

Surah 40

Ghafir¹Makkan²

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Theme

Asad summarizes the chapter quite succinctly, skillfully, and, boldly: “The main theme of the *Surah* is that false pride which often makes man think that he is the center of the universe, and thus impels him to feel snugly satisfied with his own empirically-acquired knowledge (verse 83), to worship all manner of imaginary forces and false values seemingly helpful to human aggrandizement – like wealth, power, or even the conceit of ‘progress’ – and to deny validity to any truth, however obvious, which runs counter to his sense of self-importance. The arrogant assumption that man is ‘self-sufficient’ – an illusion already touched upon in verse 6-7 of one of the earliest Qur’anic revelations (*Surah* 96) – brings with it the conviction that he is above all need of divine guidance, implying a rejection of the belief in resurrection and God’s ultimate judgment on the ‘Day of Reckoning’ (verse 27). The

opening chord of this theme appears in the statement that ‘none but those who are bent on denying the truth would call God’s messages in question’ (verse 4), and is developed in many variations throughout the *Surah*; thus ‘in their hearts is nothing but overweening self-conceit, which they will never be able to satisfy’ (verse 56), and ‘perverted are the minds of those who knowingly reject God’s messages’ (verse 63) – for ‘God sets a seal on every arrogant, self-exalting heart’ (verse 35), condemning it to spiritual blindness in this world and, as a consequence, to suffering in the life to come.

“As so often in the Qur’ān, these ideas are illustrated by reference to the stories of earlier prophets, and to what happened to deniers of truth in bygone times (verses 21-22 and 82ff.) – ‘such being the way of God that has always obtained for His creatures’ (verses 85).”

[1] Ha Mim.³

[2] Sending down of the Book is by Allah, the All-mighty, the All-knowing.

[3] Forgiver of sin,⁴ Acceptor of repentance, Severe of Retribution, Possessor of bounty. There is no deity save He. To Him is the journey-end.

﴿١﴾ حم

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

﴿٢﴾

غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّوْلِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٣﴾

1. It is also called *Surah Al-Mu'min* (the Believer).

2. Except for one or two verses, the *Surah* is Makkan. In fact, one opinion is that all those chapters that start with the consonants Ha Mim are Makkan (Zamakhshari).

3. In all, there are 7 chapters, all in sequence, that start with these consonants. Collectively they are called "*Hawamim*." Ibn 'Abbas said that everything has its quintessence. The quintessence of the Qur'an are the *Hawamim* (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

Notably, all these seven chapters mention at their beginning the fact of the Qur'an being a Revelation from Allah (Thanwi).

During some of the campaigns the Prophet (*saws*) would declare "*Ha. Mim*. They will not be helped" (or "you will not be helped") as the night password. The report is in Tirmidhi

and Abu Da'ud and is of *Sahih* status.

Abu Darda' was seen building a wall. When asked what he was doing he replied, "I am building a mosque for the people of Ha Mim." It could be the mosque which is attributed to him, lying within the Syrian fort (Ibn Kathir).

4. It is reported that a man came to 'Umar (ibn al-Khattab) and said, "I have a murder to my credit. Is there repentance for me?" He answered, "Yes. Keep attempting good deeds and do not despair." Then he recited this verse to him (Ibn Jarir).

The report is also in Ibn Abi Hatim (Ibn Kathir).

It is also reported that a well-placed Syrian used to visit 'Umar. Once he missed him and so asked, "What happened to so and so." They said he had taken to drinking." 'Umar asked his secretary to write to him, "O so

[4] None disputes the revelations of Allah but the unbelievers. So, let not their going to and fro in the land delude you.⁵

مَا يُجَادِلُ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
فَلَا يَعْزُرَكَ تَقَلُّبُهُمْ فِي الْأِلَادِ ﴿٤﴾

and so, my Salam to you. I write to you the praises of Allah besides whom there is no deity: 'Forgiver of sins, Acceptor of repentance, Severe of Retribution, Possessor of bounty. There is no deity save He. To Him is the return.'" Then he told the people around him, "Pray for your brother that he turns to Allah and Allah turns to him in mercy." When the letter reached the man, he kept saying, "He has warned me of His punishment and promises me forgiveness." He kept repeating until he wept, turned penitent and gave up drinking. When the news of his repentance reached 'Umar, he said to those around him, "This is how you should treat your deviant brothers. Pray for them and do not be *Shaytan's* aides against him."

Hafiz Abu Nu'aym has preserved this report (Zamakhshari and Qurtubi in short, Ibn Kathir in full).

A related incident goes as follows. It has been preserved by Ibn Abi Hatim. Thabit b. Bunani says, "I was with Mus'ab b. Zubayr in Kufa. I entered into an orchard in order to offer two cycles of Prayer. I be-

gan with Ha Mim until I reached 'to Him is the return.' I felt a man passing on a mule with a Yemeni decorated shroud on him. He said, "When you say, "Forgiver of sins," follow up by saying, "O Forgiver of sins, forgive me my sins." When you say, "Acceptor of penitence," say, "O Acceptor of penitence, accept my penitence." When you say, "Severe of retribution," say, "O Severe of retribution do not be retributive with me." I turned back but did not find anyone. I went out and asked people whether they had seen a man with Yemeni decorated shroud. They said no. They believed it must have been Ilyas" (Qurtubi in short; Ibn Kathir in full).

5. "Those who adopt the attitude of disputation against the Revelation of Allah, can never escape the punishment. They shall inevitably meet their doom. Now, if one sees that these people, even after adopting such attitudes, are strutting about, their business is flourishing, their governments functioning in a grand style, and they are enjoying the good things of life, one should

[5] Cried lies before them Nuh's folk, and (several) confederates after them. Every nation attempted against its Messenger: to seize him. They disputed with falsehood in order to rebut the Truth thereby.⁶ So I seized them, so (see) how (terrible) was My retribution.⁷

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَالْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ
بَعْدِهِمْ وَهَمَّتْ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ بِرَسُولِهِمْ لِيَأْخُذُوهُ
وَجَادَلُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ
فَأَخَذْتَهُمْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ ﴿٥﴾

[6] And that is how the Word of your Lord was realized against those who disbelieved, that they are the Companions of the Fire.

وَكَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ﴿٦﴾

not be misled into thinking that they have escaped Allah's punishment, or that war against Allah's revelations is an affair which can be treated as a pastime and its evil consequences warded off easily. This in fact is a respite they have been granted by Allah. Those who abuse this respite for doing more mischief are indeed preparing themselves for an ignominious end" (Mawdudi).

6. Mawdudi elaborates on what disputing constitutes: "To dispute means using crooked arguments in reasoning, raising irrelevant objections, isolating a word or sentence from its context, subjecting it to hair splitting and making it the basis of doubts and accusations, misconstruing words from their true sense and intention so that neither should one understand the meaning oneself nor let others do it."

Yusuf Ali comments in the following words: "Whenever a great or vital Truth is proclaimed and renewed, there are always shallow minds that are ready to dispute about it! And what petty and vain arguments they advance! They think they can discredit or condemn the Truth in this way, or render 'of none effect' Allah's Plan. But they are mistaken. If they seem to succeed for a time, that is merely their trial. They may try to plan and plot against Allah's men. But their plots will fail in the long run. They will themselves be caught in their own snares. And then, how terrible will be their Punishment!"

7. Sayyid leads us to another perspective, "This is how the Qur'an portrays the true situation.. the fact of the clash between belief and disbelief, between truth and falsehood, between the callers to One Allah and the transgressors who wax proud in

[7] Those who bear the `Arsh,⁸ and those around it, chant glory and praise to their Lord.⁹ They believe in Him¹⁰ and seek forgiveness for those who have believed (saying),¹¹ 'Our Lord, You have encompassed everything with mercy and knowledge; forgive those who have turned penitent and follow Your path, and protect them from the chastisement of the blazing fire.

الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ
بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ
لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَحْمَةً
وَعِلْمًا فَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَلِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ
وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٧﴾

the earth without right. This is how we learn that the clash is an ancient one that began with the first man stepping on this planet and that the sphere of struggle is wider than this earth. For, as is generally realized, every existent being has submitted itself to Allah; except for the unbelievers – and none other than them – who dispute with the signs of Allah. And we also know how the struggle will end between the two unequals .. between the shining, overarching, gigantic Truth and the tiny, dark, insubstantial, untruth, however extensive its to and fro movements in the earth, and whatever show it might make of its strength and power.

“This fact .. the fact of the clash between the two forces, and the time and place of the clash – is illustrated by the Qur’ān in order that this fact may receive its place in the hearts, and in order that those who bear the burden of calling to the Truth, in ev-

ery age and place, know the truth of it all; so that, they may not overrate the apparent power of falsehood: during a slender period in time, and a narrow stretch in space. What they see as the apparent, is not the real. It is virtual. The real is what the Qur’ān depicts here. (And [see] how [terrible] was My retribution!)”

8. The bearers of the `Arsh are the most honored of angels. The Prophet said,

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- قَالَ ” أَذِنَ لِي أَنْ أُحَدِّثَ عَنْ مَلَكٍ مِنْ مَلَائِكَةِ اللَّهِ مِنْ حَمَلَةِ الْعَرْشِ إِنَّ مَا بَيْنَ شَحْمَةِ أُذُنِهِ إِلَى عَاتِقِهِ مَسِيرَةُ سَبْعِمِائَةِ عَامٍ ” . - سنن أبي داود

رواه الطبراني في الأوسط ورجاله رجال الصحيح -
مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد

“I have been allowed to speak of an angel from among the angels of Allah – one of those who bear the `Arsh – that the distance between his ear lobe and the shoulder is seventy years” (Qurtubi).

[8] And, Our Lord, admit them into gardens of `Adn that You have promised them, as well as those who attained righteousness of their progenitors, spouses and their offspring.¹² Surely, You alone are the All-powerful, the All-wise.

رَبَّنَا وَأَدْخِلْهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدْتَهُمْ
وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ
وُذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٨﴾

Haythami remarks that the report - but for the last two words - is in Abu Da'ud, and in Tabarani's Awsat, with reliable narrators.

9. "...chant glory and praise to their Lord": to chant glory is to declare Allah free of all imaginable defects, and to chant praises is to confirm all good Qualities for Him (Ibn Kathir).

10. Mention of the angels bearing the 'Arsh clearly leads to the implication that Allah does not occupy it. If He did, He would have been in view of the angels in which case there was no point in mentioning that they believe in Him. The statement then leads to the belief that Allah is as much in the Unseen for the angels bearing the 'Arsh as to His creations on the earth (Zamakhshari).

Combating anthropomorphist tendencies, Imām Razi feels elated at the above remark and after quoting it from Zamakhshari states that had Zamakhshari written nothing else in his commentary but this point, it would have been an honor enough.

11. Can one imagine to rise higher than this in esteem that he should be sinning on the earth, but because he is a believer, angels bearing the 'Arsh should be supplicating for him? (Shabbir, slightly modified).

12. As Allah (*swt*) said elsewhere (52: 22),

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ
وَمَا أَلْتَنَاهُمْ مِنْ عَمَلِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ [الطور: ٢١]

"As for those who believed, and their offspring followed them in faith, We shall join them with them and We shall not diminish from their deeds a thing" (Shabbir).

Sa'id b. Jubayr has said that a believer will enter Paradise and ask, "Where is my father? Where is my mother? Where is my child? Where is my wife?" He will be told that their deeds were not of the class that would allow them here. He will say, "But I used to work for myself and for them." They will be told, "Admit them into (this higher) Paradise (from its lower levels)" - Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir.

[9] And protect them from evils. And, whomsoever You protected from evils that Day, surely, You showed him mercy.¹³ That indeed is the great triumph.¹⁴

وَقِهِمُ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَمَنْ تَقِ السَّيِّئَاتِ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمْتَهُ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٩﴾

[10] Surely, those who committed disbelief will be called, 'Indeed, Allah's hatred was greater than your hatred for yourselves (now), when you were called unto belief but you were refusing.'¹⁵

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنَادُونَ لَمَقْتُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرَ مِنْ مَقْتِكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِذْ تُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ فَتَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] They will say, 'Our Lord, You dealt us death twice and quickened us twice.¹⁶ Now we have confessed our sins, is there now a way out?'¹⁷

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَتْنَا اثْنَيْنِ وَأَخْيَيْنَا اثْنَيْنِ فَأَعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَى خُرُوجٍ مِّن سَبِيلٍ ﴿١١﴾

13. "That is the final Judgment, and any who is saved from the evil consequences of their deeds in this life will truly have been saved by Allah's Mercy, and for them it is the highest achievement they could have, the attainment of all their wishes, the fulfillment of their destiny and the noblest purpose of their Life, the supreme Salvation and Felicity" (Yusuf Ali).

14. To paraphrase Zamakhshari's comment at this point: The supplication of the angels in favor of a species other than theirs, reflects the significant truth that sharing of belief entails sharing of concerns and qualities that proceed from it.

15. That is, Allah's hatred of them was greater that day when they were offered His message but they

turned a blind eye to it, than their own hatred of themselves now, in the Hereafter, when they have seen the consequences of their denial (Mujahid, Qatadah, Suddi: Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

The caller could be angels, or even the Keepers of Hell seeing the unbelievers seething with anger engulfed by the flames of Hell (several commentators).

16. The *Salaf* have pointed out that this verse holds the same meaning as that of *Al-Baqarah* which said (2: 28),

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمَيِّتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ [البقرة: ٢٨]

"How can you disbelieve in Allah seeing you were (once) lifeless, then He gave you life; then, He

[12] 'That is because when Allah alone was invoked you disbelieved, but when He was associated with, you would believe.¹⁸ The judgment then rests with Allah, the Exalted, the Great.'

ذَلِكُمْ بِأَنَّهُ إِذَا دُعِيَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ كَفَرْتُمْ
وَأِنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ تُؤْمِنُوا فَالْحُكْمُ لِلَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ
الْكَبِيرِ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] It is He who shows you His signs¹⁹ and sends down to you out of heaven provision.²⁰ Yet, none but the penitent draw admonition.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُنَزِّل لَكُمْ مِّنَ
السَّمَاءِ رِزْقًا وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُنِيبُ
﴿١٣﴾

shall cause you to die and quicken you (again), and then unto Him you will be returned" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

The meaning given there holds good here. That is, 'You were dust before you were created: that was the first death. Then He quickened you and gave you life: that was the first life. Then you will die and will be returned to dust: this will be the second death. Finally, you have been resurrected on this day of Judgment: this is the second life. Thus, in total, two deaths and two lives.

But Imām Razi is of the opinion that the allusion is to the life and death of this world, and life and death of the grave.

17. That is, seeing that You gave us multiple lives and deaths in the past, could you give us another death now, and a new life on the earth so that we could lead a life of obedience and devotion? (Au.).

This statement of the unbelievers on the Day of Judgment will not be out of repentance, regret and the resolve to reform themselves, but rather, out of shock and an effort to escape the consequences. Hence the negative reply (Zamakhshari).

18. Allah (*swt*) gives the reason why their return will not profit them. Already, when Allah alone was invoked, they hated to hear it: "That is because when Allah alone was invoked you disbelieved, but when He was associated with, you would believe." As He said elsewhere (6: 28),

وَلَوْ رُدُّوا لَعَادُوا لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ
[الأنعام: ٢٨]

"If they are returned, they will return to what they were prohibited. They are indeed liars " (Ibn Kathir).

19. The heaven and the earth, the sun and the moon, the winds and the stars, the clouds and vapors, the rivers and springs, the trees and

[14] Therefore, call unto Allah making religion pure for Him, even though the unbelievers be averse.²¹

فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ
الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] High of Status,²² Master of the `Arsh.²³ He sends down the Spirit²⁴ by His will upon whomsoever He will of His servants, that he might²⁵ warn of the Day of Encounter.²⁶

رَفِيعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ
مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ لِيُنْذِرَ
يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ ﴿١٥﴾

mountains, the days and the nights, the rains and drought, and, the ruins of the nations destroyed, are all signs of Allah that He has spread around for people to draw lessons of His existence and Oneness.

20. "It is He who shows you His signs and sends down to you out of heaven provision": The manifestation of the signs gives life to the soul, just as sending down of the provision gives life to the body (Razi).

21. The Qur'anic words remind Ibn Kathir of the words the Prophet used to say after the termination of every Prayer. He would say,

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ
وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ
الدِّينَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ أَهْلُ التَّعَمَّةِ وَالْفَضْلِ وَالتَّنَافُ
الْحُسْنِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ
الْكَافِرُونَ. - سنن أبي داود

"There is no deity save One Allah. He has no partners. His is the Kingdom and for Him the Praise; and He has power over all things.

There is no power nor strength save with Allah. There is no deity save Allah. We do not worship but Allah. His is the blessing, and His the bounty. And for Him the good praise. There is no deity save Allah: being sincere in religion even though the unbelievers be averse."

The report is in Muslim (Au.).

22. A meaning attributed to "dara-jat" is "sifat", i.e., He who is of High Attributes (Qurtubi, Shawkani, Shafi' and others).

The word "Rafi" also carries the connotation of "He who raises the status" – of the Prophets, martyrs, the righteous and others (Razi, Qurtubi, Shawkani).

23. 'Arsh is a huge body that covers everything below it (Ibn Jarir).

Dhu al-'Arsh: That is, the Creator, Owner and Master of it; that is, of power and kingdom. It is said, "So and so lost His 'Arsh" meaning, he

[16] *The Day whereon they come forth,*²⁷ *nothing concerning them is hidden from Allah.*²⁸ *Whose is the Kingdom today? For Allah, the One, the Compeller.*²⁹

يَوْمَ هُمْ بَارِزُونَ لَا يَخْفَى عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] *Today, every soul shall be recompensed for what it earned. No injustice today. Verily, Allah is swift at the reckoning.*

الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٧﴾

lost the power and control of his kingdom (Razi and Qurtubi).

24. The allusion at this point by the textual term “*ruh*” is to the Qur’ān, as Allah said elsewhere (42: 52),

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا [الشورى: ٥٢]

“That is how We have revealed to you a Spirit by our command” (Ibn Jarir). And the Revelation has been called “the Spirit” because it gives life to the soul (Qurtubi), just as the spirit (soul) gives life to the body (Razi).

25. The pronoun in “*li-yundhira*” can be understood in three ways: “so that he may warn” (i.e., the Prophet), or, “that He may warn” (i.e., Allah), or “that it (the Qur’ān) may warn” (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

26. “The day of Encounter:” The day when people will meet their Lord, the day when they will meet each other, when the oppressor will meet the oppressed, the day when the inhabitants of the earth will meet the inhabitants of the heavens, the day

when people will meet with their deeds (Qurtubi).

27. The textual word is “*barizuna*” meaning, the people will be in clear view of each other. One would say, “*baraza fulanun*” to mean, ‘he came into view,’ such as when he appears at the horizon (Au.).

28. Nothing is ever hidden from Allah. But this fact was not apparent to them in the world. In the words of the Qur’ān itself (41: 22),

وَلَكِنْ ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَعْلَمُ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ [فصلت: ٢٢]

“But you guessed that Allah does not know much of what you do.”

On that day the realization will strike them hard “that nothing concerning them is hidden from Allah” (Razi).

29. Ibn Mas`ud has said that people will be resurrected on a plain, newly created earth, resembling a molded sliver (plate), over which no sin would have been committed. As they will be gathered together, someone

[18] Warn them against the Approaching Day when the hearts are at the throats,³⁰ choked.³¹ None there is for the transgressors of an intimate friend or an intercessor to be heeded.³²

وَأَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْآزِفَةِ إِذِ الْقُلُوبُ لَدَى
الْحَنَاجِرِ كَاظِمِينَ مَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ
وَلَا شَفِيعٍ يُطَاعُ ﴿١٨﴾

will call out, “Whose is the Kingdom today?” Mankind – both believers as well as unbelievers - will reply, “For Allah, the One, the Compeller.” The believers will say this with pleasure, while the unbelievers in painful realization (Qurtubi, Alusi, Shawkani).

Mawdudi quotes an anecdote in connection with this verse. When the Samanid ruler Nasr b. Ahmad (301-331 A.H.) entered Nisapur he held court and after accepting the throne desired that the proceedings be initiated with Qur’anic recitation. An elderly person came forward and recited this very passage. When he reached this verse, “Whose is the Kingdom today?” Nasr was struck with awe. He came down the throne, took off the crown and fell into prostration saying, “My Lord, Kingdom is yours not mine.”

(Nowadays one hardly comes across a faqir who is moved with awe by thoughts of Allah’s Power: Au.).

30. The situation could both be figurative, expressing extreme fear, as well as real, in the sense that the hearts torn from their places and choking the unbelievers in their throats (Razi). Perhaps it would be a situation of perpetual heart-attack (Au.).

31. Choked with fear, suppressing mounting anger and frustration, ready to burst out, but without the ability to express any of it in words or action (Au.).

32. How can a faithless people faced up with a new situation on this Day look upon the faithful for intercession? Aren’t these the very people who were the object of their scorn in the previous life? There is another factor too, the most important, which they completely neglected: their Lord. Even if they could find someone to intercede for them, the intercessors will not be heeded, for the affair involves the unbelievers and their Lord and none else. Other creations might as well keep their distance (Au.).

[19] He knows the treachery of the eyes³³ and what the breasts conceal.

يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] Allah judges with Truth, while those they invoke besides Him, judge not by aught.³⁴ Indeed, Allah is the All-hearing, the All-observing.

وَاللَّهُ يَقْضِي بِالْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَقْضُونَ بِشَيْءٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿٢٠﴾

33. The furtive glance of a man, for instance, at a woman when others around him are unaware (several commentators).

“It is not becoming of a Prophet that he should have treacherous eyes” (Qurtubi, Shawkani).

It is reported that `Abdullah b. Sa`d b. Abi Sarh was one of those who were ordered killed at the fall of Makkah. After the victory, he concealed himself in `Uthman's house. The latter brought him to the Prophet saying that the man had surrendered and was ready for allegiance. The Prophet looked at him but said nothing. `Uthman repeated the request. The Prophet raised his eyes, looked at him but said nothing. At the third time he accepted his allegiance. Later he told his Companions, “Was there not a rightly guided man among you to see that I was refusing to accept his allegiance, and so kill him?” Someone answered, “Why did you not, Messenger of Allah, signal with your eye?” He answered,

The report is in Abu Da`ud and is *Sahih* (S.Ibrahim).

34. Majid points to the misconceptions of the Christians in this regard. He writes: “This repudiates the Christian doctrine of Jesus being the Judge and Arbiter. Cf. the NT:- ‘For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.’ (Matt. 16: 27). [And], ‘When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the King will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the

إنه لا ينبغي للنبي أن يكون له خائنة عين - شرح
مشكل الآثار

[21] Have they not journeyed through the earth to see how was the end of those before them? They were stronger than them in might and in traces (they left) in the land.³⁵ Then Allah seized them for their sins. And they had not against Allah a protector.

أَوْ لَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا هُمْ أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَآثَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَاكِ ﴿٢١﴾

[22] That was because their Messengers were coming to them with clear evidences, but they disbelieved, so Allah seized them. He is indeed, Full of Strength, Terrible of Retribution.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانَتْ تَأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَكَفَرُوا فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] We had indeed sent Musa with Our signs³⁶ and a clear Authority.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢٣﴾

kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' (Matt. 25: 31-34)."

The "sheep" of the above context are of course the Christians, who by far, have proved themselves the most ferocious of all nations when it comes to murder and mayhem: whether between themselves or against nations other than theirs. The atrocities let loose by the Church during the Inquisition in the Middle-ages led to the killing of 55 million Christians. But this is only the tip of the ice-berg that historical works have recorded of the so-called sheep (Au.).

35. As Allah said elsewhere (46: 26),

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِي مَا أَنْزَلْنَاكُمْ فِيهِ [الأحقاف: ٢٦]

"Surely, We established them in what We did not establish you in it." He also said (30: 9),

وَأَنْزَلُوا الْأَرْضَ وَعَمَرُوهَا أَكْثَرَ مِمَّا عَمَرُوهَا [الروم: ٩]

"And they cultivated the land and populated it more than they themselves have populated it."

36. Apart from the nine signs that Musa (*asws*) had shown to Fir'awn and his folks, the very personality of Musa was a sign to them and to others. Here was a man who had a death warrant on his head. He had fled the country from fear of being arrested, tried and put to death. The community to which he belonged was so hopelessly enslaved that their masters could slaughter them, young and old, at will. Had Musa on his second appearance been arrested and summarily put to death, no one would have been surprised in the least. But what was truly surprising was that one of the slaves of the enslaved communi-

[24] To Fir`awn, Haman and Qarun. But they said, 'A sorcerer, big liar.'³⁷

إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَقَارُونَ فَقَالُوا سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] Now, when he brought them the Truth from Us, they said, 'Kill off the sons of those who have believed with him and let their women live.'³⁸ But the plot of the unbeliever is not but in error.

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُم بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوا اقْتُلُوا أَبْنَاءَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ وَاسْتَحْيُوا نِسَاءَهُمْ وَمَا كَيْدُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] And Fir`awn said, 'Let me alone that I kill off Musa,³⁹ and let him call to His Lord. I fear he will change your religion⁴⁰ or that he may cause disorder to appear in the land.'⁴¹

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ذَرُونِي أَقْتُلْ مُوسَىٰ وَلْيَدْعُ رَبَّهُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُبَدِّلَ دِينَكُمْ أَوْ أَنْ يُظْهِرَ فِي الْأَرْضِ الْفَسَادَ ﴿٢٦﴾

ty stood in the court and challenged the head of the state – known for no other quality better than tyranny. Musa all but abused him, right in front of his courtiers. He must have been mad with anger. Yet, there he was, helpless against him, unable to restrain him, far from killing him. Was not Musa himself a great sign for the high and the low? (With the main point from Mawdudi).

37. The textual “*kadhhab*”, instead of a simple “*kadhib*” led us to render it as “a big liar.”

38. This killing was different from the killing organized when the prediction was made that an Israelite will destroy Fir`awn's kingdom (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir).

39. This indicates that although free to kill Musa, Fir`awn could not make

up his mind either because he did not have the courage, apprehensive that it might bring the punishment Musa (*asws*) was promising, or, even if inclined towards doing away with Musa, he was being advised against it by the senior courtiers who could have warned him that killing Musa on the one hand will demonstrate the weakness of the governmental position, and, on the other, make an immediate hero of Musa, leading to the spread of faith (Au.).

Imām Razi suggests the possibility that his courtiers did not want Musa done away with, but rather, remain in Fir`awn's concern and worries, in order to keep him busy, so that, they in turn may rest in peace from his evils. Courtiers often do this to divert the attention of the ruler from themselves to other, foreign enemies.

[27] Musa said, 'I take refuge with my Lord and your Lord, against every arrogant one who believes not in the Day of Account.'⁴²

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ
مِّنْ كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُ يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٧﴾

To the brilliant point above one might add that this is much too often practiced by Western nations. Whenever they fear internal disturbance and dissatisfaction over their rule, they divert the attention of the masses to a foreign supposed enemy (Au.).

40. Majid writes, "The popular religion of Egypt, at the time of Moses, was a gross form of polytheism. 'The priests had invented, and maintained the outward polytheism and idolatry, as the only religion suitable to the mass of the people; they inculcated it, they administered its rites, they sanctioned its greatness, its licentiousness, its lowering and debasing materialism (Rawlinson, Moses: His Life and Times p. 39)."

41. A life based on devotion to Allah was, to them, a life of mischief, disorder and corruption (Ibn Jarir from the *Salaf*).

According to some other commentators, Fir'awn feared that if some people fell victim to Musa's call, while

the rest remained on the state religion, then, national unity would be endangered and the rulers will have a hard time directing the masses to a single goal which they had set up for them.

42. Our own Prophet sought Allah's refuge when in fear. Abu Burdah reports that,

عَنْ أَبِي بُرْدَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ قَيْسٍ أَنَّ أَبَاهُ حَدَّثَهُ : أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- كَانَ إِذَا خَافَ قَوْمًا قَالَ : " اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَجْعَلُكَ فِي حُجُورِهِمْ وَتَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شُرُورِهِمْ " - المستدرك - تعليق الذهبي في التلخيص : على شرط البخاري ومسلم

"When the Prophet feared a people he would supplicate in words, 'O Allah, we place You in front of their chests and seek Your refuge from their evils.'"

There is another *hadith* in slightly different words, as quoted by Ibn Kathir, but we gave preference to the version above, as in Abu Da'ud, since Haythami, Suyuti and 'Iraqi (Fayd al-Qadir) declared it trustworthy (Au.).

[28] Said a believer, one of the Fir`awn's folk⁴³ who was concealing his faith,⁴⁴ 'Will you kill a man because he says, "my Lord is Allah,"⁴⁵ while he has brought you clear evidences from your Lord? If he should be a liar, then upon him will be his lie. But if he should be truthful, then some of what he warns you might strike you.⁴⁶ Surely, Allah does not love him who is a transgressor and a big liar.⁴⁷

وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَن يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَإِن يَكُ كَاذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ وَإِن يَكُ صَادِقًا يُصِيبْكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

43. Ibn `Abbas has said that there were no more than three among the Copts who believed in Musa (*asws*): this person, who was concealing his faith, Fir`awn's wife Asiyyah and the man who had warned Musa (*Al-Qasas*: 20) that the government was planning to slay him (Ibn Kathir).

This opinion of Ibn `Abbas is in Ibn al-Mundhir and Ibn Abi Hatim (Shawkani).

Mawdudi adds: The affair of the believer from among the ruling family speaking out in the court, is an important event that both the Old Testament as well as the Talmud failed to record, nor is this mention found in any Israeli annals. The Orientalists have used it to plant doubts over the authenticity of the Qur`ān. Says the Encyclopedia of Islam (Lieden print), "The Koranic story of a believer in the court Pharaoh who wants to save Musa is not quite clear

(xI,28). Ought we to compare Jethro in the Haggada who advises clemency at Pharaoh's court?"

The insinuation is, the Prophet somehow heard this Haggada episode?!

If we are to give any credence to the Orientalists, we must conclude that there has never been a scholar in history, neither Jewish, nor Christian, the like of Muhammad, who had such mastery over the most ancient Jewish literatures, as to gather in himself a knowledge, which required life-time efforts of hundreds of modern-day Orientalists, equipped with rarest of manuscripts and archeological tablets, to merely trace out the sources of his knowledge (Au.).

44. He was of course taking great risks. If exposed he could be sent to the gallows.

The Prophet (*saws*) has said, as in a *hadith* of Abu Da'ud,

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّ مِنْ أَعْظَمِ الْجِهَادِ كَلِمَةً عَدْلٍ عِنْدَ سُلْطَانٍ جَائِرٍ - قَالَ أَبُو عَيْسَى وَفِي الْبَاب عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ وَهَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ غَرِيبٌ مِنْ هَذَا الْوَجْهِ

“The best *Jihad* is a word of truth before a tyrannical ruler” (Ibn Kathir).

A similar report is found in Nasa'i,

عَنْ طَارِقِ بْنِ شِهَابٍ أَنَّ رَجُلًا سَأَلَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَقَدْ وَضَعَ رِجْلَهُ فِي الْعَرِزِ أَيُّ الْجِهَادِ أَفْضَلُ قَالَ كَلِمَةُ حَقٍّ عِنْدَ سُلْطَانٍ جَائِرٍ - مسند أحمد

A man asked the Prophet while he had placed his foot in the stirrup, “What *Jihad* is the best?” He answered, “A word of truth before a tyrannical ruler” (Au.).

45. In reference to this verse we are reminded of an incident involving our Prophet in Makkah. Bukhari is the source,

عَنْ عُرْوَةَ بْنِ الزُّبَيْرِ قَالَ سَأَلْتُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عَمْرِو عَنْ أَشَدِّ مَا صَنَعَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ رَأَيْتُ عُقْبَةَ بْنَ أَبِي مُعَيْطٍ جَاءَ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ يُصَلِّي فَوَضَعَ رِجْلَهُ فِي غُنْفِهِ فَخَنَنَهُ بِهِ خَنْقًا شَدِيدًا فَجَاءَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ حَتَّى دَفَعَهُ عَنْهُ فَقَالَ {أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ} - صحيح البخاري

‘Urwah ibn Zubayr said he asked ‘Abdullah b. ‘Amr about the worst thing that the Quraysh did to the Prophet. He said: I saw

‘Uqbah b. Abi Mu‘ayt go up to the Prophet while he was Praying, throw his garment around his neck and begin to choke him. Abu Bakr came, pushed the man away and said, “Will you kill a man because he says, ‘my Lord is Allah,’ while he has brought you clear evidences from your Lord?” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

One might note Abu Bakr’s attachment to the Qur’ān that he remembered the verse in that frustrating situation (Au.).

In this connection, we also have a report preserved by Abu Nu‘aym in *Fada’il al-Sahabah*:

وعن محمد بن عقيل قال: خطبنا علي بن أبي طالب فقال: أيها الناس أخبروني من أشجع الناس؟ قالوا: - أو قال: - قلنا: أنت يا أمير المؤمنين. قال: أما أي ما بارزت أحداً إلا انتصفت منه، ولكن أخبروني بأشجع الناس. قالوا: لا نعلم، فمن؟ قال: أبو بكر، إنه لما كان يوم بدر جعلنا لرسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عريشاً فقلنا: من يكون مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لئلا يهوي إليه أحد من المشركين؟ فوالله ما دنا منه أحد إلا أبو بكر شاهراً بالسيف على رأس رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لا يهوي إليه أحد إلا أهوى إليه، فهذا أشجع الناس. فقال علي: ولقد رأيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وأخذته قريش فهذا يجأه وهذا يتلته وهم يقولون: أنت الذي جعلت الآلهة لهاً واحداً؟ قال: فوالله ما دنا منا أحد إلا أبو بكر يضرب هذا ويحارّ ويتلثل هذا وهو يقول: ويلكم أتقتلون رجلاً أن يقول ربي الله؟ ثم رفع علي بردة كانت عليه ثم بكى حتى

اخضلت لحيته ثم قال علي: أنشدكم الله أمؤمن آل فرعون خير أم أبو بكر؟ فسكت القوم فقال: ألا تحبونني؟ فوالله لساعة من أبي بكر خير من مثل مؤمن آل فرعون، ذاك رجل كنتم إيمانه وهذا رجل أعلن إيمانه. - مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد - رواه البزار وفيه من لم أعرفه

Muhammad b. `Aqil said that once `Ali (ibn abi Talib) asked us during a sermon, saying, "People! Tell us who is the most courageous of the people." We said, "Yourself." He said, "As for me, I never met someone in a duel but I did justice to it. But tell me who is the most courageous of the people." They said, "Then we do not know who it is." He said, "Abu Bakr. On the day of (the battle of) Badr, we built a shelter for the Prophet. But we began to ask ourselves as to who would remain with the Prophet to protect him from the pagans. By Allah, no one went near the Prophet but Abu Bakr with his sword swung out over the Prophet's head. No one (of the pagans) ever moved towards the Prophet but Abu Bakr pounced upon him. He was the most courageous of the people. And, I have seen the Prophet when he was seized by the Quraysh (in Makkah). This one was pulling

him, that one was pushing him, another was struggling with him. They were saying, 'Are you the one who made one God of several gods?' By Allah, none of us went near the Prophet except Abu Bakr. He was pulling this one, pushing that one and struggling against another saying, 'Will you kill a man who says, "Allah is my Lord?"' Then he (`Ali) raised the cloak over him and wept until his beard was wet." Then he asked, "Swear to me by Allah, was the believer from Fir`awn's folk better or Abu Bakr?" The people were quiet. He said, "Will you not answer?" Then he added, "By Allah, Abu Bakr was in time better than the believer from Fir`awn's folk. That was a man who was concealing his faith, while Abu Bakr had announced his faith" (Qurtubi, Shawkani).

According to another version, the above incident was three days after Abu Talib's death and that somebody had rushed up to Abu Bakr who came in running, with two pleats of hair (on his head) - Qurtubi.

The version above is from Kanz al-'Ummal, which is slightly lengthier than in Qurtubi or Shawkani. And Kanz's author, `Ala'uddin Muttaqi

al-Hindi reports Haythami as approving its chain of narrators.

It is possible, as it was happening on many occasions, that the Shiya'an 'Ali were around 'Ali, deprecating Abu Bakr, and so he thought it necessary to remove their misconceptions. That they remained quiet when he asked them about Abu Bakr strengthens this surmise (Au.).

At any rate, the verse allows that if one is in fear (such as of sure and immediate persecution) one might conceal his faith (Thanwi).

46. That is, if Musa (*asws*) is lying, then what can be greater transgression than to fasten a lie upon Allah? Will Allah allow him to propagate a lie in His name: Surely, Allah does not love him who is a transgressor and a big liar (Au.).

At this point it might be useful to present a short passage from the commentary on "*Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah*" by Ibn Abi al-'Izz. Discussing the issue of the possibility of our own Prophet being a false Prophet, he writes, "As for our Prophet, his case is so obvious that denying his message is tantamount to denying Allah Most High Himself, and alleging tyranny on His part, high above that Allah is. To explain: If someone thought that Muhammad, on whom

be peace, was not a Prophet, rather a tyrant ruler, then, what it implies is that he fastened a lie on God, brought before the people something not revealed by Him, then, continued to declare the lawful as unlawful and the unlawful as lawful, declared the old Scriptural Laws null and void, slew the people, and destroyed the true followers of earlier Prophets. Yet, he is led to victories after victories. He alleged that all that was by Allah's command sent down to him. And the Lord God watched him accomplish all that in His Name, annihilating the followers of truth and continuing to lie for no less than twenty three years. Indeed, Allah seems to have helped him achieve all that, let him overcome everyone, prepared the grounds with a couple of supernatural circumstances to lead him to victories. More. He even answered his prayers, destroyed those opposed to him and raised his name over all others. Now, for Allah to let someone do all that, in His Name, and, instead of uprooting him, help him in his plans, is only possible if Allah Himself is a tyrant, an oppressive Being, and a transgressor. Inevitably, that would lead the people to believe that this world has no Creator nor a Lord above all. Had there been one, He would have stopped this

[29] And O my people, for you is the sovereignty today, dominant in the land. But who will help us against Allah's ire should it befall us?' Fir`awn said, 'I do not show you but what I see (as correct) and I do not guide you, but to the right path.'⁴⁸

يَا قَوْمَ لَكُمْ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ظَاهِرِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَنْ يَنْصُرُنَا مِنْ بَأْسِ اللَّهِ إِنْ جَاءَنَا قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ مَا أُرِيكُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَرَىٰ وَمَا أَهْدِيكُمْ إِلَّا سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ ﴿٢٩﴾

person from doing all that. Indeed, He would have punished him with an exemplary punishment for the satisfaction of the rest of the world. The 'no action' response does not befit even an ordinary king of this world. How then does it fit the King of kings and the Ruler of all rulers?

"We do not deny that many liars have been successful in their own days, overcoming several opponents in their ventures. But, firstly, they did not succeed wholly, and secondly, the new situation they created did not last long. In time, Allah's Messengers and their followers did away with all that they had established. This is the *Sunnah* of Allah that has been among the nations of the past. Indeed, even the unbelievers knew it. Allah said: "They say, 'A poet for whom we await the Fate's uncertainty.' Say, 'Wait. For I am with you one of those waiting.'" (*Al-Tur*, 30-31)

(That is, even the pagans were pretty sure that if the Prophet was phony he would be destroyed and, there-

fore, the best recourse was to wait for the Divine intervention).

47. "Compare a similar incident," writes Majid, "recorded in connection with the apostle Jesus in the NT: 'When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them. Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law .. And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do as touching these men .. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye found even to fight against God.' (Ac. 5:33-39)."

48. Fir`awn was of course lying. And our Prophet has said as recorded by the *Sahihayn*,

مَا مِنْ وَالٍ يَلِي رَعِيَّةً مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَيَمُوتُ وَهُوَ غَاشٌّ لَهُمْ إِلَّا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ - صحيح البخاري

"There is no ruler entrusted the rule over Muslims, who deceives

[30] Said he who had believed, 'O my people, truly I fear for you the like of the day of the confederates.⁴⁹

وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِثْلَ يَوْمِ الْأَحْزَابِ ﴿٣٠﴾

[31] The like of the case of the people of Nuh, 'Ad, Thamud and those after them. And Allah does not intend wrong to His slaves.

مِثْلَ ذَابِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِلْعِبَادِ ﴿٣١﴾

[32] And O my people, verily I fear for you the Day of mutual calling.⁵⁰

وَيَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ ﴿٣٢﴾

[33] The day you will turn about retreating; no defender will you have against Allah. And, he whom Allah leaves unguided, has none to guide.

يَوْمَ تَوَلَّوْنَ مُدْبِرِينَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

them, except that Allah has forbidden Paradise for him" (Ibn Kathir).

So, have you also found what your Lord had promised you as true?"

Or (7: 50)

49. Ibn Jarir: the next verse identifies the 'confederates' (against the Messengers: Majid).

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ أَنَّا أَفِيضُوا عَلَيْنا مِنَ الْمَاءِ أَوْ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ [الأعراف: ٥٠]

50. Qatadah and Ibn Zayd said that the allusion is to the calling between the inhabitants of Paradise and Hell-fire. As Allah said (7: 44)

"And the inhabitants of the Fire will call the inhabitants of Paradise (saying), 'Throw down some water upon us, or out of what Allah has provided you'" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ أَنَّا قَدْ وَجَدْنَا مَا وَعَدَنَا رَبُّنَا حَقًّا فَهَلْ وَجَدْتُمْ مَا وَعَدَ رَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا [الأعراف: ٤٤]

But of course there will be other kinds of calling. E.g., the general calling to the Field of Reckoning; or the people called to fall out in groups; the call of the Companions of A'raf;

"And the inhabitants of Paradise will call the inhabitants of the Fire (saying), 'We have found true what our Lord had promised us.

يَا أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ خُلُودٌ فَلَا مَوْتَ وَيَا أَهْلَ النَّارِ خُلُودٌ فَلَا مَوْتَ - صحيح البخاري

[34] Indeed, earlier Yusuf had brought you clear evidences. But you ceased not in doubt concerning what he had brought you until, when he perished, you said, "Allah will never raise a Messenger after him."⁵¹ That is how Allah misguides him who is a transgressor, given to doubts.

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ يُوسُفُ مِنْ قَبْلُ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
فَمَا زِلْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا جَاءَكُمْ بِهِ حَتَّى
إِذَا هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَنْ يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
رَسُولًا كَذَلِكَ يَضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ
مُزْتَابٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

[35] Those who dispute with Allah's signs without an authority having come to them, greatly hateful is (that) to Allah and to those who have believed. That is how Allah sets the seal upon the heart of every arrogant, tyrannical person.'

الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ
سُلْطَانٍ أَتَاهُمْ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ
قَلْبٍ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] Fir`awn said, 'O Haman,⁵² build for me a tall palace, that haply I may attain the means..

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا هَامَانَ ابْنِ لِي صَرْحًا
لَعَلِّي أَبْلُغُ الْأَسْبَابَ ﴿٣٦﴾

or the final call when a ram symbolizing death would have been slaughtered and someone will call out, "O Inhabitants of Paradise, eternity and no death, and O inhabitants of the Fire, eternity and no death;" and so on.

51. It is possible that this was not said by Fir`awn's folks in grief and regret but rather in mockery. Sometime back they had a warner viz. Yusuf, and one was enough, God will not send another (Thanwi). Sayyid Qutb has a similar note.

But another interpretation has been offered by Shah `Abdul Qadir which purports to mean that Fir`awn's folks never believed in Yusuf until he died.

However, once he was dead, and the blessings that he had brought on the land had departed, they began to say in despair that since they had disbelieved in him, Allah might not raise another in his place (Shabbir).

52. Imām Razi refutes the allegation made by the Christians of his time that according to their history works, Haman appeared several centuries later. Why is it assumed that there could have been no more than one Haman in human history?

The Haman of Qur`ānic mention should not be confused with the Persian Haman of the Old Testament. It has been suggested that Haman was the title of the Chief Priest of

[37] The means to the heavens and look up for the God of Musa;⁵³ but I think he is a liar.' Thus were decked out fair to Fir`awn the evil of his deeds. And he was blocked from the path. And Fir`awn's plot was not but in ruin.

[38] And said he who had believed, 'O my people, follow me. I will lead you to the right path.

[39] My people, the life of this world is nothing but a passing enjoyment and indeed, the Hereafter, that is the abode of (permanent) settlement.

[40] Whosoever did an evil, then, he is not requited but with the like of it. But whosoever did a righteous deed, be it male or female, but is a believer, then, those will enter Paradise, provided therein without measure.

[41] And, my people. How is it with me that I call you to deliverance, while you call me to the Fire?

[42] You call me so that I should disbelieve in Allah, and to Associate with Him that about which I have no knowledge, while I call you to the All-mighty, the All-forgiving.

أَسْبَابَ السَّمَاوَاتِ فَأَطَّلِعَ إِلَى إِلَهِ مُوسَى وَإِنِّي لَأَظُنُّهُ كَاذِبًا وَكَذَلِكَ زَيْنَ لِفِرْعَوْنَ سُوءَ عَمَلِهِ وَصُدَّ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا كَيْدُ فِرْعَوْنَ إِلَّا فِي تَبَابٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمِ اتَّبِعُونِ أَهْدِكُمْ سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ ﴿٣٨﴾

يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ ﴿٣٩﴾

مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنشَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٤٠﴾

وَيَا قَوْمِ مَا لِي أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى النَّجَاةِ وَتَدْعُونَنِي إِلَى النَّارِ ﴿٤١﴾

تَدْعُونَنِي لِأَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَأُشْرِكَ بِهِ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَأَنَا أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى الْعَزِيزِ الْعَقَّارِ ﴿٤٢﴾

the kingdom. That Fir`awn should have addressed him is most reasonable, since his Haman was the one responsible for advocating, establishing and imposing the state religion of which he was the Chief Priest. If Musa (*asws*) was threatening the state religion, it was time the Chief Priest got involved. See *Al-Qasas*, note 9 of this work for further details (Au.).

53. "This is how Fir`awn the tyrant confronts the truth: by evading it. It is a distant thought to imagine that he was honest in his bidding, that this was the level of his understanding, that he was truly wishing to find the truth about the God of Musa: in this simple, disingenuous manner. The Fara`ina of Egypt had certainly attained higher cultural state to be so

[43] No doubt that what you call me to has no claim in this world nor in the Hereafter;⁵⁴ and that our return is to Allah; and that the transgressors, they are the companions of the Fire.

لَا جَرَمَ أَتَمَّا تَدْعُونِي إِلَيْهِ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَعْوَةٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَأَنْ مَرَدَّنَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ هُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ﴿٤٣﴾

[44] You will soon recall what I say to you.⁵⁵ As for (me) I commit my affair to Allah,⁵⁶ surely Allah is Seeing of the salves.'

فَسَتَذْكُرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ وَأَفَوضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٤٤﴾

[45] So Allah saved him from the evils of what they plotted⁵⁷ and there enveloped Fir'aun's folk an evil chastisement.

فَوَقَاهُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِ مَا مَكَرُوا وَخَاقَ بَالٍ فِرْعَوْنَ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٥﴾

crude of mind.. It was nothing but mockery from one angle, and an artificial attempt at justice to the Call on the other; an effort to match the commonsense attitude of the believer with his own feigned logical approach. All of this of course speak of his unshakable decision to disregard the truth" (Sayyid).

54. That is, although you appeal to them, but they, were they to be alive, would make no claim to divinity. Another interpretation renders "Da'wah" in the sense of "response," i.e., if called, they cannot respond (Zamakhshari, Razi).

Yet another possible rendition is, as Majid did: that which has no right to be invoked.

The Qur'an said elsewhere (35 14),

إِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا دُعَاءَكُمْ وَلَوْ سَمِعُوا مَا اسْتَجَابُوا لَكُمْ [فاطر: ١٤]

"If you invoke them, they do not hear your invocation, and, even if they heard, they cannot respond to you" (Ibn Kathir).

Therefore, is it anything but ignorance of the highest order to keep calling those who cannot respond? Allah said (46: 5),

وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ يَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَنْ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُمْ عَنْ دُعَائِهِمْ غَافِلُونَ [الأحقاف: ٥]

"And who can be in greater wrong than him who calls those – apart from Allah – who will not answer until the Day of Judgment, when in fact, they are unaware of their call?"

[46] *The Fire to which they are exposed morning and evening,⁵⁸ and on the day the Hour strikes, (it will be said), 'Admit the folks of Fir`awn into a more severe chastisement.'*

النَّارِ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَعَشِيًّا وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٦﴾

[47] *When they will dispute with each other in the Fire so that the weak ones will say to those who waxed proud, 'Surely, we were but your followers. So, will you not relieve us now against any part of the Fire?'*

وَإِذْ يَتَحَاوُونَ فِي النَّارِ فَيَقُولُ الضُّعَفَاءُ لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُعْتَنُونَ عَلْنَا نَصَبِيًّا مِّنَ النَّارِ ﴿٤٧﴾

In this case the situation is all the more hopeless, for, not that these false gods do not answer their call, but, they in fact cannot (Shabbir).

55. That is, it will not be too long before punishment strikes you, if you stayed on the path of disbelief. Then it is that you will remember me and recall my words and regret not having heeded (Au.).

56. This indicates that either he had already been threatened with death (Razi), or he felt sure he was risking his life by exposing himself (Au.).

57. Perhaps Fir`awn's government plotted to get him assassinated, in the fashion of modern day governments in the East and the West, who get their security men assassinate anyone they depict to their public as the enemy of the state, in most cases, the victims being Muslims; claiming that they were killed in an encoun-

ter, when, in fact, it is cold-blooded murder. Today's world is teeming with the Fara`ina as heads of democratic states preaching human rights, equality, freedom of the people, and all those slogans. In the face of mounting persecution of Muslims, one can only draw comfort from the words, "On the day the Hour strikes, (it will be said), 'Admit the folks of Fir`awn into a more severe torture'" (Au.).

58. Hudhayl b. Shurahbil and Suddi have said in reference to this verse that the souls of the folks of Fir`awn are in the bodies of birds that are exposed to the Fire everyday, burning their feathers and blackening them thereby, to be whole once again by next morning for the cycle to repeat (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Thus, this is in contrast to the treatment of the believers in the world of Barzakh who are in the form of green

birds, feeding themselves from any part of Paradise they will (Shabbir).

This *Ayah* is a Qur'ānic evidence for punishment in the world of Barzakh, or simply, in the graves (Zamakhshari), especially the use of the words “morning and evening,” since the allusion could not be to Hell where the criminals will not be exposed to the fire merely in the morning and evening, but rather all the time (Razi).

Ibn Kathir reconciles the contradiction between this Makkan verse and a couple of *ahadith* that say that early in Madinah the Prophet (*saws*) denied the possibility of punishment in Barzakh. How could he deny when this verse had already been revealed in Makkah? Of course, the simplest answer is that we cannot be definite about the revelation of this particular *Ayah* in Makkah, even if this chapter is Makkan. In fact, some of the earliest commentators have thought that verse 55 and 56 are Makkan. Can we rule out the possibility of this *Ayah*, (no. 46), being Madinan simply because there are no reports? (Au.).

At all events, Ibn Kathir reconciles in the following manner. First he reports a *hadith* in Ahmed which he declares *Sahih*. It says,

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أَنَّ يَهُودِيَّةً كَانَتْ تَخْدُمُهَا فَلَا تَصْنَعُ
عَائِشَةُ إِلَيْهَا شَيْئًا مِنَ الْمَعْرُوفِ إِلَّا قَالَتْ هَا الْيَهُودِيَّةُ

وَقَالَ اللَّهُ عَذَابُ الْقَبْرِ قَالَتْ فَدَخَلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَيَّ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَلْ لِلْقَبْرِ
عَذَابٌ قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ قَالَ لَا وَعَمَّ ذَاكَ قَالَتْ هَذِهِ
الْيَهُودِيَّةُ لَا تَصْنَعُ إِلَيْهَا مِنَ الْمَعْرُوفِ شَيْئًا إِلَّا قَالَتْ
وَقَالَ اللَّهُ عَذَابُ الْقَبْرِ قَالَ كَذَبَتْ يَهُودُ وَهُمْ عَلَى
اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ كُذِّبَ لَا عَذَابَ دُونَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ قَالَتْ
ثُمَّ مَكَثَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَمُوتَ فَخَرَجَ ذَلِكَ
يَوْمَ نِصْفِ النَّهَارِ مُشْتَمِلًا بِتَوْبِهِ مُحْمَرَّةً عَيْنَاهُ وَهُوَ
يَبْأَدِي بِأَعْلَى صَوْتِهِ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَطَّلَعْتُكُمْ الْفِتْنُ كَقَطْعِ
الَّيْلِ الْمُظْلِمِ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ مَا أَعْلَمَ لَبَكَيْتُمْ
كَثِيرًا وَضَحَكْتُمْ قَلِيلًا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اسْتَعِيدُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ
عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ فَإِنَّ عَذَابَ الْقَبْرِ حَقٌّ - مسند أحمد

`A'isha reports that a Jewish woman used to serve her. Now never did `A'isha do a good thing to her but the Jewess said, “May Allah protect you from the punishment in the grave.” `A'isha says when the Prophet entered upon her she asked her whether there was going to be punishment in the grave before the Judgment Day. He answered, “No. And who says that?” She told him that she never did a good thing to the Jewess but she said, “May Allah protect you from the punishment in the grave.” He said, “The Jews lied, and they are pretty fast at fastening a lie on Allah.” Then he remained as long as Allah wished him to remain (on this opinion) until one day he came out at mid-day gathering his clothes around him, red-eyed,

pronouncing in a loud voice, “O people. Tribulations have overshadowed you like a dark night. O people. If you knew what I know, surely, you would have cried much and laughed little. O people, seek Allah’s refuge from the punishment in the grave, for punishment in the grave is true.”

There are other reports of this nature in other collections. And the reconciliation is simple. In fact, reconciliation is not required. One can see that the Qur’anic statement as here, is not speaking of Fir’awn’s folks being actually tormented. It says that they are brought to the Fire morning and evening, in Qur’ān’s own words, “The Fire to which they are exposed morning and evening.” Thus, they are merely exposed to the Fire while they are in the Barzakh. Later the *Sunnah* confirmed that not merely exposed, but the evildoers in general are indeed punished in the graves. In addition, there is another possibility. When the Prophet (*saws*) denied that the believers will be punished in the grave, it was because he did not know that Muslims too would be punished. In view of this Qur’anic *Ayah* he could have surmised that it is unbelievers alone who will be punished, not believers. Indeed, this is strengthened by another version

of the *hadith* in Musnad of Ahmed which reports that he reacted angrily, “But rather, it is Jews who will be punished.” However, later he was informed by Allah that even believers are likely to be punished, which he hurried to announce. The *hadith* of Ahmed is as follows,

عُرُوهُ بْنُ الرُّبَيْرِ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ عَائِشَةَ تَقُولُ دَخَلْتُ عَلَى يَهُودِيَّةٍ فَقَالَتْ شَعَرْتُ أَنَّكُمْ تُقْتَلُونَ فِي الْقُبُورِ قَالَتْ فَسَمِعْتُ ذَلِكَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأُزِنَتْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لِيَالِي ثُمَّ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ هَلْ شَعَرْتِ أَنَّهُ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّكُمْ تُقْتَلُونَ فِي الْقُبُورِ -
مسند أحمد

‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr heard ‘A’isha say that a Jewess entered upon her and said that “I understand that you will be punished in the grave.” She said, “The Prophet heard it and felt frightened. Then he said, ‘Indeed, Jews will be punished.’” ‘A’isha said, “A few nights passed over me when the Prophet said, ‘Are you aware that it has been revealed to me that you will be punished in the graves?’”

(Thanwi states that this is the right and simple explanation of the apparent contradiction).

In any case, *ahadith* promising punishment in the graves are several (Ibn Kathir).

We also have in the *hadith* literature, the story of how the folks of Fir`awn are shunted up and down to be exposed to the Fire. Describing one of the incidents that the Prophet noticed during his Night Journey and Ascension, he said: "Then Jibril took me along until I passed over a people remarkable for their big tummies like huge houses. They were blocking the way of Fir`awn's folks. These latter ones are exposed to the Fire, morning and evening. So that when they return, they are like sick camels who cannot make the difference between a rock and a tree, neither hearing nor understanding anything. When these people with big tummies feel them coming their way, they try to rise up (and move away) but because of their heavy tummies tumble down. They rise up again but again fall down, until Fir`awn's folks arrive and run over them. They trample them coming and going. This is their punishment in the purgatory between this world and the next. The folks of Fir`awn cry out to Allah, 'O Lord! Do not ever bring forth the Resurrection'" (Ibn Kathir).

For Arabic text of the above *hadith*, see note no. 588 of *Surah Al-Baqarah* of this work (Au.).

Then there are reports of the believers rewarded during their life in Barzakh. One of the report says,

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ : إِنَّ أَرْوَاحَ الشُّهَدَاءِ فِي أَجْوَافِ طُيُورٍ خُضْرٍ تَسْرَحُ بِهِمْ فِي الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ شَاءُوا وَإِنَّ أَرْوَاحَ وَلَدَانِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي أَجْوَافِ عَصَافِيرٍ تَسْرَحُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ شَاءَتْ فَتَأْوِي إِلَى قَنَادِيلٍ مُعَلَّقَةٍ فِي الْعَرْشِ وَإِنَّ أَرْوَاحَ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ فِي أَجْوَافِ طُيُورٍ سَوْدٍ تَعْدُو عَلَى جَهَنَّمَ وَتَرُوحُ عَلَيْهَا فَذَلِكَ عَرَضُهَا

as in Ibn Abi Hatim, `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud said, "The souls of martyrs are in the bodies of green birds that fly about in Paradise as they like. The souls of minor Muslim children are in the bodies of green birds that fly about in Paradise as they will, to return to lanterns hanging by the *`Arsh*. And the souls of Fir`awn's folks are in the bodies of the birds that pass by Jahannum morning and evening, and that is their exposure to Jahannum (Ibn Kathir).

The above is a statement of ibn Mas`ud, but *ahadith* concerning souls of the martyrs in the bodies of green birds in Paradise, are trustworthy and found in several collections such as Tirmidhi, Abu Da`ud and others (Au.).

To continue with the subject at hand, there is a report in Ahmed and the *Sahihayn* which says,

[48] *Those who had waxed proud will say, 'Surely, every one of us is in it. Indeed, Allah has already judged between the servants.'*⁵⁹

قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُلٌّ فِيهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ حَكَمَ بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ ﴿٤٨﴾

[49] *And those who are in the Fire will say to the Keepers of Jahannum, 'Call on your Lord to lighten on us a day of the torment.'*

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ فِي النَّارِ لِخِزَانَةِ جَهَنَّمَ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْمًا مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٩﴾

[50] *They will say, 'Were not the Messengers ever coming to you with clear signs?' They will say, 'Yes indeed.' They will say, 'Then, call (Him) yourselves.'*⁶⁰ *But the call of the unbelievers will not be but in the wandering.*

قَالُوا أَوَلَمْ تَكُ تَأْتِيكُمُ رُسُلُكُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا بَلَى قَالُوا فَادْعُوا وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ ﴿٥٠﴾

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ، إِذَا مَاتَ، عُرِضَ عَلَيْهِ مَقْعَدُهُ بِالْعَذَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ، فَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ؛ وَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ، فَيُقَالُ هَذَا مَقْعَدُكَ حَتَّى يَبْعَثَكَ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

`Abdullah ibn `Umar reports the Prophet (*saws*) as having said, "When one of you dies, his place is shown to him morning and evening. If he is of the inhabitants of Paradise, then Paradise, but if of the inhabitants of the Fire, then the Fire, and he is told, "This is your place (that you will get) when Allah raises you on the Day of Judgment"" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

59. That is, the affair is all over: those who had to go to Paradise are gone while those that were destined for the Fire are here. Now there is no departure from here (Au.).

60. To paraphrase the passage, the angels will reply in words, "We are here to punish and torture you. Intercession is not part of our duty. Intercession in fact was the prerogative of the Prophets and Messengers. But you denied them when they came to you. That door is now closed. But if you believe there is some use in supplications, then do it, although the fact is, the time for supplications is also over. Today's supplication is lost to the wind (Au. with a point from Shabbir).

[51] Surely We help Our Messengers and those who believe in the life of this world⁶¹ and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth.⁶²

إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ ﴿٥١﴾

61. The believers in Truth are always triumphant, even if physically and materially not so, because the word of Truth they believe in overcomes the false word whenever the two clash, or come face to face with each other (Zamakhshari).

Shabbir comments: "That is, they are victorious at the intellectual, moral and spiritual level. Falsehood is merely the dreg that appears on the surface. Those who stand for falsehood, seem to be on top of the world, in great might, pomp and show. But they are nothing but the upper bubble layer of soda water. They have no real existence.

"Yet, the fact must not be lost sight of, that the promise of help and victory is for the true. Let those who seek Divine intervention look at themselves with a critical eye."

Suddi has said with reference to this verse that although some Prophets and their followers were killed by their people yet they were victorious because after they were gone, Allah sent His forces that destroyed the

criminal nations. That was Allah's help and the victory of the Messengers and believers (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Accordingly, we find that after Yahya and Zakariyyah were killed, Allah let loose upon the Jews such tribes as who tormented them. Similarly after the attempted murder of `Isa ibn Maryam, Allah sent upon them the Romans who tormented and humiliated them in a variety of ways. Allah has said in a *hadith Qudsi* preserved by Bukhari,

مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَنَهُ بِالْحَرْبِ

"He who made an enemy of My Friend, I shall surely challenge him to a war" (Ibn Kathir).

Sayyid adds: "The people notice that of the Prophets there were some who were killed, others who had to flee their land leaving behind a denying, rejecting nation; and that there were believers who were persecuted; some were thrown into fire-pits, others martyred, while some lived in pain and suffering. So, where was Allah's promise of help? *Shaytan* finds

his way in through these openings. Doubts start to creep in.

“But people see only the apparent, ignorant of many truths and values. They think about these issues with a short span of time in view, and constricted places in sight. They are quite modest in their judgment. Evidently, a comprehensive standard of judgment takes us beyond to much extended time and space without placing boundaries of time and space. If we look at the issue of faith and ideals from this angle, we find that it does emerge victorious – without the littlest of doubt. To explain, the victory of beliefs and convictions is the victory of those who stood for those beliefs and convictions. This is because those who stood for those beliefs and convictions had no personality of their own separated from those beliefs and convictions. The demand on them right at the start was that they will dissolve their personalities in them and let emanate from their selves those beliefs and convictions alone.

“Similarly, people err in allocating the meaning to the concepts of succor, restricting it to a particular familiar form. But it takes varieties of forms, some of which might even be confused with defeat. Take for in-

stance Ibrahim (*asws*) at the time he was thrown into the fire. He refused to renounce his faith, nor would agree to desist calling to it. Was that a situation of defeat or triumph? Why, was he not at the very summit of victory? .. Or, consider Hussain. He was martyred, bearing pains that he bore. Was that victory or defeat? Measured by the limited scales, and measured against superficial paradigms it was defeat. But from a broader viewpoint, it was a grand victory. There has not been a martyr whose heart was not moved by Hussain’s sacrifice and who did not feel encouraged by his example, whether in sympathy with his cause or not, whether a Muslim or not. (These last lines have been slightly modified: Au.).

“How many martyrs have not been,” continues Sayyid, “who could not have attained victory even if he had lived for a thousand years, the kind of victory he achieved with his martyrdom?!..

“What is victory and what is defeat? We need to reconsider the meanings we have allocated to these terms before we can ask: Where is Allah’s help that has been promised to the Messengers and the believers.”

62. Witnesses such as the angels, Messengers and the faithful who

[52] The Day, when their excuses will not profit the wrongdoers. For them is the curse⁶³ and for them the evil abode.

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ الظَّالِمِينَ مَعَذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَهُمُ
الْعَذَابُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ ﴿٥٢﴾

[53] We did give Musa the guidance and bequeathed upon the Children of Israel the Book.⁶⁴

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْهُدَى وَأَوْرَثْنَا بَنِي
إِسْرَائِيلَ الْكِتَابَ ﴿٥٣﴾

[54] As a guidance and a reminder for those possessed of reason.⁶⁵

هُدًى وَذِكْرَى لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٥٤﴾

[55] Observe patience then. Allah's promise is true. And seek forgiveness for your fault,⁶⁶ and glorify your Lord with praise at evening and at dawn.

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ
لِدُنْيِكَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعِشِيِّ
وَالْإِبْكَارِ ﴿٥٥﴾

will all testify that Allah's Messengers had delivered the messages (Ibn Jarir from Qatadah, Suddi and Mujahid).

63. To be under "la'nah" is to be distanced from Allah's mercy.

64. Literally, "We made the Israelites inherit the Book." This is because normally one has to work hard to obtain a blessing. But the Book was given to them without any effort on their part, just like inherited wealth (Alusi).

65. The connection between this verse and the previous ones should

be obvious. Allah helps the Messengers and their followers. Fir'awn is a good example: the ruler of a mighty nation, but done away with summarily (Shabbir).

66. Majid offers a note on the nature of "dhanb": "When spoken of in respect to the prophets it (dhanb) means an act of inadvertence, not blamable in itself, but only unworthy of their high rank."

At all events, istighfar (i.e., saying the words "astaghfirullah" or the like: Au.), is by itself a devotional act (Shawkani).

[56] Surely those who dispute concerning Allah's revelations without any authority that came to them, there is nothing in their breasts but greatness⁶⁷ that they are not going to attain. Therefore, seek refuge with Allah. He indeed is the Hearer, the Beholder.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ يَعْبِرُونَ
سُلْطَانٍ أَنَّهُمْ إِنْ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ إِلَّا كِبْرٌ
مَّا هُمْ بِبَالِيَةٍ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ
السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿٥٦﴾

[57] Certainly, the creation of the heaven and earth is greater than the creation of men but most men know not.

لَخَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِ
النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ
﴿٥٧﴾

67. This verse has been thought to be Madinan (Qurtubi, Alusi).

Our rendering of “*kibr*” as greatness, although the literal meaning is pride, is following the understanding of Mujahid as in Ibn Jarir.

As a context of revelation it is reported that the Jews used to say that Dajjal will arise from among them along with whom they will subdue the land and sea of the world, who will make rivers run as he wishes, and the kingdom of the earth will then return to them. Allah (*swt*) revealed this verse in refutation (Zamakhshari).

That is, to them Dajjal will be a man of worthy qualities (Au.).

In fact it has been reported by `Abd b. Humayd and Ibn Abi Hatim – through a chain declared trustworthy by Suyuti – that some Jews went up to the Prophet and said that the Anti-Christ will be of them, and

that they will accomplish this .. and that .. In response Allah revealed this *Ayah* to say that they will not be able to attain their objectives (Shawkani, Alusi).

With regard to pride, a *hadith* preserved by Ahmed says,

يُخَسَّرُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَمْثَالَ الذَّرِّ، فِي صُورِ
النَّاسِ، يَغْلَوْهُمْ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مِنَ الصَّغَارِ، حَتَّى يَدْخُلُوا
سِجْنًا فِي جَهَنَّمَ، يُقَالُ لَهُ: بُولَسُ، فَتَغْلَوْهُمْ نَارُ
الْأَثْبَارِ، يُسْقَوْنَ مِنْ طَبِئَةِ الْحَبَالِ، غُصَاةَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ

“Those who wax pride will be raised on the Day of Judgment like ants in the image of people. Everyone will be stepping on them because of their littleness until they enter into a prison in Jahannum called ‘Bulus.’ The fires will rise above them, and they will be made to drink a mixture of puss, blood, tears and sweat of the inhabitants of the Fire” (Ibn Kathir).

[58] And not equal are the blind and the seeing, nor those who believed and did righteous deeds and the evildoer. Little it is that you take admonition.⁶⁸

[59] The Hour is surely coming. No doubt about it. But most people believe not.

[60] And said your Lord, 'Call on Me,⁶⁹ I shall respond to you. Surely those who wax proud against My service, will surely enter Jahan-num, belittled.'

[61] Allah it is who made the night for you so that you may find repose therein,⁷⁰ and the day light-giving.⁷¹ Verily, Allah is full of bounty for the people, but most people do not give thanks.⁷²

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَلَا الْمُسِيءُ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَآتِيَةٌ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ ذَاخِرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

68. "The man of Faith who backs his faith by righteous conduct is like the man of clear vision, who sees things in their true perspective and walks with firm steps in the Way of Allah. The man who does evil is like a blind man: the Light of Allah is all around him, but he is blind, and he can see nothing. He has rejected Faith and cannot even learn by other people's admonition" (Yusuf Ali).

69. That is, address your supplications to me alone. A *hadith* explains the importance of supplications:

عن النعمان بن بشير رضي الله عنهما، قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: «الدُّعَاءُ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ»، ثم قرأ هذه الآية: ﴿وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ﴾ [غافر: ٦٠]

The Prophet said, "Supplication is indeed worship." Then he recited this verse, 'Call on Me, I shall respond to you' (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Shawkani).

The above *hadith* is in several Sunan collections about which Tirmidhi said that it is *Hasan Sahih* (Ibn Kathir).

Another *hadith* of Ahmed says,

من لم يدع الله يغضب عليه

"Allah is angry with him who does not ask Him" (Ibn Kathir).

This *hadith* is not strong enough (S. Ibrahim).

70. "The night for ... repose": There are levels and kinds of rest and re-

[62] Such is Allah your Lord, Creator of all things, there is no deity but He. How then are you being perverted?

ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۚ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

[63] That is how perverted were those who were disputing with Allah's revelations.

كَذَلِكَ يُؤْفَكُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

[64] Allah it is who made the earth for you a place of rest, and the sky a canopy, and fashioned you – and so well (fashioned) your features⁷³ – and provided you out of the good things.⁷⁴ Such is Allah your Lord, Hallowed then, is Allah, Lord of the worlds.⁷⁵

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَصَوَّرَكُم فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ۚ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

pose. Common people find repose in sleep. The devoted on the other hand find repose in deeds of the night (*dhi-kr*, *qira'ah*, *ruku`* and *sujud*: Au.). At the highest level are the lovers. Their repose is tethered to the acts of the heart (Alusi in *Isharat*, and Thanwi in his *Suluk*).

With due respect to the above, one might draw attention to the fact that the “acts of the heart” seem to be acts that are conducted parallel to the acts of the body. Allah said about the Prophet and his earliest Companions (73: 20), “Surely, your Lord knows that you stand up (praying) nearly two-thirds of the night, or its half, or its one-third, and a group of believers is with you...” making no mention of the final and higher stage of the acts of the heart, which can come only along with the physical devo-

tions, and never without them (Au.).

71. Or, alternatively, that which enables to see (Au.).

72. The familiar loses its significance. Yusuf Ali reminds us of the bounties that remain unheeded because of the familiarity: “The succession of Day and Night in our physical life is frequently appealed to, as a symbol to draw our attention to the Mercy and Bounty of Allah. If we viewed these things aright, we should serve Allah and seek Light from Him and Rest from Him, and celebrate His praises with gratitude.”

73. Allah's fashioning is of such order that further improvement is ruled out and unattainable. No artist can make a figure more beautiful than the human face through the juggling of the organs on the face (Au.).

[65] He is the Ever-living, there is no deity but He, therefore call Him, making your religion pure for Him. All praise to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.⁷⁶

هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ
الدِّينَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾

[66] Say, 'I have been forbidden that I should serve those you invoke apart from Allah, when clear evidences have come to me from my Lord, and I have been commanded that I should surrender to the Lord of the worlds.'

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهِيتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ لَمَّا جَاءَنِيَ الْبَيِّنَاتُ مِنْ رَبِّي
وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أُسْلِمَ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

74. In comparison with any other creation, including the Jinn, humankind consume the best of foods (Au.).

75. "The argument in the last two verses was from man's personal experiences of his physical life. In this and the next verse a parallel argument is addressed to man on a much higher plane: Look at the spacious earth and the canopy of the sky; look at the special position you occupy above other animals that you know, in shape and form, and moral and spiritual capacities; consider your refinements in food and fruits and the higher spiritual Sustenance of which your physical food is a type; would you not indeed say that the Lord is good, and would you not glorify His holy name?" (Yusuf Ali).

76. Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari and Ibn Kathir note that since declaration of Allah's Oneness is followed by His praise, Ibn 'Abbas and Sa'id b. Jubayr have been reported as having said,

عن ابن عباس قال : من قال : " لا إله إلا الله " فليقل على أثرها : " الحمد لله رب العالمين " فذلك قوله تعالى : ﴿ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾ .

"Whoever said,

لا إله إلا الله

let him follow up with,

الحمد لله رب العالمين

This is based on Allah's words as here.

The above report is in Ibn Marduwayah, Bayhaqi (in his *Al-Asma' wa al-Sifat*), and Hakim, who declared it as coming to us through trustworthy narrators (Shawkani).

[67] He it is who created you out of dust, then of a sperm-drop, then of a clinging clot, then He brings you out an infant, then that you may achieve your age of full strength, then that you may become old; although of you is one who dies before (it), and that you may attain the appointed term,⁷⁷ haply that you will reflect.

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لِتَكُونُوا شُيُوخًا وَمِنْكُمْ مَن يُؤْتَى مِنْ قَبْلِ وَلِتَبْلُغُوا أَجَلَ مُّسَمًّى وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

[68] He it is who gives life and deals death. And then, when He decrees an affair He but says to it, 'Be,' and it is.⁷⁸

هُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٦٨﴾

[69] Have you not considered those who dispute concerning Allah's revelations, how they are turned away?

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ أَنِّي يُصْرَفُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

[70] Those who laid the lie against the Book, and (against) that wherewith We sent Our Messengers - they shall soon know.⁷⁹

الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِالْكِتَابِ وَبِمَا أَرْسَلْنَا بِهِ رُسُلَنَا فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

77. The allusion could either be to death or Resurrection (Alusi and others).

78. This, according to latter day scholars, is an allegorical depiction of the powers of Allah, in time and space, and not necessarily to say that this is how things normally happen (Alusi), but rather Allah chooses to create as He will, when He will, and as fast as He will (Au.).

The above said, the *Ayah* speaking about instant execution of His command, gives, at this point, as referenced to life and death, an instant

example of how fast Allah's biddings are executed: an infant comes to life in the womb in an instant, and a man dies off in a microsecond. Indeed, the universe itself seems to have come into existence in an instant: "When He decrees an affair He but says to it, 'Be,' and it is" (Au.).

79. "The Book 'may refer to the Holy Qur'an or to the fundamental, Revelation the "Mother of the Book" (xiii. 39), while the Books revealed to the messengers are the definite Revelations that came down to men from time to time" (Yusuf Ali).

[71] When the shackles are around their necks, and the chains, and they are dragged.⁸⁰

إِذِ الْأَغْلَالُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَالسَّلَاسِلُ يُسْحَبُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

[72] In the boiling fluid⁸¹ and then in the fire they will be burnt.

فِي الْحَمِيمِ ثُمَّ فِي النَّارِ يُسْجَرُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

[73] Then it will be said to them, 'Where are those you were associating

ثُمَّ قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾

[74] Apart from Allah?' They will say, 'They have vanished from us. Nay, we were not invoking anything (substantial) earlier.'⁸² Thus it is that Allah leads the unbelievers astray.

مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا بَلْ لَمْ نَكُنْ نَدْعُو مِنْ قَبْلُ شَيْئًا كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾

[75] That was because you were rejoicing in the earth without justification, and because you were exulting (insolently).

ذَلِكَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَمْرَحُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

[76] Enter (now) the gates of Jahannum, abiding therein. An evil abode of the arrogant.

ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَبِئْسَ مَثْوًى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

[77] Therefore, observe patience, surely Allah's promise is true. Then, whether We show you some of what We promise them, or We complete your life-term, to Us they shall be returned.

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَإِمَّا نُرَبِّتْكَ بِبَعْضِ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفَّيْكَ فَإِلَيْنَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

80. "The rejection of Allah's Message, however brought, carries its own penalty. The yoke of slavery to Sin and Evil is fastened more and more firmly round the rejecter's neck, because there is no one to safeguard his freedom, and the chains of superstitions and the ugly consequences of evil restrict his freedom and the limited faculty of choice which was given by Allah to man. This process receives its climax at the Hour of Judgment" (Yusuf Ali).

81. "Hamim" of the text ("boiling fluid" is the literal meaning), and "Jahim" have been thought to be differently located places in Hell, so that the criminals deserving this punishment will be dragged sometimes to "Hamim" and sometimes to "Jahim" (Thanwi).

82. "All falsehoods will vanish: Cf. vii. 36. The only Reality will be fully manifest even to those to whom Evil was made to seem alluring in the lower life. They will feel in their in-

[78] Indeed, We sent Our Messengers before you, of whom some We have narrated to you (of their story), while of others, We did not narrate to you. And, it was not for a Messenger to bring a miracle but by Allah's leave. Therefore, when Allah's command came, it was judged between them in truth and lost were the falsifiers.⁸³

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّن قَبْلِكَ مِّنْهُمْ مَّن قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن لَّمْ تَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ فُضِّي بِالْحَقِّ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

[79] It is Allah who made the cattle for you, some of them to ride, and some you eat.

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَنْعَامَ لِتَرْكَبُوا مِنْهَا وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

[80] And, there are for you (other) benefits in them, and so that you may achieve upon them whatever need (is there) in your breasts,⁸⁴ and, upon them and on ships you are borne.

وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوا عَلَيْهَا حَاجَةً فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

[81] And He shows you His signs, so which of the signs of Allah will you deny?

وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ فَأَيَّ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ تُنْكِرُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

most souls that they had been pursuing mere shadows, things of no real existence. This was the result of their rejecting the Light and the Grace of Allah: they got entangled in the mazes of error" (Yusuf Ali).

83. "The Signs of Allah are everywhere, and can be seen by the discerning eye at all times. But if any extraordinary Signs are demanded by cynics or Unbelievers, they will not be granted merely because they are demanded. It is Allah's Will that issues them, not merely the desire of human beings, even if he be a Messenger of Allah. But when an ex-

traordinary Sign does issue by the Command of Allah, it means that the cup of the iniquitous is full; that their case is decided, and their time of respite is past; and that Justice takes the place of Mercy, and evil is blotted out" (Yusuf Ali).

84. After mentioning, "some of them you ride," there seems to be no need to add, "so that you may achieve upon them whatever need (is there) in your breasts." Zamakhshari comes to our rescue by explaining that there can be different needs, (especially of the religious nature) such as riding upon them during *Hijrah*, or to per-

[82] Have they not journeyed in the land and seen how was the end of those before them? They were more numerous than them, and were stronger than themselves in might, and in (leaving) traces in the land;⁸⁵ yet of no avail was for them what they were earning.⁸⁶

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ قُوَّةً وَأَثَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَا أَعْنَى عَنْهُمْ مِمَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

form Hajj, or participation in *Jihad*, or, in search of knowledge, etc.

We might also keep in mind that there are animals suitable for short-term rides such as donkeys, mules, or even cows and bullocks. They are for everyone to use. On the other hand there are animals that can only be used for long journeys such as horses and camels. The earlier part is alluding to the first kind, and the latter part to the latter kind (Au.).

85. Although at an earlier point (ref. 30: 9), a similar statement was explained by most early commentators as alluding to cultivation, at this point Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi, Alusi and Ibn Kathir explain “*atharan*” as traces in the land such as, to collect together their examples, the houses they carved in the mountains, the palaces and forts they built, or tall pyramids that they erected: none of which the Quraysh could boast of.

Nonetheless, it has also been said, (by Mujahid: Ibn Jarir) that the allusion is to their footsteps in the land that they left as they went about committing crimes.

86. Yusuf Ali again, “For any generation to take inordinate pride in its own single achievements in science or skill becomes ridiculous if we consider the broad stream of history. In the first place, men will find that a great deal of what they attribute to their own merits only became possible owing to the earlier work of their predecessors. Secondly, many of their predecessors were more numerous and mightier in power than they, although the perspective of time may have reduced the apparent depth of their influence, and the monuments which they have left behind may have suffered from the destroying hand of Time. Thirdly, and most important of all, when they forgot Allah and His inexorable Law, nothing of their own handiwork profited them: they

[83] When their Messengers came to them with clear evidences, they exulted in such knowledge as they had,⁸⁷ but they were hemmed by the very thing they were mocking.

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرِحُوا بِمَا
عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ
يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

[84] Then, when they saw Our might, they said, 'We believe in Allah, the One, and We disbelieve in that we were associating with Him.'

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ
وَكُفَرْنَا بِمَا كُنَّا بِهِ مُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

[85] But their belief was not such as to benefit them when they had seen Our might: the way of Allah that has preceded among His servants, and lost then and there were the unbelievers.⁸⁸

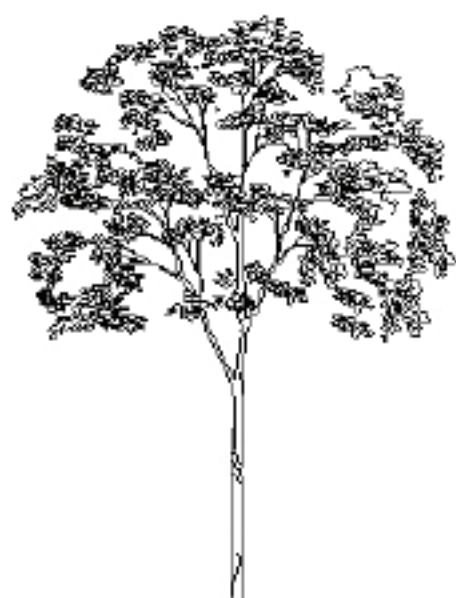
فَلَمْ يَكُ يَنْفَعُهُمْ إِيمَانُهُمْ لَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا
سُنَّتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ فِي عِبَادِهِ
وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

perished in the common ruin as all vanities must perish.”

87. Such as the philosophers, thinkers, leaders of a nation or its clergy, who exult in their knowledge and refuse to accept guidance from any other source except their own. But see to what chaos they have brought their followers in the modern world, particularly the West, where, according to women's organizations, who have arrived at conclusions after extensive surveys, twenty five percent of their women are sexually abused during their childhood by their fathers, uncles, brothers and other males around them. Many of them are rendered so impaired mentally and psychologically as to make them

incapable of any sexual enjoyment for the rest of their lives. These figures, we are told by the study, are only the tip of the iceberg. And sexual molestation, with the destruction of personalities, is only one of a dozen social ills that the individuals are subjected to living in Western societies. The prime reason for having arrived at no point of return but only promises of further chaos is the insistence of the Western thinkers that they must find solutions to their problems from within: and they exult in the knowledge that they have (Au.).

88. “Incurred loss” would have been perhaps a better translation, but which would yet remain inadequate (Au.).



Surah 41
Fussilat
 (Ha Mim Sajdah)

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
 THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Ha Mim.¹

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1. Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir present reports from several collections with regard to the context of revelation, which, although all of which are somewhat weak, gather strength when put together. (Razi places one of them against verse 14). A summary is as follows: `Utba ibn Rabi`ah was sent to the Prophet in Makkah to dissuade him from preaching. He said, "Look Muhammad. Are you better than your mother? Are you better than your father? If you say no, then, are you not belittling them by disparaging those they worshiped? Look! We do not know of anyone amongst us who did worse things to his own people. You brought differences among us, broke our unity, mocked at our gods, and disgraced us among the Arabs to the extent that they have begun to say that there is now a magician and a sooth-

sayer among the Quraysh. By God, if you need wealth, we will gather together enough to make you the richest of us, if you are looking for leadership, we shall declare you one, if you are looking for kingship, we will make you one, and, if you feel that a Jinn comes upon you then tell us, we shall get you treated." When he was over the Prophet asked him, "Are you through O Abu Waleed?" He said, "Yes." The Prophet read out the opening verses of this *Surah*. As he reached the verse, "I have warned you of a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt of `Ad and Thamud," `Utba placed his hand on the Prophet's mouth and adjuring by the right of kinship asked him to stop.

As he returned to the Quraysh, they remarked that the man was returning with a face different from what it was when he went. When asked

[2] A sending down from the Kind, the Compassionate.²

تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٢﴾

[3] A Book whose verses have been explained³ – an Arabic recitation for a people who understand.

كِتَابٌ فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣﴾

[4] Giving good tidings and warning, but most of them turn away, so they hear not.

بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا فَأَعْرَضَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٤﴾

how Muhammad had replied, he said all that he could remember was the threat, and that he had prevented him from going any further, afraid that his words might come true: true as the man was. He advised them to let the Prophet alone. If he overcame, it would be good for the Quraysh, if not, the Arabs will take care of him (Zamakhshari, Shawkani).

2. The mentioning of these two Attributes suggests that the sending down of the Qur'an was a requirement of Allah's mercy (Shabbir).

3. "Fussilat" has other connotations those of: variegating, distinguishing, exposing, explaining in detail, and separating out. Imām Razi writes: The meaning is: verses of the Qur'an explain in detail various meanings and discuss a variety of topics. They expound Allah's Attributes, His Mer-

cy, His Wisdom, the wonders in His creations such as the heavens, the earth, the stars, the alternation of the days and nights, as also the wonders in the creation of human beings and animals. Some of them carry commandments addressing the heart, others are meant for the limbs of the body (to act upon). Some contain promises while others threats. Some speak of the ranks in Paradise while others of levels in the Fire. Some carry admonitions while others help improve morals and effect spiritual cleansing. Yet some others deal with the history of past nations while some narrate stories of the ancients. In short, if you are honest about it, you will find that there is no book in men's hands that deals with so many subjects and topics and is as variegated in its contents as this one.

[5] They said, 'Our hearts are in a covering from what you invite us to; and in our ears there is a heaviness; and there is a veil between us and you; therefore, keep working, we are also working.'⁴

وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا فِي أَكِنَّةٍ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ وَفِي آذَانِنَا وَقْرٌ وَمِنْ بَيْنِنَا وَبَيْنِكَ حِجَابٌ فَاعْمَلْ إِنَّا عَامِلُونَ ﴿٥﴾

[6] Say, 'I am only a human like you,'⁵ (except that) it has been revealed to me that your God is One God. Therefore, take the straight path to Him and seek His forgiveness. And woe unto those who Associate (partners with Him).

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُوحَى إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا إِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ وَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٦﴾

[7] Those who expend not for purification⁶ and, in the Hereafter they are disbelievers.

الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٧﴾

[8] Surely, those who believed and did righteous deeds, for them is a reward unailing.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ﴿٨﴾

4. A possible meaning is: You keep working according to the demands of your religion, we shall keep working according to the demands of our religion (Razi, Qurtubi). Another meaning suggested by Mawdudi is: You can continue with your mission of trying to convert people to your cause while we shall continue to work against it.

5. That is, being a human like you, I command no special power where-with I could turn you faithful (Majid, reworded).

6. That is, Suddi said, they are not believers in charity as anything worthy to adopt (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Jarir writes: *Zakah* is the bridge (laid down) by Islam. He who crossed the bridge, saved himself, while he who failed, is destroyed. Those who denied *Zakah* after the Prophet's death said to Abu Bakr, "As for Prayers, we shall establish them. But as for *Zakah*, you ought not to seize our wealth." Abu Bakr replied, "I shall not accept one of the two that Allah (always) mentioned together (i.e., *salah* and *Zakah*).

Zamakhshari adds: The dearest thing to a man is his wealth. If he spends it in the way of Allah, then, that is a sure sign of his sincerity towards the religion.

[9] Say, 'Do you deny Him who created the earth in two days⁷ and suggest for Him equals? That is the Lord of the worlds.

قُلْ أَتُنْكُمُ لَتَكْفُرُونَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَتَعَلَّوْنَ لَهُ أَندَادًا ذَلِكَ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩﴾

[10] And He placed therein pegs from above it,⁸ placed blessings therein,⁹ and ordained therein its providences¹⁰ in four days¹¹ - alike for all who ask.¹²

وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سَوَاءً لِّلسَّائِلِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

As to the question why *Zakah* is demanded of those who have not believed in the first place, Thanwi answers that it is not a demand, but their refusal to expend in charity is mentioned as a continuous sign of refusal to believe in Islam, and a reason why they will not believe in it.

7. The allusion by the "days" cannot be to the 24-hour cycle of days and nights since, at the time of creation there was neither the day nor the night as known by us now (Shabbir).

Ibn 'Abbas was asked to reconcile this *Ayah* which speaks of the creation of the earth before that of the heavens, with those in *Al-Nazi`at* (27-30) which speak of heavens as being created first. Those verses say,

أَلَمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ السَّمَاءُ بَنَاهَا، رَفَعَ سَمَكَهَا فَسَوَّاهَا، وَأَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ ضُحَاهَا، وَالْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ دَحَاهَا
[النَّازِعَات: ٣٠-٢٧]

"What? Are you more difficult to create than the heavens that He

built? He increased its expanse and then organized (and arranged) it. Then He darkened its night and brought out its daylight. Then, after that, He readied its earth."

Ibn 'Abbas replied, "Allah created the earth first – in two days. The creation of the heavens followed. Thereafter He turned to the heavens and readied them in two more days. Thereafter He readied the earth, i.e., brought out its water and pasture. He also created the mountains, the inanimate objects, reefs and all else in two other days. Thus, the earth, and all that it contains was created in four days while the heaven was created in two other days.

The report is in Bukhari (Ib Kathir). But it must be clearly noted as a statement of Ibn 'Abbas.

8. (Lit., from above it), meaning, rising high above the surface of the earth (Shawkani).

[11] Then He turned¹³ to the heaven, it was then smoke,¹⁴ and said to it and to the earth, "Come¹⁵ willingly, or unwillingly."¹⁶ They said, "We come willingly."

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ ﴿١١﴾

9. That is, made it capable of yielding plants (Ibn Kathir); water and minerals (Qurtubi).

10. At this point Ibn Jarir quotes the *hadith* that we have quoted elsewhere which, (found in Muslim's collection) tells us that Allah created the dust on Saturday, mountains on Sunday, trees on Monday, makruhat on Tuesday, Nur (according to another version, Nun) on Wednesday, the beasts on Thursday and Adam on Friday, in the last hours of the day between late evening hours before nightfall. Ibn Kathir adds that Bukhari found defect in the above report, stating in his *Al-Tarikh* that it is more correctly a narrative of Ka'b al-Ahbar. See note 81 of *Surah 7* for discussions.

11. Some grammarians have thought that the creation and placement of providence took four days, i.e., the first two days are included in the four of later mention. They quote examples of such usage in Arabic language (Tabari, Zamakhshari, Shawkani).

12. This is how Razi and Shawkani understand "*istawa*" at this point.

13. That is, enough providence for all who will ever inhabit the earth (Tabari, Ibn Kathir).

14. "I.e., a gas – evidently hydrogen gas, which physicists regard as the primal element from which all material particles of the universe have evolved and still evolve" (Asad).

15. "Come": That is, Allah said to the heavens: "Bring out your suns, moons and stars," and to the earth, "Split up to produce the springs and bring out your fruits and pasture," and they responded (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani). Other modifications to the two – heaven and earth - were also effected (Thanwi).

16. That is, you have no choice. You will have to do as told. But the question is, are you submitted? They answered, yes we are, and are pleased to do as ordered (Thanwi).

[12] Then He determined them as seven heavens in two days¹⁷ and revealed in every heaven its affair.¹⁸ And He adorned the earthly heaven with lamps and a means of protection. Such is the ordaining of the Mighty, the Knowing.'

فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَىٰ فِي كُلِّ سَّمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَحِفْظًا ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] But if they turn away, then say, 'I have warned you of a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt of `Ad and Thamud.

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَقُلْ أَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صَاعِقَةً مِثْلَ صَاعِقَةِ عَادٍ وَثَمُودَ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] When there came to them the Messengers from before them and from behind them (saying), 'Worship not but Allah,' they said, 'Had our Lord willed, He would have surely sent down angels. We are indeed disbelievers in what you have been sent with.'

إِذْ جَاءَتْهُمْ الرُّسُلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ قَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّنَا لَأَنْزَلَ مَلَائِكَةً فَإِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] Then, as for `Ad, they waxed proud in the earth without right and said, 'Who is stronger than we in might?' Had they not seen that Allah who created them was stronger than they in might? But they kept disputing with Our signs.

فَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَقَالُوا مَنْ أَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُمْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

17. The use of the words "thumma" or "fa" (then) need not be an indication of order or sequence. There are several Qur'anic instances to demonstrate that these articles lend other meanings (Shabbir).

A hasty totaling gives us the figure of 8 days for the creation of the heaven and earth. But, there has been overlapping. That is, while some developments were taking place in the earth, they were taking place in the heavens

also. There are examples of this kind of phrasing in Arabic.

18. Mujahid and Suddi have thought that the allusion is to the placement of suns, moons, stars, and creations in every firmament (Ibn Jarir).

Shabbir quotes an opinion of Shah `Abdul Qadir which is much advanced of his times considering the fact that just a few decades ago scientists were still discussing whether there is any possibility of life in oth-

[16] So We sent upon them a furious wind¹⁹ through ominous days²⁰ to make them taste the humiliating torment in the life of this world. And surely, the torment of the Hereafter is more humiliating; and they will not be helped.

فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي أَيَّامٍ نَحْسَاتٍ لِّنَذِيقَهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَحْزَىٰ وَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] As for Thamud, We guided them but they preferred blindness to guidance. So there seized them torment of the debasing thunder-bolt because of what they were earning.

وَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَمَىٰ عَلَى الْهُدَىٰ فَأَخَذَتْهُمْ صَاعِقَةُ الْعَذَابِ الَّتِي لَّهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] And We delivered those who had believed and were ever fearful (of Allah).

وَنَجَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

er parts of the universe, “Our Lord alone knows what kind of creations inhabit other parts of the universe, in what manner, and following what laws. In this our this little planet itself there are thousands of (various kinds of life-)systems. Can the immensely large other-worlds be empty?”

19. Furious poisonous winds, is one opinion of the *Salaf*. Another opinion is that the allusion is to extremely cold, high sounding winds (Ibn Jarir). But to understand it as furious, poisonous, cold winds will not be going out of the way (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

20. This was the opinion of Mujahid, Qatadah and Suddi, and which is the opinion of Tabari, although he quotes Ibn `Abbas that the allusion is to “continuous” days (Tabari).

In Majid’s words: The days were “inauspicious for them on account of the Divine visitation;” but auspicious for the believers (Ibn Qayyim).

Alusi removes a superstition of pagan origin and Thanwi reproduces it in view of its popular currency among some Muslims: Citing this *Ayah* as evidence, some people believe that some days are ominous while others are blessed. But this *Ayah* cannot be used in evidence because the days, as mentioned elsewhere, cover all the days of the week, and beyond. The Qur’an said elsewhere, without mentioning the ominousness:

وَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَأُهْلِكُوا بِرِيحٍ صَرْصَرٍ عَاتِيَةٍ، سَخَّرَهَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ وَثَمَانِيَةَ أَيَّامٍ حُسُومًا فَتَرَى الْقَوْمَ فِيهَا صَرْعَىٰ كَأَنَّهُمْ أُعِجَزُوا تُخَلِّجُهُمْ غَاوِيَةٌ

[19] The day enemies of Allah will be gathered together at the Fire as they are pushed and dragged.²¹

وَيَوْمَ يُخْشَرُ أَعْدَاءُ اللَّهِ إِلَى النَّارِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] At length, when they have arrived at it, their hearing, their sights and their skins²² will testify against them concerning what they were doing.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا مَا جَاءُوهَا شَهِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَأَبْصَارُهُمْ وَجُلُودُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

“And, as for `Ad, they were destroyed by a fierce howling wind, which Allah caused to blow against them for seven nights and eight days continuously, so that you could have seen the people therein lying prostrate, as though they were trunks of palm trees fallen down” (69: 6-7)].

21. The words “they are pushed and dragged” have Baghawi’s interpretation behind them.

Suddi and Qatadah however thought that it meant to say that the first will be held until the last arrive (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

The textual word has the sense of large numbers being involved (Zamakhshari). Further, the missing statement is, “they will be brought at the Fire, to be questioned for their deeds” (Alusi).

22. See note 51 of Surah Ya-Sin (no. 36) for commentary.

Ibn Kathir quotes a *hadith* from Ibn Abi Hatim which is also found in

Ibn Majah which has been declared as not wholly untrustworthy by Haythami. It says,

عَنْ جَابِرٍ قَالَ: لَمَّا رَجَعْتُ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مُهَاجِرَةَ الْبَحْرِ، قَالَ: أَلَا تُحَدِّثُونِي بِأَعَاجِيبِ مَا رَأَيْتُمْ بَارِضِ الْحَبَشَةِ؟ قَالَ فِتْنَةٌ مِنْهُمْ: بَلَى. بَارَسُولَ اللَّهِ! بَيْنَا نَحْنُ جُلُوسٌ، مَرَّتْ بِنَا عَجُوزٌ مِنْ عَجَائِزِ رَهَابِنَهُمْ تَحْمِلُ عَلَى رَأْسِهَا قِلَّةً مِنْ مَاءٍ. فَمَرَّتْ بِفَتَى مِنْهُمْ. فَجَعَلَ أَحَدَى يَدَيْهِ بَيْنَ كَتِفَيْهَا، ثُمَّ دَفَعَهَا. فَحَرَّتْ عَلَى رُكْبَتَيْهَا. فَانْكَسَرَتْ قُلَّتُهَا. فَلَمَّا ارْتَفَعَتْ، انْتَفَتَتْ إِلَيْهِ فَقَالَتْ: سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُ، يَا غَدْرُ! إِذَا وَضَعَ اللَّهُ الْكُرْسِيُّ، وَجَمَعَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ. وَتَكَلَّمَتِ الْأَيْدِي وَالْأَرْجُلُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ. فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُ كَيْفَ أَمْرِي وَأَمْرُكَ، عِنْدَهُ غَدًا.

قَالَ: يَقُولُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ (صَدَقَتْ: صَدَقَتْ. كَيْفَ يُقَدِّسُ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً لَا يُؤْخَذُ لِضَعْفِهِمْ مِنْ

شَدِيدِهِمْ؟ (في الزوائد: إسناده حسن.
وسعيد بن سويد مختلف فيه).

Jabir reports: After I had returned to the Prophet via the sea he asked (during one of those sessions), “Will you not tell us about the strangest of things you saw in the Abyssinian lands?” One of the young men spoke out, “Sure, Messenger of Allah. Once as we were sitting around when one of their old ascetic woman passed by carrying on her head a pot filled with water. She passed by one of their young men. He placed one of his hands between her shoulders and gave her a push. She fell upon her knees and her pot broke. When she rose up, she turned to him and said, ‘You will soon know, you treacherous man, when Allah will place the *Kursiyy*, gather together the firsts and the lasts, and when hands and legs will speak out about what they used to do. Then you will know what will be the affair between me and you – with Allah, tomorrow.’” The Prophet (*saws*) remarked, “She spoke the truth; spoke the truth. How will Allah cleanse a people whose weak are not given their rights by the strong.”

Another narrative goes as follows:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَلْ تَرَى رَبَّنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ؟ قَالَ: "هَلْ تُضَارُونَ فِي رُؤْيَةِ الشَّمْسِ فِي الظَّهِيرَةِ، لَيْسَتْ فِي سَحَابَةٍ؟" قَالُوا: لَا. قَالَ: "فَهَلْ تُضَارُونَ فِي رُؤْيَةِ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ، لَيْسَ فِي سَحَابَةٍ؟" قَالُوا: لَا. قَالَ: "فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَا تُضَارُونَ فِي رُؤْيَةِ رَبِّكُمْ إِلَّا كَمَا تُضَارُونَ فِي رُؤْيَةِ أَحَدِهِمَا. قَالَ: فَيَلْقَى الْعَبْدَ فَيَقُولُ: أَيُّ فُلٍ أَلَمْ أُكْرِمَكَ، وَأُسَوِّدَكَ، وَأَزْوَجَكَ، وَأَسَخَّرَ لَكَ الْخَيْلَ وَالْإِبِلَ، وَأَذْرَكَ تَرَأْسُ وَتَرْبَعُ؟ فَيَقُولُ: بَلَى. قَالَ فَيَقُولُ: أَفَظَنَنْتَ أَنَّكَ مُلَاقِي؟ فَيَقُولُ: لَا. فَيَقُولُ: فَإِنِّي أَنُصَاكَ كَمَا نَسِيتَنِي. ثُمَّ يَلْقَى الثَّانِي فَيَقُولُ: أَيُّ فُلٍ أَلَمْ أُكْرِمَكَ، وَأُسَوِّدَكَ، وَأَزْوَجَكَ، وَأَسَخَّرَ لَكَ الْخَيْلَ وَالْإِبِلَ، وَأَذْرَكَ تَرَأْسُ وَتَرْبَعُ؟ فَيَقُولُ: بَلَى. قَالَ فَيَقُولُ: أَفَظَنَنْتَ أَنَّكَ مُلَاقِي؟ فَيَقُولُ: لَا. فَيَقُولُ: فَإِنِّي أَنُصَاكَ كَمَا نَسِيتَنِي. ثُمَّ يَلْقَى الثَّالِثَ فَيَقُولُ لَهُ مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ. فَيَقُولُ: يَا رَبِّ آمَنْتُ بِكَ وَبِكِتَابِكَ وَبِرُسُلِكَ وَصَلَّيْتُ وَصُمْتُ وَتَصَدَّقْتُ. وَيُثْنِي بِخَيْرِ مَا اسْتَطَاعَ. فَيَقُولُ: هَهُنَا إِذَا. قَالَ: ثُمَّ يُقَالُ لَهُ: الْآنَ نَبْعَثُ شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكَ.

يَقَالُ لَهُ: الْآنَ تَبْعْتُ شَاهِدَنَا عَلَيْكَ.
وَيَتَفَكَّرُ فِي نَفْسِهِ: مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْهَدُ
عَلَيَّ؟ فَيُخْتَمُ عَلَىٰ فِيهِ. وَيُقَالُ لِفَخْذِهِ
وَلَحْمِهِ وَعَظَامِهِ: انْطِقِي. فَتَنْطِقُ فَخِذُهُ
وَلَحْمُهُ وَعَظَامُهُ بِعَمَلِهِ. وَذَلِكَ لِيُعَذِّرَ مِنْ
نَفْسِهِ. وَذَلِكَ الْمُنَافِقُ. وَذَلِكَ الَّذِي
يَسْخَطُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ. (مسلم)

On the authority of Abu Hurayrah, they (the Companions) asked, "Messenger of Allah, shall we see our Lord on the Day of Judgment?" He replied, "Do you doubt your seeing of the Sun at noon on a cloudless day?" They said, "No." He asked, "Do you doubt your seeing of the moon on a full-moon lit cloudless night?" They said, "No." He said, "By Him in whose hand is my life, you will not doubt seeing your Lord except as much you doubt seeing one of the two (sun or the moon)." Then he added, "Then a man will be cast and He will ask, 'O so and so. Did I not honor you, gave you leadership, gave you a spouse, subjugated the horses and camels to you and let you be the head and take quarter of the booty? He will say, 'Sure, my Lord.' He will ask, Did you ever think that you are going to meet Me? He will say, 'No.'

He will say, 'So I shall forget you today as you had forgotten Me.' Then a second one will be cast and He will ask, 'O so and so. Did I not honor you, gave you leadership, gave you a spouse, subjugated the horses and camels to you and let you be the head and take quarter of the booty?' He will say, 'Sure, my Lord.' He will ask, Did you ever think that you are going to meet Me?' He will say, 'No.' He will say, 'So I shall forget you today as you had forgotten Me.' Then a third will be cast and he will be told the same things. He will reply, 'My Lord. I believed in You, in Your Book, Prayed, fasted and spent in charity.' He will speak of the good things (he did) to the possible extent. He (Allah) will say, 'Here too?' Then it will be said to him, 'Now We shall raise testifiers against you' He will start to think, 'Who can testify against me?' Then his mouth will be sealed and it will be said to his thigh, flesh and bones, 'Speak out.' His thigh, flesh and bones will speak of his deeds. That, in order that he is left with no excuse left for himself. That will be the hypocrite. That is the one Allah will be angry with."

[21] They will say to their skins, 'Why did you testify against us?' They will reply, 'That Allah made us speak who makes everything speak. He it is who created you at first, and to Him you are returned.

وَقَالُوا لِلْجُلُودِ هِمَّ لَمْ شَهِدْتُمْ عَلَيْنَا قَالُوا
أَنْطَقَنَا اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْطَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ
خَلَقَكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

[22] And, you would not conceal (from us) lest your hearing, your sights or your skins testify against you.²³ But rather, you assumed that Allah will not know much of what you were doing.

وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَتِرُونَ أَنْ يَشْهَدَ عَلَيْكُمْ
سَمْعُكُمْ وَلَا أَبْصَارُكُمْ وَلَا جُلُودُكُمْ وَلَكِنْ
ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَعْلَمُ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ
﴿٢٢﴾

[23] But that assumption of yours which you assumed concerning your Lord²⁴ brought you to destruction,²⁵ and now you have become of those (who are) utterly lost.'

وَذَلِكُمْ ظَنُّكُمُ الَّذِي ظَنَنْتُمْ بِرَبِّكُمْ
أَزَدَاكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

The one-fourth of the booty of above mention, used to be the share of the chieftain in pre-Islamic wars.

الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَى
رَاجِعُونَ

23. It could mean, "You took care to conceal your sins from others of your kind, but you did not from your own body limbs ruling it out altogether that one day they could betray you" (Ibn Jarir).

"Those who hoped that they will meet their Lord and that to Him they will return."

Or (69: 20):

إِنِّي ظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي مُلَاقٍ حِسَابِيهِ

24. Hasan and Qatadah have said: Of assumptions concerning our Lord, there are two kinds: good assumptions, and evil assumptions. A believer holds good assumptions of his Lord and so good deeds flow out of him, while the unbeliever holds evil assumptions and, consequently, evil deeds flow out of him. The example of the first is, as in the Qur'an (2: 46):

"I was hopeful that I shall encounter my reckoning."

These are the assumptions of the believers. As for the assumptions of the unbelievers, an example is the verse under consideration: "But that assumption of yours which you assumed concerning your Lord brought you to destruction."

Accordingly, adds Ibn Jarir, Ma`mar has reported that a man will be ordered sent to the Fire. He will turn around and say, "My Lord! This is not what I had assumed of You." He will ask, "So what was your assumption?" He will reply, "That You will forgive me and not punish me." Allah will say, "I am with your assumption about Me."

Razi also presents the above in brief.

Accordingly, we have a *hadith-qudsi* which (as found in Ahmad and declared as of *Sahih* narrators) says,

عن أنس أنه حدث أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "قال الله تعالى: أنا عند ظن عبدي بي وأنا معه إذا دعاني." (رواه أبو يعلى ورجاله رجال الصحيح: الهيثمي).

Allah says, "I am with the assumption of My slave about Me, and I am with him when he calls Me."

The earlier report of Ma`mar – as quoted by Ibn Jarir – could not be traced in *hadith* books. However, there are several *ahadith* of this nature in Ahmad, Abu Ya`la, and the collection of `Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak. One of them says,

أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال يخرج من النار أربعة يعرضون على الله عز وجل فيأمر بهم إلى النار فيلتفت أحدهم فيقول أي رب قد كنت أرجو إن

أخرجتني منها أن لا تعيدني فيقول فلا نعيدك فيها. (أحمد)

Four persons will be brought out of the Fire and presented to Allah the Exalted (according to another narrator, two). He will order them thrown into the Fire. One of them will turn around and say, "My Lord, I was hoping that when You had brought me out of the Fire, you will not return me to it." He will be told, "We shall not return you to it."

Another report, as in `Abdullah ibn Mubarak's collection, as also in Ahmad says,

(عن) عمرو بن مالك الجنبي أن فضالة بن عبيد وعبادة بن الصامت حدثاه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال إذا كان يوم القيامة فرغ الله من قضاء الخلق فيبقى رجلان يؤمر بهما إلى النار فيلتفت أحدهما فيقول الجبار ردوه فيرد فيقال له لم التفت قال كنت أرجو أن تدخلني الجنة قال فيؤمر به إلى الجنة قال فيقول هذا عطاء ربي حتى إني لو أطعمت أهل الجنة ما نقص ذلك مما عندي شيئا فكان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا ذكره يرى السرور في وجهه (مسند عبد الله ابن المبارك)

As Allah will terminate judging the people on the Day of Judgment, two men will be left about

whom He will order that they be sent to the Fire. One of them will look back. Allah the Subduer will say, "Bring him back." So he will be brought back. He will be asked, "Why were you glancing backward?" He will reply, "I was hoping that You will admit me into Paradise." He will be ordered sent to Paradise. The man will say, "This is my Lord's granting. If I were to feed all the inhabitants of Paradise, it will not cause any decrease in what I have." (That is, he will be given such a vast Paradise: Au.).

Whenever the Prophet (*saws*) mentioned this (adds the narrator), his face brightened up.

Haythami has commented that Ahmad's narrators are all trustworthy except that some of them suffer some kind of weakness (Au.).

Consequently, noting the *hadith* of Ahmad above viz., "I am with the assumption of My slave.." Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and Shawkani add the following report from Ahmad,

عن جابر قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لا يموتن أحدكم إلا وهو يحسن بالله الظن فإن قوما قد أرداهم سوء ظنهم بالله عز وجل وذلكم ظنكم

الذي ظننتم بربكم أرداكم فأصبحتم من الخاسرين.

"Let not any of you die but he fastens good hope on Allah. A people's evil hope of Allah destroyed them: 'But that assumption of yours which you assumed concerning your Lord brought you to destruction.'"

The above report, in part or full, is found in Muslim, Abu Da'ud, Ibn Hibban and others (Shawkani).

Some reports add that the Prophet said these words three days before his death (Au.).

On the same topic, Hasan said the following: Some people's wishful thinking led them to inactivity until they left the world without a good deed in their account. One of them says, "I fasten good hope on my Lord." But that is a lie. If he had good hope he would have attempted good deeds (Qurtubi).

25. `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud reports the following as a context of revelation of this verse:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ابن مسعود) رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ اجْتَمَعَ عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ قُرَشِيَّانِ وَتَقْفِيٌّ أَوْ تَقْفِيَّانِ وَقُرَشِيٌّ كَثِيرَةٌ شَحْمٌ بَطُونُهُمْ قَلِيلَةٌ فَقَهُ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَقَالَ أَحَدُهُمْ أَتُرَوْنَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ

[24] Now, if they observe patience, then (it is all the same), the Fire is their home; but if they seek a return,²⁶ then, they are not going to be of those returned.

فَإِنْ يَصْبِرُوا فَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَهُمْ وَإِنْ يَسْتَعْتِبُوا فَمَا هُمْ مِنَ الْمُعْتَبِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

يَسْمَعُ مَا تَقُولُ قَالَ الْآخَرُ يَسْمَعُ إِنْ
جَهَرْنَا وَلَا يَسْمَعُ إِنْ أَخْفَيْنَا وَقَالَ الْآخَرُ
إِنْ كَانَ يَسْمَعُ إِذَا جَهَرْنَا فَإِنَّهُ يَسْمَعُ إِذَا
أَخْفَيْنَا فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَسْتَرُونَ أَنْ يَشْهَدَ عَلَيْكُمْ سَمْعُكُمْ وَلَا
أَبْصَارُكُمْ وَلَا جُلُودُكُمْ الْآيَةُ (البخاري)

“Two Qurayshis and a Thaqafi, or maybe two Thaqafis and a Qurayshi – their bellies laden with fat but their hearts empty of wisdom – gathered together at the Holy House. (According to other reports, “talking together much of which I could not follow”). One of them said, “Do you think Allah hears what we speak?” The other said, “He hears if we speak aloud but not when we speak in low tones.” At that another said, “If he hears when we speak aloud, He will hear when

we speak in whispers.” So Allah revealed this verse, “And, you would not conceal (from us) lest ...” (Ibn Jarir, Imām Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi, Shawkani).

The report is the *Sahihayn* and Tirmidhi (Ibn Kathir).

The above is a shorter version. Other versions in Ahmad and others add that Ibn Mas`ud had concealed himself behind the Ka`ba covering (perhaps at night) and that Allah (swt) revealed this verse when he reported the incident to the Prophet.

26. This is how Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir understand the difficult word “yesta`tabu,” which has been explained differently also, but close in meaning such as, plea to be returned to the pleasantries they were in, or to a happier relationship with their Lord, etc. (Au.).

[25] And We assigned to them close companions who decked out fair to them what was before them²⁷ and what was behind them,²⁸ and (thus) came true the Word against them (being) among the people that passed away before them of the Jinn and mankind.²⁹ They were indeed of the losers

وَقَيَّضْنَا لَهُمْ قُرَنَاءَ فَزَيَّنُوا لَهُمْ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَحَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] And said those who disbelieved, 'Do not listen to this Qur'ān, but make noise thereat, haply that you will overcome.'³⁰

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَسْمَعُوا لِهَذَا الْقُرْآنِ وَالْغَوْا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] We shall surely make the unbelievers taste a severe chastisement, and We shall surely requite them for the worst of what they were doing.

فَلَنُذِيقَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَشْوَأَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

[28] That is the requital of the enemies of Allah: the Fire. For them is therein, the everlasting abode, a (fit) requital for that they were disputing with Our signs.

ذَٰلِكَ جَزَاءُ أَعْدَاءِ اللَّهِ النَّارُ هُمْ فِيهَا دَارُ الْخُلْدِ جَزَاءُ بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يِجْحَدُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

27. That is, they were led to believe that there was nothing before them of such things as: Hereafter, Reckoning, Paradise or Fire (Alusi).

"And he who turns away from the remembrance of Allah, We appoint for him a devil so that he is his close companion" (Ibn Kathir).

28. That is, what was behind them of the material world, coaxing them on to plan and lead a lecherous life during the days to come.

29. That is, the word of chastisement came true against them, as it came true against those of the Jinn and mankind who had rebelled earlier (Tabari).

(The Qur'ān gives the answer to the question why Allah had destined evil companions for the unbelievers: Au.), it says (43: 36),

30. Mujahid reports through his chain that the Makkan pagans used to make noise, whistle, and clap when the Qur'ān was recited by the Prophet in the Haram precincts so that it might not be heard and may

وَمَنْ يَعِشْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ نُقِيضْ لَهُ شَيْطَانًا فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ

[29] And those who disbelieved will say, 'Our Lord! Show us both the Jinn and men who misled us.³¹ We shall place them under our feet so that they be of the lowest.'³²

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا رَبَّنَا أَرِنَا الَّذِينَ
مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ نَجْعَلُهُمَا تَحْتَ
أَقْدَامِنَا لِيَكُونَا مِنَ الْأَسْفَلِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] Surely, those who said, 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then remained steadfast,³³ angels descend on them (saying),³⁴ 'Do not fear, nor grieve.³⁵ But receive good tidings of the Paradise that you were being promised.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا
تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا
تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ
﴿٣٠﴾

[31] We are your protector-friends in the life of this world and in the world to come; for you therein all that your souls desire, and for you therein all that you ask for.

نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَائُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ
وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِي أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ
فِيهَا مَا تَدْعُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

[32] As hospitality from One All-forgiving, All-compassionate.'

ثَرًّا مِّنْ غَفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

not influence any listener (Tabari, Ibn Kathir).

In modern context, "This is an allusion to the efforts aimed at discrediting the Qur'an by describing it as 'invented' by Muhammad for his own – personal and political – ends, as a series of 'misunderstood quotations' from earlier scriptures, as the result of 'hallucinations,' and so forth: all of which implies that it challenges their self-complacent, materialistic outlook on life and ought, therefore, to be combated" (Au.).

31. Although it is reported of 'Ali that the allusion is to the first unbeliever of the Jinn, Iblis, and the first murderer from among the human-

kind, Qabil, (as in Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir), the prevalent opinion has been that the allusion is general, applicable to all those of the Jinn and men who misled others to Hellfire (Au.).

32. That is, we shall place them a level below our level in the fire where the punishment is hardest (Ibn Jarir).

33. That is, as Abu Bakr al-Siddique explained, they never associated with Allah and remained in that state, disinclined towards anyone or anything, until they died (Tabari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani). Mujahid, 'Ikrimah, Suddi and others followed suite in his opinion. However, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, Ibn

`Abbas and others thought that "is-tiqamah" is to obey Allah in matters declared obligatory – and not furtively evading, (added `Umar), like a fox (Tabari, Qurtubi Ibn Kathir)

The Prophet was asked by a Thaqaifi:

عَنْ سُفْيَانَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ التَّخَفِيِّ قَالَ:
"قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، حَدِّثْنِي بِأَمْرٍ أَعْتَصِمُ
بِهِ. قَالَ: قُلْ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقِم. قَالَ:
قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، مَا أَخَوْفُ مَا تَخَافُ
عَلَيَّ؟ فَأَخَذَ بِلِسَانِ نَفْسِهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ: هَذَا."
قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى: هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ
صَحِيحٌ.

"Messenger of Allah, tell me something that I could hold fast unto." He said, "Say my Lord is Allah and then remain steadfast." He asked, "Messenger of Allah. What could be the worst thing about me that you could fear?" In reply he held his own tongue in hand and said, "This." The report is also in Muslim (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

34. That is, at the time of death: Mujahid and Suddi. But Ibn `Abbas thought that this will happen in the Hereafter (Tabari).

Actually, writes Imām Razi, this could happen three times: at the time of death, in the graves, and at

the time of Resurrection. This was the opinion of Zayd b. Aslam (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). At all events, the long *hadith* that describes the events at the time of death, both of a believer as well as a non-believer, has the following words of the angels addressing the dying believer:

أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ اخْرُجِي إِلَى رَوْحِ
رَبِّحَانٍ وَرَبِّ غَيْرِ غَضَبَانٍ (رواه الطبراني
في الكبير ورجاله ثقات: الهيثمي).

"O peaceful soul, come out to mercy and providence, and a Lord who is not angry" (Ibn Kathir).

The report is in Tabarani's "*Al-Kabir*" which Haythami declared as one carrying trustworthy chain of narrators (Au.).

35. That is, fear not the future, and grieve not the past: Mujahid and Suddi (Tabari).

Fear and grief are the two causes of depression which strike a quarter of mankind today. Fear is always of something wrong that might happen in the future, while grief is over unpleasant events that have been in the past. Further, fear of the future is always greater than grief over mishaps of the past. This could explain why fear always happens to be of first mention in the Qur'an (Au.).

[33] And who is better than he in speech, who invited to Allah, did righteous deeds and said, 'Indeed I am of the believers.'³⁶

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] Not equal are the good and the evil. Repel (therefore) with that which is better, and thereupon, he between whom and you is enmity, is, as if a warm friend.

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

[35] An none is granted this but those who exercise patience, and none is granted this but one of great fortune.

وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا أُولُو حُظٍّ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] And when Satan provokes you with a provocation, seek Allah's refuge. Surely, He is the All-hearing, the All-knowing.

وَإِذَا يَزَعَّغْتُكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَرْتَعْ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٦﴾

[37] And among His signs are the night and the day, the sun and the moon. Do not prostrate yourselves to the sun³⁷ nor to the moon,³⁸ but prostrate yourselves to Allah who created them,³⁹ if it is Him you (wish to) worship.⁴⁰

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ لَا تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] But if they wax proud, then those that are near your Lord glorify Him by night and day, and grow not weary.

فَإِنْ اسْتَكْبَرُوا فَالَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ يُسَبِّحُونَ لَهُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْأَمُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

36. Although some scholars have interpreted that the allusion is to the "Prayer-caller" (*muadhdhin*), the application is general, applicable to everyone who invited to good and himself led a righteous life (Ibn Kathir).

37. Majid comments: "(The sun has been) one of the most popular of all deities. 'Rivaling in power and glory, the all-encompassing Heaven, the

Sun moves eminent among the deities of nature .. It is no exaggeration to say with Sir William James, that one great fountain of all idolatry in the four quarters of the globe was the veneration paid by men to the sun.' (PC.II, p.286) 'To men who could look on the sky, earth and sea as animated intelligent beings, the Sun, the giver of light and life to the world, rising and crossing the sky and de-

scending at night in the under-world whence he arose, has a clearest divine personality... As far back as ancient history reaches, the Sun-god appears .. (as a deity among the people: Au.)' - (Taylor, opp.cit. p.360). According to a modern writer, if one were to merely list the people who have been votaries of the Sun, the list would include almost all nations, old and new, from Akkadians and Aztecs to Lapps and Zulus. 'As one of the most conspicuous and powerful objects in the physical world the sun has naturally attracted the attention and obtained the homage of many races, who have personified and worshiped it as a god... Whatever the reasons maybe a solar religion appears to flourish best among nations which have attained to a certain degree of civilization, such as the ancient Egyptians and the Indians of Mexico and Peru at the time they were discovered by the Spaniards.' (FWN pp. 441-442). Proceeding further, Frazer gives accurate and minute details of Sun-worship in India (both ancient and modern), Persia, Greece, Rome, Egypt, Babylon, Arabia, Japan, and other countries."

This is the reason why, Shafi' points out at *Ayah* 78 of *Surah* 19, that the Prayer timings in Islam have all been disassociated with the hours when

the sun was or is worshiped. *Fajr* Prayers are held before sunrise; *Zuhr* only after it has begun to decline; '*Asr* when it begins to lose its shine; *Maghrib* when it has set and '*Isha* only when its light has completely disappeared.

38. Majid again, "Nearly every place in early times would have a sun god or a moon god or both, and in the political development of the country the moon, god of the conquering city, displaced or absorbed the moon god of the conquered.' (Rogers, Religion of Babylonia, pp. 78, 79) 'Moon worship naturally ranking below Sun-worship in importance ranges through nearly the same district of culture. There are remarkable cases in which the Moon is recognized as a great deity by tribes who take less account, or none at all, of the Sun.' (PC. II p.299) 'The Moon-god or goddess marks the festival of rude forest tribes who dance by the light of the moon. It is not uncommon for the Moon to rank above the Sun, as perhaps for astronomical reasons was the case in ancient Babylonia; but more usually the Sun stands first, as seems to us more natural; and commonly Sun and Moon are locked on as a pair, brother and sister, or husband and wife.' (Taylor, op. cited p. 361)."

[39] And among His signs is that you see the earth withered. Then, when We send down water upon it, it quivers and swells. Surely, He who quickens it will quicken the dead, surely, He has power over all things.⁴¹

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنَّكَ تَرَى الْأَرْضَ خَاشِعَةً
فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ إِنَّ
الَّذِي أَحْيَاهَا لَمُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى إِنَّهُ عَلَى
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

39. Ibn Khuwayzmandad has said that this *Ayah* is the basis for the *Salah al-Kusuf* as instituted by the Prophet (Qurtubi).

40. The pagans who paid tributes to these celestial objects contended that it is not these very objects that they worshiped, but rather, they aimed at the One Supreme God through them. They are told here that there is no need to use them as intermediaries, you could directly worship Allah, if it is Him you wish to serve. (Au.).

Sayyid comments: "These signs are open to sights that eyes cannot miss to see: whether of the educated as well as the uneducated. They touch upon the hearts of men directly, even if a man is quite ignorant of the (cosmological) knowledge concerning them. There is a deep relationship between them and the humans which is deeper than that it should depend on a scientific knowledge of them. Between man and them, there exists a profound association: in their respective emergence, in their natures, and in their make-up. He is of

them and they are of him. His make-up is their make-up and their make-up is his make-up. His material of creation is their material of creation. His laws are their laws. His Lord is their Lord. Accordingly, he embraces the knowledge of their reality with a deep feeling of harmony. It is for this reason that the Qur'an simply draws attention to them, awakens his heedlessness towards them .. to reinvigorate the old relationship with these forgotten companions of his, and to make him recall the old affiliations deeply rooted in his being."

41. "Although the allusion to the reviving earth often occurs in the Qur'an as a parable of man's ultimate resurrection, in the present context (and in tune with the entire passage comprising verses 33-39) it appears to be an illustration of God's power to bestow spiritual life upon hearts that have hitherto remained closed to the truth of His existence and omnipotence. Hence it implies a call to the believer never to abandon the hope that 'those who deny the truth'

[40] Verily, those who seek deviation⁴² in Our verses, they are not hidden from Us.⁴³ Is he then who will be cast into the Fire (better) or he who will come secure on the Day of Standing? Do as you like. Surely, He is Seeing of all that you do

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُلْجِدُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا لَا يَخْفَوْنَ
عَلَيْنَا أَفَمَنْ يُلْقَى فِي النَّارِ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ
يَأْتِي آمِنًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ اعْمَلُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ إِنَّهُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

[41] Surely, those who denied the Admonition after it had come to them .. although it is a Mighty Book.⁴⁴.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُ
لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٤١﴾

may one day grasp the truth of the Qur'ānic message" (Asad).

Yusuf Ali is on the same line of thought: "Evil makes of the souls of men what drought makes of land: it kills life, beauty, and fruitfulness. Allah's Word in the spiritual world has the same wonderful effect as rain has on barren land: it gives life, beauty, and fruitfulness. And the effect of Allah's Word is also seen through the lives of men who repel evil with what is better. They also convert dead souls (which harbour spite and hatred) into living souls, which come into the main current of spiritual life, and help in carrying out Allah's beneficent Purpose."

42. "*Lahada*" is for the act of turning to a side while digging a hole, hence the derived meaning of turning away from the truth, in this instance, from the Qur'ān (Zamakhshari, Razi,

Qurtubi). To distort, deny, corrupt the meaning, etc., are other connotations of the original "yulhidun" without one receiving preference over another, but rather, demanding a combination of all (Ibn Jarir).

In Yusuf Ali's words, "Pervert the Truth in Our Signs; either by corrupting the scriptures or turning them to false and selfish uses; or by neglecting the Signs of Allah in nature around them, or silencing His voice in their own conscience. Everything is known to Allah. Why not work for true salvation at the final Judgment?"

43. The implied threat is, in time such criminals will be taken care of. They will not escape the consequences of their crimes.

44. That is, "those who reject the Qur'ān, do so for their own want of understanding and not on account

[42] No falsehood can approach it from before it or from behind it.⁴⁵ a sending down by One full of wisdom, worthy of Praise.

لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ ﴿٤٢﴾

[43] Nothing will be said to you but what was said to Messengers before you. Surely, your Lord is the Master of Forgiveness, and the Master of a painful chastisement.⁴⁶

مَا يُقَالُ لَكَ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ قِيلَ لِلرُّسُلِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ وَذُو عِقَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٤٣﴾

[44] And, had We made it a non-Arabic recitation,⁴⁷ they would have surely said, 'Why have its verses not explained clearly?'⁴⁸ Is it (in) non-Arabic (tongue)⁴⁹ while (the Messenger is) an Arab?' Say, 'It is a guide and a cure⁵⁰ unto the believers. As for those who do not believe, they have deafness in their ears and it is a blindness upon them. They are being called from a distant place'.⁵¹

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا أَعْجَمِيًّا لَقَالُوا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ أَعْجَمِيٌّ وَعَرَبِيٌّ قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هُدًى وَشِفَاءٌ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَمًى أُولَٰئِكَ يُنَادَوْنَ مِنْ مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

of any defect or deficiency in the Qur'an itself" (Majid).

45. By the words, "from before it" the allusion is to any reduction, distortion in meaning or perversion of the text and its message, while by the words, "from behind it" the allusion is to the introduction of anything into it that does not belong to it (Ibn Jarir).

An extended meaning is that no interpretation that disagrees with the plain Qur'anic texts, in meaning and implications, will be accepted as true by a seeker of the Qur'anic truth (Au.).

46. The two parts of the verse are connected in the following manner: It was said, "Nothing will be said to you (O Muhammad) but what was said to the Messengers before you." In response it could be asked, "Then what? What happened?" The answer is, "Surely, your Lord is the Master of Forgiveness" towards His pious slaves, "while "Master of a painful chastisement," for His enemies (Alusi).

47. One of the contentions of the Quraysh was that since the Prophet is an Arab, his bringing of a message in Arabic leaves them open to doubt that he might have made it him-

self. Had it been in a non-Arab language, that doubt could be removed (Mawdudi).

48. “.. since the Prophet was an Arab and lived in an Arabic environment, his message had to be expressed in the Arabic language, which the people to whom it was addressed in the first instance could understand.. (Allah said elsewhere, 14:4) ‘Never have We sent forth any apostle otherwise than [with a Message] in his own people’s tongue, so that he might make [the truth] clear unto them.’ Had the message of the Qur’ān been formulated in a language other than Arabic, the opponents of the Prophet would have been justified in saying, ‘between us and thee is a barrier’” (Asad).

Majid draws our attention to the implied meaning that has been ignored by many. What the Makkans meant by saying, “And, had We made it a non-Arabic recitation, they would have surely said, ‘Why have its verses not explained clearly,’ is that had the Qur’ān been revealed in any other language, the intents and purposes of the Qur’ānic texts would never have been met fully, but rather, would have been vague, unclear and subject to several interpretations, contradictory, but of equal strength. It is the clarity of the Arabic language,

that no other language could have matched, had another language been chosen for revelation (Au.).

Majid quotes: “The Arabic language – in which the Arabs themselves took particular delight, for its copious vocabulary, its wealth of forms and its inherent capability of cultivation – was peculiarly fitted to take a leading position in the world. If it is compared, for example, with the unwieldy Latin, or even with the turgid Persian, it is found to be specially distinguished by the possession of short abstract forms – a property of great service in scientific expression. It is capable of indicating the finest shades of meaning...” (De Boers, History of Philosophy in Islam, pp. 31-32). ‘Classical Arabic is characterized by an extraordinary richness of vocabulary and the logical, systematic character of its grammatical structure.’ (EBr. II p. 192).”

49. Etymologically, the word “*a`jamiyy*” is the antithesis of “*fasih*” (eloquent), in other words, a language which does not help in attaining clarity of meaning. Applied to a person or people, *a`jamiyy* is someone, no matter of what ethnic origin, including an Arab, who is unable to express himself properly, like the animals (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

[45] Indeed, We gave Musa the Book, but it was differed with.⁵² Had it not been for a Word preceding from your Lord, (the matter) would have been judged between them.⁵³ Surely they are in suspicion concerning it, (in) a disquieting doubt thereof.

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ فَاخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مُرِيبٍ ﴿٤٥﴾

[46] Whoever works righteousness, it is for his own self, and whoever does evil, it is against itself. Your Lord is not unjust (in the least)⁵⁴ to the slaves.

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَالِمٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ ﴿٤٦﴾

50. It is a cure for the diseases of the heart (Zamakhshari).

saying, it is not the truth (Zamakhshari).

51. That is, although near, but because they hear it with disbelief and attitude of rejection, the Qur'anic call comes to them from a distance. They hear a vague distant voice saying something they are unable to comprehend.

53. The word was to the effect that they will not be punished but after a while, which will take place in the Hereafter (Razi).

“They pretended that it was too deep for them, when they meant that they were superior to it! The fact was that by putting themselves in an artificially false position, they rendered themselves impervious to the Message. The voice of Revelation or the voice of conscience sounded to them as if it came from a far-off place! They themselves made themselves strangers to it” (Yusuf Ali).

In Mawdudi's words, “It has two meanings: (1) If Allah had not already decreed that the people would be given enough respite for consideration, the disputants would have long been destroyed; (2) if Allah had not already decreed that the disputes would finally be decided on the Day of Judgment, the reality would have been made plain as to who is in the right and who is in the wrong.”

52. That is, some saying, it is the truth, others differing with them and

54. The hyperbolic expression (*zalam*) denies the least possible occurrence of oppression (Qurtubi).

Another possible meaning, as pointed out by Zarkashi is that, had

[47] To Him is referred the knowledge of the Hour. And no fruit emerges out of its sheath, and not a female conceives, nor gives birth save with His knowledge. And, the day He shall call to them, 'Where now are the associates (attributed) to Me?' They will answer, 'We proclaim to You, there is none among us to testify.'

إِلَيْهِ يَرْدُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَمَا تَخْرُجُ مِنْ
ثَمَرَاتٍ مِنْ أَكْمَامِهَا وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أَنْثَى
وَلَا تَضَعُ إِلَّا بِعِلْمِهِ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ أَئِنَّ
شُرَكَائِي قَالُوا أَدْنَاكَ مَا مِنَّا مِنْ شَهِيدٍ
﴿٤٧﴾

[48] Lost from them are what they used to invoke earlier and they will come to realize that they have no place of escape.

وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَزُفُوا مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ حِصَصٍ ﴿٤٨﴾

[49] Man wearies not of praying for the good. But if an evil touches him, lo, he loses all hope and is in despair.

لَا يَسْأَلُ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ دُعَاءِ الْخَيْرِ وَإِنْ
مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَيَئُوسٌ قَنُوطٌ ﴿٤٩﴾

[50] And if We make him taste mercy from Us, after an affliction had touched him, he will surely say, 'This is my due.'⁵⁵ I do not believe the Hour will be struck. And, if I am brought back to my Lord, then, surely, there shall be good for me with Him.⁵⁶ We shall surely show the unbelievers (the truth of) what they used to do, and We shall surely give them the taste of a severe chastisement.

وَلَكِنْ أَذَقْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَاءٍ
مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ هَذَا لِي وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ
قَائِمَةً وَلَئِنْ رُجِعْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّ لِي عِنْدَهُ
لَلْحُسْنَىٰ فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا
وَلَنَذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنَ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ ﴿٥٠﴾

“*zulm*” been one of Allah’s Attributes, it would have been in exaggerated form and, thus, He would not have been a mere “*zalim*” but a “*zallam*” (Au.).

55. “Being fully convinced of his own merit (as expressed in his own words, ‘this is but my due’), he is confident that – in case there should really be a life after death – his own flattering

view of himself will be confirmed by God” (Asad).

56. “When men entertain false ideas of values in life, there are two or three possible attitudes they may adopt in reaction to their experiences. In the first place, their desire may be inordinate for the good things of this life, and any little check brings them into a mood of despair.. In the second

[51] And when We bestow favors upon man, he turns away and withdraws aside. But when evil touches him, lo, he is full of lengthy supplications.⁵⁷

وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَأَى
بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَدُو دُعَاءٍ عَرِيضٍ ﴿٥١﴾

[52] Say, 'Have you considered, if it is from Allah, yet you rejected it, then who can be in greater wrong than he who is in a far-fetched schism?'

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ كَفَرْتُمْ
بِهِ مَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ هُوَ فِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٥٢﴾

[53] We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their own selves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth.⁵⁸ Is it not sufficient for your Lord that He is over all things a Witness?

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْآفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ
حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ
أَنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٥٣﴾

[54] Lo! They are surely in a doubt concerning the meeting with their Lord. Lo! He is, of all things, encompassing.

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّن لِّقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ أَلَا إِنَّهُ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُحِيطٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

place, if their desire is granted, they are puffed up, and think that everything is due to their own cleverness or merit, and they forget Allah. Not only that, but they go a step further, and begin to doubt a Hereafter at all! If by chance they have a faint glimmering of the Hereafter, which they cannot help recognizing, they think themselves 'favoured of Heaven', because of some small favours given to them in this life by way of trial. Thus they turn all things, good or evil, away from their real purpose, because they are devoted to falsehood" (Yusuf Ali).

57. Yusuf Ali again, "The last verse and note dealt with men's distortion of the values of life. Here we come to men's ingratitude and hypocrisy. If they receive good, they go farther away from Allah, instead of coming nearer to him. If they suffer ill, they call on Allah and offer prolonged prayers, but it is not sincere devotion and therefore worthless."

58. "I.e., through progressive deepening and widening of their insight into the wonders of the universe as well as through a deeper understanding of man's own psyche – all of which points to a conscious Creator" (Asad).

Mawdudi offers another perspective: "One of the two interpretations of the major commentaries has been that the allusion of signs in the horizon is to the prediction that Islam will prevail over large tracts of land in and beyond Arabia. It is then that the sign referred to in this verse will be fully perceived and recognized. The objection that can be raised is that political dominance does not prove the veracity of a Message or its carriers. The answer is, the triumph of Islam was not a military or political triumph. It was not the kind of triumph which results in a conqueror ending up owning the life and property of the conquered nation, in consequence, the land filled with tyranny and injustice. (At this point, and at this time of writing, one might be reminded that – by the accounts of a British newspaper and other sources – five years of American occupation of Iraq has resulted in transformation of a vast area into the stone-age: no power, no water, no fuel and no food. To obtain a few liters of petrol in this oil-rich country, people sleep at the petrol stations to queue up in the morning. So far, close to a million of Iraqis have died, several times more injured and maimed, and several millions have become refugees. This is the "conquer" that Mawdudi

is alluding to. And, to continue with Mawdudi: Au.): "Contrary to this, the Islamic conquest brought with it a great religious, moral, intellectual, cultural, political, economic and social change whose influences elicited what was best in man and suppressed what was worst in him. The revolution brought by this phenomenon nurtured the moral excellence that the world could hope to see in the hermit and meditative recluses: in the politics of the rulers, in the wars and conquest, in the work of the tax-collectors or commerce of the big business, everywhere a huge moral upliftment, unseen anytime in human history, was achieved. The influence was so great and deep, that within a short time, in morality, character and behavior, cleanliness and purity, the common man was raised above the selected few of other societies. The Muslim conquests brought about in the conquered lands order in place of chaos, peace in place of anarchy, piety in place of wickedness, justice in place of tyranny, purity in place of obscenity and brotherhood in place of sanctioned inequality.

"These were the signs that the Makkan Arabs were told they will see in the horizons. And it has not stopped there. People of all ages have been witness to the signs foretold in

this Qur'ānic passage. The Muslims – even during their decline - have displayed such moral order as has not been attained by their antagonist contemporaries. No precedents can be found from any period of Muslim history of the tyrannical treatment that has been meted out by the Western nations to the subdued nations of Africa, America, Asia and, in fact, of Europe itself. Anyone can check through history books how the Muslims treated Christians in Spain and how the Christians treated Muslims there; how the Muslims behaved towards Hindus during their long rule in India and how the Hindus have begun to treat the Muslims once in power, how the Muslims treated the Jews during 1300 years and how the Jews are treating the Muslims since the deceptive occupation of Palestine."

"The other meaning given by the commentators is that the unbelievers will be shown physical signs in the material world, as well as those found in their own physical existence. These signs will never end. In every new generation new signs will be discovered that will lead to the recognition that the world is not an accident but a well-designed creation" (With minor modifications).

Majid has a short comment on this aspect, "The words are also of general application. If we only care to reflect on the marvelous structure of the atom and on the still more marvelous nature of the human mind, we are inevitably, inescapably, led to the truth of an All-Designing, Omnipotent, Omnipresent Being."

Following the same theme as above, one could add that by the words "within their own selves", the allusion could be to the unbelievers of all ages who, once antagonists and opposed to Islam, undergo mighty changes in their own selves, to become, with the acceptance of Islam, entirely new – and laudable – personalities endowed with exemplary character (Au.).

Yusuf Ali puts it in a more sublime manner: "Allah's Truth always spreads, in its own good time, across to the uttermost ends of the earth, as it did in the case of Islam. But its intensive spread in the hearts and souls of people is even more remarkable than its extensive spread over large areas. Men like the four Companions of the Prophet - and many more - became leaders of men and arbiters of the world's fate. Madinah from being a focus of jarring tribes and factions that hated each other,

became the seat of heroic actions and plans and the nursery of great and noble heroic deeds that resounded throughout the world. It makes no

difference what men may say or do. Allah's Truth must prevail, and He knows who obstruct and who help."





Surah 42
Al-Shura

Makkan¹



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Ha. Mim.

حم ﴿١﴾

[2] `Ayn. Sin. Qaf.

عسق ﴿٢﴾

[3] Thus reveals to you² and to those before you - Allah, the All-mighty, the All-wise.³

كَذَلِكَ يُوحِي إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣﴾

1. Ibn `Abbas and Qatadah are reported to have thought that except for four verses 23-24 the rest of the *Surah* is Makkan (Qurtubi, Shawkani). But there are other exceptions too to the effect that a few other verses of the *Surah* are Madi-nan (Alusi).

2. Ibn Kathir presents at this point the well-known *hadith* from the *Sa-hihayn*:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أُمِّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا أَنَّ
الْحَارِثَ بْنَ هِشَامٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - سَأَلَ رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - فَقَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
كَيْفَ يَأْتِيكَ الْوَحْيُ؟ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ -: أَحْيَانًا يَأْتِينِي مِثْلَ صَلَاحَةِ الْجَرَسِ،
وَهُوَ أَشَدُّ عَلَيَّ فَيَقْصِمُ عَنِّي وَقَدْ وَعَيْتُ عَنْهُ مَا قَالَ،
وَأَحْيَانًا يَتَمَثَّلُ لِي الْمَلَكُ رَجُلًا، فَيُكَلِّمُنِي فَأَعْبِي مَا
يَقُولُ. قَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا -: وَلَقَدْ رَأَيْتُهُ

يَنْزِلُ عَلَيْهِ الْوَحْيُ فِي الْيَوْمِ الشَّدِيدِ الْبَرْدِ، فَيَقْصِمُ عَنْهُ
وَأَنَّ جَبِينَهُ لَيَنْقُصُ عَرَقًا.

`A'isha reports that Harith b. Hisham asked the Prophet, "Messenger of Allah, how does the revelation come to you?" He replied, "Sometimes it comes to me like the ringing of a bell. This one is the most difficult of its kind. Then, as it is drawn to a close I would have retained in memory all that he (the angel) would have said. At other times the angel appears to me in the form of a man. He speaks to me and I am able to retain in memory what he said." `A'isha - Allah be pleased with her - said, "I have seen him on a chillingly cold

[4] To Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth;⁴ and He is the Exalted, the Great.

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٤﴾

[5] The heavens would almost burst forth from above them;⁵ the angels celebrate the praises of their Lord and seek forgiveness for those on earth. Lo! Allah is indeed the All-forgiving, the All-merciful.

تَكَادُ السَّمَاوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْ فَوْقِهِنَّ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَلَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥﴾

day, the revelation coming down upon him. By the time it stopped sweat would be dropping down his forehead.”

3. “I.e.,” writes Asad, “the basic truths propounded in the Qur’ānic revelation – some of which are summarized in the sequence – are the same as those revealed to all the earlier prophets.”

Some commentators have pointed out however, that by the use of the past-present tense in “*yubi*”, a hint is hidden that this revelation is not a new or odd phenomenon, but rather, your Lord has been revealing His messages throughout human history.

4. Commenting on, “To Him belongs what is in the heavens and the earth,” Sayyid writes: “Quite some people, deceived by the fact that they find things in their hands subjected to them, benefitting them and which they can use as they wish, are

led to believe that they own those things. Of course they do not. Allah is the real owner. It is He who creates and destroys, who gives life and deals death, who has the power to let people own what He wishes, or take away from their possession what He will, to place them in the hands of some others when He will. True ownership remains in His hands who dispenses with them in a manner that suits His Grand Plan. Things respond to Him and transform themselves following His Scheme. In this latter sense, none has the ownership of the heavens and the earth but He. Once a people become fully cognizant of this fact, they know where and how to seek them and how to deal with them.”

5. “From above them”: i.e., owing to the Greatness and Majesty of the Lord of the worlds above them – an opinion attributed to Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah and Suddi (Ibn Jarir);

wherein, “above” is not for indicating the direction (Au.).

If it is asked, writes Zamakhshari, why “from above them?” then the answer is: Because the greatest of signs and evidences with reference to the Exaltedness and Majesty are above the heavens viz., the *'Arsh*, the *Kursiyy*, rows of angels, their glories of their Lord, their praises ringing around the *'Arsh*, and various other holy manifestations of His stupendous Power and Kingdom. These are all above the heavens (under the force of which they could burst forth).

Another opinion as attributed to Ibn 'Abbas preserved by Hakim is that the heavens could collapse because of the weight (of the angels above them) – Alusi. This is supported by a *hadith* in Musnad Ahmad which says,

أُطَّتِ السَّمَاءُ وَحَقَّ لَهَا أَنْ تَنْطَ، مَا فِيهَا مَوْضِعُ أَرْبَعِ
أَصَابِعٍ إِلَّا عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ سَاجِدٌ

“The heaven creaks, and it is right of it that it should creak for there is not a four-finger space but an angel is there in prostration.”

Thanwi tries to answer a doubt raised by the materialists concerning weight of the angels. But for today's Muslim it should offer no difficulty to imagine that billions upon billions of angels, each loaded with immense energy (being made of “*nur*”), the heaven below them could well collapse if not for Allah's holding Power.

A third opinion is that the heavens could burst forth because of attribution of a son to Allah. The following verse supports this (19: 90-91):

تَكَادُ السَّمَاوَاتُ يَنْفَطَرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ
الْجِبَالُ هَدًّا، أَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدًا

“The heavens could well-nigh explode thereby, the earth split asunder, and the mountains collapse into ruins, that they should attribute to the Most Merciful a son.”

[6] As for those who took protectors other than Him, Allah is a Watcher over them; you are not a guardian over them.

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهُ حَفِيفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿٦﴾

[7] And thus have We revealed to you an Arabic Qur'ān,⁶ that you may warn the Mother of the Towns⁷ and those around it,⁸ and warn of the Day of gathering, wherein is no doubt: a group in Paradise and a group in the Blaze.⁹

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِتُنْذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَتُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ فَرِيقٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَفَرِيقٌ فِي السَّعِيرِ ﴿٧﴾

6. The objective of the statement that this is an Arabic Qur'ān is to impress on its being plain, simple, and, communicating its message in clear terms (Ibn Kathir, reworded).

‘Araba is to express oneself clearly, plainly, distinctly and precisely, in chaste language (Au.).

7. That is, Makkah, because, according to one opinion, it has been the spiritual center throughout human history, and, according to another, because the earth was stretched from below it. As for being the spiritual center throughout human history, this might sound a little strange, but we need to recall the *ahadīth* that speak of the ancient Prophets visiting Makkah for pilgrimage. Abu Ya‘la has a report in his collection narrated by Ibn ‘Abbas that,

“When the Prophet arrived at the ‘Usfan valley during his *Hajj*, he

asked Abu Bakr, what valley it was? Abu Bakr replied that it was the ‘Usfan valley. The Prophet said, ‘Nuh, Hud and Ibrahim have passed by this valley on their red camels led by coiled halters, wearing a lower garment and an upper striped cloak. They had come to perform the pilgrimage of the Ancient House.’”

The Musnad of Ahmad has another report of Ibn ‘Abbas who said,

“When the Prophet passed by the ‘Usfan valley during his pilgrimage, he asked, ‘Abu Bakr, what valley is this?’ He told him that it was the ‘Usfan valley. The Prophet said, ‘Hud and Saleh passed by this valley on red camels, coiled halters, wearing lower garments and striped cloaks, uttering the Supplicatory words of pilgrimage of the Ancient House.’”

Haythami said about the report of Ahmad that one of the narrators was

a controversial person; while he was considered weak by some, a few others treated him as trustworthy (Au.).

Writes Ibn Kathir: Makkah has been so called because it is the holiest of lands in the sight of Allah as several *ahadith* tell us. One of them is as follows:

عن عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَدِيٍّ بْنِ حَمْرَاءَ الزَّهْرِيِّ قَالَ: "رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَاقِفًا عَلَى الْحُزْوَةِ، فَقَالَ: وَاللَّهِ إِنَّكَ لَحَيْرٌ أَرْضِي اللَّهَ، وَأَحَبُّ أَرْضِي اللَّهَ إِلَى اللَّهِ. وَلَوْلَا أَنِّي أُخْرِجْتُ مِنْكَ مَا خَرَجْتُ". (قال أبو عيسى: هذا حديث حسن غريب صحيح.)

`Abdullah ibn `Adiyy says, "I have seen the Prophet standing on (a mound of earth called) Hazwarah and saying, 'Surely, you are the best of Allah's lands, and the most pleasing to Allah. If I was not forced out, I would not have left.'"

This version is in Tirmidhi who judged it *Hasan-Gharib-Sahih*. Similar reports are in Nasa'i and Ibn Majah (Ibn Kathir).

Some Orientalists have used this *Ayah* to argue that the Prophet was sent only to the Arabs. It is a strange case of seeking evidence from the Qur'an while disbelieving in it. If the Qur'an is trustworthy in its statement that the Prophet's mission was restricted to the Arabs, then, why is

it not trustworthy in its statement that there is no god but One? Or, as Imām Razi has pointed out, why is it not trustworthy in its other statement (34: 28):

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ

"We have not sent you (O Muhammad) but to the whole of the mankind."

8. "Those around it" could include the settlements around Makkah as well as all those living around it in every direction (right up to where the human population ends) – Shafi'.

See *Surah Anfal*, note 153 for a fuller discussion.

Sayyid Qutb presents a somewhat detailed, although not a fully comprehensive, discussion as to why Allah chose Makkah and its surroundings as the first choice for sending down and addressing the final Message in the Arabic language. He writes in effect, "Obviously, Allah knows where to place His Message. Nonetheless, when we look back at the events and occurrences behind us, beyond the conditions and demands of our times, and, considering all that this mission has been through, yielding the results and consequences that have been, we begin to realize some of the wisdom that could have been

there for choosing this place as the center for a message whose universality had been decided from day one.

“At the time of the birth of this final message, this earth was ruled principally by four empires: (i) Roman, covering Europe and parts of Asia and Africa; (ii) Persian, extended over parts of Asia and Africa; (iii) Indian and, (iv) Chinese. The last two were more or less confined to themselves, locked in, politically, religiously, and culturally, within their boundaries. It were the first two that had far reaching influence on the humans and their developments.

“Two revealed religions, Jewish and Christian, were confined in their influence to within these two great empires. They were, of course, under the subjugation of these two empires, having failed to win them over to their causes, in addition to themselves having suffered (moral and spiritual) corruptions and degeneration.

“Judaism had suffered ravages, sometimes at the hands of the Persians and at others at the hands of the Roman imperialism. It could not find any quarter in the lands worthy of consideration where it could rule the people and their hearts. It ended up becoming, for a variety of reasons, a closed religion, reserved for the Isra-

elites, without any wish on the part of its followers to accommodate people other than those of their race.

“As for Christianity, it took birth within the shades of the Roman imperialism. It ruled all those areas: Palestine, Syria, Egypt and others, where this new religion was being spread secretly. It used to conceal itself from the reaches of the ruling power which was persecuting it resulting in the death of thousands of Christians. But when the era of persecution ended, and the rulers themselves came into Christianity, they brought in with them all the superstitions and practices that were part of the pagan religion. They even brought in with them the issues that were being hotly debated among the pagan Greeks. Christianity took a new form, one which had nothing to do with the revealed religion that it was at birth. The imperial state too, which had accepted this new faith, was in no way influenced by it. The state in fact ruled the religion. It was not the other way round. Over and above this, Christianity itself broke into countless sects, of such severity, that the divisions all but divided the empire itself.

“It was in this situation that Islam appeared. It came to rid human-

ity of all that it was suffering from: corruption, degeneration, tyranny, and ignorance that filled every place. It came to rule over humanity and guide it to light. In view of the above, it was necessary for Islam to begin its work in an area untouched by occupation; a place which had remained free of slavery to imperialism of the sort that surrounded it. It had to take root and grow free of all the corruptions and degenerations that previous religious systems had suffered. The Mother of the Towns, therefore, was most suited as a starting point before it spread over the globe.

“At the time Islam appeared, there was no government of any sort in Arabia. This geographical patch was free of rules and regulations, police and armies, system of government and its overwhelming dominance over life and society. It imposed no state religion, no set of beliefs upon a subdued people, as it happens to be the state of affairs in oppressive states. Nor was there a systematized religion with clear-cut beliefs and practices. But rather, it was a disorganized house of pagan pantheons, disunited in beliefs and disunited in practices. Consequently, there was no united religious force to stand up and face Islam. If not for the material

and economic interests attached to the old system, the Quraysh would not have in fact opposed Islam as vehemently as they did.

“On the political front, things were not better organized than on the religious front which of course was a favorable point since that left no organized political system to take a stand against Islam.

“Within the chaos, there were values that were upheld by all. They came to Islam’s aid. For example, the social system was tribal-based. Family had a strong appeal. Therefore, when the Prophet stood up with his message, he found Banu Hashim – although by and large unbelievers - supporting him with their drawn swords for no reason other than that he was a Hashimi. In fact, the tribes withheld their hands from every one of the earliest Muslims who had the most insignificant connection with one or the other tribe, leaving those tribes to discipline or torture them themselves. Those slaves that had embraced Islam were tortured by their own masters. None else could touch them. When Abu Bakr purchased them and freed them, once again no one could dare stretch his hand at them. This of course was a favorable factor for Islam.

“In addition, there were certain Arab characteristics, specific to them, such as, courage, fortitude, pride, etc., that were necessary traits for taking a new mission forward and bearing the hardships that it demanded.

“Again, the Arab Peninsula was then carrying as seeds personalities of such extraordinary qualities that proved useful later. They were also well experienced in the affairs of the world, and had good knowledge of the surrounding world by virtue of their travel to the north and the south every now and then entering into the territories of the two notable empires of the time, Roman and Persian. After Islam had taken good roots, these seeds became trees and Islam was able to make good use of them for the propagation of its message. Presence of extraordinary figures in such large numbers had surely a hidden Hand. Personalities such as: Abu Bakr, `Umar, `Uthman, `Ali, Hamza, `Abbas, Abu `Ubaydah, Sa`d b. Waqqas, Khalid b. Walid, Sa`d b. Mu`adh, Abu Ayyub Ansari and numerous other figures (of such stature as only appear as singles among nations over centuries: Au.) welcomed Islam, bore its message, took it forward, and spread it around. No doubt, they were the products of Islam, but the potential was there.

“This is not the place to deal with this issue in a thorough fashion. It might require a whole work for a better understanding. Enough should be the few points we have placed above, for a common reader to get some idea of the causes that made the spread of Islam possible, the reasons why Allah chose the Mother of the Towns and its surroundings as the area to be first addressed.”

9. In connection with the statement, “a party in Paradise and a party in the Blaze,” the following *Hasan-Gharib-Sahih hadith* could be quoted. (Ibn Jarir presents it at *Ayah 7*):

عن عبد الله بن عمرو عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال -خرج علينا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وفي يده كتابان فقال أتدرون ما هذان الكتابان قال قلنا لا إلا أن نخبرنا يا رسول الله قال للذي في يده اليمين هذا كتاب من رب العالمين تبارك وتعالى بأسماء أهل الجنة وأسماء آبائهم وقبائلهم ثم أجعل على آخرهم لا يزداد فيهم ولا ينقص منهم أبدا ثم قال للذي في يساره هذا كتاب أهل النار بأسمائهم وأسماء آبائهم وقبائلهم ثم أجعل على آخرهم لا يزداد فيهم ولا ينقص منهم أبدا فقال أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فلا شيء إذا نعمل إن كان هذا أمر قد فرغ منه قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم سدودا وقاربوا فإن صاحب الجنة يختتم له بعمل الجنة وإن عمل أي عمل وأن صاحب النار ليختتم له بعمل أهل النار وأن عمل أي عمل ثم قال بيده فقبضها ثم قال فرغ ربكم عز وجل من العباد ثم قال باليمين فنبذ بها فقال فريق في الجنة ونبذ باليسرى فقال فريق في السعير. (قال أبو عيسى: هذا حديث حسن غريب صحيح.)

[8] And, had Allah willed, He could surely have made them one community but He admits into His mercy whomsoever He will.¹⁰ As for the transgressors,¹¹ they have neither a protector nor a helper.

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَهُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ وَالظَّالِمُونَ مَا هُمْ مِنْ وَيْ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٨﴾

`Abdullah b. `Amr narrated, "The Prophet came out with two books in his hand. He asked, 'Do you know what these two books are?' We said, 'No, O Messenger of Allah. Will you not tell us?' So pointing to his right hand he said, 'This is the book of the Lord of the worlds. Herein are names of the inhabitants of Paradise complete with the names of their fathers and tribes. The list ends with the last of them so that there will never be any addition or deletion.' Then he said about what was in the left hand, 'This is the Book of the Lord of the worlds. Herein are names of the inhabitants of the Fire, complete with the names of their fathers and tribes. The list ends with the last of them so that there will never be any addition or deletion.' At that his Companions said, 'Then for what end the deeds, O Messenger of Allah, if the affair has already been decided?' He answered, 'Be steadfast and try to

be (as) close (to the ideal as possible). As for the man of Paradise, (his life) will be terminated in accordance with the deeds of the inhabitants of Paradise no matter what he did (during the life). As for the man of Hellfire, (his life) will be terminated in accordance with the deeds of the inhabitants of Paradise no matter what he did (during the life).' Then the Prophet tossed away the two books and said, 'Allah is done with (His) slaves, a group in Paradise and a group in the Fire.'" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Tirmidhi remarked that this is a *Hasan-Gharib-Sahih* report. A similar report is in Nasa'i.

10. One possible connotation is, Allah (*swt*) could have made the people a single community of either believers or unbelievers – Qurtubi.

That is, had Allah willed, He could have forced them all to belief, or, could have left them all to themselves and they would all have cho-

[9] Or, have they taken protectors besides Him? But it is Allah who is the (true) Protector; He quickens the dead and He has power over all things.

أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ فَإِنَّهُ هُوَ الْوَلِيُّ
وَهُوَ يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ ﴿٩﴾

[10] And whatever it is that you differ amongst yourselves but the judgment thereof belongs to Allah.¹² Such is Allah, my Lord, in whom I have placed the trust and to Him I turn repentant.

وَمَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَحُكْمُهُ إِلَى
اللَّهِ ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبِّي عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ
أُنِيبُ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] Splitter of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you, of yourselves, mates, as (also) of the cattle mates: multiplying you thereby.¹³ There is nothing like unto Him;¹⁴ He is the All-hearing, the All-seeing.

فَاطِرُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ
مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجًا
يَذَرُوكُمْ فِيهِ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ
السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿١١﴾

sen disbelief. But He opens the gates of mercy and guides some to belief to admit them in (Au.).

11. The words, “He admits into His mercy whomsoever He will; as for the transgressors ..” are plain in their meaning that it is Allah who admits people into belief and obedience: by His mercy, but it is humans who leave themselves out of the range of mercy by adopting transgression (based on Razi).

12. That is, ultimately it is Allah who will judge between the human-kind differing between themselves (Ibn Jarir).

13. (The obvious meaning is that humans and animals were created in

pairs in order that they may multiply in numbers: Au.), however, another possible meaning is that the animals are there in pairs in order for humans to consume them and multiply themselves thereby (Ibn Jarir).

14. To be closer to a literal rendition one could state, “There is not aught the like of Him. This is one of the most powerful of Qur’anic statements, but little explained by the commentators. What Imām Razi writes, in harsh refutation of Ibn Khuzaymah’s views regarding the Deity’s features in his “*Kitab al-Tawhid*”, and vigorously, but unconvincingly expounded later by others, might not make, as Alusi remarks, one feel fully comfortable at heart.

Yet the Imām falls short of an elucidation deserving the important issue. One has the same feeling of discomfort at quoting Gibbon (instead of one of our own scholars), but is done here, presently, in hope that someone will pick up the lead and attempt a fuller exposition. As quoted by Majid, Gibbon said about the Islamic concept of Godhead: “A creed too sublime perhaps for our present faculties. What object remains for the fancy, or even the understanding, when we have abstracted from the unknown substance all ideas of time and space, of motion and matter, of sensation and reflection?” (Au.).

The above said, Asad could be quoted for further explanation: “The phrase, ‘there is nothing like unto Him’ implies that He is fundamentally – and not merely in His attributes – ‘different’ from anything that exists or could exist, or anything that man can conceive or imagine or define; and since ‘there is nothing that could be compared with Him’ (112: 4), even the ‘how’ of His being ‘different’ from everything else is beyond the categories of human thought.”

Sayyid’s statement paraphrases the passage in the following manner: “It is binding (upon the humans) that they should refer to their Creator on

matters they differ between themselves. It is He who created them, fashioned their forms, and made their mates out of them. He organized life and knows what suits it best and what gives it firm grounds. Following the same principles, as in the creation of the humans, He has also created the animals. They multiply themselves following the pattern and the system set in place by Him. However, He is apart from all His creation, different from them, away and out of the systems governing the created cosmos and its contents, living and non-living: ‘there is nothing like unto Him.’ A sound mind accepts this. How can the created be like the Creator in any way? Following the theme above, it should be obvious that when the creations differ between themselves, the judgment should be His, none else’s. Why? Because, there is none else besides Him who enjoys a true existence.

“The fact stated, viz., there is nothing like unto Him, the relationship between Him and His creations remains, despite the great difference: He hears and He sees all; when He judges or commands, it is that of One who hears and who sees (in a way the creations cannot comprehend).”

[12] To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth. He extends the providence to whom He will, or restricts. Verily, He is knowing of all things.¹⁵

لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَبْسُطُ
الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] He has laid down for you as religion¹⁶ what He enjoined upon Nuh, and that which We have revealed unto you and that which We enjoined therewith Ibrahim, Musa and `Isa: that you establish the religion¹⁷ and differ not therein.¹⁸ Hard is upon the polytheists what you call them to.¹⁹ Allah chooses for Himself whomsoever He will and guides to Himself whosoever turns (repentant).²⁰

شَرَعَ لَكُم مِّنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحًا
وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ
وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ مَا
تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي إِلَيْهِ مَن يَشَاءُ
وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَن يُنِيبُ ﴿١٣﴾

The above noted, we might point out that the ‘reality’ of the created world, let alone that of Him who described Himself as, “there is none like unto Him,’ has become so murky as to be described in an intelligible language. Tens of thousands of experiments are leading to the undeniable??? conclusion that ‘matter’ seems to be intelligent; that every atom seems to be carrying a complete information of the universe; and that ???

15. “I.e., He knows not only what every human being ‘deserves,’ but what is intrinsically – though not always perceptibly – good and necessary in the context of His plan of creation. Moreover, all that exists belongs to Him alone, and man is allowed no more than the usufruct of

what is commonly regarded as ‘property’” (Asad).

16. What is the definition of “*din*” as used here? The answer given by various commentators is as follows:

Din:

In the opinion of Qatadah, “*din*” at this point pertains to treating the lawful as lawful and unlawful as unlawful (Ibn Jarir).

Zamakhshari states: The “*din*” of “*Iqamatu al-din*” stands for Islam which in turn stands for: *Tawhid*, Allah’s obedience, belief in His Messengers, His Books and in the Day of Resurrection, as well as belief in all the rest wherewith a man can be legitimately referred to as a Muslim. This does not include the religions as

promulgated by the previous Prophets, in all their details, which have differed from each other in accordance with the situations prevalent in those times; Allah (*swt*) said (5: 48),

لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا

“For every one of you We have prescribed a Law and a Way.” (That is to say, every nation of the past in which a Prophet was raised, received a set of Laws that were specifically for it, and suitable to it: Au.).

Razi wrote: Of necessity, this “*din*” has to be different from the obligations and commandments, for, they have been different (in different religions). Allah said, “For every one of you We have prescribed a Law and a Way.” It has to be something which remained common throughout the ages such as, belief in Allah, in His angels, His Books, His Messengers and in the Hereafter. Belief (in the above) demands shunning this world and turning towards the Hereafter, a hastening towards good morals and a dislike of the low morals.

Qurtubi: “*din*” is (belief in) Allah’s oneness and His obedience, belief in His Messengers and Books, belief in the Day of Reckoning and in all that by virtue of which a man is declared a Muslim. Allah did not mean to include the details of religion which

have been different in different religions.

He expands: It has been one “*din*”, that is, the fundamental principles that have remained common throughout the times such as *Tawhid*, Prayers, *zakah*, Fasts, pilgrimage, seeking closeness to Allah by means of virtuous deeds, honoring the trusts and promises, joining the kin, forbiddance of disbelief, murder, adultery, avoiding any harm to the creations, torture of animals, and avoidance of all sorts of low morals. These are all fundamentals of Islam and the common elements between our religion and those of the past Prophets.

Ibn Kathir: The “*din*” that every Prophet brought was: devotion to Allah alone who has no associates and hence the words, “that you establish the religion and differ not therein”.

Alusi: The allusion by “*din*” is to Islam which in turn is: Allah’s oneness, His obedience, belief in His Books, in His Messengers, the Hereafter, and all the rest which make a man Muslim.

Shawkani: “Laid down the ‘*din*’: that is, *Tawhid*, the religion of Islam and those fundamental elements in which the messages of the previous Messengers did not differ, and which

are the common points amongst the Scriptures. Mujahid has said, "Allah did not send a Messenger but enjoined Prayers and *zakah*, and obedience to Allah. This is the "*din*" that He laid down for them."

Asad could be quoted for a summary: "Since, as the sequence shows, the term *din* cannot apply in this context to 'religion' in its widest connotation, including religious laws – which, by their very nature, have been different in each successive dispensation – it obviously denotes here only the ethical and spiritual contents of religion, i.e., 'faith' in its most general sense. With this verse, the discussion returns to the theme sounded at the beginning of this *Surah*, namely, the unchanging sameness of the spiritual and moral principles underlying all revealed religions."

17. Now, what does "*Iqamatu al-din*" imply? Since the meaning was obvious to most commentators, they paid scant attention to it. At all events, the following are opinions of a few authorities:

Suddi said: It means: put it to practice (Ibn Jarir). *Iqamah* is in the same sense as used when enjoining the Prayers, (that is, when it was said, "*aqimu al-salah*" it meant, "do it regularly and properly": Au.) - Ibn Jarir.

Imām Razi says that the Prophets of past were charged that they should establish the "*din*" in such a manner as to remove all differences and disputations (in matters of religion).

Qurtubi: By saying "*aqimu*" the allusion is to consistency, continuity, well-guarded performance (against error), without controversies and dubitations thereof.

Alusi: By "*Iqamah*" the allusion is to do well and thoroughly all its constituents, and safeguarding it (the "*din*") from twists and corruptions finding their way in, and, subjecting it to good practice.

In view of changed meanings of "*din*" and "*Iqamah*" current among some non-Arab Muslims, it would be appropriate to add a few lines of clarification here: Referring to the views stated above in connection with what the term "*din*" stands for and, what the implication of "*Iqamah*" of this "*din*" is, a contemporary commentator writes that "this is a superficial view", in fact, "a dangerous view." He compares the understanding of the above authorities to the view held by "Saint Paul who presented the doctrine of the separation of the *din* (religion) and *Shari'ah* (law) and corrupted the community of the Prophet Jesus!!" He goes on

to explain the two terms “*din*” and “*Iqamah*”, categorically stating that the *Ummah* of the past centuries failed to establish a proper meaning to these terms.

It is obvious that he was influenced by the connotation that the word “*Iqamah*” carries in the Urdu language. He writes: “The word *iqamat* (to establish)... when used in respect of a thing which is not material but spiritual in nature does not merely imply preaching it but also acting according to it as best as one can, introducing it and enforcing it practically.. When the Qur’ān enjoins the establishment of the Prayer (*salat*), it does not imply that one should merely preach and exhort others to the Prayer but that one should not only perform it oneself, observing all its conditions, but should also strive to make arrangements so that it becomes a regular practice among the believers. There should be mosques, there should be arrangements for offering the Prayer collectively and for the Friday congregational Prayer, and for making calls to the Prayer punctually; give sermons, and the people should visit the mosques regularly and punctually and make offering the Prayer an essential part of their daily routine.”

He goes on to devote a few pages to expound the two terms under discussion. A detailed refutation might not be necessary after the quotations from the classical scholars presented above. But, in contrast to the detailed study that he alleges was lacking on part of the scholars of the past, a cursory look into the Qur’ānic usage of the terms would demonstrate that the meaning and implication as given by him do not find support, e.g.:

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِدُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ

“Establish the Prayer at the sun’s decline until the darkness of the night” (17: 78).

وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَيْنِ الزَّكَاةَ

“Establish the Prayer (O women-folk of the Prophet’s house) and give out in charity” (33: 33).

And,

وَإِذَا كُنْتَ فِيهِمْ فَأَقِمْ لَهُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَلْتَقُمْ طَائِفَةٌ

“And, if you happen to be among them (O Prophet), and are establishing the Prayer, then, let a group stand.” (4: 102).

فَإِذَا أَطْمَأْنَنْتُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ

“Then, when you are in peace (after the situation of fear), establish the Prayer” (4: 103).

(Unable to set up Prayer houses because of the fear of Fir’aun, the Israelites were told),

وَاجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ قِبْلَةً وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ

“And treat your houses as Qiblah,
and establish the Prayer” (10:87).

It should be obvious from the above usages that the definition of “*Iqamah*” as “acting according to it as best as one can, introducing it and enforcing it practically, preaching and exhorting...” does not fit into the contexts. The following Qur’anic usage clarifies it further:

قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَقِيمُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ تَعُودُونَ

“Say, ‘My Lord has ordered justice and (that) you should set your faces at every Prayer and call upon Him making the religion sincerely His. Even as He began you, you shall return’” (7: 29).

Thus, *Iqamah* has the connotations of doing a thing well, and *aqimu* al-din primarily means to live by the *Shari’ah* punctiliously, rather than enforcing it upon others, although, the nature of the Din is such that that establishing it in the society and community of Muslims at large, is ‘part’ of its demand; but it is not the primary demand (Au.).

18. Asad very nicely presents earlier opinions: “Most of the great commentators (e.g. Zamakhshari, Razi, Ibn Kathir) understand this as an

unequivocal reference to the ecumenical unity of all religions based on belief in one God, notwithstanding all the differences with regard to ‘the [specific] statutes and practices enjoined for the benefit of the various communities in accordance with their [time-bound] conditions (*‘ala hasab ahwaliha*)’ as expressed by Zamakhshari in his comments on the verse under discussion.”

19. “Hard it was for the pagans that from among them it was Muhammad who was marked out for receiving the Revelation. They wanted it to be sent down upon a man of great reputation and honor. Muhammad had no special qualities, that is, by their standards, except that he was trustworthy. He belonged to a tribe of average status. They wanted him to be leader of a powerful tribe.

“It was also hard upon them that with the coming of the new mission, their old religious system – of deities, idols, myths and superstitions - that promised them privileges should collapse and they reduced to the status of common men. Pure monotheism was hard upon them and so they clung hard to their ancient religion.

“It was also hard upon them that they should hear people say that their fathers and grand fathers who died

[14] And they differed not but after knowledge had come to them,²¹ out of contentious envy between them. Had it not been for a word that preceded from your Lord (about) a slated term,²² it would have been decided between them. Surely, those who have been given the Book after them as inheritance are in suspicion thereof, dubitating.²³

وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ
بَعْثًا بَيْنَهُمْ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى لَفُضِّي بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ
الَّذِينَ أُورِثُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لَفِي
شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيبٍ ﴿١٤﴾

on paganism were wrongly guided. In their idiocy they accepted to end up in Hell because they did not wish to hear criticism of their ancestors” (Sayyid Qutub).

20. “Guides to Himself”: i.e., induces them to piety, live a goodly life following Prophetic teachings, and avoid His disobedience (Ibn Jarir).

This *Ayah* is similar to that of Al-Ahzab, numbered 7, which also named the same five Messengers, starting from Nuh, ending with Muhammad, and three in between: Ibrahim, Musa and ‘Isa, the five otherwise known as “Messengers of Strong Will” (Ibn Kathir). However, there is no *hadith* to this effect. Shafi’ adds: Adam (*asws*) was not mentioned perhaps because there was no corruption (of doctrinal or moral nature) during his time.

21. Asad explains, “Lit., ‘they did not break up their unity until after knowledge had come to them’ –

i.e., the knowledge that God is one, and that the teachings of all of His Prophets were essentially the same.”

22. The word that preceded was to the effect that they would not be punished for their disbelief and transgression but at an appointed time.

23. That is, those who differed in such primary tenets as Allah’s oneness or other such basic principles, and corrupted their Scriptures, did not do it out of ignorance or misunderstanding. There could not have been any confusion or obfuscation in issues of fundamental importance. They did it out of obstinacy, envy, hatred for each other and in order to make worldly gains. However, after they had achieved their objectives, and different sects and parties had firmly pitched their tents, there came their progenies who were led into doubts and such debutant theories that would not give them peace of

[15] To this then,²⁴ invite (them). And remain steadfast as you have been ordered,²⁵ and follow not their base desires. And say, 'I believe in what Allah has sent down of the Book and I have been ordered that I should judge between you justly;²⁶ Allah is our Lord, and your Lord; we have our deeds and you have your deeds; there is no argument between us and you. Allah will gather us together and to Him is the return.'²⁷

فَلِذَلِكَ فَادْعُ وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَقُلْ آمَنْتُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَعْدِلَ بَيْنَكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ لَا حُجَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمُ اللَّهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٥﴾

mind. All this happened because Allah (*swt*) gave freedom to His slaves. Had He wished, He could have restrained them and removed all their differences. But He decided to allow them respite and reserve the judgment until the next life (Shabbir).

Sayyid quotes J.H.Denison from his "Emotion as the Basis of Civilization": "In the fourth and fifth centuries the human civilization was on the borders of a pit about to fall into it. The values that help in the establishment of the civilization had collapsed without the availability of an alternative. It looked as though the Great City which had taken four thousand years of hard labor to build, was about to cave in and collapse, and the humans were very doubtful that it would ever return to what it was a second time because of the savagery that had visited it. Tribes were fiercely fighting and eliminat-

ing each other in a world in which neither there was any law nor any order. As for the order that Christianity had newly brought, it was indeed working to disunite and disintegrate rather than unite and build... It was in this situation of universal anarchy that there appeared a man who was to unite the world.." (That is, Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him).

24. This rendering is following an understanding viz., "to this Qur'an then, invite the people." Another possible meaning is, it is to this religion – upon which Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa and 'Isa were – that you should invite the people (Ibn Jarir).

25. That is, when such is the situation that the people around you are in grave confusion over the religions they have inherited, which is the cause of the present anarchy, you should, O Prophet, in this scenario

[16] As for those who dispute concerning Allah after He has been responded to, their argument is void in the sight of their Lord;²⁸ upon them rests anger, and for them is a severe chastisement.

وَالَّذِينَ يُحَاجُّونَ فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
اسْتُجِيبَ لَهُ حُجَّتُهُمْ دَاحِضَةٌ عِنْدَ
رَبِّهِمْ وَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ

﴿١٦﴾

remain steadfast on your part, not paying any attention to this one or that one in the least.

26. Given the context and the period of revelation, it is not clear what exactly is meant by judging between the unbelievers justly. Most commentators have passed over it. Asad's comment could be thought over. He writes: "I.e., 'to induce you to be more tolerant of one another': evidently an allusion to the bitterness which stands in the way of understanding between the various sects and schools of thought in all revealed religions."

However, one is tempted to believe that the *Ayah* is announcing the emergence of a new leadership after the test period has elapsed at the oncoming point of Emigration (Au.).

27. It might be noted that this verse consists of ten complete sentences. From this angle it resembles – though briefer – *Ayah al-Kursiyy* which also consists of ten sentences (Ibn Kathir).

Shabbir paraphrases the *Ayah*: Whether it is words or deeds, you should, O Prophet, stay firm with the mission and the guidance that you have been bestowed, unmindful of criticism that surrounds you. You should announce that so far as I am concerned, I believe in the truth that Torah, *Njil* and other Books of Allah contain. I have been ordered to judge equitably between you in matters in which you have been differing. But if you disagree and continue to go your way, then, I am not here to enforce my guidance on you. Our Lord is, after all, one Lord God to whom all will return. He will reward everyone according to his deeds. So, to you your deeds, and to us, ours. Let everyone be ready to face the consequences of his choices. There is no point in quarreling, nor any use in polemics.

28. At the first instance, the reference seems to have been to the Jews and Christians who had begun their polemics with Muslims although the Prophet was still in Makkah, where

[17] Allah it is who sent down the Book with Truth, and the Balance.²⁹ And, what will make you know that perhaps the Hour is close.³⁰

[18] Those who do not believe in it seek to hasten it; but those who have believed, they are in fear of it and know that it is the truth. Lo, those who dispute concerning the Hour are surely in a distant error.

اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَالْمِيزَانَ
وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ قَرِيبٌ ﴿١٧﴾
يَسْتَعْجِلُ بِهَا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا مُشْفِقُونَ مِنْهَا وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهَا الْحَقُّ
أَلَا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُمَارُونَ فِي السَّاعَةِ لَفِي
ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿١٨﴾

they were not represented, and who never ended their argumentation and disputations thereonward over the truth of Islam. The Jews, for instance, claimed that theirs was the most ancient revealed religion, and hence the best! Although believers in God, the Jews and Christians could not reconcile themselves to absolute and pure monotheism, the coming down of a fresh revelation, the raising of a new Prophet among the non-Israelites, and the submission of some people to the Islamic way of life. Since its inception Islam has remained, whether in their neighborhood, or far away in the distant Arab world, a little bone struck in their throats that they can neither gulp down nor cast out: a perpetual cause of acute discomfort (Au.).

29. Allah (*swt*) has sent down a material, physical, balance wherewith physical substances are measured. He has sent down another, incorpo-

real balance which is known as “the sound intellect” (*`aqlu salim*). There is yet another balance (criterion) which is known as the moral balance that functions with the help of “sound intellect.” However, the most important of balances (criterion) is the true religion which helps judge the rights of Allah against the rights of His creations (Shabbir).

30. What’s the connection between these three: sending down of the Book, the balance, and closeness of the Hour? The answer is that the revelation of the Book demands that justice be rendered which can be achieved with the help of the balance. Now, just as there has to be rendering of justice in the world, there has to be another, final judgment of deeds. This will happen when the Hour is struck. So, an unbeliever may ask, “When is the Hour going to be?” (meaning, when will that Final Judgment be?), the answer

[19] Allah is All-subtle³¹ with His slaves and provides whomsoever He will (abundantly); He is the Powerful, the Mighty.

اللَّهُ لَطِيفٌ بِعِبَادِهِ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ
الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter, We grant him increase in his harvest;³² and whoever desires the harvest of this world, We grant him out of it,³³ but he has no share in the Hereafter.

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَصِيبٍ
﴿٢٠﴾

is, "It is close at hand" (based on Zamaikhshari).

Ibn Kathir writes:

وقد روي من طرق تبلغ درجة التواتر في الصحاح والحسان والسنن والمسانيد، وفي بعض ألفاظه أن رجلاً سأل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بصوت جهوري وهو في بعض أسفاره، فناداه فقال: يا محمد، فقال له رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم نحوه من صوته: "هاؤم"، فقال له: متى الساعة؟ فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "ويحك إنما كائنة فما أعددت لها؟" فقال: حب الله ورسوله، فقال صلى الله عليه وسلم: "أنت مع من أحببت"

It has been reported through so many chains of narration that the report reaches mutawatir status; and is found in *Sahih* collections (such as Bukhari and Muslim), as well as in several other collections, that during a journey a man addressed the

Prophet in a pretty loud voice, "O Muhammad!" The Prophet (*saws*) replied to him in the same pitch, "Here I am." He asked, "When will the Hour be?" The Prophet answered him, "Woe unto you. It has to be. But what have you prepared for it?" He answered, "Love of Allah and His Messenger." The Prophet told him, "You will be with those you love."

31. The textual "*Latif*" in its present form indicates superabundance both in quantity as well as in quality and is a noun that applies to Him who knows infinitesimally minute details of people's needs and, (ignoring the people's disbelief: Shabbir), administers His blessings in a most subtle and concealed manner (finely suited to the needs of the recipients: Yusuf Ali). In its ultimate sense it is applicable to Allah alone (Alusi).

32. Ibn 'Abbas and Suddi interpreted the textual word harvest (of the first occurrence) as meaning, deeds (Ibn Jarir). That is, whoever desired

the deeds that will benefit him in the Hereafter, Allah grants him increase in his deeds (Ibn Kathir), meaning, Razi points out, that the person is able to do and achieve much more than what he could ordinarily have hoped within his limits (Au.).

Imām Razi explains the word “harvest” (of the second occurrence) as meaning “rewards,” which signals that both this as well as the next world are obtained through hard work alone, as any harvest can be reaped only after prolonged efforts, although, the rewards of this world are bound to be of a lower order. This is indicated by the insertion of the term “harth” at both the points.

As for increase in the harvest, continues Razi, it is best explained by the following *hadith*:

مَنْ كَانَ هَمُّهُ الْآخِرَةَ جَمَعَ اللَّهُ شَمْلَهُ
وَجَعَلَ غِنَاهُ فِي قَلْبِهِ وَأَتَتْهُ الدُّنْيَا وَهِيَ
رَاغِمَةٌ وَمَنْ كَانَتْ نِيَّتُهُ الدُّنْيَا فَرَّقَ اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ ضِعَّتَهُ وَجَعَلَ فَقْرَهُ بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْهِ وَلَمْ
يَأْتِهِ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَا كُتِبَ لَهُ

“Whoever had the next world as his main concern will have Allah organizing his affairs. He places self-satisfaction in his heart and the world comes to him willy-nilly, submitted. While he who

aimed at this world, will have Allah disorder his affairs. He places his poverty between his two eyes while, of this world nothing comes to him but what is destined for him.”

The report is in Ahmad and Tabarani, treated by Haythami in his “Ma-jma’” as trustworthy (Au.).

And the rule is, adds Qurtubi, Allah (*swt*) grants what He will of this world also to those who intend the Hereafter, but grants nothing of the Hereafter to those who choose to work for this world alone.

We might remind ourselves of a better illustrative passage of the Qur’ān (17: 18-21):

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَاءُ لِمَنْ
نُرِيدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَاهَا مَذْمُومًا مَدْحُورًا،
وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا، كُلًّا يُدْهِئُ هَؤُلَاءِ وَهَؤُلَاءِ مِنْ
عَطَاءِ رَبِّكَ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَاءُ رَبِّكَ مَخْطُورًا، انْظُرْ كَيْفَ
فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَلِلْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجَاتٍ
وَأَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيلًا (الإسراء ١٨-٢١)

“Whosoever coveted the immediate (reward), We hasten whatsoever of it We will, unto whomsoever We will, and then We appoint for him Jahannum wherein he will rest, blamed and rejected. (Whereas) Those who coveted the Hereafter, and strove for it in the manner of its striving - and he is a believer -

those, their striving is appreciated (by Allah). (Unto) everyone - these as well as those - We extend (freely) the bounties of your Lord - and the bounties of your Lord are not such as to be denied (to anyone). See then how We give preference to some over others. But surely, the Hereafter is greater in rank and greater in excellence" (Qur-tubi, Ibn Kathir).

We may also make note of a pertinent *hadith* which Haythami treated as trustworthy. (It is in Baghawi's *Sharh al-Sunnah*: Sami). It says,

عن أبي بن كعب قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: -بشر هذه الأمة بالسنة والرفعة والدين والنصر والتمكين في الأرض وهو يشك في السادسة قال: فمن عمل منهم عمل الآخرة للدنيا لم يكن له في الآخرة نصيب.

Ubayy b. Ka`b reports the Prophet (*saw*) as having said, "Give glad tidings to this *Ummah* of sublimity, exaltedness, religion, (Allah's) help, and establishment in the earth" – but of the sixth the narrator was not sure. He also said, "But whoever of them did a deed of the Hereafter for

the sake of this world, will have no share in the Hereafter" (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

In this connection, the following could also be quoted. It is in Hakim which he declared trustworthy. It says,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: إِنْ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى يَقُولُ: يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ تَفَرَّغْ لِعِبَادَتِي أَمْلَأُ صَدْرَكَ غِنًى وَأَسَدَّ فَقْرَكَ وَإِلَّا تَفَعَّلْ مَلَأْتُ يَدَيْكَ شُغْلًا وَلَمْ أَسَدَّ فَقْرَكَ

The Prophet reported Allah (*saw*) as saying, "Son of Adam. Free yourself for My worship, I will fill your breast with wealth and block your poverty; if you did not, I will fill your two hands with work and will not block your poverty."

Tirmidhi declared the above *hadith* as weak, but Albani treated as trustworthy (S. Ibrahim).

33. That is, he is not granted all that he desires, (nor all that he works for: Au.) but only that which is his share in the Divine scheme (Tabari).

[21] Or, have they associates (in Divinity)³⁴ who have laid down as religion for them that for which Allah gave no leave?³⁵ Were it not for the word of decision, it would have been decided between them.³⁶ Surely, the transgressors will have a severe chastisement.

أَمْ هُمْ شُرَكَاءُ شَرَعُوا لَهُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَنْ بِهِ اللَّهُ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةُ الْفَصْلِ لَفُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

﴿٢١﴾

34. The direct meaning of the term *sharik* (pl. *shuraka'*) is quite well known. But few people realize the wider implications. Mawdudi writes: "(The term *shuraka'*) inevitably refers to those men whom the people regard as associates in the authority and sovereignty of Allah, whose thoughts, creeds, ideologies and philosophies they believe in, whose values they admit, whose moral precepts and norms of civilization and culture they accept, and whose laws and rules and regulations they adopt in their rituals and rites of worship, in their personal and collective lives, in their trade and business dealings, in their politics and governments, as if they constituted the *Shari'ah* that they had to follow faithfully."

But of course, the above is true with the added condition that there is a contradiction between the Islamic requirements of the obligatory nature, and the various demands of the *shuraka'* (Au.).

35. That is, have their associates legalized in religion what Allah has not legalized? (Ibn Jarir).

Those were the devils who dictated the religion of association with Allah, and denial of Resurrection that led them to live and die for this world alone (Zamakhshari).

Ibn Kathir writes: They follow not but the religion of those they have declared partners to Allah who have made lawful to them what Allah made unlawful and made unlawful what Allah declared unlawful. The Prophet has informed us of the fate of those who introduced religious practices not sanctioned by Allah. He said to us, as in Bukhari:

رَأَيْتُ عَمْرَو بْنَ عَامِرِ بْنِ لُحْيٍ الْخُزَاعِيَّ يَجُرُّ قَصْبَهُ فِي النَّارِ ، وَكَانَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ سَبَّ السَّوَابِ

"I saw `Amr b. `Amir b. Luhayy al-Khuzai`i dragging his intestines in the Fire. He was the first to institute the Sa'ibah."

It was `Amr b. Luhayy, a chieftain of the Quraysh who had introduced idol-worship among them (Ibn Kathir).

The verse also carries, adds Thanwi, invalidation of all kinds and varieties of innovations (bid`ah).

Sayyid adds: "There is none among the creations who has the right to legalize or prohibit against what Allah dictates, no matter who he is. Allah alone dictates the Law; for the simple reason that He is the Originator of the world, the whole of it, and is its Administrator, employing a set of laws that He chooses to employ. Human life in this vast world is nothing but a tiny gear in the immensely massive wheel that turns around. It is the requirement of reason then that the laws the human follow must agree with the Laws that turn this massive wheel. This will not happen unless the Turner Himself dictates the laws to them. It is also an apparent fact that there is none who has any part in the Turning of the universal wheel. There is none who can be relied upon for dictating laws, so long as He is denied any role in the massive Turning.

"Yet, and despite the explicitness of this point, there are many who dispute with it, or, are not pleased with

it, and, therefore, are headstrong enough to assume law-making role for themselves, professing that they have made a good choice for the good of their people, trying to harmonize between the circumstances in which they find themselves and the laws they make; as if they know better than Allah Himself; as if they have associates in Allah who legitimize for them what Allah has not legitimized. There cannot be any greater misadventure than this nor any other more reckless attitude.

"Allah has enacted laws which are in perfect harmony with the laws of nature, that is, the laws that govern man and govern the rest of the universe. He has left for the humans only those details to fill as the situation of their life requires in various times and climes. Yet, while doing so, they are to remain within the boundaries of the Divine law promulgated by Him, so that, whenever there is any difference between the humans, they are to refer back to the set of revealed laws which act as the criteria and the ultimate paradigm.

"In this manner, the source of Law remains one, and in its origin, Divine, so that the Command is for Allah alone - and He is the best to Command. Whatever else is there,

[22] You will see the transgressors fearful on account of what they have earned,³⁷ but it will (inevitably) fall upon them. As for those who believed and worked righteousness, they will be in meadows³⁸ of the gardens. For them will be, with their Lord, what they desire.³⁹ That indeed is the great bounty.

تَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا وَهُمْ
وَأَقْعَبَ بِهِمُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
فِي رَوْضَاتِ الْجَنَّاتِ لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ
رَبِّهِمْ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] This is wherewith Allah gives the glad tiding to (such of) His slaves who believe and do righteous deeds.⁴⁰ Say, 'I do not ask you any wage for this except for love of kinship.'⁴¹ And, whoever earns a good, We shall cause him increase in good therein. Indeed, Allah is All-forgiving, All-appreciative.⁴²

ذَلِكَ الَّذِي يُبَشِّرُ اللَّهُ عِبَادَهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ
أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَمَن يَعْرِفْ
حَسَنَةً نَّذَرْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا حُسْنًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ
شَكُورٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

apart from this, is rebellion against Allah, His Command, and His Law, the Law that He dictated to Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, 'Isa and Muhammad, peace be upon them all."

36. That is, between believers and unbelievers (Zamakhshari, Alusi).

37. They will then be in the Field of Judgment (Ibn Kathir).

38. "Rawdah" is for a well-watered piece of land, full of vegetation (Alusi).

39. Abu Tayba is reported to have said that a patch of cloud will overshadow a group of people in Paradise and say, "What shall I rain down on you?" No one will ask for anything but it will rain down that particular thing, to the extent that one of

them will say, "Rain down on us high-bosomed damsels of our age" (Ibn Kathir [quoting Ibn Jarir as the source], Alusi).

It may be noted that this is not a *hadith*.

40. The reference could be to the "nearness of Allah" mentioned in the previous verse. True, material blessings will be there, but the best of them is closeness to Allah. What other blessing can compare with this? To quote the Qur'ān:

"This is wherewith Allah gives the glad tiding to (such of) His slaves who believe and do righteous deeds" (Au., with a hint from Shabbir's note placed at an earlier verse).

41. It is reported that Ibn `Abbas was asked to identify the “*al-qurba*” of this occurrence. His pupil Sa`id b. Jubayr spoke out saying, “they are the Prophet’s immediate kinsfolk.” Ibn `Abbas interjected, “You have been hasty. To be sure, there was not a clan in Makkah but was related to the Prophet.” The Quraysh were thus told that if they would not accept the Prophet’s message, they should in the least respect the ties of kinship (and treat him well). He was not asking for wages for his preaching, so why should they resort to persecuting him? Doesn’t kinship demand a better treatment? `Ikrimah, Ibn Malik, Qatadah, Suddi and others have expressed the same opinion (Ibn Jarir, Alusi).

The report is in Bukhari (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Ibn Jarir also presents two other minority opinions: (1) I do not ask for wages except that you – O my followers – love my kinsfolk and (2) “.. except that you seek Allah’s closeness (*qurba*),” but rejects both as incorrect interpretations, as do most commentators including Mufti Shafi`, Shabbir and others.

Nonetheless, since the topic has come, Ibn Kathir quotes a few

ahadith. The following is in Muslim and Nasa’i.

(عن) يَزِيدُ بْنُ حَيَّانَ. قَالَ: انْطَلَقْتُ أَنَا وَحُصَيْنٌ
بُنُ سَبْرَةَ وَعُمَرُ بْنُ مُسْلِمٍ إِلَى زَيْدِ بْنِ أَرْقَمَ. فَلَمَّا
جَلَسْنَا إِلَيْهِ قَالَ لَهُ حُصَيْنٌ: لَقَدْ لَقِيتَ، يَا زَيْدُ
خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا. رَأَيْتَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.
وَسَمِعْتَ حَدِيثَهُ. وَغَزَوْتَ مَعَهُ. وَصَلَّيْتَ خَلْفَهُ. لَقَدْ
لَقِيتَ، يَا زَيْدُ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا. حَدَّثَنَا، يَا زَيْدُ، مَا سَمِعْتَ
مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. قَالَ: يَا ابْنَ
أُجَيٍّ وَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ كَرِهْتُ سَيِّئًا. وَقَدْ مَعَّاهُ عَهْدِي. وَنَسِيتُ
بَعْضَ الَّذِي كُنْتُ أَعْيِي مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ. فَمَا حَدَّثْتُكُمْ فَأَقْبَلُوا. وَمَا لَآ، فَلَا تُكَلِّفُونِيهِ.
ثُمَّ قَالَ: قَامَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَوْمًا فِينَا
خَطِيبًا. بِمَاءٍ بُدِعَ حُمًا. بَيْنَ مَكَّةَ وَالْمَدِينَةِ. فَحَمِدَ
اللَّهُ وَأَثْنَى عَلَيْهِ، وَوَعِظَ وَذَكَرَ. ثُمَّ قَالَ: ”أَمَّا بَعْدُ. أَلَا
أَبْهَأُ النَّاسِ فَإِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ يُوشِكُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ رَسُولُ رَبِّي
فَأُجِيبَ. وَأَنَا تَارِكٌ فِيكُمْ تَقْلِينَ: أَوَلَمْ يَكُنْ اللَّهُ فِيهِ
الْهُدَى وَالنُّورُ. فَخُذُوا بِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ. وَاسْتَمْسِكُوا بِهِ“
فَحَثَّ عَلَى كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَرَعَبَ فِيهِ. ثُمَّ قَالَ: ”وَأَهْلُ
بَيْتِي. أَذْكُرُكُمْ اللَّهُ فِي أَهْلِ بَيْتِي. أَذْكُرُكُمْ اللَّهُ فِي أَهْلِ
بَيْتِي. أَذْكُرُكُمْ اللَّهُ فِي أَهْلِ بَيْتِي“. فَقَالَ لَهُ حُصَيْنٌ:
وَمَنْ أَهْلُ بَيْتِهِ؟ يَا زَيْدُ أَلَيْسَ نِسَاؤُهُ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ؟
قَالَ: نِسَاؤُهُ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ. وَلَكِنْ أَهْلُ بَيْتِهِ مِمَّنْ حُرِّمَ
الصَّدَقَةُ بَعْدَهُ. قَالَ: وَمَنْ هُمْ؟ قَالَ: هُمْ آلُ عَلِيٍّ،
وَأُلُ عَقِيلٍ، وَأُلُ جَعْفَرٍ، وَأُلُ عَبَّاسٍ. قَالَ: كُلُّ هَؤُلَاءِ
حُرِّمَ الصَّدَقَةُ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ. (مسلم)

Yezid b. Hayyan reported, “Myself, Hussayn b. Sabrah and `Umar b. Muslim went to see Zayd b. Arqam. When we were seated Hussayn said, ‘O Zayd, you certainly achieved great virtues. You saw the Prophet, heard his talk,

participated in *Jihad* with him and Prayed behind him. Indeed you achieved great good O Zayd. Now, tell us (something) that you heard from the Prophet (himself).’ He replied, ‘Dear nephew, by Allah my age is well advanced and have almost spent my term. I have begun to forget some of the things I had preserved well from the Prophet. Therefore, accept whatever I narrate. As for what I do not, then do not force me do it.’ Then he said, ‘One day the Prophet stood up to deliver a sermon near a water-station called Khumm – between Makkah and Madinah. He said, “After Praises. O people, I am but a man. It is possible that My Lord’s messenger comes to me and I have to respond. I am leaving behind me for you two weighty things: first, Allah’s Book. It has guidance and Light. Therefore, hold fast unto the Book of Allah and adhere to it.” He encouraged us to hold on to the Book. Then he added, “(Secondly) the people of my house. I remind you in Allah about the people of my house. I remind you in Allah about the people of my house. I remind you in Allah about the people of my house.” At that Hussayn inter-

rupted, ‘But who are the people of his house? Are not his wives the people of his house?’ He replied, ‘His women are of course of the people of the house. But the people of the house are all those who were denied charity after him.’ He asked, ‘Who are they?’ He replied, ‘The families of `Ali, `Aqil, Ja`far and `Abbas.’ He asked, ‘Are they all forbidden charity?’ He replied, ‘Yes.’”

Not surprisingly, it is reported of Abu Bakr, as in Bukhari, that he said,

اَتَقْبُوا مُحَمَّدًا صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ

“Be mindful of Muhammad in reference to his kinsfolk.”

The above reports not denied, the Imāmiyyah (the Twelvers of the *Shi`ah*) claim that it is `Ali, Fatimah, and their progeny alone who are the “*al-qurba*” of this and other contexts. They cite a report according to which when Ibn `Abbas was asked who the “*al-qurba*” were who deserve the love of the believers, he is alleged to have said that it were `Ali, Fatimah and their progeny alone.” The report, as Suyuti declared in *Durr al-Manthur*, is weak. Ibn Hajr also judged it weak. Nonetheless, the *Shi`ah* have argued that love of `Ali is obligatory on all Muslims. They argue that he who is loved must be

[24] Or do they say he has forged a lie against Allah? But if Allah willed, He could set a seal on your heart.⁴³ Allah blots out falsehood and establishes the truth with His words. Surely, He is knowing of that which is within the breasts.

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا فَإِنْ
يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ يَخْتِمْ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ وَيَمْحُ اللَّهُ
الْبَاطِلَ وَيُحِقُّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
بِدَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٢٤﴾

obeyed. Consequently, he who has to be obeyed has to be the *Khalifah*. So, 'Ali should have been the first *Khalifah*.

But, Alusi comments, such logic, not to speak of its weakness, also contradicts the Qur'ān. Look at the context. It says, "Say, 'I do not ask you any wage for this except for love of kinship.'" Now, if what the verse is saying is that the Prophet did not seek any wage for his mission except that 'Ali should be appointed his heir, then he has already sought a wage. (The unbelievers could have said, not unjustly, that perhaps all that Muhammad was scheming to win is political leadership for his kith and kin: Au.)

The right meaning then is that all that the Prophet expected from his adversaries was that if the Message was not acceptable to them, they should in that case at least treat him well in view of the fact that they were all of the same family, and not, as

they were planning, kill him, or, by removing the tribal immunity, allow the surrounding tribes to kill him if they so willed.

Further, apart from other spiritual or moral reasons, it is possible that the Prophet had been informed by the shoddy manner in which 'Ali was to be treated after him by the newly arising sects, the treacherous manner in which the *Shi'ah* treated Hussain b. 'Ali at Kufah, and others of 'Ali's progeny later in history, again by the *Shi'ah*, he might have thought it best to warn the *Ummah* about 'the people of his house' (Au.).

42. That is, He is forgiving of those who do evil and All-appreciative of those who do good (Qatadah: Ibn Jarir).

43. That is, seal the Prophet's heart so that he would forget the Qur'ān that had been revealed so far (Qatadah and Suddi: Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Alusi); where would he then bring a new Revelation from? (Au.).

[25] It is He who accepts repentance from His slaves and forgives sins.⁴⁴ And He knows what you do.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَعْفُو عَنِ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] He responds to those who have believed and work righteousness and grants them increase out of His grace. As for the unbelievers, there awaits them a terrible chastisement.

وَيَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَالْكَافِرُونَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] And, if Allah were to enlarge upon the providence for His slaves, they would certainly rebel in the land;⁴⁵ but He sends down in measure whatsoever He will.⁴⁶ Surely He is Aware of His slaves, Seeing.⁴⁷

وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللَّهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهِ لَبَعَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنْ يُنْزِلُ بِقَدَرٍ مَّا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٧﴾

44. We might remind ourselves once again of the oft-quoted *hadith* of Muslim that Ibn Kathir quotes here:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "لِلَّهِ أَشَدُّ فَرَحًا بِتَوْبَةِ عَبْدِهِ، حِينَ يَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ، مِنْ أَخَذِكُمْ كَانَ عَلَى رَاحِلَتِهِ بِأَرْضِ فَلَاةٍ. فَاتَّقَلَّتْ مِنْهُ. وَعَلَيْهَا طَعَامُهُ وَشَرَابُهُ. فَأَيْسَ مِنْهَا. فَأَتَى شَجَرَةً. فَاضْطَجَعَ فِي ظِلِّهَا. قَدْ أَيْسَ مِنْ رَاحِلَتِهِ. فَبَيْنَمَا هُوَ كَذَلِكَ إِذَا هُوَ بِهَا، فَائِمَةٌ عِنْدَهُ. فَأَخَذَ بِخَطَامِهَا. ثُمَّ قَالَ مِنْ شِدَّةِ الْفَرَحِ: اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ عَبْدِي وَأَنَا رَبُّكَ. أخطأ من شِدَّةِ الْفَرَحِ".

The Prophet said, "Allah is more pleased with His servant's repentance – when he repents – than when one of you is on his riding beast in a desert. It gets free of him with his food and drink upon it. He loses all hope, goes to a tree and lies down under its shade despaired of finding his riding beast. While he is in such a

state when, lo, it is by his side! He seizes it by its halter and then in his great joy utters, 'O Allah. You are my slave and I am your Lord.' He errs because of his great joy."

Harith b. al-Humam says that he and a few friends went to see `Abdullah (ibn Mas`ud) to ask him about this *Ayah*. They found a few men with him who asked him about a man who fornicated with a woman and then married her. `Abdullah recited this verse in reply (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir presents a slightly different version of this report from Ibn Abi Hatim.

45. What's the connection between this verse and the previous one? Imām Razi answers that the previous verse said that Allah responds to the virtuous. The question that then arises is,

do we not observe that the virtuous appear badly off, suffer economic deprivation and face hardships? How does Allah respond to them? The answer is in this verse. There are people whom poverty alone suits. If they are granted prosperity, they might indulge in sins. So, in His kindness Allah does not respond to them with exactly what they supplicate for.

It used to be said in our times, said Qatadah, that the best of provision is that which neither leads to rebellion nor to heedlessness (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Jarir also quotes a relevant *hadith* whose equivalent is to be found in Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad and others:

(عن) أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - يُحَدِّثُ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - جَلَسَ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ عَلَى الْمَنْبَرِ وَجَلَسْنَا حَوْلَهُ فَقَالَ « إِنِّي مِمَّا أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِي مَا يُفْتَحُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ زَهْرَةِ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتِهَا ». فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَوَيَأْتِي الْخَيْرُ بِالشَّرِّ فَسَكَتَ النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - فَقِيلَ لَهُ مَا شَأْنُكَ تُكَلِّمُ النَّبِيَّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - وَلَا يَكَلِّمُكَ فَرَأَيْنَا اللَّهَ يُنْزِلُ عَلَيْهِ . قَالَ - فَمَسَحَ عَنْهُ الرُّحْضَاءُ فَقَالَ « أَيْنَ السَّائِلُ » وَكَانَهُ حَمْدُهُ . فَقَالَ « إِنَّهُ لَا يَأْتِي

الْخَيْرُ بِالشَّرِّ ، وَإِنْ مِمَّا يَنْبَغِي الرِّبْعُ يَقْتُلُ أَوْ يُلِمُّ إِلَّا أَكَلَةَ الْخَضِرَاءِ ، أَكَلْتُ حَتَّى إِذَا امْتَدَّتْ خَاصِرَتَاهَا اسْتَقْبَلَتْ عَيْنِ الشَّمْسِ ، فَتَلَطَّتْ وَبَالَتْ وَرَتَعَتْ ، وَإِنْ هَذَا الْمَالُ خَضِرَةٌ حُلْوَةٌ ، فَنَعَمْ صَاحِبُ الْمُسْلِمِ مَا أُعْطِيَ مِنْهُ الْمُسْكِينِ وَالْيَتِيمِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ - أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - - وَإِنَّهُ مَنْ يَأْخُذْهُ بَغَيْرِ حَقِّهِ كَالَّذِي يَأْكُلُ وَلَا يَشْبَعُ ، وَيَكُونُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ » .

Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri: One day the Prophet sat on the pulpit and we gathered around him. He said, "The thing I am afraid of most concerning you after me is the splendors of the world and its ornaments that will be opened up for you." Someone said, "Messenger of Allah! Does good bring forth evil?" The Prophet remained silent for a while. It was said to that person, "What is the matter with you? You speak to the Prophet but he does not speak to you." Then we noticed that he was being inspired. Shortly the Prophet wiped his sweat and said, "Where is the questioner?" It seemed as if the Prophet had approved of his question. Then he said, "Good

never brings forth evil. Indeed it is like what grows on the banks of a stream which either kills or makes the animals sick, except if an animal eats the unhealthy foliage to its fill and then faces the sun, defecates and urinates, then goes back to its grazing. No doubt wealth is sweet and green. But blessed is that wealth of a Muslim from which he gives to the poor, the orphans and to the traveler. (Or the Prophet said something similar to it). No doubt, whoever takes it unlawfully will be like the one who eats but is never satisfied, while his wealth will be a witness against him on the Day of Resurrection.”

To explain the above *hadith*: There are both kinds of grass in a field: healthy as well as unhealthy. If an animal eats the healthy alone, it does not suffer. This is the example of the lawful of this world. But, there are some, like animals. They gulp down to their full, only to defecate, and then begin eating again, just like the animal which eats and defecates, to the end of its life. What good can there be in them, and how different are they from animals? In our times, the above contemptible way of life has been given another name. It is

called consumerism and is considered good for economy. So, more of what the Prophet warned (Au.).

A *hadith* can be quoted in support of Imām Razi’s explanation. It tells us that there is wisdom behind the unequal distribution of wealth. Allah says in a *Qudsi hadith*:

إِنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَمَنْ لَا يَصْلَحُهُ
إِلَّا الْغِنَى وَلَوْ أَفْقَرْتَهُ لَأَفْسَدَهُ ذَلِكَ وَإِنْ
مِنْ عِبَادِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَمَنْ لَا يَصْلَحُهُ إِلَّا
الْفَقْرُ وَلَوْ أَغْنَيْتَهُ لَأَفْسَدَهُ ذَلِكَ

“Surely, among believers in Me is one whom nothing suits but wealth. If I were to make him suffer poverty, it would corrupt him. And, among believers in Me is one whom nothing suits but poverty. If I were to enrich him, it would corrupt him.”

The report is in Ibn Abi Dunya and Ibn ‘Asakir but whose authenticity-judgment could not be traced (Au.).

At all events, adds Qurtubi, it is reported of Anas that he used to say, “O Allah, I believe I am one of those whom poverty does not suit. Therefore, deny me not Your mercy.”

46. The questions arising out of the distribution of wealth are many. The topic is vast and a fuller explanation will require a volume. Asad merely offers a point: “This passage connects

[28] He it is who sends down the rain after they have despaired⁴⁸ and spreads His mercy (far and wide).⁴⁹ And He is the Protector, the Praiseworthy.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُنْزِلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا
وَيَنْشُرُ رَحْمَتَهُ وَهُوَ الْوَلِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٢٨﴾

with, and elucidates, the statement in the preceding verse that God ‘responds unto all who attain to faith and do righteous deeds’ – a statement which, at first glance, seems to be contrary to the fact that whereas many wrongdoers prosper and are happy, many righteous people suffer hurt and deprivation. In reply to this objection, the above verse points elliptically to man’s innate ‘greed for more and more’ (see 102: 1), which often causes him to become ‘grossly overweening whenever he believes himself to be self-sufficient’ (96: 6). To counteract this tendency, the Qur’an stresses again and again that God’s ‘responds’ to the righteous – as well as the wrongdoers – will become fully evident only in the life to come, and not necessarily in this world, which, after all, is only the first, short stage of man’s existence.”

47. A word of further elucidation deserves to be placed here: “It may be objected that all prayers, even of good people, are not answered. The reply is: (1) Not every good person necessarily knows what is best for him, for the values in this life are cu-

riously distorted; and (2) on account of their want of knowledge, if everyone got all that he asked for, there would be chaos and confusion, and ‘transgression and injustice throughout the earth’, for the different interests are so intermingled and interdependent that some measure must be observed in granting people’s wishes. This measure is best supplied by the watchful care of Allah and His perfect knowledge of all our real needs” (Yusuf Ali).

48. (Allah’s mercy is evoked when people enter into a phase of despair. Accordingly: Au.), it is reported that when, during a dry spell, people went to ‘Umar and complained, “Leader of the Faithful. Drought is on them and the people are despaired.” He said, “If so, the rain should be coming. Allah has said, ‘And He it is who sends down the rain after they have despaired.’” (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

What ‘Umar meant was that people’s despair was a sign that Allah’s mercy had been stirred and rains should follow (Au.).

[29] And of His signs is creation of the heavens and the earth and what He has scattered abroad of living creatures therein.⁵⁰ And He is Able to collect them together whenever He will.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا
بَثَّ فِيهِمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى جَمْعِهِمْ إِذَا
يَشَاءُ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

49. Asad sees a deeper meaning: "This reference to the symbol of life-giving rain connects with the preceding statement that 'He bestows [His grace] in due measure, as He wills', and is a preamble, as it were, to the statement in the next verse that all creation is but a visible 'sign' or 'revelation' of God's existence and purposeful activity, as well as of the God-willed continuation of all life in the hereafter."

50. "Therein," i.e., both in the earth and in the heavens. Mujahid thought that by the words "living creatures" it is humans and angels that are meant (Ibn Jarir). Ibn Kathir thinks that Jinn and animals are included by default. But Alusi objects to the above interpretations since "*dabbah*" is primarily for creeping creatures which could be extended to include all kinds of animals, but not humans, Jinn or angels. It could be concluded therefore, that apart from the earth, there can be some kind of animals and other living creatures in other parts of the universe.

With reference to Alusi's opinion above, one should appreciate how little Muslim scholars were influenced by the Jewish and Christian literatures despite consulting them so often. Rationalism, and freedom from superstition and influences of folklore, have yet remained the hallmark of Islamic mind. In this instance, it was not but three hundred years before Islam that Saint Augustine, the greatest man ever in Christianity after St. Paul, believed that on this earth (not in the atmosphere where, according to the Christians, more weird creatures existed) such beings lived as, e.g., "Sciopodes who could shelter themselves from the sun in the shade of one foot, or the Cynocephali, who had dogs' heads and barked" (although otherwise, both were thought to be human: Au.). According to Saint Augustine both Sciopodes and Cynocephali, would have to be included as equal citizens when God's own city is established in the lands following the teachings of Jesus Christ. The source of this information is no less than

[30] And, whatever affliction strikes you is because of what your own hands have earned,⁵¹ although He forgives much.⁵²

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ
أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

[31] And you are not such as those to frustrate (Him) in the earth, nor do you have, besides Allah, a Protector or a Helper.

وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَكُمْ
مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٣١﴾

Saint Augustine's own book: *The City of God*. Refer its abridged edition, Image Books, USA, 1958.

In fact, life in places other than the earth has been an agonizing thought for the orthodox Jews and Christians. Every time the scientists announce that there is evidence of life elsewhere in the universe, they have anxious moments, to regain their self only when they retract their statements. Although there have been stray opinions (see *We are Not Alone* by Walter Sullivan, Plume Books), what bothers the Jews is, if there is intelligent life elsewhere, then, how can the earthian Jews remain the chosen people of God; and what is excruciating for the Christians is that if there is intelligent life elsewhere, then, how can God's salvation work there taking into consideration the fact that He has sent his 'only begotten Son,' and the 'only means of salvation' - Jesus Christ - to the earth? (Au.).

51. "This oft-recurring phrase is a Qur'anic metonym for man's doings and conscious attitudes in this world, meant to bring out the fact that these doings or attitudes are the 'harvest' of a person's spiritual character and have, therefore, a definite influence on the quality of his life in the hereafter" (Asad).

52. As Allah said elsewhere (35: 45):

وَلَوْ يَخَذُّ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِمَا كَسَبُوا مَا تَرَكَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهَا
مِنْ دَابَّةٍ

"If Allah were to seize the people for what they earn, He would not have left a living creature on its back."

And the Prophet said as in a *hadith* of the *Sahihayn*,

عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَا يُصِيبُ
الْمُسْلِمَ مِنْ نَصَبٍ وَلَا وَصَبٍ وَلَا هَمٍّ وَلَا حُزْنٍ وَلَا
أَذًى وَلَا غَمٍّ حَتَّى الشُّوْكَةِ يُشَاكُّهَا إِلَّا كَفَّرَ اللَّهُ بِهَا
مِنْ خَطَايَاهُ.

"There is no affliction that strikes a Muslim - neither fatigue, disease, worry, grief, harm, nor

anguish, including a thorn that pricks him - but Allah expiates (a sin) thereby.”

Another report elucidates further. It is in Ahmad which says,

عن أبي سخيـلة قال: قال علي رضي الله عنه: -
ألا أخبركم بأفضل آية في كتاب الله تعالى حدثنا
بها رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ما أصابكم
من مصيبة فيما كسبت أيديكم ويعفو عن كثير
وسأفسرها لك يا علي ما أصابكم من مرض أو
عقوبة أو بلاء في الدنيا فيما كسبت أيديكم والله
تعالى أكرم من أن يثني عليهم العقوبة في الآخرة وما
عفا الله تعالى عنه في الدنيا فالله تعالى أحلم من أن
يعود بعد عفوّه.

‘Ali said, “May I not inform you about the best of verses in Allah’s Book that the Prophet told us about? It is: ‘And, whatever affliction strikes you is because of what your own hands have earned, although He forgives much,’ And I shall explain to you presently O ‘Ali (said the Prophet): No disease strikes you, nor a scourge or a tribulation of this world, but it is because of what your hands have earned. And, Allah is more generous than that He should repeat the punishment upon you in the Hereafter and, Allah is more clement than that He should return (to punishment) after having forgiven (Qurtubi, Alusi).”

The report is also in Ibn Abi Hatim (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani); but its authenticity could not be traced (Au.).

After stating the above narrative, Imām Razi reports Wahidi as explaining why this verse is the best of verses. Allah (*swt*) divided the sins of the believers into two categories: first, those that are forgiven through expiations, and second, those that He forgives in this world itself; and He is the Noble who will not return to punishment. Thus, the believer will rise on the Day of Judgment sinless, and thus this is the most hope-giving *Ayah* of the Qur’ān.

It is also reported, continue Ibn Kathir and Shawkani, that some people entered upon ‘Imran b. Hussayn who was suffering from some bodily ailment. Somebody remarked, “We feel sorry to see you in this state.” He replied, “Do not be sorry. What you see is nothing but the result of sins; although what Allah forgives is much.”

And, Alusi adds, Asma’ bint Abi Bakr would place her hand on her head when she experienced headache and say, “This is because of my sins although Allah forgives much.”

As for Prophets and pious men, the tribulations they undergo are for raising their status in the Hereafter (Thanwi and others).

[32] And, among His signs are the ships in the sea like landmarks.⁵³

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ الْجَوَارِ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ ﴿٣٢﴾

[33] If He willed, He could still the wind; then they would remain motionless on its back.⁵⁴ In that there surely are signs for every stoutly patient, thanksgiving (person).

إِنْ يَشَأْ يُسْكِنِ الرِّيحَ فَيَظْلَلْنَ رَوَاكِدَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] Or He could wreck them on account of what they earn, but He forgives much.

أَوْ يُوقِفَهُنَّ بِمَا كَسَبُوا وَيَعْفُ عَنْ كَثِيرٍ ﴿٣٤﴾

[35] And let those who dispute in Our signs know that they have no place to escape.

وَيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَجِيصٍ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] Whatsoever thing you are given is for the enjoyment of the life of this world, while what is with Allah is better and longer lasting for those who believe,⁵⁵ and place (their) trust in their Lord.⁵⁶

فَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

53. It might be remembered that the Prophet had neither seen a boat nor a sea, far from ships of enormous size standing tall on water resembling landmarks. Nor can it be said that he could have heard the apt description from someone. In view of the fact that this *Surah* is Makkan, where his opponents found fault with everything he said or did, had the Prophet reproduced the description of another person, that person would have immediately claimed that the Prophet had taken the beautiful expression from him (Au.).

54. "On its back" i.e., on the back of the sea (Au.).

55. We present a summary of the summary that Sayyid Qutb places here of the passage that follows from this *Ayah* onward: These verses depict the qualities of the community of Muslims that was raised in Makkah and before the establishment of an Islamic state in Madinah. We need to ponder over them, in view of the fact that they are the qualities of a people who were to take up the leadership of mankind. They are: Faith, trust in Allah, avoidance of the major sins and the obscene, forgiveness in the state of anger, responding to Allah's calls, establishment of the Prayer, extensive consultation, expending

in the way of Allah, avenging the oppressor, forgiveness, reformation and patience. These are the criteria by which the Muslim community is measured. These should always remain before the sight of the people.

Thereafter Sayyid presents extracts on “faith” from Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi’s well-known master-piece of its time, “*Ma dha khasira al-‘alam binhitat al-Muslimin*”? (What did the World Lose from the Decline of the Muslims?). We drop out the last three paragraphs here: “The major knot was unentangled – the knot of Association and disbelief - and the rest of the knots automatically uncoiled. The Prophet fought against this first, after which he did not need to fight for the sake of every command and every prohibition. Islam overcame the *Jahiliyyah* in its first concerted attack. Thereafter, (Divine) help was his ally in every battle that was fought. They had entered into Islam wholeheartedly, wholly and completely: with their bodies, minds, hearts and souls: not disputing with the Prophet after what of the Guidance had become apparent to them; not finding any resistance in their hearts to what the Prophet decided about them, leaving no other choice nor alternatives after what he had commanded or prohibited

but to obey (p.73, second print).

“Until, when *Shaytan*’s share had left their hearts – but rather, when their selves had renounced their share – and had done justice to their inner selves, the way they would do to others, and, while living in this world they became men of the other world, living out today as men of tomorrow, no infliction frightening them, nor any blessing affecting them with vanity; no want busying them, no wealth leading them to arrogance, no trade making them unheeding, no power weakening them, neither seeking dominance in the land nor corruption, but rather became standards of judgment for the people: those who stood by justice being witnesses against themselves, even if it happened to be against their own souls, or their parents and kin. The east and west were subdued for them and they became guardians of humanity, preservers of the worlds, callers to the religion of Allah...” (page 74).

Discussing the effects of true faith on human character and behavior, he (Abul Hasan Ali) wrote: “People, whether Arabs or non-Arabs, were living in *Jahiliyyah*; prostrating themselves to every thing that was created to serve them. That was a

life in which neither the one obedient to the law was rewarded nor one discarding it was punished. An individual neither enjoined the good nor prevented the evil. Religiousness was something superficial in their lives. It had no power over their souls, their selves, or their hearts, nor did it influence their character or their environment. Their belief in God was in a Person who had created to perfection but had abandoned the kingdom to mankind placing the mantle of Lordship on them. In consequence, they took upon themselves, the running of the affairs, distribution of wealth and property, and various other affairs that a kingdom attempts to organize. Their faith in God was something that can be termed as historical. It was similar to that which is obtained when students ask their history teacher in reference to God, and about creation of the heavens and the earth. They ask the teacher, 'Who got this palace constructed?' The teacher answers, 'It was built by such and such a historical personality.' The teacher need not show any respect to that king of the past, nor should he feel any fear. That was the nature of replies they received when they inquired about God. In consequence, their religion was free of any fear of God and of

hope when they addressed their supplications to Him. They knew nothing about God that would endear Him to them. Their knowledge in this respect was vague, puzzling, incomplete and brief. It created neither love in their hearts nor fear..."

"... The Arabs, and those who entered into Islam, stepped up, from this sick, obscure and spiritless understanding into clear, profound and spiritual understanding that exercised influence on the body, heart and soul, affecting the morals and the society. They believed in someone 'whose are the best of Names and the best of examples: the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Master of the Day of Judgment, the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Granter of Peace, the Preserver, the Mighty, the Enforcer, the Proud, the Creator, the Originator, the Shaper, the Wise, the Forgiving, the Loving, the Kind: He to whom belongs the creation and whose is the Command, who has the sovereignty over all, and over everything, who gives refuge against whom no one can provide refuge ...' to the end of the description of Him given in the Qur'ān. He rewards with Paradise and tortures with Fire. He extends provision unto whomsoever He will or restricts, who knows the hidden in the heavens and the

[37] And those who avoid the great sins⁵⁷ and the obscene, and, when they get angry, they are forgiving.⁵⁸

وَالَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبَائِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ
وَإِذَا مَا غَضِبُوا هُمْ يَغْفِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

earth, who knows the treachery of the eye and what the breasts conceal ... to the end of what has come in the Qur'an describing His knowledge, power and ability.

"With this kind of clear, all-comprehensive and profound faith, the believers underwent an amazing alteration in their personalities. When one of them entered into belief and testified that there is no deity but Him, his life underwent a massive change, inside and outside. Faith entered into the inside of him and then spread thereon into every artery, pervading every perception. It ran through his body like blood through the veins, pulling out the germs of the *Jahiliyyah*, root and branch. It inundated the mind and soul with its outpourings to convert the man into an altogether different person. There appeared in him dazzling qualities of faith, trust, patience and courage and such deeds flowed out of him as which puzzled the minds, psychology, and the science of behavior. It has remained a puzzling and inexplicable phenomenon to this day. The way the personalities changed, have left

no room for any other interpretation but that the factor of influence was none other than their faith" (p. 75-76).

56. When Allah had presented a few evidences of His oneness, He followed it up with the denigration of this world, since it is the love of this world that leads to the denial of truth (Razi).

57. See *Surah al-Nisa'*, note 119 and 120 for identification of the Major Sins.

58. If a Muslim forgives a wrong done to him, then, he might remember that he has the example of his Prophet before him.

It is reported in *Sahih* collections that the Prophet never took revenge for a wrong done to him, but he reacted strongly when one of Allah's commandment was violated. In that situation he was acting on behalf of Allah. According to another report (as in Bukhari), he would say when angry, "What's wrong with him?" or, "May he have dust on his forehead," or the like words. His Companions followed him in good suit. Ibn Abi

[38] And those who responded to their Lord, prayed (regularly and assiduously), and whose affair between themselves is by mutual consultation,⁵⁹ and, out of what We have bestowed on them, they expend.⁶⁰

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ
يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

Hatim has reported about them that they did not like to be ridiculed. But when they got the better of their adversary, they forgave (Ibn Kathir).

59. Consequently, the Prophet consulted his Companions in matters concerning war and peace (Ibn Kathir).

Mawdudi expands: A few reasons why Islam has given consultation such importance: In matters involving rights of other people (in addition to one's own), not consulting those others is to do them injustice and usurp their right apart from the fact that it involves grave responsibility in terms of accountability in the Hereafter. Accordingly, Islamic way of life requires that consultation should be resorted to in all matters of common interest. In domestic life, one must consult his wife. When children grow up, they must be involved. If the matter concerns a whole tribe or the population of a city, then consultation must take place at that level. In matters involving the interests of a nation, the head of the government

should be appointed by common consent of the people, and he ought to consult the men of opinion – who in turn enjoy people's confidence - in all matters of national importance. Conversely, those whose interests are involved should have the right to freely express their opinion. They must have the right to check, voice protest, and change the rulers. Finally, the advisory committee should not be a mere stamping authority. Its recommendations must be accepted and implemented. Allah (*swt*) did not say, "They consult each other in their affairs," but rather, "They conduct their affairs by mutual consultation." Finally, there is no consultation in matters already decided by Allah, nor any advice is acceptable if it violates any of the *Shari'ah* principles. If there is any dispute the matter should be referred to the Qur'an and *Sunnah* (Condensed).

This last point has been stressed by most commentators. Consultation is restricted to affairs where Islam has not pronounced a ruling. There is no

changing the *Shari`ah* law even if it has the consent of the entire mankind. On the other hand, consultation is a requirement in affairs of some importance. There is no point in consulting over minor affairs. Finally, if an affair happens to be of the kind where Islamic law is unclear, it is to be referred to scholars of high caliber to work out the ruling in the light of the texts and Law sources.

Sayyid adds: The fact that the *Ayah* stipulating consultation is Makkan, much before an Islamic state was set up, tells us that it is a part of Muslim culture, it is the way of their life. Indeed, the characteristics of an Islamic state are no more than the projection of the character of its Muslim citizens. It is the Muslim society in general which creates it, projects it, and activates it. A Muslim society lives by the injunctions of Islam, and gives them the priority and preference over everything else. Thus, consultation is older than the state, has wider context and has profound implications, while it happens to be the distinguishing mark of the individuals, society and state. As for the form consultation will take, it has neither been concretized nor frozen. Every society or state is free to work out its own manner of conducting the affairs through consultation. In

fact, the principles and methods of the organization of the state and its machinery are not molded in steel. There are no texts requiring literal application. But rather, and before anything else, it is the spirit - which is generated by the faith residing in the hearts - that has to be there. This spirit, the outcome of firm faith, has its deep and profound effect on everything that Muslims do. Without this spirit, generated by faith, the best consultative or administrative systems will fail to generate any noticeable benefit. It is true spirit in fact, which generates the "form." The texts help to systematize, and not to "create" the "forms." So that, whatever form an Islamic system adopts for itself, it is essential that there exist believers and there exists a proactive faith. Otherwise, none of the systems devised by them would do them any good nor would such a system deserve to be called Islamic.

Consequently, whensoever it happened that there were true Muslims, and faith resided in their hearts, the Islamic system grew out by itself, manifesting itself in a form which suited those Muslims, their environment and their situation best.

60. "And, out of what We have provided them, they expend": This is an

[39] And those who, when oppression strikes them, avenge themselves.⁶¹ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

early text that speaks of expending in Allah's path. This is because, there is no recourse to *Da'wah* but through charity. There is no recourse but to cleansing of the hearts, removal of parsimony, getting over the love of wealth, and dependence on what is with Allah. And all these are necessary requirements for what we refer to as faith, as they are necessary for the creation of a healthy society. *Da'wah* after all, is a struggle. There is no other way but total co-operation for *Da'wah* to be successful. Sometimes this community liability will require absolute economic leveling of all the members of the society, as it happened early after *Hijrah*, until, (when the situation became normal), the standard *zakah* practices were adopted. At all events, expending is one of the essential characteristics of those burdened with leadership of the people (Sayyid).

61. (That is, Islam is not the religion of the weak, and the Muslims are not such weaklings as to be unable to defend themselves, or tolerate every tyrant without a squirm, a demand constantly made on them by their adversaries: Au.). They have the will

and the power to strike back (so that the evil ones might not take advantage of them: Razi).

Majid adds: "This (provision of revenge) negatives all-sufficiency of the doctrine of non-violence. Non-resistance does not necessarily prove a protection and melt the heart of the aggressor. Consider the classical example of the attempted, and almost accomplished, crucifixion of Jesus Christ – perfect non-violence on one side and wanton aggressiveness on the other."

Sayyid writes: "Mention of this quality in a Makkan revelation has special significance. It is being mentioned as the inherent quality of the Muslim community: that of facing up a tyrant and refusal to bend down to oppression. This is a natural quality of a community raised up for the purposes of enjoining the virtuous and preventing the wrong and who is duty-bound to establish peace and justice on the earth. This community seeks its strength from Allah. It is another thing that there once was, in Makkah, a situation that did not allow for retaliation, when the ear-

lier stages in the making of a Muslim personality required patience. They were then to establish the Prayer, expend in charity and bear the hardships in patience. But that was specific to a community passing through those conditions. It was not to be a permanent quality.

There were several reasons why an attitude of non-retaliation was adopted at Makkah. Firstly, that was a tribal society with all its trappings and complications. The torturous treatment of the early Muslims was at the hands of their own masters. Any other of any other tribe, could not dare harm them in any way without inviting tribal vengeance. Hence we see that when a Muslim purchased a slave and set him free, he could no more be tortured by his former master, or any person of any tribe. Had retaliation been allowed during that early phase, slaves would have attacked their masters and every home which registered a Muslim would have turned into a battle-field. Secondly, the social system then was tribal and its sense of honor was high. Muslim patience in the face of persecution was very likely to provoke the sense of honor. To be sure, this is what happened when the Muslims were socially boycotted for three years. Ultimately, the

sense of honor and pride worked in their favor, and the agreement was torn away. Thirdly, the Arab culture of that time was a warring culture, one where small pretexts led them to draw swords. The personality that Islam wished to create had to be a balanced one, not one which rushed to arms at every lean pretext. It had to learn to be patient while equally ready to take vengeance if the situation so demanded. In that phase, the ability to observe patience was a necessary tool for training (Sayyid, reworded).

It is another thing, writes Ibn Kathir, that when they overcome an oppressor, they forgive like the Prophet forgave those eighty who had tried to attack him in treachery at Hudaibiyah. Although he was able to overpower them, he forgave them all. On the personal level, he forgave the man who had intended to kill him while he rested under a tree. Displaying extreme calm he was able to disarm him, but, after that, he forgave him. Similarly, he forgave Labid b. al-A'sam who cast magical spell on him, as he also forgave the Jewish woman at Khaybar who admitted to having poisoned him; although later, when one of his Companions, Bishr b. al-Bara', died out of the effects of that poisoning, he got her executed

[40] And, recompense for an evil is an evil like thereof.⁶² However, he who forgave, brought about a reconciliation, then, His reward is upon Allah. Indeed, He does not approve of the wrongdoers.

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

in retaliation. His life is full of such examples from which we have chosen but a few to narrate.

In sum, writes Sayyid, apart from the several objectives viz., the ability to forgive for the sake of Allah, reformation of the individual, and free the society of the emotions of hatred, forgiveness is only effective when it comes from someone able to avenge. When someone has the power, and then forgives, then it leads the wrongdoer to remorse and shame and to the recognition that the person who forgave is a man of higher virtue. In fact, the power that leads to forgiveness, leads to a higher mode of existence. In contrast, forgiveness out of weakness and inability to do anything is an evil which leads the oppressor to greater wrong, and spreads corruption in the land.

Alusi places a note: The Prophet has added to the Qur'anic recommendation. He said, as in a *Sahih hadith* in Tirmidhi,

(عن أبي كَبْشَةَ الْأَثَمَارِيِّ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- يَقُولُ « ثَلَاثَةٌ أَقْسَمُ عَلَيْهِنَّ وَأُحَدِّثُكُمْ حَدِيثًا فَاحْفَظُوهُ ». قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَ مَالُ عَبْدٍ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ وَلَا ظَلِمَ عَبْدٌ مَظْلَمَةً فَصَبَرَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا زَادَهُ اللَّهُ عِزًّا وَلَا فَتَحَ عَبْدٌ بَابَ مَسْأَلَةٍ إِلَّا فَتَحَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ بَابَ فَقْرٍ

“There are three about which I could swear. And, I shall narrate to you something, that you ought to remember.” Then he said, “A slave’s wealth does not decrease because of charitable expending, nor was a man wronged yet observed patience but Allah granted increase in his repute, and, a slave did not resort to begging but Allah opened a door of poverty on him.”

62. Although retaliation of an evil is justice, it hurts the original perpetrator as evil does, and, therefore, the justification for the words, “recompense for an evil is an evil like of it.” Another question is, should those

[41] And, whoever avenged himself after he was wronged, then those, upon them there is no way.⁶³

وَلَمَنِ انتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّن سَبِيلٍ ﴿٤١﴾

[42] The way is open only against those who wrong the people and act rebelliously in the earth without right. They, for them there is a painful chastisement.

إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَظْلِمُونَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْغُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٤٢﴾

[43] Yet, he who bore in patience, and forgave, surely, that is of the matters of great resolution.

وَلَمَن صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿٤٣﴾

who avenge themselves be praised? The answer is, yes: so long as they retaliate in equal measure. Retaliation is administration of justice, and, justice is a praiseworthy quality (Zamakhshari).

This *Ayah* has its equivalents in several places. E.g., (2: 194),

فَمَنِ اعْتَدَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ

"Therefore, whosoever does you wrong, you might also do him wrong in equal measure."

Or, (16: 126),

وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبْتُمْ بِهِ وَلَئِن صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِلصَّابِرِينَ

"If you seek revenge, you might avenge with something similar to the wrong committed against you. But if you forgave, then that is best for the patient" (Ibn Kathir).

At all events, Imām Shafè'i has used this verse to deduce that a Muslim may not be killed in retaliation of a "*dhimmi*" killed at his hand, for, the *Ayah* is demanding equality. A "*dhimmi*" is not equal to a Muslim, and therefore, only blood-wit will be demanded of him in retaliation of a murdered "*dhimmi*" (Razi). Imām Abu Hanifah has differed over this issue and has ruled that a Muslim should pay with his life for taking the life of a "*dhimmi*." He has his own points of argument (Au.).

63. That is, there are situations in which forgiving is not the best course. It is reported that in the presence of *Hasan* al-Basri a man began to chide and scold another. The other man remained silent, but the chiding and scolding so disturbed the man that he began to sweat. Then he stood up (to go) and recited this *Ayah*. But

Hasan al-Basri admonished him, saying “Man, think (over the passage) and ponder. Ignorant people imagine that forgiving is obligatory.” That is, Zamakhshari and Qurtubi add, in certain situations avenging is obligatory. The Prophet himself allowed for defense. On one occasion, as the report goes, and as narrated by ‘A’isha, once Zaynab entered into her house without seeking permission, in an agitated condition and said to the Prophet, “Beware of Abu Bakr’s daughter that she should get the better of you.” Then she turned to ‘A’isha and began to scold her. But ‘A’isha did not say a word in reply until the Prophet said, “Defend yourself.” “So I began to speak out,” says ‘A’isha, “until her mouth was dry, unable to reply me with a word.” The Prophet’s face brightened up.

Ibn Kathir traces the above report (also quoted by Ibn Jarir) as in Nasa’i and Ibn Majah and declares it *Sahih*.

As a final word, one might say that it will all depend on the persons involved, the situation, and the issue (Au.).

We have a report in Abu Da’ud, although “*mursal*” which says,

عن سَعِيدِ بْنِ الْمُسَيَّبِ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: “بَيْنَمَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ جَالِسٌ وَمَعَهُ أَصْحَابُهُ وَقَعَ رَجُلٌ بِأَبِي بَكْرٍ فَأَذَاهُ، فَصَمَتَ عَنْهُ أَبُو بَكْرٍ، ثُمَّ آذَاهُ الثَّانِيَةَ، فَصَمَتَ عَنْهُ أَبُو بَكْرٍ، ثُمَّ آذَاهُ الثَّالِثَةَ فَانْتَصَرَ مِنْهُ أَبُو بَكْرٍ، فَقَامَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حِينَ انْتَصَرَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ فَقَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ: أَوْجَدْتُ عَلَيَّ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: نَزَلَ مَلَكٌ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ يُكَذِّبُهُ بِمَا قَالَ لَكَ، فَلَمَّا انْتَصَرْتَ وَقَعَ الشَّيْطَانُ فَلَمْ أَكُنْ لِأَجْلِسَ إِذْ وَقَعَ الشَّيْطَانُ“.

Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib reports: While the Prophet was sitting with a few of his Companions, a man began to abuse Abu Bakr. But Abu Bakr remained silent. The man abused him a second time. But Abu Bakr remained silent. Then he abused him a third time. At that Abu Bakr replied to him. The Prophet arose when Abu Bakr began to defend himself. Abu Bakr asked, “Messenger of Allah, did you find anything wrong with me?” He replied, “An angel had come down refuting his lying against you. But when you spoke defending yourself, *Shaytan* came in. And I am not one to sit in a place visited by *Shaytan*” (Ibn Kathir).

[44] And, whomsoever Allah led astray, He has no protector after Him. And you will see the wrongdoers, when they will see the Chastisement, saying, 'Is there any way to return?'⁶⁴

[45] You will see them as they are exposed to it, humbled in disgrace, looking with a stealthy glance;⁶⁵ when the believers will say, 'Surely, losers are those who ruined themselves and their families on the Day of Judgment.'⁶⁶ Lo! The wrongdoers will be in a lasting Chastisement.

[46] They have no protectors, besides Allah, who could help them. Indeed, he who is led astray by Allah, has no way (of escape).

[47] Respond (therefore) to your Lord before there comes a day when there will be no putting back against Allah; that day, you shall have no place of refuge, nor will you have any (room) for denial.

وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ مِّنْ بَعْدِهِ
وَتَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ لَمَّا رَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ يَقُولُونَ
هَلْ إِلَى مَرَدٍّ مِّنْ سَبِيلٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

وَتَرَاهُمْ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا خَاشِعِينَ مِّنَ
الدَّلِيلِ يَنْظُرُونَ مِّنْ طَرْفٍ خَفِيٍّ وَقَالَ
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ الْخَاسِرِينَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَهْلِيَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَلَا إِنَّ
الظَّالِمِينَ فِي عَذَابٍ مُّقِيمٍ ﴿٤٥﴾

وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ يَنْصُرُونَهُمْ مِّنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ
سَبِيلٍ ﴿٤٦﴾

اسْتَجِيبُوا لِرَبِّكُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا
مَرَدَّ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ مَّلْجَأٍ يَوْمَئِذٍ
وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ تَكْوِينٍ ﴿٤٧﴾

64. That is, writes Ibn Jarir, a return to the previous world, the *Ayah* being a replica in meaning of several others such as (32: 12),

وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذِ الْمُحْرَمُونَ نَاكِسُو
رُءُوسِهِمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ رَبَّنَا أَبْصَرْنَا
وَسَمِعْنَا فَارْجِعْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا إِنَّا
مُقْتَنُونَ

"And, if you could but see when the criminals will be in the presence of their Lord, their heads low-

ered (saying), 'O our Lord! We have seen and we have heard. So, send us back that we may do righteous deeds. We are now indeed convinced.'"

65. This is in the same way in which a criminal about to be slaughtered looks at the sword of the executioner (Zamakhshari).

66. So the believers will be masters of the situation at that time (Sayyid).

[48] But if they turn away, then, We have not sent you a guard upon them. No more is there upon you but the conveyance. Indeed, when We bestow a mercy upon man, he exults therein. But when an evil strikes them, because of what their hands have forwarded, truly then is man ungrateful.⁶⁷

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِظًا
إِنْ عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ وَإِنَّا إِذَا أَذَقْنَا
الْإِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً فَجَحَّ بِهَا وَإِنْ تُصِيبْهُمْ
سَيِّئَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَإِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ
كَفُورٌ ﴿٤٨﴾

67. "I.e., instead of remembering his past happiness with gratitude, he calls the very existence of God in question, arguing that if God did really exist, He 'could not possibly have permitted' so much misfortune and unhappiness to prevail in the world' – a fallacious argument inasmuch as it does not take the reality of the hereafter into account and is, moreover, based on a concept of God in terms of purely human feelings and expressions" (Asad).

The above in any case, is the attitude of most people. The Prophet said when he addressed women (in a gathering for 'Eid Prayers):

كَانَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَمَرَ ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: "يَا مَعْشَرَ النِّسَاءِ تَصَدَّقْنَ وَأَكْثِرْنَ الْإِسْتِغْفَارَ. فَإِنِّي رَأَيْتُكُمْ أَكْثَرَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ" فَقَالَتِ امْرَأَةٌ مِنْهُنَّ، جَزَلَةٌ: وَمَا لَنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَكْثَرَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ. قَالَ: "تُكْثِرْنَ اللَّعْنَ. وَتَكْفُرْنَ الْعَشِيرَ"

"O womenfolk, expend in charity for I saw you as most of the inhabitants of the Fire." One

of the intelligent women asked, "What is wrong with us that we are the most in Hellfire?" He replied, "Because you curse a lot and are unthankful to the family (that supports you)." But of course, a true believer's attitude is different. He is obedient in all situations: of ease or discomforts, as in a *hadith* of Muslim:

"عَجَبًا لِأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ. إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ. وَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ لِأَحَدٍ إِلَّا لِلْمُؤْمِنِ. إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ سَرَاءٌ شَكَرَ. فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ. وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَاءٌ صَبَرَ، فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ."

"The believer's affair is amazing. All of his affairs are good for him – and this is not for anyone but for a believer: if good fortune strikes him, he is thankful, which of course is good for him; but if evil strikes him he bears it with patience and fortitude, thus it is good for him" (Ibn Kathir).

The *hadith* that Ibn Kathir quotes about women is from Ahmad but we have taken from Muslim (Au.).

[49] To Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He will. He bestows on whomsoever He will females, and bestows on whomsoever He will males.⁶⁸

لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ يَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنَاثًا وَيَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ الذُّكُورَ ﴿٤٩﴾

[50] Or He couples them as males and females; and, He renders whomsoever He will, barren; He is indeed All-knowing, All-powerful.⁶⁹

أَوْ يَرْوِجُهُمْ ذُكْرَانًا وَإِنَاثًا وَيَجْعَلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ عَقِيمًا إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

68. Several reasons have been forwarded by the commentators for mentioning the female first. Imām Razi for instance states that since woman is weak, Allah mentioned her first to demonstrate His concern for them.

But perhaps it is also because human regeneration is not possible without a female: males can never conceive, while females can conceive without the co-operation of the males (as is the case with some animals which can reproduce without the male's contribution). Also, in great majority of cases, the first child is female, perhaps, once again, following the above biological truth (Au.).

Qurtubi notes that in view of this verse, it is considered good omen that a woman should bring forth a female child first. This is reported, adds Alusi, of Qatadah also.

69. Most commentators have quoted the examples of Prophets themselves:

Prophets Lut and Shu`ayb (who had only female children), Ibrahim (who had only sons), Muhammad (who was bestowed both females as well as male progenies), and `Isa and Yahya (who were childless). Imām Razi and Qurtubi attribute the above to Ibn `Abbas, but the authenticity could not be confirmed.

Qurtubi adds that in view of this verse which speaks of only two sexes, some scholars have thought that there is no third sex, i.e., hermaphrodites. Qurtubi, goes on to say that he is with those who believe there have been hermaphrodites in history, although, he could not confirm through his personal experience.

Those few who have believed that there are no more than two sexes, have modern scientific evidence to their credit. There are, in fact, no hermaphrodites. Those who are thought to be in between, are either males or females, and, perhaps need some

[51] It was not for any mortal that Allah should speak to him (directly) except by revelation, or from behind a veil,⁷⁰ or should send a Messenger to reveal by His leave what He will.⁷¹ He is indeed the Most High, the Most Wise.⁷²

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا
أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا
فَيُوحِي بَأْذَنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ حَكِيمٍ
﴿٥١﴾

physical and psychological treatment to behave and live like males or females. Nature does not produce any hermaphrodites (Au.).

70. That is, the angel remains concealed, invisible, while delivering the Message. Or, Allah remains concealed even the while speaking directly to one of His slaves. This is how Musa (*asws*) was addressed. Those in our times who believe that the term “hijab” (when used in reference to a woman’s covering), allows for uncovering of the face, may make note of the usage here (Au.).

71. That is, as Suddi said, “it was not for any mortal that Allah should speak to him (directly) except by revelation,” i.e., inspire the message in his heart, “or from behind a veil,” as Allah did with Musa, “or should send a Messenger,” i.e., Jibril, to reveal the message (in person) – Ibn Jarir.

72. “As described by the Prophet, there were,” Sayyid quotes Ibn al-Qayyim, “four kinds of revelations.

The first: that which the angel used to inspire in the heart without the Prophet being able to see him. For example, he said,

‘Verily, the Holy Ghost blew it into my heart that no soul will die until it has completed its share of providence. Therefore, fear Allah, and adopt goodly ways in seeking it.’

Second: the angel would arrive in a human form and address him until he knew what he was saying. Third: his??? arrival sounded like ringing of a bell. That was the toughest on him so that his forehead sweated on an extreme cold day; and his mount would kneel down if he was on one. Once a revelation of this nature came to him when his thigh happened to be on that of Zayd b. Thabit. The latter felt the weight until he thought his thigh would break. Fourth: He would see the angel in the form in which he has been created to inspire in him what he would. This happened to the Prophet twice, as Allah mentioned in *Surah al-Najm*.”

[52] And thus have We revealed to you a life-force⁷³ of Our bidding. You were not knowing what a Book is, nor faith;⁷⁴ but rather We made it a Light, whereby We guide whom We will of Our slaves. You are surely guiding to a straight path.

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا
مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ
وَلَكِن جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ نَّشَاءُ
مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ
مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٢﴾

[53] The path of Him to whom belongs what is in the heavens and what is in the earth. Lo! To Allah return the affairs.

صِرَاطِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَلَا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَصِيرُ الْأُمُورُ
﴿٥٣﴾

To the above of course, we might add another kind mentioned in the *Ayah* under discussion: "It was not for any mortal that Allah should speak to him (directly) except ... from behind a veil." An example of this is described in the Qur'ān (4: 164),

"And Allah spoke to Musa, directly." That is, without the medium of an angel, although He Himself remained behind the veil of light (Au.).

73. Although Suddi thought the reference by "*ruh*" is to revelation, *Hasan* (al-Basri) said that the allusion is to "*rahmah*", i.e. mercy (Ibn Jarir). Another interpretation is that the allusion by "*ruh*" is to the Qur'ān (Ibn Kathir), because, adds Zamakhshari, it gives life to the soul just as the spirit gives life to the body.

74. The term "*imān*" here alludes to the detailed belief in Allah, His Mes-

sengers, angels, etc., and not to mere belief in Allah's existence or His oneness. Qadi ('Iyad) has said that "we have received no report about any Prophet that he committed disbelief or declared partners to Allah during his pre-Prophetic life." In fact, many of them displayed signs of being on the right path, although if asked, they would not have been able to define it. They were given understanding and wisdom, and prevented from adopting any pagan practice, as preparatory qualities (and practices), before they became Messengers. Allah said about Yahya (19: 12),

وَاتَيْنَاهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِيًّا

"We gave him wisdom in childhood;"

He said about Sulayman (21: 79),

فَفَهَّمْنَاهَا سُلَيْمَانَ وَكَلَّآ آتَيْنَا حُكْمًا

"And We gave the understanding to Sulayman. And to all (of them) We gave wisdom and knowledge."

He also said about Ibrahim (21: 51),

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ

"We had certainly granted Ibrahim his rectitude earlier."

It is said that when he was thrown into the fire, he was sixteen years old. (When Isma'il was consulted over the slaughter, he was perhaps less than ten: Au.).

Similarly, Allah said about Yusuf (12: 15),

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَنَّهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِمْ هَذَا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ

"And We revealed to him that you will surely inform them about this affair of theirs."

(Our own Prophet sought recluse in caves to meditate over the truth, thus revealing his dissatisfaction with the pagan religion: Alusi, in different words).

Biographers tell us that twice the Prophet thought of taking part in pagan functions but Allah saved him both the times. Qadi 'Iyad has also pointed out that the Quraysh threw

all sorts of allegations against him but never said, "Are you not the one who was worshiping our deities until recently?" Had the Prophet once evoked them, surely they would have used it against him. Did they not say (2: 142),

مَا وَلَاهُمْ عَنْ قِبَلِهِمُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا

"What has turned them from the Qiblah on which they were?" In short, even before revelations are sent to them, Prophets are saved by Allah from worshiping idols or taking part in pagan rituals. It is in the light of these details that this *Ayah*,

مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ

"You were not knowing what a Book was, nor what faith was," is to be understood. Although the Prophet did not know the details of faith, or what exactly Revealed literature was, he never prostrated himself to an idol, did not ascribe partners unto Allah, never went to a soothsayer and never drank wine. In fact, a *hadith* to the effect that the Prophet participated in a pagan function, has been declared fabricated by Imām Ahmed and Dara Qutni (Qurtubi – shortened).

مَقَاتِلُ



Surah 43
Al-Zukhruf

(The Ornaments)

Makkan¹



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Ha. Mim.

ح م ﴿١﴾

[2] By the Clear Book.²

وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿٢﴾

[3] Verily, We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān,
haply you will ponder.

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٣﴾

[4] Surely, it is in the Mother of the Book with
Us,³ lofty, full of wisdom.

وَإِنَّهُ فِي أُمِّ الْكِتَابِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلِّي حَكِيمٌ ﴿٤﴾

1. Except for a single *Ayah*, number 45, the rest of the *Surah* is Makkan by consensus (Qurtubi).

2. Qatadah has said, "By Allah, its guidance, benefits and enlightenment can be clearly felt through and through" (Ibn Jarir).

3. The allusion by "*Umm al-Kitab*" is to the Principal Book which was written down immediately after the Pen was created (Ibn 'Abbas: Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). Allah had said to the Pen at that point of time,

اكتب قال رب وماذا أكتب ؟ قال : اكتب مقادير كل شيء حتى تقوم الساعة

"Write." It asked, "What should I write." It was told, "(Write down) Everything that is going to be until the Hour is struck." The *hadith* is in Tabarani. But Haythami thought it was somewhat weak. A slightly different version is in Tirmidhi and Abu Da'ud, but weaker. Nonetheless, there are several *ahadith*, some in *Sahih* collections, that confirm that Pen was ordered to write down in the *Umm al-Kitab* (or *Al-lawh al-Mahfuz*) all that there is going to be (Au.).

[5] Shall We then turn away the Reminder from you altogether, for that you are a transgressing people?⁴

أَفَصْرَبْ عَنْكُمْ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحًا أَنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٥﴾

[6] How many were the Prophets We sent among the ancients?⁵

وَكَمْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ نَبِيِّ فِي الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٦﴾

[7] But never went to them a Prophet except that they ridiculed him.

وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٧﴾

[8] So We destroyed those that were harder than these in prowess. And the example of the ancients has preceded.

فَأَهْلَكْنَا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا وَمَنْعَى مَثَلُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٨﴾

[9] If you should ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' they will surely say, 'The Mighty, the Knowing has created them.'

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ خَلَقَهُنَّ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٩﴾

[10] He who made the earth a cradle for you,⁶ and placed therein pathways for you, in order that you are guided (to the ways).

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] And who sent down water out of heaven in measure; then We revived thereby a land that was dead; even so will you be brought out.

وَالَّذِي نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَنْشَرْنَا بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَيْتًا كَذَلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ ﴿١١﴾

"It has been named *Umm al-Kitab* because it is the master copy from which scriptures are copied" (Zamakhshari).

4. Had the Qur'an been withdrawn because the first addressees cried lies to it, this *Ummah* would have been destroyed (Qatadah: Ibn Jarir, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Another possible connotation of "*musrif*" as pointed out by Asad is "those who waste themselves (in the life of this world)."

5. That is, the examples of how the past disbelieving nations were destroyed have passed in this Qur'an. There seems to be little room to believe, as a contemporary commentator states, that the meaning is: 'stories of the destruction of past nations are in history pages and on people's tongues.' History written by humans in fact denies existence of some of destroyed nations (Au.).

6. The earth has been likened to a cradle (or, alternatively, a bed) because

[12] He who created the varieties,⁷ all of them, and made for you the ships and the animals such as you ride.

وَالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنَ الْفُلُكِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مَا تَرْكَبُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

of the comfort it affords, despite all the destructive elements within and without it. Although below the 75 km thick uppermost crust the earth is nothing but extremely hot stuff, and the space between the earth's surface and the upper 75 km thick area above the atmosphere enveloping the earth nothing but powerful radiation and other rays that can instantly kill, man lives in the earth in such comforts within the gas and solid materials, as would be unimaginable for a being from another planet. Consider another aspect: the Plate Tectonic theory tells us that the continents are moving away from each other. Well, that is the first movement. In a second movement, the earth rotates around its axis at the speed of 1,700 km an hour. In addition it swims around the sun – in the third movement - at the speed of 100,000 km an hour. This movement of the earth around the sun happens to be zigzag, as if the earth and moon (because of their respective gravitational pulls) are going around each other while they both revolve around the sun. So, this is the fourth movement. A fifth of the earth's movement is along

with the sun, which carries along with itself its entire family of planets, their moons and the steroid belt, as it revolves around the centre of the galaxy at the speed of 792,000 km an hour. A sixth movement is that of the galaxy rotating around its own axis. A seventh movement is that of the galaxy, along with all its stars, their planets and everything else, moving away from other galaxies within the local group of galaxies at the speed of about 1,440,000 km per hour, while the cluster they belong to speeds out into the unknown, almost at the speed of light, that is at about 300,000 km a second. That's the eighth movement. Yet, despite all these movements at such fantastic speeds, does man feel any discomfort? Does he feel any vibration, any sense of movement? (Au.).

7. The translation of “*azwaj*” as “varieties” (instead of the regular “pairs”), is following the understanding of Sa'id b. Jubayr as found in Qurtubi and Shawkani.

Asad writes: “(Some commentators, e.g., Tabari), see in it [the word “*azwaj*”]) a reference to the polarity evi-

[13] So that you may settle yourselves on their backs, and recall your Lord's blessing when you are settled upon it⁸ and say, 'Blessed is He who subjected this to us, while we were not such as to be able to control it.

لَتَسْتَوُوا عَلَى ظُهُورِهِ ثُمَّ تَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّكُمْ إِذَا اسْتَوَيْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَتَقُولُوا سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] And surely to Our Lord we shall be returning.⁹

وَإِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

dent in all creation. Ibn `Abbas (as quoted by Razi) says that it denotes the concept of opposites in general, like 'sweet and sour, or white and black, or male or female'; to which Razi adds that everything in creation has its complement, 'like high and low, right and left, front and back, past and present, being and attribute', etc., (or negative and positive charges, particles and anti-particles, or, gravity and, much speculated, anti-gravity, etc.), whereas God – and He alone – is unique, without anything that could be termed 'opposite' or 'similar' or 'complementary.' Hence, the above sentence is an echo of the statement that 'there is nothing that could be compared with Him' (112: 4)."

8. The "it" (following the previous "them") refers to the genus of the cattle (Razi), or, as Asad thinks, to "all that you use or may use by way of transport."

9. We have several reports in Qur-tubi, Ibn Kathir and others on how the Prophet mounted a beast. One is in Ahmad: `Ali b. Rabi`ah narrated:

عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ رَبِيعَةَ قَالَ شَهِدْتُ عَلِيًّا أَتَى بِدَابَّةٍ لِيَرْكَبَهَا فَلَمَّا وَضَعَ رِجْلَهُ فِي الرِّكَابِ قَالَ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ ثَلَاثًا فَلَمَّا اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى ظَهْرِهَا قَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ (سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ وَإِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ) ثُمَّ قَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ثَلَاثًا وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ثَلَاثًا سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي قَدْ ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ. ثُمَّ ضَحَكَ. فَقُلْتُ مَنْ أَيُّ شَيْءٍ ضَحَكْتَ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ قَالَ رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- صَنَعَ كَمَا صَنَعْتُ ثُمَّ ضَحَكَ فَقُلْتُ مَنْ أَيُّ شَيْءٍ ضَحَكْتَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ « إِنْ رَبَّكَ لَيَعْجَبُ مِنْ عَبْدِهِ إِذَا قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي إِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ غَيْرُكَ »

"I was with `Ali when a mount was brought to him for ride. When he placed a foot into the stirrup he said, 'In the name of Allah.' Then, as he climbed its back he said, 'Glorified is He who subdued it to us while we were not such as to bring it to control. And, unto our Lord is our return.'

Then he said, 'Thanks to Allah', thrice. Then he said, 'Allah is great' three times. Then he said, 'Glory unto You, I have wronged my own soul, therefore, forgive me; none forgives the sins but You.' Then he smiled. Someone asked, 'What is it you smiled at?' He replied, 'I saw the Prophet do what I did. I asked him, "Messenger of Allah, why did you smile?" He answered, "Your Exalted Lord marvels at His slave who says, 'Forgive me my sins,' as he knows that none forgives the sins but I.'" (To a similar *hadith* Tirmidhi added the note that this is a Hasan *Sahih* narrative: Au.). Similar reports are to be found in Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi and Nasa'i. Muslim's report is as follows and which corroborates with reports in Abu Da'ud, and Nasa'i:

(يُروى) أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- كَانَ إِذَا اسْتَوَى عَلَى بَعِيرِهِ خَارِجًا إِلَى سَفَرٍ كَبِيرٍ ثَلَاثًا ثُمَّ قَالَ « سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ وَإِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ فِي سَفَرِنَا هَذَا الْبِرَّ وَالتَّقْوَى وَمِنَ الْعَمَلِ مَا تَرْضَى اللَّهُمَّ هَوِّنْ عَلَيْنَا سَفَرَنَا هَذَا وَاطْوِ عَنَّا بُعْدَهُ اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ الصَّاحِبُ فِي السَّفَرِ وَالْخَلِيقَةُ فِي الْأَهْلِ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ وَعْثَاءِ السَّفَرِ وَكَآبَةِ الْمُنْظَرِ وَسُوءِ الْمُنْقَلَبِ فِي الْمَالِ وَالْأَهْلِ ». وَإِذَا رَجَعَ قَاهُتَنَ. وَزَادَ فِيهِنَّ « أَيُّونَ تَأْتِبُونَ عَابِدُونَ لِرَبِّنَا حَامِدُونَ »

[Ibn `Umar taught (his students)] that when the Prophet (*saws*) straightened himself up on his camel intending to travel out, he would say Allahu Akbar thrice, then say, "Glorified is He who subdued it to us while we were not such as to bring it to control. And, unto our Lord is our return. O Allah, we seek from You goodness and piety in this journey of ours, and seek in deeds those that please You. O Allah, make this journey of ours easy, and fold in its distance for us. O Allah, You are the Companion in this our journey, and vicegerent of (our) homefolk. O Allah, I seek Your refuge from the hardships of the journey, from depressing sights, and an evil return to the property and family." When he returned he would say the same words but add, "We are returnees, repentant, chanting praises of our Lord."

Yet another report, continues Ibn Kathir, is in Ahmed. It says,

حَمَلْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- عَلَى إِبِلٍ مِنْ إِبِلِ الصَّدَقَةِ ضِعَافٍ لِلْحَجِّ ، فَقَالَ : يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، مَا نَرَى أَنَّ تَحْمِلُنَا هَذِهِ ؟ فَقَالَ : مَا مِنْ بَعِيرٍ إِلَّا عَلَى دُرُوتِهِ شَيْطَانٌ ، فَأَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ إِذَا رَكِبْتُمُوهَا كَمَا أَمَرَكُم ، ثُمَّ امْتَنِعُوا لَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فَإِنَّمَا يَحْمِلُ لِلَّهِ

[15] Yet they have assigned for Him a share from His slaves.¹⁰ Truly man is clearly ungrateful.

وَجَعَلُوا لَهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ جُزْءًا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] Or, has He taken (for Himself), of what He creates, daughters, and chose you for sons?¹¹

أَمْ اتَّخَذَ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ بَنَاتٍ وَأَصْفَاكُمْ بِالْبَنِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] While when one of them is given the glad tidings of what he has likened to the Compassionate,¹² his face remains dark, as he suppresses (his grief).

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُمْ بِمَا ضَرَبَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ مَثَلًا ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾

Abu Las Khuza'i said, "The Prophet gave us a few camels out of *zakah*-collections. We said, "Messenger of Allah, we do not see that these can carry us." He said, "There is no camel but which has a devil sitting on its hump. So, pronounce Allah's name when you climb them in the manner I have instructed you and then you subdue them unto yourselves, for, it is Allah who (gives you the power to) ride them." (Haythami gave his approval to this report: Au.).

10. As Allah said elsewhere explaining how the people granted a share to others, what is Allah's alone (6: 136):

{وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ مِنَ الْحَرْثِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ نَصِيبًا فَقَالُوا هَذَا لِلَّهِ بِرَعْمِهِمْ وَهَذَا لِشُرَكَائِنَا فَمَا كَانَ لِشُرَكَائِهِمْ فَلَا يَصِلُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ فَهُوَ يَصِلُ إِلَى شُرَكَائِهِمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ} [الأنعام: ١٣٦]

"They assign a share to Allah out of what He (alone) brought forth of the crops and cattle, saying - entirely out of their fancy, 'This is for Allah and this is for our associate(-gods).' Then, what is for their associate(-gods), does not reach Allah, whereas, what is assigned to Allah, reaches their associate(-gods). Evil is the way they judge" (Ibn Kathir).

11. "It should be remembered that the people thus addressed were the pagan Arabs, who believed that some of their goddesses, as well as the angels, were 'God's daughters'. In view of the fact that those pre-Islamic Arabs regarded daughters as a mere liability and their birth as a disgrace, this verse is obviously ironical" (Asad).

12. The allusion is to angels that the pagans attributed to God as His daughters.

[18] Is one then, who is brought up in ornaments? – although he is weak in dispute.¹³

أَوَمَنْ يُنَشَأُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ وَهُوَ فِي الْخِصَامِ
غَيْرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٨﴾

13. Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah and Suddi have all said that the allusion is to women who wear ornaments and are weak in argument. A minor opinion is that the allusion is to idols and deities, but this is not the preferred opinion (Ibn Jarir). Razi adds: A woman's need of ornaments (to assert her personality) is a kind of weakness that she suffers. Further (and as pointed out by Zamakhshari), rarely it happens that a woman begins to defend herself in an argument but ends up saying what will defeat her purpose. This happens, Mufti Shafi` says, because either they say something that is not related to the topic, or leave some sentences incomplete. However, this does not rule out exceptions. The rule however is made with the majority in view.

Although the above might be construed as a remark against women, we might not forget to note that the Qur'anic words under discussion are those of pagans. Allah distributes qualities. If He takes away a quality, He compensates it with another. Women had to be different from

men. They had to be complementary. And two that are complementary to each other cannot be equal. Therefore, to look for all the qualities of men in women is futile, just as to look for all their qualities in males is futile. Majid did not fail to realize this. He offers us a note from a psychologist which saves us from much research. He writes, "This refers to the almost universal custom of the 'softer sex' being brought up among jewelry and ornaments and to her innate love of display. 'A woman's skeleton, dating from the 4th century B.C. unearthed in Persia, had heaped upon the breast, necklace of pearls, lapis, turquoise, emerald and jasper.' (CE., IV, p. 1150)." And, with reference to being weak in disputations, he writes, "Compare the findings of a modern-day psychologist: 'Woman is admittedly weaker in logic than the male, and, because her "opinion" is partly instinctive feeling and partly immediate reaction to the momentary situation, she cannot equal man in enumerating arguments and proofs in support of her views. Her ways of thinking is what we describe as instinctive.'"

[19] And, they have made angels females: those that are themselves worshiper of the Compassionate. Did they witness their creation? Their testimony will be recorded and they will be questioned.¹⁴

وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ
إِنَاثًا أَشْهَدُوا خَلَقَهُمْ سَكَّتَبُ شَهَادَتُهُمْ
وَيُسْأَلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] They said, 'Had the Compassionate so willed, we would not have worshiped them.'¹⁵ But of that they have no knowledge whatsoever.¹⁶ They are not but conjecturing.

وَقَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ الرَّحْمَنُ مَا عَبَدْنَاهُمْ
مَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا
يَخْرُسُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] Or, have We given them a Book before this to which they are adhering?

أَمْ آتَيْنَاهُمْ كِتَابًا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ فَهُمْ بِهِ
مُتَمَسِّكُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

Accordingly, it might be added that when women are brought up purely on rational grounds, taught the same courses of education as men, playing the same games as men, spending all their time with men, as in the West, then they begin to look like men and even think like men. (It is thought that their male hormone production is heightened). In that event the difference between the way they think and the male think is narrowed. The objection – that they think instinctively – is then removed. But the complementariness, which attracts one to the other, is also affected (Au.).

One of the opinions about why the masculine form (*huwa*: he) has been adopted is that the allusion by “and he is unclear in his disputation” is to he who declares that angels are fe-

male, and Allah's daughters. Yet, one wonders whether the pronoun refers to women, but the masculine form is to deny already prejudiced men, an argument against women? Alternatively, it could be a hint at the fact that despite the efforts to give them maleness, (“she” becoming “he” as in the West), their weakness prevails and society remains dominated by the males (Au.).

14. “I.e., (their testimony) regarding the ‘sex’ of the angels, who are spiritual in nature (Razi) and, therefore, sexless” (Asad).

15. That is, “our worship of the idols has Allah's approval. Had He disapproved, He would not have allowed it to happen” - obviously, a queer logic, which individuals of highly cultured and advanced societies also hold as true. What strikes them not

[22] But rather, they said, 'Surely, we found our fathers on a religion¹⁷ and we are in their footsteps, following.'

بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم مُّقْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] That is how, We did not send before you any warner to a town but its affluent ones said, 'Surely, we found our fathers on a religion and we are imitating their footsteps.'¹⁸

وكَذَٰلِكَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّن نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم مُّقْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

is that by extension of this logic, the thousands of crimes committed against women every minute such as rape, murder, theft, bribery etc., also have God's approval. But if they had God's approval, there was no need for Him to raise Prophets and send messages, condemning these very acts (Mawdudi paraphrased).

16. Although there are several interpretations about what the allusion is to, one opinion is that the unbelievers have no understanding of the complications involved in predestination and Divine decree (Au.).

17. That the allusion by "*Ummah*" at this point is to religion, is the opinion of Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah and Suddi as in Ibn Jarir.

18. Asad writes: "Commenting on this passage, Razi writes: 'Had there been in the Qur`ān nothing but these verses, they would have sufficed to

show the falsity of the principle postulating [a Muslim's] blind, unquestioning attitude of [another person's] religious opinions (*ibtal al-qawl bit-taqlid*): for, God had made it clear [in these verses] that those deniers of the truth had not arrived at their convictions by way of reason, and neither on clear authority of a revealed text, but solely by blindly adopting the opinions of their forbears and predecessors; and all this God has mentioned in terms of blame and sharp disagreement.'"

The criticism, it might be noted, is directed against blind following in matters of faith (*`aqidah*), and not in matters of Law (*Fiqh*), which the great majority does not have the capacity to work out on their own, but rather have been throughout the time, and will remain, dependent on the learned (Au.).

[24] He said, 'Even if I have brought to you something better in guidance than what you found your forefathers upon?' They said, 'We are, of whatever you have been sent with, deniers.'¹⁹

قَالَ أَوَلَوْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِأَهْدَىٰ مِمَّا وَجَدْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ
آبَاءَكُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] So We took vengeance upon them. So see, how was the end of those who cried lies!

فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَنْزَلْنَا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] (Recall) when Ibrahim said to his father and his people, 'Surely I am quit of what you worship.'

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّنِي بَرَاءٌ مِّمَّا
تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] Except for Him who originated me and who guides me.'²⁰

إِلَّا الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي فَإِنَّهُ سَيَهْدِينِ ﴿٢٧﴾

19. That is, "We have decided on a certain course in our religion. And the position remains even if you have brought something better: under no circumstance are we going to abandon our ancient practices" (Qurtubi).

Mawdudi adds: "This attitude of outright rejection has two reasons. One, the affluent ones are so absorbed in their lives, and so engrossed in the joys accruing from their wealth, property and position, as to have no time for such useless affairs as considerations of what is true and what is false. Second, the political, economic and social systems they live in, which in fact is designed by them, serve their interests so well that the

moment they hear of an alternative, they realize in a flash that it will work against the prevalent system and deprive them of the advantages they draw from the established system."

20. "The plea of ancestral ways is refuted by the example of Abraham, in two ways: (1) he gave up the ancestral cults followed by his father and people, and followed the true Way, even at some sacrifice to himself; and (2) he was an ancestor of the Arabs, and if the Arabs stood on ancestral ways, why should they not follow their good ancestor Abraham, rather than their bad ancestors who fell into evil? The incident in Abraham's story referred to here will be found in xxi, 51-70" (Yusuf Ali).

[28] And He made it a word enduring in his posterity,²¹ hoping that they will return (to the truth).²²

وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً بَاقِيَةً فِي عَقْبِهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

[29] Nay, I gave these and their fathers some enjoyment²³ until came to them the truth and a Messenger making things clear.²⁴

بَلْ مَتَّعْتُ هَؤُلَاءِ وَآبَاءَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ جَاءَهُمُ
الْحَقُّ وَرَسُولٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] But when the truth came to them they said, 'This is magic, and we are therewith deniers.'

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ وَإِنَّا
بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

[31] They also said, 'Why was this Qur'an not sent down upon some great man of these two townships?'²⁵

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نَزَلَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ عَلَىٰ رَجُلٍ
مِّنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٣١﴾

21. What word is being referred to? Mujahid said it was the testimony proclaiming Allah's oneness (Ibn Jarir). This was the opinion of Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, 'Ikrimah, Dahhak and others who said that the testimony: "there is no god but Allah," remained among the progeny of Ibrahim (Ibn Kathir).

22. That is, the posterity might return to Allah in repentance, piety, and good behavior (Ibn Jarir).

23. "Note the first person singular, as showing Allah's personal solicitude and care for the descendants of Abraham in both branches. The context here refers to the prosperity enjoyed by Makkah and the Makkans until they rejected the truth of Islam when it was preached in their midst

by a messenger whose Message was as clear as the light of the sun" (Yusuf Ali).

24. Asad comments: "I.e., God did not impose on them any moral obligations before making the meaning of right and wrong clear to them through a revealed message. Primarily, this is an allusion to the pagan contemporaries of the Prophet, and to the prosperity which they had been allowed to enjoy for a long time."

25. The allusion by the two cities is to Makkah and Ta'if, and by "some great man" the pagans meant one of the following: Al-Walid b. al-Mughirah, 'Utbah b. Rabi'ah, both of Makkah, Habib b. 'Umayr al-Thaqafi, Ibn 'Abd Ya Layl or Ibn Mas'ud

[32] What! Will they distribute the mercy of your Lord? We have distributed between them their livelihood in the present life,²⁶ and have raised some of them above others in ranks, that some of them take others in servitude.²⁷ At all events, the mercy of your Lord is better than what they amass.

أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَةَ رَبِّكَ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا
بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَرَفَعْنَا
بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَتَّخِذَ
بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا سُخْرِيًّا وَرَحْمَتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ
مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

[33] And, were it not that the people would become one community (of unbelievers),²⁸ We would surely have made for those who deny the Compassionate, roofs out of silver for their houses, and stairways by which they ascend.

وَلَوْلَا أَن يَكُونَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً لَّجَعَلْنَا
لِلْمَن يَكْفُر بِالرَّحْمَنِ لِيُوقَتَهُمْ سُقُفًا مِّن
فِضَّةٍ وَمَعَارِجَ عَلَيْهَا يَظْهَرُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] And (also) doors to their houses, and couches on which they recline.

وَلِيُوقَتَهُمْ أَبْوَابًا وَسُرُرًا عَلَيْهَا يَتَكَبَّرُونَ
﴿٣٤﴾

(i.e., 'Urwah ibn Mas'ud) of Ta'if (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

26. Far from they dividing Allah's mercy: giving whom they would and denying whom they would, even a minor thing like division of means of life is not entrusted to them. Allah has kept this in His own hand (Au.).

Zamakhshari writes: It is Allah who divides providence between them, being the Sustainer of the world and what it contains. He did not, as can be observed, divide qualities equally between them, but rather, made them strong, weak, rich, poor, owners and dependents. This is in order that they interact with each other and find sustenance through the co-operation and co-ordination with

each other. In contrast, had Allah left the division to them, the lands would be filled with injustice and life destroyed. If such is the situation in worldly matters, what about spiritual matters, and those matters which order this life and the next?

27. This translation has the consent of the great majority of commentators.

28. "Since 'man has been created weak' (4: 28), it is almost a 'law of nature' that whenever he is exposed to the prospect of great wealth he is liable to lose sight of all spiritual and moral considerations, and to become utterly selfish, greedy and ruthless" (Asad).

[35] And (of) gold.²⁹ But surely, all this is no more than a brief enjoyment of the life of this world,³⁰ while the world to come is - with your Lord - for the pious.

وَزُخْرَفًا وَإِنْ كُلُّ ذَلِكَ لَمَّا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

In Yusuf Ali's simpler words: "So little value is attached in the spiritual world to silver or gold, or worldly ranks or adornments, that they would freely be at the disposal of everyone who denied or blasphemed Allah, were it not that in that case there would be too great temptation placed in the way of men, for they might all scramble to sell their spiritual life for wealth! They might have silver roofs and stair-ways, silver doors and thrones, and all kinds of adornments of gold. But Allah does not allow too great a temptation to be placed in the path of men. He distributes these things differently, some to unjust men, and some to just men, in various degrees, so that the possession of these is no test - either of an unjust or a just life. His wisdom searches out motives far more subtle and delicate than any we are even aware of."

29. That is, Allah would have made these things of gold if not for the fear that mankind will become one community of unbelievers. Consequently, gold and silver have been forbid-

den to the males of this community: whether as wares, utensils, or ornaments. It is reported that,

عَنْ ابْنِ أَبِي لَيْلَى قَالَ كَانَ حُذَيْفَةُ بِالْمَدَائِنِ فَاسْتَسْقَى فَأَتَاهُ دِهْقَانٌ يَبْدَحُ فَضَّةً فَرَمَاهُ بِهِ فَقَالَ إِنِّي لَمْ أَزِمِهِ إِلَّا أَنِّي تَهَيَّئْتُهُ فَلَمْ يَنْتَهُ وَإِنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَهَانًا عَنْ الْحَرِيرِ وَالذَّيْنَجِ وَالشُّرْبِ فِي آيَةِ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَقَالَ هُنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَهِيَ لَكُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ

Abdul Rahman ibn Abi Layla said that they were with Hudhayfah in (the province of) Mada'in when he asked for a drink. A servant brought it in a silver bowl. Hudhayfah threw it away and said, "I did this because I have forbidden him, but he does not heed. The Prophet has prohibited us silk and brocade, and drinking out of golden and silver vessels saying, 'They are for them in this world and for you in the Hereafter'" (*Sahihayn*).

The possibility remains that the meaning of the word "zukhruf" here is ornaments (Qurtubi, Alusi).

Another possible meaning is, "We would have made some of these

[36] And, whoso turns a blind eye to the remembrance of the Compassionate, We assign over him a devil, who is then his close companion.³¹

وَمَنْ يَعْشُ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ ثَقِيَصَ لَهُ
شَيْطَانًا فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ ﴿٣٦﴾

[37] They hinder them from the path, while they think they are guided aright.³²

وَأِنَّهُمْ لَيَصُدُّوهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَيَحْسَبُونَ
أَنَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

things from silver and some others from gold” (Zamakhshari).

30. The unworthiness of this world is best expressed by a *hadith* as found in Tirmidhi. It says,

لَوْ كَانَتِ الدُّنْيَا تَرْنُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ جَنَاحَ بَعُوضَةٍ، مَا سَقَى
كَافِرًا مِنْهَا شَرْبَةَ مَاءٍ

Sahl b. Sa'd reports the Prophet (*sams*) as having said, “If the world was equal to the wing of a mosquito in the sight of Allah, the unbeliever would not have received a mouthful of drink” (Ibn Kathir).

31. According to a report in Muslim, every individual has a *Shaytan* in his company (Shawkani). A Muslim, however, is able to overcome his incitation; but the unbelievers have no way to escape his prompting (Au.). Abu Sa'id al-Khudri said that the allusion is to the Devil who will meet the unbeliever as he emerges from the grave and will not part company until he leads him to the Fire (Qur-tubi).

As Allah said elsewhere (41: 25):

وَقَيَّضْنَا لَهُمْ قُرَنَاءَ فَزَيَّنُوا لَهُمْ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا
خَلْفَهُمْ وَحَقَّقَ عَلَيْهِمْ الْكُفُولُ فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا خَاسِرِينَ [فصلت
: ٢٥]

“And We assigned to them close companions who decked out fair to them what was before them and what was behind them, and (thus) came true the Word against them (being) among the people who passed away before them of the Jinn and mankind. They were indeed the losers” (Ibn Kathir).

32. Yusuf Ali comments: “The downward course in evil is rapid. But the most tragic consequence is that evil persuades its victims to believe that they are pursuing good. They think evil to be their good. They go deeper and deeper into the mire, and become more and more callous. ‘Them’ and ‘they’ represent the generic plural of anyone who ‘withdraws himself from ... Allah’ (see last verse).”

[38] Until, when he comes to Us³³ he says, 'How I wish there was between me and you the distance between the two Easts'³⁴ - an evil close-companion then.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَنَا قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ
بُعْدَ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ فَبِئْسَ الْقَرِينُ ﴿٣٨﴾

[39] Of no benefit will this Day be (he) - if you transgressed - (except) that you are sharers in the chastisement.³⁵

وَلَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ إِذْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ فِي
الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

[40] Will you then make the deaf to hear, or guide the blind or he who is in clear error?

أَفَأَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ أَوْ تَهْدِي الْعُمْيَ
وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٤٠﴾

[41] Even if We take you away (in death), We shall surely take vengeance upon them.³⁶

فَإِنَّمَا نَذْهَبَنَّ بِكَ فَإِنَّا مِنْهُمْ مُنْتَقِمُونَ
﴿٤١﴾

[42] Or, We may show you that which We have promised them, for surely, We have full power over them.

أَوْ نُزَيِّتَكَ الَّذِي وَعَدْنَاهُمْ فَإِنَّا عَلَيْهِمْ
مُقْتَدِرُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

33. That is, when he, who turned a blind eye to the remembrance of his Lord, and those of his close companion of previous life come together to Allah in the Hereafter, at that point the man will regret the company of the devil.

34. One opinion is that by the two Easts the allusion is to East and West. Just as they say, "the two Basras" meaning, Basra and Kufa, or "the two moons" for the sun and the moon (Ibn Jarir, Razi, Qurtubi and others). Yet another opinion is that it is to two Easts of summer and winter when the sun rises from two different directions - although both in the East (Ibn Jarir).

35. It is in human nature that when he sees others in the same kind of suffering, he feels his own suffering lightened. Said Khansa' in a nice poetical piece:

فلولا كثرة الباكين حولي * على إخوانهم لقتلت
نفسي

"If not for the numerous criers around me (crying) over their brothers, I would have surely killed myself" (Qurtubi, Shabir).

36. There are two opinions: Hasan and Qatadah said that the allusion is to the evil happenings that took place among the Muslims after the Prophet's death; so that, he departed

[43] Hold fast then, unto that which has been revealed to you, surely, you are on a straight path.³⁷

فَاسْتَمْسِكْ بِالَّذِي أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٤٣﴾

and afflictions began to appear. In fact, there was never a Prophet but who witnessed afflictions striking his people during his life itself. But Allah spared our Prophet that he should see in his lifetime what would agonize him. Nevertheless, he was shown in vision the displeasing events that were to happen to his followers after him, which so affected him that he was not seen smiling thereafter (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

(There is a *hadith* related to this topic). The Prophet said, as in Muslim, narrated by Abu Burdah, quoting his father,

النجوم أمان لأهل السماء فإن طمست النجوم أتى السماء ما يوعدون و أنا أمان لأصحابي فإذا قبضت أتى أصحابي ما يوعدون و أهل بيتي أمان لأمتي فإذا ذهب أهل بيتي أتى أمتي ما يوعدون

“The stars are a security for the heavens. When the stars are gone, that will come upon the heavens which it has been promised. I am a security for my Companions. When I am gone, that will come upon my Companions which has been promised. And my Com-

panions are a security for my *Ummah*. When my Companions are gone, that will come upon my *Ummah* which is being promised” (Ibn Kathir).

A second opinion is that the allusion is to those who rejected him. That was the opinion of Suddi, and is the preferred interpretation (Ibn Jarir).

37. Miur’s antagonism of Islam is almost proverbial, so the following, as quoted by Majid has some significance: “Mohammad thus holding his people at bay; waiting in the still expression of victory; to outward appearance defenceless, and with his little band as it were in the lion’s mouth; presents a spectacle of sublimity paralleled only by such scenes in the Sacred Records as that of the Prophet of Israel when he complained to his Master, ‘I, even I only, am left.’ Nay, the spectacle is in one point of view even more amazing ... It is this which brings it possible into still bolder prominence the marvelous self-possession and enthusiasm which sustained Muhammad on his course” (Op. cit., p. 126).

[44] Surely, it is an honor for you and for your people;³⁸ and soon shall you be questioned.³⁹

وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ وَسَوْفَ تُسْأَلُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

[45] And ask those of the Messengers We sent before you, did We appoint, apart from the Compassionate, deities to be worshiped?⁴⁰

وَأَسْأَلُ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا أَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ آلِهَةً يُعْبَدُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

[46] Surely, We sent Musa with Our signs to Fir`awn and his chiefs. He said, 'I am the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds.'

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَقَالَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

[47] But when he brought them Our signs, lo, they laughed them out.

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا إِذَا هُمْ مِنْهَا يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

38. This is how the word “*dhikr*” of this occurrence has been understood by Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah, Suddi and Ibn Zayd (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir); although, the “honor” is for anyone who will accept and live by the Message; while the top honors will go to the pious (Qurtubi). However, the two meanings, the apparent (of ‘remembrance’) and ‘honor’ are not, as Yusuf Ali points out, mutually exclusive.

Ibn `Adiyy and Ibn Marduwayh have reported that when the Prophet presented himself to the tribes for support to Islam, which he promised would overcome resistance, they would ask him about whose dominion it would be if it happened that way. He did not reply to them until this verse was revealed. After the revelation of this verse he would recite it

in reply to whoever raised that question (Shawkani, Alusi). That is, he told them that it was honor enough that the Revelation had come to them (Au.).

39. “The meaning is that on the Day of Judgment all prophets will be asked, metaphorically, as to what response they received from their people (cf. 5: 109), and those who professed to follow them will be called to account for the spiritual and social use they made – or did not make – of the revelation conveyed to them: and thus, the ‘eminence’ promised to the followers of Muhammad will depend on their actual behavior and not on their mere profession of faith” (Asad).

40. One opinion is that the Prophet was supposed to ask the Messengers that were brought together at Jeru-

[48] And, not a sign We showed them but it was greater than its sister.⁴¹ So we seized them with chastisement, haply that they might return.⁴²

وَمَا نُزَيِّهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ إِلَّا هِيَ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ أُخْتِهَا وَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

[49] But they said, 'O sorcerer! Pray to your Lord for us,⁴³ by what He has covenanted with you,⁴⁴ we should then be guided aright.'⁴⁵

وَقَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا السَّاحِرُ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ إِنَّنَا لَمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

saalem, the night of his Ascension, but he preferred not to ask. Another, and preferred opinion, is that he was to ask the followers of the previous Prophets, such as the Jews and Christians, but which also he did not feel the necessity to do (Ibn Jarir, Razi and others).

41. The other signs are quite well known such as, the storms, locusts, lice, frogs, blood, losses in agricultural products, loss of lives, and, of course, the shining hand and the rod becoming snake (Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir). As for being greater, it is possible that every new one was so apparently Allah's handiwork as to be impossible to dismiss as a natural phenomenon (Au.).

42. "The concept of 'returning' to God implies that the instinctive ability to perceive His existence is inherent in human nature as such, and that man's 'turning away' from God is a consequence of spiritual degen-

eration, and not an original tendency or predisposition" (Asad).

43. One question: how could they address Musa as a magician and then ask him to plead for the removal of the chastisement? The answer is that a magician was not a derogatory term among them. It was rather a word of reverence meaning "scholar" as there were no scholars then but only magicians (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi and others). Ibn Kathir seconds the above opinion.

44. The testament between Musa and his Lord was to the effect that if Fir'awn's folks entered into faith, they would be spared the punishment.

45. That is, points out Ibn Kathir, they meant to say that if they were relieved, they would accept Musa's faith, as Allah said elsewhere (7: 133-135):

[50] But when We removed from them the chastisement, at once they broke their word.⁴⁶

فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابَ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُثُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

[51] And Fir`awn made a proclamation among his people, saying, 'O my people, does not the dominion of Egypt belong to me, and these canals that flow beneath me?⁴⁷ What! Do you not see then?

وَنَادَىٰ فِرْعَوْنُ فِي قَوْمِهِ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَلَيْسَ لِي مُلْكُ مِصْرَ وَهَذِهِ الْأَنْهَارُ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِي أَفَلَا تَبْصُرُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

[52] Or, am I better than this who is insignificant,⁴⁸ who can scarcely express himself clearly?

أَمْ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ هَٰذَا الَّذِي هُوَ مِثْلِي وَلَا يُكَادُ يُبِينُ ﴿٥٢﴾

فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطُّوفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقُمَّلَ وَالضَّفَادِعَ وَالْذَّمَ آيَاتٍ مُّفَصَّلَاتٍ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ (١٣٣) وَلَمَّا وَقَعَ عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّجْزُ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّنَا بِمَا عٰهَدَ عِنْدَكَ لَئِنْ كَشَفْتَ عَنْنَا الرِّجْزَ لَنُؤْمِنَنَّ لَكَ وَلَنُرْسِلَنَّ مَعَكَ بَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ (١٣٤) فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ الرِّجْزَ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ هُمْ بِالْعُودِ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُثُونَ [الأعراف : ١٣٣ - ١٣٥]

"Therefore, We let loose upon them flood, the locusts, the lice, the frogs, and (water turning into) blood: signs distinct. But they waxed proud; indeed, they were a criminal people. Whenever a wrath fell upon them they cried out: 'O Musa. Supplicate to your Lord by what He has promised you. If you release us (O Musa) from this wrath, we shall believe in you and shall let go with you the Children of Israel.' But when We relieved them of the wrath until a term they were to attain, behold, they went back (on their word)."

46. Majid quotes the *Bible*: "Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, Entreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord" (Ex. 8: 8). And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron and said unto them, Entreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail" (Ex., 9: 28).

47. Asad's following expression was preceded by Shabbir's in Urdu: "I.e., 'at my command': a reference to the imposing irrigation system originating in the Nile and controlled by royal power."

48. That is, 'am I not?'

[53] Why not bracelets of gold were cast on him,⁴⁹ or angels came with him in accompaniment?’

فَلَوْلَا أُلْقِيَ عَلَيْهِ أَسْوِرَةٌ مِّنْ ذَّهَبٍ أَوْ
جَاءَ مَعَهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ مُقَرَّرِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

[54] Thus did he make light of his people. So they obeyed him. They were indeed a corrupt people.

فَاسْتَحَفَّ قَوْمَهُ فَأَطَاعُوهُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا
قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾

[55] At length when they provoked Us to anger,⁵⁰ We took vengeance on them and drowned them all.⁵¹

فَلَمَّا آسَفُونَا انتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ
أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

49. It was a practice among them that when one of them was promoted to higher status, he was awarded bracelets of gold to wear on the wrists (Razi, Qurtubi); while Fir`awn reserved pearls for himself (Shabbir).

Asad adds: “In Ancient Egypt, golden armlets and necklaces were regarded as princely insignia (cf. Genesis xli, 42) or at least as evidence of high social dignity.”

Yusuf Ali might be quoted here: “Gold bracelets and gold chains were possibly among the insignia of royalty. In any case they betokened wealth, and the materialists judge a man’s worth by his wealth and his following and equipage. So Pharaoh wanted to see Moses, if he had any position in the spiritual kingdom, invested with gold bracelets, and followed by a great train of angels as his Knight-companions! The same

kind of proofs were demanded by the materialist Quraish of our holy Prophet. These were puerilities, but such puerilities go down with the crowd. Barring a few Egyptians who believed in Allah and in the Message of Moses, the rest of Pharaoh’s entourage followed Pharaoh in his pursuit of revenge, and were drowned in the Red Sea.”

50. This is how Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, `Ikrimah, Sa`id ibn Jubayr, and many others understood the text (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

51. “Fir`awn boasted of water (when he spoke of the canals flowing beneath him: Au.), and he perished in water, - a fitting recompense” (Yusuf Ali, elsewhere).

Ibn al-Mundhir and Ibn abi Hatim have a report which says, as narrated by Tariq b. Shihab: “I was with `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud when some-

[56] We made them a precedent and an example for the later ones.⁵²

فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ سَلَفًا وَمَثَلًا لِلْآخِرِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

[57] And, when Ibn Maryam was cited as an example, at once your people laughed at it.⁵³

وَلَمَّا ضُرِبَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ مَثَلًا إِذَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْهُ يَصِدُّونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

[58] And they said, 'Are our deities better or he?'⁵⁴ They cited him not to you but for disputation.⁵⁵ Indeed, they are a contentious people.

وَقَالُوا آلِهَتُنَا خَيْرٌ أَمْ هُوَ مَا ضَرَبُوهُ لَكَ إِلَّا جَدَلًا بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِمُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

[59] He is only a slave whom We blessed and made him an example to the Children of Israel.

إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا عَبْدٌ أَتَعَمَّنَا عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ مَثَلًا لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿٥٩﴾

one mentioned sudden death. He remarked, 'It is an ease granted to a believer, while a source of grief for the unbeliever.' Then he recited this verse, 'At length when they provoked Us to anger, We took vengeance on them and drowned them all'" (Shawkani).

52. That is, Fir'awn and his folks were a precedent for the unbelieving nations that followed him, in terms of behavior, and in terms of the retribution that followed, as also an example for the later generations to learn from.

53. The consensus of opinion among Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah, Dahhak and Suddi is that the term "yasiddun" means "yazijjun" (Ibn Jarir), which in turn means, "to scream, protest, and ridicule" (Au.).

54. That is, when 'Isa (asws) was mentioned in the Qur'ān, the Quraysh thought the Prophet was inviting them to the worship of Jesus, in confirmation of the Christian practice, so they protested, "is he better as a deity or Allah's own daughters, the angels, whom we worship?" (Ibn Jarir in sum and substance).

In Yusuf Ali's words: "Jesus was a man, and a prophet to the Children of Israel, 'though his own received him not.' Some of the churches that were founded after him worshiped him as 'God' and as 'the son of God,' as do the Trinitarian churches to the present day. The orthodox churches did so in the time of the holy Prophet. When the doctrine of Unity was renewed, and the false worship of others besides Allah was strictly prohibited, all false gods were con-

demned, e.g., at xxi.98. The pagan Arabs looked upon Jesus as being in the same category as their false gods, and could not see why a foreign cult, or a foreign god, as they viewed him, should be considered better than their own gods or idols. There was no substance in this, but mere mockery, and verbal quibbling. Jesus was one of the greater prophets: he was not a god, nor was he responsible for the quibbling subtleties of the Athanasian Creed.”

Qurtubi, (and Ibn Kathir from Ibn Is-haq), quote the following as the context of revelation: Once the Prophet presented his message to a group of Quraysh in the Grand Mosque. Ending with a threat, he left the assembly. ‘Abdullah b. al-Zab`ara said he knew how to non-plus the Prophet. He said, “Muhammad said that those that are worshiped besides Allah will be in the Fire. This means ‘Isa ibn Maryam, ‘Uzayr and other (virtuous men of the past) will be in the Fire.” The Quraysh were well-pleased with his words. But when they suggested this to the Prophet, he replied, “Whoever approved that he be worshiped will be in the Fire.”

55. Asad writes, “Objecting to the Qur’anic condemnation of their

idolatrous worship of angels – whom they describe here as ‘our deities’ – the pagan Quraysh pointed to the parallel Christian worship of Jesus as ‘the son of God,’ and even as ‘god-incarnate,’ and argued more or less thus: “The Qur’ān states that Jesus was purely human – and yet the Christians, whom the same Qur’ān describes as “followers of earlier revelation” (*ahl al-kitab*) consider him divine. Hence, are we not rather justified in our worshiping of angels, who are certainly superior to a mere human being?” The fallacy inherent in this ‘argument’ is disposed of in the sequence..

“Since the Qur’ān condemns explicitly, and in many places, the deification of Jesus by the Christians, this unwarranted deification cannot be used as an argument in favor of the pagan worship of angels and, thus, against the Qur’ān: in the words of Zamakhshari, such an argument amounts to ‘applying’ a false analogy.”

The following comes as an additional explanation of this verse,

عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ شُعَيْبٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ أَنَّ تَقَرُّا
كَانُوا جُلُوسًا بِنَابِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ
بَعْضُهُمْ أَلَمْ يَقُلِ اللَّهُ كَذَا وَكَذَا وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَلَمْ يَقُلِ
اللَّهُ كَذَا وَكَذَا فَسَمِعَ ذَلِكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ فَخَرَجَ كَأَنَّمَا فُتِيَ فِي وَجْهِهِ حُبُّ الرُّمَانِ فَقَالَ

[60] Had We willed We could have made in place of you⁵⁶ angels in the earth, succeeding (one another).

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ مَلَائِكَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ يَخْلُفُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

[61] Verily, He is a Knowledge for the Hour,⁵⁷ therefore, be not in any doubt about it, but obey me. This is the straight path.

وَإِنَّهُ لَعِلْمٌ لِلسَّاعَةِ فَلَا تَمْتَرَنَّ بِهَا وَاتَّبِعُونِ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٦١﴾

[62] Nor let Shaytan hinder you, surely, he is your open enemy.

وَلَا يَصُدُّكُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٦٢﴾

بِهَذَا أُمِرْتُمْ أَوْ بِهَذَا بُعِثْتُمْ أَنْ تَصْرُبُوا كِتَابَ اللَّهِ بَعْضُهُ يَبْغِضُ إِنَّمَا ضَلَّتْ الْأُمَمُ قَبْلَكُمْ فِي مِثْلِ هَذَا

(It is reported) that some people were squatting near the door of the Prophet (and discussing an issue), when someone said, “Didn’t Allah said this and this?” While another said, “Didn’t Allah say this and this?” The Prophet heard them, came out with a face which looked like a pomegranate had been squeezed on his face. He said, “Have you been ordered this?” Or he said, “Is this what you have been raised for, that you should strike a part of the Book with another? Nations before you lost their way in this manner.”

Another but *Sahih, hadith* of the same nature is in Ahmed. It is as follows: Abu Umamah reports the Prophet as having said,

مَا ضَلَّ قَوْمٌ بَعْدَ هَذِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا أَوْتُوا الْجَدَلَ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ مَا ضَرَبُوهُ لَكَ إِلَّا جَدَلًا بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِمُونَ

“No people lost the path after a guidance they were upon except that they were given contentions and disputations. Then the Prophet recited this verse: ‘They did not strike (the example for) you but (by way of) disputations, but rather they are an argumentative people’” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

56. This is how Ibn Jarir understands the meaning of “*minkum*” of the text. As Allah said elsewhere (6: 133),

إِنْ يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفْ مِنْ بَعْدِكُمْ مَا يَشَاءُ [الأنعام : ١٣٣]

“If He wished He could remove you and replace after you whomsoever He will.”

However, other commentators have expressed the possibility of a literal meaning of “*minkum*” meaning, ‘(angels born) out of you.’

57. The textual “*ilmun*” has been understood as “*alamun*” (a sign, in-

[63] When `Isa brought them clear proofs, he said, 'I have brought you wisdom so as to make clear to you some of those things you are differing over.⁵⁸ Therefore, fear Allah and obey me.

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ عِيسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالَ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَلِأُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي تَخْتَلَفُونَ فِيهِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا

﴿٦٣﴾

[64] Surely, Allah is my Lord and your Lord. Therefore, worship Him. This is the straight path.'

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٦٤﴾

signia) by authorities like Ibn `Abbas; and the allusion is to his (`Isa ibn Maryam's) second coming which will take place before the end of the world. In fact, at one time some people had begun to recite the word as "alamun;" but the reciters of the Holy Qur'an (*qurra*) gathered together over this issue and the unanimous opinion was that it is "ilmun." And so was the recitation of Ubay b. Ka'b (Ibn Jarir).

The Prophet has said in a well-known *hadith* of Muslim,

فَبَيْنَمَا هُوَ كَذَلِكَ إِذْ بَعَثَ اللَّهُ الْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ فَيَنْزِلُ عِنْدَ الْمَنَارَةِ الْبَيْضَاءِ شَرَفَى دِمَشْقَ بَيْنَ مَهْرُودَتَيْنِ وَاضِعًا كَفَّيْهِ عَلَى أَجْنِحَةٍ مَلَكَيْنِ إِذَا طَاطَأَ رَأْسُهُ فَطَرَ وَإِذَا رَفَعَهُ تَحَدَّرَ مِنْهُ جُحَانٌ كَاللُّؤْلُؤِ فَلَا يَحِلُّ لِكَافِرٍ يُحْدِ رِيحَ نَفْسِهِ إِلَّا مَاتَ وَتَفْسُهُ يَنْتَهِي حَيْثُ يَنْتَهِي طَرَفُهُ فَيَطْلُبُهُ حَتَّى يَدْرِكَهُ بِنَابٍ لِّدِّ فَيَقْتُلُهُ

"While he (Dajjal) will be in that (state) Allah will send down the

Messiah, son of Maryam, by the white minaret in Eastern Dimashq, wearing two cloaks, with his hands across the wings of two angels. When he lowers his head, it begins to drop down droplets (of water), and when he raises it, bead-like pearls scatter about. It would not be possible for an unbeliever that his breath reaches him but he does not die. And his breath will end where his sight ends. Then he will chase him (Dajjal) to the gates of Ludd and kill him" (Qurtubi).

58. That is, in many matters of religious importance (whether pertaining to beliefs, law or morals: Au.) the Israelites had differed between themselves. `Isa ibn Maryam was sent to clear those differences and show where lay the truth (Razi).

[65] But the factions differed between themselves.⁵⁹ Woe then, unto those who did wrong from the chastisement of the painful day.

فَاخْتَلَفَ الْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ فَوَيْلٌ
لِّلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٦٥﴾

[66] Are they but waiting for the Hour, that it should come upon them on a sudden while they are unaware?

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً
وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

[67] Intimate friends that day will be foes to one another, but for the godfearing.

الْأَخْيَاءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا
الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

[68] O My slaves, no fear upon you this day nor shall you grieve.

يَا عِبَادِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ
تَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

[69] Those who believed in our revelations and had surrendered (to Us).

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

[70] Enter Paradise – you and your spouses – you will be made to rejoice.

ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ أَنْتُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ تُحْبَرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

59. One opinion is that the allusion is to the differences between Jews and Christians, while another is that the reference is to the division between the Christians themselves who split into Nestorians (who said Jesus was a son of God), Jacobites (who said that he was God Himself), Malakites (who said he was third of the three), and so on (Razi, Qurtubi).

Majid adds: “(.. the pure religion of Jesus degenerated into gross idolatry). ‘During the fifth century the practice of introducing images into churches increased and in the sixth it had become prevalent. The com-

mon people, who had never been able to comprehend doctrinal mysteries, found their religious wants satisfied in turning to these effigies. With singular obtuseness, they believed that the saint is present in his image, though hundreds of the same kind were in existence, each having an equal and exclusive right to the spiritual presence. The doctrine of invocation of departed saints, which assumed prominence in the fifth century, was greatly strengthened by these graphic forms, had reappeared.’ (Draper, *Intellectual Development of Europe*, I. p. 413).”

[71] *Platters and cups of gold shall be passed around them, and for them therein whatever their souls desire⁶⁰ - delight of the eyes, and you shall abide therein forever.*

يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِصِحَافٍ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ
وَأَكْوَابٍ وَفِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيهِ الْأَنْفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ
الْأَعْيُنُ وَأَنْتُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

60. There are several reports in elucidation of this verse. One of them says that a man asked the Prophet whether there will be horses in Paradise, an object of great interest for him. He answered,

عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ بْنِ بُرَيْدَةَ ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ ؛ أَنَّ رَجُلًا سَأَلَ
النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، فَقَالَ : يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ،
هَلْ فِي الْجَنَّةِ مِنْ حَيْلٍ ، قَالَ : إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَدْخَلَكَ الْجَنَّةَ
، فَلَا تَشَاءُ أَنْ تُحْمَلَ فِيهَا عَلَى فَرَسٍ ، مِنْ يَأْفُوتَةٍ
حُمْرَاءَ ، يَطِيرُ بِكَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ شِئْتَ ، إِلَّا فَعَلْتَ

“If Allah admits you into Paradise, you will not wish to ride a horse, except that you will have horses made of pink rubies flying with you to any part of Paradise.”

Another man asked about camels in Paradise. He did not answer him in the manner he answered his companion, but said,

وَسَأَلَهُ رَجُلٌ ، فَقَالَ : يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، هَلْ فِي الْجَنَّةِ مِنْ
إِبِلٍ ؟ قَالَ : فَلَمْ يَقُلْ لَهُ مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ لِصَاحِبِهِ ، قَالَ
: إِنَّ يَدْخُلَكَ اللَّهُ الْجَنَّةَ ، يَكُنْ لَكَ فِيهَا مَا أَشْتَهَتْ
نَفْسُكَ ، وَلَذَّتْ عَيْنُكَ .

“You will have therein what you wish and what pleases your eyes”
(Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

On another occasion the Prophet said,

إِن السَّيِّئَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ لَتُظْلِمَهُمُ السَّحَابَةُ ، قَالَ :
فَتَقُولُ : مَا أُمْطَرُكُمْ؟ قَالَ : فَمَا يَدْعُو دَاعٍ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ
بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَمْطَرْتَهُمْ ، حَتَّى إِذَا الْقَائِلُ مِنْهُمْ لِيَقُولُ :
أَمْطَرْنَا كَوَاعِبَ أَتْرَابَا

“A cloud will spread itself over the inhabitants of Paradise and ask, “What shall I rain down?” None will ask for a thing but it will rain down his request until one of them will say, “Rain down on us high-bosomed damsels.”

Mujahid was asked whether there will be music in Paradise. He answered, “There is a tree in Paradise [called al-`Ees] that will produce a kind of music never heard before.”

And, Abu Umamah said that a man may spot a bird flying in Paradise. He will wish to eat it. It will fall down [on a platter] cooked, ready to be served (Ibn Jarir).

It may be noted that none of the *ahadith* quoted above has been reported as fully trustworthy words of the Prophet, although it is not easy to reject them either (Au.).

[72] This is the Paradise that you have inherited for what you were doing.⁶¹

وَتِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

[73] For you therein abundant fruits whereof you may eat.

لَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ مِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾

[74] Surely, the criminals will be in the chastisement of Jahannum, abiding.

إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي عَذَابٍ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾

[75] It will not be made milder for them, even as they will be in despair therein.

لَا يُغْتَرَّ عَنْهُمْ فِيهِ مُبْسِلُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

[76] We wronged them not, but they were indeed the wrongdoers.

وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا هُمُ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

61. The Qur'an states that the inhabitants of Paradise will inherit it. What is the meaning? A *hadith* in Ibn Abi Hatim explains it. It says:

”كل أهل النار يرى منزله من الجنة، فيكون له حسرة فيقول { وَ أُنَّ اللَّهُ هَذَا لِي لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ } وكل أهل الجنة يرى منزله من النار فيقول { وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنَّ هَذَا اللَّهُ } فيكون له شكراً“ قال: وقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ما من أحد إلا وله منزل في الجنة ومنزل في النار، فالكاfer يرث المؤمن منزله من النار. والمؤمن يرث الكافر منزله من الجنة. وذلك قوله تعالى { وَتِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ }

“Everyone of the Fire will see his place in Paradise which will be a source of regret and mortification for him. He will say (39: 57), ‘Had Allah guided me, I would have been of the pious.’ Similarly, everyone of the Paradise will

see his place in the Fire. He will say (7: 43), ‘It was not for us to be guided aright had Allah not guided us.’ It will be (a source of) gratefulness for him.” Then the Prophet added, “There is none among you but he has a place in Paradise and a place in Hellfire marked for him. The unbeliever will inherit the believer’s place in the Fire, while the believer will inherit his place in Paradise. This is (the meaning of) the words, ‘This is the Paradise that you have inherited for what you were doing’” (Ibn Kathir).

The authenticity of the above report could not be verified. However, a similar but shorter narration is in Ahmed, in two places. One of them says,

[77] They shall call out, 'O Malik, let your Lord put an end to us.' He will reply, 'You shall surely abide.'⁶²

وَنَادُوا يَا مَالِكُ لِيَقْضِ عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ قَالَ
إِنَّكُمْ مَّاكِثُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

[78] We brought you the truth but most of you were averse to the truth.

لَقَدْ جِئْنَاكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَكُمْ لِلْحَقِّ
كَارِهُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

[79] Or, have they contrived an affair? But surely, We are contriving.

أَمْ أَبْرَمُوا أَمْرًا فَإِنَّا مُبْرِمُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

[80] Or, do they think that We do not hear their secret (talk) and their whispers?⁶³ Lo, Our messengers by them are recording.

أَمْ يَحْسِبُونَ أَنَّا لَا نَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ
بَلَىٰ وَرُسُلُنَا لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

لا يدخل أحد النار إلا رأى مقعده من الجنة لو أحسن ليكون عليه حسرة، ولا يدخل أحد الجنة إلا رأى مقعده من النار لو أساء ليزداد شكرا

"No one will enter the Fire but he will see his place in Paradise (that he would have got) had he done well, in order that it becomes a source of regret and mortification for him. So also, no one will enter Paradise but he will see his place in the Fire, if he had done badly; in order that he may increase his gratitude." The above is from Haythami's Majma`ul Fawa'id with his remark that one of the two narratives involve trustworthy narrators (Au.).

62. Ibn `Abbas, Nawf, Suddi and Hasan said that the inhabitants of the Fire will plead to the keeper-angel, "O Malik. Let your Lord put an end

to us." He will reply after one thousand years, "You shall surely abide" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi). This report is in Ibn abi Hatim also (Ibn Kathir).

A similar report is in Tabarani, which has the words "forty years" in place of "one thousand" and which report has Haythami's approval (Au.).

63. Muhammad b. Ka'b al-Qurazi reported that while two Qurayshis and one Thaqafi, or the other way round, were near the Ka'bah, one of them said, "Do you think Allah hears our talk?" Another answered, "When you speak aloud He hears but not when you whisper." At that the third remarked, "If He hears when you speak aloud then He will hear when you speak in whispers." Allah revealed, "Or, do they think that We do not hear their secret (words) and their whispers?" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

[81] Say, 'If the Compassionate had a son, then, I would be the first to serve.'⁶⁴

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدٌ فَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْعَابِدِينَ ﴿٨١﴾

[82] Glory to the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Lord of the `Arsh, above what they describe.

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

[83] So, leave them plunge and play⁶⁵ until they meet the Day of theirs they are being promised.

فَذَرْنَهُمْ يَخُوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

[84] And, He is the Deity in the heaven and the Deity in the earth. He is the All-wise, the All-knowing.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاءِ إِلَهٌ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَهٌ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٨٤﴾

[85] Glorified is He to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them. With Him is the knowledge of the Hour, and to Him you shall be returned.

وَتَبَارَكَ الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

[86] While those they call upon apart from Him have not the power of intercession, except for him who bears witness to the truth and those that know.⁶⁶

وَلَا يَمْلِكُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

[87] And, if you asked them who created them, they will surely say, 'Allah.' How then are they being deluded?

وَلَيْن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾

64. That is, we are so complete in our devotion to Allah, and so submitted, that if by any chance He had a son, we would have been the first to worship him (Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir).

65. That is, let them plunge in vain discussions, and play with their lives (Ibn Jarir).

66. That is, those who are worshiped other than Allah, such as angels, 'Isa ibn Maryam, 'Uzayr, pagan deities, or others, will not be allowed to intercede unless they bear witness to Allah's oneness and His Lordship and who will be aware that they can intercede only if allowed (Ibn Jarir).

[88] And for his saying, 'O my Lord, these are وَقِيلَ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمٌ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
a people who will not believe.'⁶⁷ ﴿٨٨﴾

[89] Yet, pardon them and say, 'Peace.' Soon فَاصْفَحْ عَنْهُمْ وَقُلْ سَلَامٌ فَسَوْفَ
they will know.⁶⁸ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾

67. This affords a hint that this *Surah* could be one of the last ones to be revealed at Makkah. The Prophet had reached his final conclusion about the Makkans: they will not believe (Au.).

68. The words "Soon they will know" conceal a threat; and The Prophet's departure to Madinah thereafter, should have set the Quraysh worrying (Au.). مَتَّ



Surah 44¹
Al-Dukhan

(The Smoke)

Makkan²



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
 THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Ha Mim.

حم ﴿١﴾

[2] By the clear Book.

وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿٢﴾

[3] We have indeed sent it down on a blessed night.³ Surely, We were wont to warn.⁴

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنْذِرِينَ

﴿٣﴾

1. Ibn Kathir presents two *ahadith* here that speak of the special virtues (*fada'il*) of reciting this *Surah* (at night, or, specifically, in a Friday night), both from Tirmidhi, but both declared weak by the collector himself. Qurtubi has a few others but whose authenticity is untraceable (Au.).

2. The *Surah* is Makkan by consensus except for Qurtubi's statement that the verse 15 (viz. "We are going to remove the torment a little, (but) you will surely revert") which is Madinan.

Baydawi has also said that the verse in question is Madinan (Thanwi).

3. This night has been identified by great majority of the *Salaf* as the *Laylatu al-Qadr*. A minority opinion is that the allusion is to the night of fifteenth of *Sha'ban* (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others).

What exactly does the sending down of the Qur'ān in this particular night mean? Ibn 'Abbas explained, when asked by a Khariji, that the Qur'ān was sent down as one whole from the *Lawh al-Mahfuz* (in the seventh heaven) to the *Bayt al-Ma'mur* (or *Bayt al-'Izzah*, in the first heaven) during the night of the *Qadr*, in *Ramadan*. Thereafter it was sent down

[4] Therein is decreed every affair⁵ of wisdom.⁶

فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

in parts, according to the contingencies (Razi, Alusi).

4. "The revelation of the Qur'an is but a continuation and, indeed, the climax of all divine revelation which has been going on since the dawn of human consciousness. Its innermost purpose has always been the warning extended by God to man not to abandon himself to mere material ambitions and pursuits and, thus, to lose sight of spiritual values" (Asad).

5. Mujahid, Qatadah, Hasan and others said that affairs of the next one year, *Ramadan* to *Ramadan*, are decided in this night of *Ramadan*. Thereafter, Allah brings forward what He will, and delays what He will. `Ikrimah, however, thought that it is in the night of 15th of *Sha'ban* that the affairs are decided for the next year. But this is not the preferred opinion (Ibn Jarir). In fact, Ibn Kathir points out a *hadith* to this effect – although he declares it weak. It cannot be used, write Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others, to contradict the Qur'an which says (97: 1),

{إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ} [القدر: ١]

"Surely, We have revealed it in the night of Qadr."

And (2: 185)

{شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ} [البقرة: ١٨٥]

"The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an..."

Zamakhshari, who lived in Makkah for the best part of his last years, states that one of the "*barakah*" noticed on the night of 15th of *Sha'ban* is the apparent increase in the water level of Zamzam, yet, he seems to be with the majority that the allusion here is to the night of *Qadr* – to which conclusion Razi is also inclined.

In view of some of the *Salaf* saying that fates are decreed in the *Laylatu Bara'ah*, it is quite possible, as Ibn `Abbas is reported to have said (as in Alusi), that the decree is written down in the night of the mid of *Sha'ban*, and then forwarded on for action in the night of *Qadr* (Thanwi).

That said, there is no difference in opinion that this *Ayah* is clearly referring to the Night of *Qadr* as it falls in *Ramadah*, whereas, the above is an opinion of the *Salaf* whose trustworthiness could not be established (Au.).

The Night of Mid of *Sha`ban*

Reports come to us from the earliest times about the importance of the night of the mid of *Sha`ban*. Its importance, perceived or real, has earned it at least four names: *Laylatu al-Bara'ah*, *Laylatu al-Rahmah*, *Laylatu al-Mubarakah* and *Laylatu al-Sakk*. Some scholars, viz., Qurtubi and Alusi, have given it good space, but without critically evaluating the reports. Mubarakpuri does it in his *Tuhfatu al-Ahwadhi fi Sharh al-Tirmidhi* more professionally and concludes that in view of the widespread reports involving many narrators right from the start, they should have had a good origin. One of the reports is as follows, which however, Tirmidhi himself declared weak:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ فَقَدْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- لَيْلَةً فَخَرَجْتُ فَإِذَا هُوَ بِالْبَيْعِ فَقَالَ « أَكُنْتُ تَخَافِينَ أَنْ يَحِيفَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ وَرَسُولُهُ ». قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي ظَنَنْتُ أَنَّكَ أَتَيْتَ بَعْضَ نِسَائِكَ. فَقَالَ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَنْزِلُ لَيْلَةَ النِّصْفِ مِنْ شَعْبَانَ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا فَيَغْفِرُ لَأَكْثَرِ مَنْ عَدَدَ شَعْرِ عَنَمٍ كُلِّ

`A'isha said, “(One night) I missed the Prophet and went out (seeking him). He was in Baqee` (graveyard). He said, “Were you fearful that Allah and His Messenger will be unjust to you?” I said, “Messenger of Allah. I

thought maybe you have gone to one of your wives.” He said, “Allah the Mighty, the Exalted, descends, in the night of the middle of *Sha`ban* to the earthly firmament and forgives more than the hair on the body of the sheep of the Kalb (tribe).”

[The Kalb tribe was known for its large flock of sheep, and by the words, “Are you fearful that Allah and His Messenger will be unjust to you?” – the allusion is to the Prophet spending the night of `A'isha's right with another wife: Au.].

After declaring the above *hadith* weak, Tirmidhi cites another that has been reported on this topic. Thereafter, the commentator follows up by noting that the report has also been traced by Bazzar and Bayhaqi. The latter's report seems to have a line of narrators who are perhaps just unobjectionable. To add, Ibn Majah also carries this report, as does Bayhaqiyy who presents us with another version, as originating from Mu`adh ibn Jabal which is preserved in Ibn Majah, who reports from Abu Musa al-Ash`ariyy. It also in *Mundhiri's Targhib wa Tarhib*. This particular one is in the *Sahih* of Ibn Hibban. It says,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيَطَّلِعُ فِي لَيْلَةِ النَّصَفِ مِنْ شَعْبَانَ فَيَغْفِرُ
لِجَمِيعِ خَلْقِهِ إِلَّا لِمُشْرِكٍ أَوْ مُشَاحِنٍ

The Prophet said, “Allah looks down (upon mankind) during the night of the mid of *Sha`ban* and forgives all His creations except a polytheist and one who commingles lineages.”

Ibn Majah too carries this version coming from Abu Musa al-Ash`ari, as does Bazzar and Bayhaqi, but from Abu Bakr through a chain that Mundhiri thought not too weak; but the one in Ibn Majah, writes Mubarakpuri, has Ibn Lehi`ah who was declared weak by most (though an occasional voice spoke in his favor: Au.). In addition, there is another report originating from `Abdullah ibn `Amr about which Mundhiri said that it is weak; as also there is one by Mak-hul coming through Kathir b. Murrah, as preserved by Mundhiri and Tabarani, but also weak. Mak-hul has another through Abu Tha`labah, but *mursal*. Ibn Majah has yet another *hadith*. This one originates with `Ali (ibn Abi Talib) but there is one in the chain who was alleged to have manufactured

ahadith. All these reports, concludes Mubarakpuri, lead us to believe that the *hadith* about the virtue of the night of mid of *Sha`ban* has some truth at the bottom and are evidences against him who says that there is nothing in the *hadith* literature to prove the virtue of this night. (Mufti Shafi` expresses his agreement with the above discussion).

Nevertheless, Mullah `Ali Qari has pointed out that the *hadith* which describes a Prayer of one hundred raka`ah during each of which raka`ah *Surah al-Ikhlās* is to be recited has no basis whatsoever, nor is there any basis for the special attention bestowed to the night in which the Qur`ān is completed in the *Tarawih* Prayers; in connection with which Mubarakpuri reminds that similarly the fast of the next day of the *Laylatu al-Bara`ah* has no religious significance. A *hadith* that comes to this effect is fabricated (*Tuhfah*).

6. Ibn Jarir explains that the textual “*hakim*” is to be treated as “*muhkam*” (meaning, confirmed, clear in meaning, unambiguous: Au.). Ibn Kathir is also of the same opinion.

[5] An affair (proceeding) from Us. Surely, We were wont to send (Messengers).⁷

أَمْرًا مِّنْ عِندِنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ ﴿٥﴾

[6] A mercy from your Lord. He indeed is the All-hearing, the All-knowing.

رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَبِّكَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦﴾

[7] Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between the two, if you would be believers.⁸

رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُّوقِنِينَ ﴿٧﴾

[8] There is no deity save He. He quickens and deals death: your Lord and the Lord of your ancient fathers.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٨﴾

[9] But they are in doubt, sporting.

بَلْ هُمْ فِي شَكٍّ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿٩﴾

[10] Watch then for a Day when the sky shall bring forth a manifest Smoke.⁹

فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَاءُ بِدُحَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] Enveloping the people: this is a painful torment.

يَغْشَى النَّاسَ هَذَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾

[12] (They will cry out) 'O our Lord. Remove from us the torment, we shall turn believers.'

رَبَّنَا اكْشِفْ عَنَّا الْعَذَابَ إِنَّا مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

7. Ibn Jarir's opinion is that the allusion is to Prophet Muhammad, in which case the translation should be, "And We were wont to send (a Messenger)."

8. That is, if you wish to believe (Razi from Abu Muslim), or, "if you would care for inner certainty" (Au.)

9. Manifest Smoke: i.e., a clearly visible smoke (Zamakhshari, Razi), in other words, something real and not imaginary (Au.).

Dukhan

There have been two opinions. One, that of Ibn Mas'ud through trustworthy reports viz., this has already happened. Another, that it will happen just before the Last Hour. Ibn Jarir adopts the opinion of Ibn Mas'ud. He reports that someone went up to Ibn Mas'ud and told him that someone was saying in the mosque (in a Qur'anic circle) that just before the Day of Judgment, a smoke will engulf the earth. It will affect the eyes

and ears of the unbelievers while to believers it will be like catching cold. Ibn Mas'ud was reclining. He straightened up and said, "Why should not the people say, 'I do not know', instead of speaking out without knowledge. Let me explain. When the Quraysh delayed their decision about Islam, the Prophet prayed that they be made to experience the kind of drought that Yusuf had predicted. As a result, they were struck with starvation and began to eat bones and carrion. In that state they would cast a look at the heaven and it would look like it was filled with smoke: because of the hardship, hunger and thirst. It is in reference to this that Allah said, 'Watch then, for a Day when the sky shall bring forth a manifest Smoke; enveloping the people: this is a painful torment.' When that happened they said, 'O our Lord, remove from us the torment, we shall be believers.' Allah said in reply, 'We are going to remove the torment a little, (but) you will surely revert.' Then He added, 'The day We shall assault them the greatest assaulting, We shall surely take the vengeance.' Accordingly, Allah took vengeance on the day of Badr." This opinion of Ibn Mas'ud is seconded by other authorities such as Mujahid, Qatadah, Abu al-'Aliyyah

and others. (Zamakhshari also presents the above two opinions).

Ibn Mas'ud is also reported (in *Sahih* works: Au.) that the following signs have already been: Smoke, Lizam (meaning, "[a necessary [occurrence]; ref. 25: 77), the assaulting (of verse 16 of this *Surah*), *Al-Qamar* (54: 1), and *Al-Rum* (*Surah* 30)."

The above report concerning the ten signs is in the *Sahihayn*. Ibn Mas'ud's report concerning the drought can be found in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, and others, narrated through several chains of narrators (Au.).

With reference to the famine mentioned above, the following note from Yusuf Ali should throw further light: "The 'smoke' or 'mist' is interpreted on good authority to refer to a severe famine in Makkah, in which men were so pinched with hunger that they saw mist before their eyes when they looked at the sky. Ibn Kathir in his *Tarikh* mentions two famines in Makkah, one in the 8th year of the Mission, say the fourth year before the *Hijrah*, and another about the 8th year after the *Hijrah*. But as either or both of these famines lasted as many as seven years, the dates are to be taken very roughly. It is even possible that the two famines were continuous, of varying severity

from year to year. Bukhari mentions only the post-*Hijrah* famine, which was apparently so severe that men began to eat bones and carrion. Abu Sufyan (about 8 A.H.) approached the holy Prophet to intercede and pray for the removal of the famine, as the Pagans attributed it to the curse of the Prophet. *Sura* xxiii., which is also Makkan, but of later date than the present *Surah*, also refers to a famine: see xxiii. 75, and n. 2921. As *Suras* were not all revealed entire, but many came piecemeal, it is possible that particular verses in a given *Surah* may be of different dates from the *Sura* as a whole.”

After discussing Ibn Mas`ud's opinion, Ibn Jarir takes up the second opinion which was held by Ibn `Umar, Hudhayfah b. al-Yaman, Hasan, Abu Sa`eed and others in the sense that the Smoke is going to be. Ibn `Umar is reported to have said that a Smoke will appear that will strike the believers as mere cold, but will enter into every opening of the unbelievers to such effect that he will think his head is being roasted. In addition, `Abdullah ibn `Abbas is reported to have said to Ibn Abi Mulaykah, “I could not sleep whole of the last night.” Ibn Abi Mulaykah asked him why. He answered, “Peo-

ple told me about the appearance of a cosmic body with a tail. I said to myself that perhaps Smoke will appear next. This took my sleep off until the morning.”

After presenting the above, Ibn Jarir declares them weak, especially in view of the severally reported narrative of Ibn Mas`ud.

It could have been the Halley's Comet which flew by the earth in 1986 and should come back in 75 years time, i.e. roughly in 2060.

While accepting the weakness of the *ahadith* declared weak by Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir however differs with him. He accepts the *hadith* of Ibn Mas`ud which is also in other works such as Ahmed, Nasa'i, Ibn Abi Hatim, and that Abu al-Aliyyah, Ibrahim Nakha'i, Dahhak and Atiyyah al-`Awfi held the same opinion. But the other opinion also needs consideration since all the reports in this regard are not weak; for instance, a *hadith* of Muslim says,

عَنْ أَبِي الطُّفَيْلِ عَنْ حُذَيْفَةَ بْنِ أَسِيدٍ الْعِفَارِيِّ قَالَ
اطَّلَعَ النَّبِيُّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ
تَتَذَكَّرُ فَقَالَ « مَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ». قَالُوا نَذْكُرُ السَّاعَةَ.
قَالَ « إِنَّهَا لَنْ تَقُومَ حَتَّى تَرَوْنَ قَبْلَهَا عَشْرَ آيَاتٍ
». فَذَكَرَ الدُّخَانَ وَالْجَحَالَ وَالْدَّابَّةَ وَطُلُوعَ الشَّمْسِ
مِنْ مَغْرِبِهَا وَتَرُؤْلَ عِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ- وَيَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ وَثَلَاثَةَ خُسُوفٍ خَسَفَتْ

بِالْمَشْرِقِ وَخَسَفَ بِالْمَغْرِبِ وَخَسَفَ بِحَزِيْرَةِ الْعَرَبِ
وَأَخْرَجَ ذَلِكَ نَارًا تَخْرُجُ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ تَطْرُقُ النَّاسَ إِلَى
خَشَرِهِمْ.

“Hudhayfah b. Asid al-Ghifari says that the Prophet came upon us while we were in a reminder-session (*dhikr*). He asked, “What is it you are discussing?” We said, ‘The Hour.’ He said, ‘It will not be until you have seen ten signs.’ Then he mentioned: the Smoke, Dajjal, the Animal, the sun rising from where it sets, coming down of ‘Isa ibn Maryam (peace be upon him), Ya’juj and Ma’juj, and three caving in of the earth: one in the East, another in the West and a third in the Arabian Peninsula, and the last of them would be a fire that will start from Yemen and push people to the Field of Resurrection.”

There is another *hadith*, Ibn Kathir goes on, which has a good chain of narrators. It is in Tabarani. It says,

وَرَبُّكُمْ أَنْذَرَكُمْ ثَلَاثًا : الدُّخَانُ ، يَأْخُذُ الْمُؤْمِنَ مِنْهُ
كَالرَّكْمَةِ ، وَيَأْخُذُ الْكَافِرَ فَيَسْتَفِجُ وَيَخْرِجُ مِنْ كُلِّ
مَسْمَعٍ مِنْهُ ، وَالثَّانِيَةُ الدَّابَّةُ ، وَالثَّالِثَةُ الدَّجَالُ

“Your Lord has warned you of three: The Smoke that will attack a Muslim merely as if it is an attack of cold but will seize the unbeliever until it will emerge from

every orifice in his body; second, the Animal, and third, Dajjal.”

Again, *Sahih* reports tell us that when the Prophet went up to see Ibn Sayyad in Madinah, he discovered that he was not Dajjal but a mere soothsayer. Satisfied at that, he told Ibn Sayyad, “Be off with you, you cannot go any further than your limits.” And then he recited this verse, “Watch then, for a Day when the sky shall bring forth a manifest Smoke.” This is a clear indication that there is going to be a Smoke some time in the future.

It is also reported of ‘Ali, continues Ibn Kathir, that the Smoke has not yet been. The report about Ibn ‘Abbas (with reference to a comet: Au.), is in Ibn Abi Hatim and has a good chain. (Quote from Ibn Kathir, [much of which is also in Qurtubi and others] ends here. Shawkani expresses nearly the same opinions as the two).

We might add that ‘Ali’s opinion is treated as trustworthy by Ibn Hajr in his Fat-h. But he distrusts the report about Ibn ‘Abbas saying that perhaps the word he used was “*Al-Dajjal*” which got altered to “*Al-Dukhan*.” Nawawi on the other hand states that there is no reason why both the explanations cannot be correct (i.e., future Smoke as well as of the past).

[13] On what account the admonition for them, seeing that a clear Messenger has already come to them?¹⁰

أَنَّىٰ لَهُمُ الذِّكْرَىٰ وَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] Yet they turned away from him and said, 'A tutored, possessed (man).'¹¹

ثُمَّ تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوا مُعَلَّمٌ مَّجْنُونٌ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] We are going to remove the torment a little, (but) you will surely revert.¹²

إِنَّا كَاشِفُو الْعَذَابِ قَلِيلًا إِنَّكُمْ عَائِدُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

In fact, the construction and use of words in the Qur'ānic *Ayah* under discussion is such that it appears to be alluding to both the events: that of the past and that of the future (Au.).

10. Or, "a Messenger who is clearly so (Au.); i.e., His being a Messenger is quite evident from his character, morals and deeds" (Mawdudi).

11. If the Prophet was tutored, could his tutor remain hidden from his wife and close companions: Khadeejah, Abu Bakr, 'Ali, Zayd and others? (Mawdudi).

And would the tutor remain in obscurity – never claiming the credit?

12. Predictably, that is what happened. Allah removed the torment and they went back to denial (Ibn Jarir from Ibn Zayd).

Yusuf Ali expounds Allah's mercy hidden behind the trials to which

the humans are subjected: "Allah gives every chance to all His creatures, however rebellious. He gives them a little trial, perhaps personal, perhaps economic, to see if that would bring them to their bearings, and train their will in the right direction. Some are thus reclaimed, and some do not learn. Perhaps, for the latter, he gives them a chance by removing the trial; some are reclaimed, and some still remain obdurate. And so, in His wisdom, He allows His grace to work, again and again, until, at the last, Judgment must seize the last and irreclaimable remnant 'with a mighty onslaught'. Such working of Allah's Providence is clearly visible in the story of the Quraish. It is a pity that the economic conditions of Makkah have not been studied in detail in any of the standard biographies of the Prophet."

[16] (But) the day We assault them the great assaulting, We shall surely take to vengeance.¹³

يَوْمَ نَبْطِشُ الْبَطْشَةَ الْكُبْرَىٰ إِنَّا مُنتَقِمُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] We did put to test before them the folks of Fir`awn, so a noble Messenger went to them.

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَجَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] (Saying), 'Deliver Allah's bondmen to me, surely I am unto you a trusted Messenger.¹⁴

أَنْ أَدُّوهُ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ إِلَيَّ لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] And, rise not against Allah, surely, I have brought you a clear authority.

وَأَنْ لَا تَعْلُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي آتِيكُم بِسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] I take refuge in my Lord and your Lord, lest you should stone me.¹⁵

وَإِلَيَّ عُدْتُ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ أَنْ تَرْجُمُونِ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] And, if you will not believe in me, then leave me alone.¹⁶

وَإِنْ لَّمْ تَوْمِنُوا لِي فَأَعْتَزِلُوكُمْ ﴿٢١﴾

13. It could be referring to, as Ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Dahhak, Abu al-`Aliyyah and others have said, the day of Badr (Ibn Jarir); but Ibn Kathir reports Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah and Hasan al-Busri, as saying that the allusion is to the Day of Judgment; although he accepts that there could be two "assaults" one at Badr, another on the Day of Judgment. Shawkani however argues that it fits the Day of Badr better than the Day of Judgment, when, in actual fact, there will be no assault, (but rather, one great shoving into the Fire: Au.).

14. That is, let go the Children of Israel with me. Alternatively, it could mean, "Give me the right I have

upon you O people, that you should listen to me and follow me, for, I am a trustworthy Messenger" (Zamakhshari, Razi Alusi).

15. Although originally "*rajm*" was coined for casting stones (at someone), the word has been borrowed for other purposes such as, to cast a doubt, evil presentiment, abuse, or to sound rejection and drive away (Isfahani). There is no reason why all these senses have not been used at this point of usage (Tabari), predominant being, as Ibn `Abbas said, rejection by the tongue (Au.).

16. In this is the proof that one might abandon him who stubbornly pays no attention to the attention shown to him (Thanwi in different words).

[22] Ultimately, He cried to his Lord that these are a criminal people.

فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمٌ مُّجْرِمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] 'In that case, set you out with My bondmen by night, you are sure to be pursued.

فَأَسْرِبْ بَعْدَیْ لَیْلًا إِنَّكُمْ مُّتَّبَعُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] And leave the sea as a furrow,¹⁷ they are a host to be drowned.'

وَاتْرِكْ الْبَحْرَ رَهْوًا إِنَّهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُّعْرَفُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] How many of gardens and springs they left behind?!

كَمْ تَرَكُوا مِنْ جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] Crops and honorable places?!

وَزُرُوعٍ وَمَقَامٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] And blessings wherein they took delight?!

وَتَعْمَةٍ كَانُوا فِيهَا فَاكِهِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

[28] Even so. And we bequeathed them upon another people.¹⁸

كَذَٰلِكَ وَأَوْرَثْنَاهَا قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

[29] Then neither the heaven nor the earth wept over them;¹⁹ nor were they given respite.

فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنْظَرِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] And surely, We delivered the Children of Israel from the humiliating affliction.

وَلَقَدْ نَجَّيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ ﴿٣٠﴾

17. Qatadah explained that the instruction pertained to the moment after Musa (*asws*) had crossed the sea while the water had remained parted, he thought of preventing the pursuers – Fir'awn and his forces – by striking the water with his rod again, to let the two sides join up and close the furrow. He was told to let the furrow as it was for drowning of the hosts. Several of the *Salaf* have expressed opinions close to this (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

18. Hasan (al-Busri) has said that the Israelites went back to Egypt after

Fir'awn was drowned. As for those who have rejected the theory, they have been influenced by historical reports. But, historical reports are not worthy of full trust (Thanwi).

See Al-Manar's discussion in this connection in *Surah al A'raf* note 191 (Au.).

19. Do the heaven and earth weep for anyone? The answer given by 'Ali, Ibn 'Abbas, and Mujahid is: yes, they do weep. They explain that there is no man but he has a door for him in the heaven by which his sustenance is sent down and through

which his good deeds rise up. When a believer dies, the door is closed and so the heaven weeps. Similarly, with his death, when the place where a believer used to do his Prayers goes empty the earth mourns. Fir'awn and his folks never offered any Prayers, nor any good deed that could pass through the door in the heaven. Consequently, neither the heaven nor the earth wept for them. In fact, a *hadith* is also quoted to this effect (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir); which is found in *Nazm al-Mutanasir* of Kittani, as well as in Thu'alibi (as pointed out by Qurtubi) but which is *mursal* (Au.).

The *hadith* of above reference is as follows:

Hafiz al-Musali reports on the authority of Anas b. Malik that the Prophet said,

“There is no human but there are two doors for him in the Heaven. A door from which his sustenance descends and a door by which his deeds and words ascend. When he dies they miss him and weep for him.” Then he recited this verse, “Then neither the heaven nor the earth wept over them.” Ibn Abi Hatim reports the same (Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Kathir also points out that the *hadith* quoted can be traced in its shorter form to Tirmidhi, but which Tirmidhi himself declared untrustworthy.

Ibn 'Abbas is reported to have said, as in *Hakim*, (which he declared trustworthy: Alusi) that the earth weeps for a believer for forty days. Then he recited this verse (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Razi, Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir quote in parts opinions which say that the heaven's weeping is that it should get reddened at the horizons. This is what happened, as some reports say, the day Hussain was murdered. It is reported that the heaven remained crimson for no less than four months. It is also reported that they did not turn a stone after Hussain's murder but found blood under it, and a solar eclipse took place immediately after it. These, they say, are the signs that the heaven cried at Hussain's murder.

But, Ibn Kathir writes, these reports seem to have been manufactured by the *Shi'ah* and the spirit behind them is no more than a joke. If Hussain occupied such a status as to cause natural phenomena of several sorts at his murder, then what about his father – greater than he – at whose murder nothing was noted;

[31] From Fir`awn, indeed he was high-and-mighty (and) of the prodigals.

مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَالِيًا مِّنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

[32] And We chose them²⁰ – in (full) knowledge²¹ – over the worlds.

وَلَقَدْ اخْتَرْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عَلَىٰ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

nor was anything noted at the murder of `Uthman. Further, who occupies a greater position than Prophet Muhammad? But when his beloved son Ibrahim died and solar eclipse happened to take place, and people thought that Ibrahim's death was the cause, the Prophet emphatically rejected the connection.

As for the proposition that the statement "the heaven and the earth did not weep for them" should be treated metaphorically, there seems to be no reason to resort to metaphorical interpretations when the apparent is possible. Why can the heavens and the earth not cry? If the inanimate can sing praises, [why can't they weep]? (Thanwi).

At this point, we might point out that a recent scientific paper says that several waves that originate from the Sun's surface, seem to sound like the sun is singing a kind of musical song (Au.).

20. That is, chose them (for raising Prophets among them, sending

down revelations, etc.) from among the nations contemporary to them (Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir).

21. That is, write Zamakhshari and Alusi, We chose them in full knowledge that they deserved to be chosen (for reasons Allah knew best: Au.); or, despite the knowledge that they might sometimes rebel and exceed the bounds in certain situations.

Asad comments: ".. (As) a test of their sincerity with regard to the spiritual principles which in the beginning raised them 'above all other beings' and, thus, of their willingness to act as God's message-bearers to all the world. The formulation of the above sentence implies elliptically that they did not pass the test inasmuch as they soon forgot the spiritual mission for which they had been elected, and began to regard themselves as God's 'chosen people' simply on account of their descent from Abraham: a notion which the Qur'an condemns in many places. Apart from this, the majority of the

[33] And bestowed on them such signs wherein was a manifest sign.²²

وَأَتَيْنَاهُم مِّنَ الْآيَاتِ مَا فِيهِ بَلَاءٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] Indeed, these people say,²³

إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَيَقُولُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

[35] 'It is no more but our first death and we are not to be resurrected.'²⁴

إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا مَوْتُنَا الْأُولَىٰ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُنشَرِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

Children of Israel very soon lost their erstwhile conviction that the life in this world is but the first and not the final stage of human life, and – as their *Biblical* history shows – abandoned themselves entirely to pursuit of material prosperity and power.”

Does not the above apply to this *Ummah* as well? Do we see in them any inclination to be the message-bearers? Does a strong notion prevail among them that this world is but a passage? (Au.).

In the simpler language of Yusuf Ali, “From degrading servitude, Israel was delivered, and taken, in spite of many rebellions and backsliding on the way, to ‘a land flowing with milk and honey’, where later they established the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon. This was not merely fortuitous. In Allah’s decree it was to be a link in furthering His Plan. But their being chosen did not mean that they could do what they liked.

In that sense there is no ‘chosen race’ before Allah. But Allah gives every race and every individual a chance, and when the race or individual fails to live up to it, he or it must fall and give place to others.”

22. The allusion is to such miracles as were shown to them, viz., parting of the sea, mann and salwa, (the cloud sheltering them, etc.) in the Sinai etc. They tested the Israelites whether they would stay firm on the path when bestowed with such heavenly bestowals, or would they rebel? (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir, Alusi). The shining hand and the Rod turning into snake could also be included (Qurtubi).

23. It was the Quraysh who said this (Alusi).

24. Zamakhshari writes: The meaning is not, as it might appear, that the pagans were promised several deaths and so they asserted, “This is not but our first death;” but rather,

[36] Bring back our forefathers then, if you are truthful.²⁵

فَأْتُوا بِآبَائِنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

[37] Are they better²⁶ than the people of Tubba',²⁷ and those before them? We destroyed them (all). They were indeed criminals.

أَهُمْ خَيْرٌ أَمْ قَوْمُ ثَبَعٍ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] We created not the heavens and the earth, and what is between the two in sport.

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا
بَيْنَهُمَا لَآعِبِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

[39] We created not the two but in truth, but most of them realize not.

مَا خَلَقْنَاهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

they were told that they were dead earlier, given life, will die, and will be resurrected; to which they answered in refutation, denied that they were dead earlier, that it is nothing but this first life, and it will be no more than first death after which no life will follow.

The *Ayah* of Zamakhshari's reference is (2: 28):

"You were dead then He quickened you. Thereafter He will deal you death and then will quicken you."

The problem is that this *Ayah* is said to be Madinan, while the *Surah* under discussion is Makkan - although nothing definite can be said of either of them as fully Makkan or fully Madinan. It is also possible that they were refuting a Prophetic statement of the above meaning or that of one of the Companions. Alusi appears

with Zamakhshari in this opinion (Au.).

Imām Razi mentions the above, without granting full approval, and presents another possible meaning, which sounds less convincing: "We shall not undergo any of the happenings of the Hereafter alleged by you (O Muhammad) except for experiencing the first death."

25. In particular, they wanted Qu-sayy b. Kilab – their most respected progenitor - to be brought alive so that they could consult him with regard to the Messenger and his message (Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi, Alusi).

26. That is, in worldly power and sway over the lands (Zamakhshari).

27. There is dearth of information about "the people of Tubba'". Nei-

ther do we know anything about the Prophets raised among them, nor how exactly the people treated the message and Messengers. (History of no other people is as obscure as that of Himyar despite there being 26 known occupants of the thrones over a period of 2020 years: Alusi). One difficulty is that Tubba` (meaning a King, or Sovereign; collectively, Tababi`ah) was a dynastic name (like Fir`awn, Kisra, Qaysar), of whom there were two kingdoms. Their second dynasty ruled South Yemen (Himyar) flourishing in the 3rd, 4th and 5th centuries of the Christian era. That is, their reign ended roughly one hundred years before the appearance of the Prophet. Syed Sulayman Nadwi (Arbdul Qur`ān, vol.1, p. 289-91) lists more than a dozen Tababi`ah with approximate dates of their reign as found on archeological tablets. Shammar Yur`ish, Abukarib As`ad (E.I.), Sharjil Ya`fir, `Abd Kalil, are the better known names. Some of them are credited with great exploits (as in Ibn Sa`d's Life of Muhammad), their rule extending up to Tashkent and leaving Arab colonies in Tibet. But Syed Sulayman Nadwi is with Ibn Khaldun who does not believe in these accounts. Alusi holds the same opinion (Au.).

Historians report one of the Tababi`ah as having visited Yethrib (where its inhabitants – Jews included - fought him during the day, but fed his army at night). Thereonward he visited Makkah, enshrouded the Ka`bah, and, returning to Himyar, he converted the population to Judaism. Ibn Kathir credits the Tubba` of Qur`ānic mention – named As`ad Abu Kurayb (or Karab) - as having been a (lower order: Au.) Prophet whose subjects adopted tawhid, but returned to paganism after his death. But Alusi discounts this and declares a report coming from Ibn `Abbas as weak.

There are reports coming down from the Prophet which say that he was not sure whether Tubba` of Qur`ānic mention was a Prophet or not. But, although found in several collections, those reports are weak. Another report has the Prophet saying, "Do not curse Tubba` for he had become a Muslim." It is in Ahmad's collection, but also weak because of the presence of `Amr b. Jabir and Ibn Lehi`ah in the chain (who were considered weak). Tabarani has the same report but through another chain in which (as noted by Sami b. Muhammad Salamah) one of the narrators was unknown to Haythami. `A'isha

[40] Indeed the day of Decision²⁸ is the appointed time for them all.

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ مِيقَاتُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

[41] The day no protector will avail a client aught, nor shall they be helped.

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَوْلًى عَنْ مَوْلَى شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

[42] Save him upon whom Allah showed mercy. He indeed is the All-mighty, the All-merciful.

إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٤٢﴾

[43] Surely, the Zaqquq tree,²⁹

إِنَّ شَجَرَةَ الزَّقُّومِ ﴿٤٣﴾

[44] (shall be) the food of the regular sinner.³⁰

طَعَامُ الْأَثِيمِ ﴿٤٤﴾

[45] Like molten brass bubbling in the bellies,

كَالْمُهْلِ يَغْلِي فِي الْبُطُونِ ﴿٤٥﴾

[46] as boiling (water) bubbles.

كَغَلْيِ الْحَمِيمِ ﴿٤٦﴾

and Qatadah are also on record having said (since Allah censured the people of Tubba' but not Tubba' himself), "Do not speak ill of Tubba' for he was a righteous man" (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir [some in parts]). 'A'isha's opinion about Tubba' is in *Hakim* (Alusi).

28. The textual "*fasl*" can also be understood as "separator." That day the believers will be separated from the unbelievers; the believer will be separated from all the hardships he underwent; the unbeliever will be separated from all that he dreamt of attaining (Razi).

29. Ibn 'Abbas is reported to have said that if a drop of *Zaqquq* was

dropped on the earth, it would turn everything rancid (Ibn Jarir).

Thanwi narrates that some people, Indians but residing in Makkah, told him that there the Arabs ate a fruit from a tree called *Zaqquq*. The fruit was called Barshumi. But the Qur'an says that it is the fruit of the inhabitants of the Fire! How could he reconcile, he was asked. He explained to them that, firstly, a coincidence in names does not indicate the edibility of the fruit, and, secondly, the Qur'an did not say they will eat *Zaqquq*, but that they will eat its tree.

30. Zamakhshari reports that 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud was teaching someone the Qur'an. When he said, "*Ta'amul athimi*" the man

[47] Seize him and drag him into midst of the Blazing Fire.

خُذُوهُ فَاعْتِلُوهُ إِلَى سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٤٧﴾

[48] Then pour down over his head torment of the boiling water.³¹

ثُمَّ صَبُّوا فَوْقَ رَأْسِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْحَمِيمِ ﴿٤٨﴾

[49] Taste, you are indeed the mighty, the noble.³²

ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ ﴿٤٩﴾

would say, “*ta`amul fatimi*.” After a few trials Ibn Mas`ud told him, “Say, ‘*ta`amul fajiri*.’” The man was able to say, “*ta`amul fajiri*.” So Ibn Mas`ud said, “Alright, let it be ‘*Ta`amul fajiri*’ for you.” This shows that a word of the Qur`ān can be (temporarily) replaced with another word equivalent in meaning if someone is unable to pronounce the original. This led Abu Hanifah to allow recitation in Persian on condition that the reader supplements the exact equivalent of Qur`ānic words without causing any distortion to the original. The scholars have said, adds Zamakhshari, the condition he placed meant that it was permitted but in truth not permitted since the Qur`ān is at the peak of coherence, beauty, rhetoric, eloquence and balagha, which render it impossible to convert it to another language. Further, Imām Abu Hanifah did not know Persian well enough (to know the drawbacks). However, `Ali b. Ja`d reports Abu Yusuf regarding Abu Hanifah’s change in opinion re-

garding Qur`ānic rendition into Persian. His two immediate pupils also believed that the Qur`ān could not be rendered into Persian.

Imām Razi quotes Zamakhshari’s text but says he rejects the argument, which he has discussed in detail in one of his books. Qurtubi also quotes Zamakhshari but without passing any remark. Alusi however does not accept that Abu Haneefah had ever allowed recitation of the Qur`ān in Persian, quoting in this reference a research paper by one Sharambilali.

31. That is, pour on his head the instrument of torment: boiled water (Zamakhshari).

32. Although general, Abu Jahl was considered by many as the most deserving of this punishment because when at one time the Prophet spoke to him he remarked that he was nobler than that he should be threatened with any punishment (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi).

[50] This is what you were doubting all along.

إِنَّ هَذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَمْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

[51] Surely, the godfearing will be in a secured place.

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي مَقَامٍ أَمِينٍ ﴿٥١﴾

[52] Amid gardens and springs.

فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿٥٢﴾

[53] Wearing fine silk and rich brocades, (sitting) face to face.

يَلْبَسُونَ مِنْ سُندُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

[54] Thus it will be, and We would have wed them to wide-eyed hooris.³³

كَذَلِكَ وَرَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

[55] Calling therein for every kind of fruit, in peace.

يَدْعُونَ فِيهَا بِكُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ آمِنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

[56] They shall not taste death therein other than the first death³⁴ – He would have saved them from the torment of the Blazing Fire.

لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ الْأُولَى وَوَقَاهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٥٦﴾

The fuller report is in Ibn Kathir and Shawkani:

Umawi has recorded in his “*Maghazi*” that the Prophet met Abu Jahl, on whom be Allah’s curse, and told him, “I have been asked by Allah to tell you: ‘Woe to you and then woe. Then, woe to you and woe.’” He removed his cloak from his hand and replied, “Neither you nor your Companion (meaning Allah) have any power over me. You know very well that I am the most protected of the inhabitants of Bat-ha (valley). And I am mighty and noble.” So Allah destroyed him at Badr, and humiliated him, blamed him for his words and revealed, “Taste, you are indeed the mighty, the noble.”

33. Anas is reported to have said (while the words are sometimes attributed to the Prophet) that if a Hawra’ (sing.: Hur, meaning: a woman of a dark pupil with white background: Alusi) were to spit in a bitter ocean, its water would turn sweet (Ibn Kathir). But the authenticity of the report could not be established (Au.).

The opinion to which most scholars subscribe is that Huris are not women of this world.

34. The allusion is to the death they experienced in their life on earth (Qurtubi and others). Reports say that the Prophet was asked whether the inhabitants of Paradise will sleep.

[57] As a bounty from your Lord;³⁵ that indeed is the supreme triumph.

فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكَ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

﴿٥٧﴾

[58] We have indeed made it easy in your tongue, haply they will be reminded.

فَإِنَّمَا يَسِّرْنَاهُ لِبَلْسَانِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

﴿٥٨﴾

[59] Watch then, they too are watching.³⁶

فَارْتَقِبْ إِنَّهُمْ مُّرْتَقِبُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

He answered, “No! Sleep is death’s sister” (Ibn Kathir). There are several reports to this effect but only the one in Bazzar was declared trustworthy by Haythami (Sami b. M.S.).

A report in Tabarani’s *Awsat* says,

يُنَادِي مُنَادٍ إِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَصِحُّوا فَلَا تَسْقُمُوا أَبَدًا وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَحْيَوْا فَلَا تَمُوتُوا أَبَدًا وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَشِبُّوا فَلَا تَهْرُمُوا أَبَدًا وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَتَعْمُوا فَلَا تَبْتَئِسُوا أَبَدًا

“An announcer will announce (in Paradise), “That you will be in good health and never ill, that you should remain alive and never die, that you should remain young and never get old, and that you should be in luxury therein and will never be miserable” (Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Kathir quoted a *hadith* of Tabarani about which Haythami was somewhat skeptic, we have there-

fore, picked up one from Muslim of roughly the same meaning (Au.).

35. “As a bounty from your Lord”: because none will enter Paradise on the strength of his deeds alone, as *Sahih ahadith* clarify (Razi, Ibn Kathir).

36. These words conceal both a threat as well as promise. Allah said elsewhere (Ghafir: 51, 52):

﴿إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ (٥١) يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ الظَّالِمِينَ مَعَذَرَتُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِي الْعَذَّةِ وَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ﴾ [غافر: ٥١، ٥٢]

“Surely We help Our Messengers and those who believe in the life of this world and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth. The Day, when their excuses will not profit the wrongdoers. For them is the curse and for them the evil abode” (Ibn Kathir). مَقَرَّتْ

Surah 45
Al-Jathíyyah
 Makkan¹



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
 THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Ha. Mim.

﴿١﴾ حم

[2] Sending down of the Book from Allah, the
 Mighty, the Wise.

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ
 ﴿٢﴾

[3] Surely, in the heavens and earth there are
 signs for those who will believe.²

إِنَّ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ
 لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣﴾

1. Al-Mawardi mentioned that the whole *Surah* is Makkan except one *Ayah* (no. 14), which says, "Say to those who have believed to forgive those who have no hope in the days of Allah, that He may recompense a people for that they were earning." This is said to be Madinan and came down when `Umar had to swallow his anger against a hypocrite who insulted the Prophet (*saws*). This is also stated by Mahdawi and Nuhhas coming from Ibn `Abbas through Dahhak. On the other hand, Hasan, Jabir and `Ikrimah believed that the whole *Surah* is Makkan (Qurtubi).

2. To take a quick example, there is perfect balance between the short

wave radiation originating from the sun and the long wave radiation originating from the earth. If this balance is minutely disturbed, life cannot exist on the earth. There are signs for those who wish to believe in this phenomenon (Au.).

Sayyid writes, "The signs that are spread in the heavens and the earth are not any less in anything when compared to another, nor change from place to place; so that in whichever direction man extends his sight, he will find signs staring upon him in the universe full of wonders ... What is there that has no signs?

"These heavens that include huge cosmi bodies, their various levels of

existence, which, although massive beyond imagination, are spread like specks in space .. the space itself so imposing .. so vast .. so beautiful.

“And this earth, so vast by human measure, but less than a mentionable speck in comparison to the huge universe, is, so to say, lost in this vast, expansive space .. lost, if not for the Power that holds it in place and administers it, binding it to the massive universe in which nothing gets lost.

“And, in what Allah (*swt*) has placed in the earth as its qualities, by placing it in a well-determined position in the space, which allows for the appearance, sustenance and growth of life .. and the earth endowed with the well balanced conditions that alone allow life to flourish on it, without one of which conditions it could not have flourished, (are signs for the people).

“Every little thing on this earth .. every living thing .. and every little part of a whole on this earth is a sign by itself .. And, in being a sign, every little thing is as good as any large thing. This little leaf, of this large tree, or a little plant on the ground, is a sign .. it is a sign in its size and shape, in its color and touch .. a sign in its function and composition. And this hair on the body of an animal or man ..

is a sign .. a sign in its specialties, in its size, color and its functions. This feather in a bird's wing .. is a sign .. it is a sign in the material of its composition, placement and functions. In whatever direction a man may stretch his sight, in the heavens or the earth, he will find signs of all sorts spread all over.

“But! Who is it that sees the signs and perceives them? To whom do these signs announce of their existence? To whom?

“To those who believe!”

“Consider the creation of humans endowed with amazing qualities. It is a miracle; except that it does not strike us as a miracle because of our daily experiencing of it, because of our familiarity with it. Otherwise, every joint, every limb, every organ is a miracle.

“A one-celled ameba is a miracle. (It has more DNA than the cell of a human being: Au.). If an amoeba is a miracle, then what about those biological organisms that are smaller than ameba? And what about the whole of man? And the life organisms around him, each a miracle in its own right.

“Take the world around man. The eagle (which can see a rat on the

[4] And, in your own creation,³ and what He scatters abroad of animals,⁴ there are signs for those who are of assured faith.⁵

وَفِي خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا يَبُثُّ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ آيَاتٌ
لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾

earth from one km distance in the sky: Au.) is a destroyer of bird life. It lives long but has few progeny. The lion also lives long, but its population is low. Sparrows on the other hand live a short life, but are in millions. Flies live just for 15 days, but are in millions. Who decided on this balance so that neither is the forest filled with just a single animal, nor, if left to itself, any species suffers extinction. Surely, in this are signs for those who wish to believe.”

3. Life defies laws of nature. If there was no life, and, if it was suggested by a hypothetical being that life should be created, the answer would be, the laws of nature will have to be altered before any such attempt at plant life, animal life or human life can be made. This is because natural laws do not support life's emergence. The basic problem is, matter constantly undergoes erratic changes. It is unstable and disorganized. Water turns into vapor, or solidifies. Other materials keep polluting it. On the other hand, life is highly organized matter to which no element can be added. For example, humans are

made of 24 elements in all: silicon, phosphate, carbon, oxygen, etc., in certain proportions. No 25th element can be added to the humans. If fed, the body rejects them, or may die out. There can be no life organism which has, e.g., 40 elements in it. Again, there is no chaotic action in the body, as against the chaotic movement of the air or liquids, or even matter. We might take blood circulation as an example, or, movement of food taken in, movement of material within the cells, or movement of cells within organs. All these movements are highly organized. No organelle within the cell's protoplasm can penetrate into the cell nucleus. These are simple examples to demonstrate how life defies laws of nature prevalent everywhere but not within life systems. In this – and this only one in a million - are signs for those who are ready to believe.

After facing the difficulty with the laws of nature, we come across the question of the “state of the earth” to create life. The present state of the earth does not allow for origination of life. The chemical combinations

required for the creation of first life, do not exist anywhere in the earth nor can those conditions be created in which life can originate. For example, oxygen is essential for life. But oxygen is a strong reactant. As soon as those materials that are essential life-elements are brought into contact with oxygen, it immediately reacts to produce another substance. In other words, we need oxygen, but without its characteristics. The characteristics of oxygen should be suspended for a while until life has come into existence, but should be brought back immediately after the combination is made. Thus, life contradicts nature's laws in many ways and the scientists have no doubt about it that life cannot be created by any means. It can only be replicated from life forms that already exist. These are only introductory remarks for a subject which requires volumes to explain. Are there no signs in this for those who use their reason? (Au.)

4. Just as there is perfect balance between long and short waves, between the laws of nature, or between the distances between the planets revolving around the sun, there is a perfect balance between the animals that have been scattered abroad by Allah.

Every forest has a balanced stable animal population. But the scattering abroad has its role to play. Animals that migrate over thousands of miles play their role in maintaining the balance, removing extra living organisms from one place, and providing food to other living organisms in another place. Some birds migrate to places 12,000 km. away and return within the same year by flying back the same 12,000 km. In so doing, they play important eco role. From fishes to butterfly to ants, they all migrate, in tens of thousands, and for no apparent reason. In this scattering abroad of animals are signs for those who have minds that ponder (Au.).

5. "The intricate nature of human and animal bodies, and the life-preserving instincts with which all living creatures have been endowed, make it virtually impossible to assume that all this has developed 'by accident;' and if we assume, as we must, that a creative purpose underlies this development, we must conclude, too, that it has been willed by a conscious Power which creates all natural phenomena 'in accordance with an inner truth'" (Asad).

[5] And in the alternation of night and day,⁶ and in what Allah sends down of provision⁷ from heaven, thereby reviving the earth after its death, and in turning about of the winds – are signs for a people who reason.⁸

وَاجْتِيَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ رِزْقٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَّاحِ آيَاتٌ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٥﴾

[6] These are the verses of Allah that We recite upon you in truth. In what discourse then will they believe – after Allah and His signs?⁹

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ تَنْتَلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَ اللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦﴾

[7] Woe unto every lying¹⁰ slandering sinner.¹¹

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿٧﴾

6. Alternations are of two kinds: first, that of the day following the night and night following the day, and, second, the alteration in the length of the days and nights (Razi).

7. The allusion by provision is to rains, the prime cause of vegetation (Au.).

8. One notes the various terms in verses 3-5: “Signs for those who believe; signs for those who are of assured faith; signs for a people who reason.” There seems to be an ascending order. There are signs that are easily discernable to one and all, if they have some faith in God. In the second stage, greater signs are visible to those who have firm faith. Finally, armed with firm faith, and knowledge of both the kinds: sacred as well as profane (meaning scientific), coupled with righteous living, a

believer is able to discern more subtle signs (Au., with a point from Alusi).

9. “After Allah and His signs” i.e., after Allah’s discourse and the signs He has spread around (Tabari).

Sayyid adds: “There are innumerable, undeniable signs of Allah around man. The hearts feel them, the soul recognizes them, the mind is awakened by them. These signs speak the language of nature, understood by all – there being such close relationship between man and nature. The Qur’ān, therefore, gives the hints and moves on. Yet, and despite these signs apparent to all, if someone will not believe, then there is nothing that can make him believe. He who is not woken up by these whispers, will not be woken up by shouts.”

10. “*Affak*” is a habitually lying person, or a big liar (Au.).

[8] He hears Allah's revelations rehearsed to him, yet persists arrogantly, as if he heard them not. So give him glad tidings of a painful chastisement.

يَسْمَعُ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ تُنْشَىٰ عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يُصِرُّ
مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَانَ لَمْ يَسْمَعْهَا فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ
أَلِيمٍ ﴿٨﴾

[9] When he comes to know of anything about Our revelations, he takes them in jest.¹² They, for them is a humiliating chastisement.

وَإِذَا عَلِمَ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا شَيْئًا اتَّخَذَهَا هُزُوًا
أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿٩﴾

[10] Behind them is Jahannum.¹³ What they earn shall not avail them aught, nor will those that they took as protectors apart from Allah.¹⁴ For them is a mighty chastisement.

مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ مَا
كَسَبُوا شَيْئًا وَلَا مَا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] This is guidance. As for those who disbelieved in the signs of Allah, for them is punishment of a painful, devastating nature.

هَٰذَا هُدًى وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ مِّن رَّجْزٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿١١﴾

[12] Allah it is who subjected to you the sea so that the ships may sail through it by His command; so that you may seek His bounty and that perhaps you will be grateful

اللَّهُ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْبَحْرَ لَتَجْرِي
الْفُلُكُ فِيهِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَلِتَسْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

11. That is, (a totally corrupt man: Au.): a liar in his words and a sinner in his deeds (Ibn Kathir).

13. That is, in front of them. We say, "He was planning those cunning movements but his fate was smiling at him from behind him" (Au.).

12. Accordingly, the Prophet (*saws*) prohibited that one travel with a copy of the Qur'ān to a land whose people are at war with the Muslims, in fear that it might fall in the hands of the enemy (Ibn Kathir). The *hadīth* in *Sahih* of Muslim is as follows:

14. Mawdudi points out that the term "*waliyy*" has been used in two senses: (1) deities, male and female, whom they think will save them from Allah's wrath if they devoted themselves to them enough, and (2) those who the people treat as guides and patrons, in whose obedience they would even disobey their Lord.

نَهَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْ يَسَافِرَ
بِالْقُرْآنِ إِلَى أَرْضِ الْعَدُوِّ مَخَافَةَ أَنْ يَنَالَهُ الْعَدُوُّ
(Sami).

[13] And He has subjected to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth,¹⁵ all from Him.¹⁶ Verily, in that are sure signs for a people who reflect.

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِّنْهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] Say to those who have believed to forgive those who have no hope in the days of Allah,¹⁷ that He may recompense a people for that they were earning.¹⁸

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَغْفِرُوا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ أَيَّامَ اللَّهِ لِيَجْزِيَ قَوْمًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

Both these kinds of “*awliya*” will avail them not aught.

15. “I.e., by endowing man, alone among all living beings, with a creative mind and, thus, with the ability to make conscious use of the nature that surrounds him and is within him” (Asad).

At a simpler level we might add that although the full impact of the whole world subjected to the humans is yet to dawn upon us, the present state of science tells us that in appearance of life on the earth and in its survival, the whole universe plays its role. The balance of various forces of nature allows the earth to remain in orbit, otherwise, there is no reason why it should not fly off into empty cold space (Scientific American) freezing all life. Indeed, apart from the fact that we humans have a part of stars that exploded in the past, and contributed to the elements in our body, the Moment of Inertia prevalent on

the earth, which has direct effect on the magnitude of our physical movements and the ability to move materials around, is the direct result of the combined forces of gravity exerted upon us by the surrounding stars and galaxies. The world around us, the near as well as the distant, seems to be subjected to our benefit. Strange though it may sound, the scientific fact is that removal of a single galaxy, however distant, out of trillions that exist, could ultimately result in a complete revolution if not destruction of life on earth (Au.).

16. That is, from Him alone (Ibn Kathir).

17. That is, the Day of the Hereafter where none but Allah will rule.

In this kind of expression, “*ayyam*” means days of special significance: those memorable days when important events take place, such as, e.g., “*ayyam al-‘Arab*” meaning important events of Arab history (Mawdudi).

[15] Whoso works righteousness, it is for his own soul, and whoso does evil, it is upon it;¹⁹ then unto your Lord will you be returned.

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ
فَعَلَيْهَا ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] Indeed, We gave the children of Israel the Book, the Wisdom²⁰ and Prophethood; provided them with good things, and preferred them over the worlds.²¹

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ
وَالنُّبُوَّةَ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ
عَلَىٰ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] We gave them clear evidences of the affair,²² but they differed not except after knowledge had come to them - in insolence to each other.²³ Verily, your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Standing concerning that over which they were differing.

وَأَتَيْنَاهُم بَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا
إِلَّا مِّن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَعْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ
إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا
كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

In explanation of this verse Ibn `Abbas and others said that the injunction to forgive them – belonging to the Makkan phase – was abrogated by a later commandment to fight off wrong and oppression, through verses spread over the Qur`ān (Tabari, Ibn Kathir).

(Razi, Ibn Kathir), in sending down the message of monotheism, taken to them by Messengers raised from among them (Au.).

18. The meaning, as expressed by Zamakhshari, Razi and others is, “So that Allah may reward those who bore the wrongs in patience.”

22. Asad’s note covers both the ancient understanding as well as modern interpretation: “This, I believe, is the meaning of the phrase *min al-amr* in the above context (i.e., as Asad rendered it: “clear indications of the purpose [of faith]”), although most of the classical commentators are of the opinion that *amr* signifies here “religion” (*din*), and interpret the whole phrase, accordingly, as ‘of what pertains to religion’. Since, however, the common denominator in all the possible meanings of the term *amr* – e.g. ‘command, ‘injunction’, ‘ordinance’, ‘matter [of

19. “Upon it”: that is, upon its soul (Au.).

20. Several meanings are attributable to the textual “*hukm*” such as: knowledge, wisdom, the law (Razi).

21. That is, preferred them over the peoples of the world of their time

[18] Then We have set you upon an open way²⁴ in the affair,²⁵ so follow it,²⁶ and follow not the caprices of a people who do not know.²⁷

[19] Surely, they will avail you not aught against Allah. Surely, the transgressors are allies of one another while Allah is the protector of the pious.

[20] This is an enlightenment for mankind, a guidance and mercy for a people who are of assured faith.

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَىٰ شَرِيعَةٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

إِنَّهُمْ لَن يُّعْنُوا عَنْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

هَٰذَا بَصَائِرُ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

concern]’, ‘action’, etc. – is the element of purpose, whether implied or explicit, we may safely assume that this is the meaning of the term in the above elliptic phrase, which alludes to the purpose underlying all divine revelations and, consequently, man’s faith in it. Now from the totality of the Qur’anic teachings it becomes apparent that the innermost purpose of all true faith is, firstly, a realization of the existence of God and of every human being’s responsibility to Him; secondly, man’s attaining a consciousness of his own dignity as a positive element – a logically necessary element – in God’s plan of creation and, thus, achieving freedom from all manner of superstitions and irrational fear; and, lastly, making man aware that whatever good or evil he does is but done for the ben-

efit, or to the detriment, of his own self (as expressed in verse 15 above.”

23. Thus, knowledge became the source of differences which is against the norm, it being the other way round. The reason is, knowledge was never gained for its own sake, it was gained for the sake of this-worldly returns. (It made them behave insolently with each other: Au.) - Razi.

24. “It is to be borne in mind that the literal meaning of the term *Shari`ah* is ‘the way to a watering place’, and since water is indispensable for all organic life, this term has in time come to denote a ‘system of laws’, both moral and practical, which show man the way towards spiritual fulfillment and social welfare: hence ‘religious law’ in the widest sense of the term” (Asad).

[21] What, do those who commit evil deeds think that We will treat them like those who believed and did righteous deeds – equal their living and their dying?²⁸ Evil is that which they judge.²⁹

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ
نَجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
سَوَاءً تَحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ

﴿٢١﴾

25. That is, affair of the religion; and the “*Shari`ah*” of the text refers to the obligations, legal punishments, commandments and forbiddance (Ibn Jarir). Also see note 22 above.

26. If the Prophet – the most renowned of Prophets - is directed here to follow the *Shari`ah*, then, how can any ordinary Muslim imagine that he can set it aside, lead a life divorced of law, and win Allah’s approval (Thanwi)?

Thanwi has those false *Sufis* in mind who think that they are above the law, rituals and *Sunnah* (Au.).

27. “I.e., who are not – or not primarily – motivated by God-consciousness and, hence, are swayed only by what they themselves regard as ‘right’ in accordance with worldly, changing circumstances” (Asad).

Mufti Shafi` clarifies an important point. Is the *Shari`ah* of previous nations a source of law for us? The answer is, as far as articles of faith and basic principles of law are concerned, no, they are not, although these have

remained unchanged through the history. We are bound to follow our own sources: Qur`an and *Sunnah*. However, if there is found to be mentioned (in our texts) a rule or practice of the past nations, which is not accompanied with any criticism, or something that our own texts (Qur`an and *Sunnah*) confirm or praise, then such elements of the previous *Shari`ah* can become sources of law in our own *Shari`ah*. Obviously, in practice it offers several complications, and, therefore, *Fiqh* books might be referred to for fuller details.

28. Asad again, “The reference to the intrinsic differences between these two categories with regard to ‘their life and their death’ points not merely to the moral quality of their worldly existence, but also, on the one hand, to the inner peace and tranquility with which a true believer faces life’s tribulations at the moment of death, and on the other, to the nagging anxiety which so often accompanies spiritual nihilism, and the ‘fear of the unknown’ at the time of dying.”

Yusuf Ali further explains, "Three meanings can be deduced. (1) The evil ones are not in Allah's sight like the righteous ones; neither in life nor in death are they equal; in life the righteous are guided by Allah (*swt*) and receive His Grace, and after death His Mercy, while the others reject His Grace, and after death receive condemnation. (2) Neither are the two the same in this life and in the after-life; if the wicked flourish here, they will be condemned in the Hereafter; if the good are in suffering or sorrow here, they will receive comfort and consolation in the Hereafter. (3) The real life of the righteous is not like the nominal life of the wicked, which is really death; nor is the physical death of the righteous, which will bring them into eternal life, like the terrible death of the wicked which will bring them to eternal misery."

In Mawdudi's simpler words, "By what logic can the unbelievers expect that they will be treated equal with the believers in this life and next? Is he who subjected himself to moral restrictions, rendered the rights of those they were due, restrained himself from the unlawful pleasures, incurred losses for the sake of truth, equal to another who neither recognized the rights of Al-

lah nor hesitated to violate the rights of the people, but rather, went on to collect the benefits and good things of life in every possible way, lawful or unlawful?"

Ashraf `Ali Thanwi demonstrates the logic. To paraphrase: Had there been no rewards for someone doing good, there could have been no objection. A master deals with his slaves as he likes. He is not bound to reward him. The slave too does not make any claim. But the presence of another who misbehaves, makes rewarding the other and punishing this one imperative. Take an example: there are two servants to a master. One of them hardworking and morally upright, the other lazy and mischievous. Now, if the master does not punish the lazy and the mischievous, then the other can complain that there is no justice. Consequently, rewarding this one and punishing the other becomes a demand of logic and a requirement of justice. The two cannot be treated equal.

29. Masruq reported that a Makkan showed him the place where (at Maqamu Ibrahim in the Haram: Alusi) Tamim al-Dari would do his nightly Prayers. He reported that once Tamim stood a whole night in Prayer repeating this *Ayah*, bowing

[22] Allah created the heavens and the earth in truth so that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned, and they shall not be wronged.³⁰

وَخَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ
وَلِيُجْزَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا
يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] Have you then seen him who has taken his base desires as his god?³¹ Allah has led him astray out of a knowledge,³² has sealed his hearing and his heart, and has placed a covering on his eyes. Who then shall guide him after Allah? Will you then not heed?

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ
عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ
عَلَىٰ بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ
اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

and prostrating and weeping. Ibrahim b. al-Ash'ath also reported that he had witnessed Fudayl b. 'Iyad repeat this *Ayah* and others of the same kind the whole night. Those days this *Ayah* used to be referred to as the "weep-inducing *Ayah*" (Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir and others in parts).

30. When Allah said that a believer and unbeliever cannot be treated equal, He cited the creation of the world in truth as evidence. How can the Creator of the world in truth, allow that a pious and a wrongdoer be treated equal? If He treated them equal, then, the created world is reduced to meaninglessness. Therefore, He must establish a Day in which the pious is compensated for his good deeds and a wrongdoer is punished for his evil deeds and beliefs (Razi).

31. Qurtubi comments as follows: The Qur'an has several passages condemning the following of "*hawa*" (base instinct, or desire). The following maybe brought to notice:

وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ

"And he followed his base desires; and so, his example is like that of a dog.." (7: 176). Or,

وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا

"And he followed his base desires and so his affair is ever in excess." (18: 28). Or,

وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِنَ اللَّهِ
[القصص: ٥٠]

"And, who can be in greater wrong that he who followed his base desires without a guidance from Allah?" (28: 50). Or,

وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَىٰ فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ [ص: ٢٦]

“And follow not base desires, or they will deflect you from Allah’s path.” (38: 26).

And a *hadith* of this context says,

«لا يؤمن أحدكم حتى يكون هواه تبعا لما جئت به»

“One of you will not believe until his base instinct follows what I have brought.”

(But this *hadith* does not appear in *Sahih* works: Au.).

On the other hand we have a *hadith* which says,

«الْكَيْسُ مَنْ دَانَ نَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ وَالْعَاجِزُ مَنْ أَتْبَعَ نَفْسَهُ هَوَاهَا وَتَمَتَّى عَلَى اللَّهِ»

“An intelligent person is he who takes account of himself and works for what is going to be after death, while, weak is one who followed his base desires but fastens good hope on Allah.”

(This *hadith* is found in Tirmidhi [who declared it Hasan], Hakim [who declared it *Sahih* but Dhababi disagreed] and in other works: Haythami in Majma’). Yet another *hadith* on the topic has the following text:

ثلاث مهلكات وثلاث منجيات فأما المهلكات فشح مطاع وهوى متبع وإعجاب المرء بنفسه وأما المنجيات: فالعدل في الغضب والرضا

والقصد في الفقر والغنى فحشية الله في السر والعلانية

“Three (things) are destructive while three are means of salvation. As for the destructive, they are: a miserliness that is obeyed, a base self that is followed, and a man pleased with himself. As for the means of salvation, they are: justice in anger or agreeableness, moderation in richness and poverty, and Allah’s fear in secret and open.”

(This report – popularly found in many collections, and in variety of texts - is declared Hasan by Albani: Au.).

Accordingly, we have Abu Darda’s statement: “When a man does his morning his base desires, his deeds and his knowledge gather together. Now, if his deeds follow his base desires, that is an evil day for him. But if his deeds follow his knowledge, his day is propitious for him.” Allah said (79: 40-41),

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۖ
فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ﴿٤١﴾ [النازعات: ٤٠-٤١]

“Then, as for him who feared the standing before his Lord and denied the inner self base desires, then surely Paradise is his abode.”

[24] They say 'There is nothing but the life of this world: we die and we live;³³ and nothing but Time destroys us.³⁴ Of that they have no knowledge; they merely conjecture.³⁵

وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ وَمَا لَهُم بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] When Our clear revelations are recited to them their only argument was to say, 'Bring back our forefathers if you are truthful.'

وَإِذَا تَنَكَّلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ مَّا كَانَ حُجَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا اقْتُلُوا آبَاءَنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

Quotation from Qurtubi ends here.

32. The interpretation of Ibn `Abbas in reference to "out of a knowledge" is: "in view of His eternal knowledge" or, the "knowledge that has preceded" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi). Another possible meaning is, "despite the man's knowledge that devotion to deities is neither profitable nor harmful."

33. That is, we die and are replaced by our children who live on, and so on it goes (Zamakhshari).

34. (But Time, in the sense of what happens day in and day out, throughout the universe, throughout time, is Allah (*swt*) Himself: Au.). Says a *hadith*:

يُؤْذِنِي إِنْ أَدَمَ يَسْبُ الدَّهْرُ وَأَنَا الدَّهْرُ، بِيَدِي الْأَمْرُ، أَقْلَبُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ

Adam's son vexes Me. He speaks of Time in evil terms, while I am the Time. In My hands is

the affair. I alternate the night and day." This *hadith* comes to us from Abu Hurayrah, through several chains of narration (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari).

Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir present a few other reports of the same meaning from the *Sahihayn* and other works. They also point out that (according to Imām Shafe'i and a few others: Ibn Kathir), the Arabs of pagan past used to attribute evil occurrences to Time saying, when they met someone struck by ill-fortune, "O the one struck by evil Time." But since all that happens is by Allah's will, to blame Time is to blame Allah; hence the *hadith*, "Do not speak Time in evil terms."

At all events, adds Ibn Kathir, Ibn Hazm and a few others are not right in claiming, in view of the *ahadith* of this nature that "*Al-Dahr*" is one of the Names of Allah. It is not.

[26] Say, 'Allah gives you life, then he will deal you death, and then he will gather you together on the Day of Standing,³⁶ about which there is no doubt, but most of the people know not.'

قُلِ اللَّهُ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يَجْمَعُكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. And the day the Hour is struck, that day the followers of falsehood shall lose out.³⁷

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُومِنُدِ يَحْسَرُ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

35. Had they said, (as should the scientists of today be saying: Au.), that "we do not know whether there is any life after death or not," or, "we do not know whether man's soul is seized by God after death or not," then, it would have been reasonable on their part. But these are not the kind of answers they give when asked about life after death, or about souls being taken back by Allah. Instead, these people, who seem to be otherwise reasonable and scientific, make statements based entirely on conjecture misleading themselves as well as others (Mawdudi).

36. When the pagans demanded that their forefathers be brought back to life, this is the answer the revelation gave: "This bringing back to life will not happen now, at individual basis, but rather, the entire humanity will be brought to life on a day which is

determined by none other than Allah himself (Mawdudi).

37. "*Mubtil*" is difficult to translate in a single phrase such as "indulgent in falsehood." In its most general sense, it has the meaning of indulgence in anything that is of no benefit, which is devoid of any aspect of being useful one way or another, but has every chance of being untrue in expression. So "*Mubtil*" is someone who deals in vanities, though in this context it has the sense expressed in the translation. Ibn Kathir reports from Ibn Abi Hatim that when Suyyan Thawri visited Madinah and heard that Mu'afiri indulges in what would make people laugh, he told him, "*Ya Sheikh!* Are you not aware that Allah has a Day in which the '*Mubtilun*' will be in loss?" It is said that the effect of the censure could be seen in Mu'afiri's face until the end of his life.

[28] You will see every nation on its knees.³⁸
Every nation summoned to its record: 'Today
you shall be recompensed for what you were
doing.

وَتَرَى كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ جَائِيَةً كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ تُدْعَى إِلَى
كِتَابِهَا الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

[29] This Our Book speaks with truth against
you. We were indeed recording all that you
were doing.³⁹

هَذَا كِتَابُنَا يَنْطِقُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّا كُنَّا
نَسْتَنْسِخُ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] Then, as for those who believed and did
righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them to
His mercy. That is the clear triumph

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
فَيُدْخِلُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ
الْمُبِينُ ﴿٣٠﴾

38. Dahhak said that this being on the knees will be at the time of reckoning (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi). Ibn `Abbas however said that the term "jathhiyyah" means "collected together" (Ibn Kathir, Qurtubi and others). Alusi shows that in classical Arabic times the term was in fact used in the sense suggested by Ibn `Abbas. Another meaning, especially among the Quraysh was "humbled."

39. Ibn Jarir has a narrative from Ibn `Abbas which is so amazingly close to the activities at the genetic level in the cells of living organizations that one finds it hard to attribute it to coincidence. He said in reference to this verse that Allah created the Pen and commanded it to write all that was to happen. Then, after He had created the humans, He placed guardian angels over each of them and guard-

ians over the Preserved Tablet. Every new day the guardian angels copy from the Preserved Tablet everything a man is going to do. Then, when the term is over, the provision is exhausted, and the hour has arrived, the guardian angels reach up as usual to copy down the man's deeds of the day. The guardians of the Preserved Tablet tell them, "Its all exhausted. We do not find anything here for your man." The guardian angels of the concerned person return to him and find him dead. Then Ibn `Abbas added, "You are Arabs. Do you not know that "istinsakh" is used for copying from a principal source?" The report is also in Ibn al-Mundhir as well as Ibn Abi Hatim (Alusi).

The above comes close to the activities in the cell where genetic message is time and again delivered by Mes-

[31] As for those who disbelieved, 'Were not My revelations recited to you? But you waxed proud.⁴⁰ You were a criminal people.

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَفَلَمْ تَكُنْ آيَاتِي تُنْذِرُ
عَلَيْكُمْ فَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

[32] When it was said, "Verily, Allah's promise is true, and there is no doubt about the Hour," you replied, "We do not know what the Hour is. We only think it is a conjecture. We are by no means certain."

وَإِذَا قِيلَ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَالسَّاعَةُ لَا
رَيْبَ فِيهَا قُلْتُمْ مَا نَدْرِي مَا السَّاعَةُ
إِنْ نَظُنُّ إِلَّا ظَنًّا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

[33] And the evils of what they were doing became evident to them, and they shall be enveloped by what they were mocking.

وَبَدَأَ لَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا عَمِلُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا
كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

senger Genes, commanding what of the proteins are to be manufactured by the cell. The Messenger Genes are themselves copied from the master genes (in the DNA strands) within the well preserved nucleus (Au.).

In any case, whatever the type of recording, whenever done, and by whomsoever, once this recording itself used to be questioned. How could it be done at all? But now, with the unraveling of the mystery of DNA recording evoking incredibility, the mystery of the recording might deepen, but the occurrence cannot not evoke any skepticism. An invisible DNA chain has enough information to build a whole man. If the coded message were to be expanded, the tiny DNA has hundreds of volumes of information for mak-

ing an individual. As we know pen and paper are not the only means of recording; many other possibilities have widened the scope and method of making records, even if some methods, like employed by the DNA, will ever remain mysterious (Au.).

40. It is matter of remarkable interest that although a proud man receives universal disapprobation, pride is the most common characteristic of today's man. Although the system of life generated by the Western man brought humanity nothing but disaster, in every branch of life, man is yet not ready to admit the failure and adopt the Islamic way, despite good examples visible to him in his own country and neighborhood, for no other reason but that his racial pride

[34] It will be said, 'Today We shall forget you as you forgot the meeting of this your Day.⁴¹ Your abode is the Fire and you shall have no helpers.

وَقِيلَ الْيَوْمَ نَسَاكُمْ كَمَا نَسِيتُمْ لِقَاءَ
يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا وَمَأْوَاكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُم مِّنْ
تَّائِصِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

[35] That, because you took the revelations of Allah in jest and the worldly life deceived you.' So, today, they shall not be removed from it nor shall they be asked to make amends.

ذَلِكُمْ بِأَنكُمْ اتَّخَذْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوًا
وَعَزَّيْتُمْ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُخْرَجُونَ
مِنْهَا وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] So praise for Allah, Lord of the heavens and Lord of the earth, Lord of the worlds.⁴²

فَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَرَبِّ الْأَرْضِ
رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

[37] His is the Majesty in the heavens and earth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.

وَلَهُ الْكِبَرِيَاءُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣٧﴾

cannot accept that an Arab be his guide, his prophet (Au.).

41. As a *hadith* of Muslim says:

فَيَلْقَى الْعَبْدَ فَيَقُولُ أَيُّ فُلٍ أَلَمَ أَكْرَمَكَ وَأَسَوَّدَكَ
وَأَزَوَّجَكَ وَأَسَخَّرَ لَكَ الْخَيْلَ وَالْإِبِلَ وَأَذَرَكَ تَرَأْسُ
وَتَرْبَعُ فَيَقُولُ بَلَى. قَالَ فَيَقُولُ أَفَظَنَنْتَ أَنَّكَ مَلَاقِي
فَيَقُولُ لَا. فَيَقُولُ فَإِنِّي أَنَسَاكَ كَمَا نَسِيتَنِي.

“Then He (Allah) will meet with a slave and say, ‘O so and so, did I not honor you, make a leader of you, provid you a spouse, subject the horses and camels to you and allow you leadership to obtain one-fourth (of booty). He will say, ‘Surely yes.’ He will ask, ‘Did you ever consider that you will meet Me?’ He will answer,

‘No.’ He will say, ‘So I shall forget you just like you forgot Me” (Ibn Kathir).

42. Majid comments: Even so simple a truth as that the earth is a created being stood in the need of special emphasis in view of the widely-spread worship of the ‘Mother World.’ The significant fact, says a distinguished archaeologist, about the Indus civilization is that ‘it was based on a religion precisely characteristic of present-day Hinduism. Numerous effigies of the great Mother-goddess have been found ... That same devotion which Indians are now showing to Mother India they have for at least 5000 years shown

to the Mother-World – the Mother Universe – which has brought both Mother India and themselves into existence and sustained and inspired them through life. This Mother-

World they personified in the time of the ancient Indian civilization as the Mother-goddess, and in more recent times as Kali.” ﷻ





Surah 46
Al-Ahqaf
 Makkan¹



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
 THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Ha. Mim.²

حم ﴿١﴾

[2] Sending down of the Book by Allah, the All-mighty, the All-wise.

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿٢﴾

[3] We have not created the heavens and the earth and what is between them but in truth and for an appointed term. But those who have disbelieved are turning away from what they are being warned.

مَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَمَّا أُنذِرُوا مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣﴾

1. Except for stray opinions, there is consensus that this *Surah* is entirely Makkan (Qurtubi, Alusi and others).

2. “The appearance of these letters at the beginning of this chapter and mentioning of ‘the Revelation’ in the following verses suggests that these are the letters of the Arabic language from which ‘the Revelation’ has been composed, yet it happens to be only one of its kind, with no other composition to match with it. This is the strongest proof that it is ‘from Allah, the All-mighty, the All-wise.’

“These opening verses also suggest the relationship that prevails between this ‘Book, revealed by Allah,’ and the ‘Cosmic Book’ – the heavens and the earth and what is between them - that His hand has wrought: a relationship that the inner sight is able to perceive.

“Both these Books are established on Truth: ‘We have not created the heavens and the earth and what is between them but in truth.’

“Both manifest power and wisdom, and wisdom demands termination

[4] Say, 'Have you considered those you invoke other than Allah, show me what is it they have created out of the earth, or, have they a share in the heavens? Bring me a Book earlier than this or any remnant of knowledge if you are true.'³

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ إِنْ تُحِبُّوا بِكِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِ هَذَا أَوْ أَثَارَةٍ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤﴾

[5] And, who can be more misguided than he who invokes those that will not respond to him till the Day of Judgment. Indeed, they are unaware of their invocation.

وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّن يَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لََّا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُمْ عَن دُعَائِهِمْ غَافِلُونَ ﴿٥﴾

of the created world at an appointed hour.

“Both the books are open to view and display signs of Allah. They both speak of Allah’s power and testify to His wisdom. The Cosmic Book testifies to the truth of the written Book.

“The written Book asserts that God is one, that He is the Sustainer of all things, since He is the Creator of all things, Organizer of all things, Regulator of all things. And the open-to-all Cosmic Book loudly speaks out the same truth. Its own working system, its organization and arrangement .. its operation .. all of these bear to the truths stated in the Revealed Book. It speaks of the oneness of their Maker, Organizer, Regulator and Sustainer: He who creates by knowledge, originates with knowledge. In everything that He creates, there are stamps of a Creator who

is One. From where then have the Associators with Him brought their deities? What have those deities created? In what of the created world do they have a share?” (Sayyid).

3. “*Atharatan*” has been read in two ways leading to varying understandings, but close in meaning. The majority opinion is expressed in the translation. A reported meaning attributed to Ibn ‘Abbas is that the allusion is to “*Khatt*” but without any further elaboration.

Shawkani’s commentator points out that Ibn Hajr has (in his *Fath*) discounted as untrustworthy the report that comes from Ibn ‘Abbas. All the same, some commentators tend to believe that by “*Khatt*” the allusion is to the science of drawing lines on the earth and predicting the future, to some accuracy. This knowledge has been withdrawn, and the disci-

[6] And when the people are gathered, they will be their enemies and will be deniers of their worship of them.⁴

وَإِذَا حُشِرَ النَّاسُ كَانُوا لَهُمْ أَعْدَاءً وَكَانُوا بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ كَافِرِينَ ﴿٦﴾

[7] When Our revelations are recited to them as clear evidences, the unbelievers said of the truth when it came to them, 'This is manifest magic.'

وَإِذَا تَنَزَّلَتْ عَلَيْنَا آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٧﴾

pline has disappeared. A Prophetic report confirms that once humanity did possess this knowledge of the "Khatt." A *hadith* in Muslim, Abu Da'ud, Nasa'i and others confirms that it was revealed knowledge. It says

عن (معاوية بن الحكم السلمي) قلت و منا رجال يخطون قال (النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم) "كان نبي من الأنبياء يخط فمن وافق خطه فذاك"

“(Mu`awiyah b. al-Hakam al-Sulami) said to the Prophet, “Some of our men draw lines. (What about it?)” He answered, “One of the Prophets used to draw lines. So, if someone’s lines agree with his, then, that’s it.”

Nawawi states that “that’s it” makes it “*mubah*” but since the knowledge (which could have only come through revelation) is lost, there is no chance of anyone’s lines being correct, and, therefore, drawing lines to learn of the future, is now prohibited.

Qurtubi adds: At present, there is no way left for knowing the future but true dreams. All other doors are closed, and prediction is disallowed.

4. It is reported that pagan deities and idols will be given power of speech on the Day of Judgment (Alusi).

Whether it is idols, angels, satans or humans that were chosen for worship, they will all disown those that were devoted to them. Even Satan will disown them as in a Qur’anic verse (14: 22):

وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ إِنَّكَ اللَّهُ وَعْدَكُمْ وَعْدَ الْحَقِّ وَوَعَدْتُكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ وَمَا كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي فَلَا تَلُمُونِي وَلَوْلَا أَنْفُسُكُمْ مَا أَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَا أَنْتُ بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ إِنِّي كَفَرْتُ بِمَا أَشْرَكْتُمُونِ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ [إبراهيم: ٢٢]

“And Satan will say when the matter is concluded, ‘Allah promised you a true promise, and I too

[8] Or do they say, 'He has forged it?' Say, 'If I have forged it, then you cannot avail me aught against Allah.⁵ He knows well that in which you indulge. Sufficient is He as a witness between me and you; He is the All-forgiving, the All-merciful.'

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ إِنْ افْتَرَيْتُهُ فَلَا تَمْلِكُونَ لِي مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ كَفَى بِهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٨﴾

promised. But I failed in my promise. And I had no power over you except that I invited you and you responded to me. Therefore, do not blame me, blame your own selves. I cannot come to your aid nor can you come to my aid. I disown your former (act of) associating me (with Allah). Surely, a painful chastisement (awaits) the wrong-doers."

Sayyid notes: "Another point of note is that although it is a fact that the reference at the time of the revelation was to certain false gods, familiar to humankind, it may not be ignored that the text is wider in scope, meaning, and application, and will remain so during every historical phase.

Who – of whichever age, in whatever place – can be in greater wrong than he who is devoted to other than Allah? None of them – whoever they may be – to whom the people are devoted, can respond to the call of their devotees. It is because, there is no Lord but One, who possesses all and everything, without whose approval nothing can be moved. They

do not in fact have any power of doing themselves good or bad. To call them, then, is shirk, to apply to them is shirk, to fasten hope upon them is shirk, fearing them is shirk, although, admittedly, their association is not perceptible, because it is so subtle."

Yusuf Ali expounds further: "As there is no argument at all in favour of your sham worship, what sense is there in it? Either your false gods are senseless stocks and stones which will never answer you to the end of Time, being themselves devoid of understanding, or they are real objects which will disown you at the last. If you worshipped Self, your own misused faculties will witness against you at the last (xli. 20-23). If you worshipped good men or prophets, like Jesus, they will disown you (v. 119). Similarly, if you worshipped angels, they will disown you (xxxiv. 40-41)."

5. That is, if it is supposed that the Prophet (*saws*) forged the Qur'an then, Allah (*swt*) would have pun-

[9] Say, 'I am not an innovation among the Messengers,⁶ nor do I know what will be done with me or with you.⁷ I only follow that which is revealed to me; and I am not but a plain warner.'

قُلْ مَا كُنْتُ بِدْعًا مِّنَ الرُّسُلِ وَمَا أَدْرِي
مَا يُفْعَلُ بِي وَلَا بِكُمْ إِنِّ أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا
يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٩﴾

ished him and no one would have been able to help him against Allah.

Yusuf Ali again, "If I forged a message from myself as one purporting to come from Allah, you would not be able to see me enjoy any of the blessings from Allah which I enjoy: you would not see me calm and relying on Allah, nor would you see me bear the reputation of being a trustworthy man.' A liar comes to an evil end. But what about those who talk so glibly and freely about things which they know not? Allah knows all and He is my witness! According to Ibn Kathir, the verse means that if the Prophet's claim to be Allah's messenger would have been a false one, he would have been stricken by a severe punishment from Allah and none had the power to avert that punishment."

6. That is, as a Messenger I am not a new phenomenon. There have been Messengers before me with similar messages (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Yusuf Ali puts it in different words, "What is there to forge? All proph-

ets have taught the Unity of Allah and our duty to mankind. I bring no new fangled doctrine, but eternal truths that have been known to good men through the ages. It is to reclaim you that I have come, I do not know what will be your fate for all this callousness, nor what you will do to me. But this I know, that I am preaching truth and righteousness as inspired by Allah. My duty is only to proclaim aloud and clearly the Message entrusted to me by Allah. The rest I leave to Allah."

Another possible connotation is stated by Zamakhshari and Razi, "I am not an innovative Messenger to be producing every one of the miracles that you demand of me, or give you on your demand news of all that is in the Unseen."

7. Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah, Hasan, Qatadah and others have said that this *Ayah* has been abrogated (in meaning) in view of a later *Ayah* of *Surah al-Fath* (no. 2) which said,

لَيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِن ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ [الفتح: ٢]

"So that Allah may forgive you what has been your shortcoming of the past and the future.."

Reports say that when this latter *Ayah* was revealed, one of the Companions congratulated the Prophet (*saws*) and asked, "What about us?" So, Allah revealed (33: 47):

وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِنَّ لَهُمْ مِنْ اللَّهِ فَضْلًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٤٧﴾
[الاحزاب: ٤٧]

"And give glad tidings to the believers that for them is from Allah a great grace."

He also revealed (48: 5-6),

لِيَدْخُلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَيُكَفَّرُ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَكَانَ
ذَلِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ قُرْآنًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٥﴾ وَيَعَذِّبُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ
وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ الظَّالِمَاتِ بِاللَّهِ
ظُرِّحَ السَّوَاءَ [الفتح: ٥-٦]

"In order that He might admit the believing men and believing women into gardens beneath which run springs, abiding therein, and so that He might expiate their evil deeds and that indeed is easy for Allah, and in order that He might punish the hypocritical men and hypocritical women, the associating men and associating women: those who conjecture about Allah, an evil conjecture.." (Ibn Jarir

and, Zamakhshari without quoting the verses).

Hasan al-Basri added, "As for the next world, Allah's refuge that the Prophet should not know what will happen to him. He knew that He will be in Paradise. But in reference to this world the meaning is, 'I do not know what will happen to me; whether I will be exiled (from Makkah) as Messengers before me were exiled, or will I be killed as Prophets before me were killed, or, will you be sunk into the earth or struck with stones (from the heaven).'" (Ibn Jarir, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Kathir adds: "That it cannot be said anything about anyone in certain terms, with regard to what will be done to him in the Hereafter, is established by several Prophetic reports; except of course, such of those about whom he predicted that they will be in Paradise, e.g., the ten who were given the glad tiding (*al-`ashara al-mubashsharah*), or, `Abdullah b. Salam, Ghumida, Bilal, Suraqah, `Abdullah (Jabir's father), the seventy that were martyred at Bi'r Ma'una, Zayd b. Haritha, Ja'far, Ibn Rawah, and a few others. One of the narrations in support is in Bukhari and Ahmad:

عن خارجة بن زيد بن ثابت أن أم العلاء امرأة من نسائهم بايعت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أخبرت: أن عثمان بن مظعون طار لهم في السكني حين اقترعت الأنصار على سكني المهاجرين قالت أم العلاء فاشتكى عثمان عندنا فمرضته حتى توفي وجعلناه في أثوابه فدخل علينا النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقلت رحمة الله عليك أبا السائب شهادتي عليك لقد أكرمك الله فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وما يدريك أن الله أكرمه. قالت قلت لا أدري بأبي أنت وأمي يا رسول الله فمن قال أما هو فقد جاءه والله اليقين والله إنني لأرجو له الخير وما أدري والله وأنا رسول الله ما يفعل بي. قالت فوالله لا أذكر أحدًا بعده. قالت فأحزنتني ذلك فمنت فأريت لعثمان ابن مظعون عينا تجري فجت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فأخبرته فقال ذلك عمله.

Kharijah b. Zayd reported that Umm al-`Ala was one of their women who had pledged Islam at the hands of the Prophet. She reported that `Uthman b. Maz`un fell to their lot when they drew lots in housing the emigrants (immediately after emigration to Madinah). Umm al-`Ala said, “`Uthman was with us and I was nursing him until he died. We covered him up with a cloth until, when the Prophet (*saw*s) entered I remarked, ‘May Allah show you mercy O Abu Sa’ib (i.e., `Uthman b. Maz`un), my testimony be for you: Allah

has honored you.’ The Prophet asked, ‘How did you know that Allah has honored him?’ I said, ‘I do not know, may my parents be sacrificed for you O Messenger of Allah, (if not he) then who (should be honored?)’ He said, ‘As to him, by Allah, death has been on him. By Allah, I hope good for him although I do not know what will be done to me despite the fact that I am a Messenger of Allah.’ She said, ‘By Allah, after this I shall never bear witness to anyone’s purity.’ Later she said, ‘That aggrieved me a little. Then I slept off and saw a stream flowing for `Uthman. So I went up to the Prophet and reported it. He said, ‘That was his deeds.’”

Qurtubi refers to Tha`labi’s statement with reference to the above *hadith*-statement that that was the time in his mission (immediately after emigration, when `Uthman b. Maz`un died: Au.), when the Prophet (*saw*s) had not yet been told that his past and future errors had been forgiven. Thus, the *Ayah* is not abrogated. It carries a piece of news (which cannot be altered or abrogated: Au.).

It is plain however to deduce from the verse in discussion that the

[10] Say, 'Have you considered, if it be from Allah, but you rejected it, while a witness from the Children of Israel testifies to its like,⁸ and entered into faith, but you waxed proud?! Surely, Allah guides not the wrongdoing folk.'

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَكَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ
وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَىٰ مِثْلِهِ
فَأَمَنَ وَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

Prophet could not have known, either about himself or his followers, everything that was going to happen in every detail, in this world or the Next – to which could be the allusion (Au.).

Sayyid explains the theme: "The Prophet had no misgivings about himself. He was a human being who had been addressed by Allah. He pronounced what was revealed to him. This is the hallmark of a Prophet. He does not ask why. He does not seek proofs and evidences from his Lord. He does not seek a special status for himself. He does what he is told. He preaches what he receives in accordance with what he receives. He says, 'I do not know what will be done to me or to you. I only follow that which is revealed to me.'

"This is also the attitude of his followers. They follow the Prophetic ways. They remain calling to Islam, without knowing what the ends will be, without knowing anything of the future. They do not seek evidences or

proofs from their Lord, for enough signs are there in their hearts. They do not seek to be especial in any way, for their specialty is that they have been chosen.."

8. Although the verse is Makkan, it applied well to 'Abdullah b. Salam who bore witness to the truth of this Qur'an as well as to its like, the *Torah*. This was the opinion of Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, Dahhak, 'Ikrimah, Suddi, Thawri and many others (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Jarir and Shawkani have a long narrative here that speaks of 'Abdullah b. Salam embracing Islam in a Synagogue when the Prophet (*saws*) was visiting it. But it contradicts the famous *hadith* in *Sahih* works, which says that he presented himself to the Prophet to embrace Islam. Therefore, we ignore it (Au.).

Imām Razi notes that no specific person could have been referred to. It is a general statement concerning anyone who studied the *Torah*, believed in it, and then entered into

[11] And the unbelievers say with regard to the believers, 'If it had been a good (thing), they would not have outstripped us to it;⁹ and since they are not guided by it, they will surely say, 'This is an old falsehood.'

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَوْ كَانَ خَيْرًا مَّا سَبَقُونَا إِلَيْهِ وَإِذْ لَمْ يَهْتَدُوا بِهِ فَسَيَقُولُونَ هَذَا إِفْكٌ قَدِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾

[12] Yet before it was the Book of Musa, a guide and a mercy; and this is a Book confirming, in Arabic tongue, so that it might warn the wrongdoers, and as glad tiding to those who excel.

وَمِن قَبْلِهِ كِتَابُ مُوسَى إِمَامًا وَرَحْمَةً وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّسَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لِّيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَبُشْرَى لِّلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] Surely, those who said, 'Allah is our Lord,' and then stayed steadfast, no fear shall be on them nor shall they grieve.¹⁰

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

Islam testifying to its truth. Thus, to restrict it to `Abdullah ibn Salam, as thought by some, is not correct.

9. The allusion was to Bilal, `Amm ar, Suhayb, Khabb ab and others of their like (Ibn Kathir), and Zinneerah, `Umar's slave-girl (Shawkani).

Asad adds: "... the above 'saying' has undoubtedly timeless import inasmuch as the poor and lowly have always been among the first to follow a prophet. Moreover, it may also have a bearing on our times as well, inasmuch as the materially powerful nations, whom their technological progress has blinded to many spiritual verities, are increasingly contemptuous of the weaknesses of those civilizations in which religion still plays

an important, albeit largely formalistic, role; and so, not realizing that this very formalism and the ensuing cultural sterility, and not religious faith as such, is the innermost cause of that weakness, they attribute it to the influence of religion per se, saying, as it were, 'If religion were any good, we would have been the first in holding on to it' – thus 'justifying' their own materialistic attitude and their refusal to be guided by spiritual considerations."

10. "The words, 'Allah is our Lord,' is not simply a statement made out. Indeed, it is not merely a catechism. But rather, it is a complete way of life that includes its every facet; in fact, every movement and every feeling. It becomes a criterion for thoughts and

ideas, for the people, things, acts, events and relationships; everything in existence.

“Allah is our Lord: so, worship is His right alone, the direction is toward Him, of Him is the fear, and in Him is the trust.” Allah is our Lord: so, none is to be taken account of except Allah, and, there is no fear of anyone, no striving for anyone except He.

“Allah is our Lord: so, every activity, every thought, and every evaluation is directed to Him.

“Allah is our Lord: so, there is no seeking the commandment but from Him, and no authority but for His Laws and no guidance except His.

“Allah is our Lord: so, everything and everyone who is in existence is related to us and we meet them as related to Allah.

“Allah is our Lord: A complete way of life on this pattern; not a mere word uttered by the tongue, not a negative attitude or escape from the realities of life.

“Then comes steadfastness ... after the path has been chosen, the heart’s steadfastness, the soul’s tranquility ... no regrets, no hesitancy, no doubts, no skepticism, and hence steadfastness of the deeds and acts, on the chosen path, the path filled with thorns, obstacles and hurdles, with side openings here and there (for those who wish to take the escape route).

“Such are those who shall have nothing to fear and nothing to regret” (Sayyid).

[14] Those are the companions of Paradise, abiding therein; as a recompense for what they were doing.

أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents. His mother bore him in pain and gave birth in pain;¹¹ and his bearing and his weaning is in thirty months;¹² until when he attains his full strength¹³ and attains forty, he says, 'My Lord, grant me that I be grateful for the blessings wherewith You have blessed me and my parents, and that I should do such good deeds as would please You; and make righteous for me my children. I turn to you (in penitence) and I am of those who have surrendered.'¹⁴

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا حَمَلَتْهُ
أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا وَحَمْلُهُ وَفَصَالُهُ
ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَبَلَغَ
أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ
نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ
وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي
ذُرِّيَّتِي إِنِّي تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ
﴿١٥﴾

11. Majid quotes a few medical authorities on the pain that a woman bears in pregnancy: "Nature demands in her body a pitiless dictatorship of the ripening fetus, concentrates all her forces for the protection of this tiny lump of now living matter, and mercilessly demands for the latter the most complete self-abnegation on the part of all the organs and tissues of the mother.".. "In case of the fertilization of her gamete by the male sex cell, woman is robbed of entire periods of her own individual life in which the biological processes are absorbed by the 'physical altruism.'" .. "Though a physiological state, pregnancy imposes a strain on the efficient working of every system of the

body.." "In no other living creature is the birth of a new individual accompanied by so much suffering as in the human race." "Birth-giving pains are the most unbearable and, owing to the construction of woman's body, are absolutely unavoidable."

(*hadith* literature is full of the rights of parents, and, in particular, of the mother). A single *hadith* may be quoted here. It is in Ibn Majah and Ahmed:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ أَيُّ
النَّاسِ أَحَقُّ مِنِّي بِحَسَنِ الصُّحْبَةِ قَالَ «أُمُّكَ».
قَالَ ثُمَّ مَنْ قَالَ «ثُمَّ أُمُّكَ». قَالَ ثُمَّ مَنْ قَالَ «ثُمَّ
أُمُّكَ». قَالَ ثُمَّ مَنْ قَالَ «أَبَاكَ».

A man asked the Prophet, "Who deserves my good behavior

most?" He replied, "Your mother." He asked, "Who after her?" He said, "Your mother." He asked, "Who after her?" He replied, "Your mother." He asked, "Who after her?" He replied, "Your father."

Sayyid comments: "How true..! It is reported that,

A man from Yemen appeared with his mother on his shoulders. He began to go round the Ka'ba saying,

عن سعيد بن أبي بردة، عن أبيه، أن رجلا من أهل اليمن حمل أمه على عنقه، فجعل يطوف بها حول البيت وهو يقول: إني لها بغيرها المذل إذا دعرت ركبها لم أذعر وما حملتني أكثر ثم قال: أتراني جزيتها؟ قال ابن عمر: «لا، ولا بزفرة» (شعب الإيمان للبيهقي، الأدب المفرد للبخاري)

"I am her tamed camel. If she scares her mount, I will not be scared, and, she did not carry me more (than this)." Then he asked Ibn `Umar, "Have I recompensed her?" He replied, "No. Not even by a nail."

Sayyid quotes the above as a *hadith*, and his commentator traces it to *Al-Bahr* of Bazzar. But it could not be located there. In the above two books it is preserved as a report involving Ibn `Umar and not the Prophet (Au.).

12. If this verse is compared with another of the Qur'an (2: 233):

وَالْوَالِدَتُ يُرَضِّعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُنْمِيَ الرِّضَاعَةَ [البقرة: ٢٣٣]

"And (let the mothers) suckle their children two full years. This is for him who wishes to complete the suckling," then, the conclusion drawn by the legal authorities is that a successful birth can take place six months after pregnancy, (i.e., thirty months including pregnancy and feeding, minus 24 months of feeding).

Alusi adds: The minimum is known (i.e. six months), and has been the reported observation of one of the Greek philosophers; but there is no consensus over the maximum period of pregnancy. Ibn Sina reports in his "*Kitab al-Shifa*") that he came to know through very reliable sources that a woman gave birth four year after pregnancy, and that the child had grown teeth.

Ibn Kathir presents a report which says that once `Uthman had condemned a woman to stoning because she gave birth to a child in six months after pregnancy, and that `Ali intervened and explained that the possibility was there. He used these two verses to make the deduction. But the report is not found in any *hadith*

collection, and seems to be forged, although no *hadith* Doctor has said so, obviously because it is not there at all in any *hadith* collection. Ibn Jarir does not mention it either (Au.).

13. At this point “*ashadd (fi ‘al ‘umuri)*” [attainment of full age] perhaps alludes to forty years, as the following words of the *Ayah* indicate (Au.).

Ibn Kathir states: “When he has attained his full age”: i.e., at the age when his physical and mental maturity is complete and he has attained (a few) abilities. (This could happen early for some, later for others). Forty years however is the time in life when the intellect is at its full maturity, comprehensive abilities are well achieved and when further changes are not likely.

In other words, the interpretation of “*ashadd (fi ‘al ‘umuri)*” will depend on the context. If basic obligations are concerned, such as *Salah*, *Zakah*, participation in *Jihad*, etc., the “attaining of full age” is physical maturity. But when the attainment of “full mental maturity” is concerned, it would be forty as stated by some of the *Salaf* (Au.). Zamakhshari writes: We could also say that the age of full maturity starts in early thirties and ends with forty.

14. It is said that the verse was revealed in reference to Abu Bakr and his father Abu Quhafa. It is also said that there was none among the Emigrants or Ansar except Abu Bakr who had the distinction of he, his parents and children (three generations) bearing testimony to the truth of Islam (Zamakhshari, Razi). Indeed, his slaves could also be mentioned (Au.).

Qurtubi writes: Although the application is general, applying to everyone who is qualified with qualities stated in this passage, its immediate application was to Abu Bakr. A single report may be presented here. It is from Muslim:

عن أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: من أصبح منكم اليوم صائماً؟ قال أبو بكر رضي الله عنه أنا قال فمن تبع منكم اليوم جنازة قال أبو بكر رضي الله عنه أنا قال فمن أطعم منكم اليوم مسكيناً؟ قال أبو بكر رضي الله عنه أنا قال فمن عاد منكم اليوم مريضاً قال أبو بكر رضي الله عنه أنا فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ما اجتمعن في أمرٍ إلا دخل الجنة

The Prophet (*saws*) asked a group of Companions: “Which of you is fasting today?” Abu Bakr said, “I.” He asked, “Which of you has been to the graveyard today following a bier?” Abu Bakr re-

[16] They are those – among the Companions of Paradise - from whom We shall accept the best of what they did, and shall pass over their evil deeds¹⁵ - the promise of true word that they were being promised.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ فِي أَصْحَابِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَدَ الصِّدْقِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] As for him who said to his parents, 'Fie upon you.'¹⁶ Are you promising me that I will be brought forth, when already (many) generations have passed before me?¹⁷ while they call upon Allah for help (saying), 'Woe unto you! Believe. Surely, Allah's promise is true.' But he says, 'This is nothing but tales of the ancients.'

وَالَّذِي قَالَ لِوَالِدَيْهِ أُفٍّ لَّكُمَا أَتَعِدَانِي أَنْ أُخْرَجَ وَقَدْ خَلْتُ الْقُرُونِ مِنْ قَبْلِي وَهُمَا يَسْتَعْجِلَانِ اللَّهَ وَإِنَّكَ آمِنٌ إِنْ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ حَقًّا فَيَقُولُ مَا هَذَا إِلَّا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

plied, "I." He asked, "Which of you has fed a destitute today?" Abu Bakr replied, "I." He asked, "Which of you has visited a sick man today?" Abu Bakr replied, "I." The Prophet said, "Never will these qualities combine in a man but he will enter Paradise."

15. Ibn Abi Hatim reports from Yusuf b. Sa'd, who narrated on the authority of Muhammad b. Hatib, that once while 'Ali lay on a couch, 'Ammar, Sa'sa'ah, Ashtar and Muhammad b. Abi Bakr, who were sitting around, began to talk ill of 'Uthman. One of them said, "Now, you have someone here. Why should you not get his opinion?" So they asked 'Ali. He answered, "'Uthman was of those about whom Allah said, 'They

are those – in Paradise - from whom We shall accept the best of what they did, and shall pass over their evil deeds.' Then he added, "By Allah, (it applied to) 'Uthman and his companions." At that Yusuf added, "I asked Muhammad b. Hatib, 'By Allah, did you hear this from 'Ali?' He answered, 'By Allah, I heard this from 'Ali'" (Ibn Kathir).

16. Yusuf Ali's commentary offers solace to many: "A godly man often has an ungodly son, who flouts all that the father held sacred, and looks upon his father himself as old-fashioned and unworthy of respect or regard. The contrast in an individual family may be matched by the contrast in the passing and the rising generations of mankind. All this

happens as a passing phase in the nominal evolution of mankind, and there is nothing in this to be despondent about. What we have to do is for the mature generations to bring up their successors in godly ways, and for the younger generations to realize that age and experience count for something, especially in the understanding of spiritual matters and other matters of the highest moment to man."

Some of the earliest commentators have reportedly said that it was 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Bakr who had said this to his parents. But this is not correct. (Although it is true that he was late in embracing Islam, having fought against Muslims at Badr and Uhud: Qurtubi at v.71 of *al-An'am*), he was an excellent Muslim (who was earlier known as 'Abd al Ka'ba, which was changed on the Prophet's suggestion to 'Abd al-Rahman after he embraced Islam. He was a participant at Hdaybiyyah: Qurtubi). It is said that when Marwan was trying to recruit support for Mu'awiyah, who had decided to nominate Yazid as his successor, he (Marwan) began to say in (the Prophet's) mosque that if Mu'awiyah was nominating a caliph after him then (it was nothing new) as he was following the "*Sun-*

nah" of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, who too had nominated. At that 'Abd al-Rahman interrupted him to say, "But rather this is the *Sunnah* of the Roman and Persian emperors." Marwan was mad at him and tried to get him arrested. But 'Abd al-Rahman escaped into the house of (his sister) 'A'isha. Frustrated, Marwan said, "It is this man about whom Allah (*swt*) revealed, 'He who said to his parents, fie upon you.'" When this statement reached 'A'isha she reacted strongly, and said, "Marwan lied. It was not 'Abd al-Rahman. If I wished I could reveal the name of the person who had said this to his parents. But rather, the Messenger of Allah had cursed Marwan's father (Al-Hakam b. abi al-' As) while Marwan was in his loins. Thus, Marwan is an outcome of Allah's curse" (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Kathir and Shawkani also present a shorter version of the above report as in Bukhari.

Moreover, Alusi and some others add, the latter part of the verse tells us emphatically that it cannot be applied to 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Bakr. He had also participated in the battles of Yamamah against the apostates.

[18] They are the ones against whom the Word has come true from among nations of Jinn and Men that passed away before them¹⁸ – that they were the losers.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ فِي أُمَمٍ
قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ
إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] And for everyone are degrees,¹⁹ according to what they did, so that He might recompense them in full for their deeds; and they shall not be wronged.

وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَاتٌ مِمَّا عَمِلُوا وَلِيُوَفِّيَهُمْ
أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] And the day the unbelievers are exposed to the Fire, 'You exhausted your good things in the life of the world,²⁰ and enjoyed them well. Today you shall be recompensed with a punishment of extreme humiliation for that you waxed proud in the earth without any right and for that you were wont to act corruptions.'²¹

وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَى النَّارِ
أَذْهَبْتُمْ طَيِّبَاتِكُمْ فِي حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنْيَا
وَأَسْتَمْتُمْ بِهَا فَالْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ
الْهُونِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ
الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

17. That is, so many generations have passed before, but none came back alive (Ibn Jarir).

18. This verse is evidential that the Jinn also die and are replaced by new generations (Alusi).

19. That is, ranks both in Paradise as well as in Hellfire, in accordance with the deeds (Au.).

20. It is reported that the Prophet went up the platform (known as *Suffah*) where the impoverished Muslims spent their time. He found them with tattered clothes that had been patched up with leather pieces. He asked them, in effect, "Are you better today than what you will be

tomorrow, well-dressed up and covering your homes with drapes, like you cover the Ka`bah with drapes?" They replied, "That day we should be in a better condition." He said, "Rather, today you are in a better condition" (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari).

And, Qays al-Ash`ari reports his father saying, "My son! Only if you had seen us those days with the Prophet, when it would rain upon us and we would begin to stink like goats, because we wore (rough) woolen clothes." It is reported of `Umar that when he visited Syria, he was offered a dinner full of delicacies. He remarked, "This is for us! But what about those of the poor Muslims

[21] Mention the brother of `Aad²² when he warned his people in (the region of) Ahqaf,²³ while warners had already been before him and after him²⁴ (proclaiming): 'that you worship not but Allah. I fear for you chastisement of a great day.'

وَأَذْكُرُ أَخَا عَادٍ إِذْ أَنْذَرَ قَوْمَهُ بِالْأَحْقَافِ
وَقَدْ خَلَّتِ النُّذُرُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمَنْ
خَلْفِهِ إِلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ
عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٢١﴾

[22] They said, 'Have you come to us to delude us away from our gods? Then bring us what you are threatening us with, if you should be of the truthful.'

قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا لِنَأْفِكَنَا عَنْ آلِهَتِنَا فَأْتِنَا بِمَا
تَعِدُّنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

who left this world in a state that they could not fill their stomachs, not even from barley meals?" Khalid b. al-Walid said, "They will be rewarded with Paradise." Umar's eyes became wet. He said, "If this is the junk that we get, then, surely, they left us high and dry, far removed from us" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi). `Umar also said at that point, writes Zamakhshari, "I would rather reserve the good things for the Hereafter."

Qurtubi adds: In our modern culture, it might be enough if one ate what comes by the way, not going after the dainties and delicacies (wasting his time getting them). To-day, the emphasis has to be on the consumption of that alone which is lawful.

(That is, these are times of plenty, when we need not worry over the high quality of food we consume, as

against the poor quality consumed by the *Salaf*, but rather, we might only take care not to consume the unlawful. And of course, in all circumstances, moderation should never be lost sight of: Au.).

21. That is, they were corrupt of heart and corrupt of limbs (Alusi).

22. That is, Hud (*asws*) – Qurtubi.

To begin by saying, "the brother of `Ad" is to throw a hint to the Quraysh that the Messenger raised among you, is, after all, a brother of yours. Does a brother deserve the kind of treatment you have meted him? Further, does not brotherhood demand that you have good faith in him? On the other hand, the Prophet is reminded that he should not forget how other Prophets, brothers of their nations, were treated earlier. Finally, the Quraysh might be reminded that despite ties of brother-

[23] He said, '(Its) Knowledge is only with Al-lah.²⁵ I merely deliver to you what I am sent with. Otherwise, I see you as a people behaving ignorantly.'

قَالَ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأُبَلِّغُكُمْ مَا أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ وَلَكِنِّي أَرَأَيْكُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] Then, when they saw it as a cloud advancing towards their valleys,²⁶ they said, 'This is a cloud which will bring us rain.' Rather, it is that which you sought to hasten: a wind wherein is a painful chastisement.²⁷

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ عَارِضًا مُسْتَقْبِلَ أَوْدِيَّتِهِمْ قَالُوا هَذَا عَارِضٌ مُّمْطَرُنَا بَلْ هُوَ مَا اسْتَعْجَلْتُمْ بِهِ رِيحٌ فِيهَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

hood, or of friendship, the nations of other Prophets had to meet with the destruction because of their rejection (Sayyid, rephrased).

23. *Ahqaf* is plural of *hiqf* which, according to most commentators, is for curved sand dunes, high, but not as high as mountains. The area identified is between `Oman and Hadr al-Mawt in Yemen. Some scholars have stated that it was the name of a geographical area.

Syed Sulayman Nadwi's research leads him to conclude in his *Ard al-Qur'an*, that the `Ad lived in the Empty Quarter of today's Saudi Arabia.

24. The statement that warners came after Hud can have two possible meanings. It is possible that after the destruction of the main body of `Ad, the rest, as well as those that were rescued, were sent warners after Hud

had died. Another possible meaning, as expressed by Zamakhshari, is that there might have been warners, (sort of minor Prophets: Au.), raised after Hud had been commissioned among the main body of `Ad, as aides to him and working for his cause in other areas of the land (Au.).

25. That is, Allah (*swt*) knows best whether you deserve to be punished immediately, or should you be given respite (Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

26. The original term `aridh is for clouds that gather up at the horizon (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

27. Our own Prophet would feel very concerned when he saw clouds advancing. `A'isha reports, as in Muslim:

عن عائشة زوج النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: أنها قالت ما رأيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم مستجمعاً ضاحكاً حتى أرى منه أهواته إنما كان يتسم قال وكان إذا رأى غيماً أو ريحاً عرف

ذلك في وجهه فقالت يا رسول الله أرى الناس
إذا رأوا الغيم فرحوا رجاء أن يكون فيه المطر
وأراك إذا رأيته عرفت في وجهك الكراهية؟
قالت فقال يا عائشة ما يؤمنني أن يكون فيه
عذاب قد عذب قوم بالريح وقد رأى قوم
العذاب فقالوا "هَذَا عَارِضٌ مُّطَرٌ نَّآ"

"I never saw the Prophet laughing out boisterously so as to see his throat. Most of the time he smiled." Then she added, "When he saw a piece of cloud or experienced high winds, the effect could be seen on his countenance." Once she said (to him), "I see people feel glad when they see clouds in hope that it will bring rain. But as for you, I can see concern on your face when you see them advancing." He said, "O `A'isha, what guarantee is there that they are not laden with chastisement? A nation was punished by the wind. A people saw the chastisement (coming), but said, 'This is a cloud which will bring us rain.'" (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others).

Another report, (shortened here: Au.), also of Muslim has `A'isha saying that when the winds blew hard the Prophet (*saws*) would say,

اللهم إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَهَا وَخَيْرَ مَا فِيهَا وَخَيْرَ مَا
أُرْسَلْتُ بِهِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهَا وَشَرِّ مَا فِيهَا وَشَرِّ
مَا أُرْسَلْتُ بِهِ قَالَتْ وَإِذَا تَخَيَّلْتُ السَّمَاءَ تَغْيِيرَ لَوْنِهِ
وَخَرَجَ وَدَخَلَ وَأَقْبَلَ وَأَدْبَرَ فَإِذَا مَطَرَتْ سِرِّي عَنْهُ
فَعَرَفْتُ ذَلِكَ فِي وَجْهِهِ

"O Allah. I ask you for its best, the best that it bears and the best for which it was sent. And I seek Your refuge from its evil, the evil it bears, and the evil for which it was sent." She added, "When the sky was filled with it and what it contains of lightning and thunder, His (facial) hue changed. He would go out, come in, go up and come back. When it rained he would feel relieved and I could see it on his face" (Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi adds: The Prophet said, as in the *Sahih* of Muslim,

نَصَرْتُ بِالصَّبَا وَأَهْلَكَتُ عَادَ بِالْدَّبُورِ

"I have been helped with Saba', while `Ad were destroyed by the *Dabbur* (winds)."

[25] It will destroy every thing by the command of its Lord.' So, by morning there was nothing to be seen except their dwellings.²⁸ That is how We recompense a criminal people.

[26] Indeed, We had established them in a way We have not established you. We made for them hearing, sights and hearts. But their hearing, sights and hearts did not avail them aught when they denied the signs of Allah; and that enveloped them which they were ridiculing.²⁹

[27] Surely, We have destroyed towns around you and have varied the signs that haply they will return.³⁰

[28] Then, why did not those help them that they took for gods besides Allah as means of nearness? But they disappeared from them. That was their slander, and what they had been forging.

تُدْرِكُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ بِأَمْرِ رَبِّهَا فَأَصْبَحُوا لَا يُرَى إِلَّا مَسَاكِنُهُمْ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِيمَا إِنْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِيهِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ سَمْعًا وَأَبْصَارًا وَأَفْئِدَةً فَمَا أَغْنَى عَنْهُمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَلَا أَبْصَارُهُمْ وَلَا أَفْئِدَتُهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِذْ كَانُوا يَجْحَدُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا مَا حَوْلَكُمْ مِنَ الْقُرَى وَصَرَّفْنَا الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

فَلَوْلَا نَصْرُهُمُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قُرْبَانًا آلِهَةً بَلْ ضَلُّوا عَنْهُمْ وَذَلِكَ إِفْكُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

28. Trees were uprooted, they were lifted high up in the air and dashed back against the ground. Then the winds piled sands upon them so that there was nothing left to be seen except a few of their ruined dwellings.

29. Yusuf Ali comments: "The 'Ad and their successors the Thamud were more richly endowed with the faculties of the arts, sciences, and culture than ever were the Quraish before Islam. 'Hearing and seeing' refer to the experimental faculties; the word 'heart' in Arabic includes

intellect, or the rational faculties, as well as the instruments of feeling and emotion, the aesthetic faculties. The Second 'Ad, or Thamud, have left interesting traces of their architecture in the country round the *Hijr*."

30. That is, the Makkans passed by the destroyed nations of old as they traveled about: 'Ad, who were in *Ahqaf* above Hadr al-Mawt in Yemen; Thamud, whose dwellings were between their towns and Syria; Saba', who had lived in Yemen; Madyan which they came across as they went

[29] And when We turned towards you a group of Jinn³¹ listening to the Qur'ān.³² When they attended it they said, 'Listen in silence.' When it was concluded, they turned back to their people warning.³³

وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَا إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِّنَ الْجِنَّ يَستَمِعُونَ
الْقُرْآنَ فَلَمَّا حَضَرُوهُ قَالُوا أَنصِتُوا فَلَمَّا
قُضِيَ وَلَّوْا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ مُنْذِرِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

to Ghazzah; and the Dead Sea where lay the dwellings of the people of Lut (Ibn Kathir).

31. The word “*nafar*” is for any number between 3 and 20 (Sayyid).

32. The *Ayah* was revealed to impress on the Quraysh that their rejection of the Islamic faith was, by all standards of behavior, quite unreasonable, seeing that the most ardent and fanatic of unbelievers – the Jinn – had embraced Islam (Thanwi).

A few points may be noted in connection with the timing of the Prophet's contact with the Jinn. First, the Jinn heard the Qur'ān first time when the Prophet was returning from his unsuccessful trip to Ta'if. The event took place at a time when disappointment could touch the Prophet's heart. It must have been quite consoling for him to feel that if the humans had rejected him, as in Makkah and Ta'if, the Jinn had accepted. Secondly, had the encounter taken place right at the start of the mission, the Quraysh would have had another point against

him: have not the devils believed in you? Is that not enough? Thirdly, the Quraysh had already alleged that the Prophet (*saws*) was influenced by a Jinn. Had he told them that they visited him regularly and that they had believed in him, he would have become known in the land more as one who controlled or was controlled by the Jinn, rather than as a simple human, but a Prophet (Au.).

33. A study of the mass of reports that have been recorded in this connection, and reproduced by Ibn Jarir Tabari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Sayyid Qutub and others suggests that the listening of the Qur'ān by the Jinn, or, the Prophet delivering them the message, occurred several times, both in Makkah as well as in Madi-nah. (Khifaji has worked it out as six encounters in all: Thanwi, Ma'arif, Shabbir). Ibn Is-haq (and Ibn Hish-am: Sami) have preserved a report which says that after the failed journey of Ta'if, as the Prophet was returning, he spent a night at Nakhlah. It was there that a group of Jinn of

the Nasibin listened to his recitation. Without surrounding details, the report is also in Bukhari. It says,

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه: أنه كان يحمل مع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إداوة لوضوئه وحاجته فيبينما هو يتبعه بها فقال (من هذا؟) فقال أنا أبو هريرة فقال (ابغني أحجاراً أستنفض بها ولا تأتينني بعظم ولا بروتة). فأتيته بأحجار أحملها في طرف ثوبي حتى وضعت إلى جنبه ثم انصرفت حتى إذا فرغ مشيت فقلت ما بال العظم والروتة؟ قال (هُمَا مِنْ طَعَامِ الْجَنِّ وَإِنَّهُ أَتَانِي وَفَدَّ جَنِّ نَصِيبِينَ وَنَعِمَ الْجَنُّ فَسَأَلُونِي الزَّادَ فَدَعَوْتُ اللَّهَ لَهُمْ أَنْ لَا يَمُرُّوا بِعَظْمٍ وَلَا بِرُوتَةٍ إِلَّا وَجَدُوا عَلَيْهَا طَعَامًا)

Abu Hurayrah reported that he used to carry the Prophet's gear for ablution and call of nature. One day when he began to follow him with his paraphernalia he asked, "Who is it?" He answered, "Myself, Abu Hurayrah." He said, "Look for me some stones that I can cleanse myself with, but do not bring me a bone, nor dung." So I gave him some stone which I was carrying in a corner of my cloak and placed them by his side and left. When he was over I walked along him and asked, "What about the bones and dung?" He answered, "They are food for the Jinn. A delegation of the Nasibin Jinn came to me and asked me for provision. So I

prayed to Allah that they should not pass by a bone nor a piece of dung but should find their food therein."

This of course is a report of the Madinan period but the Prophet (*saws*) could be referring to the event before *Hijrah*. Alternatively, he might have been referring to another occasion, taking place after *Hijrah*. But the fact remains that the first hearing by the Jinn happened a year or two before *Hijrah*; although there are differences in details, which could be, once again, because of more than one event being involved. In fact, adds Thanwi, one narrative says that due to the influence of the first batch of Jinn, a batch of 300 Jinn came to embrace Islam at his hand.

We have a report in the *Sahihayn* whose Muslim version suggests that although the Jinn heard the Prophet recite the Qur'an, he himself remained ignorant of their hearing. But, it might be noted that this is the opinion of Ibn 'Abbas, and not a statement of the Prophet (*saws*). The report is as follows,

عن ابن عباس قال: ما قرأ رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم على الجن وما رآهم انطلق رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في طائفة من أصحابه عامدين إلى سوق عكاظ وقد حيل بين الشياطين وبين خير السماء وأرسلت عليهم الشهب

فرجعت الشياطين إلى قومهم فقالوا مالكم؟ قالوا
 حيل بيننا وبين خير السماء وأرسلت علينا
 الشهب قالوا ما ذلك إلا من شيء حدث فاضربوا
 مشارق الأرض ومغاربها فانظروا ما هذا الذي
 حال بيننا وبين خير السماء فانطلقوا يضربون
 مشارق الأرض ومغاربها فمر النفر الذين أخذوا
 نحو تِهامة (وهو بنخل عامدين إلى سوق عكاظ
 وهو يصلي بأصحابه صلاة الفجر) فلما سمعوا
 القرآن استمعوا له وقالوا هذا الذي حال بيننا
 وبين خير السماء فرجعوا إلى قومهم فقالوا يا
 قومنا ﴿إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا عَجَبًا ۖ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْرُّشْدِ
 فَآمَنَّا بِهِ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا ۖ﴾ ﴿٢﴾ فَأَنزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ
 وَجَلَّ عَلَى نَبِيِّهِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ﴿قُلْ
 أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ ۖ﴾ - صحيح
 مسلم

Ibn `Abbas said that the Prophet neither recited the Qur`ān to the Jinn, nor did he see them. But rather, he started out with a few of his Companions intending the `Ukaz market. By that time a barrier had been placed between them and the devils, and news from the heavens; and flames of fire were being flung at them. So the devils returned to their kind. They asked, what's wrong with you? They replied, a barrier has been placed between us and news from the heavens; and flames of fire are being flung at us. They said, this is none other than the indication that something new

has happened; so spread out in the easts and wests of the lands and look for what is it because of which we are barred from the news of the heaven. So they set out to the easts and wests. A few of them who had started off towards Tihama, passed by him (the Prophet) while he was in Nakhla (a place between Makkah and Ta'if). They were heading towards the `Ukaz fair. He was then doing his *Fajr* Prayer along with his Companions. When they heard the Qur`ān, they listened quietly and said, this is what has come between us and the news of the heaven. They went back to their kind and said, O our people, "We have heard a strange recitation that leads to right path. So we have believed, and we shall never associate anyone as partner with our Lord." Thereupon, Allah revealed, "And when We turned towards you a group of Jinn ,,,."

Indeed, there is another report coming from Ibn `Abbas, as in Tabari which leads us to believe that the Prophet (*saws*) encountered the Jinn or gave his message to them more than once. This one says that they were seven in number, from Nasibin and that the Prophet appointed them messengers for their people.

Ibn Mas'ud once remarked, as in a report preserved by Abu Bakr ibn Shaybah, that they came down while he was reciting the Qur'an in Nakhlah .. They were nine and one of them was called Zawba'ah. It was in reference to this that Allah (*swt*) revealed, "And when We turned towards you a group of Jinn listening to the Qur'an. When they attended it they said, 'Listen in silence.' When it was concluded, they turned back to their people warning."

Another report confirms that the Jinn had come to know of the Prophet's appearance in Makkah itself; one of them says, as in Bukhari,

عن عبد الله بن عمر قال: ما سمعت عمر لشيء قط يقول إني لأظنه كذا إلا كان كما يظن بينما عمر جالس إذ مر به رجل جميل فقال لقد أخطأ ظني أو إن هذا على دينه في الجاهلية أو لقد كان كاهنهم علي الرجل فدعي له فقال له ذلك فقال ما رأيت كالיום استقبل به رجل مسلم قال فإني أعزم عليك إلا ما أخبرني قال كنت كاهنهم في الجاهلية قال فما أعجب ما جاءتك به جنيتك قال بينما أنا يوما في السوق جاءني أعرف فيها الفزع فقالت ألم تر الجن وإبلاسه بالقلاص وأحلاسها . قال عمر صدق بينما أنا عند آلهم إذ جاء رجل بعجل فذبحه فصرخ به صارخ لم أسمع صارخا قط أشد صوتا منه يقول يا جليح أمر نجيب رجل فصيح يقول لا إله إلا الله فوثب القوم قلت لا أبرح حتى أعلم ما وراء هذا ثم نادى يا جليح أمر نجيب رجل

فصيح يقول لا إله إلا الله فقامت فما نشبنا أن قيل هذا نبي

'Abdullah ibn 'Umar reported, "I never heard 'Umar saying about something that 'I guess it is this way,' except that it turned out to be the way he said. Once when he was in an assembly, a handsome man passed by. (That was Sawad b. Qarib: Ibn Hajr). 'Umar said, 'Either my guess is wrong or this man is still on his religion of pagan days. Or he must have been their soothsaying priest. Get me the man.' So he was called in. He asked him making the same comment to him. The man said, 'I have never experienced a Muslim who was received in such (evil) manner.'

(According to another report, the man was pretty upset at being referred to as a former soothsaying priest. But 'Umar calmed him by saying that there was nothing to be so upset about it since, before Islam, 'After all, we were worse off as associators in Allah's divinity': Au.).

'Umar said, 'But I bind you to tell me the story.' He said, 'In pagan times I was indeed a soothsaying priest.' He asked, 'What's the strangest of things that your Jinni ever brought you?'

He replied, 'Once while I was in the market when one of those female Jinni came up to me and I could see that she was scared. She said, "Have you noticed the disappointment among the Jinn after they were turned back and so have instead begun to follow the camel-riders (i.e., the Arabs)?

'Umar said, 'You spoke the truth. At one time, while I ('Umar) was sleeping near their idols a man appeared with a calf and slaughtered it. Thereat a crier cried out in a manner I never heard a crier cry out in a louder voice. It said, "O Jalih, (according to other reports: O the people of Dhar ih) a successful affair: an eloquent man says, there is no deity save Allah." Thereat, the people jumped and I said, I shall not rest until I have known what is behind all this. Then, once again someone called, "O Jal ih, a successful affair: an eloquent man says, there is no deity save Allah." I left the place and we had not attempted at anything before it was said, "Here is a Prophet."

A report preserved by Hakim and declared having the narrators of same quality as of the *Sahihayn*, has the fuller story of Sawad b. Qarib, according to which he was actually warned by one of his Jinni-companions of the Prophet's advent while he

was in India. Sawad would not believe, if not for three warnings during three nights. He came back to Arabia. By then the Prophet had already migrated to Madinah. He met him there and entered into faith. (The report in Hakim has, apart from Hakim's own judgment, internal evidences of its trustworthiness from the kind of sentences that perhaps only the Jinn or soothsayers could make. The report mentions that the Prophet (*saws*) and his Companions were quite pleased by his entry into Islam, which confirms the reported version above, which says that Sawad was a soothsaying-priest in *Jahiliyyah*, whose conversion to Islam made the Prophet happy: Au.).

Thus it is possible that in that first instance the Jinn chanced upon the Prophet reciting the Qur'an, without he knowing of their presence. Then they retreated to their kind, warning them and sending back delegations after delegations. One of those that could be quoted is in Muslim. It goes as follows:

عن عامر قال سألت علقمة: هل كان ابن مسعود شهد مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ليلة الجن؟ قال فقال علقمة أنا سألت ابن مسعود فقلت هل شهد أحد منكم مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ليلة الجن؟ قال لا ولكننا كنا مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

ذات ليلة ففقدناه فالتمسناه في الأودية والشعاب
فقلنا استطير أو اغتيل قال فبتنا بشر ليلة بات بها
قوم فلما أصبحنا إذا هو جاء من قبل حراء قال
فقلنا يا رسول الله فقدناك فطلبناك فلم نجدك
فبتنا بشر ليلة بات بها قوم فقال أتاني داعي
الجن فذهبت معه فقرأت عليهم القرآن قال
فانطلق بنا فأرانا آثارهم وآثار نيرانهم وسألوه
الزاد فقال لكم كل عظم ذكر اسم الله عليه يقع
في أيديكم أوفر ما يكون لحماً وكل بكرة علف
لدوابكم فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم
فلا تستنجوا بهما فإنهما طعام إخوانكم

Amir said that he asked `Alqamah about Ibn Mas`ud whether he was with the Prophet the night of the Jinn. `Alqamah said that he had asked Ibn Mas`ud whether anyone of you was with the Prophet the night of Jinn? He said, no, but we were with the Prophet (sawṣ) another night when we missed him. We searched him in the valleys and mountain wedges. We said to ourselves, "Was he flown away by the Jinn, or kidnapped (by men)?" That was one of the worst nights that a people could have spent. As the morning came, there he was, coming from the Hira side. We said, "Messenger of Allah, we missed you and looked for you. But, not finding you we spent a night worse than any people spent their night." He said, "There came to me a

caller from the Jinn. I went with him and recited the Qur`ān to them." Then, Ibn Mas`ud added, he took us along and showed us their marks and their fires. They had asked him for provision and he told them, "Every bone on which Allah's name has been pronounced that falls into your hand will be full of meat for you. And every piece of dung will be fodder for your cattle. Then the Prophet added, "Do not cleanse yourself using the two for they are food for your brothers."

(Ibn Mas`ud saying "no" to the inquiry at the start tells us that the allusion by the 'night of the Jinn' was to the first encounter in Nakhlah when the Jinn chanced upon the Prophet: Au.).

Yet another report confirms that the Prophet (sawṣ) had contacts with the Jinn at Makkah. Ibn Mas`ud reports, as in Ahmed:

عن ابن مسعود ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه و
سلم قال: بت الليلة اقرأ على الجن رفقا
بالحجون

The Prophet said, "I spent the last night reciting upon the Companions (from among the) Jinn in Hajun." (Hajun: a place little outside Makkah).

Another report confirming the Prophet's contacts with Jinn at Makkah is also in Ahmed. It has `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud saying,

عن عبد الله بن مسعود قال: بينما نحن مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بمكة وهو في نفر من أصحابه إذ قال ليقيم معي رجل منكم ولا يقوم معي رجل في قلبه من الغش مثقال ذرة قال فقمتم معه وأخذت إداوة ولا أحسبها الا ماء فخرجت مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حتى إذا كنا بأعلى مكة رأيت أسودة مُحْتَمَةً قال فخط لي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم خطاً ثم قال قم هاهنا حتى آتيك قال فقمتم ومضى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إليهم فرأيتهم يتثرون إليه قال فسمروا معهم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ليلاً طويلاً حتى جاءني مع الفجر فقال لي ما زلت قائماً يا بن مسعود قال فقلت له يا رسول الله أولم تقل لي قم حتى آتيك قال ثم قال لي هل معك من وضوء قال فقلت نعم ففتحت الإداوة فإذا هو نبيذ قال فقلت له يا رسول الله والله لقد أخذت الإداوة ولا أحسبها الا ماء فإذا هو نبيذ قال فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ثمرة طيبة وماء طهور قال ثم توضأ منها فلما قام يصلي أدركه شخصان منهم قالا له يا رسول الله انا نحب ان نؤمن في صلاتنا قال فصفاهما رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم خلفه ثم صلى بنا فلما انصرف قلت له من هؤلاء يا رسول الله قال هؤلاء جن نصيبين جاؤا يختصمون الي في أمور كانت بينهم وقد سألتني الزاد فزودتهم قال فقلت له وهل عندك يا رسول الله من شيء تزودهم إياه قال فقال قد زودتهم الرجعة وما وجدوا من

روث وجدوه شعيراً وما وجدوه من عظم وجدوه كاسياً قال وعند ذلك نهى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن أن يستطاب بالروث والعظم

Once while we were with the Prophet in Makkah in the company of a few Companions when he said, "Let one of your men rise up, but let not any man rise up with me who has the slightest of deceit in his heart." So I got up and took with me a leather bottle that I did not imagine but that it had water. In any case, I went out with the Prophet (saws) until when we were at the upper end of Makkah I saw a huge crowd of dark bodies gathered together. He drew a line for me and said, "Stand here until I come back to you." So I stood there and the Prophet went up to them. I saw them crowding upon him. He spent a good part of the night with them to come back to me only at Fajr. He asked, "Did you remain standing O Ibn Mas`ud?" I said, "Messenger of Allah. Had you not instructed me to stand until I come back to you?" He asked, "Do you have any water for ablution?" I said yes and opened the bottle and lo, it had a non-intoxicating

beverage (of dates). I said, "Messenger of Allah, when I brought it I had not thought but that it will have water, but it is this beverage." He said, "A good fruit and clean water." He made ablution therewith. Then, as he got up to Pray, two of them said, "Messenger of Allah, we wish that you give us assurance with regard to the Prayer." So the Prophet made them line up behind him and prayed. When they had left, I asked, "Who were they, Messenger of Allah?" He said, "Those were Jinn of Nasibin. They had come to me disputing over a few issues that had occurred between them. They asked me for provision and I provided them." I asked, "Did you have something to provide them with, O Messenger of Allah?" He said, "I provided them with the refuse (of others). They will not find dung but will find it barley and not a bone but enveloped (with meat)." Ibn Mas'ud added, "It was at that point that the Prophet instructed against cleansing oneself with
".dung or bones

(Nasibin was a place near Diyar Bakr in Syria, while Nakhlah at a night's distance from Makkah. And, it is re-

ported that the Prophet (*saws*) had recited to them *Surah* al-Rahman: Alusi).

Other versions supply some other information such as, when the Prophet returned, he asked whether Ibn Mas'ud had crossed the line he had drawn. When told no, he said that he could not guarantee they would have ever met again until the Day of Judgment, had Ibn Mas'ud crossed the line. Ibn Mas'ud also reported that he saw them as eagles. Perhaps on another occasion they looked like dark palm trees, which started to recede like receding dark patches of the night before dawn, with merely a few remaining with him by dawn. On one occasion they were many and covered the Prophet wholly, to the extent that Ibn Mas'ud thought he should rather seek the help of the people to rescue the Prophet but changed his mind when he saw that the Prophet was using his walking stick to push them back and was saying, "Sit down." The Prophet had then remarked, "Had you come out of the line, I could not have guaranteed that one of them would have snatched you away." Ibn Mas'ud also heard plenty of noises and when inquired the Prophet, was told that there was a dispute over a murder between them which he had resolved.

In connection with the Jinn's encounters with humans, especially as snakes, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others present several stories. Some involve a few of those who received the Qur'ān directly from the Prophet. Ibrahim Nakha'i, for instance, reported that while he was traveling with a few students of Ibn Mas'ud (who was then not in their company) for Hajj, they came across a (white) dead snake in a field (filled with dead snakes). This one exhumed the perfume of misk. Ibrahim told his companions to proceed while he himself went up to the perfuming snake, and after some curious examination, wrapped it in a piece of cloth and buried it. Then he rejoined his colleagues. At nightfall two women showed up and asked, "Which of you buried 'Amr?" They said they had buried no one that day. She said, "Sure one of you did. We are referring to the snake you buried." Then they added that he was the last of those Jinns that had taken the Qur'ān directly from the Prophet (*saws*). There was a battle between the believing and unbelieving Jinn, in which 'Amr was killed. When it was reported to 'Uthman ibn 'Affan

(according to other reports to 'Umar ibn al-Khattab), he remarked, "If you saw this, and are true, then you are saying something strange, but if you have lied, then the lie will be on you."

There are many stories in *Tafsir* works involving encounters with believing Jinn, but neither the strength of the above report could be established, nor of others. Nonetheless there are *Sahih* reports which say that the Prophet prohibited that snakes found in Madinan homes be killed. They might be given three day's notice. If the snake would not leave, then it was not Jinn but the Devil, and so could be killed. The Jinn used to visit Madinah in the form of snakes to learn Islam. (Scholars say that the instructions were for the times when the Prophet was alive). There is a *hadith* in Muslim according to which a visitor found a snake in Abu Sa'id al-Khudri's house. He got up to kill it but Abu Sa'id prevented him saying that during the time of the Prophet, a young man killed one such snake found in his house, but himself died immediately (Au.).

[30] They said, 'O our people! We have indeed heard a Book sent down after Musa:³⁴ testifying to that which was before it, guiding to the truth and to a straight path.'

قَالُوا يَا قَوْمَنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتَابًا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ
بَعْدِ مُوسَى مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ يَهْدِي
إِلَى الْحَقِّ وَإِلَى طَرِيقٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

[31] 'O our people! Harken to Allah's Caller, and believe in him. He will forgive you your sins³⁵ and will rescue you from a painful chastisement.³⁶

يَا قَوْمَنَا أَجِيبُوا دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ وَآمِنُوا بِهِ يَغْفِرَ
لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُجِرْكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ
﴿٣١﴾

[32] He who does not hearken to Allah's Caller, is not the one to frustrate in the earth, and he will not have protectors besides Him. Such of them are in a manifest error.'

وَمَنْ لَا يُجِبْ دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ فَلَيْسَ بِمُعْجِزٍ فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَلَيْسَ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءُ أُولَئِكَ
فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

34. To the question as to why did those Jinn ignore to mention the revelation given to `Isa, one answer is that they were Jewish Jinn, and the other is that because the scriptures given to `Isa were only complimentary to the main revelation, viz., *Torah* revealed to Musa (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others). Hence we notice that when the Prophet (*saws*) was taken to Waraqah b. Nawfal, at the start of the revelations, he remarked (although a Christian: Au.), "this is the same message that had been sent down to Musa (Ibn Kathir). However, adds Alusi, trustworthy sources do not say anything about the Jinn having been Jewish.

textual "*min*" as "*zaidah*." However, others have read it as "*tab`idiyyah*" in which case the meaning would be: "He will forgive some of the sins;" i.e., not all sins; and the reason is that entry into Islam guarantees forgiveness of sins pertaining to Allah's rights, but not the rights of the humans, (such as usurpation of another's property). Their rights must be restored (Zamakhshari, Thanwi).

35. This translation follows the understanding of some scholars, as stated by Thanwi, who treated the

36. Since this *Ayah* has not mentioned Paradise as the reward for the believing Jinn, but rather, only promises rescue from the Fire, some scholars have thought that perhaps Paradise is for humans alone and that the Jinn will not enter it. Notable among such scholars were Hasan (al-Busri) and Imām Abu Hanifah. But Imām Shafe'i, Malik and Ibn

Abi Layla (as also Nawawi: Alusi), held the opinion that they too will enter Paradise. A few texts are cited in support. One is (55: 56),

لَمْ يَطْمِئِنُّ الْإِنْسُ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٥٦﴾ [الرَّحْمَنُ: ٥٦]

"Neither men nor Jinn would have touched them."

And, (55: 74),

وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٌ ﴿١٦﴾ فَإِنِّيَ أَعْلَمُ رِيكَهَا
تُكْرَبَانِ ﴿١٧﴾ [الرَّحْمَنُ: ٤٦-٤٧]

"And whoever feared standing before his Lord shall have two gardens; which of your Lord's blessings then will you two deny?"
(Meaning Jinn and mankind).

Qushayri however stated that this is one of those issues about which nothing has been told us in definite terms (Qurtubi).

As for Abu Hanifa's position, the fact is that in view of non-availability of a clear text, he refused to take any stand, this way or that, because such issues can only be categorically decided by the main sources. This has been stated by Nasafi in his "Taysir" (Alusi, Thanwi).

Thanwi adds that because of the texts quoted above, and another in *Surah al-An'am* (6: 132), which comes after the mention of Jinn and mankind, and which says,

وَلِكُلٍّ دَرَجَاتٌ مِمَّا عَمِلُوا [الْأَنْعَامُ: ١٣٢]

"For each are ranks according to their deeds," the majority have held opinion that the Jinn will be in Paradise.

On the other hand, a figure like 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz said that the Jinn will be placed at the outskirts of Paradise.

On a different front, Qushayri has an interesting note in his *Tafsir*. With reference to the words "Respond to the caller of Allah, he writes what sounds more appealing in Arabic,

يُقَالُ الْإِجَابَةُ عَلَى ضَرِيرَيْنِ: إِجَابَةُ اللَّهِ، إِجَابَةُ
لِلدَّاعِي، فَإِجَابَةُ الدَّاعِي بِشُهُودِ الْوَسَاطَةِ - وَهُوَ
الرَّسُولُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - وَ إِجَابَةُ اللَّهِ
بِالْجَهْرِ إِذَا بَلَغَتْهُ الرِّسَالَةُ عَلَى لِسَانِ السَّفِيرِ ز
بِالسِّرِّ إِذَا حَصَلَتِ التَّعْرِيفَاتُ مِنَ الْوَارِدَاتِ عَلَى
الْقَلْبِ، فَمُسْتَجِيبٌ بِنَفْسِهِ وَ مُسْتَجِيبٌ بِقَلْبِهِ وَ
مُسْتَجِيبٌ بِرُوحِهِ وَ مُسْتَجِيبٌ بِسَرِّهِ، وَ مِنْ
تَوَقُّفٍ عَنِ دَعَاءِ الدَّاعِي إِجَابَهُ، وَ لَمْ يُبَادِرْ
بِالْإِسْتِجَابَةِ هُجْرًا فِيمَا كَانَ يُخَاطَبُ بِهِ.

It is said that there are two kinds of responses: responding to Allah and responding to the caller. Now, response to the caller is through the presence of the means - that is, the Messenger, on whom be peace. The response to Allah should be open when the message comes from the envoy, and should be in secret when the cognizance comes from the

[33] Have they not seen that Allah, who created the heavens and earth and was not wearied with their creation,³⁷ has the power over quickening the dead? Yes indeed. He has power over all things.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَمْ يَعْْيَ بِخَلْقِهِنَّ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَى أَنْ يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَىٰ بَلَىٰ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] And the day those who disbelieved will be exposed to the Fire: 'Is this not real?' They will answer, 'Yes, by our Lord.' He will say, 'Then taste the punishment for that you were disbelieving.'

وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَى النَّارِ أَلَيْسَ هَذَا بِالْحَقِّ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَرَبَّنَا قَالَ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

meanings that dawns upon the heart. Thus, there is a respondent who responds with his body, another with his heart, a third with his soul and another in secret. As for he who hesitated at the caller calling him, hastening not with a response, is put off from what he was being addressed.

37. "This is to emphatically deny the idea of fatigue and weariness to God implied in the *Bible*. Cf. the OT: 'And on the seventh day God ended the work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God

blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his works which God created and made (Gen. 2: 2,3). 'For in six days the Lord made heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day.' (20: 11) And the NT: 'And God did rest the seventh day from all his works' (He. 4: 4)." - Majid.

The idea of rest on the seventh day is extended to rest in the 'seventh year.' Western universities allow their senior teaching staff a sabbatical (every seventh year) off for rest to (Au.).

[35] Observe patience then as the Messengers of firm resolution observed patience,³⁸ and seek not to hasten it for them. The day they see what they are being promised, it will be as if they did not tarry but an hour of the day. A deliverance.³⁹ Then, shall any be destroyed except the transgressing people?

فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُوا الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ
وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ مَا
يُوعَدُونَ لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّنْ نَّهَارٍ
بَلَاغٌ فَهَلْ يُهْلَكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

38. Who were the Messengers of firm resolution? Some say that they were Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, `Isa and our own Prophet; others name others, some others mention larger numbers, while a few say that every Messenger was of firm resolution (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others). Ibn Marduwayh

has a report according to which Jabir b. `Abdullah held the opinion that there were 313 Messengers of firm resolution (Shawkani).

39. One of the connotations is that the allusion is to the Qur'an which is a nothing but deliverance (of a message) – Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others. مَقَاتِلَ





Surah 47
*Muhammad*¹

Madinan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
 THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Those who disbelieved and hindered from Allah's path, He will lay waste their deeds.²

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَضَلَّ
 أَعْمَاهُمْ ﴿١﴾

[2] While those who believed and worked righteous deeds, and believed in that which has been sent down upon Muhammad³ – and it is the Truth from their Lord – He will acquit them their evil deeds, and reform their condition.⁴

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَآمَنُوا
 بِمَا نَزَّلَ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ
 كَفَّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَأَصْلَحَ بَالَهُمْ ﴿٢﴾

1. The chapter is also named as *Surah al-Qital* (Qurtubi, Shawkani).

2. Yusuf Ali has a poignant point: "Whatever they do will miss its mark, because Allah is the source of all energy and life. If the wicked try to persecute men or seduce them from the Truth, the result will be the opposite of what they intend."

3. Sufyan Thawri said with reference to the words, "And believed in that which has been sent down upon Muhammad," that the allusion is to those who did not oppose Muhammad in any way (Qurtubi). The addition of this clause is to emphasize that after

the appearance of Prophet Muhammad, belief in him becomes part of the faith structure, and that, there is no independent path of salvation open but which must necessarily pass through Muhammad's territory (Au.).

4. Obviously, the application is general, but Ibn `Abbas is reported to have said that (at the time of revelation) the first verse was referring to the Makkans while the second to the Ansar (Tabari).

The above opinion of Ibn `Abbas was recorded by Hakim and others, with the former declaring it trustworthy (Alusi).

[3] That because those who disbelieved followed the falsehood,⁵ while those who believed followed the truth from their Lord. Thus does Allah set forth for the people their similitudes.⁶

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا اتَّبَعُوا الْبَاطِلَ وَأَنَّ
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّبَعُوا الْحَقَّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ كَذَٰلِكَ
يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ أَمْثَالَهُمْ ﴿٣﴾

[4] Therefore, when you meet the unbelievers (in a battle), then (let there be) striking of the necks until, when you have slaughtered them well enough, tie well the bonds.⁷ Thereafter either (confer) generosity, or (accept) ransom,⁸ until war lays down its burdens.⁹ That (is how it has to be)!¹⁰ Had Allah wished, He could have avenged upon them;¹¹ but that He may try some of you by means of others.¹² As for those who were slain in Allah's path, never will He lay waste their deeds.¹³

فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَثْبَثْتُمُوهُمْ فَشُدُّوا الْوَتَاقَ فِيمَا
مِنَّا بَعْدَ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً حَتَّىٰ تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ
أُوزَارَهَا ذَٰلِكَ وَلَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَانتَصَرْنَا مِنْهُمْ
وَلَكِن لِّيَبْلُوَ بَعْضُكُم بِبَعْضٍ وَالَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا
فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَن يُضِلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٤﴾

Ibn Kathir points out that similar words have been used in supplicatory words that are to be said in response to another's sneeze. They are:

يَهْدِيكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيُصْلِحْ بِأَلْكُم

“May Allah guide you and reform your condition.”

5. “*Batil*” is that which does not enjoy a true existence (Razi).

6. “We learn the greatest moral lessons by parables and similitudes from things that happen in the outer world. If a man goes after a mirage or a thing that has no real existence, he can never reach his goal, while the man that follows the kindly Light from Allah that leads him on must be

happier in mind, sounder in heart, and firmer in life, generally for every moment that he lives” (Yusuf Ali).

7. Asad comments, “.. thus connecting with verse 1 and laying down the fundamental condition which alone justifies physical warfare; namely, a defence of the Faith and of freedom. In other words, when ‘those who are bent on denying the truth’ try to deprive the Muslims of their social and political liberty and thus to make it impossible for them to live in accordance with the principles of their faith, a just war (*Jihad*) becomes allowable and, more than that, a duty.”

8. That is, after you have overcome your enemies, then, either set them

free, without any compensation, or set a ransom. Some scholars have thought that this verse is abrogated by another which said (9: 5),

فَإِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرُمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ

“When the holy months have passed, then slay the polytheists wherever you find them.” However, the correct position is that the *Ayah* under question is firm, un-abrogated. The leader of the faithful is free to kill some prisoners (with bad record: Au.), ransom some, or set free others as a gesture of goodwill (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

In fact, this *Ayah* abrogates the rule set by the verses of *Surah al-Anfal* (*Ayah* 67, 68), which disapproved prisoner-taking in the first place. In view of the verse under discussion, scholars have treated the verses of *Surah al-Anfal* as abrogated, and have said that taking prisoners and then granting them freedom after they have paid ransom, or freeing them in return of nothing, is entirely lawful. This was the position adopted by ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar, Hasan, ‘Ata, Thawri, Shafe’i, Ahmad, Is-haq and others. Accordingly, when the Prophet (*saws*) captured 80 men of an ambushing party at Hudaibiyyah, he freed them all for no returns. From Imām Abu Hanifah we

have two opinions, one disallowing ransom, another, allowing it. Tahawi has reported in Ma’ani al-Athar that this is the preferred opinion of Abu Hanifah.

As regards how Islam – which stands firm in favor of human rights – allowed taking slaves, the answer requires good amount of discussion, but in sum it might be noted that the rules and conditions that have been promulgated in this connection, leave only the name: slavery, but in actual fact take away all the realities of slavery best seen in British and American treatment of slaves. As Le Bon Gustave has pointed out, the image of a slave, bound in chains, whipped for work, housed in a pen, fed with little, if any, does not hold true of the slave in Islam. The Prophet has said, as in a *hadith* of Bukhari,

إِخْوَانُكُمْ ، جَعَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ تَحْتَ أَيْدِيكُمْ ، فَمَنْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ أَخَاهُ تَحْتَ يَدِهِ ، فَلْيُطْعِمْهُ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ ، وَلْيُلْبِسْهُ مِمَّا يَلْبَسُ ، وَلَا يَكْلِفْهُ مِنَ الْعَمَلِ مَا يَغْلِبُهُ ، فَإِنْ كَلَّفَهُ مَا يَغْلِبُهُ فَلْيُعِنْهُ عَلَيْهِ

“They are your brothers, placed under you. So if one of your brother is placed under your hand, then, let him feed him out of what he eats, clothe him out of what he clothes himself, and place not upon him a burden more than he can bear, but

if he did place an unbearable burden on him, then, help him therewith.” As against all other systems, Islam allows that a slave marry his own owner, receives half the booty of a battle, and, surprisingly, if he promises security to an enemy member, his word is to be honored. The Prophet’s last words, as reported by `Ali, were, (as in Abu Da’ud and Ahmad),

كَانَ آخِرُ كَلَامِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ :
الصَّلَاةُ الصَّلَاةُ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ فِيمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ

“The last words of the Prophet were, ‘Prayers, Prayers. Fear Allah in the matters of the slaves.’”

In addition, Islam framed such rules and injunctions that helped in the emancipation of the slaves. Indeed, it appears as though slaves were to be freed on simple pretexts. There were many sins whose commitment entailed freeing of a slave as the expiation. It went to such extent that according to a *hadith* when someone slapped his slave, he was asked to free him. These are the reason why the Companions are reported to have freed such large number of slaves. The author of *Al-Najm al-Wahhaj* has conducted research to show the following figures of slaves freed by some Companions:

`A'isha, 69 slaves,
`Abbas, 70
Hakim b. Hizam, 100
`Abdullah ibn `Umar, 1,000
`Uthman b. `Affan, 20
Dhu al-Kala` Himyari, 800
`Abdul Rahman b. `Awf, 30,000

Finally, one might note that slave-taking is a mutual act. That is, prisoners are made slaves for the reasons of retaliation. But if there is a mutual pact between a Muslim and a non-Muslim warring states that they will not take slaves, then, a Muslim state will be more than willing to enter into such a pact (Mufti Shafi').

Mawdudi adds: “The treatment therefore, of the slaves in early Islam was remarkable. One of the slave, Abu `Aziz, himself reported, “The Ansari in whose care I was placed, used to live on dates while he fed me bread.” The Prophet (*saws*) was told about another slave, Suhayl b. `Amr, that he was a fiery speaker (against Islam) and, therefore, his teeth ought to be broken. The Prophet replied, as in Ibn Hisham, “If I have his teeth broken then Allah will break my teeth, although I am a Prophet.”

The rules regarding Arabian Pagans, however, writes Alusi, are different. If they resort to war and are taken prisoners, then, nothing but Islam is ac-

cepted of them. (Having come to the battle and getting imprisoned, ransom will not be accepted of them). For them, it is either Islam or exile. However, no child, woman or an old man can be executed in view of the Prophet's instruction; nor can any individual execute any of the prisoners of war. That is the prerogative of the government alone. Further, if they embrace Islam before imprisonment, then they cannot be enslaved. On the other hand, if they embrace Islam after being imprisoned, they cannot be executed. But rather, they will remain slaves of the state.

It is reported that Hajjaj handed over a prisoner to Ibn 'Umar to execute him. He refused saying, "This is not what we have been ordered; but rather, 'either favor, or ransom'" (Qurtubi). The report is in Ibn Marduwayh (Shawkani).

Scholars have given their opinions about the third option, not mentioned here: that of executing the prisoners. A study of the Prophetic practice reveals that it was only in specific cases that the prisoners were killed, otherwise, the general Prophetic practice was adoption of one of the two alternatives mentioned above: show favor or accept ransom. This is what he did most of the

time, such as, with the prisoners of Makkah, Hawazin, Jews of Khayber, and many others (Au.).

9. Mujahid has said that the "until" of the *Ayah* would be attained when 'Isa ibn Maryam descends; (until then wars will go on: Au.) – Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others).

Apart from being a rational explanation, the above admits a fact: there will never be peace in the world. For example, during the last two hundred years Muslims have not committed any offence against the West. But, did it bring peace to them? Far from that, they have been continuously losing lives and property decade after decade.

عن جبير بن نفير أن سلمة بن نفيل أخبرهم: أنه أتى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال إني سئمت الخيل وألقيت السلاح ووضعت الحرب أوزارها قلت لا قتال فقال له النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم الآن جاء القتال لا تزال طائفة من أمتي ظاهرين على الناس يرفع الله قلوب أقوام فيقاتلونهم ويرزقهم الله منهم حتى يأتي أمر الله عز وجل وهم على ذلك إلا أن عقر دار المؤمنين الشام والخيل معقود في نواصبيها الخير إلى يوم القيامة

Abu Salamah b. Nufayl is said to have reported that someone went up to the Prophet and said, "I am wearied of the horse, have laid down my arms as war has laid down its burdens, and I said

to myself, 'there is no more fighting.'" The Prophet replied, "It is now that the war has begun. A group of my *Ummah* will remain dominant over others. Allah will up-raise the hearts of a people, so they will fight them and Allah will feed them through them, until Allah's command comes to pass while they are in that state. Lo, Islam's most prominent place will be Syria. As for horses, goodness is tied to their foreheads until the day of Judgment."

According to other versions, the man had gone to the Prophet after a certain victory (Ibn Kathir).

hadith commentators explain that Syria would be the principal city of Islam when, before the end of the world, great events will take place (Au.).

The above *hadith* is in the *Sahih* of Ibn Hibban as well as in Nasa'i (Sami).

10. Shabbir expounds the passage: Truth and falsehood will always remain confronting each other. Therefore, when there is a clash between believers and unbelievers, the Muslims should remain steadfast and show courage. Falsehood will only weaken when its ringleaders are destroyed and their unity is broken.

Therefore, let there be no lackadaisical or sluggish attitude towards the clash; nor any hesitation in slaughtering the enemy in the battlefield. When, after considerable battling, your dread is implanted in the hearts of the enemies, and their strength is broken, then it is that you might take prisoners. This imprisonment may lead them to learn a lesson (so as not to resort to violence once again). Another possibility is that when the prisoners have lived among you, they might see the difference between you and themselves, and reconsider the Islamic message. It is expected that this will lead to their acceptance of the truth. However, if you feel it right, you might free them without ransom which might lead some of them to soften their hearts towards Islam, or you may accept ransom and let them go. But if it is not possible to return the prisoners, then there are only three ways of dealing with them: (a) Keep them back as citizens of the Islamic state as *dhimmis*. (b) Take them as slaves. (c) Kill them. But killing is only allowable if one of them has committed a serious crime. (Otherwise they cannot be killed).

If someone attempts a little research - and he might not need to spend a long time on the project - he will discover how far away the West is in

dealing with war prisoners, in comparison with the Islamic instructions and practices. At the time of this writing, kidnapping citizens of other countries, locking them up in secret prisons, or handing them over to such states that promise to torture them and never let them out, without any trial ever taking place, nay, without anyone ever knowing the true numbers involved, is accepted by the citizens and leaders of the so-called civilized world as fair and just (Au.).

11. Qatadah said: He could easily destroy them by setting upon them His forces, and many they are. Were He to set upon them the weakest of His forces, it would suffice them (Ibn Jarir).

12. That is, Allah (*swt*) had the power to destroy them Himself, but He allowed them to commit aggression against you and challenge you in the battle-field, in order to try you by them: whether you will fight back, or flee to safer places, leaving Islam unsuccored (Au.).

13. Qatadah said that the special reference by “those who were slain” was to those who fell at Uhud. These verses were in fact revealed in reference to that battle. The Prophet was on a hill and his followers were

badly injured. A batch of pagans proclaimed: “Hubal is exalted.” The Muslims responded, “Allah is more Exalted and more Glorious.” The pagans said, “A day for a day. War is like a pail. We have ‘Uzza, while you have no ‘Uzza.” The Prophet then said, “Allah is our Protector while you have no protector. As for the dead they fair differently: our dead are alive, being fed, while your dead are in the Fire, receiving torture” (Tabari, Kashshaf, Qurtubi).

It was Abu Sufyan who had spoken out those words from the foot of the hill on behalf of the pagans (Ibn Kathir).

As regards a martyr's special status, there are several *ahadith* to support it. One is in Tirmidhi, who declared it *Sahih*, as well as in Ibn Majah . It says,

عن المقدام بن معد يكرب قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: ”لِلشَّهِيدِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ سِتٌّ خِصَالٍ: يُعْفَرُ لَهُ فِي أَوَّلِ دَفْعَةٍ وَيَرَى مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ، وَيُجَاوِزُ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ، وَيَأْمَنُ مِنَ الْفَزَعِ الْأَكْبَرِ، وَيُوضَعُ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ تَاجُ الْوَقَارِ، يَأْفُوتُهُ مِنْهَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا، وَيَرْجُو الثَّنَاءَ سَبْعِينَ رَوْحَةً مِنَ الْخُورِ (الْعَيْنِ) ، وَيُشَفَّعُ فِي سَبْعِينَ مِنْ أَقَارِبِهِ“. قال أبو عيسى هذا حديث حسن صحيح غريب.

Miqdam b. Ma'dikarib reported the Prophet: “A martyr enjoys six specialties: He is forgiven at the

[5] He will surely guide them,¹⁴ and reform their condition.

سَيَهْدِيهِمْ وَيُصْلِحُ بَالَهُمْ ﴿٥﴾

[6] He will admit them to Paradise with which He has familiarized them.¹⁵

وَيُدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ عَرَفَهَا هُمْ ﴿٦﴾

first instance (of martyrdom) so that he sees his place in Paradise; is saved from the punishment in the grave; will be saved from the Great Fear; will have a crown of dignity placed on his head - whose rubies will be better than the world and what it contains; will be married to seventy (wide-eyed) houris; and will be able to intercede for seventy of his kinsfolk.”

14. That is, guide them to Paradise, although other connotations are possible (Qurtubi).

15. It is widely reported by the commentators that the angel who will take charge of the individual believers on Judgment day, will lead him right up to the gates of Paradise.

We have a report in this connection from Abu Said al-Khudri. It says,

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِذَا خَلَصَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ مِنَ النَّارِ حُبِسُوا بِقَنْطَرَةٍ بَيْنَ الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ فَيَتَقَاصُونَ مَطْلَمَ كَانَتْ بَيْنَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَتَّى إِذَا ثَقُّوا وَهَدَّبُوا أُذُنَ هُمْ يَدْخُولُ الْجَنَّةَ فَوَ الَّذِي تَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ يَبْدُو لِأَحَدِهِمْ بِمَسْكَنِهِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ أَدْلُ بِمَنْزِلِهِ كَانَ فِي الدُّنْيَا

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri narrated that the Prophet said, “When the believers would have escaped the Fire, they will be held on a bridge between the Fire and Paradise. At that point they will settle their accounts of wrongs done to each other. Then they will be allowed to proceed to Paradise. At that time, they would know their places in Paradise better than they knew their homes on the earth.”

Mujahid added that they will know their places as if they lived in them from the time they were created, without seeking guidance from anyone (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari & Razi [without quoting the *hadith*]).

The above *hadith* is in Bukhari (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

The translation as “familiarized” follows Hasan’s understanding as in Qurtubi to the effect that Allah has already familiarized the believers with Paradise, having described it and explained in detail what it will be like (Au.).

[7] O those who have believed, if you help Allah, He will help you, and firm up your feet.¹⁶

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَنْصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنْصُرْكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَكُمْ ﴿٧﴾

[8] As for those who disbelieved, destruction for them,¹⁷ and He has laid waste their works.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَتَعْسًا لَهُمْ وَأَصْلًا أَعْمَاهُمْ ﴿٨﴾

[9] That because they disliked what Allah has revealed therefore, He quashed their deeds.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَرِهُوا مَا أُنْزِلَ اللَّهُ فَأَخْبَطَ أَعْمَاهُمْ ﴿٩﴾

[10] Have they not traveled in the land to see how was the end of those before them? Allah set destruction upon them. As for (these) unbelievers, they shall have the like thereof.¹⁸

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ دَمَّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ أَمْثَلُهَا ﴿١٠﴾

[11] That, because Allah is the protector of the believers and that because the unbelievers have no protector for them.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَأَنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ لَا مَوْلَى لَهُمْ ﴿١١﴾

[12] Allah will surely admit those who believed and did righteous deeds into gardens beneath which rivers flow. As for the unbelievers, they enjoy themselves and eat like the cattle eat,¹⁹ while Fire is their ultimate abode.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَتَمَتَّعُونَ وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَهُمْ ﴿١٢﴾

16. Allah (*swt*) will firm up the feet of those who help Him in His cause during this life so that they stay firm on Islam, as He will also firm them up in the battlefields and give them firm feet on the Bridge (Qurtubi), in other words, at every moment where a believer can stagger or hesitate (Au.).

والقطيفة والخميصة، إن أُعطي رضي، وإن لم يُعط لم يرض

17. The Prophet has said, as in Bukhari,

“Destroyed is the worshipper of Dinar and Dirham, cloaks and shrouds. If he is granted he is pleased, but if denied, he is displeased” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه : عن النبي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال تعس عبد الدينار والدرهم

18. That is, a similar end awaits them.

19. That is, they devour food as cattle devours pasture without any regard for anything higher (Tabari).

[13] And how many a town (there has been) that was stronger in might than the town that expelled you, (but) which We destroyed? Then, there was no helper for them.

وَكَايْنٍ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ هِيَ أَشَدُّ قُوَّةً مِّنْ قَرْيَتِكَ الَّتِي أَخْرَجْتِكَ أَهْلُكُنَاهُمْ فَلَا نَاصِرَ لَهُمْ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] Is he then, who is upon clear evidence from His Lord, like him, to whom his evil deeds have been decked out fair, and such as those who followed their base desires?

أَفَمَن كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَبِّهِ كَمَن زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] The description²⁰ of the Paradise that the pious have been promised: rivers of unpolluted water, rivers of milk of unchanging taste, rivers of wine, tasty for the drinkers, and rivers of pure honey;²¹ and for them therein all kinds of fruits - and forgiveness from their Lord. (Is someone who is in such bliss) like him who will abide in the Fire (among those) who will be served boiling liquid which will tear their intestines into pieces!?

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِّنْ مَّاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِّنْ لَّبَنٍ لَّمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِّنْ خَمْرٍ لَّذَّةٍ لِّلشَّارِبِينَ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِّنْ عَسَلٍ مُّصَفًّى وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّهِمْ كَمَن هُوَ خَالِدٌ فِي النَّارِ وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيمًا فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَاءَهُمْ ﴿١٥﴾

Razi writes: There are a few differences between the partaking of a believer and an unbeliever. A believer eats and drinks in order to (gain strength and) obey Allah. The unbeliever has no aim whatsoever. Second, a believer is led to his Lord, while an unbeliever sees no evidence of the creator of his food. Third, an unbeliever devours to get larger and fatter, just like an animal, without realizing that it is the fat one of the herd which is slaughtered first.

Hence the Prophet's words (as in the *Sahihayn*: Sami):

الْمُؤْمِنُ يَأْكُلُ فِي مَعَىٰ وَاحِدٍ وَالْكَافِرُ يَأْكُلُ فِي سَبْعَةِ أَمْعَاءٍ

“A believer eats with a single intestine while an unbeliever eats with seven intestines” (Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi adds: It is said that while a believer is preparatory (for next life: Au.), a hypocrite is ostentatious, and the unbeliever relishing. The Arabic text is as follows:

المؤمن يتزود والمنافق يتزين والكافر يتمتع في الدنيا

20. The translation of “*mathal*” as “description” is based on the un-

derstanding of `Ikrimah as in Ibn Kathir.

21. Reports tell us that the milk of Paradise will not be the product of udders, that the wine thereof would not have been pressed by the feet, and the honey, not the regurgitation of the bee. And, in a report preserved by Imām Ahmad, the Prophet said,

”إِنَّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ بَحْرَ الْمَاءِ، وَبَحْرَ الْعَسَلِ، وَبَحْرَ اللَّبَنِ، وَبَحْرَ الْحَمْرِ، ثُمَّ تُشَقَّقُ الْأَنْهَارُ بَعْدُ“.

“Surely, in Paradise there are seas of water, seas of honey, seas of milk and seas of wine. It is out of them that rivers spring out” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Kathir adds: A *hadith* tells us, (as in Bukhari: Au.),

فَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ فَاسْأَلُوهُ الْفَرْدُوسَ فَإِنَّهُ أَوْسَطُ الْجَنَّةِ وَأَعْلَى الْجَنَّةِ أَرَاهُ فَوْقَهُ عَرْشُ الرَّحْمَنِ وَمِنْهُ تَفْجَرُ أَنْهَارُ الْجَنَّةِ

“When you ask Allah, ask Him Firdaws, for it is in the best part of Paradise, in the highest part of it. Above it is the Rahman’s `Arsh, and from it flow out the rivers of Paradise.”

In this context another *hadith* might be quoted. In full length it is in Ahmad, (as also in Zawa’id of Ahmad’s son, and Tabarani: Sami but whose

authenticity could not be traced: Au.). It reports the narrator as saying,

قلت يا رسول الله فعلى ما نطلع من الجنة؟ قال على أنهار من غسل مصفى وأنهار من كأس ما بها من صداع ولا ندامة وأنهار من لبن لم يتغير طعمه وماء غير آسن وبفاكهة لعمر إلهك ما تعلمون وخير من مثله معه وأزواج مطهرة قلت يا رسول الله ولنا فيها أزواج أو منهن مصلاحات؟ قال: ”الصلاحات للصلحين تلذوحن مثل لذاتكم في الدنيا ويلذدن بكم غير أن لا توالد“

“Messenger of Allah. What is it that we will see in Paradise?” He replied, “Rivers of pure honey, rivers of wine that will neither cause headache nor regret, rivers of milk whose flavor would not have changed, and rivers of unpolluted water - and fruit. And, I swear by the eternity of your Lord, that which you do not know; and better than that would be with Him, and spouses, purified.” I asked, “Messenger of Allah. Shall we have spouses, or, will there be among them reformed ones?” He answered, “The righteous women will be for righteous men. They will enjoy them like you enjoy them in this world, and they will enjoy you except that you will not have children.”

[16] And among them are some who listen to you, till, when they depart from you ask those who have been given knowledge, 'What did he say just now?'²³ They are the ones upon whose hearts Allah has set a seal, and so they follow their base desires.²⁴

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا خَرَجُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مَاذَا قَالَ آنِفًا أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] As for those who are guided aright, He increased them in guidance, and gave them their piety.

وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَآثَانَهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] Are they then waiting for (anything) but the Hour, that it should come upon them suddenly? Already, its signs have arrived.²⁵ But how (usefull) for them their reminder (will be) when it appears to them?

فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَقَدْ جَاءَ أَشْرَاطُهَا فَأَنَّىٰ لَهُمْ إِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ ذِكْرَاهُمْ ﴿١٨﴾

Yet another *hadith* that describes the rivers of Paradise (but, as Mundhiri said in “*Al-Tarhib wa al-Tarhib*,” it is the words of the first narrator: Sami) says that rivers of Paradise will not be flowing in sunken earth, but rather, right on the surface, cordoned by pearls, whose bottom will be musk and azfar grass (Ibn Kathir).

22. The Prophet (*saws*) said, “(A drink) will be brought near to him but he will be averse to it. When brought nearer, it will burn his face and his forehead skin will rip off. When he drinks, his intestine will be torn to pieces until it comes out of his rear” (Ibn Jarir).

23. These were hypocrites in their previous life. They paid scant atten-

tion to what the Prophet was saying. When they left, they asked one of the true believers, merely out of jest, “What was he saying?” (Kashshaf).

24. “The people spoken of in the above verse are the hypocrites among the contemporaries of the Prophet as well as all people, at all times, who pretend to approach the Qur’anic message with a show of ‘reverence’ but are in their innermost unwilling to admit that there is any sense in it” (Asad).

25. Literally, its conditions have been met (Au.).

Prophet Muhammad has described the signs of the approaching hour in such details as no other Prophet did.

In fact, he himself – being last of the Prophets – was a sign. Hence his various names that give out the meaning of being last). He said (in a *hadith* of Bukhari),

بُعِثْتُ أَنَا وَالسَّاعَةَ هَكَذَا وَيُشِيرُ بِإِصْبَعَيْهِ فَيَمُوتُ بِهِمَا

“I have been sent with the Hour like this” pointing with his two fingers, stretching them forward (Ibn Kathir).

According to a *hadith* in Bukhari, the Prophet said,

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِي خَمْسَةُ أَسْمَاءٍ أَنَا مُحَمَّدٌ وَأَحْمَدُ وَأَنَا الْمَاحِي الَّذِي يَمْحُو اللَّهُ بِهِ الْكُفْرَ وَأَنَا الْحَاشِرُ الَّذِي يُحْشَرُ النَّاسُ عَلَى قَدَمِي وَأَنَا الْعَاقِبُ.

“I have five names. I am Muhammad, and Ahmad, I am Mahi, the obliterator by whom Allah will obliterate disbelief, I am Hashir after whom Allah will gather together the people, and I am the `Aqib (who is followed by none) – Au.

Since the *Ayah* speaks of the appearance of some of the signs of the end of the world, we feel appropriate to go beyond the commentaries to gather together a few traditions from various *hadith* works, that describe such signs of the Hour as seem to have come true by our times. We shall not be presenting those predic-

tions of the Prophet, which do not seem to have yet been fulfilled. A *hadith* of Bukhari says,

عَوَفَ بْنُ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: ”أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي غَزْوَةِ تَبُوكَ وَهُوَ فِي فَيْتَةٍ مِنْ أَدَمَ فَقَالَ اْعْدُدْ سِتًّا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ السَّاعَةِ مَوْتِي ثُمَّ فَتُحْ بَيْتَ الْمَقْدِسِ ثُمَّ مَوْتَانِ يَأْخُذُ فِيكُمْ كَفْعَاصِ الْعَنَمِ ثُمَّ اسْتِفَاضَةُ الْمَالِ حَتَّى يُعْطَى الرَّجُلُ مِائَةَ دِينَارٍ فَيَطْلُ سَاحِطًا ثُمَّ فِتْنَةٌ لَا يَبْقَى بَيْتٌ مِنَ الْعَرَبِ إِلَّا دَخَلَتْهُ ثُمَّ هُدْنَةٌ تَكُونُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ بَنِي الْأَصْفَرِ فَيَعْبُدُونَ قِبَائِلَكُمْ تَحْتَ ثَمَانِينَ غَايَةً تَحْتَ كُلِّ غَايَةٍ اثْنَا عَشَرَ أَلْفًا (البخاري)

`Awf b. Malik said, “I went to the Prophet during the Tabuk expedition. He was in a leather tent. He said, ‘Count six before the Hour: (i) My death; then, (ii) the fall of Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem); then, (iii) two (mass) deaths that will take you like the illness of the sheep; then, (iv) abundance of wealth so that a man will be given a 100 Dinar but he will be unhappy; then (v) a tribulation that will not leave an Arab house but would enter it; and then (vi), there will be a peace-treaty between you and the white race. But they will be treacherous and will come to you as eighty companies, in each company there will be twelve thousand (soldiers).”

The above figure works out to about a million souls. However, other re-

ports of similar nature say that the ultimate victory will be for Muslims.

At all events, first four of the above predictions have come true. We are going through the fourth, when a 100 Dinar increase in the salary of a professional (doctor, engineer) is considered worthless. As regards the fifth, it is not clear what is meant by it (Au.).

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ لَتُوثَبَانُ كَيْفَ أَنْتَ يَا ثُوثَبَانُ إِذْ تَدَاعَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ الْأُمَمُ كَتَدَاعِيكُمْ عَلَى قِصْعَةِ الطَّعَامِ يُصِيبُونَ مِنْهُ ؟ قَالَ ثُوثَبَانُ : يَا أُمِّي وَأُمِّي يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، أَمِنْ فَلَّةٍ بِنَا ؟ قَالَ : لَا أَشْمُ يَوْمَئِذٍ كَثِيرٌ ، وَلَكِنْ يُلْقَى فِي قُلُوبِكُمُ الْوَهْنُ . قَالُوا : وَمَا الْوَهْنُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ؟ قَالَ : حُبُّكُمْ الدُّنْيَا وَكَرَاهِيَتُكُمْ الْآخِرَةَ (رواه أحمد والطبراني في الأوسط بنحوه وإسناد أحمد جيد - أهيشمي) -

Abu Hurayrah says he heard the Prophet say to Thawban, "How will you be O Thawban when the nations will fall upon you like you fall upon food at the table?" He answered, "May my parents be sacrificed for you, will it be because of our fewness?" He answered, "No. You will be large in numbers, but 'wahn' would be cast in your hearts." They asked, "What is 'wahn' Messenger of Allah?" He answered, "Your love of this world and dislike of a fight."

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى تَقْتَتِلَ فِئَتَانِ عَظِيمَتَانِ يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُمَا مَقْتَلَةٌ عَظِيمَةٌ دَعَوْتُهُمَا وَاحِدَةٌ وَحَتَّى يُبْعَثَ دَجَالُونَ كَذَّابُونَ قَرِيبٌ مِنْ ثَلَاثِينَ كُلُّهُمْ يَزْعُمُ أَنَّهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَحَتَّى يُفْبِضَ الْعِلْمُ وَتَكْثُرَ الرِّلَازِلُ وَيَتَفَارَبَ الزَّمَانُ وَتَظْهَرَ الْفِتْنُ وَيَكْثُرَ الْهَرْجُ وَهُوَ الْقِتَالُ وَحَتَّى يَكْثُرَ فِيكُمْ الْمَالُ فَيَفْبِضَ حَتَّى يَهْمَ رَبُّ الْمَالِ مَنْ يَقْبَلُ صَدَقَتَهُ وَحَتَّى يَعْرِضَهُ عَلَيْهِ فَيَقُولَ الَّذِي يَعْرِضُهُ عَلَيْهِ لَا أَرَبَ لِي بِهِ وَحَتَّى يَطَّأُولَ النَّاسُ فِي الْبُيُوتِ وَحَتَّى يَمُرَّ الرَّجُلُ بِقَبْرِ الرَّجُلِ فَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي مَكَانَهُ وَحَتَّى تَطْلُعَ الشَّمْسُ مِنْ مَغْرِبِهَا فَإِذَا طَلَعَتْ وَرَأَاهَا النَّاسُ يُعْنِي آمَنُوا أَجْمَعُونَ فَذَلِكَ حِينَ لَا يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا إِيْمَانُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ آمَنَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِي إِيمَانِهَا خَيْرًا }

Abu Hurayrah reports the Prophet as having said that the Hour will not strike until two large groups will clash leading to great many deaths between them, each making the same claim; until near about 30 lying Dajjals will appear, each of them claiming that he is Allah's messenger; until earthquakes will become frequent; time will appear close; tribulations will appear and there will be lot of (senseless) killing; until there will be so much wealth that a man of wealth will be at a loss to find someone to accept his charity; until he offers it to someone, but that person will say, 'I have no need for it;' until, people will compete with

a trustworthy will be treated as treacherous and a treacherous trusted; and in which common men will speak in affairs of governance.”

The above *hadith* clearly indicates in its ending passage the scourge of the modern times viz., democracy in the hands of the inept.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى يَخْسِرَ الْفُرَاتُ عَنْ جَبَلٍ مَنْ ذَهَبٍ يَقْتَتِلُ النَّاسُ عَلَيْهِ، فَيُقْتَلُ مِنْ كُلِّ مِائَةٍ تِسْعَةٌ وَتِسْعُونَ، وَيَقُولُ كُلُّ رَجُلٍ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِّي أَكُونُ أَنَا الَّذِي أُجْزَى (صحيح مسلم)

Abu Hurayrah reports the Prophet as having said, “The Hour will not strike until river Furat (Euphrates) spews out mountains of gold over which the people will fight resulting in the killing of ninety-nine out of every hundred. Each of the men will say, ‘Maybe, I will be the one to survive.’”

It is not clear from the above whether the allusion is to oil, called black gold or to gold itself. Huge amounts of high-quality and cheap oil is said to be buried everywhere in Iraq. At the moment Iraq is occupied by the USA and other Western invaders and, so far, a million people have

died while millions are eking out their living on bread crumbs. Another report is in Muslim:

(عن) جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ “يُوشِكُ أَهْلُ الْعِرَاقِ أَنْ لَا يُجْبَى إِلَيْهِمْ قَفِيرٌ وَلَا دِرْهَمٌ قُلْنَا مَنْ أَيْنَ ذَلِكَ؟ قَالَ مِنْ قَبْلِ الْعَجَمِ يَمْنَعُونَ ذَلِكَ. ثُمَّ قَالَ يُوشِكُ أَهْلُ الشَّامِ أَنْ لَا يُجْبَى إِلَيْهِمْ دِينَارٌ وَلَا مُدِّي. قُلْنَا مَنْ أَيْنَ ذَلِكَ؟ قَالَ مِنْ قَبْلِ الرُّومِ...” (صحيح مسلم)

Jabir reports (that the Prophet) said, “It is likely that the people of Iraq would not be allowed to have their measure (of food) or Dirham.” We asked, “How would that be?” He replied, “At the hands of the non-Arabs. They will prevent it.” Then he added, “It is likely that the people of Syria would not be allowed their measure (of food) or Dirham.” We asked, “How would that be?” He replied, “At the hands of the white race.”

Above were some of the *ahadith* that have predicted what have either come true, or seem to be happening now. Here is a long report from Abu al-Sheikh but whose authenticity-status could not be traced. Perhaps it is a collection of several reports. It has piquant references to so many things of our contemporary world that as if it is not from a book of old, but written down in our own times:

عن زيد بن واقد عن مكحول عن علي قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم : من اقتراب الساعة إذا رأيتم الناس أضاعوا الصلاة وأضاعوا الأمانة واستحلوا الكبائر وأكلوا الربا وأخذوا الرشى وشيدوا البناء واتبعوا الهوى وباعوا الدين بالدنيا واتخذوا القرآن مزامير واتخذوا جلود السباع صفافا والمساجد طرقا والحريز لباسا وكثر الجور وفشا الزنا وتماونوا بالطلاق واتمن الخائن وخون الأمين وصار المطر قيظا والولد غيظا وأمراء فجرة ووزراء كذبة وأمناء خونة وعرفاء ظلمة وقلت العلماء وكثرت لقراء وقلت الفقهاء وحليت المصاحف وزحرفت المساجد وطولت المناير وفسدت القلوب واتخذوا القينات واستحلوا المعازف وشربت الخمر وعظمت الحدود ونقصت الشهور ونقصت المواريث وشاركت المرأة زوجها في التجارة وركب النساء البراذين وتشبهت النساء بالرجال والرجال بالنساء ويحلف بغير الله ويشهد الرجل من غير أن يستشهد وكانت الزكاة مغرما والأمانة مغنما وأطاع الرجل امرأته وعق أمه وأقصى أباه وصارت الإمارات مواريث وسب آخر هذه الأمة أولها وأكرم الرجل لقاء شره وكثرت الشرط وصعدت الجهال المناير وليس الرجال التيجان وضيق الطرقات وشيد البناء واستغنى الرجال بالرجال والنساء بالنساء وكثرت خطباء منايركم وركن علماؤكم إلى

ولاتكم فأحلوا لهم الحرام وحرموا عليهم الحلال وأفتوهم بما يشتهون وتعلم علماؤكم العلم ليجلبوا به دنائيركم ودراهمكم واتخذتم القرآن تجارة وضيعتم حق الله في أموالكم وصارت أموالكم عند شراركم وقطعتم أرحامكم وشربتم الخمر في ناديككم ولعبتم بالميسر وضربتكم بالكبر (بالكبر : الكبر - بفتحين - : الطبل ذو الرأسين . وقيل : الطبل الذي له وجه واحد . النهاية ٤ / ١٤٢ . ب) والمعزفة والمزامير ومنعتم محاييركم زكاتكم ورأيتموها مغرما وقتل البريء ليغيظ العامة بقتله واختلفت أهواؤكم وصار العطاء في العبيد والسقاط وطفف المكائيل والموازين ووليت أموركم السفهاء (كنز العمال : أبو الشيخ في الفتن وعويس في جزئه والديلمي) .

“Ali reports the Prophet as having said, ‘Of the signs of the Hour is that you will see the people not doing their Prayers, loss of trust, legalization of major sins, devouring of interest, acceptance of bribe, (massive) construction of buildings, following of base desires, bartering of religion for worldly gains, treating the Qur’ān as a musical instrument, spreading of the skins of wild animals, mosques as places to pass through, wearing of silk, spread of oppression, common occur-

rence of adultery, treating divorce as something easy, dependence on the treacherous, treating the trustworthy as treacherous, skin-deep rains, coarse (indisciplined) children, debauch rulers, lying viziers, those trusted proving treacherous, oppressive secret agencies, fewness of scholars, numerousness of Qur'ān reciters, fewness of the knowledgeable, decoration of the Qur'ān with gold, ornamenting of mosques, raising of the pulpits, corruption of the hearts, popularity of singing girls, legalizing of musical instruments, drinking of wine, discontinuation of capital punishments, shortness of the months, breaking of the oaths, women participating in business with their husbands, women riding mules, men imitating women and women imitating men, swearing by other than Allah, a man testifying without being asked, when *zakāh* is considered a penalty, trust as booty, a man obeying his wife abandoning his mother and distancing his father, governance becoming inheritable, the last of this *Ummah* criticizing its firsts, a man respected simply because of fear of his evil, numerousness of the police, the ignorant climbing pulpits, men wearing crowns, conges-

tion of roads, (massive) construction of buildings, men's needs met by men and women's needs by women, plethora of speech-makers on your pulpits, your scholars depending on your rulers to make the unlawful lawful to them and lawful unlawful, passing religious rulings following their wishes, your scholars gaining knowledge in order to milk your Dinars and Dirhams and when you will take the Qur'ān as a means of trading, when you will neglect Allah's share in your wealth, when your wealth will be in the hands of the most evil among you, when you break asunder the ties of kinship, drink wine in your gatherings, when you gamble, when you begin to use musical instruments, when you deny your needy ones your charity, and consider it a penalty, killing of the innocent in order to anger the common people from their killing, when your opinions are at variance, and when all charity will fall into the hands of the slaves and the lowly ones, when weights and measures are played with and when you hand over your affairs (of the government) to the inept."

The *hadīth* is from the collection of Abu al-Sheikh (*Al-Fitan*) who appeared in the 4th Islamic century.

[19] Know then that there is no deity save Allah, seek forgiveness for your sins and for the (sins of the) believing men and believing women.²⁶ Allah knows your movements about, and your end abode.²⁷

فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ
لِدُنْيِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ
مُتَقَلِّبَكُمُ وَمَتَوَاكُمُ ﴿١٩﴾

Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, who dies at the end of the 17th century (C.E.) placed it in his collection called *Kanz al-'Ummal*. This single *hadith* should be enough for anyone to embrace Islam on the spot. It makes predictions such as which no mind even of the nineteenth century could make. Consider the following which are entirely non-moral, but rather economic, political or social: “massive construction of buildings (there are so many vacant in Dubai alone that the entire Sharjah population can be accommodated); treating divorce as something easy (averagely 25% all over the world); treating the trustworthy as treacherous; coarse (indisciplined) children; lying viziers (two presidents of the USA lied to the world for starting war in Iraq and Libya); oppressive secret agencies; (they have now become a scourge even upon white, Christian, Western citizens), numerousness of Qur’ān reciters, fewness of the knowledgeable; popularity of singing girls, discontinuation of capital punishments

(now it is universally banned); women participating in business with their husbands, men imitating women and women imitating men, when trust is treated as booty, a man obeying his wife abandoning his mother and distancing his father; the last of this *Ummah* criticizing its firsts; numerousness of the police; congestion of roads; (massive) construction of buildings; men’s needs met by men and women’s needs by women; plethora of speech-makers on your pulpits; when you break asunder the ties of kinship; when you deny your needy ones your charity (in some Arab countries, even sending out of country to feed the starving is denied); killing of the innocent in order to anger the common people from their killing.”

What human could have predicted these happenings of the 21st century? (Au.).

26. Sins and errors are judged by the ranks (of the sinners). What is sin for one may not be for another. A

Prophet's minor misstep is referred to as sin, although, ordinarily, no sin at all. Hence they say,

حَسَنَاتُ الْأَبْرَارِ سَيِّئَاتُ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ

“Good deeds of the pious are evil for those brought nigh” (Shabbir).

Accordingly, the Prophet's prayer-words used to be, as in Bukhari: Sami):

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي خَطِيئَتِي وَجَهْلِي وَإِسْرَافِي فِي أَمْرِي كُلِّهِ
وَمَا أَنْتَ أَعْلَمُ بِهِ مِنِّي اللَّهُمَّ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي خَطَايَايَ
وَعَمْدِي وَجَهْلِي وَهَزْلِي وَكُلُّ ذَلِكَ عِنْدِي

“My Lord, forgive me my errors, my ignorance, my excesses in all my affairs, and of what You know better than me. O Allah, forgive me my unintended errors and the intended ones, my ignorance, my sallies - and (I admit) all these are in me.”

He would also say at the end of Prayers, as in a *Sahih* report (in Muslim: Sami),

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي مَا قَدَّمْتُ وَمَا أَخَّرْتُ وَمَا أَسْرَرْتُ وَمَا
أَعْلَنْتُ أَنْتَ الْمُقَدِّمُ وَأَنْتَ الْمُؤَخِّرُ وَأَنْتَ عَلَى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

“O Allah forgive me: what I have sent forward and what I have held back; what I have concealed and what I have done openly: surely You are the One who pulls

forward and the One who pushes backward, and You have power over all things.”

Another trustworthy report (as in Bukhari: Sami) records his words as,

وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ فِي الْيَوْمِ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ
سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً.

“By Allah! I seek Allah's forgiveness and turn to Him more than seventy times a day.”

Yet another report (of Ahmad: Sami) says,

عن أبي سعيد الخدري: -عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال قال إبليس أي رب لا أزال أغوي بني آدم ما دامت أرواحهم في أجسادهم قال فقال الرب عز وجل لا أزال أغفر لهم ما استغفروني.

Iblis said, “My Lord. I shall not cease misguiding mankind so long as there is life in their bodies.” The Lord the Mighty, the Exalted answered, “I shall not cease forgiving them so long as they seek forgiveness from Me” (Ibn Kathir).

27. The translation is based on the explanation offered by Ibn `Abbas as in Ibn Kathir.

But, as should be obvious, the words can apply to all kinds of human movements, including those from the sperm to the child; and to all kinds of returns: from return

[20] And said those who have believed, 'Why is it not that a Surah is sent down?'²⁸ But when a Surah of decisive meaning was sent down,²⁹ and fighting mentioned therein, you saw those in whose heart is a sickness,³⁰ looking at you with a look of one who swoons of death,³¹ but more fitting for them (would have been)³² ...

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَوْلَا نَزَّلَتْ سُورَةٌ فَإِذَا
أُنزِلَتْ سُورَةٌ مُحْكَمَةٌ وَذُكِرَ فِيهَا الْقِتَالُ
رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يَنْظُرُونَ
إِلَيْكَ نَظَرَ الْمَغْشِيِّ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ
فَأَوْلَىٰ لَهُمْ ﴿٢٠﴾

to homes, to graves, to the ultimate abode, etc. (Qurtubi).

28. It was the wish to defend themselves, their faith, their honor, their Prophet and their religion, and win their Lord's good pleasure that led the true believers to seek Allah's command to wage retaliatory *Jihad* against their adversaries; but the weak ones among them sought peace, even if it was at the cost of humiliation at the hands of the enemies of Islam; their policies being no different from the policies of the leaders of the Muslim *Ummah* today: surrender, so that you can live comfortably for a while more (Au.).

29. That is, a *Surah* of clear, unambiguous meaning, which would declare obligatory fighting in Allah's cause in explicit terms.

30. The allusion by heart's sickness is to hypocrisy (Ibn Jarir).

31. That is, tired of persecutions, the believers wish that a *Surah* could be sent down legalizing retaliation. But when a *Surah* is actually sent down containing the command, it shakes those who carry the disease of hypocrisy in their hearts, who would all but faint off at the news, and physically appear as if the angel of death stands right before them, about to snatch away their souls (Au.).

32. The words in parenthesis and the translation here expresses the understanding of a section of commentators such as Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, and others, who thought that the ending words of verse 20 should be joined with the opening words of verse 21.

Ibn Jarir however thinks that the words "*fa awla lahum*" should be rendered as "then, destruction be for them" which is a second meaning also accepted by many as valid, such as, Zamakhshari and Qurtubi (the latter citing other examples).

[21] Obedience and goodly word.³³ Thereafter, when the affair was resolved, then, had they been true to Allah, it would have been better for them.

طَاعَةً وَقَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ فَإِذَا عَزَمَ الْأَمْرُ فَلَوْ
صَدَقُوا اللَّهَ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ ﴿٢١﴾

[22] Then, is it expected of you, if you turned away,³⁴ that haply you would work corruption in the earth³⁵ and sever altogether your ties of kinship?³⁶

فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] They are the ones Allah has cursed and so He made them deaf and blinded their sights.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ
وَأَعَمَّى أَبْصَارَهُمْ ﴿٢٣﴾

33. Another meaning attributed to Ibn `Abbas, as in Qurtubi is that the words, “obedience and a goodly word” is an instruction from Allah to the hypocrites that they ought to be obeying and saying goodly words. Yet another possible meaning, as stated by Razi is: “It is better for them”, i.e., death is better for them. The complicated structure of the passage and its elliptic nature allows for other interpretations as well.

34. Another possible connotation is: “if you are given charge (of affairs)” – Ibn Jarir, Razi.

35. That is, will cause bloodshed in the land.

36. That is, it is not the fear of loss of life or property which discourages you from fighting. But rather, it is your unwillingness to fight for a cause, the cause of Islam that cre-

ates in you such a powerful dislike for war. Is it possible that if Islam recedes, you will revert to your pre-Islamic standards of morals and behavior, and then will fight fearlessly causing destruction in the land, and breaking ties of kinship? (Au.).

In Mawdudi's words, “If at this time you shrink from supporting and defending Islam and refrain from fighting with your life and wealth for the cause of the great reformist revolution which the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his Companions are struggling to bring about, there will be no other consequence of this that you will return to the same type of ignorance in which you have been cutting each other's throat since centuries, burying your children alive, and filling God's earth with injustice and wickedness.”

Yusuf Ali touches upon another aspect: “They have become so imperious to facts and truths, because, without the courage to oppose Allah’s Cause openly, they secretly intrigue with Allah’s enemies, and say that they will follow them part of the way, and by remaining partly in the other camp, they will be far more useful as spies and half-hearted doubters than by going over altogether. If they think that this game will be successful, they are mistaken. All the inner secrets and motives of their hearts are known to Allah. Cf. lix. 11.

(In connection with the ties of kinship, texts describing its importance are numerous). One of them says,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْخَلْقَ فَلَمَّا فَرَعُ مِنْهُ قَامَتْ الرَّحِمُ فَأَخَذَتْ بِحَقْوِ الرَّحْمَنِ فَقَالَتْ لَهُ مَهْ قَالَتْ هَذَا مَقَامُ الْعَائِدِ بِكَ مِنَ الْقَطِيعَةِ قَالَ أَلَا تَرْضَيْنَ أَنْ أَصِلَ مَنْ وَصَلَكَ وَأَقْطَعَ مَنْ قَطَعَكَ قَالَتْ بَلَى يَا رَبِّ قَالَ فَذَاكَ قَالَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ اقْرَءُوا إِنَّ شَيْئَكُمْ فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ

Abu Hurayrah reports the Prophet that Allah created the creation. When He was done with it, kinship stood up and held the lower garment of the All-merciful. He said, “Stop that.” She said, “This is the place of one seeking Your refuge from severance of ties.”

He replied, “Are you not satisfied that I should join him who joins you and sever him who severs you?” She said, “Yes, indeed.” And so it was. Then Abu Hurayrah said, “Read if you will, ‘that haply you would work corruption in the earth and sever altogether your ties of kinship’” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi)

The above *hadith* is in Bukhari and Muslim, and one of the version says that the *Ayah* was quoted by the Prophet himself. And Qurtubi explains that the *hadith* has to be understood in allegorical terms (Au.).

Then there is one in Ahmad (and Ibn Majah, and Tirmidhi who trusted its authenticity):

عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ”مَا مِنْ ذَنْبٍ أَجْدَرُ أَنْ يُعْجَلَ اللَّهُ لِصَاحِبِهِ الْعُقُوبَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعَ مَا يَدْخِرُ لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْبُغْيِ وَقَطِيعَةِ الرَّحِمِ“

On the authority of Abu Bakrah, the Prophet said, “There is no sin more deserving that its punishment should be hastened to its perpetrator in this world, in addition to what is stored for him in the Hereafter, than insurrection (against a Muslim authority) and severance of ties.” Another report is from Ahmad. It says,

عن ثوبان عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: -من سره النساء في الأجل والزيادة في الرزق فليصل رحمه.

“He who is pleased with increase in his term of life, and in his providence, may join the kin.”

(Yet another makes the point sharper). It is in Ahmad and says,

جاء رجل إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال يا رسول الله إن لي ذوي أرحام أصل ويقطعونني وأغفو ويظلمون وأحسن ويسينون أفأكافئهم قال لا إذا تركون جميعا ولكن خذ بالفضل وصلهم فإنه لن يزال معك ظهير من الله عز وجل ما كنت على ذلك

A man went up to the Prophet (*sams*) and said, “Apostle of Allah. I have close kin whom I join but they cut me apart. I forgive them, they do me injustice. I do good, they respond with evil. Should I then deal with them evenly?” He said, “No. In that event you all would have abandoned (the right behavior). But rather, show grace and keep doing them good, in which event you shall have a supporter from Allah the Exalted, so long as you are in that state.”

Bukhari has one that further expounds the subject at hand. It says,

عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَيْسَ الْوَاصِلُ بِالْمُكَافِي وَلَكِنَّ الْوَاصِلَ الَّذِي إِذَا قُطِعَتْ رَحْمَةُ وَصَلَهَا.

The Prophet said, “He who reciprocates is not one who joins the kin. A joiner is one who, when cut asunder, joins the kinship.”

Another employs different words,

توضع الرحم يوم القيامة لها حجنة كحجنة المغزل تتكلم بلسان طلق ذلق فتصل من وصلها وتقطع من قطعها

The Prophet said, “The tie of kinship will be placed on the Judgment-day with a curve like the curve of a spindle, speaking in eloquent language. It will bind him who bound it and cut asunder him who cut it asunder.”

(Haythami treated the report as quite close to being reliable: Sami).

Yet one more is also from Ahmad and Tirmidhi who declared it of Hasan *Sahih* status. It says:

الراحمون يرحمهم الرحمن ارحموا أهل الأرض يرحمكم أهل السماء والرحم شجنة من الرحمن من وصلها وصلته ومن قطعها بترته

“Those who show kindness will be shown kindness by the All-merciful. Show mercy to the peoples of the earth, you will be shown mercy by He of the heaven. And the womb (*rahm*) is derived from *al-Rahman*. It will join whosoever joined it and sever whosoever severed it.”

[24] What! Do they not ponder the Qur'ān, or, are there on the hearts their locks?³⁷

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] Verily, those who turned on their backs after the guidance had become clear to them, Satan enticed them and prolonged hopes for them.³⁸

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ارْتَدُّوا عَلَى أَدْبَارِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدَى الشَّيْطَانُ سَوَّلَ لَهُمْ وَأَمْلَى لَهُمْ ﴿٢٥﴾

Finally, we have a *hadith* from *Tabarani's Al-Awsat*, (as well as in *Shi'ab al-Imān*, which, although weak, is strengthened by others of more or less the same meaning: Au.). It says:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "إذا ظهر القول، و خُزِنَ العمل ، و اختلفت الألسن ، وتباغضت القلوب و قطع كل ذي رحم رحمه ، فعند ذلك لعنهم الله فأصمهم و أعمى أبصارهم" "لا يروي هذين الحديثين عن سلمان إلا هذا الإسناد، تفرد بهما: محمد بن عمار"

The Prophet said, "When words are displayed, but actions are absent, tongues differ, hearts are filled with rancor, and every kinsman cuts his kin, then at that point Allah will curse them, deafen them and blind their sights" (Ibn Kathir).

It is in keeping with the spirit of the above that when some women-prisoners were being sold away to one party, and their children to another, the Prophet prohibited that mothers

and children be separately sold. He ordered them kept together.

37. In the world of literature, the word "*qufl*" (pl.: *aqfal*) is used for hardness of material and immaterial objects (Qurtubi).

It is reported that once the Prophet (*saws*) recited this verse ending with, "or, are there on the hearts their locks?" A young Yemeni boy sitting thereby remarked, "Of course there are locks on the hearts and it is Allah Himself, the Exalted who locks them or unlocks them." The young man remained in 'Umar's memory until, when he assumed caliphate, he used him (for governmental services) – Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir.

38. Another possible meaning of the words "*amla lahum*" is, "He (i.e., Allah) gave them respite." In other words, "Satan enticed them but Allah gave them respite" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi); and, as explained by Ibn

[26] That is because they said to those who disliked what Allah revealed, 'We shall obey you in some affairs (alone).'³⁹ Allah knows their secrets.⁴⁰

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ كَرَهُوا مَا نَزَّلَ
اللَّهُ سَنُطِيعُكُمْ فِي بَعْضِ الْأَمْرِ وَاللَّهُ
يَعْلَمُ إِسْرَارَهُمْ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] So, how will it be when the angels receive (their souls), smiting on their faces and backs.⁴¹

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا تَوَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ
وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبَارَهُمْ ﴿٢٧﴾

‘Abbas, Dahhak and Suddi, the allusion is to hypocrites who backtracked from *Jihad* (Qurtubi).

39. They meant to say that they could commit themselves only to such things (as which pleased them), even if it happened to be in the displeasure of the Prophet (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Asad clarifies: “Lit., ‘in some [or “parts of”] the matter’: i.e., ‘although we cannot agree with you [atheists] as regards your denial of God, or of resurrection, or of the fact of revelation as such, we do agree with you that Muhammad is an imposter and that the Qur’ān is but his invention’ (Razi). By ‘those who turn their back [on the message] after guidance has been vouchsafed to them’ are meant, in the first instance, the hypocrites and half-hearted followers of Islam at the time of the Prophet who re-

fused to fight in defence of the Faith; in a wider sense however, this definition applies to all people, at all times, who are impressed by the teaching of the Qur’ān but nevertheless refuse to accept it as God-inspired and, therefore, morally binding.”

40. Allah (*swt*) mentioned “their secrets” because the above statement was made by them in secret, or kept the intention to themselves, guarding its secrecy (Qurtubi, reworded).

41. The relationship of deeds with punishments may be noted: The hypocrites “disliked what Allah has revealed,” which state (i.e., dislike) appears on their faces. Hence, the angels smite them on their faces. Thereafter, the hypocrites refused to obey saying, “We shall obey you in some affairs (alone),” which implies showing their backs. Hence the angels smite their backs (Razi).

[28] That because they followed what angers Allah and disliked His good pleasure. So He made their deeds collapse.⁴²

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ابْتِغَوْا مَا أَسْخَطَ اللَّهَ وَكَرِهُوا
رِضْوَانَهُ فَأَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٢٨﴾

[29] Or have those in whose heart is a disease though that We shall never bring out their hatred?

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ أَن لَّنْ
يُخْرِجَ اللَّهُ أَضْعَانَهُمْ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] And, if We wished, We could have shown them to you, so that you would have known them by their marks.⁴³ However, you will know them from the tune of (their) talk.⁴⁴ And Allah knows your deeds.

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَأَرَيْنَاكُمْ فَلَعَرَفْتُم بِسِيمَاهُمْ
وَلَنَعَرِفَنَّكُمْ فِي لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ
أَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٠﴾

42. "This has two meanings: (i) That Allah will render vain and fruitless all those works which they performed believing them as 'good works', and they will get no rewards whatever for them in the Hereafter, and, (ii) that all the devices that they are adopting to obstruct the way of Allah and His Messenger's religion will prove ineffective and fruitless" (Mawdudi).

43. Many of us have the experience to differentiate a Sunni from a Shi'ee from his face alone. Nothing strange then, that the Awliya' Allah should have been able to distinguish between a Muslim and non-Muslim, a good believer and a corrupt one to say, "I can smell belief in him," or, "I can smell disbelief in him." The Prophet, above all in his spiritual powers, would have been able to

recognize them with the help of his own light of faith. It is in this light that the scholars have said, (since, as a *hadith* it is either very weak or fabricated: Au.) that,

اَتَّقُوا فِرَاسَةَ الْمُؤْمِنِ فَإِنَّهُ يَنْظُرُ بِنُورِ اللَّهِ

"Be mindful of the acumen of a believer. He sees by the light of Allah" (Alusi).

That said, I would like to add, says Thanwi, that this does not make inquisitiveness allowable, but makes inquiry permissible if the reason is reformation. E.g., the Prophet telling `A'isha, after she was slandered, "If you have committed an error, then, seek Allah's forgiveness."

44. We have a pertinent report in Musnad Ahmad:

[31] And, We shall surely try you until We know⁴⁵ the striving ones of you and the steadfast ones, and shall try your reports (concerning your states).⁴⁶

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّىٰ نَعْلَمَ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ
وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَتَبْلُوَ أَخْبَارَكُمْ ﴿٣١﴾

[32] Surely those who disbelieved and hindered from Allah's path, and made breach with the Messenger after the guidance became clear to them, they will never harm Allah in the least, rather He will cause their deeds to collapse.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَشَاقُوا الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ
الْهُدَىٰ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيُحِطُّ
أَعْمَاهُمْ ﴿٣٢﴾

عن أبي مسعود قال خطبنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم خطبه فحمد الله وأثنى عليه ثم قال: إن فيكم منافقين فمن سميت فليقم ثم قال: قم يا فلان قم يا فلان قم يا فلان حتى سمى ستة وثلاثين رجلاً ثم قال: إن فيكم أو منكم فاتقوا الله قال: فمر عمر على رجل ممن سمى مقنع فد كان يعرفه قال: مالك قال: فحدثه بما قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال: بعداً لك سائر اليوم.

On the authority of Abu Mas`ud, "Once the Prophet addressed us. He began by praising Allah and extolling Him. Then he said, Among you are hypocrites. So when I name one of you, let him get up (and leave). Then he began to say, 'Rise: so and so.' 'Rise: so and so.' 'Rise: so and so,' until he named some thirty-six men. The he said, 'Surely in you, or, of you .. therefore, fear Allah.'

`Umar happened to encounter one of those men who was leaving the

mosque, whom he used to know and trust. He asked, "What's the matter with you?" He told him the story about what the Prophet said. `Umar said, "Away with you for the rest of the day man" (Ibn Kathir).

Haythami did not give this report full clearance (Au.).

A two line report in Qurtubi however, throws a refreshing light on the report above. Ibn Zayd said: "Allah wished to expose the hypocrites and so they were ordered to leave the mosque. But (some) refused, and clung to the testimony of Islam (kalimah), and therefore, their lives were spared and they were allowed to marry Muslim men or women."

45. That is, bring to light (Qurtubi).

46. "Akhbar: the things reported of you; reputation for courage and constancy, which has to be brought to

[33] *O those who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and do not nullify your deeds.*⁴⁷

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا
الرَّسُولَ وَلَا تَبْطُلُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] *Surely those who disbelieved and hindered from Allah's path, then died while they were unbelievers, never will Allah forgive them.*

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
ثُمَّ مَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ
﴿٣٤﴾

the test of facts and experience. In an epigram of Tacitus we are told of a Roman Emperor that he would have been considered in every way to have been worthy of being a ruler if only he had never ruled! So in life people may think us courageous, true, noble, and self-sacrificing; and we may consider ourselves as possessing all such virtues; but it is actual experience that will bring them to the test" (Yusuf Ali).

Fudayl b. `Iyad would cry at this verse and say, "O Allah, do not try us. If You did, You will expose us" (Qurtubi).

47. Ibn `Umar and Abu al-`Aliyyah said, "The Companions were originally of belief that since no (good) deed was acceptable from a state of disbelief, it was legitimate to conclude that no (evil) deed would do any harm from a state of belief, until Allah revealed this verse about the collapse of good deeds."

Some of the *Salaf*, like Ibn `Umar, felt that major sins led to the collapse of one's good deeds, but, in view of another verse (4: 47),

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ
لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ

"Surely Allah will never forgive that He should be associated with, but might forgive anyone anything other than that," changed the opinion to as follows: "Fear (of punishment) concerning those who committed major sins, and hope (of forgiveness) concerning those who did not indulge in them" (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Razi points to another possible meaning, Do not commit the sin of Association after your Islam. If you did, all the good deeds of the past will collapse, as Allah said (39: 65),

لَنْ أَشْرَكَتْ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ

"If you committed Association, your deeds will collapse."

[35] *So, weaken not and sue not for peace.⁴⁸ You will have the upper hand. Allah is with you and will never deprive you of your works.*

فَلَا تَهِنُوا وَتَدْعُوا إِلَى السَّلَامِ وَأَنْتُمْ
الْأَعْلَوْنَ وَاللَّهُ مَعَكُمْ وَلَنْ يَتَرَكَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ
﴿٣٥﴾

[36] *The life of the world is no more than sport and pastime.⁴⁹ But if you believe and acquire piety, He shall grant you your wages, and will not ask you for your wealth.⁵⁰*

إِنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَهَوٌّ وَإِنْ تُؤْمِنُوا
وَتَتَّقُوا يُؤْتِنَكُمْ أَجُورَكُمْ وَلَا يَسْأَلْكُمْ
أَمْوَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٦﴾

Qatadah however said, “Whoever of you can manage that he does not lead his deeds to collapse by committing sins after good deeds of the past, then, let him do it” (Ibn Jarir, Alusi, Thanwi).

48. It might be recalled that at the time this was revealed, Muslims were still in hundreds, facing a million of the Peninsula Arabs, bent on destroying Islam root and branch, while the Jews and Christians of the world over, plus the fire-worshipping Persians, watched the struggle with interests and waiting to finish off the job if the Quraysh and others would not (Au.).

49. “If life is declared as devoid of any meaning or purpose with reference to the Hereafter, and is not guided by the rules laid down by Allah, then surely it is reduced to nothing but play and pastime. It is the way of life as determined by Allah which makes it the field whose fruit will be har-

vested in the Hereafter, and which turns man into the vicegerent who will inherit the everlasting abode. This is what the words that follow indicate: ‘But if you believe and acquire piety, He shall grant you your wages.’ Belief and piety then, are elements that do not allow this life to turn into a meaningless pastime. They lift man from the state of animal existence to the state of caliphate connected to higher existence. A day will arrive when nothing that a believer would have earned in this world but would appear as reward, in the true, lasting world” (Sayyid).

50. Yusuf Ali touches on our souls when he writes: “Complete self-sacrifice, if voluntarily offered, has a meaning: it means that the person’s devotion is exclusively and completely for the Cause. But no law or rule can demand it. And a mere offer to kill yourself has no meaning. You should be ready to take risks to your

[37] If He should ask them of you, and pressed you, you will be miserly and thus He will expose your ill-feeling.⁵¹

إِنْ يَسْأَلْكُمْوهَا فَيُخَفِّكُمْ تَبَخَّلُوا وَخُجِرَ
أَضْغَانَكُمْ ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] Here you are, being invited to expend in Allah's cause, then of you are some who are miserly, although whoever is miserly, is miserly unto Himself. Allah is Self-sufficient while you are the needy ones. Yet if you turn away, He will substitute you with a people other than you, and then, they will not be the likes of you.⁵²

هَآأَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ تُدْعَوْنَ لِتُنفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ فَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يَبْخُلُ وَمَنْ يَبْخُلْ فَإِنَّمَا
يَبْخُلُ عَنِ نَفْسِهِ وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ وَأَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ
وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا
يَكُونُوا أَمْثَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٨﴾

life in fighting for the Cause, but you should aim at life, not death. If you live, you should be ready to place your substance and your acquisitions at the disposal of the Cause. But it is not reasonable to pauperise yourself and become a hanger-on for the Cause. Moreover, the inborn tendency to self-preservation in an average man would lead to concealment and niggardliness if all were asked for the Cause, by Law, and there would further be a feeling of bitterness and rebellion."

51. The dictionary meaning of "*al-dhaghā*" is hatred, or extreme rancor. This is the meaning we have adopted at *Ayah* 29 where the reference is to hypocrites. However, the meaning stated by Qurtubi is slightly different. It is, "that which is concealed of dislike." This is the meaning that suits the common believers who

conceal their dislike to spend off all their wealth in Allah's cause, while "hatred" is the right meaning for the sentiments that the hypocrites bear for Islam.

Asad expounds: "The implication is that since 'man has been created weak (4: 28), the imposition of too great a burden on the believers would be self-defeating inasmuch as it might result not in an increase of faith but, rather, in its diminution. This passage illustrates the supreme realism of the Qur'an, which takes into account human nature as it is, with all its God-willed complexity and its inner contradictions, and does not, therefore, postulate a priori an impossible ideal as a norm of human behavior."

52. That is, far from your wealth, of which Allah does not seek all, even

your physical bodies and presence are not indispensable to Him; He could replace you if He so wished.

Some scholars have thought that the allusion by the nation that might be brought in place of the older one is to non-Arabs and Persians. There is a *hadith* to this effect:

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال: إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم تلا هذه الآية: {وإن تتولوا يستبدل قوماً غيركم ثم لا يكونوا أمثالكم} قالوا: يا رسول الله من هؤلاء الذين إن تولينا استبدل بنا ثم لا يكونوا أمثالنا؟ قال: فضرب بيده على كتف سلمان الفارسي رضي الله عنه، ثم قال: ”هذا وقومه، ولو كان الدين عند الثريا لتناولهم رجال من الفرس“

The Prophet recited this verse, “Yet if you turn away, He will substitute you with a people other than you, and then, they will not be the likes of you.” They asked him, “Who are they O Messenger of Allah – those who, if we turned away, will replace us, and

then they will not be like us?”

In answer he struck on Salman Farsi’s shoulder and said, “This, and his people. If religion were to be in Sirius, surely, one of the Persians would bring it (down)”

- Ibn Jarir, Kashshaf, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi.

The *hadith* is in the *Sahih* of Ibn Hibban also.

The point to note is that the prophesy amazingly came true. Within a hundred years, and for more than a millennium thereafter, thousands of scholars from Khurasan and farther afield dominated the fields of *Tafsir*, *hadith* and *Fiqh*, leaving their permanent mark on the world of Islam. The prophesy was made at a time when pen and ink were not sold in the shops of Khurasan. Who but a Prophet could have predicted t? - Au.

بَشِيرَات



Surah 48
*Al-Fath*¹

Madinan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. Reports in the *Sahihayn* say,

عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ بْنِ قُرَّةَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ مَوْغَلٍ
الْمَزْنِيَّ يَقُولُ قَرَأَ النَّبِيُّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ-
عَامَ الْفَتْحِ فِي مَسِيرِ لَهُ سُورَةَ الْفَتْحِ عَلَى رَاحِلَتِهِ
فَرَجَعَ فِي قِرَاءَتِهِ. قَالَ مُعَاوِيَةُ لَوْلَا أَنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ
يَجْتَمِعَ عَلَى النَّاسِ لَحَكَيْتُ لَكُمْ قِرَاءَتَهُ.

Mu`awiyah b. Qurrah said that he heard `Abdullah b. Mughaffal al-Muzani narrate, "The Prophet (*saws*) recited *Surah al-Fath* during the journey he undertook in the year of Makkah's fall. He was on his mount, and did the recitation in a vibrating, pleasant tone." Then Mu`awiyah added, "Were I not afraid that the people will gather together around me, I would imitate his recitation" (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

There is unanimity over the opinion that this *Surah* was revealed in the sixth year after *Hijrah*, during the return journey from Hudaybiyyah, (somewhere between Makkah and Madinah), and that the allusion

by the victory is to the peace treaty signed there. Ibn Mas`ud used to say, "You people think that 'the victory' was the victorious entry into Makkah, which of course was a victory. But we used to consider the peace treaty at Hudaybiyyah as 'the victory'."

The same is reported of Jabir, and of Bara' b. `Azib who said, as in Bukhari,

عَنِ الْبَرَاءِ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ تَعُدُّونَ أَنتُمْ
الْفَتْحَ فَتَحَ مَكَّةَ، وَقَدْ كَانَ فَتَحَ مَكَّةَ فَتَحًا، وَنَحْنُ
نَعُدُّ الْفَتْحَ بَيْعَةَ الرُّضْوَانِ يَوْمَ الْحُدَيْبِيَّةِ. كُنَّا مَعَ
النَّبِيِّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - أَرْبَعَ عَشْرَةَ مِائَةً،
وَالْحُدَيْبِيَّةُ بَنُو فَزَحْحَاهَا، فَلَمْ تَتْرُكْ فِيهَا قَطْرَةً،
فَبَلَغَ ذَلِكَ النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - فَأَتَاهَا،
فَجَلَسَ عَلَى شَفِيرِهَا، ثُمَّ دَعَا بِإِنَاءٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَتَوَضَّأَ
ثُمَّ مَضْمَضَ وَدَعَا، ثُمَّ صَبَّهُ فِيهَا فَتَرَكْنَاهَا غَيْرَ
بَعِيدٍ ثُمَّ إِنَّهَا أَصْدَرَتْ مَا شِئْنَا نَحْنُ وَرِكَابُنَا

"You reckon the victory (of reference) as the fall of Makkah. Of course Makkah fall was a victory, but we used to count the *Ridwan*

[1] *Indeed, We have granted you a clear victory.*²

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا ﴿١﴾

Pledge on the day of Hudaibiyyah as the true victory. We were a thousand and four hundred in number and Hudaibiyyah was actually the name of the well from which we drew water until we left not a drop in it. This was reported to the Prophet. So he came down, sat at its edge and asked for a pitcher of water. He made ablution with it, supplicated, and spat into the well a mouthful of water. Then he emptied the rest of the water into it. After that we left it. And, it was not long before it sprang out enough water for us as well as for our animals” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir in different words).

2. Despite the above note, the question remains: to what victory is the allusion? The answer is, to several. The Hudaibiyyah peace treaty brought down the walls between Muslims and non-Muslims. This led to intermingling, interactions, and interfaith dialogue, which led to large-scale entry into Islam, so that, more people embraced Islam in two years following the treaty than had during the last 20 years. The peace-treaty also gave the Muslims equal status against the

pagan Arabs. It enhanced Muslim prestige by the very fact of forcing the Quraysh into a treaty they were far from willing to sign. In time, the treaty led to the fall of Makkah with little bloodshed; so little bloodshed that the Muslim scholars are divided over whether it was captured by force or peacefully. In its wake, the fall of Makkah brought another larger victory. The common Arabs – although convinced of Islam - were waiting for the results of the struggle between the Prophet and the Quraysh. When the Quraysh leadership joined the Prophet’s forces, the Arabs of the entire Peninsula began embracing Islam in droves (Au.).

The relationship of this *Surah*, adds Razi, with the previous one should be obvious. The previous one ended by saying, “*Here you are, being invited to expend in Allah’s cause, then, of you are some who are miserly, although whoever is miserly, is miserly unto Himself,*” and this one seems to ask as to why they should not be expending when Allah has granted them a clear victory. And past tense was employed when it was said, “*Indeed We have granted you..*” to give

the impression that the giving of the victory is so certain that it is as if a thing of the past.

Sha`bi said: The victory that has been alluded to here is not one but several which took place at the time the *Surah* was revealed viz., the *Ridwan* Pledge, the Hudaibiyyah Treaty, the fall of Khayber, the victory of the (Christian) Romans over the (pagan) Persians, and, the Arab entry into Islam by the thousands (Ibn Jarir, Shawkani).

The textual term "*fath*" has the literal meaning of "opening." The treaty at Hudaibiyyah opened up the hearts of the Arabs for Islam. The details of the affair are as follows:

The Hudaibiyyah Affair

The Prophet and his Companions left for Makkah intending to perform `Umrah in the sixth year after *Hijrah*. That was in *Dhu al-Qa`idah* – one of the sacred months when fighting was considered impermissible. However, and although he had no other intention but to visit the house, the Prophet (*saws*) was apprehensive that either the Quraysh will try to fight, or, in the least, prevent his entry into Makkah. Therefore, he suggested to the tribes around Madinah to travel with him. But they would not budge from their place. So

he collected whomsoever he could of the Muhajir and Ansar along with a few others, and started off. It was in reference to this that the Qur`an said, "*Those who stayed behind of the Bedouins will say to you..*" It is said that these were Juhaynah, Banu Bakr, and Muzaynah tribes.

However, as they were some distance out of Madinah, someone suggested to the Prophet: "Are you traveling into enemy treaty without arms?" So he sent across some men to fetch back every kind of arm they could.

They were between fourteen and fifteen hundred in number. (Ibn Is-haq's report that they were around 800, is incorrect. His estimate was based on the number of camels that were slaughtered: Alusi).

At Dhu al-Hulayfah, they put on their pilgrim's garb and the Prophet collared 70 camels, thus marking them as sacrificial animals and sent forward Busr b. Sufyan, to find out how the Quraysh would react.

When they reached `Usfan, Busr brought the news that the Quraysh had put on leopard skins, had placed their women and children at stake, had marched up to Dhu Tuwa. They, and had sworn to Allah that the Prophet will not enter the city. Khalid b. al-Wal id was also advancing

with a detachment of 200 horsemen, and was then reported to be at Kura' al-Ghamim. The Prophet consulted his Companions. He suggested that they should first attack Quraysh allies in order to leave the Quraysh fend for themselves without reliance upon others. But Abu Bakr said that they had started off intending to visit the Holy House, with no intention to attack anyone; therefore, they ought to continue marching, fighting only if they were prevented entry. The Prophet agreed, and altered his route to avoid encountering any advancing party. When Khalid learnt of the change in route of the Muslim troops, he returned to Makkah.

When they reached Hudaybiyyah (a place now known as Shamsiyyah: Shabbir) the Prophet's camel Qasw a' kneeled down. The Prophet said, "She has been held back by what had held back (Abraha's) elephant." He added, "By Him in whose hands is my life, they will not ask me anything today, with the intention of maintaining the consecration of the House, but I will grant them." After that he prodded the camel and she rose up. He changed his direction a little, away from the Makkan direction and moved on to the other side of Hydaybiyyah arriving at the smaller wells that had very little water. It

was not long before his companions were complaining of thirst. He pulled an arrow out of his quill and told them to pitch it into the well. (It was Khirash ibn Umayyah who descended into the well to pith the arrow: Alusi). Water began to gush forth from it and they watered themselves to their satisfaction. According to another report he sat down at the edge of the well and began to supplicate to Allah, seeking water, and the water began to gush forth. Obviously, it is possible to reconcile the two to say that he got his arrow pitched as well as supplicated at the edge. Or, perhaps two wells were involved (on two occasions).

It was there that he remarked about the Quraysh, "How unfortunate of the Quraysh? Wars destroyed them. Had they left me alone to work among the people, and, had the people embraced Islam, they would have stood to advantage. On the other hand, had the people rejected me, they could have fought me from a position of strength. At all events, what do the Quraysh imagine? By Allah, I shall keep struggling in the cause of Allah until He grants me victory, or I die in His cause."

He sent the message to the Quraysh that he had no intention to fight

them. He only wished to visit the House. When the message reached the Quraysh, they sent a team of men to assess the situation, open up talks, measure the strength of the Muslims, and judge their resolve to determine how they were likely to behave if they were forced into a battle. On the other hand, they wished to prevent the Muslims' entry into the city without recourse to force of arms.

The man chosen by the Quraysh to lead their team was Budayl b. Warq a.' He was a well-wisher of the Prophet. The delegation made it clear to the Prophet that the Quraysh were bent upon preventing his entry into Makkah. The Prophet stated his objective clearly and spoke of the harm Quraysh belligerency had brought on them. He suggested that they enter into a time-bound treaty of peace until the fog of uncertainty cleared. He also made it plain to them that if they wished to fight, he was ready. The delegation conveyed his message but the Quraysh did not like the message and actually misbehaved with Budayl. They insisted that under no circumstance would they allow him entry, if not for any other reason, then for the fear that the Arabs would deem them weak.

On his part, the Prophet sent into Makkah one of his men closely related to Khuza'ah tribe, on his personal camel, to emphasize his peaceful purposes. But they were least impressed. They slaughtered his camel and would have all but killed the man, if not for the fear of retaliation by the surrounding tribesmen who were in total disagreement with the Quraysh. Their opinion was that since the Prophet had come for pilgrimage, he should be allowed into Makkah.

Then the Prophet decided to send across 'Umar b. al-Khattab to discuss the issue. But 'Umar expressed the fear of violence against him since he had no tribal representation to protect him. So 'Uthman ibn 'Affan was chosen because of his strong tribal links. Seeking and receiving the protection of his tribal leaders, 'Uthman managed to enter into Makkah and convey the message. They allowed him to circumambulate the House but he refused saying, "I shall not do it until the Messenger of Allah has done it." This seems to have upset the Quraysh who detained him and the rumor spread that he had been murdered. When the Prophet received the news, he got his men assembled under an

acacia tree. Except for a single man, Jadd b. Qays (a hypocrite, who concealed himself behind a camel), they all pledged to the last man to fight to death. Since `Uthman was away, the Prophet stretched his right hand and placing it on to the left hand, said, "This is `Uthman's pledge."

This pledge came to be known as the "*Ridwan* Pledge," (from the root "to be pleased") because Allah announced that He was pleased with those who had pledged their hands there. (The pledge drove fear into the hearts of the Quraysh: Shabbir). They sent an emissary for discussions; and, with failure, followed it up with another, as the days passed by. One of the men they chose was `Urwah b. Mas`ud of Thaqif tribe. The Prophet repeated to him what he had said to Budayl. `Urwah blamed the Prophet for having brought destruction to his own people. He also remarked that he did not see trustworthy faces around him. The men around him were a motley group who would flee in danger. The Companions were incensed by this remark. When `Urwah passed his fingers through the Prophet's beard, Mughirah b. Sho`bah struck at his hand with the butt of his sword saying, "Off with your hand from the Prophet's beard .." `Urwah returned to the Quraysh

to say that he had been to Roman and Persian emperors, but had not observed such love and respect as the Prophet commanded.

Next to come was Hulays, a chieftain of the influential non-Makkan tribe. When he saw sacrificial marks on the animals, he did not think necessary to speak to the Prophet. He turned back to tell the Quraysh that there was no way they could fight a man who had come merely to visit the House. The Quraysh misbehaved with him calling him low-witted. But he threatened to withdraw the support of his tribe if they entered into a fight. So the Quraysh assured him that they had no such intention but merely wished to draw as much concession from the Prophet as they could. On the other hand they kept trying the use of force, although stealthily. A party of 80 Makkans tried to take them by surprise, but was discovered, and were all captured. However, the Prophet forgave them all.

Finally, Suhayl arrived to discuss the armistice. One of the first clauses was the condition that the Prophet would not be allowed to enter Makkah that year. He would have to come back the next year. There were other issues involved, but, going back and

forth several times, and the Prophet relenting on most issues, he was able to strike a peace deal.

When the peace treaty began to be written, Suhayl objected to the invocatory formula, "In the name of Allah, the *Rahman*, the *Rahim*," He said he did not know who *Al-Rahman* was, and that a mere, "In the name of Allah" should do. Then, as the Prophet proceeded to dictate, "From Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah," Suhayl objected once again, "If you are a Messenger, then, obviously, we have done you wrong. So write your name alone." So, the Prophet ordered that portion struck off. But 'Ali, the scribe, refused. So, the Prophet struck it off himself. The clauses said that the treaty would last ten years; that the Prophet and his men would return only the next year; that when they came, it would be for three days alone, during which time the Quraysh will leave the town; that the Muslims will not carry arms with them at that time, that none of the Makkan will join up with the Prophet at Madinah, but will be returned to Makkah, while any Madinan – of any kind - joining back, the Makkans will not be obliged to return. Incidentally, the sentence had been hardly written, when Abu Jandal – a Makkan who

had embraced Islam, and had been imprisoned (by his father: Shafi') - somehow made it to the scene. Bound in chains, he begged that he be released. When the Prophet said Abu Jandal would be an exception to the clause, Suhayl turned absolutely adamant, refusing to proceed, saying that that was the first violation of the treaty. The Prophet had to give in when it became the issue of make it or break it. His agreement to relent to this particular clause spread anger and discontent among the Muslims. But the Prophet remained firm. Abu Jandal was dragged back to Makkah despite his rending cries of help which disturbed many a Companion. The treaty allowed for free movement between the Muslims and pagans. It also allowed for the rest of the tribes freedom to choose their allies. Accordingly, Banu Bakr chose to ally with the Quraysh, while Banu Khuza'ah chose to align themselves with the Prophet. (Apart from the Prophet, Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Abd *Al-Rahman* b. 'Awf, 'Abdullah b. Suhayl, Sa'd b. abi Waqqas and 'Ali ibn abi Talib also signed the treaty: Shafi').

To be sure, the Companions were pretty displeased with the terms of the treaty. 'Umar ibn al-Khattab was particularly upset. He went up to

the Prophet (*saws*) and asked, 'Aren't you Allah's Messenger in truth?' The Prophet replied, 'Of course, I am.' He asked, 'Are we not on the truth and the pagans on falsehood?' He replied, 'That's true.' He asked, 'Why should we give in to them in matters of our faith?' He replied, 'I am Allah's Messenger. And I am not going to disobey Him. He is my Helper.' 'Umar asked, 'Had you not told tell us that we shall perform the pilgrimage?' He replied, 'True I did. But, did I say it will happen this year?' 'Umar replied, 'Of course you did not.' The Prophet said, 'You will surely come back and circumambulate the House.'"

But 'Umar was not satisfied. He went up to Abu Bakr and reported the conversation with the Prophet. Abu Bakr remarked, "He is Allah's Messenger. He will not disobey his Lord." Of course, with the passage of a couple of years, 'Umar realized how wise it was to have had struck the treaty. Later in his life, he observed many fasts, expended in the way of Allah, and freed slaves in expiation of his objections that he raised that day.

The treaty finally signed, the Prophet told his Companions to slaughter their sacrificing animals and shave

their heads. But so dejected they were at the demonstration of weaknesses, that not one of them rose up in obedience. He complained to Umm Salamah of the behavior of his Companions. She suggested that he himself go ahead and do what he was asking them do. So he slaughtered his animal, and they followed. Interestingly, the camel that the Prophet slaughtered had once belonged to Abu Jahl. He had received it as his share of war booty after the battle of Badr.

Another attempt to draw them to a battle was made after the conclusion of the treaty. Seventy of the pagans tried to provoke the Muslims. But the attempt was thwarted, they were captured, but set free. The Muslims returned having spent ten days at Hydaybiyyah. (By the time they reached 'Usfan where they camped for a night, they had run out of provisions. The Prophet ordered that all the food they had in their possession be brought together. When that was done he supplicated to Allah and then ordered them to begin eating. Every one of the 1400 ate to their fill: Shafi'). It was during the return journey that the verses: "*Indeed We have granted you a clear victory..*" were revealed. 'Umar was surprised.

He asked, "Was that a victory?" But when the Prophet replied, "Yes, by Allah, it was," `Umar felt relieved and went away satisfied (Au.).

عن أنس قال: نزلت على النبي صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ (إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا) مرجعه من الحديبية، وأصحابه مُحَالَطُو الْحَزْنِ وَ الْكَآبَةِ، فقال: لَقَدْ نَزَلَتْ عَلَيَّ آيَةٌ هِيَ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا جَمِيعًا، قال فلما تلاها نبي الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قال رجل من القوم هنيئًا مريئًا قد بين الله لك ماذا يفعل بك، وماذا يفعل بنا، فأنزل الله عز وجل الآية التي بعدها (لِيَدْخُلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ) حتى ختم الآية - مسند أحمد

Anas said that the opening verses (of this chapter) were revealed during the Prophet's return journey from Hudaibiyyah while his Companions were in a state of grief and dejection. He said, "An *Ayah* has been revealed to me which is dearer to me than the world and what it contains, all together." Then, when he recited it, one of the men in the group said, "May it do you much good. Surely Allah has informed you how he will treat you. But how will He treat us?" So Allah revealed the passage after it: "*So that He may admit the believing men and women into gardens..*" to the end of the *Ayah* (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others in different words).

Another report in this connection is as follows:

عن عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ أَقْبَلْنَا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- مِنَ الْحُدَيْبِيَّةِ فَذَكَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ نَزَلُوا دَهَاسًا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ - يَعْنِي الدَّهَاسَ الرَّمْلَ - فَقَالَ «مَنْ يَكْلُونَا». فَقَالَ بِلَالٌ أَنَا. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- «إِذَا تَنَّم». قَالَ فَتَنَامُوا حَتَّى طَلَعَتِ الشَّمْسُ فَاسْتَيْقَظَ نَاسٌ مِنْهُمْ فَلَانَ وَفُلَانٌ وَفِيهِمْ عُمَرُ - قَالَ - فَقُلْنَا اهْضُبُوا. يَعْنِي تَكَلَّمُوا - قَالَ - فَاسْتَيْقَظَ النَّبِيُّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- فَقَالَ «افْعَلُوا كَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْعَلُونَ». قَالَ فَفَعَلْنَا قَالَ وَقَالَ «كَذَلِكَ فَافْعَلُوا لِمَنْ نَامَ أَوْ نَسِيَ». قَالَ وَضَلَّتْ نَاقَةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- فَطَلَبْتُهَا فَوَجَدْتُ حَبْلَهَا قَدْ تَعَلَّقَ بِشَجَرَةٍ فَجِئْتُ بِهَا إِلَى النَّبِيِّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- فَرَكِبَ مَسْرُورًا وَكَانَ النَّبِيُّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- إِذَا نَزَلَ عَلَيْهِ الْوَحْيُ اشْتَدَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَيْهِ وَعَرَفْنَا ذَلِكَ فِيهِ. قَالَ فَتَنَحَّى مُتَبَذًّا خَلَفْنَا - قَالَ - فَجَعَلَ يُعْطِي رَأْسَهُ بَثْوَهُ وَاشْتَدَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّى عَرَفْنَا أَنَّهُ قَدْ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِ فَأَتَانَا فَأَخْبَرَنَا أَنَّهُ قَدْ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِ (إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا)

`Abdullah ibn Mas`ud said, "We were returning from Hudaibiyyah in the company of the Prophet. They could recall that they had camped in the sands. He asked, 'Who will give us the guarantee (of safety)?' Bilal said, 'I.' The Prophet said, 'But you will sleep off.' In any case, everyone went to sleep until the sun was out and so and so woke up, including `Umar. We said to each

other, ‘Speak out loudly.’ So they spoke out loudly and the Prophet also woke up. He said, ‘Do (your *Fajr*) as you are used to doing it.’ So, we did (the *Fajr* Prayer) as we used to do. He said, ‘Let him who sleeps off or forgets, do it (this way). Then it was discovered that the Prophet’s camel was lost. I went searching after her. I found her halter entwined in a tree (according to another report, ‘which could not have been unloosened but by a human hand’). I brought her back to the Prophet and he mounted it in happiness. And, when a revelation came down upon the Prophet, he felt its severity which we could see on him. He turned aside and began to retreat to the end, behind us. Then he covered his head with a cloth and it became severe upon him, until we knew for sure that he had received revelation. In the end we went up to him and he told us that it had been revealed to him: ‘*Indeed, we have granted you a clear victory*’” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani: each quoting various versions).

With reference to ‘Umar’s objections, the following may be quoted:

عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَسْلَمَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى
الله عليه وسلم - كَانَ يَسِيرُ فِي بَعْضِ أَصْفَارِهِ،
وَعُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ يَسِيرُ مَعَهُ لَيْلًا، فَسَأَلَهُ عُمَرُ بْنُ
الْخَطَّابِ عَنْ شَيْءٍ فَلَمْ يُجِبْهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى
الله عليه وسلم - ثُمَّ سَأَلَهُ فَلَمْ يُجِبْهُ، ثُمَّ سَأَلَهُ فَلَمْ
يُجِبْهُ وَقَالَ عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ تُكَلِّتُكَ أُمُّكَ يَا
عُمَرُ، نَزَرْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
- ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ، كُلُّ ذَلِكَ لَا يُجِيبُكَ. قَالَ عُمَرُ
فَحَرَّكَتُ بَعْضَ بَعْضٍ ثُمَّ تَقَدَّمْتُ أَمَامَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ،
وَحَشِيتُ أَنْ يَنْزِلَ فِيَّ قُرْآنٌ، فَمَا نَشِيتُ أَنْ
سَمِعْتُ صَارِخًا يَصْرُخُ بِي - قَالَ - فَقُلْتُ لَقَدْ
حَشِيتُ أَنْ يَكُونَ نَزْلٌ فِيَّ قُرْآنٌ. وَجِئْتُ رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَقَالَ
«لَقَدْ أُنْزِلَتْ عَلَيَّ اللَّيْلَةَ سُورَةٌ لَهَا أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا
طَلَعَتْ عَلَيْهِ الشَّمْسُ، ثُمَّ قَرَأْ (إِنَّا) فَتَحَنَّا لَكَ فَتَحًا
مُبِينًا»

Zayd b. Aslam reported from his father that the Prophet was in one of his journeys when, at night, ‘Umar asked him something thrice but did not get a reply. He reproached himself that although he had asked three times, he had not been answered. So he pushed his camel forward to be at the head of the caravan. It wasn’t long when he heard someone calling out his name. He felt sure that a revelation had come down censuring him. But when he reported to the Prophet and greeted him he said, “Tonight a *Surah* has been revealed to me which is dearer to me than whatever the sun shines upon.” Then

[2] So that Allah may forgive you your former sins and your latter ones,³ complete His favor upon you, and guide you on to a path straight.

[3] And so that Allah may aid you with a powerful help.

لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ
وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَبِمَا نِعَمَتُهُ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيكَ
صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ﴿٢﴾

وَيَنْصُرَكَ اللَّهُ نَصْرًا عَزِيمًا ﴿٣﴾

he recited, “Indeed, we have granted you a clear victory” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani: each presenting different versions).

Sometime later a Muslim called Abu Basir fled from the Makkan pagans. But when he came to the Prophet, he rejected him. Two Makkans also came up demanding him back. As they were taking him back, he overcame them on the way, killing one, while the other fled. Abu Basir returned to Madinah. He said to the Prophet, “You observed the treaty clause, and returned me to them, but Allah freed me.” The Prophet said, “Woe unto Abu Mis’ar’s mother, only if he had someone with him.” Abu Basir understood the Prophet’s signal and so, when he felt that he would be returned, he left Madinah and sought refuge in the mountains near the sea shore. Having heard of him, Abu Jandal also freed himself and joined him. Other Makkan Muslims in similar circumstances also understood what the Prophet had meant. They too began to flee and join up

with Abu Basir. In a while they were some sixty or seventy strong. They began to harass the passing Quraysh caravans. Finally, the Quraysh sent word to the Prophet requesting him to accept those who fled from them (Au.).

3. What sins are these? The answer is in several terms. One, the allusion is to the Prophet not opting for the best of the several options that were available to him. Another possibility is that the allusion by sins is to minor errors, which, from the Prophetic perspective, are termed sins. As to the question, what are we to understand from “sins” “of the future,” the answer is, this is another way of saying that you, O Prophet, will be prevented from committing any error in the future (Razi, reworded).

We may at this point recall the famous *hadith* once more. It is in Bukhari and several other works:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا - أَنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ -
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - كَانَ يَقُومُ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ حَتَّى
تَنْفَطِرَ قَدَمَاهُ فَقَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ لِمَ تَصْنَعُ هَذَا يَا

[4] It is He who sent down tranquility in the hearts of the believers⁴ so that they might add faith to their faith.⁵ And Allah's are the forces of the heavens and the earth.⁶ Allah was ever Knowing, All-wise.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزِدَّهُمْ إِيْمَانًا مَعَ إِيْمَانِهِمْ وَلِلَّهِ
جُنُودُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٤﴾

رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَكَ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ
وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ قَالَ «أَفَلَا أُحِبُّ أَنْ أَكُونَ عَبْدًا
شَكُورًا». فَلَمَّا كَثُرَ لِحْمُهُ صَلَّى جَالِسًا فَإِذَا أَرَادَ
أَنْ يَرْكَعَ قَامَ، فَقَرَأَ ثُمَّ رَكَعَ

A'isha said that the Prophet used to stand in Prayers at night to the length that his feet got swollen. She asked him why should he do it when Allah had forgiven his past and future sins. He replied, "Should I not be a grateful slave?" However, when he put on weight, he began to Pray from the sitting posture. When he wished to go into the deep bow, he would first rise up, do some recitation from that position, and then go into the deep bow (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, .(both in different words

4. After the initial anger, followed by disappointment and grief, at being denied entry into Makkah despite the two weeks of camping, and the Prophet's acceptance of the peace-treaty on such humiliating terms, despite their strength and willingness to lay their lives, the tranquility that

the Qur'an mentioned manifested itself when these verses came to be revealed. The Prophet announced that a new revelation had come down, and lo, they gave up their camping preparations and rallied around him. When he recited the initial verses, they asked, "Is this victory?" He replied, "Yes, it is." It was enough for them to hear that. They returned fully satisfied. How shall one explain their joyful return, except as a result of tranquility sent down into their hearts? (Au).

5. The addition of faith upon faith was achieved through the process of sending down of new commandments, every now and then, in all of which the early Muslims fully believed, and put to practice which increased their faith (Razi). Reports of similar meaning are to be found coming from Ibn 'Abbas in Tabari, Ibn Kathir and others. Ibn 'Abbas is widely reported to have said that the first thing the Prophet was given was *Tawhid*, and then, *Salah* and *Zakah*, and then fasts and Hajj, and so on.

Each commandment lived, caused increase in faith.

It might also be noted that Allah spoke of addition of faith over faith; but when speaking of increase in disbelief, He did not say, "their disbelief increased over their disbelief" as He said in an *Ayah* (3: 178),

أَنَّمَا نُؤْتِيهِمْ حَرَِّ لِّأَنفُسِهِمْ [آل عمران: ١٧٨]

"We give them respite only in order that they may increase in sins." This is because, disbelief is not the original state of man, but rather belief in God is planted in him from prenatal times. Therefore, any increase in faith, is increase upon that original faith. On the other hand, disbelief is not planted into the hearts, and therefore, although there is increase in disbelief, it is not an addition over an original disbelief (Razi, expanded).

It is Judaism and Christianity that start with an evil presumption about man: that he is a sinner to begin with, and, therefore, needs a savior (Au.).

Alusi discusses the issue of increase in faith to some detail. He points out that the majority of the Ash'ariyyah school, the Qalansiyyah, the jurists, *hadith* specialists, and the *Mu'tazilah* have held the opinion that faith in-

creases and decreases. This is also reported of Shafe'ee and Bukhari. The latter said that he met with a thousand people who believed that faith increased and decreased. They held that position based on reported knowledge (*al-naql*) as well as on rational basis (*al-'aql*). They point out that the faith of a corrupt Muslim can never be of the same level and quality as that of the Messengers and Prophets. These scholars included deeds in the definition of faith saying, "*imān* is belief (in the heart), word (of the mouth) and deeds (by the limbs), and hence increases and decreases in proportion with the deeds.

On the other hand, Imām Abu Haneefah and his school believed that faith neither increases nor decreases. This was also held as true by the philosophers (*mutakallimun*) and Imām al-Haramayn (Juwayni). They have asserted that primarily *imān* is the other name of testimony; and testimony cannot be of higher or lower order: either you testify to a thing as true, or do not testify. You cannot be in between. In consequence, when a testifier comes up with good deeds, his testimony does not undergo any change. Yet, adds Alusi, it is not deniable that when a man testifies to more and more of the truths of Is-

[5] So that He may admit the believing men and women⁷ into gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein; and so that He may acquit them of their evil deeds.⁸ And that indeed is in Allah's sight a great triumph.⁹

لِيَدْخُلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
وَيُكَفَّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عِنْدَ
اللَّهِ قُوْرًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿٥﴾

[6] And so that He may punish hypocritical men and women, and idolatrous men and women: those who assume about Allah evil assumption: upon them (hovers) the evil turn (of fortune). Allah is angry with them, has cursed them, and has prepared Jahannum for them – evil as a destination.

وَيُعَذِّبُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ
وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ الظَّالِمِينَ بِاللَّهِ
ظُلُّ السَّوْءِ عَلَيْهِمْ ذَاتُ السَّوْءِ وَعَصِبَ
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَنَهُمْ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ
وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿٦﴾

[7] And Allah's are the forces of the heavens and the earth. Allah was ever All-mighty, All-wise.

وَلِلَّهِ جُنُودُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
عَزِيزًا حَكِيْمًا ﴿٧﴾

lam, his faith increases. So also, *Imān* being a kind of Light in the heart, its power and radiance increases with good deeds. (But the point *Imān* Abu Haneefah has made remains if faith is defined as testimony: Au.).

Alusi concludes: Khattabi (who seems to have the last word: Au.) said that: *Imān* (a) with reference to the word of mouth does not increase, nor decreases, (b) with reference to the deeds increases and decreases, and (c) with reference to the testimony can increase but cannot decrease.

6. One can see the connection between the previous and this verse. When it was stated that Allah will help the Prophet, the question arose,

“How? Will the adversaries be destroyed by a huge cry, or through a massive shake of the earth, or by some other means?” The answer came, “Allah will do it by strengthening the hearts of the believers, and lifting their moral - although He has control over all the forces - so that, they are ready to lay down their lives for the Prophet's mission (Razi, expanded).

7. There being hardly any representation of women at Hudaibiyyah, on what grounds they came to be included here? Thanwi explains that the promise of Paradise is on the basis of a principle: faith and good deeds. Muslim women qualified themselves

[8] Surely We have sent you (O Muhammad) as a witness, a bearer of glad tiding, and a warner.

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿٨﴾

[9] So that you may (O people) believe in Allah and His Messenger, assist him, honor him, and celebrate His praises morning and evening.

لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُعَزِّرُوهُ وَتُوَقِّرُوهُ
وَتُسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٩﴾

[10] Surely those who are pledging allegiance to you,¹⁰ are pledging allegiance to Allah;¹¹ Allah's hand is over their hands.¹² Then, whoso violates (the pledge), violates against his own self, while whoso fulfills that which he has promised Allah, he will soon be given a mighty reward.¹³

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَمَنْ نَكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَمَ يَزِيدْهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٠﴾

by this principle. Those women who were not present might have felt aggrieved that they were not included. By this gesture they were told that the basis for earning Allah's good pleasure is obedience, which they could achieve even the while they remained in their homes. And, following the same principle disbelieving women and hypocritical women were included in the following verse (Expanded).

8. The allusion is to clothing the believers with honor, which is one way of acquitting them of their sins. In Paradise, they will have both the types of filth removed from them: physical, such as, the need to attend to nature's call, as well as ethical such

as, anger, deception, and investing of them with angelic qualities; which Allah termed as the great success (Razi).

9. So, entry into Paradise is a great victory, and is something desirable to work for. This should lead us to a correction in the opinion aired by pseudo *Sufis* who have said that to live a righteous life for the sake of Paradise, is the pursuit of the lower order of people (Shabbir); that is, the true Gnostic aims at nothing but Allah's good pleasure, if not Allah Himself (Au.).

10. According to some reports the Prophet (*saws*) said about those who pledged their hands at Hudaibiyyah that they were the best of people on

[11] *Those who were left behind¹⁴ of the Bedouins will presently say to you, 'We were occupied by our possessions and our families, therefore, seek forgiveness for us.'*¹⁵ *They say with their tongues what is not there in their hearts. Say, 'Who can avail you against Allah by aught, if He wished for you a harm, or wished for you a benefit?' But rather, Allah is ever Aware of what you do.*

سَيَقُولُ لَكَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ
شَغَلْنَا أَمْوَالَنَا وَأَهْلُونَا فَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا
يَقُولُونَ بِأَلْسِنَتِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ قُلْ
فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ مِنْ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ
بِكُمْ ضَرًّا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ نَفْعًا بَلْ كَانَ اللَّهُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١١﴾

the face of the earth at that time. Another report in Ahmad has the Prophet saying, "None who pledged his hand under the tree will enter the Fire." A report in Muslim says that one of the slaves of Hatib b. abi Balta'ah came to the Prophet complaining against him. He said, "Messenger of Allah, Hatib will surely enter the Fire." The Prophet replied, "You have spoken a lie. He will not enter it for he participated at Badr and Hudaibiyyah" (Ibn Kathir).

11. The Prophet did not declare what the pledge was about, so that, Jabir thought it was to the effect that they will not flee from the battlefield. Salamah b. al-Akwa' on the other hand thought that he had pledged for death; that is, readiness to lay the life. But the best was that of a Companion who said when asked, that he gave pledge 'to whatever was in the Prophet's heart.'

12. One might add to the apparent meaning: Allah's Power was over their power when they were swearing fealty to the Prophet (Ibn Jarir).

13. The textual phrase "*alayhuAl-laha*" (instead of *alayhiAllahi*) draws comment from Alusi which is reproduced by Mawdudi: "Alusi has given two reasons for this unusual grammatical construction. First, the objective on this special occasion is to express the glory, eminence and majesty of the Being to Whom the pledge was being sworn, and for which '*alayhu*' is more appropriate than '*alayhi*.' Second, the '*hu*' in '*alayhu*' represents '*huwa*,' therefore, adhering to the original vowel goes well with the theme of allegiance."

14. They were left behind because they showed no inclination to join the Prophet when he invited them, under the impression that the Quraysh would surely resist, and,

[12] Nay, you thought the Messenger and the believers will never, ever, return to their families,¹⁶ and that was made pleasing in your hearts; you assumed evil assumptions, and you were indeed a destroyed people.¹⁷

بَلْ ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ لَنْ يَنْقَلِبَ الرَّسُولُ
وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَى أَهْلِيهِمْ أَبَدًا وَزُيِّنَ ذَلِكَ
فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَظَنَّتُمْ ظَنًّا سَوْءًا وَكُنْتُمْ
قَوْمًا بُورًا ﴿١٢﴾

[13] And whoso does not believe in Allah and His Messenger, then surely, We have prepared for the unbelievers a blazing fire.

وَمَنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا
لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَعِيرًا ﴿١٣﴾

[14] And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; He will forgive whom He will and punish whom He will; although ever was Allah Forgiving, Merciful.

وَاللَّهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَعْفُرُ
لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٤﴾

in a fight likely to ensue, will wipe them out to the last man. Their disinclination, and following that, the refusal, led to their exclusion by the will of Allah (Au.).

15. The reference is to the Arabs around Madinah, in particular the tribes of Juhaynah and Muzaynah whom the Prophet urged to accompany him, in fear that the Quraysh might force him into a battle, although he intended no more than an 'Umrah (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Ghifar, Ashja', Aslam, and Dhayl also refused, although the Prophet's allies (Asad).

16. Since the opposition to the Prophetic mission was at its highest pitch, making it unsafe for any of his followers to venture into enemy

territory, no matter how peaceful the purpose, and, since, the pagans outnumbered Muslims by huge proportions, the Bedouins thought that the Muslims were journeying to their end. The pagan Arabs will annihilate them to the last man (based on Tabari).

17. Sayyid expands: "This is how the Qur'an makes (the hypocrites) stand – unveiled and exposed - face to face, with the evil intentions concealed in the hearts .. their judgments .. and their evil guesses. They believed that the Prophet and his followers were heading to their end. They will not return to their families in Madinah. They said, 'They are heading towards an enemy who had fought them right in their courtyard and had defeated them' – alluding to the Uhud

[15] As you start off to take booties, those who were left behind will surely say, 'Allow us to follow you.'¹⁸ They wish to alter Allah's words.¹⁹ Say, 'Never will you follow us; thus did Allah say about you earlier.'²⁰ They will surely say, 'Nay, but you are jealous of us.' Rather, they never understood except a little.²¹

سَيَقُولُ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ إِذَا انطَلَقْتُمْ إِلَى
مَغَائِمٍ لِنَأْخُذْهَا ذُرُونا تَتَّبِعْكُمْ يُرِيدُونَ
أَنْ يُبَدِّلُوا كَلَامَ اللَّهِ قُلْ لَنْ تَتَّبِعُونَا
كَذَلِكَ قَالَ اللَّهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَسَيَقُولُونَ بَلْ
تَحْسُدُونَنَا بَلْ كَانُوا لَا يَفْقَهُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٥﴾

and Ahzab battles. But they forgot to take into account Allah's own care and His protection of the truthful who stood apart from other men. They ignored this fact because of their very nature, and hearts devoid of the warmth of belief. They forgot that an obligation is an obligation. It has to be responded to, without ever any thought of the consequences, or fear of apparent material losses. An obligation has to be fulfilled without consideration of the consequences.

"They guessed an evil guess, and it was made fair in their hearts, to the extent that they foresaw no other outcome but one, did not reckon but it, which in fact was an evil estimation of Allah, indicating that there was destruction in their hearts (as in Qur'anic text) – an expression that gives rise to profound meaning. The simile is apt: a scorched piece of land is barren, infertile. So are their hearts and so are they in all aspects of their

existence: barren, infertile ... no life, no output, no fruition. What kind of a heart can it be when it bears evil assumptions about Allah? It is severed off Allah's mercy. What else, but barren, desolate, dead .. whose end is destruction?"

18. The allusion is to the Khayber expedition (Qurtubi and others). Those who had stayed behind from accompanying the Prophet to Makkah, in fear of death, now felt encouraged by his triumphant treaty, and his intended journey to Khayber, which, as they realized, was likely to prove easier to subdue. Booty would come, and they wished to get a share (Au.).

19. Allah (*swt*) had decreed that no one would be allowed to accompany the Prophet to Khayber except those who had participated at Hudaibiyyah. This was the opinion of Mujahid, Muqsim, Qatadah and others (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

[16] Say to those who were left behind of the bedouins,²² 'You will soon be invited²³ to (face) a people given to hard fighting,²⁴ against whom (either) you will fight, or they will surrender.²⁵ If you obeyed, Allah will grant you a goodly recompense; but if you turned away, as you turned away earlier, then He will chastise you with a painful chastisement.'

قُلْ لِلْمُخَلَّفِينَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ سَتُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى قَوْمٍ أُولِي بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ تُقَاتِلُونَهُمْ أَوْ يُسَلِّمُونَ فَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا يُؤْتِكُمُ اللَّهُ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا كَمَا تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِّن قَبْلُ يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٦﴾

The demands of the *Ayah* do not contradict that shares should be given to other than those who were at Hudaibiyyah; so that, the Prophet allotted shares at Khayber to those who had arrived from Abyssinia with Ja'far b. abi Talib, or to a few men of the Ash'ari and Daws tribes. It were those who had refused to accompany to Hudaibiyyah, but later wished to join in order to get a share of the Khayber booties who were denied it (based on Alusi's note).

Mufti Shafi' adds: The *Ayah* goes to prove that the *ahadith* are revelations, except that a non-recitable revelation (*wahyu ghayr matlu*; the Qur'an being *wahyu matlu*, i.e. the revelation which is recited). Although the instructions were revealed to the Prophet with regard to the non-participation of those who had refused to go along with him to 'Umrah, they were not part of the Qur'an, yet it said that they are the "words of Allah."

20. That is, this had been decided even before the Prophet (*saws*) had started off for Khayber (Qurtubi).

21. Yusuf Ali returns a punch to the Orientalists: "The desert Arabs loved fighting and plunder and understood such motives for war. The higher motives seemed to be beyond them. Like ignorant men they attributed petty motives or motives of jealousy if they were kept out of the vulgar circle of fighting for plunder. But they had to be schooled, and they were schooled to higher ideas of discipline, self-sacrifice, and striving hard for a Cause."

22. They understood only the worldly affairs, and none of the Hereafter, which is to understand pretty little (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

23. It was Abu Bakr and 'Umar who later invited the Bedouins of this mention, to fight various adversaries of Islam (Au.).

[17] There is no blame on the blind, nor any blame on the lame, nor is there any blame on the sick.²⁶ Whoso obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will admit him into gardens underneath which rivers flow. But whoever turned back, He will chastise him with a painful chastisement.

لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ حَرَجٌ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ يُعَذِّبْهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٧﴾

24. While some of the earliest commentators thought that the allusion was to the Romans and Persians, others believed that it was to the Hawazin, and a third opinion was that the allusion was to the forces of Musaylimah the Liar. However, Ibn Jarir does not see any reason for preferring one over another, all or any-one could be meant.

Another interpretation is that the allusion is either to the Turks or Kurds. The following *hadith* of Bukhari is quoted in this connection:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - عَنِ النَّبِيِّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَ «لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى تُقَاتِلُوا قَوْمًا نَعَالُهُمُ الشَّعْرُ، وَلَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى تُقَاتِلُوا قَوْمًا كَأَنَّ وُجُوهَهُمُ الْمَحَانُ الْمُطْرَقَةُ». قَالَ سُفْيَانٌ وَزَادَ فِيهِ أَبُو الزُّنَادِ عَنْ الْأَعْرَجِ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، رَوَايَةً «صِغَارَ الْأَعْيُنِ، ذُلْفَ الْأَنْوَفِ، كَأَنَّ وُجُوهَهُمُ الْمَحَانُ الْمُطْرَقَةُ».

The Prophet said, "The Hour will not strike until you have fought a people who wear footwear made of

hair. And it will not strike until you have fought a people whose face is as if layered shields." .. Other reports adds: "Of small eyes, flat noses, as if their faces are layered shields" (Ibn Kathir).

Abu Hanifa's opinion was that it were only the Peninsula Arabs who had no third option but to either accept Islam or leave the lands, while others (outside of Arabia) could pay *jizyah* and remain on their religions within their territories. In view of this opinion, it seems fair to say that the allusion by the words, "against whom (either) you will fight, or they will surrender" could only be to Banu Hanifah led by Musaylimah the Liar (Zamakhshari); in which case the translation of the textual "yuslimun" should be, "they will become Muslims" (Au.).

But the majority have believed that the allusion was to the Romans and Persians (Shafi').

[18] Allah was certainly pleased with the believers when they were swearing fealty to you under the tree.²⁷ He knew what was in their hearts,²⁸ and so sent down tranquility upon them and We awarded them an imminent victory.²⁹

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ
تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ
السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا

﴿١٨﴾

25. “That is, you shall go forth to war if you learn discipline, not for booty, but for a great and noble Cause. For if your opponents submit to the Cause, there will be no fighting and no booty” (Yusuf Ali).

26. That is, there is no sin upon these categories if they do not participate in *Jihad* (Ibn Jarir).

27. The words are unequivocal, and commentators have pointed out that Allah is not such as One to be pleased with a people and then be displeased with them later. Allah never declares His approval, without having fully tried a people and they confirming to the standards He has set for them (Au.).

We have *ahadith* in support. Bukhari has a report which says,

قَالَ عَمْرُو سَمِعْتُ جَابِرَ بْنَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ
عَنْهُمَا - قَالَ قَالَ لَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ - يَوْمَ الْحُدَيْبِيَّةِ «أَنْتُمْ خَيْرُ أَهْلِ الْأَرْضِ»

`Amr said he heard Jabir b.
`Abdullah say, “The Prophet

(*saw*s) told us on the Day of Hudaibiyyah, ‘You are best (of the people) of the earth.’”

Another *hadith* is in Tirmidhi and others. It says,

عَنْ جَابِرٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ - «لَا يَدْخُلُ النَّارَ أَحَدٌ مِمَّنْ بَايَعَ تَحْتَ
الشَّجَرَةِ». قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ
صَحِيحٌ.

“Of those who pledged their hands at Hudaibiyyah, none will enter the Fire” (Shafi’).

The *Shi`ah* may make note of these *ahadith*. O yes, they might say these *ahadith* are fabricated. But the Qur’anic *Ayah* is not fabricated, or is it? It is a moment of decision for them (Au.).

The tree itself could not be identified later. When `Umar passed by Hudaibiyyah (after he had taken up the *Khilafah*), he asked, “Where was it?” But they differed. Some identified one, others another. He said, “Forget about it. It is not important. It was

[19] And much booty that they will take;³⁰ surely Allah ever was All-mighty, All-wise.

[20] Allah has promised you much booty that you will take,³¹ and so has hastened this one for you;³² and restrained the people's hand from you³³ so that it may be a sign for the believers,³⁴ and so that He might guide you on to a straight path.³⁵

وَمَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً يَأْخُذُونَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا
حَكِيمًا ﴿١٩﴾

وَعَدَكُمْ اللَّهُ مَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً تَأْخُذُونَهَا
فَعَجَّلَ لَكُمْ هَذِهِ وَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَ النَّاسِ
عَنْكُمْ وَلِتَكُونَ آيَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ
صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ﴿٢٠﴾

an acacia tree, perhaps uprooted by flood and wind" (Ibn Jarir).

Some reports say that people had begun to pray under the tree and so `Umar got it uprooted. But either the report is wrong, since Sa`eed b. Musayyib's father (a participant at Hudaibiyyah) said, as in the reports of the *Sahihayn* that, "By the next year we could not identify the tree ourselves," or perhaps some people had assumed that one of the trees was that particular tree and had begun to offer prayers there which `Umar got cut down (Shafi').

28. That is, Allah (*swt*) knew that there was sincerity, truthfulness, and patience in the hearts of those who had pledged their hands to the Prophet at Hudaibiyyah (Ibn Jarir reworded, and others).

29. Qatadah and Ibn abi Layla said that the allusion is to Khayber expedition which took place a couple of months later (Ibn Jarir).

30. The reference is to the war spoils of Khayber (Ibn Jarir and others).

And who could keep a good record of booty that the Muslims obtained that day but an Orientalist? Majid quotes one known for his unbound hatred: "The plunder of Khaibar was rich beyond experience. Besides vast stores of dates, oil, honey and barley, flocks of sheep and herds of camel, the spoil in treasure and jewels was very large" (Majid from Muir, op. cit. p. 380).

The division was, as in reports with Ahmad, Abu Da'ud and Hakim: two parts to horsemen (who were 300 in number) and one part to foot soldiers (Alusi).

31. From now, until the day of Judgment (Alusi).

32. That is, once again, booties of Khayber (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir and others).

[21] And another (spoil is promised) over which you had no power;³⁶ but Allah has already encompassed it; and Allah ever was over all things Able.

وَأُخْرَى لَمْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهَا قَدْ أَحَاطَ اللَّهُ بِهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرًا ﴿٢١﴾

[22] Yet, if the unbelievers were to fight you, they will certainly turn (their) backs, and then they will not find a protector, nor helper.³⁷

وَلَوْ قَاتَلَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوَلَّوْا الْأَذْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُونَ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] Allah's way that has been (operational) in the past;³⁸ and you will never find any change in Allah's way.

سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا ﴿٢٣﴾

33. The allusion is to the Arabs around Madinah. Had they willed, they could have attacked Madinah in the Prophet's absence who had the best of men, and most of them, with him at Hdaybiyyah. This was the opinion of Qatadah (Ibn Jarir). Zamakhshari however believes that the allusion is to Banu Asad and Ghatafan tribes who started off to help the Jews of Khaybar but turned back (when rumors spread that another contingent of the Prophet's army was on its way to attack their territories). He adds that the allusion could also be to the Makkans who did not fight the Prophet but rather, entered into a peace treaty.

34. The allusion could be (apart from others, such as the miracles of that time: Au.) to the vision that the Prophet experienced, which proved true, and true predictions are signs of Allah (Zamakhshari).

35. That is, will increase you in faith and far-sightedness (Zamakhshari).

36. According to Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn abi Layla and others, the allusion is to the booties taken from the Romans and Persians (Ibn Jarir); but Zamakhshari sees the possibility that the allusion is to the Hawazin booties gained at Hunayn immediately after the fall of Makkah.

37. That is, had the Makkans fought the Muslims at Hdaybiyyah, this would have been the result (Ibn Jarir).

38. And Allah's *Sunnah* is to recompense each with what he deserves; if good, with good, but if they come up with evil, then evil (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir has another interpretation: That is, it has been Allah's *Sunnah* that whenever truth and falsehood clashed, falsehood was routed

[24] It is He who restrained their hands from you and your hands from them in the Makkan hollow after He had caused you to overcome them.³⁹ And ever is Allah seeing of what you do.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي كَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ بِبَطْنِ مَكَّةَ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ أَظْفَرَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا ﴿٢٤﴾

and truth emerged victorious despite fewness of those who upheld the truth and despite fewness of their war equipment.

Zamakhshari and Alusi see the allusion to Allah's promise that ultimately the Messengers triumph as He said (58: 21),

كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَأَغْلِبَنَّ أَنَا وَرُسُلِي [المجادلة: ٢١]

"Allah has decreed it (that), 'I and My Messengers shall overcome'."

39. The allusion is, as Ibn `Abbas said, to an incident involving a battalion of eighty young men who appeared from the Tan'eem side, while the Muslims were in their *Fajr* Prayers at Hudaibiyyah. They tried to besiege the believers, threw stones at them and shot a few arrows. But the Muslims were able to overpower them and arrest them all. Nevertheless, the Prophet forgave them all. There were other such minor incidents, involving a handful of Makkans, and the allusion could be to all of them. In a

third case a man called Abu Zan im happened to move a little out of Hudaibiyyah, and was killed by a dozen or so Makkan troopers. The Prophet got them captured, but forgave them, so that, the credit for starting the licentiousness be theirs (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Yusuf Ali sort of sums up: "Little incidents had taken place that might have plunged the Quraish and the Muslims from Madinah into a fight. On the one hand, the Quraish were determined to keep out the Muslims, which they had no right to do: and on the other hand, the Muslims, though unarmed, had sworn to stand together, and if they had counter-attacked they could have forced their entrance to the Ka'ba, the centre of Makkah. But Allah restrained both sides from anything that would have violated the Peace of the Sanctuary, and after the Treaty was signed, all danger was past."

[25] It is they who disbelieved and prevented you from the Sacred Mosque, and that the animal held for sacrifice should reach its place (of sacrifice).⁴⁰ And, if it was not for believing men and women – whom you did not know – lest you should trample them and a guilt should unwittingly fall on you⁴¹ – so that Allah may admit into His mercy whom He will – surely, had they been separated (from the unbelievers), We would have punished the unbelievers among them with a painful chastisement.⁴²

هُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ
الْحَرَامِ وَالْهَدْيِ مَعْكُوفًا أَنْ يَبْلُغَ مَحَلَّهُ
وَلَوْلَا رِجَالٌ مُّؤْمِنُونَ وَنِسَاءٌ مُّؤْمِنَاتٌ لَّمْ
تَعْلَمُوهُمْ أَنْ تَطَؤُوهُمْ فَتُصَيِّبَكُمْ مِنْهُمْ
مَعَرَّةٌ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ لِّيُدْخِلَ اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ
يَشَاءُ لَوْ تَزَيَّلُوا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ
عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿٢٥﴾

40. Those were seventy camels that the Prophet and his Companions had brought specifically for sacrifice. But when they were prevented, the Prophet ordered that they be slaughtered then and there. Initially, no one would respond, so upset were they at the humiliating terms of the treaty just struck. After the third exhortation, the Prophet complained to Umm Salamah, his wife. She advised that he slaughter his own camel, and shave down his head. They are likely to follow. When he did as she had said, the people rushed to do the same and the seventy camels were sacrificed at that spot, instead of within Makkah (Ibn Jarir).

Zamakhshari and Alusi add that the Prophet and his men were in a territory that included a part of the Haram, the sanctuary where alone it is legal to offer sacrifices.

41. Qurtubi discusses a hypothetical situation. Supposing the enemy has been surrounded but among them there are some Muslims. If the enemy is attacked they might come in the range. Or, the enemy might make a shield of the Muslims. What should they do? Imām Malik answered that he would not allow any attack; and that, bloodwit will be due if a Muslim is killed. (In fact, this happened on one occasion. The Romans were besieged and their access to water was denied. But they had Muslim prisoners. They were sent down to fetch water). On the other hand, Imām Abu Hanifah declared – as well as his students and, in addition, Thawri – that in such situations the enemy could still be attacked, and if one of the Muslims died, retaliation or bloodwit would not be incum-

[26] When those who have disbelieved harbored in their hearts chauvinism⁴³ – the chauvinism of the time of Ignorance – but Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger, and upon the believers, and made them adhere to the word of righteousness,⁴⁴ and they were better entitled to it and worthy of it; and Allah is of all things Knowledgeable.

إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ
حَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى
رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ
التَّقْوَى وَكَانُوا أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٢٦﴾

bent. Imām Shafē'i however, was with Imām Malik (Qurtubi).

42. The allusion is to those Makkans who had embraced Islam but were prevented from migrating because they did not have any tribal support. Many concealed their faith. Had Allah allowed the Muslims to assault the Makkans, surely, they would have killed some of them unknowingly, thus earning sin (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Zamakhshari).

The *Ayah* could be paraphrased in the following manner: If it was not for believing men and women in Makkah, who were unable to migrate, whom you did not know, but whom you could have killed unknowingly, and thus would have earned guilt unwittingly, surely Allah would have allowed you to fight the Makkans. On the other hand, had they moved apart from the pagan Makkans, then, surely, Allah would have punished the unbelievers one way or the other (Au.).

Yusuf Ali puts it more appealingly: "Allah works according to His wise and holy Will and Plan, and not according to what seems to us, in the excitement of human life, to be the obvious course of things. By preventing a fight He saved many valuable lives, not only of Muslims but also of some who became Muslims afterwards and served Islam. He grants His Mercy on far higher standards than man in his limited horizon can see."

43. To what exactly is the allusion by chauvinism? Ibn Jarir reports from Zuhri that the chauvinism (*hamiyyah*: lit. warmth, or, as Yusuf Ali puts it, "heat and cant of Ignorance") manifested itself when the pagans prevented Allah's Attribute (*Al-Rahman*) to be written at the beginning of the treaty and when they refused Muslim entry into Makkah.

Once again, Yusuf Ali puts it tellingly, "While the Unbelievers were blustering and excited, and meticulously

[27] Allah proved true to His Messenger the truth of the dream:⁴⁵ you shall enter into the Sacred Mosque - Allah willing⁴⁶ - in peace, shaving your heads and shortening (your hair),⁴⁷ not fearing.⁴⁸ He knew what you did not know⁴⁹ and so granted you besides this,⁵⁰ a victory at hand.

لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ
لَتَدْخُلَنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
آمِنِينَ مُحَلِّقِينَ رُؤُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ لَا
تَخَافُونَ فَعَلِمَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا فَجَعَلَ مِنْ
ذُنُوبِكُمْ فِتْحًا قَرِيبًا ﴿٢٧﴾

objected to introductory words such as 'In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful' (they did not like the titles), the Prophet remained calm and collected, and got the substance of their demands embodied in the Treaty without worrying about words. Even though the terms of the Treaty appeared to the companions, at first, to be unfair to Muslims, they remained faithful to their Leader and showed trust in his better judgment, a trust that was vindicated by the events that followed."

44. "*Kalimatu al-taqwa*" is literally the word of piety. Here the allusion is, according to a widely reported opinion of 'Ali, to the testimony "there is no deity worthy of worship save Allah." This was also the opinion of 'Amr b. Maymun, Mujahid, Qatadah, Ibn Zayd, Dahhak, 'Ata' al-Khurasani and Ibn 'Umar. In fact, there is a *hadith* to this effect, although there have been other, minor opinions (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir in brief).

It has been called "*Kalimatu al-taqwa*" because it will protect against the Fire (Qurtubi); in which case, the rendering should be, "the word of protection" (Au.).

45. Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, Ibn Zayd and others reported that the Prophet had mentioned to his Companions at Hudaibiyyah that he had seen in a vision that he had entered Makkah and had circumambulated the Sacred Mosque. He had assured them that that would happen. When reminded, after the Treaty which denied entry into Makkah, he replied, "Did I say it will happen this year?" (Ibn Jarir).

46. Why were the words "if Allah wills" added, seeing that there can be no doubt when it comes from Allah? There are several answers. One: Muslims were taught how they should speak about future events. They should always place the condition of Allah's will allowing it to happen. Second: Allah knew that some of

[28] It is He who sent His Messenger with the guidance and a true religion, so that He might make it prevail over every religion,⁵¹ and suffices Allah as a Witness.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿٢٨﴾

those (one thousand four hundred) who were at Hudaibiyyah might not be alive until the next year (Qurtubi). And three: Muslim entry at the time it happens will be by Allah's will and not an outcome of their efforts (Alusi).

47. Men shave their heads while women shorten. Shortening is allowed for men too, although not as the first choice. However, it is reported that Mu'awiyah shortened the Prophet's hair during his 'Umrah while he got his head shaved during the Hajj (Qurtubi).

Obviously, in view of the fact that the Prophet was to perform Hajj a few days after his 'Umrah, it was preferable to shorten the hair after 'Umrah and then shave after Hajj (Au.).

48. It came true next year when, following the previous year's Hudaibiyyah Treaty, the Prophet and his Companions entered Makkah, in *Dhu al-Qa'idah* of the seventh year after *Hijrah*. They stayed in the holy city for three days without fear. The Prophet had sent away the arms to be stored at a place called Ya'jaj near

Makkah. The Quraysh emptied the town, unable to bear the sight of Muslims. As for women, children, and non-Qurayshites, they sat by the streets watching the Prophet and his Companions march in. The Quraysh had alleged that the Muslims had grown weak because of the Madinan fever. So the Prophet instructed his followers to throw their chests out during the first three rounds of the Ka'bah. (Ibn 'Abbas reported that the Prophet also did that when performing his *Tawaf* of Hajj in the 8th year after *Hijrah*).

49. Ibn Zayd said that Allah (*swt*) knew that had He allowed a fight, the Makkans would have been routed, but some of those Muslims that were detained at Makkah, disallowed to migrate, would have got killed. This is what the Muslims did not know (Ibn Jarir).

50. The allusion by "this" could either be to the Hudaibiyyah Treaty, or fall of Khayber (Ibn Jarir).

51. Political upper hand is already visible, but the allusion could be to the superiority of Islam over the rest

of the religions that lose every battle at the intellectual level, whenever there is an encounter (based on Zamakhshari).

Sayyid's comment ending with a lament is still being ignored: "As regards the good tiding in reference to the Prophet's dream of pilgrimage to the Grand Mosque, in peace, without fear, it proved true by the next year. Subsequently it proved true in a much bigger way when he entered Makkah triumphant three years later.

"(To dwell upon the first fulfillment – of pilgrimage next year – the Prophet (*saws*) put on the pilgrimage garb at Dhu al-Hulayfah and, carrying the sacrificial animal with him, started off with his Companions chanting the '*talbiyyah*.' When he reached Marr al-Dhahran, he sent forward Muhammad b. Maslamah (who was born two years before the Prophet was commissioned, and was one of those few who were named Muhammad in the times of *Jahiliyyah*: Ibn Hajr), with the arms loaded on camels to deposit them in the Yajaj valley. He himself proceeded with only the swords and although they were kept in their sheathes, the pagans were struck with fear and awe. They sent Mikraz b. Hafs to him. He said, 'Muhammad. We have

never before experienced breaking of a promise by you.' He asked, 'What do you mean?' He said, 'You are entering upon us with your arms!' He answered, 'That's not correct. We have sent the arms away to Y ajaj.' Mikraz said, 'This is how we have known you, true to your promise.'

"The chiefs of the Quraysh left Makkah unable to bear the sight of the Prophet and his Companions, leaving behind old men, women and children. These squatted on the pavements watching the Prophet's entry. He sent the sacrificial animals to Dhu Tuwa and entered on his camel Qaswa', the very camel he rode on the occasion of Hudaybiyyah. 'Abdullah ibn Raw aha was leading her by its halter.

"This is how the vision was proven true. Then came the fall of Makkah and the religion of Islam prevailed over the religion of Makkah, and then on, gradually, over all other religions in the Arabian Peninsula.

"Thereafter, the religion became dominant, not in the Arabian Peninsula alone, but, before half a century would pass, it was dominating a great part of the known world: it prevailed over the Persian Empire, over a large part of the Roman Empire. It established itself in India, China,

East Asia, Malaysia and Indonesia. These were the most populated lands of the time.

“The religion has remained triumphant against all other religions, even after its political power declined over a large chunk of the lands, especially in Europe and in the islands of the White Sea.

“If the religion of Islam has remained triumphant, prevailing over all other religions, it is because of its own force. By its very nature it is a powerful religion. It moves forward without the sword and without a power to take its cause. This in turn is because of its harmony with nature and laws that also operate on the creations in existence .. because of its conformity with the human aspirations at the intellectual and spiritual level .. because of its concurrence with the needs of societies, cultures and their need to progress .. because of its compatibility with a variety of human societies: living in slums or in palatial buildings.

“There is no observer, who will observe with an eye free of prejudice and passion, but will agree with the soundness of this religion, the power hidden within it, its ability to lead the humans rightly, and its inherent ability to meet with the demands and desires of humanity.

“Thus, Allah kept His promise of giving this religion political and material superascendancy over all other systems, which happened in just about a century. Then on, this religion has remained dominant at the intellectual and spiritual level. Indeed, it is the only religion which has now remained at the scene. It does not merely promise to meet with human requirements, but also has the ability to do so.

“But perhaps it is Muslims themselves who are unable to realize the ability, the potentiality, and suitability of this religion. Others understand it very well. Not surprisingly, they are scared of it, and shape their policies taking this into account.”

[29] Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah,⁵² and those who are with him - tough on the unbelievers,⁵³ kind among themselves⁵⁴ - you will see them in deep bow, prostrating, seeking Allah's bounty and Approval.⁵⁵ Their marks are in their faces from the effects of prostrations.⁵⁶ That is their similitude in the Tawrah.⁵⁷ And their similitude in the Injeel:⁵⁸ like a plant that puts forth its blade,⁵⁹ then makes it strong, so that it becomes thick and stands on its stem.⁶⁰ It pleases the farmers. So that He⁶¹ may enrage the unbelievers by them.⁶² Allah has promised those of them⁶³ who believed and did righteous deeds, forgiveness and a great reward.⁶⁴

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِّنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ فَآزَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَى عَلَى سُوقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيُغَيِّظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٢٩﴾

52. Since the Quraysh insisted on the Prophet's name not to be written as "Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah," Allah sent down revelation in these very words (Shafi` and others).

53. When the Qur'an instructs the Muslims to be tough on the unbelievers, is it contradicting itself? Has it not said (60: 8),

لَا يَنْهَكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٨﴾ [الممتحنة: ٨]

"Allah does not prevent you from those who did not fight you in religion nor expelled you from your homes, that you should do good to them or do justice to them. Surely, Allah approves of the just?!" Is the Ayah un-

der question contradicting this one? The answer is: it is not. If a situation of war occurs with the unbelievers, when they fight against Islam, then no mercy should be shown to them. Otherwise, the dealing with them should be on the basis of kindness and justice. History has recorded thousands of instances of the Prophet, his Companions and the later generation Muslims treating the unbelievers with kindness (based on Mufti Shafi's note).

Sayyid expands: "The believers are tough on the unbelievers. They are tough upon such people as among whom are their parents, brothers, the kin and friends. They are above the ties of blood and kinship. They severed these relationships to be-

come brothers unto other believers. Thus, if there is severity in them, it is with reference to Allah, and if love, it is with reference to Allah. There are warm feelings in them on the basis of faith, and magnanimity on the basis of faith. There is nothing that they do for their own souls. They set their compassion and their feelings on sound principles as they set their character and behavior on sound principles: that of their faith, shred of egoism and base desires. The eruption of their passions was for no other reason but for Allah, and they made ties for no other reason but for Allah.”

54. The pagans of the Prophet’s time did not approve that their bodies should be touched by the bodies of others, or even their clothes should come into contact with another man’s clothes. On the other hand Muslims are allowed to shake hands or even embrace each other. Abu Hanifah however disapproved that Muslims should embrace each other. In fact, he disapproved that they should kiss each other. He said, “I do not like that a Muslim should kiss another, either on the forehead, his hands, or any other part of the body.” But Abu Yusuf allowed embrace (Zamakhshari, Alusi).

There is good amount of wisdom in Abu Hanifah’s opinion. The youth,

male and female, should especially be discouraged from embracing each other in view of high passions evoking unhealthy thought (Au.).

Alusi adds: There is nothing more that two Muslims might do when they meet with each other than shaking hands. Every addition is uncalled for. A *hadith* says:

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
الرَّجُلُ مِنَّا يَلْقَى أَخَاهُ أَوْ صَدِيقَهُ أَيْتَحْنِي لَهُ قَالَ
«لَا». قَالَ أَفَيَلْتَزِمُهُ وَيُقْبِلُهُ قَالَ «لَا». قَالَ أَفَيَأْخُذُ
بِيَدِهِ وَيُصَافِحُهُ قَالَ «نَعَمْ». قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا
حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ.

Anas b. Malik reported that a man said to the Prophet, “Messenger of Allah. One of us meets with his brother, or a friend. Should he bow down for him?” He answered, “No.” He asked, “Should he embrace him and kiss him?” He answered, “No.” He asked, “Should he take him by the hand to shake hands?” He replied, “Yes.”

However, there does not seem to be anything wrong if one were to greet someone coming back from a journey by embracing him. ‘A’isha reports that once Zayd b. Haritha entered Madinah and came to the Prophet. He rushed to the door to receive him and embrace him.” In

fact, to the above *hadith* of Anas, another version adds that when asked whether one could kiss another, the Prophet replied, "No, unless he were to be coming back from a journey."

Back to the verse, Ibn Kathir points out that Muslim to Muslim relationship should be based on love and affection. The Prophet has said, as in a *hadith* of the *Sahihayn*:

«الْمُؤْمِنُونَ كَرَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ إِنْ اِشْتَكَى رَأْسُهُ تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ بِالْحَمَى وَالسَّهَرِ».

"The example of the believers is like a man. When his head aches, his whole body responds with fever and wakefulness at night."

55. Majid quotes a witness from among the unbelievers of the modern times: "These men were the true moral heirs of the Prophet, the future apostles of Islam, the faithful trustees of all that Muhammad revealed unto the men of God .. They had really changed for the better from every point of view, and later on as statesmen and generals, in the most difficult moments of the war of conquest they gave magnificent and undeniable proof that the ideas and the doctrines of Muhammad had been seed cast on fruitful soil, and had produced a body of men of the very highest worth. They were deposi-

tors of the sacred text of the Qur'ān, which they alone knew by heart: they were the jealous guardians of the memory of every word and bidding of the Prophet, the trustees of the moral heritage of Muhammad." (Caetani, quoted in Arnold's *Preaching of Islam*, pp. 41-42).

56. The unanimous answer to the question whether the allusion by "*athar al-sujud*" is to the dark patch that obtains on the forehead of a man who does his Prayers regularly, is that it is not. But rather, it is to a great deal of standing in Prayers, especially deep in the night, bowing and prostrations which turns a face outstanding and distinguishable from others. It is a slightly drawn face, bright, sort of yellowish, serious, solemn, and tranquil. This is the "mark" that the *Ayah* is speaking of and which will brighten the face on the Day of Judgment. This was the opinion of the great majority of the *Salaf* such as Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Hasan, Muqatil and others (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Alusi, summarized).

Sahih reports say that when Allah (*swt*) would be done with the reckoning of the people on the Day of Judgment, and would wish to show mercy to whom He will, He will order that everyone who ever said "*la*

ilaha illa Allah” be removed from the Fire. It is from the marks of prostration that the monotheists will be recognized. The Fire would have eaten all parts of their body but not the marks of prostration. Allah has forbidden that Fire should eat the marks of prostration. Here too the reference is to the mark as explained above. Accordingly, when Mujahid was asked whether the reference was to the mark on the forehead due to prostrations, he replied, “No. A man might have a big dark patch on his forehead although his heart as hard as a stone” (Qurtubi).

Nawawi however explained that “the mark of prostration” which the Fire will not eat, as reported in the *ahadith* of the *Sahihayn*, covers all those seven parts on which a man prostrates (Au.).

It is reported of an early Muslims that he said, “By Allah, we prayed obtaining no marks on our foreheads. But in our times people pray and have big dark patches on their foreheads. I do not know whether the heads have become heavier now, or the earth has become harder” (Zamakhshari, Alusi).

(Imām) Malik reported: “It has reached me that when the Christians saw the Companions who con-

quered the Syrian territories, they remarked, ‘By God, these look better than the apostles (of Christ), as we have known them’” (Ibn Kathir).

57. The break here between the previous and the next passage is, as understood by majority of the *Salaf*, indicates that what precedes is the similitude as given in *Tawrah*, while what follows is the similitude as given in the *Inj il* (Ibn Jarir).

58. Qurtubi believes that the break discussed under note 57 above should be here, meaning, this is the similitude of the Muslims as stated in the *Tawrah* and *Injil*. This was the opinion of Mujahid. Farra’ is reported to have said that a break at any of the two points is allowable.

59. “Blade” is the nearest word that English can offer; otherwise, as Qurtubi points out, “*shatt*” is for the second bud that emerges on the side of the first shoot of a seed.

60. This, as Ibn ‘Abbas and others understood, is the example of the believers. The first one appears as a weak Muslim individual, a mere blade, then, gradually others join to become a community, and then the community engages itself in commanding the virtuous and prohibiting the evil, enraging the unbelievers (Ibn Jarir).

More specifically, writes Qurtubi, the first shoot is the Prophet, of whom several side shoots emerged, adding on (until they became the tree of Islam: Au.).

Majid quotes from the *Bible*: “Another parable he put before them, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches’” (Matt. 13: 31-32).

And,

“And he said, To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what comparison shall we compare it? [It is] like a grain of mustard-seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that are in the earth. But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under its shade” (Mark 4: 30-32).

61. That is, Allah.

62. It is on the basis of this *Ayah* that Imām Malik declared the *Rawafid* as unbelievers. They are angry with the Companions, while Allah said that it

is only the unbelievers who are angered by the Companions (Qurtubi [in different words], Ibn Kathir, Alusi and others).

63. The textual “*min*” is not conditional to include some and exclude others, but rather to express the genus. The usage is similar to saying (22: 30),

فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ ۚ [الحج: ٣٠]

“Therefore, shun the abomination of the idols” – (and not “some” of the idols).

Or (17: 82),

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ [الاسراء: ٨٢]

“We send down of the Qur’ān what is a cure” which does not mean some of the Qur’ān is a cure while the rest is not. In fact, in common Arabic we say,

قطعت من الثوب قميصا

“I cut a shirt from the cloth” which does not mean, from a part of the cloth, but rather, from the whole of it. In the like manner the *Ayah*, “Allah has promised those of them who believed and did righteous deeds” should not be thought to be saying, “Only those of them who believe and do righteous deeds will be given the reward, but not the rest” (Qurtubi).

Shabbir points out in sum and substance that (even if we take the textual “*min*” as conditional), it is quite possible that the Revelation was not allowing them to relax. Allah does not give such clear and unequivocal tiding that would encourage a people to (a relaxed life).

64. Qurtubi writes: Some people point to the battles that took place between the Companions and justify their criticism of the Companions, saying that although they were all on right guidance at the beginning of the affair, they underwent changes thereafter. Such critics forget, continues Qurtubi, that this Qur’ān (is eternal, and) thus the praise it carries is eternal. Both the Qur’ān, as well the Prophet’s *ahadith* mention them in good terms. A *hadith* of Bukhari says,

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - «لَا تَسُبُّوا أَصْحَابِي، فَلَوْ أَنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ أَتَفَقَّ مِثْلَ أُحُدٍ ذَهَبًا مَا بَلَغَ مُدًّا أَحَدِهِمْ وَلَا نَصِيفَهُ»

“Do not revile my Companions. If one of you were to spend gold equivalent to Mount Uhud, he will not achieve a *mudd* of them, nor even half of it” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

A *mudd* is what two hands joined together hold, and equivalent of about half a bushel (Au.).

Shafi` adds a *hadith*:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مُعْقَلٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- «اللَّهُ اللَّهُ فِي أَصْحَابِي اللَّهُ اللَّهُ فِي أَصْحَابِي لَا تَتَّخِذُوهُمْ غَرَضًا يَغْلِي فَمَنْ أَحَبَّهُمْ فَبِحَبِّي أَحَبَّهُمْ وَمَنْ أَبْغَضَهُمْ فَبِبُغْضِي أَبْغَضَهُمْ وَمَنْ آذَاهُمْ فَقَدْ آذَانِي وَمَنْ آذَانِي فَقَدْ آذَى اللَّهَ وَمَنْ آذَى اللَّهَ فَيُوشِكُ أَنْ يَأْخُذَهُ». قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ غَرِيبٌ لَا نَعْرِفُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ هَذَا الْوَجْهِ.

On the authority of `Abdullah b. Mughaffal, the Prophet said, “Allah! Allah! Do not take to criticizing my Companions after me. Whoever loved them, loved them in love of me and whoever hated them hated them in hatred of me. Whoever displeased them displeased me and whoever displeased me surely displeased Allah. And, whoever displeased Allah, it is possible He will seize him.”

The above *hadith*, also found in Ahmad, was declared Hasan Gharib by Tirmidhi. It is also in the *Sahih* of Ibn Hibban (Au.).

Surah 49

Al-Hujurat¹

Madinan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] O you who have believed, do not put forward before Allah and His Messenger;² and fear Allah, surely Allah is All-hearing, All-knowing.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْدِمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ
اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِنَّا اللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١﴾

1. Asad sums up the contents of the chapter, although without being comprehensive: “.. this *Surah* deals predominantly with social ethics. Beginning with the reverence to the Prophet (*saws*) and – by implication to the righteous leaders of the community after him, the discourse culminates in the principle of brotherhood of all believers (verse 10) and, in its widest sense, the brotherhood of all mankind (verse 13). The concluding passage (verses 14 ff.) points out the difference between true faith and a mere outward observance of religious formalities.”

Sayyid writes: “This chapter is no more than 18 verses, but, meaning wise, a long one. It consists of major truths concerning faith and prac-

tice, as well as aspects that concern life and existence. They are truths that open up distant horizons for the heart and mind and offer deep meanings and profound ideas to the inner self. It consists of methods of education and training, while it expounds basics of law and oneness of Divinity. In short, it carries such matter as would normally require a hundred verses.”

2. The statement is: “*Do not put forward.*” But what is it that one may not put forward? The object is missing. It has been answered that if it has been kept open, it is to include everything, so that, one should not place one’s own interests before that of Allah and His Messenger, or one’s opinions, or interests, or anything

else. In short, Allah and His Messenger should come first (Alusi and others).

Ibn `Abbas said in explanation, “Do not say anything against the Qur’ān and the *Sunnah*.” Another opinion coming from Ibn `Abbas is that the Muslims were ordered not to speak when the Prophet (*saws*) was speaking. It also means to say, do not give preference to your opinion where Allah’s or His Messenger’s has been sounded. Qatadah said that (some of the Companions) used to say, “only if such and such commandment could be sent down ..” So Allah (*swt*) revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

Hasan said that on the occasion of an `Eid, some people slaughtered their sacrificial animal before the Prophet (*saws*) could do. The Prophet ordered them a repeat (Ibn Jarir, Kashshaf, Qurtubi).

Thus, a general rule has been promulgated here: where there is an injunction from the Qur’ān or *Sunnah*, there is no room for personal opinion.

Asad sums up: “This has both literal and a figurative meaning: literal in the case of the Prophet’s Companions, and figurative for them as well as for believers of later times – im-

plying that one’s personal opinions and predilections must not be allowed to overrule the clear-cut legal ordinances and/or moral stipulations promulgated by the Prophet.”

Yusuf Ali sums up: “Several shades of meaning are implied: (1) do not make yourselves conspicuous in word or deed when in the presence of Allah (e.g. in a Mosque, or at Prayers or religious assemblies): (2) do not anticipate in word or deed what your Leader (Allah’s Messenger) may say or do; (3) do not be impatient, trying to hasten things before the time is ripe, of which the best Judge is Allah, Who speaks through His Messenger. Be reverent in all things, as in the presence of Allah: for He hears and sees all things. (4) Look to the Qur’ān and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (*saws*) (peace be on him) for guidance and let nothing else take precedence of them.”

The following may be quoted to elucidate the issue:

عن أناسٍ من أهل حصصٍ من أصحابٍ معاذٍ بن جبل: ”أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَمَّا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ مُعَاذًا إِلَى الْيَمَنِ قَالَ كَيْفَ تَقْضِي إِذَا عَرَضَ لَكَ قَضَاءٌ؟ قَالَ أَقْضِي بِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ. قَالَ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ فَبِسُنَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فِي سُنَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَلَا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ أَجْتَهِدُ بِرَأْيِي وَلَا أَلُو، فَضَرَبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

صَدْرُهُ، فَقَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَفَّقَ رَسُولَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ
لِمَا يَرْضَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ.“

It was reported by some of the companions of Mu`adh in Hims that when the Prophet was sending Mu`adh b. Jabal to Yemen he asked him, “How will you judge when you encounter an affair?” He answered, “I shall judge by Allah’s Book.” He asked, “But if you did not find it in Allah’s Book?” He replied, “Then by the *Sunnah* of Allah’s Messenger.” The Prophet then asked, “But what if you did not find it in the *Sunnah* of Allah’s Messenger, nor in Allah’s Book?” He answered, “Then I shall work out my personal opinion, without caring (for the people’s criticism).” The Prophet struck him on his chest and said, “Praise to Allah that He inspired the messenger of the Messenger of Allah with what has the approval of Allah’s Messenger” (Ibn Kathir, Sayyid).

The report is considered weak because of the unknown first narrator,

but because of the implied support from the Qur`ān, it has been accepted as a working principle by the *Fuqaha*’ (Au.).

The Companions received the message well enough. None of them offered his personal opinion to the Prophet in matters related to religion. None of them suggested anything unless the Prophet himself inquired; to the extent that even when they knew the answer, they would yet say that Allah and His Messenger knew better. We have a good example of this in the reports of the Prophet’s speech at the farewell pilgrimage. He asked the audience, “What month is this?” Now, everyone knew what month it was. But they answered, “Allah and His Messenger know better.” They did that because they thought he would give the month a new name. He went on asking questions, but, despite knowing the answers, they kept on saying, “Allah and His Messenger know better.” This was their reverence, the true face of piety (Sayyid, slightly reworded).

[2] O you who have believed, raise not your voices above the Prophet's voice, nor speak aloud to him in talk,³ like the loudness of some of you to others⁴ – lest your deeds collapse while you perceive not.⁵

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ
قَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ
كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ
أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢﴾

3. That is, do not shout out saying, “O Muhammad, O Muhammad,” or, “O Prophet of Allah, O Prophet of Allah,” or, “O Messenger of Allah, O Messenger of Allah” (Ibn Jarir).

It seems several events took place that could be connected to the revelation of this passage. (Bukhari for instance has the following: Qurtubi),

عَنْ ابْنِ أَبِي مُلَيْكَةَ قَالَ كَادَ الْحَيْرَانِ أَنْ يَهْلِكَ أَبُو
بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا رَفَعَا أَصْوَاتَهُمَا عِنْدَ
النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حِينَ قَدِمَ عَلَيْهِ رَكْبُ
بَنِي تَمِيمٍ فَأَشَارَ أَخَذَهُمَا بِالْأَفْرَعِ بْنِ خَابِسٍ أَخِي بَنِي
مُجَاشِعٍ وَأَشَارَ الْآخَرُ بِرَجُلٍ آخَرَ قَالَ نَافِعٌ لَا أَحْفَظُ
اسْمَهُ فَقَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ لِعُمَرَ مَا أَرَدْتُ إِلَّا خِلَافِي قَالَ مَا
أَرَدْتُ خِلَافَكَ فَارْتَفَعَتْ أَصْوَاتُهُمَا فِي ذَلِكَ فَأَنْزَلَ
اللَّهُ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ الْآيَةَ قَالَ
ابْنُ الزُّبَيْرِ فَمَا كَانَ عُمَرُ يُسْمِعُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَعْدَ هَذِهِ الْآيَةِ حَتَّى يَسْتَفْهِمَهُ

Ibn Abi Mulaykah says that the two good men Abu Bakr and `Umar were almost destroyed when they raised their voices in the presence of the Prophet at the time the Ban Tamim delegation arrived. One of them suggested Al-Aqra` b. Habis of

Banu Muj ashe` as suitable for leadership, while the other suggested another man – Nafe` said he could not remember his name. Abu Bakr told `Umar, ‘It seems you mean nothing but to oppose me.’ `Umar replied, ‘No, I didn’t mean that at all.’ They both raised their voices and Allah revealed, “Do not raise your voices above the Prophet’s voice..” Ibn Zubayr added that thereafter `Umar spoke to the Prophet in such low tones that he had to ask him to repeat (Ibn Jarir, Sayyid).

In this context there is another report which comes from ibn Shim as, he from his father. He said, “When this *Ayah* was revealed Thabit b. Qays sat down in the street weeping. `Asim b. `Adiyy happened to pass by and asked him why. Thabit said that perhaps the *Ayah* about not raising voices above that of the Prophet was revealed to warn him, as he was a man of loud voice, and so, a man of the Fire. While `Asim went to the Prophet, Thabit went home and

said to his wife Jam ila, a daughter of `Abd Allah b. Ubayy b. Sallul to close the door of the stable behind him and nail it, which she did. He said he would not come out until the Prophet ordered him released. On the other side `Asim reported to the Prophet that Thabit thought he was of the Fire. The Prophet told him to fetch him. `Asim went to the same spot and not finding him there went to his house. There his wife Jam ila told him the story. `Asim removed the nails and took him to the Prophet. He told him, 'Are you not satisfied that you should live praised, die as a martyr and enter Paradise?' Accordingly, reports says he died fighting the apostates in Yamamah (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

A shorter version of this report is in Bukhari, Muslim and others.

Qurtubi adds: When the Muslims met Musaylimah the Liar's men in battle, initially they faced defeat. Thabit and Salim (the freed slave of Abu Hudayfah) said, "This is not how we used to fight during the Prophet's life." Then they dug themselves into a pit and fought on until both were martyred. It was then that the famous incident of Abu Bakr acting upon a dream took place. What happened was that Thabit was wearing

an expensive coat of mail. Someone passed by after his martyrdom and took it off. Thabit appeared in another Muslim's dream and told him to inform Khalid about what had happened. He identified the person and the place where his coat of mail could be found. He also told this person in his dream not to dismiss it as a mere dream but rather to inform Abu Bakr to pay back such and such a loan that he had left behind him by disposing off the coat of mail. Khalid retrieved the coat of mail and Abu Bakr got the "testament after death" executed.

Scholars have said that raising voices near the Prophet's grave is similar to raising voices in his presence when he was alive (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Bukhari reports that `Umar ibn al-Khattab heard raised voices of two men in the Prophet's mosque. He asked them, "Do you realize where you are?" Then he asked them where they were from. They said they were from Ta'if. He said, "If you had been an inhabitant of Madinah, I would have got you whipped" (Ibn Kathir, Sayyid).

4. Asad comments: "While this relates in the first instance to the Prophet (*saws*), it may also be taken to apply to any supreme leader of the

[3] Verily those who lower their voices in the presence of the Messenger of Allah⁶ are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested for piety.⁷ For them is forgiveness and a mighty reward.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَغْضُّونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ افْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوَى لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

[4] Surely those who shout out for you from without the apartments,⁸ most of them do not understand.⁹

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَنَادُونَكَ مِنَ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾

community (*amir al-mu'minin*) who acts as the Prophet's successor (*Khalifah*) and rules in his name, i.e., under the aegis of Islamic Law."

5. (A Muslim needs to be careful about what he utters speaking out only the truth. The dissolution of deeds can take place without a man realizing it). A *hadith* of Bukhari says,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَسْكَكُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ مِنْ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ لَا يُلْقِي لَهَا بَالًا يَرْفَعُهُ اللَّهُ بِهَا دَرَجَاتٍ وَإِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَسْكَكُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ مِنْ سَخَطِ اللَّهِ لَا يُلْقِي لَهَا بَالًا يَهْوِي بِهَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ.

The Prophet (*saws*) said, "A man speaks out a word of Allah's approval without paying much attention to it, but Allah raises his ranks thereby. Conversely, a man speaks out a word of Allah's disapproval without paying any attention to it but Allah sinks him into Hellfire because of it" (Ibn Kathir).

6. The main point is reverence of the Prophet which scholars deserve after him. It is reported of Ibn `Abbas

that he would go to Ubayy's house for learning the Qur'an, but would not knock at his door; rather wait for him to emerge. When Ubayy asked him why he would not knock, Ibn `Abbas replied that a scholar among his people is like a Prophet was among his Companions (Alusi).

7. The meaning given by Mujahid and Qatadah is that Allah (*swt*) tried these people and purified their hearts, just like, Ibn Jarir adds, gold and silver are heated on the fire to remove impurities.

8. The textual word "*hujrah*" is any piece of land that is surrounded by a wall or fence. (It may or may not have an apartment within: Au.). Accordingly, a walled land for keeping camels is also a "*hujrah*" (Qurtubi, Alusi).

Hujurat al-Nabiyy:

The Prophet (*saws*) had nine "*hujurat*" for his nine wives. `Ata al-Khurasani said that the "*hujurat*" were walled with frond (date-palm

branches), and a thick-hair cloth-curtain hung on the doors. Reports in Bukhari's *Adab al-Mufrad*, Ibn Abi Dunya and Bayhaqi tell us that the *hujurat* were also covered from outside with hair-cloth. The distance from the fence door to the door of the apartment was around 6-7 feet. The apartment itself was around 10 feet by 7-8 feet. Hasan said that he used to enter the apartments of the Prophet's wife during the *Khilafah* of 'Uthman, and could touch the roof. They were all included into the mosque of the Prophet (*saws*) by the order of Walid b. 'Abdul Malik, while the people were weeping. Sa'id b. Musayyib said, "By Allah, it would have been better if they had left the '*hujurat*' as they were in order to be a lesson for generation after generation of Muslims to impress on them the kind of life their Prophet led." Abu Umamah Sahl b. Hunayf is also reported to have made the same remarks (Alusi).

Ibn Kathir writes in his "*Al-Bid'ayah wa al-Nihayah*": Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik – the Umayyad *Khalifah* (d. 131 A.H.: Au.) ordered 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz to pay the price and demolish the houses of the Prophet's wives to widen the Prophet's mosque. He gathered together the ten *Fuqaha* of Madinah and other scholars for

consultation. They disagreed with him saying that those were low-roof apartments made from very simple construction materials. So, they may be left as they are to be a lesson for the visitors, who might learn that palatial houses are for Pharaohs .. etc. 'Abdul 'Aziz wrote back the consensus of the ten *Fuqaha* to Al-Walid but he insisted that they be demolished. So 'Abdul 'Aziz had no recourse but to demolish them. When the work was begun the Madinans and in particular Banu Hashim began to weep. The general public too wept the way they had wept at the Prophet's death (Au.).

9. "To shout aloud to your Leader from outside his Apartments shows disrespect both for his person, his time, and his engagements. Only ignorant fools would be guilty of such unseemly behaviour. It is more seemly for them to wait and bide their time until he is free to come out and attend to them. But, with the Messenger of Allah, much is forgiven that is due to lack of knowledge and understanding. In an earthly Court, ignorance of the Law excuseth no man. If a man behaved in that way to the General of an army or the Governor of a Province, not to speak of an earthly King, he would be laid hands on by the Guard, and could

[5] Had they observed patience until you came out to them,¹⁰ it would have been better for them.¹¹ And Allah is All-forgiving, All-kind.

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥﴾

never gain the access he desires” (Yusuf Ali).

10. It is widely reported that this verse was revealed in response to an incident involving Al-Aqra' b. Habis of the Tamim tribe. He stood outside the Prophet's house and began shouting, “O Muhammad, O Muhammad.” (He had a few men with him and the Prophet (*saws*) was then in his noon siesta: Qurtubi). The Prophet (*saws*) came out and asked him what the matter was. Al-Aqra' said,

يا محمد إن حمدي زين وإن ذمي شين

“Muhammad. My praise is good and my curse is evil.” The Prophet (*saws*) said, “Woe unto you man, that's Allah,” and this verse was revealed (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi). That is, that kind of description befits Allah (Au.).

The above report is in Ahmed (Ibn Kathir), but in the opinion of Haythami it is quite likely to be *Mursal* (S ami). It is also in Tirmidhi who termed it Hasan Gharib (Au.).

11. It is said that the men so shouting impatiently, had gone to the Prophet (*saws*) to seek release of some of their men taken captive. The Prophet released half of them on ransom and the rest free of cost. But, had they been patient, as the Qur'ān said, it would have been better for them, for, the Prophet was likely to have freed all of them without ransom (Qurtubi).

Alusi adds that subsequently the Tamimis and the Muslims gathered together in the mosque where a sort of competition took place between a poet (Zabarq an b. Badr) and an orator (ʿUtarid b. Hajib) from their side, while a poet (Hass an b. Thabit) and an orator (Thabit b. Qays) represented the Prophet's side. When it concluded their chieftain Aqra' b. Habis admitted that the Muslim poet and orator had defeated their poet and orator, and, in consequence, he and his tribal representatives embraced Islam.

[6] O you who have believed, if there comes to you an ungodly (person)¹² with a piece of news, then investigate,¹³ lest you afflict a people unwittingly and then become, about what you did, remorseful.¹⁴

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ
فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْحَبُوا
عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٦﴾

12. The textual word is “*fasiq*” which has been understood here as “liar.” That was the opinion of Ibn Zayd, Muqatil and Sahl b. ‘Abdullah. Abul Hasan al-Warrāq defined “*fasiq*” as someone who commits sins openly while Ibn Tahir thought that it is someone who is not mindful of Allah (and hence not ashamed of himself: Au.) – Qurtubi. Raghīb has said that “*fisq*” can involve minor as well as major sins and hence there are grades of “*fisq*”, “*kufir*” being at its extreme end” (Alusi).

13. Two verses later, the question of how to deal with warring Muslim factions is dealt with. At this point Allah impresses on us that most troubles start because of rumors. Hence this present verse (Shabbir, reworded).

14. The following is reported as the context of revelation. The Prophet (*saws*) sent Walid b. ‘Uqbah b. Abi Mu‘ayt to Banu Mustaliq for collection of *zakah*. He went up to them but when they came out to receive him, almost in joy, he thought that

they were going to attack him and so retreated hastily. (It is said that his tribe and Banu Mustaliq had some quarrels between them before Islam: Au.). Walid returned to the Prophet (*saws*) and told him that they seem to have become apostates, had refused *zakah*, and had tried to kill him. On the other side Banu Mustaliq feared that there was something wrong in the man’s hasty retreat and sent a delegate on his heels. The Prophet (*saws*) asked them whether they had become apostates. They denied and explained what had happened, and Allah (*swt*) revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Mujahid and Qatadah add (as in Ibn Jarir: Au.) that the Prophet (*saws*) had actually sent Khalid ibn Walid after Walid b. ‘Uqbah’s return who reported back that he had witnessed their adhan and salah (Ibn Kathir).

The report about Walid is in Ahmed (Ibn Kathir). The narrative is in Tabarani while the narrators of Ahmed are trustworthy (Haythami). It was this Walid, writes Zamakh-

[7] And be mindful that you have Allah's Messenger amongst you. If he were to obey you in much of the affairs, you would surely suffer,¹⁵ but Allah has endeared to you the Faith,¹⁶ decking it fair in your hearts, and has made detestable to you unbelief, ungodliness and disobedience¹⁷: they indeed, they are the rightly guided.¹⁸

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ
فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ
إِلَيْكُمْ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ
إِلَيْكُمْ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ ﴿٧﴾

shari, who when appointed as governor of Kufa, led in *Fajr* Prayers and did four *raka'ah*. Then he turned to the congregation and asked, "Shall I do more for you?" He was drunk and 'Uthman removed him from the governorship.

There are one or two other unpleasant stories about him, but some scholars have contended the reports, and since his name has not appeared in the Qur'an, nor in the *hadith* in deprecatory terms, Thanwi points out that it is not allowable to think of Walid as a *fasiq* (Au.).

The *Ayah* tells us by implication, Razi, Qurtubi and Alusi write, that a single person's report (*khabr al-wahid*) is enough for acceptance of the news or a piece of information so long as he is not a *fasiq* (This establishes the strength of *Akhbar al-ahad* of the *hadith* literature: Au.).

15. As Allah said elsewhere (23: 71),

ولو اتبع الحق أهواءهم لفسدت السموات والأرض
ومن فيهن

"If the Truth were to follow their
vain desires, surely the heavens
and the earth and all there are
within them would be corrupted"
(Ibn Kathir, *Shabbir*).

Qatadah is reported to have recited this verse and said, "Look, it were none but the Companions of the Prophet (*saws*); yet Allah (*swt*) said that if the Messenger followed their opinions they would be put to difficulties. As for you, By Allah, you are worse than them in opinion, and less intelligent than them. Therefore, consult Allah's Book for it is the only trustworthy source (Ibn Jarir, shortened).

16. Hence the Prophetic statement,

"من سرته حسنته وساءته سيئته فهو مؤمن"

i.e., “He who is delighted with his good deeds and is distressed by his evil deeds is a believer.” (The report is in Tirmidhi who rated it *Hasan Sahih Gharib* (Au.).

17. The disobedience here is in particular reference to the disobedience of the Prophet (Ibn Jarir).

18. “Fortunate indeed was the generation among whom the Prophet of Allah walked in his daily life. His example was inspiring. Their inner Faith was dear to them; it was a thing to be proud of in their innermost hearts; and they loved discipline, obedience, and righteousness. No wonder all their other disadvantages were neutralised, and they went from strength to strength. Nothing but the Grace of Allah could have brought about such a result” (Yusuf Ali).

It is reported by Imām Ahmed and Nas a’i, (in his *Al-Kabir*) that after the pagans had withdrawn on the day of Uhud (another version says, the day of Hudaibiyyah: S ami), the Prophet (*saws*) said, “Line up so that I may praise my Lord.” So they fell in rows behind him and he made the following supplication,

(عن) عبيد بن رفاعه الزرقى قال: - لما كان يوم أحد وانكفأ المشركون قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم استووا حتى أثنوا على ربي فصاروا خلفه صفوفًا فقال

اللهم لك الحمد كله اللهم لا قابض لما بسطت ولا باسط لما قبضت ولا هادي لما أضللت ولا مضل لمن هديت ولا معطي لما منعت ولا مانع لما أعطيت ولا مقرب لما باعدت ولا مباعد لما قربت اللهم ابسط علينا من بركاتك ورحمتك وفضلك ورزقك اللهم إني أسألك النعيم المقيم الذي لا يحول ولا يزول اللهم إني أسألك النعيم يوم العيلة وإلا من يوم الخوف اللهم إني عائد بك من شر ما أعطيتنا وشر ما منعت اللهم حبيب إلينا الإيمان وزينه في قلوبنا وكره إلينا الكفر والفسوق والعصيان واجعلنا من الراشدين اللهم توفنا مسلمين وأحينا مسلمين وألحقنا بالصالحين غير خزايا ولا مفتونين اللهم قاتل الكفرة الذين يكذبون رسلك ويصدون عن سبيلك واجعل عليهم رجزك وعذابك اللهم قاتل الكفرة الذين أوتوا الكتاب إله الحق.

“O Allah, all praise belongs to You. O Allah there is no withholder of what You extend, nor an extender of what You withhold; no guide to him whom You sent astray and no one to send astray him whom You guided; no bestower of what You deny and no denier of what You bestow; no one to bring nearer what You send away and no one to send away what You draw close. O Allah, extend to us Your blessings, mercy, grace and provision. O Allah I ask You the lasting delight: those that do not shift, nor move away. O Allah, I ask You for blessings on a day of want, peace on a day of fear. O Allah, I seek Your protection against

[8] A favor from Allah and a bounty.¹⁹ And Allah is All-knowing, All-wise.

فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

﴿٨﴾

[9] And if two factions of the believers fight (among themselves), then make peace between them. Thereafter, if one of them rebels against the other,²⁰ then fight the faction that rebels until it reverts to the ordinance of Allah.²¹ But if it reverts, then make peace between the two equitably.²² And be just, surely Allah loves the just.²³

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَىٰ فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّىٰ تَفِيءَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٩﴾

what you have bestowed on us and the evil of what you have denied. O Allah, endear the Faith to us, deck it fair in our hearts and make unbelief, impiety and disobedience detestable to us and make us of the rightly guided. O Allah, allow us die as Muslims, live as Muslims, and join us with the righteous ones: dishonored, and untried. O Allah, fight the unbelievers: those who cry lies to Your Messengers and prevent from Your path, and, place upon them Your abomination and Your torment. O Allah, fight the unbelievers from among those who were given the Book .. O the "True God" (Ibn Kathir).

19. If it is asked: this endearing of the faith, the detestation of unbelief, ungodliness and disobedience .. how did this all happen? The answer is:

this is a favor from Allah and His bounty (Ibn Jarir).

20. What does rebellion against the other faction constitute? Ibn Jarir says it consists in refusing to accept the judgment by the Book while the other faction accepts it.

And Ibn `Abbas has said that if the mainstream believers are to fight a rebelling party, it can only be done under the leadership of the Imām (the man heading the Muslim government) – Ibn Jarir.

It might also be noted that despite two Muslim factions coming to armed conflict with each other, Allah (swt) referred to them as believers, as against the Khawarij for instance, who believed that a sinner involved in major sins is out of the boundary of Islam. This is confirmed by a *hadith* also. Once the Prophet (saws)

addressed from the pulpit while Hasan b. 'Ali (a child) was with him. He pointed to Hasan and said,

إِنِّي هَذَا سَيِّدٌ وَلَعَلَّ اللَّهَ أَنْ يُصْلِحَ بِهِ بَيْنَ فِتْنَتَيْنِ عَظِيمَتَيْنِ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

“This my son is a true leader. Perhaps Allah will make peace between two huge Muslim factions through him” (Ibn Kathir). The report is in Bukhari and the point is, despite the two factions, Iraqis and Syrians, who had earlier met in the battlefields several times, the Prophet (*saws*) referred to them as Muslims in his prediction (Au.).

21. (This interference indeed is a religious duty: Au.). The Prophet (*saws*) has said,

عَنْ أَنَسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْصُرْ أَخَاكَ ظَالِمًا أَوْ مَظْلُومًا فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَنْصُرْهُ إِذَا كَانَ مَظْلُومًا أَفَرَأَيْتَ إِذَا كَانَ ظَالِمًا كَيْفَ أَنْصُرُهُ قَالَ تَحْجُزْهُ أَوْ تَمْنَعْهُ مِنَ الظُّلْمِ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ نَصْرُهُ.

“Help your brother, whether an oppressor or oppressed.” A man inquired, “Messenger of Allah, I could help him if he was oppressed. But what do you say if he happens to be the oppressor? How could I help him?”

He answered, “Restrain him, or prevent him from oppression.

That would be helping him” (Ibn Kathir).

22. Although several minor incidents took place, the major event to which the reference seems to be is as follows: Someone suggested to the Prophet (*saws*) that he should visit 'Abdullah b. Ubayy. (This was previous to the battle of Badr: Au.). He started off (on a donkey, with a group of believers on foot: Qurtubi). As he approached him he found him sitting with a group of people (from Aws, Khazraj and Jews: Au.), Ibn Ubayy remarked, “Keep a distance from me. Your donkey's smell is offensive.” (According to another report: “Don't blow dust into our faces”: Au.). At that one of the Ansar said, “By Allah, the smell of the Prophet's donkey is better than your smell.” That angered some of Ibn Ubayy's friends and they got divided into two groups (according to some reports, into Awsis and Khazrajis: Au.). Heated words led to blows and slippers into the hands. (The Prophet) prevented further violence by cooling down the several factions and left: Au.). Allah (*swt*) revealed this verse. It was of course a fight without arms (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Muslim has a longer version containing other details (Au.).

A few rules that are applicable to the situations where the mainstream Muslims fight a rebellious faction are as follows: No prisoners are to be taken from either side, women are not captured, booty cannot be seized, those fleeing cannot be chased, neither blood wit nor retaliation can be demanded (because the aim of the war is not to annihilate the other party, but to bring it back to the mainstream: Sayyid). It is also agreed by consensus that the battles between the Companions (Jamal, Siffin or others), were either accidental, or results of *ijtihad*. Therefore, criticism of either those who participated, or of those who refused to participate, is disallowed. Muslims cannot hold any grudge against any of the Companions because of the role he played in one of the battles between themselves because, although Talha and Zubayr were on the side opposing `Ali, the Prophet (*saws*) had said about Talha that he is one of the inhabitants of Paradise. Similarly, `Ali said about the murderer of Zubayr that he was in the Fire. One of the scholars of the past generation was asked to give his opinion about the battles that the Companions fought between themselves. He replied, "My hands are free of their blood, why should I color my tongue with

it?" When Hasan al-Busri was asked, he said, "The Companions of Muhammad were present, while we were absent, they knew while we are ignorant; when they arrive at a consensus, we follow them; and when they differ, we desist" (Qurtubi).

Another incident is reported in this context. It seems there was an Ansari called `Imran with a wife called Umm Zayd. She wished to visit her folks but he prevented her by locking her in an upper chamber. She sent word to her folks. They brought her down to take her with them. The husband showed up and sought the help of his own folks. The two groups came to blows and this verse was revealed. The Prophet (*saws*) made peace between them and the two agreed to accept Allah's judgment (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Yusuf Ali comments: "Individual quarrels are easier to compose than group quarrels, or, in the modern world, national quarrels. But the collective community of Islam should be supreme over groups or nations. It would be expected to act justly and try to compose the quarrel, for peace is better than fighting. But if one party is determined to be the aggressor, the whole force of the community is brought to bear on it. The

essential condition of course is that there should be perfect fairness and justice and respect for the highest principles; for Islam takes account of every just and legitimate interest without separating spiritual from temporal matters. The League of Nations failed because these essentials were absent and today the United Nations fails for the same reason.” (They make peace, but - being dishonest - without justice, and so the quarrels linger on: Au.).

Although in practice the issue can be quite complicated, the following *Fiqh* points may help understand a few situations:

Ahl al-Hall wa al-'Aqd

There can be no rebellion against an Islamic government established by consensus of the “*ahl al-hull wa al-'aqd*” (the releasing and binding authorities).

The “*ahl al-hull wa al-'aqd*” nominate the head of the state: the “*amir al-mu'minin*.” The qualifications are: he should be a Muslim, knowledgeable of state affairs, sagacious, a man of courage and character, and loyal to the *Ummah*. (Although desirable, he need not be a scholar, nor pious; enough if he is not a *fasiq*).

Anyone who nominates himself, or is desirable of the post is disqualified

by default unless nominated by the “*ahl al-hull wa al-'aqd*” (whatever his sentiments vis a vis the post).

The “*ahl al-hull wa al-'aqd*” have the authority to remove the head of state and replace, by consensus, whenever they feel things are going awry. No one else nor any Body can remove a head of state, except those who have the appointing authority.

Removal of the “*amirul mu'minin*” does not necessarily mean dismissal of ministers and high officials. The state keeps functioning and the transition is smooth: only the top position undergoes replacement, (just like a multinational corporate business, which changes its CEO without disturbing any sector of the company).

He in turn forms a “*Shoura*” (Advisory Council) to help him appoint officials to run the affairs (but in practice to fill in new posts, or remove a few erring ones hear and there).

The *Shoura* may include such members of the “*ahl al-hull wa al-'aqd*” who are ready to devote their time, whether on voluntary basis or at cost, to help the “*amir al-mu'minin*” in the affairs of the state: creating departments, department heads, replacement of some, and so on whenever the need arises. In other words,

the head of state has the authority to make his own choice on the basis of personal knowledge and that of the advisory council, where the posts involve national interests.

Since the governing authorities in Islam do no more than implement the directives of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, every department acts more or less autonomously, so long as instructions contrary to the practice do not arrive from the top, i.e., from the "amir" (and not from the *Shoura* whose range of power does not go downwards, but only acts upwards).

The "*ahl al-hull wa al-'aqd*" are Muslim leaders of the community and include: prominent scholars, tribal chiefs, social leaders, wealthy merchants, high-ranking officials, think-tanks, and other influential persons, but not artists, sportsmen and their like. They must necessary be "*adl*" that is, endowed with moral and religious uprightness, honesty and trustworthiness. Their job is to appoint an "amir" and help him in state affairs, when requested, but not to run the state. No one but the "amir" reports to them. In short, the *Shoura* is the Advisory Council and not the Governing Council.

The "*ahl al-hull wa al-'aqd*" (the Advisory body) need not necessarily

consist of such individuals alone as described above, but may be comprised of those who take active interest in community affairs, although the doors are open for anyone who qualifies.

The "*ahl al-hull wa al-'aqd*" cannot be elected by popular vote. They are the people who are there in the community, as a matter of fact and existence; such individuals who play their prominent role whether recognized by the common public or not.

It is also not necessary, though desirable, that every leading personality of the far-flung Islamic state should be consulted. If the local members of the "*ahl al-hull wa al-'aqd*" should choose someone, the choice is binding on all, unless there is protest, disagreement, and rejection by members of this class from other quarters of the state; in which case the body of the "*ahl al-hull wa al-'aqd*" will have to be expanded to include all who qualify and are desirable of participation.

The modern democratic system of election by popular vote does not meet with the Islamic requirement of nomination by the "*ahl al-hull wa ahl al-'aqd*" although its legality is established by another route as a tolerated evil. (It is another thing

[10] The believers are but brothers,²⁴ so make peace between your two (factional) brothers.²⁵ And fear Allah haply that you may be shown mercy.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَ
أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

that it is not adequate. Democracy today is the elitist means of robbing a country's resources. Like any other crime, Islam has no solution for political crimes).

No rebellion is allowable against an Islamic government that is established by the above process. Obedience is binding on all. Bay'ah (oath of allegiance) of the amir by the common folk or the elite, is not an absolute necessity (Au.).

23. Muslim has a *hadith* on the topic of justice. The Prophet (*saws*) said,

”إِنَّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ، عِنْدَ اللَّهِ، عَلَى مَنَابِرٍ مِنْ نُورٍ. عَنْ
بَيْنِ الرَّحْمَنِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ. وَكَلَّمْنَا يَدَيْهِ بَيْنَ الَّذِينَ يَعْدِلُونَ
فِي حُكْمِهِمْ وَأَهْلِيهِمْ وَمَا وَلَوْ“.

“Surely, those who render justice will be on rostrums of Light, near Allah, on the right side of the Compassionate, the Most honored, the Exalted - and both His hands are right; those who are just when they judge while dealing with their homefolk, and while dealing with what they are given charge of” (Ibn Kathir).

24. The tie of brotherhood in Islam is stronger than the tie of brotherhood by lineage. This is because brotherhood by lineage is broken if religions are different while brotherhood of Islam remains even if the tie of lineage is broken.

This was further emphasized by the Prophet (*saws*). He said, as in a tradition preserved by Muslim:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ”لَا تَحَاسَدُوا،
وَلَا تَنَاجَشُوا، وَلَا تَبَاغَضُوا، وَلَا تَدَابَرُوا، وَلَا يَبِعْ
بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَيْعِ بَعْضٍ. وَكُونُوا، عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا.
الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ. لَا يَظْلِمُهُ، وَلَا يَحْدُثُهُ، وَلَا
يَخْفَرُهُ. التَّقْوَى هَهُنَا“. وَيُشِيرُ إِلَى صَدْرِهِ ثَلَاثَ
مَرَاتٍ: ”يَحْسِبُ امْرَأً مِنَ الشَّرِّ أَنْ يَحْقِرَ أَخَاهُ
الْمُسْلِمَ. كُلُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ حَرَامٌ. دَمُهُ وَمَالُهُ
وَعَرْضُهُ“.

The Prophet (*saws*) said, “Do not envy each other, do not help raise prices up, do not carry ill will for each other, do not boycott each other, and let not some of you bid over (a commodity) already traded off to another; but rather, be Allah's slaves, brothers unto each other. A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim. He does not

[11] O you who have believed,²⁶ let not a people scoff at another;²⁷ may be they are better than themselves, nor should women (scoff) at other women; may be they are better than themselves.²⁸ Neither defame one another nor insult one another by (offensive) nicknames.²⁹ Evil is the ungodly name after faith. And, whoso repents not, those .. they are the evildoers.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

wrong him, does not humiliate him, and does not look down upon him. Piety is here – pointing to his chest, three times. It is enough of evil for a man that he should look down upon his brother Muslim. Everything of a Muslim is unlawful unto another Muslim: whether it is his blood, property or honor” (Qurtubi).

Ibn Kathir adds the following:

”الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ، لَا يَظْلِمُهُ وَلَا يُسْلِمُهُ

“A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim. He does not wrong him nor forsake him.”

Another report says,

وَاللَّهُ فِي عَوْنِ الْعَبْدِ مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنِ أَخِيهِ

“Allah is in the aid of a slave so long as he is in the aid of his brother.” A third report says,

”مَنْ دَعَا لِأَخِيهِ بِظَهْرِ الْغَيْبِ، قَالَ الْمَلَكُ الْمُوَكَّلُ بِهِ: آمِينَ، وَلَكَ بِمِثْلٍ“.

“Whoever supplicated for his brother in his absence, has the

guardian angel say, ‘Amin! And may you have similar (to it).’”

But of course, *ahadith* on this topic are pretty many. We have presented here a few as a sample (Ibn Kathir).

The above three *ahadith* are from Muslim’s collection (Au.).

25. Yet another proof that factional Muslims fighting each other remain Muslims is in the following. ‘Ali was asked about those who fought against him, “Were they polytheists?” He replied, “No. It is polytheism from which they had fled.” It was asked, “Were they hypocrites?” He answered, “No, because hypocrites do not remember Allah but little.” He was asked, “Then, how are they to be identified?” He answered, “Our brothers who rebelled against us” (Qurtubi).

26. In the following few verses directions are being given over the kind of interpersonal and social relationship that should be generated. Ibn Kathir

has the following from Ibn Majah, though he places it elsewhere in the *Surah*:

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَمْرٍو؛ قَالَ: رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَطُوفُ بِالْكَعْبَةِ وَيَقُولُ (مَا أَطْيَبُكَ وَأَطْيَبَ رِيحَكَ. مَا أَعْظَمَكَ وَأَعْظَمَ حُرْمَتَكَ. وَالَّذِي تَنْفُسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ! حُرْمَةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ أَعْظَمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ حُرْمَةً مِنْكَ. مَا لَهُ وَدَمِهِ، وَأَنْ تَنْظُرَ بِهِ إِلَّا خَيْرًا).

`Abdullah ibn `Umar reports: "I saw the Prophet (*saws*) going round the Ka'bah and saying, 'How good you and your smell! How great you and greatness of your sacredness! But, by Him in whose hand is Muhammad's life, surely the sacredness of a believer is greater with Allah than your sacredness, his property and his life; and that we are not to think of him but in good terms.'"

Bus iri has said that the chain of narration has been questioned. One of the narrators was distrusted by one, although trusted by another *hadith* Doctor (Sami).

27. It seems there were several incidents that provoked the revelation of this verse. One was that of Thabit b. Qays who had some hearing problem so that when he came he would try and sit close to the Prophet (*saws*) to be able to hear him. Once he came late, but saying, "Open up, open up," moved forward until someone

refused to move saying, "You have found a place to sit, so why don't you take your position there?" Thabit felt irritated and asked him who he was. The man identified himself saying that he was so and so, naming his father. Thabit said, "But you are the son of so and so," naming his mother. The man felt embarrassed and this verse was revealed. (Thabit said, "Hereafter I shall never pride on ancestry: Alusi). Dahh ak said it came down when the Banu Tamim delegate made fun of some of the poor Companions. Some say it was revealed when some people referred to `Ikrimah b. Abu Jahl as "the son of the Pharaoh of this *Ummah*." Other reasons have also been put forward (Qurtubi).

Mawdudi elucidates: "Mocking does not only imply mocking with the tongue but such things are also includes as mimicking someone, making pointed references to him, laughing out at his words, or his works, or his appearance, or his dress, or calling the people's attention to a defect in him so that others may also laugh at him. All these forms of behavior are forbidden."

28. It is said that the verse was revealed because two of the Prophet's wives made fun of Umm Salamah.

[12] O you who have believed, avoid much suspicion,³⁰ verily some suspicion is sin. And, do not spy,³¹ neither backbite one another.³² Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?³³ So you abhor it. Therefore, fear Allah, surely Allah is Oft-turning, All-kind.³⁴

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

On another occasion some other wives made fun of her height. Yet others say that the context of revelation is 'A'isha pointing to Safiyyah's short height. Some others referred to her as the daughter of a Jew which brought down this verse (Qurtubi).

29. Dahhak said that the Banu Salamah complained to the Prophet (*saws*) saying, "Messenger of Allah. You arrived in a situation when there was none among us but was given two or three nicknames. Now, when one of them was referred by a certain nickname, he felt insulted." So Allah revealed this verse. Other reports suggest that this was a common practice among the pre-Islamic Arabs. Nevertheless, the allusion here is not merely to nicknames. 'Ikrimah, Mujahid and others have said that using such appellations as, "O *Fasiq*," or, "O hypocrite," or addressing a former Jew or Christian as "O Jew," or "O Christian," or referring to someone's past after his repentance, etc., is also included (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

The report is in Ahmed, Abu Da'ud and Tirmidhi who termed it *Hasan Sahih*.

30. (A Muslim needs to be constantly on the guard lest he should fall into suspecting those who do not deserve to be suspected: Au.). 'Umar is reported to have said, "Do not fall into suspicion on the basis of a word that comes out of a man's mouth (errantly) except for giving him the benefit of doubt. You will discover that the uttered word is possible of a good interpretation." However, when all evidences are there, wisdom requires that they be taken at face value as it happened during the governorship of Walid b. 'Uqbah, when 'Uthman (ra) was the Caliph. At that time of the incident, Ibn Mas'ud was the Exchequer under Walid b. 'Uqbah himself. He (Walid) was brought to Ibn Mas'ud with his beard dripping wine. Ibn Mas'ud remarked, "We have been forbidden to spy. But if something appears right before us, then we go by it." (Walid was called

back to Madinah and given lashes on the order of `Uthman. Subsequently, after `Uthman's death, Waleed retreated to Al-Jazirah [Iraq], refusing to take part in the political struggle that ensued: Au.) – Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi.

There are, of course, several *ahadith* about entertaining good opinion of one another. One is from Bukhari (which Ibn Kathir quotes partially but we do it in full: Au.). It says,

أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ يَأْتِي عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ
إِيَّاكُمْ وَالظَّنَّ فَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ أَكْذَبُ الْحَدِيثِ وَلَا تَحَسَّسُوا
وَلَا تَحَسَّسُوا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا
الرَّجُلُ عَلَى خُطْبَةِ أَخِيهِ حَتَّى يَنْكُحَ أَوْ يَتْرَكَ.

Abu Hurayrah reports the Prophet (*sams*) as having said, “Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false tales. Do not spy, do not be inquisitive, do not carry mutual hatred, but rather, be brothers and let not a man propose after the proposal of a brother until he either marries or gives up” (Ibn Kathir).

Another version includes a few other things as in Muslim and Tirmidhi,

”لَا تَقَاطَعُوا، وَلَا تَدَابِرُوا، وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا، وَلَا تَحَسَّسُوا،
وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا، وَلَا يَحِلُّ لِلْمُسْلِمِ أَنْ يَهْجُرَ
أَخَاهُ فَوْقَ ثَلَاثٍ“.

قال أبو عيسى: هذا حديث حسن صحيح.

“Do not boycott each other, do not shun each other, do not bear hatred for each other, do not envy each other, but rather be slaves of Allah, brothers (unto each other); and, it is not lawful for a Muslim to shun his brother for more than three days” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

31. To be sure, annals of history record that once when `Umar and `Abd al-Rahman b. `Awf were patrolling the town, they passed by a house with lights on and emitting noises. `Umar suspected that they were drinking wine and asked ibn `Awf what should be their course of action. Ibn `Awf said they had good reason for punitive action. `Umar said, “But Allah has said, ‘Do not spy,’” and moved on (Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

(The following tradition recorded by Ahmed, Abu D a’ud and Nas a’i throws light on the topic of spying: Au.):

عن أبي الهيثم عن دخين كاتب عقبة بن عامر قال:

-قلت لعقبة إن لنا جيرانا يشربون الخمر وأنا داع لهم الشرط فيأخذوهم فقال لا تفعل ولكن عظمهم وتهددهم قال ففعل فلم ينتهوا قال فجاء دخين فقال إني نهيتهم فلم ينتهوا وأنا داع لهم الشرط فقال عقبة ويحك لا تفعل فإني سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول من ستر عورة مؤمن فكأنما استحيا موءودة من قبرها.

Dukhayn told `Uqbah b. ` Amir, "We have neighbors who drink wine. I intend to call the police to arrest them." He replied, "Do not do it. But, at best, admonish them and threaten them." Dukhayn did it to no avail. So he went to `Uqbah to say, "I tried to prevent them, but no use. So, I think I'll call the police now." `Uqbah said, "Woe unto you man, don't do it. I have heard the Prophet (*saws*) say, 'He who concealed a believer's hidden weakness, is like he who gave new life to an infant buried alive in her grave.'" (Ibn Kathir).

Another report, preserved by Abu Da'ud has Mu' awiyyah saying,

عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ " إِنْكَ إِنْ أَتَبَعْتَ
عَوْرَاتِ النَّاسِ أَفْسَدْتَهُمْ أَوْ كِدْتَ أَنْ
تُفْسِدَهُمْ

I heard the Prophet (*saws*) say, "If you pursued the people's hidden affairs you will corrupt them, or, almost so." Finally, Abu Umamah has a very pertinent report, also preserved by Abu D a'ud. It says,

أَبِي أُمَامَةَ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "إِنَّ
الْأُمَيْرَ إِذَا ابْتَغَى الرِّيَّةَ فِي النَّاسِ أَفْسَدَهُمْ"

"If a ruler pursues doubtful affairs of the people, he will cor-

rupt them" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

32. Ibn Jarir presents a *hadith* in this context in words slightly different from what they are in Tirmidhi from which we reproduce here,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: "قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا الْغِيْبَةُ؟
قَالَ: دَخْرُكَ أَخَاكَ بِمَا يَكْرَهُ. قَالَ: أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَانَ فِيهِ
مَا أَقُولُ؟ قَالَ: إِنْ كَانَ فِيهِ مَا تَقُولُ فَقَدْ اغْتَبَيْتُهُ، وَإِنْ
لَمْ يَكُنْ فِيهِ مَا تَقُولُ فَقَدْ بَهْتُهُ"

قال أبو عيسى: هذا حديث حسن صحيح.

The Prophet (*saws*) was asked, "What is backbiting?" He answered, "That you should say something about your brother what he dislikes (to hear)." He asked, "What about when what I say is there in him?" He answered, "If what you say is there in him then you have done backbiting. But if it is not in him then you have slandered him."

It is also reported that a woman entered upon ` A'isha. When she rose up to go, she signaled with her hand to indicate how short she was. The Prophet (*saws*) told her, "You committed backbiting against her." (Ibn Jarir, Kashsh af, Ibn Kathir, Alusi). On another occasion when a man got up from the Prophet's company, he evinced weakness. They said (after he was gone), "Messenger of Allah, how weak he is." He replied, "You

ate your brother's flesh and have done him backbiting" (Ibn Jarir).

Another report has 'A'isha reporting about herself in a *hadith Sahih* documented by Tirmidhi:

قالت فقلت: يا رسول الله، إِنَّ صَفِيَّةَ امْرَأَةً وَقَالَتْ
يَبْدِيهَا هَكَذَا كَأَنَّمَا تَغْنِي قَصِيرَةً، فَقَالَ: لَقَدْ مَزَجَتْ
بِكَلِمَةٍ لَوْ مَزَجَ بِهَا مَاءُ الْبَحْرِ لَمُرَجٌ.

"I said, 'Messenger of Allah, Safiyyah is a woman .. (pointing with her hand that she was so short).' He answered, 'You have adulterated (your talk) with a word (of such class) that had you adulterated it with sea water, it would have adulterated it.'"

However, there are situations in which making an unsalutary remark about a person is not counted as "ghibah" (backbiting). We have the example of the Prophet (*saws*) speaking of Mu'awiyah as poor, or Abu Jahm as violent, before Fatimah bint Qays when she consulted him after the two had proposed to her (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). Hasan (al-Busri) said that to mention someone given to innovations (*bid'ah*) unapprovingly, is not backbiting (That is, mentioning his *bid'ah*: Alusi). Hasan also said that of three there is no backbiting: He who is given to following his base desires, he who commits major sins openly, and a tyrant ruler (Qurtubi).

Otherwise, the sanctity of a Muslim remains as said the Prophet (*saws*) in a *hadith* of Muslim:

فَإِنَّ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَأَمْوَالَكُمْ وَأَعْرَاضَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ حَرَامٌ
كَحُرْمَةِ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا فِي شَهْرِكُمْ هَذَا فِي بَلَدِكُمْ هَذَا

"Your lives, your wealth, your honor are all as sacred between yourselves, as this day of yours is (9th of *Dhu al-Hijjah*) in this month of yours (*Dhu al-Hijjah*) in this land of yours (Makkah)"
– Ibn Kathir.

33. (Herewith a few *ahadith* on the ill effects of backbiting. One is in Ahmed. 'Ubayd, the freed-slave of the Prophet (*saws*) reported that,

سَكَتَ ثُمَّ عَادَ وَأَرَاهُ قَالَ: بِالْهَاجِرَةِ قَالَ: يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ
إِنَّمَا وَاللَّهِ قَدْ مَاتَنَا أَوْ كَادَنَا أَنْ تَمُوتَا قَالَ: ادْعُهُمَا
قَالَ: فَجَاءَا قَالَ: فَجِئْتُ بِقَدَحٍ أَوْ عَسَ فَقَالَ
لِأَحَدِهِمَا قِيئِي فَقَاءَتْ قِيحًا أَوْ دَمًا صَدِيدًا وَلَحْمًا
حَتَّى قَاءَتْ نَصْفَ الْقَدَحِ ثُمَّ قَالَ لِلْأُخْرَى قِيئِي
فَقَاءَتْ مِنْ قِيحٍ وَدَمٍ صَدِيدٍ وَلَحْمٍ عَبِيطٍ وَغَيْرِهِ حَتَّى
مَلَأَتْ الْقَدَحَ ثُمَّ قَالَ: إِنَّ هَاتَيْنِ صَامَتَا عَمَّا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ
وَأَفْطَرْتَا عَلَيَّ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلَيْهِمَا جَلَسْتُ
إِحْدَاهُمَا إِلَى الْأُخْرَى فَجَعَلْتَا يَأْكُلَانِ لَحْمَ النَّاسِ.

Two women fasted. A man came to the Prophet (*saws*) and said that there were two women who were fasting and that they were about to die from thirst. The Prophet (*saws*) ignored him, or perhaps remained silent. But he repeated, and I think said somewhat loudly,

“Messenger of Allah, the two are dead or very near to dying.” He asked them to be brought. They came, and he asked for a goblet – or maybe a vessel. Then he said to one of them, “Vomit.” She vomited blood, puss, flesh until she had filled half the goblet. Then he asked the other to vomit and she vomited, blood, puss and blood-like flesh until she filled the goblet. Then he said, “These two abstained against what Allah has otherwise made lawful but fed themselves on what Allah has made unlawful to them. One of them sat down with the other and the two began to eat people’s flesh.”

Albani declared the above report weak (Au.).

(A report informs us that there were physical effects of sins that the Prophet (*saws*) and his men were able to sense: Au.). It is in Ahmed:

عن جابر بن عبد الله قال: - كنا مع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فارتفعت ريح جيفة منتنة فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أتدرون ما هذه الريح هذه ريح الذين يغتابون المؤمنين.

Jabir b. `Abdullah said, “Once we were with the Prophet (*saws*) when a stinking smell arose. The Prophet (*saws*) asked, ‘Do you know what smell is this? It is the

smell of those who backbite the Muslims.”

(Indeed, it is clear that no one’s, and not the slightest of backbiting is acceptable in Islam, including any slip of the tongue: Au.). An incident recorded by Hafiz Diy auddin al-Maqdisi in his “*Al-Mukhtarah*” runs as follows:

كانت العرب يخدم بعضها بعضا في الأسفار وكان مع أبي بكر وعمر رجل يخدمها فناما فاستيقظا ولم يهيا لهما طعاما فقالا إن هذا لنؤوم فأيقظاه، فقالا: انت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، فقل له: إن أبا بكر وعمر يقرئانك السلام ويستأذنانك، فقال: إنيما اتدما فجاءاه، فقالا يا رسول الله: بأي شيء اتدمننا؟ قال: بلحم أخيكما، والذي نفسي بيده إني لأرى لحمه بين ثناياكما، فقالا: استغفر لنا يا رسول الله. قال: مره فليسغفر لكما.

On the authority of Anas b. Malik: The Arabs were used to serving each other during journeys. (According to another report: on hire). Abu Bakr and `Umar had a man to serve them. The two slept. When they woke up they found that he had not prepared any food for them. They said, “This is a sleeper,” and woke him up. They told him to go to the Prophet (*saws*), say salam, and tell him that the two seek some dish (to eat bread with). He answered, “They have already had the dish.” So the two went up to him and

asked what dish was it that they had. He answered, "The flesh of your brother's flesh. By Him in whose hand is my life, I can see his flesh between your teeth." They said, "Seek forgiveness for us Messenger of Allah." He said, "Ask him to seek forgiveness for you" (Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

(How serious this moral failure is can be judged from the unusually harsh words that the Prophet (*saws*) employed while warning of the consequences of backbiting: Au.). Abu Barzah al-Aslami reports as documented by Abu D'a'ud,

”يَا مَعْشَرَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِلِسَانِهِ وَلَمْ يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ قَلْبَهُ لَا تَغْتَابُوا الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا عَوْرَاتِهِمْ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ اتَّبَعَ عَوْرَاتِهِمْ يَتَّبِعِ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ، وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ يُفْضَحْهُ فِي بَيْتِهِ“.

He said, "O those who have believed with the tongue but in whose heart faith did not enter, do not backbite the Muslims, nor try to discover their hidden weaknesses, for whoever tried to discover their hidden weaknesses, will have Allah uncover his hidden weaknesses. And, whosoever Allah began to uncover his hidden weaknesses, will disgrace him in his own house" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

(Another report evinces the Prophet's impatience: Au.). It says, (as in a trusted report of Hafiz Abu Ya'l a):

وعن البراء بن عازب قال: "خطبنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حتى أسمع العواتق في بيوتها - أو قال: في خدورها - فقال: يا معشر من آمن بلسانه لا تغتابوا المسلمين ولا تتبعوا عوراتهم، فإنه من اتبع عوراتهم يتبع الله عورته، ومن يتبع الله عورته يفضحه في جوف بيته.

Bara' b. `Azib said, "The Prophet (*saws*) addressed us in (such a loud voice as to make) hear the virgins in their homes - or maybe he said, (from behind) their curtains - saying, 'O those whose tongue has believed, do not backbite the Muslims nor try to discover their hidden weaknesses, for whoever tried to discover their hidden weaknesses, will have Allah uncover his hidden weaknesses. And, whosoever Allah began to uncover his hidden weaknesses, will be disgraced in the depth of his home'" (Kashshaf, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

(No wonder then that the punishment should be severe: Au.). The Prophet (*saws*) said as in a report of Ahmed, Abu D'a'ud and others,

عن أنس بن مالك قال: - قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لما عرج بي ربي عز وجل مررت بقوم لهم

أظفار من نحاس يخمشون وجوههم وصدورهم فقلت من هؤلاء يا جبريل قال هؤلاء الذين يأكلون لحوم الناس ويقعون في أعراضهم.

On the authority of Anas b. Malik, the Prophet (*saws*) said, “When I was taken up (during the Night Ascent), I passed by a people who had nails of copper. They were deep-scratching their faces and breasts. I asked, ‘Who are these people, O Jibra’il?’ He answered, ‘These are a people who eat other people’s flesh and indulge in their honor’” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Another incident brings out the heinousness of backbiting more tellingly. It says,

وروى الحافظ أبو يعلى، عن ابن عمر أن ماعزاً جاء إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال: يا رسول الله إني قد زنيت، فأعرض عنه، حتى قالها أربعاً، فلما كان في الخامسة قال: “زنيت؟” قال: نعم، قال: “وتدري ما الزنا؟” قال: نعم، أتيت منها حراماً ما يأتي الرجل من امرأته حلالاً، قال: “ما تريد إلى هذا القول؟” قال: أريد أن تطهرني، قال، فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: “أدخلت ذلك منك في ذلك منها، كما يغيب الميل في المكحلة والرشا في البئر؟” قال: نعم يا رسول الله، قال، فأمر برجمه فُرجم، فسمع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم رجلين يقول أحدهما لصاحبه: ألم تر إلى هذا الذي ستر الله عليه، فلم تدعه نفسه حتى رُجم رجم الكلب؟ ثم سار النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم حتى مرَّ بجيفة حمار، فقال: “أين فلان وفلان؟ إنزلا فكلّا من جيفة هذا الحمار”، قالوا: غفر الله لك يا رسول الله، وهل

يؤكل هذا؟ قال صلى الله عليه وسلم: “فما نلتما من أخيكما أنفاً أشدّ أكلًا منه، والذي نفسي بيده إنه الآن لفي أثمار الجنة ينغمس فيها” (أخرجه الحافظ أبو يعلى وإسناده صحيح).

Ma'iz went up to the Prophet (*saws*) and said, “Messenger of Allah! I have committed fornication.” He ignored him until he repeated four times. When it was the fifth time he asked, “Did you fornicate?” He said, “Yes.” He asked, “Do you know what fornication is?” He answered, “Yes. I went into her unlawfully the way a man goes into his wife lawfully.” He asked, “What exactly do you mean by saying this?” He answered, “I want you to cleanse me.” The Prophet (*saws*) asked him, “Did you insert your that into hers it until it disappeared like a needle in a Kohl bottle?” He answered, “Yes.” So the Prophet ordered him stoned to death. Then the Prophet heard one of his Companions saying to another, “Look at this man. Allah covered him but he would not spare himself until he had to be stoned to death like a dog.” The Prophet (*saws*) stayed quiet. Then he walked by until he came across the carcass of a donkey with its legs up. He inquired, “Where is so and so?” The two

said, "Here we are O Messenger of Allah." He said, "Get down and feast upon this donkey." They said, "Messenger of Allah! May Allah forgive you, who will eat from this?" He said, "What you indulged in of your brother's honor just now was worse than eating from a carcass. And, by Him in whose hands is my life, just now he is taking a dip in the springs of Paradise" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

(That the Prophet was terribly upset with the two is apparent. But how hurt the two felt may be gathered from their words to him, "May Allah forgive you!" To this writer there is not a second occasion when somebody told the Prophet (*saws*), "May Allah forgive you." Nonetheless, Islam remained and the relationship of love and trust between the Prophet and his Companions remained: despite things coming to such a pass, despite the Prophet's application of the strictest standards of morality, and despite such harsh treatment he meted out to his Companions, who had the option of splitting away from him, to give us some idea of the true nature of this religion and the absolute sincerity of relationship between him and his followers, who, thus trained, then proceeded to es-

tablish the Kingdom of God never established before or after: Au.).

34. Ibn Kathir writes: The question is, what should one do who did some backbiting? Should he seek the victim's forgiveness? The answer is, no. Perhaps telling him will cause him pain. But instead, it is advisable to speak well of the victim in the same assemblies where he spoke against him, to nullify the backbiting to the extent possible. Imām Ahmed has a *hadith* (both promising, as well as threatening, although the topic is not exactly the same: Au.),

عن سَهْلِ بْنِ مُعَاذٍ بْنِ أَنَسٍ الْجُهَنِيِّ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "مَنْ حَمَى مُؤْمِنًا مِنْ مُنَافِقٍ أَرَاهُ قَالَ بَعَثَ اللَّهُ مَلَكًا يَحْمِي لَحْمَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ جَهَنَّمَ، وَمَنْ رَمَى مُسْلِمًا بِشَيْءٍ يُرِيدُ شَيْئَهُ بِهِ حَبَسَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى جِسْرِ جَهَنَّمَ حَتَّى يَخْرُجَ بِمَا قَالَ."

The Prophet (*saws*) said, "Whoever defended a believer from a hypocrite, will have (Allah) raising an angel to protect his flesh on the Day of Standing in Hell-fire. On the other hand, whoever slandered a Muslim wishing him ill, will be held on the Bridge on Hell until he reproduces what he said."

The authenticity of this report could not be traced (Au.).

Alusi adds that according to a *hadith* in *Sahih* of Ibn Hibban, it is not al-

lowed to backbite an unbeliever. It runs as follows:

مِنْ سَمِعَ يَهُودِيًّا أَوْ نَصْرَانِيًّا دَخَلَ النَّارَ

“Whoever made a Jew or a Christian hear (what he does not like) will be in the Fire.”

It appears that the above *hadith* is speaking of *Dhimmis*. Nonetheless, it does not apply to an unbeliever at war with Muslims. Imām Ghazali also wrote that it is not right to speak ill of an unbeliever in his absence.

Another report, that of Abu D a'ud is on the authority of J abir b. 'Abdullah and Abu Talha Ansari.

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَا مِنْ أَمْرٍ يُخْذَلُ مُسْلِمًا عِنْدَ مَوْطِنٍ يُتَنَهَكُ فِيهِ حُرْمَتُهُ، وَيُنْتَقَصُ فِيهِ عِرْضُهُ إِلَّا خَذَلَهُ اللَّهُ، عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، فِي مَوْطِنٍ يُحِبُّ فِيهِ نَصْرَتَهُ، وَمَا مِنْ أَمْرٍ يَنْصُرُ أَمْرًا مُسْلِمًا، فِي مَوْطِنٍ يُنْتَقَصُ فِيهِ مِنْ عِرْضِهِ، وَتُنْتَهَكُ فِيهِ حُرْمَتُهُ، إِلَّا نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوْطِنٍ يُحِبُّ فِيهِ نَصْرَتَهُ

The Prophet (*sams*) said, “No Muslim will insult a Muslim, in a situation where he is being insulted and his honor is being attacked, but Allah will humiliate him in a situation where he would love to receive His help. And no Muslim will help another

Muslim, in a situation where his honor is being attacked and he is being insulted, but Allah will help him in a situation where he would love to receive His help” (Ibn Kathir).

The Muslims of the past were quite careful about falling into this heinous sin. I (Qurtubi) heard Abu al-`Asim say, “I never did any backbiting since the time I came to know its seriousness.” Maymun b. Siyah would not listen to anyone backbiting before him. He would forbid it or leave the place. `Umar is reported to have said, “Beware that you mention the people (in your assemblies), for it is a sickness. But make it a practice to mention Allah, for it is a cure.” Sufyan Thawri has said that the least of backbiting is to use words of double meaning. `Amr b. `Ubayd was told by some people, “So and so did your backbiting to the extent that we began to feel sorry for you.” He answered, “Let you feel sorry for him instead.” Someone told Hasan, “I hear that you have done my backbiting.” He answered, “You are not important enough for me to allow your person destroy my good deeds” (Qurtubi).

[13] O mankind, We have created you out of a male and female³⁵ and made you tribes³⁶ and clans so that you may identify each other.³⁷ Surely, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most godfearing of you.³⁸ Verily, Allah is All-knowing, All-aware.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ
وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا
إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

35. Thus, men and women are treated equal. Majid quotes a Western Christian woman writer: "Muhammad is supposed to have inspired her docile acquiesce to faith to have denied her self-expression in competition with men, and to have closed for her all doors which made spiritual and mental development possible. But this idea is contrary to fact ... On the advent of Mohammad the position of woman was not enviable. He found her to be little more than a chattel – a condition which was due in large part to the teaching of the Hebrew rabbis. The Hebrew religion, which was practiced throughout the area into which Mohammad carried his teaching, had placed a decided stamp of inferiority upon her. She was inherited like any piece of furniture, and the heir could do with her as he pleased. She had no protection, no recourse to law, no right of inheritance. That to the Prophet (*saws*) was a state of affairs no longer to be tolerated. He believed woman was to be the 'equal sister of man,'

and determined to strengthen the Moslem state by forcing a recognition of her equality ... He limited polygamy and abolished infanticide. He instituted the marriage contract, inheritance right, and the privilege of divorce for women, while he discouraged divorce as the behest of one or the other where difference could reasonably be dissolved. He established the principles of dowry and provided for the inviolable maintenance of part of it for the woman's protection. He safeguarded her further by decreeing religious favor to those who would assist in the support of widows and orphans. He recognized woman's earlier as well as contemporary contribution to civilization, and urged her highest development spiritually and morally as an asset to the State. This was indeed a single advance in the thinking of that period, and a transformation in social custom which would be remarkable in any age." (Miss Flory. The Muslim World, New York, January 1940, pp. 16-17).

36. Qurtubi writes: “*Sha`b*” (pl. *shu`ub*) is the great mass of people of an area who trace their origin to a single man. Within it there can be several tribes. The structure is something like this, with some differences over the arrangement, ‘*ashirah* being the lowest and smallest denomination:

الشعب-القبيلة-العمارة-البطن-الفخذ-
الفصيلة-العشيرة

Thus, writes Alusi, Khuzaymah were *Sha`b*, Kinanah were qabilah, Quraysh were ‘*imarah*, Qusayy were batn, Hashim were fakhidh, and ‘Abbas was *fasilah*.

Alusi does not mention ‘*ashirah*, as the word suggests, is perhaps for a family of around ten twenty people.

Today, *Sha`b* is used in the sense of nation, e.g., *Sha`b* masri, meaning, the Egyptian people, but this was not the original meaning. Originally it belonged to an organized system as against today’s disorganized and chaotic societies organized on the basis of wealth, race, language, color and region. Naturally, it remains incoherent so that an individual cannot bank upon anyone but himself. Modern nationalistic societal organizations are disintegrative systems (Au.).

37. That is, know each other as to who belongs to whom and how they are related to each other.

38. Majid quotes a Western scholar: “No consideration of birth, or race, or color, or money, have prevented a man from rising to the post for which it had been recognized that he was fit. Zaid, the Prophet’s freedman, led his armies in war ... A dynasty of Circassian slaves ruled Egypt for a century before its conquest by the Ottoman Turks, and it is said that Christians from the Caucasus were glad to be carried off as slaves to Egypt because each one felt that he might rise to be sultan.” (Bosworth Smith, p. 250).

Bukhari preserved a *hadith* in this context. It is on the authority of Abu Hurayrah,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ قِيلَ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ أَكْرَمُ النَّاسِ قَالَ أَكْرَمُهُمْ أَنْفَاهُمْ قَالُوا يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ لَيْسَ عَنْ هَذَا نَسْأَلُكَ قَالَ فَأَكْرَمُ النَّاسِ يُوسُفُ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ ابْنُ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ ابْنُ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ ابْنُ خَلِيلِ اللَّهِ قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَنْ هَذَا نَسْأَلُكَ قَالَ فَعَنْ مَعَادِنِ الْعَرَبِ نَسْأَلُونِي قَالُوا نَعَمْ قَالَ فَخِيَارُكُمْ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ خِيَارُكُمْ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ إِذَا فُقُّهُوا.

The Prophet (*sams*) was asked, “Who is the most honorable among the people?” He answered, “The most pious of them is the most honorable of

them.” They said, “O Prophet, we are not asking about such a man.” He said, “Then the most honorable of the people was Yusuf, a Prophet of Allah, son of a Prophet, son of a Prophet, son of Allah’s Friend (Ibrahim).” They said, “It is not about him that we ask.” He said, “Then perhaps it is about the Arab roots that you are asking.” They said, “Yes.” He answered, “Those of you who were good in the pre-Islamic times are good in Islam, if they acquire understanding” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

(A man’s worth is not by any physical property, but by the moral and spiritual condition: Au.). Says a *hadith* in Muslim,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ. قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ”إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ. وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ.“

The Prophet (saws) said, “Verily, Allah does not look at your faces, nor at your wealth but looks at your hearts and deeds.” He advised Abu Dharr in words,

انظر فإنك ليس بخير من أحمَر ولا أسود إلا أن تفضله بتقوى

“Beware. You are no better than a white or a black man unless you are better than him in godliness” (Qurtubi).

Another report is from Bazzar:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: ”كلكم بنو آدم وآدم خلق من تراب ولينتهين قوم يفخرون بأبائهم أو ليكونن أهون على الله تعالى من الجعلان“

The Prophet (saws) said, “All of you are from Adam and Adam was created out of dust. People should desist from priding by their forefathers or they will be more dishonorable in the sight of Allah than dung beetles” (Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

The above report has been thought weak, but a longer report in Abu Da’ud has been treated as trustworthy (Au.).

Another report comes to us from no less than Abu Lahab’s daughter Durrah. It says, as in Ahmed with a good chain of transmission,

عن درة بنت أبي لهب قالت قام رجل إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وهو على المنبر فقال: يا رسول الله أي الناس خير فقال صلى الله عليه وسلم: -خير الناس اقرؤهم واتقاهم وأمرهم بالمعروف وأنهاهم المنكر وأوصلهم للرحم.

A man got up and asked the Prophet (saws), “Who is the best of the people?” He answered, “The best of the people is the most learned, the most godfearing, the most to be enjoining virtue, the most to be prohibiting

vice and the most to be joining the kin.”

Finally, we have the Prophet's own preference. `Aisha reports,

ما أعجب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم شيء من الدنيا ولا أعجبه أحد قط إلا ذو تقى

“Nothing ever of this world pleased the Prophet (*saws*), nor did anyone please him ever, except a man of piety” (Ibn Kathir).

Haythami remarked about the above report that except for Ibn Lehi'yah, (whom some thought as weak) the rest of the chain is of trustworthy narrators (Au.).

Hence we find, continues Ibn Kathir, that when `Abdul Rahman heard one of the Banu Hashim say, “I am closer to the Prophet (*saws*),” he remarked, “You might be closer to him by blood ties, but there are others who are closer than you.”

Yet another narrative from Abu D a'ud is brought to us by Abu Hurayrah:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ-: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قَدْ أَذْهَبَ عَنْكُمْ عِبْتَةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ وَفَخَّرَهَا بِالْأَبَاءِ، مُؤْمِنٍ تَقَى، وَفَاجِرٍ شَقَى، أَنْتُمْ بَنُو آدَمَ، وَآدَمُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ، لَيَدَعَنَّ رَجُلًا فَخَرَهُمْ بِأَقْوَامٍ، إِنَّمَا هُمْ فَحْمٌ مِنْ فَحْمِ جَهَنَّمَ، أَوْ لِيَكُونَنَّ أَهْوَنَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنَ الْجِعْلَانِ، الَّتِي تَدْفَعُ بِأَنْفِهَا التُّنَنَ"

The Prophet (*saws*) said, “Surely Allah has removed from you the divisions of the times of Ignorance, and priding over the origins. (Now it is either) a believing pious man, or a corrupt wretched person. You are from Adam and Adam was from dust. Men should give up priding by people of the past - who are indeed coals upon coals in Jahannum – or they will be more odious in the sight of Allah than a dung-beetle that pushes the stinky-filth with its nose” (Au.).

The above statement also speaks of the Prophet's keen observational habit. It is not a common sight in the field to spot a tiny beetle pushing a ball of dung (Au.).

[14] The Bedouins say,³⁹ 'We have believed.' Say, 'You have not yet believed; but rather say, "We have surrendered."⁴⁰ Faith has not yet entered your hearts.⁴¹ If you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will diminish not aught of your deeds. Verily, Allah is the All-forgiving, All-kind."

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] Only those are believers who believed in Allah and His Messenger, then did not fall into doubts, and fought with their possessions and their persons in Allah's path. Those, they are the truthful ones.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] Say, 'Will you inform Allah of your religion, while Allah knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth? And Allah is knowing of all things.'

قُلْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾

39. Qatadah explained that the reference is not to the Bedouins in general, but to a few tribes in particular. Indeed, Allah Himself said about some of the Bedouins (9: 99),

وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَتَّخِذُ مَا يُنْفِقُ قُرْبَاتٍ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

i.e., "And of the Bedouins are some who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and treats what he spends as a means of nearness to Allah" (Ibn Jarir).

40. In this context we have a report (in Bukhari: Ibn Kathir) which recorded Sa'd as saying,

عَنْ سَعْدٍ -رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ- "أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- أَعْطَى رَهْطًا -وَسَعْدٌ جَالِسٌ

-فَتَرَكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- رَجُلًا هُوَ أَعْجَبُهُمْ إِلَيَّ.

فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا لَكَ عَنْ فُلَانٍ؟ فَوَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَرَاهُ مُؤْمِنًا. فَقَالَ: أَوْ مُسْلِمًا، فَسَكَتُ قَلِيلًا.

ثُمَّ عَلَّنِي مَا أَعْلَمُ مِنْهُ، فَعُدْتُ لِمَقَالَتِي، فَقُلْتُ: مَا لَكَ عَنْ فُلَانٍ؟ فَوَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَرَاهُ مُؤْمِنًا. فَقَالَ أَوْ مُسْلِمًا، ثُمَّ عَلَّنِي مَا أَعْلَمُ مِنْهُ، فَعُدْتُ لِمَقَالَتِي، وَعَادَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- ثُمَّ قَالَ: يَا سَعْدُ، إِنِّي لَأَعْطِي الرَّجُلَ وَغَيْرَهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْهُ، خَشْيَةُ أَنْ يَكُفَّهُ اللَّهُ فِي النَّارِ."

"The Prophet (saws) gave to a few people [while Sa'd was sitting by] but not to a particular man whom I thought was better than the rest. I said, 'Messenger of Allah, what about so and so? By Allah, I think he is a believer

[17] They mention it as a favor on you that they have embraced Islam.⁴² Say, 'Count not your Islam as a favor on me. But rather, Allah counts it as a favor on you that He led you to belief, if you are truthful.'

يَمْنُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَا تَمْنُوا عَلَيَّ
إِسْلَامَكُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ
لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] Verily, Allah knows the Unseen of the heavens and of the earth. And Allah sees what you do.'

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

(*mu'min*).’ He answered, ‘Or perhaps a Muslim.’ So I stayed quiet for a while but what I knew about him got the better of me. So I repeated, ‘Messenger of Allah, what about so and so? By Allah, I think he is a believer.’ He answered, ‘Or perhaps a Muslim.’ So I stayed quiet for a while but what I knew about him got the better of me. So I repeated, ‘Messenger of Allah, what about so and so? By Allah, I think he is a believer.’ The Prophet (*saws*) repeated his reply. Then he added, ‘Sa’d. I give to a man despite another being dearer to me in fear that Allah will thrust him into the Fire.’” (That is, if not given, he might fall into *kufir*. Au.).

The above report is in the *Sahihayn* (Ibn Kathir).

41. That is, you have sought to save your skins and your properties by

declaring Islam, although faith did not enter your hearts. This is because nothing less than Islam was acceptable of the Arabs of the Peninsula. Says a report,

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أُمِرْتُ
أَنْ أَقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَقُولُوا أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
فَبَإِذْ قَالُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ عَصَمُوا مِنِّي دِمَاءَهُمْ
وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَّا بِحَقِّهَا وَحِسَابُهُمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ.

“I have been ordered to fight the people until they say, ‘There is no deity save Allah.’ Once they have said, ‘There is no deity save Allah, they will save their lives and their properties from me, except for their rights, while their reckoning is with Allah (Ibn Jarir). The report is in Bukhari (Au.).

42. It seems Banu Asad were one of those who said to the Prophet (*saws*), “(After all) we are those who did not fight you like others who fought you” (as if they did a favor to him)

- Ibn Jarir. It is also said that when the Prophet (*saws*) heard their words, he remarked, “Their understanding

seems to be poor, and *Shaytan* speaks by their tongue,” and Allah (*swt*) revealed this verse (Ibn Kathir).

﴿٤٩﴾





Surah 50

Qaf¹

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Qaf. By the Glorious Qur'ān.²

ق وَالْقُرْآنِ الْمَجِيدِ ﴿١﴾

[2] Nay, but they wonder that there has come to them a warner from among themselves. So the unbelievers said, 'This is a strange thing.'

بَلْ عَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنْذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَقَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا شَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ ﴿٢﴾

[3] 'What, when we are dead and become dust? That is a distant returning.'

أَيُّدًا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا ذَلِكَ رَجْعٌ بَعِيدٌ ﴿٣﴾

1. There are three opinions. One, *Qaf* is one of the names of Allah, second, it is one of the names of the Qur'ān, and third, it is the name of a series of mountains (Tabari). But the third is an Israeli report and not worth considering (Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir present a few reports to show that the Prophet (*saws*) used to recite this *Surah* during a variety of public appearances such as during Friday sermons, in 'Eid Prayers, etc. A report in Muslim says,

عن أم هشام بنت حارثة قالت: لقد كان تنورنا وتنور النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم واحدا سنتين أو سنة وبعض سنة وما أخذت (ق) والقرآن المجيد إلا على

لسان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم - كان يقرأ بها كل يوم جمعة على المنبر إذا خطب الناس.

On the authority of Umm Hisham, she said, "We shared our bread-baking oven with the Prophet's for some two years, and I did not memorize this *Surah Qaf* but taking it from his mouth. He would recite it every Friday on the pulpit while addressing the congregations."

2. "*Majid* (translated as 'Glorious') is one of the beautiful appellations of the Qur'ān. Its glory is that of the rising sun: the more it rises on your mental and spiritual horizon, the more you are lost in admiration of its

[4] We know what the earth diminishes of them.³ And with Us is a preserving Book.

قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنْقُصُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ وَعِندَنَا كِتَابٌ حَفِيفٌ ﴿٤﴾

[5] Nay, but they laid the lie against the Truth when it came to them, and so they are in an affair confusing.⁴

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي أَمْرٍ مَرِيجٍ ﴿٥﴾

[6] Have they not considered the heaven above them how We have constructed it, decorated it,⁵ and that it has no cracks?⁶

أَفَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَوْقَهُمْ كَيْفَ بَنَيْنَاهَا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا وَمَا لَهَا مِنْ فُرُوجٍ ﴿٦﴾

[7] And the earth, We stretched it, and cast therein pegs, and made grow therein of every beautiful kind.

وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ ﴿٧﴾

glory. Its meanings are manifest and inexhaustible. The greater your experience, the more light is your spiritual eye able to bear. And in that glory is a beauty that none can tell who has not experienced it in his soul. It is in itself the proof of the mission of the holy Prophet” (Yusuf Ali).

3. That is, Allah knows what of their body the earth consumes [and what is left out: Au.], and it is recorded in a book that preserves well (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir); and, therefore, why should He, who knows where every atom of a dead man’s dust lies, have any difficulty in resurrecting him? (Au.).

4. “If they deny what has been made clear to them, their minds must necessarily get into confusion. All nature declares the glory and goodness

of Allah. Revelation explains the inequalities of this life and how they will be redressed in the Hereafter. If they do not accept this, they are not in a logical position. They cannot reconcile the known with the unknown” (Yusuf Ali).

5. Yusuf Ali again: “The greatest philosophers have found a difficulty in understanding the skeptical position when they contemplate the wonder and mystery of the skies with all the countless beautiful stars and planets and light in them, and laws of order, motion, and symmetry, that respond to the highest mathematical abstractions without a flaw. Can blind Chance give rise to such conditions?”

6. In the language of science, this refers to the homogeneity prevalent in

the universe; that is, on a large scale, the universe is similar and symmetric, no matter in which direction we look. This has been a problem in cosmology and a challenge to the Big Bang theory. This theory states that the universe can be traced back in time to a compressed form at Planck time 10^{-43} s, at Planck temp. 1032 K, and Planck density 10^{97} kg. m^{-3} . At that time the universe blew up releasing pure energy. After a microsecond of the Big Bang event, the newly formed universe consisted of protons, neutrons, electrons and their antiparticles. This was the result of cooling. Within a second, all antiparticles had been annihilated, as also muons and positrons, leaving only protons, electrons, neutrons, neutrinos, photons and gravitons. This is the matter that coalesced as it further cooled to form atoms, elements, cosmic dust, stars and galaxies, while the universe kept expanding, which it still does.

Now, if the universe did start from a single invisible point of energy compressed to an unimaginable degree measurable as 10^{97} kg. m^{-3} at an equally unimaginable temperature

1032 K, just before it blew up, which assures haphazard dispersal of matter ... if that really is true, then how do we explain at the galactic level the homogeneity of the universe, now as large as 15 billion light years across?

To explain with a simple example, if a little bomb is exploded, the material that is released from within the bomb cannot be predicted to be present in equal quantity in all directions. Of course, this is not a precise example, because, the Big Bang only released energy. This energy coalesced into matter over a period as the universe cooled. What is inexplicable is that when matter that was spread over one million light years or so, it coalesced in such perfect manner that we ended up with equal amount of matter no matter where we look. In the language of the Qur'ān, it has no crack or flaw. Who did it? A few scientists have the answer, but they do not have the courage to say so in public. Perhaps because a priest never betrays his ignorance to his parish when it comes to an ecclesiastical matter. Today's scientists occupy the position of priests of the past (Au.).

[8] As an insight and a reminder for every oft-turning slave.⁷

تَبْصِرَةً وَذِكْرَى لِكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُنِيبٍ ﴿٨﴾

[9] And We sent down out of heaven water, blessed; and made to grow thereby gardens and the grain for harvest.

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُبَارَكًا فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ وَحَبَّ الْحَصِيدِ ﴿٩﴾

[10] And tall palm-trees with spathes, piled one upon the other.

وَالنَّخْلَ بَاسِقَاتٍ لَهَا طَلْعٌ نَضِيدٌ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] As provision for the slaves, and We gave life thereby to the earth after its death. Even so (will be) the emergence.⁸

رِزْقًا لِلْعِبَادِ وَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ بَلَدَةً مَيِّتًا كَذَلِكَ الْخُرُوجُ ﴿١١﴾

[12] Cried lies before them the people of Nuh, the Companions of the Well,⁹ and Thamud.

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَأَصْحَابُ الرَّسِّ وَثَمُودُ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] And `Ad, Fir`awn and brothers of Lut.

وَعَادٌ وَفِرْعَوْنُ وَإِخْوَانُ لُوطٍ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] And the Companions of the Thicket,¹⁰ and the people of Tubba`.¹¹ Each one laid the lie against the Messengers, so the threat came to be fulfilled.

وَأَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ وَقَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ كُلٌّ كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ وَعِيدُ ﴿١٤﴾

7. That is, he who turned to Allah often (Au.).

8. That is, emergence from the graves (Au.).

9. "Russ" is for an unplastered well.

`Ikrimah and Mujahid said that the allusion is to the well in which the unbelievers of the time killed the Messenger sent to them (Ibn Jarir). Shafi` Deobandi believes that *As-hab al-Russ* were the remnants of the people of Thamud. Dahh ak said that when the latter were destroyed, Saleh (*asws*) moved out with 4000 of his followers to a new location

in Hadrmaut, and camped near a well. Subsequently a town developed around. After Saleh's death, newer generations reverted to paganism. Allah (*swt*) sent them a Messenger, but they killed him, so they were destroyed.

There have been several other opinions. See *Surah* 25, note 41 of this work.

10. That is, the people of Shu`ayb who lived near a thicket.

11. See *Surah* 44, note 27 of this work for identification of Tubba`.

[15] What, were We wearied by the first creation? Nay, but they are in a confused doubt about a new creation.

أَفَعَيِينَا بِالْخَلْقِ الْأَوَّلِ بَلْ هُمْ فِي لَبْسٍ مِّنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] Indeed, We have created man and know what his inner self whispers to him.¹² We are closer to him than the jugular vein.¹³

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَتَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ ﴿١٦﴾

12. In this context Allah knows that the inner-self whispers disbelief into the mind, saying, Resurrection and Reckoning is a far-fetched idea (Au.).

13. In Arabic, every artery in the blood-circulation system is known as “*habl*.” Two such major arteries were thought to be in the neck while two near the heart, and the allusion could be to any one of them. The important point is, Allah (*swt*) is closer than whatever is closer to man in his body (Shafi’).

Ibn Jarir does not explicitly discuss who is meant by the pronoun “We.” But the explanation that he offers implies, quite clearly, that it is Allah who is meant. His explanation of the whole verse is, “That is, We have greater power over his jugular vein, and closer to it in Our mastery over it than he.” But Ibn Kathir, perhaps in his attempt to escape from ideas of anthropomorphism, incarnation, unionism, or Transcendent Unity of Being (*wahdatu al-wujud*), asserts –

without the support of an authority - that by “We” it is angels that are meant, those who write men’s deeds.

However, we do not see why accepting the apparent meaning should necessarily entail the implicated meanings. Today’s scientific advances are showing that the physical world is so complicated as to defy explanation. There are theories for instance which say that there could be multiple universes around us, in various dimensions, but which we cannot observe because of the dimensional problem. It is conjectured that our own universe might be passing through another, invisible universe. The nature of the Divine, His Presence, His Attributes, and His mode of contact with the humans, will never be understood by those barred from sighting Him in this world. We might as well leave the words as they are - unexplained (Au.).

Zamakhshari, Razi and Qurtubi accept the pronoun as referring to Al-

[17] When receive the two receivers, sitting by the right and by the left.¹⁴

إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيَانِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ ﴿١٧﴾

lah, and explain that the allusion by nearness is to knowledge. That is, He is closer to man in knowledge than his jugular vein.

Mufti Shafi` explains that Allah's contact and communion with man is something that can only be felt but whose nature cannot be explained. He said (96: 19),

وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ

"Prostrate yourself and get closer"

The Prophet (*saws*) said in the cave, during His *Hijrah* journey as in the Qur'an (9: 40),

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا

"Rest assured, Allah is with us."

Musa (*asws*) had assured his people (26: 62),

إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي

which is to say, *"Surely, my Lord is with me."* A *hadith* says that man is closest to Allah during his prostration. Thus, Allah's nearness is established, but how? This cannot be established for sure.

Majid's comment is as follows: "That is the exact relationship in Islam,

between God and man. Of course, there is no identity between the two: we remain ourselves, and He the great Other. Yet His communion with us is of a more intimate nature than is that of ourselves with us. The verse also does away entirely with the idea of God being remote and unapproachable, and stresses His all-pervading character and His intimacy with His creator."

14. The allusion is to the two angels appointed to write down all that a man does. The one on the right records good deeds while the other on the left records evil deeds. The one on the right has the command over the other. So that, when a man commits evil, he says to the one on the left, "Wait, do not write. Maybe he will repent." (Zamakhshari: "Wait for seven hours"). The two change their shifts with two others every twelve hours. Thus, in sum, four angels are involved. Ibn `Abbas said that the four also guard the person (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

The angels write down every syllable that one utters, every little action that issues. Imām Ahmed b.

[18] Not a word he utters,¹⁵ but by him is an observer ready.¹⁶ مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] Then the death's agony comes in truth.¹⁷ وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ ﴿١٩﴾
That is what you were shunning.

Hanbal was heard moaning during his illness. When Ta' us came to know, he remarked that angels write down even one's moaning. It is said that thereafter Ibn Hanbal was not heard moaning until his death (Ibn Kathir).

It is said that the recording angels part company only when one goes to the water closet or is in intercourse (Zamakhshari).

There are various suggestions about how many angels are actively involved with an individual. But that the guardian angels are different from those that keep records, has consensus over it. The following Qur'anic *Ayah* (13: 11) should not lead to confusion,

له معقبات من بين يديه ومن خلفه يحفظونه من أمر الله

"For him there are successive (angels), before him and behind him, guarding him by Allah's command" (Alusi).

15. Yusuf Ali comments: "Then each 'word' spoken is taken down by a

guardian (*raqib*). This has been construed to mean that the guardian only records words, not thoughts which are not uttered. Thoughts may be forgiven if not uttered, and still more if they do not issue in action. At the stage at which we clothe a thought in words, we have already done an action. The Recorders mentioned in the last verse make a complete Record, in order to supply motives and springs of action, which will affect the degrees or status in the Hereafter. The three together, individuals or kinds, make the honourable Recorders, *Kiraman Katibin*, (plural, not dual number) mentioned in lxxii. 11."

16. That is, never are the two angels fatigued, bored, or unprepared to record the happenings. They are ever fresh, ever attentive (Au.).

17. *Majid* writes: "... in addition to its other meanings, (*haqq*) also means, 'A necessity, or requisite, thing. A thing or an event that is decreed or destined.'"

[20] And the Trumpet is blown,¹⁸ that is the day of threat.¹⁹

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمَ الْوَعِيدِ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] And every soul shall come, with it a driver and a witness.²⁰

وَجَاءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَعَها سَائِقٌ وَشَهِيدٌ ﴿٢١﴾

[22] You were in heedlessness of this, therefore, We have removed from you your covering, so, sharp is your sight this day.

لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

No one can escape the agony of death. `A'isha reports that at the time of his death the Prophet would dip his hand in a bowl of water near him, rub his face and say, as in Bukhari,

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِنَّ لِلْمَوْتِ سَكْرَاتٍ ثُمَّ نَصَبَ يَدَهُ فَجَعَلَ يَقُولُ فِي الرَّفِيقِ الْأَعْلَى حَتَّى قُبِضَ وَمَالَتْ يَدُهُ.

“There is no deity save Allah, surely death has its agonies.” Then he rested his hand in a fixed position and began to say, “To the company on High,” until the soul was withdrawn and his hand fell down (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

18. That will be another day of great consequences. The Prophet said, as in a *hadith* of Tirmidhi rated by him and Haythami as *Hasan*:

قال رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: كَيْفَ أَتَعَمُّ وَصَاحِبُ الْقُرْنِ قَدْ اتَّعَمَ الْقُرْنَ وَاسْتَمَعَ الْإِذْنَ مَتَى يُؤْمَرُ بِالنَّفْخِ فَيَنْفُخُ فَكَأَنَّ ذَلِكَ ثَقُلَ عَلَى أَصْحَابِ

النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ هُمْ: قُولُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا

“How should I relax when the bearer of the Trumpet has placed the Trumpet on his lips and awaits attentively as to when will he be ordered to blow, so that he can blow.” As if this was a bit tough on his Companions, so he told them, say,

حسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل، على الله توكلنا

“Allah is sufficient for us, and a good Trustee, upon Allah We have placed our trust” (Ibn Kathir).

19. That is, the day has come when the threats of punishment will be fulfilled (Au.).

20. `Uthman ibn `Affan (and many others of the *Salaf*) is reported to have said that two angels will accom-

[23] Said his intimate companion,²¹ 'This is what with me - prepared.'²²

وَقَالَ قَرِينُهُ هَذَا مَا لَدَيَّ عَتِيدٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] 'Cast, you two,²³ into Jahannum every stubborn unbeliever.'²⁴

أَلْقِيَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] Every resolute hinderer of the good, aggressor,²⁵ and doubter.

مَنَاعٍ لِلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ مُّرِيبٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] Who set up with Allah, another god. So cast him, you two, into a severe torment.'

الَّذِي جَعَلَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَأَلْقِيَاهُ فِي الْعَذَابِ الشَّدِيدِ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] His intimate companion²⁶ shall say, 'Our Lord, I did not make him insolent, but he was in a distant error.'

قَالَ قَرِينُهُ رَبَّنَا مَا أَطْعَيْتُهُ وَلَكِنْ كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٢٧﴾

[28] He will say, 'Dispute not before Me, for I sent you beforehand the threat.

قَالَ لَا تَخْتَصِمُوا لَدَيَّ وَقَدْ قَدَّمْتُ إِلَيْكُمْ بِالْوَعِيدِ ﴿٢٨﴾

pany man throughout the Field of Resurrection: one driving him, and another a witness to his deeds (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

21. This is one of the two angels who used to keep the record (Au.).

22. "'Atid": that is, (a record) well prepared, ready for presentation. The allusion by "this" is to the book of deeds, and the speaker is the angel.

23. That is, "You, the two angels."

24. A pertinent *hadith* is in Ahmad and is sort of acceptable by Haythami's standards:

عن نبي الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال يخرج عنق من النار يتكلم يقول وكلت اليوم بثلاثة بكل جبار وبمن جعل مع الله إلها آخر وبمن قتل نفسا بغير نفس فينطوي عليهم فيقذفهم في غمرات جهنم.

The Prophet (*saws*) said, "A neck will rise from the Fire saying, 'This day I have been given charge of three: every tyrant, everyone who set a deity along with Allah, and he who killed a soul without any cause.' Then it will encircle them and cast them into the depth of Hell."

25. "Transgressor" does not seem to express the understanding of the *Salaf* as in Ibn Jarir. They explained "*mu'tadd*" as someone who breaks the boundaries of moral rectitude in his behavior, talk, and personal affairs.

26. Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah and others said that this close companion is the Devil (Ibn Jarir), who

[29] The word is not altered with Me,²⁷ and I am not at all unjust to My slaves.²⁸

مَا يَبْدُلُ الْقَوْلُ لَدَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا بِظَلَّامٍ
لِّلْعَبِيدِ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] The day We shall say to Jahannum, 'Are you filled?' And it shall say, 'Is there any more?'²⁹

يَوْمَ نَقُولُ لِّجَهَنَّمَ هَلِ امْتَلَأْتَ وَتَقُولُ
هَلْ مِنْ مَّزِيدٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

[31] And Paradise shall be brought nigh to the godfearing, not afar.

وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٣١﴾

was appointed to accompany the man because of his evil ways of life, as Allah (swt) said (43: 36):

وَمَنْ يَعِشْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ تَقِيضَ لَهُ شَيْطَانًا فَهُوَ
لَهُ قَرِينٌ

“And, whoso turns a blind eye to the remembrance of the Compassionate, We assign over him a devil, who is then his close companion” (Au.)

27. While several other meanings are possible, presented by several commentators, one allusion seems to be to the decision to the effect that those who committed Association will not enter Paradise (Au.).

28. The textual word is “*zallam*” meaning, a great wrongdoer, and one possibility for using this exaggerated form is that, “Had I punished the innocent, I would surely be a great wrongdoer” (Zamakhshari).

Zarkashi has in his “*Al-Burhan fi ‘Ulum al-Qur’ān*” stated that another possible meaning is, had Allah (swt) been a wrongdoer, He would have been so to a great degree, since all His Qualities reach the highest degree of perfection. Hence the exaggerated form *zallam* and not a mere *zalim* (Au.).

29. This questioning and answering will be after the Judgment is over, and all those destined to enter would have entered the Fire. Yet, enough space will be there for it to ask, “Is there any more,” meaning, “I have plenty of vacant space.” We have a *hadith* on the authority of Anas,

عَنْ أَنَسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَا يَزَالُ
يُلْفَى فِيهَا وَتَقُولُ هَلْ مِنْ مَّزِيدٍ حَتَّى يَضَعَ فِيهَا رَبُّ
الْعَالَمِينَ قَدَمَهُ فَيَنْزَوِي بَعْضُهَا إِلَى بَعْضٍ ثُمَّ تَقُولُ قَدْ
قَدْ بَعِزَّتِكَ وَكَرَمَتْ وَلَا تَزَالُ الْجَنَّةُ تَفْضُلُ حَتَّى يُشَبَّ
اللَّهُ لَهَا خَلْقًا فَيُسْكِنَهُمْ فَضْلُ الْجَنَّةِ.

The Prophet (*saw*s) said, “It (Jahannum) will be continuously fed with (people) but it will keep saying, ‘Is there any more,’ until the Lord of the worlds will place His *qadam* in it so that it will fold upon itself and say, ‘enough, enough, by Your Power and Honor.’ Similarly, Paradise will keep having empty space until Allah will create a new creation and make them live in the empty parts of Paradise” (Ibn Jarir).

The above *hadith* is in the *Sahihayn* (Ibn Kathir).

Another *hadith* on this topic is as follows:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ
اخْتَصَمَتِ الْجَنَّةُ وَالنَّارُ إِلَى رَجْمَا فَقَالَتِ الْجَنَّةُ يَا رَبِّ
مَا لَهَا لَا يَدْخُلُهَا إِلَّا ضِعْفَاءُ النَّاسِ وَسَقَطُهَا وَقَالَتِ
النَّارُ يَغْنِي أَوْثَرْتُ بِالْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ فَقَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى لِلْجَنَّةِ
أَنْتِ رَحِمَتِي وَقَالَ لِلنَّارِ أَنْتِ عَذَابِي أُصِيبُ بِكَ مَنْ
أَشَاءُ وَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِنْكُمَا مِلْؤُهَا قَالَ فَأَمَّا الْجَنَّةُ فَإِنَّ
اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ أَحَدًا وَإِنَّهُ يُنْشِئُ لِلنَّارِ مَنْ
يَشَاءُ فَيُلْقُونَ فِيهَا فَيَقُولُ هَلْ مِنْ مَزِيدٍ ثَلَاثًا حَتَّى
يَضَعُ فِيهَا قَدَمَهُ فَيَمْتَلِئُ وَيَرُدُّ بَعْضُهَا إِلَى بَعْضٍ
وَيَقُولُ قَطُّ قَطُّ قَطُّ.

On the authority of Abu Hurayrah, the Prophet (*saw*s) said, “Paradise and Hell disputed before their Lord. Paradise said, (in effect), My Lord, what is with it that none enters into it but the weak and the fallen ones.’ Hell

will say, ‘I have been honored with the proud ones.’ Allah (*swt*) will say to Paradise, ‘You are My mercy.’ And He will say to Hell, ‘You are My torment, that strikes whomsoever I wish. And both of you will have their fillers.’ Then he said, “As for Paradise, Allah does not wrong anyone of His creation. He will bring forth for the Fire, whom He will, and they will be cast into it but it will keep saying, ‘Is there any more,’ until He places His *qadam* into it and it will be filled, some of it falling upon other and it saying, ‘enough, enough, enough.”

The above *hadith* is in Bukhari (Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi explains that the *hadith* may not be understood in the light of apparent words, which could be misleading to those who are poor in language. The “*qadam*” of the text means “presentation” and not foot. That is, Jahannum will not be filled until Allah consigns it to more material, perhaps other creations who will finally fill it. Some versions use the word “*rijl*” but which does not mean “leg” but, as pre-Islamic poetical examples show, it means “a huge number.” That is, a huge number will be placed into Jahannum after

[32] This is what you were promised: for every penitent, keeper (of his covenant).³⁰

هَذَا مَا تُوعَدُونَ لِكُلِّ أَتَّابٍ حَفِيظٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

which alone it will be filled. Indeed, this is supported by a passage within the *hadith* which says, "Paradise will remain having empty places until Allah creates a new creation to fill its empty space."

Alusi presents the above discussion but believes that the interpretation of the "*qadam*" (lit., foot) and "*rijl*" (lit., leg) as offered by the *Sufis* is more attractive which is: treat them as allegorical expressions of Allah's Power.

We might present an interesting anecdote here. Tantawi Jawhari (d. 1940) has stated the following in his 26-volume *Jawahir fi Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim*: During a visit to Germany, he happened to be in the company of a group of Orientalists. (Those were days when the Orientalists held sway over the Arabic literary studies). One of them asked him whether, (being a scholar of that stature), he believed in the miraculous nature of the Qur'an and whether he too thought it was inimitable. When he replied in the affirmative, they smiled the smile of half pity, half amusement. So he suggested that they hold a little test. Let

them make an eloquent sentence in Arabic, experts as they were, to say that Hell is very large.

So they made a variety of high sounding sentences all saying that Hell was very large. When they had done their best, he asked them whether they were through or needed time to improve upon their sentences. They said they were through. So he said, "Now, listen to how the Qur'an has put it." Then he recited this verse, "The day We shall say to Jahannum, 'Are you filled?' And it shall say, 'Is there any more?'"

He says they were thrilled and admitted that it was truly a profoundly eloquent way of saying that Hell is so large (that despite billions of people having gone in, it should have space for more) - Au.

30. That is, one who keeps the promise of submission that he made to Allah (*swt*) when he testified to the "*kalimah*" (Ibn Kathir, reworded).

'Abd b. 'Umayr said that "*hafiz*" is someone who does not rise up from an assembly without seeking Allah's forgiveness (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

[33] Who feared the All-compassionate in the Unseen,³¹ and came with an oft-turning heart.

مَنْ خَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ الْغَيْبِ وَجَاءَ بِقَلْبٍ مُنِيبٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] 'Enter it, in peace. This is the day of eternity.'³²

ادْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُلُودِ ﴿٣٤﴾

31. That is, he fears Allah in his open and in his secret. Hence the Prophet's words (about one of the seven who will be in the shade of 'Ars'h) that he remembered Allah in his private, and it filled his eyes (Ibn Kathir).

Mawdudi adds that the combination of fear and Allah's Attribute of mercy, indicates that the man's fear of Allah, rather than that of anything else dominates his life, and that the thought that Allah is All-compassionate does not lead him to audacity to sin.

Yusuf Ali adds: "The description of the Righteous is given in four masterly clauses: (1) those who turned away from Evil in sincere repentance; (2) those whose new life was good and righteous; (3) those who in their innermost hearts and in their most secret doings were actuated by Allah-fearing love, the fear that is akin to love in remembering Allah under His title of 'Most Gracious'; and (4) who gave up their whole heart and being to Him."

32. (It is impossible to be living in this world and imagine the kind of life one will enjoy in Paradise). Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri reports that the Prophet said,

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ لَيَسْكُنُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ سَبْعِينَ سَنَةً قَبْلَ أَنْ يَحْوَلَ ثُمَّ تَأْتِيهِ امْرَأَةٌ فَتَضْرِبُ عَلَى مَنْكِبِهِ (٥) فَيَنْظُرُ وَجْهَهُ فِي خَدِّهَا أَضْفَى مِنَ الْمِرْآةِ، وَإِنَّ أَدْنَى لَوْلُؤَةٍ عَلَيْهَا تُضِيءُ مَا بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ. فَتُسَلِّمُ عَلَيْهِ، فَيَرُدُّ السَّلَامَ، فَيَسْأَلُهَا: مَنْ أَنْتِ؟ فَيَقُولُ: أَنَا مِنَ الْمَزِيدِ. وَإِنَّهُ لَيَكُونُ عَلَيْهَا سَبْعُونَ خَلَّةً، أَذْنَاهَا مِثْلُ الثُّعْمَانِ، مِنْ طُوبَى، فَيَتَقَدَّهَا بِصَرِّهِ حَتَّى يَرَى مُحَجَّ سَاقِهَا مِنْ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ، وَإِنَّ عَلَيْهَا مِنَ اللَّيْجَانِ، إِنْ أَدْنَى لَوْلُؤَةٍ مِنْهَا لَتُضِيءُ مَا بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ"

"In Paradise, a man will rest in a certain position for seventy years before making a move. A woman will come and nudge him on his shoulder. He will see his face in her cheek brighter than a mirror. The most insignificant of the pearls on her will make the east and the west shine. She will greet him with a Salam to which he will respond and ask, 'Who could you

[35] For them therein whatever they desire, and with Us there is yet more.³³

لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] And how many generations We destroyed before them who were stronger than these in seizing. Then they went about in the land; was there any asylum?³⁴

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّن قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا فَنَقَّبُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ هَلْ مِن مَّجِيصٍ ﴿٣٦﴾

[37] Surely in that is a reminder to him who has a heart, or he gave the ear while he is attentive.³⁵

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرَى لِمَن كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] We created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six periods,³⁶ and no weariness touched Us.³⁷

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِن لُّغُوبٍ ﴿٣٨﴾

be?’ She will reply, ‘I am the *mazid*.’ She will have seventy cloaks on her, the least of them like pink garments from Tuba. He will cast his eyes until he will see her calf-bone marrow from behind them. She will be wearing a crown of which the most insignificant pearl will make shine what is between the east and the west” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

(The above *hadith*, traceable to Ahmed, was declared *Hasan* by Haythami: Au.).

33. It has already been discussed earlier (Yunus, verse 26) that the allusion by “more” is to the Beatific vision in Paradise. Our Lord will reveal Himself to the inhabitants of Paradise every Friday (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

34. This has been understood in two ways. One, faced up with chastisement, (or after their civilization was destroyed: Asad) they escaped into the lands in search of a place of escape, but where was the asylum? Second, they went about in the lands for trade and commerce, and, in today’s language, made good money, making them proud. But when the punishment came, they found no asylum. Razi and Qurtubi both accept the possibility of the two meanings.

35. That is, he is attentive with both his mind and heart when presented with the message (Au.).

36. Since there were no days and nights of the present 24-hour cycle at the time of creation, the textual “*ayyam*” has to be rendered as phases, or periods (Au.).

[39] Observe patience then over what they say and glorify your Lord with praises before sunrise and before sunset.³⁸

فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ ﴿٣٩﴾

[40] And in a part of the night (also) glorify Him, and after the prostrations.³⁹

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَأَدْبَارَ السُّجُودِ ﴿٤٠﴾

Dahhak said that the “*yawm*” of that time was equivalent to a thousand years (Ibn Jarir).

37. Qatadah said that the Jews and Christians claimed that Allah (*swt*) created the heaven and earth in six days from Sunday to Friday, was tired and so took rest on the seventh day viz., Saturday. Allah revealed this verse to refute them (Ibn Jarir, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

38. Ibn Kathir comments that until the Night Ascent only two Prayers were statutory: one before sunrise and the other before sunset, while the tahajjud Prayers were obligatory on the Prophet alone.

Also, there is a *hadith* in Bukhari and Muslim in connection with this *Ayah*.

عَنْ جَرِيرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ كُنَّا عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَظَرَّ إِلَى الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةً يَغِي الْبَدْرُ فَقَالَ إِنَّكُمْ سَتَرُونَ رَبَّكُمْ كَمَا تَرُونَ هَذَا الْقَمَرَ لَا تَضَامُونَ فِي رُؤْيَيْهِ فَإِنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ لَا تَغْلَبُوا عَلَى صَلَاةٍ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوبِهَا فَافْعَلُوا ثُمَّ قَرَأَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ

Jarir b. `Abdullah says, “We were with the Prophet. He looked at the full moon and said, ‘You will surely see your Lord as you see this moon, without doubting your sight of Him. Therefore, if you can avoid not missing the Prayer before the sunrise and before it sets, then do it.’ Then he recited this *Ayah*..” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

39. `Ali, Abu Hurayrah, *Hasan* b. `Ali, Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah, Mujahid, Sha`bi, Awza`i, Qatadah and others are reported to have said that by “adbar al-sujud” the allusion is to two cycles of Prayer after Maghrib. After stating their opinions, Ibn Jarir remarks that although the apparent meaning seems more reasonable, (that is, chant Allah’s praises after every prostration, i.e., Prayers), the weight of the authorities behind the first opinion forces us to accept it as the true interpretation.

[41] And listen on the day when a caller will call out from a close quarter.⁴⁰

وَأَسْمِعْ يَوْمَ يُنَادِ الْمُنَادِ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ ﴿٤١﴾

[42] The day they will hear the blast in truth. That is the day of emergence.

يَوْمَ يَسْمَعُونَ الصَّيْحَةَ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُرُوجِ ﴿٤٢﴾

[43] Indeed it is We who bring to life and deal death, and to Us is the homecoming.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَإِلَيْنَا الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٤٣﴾

[44] The day the earth splits asunder (letting them) hurrying forth.⁴¹ That is a gathering easy for Us.

يَوْمَ تَشَقَّقُ الْأَرْضُ عَنْهُمْ سِرَاعًا ذَلِكَ حَشْرٌ عَلَيْنَا يَسِيرٌ ﴿٤٤﴾

[45] We know very well what they say. But you are not over them a compeller. Therefore, remind by the Qur'ān one who fears My threat.

نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِجَبَّارٍ فَذَكِّرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَنْ يَخَافُ وَعِيدِ ﴿٤٥﴾

Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir mention both the interpretations.

a *hadith* preserved by Muslim (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

40. Ka'b al-Ahbar is reported by Qatadah as having said that an angel will call out from top of the Rock in Bayt al-Maqdis, which happens to be the centre of the earth (Ibn Jarir, *Kashshaf*, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

The above two construct the events of the Last Hour of this world as something like this: First Allah will send down rains. With them the bodies will begin to grow like the seed begins to grow with water. Then *Israfil* will blow out the souls through the Trumpet. By then the bodies would be fully formed. The souls – dancing about like bees - will be commanded to enter into their bodies. The Trumpet will be blown a second time. The earth will split asunder, and they will begin to hasten to the Court of Justice..

The above statement could be traced to Ahmad's *Fada'il al-Sahabah*, but whose authenticity could not be established (Au.).

Qurtubi names the angel as either Jibril or *Israfil*.

41. The first to appear as the earth splits will be our Prophet as stated in

مَنْ

Surah 51
Al Dhariyyat
 Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
 THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] *By the scatterers that scatter.*¹

وَالذَّارِيَاتِ ذَرْوًا ﴿١﴾

[2] *And the carriers of the loads.*²

فَالْحَامِلَاتِ وِقْرًا ﴿٢﴾

[3] *And those gliding with ease.*³

فَالْجَارِيَاتِ يُسْرًا ﴿٣﴾

[4] *And the distributors by the command.*⁴

فَالْمُقْسِمَاتِ أَمْرًا ﴿٤﴾

1. A variety of reports ending with `Ali ibn abi Talib convey us his opinion that the allusion is to the winds. This was also the opinion of Ibn `Abbas and Mujahid (Ibn Jarir, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

2. This refers to the clouds that carry loads of water (Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Jarir).

3. The allusion is to ships. Another opinion is that it is planets that are meant that glide by smoothly (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

4. `Ali said that it is angels that are the point of reference (Ibn Jarir); they distribute provision, rains, and other things (Zamakhshari).

Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and Alusi write: Bazzar, (Dara Qutni, Ibn Marduwayh and Ibn `Asakir reported through Sa`id ibn al-Musayyib: Alusi) that a man called Sabigh (a Tamimi: Qurtubi), asked `Umar about the meaning of these four verses. He told him that if he had not heard the interpretation from the Prophet himself, he would not tell him. He explained to him, as the man kept asking one question after another, that the first *Ayah* referred to winds, the second to clouds, third to ships and the fourth to angels. Then `Umar ordered the man whipped with a hundred lashes and placed in house arrest. When Sabigh recovered from the lashes, he got him whipped with another hun-

dred. Then he got him sent to Abu Musa al-Ash`ariyy ordering him not to allow the man to mingle with people. (He was actually a chieftain: Qurtubi). The situation remained until the man went up to Abu Musa and swore that he felt his heart filled with true faith. So Abu Musa wrote to `Umar adding his own testimony after which `Umar allowed the man company of other Muslims. It is apparent that the man was not seeking knowledge from `Umar when he aired those questions, but rather, sarcastically questioning the credibility of the Qur`ān.

Ibn Kathir remarks: The incident is well reported in *hadith* and historical works, although not without some weaknesses.

In view of other opinions reported about the four verses above, we might consider the weight of Asad's following note, which is one of the several possibilities mentioned by Imām Razi. Asad writes: "These symbolical epithets, consisting of adjective principles without any mention of the nouns which they qualify, have been variously interpreted by the early commentators; but since there is consensus of opinion regarding the first of these participles – *adh-dhariyat* – as denoting 'dust-scattering winds,' we

may assume that the other three relate to different phases or manifestations of the same phenomenon (Razi) – namely, to the life-giving function of the combination of winds, clouds and rain – pointing, symbolically, to the miraculous creation of life as such and, thus, to existence of a conscious, purposeful Creator."

Yusuf Ali's deeper insight placed at the start of the *Surah* is worth quoting: "Winds may blow strong, and scatter particles of dust far and wide; but they do not diminish by one jot the substance of Allah's material creation; on the contrary they help to readjust things. They reshape the configuration of the earth; in the vegetable kingdom they carry seeds about and plant new seeds in old soils; in the region of air they produce mighty changes in temperature and pressure that affect animal and vegetable life; they carry the moisture of equatorial Africa to the parched plains of India; and so on. Yet they are just one little agency showing Allah's working in the material world. So in the spiritual world. Revelation works mighty changes; it may be resisted, but the resistance will be swept away; it ever points to the one Great Final Event, 'to which the whole Creation moves'."

[5] Surely, what you are promised is true.⁵

إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَصَادِقٌ ﴿٥﴾

[6] And that the reckoning has to occur.

وَإِنَّ الدِّينَ لَوَاقِعٌ ﴿٦﴾

[7] By the heaven of pathways.⁶

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْحُبُكِ ﴿٧﴾

[8] Indeed, you are at variance in your utterances.⁷

إِنَّكُمْ لَفِي قَوْلٍ مُّتخَلِفٍ ﴿٨﴾

[9] He alone is deluded away from it who has been deluded.⁸

يُؤْفِكُ عَنْهُ مَنْ أَفَكَ ﴿٩﴾

5. "That which ye are promised: the Promise of Allah about Mercy and Forgiveness to the Penitent, and Justice and Penalty to the Rebellious, the promise of the Hereafter: the promise that all does not end here, but that there is a truer and more lasting world to come, for which this is but a preparation" (Yusuf Ali).

6. Another interpretation for the textual "*hubuk*" (sing. *habikah*) by authorities such as Ibn 'Abbas, Sa'id b. Jubayr, 'Ikrimah, Hasan and others is that it refers to the heaven's decoration with stars, and its splendorous arrangement (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Dahhak was of the belief that the word "*hubuk*" is for pathways (Qurtubi).

Yusuf Ali again, "The study of the numerous regular orbits of the planets and irregularly regular orbits of comets, and the various motions, vis-

ible or invisible, of the fixed stars or revolving stars, form in themselves a network of knowledge or science, of a highly technical nature; the highest astronomy or mathematics can only barely reach its fringe. But these have all a fixed Plan and Purpose under Allah's Dispensation. In them variety leads to Unity. In contrast look at the confused medley of doctrines, views, and dicta put forward by the Sceptics, as described in the next verse."

7. That is, you hold discordant opinions about the Qur'an, some believing in it, others rejecting it. Or, some saying about the Prophet that he is a soothsayer, others that he is a poet, yet others that he is a sorcerer and so on, (or 'whether or not there is life after death, whether God exists, whether there is any truth in divine revelation, and so forth': Asad) - Ibn Jarir and the rest of commentators.

8. That is, he alone is turned away from the Qur'an who has been

[10] Destroyed be the conjecturers.⁹

﴿قُتِلَ الْخَرَّاصُونَ﴾ ١٠

[11] Those who are in flooded confusion, heedless.

﴿الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي غَمْرَةٍ سَاهُونَ﴾ ١١

[12] They ask, 'When will be the day of reckoning?'

﴿يَسْأَلُونَ أَيَّانَ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ﴾ ١٢

[13] The day they will be roasted on the Fire.¹⁰

﴿يَوْمَ هُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ يُفْتَنُونَ﴾ ١٣

[14] 'Taste your torment. This is what you were seeking to hasten.'

﴿ذُوقُوا فِتْنَتَكُمْ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ﴾ ١٤

[15] Surely, the pious shall be in gardens and springs.

﴿إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ﴾ ١٥

[16] Receiving whatsoever their Lord gave them.¹¹ They were good-doers before this.

﴿آخِذِينَ مَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُحْسِنِينَ﴾ ١٦

turned away (by Allah because of his wrong choices: Au.) - Ibn Jarir.

Zamakhshari states another possibility: He alone turns away from the Qur'an who has been turned away, that is abandoned by the people because of his lies.

Or, perhaps, he alone is turned away from the Qur'an who is turned away because he succumbs to the forces of evil (Au.).

9. Mawdudi comments: "Here the Qur'an is warning man of an important truth. To judge or make an estimation on the basis of conjecture and speculation in the ordinary matters of worldly life maybe useful to some extent, although it would be no substitute for knowledge, but it

would be disastrous to make estimates and give judgments merely following one's own conjectures and speculations in questions of such fundamental and important nature as, whether we are, or are not, responsible and accountable to anyone for the deeds and actions of our lifetime, and if we are, to whom are we accountable, when and what shall be the accountability, and what will be consequence of success or failure of that accountability."

10. When "fatana" is employed in association with gold it would mean that it is being heating up on the fire to cleanse it of impurities (Qurtubi and others).

11. Ibn 'Abbas explained that they were those who received the com-

[17] Little of the night would they sleep.¹²

كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] And by the dawn they sought forgiveness.¹³

وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

mandments of their Lord (in glad obedience) - Ibn Jarir. But Ibn Kathir finds fault with the chain of narration and prefers to think that the *Ayah* is speaking of the great blessings that believers will receive from their Lord in Paradise.

Zamakhshari thinks that the reference is to the grateful attitude of the believers in this world. They took whatever came their way of the world, little or more, gallantly, with perseverance, uncomplainingly and thankfully.

12. Ahnaf b. Qays used to say, "They (the *Salaf*) slept not in their nights except a little, and I am not one of their kind" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Herewith a *hadith* on the importance of Prayer deep in the night. It is from Tirmidhi who declared it *Sahih*:

عن عبد الله بن سلام قال: لما قدم النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم انجفل الناس عليه فكنت فيمن انجفل فلما تبينت وجهه عرفت أن وجهه ليس بوجه كذاب فكان أول شيء سمعته يقول: أفسوا

السلام وأطعموا الطعام وصلوا الأرحام وصلوا والناس نيام تدخلوا الجنة بسلام.

`Abdullah b. Salam said, "When the Prophet arrived at Madinah, the people crowded around him. I too went to see him. When his face became visible to me I knew that it was not the face of a liar. The first thing that he said was, 'People. Spread Salam, feed the food, and Pray while the people are asleep and enter Paradise in peace.'"

13. Ibn Zayd defined "*sahr*" as the last sixth part of the night (Ibn Jarir).

After having spent a good part of the night in devotions, by dawn these oft-turning slaves of Allah turn to seeking His forgiveness, well-aware that whatever their quantity or quality of devotions, they can never meet with the stringent requirements of a spiritual order as meticulously designed and directed by inflexible rules as the physical world that accepts no flaw; meaning, there was every chance that the devotions were

[19] *There was a share in their wealth for the beggar and the deprived.*¹⁴

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] *And in the earth are signs for those who would be convinced.*

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُوقِنِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] *And in your own selves.*¹⁵ *Do you not see?*

وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

short of requirements, and, therefore, unacceptable, requiring Allah's forgiveness and His grace, after the night session was over (Au.).

14. “.. this applies to all living creatures, whether human beings or mute animals (Razi), irrespective of whether the need is of a physical or an emotional nature” (Asad)

The Prophet (*saws*) has spoken about the rights of he who asks. He said, as in a report preserved by Ahmad and Abu Da'ud through Hussain b. 'Ali,

الحسين بن علي قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: -للسائل حق وإن جاء على فرس.

“The beggar has a right, even if he came on a horse.”

However, Haythami declared the above report weak (Au.).

Yusuf Ali adds: “True charity remembers not only those in need who ask, but also those who are prevented by some reason from asking.

The man of true charity seeks out the latter. There may be various reasons which prevent a man from asking for help:(1) he may be ashamed to ask, or his sense of honour may prevent him from asking; (2) he may be so engrossed in some great ideal that he may not think of asking; (3) he may even not know that he is in need, (4) he may not know that you possess the things that can supply his needs; and (5) he may be a dumb and helpless creature, whether a human being or a dumb animal, or any creature within your ken or power. Charity in the higher sense includes all help,

From one better endowed to one less well endowed.”

15. It is remarkable to note that what Ibn Zayd wrote as mysteries of existence, have still remained so after a millennium and a half, but have in fact, deepened. He said, “Think about it. These faculties of sight, sound and hearing; the heart and the thinking mind, what are they? How

[22] *And in the heavens is your provision¹⁶ as well as what you are promised.¹⁷*

وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

can they be defined and understood? What is the nature of intellect?"

The mystery has deepened in our times. For example, modern science tells us that the mind neither sees anything nor hears. It merely receives electronic signals and impulses. The eye for example, receives no more than photons (particles of light). These photons are then transformed into signals. These signals pass through various apparatuses of the head, and then are finally processed in a dark chamber of the mind, where no light ever reaches. It is there that the mind identifies and defines the objects of which it receives signals, but no light. So, what is it that sees? Certainly, it is not the eye which sees it either. With more and more research going on, the ever-deepening mystery deepens further.

But it is not merely the sight, or the hearing. It is not possible that we place the finger on any part of the body but it turns out that it is a mystery that humans might never be able to unravel. The organs work,

and this is how they work, is all that we know. But why should they work, and why do they stop functioning when they do, are details that no one knows (Au.).

16. Most commentators write that the allusion is to rain which in turn accounts for all vegetative growth on earth and provision for all life forms. Yusuf Ali, however, expresses other shades of meaning: "Sustenance, here as elsewhere, includes physical sustenance, as well as spiritual sustenance. Similarly heaven or sky has both the physical and the spiritual meaning.

The physical sustenance grows from rain from the sky; the spiritual sustenance comes from divine aid, grace, and mercy, and includes the Good News and the Warning which come from Revelation about the Hereafter."

17. That is, what we are promised of good or bad: all come down by Allah's command (Au.).

Another opinion is that the allusion is to Paradise (Kashshaf, Ibn Kathir).

[23] Then by the Lord of the heaven and earth, it is true,¹⁸ just as what you are speaking.¹⁹

قَوْرَبِ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ مِثْلِ مَا
أَنْتُمْ تَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] Has the story of the honored guests of Ibrahim reached you?

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
الْمُكْرَمِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] When they entered upon him and said, 'Peace.' He said, 'peace' – 'an unknown people.'

إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ
قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] Then he turned to his homefolk and brought out a fat (roasted) calf.

فَرَاغَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ فَجَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ سَمِينٍ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] He pushed it closer to them and said, 'Will you not eat?'

فَقَرَّبَهُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

18. That is, this message is as true, as a matter of fact, as the words you speak out, which again, i.e., the ability to speak, is a sign of Allah (Au.).

Zamakhshari, Qurtubi and Alusi report the following story. Asma`i (the grammarian) reported: "I had just come out of Basrah mosque when I encountered a coarse Bedouin on his camel, with a drawn sword and a bow in his hand. He asked me, 'Whom do you belong to?' I said, 'Banu Asma'.' He asked, 'Where are you coming from?' I replied, 'From a place where the Qur'an is recited.' He asked, 'Can you recite for me?'

So I started reciting chapter Al-Dhariyyat. When I reached the verse, 'And in the heavens is your provision...' he said, 'Enough.' He went

up to his camel, hamstrung it, cut it to pieces and started to distribute its meat to the passers by. Then he broke his sword and bow and left. (A few months later), when I did my Hajj with Harun al-Rashid, and was in the *Tawaf*, when I heard myself called by a weak voice. As I turned, it was the same Bedouin. He had run down and had turned pale. He greeted me and then asked me to recite the same verses to him. When I reached the same verse as last time, he cried out, 'We have found that what our Lord promised, is true.' Then he asked me to continue if there was more to it. So I recited, 'Then by the Lord of the heaven and earth, it is true.' He cried out, 'Glory to Allah. Who angered the Exalted that He should swear? Surely, they did not believe in what

[28] He conceived a fear of them.²⁰ They said, 'Fear not,' and gave him the glad tiding of a learned boy.²¹

فَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لَا تَحْزَنْ
وَبَشِّرُوهُ بِنِعْلَامٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٨﴾

[29] His wife began to²² exclaim;²³ smote her face²⁴ and said, 'An old woman, barren?!'²⁵

فَأَقْبَلَتِ امْرَأَتُهُ فِي صَرَخٍ فَصَكَتْ وَجْهَهَا
وَقَالَتْ عَجُوزٌ عَقِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] They said, 'So says your Lord. He is indeed the All-wise, the All-knowing.'

قَالُوا كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْحَكِيمُ
الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٠﴾

[31] He asked, 'So what is your errand (now), O you the envoys?'

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ
﴿٣١﴾

He said and so He resorted to swearing.' He said that three times and died on the spot."

19. Or, "even as you are able to speak" (Asad).

20. Yusuf Ali explains why Ibrahim (*asws*) was apprehensive: "They seemed unusual strangers, but he said nothing and quietly proceeded to perform the rites of hospitality. He brought a roast fatted calf and placed it before them to eat. But the strangers did not eat (xi. 70). This disconcerted him. According to the laws of hospitality, a stranger under your roof is under your protection, but if he refuses to eat, he refuses your hospitality and keeps himself free from any ties of guest and host. 'What were their designs?' thought Abraham, and he felt some distrust. But they were angels and could not eat. They declared themselves, and

announced the birth to Abraham of a son endowed with wisdom, - in other words that Abraham was to be the head of a long line of Prophets!"

21. Mujahid thought it was Isma'il, but Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir and others assert that it was definitely Is-haq.

22. The words, "She began to" follow Ibn Jarir's understanding.

23. Although "*sarratun*" is for a cry, but since a cry can be loud as well in low pitch, we have tried to be close to Qatadah's understanding who said it means "*rannatun*" (Au.).

24. Some women lightly pat their cheek to express amazement, others, their forehead. So either could be meant by the words "smote her face" (Au.).

25. That is, will I, and old woman, and moreover, barren, bear a child ?

[32] They said, 'We have been sent to a people who are criminal.'²⁶

قَالُوا إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَى قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

[33] To loosen upon them stones of clay.

لِنُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّن طِينٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] Marked with your Lord²⁷ - for those who cross the limits.'

مُسَوَّمَةٌ عِندَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

[35] Then We brought out therefrom whosoever was of the believers.

فَأَخْرَجْنَا مَن كَانَ فِيهَا مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] But We found not there except one house of Muslims.

فَمَا وَجَدْنَا فِيهَا غَيْرَ بَيْتٍ مِّنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

[37] And We left therein a sign for those who fear the painful chastisement.

وَتَرَكْنَا فِيهَا آيَةً لِّلَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] And in Musa (was a sign) when We sent him to Fir`awn with a clear authority.²⁸

وَفِي مُوسَى إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ بِسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٨﴾

[39] But he turned back, with his court, and said, 'A sorcerer, or (perhaps) a madman.'

فَتَوَلَّىٰ بِرُكْنِهِ وَقَالَ سَاحِرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

[40] So We seized him and his forces and cast them into the sea, and he was to blame.

فَأَخَذْنَاهُ وَجُنُودَهُ فَنَبَذْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

[41] And in `Ad (was a sign) when We sent upon them the barren wind.²⁹

وَفِي عَادٍ إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيحَ الْعَقِيمَ ﴿٤١﴾

[42] It left nothing it came upon but reduced it to decaying rubble.

مَا تَذَرُ مِن شَيْءٍ أَتَتْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا جَعَلَتْهُ كَالرَّمِيمِ ﴿٤٢﴾

26. That is, to Lut's people.

27. The textual "*musawwamah*" is used for a white stone with a black spot on it, or a black stone with a white spot (Ibn Jarir). Another meaning is that each stone was marked with the name of the person it was to strike.

28. The allusion is to the nine miracles. See *Surah Al-A'raf*, note numbers 155 and 156.

29. It was barren because it did not pollinate the trees nor did it seed the clouds (Ibn Jarir from Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Dahhak and others).

[43] And in Thamud (was a sign) when they were told, 'Enjoy yourselves for a while.'³⁰

وَفِي ثَمُودَ إِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَمَتَّعُوا حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٤٣﴾

[44] But they insolently defied the commandment of their Lord. So a huge cry seized them while they were looking on.

فَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

[45] Then they could neither stand upright, nor could they defend themselves.

فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا مِنْ قِيَامٍ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنْصِرِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

[46] And earlier, Nuh's folks. They were an ungodly people.

وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ مِّن قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

[47] And the heaven, We built it with power, and indeed, We are the expanders.³¹

وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

[48] And the earth, We spread it out, and excellent Smoothers (are We).

وَالْأَرْضَ فَرَشْنَاهَا فَنِعْمَ الْمَاهِدُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

30. That is, three more days, as the Qur'an stated in *Surah Hud*, Ayah 65 (Qurtubi).

31. Expansion of the universe is by now almost universally accepted, although, since it is based on observations with the help of instruments, rather than a clear visible phenomenon, and, since the role played by hidden elements cannot be ruled out, some skeptics still hold reservations. The following there fore may be read with interest.

It was Einstein's general theory of relativity presented in 1917 that first predicted by implication, that if the

theory was right, the universe could be either expanding or contracting. However, no one picked up the implication immediately because of the idea fairly embedded in the minds of the scientists that the universe was static. Yes, the stars did move in their orbits, but that they were part of a large group in which they stayed together, i.e., a galaxy, was still not known. In other words, until early years of the last century, it was not known that there were galaxies that contained billions of stars and that there were billions of galaxies. As regards expansion, it was something so unbelievable, that , when a young

scientist pointed the implication (in his theory of the expansion of the universe) to Einstein, he dismissed the idea. But other scientists caught on, and began to show what the theory implied although observations said nothing about an expanding universe. Finally, when Einstein realized that that is what his theory was implying – a dynamic, expanding universe – he regarded it as a flaw and set about modifying his theory. He did not like the idea of ‘a runaway universe,’ as some scientists like to say, and so, he added a constant – known as the cosmological constant – to his equation, in order to make the universe static as the general belief at that time was that the universe was static.

However, within a decade an American scientist called Hubble began to notice a red shift in the spectrum of light recorded with sensitive instruments capable of picking up cosmic lights of weak intensity emitted by distant galaxies. This red-shift was because of the well-known Doppler effect. By 1929 it was fairly well established, after a pretty long spell of disbelief, that the red-shift indicated that the universe was expanding.

Einstein of course remained skeptical about the new finding for quite a

while, as did many other astro-physicists, until further studies confirmed the expansion. Einstein referred to his introduction of the cosmological constant to make the universe static as, ‘the greatest blunder of my life.’

However, there was a flaw. The universe was definitely expanding but why was the sun not moving away from the earth? In fact, the puzzle deepened when it was discovered that even stars within our own galaxy were not moving away from each other. But rather some galaxies seemed to be running away from others and that, greater the distance, the faster their rate of travel outward. The puzzle deepened all the more when measurements showed that some galaxies did not seem to increase space between each other. That is, not all galaxies seemed to be moving away from each other. So, in what sense was the universe expanding?

Obviously, while all this was going on, the Qur’ān had remained saying that the universe was expanding. Ultimately it was realized that it were not galaxies that were moving away from each other, but it was cluster of galaxies. These clusters sometimes contain thousands of galaxies. It is these clusters that were moving away

[49] *And of every thing We created in pairs, haply that you will reflect.*³² وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

from each other causing the universe to expand.

Although it is said that it is space that expands, it is not explained why space between galaxies within clusters does not expand, nor the latest discovery has any explanation for why the expansion is accelerating. It is being assumed that there is a fifth force, the dark energy, which is responsible for this but, nothing else is known of the force that accelerates the outward expansion; hence the term “the dark energy.”

In any case, the irony is, that while the Qur’ān maintained that the universe was expanding, Einstein refused to believe in it, although his own equations were saying that the universe was not static (Au.).

32. Yusuf Ali places this note slightly above: “If you do not wish to go back to the wonderful things in the past, which show the power and goodness of Allah, and His justice supreme over all wrong-doing, look at the wonderful things unfolding themselves before your very eyes! (1) The

space in the heavens above! Who can comprehend it but He Who made it and sustains it? (2) The globe of the earth under your feet! How great its expanse seems over sea and land, and spread out for you like a wonderful carpet or bed of rest! (3) All things are in twos: sex in plants and animals, by which one individual is complementary to another; in the subtle forces of nature, Day and Night, positive and negative electricity, forces of attraction and repulsion: and numerous other opposites, each fulfilling its purpose, and contribution to the working of Allah’s Universe: and in the moral and spiritual world, Love and Aversion, Mercy and Justice, Striving and Rest, and so on; - all fulfilling their functions according to the Artistry and wonderful Purpose of Allah. Everything has its counterpart, or pair, or complement. Allah alone is One, with none like Him, or (anything) needed to complement Him. These are noble things to contemplate. And they lead us to a true understanding of Allah’s Purpose and Message.”

[50] Therefore, flee unto Allah.³³ Truly, I am for you a clear warner from Him.

فَقَرُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِّنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

[51] And do not set up another god along with Allah. Truly, I am for you a clear warner from Him.

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِّنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥١﴾

[52] Similarly, no Messenger came to those before them but they said, 'A sorcerer, or (maybe) a madman.'³⁴

كَذَلِكَ مَا أَتَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِم مِّن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا قَالُوا سَاحِرٌ أَوْ مُجُنُونٌ ﴿٥٢﴾

[53] Have they bequeathed it to one another? But rather, they are a rebellious people.

أَتَوَصَّوْا بِهِ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

[54] So leave them alone, for you are not to be blamed.

فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِمَلُومٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

[55] But remind, for reminder benefits the believers.

وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَى تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

33. Usage of the word "flee" gives rise to some profound connotations. It reflects the truth of man bound to this earth, its people, its laws and traditions. They have their rules and impose restriction on him. He is given responsibilities that demand that he devote the best of his time and energy towards fulfilling them. And they are never ending. The more he gives, the more they demand, and the more he has to keep himself engaged in the humdrum of life. The norms, mores and culture of his family, society and nation fetter him. He is denied freedom and free movement. He feels he is in a prison and is surrounded by enemies. He wishes

to do things in his own way but he is constrained. So, what's the solution? The answer is, flee to Allah. Give due time to fulfill obligations to Him. Do nothing to displease Him. Earn His favor by turning to Him often. Forget Him not in any situation, at any moment. This will remove the fetters, sever the chains, and free the soul. Life will remain same for all its appearance. But inwardly, man will feel relaxed, content and spiritually at rest (Au.).

34. That is, what men contemporary to you have to say about this message O Prophet, is what the denying nations of the past had said (Ibn Kathir).

[56] And I have not created the Jinn and mankind but that they should worship Me.³⁵

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾

35. That is, it was required of the two that they worship none but Allah. However, some chose to worship Allah, while others chose to worship other than Him (with a point from Zamakhshari).

But, (according to Ibn `Abbas: Qurtubi), it means, "worship Me willingly or unwillingly" (the latter being through submission to the laws of nature) - Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir.

Some of the *Sufiya* have said that "*li-ya`budun*" should be understood as "*li-ya`rifun*." They quote a *hadith* to this effect. It says,

كنت كنزاً لا أعرف فأحببت أن أعرف
فخلقت خلقاً فعرفتهم بي فعرفوني

"I was an unknown treasure. I wished to be known. Therefore, I created a creation whom I informed about Myself and they came to know Me."

Although this is quoted quite often, (especially in *Sufi* literature produced by the Orientalists, who do not seem to learn to distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy reports), the learned *Sufiya* themselves, in-

cluding *Sheikh al-Akbar*, admit that this is no *hadith* at all; in the sense that it is neither weak, nor forged. It does not even go with a chain of narrators to be quoted as a *hadith* (Alusi).

Majid quotes some psychologists about the universal urge in man to pray implying the *raison d'être* of his creation: "In these days of scientific enlightenment, very little is said of the reason why we do pray, which is simply that we cannot help praying. It seems probable that, in spite of all that 'sciences' may do to the contrary, men will continue to pray to the end of the time ... The impulse to pray is a necessary consequence of the fact that whilst the innermost of the empirical self of a man is a self to the social sort, it yet can find its only adequate socius in an ideal world.' (James, Principles of Psychology, I. p. 316). But the concept of worship in Islam is far more comprehensive. 'Here it is not restricted to the purely devotional practices but extends over the whole of man's practical life, individual and social. If the object of our life on the whole is the worship

[57] I desire of them no provision,³⁶ nor do I want them to feed Me. مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِّن رِّزْقٍ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعَمُونِ ﴿٥٧﴾

[58] Indeed, Allah is the Provider,³⁷ Lord of Power, the Strong. إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ ﴿٥٨﴾

of God, then we necessarily must regard this life, in the totality of its aspects, as one complete moral responsibility. Thus, all our actions, even the seemingly trivial ones, must be performed as acts of worship, that is, performed consciously as constituting a part in God's universal plan.' (ASB, I.p. 39)."

36. That is, "If you are My slaves, and I your Master, then, this is only a convenient verbal expression. The earthly master requires slaves to serve him, earn for him and, thus, feed him. I am above all such needs. I am indeed the Provider" (Razi, Alusi, reworded).

Another possible interpretation is, "I do not seek of you providence, neither for yourself nor for others" (Alusi).

Majid adds: "The allusion is to the food offerings presented by the polytheistic peoples to their various gods. The gods of the Vedas, for instance, are not only anthropomorphic in appearances but also require food.

Their favorite food consists of 'milk, butter, grain and the flesh of sheep, goats and cattle.' It is offered to them in the sacrifice. This is either conveyed to them in heaven by the god of fire, or they come in their cars to partake of it on the litter of grass prepared for their reception. Their favorite beverage is the exhilarating juice of the soma plant' (ERE, XII, p. 603)... In the pre-Islamic Semitic sacrifices also 'the God and his worshippers partake of a common meal ... the deity is periodically fed by the gifts of his children and thus is kept continually favorable towards them.' (ERE, XI, p.33)."

37. A *hadith* can be quoted in this context. It is from Ahmad:

عَنْ سَلَامِ أَبِي شَرَحْبِيلَ قَالَ : سَمِعْتُ حَبَّةَ وَسَوَاءَ ابْنَيْ خَالِدٍ يَقُولَانِ : أَتَيْنَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ يَعْمَلُ عَمَلًا أَوْ يُبْنِي بِنَاءً (وفي رواية: أَوْ يُصَلِّحُ شَيْئًا) ، فَأَعْنَاهُ ، فَلَمَّا فَرَغَ دَعَا لَنَا ، وَقَالَ : لَا تَيَأْسُوا مِنَ الْخَيْرِ مَا تَهَزَّزْتُ بِهِ رُءُوسُكُمْ ، فَإِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ تَلَدُّهُ أُمُّهُ أَحْمَرَ ، لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ قَشْرَةٌ ، ثُمَّ يُعْطِيهِ اللَّهُ وَيَرْزُقُهُ

[59] Then, for the wrongdoers there is a portion³⁸ (of chastisement) like the portion of their companions.³⁹ So let them not hasten Me.⁴⁰

فَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُنُوبًا مِّثْلَ ذُنُوبِ
أَصْحَابِهِمْ فَلَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

[60] Woe then unto those who disbelieved from that day of theirs that they are promised.

فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ يَوْمِهِمُ الَّذِي
يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

Two sons of Khalid reported: “We went up to the Prophet and found him doing something, or maybe putting up a structure, (or was repairing something). We helped him in his work. When he was through, he supplicated for us and then said, ‘Never despair of the good so long as you can shake your heads. A mother gives birth to a man red without a skin. Thereafter it is Allah who gives him and feeds him’” (Ibn Kathir).

tators such as Ibn ‘Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah, Hasan and others. Ibn Jarir presents poetical examples of this usage.

39. The allusion is to the denying nations of the past, who were the companions of the present in denial, and will be their companions in Hell-fire (Au.).

40. This refers to the pagan taunt that if this was all true then where was the punishment?

مَتَشَّ

38. This is how “*dhanub*” has been understood by the earliest commen-





Surah 52
Al-Tur
 Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
 THE COMPASSONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] By the *Tur*.¹

وَالطُّورِ ﴿١﴾

[2] And a Book inscribed.²

وَكِتَابٍ مَّسْطُورٍ ﴿٢﴾

[3] In a parchment spread open

فِي رَقٍّ مَّنشُورٍ ﴿٣﴾

[4] By the House much-frequented.³

وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ ﴿٤﴾

1. The allusion is to the well-known Mount *Tur* (Ibn Jarir). This was the opinion of Suddi (Qurtubi). Ibn Kathir thinks it could be any mountain. Yusuf Ali may have a point in translating it as the 'Mount' (of Revelation).

Literally, *Tur* is any mountain that is covered with trees. A barren mountain is called "*jabal*" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

2. The reference could be to any Book, such as the Book of deeds, or the Preserved Tablet (*Al-Lawh al-Mahfuz*) [Qurtubi], or the Qur'an. Nothing can be said in definite terms (Alusi).

3. The Prophet (*saws*) reported in a *hadith*,

فَرَفَعَ لِي الْبَيْتَ الْمَعْمُورَ فَسَأَلْتُ جِبْرِيلَ ، فَقَالَ :
 هَذَا الْبَيْتُ الْمَعْمُورُ ، يُصَلِّي فِيهِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ سَبْعُونَ
 أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ ، إِذَا خَرَجُوا لَمْ يُعْودُوا إِلَيْهِ آخَرَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ

"The *Bayt al-Ma'mur* was raised for me. I asked Jibril and he answered that this is the Frequented House. Seventy thousand angels pray in it every day. After they have left, they will not reTurn until their last" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

The fuller version of the *hadith* is in Bukhari (Au.).

There is another report on this topic. It comes from Qatadah who said,

[5] And the canopy⁴ uplifted.

وَالسَّقْفِ الْمَرْفُوعِ ﴿٥﴾

[6] And by the sea on Fire.⁵

وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ ﴿٦﴾

عَنْ قَتَادَةَ قَالَ : ذُكِرَ لَنَا أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ "الْبَيْتُ الْمَعْمُورُ مَسْجِدٌ فِي السَّمَاءِ بِحِذَاءِ الْكَعْبَةِ لَوْ خَرَّ لَخَرَّ عَلَيْهَا"

A report reached us which has the Prophet saying, *Al-Bayt al-Ma`mur* is a mosque in the seventh heaven right above the Ka`bah so that, if it fell, it would fall on it (Ibn Jarir, Shawkani).

Ibn Kathir adds: *Al-Bayt al-Ma`mur* is in the seventh heaven. Our Prophet found Ibrahim reclining against this House. This was the reward to him for building the Ka`bah on earth. Every firmament (heaven) has its own House of worship for its inhabitants. The one in the firmament closest to the earth is called "*Al-Bayt al-Izzah*."

We might add: As if the physical, visible universe is no less a wonder, but rather a riddle to the scientists, the *Bayt al-Ma`mur* being right above the Ka`bah (both spiritual entities), should not lead one to wonder how an earthly collection of rocks is aligned with the heavenly one. For the scientists of course, who believe that this world consists of multiple

universes, each with its own dimensions ranging from eight to twenty and odd, hence invisible to the human eye used to three dimensions alone, and one universe passing through another without any collision, the fact of the Ka`bah aligned with another House in another universe, in some complicated way, offers no difficulty.

Nonetheless, it might be noted that Qatada's statement is his own, and not a *hadith* (Au.).

4. That is, the first firmament (Ibn Jarir).

5. There are various opinions from the *Salaf* about "*al-bahr al-masjur*" because of the several connotations that "*sajara*" contains. One: the sea that is fully filled; another: the empty sea; yet another, a sea under the *'Arsh*, etc. But "the sea on fire" seems to be right (Ibn Jarir). This is because the seas will be set on fire on the Day of Judgment (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

That water, which is used for putting off fire, should be on fire might surprise some. But, surprisingly, water is

[7] Surely, the punishment of your Lord has to occur.⁶

إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ ﴿٧﴾

[8] For it, there is no preventer.

مَا لَهُ مِنْ دَافِعٍ ﴿٨﴾

[9] The day when the heaven moves in a circular movement.

يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَاءُ مَوْرًا ﴿٩﴾

[10] And the mountains sway in motion.

وَتَسِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سِيرًا ﴿١٠﴾

[11] Then woe, that day, to those who laid the lie.

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١١﴾

made of two highly combustible elements: oxygen and hydrogen. Oxygen's combustion is well-known. As for hydrogen, the sun is nothing but a ball of three-fourth hydrogen and one-fourth helium.

At present it is burning its hydrogen. When hydrogen is exhausted in another four or five billion years, it will begin burning its helium. At that stage it will expand to engulf the inner planets (and ultimately the earth itself), within its scorching fire – to finally end up, burnt out, as a white invisible star, lost somewhere in the galaxy. It is in fact a strange fact that although water is made up of two highly combustible elements, it does not burn (Au.).

6. Jubayr b. Mut'im reports: "I had gone to Madinah to discuss the captives of Badr. I happened to arrive at a time when the Prophet was offering *Maghrib* Prayers. He was recit-

ing *Surah Al-Tur*. When he arrived at the verses, 'Surely, the punishment of your Lord has to occur. There is no preventer to it,' it shook my heart. I became a Muslim from the fear of the punishment. In fact, I was not sure I would rise up before the punishment struck" (Qurtubi, Alusi).

Bazzar reports that once when 'Umar was on his rounds, he heard a man reciting in his Prayer: "By the *Tur*; and a Book inscribed..." When he reached "Surely, the punishment of your Lord has to occur" 'Umar came down his donkey and slumped against a wall. He returned home sick and remained in that state for a whole month, nobody knowing what was wrong with him (Ibn Kathir).

Sayyid adds: Obviously, 'Umar must have heard the *Surah* several times earlier. The Prophet used to recite it in his *Maghrib* Prayers. He

himself must have recited it in his Prayers several times over. But when he heard it that night, it touched his heart in a way it hadn't before. It found some openings that were not there earlier. It must have one of those special hours, when the soul is more receptive than at other times. That moment it affected him in a way that the body was unable to take the pressure."

Yusuf Ali's several notes could be combined at this point: "The adjuration is by five things ... An appeal is made to these five Signs in verses 1 to 6, and the certainty of future events is asserted in the most emphatic terms in verses 7 to 28, in three parts, viz., the coming of judgment and the passing away of this phenomenal world (verses 7-10); the future ill consequences of ill-deeds done (verses 11-16); and future attainment of bliss and complete realisation of Allah's love and mercy" (verses 17-28).

The five Signs to which appeal is made are: (1) the Mount (of Revelation), verse 1; (2) the Book Inscribed, verses 2-3; (3) The Much-frequented House, verse 4; (4) the Canopy Raised High, verse 5; and (5) the Ocean filled with Swell, verse 6. Let us examine these in detail.

Each of them has a figurative meaning. (1) The Mount is the sublime world of Revelation. In the case of Moses it is typified by Mount Sinai: Cf. xcv. 2, where it is mentioned in juxtaposition to the sacred territory of Makkah, xcv. 3. In the case of Jesus it is the Mount of Olives: Cf. xcv. 1, and also Matt. xxiv. 3-51, where Jesus made his striking pronouncement about the Judgment to come. In the case of Muhammad it is the Mountain of Light, where he first received the revelation: Cf. n. 11 (2). The Book Inscribed is Allah's Eternal word. When it becomes Revelation to man, it is figured forth as something 'inscribed', reduced to writing; and as it is made clear to the intelligence of man, it is further described as 'in a parchment unfolded', that is, spread out so that everyone who has the will can seek its guidance.

Note that they are in a descending order; - the highest, or most remote from man's consciousness, being mentioned first, and that nearest to man's consciousness being mentioned last. The truth of Revelation; its embodiment in a Prophet's Message given in human language; the universal appeal of divine worship; the starry world above; and the encircling Ocean, full of life and motion below, -all are evidences that the

[12] *Those who sportingly indulge in trifles.*⁷

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي حَوْضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] *The day they are thrust toward the Fire with a big thrust.*

يَوْمَ يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى نَارٍ جَهَنَّمَ دَعَاً ﴿١٣﴾

[14] *This is the Fire that you were laying the lie against.*

هَذِهِ النَّارُ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] *What, is this magic,⁸ or you do not see?*⁹

أَفَسِحْرٌ هَذَا أَمْ أَنْتُمْ لَا تَبْصُرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] *Roast therein. Now you show patience or do not show patience, it is all the same for you. You are only being recompensed for that you were working.*

اصْلَوْهَا فَاصْبِرُوا أَوْ لَا تَصْبِرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّمَا تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

Day of Allah (*swt*) will finally come, and nothing can avert it.”

7. Sayyid has a long passage at this point. Herewith a summary: When we consider, not merely the pagans of the past, but thinkers, intellectuals and philosophers of our times – those whose ideas dominate the pages of history that record human thoughts – what is it that we discover? Can we describe their ideas as anything more in comparison than the ideas of children trying to discover the truths of life? Their efforts to discover the meaning of this life, and connect its disjointed ends, are no more than a child’s struggle with a mathematical formula hoping to solve all its riddles. The nature of the riddle is the same for both of them, and the solutions that the thinkers offer are as childish. The results are apparent. They deal with bits and

pieces of knowledge, and arrive at no comprehensive solution or understanding.

Their indulgence in life is, too, no different in essence, than the indulgence of the children in games and pastime. Watch the children when in play. See how deeply engrossed they are in their lifeless toys. How much care and love they bestow on them. How real they take them to be. The thinkers, intellectuals and philosophers resemble them closely when they talk and discuss the nature of this life, its purpose, its beginning and end. They are equally childish when they ignore the Revelation and depend on their little, juvenile intellect.

8. These are the very people who, when they witnessed a sign, said that it was nothing but magic. So, when

[17] Surely, the pious shall be in gardens and bliss.

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَعِيمٍ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] Enjoying what their Lord would have bestowed them. Their Lord saved them from the chastisement of the Fire.

فَاكِهِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ وَوَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ
عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] Eat and drink with relish for what you were working.

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ
﴿١٩﴾

[20] Reclining upon lined couches, and We shall espouse them¹⁰ to wide-eyed Houris.

مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَّصْفُوفَةٍ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمْ
بِحُورٍ عِينٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] And those who believed, and their offspring followed them in faith, We shall join their offspring with them; and We shall deprive not aught of their works.¹¹ Every man is pledged for what he earned.¹²

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ
أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ مِنْ
عَمَلِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ
رَهِيْنٌ ﴿٢١﴾

they taste the punishment of denial, they will be asked, "Is this magic too?" (Razi)

.9. That is, are you still blind, as you were to the truth during your earthly life (from Alusi).

10. To translate as "We shall marry them" would be wrong because of the introduction of a preposition to the verb (Qurtubi, Alusi)

11. Ibn `Abbas is severally reported to have said that in order to please the believers, Allah will join those of their offspring who were believers and did righteous deeds, although of lower order (and, therefore, in a lower part of Paradise: Au.), with their

progenitors (in a higher part of Paradise), without decreasing the rewards of good deeds of either (Ibn Jarir). This was also the opinion of Sha'bi, Sa'id b. Jubayr, Ibrahim, Qatadah, Abu Saleh, Rabi' b. Anas, Dahhak and Ibn Zayd (Ibn Kathir).

This opinion is supported by a trustworthy *hadith* preserved by Ahmad. It says,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ لِيرْفَعُ الدَّرَجَةَ لِلْعَبْدِ الصَّالِحِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ؛ فَيَقُولُ يَا رَبِّ أُنِّي لِي هَذِهِ فَيَقُولُ بِاسْتِغْفَارٍ وَلَدَكَ لَكَ

The Prophet said, "A pious man's position in Paradise will be up-
raised. He will say, 'My Lord.

[22] And We shall extend to them fruits and of the (kind of) meat they desire.¹³

وَأَمْدَدْنَاهُمْ بِفَاكِهَةٍ وَلَحْمٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] They will playfully snatch therein from one another cups (of wine),¹⁴ neither frivolity nor any sin (touching them).¹⁵

يَتَنَازَعُونَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا لَا لَعْوٍ فِيهَا وَلَا تَأْتِيهِمْ ﴿٢٣﴾

How come this for me?’ He will be told, ‘On account of your progeny seeking forgiveness for you’” (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Yusuf Ali comments in a language expressing an ethos that is fast disappearing from the planet: “... though the love poured out by Prophets, ancestors, descendants, friends, or good men and women, will secure for their loved ones the enjoyment of their society, it is an indispensable condition that the loved ones should also, according to their lights, have shown their faith and their goodness in deeds. Each individual is responsible for his conduct. In the kingdom of heaven there is no boasting of ancestors or friends. But it is part of the satisfaction of the good ones who poured out their love that those who were in any way worthy to receive their love should also be admitted to their society, and this satisfaction shall in no way be diminished to them.

12. This is another way of saying, each man is bound to the deeds he earns, so that no one else will bear any of his load (Ibn Kathir).

Every man is mortgaged with Allah against his deeds. He can redeem himself by paying back the debt viz., good deeds (Alusi).

13. Some scholars say, writes Razi, that the gnostic (*khawas*) will enjoy different kinds of (non-physical) pleasures. The answer is, material and physical activities in Paradise are mentioned against deeds (i.e., something material). Note the words, “*for what you were working.*” (So, there is no escape from good deeds: Au.). As for the intellectual reward, that will be against knowledge. Thus, each will get rewards in accordance with what he or she earned. The spiritually oriented will have the reward of Allah’s closeness.

14. Thanwi writes: As against the belief of some ascetics who believe in a dry, all-serious life, the description of the playful snatching of cups

[24] And there shall go round on them lads,¹⁶
as if they were hidden pearls.¹⁷

وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ غِلْمَانٌ لَّهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لُؤْلُؤٌ
مَّكَنُونٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] And some of them will advance upon others asking each other.

وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] They will say, 'Previously we were ever-fearful in our families.'¹⁸

قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] Then Allah conferred upon us favor and saved us from the poisonous punishment.¹⁹

فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَانَا عَذَابَ السَّمُومِ ﴿٢٧﴾

of wine from each other in Paradise demonstrates that such playful activities are perfectly allowable between believing companions and friends in this world, and that it is not at all against good behavior, decorum, or piety. The condition should remain as stated herewith: it should not involve indecency or sin.

15. In other words, the conversation of the inhabitants of Paradise will be free of unpleasant words, as well as free of lies and deceits of any kind (Tabari, reworded). In other words, their drinking will not lead to loose or sinful talk as happens with drunkards in this world (Ibn Kathir).

Thanwi adds: This shows that the kinship of the pious with the pious will be of benefit in the Hereafter.

16. They will be there to serve them, going round with trays of fruits, food and drinks. There is no agreement over their origin, but Kalbi said that they will never grow up to manhood (Qurtubi).

17. Other connotations of “*maknun*” are: the well-guarded, kept closed, etc .

18. That is, they were ever fearful of Allah’s anger, or that their good deeds may not be acceptable to Him (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

19. “*Samum*” has been explained as scorching, poisonous winds coming out of from Hell that will penetrate and hurt every cell of the body.

[28] We were earlier ever-calling upon Him. Truly it is He who is All-benign, All-merciful.'

إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ
الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٨﴾

[29] Therefore remind, for by the grace of your Lord you are neither a soothsayer nor a madman.

فَذَكِّرْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَتِ رَبِّكَ بِكَاهِنٍ وَلَا
مَجْنُونٍ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] Or do they say, 'A poet, for whom we await vicissitude of Time?'²⁰

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ نَتَرَبَّصُ بِهِ رَبُّهُ الْمُتُونِ
﴿٣٠﴾

[31] Say, 'Await. I am of those awaiting with you.'

قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُتَرَبِّصِينَ
﴿٣١﴾

[32] Or do their intellects urge them do this?²¹ Or, are they an insolent people?²²

أَمْ تَأْمُرُهُمْ أَهْلَامُهُمْ بِهَذَا أَمْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ
طَاغُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

[33] Or do they say, 'He has fabricated it?' But rather, they do not believe.

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقَوَّلَهُ بَلْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] Then let them bring a discourse similar to this, if they are true.

فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِثْلِهِ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ
﴿٣٤﴾

20. That is, maybe death will overtake him, or something else will happen to him.

Ibn `Abbas said that when the Quraysh gathered in Dar al-Nadwah to discuss the Prophet's affair, one of them said, "Place him in house arrest, bind him up and wait until death overtakes him as it overtook the poets Zuhayr and Nabigha and so Allah revealed, "Or do they say, 'A poet, for whom we await vicissitude of Time?'" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn `Abbas has said that everywhere in the Qur'an "*rayb*" has been used in the sense of "*shakk*" except here, where the meaning is, "vicissitudes of time" (Qurtubi).

21. This is how "*ahlam*" of the text was understood by Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others.

Qurtubi writes: The criticism leveled here is at the reasoning power of the mind (*dhihn*) and not the intellect (*`aql*). The pagan Arabs were quite intelligent, but lacked the power to reason properly, logically. The intel-

[35] Or, were they created out of nothing?²³ أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ
Or are they the creators? ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] Or did they create the heavens and earth? أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَلْ لَا
Nay, but they do not believe firmly.²⁴ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

lect (or mind) accepts all sorts of information. But, it is the ability to arrive at the right conclusion through proper reasoning that matters. It is reported of the Prophet that someone said to him,

“How intelligent that Christian is?!” He said, “Drop it. An unbeliever has no intellect. Have you not read (67: 10),

وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ
السَّعِيرِ

“And they said, ‘Had we heard, or could think, we would not have been companions of the Fire.’” According to another report, the Prophet said, “Drop it. Intelligent is he who obeys Allah’s commands.” The report is in Hakeem Tirmidhi’s collection.

22. “The meaning is: Have they any reasoned objection to the contents of this message – or do they simply reject the truth because their false pride in man’s supposed ‘self-sufficiency’

(cf. 96: 6-7) prevents them from accepting the notion of responsibility before a Supreme Being?” (Asad).

Yusuf Ali adds: “It may be that the persecutors of Truth are ignorant, and their deficient faculties of understanding mislead them, but it is more often the case that they are perverse rebels against the law of Allah, defending their own selfish interests, and preventing those whom they oppress, from getting justice.”

23. That man is created out of nothing is the claim of the scientists adopted to escape a Creator (Au.).

24. It reflects a universal truth. When the unbelievers give some serious thought to such thoughts as existence of God, and the evidences they see around them, their minds conclude that there has to be a creator. But this belief does not last long. After a while they are back either to paganism, atheism, agnosticism or skepticism (Au.).

[37] Or are the treasures of your Lord with them?²⁵ Or are they the controllers?

أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَبِّكَ أَمْ هُمْ
الْمُصَيِّرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] Or, do they have a ladder whereon they listen? So let their listener bring a clear proof.²⁶

أَمْ لَهُمْ سُلَّمٌ يَسْتَمِعُونَ فِيهِ فَلْيَأْتِ
مُسْتَمِعُهُمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٣٨﴾

[39] Or, are there for Him daughters and for you sons?²⁷

أَمْ لَهُ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَكُمْ الْبُنُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

[40] Or, do you ask them any wage, so that they feel burdened by the debt?

أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِّنْ مَّعْرَمٍ مُّتَقَلِّوْنَ
﴿٤٠﴾

[41] Or do they have the Unseen (in their hand), so they are writing down?²⁸

أَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

[42] Or, do they intend a plot? Then those who have disbelieved are the ones to be ensnared by the plot.

أَمْ يُرِيدُونَ كَيْدًا فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمْ
الْمَكِيدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

25. By “treasures” the allusion is to prophethood (Qurtubi).

Or perhaps to knowledge, as Yusuf Ali suggests: “The Treasures of Allah’s Knowledge are infinite. But the doubters and unbelievers have no access to them, much less can the doubters and unbelievers manage the wonders of this world. Must they not therefore seek grace and revelation from Allah?”

26. In the manner of the Prophet, for example, who brought a Book which contains its evidence of its truth within itself (Ibn Jarir).

27. “This is addressed specifically to the pagan contemporaries of the Prophet, implying that ‘you not only blaspheme by ascribing progeny to God, but intensify your blasphemy by ascribing to Him something you yourselves despise, i.e., female offspring’...” (Asad).

28. One possibility is that the “*kitab*” here is, as in one or two other places in the Qur’ān, in the sense of “judgment,” meaning, “Do they have knowledge of the Unseen (in the Preserved Tablet) and so they judge thereby?” (Qurtubi).

[43] Or, do they have a god other than Allah?²⁹ Glory to Allah, above what they associate (with Him).

أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

[44] And, if they saw a fragment of the sky falling down, they would say, 'A (mere) heavy cloud.'³⁰

وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كِسْفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ سَاقِطًا يَقُولُوا سَحَابٌ مَّرْكُومٌ ﴿٤٤﴾

[45] Therefore, leave them alone until they encounter their day wherein they shall be thunderstruck.

فَذَرُهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي فِيهِ يُصْعَقُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

[46] The day when their plot shall not avail them aught, nor shall they be helped.

يَوْمَ لَا يَنفَعُنِي عَنْهُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

29. "This is the final and decisive question: Is there really any god other than Allah the One True God? Every argument points to the negative. A series of questions has been asked above pointing to the negative of the superstitions of the godless. The gospel of Unity, Revelation, and the Hereafter has thus been preached by a searching examination of the position of the Unbelievers. And the Sura ends with an exhortation to leave alone those who will not believe because they wish not to believe, and to let Time work out the web and pattern of Allah's Plan" (Yusuf Ali).

30. The pagans would ask the Prophet to bring down what he was threat-

ening them with (17: 90-92),

وَقَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبُوعًا، أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّحِيلٍ وَعَنْبٌ فَتَفْجُرَ الْأَنْهَارَ خِلَالِهَا تَفْجِيرًا، أَوْ تُسْقِطَ السَّمَاءَ كَمَا زَعَمْتَ عَلَيْنَا كِسْفًا أَوْ تَأْتِيَنَا بِاللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ قَبِيلًا

"They said, 'We shall never believe until you break open for us a spring from the ground; or you have an orchard of date trees and grapes, and cause rivers to gush forth abundantly in our midst; or make the heaven fall upon us in fragments, as you claim (will happen), or bring God and the angels face to face (with us).'"

So Allah revealed the verse in question (Ibn Jarir).

[47] And, surely, for those who have transgressed is a chastisement beyond that,³¹ but most of them know not.³²

وَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عَذَابًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

[48] And you observe patience until the command of your Lord. Surely, you are before Our eyes. And chant the glory of your Lord's praises when you arise.³³

وَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ ﴿٤٨﴾

31. There are several opinions about what punishment could be alluded to by “chastisement beyond that;” i.e., beyond the punishment on the Day of Judgment. Some scholars have said that it refers to punishments in this world. But Ibn ‘Abbas said that the allusion is to the punishment in Barzakh (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

وَإِنَّ الْمُبَافِقَ إِذَا مَرَضَ ثُمَّ أَغْفِيَ كَانَ كَالْبَعِيرِ عَقَلَهُ أَهْلُهُ ثُمَّ أَرْسَلُوهُ فَلَمْ يَدْرِ لِمَ عَقَلُوهُ وَلَمْ يَدْرِ لِمَ أَرْسَلُوهُ

“When a hypocrite falls sick and then recovers he is like a camel whom its masters tied up and then freed it. It does not know why they tied it up nor why they freed it” (Ibn Kathir).

32. The unbelievers are unable to figure out when calamities strike them as to why they strike them, leading them to the sense of helplessness and despair; as against a believer who, when struck by a calamity realizes that one of the few reasons could be responsible: (a) punishment for his deeds, (b) a trial, or (c) Allah’s wish to wipe off his sins. That puts his mind to rest. This is one of the factors leading to the glow of peace on the faces of the believers, noticed by the unbelievers (Au.).

33. The translation follows the opinions of Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir. But the understanding of Dahhak and Qatadah will reflect better if it is translated as “when you stand forth;” that is, when you stand up for Prayers; and the injunction is to say the supplicatory words now being commonly said by the believers at the start of the Prayers, viz.

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Ibn Kathir adds: A tradition in Muslim confirms that the Prophet used to say these words at the start of his Prayers.

The Prophet (*saws*) said as in a *hadith* of Abu Da’ud,

[49] And in a part of the night chant His glory, and after the (setting of) the stars.³⁴ وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَإِدْبَارَ النُّجُومِ ﴿٤٩﴾

These are also the words, with some modifications, that one might say at the end of every assembly. There are several *ahadith* to this effect, of various levels of authenticity, and hence, trustworthy as a whole. A *hadith* of Abu Da'ud says,

Abu Barzah al-Aslami stated that the Prophet used to say at the end of an assembly when he rose up from it: "Glory to you, O Allah, and by Your praises. I testify that there is no deity save You. I seek Your pardon and Turn to You (in repentance)." Once someone asked him, "Messenger of Allah. You are saying now what you were not used to saying earlier?!" He replied, "These are words of expiation for whatever (wrong) that could happen in an assembly" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Kalbi however explained that the allusion is to the supplicatory words one says when he rises up for *Fajr* Prayers. He quotes a *hadith* in support. It is in Bukhari:

عُبَادَةُ بْنُ الصَّامِتِ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَنْ تَعَارَى مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَقَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

قَدِيرٌ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي أَوْ دَعَا اسْتَجِيبَ لَهُ فَإِنْ تَوَضَّأَ وَصَلَّى قُبِلَتْ صَلَاتُهُ.

The Prophet said, "Whoever rose up from his sleep in a night and said (the words as above), and then says, 'O Allah forgive me,' or supplicates, he is responded to. Then, if he makes ablution and offers Prayers, his Prayer is accepted" (Qurtubi).

34. There is consensus among the *Salaf* that the allusion here is to two cycles of *Sunnah* Prayers before the obligatory *Fajr* Prayer. In importance of these two *raka'ah*, a *hadith* can be quoted. It is on the authority of `A'isha.

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، قَالَ: رَكْعَتَا الْفَجْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا

"The Prophet (*saw*s) said that the two cycles of Prayers before *Fajr* are better than this world and what it contains."

`Ali, Ibn `Abbas and Qatadah had held the same opinion (Ibn Jarir).

The report is in the *Sahihayn* (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). مَقَاتِلُ

Surah 53
*Al-Najm*¹

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
 THE COMPASSONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. Sayyid Qutb offers a short note on the style adopted in this *Surah*: “Panoromically, this *Surah* sounds like a metrical composition set to lofty music. Its music dominates its verbal construction as it runs through the rhythm of its metric rhymes. Although this musical quality is quite apparent in the *Surah*, in some places this objective is more clearly visible where a word has been supplanted or a rhyming word has been adopted in order to maintain its musical quality and its rhythmic tone, in addition, of course, to the intended meaning pressed forward, as is the Qur’anic style and method. For instance consider Allah’s words,

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ، وَمَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَىٰ

Had “*manaata al-ukhra*” been the only words in the verse, the meter would have been lost, while, had “*thaalithata*” been brought after “*ukhraa*,” the rhyme would go missing. Yet, at the same time, every

word in the line carries a definite and essential meaning.

Similarly, consider the next two lines,

أَلَكُمُ الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنْثَىٰ تِلْكَ إِذَا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَىٰ

Here, the word “*idhan*” essential serves rhythmic purposes. It is another thing that its presence is necessary for the completion of the meaning.

Thus, its rhythm gives a special musical color to the *Surah* within which the ebb and flow of the wavebands is clearly detectible especially in the first and the last passages. Consequently, the illustration and fluttering effect of the first passage goes well with the lofty meanings .. and feelings .. of the last passage; while the passages in between are close to the two thematically and climatically.

The imagery of the first passage harmonizes well with the theme and domain of the higher domain where dazzling events take place and the tranquilizing effects of the move-

[1] By the star when it plunges.²

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ ﴿١﴾

ments of Jibril's wings are obtained from the rhythm of the passage set to a breathtaking melody."

Other commentators note that this is the first *Surah* revealed to have a prostration-*Ayah* in it. `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud reported the following:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَرَأَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ النَّجْمَ بِمَكَّةَ فَسَجَدَ فِيهَا وَسَجَدَ مَنْ مَعَهُ غَيْرُ شَيْخٍ أَخَذَ كَفًّا مِنْ حَصَى أَوْ تُرَابٍ فَرَفَعَهُ إِلَى جَبْهَتِهِ وَقَالَ يَكْفِينِي هَذَا فَرَأَيْتُهُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ قُتِلَ كَافِرًا (صحيح البخاري)

"The Prophet recited *Surah Al-Najm* in Makkah and fell into prostration as did others around him including a few pagans except for a solitary old man who took some pebbles or sand in his hand to rub it against his forehead saying, 'This will do for me.' Later, I found him among those killed an unbeliever." (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Some reports name Umayyah b. Khalaf. However, and although reports to this effect are in Bukhari, Muslim and others, there seems to be some sort of mix-up in names, `Utbah b. Rabi`ah being a likelier candidate (Ibn Kathir).

2. According to Mujahid the allusion is to Surayyah (Pleiades) which disappears just before appearance of the dawn. This was also the opinion of Ibn `Abbas, Sufyan Thawri and others. Suddi said that the allusion could be to Zahra since the Arabs worshipped it. But Dahhak thought it could be to any star. (Sayyid suggests that it might be to *Shi`ra* [the Dog-star, Sirius], which has been mentioned in *Ayah* 49 of this *Surah* itself).

At all events, the preferred opinion has been that the reference is to a star. Linguistically however, "*najm*" is also used for stem-less plants (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi, Shawkani).

Although primarily a singular term, "*najm*" is also employed as a plural, as evidenced by some poetical pieces. It has also been said that the term Surayyah referred to a group of seven stars of which six were clearly visible, while the seventh was somewhat dim. It is reported that the Prophet could see eleven stars in this group (Qurtubi).

Yusuf Ali comments: "*An-Najm* is interpreted in various ways. As most commonly accepted, it means either a

[2] Your companion³ neither erred nor strayed away.⁴

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَى ﴿٢﴾

[3] Nor does he speak out of caprice.

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَى ﴿٣﴾

Star generically, or the close cluster of seven stars known as the Pleiades in the Constellation Taurus, which the sun enters about the 21st of April every year. In mid-April, or a little later, the beautiful cluster would set just after the sun, after having gradually ascended the sky in the winter months. In late May, or a little later, it would rise just before the sun. In its western aspects, it might be considered a spring constellation. To open-air nations (including the Arabs) whose climate usually presents starry skies, this is an object of great interest, and many folklore tales gather round it. When so glorious a cluster is content to bow down in the horizon and merge its light in the greater light created by Allah, it becomes a symbol of humility in beauty and power before the Most High, whose revelation discloses the summit of beauty, power, and wisdom. "*Hawa*" in the text may mean either 'goes down (or sets)' or 'rises'. Whichever meaning we take, it makes no difference to the interpretation given above."

Imām Razi adds a subtle point: Allah swore by the star. Now, some of

the pagans worshipped bright stars. Therefore, Allah added words that removed the hallowed element out of it by adding, "when it plunges."

3. "The words 'your companion' ... (imply that) the person being mentioned is no stranger to you ... he is a man of your own clan and tribe; he lives and moves among you; even your children know who and what he is, what is his character, what are his dealings, what are his ways and habits and characteristics, and how he has passed his life among you so far. If someone of you were to say an improbable thing about him, who could see for themselves whether what was said actually applied to him or not" (Mawdudi).

4. That is, Muhammad (Ibn Jarir).

The difference (between "*daallan*" and "*ghaawiiyyan*") is that the former is used for someone who never found the right path whereas the latter is for him who found it but strayed away from it. The first epithet suits the Christians while the second, Jews (Razi, Ibn Kathir, slightly modified).

[4] This is not but a revelation revealed.⁵

[5] Taught him⁶ by one intense in power.

[6] Very strong,⁷ he stood poised

إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَى ﴿٤﴾

عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَى ﴿٥﴾

ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَى ﴿٦﴾

5. That is, revealed by Allah to Jibra'il and by Jibra'il to Muhammad (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

When Allah said that the Prophet "did not speak out of caprice," the question arose, then, what is the nature of his speech: is it a product of logic or is it an outcome of intellectual reasoning? The answer came, "No, this is not but a revelation revealed" (Razi).

So, none of what the Prophet said was out of caprice, but based in revelation. Accordingly, we have a *hadith* of Ahmad (trusted by Haythami: Au.) which runs as follows:

عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ مَيْسَرَةَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا أُمَامَةَ يَقُولُ
لَيَدْخُلَنَّ الْجَنَّةَ بِشَفَاعَةِ الرَّجُلِ الْوَاحِدِ لَيْسَ بِنَبِيٍّ مِثْلُ
الْحَيَّتَيْنِ أَوْ أَحَدِ الْحَيَّتَيْنِ رَبِيعَةً وَمُضَرَ قَالَ قَائِلٌ يَا رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ أَوْ مَا رَبِيعَةٌ مِنْ مُضَرَ قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَقُولُ مَا أَقُولُ

The Prophet said, "Surely, by virtue of intercession of a single man – who will not be a Prophet – (as many people as comprising) two clans or one of the clans – like Rabi'ah and Mudar – will enter Paradise." Someone

asked, "Messenger of Allah. Is not Rabi'ah a branch of Mudar?" He replied, "I just say what I am told." It is also reported that some people used to write down all that the Prophet said. Some others objected saying that sometimes the Prophet could be angry. So the writer asked him. He replied, "Write down (if you will). By Him in whose hands is my life, nothing but truth will issue from me" (Ibn Kathir).

6. "Taught him," i.e., Jibra'il taught the Prophet (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

7. Ibn `Abbas however, as well as Qatadah believed that "*dhu mirratin*" is for "good-looking and magnificent." It is also used for "the powerful." But literally the term is employed for being free of all defects. Another connotation is "sound and healthy"; and the allusion is to Jibra'il (Ibn Jarir, Qurtbi, Ibn Kathir and others). The Arabs used the phrase for any intelligent person who held judicious opinions (Alusi).

[7] While on the higher horizon.⁸

وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَى ﴿٧﴾

[8] Then he drew nigh, and then hung suspended.⁹

ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّى ﴿٨﴾

[9] Then he was at a distance of two bow-lengths, or closer.¹⁰

فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ ﴿٩﴾

“*Mirrah*” is used for the power of intellect also, although at this point it seems to mean physical power. Kalbi has said that it was Jibril’s power that he lifted the cities of Lut’s people with his wings, raised them to the heavens to the heights that the dwellers of the earthly heaven could hear barking of the dogs and crowing of the roosters, and then brought them down to bang them against the earth. Once he witnessed Iblis trying to do some harm to ‘Isa ibn Maryam, and slapped him with the edge of his wing. That flung him against a mountain in India. It is his power that he brought the punishment on the Thamud who in no time lay in ruins despite their numbers. It was by his power that he can descend down and then ascend back to the heavens in micro-seconds (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi). He can travel faster than light, keeping in mind the speed of it that scientists are talking about now (Alusi).

8. Once again the allusion is to Jibra’il and by the term “highest horizon”

the allusion is to the edge of the horizon (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi); from where the sun rises (Ibn Kathir).

9. It was Jibra’il who drew near and then hung, poised in the air. This was the opinion of ‘Abdullah (ibn Mas’ud), ‘A’isha, Hasan (al-Basri) and others. Normally, Jibra’il came in the form of a man. But this time he had appeared in his own image, covering the entire horizon with his six hundred wings (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

“After appearing on the uppermost edge of the sky, Jibra’il started advancing towards the Prophet till he reached and hung suspended above him in midair. Then he bent down to him and came within two bow-lengths” (Mawdudi).

10. In the context of these verses, reports have come about the destruction of Abu Lahab’s son. Once, as he was preparing to leave for Syria, he told a companion of his that (before leaving), “let’s go and make fun of Muhammad’s God.” He went

[10] Then he revealed to His servant what he revealed.¹¹

فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ ﴿١٠﴾

up to him and said, “Muhammad. I have disbelieved in the one who stood poised and then was at a distance nearer than two bow-lengths, or closer.” (He also divorced his wife, the Prophet’s daughter, and spat in the direction of the Prophet: Qurtubi). The Prophet said, “May Allah set upon you one of his dogs.” Both father and son proceeded along with others heading towards Syria. At one point during the journey they rested at night and Abu Lahab placed his son in the middle of the people and riding animals, out of fear of the Prophet’s words. But a lion came by midnight, went straight to ‘Utbah b. Abi Lahab, and sank his teeth in his neck (Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir). (Although the Prophet’s daughter was married to Abu Lahab’s son, the marriage had not been consummated: Au.).

11. The allusion is to Jibra’il revealing to the Prophet by the Command of Allah. From the beginning, throughout these lines, the passage is speaking of our Prophet and Jibra’il (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir); although some have thought that it was Allah who revealed what He revealed.

Such scholars have treated verses 5 to 9 as a parenthetical statement.

A report in Ahmed (trusted by Haythami: Au.) adds some details:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ سَأَلَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ جِبْرِيلَ أَنْ يَرَاهُ فِي صُورَتِهِ فَقَالَ ادْعُ رَبَّكَ قَالَ فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ قَالَ فَطَلَعَ عَلَيْهِ سَوَادٌ مِنْ قِبَلِ الْمَشْرِقِ قَالَ فَجَعَلَ يَرْتَفِعُ وَيَنْتَشِرُ قَالَ فَلَمَّا رَأَاهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ صَعِقَ فَأَنَاءَهُ فَنَعَشَهُ وَمَسَحَ الْبَرَأَقَ عَنْ شِدْقَيْهِ

On the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas, the Prophet asked Jibril to appear in his own image. He told him to ask his Lord. So he sought it from his Lord and a huge dark mass began to appear from the east spreading itself across. When the Prophet witnessed this sight, he fell unconscious. Jibril came to him, lifted his head, and wiped saliva from the corners of his mouth (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

It is reported that the Prophet said in amazement, “Jibril, I had never imagined that Allah would create any creation in this size.” Jibril replied, “It were not but two of my six hundred wings that I had then opened. Each of the two wings can cover the east and the west” (Qurtubi).

[11] *The heart denied not what he saw.*¹²

مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى ﴿١١﴾

[12] *Will you then dispute with him over what he saw?*

أَفْتُمَارُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يُبَيِّنُ ﴿١٢﴾

Through and through these passages, Asad emphasizes on the spiritual nature of the events involved. He writes at this point, “Whatever he revealed’: an allusion to the exceptional manifestation of the angel ‘in his true shape and nature’ as well as to the contents of divine revelation as such. In its deeper sense the above phrase implies that even to His chosen prophets, God does not entirely unveil the ultimate mysteries of existence, of life and death, of the purpose which has created the universe, or of the nature of the universe itself.”

12. The perception of the heart, in that situation, in that world, was more reliable than the perception of the eye. For, the eye can fail to notice some phenomena, or perceive them wrongly. But a pure heart does not.

There have been two opinions about who it was that was seen: Jibra’il, or Allah. The stronger opinion, and that held by greater number of scholars and commentators is that it was Jibra’il that the Prophet saw at this point of mention. A few have

thought that it was his Lord that the Prophet saw. Then, among those who believe that the allusion is to the Prophet’s sighting of his Lord, there are two schools. The majority opinion is that the Prophet never saw his Lord with his physical eyes, neither at this time of mention nor when he went up to the heavens during his Night-journey. He only saw Him with the sight of his heart. A minority opinion is that the Prophet saw his Lord, but without specifying whether this seeing was the heart or with the inner sight (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, summarized).

Ibn ‘Abbas maintained that the Prophet saw his Lord with his heart twice. ‘Ikrimah held the same opinion (Ibn Jarir). The report is in Muslim and the original text is as follows:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ “مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى - وَلَقَدْ رَأَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى” : قَالَ رَأَاهُ بِفُؤَادِهِ مَرَّتَيْنِ (صحيح مسلم)

(The above *hadith* is not found in any other major collection: Au).

On the other hand, ‘A’isha maintained that the Prophet never saw his Lord with his physical eyes, but rath-

er the allusion at this point is to he seeing Jibra'il (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Among those who held a similar position was Ibn Mas'ud and Zir b. Hubaysh who said that the Prophet saw Jibril with six hundred wings (Ibn Jarir). Zir's opinion is in Bukhari, and Abu Dharr as well as Abu Hurayrah were also with 'A'isha (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

'A'isha reported that the Prophet saw Jibril in his dream. Thereafter, as he went out Jibril called him, "O Muhammad, O Muhammad." But when he looked around he could not be sighted. He looked up and there he was, filling the sky. He called him again, "O Muhammad, O Muhammad," trying to calm him. The Prophet fled into the crowd and looked up again but could not see him. When he came out of the crowd, he could see him again, in the horizon. He went into the crowds once again and looked up, but he could not see him. It was only when he came out alone that he could see him. This is what Allah's words are referring to when He said, "By the star when it plunges ... until ... then he was at a distance of two bow-lengths, or closer." (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

But this report is not found in major *hadith* works (Au.).

Nonetheless, Ibn Jarir adds a little later the explanation of Ibn 'Abbas that the Prophet could not have sighted Allah to comprehend Him wholly. When he said that the Prophet saw his Lord with the heart's eye, someone objected quoting Allah's words, "Sights cannot comprehend Him but He can comprehend the sights." To this objection 'Ikrimah, who was present in the assembly, replied, "Do you not see the heaven?" The man said yes. 'Ikrimah asked, "Do you see the whole of it?" (Ibn Jarir).

However, no trustworthy report has come down from Ibn 'Abbas which says that the Prophet saw his Lord with his physical eyes (Ibn Kathir).

The *Sahih* of Muslim has a report from Abu Dharr:

سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: هَلْ رَأَيْتَ رَبَّكَ؟ قَالَ: "نُورٌ أَيْ أَرَاهُ؟".

"I asked the Prophet, 'Did you see your Lord?' He replied, 'Light. How could I see Him?'" Ibn Abi Hatim's report has it that,

عن محمد بن كعب قال: قالوا: يا رسول الله، رأيت ربك؟ قال: "رأيتُه بفؤادي مرتين" ثم قرأ: { مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى }

Muhammad b. Ka'b said that they asked the Prophet, "Did you see your Lord?" He replied,

“I saw Him with my heart twice.” Then he recited this verse, “The heart denied not what it saw.” When `Abbad b. Mansur asked `Ikrimah about this *Ayah* he retorted, “Do you wish to hear that he saw Him?” When he said yes, he said, “He surely saw Him, surely saw Him.” Later he asked Hasan the same question. He answered, “He saw His Exaltedness, Greatness and His Shroud.” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Asad adds: “Inasmuch as the Prophet was fully aware of the spiritual character of his experience, there was no conflict between his conscious mind and his intuitive perception (the ‘vision of the heart’) of what is normally not perceptible.”

This context has another *hadith* known as “*hadith al-Manam*” (*hadith* concerning the Night Vision), quoted by Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir. It is found in various *hadith* collections, and we reproduced from Tirmidhi which varies in words from those they quote, but the gist remains same:

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ حَدَّثَنَا مُعَاذُ بْنُ هَانِيٍّ أَبُو هَانِيٍّ السُّكْرِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا جَهْضَمُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ أَبِي كَثِيرٍ عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ سَلَامٍ عَنْ أَبِي سَلَامٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ عَائِشٍ الْحَضْرَمِيِّ أَنَّهُ حَدَّثَهُ عَنْ مَالِكِ بْنِ يُحْنَمَرَ السَّكْسَكِيِّ عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ قَالَ: احْتَبَسَ

عَنَّا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَاتَ غَدَاةٍ مِنْ صَلَاةِ الصُّبْحِ حَتَّى كُنَّا نَرَاهُ عَيْنَ الشَّمْسِ فَخَرَجَ سَرِيعاً فَتَوَلَّى بِالصَّلَاةِ فَصَلَّى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَتَحَوَّرَ فِي صَلَاتِهِ، فَلَمَّا سَلَّمَ دَعَا بِصَوْتِهِ فَقَالَ لَنَا عَلَى مَصَافِكُمْ كَمَا أَنْتُمْ ثُمَّ انْقَلَبَ إِلَيْنَا فَقَالَ أَمَا إِلَيَّ سَأُحَدِّثُكُمْ مَا حَبَسَنِي عَنْكُمْ الْغَدَاةَ أَيُّ قُمْتُ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فِتُضَاتُ فَصَلَّيْتُ مَا قَدَّرَ لِي فَنَعَسْتُ فِي صَلَاتِي فَاسْتَقْبَلْتُ إِذَا أَنَا بِرَبِّي تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى فِي أَحْسَنِ صُورَةٍ فَقَالَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ، قُلْتُ رَبِّ لَبَيْكَ، قَالَ: فِيمَ يَخْتَصِمُ الْمَلَأُ الْأَعْلَى؟ قُلْتُ لَا أَدْرِي رَبِّ قَالَهَا ثَلَاثًا، قَالَ فَرَأَيْتُهُ وَضَعَ كَفَّهُ بَيْنَ كَتِفَيْ. قَدْ وَجَدْتُ بَرْدَ أَنْامِلِهِ بَيْنَ ثَدْيَيْ فَتَجَلَّى لِي كُلُّ شَيْءٍ وَعَرَفْتُ فَقَالَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ. قُلْتُ لَبَيْكَ رَبِّ، قَالَ فِيمَ يَخْتَصِمُ الْمَلَأُ الْأَعْلَى؟ قُلْتُ فِي الْكُفَّارَاتِ، (و فِي رَوَايَةٍ عِنْدَ أَحْمَدَ وَ التِّرْمِذِيِّ: الْكُفَّارَاتِ وَ الدَّرَجَاتِ) قَالَ مَا هُنَّ؟ قُلْتُ مَشْيُ الْأَقْدَامِ إِلَى الْجَمَاعَاتِ، وَالْجُلُوسُ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ بَعْدَ الصَّلَاةِ، وَإِسْبَاغُ الْوُضُوءِ فِي الْمَكْرُوهَاتِ، قَالَ ثُمَّ فِيمَ؟ (و فِي رَوَايَةٍ عِنْدَ أَحْمَدَ الدَّرَجَاتِ) قُلْتُ إِطْعَامُ الطَّعَامِ، وَلَبِنُ الْكَلَامِ، وَالصَّلَاةُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ. قَالَ سَلِّ، قُلْتُ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ، وَتَرْكَ الْمُنْكَرَاتِ، وَحُبَّ الْمَسَاكِينِ، وَأَنْ تَغْفِرَ لِي وَتَرْحَمَنِي، وَإِذَا أَرَدْتَ فِتْنَةً فِي قَوْمٍ فَتَوَفَّنِي غَيْرَ مُفْتُونٍ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ حَبْلًا وَحَبًّا مِنْ يُجْبُكَ وَحَبِّ عَمَلٍ يَقْرُبُ إِلَيَّ حَبْلِكَ. قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّمَا حَقٌّ فَادْرُسُوهَا ثُمَّ تَعَلَّمُوهَا. (قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ. سَأَلْتُ مُحَمَّدَ بْنَ إِسْمَاعِيلَ { الْبَخَارِيُّ } عَنْ هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ فَقَالَ هَذَا صَحِيحٌ)

Mu`adh ibn Jabal reports: “One morning at *Fajr* time, the Prophet delayed on us for the dawn Prayer until we could almost see the sun’s eye when he emerged in haste. The call for starting

the Prayer was made. He led in the Prayer, shortening it. After he had said the termination formula, he addressed us and said in a raised voice, 'Hold on to your rows as you are.' Then he turned to us and said, 'Let me tell you what held me back this morning; I rose up at night, performed ablution, and Prayed as much as I was destined to. Then I dozed off in my Prayer, until I felt heavy. And lo! I was in the presence of my Lord, the Exalted, the Supreme - in the best form. He said, 'O Muhammad!' I said, 'Here I am O my Lord.' He said, 'What are the angels of the upper-most constellation disputing over?' I replied, 'I do not know, my Lord!' He asked three times. (And I replied in the same manner). Then I saw Him placing His palm between my shoulders until I felt the coldness of His fingers over my breast. Everything became clear to me, and I knew.

Then He asked, 'O Muhammad! What are the angels of the upper-most constellation disputing over?' I replied, 'Over expiations and ranks.' He asked, 'What are the expiations?'

I replied, 'Moving the feet towards the congregations (for Prayers), staying back in the mosques after the Prayers, and doing the ablution well despite discomforts.' He asked, 'And what are the ranks?' I replied, '(They are in) Feeding (the poor), soft manner of speech, and Prayers while people are asleep.' He said, 'Ask.' I asked, 'O Allah! I ask You: performance of good deeds, eschewing of evil ones, love of the meekly-poor, and that You forgive me and show me mercy. And, when You wish to try a people, send death upon me untried. And, I seek Your love, the love of those who love You and love of the deeds that take one nearer to Your love.' Then the Prophet added, "This is the truth, therefore, learn it and study it."

(This report is also in Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Khuzaymah in Kitab al-Tawhid, and in a dozen other books of traditions, through scores of narrators, with variations in the words, with some experts declaring the report weak, but others as trustworthy, such as Haythami, Hafiz, Hakim, Ahmed Shakir and Tirmidhi, the last of whom reports that when he spoke to Imām Bukhari about it, he said it was trustworthy: Au.).

[13] Indeed, he saw him at another descent.¹³

وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى ﴿١٣﴾

13. This second sighting of Jibril in his original form took place during the Nocturnal Journey (Sayyid and others).

But from the earliest times some people have been led to believe that it was perhaps Allah that the Prophet saw during his Nocturnal Journey. But most scholars have explained that the allusion rather, by the second sighting, is to the vision of Jibril. Ibn Jarir has the following *hadith*, (which is also in Muslim: Au.):

عَنْ مَسْرُوقٍ قَالَ: كُنْتُ مُتَكِيماً عِنْدَ عَائِشَةَ. فَقَالَتْ: يَا أَبَا عَائِشَةَ! ثَلَاثٌ مَنْ تَكَلَّمَ بِوَاحِدَةٍ مِنْهُنَّ فَقَدْ أَعْظَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْفُرْيَةَ. قُلْتُ مَا هُنَّ؟ قَالَتْ: مَنْ زَعَمَ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ رَأَى رَبَّهُ فَقَدْ أَعْظَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْفُرْيَةَ. قَالَ وَكُنْتُ مُتَكِيماً فَجَلَسْتُ. فَقُلْتُ: يَا أُمَّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْظِرِيَنِي وَلَا تَعْجَلِيَنِي. أَلَمْ يَقُلِ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: {وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ بِالْأُفُقِ الْمُبِينِ} (التكوير الآية:) {وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى} (النجم الآية:) فَقَالَتْ: أَنَا أَوَّلُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ سَأَلَ عَنْ ذَلِكَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. فَقَالَ: "إِنَّمَا هُوَ جِبْرِيلُ. لَمْ أَرَهُ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ الَّتِي لَحِيقَ عَلَيْهَا غَيْرُ هَاتَيْنِ الْمَرَّتَيْنِ. رَأَيْتُهُ مُنْهَبِطاً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ. سَادَاً عِظَمَ خَلْقِهِ مَا بَيَّنَّ السَّمَاءُ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ". فَقَالَتْ: "أَوْ لَمْ تَسْمَعْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَقُولُ: {لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ} (الأنعام آية: ٣) أَوْ لَمْ تَسْمَعْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَقُولُ: {وَمَا كَانَ لَيْسَ أَنْ يَكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحياً أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسولاً فَيُوحِي بِأُذُنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلَيَّ حَكِيمٌ} (الشورى الآية: ٥١) قَالَتْ:

وَمَنْ زَعَمَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَتَمَ شَيْئاً مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ أَعْظَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْفُرْيَةَ. وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ: {يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ} (المائدة الآية:) قَالَتْ: وَمَنْ زَعَمَ أَنَّهُ يُخْبِرُ بِمَا يَكُونُ فِي غَدٍ فَقَدْ أَعْظَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْفُرْيَةَ. وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ: {قُلْ لَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ} (النمل الآية: ٦٥) - مسلم

Masruq (Abu `A'isha) says I was with `A'isha reclining when she said, "O Abu `A'isha! There are three things about which whoever spoke fastened a lie on Allah." I asked, "What could they be?" She replied, "Whoever alleged that Muhammad saw his Lord, fastened a lie upon Allah." He said, I straightened up and said, "Mother of believers, let me speak. Do not be hasty. Has not Allah said, 'Indeed he saw him at the clear horizon' (Al-Takweer), and 'Indeed he saw him at the second descent' (Al-Najm)?" She said, "I was the first of this *Ummah* to ask the Prophet about it. He said, 'That was Jibril. I did not see him in the image in which he has been created except on those two occasions. I saw him descend down from the heaven,

covering the whole of the horizon between the heaven and the earth.”

Then she added, “Have you not heard Allah’s words, ‘Sights cannot circumscribe Him but He circumscribes the sights. He is the All-subtle, the All-aware.’ (*Al-An‘aam*: 3), and, have you not heard Allah say, ‘It is not for any man that Allah should speak to him except through revelation, or from behind a veil, or He should send a messenger to reveal by His leave what He will. He indeed is the Sublime, the Wise.’ (*Al-Shura*: 51). She added, “Whoever alleged that the Prophet concealed something of the Book of Allah, fastened a lie on Allah. Allah said, ‘O Messenger. Convey what has been sent down to you. If you did not then you would not have conveyed the message’” (*Al-Ma‘idah*). And, she added, “Whoever alleged that he (the Prophet) could say what is to happen the next day, fastened a lie upon Allah. Allah has said, ‘Say, “No one of those in the heavens and the earth knows the Unseen except Allah”’ (*Al-Naml*)” – Ibn Jarir.

There is yet another report of this context. It is in Ibn Marduwayh, but

we take it from Ibn Hajr’s Fath:

فَقَالَتْ (عائشة) : أَنَا أَوَّلُ مَنْ سَأَلَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ هَذَا فَعُلْتُ : يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَلْ رَأَيْتَ رَبَّكَ ؟ فَقَالَ : لَا إِنَّمَا رَأَيْتُ جِبْرِيلَ مِنْهُ بَطْنًا
فتح الباري لابن حجر

‘Aisha said (on that occasion of Masruq asking her), “I am the first to have asked the Prophet about it saying, ‘Messenger of Allah, did you see your Lord?’ He replied, ‘I only saw Jibril coming down’” (Shafi` Deobandi).

Whenever Imām Ahmed was asked about the Beatific Vision, he would say, “He saw Him, saw Him, saw Him ..” repeating for a long while but without further explanation to indicate that he could not have seen him with his physical eyes (Alusi).

At all events, those who maintained it was Allah who came nearer (rather than Jibril) have clarified, as Qadi ‘Iyad said, that the “getting closer” was not in the physical sense in which some space is covered, but it was to impress the Prophet’s rank with Allah, to honor him, bestow tranquility to him, allow for great (spiritual) clarity, respond to his desire to get close, and to bestow the Light of Knowledge on him (Qurtubi).

[14] By the lote-tree of the Ultimate Boundary.¹⁴

عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى ﴿١٤﴾

14. There are a variety of opinions regarding the nature of “*Sidratu al-Muntahaa*.” Ka`b explained to Ibn `Abbas that it is a Lote-tree below the `Arsh. The highest knowledge of every knowledgeable person ends there whether it is an angel brought nigh, or a Prophet raised. Whatever is beyond it is the Unseen that no one knows except Allah. Ibn Mas`ud explained that it is the Lote-tree in the sixth heaven at which ends everything that rises from the earth or from below it, or whatever comes down from above. Anything that comes down from that point, or goes up to it, is held up there (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). It was here that the Prophet was given the five daily prayers, the concluding verses of *Surah al-Baqarah* and the principle was enunciated that whoever of his *Ummah* did not associate aught with Allah, will have his major sins forgiven (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). Sayyid suggests that it was at that point that Jibril fell back from the companionship of the Prophet during the Night Ascent, leaving him alone to ascend further.

There are reports that explain “*Sidratu al-Muntahaa*.” Recounting what happened to him during his Nocturnal Journey, the Prophet said,

“.. فَإِذَا أَنَا بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مُسْنِدًا ظَهَرَهُ إِلَى الْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ وَإِذَا هُوَ يَدْخُلُهُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ لَا يَعُودُونَ إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ بِي إِلَى السِّدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى وَإِذَا وَرَقُهَا كَأَذَانِ الْفِيلَةِ وَإِذَا ثَمَرُهَا كَالْقِلَافِ قَالَ فَلَمَّا غَشِيَهَا مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ مَا غَشِيَتْ تَغَيَّرَتْ فَمَا أَحَدٌ مِنْ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يَنْعَتَهَا مِنْ حُسْنِهَا ..”

“.. and lo, I was in front of Ibrahim, on whom be peace, reclining against the ‘Bayt al-Ma`mur’ into which seventy-thousand angels enter every day who never return to it. Then he (Jibril) took me to the *Sidratu al-Muntahaa*. Its leaves were like the ears of an elephant, and its fruit like pots. Then, when covered it that which covered it, it got altered so that there is none among the creations of Allah who could describe it..”

(The above is from Bukhari, being close to the words quoted by Ibn Jarir and Qurtubi: Au.).

Qurtubi quotes another version per-

[15] Near which is the Garden of Abode.¹⁵

عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَى ﴿١٥﴾

[16] When that was covering the lote-tree which was covering.¹⁶

إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَى ﴿١٦﴾

taining to the Night Ascension. It reports,

قَالَ هَذِهِ سِدْرَةُ الْمُنْتَهَى وَإِذَا أَرَبَعُهُ أَتَهَارَ تَهْرَانِ
بَاطِنَانِ وَتَهْرَانِ ظَاهِرَانِ فَقُلْتُ مَا هَذَانِ يَا جِبْرِيلُ
قَالَ أَمَّا الْبَاطِنَانِ فَتَهْرَانِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَأَمَّا الظَّاهِرَانِ فَالْبَلْبَلُ
وَالْفُرَاتُ (صحيح البخاري)

(Jibril) said, "This is *Sidratu al-Muntaha*." I observed four rivers: two inner rivers and two outer ones. I asked, "What are these two, O Jibril?" He answered, "The inner rivers are springs of Paradise while the outer ones are Nile and Euphrates" (Qurtubi).

Asad elucidates: "Explaining the vision conveyed in the expression *Sidrat al-Muntaha*, Raghīb suggests that owing to the abundance of its leafy shades, the *sidr* or *sidrah* (the Arabian lote-tree) appears in the Qur'ān as well as in the traditions relating to the Ascension as a symbol of the "shade" – i.e., the spiritual peace and fulfillment – of Paradise. One may assume that the qualifying term *al-muntaha* .. is indicative of the fact that God has set a definite limit to all knowledge accessible to created beings, as pointed out in the *Ni-*

hAyah: implying, in particular, that human knowledge, though potentially vast and penetrating, can never – not even in Paradise (the 'garden of promise' mentioned in the next verse) – attain to an understanding of the ultimate reality, which the Creator has reserved for Himself."

15. Ibn 'Abbas explained that the "*Jannatu al-Ma'waa*" is by the right hand side of the 'Arsh and is the abode of the martyrs (Ibn Jarir).

It is here that the Prophet saw Jibril a second time in his own form and shape, at the time of his Night Ascension. Imām Ahmed has a report of good chain of narrators. It says,

رَأَيْتُ جِبْرِيلَ وَلَهُ سِتْمَاةُ جَنَاحٍ، يَنْتَشِرُ مِنْ رِيشِهِ
التَّهَاقُوتُ: الدَّرُّ وَالْيَاقُوتُ

(The Prophet said), "I saw Jibril with six hundred wings from whose feathers were falling off decorative elements: pearls, and rich stones." Ibn Mas'ud's report, also in Ahmed, adds that each of his wings was covering the horizon (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

16. What was it that covered the

[17] *The sight deviated not, nor erred.*¹⁷

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى ﴿١٧﴾

[18] *Indeed, he saw great signs of his Lord.*¹⁸

لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى ﴿١٨﴾

Lote-tree? In the absence of any trustworthy *hadith*, we have to rely on the statements of the *Salaf* who said that it was golden butterflies that had covered it. A second report says it were angels that had covered it while others said it was Allah's Nur that had covered it (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

In *ahadith* pertaining to the Night Ascension, the Prophet said,

غشيتها الملائكة مثل الغربان، وغشيتها نور الرب،
وغشيتها ألوان ما أدري ما هي.

“Angles had covered it like crows, our Lord's Nur had covered it, and those of the colors had covered about which I have no idea what they were” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Kathir seems to have taken the above *hadith* from *Tafsir ibn abi Hatim*, but whose authenticity could not be established (Au.).

Asad adds: “... a phrase deliberately vague (*mubham*), indicative of the inconceivable majesty and splendor attaching to this symbol of paradise ‘which no description can picture and no definition can embrace’ (Za-

makhshari).”

17. Ibn `Abbas said that the Prophet's eye did not deviate toward left or right nor crossed the limits (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

(In other words, the Prophet) “was in such complete control of himself and so exclusively attentive that he kept his mind and sight focused upon the object for which he had been summoned, and he did not let his sight wander” (Mawdudi).

18. One of the great signs was that he saw Jibril in his own image with six hundred wings (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Sayyid comments on this passage, though placing it at an earlier point: “Thus, we too experience those moments with Muhammad; at a time when veils had been removed for him: while he received from on High, while he listened and witnessed, while he grasped and retained. Those were moments meant specifically for the purified heart of Muhammad. True, Allah favors whomsoever of His bondmen He will. He describes those moments in a powerful, highly effective manner.

[19] Have you considered Laat¹⁹ and `Uzza?²⁰

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ ﴿١٩﴾

It is a manner which helps convey its echoes, its shades of meaning, and its nuances, directly to the hearts. He describes the voyage of the purified soul through the vast expanses of the lofty sphere. He describes it step by step, scenery after scenery, state by state, as if the believers perceive them themselves.”

The above description then, is one of the several functions of the Qur’ānic passage, that some readers fail to perceive and ask, in puzzlement, “what could be meant by a passage of this sort?” (Au.).

19. Sayyid comments: “That then, which the Prophet perceived, with his eyes and soul, is what he invited the pagans to. It was not something implied, imagined, or construed; but something real. In contrast, what is it that the pagans depend on for worshipping their idols? What was their reliance on when they worshipped Laat and `Uzza? What was the basis of their claim that angels were females and that they were daughters of Allah? On what basis did they claim that they would be delivered through intercession? This is what the next passage looks into, starting with the verse, “Have you considered

Laat and `Uzza?”

Ibn Jarir and Qurtubi comment: Most pagan deities were named after Allah’s attributes. For example, they derived “Al-Laat” from Allah, “Al-`Uzza” from Al-`Azeez. Laat had a history. It was initially a man in Nakhlah who kneaded balls of floor-paste for the pilgrims. After his death, they began to worship at his grave and ultimately he become a deity in his own right.

The report about the paste-ball seller is in Bukhari. (He was represented by) a white, ornamented rock over which they had built a huge house at Ta’if. Complete with curtains and other paraphernalia, it had a pretty large vacant area surrounding it. Second only to Ka’bah, the Thaqeef were proud of this deity of theirs (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). The Prophet had sent Al-Mughira b. Sho’bah and Sufyan Sakhr b. al-Harb to destroy Al-Laat. After destruction, they built a mosque in its place.

Majid quotes from a variety of works: “An oath by al-Lat is frequently found in the poets ... She is frequently mentioned along with the al-`Uzza ... and among the Kuraish,

she, along with this goddess and Manat, was held in such high esteem ... (EI. III. P. 18).” Reference to Al-lat are found in several Nabatean inscriptions; in one of them she is called “the mother of gods” ... Among the later Arabs this goddess was no less venerated.’ (ERE. I.p.661). ‘The Arabian Lat was worshipped by the Nabateans as mother of the gods, and must be identified with the virgin-mother, whose worship at Petra is described by Epiphanius.’ (Robertson Smith, Religion of the Semites, p. 56). Among the great ‘mothers’ is Lat or rather Allat. Apparently a sun-goddess, in Palmyra she is coupled with Shamash.’ (p. 52) ‘Al-Lat had her sacred tracts (hima and haram) near al-Taif, whither the Makkans and others flocked for pilgrimage and sacrifice. Within such an enclosure no trees could be felled, no game hunted and no human blood shed. Herodotus mentions this goddess under the name of Allaht among the Nabatean deities.’ (Hitti, op.cit., p.99)

20. It is said that originally this was a bunch of shrubs (that somehow came to be regarded as a [single] deity: Au.). Some others said it was a white rock that came to be worshipped (Ibn Jarir). It was in Nakhlah, a place between Makkah and Ta’if. After the

fall of Makkah, the Prophet had sent Khalid b. al-Waleed to destroy it. He demolished the temple and reported back to him. He told him, “Return, for you have achieved nothing.” When he returned its keepers tried to prevent Khalid from any further action and began to wail in a loud voice, “O ‘Uzza, O ‘Uzza.” Upon closer inspection Khalid discovered a naked woman with outspread hair and dust on the head. He killed her and returned to the Prophet to report of the killing. He remarked, “That was ‘Uzza” (Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

According to reports, that was a she-devil (Alusi).

Thus, adds Razi, there were three main deities and had three origins: human, plant and stone.

Majid quotes: “Far more important, at least in historical times, was the cult of the planet Venus, revered as a great goddess under the name of al-Uzza, which may be rendered ‘the Most Mighty.’ The Syriac poet Issac of Antioch, who lived in the first half of the 5th century, bears witness to the worship of ‘Uzza by the Arabs of that period; in another passage he identifies ‘Uzza with planet Venus.’ (ERE, I.p.660). ‘The goddess Al-‘Ozza was believed to reside ‘in the

[20] *And Manaat the third, the other?*²¹

وَمَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَى ﴿٢٠﴾

sacred acacia at Nakhla' (Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 185). 'Al-Ozza with Allat and Manat, the three daughters of Allah, in the Coran, is the "lady 'Ozza" to whom a man in South Arabian inscription offers a golden image on behalf of his sick daughter Amath-Ozzai. Human sacrifice and licentious practices distinguish her cult. Isaac of Antioch identified her with Beltis, and calls her the "Star." (p. 521). Al-'Uzza (the most mighty, Venus, the morning star) had her cult in Nakhla east of Makkah ... Her sanctuary consisted of three trees. Human sacrificed characterized her cult ... Abd-al-'Uzza was a favorite name at the rise of Islam' (Hitti, op.cit., p. 33)."

21. This deity was housed in Qudayd, especially revered by Banu Ka'b (Ibn Jarir). It was actually in Mushallal near Qudayd, a place between Makkah and Madinah, and was the deity of Khuza'ah, Aws and Khazraj. Abu Sufyan Sakhr b. Harb was sent to destroy this temple (Ibn Kathir).

These deities had their counterparts in various parts of the Arabian Peninsula, including the House of Ka'bah

(Alusi).

Majid quotes from other works: "An old Arabian goddess ... a goddess of fate, especially of death. Her main sanctuary was a black stone among the Hudhailis in Kuda'id ... She was however worshipped by many Arab tribes ... In Mecca she was very popular along with the goddesses al-Lat and al-'Uzzah. (EI, III, p.231). 'A number of proper names confounded with Manat prove that her cult extended over a great part of Arabia.' (ERE, I.p. 662). Manat (from Maniyah, allotted fate) was the goddess of destiny and as such represented on earlier phase of religious life. Her main sanctuary consisted of a black stone in Qudayd on the road between Makkah and Yathrib (later al-Madinah) and she was specially popular with the Aws and the Khazraj' (Hitti, op.cit. p.99)."

Asad comments: "These three goddesses – regarded by the pagan Arabs as 'God's daughters' side by side with the angels (who, too, were conceived of as females) – were worshipped in most of pre-Islamic Arabia, and had several shrines in the Hijaz and in Najd. The worship of Al-Lat was

[21] *What! For you the male, and for Him the female?*²²

أَلَكُمُ الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَى ﴿٢١﴾

[22] *That indeed is an unfair division.*

تِلْكَ إِذَا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَى ﴿٢٢﴾

particularly ancient and almost certainly of South-Arabian origin; she may have been the prototype of the Greek semi-goddess Leto, one of the wives of Zeus and mother of Apollo and Artemis.”

Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir (perhaps based on Ibn Is-haq's report), list a few other deities that were worshipped in pre-Islamic Arabia:

One was Dhu al-Khalasah belonging to Daws, Khath'am, Bajeelah and the Tabaala Arabs. (It was also known as Ka'bah al-Yamaniyyah while the Makkan Ka'bah was known as Ka'bah al-Shaamiyyah). It was Jarir b. 'Abdullah al-Bajali who was sent to destroy it. The Tayy' tribe and those around the two Tayy' mountains worshipped Fals. 'Ali b. abi Talib was sent to destroy it. The people of Himyar and San'aa had their own deity called Riyaam. It is said that it housed a black dog. Rabi'ah tribe had a temple called Rudaa. As for Bakr and Taghlab (the two sons of Waa'il), they worshipped

a deity called Dhu al-Ka'baat.

22. Yusuf Ali writes: “To show Allah in human shape, or imagine sons or daughters of Allah, as if Allah were flesh, was in any case a derogation from the supreme glory of Allah, high above all creatures, even if the human shapes were invested with great beauty and majesty as in the Greek Pantheon. But when we consider in what low opinion Pagan Arabia held the female sex, it was particularly degrading to show Allah, or so-called daughters of Allah, in female forms.

Asad adds: “In view of the contempt which the pagan Arabs felt for their female offspring ... their attribution of ‘daughters’ to God was particularly absurd and self-contradictory: for, quite apart from the blasphemous belief in God's having ‘offspring’ of any kind, their ascribing to him what they themselves despised gave the lie to their alleged ‘reverence’ for Him whom they, too, regarded as the Supreme Being – a point which is stressed in the next sentence.”

[23] These are not but names that you have named²³ – you and your forefathers. Allah has not sent down any authority touching them. They follow not but conjecture and what the souls desire,²⁴ while there has already come to them their Lord's guidance.

إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ
مَا أُنْزِلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ
إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ وَلَقَدْ
جَاءَهُمْ مِنَ رَبِّهِمْ الْهُدَى ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] Or, is there for man whatever he desires?²⁵

أَمْ لِلْإِنْسَانِ مَا تَمَنَّى ﴿٢٤﴾

23. That is, these are merely idols that you have carved and named them as deities. They have no real existence (Qurtubi, Alusi).

24. "An allusion to the pagan idea that those goddesses, as well as the angels, would act as 'mediators' between their worshippers and God: a wishful idea which lingers on even among adherents of higher religions in the guise of a veneration of saints and deified persons" (Asad).

Mawdudi adds: "In other words, the basic causes of their deviation are two: first that they do not feel any need for the knowledge of reality for the purpose of adopting a creed and religion, but make a supposition on the basis of a mere conjecture and then place belief in it as though it is the reality. Secondly, that they have, in fact, adopted this attitude in order to follow the lusts of their inner self. They desire that they should have

such a deity as should help them attain their aims and objectives of this world; and if at all there is to be a hereafter, it should take the responsibility to have them granted forgiveness there too. But it should not impose any restriction of the lawful and the unlawful on them nor should bind them to any moral discipline. That is why they do not feel inclined to worship One God as taught by the Prophets, and only like to worship invented gods and goddesses."

25. This is an implied reference to the fact that the mission that the Prophet had been entrusted with was not by his own choice, but rather, Allah's own decision (Tabari).

Ibn Kathir adds: We have a *hadith* warning about what we yearn for. It is in Ahmed (declared trustworthy by Haythami: Sami). It says,

إِذَا تَمَنَّى أَحَدُكُمْ فَلْيَنْظُرْ مَا يَتَمَنَّى فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَذَرِي مَا
يُكْتَبُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْنِيَّتِهِ

The Prophet said, "When one

[25] To Allah belongs the last and the first.²⁶

فَلِلَّهِ الْآخِرَةُ وَالْأُولَى ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] And how many angels²⁷ are there in the heavens whose intercession avails not aught,²⁸ except that Allah should allow whom He will, and is well-pleased (with)?²⁹

وَكَمْ مِنْ مَلَكٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ لَا تُغْنِي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْضَى ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] Surely, those who do not believe in the Hereafter, give the angels female names.³⁰

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ لَيَسْمُؤْنَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَسْمِيَةَ الْأُنثَى ﴿٢٧﴾

of you desires (something), let him look into what he is desiring because he does not know what of his desires are being written down.”

(Munawi explained: That is, one might be careful about what one desires and supplicates for, lest he desires in his ignorance something that might not be good for him, but it is yet granted because the hour happened to be auspicious: Au.).

26. That is, if the punishment for taking gods other than the true Deity does not descend, then, it may not be assumed that this is the end of it all, but rather, there is another world which they cannot escape (Razi, in sum).

27. Although the word “malak” is single, here it is used, as Akhfash said, in plural (Qurtubi).

28. How can the idol-worshippers depend on the intercession of their

idols – which are no more than lifeless things, when the living angels, and among them those closest in ranks, will have no independent power of intercession? (Razi).

Yusuf Ali adds: “We are apt to imagine the angelic host of heaven as beings of immense power. But their power is all derived from Allah. Men, when they attain to the highest spiritual dignities, may have even more power and position than angels in the sight of Allah, as in typified by angels being bidden to bow down to Adam: ii. 34. The Quraish superstition about angels being intermediaries and intercessors for man with Allah is condemned.”

29. That is, not every angel will be able to intercede, but only he who is allowed, and for him whom Allah considers worthy of intercession (Alusi).

30. The allusion is to the belief in an-

[28] They have no knowledge thereof but for conjectures; and surely, conjecture avails nothing against the truth.³¹

وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا
الظَّنَّ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا ﴿٢٨﴾

[29] Therefore, shun him who turns away from Our remembrance and desires no more than the life of the world.³²

فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْ مَنْ تَوَلَّى عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ
إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ﴿٢٩﴾

gels as the daughters of Allah (Qur-tubi, Alusi).

Asad explains further: "As the Qur'an points out in many places, the people spoken of in this context do believe in life after death, inasmuch as they express the hope that the angels and the imaginary deities which they worship will 'mediate' between them and God, and will 'intercede' for them. However, their belief is far too vague to make them realize that the quality of man's life in the hereafter does not depend on such outside factors but is causal, and directly connected with the manner of his life in this world: and so the Qur'an declares that their attitude is, for all practical purposes, not so much different from the attitude of people who reject the idea of a hereafter altogether."

31. Hence a *hadith* of the *Sahihayn*. It says,

إِيَّاكُمْ وَالظَّنَّ فَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ أَكْذَبُ الْحَدِيثِ

"Beware of conjecture for con-

jecture is the most deceitful of talk" (Ibn Kathir).

Alusi adds: The conjecture that is disallowed here is concerned with such affairs as have received clear instructions. But when instructions are absent, one has no choice but to resort to analogy.

32. "After demonstrating the weakness of the deities of those who do not believe in the Hereafter, after referring to the foolishness involved in their worship .. and after reference to those who attribute daughters to Allah, giving them female names, the Qur'an now turns to the Prophet to tell him that he ought not to give his mind any serious thought about them, but rather, shun them, and leave their affair to Allah who knows the good-doers of them as well as the evil-doers; who will reward the former and punish the latter. His are the affairs of the heavens and the earth as well as the affairs of this world and the Hereafter. He will hold them to

[30] That is their ultimate reach of knowledge.³³ Surely, your Lord knows well him who strays away from His path, as He knows well him who is guided.

ذَلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ
أَعْلَمُ بِمَن ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن
اهْتَدَى ﴿٣٠﴾

account in keeping with the demands of justice, without doing any wrong to anyone; who will forgive the sins over which its perpetrators did not insist; who has the knowledge of the seeds and the folded things, for, He is the Creator of the human beings, knower of their natures, and aware of every aspect of their lives” (Sayyid).

33. That is, to attain the material things of this world is the ultimate reach of their knowledge. A *hadith* (of Tirmidhi rated Hasan Ghareeb) says,

لَا تَجْعَلِ الدُّنْيَا أَكْبَرَ هَمًّا وَلَا مَبْلَغَ عِلْمٍ

The Prophet used to supplicate in words, “(O Allah), Do not make this world our main concern, nor the ultimate reach of our knowledge.” Indeed, it is only the ignorant who go after this world.

A *hadith* (treated trustworthy by Mundhiri, ‘Iraqi and Haythami: Au.) says,

الدُّنْيَا دَارٌ مِّنْ لَا دَارَ لَهُ وَمَالٌ مِّنْ لَا مَالَ لَهُ وَهَآ
يَجْمَعُ مِّنْ لَا عَقْلَ لَهُ

قال المنذري والحافظ العراقي : إسناده جيد وقال

الهيثمي : رجال أحمد رجال الصحيح غير دويل وهو
ثقة. (فيض القدير)

i.e., “This world is the home of him who has no home (in the Hereafter), wealth for him who has no wealth and none hoards it but he who has no sense” (Ibn Kathir).

Yusuf Ali adds: “Men with a materialist turn of mind, whose desires are bounded by sex and material things, will not go beyond those things. Their knowledge will be limited to the narrow circle in which their thoughts move. The spiritual world is beyond their ken. While persons with a spiritual outlook, even though they may fail again and again in attaining their full ideals, are on the right Path. They are willing to receive guidance and Allah’s Grace will find them out and help them.”

Sayyid comments: “The utmost of knowledge that these misguided ones possess appears to the common people - those who are short of heart, scant of understanding and feelings

[31] And to Allah belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. So that He may requite those who did evil according to what they worked,³⁴ as well as reward those who did well with a reward most fair.

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسَاءُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَ
الَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا بِالْحُسْنَى ﴿٣١﴾

[32] Those who avoid the major sins and the obscene³⁵ save lesser offenses.³⁶ Surely, your Lord is wide of forgiveness. He was better knowing of you when He produced you from the earth and when you were yet fetuses in the wombs of your mothers.³⁷ Therefore, ascribe not purity to yourselves;³⁸ He knows best him who is godfearing.

الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبَائِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ
إِلَّا اللَّصَمَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ هُوَ
أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ أَنشَأَكُم مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ
أَنْتُمْ أَجِنَّةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ فَلَا تُرْكُوا
أَنْفُسَكُمْ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقَى ﴿٣٢﴾

– as something great that greatly influences and shapes the life of this world. That might be true. But, being influential does not deny them the quality of misguidance in the ultimate truth, nor the qualities of ignorance and insignificance.

True knowledge has to have two necessary elements: true relationship between the Creator of this world and the creations, and true relationship between man's deeds and its retribution. Without the understanding of these two, knowledge is reduced to the equivalent of the outer skin of the fruit, incapable of influencing man's life, its progress, and its rise .. Without these, it amounts to no more than the development of tools and equipment while man retards. Of what worth is a knowledge which

allows for the progress of tools and equipment at the cost of the human (soul)?”

34. Yusuf Ali comments: “All deeds have their consequences, good or ill. But this is not an iron law, as the Determinists in philosophy, or the preachers of bare Karma, would have us believe. Allah does not sit apart. He governs the world. And Mercy as well as Justice are His attributes. In His Justice every deed or word or thought of evil has its consequence for the doer or speaker or thinker. But there is always in this life room for repentance and amendment. As soon as this is forthcoming, Allah's Mercy comes into action. It can blot out our evil, and the ‘reward’ which it gives is nearly always greater than our merits.”

35. The allusion is to fornication and acts leading to it (Tabari).

The difference between major sins and the obscene is that of quantity and quality. The term “kabaa’ir” expresses the sense of monstrosity while “faahisha” expresses its nature of being disgusting (Razi).

36. Lit., “lamam” is for that which is near (Penrice), but there are other meanings such as, that which is small and little; that which is infrequent (Shawkani); or that which you touch and go (Au.); the great majority have, however, taken it to mean minor sins. But some have believed, Sayyid included, that it is major sins that a man commits in heedlessness, but soon repents.

Nonetheless, one might warn that division of sins into major and minor are human conventions. In view of Allah’s greatness, every intentionally committed sin is a major sin, no matter how insignificant. If any sin is minor, it is in reference to the humans. This is the reason why there is no agreement over the total number of major sins. When Ibn `Abbas was asked whether major sins were not seven, he answered that they were closer to being seven hundred (Alusi).

In explanation of “lamam” the fol-

lowing is reported of Ibn Mas`ud. He said, “Fornication of the eyes is to see, of the lips is in kissing, of the hands in holding and of the feet in stepping (towards it). Then, the sexual organ accepts or rejects. If he goes ahead with his private parts, he is a fornicator. If he does not, then the other acts become ‘lamam.’” There is a *hadith* too, (of the *Sahihayn*: Ibn Kathir) which confirms a part of the above report and tells us that Ibn `Abbas held the same opinion about “lamam”. It goes as follows,

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ مَا رَأَيْتُ شَيْئًا أَشَبَّهَ بِاللَّمَمِ مِمَّا قَالَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَتَبَ عَلَى ابْنِ آدَمَ حَظَّهُ مِنَ الزَّنا أَدْرَكَ ذَلِكَ لَا مَحَالَةَ فَرَزْنَا الْعَيْنَ النَّظْرَ وَزَنَا اللِّسَانَ الْمَنْطِقَ وَالنَّفْسَ مَتَى وَتَسْتَهِي وَالْفَرْجَ يُصَدِّقُ ذَلِكَ كُلُّهُ وَيُكَذِّبُهُ.

Said Ibn `Abbas: “I did not hear anything closer to explaining ‘lamam’ than what Abu Hurayrah narrated from the Prophet (who said), ‘Allah has written for the son of Adam his share of fornication that he will earn, without escape. The eye’s fornication is to see, the tongue’s fornication is to talk (about it). The soul desires and hankers after, but the sexual organ either confirms all of it or denies.’” Another opinion coming from the *Salaf* is that “lamam” is every sin for which

[33] Have you then considered him who turned away?

أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي تَوَلَّى ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] He gave a little and then withheld?³⁹

وَأَعْطَى قَلِيلًا وَأَكْدَى ﴿٣٤﴾

neither a capital punishment has been prescribed nor which has received a threat of punishment in the Hereafter. Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah, Qatadah and Dahhak were of those who held this opinion. A third opinion is that “lamam” refers to committing a major sin once but then followed by repentance and refraining from any further commitment (Tabari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

37. That is, Allah knows, you do not (Zamakhshari).

38. It is in keeping with this Qur’ānic dictum that the Prophet would rename someone called e.g. “barrah” (meaning “good, pious or virtuous”) suggesting in place another name, such as Zaynab. He would cite this verse, “ascribe not purity to yourselves.” He also disapproved that people be praised without a good cause and without conditional clauses. The following may be quoted from the *Sahihayn* and other collections:

عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ أَتَنَى رَجُلًا عَلَى رَجُلٍ عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ

وَبَلَّكَ فَطَعْتَ عَنْقَ صَاحِبِكَ فَطَعْتَ عَنْقَ صَاحِبِكَ مِرَارًا ثُمَّ قَالَ مَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَادِحًا أَخَاهُ لَا مَحَالَةَ فَلْيُفْلِ أَوْ أَحْسِبْ فَلَانًا وَاللَّهِ حَسْبُهُ وَلَا تُزَكِّي عَلَى اللَّهِ أَحَدًا أَوْ أَحْسِبُهُ كَذًا وَكَذَا إِنْ كَانَ يَعْلَمُ ذَلِكَ مِنْهُ

A man praised another in the presence of the Prophet. He said, “Woe unto you. You severed the neck of your companion, you severed the neck of your companion ..” repeating it several times. Then he added, “If one of you has to praise his brother at all, let him say, ‘I reckon he is like this, but Allah is the Reckoner. And I do not vouch for anyone’s purity before Allah. I just assume of him in these terms,’ – if he knows for sure that (quality) is there in him” (Ibn Kathir).

In general terms, the *Ayah* refers to a man boasting, in however small a degree, of his good deeds. Excluding is that situation in which good deeds are mentioned to others by way of thanks and praise to Allah for having guided to them (Zamakhshari).

39. That was Waleed b. al-Mughirah. He entered into Islam. But someone

[35] *Has he knowledge of the Unseen so that he sees.*⁴⁰

أَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ فَهَوْ يَرَى ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] *Has he not been informed about what is in the Scriptures of Musa?*⁴¹

أَمْ لَمْ يُنَبِّأْ بِمَا فِي صُحُفِ مُوسَى ﴿٣٦﴾

[37] *And of Ibrahim who fulfilled?*⁴²

وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّى ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] *That no bearer of burden will bear the burden of another.*⁴³

أَلَا تَرَىٰ وَازِرَةً وَّرَزَّ أُخْرَىٰ ﴿٣٨﴾

[39] *And that there is no more for man than what he strives for.*

وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ ﴿٣٩﴾

taunted him, and suggested that he (Waleed) pay him some amount, so that he could, as a favor returned, bear the burden of his sin. Waleed agreed and returned to paganism. But, subsequently he went back on his word, and did not pay the amount he had promised. “Kadaa” is from a man’s action of starting to dig a well but, encountering a rock, abandoning the digging. It would be said in such a situation: “kada (al-`amal)” i.e., he gave up the effort (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi). Although others have also been named, Waleed’s name has received greater mention (Alusi). As for the story that `Uthman b. `Affan was the one who behaved in this fashion, it is baseless (Ibn Kathir, Alusi, Sayyid).

40. “I.e., ‘How can he be so sure that there is no life in the hereafter, and no judgment?’” (Asad).

41. “Books of Moses: apparently not

the Pentateuch, in the Taurat, but some other book or books now lost. For example, the Book of the Wars of Jehovah is referred to in the Old Testament (Num. xxi. 14) but is now lost. The present Pentateuch has no clear message at all of a Life to come” (Yusuf Ali).

42. That is, he fulfilled the covenant to deliver the message given him in full, as well as that of complete obedience, and fulfillment of the requirement of the dream to the effect that he was slaughtering his son (Tabari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

43. Asad comments: “This basic ethical law appears in the Qur’ān five times – in 6: 164, 17: 15, 35: 18, 39: 7, as well as in the above instance, which is the oldest in the chronology of revelation. Its implication is threefold: firstly, it expresses a categorical rejection of the Christian doctrine

of the ‘original sin’ with which every human being is allegedly burdened from birth; secondly, it refuses the idea that a person’s sins could be ‘atoned for’ by a saint’s or prophet’s redemptive sacrifice (as evidenced, for instance, in the Christian doctrine of Jesus’ vicarious atonement for mankind’s sinfulness, or in the earlier, Persian doctrine of man’s vicarious redemption by Mithras); and, thirdly, it denies, by implication, the possibility of any (unauthorized: Au.) ‘mediation’ between the sinner and God.”

Being a follower of Shafe’i’s school of *Fiqh*, Ibn Kathir points out, once again, that, basing his reasoning on this *Ayah*, Imām Shafe’i held the opinion that rewards of Qura’nic recitation cannot be gifted to another. He presents a few evidences but they sound weak. Surely, Imām Shafe’i must have had other reasons, otherwise, that no one will profit from any other’s good efforts is disproved by the following *Ayah* (52: 21):

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ
ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ مِنْ عَمَلِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ

i.e., “As for those who believed and their progeny followed them in faith, We shall join to them their offspring (in Paradise), without decreasing aught of their deeds.” The explana-

tion is that those of the offspring that could not come up with deeds of the quality of their progenitors will be allowed to dwell with their parents of higher ranks. Yes, it is not true the other way round. That is, transfer of reward is possible but not the transfer of sins. (Qurtubi also states this). Nonetheless, if applied to the unbelievers, this present *Ayah* holds good both ways, that is, they will not benefit from any other’s faith or deeds nor will others be punished because of their faith or deeds. With reference to the particular issue of recitation of the Qur’ān on behalf of a dead person, most Hanafiyy scholars have willy nilly approved it, while some of their major scholars would actually recite a few verses off and on, and gift the reward to their dead parents, teachers and others. Ashraf ‘Ali Thanwi, the last of the great *Sufis* of the Indian sub-continent however said that since there was difference in opinions, he would personally not recommend that the Qur’ān be recited for the dead (Au.).

At all events, Imām Shafe’i has allowed non-obligatory Hajj on behalf of the dead. ‘A’isha is reported to have sat in “i’tikaf” on behalf of her brother ‘Abd al-Rahman, as well as freed slaves on his behalf (Qurtubi).

[40] That his striving will soon be seen.⁴⁴

وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَى ﴿٤٠﴾

[41] Then He will reward him with complete reward.

ثُمَّ يُجْزَاهُ الْجَزَاءَ الْأَوْفَى ﴿٤١﴾

[42] And that to your Lord is the end.⁴⁵

وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنتَهَىٰ ﴿٤٢﴾

[43] And that it is He who makes to laugh and makes to weep.⁴⁶

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَضْحَكَ وَأَبْكَىٰ ﴿٤٣﴾

Alusi adds: It is reported that the governor of Khurasan asked `Abdullah b. Tahir al-Hussain b. al-Fadl about this *Ayah* and how it could be reconciled with a verse that says,

وَاللَّهُ يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ [البقرة/٢٦١]

“Allah will double up (the reward) unto whom He will?” He answered that if one goes by justice (`adl), a man gets no more than what he strives for. But if one goes by Allah’s bounty (fadl), then he gets whatever Allah decides. It is said that the governor kissed `Abdullah’s forehead.

44. “In this connection it is to be noted that in the ethics of the Qur’ān, the term ‘action’ (`amal) compromises also a deliberate omission of actions, whether good or bad, as well as a deliberate voicing of beliefs, both righteous and sinful: in short, everything that man consciously aims at and expresses by word or deed” (Asad).

45. Quite a few commentators such

as Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and Alusi seem to treat this *Ayah* as a difficult one to explain and, consequently, quote a *hadith* (of which several versions are found in Abu al-Sheikh’s collection but none trustworthy as a *hadith*. Ibn Hajr treats it as a statement of Ibn `Abbas with a good chain of narrators. However, Sakhawi noted, as in Fayd al-Qadeer, that there are so many versions that add strength to the substance: Au.). It runs as follows:

تفكروا في خلق الله ، ولا تفكروا في الله فتهلكوا (أبو الشيخ عن أبي ذر).

i.e., “Ponder over Allah’s creation but do not ponder over Allah’s Person lest you are destroyed.”

Ubayy b. Ka`b cited “not pondering over God” as the context of revelation (Shawkani).

46. Allah’s making the people to laugh in the world, or weep, is going to be carried on in the Hereafter where the pious will laugh in Paradise

[44] And that it is He who deals death and brings to life.

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَمَاتٌ وَأَحْيَا ﴿٤٤﴾

[45] And that He created the two kinds: male and female.

وَأَنَّهُ خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَى ﴿٤٥﴾

[46] Of a sperm-drop, when it is emitted.⁴⁷

مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ إِذَا تُمْنَى ﴿٤٦﴾

[47] And that upon Him is the second raising.

وَأَنَّ عَلَيْهِ النَّشْأَةَ الْآخِرَى ﴿٤٧﴾

while the wicked will weep in Hellfire (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, reworded).

We have something close to this in a *hadith*:

عن ابن أم مكتوم قال خرج النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ذات غداة فقال سعرت النار لأهل النار وجاءت الفتن كقطع الليل المظلم لو تعلمون ما أعلم لضحكتم قليلاً ولبكيتم كثيراً. (رواه الطبراني في الكبير والأوسط ورجاهما رجال الصحيح: مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

Ibn Umm Maktum reports that one day the Prophet emerged and said, “The Fire has been lit for the companions of the Fire and tribulations have arrived like patches of a dark night. If you knew what I know, surely, you would have laughed little and wept much.”

Dhannun said, “Allah makes the heart of the believers laugh by means of the light of knowledge and understanding while He makes the heart of the unbelievers weep because of

the darkness of disbelief and disobedience” (Qurtubi).

Qurtubi also mentions that there is none among biological organism which both laughs as well as weeps except humans.

We might add that counting out other ways of expressing joy, there is no animal that laughs, although some weep (Au.).

47. According to embryologists by default the sex of the fertilized ovum, should be female. Accordingly, biologists realize, although they try to explain away the problem by invoking the gene goddess, that the appearance of two sexes is a mystery. They know very well that there is no reason why a single individual cannot reproduce without any external help. After all, cells replicate without any external command or help. Many hermaphrodite animals are able to reproduce without the need of a sexual partner. However, in addition to this mystery,

determination of sex of the unborn is another inscrutable puzzle. The variety of ways adopted in a variety of animals is truly baffling. Finally, the well-maintained ratio of male and female in every population has been another challenging mystery.

Sex determination varies from species to species. In many animals there are sex chromosome in the DNA, called X-Y chromosomes. Females typically have two X chromosomes (XX), whereas males have one X and one Y chromosomes. The presence of a Y chromosome in the fertilized egg normally means it is going to be male; and its absence means it is going to be female. So, XY pair means it is male, and XX means it is female. This can be said to apply to 99.9% cases. However, some butterflies and moths are exception to this rule: females are XY and males XX.

In some insects, such as ants and bees, sex seems to be determined by the insects themselves. E.g., in case of bees, the queen-bee mates with a male only once in her life-time of 15 years. The sperm of that mating is preserved for the rest of life, in its body. The queen determines the

sex of the offspring at the time she lays the eggs. If she releases a tiny amount of the stored sperm to fertilize an egg passing through the duct, the offspring will be female; unfertilized eggs develop into males. Thus, she controls the sex ratio in her hive – a feat humans cannot perform.

In turtles, temperature during incubation determines the sex of the embryo in the egg. In most cases of tortoise, low incubation temperature results in male offspring. Higher temperatures result in female offspring. But crocodiles and lizards exhibit the opposite pattern, females being produced at low incubation temperatures and males at higher ones. In yet another twist, in few crocodiles, turtles and lizards, females are produced at “high” and “low” incubation temperatures while males at “intermediate” temperatures.

In ants, sex is determined by those that groom the larvae. If they decide to feed a few copiously, they will grow into queens. Whether the larvae will develop into worker bees or soldier bees is also determined by how they are fed. Ultimately, however, and somehow, a proper ratio of

[48] That it is He who gives wealth and contentment.⁴⁸

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَعْنَى وَأَقْنَى ﴿٤٨﴾

[49] And that He is the Lord of Sirius.⁴⁹

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ رَبُّ الشَّعْرَى ﴿٤٩﴾

[50] And that it is He who destroyed the earlier `Aad.⁵⁰

وَأَنَّهُ أَهْلَكَ عَادًا الْأُولَى ﴿٥٠﴾

[51] And Thamood, and spared (them) not.

وَتَمُودَ فَمَا أَبْقَى ﴿٥١﴾

males and females are maintained in the hive or nest (Au.).

48. There are at least five possible different meanings of the word “aqna,” one another being “reduced to poverty,” as mentioned by Ibn Jarir. The meaning expressed in the translation above reflects the understanding of Ibn `Abbas and Mujahid.

49. This bright star was worshipped by a few Arab tribes (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Actually, writes Zamakhshari, there were two stars called *Shi`ra*. They were named Ghumaysa and `Aboor. Introduced as a deity by one of the ancient chiefs Abu Kabsha, it was `Aboor that was worshipped by Khuza`ah (as well as some Yemenis: Qurtubi). Initially, the Quraysh referred to the Prophet also as Abu Kabsha, for, he too had changed his religion (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Alusi, each in his own words).

Yusuf Ali adds: “(This) .. refers to

a mighty phenomenon of nature, the magnificent star Sirius, which is such a prominent object in the skies, in the early part of the solar year, say, from January to April. It is the brightest star in the firmament, and its bluish light causes wonder and terror in Pagan minds. The Pagan Arabs worshipped it as a divinity. But Allah is the Lord, Creator and Cherisher, of the most magnificent part of Creation, and worship is due to Him alone.”

For details of beliefs of the Arabs regarding Sirius, one may look into Alusi’s discourse. A quality shared by every pagan religion and pagan thought is the belief that stars play a role in human destiny (Au.).

50. There were two major nations of `Aad: the earlier and the latter. Here, the reference is to those who were destroyed by the stormy winds: (the tribe of: `Aad b. Iram b. `Iwas b. Saam b. Nooh). Allah said about them (89: 6,7),

[52] And the folks of Nooh, earlier. Surely they, they indeed, were the most unjust and most rebellious.⁵¹

وَقَوْمُ نُوحٍ مِّن قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا هُمُ أَظْلَمَ
وَأَطْغَى ﴿٥٢﴾

[53] And the overturned (towns): he hurled (them).⁵²

وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ أَهْوَى ﴿٥٣﴾

[54] So that, that covered them which covered.⁵³

فَعَشَاهَا مَا غَشَى ﴿٥٤﴾

[55] Then which of the bounties of your Lord will you dispute?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكَ تَتَمَارَى ﴿٥٥﴾

[56] This is a warner, of the warners of old.⁵⁴

هَذَا نَذِيرٌ مِّنَ النَّذِيرِ الْأُولَى ﴿٥٦﴾

[57] The ever-approaching has drawn nigh.

أَرِفَتْ الْآرِقَةَ ﴿٥٧﴾

[58] It has none, apart from Allah, as a Dis-closer.

لَيْسَ لَهَا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ كَاشِفَةٌ ﴿٥٨﴾

[59] Do you then wonder at this discourse?

أَفَمِنْ هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ تَعْجَبُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

[60] And laugh, but weep not?

وَتَضْحَكُونَ وَلَا تَبْكُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادِ إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ

“Have you not considered how your Lord treated `Aad, Iram of the columns?” (Tabari). But Zamakhshari thinks Iram were the later `Aad.

51. They were the most unjust and rebellious of nations because Nooh (*asws*) stayed with them for a thousand but fifty years, but generation after generation of them rejected him. It is said that a man would walk by holding his little son's hand and tell him, “Son, this is how my father would walk me up (telling us not to believe in Nooh).” Some scholars

have said that they were so described here because they were the most unjust and most insolent of the nations after Adam (Ibn Jarir and others).

52. The allusion is to Loot's towns, which Jibril scooped up high into the air and then hurled them down (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir and others).

53. The answer to what it was that covered is that it was stones – one over another in several layers - that covered the town after it had been smashed down (Ibn Jarir).

54. That is, the warning contained in

[61] While you indulge in vanities!⁵⁵

وَأَنْتُمْ سَامِدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

[62] So, prostrate yourselves before Allah and worship (Him alone).⁵⁶

فَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ وَاعْبُدُوا* ﴿٦٢﴾

these words is one of the warnings that were issued through the Scriptures of old: of Musa and Ibrahim (Tabari). The allusion could also be to our Prophet (Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir).

55. In the Hymyatite Arabic “samad” stood for music, which could as well be the allusion to, as thought by `Ikrimah, although one or two other meanings are also possible (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir).

56. Referring to the reports that the Makkans were present when the Prophet recited this *Surah*, and that when he ended with prostration, they also prostrated themselves except for a single man who lifted a bunch of pebbles and touching them to his forehead said, “This should

do,” Sayyid Qutb writes that he used to wonder how the pagans present there, during that incident, could ever have prostrated themselves. But it should so happen that he and a few others were strolling at night when they heard this *Surah* being recited. The recitation was musical and ear-catching. He and his friends felt themselves fixed to the ground, unable to take off their ears from the beautiful words and beautiful recitation. By the end of the *Surah*, Sayyid felt his whole body quivering, while his mind was completely transported to the scenes that were portrayed. It was then that he realized that if this recitation, by an ordinary Muslim, had thus affected him, how could the pagan Arabs who understood the nuances and implications better, es-

مَقَامًا



Surah 54
*Al-Qamar*¹

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
 THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] *The Hour has drawn nigh² and the moon has split.³*

اِقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ ﴿١﴾

1. From the beginning to the end, this *Surah* assaults the mind and heart of the reader. After the assault in the opening passage, each of the following subdivisions portrays a scene depicting the destruction of a past nation. And, at the end of every sub-division it shakes the reader by chiding, “So, how were My chastisement and My warnings?” Then, after releasing him from the pressure it builds, it asks, “Indeed, We have made the Qur’ān easy for admonition, so is there anyone to receive admonition?”

But the beauty is that after several such assaults, the *Surah* releases its pressure, and raises the depressed spirit by ending with words: “Surely, the righteous will be in gardens and springs; in a place of truth, near an All-powerful Sovereign” – to end on

a brighter note, after having started, and continued with a threatening, depressing note (Sayyid, abridged).

2. Bukhari, Muslim and others have a narration on the authority of Sahl who said:

عَنْ أَبِي حَازِمٍ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ سَهْلًا يَقُولُ: سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُشِيرُ بِإِصْبَعِهِ الَّتِي تَلِي الْإِبْهَامَ وَالْوُسْطَى، وَهُوَ يَقُولُ: “بَعِثْتُ أَنَا وَالسَّاعَةُ هَكَذَا”

“Signaling with his middle and index finger, the Prophet said, ‘I have been raised in relations to the Hour, like this,’” (i.e., he and the Hour are that close).

Another report, as in Ahmad and the *Sahihayn*, has the Prophet saying,

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: “بَعِثْتُ أَنَا وَالسَّاعَةُ كَهَاتَيْنِ.” قَالَ وَضَمَّ السَّبَابَةَ وَالْوُسْطَى.

“I have been sent with the Hour, like this,” – he closed together his middle and index figures.

A third *hadith* is from Muslim and Ahmad. It says,

عَنْ خَالِدِ بْنِ عَمِيرٍ الْعَدَوِيِّ قَالَ خَطَبَنَا عُبَيْدُ بْنُ غَزْوَانَ - وَ قَالَ قَبْلَ هَذِهِ الْمَرَّةِ: خَطَبَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، قَالَ - فَحَمِدَ اللَّهَ وَأَثْنَى عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَإِنَّ الدُّنْيَا قَدْ أَذْنَتْ بِصِرْمٍ وَوَلَّتْ حَذَاءً وَلَمْ يَبْقَ مِنْهَا إِلَّا صِبَايَةٌ كَصِبَايَةِ الْإِنَاءِ يَتَصَابُهَا صَاحِبُهَا وَإِنَّكُمْ مُنْتَقِلُونَ مِنْهَا إِلَى دَارٍ لَا زَوَالَ لَهَا فَانْتَقِلُوا بِخَيْرٍ مَا بَحَضَرَتْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ قَدْ ذُكِرَ لَنَا أَنَّ الْحَجَرَ يَلْقَى مِنْ شَفَعَةِ جَهَنَّمَ فَيَهْوِي فِيهَا سَبْعِينَ عَامًا لَا يُدْرِكُ لَهَا قَعْرًا وَاللَّهُ لَتَمْلَأَنَّ أَفْعَاجِبُهُمْ وَلَقَدْ ذُكِرَ لَنَا أَنَّ مَا بَيْنَ مِصْرَاعَيْنِ مِنْ مِصَارِيعِ الْجَنَّةِ مَسِيرَةُ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً وَلَيَأْتِيَنَّ عَلَيْهَا يَوْمٌ وَهُوَ كَطِيطٍ مِنَ الرَّحَامِ

Once `Utban b. Ghazwan delivered a sermon - sometimes saying, ‘the Prophet addressed us,’ - praising Allah and then saying, “Indeed, the world has announced its retreat and quick return. Not much has been left of it, except like the drops remaining in an emptied water-bottle, that its owner tries to squeeze (because of his thirst). Surely, you will be transported from here into a world that will

not suffer any decline. Therefore, move out with the best of what you have; for, we have been told that a rock will be hurled into Jahannum that will keep falling for seventy years without reaching the bottom. However, it will be, by Allah, filled. Are you amazed? We have been told that the distance between the two posts of the gate to the Heaven will be of distance covered in forty years. Yet, a day will come on it when it will be jammed because of the heavy traffic” (Ibn Kathir).

3. There are several reports [of mutawatir status: Alusi, Sayyid] that confirm that the splitting of the moon took place at Makkah (some five years before *Hijrah*: Alusi).

Yes, some of the narrators were too young to have witnessed the split, in fact, Ibn `Abbas was not yet born, but there were others who witnessed, like Ibn Mas`ud. As for those who were then not present, of course they were reporting those who were personal witnesses (Alusi).

Bukhari’s report tells us that Ibn Mas`ud said,

خَمْسٌ قَدْ مَضَيْنَ: الدِّخَانُ، وَاللَّزَامُ،
الرُّومُ، وَالْبَطْشَةُ، وَالْقَمَرُ.

“Five signs have already been: the Smoke, *Al-Lizam* (destruction of the Quraysh), Romans, the Seizing (on the day of Badr) and the moon.”

According to another narrative in Muslim,

عَنِ أَنَسٍ أَنَّ أَهْلَ مَكَّةَ سَأَلُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْ يُرِيَهُمْ آيَةً فَأَرَاهُمْ انْشِقَاقَ الْقَمَرِ مَرَّتَيْنِ

“The Makkans demanded that the Prophet show them a miracle. So he showed them the splitting of the moon, twice.”

(That is, although the splitting took place once, Ibn Mas`ud saw it twice: having taken off the eyes, and then returning his gaze. Ibn Mas`ud seemed to be simply emphasizing that it did happen: Ibn Hajr).

Another report has been preserved by Ahmad. It says,

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ جُبَيْرٍ بْنِ مُطْعِمٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ انْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَصَارَ فِرْقَتَيْنِ فِرْقَةً عَلَى هَذَا الْجَبَلِ وَفِرْقَةً عَلَى هَذَا الْجَبَلِ فَقَالُوا سَحَرَنَا مُحَمَّدٌ فَقَالُوا إِنْ كَانَ سَحَرَنَا فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يَسْحَرَ النَّاسَ كُلَّهُمْ

“The moon split into two during the time of the Prophet. One half fell on this mountain, while

the other on that mountain. They said, ‘Muhammad has cast a spell on us.’ But some others said, ‘Had he cast a spell on us, he could not have cast a spell on all people.’” (I.e., let us ask the country dwellers, travelers, and others whether they noticed any such thing: Au.).

Ibn `Abbas also reports this incident. He said, as in Bukhari,

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ انْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ فِي زَمَانِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

“The moon split during the time of the Prophet.”

The incident has been reported in different words also, as in Bukhari:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ: بَيْنَمَا نَحْنُ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَمِينٌ، إِذَا انْفَلَقَ الْقَمَرُ فِلْقَتَيْنِ. فَكَانَتْ فِلْقَةً وَرَاءَ الْجَبَلِ، وَفِلْقَةً دُونَهُ. فَقَالَ لَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "اشْهَدُوا".

Said ibn Mas`ud, “As we were sitting with the Prophet in Mina, the moon split into two. One went down behind the mountain, while the other on the other side. The Prophet said, ‘Be witnesses.’”

Bayhaqi and Abu Da`ud Tayalisi report through their chains the following, (herewith the version as in Ibn Hajr’s Fath: Au.),

عَنْ أَبِي الضُّحَى .. " إِنشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ عَلَى
عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ،
فَقَالَتْ كُفَّارُ قُرَيْشٍ: هَذَا سِحْرٌ سَحَرَكُمُ
ابْنُ أَبِي كَبْشَةَ، فَانْظُرُوا إِلَى السُّفَارِ، فَإِنْ
أَخْبَرُوكُمْ أَنَّهُمْ رَأَوْا مِثْلَ مَا رَأَيْتُمْ فَقَدْ
صَدَقَ، قَالَ: فَمَا قَدِمَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا
أَخْبَرَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ "

Abu al-Dhuha reported, "The moon split during the time of the Prophet. Thereupon the Makkan Quraysh said, 'This is no more than a spell cast by Ibn Abi Kabsha. So wait for your travelers. If they say they too saw what you have seen, then he has been truthful.' Thereafter, none came in but informed them about it."

Other than the above, several collections report several *ahadith* through a variety of narrators to confirm sighting of the moon when it split (Kashshaf [without sources], Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). All the above, and more, are documented by Ibn Jarir, but we chose to present only those that Ibn Kathir presented, because he traced them to the source books.

Sayyid points to an aspect missed by others: The miracle was more to honor the Prophet than to convince the Makkan population. The Makkans were asking for a miracle - of some sort. In reply to their persistent de-

mands however, the Qur'an always suggested that they look around their world to discover as many miracles as they wished. The world was full of miracles. On this particular occasion, perhaps it just happened that the Prophet, some of his followers, and perhaps a few Makkans, happened to be in Mina when the moon split (Reworded).

Some people have suggested that the verse is announcing a future event. That is, it is going to happen sometime in future; perhaps near the end of the world. But neither the verse itself, nor the next one allow for such an interpretation (Kashshaf, Razi, Qurtubi and others).

Some people doubt the event on grounds that had a split occurred people from all parts of the world would have reported it. One cannot be more imbecile than this. Can he not see that every 'Eid Muslims differ over the sighting of the moon? A small number of people in a particular area assert that they saw the new moon, while others of another area, no more than 25km away, are pretty sure they saw no sign of it. This happens every year. (In fact, sometimes they sight the moon in Bahrain but not in Saudia at a distance of 20 km: Au.). Moreover, a miracle is a mira-

[2] Yet when they see a sign, they turn away and say, 'A continuing magic.'⁴

وَإِنْ يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُسْتَمِرٌّ ﴿٢﴾

[3] They laid the lie and followed their caprices. But every affair has a place of settlement.⁵

وَكَذَّبُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَكُلُّ أَمْرٍ مُسْتَقَرٌّ ﴿٣﴾

[4] There have already come to them such tidings⁶ that contain a deterrent.

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَنْبَاءِ مَا فِيهِ مُزْدَجَرٌ ﴿٤﴾

cle. If Allah wills, he can blind the sights of whomsoever He will (Au.).

All said, Sayyid points out that the moon is by itself a great miracle and a sign of Allah - greater than its splitting. It is still there in the heavens, in all its glory, before any eye seeking a sign.

4. Mujahid, Qatadah and others understood the textual "*mustamirr*" as meaning (not continuous but) "a passing" (event) – Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir. Yet others thought it means "a powerful (feat of magic)" – Ibn Jarir.

5. That is, evil and virtue both have their final destinations: evil has its destination to which it will take its perpetrators, as virtue has its destination to which it will lead its practitioners. This is how Qatadah explained the verse (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Eventually, every affair has to end somewhere or the other, so, let the

unbelievers wait and see how the affair of Muhammad ends. It is then that they will know whether it is the truth that he has brought or evil (Kashshaf, Alusi).

Asad quotes from Arabic commentaries: "I.e., everything has an intrinsic reality (haqiqah) of its own, and is bound to reveal that reality either in this world or in the next (Baghawi on the authority of Al-Kalbi); hence, everything must have a purpose or 'goal' of its own (Zamakhshari). These two – mutually complimentary – interpretations reflect the repeated Qur'anic statement that everything that exists or happens has a meaning and a purpose.. In the present context, the phrase relates both to the truth referred to in the preceding verses and to its rejection by those who are 'wont to follow [but] their own desires.'"

6. In the Qur'an (Alusi).

[5] A far-reaching wisdom,⁷ yet warnings avail not.

حِكْمَةً بَالِغَةً فَمَا تَعْنِ النُّذُرُ ﴿٥﴾

[6] Therefore, turn away from them⁸ (until) the day a caller calls to a thing repugnant.

فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ يَدْعُ الدَّاعِ إِلَى شَيْءٍ نُكْرٍ ﴿٦﴾

[7] Their eyes humbled, coming out of their graves as if they were scattered locusts.

حُشَّعًا أَبْصَارُهُمْ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ كَأَنَّهُمْ جَرَادٌ مُنْتَشِرٌ ﴿٧﴾

[8] Hastening towards the caller with eyes transfixed and necks outstretched.⁹ The unbelievers saying, 'This is a difficult day.'

مُتَّحِفِينَ إِلَى الدَّاعِ يَقُولُ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَسِيرٌ ﴿٨﴾

[9] Laid the lie before them the folks of Nuh. They laid the lie against Our slave and said, 'A man possessed.' And he was driven out.

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ فَكَذَّبُوا عَبْدَنَا وَقَالُوا مَجْنُونٌ وَازْدَجَرَ ﴿٩﴾

[10] So he invoked his Lord, 'I am overcome. So, do help.'

فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَغْلُوبٌ فَانْتَصِرْ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] So We opened the gates of heaven for a torrential water.

فَفَتَحْنَا أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَاءٍ مُنْهَمِرٍ ﴿١١﴾

[12] And split the earth with fountains, and the waters met¹⁰ following a purpose already decreed.

وَفَجَّرْنَا الْأَرْضَ عُيُونًا فَالْتَقَى الْمَاءُ عَلَى أَمْرٍ قَدْ قُدِرَ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] And We bore him on a (craft) of planks and nails.¹¹

وَحَمَلْنَاهُ عَلَى ذَاتِ أَلْوَاحٍ وَدُسُرٍ ﴿١٣﴾

7. That is, apart from being a deterrent, the tiding contains a far-reaching wisdom also.

8. That is, leave them alone and do not dispute with them anymore (Razi).

9. This is how "muhti" should be interpreted, as explained by Qurtubi.

10. That is, the waters of the earth and the waters of the heavens (Alu-

si), or perhaps, waters of the land and waters of the sea met. In addition, there could have been a Tsunami in the Gulf, or a large meteorite crashing into the waters (Au.).

11. "Dusur" has been explained in a few other ways also (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Other possible meanings are, "the front (bow, as against the stern, the

[14] Floating under Our eyes: a recompense to him who was rejected.

تَجْرِي بِأَعْيُنِنَا جَزَاءَ لِمَنْ كَانَ كُفِرَ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] And We left it as a sign.¹² So is there anyone who will receive admonition?¹³

وَلَقَدْ تَرَكْنَاهَا آيَةً فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] So, how was My chastisement and My warnings?

فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذْرٍ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] Indeed, We have made the Qur'ān easy for admonition. So is there anyone to receive admonition?¹⁴

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ ﴿١٧﴾

rear) part of a ship which faces the waves as it advances” or, the caulking material that is used for filling joints (Qurtubi and others).

12. One possible meaning is that “it” refers to the boat in the generic sense (Ibn Kathir). That is, there being no boats earlier, this first one and those that followed became a sign of Allah’s power who sets them afloat by His will (Au.).

However, Bukhari has a comment by Qatadah (not a Companion) that Allah preserved the boat until the firsts of this *Ummah* had seen it (Ibn Kathir and others).

Ibn Hajr reports through other routes that it was found in Jazirah (Tigris and Euphrate’s basin in Iraq) on a Mount called Judiyy. Some Western explorers claim that the remnants of the boat are still there on Mount Judiyy in Turkey. But the photographs

they have brought are far from convincing. In fact, there is no boat there, but a boat shaped area, sunk by perhaps 2-3 meters, visible from the air on the Mount (Au.).

13. This is how Ibn Zayd and Sufyan understood the word “*muddakir*” (Ibn Jarir).

14. Yet another possible connotation of the word “*muddakir*”, as suggested by Qatadah and Matar is, “someone who can be helped on.” That is, the Qur’ān has been made easy, so is there anyone seeking the truth so that “he could be helped on” (Ibn Jarir). In other words, is there anyone putting an effort so that things could be made easy for him. This is how Bukhari understood it (Ibn Kathir).

Some people, especially those educated on Western lines, full of confidence that the modern man is the smartest of the human beings that

[18] `Aad cried lies. So how was My chastisement and My warnings?

كَذَّبَتْ عَادٌ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] We sent upon them indeed, a furious cold wind,¹⁵ on a day relentlessly inauspicious.¹⁶

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي يَوْمِ نَحْسٍ مُسْتَمِرٍّ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] Sweeping the people (off their feet) as if they were uprooted stumps of palm-trees.¹⁷

تَنَزَّعَ النَّاسَ كَأَثْمِهِمْ أَعْجَارُ نَخْلٍ مُنْقَعِرٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] So, how was My chastisement and My warnings?

فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ ﴿٢١﴾

ever appeared (which disqualifies them from a true understanding of the Qur'ān), believe that the Qur'ān can be understood by any one, implying, they have the right to interpret it. The Qur'ān has been made easy, yes. But in what sense? It is in the sense of obtaining admonition. Or, as some of the *Salaf* have thought, "it has been made easy for memorization." But, if someone wishes to understand it in the fullest sense, with the license to work out the Law, then there is no recourse but to gain mastery over a few related disciplines such as: Arabic language, the context of revelation, the *Sunnah*, interpretation of the *Salaf*, logic, objectivity, etc., coupled with a high degree of piety (Au.).

15. Ibn `Abbas, Dahhak and Sufyan said that "*sarir*" is for an extremely cold wind, while Ibn Zayd said it is for a stormy wind (Ibn Jarir).

16. The days remained ominous throughout the days of destruction. Further, if the days were inauspicious, it was from their point of view. It is they who believed in some days being – as many pagan cultures still believe – inauspicious and ominous. Otherwise, there could have been nothing inauspicious about any day since all the days of the week were involved: seven days and eight nights. (Alusi has a detailed discussion). The Prophet also drew omen, but good omen alone, entirely disregarding any evil omen (Au.).

17. The winds would lift a man high up into the air, and then bang him against the ground head on, so that the head would be severed off, his torso lying there headless, like a trunk of palm-tree (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

[22] Indeed, We have made the Qur'ān easy for admonition. So is there anyone to receive admonition?

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] Thamud denied the warnings.

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِالنُّذُرِ ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] Saying, 'Shall we follow a mortal, one out of ourselves? In that case we should be in an error, and hardships.¹⁸

فَقَالُوا أَبَشَرًا مِمَّنَّا وَاحِدًا نَتَّبِعُهُ إِنَّا إِدَّا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] Has the admonition been sent down upon him alone out of us all? Rather, he is a big liar, most impudent.'

أَوُلْقِيَ الذِّكْرُ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا بَلْ هُوَ كَذَّابٌ أَشِرٌّ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] Tomorrow they shall surely know who is the big liar, most impudent.

سَيَعْلَمُونَ غَدًا مَنِ الْكَذَّابُ الْأَشِرُّ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] We are sending a she-camel as trial for them; so watch them and remain patient.

إِنَّا مُرْسِلُو النَّاقَةِ فِتْنَةً لَهُمْ فَارْتَقِبْهُمْ وَاصْطَبِرْ ﴿٢٧﴾

[28] And inform them that the water is to be shared between them. Each drink will be attended.¹⁹

وَيَبَيِّنُهُمْ أَنَّ الْمَاءَ قِسْمَةٌ بَيْنَهُمْ كُلُّ شِرْبٍ مُحْتَضَرٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

18. This was roughly the understanding of "su'ur" by Qatadadh as in Ibn Jarir.

"Su'ur" (pl. of "sa'ir") is for fires. So, one opinion is that Salih used to threaten them with the fire, so they used the word to return it in kind, meaning, if they followed him, then, far from receiving guidance, they will run into misguidance, and, in consequence land into the very fire he was promising. "Insanity" is another meaning assigned to the word (Alusi).

19. The main well of the town was divided between them: a day for the she-camel to drink, (when it emptied it), and another day for the people to draw from (Ibn Jarir).

The camel itself had emerged pregnant, miraculously from a rock. For other details see *Surah al-Shams*, note 10 and 11, as well as *Surah al-A'raf* note 110 & 114; *Hud*, note 73; and *Shu'ara*, 119.

[29] But they called their companion.²⁰ He took in hand²¹ and hamstrung (her).

﴿٢٩﴾ فَتَادُوا صَاحِبَهُمْ فَتَعَاطَى فَعَقَرَ

[30] So, how was My chastisement and My warnings?

﴿٣٠﴾ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذْرٍ

[31] We sent upon them a single Cry, and they became like stubble of a pen-owner.²²

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَكَانُوا كَهَشِيمِ الْمُخْتَطِرِ ﴿٣١﴾

[32] Indeed, We have made the Qur'ān easy for admonition. So is there anyone to receive admonition?

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

[33] Lut's folks denied the warnings.

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ بِالنُّذْرِ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] We sent against them a storm of stones – except for Lut's household; We delivered them by the morning.

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حَاصِبًا إِلَّا آلَ لُوطٍ نَجَّيْنَاهُمْ بِسَحَرٍ ﴿٣٤﴾

[35] A favor from Us. That is how We reward him who gives thanks.

نِعْمَةٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي مَنْ شَكَرَ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] He had already warned them of Our assault. But they disputed the warnings.

وَلَقَدْ أَنْذَرَهُمْ بَطْشَتَنَا فَتَمَارَوْا بِالنُّذْرِ ﴿٣٦﴾

20. That was a mischievous group – altogether nine. They had earlier threatened that they would kill Saleh if he did not give up preaching. They appointed a comrade of theirs who hamstrung the camel (Ibn Jarir).

21. “He undertook (to hamstrung)” could be another possible rendering (Au.).

It could also be said that he exchanged wine cups, got drunk and then hamstrung her (Sayyid). The

word, “*ta`ata*” (roughly: exchanged), offers some support for this meaning, although no such report has come down to us from the scholars of the past (Au.).

22. Another, out of several possible meanings of the word “*muhtadir*”, as thought by Ibn `Abbas and Qatadah, is “burnt out.” Yet another legitimate opinion is that “hashim” refers to the materials left after use, while “*muhtadir*” refers to the maker of animal pens” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

[37] They even sought his guests from him. So We blinded their eyes.²³ Taste then, My chastisement and My warnings.

وَلَقَدْ زَاوَوْهُ عَنْ ضَيْفِهِ فَطَمَسْنَا أَعْيُنَهُمْ
فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنُذِرِ ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] A pervasive chastisement visited them by early morning.

وَلَقَدْ صَبَحَهُمْ بُكْرَةً عَذَابٌ مُسْتَقَرٌّ
﴿٣٨﴾

[39] So, taste My chastisement and My warnings.

فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنُذِرِ ﴿٣٩﴾

[40] Indeed, We have made the Qur'ān easy for admonition. So is there anyone to receive admonition?

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ
﴿٤٠﴾

[41] Warnings came to the folks of Fir'aun also.

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَ آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ النُّذُرُ ﴿٤١﴾

[42] (But) they denied Our signs – all of them.²⁴ Therefore We seized them, the seizing of One Mighty, Omnipotent.

كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كُلِّهَا فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ أَحْذً عَزِيزٍ
مُفْتَدِرٍ ﴿٤٢﴾

[43] Are your unbelievers better than those (mentioned here)? Or have you immunity in the Scrolls?

أَكْفَارُكُمْ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أُولَئِكَمْ أَمْ لَكُمْ بَرَاءَةٌ
فِي الزُّبُرِ ﴿٤٣﴾

[44] Or do they say, 'We are a multitude²⁵ (capable of) overcoming.'²⁶

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ نَحْنُ جَمِيعٌ مُنتَصِرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

23. Informed by Lut's wife of the arrival of guests unmatched by anyone in beauty, the leading rogues of the town rushed to Lut's house demanding that they be handed over to them. They would almost break open the door to his house when Jibril emerged and with a single stroke of his wing blinded the pack. They fumbled about in the lanes, retreating and threatening Lut until struck

by the chastisement meant for all (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

24. That is, all the nine signs. For details see *Surah al-A'raf* note 155 and 156.

25. The word "*jami'un*" lends the sense both of largeness of a group as well as of the unity of its members (Razi).

[45] The multitude will be routed and show their backs.²⁷

سَيَهْزِمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُوَلُّونَ الدُّبُرَ ﴿٤٥﴾

[46] Nay, the Hour is their appointed time, and the Hour is most perilous and most bitter.²⁸

بَلِ السَّاعَةُ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَالسَّاعَةُ أَذْهَى وَأَمْرٌ ﴿٤٦﴾

[47] Surely, the criminals are in an error and hardships.²⁹

إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ ﴿٤٧﴾

26. There are several meanings that go with “*muntasir*” viz., victorious, those who can help themselves to victory, etc. (Zamakhshari and others).

27. It is reported that `Umar used to wonder what multitude it is and what defeat it will be until, “I saw the Prophet on the day of Badr clad in a coat of mail (emerging from his tent) saying, ‘The multitude will be routed and show their backs.’ It was then that I realized what it meant” (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

28. That is, the torments the unbelievers will go through as a result of their disbelief are much simpler than the perils and bitterness that are to follow in the Hereafter (Razi).

Bukhari preserved the following:

عن عائشة أم المؤمنين قالت لقد أنزل على محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم بمكة

وَأَنِّي لَجَارِيَةٌ أَلْعَبُ {بَلِ السَّاعَةُ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَالسَّاعَةُ أَذْهَى وَأَمْرٌ}. (القمر: ٤٦)

`A'isha says, “I was a little a girl in Makkah, playing, when this was revealed to Muhammad, peace be upon him, ‘Nay, the Hour is their appointed time, and the Hour is most perilous and most bitter’” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

29. Ibn Kathir foreshadows modern style of interpretation when he says, “The allusion at this point by ‘*su`ur*’ – although meaning fires - is to the inner condition of doubts, skepticism, uncertainty and anxiety, that visit every unbeliever, and which finally lead him to the Fire in the next world.”

nother possible connotation of “*su`ur*” is madness (Razi and others).

[48] The day they are dragged in the Fire on their faces: 'Taste the touch of Saqar.'³⁰

يَوْمَ يُسْحَبُونَ فِي النَّارِ عَلَى وُجُوهِهِمْ
ذُوقُوا مَسَّ سَقَرَ ﴿٤٨﴾

[49] Surely We have created everything according to a predestined measure.³¹

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ ﴿٤٩﴾

30. "Saqar" is one of the names of Hell (Zamakhshari).

31. "Qadr" has several connotations, two prominent ones being: (a) measure, and (b) divine decree (Razi).

Of course, a creation which results in an organized system, in addition to the balance obtained, necessarily leads to predestined decree; so, the two lead to one and the same meaning (Au.).

Muslim, as well as Ahmad have a *hadith* explaining the context of revelation:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: جَاءَ مُشْرِكُو قُرَيْشٍ
يُخَاصِمُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ فِي الْقَدَرِ فَتَرَلَّتْ: {يَوْمَ يُسْحَبُونَ
فِي النَّارِ عَلَى وُجُوهِهِمْ ذُوقُوا مَسَّ سَقَرَ
، إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ} (القمر: ٤٨-٤٩)

The pagans went up to the Prophet arguing about pre-destination, so Allah revealed this verse.

Ibn Kathir (and partly Qurtubi) goes on to narrate a few more *ahadith* on

this topic. One is in Ahmad (declared more or less trustworthy by Haythami: Au.),

قِيلَ لِابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ إِنَّ رَجُلًا قَدِمَ عَلَيْنَا
يُكَذِّبُ بِالْقَدَرِ فَقَالَ دُلُونِي عَلَيْهِ وَهُوَ
يَوْمَئِذٍ قَدْ عَمِيَ قَالُوا وَمَا تَصْنَعُ بِهِ يَا أَبَا
عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَئِنْ
اسْتَمَكَنْتُ مِنْهُ لِأَعَضَّنَ أَنْفَهُ حَتَّى أَقْطَعَهُ
وَلَئِنْ وَفَعْتُ رَقَبَتَهُ فِي يَدَيَّ لَأُدْقِنَهَا فَإِنِّي
سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
يَقُولُ كَأَنِّي بِنِسَاءِ بَنِي فَهْرٍ يَطْفَنُ
بِالْخَزَرَجِ تَصْطَطُكُ أَلْيَاتُهُنَّ مُشْرَكَاتِ هَذَا
أَوَّلُ شِرْكٍ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ
لَيَنْتَهِيَنَّ بِهِمْ سُوءُ رَأْيِهِمْ حَتَّى يُخْرِجُوا اللَّهَ
مِنْ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَدَرٌ خَيْرًا كَمَا أَخْرَجُوهُ مِنْ
أَنْ يَكُونَ قَدَرٌ شَرًّا.

Ibn `Abbas was told, "A man has appeared who denies predestination." He said, "Lead me to him." He was then blind. They said, "What will you do with him?" He answered, "By him in whose power is my life, if I manage to overpower him I will pluck out his nose. If I get hold of his throat, I will strangle him. I have heard the

Prophet say, 'As if I can see Banu Fihri's women (of Khazraj) circumambulating, but idolatresses. This (denial of pre-destination) is the first of the acts of Association (paganism, while of the women described above being last: Au.). By Him in whose Hand is my life, either they will give up their evil opinions about Allah, or they will end up ruling out Allah as One who destined the good, just as they have ruled Him out as having destined the evil."

The following is from *Tafsir* of Ibn Abi Hatim,

عَنْ عَطَاءِ بْنِ أَبِي رَبَاحٍ، قَالَ: أَتَيْتُ ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ، وَهُوَ يَنْزِعُ مِنْ زَمْزَمَ، وَقَدْ ابْتَلَتْ أَسَافِلُ ثِيَابِهِ، فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: قَدْ تَكَلَّمَ فِي الْقَدَرِ، فَقَالَ: وَفَعَلُوها؟ قُلْتُ: نَعَمْ، قَالَ: "قَوْلُ اللَّهِ مَا نَزَلَتْ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ إِلَّا فِيهِمْ: { ذُوقُوا مَسَّ سَقَرَ، إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ }، (القمر: ٤٨-٤٩) أَوَّلُكَ شِرَارُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ، فَلَا تَعُودُوا مَرْضَاهُمْ، وَلَا تُصَلُّوا عَلَى مَوْتَاهُمْ، إِنْ رَأَيْتَ أَحَدًا مِنْهُمْ فَقَاتَ عَيْنِيهِ بِأَصْبَعِي هَاتَيْنِ."

'Ata' b. Rabah said, "I met Ibn 'Abbas while he was drawing water from Zamzam well. The hem of his lower garment had become wet. I said, 'They are talking about pre-destination.' He said, 'Are they doing it?' I

said, 'Yes.' He said, 'By Allah, the *Ayah*, "Taste then the *Saqar*, We have indeed created following a predestined a measure' – was revealed in reference to these people. They are the most evil of this *Ummah*. So, do not visit their sick, do not Pray over their dead. If I were to see one of them I would (correct the Arabic tex) pluck his eyes with these two fingers of mine."

The above is not a *hadith* and its authenticity-report could not be traced (Au.).

The following is from Abu Da'ud and Musnad Ahmad:,

عَنْ نَافِعٍ قَالَ كَانَ لابْنِ عُمَرَ صَدِيقٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الشَّامِ يُكَاتِبُهُ فَكَتَبَ إِلَيْهِ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ إِنَّهُ بَلَغَنِي أَنَّكَ تَكَلَّمْتَ فِي شَيْءٍ مِنَ الْقَدَرِ فَإِيَّاكَ أَنْ تَكْتُبَ إِلَيَّ فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ إِنَّهُ سَيَكُونُ فِي أُمَّتِي أَقْوَامٌ يُكَذِّبُونَ بِالْقَدَرِ

It is said that Ibn 'Umar had a friend in Syria with whom he used to exchange correspondence. Ibn 'Umar wrote to him, "I have been told that you talk about pre-destination (i.e., deny it). Stop writing to me henceforth for I have heard the Prophet say, 'There will be people in my *Ummah* who will deny pre-destination.'"

In this connection, the following report declared trustworthy by Tirmidhi is traceable to Ibn Majah and Ahmad (Au.).

(عن) نَافِعٍ أَنَّ ابْنَ عُمَرَ جَاءَهُ رَجُلٌ فَقَالَ
إِنْ فَلَانًا يَقْرَأُ عَلَيْكَ السَّلَامَ فَقَالَ لَهُ إِنَّهُ
بَلَّغَنِي أَنَّهُ قَدْ أَحْدَثَ فَإِنْ كَانَ قَدْ أَحْدَثَ
فَلَا تُقْرِئُهُ مِنِّي السَّلَامَ فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ يَكُونُ فِي
هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ أَوْ فِي أُمَّتِي الشُّكُّ مِنْهُ خَسَفٌ
أَوْ مَسَخٌ أَوْ قَذْفٌ فِي أَهْلِ الْقَدَرِ (قَالَ أَبُو
عِيْسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ غَرِيبٌ)

Nafe` reports that a man came to Ibn `Umar and told him that so and so sends you his salam. He replied, "I have come to know that he has brought in some innovation. If it is true that he has brought in innovation, then do not give him my salam for I have heard the Prophet say, 'There will be in this *Ummah* (or perhaps he said, 'my *Ummah*'), earth-splitting, transformation, or pelting (of stones) upon those who deny pre-destination.'"

One more is from Muslim:

عَنْ طَاوُسٍ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: أَدْرَسْتُ نَاسًا مِنْ
أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
يَقُولُونَ: كُلُّ شَيْءٍ بِقَدَرٍ. قَالَ: وَسَمِعْتُ
عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عُمَرَ يَقُولُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "كُلُّ شَيْءٍ بِقَدَرٍ.

حَتَّى الْعَجْزُ وَالْكَيْسُ. أَوْ الْكَيْسُ وَالْعَجْزُ"
(مسلم)

Ta'us said, "I met several Companions of the Prophet who used to say that everything is by predestination." He also said, "I heard `Abdullah ibn `Umar report the Prophet as saying, 'Everything is by predestination to the extent of dullness and smartness' or (maybe he said), smartness and dullness.'"

There is another *hadith* in Muslim that pertains to this topic. It reports the Prophet as having said,

وَأَسْتَعِينُ بِاللَّهِ. وَلَا تَعْجِزْ. وَإِنْ أَصَابَكَ
شَيْءٌ فَلَا تَقُلْ: لَوْ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ كَذَا لَمْ
يُضَيِّبْنِي كَذَا. وَلَكِنْ قُلْ: قَدَرُ اللَّهِ. وَمَا شَاءَ
فَعَلَ. فَإِنْ لَوْ تَفَتَّحَ عَمَلُ الشَّيْطَانِ

"Seek Allah's help and do not sit back. Yet, if you are struck by something, do not say, 'Had I done that, it would not have struck me in this way.' Rather say, 'By Allah's decree. What Allah willed, He accomplished.' For, "if" opens the way for Satan."

One more on the topic is from Tirmidhi. A longer *hadith* that ends with the Prophet's admonition to Ibn `Abbas in words,

وَأَعْلَمَ أَنَّ الْأُمَّةَ لَوِ اجْتَمَعُوا عَلَى أَنْ
يَنْفَعُوكَ لَمْ يَنْفَعُوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ
لَكَ وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا عَلَى أَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ لَمْ
يَضُرُّوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ
رُفِعَتِ الْأَقْلَامُ وَجَفَّتِ الصُّحُفُ (سنن
الترمذي - قَالَ هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ
صَحِيحٌ)

“And know that if the people were to gather together to do you a good, they will not be able to benefit you except by as much as Allah has written it for you; and if they gather together to do you a harm, they will not be able to harm you except by as much as Allah has written for you. Pens have been lifted and the Scriptures have gone dry.”

Yet another report is from Ahmad but whose authenticity-status could not be traced:

عُبَادَةُ بْنُ الْوَلِيدِ بْنُ عُبَادَةَ حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي قَالَ
دَخَلْتُ عَلَى عُبَادَةَ وَهُوَ مَرِيضٌ أَتَخَايَلُ فِيهِ
الْمَوْتَ فَقُلْتُ يَا أَبَتَاهُ أَوْصِنِي وَاجْتَهِدْ لِي
فَقَالَ اجْلِسُونِي قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَطْعَمَ
طَعْمَ الْإِيمَانِ وَلَنْ تَبْلُغَ حَقَّ حَقِيقَةِ الْعِلْمِ
بِاللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى حَتَّى تُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدَرِ
خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ قَالَ قُلْتُ يَا أَبَتَاهُ فَكَيْفَ لِي
أَنْ أَعْلَمَ مَا خَيْرُ الْقَدَرِ وَشَرُّهُ قَالَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ
مَا أَخْطَأَكَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيُصِيبَكَ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ
لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيُخْطِئَكَ. يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ

رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ إِنَّ
أَوَّلَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى الْقَلَمُ ثُمَّ
قَالَ اكْتُبْ فَجَرَى فِي تِلْكَ السَّاعَةِ بِمَا هُوَ
كَائِنٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ يَا بُنَيَّ إِنَّ مِثْرًا
وَأَلَسْتُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ دَخَلْتُ النَّارَ

‘Ubadah’s son reports, “I entered upon ‘Ubadah. He was sick and I thought his sickness will probably end his life. I said, ‘Father, advice me and take the trouble for me.’ He said, ‘Make me sit up.’ Then he said, ‘My son. You will never taste the sweetness of faith nor ever reach the dept of knowledge of Allah until you believe in the divine decree, the good of it and the bad of it.’ I asked, ‘My father. How am I to know the good of the decree and its evil?’ He replied, ‘By knowing that what missed you could not have struck you, and what struck you could not have missed you. My son, I have heard the Prophet say that the first thing that Allah created was the Pen. And then said to it, “Write.” At that hour it wrote down all that was going to happen until the Day of Standing. My son. If you died but not on this faith, you will enter the Fire.”

Another report in this context is also in Tirmidhi who declared it *Hasan Sahih Ghareeb*.

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِ، قَالَ:
سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
يَقُولُ: "كَتَبَ اللَّهُ مَقَادِيرَ الْخَلَائِقِ قَبْلَ أَنْ
يَخْلُقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِخَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ
سَنَةٍ. قَالَ: وَعَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ

Abdullah b. `Amr said, "I heard the Prophet say, 'Allah wrote down the decrees of the creations fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth. His `Arsh was then on water.'"

Quotes from Ibn Kathir (and Qurtubi) end here.

Referring to the word "*Qadr*" (meaning "measure, or balance") Sayyid writes on the balance that the created world exhibits. It is being observed that there is perfect balance of forces in the things as they exist: galaxies, stars, planets and their satellites. The placement of each cosmic object, with its size, its mass and its gravitational power, at appointed places, in orbits suitable for maintenance of order, speaks of the measures.

The existence of life on this earth is possible because of various balances maintained between it and other cosmic bodies. Its placement in a par-

ticular zone around the sun, its exact distance from the sun, the sun's size, mass, energy and gravitational pull, the earth's tilt, its speed of rotation around its own axis as well as around the sun, the presence of moon causing tides in a certain measure: not to inundate the land altogether, nor leave the waters undisturbed altogether, all these are so finely balanced that any minor alteration can lead to a situation in which life cannot exist.

Come down to life. We have pointed out earlier how the balance of population is maintained on the earth. Large, flesh eating animals are few in numbers: lions, eagles, etc. If they were too many, they would eat off all the smaller animals and die out themselves. Flies, for instance, lay eggs in millions. But they do not live for more than 15 days. Their eggs are the diet of several large animals by means of which their population remains controlled, otherwise they would fill the earth. (The Grzimek's Animal Life Encyclopedia states that if a pair of fruit flies are left to multiply, unhindered for one year, they will make a ball of flies of diameter between the earth and the sun: Au.). Or consider the microbes. There are millions upon millions of them. But they are infinitesimally small, and easily destroyed, otherwise, they

[50] Our commandment is but one (word),³²
like the twinkling of an eye.

وَمَا أَمْرُنَا إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ ﴿٥٠﴾

multiply so fast that no other life-form would be possible if they are allowed to grow in numbers without check.

The balance, check and existence in well-decreed quantities, is visible in the construction and function of living bodies also. Consider a mother's breast milk. There is hardly any before birth yielding a few milliliters immediately after birth. But in time, as the child grows, the yield increases to about a liter and a half per day. At the start the milk is low in fats and sugars, high in water content, thin and yellowish. It has such chemical elements as which kill off various diseases that attack the infant. Subsequent yield is higher in fat and sugars. Thus, day by day the milk is altered in contents to suit the child as it grows. This is by Allah's decree (condensed and re-worded).

A poor understanding of the concept of *Qada'* and *QadSurahr*, which largely prevails among the Muslims also, who are confused between *Mashi'ah* (will) and *Rida'* (approval), and so fall into fatalism, even the Quraysh fell into the same error. They said, as in the Qur'an:

﴿وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا عَبَدْنَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ نَحْنُ وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَهَلْ عَلَى الرُّسُلِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ﴾ [النحل: ٣٥]

Said those who associated (others with Allah), 'If Allah had willed, we would not have worshiped anything other than Him, neither we, nor our forefathers, nor would we have forbidden anything following other than Him.' Thus did those who went before them. So, is there anything upon the Messengers beyond manifest deliverance?

The Prophet (asws) has stated, which can be taken as a clarifying note:

«إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيُحَرِّمُ الرِّزْقَ بِالذَّنْبِ يُصِيبُهُ، وَلَا يَرُدُّ الْقَدْرَ إِلَّا بِالْذُّعَاءِ، وَلَا يَزِيدُ فِي الْعُمْرِ إِلَّا الْبِرُّ» - صحيح ابن حبان - محققا

"Surely a man is denied sustenance because of sins that strike him. And nothing will drive back the *Qadr* except supplication and nothing causes increase in life-span except good deeds."

There are other *ahadith* that support the above clarification (Au.).

32. Such as the word "*kun*" with which the things become in a twinkling of the eye (Razi). One quick

[51] We have already destroyed the likes of you. So, is there anyone to receive admonition?

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا أَشْيَاعَكُمْ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدْكِرٍ ﴿٥١﴾

[52] Everything they did is in the Tablets.

وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَعَلُوهُ فِي الزُّبُرِ ﴿٥٢﴾

[53] And everything little and great is penned.³³

وَكُلُّ صَغِيرٍ وَكَبِيرٍ مُسْتَطَرٌّ ﴿٥٣﴾

[54] Surely, the righteous will be in gardens and springs.

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَتَهَرٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

[55] In a place³⁴ of truth, near³⁵ a Sovereign, Omnipotent.

فِي مَقْعَدٍ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِيكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ ﴿٥٥﴾

example is that of a speck of dust called virus, or viroid, of which millions float around. But no sooner does one of these DNA packages enters into a cell's machinery, it comes alive in the twinkling of an eye (Au.).

33. Hence one should heed the advice the Prophet gave to 'A'isha. He said to her,

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: قَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: يَا عَائِشَةُ! إِيَّاكِ وَمُحَقَّرَاتِ الْأَعْمَالِ. فَإِنَّ لَهَا مِنَ اللَّهِ طَالِبًا. (في الزوائد: إسناده صحيح. رجاله ثقات).

“‘A'isha. Beware of the insignificant sins for there is someone from Allah demanding” (the consequences: Au.) – Ibn Kathir.

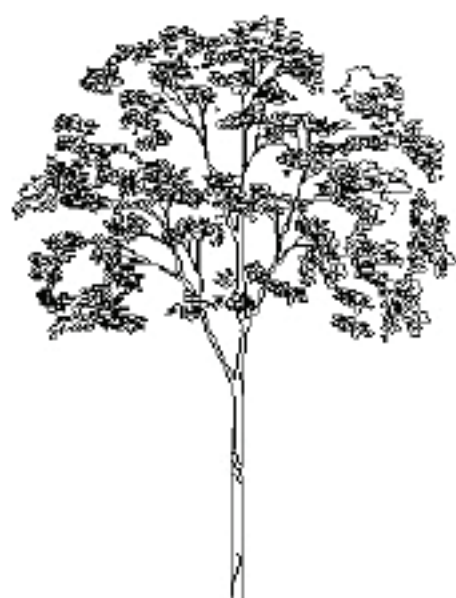
34. While the word “*maq`ad*” carries the meaning of place, it also carries the connotation of time (Razi).

35. But this closeness is not in the sense of measurable distance, but in the sense of status, honor and respect (Razi, Qurtubi).

Qushayri has the following to state at the end of his commentary on this *Surah*:

ويقال: من اشتغل بالدنيا حجبته الدنيا عن الآخرة، ومن أسره نعيم الجنة حجب عن القيام بالحقيقة، ومن قام بالحقيقة شغل عن الكون جملة.

It is said (by the *Sufis*) that he who indulged in this world, this world will veil him from the Hereafter; he who is pleased with the (thought of) pleasures of Paradise, will be prevented from perceiving the ultimate truth; and he who is preoccupied with the ultimate truth, will give cold shoulder to the universe altogether. مَتَّ



Surah 55
*Al-Rahman*¹

Makkan²



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
 THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] The All-merciful.

الرَّحْمَنُ ﴿١﴾

[2] Taught the Qur'ān.

عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ﴿٢﴾

[3] Created Man.

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ﴿٣﴾

[4] Taught him speech.³

عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ﴿٤﴾

1. There are several ways in which this *Surah* is connected with the previous one. One, the previous *Surah* repeatedly warned in words, “So, how were My chastisement and My warnings?” So, as a complimentary, this *Surah* repeatedly asks, “So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?” Two, the previous *Surah* ended by mentioning, “a Sovereign, Omnipotent.” The question arose: who is this Sovereign, Omnipotent? The answer is in the first word of this present *Surah*: He is “the All-merciful.” That is, He is the One whose primary Quality is mercy: He who, out of His mercy, sent down the Qur’ān, the gateway to all kinds of blessings (Au. with points from Razi).

‘Ali is reported to have said that everything has its bride. The Qur’ān’s bride is *Surah al-Rahman* (Qurtubi).

The report has been treated as of Hasan status by the author of Fayd al-Qadir (Au.).

2. Some scholars have thought that this is a Makkan revelation, while others that it is Madinan. Yet others say it has both Makkan and Madinan revelations (Zamakhshari, Shawkani).

3. That is, gave man the power of speech (Razi and others). After having spent millions of dollars and dedicating decades of research, the scientists have finally concluded that

[5] The sun and the moon (are) on a determined course.⁴

الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ ﴿٥﴾

[6] The herbs⁵ and the trees prostrate themselves.⁶

وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ ﴿٦﴾

[7] And the heaven, He raised it up, and set the balance.⁷

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٧﴾

[8] In order that you may not transgress in the balance.

أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ ﴿٨﴾

these dumb animals will not learn how to speak (Au.).

4. That is, they follow a well computed fixed course. Alusi, who died some 150 years ago, mentions at this point that the earlier belief of the scientists was that the sun is stationary. However, recently they have changed their opinion and begun to say that the sun is also on the move. This demonstrates that Alusi kept himself abreast of modern knowledge, because, although scientists knew of the sun's movement around the orbit since around a century ago, it was not in common knowledge until last few decades.

5. The translation follows the understanding of Mujahid, Qatadah (and many late commentators: Au.). "Najm" is used for a stem-less plant that cannot stand tall on its own, such as, for instance, vegetable plants. This was the opinion of Ibn 'Abbas, Sa'id

b. Jubayr and Suddi. Ibn Jarir prefers this opinion. But a few others have understood it in the sense of "star" which is the more popularly known meaning. Commentators are equally divided between the two meanings.

6. That is, they are submitted to Allah's commands.

7. That is, He established justice (Mujahid: Ibn Jarir); without which the universe could not have existed in its present organized form (Alusi).

The second mention of "mizan" in the verse which follows, indicates that the "mizan" of this reference, in this context of cosmic objects, refers to the balance of things noticeable in nature.

It is widely believed that the universe originated with a big bang. Calculations show that had the explosive strength of the big bang been smaller by one in 1060 the Universe would

have collapsed upon itself due to gravitational pull. Had it been bigger by one in 1060 galaxies would not have formed.

There are four forces of nature: the gravitational, the strong (nuclear) force, the weak force and the electromagnetic force. Among these, the gravitational force is the weakest. It is a trillion times weaker than the strong force that keeps the protons in an atom's nucleus together. Yet, it is said that if the gravitational force was stronger by one in 1040 the universe would have collapsed upon itself during the first few microseconds of its formation and there would have been no stars or galaxies. On the other hand, if it was weaker by the same amount, matter would have been flung far and wide and no stars or galaxies would have come into existence. (This balance of forces is different from the balance between them as a combination of four forces, and the power of explosion of the big bang stated above).

On the other hand, if the nuclear force (strong force) was slightly weaker, the nucleus of an atom would disintegrate. So, we would have no atom. Deuterium has one proton stuck to one neutron. Now the sun and other stars use Deute-

rium as a necessary link in a chain of nuclear reaction to keep shining. In contrast, if the strong force was slightly stronger, there would be virtually no hydrogen left in the universe, because two protons would then stick to each other, overcoming the repelling force of the electrical charge, and annihilate one proton to reduce it to a neutron. Thus, only Helium would have existed and no Hydrogen, and, therefore, no water and no other elements.

The balance of forces has been critically managed. If gravity was slightly weaker, or electromagnetism slightly stronger, or the electron slightly less massive compared to the proton, all stars would be red dwarfs (temp. 6000 deg.), not allowing for life to develop. A correspondingly tiny change the other way, and the stars would be blue giants (of about 60,000 deg. temp): also not allowing life to develop. Similarly if the sun was 1.2 times larger, the light output would have not have allowed life to develop. Also, had it been 1.2 times larger, it would have burned up all its fuel and become a red giant in about 4 billion years. The sun is now 5 billion years old, which means there could have been no life without the above balance of forces. Again, if the sun was 20% smaller, it would not

[9] And establish the weights with justice and cut not the measure short.⁸ وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٩﴾

produce enough blue light for plants to make sugar and oxygen efficiently.

The temperature of the sun has also been critically maintained. Its surface temperature is 6000 deg. C. If it is reduced by 1%, life will freeze on earth. If it is increased by 1%, the earth will be too hot for life. In fact, the position of the sun in the Galaxy has itself been precisely determined. At its two-third distance from the galaxy center, it allows for life to exist: closer, and the radiation from the cosmic center would destroy life.

To add to the Design idea, the earth is now in a sphere around the sun called as the Ecosphere. Life can exist only in this sphere. If the earth was closer or at greater distance from the sun, life could not survive.

The entire planetary system around the sun is precariously balanced. Every planet has its function from the position at which it has been placed. Change the position, and you end up in chaos. A scientist, Jacques Lasker, applied a technique called Chaos Mathematics, in which each of the planetary gravitational effects in the solar system is written in an equation

called a differential equation to include many variables. 150,000 such algebraic terms fed to a computer say that they account for the stability and consistency of the orbits of the planets.

The earth's own size is critical. If it was more massive, its core would be too hot. The transfer of heat from the core to the crust would not allow plant life to flourish. Further, the atmospheric pressure would increase, and would not allow for the heart to pull up the blood from the legs, unless the size of the heart was doubled. On the other hand, if the size of the earth is reduced, the gravitational pull would be weaker and the earth would not be able to retain its atmosphere: it would fly off into space. Also, a thinner atmosphere would not be able to protect life on earth from the dangerous radiation of the sun. In fact, there is not a single phenomenon in nature, but whose existence depends precariously balanced on laws and forces of nature (Au.).

8. Although the word is “*mizan*,” the meaning is “*mawzun*”, that is, the thing that is weighed (Razi).

[10] And the earth: He set it up for the creatures.⁹

وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] Therein are fruits and date-palm bearing spathes.

فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ ﴿١١﴾

[12] And the grain along with husk, and fragrant (plants).¹⁰

وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?¹¹

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] He created man out of sounding clay like pottery.¹²

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ ﴿١٤﴾

9. This is how Ibn `Abbas, Hasan, Mujahid and others understood the word “*anam*” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

10. Although “provision” is another meaning of the word “*rayhan*,” most have understood it to mean fragrance or fragrant plants (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Thus, four kinds of means of sustenance have been mentioned: fruits that are eaten for pleasure, staple food for diet, a fruit (date) which is both fruit as well as a staple food, and, finally, fragrance, which is the need of every cultured man (Au.).

11. There is no disagreement among the commentators that by “you two” the allusion is to mankind and Jinn (Au.). The repetitive refrain “So which of the favors of your Lord will

you two deny” points to several favors. Of them some are material, others spiritual, a few apparent, others unapparent, some virtual, others real, a few others both virtual as well as real – in short, each repetition alludes to a new and different favor (Thanwi).

12. Summing up the various statements in the Qur’ān concerning man’s creation, it can be said that he was created – in stages - from,

تراب - طين الازب - حمأ مسنون - صلصلة
كالفخار

“Dust, then a sticky clay, turned into a putrid sticking substance, and that to dried clay like pottery that makes sound when tapped” (Zamakhshari and Qurtubi, slightly modified).

[15] While He created the Jinn from smokeless flame of fire.¹³

وَحَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِّنْ نَّارٍ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] Lord of the two easts and the two wests.¹⁴

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] He let loose the two waters: the two meet together.¹⁵

مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] Between the two is a barrier that they transgress not.¹⁶

بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٢١﴾

13. Another meaning of “*marij*” that Ibn ‘Abbas and some others gave is, “the best of fires.” A third meaning is, “pure fire” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Lit., “*marij*” is for a mixture, and could as well be meaning “a mixture of flames” (Au.).

14. That is, the two easts and two wests of summer and winter (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

15. Ibn ‘Abbas, Sa‘id b. Jubayr and others thought that the allusion by “*bahar*” is to waters, and by “two waters” it is to the waters in the heaven and waters in the earth, that meet together (once every year) - Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir.

16. That is, the two waters preserve their qualities, despite the fact that they meet. But there have been other interpretations. Qatadah and Ibn Zayd however said that the two: sweet and sour do not meet with each other (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). See *Surah Al-Furqan*, ayah 53 for further details.

This non-mixing however, is for a while, long or short. Ultimately of course, if the two waters are side by side, sweet water has to get submerged into the salty water of the sea (Razi).

Knowing, as we do, that the Jinn live on water as well, (where Shaytan spreads his throne), there is possibili-

[22] From the two come forth pearls and coral.¹⁷

يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٢٣﴾

ty that the sweet water, (which maintains its characteristics far across into the sea to be visible for several miles), is useful for the Jinn (Au.).

17. “*Lu’lu*” is for big pearls while “*marjan*” is for the small ones. But Ibn Mas’ud said the latter stands for coral (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). Ibn ‘Abbas said that when it rains on the seas, the drop of rain water that falls into the mouth of a sea-shell becomes a pearl (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). The opinion of Ibn ‘Abbas is in Ibn Abi Hatim and others (Shawkani), and of course there have been other opinions about the identity of “*marjan*.”

Of knowledge that the pearls come from the sea and not rivers, Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir explain that although the pronoun “*minhuma*” covers both sea as well as fresh water, the allusion is only to one, just as in verse (71: 15-16) which says,

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا وَجَعَلَ
الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا

“Have they not observed how Allah has created the seven heavens in lay-

ers and placed among them the moon as a light.” Here too, Allah used the plural pronoun, lending the meaning that Allah placed a moon in each of the seven firmaments, while, as we know, the moon is found in our firmament alone. There are other examples of such usage. Even the usually well-informed Razi and Alusi offer the same explanation, while the latter uses a whole page to discuss why Allah used a noun in dual to include both sea as well as freshwater as sources of pearls and corals while they are extracted from seas alone. Mawdudi adds the possibility that since the sea water contains both alkaline as well as fresh water, the usage is literally correct.

But the Qur’ān comes on top. Perhaps, until recent times pearls were obtained from seas alone. However, latest information tells us that pearls are found in fresh water also. *The Grzimek’s Animal Encyclopedia* has the following to state (under Unionideas): “Freshwater mussels in the temperate zone of the Northern Hemisphere have produced pearls

[24] And His are the ships sailing elevated in the sea, like the landmarks.¹⁸

وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ

﴿٢٤﴾

[25] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] Everyone on it will perish.¹⁹

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] But there will remain the Face of your Lord,²⁰ possessed of Majesty and Bounty.²¹

وَيَبْقَى وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

﴿٢٧﴾

of great value, as for example those from the Mississippi River.” And, “Members of the marine Pteriidae and freshwater Unionoidea have been sources of natural pearls and mother-of-pearl shell for centuries.” The Encyclopedia Britannica states the following under “pearls”: “Pearls are characterized by their translucence and luster and by a delicate play of surface colour called orient. The more perfect its shape (spherical or drop like) and the deeper its luster, the greater its value. Only those pearls produced by mollusks whose shells are lined with mother-of-pearl (e.g., certain species of both saltwater oysters and freshwater clams) are really fine pearls; pearls from other mollusks are reddish or whitish, porcellaneous, or lacking in pearly luster. Jewelers commonly refer to saltwater pearls as Oriental pearls and to those produced by freshwater mollusks as freshwater pearls” (Au.).

As always, the *Shi'ah* have a queer explanation. According to one of their reports, ‘Ali and Fatimah are two waters (bahran) from whom issued Hasan and Hussain who are pearl and coral (*lu'lu* and *marjan*). After noting above, Alusi adds that although to him Hasan and Hussain are dearer than *Lu'lu'* and *marjaan*, the interpretation is a piece of nonsense.

18. It is said that once ‘Ali was by the shore of River Furat when a ship passed by. He remarked, “By Him who makes this ship plough through the water, neither did I kill ‘Uthman nor did the thought ever occur to me (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

19. “On it,” i.e., on the earth.

20. There is isn't any difference in opinion that by “the Face” the allusion is to the Person of Allah, Most High.

[28] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٢٨﴾

[29] All who are in the heavens or the earth implore Him.²² Every day He is in an endeavor.²³

يَسْأَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٣٠﴾

21. "Ikram: two ideas are prominent in the word, (1) the idea of generosity, as proceeding from the person whose attribute it is, and (2) the idea of honour, as given by others to the person whose attribute it is. Both these ideas are summed up in 'nobility'. To make the meaning quite clear, I have employed in the translation the two words 'Bounty and Honour' for the single word ikram. The same attributes recur in the last verse of this *Surah*. In the Fact of Allah's Eternity is the Hope of our Future" (Yusuf Ali).

The Prophet has told us to appeal in supplications by these Attributes of Allah (Kashshaf, Qurtubi):

أَلْطُؤُوا بِنَاذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

The report has been preserved by many, including Ahmad and Hakim, the latter treating it as trustworthy following the conditions laid down by Bukhari and Muslim. However, Tirmidhi declared it weak (Au.).

22. Qatadah said: None can regard himself as free of Him and His bestowal, whether in the heavens or on the earth. Everyone depends on Him and seeks His help and support, the source of all good (Ibn Jarir). Hence the reported supplicatory words (*du'a ma'thura*):

يا حي، يا قيوم، يا بديع السموات والأرض، يا ذا الجلال والإكرام، لا إله إلا أنت، برحمتك نستغيث، أصلح لنا شأننا كله، ولا تكلنا إلى أنفسنا طرفة عين، ولا إلى أحد من خلقك

"O the Living, the Self-subsisting by whom all subsist, O the Originator of the heavens and the earth, O the Majestic, the Splendid, there is no deity save You, by Your mercy do we seek Your aid: set right our affairs; do not leave (our affair) to depend on ourselves for a moment, nor upon anyone of Your creation" (Ibn Kathir).

For example, if Allah had so designed the human tongue that it moved only

on specific commands, they would eat off their tongues, placing it between the teeth at the wrong moment. If the tongue moves around a hundred times during a minute, shifting material to be chewed, but never getting hurt it is because Allah has not left us dependent upon ourselves in this regard (Au.).

23. It is said (Muqatil: Alusi) that this was revealed in response to Jewish claims that Allah takes rest on Saturdays (Kashshaf).

Mujahid and `Abd b. `Umayr remarked: Every day He is in a new affair: feeding the creations, removing their affliction, curing the sick and answering to the call of the callers. Qatadah added: Adding new creations, dealing death to others, and giving shape to new creations.

A *hadith* is also quoted in this regard:

عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - فِي قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى (كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ). قَالَ « مِنْ شَأْنِهِ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ ذَنْبًا وَيُفَرِّجَ كَرْبًا وَيَرْفَعَ قَوْمًا وَيَخْفِضَ آخَرِينَ ».

Abu Darda' reports that when the Prophet was asked about the meaning of this verse he said, "It is part of His affairs that He forgives the sin, removes the affliction, allows ascendancy to a people, and brings down others"

(Ibn Jarir, Kashshaf, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

However, Bukhari treated the above words as those of Abu Darda' (Ibn Kathir). But a shorter version has been treated as *Sahih* by Albani (S.Ibrahim).

Majid looks at a wider aspect: "God is thus not only the Creator of the universe but also its Sustainer every moment of its existence. The entire cosmic order is ever dependent on His will, incapable of sustaining and developing itself and performing its works, without His aid, in virtue of its own inherent energies, and creation is not an act of the past combining automatically: His creative activity is incessant. This refutes the Hindu doctrine that Brahma, having performed his legitimate past in the mundane evolution by his original creation of the universe has retired into the background.' (EBr. xi. P. 577) This also repudiates the mechanistic concept of deism, which limits the divine activity to creation of the world and denies to Him any direct contact with His creation and also the Greek idea which states that God is static, and aloof from the world. A Christian scholar sums up the position of the orthodox Muslim theologian thus: - 'He regards the world

and all the events in the world as a perpetual miracle – a miracle always and consistently going on. It is not only that, by a creative miracle, the world was brought into existence... but all through the existence of the world – from moment to moment – there is this miraculous creation going on... When fire burns or when a knife cuts, that is not by any nature in the fire, or a quality of the knife. The cutting and the being cut, the burning and the being burned, are all by Allah. The burning and its direct effects are the direct creations of Allah.’ (Macdonald, *Aspects of Islam*, pp. 137-139).”

Zamakhshari’s following note should set a few minds at rest. ‘Abdullah b. Tahir sent for Husayn b. al-Fadl and said to him: Three verses worry me and I have called you to help me out. (i) Allah’s words:

فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ النَّادِمِينَ [المائدة/٣١]

“Then he became of those remorseful.” (This is about Habil who murdered Qabil: Au.).

Now, said ‘Abdullah b. Tahir, remorse is nothing but repentance, so why was he punished?

Then again, (ii) His words,

وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى [النجم/٣٩]

“There is nothing for man but that for which he strives.”

But, said ‘Abdullah b. Tahir, if there is nothing for man in the Hereafter, beyond what he earned, then, what is the meaning of Allah’s words which promise several-fold rewards?

Again, (iii) His words,

كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ [الرحمن/٢٩]

“Everyday He is in an endeavor.”

Now, asked ‘Abdullah b. Tahir, is it not true that all that has to be until the Day of Judgment has been penned down. So, how do we understand Allah being in any fresh endeavor?

Husayn al-Fadl answered him: As for the verse,

فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ النَّادِمِينَ [المائدة/٣١]

- the remorse was not over the death of his brother, but over the fact that he had attacked him at all.

(Imām Razi points out that his remorse was on account of the fact that after he had left his brother’s corpse in the open, he witnessed the fight of the two ravens, one killing another, and burying it. He felt remorseful that he hadn’t been as considerate with his brother’s corpse as the raven had been for the dead raven).

[31] Soon We shall be free for you,²⁴ O the two heavy ones.²⁵

سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ أَيُّهَا الثَّقَلَانِ ﴿٣١﴾

[32] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٣٢﴾

Another explanation is that “*nadamah*” had different requirements and connotations in different nations of the past. This was not the “*nadamah*” of repentance which could wipe out sins. In some ways Allah has treated this *Ummah* as a special people: a status others do not share with it. As regards the words,

وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى [النجم/٣٩]

- the reward of “one for one” is following Allah’s “*adl*” (justice), while a thousand times more reward is following His “*fadl*” (grace). Finally, with regard to the words,

كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ [الرحمن/٢٩]

- the allusion is not to beginning of the affairs or endeavors, but to bringing them to light, in Arabic:

فإنها شؤون يبيديها لا شؤون يبتدئها

24. The allusion is to mankind and Jinn (Ibn Jarir, Kashshaf and others). The word has been used for men and Jinn in *ahadith* also (Ibn Kathir). Ja’far al-Sadiq is reported to have said that they have been so called because they are heavily load-

ed with sins. Further, this *Surah* and *Surah al-Ahqaf*, supported by a few other Qur’anic verses, prove that the Jinn have also been addressed by the Prophet. They are just like the humans in this regard (Qurtubi).

They could have been so called because (i) both men and Jinn can attempt and achieve what no other creation can, and (ii) both have been given freedom of choice and are, therefore, difficult to move out of their opinions, especially in matters related to their Lord, where their adamancy runs to a supreme degree (Au.).

To help understand the meaning of the word “*thaqal*”, Mufti Shafi’ writes: A *hadith* says,

إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمْ الثَّقَلَيْنِ أَحَدُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْآخَرِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ حَبْلٌ مَمْدُودٌ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَعِثْرَتِي أَهْلُ بَيْتِي وَإِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَى الْخَوْضِ

“I am leaving behind me two weighty things, one of which is heavier than the other: (i) Allah’s Book which is the rope extended from the heaven to the earth, and (ii) my kinsfolk. And the two will

[33] O the company of Jinn and men! If you can pass through the confines of the heavens and the earth, then pass through. You will not pass through except with an authority.²⁶

يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ
تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
فَانْفُذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٣٤﴾

never part until they come to the Pond.”

Sho`ayb al-Arna`ut remarked that although the narrative is weak (so said Tirmidhi himself), but it draws strength from other reports of similar meaning. However, the part which says, “And the two will never part until they come to the Pond,” is definitely weak (Au.).

There are other *ahadith* that speak of the importance of the Qur`ān and *Sunnah* that the Prophet left behind, although he did not employ the word “*thaqal*” in them. At all events, “*thaqal*” is used for anything heavy, important, or prominent (Au.).

25. Ibn `Abbas said that this is only a manner of threat, otherwise, Allah is never occupied (in such a way as not to be free for another affair) – Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir.

Bukhari said that being engaged in an affair does not prevent Him from taking up another (Ibn Kathir).

26. Dahhak’s opinion was that the allusion is to the Day of Judgment when the criminals would like to flee but will find seven rows of angels on the horizons stationed as barriers. But Ibn `Abbas preferred the simpler meaning that men and Jinn can never escape out of Allah’s domain, hold, and power (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi); which includes heavens and the earth, as well as His decrees: Zamakhshari); and His punishment (Razi).

Mufti Shafi` points out that the verse cannot be related to space travel either in negative or in positive.

A major problem in space is the distance. Traveling at the speed at which they do in space, about 10 km per second, humans will need 135,000 years to reach the next star; which, by cosmic standards, is as close to the sun as two bacterium within a dot. To cross their own Milky Way Galaxy, humans will need 3,000,000,000 (3 billion) years. And how many

[35] Against you will be let loose a flame of Fire²⁷ and (molten) copper;²⁸ and then you will not be able to defend yourselves.²⁹

يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شُوَاظٌ مِّن نَّارٍ وَنُحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرَانِ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٣٦﴾

galaxies are there? Billions. What is the space between galaxies? It is, in terms of travel distance, billions of years. And, finally, there are areas that humans can never reach, even if they travel at the speed of light, because those areas are receding at the same rate at which light travels. Thus, humans can never pass through the confines of the heavens. Far from that, they will never know where those confines are. Now, that was about the borders of the heavens. The situation with the confines of the earth is not any brighter since its confines are ultimately the confines of the Solar system – its own confines being inseparable. To cross the Solar system's gravitational pull will need several decades of travel, for which, (apart from length of human life, repair and maintenance of the craft, food supply, etc.), carrying the fuel is an insurmountable problem (unless a huge nuclear re-

actor is lifted into space: an impossibility by any measure). But, more importantly, the address is to the entire humanity, not to a few individuals, ready for suicide, sent into deep space. Humanity in general, is shackled to this earth (Au.).

27. Most of the scholars have said that “*shuwaz*” is used for that blue flame that breaks out of a fire while a few others have thought that it is used for smoke (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

28. Regarding “*nuhas*” the opinion is split. The Arabs use it for “smoke that is not accompanied by flame” as well as for “molten copper” (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

29. (Alternatively, or perhaps additionally), the two: men and Jinn will not be able to help each other (Qurtubi).

[37] Then, when the heaven splits open, and it will be crimson (in color)³⁰ - like oil.³¹

فَإِذَا انشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً
كَالدِّهَانِ ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٣٨﴾

[39] Then, that day none will be questioned concerning his sins, neither men nor Jinn.³²

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذَنْبِهِ إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ
﴿٣٩﴾

[40] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٤٠﴾

[41] The criminals will be known by their marks³³ and so shall be seized by their forelocks and their feet.³⁴

يُعَرَّفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ
بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأَفْدَامِ ﴿٤١﴾

30. Actually, the heavens will undergo several changes in appearance: appearing red, blue, yellow and so on in different phases of destruction (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

The Prophet has also informed us, as in a report preserved by Ahmad,

يُبْعَثُ النَّاسُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَالسَّمَاءُ تَطِشُ عَلَيْهِمْ (رواه أحمد وأبو يعلى وفيه عبد الرحمن بن أبي الصهباء ذكره ابن أبي حاتم ولم يذكر فيه جرحاً وبقية رجاله ثقات - الهيثمي في الزوائد)

“People will be raised on the Day of Standing while the heaven sends down a drizzle (for a little while)” – Ibn Kathir.

Haythami treated the report as somewhat trustworthy (Au.).

31. There are two opinions about “*dihan*.” (i) “Shining bright” and (ii), “leather” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

32. That is, they will not be questioned about their sins: did you do this? Or, did you do that? But rather, they would be questioned as to why did they ever do it (Shawkani quoting Ibn Abi Hatim).

33. The angels (as well as others) will know the unbelievers from their eyes turned blue (out of fear) and faces turned dark (Ibn Jarir from the earliest commentators).

34. Suddi said that the criminals will have their heads bound together close to their feet (Kashshaf, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

[42] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٤٢﴾

[43] This is the Jahannum that the criminals laid the lie against.

هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

[44] They shall go round between it and between scalding water (heated to the) utmost degree.

يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ آتٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

[45] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?³⁵

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٤٥﴾

[46] And for him who feared³⁶ standing before his Lord, are two gardens.³⁷

وَلِمَنْ خَافَ رَّبَّهُ جَنَّاتٍ ﴿٤٦﴾

[47] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٤٧﴾

[48] Abounding in branches.

ذَوَاتَا أَفْنَانٍ ﴿٤٨﴾

[49] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٤٩﴾

[50] In both running springs.

فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ تَجْرِيَانِ ﴿٥٠﴾

[51] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٥١﴾

35. But what's the favor in being bound, cast into Hell, and treated with boiling water? The answer is, it consists in mankind and Jinn being warned beforehand. The favor also consists in the virtuous ones informed that the criminals will be locked up away from them, and punished for the wrong they freely and sadistically committed upon them during the earthly life (Au.).

36. The word used here is "*khawf*" which is for fear arising from one's feeling of powerlessness against another, while "*khashyah*" is for fear arising out of the greatness of him that one fears or is overawed by. Both "*khawf*" as well as "*khashyah*" have been fittingly used in reference to man's fear of Allah (Razi).

Raghib has said: When *khawf* is used in reference to Allah, it does not refer to the kind of fear that one feels

against, say, a lion, but rather, it amounts to abstaining from sinful deeds and inclination towards good deeds. Hence it is said:

لا يعد خائفاً من لم يكن للذنوب تاركاً

One is not counted as fearful, if he does not give up sins (Alusi).

37. Note that in the previous verse two kinds of torture were mentioned for the sinners. Here they are contrasted with two gardens for the faithful (Razi).

A report has been preserved which says,

عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ النَّبِيَّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- وَهُوَ يَقُصُّ عَلَى الْمَنَبَرِ (وَلَمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٍ) فَقُلْتُ وَإِنْ زَنَى وَإِنْ سَرَقَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- الثَّانِيَةَ (وَلَمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٍ) فَقُلْتُ الثَّانِيَةَ وَإِنْ زَنَى وَإِنْ سَرَقَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- الثَّالِثَةَ (وَلَمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٍ) فَقُلْتُ الثَّالِثَةَ وَإِنْ زَنَى وَإِنْ سَرَقَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ «تَعَمْ وَإِنْ رَغِمَ أَنْفُ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ». - ورجال أحمد الصحيح: مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد

Abu Darda' reports that he heard the Prophet speak from the pulpit quoting this verse, '*And for him who feared standing before his Lord, are two gardens.*' I asked, 'Messenger of Allah, even if he fornicated and stole?' He answered, '*And for him who feared standing before his Lord, are two*

gardens.' I repeated a second time, 'Even if he fornicated and stole?' He said a third time, '*And for him who feared standing before his Lord, are two gardens.*' I repeated a third time, 'Even if he fornicated and stole, O Messenger of Allah?' He answered, 'Yes, even if Abu Darda dislikes it.'

Nevertheless, it is also reported as a statement of Abu Dardaa' who added his personal note that, "If someone feared he will certainly not fornicate or steal" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

The report is in Ahmad treated trustworthy by Haythami (Au.).

On another occasion when this statement "even if he fornicated and stole" was made before Zuhri, he remarked, "This was in the early stages before the obligations (*fara'id*) were revealed. After they were revealed, the statement has become defunct." (Shawkani).

But the main part is also in *Sahihayn*, Ahmad, and others, coming through Abu Dharr, but without reference to the "two gardens." Abu Hurayrah also reported something similar; and the majority is of the opinion that a believer could be ushered into Paradise despite his sins – by Allah's special grace; but the general rule is that he is likely to face punishment for

[52] In both every kind of fruit - two kinds.³⁸

فِيهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ زَوْجَانِ ﴿٥٢﴾

[53] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٥٣﴾

[54] Reclining on carpets whose inner-lining is brocade;³⁹ and fruits of the two gardens in close reach.

مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَى فُرُشٍ بَطَائِنُهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ
وَجَنَى الْجَنَّتَيْنِ دَانٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

[55] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٥٥﴾

[56] Therein (maidens) gazing low.⁴⁰ Untouched before them by any human or Jinn.⁴¹

فِيهِنَّ قَاصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ إِنْسٌ
قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٥٦﴾

[57] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٥٧﴾

his sins before entry, especially, sins against his own kind (Au.).

38. "Two kinds:" i.e., different in shape, color, smell and taste.

39. If the inner lining is brocade, what do you think of the beauty of the outer material? (Ibn Jarir from the *Salaf*).

40. Mujahid, Qatadah and Ibn Zayd explained "*qaasirat ut-tarfi*" as meaning those who will not look up to anyone but their spouses (Ibn Jarir – and most commentators); i.e., they are chaste, virtuous ones (Razi).

41. Majid comments and quotes: "Christian writers look askance, and almost in horror, at passages like this. And quite naturally. For in the system of Christian morals sex life is

conceived as something inherently evil, at best only to be tolerated. This morbid attitude to life 'has appeared only with the advent of the black Christian era.' Islam has reversed this diseased outlook. It holds, freely and frankly, with the modern scientific knowledge that sexual life is 'the source of the highest joy for which there is no substitute. It is the supreme and incomparable physiological happiness, which should be nursed and treasured, and not persecuted.'...Sex life is not at all a tolerated evil, difficult to escape, but... a great blessing, without which life is colorless. The sexual element in human existence must be valued and treasured.' (Nemilov, opp. cit. pp. 200-201)."

[58] As if they are rubies and coral.⁴²

كَأْتَهُنَّ الْيَاقُوتُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٥٨﴾

[59] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٥٩﴾

[60] Is the recompense for goodness anything but goodness?⁴³

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ﴿٦٠﴾

This *ayah* has been used as evidence that the Jinn will enter the same Paradise as humans (Ibn Jarir).

42. The Prophet is reported by Ibn Mas'ud as having said,

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- قَالَ « إِنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ مِنْ نِسَاءِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ لَيُرَى بَيَاضُ سَاقِهَا مِنْ وَرَاءِ سَبْعِينَ خَلَّةً حَتَّى يَرَى مَخْطُهَا وَذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَقُولُ (كَأْتَهُنَّ الْيَاقُوتُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ) فَأَمَّا الْيَاقُوتُ فَإِنَّهُ حَجَرٌ لَوْ أَدْخَلْتَ فِيهِ سِلْكَ لَمْ اسْتَصْفَيْتَهُ لِأَرِيئِهِ مِنْ وَرَائِهِ ».

“The whiteness of the shank of women of the dwellers of Paradise will be visible from behind seventy shrouds. Even the bone-marrow will be visible. This is following Allah’s words, ‘As if they are rubies and corals.’ As for rubies, they are precious stones. If you inserted a thread through it, and then cleansed it, you will see it from the other side,” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi); i.e. it is transparent.

However, Tirmidhi reports it as a statement of Ibn Mas'ud (Ibn Kathir).

The Prophet is also reported to have said, as in Muslim and other works that,

« إِنَّ أَوَّلَ زُمْرَةٍ تَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ عَلَى صُورَةِ الْقَمَرِ لَيَلَّةُ الْبَدْرِ وَالَّتِي تَلِيهَا عَلَى أَضْوَاءِ كَوْكَبٍ ذُرِّيٍّ فِي السَّمَاءِ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ زَوْجَتَانِ اثْنَتَانِ يَرَى مُخُ سَوْفَهُمَا مِنْ وَرَاءِ اللَّحْمِ وَمَا فِي الْجَنَّةِ أَعَزُّبُ ».

“The first group to enter Paradise will have faces like the full moon. Those who follow them will shine like the brightest star in the heaven. Each of them will have two spouses. The bone-marrow of their legs will be visible from beyond the flesh. And, there will be no bachelors in Paradise” (Ibn Kathir).

43. Imām Razi points out that this *ayah*, along with two others, is so rich of meaning that it can be explained in a hundred ways. The other two verses of the same nature are:

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ [البقرة/١٥٢]

and,

وَإِنْ عُدْتُمْ عَدُنَا [الإسراء/٨]

[61] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَيَأْتِي آلَاءَ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٦١﴾

[62] And, besides the two,⁴⁴ there are two more gardens.⁴⁵

وَمِنْ دُونِهِمَا جَنَّتَانِ ﴿٦٢﴾

To further explain the *ayah*, we take the following from Bayhaqi's *Shu'ab al-Iman* for its brevity. Abu Sa'd al-Khazzaz is reported to have said in explanation of this verse:

عن أبي سعيد الخزاز: (هل جزاء الإحسان إلا الإحسان) « هل جزاء من انقطع عن نفسه إلا التعلق بربه ؟ وهل جزاء من انقطع عن أنس المخلوقين إلا الأُنس برب العالمين ؟ وهل جزاء من صبر علينا إلا الوصول إلينا ؟ .. وهل جزاء التعب في الدنيا والنصب فيها إلا الراحة في الآخرة ؟ وهل جزاء من صبر على البلوى إلا التقرب إلى المولى ؟ وهل جزاء من سلم قلبه إلينا أن نجعل توليته إلى غيرنا ؟ وهل جزاء من بعد عن الخلق إلا التقرب إلى الحق ؟ « - شعب الإيمان للبيهقي - (ج ١ / ص ٤٩٣)

“Is the reward for him who severed himself from his own self, but a connection with his Lord? Is the reward of him who cut himself from the created beings, anything but affinity with his Lord? Is the reward of him who bore patience for Our sake, but that he should reach Us?.. Is the reward of hardships in the world and difficulties in it except rest and comfort in the Hereafter? Is the reward for him who bore

in patience the tribulations, but closeness with his Lord? Is the reward of him who submitted his heart that he should be handed over to other than Us? And, is the reward of distancing oneself from the creations but proximity with the Truth?” (Au.)

44. “Besides the two,” i.e., more illustrious than the two (Zamakhshari, Razi).

45. (Bukhari, Muslim and others have preserved) a tradition in this context:

عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرٍ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ قَيْسٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَ « جَنَّتَانِ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ ، أُنِيَتْهُمَا وَمَا فِيهِمَا وَجَنَّتَانِ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ أُنِيَتْهُمَا وَمَا فِيهِمَا ، وَمَا بَيْنَ الْقَوْمِ وَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا رِذَاءُ الْكَبِيرِ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ فِي جَنَّةٍ عَدْنٍ »

The Prophet said, “Two gardens made of silver, along with the utensils and all that there is; and two gardens of gold with their utensils and all that there is. And, there will not be anything between their Lord and them seeing Him except His shroud of

[63] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٦٣﴾

[64] Dense green.

مُدْهَامَتَانِ ﴿٦٤﴾

[65] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٦٥﴾

[66] In them two fountains gushing forth.

فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ نَضَّخَتَانِ ﴿٦٦﴾

[67] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٦٧﴾

[68] In the two are fruits, date-palm trees, and pomegranates.⁴⁶

فِيهِمَا فَاكِيهَةٌ وَنَخْلٌ وَرُمَّانٌ ﴿٦٨﴾

[69] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٦٩﴾

[70] In them are the good and comely ones.

فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَاتٌ حِسَانٌ ﴿٧٠﴾

[71] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٧١﴾

[72] Fair ones,⁴⁷ restrained⁴⁸ in pavilions.⁴⁹

حُورٌ مَّقْصُورَاتٌ فِي الْخِيَامِ ﴿٧٢﴾

Greatness on His Face, in the everlasting Paradise” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Hajr has traced another version in which the words are as follows:

جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ لِلْمُغْرَبِينَ وَمِنْ دُونِهِمَا جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ
وَرَقٍ لِأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ” (أَخْرَجَهُ الطَّبْرِيُّ وَابْنُ أَبِي
حَاتِمٍ وَرَجَّاهُ ثِقَاتٌ)

“Those will be two gardens of gold for those ‘brought nigh,’ and two gardens of silver for those of the ‘right hand side’” (Au.).

46. Aren’t dates and pomegranates included in fruits that they should be

mentioned separately? Alusi answers that the two are different from the rest. Although date is a fruit, it is also used as a staple diet. On the other hand, pomegranates are fruits as well as useful for their medicinal value. Alusi adds later that one of them is warm for the body (dates) while the other is cold; one of them is always sweet while the other sweet-sour, one’s tree is tall but less branched while the other short, well spread.

47. (In his “*Al-Nihayah fi Gharib...*” Ibn al-Athir has defined “*howra*” (pl.: “*hur*”) as a maiden with ex-

[73] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٧٣﴾

[74] Untouched⁵⁰ before them⁵¹ by any human or Jinn.⁵²

لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٧٤﴾

[75] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٧٥﴾

tremely white eye-ball, and an extremely dark iris (Alusi).

48. That is, they are concealed behind curtains. In other words, those who remain within their bridal canopies, do not look at anyone other than their spouses, and have no wish to be loitering around in the streets (Ibn Jarir from the *Salaf*).

49. Those will be huge pearls chipped hollow (Ibn Jarir from the *Salaf* such as `Umar ibn al-Khattab, `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and others).

There is a *hadith* to this effect. It is in the *Sahihayn* and other collections. It says,

« إِنَّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ حَيْمَةً مِنْ لؤلؤةٍ مَجُوفَةٍ ، عَرْضُهَا سِتُونَ مِيلاً ، فِي كُلِّ زَاوِيَةٍ مِنْهَا أَهْلٌ ، مَا يَرَوْنَ الْآخَرِينَ يَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ »

“There is a tent in Paradise of width 60 miles, made of hollow pearl. In its every corner are (a believer’s) family-folk – none able to see others. The believer will

visit them in rounds” (Shawkani, Alusi).

50. The original word “*tamatha*” is used for deflowering a virgin. A second meaning is that it is those who have never experienced menstruation (Qurtubi). And, the *ayah* leads us to believe that sexual intercourse is part of the life of the Jinn (Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi). Some scholars contend that the verse opens the possibility of Jinn’s intercourse with humans in this life (Qurtubi).

It is reported that some people wrote to Imām Malik that there was a Jinn who wished to marry a Muslim woman. He answered that he did not see anything wrong in it except that he would not like to encourage such an arrangement for the reason that if a woman is found pregnant and asked who the father was, she would reply, “A Jinn.”

That apart, the majority of scholars – such as Abu Yusuf, Muhammad, Ibn Abi Layla, Awzaa`ee, have said that

they are also liable to rewards and punishments and will enter Paradise or Hellfire (Alusi).

51. "Before them," i.e., before the dwellers of Paradise (Zamakhshari).

52. The Prophet has said about the women in Paradise:

”إن أزواج الجنة ليغنين أزواجهن بأحسن أصوات سمعها أحد قط، إن مما يغنين: نحن الخيرات الحسان، أزواج قوم كرام. ينظرن بقرة أعيان. وإن مما يغنين به: نحن الخالدات فلا نمتنه، نحن الآمات فلا يخفنه، نحن المقيمات فلا يظعنه“.

رواه الطبراني في الصغير والأوسط ورجاله رجال الصحيح. (مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

“Women in Paradise sing with the best of voices ever heard by anyone. Of what they sing: ‘We are the most splendid beautiful ones, spouses of the honored ones.’ They look around with cooling sights. And of the things they sing, ‘We are everlasting’ – so they will not die. ‘We are the peaceful ones’ – so they will not disappoint him. ‘We are stayers’ – so they will not go away.”

Haythami declared the above trustworthy (Au.).

Alusi quotes a shorter form of the following *hadith* as found in Ahmad, Hakim and *Sahih* of Ibn Hibban (in varying words) through Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri. The Prophet said,

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- قَالَ « إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَتَكَبَّرُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ سَبْعِينَ سَنَةً قَبْلَ أَنْ يَتَحَوَّلَ ثُمَّ تَأْتِيهِ أَفْرَأَتُهُ فَتَضْرِبُ عَلَى مَنْكِبَيْهِ فَيَنْظُرُ وَجْهَهُ فِي خَدِّهَا أَصْفَى مِنَ الْمِرْآةِ وَإِنَّ أَدْنَى لُؤْلُؤٍ عَلَيْهَا تُضِيءُ مَا بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ فَتُسَلِّمُ عَلَيْهِ. قَالَ فَيَرُدُّ السَّلَامَ وَيَسْأَلُهَا مَنْ أَنْتِ وَتَقُولُ أَنَا مِنَ الْمَزِيدِ. وَإِنَّهُ لَيَكُونُ عَلَيْهَا سَبْعُونَ ثَوْبًا أَذْنَاهَا مِثْلُ النُّعْمَانِ مِنْ طُوبَى فَيَنْقُدُّهَا بَصَرُهُ حَتَّى يَرَى مِخَّ سَاقِهَا مِنْ وَرَاءِ ذَلِكَ وَإِنَّ عَلَيْهَا مِنَ التَّيْجَانِ إِنْ أَدْنَى لُؤْلُؤٍ عَلَيْهَا لَتُضِيءُ مَا بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ »

“A man will remain resting in one position for seventy years in Paradise before making another move. Then his spouse will come and touch him on the shoulder. He will look into her cheek, clearer than a mirror; and the simplest of pearl on her will make the east and west shine. She will greet him. He will return her greeting and ask her, ‘Who could you be?’ She will say, ‘I am the “more [ma-zid]” (that had been promised).’ She will have seventy clothes on her. The simplest of them will be like a very special cloth. Then the man will cast a glance at her and see the bone-marrow of her leg through them. She will have a crown on her head of which the simplest of pearl will make the east and the west shine.”

[76] Reclining on green cushions and rich beautiful carpets.⁵³

مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَى رَفْرَفٍ خُضْرٍ وَعَبْقَرِيٍّ حِسَانٍ ﴿٧٦﴾

[77] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٧٧﴾

[78] Blessed is the Name of your Lord, the possessor of Majesty and Bounty.⁵⁴

تَبَارَكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ﴿٧٨﴾

Majid quotes Gibbon: "This description of physical pleasures in Paradise," says Gibbon, "has provoked the indignation, perhaps the envy, of the monks: they declaim against the impure religion of Mahomet; and his modest apologists are driven to the poor excuses of figures and allegories. But the sounder and the more consistent party adhere, without shame, to the literal interpretation of the Koran; useless would be the resurrection of the body, unless it were restored to the possession and exercises of its worthiest faculties; and the union of sensual and intellectual enjoyment is requisite to complete the happiness of the double animal, the perfect man." (GRE, V. p. 351).

53. The word "*abqariyy*" is made up of two words: "*abqar*" (meaning: a place where the Jinn were supposed to live) and "*qaryah*" (meaning: village or town). Combining the two, it became synonymous with every person who is highly powerful, tal-

ented, and able, evoking wonder; or a thing of remarkably high qualities (Kashshaf, Razi, Qurtubi, Shawkani, in different words).

However, there are several other explanations for the word "*abqariyy*" – as, naturally, of most of the adjectives used in connection with Paradise or the Fire, in this *Surah* (Au.).

54. Ibn Kathir notes: All the six *hadith* works except Bukhari have a *hadith* to this effect:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- إِذَا سَلَّمَ لَمْ يَقْعُدْ إِلَّا مَقْدَارَ مَا يَقُولُ

On the authority of `A'isha, "After the Prophet had finished his Prayers, he would hardly tarry except for the time required to say:

«اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ السَّلَامُ وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ تَبَارَكْتَ ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ». وَفِي رِوَايَةِ ابْنِ مُمَرٍّ «يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ».

That is, these were the words the Prophet invariably said after every Prayer, before rising. ۞

Surah 56
*Al-Waqi`ah*¹

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
 THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] When the Occurrence occurs.²

إِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ﴿١﴾

[2] And, there is no denying its occurrence.³

لَيْسَ لَوْفَعَتِهَا كَاذِبَةٌ ﴿٢﴾

[3] Abasing (some), raising (others).⁴

خَافِضَةٌ رَّافِعَةٌ ﴿٣﴾

[4] When the earth is rocked, rockingly.

إِذَا رُجَّتِ الْأَرْضُ رَجًا ﴿٤﴾

[5] And the mountains are crushed, crushingly.

وَبُسَّتِ الْجِبَالُ بَسًا ﴿٥﴾

1. Ibn Kathir quotes a *hadith* from Tirmidhi which Tirmidhi declared weak. However, another version is found in Tabarani's collection which Haythami declared as carrying narrators of *Sahih* works:

عن أبي بكر قال: قلت: يا رسول الله لقد أسرع إليك الشيب؟ قال: "شيبتي الواقعة و{عم يتساءلون} و{إذا الشمس كورت}." (رواه الطبراني ورجال الصحيح - الهيثمي).

Abu Bakr says I said to the Prophet, "Oldness seems to be hastening upon you." He replied, "*Surah al-Waqi`ah*, *Surah al-Naba'* and *Surah al-Takweer* have hastened old age on me" (Au.).

However, *ahadith* that mention the recitation of this *Surah* as cure for poverty, are weak (Au.).

2. That is, when the Hour strikes.

3. Alternatively, no soul will, at that moment, deny it; or deny other Unseen affairs that it denies now (Zamakhshari).

4. I.e., raising those who were lowly – but righteous in this world – over and above many self-conceited ones of this world, ushering them high into Paradise, while debasing others; i.e., the self-conceited ones of this world, casting them low into Hell-fire (Au.).

[6] Then it shall be (like) scattered dust.⁵

فَكَانَتْ هَبَاءً مُنْبَثًّا ﴿٦﴾

[7] And you shall be three kinds.⁶

وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً ﴿٧﴾

[8] So, as for the Companions of the Right .. what of the Companions of the Right?!

﴿٨﴾

[9] And the Companions of the Left; what of the Companions of the Left?!

وَأَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ ﴿٩﴾

5. “Habaa” is for that spark which shoots out of fire and dies out in a moment (Ibn Jarir, Shawkani). When it rises, you see it as something, but when it falls, it leaves no trace of itself (Qurtbi).

6. This *Ayah* has its parallel in another verse of the Qur’an:

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ
يُؤْذِنُ اللَّهُ [فاطر/٣٢]

“Then We gave the Book in inheritance to such of Our servants as We chose. Of them are some who wrong their own souls, and of them some who are on the middle course, while some who are, by Allah’s grace, outrunners in good deeds.” Thus, the division into three groups echoes in this verse also (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

That is how the people will be divided on the Judgment day: (i) Some on the right side of the ‘*Arsh*, those that were brought forth from the

right side of Adam (at the start of the creation). They will be given their Records in their right hands and will be taken to the right side. Suddi said that the great majority of the dwellers of Paradise will belong to this group. (ii) Another group will be placed on the left side of the ‘*Arsh*. They had emerged from the left side of Adam. They will be given their Records in their left hands and will be taken to the left side. They will be the dwellers of Hellfire. (iii) A third category will comprise of those who were foremost (in every act of virtue: Au.), and will be nearest to Allah. These will be Prophets, Messengers, Siddiqoon and martyrs (Ibn Kathir).

7. These have also been mentioned in the narrative coming through Abu Dharr in Muslim (and many other works). The Prophet said (while speaking of his ascent to the heavens),

[10] And the Outrunners? – the Outrunners.⁸

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] They are the ones brought nigh.

أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿١١﴾

[12] In gardens of bliss.

فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] A throng from the earlier ones.

ثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْأُولِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] And a few from the later ones..⁹

وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

فَلَمَّا عَلَوْنَا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا فَإِذَا رَجُلٌ عَنْ يَمِينِهِ أَسْوَدَةٌ
وَعَنْ يَسَارِهِ أَسْوَدَةٌ - قَالَ - فَإِذَا نَظَرْتُ قَبْلَ يَمِينِهِ
ضَحَكَ وَإِذَا نَظَرْتُ قَبْلَ شِمَالِهِ بَكَى - قَالَ - فَقَالَ
مُرْحَبًا بِالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ وَالْإِنِّ الصَّالِحِ - قَالَ - قُلْتُ
يَا جِبْرِيلُ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ هَذَا آدَمُ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ - وَهَذِهِ الْأَسْوَدَةُ عَنْ يَمِينِهِ وَعَنْ شِمَالِهِ نَسَمُ
بَنِيهِ فَأَهْلُ الْيَمِينِ أَهْلُ الْجَنَّةِ وَالْأَسْوَدَةُ الَّتِي عَنْ شِمَالِهِ
أَهْلُ النَّارِ

“As we rose up to this world’s firmament we found a man who had a huge dark patch on his right hand side and a huge dark patch on his left hand side. When he looked at those at the right hand side, he laughed. But when he looked at those at the left hand side, he wept. He said (to me), ‘Welcome, a righteous Prophet and a righteous son.’ He said, I asked Jibril. He said it was Adam – peace be upon him. And these dark patches on his right and left are the souls of his sons. Those of the right hand side are inhabitants of Paradise while

the dark patch on his left hand side are inhabitants of the Fire..” (Qurtubi).

8. What the commentators have said in a variety of ways can be summed up as follows: Outrunners are those who forerun all others in all kinds of virtuous deeds (Ibn Kathir).

Kashshaf places a line which aptly describes his own situation, if we keep in mind his long travels in search of knowledge. He writes: Those are meant who hastened to all good things, and tore through dust seeking their Lord’s pleasure.

9. That is, these Outrunners will be more from the nations of the past, while few from the followers of our Prophet (Ibn Jarir). That is because this *Ummah* was the last to appear. There were numerous Prophets and Messengers who appeared before it. Jointly, the numbers of their Outrunners are expected to be more than that of this single *Ummah*; hence the

[15] Upon couches studded (with precious stones).¹⁰

عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَّوْضُونَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] Reclining upon them, face to face.

مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَيْهَا مُتَقَابِلِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] Perpetual youths going around them¹¹

يَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] With goblets, beakers and glass(es)¹² (filled out of) flowing-fountains.¹³

بِأَكْوَابٍ وَأَبَارِيقٍ وَكَأْسٍ مِّن مَّعِينٍ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] No headache shall they undergo thereby nor intoxication.

لَا يُصَدَّعُونَ عَنْهَا وَلَا يُنزِفُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

words, “a few from the later ones.” This was hard for the Companions to hear (since it promised low numbers) and so the Prophet consoled them by saying that, all in all, they will yet be half of those in Paradise (Kashshaf, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others).

Ibn Abi Hatim has preserved a report from Hasan that when `Ali (b. Abi Talib) passed by this *Ayah*, he remarked, “As for the Outrunners, they have been; but, O Allah, make of us those of the Right Hand side.” However, Hasan himself believed, as also did Muhammad b. Seereen, that by “a throng from the earlier ones” the allusion is to the first group of believers of this *Ummah* (Ibn Kathir).

Asad’s note needs consideration: “The above stress on the ‘many’ and the ‘few’ contains an allusion to the progressive diminution, in the his-

torical sense, of the element of excellence in men’s faith and ethical achievements.”

10. Another possible meaning is “lined up”, i.e., the couches shall be lined up (Ibn Jarir).

11. That is, young ones who will never grow in age, but remain unchanged forever, serving the dwellers of Paradise.

12. “*Akwaab*” (sing.: *koob*) have no sprout and no ears (handles). “*Abaa-reeq*” (sing.: *ibreeq*) are those that have a sprout and ears; while in classical Arabic “*ka’s*” was generally referred to those glasses that had wine filled in them; i.e., when empty they were not referred to as “*ka’s*”.

13. The translation is literal, but Ibn `Abbas, Dahhak and Qatadah explained, as in Ibn Jarir, that here it stands for wine.

[20] And with fruits such as they choose.¹⁴

وَفَاكِهَةٍ مِّمَّا يَتَخَيَّرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

14. The mention of fruits reminds Ibn Kathir of a *hadith* preserved by Ahmed (and Abu Ya'la and which Haythami declared as of narrators same as of *Sahih* works: Sami):

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- تَعَجُّبُهُ الرُّؤْيَا الْحَسَنَةَ فَرُبَّمَا قَالَ « هَلْ رَأَى أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ رُؤْيَا ».

فَإِذَا رَأَى الرَّجُلُ رُؤْيَا سَأَلَ عَنْهُ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَيْسَ بِهِ بَأْسٌ كَانَ أَعْجَبَ لِرُؤْيَاؤِهِ إِلَيْهِ. قَالَ فَجَاءَتْ امْرَأَةٌ فَقَالَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ رَأَيْتُ كَأَنِّي دَخَلْتُ الْجَنَّةَ فَسَمِعْتُ بِهَا وَجِبَةً ارْتَحَّتْ لَهَا الْجَنَّةُ فَظَنَرْتُ فَإِذَا قَدْ جِئَ بِفُلَانٍ بِنِ فُلَانٍ وَفُلَانٍ بِنِ فُلَانٍ حَتَّى عَدَدْتُ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ رَجُلًا - وَقَدْ بَعَثَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- سَرِيَّةً قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ - قَالَتْ فَجِئَ بِهِمْ عَلَيْهِمْ ثِيَابٌ طَلَسَ تَشْحُبُ أَوْدَاجَهُمْ قَالَ فَقِيلَ اذْهَبُوا بِهِمْ إِلَى تَهْرِ السَّدَخِ - أَوْ قَالَ إِلَى تَهْرِ الْبَيْدَجِ - قَالَ فَغُصِمُوا فِيهِ فُخِرْجُوا مِنْهُ وَجُوهُهُمْ كَالْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ - قَالَ - ثُمَّ أَتَوْا بِكَرَاسِيٍّ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ فَقَعَدُوا عَلَيْهَا وَأُتِيَ بِصُحُفَةٍ - أَوْ كَلِمَةٍ نَحْوَهَا - فِيهَا بُسْرَةٌ فَأَكَلُوا مِنْهَا فَمَا يَقْلِبُونَهَا لِشِقِّ إِلَّا أَكَلُوا مِنْ فَاكِهِةٍ مَا أَرَادُوا وَأَكَلْتُ مَعَهُمْ. قَالَ فَجَاءَ الْبَشِيرُ مِنْ تِلْكَ السَّرِيَّةِ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَانَ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا كَذَا وَكَذَا وَأُصِيبَ فُلَانٌ وَفُلَانٌ. حَتَّى عَدَّ الْإِثْنَيْ عَشَرَ الَّذِينَ عَدَّتَهُمُ الْمَرْأَةُ. - قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- « عَلَى بِالْمَرْأَةِ ». فَجَاءَتْ. قَالَ « فَصَيَّ عَلَى هَذَا رُؤْيَاكَ ».

Anas reports that good dreams pleased the Prophet. Sometimes he would ask, “Has anyone of you seen a dream?” If one of

them had experienced one, he would ask him to narrate it. If he did not see anything unpleasant in it, the man would be pleasing to him on that score. Now, one day a woman came and said, “Messenger of Allah. I saw as if I have entered Paradise. I heard a huge noise which shook Paradise. I looked up, and lo, so and so, son of so and so, and, so and so, son of so and so, until she counted 12 that were brought in.” [Indeed, earlier the Prophet had sent a force against an enemy]. She continued, “They were brought in with torn clothes and their neck veins bleeding. It was said, ‘Take them to the Sadakh – or may be the narrator said, Bayzakh – spring.’ They were taken there and a dip given after which their faces became like moon in the middle of the month.” The narrator said, “Then golden chairs were brought for them. As they sat on them a large plate – or maybe the narrator said another word of this kind - was brought up that had half-ripe dates. They ate thereof. And, they did not turn it to a side but ate thereof

[21] And flesh of fowl such as they desire.¹⁵

وَلَحْمِ طَيْرٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

[22] And wide-eyed Houris.

وَحُورٌ عِينٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] In the likeness of pearls well-preserved.

كَأَمْثَالِ اللُّؤْلُؤِ الْمَكْنُونِ ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] A reward for that they labored.

جَزَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] They shall hear no idle talk therein nor commission of sin.

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْثِيمًا ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] But for the saying, 'Peace, Peace.'

إِلَّا قِيلًا سَلَامًا سَلَامًا ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] And the Companions of the Right .. what of the Companions of the Right?

وَأَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٢٧﴾

a fruit of their choice. I too ate with them.”

Then a news-carrier came from a battalion the Prophet had sent earlier, and said, “Messenger of Allah, it (the battle) went this way and that way, and so and so and so and so were martyred” - naming the twelve the woman had named. The Prophet ordered that the woman be brought back. When she came he told her, “Now, narrate your dream to this man.”

Hafiz Diyaa' judged the narrative as meeting with the standards of Muslim (Ibn Kathir).

15. Ahmed has a *hadith* of this context.

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- « إِنَّ طَيْرَ الْجَنَّةِ كَأَمْثَالِ الْبُخْتِ تَرَعَى فِي

شَجَرِ الْجَنَّةِ ». فَقَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ هَذِهِ لَطَيْرٌ نَاعِمَةٌ. فَقَالَ « أَكَلْتُمَهَا أَنْعَمَ مِنْهَا - قَالَهَا ثَلَاثًا - وَإِنِّي لَأَرْجُو أَنْ تَكُونَ مِمَّنْ يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا يَا أَبَا بَكْرٍ » (قلت رواه الترمذي باختصار - رواه أحمد ورجاله رجال الصحيح غير سيار بن حاتم وهو ثقة - مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

The Prophet said, “Fowls of Paradise are like long-necked (birds). They feed on the trees of Paradise.” Abu Bakr asked, “Messenger of Allah, are these birds soft (of flesh)?” He answered, “But those who eat of them will be in greater blessing” - he said that three times - “and I hope you will be of those who will eat of them, O Abu Bakr” (Ibn Kathir).

[Haythami added: The above report is also in Tirmidhi in a shorter form, while Ahmed's report has narrators

[28] Amid thornless lote trees.¹⁶

﴿٢٨﴾ فِي سِدْرٍ مَّخْضُودٍ

of *Sahih ahadith* except for Sayyar b. Hatim, who in any case was trustworthy: Au.].

Ibn Kathir reproduces several other narratives of this nature that have been preserved and judged variously by *hadith* doctors. Although they are weak, they strengthen each other (Au.).

16. A tradition preserved by Hakim reports,

عن أبي أمامة رضي الله عنه ، قال : كان أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقولون : إن الله ينفعنا بالأعراب ومساءلهم أقبل أعرابي يوماً فقال : يا رسول الله ، لقد ذكر الله في القرآن شجرة مؤذية وما كنت أرى أن في الجنة شجرة تؤذي صاحبها . فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : « وما هي ؟ » قال : السدر ، فإن لها شوكة . فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : « (في سدر مخضود) يخضد الله شوكه فيجعل مكان كل شوك ثمرة ، فإنها تنبت ثمراً تفتق الثمرة معها عن اثنين وسبعين لونا ما منها لون يشبه الآخر » « صحيح الإسناد ولم يخرجاه » - المستدرک علی الصحیحین للحاکم مع تعلیقات الذهبي في التلخيص - (تعلیق الذهبي في التلخيص : صحيح)

Abu Umamah said that the Companions of the Prophet would await a Bedouin to turn up, who could ask questions and thus Allah bestow benefit through him.

Once a Bedouin came in and asked, “Messenger of Allah. Allah has mentioned an irritating tree in the Qur’ān. I never imagined that there would be a tree in Paradise that would trouble its dwellers.” The Prophet asked him what it was and he said, “Lote tree, for it is full of thorns.” The Prophet read out, “(Among thornless lote-trees) – Allah will remove its thorns and replace every thorn with a fruit. It will fructify with fruits and whenever a fruit opens up, seventy-two colors will open up, none of the colors like any other” – Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani.

Hakim declared it as of good chain, and Dhahabi confirmed his opinion (Au.).

There is another report of similar meaning,

عن عقبة بن عبد السلمي قال كنت جالساً مع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فجاء أعرابي فقال يا رسول الله أسمعك تذكر في الجنة شجرة لا أعلم أكثر شوكة منها يعني الطلح فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يجعل مكان كل شوك ثمة منها خصوة التيس الملهود - يعني الخصى منها - سبعون لوناً من الطعام لا يشبه لون آخر . رواه الطبراني ورجاله رجال الصحيح (مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

[29] And layered bananas.¹⁷

وَطَلْحٍ مَّنْضُودٍ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] And extended shade.¹⁸

وَزَيْلٍ مَّمْدُودٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

[31] And water poured out.

وَمَاءٍ مَّسْكُوبٍ ﴿٣١﴾

[32] And fruits abundant..

وَفَاكِهَةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

In sum it says that a Bedouin said to the Prophet, “You mention a tree (*talkh*) in Paradise, but which is full of thorns” and the Prophet replied, “Allah will replace every thorn with a fruit like a castrated light-skinned ram, each of a different colored-food, that will not resemble another” (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

[Note that “*talkh*” meant, in Yemeni dialect banana, while among the Hijazis it referred to a thorny tree of the deserts: Au.].

It may also be noted that the Prophet drew a simile that was familiar to a shepherd (Au.).

The report was treated trustworthy by Haythami (Sami).

17. The great majority of the *Salaf* have believed that “*talkh*” is for bananas (Ibn Jarir). In fact, its leaves are also layered (Razi).

Note the contrast, which could be the reason why the comparatively

unknown lote-tree has been mentioned: The lote-tree has the smallest of leaves among the (fruit) plants, while banana tree has the largest of leaves (Razi).

18. We have a *hadith* in this reference. (It is in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi and other collections: Au.).

عن أَنَسٍ بْنِ مَالِكٍ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - عَنِ النَّبِيِّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَ « إِنَّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ لَشَجَرَةً يَبْسُرُ الرَّكْبُ فِي ظِلِّهَا مِائَةَ عَامٍ لَا يَنْقُطُهَا

The Prophet is reported by Anas as having said, “Paradise has a tree in whose shade a rider might ride for a hundred years, but will not be able to cross it” (Ibn Jarir). The report is in the *Sahibayn* and others, of “mutawatir” status, and a report of Ahmed names it as “*shajaratu al-kebuld*” that is, the immortal tree. Nonetheless, scholars have pointed out that there will be no sun in Paradise, but, as Ibn Mas`ud said, rather like the time after *Fajr*, neither dark nor bright (Ibn Kathir).

[33] Unfailing, unforbidden.¹⁹

لَا مَقْطُوعَةٍ وَلَا مَمْنُوعَةٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] And upraised couches.

وَفُتْرٍ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ ﴿٣٤﴾

[35] Indeed, We have created them - (a new) creation.²⁰

إِنَّا أَنْشَأْنَاهُنَّ إِنْشَاءً ﴿٣٥﴾

19. We have passed by a verse of similar meaning:

كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رِزْقًا قَالُوا هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأُتُوا بِهِ مُتَشَابِهًا [البقرة/٢٥]

i.e., “Every time they are fed with a fruit they will say, ‘This is what we have been fed with before.’ And, (indeed) they will be given the like of it.”

Yet another report of similar nature is in Abu Ya`la and others:

عن الطفيل بن أبي بن كعب عن أبيه رضي الله عنه قال : بينا نحن مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في صلاة الظهر و الناس في الصفوف خلف رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فرأينا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يتناول شيئا فجعل يتناوله فتأخر و تأخر الناس ثم تأخر الثانيه فتأخر الناس فقلت : يا رسول الله رأيك صنعت اليوم شيئا ما كنت تصنعه في الصلاة ؟ فقال : إنه عرضت علي الجنة بما فيها من الزهرة و النضرة فتناولت قطفا من عنبها و لو أخذته لأكل منه من بين السماء و الأرض لا ينقصونه فحيل بيني و بينه - المستدرك على الصحيحين للحاكم مع تعليقات الذهبي في التلخيص - (المستدرك على الصحيحين: تعليق الذهبي في التلخيص : صحيح)

Ka`b reported from his father that “once while we were lined up behind the Prophet in *Zuhr* Prayers, we saw the Prophet reach out for something. He stepped back and so did the people. Then he stepped back a second time and so did the people. I said, ‘Messenger of Allah, we saw you doing something that normally you do not do in Prayers?’ He answered, ‘Paradise was shown to me along with its fruits and flowers. I tried to reach out for a bunch of grapes. Had I taken it everyone in the heaven and earth would have eaten out thereof without any reduction. But a barrier was created between me and it” (Ibn Kathir).

Dhahabi declared this *hadith* of Hakim as *Sahih* (Au.).

20. Most commentators agree that these will be especially created women. The *hadith* that says that the allusion is to the re-creation of the old, decrepit women of this world, is weak (Au.).

[36] So We made them virgins.

فَجَعَلْنَاهُنَّ أَبْكَارًا ﴿٣٦﴾

[37] Loving ones,²¹ of equal age.²²

عُرُبًا أَتْرَابًا ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] For the Companions of the Right.

لِلْأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٣٨﴾

[39] A throng from the earlier ones

ثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

It is narrated about Sulayman al-Darani that he said, “I offered (*tahajjud*) Prayers one night and then began to supplicate. It was an extremely cold night so I began to supplicate with one hand. Then sleep overtook me and I saw a Hourie the like of whom I had never seen before. She said, ‘O Abu Sulayman. Do you supplicate with one hand while I have been preparing food for you in the Blissful Garden for five hundred years?’” (Ibn Kathir).

21. “*Urub*” are those who desire after their husbands - lovingly. Another connotation is, “those of amorous gestures” (Ibn Jarir from the *Salaf*).

22. A *hadith* can be quoted in support:

عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- قَالَ « يَدْخُلُ أَهْلُ الْجَنَّةِ الْجَنَّةَ جُرْدًا مُرْدًا مُكْحَلِينَ أَبْنَاءَ ثَلَاثِينَ أَوْ ثَلَاثٍ وَثَلَاثِينَ سَنَةً ». قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ غَرِيبٌ

The Prophet said, “The inhabitants of Paradise will enter therein with no hair growth on

their heads or cheeks, with kohl in their eyes, of age thirty-three years” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

Tirmidhi himself declared the report as a kind of weak one. But Albani treated it as *Sahih*. Haythami said that some of its parts are in the *Sahih* works (Au.).

Sex in Paradise

Ibn Kathir mentions a few *ahadith* here on the topic of sex in Paradise, during the search of which we have found a few others. Bukhari and Muslim have no reports, neither in favor nor in denial. But a few other collections do deal with the subject, although in passing. As is our habit, we present only those that enjoy some credibility ignoring those of the lesser order, whether Ibn Kathir presents them or not (Au.).

عن ابن عباس قال قيل يا رسول الله أنفضي إلى نساءنا في الجنة كما نفضي إليهن في الدنيا قال والذي نفس محمد بيده إن الرجل ليفضي بالغداة الواحدة إلى مائة عذراء. رواه أبو يعلى وفيه زيد بن

أبي الحواري وقد وثق على ضعف، وبقيّة رجاله ثقات
(مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

Ibn `Abbas reported that the Prophet was asked, "Shall we have sex with our women in Paradise just as we do in this life?" He answered, "By Him in whose hands is my life, a man will have sex during a day with a hundred virgins."

The above was preserved by Abu Ya'la and others which Haythami treated as not so untrustworthy. However, Albani said it is *Sahih*.

وعن أبي أمامة قال سئل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يتناكح أهل الجنة قال نعم بذكر لا يمل وشهوة لا تنقطع دحماً ودماً، وفي رواية لكن لا مني ولا منية، وفي رواية هل ينكح أهل الجنة قال نعم ويأكلون ويشربون. رواها كلها الطبراني بأسانيد ورجال بعضها وثقوا على ضعف في بعضهم (مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

Tabarani recorded that the Prophet was asked whether the dwellers of Paradise will have sex. He answered, "Yes: with organs that will not get weary and a desire that will never be satiated – forcefully, forcefully." According to another version, "Without ejaculation-liquid from either side."

عن زيد بن أرقم قال: جاء رجل من اليهود إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال: يا أبا القاسم تزعم أن

أهل الجنة يأكلون فيها ويشربون؟ قال: "نعم والذي نفسي بيده، إن الرجل ليعطى قوة مائة رجل في الأكل والشرب والشهوة والجماع". فقال اليهودي: إن الذي يأكل ويشرب تكون له الحاجة، والجنة مطهرة، قال: حاجة أحدهم عرق يفيض من جلده كريح المسك، فإذا بطنه قد ضمّر". (مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

Another report in Tabarani is on the authority of Zayd b. al-Arqam. It says: A Jewish man said to the Prophet, "O Abu al-Qasim, do you claim that the inhabitants of Paradise will eat and drink?" He replied, "Yes. And, by Him in whose hand is my life, a man will be given the strength of a hundred men in matters of eating, drinking, and intercourse." The Jew said, "Whoever eats and drinks will need to relieve himself, but Paradise is a clean place." He answered, "The manner of a man's relief will be issuance of a liquid of smell like musk. With that his stomach will be cleansed" (Au.).

(Haythami declared it as carrying a trustworthy chain: Au.).

Yet another *hadith* is as follows:

وعن ابن عباس قال: قيل: يا رسول الله أنفسي إلى نسائنا في الجنة كما نفسي إليهن في الدنيا؟ قال: "والذي نفس محمد بيده إن الرجل ليفضي الغداة الواحدة إلى مائة عذراء".

رواه أبو يعلى وفيه زيد بن أبي الحواري وقد وثق على ضعف، وبقيّة رجاله ثقات. (مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

Ibn `Abbas says that someone asked the Prophet whether, "We shall have intercourse with our women in Paradise as we have intercourse with them in this life?" He answered, "By Him in whose hands is my life, during a single day a man will have intercourse with a hundred virgins" (Au.).

Haythami treated the above as quite trustworthy (Au.).

The *hadith* of course does not mention the length of the day or night in Paradise.

According to yet another version when asked whether the inhabitants of Paradise will have sex he answered, "Yes; and they will also eat and drink."

Haythami remarked: These were preserved by Tabarani being reports with some narrators trusted while others considered weak.

وفي رواية عنده وعند الطبراني في الصغير والأوسط قال قيل يا رسول الله أنفضي إلى نسائنا في الجنة فقال أي والذي نفسي بيده إن الرجل ليفضي في اليوم الواحد إلى مائة عذراء، ورجال هذه الرواية الثانية رجال الصحيح غير محمد بن ثواب وهو ثقة (مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

Tabarani and Abu Ya`la have it that the Prophet was asked, "Messenger of Allah. Shall we have sex with our women in Paradise?" He answered, "Yes. By Him in whose hands is my life, a man will have sex with a hundred virgins in a day."

Haythami adds: The narrators of the above report are those of the *Sahih* works but for Muhammad b. Thawab, who was, anyway, also trustworthy.

Another narration of Tabarani says:

وعن أنس عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "يزوج العبد في الجنة سبعين زوجة". فقيل: يا رسول الله أيطيقها؟ قال: "يعطى قوة مائة". (رواه البزار وفيه من لم أعرفهم).

The Prophet said, "A man will be married to seventy women in Paradise." It was asked, "Messenger of Allah. Will he have the ability?" He answered, "He will be given the power of a hundred."

Although it is partly available in Tirmidhi, it has been considered weak by Haythami.

Ibn Hibban's *Sahih* has the following:

عن أبي هريرة : عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم أنه قيل له : أنطأ في الجنة ؟ قال : (نعم

والذي نفسي بيده دحما دحما فإذا قام عنها رجعت مطهرة بكرا) - (صحيح ابن حبان) - قال شعيب الأرنؤوط : إسناده حسن

The Prophet was asked, "Shall we have sex in Paradise?" He replied, "Yes. By Him in whose hand is my soul, forcefully, forcefully. When he moves away from her, she would turn purified, virgin."

Shu'ayb al-Arna'oot however declared it a Hasan report, i.e., a kind of weak, but not too weak (Au.).

عَنْ أَنَسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَ « يُعْطَى الْمُؤْمِنُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ قُوَّةٌ كَذَا وَكَذَا مِنَ الْجَمَاعِ ». قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَوْ يُطِيقُ ذَلِكَ قَالَ « يُعْطَى قُوَّةٌ مِائَةً ». وَفِي الْبَابِ عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَرْقَمَ. قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ صَحِيحٌ غَرِيبٌ

Tirmidhi's report, considered *Sahih-Ghareeb* by him quotes the Prophet as having said, "A believer will be given the power to co-habit, to such and such level." He was asked, "Messenger of Allah. Will he have the strength for it?" He answered, "He will be given the strength of a hundred."

The above are the *ahadith* that the books yield on this subject. Some are in Ibn Kathir. We may terminate by re-quoting another *hadith*, relevant to the above, answering how a man could have strength of so many.

Apart from other things, it speaks of their size in Paradise. It is in the *Sa-hihayn* and other works:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - « إِنَّ أَوَّلَ زُمْرَةٍ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ عَلَى صُورَةِ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ ، ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلْتَوْنَهُمْ عَلَى أَشَدِّ كَوْكَبٍ دُرِّيٍّ فِي السَّمَاءِ إِضَاءَةً ، لَا يَبُولُونَ وَلَا يَتَغَوَّطُونَ وَلَا يَتَفَلُونَ وَلَا يَمْتَخِطُونَ ، أَمْشَاطُهُمُ الذَّهَبُ ، وَرَشْحُهُمُ الْمِسْكُ ، وَجَافِرُهُمُ الْأَلْوَةُ الْأَنْجُوخُ عُودُ الطِّيبِ ، وَأَزْوَاجُهُمُ الْخُورُ الْعَيْنُ ، عَلَى خَلْقٍ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ عَلَى صُورَةِ أَبِيهِمْ آدَمَ ، سِتُونَ ذِرَاعًا فِي السَّمَاءِ »

The Prophet said, "The first group to enter Paradise will have faces like the full-moon. Those who follow them will be like the most shining star in the sky. They will not have to attend to the call of nature. They will not spit, nor spit phlegm. Their combs will be of gold and their sweat musk; their perfume-burners of high quality material; their spouses wide-eyed houris. They will be on one pattern of creation, on the face of their progenitor Adam, sixty feet in the sky."

Before closing this subject, we may also point out that the reports on this topic are a clear proof of the authenticity of the general body of *hadith*. We know that in sexual terms the Arab Peninsula is identified as the most active and passionate region in the world. Interest in sex starts pretty

[40] And a throng from the later ones.²³

وَأَثَلَةٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

[41] And the Companions of the Left .. what of the Companions of the Left?! ﴿٤١﴾

[42] Amid scorching winds and boiling water.

فِي سَمُومٍ وَحَمِيمٍ ﴿٤٢﴾

early in life, and remains till quite late in old age. It is treated with frankness and as a matter of fact. Its discussion involves no shame. The poetry that the Companions would have heard, was no other than the Jaahiliyy poetry, concerned with nothing but wars, wine and women. Had the *ahadith* in Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmed, and major works been fabricated, surely, one would have found dozens of *ahadith* on this topic of popular interest - in every one of these books. But none are found in them. In comparison, there are scores of *ahadith* on letting down the beards and trimming the moustaches. But the deviant minds of the Orientalists and their followers rarely give an ear to a keynote that would threaten their resolutely adopted position of rejection (Au.).

23. Hasan said that the allusion is to a large number of people from among the people before Prophet Muhammad, and a large number from those of his followers (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir reproduces a *hadith* to the effect that the two “throng” will be from this *Ummah*. But it is untrustworthy. Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir also produce another *hadith* of Bazzar, Hakim (which Dhahabi declared trustworthy) and Ibn Hibban (which Arna’oot declared *Sahih*) in which the Prophet used the words of the Qur’an, but which does not clearly specify that both the “throng” will be from this *Ummah*. The *hadith* however is as follows:

عَنْ عِمْرَانَ بْنِ حُصَيْنٍ ، قَالَ : تَخَذْتُنَا عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَاتَ لَيْلَةٍ حَتَّى أَكْرَمْتَنَا الْحَدِيثَ ، ثُمَّ تَرَجَعْنَا إِلَى الْبُيُوتِ فَلَمَّا أَصْبَحْنَا غَدَوْنَا إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، فَقَالَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : غُرِضْتُ عَلَى الْأَنْبِيَاءِ اللَّيْلَةَ بِأَتْبَاعِهَا مِنْ أُمَّيْهَا ، فَجَعَلَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَمُرُّ وَمَعَهُ الثَّلَاثَةُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ ، وَالنَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَعَهُ الْعِصَابَةُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ ، وَالنَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَعَهُ النَّفَرُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ ، وَالنَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَيْسَ مَعَهُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ أَحَدٌ ، حَتَّى أَتَى عَلَيَّ مُوسَى بْنُ عِمْرَانَ فِي كَوْكَبَةٍ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ، فَلَمَّا رَأَيْتُهُمْ أَعْجَبُونِي ، فَقُلْتُ : رَبِّ مَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ ؟ قَالَ : هَذَا أَخُوكَ مُوسَى بْنُ عِمْرَانَ وَمَنْ تَبِعَهُ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ، قُلْتُ : رَبِّ ، فَأَيْنَ أُمَّتِي ؟ قِيلَ : انْظُرْ عَنْ يَمِينِكَ ، فَإِذَا الطَّرَابُ طِرَابُ مَكَّةَ ،

قَدْ سَدَّ بُوْجُوْهُ الرِّجَالِ ، فَقُلْتُ : رَبِّ ، مَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ ؟
 قِيلَ لِي : أُمْتُكَ ، فَقِيلَ لِي : هَلْ رَضِيتَ ؟ فَقُلْتُ :
 رَبِّ رَضِيتُ ، رَبِّ رَضِيتُ ، فَقِيلَ : انْظُرْ عَنْ يَسَارِكَ
 ، فَإِذَا الْأَفُقُ قَدْ سَدَّ بُوْجُوْهُ الرِّجَالِ ، قُلْتُ : رَبِّ
 ، مَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ ؟ قِيلَ : أُمْتُكَ ، قَالَ : فَقِيلَ لِي : هَلْ
 رَضِيتَ ؟ قَالَ : قُلْتُ : رَبِّ رَضِيتُ ، رَبِّ رَضِيتُ ،
 ثُمَّ قِيلَ لِي : إِنَّ مَعَ هَؤُلَاءِ سَبْعِينَ أَلْفًا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ
 بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ، فَأَنْشَى عُنَاكَهُ بْنُ مُحْصَنٍ ، رَجُلًا
 مِنْ بَنِي أَسَدِ بْنِ حُزَيْمَةَ ، فَقَالَ : يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، ادْعُ
 اللَّهَ أَنْ يَجْعَلَ لِي مِنْهُمْ ، قَالَ : اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهُ مِنْهُمْ ،
 ثُمَّ أَنْشَى رَجُلًا آخَرَ ، فَقَالَ : يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ ، ادْعُ اللَّهَ
 أَنْ يَجْعَلَ لِي مِنْهُمْ ، فَقَالَ : سَبَقَكَ بِهَا عُنَاكَهُ ، ثُمَّ
 قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : فِذَا لَكُمْ أَبِي
 وَأُمِّي إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَكُونُوا مِنَ السَّابِقِينَ فَكُونُوا ،
 فَإِنْ عَجَزْتُمْ أَوْ قَصُرْتُمْ فَكُونُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الطَّرَافِ ، فَإِنْ
 عَجَزْتُمْ وَقَصُرْتُمْ فَكُونُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْأَفُقِ ، فَإِنِّي رَأَيْتُ
 ثَمَّ نَاسًا يَتَهَوَّشُونَ كَثِيرًا ثُمَّ قَالَ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
 وَسَلَّمَ إِنِّي لَأَرْجُو أَنْ يَكُونَ مَنْ تَبِعَنِي مِنْ أُمَّتِي رُبُعُ
 أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ قَالَ : فَكَبَّرْنَا ، ثُمَّ قَالَ : إِنِّي لَأَرْجُو أَنْ
 يَكُونُوا الثُّلُثُ قَالَ : فَكَبَّرْنَا ، ثُمَّ قَالَ : إِنِّي لَأَرْجُو أَنْ
 تَكُونُوا الشَّطْرَ فَكَبَّرْنَا ، فَتَلَا النَّبِيُّ ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
 وَسَلَّمَ : ثَلَاثَةً مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَثَلَاثَةً مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ ، فَتَرَاجَعَ
 الْمُسْلِمُونَ : مَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ ؟ لَا تَرَاهُمْ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ وُلِدُوا
 فِي الْإِسْلَامِ ، وَلَمْ يَزَالُوا يَعْمَلُونَ بِهِ حَتَّى مَاتُوا عَلَيْهِ ،
 قَالَ : فَتَمَّى حَدِيثَهُمْ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
 ، قَالَ : لَيْسَ كَذَا وَلَكِنَّهُمْ الَّذِينَ لَا يَسْتَرْقُونَ وَلَا
 يَكْتُمُونَ وَلَا يَتَطَيَّرُونَ وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ . (مسند
 البزار، المستدرک للحاکم، ابن حبان)

‘Imran b. Husayn reports that we spoke in the company of the Prophet until we prolonged the talk, so we returned to our homes. Next day we went up to the Prophet. He said, “Last night

Prophets were shown to me along with their followers. A Prophet would pass with three followers, or a Prophet with a group of followers, or another with a slightly smaller number of followers with him, and one without any follower from the people he was raised in; until I saw Musa b. ‘Imran among a large number of the Children of Israel. Their numbers amazed me. I asked, ‘My Lord! Who are these?’ He said, ‘This is your brother Musa b. ‘Imran and those who followed him from among the Children of Israel.’ I asked, ‘And where are my followers?’ I was told, ‘Look at your right,’ and lo, one of the smaller hillock of Makkah was covered with men. I said, ‘My Lord! Who are these?’ I was told, ‘Your followers.’ And then it was said, ‘Are you satisfied?’ I said, ‘My Lord, I am satisfied, my Lord, I am satisfied.’ I was told, ‘Look at your left.’ I found the horizon covered with people. I asked, ‘My Lord, who are these?’ It was said, ‘Your followers.’ Then it was said, ‘Are you satisfied?’ I said, ‘My Lord, I am satisfied, my Lord, I am satisfied.’ It was said to me, ‘Along with these there will be seventy thousand who will enter Paradise without reckoning.’

[43] *And shadows of dark smoke.*²⁴

وَّظِلٍّ مِّنْ يَّخْمُومٍ ﴿٤٣﴾

[44] *Neither cold nor goodly.*²⁵

لَّا بَارِدٍ وَلَا كَرِيمٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

[45] *Indeed, before this they were the ones indulging in luxuries.*

إِنَّمْهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُتْرَفِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

At that point `Ukkasha – a man from Banu Asad of Khuzaymah – got up and said, “Messenger of Allah, seek from Allah that He place me among them.” The Prophet said, “O Allah, place him among them.” Then another man and rose up and said, “Prophet of Allah, seek from Allah that He place me among them.” He said, “`Ukkasha overtook you.” Then the Prophet continued, “My parents be sacrificed for you, if you can manage to be from among the ‘seventy’, then be. But if you are unable and fall short, then be of the hillock. But if you are unable and fall short, be of those that stretched to the horizon, for, I saw people there jostling up there.” Then he added, “I hope that those who follow me will be one fourth of Paradise.” We chanted Allah’s greatness. Then he said, “I hope that they will be one-third.” We chanted Allah’s greatness. Then he added, “I hope you will be one half.” We chanted Allah’s greatness. The Prophet then recited, “A throng from the earlier ones and a throng from the later ones.” The Muslims

discussed it between themselves as to who could those be, saying, “We did not see them but as those who were born into Islamic homes and so kept living according to it and died upon it,” until their talk reached the Prophet. He said, “It is not that way. But rather they are a people who do not seek to be charmed (by charm-ers), do not get tattooed with hot iron, and do not seek after and follow omens but rather, place trust on their Lord.”

24. This *Ayah* reminds us of another passage of the Qur`an:

انْطَلِقُوا إِلَىٰ ظِلٍّ ذِي ثَلَاثِ شُعَبٍ. لَا ظَلِيلٌ وَلَا يُغْنِي
مِنَ اللَّهَبِ. إِنَّهَا تَرْمِي بِشَرَرٍ كَالْقَصْرِ. كَأَنَّهُ جِمَالَةٌ
صُفْرٌ. وَيَلَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ [المرسلات/ ٣٠-٣٤]

“Move on to a shadow that has three branches. Neither providing shade nor saving from the flames. It sends out sparks the size of palaces, as if they are yellow camels. Woe then that day unto the deniers” (Ibn Kathir).

25. Ibn Jarir offers examples of similar usages among the Arabs (i.e., where the sentence ends with “ka-

[46] And persisted in the great sin.²⁶

وَكَاُنَا يُصِرُّونَ عَلَى الْحِنثِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٤٦﴾

[47] And they would say, 'What, when we are dead and become dust and bones, are we to be raised up?

وَكَاُنَا يَحْسِبُونَ اِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا اَنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

[48] And our fathers of old (too)?'

اَوْ اَبَاؤُنَا الْاَوَّلُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

[49] Say, 'The firsts and the lasts..

قُلْ اِنَّ الْاَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

[50] will be brought together at the appointed time of a known day.

لَمَجْمُوعُونَ اِلَى مِيقَاتٍ يَوْمَ مَعْلُومٍ ﴿٥٠﴾

[51] Then you shall – O you the ignorant ones, those who cried lies –

ثُمَّ اِنْكُمْ اَيُّهَا الضَّالُّونَ الْمُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

[52] be surely eating out of the Zaqqum tree..

لَا كِلُونَ مِنْ شَجَرٍ مِنْ زَقُّومٍ ﴿٥٢﴾

[53] filling the bellies therewith.

فَمَالِؤُونَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

[54] And drinking on top of that boiling water.

فَشَارِبُونَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَمِيمِ ﴿٥٤﴾

[55] Drinking like the drinking of thirsty camels.²⁷

فَشَارِبُونَ شُرْبَ اِهْيَمٍ ﴿٥٥﴾

[56] This is their hospitality on the day of Reckoning.

هَذَا تَرْهُمُ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿٥٦﴾

[57] It is We who have created you, so why do you not acknowledge?

نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ فَلَوْلَا تُصَدِّقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

reem"). In Arabic, everything that is not good is termed as "laysa bi-kareemin" (Qurtubi).

26. That is, the sin of Association (Mujahid, Dahhak, Qatadah and others as in Ibn Jarir).

27. "Heem" is also referred to a camel which suffers from a certain disease because of which it drinks but its thirst is not satiated, so that it keeps on drinking until it dies. The medicine with which it is then treated is known as "huyaam" (Ibn Jarir from the Salaf, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

[58] Have you considered that which you emit?²⁸

﴿٥٨﴾ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تُمْنُونَ

[59] Is it you who creates it or, are We the Creator?²⁹

﴿٥٩﴾ أَأَنْتُمْ تَخْلُقُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ

28. That is, the seminal fluid of the male and female (Au.).

29. The sperm cell is a special creation of Allah. It has a head, a short body and a long tail. It behaves like a little one. In fact earliest biological text books drew a little man to illustrate the spermatozoa.

With reference to the number of chromosomes, there are two types of cells that the human body manufactures: those with the standard 46 chromosomes and those with half the numbers, i.e., 23. The latter are manufactured in testicles and ovaries. Chromosomes are helical strands that contain 3 billion molecules, around 3% of which function as genes. Genes are spread far and wide on the 46 chromosomes, and randomly placed, yield meaningful messages. They are the blue-prints of life. A whole human being can be built with the instructions contained in the 46 chromosomes.

During cell division, the 46 chromosomes replicate to become two sets of chromosomes. These two new sets

of 46 chromosomes each, move to extreme ends of the cell, which then splits from the middle to result in two daughter cells. Each daughter cell now has 46 chromosomes or 23 pairs.

The cells made in testicles and ovaries are specialized forms called sperms and eggs. In their case something mysterious happens during the division of normal cells containing 46 chromosomes. The helical strands open up in the testicle and the 23 pairs of chromosomes uncoil to resemble a ladder. Then they are vertically sliced into two halves from the middle. The two sliced sets of chromosomes move apart to two ends of the by now enlarged cell. The cell itself splits into two, giving birth to two daughter cells. Each daughter cell contains only half the chromosomes, 23. When these two specialized cells, sperm and egg, merge to become one cell during fertilization, the two sliced halved chromosomes (from sperm and egg) join together to become, once again, 23 pairs, thus completing the number 46.

[60] It is We who have decreed death among you,³⁰ and We are not to be frustrated..

نَحْنُ قَدَرْنَا بَيْنَكُمْ الْمَوْتَ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

[61] that We should substitute (you) with the likes of you, and develop you into (a form) which you do not know (now).[†]

عَلَى أَنْ تُبَدِّلَ أَمْثَالَكُمْ وَنُنشِئَكُمْ فِي مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

[62] You have already known the first creation,³² therefore, why do you not take heed?

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ النَّشْأَةَ الْأُولَىٰ فَلَوْلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

[63] Have you considered that which you sow (in the ground)?

أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَحْرَثُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

Emitted into the vagina, the spermatozoa in their millions begin to swim upstream with the help of their long tails, as if searching for an egg. Once found, each tries to force itself into the egg. Normally only one succeeds. (If more than one succeeds, the result is twins or more). The head forces itself into the egg with the help of an enzyme at the tip which breaks the outer lining of the egg. As soon as a sperm penetrates into an egg, the egg undergoes massive chemical changes in an instant. Its wall hardens up to render it impenetrable by other sperms. Soon the 23 sliced pieces of chromosomes of the male sperm and female egg find each other, arrange themselves, join up, and assuming the shape of a ladder, result in 23 complete pairs.

This is a simplistic description of the sperm and egg, and of the fertiliza-

tion, with reference to the chromosomes alone. A detailed description, describing thousands of events, each a miracle in itself, has to be obtained from biological books (Au.).

30. So that, it comes early to some, late to others (Ibn Jarir).

31. That is, are you not afraid that Allah should destroys you to bring another people in your place, and then, He should develop you into a new creation altogether, in form and shape completely different from what you are now? (Ibn Jarir)

32. Why can you not recall the creation of Adam to convince yourself that the Power that created him can create another kind of creation in your place? (Ibn Jarir with slight modification). Alternatively, why should you not consider your own creation: from semen drop, to a clot,

[64] Is it you who cause it to grow or, are We the Grower?³³

أَأَنْتُمْ تَرْزُقُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الرَّازِقُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

to a chewed flesh-like piece, and so on – although you were nothing earlier? (Qurtubi)

33. Today's botanic knowledge is so well spread that we may not repeat any of the amazing things that are reported in the media, and perhaps taught in schools. We shall present here some of the latest findings about plant life, some functions within, especially, their ability to communicate with trained persons, express feelings of joy and fear, and friendliness with those who care for them. The source is "The Secret Life of Plant" by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird (Rupa Publications, 2006):

"The true matrix of human life is the greensward covering mother earth. Without green plants we would neither breathe nor eat. On the under-surface of every leaf a million movable lips are engaged in devouring carbon dioxide and expelling oxygen. All together, 25 million square miles of leaf surface are daily engaged in this miracle of photosynthesis, producing oxygen and food for man and beast...

Of the 375 billion tons of food we consume each year the bulk comes

from plants, which synthesize it out of air and soil with the help of sunlight. The remainder comes from animal products, which in turn are derived from plants. All the food, drink, intoxicants, drugs and medicines that keep man alive and, if properly used, radiantly healthy are ours through the sweetness of photosynthesis. Sugar produces all our starches, fats, oils, waxes, cellulose. From crib to coffin, man relies on cellulose as the basis for his shelter, clothing, fuel, fibers, basketry, cordage, musical instruments, and the paper on which he scribbles his philosophy.

Instinctively aware of the aesthetic vibrations of plants, which are spiritually satisfying, human beings are happiest and most comfortable when living with flora. At birth, marriage, death, blossoms are prerequisites, as they are at mealtime or festivities. We give plants and flowers as tokens of love, of friendship, or homage, and of thanks for hospitality. Our houses are adorned with gardens, our cities with parks, our nations with national preserves. The first thing a woman does to make a room livable

is to place a plant in it or a vase of fresh cut flowers...

Wormlike rootlets, which Darwin likened to a brain, burrow constantly downward with thin white threads, crowding themselves firmly into the soil, tasting it as they go. Small hollow chambers in which a ball of starch can rattle indicate to the root tips the direction of the pull of gravity.

When the earth is dry, the roots turn toward moister ground, finding their way into buried pipes, stretching, as in the case of the lowly alfalfa plant, as far as forty feet, developing an energy that can bore through concrete. No one has yet counted the roots of a tree, but a study of a single rye plant indicates a total of over 13 million rootlets with a combined length of 380 miles. On these rootlets of a rye plant are fine root hairs estimated to number some 14 billion with a total length of 6,600 miles, almost the distance from pole to pole.

As the special burrowing cells are worn out by contact with stones, pebbles, and large grains of sand, they are rapidly replaced, but when they reach a source of nourishment they die and are replaced by cells designed to dissolve mineral salts and collect the resulting elements. This

basic nourishment is passed from cell to cell up through the plant, which constitutes a single unit of protoplasm, a watery or gelatinous substance considered the basis of physical life.

The root is thus a water pump, with water acting as a universal solvent, raising elements from root to leaf, evaporating and falling back to earth to act once more as the medium for this chain of life. The leaves of an ordinary sunflower will transpire in a day as much water as a man perspires. On a hot day a single birch can absorb as much as four hundred quarts, exuding cooling moisture through its leaves.

No plant, says France, is without movement; all growth is a series of movements; plants are constantly preoccupied with bending, turning and quivering. He describes a summer day with thousands of polyp like arms reaching from a peaceful arbor, trembling, quivering in their eagerness for new support for the heavy stalk that grows behind them. When the tendril, which sweeps a full circle in sixty-seven minutes, finds a perch, within twenty seconds it starts to curve around the object, and within the hour has wound itself so firmly it is hard to tear away. The

tendrils then curls itself like a corkscrew and in so doing raises the vine to itself.

A climbing plant which needs a prop will creep toward the nearest support. Should this be shifted, the vine, within a few hours, will change its course into the new direction. Can the plant see the pole? Does it sense it in some unfathomed way? If a plant is growing between obstructions and cannot see a potential support it will unerringly grow toward a hidden support, avoiding the area where none exists.

Plants, says France, are capable of intent: they can stretch toward, or seek out, what they want in ways as mysterious as the most fantastic creations of romance.

Far from existing inertly, the inhabitants of the pasture—or what the ancient Hellenes called *botane*—appear to be able to perceive and to react to what is happening in their environment at a level of sophistication far surpassing that of humans.

The sundew plant will grasp at a fly with infallible accuracy, moving in just the right direction toward where the prey is to be found. Some parasitical plants can recognize the slightest trace of the odor of their victim, and

will overcome all obstacles to crawl in its direction.

Plants seem to know which ants will steal their nectar, closing when these ants are about, opening only when there is enough dew on their stems to keep the ants from climbing. The more sophisticated acacia actually enlists the protective services of certain ants which it rewards with nectar in return for the ants' protection against other insects and herbivorous mammals.

Is it chance that plants grow into special shapes to adapt to the idiosyncrasies of insects which will pollinate them, luring these insects with special color and fragrance, rewarding them with their favorite nectar, devising extraordinary canals and floral machinery with which to ensnare a bee so as to release it through a trap door only when the pollination process is completed?

Some plants, unable to find nitrogen in swampy land, obtain it by devouring living creatures. There are more than five hundred varieties of carnivorous plants, eating any kind of meat from insect to beef, using endlessly cunning methods to capture their prey, from tentacles to sticky hairs to funnel-like traps. The tentacles of carnivorous plants are not only

mouths but stomachs raised on poles with which to seize and eat their prey, to digest both meat and blood, and leave nothing but a skeleton...”

Plants are even sentient to orientation and to the future. Frontier men and hunters in the prairies of the Mississippi Valley discovered a sunflower plant, *Silphium laciniatum*, whose leaves accurately indicate the points of the compass. Indian licorice, or *Arbrus precatorius*, is so keenly sensitive to all forms of electrical and magnetic influences it is used as a weather plant. Botanists who first experimented with it in London’s Kew Gardens found in it a means for predicting cyclones, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

So accurate are alpine flowers about the seasons, they know when spring is coming and bore their way up through lingering snowbanks, developing their own heat with which to melt the snow...

Whereas plants have been almost universally looked upon as senseless automata, they have now been found to be able to distinguish between sounds inaudible to the human ear and color wavelengths such as infra-red and ultraviolet invisible to the human eye; they are specially

sensitive to X-rays and to the high frequency of television... (Introduction, pp. vii-xii).

If a plant is threatened with overwhelming danger or damage, Backster (a scientist) observed that it reacts self-defensively in a way similar to an opossum — or, indeed, to a human being—by “passing out,” or going into a deep faint. The phenomenon was dramatically demonstrated one day when a physiologist from Canada came to Backster’s lab to witness the reaction of his plants. The first plant gave no response whatsoever. Nor did the second; nor the third Backster checked his polygraph instruments, and tried a fourth and a fifth plant; still no success. Finally, on the sixth, there was enough reaction to demonstrate the phenomenon.

Curious to discover what could have influenced the other plants, Backster asked: “Does any part of your work involve harming plants?”

“Yes,” the physiologist replied. “I terminate the plants I work with. I put them in an oven and roast them to obtain their dry weight for my analysis.”

To see if a plant could display memory, a scheme was devised whereby Backster was to try to identify the

secret killer of one of two plants. Six of Backster's polygraph students volunteered for the experiment, some of them veteran policemen. Blindfolded, the students drew from a hat folded slips of paper, on one of which were instructions to root up, stamp on, and thoroughly destroy one of two plants in a room. The criminal was to commit the crime in secret; neither Backster nor any of the other students was to know his identity; only the second plant would be a witness.

By attaching the surviving plant to a polygraph and parading the students one by one before it, Backster was able to establish the culprit. Sure enough, the plant gave no reaction to five of the students, but caused the meter to go wild whenever the actual culprit approached. Backster was careful to point out that the plant could have picked up and reflected the guilt feelings of the culprit; but as the villain had acted in the interests of science, and was not particularly guilty, it left the possibility that a plant could remember and recognize the source of severe harm to its fellow.

In another series of observations, Backster noted that a special communion or bond of affinity ap-

peared to be created between a plant and its keeper, unaffected by distance. With the use of synchronized stop-watches, Backster was able to note that his plants continued to react to his thought and attention from the next room, from down the hall, even from several buildings away. Back from a fifteen-mile trip to New Jersey, Backster was able to establish that his plants had perked up and shown definite and positive signs of response—whether it was relief or welcome he could not tell—at the very moment he had decided to return to New York” – Au.

But perhaps the most interesting for someone with a flare of biology, and a doubter of the theory of evolution would be the latest finding that plants seem to be capable of rectifying gene errors:

“Challenging a scientific law of inheritance that has stood for 150 years, scientists say plants sometimes select better bits of DNA in order to develop normally even when they inherited genetic flaws from their predecessors.

In the Purdue experiment, researchers found that a plant belonging to the mustard and watercress family sometimes corrects the genetic code it inherited from its flawed parents

[65] *Had We wished, We could have broken it into broken orts, and you would be left wondering³⁴..*

لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ حُطَامًا فَظَلَلْتُمْ تَفَكَّهُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

[66] *'We are indeed debt-ridden.*

إِنَّا لَمُعْرِمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

[67] *Nay, We have been denied.³⁵*

بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُومُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

[68] *Have you considered the water that you drink?*

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

[69] *Is it you who send it down from the clouds, or are We the Sender?³⁶*

أَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْزِلُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

and grows normally like its unflawed grandparents and other ancestors.

Researchers found that in 10 percent of *Arabidopsis thaliana* plants with two copies of a mutant gene called "hothead" didn't always blossom with deformed flowers like their parents, which carried the mutant genes. Instead, those plants had normal white flowers like their grandparents, which didn't carry the hothead gene. So the deformity appeared only for a single, previous generation." (JOSEPH B. VERRENGIA, Yahoo News (Au.).

34. This is how Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and Qatadah understood the word "*tafakkahoon*" though there have been other (minor) opinions (Ibn Jarir).

35. That is, this is what you would have said in frustration if Allah had

broken the seed into broken orts (Au.).

36. How rain drops form, i.e., as large as about 6-8 mm in dia., has been a mystery, since the droplets must necessarily fall off the clouds because of gravitational force, even when of dia. 2-3mm. Now with a new instrument, scientists have effectively reached into the clouds, revealing that a process they call cloud-stirring leads to the rainfall.

"As water vapor rises from the surfaces of the oceans and other bodies of water, it begins to cool off. This cooling causes condensation, which transforms the vapor into tiny water droplets — that form clouds — with diameters smaller than the width of a human hair. These droplets are far too small to fall as raindrops, which are typically at least a millimeter

[70] Had We wished, We could have made it bitter. So, only if you would give thanks.³⁷

لَوْ نَشَاءُ جَعَلْنَاهُ أُجَاجًا فَلَوْلَا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

[71] Have you considered the fire you kindle?³⁸

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ النَّارَ الَّتِي تُورُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

[72] Is it you who produced its tree,³⁹ or are We the Producer?

أَأَنْتُمْ أَنْشَأْتُمْ شَجَرَتَهَا أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنشِئُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

across and a million times heavier. To balloon to raindrop size, the droplets need to collide and stick together.

Past studies have relied on computer simulations of the rain-making process. These showed that once the itsy-bitsy droplets materialized inside the clouds, they turned into raindrops in one or two hours. In the real world, however, rain can start to fall within 15 minutes of cloud formation. Something must be speeding up the mergers of tiny droplets, which are so light they float around in clouds and often easily avoid the collisions necessary to make rain.

One way to speed the coalescence of droplets is to stir them up. If you stir up the droplets, they will more readily collide with one another.

It is now found that that droplets boasting larger-than-raindrop sizes in sinking pockets of air are found at the tops of clouds. This implies mixing occurs at the cloud edges, a support for the process of entrainment.

But that doesn't completely rule out turbulence" (LiveScienc.com) - Au.

37. Water is a miracle, in the truest sense of the word; for details see *Surah al-A`raf*, note 22.

38. The Prophet has said about this world's fire:

« نَارُكُمْ جُزْءٌ مِنْ سَبْعِينَ جُزْءًا مِنْ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ ». قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، إِنَّكَ لَكَافِيَةٌ . قَالَ « فُضِّلْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِتِسْعَةٍ وَسِتِّينَ جُزْءًا ، كُلُّهُمْ مِثْلُ حَرِّهَا »

"Your fire is one-seventieth part of the fire of Hell." It was said, "Messenger of Allah, it would have sufficed as it is." He replied, "It has been made more intense by sixty-nine times, each of them of the same intensity as it is now" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

39. "The relation of Fire to Trees is intimate. In nearly all the fire that we bum, the fuel is derived from the wood of trees. Even mineral coal is nothing but the wood of prehistoric forests petrified under the earth through geological ages" (Yusuf Ali).

[73] We made it a reminder⁴⁰ and a provision for the wayfarers.⁴¹

نَحْنُ جَعَلْنَاهَا تَذْكِرَةً وَمَتَاعًا لِلْمُقْوِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾

[74] Therefore, chant the glory of your Lord, the Supreme.⁴²

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٤﴾

40. That is, the fire of the world is a reminder for the Fire of the Hereafter (Ibn Jarir, Razi).

41. The word “*muqween*” carries several other meanings (Ibn Jarir and others).

Asad explains: “The participial noun *muqw* is derived from the verb *qawiya*, ‘it became deserted’ or ‘desolate’. From the same root is derived the noun *qawaa* (or *qiwaa*) which signifies ‘desert’, ‘wilderness’ or ‘wasteland’ as well as ‘hunger’ or ‘starvation’. Hence *muqw* denotes ‘one who is hungry’ as well as ‘one who is lost [or “who wanders”] in a deserted place.’”

42. Although the following quote is slightly off the mark, stopping at Nature, rather than proceeding to God, it could still be read with profit and applied with success to the study of the Qur’ān as well. It is from a lecture delivered by a botanist Burbank on “How to Produce new Fruits and Flowers”: “In pursuing the study of any of the universal and everlasting

laws of nature, whether relating to the life, growth, structure and movement of a giant planet, the tiniest plant or of the psychological movements of the human brain, some conditions are necessary before we can become one of nature’s interpreters or the creator of any valuable work for the world. Preconceived notions, dogmas and all personal prejudice and bias should be laid aside. Listen patiently, quietly and reverently to the lessons one by one, which Mother Nature has to teach, shedding light on that which was before a mystery, so that all who will, may see and know. She conveys her truths only to those who are passive and receptive. Accepting these truths as suggested, wherever they may lead, then we have the whole universe in harmony with us. At last man has found a solid foundation for science, having discovered that he is part of a universe which is eternally unstable in form, eternally immutable in substance.”

[75] Nay, I swear by the falling of the stars.⁴³

فَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ ﴿٧٥﴾

[76] And, it is a solemn oath, if you but knew.

وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لِّوَيْتَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٧٦﴾

[77] It is surely a Noble Qur`ān.

إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾

[78] In a well-guarded⁴⁴ Book.⁴⁵

فِي كِتَابٍ مَّكْنُونٍ ﴿٧٨﴾

The author follows up with another quote from another scientist called Fechner. It reads: “it is a dark and cold world we sit in if we will not open the inward eyes of the spirit to the inward flame of nature.” (The Secret Life of Plants, Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, Rupa Publications, 2006).

43. Depending on how “*nujum*” is understood, the translation can vary. Ibn `Abbas thought that the allusion is to the fact of the Qur`ān being sent down “munajjam” and hence the word meaning of “*nujum*” is “separately, in parts, etc.” However, Mujahid, Qatadah (and Hasan: Ibn Kathir) have adopted the preferred meaning of “*nujum*” as “stars” and of “*mawaaqi`*” as their falling, (or their locations: Ibn Kathir) which will happen at the final Hour (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Most commentators see the legitimacy of both the explanations (Au.).

Asad expounds: “The term *mawqi`* (of which *mawaaqi`* is the plural) denotes the ‘time [or ‘place’ or ‘manner’] at which something comes down.’ Although many of the commentator think that the phrase ‘*mawaaqi` annujoom*’ relates to the break-up of the stars at the Last Hour. Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah and Suddi were definitely of the opinion, strongly supported by the subsequent verses, that this phrase refers to the step-by-step revelation of – or coming down in parts (*nujum*) – of the Qur`ān .. By ‘calling to witness’ the gradual manner of its revelation, the Qur`ān points implicitly to the astounding fact that it has remained free of all inconsistencies and inner contradictions (cf. 4: 82..) despite all the dramatic changes in the Prophet’s life during the twenty-three years of the ‘unfolding’ of the divine writ: and this explains, too, the subsequent parenthetic clause (verse 76).”

44. “*Maknoon*” has two possible meanings: (a) hidden, and, (b) well-

[79] Touch it not but the purified.⁴⁶

لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

[80] A sending down by the Lord of the worlds.

تَنْزِيلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

guarded. Both fit the noun that they qualify (Au.).

the Qur'ān but he who is in a state of purity.”

45. The allusion by the Book is to the *Lawh al-Mahfuz* (Razi).

Ibn Kathir adds that the chain of narrators of this report is questionable.

46. The allusion is to the Book in the heavens which none touches but angels (Ibn `Abbas, Sa`eed b. Jubayr, `Ikrimah, Mujahid and others: Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Shawkani and Alusi quote from Hakim's Mustadrak that once when Salman al-Farsi was requested by some acquaintances to recite the Qur'ān for them, and offered to make wudu, he said that there was no need for ablution since he was, after all, not going to touch the mushaf.

The pagans alleged that the Qur'ān is a Satanic revelation. Allah refuted them by saying that only the purified (angels) touch it, never the devils (Sayyid).

We might add here that there are other *ahadith* that confirm the Prophet's directive. One is as follows:

Nonetheless, in view of a few *ahadith*, some scholars have said that the written Qur'ān may not be touched but by those in a state of purity, (i.e., those in wudu: Au.). One *hadith* is in Imām Malik's Muwatta':

عن عبد الله بن عمر أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: لا يمس القرآن إلا طاهر. رواه الطبراني في الكبير والصغير ورجاله موثقون (مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ بْنِ خَزِمٍ. أَنَّ فِي الْكِتَابِ الَّذِي كَتَبَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- يَعْمُرُو بَنِي خَزِمٍ «أَنْ لَا يَمَسَّ الْقُرْآنَ إِلَّا طَاهِرٌ». - (موطأ مالك)

`Abdullah ibn `Umar reported, as recorded by Tabarani in two of his books, that the Prophet said, "Let none but a person in a purified state touch the Qur'ān." Another report in Tabarani, which is quite trustworthy, says,

`Abdullah b. Abi Bakr al-Hazm reported that in the letter that the Prophet wrote to `Amr b. Hazm, he mentioned), "Let none touch

وعن المغيرة بن شعبة قال: قال عثمان بن أبي العاص وكان شاباً وفدنا على رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فوجدوني أفضلهم أخذاً للقرآن وقد فضلتهم بسورة البقرة فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قد أمرتك على أصحابك وأنت أصغرهم ولا تمس القرآن إلا وأنت طاهر. قلت رواه الطبراني في الكبير في جملة حديث طويل فيما تجب فيه الزكاة، وفيه إسماعيل بن رافع ضعفه يحيى بن معين والنسائي وقال البخاري ثقة مقارب الحديث. (مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

Uthman b. Abi al-`Aas, who was a young man then said, "We went up to the Prophet as a delegation. They found me – although the youngest - as the most learned of the Qur`ān and given preference because of my memorization of *Surah al-Baqarah*. The Prophet told me, 'I place you as the Imām of your group although you are the youngest of them. Now, do not touch the Qur`ān unless you are in a state of purity'" (Au.).

The great majority have believed that none but a "taahir" may touch the mushaf such as, Ibn Mas`ud, Sa`d b. Waqqas, Sa`eed ibn Zayd, `Ataa, Zuhri, Nakha`ee, Hakam, Hammad, Malik, Shafe`ee and others. One of the two opinions of Abu Haneefah is that one could touch the outer cover, the sides, or areas that do not carry

the original text (Qurtubi).

Fiqh Rules and Aadaab

Alusi writes that one may not recite the Qur`ān with a stinking mouth. It is makruh to do so. It is also recommended that the recitation of the Qur`ān is done in a clean place, the reciter facing the *Qiblah*, reciting with complete presence of mind, from a state of complete self-composure, reciting unhurriedly, pondering over the meanings, in a pleasant tone and weeping or with a humble, heartbroken face. He is also directed not to place the mushaf close by during intercourse, unless it is covered, not place any other book on top of it and not turn its pages with a finger wetted with saliva.

Those were the aadaab. Except for the Maliki school of thought, all others agree that the Qur`ān should not be touched from a state of impurity, major or minor, and that if someone who is reading it, and is not in ablution, may use a piece of wood or some such artifact to turn its pages. Malikiyyah make the exception that if it is a Qur`ānic class, then girl-students may recite the Qur`ān before a teacher, even if they are undergoing the cycle, for the fear that they might forget what they have so far memorized. Otherwise, all schools agree

[81] What, do you treat this discourse⁴⁷ with indifference?⁴⁸

أَفِيْهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَنْتُمْ مُدْهِنُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

[82] And make (it) your thanks that you should cry lies⁴⁹

وَتَجْعَلُونَ رِزْقَكُمْ أَنْتُمْ تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

that a woman undergoing menstruation, or a man or woman who has had intercourse may not recite the Qur'an, not even from memory, without a ritual bath, far from touching it. However, the above applies to masaahif and not to other religious books which contain Qur'anic quotations. Someone in a state of major or minor impurity, may read such materials, but take care not to place a finger on the Qur'anic Arabic text. This would also apply to such *Tafsir* works that contain more of explanatory notes than Qur'an text. They are not masaahif per se. That said, it is for extreme circumstances, otherwise, it is not at all advisable – for men - that they should read a religious text containing Qur'anic Arabic texts while in the state of major impurity (Au.).

47. The textual word "*hadeeth*" has both the connotations of "discourse" as well as "new." The Qur'an – although Qadeem - is new in two senses: when compared to older revelations, and, for the fact that whenever it is recited, it sounds new, which every Arabic knowing person has no

difficulty acknowledging (based on Razi's long note).

48. The translation reflects one connotation of the word, which has Zamakhshari's backing. But, as usual, and as shown by Razi and others, many other meanings and interpretations are possible (such as "disdain") without any conflict between them (Au.).

49. That is, your denial of the Qur'an, seems to be your way of giving thanks for the provision bestowed on you (Shawkani, quoting Wahidi).

There are instances of the word "*shukr*" used in the sense of provision. 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and Ibn 'Abbas held this opinion (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir). The opinion of Ibn 'Abbas is in Bukhari (Au.).

In fact, adds Ibn Jarir, there is a *hadith* to this effect:

عَنْ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- « (وَتَجْعَلُونَ رِزْقَكُمْ أَنْتُمْ تُكَذِّبُونَ) قَالَ شُكْرُكُمْ تَقُولُونَ مُطِرْنَا يَتَوَّ كَذَا وَكَذَا وَبَنَجْمَ كَذَا وَكَذَا ». قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ غَرِيبٌ

صَحِيحٌ لَا تَعْرِفُهُ مَرْفُوعًا إِلَّا مِنْ حَدِيثِ إِسْرَائِيلَ.

The Prophet said in reference to the *Ayah*, “Your thanks (of this reference) is that you say ‘We have been rained because of the moon falling into a certain sphere, or because of such and such a star.’”

A third opinion – as expressed by Hasan (al-Busri) – was, “Evil are a people who drew no (spiritual) provision from the Qur`ān but denial” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani in parts and Alusi).

Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and Alusi add a few more *ahadith* on the nature of disbelief in Allah through attribution of an independent role to nature and natural laws:

عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ خَالِدٍ الْجُهَنِيِّ أَنَّهُ قَالَ صَلَّى لَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- صَلَاةَ الصُّبْحِ بِالْحُدَيْبِيَّةِ عَلَى إِثْرِ سَمَاءٍ كَانَتْ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَلَمَّا انْصَرَفَ أَقْبَلَ عَلَى النَّاسِ فَقَالَ « أَتَدْرُونَ مَاذَا قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ». قَالُوا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ « قَالَ أَصْبَحَ مِنْ عِبَادِي مُؤْمِنٌ بِي وَكَافِرٌ بِي فَأَمَّا مَنْ قَالَ مُطِرْنَا بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَتِهِ فَذَلِكَ مُؤْمِنٌ بِي كَافِرٌ بِالْكَوْكَبِ وَأَمَّا مَنْ قَالَ مُطِرْنَا بِنُورٍ كَذَا وَكَذَا فَذَلِكَ كَافِرٌ بِي مُؤْمِنٌ بِالْكَوْكَبِ ». (موطأ مالك)

Zayd b. Khalid al-Juhani reports: One day in Hudaybiyyah the Prophet offered the *Fajr* Prayers under a sky that had rained the previous night. When he was

through with the Prayers he turned to the people and said, “Do you know what says your Lord?” They said, “Allah and His Messenger know best.” He said, “He says, ‘Some of My slaves became believers by the morning, while others became unbelievers in Me. As for him who said, ‘We were rained by Allah’s grace and His mercy’ are believers in Me and disbelievers in stars. As for those who said, ‘We received rain because of the position of the stars (in the heavens)’ – he is the one who disbelieved in Me and believed in stars.’”

The *hadith* is in *Sahih* works also. Another *hadith* puts it slightly differently. It is in Muslim. The Prophet said,

عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- قَالَ « مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ بَرَكَةٍ إِلَّا أَصْبَحَ فَرِيقٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ بِهَا كَافِرِينَ يُنْزِلُ اللَّهُ الْعَيْثَ فَيَقُولُونَ الْكَوْكَبُ كَذَا وَكَذَا »

“Allah does not send down a grace from the heaven but a group of people become unbelievers. Allah sends down the rain but they say, ‘(It happened) because of such and such a star.’”

It is reported that `Umar offered Prayers for rains and then asked

[83] Then, why is it not that when it reaches the throat,⁵⁰

فَلَوْلَا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلُقُومَ ﴿٨٣﴾

[84] And at that moment you are looking on.

وَأَنْتُمْ حِينِيذٍ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

[85] We⁵¹ are closer to him than you, but you see not.

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَبْصُرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

[86] Why not then, if you are not to be held accountable?⁵²

فَلَوْلَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِينِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

[87] bring it back⁵³ if you are truthful.

تَرْجِعُونَهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

[88] Then, if he is of those drawn nigh.

فَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾

`Abbas as to how many days were left - according to the Jahiliyy star-based calculations - for it to rain, if it would. `Abbas replied that by those calculations seven days were left. But it rained before the seventh day and `Umar remarked, "This is by Allah's grace" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

50. That is, at the time of death.

51. By "we" the reference is to angels (Ibn Jarir). As Allah said in another place:

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمْ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفَرِّطُونَ. ثُمَّ رُدُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمْ الْحَقَّ لَا لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَهُوَ أَسْرَعُ الْحَاسِبِينَ [الأنعام/٦١، ٦٢]

i.e., "He is the Irresistible, Supreme over His slaves and appoints over you (angels as) guard-

ians, till, when death comes upon one of you, Our messengers take away his soul and they fail not. Then they are restored to Allah, their true Protector. Lo! The judgment is His and He is the swiftest of reckoners."

52. The word "deen" can be alternatively translated as "resurrection."

The argument is, if you deny Hereafter as the permanent abode, then, this life should be of permanent nature. So, why do you not bring back the soul to abide forever? (Razi).

53. That is, bring back the soul. The challenge remains unanswered to this day when every cell in a human body has been – so to say – analyzed and understood for its character and function. But the scientists prefer never to talk about the soul (Au.).

[89] Then, comfort⁵⁴ and fragrance,⁵⁵ and a garden of delight.⁵⁶

فَرُوحٌ وَرِيحَانٌ وَجَنَّةٌ نَعِيمٌ ﴿٨٩﴾

[90] And, if he is a Companion of the Right.

وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٩٠﴾

54. Alternative meanings for the word “*rawh*” are: coolness, mercy, comfort, bliss, etc. (Ibn Jarir, Razi Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Razi and Alusi point to another usage of the word in the Qur’ān in the sense of mercy,

وَلَا تَيْئَسُوا مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يَيْئَسُ مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ [يوسف/٨٧]

i.e., “Do not despair of Allah’s mercy. Surely, none despairs of Allah’s mercy but an unbelieving people.”

55. Alternative meanings for the words “*rayhaan*” are: ease, provision, etc. (Ibn Jarir, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Many commentators point out that the allusion could be to the fragrant (leaves, flowers, etc.: Razi, Qurtubi) that the angels carry with them when taking the soul of the righteous. This explains, as it has been experienced, the fragrance that the corpses of some believers emit immediately after death, lasting quite a while (Au.).

Ibn Kathir offers a few *ahadith* at this point in reference to the happenings at death; but not very trustworthy. One of them, although which Haythami did not look at kindly, has its confirmation from other sources. It is in Ahmed:

عَطَاءُ بْنُ السَّائِبِ قَالَ إِنَّ أَوَّلَ يَوْمٍ عَرَفْتُ فِيهِ عَبْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي لَيْلَى رَأَيْتُ شَيْخاً أبيضَ الرَّأْسِ وَاللِّحْيَةِ عَلَى جِمَارٍ وَهُوَ يَتَنَبَّأُ جَنَازَةً فَسَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ حَدَّثَنِي فَلَانُ بْنُ فَلَانٍ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- يَقُولُ « مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ أَحَبَّ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ وَمَنْ كَرِهَ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ كَرِهَ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ ». قَالَ فَأَكْتَبَ الْقَوْمُ يَبْكُونَ فَقَالَ « مَا يَبْكِيكُمْ ». قَالُوا إِنَّا نَكْرَهُ الْمَوْتَ. قَالَ « لَيْسَ ذَلِكَ وَلَكِنَّهُ إِذَا حَضَرَ (فَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ فَرُوحٌ وَرِيحَانٌ وَجَنَّةٌ نَعِيمٌ) فَإِذَا بُشِّرَ بِذَلِكَ أَحَبَّ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لِلْقَائِدِ أَحَبُّ (وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُكَذَّبِينَ الضَّالِّينَ فَتُرْلُ مِنْ حَيِّمٍ) ».

‘Ataa’ b. Saa’ib said that the first time he knew who ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn abi Layla was when he saw an old man, white-haired in head and beard, on a donkey behind a coffin. I heard him say, “So and so narrated to me from the Prophet that, ‘He who loves to meet Allah, Allah also loves to

[91] Then, 'Peace be upon you,'⁵⁷ (O you) of the Companions of Right.⁵⁸

فَسَلَامٌ لَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٩١﴾

[92] But if he was of those who cried lies, and of the erring ones.

وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٩٢﴾

[93] Then (for him there is) hospitality of boiling water.

فَتُرْجَلُ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ ﴿٩٣﴾

[94] And roasting in Hell.

وَتَصْلِيَةُ جَحِيمٍ ﴿٩٤﴾

[95] Surely, this is the ascertained truth.

إِنَّ هَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٩٥﴾

meet him. While he who dislikes meeting Allah, Allah too dislikes meeting him.” At that the people began to weep. He asked, “What made you weep?” They said, “All of us hate to die.” He said, “That’s not what is meant. But rather, it applies to the time death arrives, as Allah said (‘Then, if he is of those drawn nigh; then, comfort and fragrance, and a garden of delight’). When he is given this glad tidings he wishes to meet Him while Allah is more loving of meeting him. But (‘But if he was of those who cried lies, and of the erring ones, then (for him there is) hospitality of boiling water; and roasting in Hell’).”

See *Surah Ibrahim, Ayah 27* of this work for a few other relevant *ahadith* (Au.).

56. Three rewards have been mentioned against three qualities of a true believer: belief in the *kalimah tayyibah*, pronouncement of it, and, a life confirming with its demands (Razi).

57. The true meaning is, be in peace against any fear of punishment on this Day (Razi, Qurtubi). The allusion could be to Salam at different points of time such as, at death, at the time Munkar and Nakeer arrive, and thirdly, when resurrected (Qurtubi).

58. Alternatively, “And, if he is a Companion of the Right, then, ‘Peace be upon you, from the Companions of Right,” where the allusion is to angels, wishing him, as they stand at his right side (from Ibn Jarir, slightly abridged, combined and modified).

[96] Therefore, chant the glory of your Lord,
the Supreme.⁵⁹

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٩٦﴾

59. Do not pay attention to the attitude of the unbelievers. That will make you unhappy. Instead, keep yourself busy in chanting Allah's glory. That is a good way of preparing yourself for the journey to the Hereafter, and avoiding the chagrin caused by the debaucheries of the unbelievers and the ungodly (Shab-bir).

What is the difference between العَظِيم and الأَعْلَى ? Imām Razi explains (at *Ayah* 74) that العَظِيم indicates (an entity at) close (quarters), while الأَعْلَى indicates (an entity at a) distance.

Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani and Alusi offer the following *hadith* in reference to this last verse:

عَنْ عُقْبَةَ بْنِ عَامِرٍ قَالَ لَمَّا تَرَلْتُ (فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ) قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- «

اجْعَلُوهَا فِي رُكُوعِكُمْ». فَلَمَّا تَرَلْتُ (سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى) قَالَ «اجْعَلُوهَا فِي سُجُودِكُمْ».

“When these words were revealed,

(فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ)

the Prophet said, ‘place it in your ruku` (deep bow).’ And when the *Ayah* of *Surah al-A`laa* was revealed,

(سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى)

he said, ‘place it in your sujood.’”

The *hadith* was declared weak by Tirmidhi, although also found in Abu Da`ud, Nasa'i, and Ibn Majah (Ibn Kathir).

Haythami made no comment on it. However, both Ibn Hibban as well as Hakim placed this *hadith* in their *Sahih* works (Au.). مَقْتَضٍ



Surah 57
Al-Hadid

Madinan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Whatever is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah;¹ and He is the All-mighty, the All-wise.

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١﴾

[2] His is the dominion of the heavens and the earth: He gives life² and deals death. He has power over all things.

لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ
وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢﴾

[3] He is the First³ and the Last,⁴ the Manifest⁵ and the Hidden;⁶ and He is of all things knowing.⁷

هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ وَهُوَ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

1. The glorification is both in verbal as well as virtual sense (Shabbir). Primarily, “*tasbih*” is declaration of freedom from any weakness which can be associated with Allah (Razi).

2. For instance, He gives life to a lifeless package of protein which comes alive as soon as it enters into a cell, thereafter called a virus (Au.).

3. That is, He is the First before whom there was no first (Ibn Jarir). To be sure, He precedes Time which is one of His creations (Alusi).

4. That is, He is the Last, who will last, after whom there can be none. As He said,

كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ. (القصص: ٨٨)

“Everything will perish except His Face.” (Ibn Jarir).

5. “*Al-Zahir*” – He who is apparent by means of the evidences. It has also been understood as meaning, ‘He who is above all, one who overcomes all’ (Zamakhshari); as in another verse of the Qur’ān,

نَاصِبًا ظَاهِرِينَ (الصف: ١٤)

“Then they became the overcomers” (Razi).

6. “*Al-Batin*” – because He is beyond the perception of all human senses (Zamakhshari). Thus, Allah is “*Zahir*” when sought through physical, perceptual evidences, and “*Batin*” when sought through conceptual senses (Alusi).

The following *hadith*, found in *Muslim*, *Tirmidhi*, *Musnad Ahmad* and others offers some explanation to the Attributes as mentioned here:

عَنْ سُهَيْلٍ قَالَ كَانَ أَبُو صَالِحٍ يَأْمُرُنَا إِذَا
أَرَادَ أَحَدُنَا أَنْ يَنَامَ أَنْ يَضْطَجِعَ عَلَى شِقِّهِ
الْأَيْمَنِ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ «اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَرَبَّ الْأَرْضِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ رَبَّنَا
وَرَبَّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَالِقَ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَى وَمُنْزِلَ
التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْفُرْقَانِ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ أَلْتَأَخِذُ بِنَاصِيَتِهِ اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ
الْأَوَّلُ فَلَيْسَ قَبْلَكَ شَيْءٌ وَأَنْتَ الْآخِرُ فَلَيْسَ
بَعْدَكَ شَيْءٌ وَأَنْتَ الظَّاهِرُ فَلَيْسَ فَوْقَكَ شَيْءٌ
وَأَنْتَ الْبَاطِنُ فَلَيْسَ دُونَكَ شَيْءٌ أَقْضِ عَنَّا
الدَّيْنَ وَأَغْنِنَا مِنَ الْفَقْرِ». وَكَانَ يَرَوِي ذَلِكَ
عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ-

Suhayl said that Abu Saleh used to instruct them that when one of us goes to bed he should lie on his right side and say, “O Allah, Lord of the heavens and the earth, Lord of the *Arsh*,

and Lord of every thing. O You the splitter of the dawn and the seed, Revealer of *Torah*, *Njil* and *Furqan*: I seek Your shelter from every evil thing that you hold by its forelock. O Allah, You are the First so that there is nothing before You; and You are the Last so that there is nothing after You. You are the Manifest so that there is nothing above You and You are the Hidden so that there is nothing beyond You. O Allah, remove our debts from us and save us from poverty.”

(Suhayl added), “He (Abu Saleh) used to narrate to us through Abu Hurayrah, who reported from the Prophet” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Alusi points out that, according to reports in *Muslim* and others, the Prophet suggested the same supplicatory words to Fatimah when she had gone to him seeking a housemaid. And, it is possible that when he said,

رَأَيْتَ الْبَاطِنُ فَلَيْسَ دُونَكَ شَيْءٌ

The Prophet meant, “there is nothing closer than You.”

Thus, and although we have offered a literal translation of the Attributes *Al-Zahir* and *Al-Batin*, they have been understood differently by dif-

ferent people. We also have Azhari explaining in the same vein. He said,

قَالَ الْأَزْهَرِيُّ يُقَالُ ظَهَرْتُ عَلَى فُلَانٍ إِذَا غَلَبْتَهُ . وَالْمَعْنَى هُوَ الْغَالِبُ الَّذِي يَغْلِبُ وَلَا يَغْلِبُ وَيَتَصَرَّفُ فِي الْمُكُونَاتِ عَلَى سَبِيلِ الْعَلَبَةِ وَالْأَسْتِيْلَاءِ أَوْ لَيْسَ فَوْقَهُ أَحَدٌ يَمْتَنِعُهُ، وَالْبَاطِنُ هُوَ الَّذِي لَا مَلْجَأَ وَلَا مَنَاجَا دُونَهُ. كَذَا فِي الْمِرْقَاةِ (تُحْفَةُ الْأَحْوَذِيِّ)

(The words *Al-Zahir* is understood in the sense of overcoming someone). So the meaning is: He is the One who overcomes all, Himself overcome by none. He conducts Himself by overpowering His subjects and subjugating them. Or, it may be said that there is none above Him to prevent Him (from doing anything). And *Al-Batin* is someone besides whom there is no shelter or refuge. The source is *Tuhfa* who took it from (Mulla `Ali Qari's *Mirqat*) – Au.

7. Ibn Kathir and Shawkani pick up a *hadith* from Abu Da'ud (as also cited by Alusi) relevant to this *Ayah* but whose authenticity could not be traced. It says that,

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو زُمَيْلٍ قَالَ سَأَلْتُ ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ فَقُلْتُ مَا شَيْءٌ أَحَدُهُ فِي صَدْرِي قَالَ مَا هُوَ قُلْتُ وَاللَّهِ مَا أَتَكَلَّمُ بِهِ. قَالَ فَقَالَ لِي أَشْيَاءٌ مِنْ شَيْءٍ قَالَ وَضَحِكْتُ. قَالَ مَا نَجَا مِنْ ذَلِكَ

أَحَدٌ - قَالَ - حَتَّى أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ { فَإِنْ كُنْتَ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ فَسْأَلِ الَّذِينَ يُقْرَأُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ } (يونس: ٩٤) الْآيَةَ، قَالَ فَقَالَ لِي إِذَا وَجَدْتَ فِي نَفْسِكَ شَيْئًا فَقُلْ { هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ وَهُوَ يَكْلِي شَيْءٌ عَالِمٌ } (الحديد: ٣)

Abu Zumayl mentioned to Ibn `Abbas, "What is this that I find in my heart?" He asked, "What is it?" I said, "I shall not speak it out." He asked, "Is it of the nature of a doubt?" Then he smiled and said, "Nobody ever escaped it," and added, "to the extent that Allah revealed the verse (10: 94): 'Now, if you are in any doubt about what We have sent down to you, then ask those of them before you who recite the Book.' He ended by saying, "When you feel something of this sort in your heart, say, 'He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden; and He is of all things knowing.'"

Alusi and Shawkani point out that Abu al-Sheikh's collection has the Prophet saying,

عن ابن عمر وأبي سعيد رضي الله عنهم عن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال: لا يزال الناس يسألون عن كل شيء حتى يقولوا هذا الله كان قبل كل شيء فماذا كان قبل الله

فإن قالوا لكم ذلك فقولوا هو الأول قبل كل شيء فليس بعده شيء وهو الظاهر فوق كل شيء وهو الباطن دون كل شيء وهو بكل شيء عليم: (العظمة - أبو الشيخ)

“People will keep asking about everything until they will say, ‘Al-right. This is Allah. He was there before everything else. But what was there before Allah?’ If that is said to you, say,

هو الأول قبل كل شيء فليس بعده شيء وهو الظاهر فوق كل شيء وهو الباطن دون كل شيء وهو بكل شيء عليم

‘He is the First before everything and nothing is there after Him. He is the Manifest above everything and He is the Hidden behind everything; and He is the Knower of all things.’”

Ibn Kathir quotes another *hadith* relevant to this *Ayah*. It is in *Tirmidhi* and a few other books but declared weak by *Tirmidhi* himself because Hasan did not hear directly from Abu Hurayrah. It says,

عَنْ قَتَادَةَ حَدَّثَنَا الْحَسَنُ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ يَنْمُو نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- جَالِسٌ وَأَصْحَابُهُ إِذْ أَتَى عَلَيْهِمْ سَحَابٌ فَقَالَ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- «هَلْ تَدْرُونَ مَا هَذَا». فَقَالُوا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ.

قَالَ «هَذَا الْعَنَانُ هَذِهِ رَوَايَا الْأَرْضِ يَسْئَلُهُ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى إِلَى قَوْمٍ لَا يَشْكُرُونَهُ وَلَا يَدْعُونَهُ». ثُمَّ قَالَ «هَلْ تَدْرُونَ مَا فَوْقَكُمْ». قَالُوا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ «فَإِنَّهَا الرُّقِيعُ سَفْفٌ مَحْفُوظٌ وَمَوْجٌ مَكْفُوفٌ». ثُمَّ قَالَ «هَلْ تَدْرُونَ كَمْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهَا». قَالُوا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ «بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهَا مَسِيرَةُ خَمْسِمِائَةِ سَنَةٍ». ثُمَّ قَالَ «هَلْ تَدْرُونَ مَا فَوْقَ ذَلِكَ». قَالُوا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ «فَإِنَّ فَوْقَ ذَلِكَ سَمَاءَيْنِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا مَسِيرَةُ خَمْسِمِائَةِ عَامٍ». حَتَّى عَدَّ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ مَا بَيْنَ كُلِّ سَمَاءَيْنِ كَمَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ. ثُمَّ قَالَ «هَلْ تَدْرُونَ مَا فَوْقَ ذَلِكَ». قَالُوا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ «فَإِنَّ فَوْقَ ذَلِكَ الْعَرْشُ وَبَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ بَعْدُ مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءَيْنِ». ثُمَّ قَالَ «هَلْ تَدْرُونَ مَا الَّذِي تَحْتَكُمْ». قَالُوا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ «فَإِنَّهَا الْأَرْضُ». ثُمَّ قَالَ «هَلْ تَدْرُونَ مَا الَّذِي تَحْتَ ذَلِكَ». قَالُوا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ «فَإِنَّ تَحْتَهَا الْأَرْضَ الْأُخْرَى بَيْنَهُمَا مَسِيرَةُ خَمْسِمِائَةِ سَنَةٍ». حَتَّى عَدَّ سَبْعَ أَرْضَيْنِ بَيْنَ كُلِّ أَرْضَيْنِ مَسِيرَةُ خَمْسِمِائَةِ سَنَةٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ «وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ دَلَيْتُمْ رَجُلًا بِحَبْلِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ السُّفْلَى لَهَبِطَ عَلَى اللَّهِ». ثُمَّ قَرَأَ {هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ} (الحديد: ٣). قَالَ أَبُو عِيْسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ غَرِيبٌ مِنْ هَذَا الْوَجْهِ (سنن الترمذی)

Once, as the Prophet sat in an assembly with his Companions, a cloud passed by. He asked, "Do you know what this is?" They replied, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said, "This is a cloud, a land irrigator. Allah will drive it to a people who do not thank Him and do not supplicate Him." Then he asked, "Do you know what is above you?" They replied, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said, "It is a well preserved vault and the suspended waves. Then he asked, "Do you know how much it is between you and it?" They replied, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said, "Between you and it is (a distance of) five hundred years." Then he asked, "Do you know what is above it?" They replied, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said, "Above it are two firmaments and between them is (the distance of) five hundred years." Then he went on counting and explaining (the distance) between every two firmaments as between the heaven and earth. Then he asked, "Do you know what is above that?" They replied, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said, "Above that is *`Arsh*, and

between it and the firmament is the distance between two firmaments." Then he asked, "Do you have any idea of what is below you?" They replied, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said, "Below it is another earth and (the distance between them) is five hundred years." He went on until he had counted seven earths with five hundred years (of distance) between one earth and another. Then he added, "By Him in whose hand is my life, if you were to let down a man by a rope to the bottom-most earth, he will fall upon Allah." Then he recited, 'He is the First...' until the end.

And, *Tirmidhi* added, by saying, "He will fall upon Allah," he meant, "He will fall upon Allah's Knowledge, His Powers, and His Rule."

A similar *hadith* is in Ahmad, but there the words are "seven hundred years," instead of "five hundred." (Ibn Kathir).

Alusi points out that the verse, "*He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden*," has been used by some *Sufis*, as evidential of "*Wahdat al-Wujud*" (Transcendental Unity of Being). They also call to evidence another *hadith* of *Tirmidhi* which

[4] He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six phases and then assumed istawaa on the `Arsh. He knows what penetrates into the earth⁸ and what emerges out of it; what descends down from the heaven⁹ and what ascends up into it;¹⁰ and He is with you wherever you be;¹¹ and Allah is Seeing of what you do.

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٤﴾

[5] His is the dominion of the heavens and the earth; and to Allah are returned the affairs.

لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٥﴾

speaks of the rope falling on Allah. But the weakness in their arguments is the fact that, firstly, the *hadith* is of the “*mutashabihat*” (uncertain of meaning) and, secondly, “falling upon Allah” has been explained as “falling upon Allah’s knowledge.”

If the *hadith* sounds strange to some, they might remember that modern cosmology tells us that we will never know our world, which, by latest computation 150 billion light years wide (Au.).

8. He has complete knowledge of all things that enter into the earth, whether they are water drops, seeds, or anything else (Au.).

9. He knows of all things that come down such as, revelations, angels, destinies, commandments, snow, rain drops, etc. Earlier we have mentioned in our work that every rain

drop that comes down is accompanied by an angel who sees to it that it reaches the place destined for it by Allah (Ibn Kathir).

10. Plants immediately come to our mind when we think of things emerging from the ground (based on Qurtubi).

To sum up the previous verses: Allah has the knowledge of the whole as well as its parts, the largest and the littlest, the visible and the invisible, the real of the physical world, and the virtual which reside in human hearts (Au.).

Ibn Kathir adds: That is, He knows what angels or deeds rise up to the heavens as says a *Sahih hadith*:

يُرْفَعُ إِلَيْهِ عَمَلُ اللَّيْلِ قَبْلَ عَمَلِ النَّهَارِ وَعَمَلُ النَّهَارِ قَبْلَ عَمَلِ اللَّيْلِ - صحيح مسلم

“The night’s deeds are raised up to Him before the deeds of the day and deeds of the day before deeds of the night.”

11. In other words, wherever you might be, He sees you, hears you and knows what you do. That is, “His being everywhere” refers to His knowledge; as Allah said elsewhere:

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْفِرُونَ شَيْئًا يَهُدَّيْلَهُمْ مَا يُفْتَرُونَ وَمَا
يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّهُ عَلَيْهِ يَدَاتِ الصُّدُورِ (هود: ٥)

“Lo! They fold their breasts that they may hide from Him. Lo! When they fold their clothes (upon themselves) He knows what they conceal and what they reveal. Verily, He is Aware of the inner (secrets) of the hearts” (Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Kathir presents a report which is a combination of two reports, one in Abu Da’ud and another in Bayhaqi and Tabarani, which are *Sahih* as declared by Albani in his *Silsilah*. The Prophet said,

ثَلَاثٌ مَنْ فَعَلَهُنَّ فَقَدْ طَعِمَ طَعْمَ الْإِيمَانِ مَنْ
عَبَدَ اللَّهَ وَحْدَهُ وَأَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَعْطَى
زَكَاةَ مَالِهِ طَيِّبَةً بِهَا نَفْسُهُ رَافِدَةً عَلَيْهِ كُلَّ عَامٍ
وَلَا يُعْطَى الْهَرَمَةَ وَلَا الدَّرَنَةَ وَلَا الْمَرِيضَةَ وَلَا
الشَّرْطَ اللَّيْمَةَ وَلَكِنْ مِنْ وَسَطِ أَمْوَالِكُمْ... وَ
زَكَى نَفْسَهُ، فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ: وَ مَا تَزَكِيَةُ النَّفْسِ؟
فَقَالَ: أَنْ يَعْلَمَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مَعَهُ حَيْثُ
كَانَ.

“Whoever did these three things tasted the sweetness of faith: He worshipped Allah, the One – and indeed there is no deity save Allah – and purified his wealth, with a good heart, helping over it, every year, not giving out the old (cattle), nor the substandard of it, nor the sick one, nor the worst one in yielding milk, but rather from the average type... and (as in other reports), purified himself.” The man inquired, “And what is purification of the self?” The Prophet answered, “He should know that Allah is wherever he is.”

Razi adds: At all events, there is no difference in opinion among the scholars that Allah is not everywhere, and not in all places. He is not in any specific direction, or in any specific place. This *Ayah*, therefore, has to be taken in the allegorical sense, and, once this rule (of allegory) is accepted, it can be applied wherever necessary.

We are forced into an allegorical meaning, because two apparently contradictory statements have been mentioned together: “He assumed *istawa* of the ‘*Arsh*,” and, “He is with you wherever you may be.” (We will do well not to try and reconcile)

yet may remember Abu al-Ma'ali's words who said, "Muhammad (peace be upon him) was nearer to Allah on the night of his nocturnal journey (*laylatu al-isra'*) than Yunus b. Matta was in the belly of the fish" (Qurtubi).

But Alusi warns that the age in which the allegory could be resorted to has gone. It was the time of the *Salaf*. Now, in our times, we will not resort to allegorical meanings but rather, we shall accept as allegorical, only that which the *Salaf* explained as allegorical. As for what they explained as the real meaning, we shall accept as the real meaning.

We have an interesting anecdote in connection with this verse. It is as follows,

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ يَعْلَى قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ ثَعْمَانَ بْنَ حَمَادٍ يَقُولُ: سَمِعْتُ نُوحَ بْنَ أَبِي مَرْثَمٍ يَقُولُ "كُنَّا عِنْدَ أَبِي حَنِيفَةَ، أَوَّلَ مَا ظَهَرَ، إِذْ جَاءَتْهُ امْرَأَةٌ مِنْ بَرْمِدَ، كَانَتْ تُجَالِسُ جَهْمًا، فَدَخَلَتِ الْكُوفَةَ فَأُظِنِّي أَوَّلَ مَا رَأَيْتُ عَلَيْهَا عَشْرَةَ آلَافٍ مِنَ النَّاسِ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى رَأْيِهَا، فَقِيلَ لَهَا: إِنَّ هَاهُنَا رَجُلًا نَظَرَ فِي الْمَعْقُولِ، يُقَالُ لَهُ أَبُو حَنِيفَةَ، فَأَتَتْهُ فَقَالَتْ: أَنْتَ الَّذِي تُعَلِّمُ النَّاسَ الْمَسَائِلَ، وَقَدْ تَرَكْتَ دِينَكَ، أَيْنَ إِلَهَكَ الَّذِي تَعْبُدُهُ؟ فَسَكَتَ عَنْهَا، ثُمَّ مَكَتْ سَبْعَةَ أَيَّامٍ لَا يُجِيبُهَا ثُمَّ خَرَجَ إِلَيْنَا وَقَدْ وَضَعَ كِتَابًا: إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى

فِي السَّمَاءِ دُونَ الْأَرْضِ. فَقَالَ لَهُ رَجُلٌ: ارَأَيْتَ قَوْلَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: "وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ" قَالَ: هُوَ كَمَا تَكْتُبُ إِلَى الرَّجُلِ: إِنِّي مَعَكَ، وَأَنْتَ غَائِبٌ عَنْهُ " (عون المعبود)

Nuh ibn Maryam was heard saying, "We were with Abu Hanifah when he first appeared (in Kufah) when a woman came down to him from Tirmidh. She used to attend the assemblies of Jahm (b. Safwan, founder of the Jahmiyy sect: Au.). When she entered Kufah, I believe ten thousand people adopted her opinions. She was told, 'There is a man here, a rationalist, called Abu Hanifah.' So she visited him and said, 'Are you the one who teaches Law to the people, and have abandoned your religion? Tell me: where is your Deity that you worship?' He remained silent and remained so for seven days not answering her. Then one day he came to us, dropped down a book and said, 'Allah is in the heavens and not on the earth.' Someone said, 'Have you considered Allah's words, 'He is with you?'" Abu Hanifah answered, "Those words are in the same sense as when you write to a friend of yours (in trouble), 'I am with you' although he is away from you."

[6] He makes the night enter the day and the day enter the night;¹² and He is Aware of what is there in the breasts.

يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي
الَّيْلِ وَهُوَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٦﴾

[7] Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and expend out of that in which He has made you successors.¹³ Those then, who believed from among you, and expended, for them there is a great reward.

آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَأَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا جَعَلَكُمْ
مُسْتَخْلَفِينَ فِيهِ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ
وَأَنْفَقُوا لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿٧﴾

[8] And what is (the matter) with you that you believe not in Allah while the Messenger is inviting you to believe in your Lord,¹⁴ and He has taken your compact¹⁵ – if you will be believers?¹⁶

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ
يَدْعُوكُمْ لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ وَقَدْ أَخَذَ
مِيثَاقَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨﴾

12. The allusion is to the lengthening and shortening of the day and night (Ibn Jarir).

يَقُولُ ابْنُ آدَمَ مَالِي مَالِي - قَالَ - وَهَلْ
لَكَ يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ مِنْ مَالِكَ إِلَّا مَا أَكَلْتَ
أَقْنَيْتَ أَوْ لَيْسَتْ فَأَقْبَلْتِ أَوْ تَصَدَّقْتِ
أَمْضَتْ.»

13. By the use of the word “successors” it has been impressed that “you have only succeeded others in owning the wealth now in your hands. You do not own the wealth. You are only keepers and custodians. Therefore, expending out of it should be as easy as expending any wealth placed in your custody (say, by one of your friends) with the authority from him to expend as you like” (Zamakhshari: from whom perhaps Razi, Qurtubi and Alusi take).

The Prophet said, “Son of Adam says, ‘My wealth, my wealth.’ But, son of Adam, is there anything of your wealth for you save what you consumed and destroyed, or wore and made it old, or gave in charity and finished (it off)?”

Ibn Kathir and Alusi write: There are many *ahadith* pertaining to this verse. One of them says, as in *Muslim*,

14. We have a *hadith* relevant to this *Ayah*. The Prophet once asked his Companions,

"أَيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعْجَبُ إِلَيْكُمْ إِيمَانًا؟" قَالُوا:
"الْمَلَائِكَةُ، قَالَ: "وَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ وَهُمْ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ؟" قَالُوا: "فَالْأَنْبِيَاءُ، قَالَ: "وَمَا لَهُمْ

[9] He it is who sends down upon His servant self-evident verses, that He may bring you out of darknesses into Light. And surely, Allah is All-clement, All-merciful.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لِّيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُمْ لَرَؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٩﴾

[10] And what is (the matter) with you that you should not expend in Allah's path while to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth? Not equal is he among you who expended before the Victory,¹⁷ and fought. They are of greater ranks than those who expended thereafter and fought;¹⁸ although to each Allah has promised (a reward) most fair.¹⁹ And Allah is well acquainted with what you do.

وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تُنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَاثُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا يَسْتَوِي مِنْكُمْ مَنْ أَنْفَقَ مِن قَبْلِ الْفَتْحِ وَقَاتَلَ أُولَئِكَ أَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أَنْفَقُوا مِن بَعْدُ وَقَاتَلُوا وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٠﴾

لا يؤمنون والوحي ينزل عليهم؟" قالوا: فنحن، قال: "وما لكم لا تؤمنون وأنا بين أظهركم؟ ولكن أعجب المؤمنين إيماناً قوم يحيئون بعدكم يحذون صحفاً يؤمنون بما فيها"

"Which of the believers is amazing to you in terms of faith?" They replied, "Angels." He said, "Why should they not believe when they are right with their Lord?" So they said, "Prophets." He said, "Why should they not believe when Revelations come to them?" They said, "Then we." He said, "Why should you not believe when I am right among you?" But rather the most amazing in terms of belief are a people who will come after you. They will find a Scripture and believe in what it states."

A similar *hadith* has been recorded by Bukhari (Au.).

15. The allusion is to the prenatal contract taken from the children of Adam to the effect that Allah is their Lord (Ibn Jarir). The opinion has Mujahid's backing. However, we believe, writes Ibn Kathir, that the allusion is to the allegiance given to the Prophet.

16. That is, if you have any willingness to believe, then this is the time you should declare your faith (Ibn Jarir).

17. Although some have believed that the allusion is to the Hudaibiyyah Treaty, most scholars have believed that the allusion is to the fall of Makkah. Until then Islam was weak and Muslims under life-threatening situation.

18. That is, there were two kinds of fighting and expending in the way of Allah: one, before the fall of Makkah, and another, after it. Of the two occasions: the fighting and expending before the fall of Makkah were of greater value (Ibn Jarir).

The status that the earliest Companions occupy is the highest ever and no generation will be able to outbeat them. And this status should be accorded them on the basis of Qur'an and *hadith*, and not on the basis of historical reports. Accordingly Imām Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyyah have written in their several works that, (in the words of Ibn Taymiyyah), "By consensus of this *Ummah*, it is an obligation on the members of this *Ummah* that they should speak well of them, mention them with love and respect, and seek forgiveness for them; and that, if anybody insults them, he should be punished. As for the errors committed by them, they were miscarriages of judgment out of complete sincerity. In fact, because of their high position in Islam, the errors they committed are more likely to be forgiven than of those who followed them." (Mufti Shafi').

The Prophet emphasized this on several occasions. A *hadith* in *Muslim* reports Abu Sa'id as saying,

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ قَالَ: كَانَ بَيْنَ خَالِدِ بْنِ الْوَلِيدِ وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ عَوْفٍ شَيْءٌ. فَسَبَّهُ خَالِدٌ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ "لَا تَسُبُّوا أَحَدًا مِنْ أَصْحَابِي، فَإِنْ أَحَدُكُمْ لَوْ أَتَفَقَّ بِمِثْلِ أَحَدٍ ذَهَبًا، مَا أَذْرَكَ مَدَّ أَحَدِهِمْ وَلَا نَصِيفَهُ

There was some friction between `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Awf and Khalid b. Waleed. Khalid abused him. The Prophet said, "Do not abuse anyone of my Companions. If one of you spent gold equal to Mount Uhud he will not attain to any of them in status, not even by half." (Ibn Kathir, Alusi and others).

Ibn Jarir reports another *hadith* of this class. (But the report's authenticity could not be established: Au.). It is as follows:

عن أبي سعيد التمار، أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "يُوشِكُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ قَوْمٌ نَحْقِرُونَ أَعْمَالَكُمْ مَعَ أَعْمَالِهِمْ، فَقُلْنَا: مَنْ هُمْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَقْرِيش؟ قَالَ: لَا هُمْ أَرْقُ أَفِيدَةً وَالْبَيْنُ قُلُوبًا"، وَأَشَارَ بِيَدِهِ إِلَى الْيَمَنِ، فَقَالَ: هُمْ أَهْلُ الْيَمَنِ، أَلَا إِنَّ الْإِيمَانَ يَمَانٍ، وَالْحِكْمَةَ يَمَانِيَّةً، فَقُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هُمْ خَيْرٌ مِنَّا؟ قَالَ: وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَوْ كَانَ لِأَحَدِهِمْ جَبَلٌ ذَهَبٌ يُنْفَقُهُ مَا أَذْرَكَ مَدَّ أَحَدُكُمْ وَلَا نَصِيفَهُ، ثُمَّ جَمَعَ أَصَابِعَهُ، وَمَدَّ خَنَصْرَهُ وَقَالَ: أَلَا إِنَّ هَذَا فَصْلٌ مَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ

[11] Who is it that will lend to Allah a goodly loan²⁰ that He might multiply it for him, and for him will be an honorable reward?²¹

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا
فِيضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ وَلَهُ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾

النَّاسِ، { لَا يَسْتَوِي مِنْكُمْ مَنْ أَنْفَقَ مِنْ قَبْلِ
الْفَتْحِ وَقَتْلِ أُولَئِكَ أَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَنْفَقُوا
بِمَا بَعَدُ وَقَتْلُوا وَلَا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحَسَنَى {
(الحديد: ١٠)

The Prophet said (according to some versions at the time of Hudaibiyyah), “It is possible that a people will rise (of such a class that) in comparison to their deeds you will belittle yours.” We asked, “Who are they Messenger of Allah? The Quraysh?” He said, “No. They have the softest of hearts and are the gentlest of them.” He pointed towards Yemen and said, “They are the people of Yemen. Lo! Faith is the faith of the Yemenis; and wisdom is Yemeni.” We asked, “Will they be better than us, Messenger of Allah?” He answered, “By Him in whose hands is my life, if one of them had gold equal to a mountain, and went about spending it, he will not become equal to you, not even by half.” Then he folded his fingers and opened out his little finger and said, “Lo! This is the dividing line between us and oth-

ers.” Then he recited, “Not equal is he among you who expended before the Victory, and fought. They are of greater ranks than those who expended thereafter and fought; although to each Allah has promised (a reward) most fair. And Allah is well acquainted with what you do.”

Ibn Kathir also reproduces the above report along with another version.

19. For those who know Arabic, Razi has a very nice discussion at this point about how the “*harakat*” of a seemingly inconsequential word can alter the meaning of a sentence.

20. What is a goodly loan? Qurtubi answers that it is one which is given out for no other reason but to please Allah, not accompanied by taunting, nor that which is the worst part of wealth, but rather, that which is best part of wealth, yet considering the much that is given as the least of no worth, at a time when the donor has good hope of further life, i.e., not at the death-bed. Qushayri added, (as in Qurtubi), that it should be from a cheerful heart, and out of lawfully earned money.

وَلَا تَيْمَمُوا الْخَيْثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ (البقرة: ٢٦٧)
 «أَنْ تُصَدِّقَ وَأَنْتَ صَاحِبُ شَيْخٍ، تُخْشَى
 الْفَقْرَ وَتَأْمُلُ الْغِنَى، وَلَا تُمَهِّلُ حَتَّى إِذَا
 بَلَغَتِ الْحُلُقُومَ قُلْتَ لِفُلَانٍ كَذَا، وَلِفُلَانٍ
 كَذَا، وَقَدْ كَانَ لِفُلَانٍ» (صحيح البخارى)
 وَلِنْ تُخَفِّوْهَا وَتُؤْتُوْهَا (البقرة: ٢٧١)
 لَا يُبْطَلُوا صَدَقَتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى (البقرة: ٢٦٤)
 لَنْ نُنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ [آل
 عمران: ٩٢]
 (أَفْضَلُ الرِّقَابِ) «أَغْلَاهَا ثَمَنًا، وَأَنْفَسَهَا عِنْدَ
 أَهْلِهَا» (صحيح البخارى)

Quotation from Qurtubi ends here.

Razi and Alusi have something similar to state.

According to `Umar ibn al-Khattab, the allusion is to spending in the way of Allah. And an interesting incident is reported in connection with this verse. It says,

عن عبد الله بن مسعود قال: لما نزلت هذه
 الآية { مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا
 فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ } قال أبو الدحداح الأنصاري:
 يا رسول الله، وإن الله ليريد منا القرض؟
 قال: "نعم يا أبا الدحداح"، قال: أرني يدك
 يا رسول الله، قال، فناوله يده، قال: فإني
 قد أقرضت ربِّي حائطي، وله حائط فيه
 ستمائة نخلة، وأم الدحداح فيه وعيالها،
 قال، فجاء أبو الدحداح، فناداها: يا أم

الدحداح، قالت: لبيك، قال: اخرجي فقد
 أقرضته ربِّي عزَّ وجلَّ. وفي رواية أنها قالت
 له: ربح بيعك يا أبا الدحداح، ونقلت منه
 متاعها وصبياتها، وإن رسول الله صلى الله
 عليه وسلم قال: "كم من عِدْقٍ رَدَّاحٍ فِي
 الْجَنَّةِ لِأَبِي الدَّحْدَاحِ" (أخرجه ابن أبي
 حاتم) - (وأخرج سعيد بن منصور وابن
 سعد واليزار وابن جرير وابن المنذر وابن
 أبي حاتم والحكيم الترمذي في نواذر
 الأصول والطبراني والبيهقي في شعب
 الإيمان عن ابن مسعود - الدر المنصور)

When this *Ayah* came down, Abu Dahdah al-Ansari went up to the Prophet and said, "Messenger of Allah. Does Allah seek a loan from us?" He said, "Yes, O Abu Dahdah." He said, "Extend your hand, Messenger of Allah." When he did, he placed his hand in his and said, "I have loaned out my orchard to my Lord." He had an orchard that had six hundred date-palm trees. Umm Dahdah and her children lived in it.

Abu Dahdah then returned to his orchard and called out: "O Umm Dahdah!" She said, "Welcome." He said, "Come out. I have loaned it out to my Lord." (According to another version, she said, "Your deal has profited you, O Abu Dahdah"). She took

[12] The Day you see believing men and believing women: their Light running before them and on their right side:²² glad tidings to you today (of) gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein. That indeed, is the supreme triumph.

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى
نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ بُشْرَاكُمُ
الْيَوْمَ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ
﴿١٢﴾

[13] On the Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, 'Wait for us that we may borrow light from your Light.' It will be said, 'Return to your rear and seek for a light.'²³ Then a wall will be struck between them,²⁴ with a door,²⁵ in the inward wherein is mercy, while in front, outside it, will be chastisement.²⁶

يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ لِلَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا انظُرُونَا نَقْتَبِسْ مِنْ نُورِكُمْ قِيلَ
ارْجِعُوا وَرَاءَكُمْ فَالْتَمِسُوا نُورًا فَضُرِبَ
بَيْنَهُمْ بِسُورٍ لَهُ بَابٌ بَاطِنُهُ فِيهِ الرَّحْمَةُ
وْظَاهِرُهُ مِنْ قِبَلِهِ الْعَذَابُ ﴿١٣﴾

her children and belongings out and left the place. The Prophet remarked, "How many a (tree with) heavy bunches (of) sweet (fruits) is not there for Abu Dahdah in Paradise?!" (Ibn Kathir)

Other reports add that Abu Dahdah had two orchards, one of which – and the better of the two – he gave off as a loan to Allah (Au.).

21. The epithet "*karim*" lends the meaning that the rewards will not only be quantitatively different, but also qualitatively so (Alusi).

22. Many commentators point out that the relationship between 'the Light in front and on their right side,' and 'the giving of the Records to the

believers from their front into their right hands,' may not be missed.

23. 'Awfi, Dahhak and others have reported from Ibn 'Abbas that he said, "While the people are in complete darkness in the Field of Resurrection, Allah will send a Light. When the believers see the Light, they will begin to move towards it. The Light will be the sole guide to Paradise. When the hypocrites see the believers moving towards the Light, they will try to follow them. But Allah will take away the light from them. It is at that point that they will say, 'Wait for us that we may borrow light from your Light; for we were with you in the world.' The believers will reply, 'Re-

turn to where you came from, and find your Light there.” (The report is also in Ibn Marduwayh and Bayhaqi: Shawkani). Abu Umamah also explained in the same terms, saying: “There will be a point of time on the Day of Judgment when it will be so dark that neither a believer nor unbeliever will be able to see his palm: until Allah sends Light to the believers (of all time, throughout history: Alusi) in proportion to their deeds” and Dahhak added that when the Light of the hypocrites is taken away, the believers will cry out:

رَبَّنَا أَتِمِّمْ لَنَا نُورَنَا (التحریم: ٨)

“O, our Lord. Complete for us our Light” (Ibn Kathir).

Imām Razi does not rule out the effect of good deeds on the amount of Light that people will receive on the Judgment Day. But he adds that considering the fact that the Light of Knowledge is in truth the Light of sight; we can conclude that the quantity and quality of Light on the Day of Judgment will be in proportion to the Light of Knowledge obtained in this life.

Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir report Qatadah as narrating a *hadith* in reference to this *Ayah*, (but which could not be traced in *hadith* works: Au.). It runs as follows:

The Prophet said,

عن قتادة، قوله: {يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ} (الحديد: ١٢) ذكر لنا أن نبي الله كان يقول: "ومن المؤمنين من يضيء نوره من المدينة إلى عدن أبين فصنعاء فدون ذلك، حتى إن من المؤمنين من لا يضيء نوره إلا موضع قدميه."

“Of the believers there will be some whose Light will shine through from Madinah to Aden or San`a, or less than that; while there will be a believer whose Light will not shine beyond where he can place his foot.”

Ibn Mas`ud further elaborated, as in Ibn Abi Hatim. The report is as follows,

عن ابن مسعود، في قوله: {يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ} (الحديد: ١٢) قال: يُؤْتُونَ نُورَهُمْ عَلَى قَدَرِ أَعْمَالِهِمْ، يَمْرُؤُونَ عَلَى الصِّرَاطِ، بَيْنَهُمْ مَنْ نُورُهُ مِثْلُ الْجَبَلِ، وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ نُورُهُ مِثْلُ النَّخْلَةِ، وَأَدْنَاهُمْ نُورًا مَنْ نُورُهُ عَلَى إِبْهَامِهِ يُطْفَأُ مَرَّةً، وَيُوقَدُ أُخْرَى.

Ibn Mas`ud said in reference to ‘their Light running before them’: “They will be given their Light in accordance with their deeds, so that they will pass over the Bridge in a manner that there will be some whose Light will be like a mountain, another whose Light will be like a palm tree. The

least of them in Light will be one whose Light will be on his toe: it will blink to light up and then go off, light up and go off.” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

The report is in Hakim also who declared it trustworthy (Shawkani).

A long report in *Muslim* confirms that (as pointed out by Ibn Hajr) the removal of the Light of the hypocrites will take place on the Bridge (Au.).

Another report of Ibn abi Hatim, (reconfirmed by a similar report in Hakim: Sami) is as follows:

عن أبي الدرداء، عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "أنا أول من يؤذن له يوم القيامة بالسجود، وأول من يؤذن له برفع رأسه فأنظر من بين يدي ومن خلفي وعن يميني وعن شمالي، فأعرف أمتي من بين الأمم"، فقال له رجل: يا نبي الله كيف تعرف أمتك من بين الأمم؟ فقال: "أعرفهم، مُحجّلون من أثر الوضوء، ولا يكون لأحد من الأمم غيرهم، وأعرفهم يؤتون كتبهم بأيّمانهم، وأعرفهم بسيماتهم في وجوههم، وأعرفهم بنورهم يسعى بين أيديهم"

The Prophet said, "I will be the first to be allowed to prostrate myself on the Day of Standing, and the first to raise his head. I will see in front of me, behind me, and left and right side of me,

and know my followers from among other nations." A man asked, "Messenger of Allah, how will you recognize your followers from among other nations?" He answered, "I will recognize them from the marks of ablution; this will be no other nation's mark. I will know them from the fact that they will be given their Records by their right hands. I will know them from the marks on their faces. And I will know them from their Lights that will be shining in front of them." (Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

Imām Razi writes: True Light is the Light of Allah.

24. Mujahid, Qatadah, Ibn Zayd and others said that the wall will be the dividing one between Paradise and Hell; the same as mentioned in *Surah al-A'raf*. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

25. It is said that the door mentioned here will be an entrance to Paradise (Zamakhshari). That is, perhaps one of the doors to Paradise, which will have seven others from various other sides; or, alternatively, the main entrance to the side that has Paradise, of which there will be eight doors. Allah knows best. Except for Thanwi in passing, other commentators have not dealt with this subject (Au.).

[14] They will be calling upon them, 'Were we not with you?'²⁷ They will reply, 'Yes indeed. But you led yourselves to temptation,²⁸ and you awaited,²⁹ and fancies deluded you;³⁰ until Allah's commandment came.³¹ (It was) the deluder³² who deluded you concerning Allah.

يُنَادُونَهُمْ أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ
وَلَكِنَّكُمْ فَتَنْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتَرَبَّصْتُمْ
وَارْتَبْتُمْ وَغَرَّتْكُمُ الْأَمَانِيُّ حَتَّىٰ جَاءَ أَمْرُ
اللَّهِ وَغَرَّكُمْ بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ ﴿١٤﴾

26. Aware of the fact that Paradise will be in the highest hemisphere of all that exists, and Hell in the lowest, we must conclude, in the light of this passage, that the great physical distance will in no manner come in the way of realizing the closeness as portrayed here (Razi).

27. The hypocrites will resort to calling the believers from behind them because the believers will be rushing away fast with the help of their own lights, leaving the hypocrites far behind them in darkness. (Zamakhshari).

In short, those who were unbelievers out and out, will be pushed into Hellfire right from the start. The believers in Prophets, during their periods, however weak in their faith, and hypocrites (carrying a potpourri of faith and unfaith: Au.) will remain. They will be asked to proceed to the Bridge and given Light. But the hypocrites will be denied. As the distance between them and the be-

lievers increases, they will begin to appeal to the believers (Shabbir).

28. That is, you led yourselves into worldly pleasures, sins and lust (Ibn Kathir from the *Salaf*), which led you to adopt hypocrisy. (Kashshaf).

29. That is, you delayed repenting (Ibn Kathir), in the hope that the rise of Islam will soon come to an end, especially when the Prophet is dead, when you could go back to the olden golden days. (Au.).

30. A *hadith* should be remembered in this context. Ibn Mas'ud said,

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ خَطَّ لَنَا رَسُولُ
اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- خطًّا مُرَبَّعًا
وَحَطَّ فِي وَسْطِ الْخَطِّ خَطًّا وَحَطَّ خَارِجًا
مِنَ الْخَطِّ خَطًّا وَحَوَّلَ الَّذِي فِي الْوَسْطِ
خُطُوطًا فَقَالَ «هَذَا ابْنُ آدَمَ وَهَذَا أَجَلُهُ
مُحِيطٌ بِهِ وَهَذَا الَّذِي فِي الْوَسْطِ الْإِنْسَانُ
وَهَذِهِ الْخُطُوطُ عُرُوضُهُ إِنْ تَجَا مِنْ هَذَا
يَنْهَشُهُ هَذَا وَالْخَطُّ الْخَارِجُ الْأَمَلُ». (هَذَا
حَدِيثٌ صَحِيحٌ - سنن الترمذی).

[15] Therefore, today no ransom shall be accepted from you, nor from those who adopted disbelief. Your refuge is the Fire: it is your best friend (now),³³ and an evil destination.'

فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْكُمْ فِدْيَةٌ وَلَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مَأْوَاكُمُ النَّارُ هِيَ مَوْلَاكُمْ وَنُفْسَ الْمَصِيرِ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] Has the time not arrived for those who have believed that their hearts should be humbled³⁴ at the remembrance of Allah, and for what has come down of the Truth?³⁵ And not be like those who were given the Book earlier, and the term prolonged over them, and so their hearts hardened,³⁶ and most of them are ungodly.

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

The Prophet drew a square (on the ground); then a central line within the square extending it out of the square. Then, he extended several lines from the one within the square, and said, "This is son of Adam, and the term allotted to him, surrounding him from all sides. The central line is man. The lines extending out are those from which if he manages to escape from one, another bites him. And the external line is his hopes." (Qurtubi).

of you." The word 'mawla' has been used in the sense of 'awla' by the poets also.

But Zamakhshari, Razi and Alusi would like to differ. They point out that Sharif al-Murtada had clung to this meaning of this verse, to help him cling to his Shi'ism; but not on strong grounds because, although the possibility is there, the two words "mawla" and "awla" are not interchangeable in many cases. Therefore, the possibility of the meaning of "mawlakum" as: "your protector", "your ally", "your helper", "your friend", or "your destination," etc., all in ironic sense, is greater.

31. That is, death. (Kashshaf).

32. That is, Satan.

33. This is how Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir explain the word "mawlakum" as meaning "most deserving," and the whole passage meaning, "That is (the Fire) is most deserving

34. In known history, this *Ayah* became the cause of two renowned person's repentance: 'Abdullah ibn Mubarak and Fudayl b. 'Iyad.

Ibn Mubarak said that once while he was in an orchard with friends, with a mandolin in hand, when the instrument spoke out, "Has not the time come..?" He responded with a yes, broke the mandolin, repented and changed his life.

About Fudayl b. 'Iyad it is reported that he was in love with a slave-girl. One night he was scaling a wall in order to meet her in secret when he heard somebody reciting: "Has not the time come..?" He traced back his footsteps saying, "Yes, by Allah, the time has come," and took to asceticism (Qurtubi).

Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir write: We have a report in this context. It says that the Prophet said,

عن شداد بن أوس أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "أول ما يرفع من الناس الخشوع". (رواه الطبراني في الكبير وفيه عمران بن داود القطان ضعفه ابن معين والنسائي ووثقه أحمد وابن حبان - مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

"The first thing to be removed from the people would be humbleness before Allah."

It is said that this *Ayah* was recited before a few people from Yamamah in the presence of Abu Bakr. The people of Yamamah began to cry

profusely. Abu Bakr remarked, "This is how we were before the hearts hardened" (Zamakhshari, Alusi).

35. That is, the Qur'an. (Kashshaf).

Muslim has recorded Ibn Mas'ud as saying,

ابن مسعود قال ما كان بين إسلامنا وبين أن عاتبنا الله بهذا الآية {أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ} (الحديد: ١٦) إلا أربع سنين.

"It was not but four years between our entrance into Islam and revelation of this *Ayah* by which Allah reproached us: "Has the time not arrived for those who have believed that their hearts should be humbled..?" (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Sharokani).

36. Allah said about them elsewhere,

فِيمَا نَقَضُوا مِيثَقَهُمْ لَعَنَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَدِيسَةً يَخْرِقُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَكُتِبَ لَهُمْ مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ. (المائدة: ١٣)

But, because of their (frequent) breach of the compact We cursed them and hardened their hearts. They displace the words from their context, and have forgotten much of what they were reminded with." (Ibn Kathir).

[17] Know that Allah quickens the earth after its death.³⁷ We have indeed made the revelation clear for you, that haply you will ponder.

اَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا
قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

﴿١٧﴾

Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir offer the following from Ibn Mas'ud, who said,

عن ابن مسعود قال: "إن بني إسرائيل لما طال عليهم الأمد وقست قلوبهم، اخترعوا كتاباً من بين أيديهم وأرجلهم استهوت به قلوبهم واستحلته ألسنتهم، وقالوا: نعرض بني إسرائيل على هذا الكتاب، فمن آمن به تركناه، ومن كفر به قتلناه، قال: فجعل رجل منهم كتاب الله في قرن، ثم جعل القرن بين ثنوديه فلما قيل له: أتؤمن بهذا؟ قال: "أمنت به ويومئ إلى القرن بين ثنوديه، ومالي لا أؤمن بهذا الكتاب؟ فمن خير مللهم اليوم ملة صاحب القرن"

When a long time had passed over the Children of Israel and their hearts hardened, they fabricated a Book (taking material) from before them and after them which their base desires approved and which their tongues repeated. They said, "We shall present this liturgy to the Children of Israel. Then, if someone believes in it, we shall spare him; but kill him who refuses." One of their men would place Allah's Book in a horn, and hang the

horn between his breasts. So that, when he was asked, "Do you believe in this?" (i.e., the fabricated scripture). He would reply, "I believe in it," nodding at the horn between his breasts. "Why should I not believe in this Book?" Therefore, Ibn Mas'ud ended by saying, "The best of their today's community are those who are on the faith of
".the man with the horn

Alusi writes that anyone who feels hardness in his heart should hasten to Allah's remembrance and recitation of His Book, so that he may return to his original state.

Thanwi adds that the *Ayah* leads us to believe that seeking a humbling fear of Allah (*khushu'*) is obligatory, and that the lack of it is obtained because of long spells of heedlessness (*ghaflah*). This is best understood by the spiritual masters who have a remarkable understanding of their own state as well of others.

37. Using His Power and Wisdom, Allah has now given life to the dead hearts of the ignorant Arabs, bestow-

[18] Surely, those men who give freely in charity, and those women who give freely in charity, and have lent Allah a goodly loan, it shall be multiplied for them, and for them is an honorable reward.

إِنَّ الْمُصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُصَدِّقَاتِ وَأَقْرَضُوا
اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُضَاعَفُ لَهُمْ وَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ
كَرِيمٌ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] And those who believed in Allah and His Messengers, they... they are the *siddiqun*;³⁸ and witnesses³⁹ in the sight of their Lord: for them are their reward and their Light.⁴⁰ As for those who disbelieved and laid the lie against Our revelations, they are the companions of the Blazing Fire.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الصَّادِقُونَ وَالشُّهَدَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ
أُجْرُهُمْ وَنُورُهُمْ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا
بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٩﴾

ing upon them amazing qualities (Shabbir).

Thus, there is hope for every dead soul to come alive if it will turn to Allah with goodly repentance (Au.).

38. Who are the “*siddiqun*”? Opinions vary. In general terms any one is a “*siddiq*” who believes in Allah’s Oneness and in the Messengership of a Messenger without harboring any doubt whatsoever, for any moment. Thus, the People of the Firepit were *siddiqun*, and so was the Believer in Fir’awn’s court, and others. From among this *Ummah*, it is said that they were eight: Abu Bakr, ‘Ali, Zayd, ‘Uthman, Talha, Zubayr, Sa’d, later joined by ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (Qurtubi).

But of course the above list is not comprehensive (Au.).

A “*siddiq*” however, occupies a greater rank in comparison to a martyr. The *Sahihayn* have a report confirming this. The Prophet said,

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "إِنَّ أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ لَيَتَرَاءَوْنَ
أَهْلَ الْعَرْفِ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ، كَمَا تَتَرَاءَوْنَ
الْكُوكَبَ الدَّرِّيَّ الْغَائِبَ مِنَ الْأَفْقِ مِنَ
الْمَشْرِقِ أَوْ الْمَغْرِبِ. لِيَتَفَاضَلَ مَا بَيْنَهُمْ"
قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ تِلْكَ مَنَازِلُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ، لَا
يَلْقَاهَا غَيْرُهُمْ. قَالَ: "بَلَى. وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي
بِيَدِهِ رَجُلٌ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَصَدَّقُوا الْمُرْسَلِينَ."

“The dwellers of Paradise will be able to see the people of the regions above them as you see a shining star about to set in the horizon, either in the east or west. That would be because of the differences in status between them.” They inquired, “Mes-

senger of Allah. Those must be dwellings of the Prophets that others would not be able to attain?" He answered, "Nay. By Him in whose hand is my life, they will be men who believed in Allah and testified to the truth of the Messengers." (Ibn Kathir).

39. Opinions vary. Some of the ancient scholars thought that the reference is to those who bear the testimony of Allah's Oneness, others that it is those who would bear witness in favor of Prophets and Messengers when they are denied by their nations on the Day of Judgment; yet others believe the reference is to martyrs (Qurtubi and others).

To be sure, the word "*shahid*" covers various categories of men. In its most general sense, most believers would be included. A *hadith* of *Muslim* says,

«مَا تَعْدُونَ الشَّهِيدَ فِيكُمْ». قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَنْ قُتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ قَالَ «إِنَّ شُهَدَاءَ أُمَّتِي إِذَا لَقِيتُ». قَالُوا فَمَنْ هُمْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ «مَنْ قُتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ وَمَنْ مَاتَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ وَمَنْ مَاتَ فِي الطَّاعُونَ فَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ وَمَنْ مَاتَ فِي الْبَطْنِ فَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ» (صحيح مسلم)

The Prophet asked, "Who do you think are the martyrs among you?" They answered, "Messenger of Allah, he who was killed in Allah's path is a martyr." He said, "If that is so, then martyrs of my *Ummah* are few." They asked, "Then who?" He replied, "He who is killed in Allah's path is a martyr, he who died in Allah's path is a martyr, he who died in plague is a martyr, he who died because of stomach problem is a martyr." (Razi).

40. Ibn Jarir reports Ibn 'Abbas and Dahhak as of opinion that there are two sentences involved in the verse: "And those who believed in Allah and His Messengers, they... they are the truthful ones; and witnesses in the sight of their Lord: for them are their reward and their Light." The first sentence is: "And those who believed in Allah and His Messengers, they... they are the truthful ones," while the rest is another sentence, i.e.: "And witnesses in the sight of their Lord: for them are their reward and their Light."

[20] Know that that the life of the world is but a sport and diversion, an adornment and a cause of boasting among you, and a rivalry in wealth and children;⁴¹ like a rain⁴² whose (re-sulting) vegetation delights the tillers;⁴³ then it withers, and you see it turn yellow and then it becomes chaff. And in the Hereafter there is severe chastisement, and⁴⁴ forgiveness from Allah and Good Pleasure;⁴⁵ and the life of the world is no more than a delusive joy.⁴⁶

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَهوَ زِينَةٌ
وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ
وَالْأَوْلَادِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ
تَبَاقُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيْجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ
حُطَامًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا
مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ ﴿٢٠﴾

41. The order should be noticeable. Life is a play (in childhood), diversion (in early youth), adornment (in early manhood), a cause of boasting (in more mature years), and a rivalry in wealth and children (middle-age onward) - Au.

Mufti Shafi` writes: It is noteworthy that what a man possesses in each stage of his life is extremely dear to him. But once that stage is crossed, those very things become laughingly unimportant. A child, for instance, mourns and weeps at the loss of a doll. But when he grows up, it becomes worthless. That goes on in every stage: the previous phase turns insignificant. When he enters old age, all the possessions of his yesteryears lose their meaning and worth. From this vantage point he realizes that the gains and losses of the previous phases would not have mattered much either way: whether he got them or

missed them. The Qur`ān reminds us of the selfsame reality that rules this ephemeral life (reworded).

42. The expression “a rain” has been employed (i.e., with “a”) because there are rains that are not beneficent to the tiller (Au.).

The difference between “*matar*” and “*ghayth*” is that the latter is used when the rain arrives after the people are in despair:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا
(الشورى: ٢٨)

“It is He who sends down rain after they were in despair.” (Ibn Kathir).

43. “*Kafara*” is to conceal, hence a tiller is “*kafir*”, one who conceals his seeds, and hence too an unbeliever is a “*kafir*” because he consciously conceals the truth planted in his heart that there is a Lord God to the uni-

[21] Race to forgiveness from your Lord and a Paradise whose width is the width of heaven and earth.⁴⁷ prepared for those who believe in Allah and His Messengers. That indeed is Allah's favor which He bestows upon whom He will; and Allah is the possessor of great bounty.

سَابِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ
عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أُعِدَّتْ
لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ
يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ
﴿٢١﴾

verse and that He can only be one (Au.).

44. Ibn Jarir understands the “*wa*” of the text as meaning “or.” However, seeing that a great majority will perhaps undergo chastisement in the Fire before proceeding to Paradise, “and” seems to be better suited (Au.).

45. (In comparison, the Hereafter is so much better that no words can describe it). Says a *hadith*,

«مَوْضِعُ سَوْطٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا» (صحيح البخارى)

“The space whereat you could hang your whip in Paradise is better than the world and all that it contains” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

46. Sa`eed ibn Jubayr has said that the world is deceptive possession if it diverts away from the Hereafter. But, if it is employed to obtain the Here-

after, then it is a wonderful means. (Razi, Alusi).

47. Ibn Kathir points out that the word “*sama*” has been used as a generic noun. That is, all heavens are inclusive. The Qur`an used the word in plural elsewhere, e.g.,

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ
عَرْضُهَا السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ
[آل عمران: ١٣٣]

“And hasten to the forgiveness from your Lord, and to a Paradise whose width is that of the heavens and the earth – prepared for the godfearing.”

Suddi has pointed out that everything has a width and a length where width is normally less than the length. Now, if the heavens and the earth are contained in the width of Paradise, one can imagine its length. (Zamakhshari).

[22] No affliction strikes the earth, nor within yourselves but is in a Book, before We bring it into existence;⁴⁸ that indeed is easy for Allah.

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] That you may not despair over what missed you, nor exult over what He granted you;⁴⁹ Allah does not approve of any self-conceited boaster.⁵⁰

لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴿٢٣﴾

48. There are two opinions about the pronoun “it” as to what is the reference? Hasan’s opinion was that it is attached to the “soul.” That is, the affliction strikes the soul. So, the meaning would be, “No affliction strikes the earth, nor within yourselves but is in a Book, before We bring the soul into existence.” That is, all that is to happen to a person has already been recorded in the Book. This is the preferred opinion. A second opinion is that it is attached to the affliction, meaning, “No affliction strikes the earth, nor within yourselves but is recorded in a Book, before We bring that affliction into existence.” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). Zamakhshari leaves the possibility of both open while Razi feels that the reference to afflictions is closer; that is, “before Allah creates the afflictions.”

The Prophet said, as in *Sahih* reports of *Tirmidhi* and others,

«قَدَّرَ اللَّهُ الْمَقَادِيرَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
الْأَرْضَ بِخَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ»

“Allah determined the destinies fifty thousand years before the creation of the heavens and the earth.” (Ibn Kathir).

49. Therefore, a believer’s equanimity should not be disturbed in either case: whether the world comes or goes. A believer knows that there is no escape from afflictions, or, contrarily, good happenings. He may aggrieve at one and feel happy with another. But in either case he maintains his self-composure. In practical terms, if good comes his way, he thanks Allah, if it is otherwise, he observes patience. (Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir, reworded).

50. It is said that “*mukhtal*” is someone who looks at himself with self-aggrandizing eyes, while “*fakhur*” is one who looks at others with belittling eyes (Qurtubi).

[24] Those who are miserly and enjoin the people miserliness.⁵¹ Yet, whoever turned away, then surely, Allah is the Self-sufficient, the All-laudable.

الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ
وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ
﴿٢٤﴾

[25] We surely sent Our messengers⁵² with clear signs and sent down with them the Book and the balance so that the people may establish justice. And We sent down iron⁵³ wherein is great military might,⁵⁴ and (other) benefits for the people,⁵⁵ so that Allah may know who helps Him and His Messengers⁵⁶ in the Unseen.⁵⁷ Surely, Allah is Strong, Mighty.⁵⁸

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ
وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنَافِعُ
لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ
بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] And We did send Nuh and Ibrahim, and We appointed Prophethood and the Book to be among their seed. Yet, of them some are rightly guided, but most of them are defiantly disobedient.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي
ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتَابَ فَمِنْهُمْ مُهْتَدٍ
وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

Only a self-conceited person or nation can boast over Allah's blessings sent their way. Do they create the fortuitous conditions that help them achieve what others, better qualified, and more hard-working than them, fail to achieve? (Au.)

51. Misers and miserliness arise from the failure to recognize that if one happens to be wealthy, it is because he happens to be located on the path by which wealth passes. He could not have obtained it, if wealth had taken another route (Au.).

Qurtubi writes: A miser and a generous person primarily differ in two

ways: a miser draws pleasure from withholding money while a generous person draws pleasure from giving it away, and a miser gives only when asked, whereas a generous person gives without asking.

52. The allusion by "messengers" is to angels. (Zamakhshari). But Alusi disagrees and says it is to human Messengers.

53. Some commentators have conjectured that perhaps iron was sent down from the heaven. The use of the words, "We sent down", could have influenced them. But it happens to be a scientific fact established

in the twentieth century. Formation of heavy metals including iron requires chemical reactions at temperatures 5×10^9 K. But the earth has never experienced this temperature. That is, at no time in the history of the earth its temperature was as high as this, or even a fraction of it. This kind of temperature obtains in the center of massive stars alone which, after their hydrogen burning phase is over, change, in various steps, into a Nova. It is at this stage that heavier elements are formed, including iron. At this stage, internal combustion results in immense amount of pressure and the Nova explodes into a Supernova shattering its heavy elements - primarily iron. The flakes, chunks and meteorites containing iron fly about in space to be ultimately attracted by other cosmic bodies. That is how the earth must have obtained its iron; i.e., through the iron-nickel meteorites. However, since the earth's core (measuring 7600 km. dia., accounting for 32% of its mass, while the earth's outer dia. is 12,700 km.), is entirely iron (with nickel as a trace element) it is a mystery where it got this quantity of iron from? The Supernova that exploded, should have been away by several light years. How did its shattered material arrive at the tiny earth in such massive

quantities? This remains a mystery, but the origin of iron is no mystery. Scientists are quick to point out that since iron is from exploded stars, and since our bodies contain iron as one of the 24 elements from which we are made, we all carry fragments of a star (or stars) in our bodies (Au.).

54. Allah created iron (for the believers) to confront those who deny Allah's revelation after its truth becomes evident to them. Our Prophet spent 13 years in Makkah trying to convince the Quraysh of the truth of his Message. But when all efforts failed, and no hope was left of they ever being cured of their intransigence and opposition to the Truth, he was ordered to emigrate and then take up iron against them. Accordingly, the Prophet said, as in a report of Ahmad (with, as Haythami said, an isnad not entirely untrustworthy: Au.),

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- «بُعِثْتُ بِالسَّيْفِ حَتَّى يُعْبَدَ اللَّهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَجُعِلَ رِزْقِي تَحْتَ ظِلِّ رُمْحِي وَجُعِلَ الذَّلَّةُ وَالصَّغَارُ عَلَى مَنْ خَالَفَ أَمْرِي وَمَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ»

"I have been sent with the sword until Allah alone - who has no partners - is worshipped. My providence is placed under the

shadow of my spear; and humiliation and abasement is written for him who opposes my affair. And, whoever imitated a people, is one of them.” (Ibn Kathir).

Mufti Shafi' writes: It might be noted that Allah sent down the Qur'ān with the teachings that organize life. He also sent down the balance – which can be anything from a weighing machine to an electronic meter – to help establish measures of things and, thus, establish justice. But sometimes instructions and examples are not enough. There are some people who remain defiant. So Allah sent down iron which carries awesome power for the authorities to enforce the system of justice. Thus, primarily Man needs two things. One: the Book, and two: the balance to weigh the worth of things. Iron is used as a last resort only when admonitions, instructions and injunctions fail. Although it must be hastily added that iron by itself (power) is not enough to enforce a system. It is education and training which must be resorted to in the first place.

55. Asad offers the following comment: “Side by side with enabling man to discriminate between right and wrong (which is the innermost purpose of all divine revelation),

God has endowed him with the ability to convert to his use the natural resources of his earthly environment. An outstanding symbol of this ability is man's skill, unique among all animal beings, in making tools; and the primary material for all tool-making – and indeed, for all human technology – is iron; the one metal which is found abundantly on earth, and which can be utilized for beneficial as well as destructive ends. The 'awesome power' (*ba's shadid*) inherent in iron manifests itself not merely in the manufacture of weapons of war but also, more subtly, in man's ever-growing tendency to foster the development of an increasingly complicated technology which places the machine on the foreground of all human existence and which, by its inherent – almost irresistible – dynamism gradually estranges man from all inner connection with nature. The process of growing mechanization, so evident in our modern life, jeopardizes the very structure of human society and, thus, contributes to a gradual dissolution of all moral and spiritual perception optimized in the concept of 'divine guidance.' It is to warn man of this danger that the Qur'ān stresses – symbolically and metonymically – the potential evil (*ba's*) of 'iron' if it is put to wrong use:

[27] Then We sent, following in their footsteps⁵⁹ Our Messengers; and sent `Isa, son of Maryam, giving him Njil; and We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy;⁶⁰ and monasticism⁶¹ which they invented⁶² - We did not prescribe it upon them - except to seek Allah's approval.⁶³ Thereafter they did not observe it as they should have observed.⁶⁴ So We gave those of them who believed their reward, but most of them are corrupt.⁶⁵

ثُمَّ قَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم بِرُسُلِنَا وَقَفَّيْنَا
بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنجِيلَ وَجَعَلْنَا
فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً
وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ
إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ
رِعَايَتِهَا فَآتَيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ
وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

in other words, the danger of man's allowing his technological ingenuity to run wild and thus to overwhelm his spiritual consciousness and, ultimately, to destroy all possibility of individual and social happiness."

56. The connection between iron and *Jihad* is established. Iron was sent down so that *Jihad* could be undertaken. And justice can only be established with the help of the power that iron affords (based on Zamakhshari's note).

57. Ibn `Abbas said: they help in Allah's causes without having seen Him (Zamakhshari); which tells us, writes Qurtubi, something about their sincerity.

58. Allah is Strong and Mighty. He can execute His plan without human

help. He only invites them to enlist themselves for His causes in order to reward them. He does the rest Himself (Au.).

59. Actually the word "*qaffa*" lends the meaning of sending one after another (Alusi), in quick succession (Au.).

60. While some commentators have pointed out the difference between "*ra'fah*" and "*rahmah*" is that the former expresses greater intensity, Alusi says that "*ra'fah*" expresses that kindness which comes in between a man and a harm befalling him, while "*rahmah*" expresses that kindness which helps obtain what is good and beneficial.

61. Abu Sa`eed al-Khudri narrated that:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ أَنَّ رَجُلًا جَاءَهُ فَقَالَ
أَوْصِنِي فَقَالَ سَأَلْتُ عَمَّا سَأَلْتُ عَنْهُ رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
«أَوْصِيكَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهُ رَأْسُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
وَعَلَيْكَ بِالْجِهَادِ فَإِنَّهُ رَهْبَانِيَّةُ الْإِسْلَامِ وَعَلَيْكَ
بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَتِلَاوَةِ الْقُرْآنِ فَإِنَّهُ رَوْحُكَ فِي
السَّمَاءِ وَذِكْرُكَ لَكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ».

A man came to him and said, “Admonish me.” He said, “You have asked me what I had asked the Prophet earlier. He told me, ‘I admonish you to fear Allah. It is the head of everything. And upon you is *Jihad* for it is the monasticism of Islam. And upon you is Allah’s remembrance and recitation of the Qur’ān for it is your (portion of) mercy in the heaven and a (means of) reminder for you on the earth.” (Ibn Kathir).

62. “*Bid’ah*” is a much abused term in our times. Alusi, and following him Thanwi, point out that the word has been used here in its linguistic sense (to start up a new practice, to innovate), and not in its technical sense. (When the Prophet said, “Every innovation is an error,” he was using the word in its technical sense: Mufti Shafi’). It may be noted that the specific *Bid’ah* mentioned here has not been condemned, but rather

the fact that it was not observed in the spirit it deserved has been criticized.

“*Rahbaniyyah*” itself, explains Shafi’, as defined by Islam (viz., observing celibacy, treating the lawful as unlawful and living in seclusion: Thanwi; not on a temporary basis, but as permanent and irreversible practice: Shafi’) stands prohibited in Islam – unless, once again, one has been left with no option between either severing all his relationships with the society, or abandoning faith. If someone faces a sure and definite threat to his faith, he may take to mountains and deserts without earning any censure, the way those of the Jews and Christians who were put to the ordeal did. They chose deserts and mountains but have not been censured by the Qur’ān.

Alusi does well to quote Nawawi from his commentary on *Muslim*. We translate in brief:

قَالَ الْعُلَمَاءُ: الْبِدْعَةُ خَمْسَةٌ أَقْسَامٌ: وَاجِبَةٌ، وَمَنْدُوبَةٌ، وَمُحَرَّمَةٌ، وَمَكْرُوهَةٌ، وَمُبَاحَةٌ.
فَمِنْ الْوَاجِبَةِ: نَظْمُ أدِلَّةِ الْمُتَكَلِّمِينَ لِلرَّدِّ عَلَى
الْمَلَاحِدَةِ وَالْمُبْتَدِعِينَ وَشِبْهِ ذَلِكَ. وَمِنْ
الْمَنْدُوبَةِ: تَصْنِيفُ كُتُبِ الْعِلْمِ، وَبِنَاءُ
الْمَدَارِسِ وَالرُّبُطِ وَغَيْرَ ذَلِكَ. وَمِنْ الْمُبَاحِ:
التَّبَسُّطُ فِي أَلْوَانِ الْأَطْعِمَةِ وَغَيْرَ ذَلِكَ.
وَالْحَرَامُ وَالْمَكْرُوهُ ظَاهِرَانِ. وَقَدْ أَوْضَحْتُ

الْمَسْأَلَةُ بِأَدْلِيَّتِهَا الْمَبْسُوطَةُ فِي تَهْذِيبِ
الْأَسْمَاءِ وَاللُّغَاتِ، فَإِذَا عُرِفَ مَا ذَكَرْتَهُ عِلْمٌ
أَنَّ الْحَدِيثَ مِنَ الْعَالَمِ الْمَخْصُوصِ. وَكَذَا مَا
أَشْبَهَهُ مِنَ الْأَحَادِيثِ الْوَارِدَةِ، وَيُؤَيِّدُ مَا قُلْنَا
قَوْلُ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ فِي
التَّرَاوِيحِ: نِعْمَتِ الْبِدْعَةِ (شرح النووي على
مسلم - ج ٣ / ص ٢٤٧)

“Scholars have said that innovation in religion (*Bid`ah*) is of five kinds: mandatory, non-mandatory, forbidden, undesirable and acceptable. Of those that are mandatory, the arguments of the philosophers for refuting the atheists and innovators, is an example. The non-mandatory type is to author books, establish schools of study, set up border posts to (deter the enemy), etc. Of those that are acceptable are such as variety in food, etc. As for the forbidden and undesirable, they are quite well known. The *hadith* (which says, “every *Bid`ah* is a misguidance”) is speaking of a particular type of *Bid`ah* and is not generally applicable to all its kind. Our statement is strengthened by `Umar’s words concerning the taraawih he instituted: ‘A good *Bid`ah* it is.’”

The topic deserves greater elaboration. But none of the commentators

under this author’s scheme of study has attempted it. It is on such occasions that one misses Rashid Rida’s thoroughgoing investigations (Au.).

63. Ibn Jarir explains this passage in the following manner: “They invented a monasticism that We had not prescribed, although they did it hoping to attain Allah’s approval.” Zamakhshari is with him in this understanding.

64. That is, a few remained true to their undertaking and so earned their rewards, but most of them did not observe monasticism the way it should have been observed but rather, proved to be incorrigibly corrupt. (Based on Zamakhshari).

Ibn Jarir (as also Qurtubi) presents a report on his own authority, which has been preserved in several *hadith* collections such as Nasa’i, Tabarani and Ibn Marduwayh. The authenticity of some versions has been doubted but Ibn Kathir thinks that certain versions hold a strong position. It says that after `Isa (*asws*), the rulers altered *Torah* and Injeel and gave the options to their populace to either accept the altered versions or face the sword. Those who did not acquiesce were murdered. A third or so of the populace begged to be allowed into deserts where they could live in se-

clusion, away from the civilized life, and in no way disturbing the peace of others. They were allowed to take such a step, and it is in this connection that Allah revealed, “and monasticism which they invented - We did not prescribe it upon them - except to seek Allah’s approval.” By the time the Prophet arrived, few of them had survived so that when the news of his advent spread, this one came down from a monastery, that one from his recluse, yet another from his retreat, to embrace Islam. It is in reference to them that Allah said, “O those who have believed, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger. He will award you a two-fold portion of His mercy and provide for you a Light whereby you can walk, and forgive you; Allah is All-forgiving, All-merciful.”

Abu Umamah al-Bahiliyy is reported to have applied this verse to this *Ummah*’s introduction of “tarawih” Prayers. He said, “Allah enjoined you to ‘siyam’ (fasts), but not ‘qiyam.’ It is something that you introduced. Now, (observe it in the manner of true observation: Qurtubi, and) do not forget that there were a people who introduced things in their religion that they were not commanded, but rather, did it on their own, and yet did not observe them in the spirit they should have been observed, so

Allah reproached them for it saying, ‘and monasticism which they invented - We did not prescribe it upon them - except to seek Allah’s approval.’” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Ibn Kathir cites a few other cases of Allah’s favor upon those He wills. The *Sahihayn*, Ibn Hibban and Ahmad have the following (the version here is from *Muslim*):

فَقَرَأَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ أَتَوْا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فَقَالُوا ذَهَبَ أَهْلُ الدُّنُورِ بِالذَّرْحَاتِ الْعُلَى وَالنَّعِيمِ الْمُقِيمِ. فَقَالَ «وَمَا ذَاكَ». قَالُوا يُصَلُّونَ كَمَا نُصَلِّي وَيَصُومُونَ كَمَا نَصُومُ وَيَتَصَدَّقُونَ وَلَا نَتَصَدَّقُ وَيُعَتِّقُونَ وَلَا نُعَتِّقُ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- «أَفَلَا أَعَلَمَكُمُ شَيْئًا تُدْرِكُونَ بِهِ مَنْ سَبَقَكُمْ وَتَسْبِقُونَ بِهِ مَنْ بَعْدَكُمْ وَلَا يَكُونَ أَحَدٌ أَفْضَلَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ صَنَعَ مِثْلَ مَا صَنَعْتُمْ». قَالُوا بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. قَالَ «تُسَبِّحُونَ وَتُكَبِّرُونَ وَتُحَمِّدُونَ ذِكْرَ كُلِّ صَلَاةٍ ثَلَاثًا وَثَلَاثِينَ مَرَّةً». قَالَ أَبُو صَالِحٍ فَرَجَعَ فَقَرَأَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فَقَالُوا سَمِعَ إِخْوَانُنَا أَهْلَ الْأَمْوَالِ بِمَا فَعَلْنَا فَعَمَلُوا مِثْلَهُ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- «ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ»

“The poor immigrants went to the Prophet and said, ‘The wealthy attained high ranks and lasting bliss.’ He asked, ‘How is

it?’ They said, ‘They Pray like we do, fast like we do, but they expend in charity while we cannot, and free slaves while we cannot.’ The Prophet told them, ‘Should I not teach you something whereby you will attain (to the same ranks) as those who went by, and overtake those who will come after you, and none will be equal to you except he who did like you do?’ They said, ‘Sure do it, Messenger of Allah.’ He said, ‘Chant out Allah’s glory, might, and praises after every Prayer thirty-three times each.’ Abu Saleh said, ‘(Later) the poor immigrants returned to the Prophet to say, ‘Our wealthy brothers came to know of what we were doing and have begun to do the same.’ He answered, ‘That is Allah’s mercy that He bestows upon whom He will.’”

Qurtubi mentions a *hadith* in reference to monasticism. It is in Ahmad. It seems one of the Companions passed by a cave attached to a small pond. The place won his approval for its distance from the towns, away from the humdrum of life. When he returned, he described it to the Prophet and sought his permission to spend the rest of his life there worshipping Allah without any disturbance. He said,

«إِنِّي لَمْ أُبْعَثْ بِالْيَهُودِيَّةِ وَلَا بِالنَّصْرَانِيَّةِ وَلَكِنِّي بُعِثْتُ بِالْحَنِيفِيَّةِ السَّمْحَةِ وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَعْدُوَّةٌ أَوْ رَوْحَةٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا وَلِمَقَامِ أَحَدِكُمْ فِي الصَّفِّ خَيْرٌ مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ سِتِينَ سَنَةً»

“I have not been sent with Judaism or Christianity but rather with the easy-to-practice religion of devotion to one God. By Him in whose hand is Muhammad’s life, a morning or a day out in Allah’s path (in *Jihad*) is better than the world and all that it contains; and the act of one of you standing in a congregational row, is better than his personal Prayers of sixty years.”

The Prophet’s words as in the Arabic text were declared trustworthy by Albani, while Haythami questioned the earlier half (Au.).

Alusi adds another *hadith* worth quoting. It is from Abu Da’ud (that has, according to Haythami, a narrator whom some accepted while others rejected: Au.),

«لَا تُشَدُّدُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَيَشَدَّدَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَإِنْ قَوْمًا شَدَّدُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ فَشَدَّدَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ فَبَلَكَ بَقَايَاهُمْ فِي الصَّوَامِعِ وَالْدِيَارِ {وَرَهْبَانِيَّتًا بَدَعُوهَا مَا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهَا عَلَيْهِمْ}

(الحديث: ٢٧)

The Prophet said, "Do not go to extremes (by being harsh) on yourselves. A people before you were stern with their selves, so Allah also tightened upon them (by issuing tough commands). Those in the monasteries and cloisters are the leftovers of them."

That is, do not set upon yourselves harsh standards, nor take up difficult religious practices. In the end you will be defeated (Au.).

65. Majid quotes a Christian: "With the passing of the concubine, the nuns in the convents provided the 'holy men' with the means of satisfying their sexual cravings" (Scot, History of Prostitution, p. 112). "Asceticism gave to sex an extravagantly important position, and the unhappy twist which the cult of celibacy gave to European morals was the natural result. There grew up a new hypocrisy, such as the old world had not troubled to practice and at the same time the extravagant license of medieval literature, and the squalor and degradation which have since

then surrounded and accompanied prostitution" (UHW, I, p. 381). The outstanding features of these monasteries were 'that they absorbed lands which would have been more useful in the hands of private owners, that they withdrew men from a life of active usefulness, and too often made them lazy and worthless.'" (IV. P. 2627) "The rich endowments granted by kings had brought with them, as was inevitable, the seeds of luxury and self-indulgence, and of the very popularity of the 'religious' life gave occasion to unreality of professing it." (DCD. I. p. 191).

The Qur'ānic remark that most of them were corrupt is not even the tip of the iceberg. History of monasticism is so full of corruption that none but the most die-hard Christian can have any respect for it. Mawdudi places a long note describing monasticism at its best, and it is far from pleasing. Although the account is familiar, we hesitate to reproduce any part of it because the author has not quoted the sources.

[28] O those who have believed,⁶⁶ fear Allah and believe in His Messenger. He will award you a two-fold portion of His mercy⁶⁷ and provide for you a Light whereby you can walk,⁶⁸ and forgive you; Allah is All-forgiving, All-merciful;

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَآمِنُوا
بِرَسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيَجْعَلْ
لَكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ
غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

66. According to Dahhak, the address is to those of the people of the Book who embraced Islam (Ibn Jarir).

67. There will be others who will be doubly rewarded on the Day of Judgment. Says the Prophet in a *hadith* (preserved by Bukhari and others: Au.),

(قال) أَبُو بُرْدَةَ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ أَبَاهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ -
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَ «ثَلَاثَةٌ يُؤْتَوْنَ
أَجْرَهُمْ مَرَّتَيْنِ الرَّجُلُ تَكُونُ لَهُ الْأَمَةُ فَيُعَلِّمُهَا
فَيُحْسِنُ تَعْلِيمَهَا، وَيُؤَدِّبُهَا فَيُحْسِنُ آدِبَهَا، ثُمَّ
يُعْتِقُهَا فَيَتَزَوَّجُهَا، فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ، وَمُؤْمِنٌ أَهْلُ
الْكِتَابِ الَّذِي كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا، ثُمَّ آمَنَ بِالنَّبِيِّ -
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ، وَالْعَبْدُ
الَّذِي يُؤَدِّي حَقَّ اللَّهِ وَيَنْصَحُ لِسَيِّدِهِ».

“There are three who will receive two fold rewards: (a) A man who owns a slave-girl. He educates her, and educates her well, he teaches her good manners, and teaches it well. Then he frees her, and then marries her. He shall have twice the reward. (b) A be-

liever of the people of the Book, who was a believer earlier also, and then believed in the Prophet (of the time). He shall have twice the reward. (c) And a slave who renders Allah’s rights and is sincere to his owner as well.” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

The above *hadith* ends on an interesting note. Sha’bi is one in the chain of narrators. He remarked as he narrated at Kufah,

ثُمَّ قَالَ الشَّعْبِيُّ وَأَعْطَيْتُكَهَا بِغَيْرِ شَيْءٍ وَقَدْ
كَانَ الرَّجُلُ يَرْحَلُ فِي أَهْوَنَ مِنْهَا إِلَى
الْمَدِينَةِ.

“I give this (narration) to you at no cost. There was a time when a man had to travel to Madinah for (a narration) much less important than this one” (Au.).

Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir present another *hadith* in reference to two-fold rewards. (It is in Bukhari, Ibn Hibban, Ahmad and many other collections: Au.),

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا - قَالَ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَ
«إِنَّمَا أَجَلُكُمْ فِي أَجَلٍ مَنْ خَلَا مِنَ الْأُمَمِ مَا
بَيْنَ صَلَاةِ الْعَصْرِ إِلَى مَغْرِبِ الشَّمْسِ، وَإِنَّمَا
مَثَلُكُمْ وَمَثَلُ الْيَهُودِ وَالنَّصَارَى كَرَجُلٍ
اسْتَعْمَلَ عَمَلًا فَقَالَ مَنْ يَعْمَلُ لِي إِلَى نَصْفِ
النَّهَارِ عَلَى قِيَرَاطٍ قِيَرَاطٍ فَعَمِلَتِ الْيَهُودُ إِلَى
نَصْفِ النَّهَارِ عَلَى قِيَرَاطٍ قِيَرَاطٍ، ثُمَّ قَالَ مَنْ
يَعْمَلُ لِي مِنْ نَصْفِ النَّهَارِ إِلَى صَلَاةِ الْعَصْرِ
عَلَى قِيَرَاطٍ قِيَرَاطٍ فَعَمِلَتِ النَّصَارَى مِنْ
نَصْفِ النَّهَارِ إِلَى صَلَاةِ الْعَصْرِ عَلَى قِيَرَاطٍ
قِيَرَاطٍ، ثُمَّ قَالَ مَنْ يَعْمَلُ لِي مِنْ صَلَاةِ
الْعَصْرِ إِلَى مَغْرِبِ الشَّمْسِ عَلَى قِيَرَاطَيْنِ
قِيَرَاطَيْنِ أَلَا فَأَنْتُمْ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ صَلَاةِ
الْعَصْرِ إِلَى مَغْرِبِ الشَّمْسِ عَلَى قِيَرَاطَيْنِ
قِيَرَاطَيْنِ، أَلَا لَكُمْ الْأَجْرُ مَرَّتَيْنِ، فَعُضِبَتِ
الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى، فَقَالُوا نَحْنُ أَكْثَرُ عَمَلًا
وَأَقْلُ عَطَاءً، قَالَ اللَّهُ هَلْ ظَلَمْتُكُمْ مِنْ
حَقِّكُمْ شَيْئًا قَالُوا لَا. قَالَ فَإِنَّهُ فَضَّلِي أُعْطِيَهُ
مَنْ شِئْتُ»

The Prophet said, “Your epoch among the epochs of those who went before you is (the time) between ‘*Asr* and *Maghrib* (prayers). And your example compared to those of Jews and Christians is like a man who hired some workers saying, ‘Who will work for me for half the day over a measure each?’ The Jews worked for half

a day for a measure each. Then he asked, ‘Who will work for me from mid-day until the ‘*Asr* time for a measure each?’ The Christians worked from mid-day until the ‘*Asr* time for a measure each. Then he said, ‘Who will work for me from the ‘*Asr* time until *Maghrib* on two measures each?’ Lo, O *Muslims*. It is you will work between ‘*Asr* and *Maghrib* for two measures each. Undoubtedly, you shall have two-fold rewards. So the Jews and Christians became angry and said, ‘Should we work more and be paid less?’ Allah asked, ‘Did I deny anything of your right?’ The two said, ‘No.’ He said, ‘This is My grace, I bestow upon whom I will.’”

(For a better understanding of how the Fuqaha’ methodology works, it may be noted that the Hanafiyyah use this *hadith* – apart from others - to deduce that the time-gap between ‘*Asr* and *Maghrib* prayers should be shorter than the time gap between *Zuhr* and ‘*Asr*. They recommend therefore, that ‘*Asr* be done late: Au.).

However, there is another report in Bukhari which varies with the above to point to another historical reality. Ibn Kathir quotes it:

عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ «مَثَلُ
- صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَ «مَثَلُ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْيَهُودِ وَالنَّصَارَى كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ
اسْتَأْجَرَ قَوْمًا يَعْمَلُونَ لَهُ عَمَلًا يَوْمًا إِلَى اللَّيْلِ
عَلَى أَجْرٍ مَعْلُومٍ، فَعَمِلُوا لَهُ إِلَى نِصْفِ النَّهَارِ
فَقَالُوا لَا حَاجَةَ لَنَا إِلَى أَجْرِكَ الَّذِي شَرَطْتَ
لَنَا، وَمَا عَمِلْنَا بِأُطْلٍ، فَقَالَ لَهُمْ لَا تَفْعَلُوا
أَكْمِلُوا بَقِيَّةَ عَمَلِكُمْ، وَخُذُوا أَجْرَكُمْ كَامِلًا،
فَأَبَوْا وَتَرَكَوْا، وَاسْتَأْجَرَ آخَرِينَ بَعْدَهُمْ فَقَالَ
لَهُمَا أَكْمِلَا بَقِيَّةَ يَوْمِكُمَا هَذَا، وَلَكُمْمَا الَّذِي
شَرَطْتُ لَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَجْرِ. فَعَمِلُوا حَتَّى إِذَا
كَانَ حِينَ صَلَوةِ الْعَصْرِ قَالَا لَكَ مَا عَمِلْنَا
بِأُطْلٍ، وَلَكَ الْأَجْرُ الَّذِي جَعَلْتَ لَنَا فِيهِ.
فَقَالَ لَهُمَا أَكْمِلَا بَقِيَّةَ عَمَلِكُمَا، فَإِنْ مَا بَقِيَ
مِنَ النَّهَارِ شَيْءٌ يَسِيرٌ. فَأَبَيَا، وَاسْتَأْجَرَ قَوْمًا
أَنْ يَعْمَلُوا لَهُ بَقِيَّةَ يَوْمِهِمْ، فَعَمِلُوا بَقِيَّةَ يَوْمِهِمْ
حَتَّى غَابَتِ الشَّمْسُ، وَاسْتَكْمَلُوا أَجْرَ
الْفَرِيقَيْنِ كِلَيْهِمَا، فَذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ وَمَثَلُ مَا
قَبِلُوا مِنْ هَذَا النُّورِ»

Abu Musa reports the Prophet as having said, "The example of the *Muslims* and Jews and Christians is like a man who hired a people to work for a day until the night, for a known wage. They worked until the mid-day, but said, 'We have no need for the wage you had promised. Whatever we did was all waste.' He told them, 'Do not do that. Complete your work

and take your wage in full.' But they refused and abandoned the work. He hired two workers after them and said to them, 'Complete this day of yours and you shall have your wages in full.' They began to work but by the time it was *Asr*-Prayer time, the two said, 'Whatever we did for you was all waste. You may keep the reward you had promised us to yourself.' He told the two, 'Complete your work. What is left of the day is but little.' The two refused. So he hired another set of people on condition that they will complete the work of the day. They worked for the rest of their day until the sun disappeared and completed the wages of the previous two parties. This is their example, and the example of what they took of this Light."

Note that the employment of the word "two" that were hired to work between noon and *Asr* time, throws the hint that the Jews were also allowed to work, and that Judaism remained valid, even after some of them formed a new sect called "Christianity" (Au.).

68. The Qur'an, the Criterion, and Allah's guidance have been explained as being alluded to by the textual

[29] that the people of the Book may know⁶⁹ that they have no power over anything of Allah's grace and that all grace is in Allah's hand. He bestows it upon whom He will;⁷⁰ and Allah is possessor of great grace.

لَيْلًا يَعْلَمُ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَلَّا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِّنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٩﴾

word "Nur." But 'the Qur'ān' is the preferable understanding, which is a source of Light for its holders (Ibn Jarir).

Alusi adds: The hidden meaning in "provide you with Light whereby you can walk" is best expressed in a saying that circulates among scholars: "Whoever lived by what he knows is led to greater learning."

69. Not knowing the Arabic language well enough can lead to faulty understanding of the Qur'ān. In this *Ayah*, "li-‘alla" is equivalent of "li-kayla." Ibn Jarir brings out a few other verses from the Qur'ān in which "la" does not hold a negative meaning, but rather is used as a conjunction (lamu silah). For example,

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ (الأعراف: ١٢)

"What prevented you that you should prostrate yourself when I ordered you?"

Or,

وَمَا يُنْعِرُكُمْ أَنَّهَا إِذَا جَاءَتْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (الأنعام: ١٠٩)

"And what will inform you that when it comes, they will believe?"

Or yet,

وَحَرَامٌ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ (الأنبياء: ٩٥)

"It is impossible for the (people of) a town which We destroyed, that they should return."

Qurtubi presents Farra's position as agreeing with the above.

70. One way to understand the verse, and its connection with the passage, is that Allah detailed some happenings of the past in order to impress upon the Jews and Christians that Allah's grace is not bound with them, but is vast and available to any qualifying individual or nation. Therefore, there should be no objection to Him raising the Final Prophet among the Arabs and revealing to him (Razi).

بَقِيَ

Surah 58

Al-Mujadalah

Madinan¹



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Allah has, indeed, heard the words of her who pleads with you concerning her husband,² and complains to Allah.³ Allah hears the conversation of you two. Surely, Allah is All-hearing, All-seeing.

قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا
وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١﴾

1. Although there are some dissenting opinions, over a verse or few others, the great majority believe that this *Surah* is entirely Makkan.

2. `A'isha (ra) has been recorded in Nasa'i, (a part of which report is also in Bukhari: Au.) as saying,

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَسِعَ
سَمْعُهُ الْأَصْوَاتَ لَقَدْ جَاءَتْ خَوْلَةَ إِلَى
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- تَشْكُو
زَوْجَهَا فَكَانَ يَخْفَى عَلَى كَلَامِهَا فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
عَزَّ وَجَلَّ {قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي
زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَا إِنَّ
اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ} الْآيَةَ (المجادلة: ١)

“Allah be praised who has circumscribed all voices. Khawlah came to the Prophet complain-

ing against her husband but her voice unclear to me, yet Allah revealed, ‘Allah has, indeed, heard the words of her who pleads with you concerning her husband’” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

There are other reports in this context, which have a few other details. One of them says that `A'isha said,

إِنِّي لَأَسْمَعُ كَلَامَ خَوْلَةَ بِنْتِ ثَعْلَبَةَ، وَيَخْفَى عَلَيَّ بَعْضُهُ
وَهِيَ تَشْتَكِي زَوْجَهَا وَهِيَ تَقُولُ ” أَكَلَ شَبَابِي
وَتَنَزَّتَ لَهُ بَطْنِي حَتَّى إِذَا كَبُرَتْ سِنِّي وَانْقَطَعَ وَلَدِي
ظَاهَرَ مِنِّي الْحَدِيثُ. فَمَا بَرَحْتُ حَتَّى تَزَلَ جَبْرِيلُ بِحَدِيثِهِ
الْآيَاتِ - وَهَذَا أَصَحُّ مَا وَرَدَ فِي قِصَّةِ الْمُجَادِلَةِ (فتح
الباري لابن حجر)

“I could hear Tha`labah's daughter, Khawlah, although not wholly, as she was complaining against her husband saying, ‘He ate my

youth, I opened my womb for him, until when my age advanced, and my child is cut off from me, he has declared that my back is like his mother's.' And, it was not too long when Jibril came with this verse." (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir cites it from Ibn Abi Hatim.

Ibn Hajr added that this is the most correct version that has come to us on this topic (Au.).

According to some reports, her husband suffered from slight mental abnormality. When it took over him he uttered such things, but not otherwise (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Could it have been a case of Borderline Personality Disorder? (Au.)

There are other reports which suggest that perhaps two incidents of "*zihar*" took place, with the first one involving Khawlah bint Tha'labah and her husband Aws b. Samit, the brother of 'Ubadah b. Samit. This was the opinion of Ibn 'Abbas (Ibn Kathir).

Other reports, as produced by Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and Shawkani, give us further detail to the effect that the Prophet spoke to Aws after the revelation of this verse. He asked him whether he could free

a slave. He said he had none. So he suggested that he fast sixty days at a stretch. He expressed his inability to do so. Finally, the Prophet told him to feed sixty persons. Aws complained of his own poverty. So the Prophet helped him out of the state treasury.

Yet another report, although weak, tells us that once while 'Umar was out with some people, a woman sought his attention. He went up to her, listened to her carefully, and did for her whatever she wanted him to do, until she left. When he returned, someone remarked, "Leader of the Faithful: Did you detain Qurayshis because of this old woman?" He replied, "Woe unto you. Do you know who she is? She is the one whose complaint Allah heard from above the seven heavens. She is Khawlah bint Tha'labah. By Allah, if she had detained me for the rest of the day, I would have attended to her, except for attending to Prayers." (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

3. The words, "complains to Allah" have been added because, as some reports say, the Prophet initially told her that he had no answer to her problem, and so, she complained to Allah.

[2] Those of you who say to your wives, 'Be, as my mother's back,'⁴ such (of the wives) are in no way their mothers. Their mothers are only those who gave them birth. Indeed, they utter inappropriate words, and a falsehood. Yet Allah is All-pardoning, All-forgiving.

الَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْكُمْ مِّن نِّسَائِهِمْ مِمَّا هُنَّ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ إِنَّ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ إِلَّا اللَّائِي وَلَدَتْهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَقُولُونَ مُنْكَرًا مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ وَزُورًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُوفٌ غَفُورٌ ﴿٢﴾

[3] As for those who liken the backs of their women with those of their mothers, and then retract what they said, (upon them is) freeing of a slave before the two of them touch each other.⁵ By this you are admonished, and Allah is, of what you do, Aware.

وَالَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْ نِّسَائِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَتَمَاسَا ذَٰلِكُمْ تُوعَظُونَ بِهِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٣﴾

4. The technical term used in the Qur'an is "zihar." In pre-Islamic times there were several ways of divorcing a woman. One was "zihar" which was for a man to say to his wife, "you are like my mother's back," or, "your back is like my mother's back." With that she was considered divorced (Ibn Jarir), and included are such words as "you are like my mother" (Ibn Kathir), or to say, "you are like my aunt," or "like my daughter-in-law," or to say, "your legs are like my mother's", etc. (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

Jarir, Ibn Kathir). A *hadith* also prohibits intercourse before the expiation. It is in Tirmidhi, (who declared it *Hasan, Gharib, Sahih*), as also in Abu Da'ud and Nasa'i. It says:

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ أَنَّ رَجُلًا أَتَى النَّبِيَّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- قَدْ ظَاهَرَ مِنْ امْرَأَتِهِ فَوَقَعَ عَلَيْهَا فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي قَدْ ظَاهَرْتُ مِنْ زَوْجَتِي فَوَقَعْتُ عَلَيْهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ أُكْفِّرَ. فَقَالَ «وَمَا حَمَلَكَ عَلَى ذَٰلِكَ يَرْحَمَكَ اللَّهُ». قَالَ رَأَيْتُ خُلُوعَهَا فِي ضَوْءِ الْقَمَرِ. قَالَ «فَلَا تَقْرُبَهَا حَتَّى تَفْعَلَ مَا أَمَرَكَ اللَّهُ بِهِ».

5. The translation is literal. Otherwise, figuratively the allusion is to intercourse. Accordingly, *Hasan*, Suyyan and others said that there is no harm in each other getting close, so long as they avoid intercourse (Ibn

Ibn `Abbas reported that a man came to the Prophet. He had declared his wife like her mother's back, but thereafter had intercourse with her. He said, "Messenger of Allah, I declared my wife like my mother's back and then had intercourse with her before I could expiate." He asked, "What made you do it, may Allah

[4] But if any does not find (the means) then two months of consecutive fasts⁶ before the two touch each other. However, if one is not able, then feeding of sixty poor persons. This, that you may believe in Allah and His Messenger.⁷ And these are Allah's bounds; and for the unbeliever (awaits) a severe chastisement.

فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامَ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسَا فَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فِإِطْعَامَ سِتِّينَ مِسْكِينًا ذَلِكَ لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٤﴾

[5] Surely those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, shall be humbled as those before them were humbled.⁸ We have, indeed, sent down self-evident signs, and for the unbelievers there (awaits) a humbling chastisement.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ كُتِبُوا كَمَا كُتِبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴿٥﴾

[6] The Day Allah will raise them up all together, and inform them of what they did.⁹ Allah had taken account of it while they forgot it. Allah is, over all things, a Witness.

يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا أَحْصَاهُ اللَّهُ وَنَسُوهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٦﴾

show you mercy?” He answered, “I saw her anklet in moonlight.” He said, “Do not go near her until you have accomplished what Allah has ordered you do” (Ibn Kathir).

6. Unless a man is forced to break for a spell because of a natural cause, such as, he falls sick, he should do the fasts consecutively. But if there happens to be a natural cause, he may count what he did earlier to the break, and then, continue after the break to complete his sixty fasts (Ibn Jarir from the *Salaf*).

7. That is, reconfirm your faith in Allah and His Messenger by accepting

the new rules of “*zihar*” and do away with all the connected taboos of the past (Razi).

8. The word “*kabata*” yields several meanings; another being, “destruction” (Ibn Jarir).

9. “This phrase, ‘Allah will tell them of their deeds (or their doings or their conduct)’ occurs frequently. See v. 51, n. 762; v. 108, n. 811; vi. 60; ix. 94; etc. In this life there is a certain mist or illusion in our spiritual sight. We see things from different angles and dispute about them; we hide real motives, and pretend to virtues which we do not possess; others may attribute such virtues to us, and we

[7] Have you not seen that Allah knows whatever is in the heavens, and whatever is in the earth? There is no secret counsel involving three but He is their fourth: nor of five but He is their sixth; and neither less than that nor more but He is with them, wherever they may be.¹⁰ Then He will inform them of what they did on the Day of Standing. Surely, Allah is of all things knowing.¹¹

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى
ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ
سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا أَذَى مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرَ
إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا
عَمِلُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾

[8] Have you not considered those who were forbidden secret counsel but they revert to what they were forbidden?¹² Moreover, they secretly counsel with each other involving sin, hostility and disobedience of the Messenger. And, when they come to you they greet you with what Allah has not greeted you.¹³ And they say within themselves, 'Why should Allah not punish us for what we say?' Enough for them is Jahannum wherein they will enter: an evil destination.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ تَهُوْا عَنِ النَّجْوَى ثُمَّ
يَعُودُونَ لِمَا تَهُوْا عَنْهُ وَيَتَنَاجَوْنَ بِاللَّيْلِ
وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَةِ الرَّسُولِ وَإِذَا جَاؤُوكَ
حَيَّوْكَ بِمَا لَمْ يُحَيِّكَ بِهِ اللَّهُ وَيَقُولُونَ
فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَوْلَا يُعَذِّبُنَا اللَّهُ بِمَا نَعْمَلُ
حَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ يُصْلَوْنَ فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَصِيرُ
﴿٨﴾

may come to believe it ourselves; we conceive likes and hatreds on insufficient grounds; we forget what we should remember, and remember what we should forget. Our vision is narrow, and our values are false. On the Day of Account all this will be remedied. Not only will true values be restored, but we shall ourselves see the inwardness of things in our own lives, which we never saw before." (Yusuf Ali).

10. That is, He is with him in His knowledge, without moving and without coming down (Qurtubi).

There is consensus of scholars over this interpretation (Ibn Kathir).

11. Imām Ahmad has pointed out that this *Ayah* starts with the mention of knowledge, and ends with the mention of knowledge (Ibn Kathir).

12. According to Mujahid, the allusion is to the Jews. Whenever a Muslim passed by them, they would put their heads together and begin

to counsel secretly. That scared the Muslim. He feared that they might be plotting to kill him. The Prophet forbade them, but to no avail (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Yusuf Ali adds: “When the Muslim Brotherhood was acquiring strength in Madinah and the forces of disruption were being discomfited in open fight against the Messenger of Righteousness, the wicked resorted to duplicity and secret intrigues, in which the ringleaders were the disaffected Jews and the Hypocrites, whose machinations have been frequently referred to in the Qur’ān.”

While on the topic, a report could be cited. It is in Ahmad:

عَنْ رُبَيْحِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ قَالَ كُنَّا تَتَنَاقَبُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فَنَبِيتُ عِنْدَهُ تَكُونُ لَهُ الْحَاجَةُ أَوْ يَطْرُقُهُ أَمْرٌ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَيَبْعَثُنَا فَيَكْثُرُ الْمُخْتَسِبِينَ وَأَهْلُ الثُّوبِ فَكُنَّا تَتَحَدَّثُ فَمَخَّرَجَ عَلَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَقَالَ «مَا هَذِهِ النَّجْوَى أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمُ عَنِ النَّجْوَى». قَالَ قُلْنَا تَتَوَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا فِي ذِكْرِ الْمَسِيحِ فَرَفَأَ مِنْهُ. فَقَالَ «أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِمَا هُوَ أَخَوْفُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْمَسِيحِ عِنْدِي». قَالَ قُلْنَا بَلَى. قَالَ «الْبَشْرُ الْخَفِيُّ أَنْ يَقُومَ الرَّجُلُ يَعْمَلُ لِمَكَانٍ رَجُلٍ». - (رواه أحمد ورجاله موثقون: تجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

One of the Companions reported, “We used to take turns and spend the night at the Prophet’s place. The point was, he might

have a need, or an affair might come up at night and he would want to send one of us out. One of those nights there were several such volunteers and we began to talk to each other (in low tones). The Prophet came out and asked, ‘Why all this secret counseling? Have I not forbidden you?’ We said, ‘We repent to Allah, O Allah’s Apostle. We were speaking of Jesus Christ, fearful on that account.’ He said, ‘May I not inform you of what I fear more for you?’ We said, ‘Please do.’ He said, ‘Secret Association (with Allah): that a man should undertake to do a thing simply because of another’s (social or political) position”’ (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Kathir suggests that the report is quite weak, but Haythami thinks it has trustworthy narrators (Au.).

13. Once again, it is the Jews. They would come to the Prophet and greet him with a twisted tongue to say one thing and mean another. There is a report wherein ‘A’isha said:

عَنْ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ. قَالَتْ: اسْتَأْذَنَ رَهْطٌ مِنَ الْيَهُودِ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. فَقَالُوا: السَّامُ عَلَيْكُمْ. فَقَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ: بَلْ عَلَيْكُمُ السَّامُ وَاللَّعْنَةُ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ “يَا عَائِشَةُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الرَّفْقَ فِي الْأَمْرِ كُلِّهِ” قَالَتْ: أَلَمْ تَسْمَعْ مَا قَالُوا؟ قَالَ “فَدَقُلْتُ: وَعَلَيْكُمْ.”

[9] O those who have believed, when you whisper secretly to each other, then do not whisper (matters) involving sin, hostility and disobedience of the Messenger, but whisper (matters) involving piety and God-consciousness. And fear Allah, to whom you will be mustered.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَنَاجَيْتُمْ فَلَا تَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَتِ الرَّسُولِ وَتَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَى وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

[10] Surely, secret whispering is from Shaytan, so that the believers may be aggrieved;¹⁴ but they are not going to harm them aught except by Allah's leave. And, upon Allah should the believers place (their) trust.

إِنَّمَا النَّجْوَى مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ لِيَحْزُنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَيْسَ بِضَارِّهِمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

A group of Jews came to the Prophet and said, “*As-samu ‘alay-kum*” – (meaning, death be upon you). ‘A’isha replied, “Upon you sam and curses.” The Prophet said, “‘A’isha, Allah approves of gentleness in everything.” She said, “Did you not hear what they said?” He said, “I replied, ‘and upon you’” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

There are several other reports of other occasions. On one occasion three Jews came to the Prophet, stood at the entrance and secretly counseled with each other, then they departed one after another, each of the three saying, “*As-samu alaykum*” and the Prophet replying, “Upon you too.” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

The above is Muslim’s version (Au.).

14. The reference is to some hypocrites who would come to the Prophet and whisper a few words in his ear to give impression to the believers that something serious must have happened, such as, an enemy advancing upon them, or his dear one killed in an expedition, causing anxiety (Ibn Jarir, Kashshaf).

Accordingly, the Prophet said,

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- «إِذَا كُنْتُمْ ثَلَاثَةً فَلَا يَتَنَاجَى اثْنَانِ دُونَ صَاحِبِهِمَا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ يُحْزِنُهُ».

“When you are three then let not two whisper to each other, leaving the third out. It aggrieves him.” (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

The Arabic text is from Muslim although the report is in several collections (Au.).

[11] O those who have believed, when you are told, 'Make room' in the assemblies, then make room. Allah will make room for you.¹⁵ But when you are told to arise, then arise.¹⁶ Allah will raise those of you in ranks who have believed and those who have been given knowledge.¹⁷ And Allah is of what you do Aware.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَإِذَا قِيلَ انشُزُوا فَانْشُزُوا يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾

15. Allah will make room for them in every likely manner and place: in provision, in the heart, in the grave and in Paradise (Razi, Qurtubi).

16. Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir use this occasion to present a note pertaining to assembly manners.

Assembly Manners

First, it is not right to ask anyone to yield his place to another.

”لَا يُقِيمَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ الرَّجُلَ مِنْ مَجْلِسِهِ، ثُمَّ يَجْلِسُ فِيهِ وَلَكِنْ تَفَسَّحُوا وَتَوَسَّعُوا“

The Prophet said, as in a *hadith* of Muslim, “Let not a man ask another to move out of his place and then occupy it himself, but rather, (you may) make room (for him) and expand.”

This happened in battles also when someone tried to occupy a place in the first row, hoping to get martyred. Allah forbade it. It is another thing that others should make space and accommodate him (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

And Salim reports in a trustworthy report that,

قَالَ سَلِمٌ فَكَانَ الرَّجُلُ يَقُومُ لِابْنِ عُمَرَ مِنْ مَجْلِسِهِ فَمَا يَجْلِسُ فِي مَجْلِسِهِ

“If a man stood up for Ibn `Umar (to offer him his seat), he would refuse to sit in his place.” (Au.).

Someone who leaves his place in the mosque for a short errand has the right of place when he returns (Qurtubi).

In fact, continues Ibn Kathir, one should not even expect that people stand up for him when he enters. A *hadith* of Tirmidhi, (of Hasan status), and Abu Da`ud reports the Prophet,

”مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَتَمَتَّلَ لَهُ الرَّجَالُ قِيَامًا فَلْيَتَوَّأْ مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ“

“Whoever wishes that the people pay him respect by standing up, may make his place in the Fire.”

In fact, the Prophet himself used to sit down wherever he found place, even

if it was at the end of an assembly. It is another thing that wherever he sat, it became the central position. Normally he had Abu Bakr on his right, 'Umar on his left and 'Uthman and 'Ali in front of him. They sat in front because they used to write the revelation. He also placed those who were better at understanding near him. A newcomer may sit down wherever he finds empty space. A related report is (in the *Sahihayn*: Sami):

عَنْ أَبِي وَاقِدٍ اللَّيْثِيِّ قَالَ بَيْنَمَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ فَأَقْبَلَ ثَلَاثَةٌ تَعْرِفُ أَقْبَلَ اثْنَانِ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَذَهَبَ وَاحِدٌ فَأَمَّا أَخَذَهُمَا فَرَأَى فَرَجَةً فِي الْحُلُمَةِ فَجَلَسَ وَأَمَّا الْآخَرُ فَجَلَسَ خَلْفَهُمْ فَلَمَّا فَرَغَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ عَنِ النَّفَرِ الثَّلَاثَةِ أَمَّا أَخَذَهُمْ فَأَوَى إِلَى اللَّهِ فَأَوَاهُ اللَّهُ وَأَمَّا الْآخَرُ فَاسْتَحْيَا فَاسْتَحْيَا اللَّهُ مِنْهُ وَأَمَّا الْآخَرُ فَأَعْرَضَ فَأَعْرَضَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

Abu Waqid al-Laythi said that once while the Prophet was in an assembly in the mosque, three men dropped in. Two of them came in towards the Prophet while the third left. One of them found a slot in the gathering and occupied it. The other sat behind. When the Prophet was through he said, "Shall I not tell you about three people? One of them sought Allah's refuge, so Allah gave him refuge. Another felt shy of Allah, so Allah also

shied off him. The third turned away, so Allah also turned away from him."

In fact, concludes Ibn Kathir, a believer should not come in between two believers (in an assembly, or during a walk: Au.). The Prophet said,

“لَا يَجِلُّ لِلرَّجُلِ أَنْ يَفْرُقَ بَيْنَ اثْنَيْنِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِمْ”

“It is not lawful for a man to come in between two, save by their permission.”

The report is in Tirmidhi of *Hasan Sahih* status (Au.).

17. Shabbir has an eye on a sickness of the soul. He writes: “True faith and right knowledge bestow Islamic manners and teach ways of behavior. The more men of faith progress in faith, the humbler they become and think of themselves as of no worth. By this, Allah raises their ranks. We know that,

مَنْ تَوَاضَعَ لِلَّهِ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ

‘Allah raises him who lowers himself for His sake.’ It is the fashion of the ignorant that they fight over such vain things as, ‘Why I was made to leave my place? Why I was seated in that place?’ And so on. Alas, today, the so-called respected religious authorities declare war on each other over such petty issues.”

[12] O those who have believed, when you consult the Messenger in secret, then advance some charity before your secret consultation.¹⁸ That is better for you and purer.¹⁹ But if you find not (the means) then Allah is All-forgiving, All-kind.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَةٌ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ فَإِن لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

(The knowledgeable have preference over others). There are numerous *ahadith* in virtue of knowledge. For example,

فَضَّلَ الْعَالِمُ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضَّلَ الْقَمَرَ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ (سنن أبي داود)

“A knowledgeable man’s superiority over a worshipper is that of the full moon over rest of the stars” (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

Accordingly, write Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir, (we see this happening early in Islamic history), as the following has been preserved by Ahmad, Muslim and others:

عَنْ عَامِرِ بْنِ وَائِلَةَ أَنَّ نَافِعَ بْنَ عَبْدِ الْحَارِثِ لَقِيَ عُمَرَ يُعْسِفَانِ. وَكَانَ عُمَرُ يَسْتَعْمِلُهُ عَلَى مَكَّةَ. فَقَالَ: مَنْ اسْتَعْمَلْتَ عَلَى أَهْلِ الْوَادِي؟ فَقَالَ: ابْنُ أَبَتْرَى؟ قَالَ: وَمَنْ ابْنُ أَبَتْرَى؟ قَالَ: مَوْلَى مِنْ مَوَالِينَا. قَالَ: فَاسْتَخْلَفْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ مَوْلَى؟ قَالَ: إِنَّهُ قَارِئٌ لِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ. وَإِنَّهُ عَالِمٌ بِالْفَرَائِضِ. قَالَ عُمَرُ: أَمَا إِنَّ نَبِيَّكُمْ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَدْ قَالَ ”إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْفَعُ بِهَذَا الْكِتَابِ أَقْوَامًا وَيَضَعُ بِهِ الْآخَرِينَ.“

When Nafi` b. `Abd al-Harith – who was appointed Amir over Makkah by `Umar – met him in

`Usfan, `Umar asked him about whom had he appointed as his deputy in his absence. He said, “Ibn Abza.” `Umar asked, “And who is this Ibn Abza?” Nafi` replied, “One of our freed slaves.” `Umar asked, “You appointed a freed slave as a deputy?” Nafi` answered, “He knows the Book well as well as the laws of inheritance.” `Umar remarked, “As for your Prophet, he said, ‘Allah raises up, on account of this Book, a people and brings down another thereby.’”

18. To summarize what Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others present over several pages: At one point in time there seems to have been pretty good amount of counseling with the Prophet, secret or open, pretended or real, with the hypocrites taking off a good share, and so Allah revealed this verse to bring order.

Yusuf Ali explains, “In the Kingdom of Allah all instruction or consultation is open and free. But human

[13] Are you afraid (you could sin) that you should offer something in charity before you secret consultation?²⁰ So, if you did not, then Allah turns to you (in mercy), and so, offer Prayers assiduously and properly, expend in alms, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah is Aware of what you do.

أَشْفَقْتُمْ أَنْ تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَاتٍ فَإِذْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَتَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] Have you not considered a people who have taken for friends a people with whom Allah is angry?²¹ They are not of you, nor you of them. They swear upon falsehood²² while they know.²³

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا هُمْ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا مِنْهُمْ وَيَجْلِفُونَ عَلَى الْكَذِبِ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

nature is weak. And people want special instruction or private consultation with the Prophet from one of several motives: (1) they may have, or think they have, a special case, which they are not willing to disclose to their brethren in general; (2) they may have some sense of delicacy or dignity, which can only be satisfied by a private interview; (3) they may even be selfish enough to want to monopolise the Prophet's time. These motives are, in an ascending order, worth discouraging; and yet, considering the weakness of human nature, they cannot be reprobated to the extent of shutting out their victims from chances of improvement. It is, therefore, recommended that they spend something in charity for the good of their poorer brethren

before they indulge in such weaknesses."

Some reports suggest that 'Ali was the only person who could manage to expend in charity and consult the Prophet, for soon it was withdrawn, with of course, the restraint remaining. But Qurtubi thinks that the reports about 'Ali are weak (Au.).

19. Purer, because charity purifies (Zamakhshari).

20. Meaning, "are you afraid that you should be offering a charity that may result in financial losses?" (Razi)

21. The allusion is to the hypocrites who befriended the Jews (Tabari, Qurtubi), although in truth they were a go-in-between: neither with Muslims nor with Jews, confused between the two, trying to draw ad-

[15] Allah has prepared for them a severe chastisement. Indeed, evil are the things that they have been doing.

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] They have taken their oaths as a shield,²⁴ and have prevented from Allah's path, so there is for them a humiliating chastisement.

اتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] Never will their wealth and children avail them aught against Allah; these, they are the companions of the Fire, wherein they shall abide.

لَنْ نُنْعِي عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] On the Day Allah will raise them up all together, they will swear to Him as they swear to you. They reckon they are upon something. Lo, they indeed, they are the liars.²⁵

يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَحْلِفُونَ لَهُ كَمَا يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ عَلَى شَيْءٍ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

vantage of both (Au.); they passed on Muslim secrets (such as news of forthcoming campaigns) to the Jews (Kashshaf, Qurtubi).

22. That is, they are lying when they swear that Prophet Muhammad is a Messenger (Ibn Jarir).

23. While they know that they are lying.

24. They used their oaths as shields to escape from confrontation with the Muslims, as well as, after their feigned belief, from many obligations of Islam which they hardly practiced (Au.).

25. It has been reported in this context that,

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فِي ظِلِّ حُجْرَةٍ مِنْ حُجَرِهِ وَعِنْدَهُ نَفَرٌ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ قَدْ كَادَ يَقْلِبُ عَنْهُمْ الظِّلُّ قَالَ فَقَالَ «إِنَّهُ سَيَأْتِيَكُمْ إِنْسَانٌ يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْكُمْ بَعَيْنِي شَيْطَانٍ فَإِذَا أَتَاكُمْ فَلَا تُكَلِّمُوهُ». قَالَ فَجَاءَ رَجُلٌ أَزْرَقُ فَدَعَاهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فَكَلَّمَهُ قَالَ عَلَامَ تَسْتَمْنِي أَنْتَ وَفُلَانٌ وَفُلَانٌ نَفَرٌ دَعَاهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ. قَالَ فَذَهَبَ الرَّجُلُ فَدَعَاهُمْ فَحَلَفُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاعْتَذَرُوا إِلَيْهِ قَالَ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ {فَيَحْلِفُونَ لَهُ كَمَا يَحْلِفُونَ لَكَ وَيَحْسَبُونَ} الْآيَةَ (المجادلة: ١٨).

The Prophet was under the shade of one of his shacks with a few Muslims with him, while the shade was shrinking over them.

[19] Shaytan got the better of them and has made them forget the remembrance of Allah.²⁶ They are the party of Shaytan. Lo, the party of Shaytan, surely, they are the losers.

اسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَأَنسَاهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ الشَّيْطَانِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ الشَّيْطَانِ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] Surely those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, they are among the most abject.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ فِي الْأَذَلِّينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] Allah has decreed: 'I shall surely overcome: I and My Messengers.'²⁷ Surely, Allah is Strong, Mighty.

كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَأَغْلِبَنَّ أَنَا وَرُسُلِي إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٢١﴾

He said, "Presently a man will come to you who will look at you with the eyes of a Devil. When he arrives, do not speak to him."

A blue-eyed man appeared. The Prophet called him and said to him, "Whatever is it over which you and so and so, and so and so, blame me?" He gave out their names. The man returned and brought them all. They all swore by Allah and sought to clear themselves of his account. So Allah revealed, "...they will swear to Him as they swear to you. They reckon they are upon something. Lo, they indeed, they are the liars" (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

The report is in Ahmad, Bazzar and others which Haythami declared trustworthy (Au.).

عن أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: "مِمَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ فِي قَرْيَةٍ وَلَا بَدْوٍ لَا

تَقَامُ فِيهِمُ الصَّلَاةُ إِلَّا قَدْ اسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ، فَعَلَيْكَ بِالْجُمَاعَةِ، فَإِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُ الذَّنْبُ الْقَاصِيَةَ" (قال زَائِدَةُ قال السَّائِبُ: يَعْنِي بِالْجُمَاعَةِ الصَّلَاةُ فِي الْجُمَاعَةِ).

26. With reference to *Shaytan* taking hold of a people, we have the following in Ahmad (as well as in Abu Da'ud, *Sahih* of ibn Hibban, Nasa'i, and *Tuhfah* about which Nawawi said that it is trustworthy: Au.),

On Abu Darda's authority, the Prophet said, "There will not be three: neither in a village nor in the deserts, among whom the congregational Prayers are not done but *Shaytan* takes hold of them. Therefore, upon you is the congregation, for, the wolf takes the wandering (sheep)." – Ibn Kathir.

27. According to some scholars these verses were revealed during the middle of the Madinan period. It was not but a few years thereafter, that

[22] You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger,²⁸ even if they are their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred.²⁹ Those, He has inscribed faith upon their hearts, and has strengthened them with a Spirit from Himself.³⁰ He will admit them into gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein. Allah is well-pleased with them, and they are well-pleased with Him. They are the party of Allah. Lo, the party of Allah,³¹ they are the success-achievers.

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا
آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ
عَشِيرَتَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ
وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا رَضِيَ
اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ
اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

the words, "I shall surely overcome, I and My Messengers" came true, although no such sign was visible until then. This is a proof of the revelatory nature of the Qur'an (Au.).

28. Sufyan Thawri was of the opinion that this verse was revealed censuring those who befriend the rulers (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). It is reported that Ibn Abi Rawwad met Mansoor (the Abbasi Caliph) while going round the Ka'bah. When he recognized him, he fled reciting this *Ayah* (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

At all events, this *Ayah* does not prevent Muslims from being good to the unbelievers, helping them out when the need is, treating them well at the social level, or doing business with them. We have several examples

of the Prophet and his Companions in evidence. It is to love them or have affection for them which the *Ayah* is prohibiting (Shafi').

29. Love of Allah, and love of His enemies, cannot reside in the same heart together (Au.).

By implication the directive of the *Ayah* can include the innovators (*as-hab al-bid'ah*). Sahl (Tustari) is reported to have said, "Whosoever's belief is right and his tawhid is purified, may not seek the affection of an innovator, never acquire his company, may not sit with him on the same food table, may not share (soft) drinks with him, and never take him (in a journey) as a companion. He ought to make apparent his enmity toward him. Whoever treated an in-

novator with respect, will have Allah remove the love of *Sunnah* from his heart... Whoever does not believe these things, may try it out.” (Alusi and, from him, Thanwi).

Alusi also points out that some of those who claim to be *Sufis*, although they have no share in it, befriend and take the company of those who are openly rebellious, and when criticized, say that after it is all over, he will read two pages of Rumi, which will wash off the filth contracted. This is a distant error, and good Muslims should avoid the company of such of them.

Thus, we see that Abu `Ubaydah killed his father at Badr, Abu Bakr tried to kill his son `Abd al-Rahman that day, Mus`ab b. `Umayr killed his brother `Ubayd b. `Umayr the same day, and `Umar, Hamzah, `Ali and `Ubaydah b. al-Harith who all killed their kindred that day (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

30. The word “*ruh*” alludes to proofs, evidences and Light of faith (Tabari, Qurtubi).

Yusuf Ali comments: “Cf. ii. 87 and 253, where it is said that Allah strengthened the Prophet Jesus with the holy spirit. Here we learn that all good and righteous men are strengthened by Allah. If anything,

the phrase used here is stronger, ‘a spirit from Himself’. Whenever any one offers his heart in faith and purity to Allah, Allah accepts it, engraves that Faith on the seeker’s heart, and further fortifies him with His help which we can no more define adequately than we can define in human language the nature and attributes of Allah.”

31. Ibn Abi Hatim has preserved the report that Abu Hazim, the lame, wrote to Zuhri,

أعلم أن الجاه جاهان، جاه يُجْريه الله على أيدي أوليائه لأوليائه، وأهمّ الخامل ذكرهم، الخفية شخصهم، ولقد جاءت صفتهم على لسان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْأَبْرَارَ الْأَتْقِيَاءَ الْأَخْفِيَاءَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا عَابُوا لَمْ يُفْتَقِدُوا وَإِنْ حَضَرُوا لَمْ يُدْعَوْا وَلَمْ يُعْرَفُوا قُلُوبُهُمْ مَصَابِيحُ الْهَدَى يَخْرُجُونَ مِنْ كُلِّ غَبْرَاءٍ مُظْلِمَةٍ. (سنن ابن ماجه) — (هذا حديث صحيح ولم يُخرج في الصحيحين، وقد احتجا جميعا يزيد بن أسلم، عن أبيه، عن الصحابة، واتفقا جميعا على الاحتجاج بحديث الليث بن سعد، عن عياش بن عباس القتيبي وهذا إسناد مصري صحيح ولا يحفظ له علة — المستدرك على الصحيحين للحاكم).

“You should know that of honor there are two kinds. One, which Allah extends to His Friends, through His Friends. They are little known and are persons taken lightly. Their attributes are best mentioned by the tongue of the Prophet: ‘Verily Allah loves the pious, the godly, the undistin-

guished ones who, when absent, their absence is not felt, and if they show up, they are not invited, and are largely unknown. Their hearts are lamps of guidance.

They come out of every turbulent calamity (without harm).”

In a long note, Hakim wrote that the narrators are reliable (Au.). مقتات



Surah 59
*Al-Hashr*¹

Madinan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Whatever is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah. He is the Mighty, the Wise.

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١﴾

[2] He it is who got out from their dwellings the unbelievers from among the People of the Book² at the first mustering.³ You had not thought they would get out; and they (too) thought that their fortresses would defend them against Allah; but Allah came to them from whence they had not reckoned.⁴ He cast terror in their hearts, as they were destroying their homes with their own hands,⁵ and the hands of the believers. Take lesson therefore, O those of sight.⁶

هُوَ الَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ
الْكِتَابِ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ لِأَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ مَا
ظَنُّوْهُمْ أَنْ يُخْرِجُوْهُمْ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ
مَانِعَتُهُمْ حُصُونُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَأَتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ
حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوا وَقَذَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ
يُخْرِبُونَ بُيُوتَهُمْ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَيْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ ﴿٢﴾

1. Bukhari's report says that Ibn `Abbas would refer to this *Surah* as *Surah* Banu Nadir (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others). Ibn Hajr explained that Ibn `Abbas held that opinion perhaps because he feared that people would think that the *Surah* was referring to the "*hashr*" of the Day of Judgment, while it was referring to the "*hashr*" of Banu Nadir (Alusi).

Ibn `Abbas also said that it was a Jewish clan from the progeny of Ha-

run (*asws*) that had settled in Arabia awaiting the promised Prophet's advent (Qurtubi).

2. The allusion is to (one of the four) Jewish tribes known as Banu Nadir, that lived a short distance (about two miles: Razi), away in the south-east of Madinah (a little above Quba': Au.), in four forts called Al-Wateeh, Al-Nurah, Al-Sulalem and Al-Kateebah (Qurtubi). [Other Jewish tribes were in other parts of the area: Au.].

Their story, primarily based on Ibn Is-haq's account in *Sirah Rasulullah* is as follows:

Banu Nadir

After the affair of Bi'r Ma'unah, where 70 of the Prophet's Companions were killed in cold blood, the sole survivor 'Amr b. Umayyah al-Dammari, encountered two men of Banu 'Amir as he was returning to Madinah. In his anger he killed them. He did not know that the Prophet had struck a treaty with them. When he reported to him the matter, he told him that the Muslims will have to pay blood-wit for the slaughter. Now, since Banu Nadir were allies of Banu 'Amir, the Prophet (*saws*) went out to them seeking some help in raising compensation funds, (since, the treaty clauses included that in such cases they wiall help out with the blood money: Au.). When he met some of them they agreed to co-operate, but privately they told each other that they would never get a better chance to kill him as he sat in the shade of a wall in their quarters along with Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Ali. It was suggested that someone should climb the roof and push down a rock on the Prophet. 'Amr b. Jihash b. Ka'b volunteered the service. (Sallam b. Mishkam tried

to prevent them: Muhammad Rida in *Muhammad Rasulullah*). But the Prophet was informed of their plan by Jibril. He left the place quickly, going into the direction of Madinah. When he delayed the return, his Companions began to look for him. Someone coming out of Madinah told them that he had seen him inside the town. When they located him he told them what had happened and ordered them to prepare for attack on Banu Nadir.

There seems to have been a second reason for the attack. A report says that after the battle of Badr, the opinion began to gain ground among the Jews that the Prophet must be the promised one (otherwise, how could the victory at Badr be explained?). However, with the defeat at Uhud they fell into doubts. During those days they received threats from the Quraysh that if they did not break away from the Prophet by revoking the treaty of theirs, the Quraysh would attack them and carry away their women to Makkah. Quraysh power was obvious and so they decided that perhaps doing away with the Prophet was the easier course. They sent a message to the Prophet that there ought to be a sort of a debate to decide the truth of his Messengership. They suggested that thir-

ty of theirs and thirty of the Prophet's men should face each other in an open place and debate the issue. The Prophet agreed and both parties met each other in a field. However, the Jews suggested that it was becoming difficult with thirty people. So, if the Prophet came out with three of his men, they will send three of their scholars. If they were convinced, all the Jews would become Muslims. The Prophet agreed. But one of the Jewish women betrayed them. Her brother had become Muslim and she confided to him that the plan was for the three scholars to carry daggers and murder the Prophet as he stepped out. The Prophet was informed and he immediately withdrew. (Alusi)

The report is in *Musannaf* of `Abdul Razzaq, which is quite trustworthy, in Abu Da'ud's *Sunan*, Hakim and others. As for the date, most biographers are of the opinion that Banu Nadir campaign was in the fourth year after *Hijrah*. This is strengthened by the fact that the Bi'r Ma'unah affair was after the battle of Uhud which took place in the third year after *Hijrah* (Mahdi Rizqallah).

Next day or so, he marched out (leaving Ibn Umm Maktum [the blind] as his deputy in Madinah: Alusi), and

laid siege to their forts. Initially he ordered Banu Nadir to simply leave their forts and go away to any place of their choice. (They could return, "every year to gather the products of their date groves, which would thus remain their property. Ostensibly agreeing: Asad); they sought ten days time to prepare for the journey. But in the meantime, `Abdullah ibn Ubayy and others advised them not to leave, promising them help, although ultimately betraying them (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi and others). The exact length of the siege is not known. It was anything between 10 and 21 days (Razi, Alusi).

Another crime that they committed was that although they were bound to a treaty of friendship and non-violence with the Prophet, one of their leaders Ka'b al-Ashraf travelled with forty of his compatriots to Makkah after the Makkan defeat at Badr. These Jews met the Makkan leaders in the Holy Mosque where they urged them to take revenge, promising to help them when the occasion came. For this blatant breach of trust, and for lewd poetry that Ka'b al-Ashraf said attacking the honor of the Prophet's aunt, he ordered him eliminated. His crime was so unforgivable that his own foster brother who had turned Muslim, killed him: (Au.).

‘Abdullah ibn Abi Salul, Wadi‘ah, Malik b. Abi Qawqal and others sent messages to the besieged Banu Nadir not to lose heart assuring them that if a fight ensued, they would fight along with them and if forced out, they would go out with them. They also promised the help of 2000 fighters, adding that Ghatafan tribes were also with them. But Banu Nadir lost heart quite soon and sued for peace. The Prophet allowed that they leave, with their movables to Syria (but not arms) and thus save their lives. He gave them three days to leave. They loaded whatever they could on their camels to the extent that they even pulled out doors, lintels, roofs and other furniture and loading them on camels, marched out (with 600 camels [Asad]; singing to the tunes of musical instruments [Muir in Majid]; perhaps celebrating their light punishment, despite their treacheries of the past: Au.): some went to Khyber, but most to Syria. Every three persons were allowed a camel-load and a water bag. (The families of Abu al-Huqayq and Huyayy b. Akhtab chose to join other Jews at Khayber; a few went as far as Heerah (in Mesopotamia: Asad), while the great majority went to Jericho and other Syrian places (Zamakhshari, Alusi and others).

Whatever they left, (50 shields, 350 swords: Alusi) fell into Muslim hands. As for the orchards, groves and other lands, the Prophet divided them among the *Muhajiroon* alone, except for two *Ansari* men who had complained of severe poverty. To them also he gave shares.

A fifth was reserved for the causes mentioned in verse 7 above. The Prophet secured one-fifth of this one-fifth for himself, which remained with him until his death. Out of his share, he used to provide for his wives, as also taking out a share from his share for general welfare. As for Allah’s share, it went into maintenance of the Holy Mosque at Makkah, and, if there was any surplus, for the maintenance or construction of other mosques (Alusi).

None of the Banu Nadir embraced Islam except two: Yameen b. ‘Umayr b. Ka‘b and Abu Sa‘d b. Wahab.

It is reported that the Prophet complained to Yameen about his cousin ‘Amr b. Jihash’s quite unjustified behavior; i.e., when he attempted to assassinate the Prophet. Yameen promptly hired someone and got ‘Amr b. Jihash murdered (Ibn Kathir, and Ibn Hajr in *‘Isabah* (Au.).

Ibn Kathir presents some poetry written after the affair, both by Mus-

lims as well as Jews answering them. His source is Ibn Is-haq. We present our own selections from him, and the translations (except for a few modifications) are by Alfred Guillaume:

When `Ali, or perhaps `Abdullah b. Rawaha, said some lines commenting on the campaign against Banu Nadir and on the killing of Ka`b b. al-Ashraf, a Jewish poet called Sammak answered him:

If you boast, for it is no more than a boast for you

That you killed Ka`b b. al-Ashraf
The day that you compassed his death,

A man who had shown neither treachery nor bad faith,

Haply time and the change of fortune

Will take revenge from 'the just and the righteous one'*

For killing al-Nadir and their confederates

And for cutting down the palms, their dates ungathered.

Unless I die we will come at you with lances

And every sharp sword that we have

In the hand of a brave man who protects himself.

When he meets his adversary he kills him.

With the army is Sakhr** and his fellows.

When he attacks he is no weakling

Like a lion in Tarj protecting its pride,

Lord of the thicket, crushing his prey, enormous.

* The allusion is to the Prophet.

** The allusion is to Abu Sufyan b. Sakhr.

Ka`b b. Malik (a Muslim) said on the same subject:

The rabbis were disgraced through their treachery

Thus time's wheel turns round.

They had denied the Mighty Lord Whose command is great.

They had been given knowledge and understanding

And a warner from God came to them,

A truthful warner who brought a Book

With plain and luminous verses.

They said, 'You have brought no true thing

And you are more worthy of God's disapproval than we.'

He said, 'Nay, but I have brought

the truth,
 The wise and intelligent believe
 me;
 He who follows it will be rightly
 guided
 And the disbelievers therein will
 be well retributed.
 But when they imbibed treachery
 and unbelief
 And aversion turned them away
 from the truth,
 God showed the Prophet a sound
 view,
 For God's decision is never false.
 A few lines later...
 Those Banu al-Nadir were an evil
 case,
 They were destroyed for their
 crimes
 The day the Apostle came to
 them with an army
 Walking softly as he looked at
 them.
 He said, (I offer) 'Peace, woe to
 you,' but they refused
 Lies and deceit were their allies.
 They tasted the results of their
 deeds in misery,
 Every three of them shared one
 camel,
 They were driven out and made
 for Qaynuqa',

Their palms and houses abandoned.

Sammak the Jew answered him:
 I was sleepless while deep care
 was my grief

On a night that made all others
 short.

I saw that all the rabbis rejected
 him,

All of them men of knowledge
 and experience

Who used to study every science
 Of which the Torah and Psalms
 do speak.

You killed Ka'b the chief of the
 rabbis,

He whose ward was always safe.

He came down to Mahmud his
 brother,

But Mahmud was harboring a
 wicked design.

He left him in his blood as though
 Saffron was flowing over his
 clothes.

By your father and mine,
 When he fell al-Nadir fell also.

If we stay safe we shall live in re-
 venge for Ka'b

Men of yours with vultures cir-
 cling round them

As though they were beasts sacri-

ficed on a feast day
 With none to say them nay,
 With swords that bones cannot
 resist,
 Of finest steel and sharpened
 edge
 Like those you met from brave
 Sakhr
 At Uhud when you had no help-
 er.
 `Abbas b. Mirdas a Jew also an-
 swered Ka`b b. Malik, praising
 the men of Banu Nadir:
 Had the people of the settlement
 not been dispersed
 You would have seen laughter
 and gaiety within it.
 By my life, shall I show you wom-
 en in howdahs
 Which have gone to Shataat and
 Tay'ab?
 Large-eyed like the gazelles of
 Tabaala;
 Maidens that would bewitch
 one calmed by much truck with
 women
 When one seeking hospitality
 came they would say at once
 With faces like gold, 'Doubly
 welcome!
 The good that you seek will not
 be withheld.

You need fear no wrong while
 with us.'

*Khanwat b. Jubayr, a Muslim, an-
 swered him,*

You weep bitterly over the Jewish
 dead and yet you can see

Those nearer and dearer to you if
 you wish to weep.

Why do you not weep over the
 dead in `Urayniq's valley

And not lament loudly with sad
 face (over others)?

When peace reigned with a friend
 you rejected it.

In religion an obstruction, in war
 a poltroon.

You aimed at power for your
 people, seeking

Someone similar that you might
 get glory and victory.

When you wanted to give praise
 you went

To one whom to praise is false-
 hood and shame.

You got what you deserved and
 you did not find

One among them to say Wel-
 come to you.

What we have produced is less than
 half of what is there in Ibn Is-haq's
Sirah Rasulullah. The translator, A.
 Guillanume, hints that these are

forged poems. This, of course, is an Orientalist's way of weeping at the Jewish losses. Those that weep for a dead Jew today in Palestine, but not for scores that include Arab Christians killed every day, with weapons and money supplied by them, may still be asked as the poet of the past did:

You weep bitterly over the Jewish dead and yet you can see

Those nearer and dearer to you if you wish to weep (Au.).

3. Literally, "*hashr*" is the moving of a group of people from one place to another (Razi). Assembly and banishment are the primary meanings of the term. (Penrice).

Ibn Abi Hatim has a report which says that when the Jews asked where should they go, the Prophet told them, "To the Field of Mustering" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani); i.e., Syria (Au.).

(The report however was declared weak by Haythami: S.Ibrahim).

According to Al-Kaya al-Tabari, exile of an enemy is no more allowed. The subdued enemy will now be asked to pay *Jizyah* (and remain in place: Au.). - Qurtubi

So, which is the second mustering? Zamakhshari states several possibili-

ties: (a) Allah said "*first mustering*" because Banu Nadir were the first to be removed from the Arabian Peninsula after the Prophet's advent; (b) This was their *first mustering* being their first banishment, the second being their banishment from Khayber during the time of 'Umar; (c) their final mustering will be on the Day of Judgment.

4. They had trust in their forts, arms, which were aplenty, and outside help. But they had not reckoned that Allah would come to them, that is, send His command, from within them. He cast terror into their hearts, and so, for no outward reason they lost heart, submitted, and agreed to leave (Ibn Jarir, Kashshaf, Qurtubi).

5. After they agreed to leave the place, they began to pull out wooden doors and other fixtures, either to take them along on their camels (Ibn Jarir), or destroy them so that they did not fall into Muslim hands (Razi and others).

Asad's comment may be considered: "...the Banu 'n-Nadir had originally concluded a treaty of mutual non-interference with the Muslim community, and were to live at Madinah as its friendly neighbors; and even later when their hostility to the Muslim community had become apparent

[3] Had Allah not decreed exile for them, He would have certainly chastised them in (this) world.⁷ (There awaits) for them in the Hereafter, the chastisement of the Fire.

وَلَوْلَا أَنْ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجَلَاءَ
لَعَذَّبُوهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابُ
النَّارِ ﴿٣﴾

[4] That is because they made a breach with Allah and His Messenger;⁸ and whoever makes breach with Allah, then surely, Allah is severe in retribution.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُّوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَمَنْ
يُشَاقِّ اللَّهَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ
﴿٤﴾

and they were ordered to emigrate, they were to be allowed to retain ownership of their plantations. Subsequently, however, they forfeited, by their treachery, both their citizenship as well as the rights to their landed property, and thus 'destroyed their homes by their own hands.'"

6. A Muslim's dependence on his knowledge or piety is not very different from the Jewish dependence on their forts: take lesson, O people of sight! (Razi).

7. The allusion is to their escape from a more severe chastisement which they richly deserved. They were outwardly in alliance with the Prophet, but for all practical purposes with the Makkan pagans (Au.). Majid quotes: "The sentence of exile passed upon this Jewish clan, says a Christian writer, 'was clement enough.

They were a turbulent set, always setting the people of Madinah by the ears,' indulging in forming alliance with enemies, violating treaty, endeavoring in every way to bring the Prophet and his religion to ridicule and destruction, and even conspiring against his life. The only question is whether their punishment was not too light' (LSQ., p. LXIV)."

8. Majid again: "Summing up the life-work of the holy Prophet, says a German Christian, 'When the Jews constituted a danger to his work, he fought them unto destruction; but when they only differed from him in matters religious he was gracious and tolerant enough to leave them alone. They (the Muslims) interfered as little with the Jews as with Christian faith, so long as they did not collide with his politics in Arabia' (Hell, op. cit., p.34)."

[5] Whatsoever you cut down of date-palm trees or left them standing on their roots,⁹ it was by Allah's leave,¹⁰ that He might humble the corrupt ungodly (ones).¹¹

مَا قَطَعْتُمْ مِّن لِّينَةٍ أَوْ تَرَكْتُمُوهَا قَائِمَةً عَلَىٰ أُصُولِهَا فَبِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلِيُخْزِيَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٥﴾

[6] And whatever of the spoils of war Allah bestowed on His Messenger (obtained) from them, against which you neither spurred horse nor camel,¹² but rather Allah gives power to His Messengers over whomsoever He will; and Allah has power over all things.

وَمَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ مِنْهُمْ فَمَا أُوجِفْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ خَيْلٍ وَلَا رِكَابٍ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَلِّطُ رُسُلَهُ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٦﴾

9. "Linah" is kind of a second grade date-palm tree, the preferred kinds being `Ajwah and Barni. (Kashshaf).

Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah and Zuhri said that the Prophet (*saws*) had allowed any kind of date-palm tree cut down, but not that which produced `Ajwah dates (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

According to Qatadah and Dahhak, some six trees were brought down and burnt at the Buwayrah side (Qurtubi).

10. Asad writes: "It should, however, be noted that apart from such stringent military exigencies, all destruction of enemy property – and, in particular, of trees and crops – had been and continued to be prohibited by the Prophet (Tabari, Baghawi, Zamakshari, Razi, Ibn Kathir), and has thus become an integral part of Islamic law."

11. The Prophet had allowed cutting down of some date-palm trees for reasons of access to the forts (Kashshaf and others).

Some of the Companions had tried to prevent the cutting down of date-palm trees. Allah informed them that it was done by His command. Some others say it was the Jews who had protested saying, "Muhammad! You had always prevented destruction, now what has happened?" So Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir, Kashshaf, Ibn Kathir). A narration preserved by Nasa'i suggests that some trees were cut while others left standing. So some Companions asked whether they would be rewarded or punished for the cutting and Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Kathir).

12. According to the prevalent opinion the allusion is to the booty obtained from the Banu Nadir expe-

[7] Whatsoever spoils of war Allah bestowed on His Messenger (obtained) from the people of the townships, belongs to Allah, His Messenger, and the kindred (of the Prophet), the orphans, the needy and the wayfarer;¹³ so that the circuit (of wealth) may not remain within the rich among you.¹⁴ And whatever the Messenger gives, accept it, and whatever He prohibits, shun (it).¹⁵ And fear Allah, surely Allah is severe in retribution.

مَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَى فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٧﴾

dition during the course of which no horses or camels were needed. Moreover, no fighting took place as they entered into agreement by which they left their dwellings and moved out to north. Subsequently, the rule also applied to the Jews of Khayber and Fadak who submitted peacefully (but for little resistance), and were not conquered territories (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

The Prophet distributed the wealth obtained from Banu Nadir among the *Muhajiroon*, (following the Qur'anic dictum: "*So that it does not remain in circuit among the rich of you*: Sayyid), keeping the landed property under his own care out of which he used to distribute a year's providence to his wives and whatever was left was spent on arms and cavalry (for the state) – Ibn Kathir.

13. "*Fay*" is that booty which is obtained from the unbelievers without a fight, without a horse or camel spurred in its cause, such as the properties of Banu Nadir – and which rule applies to any land peacefully brought to Muslim control, even after the Prophet (Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir write: Following the above understanding, 'Umar once declared that he would not leave - down to a shepherd - without a share from what this *Ayah* defines. And hence too, according to the authorities, properties of Banu Nadir were also "*fay*." Except for Ibn Majah, the rest of the six canonical works have preserved a long report in this context. It is narrated by Malik b. Aws, and the translation is as done by Muhsin Khan and Taqiuddin - with some modification:

اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْهُمْ فَمَا أَوْجَفْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ خَيْلٍ وَلَا رِكَابٍ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَلِّطُ رُسُلَهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ { (الحشر: ٦) فَكَانَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى أَفَاءً عَلَى رَسُولِهِ بَنِي النَّضِيرِ، فَوَ اللَّهُ مَا اسْتَأْثَرَ بِهَا عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَخَذَهَا دُونَكُمْ، وَكَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَأْخُذُ مِنْهَا نَفَقَةً سَنَةً أَوْ نَفَقَتَهُ وَنَفَقَةَ أَهْلِهِ سَنَةً وَيَجْعَلُ مَا بَقِيَ أُسُورَةَ الْمَالِ. ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَ عَلَى أُولَئِكَ الرَّهْطِ فَقَالَ: أَتَشُدُّكُمْ بَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي بِإِذْنِهِ تَقُومُ بِإِذْنِهِ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ هَلْ تَعْلَمُونَ ذَلِكَ؟ قَالُوا: نَعَمْ. ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَ عَلَى الْعَبَّاسِ وَعَلِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا فَقَالَ: أَتَشُدُّكُمْ بَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي بِإِذْنِهِ تَقُومُ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ هَلْ تَعْلَمَانِ ذَلِكَ؟ قَالَا: نَعَمْ، فَلَمَّا نُوْفِيَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ: أَنَا وَلِيُّ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَجِئْتُ أَنْتَ وَهَذَا إِلَى أَبِي بَكْرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، تَطْلُبُ أَنْتَ مِيرَاثَكَ مِنْ ابْنِ أَخِيكَ، وَيَطْلُبُ هَذَا مِيرَاثَ أُمَرَاتِهِ مِنْ أَبِيهَا، فَقَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَا تُورَثُ مَا تَرَكْنَا صَدَقَةً، وَ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ صَادِقٌ بَارٌّ رَاشِدٌ تَابِعٌ لِلْحَقِّ، فَوَلَّيَهَا أَبُو بَكْرٍ، فَلَمَّا نُوْفِيَ قُلْتُ: أَنَا وَلِيُّ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَوَلِيُّ أَبِي بَكْرٍ فَوَلَّيْتُهَا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ إِلَيْهَا فَجِئْتُ أَنْتَ وَهَذَا وَأَنْتُمَا جَمِيعٌ وَأَمْرُكُمْمَا وَاحِدٌ فَسَأَلْتُمَانِيهَا، فَقُلْتُ: إِنْ شِئْتُمَا أَنْ أَدْفَعَهَا إِلَيْكُمَا، عَلَى أَنْ عَلَيْكُمَا عَهْدُ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَلِيَاهَا بِالَّذِي كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَلِيهَا فَأَخَذْتُمَاهَا مِنِّي

عَنْ مَالِكِ بْنِ أَوْسٍ بْنِ الْحَدَثَانِ قَالَ: "أُرْسِلَ إِلَيَّ عُمَرُ حِينَ تَعَالَى النَّهَارُ فَجِئْتُهُ فَوَجَدْتُهُ جَالِسًا عَلَى سَرِيرٍ مُفْضِيًا إِلَى رُمَالِهِ، فَقَالَ حِينَ دَخَلْتُ عَلَيْهِ: يَا مَالِكُ إِنَّهُ قَدْ ذَفَّ أَهْلَ بَنَاتٍ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ وَإِلَيَّ قَدْ أَمَرْتُ فِيهِمْ بِشَيْءٍ أَقْسَمُ فِيهِمْ. قُلْتُ: لَوْ أَمَرْتُ غَيْرِي بِذَلِكَ، قَالَ: خُذْهُ، فَجَاءَهُ يَرْفَأُ، فَقَالَ: يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ هَلْ لَكَ فِي عُثْمَانَ بْنِ عَفَّانَ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ عَوْفٍ وَالزُّبَيْرِ بْنِ الْعُزَّامِ سَعْدُ بْنُ أَبِي وَقَّاصٍ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ، فَأَذِنَ لَهُمْ لَدَخُلُوا، ثُمَّ جَاءَهُ يَرْفَأُ فَقَالَ: يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ هَلْ لَكَ فِي الْعَبَّاسِ وَعَلِيِّ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ، فَأَذِنَ لَهُمْ لَدَخُلُوا. قَالَ الْعَبَّاسُ: يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَقْضِ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ هَذَا - يَعْنِي عَلِيًّا - فَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: أَحَلَّ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَقْضِ بَيْنَهُمَا وَارْحَمَهُمَا. قَالَ مَالِكُ بْنُ أَوْسٍ: خَيْلٌ لِي أَتَاهُمَا قَدَمًا أُولَئِكَ التَّفَرُّ لِدِلِّكَ، فَقَالَ لَمَرُّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: أَتَيْدَا، ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَ عَلَى أُولَئِكَ الرَّهْطِ فَقَالَ: أَتَشُدُّكُمْ بَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي بِإِذْنِهِ تَقُومُ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ هَلْ تَعْلَمُونَ أَنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَا تُورَثُ مَا تَرَكْنَا صَدَقَةً؟ قَالُوا: نَعَمْ، ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَ عَلَى عَلِيٍّ وَالْعَبَّاسِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا فَقَالَ: أَتَشُدُّكُمْ بَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي بِإِذْنِهِ تَقُومُ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ هَلْ تَعْلَمَانِ أَنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَا تُورَثُ مَا تَرَكْنَا صَدَقَةً، فَقَالَا: نَعَمْ. قَالَ: فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ خَصَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِخَاصَّةٍ لَمْ يَخْصْ بِهَا أَحَدًا مِنَ النَّاسِ، فَقَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: {وَمَا أَفَاءَ

عَلَى ذَلِكَ ثُمَّ حُتْمَانِي لِأَقْضِي بَيْنَكُمَا بَعِيرٌ
ذَلِكَ وَاللَّهِ لَا أَقْضِي بَيْنَكُمَا بَعِيرٌ ذَلِكَ حَتَّى
تَقُومَ السَّاعَةُ فَإِنْ عَجَزْتُمَا عَنْهَا فَرُدَّاهَا إِلَيَّ.

While I was at home, the sun rose high and it got hot. Suddenly the messenger of `Umar b. Al-Khat-tab came to me and said, "The chief of the believers has sent for you." So, I went along with him till I entered the place where `Umar was sitting on a bedstead made of date-palm frond and covered with no mattress, and he was leaning over a leather pillow. I greeted him and sat down. He said, "O Malik! Some persons of your people who have families came to me and I have ordered that a gift should be made to them, so receive it and distribute it among them." I said, "O chief of the believers! I wish you could order someone else to do it." He said, "O man! Take it." While I was sitting there with him, his doorman Yarfa` came saying, "'Uthman, `Abdul-Rahman b. `Awf, Al-Zubair and Sa`d b. Abi Waqqas are asking your permission (to see you); may I admit them?"

`Umar said, "Yes." They were admitted and they came in, greeted him, and sat down. After a while

Yarfa` came again and said, "May I admit `Ali and `Abbas?" `Umar said, "Yes." So, they were admitted and they came in and greeted (him) and sat down. Then `Abbas said, "O chief of the believers! Judge between me and this man (i.e. `Ali)." They had a dispute regarding the property of Banu al-Nadir which Allah had given to His Apostle as Fay. The group (i.e. `Uthman and his companions) said, "O chief of the believers! Judge between them and relieve both of them from each other." `Umar said, "Be patient! I beseech you by Allah by Whose Permission the Heaven and the Earth exist, do you know that Allah's Apostle said, 'Our (i.e. prophets') property is not be inherited. Whatever we leave, is Sadaqah (to be used for charity),' and Allah's Apostle meant himself (by saying 'we')?" The group said, "He did say so." `Umar then turned to `Ali and `Abbas and said, "I beseech you by Allah, do you know that Allah's Apostle said so?" They replied, "He did say so." `Umar then said, "Now, let me talk to you about this matter. Allah bestowed on His Apostle a special favor of something of this Fay which he bestowed

on nobody else.” `Umar then recited the verses: *“What Allah bestowed as (Fay) booty on his Apostle from them - for which you made no expedition with either cavalry or camelry; but Allah gives power to His Apostles over whomever He will and Allah is able to do all things.”* (9:6)

`Umar added, “So this property was especially given to Allah’s Apostle, but, by Allah, neither did he take possession of it and leave you, nor did he favor himself with it to your exclusion, but he gave it to all of you and distributed it amongst you till this property remained out of it. Allah’s Apostle used to spend the yearly expenses of his family out of this property and kept the rest of its revenue to be spent on Allah’s Cause. Allah’s Apostle kept on doing this during all his lifetime. I ask you, by Allah, do you know this?” They replied in the affirmative. `Umar then said to `Ali and `Abbas. “I ask you by Allah, do you know this?” `Umar added, “When Allah had taken His Prophet unto Him, ‘Abu Bakr said, ‘I am the successor of Allah’s Apostle;’ so, Abu Bakr took over that property and managed it in the same way as Allah’s Apostle used to do, and Allah

knows that he was true, pious and rightly-guided, and he was a follower of what was right.

Then Allah took Abu Bakr unto Himself and I became Abu Bakr’s successor, and I kept that property in my possession for the first two years of my Caliphate, managing it in the same way as Allah’s Apostle used to do and as Abu Bakr used to do, and Allah knows that I have been true, pious, rightly guided, and a follower of what is right. Now you both (i.e. `Ali and `Abbas) came to talk to me, bearing the same claim and presenting the same case; you, `Abbas, came to me asking for your share from your nephew’s property, and this person, i.e. `Ali, came to me asking for his wife’s share from her father’s property. I told you both that Allah’s Apostle said, ‘Our (prophets’) properties are not to be inherited. What we leave behind is Sadaqah.’

When I thought it right that I should hand over this property to you, I said to you, ‘I am ready to hand over this property to you if you wish, on the condition that you would take Allah’s Pledge and Convention that you

will manage it in the same way as Allah's Apostle used to, as Abu Bakr used to, and as I have done since I was in charge of it.' So, both of you said (to me), 'Hand it over to us,' and on that condition I handed it over to you. So, I ask you by Allah, did I hand it over to them on this condition?" The group aid, "Yes." Then `Umar faced `Ali and `Abbas saying, "I ask you by Allah, did I hand it over to you on this condition?" They said, "Yes." He said, "Do you now want me to give a different decision? By Allah, by whose leave the Heaven and the Earth exist, I will never give any decision other than that (I have already given). And if you are unable to manage it, return it to me, and I will do the job on your behalf."

Alusi adds: `Umar maintained his policy. When Iraq was conquered, Zubayr (b. al-`Awwam), Bilal, Salman al-Farsi and others demanded that the lands be distributed among the Mujahidin. But `Umar, and the rest of the Companions disagreed, (and treated the conquered lands as belonging to the Muslim community who should all benefit from their *Kharaj* and *Ushr*: Au.). – Alusi

Ibn Kathir adds: In this context a *hadith* might be presented (which speaks of the financial arrangements made by the *Ansar* for the Prophet: Au.). It is in the *Sahihayn*, Tirmidhi, Nasa'i, and others. The version below is from Ahmad:

حَدَّثَنَا أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ عَنْ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- أَنَّ الرَّجُلَ كَانَ جَعَلَ لَهُ - قَالَ عَفَّانُ يَجْعَلُ لَهُ - مِنْ مَالِهِ التَّخْلَاتِ أَوْ كَمَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ حَتَّى فُتِحَتْ عَلَيْهِ قُرَيْظَةُ وَالتَّضْيِيرُ. قَالَ فَجَعَلَ يَرُدُّ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ - قَالَ - إِنْ أَهْلِي أَمَرُونِي أَنْ آتِيَ النَّبِيَّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فَاسْأَلَهُ الَّذِي كَانَ أَهْلُهُ أَعْطَوْهُ أَوْ بَعْضُهُ وَكَانَ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- قَدْ أَعْطَاهُ أَمْ أَيْمَنَ أَوْ كَمَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ. قَالَ فَسَأَلْتُ النَّبِيَّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فَأَعْطَانِيهِنَّ فَجَاءَتْ أُمُّ أَيْمَنَ فَجَعَلَتْ الثَّوْبَ فِي عُنُقِي وَجَعَلَتْ تَقُولُ كَلَّا وَاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لَا يُعْطِيكَهُنَّ وَقَدْ أَعْطَانِيهِنَّ. أَوْ كَمَا قَالَتْ فَقَالَ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- «لَكَ كَذَا وَكَذَا». قَالَ وَتَقُولُ كَلَّا وَاللَّهِ. قَالَ وَتَقُولُ «لَكَ كَذَا وَكَذَا». قَالَ حَتَّى أَعْطَاهَا - فَحَسِبْتُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ - عَشْرَ أَمْثَالِهَا أَوْ قَالَ قَرِيبًا مِنْ عَشْرَةِ أَمْثَالِهَا أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ.

Anas reported: Some (of the *Ansar*) used to present date palm trees to the Prophet until the fall of Banu Quraiza and Banu Nadir. Then he began to return to

the people their date palms. My people ordered me to ask the Prophet to return some or all of the date palms they had given to him, but the Prophet had given those trees to Umm Ayman. So, when I asked him, he returned them to me. (Hearing that) Umm Ayman came and placing a garment around my neck said, “No, by Him except whom there is no Deity, he will not return those trees to you as he (i.e. the Prophet) has already given them to me.” The Prophet said (to her), “You shall have (in return) such and such (trees).” But she kept on refusing, saying, “No, by Allah,” till he gave her ten times the number of her date-palms (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

14. “This is one of the most important verses of the Qur’ān which lays down the basic principle of its economic policy. Wealth should circulate among the whole community and not only among the rich who get richer and richer while the poor become poorer and poorer. The Qur’ān has not merely enunciated the policy, but has also taken several measures towards application. It has been done through institution of further rules. The

Qur’ān has forbidden interest, made *ṣakāh* obligatory, enjoined that khumus (one-fifth) be deducted from the war spoils, has exhorted the Muslims to charity, has proposed such forms of atonement that help flow the wealth from the rich to the poor, and, finally, has made such laws of inheritance by which every deceased person’s wealth gets distributed among a wide number of people.” (Mawdudi).

15. Does this directive apply to war spoils alone, or does it apply to every directive issued by the Prophet? Well, there is no difference among the scholars that the application is general and applies to anything that the Prophet (*saws*) ordered, or prohibited. (Note the Qur’ānic words: as against “what he gives you,” it does not say, “what he does not give you,” but rather, “what he forbids you.” – Mawdudi).

Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir reproduce a *hadīth* from the *Sahihayn* to demonstrate that the rule is generally applicable to all things that the Prophet allowed or prohibited. This one is from Bukhari:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ) قَالَ لَعَنَ اللَّهُ
الْوَأْثِمَاتِ وَالْمُوتَشِمَاتِ وَالْمُتَفَلِّجَاتِ لِلْحُسْنِ الْمُغَيَّرَاتِ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ
قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ امْرَأَةً مِنْ بَنِي آسَدٍ يُقَالُ لَهَا أُمُّ
يَعْقُوبَ فَجَاءَتْ فَقَالَتْ إِنَّهُ بَلَغَنِي عَنْكَ أَنَّكَ
لَعَنْتَ كَيْتَ وَكَيْتٌ فَقَالَ وَمَا لِي أَلْعَنُ مَنْ
لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَمَنْ
هُوَ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ فَقَالَتْ لَقَدْ قَرَأْتُ مَا بَيْنَ
الْلُّوحَيْنِ فَمَا وَجَدْتُ فِيهِ مَا تَقُولُ قَالَ لَيْسَ
كُنْتُ قَرَأْتِيهِ لَقَدْ وَحَدَّثَنِي أَمَا قَرَأْتَ {وَمَا
ءَاتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا}
(الحشر: ٧) قَالَتْ بَلَى قَالَ فَإِنَّهُ قَدْ نَهَى عَنْهُ
قَالَتْ فَإِنِّي أَرَى أَهْلَكَ يَفْعَلُونَهُ قَالَ فَادْهَبِي
فَانْظُرِي فَذَهَبَتْ فَتَظَرَّتْ فَلَمْ تَرَ مِنْ حَاجَتِهَا
شَيْئًا فَقَالَ لَوْ كَانَتْ كَذَلِكَ مَا جِئْتِهَا.

Ibn Mas'ud used to say that Allah had cursed those women who get their skins engraved, as also those who do it, those who remove hair from their faces, those who get gaps created between their teeth for beauty, and those who alter Allah's creation. This reached a woman called Umm Ya'qub from Banu Asad. She came to him and said, "I am told about you that you curse so and so, so and so and so!" He said, "Why should I not curse those whom the Prophet (*saw*s) cursed, and that which happens to be in Al-

lah's Book?" She said, "I have read all there is between the two cover pages but I did not find what you say." He said, "Had you read (more carefully) you would have found it. Did you not read, 'And whatever the Messenger gives, accept it, and whatever He prohibits from, shun it?'" She said, "Of course." Ibn Mas'ud added, "He (the Prophet too) prohibited it." She said, "As I see, your wife does it." He said, "Go in and have a look." So she went in and reported back that she hadn't seen any such thing. Ibn Mas'ud said, "Had that been the case, I would not allow myself intercourse with her."

In fact, this is how the Prophet himself understood this verse. (That is, it is a directive of general application: Au.). Nasa'i and others have recorded:

(عن) ابْنِ عُمَرَ وَابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ أَنَّهُمَا شَهِدَا عَلَى
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- أَنَّهُ نَهَى
عَنِ الذَّبَاءِ وَالْحَنْتَمِ وَالْمَرْفَتِ وَالْتَقِيرِ ثُمَّ تَلَا
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- هَذِهِ
الآيَةَ {وَمَا ءَاتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ
عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا} (الحشر: ٧).

Ibn 'Umar and Ibn 'Abbas bore witness that the Prophet forbid the use of *Dabba*, *Hantam*, *Mu-*

[8] (Spoils are) for the destitute among the immigrants: those who were expelled from their homes and properties, while seeking Allah's grace and good pleasure; and helping Allah and His Messenger.¹⁶ Those, they are the truthful ones.

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَتَصَرُّونَ لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ ﴿٨﴾

[9] And those who had established home (in this city)¹⁷ and the faith,¹⁸ before them, they love those who migrated to them and find not in their hearts any need¹⁹ for what they were given,²⁰ and give preference over themselves, even though poverty happens to be their lot.²¹ And, whoever is saved from niggardliness of his own soul, those, they are the successful-achievers.²²

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٩﴾

zaffat and Naqir (all wine vessels), and then recited this *Ayah*: "And whatever the Messenger gives, accept it, and *whatever He prohibits, refrain* (from it)." – Ibn Kathir.

16. Ibn Jarir writes: It is reported that the Prophet spoke to the *Ansar* telling them about the *Muhajirun*, that they had been expelled from their homes and properties. The *Ansar* said, "We shall divide our property with them." He suggested that since they are a people who do not know how to work in the orchards, they could keep charge of the groves but share the crop. They agreed.

This report could not be traced elsewhere. (Au.).

17. The allusion is to the *Ansar*. (Ibn Jarir).

Bukhari and other have the following report:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا - قَالَ خَرَجَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - فِي مَرَضِهِ الَّذِي مَاتَ فِيهِ بِمِلْحَفَةٍ قَدْ عَصَبَ بِعَصَايَةِ دَسْمَاءَ، حَتَّى جَلَسَ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ فَحَمِدَ اللَّهَ وَأَثْنَى عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ «أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَإِنَّ النَّاسَ يَكْتُمُونَ وَيَقِلُّ الْأَنْصَارُ، حَتَّى يَكُونُوا فِي النَّاسِ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْمِلْحِ فِي الطَّعَامِ، فَمَنْ وَلَّى مِنْكُمْ شَيْئًا يَضُرُّ فِيهِ قَوْمًا، وَيَنْفَعُ فِيهِ آخَرِينَ، فَلْيَقْبَلْ مِنْ مُحْسِنِهِمْ، وَيَتَجَاوَزْ عَنْ مُسِيئِهِمْ». فَكَانَ آخِرَ مَجْلِسٍ جَلَسَ بِهِ النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

On the authority of Ibn `Abbas: The Prophet came out during the sickness in which he died, wrapped in a cotton blanket, another dark cloth tightly around his head, sat down in the pulpit, glorified Allah and then said, "People will increase in numbers but the *Ansar* will decrease until they become like salt in food. So, whosoever is given the power of rule to harm some and benefit others, may accept their best ones, and overlook him among them who commits evil." That was the last of the Prophet's assembly in which he sat (Au.).

Another narration of interest, as in Bukhari and others, is as follows:

(عن أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ حِينَ خَرَجَ مَعَهُ إِلَى الْوَلِيدِ قَالَ دَعَا النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْأَنْصَارَ إِلَى أَنْ يَقْطَعَ لَهُمُ الْبَحْرَيْنِ فَقَالُوا لَا إِلَّا أَنْ تُقْطَعَ لِإِخْوَانِنَا مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ مِثْلَهَا قَالَ إِمَّا لَا فَاصْبِرُوا حَتَّى نَلْقَوْنِي فَإِنَّهُ سَيُصِيبُكُمْ بَعْدِي أَثَرُهُ.

Anas b. Malik reported that when he went out with Waleed, the Prophet consulted the *Ansar* as to how would it be if they are given Bahrayn (i.e., its *Kharaj*). They said, "No, unless our *Muhajirun* brothers are given something similar." He replied, "If (you say)

no, then observe patience until you see me (in the Hereafter), for after me you will face preferences (over you)" [Qurtubi in passing, Ibn Kathir].

18. It is a beautiful illustration of how the *Ansar* treated faith. They gave home to faith, as they gave home to their physical bodies in Madinah. Faith was the home and the mother country in which their hearts and souls lived, in which they sought refuge, peace and security, just as a man finds refuge, peace and security in his homeland (Au.).

19. This is the literal translation which has been interpreted by Hasan al-Busri to mean "envy" (Ibn Kathir).

20. That is, what the immigrants were given from the booty of Banu Nadir, while all of the *Ansar*, but for two, were denied. This was because the *Muhajirun* were in dire conditions of poverty. Yet, this caused no rancor in the hearts of the *Ansar* (Ibn Jarir).

21. In their support of the *Muhajirun*, the *Ansar* demonstrated such enthusiasm (that sometimes they had to resort to drawing lots over who would take one of the *Muhajirun* to his house), offered such sacrifices, and created such examples, that, if they had not occurred in the

real world, they would have been treated by later generations as dream stories, or events created by flights of fancy (Sayyid).

Sayyid writes a little later in the passages: Thus we have two pictures: that of Islamic directives on the one hand, (as depicted by the *Ansar* in word and spirit, and of love transcending region, language, and race) and that of the teachings and philosophies of the Communists as contained in the gospel of Karl Marx. One is filled with love for the humans, the other is stuffed with hatred and envy.

The following can be quoted as an example of how the *Ansar* gave preference to the *Muhajireen*, even while enduring deprivation:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ أَتَى رَجُلٌ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَصَابَنِي الْجُحْدُ فَأَرْسَلْ إِلَى نِسَائِهِ فَلَمْ يَجِدْ عِنْدَهُنَّ شَيْئًا فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَلَا رَجُلٌ يُضَيِّفُهُ هَذِهِ اللَّيْلَةَ يَرْحِمُهُ اللَّهُ فَقَامَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ فَقَالَ أَنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَذَهَبَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ فَقَالَ لَامَرَاتِهِ ضَيْفُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا نَذْخِرِيهِ شَيْئًا قَالَتْ وَاللَّهِ مَا عِنْدِي إِلَّا قُوتُ الصَّبِيِّ قَالَ فَإِذَا أَرَادَ الصَّبِيُّ الْعِشَاءَ فَنَوِّمِيهِمْ وَتَعَالَى فَأَطْفِئِي السَّرَاجَ وَتَطْوِي بَطُونَنَا اللَّيْلَةَ فَفَعَلْتُ ثُمَّ عَدَا الرَّجُلُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى

اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ لَقَدْ عَجَبَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَوْ ضَحِكَ مِنْ فُلَانٍ وَفُلَانَةٍ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ {وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ} (الحشر: ٩)

Abu Hurayrah reports that a man came to the Prophet and said, "I have been struck by hardships." The Prophet sent someone to his wives but he did not find anything with them. So he said, "Would there be someone who will host him tonight? Allah will show him mercy." So one of the *Ansar* got up, said he will, and took the man to his house. He told his wife, "Here is a guest of the Prophet. Don't save back anything." She said, "By Allah! I have nothing but the children's food." He said, "When the children ask for dinner, put them to sleep, then put off the lamp. We shall fold our stomachs tonight (and feed the guest)." She did as told. The next day when he went to the Prophet he said, "Allah was amazed, (or he said, he smiled at) the man and the woman." And Allah revealed, "... And give preference over themselves, even though poverty happens to be their lot."

Ibn Jarir's report names the *Ansari* as Abu Talha (Qurtubi).

The narrative is in Bukhari (Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi and Shawkani present another example taken from Ibn Marduwayh, Bayhaqi in Sho'ab, and Hakim, who declared it *Sahih*. One of the Companions was sent a sheep's head. He forwarded it to another considering him in greater need. The second person sent it across to a third for the same reason. The sheep-head went to seven houses and arrived back at the first.

Qurtubi adds: Hudhayfa al-'Adawi reports about the battle of Yarmuk: "I went into the battlefield looking for my uncle. I was carrying some water. I said to myself that if he has any life left in him, maybe I'll pour water into his mouth. When I found him I asked, 'Shall I give you some water?' He signaled 'yes' with his head. Right then another man said, 'Ah.' My uncle signaled me to go to him. That was Hisham b. al-'Aas. I asked him whether I could give him some water. He signaled a 'yes.' But then he heard another man say, 'Ah, Ah.' Hisham signaled me to attend to him. But by the time I could reach the other man, he was dead. I returned to Hisham. He was dead. I went back to my uncle and he too was dead."

'Umar b. al-Khattab sent 400 Dinars to Abu 'Ubaydah b. al-Jarrah and instructed the carrier to tarry along for a while to see what he does with the gifted money. Abu 'Ubaydah accepted it, supplicated for 'Umar and then calling in his servant began saying: 'Five for so and so, 10 for so and so, etc.,' until he had spent the 400. Then 'Umar tried the same thing with Mu'adh b. Jabal. He too spent off the gifted amount then and there until his wife peeped into the room to remind him that they were equally poor and so he gave her the remaining two Dinars. When the messenger told 'Umar about what Mu'adh did, he was very pleased and remarked, "They are brothers, some of them are from others."

Similarly, when 'A'isha was sent 10,000 Dirhams by Mu'awiyah, she distributed it all during the same session.

Qurtubi goes on to demonstrate how little the earlier generations cared for this world. For example, Ba Yezid Bustami said, "I was never overwhelmed by anyone as I was overwhelmed by a young man from Balkh. He was on his way to Hajj and came down to see me. He asked me, 'Abu Yezid! What is the boundary of self-denial (*zuhd*) at your end?'

I said, 'If we find we eat but if we do not, we observe patience.' He said, "That is the self-denial of our dogs in Balkh." I asked, 'So what is the boundary of *zuhd* at your end?' He answered, 'When we do not have, we say thanks, and when we have, we pass on to those in greater need.'

Dhannun Misri was asked, "What is the condition of a zahid who has an open heart?" He answered, "Three: (a) distribution of that which is in his possession, (b) not seeking after what has been denied, and, (c) preferring others when given."

It is reported of Abu al-Hasan al-Antaki that once over thirty people gathered around him in one of the villages of Rayy. They had a few loaves of bread that wouldn't suffice but a few. So they broke the loaves into small pieces, put off the lamp, and sat around the bread. When the lamp was re-ignited, and the dining spread-cloth was raised, the bread was as it was. Every one of the participant had not eaten anything for the sake of the rest!

22. Literally "*shuhh*" is a synonym of "*bukhl*" (miserliness; except that it is regarded as extreme type of *bukhl*) - Munawi.

But others say it is miserliness combined with greed. Ta'us has said that

"*bukhl*" is to be stingy with one's own wealth while "*shuhh*" is to be stingy with other people's wealth (i.e., a "*shahih*" cannot see others spending: Au.). There are various other explanations such as, "(it is) oppression, or, not carrying out religious obligations, etc. (Qurtubi).

Nonetheless, according to Ibn Mas'ud it has not been used in the sense of miserliness at this point. It is reported that someone came to him and told him that he felt destroyed because he never liked to part with any of his money, while Allah has condemned "*shuhh*." Ibn Mas'ud told him that by "*shuhh*" at this point Allah meant those who devour the wealth of a brother unlawfully. It is also reported by Abu Hayyaj al-Asadi that while he was going round the Ka'bah, he found a man supplicating, "O Allah, save me from *shuhh*." He would not add anything to it. I asked him the reason. He said, "If I am saved from *shuhh*, I will not be stealing, nor fornicating, nor doing anything wrong." The man was 'Abd Al-Rahman b. 'Awf.

In fact, there is a *hadith* to this effect. Preserved in Tabarani's Awsat, (termed Hasan by Suyuti in his Jami' Saghir: Au.):

[10] As for those who came after them, they say, 'O our Lord, forgive us and those of our brothers who preceded us in faith, and place not in our hearts any rancor towards those who have believed;²³ O our Lord, surely You are the All-clement, the All-merciful.

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

عن أنس بن مالك، عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "برئ من الشُّحِّ مَنْ أَدَّى الزُّكَاةَ، وَفَرَى الضَّيْفَ، وَأَعْطَى فِي النَّائِيَةِ"

On the authority of Anas b. Malik, the Prophet (saw) said, "He is free of *shubb* who paid the *Zakah*, took care of the guest and helped him who faces hard times." (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

There are other *ahadith* that point to this meaning. One in Muslim and other collections says,

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "اتَّقُوا الظُّلْمَ. فَإِنَّ الظُّلْمَ ظُلُمَاتٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ. وَاتَّقُوا الشَّحَّ. فَإِنَّ الشَّحَّ أَهْلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ. حَمَلَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْ سَفَكُوا دِمَاءَهُمْ وَاسْتَحَلُّوا مَحَارِمَهُمْ."

The Prophet said, "Beware of oppression for oppression will be darknesses on the day of Standing. Beware of '*shubb*' for '*shubb*' destroyed those before you: it resulted in they spilling the blood, and treating the unlawful as lawful."

Another report as recorded by Nasa'i says,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- «لَا يَجْتَمِعُ غُبَارٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَدُخَانٌ حَتَمٌ فِي جَوْفِ عَبْدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَا يَجْتَمِعُ الشُّحُّ وَالْإِيمَانُ فِي قَلْبِ عَبْدٍ أَبَدًا».

Abu Hurayrah reported the Prophet's words, "The dust in the path of Allah and smoke of Jahannum will not get together within the stomach of a believer - ever; and '*shubb*' and faith cannot get together in the heart of a slave - ever" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

The narrative was preserved by Hakim as well as Ibn Hibban. (Au.).

23. The early Muslims have a special place in Islam. The following may be noted:

ذَكَرَ لَنَا أَنَّ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَغْلَظَ لِرَجُلٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَدْرٍ، فَقَالَ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ يَا عُمَرُ لَعَلَّهُ قَدْ شَهِدَ مَشْهَدًا أَطَّلَعَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ،

نَاشِهُدَ مَا لَكُمْ أَنِّي قَدْ رَضِيتُ عَنْ عِبَادِي
هَؤُلَاءِ، فَلْيَعْمَلُوا مَا شَاءُوا".

We learn that once `Umar b. al-Khattab treated a Badri Companion with harshness. the Prophet remarked, "What will teach you `Umar that may be he was at a place (meaning Badr) into which Allah looked and asked His angels to bear witness that, 'I am pleased with these My slaves, so let them now do whatever they will'" (Ibn Jarir).

The *hadith* could not be traced in other books but similar reports speak of the high status of Badri Companions (Au.).

Then there is `A'isha's statement in Baghawi (whose main text is confirmed by reports in other works such as Muslim: Sami, Au.):

رَقَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ: أَمَرْتُمْ بِالِاسْتِغْفَارِ لِأَصْحَابِ
مُحَمَّدٍ فَسَبَّيْتُمُوهُمْ، سَمِعْتُ نَبِيَّكُمْ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: (لَا تَذْهَبُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةُ
حَتَّى يَلْعَنَ آخِرُهَا أَوَّلُهَا)

`A'isha said, "You were asked to seek forgiveness for the Companions of Muhammad, but you criticize them. I heard the Prophet say, 'This community will not end until its last curses the first.'" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi adds: Some scholars have said, "Be a sun. If you cannot, be a moon. If you cannot, be a star. If you cannot, be a planet." The interpretation is: Be a *Muhajir*. If you cannot, then be an *Ansari*. If you cannot, then try to be of the same quality of deeds as they. But if you cannot, then seek forgiveness for them as Allah has ordered.

Nahhas reported that a group of Iraqi (*Shi`as*) went to Hussain and began to abuse Abu Bakr, `Umar and `Uthman. Hussain asked them, "Are you of the *Muhajirun*?" They said, "Of course not." He asked, "Are you of those about whom Allah said, 'And those who had established home (in this city) and the faith, before them..?'" They replied, "Of course not." He told them, "So, you have yourself denied. And let me bear witness that you are not of those about whom Allah said, 'As for those who came after them, they say, "O our Lord, forgive us and those of our brothers who preceded us in faith, and place not in our hearts any rancor towards those who have believed."'"

Now you can leave."

Sha`bi has said: Jews and Christians score a point over the *Shi`ah*, at least over one issue. When the Jews are asked, "Who were the best of people

[11] Have you not considered those who adopted hypocrisy,²⁴ saying to their brothers of the People of the Book who have disbelieved, 'If you are driven out, we too will go forth with you, and we will never ever obey anyone concerning you. And, if you are fought against, we will certainly help you.' But Allah bears witness that surely they are liars.²⁵

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا يَقُولُونَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمُ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَئِنْ
أُخْرِجْتُمْ لَنَخْرُجَنَّ مَعَكُمْ وَلَا نُطِيعُ فِيكُمْ
أَحَدًا أَبَدًا وَإِنْ قُوتِلْتُمْ لَنَنْصُرَنَّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ
يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١١﴾

[12] If those are expelled, they will never go forth with them, and if they are fought against, they will never help them. Even if they helped them, they will certainly show their backs, and then they would not be helped.

لَئِنْ أُخْرِجُوا لَا يَخْرُجُونَ مَعَهُمْ وَلَئِنْ
قُوتِلُوا لَا يَنْصُرُونَهُمْ وَلَئِنْ نَصَرُوهُمْ لَيُوَلِّنَنَّ
الْأَذْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا يُنصُرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

in your community?" They reply, "The Companions of Musa." When Christians are asked, "Who were the best of people in your community?" They reply, "The Companions of Jesus." When the *Shi'ah* are asked, "Who are the worst people in your community?" They answer, "The Companions of Muhammad." They were asked to seek forgiveness for them, they curse them.

24. Those were 'Abdullah b. Ubayy, Wadiy'ah b. Nawfal, Malik b. Nawfal, Suwayd b. Daa'is (Ibn Jarir), Rifaa'ah b. Tabut, 'Abdullah b. Nabtal, and Aws b. Qayzi (Qurtubi, Shawkani).

25. Yusuf Ali comments: "The Jews of the Banu Nadir had been assured by the Hypocrites of Madinah of their support to their cause. They

had thought that their defection from the Prophet's Cause would so weaken that cause that they would save their friends. But they never intended to undertake any act involving self-sacrifice on their part; if they had helped their Jewish friends, it was not likely that they would have succeeded; and if they had actually gone to the fight; they had neither valour nor fervour to support them, and they would have fled ignominiously before the discipline, earnestness, and Faith of the men of Islam."

This is one of the several signs of the Prophet's authenticity. The prediction came true and the hypocrites neither fought on their side, nor accompanied them in their banishment (Qurtubi). After all, even if they did not fight, none of them preferred to

[13] Indeed, you are more fearful to them in their hearts than Allah.²⁶ That because they are a people who do not understand.

لَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ رَهْبَةً فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] They will not fight against you all together except from fortified townships, or from behind walls.²⁷ Their valor is great among themselves. You reckon them united,²⁸ but their hearts are split.²⁹ That because they are a people who do not intellectualize.³⁰

لَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ جَمِيعًا إِلَّا فِي قُرَى مُحَصَّنَةٍ
أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ جُدُرٍ بَأْسُهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ شَدِيدٌ
تَحْسِبُهُمْ جَمِيعًا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ شَتَّى ذَلِكَ
بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

do what was easier of accomplishment, viz., accompany them to the places of banishment (Au.).

26. The reference is to both the parties: the hypocrites as well as the Jews. (Qurtubi).

As Allah said elsewhere:

إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَخْشَوْنَ النَّاسَ كَخَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَشَدَّ
خَشْيَةٍ (النساء: ٧٧)

"A party of them fears the people as they ought to fear Allah, or even more fearful" (Ibn Kathir).

27. "The passage of centuries has not had any effect on the truth of the Qur'anic statements. They hold true today as they did a millennium and half earlier. I was personal witness to the clashes during the final phases of the war between the Jews and Muslim Fida'iin in the Holy Land (in 1948: Au.). They would never fight but from fortified places in Palestine,

fleeing as soon as they feared attack in the open. Their behavior reflected the Qur'anic illustration so well as if the verses had come down then, right there while the fighting was going on." (Sayyid).

Shabbir remarks that after having always lost in wars that allowed for one-to-one sword fights, the West invented gun-powder.

Early on when gun-powder was invented and battles after battles were being lost by the Muslims against European invasions at the end of the Middle-ages because of the advantage of gun-powder, the Ottomans also introduced guns into their army. But Muslim soldiers refused to accept the guns on grounds of chivalry. They would say, "How can you kill someone without giving him an equal chance to defend himself?" They thought it was cowardice to be killing a man from a distance. By the

time they learnt that there was no alternative to the gun, it was pretty late. The lead that their enemies then acquired lasts to this day. Its supremacy in battlefields is the supremacy of a coward's reliance on the ability to kill from a distance. When this ability is gone, which is likely to happen in a short while, the Crusader will retreat to his preserves (Au.).

28. The allusion is to the hypocrites and Jews. At heart they were disunited because both bore different faiths. It was unity of ranks on the basis of unity of purposes, but not unity of convictions, that they tried to achieve, and, therefore, failed (Au.).

29. "...implying that people who have no real faith and no definite moral convictions can never attain to true unity among themselves, but are always impelled to commit acts of aggression against one another" (Asad).

30. They do not understand for instance, that where there is no unity of intents and purposes, arising from unity of convictions, unity of ranks is not viable (Au.).

(Way back in the first Islamic century, what Muslims understood seems not to be the share of modern-day Muslims, and, specifically, their leaders: Au.). Qatadah stated: You will find the followers of falsehood as holders of varying beliefs, following varying fanciful thoughts, practicing varying deeds. They are only united over enmity of the holders of Truth (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Yusuf Ali adds: "It may be that they have a strong fighting spirit among themselves, but they have no Cause to fight for and no common objective to achieve. The Makkan Pagans want to keep their own unjust autocracy; the Madinah Hypocrites wish for their own domination in Madinah; and the Jews want their racial superiority established over the Arabs, of whose growing union and power they are jealous. Their pretended alliance could not stand the strain of either a defeat or a victory. If they had been wise, they would have accepted the Cause of Unity, Faith, and Truth."

[15] Like those before them who lately tasted the evil consequences of their doings;³¹ and there awaits for them a painful chastisement.

كَمَثَلِ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَرِيبًا ذَاقُوا وَبَالَ
أَمْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾

31. The opinion of Ibn `Abbas was that the allusion was to another Jewish tribe Banu Qaynuqa` (Ibn Jarir).

Their story is as follows:

Banu Qaynuqa`

The Prophet (*saws*) had entered into peace treaties with various tribes around Madinah, including the Jews. But at the time of the Badr battle one or two incidents of the breach of trust had already appeared. Following the defeat of the Quraysh at Badr, the Prophet gathered the Jews of Banu Qaynuqa` (a gold-smith tribe: Yusuf Ali), and admonished them saying, 'fear Allah, for you have seen how the Quraysh power was destroyed at Badr.' (There is every possibility that the Prophet had learnt that orders from on High for expeditions against various Jewish tribes was simply a matter of time, and so warned them for one and the last time, hoping they could be saved). But they acted arrogantly and said to him, "Muhammad, do not be encouraged by the fact that you killed a few of the Quraysh at Badr who did not know how to fight. If you meet

with us in a battle you will learn that we are real men, and that you have not met the like of us." In reply, Allah revealed the following:

لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا اسْتُعْلِفُوا وَتُحْشَرُونَ إِلَى
نَهْمٍ وَيُقْسَرُ إِلَيْهِمْ ، قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فِي
ثَنَيْنِ الْتَقَا فِيهِ تَقْتُلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
أُخْرَى كَافِرَةٌ يَرَوْنَهُمْ مِثْلَ نَفْسِهِمْ رَأَى
مُتَيْنَ وَاللَّهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بِنَصْرِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنَّ فِي
لَآك لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ
(آل عمران: ١٢-١٣)

"Say to the unbelievers that you will be overcome and mustered into Jahannam - an evil resting place. There was a sign for you in the two groups that met (at Badr). One group fighting in the cause of Allah, while the other - the unbelievers - seeing them, as the eye sees, twice themselves. But Allah strengthens with His succor whom He will. In this (event) was a lesson indeed for those of sight."

But of course, such revelations were not to move them. Far from that, they would not give up their mischievous ways. When a Muslim woman visited a Jewelry shop in the market

[16] Like Shaytan who said to man, 'Disbelieve.' But when he disbelieved he said, 'I am quit of you. I am afraid of Allah, Lord of the worlds.'³²

كَمْثَل الشَّيْطَانِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ اكْفُرْ
فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ قَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِنْكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ
اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] So the outcome of the two was that both are in the Fire, abiding therein. That is the recompense of the wrongdoers.

فَكَانَ عَاقِبَتُهُمَا أَنَّهُمَا فِي النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ
فِيهَا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

dominated by this Jewish tribe, she was persistently asked to unveil. She refused. So the shop-keeper secretly tied her lower garment to a peg in such a manner that when she came down, she was uncovered. She called for help. A Muslim killed the Jewish shopkeeper. Other Jews rushed in and killed the Muslim. The Prophet (*saws*) announced *Jihad* against this tribe. They withdrew to their forts and the Prophet laid siege following Allah's instruction:

وَلَمَّا تَخَافُ مِنْ قَوْمٍ خِيَانَةً فَأَنْذِرْهُمْ عَلَى
مَوَالِيهِ (الأنفال: ٥٨)

"But if you fear from a people treachery, then cast back to them (their treaty), on equal footing."

Banu Qaynuqa` were considered as the toughest of the Jews, but it wasn't but 15 days of siege that they lost heart, opened the gates of their fort and announced that they were ready to accept the Prophet's decision about them. But before the Prophet could

announce his decision, `Abdullah b. Ubayy, the arch-hypocrite and their ally, doggedly pleaded for them. He said, "Four hundred unarmed and three hundred armored men, who defended me against the white and the black, will you make a game of them in half a day?" The Prophet told him, "They are yours," and ordered that they be expelled from Madinah. They went away to Adhru`at areas of Syria. That was in Shawwal of the second year after *Hijrah*.

32. Shabbir reproduces Shah `Abdul Qadir's note that this is exactly what had happened at Badr. *Shaytan* came in the form of a man and encouraged them to the battle. But when he saw the angels, he fled declaring that he was quit of the pagans.

Although obviously general, Ibn Jarir relates the *Ayah* to the story of an Israeli monk of the past. He presents several versions of it on the authority of `Ali, Ibn Mas`ud, and Ibn `Abbas.

[18] O those who have believed, fear Allah and let a soul see what it has advanced for tomorrow.³³ Fear Allah, surely Allah is Aware of what you do.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنظُرْ
نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّعْتُمْ لِعَدِّهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

Herewith a summary: There was a monk in the deserts among the Israelites much devoted to God. People came to him from afar seeking blessings. A girl fell victim to a Jinn. Her brothers brought her to him for cure. She was beautiful and he lost self-control. She became pregnant. *Shaytan* suggested to him that he should kill her and concoct a story. Given his reputation it will be believed. So he killed her and buried her under a tree. When the brothers came he told them that she died by natural causes and he had buried her. They believed in him and returned. But *Shaytan* appeared to them in dreams and told them what truly had happened. They were so sure of the innocence of the monk that they spoke of the dream to each other only fearfully. But all stories concurring, they dug the grave and found that she had truly been murdered. *Shaytan* next went to the monk and told him that his crime was about to be discovered. He could find a way out for him if he would prostrate himself to him. The monk did it. But when he had done, *Shaytan* said, "I am quit of you. I am

afraid of Allah, Lord of the worlds." The brothers, of course, informed the authorities and they handed him a death sentence.

The narrative is found in 'Abd al-Razzaq, Ibn Rahwayh, Bukhari in his *Ta'rikh*, Ibn Marduwayh, Bayhaqi and Hakim who declared it trustworthy (Shawkani). Among the early commentators, the narrative is there in Ibn Abi Hatim and *Durr al-Manthur* (Au.).

The monk involved has been named as Barsis (Qurtubi) and this story is different from the story of another monk Jurayj whom the woman involved had accused falsely (Ibn Kathir).

33. As if this world is a day, and, therefore, the Hereafter tomorrow. Another hidden hint is that the Hereafter is as sure to happen as tomorrow is sure to arrive (Alusi).

Although the following is not an explanation of the verse at hand, but we present it following Ibn Kathir, to demonstrate how the same verses affected their first recipients. It is from Muslim:

عَنِ الْمُنَادِرِ بْنِ حَرِيرٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ قَالَ كُنَّا عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فِي صَدْرِ النَّهَارِ قَالَ فَجَاءَهُ قَوْمٌ حُفَاةٌ عُرَاةٌ مُجْتَابِي النَّمَارِ أَوْ الْعَبَاءِ مُتَقَلِّدِي السُّيُوفِ عَامَّتُهُمْ مِنْ مُضَرٍّ بَلَّ كُلُّهُمْ مِنْ مُضَرٍّ فَتَمَعَّرَ وَجْهُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- لِمَا رَأَى بِهِمْ مِنَ الْفَاقَةِ فَدَخَلَ ثُمَّ خَرَجَ فَأَمَرَ بِإِلَافَةٍ فَأَذَنَ وَأَقَامَ فَصَلَّى ثُمَّ خَطَبَ فَقَالَ {يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَجَعَلَكُمْ} إِلَى آخِرِ الْآيَةِ {إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا} (النساء: ١) وَالْآيَةُ الَّتِي فِي الْحَشْرِ {اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مِمَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ} (الحشر: ١٨) تَصَدَّقَ رَجُلٌ مِنْ دِينَارِهِ مِنْ دِرْهِمِهِ مِنْ ثَوْبِهِ مِنْ صَاعٍ بُرٍّ مِنْ صَاعٍ نَمْرٍ - حَتَّى قَالَ - وَلَوْ بِشِقِّ تَمْرَةٍ. قَالَ فَجَاءَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ بَصُرَةً كَادَتْ كَفُّهُ نَعِجَزُ عَنْهَا بَلَّ قَدْ عَجَزَتْ - قَالَ - ثُمَّ تَتَابَعَ النَّاسُ حَتَّى رَأَيْتُ كَوْمَيْنِ مِنْ طَعَامٍ وَرِيَابٍ حَتَّى رَأَيْتُ وَجْهَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- يَتَهَلَّلُ كَأَنَّهُ مُذْهَبَةٌ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- «مَنْ سَنَّ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةً حَسَنَةً فَلَهُ أَجْرُهَا وَأَجْرُ مَنْ عَمِلَ بِهَا بَعْدَهُ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يَنْقُصَ مِنْ أَجُورِهِمْ شَيْءٌ وَمَنْ سَنَّ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةً سَيِّئَةً كَانَ عَلَيْهِ وِزْرُهَا وَوِزْرُ مَنْ عَمِلَ بِهَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يَنْقُصَ مِنْ أَوْزَارِهِمْ شَيْءٌ».

A Companions reports: We were with the Prophet early in the day when a group of people came in: bare feet, unclothed, striped shrouds on their bodies, and swords hanging (by their waists). Most of them were from Mudar tribe, or perhaps all. The Prophet's countenance changed, seeing the starvation that had struck them. He went into (his house) and then coming out ordered Bilal to say the Prayer-call. He led in the Prayers and then addressed them saying: "People! Fear Allah your Lord who created you from a single soul"..... until.. "surely Allah is watching over you." Then he recited this verse, "O those who have believed, fear Allah and let a soul see what it has advanced for tomorrow; and fear Allah." Then he added, "Let a man offer his Dinar or his Dirham or out of his clothes, a measure of wheat, a measure of dates" – until he said – "even if it is half of a date." In response, a man brought a small packet, so small that his palm was too large for it. Thereafter people followed until I saw two heaps of dates and clothes and I saw the Prophet's face shine, as if it was gold. He said, "Whoever started a good practice in Islam shall

[19] Be not like those who forgot Allah and so He made them forget their own souls.³⁴ Those, they are the corrupt rebellious ones.

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

have its reward and the reward of those who practiced it after him without they losing any of their reward. On the other hand, whoever started a bad practice in Islam shall have its sin upon him and the sin of those who followed him after him without their sin being reduced by any amount.”

34. That is, they forgot Allah's rights, so Allah made them forget their own rights upon themselves. (Tabari).

“What can be a greater tragedy than one forgetting oneself, one's moral rights upon oneself, one's spiritual developments, one's heedlessness to the diseases of the heart, to the extent that never does a thought cross his mind about them, never does he consider - not the seriousness of the disease - but the disease itself?

“What punishment can be greater than the punishment of one forgetting his own soul, his heart and its diseases, with no thoughts of medication or treatment; completely oblivious of its diseases, its cures, and the means of attaining salvation in the everlasting life that will follow? How

sorrowful his affair is: He is so fearful of the destruction of his body, from whose destruction there is no escape, but is forgetful of the destruction of the soul, which is what he will carry with him to the next life?” (Ibn al-Qayyim, paraphrased).

Ibn Kathir reproduces a beautiful sermon by Abu Bakr as preserved by Tabarani in his Al-Kabir, and whose narrators are, according to Ibn Kathir, trustworthy:

عَنْ نُعَيْمِ بْنِ نَمِجَةَ، قَالَ: كَانَ فِي خُطْبَةِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: أَمَا تَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّكُمْ تَعْدُونَ وَتَرْوَحُونَ لِأَجَلٍ مَعْلُومٍ، فَمَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ أَنْ يَنْقُضِيَ الْأَجَلَ وَهُوَ فِي عَمَلٍ لِلَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَلْيَفْعَلْ، وَلَنْ تَنَالُوا ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، إِنْ قَوْمًا جَعَلُوا أَجَالَهُمْ يُغَيِّرُهُمْ فَتَهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَكُونُوا أَمْثَالَهُمْ:

{ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ } (الحشر: ١٩).

أَيْنَ مَنْ تَعْرِفُونَ مِنْ إِخْوَانِكُمْ؟ قَدَّمُوا مَا قَدَّمُوا فِي أَيَّامِ سَلَفِهِمْ، وَحَلُّوا فِيهِ بِالشَّقْوَةِ، وَالسَّعَادَةِ، أَيْنَ الْجَبَّارُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ الَّذِينَ بَنُوا الْمَدَائِنَ وَحَفَفُوهَا بِالْحَوَائِطِ؟ قَدْ صَارُوا نَحْتُ الصَّخَرِ وَالْآبَارِ، هَذَا كِتَابُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَا تُفْنَى عَجَائِبُهُ فَاسْتَوْصُوا بِهِ مِنْهُ لِيَوْمٍ ظَلَمَ وَأَنْتَضِيحُوا بِسُنَائِهِ وَبَيَانِهِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ

[20] Not equal are the companions of the Fire and companions of Paradise.³⁵ The companions of Paradise, they are indeed the triumphant ones.

لَا يَسْتَوِي أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ وَأَصْحَابُ
الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

رَجُلٌ أَتَى عَلَى زَكْرِيَّا، وَأَهْلَ بَيْتِهِ، فَقَالَ:
{كَانُوا يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَيَدْعُونَكَ
رَبَّكَ وَرَهْبًا وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَاشِعِينَ} (الأنبياء:
٩٠) لَا خَيْرَ فِي قَوْلٍ لَا يُرَادُّ بِهِ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ،
وَلَا خَيْرَ فِي مَالٍ لَا يُنْفَقُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، وَلَا
خَيْرَ فِيمَنْ يَغْلِبُ جَهْلُهُ جَلْمَهُ، وَلَا خَيْرَ
فِيمَنْ يَخَافُ فِي اللَّهِ لَوْمَةً لَائِمًا.

Nu`aym b. Namiha narrated that Abu Bakr (ra) said in a sermon of his, "Do you not know that you do the morning and evening unto a known term? Therefore, whoever can manage that he arrives at his term-end while he is engaged in one of Allah's missions, let him. But you will never attain it except by Allah's own will. Some people have devoted their terms for other than themselves. Allah has prohibited you that you should be like them by saying, 'Be not like those who forgot Allah and so He made them forget themselves.'

"Where are those of your brothers you used to know? They sent forward what they could in the days of their

past. They ran into hardships as well as good fortune. Where are the earlier tyrants who built the cities and surrounded them with walls? They are now under stones and holes.

"Now, this is Allah's Book. Its wonders will never end. Therefore, seek admonition through it for a dark day and clear things in its light and expression. Allah praised Zakariyyah by saying, 'They would hasten to good deeds and would invoke Us with hopes and fears and they were humble to Us.' Remember, there is no good in a word not uttered for the sake of Allah, nor any good in wealth not spent in the path of Allah, nor any good in him whose arrogant ignorance overcomes his graciousness, neither in him who fears in matters involving Allah, the criticism of the critic."

35. Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir reproduce verses of similar meaning:

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ
لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءً نَحْيَاهُمْ
وَمَمَّا هُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ (الْحَاجِيَّة: ٢١)

[21] Had we sent down this Qur'ān upon a mountain, you would have surely seen it humbled and split asunder from the fear of Allah.³⁶ These are the similitudes that we strike for the people, haply that they will reflect.

لَوْ أَنزَلْنَاهَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْنَاهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

[22] He is Allah, other than Whom there is no god. Knower of the Unseen and the seen.³⁷ He is the All-compassionate,³⁸ the All-merciful.³⁹

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] He is Allah, other than whom there is no god. The Sovereign,⁴⁰ the All-holy,⁴¹ the Author of safety,⁴² the Provider of security,⁴³ the All-preserver,⁴⁴ the All-mighty,⁴⁵ the Irresistible,⁴⁶ the Proud.⁴⁷ Glory to Allah, high above all that they associate.

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَلَا الْمُسِيءُ
(غافر: ٥٨)
أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
كَالْمُفْسِدِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الْمُتَّقِينَ
كَالْفُجَّارِ (ص: ٢٨)

has said about the hearts that they can be harder than stones.

37. “*Al-Rahman*” is the All-compassionate of this world and the Next (Ibn Jarir).

38. That is, that which is known by the creations.

39. “*Al-Rahim*” is the All-merciful extending His mercy especially to the believers (Ibn Jarir). Thus, He is the All-compassionate of this world and the Next, and All-merciful of both (Ibn Kathir).

40. “*Al-Malik*”: He who has the power to bring into being (from not being). - Qushayri.

36. A *hadith* of “*mutawatir*” status says that when the Prophet’s pulpit was made and he abandoned the palm tree he used to lean on, it began to weep and moan – like a child, until the Prophet came down and patted it. But people are harder than that they should listen to the Qur’ān in fear and humbleness. The Qur’ān

41. “*Al-Quddus*”: Ibn Jarir states the meaning as “*Al-Mubarak*.”

Qadasa is to be pure, free of all defects. A word derived from the same root is “*al-qadas*” popular in Hejaz, which is for a kind of vessel, so named because the vessel is used for cleaning and purifying (Qurtubi). Hence Wahab b. Munnabbih’s opinion that Quddus means: “The Pure” (Ibn Kathir).

42. “*Al-Salam*”: He from whose oppression the creations can feel secure (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi); One who is free of all defects and flaws: Perfect of His Names, Acts and Attributes (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

43. “*Al-Mu’min*”: One who provides peace and security (Ibn Jarir); or One who secures His Friends from His own chastisement, and His slaves from any oppression originating from Himself (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

44. “*Al-Muhaymin*”: Ibn `Abbas stated the meaning as Witness and, Watcher. That is, He who watches over the deeds of His slaves (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

It is said,

نِيْمَنَ الطَّائِرُ إِذَا نَشَرَ جَنَاحَهُ عَلَى فِرَاحِهِ
بَيَّانَةً لَهَا

The bird spread its wings over its chicken to preserve them (*Tuh-fah*). Also see note 146 of *Surah Al-Ma’idah* where the word has been used to describe the Qur’ān (Au.).

45. “*Al-‘Aziz*”: Qatadah understood this Attribute as One who is severe in revenge when He avenges (Ibn Jarir).

46. “*Al-Jabbar*” has several connotations: The word is primarily used in Arabic for greatness, as well as for setting things right (Qurtubi); so that, “*jabr*” is for bone-setting, or plastering even in today’s parlance. (Au.). Here, He who reforms the affairs of His creation (Ibn Jarir).

Another meaning is, as Qatadah said, that of the Binder, who binds His creation to whatever He decides (Ibn Kathir); in other words, One who compels everyone to His will. Thus *Al-Jabbar* is the Compeller (Au.); yet another meaning is that of a Corrector, Restorer or Mender (Qurtubi).

47. “*Al-Mutakabbir*.” One who is above all in greatness, so that there is none like unto Him (Qurtubi). Qatadah understood it as One who is above it that any evil should touch Him (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Qushayri).

[24] He is Allah, the Creator,⁴⁸ the Maker,⁴⁹ the Fashioner.⁵⁰ To Him belong the Names Most Beautiful.⁵¹ All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Him, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.⁵²

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢٤﴾

We could combine Yusuf Ali's two notes here: "How can a translator reproduce the sublimity and the comprehensiveness of the magnificent Arabic words, which mean so much in a single symbol? (1) 'The Sovereign' in our human language implies the one undisputed authority which is entitled to give commands and to receive obedience, and which in fact receives obedience; the power which enforces law and justice. (2) Human authority may be misused, but in the title 'the Holy One', we postulate a Being free from all stain or evil, and replete with the highest Purity. (3) 'Salam' has not only the idea of Peace as opposed to Conflict, but wholeness as opposed to defects: hence our paraphrase 'Source of Peace and Perfection'. (4) Mo'min, one who entertains Faith, who gives Faith to others, who is never false to the Faith that others place in him: hence our paraphrase 'Guardian of Faith'. (5) 'Preserver of Safety'; guarding all from danger, corruption, loss, etc.; the word is used for the Qur'an in v. 51. These are the attributes of kind-

ness and benevolence: in the next note are described the attributes of power. (6) Allah is not only good, but He can carry out His Will. (7) And if anything resists or opposes Him, His Will prevails. (8) For He is Supreme, above all things and creatures. Thus we come back to the Unity with which we began in verse 22."

48. "*Al-Khaliq*": Khalaqa is to determine, condition, decide and regulate (Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir citing a poetical verse).

49. "*Al-Bari*": is an Inventor (Qurtubi); or One who makes and brings into being following a certain design and proportion (Ibn Kathir).

50. "*Al-Musawwir*" is not merely the Fashioner, but also One who creates according to the image He desires (Ibn Kathir).

51. The *Sahihayn* have a report which says:

«لِلَّهِ تِسْعَةٌ وَتِسْعُونَ اسْمًا، مِائَةٌ إِلَّا وَاحِدًا، لَا يَحْفَظُهَا أَحَدٌ إِلَّا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ، وَهُوَ وَثَرٌ يُجِيبُ الْوَثْرَ»

“Allah has ninety-nine Names. No one will take care of them but will enter Paradise. And He is odd (in number, being One) and approves of the odd.”

Hereunder His ninety-nine Names as in Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah with minor variations between the two in placements:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- «إِنَّ لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى تِسْعَةً وَتِسْعِينَ اسْمًا مِائَةً غَيْرَ وَاحِدَةٍ مَنْ أَحْصَاهَا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهِيمُنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ الْغَفَّارُ الْقَهَّارُ الْوَهَّابُ الرَّزَّاقُ الْفَتَّاحُ الْعَلِيمُ الْقَابِضُ الْبَاسِطُ الْخَافِضُ الرَّافِعُ الْمُعِزُّ الْمُدِلُّ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ الْحَكَمُ الْعَدْلُ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ الْحَلِيمُ الْعَظِيمُ الْغَفُورُ الشَّكُورُ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ الْحَفِيزُ الْمُقِيتُ الْحَسِيبُ الْجَلِيلُ الْكَرِيمُ الرَّقِيبُ الْمُجِيبُ الْوَاسِعُ الْحَكِيمُ الْوَدُودُ الْمَحِيدُ الْبَاعِثُ الشَّهِيدُ الْحَقُّ الْوَكِيلُ الْقَوِيُّ الْمَتِينُ الْوَلِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ الْمُحْصِي الْمُبْدِئُ الْمُعِيدُ الْمُحْيِي الْمُمِيتُ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ الْوَاحِدُ الْمَاحِدُ الْوَاحِدُ الصَّمَدُ الْقَادِرُ الْمُقْتَدِرُ الْمُقَدِّمُ الْمُؤَخَّرُ الْأَوَّلُ الْآخِرُ الظَّاهِرُ الْبَاطِنُ الْوَالِي الْمُتَعَالَى أَمْرُ التَّوَابِ الْمُتَنَبِّهُ الْغَفُورُ الرَّءُوفُ مَالِكُ الْمُلْكِ ذُو الْحَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ الْمُقْسِطُ الْجَامِعُ الْغَنِيُّ الْمُعْنَى الْمَانِعُ الضَّارُّ

التَّائِفُ الثَّوَرُ الْهَادِي الْبَدِيعُ الْبَاقِي السَّوَارِثُ
الرَّثِيدُ الصَّبُورُ»

He is: 1.Allah, (besides whom there is no deity), 2.The Merciful, 3.The Compassionate, 4.The King, 5.The Holy, 6.The Peace, 7.The Security-Bestower, 8.The Protector, 9.The Mighty, 10.The Compeller, 11.The Proud, 12.The Creator, 13.The Maker, 14.The Fashioner, 15.The Forgiver, 16.The Subduer, 17.The Bestower, 18.The Provider, 19.The Opener, 20.The Knower, 21.The Withdrawer, 22.The Outspread-er, 23.The Reducer, 24.The Elevator, 25.The Honorer, 26.The Abaser, 27.The Hearer, 28.The Seer, 29.The Judge, 30.The Just, 31.The Subtle, 32.The Aware, 33.The Clement, 34.The Grand, 35.The Forgiving, 36.The Appreciative, 37.The Most High, 38.The Great, 39.The Guardian, 40.The Reliever, 41.The Reckoner, 42.The Majestic, 43.The Generous, 44.The Watcher, 45.The Responsive, 46.The Comprehensive, 47.The Wise, 48.The Loving, 49.The Glorious, 50.The Raiser, 51.The Witness, 52.The Truth, 53.The Trustee, 54.The Strong, 55.The Firm, 56.The Patron, 57.The Laudable, 58.The Coun-

ter, 59.The Beginner, 60.The Restorer, 61.The Quickener, 62.The Life-taker, 63.The Living, 64.The Self-subsisting, 65.The Self-sufficient, 66.The Glorified, 67.The One, 68.The Eternal, 69.The Able, 70.The Potentate, 71.The Bringing forward, 72.The De-ferrer, 73.The First, 74.The Last, 75.The Evident, 76.The Hidden, 77.The Governor, 78.The Exalted, 79.The Righteous, 80.The Acceptor of Repentance, 81.The Retributor, 82.The Pardoner, 83.The Tender, 84.The Owner of the Kingdom, 85.The Lord of Majesty and Honor, 86.The Equitable, 87.The Gatherer, 88.The All-sufficient, 89.The Enricher, 90.The Withdrawer, 91.The Afflicter, 92.The Benefactor, 93.The Light, 94.The Guide,

95.The Originator, 96.The Lasting, 97.The Inheritor, 98.The Prudent, 99.The Patient.

(Although there is agreement among the scholars that these are ninety-nine of the many more Names that there can be, the chain of narrators has not received their approval. Further, not all of them are from the Qur'an or *hadith*: Au.).

52. The surprise at the repetition of these two Attributes, "the Mighty, the Wise" after they were stated earlier in the same passage, is removed by Shabbir's comment who writes that all the Attributes of Allah could be summed up in these two: He is Mighty, so has power over all things, and is Wise and so does whatever He does, following His wisdom. ﴿بِقُدْرَتِهِ﴾



