

Surah¹
*Al-Fatihah*²

(The Opening)

Makkan³

7 verses⁴



Merits of the *Surah*

a) Abu Sa'id al Mu'allah reported, as in *Bukhari*:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ بْنِ الْمَعْلَى قَالَ كُنْتُ أَصَلِّي فِي الْمَسْجِدِ فَدَعَانِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَلَمْ أَجِبْهُ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي كُنْتُ أَصَلِّي فَقَالَ أَلَمْ يَقُلِ اللَّهُ { اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ } ثُمَّ قَالَ لِي لِأَعْلَمَنَّكَ سُورَةً هِيَ أَعْظَمُ السُّورِ فِي الْقُرْآنِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَخْرُجَ مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ ثُمَّ أَخَذَ بِيَدِي فَلَمَّا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَخْرُجَ قُلْتُ لَهُ أَلَمْ تَقُلْ لِأَعْلَمَنَّكَ سُورَةً هِيَ أَعْظَمُ سُورَةٍ فِي الْقُرْآنِ قَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ هِيَ السَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنُ الْعَظِيمُ الَّذِي أَوْثِقَهُ

“I was in Prayers when the Prophet called me. I did not reply. I went to him after I had finished praying. He asked me, ‘What prevented you from answering me?’ I said I was in Prayers. He said, ‘Has not Allah said in the Qur’ān (8: 24): ‘Believers, respond to Allah and the Messenger when he calls you unto that which will give you life?’ Then he said, ‘(Tarry along and) before you leave the mosque I will tell you about the most im-

portant *surah* of the Qur’ān.’ When he began to stroll out with his hand in mine, I reminded him of his promise. He said, ‘Yes. It is the *Al Hamd*, the *Sab’ al Mathani*, and the *Qur’ān al ‘Azim* which I have been given.”

b) The following is in the *Sahihayn*:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ كُنَّا فِي مَسِيرٍ لَنَا فَتَزَلْنَا فَجَاءَتْ جَارِيَةٌ فَقَالَتْ إِنَّ سَيِّدَ الْحَيِّ سَلِيمٌ وَإِنْ تَقَرَّرْنَا غَيْبَ فَهَلْ مِنْكُمْ رَاقٍ فَقَامَ مَعَهَا رَجُلٌ مَا كُنَّا نَأْبَهُ بِرُفْقِهِ فَرَفَاهُ فَبَرًّا فَأَمَرَ لَهُ بِثَلَاثِينَ شَاةً وَسَقَانَا لَبَنًا فَلَمَّا رَجَعَ قُلْنَا لَهُ أَكُنْتُ مُحْسِنٌ رُفْقَةً أَوْ كُنْتُ تَزْفِي قَالَ لَا مَا رُفِقْتُ إِلَّا بِأَمِّ الْكِتَابِ قُلْنَا لَا تُحْدِثُوا شَيْئًا حَتَّى نَأْتِيَ أَوْ نَسْأَلَ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَلَمَّا قَدِمْنَا الْمَدِينَةَ ذَكَرْنَاهُ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ وَمَا كَانَ يُدْرِيهِ أَنَّهَا رُفْقَةٌ أَفَسِمُوا وَاضْرِبُوا لِي بِسَهْمٍ.

Abu Sa'id al Khudri says: “A woman came to us when we halted at a place during a journey. She said: ‘Our chief has been stung by a scorpion and our men are away. Is there anyone amongst you who can treat him with a charm?’ One of our men about whom we did not know he

worked with charms went up and treated the man with some spell words. He was cured and gifted us 30 goats. He also sent us some milk. When he returned, we asked the man (somewhat accusingly), 'Are you an expert at charms or are you are a practitioner?' He said, 'No, I merely treated him with the *Umm al Kitab*.' We said, 'Let us not talk about it until we have seen the Prophet or have asked him.' When we were back in Madinah and mentioned the affair to him he said, 'How did the man know that it works as a charm also? Divide the goats among yourselves and allot me a share.'" (Ibn Kathir)

Abu Da'ud has another version which says that the man treated him with *surah al Fatihah* for three consecutive days, during which he would recite the *surah* on him and then, gathering his spittle, spit on him. (This author has witnessed a successful Muslim charmer spit powerfully, as if on a real visible enemy).

The report also adds that when consulted, the Prophet (*saws*) said: "You earned (the goats) with a permissible charm."

'Azim Abadi quotes from *Mirqat al Qari*: "This proves that it is allowed

to charge fee for (Islamically legal: Au.) charms" (*'Awn al Ma'bud*).

c) Imām Ahmad and Tirmidhi (who classified the report as *Hasan Sahih*), have recorded that when on one occasion Ubayy b. Ka'b read this *surah* to the Prophet he remarked:

وَالَّذِي تَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا أُنْزِلَتْ فِي السَّوْرَةِ وَلَا فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ
وَلَا فِي الزَّبُورِ وَلَا فِي الْفُرْقَانِ مِثْلُهَا

"By Him in whose hands is my life, *Tawrah*, *Injil*, *Zabur* and *Al Furqan*, none of them have an equivalent of this *Surah*" (Ibn Kathir).

1. In its origin, the word *surah* stands for height, elevation (Majidi). The present divisions or chapters of the Qur'an have been so called perhaps because they raise the reader from one stage (of knowledge and spiritual advancement) to another (higher) stage (Qurtubi).

The word is also used for the walls or fortifications of a city which is perhaps another reason for this usage since each *surah* encompasses many *ayat* (verses of the Qur'an) within itself (Majidi), and guards them from spilling into other parts of the Qur'an. The Qur'an has 114 chapters and the present arrangement, obviously mechanical, is *tawqifi* (توقيفي),

i.e., ordered by the Prophet himself, who was, in all such matters, acting under Divine guidance. The arrangement therefore cannot be altered. The '*suwar*, (plural of *surah*), as also each verse with those that precede or follow, have a subtle relationship with each other in their present order and need a penetrating mind to unravel their interconnection. Imām Razi and Thanwi paid attention to explaining the relationship.

2. The names of the chapters are also "*tawqifi*."

This *surah al Fatihah* has many other names of which at least two are commonly mentioned: *Umm al Qur'ān*, and *Sab' al Mathani*.

As for the names of the chapters, sometimes they bear relationship with the theme and contents of the chapters, but sometimes they do not. Often a word of the *surah* has been picked out as its name, e.g., *Al Baqarah*.

3. That is, it was revealed during the Makkan period and not necessarily in Makkah. There is no consensus among the scholars over many of the chapters whether they are Makkan or Madinan. Even when there is consensus, not the whole *surah* can be said to be certainly of this or

that period. For, both the Makkan and Madinan chapters can contain a verse or more of the other period. Further, there are certain verses that were revealed twice: once during the Makkan and again during the Madinan period. There are possibilities of certain chapters also having been revealed twice. In fact, about this chapter itself, a second opinion is that it was revealed a second time at Madinah (Qurtubi).

Marked differences in language, style, diction and subject matter can be noticed between those passages that were revealed before *hijrah* and those after. However one cannot work the other way round and treat the differences as criteria to decide if certain verses are Makkan or Madinan, or fix the meaning in their light: a mistake often committed by contemporary commentators. Only those parts of the Qur'ān are for certain Makkan or Madinan that have an Authentic report in support. Where such reports do not exist, it is anybody's guess. Further, even with a firm report about the period of revelation, it is very difficult to establish whether a particular portion was revealed during the 'early', 'middle' or 'last' days of the Makkan or Madinan period. Trying to fix up the period of revelation in such cases

I SEEK ALLAH'S REFUGE FROM SATAN⁵ THE AC-
CURSED⁶

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

therefore can have its basis only in conjectures. However, since religion cannot be based on conjectures, it is best to avoid such exercises. Again, analogies such as: "Since the verses under discussion are Makkan, and since such and such 'are' the subject matter of the Qur'ān of the Makkan period, this is the kind of meaning that can be deduced from these verses," are invalid. Where found, it can only betray pre conceived ideas (Au.).

4. *Ayah* in the original (the smallest unit of a *surah*) stands for a sign or miracle: as if every verse of the Qur'ān is a sign of Allah (*swt*) and a miracle in itself. A word of the original, for instance, forgotten by one who knows the whole verse by heart cannot be substituted with an equivalent word to complete the verse, without he himself feeling that it is unlike the original in structure and meaning.

As the chapters, the present arrangement of the verses is also tawqifi. The Prophet (*saws*) used to dictate the verses in this order, recite them (in and out of Prayers) in this order, as well as recite the whole of the Qur'ān

once in a year to Jibril in the month of Ramadan in the same order (Au.).

The total number of verses in the Qur'ān is six thousand two hundred and odd: there being some differences over the count. (*Manahil al 'Irfan*) Majid mentions on the Authority of *Al-Itqan fi 'Uum al-Qur'ān* that they total 6,616. Of words, he gives the total as 77,934, of the letters as 323,760, drawing attention to the pains the lovers of the Qur'ān have borne with pleasure.

5. *Shayatin* are from the Jinn who are corporeal beings created from fire. They are endowed with reason. They multiply and grow in numbers just like other living creatures. Of the Jinn some have submitted to Allah (*swt*), others have not. Those that have not submitted are called *Shayatin* (sing. *Shaytan*). Although invisible to human eye, occasional contacts are not ruled out. According to one opinion (in '*Umdat al Qari* of Badruddin 'Ayni), they can run through the human body. The opinion itself is based on a *hadith* (Au.).

In common parlance everything that has a rebellious nature is called *Shaytan*. When 'Umar (*ra*) was given a

horse that he could not bring to control, he dismounted saying: 'You gave me a *Shaytan*' (Sabuni).

Shayatin are man's eternal sworn enemies, vowed to preventing him from regaining his lost position with his Lord, and accepting no compromise or peace deal with him. Every individual has (at least) one *Shaytan* accompanying him. Even the Prophet, on whom be peace, had one accompanying him, but Allah had subdued him to him. It is their inducements, evil suggestions and physical harm that we are taught to seek refuge from. To pronounce this formula [*al ta'awwudh* (التَّعَوُّذُ)] before every recitation of the Qur'an is, according to the majority of scholars, *Sunnah* (*Ma'arifi*). It is also useful to say these words against every Satanic impulse or distraction. The following *hadith* may be noted:

عَنْ أَبِي الْعَلَاءِ أَنَّ عُثْمَانَ بْنَ أَبِي الْعَاصِ أَتَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ: «يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ قَدْ حَالَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ صَلَاتِي وَقِرَائَتِي. يَلْبِسُهَا عَلَيَّ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «ذَاكَ شَيْطَانٌ يُقَالُ لَهُ خِنْزَبٌ. فَإِذَا أَحْسَسْتَهُ فَتَعَوَّذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنْهُ. وَاتَّقِلْ عَلَى يَسَارِكَ ثَلَاثًا». قَالَ: فَقَعَلْتُ ذَلِكَ فَأَذْهَبَهُ اللَّهُ عَنِّي.

Uthman b. Abi al `Aass Thaqaafi says that he complained to the Prophet: 'O Messenger of Allah, Satan intervenes between me

and my Prayers confounding me in my prayer words.' The Prophet said, 'That is a Satan called Khinzab (also pronounced: Khanzab). When you feel his presence, seek Allah's refuge (i.e. say the *ta'awwudh*), and then spit three times on your left side.' Uthman said, 'I did that and Allah (*swt*) drove him away from me" (*Muslim*).

A *Muslim* must treat the *Shayatin* and their spiritual and physical harm seriously. The Prophet has said as in *Bukhari*:

عَنْ جَابِرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِذَا اسْتَجَنَحَ اللَّيْلُ أَوْ قَالَ جُنَحَ اللَّيْلِ فَكُفُّوا صِبْيَانَكُمْ فَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ تَنْشُرُ حِينَئِذٍ فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ سَاعَةٌ مِنَ الْعِشَاءِ فَخَلُّوهُمْ وَأَغْلِقْ بَابَكَ وَادْكُرْ اسْمَ اللَّهِ وَأُطْفِئْ مِصْبَاحَكَ وَادْكُرْ اسْمَ اللَّهِ وَأُوكِ سِقَاءَكَ وَادْكُرْ اسْمَ اللَّهِ وَحَمِّرْ إِنَاءَكَ وَادْكُرْ اسْمَ اللَّهِ وَلَوْ تَغَرَّضَ عَلَيْهِ شَيْئًا.

Jabir reports the Prophet: "When the night begins to spread (its darkness) .. get your children indoors, for the *Shayatin* spread out at that time. But after the nightfall they may go out. And, when you close your door, remember Allah; when you put off the lamp, remember Allah; when you seal the water-skin, remember Allah; when you seal a jar, remember

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND, THE COMPASSIONATE⁷

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Allah – even if you have to place something on its mouth.”

Kalbi comments: “There are four things that distract a man from Allah: Satan, the self, the world, and the people. The defense against ‘Satan’ is in seeking Allah’s refuge and in opposing every suggestion made by him; against the ‘self’ in treating it harshly; against the ‘world’ in indifference (to its pains and pleasures); and against the ‘people’ in withdrawal.”

The *Bible* has a curious formula for driving away the demons. It says (Tobit 6: 16, 17):

“... you shall take live ashes of incense and lay upon them some of the heart and liver of the fish, so as to make a smoke. Then the demon will smell it and flee away, and will never again return” (Au.).

6. The word in its origin refers to one who has been stoned. In the abstract sense it means one who has been banished from Allah’s mercy, or, more generally, accursed.

7. That this formula, known as the basmalah (بِسْمَلَّة), is a verse of the Qur’ān there can be no difference of

opinion, in view of the verse 30 of al Namal. But whether it is part of every *surah* with which it opens (except for a solitary exception), is disputed. In any case, saying the basmalah before recitation of the Qur’ān is *Sunnah*. Further, coming as it does, here at the beginning of the Qur’ān it sets right man’s relationship with Allah (Sayyid Qutb).

Its meaning is: ‘I begin (this act) in the name of Allah, dependent on Him, placing trust in His Mercy, seeking His help for its completion and aiming to win His approval.’ A report as found in the *Sahih* of Muslim says:

عَنْ عُثْمَانَ بْنِ أَبِي الْعَاصِ التَّفَيْي أَنَّهُ شَكَاَ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- وَجَعًا يَجِدُهُ فِي جَسَدِهِ مُنْذُ أَسْلَمَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- « ضَعْ يَدَكَ عَلَى الَّذِي تَأَلَّمَ مِنْ جَسَدِكَ وَقُلْ بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ. ثَلَاثًا. وَقُلْ سَبْعَ مَرَّاتٍ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ وَقُدْرَتِهِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا أَجِدُ وَأُحَاذِرُ ».

‘Uthman b. Abi al ‘Aas complained of a pain he felt in his body since the day he embraced Islam, the Prophet (*sams*) told him: “Place a hand on the spot where you feel the pain and say ‘*bismillah*’ three times and then follow up by saying seven times:

[1] (All) praise belongs to Allah⁸ the Sustainer⁹ of the Worlds,¹⁰

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١﴾

أَعُوذُ بِعِزَّةِ اللَّهِ وَقُدْرَتِهِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا أَجِدُ وَأُحَازِرُ.

“I seek refuge with the Might and Power of Allah from what I find and what I am fearful of.” (Qur-tubi).

Majid says: “Contrast with this un-reservedly monotheistic introductory formula of Islam the glaringly polytheistic introductory formula of Christianity: ‘In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’”

8. Allah: “According to the best Authorities is a proper noun par excellence without derivation, from which no plural can be formed. It denotes none but the One Unique God, the Absolute, Supreme, Tender, Mighty, Gracious, Benign and Compassionate” (Majid).

He it is, with all His qualities and attributes, who is in the minds of two persons when they speak to each other about Him, even if they happen to be of different faiths and holding corrupt concepts about Him. A Christian may say that he believes in a God who is a third of the Trinity, or the atheist that there is no such reality as God. But when the two use

the word, they both mean the One, the Supreme, who has no partners in his Being or in His attributes Allah of Arabic. In other words, Allah is in the subconscious of every human being and not ‘God’ of English or its equivalent in other languages. The word therefore cannot be translated, although it may be convenient to use the word ‘God’ at some places, especially when it is the unbelievers who speak out His name.

9. “*Al Rabb*”: Sustainer is a poor substitute for this word since in Arabic it signifies (Majidi), a being who creates a thing and then develops it gradually, in steps, until it has achieved its optimum development.

Asad writes: “The Arabic expression rabb embraces a wide complex of meanings not easily expressed by a single term in another language. It comprises the ideas of having a just claim to the possession of anything and, consequently, Authority over it, as well as of rearing, sustaining and fostering anything from its inception to its final completion.”

10. “*`Aalamun*” is plural of the collective noun `alam, of which itself no singular form is available. It is de-

rived from *`alamah* (which means a sign) since *`aalam* signifies that there is a Creator who brought it in being (Sabuni).

There are various opinions about the connotation of the term *`alamun*. But they all lead to the same meaning. The opinion of Ibn `Abbas is that it is the worlds of the jinn and mankind that have been alluded to. Abu Sa'id al Khudri said: 'There are forty thousand worlds of Allah's creation. Our world, from one end to the other, is one of them.' Qatadah says: 'It includes all that there is apart from Allah' (Qurtubi). Yusuf `Ali says: 'There are many worlds astronomical and physical worlds, worlds of thought, spiritual worlds, and so on. In every one of them God is all in all.'

Another possible allusion could be to the seven firmaments (or universes) that Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an.

Finally, as we all know, everyone lives in a world of his own (Au.).

Any praise that is ever sung, whether for Allah (*swt*) or for anyone else, belongs in reality to Allah. Who is it but He who makes the idea click in the mind of an inventor? Who is it but He who steers the brush strokes

of a painter? Who is it but He who flashes the right word in the mind of a writer? And whose creation it is but His, the material that they use, the laws they follow and the beauty that they imitate? In practice, therefore, when anything strikes us as good and beautiful, it is Allah (*swt*) who must be remembered with gratitude and it is He who must be praised.

`A'isha (*ra*) says that when a pleasant thing happened to the Prophet (*saws*) he would say (Ibn Majah):

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي بِنِعْمَتِهِ تَتِمُّ الصَّالِحَاتُ

'Praise be to Allah by whose favor good things come to an agreeable end.'

But when it was unpleasant he would say:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ. (في الزوائد: إسناده صحيح، ورجاله ثقات).

'Praise be to Allah at all events.'

A *hadith* (Ibn Majah) says that the best of dhikr is (the words):

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

'There is no deity but Allah,' and the best of supplication (the words):

الحمد لله

‘All praise to Allah.’

In another *hadith* Rifa‘ah b. Rafe‘ al Zuraqi reports (*Bukhari, Muslim* and others): “One day we were offering Prayers behind the Prophet. When he raised himself from the bow (*ruku*) he said:

سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمَدَهُ

‘A praise (that is) lavish, good and blessed.’

A man at the rear responded with:

رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ - فَلَمَّا
انْصَرَفَ قَالَ مَنْ الْمُتَكَلِّمُ قَالَ أَنَا قَالَ رَأَيْتُ بِضْعَةَ
وَثَلَاثِينَ مَلَكًا يَبْتَذِرُونَهَا إِلَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُهَا أَوَّلُ

‘O our Lord! To You is the praise due in words and measure that befit Your Glory and the greatness of (Your Person).’

When the Prayer was over, the Prophet enquired who the man was. ‘It was me,’ the man said. The Prophet said: ‘I saw upwards of thirty angels vying to write down those words before the others would.’”

Another *hadith* (as in *Musnad Ahmad*) says the Prophet told them on that occasion that having taken it to the ‘*Arsh*, the two scribe angels were in confusion as to how to write down

these words. Allah told them, “Write them down the way My slave said.” (Ibn Kathir: Ibn Majah).

“*Lord of the Worlds*”: That is, the God of Islam is ‘not a tribal deity, nor the national God of any specially favored race or people, nor yet the narrow ‘Lord of the Hosts’, or the anthropomorphic ‘our Father in heaven’ (Majid).

He is not even the Lord of the Muslims in any specific sense, nor is He the Lord of those alone who believe in Him. He is the Lord of everyone and everything. He is the Creator, the Sustainer and the Nourisher of all: believers in Him and the unbelievers alike. He is the Lord, both of the worlds known to Man, as well as those not known to him. He is the Lord of the organic matter as well as the inorganic, of all times, past, present and future.

Also, He is not the God of Aristotle who created the world but has lost interest in its affairs (*Sayyid*), letting it run on its own by the first motion that He gave it. Rather, He drives it the whole as well as its every element on to a designed course, following a certain Plan which itself is determined by His boundless Wisdom. At our level, what else can we do but to offer praises to Him for the intri-

[2] *The Compassionate, the Merciful.*¹¹

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢﴾

cacy of the design, the delicacy of the balance and the beauty of the execution?! It is only one Allah who can do that. If there were many, the universe would fall apart (Au.).

Manazir Ahsan Geelani (an Indian scholar) has stated in his “*The Spiritual Cosmos*” that far from an actual world (of matter and spirit), even an imaginary one cannot remain intact without a sustainer paying constant attention to it. If you imagined, e.g., ‘Australia’ in your mind, with all its cities, people, mountains, lakes and deserts, then this Australia of your imagination will exist in your mind so long as you keep paying attention to it. If you did not, it will fall apart. What do you think of the actual world then? Can it last without a *Rabb al ‘alamīn*?

According to some scholars, this verse is of greater merit (*afdal*) than the *kalimah* since it embodies both the unity of Allah as well as His praise (Qurtubi).

Qurtubi reports about Junayd that when someone said *al hamdulillah* before him he told him to complete it and say *al hamdulillahi rabbi ‘al*

alamīn. The man protested, “But (of) whatever (worth) is the *‘alamīn* that I should mention it along with the name of the Lord?” Junayd replied: “Brother! When both the created and the Creator are mentioned together, the ‘created’ will have no unwholesome effect on your heart.”

Razi writes, in effect: “If you pondered over the wonders of the living and the non living, (how they are interrelated and supported by each other), you will begin to see a little of the ‘Compassion’ of our Lord at work in His creation, and in the various forms His ‘sustenance’ takes. It is then that a drop from the ocean of the meaning of the phrase, ‘All praise to Allah, the Lord of the worlds,’ will you have obtained.”

“Strange it is,” he adds a little further, “that Allah has other creations besides you. Whereas, you have no Sustainer besides Him. Yet He looks after you as if He has no other creation besides you; while you serve Him as if you have many other sustainers besides Him!”

11. Thus, the primary relationship of man with his Lord is that of mercy

from His side. A *hadith* of Muslim says,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
«لَمَّا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْخَلْقَ، كَتَبَ فِي كِتَابِهِ، فَهُوَ عِنْدَهُ
فَوْقَ الْعَرْشِ: إِنَّ رَحْمَتِي تَغْلِبُ غَضَبِي».

“When Allah had brought the creation into existence, He wrote in His Book, which is with Him above the ‘*Arsh*, ‘Surely, My mercy shall overcome My anger’” (Au.).

Both *Al Rahman* and *Al Rahim* have been derived from the same root *rahmah* and both can be translated as the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Kind, etc. Nevertheless, whatever word is chosen the translation will remain inaccurate. The words are intensive forms and, although the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate, the Most Kind etc. would be more appropriate rendering; but, despite that, such a rendering will not be faithful to the original since the two can not be distinguished. For, although both are intensive forms, *Al Rahman* follows the pattern that indicates intensity of a quality, but not necessarily its permanence, while *Al Rahim* follows the pattern that indicates intensity as well as permanence.

Kaslan (كَسْلَان), for instance means “very lazy,” *ta’ban* (تَعَبَان) means

“very tired,” *ghadban* (غَضْبَان), “very angry,” etc. But a person who is very lazy can become active, the very tired can regain his vigor, and the very angry will cool down to his normal temper. The forms do not promise permanence of qualities. This is applicable to the term “*Al-Rahman*” also.

In contrast, the other form indicates permanence in the quality while also expressing intensity, though not of the same order *baligh* (بَالِغ) for instance is someone who is very eloquent and whose quality of eloquence is permanent. *Shaji* (شَجِيع), “courageous” is so called because his quality of courage is permanent. If it was not, he would not be called *Shaji*.

Now, Allah (*swt*) is *Al Rahman*, the compassionate whose compassion is soaring. Yet, His being ‘*Al Rahman*’ does not mean that His compassion will come down to the state of not being compassionate at some time in the future; for He is also ‘*Al Rahim*’ whose quality of compassion will not suffer any decline. In other words, ‘*Al Rahman*’ indicates that He is One whose Mercy is in a state of eruption, while ‘*Al Rahim*’ indicates that this state is permanent.

Shanqiti states an additional connotation: “*Al Rahman* expresses the quality of mercy that encompasses all creatures in this world: the believers as well as the unbelievers. In contrast, *Al Rahim* is a quality that will be manifest in the Hereafter in favor of the believers alone. This is the opinion of the majority of scholars. What is reported of Jesus Christ, on whom and on our Prophet be peace, also corroborates this meaning. He is reported to have said: “*Rahman* is the *Rahman* of the next world as well as of this. *Rahim* is the *Rahim* of the Hereafter.”

(It might be noted however, that the above is not a *hadith*: Au.).

The doubt over the terms *Al Rahman* and *Al Rahim* seem to be old. Al Tabari clarifies: “Now, if someone objects that if both *Rahman* and *Rahim* are derived from the same root *rahmah*, (and since both carry the same meaning), what was the point in the repetition? The answer is that the matter is not as he imagines. Rather, each of these two words has a specific connotation that is not carried by the other.”

Ibn al-Qayyim advances another explanation, as quoted in Manar I. 48 and cited by Asad: “The term *Rahman* circumscribes the quality of

abounding grace inherent in, and inseparable from, the concept of Allah’s Being, whereas *rahim* expresses the manifestation of that grace in, and its effect upon, His creation in other words, an aspect of His activity.”

Sayyid Qutb comments: “The God of Islam does not pursue the humans of His creation with spite and anger, like the gods of Olympia in their violent outbursts, as portrayed by the Greek mythologists; nor does He play vengeful tricks on them as portrayed by the scribes of no less mythological Old Testament, an example of which is the story (of the Tower of Babel) narrated in the *Torah*.”

[The story of the Tower of Babel to which Sayyid Qutb refers is in Genesis, Chap. 11, verses 1-9. It is as follows:

“Now the whole earth had one language and few words, And, as men migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had bricks for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest

[3] Lord of the Day of Judgement.¹²

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٣﴾

we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.” And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, ‘Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.’ So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth”: Au.].

“In contrast, the presence of these attributes in the basmalah and at the beginning of the opening chapter sets right the relationship of man with God. Is God the Omnipotent Creator and man the weak creature who must quietly submit and suffer this life? Is God the Law Maker whose natural laws work blindly with regard to him, taking no account of his hopes, fears and aspirations? Is

God the ruthless Judge who does not differentiate between the sinner and the rebellious? Yes, the God of Islam is the Omnipotent Creator, the Law Maker, the Judge. But He is, first and foremost, “The Kind and The Merciful.” Says a well known *hadith*: “When Allah had brought into being His creations, He wrote down in His Book, which lies with Him on the ‘*Arsh*: ‘My Mercy will overcome My Anger.’”

Sayyid’s comment ends here.

12. “*Deen*” has several meanings. That of: religion, civil laws, obedience, etc. Here it signifies “rewards and punishments, or simply retribution.” The Qur’ān says elsewhere (51:6):

وَالَّذِينَ لَوْ اَفْعَ

‘*The day of Reckoning is to befall indeed.*’

And a *hadith* – treated as Hasan by Tirmidhi - says:

عَنْ شَدَّادِ بْنِ أَوْسٍ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ الْكَفَّيْسُ مَنْ ذَاكَ نَفْسُهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ وَالْعَاجِزُ مَنْ أَتْبَعَ نَفْسَهُ هَوَاهَا وَتَمَنَّى عَلَى اللَّهِ - قَالَ هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ (سنن الترمذي)

[4] You alone do we worship,¹³ and Your help alone do we seek.¹⁴

إِيَّاكَ تَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٤﴾

“Wise is the man who subjects himself to account (before he is questioned), and who works (now) to face what is to happen after death. And the truly incapacitated is one who follows his base desires while pinning good hope on Allah.”

Note the use of the word (دان) in this *hadith*.

The statement that He is the Lord of the Day of Judgment does not of course imply that He is not (the whole and sole) Lord of the worlds now. The Day of Judgment has been specifically mentioned because His absolute lordship will be apparent to everyone that day when no one else will possess lordship besides Him to any degree. The *Sahihayn* report:

(عن) عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَطْوِي اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ يَأْخُذُهُنَّ بِيَدِهِ الْيُمْنَى ثُمَّ يَقُولُ أَنَا الْمَلِكُ أَتَيْنَ الْجَبَّارُونَ أَتَيْنَ الْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ ثُمَّ يَطْوِي الْأَرْضِينَ بِشِمَالِهِ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ أَنَا الْمَلِكُ أَتَيْنَ الْجَبَّارُونَ أَتَيْنَ الْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ (صحيح مسلم)

“On the day of Standing, Allah will fold the heavens and them take them by the right Hand and proclaim: ‘I am the King. Where

are the tyrants?’ Then He will fold the earths in his left Hand and say, ‘I am the King, where are the kings of the earth? Where are the tyrants? Where are the arrogant ones?’” (Ibn Kathir).

Majid adds: “(It is on the Day of Judgment) when His sovereignty shall be more evident than ever, and manifest even to the worse scoffers. The verse completely repudiates the Christian doctrine that Christ, not God, would be judge: ‘For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son’ John 5:22”.

To mention the Day of Judgment after the attributes *Al Rahman* and *Al Rahim* is perhaps to remind man that although Allah is Kind and Merciful, He has also to be just with all of His creations. Accordingly, He has appointed a Day when everyone will have to recompense for the wrongs he committed to others and draw retribution for the wrongs he suffered at the hands of others (Au.).

13. “‘*Ibadah*” in Arabic is any act that suggests extensive humility and self abasement (Sabuni). Accordingly, tariq mu`abbad is that path which

[5] Guide us¹⁵ unto the straight path,¹⁶

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٥﴾

is well trodden, and *ba'eer mu'abbad* is a tamed camel.

In Islamic terminology it signifies deep feelings of love, humility, and fear. The meaning of the verse therefore is: 'We worship none but You, and place our trust in none but You.' The whole of the religion of Islam revolves around these two principles, the former negates any association with Allah (*shirk*) while the latter signifies trust and dependence on none other than Him (Ibn Kathir).

14. The meaning attributed to Ibn 'Abbas however is that 'We worship none but You, and seek Your help alone in the execution of our acts of obedience as well as in all our other activities' (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn al-Qayyim says that the first half of the verse is related to the *uluhiyyah* aspect of Allah (*swt*) while the second to the *rububiyyah* aspect. He defines "the best act of worship" at any particular moment as that activity which aims at pleasing Allah (*swt*) and is the precise demand of the moment. It can be jihad, Prayers, attending to guests ... it can be anything, depending on the circumstances in which one finds himself.

Going back to the verse we can also say that it warns both of overt as well as covert association (*shirk*) with Allah. The first part: "We worship none but You," negates open association (*shirk al jaliyy*) such as to ascribe partners to Allah's Person; while the second: "We seek Your help," negates any secret association (*shirk al khafiyy*), such as to imagine that others also have a say in the affairs of the world (Au.).

The use of plural forms in the verbs in this verse and in the following is suggestive of the fact that even if a *Muslim* is individually engaged in the acts of worship, he remains strongly tied to the bonds of the community (Majidi).

15. After the praise and promise comes the supplication: "Guide us to the Straight Path." What is the meaning of the words 'Guide us' here, when said by those who already believe? It is: "Grant us steadfastness" (Ibn Jarir). A *Muslim* is, at all times and in all situations, in need of Allah's help in remaining steadfast on the Path of Allah (*swt*), in firmly establishing himself on it and in continuing with determination (Ibn Kathir).

It includes an understanding (*ma'rifah*) of the Path and perseverance in it, since the two are fruits of Allah's guidance, His attention and His kindness (Sayyid).

Ihdina has much wider significance than 'showing the way.' What the supplicant is asking for is not merely that the way be pointed out or verbally indicated to him, but that he may be, by the Divine grace, actually led on to his goal, the Guide, as if, accompanying the guided and leading him on and on' (Majid).

Ibn Qayyim adds: "*Hidayah* has another function: It is to be led to Paradise on the Day of Judgment."

In other words, it is *tawfiq* (divine inducement, or inclination to submit oneself to a greater degree and depth, and grant of power to do that), which is sought along with the delineation of the path that will finally lead to Paradise. It can be added that as a rule, when a man follows up with a good deed after the previous one, it is a sign that he has been granted *tawfeeq*, and (Thanwi, elsewhere), that the previous one was accepted by Allah.

Hidayah:

Imām Raghīb al Asfahani has defined the term well in his '*Mufradat al Qur'ān*.' It can be rendered in modern terms in the following manner: There are four kinds and levels of guidance. One which has been given to all the creations of Allah: the inanimate objects (such as the mountains, rivers, stars, galaxies, atoms, radio waves, physical laws, etc.: Au.), beings incapable of reasoning (such as the animals, viruses, plants, organic matter, etc.), and the rational beings such as mankind and the jinn. All these obey Allah (*swt*) by doing what fulfills the purpose of their creation, following the laws to which they are bound, and (in the case of the living) following the instinct they have been given to preserve and multiply. In this sense they are all on a *Hidayah*, although it is a low level of *Hidayah*. The Qur'ān says (87: 1 3):

سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى وَالَّذِي
قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى

"Magnify the Name of your Lord the Most High, who created and shaped. He who proportioned and then 'guided.'"

At another place it said (20: 49, 50):

قَالَ فَمَنْ رَبُّكُمَا يَا مُوسَى . قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى

"(Fir`awn said), 'Who is the Lord of you two, O Musa?' He replied, 'Our Lord is the one who created everything and then guided it.'"

In both the above examples it is the first level and basic degree of guidance that has been alluded to: a guidance that no one and nothing misses.

The second kind of guidance is that which rational beings (mankind and jinn) are specially given through the Prophets in the form of the Revelations they bring from Allah (*swt*). Some accept this guidance, while others do not, since in this case there is no compulsion. However, if they reject it, they are not on *Hidayah* of this second kind, though, obviously, they remain living by, and following the basic level of guidance.

The third kind is that which can be described as the willingness to travel up the path, and the creation by Allah (*swt*) of the "means" that make it easy to act and live by His guidance. It is also known as *tawfiq*. It is obtained by accepting the guidance sent by Allah (*swt*) through the Prophets and making an effort to live by its dictates. The more one does that, the more of *tawfiq* does he or

she draw, with no end to the spiritual development. Conversely, the less one responds to the Call, the less *tawfiq* one receives. Faith (the second level of guidance) is the minimum requirement for drawing *tawfiq*. It is this kind of guidance or *tawfiq* that is meant in the following verses (47: 17):

وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَآتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ

"Those who are guided aright, He increases their 'guidance' and gives them their piety."

And (29: 69):

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

"Those who struggle in Our cause, surely We shall 'guide' them to Our ways."

This third kind of guidance has no limits. Each 'state' leads to the next and a higher one. It is in this sense that the Prophet (*saws*), who was himself a guide for others, was promised further guidance on the occasion of the fall of Makkah. The revelation that came down on that occasion said (48: 1-2):

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا . لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُسِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا

"Surely We have given you a manifest victory, that Allah may forgive you

your former and your later faults, and complete His blessing upon you and 'guide' you on to a straight path."

But if the guidance sent by Allah through His prophets, revelations, or through other guided men is rejected, then there can be no further guidance. That is, a jump from the first to the third levels of guidance is ruled out. The Qur'an says (64: 11):

وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ

"Whoever believed in Allah, He will 'guide' his heart."

It is also said at several places (2: 64),

وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

"Allah does not guide an unbelieving people."

Finally, the fourth kind of *Hidayah* is the one by which man will be ushered into Paradise. Allah said (7: 43),

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غَلٍّ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأُنْهَارُ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا

"And We would have removed whatever was there in their hearts of ill-feeling - springs flowing beneath them - and they will say, 'Praise to Allah who guided us to this.'"

Quote from Raghīb ends here.

16. "*Sirat al Mustaqim*": The consensus of the scholars is that it is "that straight path which has no twists

and bends in it" (Ibn Jarir). But there are various opinions about its exact significance here, although all opinions lead to the same meaning. 'Ali (ra) reported that the Prophet (saws) said, "it is the Qur'an" alluding to this verse. Ibn 'Abbas said it is "Islam." Abu al 'Aliyyah said that it is "(the ways of) the Prophet and his two companions, Abu Bakr and 'Umar" (Ibn Jarir). Mujahid said it is "the truth" (Ibn Kathir). Ibn Jarir sums up and says: "I believe it means, 'Help us to be steadfast with what is acceptable to You (O Allah), and motivate us to come up (whether they be words or deeds) with what You motivated those whom You favored before us.' Whoever is induced by Allah to do what He guided His favored ones to do, such as the Prophets, the '*Siddiqun*', the martyrs, and the righteous, is the guided one."

In a *hadith* reported by Al Nawwas b. Sam'an the Prophet illustrated 'the Straight Path' in the following manner:

عَنْ النَّوَّاسِ بْنِ سَمْعَانَ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا وَعَلَى جَنْبَيْهِ الصِّرَاطِ سُورَانِ فِيهِمَا أَبْوَابٌ مُفْتَتَحَتَا وَعَلَى الْأَبْوَابِ سُتُورٌ مُرْخَاةٌ وَعَلَى بَابِ الصِّرَاطِ دَاعٍ يَقُولُ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ادْخُلُوا الصِّرَاطَ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا وَدَاعٍ يَدْعُو مِنْ جَوْفِ الصِّرَاطِ فَإِذَا أَرَادَ يَفْتَحُ شَيْئًا مِنْ تِلْكَ الْأَبْوَابِ قَالَ وَيْحَكَ لَا تَفْتَحْهُ

[6] *The path of those You have favored,*¹⁷

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴿٦﴾

فَإِنَّكَ إِن تَفْتَحْهُ تَلِجُهُ وَالصِّرَاطُ الْإِسْلَامُ وَالسُّورَانِ
حُدُودُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَالْأَبْوَابُ الْمُفْتَحَةُ مَحَارِمُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى
وَذَلِكَ الدَّاعِي عَلَى رَأْسِ الصِّرَاطِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ
وَالدَّاعِي فَوْقَ الصِّرَاطِ وَاعِظُ اللَّهِ فِي قَلْبِ كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ
(مسند أحمد)

“Allah has drawn a simile: A straight path with walls on both sides. Both walls have open doors with curtains hanging over them. At the entrance to the path is a caller, saying, ‘People! Come straight along this path all of you and do not deviate.’ At the other end of the path is another caller. Whenever a man tries to open any one of the doors, he cries out, ‘Woe unto you man! Do not open that door. You will be lured into it and become obstinate.’

“The path is Islam. The walls are the lines delineating the lawful and the unlawful. The open doors are prohibitions of Allah. The caller at the entrance to the path is Allah’s Book. And the one calling out at the other end of the path is Allah’s admonisher that resides in every believer’s heart” (Ibn Kathir on the Authority of Ahmed, Tirmidhi and Nasa’i).

17. This qualifies the path that was sought earlier. And those who have been favored by Allah (*swt*) are the ones mentioned in (4: 69):


وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ
وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا

“Whoever obeyed Allah (*swt*) and His Messenger, will be in the company of those that Allah favored: the Prophets, the Truthful, martyrs and the righteous. And a good company they are.”

The *siddiqun* of the above verse have been identified as those who are next only to the Prophets in righteousness and elevation, who remain absolutely true to their faith in every situation and on all occasions.

Referring to this verse Ibn Jarir makes another point worth noting. He says, “In this verse is the clear evidence that the obedience that the faithful demonstrate, is not their own achievement. Rather, it is by Allah’s leave, and the *tawfeeq* granted.”

Majid has another point to state: “By qualifying the straight path in the manner done here it is being hinted that the ‘path’ is not a hypothetical, imaginary or an ideal one. Rather

[7] Not of those who earned Your anger, nor of  وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ those who lost the way.¹⁸ (Amin)¹⁹

it is a real and tangible one: one on which people have walked before and have met with success.”

Thanwi draws attention to yet another possibility: A subtle hint is hidden in the words to the effect that it is essential to seek the company of those who have been favored by Allah. Mere study of books might not be enough.

The first half of this statement corroborates the stance of Shah Waliyyullah as in his *Izaalatu al Khifa'* (vol.1) Au.

Ibn Qayyim makes his usual outstanding remark. He writes: “Since the one who is seeking the straight path is asking for a path from which many drop out, and since man loves company and fears loneliness, Allah (*swt*), while pointing out the path, has also indicated the company that he may keep. That company is no less than that of the Prophets, the Truthful, the martyrs and the righteous. And no ordinary people are these, but such as those whom Allah (*swt*) has favored. The company may be few in numbers but is great in worth as against the drop outs who

might be great in numbers but are of little worth.”

18. If the previous verse qualified the “path” in positive terms, this last verse does it in negative terms. It is not the path of those who incurred anger, nor those who lost it. Who are they? The general consensus is that the allusion is to the Jews and Christians. The Qur’ān says about the Jews (5: 60):

مَنْ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَعَظِبَ عَلَيْهِ

“He whom Allah cursed and with whom He is wroth.”

In another place it says about them (60: 13):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ

“Believers. Do not befriend a people with whom Allah is angry.”

About the Christians the Qur’ān says (5: 77):

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ

“Tell them (O Muhammad), ‘O people of the Book, stress not in your religion other than the truth and follow not the caprices of a people before you (i.e. the early Trinitarians) who erred before

and led many astray, and erred from the right way.'"

The same explanation has come down from the Prophet (*saws*).

روي عن عدي بن حاتم أنه قال: سألت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن قوله تعالى: {غير المغضوب عليهم} قال: هم اليهود {ولا الضالين} قال: النصارى (رواه أحمد والترمذي من طرق وله ألفاظ كثيرة)

‘Adiyy b. Hatim said: I asked the Prophet (*saws*), about “*those who earned Allah’s anger*.” He replied: “It is the Jews.” And what about, “*those who went astray*?” He replied, “They are the Christians” (Ibn Kathir).

Majid adds: “It is a timid philosophy that hesitates to hate and condemn the evil and the evildoer in the strongest terms.”

The strong condemnation herewith is nothing new for the Jews. The New Testament records Jesus (*asws*) addressing them in words: “O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things.”

Ibn al Qayyim again has some useful notes. He writes: “With respect to the knowledge of the Truth and deeds in its light, people can be divided into three categories: the ‘favored ones’ (*mun`am `alayhim*), those

‘who incurred anger’ (*al-maghhdubi `alayhim*), and the ‘misguided ones’ (*dallin*). A man has either knowledge of the Truth, or he does not. Further, if he has the knowledge, either he lives by its demands or he does not. Thus you can have only three kinds of people and no more.

“Now, he who has the knowledge and lives by its demands is the ‘favored’ one. He is the one who purifies his self (ego) with useful knowledge and righteous deeds. He will prosper (91:9): ‘*Prosperous is he who purifies it.*’ In contrast, he who has knowledge but follows his base desires is the one ‘who earned the anger,’ while he who is ignorant of the Truth altogether (since he lost it), is the ‘misguided’ one.

“It might also be noted that, ‘those who earned the anger’ are ‘the misguided ones’ too, as ‘the misguided ones’ are also those ‘who earned the anger.’ Both ‘earned the anger’ and both are ‘misguided ones.’ But the ones who refused to live by the guidance after they have received it are more deserving of anger than those who received it and then lost it. Hence the term ‘those who earned the anger’ has been used for the Jews, and the terms ‘misguided ones’ for the Christians.”

19. “*‘amin*” means, “Accept it O Lord.” It is reported of the Prophet (*saws*) through Abu Hurayrah (*ra*), that whenever he reached the last verse of *surah al Fatihah* in the Prayers, he said “*‘amin*” in a voice that could be heard by those in the first row (Ibn Kathir on the Authority of Abu Da’ud and Ibn Majah). The latter adds the words, “and the mosque would reverberate with the sound” (of those in the congregation) - Sabuni.

Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) also narrates a *hadith al qudsi* in which the Prophet said:

”قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: قَسَمْتُ الصَّلَاةَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي نِصْفَيْنِ. وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ. فَإِذَا قَالَ الْعَبْدُ: { الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ } قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: حَمِدَنِي عَبْدِي. وَإِذَا قَالَ: { الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ } قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: أَثْنَيْتُ عَلَيَّ عَبْدِي. وَإِذَا قَالَ: { مَالِكِ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ } قَالَ: حَمِدَنِي عَبْدِي (وَقَالَ مَرَّةً: قَوْضَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي) فَإِذَا قَالَ: { إِيَّاكَ تَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ }. قَالَ: هَذَا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ. فَإِذَا قَالَ: { اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ } قَالَ: هَذَا لِعَبْدِي وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ“.

“Allah (*swt*) says: ‘I have divided the Prayers (*salah*) between Myself and My slave half and half; And My slave shall have what he asked. When he says:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Allah says, ‘My slave has praised Me.’ When he says:

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

Allah says, ‘My slave has Auded Me.’ When he says:

مَالِكِ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ

Allah says, ‘My slave has glorified Me.’ Then, when he says:

إِيَّاكَ تَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

Allah says, ‘This is between Me and My slave (i.e., My slave is making a promise. If he keeps it, the reward will be his). And for My slave is what he asked for.’ So that when the man says:

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

Allah says, ‘This is for My slave, and for My slave is what he asked for’” (*Muslim*)."

Tafsir Majidi draws a comparison of this chapter with the Christians' Lord's Prayer:

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

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

*Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive
our debtors.
And lead us not in our temptation, but
deliver us from evil: For thine is the*

*kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever. Amen (Matthew 6: 8 13).*

The emphasis in the supplication above is, it should be obvious, on the daily bread.

Surah 2

Al-Baqarah

(The Cow)

Madinan¹

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND, THE COMPAS-
SIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Merits of the Surah

This is very important chapter of Qur'an. The Prophet said:

عن سهل بن سعد رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "إِنَّ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَنَامًا، وَإِنَّ سَنَامَ الْقُرْآنِ الْبَقَرَةُ، وَإِنْ مِنْ قَرَأَهَا فِي بَيْتِهِ لَيْلَةً لَمْ يَدْخُلْهُ الشَّيْطَانُ ثَلَاثَ لَيَالٍ" (رواه الطبراني وابن حبان وابن مردويه)

"Everything has its summit. The summit of the Qur'an is *Al-Baqarah*. Satan does not enter for three nights the house in which it is recited in a night" (Ibn Kathir, from Tabarani and others).

And by (entry of Satan) the allusion is to the non-effectiveness of his prompting (Qurtubi from Abu Hatim al-Busti).

Another report in Muslim Tirmidhi, Nasa'i and others states that the Prophet (*saws*) said:

لَا تَجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ مَقَابِرَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْفُرُ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ الَّذِي تُقْرَأُ فِيهِ سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ

"Do not turn your homes into grave-yards. Satan flees from a house in which *Al-Baqarah* is recited."

In another *hadith* preserved by Imām Muslim, the Prophet is reported to have said:

عن أبي أمامة الباهلي قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ اقْرَءُوا الْقُرْآنَ فَإِنَّهُ بَأْنِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ شَفِيعًا لِأَصْحَابِهِ اقْرَءُوا الزُّهْرَاوَيْنِ الْبَقَرَةَ وَسُورَةَ آلِ عِمْرَانَ فَإِنَّهُمَا تَأْتِيَانِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كَأَنَّهُمَا عَمَامَتَانِ أَوْ كَأَنَّهُمَا غَيَابَتَانِ أَوْ كَأَنَّهُمَا فِرْقَانِ مِنْ طَيْرٍ صَوَافٍ تُحَاجَّانِ عَنْ أَصْحَابِهِمَا اقْرَءُوا سُورَةَ الْبَقَرَةِ فَإِنَّ أَخَذَهَا بَرَكَةٌ وَتَرَكَهَا حَسْرَةٌ وَلَا تَسْتَطِيعُهَا الْبُطْلَةُ (قَالَ مُعَاوِيَةُ بَلَغَنِي أَنَّ الْبُطْلَةَ السَّحَرَةُ) - صحيح مسلم

"Read the Qur'an, for it will intercede for its companions. Read the two lights (*Al-Baqarah* and *Al-Imran*), for on the day of Judgment they will come in the form

[1] Alif. Lam. Mim.²

of two umbrellas, or like the two flocks of birds in rows arguing in favor of those who used to recite the two.” Then he added: “Read *Al-Baqarah*. I recitation brings blessing, its abandoning regrets, and magicians have no power over it.”

On an occasion, when the Prophet (*saws*) had to appoint a leader over a group of new-Muslims preparing, after their initiation at Madinah, to go back to their dwellings, he asked then to read out to him what they had memorized of the Qur’ān. A lad, who was the youngest of the group, told him: “I know so much of the Qur’ān, and, in addition, *surah Al-Baqarah*.” The Prophet exclaimed: “Do you know *surah Al-Baqarah*?” The lad said, “Yes, I do”. The Prophet said: “Then, you will be their leader” (Ibn Kathir from Tirmidhi, Nasa’i and Ibn Majah).

Qurtubi reports from Ibn Abdul Barr’s “*Al-Isti’aab*” that when, ‘Umar asked Labid, the famous pre-Islamic poet who had embraced Islam, to recite for him some of his poetry, Labid began to recite *Al-Baqarah*. “This is not what I asked you,” ‘Umar remonstrated. Labid replied: “Well,

I have given up composing poetry after Allah gave me *Al-Baqarah* and *Al-‘Imrān*.” The reply pleased ‘Umar so much that he increased his state-allowance.

1. See *surah al Fatihah*, note 3, for explanation.

2. Most of the scholars are of the opinion that the exact meaning of these letter symbols *Alif. Lam. Mim*, and others of their kind are not known. They occur at the beginning of some chapters and are known as *huruf al muqatta’at* (حُرُوفُ الْمُقَطَّعَاتِ). Abu Bakr (*ra*) is reported to have said: “Every Book has its mysteries. The mystery of the Qur’ān is at the beginning of its chapters” (Alusi).

That, however, has not prevented some scholars from speculating. The most widely quoted opinion is based on two sets of facts: firstly, all the words of the Arabic language are, in the root (*masdar*), composed of one to five letters, rarely more than five. These *muqatta’aat* are also always composed of one, two, three, four or five letters. Secondly, all the chapters beginning with these *huruf al muqatta’aat* begin with a direct or oblique reference to divine revelation (Asad, Appendix II). The conclusion

[2] This is the Book³ wherein is no doubt,⁴ a *هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ* Guidance⁵ for the godfearing.⁶



is that the *muqatta`at* are meant to illustrate the wondrous nature of the Qur`ānic revelation, which, although composed of the very sounds and letters of ordinary human speech, is yet inimitable.

Whatever the meaning, it is undeniable that these letter symbols draw the attention of the inattentive listener. When anyone who knows Arabic, hears these words recited by a *qari* (reciter), he is forced to lend his ear eagerly to know what will follow by way of explanation. Involuntarily, he becomes more attentive, and the first few verses that follow assault him in his complete unawareness, quickly penetrating his mind before his mind realizes that he has unconsciously submitted himself to their influence, and starts erecting barricades. But, until then, some message would have penetrated his mind (based on Qutrub's opinion (a language expert) as quoted by Razi and accepted by him as the preferred meaning).

3. That is, "this Book" is "the Book," par excellence, in the right and fullest sense of the word. The rest of what we know as books written by

humans fall short of the definition of "the Book," being inexact, inauthentic, hypothetical, and unreliable in their content. They are books only in the very general and loose sense of the word.

"The Qur`ān thus at its very beginning declares itself to be a written, not an oral, Revelation, passing only from mouth to mouth for generations. It is a 'Book' essentially, and not by accident. Unlike the 'sacred literatures' of the other religions, it is a single Book from the very start, and not a collection or a literature grown and developed and composed at different periods by different hands reflecting the history of their times" (Majid).

It is also the most widely read book in the world, despite the fact, as someone put it, that a book gets old in 5 years time (Au.).

4. The Book itself clears all doubts about it being from anyone other than Allah. Some say (Ibn Kathir), that what's meant is: "Do not doubt that it is Allah's revelation."

The phrase can also be translated as, "The book wherein there is no

doubt,” giving the meaning, “This is the Book in which nothing is doubtful but everything absolutely true and strictly accurate, not changeable like human knowledge” (Majid).

5. That is, a Book that guides individuals as well as nations in all the affairs of their lives, paves the way for them to eternal bliss in the Hereafter, and draws them nearer to Allah and His *rida*. This is the main function of the Book. Guidance therefore is what a reader should look for when he reads it.

Also see *Raghib*’s discussion of the term *hidayah* under note 14 of *al Fatiha*.

Shanqiti writes: *Hudan* in this verse has been used in the sense of *tawfiq* (or divine inducement to “accept” the truth and the power to do as one intends: Au.), and not merely in the commonly understood sense of making the truth distinct (from falsehood).

Majid adds from Muhammad `Ali: “(It is) not a text Book of chronology or of physical sciences, but a Guidance, showing the right way to right beliefs and right conduct. ‘Not a book meant to be read as most Europeans read it to day sitting comfortably in an arm chair with the critical

faculties especially stimulated, ready to carp and cavil on the least provocation.”

It is not a Book to be read for the sake of blessings alone, as most Muslims do today. Although there is nothing wrong in doing that. In fact, that is commendable. But that surely is not the reason of its revelation. That is not how the Companions of the Prophet, or those who followed them, treated the Book. They read it in order to structure their entire life on lines delineated by it. Whether the matter was trivial or serious, simple or complex, personal or national, they looked into this Book for guidance. It is reported of a Companion that he said that if he lost his camel’s halter, he would look for it in the Qur’ān.

“It is a book that guides:” A simple truth in which every Muslim thinks he believes, but few seem to be able to differentiate, and fewer realize the contradiction arising out of their efforts to seek guidance from other sources such as: religious writings, sayings of saintly persons or ideas of influential thinkers. The constant effort should be to seek guidance and inspiration from this Book, and its supplementary, the *Sunnah*, only seeking some help in its understand-

ing from the “other sources.” Further, it should not be forgotten that these “other sources” can help only to the extent that they contain the “sources proper”: i.e. the Qur’ān and the *Sunnah*. This means that it is necessary that they be subjected to hard scrutiny before their help is sought and accepted (Au.).

6. *Taqwa* is an oft occurring and very important concept of the Qur’ān. We shall discuss its various aspects at various points. Here we shall quote a few definitions from Ibn Kathir.

Taqwa

Ibn ‘Abbas says: “Godfearing are those who do not adulterate their faith (with *shirk*), and are obedient to Allah at all times.” Hasan al Busri has said: “(It is those) who refrain from all that has been forbidden and fulfill all that they have been commanded.” Qatadah says the verses following it define it. And a *hadith* says: “A man does not become one of the *muttaqin* until he gives up that which is lawful in fear of (of stepping into) that which is unlawful” (Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah).

When asked by ‘Umar, Ubayy b. Ka’b illustrated this concept in the following manner. “Have you ever been through a path covered by

thorny bushes?” he asked. “Yes,” said ‘Umar. “How did you conduct yourself?” Ka’b asked him. “Well,” ‘Umar said, “I gathered my clothes and maneuvered myself clear of them.” K’ab said: “That is *taqwa*.” (That is, to maneuver oneself clear of sins).

Taqwa however has various levels and functions. Accordingly, it can be variously defined depending upon its several levels and functions. For instance, another definition of Ibn ‘Abbas as reported by Tabari is: “Those who are (always) on their guard, fearing the punishment of Allah (which may befall them), if they neglect what they know to be His guidance: and are hopeful of winning His Mercy through affirmation of the truth that He has revealed.”

This seems to be another way of saying that *taqwa* is a state of hope and fear, so that, obviously, the more intense the feeling, the more *muttaqi* the person becomes.

The Qur’ān states that it is the source of guidance for the *muttaqin*. Does that mean that others cannot be guided? The answer is, ‘Yes, those who do not have *taqwa* in any measure will not be guided.’ It is the pre requisite for drawing any guidance from the Qur’ān, as its opposites pride, arro-

[3] Those, who believe⁷ in the unknown,⁸ offer⁹ the Prayer (diligently and spiritedly),¹⁰ and spend of what We have given them.¹¹

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ
وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾

gance, self conceit etc. disqualify a person from obtaining guidance.

7. The “*imān*” that is required of a Muslim stands for “Attestation (of the faith in the heart), its utterance (with the tongue), and deeds (concordant with it). Further, it increases and decreases” (Ibn Kathir). It can also be differently put and said that, “*Imān* is faith and utterance. Deeds affirm or negate (what one claims as one’s belief).” Zuhri is reported by Tabari as saying that *imān* is nothing but *Din*.

As for the meaning of the term “*those who believe*,” Tabari reports Ibn ‘Abbas as of opinion: “Those who attest,” (i.e. *tasdiq* as opposed to *takdhib*, denial).

8. In Islamic terminology, the unknown (*Al ghayb*) is anything that human reason cannot lead to and the knowledge of which has come to us through the Prophet, such as, the signs of the Hour, the punishment in the grave, the details of the Questioning, the Bridge (*Sirat*), the Scales (*al-Meezan*), the Heaven and Hell (Qurtubi). ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud’s

definition, as stated in Ibn Kathir, is also very close to this.

Al ghayb

Asad states: “In modern terminology *Al ghayb* is used in the Qur’ān to denote all those sectors or phases of reality which lie beyond the range of human perception and cannot, therefore, be proved or disproved by scientific observation or even adequately comprised within the accepted categories of speculative thought: as, for instance, the existence of God, and of a definite purpose underlying the universe, life after death, the real nature of time, the existence of spiritual forces and their inter actions, and so forth. Only a person who is convinced that the ultimate reality comprises far more than our observable environment can attain to belief in God and, thus, to a belief that life has meaning and purpose. By pointing out that it is ‘a guidance for those who believe in the existence of that which is beyond human perception,’ the Qur’ān says, in effect, that it will of necessity remain a closed book to all those minds that cannot accept this fundamental premise.”

Ibn Kathir has the following to state: Once in the presence of `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (*ra*) people were talking about the eminence and superiority of the Companions of the Prophet (*saws*) over the rest of the *ummah*. That status they rightly deserved (because of their great deeds in Islam, such as), being the first to believe in the Prophet. At that point Ibn Mas`ud interjected, saying: “You see, the fact is that the contemporaries of the Prophet saw the truth clearly, (hence no wonder that they believed in him). But, by Him besides whom there is no God, no one has a better faith than he who believed in the unknown.” Then Ibn Mas`ud recited verses 3, 4 and 5 of this chapter.

Ibn Kathir also adds the following: The *hadith* of Abu Muhayriz, recorded by Ahmad, conveys the same meaning as Ibn Mas`ud tried to express.

عَنْ أَبِي مُحَيْرِيزٍ ، قَالَ : قُلْتُ لِأَبِي جُمُعَةَ حَدَّثَنَا حَدِيثًا سَمِعْتُهُ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، فَقَالَ : نَعَمْ أُحَدِّثُكُمْ حَدِيثًا جَيِّدًا ، تَعَدُّنَا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَمَعَنَا أَبُو عُبَيْدَةَ بْنُ الْجَرَّاحِ ، فَقَالَ : يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، أَحَدٌ خَيْرٌ مِنَّا أَمَّا بِكَ وَجَاهِدْنَا مَعَكَ ؟ قَالَ : ” قَوْمٌ يَجِئُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِكُمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِي وَلَمْ يَرَوْني . ”

Ibn Muhayriz said: “I said to Abu Jumu`ah, ‘Tell us something that you (personally) heard from the

Prophet.’ He said, ‘I shall, and a good one!’ Then he said: ‘Once we lunched with the Prophet. Abu `Ubaydah b. al Jarrah was with us. He asked the Prophet: ‘O Messenger of Allah, can there be anyone better than us who believed in you and fought with you?’ The Prophet replied: ‘Yes, people after you who will believe in me even though they would not have seen me.’”

Ibn Kathir also relates Saleh b. Jubayr as saying:

وفي رواية أخرى عن صالح بن جبير قال: قدم علينا أبو جمعة الأنصاري صاحب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ببيت المقدس يصلي فيه ومعنا يومئذ (رجاء بن حيوة) رضي الله عنه، فلما انصرف خرجنا نشيِّعه فلما أراد الإنصراف قال: إِنَّ لَكُمْ جائزةً وحَقًّا، أحدثكم بحديث سمعته من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قلنا: هات رحمك الله، قال: كنا مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم - ومعنا معاذ ابن جبل عاشر عشرة - فقلنا يا رسول الله: هل من قوم أعظم منا أجراً؟ آمنا بك واتبعناك، قال: ” ما يمنعكم من ذلك ورسول الله بين أظهركم يأتيكم بالوحي من السماء؟ بل قوم بعدكم يأتيهم كتاب من بين لوحين، يؤمنون به ويعملون بما فيه، أولئك أعظم منكم أجراً، أولئك أعظم منكم أجراً ” (رواه أبو بكر بن مردويه في تفسيره عن صالح بن جبير عن أبي جمعة).

“(We were in Jerusalem when) Abu Jumu`a al Ansari, the Prophet’s Companion, visited (the city) to offer prayers in *Bayt*

al Maqdis. Raja' b. Haywah was also with him. At the time of his departure we accompanied him for a short distance. When we had to part he said: "You have a right on me (that you have treated me well. In return) I will narrate to you a *hadith* that I heard directly from the Prophet." We said (with some excitement), "Do that please, may Allah enwrap you in His mercy." He said: "Well. Once we were with the Prophet. Mu'adh b. al Jabal, one of the Ten (given the good news of entry into Paradise) was also with us. We asked the Prophet: 'Will anyone be rewarded better than us, seeing that we believed in you and followed you?' The Prophet said: 'What could have prevented you from doing that when the Prophet of Allah is with you, and the revelations come down before you from the heavens? Indeed, a people will come after you who will receive the Book bound between two covers. They will believe in it and live by it. Theirs will be a reward greater than yours. Theirs will be a reward greater than yours.'"

Razi points out that the interpretation of the *Shi'ah* to the effect that

"*ghayb*" is the "awaited Mahdi" is totally unfounded.

9. Primarily, *salah* in Arabic means supplication. The word has been used in the following *hadith* in this sense:

إِذَا دُعِيَ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَى طَعَامٍ فَلْيُجِبْ، فَإِنْ كَانَ مُفْطِرًا فَلْيَأْكُلْ، وَإِنْ كَانَ صَائِمًا، فَلْيَدْعُ، وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ: «فَلْيُصَلِّ رَوَاهُ الطَّبْرَانِيُّ فِي الْكَبِيرِ وَرَجَالَهُ ثَقَاتٌ (مَجْمَعُ الزَّوَادِ وَمَنْبَعُ الْفَوَائِدِ)

"If one of you is invited to a meal, let him accept it. If he is not fasting, let him eat, but if he is fasting, (let him still go) and pray for (the host) barakah." Alusi

Ibn Jarir adds that whenever the Qur'an says *yuqimuna al salah*, it alludes to "the obligatory Prayers."

10. The iqamah of the *iqamah al salah* is popularly rendered into English as "to establish." But linguistically it is "to do a thing properly, efficiently, and in good spirit." According to Ibn 'Abbas, *Iqama al salah* is, "to do the deep bows (*ruku'*), prostration (*sujud*) and recitation (*tilawah*) well, and pay full attention in hope and anticipation (*khushu' wa iqbal*) Tabari.

It means to do it on time, preceded

by a thorough ablution, and doing well the bows, prostrations, etc. (Qatadah Ibn Kathir).

“It means to perform all of its various elements (*arkan*) in proper measure and to take care that none of its obligatory acts (*fara'id*), non obligatory acts (*sunan*), nor the rules of decorum (*adab*) suffer from any defect” (*Kashshaf*).

Although a Muslim is required to create those conditions in the society in which *salah* can be performed well, the term “*yuqimuna*” does not mean here the “establishment” in the sense of establishing a system, a state, or a religion, as the Urdu speaking people tend to understand. The emphasis in “*iqamat al salah*” is on the individual to do the *salah* well. It does not call for efforts to make others also do it (although otherwise an obligation), nor does it allude to the efforts toward creating the conditions in the society in which it can be performed well (Au.).

11. Spending “applies to all that may be of benefit to man, whether it be something concrete (like food, property, offspring, etc.) or abstract (like knowledge, piety, etc.)” Asad

Ibn ‘Abbas said that the verse is speaking of the obligatory *zakah*

(Ibn Jarir). However, Ibn Jarir is himself of the opinion that the term “spending” covers both the (obligatory) *zakah* as well as other forms of charity.

Ibn Kathir notes that Allah Most High invariably mentions *salah* and *zakah* together in the Qur’ān. This is because one is Allah’s due and the other the people’s. Further, *salah* includes every devotional act such as to declare Allah’s Oneness, His glory, His greatness, and supplications made to Him; as “spending” includes everything of benefit that one can do to others.

Alusi adds: Deeds are either the acts of the heart (*qalbiyyah*), the acts of the body (*qaalibiyyah*), or they are of monetary nature (*maliyyah*). The act of the utmost importance of the heart is faith (*imān*), that of the body is *salah*, and that of the monetary *zakah*. Their importance is in the same order, and therefore, here they have been mentioned in the same order; for faith is obligatory at all the times, *salah* most of the times, and *zakah* at some of the times (condensed).

Razi notes: Allah Most High first mentioned *taqwa* which is to give up all that is forbidden and then He mentioned the deeds. Now, the deeds emanate either from the heart

[4] And those, who believe in what has been revealed to you¹² (O Muhammad), and that which was revealed before you,¹³ and they believe in the Hereafter.¹⁴

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾

or from the body. The deed of the heart is to believe, while that of the body is *salah* and *zakah*. *Taqwa* has been mentioned first because the heart is like a tablet on which something can be engraved. The tablet therefore must be first erased (of old lines) before new lines of faith and deeds are drawn. Accordingly, *taqwa* precedes the deeds of the heart and the body.

12. That is, they believe in and attest as true, all that you have brought them (O Muhammad, whether they be of the nature of the news of the past nations, or of commands whether they come through the Qur'an or *hadith*) - Sabuni.

13. That is, they accept as true all that you have brought, as well as all that other prophets before you brought from their Lord without making a distinction between them and without contesting anything that they brought (Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn Kathir).

Thus, the Qur'an makes it clear that the sending down of the "guidance" by Allah is not entirely a new phenomenon in the history of mankind.

It started with the very first man on earth and continued up to Prophet Muhammad (*saws*), with whom it culminated. It is not enough therefore, for a believer of today to believe in the last Prophet alone. He is rather required to believe in the whole series sent by Allah (Majidi, abridged).

"...The religion of the Qur'an can be properly understood only against the background of the great monotheistic faiths which preceded it, and which, ... culminate and achieve their final formulation in the faith of Islam" (Asad).

14. That is, they believe in the Resurrection, the Heaven and Hell, the Reckoning and the Scales (Ibn 'Abbas: Tabari).

Yuqinun means they firmly believe in it, from the depth of their hearts and without nurturing any reservations or doubts.

Yaqin is the opposite of "doubt." Says *Raghib*: "*Yaqin* is an attribute which is one level above knowledge, understanding, appreciation, etc." And, according to *Taj al 'Arus*, "*Yaqin* is

[5] These are the ones who are on a Guidance (that is) from their Lord; and these are the ones that are successful.¹⁵

أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥﴾

[6] Surely¹⁶ those who have disbelieved,¹⁷ it is alike to them whether you warned them or did not warn them¹⁸ - they will not believe.¹⁹

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلَّذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦﴾

removal of all doubt” (Majid).

Majid also writes: “Not a mere feeling, or suspicion, or opinion, but firm, unshakable adherence of mind to the truth of the Hereafter... Conviction, in its fullness, is not an exercise of the intellect, but the assent and consent of the entire human personality the recognition of a truth with heart, mind and soul. The reaction set up by the belief in the Hereafter in the minds of humble believers is far stronger than that due to sensible perceptions.”

15. One opinion of Ibn `Abbas about “those who are successful” is that “they are the ones who attain what they seek and are delivered from the evil from which they flee” (Ibn Jarir).

Al muflihun: “There is not in the language of the Arabs any word more comprehensive in its significations of what is good in the present life and in the final state than *al falah*” (Lisan al `Arab, Majid).

16. Inna has been translated as “surely.” It could also be rendered as “verily” or “indeed.” But none of them carries the sense the original does, for inna has been used here to indicate the resolve of the unbelievers, or the state of the mind that is bent on denying the truth (Au.).

17. *Kufr* in Arabic stands for covering or concealing a thing.

Hence the “tiller” (57: 20) and the “night” are also known as *kafir* because one hides seeds in the earth and the other, everything under its darkness (Sabuni).

18. It does not mean that such a person should not be warned because, even if it is of no profit to them, it is of profit to those who warn (*Bayan and Ma`arif*).

19. That is, those who recognized the truth, knew it, understood it, but refused to acknowledge, rather worked against it. To such it is alike whether

[7] Allah has set a seal on their hearts,²⁰ and on their hearing; and on their eyes is a covering.²¹ For them is a mighty chastisement.²²

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى
أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ



you warn them or not. They will not believe. Theirs is a well considered decision, which they are not going to alter. They are confirmed unbelievers, the hard core rejecters (Au.).

According to Ibn `Abbas the verse came down describing the Jewish rabbis of Madinah, who, despite their recognition of the Prophet, decided to reject him (Ibn Jarir).

Although it cannot be said of anyone with certainty that he is a kafir, since faith is hidden deep in the hearts, those will have to be treated as *kuffar* who do not announce their faith in Islam.

Qurtubi writes: Although the verse is general in application, it is specific in the case of someone whose sentence of punishment has already been passed, and who is, in Allah's knowledge, of those who will die on disbelief.

Generally speaking, that person is a kafir who expresses disbelief in anything that is well established as part of the religion of Islam (*Ma`arif*). That is, anything that the Prophet spoke of, whether it be concerning some

act enjoined upon the Muslims, or simply an information such as concerning Heaven and Hell, and which has come to the Muslims through a report that cannot be doubted for its veracity, such as, a *hadith* of *mutawatir* status, then, its rejection is tantamount to *Kufr* (Au).

20. Majid writes, "Heart' in the Qur'an, as in the Bible, is the seat of all emotional, intellectual and volitional life, and the center of all moral and spiritual functions" (Majid).

21. Similar to the "reaction" to every "action" in the physical world, the sealing of the heart and hearing, and the covering of the eyes of the *kuffar*, is a result of their persistent disbelief after the truth became evident to them. In the words of Asad, it is, "... a reference to the natural law instituted by God, whereby a person who persistently adheres to false beliefs and refuses to listen to the voice of truth gradually loses the ability to perceive the truth, 'so that finally, as it were, a seal is set upon his heart' (*Raghib*). Since it is God who has instituted all laws of nature which, in their aggregate called *Sun-*

[8] And, among the people²³ are some who declare: 'We believe in Allah and in the Hereafter,' while they are not believers at all.²⁴

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨﴾

nat Allah ('the way of God') this 'sealing' is attributed to Him: but it is obviously a consequence of man's free choice and not an act of 'predestination.'"

Majid says : "All this is the natural and inevitable sequel to the rejecters' obstinate refusal to open their hearts to receive, their ears to hear, and their eyes to see the good and true, and is only ascribable to God, as all acts, as such, are ultimately bound to be ascribed to Him. It is those who will not believe that are condemned to judicial blindness which portends the more awful punishment of Hell."

A *hadith* of Ahmad and Ibn Majah says: "When a believer commits a sin it leaves a black mark on his heart. If he repents, gives up the sin, and seeks forgiveness, his heart is cleansed. But if he adds (sins), then the black marks add up until they cover the entire heart. This is the *raan* that Allah the Praiseworthy spoke of in verse (14: 83):

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

No indeed; but that which they have been earning has rusted their hearts."

In these words, the Prophet (*saws*) has informed us that when a man covers his heart entirely with sins, Allah seals it, so that there is neither a way for *imān* to enter, nor for *Kufr* to depart" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

22. It must not be imagined that since Allah has informed us about them that they will never embrace the truth, it means that it has been predetermined that way, and, therefore, they must be excused for their continued state of disbelief. Rather, it is similar to a doctor pronouncing about a man that he will not recover from an illness, because he is in such an advanced state of the disease. It cannot be said that the lack of recovery is because of the doctor's pronouncement. Rather, it is the fact of the man so fatally affected that evoked the doctor's pronouncement (Thanwi).

23. With reference to the use of the textual word, "the people"), Qurtubi writes that according to the *Sufiya*: "The people is a generic noun, and generic nouns are not employed to speak of the beloved of Allah (*awliya*'

Allah).'

24. These are the hypocrites. This kind cropped up with the Prophet's migration to Madinah. It was here, after thirteen hard years at Makkah, that by Allah's grace and mercy Islam gained a foothold, and the hearts of the local people were softened for it, who either embraced the message, or adopted a neutral position. Almost no heathen tribe of the city indulged as a whole in active antagonism. Quite early, in fact, the Muslims were able to pacify the surrounding pagan tribes also some through peace treaties and others with the show of strength and willingness to respond strongly, if provoked. As a result, there was sufficient peace and security in the city and its surroundings to allow the Muslims to carry out their religious duties with freedom. With stability achieved, Madinah was slowly developing into a religious state with the Prophet at its head, and Islam was beginning to emerge as a force to reckon with.

But there were some in Madinah who did not appreciate these developments. They were encouraged by the Jews. These were the elements of the pagan society that stood to lose something by the growth of Is-

lam; if not anything else, then, their personal influence and popularity. However, during the first few years it was not clear to them as to how the Madinans and the adjoining tribes would respond to the Islamic message, and whether the Makkans would tolerate the growth of a parallel state. It seemed very likely that a power struggle would ensue, but it was unclear as to who would emerge victorious: Islam or paganism. These disaffected elements therefore decided to play a safe game. They were to outwardly profess faith in Islam but try to undermine it secretly: until a clearer situation emerged (Au.).

Razi says: "These verses were revealed concerning the hypocrites from the people of the Book such as 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy b. Sallul, Mu'tab b. Qushayr and Judd b. Qays, who, when they met the faithful assured them of their own faith in Islam saying: 'We find that he (the Prophet) fits the description stated in our holy literature.'"

Hypocrisy

Ibn Kathir writes: After the first four verses of this chapter, which describe the believers, and the following two, which describe the unbelievers, Allah Most High now speaks of the hypocrites who profess Islam but conceal

disbelief. But, since their case is unclear and confusing to most people, He described them in greater detail speaking at length of the traits that are the signs of hypocrisy. He revealed the chapters *al Tawbah*, and *al Munafiqun* about them; while He also mentioned them in *al Noor*, as well as at many other places, all in order that a Muslim may shun the traits possessed by them, as well as avoid their company.

As for the definition of *nifāq* (hypocrisy), it is to manifest good while concealing evil. There are two kinds of it:

- a) Pertaining to belief (*i`tiqadi*): this kind will entail everlasting stay in Hell; and,
- b) Pertaining to deeds (*a`amali*) which is the most serious of the Major Sins (*akbar al kaba'ir*). This is because the deeds of a hypocrite contradict his utterances, and his internal state contradicts the external state.

It is in the Madinan chapters that their characteristics were described because there was no hypocrisy in Makkah. In fact, it was just the opposite there (i.e. people concealed faith and outwardly professed unbelief). Allah Most High described

them in detail so that the believers may not be deceived by their appearances, leading to the spread of corruption which would happen if they did not avoid their company, under the impression that they were believers like them. It is a matter of great evil that the corrupt should be allowed to pass as the pious.

Ibn Kathir's quote ends here.

As against this universally accepted definition of hypocrisy, a contemporary scholar has stated: "In this phase of development of the Islamic movement, the 'hypocrites', began to emerge. Although the first signs of hypocrisy had appeared during the last phase of the Prophet's life in Makkah, the nature of that hypocrisy was different. The kind of 'hypocrites' found then were those who, while recognizing the truth of Islam and claiming to believe in it, were not prepared to sacrifice their material interests, run the risk of severing the relationship which bound them to others, and who shrank from the persecution and trial which used to afflict all those who responded to the call of Truth."

This definition, which goes against the Qur'ān and *hadīth*, is applicable to those honorable souls whose faith and integrity have not been ques-

tioned by anyone before. Foremost among them, upon whom the new definition casts a doubt are `Abbas b. `Abd al Muttalib, the Prophet's uncle, `Ayyash b. Abi Rabi`a, Salamah ibn Hisham, Umm al Fadl, the mother of Ibn `Abbas) [Qurtubi], Junayd b. Subai` (according to Ibn Kathir Habib b. Siba`), a few others of the Prophet's own tribe Banu Hashim, as well as many others who concealed their faith at Makkah. The Qur`an says about those who had concealed their faith and remained in Makkah, (i.e., those who did not migrate to Madinah, right up to the sixth year after the Prophet's migration): "Had it not been for certain believing men and women whom you know not, lest you should trample them, and guilt fall on you on their account unwittingly (We would have permitted you to attack the Makkans) *Al Fath*: 25).

Thus, we see that the Qur`an calls them believers (*mu'minun*) and not hypocrites. Ibn Kathir's commentary on this particular verse is: Those are meant who were living among the Makkans but who concealed their faith from them for fear of persecution.

Moreover, it will be against the Qur`an to call anyone a hypocrite,

(of whatever kind), who conceals his faith for fear of hostilities, since the Qur`an has revealed to us without its censure in *surah Al Mu'min*, the story of a court official who concealed his faith from Fir`awn and his people.

In fact, far from alluding hypocrisy to them, it is the Prophet (*saws*) himself who had advised many at Makkah to conceal their faith. When Abu Dhar (*ra*) embraced Islam, the Prophet asked him to return to his tribe and remain with them concealing his faith until Islam commanded power. In case of `Ammar b. Yasir, the Prophet went even further and advised him to conceal faith and utter *Kufr*.

About `Abbas (*ra*) and others like him, there is a clear statement of the Prophet which confirms their faith. The Prophet said about `Abbas (*ra*) just before the start of the first battle of Islam at Badr: "I know about the people of Banu Hashim, as well as some others who have no quarrel with us. They have been forced into this battle. Therefore, if anyone encounters someone from Banu Hashim, let him not kill him. Whoever encounters Al Bakhtary b. Hisham, let him not kill him. Whoever encounters `Abbas b. `Abd al Muttalib, let him not kill him." Ac-

cordingly, when `Abbas was taken prisoner in the battle and brought before the Prophet, he protested at the ransom fixed for him. He said: "Messenger of Allah, you know that I have been a Muslim." The Prophet replied: "Allah knows the truth of the matter. If you are true in your word, Allah will reward you."

The Prophet did not reject `Abbas's claim to *imān*, saying, as he would have, (if the definition of the 'different nature of hypocrisy,' and its application to certain Makkans were to be correct), that `Abbas was not speaking the truth and that his efforts at concealing the faith nullified his claim to Islam. In fact, he confirmed that a man who concealed his faith was a 'Muslim', even if he chose to live among the enemies of Islam, by saying that Allah knew if `Abbas was true in his claim' and that if he was, he would be rewarded for his faith. Of course the Prophet knew him as a Muslim but without `Abbas's own acknowledgement, he would have been speaking on his behalf. True, Allah revealed a verse (4: 97) which reproaches those who did not migrate to Madinah, were forced into the battle at Badr, 'strengthening' as Ibn `Abbas has said, 'the ranks of the enemies of Islam' (Ibn Kathir), and were killed at the hands of the

Muslims although Qurtubi deduces from the way the verse has been phrased that they died as Muslims. In any case, the very next verse there clarifies that in situations where a person cannot migrate because of overwhelming difficulties, there is no sin upon him.

Sayyid Qutb rightly defends those who concealed their faith in Makkah. Commenting on the verse which was sent down when one of the Companions accompanying a detachment sent by the Prophet fell upon a man in the enemy territory, (and killed him despite the fact that he had greeted them with the Islamic greeting: Qurtubi); he writes: "Allah reminds the believers of the recent days of ignorance, of the rashness and frivolity that prevailed then. He reminds them of His grace by which He cleansed their hearts and guided them to loftier goals, so that they could not think of returning to battles and wars with loot and plunder as their intention, as was their wont in the days of ignorance. He impresses upon them His favor in that He prescribed for them the limits and bounds, and has given them a system (that organizes their affairs). So, let not the final verdict be influenced by the first impulses (of anger), as it used to be during the days of *jahili-*

yyah. The text also throws hints at the fact that they themselves were in the same state some time back concealing their faith from their enemies, on account of the fear and vulnerability, not making it known except when in peace with the Muslims. This man too, who was killed, used to conceal his faith from his people, but disclosed it to the Muslims by greeting them in the manner of Islamic greeting. Allah said,

كَذَلِكَ كُنتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ
[النساء : ٩٤]

"So were you aforetime, but Allah has been gracious to you."

Ibn Taymiyyah writes: There was no need for anyone to resort to hypocrisy in Makkah since the Muslims were weak there. On the contrary, there were people who concealed their faith but confessed to *imān* in their private talks. The scholars have said therefore, including Ahmad b. Hanbal, that there was no hypocrisy in Makkah. Hypocrisy appeared in Madinah. However, there was weakness of faith on the part of some people at Makkah, (which Allah termed as sickness (*marad*), as stated in a Makkan chapter (74: 31) which said:

وَلَا يَرْتَابَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَلَيَقُولَ

الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا
مَثَلًا

"(So that) no doubt may be left for the people of the Book, and the believers, and those in whose hearts is a disease and the unbelievers may say 'What did Allah intend by this example?'" (Tafsir al-Kabir).

It was necessary to point out the error in the definition because, on the one side, appearing as it does in a tafsir work, it might sound as having the sanction of Islam, while the fact is that no scholar of any repute is reported to be of the opinion that those in Makkah fitting the new definition were hypocrites. On the other hand, such insidious attacks are likely to create ill feeling for those who are the very criteria of faith. The Prophet has said in a well known *hadith* of Ibn Majah:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ افْتَرَقَتْ عَلَى إِحْدَى وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً. وَإِنَّ أُمَّتِي سَتَفْتَرُقُ عَلَى ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً. كُلُّهَا فِي النَّارِ، إِلَّا وَاحِدَةً. وَهِيَ الْجَمَاعَةُ.

"The Israelites divided themselves into seventy two sects. My ummah will divide itself into seventy three. All of them will be in Fire, except one." He was asked:

[9] They (would all but) deceive Allah²⁵ and the faithful²⁶. But they deceive not (anyone) but themselves²⁷: but they perceive not.

يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يُخَادِعُونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

[10] In their hearts is a disease²⁸. So Allah caused increase in their disease²⁹. For them is a painful chastisement³⁰, because they used to lie.

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

“Which one, O Apostle of Allah?” He said: “The mainstream Muslims” (Au.).

25. That is, they think that they will be able to hoodwink Allah as easily as they are able to hoodwink the faithful. Therefore, Allah Most High used the same words for reproaching them, “They deceive not but themselves” (Ibn Kathir).

In a *hadith* the Prophet (*saws*) is reported to have said:

لا تخادع الله فإنه من يخادع الله يخدعه الله ونفسه يخدع لو يشعر قالوا: يا رسول الله، وكيف يخادع الله؟ قال: تعمل بما أمرك الله به وتطلب به غيره

“Do not deceive Allah. He who deceives Allah is deceived by Him, and (in fact), deceives himself, only if he knew.” He was asked, “How can one deceive Allah?” He replied: “By submitting yourself to one of His commands while seeking to please someone else” (Qurtubi).

26. The mentioning of the ‘faithful’

along with the name of ‘Allah’ indicates that dealing with the beloved of Allah (ahl Allah) is like dealing with Allah Himself (Thanwi).

27. “Their mendacity will recoil upon themselves, both in this world and the Hereafter” (Majid).

28. The disease, according to Ibn ‘Abbas, is that of doubts and hypocrisy (Tabari).

There is an indication in this verse that the hearts also are prone to diseases, as the *Sufiya* say (Thanwi).

Yusuf Ali writes: “The disease tends to spread, like all evil. They are curable, but if they harden their hearts, they soon pass into the category of those who deliberately reject light.”

Jesus Christ, on whom be peace, also had his share of hypocrites to deal with. Addressing them he said: “Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel” (Matthew 23: 24). And, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are

like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness" (Ibid 23: 27) - Au.

29. This happened when against their wishful belief that Islam is a passing wind that will blow for a while and then be gone, and that its banner will only flutter for a brief spell and then it would be all quiet again, they witnessed growth in the power of Islam, and victory after victory coming its way. This increased their envy and hatred toward Islam and weakened their hearts, which became prone to diseases. It could also mean that as Allah revealed more of His guidance, they failed to profit from it, (because of their original disbelief), and thus their hearts only increased in sickness (Zamakhshari, condensed).

30. They deserve to be doubly punished, because, unlike the ordinary unbelievers who openly announce their disbelief, they try to deceive Allah on one hand and the believers on the other. They try to make the best of both the worlds as well as take advantage of both the believers as well as the non believers, through their unique position of being those trusted by both. Their punishment however has been delayed till the

Day of Judgment although they, being a dangerous element in the Muslim polity, deserve punishment in this life itself. This deferment of punishment at the hands of the believers is because of the doubt with regard to their faith. It is not possible for the believers to say for sure about any one of them, however manifest his hypocrisy, that true faith does not reside in his heart. They earn therefore, the benefit of doubt and are spared punishment in this world. In the Hereafter however they will receive punishment greater than the ordinary unbelievers.

The Prophet knew the hypocrites through revelation, and so did some of his Companions by their own judgment. But it was the fear of people alleging that the Prophet was killing his own men, which could adversely affect the cause of Islam, that restrained him from taking measures against them; although, on their part they were bold enough to even attempt at his life. In fact, he was restrained by Allah Himself. He said in a *hadith* reported by Bukhari and Muslim: "I have been ordered to fight the people, until they say, 'there is no god but Allah.' Once they say that, they save their blood and property from me, except for what they must pay as compensation (when

[11] When they are told, 'Spread not corruption in the land,'³¹ they say, '(Quite the opposite), it is we indeed (who are) improving the things.'³²

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا
إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١١﴾

they transgress others in an affair). (As for what they conceal in their hearts), Allah will hold them to account" (Au.).

Qurtubi writes: The scholars say that believers are of two kinds: one whom Allah loves and befriends, and the other whom He does not love and does not befriend. Indeed, He detests him and treats him as His enemy. He loves and befriends everyone about whom He knows he will die on faith. And He hates and is angry with everyone who He knows will die on disbelief not because of his present state, but because of the disbelief on which he will die. Again, the unbelievers are also of two kinds: one who will be punished at all events, and the other who will not be punished. He who will be punished is the one who died on disbelief. Allah detests him and is angry with him. In contrast, he who would not be punished is the one who died on good faith. Allah does not detest him nor is angry

with him, rather loves him and will befriend him. It is not right therefore to say that 'so and so a believer will be rewarded,' or, 'so and so an unbeliever will be punished.' Rather, both the statements should be made conditional to the situation at death. Accordingly, we say: Allah was not angry with 'Umar (the second caliph), even when he was a pagan, and was intending to reward him with Paradise, not because of his idol worship, but because of the belief on which he was going to die. And we also say that Allah was angry with Iblis even when he was worshipping Allah, because of the disbelief on which he was going to die.

31. Corruption in the earth is 'disbelief and un-Islamic living.' Abu al 'Aliyyah has commented: 'Do not disobey Allah. Whoever disobeyed Allah on earth, or enforced it (upon others), corrupted the lands. Proper development and improvement of the earth and its environment lies in obedience of Allah' (Ibn Kathir).

[12] Lo! They in fact are the corrupters, but they realize not.³³

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِن لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] When they are told, 'Believe as the people have believed'³⁴ (in sincerity),' they say, 'Shall we believe as the fools have believed?'³⁵ Truly, they are the foolish ones, but they realize not.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا كَمَا آمَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا آمَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَكِن لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

32. Ibn `Abbas has said: What they meant is, (from this unique position) we are working at reconciliation between the two groups: Muslims and the people of the Book (Ibn Kathir).

does not conform with that of the Companions (*Ma`arif*).

33. "Much mischief is caused (sometimes unwittingly) by people who think that they have a mission of peace, when they have not even a true perception of right and wrong. By their blind arrogance they depress the good and encourage the evil" (Yusuf Ali).

One possible reason why (the generic noun) the people has been used is to say that if there are any people worth calling people, it is the believers. The unbelievers, because of their disability to discern between the right and wrong, are like animals (*Kashshaf*).

34. By the textual term '*the people*' the allusion is to the Companions of the Prophet Ibn `Abbas and others (Ibn Kathir).

35. That is, when the hypocrites were told by the Muslims to believe in Allah, His angels, revelations, messengers, resurrection and reckoning, Heaven and Hell, and all that the rest of the believers were told to have faith in, and do as they were ordered by Allah and His Messenger, they said in reply, '*Shall we believe as the fools have believed?*' by which the allusion was to followers of the Prophet (Ibn Kathir).

This implies that the Companions are a criterion for all those who will follow them in Islam. They can measure their faith and deeds against those of the Companions... Merely praying with the Muslims, and paying *zakah*, and other such deeds, do not make a man Muslim if his faith

"Another instance of the hypocrites' muddled thinking, and queer morals: First they mistook vice for virtue (vide verse 11) and now they are

[14] When they come across the faithful, they assert, 'We (also) believe (like you have believed).' But when they are alone with their evil ones³⁶ they assure them, 'We are with you, we were only mocking.'

وَإِذَا لَفُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَى شَيَاطِينِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِؤُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] Allah (indeed) is mocking with them³⁷ (by) letting them wander on (blindly) in their insolence.

اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

mistaking virtue for vice" (Thanwi, Majid's tr.).

elsewhere (57: 13 15):

يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا انظُرُونَا نَقْتَبِسْ مِنْ نُورِكُمْ قِيلَ ارْجِعُوا وَرَاءَكُمْ فَالْتَمِسُوا نُورًا فَضُرِبَ بَيْنَهُم بِسُورٍ لَهُ بَابٌ بَاطِنُهُ فِيهِ الرَّحْمَةُ وَظَاهِرُهُ مِنْ قِبَلِهِ الْعَذَابُ (١٣) يَبَادُوتُهُمْ أَلَمْ تَكُنْ مَعَهُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى وَلَكِنَّكُمْ فَتَنْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتَرَبَّصْتُمْ وَارْتَبْتُمْ وَغَرَّتْكُمُ الْأَمَانِيُّ حَتَّى جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَغَرَّكُمْ بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ (١٤) فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْكُمْ فِدْيَةٌ وَلَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مَأْوَاكُمُ النَّارُ هِيَ مَوْلَاكُمْ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ [الحديد : ١٣ - ١٥]

36. Ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and others have said that it is the arch infidels, the leading hypocrites and others of their sort that have been alluded to (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Majid quotes from Lane: "*Shaytan* if not preceded by the definite article *al*, signifies 'Any that is excessively, or inordinately, proud or corrupt or unbelieving or rebellious, or that is insolent and audacious in pride and in acts of rebellion.'"

37. The words, "*Allah is mocking with them*," draw the following commentary from In Jarir: The question arises as to how exactly will Allah mock at them? The answer is, it will be done in the manner described

"On the day when the hypocrites, men and women, will say to those who had believed, 'Wait for us, so that we may borrow from your light!' It will be said, 'Go back behind you, and seek for a light.' But (as they attempt that), a wall will be placed between them with a door in the inward whereof is mercy, but the outward whereof is chastisement. They (who will remain outside) will call them (i.e. the believers), 'Were we not with you?' They will reply, 'Yes indeed; but you tempted yourselves, and you waited, and were in doubt; and

fancies deluded you, until Allah's commandment came. The Deluder (Satan) deluded you concerning Allah. Today no ransom shall be accepted from you, nor from those who disbelieved. Your refuge is the Fire, it is your companion (now); an evil homecoming!"

A second interpretation is that while employing the same expression, He has alluded to two different meanings. For example, He said at another place (4: 142):

إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ

'The hypocrites seek to deceive Allah, the while it is He who will be deceiving them', where, what is meant is that it is they who will reap the consequences of their deceptive behavior.

To take another example, Allah said (42: 40):

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِثْلُهَا

'The requital of evil is evil the like of it.' But we know that when a sin is committed against Allah, it is an evil, while when the requital comes from Him it is justice. Thus, the expressions are common, but their meanings are different.

To take another example, Allah (swt) said (2: 192):

فَمَنْ اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ

'If someone commits a wrong against you, you are (allowed to) commit a wrong against him of equal magnitude.' It will be seen here that the expressions are same but the meanings differ, for, when a man commits a wrong against another, it is injustice, but when he is punished for it then the punishment is the administration of justice (Ibn Jarir, condensed).

Another interpretation by Ibn `Abbas, as reported by Qurtubi and *Kashshaf* is: "A door will be opened between Hell and Paradise and the hypocrites will be invited to come in. They will begin to move toward the door. When they reach the door, it will be shut in their faces. The believers, reclining on their couches in Paradise, will laugh at them. This is what alluded to when Allah said (83: 34-36):

فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ يَضْحَكُونَ. عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ يَنْظُرُونَ. هَلْ تَرَوْبَ الْكُفَّارُ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ

'So, today the believers are laughing at the unbelievers, upon couches, looking (down on them). Have the unbelievers been rewarded for what they were doing?'"

Alusi states through a reliable source that an exit from Hell will be opened and a hypocrite will be urged:

[16] These are the ones who have bought error at the price of guidance.³⁸ Their barter profited them not,³⁹ and they were not rightly guided.

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالََةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَحِمَتْ بِجَارَتِهِمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] The likeness of them is as the likeness of him who kindled a fire. When it had lit all about him, Allah took away their light and left them in darknesses, unable to perceive.⁴⁰

مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

“Come on, come on.” The man will make a great effort to move toward it because of injuries, pain and suffering. But when he reaches the door, it will be shut in his face. Then another door will be opened from which he will be invited. He will again drag himself toward it in great pain and injury. But as he nears, the door will be shut. A third one will be opened. This will go on until the hypocrite will not respond to the call.”

Majid adds: “For the Biblical use of mockery and laughter in reference to God, compare the following: ‘Ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity: I will mock when your fear cometh.’”

38. “By the deliberate choice of the path of error, guilt and impiety” (Majid).

According to Ibn ‘Abbas and Ibn Mas‘ud, “they chose error and abandoned right guidance” (Ibn Jarir).

That is, they chose error and misguidance, so right guidance was held back from them.

Ibn Jarir also reports Qatadah as saying: By Allah, you have seen that they abandoned guidance and fell into error, abandoned the *ummah* and fell with the dissenters, came out of peace and went into fear, and abandoned the *Sunnah* and committed *bid'ah*.

39. “A deeper phase of insincerity is actual duplicity. But it never pays in the end. If we compare such a man to a trader, he loses in the bargain” (Yusuf Ali).

40. Several interpretations of the verse have come down to us from Ibn ‘Abbas and others, two of which are as follows. For ease of understanding, we shall first take up the first two verses together (17 and 18) and then its parts. Ibn Jarir is the source:

a) The hypocrites perceived the light

[18] Deaf, dumb, and blind (they are);⁴¹ so they will not return.⁴²

صُمُّ بُكْمٌ عُمْيٌ فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

of Islam, acknowledged its truth, until they came out of the darkness of disbelief. But they put off that light by acting in disbelief and hypocrisy. Consequently, Allah left them in the darkness of disbelief so that they lost the ability to perceive the right path (Ibn `Abbas and others).

b) The hypocrite declared his faith in Islam by uttering the words: "There is no deity save Allah." With that the world became lit for him. With time, it grew very large Muslims intermarrying with him because of his declaration of faith, visiting him during his illness, he inheriting the Muslims or they inheriting him and so forth. Thus he saved himself and his world with the help of his utterance. But, with his death the utterance was taken away from him because he did not believe in it truly, nor did he know of its truth in his heart (Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah).

As for the "light," Mujahid says it is what the hypocrite sees (of the truth of Islam) by virtue of his being in the company of the believers, and "darkness," what he (misses to see of it) when he seeks the company of unbelievers.

Explaining the same terms "light" and "darkness" Rabi` bin Anas has said, whenever the hypocrite speaks of Islam with sincerity, he sees the light, but when he is beset by doubts, darkness settles on him (Ibn Jarir).

41. That is, it is to the truth that they are deaf, dumb and blind. They can neither hear it being described, make inquiries about it because of their dumbness, nor can they perceive it if shown because of their blindness (Alusi). Shanqiti supports this view by quoting another verse (46: 26):

وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ سَمْعًا وَأَبْصَارًا وَأَفْئِدَةً فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَلَا أَبْصَارُهُمْ وَلَا أَفْئِدَتُهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِذْ كَانُوا يَجْحَدُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ

"We appointed for them hearing, and sight, and hearts; and yet their hearing, their sight and their hearts availed them nothing, because they denied the signs of Allah."

42. That is, they will not return to Islam (Ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas, Abu Murra and others Ibn Jarir).

Razi says about the two verses 17 and 18: The parable fits the situation very well, for they first earned the 'light' with their belief, and then lost it because of their disbelief, falling into a

state of utter bewilderment “utter,” because there is no bewilderment that is more confounding than that experienced in religious matters.

Commenting upon the words “*the likeness of him who kindled a fire*” in which the singular form is used (‘him’ as against the plural in “Allah took away ‘their’ light”), Thanwi says that it is because normally it is one man who kindles a fire. It is when it lights up the surrounding that other people gather around it.

Majid quotes Shah ‘Abd al Qadir as of the opinion that the one who lighted the fire was the Prophet.

Commenting upon the term “*their light*” (in the verse ‘*Allah took away their light*’), Thanwi says Allah put it that way because there are others on the same path for whom the path remains illuminated. It is only hypocrites who lost the perception (*Tibyan and Bayan*).

Alusi has another point with regard to the “lightning” and the “darkness.” He quotes his Sufi masters as saying that these verses are also ap-

plicable to those who follow the su-
fistic ways but as mere followers (*muqallidun*), and not as those who investigate the truth (*muhqiqun*). They simply adopt certain “appearances” and therefore do not taste the sweetness, nor get the feeling in the heart that they should. Ultimately, they give up in despair.

Ibn Qayyim comments: Note the words: “Allah took away their light.” Allah used the word *noor* when saying He took away their light, whereas He used the word *naar* when saying “the likeness of him who kindled a fire.....” (Why did He say “*naar*” at the beginning and changed it to “*noor*” later)? It is because *nar* (fire) consists of two elements: (1) *Noor* (light) and (2) Heat. Now, He took away the *noor*. So, what remained? Only heat! Also, note that Allah Most High has called His Book (the Qur’ān) a *noor*, His Prophet a *noor*, His religion a *noor*, one of His own names as *Al Noor*, and the *salah* (Prayers) a *noor*. Consider, if He took away the *noor*, He took away all” (condensed).

[19] Or, like a violent cloudburst out of heaven in which is darkness, thunder and lightning. They press their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps, in terror of death. But Allah has encompassed the unbelievers.⁴³

أَوْ كَصَيْبٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ
وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَّجْعَلُونَ أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ
مِّنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ
بِالْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

Another *tafsir* of the words: “*They press their fingers in their ears*” that has come from some Companions (Qurtubi), is that they press their fingers in their ears for fear of the Qur’ān entering their heads and influencing them.

43. Verses 17 and 18 describe one kind of hypocrites: the one that believed and then changed the mind and went back to *Kufr*. Verses 19 and 20 describe the other kind that has not been able to make up its mind. This kind is neither here nor there, neither believers nor unbelievers.

Majid writes: “The Madinan hypocrites were of two kinds. One of them were rejecters of faith outright and only managed to disguise their views and beliefs. The parable in the vv. 17 18 refers to this class of dissemblers. The other class was not so definite in its rejection of the faith. They wavered, swinging to and fro, like modern ‘skeptics.’ They are the subject of the parable in the vv. 19 20.”

After presenting various opinions of

the Companions and their Followers, Ibn Jarir says that the “*violent outburst*” (*sayyib* of the verse 19) is the example of what the hypocrites evinced of belief in Islam and whatever the Prophet (*saws*) told them as coming from Allah. The “*darkness*” (*zulumat*) refers to the doubts, denial and sickness of the heart. As for the “thunder” and “lightning” (*ra’d* and *barq*), it is the description of their situation of fear of the Divine threats that they heard from the Prophet as going to befall those who deny true fear of it but with strains of doubt: whether it was true or not, whether it was really going to happen or not. Therefore, when they heard of the threats they tried to ignore them and pretend that they had not heard: which has been described in the words, “they press their fingers in their ears in terror of death.” That is, theirs was a mixed situation of true belief, doubts thereof, accompanied by the fear of Allah’s retribution descending upon them on a sudden. But (since the fear did not rest on a powerful belief), they tried to brush

[20] The lightning well nigh snatches away their sight. Whenever it lights up their surrounding they advance therein, but when it throws darkness over them, they halt.⁴⁴ Had Allah willed, He could have taken away their hearing, and their sight.⁴⁵ Indeed Allah has power over everything.⁴⁶

يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ يَخْطَفُ أَبْصَارَهُمْ كُلَّمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ مَشَوْا فِيهِ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

it away from their minds but could not.

Some other commentators believe however that it is “*imān*” and Islam that have been alluded to by the words “*violent outburst*.” As for the words “*darkness, thunder and lightning*,” the allusion is to those injunctions of Islam that were hard upon the hypocrites such as: *salah*, fasting, foregoing of leadership, the struggle against one’s unbelieving dear ones, etc. (Razi).

44. After quoting several authorities, what Ibn Jarir has to say can be summarized in the following manner: “The ‘*lightning*’ (*barq*) of the verse refers to the faith of the hypocrites in Islam: a faith which was adulterated with doubts and skepticism. It bedazzles them whenever it burst forth, a situation that has been described in the words: ‘*It all but snatches away their sight*.’ It is a graphic description of what they witnessed of the victories of Islam in the battlefields. Those

victories resulted in the spoils of war pouring in. That vastly increased the prosperity of the Muslims. Peace and security also followed. When those things happened, the hypocrites began to walk in their light. Those events as if ‘lit up their surroundings.’ The words ‘*start to walk*’ refer to their taking up Islam in earnest. But, when ‘*it throws darkness upon them*,’ that is, when the events were not so bright and encouraging, or, when they found that their allegiance to Islam was not paying them, or a personal misfortune struck them, then their doubts resurfaced, and they fell back on their disbelief which they had carried with them all along. This attitude of belief and obedience to the demands of Islam, when it met with victories, and of doubts, disbelief and abandoning of its ordinances, when it did not, has been described by the Qur’ān elsewhere in the following words (22: 11):

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَغْتَبِ اللَّهُ عَلَى حَرْفٍ فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرٌ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ انْقَلَبَ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ

[الحج/١١]

"Among men there is such a one as serves Allah upon the very edge. If good befalls him, he is at rest in it, but if a trial befalls him, he turns completely over."

Commenting on the words: "Whenever it lights up their surroundings they advance therein, but when it throws darkness over them, they halt," Ibn Kathir writes: Whenever their faith gets activated, they feel themselves well disposed to Islam and begin to follow its dictates in earnest. But when doubts attack them, their hearts get darkened, leaving them stagnated in bewilderment." In this connection he quotes Ibn 'Abbas as saying, "That is how they will be on the Day of Judgment, when everybody will be given his light (*noor*) in accordance with his faith. There will be some who will receive light which will reach the distance of a mile for him, or less, or more. There will be others whose light will alternatively go on and off. There will be some others on the Bridge (*Sirat*) who will move in kind of fits and starts (because of their poor light); while there will be some whose light will be completely off. These will be the pure hypocrites who had not a grain of faith in their hearts. It is about

them that Allah Most High said at another place (57: 13):

يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا انظُرُونَا
نَقْتَسِبْ مِنْ نُورِكُمْ قِيلَ ارْجِعُوا وَرَاءَكُمْ فَالْتَمِسُوا نُورًا

"On the day when the hypocrites, men and women, shall say to those who have believed, 'Wait for us, so that we may borrow your light.' It shall be said, 'Get back to your rear, and seek for a light (there).'" In contrast, the believers will be given their light in full, as described in the verse (57: 12):

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ
أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ بُشْرَاكُمُ الْيَوْمَ

"On the day when you will see the believers, men and women, their light running before them, and on their right hands. (It will be said), 'Glad tidings for you today!'"

45. And left them in total blindness. But He is giving them respite in order that they may correct themselves.

46. قَدِير (Qadeer), translated as "One who has power over everything," draws the following comment from Majid: "Qadeer and Qaadir (قادر) may signify the same Possessing power, or ability... (But) Qadir has an intensive signification, and 'signi-

[21] O People!⁴⁷ Serve⁴⁸ your Lord Who created⁴⁹ you and those who went before you, haply so that you may save yourselves.⁵⁰

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ
وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

[22] (Serve Him) Who assigned to you the earth⁵¹ for a resting place, and the heaven for a canopy,⁵² and sent down water out of the heaven,⁵³ wherewith He brought forth fruits for your sustenance.⁵⁴ Assign not, therefore, compeers to Allah,⁵⁵ while you know.

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ
بِنَاءً وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ
الشَّجَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا
وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

fies he who does what he wills, according to what wisdom requires, not more nor less; and therefore this epithet is applied to none but God' (Lane's Lexicon).

47. "Note that the Qur'an says 'O people,' and not 'O Muslims.' "The message of the Qur'an is addressed to the whole of mankind, not to any section of it, conditioned by race, color or country. The components of this Message are a belief in the unity of God, and a belief in the messengership of Muhammad (on him be peace!). And these two grand and central truths are now formally presented in this verse and the three succeeding verses. To believe in Him and His unity the Holy Qur'an commands us as well as persuades us. In this verse are elements both of command and persuasion happily blended" (Majid).

48. I.e., address to Him alone all your acts of worship and obedience (Ibn 'Abbas as interpreted by Tabari). Qurtubi says it means "to believe in the Oneness of Allah and to live by the *Shari'ah*," hence, the rendering as "serve" rather than worship. "Included in this command, *u'budu* are: faith in (the existence of) Allah, belief in His Oneness and His obedience "faith" for him who argues against Allah, "Oneness" for him who associates others with Allah, and "obedience" for the believers" (i.e., the atheists, the polytheist and the monotheists have all been addressed) - *Tas heel*.

49. That is, He created you "(out of nothing, and not simply evolved you out of something pre existing). Nor has man, as claimed by pantheists, emanated from God. 'Creation' negates all other forms of production" (Majid).

50. That is, save yourself from the anger and wrath of your Lord (Ibn Jarir).

51. "So it is man for whose benefit earth is created and not vice versa. The very idea of man bowing before an 'earth god' is monstrous" (Majid).

52. Firaash is a resting place (Qata-dah: Ibn Jarir). Says Majid: "...literally a thing that is spread upon the ground...Whatever its exact form and figure, this description of the earth, that it is for all living creatures a huge something to walk upon, to stand upon, to sit upon, or to lie upon, is an ideal one, which we all can admire, but none can improve."

In answer to the question, whether this disproves the claim that the earth is round and not flat, Zamakhshari (d.538 A.H.) says there is neither affirmation nor rejection of either in this verse. All that the Qur'an is saying is that Allah has made it a place on which man can rest.

Canopy: What better way can there be of describing the atmosphere that envelops the earth, shielding it from the bombardment of hundreds and thousands of small and big meteorites, which burn at impact, than to say it is a canopy? Without this roof over our heads, the millions of tons

of space debris would have made life impossible on earth.

Further, with its ozone layer, this protective roof prevents the entry of ultraviolet rays, which, if they were to penetrate in unrestricted quantities, would destroy all life on earth (Au.).

53. By this second heaven in this verse the allusion is to the clouds (Ibn Kathir). The heaven has been called heaven because of it being high and lofty. In Arabic, everything that is high and lofty is called samaa'. Hence, the roof of a building is its heaven. The Prophet has said: "The sky is stretched over the earth like a canopy, and therefore it is the earth's roof" (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir quotes another verse from the Qur'an (21: 32):

وَجَعَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ سَقْفًا مَحْفُوظًا وَهُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهَا مُعْرِضُونَ

"We set up the heaven as a roof well protected, yet they (the unbelievers) are turning away from Our signs."

54. "The Qur'an .. is in no sense a text book of the ever changing physical and geographical sciences, and even incidentally makes no mention of astronomical or geographical facts. Various phenomena of nature, as they appear to an average layman,

clear of scientific bias one way or the other, it only brings in to establish, strengthen and illustrate its central theme the undivided and indivisible Sovereignty of the Lord God and to uproot the divinity of all minor 'gods,' such as corn god, fruit god, etc." (Majid).

Majid was not unaware of course, that the Qur'an has thrown hints at many scientific truths that were to come to light centuries later. He could not have been unaware also, that although the Qur'an was revealed at a time when man was still groping in the dark, it does not contain a single idea that is contradictory to a proven scientific fact. (See his preface to the Urdu version). What he meant by the above is that the Qur'an is not a book of science per se (Au.).

55. That is, do not suggest and accept equals, rivals or compeers from among the creations of Allah in whose obedience you disobey your Lord: Ibn 'Abbas and others. 'Ikrimah has said: Do not say things such as, for example: "had it not been for our dog, the thief would have broken in last night" (Ibn Jarir).

Allah's Compeers

Asad remarks: "There is full agree-

ment among all commentators that this term (*nudd*, pl.: *andad*) implies any object of adoration to which some or all of God's qualities are ascribed, whether it be conceived a deity 'in its own right' or a saint supposedly possessing certain divine or semi divine powers."

Yusuf Ali comments: "The false gods (*andad*) may be idols, superstitions, Self, or even great or glorious things like Poetry, Art, or Science, when set up as rivals to God."

Ibn Kathir quotes a number of *ahadith* here. Ibn Mas'ud narrates:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ سَأَلْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَيُّ الذَّنْبِ أَكْثَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ قَالَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ لِلَّهِ نِدًّا وَهُوَ خَلَقَكَ.

"I asked the Prophet (on whom be peace), 'What sin is the greatest in the sight of Allah, O Prophet?' He replied, 'That you should set up compeers to Allah while He (alone) created you'" (Bukhari, Muslim).

In the *hadith* (of Bukhari) narrated by Mu'adh (*ra*), the Prophet asked him,

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَا مُعَاذُ أَتَدْرِي مَا حَقُّ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْعِبَادِ قَالَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ قَالَ أَنْ يَعْْبُدُوهُ وَلَا يُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا

"Do you know what is Allah's

right over His slaves?” (Then he himself added), “That they should worship Him alone and not associate others with Him.”

In another *hadith* (of Ibn Majah) the Prophet (*saws*) said:

”لا يقول أحدكم ما شاء الله وشاء فلان ولكن ليقول ما شاء الله ثم شاء فلان“.

“Let not one of you say: ‘What Allah wills and so and so wills (will happen).’ Rather say: ‘What Allah wills, and after Him so and so wills.’

In another *hadith* preserved by Nasa’i, and Ibn Majah, Ibn `Abbas reports that once a man said before the Prophet:

ما شاء الله وشئت، فقال: ”أجعلتني لله ندا؟ قل ما شاء الله وحده“ (أخرجه النسائي وابن ماجه).

“What Allah wills and you will.” The Prophet corrected him: “Have you set me up as a compeer to Allah? Rather say: ‘What Allah wills.’”

Ibn Kathir also presents the following *hadith* from Ahmad (which is also in Tirmidhi who declared it *Hasan Sahih*):

عَنِ الْحَارِثِ الْأَشْعَرِيِّ أَنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- قَالَ " إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَمَرَ يَحْيَى بْنَ زَكَرِيَّا

عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ بِخَمْسِ كَلِمَاتٍ أَنْ يَعْمَلَ بِهِنَّ وَأَنْ يَأْمُرَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنْ يَعْمَلُوا بِهِنَّ وَكَادَ أَنْ يَبْطِئَ فَقَالَ لَهُ عِيسَى إِنَّكَ قَدْ أُمِرْتَ بِخَمْسِ كَلِمَاتٍ أَنْ تَعْمَلَ بِهِنَّ وَتَأْمُرَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنْ يَعْمَلُوا بِهِنَّ فَإِنَّمَا أَنْ تَبْلَغَهُنَّ وَإِنَّمَا أَنْ أُبْلَغَهُنَّ. فَقَالَ يَا أَحْيَى إِنَّ أَحَشَى إِنْ سَبَقْتَنِي أَنْ أُعَذِّبَ أَوْ يُحْسَفَ بِي . قَالَ فَجَمَعَ يَحْيَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ فِي بَيْتِ الْمَقْدِسِ حَتَّى افْتَلَأَ الْمَسْجِدَ فَقَعَدَ عَلَى الشَّرَفِ فَحَمِدَ اللَّهَ وَاتَّقَى عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَمَرَنِي بِخَمْسِ كَلِمَاتٍ أَنْ أَعْمَلَ بِهِنَّ وَأَأْمُرَكُمْ أَنْ تَعْمَلُوا بِهِنَّ أَوْ هُنَّ أَنْ تَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ لَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئاً فَإِنَّ مَثَلَ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ رَجُلٍ اشْتَرَى عَبْدًا مِنْ خَالِصِ مَالِهِ بِوَرِقٍ أَوْ ذَهَبٍ فَجَعَلَ يَعْمَلُ وَيُؤَدِّي غَلَّتَهُ إِلَى غَيْرِ سَيِّدِهِ فَأَتَيْكُمْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ عَبْدُهُ كَذَلِكَ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ خَلَقَكُمْ وَزَوَّجَكُمْ فاعْبُدُوهُ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئاً وَأَأْمُرَكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَنْصُبُ وَجْهَهُ لَوَجْهِ عَبْدِهِ مَا لَمْ يَلْتَفِتْ فَإِذَا صَلَّيْتُمْ فَلَا تَلْتَفِتُوا وَأَأْمُرَكُمْ بِالصِّيَامِ فَإِنَّ مَثَلَ ذَلِكَ كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ مَعَهُ ضُرَّةٌ مِنْ مِسْكِ فِي عَصَابَةٍ كُلُّهُمْ يَجِدُ رِيحَ الْمِسْكِ وَإِنَّ لِحُلُوفٍ فَمِ الصَّائِمِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَطْيَبُ مِنْ رِيحِ الْمِسْكِ وَأَأْمُرَكُمْ بِالصَّدَقَةِ فَإِنَّ مَثَلَ ذَلِكَ كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ أَسْرَهُ الْعَدُوَّ فَشَدُّوا يَدَيْهِ إِلَى عُنُقِهِ وَقَدَّمُوهُ لِيَضْرِبُوا عُنُقَهُ فَقَالَ هَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْ أَتُتَدَّى نَفْسِي مِنْكُمْ فَجَعَلَ يَفْتَدِي نَفْسَهُ مِنْهُمْ بِالْقَلِيلِ وَالْكَثِيرِ حَتَّى فَكَ نَفْسَهُ وَأَأْمُرَكُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ كَثِيرًا وَإِنَّ مَثَلَ ذَلِكَ كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ طَلَبَهُ الْعَدُوُّ سِرَاعًا فِي أَثَرِهِ فَأَتَى حِصْنًا حَصِينًا فَتَحَصَّنَ فِيهِ وَإِنَّ الْعَبْدَ أَحْصَنَ مَا يَكُونُ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ إِذَا كَانَ فِي ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

Al Harith al Ash`ari says the Prophet said: “Allah ordered Yahya the son of Zackariyya, (*asms*, John the Baptist of the Bible), five things that he was to practice himself, and enjoin the Israelites the same. `Isa (*asms*), felt that

Yahya (*asws*) was procrastinating and so he said, 'Look, you have been asked by Allah to practice five things and enjoin the Israelites the same. Now either you do it yourself, or I will present them to the people.' Yahya replied: 'Brother! I am afraid that if you did it, I will be punished or the earth will swallow me.' So Yahya gathered the Israelites in *Bayt al Maqdis*. When the house was full, he rose up to the pulpit and addressed them. He first thanked and glorified Allah. Then he said: 'Allah has ordered me to observe these five things and instructed you to do the same. The first of them is that you should worship Allah alone, associating none with Him. The example of a man (who associated with God) is like someone who purchased a slave with his money in gold or silver. But the slave began to work and deposit his earnings with someone else. Which of you will be pleased with a slave of this sort? Allah has created you, and nourishes you, therefore, serve Him, associating none with Him. (Second), He orders you to be attentive in Prayers, for Allah pays attention to a man in his Prayers so long as the man does not divert

his attention from Allah. Therefore, do not divert your attention from Allah during your Prayers. (Third), He orders you to fast, for he who fasts is like a man who carries a bag full of musk to a people. Everyone is refreshed by the fragrance that spreads. Indeed, the smell of the fasting man's mouth is better with Allah than the fragrance of musk. (Fourth), He orders you to give in charity. The example of a man who gives in charity is like him who has been captured by a people. They handcuff him and are ready to behead him when the man cries out, 'Will you release me if I ransom myself?' (They agree) and he ransoms himself with a little here and a little there until he frees himself. (And fifth), He orders you to remember Him often; for he who remembers Allah often is like a man who was being given a hot chase by his enemy. (To his good luck) he found a fort and took refuge in it. A man is the safest against Satan, when he is in the remembrance of Allah.'

قَالَ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- " وَأَنَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِحُكْمِ اللَّهِ أَمَرَنِي بِحُكْمِ الْجَمَاعَةِ وَالسَّمْعِ وَالطَّاعَةِ وَالْهَيْجَرَةِ وَالْجِهَادِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ خَرَجَ مِنَ الْجَمَاعَةِ قِيدَ شِبْرٍ فَقَدْ خَلَعَ رِبْقَةَ الْإِسْلَامِ مِنْ

[23] And, if you are in any doubt concerning what We have sent down on Our servant, then produce a piece equal to it.⁵⁶ And call (to your aid) your witnesses⁵⁷ apart from Allah, if you are true (in your allegation).

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِمَّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

عُنْتُهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَرْجِعَ وَمَنْ دَعَا بِدَعْوَى الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ فَهُوَ مِنْ جُنَاءِ جَهَنَّمَ". قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ صَامَ وَإِنْ صَلَّى قَالَ "وَإِنْ صَامَ وَصَلَّى وَزَعَمَ أَنَّهُ مُسْلِمٌ فَادْعُوا الْمُسْلِمِينَ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ بِمَا سَمَّاهُمْ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ"

“(Al Harith al Ash`ari, the narrator) says the Prophet then added: ‘I also enjoin you five things that Allah has ordered me: (i) Hold fast unto the *jama`ah*, (ii) listen, (iii) obey, (iv) *hijrah* and (v) *Jihad*; for whoever parted company with the *jama`ah* by as much as the span of a hand, threw the noose of Islam off his neck.... until he returns (to the fold of the *ummah*). Whoever invited the people to any of the pre Islamic practices will be a carcass in Hell fire.’ The people asked, ‘Messenger of Allah, what if he prayed and fasted?’ He replied: ‘Even if he prayed, fasted and claimed that he is a Muslim. Therefore, call the believers by the name Allah has chosen for them *al Muslimun* or believers servants of Allah.’”

(Ibn Kathir evaluates this report as *hasan*).

Qurtubi adds that with this verse Allah has liberated man from all other creations. Hence the Prophet’s words (as in Bukhari):

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَأَنْ يَأْخُذَ أَحَدُكُمْ حَبْلَهُ فَيَحْتَطِبَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ خَيْرٌ لَهُ مِنْ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ رَجُلًا ، فَيَسْأَلَهُ ، أَعْطَاهُ أَوْ مَنَعَهُ

“By Him in whose hands is my life, that one of you should carry his rope and tie a pack of wood on his back is better than that he should go to a man and ask begs (someone) who might or might not give him.”

Qurtubi also reports the *Sufiya* as saying that by this verse Allah teaches us the way to abstinence which is to treat the earth as the resting place, the heaven as the roof, water and pasture as the means of livelihood, and never bow down before anyone of the creations of Allah for worldly reasons; for Allah has bestowed on you in abundance what is enough

for your sustenance and without you having to be obliged to anyone in the world.

56. The connection between this verse and the previous two verses is that when Allah gave proof of His own existence and His Oneness, He followed it up with the proof of the prophethood of His Messenger, Muhammad, *saws*. - Qurtubi.

By "it" the allusion is to the Qur'ān (Tabari, on the authority of Qatadah and Mujahid).

57. According to Ibn 'Abbas, by "witnesses" the allusion is to those who will lend help (in producing a piece equal to the Qur'ān), to which Qurtubi adds: "As if they have been asked not only to seek help from whomsoever they want, but also call upon their scholars to be present as witnesses to their failure."

The Qur'ānic Challenge

Ibn Jarir writes: Allah has addressed the unbelievers and hypocrites of the Arabs as well as the disbelieving people of the Book both the Jews and Christians and said that if you are in doubt about what I have revealed unto Muhammad (*saws*) of the Light and the Proofs and the Holy Writ, then bring a sound proof to argue,

for, you know that each Prophet brings from his Lord, a proof, a miracle, that is special to him and which no one else shares with him. This Prophet has brought the Qur'ān as a proof of his messengership. Now, if you contest his being a Prophet, then the simplest thing to do is for you to bring a piece of writing equal in beauty, truth, and sublimity to what he has brought. It should not be difficult for you, since you are a people who speak the Arabic language, and are masters of the science of eloquence. If the Book is not from Allah, and if Muhammad is its author, then surely you can also produce what he has produced.

Ibn Kathir quotes several verses of the Qur'ān which threw the same challenge at the unbelievers at different times, in different words and at different places (Makkah and Madi-nah). For instance (17:88):

قُلْ لِّمَنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا
الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا

"Say: 'If men and jinn banded together to produce the like of this Qur'ān, they would never produce its like, not even if they backed one another.'"

Again (11:15):

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ اقْتِرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيَاتٍ

وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

"Do they say that he (Muhammad) forged it? Tell them: 'Then you also bring ten forged chapters like it, and call to your aid whomsoever you wish apart from Allah, if you are true.'"

He also said in (10:38):

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

"Or, do they say that he has forged it? Say: 'Bring a chapter similar to it, and call to your aid whosoever you want apart from Allah, if you are true.'"

The above verses are of the Makkan period. The challenge was repeated during the Madinan period also, as in this *surah al Baqarah*.

In other words, the Qur'an repeatedly challenged all those who disbelieved in it as the Word of Allah: both the Arab polytheists as well as the Jews and Christians, individually as well as collectively, to produce a piece equal to it in the beauty of language and sublimity of contents. But, despite their mastery over the language, (of a kind that has not been surpassed since then), and despite their deep rooted hatred of Islam and its Prophet, they failed to produce its equal. Therefore, Allah

threatened them in words: "But if you cannot do it and you will never do it then fear the Fire whose fuel is human beings and rocks; prepared for the unbelievers."

Further, as the Qur'an predicted: "And you will never do it," neither the contemporaries of the Prophet could do it, nor has the challenge been answered since then, and will never be answered. (Ibn Kathir then proceeds to show why it is impossible for anyone to produce the like of the Qur'an).

Imām Razi presents some very interesting points. He says: You should know that the Qur'an consists of many of those elements that adversely affect the eloquence of a piece of writing. Yet it reaches the highest level of eloquence that beyond which there is no eloquence. This makes it a miracle. Let us consider some.

First, the eloquence of the great masters of the past is mostly in the portrayal of physical objects, such as, the description of a camel, a horse, a maid, a king, the powerful strike (of a sword), the throw (of a spear or arrow), a battle, or a (fierce) attack, and so on. But the Qur'an has none of these portrayals and therefore it had to go without those words of eloquence that are related to them and

have been accepted by the masters as the standard words and phrases of eloquence.

Second, *Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala* has stated only the truth in the Qur'an; while every poet who does not employ fiction, rather, adheres to speaking only the truth, will be severely restrained in eloquence. Take for example the poetry of Hassan b. Thabit, and Labid b. Rabi'a. Compare their poetry of the period when they had not yet entered the fold of Islam with that of the time when they were Muslims. You will find that the poetry of the latter period is inferior to that of the former. (That is because in the later period they had abandoned fiction and restricted themselves to truth).

Third, the eloquence of a poet is normally restricted to a verse or two of the entire poem. That is its best part. The rest is very ordinary. In comparison, the Qur'an is at all times and in every verse at the height of eloquence.

Fourth, the eloquence of a man of letters expresses itself most forcefully

on a subject only once. It is not of the same order when he takes up the same topic again. But the Qur'an repeatedly speaks on the same topics. However, each time it displays a different level and order of eloquence.

Fifth, the Qur'anic topics are unusual ones that do not provoke much interest, such as, Prayers, forbidding of the indecent things, bidding unto good, abstinence, remembrance of the life after death and so on. These, as we all know, are not topics that are well suited for eloquence.

Sixth, it is said that Imra'ul Qays is at his best in describing music, women and horses. Naabigha is at his best in lines expressing fear. A'shi is at his best in his supplications and description of wine. Zuhayr excels in expressing hopes and yearnings. In short, each poet has his field of specialty in which he is the most eloquent. But he is the most ordinary when he takes up a subject other than his specialty. In contrast, whatever subject the Qur'an takes up, it displays rhetoric and eloquence of

[24] But if you cannot do it and you will never do it then fear the Fire whose fuel is human beings and rocks,⁵⁸ prepared for the unbelievers.⁵⁹

فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ

﴿٢٤﴾

the unmatched sort.

(Quotation from Razi ends here).

Alusi adds: Although verse 22 has been brought to prove the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān, it also serves as an evidence of the Prophet's messengership.

58. The allusion by (*al hijaarah*) is to rocks of sulfur ('Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud, Ibn 'Abbas, a few other Companions of the Prophet, and Ibn Jurayj Tabari). This is the popular interpretation. However some say that the allusion is to the idols, as Allah said elsewhere (21: 98):

إِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ

"Indeed you as well as those you worship other than Allah are fuels of the Fire" (*Shanqiti*).

Sayyid Qutb writes: "Why this banding together of stones and people..... in this most terrifying illustration? The Fire has been prepared for the unbelievers: those about whom the Qur'ān said, 'Allah has (in consequence of their decision not to believe) set a seal on their hearts, and

on their hearing. And on their eyes is a covering.' But, what have stones to do with those who failed to answer the challenge of the Qur'ān, yet refused to heed its call? (The answer is): These people are themselves stones ... like any other stone, even if they are humans in their appearance. This banding together then, of stones and a people (of this nature), is a thing anticipated!"

"Moreover, the mentioning of stones here, in this terrifying scene has another illustration hidden in it: that of a Fire that eats away stones ... and men sandwiched in between!"

Incidentally, the melting point of rocks which is around 18,000 deg. C. is higher than that of iron. To inflame them would require higher temperature (Au.).

59. That is, essentially it has been prepared for the unbelievers. This does not mean that the sinners from among the believers will not pass through this purgatory before their entry into Paradise.

Qurtubi states that the wordings

[25] (In contrast),⁶⁰ give glad tidings to those who believe and do righteous deeds, that for them are gardens underneath⁶¹ which rivers flow.⁶² Whensoever they shall be served there with a fruit to eat, they shall say, 'We (seem to) have been served this before,' and they shall be (in fact) served with the like of it.⁶³ And for them shall be spouses purified⁶⁴ abiding therein forever.⁶⁵

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رَزَقُوا قَالُوا هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأُتُوا بِهِ مُتَشَابِهًا وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

suggest that Hell has already been created. Abu Hurayrah reports:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ كُنَّا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- إِذْ سَمِعَ وَجِبَةً فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- " أَتَذَرُونَ مَا هَذَا ". قَالَ قُلْنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ " هَذَا حَجَرٌ رُمِيَ بِهِ فِي النَّارِ مُنْذُ سَبْعِينَ خَرِيفًا فَهُوَ يَهْوِي فِي النَّارِ الْآنَ حَتَّى انْتَهَى إِلَى قَعْرِهَا "

- صحيح مسلم

Once they were with the Prophet (*saws*) when they heard a thud. "Do you know what that sound was?" he asked. We replied, "Allah and His Prophet know best." He said, "That was a stone that was dropped into Hell seventy years ago. It had been falling until it reached the bottom now."

60. Ibn Kathir comments: "After Allah mentioned the end of those who disbelieve in this message, He followed it up with the end of those who believe in it and do good works. This is the style of the Qur'an. It mentions a thing and follows it up

with its opposite. It mentions another thing and then its like. It states the end of the virtuous ones and then that of the evil ones. It speaks of faith and follows it up with the subject of disbelief. It refers to the consequence of a certain kind of attitude and then immediately describes the consequence of the other kind of attitude, and so on. This is the meaning of the Qur'anic term (كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا) as used in the following verse (39: 23):

اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَابَيْنِ تَقْشَعِرُ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ

"Allah has sent down the fairest discourse as a Book, consimilar in its paired (verses), whereat shiver the skins of those who fear their Lord."

61. That is, underneath its palaces and trees (Ibn Kathir). The words of the original also imply that Paradise has been created (Qurtubi).

Linguistically, *jannah* signifies a lush

green garden (Au.).

62. A tradition of the Prophet (*saws*) tells us that these rivers will flow on plain surfaces (i.e., without the hollow beds). The river beds will be made up of musk, their pebbles of jewels and other rich stones and their banks lined up with dome shaped structures carved out of pearls. A *hadith* also reports that these rivers will spring forth from mountains of musk (Ibn Kathir).

63. Ibn `Abbas, Ibn Mas`ud and some other Companions of the Prophet (*saws*) have been reported as saying that each time the people of Paradise are served with a fruit, it will seem to them as if they had been served earlier, during their lives on earth. But, in actual fact, they would be similar only in their shape and color. Their tastes would be different. Some other early exegetes have expressed the view that the fruits served would look similar to those they would have earlier had in Paradise itself (Ibn Jarir).

Yet another meaning forwarded is that all the fruits of a lot that they would be served with, would be of the same quality, as against what is experienced in this world, where, the fruits of a basket or a lot are not of the same size, color, taste, and quality

(Ibn Jarir).

Ibn `Abbas is reported to have said that there is no similarity between the fruits of Paradise and the fruits of this life except that they have common names (Ibn Kathir). The wordings of another report are that there is nothing in this world of Paradise except names (Ibn Jarir).

64. Commenting on the textual word "purified," Ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and others have said: That is, cleansed and purified of saliva, phlegm, dirt of the nose, wax of the ears, urine, excretion, monthly periods, semen and reproductive organ excretions. Qatadah has said that they would be free of moral impurities also.

Asad comments on the word *azwaj*: "The *azwaj* (sing. *zawj*) of the original "signifies either of the two components of a couple i.e. the male and the female."

65. Neither wishing to leave the place, out of ennui, nor shall they be asked to leave (Au.).

The Context of Revelation:

It is reported of Ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas, and some other Companions that when Allah (*swt*) revealed

[26] Surely, Allah is not ashamed of striking the similitude of a gnat⁶⁶ or what is above it. As for the believers, they know that it is the truth from their Lord. But, as for the unbelievers, they object: 'What did God mean by (striking) such a similitude?' Allah leads astray many thereby⁶⁷ and guides many thereby. And He does not lead astray any thereby but the transgressors.⁶⁸

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا
مَّا بَعُوضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا
يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضِلُّ
بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

the verses (17-19) which struck a similitude of the hypocrites, they remarked, 'It does not befit God's greatness to strike such similitudes.' Allah revealed these verses in response. Qatadah, on the other hand, says that when Allah struck the similitude of a spider (in verse 41, ch. 29) and a fly (in verse 73, ch. 22) the misguided ones began to object, 'Of what consequence spiders and flies are, to be mentioned (in the Qur'an)?' Ibn Kathir. Another report has it that when Allah mentioned the spider and the fly in his revelation the Jews began to mock and say, 'Now, this is not revelation like!' (Qurtubi Hasan and Qatadah). It is possible of course that the comments of all these disaffected ones caused the revelation.

66. "This is said in answer to the objections of the pagans that the Qur'an condescends to speak of such humble objects as the spider, the bee, and the fly. The Qur'an answers in

effect, that there is nothing undignified in the mention of these creatures of Allah....Fly and spider have been used in the Qur'an to illustrate the utter incompetency and helplessness of idols and (false) gods: and they serve their purpose of illustration exceedingly well" (Majid).

Sayyid Qutb writes: "Allah is the Lord of the small and the big, the Creator of the gnat and the elephant. The miracle in the gnat is of the same magnitude as the miracle in the elephant it is the miracle of 'life', the miracle of the 'locked secret' that no one can unlock but Allah Himself. The lesson in a parable does not consist in the size or shape (of the object cited in the parable). Parables are a means of enlightenment and exposition; there is no shame attached to the drawing of similitude. Allah, the Wise, wished to test the hearts and try the people: 'As for the believers, they know that it is the truth from

their Lord. But as for the unbelievers, they ask: *What did Allah mean by (striking) such a similitude?*”

(Quotation from Sayyid ends here).

Allah is surely not ashamed of striking a similitude of what He has created. Rather, we are told that He feels ashamed at not answering the prayers of those who address their prayers to Him. Imām Razi quotes a *hadith* in which Salman (*ra*) reports the Prophet (*saws*) as having said: “Allah Most High is Living, Generous. He feels ashamed that a man should raise his hands (in supplication) and He reject his prayer unanswered.”

A *hadith* of Tirmidhi declared *Sahih* by him says:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: “لَوْ كَانَتْ الدُّنْيَا تَعْدِلُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ جَنَاحَ بَعُوضَةٍ مَا سَقَى كَافِرًا مِنْهَا شَرْبَةً مَاءً.” (قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ صَحِيحٌ غَرِيبٌ)

“Had this world been worthier in the sight of Allah than the wing of a gnat, the unbelievers would not have been granted a gulp of water to drink” (Ibn Kathir).

67. Why did Allah say: ‘Allah leads many astray thereby,’ when we know that He does not lead anyone astray? In fact, throughout human history

Allah has taken great care to guide the mankind. The answer is: He attributed the act of misguidance, essentially an act of man, to Himself because it is He who is the final cause of all acts ensuing from man. Man can only intend to do a thing. But he cannot do it without Allah’s consent. Man can wish to take a certain path, say the path of evil, but he cannot trace his feet on it without Allah’s will. It is the will and the consent therefore, that has been referred to here as the act of leading the unbelievers astray (Au.).

Zamakhshari writes: The misguidance has been attributed to Allah, because it is He who struck the similitude which became the cause of some people’s guidance, while some others were led astray by it. It is said of Malik b. Dinar that once he visited a man who had been imprisoned because of debts. The man told Malik, ‘Look at the way we have been locked up!’ (i.e., unjustly). When Malik raised his head he saw a basket hung from the roof. He enquired whose it was. The man said it was his. Malik asked it to be lowered. It was filled with chicken and sweetmeat. Malik said: ‘This is what has locked you up.’”

68. In Islamic terminology, *Fāsiq* is

[27] Those who break the covenant of Allah⁶⁹ after its solemn binding, and sever⁷⁰ (the ties) that Allah has commanded they be joined, and (thus) spread corruption in the land. It is these indeed who are the losers.⁷¹

الَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

﴿٢٧﴾

one who breaks the bounds set by the *Shari'ah* (*Raghib*), and commits a major sin (*Razi*). However, one who habitually commits minor sins, without repenting, is also technically a *Fāsiq*. The term therefore, can include in its application both the unbeliever as well as an believing sinner (*Au.*).

Ibn Kathir adds: It is the unbelievers (and the hypocrites) that have been referred to here, since what follows as their qualities applies more to them than to the sinning believers.

69. What covenant is it? Ibn Jarir presents various interpretations, of which Ibn Kathir's preference (and which Muqatil shares with some others) is as follows: By the covenant of Allah, those evidences are meant that prove Allah's existence (of which no one is ignorant); and which have become more binding by the fact of Allah commissioning His Messengers, demanding submission to none but Him.

Zamakhshari adds: If it is asked, 'What covenant is meant?' The an-

swer is: 'Those evidences of God's Oneness which every man's reason accepts as valid. They function as the covenant made with Allah.'

Some others believe that the reference is to the covenant mentioned in verse 173, of *surah al A'raf*, which says:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ

"When your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins, their seed, and made them testify about themselves, 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Indeed, we testify.'"

But the verse seems to be general, and can be applied to all the people including the Jews and Christians, who were given the message earlier, which instructed them to believe in Allah and in all the Prophets that He would send from time to time (*Qurtubi*).

Asad comments: "The 'bond with God' (conveniently translated as

[28] How can you disbelieve in Allah seeing you were lifeless, then He gave you life. Then, He shall deal you death, then quicken you (again), and then unto Him shall you be returned.⁷²

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ
ثُمَّ يَمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

'God's covenant') apparently refers here to man's moral obligation to use his inborn gifts intellectual as well as physical in the way intended for them by God. The 'establishment' of this bond arises from the faculty of reason which, if properly used, must lead man to a realization of his own weakness and dependence on a causative power and, thus, to a gradual cognition of God's will with reference to his own behavior. This interpretation of the 'bond with God' stands for something that is rooted in the human situation as such, and can, therefore, be perceived instinctively as well as through conscious experience: namely, that innate relationship with God which makes Him 'closer to man than his neck-vein' (50: 16)."

70. Not to give one's kin their rights and dues as commanded by Allah amounts to severing the relationship with them (Ibn Jarir).

Majid expands: "By this are meant the duties and obligations imposed by God toward Himself and toward

one's parents, family, neighbors, community, country and fellow creatures in general."

71. *Khaasir* is someone who suffers a loss or reduction in something (Qurtubi). Here, those are meant who lose the blessings of the Hereafter because of their disobedience to Allah. They will miss the Mercy of Allah when they will need it most (Ibn Jarir).

Thanwi adds: Not just in the Hereafter, but such a man loses many blessings of this world also, since most of his time is spent in scheming and planning to cause harm to others which results in the loss of his own peace.

72. The explanation of the verse attributed to Ibn Mas'ud, Ibn 'Abbas, some other Companions, Abu al 'Aliyyah, Al Hasan, Mujahid, Qatadah, Abu Saleh, Dahhak, and 'Ata al Khurasani is in another verse of the Qur'an (40: 11):

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَتْنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ وَأَخْيَرْنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ

"Lord! You gave us death twice, and

[29] It is He who created for you all that is in the earth,⁷³ then He turned⁷⁴ to the heavens and leveled them into seven firmaments.⁷⁵ And He has knowledge of everything.⁷⁶

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] And (recall) when your Lord said to the angels:⁷⁷ 'I am to place a khalifah⁷⁸ on earth.' They said: 'Will you place therein one who will do corruption in it and shed blood,⁷⁹ while we chant Your praises and sanctify Your Name?'⁸⁰ He said: 'Verily, I know what you do know not.'⁸¹

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَن يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

gave us life twice," i.e., 'You were dust before you were created: this is the first death. Then He quickened you and gave you life: this is the first life. Then you will die and will be returned to dust: this is the second death. Finally, you will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment: this is the second life. Thus, in total, two deaths and two lives (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

73. Some say, this implies that all that is in the earth is halal (lawful) until it is declared the contrary by the *Shari'ah*. Even if this opinion is not very accurate, it is undeniable that all that is there in the earth is of some benefit or the other to man (Qurtubi).

74. The words of the original are (*Istawa ila al sama'*) which have been interpreted as: "He turned to the

heavens," or, "He directed His attention to the heavens" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

75. One upon another, in layers, with a distance of 500 years of travel between each (Qatadah: Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir adds: This proves that the earth was created before the heavens, as we shall discuss in detail when we reach (verses 9-12 of *surah Fussilat* and) verses 27-32, of *surah al-Nazi'at*.

"The term *samaa'* ('heaven' or 'sky') is applied to anything that is spread like a canopy above any other thing. Thus, the visible skies which stretch like a vault above the earth and form, as it were, its canopy, are called *samaa'*: and this is the primary meaning of this term in the Qur'an; in a wider sense, it has the connotation of 'cosmic system'" (Asad).

It is generally believed that all that is perceptible to the human eye, whether through the naked eye or by means of instruments, is a part of the first firmament. There are six more to it.

76. Since it is He who created them, and every creator knows his creation.

77. By way of consultation, which demonstrates the esteem in which angels are held by their Lord.

“Angels are super terrestrial, incorporeal, real and objective beings, not personified qualities and abstractions. They are faithful servants of God and His trusted messengers, and as pure spirits absolutely sinless and incorruptible. They are, in Islam, as unmistakably distinct from ‘gods’ as from men” (Majid).

78. The word *khalifah* has been variously interpreted. We will discuss only those that have been stated by the commentators at this point.

Khilafah

Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shanqiti and many other commentators’ first choice of meaning is that the term *khalifah* is used for those who follow each other, i.e. successors, in the same sense in which Allah (swt) used the word in the verse (10: 14):

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لِنَنْظُرَ
كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ

“Then we placed you as successors in the land after them so that We might see how you act.”

Accordingly, Ibn Jarir says, a king is called ‘*khalifah*’ because he succeeds another that was before him.

He adds: Whom did man succeed? One explanation from Ibn ‘Abbas is that the earth was inhabited by the Jinn before the advent of man; they spread corruption and shed blood after which Allah (swt) sent in Iblis (*Shaytan*) with angels under his command to restore order. Iblis was able to destroy a large number of them and drive the rest to the mountains and seas. Subsequently, Allah (swt) created Adam and placed him in their stead; hence He said: ‘I am going to place a *khalifah* on the earth.’

Ibn Kathir agrees with Ibn Jarir in the meaning of the term. However, Ibn Kathir’s preference is that humans succeeds humans. His words are: A people who will follow each other on the earth, epoch after epoch, generation after generation, as said Allah (swt) in (35: 39):

وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ الْأَرْضِ

“He it is who made you succeed each other on the earth.”

Similarly, in (27: 62):

أَمَّنْ يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ
وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ الْأَرْضِ

"Who is it that responds to the call of the constrained when he calls Him and removes the evil, and makes you successors of the earth?"

Again, in (43: 60):

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ مَلَائِكَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ يَخْلُفُونَ
"And if We had willed We would have made of you angels succeeding one another on the earth."

Likewise, in (7: 169):

فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ
"Then came after them (evil) successors."

(Quotation from Ibn Kathir ends here).

A second meaning which is based on a statement attributed to Ibn Mas'ud, Ibn 'Abbas and some other Companions of the Prophet (*saws*), and as reported by Ibn Jarir, is that the term *khalifah* stands for anyone who will execute and administer Allah's orders on others and carry out His Will. Specifically, whom does it apply to? Qurtubi answers: Here, the term *khalifah* applies, according to Ibn Mas'ud, Ibn 'Abbas, and rest of the interpreters, to Adam (*asws*),

for he was appointed to administer Allah's commands.

Can the term be applied to all men? If the answer is yes, then the attendant difficulty has not gone unperceived, viz. if Man has been placed as a *khalifah* on the earth in the sense that he executes Allah's commands or Will, then, surely, he has not proven to be so. The great majority of his kind have, in all stages of Man's history, actually refused to acknowledge Allah's sovereignty, far from executing His Will. What then did Allah mean by calling him *khalifah*? Ibn Jarir, Kalbi and Shanqiti try to resolve the issue by advancing the theory that if this meaning of the term *khalifah* is correct then it was Adam (*asws*) and those who will follow in his footsteps both in submission to Allah as well as in executing His orders that are the *khulafa'*. As for the great majority, who spread corruption and shed blood, they are *khulafa'* in the other sense; viz. successors of those who went before them, generation after generation.

Imām Razi writes: Who is meant by the term *khalifah*? There are two opinions: one, Adam (*asws*), and the other, his progeny. It is the progeny that the angels had in mind when they said, 'Are You going to place

therein someone who is going to work corruption and shed blood?' Now, what is meant by the term *khalifah*? The answer is, as for those who said that Adam (*asws*) is meant by the word *khalifah*, they disagreed over the sense in which Allah used the term. One group holds that when Allah (*swt*) cleared the earth of the Jinn, and placed Adam (*asws*) in their stead, he became the successor and hence the *khalifah*. This is the opinion of Ibn `Abbas. The second opinion is that Adam was the *khali-fah* in the sense of executing and administering Allah's commands over His creations on earth. This opinion comes from Ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas, and Suddi. It is strengthened by the verse which says (38: 26):

يَا دَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ

'(O Da'ud) We have appointed you a khalifah on the earth.'

As for those who hold that the progeny of Adam is meant by the word *khalifah*, they said they are *khalifah* in the sense that they succeed each other. This is the opinion of Hasan al Busri, and is strengthened by the verse (35: 39):

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

'He it is who made you khala'if (successors) in the earth.'

Some people understand the term *khalifah* as someone who exercises authority delegated to him by Allah, and acts as His deputy or agent in enforcing that authority on others. Such a meaning is incorrect. Ibn Taymiyyah, who has extensively dealt with the subject, is especially averse to the use of the term *khalifatullah*, or the word *khalifah* in the sense of a deputy or an agent. He believes that the term *khalifah* has no religious or spiritual connotation; it merely indicates succession in time. He goes a step further and says that it is *shirk* to say that someone is *khalifatullah*, for Allah stands in no need of a deputy or agent, so that when Abu Bakr (*ra*) was addressed by someone as, "O *Khalifatullah*," (although in a sense he was, being the leader of the *ummah*, who executed Allah's commands and administered His laws), he angrily retorted: "I am not *khalifatullah*. I am *khalifatu Rasullullah* (i.e. the Prophet's successor)." Indeed Allah (*swt*) is Himself the *Khalifah* (i.e. one who takes care of those whose masters cannot look after them), as said the Prophet (*saws*) in the prayer words for the travelers:

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ الصَّاحِبُ فِي السَّفَرِ وَالْخَلِيفَةُ فِي الْأَهْلِ

"O Allah! (Truly) You are 'The Companion in the journey (with

us) and You are The *Khalifah* of the family (we have left behind).” (“The Political Thoughts of Ibn Taymiyyah,” Qamaruddin Khan).

When Allah (*swt*) uses the term *khalifah* for a Prophet, as He did for Da’ud (*asws*) in verse: “O Da’ud, We have appointed you a *khalifah* on the earth,” it means, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, *nubuwwah*, and when referred to their true followers it would mean *Imamah* (leadership), as in verse (24: 55):

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ

“Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good that He will surely make them the leaders in the land even as He made those before them leaders.”

Raghib al Asfahani wrote in his *Al Mufradat*: “*Khilafah* is substitution for another, either because of the death of he who is being substituted, or because of his absence, or because of his inability (to discharge his duties), or for the reasons of honoring a deputy. It is in this last sense that Allah has used the term for his true followers (*awliya*) on earth, as He said, ‘He it is who made you *khala’if* in the land.’”

Shanqiti also accepts the possibility that the allusion by the term *khali-fah* could be to Adam (*asws*), since he was a Prophet, and all Prophets are *khalifatullah*, although he does not elaborate on what exactly is meant by *khalifatullah*; nor does he extend the *Khilafah* to others, such as the true followers of the prophets.

Alusi is with Ibn Jarir in his preference and meaning of the term as applied to Adam (*asws*) and his progeny, except that he indicates that the preference of the *Sufiya* is that it is Adam who is meant by the term *khalifah* in this verse and that our Prophet (*saws*) is the *Khalifah al A`azam*.

Mufti Muhammad Shafi` is of the opinion that the last and final *khali-fah* of Allah was our Prophet, [using the term in the sense of *nubuwwah*], and that his *Khilafah* will last till the Last Hour. All those who rule by his *Shari`ah* will be “his” *khulafa*’, as indicated in a *hadith* in Bukhari and Muslim which records the Prophet (*saws*) as saying:

“كَانَتْ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ تَسُوسُهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ، كُلَّمَا هَلَكَ نَبِيٌّ خَلَفَهُ نَبِيٌّ، وَإِنَّهُ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدِي. وَسَتَكُونُ خُلَفَاءُ فَكَثْرٌ”

“The (political, social and reli-

gious) organization of the Children of Israel was in the hands of prophets. When one of the prophets died, Allah replaced him with another. After me, however, there will be no prophet, but *khulafa'* and there will be many."

Rashid Rida Misri has another interpretation to offer, according to which Man is *khalifah* in the general sense of being superior to all other creations of Allah, endowed with the powers of mind and intellect that make it possible, and hold promise for the future, of endless growth in the range of thought and action.

Summary

a) Ordinarily the term *khalifah* is used for those who succeed others. In this sense the progeny of Adam (*asws*) are *khulafa'*. They succeed each other, generation after generation.

b) The term can also be used for those who follow and execute Allah's will on the earth. The Prophets and (perhaps) their true followers are *khulafa'* in this sense.

c) *Khilafah* can also mean *nubuwwah* or *Imamah* depending on the application.

d) *Khilafah* can also refer to Man's

special position in the scheme of things because of the powers of thought and action that he has been given to the denial of many other beings. In this sense, that is, the ability (though to a very limited degree) to exercise power and abilities that are Divine (of course, to an unlimited degree), every individual is a potential *khalifah* who must prove his *Khilafah* by using the powers and abilities given, in accordance with his Lord's will.

d) Vicegerent is not the right word for *khalifah* because of the meaning of substitution inherent in it.

It might also be pointed out that in the political theory of Islam the term *khalifah* is synonymous with *Imam*, and *Khilafah* with *Imamah*, and this verse has been considered as the basis for the establishment of *Khilafah* in the *ummah*. Some commentators (for instance Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and Shanqiti) have, therefore, discussed at this point the question of *Imamate* or political leadership and organization of the *ummah* (Au.).

e) Another understanding has been, as discussed by al-Batliyusi (d. 637 AH) in his *al-Tanbih*, that Allah gave man the power of intellect, as a result of which he thinks, acts, leads, orders and prevents. Allah made the

land and sea, earth and heavens subjected to him, which is what it means to make him *Khalifah* on the earth.

In other words, some of the powers and attributes that Allah possesses in their unlimited degree, have been bestowed to man in a limited degree and allowed him freedom to exercise them; so that he hears and sees, manipulates and invents, constructs and destroys, orders and prevents, punishes or rewards, lays the rules and enforces the laws, is kind or angry, and consequently, rules over the earth, which has been termed as *Khilafah* of the earth, and he the *Khali-fah* (Au.).

Finally, according to Zayd b. 'Ali, a variant reading has been, *khaliqa* in place of *khalifah*, meaning "creation" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi and others). The verse will then mean, "And when your Lord said to the Angels: 'I am going to place a (new) creation in the earth.'

79. The angels said those words not by way of protest or complaint but out of wonder and further inquiry (Ibn Jarir), since they had the premonition that Man was going to spread corruption in the land (Ibn Kathir, Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn Mas'ud, a few other Companions, Suddi, Qatadah and

Hasan).

Another possibility is that they had known how the Jinn had behaved on the earth, and feared that the same will be repeated by Man (Ibn Kathir 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, Mujahid, Abu al 'Aliyyah).

Another opinion of Ibn 'Abbas' is that by way of this consultation the angels were put to test, as everyone of Allah's creation is put to test even the heaven and the earth were put to test when they were asked (41: 11):

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ
اِئْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ

"Then He assumed istawaa on the heaven - while it was smoke - and on the earth and said, 'Come willingly or unwillingly.' They said, 'We come willingly'" (Ibn Kathir).

80. The words tasbih and taqdis have several meanings. But, according to Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn Mas'ud, and some other Companions, in this verse they mean: "We worship, and address our supplications to You (*nusalli*)" Ibn Kathir.

However the general meaning of tasbih is to glorify and extol greatness, while that of taqdis is to sanctify, or

[31] And He taught Adam⁸² the names,⁸³ all of them, and then He presented them to the angels and said: 'Tell Me the names of these⁸⁴ (things) if you are true.'

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

purify, as well as 'celebrate holiness, and to proclaim greatness.' Hence, according to Ibn Jarir, the meaning is: "We purify Thee from all that the polytheists falsely attribute to You as Your qualities, worship You, and, attribute to You all the good qualities that truly belong to You as against the blasphemies uttered against You by the unbelievers."

A *hadith* in *Sahih* of Muslim reported by Abu Dhar (*ra*) says that the Prophet (*saws*) was asked,

عن أبي ذر: أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم سئل: أي الكلام أفضل؟ قال "ما اصطفى الله لملائكته أو لعباده: سبحان الله وبحمده".

"What words are the best?" He replied: "Those that Allah chose for His angels:

سبحان الله وبحمده".

81. According to Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn Mas'ud, a few Companions of the Prophet (*saws*), and Mujahid, the meaning is: "I know about the rebellious nature of Iblis (who used to live with them until then, and who pretended to be very pious), of which you are unaware" (Ibn Jarir).

Another opinion is that "it was in Allah's knowledge that among men would be Prophets, Messengers, and the pious who will inherit Paradise (something the angels had no known)" - Qatadah, Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi adds: But a more general meaning is also possible which is, 'I know what has happened in the past, what is happening now and what will happen in the future, which you do not.'

82. Ibn Jarir relates on the authority of Abu Musa al Ash'ari that the Prophet (*saws*) said: "Allah (*swt*) created Adam (*asws*) from a handful of dust that He took from all over the earth. Therefore, the children of Adam are of every hue and composition as the earth itself is: red, black, white, mixed, the cheerful the melancholic, the evil and the virtuous." But the *hadith* could not be traced in leading trustworthy works (Au.).

83. That is, taught him all the names of his own offspring, the angels, animals, and anything else he would have anything to do with (later in his life) Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir and oth-

[32] They said: 'Glory be to You, we know not save that which You have taught us. You indeed, You are the Knowing, the Wise.' ⁸⁵

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا
إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣٢﴾

ers.

"The term *ism* (name) implies to all philologists, an expression 'conveying the knowledge [of a thing]... applied to denote a substance or an accident or an attribute, for the purpose of distinction' (Lane IV, 1435): in philosophical terminology, a 'concept'" (Asad).

Yusuf Ali adds: "... (the) commentators take to mean the inner nature and qualities of things, and things here would include feelings."

84. This was in order to demonstrate that *Khilafah*, administration of justice and organization of life on the earth, required special qualities based on knowledge, which the angels lacked (Alusi).

85. Qurtubi comments: It is a good habit to say 'I do not know' when one is asked about a thing in religion and he does not know, referring the matter to the more knowledgeable following the example of the angels, the Prophets and good scholars. The Prophet has predicted that a time will come when knowledge will be with-

drawn due to the death of the 'ulamaa', so that only the ignorant will remain who will be asked and they will give answers based on their own opinion (rather than the revealed knowledge), misguiding themselves and others. In a *Sahih hadith* related by Ibn 'Umar, the Prophet is reported to have been asked about the best patch on the earth. He said,

خير البقاع المساجد وشر البقاع الأسواق (للحديث
شواهد يتقوى بها كما أفاده الحافظ ابن حجر -
فيض القدير)

"The best patches of the earth are mosques, and the worst the commercial centers."

[Qurtubi quotes a longer version as in Tabarani, but we have chosen the above which has been trusted by Ibn Hajar: Au.].

Qurtubi follows up with many examples coming from the Companions and others, one of which is related by Ka'b al Qurazi. He says that once a man asked 'Ali (ra) about something. He told him it is so and so. The man said, "No, leader of the faithful, it is actually this way." 'Ali said in reply: "You are right and I

[33] He said: 'O Adam, tell them the names of these (things).' ⁸⁶ When he had told them their names, He said: 'Did I not tell you that I am aware of the unknown of the heavens and the earth, and I am aware of what you reveal and what you conceal?' ⁸⁷

قَالَ يَا آدَمُ أَنْبِئْهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] And when We said to the angels: 'Prostrate yourselves before Adam.' ⁸⁸ They fell prostrate, except Iblis. ⁸⁹ He refused, waxed pride, and became of the infidels. ⁹⁰

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

was wrong." Another example is that of Imām Malik. Haytham b. Jamil reports: "I was present when he was asked 48 questions. In reply to 32 of them he said, 'I do not know.'"

As to which of the two is superior, the angels or man, Qurtubi states that there is no consensus among the scholars over the question because of lack of an authoritative statement of the Prophet. The fact that angels were asked to prostrate before Adam (*asws*), he adds, does not necessarily prove that Man is superior to angels.

86. This shows that the qualifications for *Khilafah* are knowledge and understanding (so long as one's practice is not in contradiction with his knowledge), and not deeds and spiritual exercises (Thanwi).

Razi writes: This verse proves the merit of knowledge. Had there been

anything else more meritorious than knowledge, Allah (*swt*) would have asked Adam to demonstrate it.

87. That is, I am aware of the pride and arrogance that Iblis conceals in his heart (Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn Mas'ud, and others Tabari).

Razi comments: You should know that no one knows the secrets of Allah's wisdom save Himself. The angels for instance saw only the evil qualities in man, and belittled him on that score. In Iblis they saw only the qualities of devotion to Allah and held him in great esteem. But Allah knew that even if Adam committed sins, he will come back with repentance, and that even if Iblis devoted himself to Allah, he would come up with the boastful assertion, "I am better than he," (as stated in the Qur'an as his reason of refusal to prostrate himself to Adam).

[35] Then We said: 'O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the garden (of Eden),⁹¹ and eat freely thereof from where (and of what) you wish⁹² but draw not near this tree⁹³ lest you become of the transgressors.'⁹⁴

وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ
وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا
هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

﴿٣٥﴾

88. Prostration before Allah is by way of worship, and before others it is by way of reverence as was the prostration of the angels before Adam or of Yusuf's brothers before him (Zamakhshari). Now, it remains totally prohibited in Islam. The Prophet was asked by his Companions if they could prostrate themselves before him. He replied that it is not permissible in our *Shari'ah*. "Had it been permissible," he said, "I would have asked women to prostrate themselves before their husbands" (Ibn Kathir).

89. Literally, Iblis is the "despaired one." That is, despaired of ever being forgiven for his sin of disobedience emanating from pride. It is not clear how Iblis (Satan) reached the company of the angels in order to be included among those who were ordered to prostrate themselves to Adam. The opinion of Ibn 'Abbas as reported by Ibn Jarir is that he was of a tribe of angels called Jinn who had been created from fire, while other angels had been created from Light (*noor*). Outwardly, he professed to be a very pious person devoted to Allah,

but inwardly proud and rebellious. Another opinion is that of Hasan al Busri who believes he was never one of the angels, but of a different species. When he was commissioned by Allah to discipline the Jinn on the earth who were shedding much blood among themselves, and when he succeeded in driving them away into the mountains and seas, he was promoted and allowed to live among the angels in the heavens. Hence, when the angels were ordered to prostrate themselves before Adam (*asws*), he became one of those to whom the order was applicable. Ibn Kathir believes Al Hasan's opinion is strong and authentic.

90. The last phrase of the original can also be translated as: "He (already) was (in the knowledge of Allah) of the infidels" (Qurtubi); for he was proud, and a proud person will not enter Paradise. A *hadith* of Muslim says:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ
ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ كِبَرٍ

[36] But Satan caused them to slip about it,⁹⁵ and brought them out of that they were in.⁹⁶ So We said: 'Go down: some of you enemies unto others.'⁹⁷ For you shall be a sojourn in the earth and enjoyment for a time.'

فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٣٦﴾

"Whoever bears in his heart as little pride as equal to the weight of an atom, will not enter Paradise" (Ibn Kathir).

91. Although it is not stated explicitly in the Qur'an if by the term *jannah* the allusion here is to the same Paradise that the people will be rewarded with in the Hereafter, most scholars deduce from the verses that follow and from various *ahadith* on the subject that Adam and Eve dwelt in the same Paradise.

"Was the Garden of Eden a place on this earth? Obviously not, for, in verse 36 below, it was after the Fall that the sentence was pronounced: 'On earth will be your dwelling place'" (Yusuf Ali).

92. They were allowed to eat the fruits from any part of the Garden so that they might have no excuse for eating from the single prohibited tree (Zamakhshari).

93. "Note that the tree remains nameless and unspecified in the Qur'an" (Majid).

In the absence of a *hadith*, Ibn Jarir presents various opinions but concludes that it is pointless to find out what tree it was, since, it has no bearing on our life. *Shajarah*, he says, is used in Arabic for any plant that can stand on its stem, and hence is also applicable to the stems of grains such as wheat.

94. That is, those who transgress their own souls through disobedience of their Lord.

95. Majid writes: "This shows that the Prophets can commit mistakes. Says Mullah 'Ali Qari in his "Sharh al Fiqh al Akbar": 'The Prophets have slipped and committed errors ... This is the opinion held by the majority of scholars....as against the *Sufiya* and some philosophers (*mutakallimun*) who deny this and say that the Prophets have not been subject to forgetfulness or errors.'"

96. That is, brought them out of the state of peace, abundance, and innocence by inducing them to eat from the tree. The Qur'an says elsewhere

[37] Thereafter Adam learned certain words⁹⁸ from His Lord, and He turned to him (in mercy).⁹⁹ Indeed He is the Oft turning, the All-merciful.

فَتَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٣٧﴾

that both of them ate from the forbidden tree. See *Taa-ha*, verse 121 (Au.).

97. That is, Adam and Eve (peace upon them), and Satan the accursed.

98. According to Ibn 'Abbas, al Hasan, Sa'id b. Jubayr, Dahhak, and Mujahid, the words were (7: 23):

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

"O Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us, and show us compassion, indeed we shall be the losers."

Ibn Kathir also mentions Hakim as having recorded in his "*Mustadrak*" a report (on the criteria of Bukhari and Muslim) according to which Ibn 'Abbas said that the words alluded to in this verse are the following:

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما ، فتلقى آدم من ربه كلمات فتاب عليه قال : أي رب ألم تخلقني بيدك ؟ قال : " بلى " . قال : أي رب ، ألم تنفخ في من روحي ؟ قال : " بلى " . قال : أي رب ، ألم تسكني جنتك ؟ قال : " بلى " . قال : أي رب ألم تسبق رحمتك غضبي ؟ قال : " بلى " . قال : أرأيت إن تبت وأصلحت أراجعي أنت إلى الجنة ؟ قال : " بلى " . قال : فهو قوله (فتلقى آدم من ربه

كلمات) - هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد ولم يخرجاه (تعليق الذهبي قي التلخيص : على شرط البخاري ومسلم)

"Adam said, 'O My Lord! Did You not create me with Thy own Hands?'"

It was said: 'Yes.'

'And blew into me a spirit from You?'

It was said: 'Yes.'

'And my Lord: Did You not place me in Paradise?'

It was said: 'Yes.'

'And is it not true that Your Compassion has overcome Your anger?'

It was said: 'Indeed.'

'And You had written it beforehand that I will commit this error?'

It was said: 'Indeed.'

'Will You then allow me back into the Paradise if I repented?'

[38] We said: 'Go down (to the earth)¹⁰⁰, all of you from this (place). Then, whenever comes to you a Guidance¹⁰¹ from Me then those who followed My Guidance will have nothing to fear nor shall they grieve.

قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعاً فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

[39] As for those who disbelieved and denied Our signs,¹⁰² they indeed shall be the inhabitants of the Fire.¹⁰³ They shall abide in it forever.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

He said: 'Yes.'

The reference then is to the words, "When Adam obtained from his Lord a few words."

99. Note that Eve (*asws*) has not been mentioned as also being forgiven. This is because in the Qur'anic method of narration women are not mentioned separately unless there is a specific need. They are included by default in any address to man (Au.).

100. Although the sin was forgiven, i.e., no punishment followed, Adam and Eve (*asws*) had to still descend to the earth (in consequence of the physical effects and: Au.) because Allah (*swt*) wished to try them and their progeny, and to impress upon them that if a single sin was the cause of their exit, how would an easy re entry be possible for anyone loaded with many? (Qurtubi).

Shafi` has the following point: The first order to "go down" was because of the sin committed. But after Adam repented, and Allah forgave him, he had yet to descend to the earth in order to assume *Khilafah*, which was one of the many purposes of his creation.

101. In the form of a Prophet or revealed literature that he will leave behind (Au.).

102. Mawdudi writes: "*Ayat* is the plural of *ayah* which means a sign or token which directs one to something important... (In the Qur'an) sometimes it denotes a sign or an indication. In certain other places the phenomena of the universe are called the *ayat* (signs) of Allah, for the reality to which the phenomena points is hidden behind the veil of appearances. At times the miracles performed by the Prophets are also termed *ayat*,

[40] Children of Israel!¹⁰⁴ Remember My favors¹⁰⁵ wherewith I favored you, and fulfill My covenant I shall fulfill your covenant,¹⁰⁶ and fear Me alone.

يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِي أَوْفٍ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُون ﴿٤٠﴾

since they show that the Prophets were envoys of the Sovereign of the universe. Lastly, individual units of the Book of Allah are also called *ayat* because they point to the ultimate reality, and because the substantive excellences are clear tokens of the attributes of the Author of the Book. The sense in which the word *ayah* has been used in a particular verse becomes evident from the context of its occurrence.”

103. The Prophet (*saws*) has said:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ”أَمَّا أَهْلُ النَّارِ الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَهْلُهَا، فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يَمُوتُونَ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَوْنَ. وَلَكِنْ قَوْمٌ أَصَابَتْهُمْ النَّارُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ (أَوْ قَالَ بِخَطَايَاهُمْ) فَأَمَاتَتْهُمْ إِمَاتَةً. حَتَّى إِذَا كَانُوا فَحْمًا. أُذِنَ بِالشَّفَاعَةِ“.

“As for the people of the Fire, they shall be its inhabitants. They shall neither die in it nor live. But there will be people who would have entered into it because of their sins and errors. It will kill them in one go. When they would have become coals, intercession would be permitted on their behalf” (Ibn Jarir). Ibn Kathir adds

that a similar *hadith* has been recorded by Muslim.

104. The address at the time of revelation was to the Jews of Madinah, but with the lapse of that historical situation, it is to the Jews of all times, as well as all those who will follow them in their footsteps, not excluding the Muslims. Note the tenderness in the appeal and mildness of reproach. This is because this was the first direct call and the Prophet’s first encounter with them. The tone became harsher with the passage of time and experience of their increased obduracy and hostility (Au.)

Israel was the title conferred on Ya`qub (Jacob), the son of Is-haq (Isaac) and the grandson of Ibrahim (*asws*). The progeny of Ya`qub were known as the Children of Israel. According to Ibn `Abbas, the meaning of the term is “the slave of God” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir), since “*Isra*” in Hebrew stands for “slave” and “ail” for God (Ruh).

The Christian Biblical commentators state that the meaning of the

term is “the soldier of God,” a title which Jacob won when he defeated God in a wrestling bout! Genesis: 32. Whatever the meaning, not all the Jews were the progeny of Ya`qub at the time of the address. Many of them in and around Madinah were, in fact, Arabs and of the Isma`ili line. As for the modern Jews, the great majority of them have no lineage with that Prophet. With several large scale massacres at the hands of their enemies at different times in history, and conversion of new peoples to Judaism (the East Europeans, Russians, Ethiopians, Middle easterners, etc.), the original stock is lost. However, they were addressed as the Children of Israel because that is how they loved to be addressed (Au.).

Ibn Kathir writes: The point in addressing them in a manner they liked most was as if to tell them: ‘O the progeny of an obedient slave of Ours! Be like your forefathers.’

Majid comments: “This nation of priests, patriarchs and prophets, perhaps the most remarkable people in ancient history, blessed of their Lord, always great in the realm of religion and faith, and mighty and glorious for long periods in the affairs of the world, had migrated in their thousands, after the capture of Jerusa-

lem by the Romans under Titus, into Arabia, and had settled in and around Madinah long before the advent of the holy Prophet. The whole of the north western Arabia was dotted over by their colonies, and many of the Arab pagans, in the course of time, had come to adopt their ways and their faith. In the third century of the Christian era an Arabian tribe, even so remote as in the south of the Peninsula, was led to adopt the Jewish faith. As proud possessors of the book and the divine Law, and even more as adept in crude occult sciences and magical crafts, these Arab Jews were in early days of Islam, in effect intellectually the dominating masters of the country. In matters religious and divine they were the trusted advisers of the unlettered pagans and their acknowledged superiors. Jewish legends, Jewish tenets and Jewish feats of exorcism were by now popular knowledge throughout Arabia. The ‘idolatry of Arabia,’ to use the words of Muir, had formed a compromise with Judaism, and had imbibed many of its legends and perhaps many of its tenets. It was the Jews, again, who had been long predicting a new redeemer, and had been keenly looking for him. This helps to explain the extent of attention they receive in the Qur`an, and

the long series of admonitions, warnings and exhortations addressed to them. In the domain of religion they were always the foremost: in Arabia, contemporaneous with Islam, their importance stood especially high."

105. Drawing the meaning from the comments of Ibn `Abbas, Abu al `Aliyyah, and Mujahid, Ibn Jarir says that the favors wherewith Allah (*swt*) favored the Children of Israel are: His choice of Messengers from among them, revelation of Books unto them, releasing them from the tyrannies of Fir`awn and his people, giving them a foothold in the holy land, springing forth of water from a piece of rock, and feeding them with *mann and salwa*. He reminded them of His favors shown to their fathers in order that the progeny might not forget (their unique position with God), and might not commit those acts that entail Allah's anger.

Qurtubi and Sabuni note: The Gnostics say: 'The worshippers of favors and blessings are many. But the worshippers of Him who grants favors and blessings are few. The Israelites were asked to remember the favors, in order that they might reach

through them the One who bestows. In contrast, the Muslims were told to remember the One who grants favors. They were told (2: 152): "*Remember Me, I will remember you,*" so that they might know Him who grants the favors. Then, through Him, they could seek the favors. The two situations are poles apart.'

106. What was the covenant of God with the Israelites? It was to the effect that if they remained true to their part of the covenant, He will be pleased with them and reward them in the Hereafter with Paradise (Ibn `Abbas, Suddi, Dahhak, Abu al `Aliyyah, Rabi': Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

According to Hasan al Busri (Ibn Kathir), the details of the covenant are in verse 12 of *surah al Ma'idah* which says (5: 12):

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ وَبَعَثْنَا مِنْهُمُ اثْنَيْ
عَشَرَ نَقِيبًا وَقَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ لَئِنْ أَقَمْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ
وَاتَيْتُمُ الزَّكَاةَ وَآمَنْتُمْ بِرُسُلِي وَعَزَّرْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَقْرَضْتُمُ اللَّهَ
قَرْضًا حَسَنًا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّكُمْ
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

"Allah took compact with the Children of Israel; and We raised up from among them twelve chieftains. And Allah said, 'I am with you. Surely, if you perform the

[41] Believe in that I have sent, confirming that which is with you,¹⁰⁷ and be not the first to disbelieve in it.¹⁰⁸ Barter not My signs for a paltry price,¹⁰⁹ and fear Me alone.

وَأْمِنُوا بِمَا أُنزِلَتْ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ وَلَا تَكُونُوا أَوَّلَ كَافِرٍ بِهِ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا وَإِيَّايَ فَاتَّقُونِ ﴿٤١﴾

prayer, and pay the alms, and believe in My Messengers and succor them, and lend to Allah a good loan, I will acquit you of your evil deeds, and I will admit you to gardens underneath which rivers flow.”

Ibn Jurayj has said: This also happens to be the compact between us (Muslims) and Allah (Ibn Jarir).

107. Disbelief in the new revelation will amount to disbelief in your own revelation which the new revelation confirms as true (Au.).

108. That is, having known the theme of past revelations, and the common elements of divine guidance, of which the new guidance is also composed, it was not difficult for the Jews to judge whether the new call had a divine origin or not. Accordingly, they should have been the first to believe in the message of Islam and not the first to reject it. In fact, before the advent of Islam, they used to promise the pagan Arabs that soon a new Prophet would appear in whom they would be the first to believe and who would lead them to

victory and destroy their enemies for good (*Ruh*).

109. That is, do not, O Rabbis, hesitate from spreading the word of Allah as found in your holy writ, in fear that if people begin to follow it you will lose your influence. The Prophet (*saws*) has said in a *hadith* of Abu Da'ud:

”مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ عِلْمًا مَّا يُبْتَغَى بِهِ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ لَا يَتَعَلَّمُهُ إِلَّا لِيُصِيبَ بِهِ عَرَضًا مِنَ الدُّنْيَا لَمْ يَجِدْ عَرْفَ الْجَنَّةِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ - يَعْنِي رِجْهَهَا“.

“Whoever sought knowledge that is normally sought for Allah’s pleasure, for the sake of worldly rewards, will not even smell Paradise on the Day of Judgment” (Ibn Kathir).

Zamakhshari adds: The allusion is to the practice of the Rabbis who took a share of the fruits and crops which were in fact bribes offered to them by the commoners for securing rulings that made it easy for them to follow the “Law.” The allusion is also to the financial help they received from their rulers for concealing the truth or giving the law a twist.

Although the Jews are the subject of the verse, a glaring example of this bartering of the truth for paltry price was provided by the Christians of Najran whose delegation appeared in Madinah those very days. They were sixty riders headed by three men, 1) Abu Haritha, a religious scholar and Bishop, 2) `Abd al Masih, in general command of the delegate, and 3) Al Ayham who looked after transport and general administration. Abu Haritha confided to his brother, Kurz b. Alqamah that he was convinced that Muhammad (*saws*) was a true Prophet. "Then what prevents you from accepting him?" asked the astonished brother. He replied, "The way these people (the Romans) have treated us. They bestowed titles on us, paid us subsidies, (built churches for us), and honored us. And they are absolutely opposed to him. If I accept him, they will withdraw from us all that you see (with us)" (Sirah Rasulullah, Ibn-Is haq).

In connection with speaking out the truth and not bartering it away for a paltry price, Qurtubi gives us the account of Abu Hazim's encounter with the Umayyad king Sulayman. The original source is Darami, and here we present it in a truncated form but leaving the original text in full for Arab readers' enjoyment.

أخبرنا الضحاك بن موسى قال: مر سليمان بن عبد الملك بالمدينة - وهو يريد مكة - فأقام بها أياما فقال: هل بالمدينة أحد أدرك أحدا من أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم؟ قالوا له: أبو حازم فأرسل إليه فلما دخل عليه قال له: يا أبا حازم ما هذا الجفاء؟ قال أبو حازم: يا أمير المؤمنين وأي جفاء رأيت مني؟ قال: أتاني وجوه أهل المدينة ولم تأتني! قال يا أمير المؤمنين أعينك بالله أن تقول ما لم يكن ما عرفتني قبل هذا اليوم ولا أنا رأيتك! قال: فالتفت إلى محمد ابن شهاب الزهري فقال: أصاب الشيخ وأخطأت.

قال سليمان: يا أبا حازم ما لنا نكره الموت؟ قال: لانكم أخرجتم الآخرة وعمرتم الدنيا فكرهتم أن تنتقلوا من العمران إلى الخراب قال أصبت يا أبا حازم فكيف القدوم غدا على الله تعالى؟ قال: أما المحسن فكالغائب يقدم على أهله وأما المسيء فكالآبق يقدم على مولاه.

فبكى سليمان وقال: ليت شعري! ما لنا عند الله؟ قال: اعرض عملك على كتاب الله.

قال: وأي مكان أجده؟ قال: "إن الأبرار لفي نعيم وإن الفجار لفي جحيم" [الانفطار: ١٣ - ١٤].

قال سليمان: فأين رحمة الله يا أبا حازم؟ قال أبو حازم: رحمة الله قريب من المحسنين قال له سليمان: يا أبا حازم فأني عباد الله أكرم؟ قال: أولو المروءة والنهي.

قال له سليمان: فأني الأعمال أفضل؟ قال أبو حازم أداء الفرائض مع اجتناب المحارم.

قال سليمان: فأني الدعاء أسمع؟ قال دعاء المحسن إليه للمحسن.

فقال: أي الصدقة أفضل؟ قال: للسائل البائس وجهه المقل ليس فيها من ولا أذى.

قال: فأبي القول أعدل؟ قال: قول الحق عند من تخافه أو ترجوه.

قال: فأبي المؤمنين أكيس؟ قال: رجل عمل بطاعة الله ودل الناس عليها.

قال: فأبي المؤمنين أحق؟ قال: رجل انحط في هوى أخيه وهو ظالم فباع آخرته بدنيا غيره قال له سليمان: أصبت فما تقول فيما نحن فيه؟ قال يا أمير المؤمنين أو تعفيني؟ قال له سليمان: لا! ولكن نصيحة تلقئها إلي.

قال: يا أمير المؤمنين إن آباءك قهروا الناس بالسيف وأخذوا هذا الملك عنوة على غير مشورة من المسلمين ولا رضاهم حتى قتلوا منهم مقتلة عظيمة فقد ارتحلوا عنها فلو شعرت ما قالوه وما قيل لهم!.

فقال له رجل من جلسائه: بغس ما قلت يا أبا حازم! قال أبو حازم: كذبت إن الله أخذ ميثاق العلماء ليبيننه للناس ولا تكتمونه.

قال له سليمان: فكيف لنا أن نصلح؟ قال: تدعون الصلف وتمسكون بالمرؤة وتقسمون بالسوية.

قال له سليمان: فكيف لنا بالمأخذ به؟ قال أبو حازم: تأخذه من حله وتضعه في أهله.

قال له سليمان: هل لك يا أبا حازم أن تصحبنا فتصيب منا ونصيب منك؟ قال أعوذ بالله! قال له سليمان: ولم ذاك؟ قال: أخشى أن أركن إليكم شيئا قليلا فيذيقني الله ضعف الحياة وضعف الممات.

قال له سليمان ارفع إلينا حوائجك قال: تنجيني من النار وتدخلني الجنة.

قال له سليمان: ليس ذاك إلي! قال له أبو حازم: فما لي إليك حاجة غيرها.

قال: فادع لي. قال أبو حازم: اللهم إن كان سليمان وليك فيسره الخير الدنيا والآخرة وإن كان عدوك فخذ بناصيته إلى ما تحب وترضى قال له سليمان

قط! قال أبو حازم: قد أوجزت وأكثرت إن كنت من أهله وإن لم تكن من أهله فما ينبغي أن أرمي عن قوس ليس لها وتر قال له سليمان أوصني قال سأوصيك وأوجز: عظم ربك ونزهه أن يراك حيث نهاك أو يفقدك حيث أمرك.

فلما خرج من عنده بعث إليه بمائة دينار وكتب [إليه] أن أنفقها ولك عندي مثلها كثير قال فردها عليه وكتب إليه يا أمير المؤمنين أعيدك بالله أن يكون سؤالك إياي هزلا أو ردي عليك بذلا وما أرضاها لك فكيف [أرضاها] لنفسي!

“When Sulayman b. `Abd al Malik visited Madinah he asked his courtiers whether there was any one in the town who had seen a Companion of the Prophet (saws). They named Abu Hazim. Sulayman sent word to him that he would be glad to receive him. When Abu Hazim came Sulayman complained that he did not come on his own, rather, had to be invited. He replied that the two had not known each other previously. Sulayman asked him: “Why do we fear death, Abu Hazim?” Abu Hazim replied, “Because you have built this world and destroyed your Hereafter and hate to shift from a beautified world to a ruined one.” Sulayman remarked, “I think you are right,” Then he asked: “What kind of returning will ours be to the Hereafter?” Abu Hazim an-

[42] Do not confound the Truth with falsehood,¹¹⁰ nor conceal it¹¹¹ while you know. وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

swered: "For those who did well in this world it will be like someone returning to his home and family. As for him who did evil, it will be like a runaway slave reporting back to his master." This brought tears to Sulayman's eyes. He said: "God! I wonder what's in store for us in the Hereafter." Abu Hazim replied: "Well, you might weigh your deeds against the Qur'ān." Sulayman asked: "What will be my place there?" Abu Hazim recited the verse (82: 13, 14): "*The righteous will be in bliss, and the libertines will be in a fiery furnace.*" At that Sulayman protested: "And where is Allah's mercy?" Abu Hazim quoted another verse (7: 56): "*Allah's mercy is very near the righteous.*" Then, as the conversation proceeded, Sulayman asked Abu Hazim's opinion about himself as a ruler and his government. Abu Hazim asked to be spared the answer. But Sulayman persisted. So he said: "You know that your forefathers came to power not by the people's consent or council but through brute force, killing a large number of their opponents.

They are gone; but only if you knew how the people remember them now!" Upon this one of the courtiers interjected: "You have spoken evil, Abu Hazim." Abu Hazim shot back: "You have lied. (I have said what I should have). Allah has taken a pledge from us scholars that we shall speak the truth and never conceal it."

Later, Sulayman sent him a hundred Dinars. Abu Hazim returned it saying, "I do not approve it for you, how could I approve it for myself?"

110. Here, the term "the truth" refers to *Tawrah* and "falsehood" to its interpolations (Ibn Zayd: Tabari). But to Abu al 'Aliyyah this refers to the Jews of Madinah admitting that Muhammad (*saws*) was a true Prophet but raised for the non Jews alone, and not for them at all. This he thinks is being referred to as confounding the truth with falsehood (Qurtubi).

111. The 'truth' that they used to conceal was the fact of Muhammad (*saws*) being the Prophet (whose advent was promised in the Biblical literature): Ibn 'Abbas, Abu al 'Ali-

yyah, Mujahid Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir.

Asad makes a point “.... The suppression of truth refers to their disregard or deliberately false interpretation of the words of Moses in the Biblical passage, ‘The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken’ (Deuteronomy xviii, 15), and the words attributed to God Himself, ‘I will raise them up a prophet from among thy brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in his mouth’ (Deuteronomy xviii, 18).”

Mawdudi writes: “For the proper understanding of the verse we need to recall that in the time of the Prophet the Jews of Arabia were more learned than the Arabs. In fact, there were some Jewish scholars of Arabia whose fame had spread even beyond the confines of that land. For this reason the Arabs tended to be intellectually overawed by them. In addition, the influence of the Jews had become pervasive and profound by virtue of the pomp and pageantry of their religious rites, and the magical crafts and feats of exorcism for which they were famous. The people of Madinah, in particular, were greatly under the spell of the Jews. These Jews made on them the sort

of impression generally created on ignorant neighbors by a better educated, more refined and more conspicuously religious group.

“It was natural in such circumstances that, when the Prophet began to preach his message, the ignorant Arabs should approach the Jews and ask their opinion of the Prophet and his teachings, particularly as the Jews also believed in Prophets and Scriptures. We find that this inquiry was often made by the Makkans, and continued to be addressed to the Jews after the Prophet arrived in Madinah.

“In reply to this query, however, the Jewish religious scholars never told the candid truth. It was impossible for them to say that the doctrine of monotheism preached by Muhammad was incorrect, that there was any error in his teachings regarding the Prophets, the Divine Scriptures, the angels and the next life and that there was any error in the principles of moral conduct which the Prophet propounded. At the same time, however, they were not prepared to make a straightforward affirmation of the truth of his teachings. In short, they neither categorically denied the Truth nor were prepared to accept it with open hearts.

[43] Perform the Prayers, pay the alms¹¹² and *وَاقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ*
*bow down along with those who bow.*¹¹³

“Instead, they tried to plant insidious doubts in the minds of everybody who enquired about the Prophet and his mission. They sought to create one misgiving after another, disseminated new slanders, and tried to engage people’s minds in all kinds of hypothetical problems so as to keep them in a state of doubt and uncertainty. They also tried to raise controversial issues which might keep people, including the followers of the Prophet, entangled in sterile debate. It is this attitude of the Jews to which the Qur’ān alludes when it asks them not to overlay the truth with falsehood, not to suppress and conceal it by resorting to false propaganda and mischievous campaigns of slander, and not to attempt to deceive the world by mixing truth with falsehood.”

Razi comments: You should know that there are two effective ways by which a man can be misguided. They arise from two different situations: one in which the arguments in favor of truth have reached one, and the other in which the arguments have not yet reached him. In the first case, i.e., when the arguments have

reached him, the way to misguide him is to confound those arguments so that he gets confused and remains undecided. The other way is to work against the arguments and prevent them from reaching the person. Now, both of these were practiced by the Jews who used to confound those whom the arguments had reached as well as prevent the arguments from reaching those that had not received them; hence the verse.

112. The word used in the original is *zakah*, which has in its roots two meanings: one, increase, and the other, purification and cleansing. Alms create both these effects. They increase welfare in a society as well as cleanse and purify the hearts of those who give out (Au.).

“In the language of the Islamic law it means: the poor rate, the portion, or amount, of property that is given therefrom as the due of God, by its possessor to the poor in order that he may purify it thereby” (Majid from Lane’s Lexicon).

113. Thanwi writes: Deeds are of two kinds: external and internal. Again, the external deeds are of two

[44] Do you enjoin the people to righteousness and forget yourselves,¹¹⁴ while you recite the Book?¹¹⁵ Do you not understand?

أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

kinds: physical and monetary. Hence the three injunctions: *salah*, which is an external and physical deed; *zakah*, which is also an external but a monetary deed; and humility, which is an internal deed and which has been alluded to in the words: “bow down.”

Of these, humility is something that is to be learnt from those who are humble. Hence, “bow with those who bow.”

Further, the three directives suited the Jewish situation most. *Salah* would have decreased their love of power, *zakah* their greed of wealth, and humility would have cured the diseases of envy, hatred, etc. These were the three major diseases that afflicted them.”

114. According to one opinion of Ibn `Abbas, the meaning is: ‘You enjoin the people O Rabbis, to believe in the *Tawrah* and to be true to the compact of God (that you will worship none but Him and will believe in every new Messenger sent by Him), but you do not do that yourself.’ Others, such as Suddi, Qatadah, Ibn Jurayj and Ibn Zayd, believe that the meaning is more general and refers

to the Jewish practice of preaching piety, godliness, obedience to God, and other practical virtues but not practicing them (Ibn Jarir).

It is also possible that reference is to, as Dahhak has said, the advice of the Jewish Rabbis to the pagan Arabs to accept Islam. This they used to do in the early days of Islam at Makkah in the hope that since the Prophet was preaching worship of one God and upholding those virtues and values that were the central themes of *Tawrah*, ultimately he would come around and follow their religion. In that event, they conjectured, he would bring with him the pagans too to the Jewish fold. But when that did not happen, rather, when the Prophet (*saws*) changed the direction of Prayers from Jerusalem to Makkah, after facing it for a year and a half in Madinah, they lost all hopes and began to advise the pagans not to give the ear to the new message (Au.).

This does not mean, says Ibn Kathir, that a non practicing person should not preach. Rather, a preacher should also practice. There are several

ahadith that warn those who preach but forget themselves. A *hadith* of Tabarani says:

عن أبي تيمية عن جندب بن عبد الله الأزدي صاحب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم مثل العالم الذي يعلم الناس الخير وينسى نفسه كمثل السراج يضيء للناس ويحرق نفسه (جمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد: رجاله موثقون)

“The example of a scholar who preaches virtue to the people but does not practice himself is like that of a lamp which gives light to the people but burns itself out.” Another *hadith*, which is in *Musnad Ahmad* (and whose another version is declared trustworthy by Haythami: Au.), says:

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- "مَرَرْتُ لَيْلَةً أُسْرِي بِي عَلَى قَوْمٍ تَعْرِضُ شِفَاهَهُمْ بِمَقَارِضَ مِنْ نَارٍ قَالَ قُلْتُ مَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ قَالُوا حُطَبَاءُ مِنْ أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا كَانُوا يَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَيَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ "مسند أحمد"

“During my Ascent to the Heavens (*me`raj*) I passed by some people whose lips were being sheared with scissors of fire. I asked (Jibril) who those people were. He said they were the preachers (*khutaba*) of your nation who enjoined the people to righteousness but forgot themselves. And they recited the Book, should

they not have thought?” In a *hadith* recorded by Bukhari, Usama b. Zayd reports the Prophet (*saws*) as having said:

يُجَاءُ بِالرَّجُلِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَيُلْقَى فِي النَّارِ فَتَنْدَلِقُ أَقْنَابُهُ فِي النَّارِ فَيَدُورُ كَمَا يَدُورُ الْحِمَارُ بِرَحَاهُ فَيَجْتَمِعُ أَهْلُ النَّارِ عَلَيْهِ فَيَقُولُونَ أَيُّ فَلَانٍ مَا شَأْنُكَ أَلَيْسَ كُنْتَ تَأْمُرُنَا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَانَا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ قَالَ كُنْتُ أَمُرُّكُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلَا آتِيهِ وَأَنْهَأُكُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَتِيهِ

“A man will be brought forth on the Day of Reckoning and thrown into the Fire. (The impact) will bring out his intestines around which he will circle like a donkey in the mill. The people of the Fire will gather around him and ask: ‘O so and so! What’s your problem? Are you not the one who used to bid us unto righteousness and forbid us the vice?’ He will reply: ‘Yes! I bid you to righteousness but neglected it myself, and forbade you vice but committed it myself.’”

Dahhak relates of Ibn `Abbas that a man came to him and said that he wished to enjoin the people to righteousness and forbid the vices. Ibn `Abbas asked him if he had attained that status. The man said: “Hopefully, yes.” Ibn `Abbas told him: “If you do not fear that three verses of the Qur`an will disgrace you, then go ahead.” “What are they?” the man

enquired. Ibn `Abbas said, "The first is (2: 44):

أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ

'Do you enjoin the people to righteousness and forget yourselves?'

Then he asked: "Are you through with this?" The man said, 'No.' Ibn `Abbas continued: "The second is (61: 2, 3):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ كَبُرَ مُقْتًا
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

'Believers! Why do you enjoin that which you do not practice? It is most despising to Allah that you should enjoin that which you do not practice.'

Then Ibn `Abbas asked the man: "Are you through with this?" The man said, 'No.' Ibn `Abbas continued: "The third is the statement of Shu`ayb (*asws*) who said (11: 88):

وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَمْلِكَكُمْ إِلَىٰ مَا أَتَاهُمْ عَنْهُ إِنْ أُرِيدُ
إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ

'I do not wish to do what I forbid you. I only wish to reform.' Then Ibn `Abbas enquired: "Are you through with this?" When the man again confessed a no, Ibn `Abbas told him: "Then begin with yourself."

(Quotation from Ibn Kathir ends here).

Nevertheless, the emphasis is on the preacher to practice what he preaches. However, if he cannot, because of his weaknesses, let him not give up his preaching either, for it is possible that Allah will guide him to live by what he preaches. Qurtubi reports Sa`id b. Jubayr as having said that if one were to suspend preaching until he can live by it himself, preaching will grind to a halt."

Majid writes: Compare with this the Jewish dictum: "He who induces others to do a good deed, stands in the sight of heaven higher than the one that does the deed" (*The Jewish Encyclopedia*).

Sayyid Qutb comments: "The tragedy with the religious class when religion becomes a profession, a trade, and not a burning faith is that they begin to say with their mouths what is not there in their hearts; enjoin virtue upon others while they do not live by it themselves; urge others to righteousness but neglect it themselves; begin to play upon words; misinterpret clear cut texts following their whims and fancies and issue religious rulings that agree with the surface meaning of the text but are in contradiction with its spirit in order to satisfy the demands of those who

possess power and money: all in the footsteps of the Jewish Rabbis.

“Indeed, inviting to righteousness while living against its very spirit in one’s own affairs, is a sickness that does not affect the individual callers to Islam alone, inflicting them with doubts and pessimism. It can in fact adversely affect the “call” itself. It casts a spell of skepticism on the call in the hearts of the masses because they hear beautiful words, but witness ugly deeds. This throws them into confusion about what to believe: the words or the deeds? This effectively extinguishes the flame that faith kindles in their souls, and puts off the light that belief ignites in their hearts. Consequently, they lose confidence in the religious class itself and never find themselves inclined to believe in them whole heartedly.

“That message will remain sterile, lifeless and rigid however fiery, loud and ringing that does not come from a heart which believes in it itself. And a man does not truly believe in a thing until he can convert himself into a living model of that message: a real, and not abstract, embodiment of the spoken word. Then it is that people will believe in him and trust him even if the message is delivered without fire and thun-

der. The word then draws its power not from its rhetoric, rather, from its content. Its beauty comes not from its fire, but from its truth. Then it is that it converts lives of the people, for it has its origin in life.

“Admittedly, the conformity between the word and the deed, between faith and practice, is not an easy thing to achieve. It involves a lot of hard work, zeal and dedication. Above all, it requires building up of a right relationship with Allah, and striving in search of His help.... and His guidance, for the traps of the world are many, its demands and exigencies are plenty. Unwittingly they tend to draw him away from what he carries in his heart as his beliefs, or to which he invites others. Man unaided by the Eternal Power is weak against them, whatever his powers and abilities, for the power of evil and rebellion is greater than his powers. They overcome him, again and again. And a moment of neglect can ruin his past, present and even the future. But when he aligns himself with the Eternal Power then he is strong stronger than every real or abstract reality. He is strong against his own weaknesses and indulgences, against his needs and exigencies, stronger than those powers that challenge and resist him.”

[45] And seek help in patience and Prayers.¹¹⁶
They are indeed hard but not upon those who
fear.

وَأَسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ
إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

115. Ibn Jarir reports Abu Darda (ra) as having said that one has not fully appreciated the truth if he does not despise the people for the sake of God and then turns to his own self and finds that he despises it even more.

Imām Razi reports the story of Yezid b. Harun who was a very pious person and an ascetic. Someone saw him in his dream after his death and asked him, "How did Allah treat you?" He said, "He pardoned me. When the angels of the grave (munkar wa nakir) asked me, 'Who is your Lord?' I replied, 'Are you not ashamed! I spent such and such a number of years inviting the people to Allah, and now you ask me, 'Who is your Lord?!'

116. That is, seek help in patience and Prayers to get rid of the love of this base world and to be able to keep the covenant that you have made with Allah (Ibn Jarir).

It was observed of Ibn `Abbas that he was informed of either his brother Kuthum's death, or that of his

daughter during a journey, he came down the mount, offered two *rak'ah* of prayers and came back reciting this verse (Qurtubi).

Sa'id b. Jubayr has defined *sabr* as: "To know and believe that whatever befalls is by the will of Allah, and to cherish hope that He will reward for it". `Umar b. al Khattab (ra) said: "*Sabr* is of two kinds. One, to bear an affliction gracefully. This of course is commendable. But what is better is the second kind of *sabr*. It is to refrain from all that is forbidden" (Ibn Kathir).

"The Arabic word *sabr* implies many shades of meaning which it is impossible to comprehend in one English word. It implies (1) patience in the sense of being thorough, not hasty; (2) patient perseverance, constancy, steadfastness, firmness of purpose; (3) systematic as opposed to spasmodic or chance action; (4) a cheerful attitude of resignation and understanding in sorrow, defeat, or suffering, as opposed to murmuring or rebellion, but saved from mere passivity or listlessness, by the element of constancy or steadfastness"

[46] Those who believe¹¹⁷ that they shall meet their Lord, and that unto Him they shall return.¹¹⁸

الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

[47] Children of Israel!¹¹⁹ Remember My favors wherewith I favored you, and (that) I preferred you above nations of the world.¹²⁰

يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

(Yusuf Ali).

Hudhayfah b. al Yaman says, "The Prophet (*saws*) used to resort to *salah* in the face of every difficulty." `Ali (*ra*) said, "I observed the Prophet (*saws*) Praying in the night previous to the battle of Badr, while there was none among us who was awake. He remained in Prayers and supplications until the dawn."

117. The word in the original is *zann*. In Arabic, it has a dual meaning: both of belief as well as doubt. Obviously, here it is belief that is meant; as in another verse (69: 20):

إِنِّي ظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي مُلَاقٍ حِسَابِيَّةٍ

'I was sure I would encounter my reckoning.'

118. (This verse proves that) it is through constant remembrance of the fact of the return to God that one can achieve the state of *khushu`*. Further, it is *khushu`* which makes *salah* easier to be offered (Thanwi).

119. What was stated in the previous section (verse: 40 46) was a preamble to the detailed discourse which starts with this verse and will continue down to verse 123, which will for the last time in the *surah* warn the Israelites in the same words as in this first instance (Au.).

Mawdudi writes: "From here on, through several sections that follow, reference is made to the best known episodes of Jewish history. As these episodes were known to every Jewish child, they are narrated briefly, rather than in detail. This reference is intended to remind the Jews both of the favors with which the Israelites had been endowed by God and of the misdeeds with which they had responded to those favors."

120. Ibn Kathir quotes a verse to explain the nature of the preference shown to the Israelites. Musa (*asws*) said to his people (5: 20):

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ

[48] Fear the day when no soul shall avail anything for any other;¹²¹ no intercession shall be accepted for it;¹²² nor ransom shall be accepted;¹²³ neither shall they be helped.

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا وَأَنَاكُمْ مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ

'O my people remember Allah's blessings upon you when He raised prophets among you, appointed you kings, and gave you such things as He had not given any other people in the world.'

Majid adds: "Now what did this 'preference' of the Israelites consist in? Was it their commerce, their adventures, their martial glory, their achievements in art, or their eminence in science? Nothing of the sort. Their singular glory and peculiar excellence, as a race, lay in their special mission their tenacious, pure and absolute MONOTHEISM in fact the only living monotheism that the world knew before the advent of Islam. 'The Hebrews alone of all Semitic people reached the stage of pure monotheism, through the teachings of their prophets...As long as a man refused allegiance to other gods, he was looked upon as a Jew: whoever denies the existence of other gods is called a Jew. The unity of God was a revealed truth for the

Jew, there was no need of proofs to establish it: it was the leading tenet of faith' (*Jewish Encycl.* VIII pp. 659, 661)."

121. That will be the day of presentation to Allah when each soul will have to account for itself: the day when (35: 18):

وَلَا تَرَىٰ وَارِدًا وَرَدَ أُخْرَىٰ

"No soul shall carry the burden of another," because (80: 37):

لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ

"For every man that day will be an affair that will suffice him" (Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi writes: The Prophet (*saws*) has said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ كَانَتْ لَهُ مَظْلَمَةٌ لِأَخِيهِ مِنْ عَرَضِهِ أَوْ شَيْءٍ فَلْيَسْأَلْهُ مِنْهُ الْيَوْمَ قَبْلَ أَنْ لَا يَكُونَ دِينَارٌ وَلَا دِرْهَمٌ إِنْ كَانَ لَهُ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ أُخِذَ مِنْهُ بِقَدَرٍ مَظْلَمَتِهِ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ حَسَنَاتٌ أُخِذَ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتٍ صَاحِبِهِ فَحُمِلَ عَلَيْهِ - صحيح البخاري

"Let him who has wronged his brother, whether it be involving his honor or anything else,

[49] And when We delivered you from Fir'awn's folk¹²⁴ (who were) afflicting you with dreadful torture, slaughtering your sons¹²⁵ and keeping your women alive. In that indeed was a severe test for you from your Lord.¹²⁶

وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ
سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يُذَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ
نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَلِكَ لَكُمْ بَلَاءٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ

﴿٤٩﴾

clear it now before the day when he will have neither Dinar nor Dirham in his possession. If he has some good deeds in his account, those will be taken away and given as compensation to those he wronged. If he does not have any good deeds, proportionate amount of evil deeds will be taken from the man he had wronged and credited to his account” (Qurtubi).

Majid adds: “This (verse) is to repudiate the Rabbinical doctrine that 'grace is to be given to some because of the merits of their ancestors, to others because of the merits of their descendants'”. (Jewish Encycl. VI. p.61).

122. “The patriarchs in heaven were believed to be intercessors for the living...Angels were often invoked by certain (Gnostic?) class of Jews. Especially was Michael invoked as intercessor for the Jewish people.” (JE. VIII, p. 408) Majid.

The Islamic concept in this regard is that if a soul has died disbelieving

in Allah, then no intercession will be accepted for it. As for intercession for the believers: by the righteous, the martyrs, *siddiqun*, and the prophets, there is no difference of opinion among the scholars that it would be allowed for whomsoever Allah is pleased, by him whom He allows.

123. As says Allah (*swt*) elsewhere (3: 91):

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارًا فَلَنْ يُمْسَلَ مِنْ
أَحَدِهِمْ مِلْءُ الْأَرْضِ ذَهَبًا وَلَوْ اقْتَدَى بِهِ

“Those who disbelieved and died disbelieving will not have even earthfull of gold accepted from them as ransom even if he were to offer the ransom.”

124. Fir'awn was not the name of the king contemporaneous to Musa (*asws*), rather, a title for the Amalekite rulers, as Qayser was that of the Roman kings, Kisra of the Persians, and Najashi of the Ethiopian kings (Ibn Kathir).

Majid adds: “The Pharaoh spoken of here, the one contemporaneous with

Moses (peace be upon him!) was, till recently, believed to be Ramses II, in the 13th century B.C., or Merenptah, or both. 'Ramses II of the 19th dynasty is generally accounted the Pharaoh of the Oppression, and his son and successor, Merenptah is considered to be the Pharaoh of the Exodus...The Oppression evidently lasted many years. Ramses II reigned 67 years, and thus the Exodus may have taken place in the short reign of Merenptah, the son and successor of that aged king.' (*Dict. of the Bible*, III, p. 820. Also JE. IX p. 660). Fresh archaeological evidence, however, identifies the Pharaoh of Oppression with Thotmas III and Pharaoh of the Exodus with Amenhtap II, and postulates the date of the Exodus as falling between 1447 B.C., and 1417 B.C....The Exodus must, therefore, have taken place after Thotmas III's death in 1447 B.C., and during the reign of Amenhatap II' (Marston, "*The Bible is True*, p. 171)."

He further writes: "It may also be noted that while the Bible refers to the masters of the Israelites before their deliverance at the hands of Moses (*asws*) as "Egyptians", the Qur'an invariably refers to them as the "people of Fir'awn. For the two, (the tyrannous people of Fir'awn and the Egyptians) are as different

as the British Colonial Rule and the Englishmen."

125. It is reported of Suddi that he said that the Fir'awn (contemporary to Musa, *asws*) dreamed that a fire had started from Jerusalem which burned the houses of the Copts in Egypt but spared those of the Israelites. He consulted the leading magicians, fortune tellers, dream interpreters, and priests. They predicted that a man would rise from among those who had come from that land, meaning Palestine, who will destroy the Egyptian kingdom. So he ordered that all the male new born of the Israelites be slaughtered, and the females spared. He also ordered the Israelites to be put to hard labor. But, as the male population of the Israelites dwindled, the leaders of the Coptian community complained to Pharaoh that if he continued killing the Israelites, they would be left with no slaves. He ordered therefore that the male children be slaughtered a year and spared the next. Harun (*asws*) was born the year they were to spare the male children and Musa (*asws*) the year they were to be slaughtered (Ibn Jarir).

126. According to Ibn Jarir and Qur-tubi the *bala'* of the original means a test, or a trial and is used both when

[50] And when We divided the sea¹²⁷ for you, rescued you, and drowned Fir'awn's folk¹²⁸ while you were witnessing.¹²⁹

وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمْ الْبَحْرَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

the test is through a blessing as well as when it is through an affliction. The example of the first kind of usage is the Qur'ānic verse (7: 168):

وَبَلَوْنَاهُمْ بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

"And we tested them with both the good things as well as evil in the hope that they will return (to truth)."

Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid and Ibn Jurayj therefore, are, as reported by Ibn Jarir, of the opinion that here it means a blessing. The whole verse will then mean: "If you were suffering O children of Israel, at the hands of the people of Fir'awn, who used to slaughter your male children and let live the females, then your deliverance from them, was a great blessing for you from your Lord."

Zamakhshari (who was an expert linguist) merely mentions both the possibilities (as Alusi does) without stating his own preference. Ibn Kathir's preference is that the word *balaa'* should be taken in its evil sense. The meaning should thus be, "This slaughtering was a severe test for you from your Lord."

127. The word in the original is *bahr* which is used for any large collection of water. It can therefore mean a river, a lake or a sea. Neither the Qur'ān nor a reliable *hadith* specify this to be the river Nile, the Red Sea or backwaters of the Mediterranean Sea. The *Tawrah* itself has been so badly disfigured that it cannot be relied upon for anything unless it is corroborated by the Qur'ān, *hadith* or an independent means of enquiry. Western "experts" have worked upon conjectures. Even route maps have been drawn to trace the sojourn of the Israelites from Egypt to Sinai, which, even if they draw curious attention, are as dependable as the route taken by the Phoenicians to Northern America, centuries before Columbus discovered the continent. However, it must have been a sea, as stated by most commentators, to accommodate Fir'awn's huge army. The date also, of Exodus, which has been fixed as 1447 B.C., is as unreliable. Nonetheless, since a people normally preserve the memory of the great events of their past, the Prophet (*saws*) accepted from the Jews the tenth of *Muharram* as the

[51] Yet, when We appointed for Musa forty nights,¹³⁰ you took the calf behind him (for worship).¹³¹ And you went out of bounds.¹³²

وَإِذْ وَاعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِن بَعْدِهِ وَأَنتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

day of the crossing. They used to fast on that day to celebrate the event. The Prophet recommended that the Muslims also fast on that day, adding that “we Muslims are morally bound to a greater degree than the Jews to follow Musa (*asws*).” However, he instructed an additional day’s fast, before or after, to oppose the Jews (Au.).

128. By the term “*Aalu Fir`awn*” the allusion is to the army which was accompanying Fir`awn in pursuit of the Israelites.

129. This was another favor shown to the Children of Israel that not only were they delivered from Fir`awn and his folk but also their enemy was destroyed before their eyes (Au.).

130. Allah (*swt*) said “nights” because in Islamic calendar the night precedes the day (Razi).

Thanwi says: This verse is the basis, as also some *ahadith*, for the forties prescribed for the *saalikin*.

131. This happened after the Israel-

ites had been delivered from Fir`awn and his folk and had entered the Sinai as a free people. They began to make demands on Musa (*asws*) that they be given the Law and moral precepts which could guide them in their everyday affairs. Musa (*asws*) made supplications to his Lord. His supplications were answered and he was summoned to Mount Tur to receive the *Tawrah*. But when he did not return within the time he had promised (since it was extended from 30 to 40 days by Allah), they took to worshipping a calf molded out of gold by a man called Samiri.

Majid adds: “The Israelites in their impatience during the temporary absence of Moses (peace on him!) had taken to the image worship of a golden calf. The Bible narrates the story of calf worship by the Israelites in great detail (Ex. 32: 1-8). The Qur`an is in substantial agreement with it, except in one very important particular, where the Bible makes the prophet Aaron him of all the people! responsible for this act of

[52] Nonetheless, We pardoned you over that (crime)¹³³ in the hope that you will give thanks.

ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنْكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

[53] And, (recall) when We gave Musa the Book and the Criterion,¹³⁴ in order that you may be rightly guided.

وَإِذْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

outrageous impiety.”

132. This proves that the *hulul* (a concept of infusion or incarnation held by the ignorant Sufis) is incorrect and impossible. Had it been a possibility, the Israelites would not have been chastised for believing that Allah had taken *hulul* in the calf, a belief, following which they took to worshipping it (Thanwi).

133. That is, the crime was so great that the whole lot of them should have been destroyed root and branch as well as punished in the Hereafter. But Allah in His mercy pardoned them. He prescribed for them only a lighter kind of punishment of which verse 54 speaks. This punishment itself was deferred until Musa (*asws*) went back to his people. Hence the one verse gap (no. 53) between the verse (no. 52) concerning the “pardon” and the “punishment” mentioned in verse 54 (Au.).

‘*Afw* of Arabic implies a forgiveness which may or not be accompanied by a punishment inflicted before

or after the ‘*afw*, as against *ghufrān* which is not accompanied by a punishment (i.e. it is a forgiveness without punishment) - Qurtubi.

134. By the term “the Book” the allusion of course is to *Tawrah*, which was revealed to Musa (*asws*) after the Exodus, as is evident from the story narrated in greater detail in *surah al A`raf*, and from the verse 43 of *surah al Qasas* (Ibn Kathir).

The word *Al Furqān* has been used here to qualify “the Book” and stands for something against which other things can be measured, a thing that helps in distinguishing: something that works as the dividing line. “Anything that makes a separation, or distinction, between the truth and falsity. It also means ‘proof, or demonstration’ (Lane’s Lexicon, Majid).”

Ibn Jarir offers the following explanation: It means, ‘We gave Musa the *Tawrah* which was the criterion of right and wrong... Hence in the verse (8: 41):

يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ التَّقْيِ الْجُمُعَانِ

[54] And when Musa said to his people, 'People! You have done a wrong to yourselves by taking the calf (for worship). Now turn to your Lord in repentance and slay one another. This indeed will be better for you in the sight of your Lord.' Then He relented towards you. Indeed He is very Relenting, very Kind.¹³⁵

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّكُمْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ بِاتِّخَاذِكُمُ الْعِجْلَ فَتُوبُوا إِلَىٰ بَارِئِكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِنْدَ بَارِئِكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥٤﴾

[55] (Recall) when you said, 'Musa! We shall never believe in you till we see God openly.' A thunderbolt struck you while you were looking.

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَىٰ لَنْ نُّؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ نَرَى اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

[56] Then We raised you up after you were dead, that haply you may be thankful.¹³⁶

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاكُم مِّن بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

"The day of criterion, the day the two armies met."

The day of Badr was called the day of *Al Furqān* because it helped, through the miraculous victory against all odds, to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

Thanwi writes: There is room however to believe that by *Al Furqān* the allusion is to miracles, or to the Divine Law which also helps in distinguishing between truth and falsehood.

Some scholars have thought that the allusion is to *Zabur* which was revealed to Da'ud (*asws*). - (Au.)

135. The way Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, `Ikrimah, Suddi, Sa`id b. Jubayr and

some others understood these verses is as follows. When Musa (*asws*) came down from Mount Tur, he ordered those that had worshipped the calf to kneel down before those that had not. The latter were armed with swords, daggers and knives. When the two were thus lined up, a blinding darkness settled over them and those with arms were ordered to slaughter those kneeling before them. Thus, they did not know who killed whom. When the killing was stopped, they were all pardoned: both those who had lost their lives in the homicide as well as those who had escaped (Ibn Jarir).

136. The commentators are widely divided over how and when this hap-

[57] (Recall) when We outspread the cloud over you (in Sinai),¹³⁷ and sent down manna¹³⁸ and quails¹³⁹ to you (saying), 'Eat of the good things We have given you.' And they wronged Us not, but rather, they were wronging themselves.¹⁴⁰

وَوَضَعْنَا عَلَىٰ كُفْرِكُمُ الْغَمَامَ وَأَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّاءَ وَالسَّلَوى كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

﴿٥٧﴾

pened. Thanwi's preference is that this happened when Musa (*asws*) took with him seventy prominent leaders of the Israelites to Mount Tur for them to hear Allah first hand (*swt*) speaking to him: something about which they had expressed their misgivings. When they reached the Mount, a cloud engulfed them and they heard Allah (*swt*) reveal His message to Musa (*asws*). But when it was over, they began to say that they were not convinced by the voice alone and would not believe until they had seen God Himself. Upon this, a thunderous noise killed them all. Musa (*asws*) prayed to Allah that since none of them was alive to bear witness to what had happened, he would be blamed for their death. Allah then quickened them all (Au.).

As these lines were being written, this writer heard a volunteer in Afghanistan describe an incident that took place during the *Jihad* against the Russians in the eighties of this century. The mujahedeen had to attack a communist post on a hill,

which could only be done from another hill opposite to it, but impossible to climb from the rear. If they attempted from the front they came under enemy fire. As they were considering their moves, a cloud came and settled on the hill occupied by the communists obscuring their view of the surrounding area. The piece of cloud stayed so long that the mujahedeen could not fail to notice that it was stationary for quite a while. They began to scale the hill and it was not until they had reached the top, with their guns, RPG's and small missiles which took a couple of hours that the cloud moved off from the opposite hill. The communists were completely taken by surprise and abandoned the post after a brief resistance.

137. This episode had occurred earlier but has been related later. This took place when they were wandering in the Sinai valley and had complained to Musa (*asws*) about the scorching sun. Allah (*swt*) sent a piece of cloud that accompanied

[58] And when We said, 'Enter this township, and eat thereof as you desire, abundantly, but enter the gate in humility, saying "hittatun,"¹⁴¹ We shall forgive you your sins, and shall increase (the reward of) those who do good.'

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا ادْخُلُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَدًا وَادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ نَّغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطَايَاكُمْ وَسَنَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

them wherever they went.

138. This also happened in the Sinai when the Israelites began to clamor about the shortage of food and water. The *Tawrah* gives us a glimpse of their impatience with their Prophet: "They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the people of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, and said to them, 'Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger'" (Exodus, 16:1 3).

Musa (*asws*) prayed to Allah and He sent *manna* and partridges. Opinions vary over what exactly was manna. Some believe it was honey, others say it was a kind of a sweetish

gum, while others maintain that it was a snow like substance that settled upon trees and on the ground every night as the dew. They could dissolve it in water to drink or make bread on the fire (Au.).

A *hadith* recorded by Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Ahmad, Marduwayh and others says:

عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْكُمَاةُ مِنَ الْمَنِّ وَمَاؤُهَا شِفَاءٌ لِلْعَيْنِ

"Mushrooms have originated from manna, and its extract is a cure for the (diseases of the) eyes" (Ibn Kathir).

139. These partridges used to settle in thousands every morning and evening near their camps and tents at such a close range that the Israelites could grab them by the hands.

140. That is, with so many blessings it was expected of them that they would remain faithful to Allah. But, instead, they neglected their duties and indulged in sins (Ibn Jarir, Ibn

[59] But the transgressors substituted another word in place of that which they had been ordered; so We let loose upon those that had transgressed a scourge¹⁴² from the heavens – because they were defiantly disobeying.

قَبَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رَجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

[60] And (recall) when Musa sought water for his people. We said: 'Strike the stone¹⁴³ with your staff.' Lo! Gushed forth from it twelve fountains. All the people knew their places of drink. 'Eat then, and drink from the bounties of Allah and act not corruptly in the earth, spreading mischief.'

وَإِذِ اسْتَسْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانْفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرِبَهُمْ كُلُّوا وَاشْرَبُوا مِن رِّزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

Kathir).

Thanwi remarks: The verse proves that the bestowal of one material blessing after another, despite repeated sins, is a trial in disguise (*istidraj*). Many pseudo Sufis are misled by this, believing that the wealth and popularity they enjoy are signs of Allah's approval (of their life and conduct).

141. Opinions are divided between Jerusalem and Jericho over the town alluded to here. The Israelites were ordered to enter it in humility, chanting the praises of their Lord and seeking His forgiveness for past transgressions and ill behavior towards their Prophet Musa (*asws*). But they ignored the order and entered the town proud and arrogant. They showed their backs to it and went in dragging themselves on their

buttocks as reported in some *ahadith* (Muslim: Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). Further, instead of praising their Lord in words they were ordered, they struck a pun on it (saying *hintatun* instead of *hittatun*), making it a point of derision and mockery (Au.).

Ibn Kathir remarks: Compare with this our Prophet's example who entered Makkah after its fall with his head bowed down so low that it almost touched the saddle of the beast he was riding.

142. The word in the text for "scourge" is *rijz* and Ibn 'Abbas is reported to have said that every *rijz* in the Qur'an stands for "punishment." This is also the opinion of Mujahid, Abu Malik, Suddi, Hasan, Qatadah and others. Some others however, like Sa'id b. Jubayr, believe that the allusion here is to plague. In a *hadith*

[61] And when you said: 'O Musa! We will no longer put up with this monotonous diet.¹⁴⁴ Invoke your Lord, therefore, on our behalf¹⁴⁵ that He may bring forth for us what the earth produces: green herbs, cucumbers, garlic, lentils, onions.' He said: 'Would you have that which is meaner in exchange of that which is better? Go down to any town,¹⁴⁶ you shall find (therein) what you have asked for.' And humiliation and wretchedness were stamped upon them,¹⁴⁷ and they drew on themselves the wrath of Allah.¹⁴⁸ That because they used to deny Allah's signs and slay¹⁴⁹ (His) Messengers without right.¹⁵⁰ That because they disobeyed¹⁵¹ and were frequently transgressing.¹⁵²

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَىٰ لَنْ نَصْبِرَ عَلَىٰ طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ فَادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ لَنَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْ بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّائِهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِهَا وَبَصَلِهَا قَالَ أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ اهْبِطُوا مِصْرًا فَإِنَّ لَكُمْ مِمَّا سَأَلْتُمْ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَاؤُوا بِغَضَبِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّنَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

too the word used for plague is *rijz* which was inflicted on a certain transgressing nation of the past (Ibn Kathir).

143. This event also occurred in the Sinai when the Israelites ran out of water and made demands on Musa (*asws*) that he pray to his Lord for relief. Musa (*asws*) supplicated to Allah. He was asked to strike his rod on a specific stone from which sprang out 12 springs so that each of the twelve tribes could draw water from a specific one. It is reported that from then on they carried the stone (according to one version on a donkey which gives some idea of its size) wherever they went, and Musa

(*asws*) would strike it whenever the need arose. The “*al*” of “*hajr*” indicates that it was a specific stone. Some have speculated that it was the same stone that had run away with Musa's clothes in the story alluded to in verse 33 of *surah al Ahzāb* (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Qurtubi).

No less wondrous, however, was our Prophet's miracle who produced water from flesh and bones. This happened in a campaign when the Muslims numbering about two thousand and five hundred ran out of water. The Prophet (*saws*) thrust his hand into a pitcher, and water began to gush forth from his fingers (Qurtubi).

144. According to Qatadah and Abu al 'Aliyyah, when the Israelites complained of heat and hunger in the Sinai, Allah sent a cloud that remained stretched over them. He also sent them the *manna* and the quails which they received daily without any exertion on their part. But very soon they were weary of these things and began to hanker for the variety of foods they relished in Egypt. When they began to pester Musa they were told to go and settle into any town where such things are found aplenty (Ibn Jarir).

Majid quotes: "And the Children of Israel also wept again, and said: Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely, and the cucumbers, and the melons, and the onions, and the garlic. But now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all besides this, before our eyes' (Nu.11: 4 6)."

145. Note the words "call on your Lord on our behalf" (ud`u lana) which suggest little personal attachment on the part of the Israelites, to the Lord, their God, who had rescued them from slavery into freedom and showered blessings on them all the way down from Egypt to the Sinai (Au.).

146. Although a variant reading of

the original has been "*misra*" which could be interpreted as the land of Egypt that the Israelites had left behind them, the great majority of scholars have, from the earliest times, read it as "*misran*" as it also appears in all texts, which leaves no possibility but the rendering as "any town" (*misr*: pl. *amsar*: a town, dwelling place). Ibn Jarir reports Qatadah, Suddi, Mujahid and Ibn Zayd of this opinion, and himself quotes another verse (no. 21 of *al Ma'idah*) which proves that it was any town one of the Syrian region, that was meant. Ibn Kathir reports Ibn 'Abbas as also of the opinion that the allusion by the term *misran* is to any town. Nonetheless, the Orientalists of all times (Sale, Rodwell, Palmer, Bell, N.J.Dawood, Arberry) have preferred to stay unanimous over the rendering as "Egypt," perhaps to prove that the Prophet (whose authorship of the Qur'an they were desperate to prove), erred and thought that the Israelites went back to Egypt something the Old Testament would not agree with. Interestingly though, Rashid Rida has shown that there is evidence that the Israelites might have gone back to Egypt. See note 191 of *Surah al A'rāf* of this work for details (Au.).

147. Majid remarks: "Note that the

pronoun 'them' refers to the race of Israel rather than to the Jews as a religious body. Even in the present day anti Semitic agitation (1957), 'the Jews are not opposed on account of their religion, but on account of their racial characteristics. As such are mentioned: greed, a special aptitude for money making, aversion to hard work, clannishness and obtrusiveness, lack of social tact, and especially of patriotism. Finally, the term is used to justify resentment for every crime or objectionable act committed by individual Jews' (J.E.I.p. 641)."

Thanwi remarks: This goes to prove that not to be satisfied with what Allah has ordained for a man is a thing displeasing to Allah. Such as, for instance, the case of a man endowed with tawakkul going about hunting to further the means of sustenance, or that of a man giving up an easy source of income already on hand, in search of something better.

148. Majid comments: "In the words of a Christian historian, 'for ages the Hebrew history has been the same everywhere substantially a constant moan, as it were, with variations indeed, but seldom a note in which we miss the quality of agony.' And a leading Jew of today is said to have

exclaimed: 'If there are gradations in suffering, Israel has reached its highest acme.' Certainly, there is no history so full of mournful pathos as theirs. And it is instructive, if also pathetic, to note that in the years 1938-39 with all the wealth and commerce and 'influence' at their disposal there are incessant references in their press to their 'frightful persecutions' and 'the beatings, the murders, the torture, the robbing, the blackmailing, the arrests and imprisonments' and 'humiliations, both public and private' that are being perpetrated on them in several parts of 'civilized' Europe."

"Statistics wherever obtainable, show that the proportion of blindness is greater among modern Jews than among their non Jewish neighbors (J.E.III, pp.249,250)....As with blindness, Jews...have shown a marked tendency toward deaf mutism in the general proportion, as compared with non Jews, of two to one (IV. p.480). 'Among the Jews the proportion of insane has been observed to be very large. From statistics collected by Kushan, he concludes that they are four to six times more liable to mental illness than non Jews' (VI.p.603). 'The Jews are more subject to diseases of the nervous system than the other races and

peoples among which they dwell. Hysteria and neurasthenia appear to be most frequent. Some physicians of large experience among Jews have even gone so far as to state that most of them are neurasthenic and hysterical. Tobler claims that all the Jewish women in Palestine are hysterical. The Jewish population of that city alone is almost exclusively inexhaustible source for the supply of hysterical males for the clinics of the whole continent' (IX. p.225)."

149. "This passage obviously refers to a later phase of Jewish history. That the Jews actually did kill some of their prophets is evidenced, for instance, in the story of John the Baptist, as well as in the more general accusation uttered, according to the Gospel, by Jesus: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee" (Matthew xxiii, 37). See also Matthew xxiii, 34 35, Luke xi, 51 both of which refer to the murder of Zachariah and I Thessalonians ii, 15. The implication of continuity in, or persistent repetition of, their wrongdoing transpires from the use of the auxiliary verb *kanu* in this context" (Asad).

Majid quotes: "They mocked the messengers of God, and despised

his words and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.' (2 Ch. 36:16) 'Wherefore, will ye plead with me? Ye have all transgressed against me, saith the Lord ... Your own sword hath devoured prophets, like a destroying lion.' (Je. 2:30) 'They were disobedient and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs and slew thy prophets.' (Ne. 9:26).' ... 'Ye are the children of those which killed the prophets.. Fill ye up then the measures of your father. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify: and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous bloodshed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barchias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar (Mt. 23:31 35)."

Imām Ahmad reports Ibn Mas'ud as having said that the Prophet said:

"أَشَدُّ النَّاسِ عَذَابًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ رَجُلٌ قَتَلَهُ نَبِيٌّ أَوْ قَتَلَ
نَبِيًّا وَإِمَامًا ضَلَالَةً وَمُتَمِّلٌ مِنَ الْمُتَمَلِّلِينَ "

"The most severely punished on

the day of Judgment would be, (a) a man who was killed by a Prophet, (b) a man who killed a Prophet, (c) a leader who misled his people, and, (d) the sculptor” (Ibn Kathir).

The second part of the above *hadith* is in the *Sahihayn* also, but the first part is declared weak by Haythami (Au.).

150. “I.e., wrongful and unjust not only in the sight of God, as the murder of a prophet in any instance is bound to be, but wrongful, unjust and illegal, even according to Israel’s own code of law and justice. To take the case of Jesus: He ‘was not condemned but he was slain. His martyrdom was no miscarriage of justice, it was a murder’ (Rosadi, *Trial of Jesus*, p.301). ‘In this trial was a violence done to the forms and rules of Hebrew as well as to the principles of justice.’ (Innes, *Trial of Jesus Christ*, p.35)” Majid.

151. “For the uniformly rebellious attitude of Israel towards their greatest leader and benefactor, Prophet Moses, compare and consult their national historian Josephus: ‘They were very angry at their conductor Moses and were zealous in their attempt to stone him as the direct occasion of their present miseries.’

(“And.” III. 1:3) ‘... the multitude were irritated and bitterly set against him.’ (1:4) ‘They again turned their anger against Moses, but he at first avoided the fury of the multitude...’ (1:7) ‘The multitude began again to be mutinous and blame Moses for the misfortunes they had suffered in their travels.’ (13:1) ‘The multitude therefore became still more unruly and more mutinous against Moses than before.’ And Moses ‘was abused by them.’ (13:1) ‘They again blamed Moses and made a clamor against him and his brother Aaron ... They passed that night very ill and with contumacious language against them: but in the morning they ran to a congregation intending to stone Moses and Aaron, and so to return to Egypt.’ (14:3) ‘... notwithstanding the indignities they had offered their legislator and the laws and their disobedience to the commandments which He had sent them by Moses.’ (IV. 2:1) ‘When forty years were completed, Moses gathered the congregation together near Jordan ... and all the people being come together he spoke thus to them: ‘you know that I have been oftener in danger of death from you than from our enemies’ (8: 1 2)” Majid.

152. “The *Bible* abounds in doleful narratives of their rebellion and re-

[62] Verily, those who believed, as also the Jews,¹⁵³ the Christians,¹⁵⁴ and the Sabians¹⁵⁵ whosoever believed in Allah and the Hereafter, and worked righteousness for such is their reward with their Lord.¹⁵⁶ They shall neither fear nor shall they grieve.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى
وَالصَّابِّينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

volt. To give only a few such extracts out of many: 'Remember and forget not, how thou provoked the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord. Also in Horab ye provoked the Lord to wrath, so that the Lord was angry with you to have destroyed you. When I was gone up in the Mount to receive the tablets of stone ... the Lord said unto me: ... thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted themselves; they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten image. Furthermore the Lord spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff necked people. Let me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven.' (Dt. 9: 7 13) 'Ye rebelled against the commandment of the Lord, your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice.

Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I know you.' (23 24) 'I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I (Moses) am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; and how much more after my death? ... I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you and evil will befall you in the latter days: because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands' (31: 27 29)" Majid.

153. "The correct rendering of (*al-ladhina hadu*) can only be 'those who are Judaised or those who have become Jews.' 'It is for the first time that the Qur'an speaks of the 'Jew' as distinct from the 'children of Israel.' The two terms, though frequently used as synonymous, are not exactly coextensive or interchangeable. Israelites are a race, a nation, a people, a huge family, sons of a particular

progenitor, conscious and proud of their high lineage. Jews are a religious community, a church, believers in particular tenets, members of a certain faith. The Holy Qur'ān, regardless of the niceties of expression, has always observed this distinction. When speaking of the religious beliefs and practices of the Hebrews and those who had adopted their faith, it uses the term 'Jew': when alluding to their history and their national traits it keeps mentioning 'the children of Israel.' The Israelites ceased to exist as a nation with the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, and thenceforth they became a purely religious community. Many of the Arabs had, by the advent of Islam, adopted the Jewish faith and usage. Hence the significance of the Qur'ānic expression 'those who are Judaized.' 'The children of Israel,' so frequently addressed in the Qur'ān, says D.S. Margoliouth, 'were merely Arab tribes made Israelite by conversion.' (Torrey, Jewish Foundation of Islam, p.23) Most of the Arab Jews, like the Jews of Abyssinia, seem not to have been genuine children of Israel, but native converts to Judaism.' (HHW. VIII. p. 10) 'Judging by their proper nouns and the Aramaean vocabulary used in their agricultural life, these Jews must have

been mostly Judaized clans of Arabian and Aramaean stock, though the nucleus may have been Israelites who fled from Palestine at the time of its conquest by the Romans, in the first century after Christ.' (Hitti, op.cit. p. 104)" Majid.

154. "(*Nasara*) is, in its proper sense, '*Nazarenas*,' not Christians. A Nasrani is 'a Nazarene' in its original meaning and a Christian only 'in its secondary application.' (LL) Nazarene is derived from '*Nazareth*,' the place where Jesus passed his youth. The *Nazarenas* or the primitive Christians were the followers of the original pre Pauline church, not quite like the present day Christians of the Pauline variety. Nor is the title 'in itself disparaging.' (EBi. c. 3356) Rather, 'it was a primitive designation for Christians.' (ERE. II p. 374)" - Majid.

155. Opinions vary over identity of the Sabians of this verse. Mujahid and Ibn Zayd believe that the allusion is to anyone who does not follow any of the well known religions of the world. It is in this sense that the Quraysh used to refer to the Prophet (*saws*) as a *Sabe'i*: since he did not follow either Judaism, Christianity, or the pagan religion of the Quraysh. Qatadah and Abu al 'Ali-

yyah are of the opinion that those of the contemporaries of the Prophet (*saws*) are meant who inhabited the Southern Iraqi region, followed the *Zabūr*, prayed five times a day but worshipped angels (Ibn Jarir).

Asad says: "The Sabians seem to have been a monotheistic religious group intermediate between Judaism and Christianity. Their name (probably derived from the Aramaic verb *tsebha*, 'he immersed himself [in water]') would indicate that they were followers of John the Baptist in which case they could be identified with the Mandaean community, a community which to this day is to be found in Iraq. They are not to be confused with the so-called 'Sabians of Harran', a Gnostic sect which still existed in the early centuries of Islam, and which may have deliberately adopted the name of the true Sabians in order to obtain the advantages accorded by the Muslims to the followers of every monotheistic faith."

Majid quotes: "They 'practiced the rite of baptism after birth, before marriage and on various other occasions. They inhabited the lower plains of Babylonia, and as a sect they go back to the first century after Christ ... Mentioned thrice in

the Koran, these Babylonian Sabians acquired a dhimmi status and were classified by Moslems as 'protected' sect ... The community still survives to the number of five thousand in the swampy lands near al Basrah' (Hitti)."

156. The reason for the revelation of this verse has been given in a *hadith* recorded by Ibn Abi Hatim (a second is related by Suddi, and a third by Sa'id ibn Jubayr), in which Salman al Farsi says he asked the Prophet about those of the people of the Book in whose company he happened to have spent a lot of time in Persia and other places prior to the Prophet's appearance. They were devoted to God, prayed and fasted, and were anticipating the appearance of the Final Prophet. What about them? What's likely to be their destination after death? Initially, the Prophet said they would go to Hellfire. But Allah (*swt*) revealed this verse. And the Prophet's concluding remarks were: "Whoever followed Christianity, submitting himself to Allah, and died before I appeared, would be granted salvation. But if he heard of me but would not believe in me, he will be denied salvation."

After reporting these *ahadith*, Ibn Ja-

[63] And (recall) when We took a compact with you and raised the Tur over your heads (saying): 'Hold fast unto that which We have given you; and be mindful of that which is therein, haply that you may become godfearing'.

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

[64] Yet, you turned away thereafter. Had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy, surely you would have been of the losers.¹⁵⁷

ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

rir and Ibn Kathir explain that what is meant is that those who believed in Musa (*asws*), for instance, and did good works will inherit Paradise. But after the appearance of `Isa (*asws*) it became necessary for them to believe in him along with Musa to achieve salvation. Similarly, with the appearance of our Prophet, Muhammad (*saws*), it became incumbent upon them to have faith in him along with `Isa and Musa for their devotion to be acceptable to Allah who demands belief in all of His Prophets without exception (Au.).

Majid writes: "Right belief and right conduct are the only sine qua non of salvation which every individual has thus in his own hands. Howsoever grave his disbelief or misconduct in the past, he is not past redemption. If he only accepts God's truth, and obeys His laws, however late in life, blessings both of this world and the

Next are his. Not even the Jews with their centuries old record of crime and corruption, depravity and rebellion, are debarred from Allah's All embracing grace and mercy: provided they mend their ways."

A contemporary commentator remarks: "The above passage which recurs in the Qur'an several times lays down a fundamental doctrine of Islam. With a breadth of vision unparalleled in any other religious faith, the idea of 'salvation' is here made conditional upon three elements only: belief in God, belief in the Day of Judgment, and righteous action in life."

However, the introduction of the word 'only' in the above quotation can lead to some misunderstanding. Salvation does not depend on these three elements only. Belief in "the Prophet of the time" is an integral part of the system. The Prophet

(*saws*) has said: "Even if Musa was alive, there would be no recourse for him but to follow me" (Au.).

157. The story behind this is that the Israelites made frequent demands on Musa that they be given a holy writ from which they could draw guidance for their lives. Aware of their rebellious nature, he advised them not to ask for something that they might or might not follow. But they insisted. So Musa took a firm compact from them that if revealed they would follow it to the best of their ability. Then he prayed to Allah (*swt*), who ordered him to spend 40 days and nights on Mount Tur: in complete seclusion, praying, fasting and preparing himself in other ways to receive the revelation. However, when he came down with the revelation and read it out to the Israelites, they went back on their promise. They said that the teachings and the laws therein were too difficult to follow. Now, Allah does not impose His religion on anyone. But in this case, since it was they who had demanded the Book, Mount Tur was raised over them and they were told: 'Either accept it or you will be destroyed.' So they accepted it willy nilly and promised that they would abide by it. Nonetheless, later they began to lead a life which was in total defiance

of its teachings. (Based on opinions of Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, 'Ata', 'Ikrimah, Hasan al Busri, Dahhak, Rabi' b. Anas as reported by Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Qurtubi, and others).

Toeing the line of the "rationalists," some commentators of this century tend to express that this raising of the Mount Tur was not real, rather, "it was made to look like it." But such an interpretation defies a general principle of *tafsir* set by the scholars, viz.: whenever the apparent meaning is clearly worded, the metaphorical or figurative derivation is ruled out. In this case the Qur'an is very clear about Mount Tur being raised over their heads. In *surah al A'raf*, verse 171, the addition of the words "as if it was an umbrella" leaves no room for doubt.

Majid adds: "That the mount was actually inverted over the Israelites is what is expressly narrated in the *Talmud*. 'The holy One, blessed be He, inverted mount Sinai over them like a huge vessel and declared, 'If you accept the *Tawrah*, well and good; if not, here shall be your sepulcher.' (JE. IV, 321):

Qurtubi quotes Sha'bi and Ibn 'Uyayna as saying: "Whenever it is said, 'Read the Book,' the meaning is that one must live by its dictates and

[65] And you know well of those of you who broke the Sabbath.¹⁵⁸ We said unto them: 'Be apes, despised and hated'.

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ الَّذِينَ اعْتَدَوْا مِنْكُمْ فِي السَّبْتِ فَعُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُفُوفًا قَرْدَةً حَاسِيَيْنَ

implement its teachings, rather than recite it beautifully and then forget all about its teachings. He quotes a *hadith* from Nasa'i which says that the Prophet (*saws*) said:

وَإِنَّ مِنْ شَرِّ النَّاسِ رَجُلًا فَاجِرًا يَقْرَأُ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ لَا يَرْعَوِي إِلَى شَيْءٍ مِنْهُ

“The worst of the people is the corrupt man who reads the Qur’ān but pays no attention to its commandments.”

The authenticity of the above report could not be established (Au.).

According to another *hadith* of Tirmidhi, Qurtubi continues, the Prophet (*saws*) once looked up at the heaven and said:

عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ قَالَ كُنَّا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَشَخَصَ بَبَصَرِهِ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ قَالَ هَذَا أَوَانُ يُخْتَلَسُ الْعِلْمُ مِنَ النَّاسِ حَتَّى لَا يَقْدِرُوا مِنْهُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ فَقَالَ زَيْدُ بْنُ لَبِيدٍ الْأَنْصَارِيُّ كَيْفَ يُخْتَلَسُ مِنَّا وَقَدْ قَرَأْنَا الْقُرْآنَ فَوَاللَّهِ لَنَقْرَأَنَّهُ وَلَنُقَرِّئَنَّهُ نِسَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَنَا فَقَالَ ثَكَلْتِكَ أُمُّكَ يَا زَيْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُ لَأَعُذَّكَ مِنْ قَهْمَاءِ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ هَذِهِ التَّوْرَةُ وَالْإِنْجِيلُ عِنْدَ الْيَهُودِ وَالنَّصَارَى فَمَاذَا تَعْنِي عَنْهُمْ (قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ غَرِيبٌ)

“The time is close when knowledge will be withdrawn from the

people.” Ziyad b. Labid who was present enquired: “How will that happen O Messenger of Allah, when we recite the Qur’ān and teach it to our children?” The Prophet (*saws*) replied: “Woe unto you Ziyad. I though you were one of the intelligent men of Madinah. Here are the Jews and Christians who recite their Scriptures, but it avails them not aught?”

Qurtubi also quotes ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud telling another man: “You are in a world in which there are many men of knowledge, but few reciters. The Qur’ānic injunctions are closely followed though its letters are in neglect. Few are there who ask, but many who give. They lengthen their Prayers and shorten their sermons. They put the word of command into action and keep their desires under control. But a time will come when there will be many reciters of the Qur’ān, but few who will understand it. They will know its word but neglect its demand. Many will ask but few will give. They will lengthen their sermons and shorten

[66] And We made it an example to their own and to succeeding generations and an admonition for the godfearing.¹⁵⁹

فَجَعَلْنَاهَا نَكَالًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلْفَهَا
وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

their Prayers. They will begin with their base desires before they would attempt (anything good).”

158. Majid writes: “The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week (Saturday), which in the Jewish law was to be devoted exclusively to religious observances, and a cessation of almost all the principal activities of life, such as field labour, business, cooking, hunting, was imperative: and the penalty of profaning the sacred day was death. ‘Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: everyone that defileth it shall surely be put to death’” (Ex. 31: 14).”

Qurtubi quotes from Nasa’i who recorded the following:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ سَلَمَةَ عَنْ صَفْوَانَ بْنِ عَسَّالٍ قَالَ،
قَالَ يَهُودِيٌّ لِصَاحِبِهِ اذْهَبْ بِنَا إِلَى هَذَا النَّبِيِّ قَالَ
لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ لَا تَقُلْ نَبِيٌّ لَوْ سَمِعَكَ كَانَ لَهُ أَرْبَعَةُ أَغْنِي
فَأَتَى رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَسَأَلَاهُ عَنْ
تَسْمِعِ آيَاتِ بَيِّنَاتٍ فَقَالَ هُمْ لَا تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا
تَسْرِقُوا وَلَا تَزْنُوا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا
بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَمْشُوا بِنِجْيٍ إِلَى ذِي سُلْطَانٍ وَلَا تَسْجُرُوا
وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَا وَلَا تَقْذِفُوا الْمُحْصَنَةَ وَلَا تَوَلُّوا يَوْمَ
الرَّحْفِ وَعَلَيْكُمْ خَصَّةٌ يَهُودُ أَنْ لَا تَعْدُوا فِي السَّبْتِ
فَقَبِلُوا يَدَيْهِ وَرَجَلَيْهِ وَقَالُوا نَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ نَبِيٌّ قَالَ فَمَا

مَنْعَكُمْ أَنْ تَتَّبِعُونِي قَالُوا إِنَّ دَاوُدَ دَعَا بَأْنَ لَا يَرَال
مِنْ دُرَيْتِهِ نَبِيٌّ وَإِنَّا نَخَافُ إِنْ اتَّبَعْنَاكَ أَنْ تَقْتُلَنَا يَهُودُ

Safwan b. `Assal said to another Jew, “Come. Let’s go to this Prophet.” The man said, “Don’t use the word ‘the Prophet,’ for he may hear you. He has four eyes.” They proceeded to the Prophet (*saws*) and asked him about the nine commandments. He told them: “Do not assign partners unto Allah, do not steal, do not commit adultery, do not kill a person unless by law, do not hand over to the ruler one who has not committed a crime, do not indulge in magic, do not take interest, do not slander a woman, do not run away from the battle field, and for you especially, O Jews do not break the Sabbath.” They kissed his hands and said: “We testify that you are a Prophet.” “What prevents you from following me then?” he asked. “Because,” they said, “David had supplicated to Allah that Prophethood remain in his progeny. Further, we are afraid the Jews will kill us if we

followed you.” Tirmidhi has also reported this *hadith* rating it as a trustworthy one.

159. The story behind this episode, as narrated by Ibn ‘Abbas, Qatadah, Suddi, ‘Ata’, Abu al ‘Aliyyah, is as follows. Allah (*swt*) appointed for the Israelites Friday as the weekly day of rest and devotional acts. But they argued with Musa (*asws*) and got the day changed to Saturday. That granted, they were asked to observe complete abstinence on that day from all economic activity, pleasures, and devote themselves to religious observances. But they broke the Sabbath in a variety of ways. A group of them who lived somewhere in Ailah or Eylah (near the modern town of Aqabah), at the tip of the Sinai, which was a fishing community at the time of Da’ud (*asws*), was ordered not to fish on Saturdays. But it would so happen and this was a test of their faith that the fish would appear in thick shoals just on the surface of water on Saturdays, but disappear on other days. Finally, the Israelites could not resist. They thought they would break the Sabbath and keep it. One of the strategies they adopted was to dig large holes near the sea connecting them with a thin line of water. When the fish showed up on

Saturdays, and went across from the main waters to the holes, pushed forward by the tide, they plugged the path of return. Then they returned the next day to collect the trapped fish.

This deceptive act divided them into three groups to the extent that they divided their village into three camps. One that committed the deception, the other that warned them against it, and a third that stayed aloof of the two. When the deceptive practice continued, one night Allah (*swt*) sent His scourge which transformed the tricksters into apes who all died within three days. The punishment became an example of Allah’s scourge on those who try to deceive Him. The story narrated briefly in *surah al A’raf*, verses 162-166, speaks of those who used to prohibit as having being spared the punishment, while the fate of the third group goes unmentioned Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir.

Majid says: “There is a similar tradition of a tribe becoming baboon in certain primitive communities like the Zulus (PC. I. p. 376). (And) the scornful epithet (*khase’in*) strikes at the root of monkey adoration and Hanuman worship of several polytheistic people.”

[67] And (recall) when Musa said to his people: 'Allah commands you to slaughter a cow.'¹⁶⁰ They said: 'Do you take us in mockery?' He said: 'I seek Allah's refuge that I should be one of the ignorant.'

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقْرَةً قَالُوا أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُوًا قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

Mujahid, however, is reported to have said that the transformation was not real; only their hearts were transformed. But Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir reject the opinion on grounds that the great majority of authorities before and after him have accepted the literal meaning of the Qur'anic text here.

That the story goes unmentioned in Jewish literature does not make its occurrence any less plausible. It may be recalled that when the Prophet (*saws*) laid siege to the forts of Banu Qurayzah he called out to them, saying:

”يا إخوان القردة ويا إخوان الخنازير ويا عبدة الطاغوت“ فقالوا: من أخبر هذا محمدا؟

“Listen, you cousins of apes and swine.” The Jews turned to each other at the top of the wall and exclaimed: “Who informed Muhammad of this?” (Ibn Kathir, *al Baqarah*, verse 76).

Ibn Kathir reports a *hadith* recorded in Irwa' al Ghaleel narrated by Abu

Hurayrah (*ra*) in which the Prophet (*saws*) said: “Do not do as the Jews used to do: making the unlawful lawful by devious means.”

Interestingly, the National Geographic Magazine reports in one of its articles that in the modern day Israel, where the Rabbis have declared even the operation of an elevator as a breach of the Sabbath, the Jews set the elevator switches in such a manner, that from Friday evening until the next evening the lifts are operative all the time with the small inconvenience of halts at every floor.

160. This is an episode from the history of the Israelites which depicts the national character of a people who listened to their Prophets but half seriously, followed the Law but unwillingly, and obeyed their God but dispiritedly.

The story behind it, as told by the first generation scholars, who probably relied on Jewish sources, is that a man was the sole heir to his very rich uncle. He killed him in or-

[68] They said: 'Ask your Lord to make plain to us what (kind of a cow) is she to be.' He said: 'Your Lord says she may be a cow neither old, nor too young: middling between the two. Therefore, do as you are ordered.'

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَّا فَارِضٌ وَلَا بِكْرٌ عَوَانٌ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ فَافْعَلُوا مَا تُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

[69] They said: 'Ask your Lord to make plain to us what is her color.' He said: 'He says she should be a golden colored cow, shining bright and pleasing to the observers.'

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا لَوْنُهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ صَفْرَاءُ فَاقِعٌ لَوْنُهَا تَسُرُّ النََّاظِرِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

[70] They said: 'Ask your Lord to make plain to us what she is (like). Indeed, the cow has become confusing to us. And Allah willing¹⁶¹ we should be rightly guided.'

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ إِنَّ الْبَقَرَ تَشَابَهَ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

der to inherit his wealth, threw his body in the neighborhood of another tribe, and began to make noise about justice, revenge and so forth. Arguments ensued between his tribe and the one alleged to be involved in the murder, leading to the drawing of swords when someone suggested that Musa be asked to intervene and give his judgment. When the case was referred to him he ordered them to slaughter a cow. They thought he was joking. But Prophets are dead earnest. So they decided they would slaughter it after all. But, like all those who care little for true piety, (which consists in immediate execution of an order in good spirit), and more for outward forms, (which is the reason of narration of

this story in the Qur'ān), they began to seek details, which, they should have known, cannot add elegance and beauty to a religious act if the spirit is lacking. Nonetheless, the details they asked for were provided so that, ultimately, it was as if the finger was placed precisely on a particular cow owned by an old woman. She in turn, when she learned that nothing short of her cow would do to meet a certain religious requirement, set an exorbitant price. Some versions suggest they had to weigh the beast in gold. They had no choice but to cough out the price. After all, they had originally been told to slaughter any cow. They could have grabbed the nearest one and be finished with it. But they kept seeking details that

[71] He said: 'He says she shall be a cow not broken to plough the earth or to water the tillage, whole and without blemish.' They said: 'Now¹⁶² you have brought the true (description).' Finally, they slaughtered her, although, they did not seem to be anywhere near about doing it.¹⁶³

قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَا ذَلُولَ تُثِيرُ
الْأَرْضَ وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسَلَّمَةٌ لَا شِيَةَ
فِيهَا قَالُوا الْآنَ جِئْتَ بِالْحَقِّ فَذَبَحُوهَا وَمَا
كَادُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

made the affair difficult for themselves. In any case, they slaughtered the cow. The corpse was struck with a piece of its flesh and the man rose up. He told the people who the real murderer was, and died again (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir and others).

161. Ibn `Abbas said: Had they not added insha Allah, the cow would never have been described to their satisfaction (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Zamakhshari).

162. "Now?!" As if it was not clear right in the beginning that all that was required was the slaughtering of an unspecified cow. Further, even when they had raised the first foolish question: "Ask your Lord to let us know what (kind of a cow) is she to be," Musa (*asws*) had told them not to be fussy about it, rather: "Do as you are ordered (and slaughter any cow)." Their questioning then was not because it was really unclear to them as to what kind of a cow was being demanded, rather, because

they did not want to slaughter one. Probably, their reluctance stemmed from the concept of "holiness" of the cow that they had acquired through their long stay with the Egyptians who worshipped it. It was perhaps this influence that had led them to heifer worship during Musa's absence.

Further, as some commentators have pointed out, it is possible that although the murder became the occasion, the cow was chosen for slaughter shockingly to them because of their reverence for it. Hence the initial reaction: "Are you joking?" The concept of holiness of the cow, however, could not be slaughtered with the slaughtering of the animal. The worship of the Ba'l (a local deity) and the Bull figures again and again in the history of the Jews. See for instance 1 Kings, 16: 32; 2 Kings, 21: 3. In 1 Kings (18: 25) Prophet Elijah laments in words: "... Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on

[72] And when you murdered a person and then contended among yourselves over the issue,¹⁶⁴ but Allah was to bring out that which you were concealing.¹⁶⁵

وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَادَّارَأْتُمْ فِيهَا وَاللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

the name of your gods, but put no fire under?" (Au.).

163. In contrast, the Companions of the Prophet (*saws*) asked him few questions, following his advice to leave him alone as long as he left them alone. But when they were ordered to do a thing, they hastened to act, unmindful of the consequences. It is reported of a Companion that as he was approaching the mosque he heard the Prophet (*saws*) say: "Sit down." He sat down right on the road in the dirt, although, apparently the Prophet had addressed those within the mosque (Au.).

Zamakhshari notes: A *hadith* says that the vilest of men is the one who inquired (a Prophet) about a thing that had not been declared unlawful, but the unlawfulness of which came to light because of his enquiry.

Asad adds: "... their obstinate desire to obtain closer and closer definition of the simple commandment revealed to them through Moses had made it almost impossible for them to fulfill it. In his commentary on

this passage, Tabari quotes the following remark of Ibn `Abbas: 'If [in the first instance] they had sacrificed any cow chosen by themselves, they would have fulfilled their duty; but they made it complicated for themselves, and so God made it complicated for them.' A similar view has been expressed, in the same context, by Zamakhshari. It would appear that the moral of this story points to an important problem of all (and, therefore, also of Islamic) religious jurisprudence: namely, the inadvisability of trying to elicit additional details in respect of any religious law that had originally been given in general terms for, the more numerous and multiform such details become the more complicated and rigid becomes the law. This point has been acutely grasped by Rashid Rida, who says in his commentary on the above Qur'ānic passage (see Manar I, 345f): 'Its lesson is that one should not pursue one's [legal] inquiries in such a way as to make laws more complicated...This was how the early generations [of Muslims] visualized the problem. They did not make

[73] So We said: 'Strike him with a part of her.'¹⁶⁶ That is how He will quicken the dead. He shows His signs to you haply that you will think.

فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبُوهُ بِبَعْضِهَا كَذَلِكَ يُخَيِّبُ اللَّهُ
الْمُؤْتَى وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾

things complicated for themselves and so, for them, the religious law (*din*) was natural, simple and liberal in its straightforwardness."

164. The incident of the Israelite's murder had, according to most commentators, preceded the order to slaughter the cow, but as the story is not important, rather the lesson, the sequence was altered. Zamakhshari gives another reason for the change in the sequence. The unwillingness of the Israelites to do the bidding of their Lord is one story with one lesson; and the murder of a man and then what followed is another story with several other lessons. Now, if they both had been stated in one sequence, they would have sounded like one story, while in actual fact they are two episodes with two different sets of lessons to be drawn; hence the change in the sequence.

165. That is, Allah was to expose the murderer whom a group of the Israelites were trying to shield.

166. That is, touch a part of the cow with the murdered man's corpse.

Zamakhshari raises a question: "It may be argued, why Allah did not quicken the man without involving the slaughtering of the cow?" Then he answers that in the adoption of means and in attaching conditions to it are reasons and benefits (that cannot be obtained otherwise). First, the slaughtering of the cow by the command of Allah was a means to gain His nearness (which is obtained by doing Allah's bidding). Second, to teach the lesson that when one is ordered to do something, it should be done well. Third, to impress on the slaves of Allah that when one is ordered to do something, he should hasten to act, and not seek details that may make it harder for him to act. Fourth, to help the orphan (who owned the cow). Fifth, for the ignorant not to treat the words of the wise as mockery, (as the Israelites did when Musa (*asws*) ordered them to slaughter the cow). Sixth, for the

[74] But your hearts hardened thereafter so that they are as if of stones or even harder;¹⁶⁷ while there are stones from which springs gush forth, and there are some of them that split and water issues from them, and yet there are some that fall to the ground in Allah's fear.¹⁶⁸ Surely, Allah is not unaware of what you do.

ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسَوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشَقَّقُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾

man seeking nearness to Allah by his offerings to choose the best that he can offer, as is reported of Ibn `Umar that he used to select an animal best of its kind and the most expensive for sacrifice. And seventh, to demonstrate that in the final analysis it is the One who controls the means that is Himself important and not the means themselves, for it is only death that can be obtained from the dead (but Allah gave life to one dead, through the touch of another).

167. "They (the hearts) are as if of stones or even harder:" that is, they are all not the same in hardness, rather some are like stones, while some others harder, such as iron (Alusi).

168. Is the comparison of the hardness of hearts with the stones real or figurative? According to Qurtubi there is no reason to believe that it is figurative since it is quite possible that the stones fear the Lord. After all we have authentic *ahadith* confirming feelings attributed to lifeless

things, as in the *hadith* of Muslim in which the Prophet (*saws*) said:

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ سَمُرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنِّي لَأَعْرِفُ حَجَرًا بِمَكَةَ كَانَ يُسَلِّمُ عَلَيَّ قَبْلَ أَنْ أُبْعَثَ

"I know the rock that used to greet me in Makkah those days when I had not been addressed by Allah yet."

It is also reported of the date palm trunk on which the Prophet (*saws*) used to recline during his sermons in the Madinan Mosque that it began to cry when the Prophet (*saws*) abandoned it in favor of a column. To this Ibn Kathir adds that we know of the *hadith* in which the Prophet said about Mount Uhud:

عَنْ عَبَّاسٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ أُحُدٌ جَبَلٌ مُحِبُّنَا وَحُبُّهُ - صحيح البخاري

"This Mount loves us and we love it."

Allah (*swt*) Himself says in the Qur'an (33: 72):

[75] Do you then (O Muslims) entertain the hopes that these (people) will believe in you,¹⁶⁹ while a party of them used to hear the words of Allah and then tamper with them¹⁷⁰ after they had well comprehended them and they knew?¹⁷¹

أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ
مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِنْ
بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ
فَأَبَيْنَ

"And We offered this Trust unto the heavens and the earth, but they declined," and (17: 44):

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ

"The seven heavens and all that they contain sing His Glory."

Sayyid Qutb writes: "Further, weren't they the witness to the springing forth of twelve streams from a stone?"

Commenting on the stones from which gush forth springs, those that split and water issues from them, and those that fall to the ground in Allah's fear, Majid states: "A beautiful description, in parable, of three grades of a righteous people:

(a) those who do universal good, such as the prophets (like big rivers in their beneficence).

(b) those whose outlook is not so broad, yet who do immense service within their limited sphere, such as

the saints and martyrs (like smaller streams and rivulets); and,

(c) those who are true and faithful at least to their own selves: the general community of the faithful (like stones which are impressionable)."

169. "Here the Muslims are addressed. In the early period of Islam and especially after their exodus to Medina, where many Jews were then living the Muslims expected that the Jews, with their monotheistic beliefs, would be the first to rally to the message of the Qur'an: a hope that was disappointed because the Jews regarded their own religion as a kind of national heritage reserved to the children of Israel alone, and did not believe in the necessity or possibility of a new revelation" (Asad).

170. That is, they used to tamper with the meaning and interpretation of the words, not because of any ambiguity, but after they had well understood the purport (Zamakhshari).

[76] *These, when they fall in with those who have believed, say, 'We have (also) believed.'*¹⁷² *But when some of them are in privy with the others they reproach them: 'Do you disclose to these (Muslims) what God has revealed to you, so that they will dispute with you thereby before your Lord?'*¹⁷³ *Do you not think?'*

وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَا
بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ قَالُوا أَتُحَدِّثُونَهُم بِمَا
فَتَحَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَاجُّوكُمْ بِهِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ
أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾

It is reported of Ibn Zayd that he said: They used to declare the lawful unlawful and vice versa and declare the truth as falsehood and falsehood as the truth. So that, when someone approached them with bribes seeking judgment in a case in which he was not in the right, they read from the Scriptures to demonstrate how the right was on his side. But when he did not offer them bribes, they ruled without the need to look into them. It is the rabbis, therefore, who have been alluded to as those who committed these crimes (Ibn Jarir).

171. This means that they knew of their crimes but vainly hoped that they would be let off easily.

Majid comments: "I.e., their act of perverting their text was deliberate and with a set purpose, so that far from being ashamed of it they were proud of their performance."

172. This refers to the Jewish response to the Companions. When they asked them the basis for their

rejection of the Prophet, although he had all the signs on him that the Jews narrated as prophesied in their Scriptures. The Jews would answer that they too had an inkling that he could be a true Prophet. But if that was so, then he seemed to have been sent to the Arabs alone. However, when they met better knowing Jews they would be reproached for having conceded even that little (Ibn Kathir). That does not rule out other religious matters that came under discussion when the Jews sat in the company of Muslims. In those sessions they disclosed some Scriptural information, but it met with the disapproval of their religious authorities (Qurtubi).

Interestingly, even today the Talmud is not available openly, although books dealing with "some" of its aspects and subjects are in no short circulation. Indeed, were it not for the Christians, even the Old Testament would not have seen the light of the day (Au.).

[77] Do they not know that Allah is aware of what they conceal and what they reveal?

أَوَلَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

[78] And, among them are unlettered ones who have no knowledge of the Scripture save their fancies, and they do nothing but conjecture.¹⁷⁴

وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا أَمَانِيَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

173. With reference to the words, “Do you disclose?” Mujahid reports that when Banu Qurayzah were besieged by the Prophet and his followers, the Prophet addressed them from the foot of the fort in words:

يا إخوان القردة والخنازير، ويا عبدة الطاغوت فقالوا من أخبر بهذا الأمر محمداً؟ ما خرج هذا القول إلا منكم.

“Ye the brothers of monkeys and swine”, and, “Ye the worshippers of false gods,” the Jews turned to each other over the wall and exclaimed in amazement: “Who passed this information on to Muhammad? This information has not gone out but from you.” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

The last phrase of the verse: “Before your Lord” has also been interpreted by Hasan al Busri as: “in matters concerning your Lord” (Zamakh-

shari and Qurtubi). The verse would then mean: ‘Do you disclose matters concerning your Lord, without realizing that the Muslims will use them in arguments against you to beat you on your own grounds?’

Majid writes: “This is how the more obdurate among the Jews remonstrated with their co religionists for opening their hearts to the Muslims. The allusion is to such matters as prophecies about the Prophet of Islam and any other information that the Muslims might have made use of and that might have proved damaging to the cause of Jewish unreason.”

174. If the previous two verses describe the perversions of the elites of the Jewish society, this present one refers to the follies of their common folk, who, being unlettered, had no personal knowledge of the Scrip-

[79] Woe then unto those who write the Book with their hands and then proclaim,¹⁷⁵ 'This is from God,' in order that they may barter with it a paltry sum. So woe unto them for what their hands write and woe unto them for what they earn.

قَوْلٍ لِّلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا قَوْلٍ هُمْ مِمَّا كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

tures, depended on their Doctors and rabbis for religious information, and did not but fancy that they were one hundred percent on the right requiring no modification in their attitudes toward God and His Messenger. If their priestly class did not follow the Word of God willfully, the common folk only used conjectures to determine the ways of their lives and fancied that they were right on top of the world (Au.).

175. "Writing with their own hands" means inventing books themselves which had no divine authority" (Yusuf Ali).

Majid quotes from "*The Jewish Encyclopedia*:" "The habit of literary forgeries had grown so strong with the Jews that in the new and second centuries of the Christian era they felt no scruple in composing works depicting the grandeur and moral elevation of Judaism, and ascribing their own writings to heathen poets and celebrities" (vol.II p.9). And: 'Pseudopigraphy the ascribing the

authorship of a book, falsely, to some person of note in order to make it more popular has frequently been practiced in Jewish literary history' (VJE.p.542)."

Max I. Dimont, the well known Jewish scholar writes in "Jews, God and History": "The Biblical scholars have conjectured that the Old Testament is composed essentially of four major narratives, the 'J', 'E', 'JE' and 'P' documents woven into one. The 'J' documents are so named because in them God is always referred to as "Jehovah." They are the oldest, written around the ninth century B.C. written in the southern kingdom of Judah. The 'E' documents, so called because in them God is referred to as 'Elohim,' were written about a hundred years after the 'J' documents in the eighth century in the northern kingdom of Israel. Scholars assume the "P" or 'Priestly,' documents were composed some two hundred years after the 'E', about 600 B.C. In the fifth century Jewish priests combined portions of the 'J' and 'E' doc-

[80] And they claim, 'The Fire will not touch us but for a few days.'¹⁷⁶ Ask them, 'Have you taken a pledge from your Lord, so that Allah will not break His pledge, or do you ascribe to Allah what you do not know?'

وَقَالُوا لَنْ تَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَةً
قُلْ أَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَهْدًا فَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ
عَهْدَهُ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

﴿٨٠﴾

uments, adding a little handiwork of their own (known as pious fraud) which are now referred to as the 'JE' documents, since God in these passages is referred to as 'Jehovah Elohim' (translated as 'Lord God')."
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The author writes elsewhere, in the same book: "The final fusion of the five books of Moses, called the Pentateuch, occurred around 450 B.C. in other words, not eight to sixteen hundred years after some of the events narrated in them took place."

And, at another place: "(In the fifth century B.C.) ... Ezra and Jeremiah decided not only to revise the Book of Deuteronomy but to add to it four other books of Moses. Under their directions, priests and scholars labored diligently to fuse the most important of the divergent Mosaic documents, including the Deuteronomy of Josiah, into the five books of the Pentateuch, namely, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. All five books of Moses were now made divine" (Au.).

176. Those "few days" according to the Jews of Madinah, are the same number of days that they worshipped the calf, i.e., forty (Ibn 'Abbas Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). According to another report, the Jews claimed that they will not remain in Hell but for forty days, after which Muslims will remain behind abiding therein forever ('Ikrimah, Ibn Jarir). Yet another belief was that the total life span of the world was seven thousand years. They believed that for every thousand year they would remain in the Fire for a day, i.e., a total of 7 days (Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir reports on the authority of Sharh al *Sunnah* that when the Prophet's food was poisoned at the time of the Khayber campaign, he ordered his Companions to round up the Jews (probably the leaders: Au.). When they had assembled he asked them: "Who is your father?" They said: "So and so." The Prophet told them: "You have lied. Your father is so and so." They said: "You are right." Then he asked them: "Will you tell me the truth if I asked

[81] Nay indeed, he who earned evil¹⁷⁷ to the extent that the evil girt round him¹⁷⁸ they, such are the people of the Fire; they shall abide therein forever.

بَلَىٰ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خَطِيئَتُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

﴿٨١﴾

you something?” They said: “Yes, because if we lied, you would know.” He asked them: “Who are the people of the Fire?” They replied: “Initially it is we. But after a while you will take over.” The Prophet told them: “Begone. By Allah, we will never take your place there.” Then he asked them: “Will you tell me the truth if I asked you something?” They said: “Sure, we will.” He asked: “Did you poison this meat?” They said: “Yes.” He asked them: “Why did you do it?” They said: “We reckoned that if you are phony we would get rid of you. But if you are a true Prophet, you will escape unhurt” (Imām Ahmad, Bukhari and Nasa’i have similar reports in their compilations).

Majid quotes present day belief of the Jews: “In the Hereafter Abraham will sit at the entrance of Gehinnom and will not allow any circumcised Israelite to descend into it” (Cohen’s ‘Everyman’s Talmud’). And, ‘The Fire of Gehinnom does not touch the Jewish sinners because they confess their sins before the gates of Hell and return to God’ (JE. V. p.583).”

“The general application is also clear. If Unfaith claims some special prerogative, such as race, ‘civilization’, political power, historical experience, and so on, these will not avail in God’s sight. His promise is sure, but His promise is for those who seek God in Faith, and show it in their conduct” (Yusuf Ali).

177. The word “*sayyi’ah*” of the original has been interpreted as “*shirk*” (assigning partners unto Allah) Abu Wa’il, Mujahid, Qatadah, Suddi, and ‘Ata’. In fact, even major sins are excluded. This is because, as clarified in the *ahadith*, those who do not assign partners unto Allah will not abide in the Fire forever, even if consigned to it initially because of their sins (Ibn Jarir).

Majid adds: “The implication of the word *ahaatat* is that not a trace is left of virtue, which is possible only in the case of those who are totally devoid of faith.”

Nonetheless, according to a statement attributed to Mujahid and some others a major sin that com-

[82] As for those who believed and did righteous works, they are the people of Paradise; they shall abide therein for ever.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

[83] And (recall) when We took compact with the Children of Israel: 'You shall not serve any other than Allah; to be good to the parents, the kindred, orphans, and the needy.¹⁷⁹ You shall speak kindly to the people,¹⁸⁰ establish Prayers, and give in charity'. But you turned away all but a few of you, while you were backsliders.

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَٰئِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

pletely engulfs a man is included in the definition (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

In support of the above statement, Ibn Kathir quotes that *hadith* of Musnad Ahmad in which `Abdullah Ibn Mas`ud (*ra*) reports the Prophet (*saws*) as saying:

إِنَّ مُحَقَّرَاتِ الذُّنُوبِ مَتَىٰ يُؤْخَذَ بِهَا صَاحِبُهَا تُهْلِكُهُ
(مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد - رواه كله أحمد ورجاله رجال الصحيح)

“Surely, when one is held accountable for insignificant sins, they will destroy him.”

The Prophet (*saws*) also struck an example of some travelers who encamped in a desert. One of the men brought a twig, another a stick, and so on, until they made quite a pile of it and were able to cook their food therewith.

178. The words, “the evil girt round

him” mean that he remained in the state of *shirk* until his death (Ibn `Abbas, Rabi` b. Khaithum, Qatadah Ibn Jarir).

179. While being good to the parents involves kind behavior toward them and their obedience in all matters except those that involve a sin, being good to the kindred, the orphans and the needy primarily means to help them materially which, of course, does not exclude services of other kind. Islam is totally opposed to the egocentric life of the Western type.

It might also be noted that in the Qur`ān, the rights of the parents always follow the rights of Allah Himself. `Abdullah Ibn Mas`ud reports in a *hadith* preserved by Bukhari and Muslim that he asked the Prophet:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى

الله عليه وسلم أَيَّ الْعَمَلِ أَفْضَلُ؟ قَالَ: "الصَّلَاةُ لَوْ قَتَلَهَا" قَالَ قُلْتُ: ثُمَّ أَيُّ؟ قَالَ: "بِرِّ الْوَالِدَيْنِ" قَالَ قُلْتُ: ثُمَّ أَيُّ؟ قَالَ: "الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ"

"What deed is the most virtuous?" The Prophet replied: "Prayer at its specified hour." "And then what?" I asked. "To be good to the parents," he replied. "And then?" I asked. He replied: "Jihad in the way of Allah."

According to another *hadith*:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ. قَالَ: قَالَ رَجُلٌ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَنْ أَحَقُّ بِحُسْنِ الصَّحْبَةِ؟ قَالَ "أُمُّكَ. ثُمَّ أُمُّكَ. ثُمَّ أُمُّكَ. ثُمَّ أَبُوكَ. ثُمَّ أَدْنَاكَ أَذْنَاكَ."

A man asked the Prophet, "Who deserves my services most"? He replied, "Your mother; then your mother, then your mother, then your father, and then those who follow (of the kinsfolk), and then those who follow."

عن أبي هريرة قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: (إن للرحم لسانا يوم القيامة تحت العرش يقول يا رب قطعتم يا رب ظلمت يا رب أسيء إلي فيجبها رها ألا ترضين أن أصل من وصلك وأقطع من قطعك).

As regards the kindred, Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) reports a *hadith* that the *rahm* (literally womb, but here, the factor by which people are linked together in relationship by birth) would speak up,

from below the *`Arsh*, on the Day of Reckoning complaining, 'O Lord! I have been oppressed, I have been mistreated, I have been severed.' Allah will reply, 'Are you not satisfied that I should cut him off who cut you off, and join him who joined you?' (Razi).

With regards to the covenant itself, the Jews acknowledge that they had entered into such a bond with God. Says the *Jewish Encyclopedia* (Majid): "Abrahamic covenant ... was renewed on Mount Sinai when, before the giving of the Law, Israel as a people pledged itself to keep His covenant (vol. IV. p. 319)."

180. The most important right of the people is that they should receive from a Muslim the message of salvation. According to Ibn `Abbas, by the words, "*you shall speak kindly to the people*," the allusion is to the delivery of the message of Islam to those who are ignorant of it. As for those who are already Muslims, bidding unto good, and forbidding the wrong is, according to Sufyan Thawri, their most important right (Ibn Kathir). But of course there are many other rights that arise in different situations. The least that one can do is to meet the people with a cheerful face

[84] And, when We took compact with you: 'You shall not shed your own blood, and you shall not drive out each other from your dwellings.' Then you confirmed it and bear witness to it yourselves.

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ لَا تَسْفِكُونَ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَلَا تُخْرِجُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

[85] Yet, you are the very people who slaughter your own people and drive out a number of them from their dwellings, helping others against them in violation and rebellion.¹⁸¹ When they are brought to you as captives, you ransom them out, while it was unlawful for you to have expelled them. Do you then believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part? So, what can be the reward of those of you who do that but degradation in the present life, to be returned to the most terrible chastisement on the Day of Resurrection? And Allah is not unaware of what you do.

ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتُخْرِجُونَ فَرِيقًا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ تَظَاهَرُونَ عَلَيْهِم بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَإِنْ يَأْتُوكُمْ أُسَارَى تَفَادَوْهُمْ وَهُوَ مُحَرَّمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجُهُمْ أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَى أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

as states a *hadith*:

”لَا تَحْفَرَنَّ مِنَ الْمَعْرُوفِ شَيْئًا، وَلَوْ أَنَّ تَلْقَى أَحَاكَ بِوَجْهِ طَلْقٍ“.

“Do not treat minor good deeds as something insignificant; at least meet the people with a cheerful face” (Ibn Kathir from Muslim, Tirmidhi through Abu Dhar).

In contrast, to grin at the people and treat them with greatest outward respect without any feeling whatsoever in the heart, is all the good that is required of an individual in modern cultures. Islam has no use for such

hypocrisy (Au.).

181. At the time of the revelation of these verses, the Jews of Madinah were divided into three tribes: Banu Qaynuqa', Banu Nadir, and Banu Qurayzah. The Madinan pagans were divided into two tribes, Khazraj and Aws. The two had been at war with each other for over a century. Banu Qaynuqa' and Banu Nadir were allies of Khazraj, while Banu Qurayzah allied themselves with Aws. When fighting took place between the two pagan tribes, the Jews took active part and freely slaughtered the Jews allied to the other tribe. Further,

[86] These are a people that have purchased the life of this world at the price of the Next; so their chastisement shall not be lightened nor shall they be helped.

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ
فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

[87] Verily, We gave Musa the Book and sent after him Prophets one after another.¹⁸² We (also) gave 'Isa the son of Maryam, clear signs¹⁸³ and strengthened him with the Ruh al-Qudus.¹⁸⁴ But, is it that whenever a Prophet came to you with that which did not conform with your desires, you stiffened?¹⁸⁵ So, you laid the lie against some of them, while others you slew.

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَفَعَّلْنَا مِنْ
بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ
الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ أَفَكُلَّمَا
جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَى أَنْفُسُكُمْ
اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَرِيقًا كَذَّبْتُمْ وَفَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾

when the fighting reached the very heart of their dwellings, they drove them out and pillaged their homes.

Nonetheless, when the fighting ceased, and the very Jews they had fought and driven out were brought as captives, they hastened to ransom them saying that they had a compact with God to that effect. Hence the revelation asked: "Do you believe in a part of the Book and disbelieve in a part?" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Kathir also reports that after a battle fought near Kufa in a place called Langer, Salman al Farsi purchased a Jewish slave girl for 700 Dirhams. A little later he was in the company of a well known Jewish figure, Ra's al Jalut. Salman mentioned to him the slave girl he had

purchased for 700, and asked him whether he was interested in buying her. Ra's al Jalut consented and offered 1400. Salman told him he had hoped to sell her for 4000. Ra's al Jalut told him that at that price he was not interested in her. Salman told him: "But you must, for, that is an ordinance of your religion." Then, bending forward, Salman whispered to him the verse of the *Tawrah* concerning freeing of slaves. A surprised Ra's al Jalut asked him if he was Salman al Farsi (who was known for having acquired learning in various religions before Islam). When Salman nodded in affirmation, the man went in and brought him 4000 Dirhams. Salman kept half of it and returned him the rest.

182. Such as Yusha' (Joshua), Sham-

wil (Samuel), Sham'un (Simon), Da'ud (David), Sulayman (Solomon), Sha'ya (Isaiah?), Ariyah (Jeremiah), 'Uzayr (Ezra), Hizqil (Ezekiel), Ilyas (Elias), Yunus (Jonah), Zakariyyah (Zechariah), Yahya (John the Baptist), and others (Razi).

183. The clear signs referred to here are quickening of the dead, curing of the blind and the deaf, making of birds from clay and blowing life into them, etc., all by Allah's will. Being the last of the series of prophets sent to the Israelites, he was given very powerful and irrefutable signs (Au.).

184. According to most early commentators such as Ibn Mas'ud, Ibn 'Abbas, Suddi, Qatadah and others, the allusion by the words "*al-Ruh al Qudus*," is to Jibril. This is confirmed by a *hadith* (which we pick up from Muslim) which says that the Prophet told Hassan b. Thabit:

إِنَّ رُوحَ الْقُدُسِ لَا يَزَالُ يُؤَيِّدُكَ مَا نَافَحْتَ عَنْ اللَّهِ
وَرَسُولِهِ

"Surely, *Ruh al Qudus* will remain helping you (in your satires) so long as you remain defending Allah and His Messenger" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Kathir further adds: In another *hadith* the Prophet (*saws*) named specifically Jibril while praying to

Allah to help Hassan in his satires. The term has been used in other reports also. In one *hadith* the Prophet (*saws*) said:

إِنَّ رُوحَ الْقُدُسِ نَفَثَ فِي رَوْعِي : أَنْ نَفْسًا لَنْ تَمُوتَ
حَتَّى تَسْتَوِي رِزْقَهَا ، فَأَجْلُوا فِي الطَّلَبِ

"*Ruh al Qudus* has inspired into me that no one will die without receiving his share of the provision and without completing the term allotted to him. Therefore, be graceful while seeking your share of the world."

(The above report is from Kanz which Haythami declared as trustworthy but for a minor problem in evaluation: Au.)

Thanwi writes: The Jews were sworn enemies of Jesus and would have all but murdered him. It was Jibril who guarded him against them.

Nevertheless, a minority opinion is that the term alludes either to the Gospels, or, the Great Name (*Al Ism al A'zam*) which 'Isa b. Maryam used to spell before blowing the spirit into shapes of clay.

Majid adds: "This 'holy spirit' of Islam has nothing, save name, in common with the 'Holy Ghost' of Christianity, who is 'the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity ... the Spirit of the

[88] They say, 'Our hearts are insulated.'¹⁸⁶
Nay, Allah has rather cursed them for their
unbelief,¹⁸⁷ so little do they believe.¹⁸⁸

وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ بَلْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ
فَقَلِيلًا مَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾

Father and of the Son' proceeding 'alike from both as from one common principle.' (Pallen and Wynne's 'New Catholic Dictionary', p. 451) Islam has no such preposterous proposition to support as that 'the Holy Spirit is rightly included in the Godhead, and to be worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son as divine' (Everyman's Encycl. vol. XI, p. 635)."

185. Majid's quotation while dealing with verse 83, applies very well here also: "I have seen this people, and behold! it is a stiff necked people.' (Ex. 32:9) 'Thou are a stiff necked people ... from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord' (Dt. 9: 6&7)."

Thanwi comments: There is indication in the verse that pride is the root of all sins.

186. That is, insulated from any outside influence (Ibn 'Abbas, 'Ikrimah, Ata', Qatadah Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Another interpretation of the term "*ghulf*" rendered here as "insulated" is that our hearts are repositories of knowledge and wisdom and therefore in no need of that which is now being preached by the new Prophet (Ibn 'Abbas and 'Atiyyah Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, in the words of Asad).

Yusuf Ali writes: "How many people at all times and among all nations close their hearts to any extension of knowledge or spiritual influence because of some little fragment which they got and which they think is the whole of God's Truth?"

187. "For 'curses' compare the OT: 'A curse if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God.' (Dt. 11:27) 'If thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God ... all these curses shall come upon

[89] And (now) when a Book came to them from Allah, conforming that which is in their possession while earlier they sought (Allah's) help against the pagans but when it came to them with what they knew (as from their Lord), they rejected it.¹⁸⁹ So Allah's curse be upon the rejecters.

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ كِتَابٌ مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ وَكَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مَا عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

[90] Evil is that for which they barter themselves by rejecting that which has been revealed by Allah in grudge that Allah should reveal it in His mercy unto whom He will of His slaves. Thus they piled (upon themselves) anger upon anger.¹⁹⁰ Therefore a humiliating punishment awaits the unbelievers.¹⁹¹

بِمَا اشْتَرَوْا بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ أَن يَكْفُرُوا بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ بَغْيًا أَن يَرْسُلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ فَضْلِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ قَبَآؤُوا بِغَضَبٍ عَلَى غَضَبٍ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿٩٠﴾

thee and overtake thee; cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Curse shalt be thy basket and thy land, the increase of thy kind, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt be thou when thou comest in, and cursed shalt be thou when thou goest out' (Dt, 28: 15 19)" - Majid.

188. Another rendering could be "so believe not but a few of them" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

189. This refers to the situation before the advent of the Prophet (*saws*) when, defeated in the battles (or in arguments) by the pagans, the Jews of Madinah would say that even if they had suffered defeat, it was of a

temporary nature. Soon they would square up with them once the Promised Messiah whose time of appearance had come close made his advent. It is with him on their side that they would wage a final battle against the non Jews of the world and regain their supremacy. But when the Prophet appeared, they refused to acknowledge him because it was impossible in their thought that God should send a Messenger among a people they esteemed low such as the Ishmaelites. In one gathering, Mu'adh b. Jabal, Bishr b. Bara', and Da'ud b. Salamah reproached the Jews and told them: "Fear God, and believe in Him. Aren't you the ones who used to predict his appearance?"

[91] And when they are told, 'Believe in that which Allah has revealed,' they say: 'We shall believe (only) in that which has been revealed unto us.' And they reject that which came after, while it is the Truth which confirms that which is in their hands.¹⁹² Ask them: 'Why is it then that you slew the Messengers of Allah afore, if you were believers?'¹⁹³

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا تَأْمِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْنَا وَيَكْفُرُونَ بِمَا وَرَاءَهُ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَهُمْ قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْبِيَاءَ اللَّهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

[92] Verily Musa had come to you with clear signs, yet while he was away, you took the calf (for worship) and you were transgressing.¹⁹⁴

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

To that Sallam b. Mishkam replied: "He has not brought anything that we could recognize as from God, neither is he the 'one' we predicted" (Ibn Kathir).

190. The two fold anger is because of their disbelief in two major Prophets: Jesus and Muhammad (*asws*). A *hadith* says that whosoever believes in Jesus and also in Muhammad (*asws*), will have two fold rewards. There have been other explanations too (Ibn Jarir).

191. This "humiliating" nature of the punishment is specific to the unbelievers. The sinning believers will undergo a punishment that will be for cleansing them and not for humiliating them (*Ma'arif*).

192. The allusion is to the Jews of Madinah who, when told to be-

lieve in the new Revelation the Qur'an replied that they will not believe in anything after the *Tawrah*. What they failed to understand was that their rejection of the Qur'an was tantamount to the rejection of their own holy Scriptures, since the Qur'an confirmed the *Tawrah* as a revelation of Allah (Au.).

193. While rejecting the Qur'an, the Jews asserted their faith in the *Tawrah*. But, it is a fact of their history that they murdered Prophets sent to them. The Qur'an, therefore, rejects the claim to faith: both of those who committed those heinous crimes in earlier times, as well as the contemporaries of the Prophet (*saws*), who became equal in crime by not disowning those murders and murderers. Whoever assents to a crime is a criminal himself (Au.).

[93] And (recall) when We took compact with you and then raised the Tur over you¹⁹⁵ (saying): 'Hold fast unto what We have given you, and listen.' They said: 'We have heard but we shall disobey!' They were drunk with (the love of) the calf in their hearts because of their unbelief. Tell them, 'Evil is that which your faith dictates to you if you are truly faithful.'

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاسْمَعُوا قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأُشْرِينَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ قُلْ بِئْسَمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِهِ إِيمَانُكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

[94] Tell them: 'If the last abode with Allah is for you alone, to the exclusion of all others, then long for death if you are true.

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَالِصَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾

[95] But they will never long for it because of what their hands have forwarded. And Allah is well aware of the transgressors.¹⁹⁶

وَلَنْ يَتَمَنَّوْهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

194. In this verse the Qur'an takes the case a little further to point out that the tendencies of disbelief in the Israelites were not peculiar to the generations posterior to Musa (asws). As early as during Musa's period, the Israelites had betrayed their inclinations toward false gods despite all the signs that were made manifest to them: their calf worship during a short absence of Musa, is a case in point (Au.).

195. For explanation see verse 63 above.

196. It is reported that the Prophet (saws) said, as in a report in Ahmad declared as of trustworthy narrators

by Haythami:

كَوْنُ أَنَّ الْيَهُودَ تَمَنَّوُا الْمَوْتَ لَمَّا نَظَرُوا مَقَاعِدَهُمْ فِي النَّارِ

“Had the Jews (sincerely) wished for death, they would have all died and seen their places in the Fire” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Qurtubi).

Alusi adds: Wishing for death can be of two kinds. One in which a person wishes to die soon in order to be closer to Allah, His chosen slaves, and to hasten to the blessings of the Hereafter. Wishing death for such reasons is not prohibited in Islam. It is this kind of wish that the Jews were incapable of, which proved that they

[96] You will find them the most greedy of this life even greedier than the pagans;¹⁹⁷ Every one of them wishes that he be granted life of a thousand years, although, granted such prolongation, it will by no means save him from the chastisement. And Allah is well aware of all that they do.

وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ عَلَى حَيَاتِهِ وَمِنْ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمُخْرِجِهِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ أَنْ يُعَمَّرَ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

[97] Say, 'Whosoever is an enemy to Jibril while he is the one who has revealed this (Qur'ān) upon your heart (O Muhammad), by the leave of Allah, confirming that which came before it, a source of guidance and glad tidings for those who believe¹⁹⁸

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾

were not true in their claim that the pleasures of the Hereafter have been prepared for them alone. The second kind is that which arises out of the unbearableness of tribulations. To wish death for such reasons reveals a man's weakness in faith and his complete despair. This kind of longing for death is prohibited. A *hadith* (of Muslim: Au.) says:

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "لَا يَتَمَنَّيَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ الْمَوْتَ لِيُضْرَ نَزْلَ بِهِ. فَإِنْ كَانَ لَا بُدَّ مُتَمَنَّيًّا فَلْيَقُلْ: اللَّهُمَّ أَجْنِبْنِي مَا كَانَتْ الْحَيَاةُ خَيْرًا لِي، وَتَوَفَّنِي إِذَا كَانَتْ الْوَفَاةُ خَيْرًا لِي."

"Let none of you wish for death because of a misfortune that has struck him. If he has to say it at all, let him say: 'O Lord! Keep me alive if my staying alive is good for me; and let me die if death is

better for me.'"

It is reported by Nafi' (continues Alusi) that there was a Jew who used to go about boasting, 'Here I am longing for death. Why doesn't death overtake me?' When 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar heard him, he went after him with a naked sword. The Jew fled. Ibn 'Umar said: 'By God! Had I got hold of him, I would have beheaded him.'

197. Some pagans of the Prophet's time used to say to one who sneezed: "May you live for ten thousand years" (Ibn 'Abbas Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

198. Ibn Jarir relates two incidents which occasioned the revelation of this verse. One is as follows. (The report is taken from Haythami who thought that one of the narrators was

not so trustworthy: Au.):

عن ابن عباس قال حضرت عصابة من اليهود نبي الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يوما فقالوا يا أبا القاسم حدثنا عن خلال نسألك عنهن لا يعلمهن الا نبي قال سلوني عم شئتم ولكن اجعلوا لي ذمة الله وما أخذ يعقوب على بنيه لئن أنا حدثتكم شيئا ففرقتموه لتبايعني قالوا فذلك لك قال أربع خلال نسألك عنها أخبرنا أي شئ حرم اسرائيل على نفسه من قبل أن تنزل التوراة وأخبرنا كيف ماء الرجل من ماء المرأة وكيف الانثى منه والذكر وأخبرنا كيف هذا النبي الامي في النوم ومن وليه من الملائكة فأخذ عليهم عهد الله لئن أخبرتكم لتتبايعني فأعطوه ما شاء من عهد وميثاق قال فأنتشدهم بالذي أنزل التوراة على موسى هل تعلمون أن إسرائيل مرض مرضا طال سقمه فنذر نذرا لئن عافاه الله من سقمه ليحرم من أحب الشراب إليه وأحب الطعام إليه وكان أحب الطعام إليه لحمان الابل وأحب الشراب إليه ألبانها فقالوا اللهم نعم فقال اللهم اشهد وقال أنشدكم بالله الذي لا إله إلا هو هل تعلمون أن ماء الرجل غليظ وأن ماء المرأة أصفر رقيق فأيهما علا كان الولد والشبه باذن الله تعالى إن علاماء الرجل كان ذكرا باذن الله تعالى وإن علاماء المرأة كان أنثى باذن الله قالوا اللهم نعم قال اللهم اشهد قال فأشهدكم بالذي أنزل التوراة على موسى هل تعلمون أن النبي الامي هذا تنام عيناه ولا ينام قلبه قالوا اللهم نعم قال اللهم اشهد عليهم قالوا أنت الآن حدثتنا فحدثنا من وليك من الملائكة فعندها نجتمعك أو نفارقك قال فان وليي جبريل ولم يبعث الله نبيا قط إلا وهو وليه قالوا فعندها نفارقك لو كان وليك من الملائكة سواه لاتبعناك وصدقناك قال فما يمنعكم أن تصدقوا قالوا هو عدونا فعند ذلك قال الله عزوجل (من كان عدوا لجبريل فانه نزله على قلبك باذن الله مصدقا لما بين يديه وهدى وبشرى للمؤمنين). (مجمع الزوائد)

A group of Jewish rabbis came

to the Prophet (*saws*) and said, 'We would like to ask you a few things that we believe no one has the knowledge of, save a Prophet.' The Prophet said: 'Go ahead. But give me your word that if I answer them rightly you will declare your faith in me.' They said, 'You have our word.' They asked him about four things. One, about the food that Israel (Jacob) had declared forbidden unto himself; two, about how a child is sometimes male and sometimes female; three, about the nature of sleep of "this unlettered Prophet;" and four, about who is his (the Prophet's) friend among the angels? The Prophet answered, 'As for the food that Israel had voluntarily forbidden himself, it was camel's flesh which was very dear to him. He did that in gratitude to Allah for having cured him of a disease.' The rabbis said: 'You spoke the truth.' 'As for the sex of the child,' the Prophet continued, 'a man's semen is white and thick while the woman's is yellowish and thin. When the man's semen overcomes the woman's the child is male by the leave of Allah. And when the woman's semen overcomes that of man, it is a female by the leave

of Allah.' 'You spoke the truth,' the rabbis remarked. 'As for the question about the nature of sleep of the unlettered Prophet,' the Prophet continued, 'well, his eyes sleep but the heart is awake,' 'You spoke the truth again,' they said. 'As for your last question,' the Prophet told them, 'why, you know that it is Jibril who brings the revelations to me. He is my friend from among the angels.' 'That's where we part ways,' said the rabbis. 'He is our enemy who has always brought down punishments and hardships on us. If it had been Mika'il (Michael) we would have acknowledged you since he has always been kind upon us, causing increase in our harvests, easing our hardships and bringing peace.' In response, Allah revealed this verse: 'Who-soever is an enemy to Jibril..'

In the above incident it might be noted how cleverly the Jews formulated the questions. Three of them they took from their Scriptures while a fourth, not from their Scriptures, but whose answer was common knowledge, they kept in reserve, to be able to reject the Prophet (Au.).

The second incident, as reported by Sha'bi and others, is as follows in

its abridged version: It is said that 'Umar (*ra*) used to pass by Jews taking lessons in *Tawrah*. Occasionally, he joined them and listened to their discussions. It was interesting for him to note how the *Tawrah* confirmed the Qur'ān and the Qur'ān the *Tawrah*. One day he asked them adjuring them in the name of whatever was most holy to them to tell him if Muhammad (*saws*) was not a true Prophet. For a moment they were silent, staring into each other's faces. Then one of them spoke out saying that they believed he was a true Prophet, but weren't ready to acknowledge him. 'Umar asked them that if they knew he was a Prophet and yet refused to acknowledge him, could not they be punished? They said they were not worried about that because there were two angels most close to God. One was at odds with them (the Jews), and the other friendly. If one tried to harm them, the other would shield them. 'Who are they?' Umar enquired. They said, 'Jibril, who is our enemy, and Mika'il who is our friend and protector. One is at the right hand of God and the other on the left.'

'Umar (*ra*) mentioned it to the Prophet (*saws*) who told him that he had received verses referring to

[98] (Therefore) whosoever is an enemy to Allah, His Angels, His Messengers, Jibril, and Mikal,¹⁹⁹ then, surely Allah is an enemy to the unbelievers.²⁰⁰

مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِلَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَالَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾

[99] We have indeed revealed unto you clear signs, which none can discredit but the corrupt.²⁰¹

وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَا إِلَّا الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

[100] Has it not ever been so, that whenever they made a compact a party of them threw it away? Nay, but most of them have no faith.²⁰²

أَوَكَلَّمَا عَاهَدُوا عَهْدًا ثَبَّاهُ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

them, and read out: 'Whosoever is an enemy to Jibril...

anger.

In a *hadith* Allah (*swt*) says:

مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَنَنِي بِالْحَرْبِ

The Jewish dislike of Jibril seems to have a Biblical background. Majid quotes: "Refer the Bible: 'I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way... Beware of him, and obey his voice. Provoke him not!' (Ex. 23: 20 21) ... 'but they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them' (Is. 63:10)."

"Whoever acted with hostility against one of My friends, challenged Me to a fight" (Ibn Kathir).

199. Mikal is the word used in the original. Ibn Jarir explains that the Hejazi Arabs say Jibril and Mikal while those of Tamim, Qays, and Najd pronounce them as Jibra'il and Mika'il.

201. This verse was revealed as a reply to Ibn Suriya who said: "Muhammad! You have not brought anything that we (Jews) can recognize. Nor do you have a sign with you" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi). Allah replied that Muhammad had brought them not one but several signs. But none misses to see save the corrupt and the ungodly (Thanwi).

200. Thanwi says: The verse proves that whoever is hostile to the Friends of God (*Awliya' Allah*), earns Allah's

202. The "official" position of the Jews at Madinah was that although they were awaiting the appearance

[101] Whenever a Messenger came to them from Allah, confirming what was with them, a party of the People of the Book flung the Book of Allah behind their backs, as if they knew nothing (about it).²⁰³

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ تَبَدَّ فَرِيقٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾

of the last Prophet, they did not feel convinced that Muhammad was the promised one. This verse told them that their rejection of the Prophet was not because of their difficulty to recognize him. Rather, it was because they were used to breaking their compacts with Allah: one of which was to the effect that when the Last Prophet appears, with the signs that had been stated in very clear terms in their Scriptures, they would acknowledge him and follow him. But their history is replete with instances

of their disregard of the covenants (Au.).

Mufti Shafi` says: Allah (*swt*) used the words: “a party of them” because some of them kept the covenants. As, e.g., in the case of the last Prophet, a party of the Jews acknowledged him and embraced Islam.

203. The criticism is directed not only at the Jews contemporary to Sulayman (*asws*), but also at the Jews of the Prophet’s time who took equal interest in devilish crafts. Ibn Kathir

[102] And, (instead), they followed what the devils²⁰⁴ recited to them during Sulayman's kingdom.²⁰⁵ But it was not Sulayman who had blasphemed, rather it were the devils who blasphemed²⁰⁶ teaching the people magic and that which was sent down to the two angels at Babylon Harut and Marut.²⁰⁷ However, the two taught not any man without warning: 'Beware! We are (not here) but for (your) trial, so blaspheme not (by learning magic).' ²⁰⁸ Yet they would learn from the two what they might use to cause division between a man and his wife,²⁰⁹ although they harmed none thereby save by the leave of Allah.²¹⁰ Thus they learned what harmed them and not profited them, knowing well that whosoever trafficked therein will have no share in the world to come. Evil it was for which they bartered their souls if they had but known.

وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُوا الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَىٰ مُلْكِ
سُلَيْمَانَ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمَانُ وَلَكِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ
كَفَرُوا يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ
عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ بِبَابِلَ هَارُوتَ وَمَارُوتَ وَمَا
يُعَلِّمَانِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ
فَلَا تَكْفُرْ فَيَعْلَمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يَفْتَرُونَ بِهِ
بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ وَمَا هُمْ بِضَارِّينَ بِهِ مِنْ
أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَيَعْلَمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ
وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ
فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ وَلَبِئْسَ مَا شَرَوْا بِهِ
أَنفُسَهُمْ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

says: The Jews of Madinah first tried to confront the Prophet with the *Tawrah*. But when they found that the two Books confirmed each other, they flung the *Tawrah* behind their backs and began to use black magic against him. One of their men Labid b. al A'sam was a skilled magician who cast a spell on the Prophet (*saws*).

204. "By the term *Shayatin* is meant malevolent genii or Jinns. There also may be a tacit reference to the malcontent historical personalities of Prophet Solomon's time the renegade Jeroboam and the apostate Ahi-

jah, for example, and their band of rebellious conspirators and unbelieving soothsayers" (Majid).

205. Suddi reports that during Sulayman's reign the devils (*Shayatin*) used to ascend to the first firmament trying to eavesdrop on what the angels were discussing among themselves concerning the affairs that they were ordered to execute. The devils then recited the news they had picked up to their magician friends on the earth who would add a hundred lies and spread them among the masses. This was followed by the appearance of literature on black magic, sorcery,

fortune telling, etc. When Sulayman (*asws*) came to know of it all, he confiscated the literature and got it buried under his throne. After his death the literature was dug out and the opinion gained ground that magic was the basis of Sulayman's power, and that he was himself a powerful magician. Such were also the beliefs of the Jews of Madinah themselves experts in the science of black magic. They were shocked that the Qur'an declared Sulayman (*asws*) a Prophet and not a sorcerer and idolater. Hence these verses (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Jarir also relates another report (re narrated by Ibn Kathir) according to which someone came to Ibn 'Abbas some time after the assassination of 'Ali (*ra*), the fourth *Khalifah*. Ibn 'Abbas asked the man where he was from. "Iraq," the man replied. "From what place in Iraq?" Ibn 'Abbas enquired. "Kufah," the man answered. "And what's the news?" enquired Ibn 'Abbas. "Well," said the man, "I left the people there with rumors rife that 'Ali is to reappear soon." Ibn 'Abbas let out a shriek. Then he said: "Look. If there was any chance of him returning we would not have married his wives, nor divided his inheritance among ourselves. Let me tell you something. (Until the appearance of our own Prophet, *saws*) the Jinns

used to climb up to the first firmament and pick up bits and pieces of news from there. They would add a hundred lies and spread them among the people on the earth. Gradually, the material spread. When Sulayman (*asws*) was apprised of it he got the literature buried under his throne. After his death the Jinns disclosed the information to the people who dug them out again. It is the left-over of what was found then that the Iraqis are talking about now."

Majid notes: "The practice of magic was common throughout ancient Israel....knowledge of magic was indispensable to a member of the chief council of the judiciary, and might be acquired even from the heathen. The most profound scholars were adepts in the black art, and the law did not deny its power. The people who cared little for the view of the learned, were devoted to witchcraft. 'Adultery and sorcery have destroyed everything;' the Majesty of God departed from Israel... Exorcism also flourished. ... The Greco Roman world regarded the Jews as a race of magicians.' (*Jewish Encyclopedia* VIII p. 255) This reputation of the Jews as skilled magicians and expert exorcists continued right up to the time of the holy Prophet. 'They were,' in Arabia at the advent of Islam, 'adept in magic, and pre-

ferred the weapons of the black arts to those of open warfare.’ (Margo-liouth, Mohammad, p.189). The Arab Jews were adept in the black magic both of Palestine and Chaldea (Babylonia). They inherited the one and acquired the other. The Chaldeans, after they had ceased to be a nation, ‘dispersed all over the world, carrying their delusive science with them practicing and teaching it, welcomed everywhere by the credulous and superstitious.’ (Ragozin, Chaldea, p.255) And no better pupil could they have found than the Jews. ‘Babylonia... continued to be regarded with reverence by the Jews in all parts.’ (Jewish Encycl. II p. 413 414) Contact with Babylonia tended to stimulate the angelology and demonology of Israel’ (Ency. Britannica XIII p. 187, 11th ed.).

206. “King Sulayman (973 933 B.C.) of the *Bible*, who according to the teachings of Islam, was not an idolatrous king, but a true prophet of God and a benevolent and wise ruler. He was, as his name implies, essentially a man of peace. The Jews, true to their traditions of ingratitude and malevolence, have not hesitated to malign their own hero and national benefactor, Prophet Solomon (on whom be peace!), and to accuse him of the most heinous of all offences

idolatry! (See I Kings, 11: 4,9,10). They have also unblushingly attributed to him the cult of crude occultism and witchcraft. The Qur’ān upholds the honor of all prophets of God, to whatever race or age they may belong, and believes in the saintliness and sinlessness of every one of them. It takes this opportunity to sweep aside all the ugly tales and outrageous imputations about Solomon, and says in effect that far from being an unbeliever or a blasphemer, he never practiced any such black art as the pagans did” (Majid).

The slanderous statements in the *Bible* referred to by Majid above are as follows: “For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his god, as was the heart of David his father (I Kings, 11: 4).” At another place: “And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord commanded” (Ibid, 9,10) Au.

Majid also writes: “Observe the result of modern research by Biblical

scholars themselves into the 'polytheism' of Solomon maintained by the Bible and stoutly denied by the Holy Qur'ān. 'That Solomon had a number of wives both Israelite and non Israelite, is probable enough, but he did not make altars for all of them, nor did he himself combine the worship of his wives' gods with that of Yahweh. He can have had no thought of denying the sole divinity of Yahweh in the land which was Yahweh's "inheritance" We have no reason to doubt that according to his lights he was a faithful worshipper of Yahweh, so far as this was consistent with his despotic inclination' (Encycl. Biblica. c.4689). 'That the king abandoned his faith in Jehovah and became an idolater is difficult to believe, while it is easy to conceive how the fame to that effect may have arisen ... That he should have been guilty of the apostasy and sin alleged seems incredible and inexplicable on any supposition except one, viz., that his mode of life had left him prematurely worn out both in body and mind, so as to be, even in the fifth decade of his age, in a senile condition and hardly responsible for his actions. That is little if anything more than a supposition.' (Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible* IV pp. 567,568) 'Solomon was a sin-

cere worshipper of Yahweh' (Encyl. Britt. XX p. 952)."

207. Although both Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir have offered several interpretations recording numerous opinions of various authorities, no conclusion can be reached about what exactly the reference is to, and who the personalities were that have been alluded to here. There are two reasons for the uncertainty. First, there are variant readings of the text the explanation of which, here in English, will only further complicate and obscure the meaning. It should suffice to say that if the variant reading is accepted, it would mean that the two angels did not teach magic at all. However, this variant reading is the opinion of a minority. Second, the trustworthiness of the reports coming from the Prophet (*saws*) as well as those attributed to the Companions has been questioned. It will be best therefore to summarize the most probable explanation as presented in *Bayan al Qur'ān*, and *Ma'arif*, who themselves have probably relied upon Ibn Jarir and other classical scholars.

Harut and Marut

At the time when Babylon was the center of occult sciences, it was be-

coming increasingly difficult for the common man to distinguish between the knowledge brought by the Prophets and that presented by the occult sciences. The opinion had spread wide that the miracles of the Prophets also had their basis in magic. This led the common people to revere the magicians, sorcerers and others of the trade in the manner of saints, and to seek guidance from them in the affairs of life. Therefore, Allah (*swt*), who is bound by His mercy to provide His creations the right guidance, as He is bound to feed them, appointed two angels in human form Harut and Marut in order that they may demonstrate the difference between occult sciences and the knowledge brought by the Prophets and lead the people from darkness to light. Prophets themselves were not chosen for this task perhaps because using them as the means, would have defeated the whole purpose, for the Prophets themselves were, so to say, one of the disputed party, and anything said or done by them would have been received with skepticism and prejudice. The angels, anyway, began to teach the people that the truth and right guidance did not lie in occult sciences, rather, in the teachings of the Prophets. They also demon-

strated the difference. Some people then wanted to learn the art of magic from them on the pretext that their intentions were to defend themselves against the magicians who were widely influential at that time and were quite a nuisance to the society. They were sternly warned that such learning could lead them to unbelief and therefore, it was best for them to stay away from it. But the disciples would insist and they would teach them the art. Yet, those who acquired the art from them did not put it to self defense purposes only. Thus, although the angels were sent to make distinct truth from falsehood, the people actually turned the blessing into a curse by learning the science from them and then putting them to evil uses. They also spread the newly learnt art among the masses, adding to whatever already existed, enriching the whole.

As for the personalities of Harut and Marut, once again there are many reports attributed to the Companions but, to the exception of one, are all untrustworthy. One of them which is, according to Ibn Kathir, somewhat trustworthy, is also, it must be clearly understood, not a *hadith*, but a story attributed to a Companion, who probably relied on a Jewish source. Apart from other things,

the story will, it is hoped, convey a point to the pessimist and the misanthrope.

“When the people fell into degradation after Adam (*asws*), angels aired their view before Allah (*swt*) in words: ‘You are aware, O our Lord, the degradation into which men have fallen. They drink wine, commit theft, murder, and adultery, deceive in dealings, worship idols, et. al.’ They also cursed the humans thus showing no sympathy or understanding of their problems. In answer Allah (*swt*) told them to choose two of themselves that they trusted most who could be tested on earth. They chose Harut and Marut who were invested with human passions, weaknesses, wants and necessities and then sent to earth. The two lived a life of exemplary piety for a long time until a woman named Zahra the most beautiful daughter that Babylon had produced appeared before them seeking help in some affair. They fell in love with her. But, in reply to their advances, she made it clear that any relationship with her would be on the condition that they follow her religion: idolatry. They refused. But she was more enchanting than the chastity and patience that they could summon. So they returned to her time and again with

amorous appeals. When she saw that their love was unabated, and that they were not going to worship idols for her sake, she offered them an alternative: they murder someone she wanted done away with. Again they refused. Then, as their impatience with her mounted, she suggested that at least they drink wine with her. They thought that it was the least of evils she had suggested. But, once drunk, and their desires gratified, they murdered a man they thought would disclose their association with her. However, with the passions cooled and effects of intoxication gone, they were overcome by a sense of guilt and remorse. They thought they would simply quit the scene, but they found that they were no more capable of flying back to the heaven. They were offered the alternative of everlasting punishment in the Hereafter or in this world itself until the Day of Resurrection. They chose the latter. The angels in the heavens of course realized the immensity of the test Man was put to. And those who were once unsympathetic to mankind, now began to seek forgiveness for them through those beautiful words that Allah (*swt*) revealed in the Qur’ān (42: 5):

وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِمَنْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ [الشورى/٥]

"And the angels sing praises of their Lord, and seek forgiveness for those who are on the earth."

Ibn Kathir presents a few reports which confirm much of the above story (including a *hadith* from Ahmad), but cautions that although many Companions and their Followers have narrated the stories, they all seem to be of Jewish origin. Shawkani does not deny the possibility of such an incident taking place.

208. In the light of this verse and the *hadith* which says:

”من أتى كاهناً فصدقة بما يقول فقد كفر بما أنزل على محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم“.

رواه البزار ورجاله رجال الصحيح خلا عقبه بن سنان وهو ضعيف: مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد

“Whoever went to a fortune teller or a magician, accepting his word as true, disbelieved in what I have brought”

In view of this the opinion of some jurists is that a magician is to be put on the same footing as an apostate and put to death. Others believe, however, that he is not an apostate, but punishment for magic is, all the same, death. It is related by Imām Shafē'i and Ahmad b. Hanbal that `Umar (*ra*) sent orders to punish every (believing) magician with death,

and, as Bijalah b. `Abduh reports, 'Accordingly, we beheaded three magicians.' This report is in Bukhari too. It is also reported that Walid b. `Uqbah, who was the governor of Madinah, had a magician who could kill a man and then quicken him. One day, an Ansari slew him saying, 'If he has the power to quicken the dead, let him come back to life.' Walid was very upset about it. He imprisoned the Ansari but released him after some time (Ibn Kathir).

As for the truth of the magical feats, Imām Razi, who authored a separate book on magic, (which it is said he later disowned, removing it from the list of books authored by him), has mentioned eight kinds. The following free and abridged translation is from Ibn Kathir. Two kinds have been dropped out since they will not be considered as witchcraft today, rather, mere psychological tricks. Obviously, the list given by Imām Razi is not comprehensive. Perhaps, mesmerism, hypnotism, telepathy and many more kinds should also be added to the list.

Kinds of Magic

a) The kind which the ancient Babylonians practiced. They were worshippers of the seven stars and believed that the celestial objects have

a say in the fate of man. It is to these that Ibrahim (*asws*) was sent.

b) The magic (or extra sensory perceptions) which involves superstitious people on the one side and the strong willed on the other. To explain: a man will easily walk over a narrow path on the ground, but will be very fearful of falling off a narrow bridge; or the effect produced by the staring into very bright red color, or things that are rotating fast, etc. They can have ill effects on a superstitious person. To this category belongs the effect of the 'evil eye' which on the one hand is caused by the strong willed and on the other, affects the superstitious. Accordingly, a *hadith* says:

الْعَيْنُ حَقٌّ وَلَوْ كَانَ شَيْءٌ سَابِقَ الْقَدَرِ سَبَقَتْهُ الْعَيْنُ
- صحيح مسلم

"The evil eye is a reality. If anything could overtake the predestined, it would be the evil eye."

To explain further: men are composed of an earthly body and a heavenly soul. Now, if the soul is more powerful than a body, then it is attached more to the heavenly system and hence overpowers its own and another person's mind and body. As against that, if the body is inclined

more toward the earthly existence then it will have a weak soul which will be susceptible to the influences of the powerful souls. The strength of the soul itself can be achieved through decrease in food intake, withdrawal from the people and abstinence from fraudulent piety (*riya*).

At this juncture Ibn Kathir breaks in to make his own point. He says: "This is the explanation of the 'states' (*ahwaal*, sing, *haal*) of the *Sufiya* and *Awliya* Allah. Of this in turn are two kinds: one approved by Islam, and the other, not. The one approved by Islam is that in which the man is a close and strict follower of the *Shari'ah*, is pious, knows the right from wrong, and behaves rationally and in accordance with the rules of the *Shari'ah* in and out of his 'state.' This kind of 'state' is a God given gift bestowed by Allah upon whom of His servants He will. This, however, does not fall in the category of sahar of the *Shari'ah* definition. The other kind of 'state' (*haal*) which is disapproved by Islam is the one in which the man of the 'state' does not observe the rules of the *Shari'ah* in and out of his 'state.' Although it is Allah who causes these 'states,' it is no blessing from Him. It is of the kind

that Dajjal will be endowed with.”

Ibn Kathir's remarks end here.

c) A third kind of magic involves co-operation of the earthly jinn. Of the jinn there are two kinds: the believers and the unbelievers. The unbelieving jinn are known as *Shayatin*. It is maintained by those who practice occult sciences that it is easier to work ways of cooperation with the earthly jinn than those flying around in the first firmament.

d) The fourth kind does not involve anything but tricks, sleight of hand and casting of spells that give the appearance of reality. Some scholars say that the performance of the magicians in the court of Fir'awn was of this kind. Hence Allah (*swt*) described it in the following words (7: 116):

فَلَمَّا أَلْقَوْا سَحَرُوا أَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ وَاسْتَزْهَبُوهُمْ وَجَاءُوا
بِسِحْرِ عَظِيمٍ [الأعراف/١١٦]

“And when they threw, they cast a spell upon the people's eyes; overawed them and produced a mighty spell.”

At another place it was said (20: 66):

فَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ وَعَصِيَّتُهُمْ تُخِيلُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ سِحْرِهِمْ أَتَتْهَا
نَسْعَى [طه/٦٦]

“And lo! Their ropes and their staffs, by their magic, appeared to

him as if they were crawling (like snakes).”

e) The fifth kind includes feats performed with the help of strange tools and instruments, such as mathematical contraptions, like a horse with a trumpet in its leg, blowing the trumpet at every hour, or those images that laugh and cry. These feats of course should not be counted as magic because they are produced by the application of physical laws and which can be imitated by anyone ready to apply himself to the task with some diligence. To this category also belong those tricks practiced by the Christians of Jerusalem who have lit a lamp in a Church which seems to burn continuously without fuel. The fuel is in fact secretly supplied, known and admitted by the Church men but considered a miracle by the laity; or the bird that a priest had planted in the Church spire with a secret door below. In the season of the year when the olives in the Church yard were ready to be plucked, the priest opened the secret door letting in blasts of wind that made the artificial bird chirp and attract other birds. A flock of birds that were attracted plucked the olives to the wonder of the laity who thronged to watch the miracle of the birds plucking the olives almost on

call.

f) A sixth kind involves certain medicines (and herbal plants) that, as we all know, have their effects on the body, but assumed by the common people as feats of magic.

Razi's quote as presented by Ibn Kathir ends here.

209. This shows how serious a crime the break up of a family is in the sight of Islam. A *hadith* recorded by Muslim says:

”إِنَّ إِبْلِيسَ يَضَعُ عَرْشَهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ. ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُ سَرَايَاهُ. فَأَذْنَاهُمْ مِنْهُ مَنْزِلَةً أَعْظَمُهُمْ فِتْنَةً. يَجِيءُ أَحَدُهُمْ فَيَقُولُ: فَعَلْتُ كَذَا وَكَذَا. فَيَقُولُ: مَا صَنَعْتَ شَيْئًا. قَالَ: ثُمَّ يَجِيءُ أَحَدُهُمْ فَيَقُولُ: مَا تَرَكْتُهُ حَتَّى فَرَّقْتُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ امْرَأَتِهِ. قَالَ: فَيُذَيِّبُهُ مِنْهُ وَيَقُولُ: نَعَمْ أَنْتَ.“

“Satan sets his throne on waters and spreads his disciples among the people. Then, (as he gathers them back for a report), the nearest to him is the one who does the greatest of mischief to mankind. So that when one comes back and reports that he did not part from a man until he forced him to speak such and such (evil things), Satan says, ‘By God. You achieved nothing.’ This goes on, until one shows up who says, ‘I

did not part from a man until I had separated him from his wife.’ Satan congratulates him, hugs him, and draws him close to himself saying: ‘Yes, you!’” (That is, you have achieved something) Ibn Kathir.

Majid quotes: “The commonest form of magic was the love charm, especially the love charm required for an illicit amour. Such magic was practiced especially by women so that magic and adultery frequently are mentioned together....The context of the passages in Exodus which mention sorcery clearly shows that it was associated with sexual license and unnatural vices’ (*Jewish Encycl.* VIII. p. 255).”

Mawdudi comments: “This was the depth of moral depravity to which these people had fallen. A people cannot sink to a lower level of moral degeneracy than when adulterous affairs become their favorite pastime, and when seducing a married woman is considered a boastful achievement. The matrimonial relationship is, in truth, the very foundation of man’s collective life. The soundness of human civilization depends on the soundness of the relationship be-

[103] Had they believed and been pious, surely, the reward with Allah would have been better if they but knew.

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَمَثُوبَةٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
خَيْرٌ لَّوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

[104] O believers,²¹¹ do not say "ra'ina" (while addressing the Prophet). Say, "unzurna,"²¹² and listen (to him carefully).²¹³ A painful chastisement awaits the unbelievers.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقُولُوا رَاعِنَا وَقُولُوا
انْظُرْنَا وَاسْمَعُوا وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ
﴿١٠٤﴾

tween the two sexes. Hence, nothing could be worse than the person who strikes at the very foundation of the structure which supports him and the society as a whole."

210. This, it must be noted, is an unfailing rule, i.e., no magician can cast his spell on anyone, or cause any harm, without the will of Allah (*swt*).

Rulings on Magic

a) The consensus of Muslim scholars is that, regardless of the kind, practice of magic is prohibited.

b) Learning of magical arts is also prohibited. But a minority opinion is that its learning for the sake of curing Muslims is not prohibited, provided the need is immediate and the learning does not require uttering words of disbelief.

c) Punishment for a Muslim practicing the craft would depend on the kind of magic: one requiring utter-

ance of words of disbelief is punishable with death.

d) Those charms, amulets etc., are also prohibited in which the help of the jinn or *Shayatin* is sought.

e) It is also prohibited to use the words of the Qur'an or *hadith* to cast spell with the intention to cause harm.

211. A literal translation would be "O ye who have believed," or, "O you who have attained to faith."

"This is the first instance of the usage of this expression which has occurred 89 times in the Qur'an, and implies in its structure that the faith residing in the hearts of those thus addressed ought to respond with obedience and submission (Sabuni).

212. "Ra'ina" of the original means "listen to us," "but the term, innocent in itself, was turned by a little twist in pronunciation into a word

of reproach and insult by the Jews when addressing the holy Prophet,” (Majid) hence the Muslims were forbidden the use of the term while addressing the Prophet and ordered to employ another term “unzurna” which means “look upon us,” or “pay attention to us,” and which could not be given the same twist.

Mawdudi writes: “When the Jews visited the Prophet they tried to vent their spite by using ambiguous expressions in their greetings and conversations. They used words which had double meanings, one innocent and the other offensive.... Ostensibly they maintained the decorum of respect and courtesy while sparing no underhand means to insult the Prophet.... They used the expression *Ra'ina*, which meant ‘kindly indulge us’.... It was possible, however, for the expression to be used with quite a different shade of meaning. In Hebrew, for instance, there is a word similar to it which means: ‘Listen, may you become deaf.’ In the same language it also means arrogant, ignorant and fool. In actual conver-

sation it was also used on occasions when one wanted to say: ‘If you listen to me, I will listen to you.’ When it was pronounced with a slight twist of the tongue it turned into *Ra'ina*, meaning our shepherd.”

Ibn Kathir comments: In this verse Allah has forbidden us from following the ways of the unbelievers: either in deeds or in words... The Prophet is reported to have said in a *hadith* of Ahmad (also in *Majma' al Zawa'id*: H. b. Ibrahim):

" بُعِثْتُ بِالسَّيْفِ حَتَّى يُعْبَدَ اللَّهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَجُعِلَ رِزْقِي تَحْتَ ظِلِّ رُجْحِي وَجُعِلَ الدَّلِيلُ وَالصَّعَاوُ عَلَى مَنْ خَالَفَ أَمْرِي وَمَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ " رواه أحمد وفيه عبد الرحمن بن ثابت وثقه ابن المديني وغيره وضعفه أحمد وغيره، وبقية رجاله ثقات - مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد .

“I have been commissioned with the sword with the Doomsday close at hand, so that Allah alone, who has no partners, may be worshipped. My sustenance has been placed under the shadow of my spear; and humiliation and subordination has been written upon him who will oppose my mission.

[105] The unbelievers do not like it at all - neither the people of the Book,²¹⁴ nor the pagans - that anything good should be sent down to you by your Lord. But it is Allah who chooses for His mercy whom He will. Allah indeed is infinitely Bountiful.²¹⁵

مَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَلَا الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مِمَّنْ رَّبُّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿١٠٥﴾

[106] We do not abrogate a verse, or cause it to be forgotten, but substitute with one better than it or similar to it.²¹⁶ Have you not known that Allah has power over all things?

مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِمَّنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾

And he who imitated a people is one of them.”

213. So that you may not have to make him repeat what he has said. The expression, ‘and listen’ could also mean: listen to him with the intention to obey unlike the Jews who said to their Prophet “we have heard, but we will not obey” (Zamakhshari).

214. “In contradistinction to the idolaters, Islam gives this name, ‘the people of the Book’ to the Jews and Christians on account of their possessing, in a falsified form though, divine books of revelation, and grants them a privileged position” (Majid).

215. “So He can be as Gracious to the descendants of Isma’il as He has been to the race of Israel” (Majid).

216. “This refers to the objections

raised by the opponents of Islam to the abrogation of certain laws and their replacement by others during the early days of Islam. The main objectors were the Jews. Their objective was not to know the truth but to cast doubt on the Divine origin of the Qur’ān. In refutation God states that He being the Absolute Sovereign has unlimited authority both to abrogate previous injunctions and to cause people to forget the injunctions He wants them to forget” (Mawdudi).

Ibn Kathir comments: To raise such objections is disbelief. In addition, there is no basis in reason for such objection, for Allah orders what He wishes, and He acts as He wills. Moreover, abrogation has also occurred in previous revelations. For instance, it was lawful for the sons of Adam to marry their sisters. Later it was declared unlawful. Again, it was

lawful for the children of Israel to have two sisters as wives at one time, until the Mosaic law prevented it. And again, Allah ordered Ibrahim to slaughter his son, but later abrogated the commandment.

Majid writes: "There is nothing to be ashamed of in the doctrine of certain laws, temporary or local, being superseded or abrogated by certain other laws, permanent and universal, and enacted by the same Law giver, especially during the course of promulgation of that law. The course of Qur'ānic Revelation has been avowedly gradual. It took about 23 years to finish and complete the Legislation. Small wonder, then, that certain minor laws, admittedly transitory, were replaced by certain others, lasting and eternal....It must be, however, clearly understood that the doctrine of abrogation applies to 'law' only, and even there to those of minor or secondary importance. Beliefs, articles of faith, principles of law, narratives, exhortations, moral precepts, and spiritual verities, none of these is at all subject to abrogation or repeal."

Qurtubi relates the following. Once when 'Ali (*ra*) entered the mosque

he found a man addressing the people. He enquired what the man was doing. He was told he was admonishing. 'Ali said: "He is not admonishing the people. He wants to be known that he is so and so, son of so and so." Then he ordered the man to be presented to him. When he came he asked him if he knew which verses of the Qur'ān abrogated others. The man said he did not. 'Ali told him to get out of the mosque and never to engage himself in this kind of activity again.

Thanwi points out: The verse carries the implication that what descends upon a man (causing losses) without him being its cause will be replaced by something similar or better. So let him not grieve over it.

It might also be pointed out that just as abrogation occurred, it also happened that a verse, or more, or a whole chapter was revealed and then, when the contingency was over, was removed from the people's memory (Au.). It is reported by Ubayy b. Ka'b and 'A'isha (*ra*) that *surah al Ahzāb* was originally as long as *surah al Baqarah* (until a large portion of it was erased from memory) Qurtubi.

[107] Have you not known that to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth? And besides Allah you have neither a protector nor helper.

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ
وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾

[108] Do you want to make demands on your Prophet the way demands were made on Musa aforetime?²¹⁷ He who exchanges belief for unbelief has indeed lost the right path.²¹⁸

أَمْ تُرِيدُونَ أَن تَسْأَلُوا رَسُولَكُمْ كَمَا سُئِلَ
مُوسَىٰ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ
فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿١٠٨﴾

As for the contingency itself, the scholars are agreed that in its early days Islam was passing through special circumstances which required very special laws. They were repealed once those very special circumstances disappeared. However, Islam is now well established. Neither an abrogation nor repeal is now allowable (Au.).

217. The rendering into English of the original “*tas’alu*” as “make demand” is in keeping with the later part of the verse which condemns it as an act of disbelief, and refers to, according to one report, the demand of the unbelievers on the Prophet to bring down a Book right in front of their eyes from the heavens (Ibn ‘Abbas). This is also Ibn Kathir’s preferred meaning.

Nonetheless, Ibn Kathir himself, as well as some other commentators have applied the verse to instances

of the Companions seeking from the Prophet minor details of the law. Allah (*swt*) forbade them in words (5: 110):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَسْأَلُوا عَنْ أَشْيَاءٍ إِن تَبَدَّلَ لَكُمْ
تَسْوُؤُهُمْ وَإِن تَسْأَلُوا عَنْهَا حِينَ يُنَزَّلُ الْقُرْآنُ تَبَدَّلَ لَكُمْ
[المائدة/١٠١]

‘O believers, question not concerning things which, if they were revealed to you, would vex you. But if you ask about them while the Qur’ān is being revealed, they will be revealed to you.’ The Prophet (saws) also instructed his Companions not to ask him too many questions. A *hadīth* (of Muslim) says the Prophet (saws) told them:

"ذَرُونِي مَا تَرَكْتُكُمْ فَإِنَّمَا هَلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ بَكْرَةٍ
سُؤَالِهِمْ وَاجْتِلَافِهِمْ عَلَىٰ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَا تَهَيَّئْتُمْ عَنْهُ
فَاسْتَهْوُوا وَمَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَهْوُوا مِنْهُ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ "

“Let me alone so long as I leave you alone. Those who went before you were destroyed because of excessive questioning and their disputations with their Prophets.

[109] Many of the people of the Book aspire to make you unbelievers after you have believed²¹⁹ out of jealousy rising in their hearts²²⁰ even after the truth has become apparent to them. Forgive them, and overlook,²²¹ until Allah sends His command.²²² Indeed Allah has power over all things.²²³

وَدَّ كَثِيرٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يَرُدُّوكُم مِّنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِكُمْ كُفَّارًا حَسَدًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ أَنفُسِهِمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ فَاعْفُوا وَاصْفَحُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾

So, when I forbid a thing, avoid it and when I order you to do a thing, go ahead and do it to the extent possible.”

Accordingly the Companions asked him few questions. Bara’ bin ‘Azib says: “A year would pass and I could not ask the Prophet about something I wanted to, in awe of him. We used to wish that a Bedouin would appear (and question him about things we did not have the courage to ask, since the Bedouins were unlikely to know that the Qur’ān had frowned upon questioning).”

218. “Lit., ‘whoever takes a denial of the truth in exchange for belief’ i.e., whoever refuses to accept the internal evidence of the truth of the Qur’ānic message and demands, instead, an ‘objective’ proof of its divine origin (*Manar* I, 416f.) that which was ‘asked of Moses aforetime’ was the demand of the children of Israel to ‘see God face to face’ (cf. 2:55).” Asad

219. It is related that Finhas b. ‘Azura’, Zayd b. Qays and some other Jews met Hudhayfa b. Al Yaman, and ‘Ammar b. Yasir after the battle of Uhud. They taunted the latter: “Can you not see what has befallen you? If you had been in the right you would not have been defeated. Come and join us in our religion. It will be a better religion for you, since we are better guided than you.” ‘Ammar replied: “What do you think about the breaking of an oath?” They said: “A terrible thing.” He said: “Then I have given an oath that I’ll never forsake Muhammad in my life.” The Jews said: “This man has turned a Sabe’i (so leave him alone).” Then Hudhayfa said: “As for me, I am quite satisfied with Allah as my Lord, Islam as my religion, the Qur’ān as my guide, Ka’ba as my *qiblah*, and believers as my brothers.” When the two returned to the Prophet, he told them: “You spoke rightly and you have attained success.” It was then that this verse was revealed: “Many of the un-

believers aspire....” (Razi and others).

220. The word used in the original for “jealousy” is “*hasad*.” There are two kinds of *hasad*. One in which a man desires that the person endowed with something good be dispossessed of it. Such jealousy is prohibited in Islam. Says a *hadith* about this kind of *hasad* (Razi):

فَإِنَّ الْحَسَدَ يَأْكُلُ الْحَسَنَاتِ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ النَّارُ الْخَطْبَ

“*Hasad* eats away good deeds as (fast as) fire eats away wood.”

The other is the kind in which a person becomes desirous of obtaining a thing after having seen it in, or with, another person, but has no rancorous feeling toward him nor does he wish the dispossession of the thing by the person envied. This is permissible. A *hadith Sahih* says (Qurtubi):

" لَا حَسَدَ إِلَّا فِي اثْنَتَيْنِ رَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْقُرْآنَ فَهُوَ يَتْلُوهُ آتَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَآتَاءَ النَّهَارِ ، وَرَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَالاً فَهُوَ يَنْفِقُهُ آتَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَآتَاءَ النَّهَارِ " - صحيح البخارى

“*Hasad* is not allowed except of two persons: One, he whom Allah gave the (gift of) the Qur’ān and he stands with it before his Lord day and night; second,

a man whom Allah (*swt*) gave wealth and he spends of it day and night.”

Imām Razi has devoted about eight pages discussing kinds, causes and treatment of *hasad*.

221. “Forgive them and overlook” are not the best words for “*f’afu*” and “*isfahu*”; for “the first implies a forgiveness (behind which there is no vindictiveness), while the second term implies the removal of all ill feelings from the heart concerning the person being forgiven” - Qurtubi. Thus “*safh*” is a higher state of “*afw*.”

222. The new orders that Allah (*swt*) had promised were issued a few years later when He revealed (9: 5):

فَاذْكُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ [التوبة/٥]

“Therefore, slay the idolaters (of Arabia) wherever you find them” (Ibn Kathir), and (9: 29):

فَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَنْ يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ [التوبة/٢٩]

“Fight those who do not believe in Allah (*swt*) and the Last Day,

[110] And offer Prayers (assiduously and spiritedly), pay the zakah, and whatever good you send forward for yourselves, you shall find it with your Lord.²²⁴ Verily, Allah is aware of all that you do.

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا
لَأَنْفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١١٠﴾

and do not forbid what Allah (swt) and His Messenger have forbidden such men as practice not the religion of Truth, of those who have been given the Book until they pay the tribute of hand and have been humbled" - Ibn Kathir and Ibn Jarir.

223. That is, He who has power over all things will either forgive them or guide them to Islam (Ibn Jarir).

224. A *hadith* says:

أَنَّ الْعَبْدَ إِذَا مَاتَ قَالَ النَّاسُ مَا خَلَّفَ وَقَالَتِ
الْمَلَائِكَةُ مَا قَدَّمَ

"When a man dies people enquire about what he left behind, while the angels ask about what he sent forward."

But the above *hadith* could not be located in major works (Au.).

Bukhari and Nasa'i, report:

أَيُّكُمْ مَالٌ وَارِثُهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ مَالِهِ؟ قَالُوا : يَا رَسُولَ

اللَّهِ ، مَا مِنَّا أَحَدٌ إِلَّا مَالُهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْهِ؛ قَالَ : فَإِنْ مَالَهُ
مَا قَدَّمَ وَمَالُ وَارِثِهِ مَا أُخَّرَ

The Prophet (*saws*) asked, "To which of you is the wealth of his inheritors dearer than his own wealth?" The Companions replied, "To none of us is the wealth of his inheritors dearer than his own." The Prophet said, "But your wealth is that which a man sends forward. And the wealth of the inheritors is that which he leaves behind."

It is reported of 'Umar (*ra*) that when he visited the graveyard of Baqi' al Gharqad he addressed the dead in the following words,

السلام عليكم أهل القبور ، أخبارُ ما عندنا أن
نساءكم قد تزوجن ، وودوركم قد سكنت ، وأموالكم
قد قُسمت . فأجابه هاتفت : يابن الخطاب أخبار ما
عندنا أن ما قدّمناه وجدناه ، وما أنفقناه فقد ربحناه
، وما خلفناه فقد خسرناه .

[111] And they say, 'None shall enter Paradise except he who is (according to the Jews) a Jew or (according to the Christians) a Christian.' These are their illusions.²²⁵ Tell them, 'Bring your proof if you be true (in your claim).'

وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ
نَصَارَى تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١١١﴾

[112] Nay indeed, whosoever submits himself to Allah,²²⁶ and he is sincere,²²⁷ his reward is with his Lord. No fear shall be on them, neither shall they grieve.²²⁸

بَلَى مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ
أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

"Peace upon you, people of the graves! The news from us is that your women have remarried; your houses have been occupied; and your wealth has been distributed." A voice replied, "O `Umar b. al Khattab! Our news is that whatever we sent forward, we have found it; what we spent, we have profited from it; and what we left, we lost it!" (Qurtubi).

225. Nothing materializes from dreams. A *hadith* says:

سنن الترمذی الکبیر من ذان نفسه وعمل لما بعد
الموت والعاجز من أتبع نفسه هواها وتمنى على الله
". قَالَ هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ

"Intelligent is the man who takes account of himself and works for the Hereafter. And weak is the man who follows his base desires and fastens hopes (of forgiveness) on his Lord" (Razi).

The *hadith* is in Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, with the former declaring it *Hasan* (Au.).

226. "Lit., "who surrenders his face unto God." Since the face of a person is the most expressive part of his body, it is used in classical Arabic to denote one's whole personality, or whole being. This expression, repeated in the Qur'an several times, provides a perfect definition of islam, which derived from the root verb *aslama*, "he surrendered himself" means "self-surrender [to God]": and it is in this sense that the terms *islam* and *muslim* are used throughout the Qur'an" (Asad).

227. It is sincerity on which depends the weight and worth of an act. Allah (*swt*) will not accept anything that is not purely for Him. The very first *hadith* in Bukhari says:

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ

[113] The Jews say, 'The Christians are on nothing.' And the Christians say, 'The Jews are on nothing,' while they both read the Book.²²⁹ So say those who have no knowledge, making similar statements.²³⁰ Allah will decide between them on the Day of Judgment in all those matters over which they were differing.

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ النَّصَارَىٰ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ
وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَىٰ لَيْسَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ
وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾

"Actions are by intentions."

That is, actions will be judged by the intentions behind them. Another *hadith* (of Muslim: Au.) says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَىٰ صُورَتِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَىٰ قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ

"Allah does not look at your faces or wealth. He looks at your hearts and deeds."

Intention

What Imām Razi has written here can be summed up as follows: When an ignorant man hears about intention and how important it is to be of good intentions, he says to himself, (sometimes actually uttering the words), 'I intend to please Allah by this act ... of trade, or commerce,' or whatever he is engaged in. This is an error; for intentions cannot be made this way. Intentions are something that spring forth from the bottom of the heart in a spontaneous response to one's actions, without recourse to a choice. A full stomached man

cannot say for instance, 'I intend to be hungry,' and be actually hungry the next moment. That cannot happen. Rather, he will have to work the means that produce the desire in one's heart for food. Right intentions therefore, also need to be produced through the conviction of the heart and mind. This can be brought about by the knowledge of the rewards, punishments and consequences that result from the deeds, as well as from the knowledge, deep seated in the soul, that it is Allah alone who has all the power, who can reward and punish, and none else can do that besides Him. The stronger this conviction, gained by means of knowledge, the purer the intentions.

228. Thus the verse lays down a rule for salvation. It does not lie in being a Jew, a Christian, or a Muslim. It lies in total submission to Allah and in leading a righteous life in accordance with the dictates of Revelation. Quite unmindful of this rule, the Jews, Christians and Muslims, all

[114] And who can do greater wrong than he who prevents Allah's Name from being raised in the places of worship and strives to destroy them?²³¹ It was not for such to enter them but in fear. For them is ignominy in the present world and a mighty chastisement awaits them in the world to come.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذَكَّرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَىٰ فِي خَرَابِهَا أُولَٰئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا خَائِفِينَ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١١٤﴾

lead a life of sin with total disregard of the Hereafter, and yet fasten hope on their Lord that they will be ushered into Paradise simply because of the fact that they are Jews, Christians or Muslims (*Ma'arif*).

229. These verses were revealed to refute the Jews and Christians, who, while drawing inspiration from the Holy literature common to them, dismissed each other's faiths as being without any basis. Ibn `Abbas said (Ibn Kathir, Razi): When the Christians of Najran came to see the Prophet (*saws*) in the first year after *hijrah*, the Jews began to argue with them. Rafi` b. Hurmala (a Jew) told them, 'You Christians are on nothing.' He rejected both `Isa as well as the Gospels. In reply a man from Najran told him that the Jews were on nothing. He denied Musa as well as the *Tawrah*. Allah revealed this verse.

230. Making statements of this sort requires knowledge of the Scriptures. Now, when those who have the

Scriptures, make such irresponsible statements, then, what about those who have no knowledge whatsoever of the Scriptures? (Au.).

231. There are two opinions about what occasioned the revelation of this verse. One, preferred by Ibn Jarir (and based on opinions of Mujahid, Qatadah, and Hasan al Basri), is that it refers to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem at the hands of the (pagan) Romans, in which the Christians took active part. A second opinion (based on the opinions of Ibn `Abbas and Zayd, and of Ibn Kathir's preference), is that it refers to the Arab polytheists preventing the Muslims from worshipping in the Grand Mosque at Makkah. If the earlier interpretation is accepted as true then the "destruction" (referred to in the latter part of the verse) would be actual and physical. But, if the second interpretation, which is weightier of the two, is treated as valid, then it is figurative.

Asad writes: "It is one of the fundamental principles of Islam that every religion which has belief in God as its focal point must be accorded full respects, however much one may disagree with its particular tenets. Thus, the Muslims are under an obligation to honor and protect any house of worship dedicated to God, whether it be a mosque or a church or a synagogue (cf. the second paragraph of 22:40); and any attempt to prevent the followers of another faith from worshipping God according to their own lights is condemned by the Qur'ān as sacrilege."

Mosques

Since the textual word "masajid" has occurred for the first time, Imām Razi has dealt with the subject of construction, visit, decoration, and rules pertaining to the mosques with his usual thoroughness. We shall present only the main points here.

Construction: When some Companions objected to 'Uthman the third caliph's intention to expand the Prophet's mosque at Madinah, he said:

مَنْ بَنَى لِلَّهِ مَسْجِدًا بَنَى اللَّهُ لَهُ مِثْلَهُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ (سنن الترمذی)

"I have heard the Prophet (*saws*) say, 'Whoever built a mosque for the sake of Allah, will have a house built for him in Paradise by Him.'"

(According to Tirmidhi, the *hadith* is trustworthy: Au.).

Another *hadith* says,

“خير البقاع المساجد وشر البقاع الأسواق”

"The best of places in the sight of Allah are mosques, and the worst, the commercial centers."

(Haythami added that except for a minor glitch, the report is trustworthy: Au.).

Visiting Mosques: A *hadith* (in Bukhari: Au.) says,

إِذَا تَوَضَّأَ فَأَحْسَنَ وَأَتَى الْمَسْجِدَ ، لَا يُرِيدُ إِلَّا الصَّلَاةَ ، لَمْ يَنْطُ حُطُوءٌ إِلَّا رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ بِهَا دَرَجَةً ، وَحُطَّ عَنْهُ خَطِيئَةٌ

"When a man makes ablution and starts for the mosque for no other reason but to offer Prayers, then, with his every step a sin is erased and with the next step his position is elevated in Paradise."

A report says that the family of Banu Salamah, whose dwellings were a little way off, intended to shift to the

vicinity of the Masjid al Nabawi. The Prophet (*saws*) asked them if what he heard of their intention was true. They affirmed. He said,

يَا بَنِي سَلَمَةَ دِيَارَكُمْ تُكْتَبُ آثَارُكُمْ دِيَارَكُمْ تُكْتَبُ
آثَارُكُمْ

“O Banu Salamah, stay put in your dwellings. Your footsteps are registered, your footsteps are registered.”

(The report is in *Muslim: Au.*).

Decorating the Mosques: Ibn `Abbas says the Prophet (*saws*) said:

ما أمرت بتشديد المساجد

“I have been ordered not to raise the walls of the mosque high.”

When `Umar the second Caliph ordered a mosque built, he instructed the contractor: “Take care to shelter the people from rain. And beware that you use red or yellow paints. That will divert the attention of the worshippers.”

It is reported of Anas that he was passing by a place along with a few friends. When he intended to offer Prayers in a mosque, someone suggested, “I wish we could Pray in such and such a mosque.” He enquired, “What mosque?” They said, “A new mosque yonder there.” Anas said, “I

have heard the Prophet (*saws*) say:

سَيَأْتِي عَلَى أُمَّتِي زَمَانٌ يُتَبَاهَوْنَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ وَلَا يَعْمُرُونَهَا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

“A time will come when my people will compete with each other in building mosques. But they will not pray in them.”

Worldly Dealings inside the Mosques: The Prophet (*saws*) has said:

إِذَا رَأَيْتُمْ مَنْ يَبِيعُ أَوْ يَبْتَاعُ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ فَقُولُوا : لَا أَرْبِحَ اللَّهُ بِتِجَارَتِكَ

“If you find a man selling or buying in a mosque, say, ‘May Allah bless you not in your dealing.’”

Sleeping in the Mosques: Some scholars permit sleeping in the mosques. But Ibn `Abbas used to say, “Do not sleep in them, nor take your siesta there.”

Sanctity: A *hadith* says:

مَنْ أَكَلَ مِنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ الْمُنْتَنَةِ فَلَا يَقْرُبَنَّ مَسْجِدَنَا فَإِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَتَأَذَى مِمَّا يَتَأَذَى مِنْهُ الْإِنْسُ

“Let him not, who ate onion or garlic come into the mosque. The angels dislike those smells that the humans dislike.” (That is, it is the raw ones that have been prohibited: Au.).

[115] To Allah belong the east and the west. So whithersoever you turn, there is Allah's Face.²³² Verily Allah is All embracing, All knowing.

وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾

Qurtubi adds the following points:

With this verse (i.e. "And who can do greater wrong than he who prevents Allah's Name from being raised in the places of worship?"), as the basis, the jurists say:

a) women should not be prevented from Praying in the mosques,

b) another mosque should not be built next to one already existing, if the intention is to create division among the Muslims,

c) there should not be two Friday mosques in a single town,

d) a single mosque should not have two Imāms,

e) two congregations should not be allowed in the same mosque

f) once a place is marked for Prayers, it becomes public property, and,

g) if a man allocates a place in his house exclusively for Prayers for himself or for the people of the house, it remains his property, but if he declares it open to the

public, it becomes public property and he cannot reclaim it.

232. Once again there are several opinions. We shall state three. First, the verse was revealed in answer to the Jews who objected to the change in the direction of orientation in Prayers (*qiblah*) from *Bayt al Maqdis* in Jerusalem to Masjid al Haram at Makkah. Second, it refers to a group of Companions who, in a dark night during a journey, Prayed in different directions but discovered in the morning that they hadn't oriented themselves properly. When they mentioned this to the Prophet (*saws*), this verse was revealed. A third opinion is that it was revealed when the Prophet (*saws*) prayed for Najashi of Abyssinia at his death. The Companions were surprised that he died a Muslim, and expressed some misgivings about what direction he faced while offering his Prayers. Allah (*swt*) then revealed: "To Allah belong the East and the West."

Of course, it is quite possible that all these incidents took place in close range of time, invoking the revela-

[116] And they say, 'Allah has taken a son.'²³³
 Glory to Him! Nay. To Him belongs all that
 is in the heavens and the earth. All are bent to
 His Will.²³⁴

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَانَهُ بَلْ لَّهُ
 مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلٌّ لَّهُ
 قَانُتُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾

tion of this verse (Au.).

Majid quotes the following from
 "The Muslim World", New York,
 January, 1937, p.13): "From very ear-
 ly times and in more than one ethnic
 religion, the direction toward which
 the worshipper made his prayer was
 considered of great importance....
 The Essenes prayed in the direc-
 tion of the rising sun and the Syr-
 ian Christians also turned eastward
 at prayer. The Zoroastrians attached
 great importance to the points of the
 compass in their ritual of purifica-
 tion or prayer and in the building of
 the fire temples, the Bareshnum, and
 the towers of silence ... In the Angli-
 can Church the import and impor-
 tance of the eastward direction is still
 a matter of grave discussion."

233. Bukhari has the following to
 report from the Prophet in explana-
 tion of this verse:

عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ قَالَ اللَّهُ كَذَّبَنِي
 ابْنُ آدَمَ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ ذَلِكَ وَشَتَمَنِي وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ ذَلِكَ
 فَأَمَّا تَكْذِيبُهُ إِيَّايَ فَرَعَمَ أَيُّ لَا أَقْدِرُ أَنْ أُعِيدَهُ كَمَا
 كَانَ وَأَمَّا شَتْمُهُ إِيَّايَ فَقَوْلُهُ لِي وَلَدٌ فَسُبْحَانِي أَنْ أَتَّخِذَ
 صَاحِبَةً أَوْ وَلَدًا.

"Allah said: 'Son of Adam cries
 lies to Me, while it behooves
 him not to do that. He calls Me
 names which behooves him not.
 As for his crying lies to Me, it is
 his belief that I cannot resurrect
 him in the form and shape he
 was. And his calling Me names, is
 to say that I have a son. Glorified
 I am and above that I should take
 a son or a wife."

And a *hadith* in the *Sahihayn* says:

لَا أَحَدٌ أَصْبَرَ عَلَى أَدَى يَسْمَعُهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ. إِنَّهُ
 يُشْرِكُ بِهِ، وَيُجْعَلُ لَهُ الْوَلَدُ، ثُمَّ هُوَ يُعَافِيهِمْ وَيَرْزُقُهُمْ

"No one is more forbearing with
 insults than Allah (*swt*). People
 ascribe a son to Him yet He feeds
 them and gives them peace" (Ibn
 Kathir).

Majid writes: "According to the
 Christians, God the Son is the sec-
 ond Person of the Blessed Trinity.
 He is the only begotten and eternal
 Son of the Father. He is consubstan-
 tial with the Father' (CD. p.912).
 The first two articles of the Apostle's
 creed run: 'I believe in God, the
 Father Almighty, Creator of heaven

[117] He is The Originator²³⁵ of the heavens and earth! When He decrees a thing He says to it, 'Be' and it is.²³⁶

بَدِيعُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا
فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿١١٧﴾

and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.' The form of the words "*ittakhadha*" 'Hath taken unto him' suggests that the reference is, in particular, to the 'Adoptionists' Christianity which held that Christ as Man was only the adoptive Son of God (CD. p. 13). The Adoptionists hold 'that Christ was a mere man, miraculously conceived indeed, but adopted as the Son of God only by the supreme degree in which he had been filled with the divine wisdom and power' (UHW. IV. p. 2331). They asserted that 'Jesus was a man imbued with the Holy Spirit's inspiration from his baptism and so attaining such a perfection of holiness that he was adopted by God and exalted to Divine dignity' (EBr. I. p.177)."

234. It is reported of 'Ali (*ra*) that he told a Christian: "If Jesus had not rebelled against God refusing to worship Him, I would have become a Christian." The man protested saying: "How can you say that about Jesus when we know that he was totally devoted to God, turning to Him in obedience and worshipping

Him all the time?" 'Ali said: "If Jesus was God himself, how come he worshipped someone else? It is a slave and a creation of God that worships God." The Christian had no reply (Razi).

235. The word in the original is *badi'* which is used for the act of creation involving no previous example.

Majid writes: "He is the Creator of all that exists; its sole Maker and Master. That alone describes the correct relationship between Him and the world. To ascribe to Him the grossly materialistic relationship of fatherhood and sonship, in however etherealised a form, is the height of absurdity."

236. That is, the creative act is verbal and the mode of creation is directly opposed to the principle that nothing can be created from nothing. But, is this act of creation with a word *kun* really contradictory to scientific postulates? Perhaps not, for the substance of all things, is, in the final analysis, matter. And matter can be converted into energy. In fact the physicists say matter is a form of

[118] And those who have no knowledge say, 'Why does Allah not speak to us or send us a sign?' ²³⁷ So said those who went before them, uttering similar words. Their hearts are all alike. We have indeed made clear the signs for those who believe. ²³⁸

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ لَوْلَا يُكَلِّمُنَا اللَّهُ أَوْ تَأْتِينَا آيَةٌ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ تَشَابَهَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾

[119] Indeed, We have commissioned you (O Muhammad) with truth: as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner. And you shall not be questioned about the people of the Fire. ²³⁹

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَا تُسْأَلُ عَنْ أَصْحَابِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١١٩﴾

energy. Now, if the word can be interpreted as a form of energy, then there will be no mystery in the act of creation with a *kun*. (Adopted from "*The Qur'anic Phenomenon*" by Malek Bennabi).

However, the point here is to demonstrate the speed with which the act of creation is executed (Razi).

Ibn Kathir writes: There is no need to suggest that Allah (*swt*) took a son simply because Jesus was born without a father since Allah (*swt*) creates with verbal power, as He said:

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَى عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ [آل عمران/ ٥٩]

"The example of Jesus with Allah (*swt*) is like that of Adam whom He molded from clay and then said, 'be,' and he was."

237. It is reported on the authority

of Ibn 'Abbas that Rafi' b. Huraymalah challenged the Prophet (*saws*) saying: "Muhammad! If you are truly a Messenger of God as you claim, then ask God to address us so that we can directly hear Him speak." Allah revealed this verse. However, Abu al 'Aliyyah, Rabi' b. Anas, Qatadah and Suddi believe that this verse was revealed in reply to the demand made by the polytheists (Ibn Kathir).

238. "The demand that God should speak to them directly was too absurd even to be answered. The question dealt with here concerns the demand for a sign that would convince them of the Truth. In response to this it is pointed out that many signs do exist, but all such signs are of profit only to those who are inclined to believe" (Mawdudi).

239. "The holy Prophet in the ten-

[120] *The Jews and Christians will never be pleased with you until you follow their religion.*²⁴⁰ *Tell them, 'Allah's guidance is the true guidance.'* *And if you followed their wishes after the Knowledge has reached you, you shall have no one besides Allah as friend or helper.*

وَلَنْ تَرْضَىٰ عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ وَلَئِنَّ اتَّبَعْتُمْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِي جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٢٠﴾

[121] *Those unto whom We gave the Book recite it in the true manner of its recitation.*²⁴¹ *It is these who believe in it. As for those who reject it, it is they indeed who are the losers.*

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾

derness of his heart was exceedingly solicitous for the unbelievers. He is told now that his responsibility as a Prophet ended with his preaching the true doctrines and expounding the Message. Everyone was accountable for his own actions. Why should the Prophet burden his heart with anxiety on their account?" (Majid)

Although the application is general, some believe that the verse was revealed in response to the Prophet wishing to know where his parents were: in Heaven or Hell (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

240. That is, short of accepting their religion and culture, their way of life and thought, their way of setting up a government, managing the economy, and accepting a subservient position in all walks of life, there is no way in which you will be able to ap-

pease the Jews and Christians (Au.).

Majid comments: "The argument addressed to the Prophet in effect is this: You cannot by any means win the support and goodwill of the Christians and the Jews, since it is dependent on your accepting and adopting their religion which, as they exist, are untrue and unsubstantial to the core. But your acceptance of such untruths is impossible, since it involves your being accursed of God, which you most emphatically are not. Your enjoyment of the highest Divine blessings and favors is self evident; hence your deviation from the right course is an absurdity."

241. `Umar's explanation of the words, "*they recite it in the true manner of its recitation*" is that when the reader passes by the verses promising Paradise he prays for it and when

[122] Children of Israel! Remember My favors wherewith I favored you, and (that) I preferred you above nations of the world.

يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

[123] Fear the day when no soul shall avail anything for any other; no ransom shall be accepted for it; nor intercession shall be of any use,²⁴² neither shall they be helped.

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا تَنْفَعُهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

[124] And (recall) when Ibrahim was tested by his Lord with certain words,²⁴³ and he fulfilled them. He told him: 'I shall appoint you an Imām for the nations.' He pleaded: 'And from my progeny (too).' He answered: 'My covenant shall not reach the evildoers.'²⁴⁴

وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

passing by the verses mentioning the Fire, he seeks Allah's refuge from it. Ibn Mas'ud's interpretation is that he treats its lawful as lawful, the unlawful as unlawful, reads it exactly as Allah (*swt*) has revealed it, without altering a word or giving it a meaning that was not intended (Ibn Kathir).

Asad writes: "[The verse can also be worded as]: 'Apply themselves to it with true application' i.e., try to absorb its meaning and to understand its design."

242. See notes 119 123 above.

243. The *kalimaat* of the original has been interpreted as the obligations incorporated into verse 112 of *surah al Tawbah*; verse 35 of *surah al Ahzāb*,

verses 1 10 of *surah al Mu'minun*; and verses 23 34 of *al Ma'arij* altogether 30 commandments (Ibn 'Abbas Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

It is also reported of Ibn 'Abbas that the allusion is to the tests that Ibrahim was subjected such as being thrown into the fire, journeys to distant lands for the delivery of the message, abandoning of wife and child in Arabia, sacrifice of his son, etc. (Ibn Kathir).

Majid adds: Of course he was tried not because God was unaware of his qualities, but in order that the world may know the strength of his faith and the magnitude of his devotion (Majidi).

244. After Allah (*swt*) mentioned some of the blessings He bestowed upon the Children of Israel, and spoke of the disgraceful manner in which they responded to those blessings, He now mentions the story of Ibrahim. The reason for doing this is that Ibrahim was accepted as a religious leader both by the polytheists of Arabia as well as the Jews and Christians. His story was related to them to impress on them that if Ibrahim was given *Imāmah* (leadership), it was only after he had unconditionally submitted himself to his Lord, and that one is not qualified to leadership automatically, without an effort on his part. Ibrahim himself was warned of the non eligibility of the *Imāmah* of the evildoers in his progeny (Based on Razi's notes).

In the words of Muhammad Asad: "This passage, read in conjunction with the two preceding verses, refutes the contention of the Children of Israel that by virtue of their descent from Abraham, whom God made 'a leader of men', they are 'God's chosen people'. The Qur'ān makes it clear that the exalted status of Abraham was not something that would automatically confer a comparable status on his physical descendants, and certainly not on the sinners among them."

Mawdudi writes here: "A fresh subject is now broached.

(1) At the outset, he (Ibrahim) journeyed for many years from Iraq to Egypt, and from Syria and Palestine to various parts of Arabia inviting people to serve and obey God.

(2) Abraham's progeny descended in two main branches. One of these, the Children of Ishmael, lived in Arabia...The other branch consisted of the Children of Isaac. At the time when decadence flourished, this branch of the Abrahamic family gave birth first to Judaism, and subsequently to Christianity.

(3) The true mission of Abraham was to invite the people to obey God...He was himself obedient to God and followed the teachings received from Him, and constantly strove to spread it and make all human beings live in obedience to it. After his death, the task of guiding the world was entrusted to the branch which had issued from Isaac and Jacob, and which came to be known as the Children of Israel. It is of this favour that God again and

again reminds these people.

(4) While addressing the Children of Israel in the last ten sections, God set forth the criminal record of the Jews, exposed their decadent state at the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān, and made it clear to them that they had totally lacked gratitude to God for His favors and bounties. Not only had they ceased to guide the world, but had turned away from Truth and righteousness to such an extent that nearly all of them had lost the capacity to do good and to respond to Truth.

(5) It is also intimated that the religious leadership of all mankind is not an exclusive privilege of Abrahamic blood, but rather the fruit of Abraham's sincere obedience and service to God, to which he had wholly consecrated himself. Only those who follow the way of Abraham, and guide the world along that way, are therefore entitled to the position of guidance and leadership. And since the Jews had abandoned it and become incapable of carrying out the mission of Abraham they were being removed from that position.

(6) At the same time it is hinted

that the non Israelite peoples who identified themselves with Abraham through Moses and Jesus had also veered from the way of Abraham.

(7) It is also made clear that by God's will a Prophet, for whose advent Abraham and Ishmael had once prayed, was born in the other branch of the Abrahamic family...(and the) leadership now naturally devolves on those who follow this Prophet.

(8) This proclamation of transfer of leadership naturally called for the proclamation of a change in the direction of Prayer. As long as the Israelites held the reins of the world's religious leadership, Jerusalem remained the centre of the mission of Islam and the *qiblah* of truth loving people...it was proclaimed that...the centre of God's true religion would be the place from which the message of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) had radiated.

(9) The proclamation that the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) had been designated to the religious leadership of mankind, and that the *Ka'bah* would now be the focal point of man's religious life,

[125] And when We made the House a point of (frequent) return²⁴⁵ for the people, and a sanctuary²⁴⁶ and (ordained): 'Take to yourselves Ibrahim's Station²⁴⁷ for a place of prayer,' ordering²⁴⁸ Ibrahim and Isma'il that you two shall cleanse²⁴⁹ My House²⁵⁰ for the visitors, residents²⁵¹ and those bowing down and prostrating themselves (therein).²⁵²

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا
مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى وَعَهِدْنَا إِلَى
إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَنَّ طَهِّرَا بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ
وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ ﴿١٢٥﴾

was followed by directives (beginning with verse 153 and continuing to the end of the *surah*) addressed to the Muslims. These directives were aimed at enabling the Muslims to acquit themselves creditably of the duties laid upon their shoulders as the bearers of their mission.”

(Quotation from Mawdudi ends here).

Referring to the later part of the verse: 'My covenant shall not reach the evil doers,' Sayyid Qutb comments: "This is what Ibrahim peace be on him was told. This declaration, in such clear and unambiguous terms, also disqualifies all those who call themselves Muslims today: with their transgressions, corruptions, remoteness from the religion of God, and their habit of flinging away Islam behind them...while they declare their allegiance to it...while they turn

away from it and its demands on life, forgetting that false claims cannot be the basis for demanding fulfillment of promises.

“Islamic concept (of bonds and relationships) does not recognize those ties that are not based on faith and practice...It severs a generation from another, if one contradicts the other in faith and belief. Indeed, it severs relationships between father and son and husband and wife if the string of faith binding them together is broken. Therefore, pagan Arabs are one thing and Muslim Arabs are another. There is no relationship between them, neither any binding. Those of the people of the Book who believed in Islam are one people and those who deviated from the religion of Musa and `Isa are another. There isn't any relationship between them, nor any binding. The *ummah* (nation of Islam) is not the name given to a series of generations following each other, springing forth from one

stock....It is the sum total of believers even if their racial origins, nationalities, and skin colors are different. This is the concept that emerges from the words of Allah that have been expressed here in this Sacred Revelation."

245. The rendering of *mathabaturun* as "point of frequent return" is based on the opinion of Ibn 'Abbas, Suddi, Sa'id b. Jubayr and others who say that "the people never feel they have had a heart's fill with the holy place and long to return to it as soon as soon they are back home after a visit to it."

Majid quotes: "A shrine of immemorial antiquity, one which Diodorous Siculus, a hundred years before the Christian era, tells us, was even then 'most ancient, and most exceedingly revered by the whole Arab race' (Bosworth Smith, Mohammed and Mohammedanism, p. 166)."

246. Even in the days of ignorance (*jahiliyyah*), if a man encountered the murderer of his father in the Holy House (haram), he would not harm him (Ibn 'Abbas Ibn Jarir). Hence, according to Abu Hanifah if a murderer takes shelter within the Holy Precincts, he might not be ar-

rested so long as he remains inside, but may be besieged, (and food and water withheld), until he dies or gives himself up. However, if he kills in the *haram* he can be killed in the *haram* in retaliation (Qurtubi).

Ibn Kathir adds: In fact, the city of Makkah had been declared Sacred by Allah (*swt*) even before the creation of the heavens and the earth took their final form. It is reported of the Prophet that at the time of the fall of Makkah he said:

" إِنَّ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ حَرَّمَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ ، فَهُوَ حَرَامٌ بِحُزْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ، وَإِنَّهُ لَمْ يَحِلَّ الْقِتَالُ فِيهِ لِأَحَدٍ قَبْلِي ، وَلَمْ يَحِلَّ لِي إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِنْ نَهَارٍ ، فَهُوَ حَرَامٌ بِحُزْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ، لَا يُعْضَدُ شَوْكُهُ ، وَلَا يُنْفَرُ صَبْدُهُ ، وَلَا يُلْتَقِطُ لُقْطَتُهُ إِلَّا مَنْ عَرَفَهَا ، وَلَا يُخْتَلَى خِلَاهُ . " فَقَالَ الْعَبَّاسُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْإِدْخِرَ ، فَإِنَّهُ لَقَيْنِهِمْ وَلِيُؤْتِيَهُمْ . قَالَ " إِلَّا الْإِدْخِرَ " - صحيح البخارى

"Allah declared town Sacred the day He created the heavens and the earth. It will remain so until the Last Day. Fighting was not permitted in its precincts for anyone before me. It has not been allowed to me save for an hour or so. Therefore, it will remain sacred until the Day of Judgment by Allah's order. Let not, therefore, its thorns be plucked or its wild animals hunted. Things

fallen in its wayside may not be picked up by anyone save its owner, and its grass may not be uprooted.” ‘Abbas b. ‘Abdul Muttalib interjected and requested: “Except for the *izkhar* (a kind of grass), O Prophet, for it is for their craftsmen and for houses.” The Prophet accepted and declared: “Except for its *izkhar*.”

The Prophet (*saws*) also prayed that Madinah be declared a sacred city. Muslim has recorded Abu Hurayrah’s report:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: كَانَ النَّاسُ إِذَا رَأَوْا أَوَّلَ التَّمْرِ جَاءُوا بِهِ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. فَإِذَا أَخَذَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: ”اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي ثَمَرِنَا. وَبَارِكْ لَنَا فِي مَدِينَتِنَا. وَبَارِكْ لَنَا فِي صَاعِنَا. وَبَارِكْ لَنَا فِي مُدُنَا اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَبْدُكَ وَخَلِيلُكَ وَنَبِيَّكَ. وَإِنِّي عَبْدُكَ وَنَبِيَّكَ. وَإِنَّ دَعَاكَ لِمَكَّةَ. وَإِنِّي أَدْعُوكَ لِلْمَدِينَةِ. يَمْثِلُ مَا دَعَاكَ لِمَكَّةَ. وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ.“ قَالَ: ثُمَّ يَدْعُو أَصْغَرَ وَلِيدٍ لَهُ فَيُعْطِيهِ ذَلِكَ التَّمْرَ.

“When the people plucked the first fruits of the season they would take it to the Prophet. He) would pray in the following words: ‘O Allah! Grant us increase in our fruits. Bless our city. Grant us increase in our weights and measures. O Allah! Ibrahim was Your slave, Friend and a Prophet. I am also Your slave and Prophet. He prayed for Makkah. I pray to You for Madi-

nah for the same things that Ibrahim prayed for Makkah, and for more.’ Then he would ask for the youngest child among them and hand over the fruit to him.”

Muslim reports another *hadith* in which the Prophet (*saws*) is reported as supplicating in words:

”إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَرَّمَ مَكَّةَ. وَإِنِّي أَحَرِّمُ مَا بَيْنَ لَابَتَيْهَا“

“O Allah! Ibrahim declared the city of Makkah sacred. And I declare what is between the two mountains (of Madinah) also sacred.”

Ibn Kathir’s quote ends here.

247. “*The Station of Ibrahim*” is the stone which he employed to climb on, in order to raise the walls of the *Ka’bah*. He moved it about during the construction. And, according to a *hadith* of Jabir, when the Prophet (*saws*) had finished going around the Ka’ba, he offered two cycles of prayers (*rak’ah*) behind this stone and recited this verse (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). According to another report of Bukhari and others, ‘Umar b. Al Khattab used to say that Allah (*swt*) agreed with him on three issues: one of which was “The Station of Ibrahim,” about which he suggested to the Prophet that he pray near the “Station” and Allah (*swt*) sent His

commandment to the same effect saying: "Take to yourselves Ibrahim's Station for a place for prayers."

It remained around and was close to the wall of the House when, according to a report (*Fath al Bari*: Alusi), 'Umar the second Caliph got it moved to its present position. No Companion objected to the change of position.

However, another opinion attributed to Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, 'Ata' and Nakha'i is that the Station of Ibrahim includes the entire area of the *Haram* (i.e. the Sacred precincts around the Holy Mosque) Majidi.

248. The word in the text is *'ahid-na* which literally means "We took pledge," or "We made covenant." But when it is used with the suffix *"ila"* then it means to enjoin or order (Alusi).

249. The cleansing included physical purification such as from filth etc., as well as metaphorical, applying to evil words, obscenities, idols and polytheism (Ibn 'Abbas, 'Ata', Qatadah and others Ibn Kathir).

250. "...the House is called "My House," to emphasize the personal relation of the One True God to it, and repudiate the Polytheism which

defiled it before it was purified again by Muhammad" (Yusuf Ali).

251. The literal meaning of *ta'ifin* is those who circumambulate the House. But here, those are meant who visit the House for pilgrimage. In contrast, by *'akifin* those residents of the city are meant who come in for prayers and rituals.

Asad says: "The seven fold circumambulation (*tawaf*) of the *Ka'bah* is one of the rites of the pilgrimage, symbolically indicating that all human actions and endeavors ought to have the idea of God and His oneness for their centre."

252. The verse served as a prediction also. One can see a never ending stream of visitors entering the city of Makkah every day, while the House is not neglected by the residents themselves who are equally devoted to it. Round the clock the House is filled with thousands of people whose sincere devotion can move the hardest of hearts. The attraction to the House is so great that in our own times, the best hour at which one can circumambulate the *Ka'bah* and offer two *rak'ah* of prayers near the Station of Ibrahim somewhat peacefully, is after midnight or later.

[126] And when Ibrahim prayed: 'O My Lord! Make this land a peaceful place and provide with fruits such of them as those who believe in Allah and the Last Day.' He replied: 'As for him who will not believe, I shall grant him enjoyment for a while and then drive him to the chastisement of the Fire an evil homecoming.'²⁵³

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا آمِنًا
وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ مَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ
بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَأُمَتِّعُهُ
قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ أَضْطَرُّهُ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ النَّارِ وَبِئْسَ
الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٢٦﴾

A Neo Muslim, Muhammad Ali of American origin, expressed his feelings in the following words: "I have had my nice moments in my life. But the feelings I had while standing on Mount Arafat on the day of 'hajj', was the most unique. I felt exalted by the indescribable spiritual atmosphere there as over a million and a half pilgrims invoked God to forgive them of their sins and bestow on them His choicest blessings. It was an exhilarating experience to see to people belonging to different colors, races and nationalities, kings, heads of states and ordinary men from very poor countries all clad in two simple white sheets praying to God without any sense of either pride or inferiority. It was a practical manifestation of the concept of equality in Islam" (Au.).

253. Ibn Kathir relates a long tradition coming from Ibn `Abbas, which has its origin in Bukhari.

The Story Of Ibrahim, Hajar and

Isma`il:

Ibn `Abbas is reported to have said: "Ibrahim brought Hajar and Isma`il (peace be on them) and left them in Makkah at a barren and deserted place called Doha. When he turned to go, Hajar followed him saying, 'Ibrahim! Are you leaving us in this barren and deserted place?' Ibrahim did not turn to her despite her repeated pleading. But when she asked: 'Is this by Allah's command?' He replied: 'Yes.' She said: 'Then Allah will not waste us.' Ibrahim continued. When he was out of sight he turned around and prayed (14: 37):

رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ دُونِ بَوَادِي غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ
بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفْئِدَةً
مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَشْكُرُونَ [إبراهيم/٣٧]

'O Allah! I am abandoning my progeny in an arid valley by Thy Sacred Holy House, in order, O our Lord, that they may establish the Prayers. So fill the hearts of the people with its love and provide them with fruits so that they may

give thanks.'

"After some time, the water that Hajar had brought was exhausted and Isma'il began to cry out of thirst. She ran to the nearest hill Safa in search of water. She could not find any living being around. She descended and ran to the child again. After some time she climbed the hill Marwah on the opposite side with the same hopes. But there was nothing but barren lands. She descended down to her child. She did that running between the hills several times seven in all. And the Prophet (*saws*) said, interjects Ibn 'Abbas, 'this is the reason why a pilgrim is required to circumambulate between the two hills seven times.'

"When she climbed Marwah for the last time, she heard a sound and saw an angel near her child. He was scraping the sand with his wings. Water began to gush forth and she began to pile sand around it to prevent it from flowing away. And, interjected Ibn 'Abbas, the Prophet (*saws*) said: 'May Allah be kind to Umm Isma'il. I wish she had left it flowing. It would have become a river.'

"She settled there. Then a branch of the Banu Jurham tribe happened to pass by. They spotted birds encir-

cling and guessed that there must be water below there. They sent two scouts who reported spotting Umm Isma'il, her son and the water. They sought her permission to alight and make the place their home. She allowed them on the condition that she would retain her hold on the water. They agreed and settled there with their women and children. When Isma'il grew up he married a woman from among them.

"Then Ibrahim (*asws*) came on a visit. (By then Hajar was dead). When he reached the place, the son had gone hunting. He asked his son's wife how they were faring. She began to complain of the hard times they were facing. Ibrahim left the place with the message for Isma'il that he was to replace the threshold of his door. When Isma'il came back he felt that a visitor had been in. On enquiry, she narrated the story ending with the message. He told her, 'That was my father and he has asked me to divorce you.' He sent her away and married another woman from the same tribe.

"Ibrahim came for a second time. Again Isma'il was away. His wife invited him in and fed him. When he asked her how they fared, she praised Allah (*swt*) and said they were happy

[127] And when Ibrahim was raising the foundations of the House, and Isma'il,²⁵⁴ (both supplicating): 'O our Lord! Accept this (labor) from us.²⁵⁵ You indeed are the All hearing, the All knowing.

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٢٧﴾

and satisfied with the blessings of Allah (*swt*). He asked her what they lived on and she said, 'Meat and water.' Ibrahim prayed for them and departed leaving the message that she was to tell her husband to retain the door threshold.

"Ibrahim came for a third time. This time the two met and Ibrahim told Isma'il that Allah (*swt*) had ordered him to build a House. The two then built the House."

Further, it is reported that Ibrahim used to come riding on the *buraq* (Ibn Kathir, abridged).

It may be noted that the story of Isma'il's slaughter has been ignored in this version (Au.).

254. Bukhari has reported through 'A'isha that the Prophet (*saws*) told her:

أَلَمْ تَرَيَنَّ أَنَّ قَوْمَكَ لَمَّا بَنَوْا الْكَعْبَةَ اقْتَصَرُوا عَنْ قَوَاعِدِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَلَا تَرُدُّهَا عَلَى قَوَاعِدِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ قَالَ لَوْلَا حَدَّثَانُ قَوْمَكَ بِالْكَفْرِ لَفَعَلْتُ

"Do you know that when your people rebuilt the Ka'bah they

made it smaller than the original construction of Ibrahim?" (Because they ran short of building material). She said: "Why do you not order it rebuilt on Ibrahim's design?" He said: "I would have, but for the people's freshness in Islam."

According to a report of Muslim, the Prophet (*saws*) said:

لَوْلَا أَنَّ قَوْمَكَ حَدِيثُو عَهْدٍ بِجَاهِلِيَّةٍ - أَوْ قَالَ بِكُفْرٍ - لَأَتَقَفْتُ كَثْرَ الْكَعْبَةِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَجَعَلْتُ بَابَهَا بِالْأَرْضِ وَلَأَدْخَلْتُ فِيهَا مِنَ الْحِجْرِ

"If not for the people's freshness in Islam, I would have spent the treasure of Ka'bah in the way of Allah, lowered its door to the ground level and included the 'Hijr' (area: or the 'Hateem') to bring it within the building."

According to another report of Bukhari, the Prophet said:

- لَنَقْضُ الْكَعْبَةَ فَجَعَلْتُ هَذَا بَابَيْنِ بَابٌ يَدْخُلُ النَّاسُ ، وَبَابٌ يَخْرُجُونَ

"I would have broken down the Ka'bah, and added another door; one for entry and the other for

exit” (Ibn Kathir).

Construction of the *Ka'bah*

Ibn Kathir narrates the following in the words of Ibn Ishaq.

“The Quraysh decided to rebuild the *Ka'bah* when the Messenger was thirty five years of age (and not yet a Prophet). They were planning to roof it but feared to demolish it, for it was made of loose stones above a man's height, and they wanted to raise it and roof it because men had stolen part of the treasure of the *Ka'bah* which used to be in a well in the middle of it. The treasure was found with Duwayk a freedman of B. Mulayh b. 'Amr of Khuza'ah. The Quraysh cut his hands off; they say that the people who stole the treasure deposited it with Duwayk.

“Now a ship owned by a Greek merchant had been cast ashore at Jeddah and had become a total wreck. They took its timber off and got it ready to roof the *Ka'bah*. It happened that there was a Copt in Makkah who was a carpenter, so everything they needed was ready at hand. Now a snake used to come out of the well in which the sacred offerings were thrown and sun itself everyday on the wall of the *Ka'bah*. It was an object of terror because whenever anyone came near

it, it raised its head and made a rustling noise and opened its mouth. So that they were terrified of it. While it was thus sunning itself one day, God sent a bird which seized it and flew off with it. Thereupon Quraysh said, ‘Now we may hope that God is pleased with what we propose to do. We have a friendly craftsman, we have got the wood and God has rid us of the snake.’

“Then Quraysh divided the work among themselves; (but) the people were afraid to demolish the temple, and withdrew in awe from it. Al Walid b. al Mughira said, ‘I will begin the demolition.’ So he took a pick axe, went up to it saying, ‘O God, do not be afraid. O God, we intend only what is best.’ Then he demolished the part at the two corners. That night the people watched, saying, we will look out; if he is smitten we won't destroy any more of it and will restore it as it was; but if nothing happens to him then God is pleased with what we are doing and we will demolish it.’ In the morning al Walid returned to the work of demolition and the people worked with him, until they got down to the foundation of Abraham. They came on green stones like camel's humps joined one to another.

“A certain Traditionist told me that a man of the Quraysh inserted a crowbar between two stones in order to get one of them out, and when he moved the stone the whole of Makkah shook so they left the foundation alone.

“The Quraysh tribes gathered stones for the building, each of them collecting and building by itself until the structure was finished up to the black stone, where controversy arose. Every tribe wished to lift it to its place. Arguments ensued until they went their several ways, formed alliances, and got ready for a battle. The Banu ‘Abdul Dar brought a bowl full of blood; they and the Banu ‘Adiyy b. Ka‘b b. Lu‘ay pledged themselves unto death and thrust their hands into the blood. For this reason they were called the blood lickers. Such was the state of affairs for four or five nights, and then Quraysh gathered in the mosque and took counsel and were equally divided over the issue.

“A Traditionist reports that Abu Umayyah b. al Mughira b. ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar b. Makhzum who was at that time the oldest man of Quraysh, urged them to make the first man to enter the gate of the mosque umpire in the matter in dispute. They did so and the first to come in was the

Messenger of God. When they saw him they said, ‘This is the trustworthy one. We are satisfied. This is Muhammad.’ When he came to them and they informed him of the matter he asked them to bring him a cloak. When it was brought, he placed the black stone into the cloak and asked the leader of each tribe to hold it by its edge and lift it together. They did that so that when they got it into position he placed it with his own hand. And then the building went on above it.” (Guillumme’s translation slightly shortened).

“The building remained (continues Ibn Kathir), on the design of the Quraysh until, in the year 60 A.H., it was burnt during the time of Ibn Zubayr. So Ibn Zubayr razed it to the ground and made those changes that the Prophet (*saws*) had wished: bringing the door to the ground level, adding another on the opposite side, and expanding it according to the size and shape Ibrahim (*asws*) had built. However, with his overthrow, Hajjaj, acting on the orders of Malik b. Marwan, got the building reconstructed on the lines of the Quraysh construction. Subsequently, when Malik b. Marwan learned of what ‘A’isha had to relate, he regretted that he demolished Ibn

[128] O Lord! Make us submissive to You²⁵⁶ and (generate) from our progeny a people submissive to You. And show us our holy rites,²⁵⁷ and turn to us. Surely You are the Relenting, the Merciful.

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ دُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٢٨﴾

[129] And O Lord! Raise in them a Messenger from among them²⁵⁸ who shall recite Your verses to them, instruct them in the Book²⁵⁹ and Wisdom,²⁶⁰ and purify them.²⁶¹ Indeed you are the Mighty,²⁶² the Wise.²⁶³

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٢٩﴾

Zubayr's construction. Later, Harun al Rashid sought Imām Malik's counsel expressing his desire to rebuild the House on the pattern the Prophet (*saws*) had wished. Imām Malik discouraged him by saying that if he did that, he would make a plaything of the House. Since then the House has remained as it was. It will remain so until, as the Prophet (*saws*) has predicted, an Abyssinian man demolishes it. When that happens, it will be time for the appearance of Yajuj and Majuj (Gog and Magog). Nevertheless, it will be rebuilt and the people will continue to visit the House for pilgrimage even after the appearance of Yajuj and Majuj, as stated in a *hadith* of Bukhari.

255. It is reported of Wuhayb b. Ward that when he read the verse: "O Lord! Accept this (effort) from us," he cried out, 'O Allah's Friend ("*khalil*")! You were building the sacred House, and

fearing that your deed might not be accepted?!" (Ibn Kathir).

Alusi adds: Their supplication to the effect that their effort may be accepted proves that it is not binding on Allah (*swt*) that He reward for a deed.

256. Since they were already submitted to God, in these words they were seeking steadfastness in their devotion to Him.

257. The majority of scholars believe that by the word *manasik* it is the hajj rites that are meant. However, according to others it is the ordinances that have been alluded to.

258. The prayer was answered and Prophet Muhammad was raised among the children of Isma'il (Au.).

Ibn Kathir writes: Imām Ahmad relates that Abu Umamah asked the Prophet about the beginning of the

affair of Prophethood. He replied:

دَعُوهُ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَيُسْرَىٰ عِيسَىٰ وَرَأَتْ أُمِّي أَنَّهُ يُخْرِجُ
مِنْهَا نُورَ أَضَاءَتْ مِنْهَا قُصُورُ الشَّامِ - مسند أحمد

“I am the answer to Ibrahim’s prayer, fulfillment of the prediction of Jesus, and my mother’s dream who saw that a ‘Light’ had emanated from her belly and had lightened the palaces of Syria.” (The report is in Ibn Hibban also: Au.).

That is, it was first Ibrahim who prayed for his appearance. Then all subsequent prophets predicted his advent until ‘Isa spelled his name, as in the verse (61: 6):

إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ النُّبُوَّةِ
وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ [الصف/٦]

‘[Jesus said] I am a Messenger from your Lord, confirming that which is in your hands of the Tawrah, and giving you glad tidings of a Messenger who will appear after me. His name will be Ahmad.’

As for the mention of Syria in the *hadith* in connection with his mother’s dream, it is indicative of the fact that Islam will acquire a firm foothold in Syria. It is Syria that will be the centre of Islam in the later days, and it is Syria where Jesus (*asws*) will reappear. A *hadith Sahih* (in Muslim and others: Au.) says:

لَا تَزَالُ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي قَائِمَةً بِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ، لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ

مَنْ خَذَهُمْ أَوْ خَالَفَهُمْ، حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَهُمْ ظَاهِرُونَ عَلَى النَّاسِ

‘A group of my *ummah* will remain upholding the truth. Those who try to disgrace them or oppose them will not succeed. (This will be the status) until Allah sends His command (concerning the Day of Judgment), while they retain the upper hand over the people.’

Ibn Kathir’s quote ends here.

Majid adds: “Mark the very clear reference in the OT reiterated in the NT, to the advent of a prophet from among the brethren of Israel, i.e., the Ismailites. ‘I will raise up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee’ (Dt. 18:18). ‘Moses truly said unto the fathers: A prophet shall the Lord, your God, raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me’ (Ac. 31:22).”

259. This prayer was also answered and the Qur’ān was revealed to the Prophet Sabuni.

260. Majid writes: “*Hikmah*” primarily is what prevents, or restrains, from ‘ignorant behaviour,’ but is usually used in the sense of ‘wisdom.’ It also means ‘knowledge in matters of religion, and the acting agreeably

[130] And who will turn away from the religion of Ibrahim save him who is a fool to himself?²⁶⁴ Indeed We chose him²⁶⁵ in the present world, and in the world to come he will be (in the ranks) of the righteous.

وَمَنْ يَرْتَعِْبْ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَفِهَ
نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدْ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي
الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾

therewith; and understanding.”

The most widely prevalent interpretation however is that by the term ‘*Hikmah*’, the allusion is to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet.

261. That is, purify them from “*shirk*” and other base qualities (Au.).

Majid states the following:

“The mission of this Ismailite prophet of God was thus to be fourfold:

a) He will recite and deliver to his people the revelation exactly as he receives them, and will, in this sense, be a trusted Divine Messenger.

b) He will not only transmit the Message but will also expound, interpret and illustrate the Teachings he is commanded to impart, and would, in this phase of his life, be a Divine Teacher.

c) Besides explaining to the many the injunctions of the Divine law, he will also unravel to the elect of his people the deeper significance of the Divine wisdom, and will initiate them in the

profundities of spirit and the subtleties of soul. He will, on this account, be known as an exponent of Divine Wisdom.

d) He will, by his words and deeds, precept and practice, raise and uplift the moral tone of his people, will purge them of vice and immorality, and will make them pious and godly. He will in this capacity be called a Divine Reformer and Law giver.”

262. “I.e., able to grant every prayer” (Majid).

263. “I.e., granting only such prayers as are, in His Infinite, Divine Wisdom, proper” (Majid).

264. The word used in the original is *safiha* which is applied to someone who is foolish and ignorant and hence estimates himself low (*Raghib* and others).

“These words, *safiha nafsah* is the basis of the proverb, ‘*mun `arafa nafsah, `arafa rabbah*’, meaning, ‘He who knows his self, knows his Lord’” (Thanwi).

[131] When his Lord said to him, 'Surrender,' he said, 'I surrender unto the Lord of the worlds.'²⁶⁶

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾

Zamakhshari says: It is said that the cause of revelation of this verse was as follows. Two Jews, Salamah and Muhajir, were invited by their cousin 'Abdullah ibn Salam to Islam. He reminded them that they were well aware that Ibrahim's religion was not Judaism, rather, surrender to God. Salamah embraced Islam but Muhajir refused. So Allah said: 'And who will turn away from the religion of Ibrahim save him who is a fool to himself...'

265. That is, chose him "as Our apostle and the leader of religion" (Majid).

"*Istafa*: Chose; chose because of purity; chose and purified. It is the same root from which Mustafa is derived, one of the titles of Muhammad" (Yusuf Ali).

In its root the word "istafa" is applied to the act of chaffing out the best part of anything (Alusi).

266. The term *aslim* of the original has been used here in the fullest sense of the word, i.e. submission to the will of Allah (*swt*), and not

in the sense of submitting oneself to the rule of Islam; as for example, those about whom the Qur'ān said (49: 14): "*The Bedouins say, 'We have believed (aslamna).'*" They were told: "*Nay. But you have not yet believed. Rather say that you have surrendered. Faith has not yet entered your hearts.*" What has to be understood is that Islam is often synonymously employed for "*imān*," as, for instance, in this present verse. However, "*imān*" is not synonymous to "*islam*." Hence a "*mu'min*" is necessarily a "*muslim*," but a "*muslim*" is not necessarily a "*mu'min* too" (Qurtubi).

This should also clear the doubt about the abrogation of previous religions. Since what is meant by the term "religion" when used in this context is the "*Shari'ah*" or the Law; what remains in force and stands confirmed is the "Religion of submission to the Will of Allah," which the Jews and Christians have abandoned.

Mawdudi writes: "*Muslim*" signifies he who bows in obedience to God, who acknowledges God alone as his Sovereign, Lord and Master, and the only object of worship, devotion and

[132] Ibrahim enjoined the same to his sons, as did Ya`qub (saying), 'Verily my sons! Allah has chosen this religion for you, so see that you die not save as Muslims.'²⁶⁷

وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ يَا بَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمُ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

service, who unreservedly surrenders himself to God and undertakes to live his life in accordance with the guidance that has come down from Him. *Islam* is the appellation which characterizes the above mentioned belief and outlook which constitutes the core and kernel of the religion of all the Prophets who have appeared from time to time among different peoples and in different countries since the very beginning of human life."

267. That is, you do not know when death will overtake you; maybe this day or this night. Therefore, remain submitted to Him every moment (Ibn Jarir with some modification).

"That is, 'live out a life of surrender to Allah,' for in most cases a man dies on what he lives. Further, this does not contradict the *hadith* in which the Prophet is reported to have said:

إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ لَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّىٰ مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا ذِرَاعٌ. فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ. فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ. فَيَدْخُلُهَا. وَإِنْ أَحَدَكُمْ لَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ. حَتَّىٰ مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا ذِرَاعٌ. فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ. فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ. فَيَدْخُلُهَا

"One of you works the deeds of the people of Paradise, until he is at no more a distance from Paradise but an arm's length. But then his written (word) overtakes him, he starts to work the deeds of the people of the Fire and ultimately falls into it. And one of you works the deeds of the people of Fire, until he is at no more a distance from Fire but an arm's length. But his written (word) overtakes him, he starts to work the deeds of the people of Paradise and ultimately enters it."

This *hadith* does not contradict the Qur'anic injunction that requires submission until the last breath, since other versions (as in Bukhari: Au.) of the above *hadith* add the words:

فِيمَا يَبْدُو لِلنَّاسِ - صحيح البخارى

"In what appears to the people."

That is, it only appears to the people that the man is working the deeds of the people of Paradise or Fire, while in the knowledge of Allah it is other-

[133] Why, were you present when death appeared before Ya`qub?²⁶⁸ When he asked his sons, 'Whom will you serve after me?' They said, 'We shall serve your God and the God of your fathers Ibrahim, Isma`il,²⁶⁹ and Is-haq One God; unto Him we have surrendered.'²⁷⁰

أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتُ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ وَإِلَهَ آبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهاً وَاحِداً وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

wise (Ibn Kathir).

The textual phrase also indicates that the demand is to remain surrendered to Allah (*swt*) 'at heart' and not surrendered in deeds, even if that is the demand during the life. For, at the time of death that is the only kind of surrender, (i.e. the surrender of the heart), that is possible. Hence the *hadith* (as in Tirmidhi, declared *Sahih*: Au.):

اللَّهُمَّ مَنْ أَحْيَيْتَهُ مِنَّا فَأَخِيهِ عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ تَوَفَّيْتَهُ مِنَّا فَتَوَفَّهُ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ

“O Allah! Whomsoever of us You allow to live, allow him to live in Islam and whomsoever You give death, let him die on *imān*” (Alusi).

268. Yusuf Ali writes: “The whole of the Children of Israel are called to witness one of their slogans, that they worshiped ‘the God of their fathers.’ The idea in their minds got narrowed down to that of a tribal God. But they are reminded that

their ancestors had the principle of Islam in them: the worship of the One True and Universal God.”

The Bible also records the death bed talk of Jacob. But it is more of the nature of a verdict on the sons, than an admonition. Here is an excerpt:

Assemble and hear, O sons of Jacob, and hearken to Israel your father. ...

Reuben, you are my first born, my might, ... unstable as water, you shall not have pre eminence ...

Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords

Is'sachar is a strong ass ...

Benjamin is a ravenous wolf ...

The rest is in the same vein and concludes with the words:

“When Jacob finished charging his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed, and breathed his last...(Gen, ch. 49)

The above corruption evoked the Qur'anic statement, “were you present? ..” (Au.).

[134] That was a nation that has passed away. For them will be what they earned and for you what you earn. And you will not be questioned about what they used to do.²⁷¹

تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ
مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

However, as Majid has pointed out, apart from the Bible, some other Jewish sources have also recorded Ya`qub's behest. For example, "He ordered all his children and grandchildren to avoid magic, idolatry, and all kinds of impurity, and to walk in the path of righteousness" (*Jewish Encycl.* I, 87). Although in the *Talmudic* version the main point - surrender to God - is not entirely missing, the emphasis is not on it (Au.).

269. Isma`il (*asws*) who was Ya`qub's uncle has been included in the list of the fathers because, with the Arabs, an uncle is considered equal to the father and an aunt equal to the mother (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). There are some *ahadith* also to this effect. For example, the Prophet (*saws*) is reported to have said about `Abbas, his uncle,

" هذا بقية آبائي "

"This is the remainder of my forefathers" (Zamakhshari).

270. According to Wahidi this verse was revealed when the Jews said to the Prophet (*saws*), Do you not know

that Jacob instructed his sons at his death bed to remain Jewish?' (Alusi).

Imām Razi points out that Ya`qub did not adulterate his last minute behest with anything else but "surrender to Allah alone until one's death." He laid great emphasis on that single point, as the Qur`ānic text indicates, so that they miss neither the point nor the emphasis.

Sayyid Qutb comments: "This scene from Ya`qub's death bed is an extraordinary one. It is of great significance...rich in implications...and greatly moving. A man is dying! What is the affair that occupies his mind most - at that hour? What is the thing that he is concerned about most while in his last breath? What is the issue that he wants to be assured about and seeks new resolves over? What is the legacy that he wants to leave behind for his sons? What is it that he is anxious that it be received by them securely and so wishes to hand it over to them in an assembly so that they might not miss any detail? It is the faith. It is the legacy. It is the treasure. It is the issue of all

issues. It is an issue of such importance that even the pains of the last hours cannot distract him from it.”

271. It is a very beautiful way of stating that if you believe, O Jews, that you are entitled to Paradise because of the deeds of your ancestors, as your holy literature asserts, then in all fairness you should be held responsible for whatever wrong they might have committed. But since you will not accept the responsibility for what they did, agreeing with the Qur’ān when it states, ‘and you will not be questioned for what they did,’ then, obviously you cannot be rewarded for whatever good they did (Au.).

“The Jews, in contrast to the Christian concept of ‘original sin,’ had coined a new term ‘original virtue.’ ‘The doctrine asserts that God visits the virtues of the father upon the children for His Name’s sake and as a mark of grace’ (JE. XII p. 441)” Majid.

Majid also quotes from the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*: “In the Jewish scheme of salvation, the excellences of the three patriarchs also, (though this idea is far less emphasized), and indeed of all the righteous Israelites of the past are supposed to

be thrown into a common stock for the benefit of their people, collectively and individually, in every age” (XI p. 144). And also, “The hopes of the individual Jew were based on the piety of holy ancestors: ‘We have Abraham as our father’ (EBr. XII, 11th. ed. p.184).”

Qurtubi comments: In this verse is the proof that a man earns the deeds he works, even if it is Allah (*swt*) who in reality is the Creator of those deeds. This is so because he has been given the power to discern and distinguish between (right and wrong).

Yusuf Ali writes: “The doctrine of personal responsibility is the cardinal feature of Islam.”

Asad adds: “This verse, as well as verse 141 below, stresses the fundamental Islamic tenet of individual responsibility, and denies the Jewish idea of their being “the chosen people” by virtue of their descent, as well as by implication the Christian doctrine of an “original sin” with which all human beings are supposedly burdened because of Adam’s fall from grace.”

Zamakhshari wrote: The Prophet (*saws*) is reported to have warned his own clan:

" يا بني هاشم ، لا يأتيني الناس بأعمالهم وتأتوني
بأنسابكم "

"O Banu Hashim! Do not come to me stressing ancestral connections with me, while the people come to me with deeds."

But the *hadith* could not be found in major works in the above words. The words of Muslim are:

يَا بَنِي هَاشِمٍ اتَّقُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ مِنَ النَّارِ يَا بَنِي عَبْدِ
الْمُطَّلِبِ اتَّقُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ مِنَ النَّارِ يَا فَاطِمَةُ اتَّقِي
نَفْسَكَ مِنَ النَّارِ فَإِنَّ لِيَ أَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا
غَيْرَ أَنَّ لَكُمْ رَحْمًا سَأُبْلِغُهَا بِبِلَاهَا

"O Banu Hashim! Save yourself from the Fire. O Banu `Abd al-Muttalib! Save yourself from the Fire. O Fatimah! Save yourself from the Fire, for I have no power (of any good) for you against Allah except that you deserve good treatment being blood kin which I shall do my best to serve" (Au.).

Finally, here is Sayyid Qutb's commentary: "The foregoing passage makes distinct to us that the line which divides the people who have passed away and those of their progeny who were confronting this Call. It tells us that there is no relationship between the two. There is no question of a legacy, or room for any genealogical connection, between

those that were present and those that have passed away: 'That was a nation that has passed away. For them will be what they earned and for you what you will earn. And you will not be questioned about what they used to do.'

"Each had its own measure, its own way, its own model, and its own characteristics...They were a believing nation that bear no relationship with the corrupt and evil ones that followed. These followers are not the tail enders of that virtuous lot. No. These are a set of people and those were another set of people. These have a banner, and they had a banner. The concepts of faith of those people were different from the concepts of faith of these people. The concepts of the pagans of one epoch are not very much different from those of another epoch. The relationship with these is the relationship of nationality and race. As for the concept based in beliefs and faiths, it distinguishes between a generation of believers and a generation of criminals. Those who have beliefs contrary to this are not one nation with those who did not hold such beliefs. They are two different nations by the measure of Allah and so they are two different nations by the measure of the believers also. The nation (*ummah*) accord-

[135] They say, 'Be Jews or Christians, and you shall be rightly guided.'²⁷² Tell them, 'Rather the Religion of Ibrahim, the upright;²⁷³ and he was not of the idolaters.²⁷⁴

وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تَهْتَدُوا قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

ing to the concepts of faith, is the name of a group, the individuals of which come from every nationality, from every part of the earth, and are woven into one unit on the basis of faith. They are not a group that associates itself with a certain nation, or to a certain geographical area of the earth. This obviously is a concept that is becoming of a man who derives his humanity from the heavenly spirit, and not from the filthy properties of the earth."

272. It is said that `Abdullah ibn Suriya said to the Prophet, "There is no guidance save that upon which we are. Therefore, follow us Muhammad and you will be rightly guided.' The Christians also said the same thing to the Prophet. So Allah revealed: "And they say, 'Be Jews or Christians...'" (Ibn Kathir).

273. *Hanif* is one who stays firm on a straight path, not inclining a bit towards anything or accepting any distraction.

"*Hanif* literally is 'Inclining to a right state or tendency...and particularly

inclining from any false religion, to the true religion' (LL)" Majid.

Yusuf Ali adds: "The Jews, though taught Unity, went after false gods, and the Christians invented the Trinity or borrowed it from Paganism. We go back to the pure, '*hanif*' doctrine of Abraham to live and die in faith in the One True God."

Asad comments: "The expression '*hanif*' is derived from the verb '*hanafa*,' which literally means "he inclined [toward a state or tendency]" (cf. Lane II, 658). Already in pre Islamic times, this term had a definitely monotheistic connotation, and was used to describe a man who turned away from sin and worldliness and from all dubious beliefs, especially idol worship; and '*tahan-nuf*' denoted the ardent devotions, mainly consisting of long vigils and prayers, of the unitarian God seekers of pre Islamic times."

There were at least four persons in Makkah who had adopted "*tahan-nuf*." Waraqah b. Nawfal was one of them.

[136] Tell them, 'We believe in Allah, in that which has been revealed unto us, that which was revealed unto Ibrahim, Isma'il, Is-haq, Ya`qub, and the Tribes,²⁷⁵ that which was given to Musa and `Isa, and that which the Prophets had been given by their Lord. We make no division between any of them.²⁷⁶ We have surrendered ourselves unto Him.

قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنْزِلَ
إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ
وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا
أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ
مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

274. That is, he was neither a Jew nor a Christian for the Jews or the Christians to affiliate themselves with. He was not a polytheist either, for the pagans of Makkah to claim affiliation with him as they did.

275. By the words '*what was revealed unto the Tribes*' the allusion is to the Revelation given to Ibrahim (*asws*) which was followed by his progeny. It has been ascribed to them because of their close following of the revelation; as it is mentioned in this very verse: '*We believe in that which have been revealed unto us.*' Now, we know that the Qur'ān was revealed to Muhammad and not to his followers. But since we accept it as our source of Guidance and hold fast unto it, it is as if it has been revealed unto us (Alusi).

276. That is because a person who rejects one of them, is as though one who rejected all (Ibn Kathir).

Mawdudi remarks: "The name Judaism, as well as the characteristic features and elaborate body of laws and regulations associated with it, emerged during the third or fourth century B.C. As for Christianity, in the sense of the body of dogmas and theological doctrines which characterize it, it came into existence long after Jesus (peace be upon him). The question that naturally arises is that, if man's guidance depends on following Judaism or Christianity how can Abraham and other Prophets and righteous people who are accepted as having been rightly guided even by the Jews and Christians be considered so when they were born several centuries before the birth of Judaism and Christianity. If they were rightly guided, from whom did they receive their guidance? Obviously their source of guidance and inspiration was neither Judaism nor Christianity since, in their times, these did not exist. So man's rectitude does not de-

[137] And (hence), if they believe in the like of which you have believed in, then they are rightly guided. But if they turn away, then, it is they who are in schism. Allah will suffice you (O Muslims) against them.²⁷⁷ He is the Hearer, the Knower.

فَإِنْ آمَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ اهْتَدَوْا
وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ
اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣٧﴾

pend on those characteristics which led to the rise of Jewish and Christian particularisms; it rather depends on adopting that universal way to Truth which has guided and inspired men through the ages.”

He adds: “Those who believe in one particular Prophet and disbelieve in others do not in fact believe even in that particular Prophet in whom they claim to believe; for they have not grasped the nature of that universal ‘Straight Way’ (al *Sirat al mustaqim*) which was enunciated by Moses, Jesus and other Prophets. When such people claim to follow a Prophet they really mean that they do so out of deference to their forefathers. Their religion in fact consists of bigoted ancestor worship and blind imitation of inherited customs rather than sincere adherence to the directives of any Prophet of God.”

277. That is, when the truth has become evident and they show their

backs to it, then surely it is they who are in schism. Obviously, this schism is sooner or later going to take the form of hostilities. But, when that happens, Allah (*swt*) will suffice you, O Prophet, and after him, his followers (based on Ibn Jarir).

“We are thus in the true line of those who follow the one and indivisible Message of the One God, wherever delivered. If others narrow it or corrupt it, it is they who have left the faith and created a division or schism. But God sees and knows all. And He will protect His own, and His support will be infinitely more precious than the support which men can give” (Yusuf Ali).

Ibn Abi Hatim has reported Ziyad b. Yunus as saying that a Caliph sent ‘Uthman’s copy of the Qur’ān to Nafi’ ibn Abi Na’im for him to collate it with other copies. Ziyad asked

[138] Allah's color. And who can be better at coloring than Allah?²⁷⁸ And we are His worshippers.

صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً
وَنَحْنُ لَهُ عَابِدُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾

[139] Say, 'Do you dispute with us about Allah? while He is our Lord and your Lord.²⁷⁹ For us are our deeds, and for you yours. We are devoted in sincerity to Him.²⁸⁰

قُلْ أَتَخْذُونَ فِي اللَّهِ وَلَهُ رَبُّكُمْ وَلَنَا
أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ
﴿١٣٩﴾

Nafi', "We have heard that when 'Uthman was murdered his blood fell on the verse, '*Allah shall suffice you against them. He is the Hearer, the Knower.*' Is that correct?" Nafi' told him, 'Yes, my eyes have seen his blood on those words' (Ibn Kathir).

278. "By the term '*sibghatullah*' the allusion is to 'the religion of Islam' (Qatadah, Abu al 'Aliyyah, Suddi). That is the true 'baptism water'" (Majid).

Majid also writes: "The dye of Allah' is grace on His part and absolute surrender on ours. '*Sibgha*' is also 'Religion' and '*sibghatullah*' means the religion of God,...because its effect appears in him who has it like the dye in the garment; or because it intermingles in the heart like the dye in the garment' (LL)."

It is reported of Ibn 'Abbas that he said: Christians used to bathe the newborn on the seventh day of its

birth with a colored water (saffron color: Razi), after which they would declare, 'Now has the child become Christian' (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Qurtubi).

Alusi, writes: The allusion by the word "*sibgha*," is to the state of (spiritual) purity that is attained through faith in One God (Alusi).

Another explanation is that the allusion by "*fitrah*," is to the tawhid on which every child is born (Mujahid, Ibn Jarir, Razi, Alusi, Ibn Kathir).

The meaning, therefore, is that it is not baptism or any other ceremony of coloring that colors anyone in the color of God. It is the belief in one True God, and obedience to the commands that He has sent through His messengers, that color a man in a hue that is recognizable in his conduct. It is this color that is approved by Allah (*swt*). It is this which is His color (Au.).

[140] Or, will you say that Ibrahim, Isma`il, Is-haq, Ya`qub and the Tribes were Jews or Christians?' Ask them, 'Do you know better or Allah?' And who can do greater evil than he who conceals a testimony of Allah that is with him?²⁸¹ Allah is not unaware of what you do.²⁸²

أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطَ كَانُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى قُلْ أَأَنْتُمْ أَعْلَمُ أَمِ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَتَمَ شَهَادَةً عِنْدَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٠﴾

279. The words, “in God” of the original mean “the religion of God,” i.e., “Do you argue with us on the religion of God and claim that the true religion sent by Him is Judaism or Christianity?” It could also mean: “Are you contending with us the fact of God choosing a Prophet from among the Arabs and not from among you?” (Qurtubi and Alusi).

The Jews and the Christians used to claim that they were closer to God than the Muslims because they were the “children of God.” Allah (*swt*) refuted their claim, saying that no such special relationship exists between Allah (*swt*) and them. It is entirely by deeds that people will be judged, punished or rewarded (Qurtubi).

280. Qurtubi writes: Junayd has said about ‘*ikhlas*’ (sincerity) that it is a secret between Allah (*swt*) and His slave. Neither the angel (that scribes human deeds) knows about it that he can note it, nor *Shaytan* knows it that he can corrupt it, nor yet the

man’s own passion knows it so that it can corrupt it.

Alusi adds: Fudayl has defined it in these words: ‘(a) To give up doing something because of the people, is “*riya*” (hypocrisy), (b) to do something to please them is “*shirk*” (association with Allah), and (c) to be free of the two is “*ikhlas*” (purity of thought and action).’

Sulayman Al Darani has identified three signs of *riya*: (i) To be unenthusiastic about an act of worship when out of sight of the people, (ii) to do it zealously when in their sight, and (iii) to be pleased when praised for it.

281. That is, the Jews and Christians know in their hearts that these Prophets were neither Jews nor Christians, but refused to acknowledge the fact, thus concealing a testimony from their Lord (Ibn Kathir).

282. That is, Allah (*swt*) is not unaware of your acts of concealment of

[141] *That was a nation that has passed away. For them will be what they earned and for you what you earn. And you will not be questioned about what they were doing.*²⁸³

تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤١﴾

[142] *Soon the fools²⁸⁴ among the people will say, 'What has turned these (Muslims) away from the qiblah they were facing earlier?'²⁸⁵ Tell them, 'To Allah belong the East and the West. He guides whom He will to a straight path.'*²⁸⁶

سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّاهُمْ عَنْ قِبْلَتِهِمُ الَّتِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٤٢﴾

the Truth (Ibn Jarir).

Abu Hayyan has said: This verse (*and Allah is not unaware of what you do*) does not appear in the Qur'ān but after the mention of a sin, as if to impress that Allah (*swt*) is not going to overlook it (Sabuni).

283. One explanation for the repetition of the verse, 'That was a nation that has passed away' is that the first was addressed to the Jews and Christians, and the second one to the Muslims to emphasize that even your efforts to affiliate yourselves with these great servants of Allah will be of no avail if you do not follow in their footsteps (Alusi).

284. It may be noted that a word arising from the same root "*safaha*" (he fooled himself) has been used here as was used in verse 130 which said, '*And who will turn away from*

the religion of Ibrahim save him who is a fool unto himself?'

285. A *hadith* in Bukhari reports Bara' ibn al 'Azib as saying: "For sixteen or seventeen months after leaving Makkah the Prophet continued to offer prayers at Madinah facing Jerusalem. But it was his wish that the Holy Makkan Mosque be declared the *qiblah*. (Finally, the command came) and the first prayers that he offered facing the new *qiblah* was the after noon Prayers (*'Asr*). A person who had prayed behind him passed by another mosque and found the congregation bowing in Prayers. He cried out: 'I swear by Allah that I have prayed with the Prophet (*saws*) facing Makkah.' Upon this the congregation turned around (one hundred and eighty degrees) to the new *qiblah* while still in prayer. Some Muslims had died before the *qiblah*

was changed, so we didn't know what to think of them, (whether their prayers were valid or not). So Allah revealed, '*Allah was not such as to waste away your faith.*'" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir and others, based on a *hadith* in Bukhari, Muslim and others).

According to other reports, the Prophet (*saws*) used to pray in Makkah in such a way as to keep both the Holy Mosque as well as Jerusalem before him, but the two being on the opposite sides in Madinah such an arrangement was not possible. Therefore, he had to choose Jerusalem.

Imām Ahmad has reported a *hadith* of `A'isha which says that the Prophet said:

إِنَّهُمْ لَا يَحْسُدُونَا عَلَى شَيْءٍ كَمَا يَحْسُدُونَا عَلَى يَوْمِ
الْجُمُعَةِ الَّتِي هَدَانَا اللَّهُ هَا وَضَلُّوا عَنْهَا وَعَلَى الْقِبْلَةِ
الَّتِي هَدَانَا اللَّهُ هَا وَضَلُّوا عَنْهَا وَعَلَى قَوْلِنَا خَلَفَ
الْإِمَامَ آمِينَ

"The people of the Book do not envy us over anything the way they envy us over (three things): Friday, to which Allah guided us and they missed it, the *qiblah* to which we have been guided and which they missed, and 'amin' behind the Imām (in the Prayers)" Ibn Kathir.

"From the incident of the change in *qiblah* is derived the principle that the Qur'ān abrogates the *Sunnah*, as in this case the earlier orientation during prayers was based on *Sunnah* that the Qur'ān abrogated. Also, the reliance of the Companions on a single reporter for changing their *qiblah* proves the validity of the principle in Islamic Law that *ahadith* of the '*aahaad*' type have sufficient legal value" (Qurtubi).

"Aahaad" *ahadith* are those that have a single narrator (a Companion) at the end of the chain of narrators, the number of subsequent narrators being of no consequence (Au.).

286. This is the first answer to the objection raised by the unbelievers and the substance of the answer is: 'Who are you to object? It is Allah to whom belongs the Kingdom of the heaven and the earth. He orders as He will. His servants' duty is to obey as ordered and not to question' (Ibn Kathir, Thanwi).

Furthermore, Ibn Kathir says, it is our duty to obey the commands and turn to the direction He orders. If He orders us to change the direction several times a day, then, as His slaves and servants we should comply with the orders.

[143] Thus We have appointed you a justly balanced nation²⁸⁷ that you might be witnesses over the people and the Prophet a witness over you.²⁸⁸ And We did not appoint the qiblah which you were observing but to distinguish between he who follows the Messenger and he who turns on his heels;²⁸⁹ although, this was a hard thing indeed save for those whom Allah guided.²⁹⁰ And Allah was not such as to allow your faith go wasted.²⁹¹ Truly Allah is Most Kind, Most Merciful.²⁹²

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعَ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرُؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾

Wisdom behind the Qiblah

Mufti Shafi` Deobandi has the following to state in explanation of the appointment of a *qiblah* for this community: It is commonly known that the strength of any collective system depends on the unity of its individuals. Excessive individualism is destructive to collective causes. Nations have tried to use race, lineage, country, geographical area, color or language as the basis of unity. But these are not things of choice. A white man cannot become black. A Pakistani cannot undergo re-birth as an African. Therefore, these kinds of factors cannot be used as a basis to unite a very large number of people. In fact, they are the dividing factors. Islam has not tried to unite people on the basis of factors over which they have no control. So too, it has not tried to impose those factors of unity

that go against their love of freedom and an innate dislike of restrictions. It has also not tried to do so on the basis of principles that are against human reason and aspirations. For instance, it did not recommend a common dress code, rather, left it to the choice of the people, only delineating limits of exposure of the body. Islam unites the people on the basis of faith and belief. And to strengthen the unity it has taken simple measures that are possible for everyone to observe without inconvenience and at no cost - whether they be villagers or townsmen, Indian or English. One such factor of unity is the direction to be observed during the five daily prayers (*Ma`arif*, abridged).

287. Literally, “*wasat*” is the middle. Incidentally, this *Surah* has 286 verses. One half of that is 143, which is the verse in which this term “*wasat*”

occurs (Au.).

“*Wasat*” is, according to me, the “justly balanced,” since this *ummah* is between two excesses of the Jews and Christians. The Jews cried lies to their Prophets, killed them and corrupted the Holy Scriptures sent to them, while the Christians declared Jesus the son of God, and invented priesthood. There is a *hadith* which corroborates this meaning. It is also the opinion of Abu Sa’id al Khudri, Ibn ‘Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah and others” (Ibn Jarir).

Asad writes: “...the community that keeps an equitable balance between extremes and is realistic in its appreciation of man’s nature and possibilities, rejecting both licentiousness and exaggerated asceticism. In tune with its oft repeated call to moderation in every aspect of life, the Qur’ān exhorts the believers not to place too great an emphasis on the physical and material aspects of their lives, but postulates, at the same time, that man’s urges and desires relating to this ‘life of the flesh’ are God willed and, therefore, legitimate. On further analysis, the expression ‘a community of the middle way,’ (Asad’s translation of ‘*wasat*’: Au.), might be said to summarize, as it were, the Islamic attitude towards the problem of man’s exis-

tence as such: a denial of the view that there is an inherent conflict between the spirit and the flesh, and a bold affirmation of the natural, God willed unity in this twofold aspect of human life. This balanced attitude, peculiar to Islam, flows directly from the concept of God’s oneness and, hence, of the unity of purpose underlying all His creation: and thus, the mention of the ‘community of the middle way’ at this place is a fitting introduction to the theme of the Ka’bah, a symbol of God’s oneness.”

Shafi’ Deobandi adds: This *Ummah* is justly balanced in every aspect of its existence.

- a) In faith and belief: between the extremes of the Jews and Christians, (as pointed out by Ibn Jarir above).
- b) In matters of worship: as against the other nations who either neglected it altogether, or went to extremes of shutting themselves in monasteries, Muslims follow the middle path and pray five times a day devoting the rest of the time to worldly affairs.
- c) In matters of culture and civilization: as against other nations who take care to preserve the lives of animals and plants, but fail to protect the lives of human beings, Muslims are very mindful of the human rights

at every level of interaction.

d) Economy: An even distribution of wealth in Muslim society is the best example of how they are justly balanced against other people among whom either private ownership is frowned upon or the whole society is engaged in nothing but accumulation of wealth (Abridged).

Thanwi adds: Judging by the way they react to the injunction about the *qiblah*, the Muslims are justly balanced from this angle also. That is, neither such dim-wits that they cannot appreciate the wisdom behind the command concerning the *qiblah*, even when explained, nor such theorists as to refuse to follow the command without knowing the wisdom.

Another possible meaning is that “*wasat*” stands for “the best,” as used in the Qur’ān is several places. For example, to describe the “*salat al ‘Asr*” the Qur’ān used the words: “*salat al wusta*.” The Prophet (*saws*) has also used this term in this sense in several *ahadith*. For example, he called Quraysh the “*wasat*” of the Arab tribes” (Ibn Kathir).

288. “*Shuhada*’”: In his characteristic style of seeking the meaning of the Qur’ān from the Qur’ān, Shanqiti writes: “It has not been stated here

whether the Prophet (*saws*) will be a witness in this world or in the Hereafter. It has been made clear elsewhere that it is in the Hereafter that he will be a witness. Allah (*swt*) said (4: 41):

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا [النساء/ ٤١]

‘How will (it be, O Prophet) when We will bring forth a witness in the Hereafter, from every nation and will bring you forth a witness against them?’”

Ibn Jarir, as well as Ibn Kathir, (whose reports are based on those of Bukhari and Tirmidhi) state the following:

Abu Sa’id al Khudri reports the Prophet (*saws*) as having said:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ”يُدْعَى نُوحٌ فَيَقَالُ هَلْ بَلَغْتَ؟ فَيَقُولُ نَعَمْ، فَيُدْعَى قَوْمُهُ فَيَقَالُ: هَلْ بَلَغْتُمْ؟ فَيَقُولُونَ: مَا أَنَا مِنْ نَذِيرٍ وَمَا أَنَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ. فَيَقَالُ: مَنْ شُهِدُوكَ؟ فَيَقُولُ: مُحَمَّدٌ وَأُمَّتُهُ، قَالَ فَيُؤْتَى بِكُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّهُ قَدْ بَلَغَ فَذَلِكَ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى {وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا}“ . (قال أبو عيسى: هذا حديث حسن صحيح).

“On the Day of Judgment Nuh will be asked to appear before the people and will be asked, ‘Did you convey the Message that you were entrusted with?’ He will say, ‘I did.’ Then the people to whom he was sent will be asked: ‘Did he

convey the Message?’ They will say, ‘No warner none at all ever came to us.’ So Nuh will be asked, ‘Do you have a witness?’ He will say, ‘Yes, Muhammad and his followers.’ This is the meaning of the verse, ‘Thus We have made you a justly balanced people so that you may be witnesses to the people and the Prophet a witness to you.’”

Another version adds that the Muslims will be asked, ‘How can you say that (the Message was delivered)?’ They will say, ‘On the basis of the Revelation (the Qur’ān) reaching us confirming that the Message was delivered.’

Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir also add: Another report of Abu Sa’id al Khudri, recorded by Ibn Marduwayh and Ibn Abi Hatim says that the Prophet (*saws*) said,

”أنا وأمتي يوم القيامة على كوم مشرفين على الخلائق ما من الناس أحد إلا ودَّ أنه منا، وما من نبي كذبه قومه إلا ونحن نشهد أنه قد بلغ رسالة ربه عزَّ وجلَّ“
(رواه ابن مردويه عن جابر بن عبد الله .)

“I and my followers will be on a raised platform on the Day of Judgment looking down upon the people (and the proceedings). There will be no one but wishing to be with us. And there will be

no Messenger who will be given the lie but we will bear witness that he conveyed the Message.”

The report could not be traced in major works (Au.).

Both Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir (with some modifications) add the following: It is also reported that, once a group of people were with the Prophet (*saws*) in a graveyard burying a man from Banu Salamah, when someone remarked, ‘He was the best of them,’ then he went on to count some of his virtues. The Prophet (*saws*) said, ‘It has become due.’ On another occasion when they were burying a man from Banu Haritha someone said, ‘He was an evil man,’ and went on to mention some of his evil deeds. The Prophet (*saws*) said, ‘It has become due.’ He was asked what he meant by that remark. He said, ‘Allah (*swt*) has said: “...so that you might be witness to the people.”’ That is, Paradise became due because Muslims bore witness to the man’s goodness, and the opposite also (Au.). Ibn Kathir says that according to Hakim, the *hadith* is “*Sahih*” by the standards of Bukhari and Muslim].

(Bukhari’s version is as follows: Au.):

عَنْ ثَابِتٍ عَنْ أَنَسٍ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ مَرَّ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - بِجَنَازَةٍ ، فَأَتَتْهُا

عَلَيْهَا خَيْرًا فَقَالَ " وَجَبَتْ " . ثُمَّ مَرَّ بِأُخْرَى فَأَتَتْهُا
عَلَيْهَا شَرًّا - أَوْ قَالَ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ - فَقَالَ " وَجَبَتْ " .
" . فَقِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، قُلْتَ لِهَذَا وَجَبَتْ ، وَلِهَذَا
وَجَبَتْ ، قَالَ " شَهَادَةُ الْقَوْمِ ، الْمُؤْمِنُونَ شُهَدَاءُ اللَّهِ
فِي الْأَرْضِ "

Ibn Kathir also narrates from Bukhari and Nasa'i: On a similar occasion during his caliphate, 'Umar related the Prophet's words:

" مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يَشْهَدُ لَهُ ثَلَاثَةٌ إِلَّا وَجَبَتْ لَهُ الْجَنَّةُ " .
قَالَ قُلْنَا وَاثْنَانِ قَالَ " وَاثْنَانِ " . قَالَ وَلَمْ نَسْأَلْ رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - عَنِ الْوَاحِدِ . قَالَ أَبُو
عِيْسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ .

"Any Muslim about whom four of you bear good testimony will be sent to Paradise." He was asked, "What if three (of us bear the testimony)." He said, "Even if three." Then someone said, "If two (of us bear the testimony)?" He said, "Even two." After that no one enquired about one.

In yet another *hadith* the Prophet (*saws*) said,

يُوشِكُ أَنْ تَعْرِفُوا أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ . قَالُوا:
بِمَ ذَاكَ؟ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! قَالَ (بِالْثَّاءِ الْحَسَنِ وَالثَّاءِ
السَّيِّئِ . أَنتُمْ شُهَدَاءُ اللَّهِ، بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ (في
النَّوَائِدِ: إِسْنَادُهُ صَحِيحٌ . رَجَالُ ثِقَاتٍ)

"It is hoped that you will know the good ones among you from the evil ones." He was asked, "How would that be O Mes-

senger of Allah?" He answered, "Through your praise of some as virtuous and condemnation of others as the corrupt. You are Allah's witnesses on the earth" (Ibn Kathir, from Ibn Majah).

However, according to Dahhak, it is those of this "*ummah*" who follow the guidance that will be the witnesses, and not just everyone (Ibn Jarir).

289. What is meant by the words: 'We did not appoint....but to distinguish' is that the "people might know," since Allah has foreknowledge of things to happen. Further, this applies to every such statement in the Qur'an. For example,

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّى تَعْلَمَ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ
وَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ أَخْبَارَكُمْ [محمد/٣١]

'And We will try you in order that We know the mujahideen and those that persevere among you.'

What is meant by the words: "So that We know" is "so that the people might know" (Qurtubi).

290. It was a hard thing because the pagans said, 'Muhammad seems to be confused. Probably he thinks we are better guided, and it is possible he will revert to our ancestral religion.' The hypocrites said, 'What's wrong with Muhammad? Sometimes he asks us to pray in one direction and at oth-

er times in another direction!’ Many abandoned Islam. Some Muslims began to ask about those that had died praying in the direction of Jerusalem. But true Muslims remained steadfast and emerged from the test successful (Ibn Jarir).

Mawdudi writes: “One purpose of this change in the direction of Prayer was to find out who was blinkered by the irrational prejudices and chained by chauvinistic attachment to land and blood, and who, having liberated himself from those bonds, was capable of rising to the heights and grasping the Truth.

“On the one hand were the Arabs who were steeped in their national and racial arrogance. For them, taking Jerusalem as the direction by their Prayer (as originally practiced by the Prophet) was too hard a blow to their national vanity to be accepted with equanimity. On the other hand, the Jews were essentially no different. They, too, were obsessed with racial pride so that it was difficult for them to accept any other than the direction of Prayer which they had inherited from the past. How could the people whose hearts were full of such idols respond to the call of the Messenger of God? Hence, God saw to it that the worshippers of such

idols were distinguished from the genuine worshippers of God by first fixing Jerusalem as the direction of Prayer. This was bound to alienate all those who had worshipped the idol of Arabianism. Later, the fixing of the Ka’bah as the direction of Prayer led to the alienation of those who were engrossed in the worship of the idol of Israel. Thus there were left with the Prophet (*saws*) only those who truly worshipped none but the One True God.”

291. Apart from the interpretation that “faith” here alludes to “*salah*,” an additional meaning is that Allah was not such as to waste away your consistency in faith considering the fact that you did not doubt and did not waver (Zamakhshari).

292. “*Al Ra’uf*”: Though “*ra’fah*” has the same meaning as “*rahmah*,” it expresses greater intensity of kindness” (Qurtubi).

Ibn Kathir comments: Bukhari has recorded a *hadith* which reports that,

عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَدِمَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ سَبِيٌّ فَإِذَا امْرَأَةٌ مِنَ السَّبْيِ قَدْ تَحَلَّبَتْ تَذِيهًا تَسْقِي إِذَا وَجَدَتْ صَبِيًّا فِي السَّبْيِ أَخَذَتْهُ فَأَلْصَقَتْهُ بِبَطْنِهَا وَأَرْضَعَتْهُ فَقَالَ لَنَا النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَثَرُونَ هَذِهِ طَارِحَةٌ وَلَدَهَا فِي النَّارِ فَلَمَّا لَا وَهِيَ تَقْدِرُ عَلَى أَنْ لَا تَطْرَحَهُ فَقَالَ اللَّهُ أَرْحَمُ بِعِبَادِهِ مِنْ هَذِهِ بِوَلَدِهَا.

[144] We have seen your face (O Prophet) turning (oft) towards the heavens.²⁹³ We will surely turn you toward the qiblah (that is) dear to you. So turn your face (during Prayers) in the direction of the Holy Mosque.²⁹⁴ And wherever you may be (O Muslims) turn your faces in its direction.²⁹⁵ Those who have been given the Book know that this is the truth from your Lord.²⁹⁶ And Allah is not unaware of the things they do.

قَدْ تَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ
فَلَنُوَلِّينَاكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ
الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا
وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ
عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

The Prophet saw a woman prisoner searching for her child. Every time she found a child she would grasp it, hugged it and began to breast feed it. He asked his Companions, “Do you think she will throw her child into a fire, if she has the power not to do so?” We answered, “Of course not, if she has the choice not to throw it.” The Prophet (*saws*) said: “By Allah, Allah (*swt*) is kinder to His creations than this woman is to her child.”

293. Knowing that since the leadership had been taken away from the Children of Israel, it was only a matter of time when their *qiblah* would be abandoned in favor of the *qiblah* of Ibrahim, the Prophet (*saws*) used to turn often toward the heavens in anticipation of orders to reorient himself toward the *Ka'bah* in Prayers.

Note also that although the order concerning the change in *qiblah* was expected and would have come anyway, Allah (*swt*) put it in such words as if to sound that the order was following the Prophet's desire. This demonstrates the regard the Prophet (*saws*) enjoys with Allah (Au.).

294. Ibn 'Abbas has reported the Prophet (*saws*) as having said: “The Holy House is the *qiblah* of those in the Holy Mosque. The Holy Mosque is the *qiblah* of those in the Haram (the Holy Precincts around the Holy Mosque). And the Haram is the *qiblah* of the Muslims all over the world (Qurtubi).

This report could not be traced in major works.

The ‘Holy Mosque’ refers to the sanctuary invested with holiness and sanctity: in the centre of which the *Ka'bah* is located.

[145] Yet, were you to bring the people of the Book all the signs, they will never follow your qiblah, nor are you going to follow their qiblah;²⁹⁷ nor any of them is going to follow the qiblah of the others. And, were you to follow their caprice, after the knowledge has come to you, surely you will be of the evildoers.

وَلَيْنِ أَتَيْتَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَّا تَبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ وَلَئِنْ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّكَ إِذًا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

Mawdudi remarks: "To turn one's face in the direction of the *Ka'bah* does not mean that wherever a man might be he should turn to the *Ka'bah* with absolute accuracy. It would obviously be extremely difficult for everyone to comply with such an order. Hence the order is to turn in the direction of the *Ka'bah* rather than to the *Ka'bah* itself. ... We may pray in the direction which appears correct... However, if a man is either at a place where it is difficult to determine the direction of the *Ka'bah* or if he is in a position where it is difficult to maintain the correct direction (e.g. when travelling on a train, a boat, or an aero plane), he may pray in the direction which seems correct, or in whatever direction it is possible for him to face. If he then comes to know the correct direction while he is in the state of Prayer he should turn his face in that direction."

295. "A bird's eye view of the Moslem world at the hour of prayer

would present the spectacle of a series of concentric circles of worshippers radiating from the *Ka'bah* at Makkah and covering an ever widening area from Sierra Leone to Canton and from Tobolsk to Cape Town' (Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp.130 131)" - Majid.

296. According to Suddi and Ibn Zayd, when the Prophet (*saws*) began to pray facing the *Ka'bah*, the Jews said that if he had remained on their *qiblah*, they could have felt reassured that he was the Promised Messenger and, consequently, would have followed him. Allah (*swt*) then revealed: 'Those who have been given the Book know that this is the right (command) from your Lord. And Allah is not unaware of the things they do' (Ibn Jarir).

297. "In fact, the subsequent command to Muslims to face in their prayers a central point common to them alone has powerfully contributed to that distinctive feeling of

[146] Those unto whom We have given the Book recognize him (Muhammad) as well as they recognize their offsprings.²⁹⁸ Yet a party of them knowingly suppresses the Truth.

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾

[147] The Truth is from your Lord²⁹⁹, so be not of the doubters.

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

[148] Everyone has a direction to which he turns.³⁰⁰ So you vie with one another in good works.³⁰¹ Wherever you may be, Allah will gather you all. Verily Allah has power over everything.

وَلِكُلٍّ وِجْهَةٌ هُوَ مُوَلِّيهَا فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٤٨﴾

unity to this day, in spite of so many differences and sectarian dissensions, binds the Muslims together into one single *ummah* and makes them realize that they are a group of their own, different from the rest of the world. It is impossible to over estimate this feeling of unity' (AS I. p. 60)" - Majid.

298. According to Ibn 'Abbas, Qatadah, Suddi, Rabi', Ibn Zayd, Ibn Jurayj, it is the fact of the Ka'bah being the right *qiblah* (of the Final Messenger) that the Jews and Christians knew as clearly as they knew their offspring (Ibn Jarir). However, others believe that the allusion is to the Prophet. That is, they recognize the Prophet (*saws*) as being from God, as clearly as they recognize their offspring. Hence, it is reported that 'Umar asked 'Abdullah ibn Salam if

he knew the Prophet better than he knew his offspring. He said, 'Yes. And more certainly.' 'Umar asked him, how he could say that?' He replied, 'The Trustworthy from the heavens (Jibril) came down to the Trustworthy on the earth (Muhammad) with signs undeniable; whereas I cannot be so sure of my child's mother' (Ibn Kathir, Qurtubi, Alusi).

It is said that the answer pleased 'Umar so much that he kissed 'Abdullah on the forehead (Zamakhshari).

Majid adds : "'There is no room to doubt,' says a Christian biographer of the Prophet, 'that a section of the Jews not only hinted, before the Prophet, but even affirmed that he was that Prophet who the Lord their God should raise up unto them of

[149] From wheresoever you may embark (O Prophet), turn your face in the direction of the Holy Mosque.³⁰² That indeed is the truth from your Lord. Allah is not unaware of what you do.

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِنَّهُ لَلْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

their brethren' (Muir, p. 98)."

299. According to Qatadah and Mujahid it is Muhammad (*saws*) who is alluded to by the word: "*al haqq*" (the Truth) of this verse (Ibn Jarir). According to Ibn Kathir it is what Muhammad (*saws*) has brought.

300. What's meant by "everyone" is every follower of a religion (Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Suddi and others Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Qurtubi, Alusi).

301. "There is a subtle gap between this sentence and the next, a gap which the reader can fill with just a little reflection. The idea conveyed here is that anyone who prays will, after all, have to turn his face in some direction. But what is of real significance is not the turning of one's face in some specific direction but one's orientation to righteousness for the sake of which one performs the ritual Prayer" (Mawdudi).

302. Mufti Shafi` brings home the following points:

Determining the *Qiblah*

Since Islam is an ever-lasting religion and is meant for peoples of all regions of the globe, city dwellers as well as villages, those living in ravines or on top of the mountains, of the past, present and future times, its demands are simple enough for everyone to meet. In case of the *qiblah*, for example, the actual direction may be determined roughly. There is no need for astronomical instruments to determine the direction precisely. Difference of a few degrees will do no harm. The Prophet (*saws*) described the *qiblah* for the Madinans in the following words:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- قَالَ " مَا بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ قِبْلَةٌ ". قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ.

'What is between the east and the west is the *qiblah*.' Accordingly, the practice of the Companions and their Followers was that they simply followed the *qiblah* of a previously constructed mosque.

[150] And, from wheresoever you may embark, turn your face in the direction of the Holy Mosque. And, wherever you may be (O Muslims) turn your faces in the direction of the Holy Mosque.³⁰³ (This) in order that the people might have no argument³⁰⁴ against you, save for those among them who are unjust. But fear them not.³⁰⁵ Fear Me (alone). So that I may complete My favors on you and so that you might be guided.

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي وَلَئِمَّ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

Those who constructed later followed the older orientations. As for those areas in which no previously constructed mosques exists, it is enough to determine the *qiblah* with the help of the sun, moon and stars; similarly, there is no need at all to check the *qiblah* of the older mosques with the help of instruments.

303. This is the third time the order has been repeated. The reason given by Ibn `Abbas is that since this was the first abrogation in Islam, it had to be stressed. Imām Razi, however, states that the first order is for him who is in front of the Ka`bah; the second for him who is away from it; and the third for the peoples of the rest of the world. Qurtubi, however, believes the third is for the traveler (Ibn Kathir).

The stress was also necessary, says Qurtubi, because, being at a great

distance from the Ka`bah people would have taken it lightly. Imām Razi says there is an added reason for repeating the command three times, which is, when Allah (*swt*) said “We will turn you toward the *qiblah* that is dear to you,” an ignorant man might have thought that the change in the *qiblah* was instituted solely to please the Prophet (*saws*). Since that is not the case, the orders were repeated thrice.

304. This refers to the objections made by the Jews who said, ‘Muhammad and his followers could not fix their *qiblah* until we guided them,’ and, ‘Look at Muhammad. He follows our *qiblah* while he denounces our religion’ (Ibn Jarir). The Makkan pagans also used to say, ‘Since the Prophet has finally come around to accepting our *qiblah*, he is likely to revert to the ancestral religion’ (Qur-

[151] Even as We have sent you a Messenger from among yourselves who recites to you Our revelations, purifies you,³⁰⁶ instructs you in the Book and the Wisdom,³⁰⁷ and teaches you that which you did not know.³⁰⁸

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُو
عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾

tubi, Alusi). Another interpretation is that if Jerusalem had continued to be the *qiblah*, the people of the Book who knew very well that the *qiblah* of Islam would be the *Ka'bah* would have raised all kinds of objections (Ibn Kathir).

305. That is, do not be afraid of their criticism.

306. That is, from the dirt of '*shirk*' (associations with God) and other moral impurities.

307. By the word "*Hikmah*" of the original the allusion here is to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (Ibn Kathir, Imām Shafe'i, Razi).

Note the order. The Prophet first recites the revelations which remove the impurities of '*shirk*.' It is then that the Words of Allah (*swt*) and the secrets of His Wisdom can be taught, for which '*Kufr*' (the state of unbelief) had been a barrier (Alusi).

308. This is the answer to the prayer of Ibrahim (*asws*) who had supplicated (2: 128 129):

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ دُرِّيْنَا أُمَّةٌ مُّسْلِمَةٌ لَكَ
وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ.
رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ
وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ [البقرة/١٢٨، ١٢٩]

"O Lord! Make us submissive to You and (generate) from our progeny a people submissive to You. Show us our holy rites, and turn to us (in mercy). Surely You are the Relenting, the Merciful. O Lord! Raise in them a Messenger from among them who shall recite Your verses to them, instruct them in the Book and Wisdom, and purify them" (Ibn Jarir).

Sayyid Qutb comments: He purifies them: "Were it not for Allah, none of them would have attained purification, cleansed himself, or risen up (in spirit). But He sent His Messenger on whom be peace to purify them ... purify their souls from the impurities of '*shirk*,' from the filth of '*jahiliyyah*' and from the base concepts that weigh heavily upon the human soul crushing it under their weight ... purify them from profane

lust and eruptions of base desires ... in order that their souls may never again retract to the immoralities (of the past). Those whom Islam does not purify from the filth of the earth – filth whether ancient or modern – they fall in the poisoned quagmire of lust and beastly desires which shrink the very humanism of the humans to the extent of raising animals – that are guided merely by their instincts – above them: animals which, in fact, prove to be more sublime than what many humans fall to without the purifying factor of faith. Islam purifies their community from usury, deceit, usurpation, mugging and looting. These corruptions taint human perceptions and sensibilities, and pollute life and community. Islam frees lives from oppression and injustice and establishes that pure and noble order that human society has not experienced in the manner it experienced under the influence of Islam ... under the rule of Islam ... under the polity of Islam. Islam purifies them from all the scum and filth that smudge the face of the *'jahiliyyah,'* those that attack it from all sides, and attack those societies that Islam has not purified with its uplifting, purifying touch.

"And (He) instructs you in the Book and the wisdom:" This is in line with

what has been stated in the earlier parts of this section of the Qur'ān and summaries in a word the ultimate objective of the efforts to understand the Book, viz. attainment of wisdom. Wisdom is the fruit of all instructions in the Qur'ān. It is this faculty by which things are placed in their proper order and right perspective, and by which they are allotted their proper weights. It is this faculty that reaches at the very heart of reason, (causes, and motives) underlying the injunctions and commandments. This was attained (to the highest degree) by those whom the Prophet (*saws*) himself instructed in the Book and purified them.

'And (He) teaches you that which you did not know:' This is exactly what happened with the first batch of Muslims. Islam had picked them up from the Arab environs which did not provide them but with a few unconnected pieces of information: information that was just sufficient for the needs of a nomadic life, or for those minor civilizations that flourished amid the sand dunes. Islam picked them up from there and converted them into a group that assumed the clear sighted and wise leadership of the people (of the world). It was this Qur'ān, combined with the inspiration that the Proph-

[152] Remember Me, therefore, I will remember you.³⁰⁹ Be thankful to Me; and be not ungrateful to Me.

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ ﴿١٥٢﴾

et himself drew from the Qur'an, which was the nucleus of study. And the Prophet's mosque in which was recited the Qur'an along with the instructions of the Prophet was the university from which graduated the first generation of leaders who assumed the leadership of the world: that wise and clear sighted leadership which the humans have not experienced since then.

"It is this system of education (based on the Qur'an and the guidance from the Prophet) which produced that first generation ... and those leaders ... that is capable of producing the same quality of men and leaders. But that, if the *ummah* will return to the same methods, and to the same sources; if the *ummah* will believe in the Qur'an in the same spirit; if it will adopt its guidance for application in every day life, and not to chant words for the pleasure of the ears alone."

309. Mak-hul reports that he asked Ibn 'Umar, 'What do you say about a person who is a murderer, drinks wine, commits theft, fornicates, but he remembers God.' Ibn 'Umar re-

plied, 'Allah also remembers him but with curses, until he gives up (those vile practices).' Ibn 'Abbas has said, 'Allah's remembrance is not like your remembrance. It is of a great magnitude.' And a *hadith* recorded by Bukhari says that Allah says,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - " يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي ، وَأَنَا مَعَهُ إِذَا ذَكَرَنِي ، فَإِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي نَفْسِهِ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي نَفْسِي ، وَإِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي مَالٍ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي مَالٍ خَيْرٌ مِنْهُمْ ، وَإِنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ بِشِبْرِ تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعًا ، وَإِنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ ذِرَاعًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ بَاعًا ، وَإِنْ أَتَانِي يَمْشِي أَتَيْتُهُ هَرْوَلَةً "

"Allah says, I am by slaves hopes and I am with him when he remembers me. When he remembers Me quietly to himself, I remember him in a group better than him. And, if he gets closer to Me by the span of a hand, I get closer to him by a foot. If he gets closer to Me by a foot I get closer by a yard. And if he walks to Me, I run toward him" (Ibn Kathir).

Actually, Ibn Kathir quotes a *hadith* from *Musnad Ahmad* of the same meaning (Au.).

[153] O you who have believed! Seek help in patience and Prayers, verily Allah is with the patient.³¹⁰

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ
وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

Sa'id ibn Jubayr has said: Whoever did not obey his Lord, did not remember Him, irrespective of how many rosaries (*tasbeih*) he did, how much he chanted the greatness of God, and however much he recited the Qur'an. Abu 'Uthman was asked: "Why is it that we remember Allah but do not feel its sweet effects on our hearts?" He said, "Thank Allah that He has (at least) inspired a member of your body to His obedience" (Qurtubi).

Alusi writes: There are three ways of conducting "*dhikr*" (remembrance). First: with the tongue, which is to say thanks, chant Allah's Glory, sing His Greatness, recite the Qur'an etc. Second: with the heart (and mind) which is to think and discover the wisdom behind various obligations of Islam, to contemplate over the rewards and punishment in the Hereafter, to understand the Attributes of Allah, and unravel Divine secrets. And third: to keep every limb and joint of the body engaged in acts approved by Allah, and restrain them from the prohibited acts. Razi has a similar statement to make.

Yusuf Ali adds: "The word 'remember' is too pale a word to describe '*zikr*'... In Sufi devotions '*zikr*' represents both a solemn ritual and a spiritual state of mind or heart in which the devotee seeks to realize the presence of God."

310. After Allah (*swt*) directed the believers in the previous verse to be thankful to Him and remember Him much, He followed it up by directing them to be patient. (This is because it will not be possible to observe the two without *sabr* and *salah*: Razi). The two, *shukr* and *sabr*, go together, even as blessings and trials go together, the former requiring *shukr* (thankfulness) and the latter demanding *sabr* (patience). Further, the best way to endure misfortunes is through *salah* and *sabr*. The Prophet (*saws*) himself, as reported in a *hadith* of Ahmad, used to rush to *salah* in the face of every major or minor difficulty.

Sabr

Sabr is of two types. One consists in giving up the prohibited and the other in carrying out the command-

ments. The second of the two is of a higher order and carries greater rewards. A third kind of *sabr* is to show patience, forbearance, and steadfastness in the face of hardships. This is also obligatory on a Muslim.

It is reported of `Ali ibn al Hussain Zayn al `Abidin that he said: When Allah would have gathered the first and the last of men on the Day of Judgment, a caller will call out: 'Where are the *sabirin*. They may enter Paradise without reckoning.' Some people will proceed toward the gates of the Paradise. The angel guards will ask, 'Where are you going O children of Adam?' They will reply, 'To Paradise.' They will ask, 'Will you, even before the reckoning has begun?' They will reply, 'Yes.' They will ask: 'And who are you?' They will reply, 'We are the *sabirin*.' The angels will ask, 'And what was it that you were patient and persevering about?' They will reply, 'We carried out what was ordered and refrained from what was forbidden.' They will say, 'If that is so, then enter Paradise: a good reward for the workers of righteous deeds' (Ibn Kathir).

Sabr, however, in the sense of forbearance, must immediately follow a calamity, following the Prophet's directive,

عَنْ أَنَسٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- قَالَ
" الصَّبْرُ فِي الصَّدْمَةِ الْأُولَى ". قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا
حَدِيثٌ غَرِيبٌ مِنْ هَذَا الْوَجْهِ.

"*Sabr* is at the first instance of the calamity." It is immediately after the calamity that emotions are high. Later, after some time, when emotions have cooled, everyone becomes a *sabir*. Therefore, it is said that the wise man is the one who demonstrates at the time of misfortune what an idiot will demonstrate after a couple of days. Further, *sabr* is of two kinds. First, of him who refrains from evil deeds. The other is that of him who continues obeying the Lord in everything. As for its sign, it is to find peace and tranquility in the heart at the time of calamities. (*Sabr* has been variously defined), Ruwaym has said that *sabr* is to desist from complaining against what has occurred. Dhu al-Nun Misri has said that *sabr* is the name of seeking none but Allah's help. And, Abu `Ali said that the boundary of *sabr* is to betray grudge, and complain in the face of a calamity. (I.e. as soon as one begins to complain, or feels a grudge in the heart because of a misfortune that has befallen him, he is out of the state of *sabr*). As for merely speaking about it by way of the description of the hardship etc. without the tone of

complaint: that does not go against *sabr*. The proof is in the verse which says about Prophet Ayyub (38: 44):

إِنَّا وَجَدْنَاهُ صَابِرًا نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ [ص/٤٤]

“We found him a *sabir* (patient man), a good slave (of his Lord).” This was said despite the earlier statement in which Ayyub said,

وَأَيُّوبُ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ [الأنبياء/٨٣]

“When Ayyub called his Lord that, ‘misfortunes have befallen me’” (Qurtubi).

Commenting on the words “Allah is with the patient,” Majid adds: “This consciousness of the accompaniment of God, this awareness that He is with us, is the greatest comfort that the human mind can have in this world, and the greatest antidote to our sense of loneliness.”

Sayyid Qutb offers us a detailed commentary: “After the new *qiblah* has been appointed, and the Muslim *ummah* has been assigned its special character and role, the first thing that this Nation the justly balanced Nation is being instructed is to seek help in *sabr* and *salah* while attempting to accomplish the task it has been entrusted with, and to get prepared to offer the sacrifices that this role demands from those that are its witnesses (shuhada’): sacrifices of life,

property and goods, in the face of fear and poverty; and the hardships that one has to endure while engaged in the struggle to establish the ways approved by Allah (*swt*): both in the hearts of the people as well as in their every day life ...to unite the people on the basis of their relationship with Allah (*swt*), in order to free them for His services, and in order that they may live by His commandments... (all these tasks and all these hardships) for the sake of Allah ... for the sake of His approval, His Mercy and Guidance, which are themselves the rewards that the heart of a believer considers weighty and worthwhile enough to attempt: ‘O you who believe. Seek help in patience and Prayers, verily Allah is with the patient.’

“The theme of *sabr* is oft repeated in the Qur’ān. This is because Allah knows the magnitude of the task with which the believers have been entrusted, the steadfastness it requires while treading the middle path between various drives and inclinations, and while calling the people to Allah and His ways, which itself requires full control of one’s nerves, summoning of all abilities, and full awareness of all that is happening outside (among the people) as well as inside (within the self). All

these require patience... patience to do the bidding of Allah (*swt*), patience in abstaining from what He has forbidden, patience in *Jihad*, patience against deception in its various forms, patience at the slow materialization of help, patience at the remoteness of the goal, patience at the puffing up of the falsehood, patience at the small number of sympathizers, patience in the stretched out thorny path, patience at the crookedness of the souls, at the darkness in the hearts, at the stubbornness of men, and patience against agony in the face of people's unresponsiveness.

"Then, as time lengthens and struggle intensifies, patience weakens... or would even be exhausted .. if there is no fresh supply and renewed backing. Hence, Prayers have been mentioned along with patience. For Prayer is the source of help that never dries up, the provision that never gets exhausted, the aid that reinvigorates the powers of man, the wealth that enriches the heart; so that the cord of Patience gets extended and does not sever, and adds to patience, contentment, buoyancy, satisfaction, faith and trust.

"It is necessary for man, therefore, who is, by his nature weak and of

limited resources, to be linked to a Greater Power in order that he may draw enough help to be able to go beyond the limits of his own powers.

"When he faces the evil powers, both internal and external, when constant struggle between the just needs and lusts of the self becomes a heavy burden on him, when combating the rebellion (against Allah) and corruption (in the land) bear heavy on him, when the distances appear long and the destination far away, for a life limited in its tenure... and when he looks back and feels that he has not covered much while the sun is about to set, when he seems to have achieved nothing while the life's span seems to be reaching its end, when he finds evil blown up and virtue thin and lean... with no light on the horizon, and no landmark on the road.... It is then that the value of Prayers comes to light.

"Prayer is the mortal man's link with the Immortal Power. It is the appointed hour when the lonely drop joins up with the spring that does not dry up. It is the key to the treasures that enriches. It is the departure from the boundaries of this little earth to the unlimited World beyond. It is the very soul, the very coolness and the

[154] And do not refer to those who are slain in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather they are living but you do not perceive.³¹¹

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ ۚ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾

shade at the midday. It is the tender touch for the weary heart. Hence we see that whenever the Prophet, on whom be peace and blessing, faced a difficulty he would order Bilal, 'Bilal. Relieve us with the call to Prayers,' and used to resort to Prayers whenever an affair worried him."

311. The verse tells us that those who died martyrs are alive in Paradise. We find further elaboration in *hadith* literature. A *hadith* preserved by Muslim says:

"أَرْوَاحُهُمْ فِي جَوْفِ طَيْرٍ خَضِرٍ هَا فَتَادِيلُ مُعَلَّقَةٌ بِالْعَرْشِ تَسْرُحُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ شَاءَتْ ثُمَّ تَأْوِي إِلَى تِلْكَ الْقَنَادِيلِ فَاطْلَعَ إِلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ إِطْلَاعَةً فَقَالَ هَلْ تَشْتَهُونَ شَيْئًا قَالُوا أَيْ شَيْءٍ نَشْتَهُى وَنَحْنُ نَسْرُحُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ شِئْنَا فَفَعَلَ ذَلِكَ بِهِمْ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا أَنَّهُمْ لَنْ يُرْجَعُوا مِنْ أَنْ يُسْأَلُوا قَالُوا يَا رَبِّ نُرِيدُ أَنْ تَرُدَّ أَرْوَاحَنَا فِي أَجْسَادِنَا حَتَّى نَقْتَلَ فِي سَبِيلِكَ مَرَّةً أُخْرَى. فَلَمَّا رَأَى أَنْ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ حَاجَةٌ تُرْكُوا "

"The Spirits (of the martyrs) are in the form of green birds. They have lanterns hanging by the *`Arsh*. They fly about as they wish in Paradise. (By evening) they return to those lanterns. Allah turns His attention to them and asks, 'Do you want anything

else?' They say, 'What more can we want, when we flay about in the Garden as we will?' Allah returns to them with the same question three times until they know that they will not be spared the questioning, they say, 'Our Lord! We wish You return our souls to our bodies so that we are killed another time. When He sees that they have no other desire, (they will be left to themselves.)"

As for the spirits of the believers, according to a *hadith* in Ahmad,

(عن) كَعْبِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- " نَسَمَةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ إِذَا مَاتَ طَائِرٌ تَعْلُقُ بِشَجَرِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّى يُرْجِعَهُ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى إِلَى جَسَدِهِ يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُ اللَّهُ "

"The believer's soul - when he dies - is in the form of a bird that feeds on the trees in Paradise, until Allah returns them to their bodies on the day of Resurrection' (Ibn Kathir).

Lives of the Martyrs

A question arises. In what sense are the martyrs alive? The answer is: It is a kind of life enjoyed in the Isthmus

(*barzakh*: a stage between this world and the Hereafter) that reason and intelligence cannot comprehend. As Ibn al-Qayyim has written in his book "*Al Ruh*": "It is from this realm (the *barzakh*) that the Prophet (*saws*) answers to the greetings addressed to him near his grave, although his soul is in the highest realms of "*Il-liyyun*", in the company of "*Al Rafiq al A'la*", from where it enjoys a connection with the body in the grave. Although, once again, it is beyond our comprehension to judge what kind of connection it is. The Prophet saw Musa (*asws*) Praying in his grave, while, at the same time, he also met with his soul in the sixth heaven during his *Me'raj* journey." That's about the soul. As for his body, it has been preserved, as *Sahih ahadith* say, from destruction. However, as far as the life of this world is concerned, they are most surely dead. Indeed even the Prophet (*saws*) is dead in this sense, a fact which is substantiated by the words of Abu Bakr (*ra*), who, arriving at the scene after the death of the Prophet said, "By Allah, He will not give you two deaths. The first death that He had written for you has come to pass." Then he said those famous words: "Whoever worshipped Muhammad may know that he is dead. While those who worshipped Allah

may know that He is alive, He does not die." Thus we see that Abu Bakr and the Companions believed that Muhammad had died. If he had not died, surely, they would have consulted him in matters in which they disagreed between themselves after him (Shanqiti).

Thanwi has the following plausible theory to offer.

Just as the finger tips and heels are both part of the same living body, but the signs of life in the former is greater than in the latter, in that the finger tips are more sensitive than the heels, so is also the difference in the level of consciousness of the dead. Every dead man possesses a level of consciousness which, in the case of an unbeliever, is enough to taste punishment. In the case of the believers it is more advanced. In the case of the martyrs it is so advanced that they are almost alive by the earthly standards; even their bodies are not decompose by the earth. Above them are only the Messengers of Allah who possess the highest level of consciousness after their earthly term has expired. They are alive in the other world exactly in the same sense as people on earth, except that in all cases the human mind cannot perceive the quality of their life.

Sayyid Qutb comments: “Who are these *shuhada*’ (martyrs), that are alive? They are those that were killed in the way of Allah... in the way of Allah alone, without a thought of any other goal, any other purpose, any other aim, save Allah... in the cause of the true guidance He has sent down, in the cause of life that He has revealed, in the way of the religion that He has chosen for us... in its way alone, and not in any other cause, nor under any other slogan, not even in combination with other slogans and causes. The Qur’ān and *hadith* both have greatly emphasized this point so that there remains no doubt whatsoever.

“Abu Musa al Ash`ari (*ra*) says that the Prophet was asked about someone who fights to display his courage, another for national or racial causes, and yet another hypocritically... which of them is in the ‘way of Allah?’ The Prophet replied:

مَنْ قَاتَلَ حَتَّى تَكُونَ كَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ أَعْلَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

‘He who fought in order that the Word of Allah (i.e. Islam and its principles) may triumph, is in the way of Allah.’”

“Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) says a man asked the Prophet:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ: ”أَنَّ رَجُلًا قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ رَجُلٌ يُرِيدُ الْجِهَادَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَهُوَ يَبْتَغِي عَرَضًا مِنْ عَرَضِ الدُّنْيَا؟ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَا أَجْرَ لَهُ، فَأَعْظَمَ ذَلِكَ النَّاسَ وَقَالُوا لِلرَّجُلِ: عُذْ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَلَعَلَّكَ لَمْ تَقْهَمْهُ، فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ رَجُلٌ يُرِيدُ الْجِهَادَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَهُوَ يَبْتَغِي عَرَضًا مِنْ عَرَضِ الدُّنْيَا؟ قَالَ: لَا أَجْرَ لَهُ، فَقَالُوا لِلرَّجُلِ: عُذْ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ لَهُ النَّالِقَةُ فَقَالَ لَهُ لَا أَجْرَ لَهُ“.

‘Messenger of Allah, what will you say of a man who takes up *Jihad* for the sake of Allah, but has spoils of war also in his sight?’ He replied: ‘He will have no rewards.’ That was hard upon the people so they told the man to repeat his question. Perhaps the Prophet did not understand him. So the man repeated the question but the Prophet replied

[155] And surely We shall try you with something of fear, hunger and depletion in goods, lives and crops.³¹² Give glad tidings then (O Prophet) to those who endure in fortitude.

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

[156] Such as those who, when visited by an affliction say, 'To Allah we belong and to Him we will return.'³¹³

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾

both times as, 'He will have no rewards.' - Abu Da'ud."

Sayyid's comment ends here.

312. This is in line with the statement in the Qur'an which says (2: 214):

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَاءُ وَزُلُّوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصُرُ اللَّهَ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ [البقرة/٢١٤]

"Do you imagine that you will be let into Paradise without those trials visiting you that came to those who passed away before you? They encountered sufferings and adversity, and were shaken, until the Prophet and the believers with him cried out, 'When (will come) Allah's help?' Lo! Allah's help is near" (Ibn Jarir).

313. Umm Salamah narrated (as in Muslim, but the following is from Ahmad: Au.),

عَنْ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ قَالَتْ أَتَانِي أَبُو سَلَمَةَ يَوْمًا مِنْ عِنْدِ

رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فَقَالَ قَدْ سَمِعْتُ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- قَوْلًا فَسَرَرْتُ بِهِ قَالَ " لَا يُصِيبُ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مُصِيبَةٌ فَيَسْتَرْجِعُ عِنْدَ مُصِيبَتِهِ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ اللَّهُمَّ أَخْرِني فِي مُصِيبَتِي وَاخْلُفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا إِلَّا فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ بِهِ ". قَالَتْ أُمُّ سَلَمَةَ حَفِظْتُ ذَلِكَ مِنْهُ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّى أَبُو سَلَمَةَ اسْتَرْجَعْتُ وَكَلْتُ لِلَّهِمَّ أَخْرِني فِي مُصِيبَتِي وَاخْلُفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهُ ثُمَّ رَجَعْتُ إِلَى نَفْسِي قُلْتُ مِنْ أَيْنَ لِي خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ فَلَمَّا انْقَضَتْ عِدَّتِي اسْتَأْذَنْتُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- وَأَنَا أَذْبُغُ إِهَابًا لِي فَعَسَلْتُ يَدَيَّ مِنَ الْقِرْطِ وَأَذْنْتُ لَهُ فَوَضَعْتُ لَهُ وَسَادَةً أَدِمَ حَشْوُهَا لَيْفٌ فَقَعَدَ عَلَيْهَا فَخَطَبَنِي إِلَى نَفْسِي فَلَمَّا فَرَغَ مِنْ مَقَالَتِهِ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا بِي أَنْ لَا تَكُونُ بَكَ الرَّغْبَةُ فِيَّ وَلَكِنِّي امْرَأَةٌ فِي غَيْرَةِ شَدِيدَةٍ فَأَخَافُ أَنْ تَرَى مِنِّي شَيْعًا يُعَذِّبُنِي اللَّهُ بِهِ وَأَنَا امْرَأَةٌ قَدْ دَخَلْتُ فِي الْبَيْتِ وَأَنَا ذَاتُ عِيَالٍ. فَقَالَ " أَمَّا مَا ذَكَرْتَ مِنَ الْغَيْرَةِ فَسَوْفَ يُذْهِبُهَا اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مِنْكَ وَأَمَّا مَا ذَكَرْتَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ فَقَدْ أَصَابَنِي مِثْلُ الَّذِي أَصَابَكَ وَأَمَّا مَا ذَكَرْتَ مِنَ الْعِيَالِ فَإِنَّمَا عِيَالُكَ عِيَالِي ". قَالَتْ فَقَدْ سَلَّمْتُ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فَتَرَوُجَهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فَقَالَتْ أُمُّ سَلَمَةَ فَقَدْ أَبْدَلَنِي اللَّهُ بِأَبِي سَلَمَةَ خَيْرًا مِنْهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم-

"One day Abu Salamah came to me from the Prophet's company

and said, ‘Today I have heard the Prophet (*saws*) say something that has pleased me a lot. He said, ‘No Muslim on whom a misfortune has befallen will say, ‘To Allah we belong, and to Him do we return, ‘and then supplicate in these words: “O Lord! Reward me for this misfortune and grant me better than what I have lost,” but Allah will grant him that.”

Umm Salamah said: “I memorized the words from him. When Abu Salamah died I prayed to Allah (*swt*) in those very words. But I said to myself, ‘What man can be better for me than Abu Salamah?’ Sometime later the Prophet (*saws*) visited me. At that moment I was tanning a hide. I washed my hands and let him in. I placed a cushion for him on the floor and he sat down on it. As he spoke he offered to marry me. I told him, ‘Messenger of Allah! There is no reason why I should not accept your offer. But the thing is I am a jealous woman (*ghayrah*) and am afraid that I may say or do something (that will displease you) and in consequence I may suffer Allah’s punishment. Also, I am getting old. Finally, I have children (that may

bother you).’ He replied, ‘Well, as for jealousy, hopefully Allah (*swt*) will cure you of it. As for age, I’m getting old too. And, as for the children, well, your children are my children!’”

Umm Salamah accepted him, and used to say, “For sure, Allah gave me a better husband than Abu Salamah” (Ibn Kathir).

Another report of Tirmidhi says,

عن أبي موسى الأشعري: “أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: إِذَا مَاتَ وَلَدُ الْعَبْدِ قَالَ اللَّهُ لِمَلَائِكَتِهِ قَبَضْتُمْ وَلَدَ عَبْدِي؟ فَيَقُولُونَ نَعَمْ فَيَقُولُ قَبَضْتُمْ ثَمَرَةَ فَوَادِهِ فَيَقُولُونَ: نَعَمْ. فَيَقُولُ: مَاذَا قَالَ عَبْدِي؟ فَيَقُولُونَ حَمْدَكَ وَاسْتَرْجَعْتَ، فَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ: ابْنُوا لِعَبْدِي بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَسَمُّوهُ بَيْتَ الْحَمْدِ.”

“When a man’s child dies, Allah asks the angel of death: ‘Have you taken away the child of My slave? Have you taken away the light of his eyes and the peace of his heart?’ The angel says, ‘Yes.’ Allah asks (and He knows what has been said): ‘And how did My slave react?’ He replies: ‘He praised You and said, “To Allah we belong, and to Him do we return.”’ Allah says: ‘Build for him a house in Paradise and call it the House of Praise’” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

[157] It is these on whom descends from their Lord peace and mercy.³¹⁴ It is these who are rightly guided.

أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

Abu Bakr al Razi used to say that the verse: “To Allah we belong, and to Him we return” has two commandments hidden in it: one obligatory and the other non obligatory. The obligatory is to feel no grudge over the misfortune, (i.e. show total submission to Allah, and make no complaints to anyone other than Allah) and the non obligatory is to say these words.

314. Safa and Marwah are two hills near Ka'ba. Passages from the Grand Mosque now lead directly into the passage where the “walking” is to be done between the two in Hajj or 'Umrah. The distance between the two is, according to Majid, 493 paces.

Muhammad Asad writes: “Distraught with thirst and fearing for the life of her child, Hagar ran to and fro between the two rocks (when, following God's command, Ibrahim had left them there: Au.) and fervently prayed to God for succor: and, finally, her reliance on God and her patience were rewarded by the discovery of a spring existing

to this day and known as the Well of Zamzam which saved the two from death through thirst. It was in remembrance of Hagar's extreme trial, and of her trust in God, that As Safa and Al Marwah had come to be regarded, even in pre Islamic times, as symbols of faith and patience in adversity: and this explains their mention in the context of the passages which deal with the virtues of patience and trust in God (Razi).”

Sayyid Qutb comments: “It is important that we halt here for a moment and reflect over the mobilization of the Muslim forces... the mobilization against hardships, sacrifices, death, hunger, fear, and, loss of lives, goods and fruits... the mobilization for a long struggle, that was bound to be filled with pains and burdens of great magnitude.

“Allah places them... all these... in one pan and in the other pan of the scale only peace and mercy, and the assurance that they will be rightly guided! Here, at this point, He does not promise them His succor, does not promise them their consolida-

[158] Verily, Safa and Marwah are among the Symbols of Allah.³¹⁵ There is no sin upon him, therefore, who, when he visits the House for Hajj or for `Umrah, to walk around them.³¹⁶ Whosoever volunteers a good (deed, will) surely (find) Allah Appreciative and Aware.³¹⁷

إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ أَوْ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا وَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٨﴾

tion, nor booty. Nothing at all except peace, mercy, and guidance. Allah was promising the first set of Muslims things that were more important than their own selves, things of greater consequence than their lives. Therefore, He was divesting them of every other objective and of every desire and inclination that humans tend to set as their goal in life even the longing for victory for Truth. He was cleansing them of every adulteration in order that they be totally free of all abstractions, and be devoted to Him and His Call. It was for them to walk in the 'ways' unhindered by anything and unconcerned of anything but His peace, mercy, and guidance. This was the goal. This was the end to which they were directed. This was the sweet fruit toward which their hearts were to hasten ... As for what Allah (*swt*) had ordained of the help, succor, and consolidation that was for the Call itself, for which they were working... and which they were carrying on their shoulders."

315. "*Sha`a'irullah* means 'all those religious services which God has appointed to us as signs... or the rites and ceremonies of the pilgrimage, and the places where these rites and ceremonies are performed'" (Majid from LL).

316. `Urwah ibn Zubayr (who was then very young Ibn Jarir) says I told `A'isha, "By Allah, in view of the verse: 'Safa and Marwah are among the Symbols of Allah. There is no sin upon him, therefore, who, when he visits the House for hajj or `umrah to walk between them,' .. (in view of this verse) I'll not walk between them." `A'isha said, "You missed the point. Had the verse meant to say what you have understood, the words would have been, 'It is no sin for a man if he does not walk between them.' Those words were added because to walk between the hills of Safa and Marwah during the pilgrimage was a practice from the Ibrahimic times instituted in remembrance and appreciation of

Hajar's run between the two Hills in search of water for her infant. The pagans had in subsequent times placed two idols Isaf and Na'ilah on them, which the Madinans considered a sacrilege. Accordingly, some people had given up the practice in the days of ignorance itself, and others did so after embracing Islam, assuming that it would be a sin to walk between the hills (so decorated). So Allah (*swt*) revealed this verse, (which says that far from sin, the two hills are Allah's symbols, and hence it will be a virtue to walk between them in *Hajj* and '*Umrah*') Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Qurtubi and others.

Accordingly, it is reported in a long *hadith* of Jabir in Muslim that when the Prophet (*saws*) had finished circumambulating the House, he went out through the Safa door, to begin walking between the hills saying: "I begin with what Allah began" (i.e. Safa) Ibn Kathir and others.

The connection between this verse and the previous passage is that the earlier passage spoke of the change in the direction of *qiblah* from Jerusalem to the Ka'bah. And since, walking in between the two hills Safa and Marwah is part of the *Hajj* and '*Umrah*' rites, and the bona fide of this act had come to be doubted,

it was mentioned immediately after the command changing the *qiblah*. Another reason is that Allah spoke of *sabr* in the previous verses and promised rewards. He followed it up by mentioning a hajj rite to remind the believers of the exemplary patience of Hajar (*asws*), and to note how, when her patience was accepted by Allah, he rewarded her by making her act of running between the hills a rite of pilgrimage (Razi).

Legal Points

Sa'i is the rite of hajj and 'umrah, and consists in going to and fro between the two hills Safa and Marwah seven times. Starting from Safa and ending at Marwah is one round, and then from Marwah to Safa second, and so on. It is a *rukn* (*fard*, or integral part) of *Hajj* and '*Umrah*' according to Imām Shafē'i and Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Sunnah* according to Imām Malik (another report suggests he too considered it a *rukn* Sabuni), and *wajib* according to the Hanafiyy school (Qurtubi).

According to the Hanafiyy school, *wajib* is that act which is not *fard* but almost so i.e. between *fard* and *Sunnah*. Hence, if it is not done intentionally, and despite the availability of the means, then such a *Hajj* or '*Umrah*' is invalid. It must be repeat-

[159] Verily, those who conceal what We have sent down of the clear proofs and Guidance³¹⁸ after We have proclaimed them in the Scriptures it is such who are accursed of Allah and accursed of all those who curse.³¹⁹

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ
وَأَهْدَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِي
الْكِتَابِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ
اللَّاعِنُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

ed. However, if it is left out due to an acceptable excuse, then it would be enough to sacrifice a goat in the Haram area in expiation, and the *Hajj* or *`Umrah* would be complete. As against *wajib*, *rukn* to them is that article without which *Hajj* or *`Umrah* would not be complete, whether left out intentionally or due to a reason (Au.).

317. The original for what has been rendered as "Appreciative" is *shakir*. "*Shakir*, like *shakur*, when applied to God, means, 'He who approves, or rewards, largely: He who gives large rewards for small, or few works.'" (Majid from LL).

318. Although opinions vary about what the people of the Book used to conceal, some saying the guidance itself (Qatadah), and others that it was the prophecy of Prophet Muhammad (Ibn `Abbas), it surely applies to anything of the religion of Allah that can be concealed from the people as says a *hadith*:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- " مَنْ سُئِلَ عَنْ عِلْمٍ عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ كَتَمَهُ أُجِمَ يَوْمَ

الْقِيَامَةِ بِلِجَامٍ مِنْ نَارٍ " - قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى حَدِيثُ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ

"Whoever concealed a piece of knowledge granted to him by Allah) will have on the Day of Resurrection a rein of fire in his mouth."

Accordingly, Abu Hurayrah used to say quoting this verse, that 'were it not for a verse in the Qur'an, I would not have narrated *ahadith*' (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). In contrast is Ibn Mas'ud's statement which says, "Never will you pass on a piece of knowledge to those who are freshmen and immature of minds, but you will plant doubts and suspicions among some of them." The Prophet (*saws*) also said on one occasion,

" حَدَّثَ النَّاسَ بِمَا يَفْهَمُونَ أَتُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَكْذِبَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ "

"Speak to the people in accordance with their intellectual capacity. Do you want Allah (*smt*) and His messenger denied?"

(But Bukhari has said that the above

is a remark made by `Ali: Au.).

The two statements refer to the kind of knowledge that can be misunderstood or put to wrong uses by the people. For instance, the knowledge that helps the ruler in deceiving his subjects, or the leniency of the *Shari`ah* which the ignorant will use to escape from the obligations of Islam (Qurtubi).

319. Mawdudi comments: “The biggest failure of the Jews was that they kept the teachings contained in the Book of God confined to a limited class of people, the rabbis and professional theologians, instead of spreading them. They did not allow this knowledge to filter through even to the Jewish masses, let alone the non Jewish peoples of the world. Later, when errors and corruptions spread among them owing to widespread ignorance, the Jewish theologians made no serious effort to root them out. Moreover, in order to maintain their hold on the Jewish masses they lent their tacit approval to every corrupting deviation from the true faith that gained currency.

“The Muslims are being admonished to refrain from this kind of behaviour. The nation which has been charged with the guidance of the entire world is duty bound to do its ut-

most to radiate true guidance, rather than keep it under lock and key as a miser hoards his money.”

Mawdudi’s comments end here.

As for the identity of those who curse, the opinion of Mujahid and `Ikrimah is that it is the beasts, reptiles and creepers that are meant by the words “those who curse.” They say, “It is the sins of the children of Adam that held back rains from us.” But Qatadah and Dahhak believe that it is the believers and the angels who curse (Ibn Jarir). A *hadith* in Ibn Abi Hatim records Bara’ b. `Azib as reporting that the Prophet (*saws*) said,

”إن الكافر يضرب ضربة بين عينيه، يسمعها كل دابة غير الثقلين، فتلعنه كل دابة سمعت صوته، فذلك قول الله تعالى، {أُولَئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّاعِنُونَ} يعني دواب الأرض“

“When an unbeliever is buried he is struck between the two eyes (with a force) that everyone, save men and Jinn hears. Every animal that hears the sound curses him. Allah said in this connection, “Curses them Allah and all those who curse” (Ibn Kathir).

The above report’s different versions are in Bukhari, Abu Da’ud, Nasa’i, Ibn Abi Hatim and others (Au.).

[160] Except those who repent, make amends, and bring to light, it is such to whom I turn (in mercy). And I am Oft turning, Most Merciful.³²⁰

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَبَيَّنُّوا فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنَا التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٠﴾

Alusi explains: When cursing is attributed to Allah (*swt*), it means that He has distanced the object of curse from His Mercy.

Yusuf Ali remarks: "A curse is not a matter of words: it is a terrible spiritual state, opposite to the state of Grace. Can man curse? Not of course in the same sense in which we speak of the curse of God. A mere verbal curse has no effect... But if men are oppressed or unjustly treated, their cries can ascend to God in prayer, and then it becomes God's 'wrath' or curse, the deprivation of God's Grace as regards the wrong doer."

Majid notes: "The Christian conception of 'curse' is singularly amusing, if not actually blasphemous: 'The non observance of the law, St Paul teaches, puts men under a curse: from this curse Christ redeems them by becoming Himself a curse on their behalf,' The proof that Christ

did become a curse is given in the form of a reference to the Crucifixion: it is written, 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree'... In His death on the cross He was identified under God's dispensation with the doom of sin: He became a curse for us; and it is on this our redemption depends' (DB. I. p.535)."

320. The God of Islam is a kind God. He loves man seventy times more than a mother does her child. He will be angry with only those who will waste away the opportunity given to them of a whole lifetime and, instead of submitting themselves to such a Kind God, choose to serve others. It is such who will be punished. As for those who submit themselves, He is very Kind, very Merciful. Says Majid: "The God of Islam, unlike the God of so many religions, is neither jealous nor vindictive. This requires frequent reiteration not only in view of the doctrines of the pagans

[161] Those who insisted on rejection and died in the state of unbelief, it is such on whom is Allah's curse, that of the angels and of the mankind combined.³²¹

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارًا أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾

[162] They shall abide therein forever, the chastisement shall not be lightened for them, neither shall they receive respite.

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُونَ ﴿١٦٢﴾

[163] And your God is one God. There is no god save He: the Kind, the Merciful.³²²

وَإِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٣﴾

but also of the teachings of the *Bible* (which says: ed.)... 'He is a holy God: he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgression nor your sins' (Jo. 24:19)."

321. There is no difference of opinion that the unbelievers may be cursed. 'Umar b. al Khattab and others of the Companions used to curse the unbelievers in their (*Qunut*) prayers. As for an individual specific unbeliever, the opinion of one section of the scholars is that he may not be cursed by name because nobody knows whether he will die on belief or on unbelief. Their opinion is based on this verse which, it will be noted, limits the curse to "*those who have died on unbelief*" (Ibn Kathir).

322. This verse was revealed when the pagans asked the Prophet (*saws*) to describe what the Lord was like (Tabari, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

Ibn Kathir states that according to a *hadith* of Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, *Al Ism al A'zam* happens to be concealed in this verse and that of *Aal-Imran*, verse 1 and 2:

عَنْ أَسْمَاءَ بِنْتِ زَيْدٍ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "اسْمُ اللَّهِ الْأَعْظَمُ فِي هَاتَيْنِ الْآيَتَيْنِ {وَإِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ}. وَفَاتِحَةِ آلِ عِمْرَانَ: {أَلَمْ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ}" - قال أبو عيسى: هذا حديث حسن صحيح.

Adds Razi: Allah is One in three aspects. One in His Person, Being and Essence, uncomposed of other units, so that He cannot be divided. One

[164] Lo! In the creation of the heavens and the earth,³²³ in the alternation of night and day, in the ships that sail across the sea (laden) with what is beneficial to men, in the water that Allah sends down from the sky, reviving the earth therewith after its lifelessness, in His scattering abroad of all kinds of animals therein, in the turning about of the winds, and in the clouds hanging between heaven and earth .. are signs³²⁴ for people who contemplate.³²⁵

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالاخْتِلَافِ
الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ
بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
مِنْ مَاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا
وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَّاحِ
وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَجَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ
لَايَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾

in Attributes so that no one shares His Attributes in their uniqueness with Him. And One in His Acts of creation so that no one can imitate His Acts.

323. It is said that when Allah revealed the verse, '*And your God is One God, there is no god save He,*' the polytheists, who had set up 360 idols around the Ka'bah, objected: 'How can a single God suffice for this vast world?' So Allah (swt) revealed the verse: '*Lo! In the creation of the heavens and the earth...*' to point out that the unity of creation proves the unity of the Creator. According to another interpretation the Quraysh asked the Jews and Christians about the miracles given to previous prophets. When they learnt of Musa's staff and 'Isa's quickening of the dead, they demanded that Muhammad (asws) produce similar miracles. So Allah

(swt) revealed this verse (Tabari).

324. Imām Razi, who died in early 13th century after Christ, devotes several pages to explain the cosmos and the signs of the Creator evident in it. He argues that the earth is spherical and therefore when it is morning in one place, it has to be noon at another and evening at another. He also argues that since physical features of every man on the earth are at variance with another's, it must be assumed that the same is already present in the semen (*nut-fah*).

Thus he is not far away from the modern findings in the field of genetics (Au.).

325. 'A'isha (ra) reports that the Prophet (saws) said:

ويل لمن قرأها ولم يتفكر فيها (صحيح ابن حبان)

[165] Yet among the people are some who take to themselves compeers to Allah,³²⁶ bestowing on them the adoration that is due to Allah. While those who have believed love Allah much more ardently.³²⁷ And were those that have wronged themselves to realize, when they will face the Punishment, that all Might belongs to Allah, and that Allah is severe in chastisement.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرُونَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿١٦٥﴾

[166] When those that have been followed will disown those who followed them and will witness the punishment, and the relationship between them will be cut asunder.³²⁸

إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا وَرَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ وَتَقَطَّعَتْ بِهِمُ الْأَسْبَابُ ﴿١٦٦﴾

“Woe unto him who passed over this verse but did not contemplate over it” (Alusi, Zamakhshari).

Thanwi has a point: The invitation to contemplate is indicative of the fact that religious “principles” (such as the oneness of Allah, the need for Prophets, etc.) are rooted in reason. However, it does not mean that the “details” (of religion) should conform to the prevalent standards of reason and logic. It is enough if such details are not in total violation of reason and logic. Many immature minds that cannot distinguish between the two, are led away from Islam.

326. The word in the original is *andaad* (sing. *nidd* compeer, equal). According to Qatadah, Mujahid and

others, the allusion is to deities. Other commentators believe those of the chiefs and important men are meant whom the masses obey. While yet others (such as Suddi, Ja'far al Sadiq and the *Sufiya*) say that anything that diverts one's attention from his Lord is His *nidd* (Alusi, Razi).

327. The words “*ashaddu hubban*” indicate that other kinds of love can co exist with the love of Allah. (However, the believer's love of Allah should exceed that of everything else) - Thanwi.

328. That is, the relationship of love, veneration and obedience that existed between them in this world will be cut asunder and, in place, hatred will appear as said in the Qur'an (29: 25):

[167] Then those that had followed will say, 'Had we another chance we would disown them as they have disowned us.³²⁹ Thus will Allah show them their deeds as (cause of) regret for them and they will be never let out of the Fire.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا لَوْ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَتَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُمْ كَمَا تَبَرَّؤُوا مِنَّا كَذَلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ اللَّهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ حَسَرَاتٍ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا هُمْ بِخَارِجِينَ مِنَ النَّارِ ﴿١٦٧﴾

ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُ بَعْضُكُم بِبَعْضٍ بَعْضٌ يَلْعَنُ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا [العنكبوت/٢٥]

"And then on the Day of Judgment you will deny each other and some of you will curse others."

And, at another place (43: 67),

الْأَخِلَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ [الزخرف/٦٧]

"Close friends that day will be enemies unto each other save the righteous" (Qatadah: Ibn Jarir).

It will actually happen that the unbelievers will be shown their places in Paradise which they would have inherited, had they believed and lived righteously. Then they would be ordered to proceed to the Fire. It is at that juncture that they will bitterly regret not having believed (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Thanwi adds: Even ordinarily, the believer's love for Allah is greater than the unbeliever's love for his idols and deities. As against the believer who knows that everything that happens

to him, good or bad, proceeds from his Lord, yet loves Him, those who worship the deities always hope to be rewarded for their devotion. Were they to know that the deity will harm them, surely they would abandon them. Hence the believer's love for Allah (*swt*) is more ardent and worthier.

Also, a believer never loses his faith in Allah. In comparison, those who worship deities abandon them when in serious trouble and begin to call their true Lord One God, as is the experience. In fact, it is reported of the Bahilah tribe, (whose idol was made of dates), that at times of famine they would devour the idols that they normally worshipped. Hence what is meant by "more ardent in love" is consistency. Otherwise, some of the believers in idols are seen carrying out more arduous tasks for their false god, than the believers in true God (Alusi).

329. "Here particular reference is made to the dismal end of those so

[168] People! Eat of the earth what is lawful and good,³³⁰ and do not follow in the footsteps of Satan.³³¹ Verily, he is your declared enemy.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٦٨﴾

called religious leaders who mislead people, and of their gullible followers who fall easy prey to their deception. This has been done in order to warn the Muslims to beware of the errors which misled former nations, and to impress upon them the need to develop the capacity to distinguish between true and spurious leaders so as to avoid being led by the latter” (Mawdudi).

330. Thanwi says: This demonstrates the folly of those who go to extremes in the renunciation of the pleasures of the world.

Further, the *halal* of the original has been interpreted by Ibn Jarir as that which has been given free access to, as they say in Arabic: *huwa laka hilla*, i.e. everything is allowable for you.

What it means, says Ibn Kathir, is that nothing that has been forbidden to you by your customs and taboos is really forbidden save what Allah (*swt*) has forbidden. Muslim records the Prophet (*saws*) as having said:

كُلْ مَالِ نَحْلَتِهِ عَبْدًا، حَلَالًا (مسلم)

“Allah says, ‘All that I have created for My servants is lawful unto them.’

Allah (*swt*) also says,

وَإِنِّي خَلَقْتُ عِبَادِي حُنَفَاءَ كَلَّهْمُ. وَإِثْمُهُمْ أَثْمُهُمُ الشَّيَاطِينُ فَاجْتَالَتْهُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِمْ

‘I created My slaves *hunafa*’ (believing in One God). Then came to them the *Shayatin* who diverted them from their Religion.”

Ibn Marduwayh records Ibn `Abbas as saying that this verse: ‘People! Eat of the earth what is lawful and good’ was recited before the Prophet (*saws*). Sa`d ibn Waqqas stood up and said, ‘Pray for me O Messenger of Allah that I be of those whose supplications are answered.’ The Prophet (*saws*) told him,

يا سعد ! اطلب مطعمك تكن مستجاب الدعوة ، والذي نفس محمد بيده إن العبد ليقذف اللقمة الحرام في جوفه ما يتقبل منه عمل أربعين يوما. و زاد في آخره : ” و أما عبد نبت لحمه من السحت فالنار أولى به “

‘Sa`d! Eat of the clean and lawful, you will become of those whose prayers are answered. By

[169] Surely, he will command you (only) to evil and indecency, and that you fasten upon Allah what you have no knowledge of.³³²

إِنَّمَا يُأْمُرُكُم بِالسُّوءِ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ وَأَن تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾

Him in whose hands is my soul, a man partakes of one mouthful of the forbidden and Allah (*swt*) rejects forty days of Prayers (acts of worship) because of it. And whosoever has his flesh made up of the unlawful and usury is better suited for the Fire.”

But Albani thought that the *hadith* is weak (Au.).

Qurtubi notes: Sa`id ibn Yazid is reported to have said, “There are five things that encompass (true) knowledge. Knowledge of Allah, knowledge of the Truth, deeds for the sake of Allah (*swt*) alone, deeds being in accordance with the *Sunnah*, and partaking of only the lawful.”

331. Explaining what the footsteps of Satan mean, Ibn Kathir reports that once someone vowed that he will sacrifice his son. When Masruq learnt of it he remarked, “This is ‘the footsteps of Satan,’ and advised him to slaughter a goat instead. It is reported that once udder and salt were placed before `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud. He began to eat. He found a man

avoiding it. He said, “Pass it on to your friend.” The man said, “Not for me.” “Why not, are you fasting?” asked Ibn Mas`ud. The man replied, “I have vowed that I’ll never eat udder.” Ibn Mas`ud said, “This is ‘the footsteps of Satan.’ Eat a little and expiate your oath.” In another report Abu Rafe` says that his wife swore that she “would be a Jew one day and a Christian the next day, and all her slaves would be free, if he will not divorce his wife (i.e. herself).” Abu Rafe` took the case to `Abdullah ibn `Umar. He said, “This is ‘the footsteps of Satan.’” Then he went up to Zaynab, the daughter of Umm Salamah, who was the most learned scholars of the women of Madinah. She also said the same words. Later, he took the case to `Asim and Ibn `Umar. They both used the same words in answer.

But, of course, the word covers all that is of the nature of sin, innovation and opposed to the *Sunnah* (Qurtubi).

332. Such as to suggest that such and such a thing is unlawful for you, or

[170] When they are told, 'Follow that which Allah has sent down,' they say, 'Nay. Rather, we shall remain on that upon which we found our forefathers.' Even if their forefathers did not use reason nor were they rightly guided?³³³

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أَوْ لَوْ كَانَ آبَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾

such and such a thing is lawful, while it is not.

333. Qurtubi has the following to state at this point about taqlid.

Taqlid

Some people have used this verse to prove the illegality of taqlid. This is true in case of those who follow others in matters of sins and disbelief. As for taqlid involving the Truth, it is, it must be known, an accepted principle in Islam, and a means for the ignorant lacking in-depth knowledge of things, to resort to and safeguard their religion.

Accordingly, it is obligatory on a man who does not have an expert knowledge of Islam to look for the most knowledgeable person of his time and place following the commandment of Allah (16: 42):

فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ [النحل/٤٣]

"Ask those who are the people of knowledge if you know not (yourself)." In this search he may use his

own faculties and may accept as his guide one on whom most people of his time have converged.

In fact, *taqlid* is incumbent upon that man of knowledge also who is unable to form his own opinion in matters complicated and involved, especially when there is no time for research and delay in offering an opinion may affect the performance of a religious obligation. The one to be resorted to for help and guidance in such cases may be a Companion of the Prophet (*saws*), or a latter day mujtahid [a legalist formulating independent decisions in legal or theological matters, taking his research to the ultimate end, safe from refutation: Au.].

(According to the Hanafiyy school of law, however, it is not an individual opinion of a Companion, rather, the unanimous opinion of the Companions which is the criterion. As for the later day mujtahid, only he is considered as qualified who has been declared a *mujtahid* by the scholars

[171] And the likeness of those who disbelieve is as the likeness of one who shouts to (a beast) who hears nothing, save a call and a cry deaf, dumb and blind (they are), and so they will not use their reason.³³⁴

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي يَنْعِقُ بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَاءَ وَنِدَاءَ صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمْيٌ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٧١﴾

[172] Believers! Eat of the good things that We have provided you, and give thanks to Allah if it is Him you worship.³³⁵

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١٧٢﴾

[173] He has indeed forbidden you only the carrion,³³⁶ blood, flesh of swine,³³⁷ and that which has been consecrated in the name of other than Allah.³³⁸ Nonetheless, whoever has been driven by necessity,³³⁹ but (does it) without desiring (it), and without transgressing (the limits), there is no sin upon him. Verily Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.³⁴⁰

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَمَن اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٧٣﴾

of the *ummah*, and not one who is popularly treated by the common people as one: Au.).

Scholars are unanimous over the opinion that there is no *taqlid* in matters of faith and belief (such as oneness of Allah, His Attributes, etc.

334. "This parable has two aspects. On the one hand, it suggests that these people are like herds of irrational animals, dumb cattle that always follow their herdsmen, moving on as they hear their calls without understanding what they mean. On the other hand, it also suggests that when the Truth is preached to them they

show such insensitivity to it that one may as well be addressing animals who merely comprehend sounds but are incapable of understanding their meaning" (Mawdudi).

335. Alusi and Razi report a *hadith* according to which the Prophet (*saws*) says,

” قال الله عز وجل : إني و الجن و الإنس في نأ عظيم ، أخلق و يعبد غيري ، و أرزق و يشكر غيري ”

“Allah says, ‘I and mankind and jinn are involved in a serious affair. I create them, and they worship others. I feed them and they

thank others.”

336. Under this comes all that is otherwise lawful but died of its own self, without being slaughtered. Excluded are those mentioned in a *hadith* of Daraqutni which records the Prophet as having said:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- قَالَ "أَحِلَّتْ لَنَا مَيْتَتَانِ وَدَمَانِ فَأَمَّا الْمَيْتَتَانِ فَالْحَوْتُ وَالْجَرَادُ وَأَمَّا الدَّمَانِ فَالْكَبِدُ وَالطَّحَالُ".

“Two kinds of carrion are lawful to us: fish and locust; and, two kinds of blood: liver and the spleen.”

The above report could not be checked for its authenticity (Au.).

According to another report the Prophet (*saws*) said:

"هُوَ الطَّهُورُ مَاؤُهُ الْحِلُّ مَيْتَتُهُ". قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ

“(The sea): its water is clean and its dead is lawful” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Mufti Shafi` adds the Hanafiyy view point: Except for the flesh and fat (which cannot be eaten or used in any way), other parts of the dead animal are lawful to use, such as its skin, hair etc.

337. Although the words used are

“flesh of swine,” nothing of this animal is lawful, by the consensus of the scholars, (except Imām Shafe`i: Sabuni), save its hair, which is lawful and not unclean (Qurtubi). According to the Hanafiyy school of law, however, it can only be used to stitch leather products (Mufti Shafi`).

338. Under this comes all that is slaughtered in anyone’s name other than Allah. However, it makes no difference whether the name of someone “other than Allah” is actually pronounced or not, such as in the case of the idol worshippers expressly saying at the time of slaughter, “In the name of such and such a deity.” It is unlawful all the same. In other words, animals slaughtered by them are unlawful for a Muslim, notwithstanding what they utter at the time of slaughter (Qurtubi).

Also, it may be noted here that it has been the practice among many a people to consecrate an animal in the name of a saint, idol or deity, and then set it free. The practice, as well as the animal is unlawful in Islam. Included in this, adds Mufti Shafi` are those animals, chicken, goats etc. that are set free in the name of a saint or a divine (sheikh, *waliyy*, or pir) and slaughtered only when he descends as a guest or visitor.

Finally, those food articles are also included that are sent by Muslims to the graves of the saints, or by the non Muslims to their temples (Mufti Shafi').

Qurtubi mentions the story of a woman who celebrated the playful marriage of her dolls by actually slaughtering a goat. When Hasan al Basri's opinion was sought he ruled that its flesh was unlawful.

339. That is, if one is so hungry that he fears he will die, and finds nothing but one of the unlawful items, then he is allowed to partake of it in just a sufficient quantity to kill his hunger, neither relishing it nor eating to the fill (which is the explanation of "*ghayra baghin wa la 'adin*" of the text).

Lawful and Unlawful

Qurtubi and Shanqiti have the following to say on the subject: When one is forced to partake of the unlawful, first preference is to be given to that which is otherwise lawful in general but unlawful to the one in straightened circumstances, such as fruits hanging by the trees, or sheep wandering over the mountains, which do not sanction the amputation of the hand if stolen. This is based on a *hadith* in Ibn Majah

which reports that the Prophet was asked by his Companions:

”قلنا يا رسول الله ، ما يحل لأحدنا من مال أخيه إذا اضطر إليه؟ قال : " يأكل ولا يحمل ويشرب ولا يحمل"

“What is lawful for us of the property of Muslims, if we are constrained, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied: “One may eat, but not carry, and drink but not carry.”

Ibn Majah has recorded another incident in which 'Abbad b. Shurahbil reports:

رَجُلًا مِنْ بَنِي عُبَيْرٍ - قَالَ أَصَابَنَا عَامٌ خَمَصَةٌ فَأَتَيْتُ الْمَدِينَةَ فَأَتَيْتُ حَائِطًا مِنْ جِبْطَانِهَا فَأَخَذْتُ سُبُلًا فَمَرَكْتُهُ وَأَكَلْتُهُ وَجَعَلْتُهُ فِي كِسَائِي فَجَاءَ صَاحِبُ الْحَائِطِ فَضَرَبَنِي وَأَخَذَ ثَوْبِي فَأَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ فَقَالَ لِلرَّجُلِ " مَا أَطْعَمْتَهُ إِذْ كَانَ جَائِعًا أَوْ سَاعِبًا وَلَا عَلَّمْتَهُ إِذْ كَانَ جَاهِلًا ". فَأَمَرَهُ النَّبِيُّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فَرَدَّ إِلَيْهِ ثَوْبَهُ وَأَمَرَ لَهُ بِوَسْقٍ مِنْ طَعَامٍ أَوْ نَصْفِ وَسْقٍ.

“When we were experiencing a year of drought, I set out for Madinah. There I entered an orchard. I began to pluck corn, eating some and packing the rest in my cloak. The owner chanced on me. He beat me and took away my cloak. I went up to the Prophet and complained to him. He called for the owner, and re-

[174] Those who conceal that which Allah has revealed of the Book and barter in its return a partly price, do not fill their bellies but with Fire.³⁴¹ Allah will not speak to them on the day of Resurrection³⁴² nor will He will purify them, but rather, there will be a painful chastisement³⁴³ for them.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَشْتَرُونَ بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَٰئِكَ مَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ إِلَّا النَّارَ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَهُمْ عَذَابُ أَلِيمٍ ﴿١٧٤﴾

buked him saying, ‘You did not feed him if he was hungry, and did not instruct him if he was ignorant.’ Then he ordered the man to return me my cloak, and hand over to me some amount of grain.”

The above report of Ibn Majah is also found in Hakim’s Mustadrak which Dhahabi declared trustworthy: Au.).

In other words, “dire needs annul the illegality” (Qurtubi). And, although some legists are opposed to it, many others believe that the rule applies to human flesh as well (Qurtubi, Shanqiti).

Regarding medicines, it is a matter of dispute whether such medicines as those in which the unlawful has been added could be used in ordinary circumstances, or should they be resorted to only in time of emergency. There is consensus of opinion however they should not be used if alternatives are available (Shafi’). As

for the amphibious animals, such as frogs, turtles, alligators, etc., there is a strong disagreement among the jurists over their lawfulness. Most seem to abhor their consumption, even if some of them declare their lawfulness. Differences in opinion also prevail over those sea animals that have their counterparts on the land prohibited, such as the sea-dogs, sea-lions, etc. However, there is no difference of opinion over the unlawfulness of those birds that use their talons to hold their prey, nor over the predatory animals (Shanqiti).

340. That is, although it is a grave sin to consume any of the above, Allah is Most Forgiving and Most Merciful, and has therefore allowed their consumption in the state of extreme compulsion. Allah is also Most Forgiving and Most Merciful toward him who happens to commit excesses unintentionally in partaking of the unlawful in such situations (Au.).

341. Jewish scholars used to con-

[175] These are a people who have purchased error at the price of guidance, and chastisement at the price of forgiveness. So how courageous they are for the Fire!³⁴⁴

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالََةَ بِالْهُدَى
وَالْعَذَابَ بِالْمَغْفِرَةِ فَمَا أَصْبَرَهُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ ﴿١٧٥﴾

[176] This because Allah revealed the Book with the Truth but those who at variance with the Book, are indeed in a distant schism.³⁴⁵

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ
الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِي الْكِتَابِ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ
بَعِيدٍ ﴿١٧٦﴾

ceal the truth about the Prophet from their masses from fear of losing them to Islam. Their loss would have meant them financial losses since they survived on gifts they received from them in cash and kind for rendering them religious services. But Allah (*swt*) was to make evident the truth so that a time came when some of the Jews embraced Islam and fought against them in the company of the Prophet (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

342. Not that Allah (*swt*) will not speak to them at all; He will, But in anger (Shanqiti).

343. Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) reports the Prophet (*saws*) as having said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ: "ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يَرْجِيهِمْ
(قَالَ أَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ: وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ) وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ:
شَيْخٌ زَانٍ وَمَلِكٌ كَذَّابٌ. وَعَائِلٌ مُسْتَكْبِرٌ".

"There are three persons with

whom Allah (*swt*) will not speak, not look at, nor purify them, instead, there will be a painful chastisement for them: an aged adulterer, a lying ruler and a proud but destitute" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, from Muslim).

344. The verse (and the threat it carries) also applies to those Muslims who conceal any part of the Book of Allah (*swt*) for the sake of worldly gains (Qurtubi).

345. Majid comments: "I.e., at great variance with truth, and constantly disputing among themselves. The divisions and subdivisions of the Christians are only too well known. Draper, while speaking of the interminable wrangling and bickering of the Christian sects, refers to the incomprehensible jargon of Arians, Nestorians, Entychians, Monothelites, Monophysites, Mariolatrists, and an anarchy of countless dispu-

[177] Piety³⁴⁶ is not (in) that you turn your faces towards the east or the west.³⁴⁷ Rather piety (is in) him who believed in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Books and the Prophets. And he gave wealth despite it being dear³⁴⁸ to the kindred, orphans,³⁴⁹ the destitute,³⁵⁰ the wayfarer,³⁵¹ to those who ask,³⁵² and, to (ransom) slaves.³⁵³ Moreover, he Prayed (diligently and spiritedly),³⁵⁴ and gave the zakah.³⁵⁵ And those who fulfill their promises when they make them. And those who endure with fortitude poverty, illness,³⁵⁶ and, (remain steadfast) at moments of great stress in the battlefield.³⁵⁷ It is these who are truthful, and it is these who are godfearing.³⁵⁸

لَيْسَ الْبِرُّ أَنْ تَوَلَّوْا وُجُوهَكُمْ قَبْلَ الْمَشْرِقِ
وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى
الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ
وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي
الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ
بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ
وَالضَّرَاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا
وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾

tants” (*History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, I. p. 333).

346. Ashraf Ali Thanwi calls the virtues listed in this verse as the “Doors to Virtue” (abwab al birr).

347. That is, there is no virtue in you doing prayers (etc.) but not practicing (the rest of Islam): Ibn `Abbas Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir.

Thanwi adds: The verse indicates that mere “appearances” are not enough.

“Islamic worship, it must be manifest to the reader, is not directed toward any direction as such east, west, north, or south, but toward a particular House, on whatever side of the worshipper it may happen to be” (Majid).

348. That is, he gave despite such obstacles of the inner self (Au.).

`Abdullah ibn Mas`ud has said: The meaning is: “(He spent despite) greed, without any great internal desire (to give, rather, on the contrary) wishing to get richer, and fearing poverty” (Ibn Jarir).

There is in fact, a *hadith* also (in Fath al Bari), to this effect (Ibn Kathir).

Abu Hamza says: I asked Sha`bi: “Is a man’s wealth pure after he has paid the *zakah*?” He recited this verse In reply: “*Piety does not consist in....*”

Fatimah bint Qays says the Prophet said:

“إِنَّ فِي الْمَالِ لَحَقًّا سِوَى الزَّكَاةِ”

“There are other rights of the people on your wealth apart from *zakah*,’ and recited this verse” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, and Qurtubi).

The last mentioned, however, adds that the dependability of the chain of narrators has been questioned but not the meaning it conveys).

And when the Prophet (*saws*) was asked, ‘What charity is the best,’ he replied:

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“Of a person who has to struggle to give from his little, to the kin who bears grudge against him” (Ibn Jarir).

The authenticity of the report’s second half part could not be traced (Au.).

There is another *hadith* on the topic. It is in the *Sahihayn*. When asked about the best of charity, the Prophet replied:

أَنْ تَصَدَّقَ وَأَنْتَ صَحِيحٌ شَحِيحٌ ، تَخْشَى الْفَقْرَ
وَتَأْمُلُ الْغِنَى

“That you should spend in charity while you are healthy, parsimonious, fearful of poverty and hoping for wealth” (Ibn Kathir).

349. “An orphan is defined as one

who has lost his father and is a minor. He deserves charity if he has no one to provide for, and is unable to earn his own living. However, once he attains maturity, he is no more an orphan, as declared by the Prophet” (Ibn Kathir).

350. Miskin (destitute) is someone who does not have enough for his food, clothing, or housing. Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) has been recorded in the *Sahihayn* quoting the Prophet (*saws*) as having said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم-
قَالَ " لَيْسَ الْمِسْكِينُ بِهَذَا الطَّوَّافِ الَّذِي يَطُوفُ
عَلَى النَّاسِ فَتَرْدُّهُ اللَّقْمَةُ وَاللُّقْمَتَانِ وَالْتَّمَرَةُ وَالتَّمْرَتَانِ
". قَالُوا فَمَا الْمِسْكِينُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ " الَّذِي لَا
يَجِدُ غِنًى يُغْنِيهِ وَلَا يُقْضَى لَهُ فَيُتَصَدَّقَ عَلَيْهِ وَلَا يَسْأَلُ
النَّاسَ شَيْئًا " .

“Miskin is not one who goes about begging people who can be sent away with a morsel or two or a date or two.” They asked him, “Who then is a true *miskeen*, Messenger of Allah?” He answered, “He is someone who does not find enough for his needs; but who does not make his situation obvious so that he could be helped” (Ibn Kathir).

351. A wayfarer is someone who is in journey, but has no means to continue, or who wants to start on a jour-

ney in the way of Allah but does not find enough means. According to Ibn `Abbas, however, every guest (who drops in to spend a day or two) is a wayfarer. This is also the opinion of Mujahid, Sa`id ibn Jubayr, Abu Ja`far al Baqir, Hasan, Qatadah and others (Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Jarir adds: Qatadah used to say that “*ibn al sabil*” includes the guest. He also reported the Prophet (*saws*) as saying:

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكَلِّمْ خَيْرًا ، أَوْ
لَيْسَ كُنْتُ

“Whoever believes in Allah and the Hereafter may say good or remain silent.”

(The report is in Bukhari: Au.). He also reports the Prophet as saying:

حَقُّ الصَّيَّافَةِ ثَلَاثَةُ أَيَّامٍ فَمَا أَصَابَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَهُوَ
صَدَقَةٌ

“The guest’s right of hospitality is three days. Anything beyond that is *sadaqah*.”

(The report is also in Ahmad but could not be checked for its authenticity: Au.).

A casual visitor, individual or family, is not *ibn al-sabil* (Au.).

352. The *saa’il* of the original is anyone who asks for help. The Prophet is

reported to have said,

عَنْ فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتِ حُسَيْنٍ عَنْ حُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: “لِلْسَائِلِ حَقٌّ وَإِنْ جَاءَ عَلَى فَرَسٍ”

{وَأَسْنَادُهُ حَسَنٌ إِلَّا أَنَّهُ مُرْسَلٌ ، قَالَ أَبُو عَلِيٍّ بْنُ السَّكَنِ وَأَبُو الْقَاسِمِ الْبَغَوِيُّ وَغَيْرُهُمَا : كُلُّ رَوَايَاتِ حُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ مَرَّاسِيلُ فَهُوَ مُرْسَلٌ صَحَابِيٌّ وَجُمْهُورُ الْعُلَمَاءِ عَلَى الْإِحْتِجَاجِ بِهِ (تحفة الأحمدي)}

“The beggar has the right (to be given), even if he comes on a horse” (Ibn Kathir).

353. By the *al riqab* of the original those slaves are meant who have entered into an agreement with their masters about redemption but are unable to raise sufficient funds (Ibn Kathir). Qurtubi adds: According to Imām Malik (it applies to the prisoners of war also) who should be released at all cost, even if it means spending away all the wealth of the people.

Asad comments: “By including this kind of expenditure within the essential acts of piety, the Qur’ān implies that the freeing of people from bondage and, thus, the abolition of slavery is one of the social objectives of Islam. At the time of the revelation of the Qur’ān, slavery was an established institution throughout the world, and its sudden abolition would have been economically impossible. In order

to obviate this difficulty, and at the same time to bring about an eventual abolition of all slavery, the Qur'ān ordains in 8:67 that henceforth only captives taken in a just war (*Jihad*) may be kept as slaves. But even with regard to persons enslaved in this or before the revelation of 8:67 in any other way, the Qur'ān stresses the great merit inherent in the freeing of slaves, and stipulates as a means of atonement for various transgressions (see, e.g., 4:92, 5:89, 58:3). In addition, the Prophet emphatically stated on many occasions that, in the sight of God, the unconditional freeing of a human being from bondage is among the most praiseworthy acts which a Muslim could perform. (For a critical discussion and analysis of all the authentic Traditions bearing on this problem, see *Nayl al Awṭar* VI, 199 ff.).”

354. *Aqama al salah*: That is, prayed on time, doing the bowing and prostration properly, and with full attention of the heart and mind (Ibn Kathir).

355. *Aata al zakah*: It could be alluding to the cleansing of the soul from base qualities, as well as to the charity that Allah has stipulated, as is the opinion of Sa'id ibn Jubayr and Muqatil b. Hayyan. As Musa said to Fir'awn (79: 18):

{ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَى أَنْ تَزَكَّى } [النازعات: ١٨]

“Would you then, like to be cleansed?” (Ibn Kathir).

356. Qurtubi cites a *hadīth* in which the Prophet is reported to have said:

عن أبي هريرة قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : قال الله تعالى : إذا ابتليت عبدي المؤمن ولم يشكني إلى عواده أطلقته من أساري ثم أبدلته لحما خيرا من لحمه و دما خيرا من دمه ثم يستأنف العمل (هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين و لم يخرجاه - المستدرك على الصحيحين للحاكم مع تعليقات الذهبي في التلخيص)

“Allah says, ‘When I test one of My slaves with a sickness, and he does not complain to his visitors, I change his old flesh for a better one, and his old blood for a better one. So that, if I deal him death, he returns to My Mercy, and if I cure him, he is without a sin.’ They asked, ‘In what sense does his flesh become better than his old one?’ He replied: ‘A flesh that has not sinned.’ He was asked, ‘In what sense does his blood become better than his old one?’ He replied, ‘A blood that has not sinned.’”

357. Sayyid Qutb comments: “Let us look at this important verse more closely. What’s the true value of faith in Allah, in the Hereafter, in the angels and in the Prophets?

“Faith in Allah is the point of departure in the life of a person from the worship of various powers, objects and opinions ... to ... the worship of one Allah ... the faith that liberates him from all other kinds of worship, raising him to the level of everyone else of the humankind on to a single platform, in a single row in front of One God! It is also the point of transition from anarchy to discipline, from aimlessness to purpose in life, from disunity and fragmentation to unity of purpose ... Belief in the Hereafter is belief in the system of justice instituted by Allah ... and for awareness that this life is not pointless, rather, a good deed here will be rewarded for, if not in this life, then in the next ... Belief in the angels is a part of belief in the unknown which makes the difference between animals and man, the former incapable of feeling anything but that which is palpable through physical senses ... Faith in the Books and Prophets is the faith in the unity of humankind, in the unity of its God, in the unity of its religion, and in the unity of the divine system (of guidance).

“Again, what is the point in spending money despite it being dear on the relatives, orphans, destitute, travelers, those who ask, and the prisoners and slaves? Spending liberates the

humans from the shackles of greed, avariciousness, weakness and selfishness ... liberates them from the worship of wealth ... and from greed. This is a very important element in the sight of Islam. It endeavors to liberate a man first from his evil inner forces, before attempting to liberate him from external forces. The spending on the kin, orphans, destitute, travelers, those that ask, the prisoners and the slaves ... all these have their place and value. Spending on the kin strengthens the family ... which is the first seed of the larger tree of community ... Spending on the orphans levels up the young with the old, the weak with the strong. Neglect of these results in their exposure to all kinds of evils. Spending on the destitute gives them the assurance that no individual of the society suffers neglect. Spending on the traveler gives him the feeling that the whole world is his world, and every town is his home town. Spending on those who ask, is, in the Islamic system of life, spending on someone who is in dire need of help, for Islam advises him to work and not ask, to be content and not beg, and therefore, he must have been forced by totally unavoidable circumstances to ask. Finally, spending on the slaves and prisoners indicates that the Is-

lamic system of life has declared war against these institutions.

“Prayers! What’s their value? It is not simply the movements of the body and limbs in a prescribed manner; nor it is simply a spiritual exercise as understood by the Sufis. It is the combination of bodily movements, mental attention, and spiritual concentration.

“What about *zakah*?! To mention it after charity is a clear indication that there are other demands on the wealth of a man ... that charity is voluntary while *zakah* is enforced by the state.

“Again, the oft repeated injunction to fulfill promises? What about it? It creates the right atmosphere ... the atmosphere of trust between man and his God, between man and man, between state and state.

“Finally, the injunction about steadfastness in the face of difficulties is to teach the individuals that they may not get overly excited with every new event nor die out of despondency at every misfortune.

“Thus in a single verse the Qur’ān has assembled together all the virtues that are the basis of the Islamic system and which cannot be established if any of them is missing.”

358. “‘This is one of the noblest verses in the Qur’ān ... Faith in God and benevolence toward man is clearly set forth as the essence of religion. It contains a compendium of doctrine as well as of precept to be practiced in life.’ It is something after all to have these words of commendation by so irreverent a critic of Islam as ‘reverend’ E.M. Wherry” (Majid).

[178] Believers,³⁵⁹ (law of just) retribution has been prescribed³⁶⁰ for you in matters of the slain: a free man for a free man; slave for slave, and female for female.³⁶¹ But he who has been forgiven something by his brother, then, let the pursuing be honorable, and let the other pay to him in a goodly manner.³⁶² This is a leniency from your Lord, and a mercy.³⁶³ He who commits an aggression after that, will have a painful chastisement.³⁶⁴

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلِ الْحُرُّ بِالْحُرِّ وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأُنثَىٰ بِالْأُنثَىٰ فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ فَاتَّبَاعْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدَاءٍ إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَانٍ ذَلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٨﴾

359. Asa writes: "After having pointed out that true piety does not consist in mere adherence to outward forms and rites, the Qur'an opens, as it were, a new chapter relating to the problem of man's behaviour. Just as piety cannot become effective without righteous action, individual righteousness cannot become really effective in the social sense unless there is agreement within the community as to the social rights and obligations of its members; in other words, as to the practical laws which should govern the behaviour of the individual within the society and the society's attitude toward the individual and his actions. This is the innermost reason why legislation plays so great a role within the ideology of Islam, and why the Qur'an consistently intertwines its moral and spiritual exhortation with ordinances relating to practical aspects of social

life. Now one of the main problems facing any society is the safeguarding of the lives and the individual security of its members: and so it is understandable that laws relating to homicide and its punishment are dealt with prominently at this place...

"As for the term *qisas* occurring at the beginning of the above passage, it must be pointed out that according to all the classical commentators it is almost synonymous with *mu-sawaah*, i.e., 'making a thing equal [to another thing]': in this instance, making the punishment equal (or appropriate) to the crime a meaning which is best rendered as 'just retribution.'"

360. That is, it has been made obligatory.

361. This verse was revealed to institute justice. In pre Islamic times some people considered themselves supe-

rior to others, enforcing their superiority with force. In matters of blood money, for instance, certain tribes considered males of other tribes unequal to males of their own, so that when one of their slaves was killed by another tribe, in retaliation they demanded a free man's life or blood wit double in amount. Likewise if a female of their tribe was killed by a female of another and lower tribe, they demanded a male's life or blood money of a free male in retaliation. Banu Nadir for instance demanded from Banu Qurayzah double the blood wit, although both were Jewish. In fact, cases of similar nature were pending decision between two other tribes when Islam appeared. Although both the tribes embraced Islam, one of them remained demanding retribution according to the old order. Allah (*swt*) revealed this verse which purports to say: If a woman kills a woman, only the woman may be punished in retaliation. And, if a slave kills a free man, only the slave may be punished, and so on (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Mawdudi comments: "In pre Islamic Arabia people tried to take blood revenge upon the murderer's family and tribe, and the retaliation corresponded to the value placed on the

blood of the victim. Their desire for revenge was not quenched merely by putting the murderer to death. They preferred to put to death tens and even hundreds of people for the one life they had lost....

"This attitude is not confined to the Ignorance of that bygone age. Even today those nations that are supposedly the most civilized will often proclaim, officially and quite brazenly, that if one of their citizens is killed they will execute scores of the killer's compatriots."

362. This refers to the situation in which the heirs of the victim either show leniency to the criminal and accept legal compensation in lieu of life for life, or agree not only to waive away their claim to his life but also forgive a part of what is due from him as *diyyah* (blood money). In such cases, the Qur'ān, first of all reminds them both that their relationship of brotherhood remains despite the crime, and then exhorts them to be good and kind to each other. It exhorts the heirs to be patient and not press for payments, as it advises the aggressor to pay the sums due as soon as possible, and in excess if he can: a message hidden in the words '*ada'un ilayhi bi ihsan* (Au.).

[179] There is life in you in the (law of just) retribution, O men of understanding. So that you may refrain.³⁶⁵

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٩﴾

363. Ibn `Abbas is reported to have said: "There was no system of blood wit in the law of the Israelites. A man had to necessarily die as a punishment for homicide. Islam instituted the system of blood wit. Hence this is a mercy from our Lord." Qatadah goes further and says that among the Israelites either it was death for murder or forgiveness. No system of blood wit prevailed. The system prevalent among the Christian did not allow for a murderer to be killed. He was to be pardoned altogether. As against these two extremes Islam offered a third course (which is the middle, practicable and equitable course) and hence the law is a mercy from Allah (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir) The report by Ibn `Abbas is in Bukhari (Qurtubi).

The fear of punishment restrains a man from the crime and thus there is life in this law of retribution (Qatadah: Ibn Jarir).

"Thus, the objective of *qisas* is the protection of the society, and not "revenge" (Asad).

364. The allusion is to the one who killed the murderer after accepting indemnification, or legal reparation. No mercy will be shown to him in this world, so that no blood wit will be accepted from him, rather, he will be executed, and, in addition, he will be punished in the Hereafter. The Prophet (*saws*) said about him: "I will not forgive a man who killed (the killer) after accepting blood wit" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

365. "This refutes another notion of Ignorance, a notion ingrained in the minds of many people, both past and present. On the one hand, there are some people who, entrenched in Ignorance, tend to exceed the limits of moderation in revenge. At the other end of the spectrum stand those who are opposed in principle to the concept of executing a murderer...

"The Qur`ān, however, addresses this question to wise and intelligent people and cautions them against such immoderate leniency by proclaiming that the survival of human society rests on the application of the death penalty for homicide. A society which holds inviolable the lives

of those who disregard the sanctity of human life is in fact rearing snakes and serpents” (Mawdudi).

Legal Points

1. The law of *Qisas* (just retribution) is applicable only to premeditated murder (and not accidental) [*Ma'arif*]. It is not applied to an insane or a minor (*Al Arba'ah*). For the *awliya'* (next of kin) there is no recourse but to one of the three: life for life (i.e. they demand that the murderer be punished with death), forgiveness, or acceptance of blood wit.

2. There is no difference of opinion over the rule that all punishments involving murder (in fact all cases involving hudud – major crimes for which punishment has been pronounced by the Qur'an), are to be administered by the state or a ruling authority, and not by individuals or groups (Qurtubi).

3. The majority of scholars are of opinion that a free man may not be killed in retaliation of the murder of a slave, or a Muslim for a dhimmi, rather only blood money would be due. However, the Hanafiyya's opinion, and that of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, Ibn Mas'ud, Thawri, Ibn Abi Layla, Sa'id ibn al Musayyib, Qatadah,

Ibrahim Nakha'i and Ibn 'Uyayna is that a free man will be killed in retaliation of a slave and a Muslim for killing a *dhimmi* (Qurtubi).

4. Opinions vary between the leading scholars over whether a man would be killed in retaliation if he murdered his own son.

5. If, for instance, a murdered man has left only two sons as his legal heir, and one of them agrees to forgive the murderer but the second refuses, then the murderer will be set free and required to pay only one half of the blood wit amount to the second son (*Ma'arif*).

6. Blood wit amount is the value of one hundred camels, 1000 Dinars or 10,000 Dirhams (of the Prophet's time) when a Dirham was equal to about 3.5 *masha* of silver (*Ma'arif*). [One Indian *tola* = 12 *masha* = 11.66 grams, and hence one *masha* = 0.972 gm. Thus the blood money today will be equal to (10,000 x 3.5 x 0.972) about 34 kg. of silver or its equivalent in currency: Au.]. This in principle is the *diyyah* (blood money) in case of accidental manslaughter. The amount might be increased (by the judge) for premeditated murder (*Al Arba'ah*).

[180] It has been prescribed for you, when death approaches one of you, and he is leaving wealth (behind him),³⁶⁶ that he make testament in favor of his parents and kinsmen, in a just manner:³⁶⁷ an obligation on the godfearing.³⁶⁸

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدُكُمُ الْمَوْتُ
إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةُ لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٨٠﴾

7. The inheritors will divide the blood money among themselves in the same ratio in which the *Shari`ah* has allotted them the shares in inheritance (*Ma`arif*).

8. The murderer will not get any share from the murdered person if he happens to be one of the heir (*Al Arba`ah*).

9. Will a group of people be punished if they jointly commit a murder? Hanafiyyah and Shafe`iyyah say yes. Malikiyyah add conditions. Hanabilah say no (*Al Arba`ah*).

10. “Whenever retaliation for murder or hurt is compounded, the money payable as consideration can be realized only from the offender himself. So also, when compensation is ordered in cases where there is a doubt as to the willful nature of the homicide. Similarly, when the hurt caused has not resulted in death, the wrong doer alone can be called upon to pay compensation. But when death has been caused by negligence or mistake, the offender’s

Akilas (‘Aqila: Au.), that is, his tribe, or regiment, or the inhabitants of the town to which he belongs, are to pay the blood money to the heirs of the deceased. The reason is, that it is the duty of a person’s *Akilas* to watch his conduct and the law presumes that the wrong doer would not have acted in the way he did unless they neglected their duty.” (Abdur Rahim, *Muhammadian Jurisprudence*, p. 359)” - Majid.

366. “The word *khayr* occurring in this verse denotes “much wealth” and not simply “property” (Ibn Kathir, Qurtubi, in Asad’s words). Accordingly, it is reported of ‘Ali (*ra*) that he visited a cousin of his at the time of his death. The man said he wanted to write down his will. ‘Ali told him, “Don’t do that, for you are not leaving wealth behind you.” The man was leaving behind 700 900 Dirham (Ibn Jarir). It is also reported of ‘A’isha (*ra*) that a man wanted to write down his will while he was leaving a lot of children behind him and about 400 Dinars. ‘A’isha said,

“I don’t see any virtue in (you writing) it down” (Ibn Jarir).

Thanwi adds: (The use of the word *khayr* which is synonymous with “much wealth”) is indicative of the fact that possession of wealth is not against *taqwa*, so long as various dues are paid and obligations met.

367. “The term *ma`ruf* occurs quite frequently in the Qur`ān. It refers to the conduct which is reckoned fair and equitable by the generality of disinterested people. The generally accepted usages and customs of life are called *`urf* and *ma`ruf* in Islamic terminology, and they are considered valid in all those matters not specifically regulated by the *Shari`ah*” (Mawdudi).

368. According to the great majority of scholars, this verse has been abrogated by verse 7 of *surah al Nisa`* which says:

لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ
نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ
[النساء : ٧]

“For men is their share of what their parents and relatives leave behind, and for women is their share of what their parents and relatives leave behind whether little or much that they leave behind a share allotted (by Allah).” However, since quite a few of the kin

are left out without a share allotted to them by the Qur`ānic verses of mirath, it can be said that this verse of *al Baqarah* remains unabrogated for a person who is leaving a lot of wealth and many relations behind him, whom he may allot their share through his will, acting on the verse under discussion and on the *hadith* of Bukhari which says,

مَا حَقُّ امْرِئٍ مُّسْلِمٍ لَهُ شَيْءٌ يُوصِي فِيهِ نَيْبَتَ لَيْلَتَيْنِ
إِلَّا وَوَصِيَّتُهُ مَكْتُوبَةٌ عِنْدَهُ

“It is not right of a man who has some wealth that he pass two nights without the will written down.”

Accordingly, Ibn `Umar used to say, “I have not spent a night since I heard this from the Prophet without the will written down” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

As for the amount one can bequeath, there is consensus of opinion that it may not exceed one third of the estate (i.e. the sums that will remain after all debts have been paid). This is in light of the *hadith* of Sa`d b. Mu`adh in the *Sahihayn* whom the Prophet visited in his sick bed.

عَامِرُ بْنُ سَعْدٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ مَرَضْتُ
فَعَادَنِي النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ ادْعُ اللَّهَ أَنْ لَا يَرُدَّنِي عَلَى عَقْبِي قَالَ لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ
يَرْفَعَكَ وَيَنْقُضَ بِكَ نَاسًا قُلْتُ أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُوصِيَ وَإِنَّمَا

[181] And whoever alters (the will) after having known it,³⁶⁹ surely the sin will be upon those who alter it. Allah is All hearing, All knowing.

فَمَنْ بَدَّلَهُ بَعْدَمَا سَمِعَهُ فَإِنَّمَا إِثْمُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يُبَدِّلُونَهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨١﴾

لِي ابْنَةٍ قُلْتُ أُوصِي بِالنِّصْفِ قَالَ النِّصْفُ كَثِيرٌ قُلْتُ
فَالثُّلُثُ قَالَ الثُّلُثُ وَالثُّلُثُ كَثِيرٌ

Sa'd was reported as saying, "I fell sick and the Prophet came to visit me. I said, 'Messenger of Allah, pray Allah for me that He may not turn me back (apostate).' He said, 'Maybe Allah will raise you (in rank) and people will benefit from you.' I said, 'I wish to leave a will. I have a daughter and so I wish to will for half.' He said, 'Half is too much.' I said, 'Then a third?' He said: "A third, yes. But even a third is too much." Accordingly, Ibn `Abbas used to say that he wished people would remain within one fourth since the Prophet said that even a third was too much (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

However, one may bequeath more than one third also, provided all the legal heirs give their consent (Thanwi).

But one cannot will in favor of an inheritor. If he did, it will be treated as null and void after his death in view of *hadith* in Bukhari and others,

لَا وَصِيَّةَ لَوَارِثٍ

"Bequething in favor of an inheritor is disallowed."

Yet, it is not the best thing to spend one's wealth at the death bed, in view of the *hadith* of Nasa'i which reports the Prophet (*saws*) as having said:

مَثَلُ الَّذِي يَنْفِقُ أَوْ يَتَصَدَّقُ عِنْدَ مَوْتِهِ مَثَلُ الَّذِي يَهْدِي بَعْدَ مَا يَشْبَعُ

"Whoever spends or gives away in charity at the time of his death is like he who gifts away (a food article) after he has had his full" (Qurtubi).

369. *Sami`a* has also the connotation of "he came to know" (Asad).

[182] However, if anyone fears from the testator, an inclination (to injustice),³⁷⁰ or a sin and so makes peace between them, then there is no blame upon him.³⁷¹ Surely, Allah is very Forgiving, very Kind.³⁷²

فَمَنْ خَافَ مِنْ مُوصٍ جَنَفًا أَوْ إِثْمًا فَأَصْلَحَ بَيْنَهُمْ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٨٢﴾

370. *Janafa* of the original means to incline or deviate. That is, he who deviates from the course of justice. This is applicable to the situation in which a man is present beside a testator who is not doing justice while writing down the will. He tells him, 'Look! Don't give this man so much.' Or, 'I believe the other man is more deserving,' and so forth (Ibn Jarir).

371. That is, if a testator commits wrong or does not do justice by his will, and the next of kin (*waliyy*) or the ruler of the time makes corrections in accordance with the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, then there is not sin upon them. According to Suddi, parents and relatives can also make alterations through mutual consultations without incurring a sin (Ibn Jarir).

372. Daraqutni has related through Anas b. Malik that the Companions of the Prophet (*saws*) used to begin their testament with the following:

"هذا ما أوصى به فلان بن فلان أنه يشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له ، وأن محمداً عبده ورسوله ، وأن الساعة آتية لا ريب فيها ، وأن الله يبعث من

في القبور . وأوصى من ترك بعده من أهله بتقوى الله حق ثقاته وأن يصلحوا ذات بينهم ، ويطيعوا الله ورسوله إن كانوا مؤمنين ، وأوصاهم بما وصى به إبراهيم بنيه ويعقوب : "يا بني إن الله اصطفى لكم الدين فلا تموتن إلا وأنتم مسلمون"

"This is the testament of so and so, son of so and so. He bears witness that there is no deity save Allah, the One who has no partners; and he bears witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger. The Hour will arrive, there is no doubt about it; and that Allah will resurrect those in the graves."

(He would then admonish those he was leaving behind of his kin to):

"Fear Allah in the manner in which it is befitting; to be good and fair with each other; and obey Allah and His Prophet if they are true in their claim to faith. (He would also admonish them in the words Ibrahim (*asws*) admonished his progeny when he said: 'O my children, Allah has chosen this religion for you, so die not save on submission).'"

[183] Believers! Fasts have been prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those that were before you haply so you will learn self restraint.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ
كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾

[184] Days numbered; yet, if one of you were to be sick or traveling, then, (let him) count (and fast equal number) on other days. As for those who can fast (but with great exertion), for them is feeding of a needy person as redemption. And whosoever does good of his own accord, that is better for him.³⁷³ Therefore, that you should fast is better for you, if you but knew.³⁷⁴

أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوْ
عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ
يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ فَمَن تَطَوَّعَ
خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٤﴾

(Then, after this preamble, would the Companion state his will - Qurtubi).

373. "And whosoever does good of his own accord, that is better for him:" That is, if anyone of you gave twice the amount prescribed, or both fasted as well as fed the needy, then surely that is good for him Ibn Mas'ud, Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, Ta'us etc. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

374. Mu'adh ibn Jabal reports: When the Prophet arrived in Madi-nah, he used to fast on the days of 'Ashura in addition to three days each month. Then Allah revealed: 'Believ-

ers! Fasting has been prescribed for you ..' until 'As for those who can fast (but with great exertion), for them is feeding of a needy person as (a means of) redemption...' Therefore, whoever wished to fast, fasted, while he who did not, fed the poor instead. (And there was no blame on him). This remained the practice until Allah revealed: 'Therefore, let him who is present in this month, fast the month.' This made it obligatory on every healthy person in the town to fast, leaving out only the very old who could yet feed the poor instead" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

[185] Ramadan is the month wherein the Qur'ān was sent down,³⁷⁵ a guidance for the people and as clear proofs of the Guidance, and a Criterion. Therefore, let him who is present in this month,³⁷⁶ fast the month. But if any-one of you be sick or traveling, (let him) count (and fast equal number) on other days. Allah desires ease for you and does not desire hardship for you.³⁷⁷ (This) so that you may complete the prescribed period and proclaim Allah's greatness³⁷⁸ for having guided you and so that you may be thankful.

شَهْرَ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى
لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَى وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَنْ
شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَنْ كَانَ
مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ
يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ
وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا
هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٨٥﴾

375. Ibn 'Abbas is reported to have said that the Qur'ān was sent down as one whole from the *Zubur* (*Al Lawh al Mahfuz*) to the *Al Bayt al Ma'mur* (also known as *Bayt al 'Izzah*) at the firmament nearest to the earth, in Ramadan, on the night of *Qadr*. Then from there it was revealed in twenty three years to our Prophet in quantities that the varying situations in his call required (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

376. Following these words some of the Companions of the Prophet (*saws*) used to discourage a person from leaving the town once Ramadan moon had been sighted. 'Aisha (*ra*) for instance inquired a visiting woman about her brother. She said he was preparing to travel. She told her to tell him not to go, and added: "If I were to be on the way (in a

journey), and the month of Ramadan arrived, I would halt my journey there" (Ibn Jarir).

377. Accordingly, the Prophet instructed Mu'adh ibn Jabal and Abu Musa Al Ash'ari while sending them to Yemen as his deputies:

يَسِّرَا وَلَا تُعَسِّرَا وَبَسِّرَا وَلَا تُشَفِّرَا وَتَطَوَّعَا وَلَا تُحْتَلِفَا

"Make it easy and not difficult. Give them glad tidings, do not repulse them. And co operate, do not differ" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

378. "And proclaim Allah's greatness:" According to Ibn 'Abbas, Zayd b. Aslam and Sufyan, the allusion is to the takbirat that one is required to say upon sighting the moon of Shawwal until the Imām enters the mosque for the sermon on the day of 'Eid (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

[186] And when My slaves inquire you concerning Me, (let them know): surely I am close.³⁷⁹ I answer the call of the caller when he calls to Me.³⁸⁰ Therefore, let them respond to Me, and have trust in Me, haply so they may be led aright.

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ
أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا
لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾

379. There are two opinions about the cause of revelation of this verse. One version says that it was revealed when some people asked the Prophet about Allah, whether He was close so they could whisper their supplications, or far, that they might cry out loud to Him. Another version is that some people asked the Prophet about the hour that was best for supplications. In either case, it was answered that Allah is close and does not fail to respond to the call of the suppliant (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Abu Musa Al Ash`ari says,

كُنَّا مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي سَفَرٍ. فَجَعَلَ
النَّاسُ يَجْهَرُونَ بِالتَّكْبِيرِ. فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ: "أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ارْزِعُوا عَلَيَّ أَنْفُسَكُمْ. إِنَّكُمْ لَيْسَ
تَدْعُونَ أَصَمَّ وَلَا غَائِبًا. إِنَّكُمْ تَدْعُونَ سَمِيعًا قَرِيبًا،
وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ" وَقَالَ فِيهِ: "وَالَّذِي تَدْعُونَهُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيَّ
أَحَدِكُمْ مِنْ عُنُقِ رَاحِلَتِهِ"

"Once we were on a journey with the Prophet (*saws*). We did not descend a hill, ascend another, or march into a valley but raised our voices in unison chanting Allah's

greatness. The Prophet came up from the rear and said: 'People. Show mercy to yourselves. The One you are calling is neither deaf nor away. You are calling the Hearer, the Seer.' He also added, 'The One you are calling is nearer to you than the neck of the beasts (you are riding)'" - Ibn Kathir.

(The above *hadith* is in *Sahih* of Muslim: Au.).

Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir state some rules that should be borne in mind while making supplications.

The verse under discussion promises that Allah will answer the call of the suppliant. This can happen in a variety of ways, as stated in a *hadith* which says,

" مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مُسْلِمٌ يَدْعُو اللَّهَ بِدَعْوَةٍ إِلَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ
إِيَّاهَا أَوْ صَرَفَ عَنْهُ مِنَ الشُّؤْمِ مِثْلَهَا مَا لَمْ يَدْعُ بِمَائِمٍ
أَوْ قَطِيعَةٍ رَجِمَ ". فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ إِذَا نُكْتِرَ. قَالَ
" اللَّهُ أَكْثَرُ " قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ
صَحِيحٌ غَرِيبٌ)

“No Muslim makes a supplication in which he does not ask for a sinful thing, or severance of blood relationship (qati`at al rahm) but Allah grants him one of the three things: either He grants him what he has asked for in this world, or, reserves it for him for the Hereafter, or wards off an evil of equal magnitude.” Someone said: “Then we shall increase (in our supplications).” The Prophet said: “Allah will increase (in His bestowals).”

However, there are conditions that must be observed.

Supplication Rules

1. The suppliant should ask with full confidence. He should realize that the One he is asking has power over everything, and so can have no difficulty in granting him any request.
2. The suppliant should not be hasty, to say, “I supplicated and supplicated, but nothing happened.” When he says that, his supplication is rejected.
3. Another obstacle to the acceptance of supplications is partaking of the prohibited. A *hadith* says,

ثُمَّ ذَكَرَ الرَّجُلُ يُطِيلُ السَّفَرَ أَشْعَثَ أَغْبَرَ يَمُدُّ يَدَيْهِ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ يَا رَبِّ يَا رَبِّ وَمَطْعَمُهُ حَرَامٌ وَمَشْرَبُهُ حَرَامٌ

وَمَلْبَسُهُ حَرَامٌ وَغُذِيَ بِالْحَرَامِ فَأَنَّى يُسْتَجَابُ لِذَلِكَ".
(صحيح مسلم)

“A man in a long journey, hair dishevelled, covered in dust, raises his hands to the heavens and cries out: ‘O Lord! O Lord!’ But his food is unlawful, his drink is unlawful and his clothes are unlawful. So how can he be answered?!”

4. The suppliant should make supplication with full attention of heart and mind. Allah (*swt*) does not answer prayers coming from an inattentive heart.
5. He should make his pleading with utmost humility and self abasement.
6. There are moments when prayers stand greater chance of being answered. Such as: at dawn, at the time the fast is broken, the interval between the Call and start of the Prayers, (*adhan wa iqamah*), the time between afternoon and evening prayers on Wednesdays, at times of difficulties, during journeys, when one is ill, when it is raining and when the troops line up in the battle field against the enemy (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).
7. Finally, there are some whose supplication is not rejected. The Prophet said in a *hadith*:

"ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا تُرَدُّ دَعْوَتُهُمُ الصَّائِمُ حَتَّى يُفْطِرَ وَالْإِمَامُ الْعَادِلُ وَدَعْوَةُ الْمَظْلُومِ يَرْفَعُهَا اللَّهُ فَوْقَ الْعِمَامِ وَيُفْتَحُ لَهَا أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَيَقُولُ الرَّبُّ وَعِزَّتِي لَأَنْصُرَنَّكَ وَلَوْ بَعْدَ حِينٍ". قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ

"There are three whose supplication is not rejected: 1) A just ruler. 2) A fasting man until he breaks his fast, and 3) The call of the oppressed whose call is raised up to the heavens (and Allah says), 'By My Greatness. I shall help you, even if it be after a while.'"

(The above report is in *Sahih* Ibn Hibban: Au.).

Qurtubi adds that the supplication should not be chanted out (as, for instance, one does with the verses of the Qur'an).

Imām Razi points out that the purpose of supplications is not to inform Allah (of one's conditions). It is to demonstrate servitude, humility, and one's total attachment to and dependence on Allah.

Qurtubi also reports,

قِيلَ لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ أَدْهَمَ : مَا بَالُنَا نَدْعُو فَلَا يُسْتَجَابَ لَنَا؟ قَالَ : لِأَنَّكُمْ عَرَفْتُمْ اللَّهَ فَلَمْ تَطِيعُوهُ ، وَعَرَفْتُمْ الرِّسُولَ فَلَمْ تَتَّبِعُوا سُنَّتَهُ ، وَعَرَفْتُمْ الْقُرْآنَ فَلَمْ تَعْمَلُوا بِهِ ، وَأَكَلْتُمْ نِعَمَ اللَّهِ فَلَمْ تَوْدُّوا شُكْرَهَا ، وَعَرَفْتُمْ الْجَنَّةَ فَلَمْ تَطْلُبُوهَا ، وَعَرَفْتُمْ النَّارَ فَلَمْ تَهْرَبُوا مِنْهَا ، وَعَرَفْتُمْ الشَّيْطَانَ فَلَمْ تَحَارِبُوهُ وَوَافَقْتُمُوهُ ، وَعَرَفْتُمْ الْمَوْتَ فَلَمْ

تَسْتَعْدُوا لَهُ ، وَدَفَنْتُمُ الْأَمْوَاتَ فَلَمْ تَعْتَبِرُوا ، وَتَرَكْتُمْ عِبَادِيكُمْ وَاشْتَغَلْتُمْ بِعُيُوبِ النَّاسِ

Ibrahim b. Ad-ham was asked as to 'why is it that we supplicate but are not answered?' He replied, "Because:

You have known Allah but did not obey Him.

You have known the Prophet but did not follow his *Sunnah*.

You understood the Qur'an but did not live by it.

You devoured the blessings of God but did not offer thanks.

You have known Paradise but did not seek it.

You have known the Fire, but did not try to avoid it.

You have known Satan but did not declare war against him, rather, you befriended him.

You have known death but did not prepare for it.

You buried the dead but did not draw lessons from it.

And, you forgot your own defects and busied yourselves with the defects of the others."

380. That is, when I respond to your calls, while the fact is that I do not need you, you should also respond to My call, noting that you need Me

[187] It has been made lawful unto you to go into your women in the nights of Ramadan: they are your mantle and you their mantle.³⁸¹ Allah was aware that you were betraying yourselves but He relented towards you and pardoned you.³⁸² So you may go into them now, and seek what Allah has ordained for you.³⁸³ And eat and drink until the white streak of dawn becomes distinguishable from the black streak (of night);³⁸⁴ then observe the fasts until nightfall; but do not approach them while you are in devotional retreat in the mosques.³⁸⁵ These are the bounds set by Allah, so keep well within them. Thus does Allah make clear His commandments for the people in order that they may refrain.

أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ هُنَّ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ فَالآنَ بَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَابْتَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَبْيُنَ لَكُمْ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتُمُوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾

(Razi).

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا [النبا/ ١٠]

381. One interpretation is that because of the intimate relationship and closeness that the husband and wife enjoy with each other, they become like garments unto each other: two personalities wrapped in one mantle. (They also cover each other's defects and that which happens between them when in privacy: Au.). Another interpretation attributed to Rabi', Mujahid, Qatadah, Suddi, and Ibn Zayd is that libas has been used in the sense of sakan (rest and comfort) i.e., each is a source of rest and comfort for the other as the usage in the verse 47 of *Al Furqān* which says:

"It is He who made the night for you a source of comfort (libasa)" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

382. This verse was revealed to grant relaxation in the rule which initially required that the Muslims abstain from food, drink, and sex during the nights of Ramadan. They were free to eat, drink and have sex after the sunset but only until they went to bed. Once they had slept everything became prohibited until the next sunset. It so happened that Qays b. Sarmah came home one evening from a day's hard work in the fields. He enquired if there was anything to eat. His wife said no, but promised

to get something from the neighbors. However, by the time she could return, he had fallen asleep. He continued his fast into the next day but collapsed by the mid-day. This was reported to the Prophet. The second incident causing the revelation of this verse involves `Umar (*ra*). It is said that one evening he invited his wife to the bed. She told him she had already had a nap, (and so she was in the next day's fast). `Umar thought she was seeking an excuse and despite the protest had sex with her. Later, however, he realized the mistake and reported to the Prophet (*saws*). The Prophet told him that he did not expect this from a man like him. Nevertheless, Allah Most High in His mercy revealed this verse which brought great relief and joy to the Muslims (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

383. *"And seek what Allah has ordained for you:"* that is, children. This is the opinion of Abu Hurayrah, Ibn `Abbas, Anas b. Malik, Qadi Shurayh, Mujahid, `Ikrimah, Sa'id b. Jubayr, `Ata', Zayd b. Aslam, Hakam b. `Ut-bah, Muqatil b. Hayyan, Hasan al Basri, Qatadah, Dahhak and others (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

384. `Adiy b. Abi Hatim (who embraced Islam after the fall of Makkah)

said: "When this verse was revealed I took two strings, one black and another white, and placed them under my pillow. I pulled them out and looked at them if I could distinguish one from the other when I could I suspended eating and drinking. Next day I mentioned this to the Prophet. He said:

إِنَّ وَسَادَكَ إِذَا طَوَيْتَ غَرِيضَ إِيمًا هُوَ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ

'You seem to have a pretty large pillow. It is the whiteness of the dawn and darkness of the night that has been meant.'" (Ibn Kathir)

As for the statement: 'You seem to have a pretty large pillow', perhaps what the Prophet meant is that you seem to have a pillow that is large enough to accommodate the horizon (Au.).

Mawdudi adds: "In fixing the time of obligatory rites, Islam has been mindful that these timings should be so clear and simple that people, at all stages of development, should be able to follow them. That is why Islam bases its timings on conspicuous natural phenomenon and not on the clock."

Suhur

Regarding the pre dawn meal (suhur), the Prophet has encouraged that we do not miss it. He said in a *hadith* of Bukhari:

" تَسَحَّرُوا فَإِنَّ فِي السَّحُورِ بَرَكَهً "

"Do not forget the suhur. There is barakah in it" (Ibn Kathir).

As for the time-limit for *suhur*, there seems to be sufficient flexibility, so that one can gulp down a hurried meal or a quick drink close to the dawn. Hudhayfah (*ra*) has been recorded by Ahmad, Nasa'i, and Ibn Majah as saying:

عَنْ حَدِيثَةٍ قَالَ تَسَحَّرْتُ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- هُوَ النَّهَارُ إِلَّا أَنَّ الشَّمْسَ لَمْ تَطْلُعْ.

"I took the pre dawn repast with the Prophet until it was almost the daybreak save that the sun had not risen."

(The authenticity note on the above report could not be located: Au.).

However, cautions Ibn Kathir, this should be understood as expressing the proximity to the day and not meaning the day break itself. This in view of the *hadith* of Bukhari and Muslim which records Zayd Ibn Thabit as saying:

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ ثَابِتٍ قَالَ تَسَحَّرْنَا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- ثُمَّ قُمْنَا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ. قُلْتُ كَمْ بَيْنَهُمَا قَالَ قَدْرُ قِرَاءَةِ حَمْسِينَ آيَةً.

"We ate our pre dawn meal with the Prophet (*saws*) and then stood up for Prayers." At that Anas asked Zayd: "What was the time gap between the Call to Prayer (*adhan*) and the Prayers?" He said: "About (the time required to recite) 50 verses."

Nonetheless, Ibn Kathir also reports the opinion of many who were not very rigid about the exact limits of the suhur period. Among them were many Companions of the Prophet such as Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Ali, Ibn Mas'ud, Hudhayfah, Abu Hurayrah, Ibn 'Abbas, and Zayd ibn Thabit. He also reports (as also does Ibn Jarir) Ibn 'Abbas as saying: "There are two kinds of dawn: the one that appears in the horizon. This one does not make anything lawful or unlawful. It is the other one that appears on the mountain peaks that makes (eating) and drinking unlawful. Ibn Jarir also records several incidents from the earlier days to demonstrate that the *suhur* time was not followed very rigidly. Here are some:

سَحَرْتُ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ، ثُمَّ خَرَجْتُ فَأَتَيْتُ ابْنَ مَسْعُودٍ، فَقَالَ: اشْرَبْ. فَقُلْتُ: إِنِّي قَدْ تَسَحَّرْتُ! فَقَالَ: اشْرَبْ! فَشَرَبْنَا، ثُمَّ خَرَجْنَا وَالنَّاسُ فِي الصَّلَاةِ

[188] And do not usurp one another's property by unjust means (nor) present (your cases about) them to the authorities, in order that you may sinfully devour a part of people's property, while you are aware.³⁸⁶

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتُدْلُوا بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٨﴾

“Bara’ said, “I finished my pre dawn repast and then went to see Ibn Mas`ud. He said: ‘Here, drink some.’ I said: ‘I am finished with my *subur*.’ He said: ‘Drink some.’ So I drank. Then we went out together to the mosque and the people were in (*fajr*) Prayer.”

(The authenticity of the above report could not be checked: Au.).

عن حبان، قال: تسحرنا مع عليّ، ثم خرجنا وقد أقيمت الصلاة، فصلينا

Hibban says, “We ate with `Ali and when we came out we found the people in (*fajr*) Prayers.”

(The above report is trustworthy: Au.).

عن عامر بن مطر، قال: أتيت عبد الله بن مسعود في داره، فأخرج فضلا من سحوره، فأكلنا معه، ثم أقيمت الصلاة فخرجنا فصلينا

`Amir b. Matar says, “We went to see Ibn Mas`ud. He presented the left over of the *subur* meal and we ate with him. Then the Prayers began, we went out and joined the congregation.”

“This, however,” cautions Mufti Shafi`, “should not allow one to grant himself undue leniency in view of the warning contained in the words: “These are bounds set by Allah”

385. “It was the practice of the Prophet (*saws*) to spend several days and nights during Ramadan and occasionally at other times also in the mosque, devoting himself to prayer and meditation to the exclusion of all worldly activities, and since he advised his followers as well to do this from time to time, seclusion in a mosque for the sake of meditation, called *i`tikaf*, has become a recognized though optional mode of devotion among Muslims, especially during the last ten days of Ramadan” (Asad).

386. Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, `Ikrimah, Hasan, Qatadah, Suddi and others say that this was revealed concerning the man who knows in his heart that some money is due on him for another man, but the other man lacks evidence. (Instead of confessing), he argues before the judges in

[189] They ask you concerning the new moons. Tell them, they are for the people (a means of) computing time³⁸⁷ and (determining dates of) Pilgrimage.³⁸⁸ There is no piety in that you should enter houses (during Hajj) from the rear.³⁸⁹ Rather, piety is (in him) who fears Allah. Therefore, come to the houses by their doors,³⁹⁰ and fear Allah haply you may prosper.³⁹¹

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهْلِ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ
لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ
مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنِ اتَّقَى وَأَتُوا
الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٨٩﴾

order that he may unjustly usurp it, making use of the weakness of the case. The Prophet (*saws*) made the unlawfulness of such acts more explicit through a *hadith* (of Muslim: Au.) reported by Umm Salamah (*ra*) which says:

”إِنَّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ إِلَيَّ، وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضَكُمْ أَنْ يَكُونَ الْآخَرُ
يُجْتَنِبُهُ مِنْ بَعْضٍ، فَأَقْضِي لَهُ عَلَى نَحْوِ مَا أَسْمَعُ مِنْهُ،
فَمَنْ قَطَعْتُ لَهُ مِنْ حَقِّ أَخِيهِ شَيْئًا، فَلَا يَأْخُذْهُ، فَإِنَّمَا
أَقْطَعُ لَهُ بِهِ قِطْعَةً مِنَ النَّارِ.“

“You bring your cases to me. Now, it may happen that one of you is smarter in presenting his arguments than the other, and depending on what I hear, I may judge in his favor. But if I allot him what is rightfully his brother's, let him not accept it, for I would have given him a piece of fire” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). According to other reports, the Prophet said this when two people came to him quarrelling

over some money, and that when he admonished them thus, they were in tears (Au.).

Another possible meaning is, “do not gift properties to the authorities in order to bribe them” (Qurtubi).

Adds Yusuf Ali: “Besides the three primal physical needs of man, which are apt to make him greedy, there is a fourth greed in society, the greed of wealth and property. The purpose of fasts is not completed until this fourth greed is also restrained.”

387. Ibn `Abbas reports that some people asked the Prophet about the new moons, as to why it appears thin in the beginning and then grows bigger as the days pass by. Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

It must be noticed that the question was about a natural phenomenon and the answer expected was an explanation of the phenomenon per-

haps in astronomical terms. But Allah (*swt*) turned their attention from a knowledge that would have been useless to them, to what was of use to them. The answer to this particular phenomenon would have required an exposition that would have taxed the minds of the people during times when scientific truths about celestial objects was of a very primitive order. If given a scientific answer they would not have appreciated it. Even if they had, by any stretch of their imagination, it would have been of no practical use to them. So their attention was turned from what was futile to what was useful. Accordingly, the Prophet said in a *hadith* declared *Sahih* by Hakim with Dhahabi making no remarks:

عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما : أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال : إن الله قد جعل الأهلة مواقيت فإذا رأيتموه فصوموا وإذا رأيتموه فافطروا فإن غم عليكم فاقدروا له واعلموا أن الأشهر لا تزيد على ثلاثين

“Allah (*swt*) has placed the moons to be a means of computing the time (and date). Therefore, start fasting with its appearance and break the fasts (after a month) with its appearance. But if you are in doubt (because of clouds) then complete your 30 days” (Au.).

Asad writes: “The reference, at this stage, to lunar months arises from the fact that the observance of several of the religious obligations instituted by Islam like the fast of Ramadan, or the pilgrimage to Mecca (which is dealt with in verses 196-203) is based on the lunar calendar, in which the months rotate through the seasons of the solar year. This fixation on the lunar calendar results in the continuous variation of the seasonal circumstances in which those religious observances are performed (e.g. the length of the fasting period between dawn and sunset, heat or cold at the time of the fast or the pilgrimage), and thus in a corresponding, periodical increase or decrease of the hardship involved.”

388. Hajj was specifically mentioned because the Arabs used to alter the calendar at will, which, apart from other evils, affected the dates of this important pillar of Islam (Qurtubi).

389. It is said that in pre Islamic times when the people of Yethrib returned from a journey, or when they had put on the pilgrim's garb (*ihram*) for *Hajj* or *Umrah*, they would enter their houses from the rear. They followed the practice, shared by many other tribes on other occasions too, as well as during the period of

Hajj. On such occasions they either went into the house through a hole, or climbed over a wall from the rear. The Quraysh and some other leading tribes did not follow this practice though. They considered themselves exempt because they were upholders of the religion. Allah revealed this verse to abrogate the baseless practice.

It is also reported that during the Hudaibiyyah treaty the Prophet came out of (according to a version in Tabari, went in) an orchard followed by an Ansari called Qutba b. 'Amir. People complained to the Prophet about Qutba's action, who was then in ihram (and not supposed to use the front door). The Prophet asked Qutba why he had done so. "Because you did so," he replied. The Prophet told him that for him it was permissible because he was "*Ahmas*," (someone staunchly committed to the defense of his religion). The man said: "Your religion is my religion," and Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

390. "I.e. true piety does not consist in approaching questions of faith through a 'back door', as it were that is, through mere observance of the forms and periods set for the performance of various religious du-

ties (cf. 2: 177). However important these forms and time limits may be in themselves, they do not fulfill their real purpose unless every act is approached through its spiritual 'front door', that is, through God consciousness. Since, metonymically, the word *bab* ('door') signifies 'a means of access to, or of, a thing' (see Lane I, 272), the metaphor of 'entering a house through its door' is often used in classical Arabic to denote a proper approach to a problem (Razi)" - Asad.

Yusuf Ali has also something of this nature to note. He says: "This is a Muslim proverb now, and much might be written about its manifold meanings. (For instance) 'If you want to achieve an object honorably, go about it openly and not by the back door.'"

Qurtubi presents a very useful point here: What Allah (*swt*) has not instituted as a means of gaining His Pleasure, does not become so by anyone's will or desire. He explains with Ibn Khuwayzmandad's illustration: 'If one runs into confusion about what falls in the domain of the approved and what does not, (of those deeds that do not have explicit sanction by the *Shari'ah*), one has to look for the particular deed's equivalent among

[190] And fight³⁹² in the Way of Allah³⁹³ with those who fight you, but do not transgress. Surely Allah does not approve of the transgressors.³⁹⁴

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١٩٠﴾

what have already been made obligatory or confirmed by the *Sunnah*. If one can find its equivalent there, then the deed in question can also be treated so (i.e. a means of gaining virtue). This is deduced from an incident of the Prophet's time. It is said that he passed by a man who was standing in the sun. He enquired about him and was told that the man was Abu Isra'il who had vowed that he would remain standing, not sit down, would not go into a shelter, would not talk to anyone and would fast on the day. The Prophet said: "Tell him he can talk, go into the shelter, sit down, but complete his fast." Thus the Prophet confirmed the man's many articles of vow what was otherwise a virtue (i.e., the fast) and invalidated the rest, which did not match with any of the virtuous acts prescribed by Islam.'

391. "Two entirely distinct, rather mutually destructive, emotions are covered by the same word 'fear.' One is baser, selfish, and servile, always arising out of thoughts of danger to self. Fear, in this sense, is negatived in the Qur'an of all righteous and

Godly persons, in verses like the following reiterated again and again: 'No fear shall come upon them, nor will they grieve.'

"But there exists also a noble, higher, and disinterested variety of fear, which has its roots not in cowardice or timidity at all but in man's feeling of awe at what his Lord is, and in his contemplating his own utter insignificance and unworthiness. Fear, in this sense, attracts; it does not repel. It has the effect of drawing the man closer and closer to his Lord; and he entirely surrenders himself to His will. It is this 'fear of Allah' that is inculcated in a thousand and one ways in the Qur'an, and is described as the master key to all success: 'Fear Allah that ye may thrive'" (Majid).

392. Abu al 'Aliyyah says this is the first of the set of verses that were revealed concerning fighting in the way of Allah. Following this revelation the Prophet (*saws*) fought those who fought him and let alone those who let him alone until Allah (*swt*) revealed the first few verses of *surah al Tawbah* (and other verses of this

chapter) Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir.

393. "(That is), fight in the cause of His true Religion; in the cause of truth, justice, equity and humanity... to combat the dark forces of polytheism, superstition, perfidy, irreligion, and religious persecution; and not for the greed of booty or for self aggrandizement, nor yet to extend the 'sphere of influence' of this country or that. Is the extermination of moral evil, in any sense, an unworthy object of war?" (Majid)

Sabuni quotes in his *Rawa'e' al Bayan* a poetical stanza that `Abdullah ibn Mubarak wrote to the well known ascetic Fudayl bin `Iyad:

يا عابد الحرمين لَوْ أَبْصَرْتَنَا ... لَعَلِمْتَ أَنَّكَ فِي
الْعِبَادَةِ تَلْعَبُ

من كان يَخْضِبُ خَدَّهُ بدموعِهِ ... فَتُحَوِّرُنَا بدمائِنَا
تَتَخَضَّبُ

أَوْ كَانَ يَتَعَبُ حَيْلَهُ فِي بَاطِلٍ ... فَخَيَّلْنَا يَوْمَ
الصَّبِيحَةِ تَتَعَبُ

رِيحُ الْعَبِيرِ لَكُمْ وَنَحْنُ عَبِيرُنَا ... وَهَجَّ السَّنَابِكُ
وَالْغَبَارُ الْأَطْيَبُ

وَلَقَدْ أَتَانَا مِنْ مَقَالِ نَبِينَا ... قَوْلٌ صَحِيحٌ صَادِقٌ
لَا يُكَذَّبُ

لَا يَسْتَوِي وَغَبَارُ خَيْلِ اللَّهِ فِي ... أَنْفِ امْرِئٍ وَدَخَانَ
نَارٍ تَلْهَبُ

هَذَا كِتَابُ اللَّهِ يَنْطِقُ بَيْنَنَا ... لَيْسَ الشَّهِيدُ بِمَيِّتٍ
لَا يُكَذَّبُ

*O thou given to devotions in the Holy
Harams, had you seen us,*

*You'd realize that your devotions are
mere amusement.*

*He who dyes his cheeks with tears that
roll down,*

*(Does he know that) with blood do we
dye our necks?*

*He who tires his horse in playful re-
past,*

*(May know that) our horses exhaust
themselves on the day of spoils.*

*For you be the best of perfumes, but
for us,*

*Sweeter the (aroma of) dust rising from
the earth.*

*To us has come the saying of our
Prophet,*

*A word unerring, true, that cannot be
denied,*

*Not equal are the dust of the horses in
Allah's path*

*In the nostrils of a man, and the smoke
of the Fire, flaming*

*Here is Allah's Book speaking be-
tween us,*

*The martyrs is not dead, a fact undeni-
able.*

When Fudayl read these lines he broke into tears and said: 'By Allah he admonished us!'

394. According to Ibn `Abbas, Hasan al Basri, `Umar b. `Abdul `Aziz, Muqatil b. Hayyan and others, the transgression mentioned here would include all those acts during a

war that Islam has forbidden, such as mutilating the dead, killing women or the old, etc. This can be corroborated with a *hadith* which, as recorded by Muslim reports Buraydah (ra) as saying that the Prophet used to say:

اغْرُوا بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَاتِلُوا مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ اغْرُوا
وَلَا تَغْلُوا وَلَا تَعْدُوا وَلَا تَمْتَلُوا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا وَلِيدًا

“Fight in the way of Allah. Fight him who denies Allah. Fight, but do not steal from the booty, do not deceive (therein), do not mutilate the dead, and do not kill a child” (Ibn Kathir); unless of course, if women, children, old men and priests take up arms against the Muslims (Qurtubi).

(Note that the Crusading Church had sent an army of children to retrieve Jerusalem. Starting from Europe, many children died on their way, some were kidnapped, and some sold out as slaves by the Christian as they passed through their countries, and the child Crusaders failed to reach Muslim lands: Au.).

It seems this could also apply to the

conquerors. Ibn Kathir reports a *hadith* preserved by Imām Ahmad which says that the Prophet (saws) said:

”إِنْ قَوْمًا كَانُوا أَهْلَ ضَعْفٍ وَمُسْكِنَةٍ، قَاتَلَهُمْ أَهْلُ
تَجَرٍ وَعَدَاءٍ، فَأَظْهَرَ اللَّهُ أَهْلَ الضَّعْفِ عَلَيْهِمْ، فَعَمِدُوا
إِلَى عَدُوِّهِمْ فَاسْتَعْمَلُوهُمْ وَسَلَطُوهُمْ فَأَسْخَطُوا اللَّهَ
عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمٍ يَلْقَوْنَهُ“

“There (was the case of) a weak and poor people opposed by their strong and tyrannical enemy. Allah (swt) gave victory to the weak. But they in turn began to persecute and exploit the former oppressors. This angered Allah (and He will remain angry with them) until the Day they meet Him.”

(Haythami gives his approval to the above report: Au.)

395. According to Qatadah, Rabi`, Dahhak, Mujahid, and Ibn Zayd, by the *fitnah* of the original the allusion is to idolatry (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). However, another interpretation is that the allusion is to persecution (Qurtubi).

There is no doubt that “idolatry” is worse than death. In fact, even per-

[191] Slay them wherever you get hold of them, and expel them from where they expelled you, for persecution is worse than slaughter.³⁹⁵ But do not fight by the Holy Mosque unless they attack you there.³⁹⁶ Nonetheless, if they attack you (there), put them to the sword. Such is the recompense of the unbelievers.

وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ تَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمُ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا تَقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يَبْقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ فَإِنْ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٩١﴾

[192] Yet, if they desist, surely Allah is Forgiving, Kind.

فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٩٢﴾

secution is worse than death. Says Zamakhshari: "Torture and persecution that a man is subjected to is worse than slaughter. Someone asked the wise men: 'What is worse than death?' They answered: 'The state in which you wish for death.'"

396. Speaking of the sanctity of the Grand Mosque and its precincts, the Prophet (*saws*) said on the day he entered Makkah triumphant:

إِنَّ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ حَرَمَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ ، فَهُوَ حَرَامٌ بِحُزْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ، وَإِنَّهُ لَمْ يَحِلَّ الْقِتَالُ فِيهِ لِأَحَدٍ قَبْلِي ، وَلَمْ يَحِلَّ لِي إِلَّا سَاعَةٌ مِنْ تَهَارٍ ، فَهُوَ حَرَامٌ بِحُزْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ، لَا يُغْضَدُ شَوْكُهُ ، وَلَا يُنْقَرُ صَبْدُهُ ، وَلَا يُلْتَقِطُ لُقْطَتُهُ إِلَّا مَنْ عَرَفَهَا ، وَلَا يُحْتَلَى خِلَاةُ (صحيح البخارى)

"Verily Allah sanctified this city the day He created the heavens and the earth. So it will remain by the order of Allah until the Day of Judgment. Its sanctity has

not been lifted save for an hour of the day - which is this hour - for me alone. And, for me too, it was made lawful for a short while. So, it will remain sanctified by the order of Allah. Its thorn is not to be uprooted, nor its wild animals disturbed. Its lost items are not to be picked up except by him who knows it, nor should its grass be uprooted."

Another report of Bukhari adds,

فَإِنْ أَحَدٌ تَرَحَّصَ لِقِتَالِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ - صلى الله عليه وسلم - فِيهَا فَقُولُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَذِنَ لِرَسُولِهِ ، وَلَمْ يَأْذَنْ لَكُمْ

"Therefore, if anyone seeks to justify bloodshed in it in view of it being made lawful to the Messenger of Allah, tell him that Allah had made it lawful to His Messenger but has not done so for you" (Ibn Kathir from Sharh

[193] And fight them until there remains no unbelief and the Religion becomes Allah's.³⁹⁷ But if they desist, then there is no hostility save against the oppressors.³⁹⁸

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ
الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩٣﴾

al *Sunnah*).

397. "(That is), God can be worshipped without fear of persecution, and none is compelled to bow down in awe before another human being" (Asad).

The Prophet said:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أُمِرْتُ أَنْ
أُقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَقُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فَإِذَا قَالُوا لَا
إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ عَصَمُوا مِنِّي دِمَاءَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَّا بِحَقِّهَا
وَحَسَابُهُمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ

"I have been ordered to fight the people until they say, 'There is no god save Allah.' Once they have said that, their lives and property become inviolable, save for what is Allah's right. (As for their deeds), it is for Allah to judge them" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

(However, the opinion of some scholars is that by the word "people" in the above *hadith* the Prophet meant only the people of the Arabian Peninsula, who had no choice but to either accept Islam or leave the land, since two religions would not be tolerated in this land. As for

the non Muslim peoples of the rest of the world, there is a difference of opinion among the scholars over whether Islam should be on the offensive or defensive with them. We shall deal with this subject in detail in *surah al Anfal*, in *sha Allah*. (See Foreword to the *surah*). In the present context, perhaps a few sentences from Ibn al Qayyim's *Zad al Ma'ad*, summing up the issue, would be of interest.

"... (Fighting) was initially 'forbidden', then 'permissible', then an 'obligation' in the face of attack, then an '(unqualified) obligation' according to one opinion, but 'optional' (*fard kifayah*) according to the majority opinion against the idolaters of all times": Au.).

Nafi' reports that when Ibn Zubayr claimed *Khilafah*, two people came to Ibn 'Umar and said: "People are lost. You are the son of 'Umar (ibn al Khattab) and a Companion of the Prophet. What prevents you from joining forces with (this or that party)?" He replied: "Because Allah has

declared my brother's blood unlawful to me." They said: "Did Allah not say, 'And fight them until there is no fitnah?'" He replied: "Yes. We fought until there was no fitnah and the Religion became Allah's. Whereas you wish to fight until fitnah reappears and the Religion becomes other than Allah's."

Naafi' also reports another occasion (during the same turbulent period) when a man came to Ibn 'Umar and said: "O Abu 'Abdul Rahman! What makes you go for Hajj one year and stay back the next, but stay away from *Jihad* in the Way of Allah, while you know its virtues?" He said: "Islam is built on five (pillars): faith in Allah and His Messenger, Prayers, *zakah*, Fast, and Hajj." They said: "O Abu 'Abdul Rahman! Haven't you heard Allah (*swt*) say: 'And if two group of Muslims quarrel among themselves, make peace between them. But if one of them rebels against the other (after peace has been made) then, fight against that (group) which rebels, until it falls back to accepting Allah's rule.' And, at another place, 'And fight them until there remains no *fitnah*.'" Ibn 'Umar replied, "That we did alongside the Prophet when the Muslims were few and a man was persecuted for his religion. The pagans would either kill him or

subject him to prolonged torture. That was the state until Islam grew strong." They asked him, "What do you have to say about 'Uthman and 'Ali?" He said: "As for 'Uthman, Allah has declared that He was pleased with him, but it seems you are not pleased with him. As for 'Ali, well, he was the Prophet's cousin and his son in law." Then he pointed with his finger and said: "That's his house that you see over there" (Ibn Kathir).

What he meant by pointing to the house, perhaps, is that 'you may look at the simplicity of the house in which he lived, and compare it with your own dwellings, to know what he fought for and what you are fighting for' (Au.).

398. The *zalimin* of the original either means those who remain on unbelief, or those who begin hostilities against the Muslims (Qurtubi).

399. Qurtubi - who was the chief justice of Spain - takes up a practical problem at this point. It is that of wrongs done to people who do not have the lawful means to correct those wrongs. What should they do? He says in effect:

Righting the Wrongs

[194] Sacred month for sacred month: holy things (demand) reciprocation. Therefore, whosoever commits aggression against you, you also retaliate against him in the same measure in which he commits aggression against you.³⁹⁹ Fear Allah, and know that Allah is with the righteous.⁴⁰⁰

الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحُرُمَاتُ قِصَاصٌ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾

According to some scholars it is permissible for a man who has been wronged to retaliate and take his right secretly (if necessary), in the same measure as he was wronged. This is the opinion of Imām Shafē'i and others. According to one version it is also the opinion of Imām Malik. However, some Maliki scholars say that it is only for the judicial authorities to decide and not for the people themselves, especially in money matters, following a *hadīth* (of Daraqutni) which says:

" أَدِّ الْأَمَانَةَ إِلَى مَنِ اتِّمَمْتَهَا وَلَا تَخُنْ مَنْ خَانَكَ " (رواه الطبراني في الكبير والصغير ورجال الكبير ثقات.)

'Deliver back the trust to those who trust you. Do not deceive him who deceives you.'

(The above *hadīth* is also in Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi and Hakim: Au.)

This is also the opinion of Imām Abu Hanifah who rests his opinion

on this *hadīth* as well as verse 58 of *surah al Nisa'* which says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا [النساء/٥٨]

'Allah orders you to deliver trusts back to those who trust you.' This is also the opinion of 'Ataa' al Khurasani. Qudamah b. al Haytham said, 'I asked 'Ata' b. Muyessarrah al Khurasani: "A man owes me something. He denies it and I do not have any proof. Shall I take from his money what I think is my due?" 'Ata replied: "Look. If he were to rape your maid, are you going to retaliate in the same manner?"

[The above is the opinion of Ibn 'Abbas also, as stated by Ibn Kathir, who is reported to have said that after Allah (*swt*) gave power to Islam, Muslims should take all their disputes to judicial authorities only Au.].

However, (continues Qurtubi), the preferable opinion, which is that of Imām Shafē'i, Malik, Ibn al Mundhir

and (Abu Bakr) Ibn al `Arabi, is that it is permissible to retaliate and take one's right. Such a measure will not be called deception for one is taking what is his right. The Prophet (*saws*) has said:

"انصُرْ أَخَاكَ ظَالِمًا أَوْ مَظْلُومًا" - صحيح البخارى

'Help your brother: be he the oppressor or the oppressed.'

To take one's right from an oppressor is to help him. Further, when Hind b. `Utbah the wife of Abu Sufyan complained to the Prophet that Abu Sufyan was a miser who did not give her enough for her and her children's maintenance, so, could she steal some money from him? He replied: '(You might) take from him (without his knowledge) what will suffice you and your children, in a goodly manner.' Finally, the verse in discussion is itself sufficient to substantiate this point."

The scholars also differ over whether, if one is wronged in financial affairs, can he take his right in kind. One opinion, and which seems to be the heavier, is that he may. Another opinion is that he may not since the categories are different. Some say, however, that he may calculate the equivalent in the other category and take his right. This (according to me)

is the right opinion based on arguments presented above.

(Qurtubi's quote ends here).

400. Ibn `Abbas gives the following as the reason for the revelation of this verse. In the sixth year after *hijrah* the Prophet set out with the intention of `Umrah. He was stopped a few miles off Makkah at a place called Hudaibiyyah and refused entry. Subsequently, the Quraysh made peace with him on condition that he return to Madinah that year and come back the next, yet for three days alone. Accordingly, the Prophet set out for Makkah the next year in the month of Dhu al Qa`idah, which was one of the four consecrated months during which war was prohibited. But the Muslims feared that they might be taken by surprise and attacked, and they would not be able to retaliate because of the holy month. Allah relieved them of their anxiety by revealing this verse: "The sacred month is for the sacred month: holy things (demand) reciprocation" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Jarir reports Ibn Zayd as saying that this verse was abrogated by the verse that was revealed later which said (9: 36),

وَقَاتِلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَافَّةً كَمَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ كَافَّةً

[195] Expend in the Way of Allah and do not contribute to your destruction at your own hands.⁴⁰¹ And do things well. Verily Allah loves those who do things well.

وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٩٥﴾

[التوبة/٣٦]

“And fight the polytheists all of them as they all fight you” and (surah al Tawbah, verse 123):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ
[التوبة/١٢٣]

“Fight those of the unbelievers who are nearest to you (i.e. the Arabs).” When the Prophet had done that, Allah revealed further (surah al Tawbah, verse 29):

قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَنْ يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ [التوبة/٢٩]

“Fight those of the people of the Book who do not believe in Allah, nor the Last Day, nor do they treat as unlawful what Allah and His Messenger has made unlawful, nor they accept the true religion: of those who were given the Book, until the pay Jizyah at hand and they are subdued,” meaning the Romans. Accordingly, the Prophet turned his attention to them (and went as far as Tabuk to confront them: Au.).

401. According to Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah, Ikrimah, Suddi, Hasan al Basri, `Ata', and Dahhak, the “self destruction” of the verse refers to holding back contributions to war (Ibn Jarir).

Others believe, however, that it refers to abandoning *Jihad*. Abu `Imran says that when Muslim armies were facing the Romans under the walls of Constantinople, a solitary Muhajir rushed into the enemy forces from one side and emerged from the other side. The people cried out: “He contributed to his destruction with his own hands.” Abu Ayyub al Ansari (ra) was also present. He said: “People, you give the verse a wrong interpretation. We know very well whom the verse applies to. It was revealed concerning us. We helped the Prophet and fought along with him until Islam spread far and wide. When that happened we Ansar got together and said to ourselves: ‘Indeed Allah (swt) favored us by making us the Companions of His Messenger. We helped him until Islam spread far and wide. We gave him

preference over our families, children, and property. Now that peace has prevailed let us return to our wives and children and attend to our worldly affairs. In response Allah (swt) revealed: *‘Expend in the Way of Allah and do not contribute to your destruction with your own hands.’*”

Destruction, therefore, refers here to engaging oneself in worldly affairs to the neglect of *Jihad* (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi also discusses the case of a man who rushes into the enemy lines,

or exposes himself to great dangers, whether he would be considered as one who contributed to his own destruction. He proves with the help of various incidents from the life of the Companions and their Followers that the man’s actions will not be considered so, even if he loses his life, so long as he is sincere in seeking Allah’s Pleasure, and sure that if captured alive and tortured, he will not cause any harm to the Muslims or to his own religion.

402. **Hajj:** Hajj is Pilgrimage to Makkah. As a precondition the pil-

[196] And complete the Hajj and 'Umrah for Allah (alone).⁴⁰² But if you are prevented, then whatever is possible with ease of the sacrifice (animal). But do not shave your heads until the sacrifice reaches its (appointed) place.⁴⁰³ However, if any of you is sick or has ailment in his scalp, then in redemption either fasts, or alms giving, or sacrifice (of an animal).⁴⁰⁴ But when you are in peace then whoever enjoys the 'Umrah with the Hajj, (for him) is (prescribed) a sacrifice (that he can offer) with ease. But if he who does not find (the means) then (for him) are (prescribed) three days of fasting during the Hajj and seven when you return.⁴⁰⁵ Those are ten complete (days).⁴⁰⁶ This (combining of Hajj and 'Umrah) is for him whose family does not reside by the Holy Mosque. Fear Allah, and know that Allah is terrible in retribution.

وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أُخْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحَلَّهُ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِ أَذًى مِنْ رَأْسِهِ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِنْ صِيَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَمَنْ تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ تِلْكَ عَشْرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلُهُ حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٩٦﴾

grim puts on *ihram* (or pilgrim's garb normally two seamless cloaks) before entering into Makkan territory, known as *mawaqit*. It starts with a few hours stay in the plains of 'Arafah (about 15 km off Makkah) on the ninth day of the 12th Islamic month (*Dhu al Hijjah*). He engages himself there in prayers and supplications. By sunset he proceeds to the Muzdalifah plain and spends the night there, either resting or engaged in prayers and supplications. The next day, (the tenth of *Dhu al Hijjah*) he proceeds to the valley of Mina where he stones *Shaytan* on

three consecutive days (at spots Ibrahim stoned him for trying to tempt him away from the sacrifice of his son). Subsequent to the stoning on the first day in Mina, the pilgrim sacrifices an animal, shaves his head (or cuts the hair short; which women also do, shaving being disallowed for them), removes his *ihram* to wear ordinary clothes. One of these days he goes up to Makkah (about 12-15 km) to circumambulate the Ka'bah and walk seven times between Safa and Marwah (hillocks between which Hajar ran, centuries back, in search of water). He returns to Mina

to spend two more days stoning the *Shaytan* everyday. With that the Hajj terminates, having lasted four days. Hajj is obligatory once in a life time on every Muslim who can afford the journey. Originally instituted by Ibrahim (*saws*) it was also practiced by the pre-Islamic Arabs but in a corrupt form.

`Umrah: `Umrah is lesser Pilgrimage which consists in donning the ihram, circumambulating the House seven times, walking between the hills Safa and Marwah and shaving off the hair (or cutting it short). With that `Umrah is complete. It can be performed at any time during the year, and, according to most jurists, is not obligatory though highly recommended: Au.).

Majid quotes Hitti: "The socializing influence of such a gathering of the brotherhood of believers from the four quarters of the earth is hard to over estimate. It afforded opportunity for Negroes, Berbers, Chinese, Persians, Syrians, Turks, Arabs rich and poor, high and low to fraternize and meet together on the common ground of faith."

The verse itself has been interpreted in various ways. (i) Complete the Hajj and `Umrah rites once you have begun them. (ii) Intend nothing else

save Hajj or `Umrah while starting for them and (iii) Perform Hajj and `Umrah for Allah alone (Ibn Jarir).

The third interpretation is in view of the practice of the pre Islamic Arabs who used to perform Hajj to display pride, assemble on the Hajj sites to boast of the glory of their forefathers, or engage in commerce, never intending to please Allah (Qurtubi).

403. Hajj is a very complicated rite. Ibn Jarir devotes over 25 pages presenting the views of various scholars in explanation of this verse alone. The preferred opinion regarding this portion of the verse is as follows: If one is prevented from proceeding to Hajj or `Umrah by reasons beyond his control such as sickness, war etc., he might send forward a sacrifice to the Haram, shave his head (or cut short the hair) and remove his pilgrim's clothes (*ihram*) as soon as the sacrifice has reached the Haram and has been slaughtered. It is incumbent upon him, however, to perform another Hajj or `Umrah later, when circumstances permit.

404. As it happened with Ka'b b. `Ujrah whose head was full of lice. He complained to the Prophet (*saws*) and he told him to shave and in redemption either fast three days, feed six poor persons, or sacrifice a goat

[197] Hajj months are well-known.⁴⁰⁷ Therefore, whoever undertakes to perform Hajj^{407a} in those months, (may be aware that) there be no sensual indulgence,⁴⁰⁸ no ungodliness,⁴⁰⁹ nor wrangling during Hajj. And whatever you do of the good, Allah knows about it. And take provision with you.⁴¹⁰ However, the best provision is right conduct. Therefore, fear Me (alone), O those who have wisdom.⁴¹¹

الْحُجَّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَاتٌ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ
الْحُجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ
فِي الْحُجِّ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمْهُ اللَّهُ
وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُونِ يَا
أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٧﴾

(Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

405. This injunction applies to those who combine *Hajj* and `Umrah (either in the form of *Tamattu`* or *Qiran*: see *Fiqh* books for further details). A sacrifice (in gratitude) is incumbent upon them. But if they be poor and cannot afford a sacrifice, they may fast for three days during Hajj, and seven after returning home (Ibn Kathir).

406. Commenting on the word “*kamilan*” of the original (rendered as: “in all”), Imām Razi first quotes the objection of the antagonists who say that we know that three plus seven is ten. Why did Allah (*swt*) add “*kamilan*?” Is not the word redundant? Then he answers that one possible explanation, apart from others, is that the word “*kamilan*” qualifies the Hajj in which sacrifice was offered. The Hajj became “*kamil*” (complete in all sense) rather than “*ghayr*

kamil,” (incomplete, or lacking in perfection, when sacrifice was not offered).

407. According to most of the early scholars, these are the tenth and eleventh months of the Islamic calendar plus the first ten days of the twelfth month. That is, the whole of *Shawwal*, *Dhu al Qa`dah*, and ten days of *Dhu al Hijjah*. Although a minority opinion is that the whole of the month of *Dhu al Hijjah* is included (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

But this only means that these are the months specified for Hajj, and not that `Umrah (the lesser pilgrimage) is not lawful in these days (Qurtubi).

407a. “*Fareedah*” of the text alludes to the time the *Ihram* is put on (Tabari).

408. Some translators have rendered *rafatha* of the original as “obscenity.” But all classical commentators

are agreed that the word stands for sexual intercourse and the amorous talks and acts that precede it. However, since there is no equivalent for it in the English language, the translation can reflect only one aspect of the meaning.

409. In the Islamic terminology “*Fusug*” refers to every act that disregards the *Shari`ah*.

410. It is reported of some tribes of Yemen that prior to Islam they used to set out for *Hajj* without carrying their provision with them claiming that they depended on God. But they used to beg in Makkah. Allah revealed this verse to disapprove the practice (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, and others, from Bukhari and other *Hadith* books).

Qurtubi reports (Abu Bakr) Ibn al `Arabi as saying: “Allah has ordered the man of means to equip himself with provisions. As for him who has no means but specializes in a trade, he might earn on the way, or even beg (if, against his hopes, he cannot find work). The verse is not addressing him. Rather, it is addressing

those who had the means and yet used to abandon them saying, ‘We trust in God.’ (They did not realize that) trust (*tawakkul*) has certain rules. Whoever observes them might journey without provision. The verse does not prevent him.”

Qurtubi also reports that a man told Ibn Hanbal that he was planning to journey to Makkah without provision, placing his trust in Allah. Ibn Hanbal told him: “Fine. But travel alone and not in a caravan.” The man said: “No. Rather with them.” Ibn Hanbal replied: “Then your *tawakkul* is on the pots of the fellow travelers.”

Another possible meaning of the word “*tazzawwadu*” can be: “Furnish yourself (with *taqwa*)” in view of the sentence following it: “And the best provision is *taqwa*” (Razi, Zamakhshari).

411. That is, the demand of wisdom is that one fear Allah (*swt*). If one does not, then he lacks wisdom (Zamakhshari).

412. Ibn Kathir records several re-

[198] And there is no sin upon you that you should seek your Lord's bounty.⁴¹² Then, when you have surged downward from 'Arafat remember Allah much at Mash'ar al Haram (i.e. Muzdalifah). Remember Him in the manner He has directed you. Indeed you were earlier among those unguided.

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَإِذَا أَفَضْتُمْ مِّنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ وَاذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَاكُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿١٩٨﴾

[199] Then surge onwards from where the people surge onward⁴¹³ and implore Allah's forgiveness.⁴¹⁴ Verily Allah is Oft forgiving, Very Kind.

ثُمَّ أَفِضُوا مِّنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ النَّاسُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٩٩﴾

ports to the effect that in pre Islamic times fairs used to be held during the Hajj period at 'Ukaz, Majnah and Dhu al Majaz. However, (Ibn Jarir), some tribes stayed away from any buying and selling during Hajj. With the advent of Islam some Muslims also began to wonder whether it would be right to indulge in trade during these days. So Allah revealed this verse making it lawful for a man to trade while performing Hajj.

And the connection with the previous verse seems that if you cannot start with provisions, you can earn it during Hajj (Au.).

413. This had to be said because while the rest of the Arabs started from 'Arafat, the Quraysh refused to go farther than Muzdalifah on grounds that they were exempt because of their special position (Ibn

Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Asad remarks: "'Surge onward'...: thus the pilgrims are called upon to submerge their individualities, at the supreme moment of the pilgrimage, in the consciousness of belonging to a community of people who are all equal before Allah, with no barrier of race or class or social status separating one person from another."

414. Ibn Kathir records a *hadith* from Ibn Marduwayh which says that "*Sayyid al Istighfar*" is the following:

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبِّي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ خَلَقْتَنِي وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ وَأَنَا عَلَى عَهْدِكَ وَوَعْدِكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ أَبْتَغِي لَكَ بِنِعْمَتِكَ عَلَيَّ وَأُتَوِّعُ لَكَ بِذُنُوبِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ. قَالَ وَمَنْ قَالَهَا مِنَ النَّهَارِ مُوقِفًا بِهَا فَمَاتَ مِنْ يَوْمِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُمْسِيَ فَهُوَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ وَمَنْ قَالَهَا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُوَ مُوقِفٌ بِهَا فَمَاتَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُصْبِحَ فَهُوَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ

[200] And then, when you have completed your rites, remember Allah as you were wont to remember your forefathers, or with a stronger remembrance.⁴¹⁵ And among the people are some who pray: 'O Allah give us our due in this world itself.' There is no share for such in the Hereafter.⁴¹⁶

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمْ مَنَاسِكَكُمْ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ آبَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

[201] While there are some among them who pray: 'O Allah, give us of good things in this world and good things in the Hereafter, and save us from punishment of the Fire.'⁴¹⁷

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿٢٠١﴾

"O Allah. You are my Lord. There is no deity besides You. You have created me, and I am your slave. I am on the covenant and the promise (of obedience) that I gave You, to the extent of my power. I seek your refuge from the evil that I have committed. I acknowledge Your favors to me and I admit my sins. Therefore, forgive me; for no one can forgive sins save You."

"Whoever said this," the Prophet added, "on a night and died in that night will enter Paradise. Whoever said this on a day and died that day will enter Paradise."

415. This was said because it was the Arab practice to talk of their ancestors and boast of their deeds during gatherings at Mina instead of

remembering Allah (Ibn Jarir, Qur-tubi, Ibn Kathir).

416. In the days of Ignorance when the Arabs camped at Mina they prayed for such things as rains, increase in cattle, victory over their enemies, etc., completely neglecting the Hereafter (Ibn Jarir).

417. Ibn Kathir says that according to a *hadith* of Ahmad and Muslim, Qatadah asked Anas about the prayer words the Prophet used most. He replied that he used to say:

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ [البقرة/٢٠١]

According to a report in Bukhari and Muslim,

عَنْ أَنَسٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَادَ رَجُلًا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ قَدْ خَفَتَ فَصَارَ مِثْلَ الْفَرَحِ.

[202] For these are their rewards in accordance with what they earn.⁴¹⁸ And Allah is swift in reckoning.⁴¹⁹

أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ
الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٠٢﴾

فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "هَلْ كُنْتَ تَدْعُو بِشَيْءٍ أَوْ تَسْأَلُهُ إِيَّاهُ؟" قَالَ: نَعَمْ. كُنْتُ أَقُولُ: اللَّهُمَّ مَا كُنْتُ مُعَاقِبِي بِهِ فِي الْآخِرَةِ، فَعَجِّلْهُ لِي فِي الدُّنْيَا. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "سَبِّحَانَ اللَّهَ لَا تُطِيعُهُ أَوْ لَا تَسْتَطِيعُهُ أَفَلَا قُلْتَ: اللَّهُمَّ آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ"، قَالَ: فَدَعَا اللَّهَ لَهُ. فَشَفَّاهُ.

Someone was seriously ill during the time of the Prophet (*saws*). When he visited him he found that he had shrunk to the size of a chicken. The Prophet asked him if he had supplicated to Allah about something. The man replied: "Yes. I prayed to Allah that if You are going to punish me in the Hereafter, do it now, in this world." The Prophet told him: "Glory to Allah. You cannot bear it. Why did you not say: 'O Allah give us of the good things in this world (as well as) good things in the Hereafter, and save us from the Fire.' The man supplicated to Allah (*sawt*) in these words and he was cured (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

According to Qurtubi, one meaning of the words: "good things of the

Hereafter" is that the man may not enter the Fire in the Hereafter and then wait for an intercessor to rescue him.

Further, it is reported that these are the prayer words that `Umar (*ra*) used to say during his tawaf (circumambulation) of the *Ka'bah*.

Abdul Majid Daryabadi presents a Christian scholar's puzzle: "This is one of the most puzzling paradoxes in Islam. As to recognizing, using and enjoying this world, Islam is a most practical religion, but on its doctrine of salvation, it is absolutely and entirely other worldly" (McDonald, *Religious Life and Attitudes in Islam*, p.43).

418. That is to say that mere supplications and good intentions are not enough. The next step after the expression of good wishes is to come up with deeds that match with those wishes (Au.).

419. `Ali (*ra*) was asked: "How will Allah (*sawt*) take account of the deeds of the people in a single day?" He replied: "Even as He feeds them all everyday" (Qurtubi).

[203] And, remember Allah much through the appointed days.⁴²⁰ Whoever hastens in two days has no sin upon him, nor upon him who delays so long as he strives to gain piety. Fear Allah therefore, and be of knowledge that to Him you will return.⁴²¹

وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَنْ تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَنْ تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ لِمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٠٣﴾

420. It is the tenth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth of *Dhu al Hijjah*, that are meant by these words. They are also known as “*Ayyam al Tashriq*” (Ibn ‘Umar, Ibn Zubayr, Abu Musa, ‘Ata’, Mujahid, ‘Ikrimah, Sa’id ibn Jubayr, Abu Malik, Ibrahim Nakha’i, Yahya ibn Kathir, Hasan, Qatadah, Suddi, Zuhri, Rabi` b. Anas, Dahhak, Muqatil b. Hayyan, ‘Ata’ al Khurasani, Malik b. Anas and others Ibn Kathir). Ibn Kathir also reports a *hadith* on the authority of Ibn Jarir that the Prophet said:

عن عائشة، قالت: نهي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن صوم أيام التشريق وقال: وهي أيام أكل وشرب وذكر الله.“

“The Prophet prohibited fasts on these days. He said, “These are days of feast and Allah’s remembrance.”

These are also the days of “*takbirat*,” chanted in slightly raised voice after the five daily Prayers, starting from the “*Fajr*” of the tenth until the “*Asr*” of thirteenth *Dhu al Hijjah* (Au.).

421. That is, Muslims should remind themselves that similar to their gathering at the Hajj sites and dispersion to all parts of the world, there will be another and final gathering before Allah on the Day of Resurrection, and dispersion and entry into Heaven or Hell (Ibn Kathir).

Taqwa

Sayyid Qutb writes: “Thus we see here as we have seen in earlier sections that teachings concerned with faith and concepts ... teachings concerned with matters of worship, teachings concerned with fighting, ... are all assembled in a single strand and all of them are followed by warnings of punishment, that remind of Allah (*swt*), and the need for the humans to fear and obey Him.

“The discussion over the entry into the houses from the rear is followed by corrections in the concept of piety, concluding with the exhortation that piety does not consist in physical gestures. It is in being God conscious: “There is no piety in that you

should enter houses from the rear. Rather, piety is (in him) who fears Allah. Therefore, come to the houses by their doors, and fear Allah haply so you will prosper.'

"While discussing warfare, the Qur'an instructs the people not to transgress, and links it with the love of Allah and His dislike of it by saying: 'Allah does not approve of the transgressors.'

"While discussing fighting in the consecrated months, it terminates by saying: 'And fear Allah and know that Allah is with the righteous.'

"The discussion on charity also terminates with: 'And do things well. Verily Allah loves those who do things well.'

"Discussing Hajj rites Allah says: '*And fear Allah, and know that Allah is terrible in retribution.*'

"While declaring sensual indulgence, wickedness and wrangling as against the spirit of Hajj, the Qur'an terminates the passage by saying: 'And take provision with you. However, the best of provision is godfearing. Therefore, fear Me (alone), O those who have wisdom.'

"Even after exhorting the people to remember Allah (*swt*) much, the words that follow are: '*And fear Allah, and be of knowledge that to Him you will return.*'

"Thus we see that all these numerous commands of varying nature are strung together in a single strand ... the strand which grows out of the very nature of this religion, which does not allow for differentiation between methods of worship and those of the improvement of the heart and soul, or for the divorce of its administrative affairs from the affairs of the next world. In fact, this religion will not be established without the merger of the affairs of this world with the affairs of the next, those of the heart and soul with those of the social and international relationships, and not until this religion is allowed to organize the whole life so that it may shape it into one single and complete entity ... give it a single direction and a single system. This single system is specifically its very own, which is built on the application of the Law of Allah to all affairs of life."

[204] And among the people is one whose talks in worldly affairs will amaze you. He will put forward Allah as a witness with regard to what is in his heart – although he is a most stubborn disputant.⁴²²

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ وَهُوَ
أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ ﴿٢٠٤﴾

[205] When he turns his back, he strives to spread corruption in the land and destroy crops and cattle,⁴²³ even though Allah does not approve of mischief.

وَإِذَا تَوَلَّى سَعَى فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا
وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْفُسَادَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾

[206] When he is told: 'Fear Allah,' he is led by arrogance to more sins.⁴²⁴ Hell shall suffice for him an evil place to rest indeed .

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ
فَحَسْبُهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿٢٠٦﴾

422. These verses describe the hypocrite, although it is the behavior of Akhnas b. Shurayq that occasioned their revelation. He came to the Prophet swearing his faith in Islam but when he passed by a place he burned the crop and destroyed the cattle.

At this point Ibn Kathir relates several *ahadith* which say that the most abominable in the sight of Allah (*swt*) is the "*alad al khisam*": one who is stubborn in arguing against the Truth.

423. When people lead a corrupt life, Allah (*swt*) holds back rains as punishment which causes death of animals and vegetation (Mujahid Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi adds: The verse implies that the multiplication and growth of animals and vegetation should be pursued in Islam.

424. Qurtubi records 'Abdullah (Ibn Mas'ud Alusi) as having said: "It is enough of a sin for a man that his brother should tell him, 'Fear Allah,' and he should reply, 'Look after yourself. Does a man of your sort lecture me?!'"

Qurtubi also reports the incident of a Jew who had to see Harun al Rashid for an affair. He waited for one whole year to reach him but failed. One day the man stood at the palace gate and when Harun came out he rushed forward and placing himself in front of him said: "Fear God, O Commander of the Faithful." Harun

[207] While among the people is one who will readily sell himself in search of Allah's Pleasure. Allah is full of kindness towards such of His slaves.⁴²⁵

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ
اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَؤُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٢٠٧﴾

[208] O you who have believed, enter into Islam whole heartedly and do not follow in the footsteps of Satan,⁴²⁶ indeed he is your avowed enemy.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَآفَّةً
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ
عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٠٨﴾

alighted and went into prostration. When he lifted his head he ordered that the man's need be attended to. Someone questioned him if he had to come down from his beast in reaction to a Jew reproaching him. He said, "No. Not necessarily. But I was reminded of the verse: '*And when he is told: "Fear Allah," He is led by arrogance to more sins. (Beware) his abode is Hell fire an evil place to lie.*'"

Thanwi adds: The verse pronounces the rule of 'cessation of admonition when faced with the stubborn arrogance.'

425. Although the application can be general, Suhayb Rumi (ra) was the cause of revelation of this verse. When he wanted to migrate to Madinah the Makkans blocked his way. He asked them whether they would let him go if he gave them his wealth. They agreed. He gave them all his wealth and walked away empty handed (Ibn Kathir). According

to another report recorded by Ibn Jarir, in which Suhayb (ra) has not been mentioned by name, he gave away his house also. Qurtubi points out that Suhayb was then in his advanced age!

Yusuf Ali adds: "This second type of man firm, sincere, devoted, willing to give his life for the faith that is in him was common in early Islam. Such men were its pillars. Through persecution, obloquy, torture, threat to their own lives or the lives of those dear to them, they stood by their leader and many of them gave their lives. That is what established Islam. We are asked in the next verse to follow this type and shun the other or evil type. If we do that, our Cause is safe."

426. Those are addressed whose Islam is on their tongues. They are being advised that they enter into Islam wholeheartedly (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Another report suggests that this

[209] But if you backslide⁴²⁷ after the clear signs have come to you, then be aware that Allah is Powerful, Wise.⁴²⁸

فَإِنْ زَلَلْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْكُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ
فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٩﴾

[210] Are they but awaiting that Allah should come to them in canopies of clouds,⁴²⁹ with the angels, and the affair be settled?⁴³⁰ And to Allah the affairs are returned.⁴³¹

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظُلَلٍ
مِنَ الْغَمَامِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَإِلَى
اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٢١٠﴾

verse was revealed when new converts from Judaism requested the Prophet that they be allowed to follow the *Tawrah* (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others).

427. Yusuf Ali notes: "If you backslide after the conviction has been brought home to you, you may cause some inconvenience to the Cause, or to those who counted upon you, but do not be so arrogant as to suppose that you will defeat God's Power and Wisdom. The loss will be your own."

428. That is, Allah (*swt*) is Powerful, so nothing can prevent Him from punishing you, but He is Wise, so He gives you time to repent.

It is said that someone recited this verse ending with "*Ghafurur Rahim*," (instead of "*Azizun Hakimun*"). A Bedouin was passing by. He said if it is Allah's revelation it cannot remind of His kindness while disapproving of "backsliding" (Qurtubi, Alusi,

Zamakhshari).

Qurtubi adds: The verse implies that the responsibility of a knowledgeable man is far greater than that of the ignorant.

429. Ibn Jarir says that the verse has been interpreted in several ways. However, all of them confirm that Allah will arrive. Abu al 'Aliyyah's explanation is that it is the angels that will arrive in the canopies of clouds, while Allah will arrive 'on whatever' He will. Mujahid, Qatadah and 'Ikrimah are also close to this opinion. Nevertheless, Ibn Jarir adds, Allah's coming has been interpreted in several ways: one, real movement, another, as the coming of His commandment, and a third, as the coming of His rewards and punishments.

Ibn Jarir, however, is personally inclined to believe in the movement of Allah. He narrates a long *hadith* which reports Abu Hurayrah as say-

ing: When the people will be exhausted by the 'standing' in the Field of Judgment they will approach the Prophets, one after another, starting with Adam (*asws*) ending up with our Prophet (*saws*). He will accept to intercede and will prostrate himself under the 'Arsh praying to Allah that He come to judge between the people. Allah will accept his intercession and with the splitting open of the firmament closest to the earth, then the next, then the next, until the seventh, the bearers of the 'Arsh, angels of each firmament and, finally, Allah will Himself come down in canopies of clouds (abridged).

Imām Razi is of the firm opinion that Allah neither comes nor goes nor does He move, being everywhere at any given moment time and space being His creations. The strange part of this opinion is that he says this is the confirmed opinion of the *Salaf al Salih*. He concludes, all the same, that no interpretation can be offered to the words: "*Are they but awaiting that Allah should (Himself) come to them...*"

In the absence of a *Sahih hadith*, there are differences in opinion over the explanation of these words. Qurtubi quotes various opinions but rejects the possibility of Allah's movement,

as a characteristic of physical bodies. He reports Ibn 'Abbas through Abu Saleh, that these words are of the unknowable class (*mutashaabihaat*), that ought to be left un-interpreted.

Ibn Kathir re narrates the *hadith* of Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) from Ibn Jarir, but in a much shortened form and without passing, against his usual habit, his personal judgment with regards to its authenticity. He quotes a few more *ahadith* on the subject of Allah's coming but disqualifies them as untrustworthy. Nonetheless, he is inclined to believe in the "coming" of Allah.

Shawkani drops off the *hadith* of Abu Hurayrah, recounts various possible meanings, as discussed by Ibn Jarir and Razi, and ends up re narrating a few of those reports that Ibn Kathir rejects as weak, including one of Ibn Mas'ud which attributes to the Prophet the words that Allah will descend down from the 'Arsh on to the *Kursiyy*. This report however has been, according to Sayyid Ibrahim, evaluated as weak by Dhahabi and Albani.

Rashid Rida, who quotes Imām Ghazali's opinion that the allusion is to the "removal of the veils," is himself, along with his mentor Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh, of the opinion

that the words: “Are they but awaiting that Allah should (Himself) come to them in canopies of clouds..” are of the *mutashabihat* type that should be left to themselves.

Alusi interprets the word “comes” as “*zuhoor*” (appearance) but warns that the Salaf al Saleh firmly refused to discuss these matters.

Sabuni concludes by quoting Ibn Taymiyyah: “The practice of the Salaf has all along been that they described Allah (*swt*) the way He described Himself, or as the Prophet (*saws*) described Him, without quantifying or qualifying. Allah is One the like Whom does not exist. Therefore, if it is asked, ‘How can Allah move?’ the reply would be: ‘Just as His Being is unknowable, so are His Attributes.’

Ibn Hibban, however, (d. 353 A.H.) has the following to say as Abu Hatim’s note to the *hadith* that speaks of Allah’s coming down to the firmament closest to the earth during the last third part of the night:

صفات الله جل وعلا لا تكيف ولا تقاس إلى صفات المخلوقين فكما أن الله جل وعلا متكلم من غير آلة بأسنان ولهوات ولسان وشفة كالمخلوقين جل ربنا وتعالى عن مثل هذا وأشباهه ولم يجوز أن يقاس كلامه إلى كلامنا لأن كلام المخلوقين لا يوجد إلا بآلات والله جل وعلا يتكلم كما شاء بلا آلة كذلك ينزل بلا آلة ولا تحرك ولا انتقال من مكان إلى مكان

(صحيح ابن حبان بتحقيق الأرناؤوط)

“Allah’s Attributes ought not to be qualified or quantified, nor should they be likened to those of His creations. For, as Allah speaks without the means of the teeth, the tongue or the lips, as His creations do, ... so also He comes down without any means, without moving and without shifting from place to place. (*Sahih Ibn Hibban bi Tartib Ibn Balban, hadith* 920, vol.3, p. 200).

430. That is, are they waiting for the Day of Resurrection? (Ibn Kathir).

The “*Fi*” preceding the “*Zulalim min al ghamami*” has been interpreted as “*ma`a*” i.e. “with.” As in the phrase:

أقبل الأمير في العسكر

“*Aqbala al Amir fi al `askar*,” where, what is meant is that the Amir came down with his troops.

There have been other interpretations, but Ibn `Abbas is reported to have said that the verse is of the kind whose interpretation should not be sought (Qurtubi).

431. That is, when full justice will be done so that, as a *hadith* says, every oppressor will be made to compensate to the one he or she oppressed,

[211] Ask the Children of Israel how many a clear sign We gave them.⁴³² And whosoever substitutes a favor of Allah⁴³³ after it was received (should know that) Allah is stern in punishment.

سَلْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَمْ آتَيْنَاهُم مِّنْ آيَةٍ بَيِّنَةٍ
وَمَن يَبْدِلْ نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢١١﴾

to the extent that a hornless goat will receive retribution from a horned goat (that had hit her without cause) Ibn Jarir.

Legal Points

1. According to the Hanafiyy school, it is quite lawful that one perform 'Umrah during the Hajj season and return home without performing Hajj. However, if he stays back within the *Miqat* then it is obligatory on him to also perform Hajj the same year (*I'laa' al Sunan*).

2. Explaining "*Wuquf al 'Arafah*," Qurtubi has stated that it is allowable to stay in 'Arafat on an animal's back. If one cannot afford that, he may stand on his feet, although he could also sit down, but at all events engaged in supplications and prayers. However, to be on the back of a beast is better. He reports Imām Malik as having said that he would prefer to be on the back of a beast in 'Arafat rather than on his feet.

3. According to the Hanafiyyah and Malikiyyah, the period within which

the "*Eid al Ad-ha*" sacrifice should be made extends to the evening of the thirteenth of *Dhu al Hijjah*. But, according to the Hanabilah and Shafe'iyyah, the period extends only to the twelfth of *Dhu al Hijjah* (*Al-Arba'ah*).

432. For instance, they were given the *Tawrah* but they refused to accept its commandments. The sea was divided for them, but they began to worship the heifer. They were given *Mann and Salwa* but they insisted on the produce of the earth. Prophets were sent down among them but they murdered them (Ibn Jarir and Thanwi condensed).

433. By the term "favor" it is the Religion of Allah (*swt*) sent through the Prophets that has been intended, while "substitution" refers to distortion, disbelief and rejection (Mujahid, Suddi, Rabi', Ibn Jarir).

434. Who has made this life alluring to the unbelievers? One answer is: the Devil. Another possibility is that it is Allah (*swt*) since in the ultimate analysis it is He who creates

[212] The life of this world has been made al-luring to the unbelievers,⁴³⁴ so they make fun of those that have believed. But those that have attained to piety will be (far) above them on the Day of Resurrection.⁴³⁵ Allah bestows upon whomsoever He will without measure.⁴³⁶

رَبِّنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَيَسْخَرُونَ
مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٢١٢﴾

thoughts, ideas and propensities (Razi).

435. Why did Allah say “those that attained to piety” and not simply “the believers” as one would expect in the light of the unbelievers making fun of “the believers,” as stated in the earlier part of the verse? The answer is: it is to impress that Paradise will be inherited by those believers who attain to piety. However, the sinning Muslim cannot be ruled out altogether in view of the Pardon (that Allah will grant to whomsoever He will) Razi.

436. “Allah bestows upon whomsoever He will without measure,” i.e. Allah bestows His blessings of all kinds in great measure on whomsoever He will. Hence His slaves should not hesitate to expend of what He has bestowed on them as said the Prophet in a *hadith*:

”ابن آدم أنفق أنفق عليك“

“Son of Adam! Spend, and it will

be spent on you.”

He also said:

”أنفق بلالاً ولا تخش من ذي العرش إقللاً“

“Spend O Bilal. Do not fear a decrease from He who owns He also said in a *Sahih hadith*,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَا مِنْ يَوْمٍ يُصْبِحُ الْعِبَادُ فِيهِ إِلَّا مَلَكَانِ يَنْزِلَانِ فَيَقُولُ أَحَدُهُمَا اللَّهُمَّ أَعْطِ مُنْفِقًا خَلَفًا وَيَقُولُ الْآخَرُ اللَّهُمَّ أَعْطِ مُمْسِكًا تَلَفًا.

No day dawns but two angels descend from the Heavens morning and say: “O Allah, bestow on him who spends that which will last; and bestow on him who holds back that which will fizzle out.”

In another *Sahih hadith* he said:

”يَقُولُ ابْنُ آدَمَ: مَا لِي. مَا لِي (قَالَ) وَهَلْ لَكَ، يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ مِنْ مَالِكَ إِلَّا مَا أَكَلْتُ فَأَقْتَيْتَ، أَوْ لَبَسْتُ فَأَبْلَيْتَ، أَوْ تَصَدَّقْتُ فَأَمْضَيْتَ؟“.

“Son of Adam says: ‘My wealth, my wealth.’ But is there any

[213] Mankind was one community.⁴³⁷ (But differences arose), so Allah sent Messengers giving glad tiding and warning,⁴³⁸ and sent with them the Book with the truth, in order that it may judge among the people in matters wherein they had differed. But none disagreed with it save those (very people) that had been given it, after they had received clear signs, out of contention with each other. Therefore, Allah guided by His will those who had believed to the right course in matters concerning the truth wherein they were contending.⁴³⁹ And Allah guides whomsoever He will to the straight path.

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيُحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢١٣﴾

wealth for you save what you ate and finished off, what you wore and tore it out, what you spent and is gone? What remains will be for others when you are gone.”

In another *hadith* preserved by Ahmad he said:

الدنيا دار من لا دار له ولها يجمع من لا عقل له

“This world is his home who has no home (in the Hereafter), and wealth for him who has no wealth (in the Hereafter). Only he amasses wealth for it who is short of intelligence” (Ibn Kathir).

(This last *hadith* was declared weak by Haythami: Au.).

437. Majid notes: ‘(In the beginning)

mankind was one community.’ This implies that originally there was but one religion in the world the religion of Monotheism. Contrary to the conclusion arrived at by an older generation of scientists and pseudo scientists, recent discoveries both in Archaeology and Anthropology have proved that monotheism not polytheism, was the religion of the oldest races of mankind. ‘The evidence of Anthropology,’ says a leading archaeologist of the day, Sir Charles Marston, ‘will be cited in these columns to prove that the original religion of the early races was actually Monotheism or something very like it’ (*The Bible is True*, p.25). ‘The theory of the evolution of Religion is contradicted by the evidence of both Archaeology and Anthropology’ (p.

29), "This is the very careful and deliberate conclusion of Dr. Langdon, Professor of Assyriology at Oxford, probably the greatest living authority on cuneiform literature ... As a result of his excavations at Kish, Dr. Langdon writes: 'In my opinion, the history of the oldest religion of man is a rapid decline from monotheism to extreme polytheism and wide spread belief in evil spirits. It is in a very true sense the history of the fall of man' (pp. 58, 61). 'Thus is the evidence, from the most ancient libraries of cuneiform tablets, that Monotheism was the original religion. And there is confirmation of this great fact from other sources, especially from the Science of Anthropology. Along with this is the evidence of a universal belief in Future Life' (p. 265).

According to a trustworthy report Ibn 'Abbas says that there were twenty generations between Adam and Nuh: all of them following the true religion, until corruption began to appear and Allah (*swt*) began sending down His Prophets as war-ners and evangelists (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Jarir quotes a poetical piece from Nabigha to show that the term "*um-mah*" (as used in the Qur'an here) is

also used in the sense of "religion."

438. Ibn Hibban has recorded a *hadith* which says that Abu Dharr (*ra*) asked the Prophet (*saws*):

قلت: يا نبي الله كم عدد الأنبياء؟ قال: "مائة ألف وأربعة وعشرون ألفاً الرسل من ذلك ثلاث مائة وخمسة عشر جمّاً غفيراً" (مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

"How many Prophets (*anbiya*) have there been?" He replied: "One hundred and twenty four thousand." He asked: "And how many Messengers (*rusul*)?" He said: "Three hundred and thirteen. And that is a lot" (Alusi).

(Haythami declared this report weak: Au.).

439. With reference to this verse: "Therefore, Allah guided by His Will those who had believed to the right course in (all those) matters concerning the truth in which they (who had disbelieved) were contending," Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) reports that the Prophet said:

"نَحْنُ الْآخِرُونَ السَّابِقُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ، بَيَدَ أَتْهَمِ
أَوْثُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا ، ثُمَّ هَذَا يَوْمُهُمُ الَّذِي فُرِضَ
عَلَيْهِمْ فَاحْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ ، فَهَذَا اللَّهُ ، فَالنَّاسُ لَنَا فِيهِ
تَبَعٌ ، أَلَيْهُودُ عَدَا وَالنَّصَارَى بَعْدَ عَدِي " - صحيح
البخارى

"We are the last (to appear) but

shall be the first in the Hereafter. We will be the first of the people (to enter Paradise), although they were given the Book earlier than us. Allah (*swt*) guided us to this day (Friday) in which they differed among themselves. But Allah guided us. Therefore, the other people are our followers; tomorrow (Saturday) is for the Jews and the day after (Sunday) for the Christians” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Zayd said: Allah guided us to Islam. They (the Jews and Christians) disagreed over the Prayers, so that some pray facing the east, while others facing Jerusalem. Allah guided us to the right *Qiblah*. They disagreed over fasts so that some fast a part of the day, others a part of the night. Allah guided us to the right way. They disagreed over Friday so that the Jews chose Saturday for themselves and the Christians Sunday. Allah guided us to Friday. They disagreed about Ibrahim (*saws*), so that the Jews said he was a Jew and the Christians said he was a Christian. Allah exonerated him of all that and declared him a *Hanif* and a Muslim. He also exonerated him of what the polytheists had fabricated about him that he was an idol worshipper. They disagreed about `Isa so that the Jews

alleged impropriety on the part of Maryam (*asws*) and the Christians made a god of Jesus. Allah guided us to the truth about him. This is the meaning of Allah saying: “*Therefore, Allah guided by His Will those who had believed in the right course in (all those) matters concerning the truth in which they (who had disbelieved) were contending*” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Alusi: the report is by Ibn Abi Hatim).

The sum and substance of the above has been reported in *ahadith* also (Au.).

Traditionists have recorded a *hadith* from `A'isha according to which the Prophet used to say the following prayer words during his night vigils (*tahajjud*):

كَانَ إِذَا قَامَ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ افْتَتَحَ صَلَاتَهُ فَقَالَ "اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ جِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَائِيلَ وَإِسْرَافِيلَ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَعَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ اهْدِنِي لِمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِكَ إِنَّكَ تَهْدِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ".
قَالَ هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ غَرِيبٌ.

“O Allah, the Lord of Jibril, Mika'il and Israfil, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Knower of the seen and the unseen. You who judges between the people in affairs in which they differ Guide me by Your

[214] Or do you reckon that you will enter Paradise, while (trials) similar to those (that visited others) before you, have not yet come to you?⁴⁴⁰ Suffering and adversity touched them, and they were shaken⁴⁴¹ until the Messenger and those who had believed in him cried out: 'When (will come) Allah's help?'⁴⁴² Lo! Allah's help is close.

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصْرُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ ﴿٢١٤﴾

leave in affairs in which they differ concerning the truth. Indeed You guide whomsoever to the Right Path.”

(The *hadith* is in Tirmidi, Abu Da'ud, and Ahmad which although declared weak by Tirmidhi was recorded by Ibn Hibban in his *Sahih*: Au.).

Another supplication of the Prophet used to be in the following words:

اللهم، أرنا الحق حَقًّا وارزقنا اتباعه، وأرنا الباطل باطلا ووقفنا لاجتنابه، ولا تجعله ملتبسا علينا ففضل، واجعلنا للمتقين إماما.

“O Allah, show us the Truth as Truth, and help us follow it. Show us falsehood as falsehood, and help us avoid it. Do not let it remain a matter of doubt for us, for then we will be misguided. And make of us leaders of the righteous” (Ibn Kathir).

(The authenticity of the above report could not be established: Au.).

440. With reference to the words, “Do you think that you will enter Paradise..?” it is reported that this revelation came when, unable to bear the persecutions of the Quraysh, Khabbab b. al Art asked the Prophet to pray to Allah for help. The report is as follows:

أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ مُتَوَسِّدٌ بُرْدَةً وَهُوَ فِي ظِلِّ الْكَعْبَةِ وَقَدْ لَقِينَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ شِدَّةً فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَلَا تَدْعُو اللَّهَ فَقَعَدَ وَهُوَ مُحْمَرٌّ وَجْهُهُ فَقَالَ لَقَدْ كَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَيْمَسْتُ بِمِشَاطِ الْحَدِيدِ مَا دُونَ عِظَامِهِ مِنْ لَحْمٍ أَوْ عَصَبٍ مَا يَصْرِفُهُ ذَلِكَ عَنْ دِينِهِ وَيُوضَعُ الْمِنْشَارُ عَلَى مَقْرِقِ رَأْسِهِ فَيُشَقُّ بِاثْنَيْنِ مَا يَصْرِفُهُ ذَلِكَ عَنْ دِينِهِ وَلَيْتَمَنَّ اللَّهُ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ حَتَّى يَسِيرَ الرَّكِيبُ مِنْ صَنْعَاءَ إِلَى حَضْرَمَوْتَ مَا يَخَافُ إِلَّا اللَّهَ.

Khabbab said, I went up to the Prophet while he was resting on his (folded) cloak under the shade of the *Ka'bah*. We had encountered quite harsh treatment at the hands of the pagans. I said, “Will you not pray against the pagans?” His face turned

red. He said, "Such people have passed before you who would have a saw run through the middle of the skull until it arrived between his legs, but that would not deter him from his religion. An iron comb would be used to comb through his flesh until it scratched the bones but it would not deter him from his faith." Then he added: "By God, Allah will complete this religion (and give it victory over others) until a rider will travel from San'a to Hadrmaut fearing none but Allah." (According to other reports, nothing will worry him about his cattle save the wolf. But you are a people who are impatient)" - Ibn Kathir, Razi, Alusi.

Majid remarks: "Entry into Heaven presupposes some measure of suffering maybe in certain cases, exceedingly slight either mental or physical in this world. The higher one's spiritual ambitions, the greater the trials and tribulations one is expected to undergo. And none could be greedier of spiritual advancement than the Muslims of the Prophet's time, his 'companions.' Hence their readiness to undergo the hardest affliction in the service of God's religion."

Tests and Trials

Tirmidhi has recorded a *hadith* of Abu Sa'd who says he asked the Prophet:

عن مُصْعَبِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَيُّ النَّاسِ أَشَدَّ بَلَاءً؟ قَالَ: "الْأَنْبِيَاءُ ثُمَّ الْأَمْثَلُ فَالْأَمْثَلُ: فَيُبْتَلَى الرَّجُلُ عَلَى حَسَبِ دِينِهِ، فَإِنْ كَانَ فِي دِينِهِ صُلْبًا أَشَدَّ بَلَاءً، وَإِنْ كَانَ فِي دِينِهِ رِقَّةً ابْتُلِيَ عَلَى حَسَبِ دِينِهِ، فَمَا يَبْرُحُ الْبَلَاءُ بِالْعَبْدِ حَتَّى يَتَرَكَ يَمْشِي عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مَا عَلَيْهِ خَطِيئَةٌ." (قال أبو عيسى: هذا حديث حسن صحيح)

"Messenger of Allah, which of the people is tried most." He said: "The Prophets, and then those closest to them and then those closest to them. A man is tried in proportion to the strength of his faith. If there is strength in his religion, tests are increased in severity. But if there is weakness in his religion, he is tested accordingly. And tests keep on descending on a man until he walks on the earth without a sin upon him" (Au.).

441. "And they were shaken:" The Companions of the Prophet had to pass through tests that shook them to their core. One of the occasions was during the Battle of the Trench which the Qur'an has described in these words (33: 9 12):

إِذْ جَاءُوكُم مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنكُمْ وَإِذْ زَاغَتِ

[215] They ask you concerning what it is that they should expend.⁴⁴³ Tell them, 'Whatever you expend of the wealth is for the parents,⁴⁴⁴ the kindred, the orphans, the destitute and the wayfarer.' Indeed, Allah is Aware of whatever good you do.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ
مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَى
وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ
خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢١٥﴾

الْأَبْصَارَ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ
الظُّنُونِ هُنَالِكَ ابْتُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَزُلْزِلُوا زَلْزَالًا شَدِيدًا.
وَإِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ مَا وَعَدَنَا
اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا [الأحزاب/ ١٠-١٢]

“When they descended upon you from your front and from the rear, when eyes became down-cast, and the hearts began to leap to the throats and you began to imagine wild things about Allah. It was then that the believers were tested and shaken with high tremors. When the hypocrites and those in whose heart is a sickness began to say, ‘Allah and His Messenger did not make but false promises to us’ (Ibn Kathir).

442. “When will come Allah’s help?”: Since these words betray despair and impatience which are not the qualities of prophets, the interpretation offered by some scholars is that the words “when will come Allah’s help” was from the followers of the prophets and “verily, Allah’s help is nigh” from the prophets (Qurtubi, Za-

makhshari). Razi, however, expresses his reservations about the interpretation, and so does Alusi.

If the statement is accepted as coming from a Prophet, then Thanwi’s note might throw light on another aspect. He says: “The cry emphasizes the entirely human nature of the prophets.”

443. According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra) this verse was revealed in response to the enquiry of ‘Amr b. al Jamuh who was an old and rich man and who asked the Prophet about what and on whom should he spend (Alusi).

Yusuf Ali notes: “Three questions arise in charity: (1) What shall we give? (2) to whom shall we give? and (3) how shall we give? The answer is here. Give anything that is good, useful, helpful, valuable. It may be property or money; it may be a helping hand; it may be advice: it may be a kind word: ‘whatever you do that is good’ is charity. On the other hand if you throw away what is useless, there is no charity in it...To whom should

[216] Prescribed for you is fighting⁴⁴⁵ though it be hateful to you.⁴⁴⁶ But it is possible that you dislike a thing and it is good for you, and it is possible that you love a thing and it is harmful to you. Allah knows, and you know not.

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢١٦﴾

you give? It may be tempting to earn the world's praise by a gift that will be talked about, but are you meeting the needs of those who have their first claim on you? If not, you are like a person who defrauds creditors: it is no charity."

Mahran b. Maymun has said: "Such are the objects of expenditure. It might be noted that Allah (*swt*) did not mention musical instruments, oil paintings, or murals" (Ibn Kathir).

444. Qurtubi reports Imām Malik's opinion that if the father is in need of getting married again, but cannot by himself, the son should help him out. Also, the step mother is included in the term 'parents' with same material rights.

445. Ibn Kathir quotes Zuhri's opinion: "*Jihad* is obligatory on everyone without exception, it being immaterial whether one actually takes part in a battle or not. Someone who stays back from the battlefield, is required to help (materially) whenever there is

a call. But when he is asked to come out and take part in the fighting, he should, sitting back only when he is not required." Accordingly, a *hadith* (of Muslim) says:

" مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَغْزُ وَلَمْ يُحَدِّثْ بِهِ نَفْسَهُ مَاتَ عَلَى شُعْبَةٍ مِنْ نِفَاقٍ "

"Whoever died without taking part in a *Jihad* and without intending to do it, died on a branch of hypocrisy" (Ibn Kathir).

Majid adds : "War, it has been truly said, is sanctioned by the law of nature the constitution of man and the constitution of society ... Islam, the ideal practical religion, has allowed it, but only in cases of sheer necessity. In Christianity, 'the coming of the Lord is associated with terrible wars ... In the Epistles, St. Paul shows in a dozen references to a soldier's career that he looked at it with interest and even with sympathy' (DB. IV p. 895)."

Legal Points

1. *Jihad* is obligatory (*fard `ayn*) on every Muslim in the event of the land of Islam being attacked and conditionally obligatory (*fard kifayah*) when hostilities are taking place in the lands of the enemy (Alusi).

2. *Jihad* becomes *fard `ayn* (an unconditional obligation) on those living in the area attacked. However, if the Muslims of the area are unable to fight off the invaders then it becomes *fard `ayn* on those nearest to the area of conflict. It also becomes *fard `ayn* if the *Amir al Muslimin* (the ruler of the area) orders everyone (or a particular person) to participate in the *Jihad* (*Ma`arif*).

3. However, if a situation arises in which no *Jihad* is taking place in any part of the world then all Muslims will be considered sinful. This is in view of the reports that “*Jihad* will continue until the Last Day” (*Ma`arif*).

4. According to the Hanafiyyah and a few others, *Jihad* should be con-

ducted by an Islamic state at least once in a year (Au.).

5. So long as *Jihad* has not been declared *fard `ayn* it is not permissible to go without the permission of the parents (*Ma`arif*). I.e., if someone happens to be the only son of parents who are too old to look after themselves, he cannot leave without his parent's leave (Au.).

446. “Persecuted, harassed, afflicted, poverty ridden, exiled, and small in numbers, as the Muslims were at the time of the enactment of warfare, it was but natural that they were not too fond of crossing swords with the mighty forces that had conspired for their extirpation. Nothing short of express and emphatic Divine command could urge them on to the field of battle. And yet the Islamic *Jihads* are declared to be ‘designed’ by the Prophet ‘to satisfy his discontented adherents by an accession of plunder!’ (Margoliouth) Such is this European scholar's love of veracity! Such is his wonderful reading of history!” (Majid).

[217] They ask you concerning fighting in the Sacred month.⁴⁴⁷ Tell them, 'Fighting therein is (a) grave (offence);⁴⁴⁸ but to bar from the way of Allah, disbelief in Him, and in the Holy Mosque, and expelling its people from it are (crimes of) greater (dimension) in the sight of Allah. And persecution is worse than slaughter.⁴⁴⁹ They will never cease fighting you until they have turned you back from your religion if they are able.⁴⁵⁰ But whosoever turns back from his religion, and dies in the state of unbelief, it is such whose works will go waste both in this life as well as in the next.⁴⁵¹ These are companions of the Fire. They shall abide in it forever.⁴⁵²

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ
قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدٌّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌ
بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ
يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرْدُوكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ إِنْ
اسْتَطَاعُوا وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ
فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ
هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢١٧﴾

447. The following incident became the cause of revelation of this verse. The Prophet sent eight of his Companions headed by `Abdullah b. Jahash (a cousin of the Prophet: Alusi), giving him a letter and instructing him that it was not to be opened until they had reached such and such a place. When the letter was opened it instructed them to move into the territory between Makkah and Tayf, and monitor the enemy movements. It also instructed that no one was to be forced along, rather, be given the choice to either continue or return. Despite the extreme risk to their lives, since the Makkans killed any Muslim found in their territory, of the eight none returned. On the

night of the last day of *Jumada II* they ambushed a small Makkan caravan, killing one man `Amr al Hadrami and capturing two. Thereafter they returned to Madinah with the booty. The first thing that the Prophet told them was: "I had not asked you to fight in the Sacred month!?" He kept the decision about the booty and the prisoners pending. This dismayed those who had participated in the campaign, and they thought they were doomed.

The Makkans of course seized on the opportunity and accused the Prophet (*saws*) of the violation of the sanctity of the sacred month that of *Rajab*, while `Abdullah ibn Jahash and his men maintained that it was the last

day of *Jumada II*. It was then that Allah (*swt*) revealed this verse.

This of course did not sanction fighting in this month, but the point was made that if bloodshed had occurred at all in a holy month, the polytheist had committed greater crimes that of expelling the Prophet and his followers from Makkah, persecuting the Muslims and barring their entry into Makkah for Pilgrimage.

Subsequent to the revelation of this verse, those who had participated in the ambush enquired the Prophet if they would be rewarded for their action. In response Allah (*swt*) revealed the verse (2: 218):

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَةَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ
[البقرة/٢١٨]

"Those who believed, and those who migrated and struggled in the Way of Allah, it is such who (rightly) hope to win Allah's Mercy. And Allah is very Forgiving, very Kind" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

448. The rule, however, banning fighting in the Sacred months (*Rajab, Dhu al Qa'dah, Dhu al Hijjah, and Muharram*) has been, according to the majority of scholars, abrogated. The Prophet attacked his enemies during these months (Ibn Jarir, Qur-

tubi, Alusi). Imām Razi says he does not know any contemporary scholar of Hejaz, Syria or Iraq who holds a different opinion.

However, there is no general consensus over the issue (*Ma'arif*).

449. Slaughter brings misery to the people in this world alone. But religious persecution destroys all that is good in this life, forcing a man to abandon his religion, bringing upon him the everlasting misery of the Hereafter (Au.).

450. The addition of these words: *"If they are able,"* gives assurance that they will never succeed in changing the religion of the Muslims by force (Alusi and others).

451. Majid adds a very useful note: *"Rebellion annuls all previous deeds of loyalty and virtue."*

There is difference of opinion whether the good works of days of Islam of the apostate remain in his credit if he reverts back to Islam or has he to work again and repeat the obligatory acts such as Hajj, *zakah* etc. Abu Hanifa's opinion is that all is lost and must be regained. As for one who is a born unbeliever, his good deeds hang in balance. If he embraces Islam they are written down in his ac-

[218] Surely, those who believed, and those who migrated and fought in the way of Allah,⁴⁵³ it is such who (rightly) hope to win Allah's Mercy.⁴⁵⁴ And Allah is very Forgiving, very Kind.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢١٨﴾

count, otherwise they are lost. This is supported by the *hadith*: "You came into the fold of Islam by virtue of your good deeds" (*Ma`arif*).

452. There is no difference in opinion that someone who reverts to *Kufr* from Islam is to be punished with death. The majority of scholars, however, believe that he should be persuaded to come back and allowed sufficient time to think over the issue and weigh the arguments well (Au.).

The rule of course does not apply to one who reverts from a religion other than Islam to another religion, such as Judaism to Christianity (Qurtubi).

However, this is for a male. An apostate woman's punishment is imprisonment for life (*Ma`arif*).

Majid writes: "Compare with this the Law of Moses which does not allow for repentance and re entry into faith. It recommends unconditional execution. (The *Tawrah* says): 'If thy brother ... entice thee secretly, saying, let us go and serve other gods, ... thou shalt surely kill him. ... And

thou shall stone him with stones that he die' (Dt. 13: 6 10)."

Christianity too, is not far behind. Majid quotes from the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics: "Willful apostasy was, of course, an inextinguishable offence, and ranked with murder and adultery" (I, p. 623)."

453. *Jihad* is fighting in the way of Allah. (Although included by implication), striving in the way of Allah is not, strictly speaking, *Jihad* per se. In this verse itself it has been used, as pointed out by Ibn Jarir, in the sense of "*those who fought*," since it is preceded by the words, "*those who believed, and those who left their homes*," which are themselves a kind of 'striving to the utmost in the way of Allah' (a form of *Jihad*). A *Jihad* which is sometimes defined by some people as: "*striving to the utmost*" is, what can be called for want of a better phrase, a passive *Jihad* and inferior to the active *Jihad* which involves fighting. Allah said (4: 95):

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فَضَّلَ

[219] They ask you concerning wine⁴⁵⁵ and gambling.⁴⁵⁶ Tell them: 'There are grave sins in both, although there are (some) benefits for mankind. However, the sin in them is greater than their benefits.' And they ask you concerning what it is that they should expend. Tell them, 'That which is in surplus.'⁴⁵⁷ Thus does Allah make clear His commandments in order that you may reflect

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا
إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ
تَنفَعِهِمَا وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ
كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١٩﴾

اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ
دَرَجَةً [النساء/٩٥]

"Not equal among the Muslims are those who sit back without (going through any) suffering, and those who struggle with their selves and their wealth in the way of Allah. Allah has given preference in rank to the mujahideen over those who sit back."

Some people who do not understand this point have worked hard in their lives for various causes of Islam without ever thinking of participating in an active *Jihad* under the belief that what they are engaged in is active *Jihad* (Au.).

454. The words: "They hope to win Allah's Mercy" indicate that in the final analysis it is not on our deeds that we can depend on, rather on Allah's Mercy for forgiveness and entry into Paradise. Qatadah has said: 'People who were addressed by these words

i.e., the Companions were the best of people on earth, yet Allah referred to them as those who hoped. Indeed it is the "hopeful" that will ask (for Allah's forgiveness); while he who is overwhelmed with fear will look for the escape route'" (*Rawa'i*).

455. Imām Ahmad, Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi and Nasa'i have reported that it was `Umar ibn al Khattab (*ra*) who pressed for a ruling on wine. When he first prayed to Allah that a clear commandment be sent, this verse was revealed:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ
لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ تَنفَعِهِمَا [البقرة/٢١٩]

"They ask you (O Prophet) concerning wine and gambling. Tell them: 'They are grave sins, though there are benefits for the people;' although the sin in them is greater than the benefits in them." (During those very days Mu'adh b. Jabal drank after a dinner and then led the Prayers dur-

ing which he recited the Qur'an erroneously: Zamakhshari). Therefore, 'Umar supplicated for a clearer injunction. In answer, verse 43 of *surah al Nisa'* was revealed which said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنتُمْ سُكَارَى
[النساء/٤٣]

"Believers. Do not come near the Prayers while you are drunk." Accordingly, the Prophet (*saws*) used to have it announced that whoever had drunk wine may not come for Prayers. (During those days Sa'd b. Waqqas hosted a drinking party during which the people came to blows under intoxication: Zamakhshari). However, 'Umar (*ra*) was dissatisfied with this also and prayed for a clearer injunction. It was then that the verse completely prohibiting intoxicants was revealed. The verse, 91 of *surah al Ma'idah*, said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ
وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُفْلِحُونَ (٩٠) إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمْ
الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ
عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ
[المائدة/٩٠، ٩١]

"Believers, surely wine, gambling, stones (dedicated to altars), and (divination by) arrows are abomination and Satan's handiwork" ... until ... "Will you then abstain?" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

'Umar himself has defined wine as "anything that intoxicates." (Further, both small and large quantities of anything that intoxicates is prohibited: Qurtubi). Also prohibited is its buying and selling (Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi narrates the singular incident of a drunken man who was washing his face with his own urine and saying: "Allah be praised for having guided me to Islam!"

Qurtubi also relates the following story: 'It is said that A'shi, the famous poet, decided to embrace Islam. On his way to Madinah he met a couple of pagans. They asked him about his intentions and on learning that he was going to Muhammad (*saws*) they told him: "Do not go, for he will order you to Pray." He replied: "(That does not matter for) a man is obliged to worship God." They told him: "He will ask you to spend money on the poor." He said: "Ordering good deeds (of this sort) is (also) an obligation." They said: "He prohibits adultery." He replied: "It's a vile act and an unreasonable thing. Moreover, I am an old man and no more in need of it." Finally, they told him: "He prohibits wine." This had its effect. He said: "As for this, I do not think I can restrain myself." So he turned back saying: "Let me drink

for a year and then I will go (and embrace Islam).” But, he did not reach home. On his way back he fell from his mule, broke his neck and died.’

Mufti Shafi` states the following: ‘Abdullah ibn `Umar (ra) has reported that when the announcement about the prohibition of the intoxicants was made, those who had them in the vessels, broke those vessels, those who were drinking stopped immediately, and those who had the cups at their lips threw them away. It is said that so much wine was spilled that day that it flowed like rain water in the lanes of Madinah. Later, the Prophet (saws) got collected all the wine that was with the merchants, destroyed some with his own hands and got the rest destroyed at the hands of his Companions. More amazing was the case of a Companion whose main business was liquor. He was in Syria when the prohibition came. He arrived with a whole caravan load of wine. Learning of the prohibition, he left the goods a little out of town and presented himself to the Prophet. He asked him what he was to do with the merchandise. The Prophet told him to destroy it. He went back and destroyed it all and entered Madinah empty handed.

Nonetheless, these incidents were, according to an eminent Western biographer of the Prophet, of tragic nature. He pours his grief in the following words quoted by Majid: “When the revelation came, zealous followers went round the houses of the Moslems and emptied their vessels of all liquor which was supposed to be intoxicating, in many cases breaking the vessels themselves; and trading Moslems who brought wine home from Syria after this event were compelled to pour their earnings away...!”

The irony is that the same Orientalists have popularized the notion that Islam spread by the sword (Au.).

456. Gambling: Every game of chance involving exchange of money or assets is gambling.

457. The meaning of spending the “*afw*” (surplus: Ibn `Abbas), has been well brought out by a *hadith* according to which,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- " تَصَدَّقُوا ". قَالَ رَجُلٌ عِنْدِي دِينَارٌ. قَالَ " تَصَدَّقْ بِهِ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ ". قَالَ عِنْدِي دِينَارٌ آخَرُ. قَالَ " تَصَدَّقْ بِهِ عَلَى زَوْجِكَ ". قَالَ عِنْدِي دِينَارٌ آخَرُ. قَالَ " تَصَدَّقْ بِهِ عَلَى وَلَدِكَ ". قَالَ عِنْدِي دِينَارٌ آخَرُ. قَالَ " تَصَدَّقْ بِهِ عَلَى خَادِمِكَ ". قَالَ عِنْدِي دِينَارٌ آخَرُ. قَالَ " أَنْتَ أَضَرُّ "

The Prophet encouraged his men to expend. A man said: "I have a Dinar." The Prophet told him: "Spend it on yourself." The man said: "I have another." He told him: "Spend it on your wife." He said: "I have another." He told him: "Spend it on your children." The man said: "I have yet another." The Prophet told him: "Then you know better (who deserves it most)" - Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir.

(The above *hadith* is also in Hakim who declared it as of a good chain, and so said Arna'ut: Au.).

According to another *hadith* (in Bukhari: Au.) the Prophet said:

" خَيْرُ الصَّدَقَةِ مَا كَانَ عَنْ ظَهْرِ غِيٍّ ، وَإِنْدَاءُ يَمَنٍ تَعُولُ "

"The best of charity is that which is spent out of the surplus. The upper hand is better than the lower. And, begin (by spending) on someone with a large family."

This verse is the basis of the opinion that treasuring is undesirable (Than-wi).

Ibn Jarir also reports a *hadith* related by 'Abdullah ibn Jabir who says that once while the Prophet sat in the company of his Companions a man

came to him with a piece of gold the size of an egg that he had found in a mine. He said:

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ قَالَ كُنَّا عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- إِذْ جَاءَ رَجُلٌ بِمِثْلِ بَيْضَةِ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَصَبْتُ هَذِهِ مِنْ مَعْدِنٍ فَخَذَهَا فَهِيَ صَدَقَةٌ مَا أَمْلِكُ غَيْرَهَا. فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- ثُمَّ أَنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلِ رُكْبَتِهِ الْأَيْمَنِ فَقَالَ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ ثُمَّ أَنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلِ رُكْبَتِهِ الْأَيْسَرِ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- ثُمَّ أَنَاهُ مِنْ خَلْفِهِ فَأَخَذَهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فَخَذَهُ بِمَا قَلَوُ أَصَابَتُهُ لَأَوْجَعَتْهُ أَوْ لَعَفَرَتْهُ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- " يَا أَيُّ أَحَدِكُمْ بِمَا يَمْلِكُ يَقْبُولُ هَذِهِ صَدَقَةٌ ثُمَّ يَقْعُدُ يَسْتَكِفُّ النَّاسَ خَيْرَ الصَّدَقَةِ مَا كَانَ عَنْ ظَهْرِ غِيٍّ " - سنن أبي داود - ورواه الحاكم في المستدرک وقال : " هذا حديث صحيح على شرط مسلم ، ولم يخرجاه " . ووافقه الذهبي

"Here. Accept this, O Messenger of Allah, as charity. And by Allah, I have nothing in the world save this." The Prophet turned to the other side. The man followed him and came to him from that side. The Prophet turned to the other side. The man came to him from the other side. At this the Prophet took it from him and threw it away with such a force that had it struck a man it would have hurt him. He said angrily: "One of you comes to me with all that he possesses to be spent as charity. Then he will sit down

[220] Over the present world as well as the next.⁴⁵⁸ And they ask you about the orphans. Tell them: 'The best thing is promotion of their welfare.' Therefore, if you mingle (your food) with theirs, then, they are your brethren.⁴⁵⁹ And Allah knows the corrupt from the well intending. Had Allah willed He could have made things difficult for you, verily, He is Mighty, Wise.

فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْيَتَامَىٰ
قُلْ إِصْلَاحٌ لَّهُمْ خَيْرٌ وَإِنْ تُخَالِطُوهُمْ
فَأَحْوَانُكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ
الْمُصْلِحِ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَأَعْنَتَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٠﴾

begging the people. Charity should be from what's left over."

Nevertheless, it is said that (if spending of the surplus was obligatory) the rule has been abrogated by the injunctions of *zakah*. This is the opinion of Ibn 'Abbas, 'Ata' Khurasani, and Suddi. However, Mujahid and others say that the verses concerning *zakah* are explanatory of this verse (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

458. That is, in order that you may realize that this world is ephemeral and the Hereafter is everlasting and a place of reward (Ibn 'Abbas, Hasan al Basri, Qatadah, Ibn Jurayj and others Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Here are some hints from Thanwi about when and how to spend: If it is a sinful affair, then spending is prohibited. If it is to please Allah, then, if the head of expenditure is a religious obligation such as *zakah* then spending is obliga-

tory; but if the head of expenditure is non obligatory such as common charity then, if such spending affects the rights of the dependents, it is not permissible. If the rights of the dependents are not affected, but the man feels about himself that he might not be able to observe abstinence in a goodly manner, (rather, will look at others with greed and envy), then also spending (of the surplus) is not permissible. Otherwise it is permissible. If it is neither the case of meeting a religious obligation, nor that of common charity, but of the nature of good food etc., then, if the intention is to strengthen oneself for further obedience, it is worthy of rewards; but if the intention is to commit a sin, then the spending is punishable. Finally, if the intention is simply to please himself, then (if it does not amount to self indulgence) it is permissible (mabah) [an act which goes with neither reward nor punishment: Au.].

[221] And marry not idolatresses until they believe. Surely, a believing slave girl is better than an (free) idolatress, even if she is alluring to you. And give not in marriage (your women) to idolaters until they believe. Surely, a believing slave is better than a (free) idolater though you may admire him.⁴⁶⁰ These beckon you to the Fire while Allah beckons you to Paradise and pardon by His leave. And He makes clear His commandments to the people; haply so they may remember.

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَاتِ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنَ وَلَأَمَةٌ مُّؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكَةٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنُوا وَلَعَبْدٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيُبَيِّنُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٢١﴾

459. Ibn Jarir reports Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, `Ata', Sha`bi and others as saying in explanation of this verse that when Allah (*swt*) revealed verse 34 of *surah Bani Isra'il* which said:

وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ [الإسراء/٣٤]

“Do not go near the property of the orphans save in a goodly manner,”

and verse 10 of *surah al Nisa'* which said:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَى ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَسَيَصْلَوْنَ سَعِيرًا [النساء/١٠]

“Those who eat up the property of the orphans unjustly, eat nothing but fire into their bellies. Soon they will reach a blazing Fire,” when these verses were revealed those who had orphans under their care segregated them in matters of food and drink to the extent that even the left over was

preserved until it got rotten. (Some of them separated their [sweet] water also: Ibn Jarir). But this was getting hard to manage so they presented their difficulty to the Prophet and Allah revealed this verse. Similar reports are in the collections of Abu Da'ud, Nasa'i and others (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

460. It is reported that `Abdullah ibn Rawaha had a black slave girl. One day he got angry with her and slapped her. Then he felt guilty and reported the matter to the Prophet (*saws*). The Prophet asked him: “What kind of woman is she, O `Abdullah?” He said: “She fasts, Prays, does her ablution (wudu) well and bears witness to Allah's Oneness and your Messengership.” The Prophet told him: “O `Abdullah. She is a believer.” At this `Abdullah ibn Rawaha said: “I shall free her and then marry her.” After

he had done that some people began to criticize him for his action saying that he need not have to marry a slave girl when so many Makkan free girls (even if idolatresses) were available. At this Allah (*swt*) revealed: “Marry not idolatresses until they believe” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

Of course, women of the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) are exempt from this rule in view of the commandment in verse 5 of *surah al Ma'idah*. As for the disapproval reported of `Umar (*ra*), it could be because he feared that the Companions of the Prophet many of whom had migrated to Syria and Iraq might marry them in large numbers giving rise to social problems (Ibn Kathir).

Thanwi, however, warns that the faith and beliefs of the modern day Christians should be checked before one of their woman is taken into marriage, for a great majority of the so-called Christians of today neither believe in Jesus (*asws*) nor in the Scriptures as the God sent revelation. In fact, many of them are downright atheists. Marriage with such people is not permissible.

In fact, the injunction should be generally applied and one should not marry a woman mainly for her

beauty. Says a *hadith*:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
”تُنْكَحُ الْمَرْأَةُ لِأَرْبَعٍ: لِمَالِهَا، وَلِحَسَبِهَا، وَلِجَمَالِهَا،
وَلِدِينِهَا فَأَظْفَرُ بِدَاتِ الدِّينِ تَرَبَّتْ يَدَاكَ“.

“A woman is married for four reasons: wealth, social position, beauty, and religion. Marry them for their religion. That will bring blessings.” Muslim has a similar report in his collection (Ibn Kathir and others).

Note also the difference between “marry not idolatresses until they believe,” and “give not in marriage (your women) to idolaters until they believe.” This is the basis of the rule that a woman should normally be married off by her waliyy (guardian) Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi.

Legal Points

1. If a woman married to an unbeliever (of whatever faith), embraces Islam, their marital relationship is broken, unless the husband also accepts Islam. Divorce is not necessary for separation (Thanwi).
2. The same ruling applies to a case in which the Muslim husband has become an apostate. In both cases she must spend her waiting period (*`iddah*) before remarriage (Thanwi).

[222] They ask you concerning menstruation. Tell them, 'It is a hurt.' So stay away from (your) women during the menstruation. Do not approach them till they are cleansed.⁴⁶¹ And, when they have cleansed themselves then go into them as Allah has commanded you.⁴⁶² Verily, Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and those that keep themselves pure and clean.⁴⁶³

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ هُوَ أَذًى
فَاعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ
حَتَّى يَطْهُرْنَ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ
حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ
وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ ﴿٢٢٢﴾

3. If a man married to an idolatress embraces Islam, he should also break his marriage with her (Au.).

461. Imām Ahmad has reported Anas (ra) as saying that the Jews segregated their women during their monthly courses to the extent of denying them company on the dining table. The Ansar, influenced by them, treated them similarly. The Prophet was asked about it and Allah (swt) revealed this verse, to which the Prophet added: "Everything is permissible save intercourse." When the Jews heard about it they remarked: "This man seems to be bent on opposing us in everything that we do." When Usayd b. Hudayr, and 'Abbad b. Bishr (ra) heard this remark they said to the Prophet: "(If the Jews say so) why should we not allow intercourse also (during the periods, in order to provoke them to greater frustration)?" At this the Prophet was so angry with the two that they were

afraid he would order them punished. So they went out and brought in some milk as gift. (When they had left) he sent a man behind them to call them back and made them drink the milk so that they would know that he was not angry with them (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

'A'isha (ra) herself reports that while she was in her periods, the Prophet would rest on her back and read the Qur'ān. During those days he would drink from the same bowl and sleep with her in the same bed (Ibn Kathir).

In contrast, note the injunctions of the *Bible* as quoted by Majid: "She shall be put apart seven days. And whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even. And everything that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean; everything also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean. And whosoever toucheth her shall

wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even" (Le. 15:19 21)."

Majid also quotes the opinion of medical men: "Even in a perfectly healthy woman this (menstruation: au) affects the whole organism to a more or less marked degree...There is increased nervous tension and greater muscular excitability; reflex action is more marked and there may be slight twitching of the legs; also yawning and stiffness in the neck, and sleep is heavier than usual. There is loss of appetite and a certain amount of digestive and intestinal disturbance with a tendency to flatulence" (Havelock Ellis, Man and Woman, pp.289 290)." And: "During menstruation, a woman is exceptionally sensitive and irritable, so that she may be greatly excited by trifling matters which at other times would arouse no obvious response... The statistics of criminality in women show that a very large majority of crimes committed by women are committed during menstruation" (Bauer, *Woman and Love*, pp. 283 284)."

Sabuni adds: With reference to the words, "*Wa la taqrabuhunna*," a linguistic point may be noted. When it is said "*la taqrab*" it means, as Shashi

has pointed out, "do not do a thing." But when you say "*la taqrib*" then you mean to say "do not go near it." Therefore, here it means, "do not go into your women" (*Rawae'*).

Legal Points

1. The maximum length of a menstrual cycle is, according to the Shafe'iyyah, Hanabilah and Malikiyyah, 15 days. According to the Hanafiyyah it is 10 days. If the discharge continues beyond these periods, then the woman is in the state of "*istihada*" during which she is required to resume her Prayers and fast (*Al Arba'ah*). The main difference between the two discharges is in color and density former is dark red (bluish, or of the color of the soil: Thanwi) and thick, while the latter of the same color as blood, but thinner (Razi and *Al Arba'ah*).

2. Sexual intercourse is allowed during *istihada* (Razi).

3. In individuals whose normal period is well known, anything lasting more is "*istihada*" (Thanwi in *Bahishti Zewar*).

4. It is 24 hours after the cessation of discharge of the menstrual cycle that a woman is in the state of purity and hence liable to Pray, fast,

etc. A grand ablution is necessary (*Al Arba'ah*). According to the Hanafiyyah, however, the time allowed is the time between one Prayer and the next. After the lapse of that time she should bathe herself and start praying (*Bahishti Zewar*).

5. Can a woman recite the Qur'ān during her menstrual cycle? The answer given by the four fuqaha' is that she cannot. She could as such quote or read a part of a Qur'ānic verse, but not recite the Qur'ān or even handle it (just like a man cannot do it in a state of major uncleanness). She can however, read *Hadīth* literature (Au.).

6. During this period she may not offer Prayers, observe fasts, enter a mosque or touch the Qur'ān. However, fasts have to be observed later, while Prayers are forgiven (*Al Arba'ah*).

7. According to most jurists a woman must bathe herself after the periods before intercourse (Ibn Kathir). However, according to the Hanafiyy school cessation of blood is enough, although a bath is recommended and intercourse is undesirable before it (Qurtubi).

8. The discharge before and after the birth of a child is known as "*nifas*."

Its maximum period ranges from 40 to 60 days depending on various schools of *fiqh*. The minimum is the cessation of discharge. The rules of Prayers, fasts etc. are the same as with menstrual cycles (*Al Arba'ah*).

9. Someone who loses control and has intercourse with his wife during her periods, commits, according to the majority of scholars, a sin for which he must seek Allah's forgiveness, but no expiation has been prescribed (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

462. The original words: "*min haythu amara kumullah*" lend various meanings (Razi). That expressed in the translation implies that one might go into his women from whatever direction it pleases him: the front or the rear, from the sides, lying down, sitting or standing (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi), from above or below (Thanwi). It is said that the Ansar were under the influence of the Jews who held the belief that coitus from the rear (in the vagina) produced squint eyed children. The Makkans, however, believed in no such restriction. So when some of them migrated to Madinah and married Ansari women, their wives protested at their liberty and complained to the Prophet. This verse was revealed to remove the taboo.

[223] Your women are a tilth for you, so approach your tilth howsoever you wish,⁴⁶⁴ but send forward (good deeds) for yourselves.⁴⁶⁵ Fear Allah and remember that you are to meet Him. And give glad tiding to the Believers.

نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ فَأَتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ وَقَدِّمُوا لَأَنفُسِكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ مُلَاقُوهُ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٢٣﴾

[224] And make not Allah by your oaths a hindrance to acts of virtue, piety, or to promote peace between the people.⁴⁶⁶ Allah is All hearing, All Knowing.

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ عُرْضَةً لِأَيْمَانِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَتُصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٤﴾

It might also be noted in this connection that anal sex is strictly prohibited. According to several *ahadith* (of various strength), Allah will not look at the man who molested his wife that way. In some reports he is called “the accursed one.” As for the reports that have come from Ibn ‘Umar that he saw no sin in it, they are all untrustworthy. On various occasions he denied having ever uttered such a thing. The same is true of Imām Shafe’i, to whom reports of its lawfulness are attributed but against which his stand has been made clear in no less than six books (Ibn Kathir, condensed).

463. Majid writes: “Compare and contrast the Christian aversion to bathing and personal ablutions. ‘Jerome warns ascetics against warm baths as morally enervating, and in a letter to one of his female disciples denounces every sort of bathing for women. Augustine allows a

bath once a month only’ (DCA, II, p. 939).”

464. That is, in the vagina (Ibn ‘Abbas, Mujahid, ‘Ikrimah Ibn Kathir).

465. There are at least two other interpretations to the textual words *wa qaddimu li anfusikum*: (1) Seek children, (2) Pronounce Allah’s name before intercourse. The latter practice, according to a *hadith*, will bring children free of Satanic influences (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others).

Majid adds: “A powerful reminder that moral and spiritual ends are not to be lost sight of even in the height of carnal pleasures.”

466. That is, if you have by any chance vowed that you will not do a thing, while doing it is an act of welfare, or piety, or will make peace between people, then you ought not to be hindered by the oath. Rather, break it and go ahead and do those

[225] Allah will not take you to task for your unintentional oaths, but will take you to task for what your hearts have earned.⁴⁶⁷ Allah is All forgiving, All clement.

لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٥﴾

things. A good deed cannot be abandoned in the name of God!

The Prophet (*saws*) is reported to have said in a *hadith* of the *Sahihayn*:

إِنِّي وَاللَّهِ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا أَخْلِفُ عَلَى يَمِينٍ فَأَرَى غَيْرَهَا خَيْرًا مِنْهَا إِلَّا أَتَيْتُ الَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ وَتَحَلَّلْتُهَا.

“By Allah, and by His Will, I do not swear against doing a thing, but do it if I find that doing it would be better, and break my oath.”

In another *hadith* of the same sources he told Abdul Rahman ibn Samurah:

”يَا عَبْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنَ سُمْرَةَ لَا تَسْأَلِ الْإِمَارَةَ، فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ أُعْطِيتَهَا عَنْ مَسْأَلَةٍ وَكَلْتَ إِلَيْهَا، وَإِنْ أُعْطِيتَهَا عَنْ غَيْرِ مَسْأَلَةٍ أَعْنَتْ عَلَيْهَا، وَإِذَا حَلَقْتَ عَلَى يَمِينٍ فَرَأَيْتَ غَيْرَهَا خَيْرًا مِنْهَا فَكْفَرْ عَنْ يَمِينِكَ، وَائْتِ الَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ“.

“O Abdul Rahman ibn Samurah! Do not ask to be entrusted with a state authority (imarah), for if it is imposed on you while you are undesirous of it, you will be helped (by Allah). But if you seek it and are given then you will be left to yourself to manage it.

Further, when you have vowed a thing, but find something else better than what you have sworn against, then go ahead and break your oath, do that thing and then atone for it” (Ibn Kathir).

467. That is, those words of oath that people utter without meaning them such as: “No, by God, yes by God,” etc. These are not oaths, and there is no expiation for breaking them. It may also apply to those things about which one believes that he is right (and so swears on it), but is proven wrong later. (There is no expiation for them also: Au.). Expiation is prescribed for those deeds about which a man makes a firm intention (‘A’isha, Ibn ‘Abbas and others: Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Though written in a different context, the following lines from “*Islam Between East and West*” by the Bosnian President (1996) Alija Izetbegovic, are worth reproducing: “All men believe in the soul and act accordingly, even if they do not speak up. If somebody has committed a murder and admits it, but insists that he did

[226] For those who forswear their wives is (prescribed) a waiting period of four months.⁴⁶⁸ If they reconcile⁴⁶⁹ then Allah is All forgiving, All merciful.⁴⁷⁰

لِّلَّذِينَ يُؤْلُونَ مِن نِّسَائِهِمْ تَرَبُّصُ أَرْبَعَةِ أَشْهُرٍ فَإِنْ فَآؤُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٦﴾

[227] But if they resolve on divorce, then Allah is All hearing, All knowing.

وَإِنْ عَزَمُوا الطَّلَاقَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٧﴾

it unintentionally, what follows then with the prosecutor, the defense, the witnesses, the experts and the court? Why do they deliver learned speeches, analyze every detail and so on, when the very deed has been admitted to and its consequences are evident. All their efforts are not concerned with external objective facts, but with an inner problem: that of intention. It is not a question of what really happened, but what happened in the heart of the murderer. Moreover, everyone involved in the case spontaneously believes that the intention is more important than the consequence. That means that everyone, maybe unconsciously, prefers the soul to the facts. A worker who, unintentionally, causes a mine disaster in which hundreds of miners are killed, will be less responsible and less punished, than a man who kills an old woman in order to rob her. ... Man's judgment tries to imitate God's judgment" (p. 244)."

468. One way in which people impressed on their recalcitrant wives that things had come to a serious pass, was to swear that they would not go into them. In the Islamic terminology this is known as "ila". However, in pre Islamic times this was often misused and employed as a tool for oppression. Men used to forswear and stay away from their wives for endless periods causing them psychological and physical suffering. This verse was meant to correct the situation (Au.).

'Ila' Rules

Someone who has vowed that he will not go into his wife has four months to decide on his future course. Either he reconciles himself with her (in which case he offers expiation for the oath: Sabuni), or says good bye to her and divorces her. (According to the Hanafiyyah, divorce automatically takes effect with the lapse of four months: Sabuni. According to others, it does not: Au.). If he does

not decide upon either of the two courses, the woman can apply to the courts for separation. A simple but sure way of expressing reconciliation is to resume the conjugal relationship. Hence Allah (*swt*) said: "If they reconcile", wherein "reconciliation" (*faa'u* of the original) refers to sexual intercourse: Ibn `Abbas, Masruq, Sha`bi, Sa`id b. Jubayr and others. However, in cases where that is not possible, verbal reconciliation should suffice: Ibrahim Nakha`i, Zuhri, `Alqamah, Abu Hanifa, and others (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir) .

Commentators generally quote the following incident to emphasize that the four months period that this verse has allowed as the maximum period that a man can be allowed to abstain from his wife is in keeping with the biological requirement of a woman. It is said that once when `Umar ibn al Khattab (*ra*), was patrolling the town of Madinah in his usual night rounds he heard the following lines from a woman whose husband was at the frontiers in *Jihad*:

The night has prolonged, its fringes have darkened,

O miserable me without my sweetheart to play with.

By God! But for Allah's fear,

Pedestals of this couch would be quivering.

`Umar (*ra*) inquired his daughter Hafsa (*ra*) as to how long a woman can manage without her husband. She said: "Four months." So `Umar stipulated four months as the longest period a man could be kept away from his wife (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Sayyid Qutb).

469. The statement, "If they reconcile", implies that to get married (and raise a family) is not against *zuhud* (Thanwi).

470. "Allah is All forgiving, All merciful," and so He will not take to task for those of the conjugal rights of the woman that were neglected because of the oath (Ibn Kathir).

471. The word "*talaq*" usually translated as "divorce" means, in its root,

[228] And divorced (women)⁴⁷¹ shall wait by themselves for three periods.⁴⁷² It is not lawful for them to conceal that which Allah has created in their wombs if they (truly) believe in Allah and the Last Day.⁴⁷³ And their husbands have the right to take them back if they intend to set things right.⁴⁷⁴ And for them is the same as is upon them in a fair manner;⁴⁷⁵ although men have a degree over them.⁴⁷⁶ And Allah is All mighty, All wise.

وَالْمُطَلَّاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَبَعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٨﴾

“freedom”, and “*tallaqa*” would mean “He freed (in this case, the woman who was bound to him).” It is, however, as a *hadith* says, the most hateful of the permissible things in the sight of Allah (Qurtubi).

Divorce

Majid writes: “The course of divorce, ... among ancient nations has been erratic, some making it too loose, others making it too tight...The Jewish law allows it as a matter of no great concern. ‘If husband finds some uncleanness in her, then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife.’ (Dt. 24: 1,2) Christianity, on the other hand, ... has interdicted divorce altogether. The Catholics hold: ‘When the sacrament of matrimony has been received

by a man and a woman and ratified by their cohabitation as husband and wife, their union cannot be dissolved except by death.’ (CD. p. 41) ... The Protestants allow no doubt, but only on grounds ... of fornication. Islam has steered its course midway between the two, avoiding the extremes of either making divorce too rigid or banning it altogether, or of making it too loose and frivolous. Islam has adopted the only wise course open that of imposing certain conditions and limitations upon the right of the husband to dissolve the matrimonial bond, the object of which is ‘to ensure that the husband was not acting in haste or anger and that the separation becomes inevitable in the interests of the husband and the wife and the children’ (Abdur Rahim, op. cit, p. 336).”

472. The word in the original is “quru’: sing. “qar”, which is pri-

marily used for a “period of time”, but also for the state of impurity of a woman (*hayd*), as well as for that of her purity (*tuhur*). Hence there is difference of opinion between the scholars whether here the reference is to the period of monthly cycle or the period of purity between one monthly cycle and next (Ibn Kathir).

473. It could either refer to pregnancy or to their menstrual period (Ibn ‘Abbas, Ibn ‘Umar, Sha’bi and others). Further, the phrase “*If they believe in Allah and the Last Day*” had to be added because these are things that only women know about themselves. There is no way for another person to verify (Ibn Kathir).

Asad says: “The primary purpose of this waiting period is the ascertainment of possible pregnancy, and thus of the parentage of the as yet unborn child. In addition, the couple are to be given an opportunity to reconsider their decision and possibly to resume the marriage.”

474. When a man having consummated his marriage divorces his wife for the first time, the “*talaq*” is technically known as the “*talaq al raja`i*” (the revocable divorce). With such a divorce the woman has to wait for three periods (*quru`*), during which she can share the same apartment

with him, after which she can remarry. However, this waiting time, known as “*iddah*” gives the husband the opportunity to reconsider his decision. If he feels that it was a hasty step he can revoke the divorce (either by express words or conduct: Abdur Rahim Majid), and continue to live with her as before without a remarriage. But if he does not i.e., within the “*iddah*” but wants to remarry her, after the lapse of the period, he can still do it, provided of course, she is willing, and obviously, on new terms of marriage, such as, for instance, a new “*mahar*” (dower) Au.

475. The Prophet (*saws*) has further enlightened us on the subject through various statements. For instance, at the time of his Hajj he said:

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ فِي النِّسَاءِ فَإِنَّكُمْ أَخَذْتُمُوهُنَّ بِأَمَانٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَاسْتَحْلَلْتُمْ فُرُوجَهُنَّ بِكَلِمَةِ اللَّهِ وَلَكُمْ عَلَيْهِنَّ أَنْ
لَا يُوطِئَنَّ فَرْشَكُمْ أَحَدًا تَكَرَّمُوهُ. فَإِنْ فَعَلَنَّ ذَلِكَ
فَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ ضَرْبًا غَيْرَ مُبْرِحٍ وَهُنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ رِزْقُهُنَّ
وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ - صحيح مسلم

“Fear Allah (*swt*) in matters involving women. You have made them lawful unto yourself by an oath and a promise given to Allah. It is your right that they should not allow someone you do not approve to enter your house in your absence. If they do that, you may beat them, but without

injury. As for their rights, it is that they should be fed and clothed in a goodly manner.”

[Explaining “*you may beat them*,” Ibn `Abbas said: “With your tooth stick (*miswak*): Au.]:” According to another *hadith* the Prophet (*saws*) was asked: “What are the rights of our women, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied:

وفي حديث عن معاوية بن حيدة القشيري عن أبيه عن جده أنه قال: يا رسول الله ما حق زوجة أحدنا؟ قال: “أن تطعمها إذا طعمت، وتكسوها إذا اكتسيت، ولا تضرب الوجه، ولا تقبح ولا تحجر إلا في البيت.”

“That you should feed them and clothe them as you will yourself, not hit them in their faces, not insult them, and not abandon them save within the four walls of the house.”

Ibn `Abbas (*ra*) used to say: “I like to present myself to my wife as neat and clean as I like that she should present herself to me in a pleasant form. This is following Allah’s injunction: ‘And they (the women) have the same (rights upon men) as (the men have their rights) upon them’” (Ibn Kathir). Her rights also include that if the husband is unable to satisfy her in the bed, he should seek medical help (Qurtubi). It is also her right

that the man should not climax before the woman does (Alusi).

However, it must be understood that each has his or her rights and obligations that suit him or her. If, for instance, a woman cooks food and washes linen, it does not mean that in return the husband should cook food and wash linen for her. Rather, it is the case of one right against another (Zamakhshari).

Women’s Position in the Old World

Comparing the treatment of women by other religions with that of Islam, Majid says: “This bold and explicit declaration of the right of women centuries and centuries before a Mill dreamt of writing on the ‘Subjection of Women,’ has no parallel in the pages of another Divine Scriptures. Contrast with this the attitude of the *Bible* which as a punishment of the sin of Eve makes wife a subject to her husband who is to rule over her. ‘According to the Old Testament, woman is responsible for the fall of man, and this became the cornerstone of Christian teaching...It is a remarkable fact that the Gospel (barring divorce, Matt. 19:9) contains not a word in favour of woman...The epistles of St. Paul definitely insist that no change can be permitted in the position of women...St. Jerome

has aught but good to say to woman. "Woman is the gate of the devil, the road of evil, the sting of the scorpion." Canon law declares: "Man only is created in the image of God, not woman: therefore woman shall serve him and be his handmaid." The Provincial Council of Mocon (sixth century) seriously discussed the question 'whether woman has a soul at all.' (Kraft Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, p.4 n. 12th Ed.) The effect of the teachings of the Jewish Rabbis and Christian fathers was that in the course of history 'woman was represented as the door of hell, as the mother of all human ills. She should be ashamed at the very thought that she is a woman' (Lecky, *History of European Morals*, II. p. 142)."

476. What exactly is the meaning of the words: "And men have a degree above them?" Some scholars (Mujahid, Qatadah) have said that the words refer to the natural advantages that men enjoy over women such as they do not miss their Prayers because of menstrual cycle, can participate in *Jihad*, which is not obligatory on women, etc. (Granted the meaning usually taken, [Kashshaf and Baydawi: "men have an edge over women in rights Majid], it only points to the added responsibility of men and not to their superiority,

in the light of the Qur'ānic dictum, "*the most honorable among you in the sight of your Lord is the most fearful of Him*": Sabuni) However, Ibn 'Abbas has said that it is the fulfillment of marital obligations on the part of men, and observation of patience and grace in the face of ill behavior by their wives which is the demand of the statement: "And men have a degree above them" (Ibn Jarir).

That men are superior to women cannot be derived either from this verse or from another (4: 34): "*Men are the managers of the affairs of women*" However, complete freedom to women has also proved disastrous (*Ma'arif*).

Majid adds: "Man, perhaps even down to the protein molecules of his tissue cells is biologically different from woman ... The revolutionary principles collide with the very important circumstances, namely the biological inequality of the sexes. We must recognize the unquestionable existence of the biological inequality of the sexes. It goes deeper and is of far greater import than it would appear to those not familiar with natural sciences' (Nemilov, *Biological Tragedy of Woman*, pp. 75 78)."

477. One reason, (apart from the fact that a woman is not obliged to spend

[229] (Revocatory) divorce⁴⁷⁷ is twice.⁴⁷⁸ Then either honorable retention or release with kindness.⁴⁷⁹ And it is not lawful for you that you should take back anything of what you gave them⁴⁸⁰ unless the two may fear that they might not be able to observe Allah's bounds. But if you are afraid that the two may not observe Allah's bounds,⁴⁸¹ then there is no sin upon the two in what she will (pay and) release herself with.⁴⁸² These are the bounds of Allah. So do not transgress them. Those who transgress Allah's bounds, such indeed are the wrongdoers.

الطَّلَاقُ مَرَّتَانٍ فَإِمْسَاكٌ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٌ بِإِحْسَانٍ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمُ أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا بِمَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَخَافَا أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ بِهِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٢٩﴾

anything of her wealth at the time of or after the marriage), why a woman has not been given the right to break the marriage tie by pronouncing the word talaq, is that women are more emotional and easily excited to anger (*Al Arba'ah*). An added reason is that it is men who expend their money on women, by way of dower, etc. How can women who are at the receiving end through and through be allowed to divorce their husbands? (Au.).

478. Allah (*swt*) has allowed two revocations because when someone lives with another, he does not know how he will feel when separated from him or her. Had Allah (*swt*) ordered separation with one pronouncement, surely it would have caused suffering (Razi).

479. Another tool of oppression for the husbands in the pre Islamic Arabia was to divorce a woman, revoke the divorce after some time, re divorce and go on and on to torture the woman. A Muslim fresh in Islam promised his wife the same treatment and Allah revealed this verse which curtailed the practice, (*Abu Da'ud Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir*), while keeping the door of separation open (Au.). The Prophet is reported to have said to Mu'adh bin Jabal in a *hadith* preserved by Daraqutni:

(يا معاذ ما خلق الله شيئا على وجه الأرض أحب إليه من العناق ولا خلق الله تعالى شيئا على وجه الأرض أبغض إليه من الطلاق فإذا قال الرجل لمملوكه أنت حر إن شاء الله فهو حر ولا استثناء له وإذا قال الرجل لامرأته أنت طالق إن شاء الله فله استثنائه ولا طلاق عليه).

“O Mu`adh! There is nothing that Allah (*swt*) loves more than redemption of a slave. And there is nothing more hateful to Him than divorce. Therefore, if a man says to his slave, ‘If Allah wills you are free.’ then he is free, and there is no other option. But if he says to his woman, ‘If Allah wills you are divorced,’ then she is not divorced and there is no option” (Qurtubi).

Abu Dhar reports (in a *hadith* of Ahmad) that someone recited this *ayah* and asked,

يا رسول الله، أ رأيت قول الله تعالى: ”الطلاق مرتان فإمساك بمعروف أو تسريح بإحسان“ فأين الثالثة؟ فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: (فإمساك بمعروف أو تسريح بإحسان).

Messenger of Allah, “Where is the third divorce?” The Prophet told him: “It is (in the words) ‘release with kindness’” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Majid notes: “The goal of matrimony in Islam is to unite two lives, to bring happiness to the couple, and to instill mutual amity, harmony, responsible co partnership and good fellowship in the pair. Now human nature being what it is, it sometimes happens that even with the best of motives and after repeated trials, the union

remains unhappy. The only remedy then is to unfasten the wedding tie. Even then, the husband is enjoined by the Qur`ān not to dismiss the wife in disgrace, or with a view to humiliating her but to let her off kindly, with due regard to his chivalry and her tenderness, and with a view to securing peace of mind both for her and himself.”

480. That is, if a man divorces his wife, it is not lawful for him to take back anything that he gave her at the time of marriage or during the married life, in cash or kind (Au.).

481. That is, the two are afraid that they might not be able to fulfill their respective conjugal duties (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

482. This applies to the situation in which the man does not wish to divorce his wife (because of the expenses he would have incurred, in addition to the mahr he would have paid) but the woman finds it impossible to live with him and hence demands to be released. To compensate his losses she agrees to pay back a certain amount in return of the freedom (Au.). Technically this is known as *khul`*. An incident of this sort took place during the Prophet’s life. Preserved by Bukhari the report says

that the wife of Thabit b. Qays b. Shimas told the Prophet that she did not find any fault in the man's religion but that she could not stand the sight of him. (According to another report "so ugly that, if not for the fear of Allah, I could spit in his face"). The Prophet asked her if she would give back the orchard he had gifted her. (According to other reports two orchards). She readily agreed and the Prophet ordered Thabit to release her (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

It is also reported that during `Umar's reign a woman came to him seeking separation from her husband. `Umar ordered her locked up in the garbage yard. The next day he asked her, (according to other reports he locked her up for three days), "How did you like it?" She said, "For the first time in my life I was happier (in there in the garbage yard) than I ever was with him." `Umar ordered the man to release her (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). According to the majority, however, the man can in no case take from her more than what he gave her. Nevertheless, that is in a case in which

the woman demands separation. If the tie is broken by the man, then he can take back nothing. However, some scholars believe that in certain cases he can demand and get more than what he gave her (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

However, if the man is at no fault, and the woman does it to ruin him financially, or simply out of mischief, then there are *ahadith* that warn of severe punishment (Au.). One *hadith* says:

: "أَيُّمَا امْرَأَةٍ سَأَلَتْ زَوْجَهَا طَلَاقًا فِي غَيْرِ مَا بَأْسٍ فَحَرَامٌ عَلَيْهَا رَائِحَةُ الْجَنَّةِ".

"Forbidden is the smell of Paradise to a woman who seeks divorce without a good reason" (Abu Da'ud Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

483. An added condition is that the marriage should have been consummated before the second husband divorces her of his own free will. It is then that the woman will be able to re-marry her first husband.

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: سُمِّلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ

[230] Then, if he divorces her (for the third time) she is not lawful unto him until she weds a man other than him. So, if he (the second husband) divorces her then there is no sin upon the two that they should reunite provided they believe they will observe Allah's bounds.⁴⁸³ These are the bounds of Allah which He makes clear for a people who know.⁴⁸⁴

فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدُ حَتَّى تَنْكِحَ
رَوْجًا غَيْرَهُ فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا
أَنْ يَتَرَاجَعَا إِنْ ظَنَّا أَنْ يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ
وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٠﴾

وسلم عَنْ رَجُلٍ طَلَّقَ امْرَأَتَهُ فَتَزَوَّجَتْ رَوْجًا غَيْرَهُ
فَدَخَلَ بِهَا ثُمَّ طَلَّقَهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يُوَاقِعَهَا أَتَحِلُّ لِلأَوَّلِ؟
فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "لَا حَتَّى
يَذُوقَ الأَخْرَ عَسِيلَتَهَا وَيَذُوقَ عُسِيلَتَهُ

The Prophet (*saws*) was asked about a man divorced a woman, then another married her, closed the door behind him with her inside and then divorced her, without having had intercourse with her, will she be lawful to the husband of the first marriage? He replied: "No. Not until he tastes her sweetness and she his" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Several *ahadith* have been recorded by various collectors forbidding an arranged "marriage and divorce" with the purposes of making a wom-

an lawful to her previous husband. In some *ahadith* both the first and the second husbands involved in the affair of trying to make a woman lawful this way are equated with those who partake of interest money and have been cursed by the Prophet (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

484. This is because the ignorant cannot remember such numerous and involved laws; only the men of understanding can (Qurtubi).

485. What is actually meant by the words, "and when they have reached their period of waiting" is that they are "about to complete their waiting period" since after completion of the period, the choice is lost (Qurtubi).

[231] And when you have divorced your women and they have reached their period (of waiting)⁴⁸⁵ then either retain them honorably⁴⁸⁶ or release them honorably. Do not retain them by way of harm to take undue advantage. Whoever does that will wrong his own soul.⁴⁸⁷ And do not make a mockery of Allah's injunctions,⁴⁸⁸ but rather, rehearse Allah's favors unto you⁴⁸⁹ and that He sent down the Book and the Wisdom⁴⁹⁰ whereby He admonishes you. Fear Allah and be aware that Allah has knowledge of everything.

وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُنَّ أَجَلُهُنَّ
فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ
وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِّتَعْتَدُوا وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ
ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا آيَاتِ
اللَّهِ هُزُوءًا وَادْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا
أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ لِيُعْظِمَ
بِهِ وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣١﴾

486. According to Imām Shaf'e'i, Ahmad and Malik these words: “*retain them honorably*” imply that if a man is not able to provide for his wife she can be separated from him. However, others believe she ought to observe patience; and the state should provide for her since Allah has indicated to us through a verse (24: 32):

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ
وَإِمَائِكُمْ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُعْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ
وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ [النور/٣٢]

“And marry the single among you, the virtuous ones among your male and the female slaves: if they be poor Allah will enrich them with His bounty.” Thus, despite poverty a man and a woman can wed. Obviously, if they can wed, they can also remain in wedlock in poverty (Qurtubi).

487. He will wrong himself in this world also; for when it is known how he treated his previous wife, no decent woman would like to marry him (Razi, Alusi).

488. So that a word of “*talaq*” will be treated as a divorce even if the man says “I was only joking.” A *hadith* of Abu Da'ud, Nasa'i and Ibn Majah says:

”ثَلَاثٌ جِدُّهُنَّ جِدٌّ: وَهَزْؤُهُنَّ جِدٌّ: النِّكَاحُ وَالطَّلَاقُ
وَالرَّجْعَةُ“ . (قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ
غَرِيبٌ. وَالْعَمَلُ عَلَى هَذَا عِنْدَ أَهْلِ الْعِلْمِ مِنْ
أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- وَغَيْرِهِمْ)

“There are three things which will be taken seriously: marriage, divorce, and revocation (of the divorce)”

Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir. Other reports include redemption of slaves. Imām

[232] And when you have divorced your women, and they have completed their period (of waiting), do not prevent them⁴⁹¹ from marrying their (former or new) husbands, if they mutually agree on equitable terms.⁴⁹² These (are the words) by which is admonished he among you who believes in Allah and the Last Day. This is the (course for making) most virtue and purity amongst you. Allah knows, and you know not.

وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُنَّ غَيْرَتٌ فَمَا ظَنُّكُمْ بِالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أَسْوَءٌ مِنْكُمْ أَمْ أَحْسَنُ وَلَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٢﴾

Malik has recorded in his *Muwatta* that a man came to Ibn `Abbas and said: "I have divorced my wife a hundred times. So what do you have to say about it?" He replied: "With the first three she gets separated from you. The rest of the ninety seven are a mockery of Allah's commandments." It is also mockery to seek Allah's forgiveness while continuing to indulge in a sin (Qurtubi, Razi). Furthermore, not to carry out the commandments of Allah in real earnest, or to do them badly is also to make mockery of them (Zamakhshari).

489. "We are asked to remember in our own minds and to proclaim and praise, and be proud of God's favors on us. His favors are immeasurable: not the least are His Revelations, and the wisdom which He has given to us to enable us to judge and act up to His guidance" (Yusuf Ali).

490. The *Hikmah* of the original alludes to the *Sunnah*, (since both have Divine origin) Alusi.

491. It is the custodian (waliyy) of the woman who has been addressed and the indication is that it is the waliyy who should marry her off, instead of the woman arranging her own marriage (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). However, according to the Hanafiyyah, who base their opinion on an earlier verse viz., "...until she weds a man other than him (no. 230)," a woman may give herself in marriage, although it is undesirable that she should do so (Alusi).

492. This verse was revealed when, as in Bukhari, Tirmidhi and other collections, the sister of Ma`qal b. Yasar was divorced by her husband. But both were inclined to each other so that when she was out of her waiting period he came back requesting

her hand. Ma`qal told him: "No. You greedy man, son of a greedy man. I honored you by marrying my sister to you but you divorced her. By God, she will never go back to you." (The narrator interjects: But Allah knew of his fondness for her and her fondness for him). So Allah revealed: "When you have divorced your women, .. until, "This is the (course of Law for making) most virtue and purity amongst you. And Allah knows, you know not." When Ma`qal heard this he said: "Hearing and obedience is for our Lord." Then he sent word for his sister's former husband and told him: "I will marry her to you, and shall accord you full respect (as before)." [Ibn Marduwayh adds: "And will expiate my oath]" Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi.

Although such were the circumstances of revelation of this verse, the application is common so that, also prohibited is the practice, prevalent in some Muslim societies, of placing obstacles in the path of a woman getting married to a person of her choice in the hope of the family members obtaining gifts from another, more gullible, suitor (*Ma`arif*).

Yusuf Ali writes: "The termination of a marriage bond is a most serious

matter for family and social life. And every lawful device is approved which can equitably bring back those who have lived together, provided only there is mutual love and they can live on honorable terms with each other. If these conditions are fulfilled, it is not right for outsiders to prevent or hinder re union. They may be swayed by property or other considerations."

Legal Points

1. Divorce is the most hateful of the "lawful" in the sight of Allah. The following, however, is the process when it becomes inevitable:

a) According to the majority, the *Sunnah* way of divorce is to pronounce the divorce when the woman is in the state of purity (*tuhur*), in which state sexual intercourse with her has not taken place, and the woman is not pregnant (*Al Arba`ah*). This will be the first talaq. Nevertheless, the husband and wife can continue to live together. If the husband does not revoke his divorce within the waiting period (either in words, or by way of resumption of conjugal relationship [according to the Hanafiyy and Maliki schools, even amorous activities such as kissing, caressing, etc. would suffice: Rawai`]), then the woman is divorced and she must be sent away in a goodly manner, that is, with

gifts etc. Nevertheless, the man can re marry her if she is willing (Au.).

b) However, according to the Companions, if a man has made up his mind about separation the best way would be to let the divorce become absolute by default, i.e., by the expiry of the period of probation (Majid, *Ma'arif*).

c) Notwithstanding how the husband acts i.e., whether he revokes the divorce within the waiting period, or remarries the same woman he has two more divorce pronouncements to his credit.

d) If he divorces her again, the process of the first divorce must be repeated.

e) If he revokes his divorce for the second time, he can continue to live with her with another divorce pronouncement to his credit the final one which will entail permanent separation.

f) But if he does not revoke his divorce after the second pronouncement and she completes her period of waiting then his inaction will be considered a third divorce and she will be separated from him. They cannot reunite until she marries another man who divorces her of his

own free will.

2. When a woman has been divorced for the first or second time, and she completes her period of waiting, then the husband has a right to re marry her albeit on new terms. However, the woman has the right to decide whether she will accept him. That is, after the waiting period the former husband will be on the same footing as any other suitor (Qurtubi).

3. The husband is required by the law to provide for his wife, exactly in the same manner as before, during the period of waiting. Also, she cannot be asked to vacate the house.

4. According to the Hanabilah khul' is revocation (*faskh*) of the marriage contract and not talaq. Hence the pair can reunite later under new terms, even if the husband had divorced her twice earlier (*Al Arba'ah*). This is also the earlier opinion of Imām Shafe'i and one of the two opinions of Ahmad ibn Hanbal. However, according to Imām Malik, Abu Hanifa, and a later opinion of Shafe'i, it is just another kind of talaq (Shanqiti). Nevertheless, the scholars of these schools have set some more conditions depending on which it will be either *talaq* or *faskh* (revocation) - *Al Arba'ah*.

5. It is highly repugnant that a man should pronounce the word *talaq* three times in one go, which entails irrevocable separation. The Prophet was extremely upset when someone did it during his time (Nasa'i: *Ma'arif* and others). Yet, and although against the *Sunnah*, the majority of scholars Hanafiyyah, Shafe'iyyah, Malikiyyah (and according to Imām Nawawi, even Imām Ahmad b. Hanbal: *Ma'arif*) treat it as three separate pronouncements even if the man did not mean it and said it only in anger. Ibn Taymiyyah and some later-day scholars declare it only one divorce. *Triple talaq* in one session (such as to say: You are divorced, you are divorced, you are divorced, or to say: "Your are divorced three times") were considered, according to a report of Ibn 'Abbas, as one during the Prophet, that of Abu Bakr Siddiq and the first two or three years of 'Umar's caliphate. But then cases of three pronouncements became common and 'Umar changed the rule to treat it as three with the rest of the Companions not disagreeing with him (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, and others).

The truth is that the majority opinion is stronger, that is, three pro-

nouncements in one sitting (or one pronouncement of the three: Au.) will be treated as three separate pronouncements entailing final separation. Disagreeing with the *ijma'* of the Companions and *ijma'* of the *ummah* is not an easy matter indeed (*Rawa'e'*). There are reports, however, that show that even the Prophet (*saws*) treated three one sitting pronouncements as three only, and not as one. The *hadith* of Ibn 'Abbas has not been properly understood (*Ma'arif*).

6. *Talaq* during the menstrual period is innovative (*talaq bid'i*), but it is *talaq* all the same with all legal implications.

7. There is general agreement among the legists that *talaq* pronounced in anger entails *talaq* (*Al Arba'ah*).

The rules of *talaq* take many other factors into consideration. The above are only for a general understanding and not for specific application. It is advisable to consult a faqih in matters of divorce (Au.).

493. Ibn Kathir comments: A *hadith* preserved by Tirmidhi reports the Prophet as having said:

عن أم سلمة قالت: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "لَا يُجْزَمُ مِنَ الرِّضَاعَةِ إِلَّا مَا فَتَقَ الْأُمْعَاءُ فِي

[233] Mothers may suckle their offspring two whole years. (This) for him who desires to go to the full length of the suckling period.⁴⁹³ It is for the father to provide and clothe them in a just manner.⁴⁹⁴ No soul is charged save to its capacity. Neither should a mother be made to suffer on account of her child nor he to whom the child was born.⁴⁹⁵ And the same is (incumbent) upon the heir.⁴⁹⁶ However, if the couple desire by mutual consent and consultation⁴⁹⁷ discontinuation then there is no blame upon them.⁴⁹⁸ Further, if you wish to get the child suckled (by a wet nurse), then there is no harm in that so long as you hand over in kindness what you (mutually) agree upon.⁴⁹⁹ Fear Allah and be aware that Allah sees all that you do.

وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُنِمَّ الرِّضَاعَةَ وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ لَا تُكَلَّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَا تُضَارَّ وَالِدَةٌ بِوَلَدِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ بِوَلَدِهِ وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ تَسْتَزِغُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَا آتَيْتُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٣﴾

النَّدَى، وَكَانَ قَبْلَ الْفِطَامِ“.

“There is no suckling (with foster implications) save what reaches the intestine from the breast and after the child has been weaned.”

Hence any suckling after this maximum period of two years prescribed by the Qur’ān, will have no legal implication (such as the woman becoming the foster mother, her daughters forbidden in marriage to the suckled, and so on). This is the opinion of the majority of scholars. The term majority of scholars (jumhur) itself is applicable to the four Imāms, the seven fuqaha’ of Madinah and the senior Companions of the Prophet. However, ‘A’isha (ra) was of the

opinion that the laws of suckling are applicable even to grown up men.

According to Imām Abu Hanifa, however, the age-limit is two and a half years (Razi).

Legal Points

1. The condition for suckling, for the enforcement of all legal implications, is that the child should have received a full feed from the breast. A drop or two will have no legal implication. (It is women’s practice, at least in the East, to press a crying family child against their breast to pacify it, and suckle even if their breasts are dry: (Au.).

2. In view of the *hadith* that suckling

has no legal binding after the child has crossed two years of age, the majority of scholars believe that if the husband, overcome by emotions, happens to suck his wife's breast, their marital relationship is not affected.

3. A woman in wedlock, or divorced but still in waiting, cannot demand separate payment for suckling her child (*Arba'ah*).

4. According to the majority the mother is obliged to suckle her child, not because of an explicit injunction to this effect, but because of the age old customs and practices, the exception being (in the opinion of Imām Malik) the woman of the aristocratic class amongst whom it has been the practice throughout the ages to get the child nursed by others to free the ladies for activities more pleasing to their men (Qurtubi).

5. According to the Hanafiyyah, it is not allowable that the child be given away to someone else for suckling if the mother is prepared to do it herself (Alusi).

6. According to Imām Malik and Abu Hanifa, a divorced woman has greater right to the custody of the female child until the girl's marriage, and the male child until the age

of eight when he will be given the choice between the father and the mother. However, all scholars agree that she loses this right if she remarries or disqualifies herself by other means such as overwhelming social activities, wandering habits, etc. (Qurtubi).

7. According to the Hanafiyyah, Shafe'iyyah, and Malikiyyah a divorced woman who has completed her waiting period and is suckling a child born of her deserves to be paid by the father of the child, (or the heir) separately for: a) Suckling, b) Nursing (bringing up) and c) other expenses (of the child). However, Malikiyyah say that she need not be paid for the second item (i.e., nursing of the child) - *Al Arba'ah*.

494. That is, a sum fixed taking into consideration the needs of the woman, her social status and the financial strength of the child's father (Ibn Jarir).

Allah (*swt*) said at another place (7: 65):

لِيَتَّقِيَ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّن سَعَتِهِ وَمَن قَدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيَتَّقِ
بِمَا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ لَا يَكْلِفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا سَيَجْعَلُ
اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا [الطلاق/ ٧]

"Let the man of means spend according to his means. As for him who is in straitened circumstances,

let him spend from what Allah has given him. Allah does not charge a soul but within what He has bestowed. And soon Allah will cause ease after want" (Ibn Kathir).

495. That is, neither should the child be given away for suckling to a wet nurse with the intention to cause grief to the divorced mother, nor should the divorced mother refuse to suckle the child merely to make the father suffer (the economic consequences) Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir. Nor should she demand as wages more than what she truly deserves, or he give her less than what she deserves (*Kashshaf*).

496. Opinions vary over the identity of the "heir" alluded to: whether it is the heir of the deceased man, the blood kin of the deceased, one of the two parents, the heir of the child or the child itself (Qurtubi, Alusi, and others). Law books may be referred to for a detailed discussion (Au.).

Following this injunction the Hanafiyyah and the Hanabilah argue that providing a destitute is the responsibility of the kindred which, in fact, is also the opinion of the majority of scholars (Ibn Kathir).

497. The word used in the origi-

nal is "*tashaawur*." It has its root in "*shawr*," which is applied to the process of extracting honey from the honeycomb (Sabuni).

It means to say that no unilateral decision should be taken about the child by either of the parents because it is possible that either the mother is wary of giving suck or the father is miserly (Alusi).

498. Therefore, none of the parents can take a unilateral action regarding suckling or weaning of the child (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

499. It is possible that the divorced mother may not be able to give suck to the child, due to reasons of health, in which case the child may be suckled by a wet nurse, on wage, while the mother needs also to be provided for in a reputable manner (Ibn Jarir).

500. However, this applies to the woman who is not pregnant. For one who is, the period of waiting before she can remarry is delivery of the child. This is in view of the verse 4 of *surah al Talaq* which says:

وَأُولَاتُ الْأَحْمَالِ أَجَلُهُنَّ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ

"The waiting period of the pregnant women (whose husbands have died) is delivery (of the

[234] And those of you who die leaving behind their spouses, let them (the spouses) restrain themselves for four months and ten days.⁵⁰⁰ However, when they have attained their period there is no sin upon you in what they do with themselves in a reputable manner.⁵⁰¹ Allah is well aware of what you do.

وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا
يَرْتَضْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا فَإِذَا
بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ
فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٤﴾

child).”

An incident also confirms this. It is reported by Abu Da’ud on the authority of Subay’ah bint Harth who says that she gave birth to a child fifteen days after the death of her husband Sa’d b. Khawla. When she was out of her confinement she applied cosmetics and came out well dressed. Somebody told her: ‘Probably you intend to get married again. Well, you can’t do it for four months and ten days.’ She went straight to the Prophet who told her that with the delivery of the child she was out of the period of waiting. He advised her to get married if a good proposal came up (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, *Kashshaf*, Ibn Kathir, Razi). The waiting period itself is to ascertain that the widow is not carrying child from the deceased husband (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir and others).

The status of women in pre Islamic Arabia can be judged from the *hadith* quoted by Ibn Jarir here. Our

mother Umm al Salamah (ra) reports that a woman in mourning came to the Prophet complaining that she had some problem in her eyes and wanted permission to apply *kohl*. The Prophet (saws) told her:

”لقد كانت إحداكن تكون في الجاهلية في شر أحلاسها، فتمكث في بيتها حولا إذا توفي عنها زوجها، فيمر عليها الكلب فترميها بالبرة ! أفلا أربعة أشهر وعشرا“

“Was it not so in the pre Islamic times that a woman was supposed to mourn her husband’s death for one year, wearing the most filthy dress she could? When a dog came near her in that state, she chased it away by throwing camel dung at it! (That was in the bygone days). Now the period of mourning is only four months and ten days.”

Legal Points

1. A widow may not use perfumes, wear make up or put on attractive clothes for the full period of waiting.

This is prohibited by several *ahadith* (Ibn Kathir). However, it is not necessary that she appear shabby as is the custom in certain societies (Au.). `A'isha (*ra*) used to say that she may not wear either white or black clothes during this period (Ibn Jarir).

2. A widow in waiting should continue to live in her deceased husband's house, if he owned it; and, of course, if she is carrying child, then, until she has delivered the baby (Qurtubi). She may go out for errands during the day but may not spend a night outside (*Ma'arif*). Some scholars have expressed the opinion that she can also spend her waiting period in her own house if she wishes (Ibn Jarir and others).

501. In saying: "*And when they (the women) have attained their period there is no sin upon you (O men) in what they do with themselves in an honorable way,*" Allah (*swt*) has hinted that it is for men to prevent their

women from committing unethical acts. They will be sinning if they do not (Alusi).

Basing their opinion on this verse: the Hanafiyyah argue that a woman has the right to marry without the consent of her legal guardian (*waliyy*) Razi.

Nonetheless, another rule worked out by the Hanafiyyah safeguards a gullible woman from shrewd men. It says that the *waliyy* can seek separation through the courts if he feels that the girl has married a wrong man.

502. What is meant by the original words "*La tuwa'idu hunna sirran?*" According to Abu Mijlaz, Abu Sha'sa, Jabir b. Zayd, Hasan al Basri, Ibrahim Nakha'i, Qatadah, Dahhak, Rabi' b. Anas, Sulayman al Taymi, Muqatil b. Hayyan and Suddi, the meaning is: "Do not commit adultery with them." Ibn Jarir (and on his authority Ibn Kathir also),

[235] And there is no harm in the hints of proposal that you may send to the (widowed) women or conceal (such intentions) in your heart. Allah knows that you will remember (and talk to) them. Yet, do not make firm promises of marriage,⁵⁰² save that you say something honorable. But do not resolve upon the marriage tie until the prescribed term (of waiting) has been completed.⁵⁰³ And be aware that Allah knows what is in your hearts, therefore, beware of Him and know that Allah is All forgiving, All clement.

وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا عَرَّضْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ
خِطْبَةِ النِّسَاءِ أَوْ أَكْنَنْتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ
عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنْكُمْ سَتَدْكُرُونَهُنَّ وَلَكِنْ لَا
تُوَاعِدُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا
وَلَا تَعْرِمُوا عُقْدَةَ النِّكَاحِ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ
الْكِتَابُ أَجَلَهُ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي
أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُوٌّ
كَارِيمٌ ﴿٢٣٥﴾

prefers this meaning. However, Zamakhshari argues that although it is correct that “*sirran*” normally implies sexual intercourse, here it has been employed in the sense of marriage and hence it will mean, “Do not make marriage promises.” This is also the meaning stated in the *Jalalayn*. Yet, there seems to be room for the meaning commonly adopted by the modern translators viz., “Do not make secret promises,” though not as commonly preferred by the classical commentators (Au.).

503. The meaning is that a direct proposal may not be made to a woman in waiting. Rather, one may reveal his intention by saying things like: ‘Be of good cheer, you will be

taken care of,’ or, ‘I hope to find a suitable partner for myself and you are a pretty woman,’ or say to her guardian, ‘Do not forget to talk to me when you receive a proposal for her,’ etc. (Ibn ‘Abbas, Mujahid, Sa’id b. Jubayr: Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). According to Ibrahim Nakha’i, he can even send her gifts (to reveal his intention) Ibn Jarir.

504. What is meant here by the words: “women you have not touched” is “women with whom you have not consummated the marriage.” Nonetheless, some fuqaha’ make a difference between a man and woman coming together in complete privacy, (known as *khalwah*) and actual consummation of marriage. Ac-

[236] There is no sin upon you that you divorce women you have not (yet) touched,⁵⁰⁴ nor have settled a dower upon them.⁵⁰⁵ However, bestow (gifts) on them: upon the affluent according to his resources while upon the straitened according to his resources a gift (made) in an honorable manner, due from those who do things well.

لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ
تَمْسُوهُنَّ أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَمَتَّعُوهُنَّ
عَلَى الْمَوْسِعِ قَدْرُهُ وَعَلَى الْمُقْتَرِ قَدْرُهُ
مَتَاعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٢٣٦﴾

[237] However, if you divorce them before you consummate (the marriage) but have settled upon them a dower, then (the due is) one half of what you have settled, unless they (the women) forgive (their half) or he forgives (his half) in whose hand is the knot of marriage⁵⁰⁶ (i.e., the husband).⁵⁰⁷ Should you forgive, then, that is nearer to piety. Therefore, forget not generosity (while dealing) with each other. Verily, Allah is aware of what you do.⁵⁰⁸

وَإِنْ طَلَقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ وَقَدْ
فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً فَنِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ إِلَّا
أَنْ يَعْفُونَ أَوْ يَعْفُوَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ عُقْدَةُ
النِّكَاحِ وَأَنْ تَعْفُوا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى وَلَا تَنْسُوا
الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٧﴾

cordingly, rules governing the two situations can be different (Au.).

505. Imām Razi points out that the verse proves by implication that marriage without agreeing upon the exact sum of the dower is perfectly legal.

506. The opinion of a minority of scholars is that by the words, “*He forgives in whose hand is the knot of marriage*,” the allusion is to the guardian of the virgin girl who can use his discretion and forgive the husband the one half of the dower receivable. This is the opinion of Ibn ‘Abbas, Hasan and ‘Alqamah and the ear-

lier opinion of Qadi Shurayh, Ta’us and Mujahid before the last three retracted their opinion and said that it is the husband who has been alluded to. However, the majority opinion is that the allusion is to the husband since it is he who holds the tie of marriage (Ibn Jarir).

507. The idea for the words in parenthesis here has been taken from Zamakhshari (Au.).

Thus there are four kinds of divorces, each with its own ruling so far as the dower is concerned.

1. A marriage in which the dower

was not fixed and which was not consummated: Nothing is obligatory save that the husband ought to offer some gifts in accordance with his means.

2. A marriage in which the dower was fixed but the marriage was not consummated: Due in this case is one half of the dower agreed by the two parties.

3. A marriage in which the dower was not fixed but the marriage was consummated: Due is the dower in accordance with the status of the woman (*mahr al mithl*).

4. A marriage in which the dower was fixed and the marriage was consummated: Due is what was mutually agreed upon (Qurtubi, Razi and Alusi).

508. It is reported of Jubayr bin Mut'im that once he visited Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas. Sa'd proposed that he marry his daughter. He agreed and the marriage took place then and there. But when he went back he divorced her and sent her dower in full. He was asked: "Why did you marry her in the first place?" He replied: "Because he proposed and I did not like to say no." He was asked: "But why did you send the dower in full?" He replied: "What about generos-

ity?" (Zamakhshari). He was referring to the "*fadl*" of this verse (Au.).

'Ali ibn abi Talib said:

”سَيَأْتِي عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ عَصُوفٌ يَعَصُّ الْمَوْسِرُ عَلَى مَا فِي يَدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يُؤْمَرْ بِذَلِكَ، قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: {وَلَا تَتَسَوَّاءُ الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ} وَيَبَايِعُ الْمِضْطَرُونَ، وَقَدْ تَهَى النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ بَيْعِ الْمِضْطَرِ وَبَيْعِ الْغَرِّ وَبَيْعِ التَّمَرَةِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُدْرِكَ.“

“A time will come when tenacity will be of a high order. In those times a man of means will hold fast to what he has in his hands although he has not been commanded that, while Allah has said, ‘And forget not generosity with each other.’ The people would deal with the most desperate to trade with, while the Prophet has prohibited dealings with the most desperate, from trading in the unknown (commodities) and from fruit that is not yet ready (on the trees)” (Ibn Kathir).

The report is from Abu Da'ud but which has a weak chain, as judged by Mundhiri in 'Awn al-Ma'bud (Au.).

509. A *hadith* preserved by Bukhari and Muslim has Ibn Mas'ud saying that he asked the Prophet (*saws*):

[238] Guard the (daily) Prayers⁵⁰⁹ and (especially) the Wusta⁵¹⁰ Prayer, and stand before Allah in all humility.

حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَى
وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ ﴿٢٣٨﴾

سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: أَيُّ الْأَعْمَالِ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: "الصَّلَاةُ عَلَى وَفَّيْهَا" فُلْتُ: ثُمَّ أَيُّ؟ قَالَ "ثُمَّ بَرُّ الْوَالِدَيْنِ" فُلْتُ: ثُمَّ أَيُّ؟ قَالَ "ثُمَّ الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ" قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي بَعْضُ مَنْ وَلَوْ اسْتَرْزَدْنَاهُ لَرَأَدَنِي.

"What deed is the most virtuous?" He answered, "Prayers at their appointed hours." I asked him: "Which one after that?" He replied: "Treating the parents well." I asked: "Which one after that?" He replied, "Jihad in the way of Allah." Ibn Mas'ud adds, "Had I asked him for more he would added to the list" (Ibn Kathir).

What is the connection between the injunctions dealing with women's rights and Prayers? Mawdudi writes: "Having mentioned the laws for the guidance of human society, God rounds off this address by emphasizing Prayer, for it is Prayers which instill in man the fear of God. They inculcate the feelings of goodness and purity and the disposition to obey the ordinances of God, and foster adherence to righteousness. Without Prayer it would be impossible

for men to persist in observing the laws of God, and they are likely to be swept away by a current of defiance and disobedience, as happened in the case of the Jews."

Asad adds: "In accordance with the system prevailing throughout the Qur'an, any lengthy section dealing with social laws is almost invariably followed by a call to God consciousness (*taqwa*: Au.): and since God consciousness comes most fully to its own in prayer, this and the next verse are interpolated here between injunctions relating to marital life and divorce."

Imām Razi has his own point. He says: While ordering us to guard the Prayers, Allah (*swt*) used the form in Arabic which is used for two persons participating in an act. "*Qaatala*" for instance would imply that there are two persons who fought with each other. Therefore, "*haafaza*" would imply that the act of guarding is being performed by two parties. One of them is the Muslim? Who is the other? There are two possibilities. First, Allah is the other, guarding the devotee against various calamities.

ties while the man himself takes good care of the Prayers. Second, the Prayers guard him. And the Prayers guard in at least three ways. One, they guard him against committing sins as Allah said (45:29):

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ
[العنكبوت/٤٥]

“Indeed Prayers come in the way of the obscene and the unseemly (things).” Second, they guard him against various ordeals, as Allah said ():

اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ [البقرة/١٥٣]

“Seek help with Prayers and Patience.” And third, they will guard him from the Fire on the Day of Judgment, since one who Prays, recites a lot of Qur’ān and, as we know, the Qur’ān will intercede on the Day of Judgment.

510. Ibn Kathir writes: Authorities are at variance over the Prayer that is alluded to by the words “*Salaut al Wusta*.” Opinions range as far and wide as to cover (a) each of the five daily Prayers, (b) all five of them combined, (c) none of them in specific, and (d) even the Friday and (e) ‘Eid Prayers. However, based on the number of scholars behind them, the opinions narrow down to *Fajr* and ‘*Asr* Prayers. Further, between the two the ‘*Asr* Prayer seems to be the

most favored.

Fajr Prayer: According to a report in Al Muwatta of Imām Malik ‘Ata’ al ‘Utaradi once performed his Fajr Prayers with Ibn ‘Abbas who did the *qunut* (supplication in the sate of *Qiyam*). Then he turned around and said, “This is the *Salatu al Wusta*.” Abu al ‘Aliyyah reports a similar incident involving Ibn ‘Abbas in the mosque of Basra. This also seems to be the opinion of Ibn ‘Umar, Abu Umamah, Anas, Abu al ‘Aliyyah, ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr, ‘Ata’, Mujahid, Jabir b. Zayd, ‘Ikrimah and Rabi’ b. Anas. This is the opinion of Imām Shafe’i too. It is said that it has been called *Salatu al Wusta* (the middle Prayer) because it falls between two Prayers (‘*Isha* and *Zuhr*’) which are four *rak’ah* each, shortened to two in a journey, while the *Fajr* Prayer is two *rak’ah* and is not shortened. It is also said that the reason is that it falls between two Prayers in which the Qur’ān is recited loudly, i.e., *Maghrib* and ‘*Isha*, and two Prayers in which the recitation is not loud, i.e., *Zuhr* and ‘*Asr*.

‘Asr Prayer: Tirmidhi and Baghawi have said that the opinion of the great majority of Companions and scholars of later period is that it is the ‘*Asr* Prayer which is the *Wusta*

Prayer. Qadi al Mawardi has said that this is the opinion of the great majority of the *Taba'iyyun* (Followers).

The latter has in fact devoted a whole book to this subject in which he has presented no less than 39 different opinions, but eventually settles on 'Asr Prayer as the *Wusta* Prayer: *Tuhfatu al Ahwadhi*.

Ibn 'Abdul Barr says this is the opinion of the great majority of the Traditionists (*Ahl al Athar*). Ibn 'Atiyyah has said in his *tafsir* that this is the opinion of the majority of the scholars. Hafiz Abu Muhammad has reported in his book on this subject that it is the 'Asr Prayer in the opinion of 'Umar, 'Ali, Ibn Mas'ud, Abu Ayyub, 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr, Samurah b. Jundub, Abu Hurayrah, Abu Sa'id, Hafsa, Umm Habibah, Umm Salamah, Ibn 'Umar, and, the correctly traced opinion of Ibn 'Abbas, and 'A'isha (may Allah be pleased with them all). Such is also the opinion of 'Ubaydah, Ibrahim Nakha'i, Razin, Zir b. Hubaysh, Sa'id ibn Jubayr, Ibn Sirin, Qatadah, Dahhak, Hasan, Muqatil, 'Ubayd and others. This is also reported of Ahmad b. Hanbal ... and, according to Ibn al Mundhir, it is the opinion of Abu Hanifah, Abu Yusuf, Imām Muham-

mad and Ibn Habib Maliki.

They base their opinion on the *hadith* of *Khandaq* reported by 'Ali in Bukhari, Muslim and others. It says that one day during the battle of the Trench (*khandaq*) the assault by the polytheists was so intense that the Prophet (*saws*) could not offer his 'Asr Prayer until the sunset. The Prophet said in anger:

مَا لََّ اللَّهُ قُبُورُهُمْ وَيَبُوتُهُمْ نَارًا كَمَا شَعَلُونَا عَنْ صَلَاةِ
الْوُسْطَى حَتَّى غَابَتْ الشَّمْسُ وَهِيَ صَلَاةُ الْعَصْرِ.

“May Allah fill their graves and homes with fire. They prevented us from the *Wusta* Prayer until the sun disappeared,” and it was the 'Asr Prayer.” Eventually, he offered this Prayer after the *Maghrib* and before the 'Isha Prayers.

Yet another opinion is that the knowledge of the *Wusta* Prayer was withheld like the knowledge of the *Qadr* Night was withheld, in order that people may seek it in all the Prayers and do their utmost to achieve excellence in each of them.

Quotation from Ibn Kathir ends here.

Sa'id b. Mysayyib, the famous *Taba'i* says: “The Companions of the Prophet were as much in disagreement over the *Salatu al Wusta*

[239] However, if you are in fear then on foot or riding.⁵¹¹ But when you are in peace, then remember Allah as He taught⁵¹² you what you knew not.

فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَأَدْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَمَا عَلَّمَكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٩﴾

as these,” he passed the fingers of one of his hand into those of the other” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Qurtubi, Alusi).

Why is it so, seeing that the terms used in the reports in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and other *hadith* collections are unambiguous? One answer is that the *hadith* of Khandaq did not reach everyone during or immediately after the Prophet’s time leading to such variance in opinion. Later, with the spread of the *hadith* literature the ‘*Asr* Prayer came to be accepted by most scholars as the *Wusta* Prayer. In fact, Hafsa (*ra*) was so sure about it (Ibn Kathir and others), that she had the words *Salatu al ‘Asr* included in her personal copy of the Qur’ān, either as an explanatory remark, or under assumption that it was part of the text. Moreover, the Companions of the Prophet were men of action and not theorizers. For them every Prayer was *Wusta* Prayer to each of which they applied themselves with equal zeal (Au.).

511. “This relates to the dangerous situation for instance that of war where, remaining for any length of time at one place would only increase the peril. In such an event, the obligatory prayers may be offered in any way that is feasible, even without consideration of the *qiblah*” (Asad).

In addition to the permission to do the Prayers on foot, or on a beast (or a vehicle) through gestures, if necessary, Prayers have been shortened for situations of fear. The four *rak’ah* of the ordinary times, become two in a journey, and one in situations of fear. This is the opinion of Ibn ‘Abbas, Hasan al Basri, Thawri and others (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). However, the shortening to one *rak’ah* is only when a congregational Prayer as specified by the Qur’ān and explained in the *ahadith* is not possible (Ibn Jarir). Nevertheless, the majority of scholars believe that Prayers at times of fear are also shortened to two and not one (Razi).

512. I.e., Offer the Prayers in their completeness and with the *qiyam*

[240] As for those of you who (fear they may) die leaving behind wives, (they may make a) testament for the widows (specifying) a year's provision without being dislodged.⁵¹³ However, if they depart (on their own), then there is no blame upon you in what they do with themselves honorably. And Allah is Powerful and Wise.

وَالَّذِينَ يَتُوفَوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا
وَصِيَّةً لِّأَزْوَاجِهِمْ مَّتَاعًا إِلَى الْحَوْلِ غَيْرِ
إِخْرَاجٍ فَإِنْ خَرَجْنَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي
مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ مِنْ مَّعْرُوفٍ وَاللَّهُ
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٠﴾

(standing), *ruku`* (bowing) and *sujud* (prostration) done properly. Reports also suggest that people used to say a few necessary words to each other during their Prayers until Allah (*swt*) revealed this verse. After this they were forbidden from speaking to each other while in Prayers. Once (following the old practice), when the Prophet (*saws*) was greeted while he was in Prayers, he did not answer. After terminating the Prayers he recited this verse (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

For further discussions see *al-Nisa'* note 272.

513. According to the great majority, who base their opinion on a report in Bukhari, this verse has been abrogated by the verses preceding it. However, the opinion of Ibn `Abbas is that it has been abrogated by those verses of *surah* al Nisa' which deal with inheritance. Abu Musa al Ash`ari, Ibn Zubayr, Mujahid, Ibrahim, `Ata',

Hasan, `Ikrimah, Qatadah, Dahhak, Zayd ibn Aslam, Suddi, Muqatil, `Ata' al Khurasani, and Rabi' b. Anas also hold the opinion that this verse is abrogated. Ibn Zubayr asked `Uthman ibn `Affan at the time the Qur'an was being compiled as to why the verse should be included at all if it was abrogated. `Uthman's answer was: "Brother. I am not going to remove anything from its place." What he meant was that this was a matter of Divine judgment (*amr tauqifi*) and not a thing for humans to meddle with (Ibn Kathir).

A minority opinion is that there has been no abrogation and that the husband can still make a testament to the effect that his widow be provided for a year and not expelled from the house for that period; although the injunction about the testament is not obligatory (Ibn Jarir).

514. Without a *hadith* on the subject, it is difficult to say what histori-

[241] And for the divorced (of every category) is a bestowal in a suitable manner; an obligation on the godfearing.

وَالْمُطَلَّقاتِ مَتَاعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢٤١﴾

[242] Thus does Allah make clear His signs to you in order that you may reflect.

كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٤٢﴾

[243] Have you not heard of those who abandoned their homes although they were in their thousands for fear of death?! Whereupon Allah said unto them: 'Die.' Subsequently He brought them to life. Verily Allah is full of bounty for the people, but most people do not give thanks.⁵¹⁴

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ مُوتُوا ثُمَّ أَحْيَاهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٤٣﴾

cal incident the Qur'an is referring to. The classical commentators offer the following as their comment.

Sa'id b. Jubayr reports Ibn 'Abbas as having said that these were four thousand in number who were fleeing from plague (or *Jihad*: Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Alusi, Zamakhshari from Ibn 'Abbas). They said, 'We shall go to a land where death will not overtake us.' When they had reached the intended destination, Allah (*swt*) ordered: "Die." They fell dead. Some time later a prophet happened to pass by their remains. He prayed to Allah that they be given a new life. Allah restored them to life. According to some the prophet was: Hizqil (Ezekiel of the Old Testament: Au.) Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others).

As for the modern interpretation that the dying and bringing back to life allude to the wandering of the Israelites in the desert for forty years, suffice it to say that it has no basis either in idion or in tradition. It is entirely conjectural (Au.).

Plague

With reference to plague, Ibn Kathir reports a *hadith* from Musnad Ahmad and *Sahihayn* the substance of which is that when 'Umar ibn al Khattab (*ra*) arrived in Syria for inspection, he met Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al Jarrah and his companions who informed him that plague had struck the Syrian region. Abdul Rahman ibn 'Awf appeared and told him: "I know something about this. I have heard the Prophet (*saws*) say, 'If it breaks out in a place then, if you are

there, do not run away; but if you are not there, do not go there either.”

‘Umar thanked Allah and left the place. (Abu ‘Ubaydah objected to ‘Umar going away saying, ‘Are you running away from the *qadr* [the Divine Decree] of Allah? ‘Umar replied, ‘I wish it was not you who said that. Yes, (I am running away) from Allah’s *qadr* to Allah’s *qadr*’: Qurtubi).

What the above report tells us is that a time is allotted to each individual. No one can die before completing his term. There is no escape from *qadr* nor from Allah save towards Allah. Therefore, there is no point in running away from a place where an epidemic has struck. This of course, adds Ibn Kathir, is also applicable to *Jihad* (during which a lot of people die, but they would any way, even if they did not participate in it: Au.)

Zamakhshari adds: “After all one has to die; so why not in the way of Allah?”

Accordingly, Allah said (Ibn Jarir) in the following verse:

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ
[البقرة/٢٤٤]

“Fight in the way of Allah, and know that Allah is the All seeing, the All knowing.”

He also said at another place (3: 168):

الَّذِينَ قَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَعَدُوا لَوْ أَطَاعُونَا مَا قُتِلُوا قُلْ فَادْرَءُوا عَنْ أَنْفُسِكُمُ الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ [آل عمران/١٦٨]

“Those who told their compatriots, while they themselves remained behind, ‘Had they listened to us they would not have been killed.’ Tell them, ‘Stave off death from yourselves, if you are true.’” And, at another place (4: 77,78):

رَبَّنَا لَمْ كُنْزِبْ عَلَيْنَا الْقِتَالَ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنَا إِلَى أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ قُلْ مَتَاعُ الدُّنْيَا قَلِيلٌ وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِمَنِ اتَّقَى وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا (٧٧) أَيْنَمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِكْكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُشِيدَةٍ [النساء/٧٧، ٧٨]

“They said, ‘O Lord! Why did You prescribe fighting for us? Why did You not give us a respite?’ Tell them, ‘This world’s pleasures are meagre. The Hereafter is better for him who fears Allah. And you shall not be wronged. Wherever you might be, death will overtake you, even if you were in fortified forts.”

It has also been reported to us that Allah’s sword Khalid ibn Walid said in his death bed: “I have been through such and such dangerous situations. There is not a part of my body where there is no mark of injury. But look. I’m dying in this bed like a wild ass.”

Quotation from Ibn Kathir ends

here.

According to a report in Bukhari, the Prophet was asked about plague. He said:

"الطَّاعُونَ رَجَسٌ أُرْسِلَ عَلَى طَائِفَةٍ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ
أَوْ عَلَى مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ ، فَإِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِهِ بِأَرْضٍ فَلَا
تَقْدُمُوا عَلَيْهِ ، وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا فَلَا تَخْرُجُوا
فِرَارًا مِنْهُ "

“It is a punishment that was (originally) sent down upon the Israelites, or (he said) upon those before you. If you hear that it has struck a land, do not go there. But if you are there, then do not run away from there, trying to escape it.”

According to another *hadith* in Bukhari the Prophet (*saws*) said when enquired about plague:

"أَنَّهُ عَذَابٌ يَبْعَثُهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ ، وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
جَعَلَهُ رَحْمَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ، لَيْسَ مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَمُوتُ بِالطَّاعُونِ
فَيَمُوتُ فِي بَلَدِهِ صَابِرًا مُحْتَسِبًا ، يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَا يُصِيبُهُ
إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ ، إِلَّا كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ شَهِيدٍ "

“It is a scourge that Allah sends down upon whomsoever He will. Now, Allah has made it a means

of mercy for the believers so that there is no believer who stays put patiently in a place struck by plague, firmly believing that nothing will happen except that which has been preordained by Allah, but he will be rewarded in the same measure as a martyr.”

However, there is no difference in opinion between the scholars, that this is not applicable to the situation of the enemies of Islam overrunning a Muslim territory, or dacoits raiding a district in which circumstances the Muslims are allowed to move to places of safety. Also, if one leaves the area affected by plague, for reasons other than escape, then it should be permissible, in view of the words of the *hadith* which disallow the movement as a means of escape. Accordingly, we do not know of any Muslim scholar running away from plague (Qurtubi).

515. The way of Allah: Imām Malik has said, ‘Ways of Allah are many. There is not a “way of Allah” that is not fought for, or against, or in its cause. The noblest of these (“ways of

[244] Fight in the way of Allah,⁵¹⁵ and know that Allah is the All hearing, the All knowing.

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٤﴾

[245] Who is it that will offer Allah a goodly loan⁵¹⁶ so that Allah may increase it many fold?⁵¹⁷ And Allah withholds and gives⁵¹⁸ (whomsoever He wills);⁵¹⁹ and it is to Him that you will return.⁵²⁰

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً وَاللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْسُطُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٤٥﴾

Allah” for which one may fight), is Islam’ (Qurtubi).

516. According to ‘Umar and some others of the *Salaf*, “Goodly loan” refers to what is spent in the way of Allah (Ibn Kathir).

Goodly Loan

Three points must be observed while spending: (i) It should be the best of what one possesses, (ii) it should be done to win Allah’s approval and, (iii) it should not be with the intention of placing someone under an obligation.

“The first is concerned with the thing itself that is being spent, the second is between the bestower and His Lord, and the third between the bestower and the bestowed upon” (Ibn al-Qayyim).

517. The Qur’ān itself says in verse 261 of this *surah* that Allah (*swt*) increases the reward of good deeds seven hundred fold. There are sev-

eral *ahadith*, although some weak, but the combination of which makes the meaning acceptable, to the effect that Allah (*swt*) increases the reward of a good deed by a million or more times (Ibn Kathir).

518. Since the “giving” and “withholding” are both means by which Allah reveals His Powers, both the “states” are commendable (and should be equally welcome to a believer) - Thanwi.

519. It is reported that once in Madi-nah the prices of commodities rose up sharply. The people came to the Prophet and suggested that he fix up the prices. He told them: “It is Allah who is the Bestower, the Withholder and the Provider. I hope to meet my Lord in a state in which no one will be complaining of a wrong done to him by me in matters of life or property” (Ibn Jarir).

520. Ibn Abi Hatim has reported that when this verse: “Who is it that will offer Allah a goodly loan, so that Allah may increase (for him

[246] Have you not heard of the elders of the Children of Israel after Musa? When they said to a Prophet of theirs,⁵²¹ 'Appoint a king over us so that we may fight (under his command) in the way of Allah' ⁵²² He replied, 'Is it possible that if fighting is prescribed for you, you will not fight?' They said: 'What will prevent us from fighting in the way of Allah when we have been expelled from our homes and (separated from our) offsprings?' ⁵²³ But when fighting was prescribed for them they turned away save for a few of them. And Allah knows best the transgressors.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الْمَلَاِ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى إِذْ قَالُوا لِنَبِيِّهِمْ ائْبَعْثْ لَنَا مَلِكًا نُنَاقِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ قَالْ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ أَلَّا تُقَاتِلُوا قَالُوا وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ وَقَدْ أُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ دِيَآرِنَا وَأَبْنَاءِنَا فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّآلِمِينَ ﴿٢٤٦﴾

the reward) many fold,” was revealed, Abu al-Dahdah al Ansari went to the Prophet and asked him:

يا رسول الله إن الله يريد منا القرض؟ قال: ”نعم يا أبا الدحداح“. قال: أرنا يدك، قال: فناوله يده، قال: قد أقرضت ربي حائطي - وحائطه فيه ستمائة نخلة - فجاء يمشي حتى أتى الحائط وأم الدحداح فيه وعيالها، فنادى: يا أم الدحداح، قالت: لبيك، قال: اخرجي فقد أقرضته ربي. - رواه أبو يعلى والطبراني ورجاهما ثقات ورجال أبي يعلى رجال الصحيح.

“Does Allah want a loan from us?” The Prophet said, “Yes. O Abu Dahdah.” Abu Dahdah said, “Will you stretch your hand?” When the Prophet did that he said, “Be witness that I have lent my orchard to my Lord.” (The transmitter of the report adds: “There were six hundred trees in that orchard”). Abu Dahdah then proceeded to the orchard

and called Umm Dahdah and children without entering into it: “Come out O mother of Dahdah for I have lent this orchard to my Lord” (Ibn Jarir). (The version above is from *Majma`u as-sawad'id*). Ibn Marduwayh also reports this through `Umar (Ibn Kathir).

521. It is said that the Prophet referred to was either Sham'un (Simon) or Shamwil (Samuel) Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir.

As for Talut, he is Saul of the Bible (Au.).

522. This request was made by the Israelites when their enemies defeated them in battle after battle, expelled them from their homes and enslaved their children (Ibn `Abbas: Ibn Jarir).

[247] Their prophet told them, 'Verily Allah has appointed over you Talut a king.' They objected, 'How can kingship be for him over us when we are more deserving of kingship than he?⁵²⁴ nor has he been given abundant wealth.' He replied, 'It is Allah who has chosen him above you. Further, He has given him a decisive edge over you in knowledge and physical strength.⁵²⁵ And Allah bestows His sovereignty upon whomsoever He will. Allah is All Embracing, All Knowing.'

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا قَالُوا أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِنَ الْمَالِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مُلْكَهُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٧﴾

523. "Obviously, a reference to the many invasions of their homelands by their perennial enemies, the Philistines, Amorites, Amalekites and other Semitic and non Semitic tribes living in and around Palestine; and, by implication, a reminder to the believers of all times that 'fighting for God's cause' (as defined in the Qur'an) is an act of faith" (Asad).

524. It is said that of the twelve tribes of the Israelites, one, Yehuda, was known for producing prophets and the other, Levi, for producing rulers. Talut was from neither of them. He was a Benjamite (Ibn 'Abbas, Suddi, Qatadah, Dahhak, Wahab b. Munabbih Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

The verse implies that *Imamah* is not

necessarily hereditary (Razi).

525. Having had an edge over them in physical prowess did not necessarily mean Talut was tall and robust. It implies rather that he was endowed with power and courage. As for example, the Prophet told his wife: "First to join me would be the one with the longest arm." His wives began to measure each other's arms. But the first to die after him was Zaynab (*ra*) who used to work with her hands and was the most generous of hand (Qurtubi).

526. The following has been reported about the Tabut.

The Tabut

According to Jewish sources, this

[248] Their Prophet also told them, 'The sign of his kingship is that the Chest⁵²⁶ will come back to you wherein is sechina⁵²⁷ from your Lord and a remnant of what the family of Musa and the family of Harun left behind: the angels bearing it. Verily in this is a sign for you if you are believers.'

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ
التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ
مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ
الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ
مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٤٨﴾

was a wooden chest lined with gold. It contained, according to Ibn `Abbas, the rod of Musa (*saws*) and the Tablet on which the Law was originally written. Qatadah, Suddi, `Ikrimah and Abu Saleh add to the list a copy of the *Tawrah*, some mann, and clothes worn by Musa and Harun, peace be upon them. The Israelites carried it into the battlefields as a source of comfort and blessing. (When religious and moral perversion became rampant: Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Zamakhshari), they lost it to their enemies (according to one report, Amalekites: Ibn `Abbas, Ibn Jarir). There are two opinions about how it came back. Ibn `Abbas is reported to have said that it was brought down by the angels from the heavens right into the midst of the Israelites. Another version is that those who had captured it took it

to Jericho and placed their idols on it. One day they found their idols fallen down and broken. They attributed this to the casket and putting it on a bullock cart pushed it on the road leading to the Israeli settlements and there onwards angels took charge (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi, Zamakhshari). Ibn Jarir adds: "I am told that the rod and the casket are buried in Tabariyyah (a lake in Palestine), and that they will be excavated before the end of the world."

527. The verbal meaning of the word Sechina is peace or comfort. Yet Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir (and others) offer various interpretations, probably of Jewish origin.

528. The intransigence and unreliability of the Israelites, despite clear signs, and their hostility towards their Prophets and rulers was well

[249] When Talut set forth with his troops he told them, 'Verily, Allah is going to test you at the stream.⁵²⁸ Whosoever drank from it, is not of me. But he who did not partake of it is of me, except for him who takes a sip out of his hand.' But, they drank from it (their fill) save for a handful of them.⁵²⁹ When he had crossed it along with those who had believed in him,⁵³⁰ they began to say, 'We have no strength this day against Jalut and his forces.' But those who believed that they would meet their Lord exclaimed: 'How many a small band overcame a big band, with the help of Allah?'⁵³¹ And Allah is with the patient.'⁵³²

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَنْ لَمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنِ اعْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ فَشَرَبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُّلَاقُوا اللَّهَ كَمْ مِّن فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٢٤٩﴾

known. Allah, therefore, put them to test at the stream in order that those who were weak in faith and meager of patience could be distinguished and separated out before they met their mighty enemy in the battlefield (Qadi: Razi).

529. "The symbolic implication is that faith and, thus, belief in the justice of one's cause has no value unless it is accompanied by heightened self discipline and disregard of one's material interests" (Asad).

530. According to a report in Bukhari the forces with Talut numbered many thousand. But, after the crossing of the stream, as many were left as the Muslims were at Badr, i.e. three hundred and a few over ten. The rest were left behind (Ibn Jarir).

The stream itself, according to one version, was a river between Jordan (city: Au.) and Palestine (i.e. river Jordan: Au.) Ibn 'Abbas, Rabi', Qatadah: Ibn Jarir).

It may also be noted that just as the result of the historical battle at Badr, the result of the battle between the forces of Talut and Jalut also proved to be a decisive one. It led to the establishment of the powerful kingdom of David and Solomon (Au.).

531. It seems it was the ordinary believers who were awed at being so overwhelmingly outnumbered by the enemy forces led by Jalut (Goliath of the Bible). Those that were strong in their faith were at peace and (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi) advised those who were losing heart not to look at numbers

[250] So, when they came face to face with Jalut and his forces, they prayed, 'O Lord, shower upon us patience,⁵³³ make firm our feet, and help us against the unbelieving people.'⁵³⁴

وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٥٠﴾

as Allah's help does not hinge on numbers, rather on who is fighting for a just cause (Ibn Jarir).

532. Qurtubi, the Chief Justice of Spain, laments in the 13th century of the Christian era: Is this not what we are required to do? (i.e., courageously face our powerful enemies with faith and patience). But our ugly deeds combined with our unholy intentions deter us. In fact, our large forces get knocked out at the hands of a small force of the enemy as has repeatedly happened. This is because of what our hands have earned. Bukhari records Abu Darda' as saying, 'You fight with your deeds (as your arms).' The Prophet has said, 'Are you not fed and helped but because of your weaker sections (of the society)?' But our deeds are corrupt, the weaker sections disdained, patience is little, trust is gone and fear of Allah is lacking; while Allah has said, 'Verily Allah is with those who fear Him and those who do things well.'... These then are the factors that decide whether Allah's help will descend or not. And these are lack-

ing in us. *Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un*. Indeed nothing remains of Islam but its name, nor of the religion but appearances, because of the corruption that has dug deep, the increase in sins and rebellion, the deterioration in conduct, until our enemy has overpowered us everywhere: east and west, over land and sea. Hence trials have multiplied, tribulations have become severe and there is no one who has escaped but he with whom Allah has been merciful.

533. The "afriq" of the original suggests outpouring of a thing into a receptacle (Razi, Alusi).

534. When our Prophet faced his enemies in the battlefield his prayer words used to be:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَجْعَلُكَ فِي نُحُورِهِمْ وَتَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شُرُورِهِمْ

"O Lord, we entrust their throats unto You and seek Your refuge from their evil" (Razi, Alusi).

Note the order in the verse under discussion: 'O Lord, shower upon us patience (and perseverance), make firm our feet, and help us against the

[251] Thereupon they routed them by Allah's will, and Da'ud slew Jalut. Allah gave him kingship and prophethood,⁵³⁵ and taught him what He willed.⁵³⁶ And, were not Allah to remove one set of people by means of another, the earth would be utterly corrupted,⁵³⁷ but Allah is bounteous upon all the beings.

فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُودُ جَالُوتَ
وَأَتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مَا
يَشَاءُ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ
لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٥١﴾

unbelieving people.' Victory requires firmness. And patience is the pre requisite for firmness (Thanwi).

535. According to Jewish sources, Jalut was a huge and powerfully built man. He came out challenging a duel but no one responded. Talut announced that he would give his daughter in marriage to anyone who killed him. Da'ud, a young man, not yet a prophet, and not as massively built, accepted the challenge, fought him and killed him. In consequence he married Talut's daughter and thus entered the royal family inheriting the rule after Talut. Subsequently, Allah made him a Prophet also. Accordingly the "*Hikmah*" of the original should be interpreted as "prophethood" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, *Bayan*).

The account given both by the classical as well as modern commentators concerning Da'ud and Jalut (David and Goliath) heavily rely upon Biblical sources, (*Samuel 1*, Chap. 17 & 18), where fiction goes hand in

hand with truth and hence we have dropped them out (Au.).

Majid says: "Kingship is Islam is not incompatible with the highest spiritual achievements. It can co exist even with prophethood. In fact it is on occasions a special Divine reward an excellent opportunity to serve one's fellow creatures."

Alusi and Razi add: It implies that knowledge (of revelation) and (an organized) government are the two basic requirements for bringing about peace in the land (Alusi, Razi).

536. This could refer to the manufacturing techniques of armory, (Ibn Jarir) or the understanding of the language of the birds, (Qurtubi, Alusi), or even the knowledge of religion sent through revelation. The phrase itself was perhaps added to point out that no man not even a prophet can at any stage in his life dispense with knowledge (Razi).

537. "That is, were not Allah to replace the wicked and the mischief-

[252] These are the revelations of Allah that We recite to you with Truth and verily, you are of the Messengers.⁵³⁸

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ تَنْزِيلُهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٢٥٢﴾

[253] Those (were) Messengers some of whom We preferred above others: to some Allah spoke (directly)⁵³⁹ while others He raised in rank.⁵⁴⁰ And We gave 'Isa, son of Maryam, clear proofs, and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit.⁵⁴¹ And, had Allah willed, those who succeeded them⁵⁴² would not have fought one against the other after the evidences (of truth) had come to them but they differed among themselves, so that some of them believed and some of them disbelieved.⁵⁴³ Yet, had Allah willed they would not have fought one against the other, but Allah does what He will.⁵⁴⁴

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّنْ كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا اقْتَتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَلَكِنِ اخْتَلَفُوا فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ آمَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ كَفَرَ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا اقْتَتَلُوا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿٢٥٣﴾

vous with the righteous and the rightly guided, the earth would be filled with mischief” (Majid).

In the words of Mawdudi: “Were the dominion of one nation or party to endure for ever, and were its capacity to perpetrate wrongs granted perpetuity, God’s earth would become full of corruption and wickedness.”

538. These revelations of Allah are a clear proof of your messenger-ship; otherwise, how could you, O Muhammad, being unlettered, relate these events of the past, in such detail and with such accuracy? (Ibn Jarir).

539. Adam, Musa and Muhammad

(peace on them all) were cases in point with whom Allah spoke directly (Ibn Kathir, Shanqiti).

540. Thus, prophets hold various status and ranks with Allah. This was demonstrated to our Prophet at the time of his nocturnal journey. He met them in various firmaments which indicated their status. A question arises: If the status of the prophets varies, why did our Prophet instruct us not to raise one prophet over the other? A *hadith*, for example, preserved by Bukhari and Muslim says,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ بَيْنَمَا يَهُودِيٌّ يَغْرُضُ سِلْعَةً لَهُ أُعْطِيَ بِهَا شَيْئًا كَرِهَهُ أَوْ لَمْ يَرْضَهُ - شَكََّ عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ - قَالَ لَا وَالَّذِي اصْطَفَى مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَى

الْبَشَرِ. قَالَ فَسَمِعَهُ رَجُلٌ مِّنَ الْأَنْصَارِ فَلَطَمَ وَجْهَهُ - قَالَ - تَقُولُ وَالَّذِي اصْطَفَىٰ مُوسَىٰ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَى الْبَشَرِ وَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صلى الله عليه وسلم - بَيْنَ أَظْهُرِنَا قَالَ فَذَهَبَ الْيَهُودِيُّ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ - صلى الله عليه وسلم - فَقَالَ يَا أَبَا الْقَاسِمِ إِنَّ لِي ذِمَّةً وَعَهْدًا. وَقَالَ فَلَا لَطَمَ وَجْهِي. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صلى الله عليه وسلم - " لَمْ لَطَمْتَ وَجْهَهُ ". قَالَ. قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِي اصْطَفَىٰ مُوسَىٰ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَى الْبَشَرِ وَأَنْتَ بَيْنَ أَظْهُرِنَا. قَالَ فَغَضِبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صلى الله عليه وسلم - حَتَّى عَرَفَ الْغَضَبُ فِي وَجْهِهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ " لَا تَفْضِلُوا بَيْنَ أَنْبِيََاءِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهُ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَيَصْعَقُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ - قَالَ - ثُمَّ يُنْفَخُ فِيهِ أُخْرَى فَأَكُونُ أَوَّلَ مَنْ بُعِثَ أَوْ فِي أَوَّلِ مَنْ بُعِثَ فَإِذَا مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ آخِذٌ بِالْعَرْشِ فَلَا أَدْرَى أَحْسَبَ بِصَعْقَتِهِ يَوْمَ الطُّورِ أَوْ بُعِثَ قَبْلِي ". صحيح مسلم

Once a Jew and a Muslim argued over some trade commodity when the Jew said, "No, by Him who chose Moses over the (people of the) world." An Ansari Muslim who heard him slapped him saying, "Do you say He chose Musa over the people, and over Muhammad?" The Jew complained to the Prophet. He was quite upset. He said: "Do not raise me above other Prophets; for on the Day of Judgment everyone will pass out. I will be the first to regain myself, and I will find Musa (*saws*) holding the `Arsh. Now, I don't know if Musa would not have lost his consciousness at all,

or would have been spared because of what happened to him (when he desired to see Allah in Person) at Mount Tur." (The tr. is shortened).

The question, therefore, in view of the Qur'ānic statement that there are ranks among the Prophets, remains to be answered. There can be several answers: a) The Prophet said this out of humility, b) The forbiddance is for situations of arguments, c) One should not seek to raise him above other prophets out of prejudice against them, and d) It is not for us to judge their status. It is for Allah to judge. For us, it is only obedience (Ibn Kathir).

Following a *hadith* in which the Prophet mentioned himself as of the highest of rank among the sons of Adam, it is allowed that we refer to him as the best of Prophets and the most exalted of all the Messengers, making it a general statement. However, it is not allowed that we say he is better than so and so, specifically naming a prophet, or calling him inferior to our Prophet (Qurtubi). The best that has been said about the subject is that there is no difference among the prophets as prophets; being all equal in the qualities of prophethood. The difference among

them is in their personal qualities as well as in their 'states' (Qurtubi, Shanqiti).

541. "(He is) not the 'third person of Trinity' but the arch angel Gabriel, who was in constant attendance upon Prophet Jesus, and protected him a mere mortal from the wiles of his enemies" (Majid).

542. That is, after Musa and 'Isa (Qatadah, Rabi': Ibn Jarir). However, it seems it is applicable to all the prophets whose succeeding generations generally quarreled among themselves after them (Qurtubi).

543. "This, in a nutshell, has been the history of the prophets and their peoples. The moral for the holy Prophet of Islam is to derive comfort by contemplating on this uniform fact of history, and not to expect wholesale conversion" (Majid from Thanwi).

Mawdudi elaborates: "God did not appoint the Prophets as policemen to force people to faith and obedience. He sent them, instead, with reasonable arguments and clear signs in order to invite people to righteousness. Hence the cause of all the differences and wrangling and fighting which took place was that people, in exercising the free will granted to them

by God, followed divergent courses. In short, people follow divergent ways precisely because of God's omnipotent will that men should have a choice. It would be a grave misunderstanding to hold that people follow different paths because God failed to persuade people to follow the path which He wanted them to choose."

544. Sayyid Qutb comments: "This fighting (between the people) did not take place against Allah's Will. Nothing can happen in this world without His Will. It was His Will that man's nature should be what it is ... with the capacity both for good as well as evil ... and that he should have the freedom to choose between right and wrong. Therefore, all that happens within his soul, all that he strives for and all that he achieves, fall within the scope of Allah's Will.

"Further, the differences in capabilities between one individual and another are by the design of Allah ... and so is the diversity despite the unity of origin in order that these different capabilities may match with the different functions of *Kh-ilafah* (that the humankind has been entrusted with). Allah was not such as to make all the people a carbon copy of each other ... while the func-

[254] Believers! Expend of what We have provided you before a Day comes wherein shall be no buying (or selling) nor friendship nor intercession (will be of any use). The unbelievers indeed are the wrong doers.⁵⁴⁵

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ
مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعَ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ
وَلَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

﴿٢٥٤﴾

[255] Allah! There is no deity but He: the Living,⁵⁴⁶ the Self subsisting by whom all subsist. Slumber does not overtake Him nor does sleep.⁵⁴⁷ To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. Who is there that can intercede with Him save by His leave?⁵⁴⁸ He knows what lies ahead of them and what is behind them,⁵⁴⁹ while they comprehend not aught of His knowledge, save such as He wills. His Kursi⁵⁵⁰ extends over the heavens and the earth; and their preservation tires Him not. He is the Exalted, the Supreme.⁵⁵¹

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ
سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا
فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا
بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا
يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ
كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ
حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

﴿٢٥٥﴾

tions and responsibilities of *Khilafah* on the earth, and the all round growth and development of life in it, was to take such varying and divergent forms. Indeed, when Allah (*swt*) wished diverse responsibilities for man, He also placed divergent capabilities in him, as a means of the completion and unification of the efforts towards realization of their goals. (But, instead, they chose to differ with these wide ranging faculties and took to quarrelling among themselves)."

545. 'Ata' ibn Dinar has been quoted by Ibn Abi Hatim as saying: "Praise

to Allah that He said, "*The unbelievers are the wrong doers*", and not, "*The wrong doers are unbelievers*" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

546. The Living, i.e., the Eternal, who had no beginning and who will have no end. In other words, this is His Attribute and not the quality of He being alive (in the sense in which we understand life: Au.) Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi.

547. Denial of slumber would not have meant denial of sleep and denial of sleep would not have included denial of slumber. Hence both had to be separately mentioned (Shawkani).

"This repudiates the Jewish and Christian idea of God 'resting' on the seventh day after His great exertion in creating the universe. 'And on the seventh day God ended 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 work which God created and made' (Genesis 2: 2, 3)" - Mawdudi

548. The commentators have the following to say on intercession:

Love and Intercession

The denial of love and intercession in the Hereafter concerns the unbelievers. The sentiments of love between the believers will survive. Accordingly, they will intercede for each other with Allah's leave (Razi).

The same thing (i.e. possibility of intercession only after leave has been granted: Au.) has been stated by the Prophet in the famous *hadith* known as the *Hadith al Shafa'ah*. He said:

فَيَأْتُونِي فَأَسْتَأْذِنُ عَلَى رَبِّي فَيُؤْذَنُ لِي فَإِذَا أَنَا رَأَيْتُهُ وَقَعْتُ سَاجِدًا فَيَدْعُنِي مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ فَيَقَالُ يَا مُحَمَّدُ ارْأِفْ رَأْسَكَ قُلْ تُسْمِعُ سَلْ تُنْعِظْ أَشْفَعُ تُشَفِّعُ. فَأَرْفَعُ رَأْسِي فَأُحْمَدُ رَبِّي بِتَحْمِيدِ يَوْمِئِذٍ رَبِّي ثُمَّ أَشْفَعُ فَيُخَذُ لِي خِذَا فَأُخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ النَّارِ وَأَدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ - صحيح مسلم

"The people will come to me and

I will proceed to seek my Lord's permission. I will be granted leave. When I see Him, I will fall prostrate. He will allow me to remain in that state so long as He will. Then it will be said: 'Muhammad, raise your head and ask, you will be heard, and intercede, your intercession will be granted.' Then I will praise my Lord with words that He will reveal to me then. Thereafter I shall begin to intercede; but a limit will be set (about what kind of people it is for whom I could intercede). Consequently, I shall take them out of the Fire and usher them into Paradise" (Ibn Kathir).

Ordinary believers will also be allowed to intercede for those Muslims they knew (Qurtubi). Accordingly, here are a few *ahadith* (Au.):

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- شَفَاعَتِي لِأَهْلِ الْكِبَائِرِ مِنْ أُمَّتِي (صحيح - سنن الترمذی)

Anas reported the Prophet as having said, "My intercession will be for those who committed major sins."

And,

"يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ بِشَفَاعَةِ رَجُلٍ مِنْ أُمَّتِي أَكْثَرُ مِنْ بَنِي نَمِيمٍ". قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ سِوَاكَ قَالَ "سِوَايَ". قَالَ أَبُو عِيْسَى (الترمذی) هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ غَرِيبٌ

“Through the intercession of a person of my *Ummah*, more people will enter Paradise than the population of Banu Tameem.” He was asked, “(Will he be) other than you?” He answered, “Yes, other than me.”

In contrast with the Islamic principle that salvation depends primarily on one's own faith and deeds, and intercession will only be allowed in favor of the deserving, who fell just short of the target, but were right on the track, the two preceding great religions, Christianity and Judaism, have both relied heavily on unlimited and unrestricted intercession for salvation. Majid quotes from Christian sources: “We were saved through the merit of one mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ.” ...

And from the Jewish belief as stated in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*: “The Father who created the universe has given to His arch angel and most ancient Word a pre eminent gift to stand on the confines of both: while separating the created things from the Creator he pleads before the immortal God on behalf of the mortal race which sins continually, and is the ambassador sent by the Ruler to the subject race.”

549. Hakam, Mujahid, Ibn Jurayj

and Suddi, however, believe that by the words *ma bayna aydihim* the reference is to this world and by *ma khalfahum* to Hereafter (Ibn Jarir).

Asad writes: “Another interpretation is ‘that which took place before them and that which will take place after them’ (Zamakhshari). It would seem, however, that in all these interpretations the obvious meaning of the idiomatic expression *ma bayna ya-dayhi* (‘that which lies open between one's hands’) is lost sight of: namely, that which is evident, or known, or perceivable; similarly, *ma khalfahu* means that which is beyond one's ken or perception. Since the whole tenor of the above Qur'an verse relates to God's omnipotence and omniscience, the translation given by me seems to be the most appropriate.” (Asad's rendering of the phrase is: “He knows all that lies open before men and all that is hidden from them.” Au.).

But Majid agrees with the meaning that has come from the earliest scholars, phrasing it differently but succinctly. He writes about *Ma bayna aydihim wa ma khalfahum*: “That which is in front of them as well as that which is behind them, i.e. ‘In point of space as well as in point of time.’”

Yusuf Ali's comment is also close to it: "God's knowledge is absolute, and is not conditioned by Space or Time."

It can both mean, they cannot know about anything save what He will, as well as, they cannot know about His Attributes and Qualities save what He will (Ibn Kathir).

550. The word *Kursiyy* appears only once in the Qur'ān while *`Arsh* has appeared several times (Au.).

Ibn Abi Hatim reports Ibn `Abbas (who bases his judgment on the words that follow, viz., "*their preservation does not tire Him*": Ibn Jarir) as having said that the term *Kursiyy* signifies knowledge. (But Albani declared the report weak: no. 9, *Al Ahadith al Sahihah*: Au.).

On the other hand, several reports, varying in their degree of reliability, say that Ibn `Abbas (as well as Abu Musa, Suddi, Dahhak: Ibn Jarir) also said that the *Kursiyy* is where our Lord rests His *Qadamayn*. (Hakim has declared this report of Ibn `Abbas, *Sahih*: Shawkani).

Ibn Kathir mentions several such reports and accords them some respect. But Albani declared the report weak (*Al-Jami' al-Sahih*, *hadith* no.

109) - Au.

Ibn al-Jawzi has on the other hand, stated in his "*Ilal*" that Ibn `Abbas explained the word *Kursiyy* as "where one places one's feet" merely to reject the opinion of those who said that it means "knowledge;" accordingly, Dahhak said (we know literally) that *kursiyy* is that usufruct which is placed under the throne of the kings for them to place their feet on (Au.).

The text of the above is as follows:

وكان ابن عباس يفسر معنى الكرسي وأنه موضع
قدمي الجالس ليخرجه عن قول من يقول ان الكرسي
بمعنى العلم قال الضحاك الكرسي الذي يوضع تحت
العرش يضع عليه الملوك اقدامهم - العلل المتناهية

In other words, we know what an earthly *'arsh* and *kursiyy* look like, and what their functions are. But when we talk of the *'Arsh* and *Kursiyy* of the heavens, then, it is Allah alone who knows their true meaning (Au.).

The Prophet (*saws*) is reported to have said (in a *hadith* of *Sahih* ibn Hibban):

ما السماوات السبع مع الكرسي إلا كحلقة ملقا
بأرض فلاة وفضل العرش على الكرسي كفضل
الفلاة على الحلقة - صحيح ابن حبان

"Compared to the *Kursiyy* the seven heavens are no more than a ring thrown into the desert and

compared with the *`Arsh*, the *Kursiyy* is no more than a ring thrown into the desert” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

551. Ibn Kathir writes: This verse is known as *Ayah al Kursiyy*. Muslim and others have recorded that:

عَنْ أَبِي بِنِ كَعْبٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- " يَا أَبَا الْمُنْذِرِ أَتَدْرِي أَيُّ آيَةٍ مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ مَعَكَ أَعْظَمُ ". قَالَ قُلْتُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ " يَا أَبَا الْمُنْذِرِ أَتَدْرِي أَيُّ آيَةٍ مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ مَعَكَ أَعْظَمُ ". قَالَ قُلْتُ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ. قَالَ فَضَرَبَ فِي صَدْرِي وَقَالَ " وَاللَّهِ لِيَهْنِكَ الْعِلْمُ أَبَا الْمُنْذِرِ ".

The Prophet (*saws*) asked Ubayy ibn Ka`b about the most magnificent verse in the Qur`an. He replied: “Allah and His messenger know best.” The Prophet asked him again, “O Abu al-Mundhir, do you know which *ayah* of Allah’s Book do you think is the most magnificent?” He replied: “*Allah, there is no God save He, the Living, the Self subsisting by whom all subsist.*”

The Prophet congratulated him on his knowledge. This verse is probably the most magnificent because Allah’s name has appeared in it, either by name or as a personal pronoun, 18 times (Qurtubi).

A *hadith* says,

"مَنْ قَرَأَ آيَةَ الْكُرْسِيِّ دُبُرَ كُلِّ صَلَاةٍ مَكْتُوبَةٍ لَمْ يَمْنَعْهُ مِنْ دُخُولِ الْجَنَّةِ إِلَّا الْمَوْتُ"

“Whosoever recited *Ayah al-Kursiyy* after every Obligatory Prayer, will have nothing to prevent him from Paradise except death.” (Ibn Kathir from the *Sahih* of Ibn Hibban).

Hakim has recorded the following *hadith* that he thinks meets with the criteria set by Bukhari and Muslim although they did not record it.

حَدَّثَنِي ابْنُ أَبِي بِنِ كَعْبٍ، أَنَّ أَبَاهُ، أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّهُ كَانَ لَهُمْ جُزْنٌ فِيهِ تَمَرٌ قَالَ: فَكُنْتُ أَتَعَاهَدُهُ فَأَجِدُهُ يَنْقُصُ قَالَ: فَحَرَسْتُهُ ذَاتَ لَيْلَةٍ، فَإِذَا أَنَا بِدَائِيَّةٍ كَهَيْئَةِ الْعُلَامِ الْمُخْتَلِمِ فَسَلَّمْتُ فَرَدَّ السَّلَامَ، فَقُلْتُ: مَنْ أَنْتَ؟ أَجَبَنِي أَمْ إِنْسِي؟ فَقَالَ: جَنِّي، فَقُلْتُ: نَاوِلْنِي يَدَكَ فَنَاوِلْنِي فَإِذَا يَدُ كُلِّبٍ وَشَعْرُ كُلِّبٍ، فَقُلْتُ: هَكَذَا خُلِقَ الْجِرْنُ؟ قَالَ: لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ الْجِرْنُ أَنَّهُ مَا فِيهِمْ مَنْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ أَسْرًا مِنِّي، فَقُلْتُ: مَا يَحْمِلُكَ عَلَى مَا صَنَعْتَ؟ قَالَ: بَلَّغَنِي أَنَّكَ رَجُلٌ تُحِبُّ الصَّدَقَةَ فَأَحْبَبْتُ أَنْ أُصِيبَ مِنْ طَعَامِكَ، قُلْتُ: فَمَا الَّذِي يُجِيرُنَا مِنْكُمْ؟ قَالَ: هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ آيَةُ الْكُرْسِيِّ قَالَ: فَتَرَكْتُهُ، ثُمَّ عَدَوْتُ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ فَقَالَ: "صَدَقَ الْحَبِيبُ"

`Abdullah ibn Ubayy reports his father as saying that he used to have a container filled with dates from which he noticed some decrease everyday. One day he decided to guard over it the whole night. He found someone very young (stealing from it). I said:

"Are you from the Jinn or mankind?" He replied: "Of the Jinn." I said: "Stretch your hand." When he stretched his hand I found it in the shape of a dog's paw and so were the hair covering the skin. I asked him: "Have all the Jinns been created in this fashion." He said in reply: (Evasively) "The Jinn know that I'm the strongest of them." I said: "What are you up to around here?" He said: "I have heard that you are a man who loves to give. So I thought I'll help myself." Ubayy asked him: "And how best can one guard oneself from (the mischief of) your kind?" He said: "With the help of *Ayah al Kursiyy*." Ubayy reported the incident to the Prophet who said: "The evil being spoke the truth."

Musnad Ahmad has another report, termed *hasan gharib* by Tirmidhi, which speaks of Abu Ayyub also coming in contact with a ghou.

Bukhari has reported the following incident in various chapters (Qur-tubi). Abu Hurayrah (ra) says:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ وَكَلَنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - بِحِفْظِ زَكَاةِ رَمَضَانَ ، فَأَتَانِي آتٍ فَجَعَلَ يَخْتُو مِنْ الطَّعَامِ ، فَأَخَذْتُهُ ، وَفُتِلْتُ وَاللَّهِ لَأَرْفَعَنَّكَ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - . قَالَ إِنِّي مُحْتَاجٌ ، وَعَلَيَّ عِيَالٌ ،

وَلِي حَاجَةٌ شَدِيدَةٌ . قَالَ فَخَلَيْتُ عَنْهُ فَأَصْبَحْتُ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - " يَا أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ مَا فَعَلَ أَسِيرُكَ الْبَارِحَةَ " . قَالَ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ شَكَا حَاجَةً شَدِيدَةً وَعِيَالًا فَرَجَمْتُهُ ، فَخَلَيْتُ سَبِيلَهُ . قَالَ " أَمَا إِنَّهُ قَدْ كَذَبَكَ وَسَيَعُودُ " . فَعَرَفْتُ أَنَّهُ سَيَعُودُ لِقَوْلِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - إِنَّهُ سَيَعُودُ . فَرَصَدْتُهُ فَجَاءَ يَخْتُو مِنْ الطَّعَامِ فَأَخَذْتُهُ فَقُلْتُ لَأَرْفَعَنَّكَ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - . قَالَ دَعْنِي فَإِنِّي مُحْتَاجٌ ، وَعَلَيَّ عِيَالٌ لَا أَعُودُ ، فَرَجَمْتُهُ ، فَخَلَيْتُ سَبِيلَهُ فَأَصْبَحْتُ ، فَقَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - " يَا أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ ، مَا فَعَلَ أَسِيرُكَ " . قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ شَكَا حَاجَةً شَدِيدَةً وَعِيَالًا ، فَرَجَمْتُهُ فَخَلَيْتُ سَبِيلَهُ . قَالَ " أَمَا إِنَّهُ قَدْ كَذَبَكَ وَسَيَعُودُ " . فَرَصَدْتُهُ الثَّالِثَةَ فَجَاءَ يَخْتُو مِنْ الطَّعَامِ ، فَأَخَذْتُهُ فَقُلْتُ لَأَرْفَعَنَّكَ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - ، وَهَذَا آخِرُ ثَلَاثِ مَرَّاتٍ أَنْتَ تَعُودُ لَا تَعُودُ ثُمَّ تَعُودُ . قَالَ دَعْنِي أَعْلَمَكَ كَلِمَاتٍ يَنْفَعُكَ اللَّهُ بِهَا . قُلْتُ مَا هُوَ قَالَ إِذَا أُوْتِيتَ إِلَى فِرَاشِكَ فَأَقْرَأْ آيَةَ الْكُرْسِيِّ (اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ) حَتَّى تَخْتِمَ الْآيَةَ ، فَإِنَّكَ لَنْ يَزَالَ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ حَافِظٌ وَلَا يَفْرُتُكَ شَيْطَانٌ حَتَّى تُصْبِحَ . فَخَلَيْتُ سَبِيلَهُ فَأَصْبَحْتُ ، فَقَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - " مَا فَعَلَ أَسِيرُكَ الْبَارِحَةَ " . قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ زَعَمَ أَنَّهُ يَعْلَمُنِي كَلِمَاتٍ ، يَنْفَعُنِي اللَّهُ بِهَا ، فَخَلَيْتُ سَبِيلَهُ . قَالَ " مَا هِيَ " . قُلْتُ قَالَ لِي إِذَا أُوْتِيتَ إِلَى فِرَاشِكَ فَأَقْرَأْ آيَةَ الْكُرْسِيِّ مِنْ أَوَّلِهَا حَتَّى تَخْتِمَ (اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ) وَقَالَ لِي لَنْ يَزَالَ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ حَافِظٌ وَلَا يَفْرُتُكَ شَيْطَانٌ حَتَّى تُصْبِحَ ، وَكَانُوا أُخْرَصَ شَيْءٌ عَلَى الْخَيْرِ . فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - " أَمَا إِنَّهُ قَدْ صَدَقَكَ وَهُوَ كَذُوبٌ ، تَعْلَمُ مِنْ مُحَاطَتِهِ مُنْذُ ثَلَاثِ لَيَالٍ يَا أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ " . قَالَ لَا . قَالَ " ذَاكَ شَيْطَانٌ "

"The Prophet appointed me to look after Ramadan *zakah* mate-

rials. And lo! Someone came and started grabbing food items from the lot. I caught him and said: 'I shall take you straight to the Prophet.' He pleaded: 'Forgive me. I'm poor. I have a big family and at the moment I'm in great want.' I let him go. Next morning the Prophet asked me: 'Abu Hurayrah. What did your prisoner of last night have to say?' I said: 'Messenger of Allah. He complained of poverty and great need and so forth. I felt sorry for him and so I let him go.' He said: 'He lied. He will come back.' So I kept watch, and for sure he was there, the next night, grabbing food items. I told him: 'For sure today I'll take you to the Prophet.' He said: 'Let me go for I am in great want and after this I will not return.' So I let him go. The next morning the Prophet again asked me: 'What did your prisoner do last night?' I told him that he complained of poverty and so forth and so I let him go. He said: 'He lied and he will return.' So I kept watch and there he was, once again. I caught him as while was helping himself and told him: 'That's it. Today I will take you to the Prophet. This is the third time I have caught you

while every time you promise you won't come back.' He said: 'Let me go and in return I'll teach you some words that will benefit you greatly.' I asked him what they were. He said: 'When you go to bed say: "*Allah! There is no god save He ...* until the end of the verse." With that you will have a guardian (angel) from Allah (*smt*) by your side, and *Shaytan* will not come near you until the morning.' So I let him go. The Prophet enquired in the morning: 'What did your prisoner have to say last night?' I gave him the story. He said: 'Although a liar, he spoke the truth.'" Then he added, "Do you know who is it that you have been encountering? It was *Shaytan*."

Similar reports are to be found in the collections of Nasa'i and Ibn Mardwayh.

Similarly Abu 'Ubayd has reported of 'Umar ibn al Khattab that once he wrestled with a Jinn. When he overcame him, the Jinn told him about *Ayah al Kursiyy* (Qurtubi). According to a *hadith* preserved in Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, the *Al-Ism al A'zam* is contained in this verse and the one of *Āal 'Imrān* which reads:

[256] *There is no compulsion in religion. Truth has become distinct from falsehood.⁵⁵² Therefore, he who denies Shaytan⁵⁵³ and believes in Allah, holds firm a bond⁵⁵⁴ that severs not. And Allah is All hearing, All knowing.*

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ
الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنِ بِاللَّهِ
فَقَدْ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ
لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥٦﴾

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ [آل عمران/٢]

Ibn Marduwayh has preserved another *hadith*, which although (mistakenly) declared fake by Ibn al-Jawzi, meets with the criteria of Bukhari in which the Prophet said that nothing prevents a man who recites the *Ayah al Kursiyy* after every obligatory Prayer from entering Paradise save death. Similar reports are by Nasa'i in his *Al Yawm wa al Laylah*, as well as in *Sahih* ibn Hibban.

Quotations from Ibn Kathir end here.

It is reported of `Abdul Rahman ibn `Awf that when he entered his house he would recite this verse in its four corners (Qurtubi).

The beauty of the verse does not seem to have been entirely lost on the unbelievers either. Says Majid: "The verse ... has often won the admiration of non Muslims, even of anti Muslims. '... a magnificent description of the divine majesty and providence: but it must not be supposed the translation comes up to the

dignity of the original' (Sale). 'One of the most admired passages in the Koran' (Lane). 'One of the grandest verses of the Qur'an' (Wherry).

It might also be noted that the verse is made up of 10 whole sentences (Ibn Kathir).

Zamakhshari adds: It is the most magnificent verse of the Qur'an because it speaks of the Oneness of Allah (*swt*), which should also lead us to the conclusion that the Oneness of Allah is the most magnificent of the disciplines of knowledge.

552. Although the meaning and application is general, several incidents are reported to have occasioned the revelation of this verse. Here are a few.

First, it was a custom in the Ansar that if a woman's sons did not survive, she vowed that if the child lived he would be converted to Judaism. There were many such Judaised children in Madinah. When Banu Nadir were banished they wanted to take along such of them with them. (The

Ansar maintained that so it was before the advent of Islam. But since the true religion Islam had appeared they would not let their sons go with them: Qurtubi). So Allah (*swt*) revealed this verse which meant to say that whoever wished to stay back could do so, while whoever wished to go was free to do so (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir through Ibn 'Abbas). The reports are also in Abu Da'ud, Nasa'i and *Sahih* works of Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Hibban.

Second, a man's two sons converted to Christianity and wanted to migrate to Syria in the company of Christian traders who had come from there. Their father had however embraced Islam and enquired the Prophet (*saws*) whether he could force them into Islam. Allah (*swt*) revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

There is, however, some difference of opinion among the scholars whether this verse stands as it is or is it abrogated by the verses legalizing *Jihad* (Ibn Kathir). According to Ibn 'Abbas and Qatadah the rule of free choice is abrogated in favor of the Arabs of the Peninsula, who may either accept Islam, migrate, or be destroyed. But it is not abrogated in respect of others living outside of the Peninsula, although in the dominion

of Islam, who can remain on their religion, paying Jizyah (Qurtubi). However, it is not right to say that the verse is abrogated simply because it was revealed to solve a specific problem (Ibn Jarir).

Thanwi adds: It must be noted, however, that what is of greater significance is the people's intention. They can be forced into submission, but they cannot be forced to believe.

Hence we find 'Umar ibn al Khat-tab's former slave Asbaq reporting that 'Umar (*ra*) used to offer him Islam, but he would refuse. 'Umar used to tell him, 'If you accepted Islam, I could involve you in Muslim affairs' (Ibn Jarir). 'Umar could have as well coerced him into embracing Islam. But he did not (Au.).

553. The word in the original is *Taghut*. According to 'Umar (*ra*) the allusion is to *Shaytan*. There are other opinions, but this is the strongest one since, he personifies every evil that people in pre Islamic times practiced, be they of the nature of worshipping idols, seeking their guidance in the affairs of life, or their help instead of Allah's (Ibn Kathir). Ibn Jarir's preference, however, is that *Taghut* is anyone or anything that symbolizes rebellion against Allah (*swt*) and is worshipped in His stead, be it of the

mankind, jinn or idols.

Asad says: "*Al Taghut* denotes, primarily, anything that is worshipped instead of God and, thus, all that may turn man away from God and lead him to evil. It has both a singular and a plural significance (Razi), and is, therefore, best rendered as "the powers of evil."

554. Opinions of the earliest scholars vary between Islam, faith, the *shahadah* (testimony), the Qur'an, and other possibilities, in reference to interpretation of the term *Al-'Urwatu al Wuthqa*. There is of course, no contradiction between them. Further, this bond never severs unless a man severs it as has Mujahid interpreted this present verse quoting the other famous verse (13: 11):

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ
[الرعد : ١١]

"Allah does not change what is with the people unless they change what is with them" Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir); that is, unless they discard the guidance given to them and opt for misguidance (Au.).

Al 'Urwatu al Wuthqa

Bukhari and Muslim have recorded a *hadith* that runs as follows. Muhammad b. Qays b. 'Ubadah says,

عَنْ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ قَيْسِ بْنِ عُبَادٍ قَالَ كُنْتُ جَالِسًا فِي مَسْجِدِ الْمَدِينَةِ ، فَدَخَلَ رَجُلٌ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ أَثَرُ الْحُشُوعِ ، فَقَالُوا هَذَا رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ . فَصَلَّى رَكَعَتَيْنِ تَحَوَّرَ فِيهِمَا ثُمَّ خَرَجَ ، وَتَبِعْتُهُ فَقُلْتُ إِنَّكَ حِينَ دَخَلْتَ الْمَسْجِدَ قَالُوا هَذَا رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ . قَالَ وَاللَّهِ مَا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ أَنْ يَقُولَ مَا لَا يَعْلَمُ وَسَأُحَدِّثُكَ لِمَ ذَاكَ رَأَيْتُ رُؤْيَا عَلَى عَهْدِ النَّبِيِّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - فَقَصَصْتُهَا عَلَيْهِ ، وَرَأَيْتُ كَأَنِّي فِي رَوْضَةٍ - ذَكَرَ مِنْ سَعَتِهَا وَخُسْرَتِهَا - وَسَطُهَا عَمُودٌ مِنْ حَدِيدٍ ، أَسْفَلُهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَاهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ ، فِي أَعْلَاهُ عُرْوَةٌ قَبِيلٌ لَهُ رِقَّةٌ . قُلْتُ لَا أَسْتَطِيعُ . فَأَتَانِي مِنْصَفٌ فَرَفَعَ رُؤْيَايَ مِنْ خَلْفِي ، فَرَقِيتُ حَتَّى كُنْتُ فِي أَعْلَاهَا ، فَأَخَذْتُ بِالْعُرْوَةِ ، فَقَبِيلٌ لَهُ اسْتَمْسَكَ . فَاسْتَيْقَظْتُ وَإِنَّهَا لَفِي يَدِي ، فَقَصَصْتُهَا عَلَى النَّبِيِّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَ " تِلْكَ الرَّوْضَةُ الْإِسْلَامُ ، وَذَلِكَ الْعَمُودُ عَمُودُ الْإِسْلَامِ ، وَتِلْكَ الْعُرْوَةُ عُرْوَةُ الْوَقْفَى ، فَأَنْتَ عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ حَتَّى تَمُوتَ " . وَذَلِكَ الرَّجُلُ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ سَلَامٍ

"I was in the mosque when a man entered whose face bore marks of Allah's fear. He did two short *rak'ah* of Prayers and left. When he was gone people said: 'This man is of the Paradise.' So I followed him. When he entered his house I knocked at the door. He let me in. After the ceremonial greetings I told him what the people had said about him. He said: 'Allah be glorified. It is not proper for anyone to open his mouth about what he does not know. Let me tell you why. Once I dreamt during the Prophet's time

[257] Allah is the Protector of the believers. He brings them forth from darknesses into Light.⁵⁵⁵ As for the unbelievers, their patrons are the evil ones. They bring them forth from Light into darknesses. These are companions of the Fire. They shall abide therein forever.

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٥٧﴾

that I was in a flush green garden. (He described the greenery and the vastness). In its center was a steel column pitched into the earth and reaching the heavens. At the top was a kind of handle (*urwah*). I was told, 'Climb.' I said, 'I can not.' A young person appeared from my rear and lifted me by my clothes. I climbed and caught hold of the handle. I was told, Hold fast unto the handle.' I woke up with it in my hand. I went up to the Prophet and related the story to him. He said: "The garden was the garden of Islam and the column was the column of Islam. As for the handle, it was the firm handle (*Al-'Urwatu al Wuthqa*). You shall remain on Islam until you die.' The man, adds the transmitter was `Abdullah b. Salam." Muslim, Nasa'i and Ibn Majah have other versions of this *hadith* with variations in details (Ibn Kathir).

555. That is from the darkness of disbelief, doubts and skepticism into

the light of plain truth. We also see that Allah (*swt*) mentioned the light in singular form and darkness in plural; since there is only one path to truth and guidance, while that of falsehood are many and disparate. Allah also used the plural form when He said at another place (6: 153):

هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ [الأنعام/١٥٣]

"This is My path; straight. Follow it. And follow not diverse paths, lest they scatter you from His path" (Ibn Kathir).

It might be noted here that in the earlier verses Allah (*swt*) spoke of the light of the believers and the darknesses of the unbelievers. He followed it up with three episodes in the first of which He illustrated the light of Ibrahim (*saws*) and the darknesses of Nimrod (Thanwi).

556. The king in question is said to be Nimrod (who flourished about 2450 B.C. Majid) of Babil (Babylon). The story goes that to demonstrate that life and death were in

[258] Have you not heard of him, who disputed with Ibrahim concerning His Lord, that Allah gave him kingship?! When Ibrahim said to him, 'My Lord is He who gives life and deals death,' he replied, 'I (too) give life and deal death.' Ibrahim said, 'Allah brings the sun from the east, you bring it from the west.' The disbeliever was confounded. And Allah does not guide a transgressing people.⁵⁵⁶

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ
أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّي
الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ
قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ
الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ
الَّذِي كَفَرَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٥٨﴾

his power, he granted amnesty to one of two criminals condemned to death, and upheld execution for the other! The story also goes that when he acted arrogantly, Allah (*swt*) sent an insect into his head. Every time it stung him he felt like scratching. But unable to do so asked his attendants to bang his head with their fists (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

With reference to Ibrahim's statement, peace on him, that Allah (*swt*) makes the sun rise from the East and that Nimrod may bring it from the West if he could, Thanwi says the following: "Nimrod could not have said in reply that he was also capable of bringing the sun out from the West. Nor could he have asked Ibrahim (*saws*) to ask his Lord do that since he knew in his heart that Ibrahim was a true Prophet and that if he prayed to his Lord He would

grant him his request in which case he would lose his hold on the masses" (Thanwi).

Mawdudi comments: "The event which is referred to here is not mentioned at all in the Bible. However, the whole story occurs in the Talmud and is largely in harmony with the Qur'anic version. In the Talmudic version it is said that the father of Abraham occupied the highest office in Nimrod's government. When Abraham denounced polytheism, preached the doctrine of the unity of God and smashed the idols of the temple, his own father lodged a complaint against him before the king. This was followed by a conversation which is mentioned here."

557. Opinions are divided between 'Uzayr and Aramiyyah (Ezra and Jeremiah of the *Bible*: Au.), as the man alluded to in this verse. 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, Ibn Ka'b, Ibn 'Abbas,

[259] Or, the like of him who passed over a town that had fallen upon its roofs.⁵⁵⁷ He wondered, 'How will Allah bring this back to life after its (present) decay?' So Allah put him to death for a hundred years and then brought him back to life and asked: 'How long did you remain (in that state)?' He replied: 'I remained a day or a part thereof.' He said: 'You remained (in that state) a hundred years. Look then at your food and drink, it is unspoiled. But look at your donkey; so that We may make a sign of you for the people.'⁵⁵⁸ And look at the bones (of the donkey) how We set them up and then clothe them with flesh.' Thereupon, when it became evident to him, he cried out: 'I realize that Allah has power over all things.'

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّى يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِئَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتَ مِئَةَ عَامٍ فَانْظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ وَانْظُرْ إِلَى جِمَازِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَانْظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٥٩﴾

Hasan, Qatadah and others are of the opinion that it is 'Uzayr, while Wahab b. Munabbih and 'Abdullah ibn. 'Ubayd think it is Aramiyyah (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). A third opinion is that it is Hizqil (Ezekiel of the Bible: Au.). A fourth opinion is that it is Khidr (Qurtubi). As for the ghost town, it was Jerusalem which was in ruins after Nebuchadnezzar's invasion (in 590 B.C.: Majid) Ibn Kathir.

The identification is not important; rather, the reminder that Allah has power over all things (Ibn Jarir).

558. It is said that when he returned to his home town, his grandchildren

had become aged while he had remained young. Thus he became a sign for others (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Qurtubi). Another report suggests that when he returned to the Israelites and told them he was Ezra, they refused to believe in him. So he told them to bring the Torah. When they brought it out, he began to read out from memory while they were checking his reading from the written copy. When he did not err by a diacritical mark, they cried out, 'This is a son of God' (Zamakhshari).

559. This increase in peace was in accordance with the level and degree of faith that Ibrahim (*saws*) enjoyed from his position and rank. (Over

[260] And (recall) when Ibrahim said: 'My Lord. Show me how You will quicken the dead.' He said: 'Have you not believed?' He replied: 'Indeed (I have). But in order that my heart may be at rest.'⁵⁵⁹ He said: 'Then take four birds and tame them to yourself. Then (cut them to pieces and) place their parts on every hill, then beckon them, they shall come to you in speed.'⁵⁶⁰ And know that Allah is All Mighty, All wise.'

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى قَالَ أَوَْلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ قَالَ بَلَى وَلَكِنْ لِيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَى كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٠﴾

and above the level and degree enjoyed by those lower in status: Au.), and it is in this light that the saying attributed to 'Ali should be understood who said: 'Even if the veils are removed, it would cause no increase in my faith' (Thanwi).

In a *hadith* preserved by Bukhari and Muslim the Prophet (*saws*) said:

" نَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالشَّكِّ مِنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِذْ قَالَ (رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى قَالَ أَوَْلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ قَالَ بَلَى وَلَكِنْ لِيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي)

"It behooves us more to be in doubt than Ibrahim when he said, 'My Lord. Show me how will You quicken the dead.' The request then was not out of a doubt that he bore as the ignorant might presume (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Nawawi's explanation (supported by Ibn Kathir, Alusi and Shawkani), should be enlightening. Qurtubi in

fact says this is the position of the great majority of scholars. Nawawi says: Of the various interpretations that have been reported, the best is the one offered by Imām Abu Ibrahim al Muzani, Imām Shafē'ī's disciple, and some others. According to it, our Prophet did not actually mean that Ibrahim (*saws*) was in doubt, when he said, 'It behooves us more to be in doubt than Ibrahim.' Rather, what he meant is that if it was possible for the Prophets of Allah to doubt, then I would have been in doubt also. But since I am not in doubt, Ibrahim (*saws*) was also not in doubt. The Prophet (*saws*) of course said this out of humbleness placing himself lower than Ibrahim. As Ibrahim's words, 'In order that my heart may stay at rest,' what he meant was "in order that it might help elevate the faith from one state to another, higher state: from 'Ilm al *Yaqin* to 'Ayn al *Yaqin*. Further, according to

Sahal b. Tustari, Ibrahim's request was for the removal of veils placed before the eyes so that the light of faith could increase (*Sahih Muslim, Kitab al Imān, hadīth 238*).

It might also be kept in mind, says Qurtubi, that to attribute a doubt to Prophets is an act of *Kufr*.

Nonetheless, it is reported that when Ibn `Abbas and `Abdullah b. `Amr b. al As happened to get together. Ibn `Abbas asked Abdullah b. `Amr what verse of the Qur`ān he thought held out the greatest hope (for the sinners). Ibn `Amr said (39: 53):

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا
مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ
الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ [الزمر : ٥٣]

“Tell them, (O Muhammad that Allah says), ‘O those of My slaves who have wronged their souls, do not despair of Allah’s mercy. Allah will forgive all sins.’” In reply Ibn `Abbas gave his subtle opinion: “To me the verse that holds out greatest hope is this (statement of Ibrahim),

وَلَكِنْ لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي [البقرة : ٢٦٠]

‘In order that my heart may be at rest’ (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani and

others).

560. Those were birds.

This writer received the following report from some of the mujahideen of Afghanistan who fought the Russian invasion of 1982. It came through persons whose integrity cannot be doubted. Somewhere in the front, three of the mujahideen were trying to halt the enemy’s advance by firing at it from the top of a hill. During the battle one of them received a bullet and died. The two were felt severely handicapped because he was carrying up ammunition from the foot of the hill. But, as they continued to fire at the enemy they found that the man was up again and began to supply ammunition as before. Later, when the enemy had retreated, a greater surprise was in store for them: the man fell dead again (Au.).

561. Imām Ahmad has recorded that:

عَنْ عِيَّاضِ بْنِ عُطَيْفٍ قَالَ دَخَلْنَا عَلَىٰ أَبِي عُبَيْدَةَ بْنِ
الْجَرَّاحِ تَعُوذُهُ مِنْ شَكْوَىٰ أَصَابَهُ وَافْرَأْتُهُ مُحِيفَةً قَاعِدَةً
عِنْدَ رَأْسِهِ قُلْنَا كَيْفَ بَاتَ أَبُو عُبَيْدَةَ قَالَتْ وَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ
بَاتَ بِأَجْرِ. فَقَالَ أَبُو عُبَيْدَةَ مَا بَتْ بِأَجْرِ وَكَانَ
مُتَقِبِلًا بِوَجْهِهِ عَلَى الْحَائِطِ فَأَقْبَلَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ بِوَجْهِهِ
فَقَالَ أَلَا تَسْأَلُونِي عَمَّا قُلْتُ قَالُوا مَا أَعْجَبَنَا مَا قُلْتَ

[261] The likeness of those who expend their wealth in the cause of Allah is as the likeness of a grain which brought forth seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains. And Allah grants increase to whom He wills. Allah is All embracing, All knowing.⁵⁶¹

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ سُنْبُلَةٍ مِئَةُ حَبَّةٍ وَاللَّهُ يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦١﴾

فَتَسَأَلُكَ عَنْهُ . قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- يَقُولُ " مَنْ أَتَقَقَّ تَقَقَّةً فَاضِلَةً فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَسْبُعِيَاءَةً وَمَنْ أَتَقَقَّ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَأَهْلِهِ أَوْ عَادَ مَرِيضاً أَوْ مَارَ أَدَى فَالْحُسْنَةُ بِعَشْرِ أَمْثَالِهَا وَالصَّوْمُ جَنَّةٌ مَا لَمْ يَخْرُفْهَا وَمَنْ ابْتَلَاهُ اللَّهُ بَبَلَاءٍ فِي جَسَدِهِ فَهُوَ لَهُ حِطَّةٌ "

Some people visited Abu `Ubaydah when he was ill. They found him in his bed with his face towards the wall, his wife besides him shrouded (in a cloak). They asked her, 'How did he spend the night?' She said, 'Earning rewards.' Upon this Abu `Ubaydah spoke out, 'No. Not earning rewards.' Then he turned around and said, 'Will you not ask me why I said that?' They said, 'Your answer didn't please us enough to ask you why.' He said, 'I heard the Prophet (*saws*) say, "Whoever spent in the way of Allah will have rewards seven hundred fold. Whoever spent on himself, his family, or visited the sick will have the rewards ten fold. And

fasts are a shield so long as one does not destroy it (himself). Further, whomsoever Allah tested with a physical disorder will have his sins washed off"' (Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi writes: By implication it can be deduced from this verse that farming is one of the best of professions. Muslim records a *hadith* which says:

" لَا يَغْرِسُ مُسْلِمٌ غَرْسًا وَلَا يَزْرَعُ زَرْعًا فَيَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ إِنْسَانٌ وَلَا دَابَّةٌ وَلَا شَيْءٌ إِلَّا كَانَتْ لَهُ صَدَقَةٌ "

"A Muslim does not plant a tree, or work on a farm but he is rewarded for every benefit that mankind, animals or birds draw from it."

Tirmidhi has another narration which reports the Prophet as having said:

" التمسوا الرزق في خبايا الارض "

"Seek your providence from natural resources," (meaning: plan-

[262] Those who expend their wealth in the cause of Allah and then follow not what they have expended with taunts and injury: for such is their reward with their Lord. They shall have nothing to fear nor shall they grieve.⁵⁶²

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَّبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا أَذًى لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٦٢﴾

tation and farming - Qurtubi).

562. Ibn Marduwayh as well as Abu Hatim and Hakim in his *Sahih*, have recorded that when this verse was revealed the Prophet (*saws*) supplicated:

رب زد أمتي

“O Lord, grant an increase to my *ummah*.”

In response it was revealed: “Who is it that will offer Allah a goodly loan so that Allah may increase (for him the reward) many fold?” The Prophet again supplicated, “O Lord. Grant an increase to my *ummah*.” Then Allah revealed: “Indeed those who are patient will have their reward without measure” (Ibn Kathir).

It is reported that once `Uthman ibn `Affan brought in 1000 Dinars (at a time when funds were badly needed). The Prophet (*saws*) shoved

his hand into the heap, turned the Dinars around and said, “Nothing of what `Uthman will do after this will do him any harm.”

Abu Sa`id al Khudri says I saw the Prophet (*saws*) with his hands raised up in supplication, ‘O Allah, I’m pleased with `Uthman, May You also be pleased with him.’ He kept repeating these words until the day-break. Then came down this verse: “*Those who expend their wealth in the cause of Allah and then follow not what they have expended with reminders, nor injury: for such is their reward with their Lord*” (Qurtubi).

563. The word in the original rendered as “reminders” is *mann*, which is the act of reminding some one of favors shown to him.

Mann is a major sin (*kabirah*) Qurtubi, Razi, Shawkani. In a *hadith* the Prophet (*saws*) is reported to have

[263] A good word and forgiveness is better than that charity which is followed by injury. And Allah is All sufficient, Forbearing.

قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أَذَىٰ وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٣﴾

[264]. Believers! Do not destroy your charity with taunts⁵⁶³ and injury as one who expends his wealth to show off to the people, believing neither in Allah nor in the Day of Standing. The likeness of him is as like the likeness of a smooth rock on which is (a thin coat of) soil. When heavy rains fell upon it, it rendered it hard and bare. They have no power over anything of what they earned. And Allah guides not an ungrateful people.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَبْطُلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَىٰ كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِثَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ ثَرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٦٤﴾

said:

لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مُدْمِنٌ خَمْرٍ، وَلَا عَاقٌ، وَلَا مَنَانٌ

“Three persons will not enter Paradise: An alcoholic, the one disobedient to his parents, and the one who reminded the recipient after having given him in charity” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Zayd said, “A woman came to my father and said: ‘Abu Usama! Show me a man who is sincere in his claims to be fighting in the way of Allah, for I believe they join these expeditions only to get some good food. I have (some) arrows and quiver (that I would like to gift to someone).’ My father told her: ‘May Allah bless you not in your arrows and the quiver. You have caused injury even before you spent’” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

There is a *hadith* on these lines. Preserved by Muslim it records the Prophet as having said:

”الكلمة الطيبة صدقة وإن من المعروف أن تلقى أخاك بوجه طلق”

“A good word is (an act of) charity. It is also an act of charity that you meet your brother with a cheerful face” (Qurtubi, Shawkani).

The Prophet has also said:

”إذا سأل السائل فلا تقطعوا عليه مسأله حتى يفرغ منها ثم ردوا عليه بوقار ولين أو ببذل يسير أو رد جميل فقد يأتيكم من ليس بإنس ولا جان ينظرون صنيعكم فيما خولكم الله تعالى .”

“When someone comes to you asking for help, do not cut him short while he is speaking. After he is finished, respond to him

[265] And, the likeness of those who expend their wealth seeking Allah's approval and to strengthen their own souls⁵⁶⁴ is as the likeness of a garden on a lofty piece of land, which, (when) struck with heavy rains, yields its produce two fold. But, if it does not receive heavy rains, then, even a shower (would do). And Allah is Aware of what you do.

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ
اللَّهِ وَتَثْبِيتًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ
أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَاتَتْ أَكْثَلَهَا ضِغْفِيرٌ فَإِنْ لَمْ
يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطُلٌّ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ
﴿٢٦٥﴾

with dignity and grace: either giving him what you can, or excusing yourself with honorable words. Sometimes those come to you (in disguise) who are neither of the men nor of the Jinn. They come only to find out how you fare with what Allah has given you.” The allusion is to another *hadith* which relates the story of a leprous, a bald and a blind, (in which the three men were tested through an angel who sought financial help from them: Au.) Qurtubi.

An example of wider implication was given by `Amr b. Hurayth. He said: “A man goes out to participate in a battle. He commits no sins while he was out but returns without any rewards.” He was asked: “How can that be?” He said: “This happens when something goes wrong during the campaign that Allah had decreed for him anyway, he starts blaming his commander saying, ‘I

will never go out with this man (in command) again.’ This is the man who got nothing. It is about him that Allah (swt) said: “*Believers, do not destroy your charity with reminders and injury*” (Ibn Jarir).

564. The meaning of “*tathbeetan min anfusihim*,” as given in the English rendering is based on *Kashshaf's* interpretation. However, Ibn Jarir's preference is, ‘out of inner certainty,’ a meaning originating from Qata-dah, Saleh, Ibn Zayd and Sha'bi. The meaning given by Mujahid and Hasan is, ‘They are careful about where they place their charity’ (Ibn Kathir).

565. Such is the example of a hypocrite. He expends in this world, but to show off. On the day of Judgment, when in dire need, he will find that his charity bore no fruit. All of his good deeds will lie in ruins (Suddi: Ibn Jarir).

[266] Will any of you wish to have an orchard of palms and vines with streams flowing beneath it with all manners of fruits for him therein, and old age has struck him, and he has children (but) weak, when a scorching whirlwind struck it and burnt it down? Thus Allah makes clear His signs haply that you will reflect.⁵⁶⁵

أَيُّودُ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّحِيلٍ
وَأَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُ فِيهَا
مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَّةٌ
ضُعْفَاءُ فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَاحْتَرَقَتْ
كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦٦﴾

However, several reports coming through various chains of transmitters and also recorded by Bukhari say that once `Umar (ra) asked those around him how they understood this verse. They said, 'Allah knows best.' `Umar was not pleased. He said, 'Either you know, or you do not.' Ibn `Abbas said that he had something to say. `Umar told him to speak out and not to be humble about it. Ibn `Abbas said that this is the example of a man who acts righteously through and through, but changes his orientation at the end of his life, losing the credit for all that he did before (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

Thanwi writes: Thus, as Ibn `Abbas has said, and which `Umar (ra) approved of, this example encompasses all kinds of good deeds, which of course includes expending in the way of Allah. As further illustration it can be added that there are certain conditions for the appearance of certain

spiritual benefits and benedictions. One of them is that one should not indulge in sinful acts after performing good deeds. If one does that, then the spiritual benefits and benedictions are lost, which shows itself in this profane world by the loss of the blissful feeling that appears with good deeds. When that happens then the chain of another good deed after the previous one is broken and the "inducement of good deeds," which is also known as "*tawfiq*" is severed. In fact, beyond this, one becomes lazy and unwilling even with the habitual good deeds of the day. Thus he loses the reward of the Hereafter, which is the real loss. The loss of spiritual benefits and blessings in this world, that have been mentioned above, has also been referred to as "habt (al A`maal: Au.)."

Commenting on the use of the textual word "rabwa," Razi writes: "It occurs to me that a land which is on a lofty place cannot have streams flow-

[267] Believers! Expend of the good things⁵⁶⁶ you have earned⁵⁶⁷ and of that which We bring out for you of the earth;⁵⁶⁸ and do not aim at the worthless of it, of (which) you expend while you will not accept it yourself,⁵⁶⁹ unless you closed an eye on it. And know that Allah is All sufficient, All laudable.⁵⁷⁰

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا يَتَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِآخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَمِيدٌ ﴿٢٦٧﴾

ing through it, which is necessary for the richness of soil and vegetation. I believe the right interpretation is that by “*rabwa*” the allusion is not to ‘a piece of land on a lofty place,’ which happens to be the meaning adopted by most commentators, rather it is to a ‘rich and fertile land.’ Another example of this usage is in verse 5 of *surah* al Hajj:

وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَإِذَا أَتَيْنَا بِهَا مَاءً فَاهْتَمَزَتْ
وَرَبَّتْ [الحج/٥]

“And you see the earth dry, but when We send down water upon it, it quivers, and swells.”

Commenting on the destruction of an orchard in old age, Ibn Kathir quotes from Hakim’s Mustadrak that the Prophet (*saws*) used to supplicate in the following words:

”اللهم اجعل أوسع رزقك علي عند كبر سني
وانقطاع عمري“. رواه الطبراني في الأوسط وإسناده
حسن. مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد .

“O Allah, let the best of Your bestowals destined for me be

during my old age and at the termination of my term.”

566. The connection with the previous verses should be obvious. First Allah (*swt*) exhorted to give in charity. Then He divided charity into two kinds: those which are followed by reminders and injury, and those that are not. Then He gave examples of both. Now He indicates what kind and quality of a thing it is that one should expend in His cause (Razi).

567. It is said that people hung bunches of dates in the Prophet’s mosque meant for the people of Suf-fa who sometime totaled around four hundred and had no means of income. Once someone hanged a bunch of rotten dates. The Prophet disapproved of it and this verse was revealed (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Razi).

Basing their judgment on the word “*kasabtum*” ([what] you have earned), the jurists say that a man has the right to take what he wishes

from the earnings of his sons. The Prophet has said in a *hadith*:

أولادكم من طيب أكسابكم فكلوا من أموال أولادكم
ههنا

“Your offspring are the best of what you earn (aksaab”). Therefore, you may take from their earnings as you please” (Qurtubi, *Ma`arif*).

568. This includes everything that the earth produces, such as vegetables, fruits, minerals and precious metals such as diamonds, gold and silver (Qurtubi).

569. According to a *hadith* of `A'isha (ra) preserved in *Musnad* of Ahmad, when the Prophet (saws) was sent dab-meat (a large lizard like desert animal) he did not eat of it, but he did not forbid others either. `A'isha says I suggested, “Why should we not give it away to the poor?” He replied: “Do not give them what you would not like to eat yourself” (Ibn Kathir). In fact, the Prophet has forbidden that rotten things be accepted in charity (Qurtubi).

The injunction, therefore, is to give the best in charity. The orders, nevertheless to the state officials is not to eye the best when they go around collecting *zakah* (Au.).

570. A *hadith* of the Prophet clarifies this issue. Preserved by Imām Ahmad and narrated by Ibn Mas`ud, it says:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- " إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَسَمَ بَيْنَكُمْ أَخْلَاقَكُمْ كَمَا قَسَمَ بَيْنَكُمْ أَرْزَاقَكُمْ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يُعْطِي الدُّنْيَا مَنْ يُحِبُّ وَمَنْ لَا يُحِبُّ وَلَا يُعْطِي الدِّينَ إِلَّا لِمَنْ أَحَبَّ فَمَنْ أَعْطَاهُ اللَّهُ الدِّينَ فَقَدْ أَحَبَّهُ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَا يُسْلِمُ عَبْدٌ حَتَّى يُسْلِمَ قَلْبُهُ وَلِسَانُهُ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ حَتَّى يَأْمَنَ جَارُهُ بِوَأَيْفِهِ ". قَالُوا وَمَا بِوَأَيْفِهِ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ قَالَ " عَشْمُهُ وَظَلْمُهُ وَلَا يَكْسِبُ عَبْدٌ مَالًا مِنْ حَرَامٍ فَيُتَفَقَّ مِنْهُ فَيُبَارَكَ لَهُ فِيهِ وَلَا يَتَصَدَّقَ بِهِ فَيُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَلَا يَتَرَكُهُ خَلْفَ ظَهْرِهِ إِلَّا كَانَ زَادَهُ إِلَى النَّارِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَا يَمَحُو السَّيِّئَ بِالسَّيِّئِ وَلَكِنْ يَمَحُو السَّيِّئَ بِالْحَسَنِ إِنَّ الْحَبِيبَ لَا يَمَحُو الْحَبِيبَ ".

“Allah has distributed moral and spiritual qualities among you as He has distributed providence. Verily, Allah gives the world to him He loves as well as him whom He does not. But He does not guide to His religion any but whom He loves. Therefore, whomsoever He made religious, surely He loved him. By Him in Whose Hands is my soul, a man does not become a believer until his heart and hands also become muslim, and one does not become a muslim until his neighbors are in peace from the evil in him.” He was asked, “What evil do you mean O Messenger

[268] Satan promises you poverty and bids you unto parsimony,⁵⁷¹ while Allah promises you His forgiveness and bounty.⁵⁷² Allah is All embracing, All knowing.

الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُم بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ يَعِدُكُم مَّغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ وَفَضْلًا وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٨﴾

of Allah?” He said, “His deceit and oppression.” Then he continued: “And a man does not earn something by unlawful means and spend out of it but the benedictions do not reach him, nor is his charity accepted. Such a man does not leave his wealth behind him but it will be a burden of Fire on him. Allah does not wipe out (an) evil (deed) with another (evil deed), rather, He wipes out an evil (deed) with a good (deed) that follows. A corrupt (deed) does not wipe out another corrupt (deed)” Ibn Kathir.

571. *Fahsha'* in Arabic primarily refers to parsimony (Zamakhshari, Razi, Alusi). However, it is also applied to evil deeds as if a man of evil deeds is, in the figurative sense, parsimonious with good deeds (Shawkani).

The Prophet has been reported by `Abdullah (ibn Mas`ud) as having said:

إِنَّ لِلشَّيْطَانِ لَمَّةً بَابْنِ آدَمَ وَلِلْمَلِكِ لَمَّةً فَأَمَّا لَمَّةُ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِعَاذٌ بِالشَّرِّ وَتَكْذِيبٌ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَمَّا لَمَّةُ

الْمَلِكِ فَإِعَاذٌ بِالْخَيْرِ وَتَصْدِيقٌ بِالْحَقِّ فَمَنْ وَجَدَ ذَلِكَ فَلْيَعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَلْيُحْمَدِ اللَّهَ وَمَنْ وَجَدَ الْآخَرَى فَلْيَنْتَعِزْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُم بِالْفَحْشَاءِ

“Satan whispers to the children of Adam as the angels do. Satan’s whispering is the incitation to corruption and denial of the truth. The angel’s whispering is the persuasion to good deeds and acceptance of the truth. So whoever finds this with himself may know that it is from Allah (*swt*), and let him thank Him. But if he finds something different, let him seek Allah’s refuge from Satan.” Then the Prophet recited this verse: “Satan promises you poverty and bids you to indecency....”

According to some versions this is a saying of Ibn Mas`ud (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Razi), although Tirmidhi has called it a *hadith* of the *Hasan Gharib* type (Ibn Kathir).

Razi says: Satan first tries to incite one to spend the worst part of a thing. When one listens to him and

[269] He bestows Wisdom upon whomsoever He will, and whosoever is granted Wisdom,⁵⁷³ has been granted a great bounty. Yet none will receive admonition but men of understanding.

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٦٩﴾

acts according to his bidding, he increases his demand and questions him as to why he should spend at all. This is what is meant by: "Satan promises you poverty and bids you parsimony."

572. Accordingly, there is a *hadith* which says that:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَ " مَا مِنْ يَوْمٍ يُصْبِحُ الْعِبَادُ فِيهِ إِلَّا مَلَكَانِ يَنْزِلَانِ فَيَقُولُ أَحَدُهُمَا اللَّهُمَّ أَعْطِ مُنْفِقًا خَلْفًا ، وَيَقُولُ الْآخَرُ اللَّهُمَّ أَعْطِ مُمْسِكًا تَلْفًا " (صحيح البخارى)

No day passes but two angels come down, one of them saying: "O Lord, give him who gives," and the other saying: "O Lord, hold back from him who holds back" (Razi, Alusi).

573. The word "*Hikmah*" of the original can carry different connotations depending upon the context in which it occurs. *Hikmah* is, as stated in Al Bahar al Muhit, the quality of placing things (and acts) in their right and proper places. It is something that can be mastered only by the Prophets. Accordingly, Allah

used the word for Da'ud (*saws*) in the sense of Prophethood in verse 251 of this chapter when He said:

وَأَتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ

"Allah gave him kingship and prophethood" (*Ma'arif*).

In the present context it stands for knowledge and understanding of the Qur'an Ibn 'Abbas, Qatadah, Mujahid, Abu al 'Aliyyah. Other meanings close to this are also reported (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Alusi adds: As for the report coming from Ibn 'Abbas, which says that by the *Hikmah* it is Prophethood that is meant, it might be that he was referring to the *hadith* that Bayhaqi has preserved through Abu Umamah al-Bahili in which the Prophet is reported to have said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم " من قرأ ثلث القرآن أعطي ثلث النبوة ومن قرأ نصف القرآن أعطي نصف النبوة ومن قرأ ثلثيه أعطي ثلثي النبوة ومن قرأ القرآن كله أعطي النبوة ويقال له يوم القيامة : اقرأ وارق بكل آية درجة حتى ينجز ما معه من القرآن. فيقال له : اقبض. فيقبض فيقال له : هل تدري ما في يديك ؟ فإذا في يده اليمنى الخلد وفي الأخرى النعيم " (أخرج البيهقي في شعب الإيمان)

“Whoever read a third of the Qur’ān, is given a third of Prophethood. Whoever read one half of the Qur’ān, is given one half of Prophethood. Whoever read two thirds of the Qur’ān, is given two thirds of Prophethood. And whoever read the whole of the Qur’ān, is given the whole of the Prophethood. He will be told on the Day of Judgment, ‘Recite the Qur’ān and go up to higher and higher levels of Paradise.’ When he is finished with the Qur’ān, he will be told, ‘Hold.’ He will catch hold of it. He will be asked, ‘Do you know what is it that you are holding?’ He will find that in his right hand is ‘Eternal (stay in Paradise) and in his left hand blessings (of various kinds).”

However, when we are asked to recite, it is not the verbal recitation alone that is meant, rather, its comprehension also and a life that agrees with its principles.

Alusi also presents several *ahadith* on the virtues of religious knowledge. One of them is in Bukhari. It says:

عن عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - لَا حَسَدَ إِلَّا فِي اثْنَتَيْنِ رَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ

مَالًا فَسَلَّطَ عَلَى هَلَكِهِ فِي الْحَقِّ ، وَرَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْحِكْمَةَ ، فَهُوَ يَقْضِي بِهَا وَيُعَلِّمُهَا.

“Envy is not allowed but of two: One, a man whom Allah gave wealth and he is bent upon destroying it through charity; and another, he whom Allah gave wisdom wherewith he judges and which he teaches.”

In another *hadith* preserved by Tabarani the Prophet is reported to have said: Luqman advised his son:

إن لقمان قال لابنه : يا بني عليك بمجالس العلماء واستمع كلام الحكماء فإن الله يحيي القلب الميت بنور الحكمة كما يحيي الأرض الميتة بوابل المطر (المعجم الكبير)

‘My son. Keep yourself in the company of the *‘ulamaa* and listen to what the *hukamaa*’ have to say; for Allah quickens dead hearts with the *Nur* of *Hikmah* as He gives life to the dead land with rain.’

574. Islamically, vow (*nadhr* of the original) is to promise oneself that he will spend something in charity or carry out a good act (such as fast for so many days) if such and such of his wishes are fulfilled. So long as the wish itself is not unlawful, and the acts vowed are not unlawful, one is

[270] And whatever expenditure you expend or whatever vow you vow,⁵⁷⁴ surely Allah knows about it. And the transgressors will have no helpers.

وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِّنْ نَّفَقَةٍ أَوْ نَذَرْتُمْ مِّنْ نَّذْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُهُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴿٢٧٠﴾

[271] If you disclose (your) charity, even so it is well. But if you conceal them and pass them on (secretly) to the destitute,⁵⁷⁵ then that would be better for you.⁵⁷⁶ He will acquit you of some of your sins.⁵⁷⁷ And Allah is Aware of what you do.

إِنْ تَبَدُّوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَبِعَمَّا هِيَ وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُونَهَا الْفُقَرَاءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنْكُم مِّنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٧١﴾

bound to fulfill such vows (Au.).

575. The sequence is as follows: First Allah divided charities into two kinds: those that are followed by reminders and injury, and those that are not. Then He gave an example of both. Subsequently, He specified what kind and quality of a thing it is that one may expend in His cause. Finally, He adds that charity can be sometimes concealed and sometimes given in open (Razi).

576. Although the ruling will differ from case to case and situation to situation, generally speaking there is no difference in opinion among the scholars that it is preferable to disclose one's obligatory charity (*faraid*) and conceal the non obligatory ones (*tatawwu'*). However, on the whole, it is better to conceal them all. A *hadith* of the *Sahihayn* confirms this. It says:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَ: سَبْعَةٌ يُظِلُّهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظِلِّهِ يَوْمَ لَا ظِلَّ إِلَّا ظِلُّهُ الْإِمَامُ الْعَادِلُ ، وَشَابٌّ نَشَأَ فِي عِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ ، وَرَجُلٌ قَلْبُهُ مُعَلَّقٌ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ ، وَرَجُلَانِ تَحَابَّا فِي اللَّهِ اجْتَمَعَا عَلَيْهِ وَتَفَرَّقَا عَلَيْهِ ، وَرَجُلٌ طَلَبَتْهُ امْرَأَةٌ ذَاتُ مَنْصِبٍ وَجَمَالٍ فَقَالَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ . وَرَجُلٌ تَصَدَّقَ أَخْفَى حَتَّى لَا تَعْلَمَ شِمَالُهُ مَا تُنْفِقُ يَمِينُهُ ، وَرَجُلٌ ذَكَرَ اللَّهَ خَالِيًا فَفَاضَتْ عَيْنَاهُ .

“There are seven whom Allah will provide shade on a day when there will be no shade save His: A just ruler; a young man who spent his youth in devotions to Allah; two people who loved each other for the sake of Allah so that they did not come together nor departed but in His love; a man whose heart was in the mosque after he left it until he entered it again; a man who remembered Allah when alone and his eyes were filled with tears, a man whom a woman of

[272] Their guidance is not your responsibility (O Muhammad), but rather, it is Allah who guides whomsoever He will.⁵⁷⁸ Further, what you expend of wealth is for your own good, (since) you expend not but seeking Allah's Pleasure.⁵⁷⁹ And, whatever you expend of wealth shall be returned to you and you shall not be wronged.⁵⁸⁰

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي
مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَا تُنْفِسْكُمْ
وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ وَمَا
تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا
تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧٢﴾

repute and beauty invited (to herself) but he said, 'I fear Allah,' and, a man who spent in charity but concealed it so well that his left hand did not know what his right hand spent" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

577. The words "some of your sins" has been added because all the sins cannot be forgiven because of a few charitable acts (Razi, Alusi).

578. (That is) you are "responsible only for conveying God's message to them, and not for their reaction to it" (Asad).

It is reported that the Prophet (*saws*), and following him his Companions, were averse to spending on the polytheists until Allah revealed this verse Sho`bah, Sa'id b. Jubayr, Ibn `Abbas (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

However, the permission is valid only for general charities. As for *zakah* funds, the scholars agree that

non Muslims cannot be given from it (save in the hope of their acceptance of Islam, i.e. under the provision of *ta'lif al qulub*: Au.). As for the sinning Muslim, there is no difference in opinion that he may be given from the general charity funds so long as he is not one of those who disregards major obligations such as five time Prayers or Ramadan fasts (Qurtubi).

Thanwi adds: There is no contradiction between the *hadith* which says, in effect, 'Let not your food be eaten but by the pious,' and this verse which says that non Muslims (who are obviously not pious) can be given in charity because the *hadith* is speaking of the kind of friends one might keep, and this verse of the needy.

Legal Points

1. It is prohibited to give any kind of charity to a non Muslim whose people are at war with Muslims (*Kafir al Harbi*) - *Ma'arif*.

2. A non warring unbeliever may not be given from *zakah* or '*ushur* funds (*Ma'arif*).

3. They may be given from ordinary charitable funds (*sadaqat*) *Ma'arif*.

579. Thanwi makes a point: This verse, which combines the quest for reward and pursuit of Allah's Pleasure, shows that the two are not incompatible, as some ignorant people believe.

580. Hence the *hadith* in Bukhari and Muslim which reports the Prophet as having said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَ " قَالَ رَجُلٌ لَأَتَصَدَّقَ اللَّيْلَةَ بِصَدَقَةٍ فَخَرَجَ بِصَدَقَتِهِ فَوَضَعَهَا فِي يَدِ زَانِيَةٍ فَأَصْبَحُوا يَتَحَدَّثُونَ تُصَدِّقُ اللَّيْلَةَ عَلَى زَانِيَةٍ. قَالَ اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ عَلَى زَانِيَةٍ لَأَتَصَدَّقَ بِصَدَقَةٍ. فَخَرَجَ بِصَدَقَتِهِ فَوَضَعَهَا فِي يَدِ غَنِيِّ فَأَصْبَحُوا يَتَحَدَّثُونَ تُصَدِّقُ عَلَى غَنِيٍّ. قَالَ اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ عَلَى غَنِيٍّ لَأَتَصَدَّقَ بِصَدَقَةٍ. فَخَرَجَ بِصَدَقَتِهِ فَوَضَعَهَا فِي يَدِ سَارِقٍ فَأَصْبَحُوا يَتَحَدَّثُونَ تُصَدِّقُ عَلَى سَارِقٍ. فَقَالَ اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ عَلَى زَانِيَةٍ وَعَلَى غَنِيٍّ وَعَلَى سَارِقٍ. فَأُتِيَ فَقِيلَ لَهُ أَمَا صَدَقْتِكَ فَقَدْ فُيِّلَتْ أَمَا الزَّانِيَةُ فَلَعَلَّهَا تَسْتَغْفِرُ بِهَا عَنْ زَنَاهَا وَلَعَلَّ الْغَنِيَّ يَغْتَبِرُ فَيَنْفِقُ بِمَا أَعْطَاهُ اللَّهُ وَلَعَلَّ السَّارِقَ يَسْتَغْفِرُ بِهَا عَنْ سَرِقَتِهِ. (صحيح مسلم)

"A man said, 'Tonight I shall give something in charity.' He went out with his charity and placed it in the hand of an adulteress. By morning people began to say, 'Last night charity was spent on

an adulteress.' He said, 'Praise be to Thee O Allah for (what I spent on) an adulteress. Tonight I shall (again) spend in charity.' He placed it in a rich man's hand. By morning people began to say, 'Last night charity was spent on a rich man.' He said, 'Praise be to Thee O Allah for (what reached) the rich man. Tonight I shall again spend in charity.' He went out with his charity and placed it in the hand of a thief. People said, 'Last night charity was spent on a thief.' He said, 'Praise be to Thee O Allah for the adulteress, for the rich man and for the thief.' Someone came to him from on high and said, 'As for your charity, it has been accepted. As for the adulteress, maybe she will give it up on the strength of what she received; and maybe the rich man will learn a lesson and begin to spend from what Allah has given him, and maybe the thief will give up theft because of what he received'" (Ibn Kathir).

The theme is obvious. The good effects of charity are never lost (Au.).

581. The verse shows that preference should be given to the affairs of the "next world" over efforts to earn livelihood, although there isn't

[273] (Charity is) due to the destitute who are preoccupied in Allah's cause,⁵⁸¹ who cannot travel in the land.⁵⁸² The ignorant supposes them prosperous on account of their restraint.⁵⁸³ (But) You can recognize them by their looks.⁵⁸⁴ They do not beg of men importunately.⁵⁸⁵ And (remember) whatever of wealth you expend, surely Allah is well Aware of it.

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَحْصَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَحْسَبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِحْفَافًا وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٧٣﴾

any contradiction between the two (Thanwi).

It may also be noted here that those “engaged in Allah's cause” have been accorded such honor that Allah did not specifically say: “charity is due to them,” rather, left out the words as understood (Au.).

582. The Prophet has said in a *hadith* of Bukhari:

لَيْسَ الْمِسْكِينُ الَّذِي يَطُوفُ عَلَى النَّاسِ تَرُدُّهُ الْلُقْمَةُ وَاللُّقْمَتَانِ وَالْتَمَرَةُ وَالتَّمَرَتَانِ ، وَلَكِنَّ الْمِسْكِينُ الَّذِي لَا يَجِدُ غَىٰ يُغْنِيهِ ، وَلَا يَقْطُنُ بِهِ فَيُتَصَدَّقَ عَلَيْهِ ، وَلَا يَقُومُ فَيَسْأَلُ النَّاسَ .

A destitute is not someone who goes around to the people, who can be returned with a morsel or two or a date or two, but rather, a destitute is someone who does not find enough to support himself, cannot be recognized by his appearance that he may be helped, nor does he undertake to

beg the people” (Ibn Kathir).

Thanwi says: “In our own country those that are engaged in dissemination of knowledge are the most deserving of charity. As for the accusation that they are ill qualified for facing the economic realities of this life, the Qur'an itself has answered that it is their pre occupation with other things that has placed them in that situation.”

Asad remarks: “I.e. those who have devoted themselves entirely to working in the cause of the Faith be it by spreading, elucidating or defending it physically or intellectually or to any of the selfless pursuits extolled in God's message, such as search for knowledge, work for the betterment of man's lot, and so forth; and, finally, those who, having suffered personal or material hurt in such pursuits, are henceforth unable to fend for themselves.”

583. The word in the original is ta'affuf which has been interpreted as total abstention from asking, as Abu Sa'id al Khudri has reported.

عن أبي سعيد الخدري، قال: أعوزنا مرة فقبل لي: لو أتيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فسألته! فانطلقت إليه مُعِيقًا، فكان أول ما واجهني به: "من استعفف أعفاه الله، ومن استغنى أغناه الله، ومن سألنا لم نذكر عنه شيئًا نجاه". قال: فرجعت إلى نفسي، فقلت: ألا أستعفف فيعفني الله! فرجعت، فما سألت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم شيئًا بعد ذلك من أمر حاجة، حتى مالت علينا الدنيا فعرّقتنا، إلا من عصم الله.

He said, "Once we were badly off. Somebody suggested that I should seek the Prophet's help. Accordingly, I went to him. But the first thing I heard from him was, 'Whoever refrains from asking, Allah will save him from asking. Whoever seeks Allah's provision, Allah will provide him. (However), if someone asks us, we will not refuse so long as we have something to offer.' So I told myself, 'Why should I not refrain from asking, so that Allah saves me from asking?' and returned. Then onward I never asked the Prophet anything until the world fell upon us and drowned us, except for him whom Allah saved." In this report also the word ta'affuf has been used in the

sense of refraining from asking (Ibn Jarir).

584. (Nevertheless, the believer can recognize them because: Au.) the Prophet has said:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- اتَّقُوا فِرَاسَةَ الْمُؤْمِنِ فَإِنَّهُ يَنْظُرُ بِنُورِ اللَّهِ

"Beware of the believer's inner sight. He sees with the Light of Allah" (Ibn Kathir). The *hadith* is also in *Tuhfah al Ahwadihi* (Husayn). It is also in Tabarani which Haythami declared Hasan (Au.).

Imām Razi comments: However, it is not by the physical signs by which they can be recognized. Rather by spiritual signs. Just as it is not by physical signs that the jungle animals feel scared at the appearance of a lion, since many of them would not have had personal experience of its ferocity. So also, it is by the very spiritual quality that the personality of these people acquires its specific nature and by which they are recognized. This is what the word *sima'* is referring to."

Thanwi adds: "The verse shows that a man should not put up an appearance that will make him stand apart from the common people."

585. According to the majority of scholars, what is meant is that they do not beg at all, neither importunately nor otherwise (Shawkani).

Razi presents a subtle point. He asks: "When it has already been said of them that abstention from asking is their mark, what does it mean to say that they do not beg of men importunately?" Then he answers, "It is not their quality that is being described, rather of one who begs. He is being disciplined that he should not beg importunately. It is like two men entering in upon you, one of them virtuous and the other evil. You praise one saying, 'you possess such and such good qualities,' and add, 'also, you are not evil,' by which you imply that the other man is evil."

The Prophet (*saws*) is reported to have said:

”لا يحب الله إضاعة المال ولا كثرة السؤال ولا قيل وقال.“ (رواه أبو يعلى ورجاله رجال الصحيح - مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

"Allah does not approve of three things: (i) Pointless chatter, (ii) squandering of wealth, and (iii) importunate begging" (Ibn Jarir).

With regard to importunate begging, Abu Sa'id al Khudri says the Prophet said:

قال أبو سعيد الخدري: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "من سأل وله قيمة وقية فهو ملحف" والوقية: أربعون درهما

"Whoever asked while in the possession of the equivalent of 40 Dirhams is an importunate beggar" (Ibn Kathir from Ahmad and Nasa'i).

But there is no harm in seeking help if one is in distress, although undesirable. Nasa'i and Abu Da'ud have reported that a man from Banu Firas enquired the Prophet (*saws*):

أسأل يا رسول الله؟ قال: "لا وإن كنت سائلا لا بد فاسأل الصالحين".

"Can I ask, O Messenger of Allah?" He told him: "No. However, if you have to ask, ask the virtuous."

Also, if something comes to a man that he did not ask for, he might accept it. It is reported of 'Umar ibn al Khattab that when the Prophet sent him something he refused to accept it on the ground that the Prophet had forbade asking. The Prophet told him:

”إنما ذاك عن المسألة فأما ما كان من غير مسألة فإنما هو رزق رزقك الله.“

"That was about one who asks. But when a thing comes to you

[274] Those who expend their wealth night and day, secretly and in public, for such is their wage with their Lord.⁵⁸⁶ They have nothing to fear nor shall they grieve.

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٧٤﴾

without asking, (according to another report ‘without you desiring and hoping that someone will send it to you,’ i.e., out of *Ishraf*: Au.) then accept it, for it is a gift from Allah” (Qurtubi).

586. It is said of `Ali (who was poor even by the standards of those times: Au.), that he had four Dirhams. He spent one in the night, another in the day, one secretly and another openly. Allah revealed this verse in approval. There were others who used to spend huge sums, such as Abu Bakr, `Uthman, `Abdul Rahman b. `Awf whose charity prompted this verse. Another opinion, (supported by Abu Umamah, Abu Darda', Mak hul, Awza'i, and Rabah b. Yezid: Alusi), is that it refers to those who participate in *Jihad* with their horses (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Jarir, Razi, Zamakhshari, Alusi, Shawkani).

It is reported that the Prophet said:

المكثرون هم الأسفلون. قالوا: يا نبي الله إلا من؟ قال: المكثرون هم الأسفلون، قالوا: يا نبي الله إلا من؟ قال: المكثرون هم الأسفلون. قالوا: يا نبي الله، إلا من؟ حتى خشوا أن تكون قد مضت فليس لها رد، حتى قال: “إلا من قال بالمال هكذا وهكذا، عن

يمينه وعن شماله، وهكذا بين يديه، وهكذا خلفه، وقليل ما هم - هؤلاء قوم أنفقوا في سبيل الله التي افترض وارتضى، في غير سرف ولا إملاق ولا تبذير ولا فساد

“The wealthy will be in the lowest region (of Hell).” His Companions enquired: “Except who, O Messenger of Allah?” He said: “The wealthy will be in the lowest region (of Hell).” His Companions again enquired: “Except who, O Messenger of Allah?” He said: “The wealthy will be in the lowest region (of Hell).” His Companions again enquired: “Except who, O Messenger of Allah?” and feared that perhaps the rule has been written down and will not be abrogated, until he said: “Except he who spent, this way and that way, with his right hand and left hand, in front of him and the rear of him. But few are they. These are a people who spend in the way of Allah that which He has declared obligatory and which pleases Him without extravagance, without fear of poverty, without squan-

[275] Those who deal in usury⁵⁸⁷ shall not rise (on Judgment Day) except as he rises whom the Devil has driven to madness⁵⁸⁸ by (his) touch. That is because they say, 'Trading is indeed similar to usury,' whereas Allah has made trading lawful and forbidden usury.⁵⁸⁹ Therefore, he whom admonition has reached from his Lord and (so) desists,⁵⁹⁰ for him is what was in the past⁵⁹¹ and his affair is with Allah.⁵⁹² But whosoever reverts, it is such indeed who are companions of the Fire. They will dwell therein for ever.

الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا يَتَغَوَّوْنَ إِلَّا كَمَا
يُغْوَمُ الَّذِي يَتَحَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبَا وَأَحَلَّ
اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا فَمَنْ جَاءَهُ مَوْعِظَةٌ
مِّن رَّبِّهِ فَانْتَهَىٰ فَلَهُ مَا سَلَفَ وَأَمْرُهُ إِلَى
اللَّهِ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ
فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٧٥﴾

dering and without corruption.”

However, Ibn `Abbas has said that the verse of *surah Bara'ah* (that speaks of *zakawat*) abrogates this verse (Ibn Jarir).

Nonetheless, the charity that has been mentioned here includes all kinds of expenditure that a man incurs such as what he spends on his family.

While visiting Sa`d b. Abi Waqqas in his sickness the Prophet said:

”وإنك لن تنفق نفقة تبتغي بها وجه الله إلا ازددت بها درجة ورفعة، حتى ما تجعل في في امرأتك“

“You do not spend anything seeking Allah’s Pleasure but you achieve a higher status (with Allah) including what you place into your wife’s mouth “ (Ibn Kathir).

587. The two, charity and usury, stand in sharp contrast to each other: one is commended by Allah and which (supposedly) reduces one’s wealth while the other has been forbidden by Allah and which (supposedly) causes increase in wealth. Hence the two have been juxtaposed here (Razi).

Riba

Linguistically the word means increase, growth, addition (Sabuni and others).

Majid comments: “The Arabic word *riba* is but partially covered by the English word ‘usury’ which, in modern parlance, signifies only an ‘exorbitant’ or ‘extortionate interest.’ The Arabic *riba* on the other hand, means any addition, however slight,

over and above the principal sum lent, and thus includes both 'usury' and 'interest.' In the language of modern socialism, interest is an unjustifiable tax on the laboring classes, the unpaid wage. According to the socialist writers of today, money is lent by them who have abundance and returns to them to increase that abundance, the increase being the unpaid dues of labor, which is the only source of wealth the rich are thus made richer and the poor poorer, by every fresh act to taking interest, and the stability of social organism disturbed."

Further down the line he follows up by writing: "The devastating propensities of usury are visible to every eye. The evils attendant on it are neither few nor far between the callousness it engenders, the profligacy it lets loose, the greed it encourages, the jealousy it breeds, the misery it entails, the abjectness it inculcates, and so on. Yet it is Islam alone that has the unique distinction of declaring the pernicious practice illegal absolutely and unconditionally. Greece and Rome both groaned heavily under its yoke, but none of their legislators, like the economists of modern Europe, thought of banning it altogether.. In Greece, 'the bulk of the population ... became gradually in-

debted to the rich to such an extent that they were practically slaves.' And 'usury had given all the power of the state to a small plutocracy' (*Encycl. Brit.* XXVIII. p. 812, 11th Ed.). The Romans fared still worse. 'The attempt to regulate the rate of interest utterly failed. In the course of two or three centuries the small free farmers were utterly destroyed. By the pressure of war and taxes they were all driven into debt, and debt ended practically, if not technically, in slavery' (*ibid*). With all these horrors, experienced and patiently borne, nobody ventured to eradicate the evil root and branch. The utmost that a Solon among the ancients or a Bacon amongst the moderns could advise was to 'grind the tooth of usury, that it bite not too much, that is to say, to regulate its rate, without attaching the slightest moral taint to the user. The Bible went no doubt many steps further inasmuch as it forbade the advance of usurious loans to the Israelites, (Ex. 22: 25, Dt. 23: 19). But even the Biblical prohibition did not include usurious loans to non Israelites. It is the Holy Qur'ān which, to its everlasting glory, has forbidden usury in all its forms categorically."

Qurtubi explains further: The Prophet has defined (other forms of) riba in the following words:

الدَّهَبُ بِالذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةُ بِالْفِضَّةِ وَالْبُرُّ بِالْبُرِّ وَالشَّعِيرُ
بِالشَّعِيرِ وَالْتَّمَرُ بِالتَّمَرِ وَالْمِلْحُ بِالْمِلْحِ مِثْلًا مِثْلًا يَدًا
بِيَدٍ فَمَنْ زَادَ أَوْ اسْتَرَادَ فَقَدْ أَزْنَى الْآخِذُ وَالْمُعْطَى فِيهِ
سَوَاءٌ - صحيح مسلم

“Gold against gold, silver against silver, wheat against wheat, barley against barley, dates against dates, salt against salt, equal to equal, hand to hand. Whoever added or demanded more, took interest. He who accepts, and he who gives are equal in sin.”

According to another *hadith* reported by `Ubadah b. Samit,

فَإِذَا اخْتَلَفَتْ هَذِهِ الْأَصْنَافُ فَيُعْبَوْا كَيْفَ شِئْتُمْ إِذَا
كَانَ يَدًا بِيَدٍ - صحيح مسلم

“If the exchange is of different commodities (such as gold against silver) then deal as it suits you so long as it is exchanged hand to hand.” ...

Hence when Bilal (*ra*) once sold poor quality dates (of one measure) against good quality ones (of another measure), the Prophet (*saws*) disapproved of it calling it a usurious deal. He suggested that he should have rather sold out the poor quality dates and then purchased good ones with the price obtained.

Accordingly, if one sells, (say one kilogram of) wheat against (two kilo-

grams of) barley, such a deal would be lawful (*Rawaa'e*). As for the modern day banks, there is no difference of opinion among the legal experts of Islam that their dealings are usurious and unlawful (Au.).

It is this usury about which the Prophet (*saws*) said in his Sermon delivered from Mount `Arafah:

أَلَا وَإِنَّ كُلَّ رِبَا كَانَ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ مَوْضُوعٌ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قَضَى أَنَّ أَوَّلَ رِبَا يُوضَعُ رِبَا الْعَبَّاسِ بْنِ
عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ لَكُمْ رُءُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ لَا تَظْلِمُونَ وَلَا
تُظْلَمُونَ - مسند أحمد

“Verily, every kind of usury prevalent in pre-Islamic times stands abrogated, and the first usury that is to be abrogated is that owing to `Abbas b. `Abd al-Muttalib. Your capital amounts are yours: you will neither commit wrong, nor shall you be wronged.” Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi. (The above *hadith* of Ahmad is, however, a slightly different version: Au.).

(Riba can take imperceptible forms also: Au.). It is reported of `A'isha (*ra*) that Umm Muhibba asked her about a deal she made with Zayd b. al Arqam al Ansari by which she sold a slave girl to him in return for 800 Dirhams that he would pay up later. Then she re purchased the same slave from him at six hundred Dirhams

cash that she paid to him. (That is, the slave girl remained with her with eight hundred Dirhams now due to her from Zayd who got six hundred in cash by the deal: Au.). `A'isha (ra) told her: "It is an ugly deal that you made. Tell Zayd that if he did not repent he will undo his *Jihad* with the Prophet" (Qurtubi from Al Muwatta).

However, the Prophet has been recorded by Abu Da'ud as having said:

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- يَقُولُ " إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ بِالْعَيْنَةِ وَأَخَذْتُمْ أَذْنَابَ الْبَقَرِ وَرَضِيْتُمْ بِالزَّرْعِ وَتَرَكْتُمُ الْجِهَادَ سَلَّطَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ ذُلًّا لَا يَنْزِعُهُ حَتَّى تَرْجِعُوا إِلَى دِينِكُمْ " - سنن أبي داود

"When you begin to indulge in `Eenah (the kind of trade `A'isha disapproved of in the above incident), take up to raising cattle, are satisfied with plowing fields and give up *Jihad* then Allah will impose upon you a humiliation that He will not remove until you return (to your religion)" - Qurtubi.

It might also be noted at this juncture that Allah adopted a gradual measure in forbidding usury. It was done in four stages:

1. In the first stage it was said in a Makkan revelation (30: 39):

وَمَا آتَيْتُمْ مِنْ رَبًّا لِيَرْبُو فِي أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلَا يَرْبُو عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا آتَيْتُمْ مِنْ زَكَاةٍ تُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُضْغَفُونَ [الروم/ ٣٩]

"That which you give in interest in order that it may increase at the cost of (other) people's property has no increase with Allah; but that which you give in charity, seeking Allah's countenance, increases many fold." This verse did not declare usury unlawful but expressed disapproval.

2. The second stage Madinan revelation expressed the disapproval of the Jewish practice. It said (4: 160, 161):

فَبَطَلْهُمْ مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ طَيِّبَاتٍ أُحِلَّتْ لَهُمْ وَبِصَدِّهِمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا (١٦٠) وَأَخَذَهُمُ الرِّبَا وَقَدْ نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَأَكْلِهِمْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا [النساء/ ١٦٠]

"Because of the wrongdoing on the part of the Jews We forbade them (certain) good things that were lawful unto them, and because of their much obstructing Allah's path, and (because of) their taking usury although they were prohibited ..." This verse forbade usury by implication, but not yet directly.

3. In the third stage usury was forbidden in unequivocal terms, but not yet all its kinds, rather only one: that kind in which interest was charged upon interest – what was known as

riba al fahish. The revelation said (3: 130):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَا أَضْعَافًا مُضَاعَفَةً
[آل عمران/ ١٣٠]

"Believers! Do not devour interest doubling and quadrupling."

4. Finally, in the fourth stage all kinds of usury were forbidden, whether small or big by the verse under discussion.

We have a parallel of this in the banning of liquor, which was also declared forbidden in stages. Thus we see that a gradual measure was applied in treating social ills that the pre Islamic Arab world suffered (Sabuni in *Rawad'e*).

588. Describing one of the incidents that he noticed during his Night Journey and Ascension, the Prophet said:

"فانطلق بي جبريل فمررت برجال كثير كل رجل منهم بطنه مثل البيت الضخم متصددين على سائبة آل فرعون وآل فرعون يعرضون على النار بكرة وعشيا فيقبلون مثل الابل المهيمومة (١) يتخبطون الحجارة والشجر لا يسمعون ولا يعقلون فإذا أحس بهم أصحاب تلك البطون قاموا فتميل بهم بطونهم فيصرعون ثم يقوم أحدهم فيميل به بطنه فيصرع فلا يستطيعون براحا حتى يغشاهم آل فرعون فيطوفونهم مقبلين ومديرين فذلك عذابهم في البرزخ بين الدنيا والآخرة وآل فرعون يقولون اللهم لا تقم الساعة أبدا، فإن الله تعالى يقول: "ويوم تقوم الساعة أدخلوا آل فرعون أشد العذاب (٢)" - قلت - يا

جبريل من هؤلاء ؟ قال: " هؤلاء الذين يأكلون الربا لا يقومون إلا كما يقوم الذى يتخبطه الشيطان من المس".

"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 which cannot make the difference between a rock and a tree, neither hearing nor understanding anything. When these people with big tummies (according to another version: "with snakes in their bellies": Ibn Kathir), feel them coming their way, they try to rise up (and move off) 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.' That is because Allah has said (40: 46), *'When the day of Resurrection is brought forth, thrust*

the folks of Fir'awn into a Punishment more severe.' I asked Jibril, 'Who are these people?' He said, 'These are a people who dealt in interest. They will not rise again except as he rises whom the Devil has driven to madness by (his) touch'" (Qurtubi).

Thanwi says, in effect, that the punishment of being raised as a mad one corresponds well with the crime which has its basis in irrationalism. A person who is so irrational as to believe that 'trade is in principle similar to usury' deserves that he should be raised mad. *Tafsir Abi Sa'ud* has another point. Sabuni quotes it in his *Rawa'e'* that the punishment of being raised as one touched by the Devil is because Allah nourished and made to grow in size what they used to feed on, here in this world, that is, usury. The increase in the size of their stomachs will make them sway this way and that, like a man attacked by epilepsy.

One of the prayers of the Prophet as recorded by Nasa'i used to be:

عَنْ أَبِي الْيَسْرِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم-
كَانَ يَدْعُو " اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَدْمِ وَأَعُوذُ
بِكَ مِنَ التَّرَدَّى وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْغَرَقِ وَالْحَرَقِ وَالْهَرَمِ
وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ يَتَخَبَّطَنِي الشَّيْطَانُ عِنْدَ الْمَوْتِ وَأَعُوذُ
بِكَ أَنْ أَمُوتَ فِي سَبِيلِكَ مُدْبِرًا وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أَمُوتَ
لَدِيْعًا " - سنن أبي داود

"O my Lord. I seek Your refuge from (death by) fall, from destruction, drowning, fire, extreme old age. I seek Your refuge that I be bewitched by the Devil while in the throes of death. I seek Your refuge that I should die showing my back (during a battle) in Your path. And I seek Your refuge that I should die stung (by a snake or scorpion)" Qurtubi.

The Prophet seeking Allah's protection against the touch of the Devil shows that the phrase has not been used here metaphorically; rather, in its real sense (Shawkani).

To the above can be added various other *ahadith* that confirm that the Devil can touch and affect the people, such as:

مَا مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مَوْلُودٌ إِلَّا يَمْسُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ حِينَ يُوَلَّدُ ،
فَيَسْتَهْلُ صَارِحًا مِنْ مَسِّ الشَّيْطَانِ ، غَيْرَ مَرِيْمَ وَابْنِهَا
- صحيح البخارى

"There is not a new born child but the Devil touches it so that it begins to cry out, except Maryam and her child"

and,

احْبِسُوا صِبْيَانَكُمْ حَتَّى تَذْهَبَ قُوَّةُ الْعِشَاءِ فَإِنَّهَا
سَاعَةٌ تَخْتَرِقُ فِيهَا الشَّيَاطِينُ

"Keep your children indoors until its early part has disappeared

because this is the time *Shayatin* spread (in the earth)” Alusi.

Some people have been misled by another verse in which *Shaytan* himself is quoted as what he would say on the Day of Judgment (14: 22):

وَمَا كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي فَلَا تَلُمُونِي وَلَوْمُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ
[إبراهيم/٢٢]

“I had no power over you except that I incited you and you responded to my incitement; therefore, reproach me not rather reproach yourselves.” But what this verse is saying in reality is that *Shaytan* cannot force anyone to commit deeds. He can only incite men (so that man remains responsible for his deeds). Also, it is not proven that the spirits of the dead can influence those alive (as believed by the masses: Au.); because, if they are in blessings (because of their past good deeds: Au.), then there is no need for them to distract themselves; and, if they are being punished, then they cannot respond because they are kept busy (Thanwi).

589. At the time of the Prophet (*saws*) *riba* used to be of two kinds: *riba al-nasi'ah* and *riba al-fadl*. (*nasi'ah* is the well known interest on money: Au.); as for the *riba al-fadl* it was to sell say a kilogram of one quality of wheat

against two kilograms of wheat of another quality. The Qur'ān spoke of it in general terms but the Prophet specifically prohibited both. However, until the prohibition of the Prophet reached Ibn 'Abbas he remained believing that it was only the *riba al nasi'ah* that was prohibited. When he received the *hadīth* of Abu Sa'id al Khudri, he changed his opinion (Razi).

(For further discussion see note 599 below: Au.).

Mawdudi adds: “Let us consider ... the question of loans for profitable enterprises, and confine our consideration to loans made at non exorbitant rates of interest. The question, however, remains: Which rational principle, which logic, which canon of justice and which sound economic principle can justify that those who spend their time, energy, capacity and resources, and whose effort and skill make a business thrive, are not guaranteed profits at any fixed rate, whereas those who merely lend out their funds are fully secured against all risks of loss and are guaranteed profit at a fixed rate? And which principle can justify the fact that a man lends out his funds to an industrial concern and fixes, say for the next twenty years, that he will be en-

titled to receive each year a given per cent interest on his capital, while the proprietors of the industrial concern have no means of foretelling the price changes affecting their commodity, and hence their profit? Let us consider another case, namely that of war loans. How can it be appropriate that all classes of people endure all kinds of losses and are exposed to all kinds of risks and dangers connected with war, whereas the financiers, simply by having made loans, continue to receive interest on them for long periods of time, sometimes even for a whole century?"

That said, it must be realized that with the involvement of billions of people spread over several continents, linked to each other through a myriad of strings leading to a single economic system that governs the world, the hourly exchange of goods, money and services on such enormous scale, and the complex functioning of thousands of national and international banks and monetary agencies, today's economic system has become so complex that it is no less beyond the grasp of a single mind than weather predictions are. That should explain why there are so few unanimous opinions among the economic experts over any economic issue. One such concerns the

exact role, function, advantages or disadvantages of the interest bearing banks, (no less than a few hundreds of which are declared insolvent every year), and which play a pivotal role in all transactions, small or big, local or international. But, to be sure, disenchantment is growing fast. And many Western economic experts are coming to the point that the present system is, to say the least, extremely vulnerable. Many of them go a step further and say that if the system crashed they would not be too surprised. And, the system does crash every decades or so. This should also explain why, apart from a proper appraisal and "technical" criticism of the system, which itself is an enormous task demanding economic expertise as well as a thorough understanding of the *Shari'ah*, a combination not easily achieved, it is of prime importance that an alternative system be gradually brought into being.

The first decade of the twentieth century economy is a picture of:

يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا وَيُزِيلُ الصَّدَقَاتِ [البقرة : ٢٧٦]

"Allah destroys usury and cultivates charity." Despite tremendous growth in industrial, agricultural, trade and other economic activities, unemployment is wide-spread, and

four-fifth of the human population all over the globe are finding it hard to feed themselves, while the great majority of banks are being gifted trillions of dollars because all their liquid cash has evaporated. To refer to the present financial activities as ‘bubble economy’ is a fashion and a key-word of not the laymen, but economic experts (Au.).

590. Ja'far b. Muhammad As Sadiq has said: “Allah forbade usury so that people may borrow from each other.” According to *Musnad* al Bazzar, the Prophet said:

قَرْضُ مَرَّتَيْنِ يَعْدِلُ صَدَقَةً مَرَّةً

“Two instances of offering loans is equal to giving out in charity once” (Qurtubi).

591. This verse lays down a general rule viz., a new Muslim will remain on what he was prior to his acceptance of Islam. For instance, if he was married following a marriage process that was approved by his previous religion, his marriage remains valid in Islam. This is in accordance with the Shafe'i school of fiqh (Razi).

592. The words: “*His affair is with Allah*” can be interpreted in several ways. The meaning preferred by Nuhhas, which I believe is the preferable one, is that it means: “It is now

for Allah, to whom his affair returns, that He either keeps him guided so that he remains avoiding usury or let him go off the track so that he falls into it again” (Qurtubi).

Razi however says that the phrase can either mean: a) his past usury dealings are not forgiven and that his case will be looked into again on the Day of Judgment; but this interpretation creates several problems. Alternatively, it may mean, and this seems to be the better interpretation, that, b) it refers to those who revert back to dealings in interest despite the announcement of Allah's disapproval, and despite the fact that they admit that it has no sanction in the *Shari'ah* and what they are doing is wrong. It is such whose affair is with Allah. He may either forgive them or punish them. This is also the meaning adopted by Ibn Jarir. Thanwi's explanation is that it refers to a man who has desisted from dealing in usury; his affair returns to Allah, who will judge him in accordance with his intentions, whether his act was prompted by an inner conviction or was it external pressure that made him give up the usurious dealings.

593. As Allah said in *surah al Rum*:

وَمَا أَتَيْتُم مِّن رَّبًّا لِّيرْتَوْ فِي أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلَا يَرْتَوْ عِنْدَ

[276] Allah destroys usury⁵⁹³ and cultivates charity.⁵⁹⁴ And Allah bears no love for any denier, sinful (person).⁵⁹⁵

يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا وَيُرْبِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿٢٧٦﴾

اللَّهُ [الروم/٣٩]

“That which you give in usury in order that it may increase upon other people’s wealth, has no increase with Allah” (Ibn Kathir).

594. We have a report in this context. The Prophet (*saws*) said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَقْبَلُ الصَّدَقَةَ وَلَا يَقْبَلُ مِنْهَا إِلَّا الطَّيِّبَ يَقْبَلُهَا بِمِثْلِهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى وَيُرِيهَا لِعَبْدِهِ الْمُسْلِمِ اللُّقْمَةَ كَمَا يُرِي أَحَدَكُمْ مَهْرَهُ أَوْ فَصِيلَهُ حَتَّى يُوَافِيَ بِهَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِثْلُ أُحُدٍ

“Allah accepts not charity but that which is clean and lawful. Then He grows it for His Muslim-slave, just as one of you would tender a young mare or a sapling, until He will complete its growth to the size of Mount Uhud on the Day of Judgment” (Ibn Jarir). The *hadith* is in Muslim (Qurtubi). It is also in Bukhari in slightly different words (Ibn Kathir). The above text has been taken from Ahmad (Au.).

مَا تَقْصُرُ مَالُ عَبْدٍ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ: قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ - الترمذی

Another *hadith* says: “The wealth of a slave does not decrease with charity” (Zamakhshari).

595. “It is clear that only those who have a surplus of earnings over their basic requirements that can lend out money on interest. This surplus, according to the Qur’ān, constitutes God’s bounty. And true thankfulness for this bounty requires that a person should be bountiful towards other creatures of God even as the Creator has been to him. If, instead of doing this, the person tries to become richer at the expense of those whose present earnings are insufficient to meet their needs, he is at once guilty of ungratefulness to God, and blatantly unjust, cruel and wicked” (Mawdudi).

596. That is, they shall neither be apprehensive of what’s going to happen to them in the future, nor shall they grieve over the past Ibn ‘Abbas (Razi).

597. The verse was revealed in response to the claims of the tribe of

[277] Those who believed and did good deeds, Prayed (assiduously and spiritedly) and gave the zakah, for them is their wage with their Lord. They have nothing to fear nor shall they grieve.⁵⁹⁶

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٧٧﴾

[278] Believers! Fear Allah and give up any outstanding interest if you are believers.⁵⁹⁷

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٧٨﴾

[279] But if you do not, then take notice of war from Allah and His Messenger.⁵⁹⁸ However, if you repent then you may have your principal: neither you wrong nor are you wronged.⁵⁹⁹

فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِنْ تُبْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُؤُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ لَا تَظْلُمُونَ وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧٩﴾

Thaqif upon the tribes of Makhzum and Mughira who refused to pay interest after they had converted to Islam. A delegation was sent to the Prophet and the verse settled the issue (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

598. The person who dealt in usury will be told on the Day of Resurrection, “Here, get ready with your arms for a fight now” (Ibn ‘Abbas: Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

According to Ibn ‘Abbas, if a citizen of an Islamic state deals in usury, he may be detained and ordered to repent. If he refuses, he should be put to death (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi). Ibn Khuwayzmandad has said that if the people of a place consider interest as a lawful thing, they have turned apostates. However, if they deal in it but do not believe in

its lawfulness then the Imām al Muslimin may declare war on them.

Nonetheless, the Prophet is on record as having said:

لَيَأْتِيَنَّ عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ لَا يَبْقَى أَحَدٌ إِلَّا أَكَلَ الرِّبَا فَإِنْ لَمْ يَأْكُلْهُ أَصَابَهُ مِنْ بُخَارِهِ

“A time will surely come upon the people when no one will be left but would consume interest. If he would not have partaken of it directly, then at least its smoke (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir quoting from Ibn Majah, Nasa’i and Abu Da’ud).

According to another *hadith* the Prophet said:

عن عبد الله : عن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال : ”الربا ثلاثة و سبعون بابا أيسرها مثل أن ينكح الرجل أمه“ - هذا حديث صحيح على شرط

الشيخين و لم يخرجاه (المستدرك على الصحيحين للحاكم) - تعليق الذهبي في التلخيص : على شرط البخاري ومسلم

“Usury has 73 grades, the lowest of which is as (heinous a crime) as a man having sex with his mother” (*Majma` al-Zawa'id*, Shawkani).

Mawdudi adds: “The Prophet (peace be on him) warned the Arab tribes (that had entered into peace treaties with the Prophet: *Ma`arif*) ... that war would be declared against them if they did not give up interest bearing transactions. It was specified, for instance, in the agreement under which the Christians of Najran were granted internal autonomy under the suzerainty of the Islamic state, that if they continued to use interest, the agreement with them would be considered void and their action an act of belligerency.”

599. It is reported of `Umar ibn al Khattab and Ibn `Abbas that they said: “The set of verses concerning usury are the last ones to be revealed so that the Prophet died before he could extensively elaborate the issue. Therefore shun (all kinds of) interests including those that are of doubtful nature” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Hence the Prophet's *hadith* pre-

served by Imām Muslim in which he is reported by No`man b. Bashir as having said:

الْحَلَالُ بَيِّنٌ وَالْحَرَامُ بَيِّنٌ ، وَبَيْنَهُمَا مُشَبَّهَاتٌ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ ، فَمَنْ اتَّقَى الْمُشَبَّهَاتِ اسْتَبْرَأَ لِدِينِهِ وَعَرْضِهِ ، وَمَنْ وَقَعَ فِي الشُّبُهَاتِ كَرَعَ يَرْعَى حَوْلَ الْحِمَى ، يُوشِكُ أَنْ يُوَاقِعَهُ . أَلَا وَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ مَلِكٍ حِمًى ، أَلَا إِنَّ حِمَى اللَّهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ مَحْرَمُهُ

“The lawful is clear and the unlawful is clear; between them are things that are doubtful which most people have no knowledge of. Therefore, whoever avoided the doubtful saved his religion and his honor. Whereas, he who indulged in the doubtful is like a shepherd who lets his cattle graze by the boundary. It is feared that he will cross the boundary. Lo! Every king has his boundaries. Lo! Allah's boundaries in the earth are those things that He has forbidden” (Qurtubi). The above text is from Bukhari (Au.).

Shafi' Deobandi has the following to say in explanation of the statement of `Umar and Ibn `Abbas (*ra*) viz., the Prophet (*saws*) died before he could elaborate upon the subject of *riba*: *Riba* is a common Arabic word whose meaning was never obscure to the people who spoke the language. When it was declared unlawful in the eighth year after *hijrah*, the

[280] Yet, were he (the debtor) to be hard up, then allow him respite until easy circumstances.⁶⁰⁰ However, if you treat it as charity, it will be better for you, were you to know.⁶⁰¹

وَإِنْ كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ
وَأَنْ تَصَدَّقُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

﴿٢٨٠﴾

Companions of the Prophet had no difficulty in determining its meaning namely, that sum (or material) which is additionally charged over the principal on the debtor in return of the delayed return. This is the kind of *riba* that the Qur'an spoke of in these verses. However, *riba* can take inconspicuous forms. The Prophet, therefore, further broadened the spectrum of its meaning by banning certain kinds of dealings and declaring them usurious. For instance he declared as unlawful the selling of fruits before they are ripe or the crops before they are harvested. He also declared, "Gold for gold, silver for silver, wheat for wheat, barley for barley, dates for dates, salt for salt, equal to equal, hand to hand. Whoever added or demanded more took interest." Now, the question arose whether *riba* was confined to these six commodities or was it generally applicable to all kinds of materials. It was to this that 'Umar (ra) was referring when he said that the Prophet died without elaborating the subject. 'Umar recommended therefore, that

in view of the grave risk of falling into the unlawful, one should abstain from every deal that has any resemblance to either of the two kinds of *riba*: the one declared unlawful by the Qur'an as well as the other kinds declared unlawful by the Prophet. Those Muslims of our times therefore, who argue that the term *riba* has remained undefined and a term obscure in its meaning are at a great distance from truth and guidance."

600. It is said that two men quarreled over something and appeared before Qadi Shurayh (the famous judge of the time of Companions: Au.). He found one of them to be on the wrong and so awarded him a jail term. The man said: "That's a bit too harsh. Allah has said, 'Yet, were he to be hard up, then allow him respite until easy circumstances (prevail).'" Shurayh told him: "That is for cases involving usury. For us is that injunction of Allah which says (4: 58): 'Verily Allah orders you to render the trusts to those they belong, and that if you have to judge between the people, judge fairly.' Allah will not order us

do a thing and then punish us for doing it” (Ibn Jarir).

The majority of scholars however believe that the application is common to all kinds of loans and transactions, so that someone in straitened circumstances will be granted reprieve by the courts, although every case will be judged by its own merit and in cases of foul play detention and forcible recovery cannot be ruled out. Further, legal experts have laid out rules about what can be confiscated of the property of an insolvent and what cannot be confiscated (Au.).

The act itself of giving respite is a virtuous one. There are several *ahadith* that extol the act. For instance, Imām Muslim has recorded a *hadith* in which the Prophet is reported by Hudhayfah as having said:

" أَتَى اللَّهَ بِعَبْدٍ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَالًا فَقَالَ لَهُ مَاذَا عَمِلْتَ فِي الدُّنْيَا - قَالَ وَلَا يَكْتُمُونَ اللَّهَ حَدِيثًا - قَالَ يَا رَبِّ أَتَيْتَنِي مَالَكَ فَكُنْتُ أَتَابِعُ النَّاسَ وَكَانَ مِنْ خُلُقِي الْجَوَارُ فَكُنْتُ أَتَبَسِّرُ عَلَى الْمُوسِرِ وَأَنْظِرُ الْمُعْسِرَ. فَقَالَ اللَّهُ أَنَا أَحَقُّ بِدَا مِنْكَ تَجَاوَزُوا عَنْ عَبْدِي "

“A man from a previous nation who was given wealth was brought up before Allah. He asked him, ‘What good did you do

in the world? – He (the Prophet) added, ‘They will not be able to conceal a word from Allah. The man answered, ‘My Lord. You gave me Your bounty and I used to trade with the people. Now, my habit was to forego, so that I used to make it easy for a man of means and offer reprieve to a man hard up.’ Allah said, ‘I am more deserving of it than you.’ (Then He ordered), ‘Let go My slave’” (Qurtubi). Bukhari has another version of this *hadith* (Ibn Kathir).

There are several *ahadith* that say that Allah will provide shelter on a Day when there will be no shelter besides His, to him who allowed reprieve to a man hard up in finance (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

601. Thus Allah declared those who know but do not live according to their knowledge are like those who do not know at all (Zamakhshari).

602. According to ‘Atiyya, Suddi, and Dahhak, this is the last verse revealed by Allah. According to Ibn ‘Abbas, the Prophet lived for no more than nine days after its revelation (Ibn Jarir and others). In other words, this was the last contact between the heavens and the earth

[281] And fear a Day wherein you will be returned to Allah, then (it is that) each soul shall be paid in full for what it earned. And they shall not be wronged.⁶⁰²

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى
كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨١﴾

(Sabuni). It is also reported that following Jibril's advice, the Prophet ordered this verse placed between this

passage (dealing with usury) and the passage dealing with loans (Qurtubi, Razi, Shawkani, Zamakhshari).

[282] Believers!⁶⁰³ When you contract a debt⁶⁰⁴ upon each other for an appointed term, commit it to writing.⁶⁰⁵ And let a scribe write down between you justly. And let not any scribe refuse to write, even as Allah has taught him: so let him write. And let the debtor dictate and let him fear Allah his Lord and not reduce aught of it. And if the debtor be feeble minded, or weak, or unable to dictate himself, then let his guardian⁶⁰⁶ dictate justly. And call in to witness two of your men (as) witnesses; but if two men be not (at hand) then a man and two such women witnesses as you approve of, so that if one of them forgets the other will remind.⁶⁰⁷ And let not the witness refuse when summoned, nor should you be weary⁶⁰⁸ of writing it down whether (the deal is) small or big with its term. That is more equitable in Allah's sight, surer for testimony, and likelier that you will not be in doubt, unless it be a (hand to hand) ready merchandise that you transact between yourselves, then there is no fault in you that you do not write it down. And call for witnesses whenever you trade with one another.⁶⁰⁹ And let no harm be done either to the scribe or the witness,⁶¹⁰ but if you do then, that is a wickedness in you.⁶¹¹ And fear Allah. Allah teaches you. And Allah has knowledge of everything.⁶¹²

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَانَيْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ وَلْيَكْتُب بَيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ وَلَا يَأْب كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ وَلْيُمْلِلِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا يَبْخَسَ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ سَفِيهًا أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يُمْلِئَ هُوَ فَاْلْيُمْلِلْ وَلِيُّهُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَاسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ مِمَّنْ تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى وَلَا يَأْب الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا وَلَا تَسْأَمُوا أَنْ تَكْتُبُوهُ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَى أَجَلِهِ ذَلِكَمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَى أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا وَأَشْهِدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ وَلَا يُضَارَّ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ وَإِنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَإِنَّهُ فُسُوقٌ بِكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيَعْلَمُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٢﴾

603. This is the longest verse of the Qur'an (Ibn Kathir). According to Ibn Khuwayzmandad, it consists of 30 commandments (Qurtubi).

The connection between this and the previous verses can be perceived

from two angles. First, when Allah prohibited usury he declared lawful *bay' al salam*; for it has all the advantages that usury has, and even more. Second, when Allah enjoined the people to spend, it meant decrease in wealth. Abstaining from usury also

means apparent decrease in wealth. Hence it became necessary to show a way by which it could be conserved: by taking care of one's wealth and not allowing it to be depleted through neglect. Consequently, the injunction followed to write down when lending it (Razi).

604. Ibn `Abbas (ra) says the Madinans used to sell the fruits off their orchards for a year, two and even three, (also unborn beasts: Qurtubi), until the Prophet stopped the practice by declaring:

مَنْ أَسْلَفَ فِي شَيْءٍ فَفِي كَيْلٍ مَعْلُومٍ وَوَزْنٍ مَعْلُومٍ ،
إِلَى أَجَلٍ مَعْلُومٍ

“Whoever sold his goods in advance, may sell a known measure, weight, a known weight, to a known period” (Ibn Kathir). The *hadith* is in Bukhari, Muslim and others (Qurtubi).

605. Such writing down, or calling in of witnesses, as the subsequent words enjoin, is not obligatory (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir), but if a document is prepared, then someone properly qualified and experienced in writing documents may be employed (Zamakhshari, Alusi).

606. The term “*waliyy*” here signifies anyone who has been delegated the

powers to act on behalf of another, such as a legal advisor (Alusi).

607. With reference to the rule of two women in substitution of one male, a *hadith* preserved by Bukhari and Muslim is often quoted. The Prophet said:

يَا مَعْشَرَ النِّسَاءِ تَصَدَّقْنَ ، فَإِنِّي أُرَيْتُكُمْ أَكْثَرَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ . قُلْنَ وَبِمَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ قَالَ " تُكْثِرْنَ اللَّعْنَ ، وَتُكْفِرْنَ الْعَشِيرَ ، مَا رَأَيْتُ مِنْ نَاقِصَاتِ عَقْلِ وَدِينٍ أَذْهَبَ لِلْبَّيْتِ الرَّجُلِ الْحَارِمِ مِنْ إِحْدَاكُنَّ " . قُلْنَ وَمَا تُقْصَانِ دِينَنَا وَعَقْلَنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ " أَلَيْسَ شَهَادَةُ الْمَرْأَةِ مِثْلُ نِصْفِ شَهَادَةِ الرَّجُلِ " . قُلْنَ بَلَى . قَالَ " فَذَلِكَ مِنْ تَقْصَانِ عَقْلِهَا ، أَلَيْسَ إِذَا حَاضَتْ لَمْ تُصَلِّ وَلَمْ تَصُمْ " . قُلْنَ بَلَى . قَالَ " فَذَلِكَ مِنْ تَقْصَانِ دِينِهَا

“O women, give in charity, for I have seen you most in numbers in Hell.” We asked, “Why is it so, O Messenger of Allah?” He said: “You curse a lot and deny favors shown to you by your husbands. I have not seen anyone more deficient of intellect and religion than you who overcome the most intelligent of men.” We asked: “What’s the deficiency in our religion and in our intellect?” He replied: “Is it not that a woman’s testimony is declared equal to half of a man?” We said, “True.” He said, “This is her deficiency in intellect. And, is it not

that when she is undergoing her monthly period, she neither prays nor fasts?" We said, "True," He said, "That is her deficiency in religion" (Ibn Kathir). The text is from Bukhari (Au.).

The above implies feeble mindedness on the part of women. Whether that applies to women of the Prophet's time alone, or to women of all times, is a debatable issue. Moreover, that education breaks the rule is demonstrated by none other than the Prophet's own wife: 'A'isha. She was far more intelligent than many of the outstanding Companions of the Prophet (Au.).

Women in the Eyes of Secular Law

Majid writes: "In the Jewish code the testimony of a woman is inadmissible. 'The witnesses must be men, not women or minors (*ET*. p. 326).' 'Let not the testimony of women be admitted, on account of the levity and boldness of their sex (*"Ant"*, IV. 8:15). 'The witness must be a man, not a woman' (*JE*. V. p.177).'

The Christian world of the twentieth century also does not seem to place great trust in women. Although it is difficult to agree with the observations stated below, here are some opinions of leading Western schol-

ars as quoted by Majid: "In women deception is almost psychological ... The same fact is more coarsely and ungraciously stated in the proverbs of many nations, and in some countries it has led to the legal testimony of women being placed on a lower footing than that of men' (Havelock Ellis, *Man and Woman*, p. 196). Lombroso and Ferrero actually regard deception as being 'physiological' in women ... The evidence of profound psychologists, the substance of myths, the content of national proverbs, the personal experience, in short, of all those who have learnt to know women generation after generation, all point to this conclusion, that there is a certain duplicity and unscrupulousness in their nature' (Ludovici, *Woman*, p. 281). 'The fact that women are difficult to deal with under cross examination is well known among lawyers, and their skill in drawing red herrings across the path of any enquiry directed against themselves, makes them stubborn and evasive witnesses at all times when they have anything to conceal' (p. 320). 'We are again and again forced to admit that a woman is not in a position to judge objectively, without being influenced by her emotions' (Bauer, *op.cit.* I. p.289). .. 'In a court of justice women are

more often found guilty of perjury than men. It is indeed to be generally questioned whether they should be allowed to take an oath at all' (Schoenhauer)."

Majid's quote ends here.

The above noted, it might be pointed out that the subjects observed were non Muslim and of the Western society. That Muslim women will, and do display entirely different characteristics, is a point no one can contend. And it is Muslim women that the Qur'an is speaking of. Accordingly, the explanation for the words: "*If one of them forgets*" has to be sought in the influence of the environment of simplicity and innocence in which Islam places a woman. In Islam she is kept far away from the hum drum of the markets, where it is normally men who conduct business with craft and dexterity. A woman understands little of the tactics applied in trade and commerce in quarters disapproved of even for men. (The *hadith*: "The best spots on the earth are the mosques, and the worst the commercial centers"). Assuming the role that Islam assigns her, a Muslim woman does not receive exposure in the same measure as men to the corrupting influences of the outer world and hence is not

unlikely to forget or score confusion over the details of deals of little interest to her. Her testimony, therefore, could not have been treated as unequal to that of man solely because of lack of probity or a natural tendency to be dubious, but seems to be because of the mental state in which Islam likes to preserve her. Islam cannot lose sight of the fact that if purity of mind, simplicity and innocence are qualities that are approved of as those that must be at the bottom of every human psyche, then surely the primary source will have to remain uncorrupt.

A woman can of course refuse to accept this role and come out into the open to assume the same responsibilities as men, in consequence, measuring the same as men on I.Q. scales, but then she would no longer be that pure and innocent being that man would like to return to by the evening, in order to regain his own self in the environment of mental relaxation, innocence and purity.

The above will perhaps also explain the *hadith*: "I have not seen a creature more heedless (*ghafilaat* in the terminology of the Qur'an - 24: 23) capable of conquering the minds of the most intelligent..."

Incidentally, it should be obvious that by insisting that two women be presented as witnesses in place of a single male, Islam foils the attempts by men to drag women to the courts (Au.).

608. Allah did not use the word *tak-salu* because *kaslaan* is the quality of hypocrites. A *hadith* tells us: "A believer should not say: *kasiltu*. (i.e. 'I was lazy [about an act of virtue'])" - Zamakhshari, Alusi.

609. Although advisable, it is not obligatory, however, to call in witnesses for every deal. It is reported in Abu Da'ud and Nasa'i that the Prophet himself once purchased a horse from a Bedouin. Following the deal, as he was leading the man to his house in order to pay him the price, the Bedouin was offered a better price by some people who were not aware that the deal was done. The man changed his mind and shouted out to the Prophet: "I am going to sell away this horse if you will not buy it." The Prophet turned back and asked him perplexed: "I thought you had sold it to me!" The Bedouin refused that he had sold it to him and demanded a witness. There were no witnesses around. The Bedouin and he were in that situation when Khuzaymah happen to show up.

After hearing what both sides had to say he said: "I bear witness that the Prophet has purchased it." The Prophet turned to him and asked him: "How could you bear witness when you were not present?" Khuzaymah said: "On the strength of your claim." The Prophet declared that thereonward Khuzayma's testimony was to be treated equivalent to that of two men (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others).

610. The implication of the words: "*Let no harm be done either to the scribe or the witness*" is that if either of them is not inclined to offer his services, he may not be forced to do so (Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, Ta'us, Sa'id b. Jubayr, Dahhak, Muqatil, Ibn Hayyan, Rabi', and Suddi: Ibn Kathir).

611. As Allah has said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِنْ يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا وَإِنْ تَلُوتُوا أَوْ نَعِرْضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا
[النساء/ ١٣٥]

"Believers, be you securers of justice, witness for Allah, even though it be against yourselves, or your parents and kinsmen, whether (the man) be rich or poor; Allah stands closest to either. And follow not caprice, so as to swerve; for if

[283] And, if you are on a journey and do not find a scribe then a pledge in possession.⁶¹³ And, if one of you trusts another then let him who has been trusted deliver the trust and fear Allah his Lord.⁶¹⁴ And do not conceal evidence.⁶¹⁵ Whoso conceals it, lo, his heart is sinful. Allah is aware of all that you do.

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا فَرِهَانٌ مَّقْبُوضَةٌ فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي أُؤْتِيَ أَمَانَتَهُ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ آثِمٌ قَلْبُهُ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٣﴾

you twist or turn, Allah is aware of the things you do" (Ibn Kathir).

612. In this is the promise from Allah that He will grant knowledge to the man of *taqwa* (Qurtubi).

613. The pledging, however, is not conditional to a journey. It has been stated in this manner because it is normally in a journey that the situation of non availability of a scribe or witness arises. The Prophet had himself pledged his shield to a Jew in Madinah, (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir), for thirty measures of barley that he needed for his wives (Qurtubi). The report is in Bukhari (Alusi).

614. "Deliver the trust...." this part of the verse is speaking of the third kind of deal in which there has neither been documentation in the presence of witnesses nor a thing has been pledged, (rather it was conducted in good faith: Au.) Razi.

615. When one is asked to appear for testimony, after he has been witness to a deal, the appearance is obligatory on him. So it is when he knows that with his appearance even if uninvited a wrong can be righted. But if he is not invited, and no harm is expected, then he has the choice. Allah said:

وَأَقِيمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ لِلَّهِ [الطلاق/٢]

"And bear witness for Allah," and the Prophet has said (as in a *hadith* of Bukhari: Au):

انصُرْ أَخَاكَ ظَالِمًا أَوْ مَظْلُومًا

"Help your brother, whether he is the oppressor or the oppressed." (That is, if he happens to be an oppressor, prevent him from his oppression: Au.).

Further, there is no contradiction between the two *ahadith* in one of which the Prophet is reported to have said:

"خير الشهداء الذي يأتي بشهادته قبل أن يسألها"

“The best of witnesses is he who appears for testimony before he is invited,”

and the other *hadith* of Bukhari in which he said:

”حَيْرُ أُمَّتِي قَرْنِي ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يُلُونَهُمْ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يُلُونَهُمْ“
 . قَالَ عِمْرَانُ فَلَا أَدْرِي أَذَكَرَ بَعْدَ قَرْنِي قَرْنَيْنِ أَوْ ثَلَاثًا
 ”ثُمَّ إِنَّ بَعْدَكُمْ قَوْمًا يَشْهَدُونَ وَلَا يُسْتَشْهَدُونَ ،
 وَيُخَوَّنُونَ وَلَا يُؤْمَنُونَ ، وَيَتَذَرُونَ وَلَا يَقُونَ ، وَيُظْهَرُ
 فِيهِمُ الْبَيْسُ“

“The best of generation is my *Ummah*, and then of those that will follow and then of those that will follow...” (‘Imran the transmitter, was not sure whether he said it twice or thrice). “Then after you will be a people who will bear witness without being invited, who will deceive and will not be trusted, who will vow but will not keep it, and in whom will appear obesity.” In this second *hadith* the Prophet was speaking of false testimonies (Qurtubi).

Legal Points

1. A *ba‘y al salam* (is a contract of sale in which an immediate price is paid in return of delayed delivery of the goods. Au.). It must fulfill eight conditions, some agreed to by all jurists, others not: (i) The seller must possess the material he is selling, (ii) the material should be properly specified, (iii) it should be of known

quantity, (iv) delivery should be delayed, (v) the delivery date should be specified, (vi) the currency should be defined (such as gold, silver, Dinar, etc.: Au.), (vii) the amount should be specified, and, (viii) it (the amount) should be in possession of the buyer. Some jurists say the amount should be paid at the time of the deal, others allow a delay of a couple of days (Qurtubi).

2. The date of delivery must be properly specified by the calendar and not left vague such as to say: “When the crops are harvested,” or “When the pilgrims start arriving,” etc. (Razi, Zamakhshari, Shawkani).

3. The witnesses “...must be adults, of unimpaired reason, free men (not slaves), and of good character. Disputes are to be decided on the testimony of these witnesses, and not on the strength of the written documents, the role of which is only secondary or subsidiary” (Majid).

4. Testimony of women is not admissible in cases involving hudud (capital punishments) or marriage and divorce. Their testimony alone, to the exclusion of a male witness, is also not sufficient save where there is no recourse to it, such as in cases of determination of virginity of a girl, matters related to the birth of a child

[284] To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth. And, whether you reveal what is in your hearts⁶¹⁶ or conceal it, Allah shall bring you to account for it. He may then forgive whom He will and punish whom He will,⁶¹⁷ for Allah has power over everything.⁶¹⁸

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٨٤﴾

and so forth (Qurtubi, Shawkani).

5. Non Muslims cannot be witnesses in affairs involving Muslims; but, among themselves, involving their own affairs, yes, they may.

616. This verse proves that as there are acts of the body, there are acts of the heart also (Thanwi).

617. Different kinds of sins entail different retributions, depending upon how they are committed. If they are committed openly, the punishment also comes openly. If they are concealed, the punishment is also concealed. It is reported of 'A'isha (ra) that she said: "If you sin openly you will be punished in the Hereafter. But if you do it secretly then Allah will punish you for it here in this world alone." Accordingly, when Sufyan b. 'Uyayna was asked about the melancholic feeling that one cannot explain the cause for, he answered: "This is the punishment for what evil you intend in the depth of your hearts but do not commit them" (Ibn Taymiyyah).

618. According to Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn Mas'ud, (Ibn 'Umar: Ibn Taymiyyah) 'A'isha, Abu Hurayrah, Sha'bi, 'Ataa', Muhammad b. Sirin, and others this verse has been abrogated. A *hadith* (narrated by Abu Hurayrah (ra) and preserved by Imām Ahmad and Muslim: (Ibn Kathir) says:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ لَمَّا نَزَلَتْ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- (لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ) قَالَ فَاسْتَدَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فَأَتَوْا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- ثُمَّ بَرَكُوا عَلَى الرَّكْبِ فَقَالُوا أَيْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كُلُّنَا مِنَ الْأَعْمَالِ مَا نَطِيقُ الصَّلَاةَ وَالصِّيَامَ وَالْجِهَادَ وَالصَّدَقَةَ وَقَدْ أُنْزِلَتْ عَلَيْكَ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ وَلَا نَطِيقُهَا. قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- "أُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَقُولُوا كَمَا قَالَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا بَلْ قُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ". قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ. فَلَمَّا اقْتَرَأَهَا الْقَوْمُ ذَلِكَ بِمَا أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فِي إِثْرِهَا (آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَأَتْ كُتُبُهُ وَرُسُلُهُ لَا تَفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ) فَلَمَّا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ نَسَحَهَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ (لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ تَعْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا

[285] The Messenger believed in what was sent to him by his Lord⁶¹⁹ and (so did) the believers. They all believed in Allah, His angels, His Scriptures and His Messengers, (declaring), 'We make no distinction between any of His Messengers.' They said, 'We heard and obeyed: Your forgiveness O our Lord. Unto You is the return.'

آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ
وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ
وَرُسُلِهِ لَا تَفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا
سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٢٨٥﴾

تَوَّاجِدُنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا قَالَ تَعَمُّ (رَبَّنَا وَلَا
تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إَصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا)
قَالَ تَعَمُّ (رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ) قَالَ تَعَمُّ
(وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا
عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ) قَالَ تَعَمُّ.

“When Allah revealed, ‘To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth... until ... Allah has Power over everything,’ the Companions of the Prophet felt, (because of the strength of their faith: Ibn Kathir), seriously concerned. They went to the Prophet, kneeled before him and said, ‘Messenger of Allah. We were asked to do things that we could, such as Prayers, fasts, *Jihad* and charity, but now this verse has been revealed, and we do not find the strength in ourselves for it.’ The Prophet told them, ‘Do you wish to be like the people of the two Books who said: We have heard but will not obey!? Rather say, ‘We have heard and we shall

obey. Your forgiveness O our Lord, and unto You is the return.’

When the people had begun to recite it and the tongues got used to it, Allah sent behind it the following verse: ‘The Messenger believed in what was sent to him by his Lord ...’ until, ‘Unto You (indeed) is the return.’ And when they had done that, Allah abrogated the previous verse and revealed: ‘Allah charges no soul save to its capacity ...’ until, ‘You are our Protector, therefore, help us against the unbelieving people’ (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Nevertheless, Ibn Jarir’s opinion is that this verse is not abrogated. Allah will take to account for what passes through a man’s mind. But, as pointed out by Hasan al Basri, taking to account for something does not necessarily entail punishment. In other words, even if asked to account for them, one will not be punished for

his passing thoughts. This is based on a *hadith* report preserved by Muslim which says,

(قال الراوي) بينما نحن نطوف بالبيت مع عبد الله بن عمر وهو يطوف، إذ عرض له رجل فقال: كَيْفَ سَمِعْتَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- يَقُولُ فِي النَّجْوَى قَالَ سَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ: يُدْنِي الْمُؤْمِنُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حَتَّى يَضَعَ عَلَيْهِ كَنَفَهُ فَيَقْرَأُ بِذُنُوبِهِ فَيَقُولُ هَلْ تَعْرِفُ فَيَقُولُ أَيْ رَبِّ أَغْرَفَ . قَالَ فَإِنِّي قَدْ سَتَرْتُهَا عَلَيْكَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنِّي أَغْفِرُهَا لَكَ الْيَوْمَ. فَيُعْطَى صَحِيفَةً حَسَنَاتِهِ وَأَمَّا الْكُفَّارُ وَالْمُنَافِقُونَ فَيُنَادَى بِهِمْ عَلَى رُءُوسِ السَّمَاوَاتِ هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ.

While `Abdullah ibn `Umar was going around the Ka`bah a man approached him and asked: "How did you hear the Prophet talking about the *hadith* of 'secret whispering (*al Najwa*)?" Ibn `Umar replied: "I heard him say, 'Allah will draw a believer close to Himself until He places his palms on him and make him admit his sins. He will ask, 'Are you familiar (with this sin)?' He will say, 'My Lord. I am familiar.' (According to other reports: this will go on as long as Allah wishes). Then He will say, 'I concealed your sins in the world, today I forgive them all.' Then he will be given his book of good deeds by his right hand. As for the unbelievers and the hypocrites it will

be announced about them in front of all (11: 19): '*These are the ones who had uttered lies about their Lord.*' (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

According to some reports, Ibn `Abbas was also of the opinion that this verse has not been abrogated. Rather, Allah will gather the people unto Himself and say: "Today I will tell you about what you used to conceal in your hearts." Then, as for the believers, He will tell them (about what they used to conceal) and then forgive them. As for the unbelievers and the doubters, He will inform them of the lies they were concealing in their hearts about Him. Hence He said (2: 225): "*He may then forgive whom He will and punish whom He will, for Allah has power over all things.*" At another place He said (2: 255):

وَلَكِنْ يُوَاحِدُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ [البقرة : ٢٢٥]
"He will take you to account for what your hearts have earned"
 (Qurtubi).

"It may be remembered at this point," says Ibn Taymiyyah, "that sometimes the *Salaf* used the word *naskh* (abrogation) to indicate that certain implications of the verse in question stood abrogated and not the verse itself. For instance, they said that the verse: '*Fear Allah, as He should be feared,*' is abrogated by the verse, '*Fear Al-*

[286] Allah charges no soul save to its capacity.⁶²⁰ To it what it strove for and upon it what it earned.⁶²¹ 'Our Lord! Do not take us to task for what we forgot or erred.⁶²² Our Lord! Lay not upon us a burden⁶²³ as You laid upon those before us.⁶²⁴ Our Lord! Do not charge us with what we do not have the strength for.⁶²⁵ Pardon us, forgive us and have mercy upon us. You are our Protector, therefore, give us victory over the unbelieving people.'⁶²⁶

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إَصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٨٦﴾

lah to the extent possible,' when we know that there is no contradiction between the two. What they meant therefore is that the first verse stands abrogated by the second in a certain sense alone. One may assume that by the verse, 'Fear Allah in the manner He should be feared,' one is being burdened with what was beyond his capacity. The second verse corrected this understanding and explained that he ought to fear Him to the extent possible."

Thanwi adds: The *Salaf* also used the term *naskh* where one verse explained another.

These points must be borne in mind to understand why some of the Companions believed a certain verse stood abrogated, while others maintained that it was not (Au.).

619. Mentioning the Prophet along with the common believers as those who believed, is I believe, to encourage them (Thanwi).

620. "Was" is used in Arabic for an act that one can carry out with extraordinary difficulty. For example, it was in the range of possibility for a man to perform more than five Prayers a day, fast more than thirty days a year, and perform Hajj more than once in his lifetime, but Allah ordered, out of His mercy, only what was comfortably possible" (Zamakhshari).

Ibn Taymiyyah remarks: "The passage, 'Allah charges no soul save to its capacity,' corrects the understanding of him who deduces from the verse that Allah burdens a soul beyond its capacity. On the other hand, the passage, 'To it (the rewards for) what it

strove for, and upon it (the burden of) what it earned,' corrects the understanding of him who held that Allah's forgiveness or punishment are without any wisdom (Al Kabir).

It might be noted that it is not the physical or material burden that is meant by "*la yukallif*" (as non-Arabs understand from this verse), but rather the burden of the *Shari'ah*. Otherwise, a man may suffer such pain of body or mind that it will drive him mad, or lead him to death (Au.).

621. "So everyone must win his own redemption. In Islam there is neither an 'original sin' nor 'universal redemption.' Every individual must work out the propensities of his soul his own possibilities of spiritual success or failure" (Majid).

Accordingly, the *Sahihayn* report a *hadith* of Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) in which the Prophet is reported to have said,

قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِذَا هَمَّ عَبْدِي بِحَسَنَةٍ وَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا
كُتِبَتْ لَهُ حَسَنَةٌ فَإِنْ عَمِلَهَا كُتِبَتْ لَهُ عَشْرُ حَسَنَاتٍ
إِلَى سَبْعِمِائَةٍ ضِعْفٍ وَإِذَا هَمَّ بِسَيِّئَةٍ وَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا لَمْ
أَكْتُبْهَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنْ عَمِلَهَا كُتِبَتْ لَهُ سَيِّئَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ

"Allah Most High and Honored says: 'When My slave intends to do a good thing but does not, I write a good deed in his account. If he does it I write anything be-

tween ten to seven hundred in his account. In contrast, if he intends to do an evil thing but does not commit it, I write nothing in his account. However, if he carries out the evil act, I write it as only one.'" There are several *ahadith* to this effect (Ibn Kathir).

It may also be noted that even the doubts and misgivings that pass through one's heart unintentionally are forgiven (*Ma'aarif*). Accordingly, a *hadith* of Muslim says that some people came to the Prophet (*saws*) and said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ جَاءَ نَاسٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ
-صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- فَسَأَلُوهُ إِنَّا نَجِدُ فِي أَنْفُسِنَا مَا
يَتَعَاطَى أَحَدُنَا أَنْ يَتَكَلَّمَ بِهِ. قَالَ " وَقَدْ وَجَدْتُمُوهُ ".
قَالُوا نَعَمْ. قَالَ: ذَلِكَ صَرِيحُ الْإِيمَانِ

"O Messenger of Allah, we find in our hearts things that we consider so serious that we cannot even speak about them." The Prophet asked them: "Do you find that?" (I.e. the feelings of fear and abhorrence: Ibn Taymiyyah). They said: "Yes. We do." He said: "That surely is iman (faith)" (Ibn Kathir).

Excluded from the rule stated here, namely, "*To each soul (the rewards for) what it strove for,*" are those cases in which a good or bad deed of a

man continues to influence people after him. In such cases he shall have a share in the reward or punishment of those who followed him in those good or bad deeds after him (Au.).

Noting the use of two different words, *kasaba* (for good) and *iktasaba* (for evil), Rashid Rida points out that it proves by implication that by nature man is inclined to virtue. He can perform good deeds effortlessly, hence the use of the word *kasaba*. In contrast, those acts that are evil are rejected by the inner self in the first instance. A man has to struggle against himself to perform them. Therefore, Allah (*swt*) used the word “*iktasabat*” for evil deeds (*Manar*).

622. The Prophet (*saws*) has said:

عن ابن عباس ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال
ان الله تجاوز عن امتي الخطأ والنسيان وما استكرهوا
عليه

“My *ummah* has been forgiven three things: error in judgment, what is committed forgetfully, and what it is compelled to do” (Ibn Kathir and others). Shawkani adds that although this *hadith* is not very strong, but, since it has come through many transmitters, on the whole it acquires *hasan li ghayrihi* status.

Ibn Hibban has, however, placed it

in his *Sahih* (Au.).

623. The word in the original is *isr* which is used, according to Ibn Zayd, for a sin that can neither be atoned for nor repented (Shawkani from Ibn Jarir).

624. Such as the commandment in the Bible that clothes cannot be cleansed with water rather the dirty portion be either burnt or cut off, or that there is no repentance for murder, etc. (*Ma`arif*).

625. When it has already been said that Allah does not charge a soul beyond its capacity, (although He could [Thanwi], being Lord of the worlds), this piece, ‘Do not charge us with what we do not have the strength for,’ when said by the believer in his supplication, expresses the resolve that were Allah to impose on him what is beyond his capacity, he would all the same try and do as ordered (Au.).

626. A *hadith* preserved by Muslim says:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ لَمَّا أُسْرِيَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- انْتَهَى بِهِ إِلَى سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى وَهِيَ فِي السَّمَاءِ السَّادِسَةِ إِلَيْهَا يَنْتَهَى مَا يُعْرَجُ بِهِ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ فَيُقَبِّضُ مِنْهَا وَإِلَيْهَا يَنْتَهَى مَا يُهْبَطُ بِهِ مِنَ قَوْفِهَا فَيُقَبِّضُ مِنْهَا قَالَ (إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَى) قَالَ فَرَأَتْ مِنْ ذَلِكَ قَالَتْ فَأُعْطِيَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- ثَلَاثًا أُعْطِيَ الصَّلَوَاتِ الْخَمْسَ وَأُعْطِيَ

خَوَاتِيمِ سُورَةِ الْبَقَرَةِ وَغُفِرَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ أُمَّتِهِ
شَيْئًا الْمُفْجَحَاتُ.

“When the Prophet was taken to the heavens during his Night Journey and Ascension (*Al Isra' wa al Me'raj*) he reached a place called *Sidratu al Muntaba'*. It is in the sixth firmament. At this point ends everything that ascends from the earth, and is held there (to be taken by the angels) as well as all that comes down from above to be taken charge of from there ... It was here that the Prophet was bestowed three gifts: (i) five daily Prayers, (ii) last (two) verses of *surah al Baqarah* and (iii) [the promise that] whoever committed sins but did not associate aught with Allah, even if he committed major sins, will be (ultimately) forgiven.”

According to another version, the Prophet said:

أَعْطِيَتْ هَذِهِ الْآيَاتِ مِنْ آخِرِ سُورَةِ الْبَقَرَةِ مِنْ كَنْزٍ
تَحْتَ الْعَرْشِ لَمْ يَعْطِهَا نَبِيٌّ قَبْلِي - رَوَاهُ أَحْمَدُ وَالطَّبْرَانِيُّ
فِي الْكَبِيرِ وَالْأَوْسَطِ وَرِجَالُ أَحْمَدَ رِجَالُ الصَّحِيحِ.
(مَجْمَعُ الزَّوَادِ وَمَنْبَعُ الْفَوَائِدِ)

“I was given these two verses from a treasure beneath the *`Arsh*, which no Prophet was given before me” (Qurtubi). Shawkani traces no less than thirteen dif-

ferent *ahadith* to this effect.

A *hadith* preserved by Bukhari, Muslim and others of the *Sahih* compilers report that the Prophet said:

عَنْ أَبِي مَسْعُودٍ الْبَدْرِيِّ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ قَالَ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - " الْآيَتَانِ مِنْ
آخِرِ سُورَةِ الْبَقَرَةِ مَنْ قَرَأَهُمَا فِي لَيْلَةٍ كَفَّتَاهُ

“Whoever recited the last two verses of *surah Al-Baqarah* in a night, they will suffice him (*Kashshaf*, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Kathir).

The following is also reported in Muslim:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ لَمَّا تَرَلَتْ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ (وَإِنْ تَبَدُّوا
مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخَفُّوهُ يَخَافُكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ) قَالَ دَخَلَ
قُلُوبُهُمْ مِنْهَا شَيْءٌ لَمْ يَدْخُلْ قُلُوبَهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَقَالَ
النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - " قُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا
وَسَلَّمْنَا ". قَالَ فَالْقَى اللَّهُ الْإِيمَانَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَثَرَلِ
اللَّهُ تَعَالَى (لَا يُكَفِّرُ اللَّهُ تَفْسًا إِلَّا وَسْعَهَا هَا
مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ
نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا) قَالَ قَدْ فَعَلْتُ (رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ
عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا) - قَالَ
قَدْ فَعَلْتُ (وَاعْفُزْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا) قَالَ قَدْ
فَعَلْتُ - صَحِيحٌ مُسْلِمٌ.

Ibn `Abbas said that when the verse, ‘If you conceal ..’ was revealed, some of it entered into the hearts, while some of it did not. The Prophet said, ‘Say, we have heard, obeyed, and surrendered,’ So Allah sent down faith into their hearts. Then Allah re-

vealed, *‘Allah does not burden a soul beyond its capacity. It shall have what it earned and upon it what it earned. Our Lord! Do not take us to task for what we forgot or erred.’* At that Allah said, ‘I have done it.’ And

He revealed, *‘Our Lord! Do not charge us with what we do not have the strength for,’* Allah said, ‘I have done it’ (Ibn Kathir).

Surah 3

Āl-`Imran

(The Family of `Imran)

Madinan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COMPASSION-
ATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Merits of the Surah

Several merits of the *surah* have been reported, such as, it safeguards against snakes, from extreme poverty, and, will plead in the Hereafter for those who recited it (often). According to a *hadith* of Al Nawwas b. Sam`aan, the two *suwar*, *al Baqarah* and *Āl `Imrān* will appear together leading those who recited and lived by their message. The Prophet has also said (as recorded by Abu Da`ud and Ibn Majah) that the *Ism al A`zam* is in these two verses (2: 163):

وَأِنتُمْ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ [البقرة : ١٦٣]

“And your Lord is One Lord. There is no god save He. The Compassionate, the Merciful,” and this second verse of *Āl `Imrān*:

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ [آل عمران : ٢]

“Allah there is no God but He. The Living, the Self subsisting

by whom all subsist” (Qurtubi: abridged).

Alusi adds: There are many reasons for these two *suwar*, *al Baqarah* and *Āl `Imrān*, to be paired. One reason is that each is complementary to the other. *Surah al Baqarah*, for instance, presents arguments, *Āl `Imrān* attends to clearing doubts. In the former, the creation of the people was mentioned, in the latter, their fashioning in the wombs has been mentioned. There, Adam’s creation was spoken of. Here, that of his progeny has been mentioned. In *al Baqarah*, creation of Adam without a mother was mentioned. In *Āl `Imrān*, creation of `Isa b. Maryam without a father has been mentioned. In *al Baqarah*, the Jews were addressed. In *Āl `Imrān*, the Christians have been addressed. There, it spoke of the Fire that has been prepared for the unbelievers. Here, it speaks of Paradise that has been prepared for the believ-

ers. There, it was said at the beginning that it will be the godfearing who will be successful. Here, in this *surah*, it is said at the end,

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ [آل عمران : ٢٠٠]

"Fear Allah, so that you may succeed."

Al Baqarah opens with the words:

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
[البقرة : ٤]

"Those who believe in what has been sent to you as well as in what was sent before you..."

Āl `Imrān ends with words:

وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ
وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ [آل عمران : ١٩٩]

"And of the people of the Book are some who believe in Allah and in what has been sent down to you, as well as in what was sent down to them."

Again, it is said that when the verse in *surah al Baqarah* was revealed saying:

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يقرضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا [البقرة : ٢٤٥]

"Who will lend a goodly loan to Allah," the Jews said: "Muhammad! Your Lord has gone broke. He seeks loans from His slaves." In *Āl `Imrān* it was replied:

لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ

أَغْنِيَاءُ [آل عمران : ١٨١]

"Allah has heard the words of those who said Allah is broke and we are rich."

Finally, if *surah al Baqarah* recorded the prayer words of Ibrahim:

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ [البقرة : ١٢٩]

"Our Lord! Raise among them a Messenger from among them," then, *Āl `Imrān* stated:

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ
أَنْفُسِهِمْ [آل عمران : ١٦٤]

"Allah has done a favor to the believers in that He raised among them a Messenger from among them."

It is widely reported that revelation of the first eighty and odd verses of this chapter were occasioned by the arrival at *Madinah* of the Christian delegation from Najran. They were about sixty riders led by three prominent men. They encamped near Masjid al Nabawi and were allowed to offer their services there, which they did facing the east. They argued with the Prophet about `Isa b. Maryam, affirming their faith in Him as the son of God who performed such miracles as curing the blind and the deaf, blowing life into birds made of clay, and so on. The Prophet told

[1] *Alif. Lam. Mim.*¹



them: "Submit yourselves (to Allah)." They protested, "But we have submitted." He told them: "You have not, for your declaration that 'Isa was the son of God, your worship of the Cross and your eating of the pork prevents you from submitting yourselves." Exasperated, they asked: "Who was his father then, O Muhammad?" The Prophet did not answer until these verses were revealed (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Razi, Ibn Kathir and others who cite Ibn Ishaq as the source).

1. It is said that once Huyayy b. Ukhtab, a Jew, came to the Prophet (*saws*) and said: "Is it true that it has been revealed to you, '*Alif. Lam. Mim. This Book ...*'" (*Al-Baqarah*, verses 1-2). The Prophet replied, "Yes." Huyyi said, "We do not know of any prophet before you who was told about how long he and his followers would last. You seem to be the exception, for (according to the classical numbering [gematrical system] given to Arabic letters) *alif* is equal to 1, *lam* to 30, and *mim* to 40. The total works out to 71. (This is how long your religion will last). Do you have more of them?" The Prophet replied, "Yes, *Alif. Lam. Mim. Sad.*" Huyyi

said: "That makes it 161 years. Is there more to it?" The Prophet said, "Yes, *Alif. Lam. Ra.*" (Which add up to 231: Au.) Huyyi said, "That makes it a bit long. However, is there more?" The Prophet said, "Yes, *Alif. Lam. Mim. Ra.*" (These add up to 271, and the grand total works out to 734: Au.) Huyyi said: "Surely, this is longer and more burdensome (to bear)." Then he turned to his companions and said, "Let's go. The matter is a bit confusing" (Alusi).

Huyyi's calculation was based on the ancient cryptographic system where numerical values were given to each of the Arabic letters from *alif* to *ya*. In this system, still in use in some parts of Asia for dating, *alif* = 1, *baa* = 2, *jim* = 3, *dal* = 4, *haa* (the round *haa*) = 5, *waw* = 6, *zaa* (letter after *raa*) = 7, *haa* (letter after *jim*) = 8, *taa* (letter before *daad*) = 9, *yaa* = 10, *kaaf* = 20, *laam* = 30, *mim* = 40, *noon* = 50, *sin* = 60, 'ayn = 70, *faa* = 80, *saad* = 90, *qaaf* = 100, *raa* = 200, *shin* = 300, *taa* (letter after *baa*) = 400, *thaa* = 500, *khaa* = 600, *dhaal* = 700, *daad* (letter after *saad*) = 800, *zaa* (letter before 'ayn) = 900 and *ghayn* = 1000. This numbering helped the ancients in several ways,

[2] Allah - there is no god but He. The Living, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist.

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ ﴿٢﴾

[3] He (has) sent down² upon you the Book with the truth,³ confirming⁴ that which preceded it (as) He sent down the Tawrah⁵ and the Injil⁶

نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ﴿٣﴾

one of which was to keep dates in words. For example, a name “Naseem Akhtar” gives the year of the person’s birth as 1361 A.H. Olden epitaphs carried a poetical line in praise of the person buried which indicated the date of his death (Au.).

We might remind here of the *hadith* which reports:

عن أسماء بنت يزيد أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: “اسم الله الأعظم في هاتين الآيتين {وَأَنزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ} لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ” وفاتحة سورة آل عمران لم آلم الله لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ“.

The “*Ism al-A`zam*” is in these two verses (2: 163), “Your Lord is one God besides whom there is no God, the Kind, the Merciful” and, “the first two verses of this Surah) “Alif. Lam. Mim. Allah, there is no God save He, the Living, the Self-subsisting by whom all subsist.” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Tirmidhi rated the above *hadith* as *Hasan Sahih* (Au.).

2. *Nazzala*: It will be noticed that while the Qur’ān uses the word *anzala* for other revealed books such as *Tawrah* and *Injil*, it is the grammatical form *nazzala* that is employed for the Qur’ān. This is to stress the gradualness of its revelation which took place in 23 years. Where the form *anzala* has been used for the Qur’ān, the reference is to the sending down from the ‘*Arsh* to the firmament closest to the earth (Qurtubi, Ruh).

3. *Al-haqq*: “The primary significance of *haqq* is: ‘Suitableness to the requirements of wisdom, justice, right, or rightness, truth, reality, or fact, or to the exigencies of the case’” (Majid from Lane’s Lexicon).

4. That is, this Qur’ān and the previous revelations confirm each other: unraveling the same truths and forecasting the same events (Ibn Kathir).

5. *Tawrah*: The Jews are not fond of opening up their literature to non-Jews. Therefore, few perhaps, even

among the Jews, know what exactly *Torah* stands for. Shumuley writes that *Torah* is the name of 24 books of written law containing 613 written commandments, in addition to oral code in *Mishnah* and *Talmud*. The *Torah* can only be written on cow's parchments (*Judaism for Everyone*, Rabbi Shamuley Boteach). Encyclopedia Britannica has something similar to say in slightly different words, which makes *Torah* a huge work of hundreds of volumes (Au.).

“(It) is certainly not identical with the OT, or even with the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament: Au.), but is synonymous with *Torah*, of which only fragments can at best be found in the extant Pentateuch. What the Qur’ān commends as a Holy Writ is certainly not the same book of which it is freely and openly stated that it is ‘the work’ not of God but ‘of godly men’ (Majid).

6. *Injil*: “(It) is not at all identical with the NT or even the Four Gospels of the Christian Church. ‘*Injil*,’ according to the teachings of Islam, was a Book sent down to Jesus (on whom be peace!), not a collection of

reports and stories about him compiled at dubious dates by unknown persons, - an un-designed and unforeseen product of the apostolic age.’ (*Encycl. Br.* III, p. 513)” - Majid.

Asad adds: “It is to be borne in mind that the Gospels frequently mentioned in the Qur’ān are not identical with what is known today as the Four Gospels, but refers to an original, since lost, revelation bestowed upon Jesus and known to his contemporaries under its Greek name of *Evangelion* (“Good Tiding”), on which the Arabicized form ‘*Injil*’ is based.”

In any case, there are so many versions of the *Bible* that it is hard to say if any part of the *Bible* is *Torah* or *Injil*. For example, the Desert Storm Bible that the Americans distributed among their soldiers in the M.E. in 1990, consists of only 66 books in all, whereas the RSV has 73 books. Other versions have more or lesser books, each sect removing or adding books as they say in common language, “like nobody’s business” (Au.).

[4] Earlier - a (means of) guidance to the people. As He (also) sent down the Criterion.⁷ Verily, a painful chastisement is in store for those who reject the signs of Allah. Allah is Mighty, Lord of Retribution.⁸

مِنْ قَبْلُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَنْزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ إِنَّ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ
وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انتِقَامٍ ﴿٤﴾

[5] Verily, nothing is hidden from Allah, neither in the earth nor in the heavens.⁹

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا
فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٥﴾

[6] He it is who fashions¹⁰ you in the wombs as He will. There is no god save He, the Mighty, the Wise.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦﴾

7. Ibn Jarir prefers the opinion that by *al-Furqān* the allusion is to those arguments and proofs that differentiate the truth from falsehood, with special reference to the Christians and other sects. This opinion is based on Ja'far ibn Zubayr's statement.

Ibn Kathir however says that the Qur'ān is the Furqan which distinguishes guidance from error, truth from falsehood, ... through what Allah (*swt*) reveals as the clear proofs and evidences.

Razi says: "I believe that the allusion by *al-Furqān* is to miracles."

Rashid Rida prefers the power of intellect as the meaning, since, primarily, it is with this faculty that one weighs and balances thoughts and ideas. He quotes Imām Ghazali as also of the same opinion.

8. "Ends of righteousness and equity demand that God must be Just even before being Generous....His loving-kindness, infinite no doubt, is not to be had at the expense of his justice..." (Majid).

9. Only the "earth" and the "heaven" have been mentioned because human senses cannot go beyond them (Majid).

10. That is, Allah creates in the form and shape He will, such as, whether the infant shall be male or female, ugly or pretty, of good or bad fortune, and so forth (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

It is said that some people gathered around Ibrahim b. Ad-ham to hear from him. He told them he was busy with himself thinking of the four occasions and had no time for them.

[7] He it is who sent down upon you the Book wherein are verses clear.¹¹ They are the substance of the Book, while (there are) others that are allegorical. Now, those in whose heart is deviation,¹² pursue its allegorical part¹³ seeking distortion and desiring (false) interpretation;¹⁴ whereas no one knows its (true) interpretation save Allah. As for the well-grounded in knowledge,¹⁵ they say, 'We believe in it. All of it is from our Lord.'¹⁶ And grasp not (the true meaning) but men of understanding.¹⁷

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٧﴾

They asked, "What four occasions are they?" He answered:

1) About the moment on the Day of Judgment when Allah will say, 'These (people) are for Paradise, and I do not care; and these are for Hell-fire, and I do not care.' I wonder among which of the two groups I will be.

2) About the moment when the angel enquired his Lord (at the time of creation), 'O my Lord! Should (this soul) be of the fortunate ones, or the unfortunate ones?' I'm wondering what was said about me then.

3) Of the moment (of death) when the angel of death asks: 'O my Lord! Is he to be accepted on belief or unbelief?' I do not know what will be the answer about me then. And,

4) About the day when it will be said, 'Stand out, O criminals.' I do

not know among which of the two groups I will be!" (Qurtubi).

11. The original words are *muhkamat* (sing. *muhkam*) and *mutashabihat* (sing. *mutashabih*). The meaning, says Ibn Kathir, is that there are verses in the Qur'an that are clear in meaning, unambiguous and self-evident bearing no doubt about their purport. These are the *muhkamat*. There are others that are not so clear for many people, or, at least, for some of them. They allow for varying interpretations. Therefore, whoever referred back to the *muhkamat* for interpreting the *mutashabihat* found the right guidance, while he who refused, turned back upon it (i.e. upon guidance). Hence Allah (*swt*) said about *muhkamat* that they are the *Umm al-Kitab*, i.e. the foundation, substance and basis of the Book upon which one should rely when in

doubt. In contrast, the *mutashabihat* allow for varying interpretations either in the light of a *muhkam*, or (because of the phrasing, and not because of the intent itself), independent of them.

What parts of the Qur`ān are the *muhkam*? The opinion of Ibn `Abbas is: "They are the abrogating verses (*al-nawasikh*), those declaring (a thing) permissible, those that declare (another) impermissible, those that delineate boundaries, and those that can be used for ordering a thing and hence are meant for action (rather than contemplation: Au.)." In another report he adds "those that are meant to be believed in, and not meant for action."

Ibn Hanbal's opinion is that *muhkam* is self explanatory and *mutashabih* that which requires explanation. Imām Shafe`i has said that as against *mutashabih*, *muhkam* is that which does not admit multiple interpretations - Rashid Rida from Ibn Taymiyyah. Though it "does not," Asad says, "preclude differences of opinion regarding the implication of a particular *ayah*." He adds, "...there are many statements in the Qur`ān which are liable to more than one interpretation but are, nevertheless, not allegorical - just as there

are many expressions and passages which, despite their allegorical formulation, reveal to the searching intellect only one possible meaning. For this reason, the *ayat mutashabihat* may be defined as those passages of the Qur`ān which are expressed in a figurative manner, with a meaning that is metaphorically implied but not directly, in so many words, stated."

It is said that as against the above the *mutashabihat* are those that are, so far as belief in them is concerned, which are to be accepted in verbatim, without any alteration, addition, interpretation (or, as in the case of Allah's Hands, Eyes or *Istawa'*), without the imagination of a physical embodiment or striking a simile. Rather, one is to believe in them, (as also in all those of the unseen which one is required to believe), without further questioning, elaboration or clarification (unless given in the Qur`ān itself: Au.). That is the opinion of the *salaf* and the *Ash`ariyyah*. (Alusi adds: the *sufiya* are also quite close to this definition and understanding). According to another report from Ibn `Abbas, *mutashabihat* are the abrogated verses, those that were preceded by others, oaths and those that are for belief not involv-

ing any action (Quotation from Ibn Kathir ends here).

Another opinion is that *muhkam* can be defined as that statement whose meaning can be obtained by reasoning - either in concrete terms or abstract. And *mutashabih*, as that whose true knowledge can in no way be gained, such as the knowledge of the Hour, as to when it will take place, etc. (Razi).

It is also reported of Ibn `Abbas that he said that the *muhkamat* are in the following verses (6: 151, 152):

قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَنَا فِي حَرَمٍ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا
وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ إِمْلَاقٍ تَحْنُ
تَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا
وَمَا بَطَّنَ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ
ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ. وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ
إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا بِالْكَيْلِ
وَالْمِيزَانِ بِالْقِسْطِ لَا تَكْلَفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا وَإِذَا
قُلْتُمْ فَأَعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ وَبِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا ذَلِكُمْ
وَصَّاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ [الأنعام : ١٥١-١٥٢]

"Say: `Come, I shall rehearse what Allah has proscribed for you: as-sign not anything as equal with Him; be good to your parents; kill not your children on a plea of want; - We provide sustenance for you and for them; - come not near to shameful deeds, whether open or secret; take not life, which Allah has made sacred, except by way of justice and law: thus does He

command you that you may learn wisdom. And come not near the orphan's property, except in the approved way, until he attains the age of full strength; give measure and weight in (full) justice; - no burden do We place on any soul, but that which it can bear; - whenever you speak, speak the truth, even if a near relative is involved; and fulfill the Covenant of Allah: thus does He command you that you may remember.'"

And in the verses (17: 23 26):

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا
يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا
أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا (٢٣) وَاحْفَظْ
لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذَّلِيلِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا
رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا (٢٤) رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي ثُفُوسِكُمْ إِنْ
تَكُونُوا صَالِحِينَ فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ لِلْأَوَّابِينَ غَفُورًا (٢٥) وَأَتِ
ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تَبْذُرْ
تَبْذِيرًا [الإسراء/٢٣-٢٦]

i.e. "Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor. And out of kindness lower to them the wing of humbleness, and say, `My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy even as they cherished me in my childhood.' Your Lord knows best what is in your hearts. Verily, He is Most Forgiving to

those who turn to Him often. And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want, and to the wayfarer: but squander not (your wealth) squanderingly” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

12. Such as the Christians, who say that the Qur’ān has also spoken of Christ as “His Spirit” and “His Word” that He placed in Mary,” and that he is “A Spirit from Him,” ignoring its other statements such as, “He is not but a slave whom We favored,” and His words, “Verily, with Allah `Isa is but like Adam whom He created out of dust and then said `Be,’ and he was” (Ibn Kathir).

13. In the words of Muhammad Asad (with some modification): “According to most of the early commentators, this refers to the interpretation of allegorical passages which deal with metaphysical subjects - for instance, God’s attributes, the ultimate meaning of time and eternity, the resurrection of the dead, the day of Judgment, paradise and hell, the nature of the beings ... described as angels, and so forth - all of which fall within the category of *al-ghayb*, i.e., that sector of reality which is beyond the reach of human perception and imagination and cannot, therefore, be conveyed to man in other than allegorical terms.”

14. That is, they seek an interpretation of their liking. According to a *hadīth* in Ahmad, and confirmed by similar reports in Bukhari, (and Muslim: Qurtubi), Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah (and Ibn Jarir: Au.), the Prophet (*saws*) recited this verse: ‘*He it is who sent down upon you the Book (O Muhammad)....*’ until, ‘*And grasp not (the true meaning) but men of understanding.*’ and added:

فَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ، فَأُولَٰئِكَ
الَّذِينَ سَمَّى اللَّهُ ، فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ

“If you find a people arguing over the ambiguous, you should know that it is of them that Allah spoke; so avoid them” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

A report which is confirmed to be the words of the Companions, (if not a *hadīth*) says that the first to whom this description was applicable, (i.e. “*those in whose hearts is deviation*”: Au.) were the Khawarij, who were the first sect (to deviate from the main stream: Au.). The reason of their deviation was nothing but worldly benefits. It so happened that when the Prophet (*saws*) divided the spoils of the Hunayn battle, a man called Dhu Khuwaysarah said: ‘Be just, for you have not done justice.’ The Prophet replied: ‘If I do not administer justice, then you are lost.

Did Allah trust me over the peoples of the world but you do not?’

After the man had left, `Umar ibn al Khattab (according to another report Khalid ibn al Walid), asked leave to behead him. The Prophet said:

إِنَّ مِنْ ضِئْضِئِ هَذَا - أَوْ فِي عَقِبِ هَذَا - قَوْمٌ يَقْرَءُونَ الْقُرْآنَ ، لَا يُجَاوِرُونَ حَنَاجِرَهُمْ ، يَمْزُقُونَ مِنَ الدِّينِ مُرْوَقَ السَّهْمِ مِنَ الرَّمِيَّةِ ، يَقْتُلُونَ أَهْلَ الْإِسْلَامِ ، وَيَدْعُونَ أَهْلَ الْأَوْتَانِ ، لَعْنُ أَنَا أَذَرَكْتُهُمْ لِأَقْتُلَهُمْ قَتْلَ عَادٍ (صحيح البخارى)

‘A people will rise from his progeny who will read the Qur`ān that will not go beyond their throats. They would have passed through it as clean of this religion as an arrow passes through a bow. They will fight the Islamic people and spare the pagans. If I am to encounter them, I would surely kill them the killing of `Aad.’

They first appeared during the reign of `Ali ibn Abi Talib who fought against them at Nahrawan. Then various deviant groups appeared among their progeny such as the Qadriyyah, the Mu`tazilah, the Jahmiyyah and others. Thus, that prediction of the Prophet came true according to which:

إِنَّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ تَفَرَّقَتْ عَلَى ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ مِلَّةً وَتَفَرَّقَ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ مِلَّةً كُلُّهُمْ فِي النَّارِ إِلَّا مِلَّةً وَاحِدَةً قَالُوا وَمَنْ هِيَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ مَا أَنَا

عَلَيْهِ وَأَصْحَابِي - قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ مُفَسَّرٌ حَسَنٌ غَرِيبٌ لَا تَعْرِفُهُ مِثْلَ هَذَا إِلَّا مِنْ هَذَا الْوَجْهِ (سنن الترمذی)

‘Surely the Israelites divided themselves into 72 sects, while my *Ummah* will divide itself into 73 sects of which every one of them will be in Fire except one.’ They asked him: ‘Which one would that be, Messenger of Allah?’ He replied: ‘That upon which I and my Companions are’ (Ibn Kathir).

The *hadith* as stated above is weak. Ibn Kathir himself does not give it clearance in unambiguous terms. In fact, reports that use the words “every one of them in the Fire” have been contended. Therefore, it should be taken with a pinch of salt. Nonetheless, the following is a version declared trustworthy by Tirmidhi and others:

تَفَرَّقَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَى إِحْدَى وَسَبْعِينَ أَوْ اثْنَتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً وَالنَّصَارَى مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ وَتَفَرَّقَتِ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً . «. وَفِي الْبَابِ عَنْ سَعْدٍ وَعَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو وَعَوْفٍ بْنِ مَالِكٍ. قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى حَدِيثُ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ. (سنن الترمذی)

“The Jews divided themselves into 71 or 72 sects, s also the Christians. My *Ummah* will divide itself into 73 sects” (Au.).

15. Who are the *al rasikhuna fi'l `ilm* (well grounded in knowledge)? The answer has been given by the Prophet who, when asked replied,

”من برت يمينه، وصدق لسانه، واستقام قلبه، ومن أعف بطنه وفرجه، فذلك من الراسخين في العلم“

“He whose hands work righteousness, whose tongue speaks the truth, whose heart is upright, who guards his stomach and sexual organ - it is such who are the well grounded in knowledge” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

It may be noted that the Prophet used organs of the body alone for illustration (Au.).

The terms under question have been used at another place in the Qur`ān:

فَبِظُلْمٍ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ طَيِّبَاتٍ أُحِلَّت لَّهُمْ وَبِصَدِّهِمْ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا (١٦٠) وَأَخَذَهُمُ الرِّبَا وَقَدْ نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَأَكْلِهِمْ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا (١٦١) لَكِنِ الرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَالْمُقِيمِينَ الصَّلَاةَ وَالْمُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أُولَٰئِكَ سَنُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا [النساء/ ١٦٠-١٦٢]

“Therefore, because of the transgressions of those who Judaized themselves, We made some of those good things unlawful to them that were (originally) declared lawful, and because of their hindering many from the path of Allah;

and, because of their acceptance of usury, although they were prohibited, and consuming the wealth of the people without right. We have prepared for the unbelievers among them a painful chastisement. But those of them who are well-grounded in knowledge, and the believers believe in what has been revealed to you (O Muhammad) and what was revealed before you, attend to the Prayers, pay the zakah, and those who believe in Allah and the Last Day - on such (of them) We shall soon bestow a mighty reward” (Au.).

16. An alternative interpretation is that, “No one knows the true interpretation save Allah and those well grounded in knowledge, who say that ‘We believe in it, for all of it is from our Lord.’” This is the interpretation of Mujahid, although it has been rejected by the majority. (But it is also reported of Ibn `Abbas, Ja`far Ibn Zubayr, Qasim b. Muhammad and others: Qurtubi, Shawkani). Some scholars have said that the word *ta`wil* of the original has two meanings. One, its true meaning; two, interpretation of the words. The well grounded in knowledge know the true meaning i.e., the plain meaning that the word affords, (as said Ibn `Abbas about himself: “I am one of those who know the

meaning: Ibn Jarir), but if what is meant by the word *ta'wil* is the interpretation of that word meaning, then it is only Allah who has its true knowledge (Ibn Kathir).

Rashid Rida deals with the subject of *muhkam* and *mutashabih* in a thorough fashion, quoting several authorities who have spoken on the subject including the interpretation of Ghazali. Here we (Rashid Rida) summarize a point that Ibn Taymiyyah has discussed at great length. It is with regard to what exactly is meant by the statement, "No one knows its (true) interpretation save Allah." The substance of what he has to say is as follows:

If someone believes that Allah revealed certain portions of the Qur'ān that no one understood, neither the Prophet, nor anyone after him, then surely he needs to correct himself. The Companions understood its every part as can be demonstrated in a variety of ways. The Prophet (*saws*) for instance prayed for Ibn `Abbas in words: "O Lord! Give him knowledge of the religion and teach him the *ta'wil* (i.e. the true meaning: Au.)." This is in Bukhari. Accordingly, Ibn `Abbas expounded the whole of the Qur'ān as reported by Mujahid who said: "I took lessons

of the whole of the Qur'ān from Ibn `Abbas who explained to me its every verse." Similarly, Ibn Mas`ud is reported to have said: "There is not a verse in the Qur'ān about which I do not know in what connection it was revealed."

"Therefore, distinction has to be drawn between the 'meaning' and 'interpretation.' The *salaf*, as also many of the later scholars, knew the meaning of much or all of what is thought to be the *mutashabih*; although in some cases they could not have known the true interpretation. For instance, when Allah spoke of the Hour, they knew what was being said. But as to when and exactly how it would take place, they did not have its sure and complete knowledge; so also that statement of Ibn Hanbal in which he said in reference to *Al Rahman `ala al `arshi istawa*: 'We know *istawa* but its "how" is unknown.' (That is, we know what is the word-meaning, but we do not know its true interpretation: Au.). Or, to take another example, the *salaf* knew what was being meant when the Qur'ān said (2: 210): "*Are they but waiting that Allah should come to them in canopies of clouds with the angels accompanying Him and the affair be settled?*" But they did not claim to know the true interpretation of these

words. The Qur'ān has, as such, denied the true interpretation and not the meaning when it said: "*Whereas no one knows its (true) interpretation save Allah.*" This is why we say that distinction has to be made between the "meaning" and "true interpretation." (Quotation from Rashid Rida ends here).

Bukhari reports (in his *Kitab al Tafsir*) through Sa'id ibn Jubayr that a man came to Ibn 'Abbas and said: "I read certain things in the Qur'ān that confound me."

"What are they?" asked Ibn 'Abbas. The man said, "It is said in the Qur'ān (23: 101),

فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا أَنْسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ [المؤمنون/١٠١]

'When the Trumpet is blown, that day blood relationship between them shall cease to exist and they will not enquire (about each other).'

But it is said at another place (37: 27),

وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ [الصافات/٢٧]

'And some of them will come forward enquiring (about others).'

Then, it is said in one place (4: 42),

وَلَا يَكْتُمُونَ اللَّهَ حَدِيثًا [النساء/٤٢]

'They will not be able to conceal a thing,' while it is also said at another place, (6: 23),

وَاللَّهُ رَبَّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ [الأنعام/٢٣]

'By Allah, we were not of the polytheists),' that is, they will be able to conceal the fact of having been polytheists.

Or, it is said (79: 27 30),

أَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمِ السَّمَاءُ بَنَاهَا (٢٧) رَفَعَ سَمَكَهَا فَسَوَّاهَا (٢٨) وَأَعْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ ضُحَاهَا (٢٩) وَالْأَرْضُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ دَحَاهَا (٣٠)
[النازعات/٢٧-٣٠]

'What! Are you the more difficult to create or the heavens (above you that Allah has) built? He lifted up its vault and gave it order and perfection. He darkened its night and gave light to its day, and after that He extended the earth (to great expanses),' in this verse Allah mentioned the creation of the heavens before the creation of the earth, whereas in another verse (41: 9-10) it is stated that the earth was created after the heavens:

قُلْ أَنْتُمْ لَتَكْفُرُونَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَتَعَلَّلُونَ لَهُ أَنْتَادَا ذَلِكَ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٩) وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سَوَاءً لِّلسَّائِلِينَ (١٠) ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ (١١) [فصلت/٩-١١]

'Tell them, do you deny Him who created the earth in two days,

and set up His equals? (While) He (alone) is the Lord of the universe. And He placed pegs over it, bestowed blessings upon it, and placed therein its nourishment in proper measure in four days, enough for the seekers. Then He turned to the heaven and it was smoke, he said to it and to the earth: "Come, willingly or unwillingly." They said, "We come willingly."'

Again, the Qur'ān says about Allah, literally, "He was (*kana*) Forgiving, Kind," and, "He was Mighty, Wise," and, "He was Hearing, Seeing," as if, He was (once upon a time) but is not any more."

In reply Ibn 'Abbas told him: "Regarding the verse, '*And some of them will come forward enquiring (about others),*' that will be before the *Sur* (the Trumpet) would have been blown. After the second blow everyone will swoon save he whom Allah saved, it is of this occasion that the verse is speaking, viz., 'That day when blood relationship between them shall cease to exist and they will not enquire (about each other).'

"Regarding the two verses, one of which speaks of the polytheists concealing the truth and the other one which says they shall not be able to conceal anything, it will so happen

that Allah will forgive the sins of those who believed in Him sincerely. Seeing this, the polytheists will also lay claim that they too associated none with Allah. Allah will in response seal their mouths and let their organs speak for them. The truth will then come out and it is then that they will know that they cannot conceal a thing from Allah.

"Regarding the creation, you should know that Allah created the earth in two days, then He turned to the heavens (which were already there: Au.) and divided them into seven heavens. It is then that He brought forth the means of nourishment for the living on earth, creating the mountains, trees, and pasture in it in next four days.

"As for Allah using the word *kana* for Himself, it is to express that He always was and will always remain (Kind, Merciful, Mighty, Forgiving, etc., i.e., *kana* is to express continuity. It belongs to a family of verbs called "*al-Af'aal al-Istimrariyya*": Au.). Allah did not state a thing in the Qur'ān but achieved the meaning He intended. Woe unto you man! Do not be confused over the Qur'ān, for the whole of it is from Allah" (Qurtubi).

The editor of Qurtubi says in the

footnote that according to Qastalani the enquirer was Nafi' b. al Azraq who later became the leader of one of the sub sects of the Khawarij.

As to why at all the allegorical is there in the Qur'ān, and why not the whole of it *muhkamat*, one answer is, they are a challenge to the student to think and reconcile the statements. His success increases his faith and confidence (*Kashshaf*).

Yet another reason is that the exercises to seek the true meaning of the allegorical has forced the readers of the Qur'ān to think, which, in turn, has led to the birth of many disciplines of knowledge. Again, the Qur'ān is for the commoner as well as the specialist. Now, what is for the specialist had to be clothed in such words as would lead the commoner to believe that a certain meaning had been intended which was there alright and yet there would be room for the specialist to unfathom a deeper meaning, so that a single statement can be *mutashabih* for the commoner, but

muhkam for the specialist (Razi).

Obviously, the allegorical substance also lures those in whose heart is sickness, to lead them to where they love to be led, i.e., to misguidance. In other words, they are a means of test, as pointed out by others (Au.).

17. Ibn Hanbal has reported through `Amr b. Shu'ayb's grandfather that the Prophet found some people arguing (over the Qur'ān). He told them:

إِنَّمَا هَلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ هَذَا صَرَبُوا كِتَابَ اللَّهِ بَعْضَهُ
بِبَعْضٍ وَإِنَّمَا تَزَلَّ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ يُصَدِّقُ بَعْضُهُ بَعْضًا فَلَا
تُكَذِّبُوا بَعْضَهُ بِبَعْضٍ فَمَا عَلِمْتُمْ مِنْهُ فَقُولُوا وَمَا
جَهِلْتُمْ فَكَلُّوهُ إِلَى عَالِمِهِ

“This is how others before you destroyed themselves in this manner. They used one part of Allah's Book against another, while Allah's Book has been sent down in such a way that some parts confirm others. Do not, therefore, try to refute one part with another. What you know for sure, you can speak about. But

[8] (Who say) 'Our Lord! Do not deviate our hearts after You have guided us.¹⁸ Bestow upon us mercy from Yourself. Indeed, You are the Bestower.

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا
مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ﴿٨﴾

[9] Our Lord! Surely, You are going to gather the people in a Day wherein there is no doubt. Surely, Allah does not fail in His trust.'

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ جَامِعُ النَّاسِ لِيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿٩﴾

what you do not, leave it for the learned ones.” (Ibn Kathir)

18. Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatim have recorded Umm Salamah (ra) as saying that the Prophet (*saws*) used to very often supplicate in words:

يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ، ثَبِّثْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ.

“O Transformer of the hearts. Grant my heart firmness in Your religion.”

Another narrator Asma' bint Yazid reported Umm Salamah as saying that she used to hear these words from him so often that she asked him once: “Do the hearts change?” He said: “Yes. Allah hasn't created a man through Adam but his heart is in two of His fingers. If He wishes, He guides them. But if He wishes, He deviates them.” According to another version, upon hearing this she asked him for the Prayer words that

she could supplicate with. He told her: Say,

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ ائْفِمْ لِي ذَنْبِي وَأَذْهَبْ غَيْظَ
قَلْبِي وَأَجِرْنِي مِنْ مُضِلَّاتِ الْفِتَنِ مَا أَحْيَيْنَا

‘O Allah, Lord of Muhammad the Messenger, forgive me my sins, remove anger from my heart and save me from trials that deviate – so long as we are alive.’ (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir)

The *hadith* has also been recorded, with variations, by several doctors including Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Da'ud and Nasa'i. (Ibn Jarir has several versions of this tradition: Au.) Further, Abu `Abdullah Sanabe'i says once he Prayed maghrib behind Abu Bakr. When Abu Bakr went into the third cycle (*rak'ah*), he bent forward to hear what he was reciting. Abu Bakr first recited sura al Fatiha and then this verse: ‘Our Lord! Do not deviate our hearts after You have guided us. And bestow upon us mer-

[10] Verily, neither the wealth of those who have disbelieved nor their progeny¹⁹ will aught avail them with Allah. They shall be fuel for the Fire.²⁰

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا
أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمْ وَقُودُ
النَّارِ ﴿١٠﴾

cy from Yourself. Indeed, You are the Bestower' (Ibn Kathir).

Abu Hurayrah (ra) used to pray in words: "O my Lord! May I not commit adultery. O my Lord! May I not steal. O my Lord! May I not revert to unbelief." Somebody asked him if he feared these things of himself. He said, "I have believed in the Turner of hearts." Abu Darda' reports: "Whenever `Abdullah ibn Rawaha met me he would say: 'Come `Uwaymar, let us renew our faith.' We would sit down and remember Allah for as long as He would. Then, as we would part company, Ibn Rawaha would say: "Uwaymar, these are the assemblies of faith. Faith is like you and your jacket. Sometimes you might have removed it but would be under the impression that you have it on. And you might have put it on while thinking that you had removed it"" (Alusi).

19. An incident involving an Arab and his several sons participating in the Afghan *jihad* of the 1980's, served as an eye opener to others. A mild tremor shook the area. Every-

one ran away into the open including the sons who also scrambled for safety leaving their old father behind them. "So you forgot me, eh?" the father taunted them as he advanced to them. They were of course ashamed, but the question that everyone asked himself was, if such was the behavior of those in danger, who had left their homes seeking martyrdom, what about the ordinary people! (Au.).

20. A *hadith* of Ibn Abi Hatim reports Umm al Fadl, mother of Ibn `Abbas as saying: "Once when we were in Makkah the Prophet rose up one night and called out, 'Have I preached O Lord? Have I preached?' three times. `Umar ibn al Khat-tab stood up and said, 'Yes, (you have)'. (According to another version he said, 'By Allah you have. You have been extremely eager, did your best, and sought goodness for them. Therefore, observe patience.'

"When it was morning the Prophet (*saws*) said,

” يظهر هذا الدين حتى يجاوز البحار وحتى نحاض
بحار بالخیل في سبيل الله تبارك وتعالى ثم يأتي أقوام

[11] Similar to the folks of Fir`awn and their predecessors - who cried lies to Our signs. Allah seized them for their sins. Allah is terrible in retribution.

كَذَّابٍ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ
شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١١﴾

[12] Say to the unbelievers that you shall be overcome and mustered into Jahannam²¹ - an evil resting place.²²

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَتْغَلِبُونَ وَتُخْشَرُونَ إِلَى
جَهَنَّمَ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿١٢﴾

يقرءون القرآن فإذا قرءوه قالوا من أقرأ منا من أعلم منا ” ثم التفت إلى أصحابه فقال: ” هل ترون في أولئك من خير ” قالوا: لا. قال: ” أولئك منكم وأولئك من هذه الأمة وأولئك هم وقود النار ”.

they would be fuel of the Fire”
(Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

21. Jahannam is one of the names of Hell.

‘Soon Islam will overcome unbelief and push it to its enclaves until horses cross across the seas in the path of Allah. Then a people will come who will recite the Qur’ān. When they have begun to recite, they will say, ‘Who could be better than us in recitation, in knowledge?’ Then he turned to his Companions and asked, ‘Do you any good in them?’ They said, ‘No.’ He added, ‘They would be of you; they would be of this *Ummah*, and

22. (Although the application is common, the immediate cause of revelation of this verse was that: Au.), when the Prophet returned from Badr, he ordered the Jews of the Qaynuqah tribe to assemble in their market square. When they had assembled he told them: “O Jews! Submit to Islam before a similar fate overtakes you as that which overtook the Quraysh.” They replied: “Muhammad. Let not your slaying of a few Qurayshis embolden you. They were novices who did not know the art of war. If you meet us in a battle, you will discover that you had not encountered a peo-

[13] 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 – unbelievers, (in the cause of the Devil). They saw them, as the eye sees, twice themselves.²³ (But) Allah strengthens with His succor whom He will. In that was a lesson indeed for those who have insight.

قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فِي فِتْنَتِي الثَّقَيْنِ فَبُذِّقُوا فَبِمَا تَرَوُنَّ يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بِنَصَرِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ ﴿١٣﴾

ple like us” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

23. Two meanings are possible: first, the Muslims were seeing the unbelievers twice themselves in number, and second, it was the unbelievers who were seeing the Muslims twice themselves in numbers. In either case a doubt arises about the implication of another verse in the Qur’ān which says (8: 44),

وَإِذْ يُرِيكُمُوهُمْ إِذِ التَّمِيشُمْ فِي أَعْيُنِكُمْ قَلِيلًا وَيُقَلِّلُكُمْ فِي أَعْيُنِهِمْ لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا [الأنفال : ٤٤]

‘When Allah rendered them to you as few, when you encountered them (at Badr) and rendered you to them as few in their eyes, in order that Allah may bring to an end the affair that had been

decided (in your favor).’ The answer is that although both the incidents are in reference to Badr, they happened at different moments of the battle. Initially, when they came face to face with each other, the Muslims saw the unbelievers as twice themselves in numbers, (although they were three times more). But when actual combat started, the Muslims saw them as fewer than themselves. “Until,” says Ibn Mas’ud, “I turned to the man next to me and asked: ‘Do you reckon they are seventy?’ He said: ‘Nope. I think they are a hundred.’ (Actually, they were about a thousand: Au.). But when we defeated them and captured prisoners we asked them, ‘How many were you?’ They said, ‘A thousand’” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Kashshaf,

[14] Beautified²⁴ for mankind is the joy of the carnal things (that come) from: women,²⁵ offspring, heaped-up hoards²⁶ of gold and silver, branded horses, cattle²⁷ and fields. These are short-lived joys of this world, whereas with Allah is the fairest resort.²⁸

زَيْنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ
وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ
وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ
ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ
الْمَأَبِ ﴿١٤﴾

Ibn Kathir).

24. The verse, following the previous verse, which spoke about the battle of Badr, seems to imply that most of the wars are fought for worldly gains, which have been beautified for the people (Alusi).

25. This making of the worldly things attractive in the sight of the people has been done to test them. A *hadith* in Muslim says:

حُفَّتِ الْجَنَّةُ بِالْمَكَارِهِ وَحُفَّتِ النَّارُ بِالشَّهَوَاتِ

“Paradise has been covered with unpleasant things, and the Fire with carnal things.” (Qurtubi)

The Prophet has also said:

مَا تَرَكْتُ بَعْدِي فِتْنَةً أَضَرَّ عَلَى الرِّجَالِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ

“I am not leaving behind me a temptation for men greater than women.”

He has also said in a report preserved by Ibn Majah:

لَا تَنْكِحُوا النِّسَاءَ لِحُسْنِهِنَّ فَعَسَى حُسْنُهُنَّ أَنْ
يُزِيدَهُنَّ وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا النِّسَاءَ لَأَمْوَالِهِنَّ فَعَسَى أَمْوَالُهُنَّ
أَنْ تُطْغِيَهُنَّ وَأَنْكِحُوهُنَّ عَلَى الدِّينِ فَلَأَمَّةٌ سَوْدَاءُ
حَرَقَاءُ دَاثَ دِينَ أَفْضَلُ

“Do not marry women for their beauty, for their beauty may fade away, nor marry them for their wealth, for their wealth may lead them to rebellion. Rather, marry them for their religion. A black religious slave girl with a sheared ear, or lobes pierced, is preferable (over an irreligious one)” – Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir.

However, if one is fond of women for the sake of children or to safeguard his chastity, then this does not go against the Qur’ān as said the Prophet in a *hadith* of Bukhari:

فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ كَانَ أَكْثَرُهَا نِسَاءً

“The best of my *Ummah* are those who have the largest number of women (as wives).”

He said about himself:

حُبِّبَ إِلَيَّ النِّسَاءُ وَالطِّيبُ وَجُعِلَ قَرَّةُ عَيْنِي فِي الصَّلَاةِ

“Women and perfumes have been made dear to me. And the cool of my eyes has been placed for me in the Prayers.”

And, (Qurtubi) `A'isha (*ra*) says:

لم يكن أحب إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بعد النساء من الخيل

“Nothing was dearer to the Prophet after women than horses.”

According to another version: “than horses except women.” The same principle applies to all the other things mentioned in this verse. If they are dear for the sake of Allah, in order to carry out a duty of Allah, or to meet the just needs, and not for the sake of possession, or to appease the ego, then there is no harm in them. In fact, they are commendable (Ibn Kathir).

26. *Qintar* is either African, Syrian or Roman in origin, meaning a large amount of heaped up gold or silver. Its plural is, according to Farra', *qanatinir* and *muqantarah* is a plural of plural (Qurtubi).

27. Thanwi has a useful point on the question of love of worldly things. He writes: “Since it is Allah Him-

self who has beautified the worldly things for mankind, it is a part of human nature, and hence a man is not required to remove it from his heart. (Rather, adds Mufti Shafi', as Rumi has said, let the heart swim in the sea of material things as does the boat in water, and not sink into it). Whereas (continues Thanwi) in the verse that follows, which declares the Hereafter of greater and permanent value, man is exhorted to cultivate in his heart the love of the Hereafter. That is, instead of working against the “natural love” man is recommended to work on generating in himself this “rational love,” and give it preference over the former. This leads us to another truth, viz., of the human qualities some are natural and Allah endowed, and hence man has no control over them. He cannot overcome them. Others are those that man is supposed to acquire, and they, of course, are within his reach and capability. Some *salikin* do not know the difference and toil at the wrong end.”

28. *Na`m* is camels. But its plural *an`am* is cattle. A *hadith* of Ibn Majah says the Prophet (*saws*) said:

الإِبِلُ عِزٌّ لِأَهْلِهَا. وَالْعَنَمُ بَرَكَةٌ. وَالْخَيْلُ مَعْقُودٌ فِي تَوَاصِيِ الْخَيْلِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

“Camels are a means of honor.

[15] Tell them, 'Shall I tell you of (things) better than these? For those of you who acquired piety, for them are, with their Lord, gardens beneath which rivers flow; wherein they shall abide forever; and spouses purified, and a rida from Allah.²⁹ And Allah Sees His slaves.

قُلْ أُو۟سِّتُكُم بِخَيْرٍ مِّنۭ ذٰلِكُمْ لِّلَّذِيۡنَ اتَّقَوْا عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّٰتٌۭ تَّجْرٰى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهَارُ خَالِدِيۡنَ فِيْهَا وَاَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَاللّٰهُۤ اَبْصِرُۢ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] Those who say: 'Our Lord! We have believed, therefore, forgive us our sins, and save us from the punishment of the Fire.'

الَّذِيۡنَ يَقُوۡلُوۡنَ رَبَّنَا اِنَّا اٰمَنَّا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوۡبَنَا وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٦﴾

In sheep and goat there is *barakah*. As for horses, blessings of all kinds will accompany them until the Last Day."

The above *hadith* is partly in Ibn Majah, which Haythami declared trustworthy (Au.).

Another *hadith* of *sahih isnad* reports the Prophet as having advised Umm Hani:

اتخذني غنما فان فيها بركة

"Keep some flock of sheep (and goats) for yourself, there is *barakah* in them" (Qurtubi).

Haythami declared the above *hadith* as trustworthy.

One many note the order: women, children, gold and silver, horses, cattle and farms. When a man attains maturity, he needs a woman. Children follow. The family needs wealth

and means of transport. Wealth comes from cattle and farms. Industry has been left out, (although a Prophet of yore, Da'ud (*asws*), made industrial wares, and rudimentary ones existed in Arabia), perhaps because the modern industrial activity is an incidental and short lived one. Human economy over the centuries has been primarily agricultural and pastoral, and will remain so, since humans will outlast minerals (Au.).

29. A *hadith* of Muslim says:

إذا دخل أهل الجنة يقول الله تعالى لهم (تريدون شيئا أزيدكم)؟ فيقولون: يا ربنا وأي شيء أفضل من هذا؟ فيقول "رِضَايَ فَلَا أَسْخَطُ عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْدَهُ أَبَدًا"

Allah will enquire the people of Paradise whether they needed anything else. They would ask if there was anything else better than what they already had. They would be told: "My (approval) *rida*. I will not be angry with you

[17] *The Patient (and persevering), truthful, devoted, (those who) expend and implore Allah's forgiveness in the early hours of the morning.*³⁰

الصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقِينَ
وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] *Allah testifies that there is no god save He,³¹ and (so do) the angels and the men of learning³² upholding justice,³³ there is no god save He, the Mighty,³⁴ the Wise.*³⁵

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ
وَأُولُوا الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٨﴾

again” (Qurtubi).

30. It has been recorded in the *Sahihayn* and other books that the Prophet said:

”يُنْزِلُ رَبَّنَا تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا
حِينَ يَبْقَى ثُلُثُ اللَّيْلِ الْآخِرِ، فَيَقُولُ: مَنْ يَدْعُونِي
فَأَسْتَجِيبَ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَسْأَلُنِي فَأُعْطِيَهُ وَمَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُنِي
فَأَغْفِرُ لَهُ“.

“Allah descends to the firmament of this world every night when a third of it is left and says: ‘Is there anyone to ask so that I might give? Is there anyone to supplicate so that I might answer? Is there anyone to seek forgiveness so that I might forgive?’” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

It is reported of Ibn `Umar that he would Pray through the night and then ask: “Nafe`! Has the dawn begun to appear?” When Nafe` said yes, he would begin to supplicate and seek forgiveness until the dawn.

`Awf Ibn Hatib reports from his father that once he overheard a man who was supplicating in the corner of the mosque, saying: “O My Lord! You ordered and I obeyed. Now this is dawn. Therefore, forgive me.” He looked at him. It was `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud. Finally, Anas bin Malik says: “We used to be told that when we are through with the night Prayers, we should seek Allah’s forgiveness seventy times at the approach of dawn (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

31. What is the meaning of Allah bearing witness? Ibn al-Qayyim offers an explanation in detail, of which we shall present only the main points, leaving out the arguments that accompany them.

There are four levels of testimony to a thing:

1. Knowledge of the thing and belief in it as the truth, as Allah said (86:

43),

وَلَا يَمْلِكُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ [الزخرف : ٨٦]

"And those whom they call upon except Allah have no power of intercession save those who testify to the truth and they have knowledge."

2. Its articulation, even if done to oneself and without the knowledge of others, as Allah said (43:19):

وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنَاثًا أَشَهِدُوا خَلْقَهُمْ سَتُكْتَبُ شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَيُسْأَلُونَ [الزخرف : ١٩]

"They have declared angels who are the slaves of the Merciful – as females. Have they witnessed their creation? Their testimony will be written down and they shall be questioned."

3. Education and tutoring of others who are ignorant of it as Allah said (9: 17):

مَا كَانَ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يَعْمُرُوا مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ شَاهِدِينَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِم بِالْكَفْرِ [التوبة : ١٧]

"It was not right of the polytheists to visit the Mosques of Allah, while they bear witness to their own disbelief."

4. Living by its implications and ordering others the same as Allah said (17: 23):

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ [الإسراء : ٢٣]

"Your Lord has ordered that you worship none but Him."

Ibn Taymiyyah however points out that the existence of the world itself, and the wonderful system by which it operates, bears testimony to Allah's oneness, hence "His testimony."

32. This demonstrates the status of the 'ulama' who have been mentioned along with Allah as witnesses to His oneness, as also it proves the value of knowledge. Indeed, our Prophet himself was asked to supplicate in words:

رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا [طه : ١١٤]

"My Lord! Grant me increase in knowledge." The Prophet is reported to have said about the scholars that they are the inheritors of the Prophets (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

A *hadith* of *Musnad Ahmad* reports Zubayr b. al `Awwam as saying that the Prophet (*saws*) recited this verse in `Arafah and said: "And I am of those who bear witness, O My Lord."

And Qattan reports that he happened to have been in Kufa for trade. He stayed there near the quarters of A`mash. One night he heard him recite in his *tahajjud* this verse: "Allah is witness that there is no god save He,

[19] Verily the (true) religion³⁶ with Allah is Islam.³⁷ Those who were given the Book did not differ but after they had received the knowledge - in envy of each other.³⁸ And whoever rejects the Signs of Allah (should know that) Allah is swift at the reckoning.

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَعْثًا بَيْنَهُمْ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٩﴾

and (so do) the angels and the men of learning, (the One Allah, who is at all times) upholding justice; there is no god save He, the Mighty, the Wise,” and then add: “I bear witness to what Allah has borne witness. And I reserve this testimony with Allah. It will be with Him until the Day of Resurrection. And Islam is the true religion.” Qattan says, “When I went to say goodbye to A`mash I asked him about what he meant when he said that night since I had not heard anything of the sort from him earlier, although I was in his neighborhood for almost a year.” He told me, ‘By Allah, I will not tell you about it for another year.’ So I left him and wrote the date on his house. After a year I reminded him of it. He said, ‘I have heard Ibn Mas`ud report the Prophet as having said that this testimony will be brought to Allah on the Day of Resurrection. Allah will say, “My slave took a promise from Me, and it is deserving of Me that I should keep the promise. Let My slave enter Paradise.”’ (Qurtubi, Ibn

Kathir, Shawkani).

Qurtubi adds however that according to some scholars this report originating from *Musnad Ahmad* is weak because of Qattan, but Ibn Ma`in, and Abu Hatim declared him a reliable transmitter.

33. All the attributes of Allah can be incorporated into two: *tawhid* and *`adl*. *Tawhid* signifies Perfection and Beauty. *`Adl* signifies the emanation of actions that are just, in the right proportion and meeting with the requirements of wisdom. Allah first spoke of *tawhid* and then *al qist* which is a synonym of *`adl* (Ibn Qayyim).

34. The Mighty, whose Power defies any estimation (Ibn Kathir).

35. The Wise in His acts, Laws, and Right proportionate (in all things He creates) - Ibn Kathir.

36. “*Din*” here is equivalent of submission and obedience. (Ibn Jarir)

37. That is, Allah will accept no reli-

gion from His slaves except Islam as He said at another place in this *surah* itself (3: 85):

وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ [آل عمران : ٨٥]

"Whoever sought a religion other than Islam will not have it accepted from him."

The first to whom the passage addressed were the Christians of Najran (Ibn Jarir).

Zamakhshari says, to the effect: Allah qualified Himself as the One who is Mighty, (whom no one can overcome), and as the Just who rules with wisdom. To put it briefly, He is the One and the Just. Then Allah said that "religion with Him is Islam," implying that Islam can be summarized as the religion of oneness of Allah, and justice (to His creation: *din al tawhid wa `adl*).

He also explains that there is no repetition in "There is no god save He." For, the first asserts His unity, and the second explains that God, who is One, possesses the Attributes of

Might and Wisdom.

38. Mawdudi writes: "In the sight of God there is only one system of life and way of conduct which is both in accord with reality and morally right. This consists of man's acknowledging God as his Lord and the sole object of worship and devotion; of surrendering himself unreservedly to God in obedience and service. In doing so he should follow in toto the guidance communicated by God through His Messengers..." And, a little later, "...the religion of every Messenger of God, in every age and clime, was none other than Islam (submission to God). Likewise, every Divine book, in whichever language it was revealed, and to which ever people it was addressed, contained the teachings of Islam. The various religions which have spread among mankind are distortions of this original religion, and are the results of tampering. Coveting privileges over and above those to which they were entitled, people altered the beliefs, principles and injunctions of the true religion in a manner condu-

[20] Therefore, if they dispute with you, tell them, 'I have surrendered myself to Allah as (have) those who follow me.' Ask those who have been given the Book and the unlettered ones: 'Have you surrendered?' If they surrender, they (will) attain to guidance. But if they turn away, then, upon you is only the deliv-
erance (of the message). And Allah sees the people.³⁹

فَإِنْ حَاجُّوكَ فَقُلْ أَسْلَمْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّهِ
وَمَنِ اتَّبَعْنِ وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
وَالْأُمِّيِّينَ أَسْلَمْتُمْ فَإِنْ أَسْلَمُوا فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا
وَوَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاءُ وَاللَّهُ بِصِيرٍ
بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٢٠﴾

cive to their own interests.”

39. Ibn Kathir writes: The verse underlines the fact that Prophet Muhammad was sent to the entire mankind, as it is stated in another verse (7: 158):

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا [الأعراف : ١٥٨]

“O people. Verily I am a Messenger of Allah unto all of you.” And (25: 1),

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا [الفرقان : ١]

“Glorified is He who sent down the Furqan on His slave (Muhammad) so that he may be a warner unto the worlds.”

And a *hadith* preserved by Muslim reports the Prophet as having said: “By Him in whose Hands is my life, no one from this *Ummah*, whether he be a Jew or a Christian, hears about me and then dies without be-

lieving in what I have brought, but he will be among the people of the Fire.” Imām Ahmad has another tradition recorded in his *Musnad* (as also by Bukhari) which supports our statement.

عَنْ أَنَسٍ أَنَّ غُلَامًا يَهُودِيًّا كَانَ يَضَعُ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَضْوءَهُ وَيُنَاوِلُهُ تَغْلِيهِ فَمَرَضَ فَأَتَاهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَدَخَلَ عَلَيْهِ وَأَبُوهُ قَاعِدٌ عِنْدَ رَأْسِهِ فَقَالَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَا فُلَانُ قُلْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فَتَطَرَّ إِلَى أَبِيهِ فَسَكَتَ أَبُوهُ فَأَعَادَ عَلَيْهِ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَتَطَرَّ إِلَى أَبِيهِ فَقَالَ أَبُوهُ أَطْعَمَ أَبَا الْقَاسِمِ فَقَالَ الْغُلَامُ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ فَخَرَجَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ يَقُولُ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَخْرَجَهُ بِي مِنَ النَّارِ

□ A Jewish lad used to assist the Prophet by fetching water for ablution, setting right his shoes and so forth. He fell sick and the Prophet visited him. His father was by the boy's side. The Prophet told him: “O so and so, say, “There is no god save Allah.”” The lad looked at his father

[21] Surely, those who deny the Signs of Allah, slay the prophets without right, and slay such of the people as enjoin justice,⁴⁰ give glad tidings to them of a painful chastisement.⁴¹

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّنَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الَّذِينَ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْقِسْطِ مِنَ النَّاسِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

﴿٢١﴾

(as if seeking his acquiescence). The father remained silent. The Prophet repeated the invitation. The boy again looked at his father. The father said: "Obey Abu 'l Qasim." The boy said: "I testify that there is no god save Allah, and that you are His Messenger." The Prophet came out saying: "Praise to Allah who saved the boy from the Fire through me" (Quotation from Ibn Kathir ends here).

40. Enjoining virtue and forbidding evil is an obligation that applies to all. But it is conditional to the ability of a person. Abu Sa`id al Khudri has reported the Prophet as having said:

مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ

"Let him who sees an unseemly thing happen change it with (the force of) his hands. If he cannot, let him do it with his tongue. If he cannot, then let him condemn it in his heart. And this is the

weakest (level) of faith" (Qurtubi).

Qurtubi writes: It is said that four things prevent tribulations from descending down upon a country. First, a just ruler; second, a rightly guided scholar; third, a people who enjoin virtue and forbid evil, and fourth, women who observe *hijab*.

41. The Jews have been indicted in this verse. In a *hadith* preserved by Ibn abi Hatim and reported by Ibn Jarir, the Prophet is reported by Abu `Ubaydah ibn al Jarrah as replying to him when he asked him about who will be the most severely punished person in the Hereafter:

"رجل قتل نبياً، أو من أمر بالمعروف ونهى عن المنكر" ثم قرأ رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: {إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ، وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الَّذِينَ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْقِسْطِ مِنَ النَّاسِ، فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ} الآية. ثم قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "يا أبا عبيدة قتلت بنو إسرائيل ثلاثة وأربعين نبياً من أول النهار في ساعة واحد، فقام مائة وسبعون رجلاً من بني إسرائيل فأمرؤا من قتلهم بالمعروف ونهؤهم عن المنكر فقتلؤهم جميعاً من آخر

النهار من ذلك اليوم، فهم الذين ذكر الله عز وجل”
(رواه ابن أبي حاتم وابن جرير).

“He who killed a Prophet, or (killed) someone who enjoined good and forbade wrong.” Then the Prophet recited this verse: “Surely those who deny Allah’s Signs, slay the prophets without right, and slay such of the people as enjoin justice, give glad tidings to them of a painful chastisement.” Then he added: “Abu `Ubaydah! Once, the Israelites slaughtered 43 prophets at the beginning of the day. In protest 112 of them stood up to enjoin good and forbid evil. By the evening, the Israelites had slaughtered them all” (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Razi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Perhaps by prophets the allusion is to pious men. The *Bible* confirms the Prophet’s statement about a multitude of prophets appearing at one time. It says in 1 Kings, ch.18, verses 3 4: (Now Obadi’ah revered the Lord greatly; and when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, Obadi’ah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and fed them with bread and water)” - Au.

According to Ma`qal bin Abi Miskin,

Qatadah, and Ibn Jurayj, the people who enjoined the Israelites justice were those who received inspiration from Allah (and not Revelation) which they conveyed to the people who in response murdered them (Ibn Jarir).

According to Ibn `Abbas, the verse refers to the murder of Yahya (John the Baptist) who was killed because he refused to endorse the marriage of the Israeli ruler of his time to his niece (Hakim has declared this report trustworthy: Shawkani).

Sayyid expounds: “Slaying of the Prophets and those who enjoined justice leads us to believe that the allusion here is to Jews. This has been their characteristic down the ages. However, this does not absolve the Christians completely. The pages of history are replete with the story of their cold blooded murder of tens of thousands of those who did not accept a particular version of Christianity forced upon them by the Roman imperialists. Among those who were thus done away with, were those who believed in the oneness of Allah and in the human nature of Jesus Christ. Obviously, this indictment also includes those of all times who will follow them in their footsteps and persecute the flag bearers

[22] *These are the ones whose deeds will bear no fruit in this world nor in the next, neither shall they have anyone to help.*

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَّاصِرِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] *Have you not considered those who were given a share of the Book who, when they are invited to the Book of Allah in order that it may judge between them, (yet), despite that, a party of them turns away, declining?*⁴²

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ
يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى كِتَابِ اللَّهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ
يَتَوَلَّى فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

of truth.

“Further, it will do us good to find out whom the Qur’ān is alluding to when it says *“those who deny the signs of Allah.”* It is not only those who openly declare their word of unbelief; also included are those who do not believe in the oneness of Allah in the sense that they do not confine their acts of worship to Him alone. Furthermore, this also implies the unity of orientation in the collective life of the people, so far as their laws, values, criterion of judgment, and objectives (of life) are concerned.”

42. Reports suggest that some Jews came to the Prophet and asked him about what was the religion that he followed. He said, “That of Ibrahim.” They said, “But he was a Jew.” He challenged them to bring the Scripture to substantiate their claim. They balked at that and Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qur-

tubi, Razi, Shawkani).

According to another report the case of a wealthy Jewish man and woman adulterers was brought to the Prophet in the hope that he would order lighter punishment. He judged that they be stoned to death. They refused on the grounds that no such commandment was prescribed by the *Tawrah*. The Prophet asked them to bring the *Tawrah* and read out the text to him. When they reached the portion ordering stoning of the adulterers, they placed their hand on the text and read out the rest. Abdullah ibn Salam (a former Jew and rabbi) exposed the deceit. Allah revealed this verse and the Prophet confirmed their stoning. (Zamakhshari, Razi)

Sayyid Qutb asks: “How then should those be judged who claim that they are Muslims while they deny the Shari’ah any role in their lives?! If such an attitude was not ac-

[24] This because they claim: 'The Fire shall not touch us but for a few days.' (Thus) deludes them in their religion what they used to forge.

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَنْ نَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ وَغَرَّهُمْ فِي دِينِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] How will it be then when We shall assemble them together on a Day in which there is no doubt. And every soul shall be paid in full for what it earned, and they shall not be wronged.

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جَمَعْنَاهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] Say, 'O Lord! Master of the Kingdom, Thou bestow the rule⁴³ upon whom Thou will, and taketh away the rule from whom Thou will. Thou endow with honor whom Thou will, and humiliate whom Thou will. In Thy Hand is the Good.⁴⁴ Verily, Thou hast power over all things.⁴⁵

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِكُ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٦﴾

ceptable from those who were given 'a part of the Book' earlier, how can it be acceptable from those who have been given 'whole of the Book' in the sense that it is the complete and comprehensive revelation, viz., the Qur'an?!"

43. The great majority take the obvious meaning of mulk as kingdom or rule. Nevertheless, according to Mujahid, here mulk stands for messengership, meaning, Allah takes away messengereship from the descendants of one person and places it in the descendants of another (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

44. The words, "In Thy Hand is the Good," hint at the fact that all that there is in the world is good in its essence. Evil has no real existence. It has its existence only from a certain angle or perspective. A thing or event may be evil for a people, but not so for everyone. In fact, it may even be good for another set of people. Hence, Allah did not mention evil along with Good (Mufti Shafi' from Thanwi).

45. It is said that when the Prophet (saws) had overrun Makkah he predicted that his Companions would similarly overrun the Roman and

Persian Empires. When the Jews and the hypocrites heard about it, they remarked: "How preposterous of Muhammad to claim Rome and Persia. They are more powerful and honored than to fall to Muhammad. Aren't Makkah and Madinah enough for him that he should now aspire to rule Rome and Persia?" Allah revealed this verse (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Alusi).

Another narration has it that, while digging the trench when Salman al Farsi and some of his compatriots struck a rock that they could not break, they complained to the Prophet. He struck it with a pick ax. The strike produced sparks and he said "*Allahu Akbar*." This happened thrice and ultimately the rock split. When he was asked to explain, he said that with the first spark he saw the palaces of Persia and was promised by Jibril that his followers would one day possess them. With the second spark he saw the palaces of Rome and was promised that they would also fall into the hands of his followers. The third spark lighted the palaces of the Himyar kings in Yemen and Jibril promised that those lands would also be subdued. When the Jews and hypocrites heard that they said: "Look at these people.

They are digging a trench to save their skins from the Makkans but they dream of such things." Against this background, Allah revealed this verse (Zamakhshari, Razi, Alusi).

According to a *hadīth* preserved by Ibn Abi Dunya and Tabarani, when Mu'adh ibn Jabal complained of debts the Prophet told him to recite this verse and then follow it up with:

اللَّهُمَّ مَا لَكَ الْمُلْكُ تُوْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ، وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ إِلَى قَوْلِهِ بَعِيرٍ حِسَابٍ إِلَى الْآخِرِ، رَحِمَنَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَرَحِيمَهُمَا، تُعْطَى مِنْهُمَا مَنْ تَشَاءُ، وَتُمْنَعُ مِنْهُمَا مَنْ تَشَاءُ، اللَّهُمَّ أَغْنِنِي عَنِ الْفَقْرِ، وَاقْضِ عَنِّي الدَّيْنَ، وَتَوَفَّنِي فِي عِبَادِكَ وَجَهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِكَ

"O Allah, the Owner of the kingdom, You bestow the kingdom upon whom You will, and take the kingdom away from whom You will .. until the words .. without measure, O Compassionate of this world and the Hereafter, and O Merciful of both the worlds! You bestow upon whom You will, and withhold from whom You will. O Allah! Relieve me of poverty and relieve me of my debts; and deal me death in the company of Your slaves, and fighting in Your path." Allah will clear his debts even if they were to be as large as Mount Uhud

[27] Thou maketh the night enter into the day and maketh the day enter into the night,⁴⁶ bring forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living,⁴⁷ and provide him Thou wilt without measure.'

تُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَتُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي
اللَّيْلِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَتُخْرِجُ
الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَتَرْزُقُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ
حِسَابٍ ﴿٢٧﴾

[28] Let not the believers take the unbelievers rather than the believers as their (trusted) friends.⁴⁸ He who does that, has no standing with Allah, unless you (intend to) guard yourselves against them.⁴⁹ And Allah cautions you against Himself. To Allah will be the return.

لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ
دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ
مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ تُقَاةً
وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ
﴿٢٨﴾

[29] Tell them, 'Whether you conceal what is in your hearts, or reveal it, Allah knows it (all the same). He knows what is in the heavens and what is in the earth. Allah has power over all things.'

قُلْ إِنْ تُخْفُوا مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ أَوْ تُبْدُوهُ
يَعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

(Qurtubi, Shawkani).

(The *hadith* text is from Tabarani: Au.).

46. That is, He lengthens the day in one season by taking away a part of the night and adding it to the day, and lengthens the night in another season by taking a part of the day to add it to the night (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

47. That is, He brings out the plant from its grain, the grain from its plant, the palm tree from its seed and the seed from the palm tree, the

believer out of an unbeliever, an unbeliever out of a believer, the chicken from the egg, and the egg from the chicken (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

According to Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah and Suddi, by the "dead" the allusion is to the semen that originates from the "living" man and then from this "dead" matter a man who is "living" springs out (Ibn Jarir).

48. Ibn `Abbas has said that `Ubadah ibn Samit (who was an important figure of the Ansar: Au.) had

500 Jews as his supporters. On the occasion of a certain campaign he sought the permission of the Prophet to take them along as volunteers. Allah revealed this verse (Alusi).

Allah (*swt*) also said elsewhere (5: 51):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ
بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ
[المائدة : ٥١]

"Believers! Do not take Jews and Christians as your friends. Some of them are friends of the others. Those of you who befriend them are of them."

Allah also said about the pagans, after He had spoken of friendship between believers, immigrants, the Helpers and the Arabs in general (8: 73),

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ إِلَّا تَتَعَلَّوه تَكُنْ
فِتْنَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ كَبِيرٌ [الأنفال : ٧٣]

"Those who have disbelieved, some of them are friends of the others. If you do not do that (i.e. shun them) there will be tumult in the earth and corruption in great proportions" (Ibn Kathir).

Alusi explains: Some scholars are of the opinion that the impermissibility of taking unbelievers as friends includes seeking their help in war. But the great majority believes that

their help may be taken in return for a small amount of war spoils. However, it has been clarified that it is conditional to seeking their help against the pagans and not against (Muslim: Au.) rebels. As for what is reported of the Prophet that at the time of Badr when a polytheist asked his permission to fight along with him, he refused, saying, "We do not seek the help of the polytheists," this is abrogated since later the Prophet himself accepted the help of the Jews of Qaynuqa' and that of Safwan b. Umayyah on the occasion of the Ta'if campaign. In conclusion it can be said that the help that some have declared unlawful is the one in which Muslims happen to be the weaker party (i.e. if the Muslims are weaker than the unbelievers whose help they are seeking, then it is disallowed), but if the Muslims remain the stronger party in the coalition, (and in control of the situation: Au.) then it is permissible. Further, in view of this some scholars have ruled that in the event of co operation, non Muslims should not be given sensitive positions.

Thanwi has some useful points. He says there are three kinds of relationships with the unbelievers: *muwalaat*, (friendship based on mutual trust and love) *mudaraat*, (courteous be-

havior), and *mu'asaat*, (charitable behavior). *Muwaalat* (the friendship of the kind in which secrets are shared), is impermissible in all circumstances in view of (5: 51): “*Believers! Do not take the Jews and Christians as your friends. Some of them are friends of the others. Those of you who befriend them, are of them,*” and (60: 1): “*Believers! Do not take My enemies and your enemies as friends.*” *Mudaarat* is permissible in three circumstances: 1) To avoid a harm or injury; 2) in view of an advantage to the unbeliever, such as presentation of Islam to him, and 3) in the circumstances of the unbeliever being a guest. However, *mudarar* is not permissible if the objective is to gain material advantages of them. In fact, if it causes religious harm, it is strictly disallowed. The verse in question is in fact speaking of this type of *mudarar* though in the name of *muwalat* since in appearance it is *muwalat*. As for *mu'asat*, it is permissible toward the non violent unbeliever (*al kafir al ghayr al harbi*) but impermissible toward the violent unbeliever.

Muhammad Shafi` adds: A fourth level is that of *mu`amalat* or dealings such as in trade and commerce. This is allowed without any restriction so far as it does not hurt Islam and Muslims, such as selling arms to

them which might be used against Muslims.

49. Accordingly, in situations where one is fearful of his life or a great injury, Islam allows dissimulation of faith. This is known as *taqiyyah*, and, according to Hasan al Basri, as reported by Imām Bukhari, the rule will stay in force until the Day of Judgment. This is based on another verse which says (16: 106):

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أَكْرَهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ
بِالْإِيمَانِ [النحل : ١٠٦]

“Whoever disbelieved after having believed, except for him who was compelled, while his heart was satisfied with the faith (of Islam)...” But *taqiyyah* is to be employed in words alone and not in deeds (Ibn Kathir). However, some of the *Salaf* have disagreed and said that there is no *taqiyyah* after the power that Islam has gained (Shawkani).

Nevertheless, if one takes the tough line and bears the hardships, including death, which will be sure martyrdom, then, such a course is also approved; although both the options are available. It is reported that Maysalimah al Kadhhab captured two Muslims. He asked one of them if he believed Muhammad was a Prophet. He replied: “Yes, yes, yes.” Then he

asked if he believed he (Musaylimah) was a prophet too. He replied: "Yes." Now, Musaylimah was of the opinion that he was the prophet of Yamamah and Muhammad a prophet of the Quraysh. So he let him go unharmed. Then he asked the other man whether he believed Muhammad was a Prophet. He said yes. But when he asked him whether he believed he (Musaylimah) was a prophet too, he said no. Musaylimah killed him. When the Prophet was reported he said: "As for him who said yes, well, he used the permission granted by Allah. As for him who said no, if he was sincere in his faith, then glad tidings to him" (Razi, Alusi, *Rawa'e*).

The verse also implies, adds Alusi, that if one is not allowed to practice his religion openly and freely, *hijrah* becomes an obligation.

At this point he has written several pages in refutation of the *taqiyyah* of the Shi`ah who have made it an article of faith. He quotes profusely from their books.

Thanwi adds: You must know that

the *taqiyyah* which is allowed by our scholars has nothing in common with the *taqiyyah* of the Shi`ah. They only share the term, for this *taqiyyah* is adopted (only temporarily and) in order to avoid a harm that is certain. Whereas the *taqiyyah* of the Shi`ah is a permanent feature of a person and is primarily employed to win material advantages. Secondly, it is allowed only where the circumstances are extremely compelling, but the Shi`ah approve of it even if the harm entailing is imaginary and minor.

However, the most important difference is that the *taqiyyah* of the Shi`ah is a necessary article of faith, without which a person is not a true believer. Out of hundreds, here is a quote from *Al-Kafi* the most respected and prestigious source of religious knowledge for the Shi`ah:

عن ابن أبي عمير عن هشام بن سالم عن أبي عمر
الأعجمي قال قال لي أبو عبد الله ع يا أبا عمر إن
تسعة أعشار الدين في التقية ولا دين لمن لا تقية
له (الكافي ٢١٧ ٢ باب التقية ص
(٢١٧ :

Abu `Umar al-A`jami reported from Abu `Abdullah who said,

[30] (Fear then) That day when every soul shall find whatever it did of good and whatever it did of evil brought forward. It will wish if there could be a great distance between it and its (evil deeds).⁵⁰ And Allah cautions you against Himself, (for if) Allah is Gentle (it is) with His (obedient) slaves.

يَوْمَ يَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُّحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَاللَّهُ رَؤُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٣٠﴾

[31] Tell them, 'If you (truly) love Allah, follow me,⁵¹ Allah will love you⁵² and forgive you your sins. And Allah is very Forgiving, very Kind.'⁵³

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾

“O Abu `Umar, nine-tenth of religion is in *taqiyyah*, and he has no religion who has no *taqiyyah*” (Au.).

ليس الشأن أن تحب، إنما الشأن أن تحب

“There is nothing remarkable in that you love, rather, in that you are loved” (Ibn Kathir).

50. The word in the original for “great distance” is *amad* which is employed for a distance in time or space that is not infinite but whose end is unknown (being at such a great distance), whereas *abad* is for the infinite (Alusi).

A *hadith* preserved by Muslim reports the Prophet as having said:

51. Following the Prophetic ways then, is a sign of one's love of Allah. Says the Prophet:

”إِنَّ اللَّهَ، إِذَا أَحَبَّ عَبْدًا، دَعَا جِبْرِيلَ فَقَالَ: إِنِّي أُحِبُّ فُلَانًا فَأَحِبَّهُ. قَالَ: فَيَحِبُّهُ جِبْرِيلُ. ثُمَّ يَنَادِي فِي السَّمَاءِ فَيَقُولُ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ فُلَانًا فَأَحِبُّوه. فَيَحِبُّهُ أَهْلُ السَّمَاءِ. قَالَ: ثُمَّ يَوْضَعُ لَهُ الْقَبُولُ فِي الْأَرْضِ. وَإِذَا أَبْغَضَ عَبْدًا دَعَا جِبْرِيلَ فَيَقُولُ: إِنِّي أَبْغَضُ فُلَانًا فَأَبْغَضْهُ. قَالَ: فَيَبْغِضُهُ جِبْرِيلُ. ثُمَّ يَنَادِي فِي أَهْلِ السَّمَاءِ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْغِضُ فُلَانًا فَأَبْغِضُوهُ. قَالَ: فَيَبْغِضُونَهُ. ثُمَّ تَوْضَعُ لَهُ الْبَغْضَاءُ فِي الْأَرْضِ.“

”مَنْ أَخَذَتْ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ.“

“Whoever brought something new in our religion, that which is not a part of it, stands rejected.” (Ibn Kathir)

“When Allah loves a person he beckons Jibril and tells him that He loves so and so and, therefore, Jibril should also love him. Accordingly, Jibril begins to love him and announces to those in

52. It is an Islamic proverb that,

[32] Tell them (also), 'Obey Allah and the Messenger.' But if they turn away, (then) Allah does not approve of the unbelievers.

قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

[33] Verily Allah chose Adam, Nuh, the House of Ibrahim and the House of `Imran⁵⁴ over all beings:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] Descendants of each other.⁵⁵ And Allah is Hearer, Knower.

ذُرِّيَّةً بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

the heavens that Allah loves so and so and hence they all ought to love him. They begin to love him and then acceptance for him is placed among the people of the earth. In contrast, when Allah hates a person he beckons Jibril and tells him that He hates so and so and that Jibril ought to also hate him. Jibril does that and announces to those in the heavens that Allah hates so and so and, therefore, they should also hate him. They begin to do so, and hatred is placed for him among the people of the earth" (Qurtubi).

53. The connection with the preceding verses is as follows. In verse 26 27 Allah spoke of His Sovereignty and Power in words that evoke His love. In verse 28 He instructed His slaves not to befriend the unbelievers (who hate Him: Au.). Therefore, there remained only Allah to be loved. Hence, in the following verses He

showed them the way by which they can realize their love for Him, viz., by following His Messenger (from Alusi with minor modification).

54. The Qur`ān has spoken of two `Imrans. One, the father of Musa and Harun, (Amram of the Bible: Asad) and the other of Maryam. "The identity of names has led to a curious confusion and to a 'comedy of errors' on the part of many a Christian 'scholar.' Either of the `Imrans, or both of them may be meant in this place" (Majid).

55. What exactly is meant by the words, "(They were) descendants of each other?" Qatada's opinion is that they shared love, friendship, faith, truth, purity of intentions and good deeds with each other (Ibn Jarir).

In the words of Asad: "(This is) an allusion not merely to the physical descent of those prophets but also to

[35] (He heard) When the wife of `Imran⁵⁶ prayed: 'My Lord! I have vowed to dedicate what is in my womb - freed (for Your services).⁵⁷ Therefore, accept it from me. Indeed You are the Hearer, the Knower.'

إِذْ قَالَتْ امْرَأَةُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] But when she gave birth to her she exclaimed: 'My Lord! I have given birth to a female,'⁵⁸ - and Allah knew what she had given birth to. And surely, the male is not like the female⁵⁹ - 'however, (she continued) I have named her Maryam⁶⁰ and seek Your protection for her and her progeny from Shaytan the outcast.'⁶¹

فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَىٰ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذَرَيْتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿٣٦﴾

the fact that all of them were spiritually linked with one another and believed in one and the same fundamental truth."

56. Reports say that her name was "Hannah." (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir) Majid adds: "Anne of English." Again, there were two Annes: the other being the sister of Musa and Harun. Majid also quotes the *Encycl. Britannica*: "Muslim historians have traced the genealogies of both. The Christians admit that in their own records and genealogies nothing of any historical value is recorded of the parentage of Mary."

57. When one vows, he must fulfill it. Failure entails expiation which is the same as that of an oath (3 days of fasting, freeing of a slave or feed-

ing of ten poor souls: Au.). However, if the vow involves a sin then one is not to fulfill it, instead, offer expiation. Ibn Is-haq in his *Sirah* and Abu Da'ud have related that once a woman escaped some people pursuing her on one of the Prophet's camels. She came to him and said: "I vowed to Allah that I shall slaughter her (i.e., the camel) if Allah lets me escape on her." The Prophet smiled and said: "If you slaughtered her, you would have repaid her badly seeing that Allah mounted you on her and delivered you by her." Then he added, "That vow is not valid which is in the disobedience of Allah, or one that concerns a property which is not yours" (Ibn Is-haq, p. 488).

58. This is because normally a female

[37] So He accepted her with a goodly acceptance and made her grow to her full blossom, and made Zakariyyah her guardian.⁶² Whenever Zakariyyah entered upon her in the Sanctuary⁶³ he found near her provision.⁶⁴ He enquired: 'Maryam! Where do you get this from?' She answered, 'It is from Allah. Verily Allah bestows upon whom He will without measure.'⁶⁵

فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا قَالَ يَا مَرْيَمُ أَنَّى لَكَ هَذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

was not accepted for religious services by the Jews (Qurtubi).

59. Thanwi says, in the words of Majid: "No male child (such as Hannah desired) could be like this female child in worth."

60. In their language the word Maryam meant "'*Abidah*" (a worshipper, devotee, etc.) Razi, Thanwi.

61. The prayer was granted. Accordingly, a *hadith* preserved by Bukhari and Muslim says,

”مَا مِنْ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ إِلَّا نَحَسَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ. فَيَسْتَهْلِكُ صَارِحًا مِنْ نَحْسَةِ الشَّيْطَانِ. إِلَّا ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَآمَنَهُ“

“There isn't a child that is not touched by Shaytan at its birth so that it starts crying, except for Maryam and her son.” There are other reports of similar meaning. (Ibn Jarir, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi)

62. Maryam's father had died in the meantime and therefore she was given to the care of Zakariyyah who was the chief priest apart from being her uncle (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Verse 44 of this *surah* tells us that this happened by the draw of lots in which all those desirous of sponsoring her were asked to throw their pens into the stream. That of Zakariyyah stayed afloat while those of others were swept away by the currents. Hence Allah's statement that He made Zackariyyah her guardian ('Ikrimah, Rabi', Suddi: Ibn Jarir).

63. The word in the original is "*mihrab*" which is applicable to the best part of the sitting area of a house. However, more generally, it is any place, corner, niche, room, or hall marked out for prayers, supplications and other acts of devotion (Ibn Jarir).

64. According to Mujahid, `Ikrimah, Sa'id b. Jubayr, Abu Sha'sha', Ibrahim Nakha'i, Dahhak, Qatadah, Rabi' b. Anas, `Atiyya al `Awfi and Suddi, he found with her fruits of summer in winter and those of winter in summer (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

65. It was a miracle. And we have examples of such miracles recorded in *hadith* books. For example,

عن جابر أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم اقام أياماً لم يطعم طعاماً، حتى شقّ عليه، فطاف في منازل أزواجه فلم يجد عند واحدة منهن شيئاً، فأتى فاطمة فقال: ”يا بنية هل عندك شيء آكله فأني جائع؟“ قالت: لا والله - بأبي أنت وأمي - فلما خرج من عندها بعث إليها جارة لها برغيفين وقطعة لحم، فأخذته منها فوضعت في جفنة لها وقالت: والله لأؤثرن بهذا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم على نفسي ومن عندي، وكانوا جمعاً محتاجين إلى شبة طعام، فبعثت حسناً - أو حسيناً - إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فرجع إليها، فقالت: بأبي أن وأمي قد أتى الله بشيء فخبأته لك، قال: ”هلمي يا بنية“، قالت: فأتيته بالجفنة فكشفت عنها فإذا هي مملوءة خبزاً ولحماً، فلما نظرت إليها بهت وعرفت أنها بركة من الله، فحمدت الله وصليت على نبيّه، وقدمته إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فلما رآه حمد الله، وقال: ”من أين لك هذا يا بنية“ قالت: يا أبت {هو من عند الله إن الله يرزق من يشاء بغير حساب} فحمد الله، وقال: ”الحمد لله الذي جعلك يا بنية شبيهة بسيدة نساء بني إسرائيل فأخا كانت إذا رزقها الله شيئاً وسلّت عنه قالت هو من عند الله، إن الله يرزق من يشاء بغير حساب، فبعث رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إلى علي ثم أكل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، وأكل علي وفاطمة

وحسن وحسين، وجميع أزواج النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، وأهل بيته حتى شبعوا جميعاً. قالت: وبقيت الجفنة كما هي. قالت: فأوسعت ببقيتها على جميع الجيران، وجعل الله فيها بركة وخيراً كثيراً (رواه الحافظ أبو يعلى عن جابر بن عبد الله)

Hafiz Abu Ya'la reports through Jabir that once the Prophet was extremely hungry. He went to his various wives but they had nothing to offer. He went to his daughter Fatimah who also had nothing to present. A little later, she received two pieces of bread along with a piece of mutton from a neighbor. She decided to offer it to the Prophet although she needed it most for her own household as everyone was hungry. She put it in a tray, covered it with a piece of cloth, and sent Hassan or Hussayn to fetch back the Prophet. When he arrived she explained that she received it just after he had left. When she removed the cloth she was astonished to find it filled to its full with bread and mutton. He asked her: "Where did you get this from, my daughter?" She replied: "It is from Allah. Verily Allah bestows upon whom He will without measure." He said: "Allah be praised for having made you like the princess of the Israelites

[38] Thereat Zakariyyah supplicated to His Lord: 'My Lord! Grant me by Your grace a progeny pure. Verily, You are (the) Hearer of the prayer.'⁶⁶

هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي
مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴿٣٨﴾

[39] Thereupon the angels called out to him - as he stood in the Sanctuary Praying - that Allah gives you the glad tiding of Yahya⁶⁷ confirming a Word from Allah,⁶⁸ and, (who will himself be), noble,⁶⁹ chaste,⁷⁰ a Prophet (and) of the righteous.

فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي
الْمِحْرَابِ أَنْ اللَّهُ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَامٍ مُصَدِّقًا
بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِّنَ
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

(Maryam), who, whenever asked where the food came from, replied, 'It is from Allah. Verily Allah bestows upon whom He will without measure.' Then he, `Ali, Fatimah, and everyone of the Prophet's household shared the food and it remained in the same quantity after they were finished. Fatimah divided the rest among her neighbors. (Ibn Kathir, Alusi, abridged slightly).

66. The verse proves that one should seek virtuous children (Thanwi). They are a source of strength in this world and will be of profit in the Hereafter as said our Prophet:

(إذا مات أحدكم انقطع عمله إلا من ثلاث) فذكر
(أو ولد صالح يدعو له).

"When one of you dies, his deeds discontinue save in three (cases)" ... One of those that he counted

was, "a righteous progeny that supplicates for him."

Accordingly the Prophet is reported to have said:

تزوجوا الولود الودود

"Marry women who give birth to plenty of children" (Qurtubi).

67. Yahya is 'John the Baptist' of the Bible.

68. According to Ibn `Abbas, Hasan, Qatadah, `Ikrimah, Mujahid, Abu Sha`sha', Suddi, Rabi', Dahhak and others, the allusion by the words: "a Word from Allah" is to Jesus Christ (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Jesus Christ has been referred to as "a Word" because he was created by the command of a single word: "kun" ("be") (Qurtubi, Alusi). "However," adds Shawkani, "the use of the word

[40] He exclaimed, 'My Lord! How shall I have a son seeing I am so advanced in age and my wife is barren!?' 'Even so (came the reply).⁷¹ Allah accomplishes what He will.'

قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِيَ
الْكِبَرُ وَامْرَأَتِي عَاقِرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ
مَا يَشَاءُ ﴿٤٠﴾

“*kalimah*” in the sense of a book, or a piece of writing is not uncommon in the Arabic language and hence it could also mean “the Book.”

Also see note 378 below.

69. The word in the original is sayyid which has been interpreted variously: as chief, leader of the people in good qualities, patient and gentle. Bukhari has a *hadith* in which the Prophet said about Hasan b. `Ali:

ابْنِي هَذَا سَيِّدٌ وَلَعَلَّ اللَّهَ أَنْ يُصْلِحَ بِهِ بَيْنَ فِتْنَتَيْنِ
عَظِيمَتَيْنِ.

“This son of mine is a Sayyid. Maybe Allah will make peace between two important Muslim groups through him.”

And that is how it proved to be. After the death of `Ali he was elected to the office of *Khilafah* through the consent of forty thousand people including even those who had not sworn allegiance to his father. He remained the *Khalifah* for seven months and then led his army composed of the Iraqis and Hijazis to face Mu`awiyah who marched for-

ward with the army of the Syrians. When the two forces met at a place called Maskin, Hasan realized that the issue would not be settled without a large number of deaths on both sides. Therefore, he abdicated on the condition that he would succeed Mu`awiyah after his death (Qurtubi).

(But Hasan died a little after abdication, some say, poisoned: Au.).

70. It is widely reported that according to Ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah, Mujahid, Suddi and others what is meant by “*hasur*” of the original is one who does not go into women despite the ability and the urge. Qurtubi adds that if that is true then perhaps that was allowed in the *Shari`ah* of that time. Our *Shari`ah* recommends marriage. Some reports suggest that he did not even have the ability for sex (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi). But Qadi Ayad says in his book “*Al Shifa*” that what has been reported in this regard is totally unacceptable. It has been rejected by all serious commentators. Yahya was without a blemish or weakness of that sort; rather, what

[41] He prayed, 'My Lord! Appoint to me a sign.'⁷² He said, 'Your sign is that you shall not (be able to) speak - save by tokens - to the people for three days.'⁷³ Therefore, remember your Lord much and proclaim His glory⁷⁴ in the evening and in the morning.'⁷⁵

قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِّي آيَةً قَالَ آيَتُكَ أَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ
النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمْرًا وَادْكُرْ رَبَّكَ كَثِيرًا
وَسَبِّحْ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ ﴿٤١﴾

is meant is that he was as sinless as an innocent child (Ibn Kathir).

Alusi also rejects the notion (Au.).

71. That is, he did not doubt the likelihood of such a thing happening, despite the fact that both he and his wife were of advanced ages, and, moreover, she was barren; rather, he wanted to know how, or by what process pregnancy and birth would take place. He was told, "Even so," that is, without he remarrying, and without Allah restoring him his youth. (Ibn Jarir, Razi, Alusi, Thanwi).

72. He needed a sign because, according to most commentators, it took about twenty years from the acceptance of the prayer to the appearance of the signs of pregnancy in his wife.

73. That is, he could not speak for three days and did so only in signs and tokens (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

The verse proves that signs and tokens are equivalent of words in our *Shari'ah*. For instance, when the Prophet asked a black slave woman about where Allah was, she pointed her finger toward the heavens. (According to another version, he asked her who he was and she replied by pointing at him and then toward the heavens, meaning that he was a Messenger of Allah: Au.) The Prophet told her master to release her saying, "She is a Muslim" (Qurtubi).

74. Accordingly, Ka'ab al Qurazi has said that if remembrance could be absolved in anyone's favor it would have been in favor of Zakariyyah for those three days (Qurtubi).

[42] And (recall) when the angels said,⁷⁶ 'Maryam, verily Allah has chosen you,⁷⁷ purified you and chosen you over the women of the world.⁷⁸

وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفَاكِ عَلَى نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

75. `Ashiyy of the original is the time between afternoon to sunset and *ib-kar* the time between dawn and early hours of the day (Qurtubi, Alusi, Shawkani).

76. This demonstrates the possibility of angels speaking to non prophets following the opinion of the great majority that Maryam was not a Prophetess. Muslim has a report of the angels greeting `Imran b. Hussein. As for the 'speech' reserved for the Prophets, they are messages for transmission (Thanwi).

Qurtubi writes however that according to the majority, Maryam was a Prophetess.

77. Allah chose her because of her high degree of devotion, indifference to the world, life of chastity, and purity of the soul from sins and of the mind from doubts (Ibn Kathir).

78. Sa'id ibn al Musayyib used to quote a *hadith* of Abu Hurayrah in explanation of this verse in which Prophet said (Muslim):

”نِسَاءُ قُرَيْشٍ خَيْرٌ نِسَاءِ رَكِبَتِ الْإِبِلَ. أَحْنَاهُ عَلَى

طِفْلِ. وَأَرْعَاهُ عَلَى رَوْحٍ فِي ذَاتِ يَدِهِ“.

“The best of women that have mounted camels are those of the Quraysh. They are the most kind to their children, the best of housekeepers in the absence of their husbands.”

Abu Hurayrah added that Maryam did not ever ride a camel (i.e., despite that she attained great merits: Au).

`Ali Ibn Abi Talib has reported another *hadith* recorded both by Bukhari and Muslim in which the Prophet has been reported as saying:

يَقُولُ خَيْرُ نِسَائِهَا مَرْيَمُ ابْنَةُ عِمْرَانَ وَخَيْرُ نِسَائِهَا خَدِيجَةُ

“The best of its (i.e. of the Paradise: Ibn Jarir) women is Maryam and best of its women is Khadijah.”

Anas has reported another version in which the Prophet said:

”حَسْبُكَ مِنْ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ: مَرْيَمُ ابْنَةُ عِمْرَانَ، وَخَدِيجَةُ بِنْتُ خُوَيْلِدٍ، وَفَاطِمَةُ بِنْتُ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَآسِيَةُ امْرَأَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ“.

[43] Worship your Lord O Maryam (in complete devotion),⁷⁹ prostrate yourself and bow with those who bow.⁸⁰

يَا مَرْيَمُ اقْنُتِي لِرَبِّكِ وَاسْجُدِي وَارْكَعِي مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

“Enough for you of the women of the world: Maryam the daughter of `Imran, Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, Asiyyah the wife of Fir`awn and Fatimah the daughter of Muhammad.”

(The above text is from Tirmidhi who declared it *Sahih*.

In another version preserved by Tirmidhi the Prophet said:

كَمَلَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ كَثِيرٌ وَلَمْ يَكْمُلْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَرْيَمُ
بِنْتُ عِمْرَانَ وَآسِيَةُ اِفْرَاءَةَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَفَضْلُ عَائِشَةَ عَلَى
النِّسَاءِ كَفَضْلِ التَّرِيدِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الطَّعَامِ

“Of the men there have been many who achieved perfection, but of the women none achieved it but Maryam the daughter of `Imran and Asiyyah the wife of Fir`awn and `A'isha's superiority over other women is similar to that of tharid over other dishes” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

(Made from bread, meat and broth, *tharid* was considered a delicious dish in those times. The *ahadith* do

not appear exactly as above in the *tafsir* works, but we preferred to take directly from *Hadith* works: Au.).

79. The original word here is *qunut* which is the state of humility in worship. Mujahid however interprets it as lengthy Prayers (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Rashid Rida adds: “The Israeli Prayers were much different from ours. But the demand of quality was the same, that is, concentration, fear and sincerity.”

80. (Apart from the meaning we have stated under note 113 of *surah al Baqarah*: Au.), ‘*bowing with those who bow*’ could also mean: “seek the company of those who are devoted to Allah” (Qurtubi).

Ibn al-Qayyim writes: “*Prostrate yourself*” and “*Bow down with those who bow down*” have different connotations. The first refers to the Prayers performed at home, which is the place recommended for women

[44] These are a part of the tidings of the past that We reveal unto you (O Muhammad),⁸¹ for you were not there with them when they were casting their quills (to decide) which of them shall have charge of Maryam,⁸² nor were you there with them when they were disputing.

ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يُلْقُونَ أَقْلَامَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ يَكْفُلُ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

[45] When the angels said, 'O Maryam, verily Allah sends you the glad tiding of a Word⁸³ from Him, whose name is Al-Masih,⁸⁴ `Isa, son of Maryam,⁸⁵ held in high honor⁸⁶ in this world as well as in the next and of those brought nigh.

إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنْهُ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

while the latter refers to Praying with the congregation in the mosque. Thus she was asked to observe two different kinds of Prayers: one at home and the second with the congregation."

81. Majid has the following observation to make: "What is meant is, this is among those events of which the accurate records are now obliterated altogether, and there is no means of knowing it in full and exact details except through Revelation."

82. It is said that since Maryam was the daughter of the deceased chief priest of the Temple, and appeared to be a promising child, a dispute arose among the priests over who will take charge of her. The affair had to be decided by lots. Every contender threw

his quill in the river Jordan. The one that floated against the others that were swept away by the current was Zakariyyah's. (Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah, Dahhak, Hasan: Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Thanwi adds a legal point. "According to the Hanafiyyah, drawing lots is permissible in those affairs alone in which the *Shari`ah* has not given a ruling, (or allotted shares). Where the rights have been promulgated by the *Shari`ah*, deciding the shares by lots is not permissible. It is permissible, for instance, to decide by lots what portion of a house will an inheritor get (and not in what proportion, which will be decided by the laws of inheritance: Au.)."

83. Although everything that is cre-

ated by Allah is by the command of a “word” (*kalimah*) alone, yet `Isa was specifically called a “Word” (*kalimah*) because, in his case, the normal process of creation was overruled and he was brought into being not by means of a father but at the behest of a word *kun* alone. (Ibn `Abbas, Shawkani, Manar). Ibn Jarir however prefers that the word *kalimah* should be understood to mean “*bushra*” i.e. glad tidings.

84. Since *Masih* has its origin in *mas h* which means to touch, rub, wipe (if the word is Arabic and not Hebrew, which in fact is more likely: Alusi) one probability is that he was called so because (as is reported of Ibn `Abbas: Qurtubi, Razi), he could heal the ailing with his very touch (Ibn Kathir). Ibn Jarir however quotes various authorities to the effect that he was called *Masih* because it was by a touch from Allah that he was purified and blessed. *Dajjal* has been called *Masih al Dajjal* because he will have no sensation in one eye (which is another meaning of *mas-h*) or because, while he would trounce the world touching upon all the lands except Makkah and *Madinah* into which he will be prevented from entering, as predicted in a *hadith* (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Shawkani). Another possibility is that its origin is *mashih*

which is equivalent of “King” in Hebrew (*Manar* and others).

Majid adds: “(*Maseeh*) is the Messiah of the Bible. Messiah, the surname of Jesus, is a title of honor, literally meaning ‘the anointed.’ Notice that the Qur`ān fully concedes the Messiahship of Jesus: it is only his Divinity, his Son-ship, his God-head that it is so unsparing for assailing.”

Muhammad Asad comments: “The designation *al masih* is the Arabized form of the Aramaic *messiha* which, in turn is derived from the Hebrew *mashiah*, “the anointed” a term frequently applied in the Bible to the Hebrew kings, whose accession to power used to be consecrated by a touch with holy oil taken from the Temple. This anointment appears to have been so important a rite among the Hebrews that the term “the anointed” became in the course of time more or less synonymous with “king”. Its application to Jesus may have been due to the widespread conviction among his contemporaries (references to which are found in several places in the Synoptic Gospels) that he was descended in direct and obviously legitimate line from the royal House of David. (It is to be noted that this could not have related to his mother’s side, because Mary belonged to the priestly

[46] He shall speak to the people from the cradle⁸⁷ as well as in maturity⁸⁸ and (shall be) of the righteous.' وَيُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

class descending from Aaron, and thus to the tribe of Levi, while David descended from the tribe of Judah.) Whatever may have been the historical circumstances, it is evident that the honorific “the Anointed” was applied to Jesus in his own lifetime. In the Greek version of the Gospels which is undoubtedly based on a now lost Aramaic original this designation is correctly translated as *Christos* (a noun derived from the Greek verb *chriein*, “to anoint”): and ... it is in the form “the Christ” that the designation *al masih* has achieved currency in all Western languages.”

85. Imām Razi asks as to why Allah added the words “*Ibn Maryam*” when He was addressing Maryam herself and answers that it was to emphasize that he would be born out of her alone without a father.

86. Says Majid: “(This is) chiefly in answer to the calumnies of the Jews who remembered him ... as ‘one who practiced magic and deceived and led astray Israel,’ with coarse allusions to His birth.’ (ERE. VII. p. 551)”

87. Abu Hurayrah has reported the

Prophet as having said:

لم يتكلم في المهد إلا ثلاثة: عيسى، وصبي كان في زمن جريج، وصبي آخر

“In all, three infants spoke from their cradle. (i) `Isa, (ii) the child of the times of Jurayj, and (iii) the infant (of the woman thrown into the pit by the *As-hab al Ukh-dud*” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

There are other reports, however, that speak of other infants speaking from the cradle (Shawkani), such as the child who, according to some stories, spoke for Yusuf from the cradle (Au.).

88. The word in the original is *kahl* which is the period of life between youth and old age (Ibn Jarir, Alusi).

Why did Allah say “*and in his maturity*” when we know that everyone speaks in his maturity? It is as if to say that he will speak on the same subjects with authority from his cradle as he will in his maturity (Alusi). An added reason could be to give the tiding that he was going to attain his full age (Razi, Alusi, Manar).

Another doubt has been raised. Why

[47] She exclaimed, 'How shall I have a child my Lord, seeing no mortal has touched me?' He said, 'Even so, Allah accomplishes what He will. When He decrees a thing (to be) He (merely) says to it "Be," and (Lo!) it is.'

قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٤٧﴾

[48] And he will teach him the Book, the Wisdom, the Tawrah and the Injil.

وَيُعَلِّمُهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ﴿٤٨﴾

[49] A messenger unto the Children of Israel,⁸⁹ (proclaiming) 'I have indeed come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I mold for you out of clay the like of a bird and breathe into it and it becomes a bird,⁹⁰ by the leave of Allah. And I heal the blind and the leper and bring to life the dead by the leave of Allah. I also disclose to you what you eat and what you store in your houses. Surely, in that is a sign for you if you are believers.

وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ أَنِّي أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُبَيِّنُكُمْ مِّمَّا تَتَكَلَّمُونَ وَمَا تَدْخِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

does the Christian literature not record this particular miracle? The answer is: first of all those who had gone to Maryam questioning her integrity were a few people and not a large crowd that would transmit it to others on a large scale. Secondly, the Jews were opposed to `Isa and hence kept the matter to themselves (Razi).

Further, the Gospels are not a complete and fully trustworthy account of Prophet's Jesus' life, and, therefore, one may not look into it for any

missing detail (Au.).

89. So his was not a universal message. Says Majid: "Witness his own words in the NT, plain and conclusive (to his disciple: Au.): (Addressing his disciples he said), 'Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Matthew 10: 5,6). 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (15: 24). And modern Christian scholars

have to acknowledge the reluctance of Jesus and his earliest disciples to treat his message as universal in ways as round about as their conscience would permit: 'The earliest group of disciples, it is true, did not appreciate the universality of the teaching of Jesus' (EBr. V. p. 632)' ... 'nor did He seek converts outside Israel' (p. 631)."

Majid has summed up the opinions of Muslim commentators, old and new, on this point: It is true that 'Isa was not a universal messenger; but, what about the Gentiles such as Romans, Palestinians, Aramaens and many other communities that lived in Jerusalem at that time? Did his prophetic mission require that he was to reject any non-Israelite ready to acknowledge Allah as his sole Lord and him as His Messenger? The Gospels answer in an emphatic yes. But, has the Qur'ān stated that? The answer is, no. It is merely stating the fact of he being sent a messenger to the Israelites to start his mission with. (After all, Musa was sent to the Israelites; but did that imply that none of the folks of Fir'awn believed in him? – Au.).

This point does not seem to have been entirely lost by the commentators. Shawkani for instance explains

that the verse could be saying: "A Messenger, sent to the children of Israel, will speak to them saying: 'I have indeed come to you with a sign from your Lord ...' There is a sea of difference between the Qur'ānic statement and the one in the Gospels which says: "I am not sent but unto the house of Israel."

Shabbir 'Usmani adds the following note at this point: "That is, after having been appointed a Messenger he will give this message to the Children of Israel (I have indeed come to you with a sign ...)." That is, the emphasis is on being made a Messenger and not on who he was specifically sent to (Au.).

90. Majid quotes Christian sources: 'Jesus having come to the sepulcher where everyone was weeping said: "Weep not, for Lazarus sleepeth, and I am come to awake him," ... Said Master, "Lord, he striketh, for he hath been dead four days," ... Then Jesus lifted up his hands to heaven, and said: "Lord God of Abraham, God of Ishmael and Isaac, God of our father, have mercy upon the affliction of these women, and give glory to thy holy name." And when everyone had answered "Amen," : Jesus said with a loud voice: "Lazarus! Come forth." Thereupon he that was

[50] (I have come) confirming what has been before me of the Tawrah⁹¹ so that I may make lawful for you some of those things that were made unlawful to you (earlier)⁹² and thus, I have come to you with a sign from your Lord. So fear Allah and follow me.

وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَلَأُحِلَّ
لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَجِئْتُكُمْ
بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا



dead arose.’ (GB. pp. 431, 437

Rashid Rida writes: “A summary of what the Sufiya have to say about the dead coming back to life is as follows. `Isa’s spiritual powers, when compared to those of other ordinary mortals, greatly overwhelmed his physical powers, because his spirit had been directly blown into his mother’s womb by the angel. Hence he could interact at a deeper level with other spirits than others could. Accordingly, when he took a handful of clay that was destined to become a bird by the normal process, and beckoned its spirit (that was already created and was awaiting order to join the body not yet created), to come and join the clay and become a living bird, it did. Similarly when he beckoned a spirit that had left a human body, and which had not yet decayed, it answered his call and that person stood up alive. However, the spiritual power of a man can never be strong enough to be able to bring back to life those who had died long

ago and whose physical being had decayed and become dust. Hence we see that he brought back to life only those who had died a short while ago.”

91. “The fact that Jesus preached the same religion as that expounded earlier by Moses and the other Prophets is also borne out by the statements of the existing Gospels. According to Matthew, in his Sermon on the Mount the Messiah categorically declared: ‘Think not that I have come to abolish them’ (Matthew 5: 17). And when a Jewish lawyer enquired: ‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’ Jesus replied: ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, This is the greatest and the first commandment. And a second like it, is that you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depends the law of the prophets’ (ibid, 22: 37 40). He also instructed his disciples: ‘The scribes

and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do, for they preach, but do not practice" (ibid, 23: 2 3) Mawdudi.

Sayyid Qutb comments: "This verse throws light on the nature of the *din* (commonly translated as "religion": Au.) whichever *din* it might be (whether that brought by Musa, `Isa or Muhammad, peace be upon them: Au.) that it has to be a comprehensive system of life, and that it should not be one-sided: in either moral, spiritual or devotional spheres. If it is, then such a system cannot be called a *din* proper. *Din* is nothing but the way of life that has been designed by Allah for mankind: the way of life that binds and harmonizes the lives of the people with the ways of Allah. Hence it is not possible that the faith and beliefs, for instance, be delinked from the system of worship, moral principles, or the organization of the legislature. That cannot be done by a religion that endeavors to organize life on the pattern designed by Allah.

"Now, this is what happened to Christianity because of various historical reasons, apart from the fact that it was never designed to last, rather a stop gap arrangement until

the "final *din*" made its appearance. What happened is that because of antagonism, a breach occurred between Christ and his followers on one side, and the Jews on the other. This in turn led to a breach between the *Tawrah*, which contained the Law, and *Injil*, which contained moral teachings and admonitions addressing the soul. With this breach, Christianity became a sect without law: incapable of guiding the people in the affairs of this world. Thus, it lost the qualification to guide the "whole of the human life" forcing its followers to create a breach between the life of the soul and the life of the human society (the rules for which had to be of necessity borrowed from other systems: Au.). Thus, it is a religion that remains suspended in the air, or, at best, limps (on the ground: Au.).

"Now, this was not a minor event for humankind. Rather, a great disaster that led to confusion and bewilderment that lasts to this day both in the Christian world as well in the lives of those who came under its influence."

92. Rabi`, Ja`far ibn Zubayr and Hasan are reported to have said that the *Shari`ah* of `Isa was comparatively more lenient than that of Musa, peace be on both (Ibn Jarir).

[51] Surely, Allah is my Lord and your Lord. Therefore, worship Him (alone). This is a straight path.'

إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٥١﴾

[52] And when `Isa perceived unbelief on their part, he said, 'Who will be my helpers unto Allah?'⁹³ The disciples⁹⁴ said, 'We are the helpers of Allah; we have believed in Allah; and bear thou witness that we have surrendered.'⁹⁵

فَلَمَّا أَحَسَّ عِيسَى مِنْهُمْ الْكُفْرَ قَالَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَأَشْهَدُ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

Rejection of a part is not always rejection of the whole. Hence, there is no contradiction between this statement and the one preceding one which said that he had appeared "confirming what has been before me of the *Tawrah*" (*Manar*). The reference could also be to declaring lawful those things that were made unlawful by the Jewish priests and interpolated into the *Tawrah* (Qurtubi, Razi, Ibn Kathir).

93. He sought their help and protection in the propagation of his message in the same manner as our Prophet sought the help of the tribes during his last years at Makkah and migrated when they declined (Ibn Kathir).

94. There have been several interpretations of the word hawari who seem to have been by profession butchers, fishermen, painters and of other

humbler callings. Ibn `Abbas is of the opinion that it means "whiteness." They were so called because they wore white dresses (Qurtubi, Shawkani and others).

Alternatively, it could mean "helpers." This is strengthened by the *hadith* in which the Prophet drew Zubayr ibn al `Awwam to himself and said:

وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ حَوَارِيًّا وَإِنَّ حَوَارِيَ الرَّبِيِّ بْنِ الْعَوَّامِ

"Every Messenger has a *hanwari*. My *hanwari* is Zubayr b. al `Awwam (Ibn Kathir).

Whatever the word meant, it is obvious that they were his disciples (Au.).

95. Majid quotes a Christian scholar: 'The faith of the Musalman is concentrated in a single word Islam: devotion, resignation of our own will

[53] (They supplicated) 'Our Lord! We believe in what You have sent down and follow the Messenger.⁹⁶ Write us down, therefore, among those who bear witness.'⁹⁷

رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا بِمَا أَنزَلْتَ وَاتَّبَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ فَاكْتُبْنَا
مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

to the supreme decree. That word was not limited to Muhammad's own followers: it was used ungrudgingly of his Judaic Christian predecessors. There is no fitter word for the religion of the human race' (Dr. J.H. Bridges).

96. Thus we see that actions followed declaration of faith. This is because faith demands actions according to its dictates, if such faith is based on knowledge. In contrast, if knowledge has no influence on faith, it signifies either its incompleteness or uncertainty, and not a certainty that leads to faith in it. Often it happens that a man is led to believe that he knows a thing. But when he attempts to act according to his knowledge he fails to do a good job of it, indicating that he was incorrect in his claim to knowledge (*Manar* quoting Sheikh `Abduh).

97. According to a reliable report, the opinion of Ibn `Abbas is that the allusion is to this *Ummah* (al Muslimah: Au.) by the words: "among those who bear witness" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Referring to the phrase: "Write us down, therefore, among those who bear witness," Sayyid Qutb says: "It is a demand upon him who believes in this religion that he bear the testimony the testimony that will guarantee that this religion will last and thus help establish the good and virtue that this religion carries with it. Obviously, he does not and cannot bear this testimony without first being himself what this religion demands and without presenting an image of it through his own person an image that the people observe and in which they discover the ideal example. Thus his very person bears the testimony to the truth of this religion.

"Obviously too, he cannot bear this sort of testimony without accepting this religion as the basis upon which to build his own life, as well as that of the world around him working out the law in its light. Such efforts would include a nation organizing its life and society in its light. And, of course, it will include struggling in its cause and offering his life, if

[54] (But) They (the Israelites) plotted⁹⁸ (a scheme against `Isa). And Allah (also) plotted. *وَمَكَرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ*
 And Allah is the best of plotters.⁹⁹ ﴿٥٤﴾

necessary, for the sake of living his life under its banner rather than under the shades of those life systems that are opposed to it. Thus he bears witness that death in its cause is better than life under other systems that do not agree with nor follow this system of life. It is then that he earns the appellation, a martyr.”

98. This refers to the efforts of the Jews contemporary to `Isa ibn Maryam to hatch a plan against him and get him executed. They petitioned to the Roman Governor of Palestine (who alone could pass a death sentence: Au.) that a man born out of sin had appeared among them, claiming himself to be the “awaited Messiah.” He divides peaceful homes, is misleading the people, and will all but form a new seditious sect. He deserves to be put to death. They persisted in their efforts until the

Governor decided to take action. It is another thing that when they went to arrest him, he was protected by Allah and raised to the heaven alive. They captured another person in his stead who looked similar to him and crucified him (Ibn Kathir).

99. *Makr*: The expression used for the unbelievers as well for Allah is the same but the meanings are different. *Makr* on the part of man is secretive plotting or scheming with mischievous intents. Allah responds with His own plots to frustrate the plotting of His subjects. But His slaves remain completely in the dark about what He plans and how He intends to accomplish it. (Thus, the sharing of the meaning of secretiveness allows for use of the same term: Au.) However, Allah’s plotting and scheming is entirely within the norms of justice. Finally, His plot-

[55] When Allah said: 'O `Isa I shall keep the promise made to you¹⁰⁰ and raise you to Me¹⁰¹ and will clear you (of the falsehood) of those who blaspheme¹⁰² and will set those who follow you¹⁰³ above those who have rejected - till the Resurrection Day. Then unto Me is your return and I shall judge between you in (all) those (affairs) in which you were at variance.

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ اذْكُرْ مَا كُنْتُمْ يَفْعَلُ
إِلَيَّ وَمُطَهِّرُكَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَجَاعِلُ
الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوكَ فَوْقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَى يَوْمِ
الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ
فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

ting is based on wisdom and hence entirely beneficial to man as well as to an unknown number of His creations. Therefore, He is the best of plotters.

Also see note 37, of *surah al Baqarah*.

100. This then was the "scheme" that Allah alluded to in the last verse.

As to the word *mutawaffi ka*, the meaning according to Matar al Warraq, Ibn Jurayj, Ka'b al Ahbar, Ibn Zubayr and Ibn Zayd is, "I will bring you back from the earth alive." Ibn `Abbas believes, however, that it refers to his natural death. (By which he meant that Allah will raise him up, send him to the world a second time, and then cause him to die a natural death, as states a report in *Durr al Mansur*: Mufti Shafi'). A third opinion is that by waffa the allusion is to "sleep," a usage not uncommon in the Qur'an. For example (6: 60):

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُم بِاللَّيْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُم بِالنَّهَارِ
[الأنعام : ٦٠]

"It is He who gives you sleep (*yata waffakum*) in the night and knows what you do in the day."

The word has thus been used perhaps because Jesus is thought to have been lifted up in the state of sleep (Ibn Jarir, *Kashshaf*, Ibn Kathir).

Majid states: "The original sense of '*tawfiyah*' is 'to perform a promise,' 'to fulfill a covenant,' and 'to give in full measure.' So the meaning may also be, 'I will fulfill thy span of life,' or 'I will achieve the whole of thy term.'"

Another possible meaning is, "I will cause you to die," and that there has been at this point what is called as *taqdim* and *ta'khir* in the sentence. That is, what has been stated in the earlier part has to be assigned to the later part, so that the translation of

the whole verse should be as follows: "When (they plotted), Allah said: 'O `Isa I will raise you to Me, will clear you (of the blasphemy) and cause you to die (after you have been sent down again)." This kind of usage is quite common in Arabic language and we have a good example of it from the Qur'ān itself which says (20: 129):

وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَكَانَ لِزَامًا وَأَجَلٌ مُسَمًّى
[طه : ١٢٩]

"But for a word that preceded from your Lord, it (i.e., of punishment) would have been fastened (upon them) and it would have been a stated term."

However, that is the literal translation. In fact, there has been a *taqdim* and *ta'khir* in the sentence so that it should be translated as: "And but for a word that preceded from your Lord, and (but for a) stated term, it (i.e. the punishment) would have been fastened (upon them)" Razi, Qurtubi and others.

"Again," adds Mufti Shafi`, "we all know that Allah raises a person's soul to Himself at his death. Hence, if it was meant to say that 'We will cause you to die,' then there was no need to add 'I am going to raise you up to Me.' The use of the word *raafi`u ka* indicates that he was raised up body

and soul."

The opinion therefore, that prevailed among the Companions was that it refers to the death that Ibn Maryam will encounter at the end of his second mission on earth. This is based on several *ahadith* one of which, (that enjoys the *tawatur* status: Thanwi) says:

"إِنَّ عِيسَى لَمْ يَمُتْ، وَإِنَّهُ رَاجِعٌ إِلَيْكُمْ قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ"

"`Isa did not die. He is going to come back to you before the end of the world." (Ibn Hajr has pointed out that there is consensus of the *Ummah* over the issue: Mufti Shafi`).

The above *hadith* is in Ibn abi Hatim.

Another tradition has been transmitted by Abu Hurayrah who reports the Prophet as having said:

الأنبياء أخوة لعالات وأمهاتهم شتى وأنا أولى الناس بعيسى ابن مريم وإنه نازل فاعرفه فإنه رجل ينزع إلى الحمرة والبياض كأن رأسه يقطر وإن لم يصبه بلة وإنه يدق الصليب ويقتل الخنزير ويفيض المال ويضع الجزية وإن الله يهلك في زمانه الملل كلها غير الإسلام ويهلك الله المسيح الضال الأعور الكذاب ويلقي الله الأمانة حتى يرعى الأسد مع الإبل والنمر مع البقر والذئب مع الغنم ويلعب الصبيان مع الحيات لا يضر بعضهم بعضاً (- صحيح ابن حبان بتحقيق الأرناؤوط قال شعيب الأرناؤوط : إسناده صحيح

على شرط مسلم

“Prophets are brothers, sons of different mothers, but of a common father (i.e. descendants of a single male: Au.). They brought down one and the same religion. I’m closest to `Isa ibn Maryam. And he is going to descend again. When you see him, you will recognize him. He will be a man of medium height of hue fair and pinkish. He will be long of hair parted at the center which, as if letting down droplets even though not wet. He will break the cross, destroy the pig, distribute wealth and fight the people over Islam until no other religion will remain on the earth. It is during his tenure that the misguiding Masih al Dajjal, the great liar, will be destroyed and peace will prevail on the earth so that lions will go about with camels, panthers with cows, wolves with sheep and children will play with snakes. They will not harm each other. He will tarry on the earth for forty years and will then die. The Muslims will pray over him and bury him” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir and others).

101. Majid quotes De Bunsen from Islam, or True Christianity, p. 143,

f.n.: “A similar conception was promulgated by the earliest gnostics, Corinthus, Basilides, Carpociates, and others.”

102. This cleansing was accomplished by our Prophet Muhammad who cleared the baseless allegation of impropriety on the part of Maryam alleged by the Jews (Ma`arif).

103. Qatadah, Rabi`, Ibn Jurayj and Hasan believe that the allusion is to those who will follow Islam. Accordingly, adds Shawkani, we have the *hadith* which says:

”لَا تَزَالُ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي ظَاهِرِينَ عَلَى الْحَقِّ. لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ مَنْ خَذَلَهُمْ. حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَهُمْ كَذَلِكَ“

“A group of my followers will remain having the upper hand over the truth (“battling with the unbelievers,” says another version: Au.). Those opposed to them will do them no harm. That will remain the situation until the Day of Judgment.”

Ibn Zayd however believed that it is the Christians that are meant who shall have an upper hand over the Jews until the Day of Judgment (Ibn Jarir).

Thanwi states: “As for the establishment of the state of Israel near the end of the world as foretold in the

[56] Then, as for those who disbelieved, I shall chastise them severely both in this world as well as the next; they shall have no helpers.¹⁰⁴

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَأَعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

traditions of the Prophet, (at the time of Thanwi's writing the state of Israel was not yet established: Au.), well, firstly it will be a short lived one: maybe forty days. Such states have been established earlier also during the `Abbasid period as recorded by the historian Al Mas`udi. Further, it will not enjoy a peaceful existence. An anarchic existence obviously, is no existence proper."

"Moreover," asks Mufti Shafi`, "is the present state of Israel anything more than an American and European colony and a springboard?!"

Ibn Kathir comments: What happened after `Isa b. Maryam was lifted up to the heavens is that his followers broke into groups and sects. Some remained steadfast believing that he was a Prophet and a slave of Allah, but others declared him a son of God. Yet another sect declared that he was God himself, while others began to say that he was the third of

the three. Such was the situation until a Roman king called Constantine entered into Christianity some three hundred and odd years after Christ. He incorporated many new creeds into the Christian faith while declaring some (older ones) annulled. It was during his time that they declared pork lawful, began to pray facing the East, and built Churches. They persecuted the Jews. That was the situation until Allah raised his last Messenger whose followers, by virtue of belief in Christ as a Messenger of Allah, proved themselves nearest to him. Allah gave them victory over their adversaries and they wrested control of the Syrian territories from them. Later they shall also capture Constantinople. Thus, Allah's word came true that the Muslims will have an upper hand over them until the Day of Judgment.

104. This applies generally to all kinds of unbelievers including the Jews who have been punished with

[57] *As for those who believed and acted righteously, He will give them their reward in full. And Allah does not approve of the transgressors.'*

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
فَيُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرَهُمُ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

[58] *These are some of the signs and messages of wisdom that We recite unto you.*

ذَٰلِكَ نَتْلُوهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ
الْحَكِيمِ ﴿٥٨﴾

[59] *The likeness of `Isa in Allah's sight is similar to that of Adam whom He made out of dust and then said unto him: 'Be,' and He was.*¹⁰⁵

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ
مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٥٩﴾

[60] *The truth is from your Lord, therefore be not of the doubters.*

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

ignominy and wretchedness and subservience to the people until the Day of Judgment. This does not mean that the Muslims are not punished. They are. But it is not a result of the curse or out of anger, rather, out of mercy and as a means of expiation of their sins (Thanwi).

105. "The birth of Jesus was surely an extraordinary event by any measure. But what is so strange about it when compared to the creation of Adam, peace on him? (The strange thing is that) the people of the Book were arguing and disputing (with the

Prophet) over Jesus because of his miraculous birth and had built beliefs and fetishes around his person for the sole reason that he was born without a father. But these were the very people who also believed that Adam was created out of dust, without attributing divinity or godhead to him" (Sayyid Qutb).

Majid notes: "The divinity of Jesus has been denied by some ancient Christian sects themselves. 'Arius taught that the Son of God was a created being. There was a time when He did not exist.' (*Encycl. Brit.*

[61] Therefore, whoso disputes with you over him, after the truth has come to you, tell (them): 'Come. Let us gather together our sons and your sons, our women and your women and our selves and your selves and mutually invoke Allah's curse on the liars.'¹⁰⁶

فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ
الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ
وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ
تَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٦١﴾

[62] This indeed is the true account; and there is no god save Allah. And surely, it is Allah who is the Mighty, the Wise.

إِنَّ هَذَا هُوَ الْقَصَصُ الْحَقُّ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا
اللَّهُ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦٢﴾

II, p. 598) Paul of Samosata also held that "Jesus Christ," begotten of the Holy Ghost and born of the virgin, was a mere man. But "the man" was anointed by the Holy Ghost and for the same reason was called Christ ... Though the Logo was in Christ, it did not invest him with divinity' (XI p. 171).

106. Accordingly, the Prophet invited members of the Najran delegation, that was then camped in Madinah and disputing with him over Jesus' divinity, to participate in the mutual invocation of Allah's curse (*mubaahala*). They agreed. But when he came out with `Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn, they backed out, having been warned by their elders of the seriousness of the consequences, if Muhammad were to be a true Prophet. One account has it that it

was a Jew who advised them not to face the challenge (Ibn Jarir).

Razi, Qurtubi, Alusi, Shawkani and others are with Ibn Kathir, who, quoting Ibn Ishaq and Bayhaqi, gives a detailed account of the Christian delegation of Najran that visited Madinah in the early years after *hijrah*. (According to the report of Bayhaqi, the Prophet had written them a letter asking them to either submit to Allah or pay tribute; failing both, they would face the sword). Herewith is a shortened account: "They were sixty riders led by three men, one of whom was a Bishop. They entered at `Asr time and wore such expensive clothes as the Madinans had never seen before, nor did they later. (According to Bayhaqi's version they wore golden jewelry and the Prophet did not answer to their

salutation. They sought the help of his Companions and were told by `Ali that their golden jewelry could be the cause. They stripped themselves of them and went to see him. He received them saying: "By Allah. Earlier they had the Devil accompanying them.") They were allowed to offer their prayers in the Prophet's mosque itself and they did that facing the East. Then they entered into discussions with the Prophet who offered them plain guidance against their complex beliefs. He told them to desist from their assertion that Jesus was the son of God and a third person of the Trinity. But they side tracked him into arguments that had no basis in reason or revelation. Finally, he told them: "Submit yourselves." They said, "We have submitted." He insisted, "You have not submitted, so submit." They replied, "Indeed we submitted before you did." He told them, "You lie. Your assertion that God has a son, your worship of the Cross and your eating of the pork hold you back from submission." They were taken aback and asked him in vexation. "Then who was his father, Muhammad." At that Allah sent down a detailed account of Jesus as contained in the first eighty verses of this *surah*. When that failed to convince them they were asked to

bring their men and face the Prophet in mutual invocation of Allah's curse on the liar. They did not respond. Rather, they agreed to pay the tribute. (According to a report, when the Bishop who was with them saw the Prophet, Hasan, Husayn, followed by Fatimah with `Ali at the rear, coming out to meet them in the *mubaahala*, he said: "By God. I see faces that, were they to ask Allah to move a mountain, He would move it. Do not go out to meet him in this challenge": Zamakhshari, Alusi).

[Ibn `Abbas said, as in Bukhari: 'Had Abu Jahl thrown the camel's intestines over the Prophet (as he had intended) he would have been arrested by the angels before everyone's eyes. Had the Jews wished to die they would have died and seen their places in the Fire. And. had (the Christians) faced the Prophet in the *mubahala* they would have gone back home to discover their families and property destroyed'].

"When they had agreed to pay the tribute they asked the Prophet to send one of his trusted men to settle some of their disputes in Najran. He told them he would do so the next day. (According to another version reported by `Umar ibn al Khattab, the next day `Umar straightened his

[63] But if they decline then surely Allah is فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ
aware of the corrupt.¹⁰⁷ ❁ ٦٣ ❁

back and stretched his neck upward in order to be visible to the Prophet. The Prophet however ordered Abu 'Ubaydah to rise up saying: 'This is the *Amin* (trustworthy) of this *Ummah*.'"

Shawkani adds: “Hakim has reported the following, declaring it authentic, as has Bayhaqi, both of whom quote Ibn ‘Abbas. The Prophet said: ‘This is *ikhlas* (purity of assertion in Allah’s oneness), and pointed to his index finger - this is supplication, and raised his two hands (with palms stretched) up to the shoulders - and this is *ibtihal*, and stretched forward full his two hands (in front of him in a straight line: Au.).’”

Majid quotes Muir at this point: “We cannot but see throughout the earnestness of Muhammad’s belief, and his conviction that a spiritual illumination had been vouchsafed to him, bringing with it knowledge and certainty whereto the Christians, as he conceived, all was speculation and conjecture (p. 460).”

At this juncture most commentators have also refuted notions of the Shi'ah who use this verse to prove

that 'Ali was superior to all prophets except Muhammad. The argument is constructed by them in the following manner: The Qur'ān said, *'Come. Let us gather together our sons and your sons, our women and your women and our selves and your selves and then (earnestly) pray and lay Allah's curse on those who lie.'* In reply, the Prophet came out with Hasan, Husayn, Fatimah and 'Ali. Now, 'Ali did not come under 'our sons' nor under 'our women.' Therefore, he came under the category of 'our selves.' This means he was at least equal to the Prophet in status. Now, since the Prophet was superior to all other Prophets and Messengers, it goes to prove that 'Ali was also superior to all Prophets and Messengers. Further, the verse also proves, say the Shi'ah, that he was a Messenger himself and hence deserved the *Khilafah* immediately after the death of our Prophet.

However, since the argument is quite ingenious, and amusing too, we leave out the refutation (Au.).

Thanwi, nevertheless, adds that the Shi'ah forget that the Qur'ān used "*faqtulu anfusakum*" (2: 54) and

[64] Tell them, 'O people of the Book! Come to an equitable term between us and you.'¹⁰⁸ that we worship none but Allah and associate not aught with Him,¹⁰⁹ and some of us do not declare others as Lords besides Allah.¹¹⁰ But if they turn their backs, say, 'Bear witness that we are Muslims.'

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

meant "*faqṭulu qawmakum*."

107. Sayyid Qutub writes: "This world cannot run right without there being a single God managing its affairs. The Qur'an says:

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا [الأنبياء : ٢٢]

'Had there been many gods (in the heavens and the earth) surely the two would have met with destruction.' The most blatant attempt by man is his efforts to split godhead by way of accepting the worship of man by man, the making of laws of life for them, and the setting up of values for them. Whoever claimed anything of these things, claimed divinity for himself, and set himself up as a god besides Allah.

"Further, corruption never occurs on the earth on a greater scale than when there are more than one god on it claiming godhead on this pattern: when a man from the mankind claims for himself the right of obedience, the right to dictate laws to oth-

ers, and the right to set up values for them. This is the claim to godhead and divinity that does not require the words (of Fir'awn): 'I am your supreme Lord' to be spoken."

108. This verse was revealed when the Jews and Christians were presented with the arguments about the Oneness of Allah and the truth of Islam, but they refused to submit or acknowledge. It summed up and closed the doors for further arguments with them. (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Imām Razi and others).

According to Qatadah and Rabi', what is meant by "*sawā'un*" of the original is (that we come to an agreement that will assure) "justice" (to both of us) Ibn Jarir, Razi, Ibn Kathir.

To Abu al `Aliyyah however, it refers to the central principle, "There is no god but Allah," in which case (adds Ibn Kathir) the word "*kalimah*" will be understood to mean "a sen-

tence” (Ibn Jarir). Zamakhshari and Shawkani are very near to it when they say that the words following it, i.e., “We worship none but Allah and associate not aught with Him, and do not declare some of us others as Lords, apart from Allah,” explain what is meant by the term *kalimah*.

109. (The New Testament is witness: Au.) “Thou shall worship the Lord thy God, and Him only thou shall serve” (Matthew: 4: 10) – Majid.

110. Asad remarks: “.. the above call is addressed not merely to the Christians, who attribute divinity to Jesus and certain aspects of divinity to their saints, but also to the Jews, who assign a quasi divine authority to Ezra and even to some of their great Talmudic scholars.”

Regarding the last part of the verse: “And some of us do not take others as Lords besides Allah,” Ibn Jurayj’s opinion was that it means, “let not some of us obey others in disobedience of Allah,” while to `Ikrimah it means, “Let not some of us prostrate ourselves before others” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Jurayj’s opinion is supported by a *hadith* in Tirmidhi narrated by `Adiyy b. Hatim (who was formerly

a Christian) who reported:

عَنْ عَدِيِّ بْنِ حَاتِمٍ قَالَ أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَفِي عُنُقِي صَلِيبٌ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ فَقَالَ يَا عَدِيُّ اطْرَحْ عَنْكَ هَذَا الْوَتْنَ وَسَمِعْتُهُ يَقْرَأُ فِي سُورَةِ بَرَاءَةِ اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالَ أَمَّا إِيَّاهُمْ لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَعْْبُدُونَهُمْ وَلَكِنْهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا أَحْلَوْا هُمْ شَيْئًا اسْتَحْلَوْهُ وَإِذَا حَرَّمُوا عَلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا حَرَّمُوهُ قَالَ أَبُو عِيْسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ غَرِيبٌ لَا تَعْرِفُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ حَدِيثِ عَبْدِ السَّلَامِ بْنِ حَزْبٍ وَعُطِيفٌ بْنُ أُعَيْنٍ لَيْسَ بِمَعْرُوفٍ فِي الْحَدِيثِ

“I went to the Prophet (while still a Christian) with a golden cross hanging by my neck. He said, “O `Adiyy, get rid of that idol.” Then I heard him recite a verse from *Surah Bara’ah*: “They took their scholars and monks as lords besides Allah.” He added, “They did not worship them literally, but when they declared something lawful (which was not lawful), they accepted it as lawful; and when they declared something unlawful (which was lawful), they accepted it as unlawful” (Zamakhshari, Alusi).

Tirmidhi cast doubt on perfect health of the *hadith*. It does not appear in any other trustworthy *Hadith* collection (Au.).

Qurtubi adds: Far from prostration, Islam does not even allow someone

to bow down before others. A *hadith* preserved by Ibn Majah reports Anas b. Malik:

يا رسول الله أينحنى بعضنا لبعض؟ قال (لا) . قلنا أيعانق بعضنا بعضاً؟ قال (لا) . ولكن تصافحوا (- قال الشيخ الألباني: حسن

“We asked: Messenger of Allah. Can we bow down to each other?” He said: “No.” We asked: “Shall we hug each other?” He said: “No. But you may shake hands.”

Majid quotes: (Christian scholars have not denied the prevalence of saint worship among the Christians: Au.) ‘In the long period of twelve hundred years ... the worship of saints and relics corrupted the pure and perfect simplicity of the Christian model’ (GRE., III. pp 200 210);

Alusi has another point. He says: In the words, ‘And do not declare some of us others as Lords,’ is a hidden question. How can those who are “of us,” and “like us,” become gods unto some of us?”

Rashid Rida writes: “The above verse establishes *Tawhid* (Oneness of Allah) in its completeness. *Tawhid* has two aspects: “*Tawhid al Uluhiyyah*” (Unity of Godhead) and “*Tawhid al Rububiyyah*” (Unity of Lordship). Now “*Tawhid al Uluhiyyah*” is con-

tained in the statement: ‘We worship none but Allah and associate not aught with Him,’ and “*Tawhid al Rububiyyah*” is contained in: ‘Some of us do not take others as Lords besides Allah.’”

(And the importance of this verse as the basis, foundation and central principle of Islam can be gauged from the fact: *Al Manar*) that the Prophet used to quote it (as in the reports of Bukhari and Muslim), without the first word “say,” in his letters to the rulers such as when he wrote to the Roman emperor Heraclius to whom he had sent Dihya al Kalbi (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

“Compare and contrast the tenets of orthodox Christianity: ‘The church of Christ is the fellowship of all those who accept and profess all the articles transmitted by the Apostles and approved by General Synods. Without this visible Church there is no salvation. It is under the abiding influence of the Holy Ghost, and therefore cannot err in the matters of faith’ (EBR. XVI, pp. 939 940) – Majid.

Sayyid Qutb comments: “In this world, whatever earthly system of life a people might follow be it the most advanced democratic system, or a dictatorial one some people al-

[65] O People of the Book! Why do you dispute with us concerning Ibrahim¹¹¹ while the Tawrah and the Injil were not revealed but after him?! Do you not reason?

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تُحَاجُّونَ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَتِ التَّوْرَةُ وَالْإِنْجِيلُ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

[66] Here you are disputing in matters that you have some knowledge of, why then do you dispute touching matters you have no knowledge of? Allah knows, you know not.¹¹²

هَآأَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ حَآجَجْتُمْ فِيمَا لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلِمَ تُحَاجُّونَ فِيمَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

ways act as Lords over others besides Allah. The first and the major right of Allah, when He is accepted as the Lord, is the right to regulate the lives of the people, which includes the Law, values and the organization of life and society in general. Now, in all earthly systems, the people are made subservient to others, one way or the other. The affair of regulating the life is ultimately handed over to a small group of people among them. This group designs the system, determines the values and regulates the daily affairs of the masses. Thus the rest of the people submit to them and allow them to assume what is the right of Allah alone. In this sense they take them as Lords besides Allah and worship them, even if they do not prostrate themselves before them.

“It is only in a truly Islamic system

that the people are liberated from others. Each individual is on the same footing as the other, all at one level, obeying a single Lord.

“It is Islam of this meaning that every Prophet brought to mankind: to free the people from the worship of others and bind them to the worship of Allah alone.”

111. “I.e., as to whether the principles he followed were those of the Jewish faith, according to which the *Torah* is considered to be the final Law of God, or of Christian faith, which conflicts with the former in many cases” (Asad).

112. Shawkani says: The verse teaches us that there is no use in engaging oneself in polemics, especially when the opponent is an ignorant person. In fact, according to a *hadith* one should not engage in polemics even

[67] Ibrahim in truth was neither a Jew nor a Christian, rather, he was a Muslim, pure of faith.¹¹³ And certainly, he was never of the idolaters.

مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

with those who have knowledge (for one cannot win people to his point through polemics: Au.). One may enter into debates only when one is certain of convincing an opponent, following the Qur'anic dictum (29: 46):

وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ
[العنكبوت : ٤٦]

"Dispute not with the People of the Book save in the fairest manner."

113. This verse was revealed, as reported by Ibn Ishaq through Ibn 'Abbas, when members of the Najran Christian delegation claimed that Ibrahim was a Christian while the Jews asserted that he was a Jew (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). It says in other words that the Jews and Christians are not on the religion of Ibrahim, nor was he a follower of the Judaism or Christianity of their definition, even though Ibrahim, Musa and 'Isa followed the same *din al hanif* (Razi).

Rashid Rida adds: "Ibrahim (asws) was not a follower of our Prophet Muhammad (saws) either, leading

his life by every detail of the Law as revealed to him, since this was also not revealed but after him. Hence, he was not a Muslim in the sense in which we are Muslims. Rather, he was a Muslim in the sense that he had given up false gods and was completely devoted to Allah in his life and its multifarious activities. Most Muslims have forgotten this reality, and think of Ibrahim as one belonging to their racial or national denomination."

Ibn Jarir reports the story of Zayd b. 'Amr (one of the four in Makkah who had adopted the *din al hanif* (the "pure religion," before the advent of Islam: Au.) that he went to Syria seeking a religion to adopt. He met a rabbi to whom he expressed his desire. He told him: "You can't adopt Judaism without agreeing to bear a part of God's anger." Zayd told him he did not have the strength to do that. "Then you better adopt," the rabbi told him, "the religion of Ibrahim *the Hanif*." Next he met a Christian priest to whom he expressed the same desire. He told him, "You cannot possibly become a Christian

[68] Surely, the nearest of the people to Ibrahim are those who followed him, and this Prophet (Muhammad),¹¹⁴ and those who believe.¹¹⁵ And Allah is the Protector of the believers.

إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا
النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

without agreeing to share a part of God's curse." Zayd told him he wasn't ready to do that. He was told, "Then adopt the religion of Ibrahim who was a *Hanif*." Zayd headed back to Makkah promising himself that he would not die but a *Hanif*. (The concept then prevalent in Arabia of a *Hanif* was that it was someone who had abandoned all religions, their customs and practices, and had devoted himself to one God: Au.).

114. Sa'id bin Mansur has reported Ibn Mas'ud, and so has Tirmidhi and Bazzar, (Hakim evaluating it as a trustworthy report: Shawkani) with some variations both in the chain of narrators as well as in the text, that the Prophet (*saws*) said:

إِنَّ لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ وَلَدَةً مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَإِنَّ وَلِيَّيَ أَبِي وَخَلِيلِي
رَبِّي. ثُمَّ قَرَأَ: إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ
وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"Every Prophet has friends from among the previous Prophets. My friend from among them is my progenitor and the *Khalil* of my Lord (i.e. Ibrahim)." Then

he recited this verse: "Surely, the nearest of the people to Ibrahim are those who followed him and this Prophet and those who believe (in this new Prophet)" Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir.

Ibn Abi Hatim has also reported that the Prophet addressed his own tribe thus:

يَا مَعْشَرَ قُرَيْشٍ إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِالنَّبِيِّ الْمُتَّقُونَ فَكُونُوا
أَشْتَمَ بِسَبِيلِ ذَلِكَ فَانْظُرُوا أَنْ لَا يَلْقَانِي النَّاسُ يَحْمِلُونَ
الْأَعْمَالِ، وَتَلْفُؤُنِي بِالْأُتْيَا تَحْمِلُونَهَا فَأَصِدَّ عَنْكُمْ
بِوَجْهِي، ثُمَّ قَرَأَ عَلَيْهِمْ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ: "إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ
بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاللَّهُ
وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ" تَفْسِيرُ ابْنِ أَبِي حَاتِمٍ - (٣ / ٣٧)

"O Quraysh. People closest to Ibrahim are the godfearing. Follow this path, and it should not happen that people come to me (on the Day of Judgment) bearing good deeds and you come to me loaded with this world so that I divert my looks from you." Then he recited this verse.

Hasan (al Basri) has added: "Every believer is Ibrahim's friend: both from the past nations as well as those

[69] A section of the people of the Book wish to deviate you (O Muslims, but), they deviate not but their own selves. But they perceive not.

وَدَّتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يُضِلُّونَكُمْ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

[70] O people of the Book! Why do you reject the signs of Allah while you bear witness?¹¹⁶

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

[71] O people of the Book! Why do you confound the truth with falsehood?,¹¹⁷ and conceal the truth while you know?¹¹⁸

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَلْبِسُونَ الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

[72] A section of the people of the Book say, 'Believe in what has been sent down to the believers at the beginning of the day and reject it at the end of the day. Hopefully, they will return (to paganism).'¹¹⁹

وَقَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ آمِنُوا بِالَّذِي أُنْزِلَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَجْهَ النَّهَارِ وَاتَّخِذُوا آخِرَهُ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

who follow (until the end of the world) Shawkani.

115. Majid quotes a Western scholar as witness. 'The true heir of Jewish thoughts', observes a Christian historian of recent times, 'is Islamism, the modern religion of the Semitic races. By depriving Christianity of its Greek elements, by setting aside the ideas of the incarnation of the Divine in humanity, which spanned the gulf between God and man, Muhammad restored Semitic monotheism to its pristine severity' (HHW. II. p. 171).

116. According to Suddi and Qata-

dah, this refers to those sections of the revelation in the Qur'an which are common with those in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures (Qurtubi). However, it could also refer to the denial of the truth of Islam by the Jews and Christians when confronted with their followers while they admitted its truths in their hearts. Yet another possibility is 'their rejection of the implications of the texts in *Tawrah* and *Injil*, which is tantamount to the rejection of those Scriptures' (Razi).

117. Qatadah, Rabi' and Ibn Jurayj say that the people of the Book used to bundle teachings of Juda-

[73] 'And trust not in any but him who follows your religion.' Tell them, 'Verily true guidance is the guidance of Allah - that anyone should be given the like of what you have been given, or dispute with you before your Lord.'¹²⁰ Tell them, 'Surely, the bounty is in the hand of Allah.¹²¹ He bestows it upon whosoever He will. And Allah is All-embracing, All-knowing.

وَلَا تُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا لِمَنْ تَبَعَ دِينَكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ
الْهُدَىٰ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ أَن يُؤْتَىٰ أَحَدٌ مِّثْلَ مَا
أُوْتِيتُمْ أَوْ يُحَاجُّوكُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ
الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ
عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾

ism, Christianity and Islam into one whole to confuse the Muslims (Ibn Jarir).

118. As do the innovators (*ahl al bid'ah*) in our times concealing the well researched works of the scholars from their ignorant followers (Razi).

119. Mujahid says a bunch of Jewish Rabbis (numbering 12, of a settling called 'Uraynah: Alusi, *Manar*) announced their belief in Islam, did their fajr Prayers with the congregation and then renounced their faith in the evening (in the hope of casting doubt in the hearts of the weak Muslims) Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir.

Another possibility, as expressed by Asam, is that they used to tell each other that it was not the right policy to be denouncing all that Muhammad had brought since there were plenty of things that they could not deny without being branded idiots

by their own communities. Therefore, it would be better to declare some things as true and denounce others as false (Razi).

Majid adds: "Modern biographers of the Prophet, with huge pretensions to learning and impartiality, who begin by admiring his earnestness, his sincerity of purpose and the depth of his convictions, and end by denouncing him as a deluded visionary and a false prophet, are almost playing the same old game with modern variants."

120. This is a difficult piece of text which could be paraphrased in the following manner:

'And (they also advise each other), trust not in any but him who follows your religion.' Tell them, '(Such efforts will not bear any fruit because), Verily true guidance is the guidance of Allah (which He bestows

[74] He selects by His mercy who He will (for Messengership). And Allah is the possessor of great bounty.

يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٤﴾

[75] (Yet) of the people of the Book¹²² is he who, if you trust him with a pile (of wealth), will restore it to you. While of them is he who, if you trust him with a (single) Dinar, will not repay it to you, unless you were to stand over his head persistently.¹²³ This because they claim, 'There is no liability upon us for the unlettered people.'¹²⁴ But they fasten a lie upon Allah while they are aware.¹²⁵

وَمِنَ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنُ إِن تَأْمَنهُ بِقِنطَارٍ يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنُ إِن تَأْمَنهُ بِدِينَارٍ لَّا يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ إِلَّا مَا دُمْتَ عَلَيْهِ قَائِمًا ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ سَبِيلٌ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

upon whom He will. You will not be able to stop it. You are fearful) that anyone should be given the like of what you have been given, or dispute with you (in the Hereafter) before your Lord.' Tell them (O Prophet, in sum), 'Surely, the bounty is in the hands of Allah (alone). He bestows it upon whosoever He will. And Allah is All-embracing, All-knowing (and so, knows where to place it).

There have been several interpretations to these words. One is expressed in the translation. Another, forwarded by Akhfaash will render the translation as: "And believe not in any but him who follows your religion.' Tell them, 'Verily, true guidance is the guidance of Allah.' (They also say, "believe not) until he be

given the like of what you have been given, and do not give it credence that they argue with you before your Lord." Qurtubi and others have discussed several other possibilities, but quite complicated for translation. (Au.).

It is said that this is one of the most difficult verses of the Qur'an to interpret (Shawkani).

121. "The bounty" (*al fadl* of the original) refers to Messengership (Razi).

122. Qatadah, Suddi, Sa'id b. Jubayr, and Ibn 'Abbas were of belief that it is the Jews who are referred to in this verse (Ibn Jarir). And more specifically it refers to 'Abdullah ibn Salam whom a man from Quraysh

entrusted with 2200 ounces of gold, which he returned promptly when asked, whereas a Jew called Finhas Ibn `Azura was lent a Dinar but began to argue when asked to return it (Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi).

Ibn Kathir places a *hadith* here which Bukhari placed in several places in his collection. The ungrateful Jews will of course never respond positively to Islam:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ ذَكَرَ رَجُلًا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ سَأَلَ بَعْضَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنْ يُسْلِفَهُ أَلْفَ دِينَارٍ فَقَالَ أَتُنِي بِالشَّهَدَاءِ أَشْهَدُهُمْ فَقَالَ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا قَالَ فَأُنِي بِالْكَفِيلِ قَالَ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ كَفِيلًا قَالَ صَدَقْتَ فَدَفَعَهَا إِلَيْهِ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى فَخَرَجَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَقَضَى حَاجَتَهُ ثُمَّ التَّمَسَّ مَرْكَبًا يَرْكَبُهَا يَتَدَمُّ عَلَيْهِ لِأَجَلِ الَّذِي أَجَلُهُ فَلَمْ يَجِدْ مَرْكَبًا فَأَخَذَ خَشَبَةً فَتَقَرَّرَهَا فَأَدْخَلَ فِيهَا أَلْفَ دِينَارٍ وَصَحِيفَةً مِنْهُ إِلَى صَاحِبِهِ ثُمَّ رَجَعَ مَوْضِعَهَا ثُمَّ أَتَى بِهَا إِلَى الْبَحْرِ فَقَالَ اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ أَيُّيَ كُنْتُ تَسَلَّفْتُ فَلَانًا أَلْفَ دِينَارٍ فَسَأَلَنِي كَفِيلًا فَقُلْتُ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ كَفِيلًا فَفَرَضِي بِكَ وَسَأَلَنِي شَهِيدًا فَقُلْتُ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا فَفَرَضِي بِكَ وَأَنِّي جَهَدْتُ أَنْ أَجِدَ مَرْكَبًا أَبْعَثَ إِلَيْهِ الَّذِي لَهُ فَلَمْ أَقْدِرْ وَإِنِّي أَسْتَوْدِعُكَهَا فَرَمَى بِهَا فِي الْبَحْرِ حَتَّى وَجَلَّتْ فِيهِ ثُمَّ انْصَرَفَ وَهُوَ فِي ذَلِكَ يَلْتَمِسُ مَرْكَبًا يَخْرُجُ إِلَى بَلَدِهِ فَخَرَجَ الرَّجُلُ الَّذِي كَانَ أَسْلَفَهُ يَنْظُرُ لَعَلَّ مَرْكَبًا قَدْ جَاءَ بِمَالِهِ فَإِذَا بِالْخَشَبَةِ الَّتِي فِيهَا الْمَالُ فَأَخَذَهَا لِأَهْلِهِ حَطَبًا فَلَمَّا نَشَرَهَا وَجَدَ الْمَالَ وَالصَّحِيفَةَ ثُمَّ قَدِمَ الَّذِي كَانَ أَسْلَفَهُ فَأَتَى بِالْأَلْفِ دِينَارٍ فَقَالَ وَاللَّهِ مَا زِلْتُ جَاهِدًا فِي طَلَبِ مَرْكَبٍ لِأَتِيَنَّكَ بِمَالِكَ فَمَا وَجَدْتُ مَرْكَبًا قَبْلَ الَّذِي أَتَيْتُ فِيهِ قَالَ هَلْ كُنْتُ بَعَثْتُ إِلَيَّْ بِشَيْءٍ قَالَ أَخْبَرْتُكَ أَنِّي لَمْ أَجِدْ مَرْكَبًا قَبْلَ الَّذِي جِئْتُ فِيهِ قَالَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ

أَدَّى عَنْكَ الَّذِي بَعَثْتُ فِي الْخَشَبَةِ فَانْصَرَفَ بِالْأَلْفِ الدِّينَارِ رَاشِدًا

Abu Hurayrah reports that the Prophet mentioned a man of the Israelites who asked another Israelite to lend him a thousand Dinars. He said, "Bring in witness who will testify for me." He answered, "Allah is sufficient as a witness." He said, "Then bring me a warrantor." He replied, "Allah is enough of a warrantor." He said, "You spoke the truth," and then lent the money for a known time. The man (the borrower) went into the sea and fulfilled his needs. Then he started looking for a boat to keep up with his promised date. But he could not find one. So he took a piece of wood, hollowed it, placed 1000 Dinars in with a note for the owner and plugged the hole. Then he went up to the shore and said, "O Allah. You are aware that I borrowed 1000 Dinars from so and so. He asked me for a warrantor and said, 'Allah is the best of warrantors.' He was satisfied with You (as a warrantor). Then he asked for a witness and I said, 'Allah is the best of witnesses.' He was satisfied with You (as a witness). Now, I

have tried but cannot find a boat to send it back to him. I place it in Your trust.” Then he threw it into the sea and it disappeared in it. He left the place but was still looking for a boat so as to travel back home. On the other side, the lender was waiting, hoping that a boat will come along with his money, when, lo, he found the wood-piece floating. He took it out as firewood for his home-folk. When he tore it, he found his money and a note. Then came along the man who had borrowed the money from him (with 1000 Dinars). He said, “By Allah I kept trying so hard to find a boat in order to bring you back your money, but I could not find a boat earlier than the one I have come by. The lender asked, “Did you send me anything at all?” He replied, “As I said, I did not find a boat but the one by which I have just arrived.” He said, “Well, Allah sent the wood-piece you sent along. So, go now, with the 1000 Dinar of yours, rightly guided.”

123. Abu Hanifah has, accordingly, said that in the light of the verse it is quite admissible (even though not always recommended: Au.) for the creditor to follow the debtor until he pays up (Maʿarif).

124. Rabbis and Jewish religious scholars of the past have left no doubts as to the rightfulness of wrongs committed against the Gentiles, that is, the non Israelites and non-Israelis. *Talmud* (the authoritative running commentary of the Old Testament, Jewish oral Law and rabbinical teachings) has the following instruction for the court officials: “When an Israeli and a Gentile have a lawsuit before thee, if thou canst, acquit the former according to the laws of Israel, and tell the latter such is our Law. If you canst get him off in accordance with Gentile law, do so, and say to the plaintiff such is your Law. But if he cannot be acquitted according to either law, then bring forward adroit pretexts and secure his acquittal. These are the words of the Rabbi Ishmael. Rabbi Akiva says, ‘No false pretext should be brought forward, because, if found out, the name of God would be blasphemed, but if there be no fear of that, then it may be adduced’: *Talmud, Bara Kama*, fol. 113, col. 1.”

The *Talmud* also says elsewhere (*Sanhedrin*, fol. 58. col. 2): “If a Gentile strikes an Israelite, he is guilty of death, as it is written (Ex. II, 12), ‘And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw there was no man, he slew the Egyptian’ (Au.).

[76] Nay, he who fulfilled his promise and feared (Allah) then Allah loves the pious.

بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ وَاتَّقَىٰ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

[77] Those who barter Allah's covenant and their oaths for a paltry sum,¹²⁶ such shall have no share in the life to come.¹²⁷ Allah will not speak to them; neither look at them, nor will He purify them. Instead, for them will be a painful chastisement.¹²⁸

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَأَيْمَانِهِمْ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَا خَلَاقَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾

Mawdudi comments: "This was not merely the misconception of the ignorant mass of Jews. Their religious teaching was the same and the legal doctrines of their accepted religious authorities and jurists reflected this idea. With regard to injunctions on loans and interest, the *Bible* makes a clear distinction between an Israelite and a non Israelite (*Deuteronomy* 15: 1 3; 23: 20). It is stated in the *Talmud* that if the bullock of an Israelite injures the bullock of a non Israelite the former is not liable to pay any penalty, but not vice versa. Similarly, it is laid down that if anyone finds an unclaimed article he should enquire amongst the people who live nearby. If they are Israelites he should announce his find; if not, he may keep it without saying anything further."

125. It is said that some people came to Ibn `Abbas and enquired, "When we go into non Muslim territories (that have submitted and pay *Jizyah*)

we pick up a chicken here or a goat there for our use. What do you have to say about it?" He said, "And what do you think about it yourself?" They said, "Well, we think there is no harm in it." Ibn `Abbas said: "In that case you'll be like the people of the Book who used to say, '*There is no liability upon us against the unlettered ones.*' Once they have agreed to pay *Jizyah* (poll tax), nothing belonging to them is lawful for you without their happy consent" (Ibn Jarir, *Zamakhshari*). The report is in the works of Abdul Razzaq: Qurtubi, and Ibn Kathir).

Adds Qurtubi: "Trust and blood relations (*rahm*) both are of prime importance in Islam. They will be, according to a *hadith* in Muslim, stationed at the two sides of the gate to Paradise, so that no one who had wasted them will be able to make through."

126. Allah (*swt*) spoke of His covenant in connection with the people making and breaking covenants and promises among themselves because all the revelations that He has made to man have included the commands to be truthful and honest when dealing with each other, and not to be untruthful and dishonest, as He also took covenant to the effect that they shall worship none but Him and obey none but Him (*Al Manar*). [What he means perhaps and Allah knows best is that when people are dishonest with each other, do not keep the trusts, or break covenants made to each other, then, they are equally guilty of breaking the covenants they made with Allah of obedience to His commands: Au.).

Sayyid Qutb remarks: "This then, in general, is the Islamic viewpoint with regard to keeping of oaths as it is with regard to other moral questions: any dealing (between the humans) is first and foremost a deal with Allah in which due regard should be paid to Allah, to His pleasure which is to be gained, and to His anger which is to be avoided. The moral impetus then is not the exigencies of the society, its customs, nor yet its immediate needs and requirements. A society can and does go astray or lean towards evil so that false values and standards gain

currency in it. It is essential, therefore, that there should be a permanent set of values and standards, which the society as well as the individuals should refer to. And it is essential that such a set of values and standards should have, apart from their own strength, a power supporting them from above a power that is over and above the ever changing requirements and conventions of the human society. Accordingly, it is essential that the values and standards be taken from Allah along with the knowledge of what is pleasing to Him and what is displeasing, in addition to the proper concept of where lies virtue. This way Islam makes it possible for mankind to raise itself up far above the earthly existence and seek the pure and lofty values and standards from high above."

127. (Several incidents, involving both Jews versus Muslims, and Muslims versus Muslims, took place that became the cause of revelation of this verse, or to which the verse immediately referred at revelation: Au.) In one case (reported by Ahmad through `Abdullah, as also by Bukhari and Muslim: Ibn Kathir, Shawkani), Ash`ash b. Qays brought a case to the Prophet against a Jew, who, he alleged had usurped some of his lands. Since he lacked evidence,

the Prophet asked the Jew to swear. Ash`ash rejoined that were the Jew to be allowed to keep the land merely on the strength of an oath, surely he will not hesitate to swear. The Prophet said:

مَنْ حَلَفَ عَلَى يَمِينٍ صَبْرٍ لِيَقْتَطَعَ بِهَا مَالَ امْرِئٍ مُسْلِمٍ وَهُوَ فِيهَا فَاجِرٌ لَقِيَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِ غَضَبَانٌ

“Whoever swore a false oath in order to usurp a Muslim’s property wrongfully, will meet Allah in the state of His anger.” And this verse was revealed, “Those who barter Allah’s covenant...” (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

In another incident involving Imra’ul Qays and a Hadrami, (reported by `Adiyy in *Musnad Ahmad*, as well as Nasa’i through `Adiyy b. `Adiyy: Ibn Kathir)

خاصم رجل من كندة، يقال له امرؤ القيس بن عابس، رجلاً من حضر موت إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في أرض، فقاضى على الحضرمي بالبينة، فلم يكن له بينة فقاضى على امرئ القيس باليمين، فقال الحضرمي: أن أمكنته من اليمين يا رسول الله؟ ذهبت ورب الكعبة أرضي، فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: “من حلف على يمين كاذبة ليقطع بها مال أحد لقي الله عز وجل وهو عليه غضبان” قال رجاء: وتلا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم {إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَأَيْمَانِهِمْ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا} فقال امرؤ القيس: ماذا لمن تركها يا رسول الله؟ فقال “الجنة”. قال: فاشهد أني قد تركتها له كلها

The Prophet asked Hadrami to

produce evidence, but he had no evidence; so he asked Imra’ul Qays to swear. The Hadrami protested, “If I gave him the right to oath, Messenger of Allah, then, by the Lord of the Ka’bah, my land will be gone. The Prophet said: “Whoever swore a false oath in order to usurp his brother’s property wrongfully, will meet Allah in a state that He is angry with him.” Imra’ul Qays then asked, “What if a man knows it is his right, yet forgoes it?” The Prophet answered: “He shall have Paradise.” Upon this Imra’ul Qays said: “Then bear witness that I relinquish my right” (Ibn Jarir). The report is in Nasa’i (Shawkani).

Ibn Kathir writes: Several *ahadith* have come down to us in connection with this verse. We shall quote a few here.

1. It is reported in *Musnad Ahmad* by Abu Dharr that the Prophet said:

”ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ: الْمَنَانُ الَّذِي لَا يُعْطِي شَيْئًا إِلَّا مَنَةً. وَالْمُنْقِقُ سَلْعَتَهُ بِالْحَلْفِ الْفَاجِرِ، وَالْمُسْبِلُ إِزَارَهُ“.

“There are three to whom Allah will not speak, will not look at, and will not purify them: He who will not give a thing but reminds

of it; he who sells his goods on the strength of false oaths, and he who lets down his trousers" (below the ankles, out of pride: Au.)."

2. Another incident is reported by Bukhari and Abu Hatim through Abdullah ibn Abi Awfa. A Muslim merchant swore in the market that he had paid a certain amount for a certain article, while actually he had not, in order to increase its sales price. Allah revealed this verse (Shawkani).

3. Again, according to another *hadith* reported by Abu Hurayrah and preserved by Imām Ahmad and Tirmidhi, who termed it *Sahih*, the Prophet said:

« ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ رَجُلٌ مَنَعَ ابْنَ السَّبِيلِ فَضْلَ مَاءٍ عِنْدَهُ وَرَجُلٌ خَلَفَ عَلَى سِلْعَةٍ بَغْدَ الْعَصْرِ - يَغْنِي كَاذِبًا - وَرَجُلٌ بَايَعَ إِمَامًا فَإِنْ أَعْطَاهُ وَفَى لَهُ وَإِنْ لَمْ يُعْطِهِ لَمْ يَفِ لَهُ »

"There are three to whom Allah will not speak on the Day of Judgment, nor look at them, nor purify them, rather for them will be a painful chastisement: 'A man who refused to give a drink to a traveler out of the extra water he had, a man who falsely swore after `Asr over his merchandise and a man who gave allegiance to a ruler and kept it if he gave him,

but if he did not give him, he did not keep it."

[We have taken the text from Abu Da'ud; and the addition of "after `Asr" is, as explained by some scholars, is to emphasize the sin committed at a sacred hour: Au.].

Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib said that false oath is a major sin. And Ibn Mas'ud said, "During the life of the Prophet we used to consider false oath as an unforgivable sin." (Ibn Jarir)

128. It should be noticed that although drinking, gambling, usury, and mistreating parents have been declared as major sins, the commitment of none of them promises the punishment as severe as that promised to those who do not honor trusts. This is because untrustworthiness and faith do not combine together in a single individual. Allah ordered the believers to wage war against the leaders of the unbelievers on grounds that they are dishonest. He said (9: 12):

فَقَاتِلُوا أَئِمَّةَ الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَا أَمَانَ لَكُمْ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْتَهُونَ
[التوبة : ١٢]

"And fight the leaders of the unbelievers for they are untrustworthy. Maybe they will cease (to be dishonest)."

And the Prophet has said:

"مِنْ عَلَامَاتِ الْمُنَافِقِ ثَلَاثَةٌ: إِذَا حَدَّثَ كَذَبَ. وَإِذَا

[78] Among them are some who twist the tongue with the (words of the) Book, so that you may suppose it part of the Book, while it is not part of the Book. And they say, 'This is from Allah,' while it is not from Allah, and fasten lies upon Allah while they know.

وَإِنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقًا يَلُؤُونَ أَلْسِنَتَهُم بِالْكِتَابِ لِتَحْسَبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

[79] It is not for anyone that Allah should give him the Book, wisdom and the Prophetic office and then he should say to the people, 'Be you my worshippers, along with Allah'.¹²⁹ Rather, (he will say) 'Be you faithful servants (of Allah)¹³⁰ by virtue of what you teach of the Book, and by virtue of what you have been learning'.¹³¹

مَا كَانَ لِيَشْرَ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ اللَّهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَ وَالنَّبُوءَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا عِبَادًا لِي مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ كُونُوا رَبَّانِيِّنَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

[80] He would never instruct you to take the angels and prophets as Lords. Will he bid you to disbelieve after you have surrendered?

وَلَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ أَرْبَابًا أَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْكُفْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

وَعَدَ أَخْلَفَ. وَإِذَا اتَّخَمْنَ حَانَ. (و زاد: "وَأَنَّ صَامَ وَصَلَّى وَزَعَمَ أَنَّهُ مُسْلِمٌ")

did not say:

لا إيمان لمن لا أمانة له ولا دين لمن لا عهد له

"There are three signs of a hypocrite (and, according to the report in Muslim, even if he Prayed and fasted): when he speaks he lies, when he promises he breaks it and when he is given a trust he does not honor it."

"There is no faith in him who cannot be trusted, and there is no religion of him who does not keep his promises" (*Manar*).

And Ahmad, Bazzar, and Tabarani in his *Awsat* have reported Anas as saying that it rarely happened that the Prophet gave a sermon in which he

129. Ibn `Abbas has reported that when representatives of the Jews of Madinah and Christians of Najran gathered in Madinah to discuss religious issues with the Prophet, Abu Rafe` al Qurazi said to the Prophet

accusingly: “Muhammad. Do you want us to worship you as the Christians worship Jesus Christ?” Upon this a man from the Najran who overheard this statement he was called Ra’yes asked: “Muhammad. Is this what you are inviting us to?” Allah then revealed: *‘It is not for anyone that Allah should give him the Book, (bestow on him) wisdom and the Prophetic office, and then he should say to the people, ‘Be you my worshipper, apart from Allah’”* (Kashshaf, Razi, Ibn Kathir).

The verse also implies, of course, that it was not `Isa ibn Maryam who instituted the worship of himself by his followers (Au.).

Qurtubi writes: Accordingly, the Prophet has said (as in Muslim and others: Au.):

”لَا يَقُولَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ: عَبْدِي وَأَمَتِي. كُلُّكُمْ عِبْدُ اللَّهِ وَكُلَّ نِسَائِكُمْ إِمَاءُ اللَّهِ. وَلَكِنْ لِيُقَالْ: غُلَامِي وَجَارِيَّتِي، وَفَتَايَ وَفَتَاتِي.“

“Let not one of you say to his slaves ‘My slave,’ or ‘My slave girl.’ All of you are Allah’s slaves, and all of your women are Allah’s slave-women; but rather, let him say, ‘My boy,’ or ‘My girl.’

Another version says,

”لَا يَقُولَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ: عَبْدِي. فَكُلُّكُمْ عِبْدُ اللَّهِ.

وَلَكِنْ لِيُقَالْ: فَتَايَ. وَلَا يَقُلِ الْعَبْدُ: رَبِّي. وَلَكِنْ لِيُقَالْ: سَيِّدِي“

“And let not one of you say, ‘My slave,’ for every one of you is Allah’s slave, but say, “My boy,” nor should a slave say, ‘My lord,’ rather, let him say, ‘My master.’”

As for Allah’s words (in Surah Yusuf), ‘And mention me to your Lord,’ scholars explain that the ban in the above *hadith* is *irshadi*, i.e., more or less as an advisory, rather than a command. The important point is the spirit of directive, rather than the statement of a rule (Au.).

130. The word in the original is *rabbaniyyun* (sing: *rabbaniyy*) which has been interpreted by Ibn `Abbas, Sa`id b. Jubayr, Qatadah, and others, as those pious scholars of religion who are completely devoted to God (Ibn Jarir, Kashshaf, Ibn Kathir).

It is reported of Muhammad bin Hanafiyyah that when Ibn `Abbas died, he said that the *rabbaniyy* of this *Ummah* had died (Kashshaf).

131. The verse implies that one ought to live by his knowledge (Razi).

Zamakhshari adds: There is a lesson in the verse for him who devotes himself to amassing knowledge but does not put it to practice. His ex-

[81] And (recall) when Allah took covenant of the Prophets: '(When)¹³² I have bestowed on you a Book and Hikmah¹³³ and then comes to you a Messenger, confirming what is with you, you shall believe in him and strengthen him.'¹³⁴ Then He asked, 'Do you agree and accept this My covenant¹³⁵ as binding on you?' They replied, 'We do agree.' He said, 'Then bear witness.¹³⁶ And I am with you among the witnesses.'

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْتُكُمْ
مِّنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ
مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ
قَالَ أَأَقْرَضُكُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ إِصْرِي
قَالُوا أَقْرَضْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا وَأَنَا مَعَكُمْ
مِّنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٨١﴾

[82] Then, after that, whosever turns his back, such indeed are the pervert transgressors.

فَمَن تَوَلَّىٰ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ
﴿٨٢﴾

ample is that of a man who planted a tree which grew up into a beautiful looking plant but which does not bear any fruit.

The Connection: The previous verses spoke of the opposition of the people of the Book to Prophet Muhammad and what he had brought. Now they are being told that far from opposition, according to a covenant taken earlier, they are required to believe in him and help him to establish the truth he has brought (Thanwi).

132. The *lama* of the original has been a challenge to the grammarians (Au.). In fact the whole verse is grammatically quite complicated (Alusi).

133. *Hikmah* here could signify either knowledge of Divine Law or simply "wisdom."

134. Although the meaning is general, as expressed by Ibn `Abbas, and Hasan that no Messenger or Prophet was sent but was made to take a oath to the effect that he will believe in, and support any other Messenger that follows him, `Ali ibn Abi Talib, Qatadah, and Suddi are of opinion that no Prophet was sent earlier but an oath was taken from him that if Muhammad was sent during his time, he will believe in him and render him help. And, according to a report this happens to be a second opinion of Ibn `Abbas also (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Yusuf `Ali remarks: "The argument is: You (People of the Book) are bound by your own oaths, sworn solemnly in the presence of your own Prophets. In the Old Testament as it now exists, Muhammad is foretold in Deut. xviii. 18: and the rise of the Arab nation in Isaiah. xlii. 11, for Kedar was a son of Isma`il and the name is used for the Arab nation: in the New Testament as it now exists. Muhammad is foretold in the *Gospel of St. John*. xiv. 16, xv. 26, and xvi. 7: the future Comforter cannot be the Holy Spirit as understood by Christians, because the Holy Spirit was already present, helping and guiding Jesus. The Greek word translated "Comforter" is "Paracletos", which is an easy corruption from "Periclytos", which is almost a literal translation of "Muhammad" or "Ahmad": see Q lxi. 6. Further, there were other Gospels that have perished, but of which traces remain, which were even more specific in their reference to Muhammad; e.g., the *Gospel of St. Barnabas*, of which an Italian translation is extant in the State Library at Vienna. It was edited in 1907 with an English translation by Lonsdale and Laura Ragg."

135. (Linguistically the *Isr* of the original means a load or burden). Here it signifies, in the opinion of

Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Rabi` b. Anas, Qatadah and Suddi, a covenant (Ibn Kathir).

136. According to `Ali (*ra*) what the words mean is: "then bear witness against your nations," (i.e. take covenant from your respective followers too: Au)" (Ibn Jarir). The same meaning is reported of Sa`id ibn Jubayr (Qurtubi); as also of Ibn `Abbas (Ibn Kathir).

In fact `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, followed by Mujahid, was of opinion that the original revelation was not "When Allah took covenant of the Prophets (*al nabiyyina*)", rather it was "When Allah took covenant of the people of the Book (*alladhina `utu al kitaba*)" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani and others). But the consensus of the *Ummah* is that the original revelation was "*al nabiyyina*" and not "*alladhina `utu al kitaba*" (Au.).

Ahmad has reported through `Abdullah b. Thabit that once `Umar appeared before the Prophet and said, "Messenger of Allah, I had asked one of my Jewish brothers of Qurayzah to note down for me some of the beautiful things there are in the *Tawrah*. Shall I read them out to you?" The Prophet's face darkened with anger. Ibn Thabit says I told

[83] Do they, then, seek a religion other than Allah's,¹³⁷ while to Him has submitted whoso is in the heavens and the earth willingly or unwillingly?¹³⁸ And to Him they shall be returned.¹³⁹

أَفَعَيِّرُ دِينَ اللَّهِ يَتَّبِعُونَ وَلَهُ أَسْلَمَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَكَرْهًا وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

‘Umar, “Can’t you see the Prophet’s reaction?” ‘Umar added hastily, “I am satisfied with Allah as the Lord, Islam as the religion, and Muhammad as the Messenger.” This pleased the Prophet. He said, “By Him in Whose Hand is my life, were Musa to appear before you now, this moment, and you were to abandon me and follow him, surely you’d be considered misguided. You are my share of the nations and I am your share of the Prophets” (Ibn Kathir).

137. It is reported that (a Jew) Ka’b b. al Ashraf and his colleagues argued with the (visiting) Christians (of Najran) over the right religion and turned to the Prophet for his opinion about which of the two groups was on the religion of Ibrahim. The Prophet told them, ‘Both of you have nothing to do with Ibrahim.’ Ka’b responded, ‘If you maintain that, then neither we accept your judgment nor your religion.’ Allah then revealed this verse (Qurtubi, Kashshaf, Razi, Alusi).

The appearance of this verse after the “Covenant” implies that today no religion is acceptable to Allah save that of belief in Prophet Muhammad ... and that common sense requires that man submit as all creations have submitted willingly or unwillingly ... in the sense that Allah alone creates and destroys them as He wishes, and they have no choice but to submit themselves to His will (Razi).

In Thanwi’s words: Allah’s commandments are of two types: those in which His creations have a choice: whether to act upon them or not, for instance Prayers, fasts etc. The second type is that in which the creations have no choice but to submit, such as hunger, sickness, death and so forth. Obedience to the second type of commands is referred to in the statement: “to Him has submitted whoso is in the heavens and the earth willingly or unwillingly.”

138. It is reported of Ibn ‘Abbas that he said: “If your beast behaves tough and gets uncontrollable, recite this

verse in its ear: ‘Do they ... unwillingly’” (Qurtubi). Shawkani quotes a *ḥadīth* also from Tabarani’s *Awsat* to this effect, but does not state its strength.

139. Mawdudi writes: “Here people are asked if they would follow a way of life different from Islam though they are part of the universe which is characterized by submission to God (Islam).”

Sayyid Qutb comments: “In its essence human nature has been created in harmony with the laws of nature that govern the rest of the world that itself the living as well as the non living of it is submitted to its Lord. So that, when man abandons his nature, he not only runs into conflict with the rest of the created world, but also with his own self. He is rendered miserable, torn off, bewildered and distressed and lives an exhausted life of the kind people are experiencing today, despite all the advances in science and despite the ease and comfort that the modern world offers. Today humanity is experiencing a bitter emptiness. It is a spiritual emptiness. Man’s inner being feels dissatisfied with the prevalent situation ... It is the emptiness that re-

sults from the loss of faith in God and Divine Guidance, which alone are capable of harmonizing and reconciling his activities with those of the wider physical world. Humanity is experiencing a burning estrangement in place of the cooling effects of nature; and a worrisome demoralization that is way off from the straight path and a simple program of life given by God. And hence it experiences miseries, tensions and bewilderment. It feels an emptiness, hunger and loss, and tries to escape from the realities with drugs and intoxicants, in a life characterized by schizophrenic behavior, maddening haste, foolish adventures and imbalances in behavior, crazy dress code and unhealthy eating habits...

“This bitter emptiness attacks humanity from all sides and follows it like a fearful phantom. Humanity tries to flee from it but ends up confronting the same bitter emptiness again and again...

“People, especially in the affluent Western world, cannot come to terms with themselves basically because they are unaware of the ultimate goal of their lives. They miss the real bliss of life because they do

[84] Tell (them), 'We have believed in Allah, in that which has been sent unto us, that which was revealed unto Ibrahim, Isma'il, Is-haq, Ya`qub, and the Tribes (of Ya`qub), that which was given to Musa, `Isa and (other) Prophets by their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them. And we have surrendered ourselves unto Him.'

قُلْ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَالنَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا تَفْرُقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

[85] And he who desires a religion other than Islam, shall not have it accepted of him.¹⁴⁰ He shall be of the losers in the next world.¹⁴¹

وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

[86] How shall Allah guide a people who disbelieved after they had declared faith and after they had (in private) attested to the truth of the (new) Messenger after receiving veritable proofs?¹⁴² And Allah guides not the transgressors.¹⁴³

كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ قَوْمًا كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَشَهِدُوا أَنَّ الرَّسُولَ حَقٌّ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

not know of a Divine Guidance that can harmonize their activities with the activities of the physical world at large. They are not able to harmonize their system of life with the system governing the world. They do not experience satisfaction because they do not know the Lord to whom they will return."

140. Majid quotes: "Islam is among the simplest of all the revealed religions, its simplicity is attractive and appealing alike to the man in the street and to the philosopher in the closet. Goethe fell into raptures over the Kuran and Gibbon found in it

a glorious testimony to the unity of God. Belief in One God and belief in Mohammed as the prophet of God: such is the quintessence of the Islamic faith.' (BK. IV. p. 2282)

141. Hence a *hadith* of the Prophet which says:

مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُنَا فَهُوَ رَدٌّ

"Whoever did a thing about which we have not issued a command, will have it rejected." (Ibn Kathir)

142. The immediate cause of revelation, according to Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and Suddi, was that a per-

[87] *Their recompense is that there shall rest on them the curse of Allah, that of the angels and of the people, combined.*¹⁴⁴

أُولَٰئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ أَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

[88] *They shall dwell in it forever. The chastisement shall not be lightened for them nor shall they be given respite.*

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا
هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾

[89] *Save for those who subsequently repented and made amends. Truly, Allah is very Forgiving, very Kind.*

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٨٩﴾

son called Al Haris b. Suwayd. He declared his Islam but subsequently apostatized. However, when verse 89 was revealed he repented, was accepted back and became a good Muslim. According to Mujahid he had run away and taken refuge with the Romans from where he wrote to ask if there was room for repentance. (The report is in Nasa'i: Qurtubi. And also in Ibn Hibban and Hakim, the latter marking it as *Sahih*: Ibn Kathir; also in Bayhaqi: Shawkani). `Ikrimah has added that there were no less than a dozen men who had apostatized at different times, took refuge with the Quraysh and then requested to be accepted back (Ibn Jarir, Razi).

Ibn `Abbas and Hasan are of the opinion that (whatever the other causes of revelation: Au.) it is the Jews and Christians who are alluded to in this verse. They believed in a

previous Prophet and then, despite the conviction in their hearts that Muhammad bore the signs of belonging to the same series, rejected him out of envy (Ibn Jarir).

143. It is said that when His slaves intend a deed Allah "creates" it so that they can adopt and perform it; so what the words, "*How shall Allah guide a people who ...*" mean is how can Allah create the deed (of belief) if they have not intended to perform it, rather intend to do the opposite of it? i.e., disbelieve (Razi).

144. Even those who do not curse them now will do it when they will see their fate in the Hereafter and look at them as the cause of that fate. Allah said (7: 38):

كُلَّمَا دَخَلَتْ أُمَّةٌ لَعَنَتْ أُخْتَهَا [الأعراف : ٣٨]

"Whenever a nation enters into it (Hell) it will curse its sister (na-

[90] Verily, those who disbelieved after their belief, and then worked increase in their disbelief,¹⁴⁵ their repentance shall not be accepted. They are truly the misguided.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ ثُمَّ أَزْدَادُوا كُفْرًا
لَنْ تَقْبَلَ تَوْبَتُهُمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الضَّالُّونَ ﴿٩٠﴾

[91] Verily, those who disbelieved and died in the state of disbelief shall not have earthfull of gold accepted of any of them, even if he were to seek ransom thereby.¹⁴⁶ For them will be a painful chastisement. And they shall have no helpers.¹⁴⁷

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَنْ
يُقْبَلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمْ مِلْءُ الْأَرْضِ ذَهَبًا وَلَوْ
افْتَدَى بِهِ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ وَمَا لَهُمْ
مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

tion)."

Allah also said (28: 25):

ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُ بَعْضُكُم بِبَعْضٍ وَلَيَعْنُ بَعْضُكُمْ
بَعْضًا [العنكبوت : ٢٥]

"And then, on the Day of Judgment, some of you will deny others, and will curse each other" (Razi).

145. The English rendering is based on the commentary of Hasan, Qatadah and Abu al `Aliyyah, as in Ibn Jarir, and Ata' al Khurasani as in Qurtubi and Shawkani. This is also one of the opinions of Razi (Au.).

The statement "their repentance shall not be accepted" could also be referring to the repentance that every soul makes at the time of death. But the repentance of that moment is of no worth (Hasan, Qatadah and Jiba'i: Alusi).

146. Anas b. Malik reports the Prophet:

جَاءَ بِالْكَافِرِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَيُقَالُ لَهُ أَرَأَيْتَ لَوْ كَانَ
لَكَ مِلْءُ الْأَرْضِ ذَهَبًا أَكُنْتَ تَقْتَدِي بِهِ فَيَقُولُ نَعَمْ
فَيُقَالُ لَهُ قَدْ كُنْتَ سُئِلْتَ مَا هُوَ أَيسَّرُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ

"An unbeliever will be brought forth on the Day of Judgment and asked: 'Do you think you would like to ransom yourself with an earth full of gold, were you to possess it?' He will reply, 'Yes, for sure.' It will be said, 'You were asked for something much simpler' (Ibn Jarir).

The report is in Bukhari and Muslim (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

147. Sabuni writes: Thus the Qur'an divided the unbelievers into three types. First, those who repented and whose repentance bore fruit; they were spoken of in verse 89. Second,

[92] You will never attain piety¹⁴⁸ unless you expend of what is dear to you. And, whatever you expend,¹⁴⁹ verily Allah is aware of it.¹⁵⁰

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٩٢﴾

those who repented but with an insincere repentance; they were hinted at in verse 90. And third, those who did not repent at all and died on unbelief; they are spoken of in verse 91.

The Connection: Verse 91 spoke of how a man's desire to spend an earth full of gold on the Day of Judgment will be of no avail. In these verses it is being said that now it is the time for man to spend in the way of Allah. Further, the best spending is that which is out of what is dear to man.

148. The *birr* of the original is defined as giving someone his rights in full.

149. It is reported in Bukhari and Muslim that when this verse was revealed, 'Umar came to the Prophet and said,

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي أَصَبْتُ أَرْضًا بِمَجْنَبٍ لَمْ أَصِبْ مَالًا قَطُّ
أَتَمَسَّ عِنْدِي مِنْهُ فَمَا تَأْمُرُ بِهِ قَالَ إِنْ شِئْتَ حَبَسْتَ
أَصْلَهَا وَتَصَدَّقْتَ بِهَا قَالَ فَتَصَدَّقَ بِهَا عُمْرُ أَنَّهُ لَا
بَيْعَ وَلَا يُوهَبُ وَلَا يُورَثُ وَتَصَدَّقَ بِهَا فِي الْفُقَرَاءِ
وَفِي الْقُرْبَى وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ
وَالضَّيْفِ لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَى مَنْ وَلِيَهَا أَنْ يَأْكُلَ مِنْهَا
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيُطْعِمَ غَيْرَ مُتَمَوِّلٍ

“Messenger of Allah. I have ob-

tained a piece of land in Khayber better than which I never obtained. What do you advise me about it?” The Prophet told him: “Keep the orchard with you but distribute its fruits among the poor.” Accordingly, 'Umar declared that it should not be sold, gifted, or inherited, rather, its produce should be spent on the poor, the kin, in releasing from debt, in the way of Allah, and on the guest. There shall be no sin upon him who looked after it that he should take for himself something reasonable and feed himself without excess (Ibn Kathir).

It is also reported that when Jalula' was captured 'Umar wrote to Abu Musa al Ash'ari to purchase a slave girl for him. When she arrived at Madinah she struck 'Umar (because of her beauty: Kashshaf). 'Umar recited this verse and freed her. It is also reported (in the *Sahihayn*: Ibn Kathir; also Tirmidhi and Nasa'i: Alusi) of Abu Talha that either when this verse was revealed or that of *surah al Baqarah* (“Who is it that will offer Allah a

goodly loan, so that Allah may increase it manifold? - 2: 245”), he told the Prophet that his orchard at Bayruha was his donation to the cause of Allah. (It was adjacent to the mosque. Its water was sweet and fruits abundant. The Prophet occasionally visited Abu Talha there to be treated with its fruits: Ibn Kathir). The Prophet instructed him to distribute it among the poor of his kinsfolk. It is also reported that when this verse was revealed Zayd b. Haritha came to the Prophet with his horse called “Sayl” which was quite dear to him and said, “Messenger of Allah, this is my contribution in the way of Allah. The Prophet accepted it and gave it to his son Usama b. Zayd. Zayd ibn Haritha protested: “Messenger of Allah, I gave it in charity.” The Prophet told him: “Allah accepted it as such” (Ibn Jarir, Kashshaf, Razi, Qurtubi, Shawkani).

It is also said that a man asked Abu Dharr about the most virtuous deed in Islam. Abu Dharr replied: “Prayers are the pillar of Islam. And jihad is the pinnacle of deeds. As for charity, well, it is really a wonderful thing.” The man said, “You did not mention what at least to me is more virtuous.” Abu Dharr asked him what it was. He said, “Fasts.” Abu Dharr told him: “Very near it, but not belong-

ing to the same category.” Then he recited this verse (Ibn Jarir).

It is also reported of Abu Dharr that he had guests. He told his shepherd, “Bring me the best of camels I have.” When the man brought an old one, Abu Dharr told him: “You have not been honest to me!” The shepherd said: “True. I spotted the best of the camels, but I was reminded of the day when you will need it most and hence kept it back.” Abu Dharr told him: “The day I’ll need it most will be the day I will be lowered into the grave” (Kashshaf).

Rashid Rida adds another incident to his *Manar* taken from “*Ihya*” (of Ghazali): ‘Abdullah ibn Ja’far had the occasion to seek a night’s rest in an orchard looked after by a boyish black slave. When the slave sat down for his dinner, a dog appeared at the door. He threw a piece of bread at him. Then another, and then another, until he was left with none. ‘Abdullah asked him what he earned every day. The young man said, ‘What you have seen me throwing at the dog.’ ‘Why then did you give away all of it?’ he asked. ‘Because,’ said the boy, ‘This place has no dogs. It looks like he came from a distance and so I did not like to turn him back disappointed.’ ‘Abdullah asked

[93] All food was lawful to the Children of Israel save for what Israel forbade unto himself before the revelation of Tawrah. Tell them, 'Produce the Tawrah and recite it if you are true.'¹⁵¹

كُلُّ الطَّعَامِ كَانَ حَلَالًا لِّبَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ إِلَّا مَا حَرَّمَ إِسْرَآئِيلُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تُنَزَّلَ التَّوْرَةُ فُلْ قَاتُوا بِالْتَّوْرَةِ فَاثْلَوْهَا إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

him, 'And what are you going to do now?' The boy said, 'I think I'll fold my legs a little tonight.' `Abdullah was so impressed that he purchased the orchard and gifted it to the boy.

However, what is meant, adds *Kashshaf*, is that one ought to spend a part of what is dear to him, and not necessarily all that is dear to him, (since moderation should never be lost sight of: Shafi`, and since the text has the word "*min ma*" added to it: Au.).

150. Mufti Shafi` says that according to the majority of commentators, the implication is general, so that, all that will be included which one may expend in the way of Allah, whether by way of the obligatory charity, i.e., *zakah*, (to which Ibn `Abbas has referred in one of his statements: Au.), or general philanthropic measures. Further, the verse does not discourage spending off what is surplus.

151. Wahidi has reported through Kalbi that when the Prophet (*saws*) said that he followed the religion of

Ibrahim, the Jews objected: "How can you say that when you eat of the camel's flesh and drink its milk." The Prophet told them that these were not prohibited in the religion of Ibrahim. They said they were. Allah (*swt*) revealed this verse which meant to say that it was not unlawful in the Law of Ibrahim. It came to be prohibited later, so that many things that were permissible earlier were made unlawful to Israelites because of their rebellion as stated in another verse (4: 160, 161):

فَبَطَّلْنَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمًا عَلَيْهِمْ طَيِّبَاتٍ أُحِلَّتْ لَهُمْ وَبِصَدِّهِمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا (١٦٠) وَأَخَذْنَاهُمُ الرِّبَا وَقَدْ نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَأَكْلَاهُمْ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا [النساء : ١٦٠ ، ١٦١]

"And, We forbade those who had adopted Judaism good and wholesome things that were previously lawful unto them, because of their transgression, their hindering in the way of Allah, their acceptance of usury while it was forbidden to them and because of their devouring people's property. And We

have prepared for the unbelievers in them a painful chastisement."
(Alusi)

According to Ibn `Abbas and Qatadah, (the report is in Hakim who declared it trustworthy: Alusi) all food was permissible to the Children of Israel. But as Israel (Ya`qub) was afflicted with a disease called *`irq al nasa'* (sciatica), he vowed that if he was cured, he would stop consuming soups (according to some reports, camel meat and its milk products). When he was cured, he kept his word, that is, forbade himself these items. His followers also continued to shy away from these things until Allah revealed the *Tawrah* that cleared the situation by declaring what was lawful to them and what was unlawful. The Jews told Prophet Muhammad that *Tawrah* had declared unlawful unto the Children of Israel what Israel had declared unlawful unto himself (i.e. camel meat, its soup etc.). But Allah refuted them with this verse (Ibn Jarir).

It is also reported that the Jews did not come back with *Tawrah* to argue their point (*Kashshaf*, Qurtubi).

Razi adds that camel meat being dear to him, Ya`qub (*asws*) perhaps intended to suppress his carnal self by the vow.

According to another version a group of Jews came to the Prophet to enquire what it was that Israel had made unlawful unto himself. The Prophet told them that it was camel meat and its soup which he happened to be fond of (Ibn Jarir). The full version of the *hadith* is in Tirmidhi (Qurtubi). Ibn Jarir also adds that until his time (350 A.H.) camel meat and its soup were taboo to the Jews.

What the verses seem to be saying, maintains Ibn Kathir, is that there is nothing in new revelations that adds or deletes from the list of prohibitions. Marriage between real brothers and sisters was not incest at the time of Adam. A man marrying two real sisters at one time was not taboo which Ya`qub had done. Likewise, the meat of all animals was lawful at the time of Nuh. Therefore, what's strange in this new Prophet, Muhammad, to be declaring some things unlawful that were lawful in the *Shari`ah* of Musa, or vice versa,

[94] Whoso fastens a lie upon Allah after this, such then are the transgressors.

فَمَنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ مِنْ بَعْدِ
ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

[95] Tell (them) 'Allah spoke the truth', and follow the religion of Ibrahim, the upright, who was not of the polytheists.

قُلْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ فَاتَّبِعُوا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا
وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

[96] Verily, the first House (of worship)¹⁵² appointed for mankind was that at Bakkah,¹⁵³ Holy,¹⁵⁴ and a guidance for the peoples.

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ
مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٦﴾

for the people of the Book to use it as a pretext to reject him? The same applies to the House of worship at Makkah. If the Jews and Christians treat true religion as originating from Ibrahim, then, is he not the one who built the Ka`bah? How can they refuse to accept the new Revelation?

152. We have a *hadith* in this context:

عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ قَالَ: قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! أَيُّ مَسْجِدٍ
وُضِعَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوَّلُ؟ قَالَ: "الْمَسْجِدُ الْحَرَامُ"
قُلْتُ: ثُمَّ أَيُّ؟ قَالَ: "الْمَسْجِدُ الْأَقْصَى" قُلْتُ: كَمْ
بَيْنَهُمَا؟ قَالَ: "أَرْبَعُونَ سَنَةً".

Abu Dharr enquired the Prophet about which house of worship was built first. He replied: "Masjid al Haram." "Which one after that?" asked Abu Dharr. He said: "Masjid al Aqsa." Abu Dharr asked: "What was the time gap?" "Forty years" the Prophet replied (Ibn Jarir, Razi).

(The above *hadith* is in Muslim: Qurtubi; and in Bukhari: Ibn Kathir).

Further, in view of a *hadith* in Nasa'i which says that Sulayman built the house of worship in Jerusalem (Masjid al Aqsa), and that, there was a long time gap between him and Ibrahim, it is probable that both the Houses were built earlier, and both reconstructed on old sites (Qurtubi).

153. According to many authorities of the first and second generations, since linguistically "Bakkah" is for a place crowded by men and women, it is applicable to the area immediately around the Ka`bah, or what is within the inner precincts of the Masjid al Haram. As for what is outside of it, it is Makkah. Some others have explained Bakkah as Makkah (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Majid adds: "There is mention of

[97] In it are signs manifest, and the Station of Ibrahim.¹⁵⁵ Whosoever entered into it is in security.¹⁵⁶ People who afford the passage to it,¹⁵⁷ owe to Allah pilgrimage to the House. As for him who denies,¹⁵⁸ (may know that) Allah is independent of the creations.

فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مِّمَّا فِرَافِهُمُ وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ
كَانَ آمِنًا وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنْ
اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ
عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾

a name of the valley of Baca in the Bible (Ps. 84: 6). The old translators gave the word the meaning of 'a valley of weeping,' but better sense seems to have come now. According to more recent of the Biblical scholars, the word 'signifies rather any valley lacking water' (JE. II, p. 415)."

And, "The sanctuary at Makkah possessed a worldwide fame, surpassing even that of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher or St. Peter at Rome' (ERE. I. p. 667)."

154. Razi comments: (The fact of the place being Holy has many aspects which can be explained variously. One aspect is that it bestows spiritual blessings upon those who orient themselves towards it, especially those who happen to be in close vicinity, whether visitors or permanent residents. The explanation is as follows: Au.). Imagine Ka'bah as a dot, like the dot at the center of a circle. Around this dot are concentric circles of devotees standing in

rows after rows, (all over the world, at any time of the day: Alusi). Many of those who stand in these rows are men of heart and spirit whose whole attention is focused on Ka'bah. Thus, the Ka'bah is in constant spiritual focus of powerful personalities. Their spiritual attention converges on a single point: its center. Obviously, the hearts and spirits of those who are in similar postures, immediately around the Ka'bah, absorb these spiritual lights as they converge upon the Ka'bah and are positively affected by them.

Thus Ka'bah becomes a means of guidance to the peoples of the world to which the rest of the verse alludes (Au.).

155. The Station of Ibrahim, according to Qatadah and Mujahid, is one of the signs. The others are the Zam Zam spring, Ibrahim's foot marks on the stone he used to climb while constructing the house, the Black Stone, etc. (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

(It is generally believed that) the Haram or the *Bayt al `Atiq*, which is the *mataf* of the people of the earth, is right under the *Bayt al Ma'mur* which is the *mataf* of those in the heavens, that is, the House which those in the heavens circumambulate (Sabuni).

See note 247, *surah al Baqarah* for explanation of the Station of Ibrahim.

156. Accordingly, the opinion of Ibn `Abbas, Ibn `Umar, Suddi and others, (also of Sha'bi and Imām Abu Hanifah: Razi, Qurtubi; and Imām Ahmad too: *Rawa'e*), is that if a man commits murder and takes refuge in the haram, he should not be forced out until he surrenders. It is only after he voluntarily surrenders himself that he may be arrested, convicted, and punished. However, Ibn Zubayr, Mujahid and Hasan are of the opinion that he may be forced out and then arrested (Ibn Jarir). But the opinion of the Shafe'iyyah and Malikiyyah is that he might be arrested even inside the Haram (*Rawa'e*).

Zamakhshari, Razi and Qurtubi have pointed out that it could also mean that he who entered the haram in sincere devotion will be in peace from the Fire.

157. The words "*afford the passage*"

of the original has been interpreted by the Prophet, as quoted by Ibn `Umar, (and others, and in several *hadith* works: Ibn Kathir) as:

”الزاد والراحلة“

“Provision (for the journey), and the means of travel” (Ibn Jarir).

Good health, safety of passage and some others are, adds Ibn Jarir, additional conditions; as it is also incumbent upon the pilgrim to arrange for provision for those dependent on him back home, says Qurtubi.

A *hadith* preserved by Imām Ahmad and Muslim reports Abu Hurayrah as saying that one day the Prophet delivered a sermon during which he said:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ فَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمُ الْحَجَّ فَحُجُّوا
فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ: أَكُلَّ عَامٍ؟ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَسَكَتَ. حَتَّى
قَالَهَا ثَلَاثًا. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:
”لَوْ قُلْتُ: نَعَمْ. لَوَجِبَتْ. وَلَكَمَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ“. ثُمَّ قَالَ:
”ذَرُونِي مَا تَرَكْتُمْ. فَإِنَّمَا هَلَكٌ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ بِكَثْرَةِ
سُؤَالِهِمْ وَاحْتِلَافِهِمْ عَلَى أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ. فَإِذَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ
فَاتَّبِعُوا مِنْهُ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ. وَإِذَا نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ فَدَعُوهُ

“People. Allah has declared Hajj obligatory on you. Therefore go to Hajj.” A man got up and asked: “Is it an yearly obligation, O Messenger of Allah?” The Prophet kept silent until the man repeated his question three times. Finally

he replied: "Were I to say yes, it would have become a yearly obligation on you and you would not have been able to bear it." Then he added: "Let me alone until I leave you alone. Many nations before you were destroyed because of their excessive questioning and their disagreement with their Prophets. Therefore, when I order a thing, do it to the best of your ability; and when I forbid a thing, avoid it" (Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

158. That is, one who denies the obligatory nature of Hajj (Ibn Abbas, Dahhak, Hasan, Mujahid: Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). Accordingly, if one has the means and facilities but does not perform Hajj, he will be questioned about it (Razi). Further, the responsibility cannot be absolved by others making pilgrimage on his behalf (Qurtubi).

This is in view of the *hadith* related by 'Ali which reports the Prophet as having said:

من ملك زاداً وراحلة ولم يحج بيت الله فلا يضره
مات يهودياً أو نصرانياً

"Whoever had provision and means of conveyance that will take him to the House of Allah, but did not make the pilgrimage,

may die, for all we care, a Jew or a Christian" (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Razi).

Ibn Kathir and Shanqiti point out that the above report is *Da'if* (weak), but *Sahih* as a statement of 'Umar.

'Umar also used to say, (according to a *Sahih* report in Suyuti) that he would all but strike *Jizyah* on those who do not perform Hajj (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Legal Points

1. The great majority of jurists are of the opinion that Hajj can be delayed for reasons of convenience after it becomes obligatory, although it is advisable to perform it as soon as possible (Qurtubi).

2. If a non-adult who has performed Hajj, later achieves maturity, and can afford the journey, Hajj is still obligatory on him (Qurtubi).

3. If Hajj becomes obligatory on one who suffers from a disability of a permanent nature, for example extreme old age, then, according to 'Ali, Thawri, Abu Hanifah, Ibn al Mubarak, Ahmad and Ishaq, he should send someone in his stead (Qurtubi).

4. According to Imām Malik, if one

[98] Say, 'O people of the Book! Why do you deny the signs of Allah, while Allah is witness to what you do?'

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَىٰ مَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾

[99] Say, 'O people of the Book! Why do you prevent those who believe from the way of Allah, seeking to make it crooked while you are witnesses (to its veracity)?¹⁵⁹ And Allah is not unaware of what you do.'

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَن آمَنَ تَبْعُونَهَا عِوَجًا وَأَنتُمْ شُهَدَاءُ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

has enough provision but does not possess a means of conveyance, Hajj is still obligatory on him, if he can walk up the distance. (Dahhak was of this opinion and when objected, he retorted that would a man to inherit someone in Makkah, go there at all cost to collect his share or not?). Conversely, if he has conveyance, but not provision, but is confident of earning it on the way (without having to beg the people), then too Hajj is binding on him (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

5. As for a woman, according to the Hanafiyyah it is obligatory on her to travel in the company of a *mahram* or her husband. However, Shafe'iyyah and Hanabilah believe that a *mahram* is not a strict requirement, even if recommended, on the condition that she feels herself safe in the company of a group of women. However, this, according to them is for Hajj alone, and is not applicable

to *`Umrah* which she must perform in the company of a *mahram* or husband (*Rawa'e*).

159. It is reported that Shas b. Qays, (some have named him Shammas) a very old Jew and a tough opponent of Islam, happened to pass by Muslims of Aws and Khazraj sitting around engaged in a happy gossip. He was reminded of the enmity between the two tribes in pre-Islamic times. He felt intensely envious. He sent a young poet to recite poems said in connection with Bu'ath, which was a fierce battle fought in pre Islamic times in which Aws had overcome Khazraj. With the recitation, men began to argue with each other over various events of the battle. That revived memories and opened old wounds. Quickly, swords were drawn and men lined up, with Aws on one side and Khazraj on the other, for a trial of strength. The news reached the Prophet. He rushed to

[100] O those who have believed! If you follow a set of those that were given the Book (earlier), they will surely turn you, after you have believed, into unbelievers.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ يَرُدُّوكُم بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ كَافِرِينَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

[101] And how can you disbelieve while Allah's revelations are being recited unto you, and His Messenger is in your midst?¹⁶⁰ And he who holds fast to Allah is surely guided to the straight path.¹⁶¹

وَكَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ وَأَنْتُمْ تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ وَفِيكُمْ رَسُولُهُ وَمَن يَعْتَصِم بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾

the spot and appealed to them in words: "O Ansar. Allah! Allah! Will you respond to *Jahilyy* calls even the while I am in your midst? Will you do that even after Allah has guided you to Islam, rid you of unbelief, and endeared you to each other? Are you going to return to the unbelief of pre Islamic times?" This cooled passions. They threw down their arms and began to weep. Then they embraced each other and left the spot in the company of the Prophet. Thereupon Allah revealed this and the following two verses (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi).

It could also be referring, adds Ibn Jarir, as is the opinion of Suddi, Qatadah and Hasan, to the misguidance that the Jewish rabbis used to cause by discouraging people from joining the ranks of the Prophet (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

160. A report says that the Prophet asked his followers:

"أي المؤمنين أعجب إليكم إيماناً؟" قالوا: الملائكة، قال: "وكيف لا يؤمنون والوحي ينزل عليهم"، قالوا: فنحن، قال: "وكيف لا تؤمنون وأنا بين أظهركم"، قالوا: فأبي الناس أعجب إيماناً؟ قال: "قوم يجيئون من بعدكم يحدون صحفاً يؤمنون بما فيها".

"What kind of believers sound remarkable to you?" They answered: "Angels." He said: "Why should they not believe when revelations are sent to them." They said: "Then we." He said: "Why should you not believe when I am in your midst?" They asked: "Then which of the believers are remarkable?" He said: "A people after you who will find the Revelation and believe in its contents" (Ibn Kathir).

The report is from Hakim, Bazzar, Abu Ya`la and others, with some versions, in different words, in Ahmad,

[102] Believers! Fear Allah¹⁶² in the manner He ought to be feared,¹⁶³ and die not save as Muslims.¹⁶⁴

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

which, all put together, give strength to the *hadith* (Au.).

161. Qatadah has said: As for the Qur'an, it is before you. As for the Prophet, his *Sunnah* is his substitute (Ibn Jarir, Razi Qurtubi).

“And the point is,” adds Majid, “that there is no earthly reason for anyone to go back to irreligion so long as the Qur'an and *Sunnah* are in existence.”

162. The word in the original is a derivation from the root waqa which is used for guarding oneself, shielding, or safeguarding. The adjective taqwa has been derived from this as the root. It therefore carries the same connotations (in addition to denoting piety, godliness etc.: Au.). Now, since the above meaning implies fear, as it is out of fear that one tries to safeguard oneself from something, and, since a suitable term does not exist in other languages, the word taqwa is commonly rendered and understood as fear. However, it primarily means to guard oneself from breaking Allah's bounds out of fear of His wrath. It has at least three levels. One, to desist from ascribing partners or equals

unto Allah; second, to avoid doing everything that will evoke His anger and third, which is really the share of only the Prophets and the awliya', to empty one's heart of all that is “apart from Allah” and to put it on a permanent course of “His remembrance” (Shafi').

163. What is the implication of, “the manner He ought to be feared?” It is, according to Ibn Mas'ud's report (in of Hakim who declares it *Sahih*: Shawkani),

أَنْ يَطَاعَ فَلَا يَعْصَى، وَيُشْكَرَ فَلَا يَكْفُرُ، وَيَذَكَّرَ فَلَا يَنْسَى

“Obeyed and not disobeyed, thanked and not denied, remembered and not forgotten (Zamakhshari, Razi, Alusi). But Ibn Kathir thinks that the above is a statement of Ibn Mas'ud.

According to another report, “that He may be obeyed and not disobeyed, thanked and not denied,” (without the last part of the above report) – in a *hadith* which has been evaluated by Hakim as *Sahih* (Shawkani).

Qatadah, Rabi', Suddi and Ibn Zayd,

however, say that the verse is abrogated by that of *surah al Taghabun* verse 16 which says: “So fear Allah, to the extent possible” (Ibn Jarir). But some say that the meaning of the words, “the manner He ought to be feared,” is that He should be feared to the extent possible; and hence there is no abrogation. Ibn `Abbas’ statement strengthens it who said that this is not abrogated, rather, “the manner He ought to be feared” is to struggle in Allah’s cause to the best of one’s ability, not to be discouraged by the criticism of the critics, and to judge rightfully, even if it goes against one’s kinsfolk (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

A tradition in Tirmidhi, Nasa’i, Ibn Hibban, and Hakim, who has declared the narration *Sahih* on the criteria of Bukhari and Muslim, related by Ibn `Abbas reports,

عن ابن عباس أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَرَأَ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ: {اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ} قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: “لَوْ أَنَّ قَطْرَةً مِنَ الزُّقُومِ قُطِرَتْ فِي دَارِ الدُّنْيَا لَأَفْسَدَتْ عَلَى أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا مَعَاشَهُمْ، فَكَيْفَ يَمُنُّ بِكَوْنِ طَعَامُهُ”.

The Prophet recited this verse, “Fear Allah in the manner He ought to be feared, and die not save as Muslims,” and then added, “If a drop of Zaqquq was dropped on to the earth, it would

destroy the livelihood of the peoples of the world. So what do you think of him whose food will be nothing but Zaqquq?” (Ibn Kathir).

164. Accordingly, `Abdullah ibn `Amr reports the Prophet in a *hadith* of Ahmad as having said:

فَمَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يُرَخَّجَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَيَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَلْيُذَكِّرْهُ مَبْنِيَّتَهُ وَهُوَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْتِي إِلَى النَّاسِ مَا يُحِبُّ أَنْ يُؤْتَى إِلَيْهِ

“Whoever wants to save himself from the Fire and enter Paradise, may die not but in the state of faith in Allah. And let him deal with the people in the manner he would like to be dealt with himself.”

In another report, also of Ahmad, Jabir says he heard the Prophet say three times before his death:

لَا يَمُوتَنَّ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا وَهُوَ يُحْسِنُ الظَّنَّ بِاللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

“Let not one of you die but on hopeful terms with Allah, the Powerful, the Honored.”

Abu Hurayrah has reported him in another *hadith* of Ahmad in words:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قَالَ أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي إِنْ ظَنَّ بِي خَيْرًا فَلَهُ وَإِنْ ظَنَّ شَرًّا فَلَهُ

[103] Hold fast unto the Rope of Allah together,¹⁶⁵ and divide not yourselves.¹⁶⁶ And remember Allah's favor unto you when you were enemies¹⁶⁷ He joined your hearts in love¹⁶⁸ so that by His grace you became brothers.¹⁶⁹ And you were at the edge of the pit of Fire,¹⁷⁰ but He rescued you from it.¹⁷¹ Thus does Allah make clear His revelations for you, haply you may be guided.

وَاَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا
وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءَ
فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ
إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ
فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

“Allah says, ‘I am with the faith and trust of My bondsman with Me. If he expects good from Me, then that is for him. But if he expects evil of Me, then that is for him.’” This *hadith* can also be found with the *Sheikhayn* in varying words (Ibn Kathir).

In other words, what's meant is that a believer should die not but in a state of surrender of the heart (Alusi). That is, the accent is on the condition of the heart rather than on deeds (Au.).

For further commentaries refer note 167 of *surah al Baqarah*.

165. According to Ibn Mas`ud, the habl of the original is the *jama`ah* (the community of Muslims); but to Ibn `Abbas thought that it is the “covenant.” However, according to Qatadah, Suddi, Dahhak and, according to some reports, Ibn Mas`ud himself, it is the Qur`an. Their opin-

ion seems to be based on a *hadith* (termed as *Hasan* in *Jami` Saghir: Manar*) in which the Prophet (*saws*) said:

كتاب الله، هو حبل الله الممدود من السماء إلى الأرض

“The Book of Allah: It is the Rope of Allah that has been extended down from the heavens to the earth” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Razi comments: Since the path that believers are required to take is a very narrow one, the likelihood of a person slipping away always remains high, except in case of him who holds a rope that runs across. This rope then, in view of the above, can be variously explained as (remaining true to the) covenant, or, the Qur`an, or the *jama`ah* (since the *Ummah* has been assured of not swerving off the path as a whole: Au.). Accordingly, it is reported of `Ali that the Prophet said:

إِنَّهَا سَتَكُونُ فِتْنَةً ، قَالَ : قُلْتُ : فَمَا الْمَخْرَجُ مِنْهَا
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ؟ قَالَ : كِتَابُ اللَّهِ فِيهِ تَبَأُ مَا قَبْلَكُمْ وَخَبَرُ
مَا بَعْدَكُمْ وَحُكْمُ مَا بَيْنَكُمْ ، هُوَ الْفَصْلُ لَيْسَ بِأَهْزَلُ
، مَنْ يَرْدْهُ مِنْ جَبَّارٍ قَصَمَهُ اللَّهُ ، وَمَنْ ابْتَعَى الْهَدَى
فِي غَيْرِهِ ، أَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ ، هُوَ حَبْلُ اللَّهِ الْمَتِينُ

“Soon there are going to be trials and tribulations.” I asked, “What’s the way out, Messenger of Allah?” He said, “The Book of Allah. It has the news of those that were before you as well as of those that will come after you. It is the judge in your affairs. It is the deciding factor, no plaything. Whoever rejected it out of contumely, will be broken by Allah; whoever sought guidance from apart of it, will be misguide by Allah; it is Allah’s Firm Rope” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Kathir points out that perhaps this is `Ali’s statement.

Mufti Shafi` remarks: Now, a black man cannot become white, an Arab cannot become non Arab. Geographical, national, racial, cultural and linguistic considerations cannot unite people. Rather, these are the very dividing factors. Therefore, it is meaningful that Allah mentioned the adhering to His Rope the Qur`ān and *Sunnah* before exhorting the Muslims to beware of divi-

sions. When we speak of the unity of ranks, we know that it cannot be obtained without the unity of ideas, belief, and purposes. That will come from the Qur`ān and *Sunnah*. It is only when we hold fast unto them, accepting them as the sole criteria, guide and judge, that the much sought after unity of ranks (of which ‘unity of action’ is a necessary corollary: Au.), will be achieved. Every other method will fail miserably (abridged).

166. Ibn Mas`ud has been reported as saying: “People, hold fast unto obedience and unto the *jama`ah*, for it is the Rope that Allah spoke of. And what you dislike of the obedience and the *jama`ah* is better than what you would like in separation.” The Prophet has said (in a *hadith* of Tirmidhi which he termed *Sahih*: Qurtubi and Alusi from Abu Da`ud, Ibn Majah and Hakim, the last mentioned declaring it trustworthy: Shawkani),

وَأَنَّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ تَفَرَّقَتْ عَلَى ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ مِلَّةً ،
وَتَفَرَّقَ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ مِلَّةً كُلُّهُمْ فِي النَّارِ
إِلَّا مِلَّةً وَاحِدَةً ، قَالَ وَمَنْ هِيَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ؟ قَالَ : مَا
أَنَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَصْحَابِي

“Verily the Children of Israel divided themselves into seventy two sects. My followers will divide themselves into seventy

three sects, all of them would be in the Fire except one.” He was asked, “Who will they be, Messenger of Allah?” He answered, “That upon which I and my Companions are” (Razi).

Ibn Kathir adds his remark that the *hadith* is *Hasan Gharib* and reports that the Prophet also said in a report of Muslim:

”إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْضَى لَكُمْ ثَلَاثًا وَيَكْرَهُ لَكُمْ ثَلَاثًا فَيَرْضَى لَكُمْ أَنْ تَعْبُدُوهُ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا، وَأَنْ تَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا، وَيَكْرَهُ لَكُمْ قِيلَ وَقَالَ، وَكَثْرَةُ السُّؤَالِ. وَإِضَاعَةُ الْمَالِ“.

“Allah approves of three things and disapproves of three. The three things He approves are that you worship Him, ascribe no partners unto Him and hold fast unto the Rope of Allah instead of dividing yourselves. And He disapproves of three: *Qil wa qal* (lit.: ‘this was said and that was said’), asking too many questions, and squandering of wealth.” (The allusion by “*qil wa qal*” is to pointless argumentation in which unknown references are cited, and by “asking too many questions” is meant seeking out unnecessary details about what is *halal* and what is *haram*. Au.) – Qurtubi.

Nevertheless, this does not rule out

differences of opinions in the details of things, nor seeking them is forbidden. (That was primarily forbidden during the Prophet’s time: Au.). In our times, there is no escape from them especially in judicial matters. Also, they are not differences that lead to division. (It is the following of one’s base desires, and whims of the heart that do. Remaining adhered to the Qur’ān and *Sunnah*, one can differ in details: Shafi’). The Companions too differed in their opinions, yet they remained on terms of great love with each other. Such differences of opinion alone are discouraged that lead to the loss of love and trust (Qurtubi).

Indeed, adds Sheikh `Abduh, such divisions are natural as Allah said (11: 118,119):

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ (١١٨) إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ رَبُّكَ وَلِذَلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ [هود : ١١٨ ، ١١٩]

“Had Allah wished, He could have made the people a single community. They have always remained differing with each other; except him He showed mercy. That is how He has created them.”

But their differences ought to be of the type as that occurs between brothers of a family. This is how it was with the *Salaf al Saleh* (the righ-

teous predecessors). For example, Imām Malik who was from Madinah, and Imām Abu Hanifah who was based in Iraq, differed on many issues. But that did not affect their relationship which remained rooted in love, trust and respect for each other. Their followers, unfortunately, followed them in juristic details, but not in their exemplary lives. As a community, Muslims ought to be like a leaded wall following the famous *hadith* of Muslim quoted by Nu`man b. Bashir:

مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادُّهِمْ وَتَرَاحُمِهِمْ وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ، مَثَلُ
الْجَسَدِ. إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ عُضْوٌ، تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ
الْجَسَدِ بِالسَّهَرِ وَالْحُمَّى

“The example of the Muslims in their love, kindness and tenderness towards each other is that of the body itself, of which if one member suffers an ailment, the rest of them rally around in support with sleeplessness and fever” (Manar).

At this point Qurtubi lists down six major sects in Islam that later divided themselves into 12 sub groups each. He names each of these seventy-two sub groups and their main points of differences with the general body of the *Ummah*, and adds that all those who will separate out to form a new sect in the future, will ultimately

join up and could be classified with one of them. The six main sects are: “Al Harouriyyah [or Khawarij: Au.], (of whom Mu`tazilah are but one sub-sect), Al Qadariyyah, Al Jahmiyyah (Zanadiqah is a sub-sect of this group), Al Murji`ah, Al Rafidah (of which the Shi`ah, the `Alawiyyah etc. are but sub-sects), and Al Jabriyyah.

Muhammad `Abduh had said: In our times, the Westerners, after having divided themselves on the basis of race, have also influenced us and there is a tendency to look at Muslims as of different nationalities. This is something that needs to be strongly condemned and resisted.

167. The allusion is to the incident that took place at the provocation of Shas b. Qays (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Refer note 159 of this *surah*.

Majid remarks: “Internecine warfare in pre Islamic Arabia has been proverbial and pagan Arabia, divided into mutually hostile clans and tribes, very much after the fashion of modern European states, presented the sight of a veritable armed camp. ‘Of the time of ignorance which preceded Mohamet, seventeen hundred battles are recorded by tradition: hostility was embittered with the rancor of civil faction; and the recital, in

prose or verse, of an obsolete feud was sufficient to rekindle the same passions among the descendants of the hostile tribes. In private life, every man, at the best every family was the judge and avenger of its own cause.” (GRE V, p.323)

168. Hence, every man whose objectives are this worldly alone, will be at odds with the people. In contrast, everyone whose aim is to serve Allah, will have no grudge against anyone. The secret of this is that his eyes move up from the created to the Creator, as he realizes that all are bound by His *Qada'* and *Qadr*. He considers it pointless to be angry with the people. It is said that the Gnostic will always be soft (towards the people) and will admonish them. He will neither be harsh with them nor blame them for his perception is through the secrets of the *Qada'* (Razi).

169. Majid quotes P. K. Hitti: “Within a brief span of mortal life Muhammad called forth out of uncompromising material a nation never united before, in a country that was hitherto but a geographical expression” (*History of the Arabs*, p. 121, 122).

170. In the words, “at the edge of the pit” is the implication that that’s the distance between life and death. One step forward, and that’s the end of life, after which it is the pit of Fire (Razi).

171. Qatadah is reported to have said in explanation of these words: “The pre-Islamic Arabs were the most despised of people, leading a hard life, whose misguidance was evident: bodies naked, stomachs unfed and heads bent down between two rocks the Romans and the Persians. By Allah, there wasn’t anything in their lands that they could be envied of. Whoever of them lived, led a miserable life; whoever died, entered the Fire. Fed, but unable to feed. By Allah, we do not know a people on earth who were of resources as little as theirs, and a people as despicable as they. This was the situation until Allah sent Islam, gave you the Book, sanctioned jihad, provided you sustenance by means of it, appointed you leaders over the people, and all that you see now. Therefore, give thanks to Him for His favors, for your Lord is the Bestower who approves of the thanks-giving. Exalted is our Lord, and Holy” (Ibn Jarir).

[104] And¹⁷² let there be a group of people among you¹⁷³ inviting to virtue,¹⁷⁴ enjoining the good and forbidding the evil.¹⁷⁵ Such indeed are the prosperers.

وَلْتَكُن مِّنكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

[105] And be not like those who divided themselves and disputed after clear signs had reached them. For such indeed is a mighty chastisement.

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾

This is a reminder especially for the people of Aws and Khazraj, who had fought between themselves a 120 year long war before the arrival of the Prophet, that if not for Allah they would not have found guidance. Weren't the Jewish scholars concealing the guidance from them all along? (Ibn Jarir).

172. It may be noted that in the earlier verses Allah censured the unbelievers for two things, first, their disbelief (verse 97): "Say, 'O people of the Book! Why do you deny the signs of Allah, while Allah is witness to what you do?'" And second, their efforts to spread unbelief and distort the truth (verse 98): "Say, 'O people of the Book! Why do you prevent those who believe from the way of Allah, seeking to make it crooked while you are witnesses (to its veracity)?'" Therefore, when He followed it up with an address to the believers, He exhorted them, in contrast to the unbelievers, with two

things: one, belief in Him and fear of Him (verses 102, 103), and two, spread of faith and virtue (verses 104, 105) Razi.

173. The min of this occurrence (in *minkum*) is for *tab'id* (that is, "portioning", or "separating." It carries the sense of "some," rather than all). This is because *al amr bi'l ma'ruf* and *al nahyu 'an 'l munkar* is a conditional obligation and is not for him who has not understood what *ma'aruf* and *munkar* are; and, therefore, does not know how to go about the work. It might happen in the case of an ignorant man that he will enjoin the *munkar* and forbid the *ma'ruf*, or might know the ruling of his own school of law or thought but not that of others and might end up trying to forbid what is not *munkar*. Or, he might be harsh where he should be mild and mild where he should be harsh. Or, he might go about preaching him

preaching whom will cause nothing but increase in obduracy (Razi).

Al amr bi 'l ma`ruf wa 'l nabyu `an 'l munkar

As for the status of the act of enjoining virtue (whether it is in itself obligatory or supererogatory), it depends on what is being enjoined. If it is an obligatory act (such as *salah*, *zakah*, etc.: Au.), its enjoining is *wajib*, but if it is a non obligatory act (such as a *Sunnah*: Au.) then the enjoining is also non obligatory. However, forbidding evil is always obligatory since evil is always reprehensible. ... Yet, everyone should enjoin and forbid including someone who is himself a victim of an evil, for it is an obligation on a man to give up the evil as it is an obligation on him that he forbid it. So let him not neglect one because of the other. In fact it is reported of the scholars that they said, 'Enjoin what is good, even if you do not practice it.' It is reported of Hasan (al-Basri) that he heard Mu-tarrif b. `Abdullah say, 'I do not say what I cannot do.' Hasan told him, 'Which of us does what he says? If we follow this principle Shaytan will be victorious, for there will be no enjoining and no forbidding.'

Hudhayfah has said, 'A time will

come when a donkey's carrion will be dearer to men than someone enjoining good and forbidding evil.' And Sufyan Thawri has said that if a man is popular with his neighbors and friends, you can be sure that he is negligent of *al amr bi 'l ma`ruf* and *al nabyu `an 'l munkar*.

Now, if it is asked how is it that we are required to "call to virtue" as well as "enjoin what is good?" the answer is, calling to virtue is something of a general nature (that all are required to attempt); but *al amr bi 'l ma`ruf* is of a particular nature and over and above the call to virtue which not everyone can perform. Hence they have been separated out (*Kashshaf* and Razi with the order of the statements altered: Au.).

Imām Razi says that although it is possible that the *min* of the *minkum* is for *tab'id* and although it seems to be the weightier opinion the *min* in it could also be for *tabyin* (that is, clarification and elucidation). If that is accepted, then it would imply that every individual of the *Ummah* is obliged to discharge *al amr bi 'l ma`ruf* and *al nabyu `an 'l munkar*: either with his hands, tongue, or the heart. In that case the verse would mean: "be a nation that invites to

virtue...”

Ibn Kathir says that although the verse has both the connotations in it, that is, while it is *fard kifayah* on the *Ummah*, it is *fard `ayn* on every individual, although conditionally. That is, it is obligatory to the extent of a person’s knowledge, power and ability. We have a *hadith* of Muslim which says:

مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ

“Whosoever of you sees a reprehensible thing, let him change it with his hands; if he cannot, then with his tongue; if he cannot, then let him disown it with his heart. And that is the lowest level of faith.”

Another *hadith*, of Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, says:

”وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَتَأْمُرَنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ أَوْ لَيُوشِكَنَّ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عِقَابًا مِنْهُ ثُمَّ تَدْعُوهُ فَلَا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَكُمْ“.

“By Him in whose hands is my life, you will either enjoin virtue, prevent vice, or, it is possible that Allah sends down upon you one of His scourges, after which you supplicate to Him, but are not answered.”

This is also the opinion of Sheikh

`Abduh who says that the minimum that a Muslim can do is to invite the people to the Qur`ān and *Sunnah*, of which no Muslim can have an excuse to be ignorant of (*Manar*).

Rashid Rida has at this point thoroughly dealt with various aspects of the work of *al amr bi'l ma'ruf* and *al nahyu `an 'l munkar*, as dealt by Muhammad `Abduh. It runs into several pages that is worth reading. We reproduce a single point here. Muhammad `Abduh says that just as it is essential for the common people to invite each other to what is good and virtuous, and for the scholars to educate and train the masses in knowledge and wisdom of the *Shari`ah*, the entire Muslim *Ummah* ought to shoulder the responsibility of inviting non-Muslim peoples to Islam. It should become the *Ummah al Da`wah*, treating it as its main task that is to be kept uppermost in the minds while dealing with other nations of the world.

174. The *khayr* of the original alludes to Islam and its teachings (Ibn Jarir).

175. Majid comments: “Thus the Muslims are the creators, preservers and custodians of moral order in God’s universe, i.e., His policemen on the earth.” (Then he quotes Asad from his “*Islam at the Crossroads*”,

[106] The Day some faces 'will brighten up while some faces darken up.¹⁷⁶ Then, as for those whose faces will be dark, 'Did you revert to disbelief after your faith?¹⁷⁷ Taste then, the punishment today for what you were denying.'

يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكْفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

[107] As for those whose faces will be bright, they shall be in the mercy of Allah, abiding therein forever.

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ابْيَضَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فَفِي رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

[108] These are the revelations of Allah that We recite unto you in truth. And Allah intends not a wrong unto the worlds.

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ تَنْزِيلُهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

[109] And to Allah belong all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth; and to Him are returned all affairs.

وَاللَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿١٠٩﴾

pp. 27 28): 'This is the moral justification of the aggressive activism of Islam, the justification of the early Islamic conquests and its so called "Imperialism" ... Moral knowledge, according to the teachings of Islam, automatically forces a moral responsibility upon men. A mere Platonic discernment between Right and Wrong, without the urge to promote the Right and to destroy the Wrong is a gross immorality in itself. In Islam, morality lives and dies with the human endeavor to establish its victory upon earth.'

176. Although the application is general, Ibn `Abbas said that it is the

ahl al Sunnah wa al Jama`ah whose faces shall be bright, and the *ahl al bid`ah* (the innovators) whose faces will turn dark on the Day of Judgment. According to Abu Umamah however, the verse was specifically applicable to the Khawarij. Tirmidhi has reported the following *hadith* declaring it *Hasan*. He (Abu Umamah) saw heads of the Khawarij displayed at the stairs of the Damascus mosque and said:

كِلَابُ النَّارِ شَرَّ قَتْلَى تَحْتَ أَيْمِ السَّمَاءِ خَيْرُ قَتْلَى مَنْ قَتَلُوهُ، ثُمَّ قَرَأَ: {يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ} إِلَى آخِرِ الْآيَةِ. قُلْتُ لِأَيِّ أَمَانَةٍ: أَنْتَ سَمِعْتَهُ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ؟ قَالَ: لَوْ لَمْ أَسْمَعْهُ إِلَّا مَرَّةً أَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ أَوْ ثَلَاثًا أَوْ أَرْبَعًا حَتَّى عَدَّ سَبْعًا مَا

[110] You are the best of communities that has been raised up for mankind: You enjoin the good, forbid the evil, and believe in Allah.¹⁷⁸ Had the people of the Book believed, surely, it would have been better for them. Of them some are believers, while the great majority are perverted transgressors.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ
بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا
لَّهُمْ مِنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾

حَدَّثَكُمْ

“The dogs of fire. The worst of those under the sky that were ever killed, and the best of killers those who killed them.” Then he recited this verse. Abu Ghalib, the narrator, says I asked him, “Did you hear this from the Prophet (or it is your opinion)?” He replied, “Had I not heard from him once, or twice, thrice or four times, (until he counted up to seven), I would not have narrated it to you “ (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

177. There are three opinions about who is meant by “*those who reverted to disbelief after their faith.*” First, those who apostatized after the Prophet; second, hypocrites; and third, the progeny of Adam which did not remain on the original faith: those who had borne witness and had said (7: 172): “*Indeed we bear witness.*” The third category seems to be the most

likely one (Ibn Jarir).

Shabbir sums up the opinion of the *ahl l Sunnah wa l-Jama`ah* concerning Muslims who fail to live by Islam. How should the verse be applied to them? He states: It is possible for the innovators in the religion of Islam to claim that they are Muslims, that they follow the Qur`ān and *Sunnah*, and that they believe in the Prophet as a Messenger of Allah. Yet, and notwithstanding that, when they, after their claim to faith, add innumerable false elements to the *Din* and the *Shari`ah*, or deny certain essentials of Islam, then, in a way, it can be also asked of them, ‘Have you reverted to disbelief after your faith?’ Nevertheless, if it is the *fussaq* whose basic beliefs may be right but whose deeds are otherwise ... if such are assumed to be addressed by the verse, then the meaning would be, ‘Why did you, then, after your belief in Islam, lead a life similar to those of the unbelievers?’ (The cautious phrasing

is worth noting: Au.).

178. A report in Hakim with the approval of Dhahabi says that Abu Hurayrah said:

كنتم خير أمة أخرجت للناس“ قال: تجرون الناس
بالسلاسل إلى الإسلام

“You re the best of nations who bring people bound in chains and make them enter into Islam.” (That is you engage in jihad, subdue the people, who, ultimately, exposed to Islam, embrace the faith: Au.). This is also the opinion of Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, `Atiyyah, Al `Awfi, `Ikrimah, `Ata' and Rabi` b. Anas (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Khayr `l Umam

According to `Umar ibn al Khattab, Ibn `Abbas, and Suddi, the verse is applicable, specifically, to the earliest of the believers in Islam, that is, the earliest Companions, and then, generally, to whomsoever of the later generations that met with the conditions stated herein and dealt with life and situations in the manner they dealt with. Hasan has said however, and he seems to be right, that the entire Muslim *Ummah* is covered by the statement. This is based on a *hadith* of the Prophet in which he said:

إِنَّكُمْ تَوْفُونَ سَبْعِينَ أُمَّةً أَنْتُمْ خَيْرُهَا وَأَكْرَمُهَا عَلَى
اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

“You are the seventieth community, the last, the best, and the most honorable of them in the sight of Allah” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

The above report has been declared *Hasan* (Au.).

According to a *hadith* in *Musnad* of *Hasan isnad* the Prophet said as reported by `Ali ibn Abi Talib,

« أُعْطِيتُ مَا لَمْ يَعْطَ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ ». فَقُلْنَا :
مَا هُوَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ فَقَالَ : « نُصِرْتُ بِالرُّعْبِ ،
وَأُعْطِيتُ مَفَاتِيحَ الْأَرْضِ ، وَسُمِّيتُ أَحْمَدَ ، وَجُعِلَ لِي
النُّرَابُ طَهُورًا ، وَجُعِلَتْ أُمَّتِي خَيْرَ الْأُمَمِ »

“I have been granted certain things that no Prophet was granted earlier: I have been aided by fright (*ru`b*), I have been given the keys of the earth, I’ve been named Ahmad, dust has been declared pure for me and my *Ummah* has been declared the best of the *Ummam*.”

According to another *hadith* of Ahmad, of trustworthy narrators, reported by Shurayh b. `Ubayd:

قال شريح بن عبيد مرض ثوبان بجمص وعليها عبد
الله بن قرط الأزدي فلم يعده فدخل على ثوبان رجل
من الكلاعيين عائداً فقال له ثوبان: أكتنب فقال:

نعم فقال: اكتب فكتب للأمين عبد الله بن قرط من ثوبان مولى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أما بعد فإنه لو كان لموسى وعيسى مولى بحضرتك لعدته ثم طوى الكتاب وقال له: أتبلغه إياه فقال: نعم فانطلق الرجل بكتابه فدفعه إلى ابن قرط فلما قرأه قام فزعاً فقال الناس ما شأنه أحدث أمر فأتى ثوبان حتى دخل عليه فعاده وجلس عنده ساعة ثم قام فأخذ ثوبان بردائه وقال: اجلس حتى أحدثك حديثاً سمعته من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم سمعته يقول: ليدخلن الجنة من أمتي سبعون ألفاً لا حساب عليهم ولا عذاب مع كل ألف سبعون ألفاً

The Prophet's attendant Thawban fell ill in Hims those days when `Abdullah b. Qurt al Azdi was its Governor. When someone visited Thawban, he asked him whether he knew how to write. When he said yes, he dictated him a letter for Ibn Qurt in which he said: 'Were a man who had served Musa and `Isa to be with you, surely you would have visited him.' When Ibn Qurt received that letter, he jumped to the fright of the people around him. He went straight to Thawban and sat with him for an hour. When he rose up to leave, Thawban pulled him by his clothes saying, 'Sit down. I've a *hadith* to narrate.' Then he said, 'I have heard the Prophet say: "Seventy thousand of my people shall

enter Paradise without going through the reckoning, with every thousand of them accompanied by seventy thousand."

The above report is termed *Sahih li Ghayrihi* by Shu`ayb al-Arna'ut (Au.).

A third *hadith* is also from Ahmad, and also of good *isnad*, of Ibn Mas'ud. It says:

عَنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ أَكْثَرْنَا الْحَدِيثَ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَاتَ لَيْلَةٍ ثُمَّ غَدَوْنَا إِلَيْهِ فَقَالَ عَرِضْتُ عَلَى الْأَنْبِيَاءِ اللَّيْلَةَ بِأَيِّهَا فَجَعَلَ النَّبِيُّ يَمُرُّ وَمَعَهُ الثَّلَاثَةُ وَالنَّبِيُّ وَمَعَهُ الْعَصَابَةُ وَالنَّبِيُّ وَمَعَهُ التَّقَرُّ وَالنَّبِيُّ لَيْسَ مَعَهُ أَحَدٌ حَتَّى مَرَّ عَلَى مُوسَى مَعَهُ كَبْكَبَةٌ مِنْ نَبِيِّ إِسْرَائِيلَ فَأَعْجَبُونِي فَقُلْتُ مَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ فَقِيلَ لِي هَذَا أَخُوكَ مُوسَى مَعَهُ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ قَالَ قُلْتُ فَأَيْنَ أُمِّي فَقِيلَ لِي انْظُرْ عَنْ يَمِينِكَ فَتَظَرَّتْ فَإِذَا الطَّرَابُ قَدْ سُدَّ بِوُجُوهِ الرِّجَالِ ثُمَّ قِيلَ لِي انْظُرْ عَنْ يَسَارِكَ فَتَظَرَّتْ فَإِذَا الْأُفُقُ قَدْ سُدَّ بِوُجُوهِ الرِّجَالِ فَقِيلَ لِي أَرْضَيْتَ فَقُلْتُ رَضِيتُ يَا رَبِّ رَضِيتُ يَا رَبِّ قَالَ فَقِيلَ لِي إِنَّ مَعَ هَؤُلَاءِ سَبْعِينَ أَلْفًا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِدَا لَكُمْ أَبِي وَأُمِّي إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَكُونُوا مِنَ السَّبْعِينَ أَلْفِ فَافْعَلُوا فَإِنْ فَصَرْتُمْ فَكُونُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الطَّرَابِ فَإِنْ فَصَرْتُمْ فَكُونُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْأُفُقِ فَإِنِّي قَدْ رَأَيْتُ ثُمَّ نَاسًا يَتَهَاوَشُونَ فَقَامَ عَكَاشُهُ بْنُ حِصْنٍ فَقَالَ ادْعُ اللَّهَ لِي يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يَجْعَلَ لِي مِنَ السَّبْعِينَ أَلْفِ فَدَعَا لَهُ فَقَامَ رَجُلٌ آخَرُ فَقَالَ ادْعُ اللَّهَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يَجْعَلَ لِي مِنْهُمْ فَقَالَ قَدْ سَبَقَكَ هَؤُلَاءُ قَالَ ثُمَّ تَحَدَّثْنَا فَقُلْنَا مَنْ تَرَوْنَ هَؤُلَاءِ السَّبْعُونَ أَلْفَ قَوْمٍ وَلِدُوا فِي الْإِسْلَامِ لَمْ يُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا حَتَّى مَاتُوا فَفُتِحَ ذَلِكَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ هُمْ الَّذِينَ لَا يَكْتُمُونَ وَلَا يَسْتَرْفُونَ

وَلَا يَتَّبِعُونَ وَعَلَىٰ رَحْمِهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

One evening the Companions prolonged their conversation with the Prophet, and then went up to him the next day. He said, "Last night Prophets were shown to me along with their followers. I saw a Prophet with three followers, another with a group and another with just one follower. Then I saw Musa. With him were a large number of Israelites. I was impressed. I asked: 'Who is this?' It was said: 'This is your brother Musa and with him were the Israelites.' I asked: 'Where are my people?' It was told: 'Look to your right.' And I saw a valley filled tight with faces. Then I was told: 'Look to your left.' And I saw a valley filled tight with faces. I was asked: 'Are you satisfied?' I said: 'I'm satisfied O my Lord.' It was said: 'Along with them shall enter into Paradise another seventy thousand without reckoning.' Then the Prophet said: 'May my parents be sacrificed for you, if you can manage, be of those seventy thousand. If you cannot, then be of those of the valley (filled by the followers of Musa). And if you cannot, then try and be of the people at the horizon,

for I saw people jostling up there.' Upon this `Ukkasha b. Mohsin got up and said, 'Pray for me O Messenger of Allah that I be of them.' The Prophet prayed for him. Then another man got up and said, 'Pray for me O Messenger of Allah that I be of them.' The Prophet told him, "Ukkasha outstripped you.' At this we talked to ourselves saying, 'Who do you think those seventy thousand could be? Perhaps those who were born in Islam and did not associate others with Allah until their death.' When the Prophet came to know of our conversation he remarked: 'They are those who do not use (forbidden: Au.) charms, do not draw bad omens, and those who have trust in Allah.'"

The same tradition has come through Ibn Mas`ud in the collection of Diya' al Maqdisi who said that it meets with the isnad requirements of Muslim. In fact Muslim himself has reported through `Imran b. Husayn that the Prophet said:

“يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مِنْ أُمَّتِي سَبْعُونَ أَلْفًا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ
قَالُوا: وَمَنْ هُمْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: ”هُمْ الَّذِينَ لَا
يَكْتُمُونَ وَلَا يَسْتَرْفُونَ. وَعَلَىٰ رَحْمِهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ“

"Seventy thousand of my *Ummah* will enter Paradise." They

asked, "Who are they, Messenger of Allah?" He answered, "Those who do not use (forbidden: Au.) charms, do not draw bad omen, and have trust in Allah."

Bukhari, Muslim and others have several *ahadith* to this effect, including the one in the *Sahihayn* which reports Ibn Mas'ud narrating the Prophet:

”أَمَّا تَرْضَوْنَ أَنْ تَكُونُوا رُبْعَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ؟“ قَالَ فَكَبَّرْنَا. ثُمَّ قَالَ: ”أَمَّا تَرْضَوْنَ أَنْ تَكُونُوا ثُلُثَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ؟“ قَالَ: فَكَبَّرْنَا. ثُمَّ قَالَ: ”إِنِّي لَأَرْجُو أَنْ تَكُونُوا شَطْرَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ“.

“Are you not satisfied that you be one fourth of the people of Paradise?” We said, “*Allahu Akbar*.” He said, “Are you not satisfied that you be one third of the people of Paradise?” We said, “*Allahu Akbar*.” He said, “Indeed, I hope that you’ll be one half of the people of Paradise.”

In yet another *hadith* which proves that this *Ummah* has an edge over others, the Prophet is reported by Abu Hurayrah in a transmission of Muslim as saying:

نحن الآخرون الأولون يوم القيامة، نحن أول الناس دخولا الجنة

“We are the last to come, but shall be the first to arrive at the

site on the Day of Judgment, and the first to enter Paradise” (Ibn Kathir).

Imām Razi reports Qaffal as having said that although other communities have also enjoined what is good, forbidden what is evil, and have believed in Allah, this *Ummah* has been ranked as the best because it goes a step further and conducts jihad in its efforts to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil. Jihad is the most virtuous of deeds, and has received greater emphasis in our religion (*shar`*) than in previous religions. Hence this *Ummah* has an edge over other *Ummam*. Accordingly, we find Ibn `Abbas explaining the term “*you are the best of communities*,” in words: “Because you enjoin the people to believe in Allah, and to accept what He has revealed (as the only accessible truth). Further, if there be the need, you fight against them over the issue of Allah’s oneness.”

To the above, Qurtubi adds that of this *Ummah* too, the first generation is superior to the later ones in view of the *hadith*:

خير أمتي القرن الذين يلوني ثم الذين يلونهم ثم الذين يلونهم

“The best of my *Ummah* are the people of my age, then those

who follow and then those who follow.”

It is also agreed that he who was a Companion of the Prophet, or even saw him once, is better than he who came after him, and that the virtue of Companionship will never be equaled by deeds alone. This is the opinion of the great majority of scholars. Nonetheless, another opinion is that the possibility of one of the later generations being equal to those of the first generation exists in view of several *ahadith*. One of them reported by Ibn `Umar says:

”أي المؤمنين أعجب إليكم إيماناً؟“ قالوا: الملائكة، قال: ”وما لهم لا يؤمنون وهم عند ربهم؟“ قالوا: فالأنبياء، قال: ”وما لهم لا يؤمنون والوحي ينزل عليهم؟“ قالوا: فنحن، قال: ”وما لكم لا تؤمنون وأنا بين أظهركم؟ ولكن أعجب المؤمنين إيماناً قوم يجيئون بعدكم يجدون صحفاً يؤمنون بما فيها“

”(We were with the Prophet when he asked), ‘Who do you think of the creations is the best in faith?’ They said, ‘Angels.’ He said, ‘Why should they not believe when they are with their Lord?’ So they said, ‘Then Prophets.’ He said, ‘Why should they not believe when revelations come to them?’ They said, ‘Then, us.’ He said, ‘Why should you not believe when I am in your midst?’

But rather it is those who will come after you, find the Scriptures and believe in them.”

In another report given us by Abu Jumu`ah, whom Abu `Amr has declared trustworthy, when the Prophet was asked by the Companions if there was someone better than they, he said,

قوم يكونون من بعدي، يؤمنون بي ولم يروني، يجدون كتاباً بين لوحين فيؤمنون به ويصدقون به، فهم خير منكم.

“Yes. A people who will be after you. They will find the Book between two hard covers, will believe in it, and testify to its truth, although they would not have seen me.”

Another report of Abu Tha`labah al Khashani says:

قال: (إن أمامكم أياما الصابر فيها على دينه كالقابض على الجمر للعامل فيها أجر خمسين رجلا يعمل مثله عمله) قيل: يا رسول الله، منهم؟ قال: (بل منكم).

“Ahead of you are days in which one who holds fast unto the religion will be like one holding a piece of burning coal in his hand. In those days the worker of a good deed shall have the reward of fifty of workers of the same

deed.” He was asked, “(Fifty) of them?” He replied, “But rather, “fifty of you.”

The statements then, for and against, have been reconciled in this fashion. He who came after the Companions and faced the same situations as they faced, and remained as true as they remained, would be considered as of the same level as they. This is based on the *hadith* which says,

بدأ الإسلام غريبا وسيعود كما بدأ فطوبى للغرباء

“Islam has started as a stranger and will end up as a stranger. Glad tidings then to the strangers (or, ‘be the strangers blessed’: Au.).”

The above *hadith* is supported by another of Abu Tha`labah, about which Abu `Umar has expressed satisfaction, which reports the Prophet (*saws*) as having said:

أمتي كالْمَطَر لا يُدْرَى أَوَّلُهُ خَيْرٌ أَمْ آخِرُهُ

“My *Ummah* is like rain water about which it cannot be said as to which is more beneficial, the earlier or the later.”

But an exception still remains. It is that of those who participated at Badr and *Bay` al Ridwan*, for they can never be equaled.

(Qurtubi’s quotation ends here).

The above exception has also the support of the Qur’ān by implication, which says in *surah* 57, *al Had-id*, verse 10:

لَا يَسْتَوِي مِنْكُمْ مَنْ أَنْفَقَ مِنْ قَبْلِ الْفَتْحِ وَقَاتَلَ أُولَئِكَ أَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ بَعْدُ وَقَاتَلُوا وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ [الحديد : ١٠ :

“Not equal among you are those who spent (in the way of Allah) and fought before the Victory (the fall of Makkah, and those who did not). They are of higher rank than those who spent and fought later, although Allah has promised good rewards for both. Allah is aware of what you do” (Au.).

179. That is, a harm that will mostly remain verbal, such as their attacks on Islam, its Prophet, or their claim that Jesus was the son of God, etc. (Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

180. The verse is a proof of the Prophet’s authenticity. The Jews did not fight with the Prophet but suffered defeat (Qurtubi).

181. As it happened with Banu Nadir, Banu Quraydah, Banu Qaynuqah, those who took shelter in Khayber, and as it happened with the Christians in Syria (Ibn Kathir).

[111] They will never harm you except for some annoyance.¹⁷⁹ If they ever fight you they will show their backs to you and they will not be helped.¹⁸⁰

لَنْ يَضُرُّوكُمْ إِلَّا أَذًى وَإِنْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ يُؤْلُوكُمْ
الْأَذْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا يُنصَرُونَ ﴿١١١﴾

[112] Fastened upon them is ignominy wherever they are found unless in a bond of Allah, or a bond of the people.¹⁸¹ They incurred Allah's anger and (therefore) destitution is branded upon them. This because they used to deny Allah's signs and slaughter the Prophets without right.¹⁸² This because they used to disobey and persistently transgress.¹⁸³

ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ أَيْنَ مَا تَفْتَوُوا إِلَّا بِحَبْلٍ
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَحَبْلٍ مِّنَ النَّاسِ وَبَآؤُوا بِغَضَبِ
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَسْكَنَةُ ذَلِكَ
بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُكَفِّرُونَ بآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ
الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقِّ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا
يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah, `Ikrimah, Suddi and Rabi` are of the opinion that they shall never be in peace save as dhimmis, which is the covenant of Allah (or shelter: Au.) referred to in the text, or by a peace treaty with the Muslims which is the covenant of the people (or shelter: Au.) referred to above (Ibn Jarir).

you above those who have rejected
(you, O Jesus) till the Resurrec-
tion Day."

Therefore, there is no land in which there are Jews and Christians living together but the Christians have an upper hand and authority over the Jews. Allah has said about them in 7: 168:

Imām Razi, Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir have adopted the same interpretation without naming the authorities.

وَقَطَّعْنَاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُمَمًا [الأعراف : ١٦٨]

"And we dispersed them in the earth in small bands" (Ibn Jarir).

And, according to Ibn Zayd it is primarily the Jews who are meant by the verse in question, as they were also the subject of verse 55 of this *surah*, which said:

وَجَاعِلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوكَ فَوْقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَى يَوْمِ
الْقِيَامَةِ [آل عمران : ٥٥]

"(We) will set those who follow

The present state of Israel, adds Muf-ti Shafi`, proves the statement of the Qur`ān. If it were not to be the unconditional, blind and massive support of the West, the state would not have lasted for a day.

182. It is reported of Ibn Mas`ud that he said: "In their heyday the

[113] They are all not alike. Among the people of the Book are some who establish (the truth), recite Allah's verses in the depths of the night and prostrate themselves.¹⁸⁴

لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾

[114] They believe in Allah and the Last Day,¹⁸⁵ enjoin virtue, forbid vice and vie one with another in good works. These are of the righteous.¹⁸⁶

يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾

Israelites would slaughter 300 prophets during the day, and by the evening conduct business in the vegetable market as usual" (Ibn Kathir).

Also see note 41 above.

183. This is to warn the believers of this *Ummah* that this is how the earlier nations have been destroyed. If they also behave in the like manner, and follow them in their footsteps, then, the same treatment would be meted out to them as well (Ibn Jarir).

184. It is reported by Ibn Mas`ud that once the Prophet came out for `Isha Prayers late. He found us waiting. He said: "There is no one in prayers on this earth except you" and Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

185. That is, if, in their praying and prostrating themselves in the depth of the nights is an indication of their

strength in the field of action, then their belief in Allah and the Last Day is indicative of their insight into the field of theories and concepts. Having attained these two, a man is at a level which is the highest level of the human order (*darajat al insaniyyah*) and the first stage of the angelic order (*darajat al malakiyyah*) Razi.

186. The allusion is to those Jews and Christians who embraced Islam (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

A contemporary commentary, however, tends to state that the allusion could be to those of the people of the Book of our times who can distinguish themselves from the banal rest with the qualities stated. According to him piety is not the prerogative of Muslims. This is a conceptual error of immense proportion. There is no piety in him who rebels against his Lord, ascribes partners to Him and denies a Prophet whose denial as-

[115] Whatever they do of the good shall not be rejected. And Allah is Aware of the pious.

وَمَا يَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَنْ يُكْفَرُوهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾

[116] (As for) the unbelievers, neither their wealth nor their offspring shall avail them in any measure against Allah. They are the companions of the Fire wherein they shall abide forever.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾

[117] The likeness of what they expend in this life is as the likeness of a wind (packed with) freezing (blasts) that struck the tillage of a people who wronged themselves, and destroyed it.¹⁸⁷ It was not Allah who wronged them. Rather, they used to wrong their own souls.

مَثَلُ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ رِيحٍ فِيهَا صِرٌّ أَصَابَتْ حَرْثَ قَوْمٍ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَأَهْلَكَتْهُ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾

sumes some amount of intellectual dishonesty and, hence, moral perversion. Further, ignorance of Islam can be no excuse, for to believe in the Bible, while it is splashed with stories of Prophets getting drunk, their daughters molesting them, or holy men lying down with prostitutes ... to believe in such a work as the Holy word of God and seek piety through whatever guidance it can provide, is, to say the least, scandalous. If some

of the followers of such books are, to all appearances pious, then it is piety of human definition. It is not a piety of Islamic definition which demands honesty to God and honesty to oneself (Au.).

187. 'In a marginal note connected with his commentary on this verse, Zamakhshari explains this parable thus: "If the 'tilth' [i.e., the gainful achievements] of those who deny the

[118] Believers! Do not take as intimate friends¹⁸⁸ those not of your ranks.¹⁸⁹ They will spare nothing to ruin you. They (only) wish for you that which will distress you. Their mouths have (already) spoken out hatred.¹⁹⁰ What their hearts conceal is greater. We have thus made the revelation plain to you, if you will consider.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بِطَانَةً مِّن دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأْلُونَكُمْ خَبَالًا وَدُؤًا مَّا عَنْتُمْ قَدْ بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفِي صُدُورُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾

truth is lost, it is lost in its entirety, with nothing remaining to them in this world and in the life to come; while, on the other hand, the 'tilth' of a believer is never lost in its entirety: for even if it is seemingly lost, there remains to him the expectation of a reward, in the life to come, for his patience in adversity" (Asad).

188. The word in the original is *bitanah* which is used for a very close, a very intimate friend. The word has been used in this sense in a *hadith* reported by Bukhari and Nasa'i according to which the Prophet said:

مَا بَعَثَ اللَّهُ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ وَلَا اسْتَخْلَفَ مِنْ خَلِيفَةٍ إِلَّا كَانَتْ لَهُ بِطَانَتَانِ بِطَانَةٌ تَأْمُرُهُ بِالْخَيْرِ وَبِطَانَةٌ تَأْمُرُهُ بِالشَّرِّ وَتُحْضِرُهُ عَلَيْهِ وَالْمَعْصُومُ مَنْ عَصَمَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

"Allah did not send a Prophet nor did He leave behind him a successor but he was given two intimate (*bitanah*) advisors. One of them bids him do good and the other bids him do evil. And saved is only he, who is saved by

Allah."

Abu Da'ud has preserved a *hadith* in which the Prophet said:

الرَّجُلُ عَلَى دِينِ خَلِيلِهِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَحَدُكُمْ مَنِ يُحَالِلُ

"A man is on the religion of his friend. So let him look at whom he befriends" (Qurtubi).

Accordingly, when 'Umar was advised to appoint a Christian as one of his secretaries, he said: "If I do that I would be taking an intimate one (*bitanah*) apart from the believers (Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). According to another report once Abu Musa al Ash'ari presented his accounts to 'Umar ibn al Khattab in a format that pleased him. He enquired about who had made it up that nice way and was told that it was a Christian. 'Umar expressed disapproval of Abu Musa for hiring a non Muslim and recited this verse. According to another report he advised him to seek the help of only godfearing Muslims

in state affairs (Qurtubi).

However, adds Mufti Shafi`, the verse restricts us only from treating them as our confidants. As individuals they are to be treated with compassion. This was the practice of the Prophet himself apart from various precepts that he has left behind to this effect. In one *hadith* he said:

أَلَا مَنْ ظَلَمَ مُعَاهِدًا أَوْ انْتَقَصَهُ أَوْ كَلَّفَهُ فَوْقَ طَاقَتِهِ
أَوْ أَخَذَ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا بَغَيْرِ طَيْبِ نَفْسٍ فَإِنَّا حَاجِبُهُ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ

“Whoever wronged a *dhimmi*, or paid him less, or overloaded him beyond his capacity, or took away from him anything without his consents, will have me as his pleader on the Day of Judgment.”

Sayyid writes: “With regard to not taking the unbelievers as intimate confidants, there is another aspect that ought not to be neglected: viz. lofty ideals offered by Islam. Muslims may not take them as intimate friends while they bear grudge and hatred against Islam. But their hatred, deceit, and machinations are not to be returned with hatred, deceit and machinations by the Muslims. The injunctions here are merely safety measures. A Muslim individual therefore, confronts machina-

tions but does not reciprocate with machinations ... meets with hatred but does not hate in return. He does nothing of that sort until he is forced to fight for his religion and for the way of life it dictates. He fights, but not to avenge himself. He fights for his faith, in love of the good and virtuous, and not in hatred of those who hate him. He fights to destroy those obstacles that are placed in the path of Islam, and not for subjugation of a people. He fights to establish the way of life from which all, believers and unbelievers alike, would benefit, and not for addition of territories or for setting up of an empire.”

189. Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah and Rabi` have said that some Muslims, (following past contacts, relationships of various sorts, and pacts), continued to be friendly with the Jews and the hypocrites. Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir).

However, Ibn Abi Hatim has reported a *hadith*, (which, in the opinion of Suyuti, is of good *isnad*), that it is the Khawarij who have been alluded to by the verse (Shawkani).

Obviously, even if the verse originally referred to the Khawarij, the rule remains general. Hence the statement of `Umar above and the following: It is reported that some people attend-

[119] There you are, loving them (but) they do not love you. You believe in all the Books. When they meet you they say, 'We believe.'¹⁹¹ But when they are in privy they bite off their fingertips in rage at you. Tell them, 'Die in your rage.'¹⁹² Surely, Allah is Aware of what is in the hearts.

هَآأَنْتُمْ أَوْلَاءُ تُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِبُّونَكُمْ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ كُلِّهِ وَإِذَا لَقُوكُمْ قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا عَضُّوا عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَنَامِلَ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ قُلْ مُوتُوا بِغَيْظِكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿١١٩﴾

ing Malik b. Anas's classes could not at times understand the *hadith* he was transmitting. They would then go to Hasan (al Basri) who would offer the explanation. Once they heard him reporting the Prophet as having said:

لَا تَسْتَضِيئُوا بِنَارِ الْمُشْرِكِ، وَلَا تَتَّقَشُوا فِي خَوَاتِيمِكُمْ
عَرَبِيًّا (احمد)

“Do not light your fire with that of the fire of the idolaters and do not engrave Arabic on your rings.”

They could not understand what it meant and asked Hasan (al Basri) to explain. He said: “Yes. What it means is ‘Do not seek advice of the idolaters in your affairs and do not engrave the name Muhammad on your rings.’ Then he added, ‘Read in the Qur’ān if you like: “Believers! Do not take as intimates those not of your ranks”’ (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi). Ibn Kathir, however, after reporting this *hadith* says that he believes the right meaning of the earlier part of

the above *hadith* is, ‘Do not take up residence in the neighborhood of idolaters.’

190. Their hatred is of such order that they lose control of their tongues and speak out (their anger, frustration and: Au.) hatred (Alusi).

191. The verse is applicable both to the hypocrites as well as to unbelievers. However, when applied to the hypocrites, it would mean those who, by virtue of their birth, live among the Muslims, but hate Islam and Muslims. But, because of their circumstances of birth and perforce belonging to a particular social group, they have to put up appearances of Islam. When they are among the believers they assure them that they are fully committed Muslims.

If applied to the unbelievers, the verse would mean that although hatred wells up in their eyes, whenever they see something good happening to the Muslims, yet they make

[120] If something good happens to you, it vexes them. But if an evil befalls you, they rejoice over it. But if you are patient and god-fearing, their guile will not harm you in the least. Verily, Allah is encompassing what they do.

إِنْ تَمَسَّسْكُمْ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ وَإِنْ تُصِيبْكُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَفْرَحُوا بِهَا وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ حَاطٌ ﴿١٢٠﴾

[121] And (recall, O Muhammad)¹⁹³ when you departed from your home-folk at dawn, (and were) posting the believers in their positions for the battle (at Uhud). And Allah is All-hearing, All-knowing.

وَإِذْ غَدَوْتَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ تُبَوِّئُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَقَاعِدَ لِلْقِتَالِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢١﴾

[122] When two of your groups were about to lose heart,¹⁹⁴ (but) Allah was their Protector.¹⁹⁵ And it is in Allah that the believers ought to place their trust.¹⁹⁶

إِذْ هَمَّتْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ تَفْشَلَا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّهُمَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

hypocritical gestures, and assure the believers that they believe there is “a lot of good in Islam,” for the sake of maintaining courteous relationship, and draw material benefits (Au.).

192. These words indicate that if one decides to sever relationships completely with someone, there is no harm in using such harsh terms (Thanwi).

193. Bayhaqi has, in his *Dala'il al Nubuwwah*, reported a group of scholars as saying that the day of Uhud was the day of trial and filter. Allah tested the believers and exposed the hypocrites who used to pretend Islam but conceal unbelief.

It was a day in which Allah intended to bless a section of His awliya' with martyrdom (Shawkani).

194. The two groups were the two tribes Banu Salamah and Banu Haritha who began to waver when 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy withdrew with three hundred and odd of his hypocritical followers (Ibn 'Abbas, Qatadah, Rabi', Suddi, 'Ikrimah: Ibn Jarir).

(`Abdullah ibn Ubayy had withdrawn on the pretext that he did not see any fight in the expected clash, rather, only a massacre of the Muslims).

Uhud

Since the background of these verses is the battle of Uhud, we present here a brief account of the event.

After "the catastrophic defeat at Badr," (Asad) the Quraysh sent their emissaries to various tribes around Makkah to explain to them the gravity of the situation arising out of the Prophet setting up a power base at Madinah. There was every possibility that if unchecked, it would lead to the closing of the trade routes leading to the northern regions. As a result, the Makkans were able to raise an army of 3000, of which no less than 700 were fully armored. A division of two hundred was on horseback. A total of 250,000 Dirhams were pooled in Makkah alone for the expedition. Abu Sufyan, the new Commander in Chief himself contributed a fabulous sum out of the profits he had made by the caravan, to save which the battle of Badr was supposedly fought (Hamidullah: *'Ahad e Nabawi ke Maydan e Jang*).

When the pagan army arrived at Madinah in 3 A.H., (*Shawwal* 7: Shafi'), the Prophet sought the advice of his Companions over whether they should remain in Madinah and face the besieging enemy from within or should they go out and meet them

in the open. Several of those who had not participated in the battle of Badr spoke strongly in favor of going out for a face to face clash. Actually, they wanted to prove their sincere desire for martyrdom. 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy however was, (and most of the *Ansar*: Zamakhshari, Razi) of the opinion that the Muslims should remain within Madinah. The Prophet, following the general advice, came out with his coat of mail on, ready to march out. Meanwhile the Companions had changed their mind. They reproached each other for having unduly influenced the Prophet while he was in direct contact with Allah who would have instructed him with what was best for them. Therefore they met him and told him that they were withdrawing their earlier suggestion and were leaving the matter entirely for him to decide. But the Prophet told them, "It does not behove a Prophet to put on his armor and remove them before he has fought his enemy," (because it does not befit a Prophet to show weakness: Shafi').

So he continued with a thousand people (a hundred of whom were fully armored: Hamidullah), but a little out of town 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy fell back with three hundred or so of his followers on the pretext

that his advice had not been heeded (although some hypocrites still remained in the army: Thanwi). [It was suggested that the treaty with the Jews be made use of, and they be invited to fight alongside the Muslims. But the Prophet spurned the idea: Sayyid]. So the Prophet continued with the rest. (On the way he thought he would take a short cut by passing through the property owned by Mirba' b. Qayzi who was a blind hypocrite. He threw dust in the face of those who had gone to seek his permission, and refused them entry. According to one report when the Prophet went to him he said he would have thrown dust in his face if he could be sure it was not going to strike others along with him. Upon this the Companions wanted to kill him but the Prophet restrained them saying: "Let him alone. He is a man blind of eye, blind of heart: *Manar*). Nonetheless, on arriving at Uhud (the name of a series of mountains, about 6-7 km. away from the heart of the town: Au.) the Prophet kept Mount Uhud behind him, assigned the command of the left, right and other wings to various people and stationed fifty archers headed by 'Abdullah ibn Jubayr on a hill called Al-'Ayn overlooking a pass instructing them not to abandon the post,

come what may, victory or defeat; according to one version: "Even if you see vultures hovering over our heads." (Before the start of the battle the women of the enemy forces began to beat their drums and sing poetry, encouraging their fighters. When the Prophet heard them, he responded with supplications in words: "O Allah! I seek Your Strength, and with You do I join. I fight in Your cause. Enough for me is Allah, and a good Supporter He is": *Manar*).

When fighting began, Muslims gained an upper hand within a short time and the Makkans began to retreat. (Said Bar' b. 'Azib: I saw their women running away, climbing the hills with their skirts pulled up barring their anklets and calves. Muslims began to cry: "Get the booty, get the booty": Bukhari).

At this, the archers, sensing (a repetition of Badr: Razi) and victory at hand, came down looking for booty, leaving the pass clear for Khalid ibn al Walid to advance from the rear. He easily overcame the resistance of the ten or so left with the commander on the hillock, slew them all, and moved on to attack the main army from the rear. Encouraged by this attack, the enemy front lines also assembled themselves anew and the Muslims

felt crushed between the two. The enemy targeted the Prophet. (Khalid began to climb with his horses a hill that the Prophet did not want to lose the command of: Ibn Jarir). The pagans both shot arrows at the Prophet, as well as threw stones. One stone, hurled by 'Abdullah b. Qum'ah, struck him in the face and broke his tooth. Ibn Qum'ah then advanced, and brought down his sword on the Prophet. (But his strike was taken by Mus'ab b. 'Umayr whom Ibn Qum'ah mistook for the Prophet: Zamakhshari). Ibn Qum'ah returned to the people with the news that he had killed the Prophet. The Prophet had actually fallen into a ditch from where he was helped out, and led to a hill. He said, somewhere at that time, "Allah's anger has intensified against those who have bloodied His Messenger's face." Ka'b b. Malik said: "I was the first to recognize him from the way his shoulders inclined to the sides when he walked. 'Good news, brothers. Here is the Messenger,' I shouted out in joy. But the Prophet signaled me to be quiet." The pagans began to target him, but thanks to the valiant efforts of the ten or so Companions left with him, out of which seven died, they could do him no harm. Nevertheless, the news had spread among the Muslims

that he had fallen. That added to the panic, and they began to flee. Thus the victory at hand was allowed to slip away, first by the Muslims, and then by the pagans.

At that moment Ubayy b. Khalf advanced towards the Prophet, saying he would not survive if Muhammad survived, for he used to say in Makkah that he would kill Muhammad, and had heard that the Prophet had said in reply that he would rather kill him. When the Prophet saw him advancing, he took aim and threw his spear at him. It merely kissed him leaving a scratch (on the neck: Au). But the man fell down and began to yell like a bull. The pagans picked him up and chided him for his screams. He told them that if the pain he felt were to be distributed amongst the population of Hejaz, they would all die. He died on the way back to Makkah.

Some Companions however, such as 'Umar and Talha (who received seventy wounds: Ibn Kathir), fought back with the strength of the one in "despair." In the meanwhile, Muslims began to learn that the Prophet was alive. He beckoned them to himself: "Unto me, O slaves of Allah, unto me," he cried. They rallied around him and counter attacked

the enemy, saving the day, but by then they had lost seventy of their men, were "too exhausted to exploit their chances of victory, and the battle ended in a draw" (Asad).

Abu Sufyan came up to the foot of the hill and called out: "Is Muhammad among you?" three times. The Prophet told them not to answer him. Then he called out: "Is Abu Quhafa's son with you (i.e. Abu Bakr)? Is Ibn al Khattab with you?" When he did not receive any answer he remarked: "Perhaps they have all been killed. Were they alive they would have answered." At that `Umar could not restrain himself, he shouted: "You have lied O enemy of God. They have been kept alive in order to humiliate you." Upon that Abu Sufyan said: "Glory to Hubal (a deity)." The Prophet told them to answer: "Allah is Glorious, Magnificent." Abu Sufyan said: "We have `Uzza (another deity) to help us but you have no `Uzza." The Prophet told them to reply: "Allah is our Protector, and you have no protector." Abu Sufyan added: "Today was against the day of Badr. Wars are like pails (of water that go up and down in a well). You will find some people disfigured. I didn't order it. But it doesn't hurt me either" (Bukhari).

Thus the disobedience of the Prophet

became the cause of the disaster. (A second cause was their acceptance of ransom from the prisoners at Badr: Thanwi Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir).

According to a report in Muslim, prior to the battle the Prophet had dreamt that his sword had broken, that a cow was slaughtered, and that he had thrust his hand in a safe coat of mail. He interpreted it as meaning that some of his followers would be martyred, he would lose one of his family members, and that Madi-nah would remain safe: all of which proved to be true (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

195. This shows Allah's extreme regard of the true believers in Him that it was not but a passing thought in their hearts that they should also perhaps withdraw, as had `Abdullah ibn Ubayy. But Allah strengthened their hearts and announced that He is their Protector. Accordingly, it has been reported of Jabir (who belonged to one of those tribes) as saying, "It wouldn't have pleased me that the verse did not come down about us, because of the words: '*And Allah was their (Friend and) Protector*'" (Zamakhshari, Thanwi).

The report is in the *Sahihayn*.

Thus Allah brought to surface what

[123] Allah had helped you at Badr¹⁹⁷ while you were so weak.¹⁹⁸ Therefore, fear Allah hap-
pyly you may be thankful.

وَلَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِبَدْرٍ وَأَنْتُمْ أَذِلَّةٌ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

they concealed in their hearts to impress on them that He was their true Friend, who was with them all the time, to whom they should turn and in whom they should place their trust (Ibn Jarir), whenever such thoughts occur (Sayyid Qutb).

A contemporary commentator has said that the two tribes actually did announce their intention to withdraw and “it took some effort on the part of the Companions to persuade them not to.” One is perplexed about the source of this story. It is neither in any of the leading *tafsir* nor *sirah* works (Au.).

196. Accordingly, when Abu `Ubaydah wrote to `Umar requesting him to beef up his forces at the Syrian front, (before the Yarmuk battle: Shafi`), `Umar wrote back that Allah is the best of those who can fortify, and that the Prophet was helped at Badr with lesser forces. Therefore, they should fight on with their faith in Allah and not write to him again. They did that and victory was granted (Ibn Kathir from *Musnad Ahmad*).

Tawakkul

Linguistically *tawakkul* is ‘dependence on another out of one’s weakness.’ Sahal b. `Abdullah has defined it as ‘Contentment accompanied by assurance, and severance of all hopes of the created.’ According to the *sufya* when one begins to “depend” on the ‘means,’ then *tawakkul* has departed from him. (That is, when means are not treated as simply means but as those that can produce results: Au.) Qurtubi, abridged.

197. Badr was the name of a spring down south of Madinah (at about 200 km. from the city, and now a town: Au.), where the first battle of Islam took place (in 2 A.H. on 17 of Ramadan, Friday: Alusi). That happened to be also the first, of the total of 27 (according to Ibn Is-haq in his *Tabaqat*) battles, campaigns and skirmishes in which the Prophet personally participated, in eight of which he actually fought (Qurtubi).

198. At Badr Muslims were three hundred and odd against a thousand or so of the pagans. The Prophet is reported to have said that day: “To-

[124] When you were saying to the believers, 'Does it not suffice you that your Lord extends you help with three thousand angels¹⁹⁹ descending down?'

إِذْ تَقُولُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَلَنْ يَكْفِيَكُمْ أَنْ يُنْزِلَ
رَبُّكُمْ بِثَلَاثَةِ آلَافٍ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُنْزِلِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

[125] Rather, if you observe patience, are god-fearing,²⁰⁰ and, if (the enemy) surprises you,²⁰¹ your Lord will extend His help with five thousand marked angels.²⁰²

بَلَىٰ إِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُم مِّنْ فُورِهِمْ
هَذَا يُغْدِثُكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ آلَافٍ مِّنَ
الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

day you are in the same numbers as were the forces of Talut the day he encountered the forces of Jalut" (Ibn Jarir).

Majid quotes: "However unimportant itself as a military engagement, this *Ghazwat Badr* laid the foundation of Muhammad's temporal power. Islam had won its first and decisive military victory ... Hitherto it had been a religion within a state; in al Medinah, after Badr, it passed into something more than a state religion in itself became the state. Then and there Islam came to be what the world has ever since recognized it to be a military polity" (Hitti).

199. It is reported of Abu Usayd Malik b. Rabi'ah (the last to die of the Badri *sahabah*: Qurtubi) as saying, after he had lost his eye sight, "Were I to be there at Badr with you and able to see, I'd show you the valley out of which emerged the angels. I harbor no doubt about it." (One of

them was heard saying during the battle: 'Charge O Hayzum.' After the battle the Prophet asked Jibril who the angel was who had said that. Jibril replied: 'Not all of the inhabitants of the heaven do I know Muhammad': Qurtubi).

Ibn `Abbas has reported a man of Banu Ghifar as saying, 'I and my uncle polytheists until then were watching the battle of Badr from a distance when we saw a piece of cloud descending down. We could hear the neighing of horses proceeding from it. My uncle suffered a massive stroke at the sight and died on the spot. I too all but died out of fear.'

Ibn `Abbas has said that although angels did descend during the battles on many occasions, they did not take active part on any occasion save at Badr. Further, it is reported that Abu al Yusr, although a tiny man, captured `Abbas ibn `Abdul Muttalib

at Badr. The Prophet asked him how he managed it. He said that another man, whom he never saw before or after, had aided him. The Prophet said: "That was an angel that had helped you" (Ibn Jarir).

200. Something the participants at Uhud did not come up with and so were not helped (Dahhak: Ibn Jarir). In fact, according to 'Ikrimah not even the three thousand promised earlier were sent down at Uhud (Ibn Kathir).

The early commentators have differed over the battle to which this promise referred. Some believe that it was with reference to Badr; but since the need did not arise the Muslims were not helped with the additional five thousand angels promised. But some others are of the opinion that the angels did come down since Muslims observed patience and were godfearing. A third believes that this verse refers to Uhud but since the Muslims did not demonstrate patience and godfearing they were not helped with the five thousand promised (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Another interpretation is that the Muslims at Badr were initially promised a thousand angels as in verse 8 of al Anfal, since the forces opposing them were a thousand. However, when the news about Kurz (bringing in additional forces) reached them, and since Muslims were one against three, they were promised three thousand. Finally, they were promised that if they observed patience and godfearing, and, were their enemy to surprise them, they would be helped with five thousand more. But since the enemy did not receive the additional forces, the five thousand angels did not arrive (Alusi, Shafi').

201. Hasan and Sha'bi have said that Kurz bin Jabir had intended to extend his help to the pagans at Badr. That caused some concern among the Muslims. Allah revealed this verse to strengthen the heart of the believers. However, since Kurz did not come up with his forces, some say that Allah also did not send down the five thousand He had promised, rather three thousand of the earlier promise sufficed (Ibn Jarir).

[126] And Allah did not arrange it but as a source of delight for you and a means of reassurance to your hearts. But help is not but from Allah the Mighty, the Wise.

وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ لَكُمْ وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوبُكُمْ بِهِ وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿١٢٦﴾

[127] In order that He might cut off a chunk of the unbelievers, or humiliate them, so that they may turn back frustrated.

لِيَقْطَعَ طَرَفًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْ يَكْتَسِبُ غَلَبًا فَتُقَبِّلُوا خَائِبِينَ ﴿١٢٧﴾

[128] You have no say (O Muhammad) whatsoever in the affair. He may either turn to them (in mercy)²⁰³ or punish them, for surely, they are transgressors.²⁰⁴

لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْ يُعَذِّبُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١٢٨﴾

But Ibn Abbas' opinion is that by the terms *yaa' tukum min fawrihim hadha* Allah meant to say, "if they arrive on you now (at Uhud)" Ibn Jarir, Shawkani from Ibn Abi Hatim.

202. It is widely reported that the angels that day wore woollen turbans in the style of Zubayr ibn al `Awwam, riding black and white horses with tufts of wool or cotton tied to their tails and forehead. This is the marking that was alluded to in the verse (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

203. "He may either turn to them (in mercy and guide them)...": The words indicate that repentance is a creation of Allah, for repentance is basically remorse, and remorse itself is one's commitment to himself that the evil act will not be repeated. In other words it is an intention. Now,

if we say that man creates his intentions, then, intention will become an act, requiring another intention. This will lead to a vicious circle. Hence we say that repentance is an act of Allah (bestowed upon man) Razi.

204. Ibn `Abbas, Anas, Qatadah and Hasan report (the *hadith* is in Muslim: Ibn Kathir) that when the Muslims were routed at Uhud, the Prophet (*saws*) broke a tooth (lower right, the one after the front two teeth: Thanwi), and received a wound in his face that bled profusely, he remarked,

”كَيْفَ يَفْلِحَ قَوْمٌ شَجَّوْا نَبِيَّهُمْ وَكَسَرُوا رَبَاعِيَتَهُ، وَهُوَ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ؟“

“How will a people prosper who have wounded their Prophet, broke his tooth, while he invites

them to Allah!?” Upon that Allah revealed this verse. Another version (in Bukhari, Tirmidhi, Nasa’i and others: Alusi) says that the Prophet invoked Allah’s curse upon some of the unbelievers, specifically naming Abu Sufyan, Harith b. Hisham, Suhayl b. ‘Amr and Safwan b. Umayyah, after fajr Prayers, subsequent to the defeat at Uhud. But Allah revealed this verse in response (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Alusi adds: The verses indicated the preferable reaction, although the unbelievers did deserve to be cursed and hence the Prophet was not wrong in reacting that way.

In fact, the four leading antagonists named by the Prophet actually embraced Islam following Allah’s promise that He may turn to them in mercy (Ibn Kathir).

Bukhari, Muslim and others have also reported that whenever the Prophet faced hard times he made special supplications in his qunut in the Fajr Prayers, seeking Allah’s blessings for the Muslims and His scourge on the unbelievers, naming tribes and individuals, until Allah revealed this verse and he discontinued. (Shawkani).

Rashid Rida comments: This piece of Divine revelation, coming at this juncture establishes in the heart, that which could not have been established were it not to be a part of the important events which cannot be interpreted in any other way but one. This piece is a very strong proof of *tawhid* and one of the proofs of the authenticity of the Prophet. Had the Prophet been founder of a kingdom, or a political manipulator he would not have said what he said on this occasion. So what share do those people have in this religion who believe that the spirits of the saints in the graves have a say in the affairs of the world ... those who believe that the supposed saints can give victory or defeat, can grant or withhold, can kill or give life, can render rich or poor, can cure or render sick ... who can do everything (for their followers). Are these to be considered Muslims and followers of the Qur’ān, which said at that moment when the Prophet was wounded by the polytheists and had his teeth broken: “*You have no say in the affairs,*” and, “*Tell them all affairs are in Allah’s Power?*” This then is the teaching of the Qur’ān and the guidance shown by the Qur’ān. Were then, those people of Bukhara rightly guided who, in the face of the Russian invasion said, “Naqshbandi

[129] To Allah belong all that is in the heavens and the earth. He forgives whom He will, and punishes whom He will. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.²⁰⁵

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٩﴾

will save us?” Were the people of Fez rightly guided, who, in the face of the French invasion, resorted to supplications at the grave of Sheikh Idris? And, were those Muslims of numerous places rightly guided who, when facing foreign invasions, began to recite Bukhari or call upon the saints? Did they believe that those pagan practices were prescribed by Islam? Did they not recite this verse, and learn the circumstances of its revelation? Did they not learn of the acts and deeds that preceded the supplications of the righteous people of the past? Did they not learn that their righteous predecessors were always divinely helped as long as they did not remain merely cursing their adversaries in their lengthy and heart rending supplications? Therefore, act, believers, act. Prepare yourself fully (8: 60):

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ [الأنفال : ٦٠]

“Prepare yourselves against them with whatever force (you can muster).” There is no power without knowledge and without material means. There are no material means without

justice. And there is no justice with the tyrannical rulers. Then it is, after full preparations, that remembrance and supplications should follow (8: 45):

إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً فَاثْبُتُوا وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا [الأنفال : ٤٥]

“And when you meet a party (in the battlefield) then be steadfast and remember Allah much,” and (8: 46):

وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا [الأنفال : ٤٦]

“Do not differ (among yourselves) or you will lose heart.”

This is the guidance of Islam that reflects its truth in the life of the Prophet and the righteous believers (23: 68):

أَفَلَمْ يَدَّبَّرُوا الْقَوْلَ أَمْ جَاءَهُمْ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِ آبَاءَهُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ [المؤمنون : ٦٨]

“Have they not then pondered the word? Or, have they received what their forefathers didn't receive?”

Quotation from Rashid Rida ends here.

205. That is, Allah is right and just

[130] Muslims! Do not devour usury doubled and redoubled.²⁰⁶ Fear Allah, haply you may prosper.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَا أَضْعَافًا
مُضَاعَفَةً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾

[131] And beware of the Fire that has been prepared for the unbelievers.²⁰⁷

وَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾

in doing whatever He decides to do. If He punished those who did not sin - although He does not do that He would still be just and right with them since they are His creations, and He has a right to deal with His creation the way He will. Conversely, if He rewarded those who sinned against Him although, normally He does not do that then too He would be right and just, for He is not bound by any rule and has the right to deal with His creations the way He will. (Razi, Alusi)

The Connection

Qaffal has said that since the heathens were able to raise a big army with the help of the usurious money they had amassed, Allah introduced the prohibition of usury at this juncture, when Uhud and its aftermath were being discussed, in order that the Muslims may not follow them in their footsteps and resort to usurious means to raise money for war preparations (Razi, Alusi).

Majid adds: "The close connection between war and national loans and debts is too plain to need explanation."

206. That is, 'O those who have believed, do not devour usury after your Islam, as you were used to devouring it in pre Islamic times.' The practice then prevalent was that when a man failed to return a loan taken on interest within the stipulated time, he would make a fresh contract with the lender, agreeing to add up the interests accrued until then to the principal and allow new rates of interest payable on the new sum, in return for an extended deadline. This, according to 'Ata', Mujahid, and Ibn Zayd, is the interest upon interest that the verse is speaking of (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Further, the words doubled and redoubled do not mean you can consume simple interest (and not compound interest: Au.). Rather, the worst of its kind has been mentioned for emphasis. For example you say,

[132] Obey Allah and His Prophet in order that you are shown mercy.

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

﴿١٣٢﴾

[133] And rush, vying with one another to Forgiveness from your Lord and a Paradise whose breadth²⁰⁸ is the heavens and the earth,²⁰⁹ prepared for the believers.

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

﴿١٣٣﴾

‘Do not speak foul inside a mosque.’ But it does not mean that the person can speak foul outside the mosque (Shabbir).

breadth (Zamakhshari). For example, the Qur’ān said (55: 54):

مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَى فُرُشٍ بَطَائِنُهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ [الرحمن : ٥٤]

207. Imām Abu Hanifah has said that this is the toughest of the Qur’anic verses with reference to the believers, who, if they do not give up usury, are promised a Fire that has been primarily lit for the unbelievers (Zamakhshari, Alusi).

“They will be sitting on carpets whose inner lining will be of brocade.” Now, if the inner lining will be of brocade, how rich the outer material will not be? (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir)

Because of the placement of the verse, many commentators are of the opinion that whoever deals with usury with the belief that it is permissible, can be declared a kafir. Abu Hanifah has stated that the kufr of a person appears itself at the time of his death (Qurtubi).

209. If the seven heavens and the seven earths were to be folded together the way you can fold a piece of cloth, that would be the breadth of Paradise (Ibn `Abbas: Ibn Jarir). Other commentators have understood him to mean that if the empty spaces are removed (Au.).

The verse also proves that Jahannum has already been created (Razi, Qurtubi).

Kalbi has said that there are four Gardens: *Jannatu `Adn*, *Jannatu al Ma’wa*, *Jannatu al Firdaws* and *Jannatu al Na’im*. A *hadith* of the *Sahihayn* says that the last man to enter Paradise will have:

208. It is the breadth of Paradise that has been mentioned since normally it is lesser of the two: the length and

وَيُذَكِّرُهُ اللَّهُ سَلَكًا وَكَذَا فَإِذَا انْقَطَعَتْ بِهِ الْأَمَانَةُ قَالَ اللَّهُ هُوَ لَكَ وَعَشْرَةٌ أَمْثَالِهِ

[134] Those who expend in prosperity and adversity,²¹⁰ swallow anger²¹¹ and forgive the people. Allah approves of those who excel.²¹²

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

“Allah, reminding him to ask this and ask that, until when he would have exhausted his imagination, he would be told, ‘All that you wished for is yours plus ten times it’” (Qurtubi).

Ya`la b. Murra says (in a *hadith* in *Musnad* of Ahmad: Ibn Kathir): ‘I met Al Tanukhiyy in Hims. He was the one who had (in his days of unbelief) carried the letter of Heraclius (the Byzantine Emperor) to the Prophet. By then he had become very old, bent double. He told me: “I presented the letter of Heraclius to the Prophet. A man at his left side received the letter from me. I asked: ‘Who is it that is going to read the letter?’ They said, ‘Mu`awiyah.’ He began to read. (One sentence said): ‘You have written to me, inviting me to a Paradise whose breadth is the heavens and the earth, prepared for the believers. Where then is the Fire?’ The Prophet answered: “Glory to Allah. Where is the night when the day arrives?”’ (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

210. It is reported of `A`isha that

once she gave away in charity a single grape (Zamakhshari, Razi); others of the *Salaf* have given a single onion in charity (Razi).

211. *Kazm* of the original is used for holding back something and filling it to its full such as pouring water into a water skin brim-full and then tying up a knot at the mouth not to let it escape. Hence the verse 84 in *surah Yusuf*:

وَابْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ [يوسف : ٨٤]

“His eyes whitened with sorrow and he was choked up (with grief)” Qurtubi.

Here are a few *ahadith* on this topic:

The Prophet is reported by Abu Hurayrah as having said:

من كظم غيظاً وهو يقدر على إنفاذه ملاً الله جوفه أمناً وإيماناً

“Whoever restrained his rage despite being in a position to react, shall have his heart filled with peace and faith” (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Alusi).

The phrasing of another version as in Abu Da'ud and Tirmidhi is:

”مَنْ كَظَمَ غَيْظًا وَهُوَ قَادِرٌ عَلَى أَنْ يُنْفِذَهُ، دَعَاهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى رُؤُوسِ الْخَلَائِقِ، حَتَّى يُخَيَّرَ مِنْ أَيِّ الْحُورِ شَاءَ“

“Whoever restrained his rage despite being in a position to react, will have Allah call him out in front of mankind and let him choose a Huri of his preference” (Ibn Kathir). The *hadith* is of *hasan gharib* status (Qurtubi).

According to another *hadith*:

« مَا تَعُدُّونَ الصَّرْعَةَ فِيكُمْ ». قَالُوا الَّذِي لَا يَصْرَعُهُ الرِّجَالُ. قَالَ « لَا وَلَكِنَّهُ الَّذِي يَمْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ عِنْدَ الْغَضَبِ ».

The Prophet asked, “Whom do you consider a good wrestler?” They replied, “He who cannot be wrestled down by men.” He said, “No, a good wrestler among you is he who can control himself when angry “ (Razi, Qurtubi). The *hadith* is in *Sahibayn*.

There are several reports according to which when somebody asked the Prophet to enjoin him with something good, he replied:

لَا تَغْضَبْ

“Do not get angry,” and repeated the answer when the man repeated his requests.

Ibn `Abbas narrated the Prophet:

مَنْ أَنْظَرَ مُعْسِرًا أَوْ وَضَعَ لَهُ وَقَاهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فِتْحِ جَهَنَّمَ أَلَا إِنَّ عَمَلِ الْجَنَّةِ حَزْنٌ بِرَبْوَةٍ ثَلَاثًا أَلَا إِنَّ عَمَلَ النَّارِ سَهْلٌ بِسَهْوَةٍ وَالسَّعِيدُ مَنْ وَفِيَ الْفِتْنِ وَمَا مِنْ جَزَعَةٍ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ اللَّهُ مِنْ جَزَعَةٍ غَبِطَ يَكْظُمُهَا عَبْدٌ مَا كَظَمَهَا عَبْدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلَّا مَالًا اللَّهُ جَوْفَهُ إِيْمَانًا

“Whoever gave respite to someone in hardships or forgave it, Allah will save him from the heat of Jahannum. Lo! The deeds of Paradise are rough, (through) high grounds – said that three times – while the paths of the Fire are easy, down the slope. So, fortunate is he who escaped trials. And there is no gulp that is dearer to Allah than the gulp of anger that a man gulps down. And, never did a man gulp it down for the sake of Allah except that Allah filled his inner self with *iman*.”

The above report is from Ahmad and of good chain and good *matn*.

Abu Dharr has reported the Prophet:

« إِذَا غَضِبَ أَحَدُكُمْ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ فَلْيَجْلِسْ فَإِنْ ذَهَبَ عَنْهُ الْغَضَبُ وَإِلَّا فَلْيَضْطَجِعْ »

“When one of you gets angry, let him sit down if he is standing. If that does not cool him down, let him lie down.”

[135] And those who, if they commit an indecent act,²¹³ or wrong themselves, remember Allah and implore forgiveness for their sins²¹⁴ - and who forgives sins but Allah?²¹⁵ - and (those who) do not persist with what (wrongs) they committed.²¹⁶

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُبْصِرُوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

In another *hadith*, also recorded by Abu Da'ud, the Prophet said:

إِنَّ الْغَضَبَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ، وَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ خُلِقَ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَإِنَّمَا تُطْفَأُ النَّارُ بِالْمَاءِ، فَإِذَا غَضِبَ أَحَدُكُمْ فَلْيَتَوَضَّأْ

“Anger is from Shaytan. Shaytan has been created from fire. And fire is quenched with water. Therefore, if one of you is angry, let him make an ablution” (Ibn Kathir).

212. Ibn Is-haq has said that these are the qualities: expending, swallowing anger and forgiving the people that constitute *ihsan* (Ibn Jarir).

Qurtubi adds: It is said that a slave girl of Maymun b. Mehran spilled hot soup on him while he sat with his friends. He flared up in anger. She said (quoting the Qur'an): “*Those who swallow anger.*” He cooled down and said: “I’ve done it.” She said: “*And forgive the people.*” He said, “I forgive you.” She added: “*And Allah approves of those who excel.*” He said: “I set you free” (Bayhaqi has a similar

incident attributed to ‘Ali ibn Husayn b. ‘Ali: Alusi).

213. Although the meaning is general and covers all kinds of sins, one of its meanings is adultery. In fact, Jabir and Suddi hold the opinion that this is the only meaning intended here (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Ibn ‘Abbas has reported however that the following incident became the cause of its revelation. The Prophet had instituted brotherhood between an Ansari and a Thaqafi both of whom used to go out with the Prophet in turns and by lots for the other to stay back and look after the family of the one out. Now, once the Ansari encountered the Thaqafi’s wife when he was out, and tried to kiss her. She covered her face with her hands. (He kissed her hands: Qurtubi). Nevertheless, the Ansari fell into remorse and took to the mountains. (Informed by his wife, the Thaqafi searched out the Ansari and presented him first to Abu Bakr and ‘Umar who both chased them

away: Qurtubi). When the matter was reported to the Prophet he did not say anything until this verse was revealed (Razi). According to the narration in Kalbi, 'Umar asked the Prophet if it was specifically for the Ansari or the rule was common. He said the rule was common (Alusi).

214. Abu Hurayrah has reported a *hadith*, preserved in Bukhari and Muslim through Ishaq b. Abi Talha, which says:

”أَذْنَبَ عَبْدٌ ذَنْبًا. فَقَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذَنْبِي. فَقَالَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى: أَذْنَبَ عَبْدِي ذَنْبًا، فَعَلِمَ أَنَّ لَهُ رَبًّا يَغْفِرُ الذَّنْبَ، وَيَأْخُذُ بِالذَّنْبِ. ثُمَّ عَادَ فَأَذْنَبَ. فَقَالَ: أَيُّ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذَنْبِي. فَقَالَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى: عَبْدِي أَذْنَبَ ذَنْبًا. فَعَلِمَ أَنَّ لَهُ رَبًّا يَغْفِرُ الذَّنْبَ، وَيَأْخُذُ بِالذَّنْبِ. ثُمَّ عَادَ فَأَذْنَبَ فَقَالَ: أَيُّ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذَنْبِي. فَقَالَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى: أَذْنَبَ عَبْدِي ذَنْبًا. فَعَلِمَ أَنَّ لَهُ رَبًّا يَغْفِرُ الذَّنْبَ، وَيَأْخُذُ بِالذَّنْبِ. اْعْمَلْ مَا شِئْتَ فَقَدْ غَفَرْتُ لَكَ“

“A man committed a sin and then said, ‘O my Lord. I’ve committed a sin. Forgive me.’ Upon this Allah said, ‘My slave committed a sin. He knows that he has a Lord who forgives and punishes for sins. I’ve forgiven him his sin.’ The man committed another sin and said: ‘O my Lord. I’ve committed a sin. Forgive me.’ Upon this Allah said, ‘My slave committed a sin. He knows that he has a Lord who forgives or pun-

ishes for sins. I’ve forgiven him his sin.’ The man then followed up with another sin and said, ‘O my Lord. I’ve committed a sin. Forgive me.’ Upon this Allah said, ‘My slave committed a sin. He knows that he has a Lord who forgives and punishes for sins. I call you to witness that I’ve forgiven My slave. So let him do what he will.’ (However, what this last part means is that his previous sins are forgiven, since he admitted them, and that he will be saved from future ones by the will of Allah: Qurtubi).

Another *hadith* on the subject has been recorded by Ahmad, as well as by Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah (which Shu`ayb Anra`ut treated as *Sahih* on the basis of several citations: Au.). It reports Abu Hurayrah as saying:

”قُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ: مَا لَنَا إِذَا كُنَّا عِنْدَكَ رَفَّتْ قُلُوبُنَا، وَرَهَدْنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَكُنَّا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْآخِرَةِ، فَإِذَا خَرَجْنَا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَنْسَنَا أَهْلِيَنَا وَشَمَمْنَا الْأَوْلَادَ أَنْكُرْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا؟ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ”لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ تَكُونُونَ إِذَا خَرَجْتُمْ مِنْ عِنْدِي كُنْتُمْ عَلَى حَالِكُمْ ذَلِكَ لَرَأَيْتُكُمْ الْمَلَائِكَةَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ، وَلَوْ لَمْ تَذْبُحُوا لَجَاءَ اللَّهُ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ كَيْ يَذْبُحُوا فَيَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ. قَالَ فُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مِمَّ خَلَقَ الْخَلْقُ؟ قَالَ: مِنْ الْمَاءِ. قُلْنَا الْجَنَّةُ مَا بَنَاهَا؟ قَالَ: ”لَبَنَةً مِنْ فِضَّةٍ وَلَبَنَةً مِنْ ذَهَبٍ، وَمِلَاطُهَا الْمِسْكُ الْأَذْفَرُ وَخَصْبُهَا الْوَلُولُ وَالْبِاقُوتُ وَتَرْبَتُهَا الرِّعْفَرَانُ مَنْ يَدْخُلُهَا يَنْعَمَ لَا يَبْأَسُ، وَيَخْلُدُ لَا يَمُوتُ: وَلَا تَبْلَى ثِيَابُهُمْ وَلَا يَفْقَى شَبَابُهُمْ. ثُمَّ قَالَ:

ثَلَاثَ لَا تُرَدُّ دَعْوَتُهُمْ: الْإِمَامُ الْعَادِلُ، وَالصَّائِمُ حِينَ يُفْطِرُ، وَدَعْوَةُ الْمَظْلُومِ يَرْفَعُهَا فَوْقَ الْعَمَامِ، وَتَنْفُخُ لَهَا أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ، وَيَقُولُ الرَّبُّ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: وَعِزَّتِي لِأَنْصُرَنَّكَ وَلَوْ بَعْدَ حِينٍ.”

“We said, ‘Messenger of Allah. What’s wrong with us that when we are in your presence our hearts soften up, we treat the world with disdain, and we feel concerned with the Hereafter alone; but when we part company with you, the world bewitches us, and our wives and children engage us.’ He said, ‘Were you to be always in the state in which you are when with me, angels would shake hands with you and visit you in your homes. And, were you not to sin, Allah would bring a people who will sin so that He might forgive them.’ We said, ‘Messenger of Allah. Tell us about Paradise, as to how it has been built?’ He said, ‘A golden brick upon a silver brick, with musk of Azfar grass as its mortar, pearls as the pebbles and saffron as its floor. Whoever gained entry will be in great pleasures and never unhappy, will abide forever and never die. His clothes will never get torn, and his youth will never fade. There are three whose supplication is not rejected: A just

ruler, a fasting person when he breaks his fast, and the call of the oppressed which are carried above the clouds, for which the gates of heaven are opened and the Lord says, ‘By My Power. I shall help you, even if be after a while’” (Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi comments: It should be understood, however, that repentance requires atonement, such as, performance of a religious duty that was neglected, or returning of the people’s rights if they were wronged, and so forth.

He also adds: Our scholars say however, that the *istighfar* that is expected of a believer is something that deters repetition of the sin, and not that which is merely expressed out with the tongue. If one says *astaghfirullah* with his tongue but his heart is with the sin, ready to repeat it, then such an *istighfar* itself demands another *istighfar*. This is reported of Hasan al Basri who used to say: “Our *istighfar* demands *istighfar*.” If that was in his time, then, what about in our own times (i.e. Qurtubi’s), when people go about with beads in their hands, committing sins upon sins, and quite sure that they will be forgiven!

Sahal bin `Abdullah has said: “The

[136] Such, their reward is forgiveness²¹⁷ from their Lord and Gardens beneath which rivers flow, dwelling therein forever. An excellent reward for those who labor.²¹⁸

أُولَٰئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَجَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

ignorant is dead. The forgetful is sleeping. The sinner is drunk and the repeater is destroyed. And the repeater is the one who puts off repentance to the next day, while the next day may not be his.”

215. Majid says: “A staggering blow to the Christian idea that the power of forgiving sins is in the hands of Christ and the pastors of his Church. Cf. the NT: ‘Then Jesus said to them again ... Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted upon them; and whose sins ye retain, they are retained.’ (Jn. 20: 20-23). ‘Unlimited power of remitting sin was promised and conferred upon the Apostles and their successors by Jesus Christ. This power is exercised in the Sacrament of Penance’ (CD. p. 821). And the following is an extract from Dr. Butler’s ‘Catechism’ for the Roman Catholics:

"Q. By whose power are sins forgiven?

A. By the power of God, which Christ left to the pastors of the Church’ (p.84).”

216. This shows that of the believers there are three kinds: the “godfearing,” the “repenting,” and the “persisting” (Zamakhshari).

217. It is said (in `Abd b. Humayd: Alusi, and in Ibn al Mundhir: Shawkani), that some Companions went to the Prophet and said that the Israelites were quite lucky in that when they committed a sin they found it written on their door along with the expiation required (which made it easy for them to wash their sins off: Au.). Upon this, these verses were revealed (which showed a way of expiation without the humiliation: Au.). It is reported of Thabit al Bunani that he said (and so has Malik b. Anas: Ibn Kathir): “When this verse was revealed, Iblis wept.”

Further, `Ali is reported to have said that he heard Abu Bakr report the Prophet - and Abu Bakr never lied, that,

مَا مِنْ رَجُلٍ يُذْنِبُ ذَنْبًا فَيَتَوَضَّأُ فَيُحْسِنُ الْوُضُوءَ
قَالَ مَسْعَرٌ وَيُصَلِّيُ وَقَالَ سُفْيَانُ ثُمَّ يُصَلِّيُ رَكَعَتَيْنِ
فَيَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِلَّا عَفَرَ لَهُ

No Muslims commits a sin, then

[137] Examples have preceded you,²¹⁹ so go about in the land and see what was the end of those who cried lies.

قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ سُنَنٌ فَسِيرُوا
فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١٣٧﴾

[138] This is a plain exposition for the people, a Guidance, and an admonition for the god-fearing.

هَذَا بَيَانٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٨﴾

makes a good ablution, offers two *rak`ah* of Prayer, and seeks Allah's forgiveness but he is forgiven.' Then the Prophet recited this verse" (Ibn Jarir).

"He did not persist who sought forgiveness, even if he sinned seventy times in a day" (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari).

The *hadith* is also in Ahmad, Ibn Majah and in the *Sahih* of Ibn Hibban (Ibn Kathir).

The *hadith* is at least of *hasan* grade (Ibn Kathir).

It is also in Tirmidhi who declares it *hasan* (Qurtubi).

218. Zamakhshari writes: With reference to this verse, "An excellent reward for those who labor," Shahar b. Hawshab remarked: "To ask for Paradise without working for it is a sin. To depend on intercession without creating a cause for it is a kind of self deception. And to seek mercy from Him who is not obeyed is a kind of foolishness."

Some scholars have said that the meaning of *israr* of the original is 'not to commit a sin as soon as its wrongfulness is realized.' Others have said that it is to 'commit a sin deliberately and then seek forgiveness.' Yet others have said that it is 'not to seek forgiveness.' However, the weightier meaning is 'not to repeat the sin.' The Prophet has said:

Rabi`ah al Basriyyah is reported to have sung the following couplet:

Seek thou salvation, but do not tread its course?!

مَا أَصَرَ مَنْ اسْتَعْفَرَ وَإِنْ عَادَ فِي الْيَوْمِ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً

Alas, a ship does not sail on sand.

[139] And weaken not, nor grieve, for you shall have the upper hand if you are believers.²²⁰

وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾

[140] If you have been inflicted wounds, then the (unbelieving) people have also received similar wounds. These days We run through the people in turns²²¹ in order that He knows the believers, and in order that He may take martyrs from your ranks.²²² And Allah does not approve of the transgressors.²²³

إِنْ يَمَسُّنَّكُمْ قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ قَرْحٌ مِّثْلُهُ وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَاءَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾

219. That is: Consider how We sent our Messengers to earlier people whom they promptly rejected. But We allowed them respite, and then, when they did not heed, gradually led them down to their destruction, making them a sign and a lesson for the posterity (Ibn Jarir).

What is being said is that you and they are not on the same footing. You are above them (*a' lawn*). You fight in Allah's cause, while they fight in the cause of the Devil. Your dead are in Paradise while theirs are in the Fire.

Ibn Is-haq has said that when the Companions of the Prophet thought of Uhud and the grief it had brought, this verse was revealed to tell them that 'the operative laws had not changed' (Ibn Jarir).

It could also mean that ultimately it is you who will triumph (Zamakhshari).

Nonetheless, after this verse the Companions never lost a battle (Qurtubi).

220. Ibn `Abbas has said that when the Prophet saw Khalid ibn al Walid climbing the hill with his men, he prayed: "O Allah. May they not come on top of us (*la ya'lu `alayna*)."

So Allah revealed: "You will be on top of them (*antum 'l a' lawn*)" Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi.

During the lessons our teacher (Sheikh Muhammad `Abduh) said: "Last Thursday (*Dhu al Qa'idah* 1320), I saw the Prophet in my dream. He was leaving Uhud with his Companions. He was saying, 'If I was given the choice between defeat and victory, I would choose defeat.' Probably he said so for the reasons

[141] (The setback at Uhud was) in order that Allah may purify the believers and destroy the unbelievers.²²⁴

وَلِيُمَحِّصَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَيَمْحَقَ
الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾

[142] Or, do you imagine that you will enter Paradise while Allah has not yet known those of you who fight, and so that He may know the persevering (ones).

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ
اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾

of the many lessons that it brought in its wake, such as, Allah's instruction to the believers not to slacken, rather, make preparations, and several others" (Rashid Rida).

221. "So a day for you and a day for the heathens" (Suddi Ibn Jarir).

As noted above, after the battle Abu Sufyan climbed a hill and called out addressing the Muslims who were seeking refuge on a higher one: "Where is Muhammad, where is Abu Bakr, where is 'Umar?" 'Umar replied: "Here we are." Abu Sufyan said: "A day for a day. Days are in vicissitudes. And war is like a bucket (that goes up and down the well: Au.)." 'Umar replied: "We are not equal. Our dead are in Paradise while yours are in Hell fire." Abu Sufyan said: "If that is your claim then surely we are the losers" (Zamakh-

shari, Razi).

222. I.e., We give you or the heathens upper hand in turns to find out which of you is a true believer and which a hypocrite (Ibn Ishaq), and to bestow martyrdom on those who had wished for it (Ibn 'Abbas, Qatadah, Ibn Ishaq Ibn Jarir).

223. "The Qur'ān quite often uses the term "*al zalimun*" in the sense of *al mushrikun*, that is, those who ascribe partners unto Allah. For instance, in (31: 13):

Shahar b. Hawshab has said:

إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ [لقمان : ١٣]

"Surely, association is a great transgression."

The *Sahihayn* report 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud as having asked the Prophet about the greatest of sins. He replied,

[143] You were longing death before you encountered it. Now you have experienced it, beholding it.²²⁵

وَلَقَدْ كُنتُمْ تَمَنَّوْنَ الْمَوْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَلْقَوْهُ فَقَدْ رَأَيْتُمُوهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿١٤٣﴾

[144] Muhammad is not aught but a Messenger. Messengers have passed away before him.²²⁶ Were he to die, or be killed, will you turn about on your heels?²²⁷ Whoso turns about on his heels will do no harm to Allah.²²⁸ And Allah shall surely recompense the thanksgiving.²²⁹

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

أَيُّ الذَّنْبِ أَعْظَمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: "أَنْ تَجْعَلَ لِلَّهِ نِدَاءً وَهُوَ خَلَقَكَ

"That you should set up equals to Allah, while He created you" (Sayyid).

224. With such events as Uhud, when the people are subjected to tests, the true believers emerge successful, while the hypocrites fail and are led to destruction (Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah, Suddi, Ibn Ishaq; Ibn Jarir).

The term *mahaqa* of the original gives the meaning of slow destruction, little by little (Alusi).

225. This refers to those of the Companions who had missed participation at Badr, wanted the Prophet to go out of Madinah to face the enemy there, so that they could fight face to face, demonstrate their fighting

prowess, and have a chance to win martyrdom. But when the enemy onslaught came, (and the rumors of the Prophet's death depressed them: Au.) they fled (Mujahid, Qatadah, Suddi, Ibn Ishaq Ibn Jarir).

And the verse came as a warning to Muslims that they ought not wish to fight or wish to die (in Allah's cause), unless they are sure they can remain true to their wishes (Zamakhshari).

In other words, wishing martyrdom itself is not prohibited. What is prohibited is to show the back when a difficult situation arises in the battle field (Thanwi).

Hence the Prophet has said in a *hadith* of the *Sahihayn*:

لَا تَتَمَنَّوْا لِقَاءَ الْعَدُوِّ وَاسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ الْعَافِيَةَ، فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُوهُمْ فَاصْبِرُوا وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ الْجَنَّةَ تَحْتَ ظِلَالِ السُّيُوفِ

“Do not wish to encounter the enemy. Rather, seek peace. But if you do meet them, then stay firm and know that Paradise is under the shade of the swords” (Ibn Kathir).

226. “*Da`wah* is older than the *da`i* ... and will outlast the *da`i* ... Callers to the Call will come and go. The Call itself will remain ... through and through the ages ... with each new generation of callers turning for inspiration to the Primary Source ... Allah ... the Everlasting” (Sayyid).

227. This refers to the situation in the battle of Uhud when the Prophet (*saws*) disappeared from the sight, and the news spread that he was dead. (According to a report in Bukhari of `A'isha's narration, it was Iblis who had shouted out that Muhammad was dead: Ibn Kathir). At this, some people, in whose heart was sickness, said that if he was dead there was no point in remaining Muslims. (Some Muslims said: “O that `Abdullah ibn Ubayy was with us, so he could strike a deal with Abu Sufyan”: Zamakhshari). Others, who were true in their faith such as an *Ansari* who was found by a *Muhajir* injured and bleeding said that if he was dead, there was no point in living, rather, it would be better to die defending

what Muhammad had died defending. Thereupon Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Razi).

These lines announced that Muhammad's messengership was not a new phenomenon. Other Messengers had come and gone, and one day he will be gone too; as it happened a few years later when he died. (For Messengers are sent to deliver the message, and complete the argument, and not to abide with their people: Zamakhshari). But when that happened, and the Messenger actually died, the people weren't ready to accept the fact. Even a person like `Umar declared that he would behead anyone who said that Muhammad was dead. (That was how `Umar reacted, while, as some people have said, `Uthman was dumb, and `Ali out of sight: Qurtubi). “People,” as `A'isha has reported in a version in Bukhari, “were in a state of shock and perplexity, until Abu Bakr arrived (from one of his wives, who lived among the Banu `Awali, a mile out of *Madinah*: Qurtubi). He went to the corpse, removed the covering, bent down, kissed the forehead and said, ‘By Allah. He will not give you two deaths. The death that was written for you has overtaken you.’ Then he entered the mosque where

[145] It is not given to any soul to die, save by the will of Allah - (there being) an appointed term (for everyone).²³⁰ Whoso seeks the rewards of this world, We will give him of it. And whoso seeks the reward of the next world, We will give him of that.²³¹ And We shall surely recompense the thanksgiving.

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ
كِتَابًا مُّؤَجَّلًا وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ
مِنْهَا وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الْآخِرَةِ نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا
وَسَنَجْزِي الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

he encountered `Umar. He told him, 'Sit down `Umar!' He proceeded to the pulpit and addressed the people in words: 'People. Those who worshipped Muhammad should know that he is dead. But those who worshipped Allah, should know that Allah is Living. He does not die.' Then he recited this verse: '*Muhammad is naught but a Messenger...* (until the end).' "And, by God," continues `A'isha, "it was as if the people had not heard of this revelation earlier. It was as if they had just learnt it from Abu Bakr! The next minute, the verse was on everyone's lip." Sa'id ibn al Musayyib adds that `Umar said, 'I did not hear Abu Bakr reciting it, but I began to sweat, and (with its meaning gradually settling upon him), my legs gave way and I collapsed' (Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi quotes the following here: Anas b. Malik said, as recorded in Ibn Majah: "Madinah had lit up the

day the Prophet had entered it, and darkened the day he died. And, it wasn't a moment after we had buried him, but we felt a change in our hearts."

Ibn `Umar said: "Until the Prophet was alive, we used to be careful with our women, avoiding even talking to them playfully, fearful that a revelation might come down censuring us. When he was dead, we became free with them."

228. In this verse was the prediction that the death of the Prophet will be followed by some apostasy. (Shab-bir).

229. `Ali is reported to have said that Abu Bakr is the leader of the "*Thank-full*" (Ibn Jarir, Shawkani).

230. (During their encounters with the Persians, much later, during `Umar's caliphate) when the Islamic forces were unable to reach the en-

[146] How many Prophets there have (not been) with whom large bands of godly men²³² fought?²³³ They did not lose heart at the setbacks they suffered in the way of Allah; neither did they weaken, nor yet they gave in.²³⁴ And Allah loves the Patient.²³⁵

وَكَايِن مِّن نَّبِيٍّ قَاتَلَ مَعَهُ رِبِّيُّونَ كَثِيرٌ فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوا وَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾

emy forces that were at the other side of river Dijlah (Tigris), Hajr b. `Udayy addressed the Muslims: "What?! Is there nothing between you and them, but this river? It is not for any soul to die save by the will of Allah an appointed term?" Then he plunged his horse into the river. Following his example others also plunged their horses into the river (and nobody was drowned). When they arrived at the other side, the Persians began to say, "*Deo an*," (meaning, "The supermen have arrived: Au.), and fled (Ibn Kathir).

231. As said Allah elsewhere (17: 18, 19):

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَاءُ لِمَنْ نُرِيدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَاهَا مَذْمُومًا مَّدْحُورًا (١٨) وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا [الإسراء : ١٨ ، ١٩]

"Whoso wishes for the transitory things, We hasten for him therein, what We will unto whomsoever We will. Then We have appointed for him Jahannum, which he will reach, disgraced and rejected. As

for him who wishes for the Hereafter, and strives after it in the way it deserves to be striven for and he is a believer such are the ones whose striving will be well appreciated" (Ibn Kathir).

232. The word in the original is *ribbiyyun* (sing. *ribbi*) and as to their numbers can be interpreted both to mean "groups" as well as "batches", which is the opinion of Ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah, Mujahid, Dahhak, Rabi`, Suddi and others. Nonetheless, the word itself can as well be understood as "scholars" (or godly men: *rabbī*), which is the opinion of Ibn `Abbas, Hasan, Ibn al Mubarak and others (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi). Of the grammarians, Zajjaj is with the former, while Khalil sides with the latter (Shawkani).

233. (Although a variant reading of *qatala* [fought] is *qutila* [were killed] which would mean that many Prophets have earlier been killed along with their numerous followers in the battle fields fighting in the way of Allah,

[147] They had nothing to say except that they prayed: 'Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and our excesses in our affairs,²³⁶ make firm our feet and help us against the unbelieving people.'

وَمَا كَانَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا
ذُنُوبَنَا وَإِسْرَافَنَا فِي أَمْرِنَا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا
وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

[148] So Allah gave them the reward of this world and the excellent reward of the Hereafter. And Allah loves those who do good.

فَأَنآءَهُمُ اللَّهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحُسْنَ ثَوَابِ
الْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾

[149] Believers! If you follow the unbelievers, they will turn you upon your heels, in which case you will turn about losers.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ تَطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
يُرْذِلُوكُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوا حَاسِرِينَ
﴿١٤٩﴾

[150] Allah is your Protector, and He is the best of the helpers.

بَلِ اللَّهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ النَّاصِرِينَ
﴿١٥٠﴾

but that did not deter the rest from following their ways - a meaning of Ibn Jarir's preference: Au.) Hasan [and Sa'id ibn Jubayr: Zamakhshari and Razi], however, have said that no Prophet was ever killed in a battle-field [and hence *qatala* is the right reading: Au.] - Shawkani.

234. Razi comments: The original has three words of similar meaning: viz., *wahn*, *da'f*, and *istikanah*. What's the difference? Zamakhshari has said in explanation: "They did not weaken down at the death of their Prophet (*ma wahanu*), did not slacken their jihad efforts after him

(*ma da'ufu*) and, did not seek compromises with their enemies (*ma istakanu*). However, there is another way of differentiation: *Wahn* is the weakness that strikes the heart; *da'f* is that which affects the body leading it to inactivity; and *istikanah* is the display of such internal weaknesses to others.

235. So, the absence of *wahn*, *da'f* and *istikanah* are signs of *sabr* (Au.).

236. One of the Prophet's prayer words, according to Muslim, were:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي خَطِيئَتِي وَجَهْلِي وَإِسْرَافِي فِي أَمْرِي
وَمَا أَنْتَ أَعْلَمُ بِهِ مِنِّي ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي هَزْلِي وَجِدِّي

[151] We shall soon cast terror into the hearts of the unbelievers,²³⁷ because of their association of partners with Allah for which He has not sent any authority. Their end is the Fire: an evil abode for the wrongdoers.

سَنُلْقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ وَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٥١﴾

وخطأي وعمدي وكل ذلك عندي

“O Allah, forgive me my errors, my ignorance, my excesses in my affairs, and what You know of me more than I. O Allah, forgive me my frivolous and the serious, my unintended errors, and the intended errors, and all of them are in me.”

The Prophet's followers should also adopt his proven prayer words, which are Divinely inspired, rather than substitute them with their own words (Qurtubi).

237. Suddi said that on their way back to Makkah, Abu Sufyan and his men realized that victory was not complete. They could have plundered Madinah and destroyed the Muslims root and branch. But Allah cast terror in their hearts and they

did not return (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari). In fact, they gave some money to a Bedouin, to go across to Muhammad and warn him that Abu Sufyan was coming back. But, instead of panic, it prompted the Prophet to pursue them with a chosen band of men following their trail until he arrived at a place called Hamra 'l Asad. However, Abu Sufyan's victorious army did not have the courage to turn back and fight (Alusi, Thanwi, Majid and others).

Ibn Kathir has written: (The casting of fear in the hearts of the unbelievers was not specific to that situation: Razi). According to a *hadith* in the *Sahihayn* the Prophet (*saws*) is reported by Jabir b. `Abdullah as having said:

أُعْطِيتُ خَمْسًا لَمْ يُعْطَهُنَّ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ قَبْلِي نُصِرْتُ بِالرُّعْبِ مَسِيرَةَ شَهْرٍ وَجُعِلَتْ لِي الْأَرْضُ

[152] Surely, Allah kept His promise with you when you were cutting them down by His will.²³⁸ Until you flinched, and fell to disputing in the affair,²³⁹ and disobeyed after He had shown you what you love.²⁴⁰ There were some among you who aimed at this world, while there were others who aimed at the Hereafter.²⁴¹ Then He turned you from them - in order that He might try you. However, He has forgiven you.²⁴² Allah is full of grace for the believers.

وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ إِذْ تَحُسُّوهُم بِأُذُنِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا فَشِلْتُمْ وَتَنَزَّعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُمْ مِمَّنْ بَعْدَ مَا أَرَاكُمْ مَا تُحِبُّونَ مِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ ثُمَّ صَرَفَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ لِيَبْتَلِيَكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَفَا عَنْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٥٢﴾

مَسْجِدًا وَطَهُورًا وَإِنَّمَا رَجُلٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي أَدْرَكْتَهُ الصَّلَاةَ فَلْيُصَلِّ وَأَحَلَّتْ لِي الْغَنَائِمُ وَكَانَ النَّبِيُّ يُبْعَثُ إِلَى قَوْمِهِ خَاصَّةً وَيُبْعَثُ إِلَى النَّاسِ كَافَّةً وَأُعْطِيتُ الشَّفَاعَةَ

“I have been granted five things that no Prophet was granted before me: I have been aided by fright (*ru`b*) from a distance of a month, dust has been declared pure for me, war booty has been declared lawful to me, I have been granted intercession, and, earlier to me, Prophets used to be sent to a specific people while I have been sent to the entire mankind.”

238. Initially Muslims had an upper hand at Uhud, cutting down the unbelievers from all sides, until the tides turned and they began to flee. This verse refers to that situation. Hence Ibn `Abbas has said that Allah helped the believers in Uhud like He never did before (Qurtubi, Ibn

Kathir).

If Allah had not cast terror into the hearts of Abu Sufyan and his men, and, had they decided to plunder Madinah, surely, it would have been a difficult day for the Muslims (Au.).

239. It refers to some saying, ‘we ought not to abandon the post following the Prophet’s instruction,’ while others saying, ‘there was no need for such a precaution since the Makkans had lost the battle’ (Qurtubi).

240. This refers to the disagreement among the archers on the mount who were ordered by the Prophet not to abandon their post, come what may, victory or defeat. But they disputed the implication of the instruction among themselves, and save for a few, the rest rushed down to collect

[153] When you were running²⁴³ and would not cast a glance at anyone, while the Messenger was calling you in your rear, then, He struck you with distress upon distress,²⁴⁴ so that you may not grieve over what escaped you nor over what befell you. And Allah is Aware of what you do.

إِذْ تُصْعِدُونَ وَلَا تَلْوُونَ عَلَى أَحَدٍ وَالرَّسُولُ يَدْعُوكُمْ فِي أُخْرَاكُمْ فَأَتَابَكُمْ عُنًى يَعْصِمُ لِكَيْلًا تَخَزِنُوا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا مَا أَصَابَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

booty. Muslims were denied the victory they desired (Au.).

241. It is widely reported of Ibn Mas'ud that he said: "I did not believe there was anyone among the Companions of the Prophet who desired this world, until Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

242. Hasan is reported to have raised the question of what form this forgiveness took, when, as the reality is, seventy of the Muslims were slain, the Prophet lost a dear uncle of his, and he himself had his tooth broken?! Then he replied saying that what Allah meant by the words "*He has forgiven you*," is that "He did not annihilate and destroy you completely." "Is there in this," Hasan added, "a lesson for the brave sinners of our times? They shall soon know the outcome of their audacity!" (Ibn Jarir).

Thanwi adds: The verse demonstrates the special status of the Com-

panions with Allah. He punished them, but forgave them immediately, and then consoled them by saying that the whole affair was not entirely without some good results, for it exposed the hypocrites and brought to light the true believers. Further, by saying, "*There were some among you who aimed for this world*," it was not meant that they were aiming at this world 'for the sake of this world,' rather, it cannot be ruled out that it was 'for the sake of the other world.' Yet it was censurable since it had behind it a disobedience to the Prophet's order, viz., abandoning of the post.

243. This translation is based on the standard reading "*tus'iduna*" of which the root is "*as'ada*" (to run, start of, move about on a plane: Ibn Jarir's preference). A variant reading is "*tas'aduna*" which has its root in "*sa'ida*" which means (to climb a hill, a tree, etc.). Ibn Kathir prefers the meaning: "When you were

[154] Then, after the distress, He sent down upon you by way of peace, a slumber that was overcoming a party of you. But a party was there that was only concerned with itself,²⁴⁵ imagining untrue things about Allah - imaginations (worthy only) of the pre-Islamic days,²⁴⁶ asking: 'Is there any say for us in this affair?' Tell them: 'The affair belongs entirely to Allah.' They were concealing in their hearts what they would not let you know, saying: 'Had we any say in the affair, we would never have been slain here.'²⁴⁷ Tell them, 'Had you remained in your homes, surely those for whom death had been ordained,²⁴⁸ would have appeared at the death sites,' in order that He might try what is in your breasts,²⁴⁹ and purge what is in your hearts. Allah is Aware of what is in the inner recesses of your hearts.

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُم مِّن بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ أَمَنَةً نُّعَاسًا يَغْشَى طَآئِفَةً مِّنكُمْ وَطَآئِفَةٌ قَدْ أَهَمَّتْهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ يَظُنُّونَ بِاللّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنَّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَقُولُونَ هَل لَّنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مِن شَيْءٍ قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ كُلَّهُ لِلّهِ يُخْفُونَ فِي أَنفُسِهِم مَّا لَا يُبْدُونَ لَكَ يَقُولُونَ لَوْ كَانَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ مَّا قُتِلْنَا هَاهُنَا قُل لَّوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ لَبَرَزَ الَّذِينَ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَتْلُ إِلَى مَضَاجِعِهِمْ وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَلِيُمَحَّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿١٥٤﴾

climbing (the hill))” Au.

Qurtubi writes: It cannot be ruled out that they moved out towards the edge of the valley and then climbed the hill, hence both the variant readings, and the meaning they lend, could be correct.

244. Distress upon distress: one of which was the news that the Prophet was dead, and the other, their massacre at the hands of the Makkani pagans: Qatadah, Mujahid, Rabi` (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Qurtubi).

(The two mentioned above were the great losses). There were others

too, such as: loss of booty, injury to many, the triumphant statements of Abu Sufyan at the base of the hill, and others (Razi, Qurtubi).

245. Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah, Suddi and others have said that what happened after Abu Sufyan had spoken to the Muslims from the foot of the hills and then departed, is that the Prophet sent a man after him to check whether the Makkans were intending to plunder Madinah or were heading to Makkah. When it was reported that they were heading towards Makkah, the Muslims felt relieved (and: Suddi), a refresh-

ing slumber overtook them. Abu Talha and Ibn Zubayr used to say (the report is in Tirmidhi of *hasan sahih* status, as well as in Nasa'i: Ibn Kathir, Shawkani) that they did not raise their heads from slumber that was overtaking them ('despite repeated efforts, my sword would slip out of my hand': Abu Talha in Bukhari), but found that all around them heavy heads were tilting down full this way or that. Whereas, adds Suddi, the hypocrites either did not get the news or would not believe that the Makkans had spared Madi-nah. So they remained tense. Hence the words: "*But a party was there that was only concerned with itself*" (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Mas'ud has added that sleep or slumber during a battle is a sign of peace, but when it is during *salah*, it is from Shaytan (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Razi said: this is because sleep can only overtake a person during a battle if he has full trust and confidence in Allah, while in *salah* it can only be

because of being at a great distance from Him (at that moment).

246. That is, thoughts that rest on pre Islamic pagan beliefs: Qatadah (Ibn Jarir).

Majid remarks: "*Al Jahiliyya* is a well known synonym for the Arabian dark ages or pre Islamic Arabia, but an erudite Egyptian scholar has recently shown, as quoted by Dr. Zaki Ali, that instead of its literal meaning, the word 'rather denotes arrogance, ostentation and contention which were prevalent among the Arabs before Islam, in contradistinction to modesty, pious resignation conducive to peace, and the advantage of good deeds over the nobility of pedigree, these being distinctive features of the ethics of Islam' (Zaki Ali, *Islam and the World*, p. 3 f.n.)."

247. Zubayr (b. al 'Awwam) said that even as slumber was overtaking him, he clearly remembers hearing Mu'attab b. Qushayr say (to himself in a low pitched voice: Ibn Kathir), "*Had we any say in the affair, we would not have been slain here*" (Ibn

[155] Those of you who turned away the day the two forces met, surely, it was Satan who had caused them to slip because of some of what they had earned.²⁵⁰ However, Allah has forgiven them.²⁵¹ Surely Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Forbearing.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ
إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوا
وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ
حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٥﴾

Jarir).

248. Hasan has said: Not everyone participating in a jihad can get killed. It is only those for whom it has been so destined that die (Ibn Jarir).

249. We have time and again explained that what Allah means by saying: “*in order that He may know,*” or, “*in order that We may know,*” is, “in order that He may let His chosen slaves and true followers know,” for He is complete in His knowledge (Ibn Jarir).

250. Asad writes: ‘This is an illustration of a significant Qur’ānic doctrine, which can be thus summarized: “Satan’s influence” on man is not the primary cause of sin but its first consequence: that is to say, a consequence of a person’s own attitude of mind which in moments of moral crisis induces him to choose the easier, and seemingly more pleasant, of the alternatives open to him, and thus to become guilty of a sin, whether by commission or omis-

sion. Thus, God’s “causing” a person to commit a sin is conditional upon the existence, in the individual concerned, of an attitude of mind which makes him prone to commit such a sin: which, in its turn presupposes man’s free will that is, the ability to make, within certain limitations, a conscious choice between two or more possible courses of action.’

Commenting on the words, “*because of some of what they had earned,*” Thanwi says that this shows that a previous sin can cause another, just as a good deed gives birth to another good deed.

251. It is reported that one day `Umar ibn al Khattab recited *surah Āl `Imrān* in his Friday sermon. He used to do that quite often. When he reached this verse he said: “When the scales turned in Uhud, I fled. The next thing I saw myself climbing a hill and people saying, ‘Muhammad has been killed.’ I said, ‘I shall not hear anyone say Muhammad has been killed, but I shall kill

him.' Then we assembled on top of a hill and Allah revealed this verse."

(A report in Muslim says that in total seven Ansar and two Muhajirun remained with the Prophet, out of which seven Ansar died defending him, until the Prophet said: "We did not do justice to our brothers." [Other reports suggest that in total 12 were left with the Prophet: Qurtubi]. Bukhari and Muslim have also reported that two men in white attire, who were never seen before or after, presumably Jibril and Mika'il, were seen at the left and right hand side of the Prophet shielding him: Ibn Kathir).

Some scholars are of the opinion that this has reference to those, who, in the face of defeat, left the battle field and began to climb the hills (Qurtubi). Others are of the opinion that the verse was revealed concerning those who fled to Madinah. Some others have named those Companions who were criticized by this verse (Ibn Jarir).

In any case, adds Qurtubi, even if the allusion is to those who fled to Madinah, it can be said that they were seeking refuge there, with the expected onslaught of three thousand murderous Makkans against a depleted army of seven hundred

Muslims.

(It might also be noted that it was only the second major battle in Islam and the Muslims did not have a clear instruction about what they were required to do in the face of a defeat: whether to die, to the last man, in the battle field, or retreat to a refuge: Au.). "Hence," Qurtubi has said, "it was their act of abandoning the Prophet which was considered a sin and which evoked Allah's rebuke. Further," he adds, "Allah forgave them the sin, as He forgave Adam the sin of the first disobedience. It was a great favor, for even if a man is truly remorseful, repents and seeks forgiveness for a sin, he cannot be sure that he has been forgiven, as against this sin which was announced forgiven and which left the sinners blameless."

Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi also add: It is reported by Bukhari that a man came to perform Hajj. He happened to pass by a group of people and enquired who they were. He was told that they were of the Quraysh. He asked: "And who that Sheikh is?" They said, "That's Ibn 'Umar." He turned to him and said: "Will you answer me if I asked you some questions?" He replied: "Go ahead." The man asked: "I adjure you by the

[156] Believers! Be not like those who disbelieved and said about such of their brethren²⁵² as who, when they journeyed through the land, or were in an expedition, that 'Had they remained with us, they would not have died or been slain.'²⁵³ This, in order that Allah may make it a source of great regret in their hearts. Indeed, it is Allah who bestows life and deals death.²⁵⁴ Allah sees what you do.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا وَقَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ إِذَا ضَرَبُوا فِي
الْأَرْضِ أَوْ كَانُوا غُرَىٰ لِّو كَانُوا عِنْدَنَا مَا
مَاتُوا وَمَا قُتِلُوا لِيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ حَسْرَةً فِي
قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٥٦﴾

[157] If you are slain, or die in Allah's cause, surely, Allah's forgiveness and His mercy are better than what they amass.

وَلَئِنْ قُتِلْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ مُتْتُمْ لَمَغْفِرَةٌ
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

[158] Whether you die or are slain, surely it is unto Allah that you shall be gathered.

وَلَئِنْ مُتْتُمْ أَوْ قُتِلْتُمْ لَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

glory of this House, are you aware that 'Uthman ibn `Affan had fled at Uhud?" Ibn `Umar said: "Yes." The man asked: "Are you aware that he did not participate in the battle of Badr?" Ibn `Umar said: "Yes." Then he asked: "Are you aware that he was not present on the occasion of the *Ridwan* Pledge?" Ibn `Umar said: "Yes." The man said: "God is Great." Ibn `Umar told him: "Come to me and I'll explain to you these things." Then he told him: "As for his fleeing at Uhud, Allah forgave it. As for his absence at Badr, the Prophet's daughter was his wife and she was sick. The Prophet told him: '(If you

stayed back) You shall have rewards, and a share in booty equal to any other participant.' As for his absence from *Ridwan* Pledge, had there been any other man more honorable than him, the Prophet would have sent him as his emissary to Makkah. The Pledge of *Ridwan* took place after 'Uthman had left for Makkah for negotiations. The Prophet pointed to his right hand and said: 'This is the hand of 'Uthman,' and then placing it on the other he said, 'This is 'Uthman's pledge.' Take that (from me), and now you can go." In fact, the *Bay'ah* was occasioned by the rumors that Uthman had been mar-

tyred in Makkah (Au.).

252. It is the hypocrites who had said these words. It is possible that they were referring to the people of their own kind who died in the Uhud encounter, or on other occasions, and hence the word "brethren." Alternatively, they might have been speaking of their blood-related brothers, and not brothers in faith (Zamakhshari, Razi).

253. Sayyid writes: "The words, '*had they remained with us, they would not have died or been slain,*' reveal the distinguishing marks found in the concepts of one endowed with faith, and the one lacking it ... concepts regarding the Divine Laws that govern life and its numerous facets: both the pleasant as well as the unpleasant. A man of faith understands the laws of Allah, knows the will of Allah, and is satisfied with the decrees of Allah. He knows that nothing but what is decreed by Allah can strike him; that what he got could not have been missed, and what he missed could not have been got. He does not, therefore, meet setbacks with despair, nor does he indulge in excessive celebrations at successes. He does not lose his self before this or that event, nor does he regret at the end of an affair, that if he had not done that,

he would not have received this. With him, the considerations of the Divine Decree, efforts, opinions and consultations, are all before the event, and before the action. But after the action, in line with the Decree and efforts, within the limits of his knowledge, and within the limits of the lawful and unlawful ... after the action in the light of these factors ... there is no looking back for him. Whatever the outcome, he meets it with grace, peace, and submission, believing that whatever happened is by the will of Allah and following His wisdom, and that it could not have been otherwise, although it was he who made the efforts, balancing it between actions and submission and between positivism and trust in Allah. As for him whose heart is devoid of faith in Allah, faith of the kind described herewith, it is he who is always in worries ... always in an 'if' and 'if not' situation, or mutters, 'Woe unto me,' or 'to my great ill luck,' etc."

254. That is, Allah gives life to those who go to the battle field, and death to those who stay back at home (Qurtubi). Not only does Allah give life and deal death, He also lengthens or shortens life of whomsoever He will (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

[159] And by Allah's grace you are (O Muhammad) soft to them.²⁵⁵ Had you been harsh and hard-hearted, surely they would have dispersed away from about you.²⁵⁶ Therefore, overlook, seek Allah's forgiveness for them, and consult them in the affairs.²⁵⁷ But when you are resolved,²⁵⁸ put your trust in Allah.²⁵⁹ Verily, Allah approves of those who put their trust (in Him).

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

Khalid ibn al Walid is reported to have said on his death bed: "There isn't a place on my body equal to the length of the span of a hand on which there isn't a mark of an injury that I received in the battle fields. Yet, here I am, dying on this bed" (Zamakhshari).

"However," Razi writes, "coming as it does, after the mention of the heart, the phrase could also mean that Allah gives life to the hearts of the righteous with the light of guidance, and lets the hearts of the hypocrites die."

255. The relationship between the previous and this verse is that when the Prophet returned from Uhud, he did not evince any anger toward his followers (Qurtubi), nor toward the hypocrites, rather, was lenient and forgiving, and hence the words: "By Allah's grace you are soft ..." Accordingly, when the Prophet and `Ali were

washing their arms after the battle of Uhud, `Uthman's wife came in and enquired about him. `Ali said that `Uthman had disgraced himself (by leaving the battlefield and seeking refuge in Madinah). But the Prophet was not too pleased with the answer. When `Uthman himself showed up a little later, along with two of his friends, all that the Prophet said to him was: "Surely, you travelled a long distance (retreating all the way to Madinah)" - Razi.

Abu Umamah al-Bahili has reported in a *hadith* of Ahmad that once the Prophet took his hand in his own and said:

يَا أَبَا أُمَامَةَ إِنَّ مِنْ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَنْ يَلِينُ لِي قَلْبُهُ

"O Abu Umamah, there are some among the believers whose heart softens for me" (Ibn Kathir).

256. According to Rabi`, the de-

scription of our Prophet in the *Tawrah* is as follows:

إنه ليس بفظ، ولا غليظ، ولا صخاب في الأسواق
ولا يجزي بالسيئة السيئة، ولكن يعفو ويصفح

“He will not be harsh, nor severe, nor quarrelsome in the markets, nor will he pay back an evil with an evil, rather, will forgive and overlook” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

257. The word *shawir* refers in its root to the act of extracting honey from a beehive. There was at least one additional reason why Allah ordered the Prophet to consult his followers. Things had gone awry at Uhud after he had consulted them before the battle and had acted according to their wishes. If he had not consulted them in the subsequent affairs, it would have sounded as if he was not too pleased with them at heart, which was not the case (Razi).

The Prophet always consulted them. He consulted them at Badr: whether they should fight or not; at Uhud: whether they should defend the city from within or go out and meet the enemy in the open; during the battle of the Ditch: whether they should make peace with the Makkans over one third of the dates of Madinah or not, but abandoned the idea after it was opposed; at Hudaibi-

yyah: whether they should fight the Makkans or not; at the incident of Fidak regarding what was to be done with regard to the rumors about 'A'isha; as well as on several other occasions (Ibn Kathir).

A *hadith* says that a people will not consult each other in their affairs, but will be guided to what is best for them. And Abu Hurayrah is reported to have said: “I have not encountered another set of people other than the Companions who consulted each other more” (Zamakhshari).

Some reports, one in Hakim of a strong status, suggest that it was not everyone that the Prophet was supposed to consult, rather men like Abu Bakr and 'Umar, for they were, according to 'Ali ibn abi Talib, his apostles, viziers and fathers of the *Ummah* (Ibn Kathir). Accordingly, the Prophet is reported to have said about Abu Bakr and 'Umar:

لو اجتمعتما في مشورة ما خالفتكما

“If you two agree on something, I will not go against it” (Alusi).

In fact, Ibn 'Atiyyah has said that consultation is one of the pillars of Islam and a ruler who does not consult may be removed. Ibn Khuwayz-mandad has said that it is obligatory on the rulers to consult the scholars

in matters of Islamic law, military chiefs in matters of war, prominent citizens in matters of their welfare, and technical and other experts on the developmental affairs... (The more so for them because), as Hasan al Basri and Dahhak have said, the order to consult is actually more binding on the Muslims than on the Prophet, who actually stood in no need of their opinions ... Hence we find that the ruling Companions of the Prophet created a consultative council for state affairs (Qurtubi).

Asad adds: "This injunction, implying government by consent and council, must be regarded as one of the fundamental clauses of all Qur'ānic legislation relating to statecraft. The pronoun "them" relates to the believers, that is, to the whole community; while the word *al amr* occurring in this context as well as in the much earlier revealed phrase *amruhum shura baynahum* in 42: 38 denotes all affairs of public concern, including state administration. All authorities agree in that the above ordinance, although addressed in the first instance to the Prophet, is binding on all Muslims and for all times. (For wider implications see *State and Government in Islam*, pp. 44 ff.)."

258. When the Prophet was asked

according to a tradition in Ibn Mar-duwayh, on the authority of `Ali ibn abi Talib to explain the implications of the word *`azm* in the above context, he replied: "(It means) consulting the knowledgeable people (*ahl 'l ra'y*) and thereupon following them (in their advice)" - Ibn Kathir.

Thanwi adds: It is not binding, however, upon a person, be he a ruler, to follow the advice of those he consults. He may overrule them and act in the best interests of those who will be directly affected.

259. Rashid Rida writes: That is, after you have consulted the people, and have made your choices, depend on Allah, (and not on your material means or equipment) and put your plans to action. So did the Prophet when he sought the advice of his Companions whether they should defend the city from within or without. When they had given their opinion, he had made up his mind, and he had put on his armor, he went ahead with the action, not looking back. He did not change his decision when his Companions withdrew their suggestion. Had he done that he would have betrayed lack of firmness. He moved ahead with faith and trust in Allah. In fact, as a corollary it can be added that

when a similar incident took place with the British they also did not withdraw from their declared intention. When our master (Sheikh `Abduh) was in Britain they asked him the advisability of sending British troops to Sudan to combat the forces of Mahdi. He told them that it was not advisable and that the British would lose the war. The British did not pay attention and sent out their troops. They were promptly defeated and our master wrote to the British minister reminding him of his own advice. The minister wrote back that be that may, but the British policy was that once the government had taken its decision, it did not like to withdraw it.

Tawakkul

On the subject of *tawakkul*, it might be pointed out that it is not the name of cessation or slackness of efforts. *Tawakkul* is an act of the heart, while efforts are the acts of the body. Tirmidhi has preserved a *hadith* which says:

التَّاجِرُ الصَّدُوقُ الْأَمِينُ مَعَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ

“An honest, truthful trader shall be with Prophets, *Siddiqun* and martyrs on the Day of Judgment.”

In this *hadith* we see the rule at work is that anyone who made efforts and strove to make his living honestly will be placed with the chosen ones. Another *hadith* of Tirmidhi, Nasa'i and Ibn Majah says:

لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَوَكَّلُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ حَقَّ تَوَكُّلِهِ لَرَفَعْتُمْ كَمَا تَرْفَعُ الطَّيْرُ تَغْدُو خِمَاصًا وَتَرْجِعُ بِطَانًا

“Were you to have trust in Allah, the way He should be trusted, He would feed you the way He feeds the birds: they go out hungry in the morning and return well-fed by the nightfall.”

This *hadith* indicates that it is necessary to make efforts, so that even the birds have to fly out.

According to another *hadith*, of which various versions exist in Tirmidhi, Ibn Hibban and Tabarani a man asked the Prophet (*saws*) if he should tie his camel or leave it in Allah's trust. He told him:

قال رجل يا رسول الله أعقلها وأتوكل أو أطلقها وأتوكل؟ قال أعقلها وتوكل

“Bind it and have trust in Allah.”

The above *hadith* has been declared *Hasan* by Tirmidhi (Au.).

`Umar is reported to have said: “Let not anyone sit back at home doing nothing about his sustenance saying,

[160] If Allah helps you, then there is none to overcome you. But if He abandons you, then who is it that can help you after Him?²⁶⁰ Therefore, in Allah let the believers place their trust.

إِنْ يَنْصُرْكُمُ اللَّهُ فَلَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ يَخْذُلْكُمْ فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

[161] It is not for a Prophet to be fraudulent.²⁶¹ Whoever defrauded shall bring the fruits of his fraud on the Day of Judgement.²⁶² Then it is that every soul shall be repaid in full for what it earned, and they shall not be wronged.

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَغُلَّ وَمَنْ يَغْلُلْ يَأْتِ بِمَا غَلَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾

‘O Allah feed me,’ for you know that the heavens neither rain down silver nor gold” (Rashid Rida: abridged and annotated).

Thanwi comments: Efforts (*tadbir*) do not contradict *tawakkul*. However, (*tadbir*) is not absolutely essential. In contrast, *tawakkul* – in the sense of trust in Allah for the best of outcome – is absolutely essential and obligatory upon every Muslim. The rules for efforts (*tadbir*) are therefore as follows: If the efforts required are of religious nature, then it is forbidden to neglect them (for instance war preparations, which has been ordered by the Qur’ān. Mere *tawakkul* is not enough for victory: Au.). If the efforts are not a religious requirement, but are of the sort upon which results ‘normally’ depend, then too they cannot be neglected

(for instance working for one’s living before expecting to see the dinner table laden with food, although Allah is the Provider: Au.). On the other hand, if the effects of efforts on the results are of “uncertain” nature (*zanni*), then, for someone endowed with a strong will and faith, they are inessential. But if the effects of the efforts are of imaginary type (*wahmi*), then one should entirely abstain from *tadbir* (such as, for example, refusing to share a drink from a single bowl out of fear of transmission of diseases: Au.).

Also see note 196 of this *Surah* for further discussion.

260. Hence the Prophet’s supplication (abridged):

فَاَصْلِحْ لِي شَأْنِي كُلَّهُ وَلَا تَكِلْنِي إِلَى تَفْسِي طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ

“O Allah, do not abandon me to

my own self, nor to anyone else, even for a moment” (Ibn al-Qayyim).

261. There are several interpretations, one of them (preferred by Ibn Jarir) comes from Ibn `Abbas. It says: “This verse was revealed after the battle of Badr when a red gown was found missing of the war spoils and some of the Companions thought that probably the Prophet had kept it for himself (to which he had the right anyway, according to the laws then in force: Au.)” Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir.

When Ibn `Abbas was asked how his followers could suspect his honesty, he answered: “Why not? If they could attempt to assassinate him (they could also suspect him)” (Razi).

In other words, Ibn `Abbas had the hypocrites in his mind (Au.).

However, an alternative explanation (offered by Kalbi and Muqatil: Razi), is that the verse was revealed in response to the conversation that took place between the Prophet and the archers. When he asked them why they had abandoned their post while they had his strict instruction against it, they replied that they thought each person would get what

he had helped himself of the booty, and therefore, they might not get a share in it. The Prophet remarked: “Did you imagine that we were going to dupe you and deny your share of the booty?!” (Zamakhshari).

262. In a long *hadith* (in Bukhari and Muslim: Ibn Kathir), the Prophet is reported to have warned that on the Day of Judgment people would appear with a goat, a horse or a camel on their shoulders those beasts crying in their voices and men pleading help of the Prophet who will say: “I have no power over anything today. I had delivered my message.” According to another report (in Bukhari and Muslim: Ibn Kathir), the Prophet sent one of his men to collect *zakah*. When the man returned he said: “These are *zakah* goods, and these are my personal things that have been gifted to me.” At this the Prophet climbed the minber and said after praises to Allah: “What’s the matter with the people that when I send one of them to collect *zakah*, he returns and says I have been gifted such and such things. Lo. Why should he not stay put in his house and wait for the gifts to come by?!” Then he added: “People. Fear Allah. Let not one of you come on the Day of Judgment with an animal on his shoulder bleating or neighing,

or whining” (Qurtubi).

According to another report, when the Prophet warned Sa’d b. `Ubadah, (before sending him out on a mission) of the seriousness of the affair of collecting the zakah (in which there is the likelihood of collecting more than the obligatory and earning a sin: Au.), Sa’d b. `Ubadah sought to be spared the job and the Prophet spared him (Ibn Jarir). A similar report is (in Abu Da’ud: Ibn Kathir) about Ibn Mas’ud who declined to accept the responsibility and the Prophet spared him too (Qurtubi).

According to a report in Ahmad and Abu Da’ud, the Prophet said:

مَنْ كَانَ لَنَا عَامِلًا فَلْيُكْتَسَبْ زَوْجَةٌ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ
خَادِمٌ فَلْيُكْتَسَبْ خَادِمًا، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ مَسْكَنٌ
فَلْيُكْتَسَبْ مَسْكَنًا. قَالَ قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ: أُخْبِرْتُ أَنَّ
النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَنْ اتَّخَذَ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ
فَهُوَ غَالٍ أَوْ سَارِقٌ

“Whomsoever we appoint as a state official may take a house for residence if he hasn’t one, a wife as a spouse if he has none, and a servant to serve him if he has none. But whoever took anything more than this is fraudulent or a thief” (Qurtubi),

According to another report in Ahmad, brought to us by Abu Rafi`, the

Prophet used to do his `Asr and go out to Banu `Abdul Ash-hal staying some time with them chatting and returning by *Maghrib*. Once when he was returning and happened to pass by the graves of Jannatu al Baqi`, he turned one side and said, ‘Woe unto you, woe unto you.’ At this I (the reporter) felt constricted in my shield and fearing he had addressed me I fell back. He asked me why I had fallen back. When I told him my fears, he said, ‘Rather, that grave is of so and so whom I had sent for collecting *zakah*, but he kept back a shield for himself. He is being punished now.’”

We also have the famous story of Khayber preserved in Muslim, related by `Umar ibn al Khattab, which says that people were counting the dead and saying,

فلان شهيد فلان شهيد حتى مروا على رجل فقالوا
فلان شهيد فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم:
كلا إني رأيته في النار في بردة غلها أو عباءة ثم قال
رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: يا ابن الخطاب
إذهب فناد في الناس أنه لا يدخل الجنة إلا المؤمنون

‘So and so is a martyr, so and so is a martyr,’ until they passed by a corpse and said the same thing. The Prophet interjected: “Not at all. I have seen him in the Fire because of a cloak he had stolen out of the booty.” Then the Prophet

[162] What?! Can he who followed Allah's good pleasure can be like him who returned with Allah's anger, and whose abode is Hell? - an evil homecoming!^[263]

أَفَمَنْ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ كَمَنْ بَاءَ بِسَخَطِ
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٦٢﴾

[163] They are in varying ranks with Allah. And Allah sees all that they do.

هُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِندَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾

added, "O Khattab's son, go and announce: "Beware! None but believers will enter Paradise."

Finally, we have (Qurtubi), the *hadith* of the Prophet which says that:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا أَصَابَ
غَنِيمَةً أَمَرَ بِأَلَا، فَنَادَى فِي النَّاسِ، فَيَجِئُونَ
بِعَنَائِمِهِمْ فَيَحْمِسُهُ وَيَقْسِمُهُ، فَجَاءَ رَجُلٌ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ
بِرِمَامٍ مِنْ شَعَرٍ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَذَا فِيمَا كُنَّا أَصْبَنَاهُ
مِنَ الْغَنِيمَةِ فَقَالَ أَسَمِعْتَ بِأَلَا يُنَادِي ثَلَاثًا؟ قَالَ
نَعَمْ. قَالَ وَمَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَجِيءَ بِهِ فَأَعْتَدَ إِلَيْهِ فَقَالَ
كُنْ أَنْتَ تَجِيءُ بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَلَنْ أَقْبَلَهُ عَنْكَ

After every battle in which booty was obtained, the Prophet ordered Bilal and he announced among the people (that all booty was to be registered with the Prophet). They came with the booty they had captured and he divided in the following manner: one fifth to the state and

four fifth to the soldiers. Once it so happened that a man came up after the division with a tuft of hair. The Prophet asked him three times: "Did you hear Bilal's announcement or not? Did you hear Bilal's announcement or not?" The man said he had. "Then what kept you back from bringing it?" he asked him. The man sought to be excused. But the Prophet did not accept his excuse. He said, "Rather, you will bring it with you on the Day of Judgment, I am not accepting it from you now." (Ibn Kathir) The above report, as found in Abu Da'ud's collection, has been termed *Hasan* (Au.). Nevertheless, various reports suggest that food articles are exempted, especially when there is scarcity; so that one might eat out of the

[164] Surely, Allah conferred a great favor on the believers²⁶⁴ when He raised amidst them a Messenger from amongst themselves,²⁶⁵ who recites to them His verses, purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom,²⁶⁶ while, before that, they were in manifest error.²⁶⁷

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٦٤﴾

booty, to the extent of his hunger without incurring sin (Razi, Qurtubi). 263. Several interpretations of the two kinds of men referred to at this point are possible: a) true believers and hypocrites, b) those who do not defraud, and those who defraud in the spoils of war, c) he who obeyed and is righteous and he who did not obey and committed sins, and d) those who followed the Prophet in chasing Abu Sufyan after Uhud and those who .(did not (Razi

264. Sayyid comments: "What is the great blessing of Allah upon all Muslims of all times that has been conferred upon them through their Prophet? It is that of Islam, its way of life, its social, economic, and political systems. This is now their personal identity card with which they Arab Muslims as the first to be addressed and non Arab Muslims as their partners can introduce them-

selves to the rest of the world. But if they do not present this as their specialty, what else is there that they can present? Can they present geniuses in arts, science, and literature? No. The people have enough of them, of their own stock and, therefore, are neither in need of them nor are they waiting for the appearance of a few more. Can they, alternatively, present their industrial products and fill their markets with them? No they can not, for the rest of the world is already producing enough. In fact, others are leaders in these fields. Or, can they present to them the secular systems of thoughts and ideas, or economic theories, or what have you not? No, they cannot, for the world is over subscribed with theories and philosophies touching every issue of life. What then is it that the Muslims can present to the world? Lo! It is none other than the religion of Islam and the system of life it offers. Nothing short of the great blessing itself that has been bestowed upon them

can they present to the world. The world was never in greater need of it than today. If the Arab and non Arab Muslims cannot present this, then there is nothing else they can offer to the world at large. They are in possession of this great blessing. But what Devil is it which prevents them from presenting this to the world? What Devil is it? (Can anyone tell us)?”

265. The meaning of the words: “*min anfusi him*” (a Messenger from amongst themselves), is that Allah raised him from their own kind, that is, a man (and not, for instance, an angel: Au.) in order that they might be at ease with him, as He said elsewhere (30: 21):

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا
إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ [الروم : ٢١]

“And of His signs is that He created out of your own selves spouses in order that you may find solace in her.”

In this verse, Allah used the same phrase “*min anfusi kum*.” Allah also said elsewhere (18: 110):

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ
[الكهف : ١١٠]

“Tell them (O Prophet), I am but a man like you, (save that), it is re-

vealed unto me that your Lord is one Lord.”

Or (25: 20):

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا إِنَّهُمْ لَيَأْكُلُونَ
الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشُونَ فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ [الفرقان : ٢٠]

“I have not sent before you (O Prophet) Messengers but that they used to eat food and used to go about in the markets.”

And, elsewhere (12: 109):

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ
الْقَرْيَةِ [يوسف : ١٠٩]

“And We have not sent to the chief towns earlier but men, revealing unto them.” (Ibn Kathir)

266. By “*the Book and the Wisdom*.” the first alludes to what is apparent and extrovert, while the other to what is unapparent and introvert in our religion (Razi).

267. Sayyid comments: “To understand what purification this verse is referring to, we might recall what Ja`far b. abi Talib said when he appeared in the court of Najashi to thwart the attempts by the Quraysh to get the Muslims expelled from Habasha. He said: “O King. We were an ignorant people: worshipping idols, devouring carrion, committing indecencies, severing blood ties, neglecting the neighbor, and the strong de-

vouring the weak. We were in that state when there appeared amongst us a Messenger of our own stock. We know his family connections, his truthfulness, his trustworthiness, and his chastity. He called us to one God, in order that we may worship Him alone and give up what we and our forefathers worshipped of stones and idols. He taught us to be truthful, deliver the trust, join the blood ties, do good to the neighbor, abstain from vile things and bloodshed. He forbade us indecencies, false witnessing, devouring of the property of orphans, defaming of chaste women, and ordered us that we worship none but one God, ascribing no partner unto Him, and he ordered us to establish the Prayers, pay the zakah and observe fasts."

In addition, we may recall what `A'isha had to say about the different kinds of sexual and marital relationships and practices that existed before the advent of Islam. She said, "Before Islam there were four kinds of sexual and marital relationships. First, the kind of practice which is now prevalent, after Islam, according

to which, a man proposes to a woman through her guardian and marries her against a dowry. Second, a man would tell his wife, 'Go to such and such a man and lie down with him.' Then he would not touch her until the time he was sure she was pregnant from that man. If she was, he would go into her if he wished. This they would do in order to bring into their own family a trace of nobility of that man. This was known as the 'stock marriage.' Another form of marital relationship was of ten or more people going into a single woman in turns at a time. After she had become pregnant by them and had given birth to a child, she would invite them all to her house. They would all show up without exception. When they had gathered at her place she would say, 'You know what has transpired between us. Now I have given birth to a child.' Then she would declare anyone of them she wished as the child's father, and the man had to accept the child as his son, without anyone protesting about it. Finally, a group of people would gather and go into a woman. These were prostitutes who hoisted a

[165] Is it that when you were struck with a disaster, while you had struck them (with one) two-fold (in its destructiveness),²⁶⁸ you asked, 'Where is this from?' Tell them, 'This is from your own selves.'²⁶⁹ Verily, Allah has power over all things.'

أَوَلَمَّا أَصَابَكُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَدْ أَصَبْتُمْ مِثْلَيْهَا قُلْتُمْ أَنَّى هَذَا قُلْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٦٥﴾

[166] What befell you the day the two forces met (at Uhud), was by the will of Allah, in order that He may know the believers.

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ فَيَإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾

flag on their doors so that they may be recognized as prostitutes. Anyone could go into them. When one of them became pregnant and gave birth to a child, all the people would be invited and a 'tracker' (*Qaafah*) would be brought in who would decide by physical signs as to whose son the child could be. He would name a person and the child would be attached to him, to be known as his son. The man had no choice in the affair and had to acquiesce."

268. According to Ibn `Abbas, Qataadah, `Ikrimah, and others this refers to the defeat at Uhud where seventy of the Muslims were martyred while at Badr the Muslims had killed seventy and imprisoned seventy (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

269. According to Qatadah, this refers to the advice given by the Companions to the Prophet to go out

of Madinah and give the enemy a fight in the open, rather than, as the Prophet had wished, use the city as a bastion and fight from within.

But, according to `Ubaydah al Salmani and `Ali, this was due to their preference to accept redemption from the prisoners of Badr instead of executing them, and risk martyrdom of seventy of their own men, about which they had been warned by Jibril and by the Prophet, since the Companions thought, at that time, that martyrdom was not such a bad idea after all, and that they needed the money rather so badly then (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Abu Da'ud and Tirmidhi have also related this *hadith*, but the latter has declared it *hasan gharib* (which is a kind of weak report: Au.) Ibn Kathir.

[167] And in order that He may know those who resorted to hypocrisy.²⁷⁰ They were told, 'Come. Fight in the way of Allah, or defend,' they replied, 'Had we known there would be a fight, we would have followed you.'²⁷¹ That day they were nearer to unbelief than they were to belief,²⁷² uttering with their mouths what was not in their hearts. And Allah is better informed of what they conceal.

وَلْيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا قَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ ادْفَعُوا قَالُوا لَوْ تَعْلَمُ قِتَالًا لَاتَّبَعْنَاكُمْ هُمْ لِلْكَفَرِ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ يَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١٦٧﴾

Nasa'i has also this report coming from `Ali (Shawkani). But Shawkani wonders how the report can be reconciled with another trustworthy report according to which the Prophet and Abu Bakr regretted that they had not executed the Prisoners at Badr. Why should they have, if they had been given a choice to act either way? Rashid Rida also doubts the strength of the report. Albani has however declared it trustworthy (Sayyid Ibrahim) Au.

270. According to the grammarian Abu `Ubaydah, the word *nifaq* (hypocrisy) is derived from the word *nafiqah* which is the name of one of the two exits of a tunnel that a desert rodent (Jerboa: a kind of rat) digs in

the earth for itself. When it is pursued from one end he escapes by the other (Razi, Qurtubi).

However, it may be noted that Allah did not refer to them as hypocrites, rather as, "those who resorted to hypocrisy." This is because until then hypocrisy of most of the doubters was not firm and certain. For many it was a passing condition of heart. Many in fact repented later to become good Muslims (Rashid Rida).

271. This refers to the falling back of `Abdullah ibn `Ubayy b. Sallul and his three hundred followers a little out of Madinah on the pretext that they saw no fight at all and that their advice had not been heeded. When they were reproached at the fact that

[168] Those who said about their brethren,²⁷³ while they themselves had stayed back, 'Had they obeyed us, they would not have been slain.' Tell them, 'Then turn death away from your own selves, if you are true.'

الَّذِينَ قَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَعَدُوا لَوْ أَطَاعُونَا مَا قُتِلُوا قُلْ فَادْرَؤُوا عَنْ أَنْفُسِكُمُ الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٦٨﴾

[169] Consider not those who were slain in the way of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, being provided,

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾

[170] Well pleased with what Allah has provided them of His grace, and rejoice in the fact that those behind them who have not yet reached them, shall be in no fear, nor shall they grieve.²⁷⁴

فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾

they were abandoning their brethren to perils, they said they did not expect a fight would take place (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Another possible meaning is that they did not see a fight, rather a slaughter at the hands of the invaders (Razi, Qurtubi).

جَوْفٍ طَيْرٍ خَضِرٍ تَرُدُّ أَشْهَارَ الْجَنَّةِ تَأْكُلُ مِنْ ثَمَرِهَا وَتَأْوِي إِلَى فَنَادِيلٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ مُعَلَّقَةٍ فِي ظِلِّ الْعَرْشِ فَلَمَّا وَجَدُوا طَيْبَ مَا كَلَّهِمْ وَمَشَرَّجَهُمْ وَمَقِيلَهُمْ قَالُوا مَنْ يُبَلِّغُ إِخْوَانَنَا عَنَّا أَنَا أَحْيَاءُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ تُرْزَقُ لِقَاءَ يُرْعَدُوا فِي الْجِهَادِ وَلَا يَنْكَلُوا عِنْدَ الْحَرْبِ؟ فَقَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: أَنَا أَبْلَغُهُمْ عَنْكُمْ، قَالَ: وَأَنْتَ اللَّهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ: ﴿وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا﴾ إِلَى آخِرِ الْآيَةِ

272. It has been argued with this verse that a man can be in various states of faith, sometimes weak, sometimes strong (Ibn Kathir).

273. See note 251 above.

274. Ibn `Abbas, Ibn Mas`ud, and Jabir b. `Abdullah have variously reported that the Prophet said:

لَمَّا أُصِيبَ إِخْوَانُكُمْ بِأَحَدٍ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ أَرْوَاحَهُمْ فِي

“Verily, Muslims who fell in the battle-fields of Badr and Uhud have been given the forms of green birds. They drink from the springs of Paradise, eat out of its fruits. By the evening they rest on golden lanterns that hang by the shade of the `Arsh. When they find the good food, drink and place of rest, they say, “who will inform our brothers about us,

that we are alive in Paradise, well-fed, so that they might also work for it and not turn away from jihad. They are told by Allah that their wishes would be conveyed to their compatriots on earth, and this verse was revealed” (Ibn Jarir, *Kashshaf*, Qurtubi, Shawkani).

Similar versions are in Muslim, Abu Da’ud and Hakim. In fact, there are reports coming from the Prophet which say that even the souls of ordinary Muslims are in Paradise (in the form of birds: Au.). Indeed, in one of the reports, three of the four great Imāms appear in the chain of narrators. Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal has reported through Muhammad b. Idris Shafe’i and he through Malik b. Anas, and he through others, that the Prophet said:

إِنَّمَا نَسَمَةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ طَائِرٌ فِي شَجَرِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّى يَبْعَثَهُ
اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِلَى جَسَدِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

“Souls of the believers are in the form of birds that perch on the trees of Paradise until Allah will put them back in their human form on the Day of Judgment” (Ibn Kathir).

While on the subject, the following can also be quoted. In a *hadith* in Muslim the Prophet (*saws*) is quoted

as having said:

مَا مِنْ نَفْسٍ تَمُوتُ. لَهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ. يَسْرَهَا أَتَهَا
تَرْجِعُ إِلَى الدُّنْيَا. وَلَا أَنَّ لَهَا الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا. إِلَّا
الشَّهِيدُ. فَإِنَّهُ يَمْتَنِي أَنْ يَرْجِعَ فَيُقْتَلَ فِي الدُّنْيَا. لِمَا
يَرَى مِنْ فَضْلِ الشَّهَادَةِ

“No soul which dies and finding itself favored there in the Hereafter, wishes that it come back to earth except for the martyr. He wishes that he be sent back and again get killed in the way of Allah. This is because of the favors it sees in martyrdom” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

But it may be remembered that death in Allah’s cause expiates all sins, except, as a *hadith* states, what one borrows in this world. The debts have to be settled before they can enter Paradise. Now, if it is asked, where are the souls of those martyrs who left the world in debts, since their entry into Paradise is barred, the answer is, it is possible that it is martyrs of this kind who are alluded to in a tradition of the Prophet. He said:

الشُّهَدَاءُ عَلَى بَارِقٍ تَهْرِي بِأَبِ الْجَنَّةِ فِي قَبَّةٍ خَضْرَاءَ
يَخْرُجُ عَلَيْهِمْ رَوْقُهُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا

“Souls of the martyrs are near a gleaming stream at the gate of Paradise in a green tomb, where they are fed from Paradise, morn-

[171] They rejoice²⁷⁵ in the bounties from their Lord, and His grace, and (in) that Allah lets not the reward of the believers go waste.²⁷⁶

يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧١﴾

[172] Those who responded to Allah and the Messenger, after wounds had afflicted them - for all those of them who did good and were godfearing, shall be a great reward.

الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ مِن بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقُوا أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٢﴾

[173] Those, to whom the people said, 'Surely, the forces have gathered against you, therefore fear them.' But that increased them in their faith²⁷⁷ and they said, 'Allah is sufficient for us, an excellent Trustee.'²⁷⁸

الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ﴿١٧٣﴾

ing and evening" (Qurtubi).

The *hadith* is in several works including in Hakim's *Mustadrak* declared by Dhahabi as of trustworthy chain (Au.).

However, according to Anas b. Malik, this verse is also applicable to those who were martyred in the Bi'r Ma'una expedition about which another verse was revealed but subsequently abrogated and replaced by this one (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

275. Suddi has said in a statement (in Bukhari: Ibn Kathir) that the martyrs are given a book which tells them that so and so is going to join them on such and such a day, they rejoice in that as they would if someone were to come back to them from a journey (Qurtubi).

276. According to a *hadith* in Ibn Majah and Tirmidhi, who has declared it *hasan sahih gharib*, a martyr enjoys six special benefits:

يُغْفَرُ لَهُ فِي أَوَّلِ دُقْعَةٍ وَيَرَى مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ، وَيُجَارَى مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ، وَيَأْمَنُ مِنَ الْقَرْعِ الْأَكْبَرِ، وَيُوضَعُ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ تَاجُ الْوَقَارِ، الْيَاقُوتَةُ مِنْهَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا، وَيَرْوَجُ اثْنَتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ زَوْجَةً مِنَ الْخَوَرِ (الْعَيْنِ)، وَيُسَقَّعُ فِي سَبْعِينَ مِنْ أَقَارِبِهِ

1. He is forgiven his sins instantly and is shown his place in Paradise, 2) He is saved from the punishment of the grave, 3) He will be saved from the fear and shock of the Great Day, 4) A crown studded with pearls will be placed on his head better than the world and what it contains, 5) He will be married to seventy houries, and, 6) He will intercede on be-

half of seventy of his kinsfolk.

277. This verse proves that *iman* increases and decreases (*Kashshaf*, Razi). As for those who have said that it does not, have only differed in the use of the descriptive words. What they have meant to say is that so far as “testimony” is concerned, it can only be called “testimony” if it is accompanied by “conviction.” If any doubt lurks, the testimony is no testimony, and hence there is no “belief” in the person. Yes, there can be increase or decrease in the “faith” (*yaqin*) of a person. A person, to take an example, has full “faith” in a doctor, finds it shaken and is beset with doubts when he discovers him failing with a patient. Therefore, it is “faith” (*yaqin*) that accepts increase or decrease of which there are, roughly, three degrees: *`ilm l yaqin*, (faith based on knowledge), *haqq l yaqin* (faith based on proofs and arguments) and *`ayn l yaqin* (faith based on personal experience). It is in this background that some scholars have said that *iman* neither increases nor decreases since there can be no grades or levels of testimony. Either one testifies honestly or he does not. It is in this sense that `Ali is reported to have said that were the veils to be removed there would be no increase in his faith. (He used the

word *yaqin*). Otherwise no one argues that *iman* increases or decreases in its warmth and force (*Manar*).

278. Ibn Kathir writes: In a report of Bukhari Ibn `Abbas has said that these were the words Ibrahim (asws) said when he was flung into Fire, and these were the words that Muhammad, peace be upon him, had said when he was told that the forces had gathered against him. It is recommended that the believers also say these words when faced with difficult situations. (However, its utterance does not preclude action: Au.). We have a tradition in Abu Da`ud and Nasa`i which says that once a case was brought up before the Prophet. When he had judged, the man against whom the case had gone, turned back saying: “Allah is sufficient for me, an excellent Trustee (He is).” The Prophet ordered the man brought back. He asked him what it was he had said. The man said, ‘I said, “Allah is sufficient for me, and an excellent Trustee (He is).”’ The Prophet told him:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَلُومُ عَلَى الْعَجْزِ وَلَكِنَّ عَلَيْكَ بِالْكَفْسِ
فَإِذَا غَلَبَكَ أَمْرٌ فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ

“Allah does not approve of weakness. Rather, you have to act wisely. However, if things go wrong (despite that) then you

[174] So they returned with blessings and bounty from their Lord, untouched by evil; they followed the good Pleasure of Allah. And Allah is the Lord of a great Bounty.²⁷⁹

فَانْقَلَبُوا بِبَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَفَضْلٍ لَّمْ يَمَسَّ مِنْهُمْ
سُوءٌ وَاتَّبَعُوا رِضْوَانِ اللّٰهِ وَاللّٰهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ
عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٧٤﴾

might say: "Allah is sufficient for me, and an excellent Trustee (He is)."

According to another reliable report the Prophet said:

كَيْفَ أَتَعُمُّ وَصَاحِبُ الْقُرْنِ قَدْ التَّمَّ الْقُرْنَ ، وَحَتَّى
جَبْهَتُهُ يَنْتَظِرُ مَتَى يُؤْمَرُ ، قَالُوا : يَا رَسُولَ اللّٰهِ ، فَمَا
تَأْمُرُنَا ؟ قَالَ : قُولُوا حَسْبُنَا اللّٰهُ ، وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ

"How can I relax when the Trumpet bearer has the Trumpet on his lips, and awaits with the head bowed down, in anticipation of the order to blow." He was asked: "What should we say then, Messenger of Allah?" He replied: "Say: 'Allah is sufficient for us, and an excellent Trustee (He is).'"

It is also reported of `A'isha and Zaynab (both wives of the Prophet) that they contended with each other. Zaynab said, "Allah married me to the Prophet in the heavens while you were married to him by your kinsfolk." `A'isha replied: "Allah sent down my exoneration from the heavens (and it is) in the Qur'ān."

With this Zaynab admitted her superiority. Then she asked her: "What did you say when you were found by Safwan b. Mu`attal? (At the time she was left behind by the caravan: Au.). `A'isha said, 'I said, "Allah is sufficient for me, and an excellent Trustee (He is)."' Zaynab said: "You said what the believers say" (Ibn Kathir's quotation ends here).

279. `Ikrimah says the allusion is to the campaign of Hamra' al Asad. The battle of Uhud took place on Saturday the 15th of *Shawwal*. On the evening of the 16th the Prophet's caller announced that volunteers were required for a new campaign. He also announced that only those will be allowed who had participated at Uhud. At this Jabir b. `Abdullah came forward and said, 'You know Messenger of Allah, that I had not stayed back but because my father had said that it isn't right for both of us to go out in the battle leaving seven little girls in no one's care. Therefore I should be allowed to go out now.' (His father was martyred at Uhud: Au.). The Prophet let him

join. Some of those who answered the call were Abu Bakr, `Umar, `Uthman, `Ali, Zubayr, Sa`d, Talha, `Abdul Rahman ibn `Awf, `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, Hudhayfah ibn al Yaman, Abu `Ubaydah ibn al Jarrah: in all, some seventy volunteers. They marched out up to Hamra' al Asad, in pursuit of Abu Sufyan and his forces.

According to another report Abu Sa'ib, the freed slave of `Uthman, a man from Banu Ash-hal and his brother both had received injuries at Uhud. When the second call came, they said to each other that they were not going to miss a campaign in which the Prophet was participating. Accordingly, they both came out, with one of them leaning against the other, joining the Muslims at the camp. From there they marched out to Hamra' al Asad, a station some 12 km from Madinah where the Prophet spent three days before returning.

In the meanwhile Abu Sufyan and his men who had encamped a little further up at a place called Rawha' began to question their own wisdom in not plundering the city of Madinah. "Neither did you kill Muhammad, nor have you got with you heavy bosomed dames as your pillion riders," chided some of them. Even

as they were discussing the return, a man called Ma`bad the Khuza'i came up to them. He was still an unbeliever but with a soft corner for the Prophet. He was unhappy with what had struck the Prophet at Uhud. When Abu Sufyan enquired about the Prophet, Ma`bad bluffed to him that he was right behind him with his forces, in numbers unseen at any time, swelled by those angry ones at Madinah who had not participated in the battle of Uhud. They are full of vengeance and anger. To drive home the point he recited a few couplets of his own. That scared Abu Sufyan. He offered a passing caravan a camel load of raisins if he would pass by the Prophet and discourage him from pursuing him by telling him that Abu Sufyan was himself coming back with a huge army bent on destroying Madinah. When the Prophet and his Companions were informed of this, it only increased them in their faith and they said: "Allah is sufficient for us, and an excellent Trustee (He is)." This, Ibn Jarir says, seems to be the most likely reason for the revelation of these verses.

Badr Sughra

Nevertheless, according to Muja-hid, these verses refer to the second campaign of Badr known as Badr al

[175] *That was Satan scaring you of his friends. So fear them not; fear Me,²⁸⁰ if you are believers.* إِنَّمَا ذَلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُوا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾

Sughra ('the lesser Badr'). The details are as follows. Before returning from Uhud, Abu Sufyan had promised the Prophet that he would meet him at Badr the next year for another trial of strength. Following his promise Abu Sufyan started out, but fright got the better of him and he returned from Marr 'l Dhahran itself, commissioning Nu`aym b. Mas`ud al Ashja`i at the cost of ten camels to go and relay the news to the Prophet that he was coming up against him with a mighty force. Nu`aym (who embraced Islam during the battle of the Ditch in 5 A.H.: *Manar*) came down to the town and tried to dissuade the Prophet from setting out, warning him and his men that he did not expect them to return alive, such large were the numbers with Abu Sufyan. This did cause some concern among the Muslims whose response to the Prophet's call was initially lukewarm. But the Prophet was determined and said that he would go alone, even if no one joined him. Encouraged by his determination, some seventy volunteered, and he set out for Badr.

On the way they met batches of pagans who all assured them that Abu Sufyan was marching across with an indestructible force. But this only increased them in their faith and they said: "Allah is sufficient for us, an excellent Trustee (He is)." Abu Sufyan of course did not go beyond Marr 'l Dhahran (according to some narrations, `Usfan: *Manar*). The Muslims, however, chanced into a fair held annually at Badr in which they made great profits and returned laden with merchandise eight days later. This explains the verse: "*They returned with blessings and bounty from their Lord, untouched by evil*" (Ibn Jarir, Kashshaf, Ibn Kathir).

It seems allusions have been made in these verses to both the campaigns, the Hamra' al Asad as well as the Badr al Sughra. (Verse 172 alludes to Hamra' al Asad, and 173, 174 to Badr al Sughra) - Razi, *Manar*.

Ibn al-Qayyim and Halabi have stated that the total number of men with the Prophet was around 1500. It is possible that only 70 accompa-

[176] Let not those who hasten to disbelief²⁸¹ aggrieve you.²⁸² They will not harm Allah in the least.²⁸³ Allah desires not to appoint a share for them in the Hereafter.²⁸⁴ For them is a great chastisement.

وَلَا يَحْزَنكَ الَّذِينَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَن يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَلَّا يَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ حِزْبًا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٦﴾

[177] Those who bartered unbelief at the price of belief, surely they will not harm Allah in the least. For them is a painful chastisement.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ لَن يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٧﴾

[178] Let not the unbelievers suppose that the respite We grant them is in fact good for their selves. We grant them respite only in order that they may increase in their sins. For them is a humiliating chastisement.

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّامُ تَمْلِكُهُمْ حَيْرٌ لِّأَنفُسِهِمْ إِنَّمَا نَمْلِكُهُمْ لِيَزِدَّادُوا إِثْمًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿١٧٨﴾

nied him initially, and the rest joined him later (*Manar*).

280. It is said that it is not he who is fearful of his Lord who weeps and then wipes off his eyes (moments later). It is he who gives up what Allah has forbidden in fear of His punishment (Thanwi, *Ashraf al-Tafasir*). The Prophet has said in a *hasan gharib hadith* of Tirmidhi:

إِنِّي أَرَى مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ وَأَسْمَعُ مَا لَا تَسْمَعُونَ، أَطَّتِ السَّمَاءُ وَحَقَّ لَهَا أَنْ تَبْطَأَ فِيهَا مَوْضِعُ أَزْبَعِ أَصَابِعِ إِلَّا وَمَلَكَ وَاضِعٌ جَبْهَتَهُ سَاجِدًا لِلَّهِ. وَاللَّهُ لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ مَا أَعْلَمَ لَضَحِكْتُمْ قَلِيلًا وَلَبَكَيْتُمْ كَثِيرًا، وَمَا تَلَدَّدْتُمْ بِالنِّسَاءِ عَلَى الْفُرُشِ، وَلَخَرَجْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّغَدَاتِ تَحَارُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ لَوَدِدْتُ أَنِّي كُنْتُ شَجَرَةً تُعْضَدُ

“I see what you do not see, and hear what you do not hear. The heaven is creaking and it is right

that it should creak, for there is not an inch of space in it but occupied by an angel in prostration. By Allah! If you knew what I know, you’d laugh less, cry more, would not lie down with your women in your beds, rather, would go out into the fields weeping and crying aloud to God (saying) ‘I wish I was a tree plucked off’” (Qurtubi).

281. Sayyid writes: “Let not those who hasten towards disbelief...”: This is a pictorial illustration depicting a psychological state. We can notice some of the unbelievers working real hard in the way of disbelief, falsehood, evil, and sins; as if they are contending with others of their kind for an award awaiting them at

the other end. We find them heading speedily, in full zeal, great enthusiasm, and full force, plunging headlong, as if they are being pressed on from the rear or are goaded on from the front by someone holding out an award to the winner of the race.”

282. Rather, they harm themselves alone, entirely, as Allah said in a *hadith* of Muslim and Tirmidhi narrated by Abu Dharr:

يَا عِبَادِي إِنِّي خَشِيتُ الظُّلْمَ عَلَى نَفْسِي. وَجَعَلْتُهُ بَيْنَكُمْ مُحَرَّمًا. فَلَا تَظَالَمُوا. يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ ضَالٌّ إِلَّا مَنْ هَدَيْتُهُ. فَاسْتَغْفِرُونِي أَهْدِكُمْ. يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ جَائِعٌ إِلَّا مَنْ أَطْعَمْتُهُ. فَاسْتَغْفِرُونِي أَطْعَمَكُمْ. يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ عَارٍ إِلَّا مَنْ كَسَوْتُهُ. فَاسْتَغْفِرُونِي أَكْسَوَكُمْ. يَا عِبَادِي إِنَّكُمْ تُخْطِئُونَ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ، وَأَنَا أَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا. فَاسْتَغْفِرُونِي أَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ. يَا عِبَادِي إِنَّكُمْ لَنْ تَبْلُغُوا ضَرْيَ فَضْرَتِي. وَلَنْ تَبْلُغُوا نَفْعِي فَتَنْفَعُونِي. يَا عِبَادِي لَوْ أَنَّ أَوْلَكُمْ وَأَخْرَكُمْ، وَإِنْ سَكُمُ وَجِنَّتُمْ. كَانُوا عَلَى أَتَقَى قَلْبَ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ مِنْكُمْ. مَا زَادَ ذَلِكَ فِي مُلْكِي شَيْئًا. يَا عِبَادِي لَوْ أَنَّ أَوْلَكُمْ وَأَخْرَكُمْ، وَإِنْ سَكُمُ وَجِنَّتُمْ. كَانُوا عَلَى أَفْجَرِ قَلْبِ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ. مَا نَقَصَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ مُلْكِي شَيْئًا. يَا عِبَادِي لَوْ أَنَّ أَوْلَكُمْ وَأَخْرَكُمْ، وَإِنْ سَكُمُ وَجِنَّتُمْ. قَامُوا فِي صَعِيدٍ وَاحِدٍ فَسَأَلُونِي. فَأَعْطَيْتُ كُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ مَسْأَلَتَهُ. مَا نَقَصَ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عِنْدِي إِلَّا كَمَا يَنْقُصُ الْبَحِيرُ إِذَا أُدْخِلَ الْبَحْرَ. يَا عِبَادِي إِنَّمَا هِيَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ أُخْصِيهَا لَكُمْ. ثُمَّ أُوَفِّيكُمْ بِهَا. فَمَنْ وَجَدَ خَيْرًا فَلْيَحْمَدِ اللَّهَ. وَمَنْ وَجَدَ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ فَلَا يَلُومَنَّ إِلَّا نَفْسَهُ

“O My slaves, I have forbidden oppression unto Myself and have made it unlawful unto you,

therefore do not oppress each other. O My slaves, all of you are misguided save him whom I have guided. Therefore seek guidance of Me, I shall guide you. O My slaves, all of you are hungry save him who I have fed. Therefore ask food of Me and I shall feed you. O My slaves, all of you are naked save him I have clothed. Therefore seek clothes of me and I shall clothe you. O My slaves, you sin by the day and by the night and I forgive all of your sins. Therefore, seek forgiveness of Me and I shall forgive you. O My slaves, you can never be in a position to harm Me that you might (attempt to) harm Me, neither can you ever be in a position to be of profit to Me so that you might (try and) cause Me profit. O My slaves, were the first of you and the last of you, the mankind of you and the jinn-kind of you to become as pious as the most pious of you, that will not cause increase in My kingdom in the least. O My slaves, were the first of you and the last of you, the men of you and the jinn of you to become as corrupt as the most corrupt of you, that will not cause decrease in My kingdom in the least. O My slaves, were the

[179] Allah was not such as to let the believers remain in the state in which you are, until He distinguished the corrupt from the good.²⁸⁵ And Allah was not such as to let you have knowledge of the Unseen, rather Allah chooses whom He will of His Messengers. Therefore, believe in Allah and His Messengers; and if you believe and are godfearing, then, for you is a great reward.

مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّىٰ يَمِيزَ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُطْلِعَكُمْ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْتَبِي مِنْ رُسُلِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فَأَمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَإِنْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَلَكُمْ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٩﴾

first of you, the last of you, the men of you and the jinn of you to gather in a plain field and ask Me, and I were to grant everyone of you what he asked for, that would not cause a decrease in My kingdom more than what would if a needle were to be dipped into the sea. O My slaves, it is nothing but your own deeds that I keep record of and then return them to you (in the form of retribution, good or bad). Therefore, let him who finds good, thank Allah, and let him who finds it different, may blame none but himself” (Qurtubi).

283. The allusion is to hypocrites (Mujahid, Ibn Ishaq; Ibn Jarir). But some have said that some people became Muslims and then turned apostates. It is they who are alluded to by either of the two verses, 176 and 177 (Razi).

284. That is, they are in such a state of corruption and evil that it entails their deprivation of the blessings of the Hereafter by the Will of Allah and His Approval (Manar).

Asad comments: “This is an allusion to the doctrine of natural laws (in Qur’anic terminology, *sunnat Allah*, “God’s way”) to which man’s inclination and actions as well as all other happenings in the universe are subject. The above verse says, as it were, “Since these people are bent on denying the truth, Our giving the rein [that is, freedom of choice and time for a reconsideration of their attitude] will not work out for the benefit but will, on the contrary, cause them to grow in false self confidence and, thus, in sinfulness.” As in many similar passages in the Qur’ān, God attributes their “growing in sinfulness” to His own will because it is He who has imposed on all His creation

[180] And let not those who are niggardly²⁸⁶ with what Allah has bestowed upon them by His grace imagine that it is a good thing for them. Rather it is evil for them.²⁸⁷ They shall have that which they used to be niggardly with hung about their necks on the Day of Judgment.²⁸⁸ And to Allah belongs the inheritance of all that is in the heavens and the earth. Allah is Aware of what you do.

وَلَا يَخْسِرَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُمْ بَلْ هُوَ شَرٌّ لَّهُمْ سَيُطَوَّقُونَ مَا بَخُلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَاثُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٨٠﴾

the natural law of cause and effect.”

285. There are many advantages in the distinction being drawn between the believers and the hypocrites. Without that it might happen that a true believer divulge important information to a hypocrite. It also helps the believers to attempt a realistic evaluation of themselves. On the level of the individual, it can prove to be an unveiling, leading them to corrections. Further, it strikes me that one of the easiest way for a person to know of his situation vis a vis his faith, or of those around him, would be for Allah to directly let him have its knowledge. But this is not the Sunnah of Allah. He does not let people know what is in the unseen. Rather, He leaves it to them, giving them the choice to either make efforts towards corrections, in the light of the guidance sent to them, or be negligent (*Manar*).

286. There is no difference of opinion among the scholars that niggardliness is applicable to withholding when it is obligatory to spend. Withholding that, the spending of which is not obligatory upon a person, does not incur the same censure (Razi).

As for the other Qur’ānic term *shuhh*, it is niggardliness coupled with greed (Qurtubi).

287. When Allah had, up to the last verse, encouraged the believers to go out in the way of Allah, to struggle in His cause with their physical selves, He now follows it up by encouraging them to continue the struggle with their material possessions (Razi, *Manar*).

Asad adds: “This is an allusion to the way of life of the unbelievers mentioned in verse 179 above: a way of life characterized by extreme attachment to the material things of this

world a materialism based on a lack of belief in anything that transcends the practical problems of life.”

288. The translation follows the interpretation preferred by Ibn Jarir of Ibn Mas`ud, Suddi and others who have said that it is the withholding of *zakah* that is alluded to which will be given the form of a serpent. On the day of Judgment it will bite the non remitters on their cheeks.

Ibn Kathir (and to an extent Qurtubi) adds evidence by quoting several *ahadith* of identical meaning found in various books. One of them, in Bukhari narrated by Abu Hurayrah, says that the Prophet said:

«مَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مَالًا فَلَمْ يُؤَدِّ زَكَاتَهُ مَثَلُ لَهُ مَالُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ شُجَاعَا أَفْرَعٍ لَهُ زَبِيصَتَانِ يَأْخُذُ بِلَهْزَمَتَيْهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَيَقُولُ: أَنَا مَالُكَ أَنَا كَثْرُكَ ثُمَّ تَلَا هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ: وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ» (آل عمران، الآية: ٨١)

“Whoever was given wealth but did not pay the *zakah* will have his wealth turned into a serpent with two spots, taking him by his two jaws on the Day of Judgment saying, ‘I’m your wealth, I’m your treasure.’ Then the Prophet quoted this verse: “Let not those who are niggardly with what Allah has bestowed upon them by His grace imagine that it is a good

thing for them. Rather it is evil for them.”

However, Ibn `Abbas and Mujahid have said that the allusion is to the Jews who withhold knowledge of Allah’s revelations from the people, and will have some sort of punishment hung around their necks on the Day of Judgment.

It should be apparent on closer consideration that there is no contradiction between the two opinions. In fact, withholding knowledge sent down by Allah, or corrupting it for worldly reasons, is a sin of greater significance than withholding material wealth. To cite an example of a similar nature: after speaking of what Allah has forbidden of the food in verse 173 of *surah al Baqarah*, which says:

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ [البقرة: ١٧٣]

“He has indeed forbidden you only the carrion, blood, flesh of swine, and that which has been consecrated in the name other than that of Allah,” after saying that, Allah went on to say in the next verse:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَشْتَرُونَ بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَئِكَ مَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ إِلَّا النَّارَ [البقرة: ١٧٤]

“Those who conceal that which Allah

[181] Surely, Allah has heard the saying of those who said, 'Allah is poor and we are rich.'²⁸⁹ We shall write down what they have said and (the fact of) their slaying of the Prophets without cause²⁹⁰ and shall say, 'Taste then the chastisement of the burning.'

لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاءُ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَالُوا وَقَتْلَهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَنَقُولُ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿١٨١﴾

has revealed of the Book and barter in its return a paltry price do not fill their bellies but with Fire,” implying that if blood, carrion, etc., are forbidden things, then surely concealing Allah’s revelation is forbidden to a greater degree. Furthermore, as Imām Razi has pointed out, the next few verses also point to the possibility that it is the Jews who have been alluded to by this verse, who, anyway, committed both kinds of niggardliness: that involving wealth as well as that involving knowledge (Au.).

The Relationship: In the verses previous to this one (no. 181) when Allah spoke of charity the unbelievers said that He must be poor to be exhorting His slaves to spend. He revealed these verses (Razi).

289. Ibn Ishaq has said that according to Ibn ‘Abbas, the following incident occasioned this verse. Abu Bakr visited a group of Jews taking lessons from a Rabbi of theirs called Finhas. Abu Bakr told Finhas to fear God and declare belief in Islam, for

he knew at heart that Muhammad was a Messenger. Finhas replied arrogantly that God seemed to be in need of the Jews, while the Jews did not need Him. If God were to be rich He would not have sought loans. He has prohibited the Muslims from charging usury while He had permitted the Jews to accept it which showed that He stood in need of the Jews more than they of Him. Abu Bakr got angry at these words and hit him in the face. Finhas reported to the Prophet. When he asked Abu Bakr the reason, Finhas denied that he had said the things Abu Bakr was alleging. Allah revealed: “Surely Allah has heard the saying of those who said, ‘Allah is poor and we are rich...’” Allah further said, referring to what Abu Bakr had heard from Finhas: “You might hear a lot of painful things from those who were given the Book before you, and from the idolaters....” (Ibn Jarir, Razi). The report is in Abu Hatim also (Ibn Kathir). Suddi, Mujahid and Shibl have also said that the Jews were the cause of the revelation

[182] This is in return of what your hands have forwarded.²⁹¹ Allah is never in the least unjust unto the slaves.²⁹² ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ ﴿١٨٢﴾

of these verses (Ib Jarir).

According to Hasan, Qatadah and Ibn Zayd, when the Jews said that God was seeking loans, they were referring to an earlier revelation which said (2: 245): “Who is it that will offer Allah a goodly loan ...” (Ibn Jarir).

290 Obviously the Jews did not mean what they were saying. It was by way of mockery that they had said those things (Qurtubi).

That is, those who said such things as ‘Allah is poor and we are rich’ out of ignorance were not demonstrating something new. In earlier times they have even slain their Prophets out of insistence on ignorance (Razi).

But, we might remind that the Jewish literature reveals that the Jews do think that God needs them (Au.).

They have been charged with slaying their prophets, although it is their previous generations who did that because they were in full agreement with their previous generations over the issue. Had they disowned their previous generations, they could have been absolved. It is said that

someone showed approval of `Uthman’s murder before Sha’bi. Sha’bi told him: “You are a co partner in the murder.” In fact there is a *hadith* in Abu Da’ud which says:

إِذَا عُمِلَتِ الْخَطِيئَةُ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَانَ مَنْ شَهِدَهَا فَكَرِهَهَا . وَقَالَ مَرَّةً « أُنْكِرُهَا » . « كَمَنْ غَاب عَنْهَا وَمَنْ غَابَ عَنْهَا فَرَضِيهَا كَانَ كَمَنْ شَهِدَهَا

“When an evil deed is done in the earth then whoever was present and disapproved of it and, according to another report, disowned it is like someone who was not there; while whoever was not there but approved of it is like he who was present (at the scene of the crime) - Qurtubi.

Munawi has said in *Jami` Saghir* that the *hadith* sounds trustworthy (Au.).

Muhammad `Abduh said: The verse has a message for every new generation of Muslims in that they should examine what has been produced by the previous generations, accept only that which conforms with the *Shari`ah* and reject the rest. If they do not, then they would be considered equal in their crimes (*Manar*).

[183] Those who said, ‘Allah has surely made covenant with us that we shall not believe in a Messenger until he brings us a sacrifice burned by the fire,’²⁹³ ask, ‘Indeed Messengers had come to you before me bearing clear signs and with what you have spoken of; why did you then slay them, if you speak the truth?’²⁹⁴

الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عٰهَدَ اِیِّنَا اَلَّا نُرْسِلَ
لِرَسُوْلٍ حَتّٰی یَاْتِنَا بِمُرْبٰنٍ نَّاْكُلُهٗ النَّارُ
قُلْ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْ قَبْلِی بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ
وَبِالَّذِی قُلْتُمْ فَلِمَ قَتَلْتُمُوْهُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ
صٰدِقِیْنَ ﴿۱۸۳﴾

291. The words “*what their hands have forwarded*” is to emphasize their intentions and full commitment to what they did (Qurtubi).

292. That is, Allah will administer punishment in accordance with their deeds, no more, no less. If He does not do it then He cannot be called Just, for there are people who lead a righteous life. Were He to place those who made fun of their Prophets, nay, even murdered them, along with the righteous ones, together in the same Paradise then He would not be just with the righteous ones, and religion itself would be a mockery. But that is not the case. Rather, Allah says (38: 28):

اَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِیْنَ
فِی الْاَرْضِ اَمْ نَجْعَلُ الْمُتَّقِیْنَ كَالْفُجَّارِ [ص : ۲۸]

“Or shall We make those who believe and do righteous deeds as the workers of corruption in the earth, or shall We make the godfearing as the transgressors?” (Manar).

The translation of the verse follows the understanding of the majority of commentators. The difficulty is in the word “*zallam*” which is a hyperbolic term, literally meaning “unjust to a high degree.” Zarkashi (*Al Burhan*, vol II, p. 511) has given eleven possible explanations of the exaggerated form. One of them is, it is for emphasis, as if to say: “(Allah is not) unjust, not unjust, not unjust.”

Shabbir has an additional remark, also hinted at by Zarkashi. Had Allah possessed the attribute of injustice, surely it would have been of a very high order, to a perfect degree, as all His other attributes are. Therefore the refutation, ‘Allah is not “*zallam*.”’

293. Ibn `Abbas and Dahhak have said that the allusion is to the sacrifices of the Israelites in the ancient times when they left their sacrificial material in the open and the sign of its approval by God was that a fire de-

[184] Therefore, if they give you the lie, then surely, lies were given to prophets before you who came with all the evidence, with the Scriptures,²⁹⁵ and with the radiant Book.

فَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ
جَاءُوا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ
﴿١٨٤﴾

[185] Every soul shall taste death, and you shall surely be paid your wages in full on the Day of Resurrection. Then whosoever is saved from the Fire and admitted to Paradise, indeed he triumphed.²⁹⁶ As for the life of this world, it is nothing but a brief deceptive enjoyment.²⁹⁷

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّقُونَ
أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَن زُحِرَ عَنِ النَّارِ
وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا
مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ ﴿١٨٥﴾

scended from the heavens and burnt the offering. The Jews demanded the same of our Prophet and used it as a pretext for denying him (Ibn Jarir).

Majid says: "Cf. the *Bible*: 'And the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the alter the burnt offering and the fat.' (Le. 9: 23,24). Also Jn. 13: 20 23; 1 Ki. 18: 38; 1 Ch. 21: 26; 2 Ch. 7: 1. Fire thus came to be regarded by the Jews as one of the agents of Divine will, and Divine fire was expected to consume the acceptable offering."

Mawdudi writes: "The Bible mentions, for example, the Prophet Elijah who had challenged the worshippers of Ba`l to sacrifice a bull, promising that he too would sacrifice a bull. He stated that the offering of the one who was truthful would

be consumed by the miraculous fire. The confrontation took place before a large crowd and it was Elijah's sacrifice which was consumed by the fire. This so antagonized the Ba`l worshipping Queen that ... Elijah was forced to leave his homeland and take refuge in the mountains of Sinai."

294. That is, their demand for such miracles is out of contention and not out of a true desire for right guidance (Razi).

295. According to Zajjaj, *Zabūr* (pl. *Zubur*, translated here as Scriptures) is every book of wisdom; hence *Zabūr* (Psalms) of Da`ud (Razi).

296. The Prophet has said in a *hadīth* of Ahmad narrated by `Abdullah ibn `Amr:

مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يُرْخَاحَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَيَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَلْتُدْرِكْهُ
مَنِيَّتُهُ وَهُوَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْتِي إِلَى النَّاسِ

[186] You shall surely be tried (O Muslims) with your wealth and your selves and you might hear a lot of painful things from those who were given the Book before you, as well as from the idolaters.²⁹⁸ But if you persevere and are godfearing, then indeed, that is of the matters of great resolution.

لَتَبْلُوَنَّ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلَتَسْمَعَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَذًى كَثِيرًا وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿١٨٦﴾

مَا يُحِبُّ أَنْ يُؤْتَى إِلَيْهِ

“Whosoever wishes that he be spared the Fire and admitted into Paradise may not die but on faith in Allah and the Hereafter, and give to the people what he would approve of being given to himself” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Shu'ayb Arna'ut remarks that the *hadith* is trustworthy (Au.).

Adds Thanwi: This verse which speaks of being saved of the Fire and admitted into Paradise as the triumph of the highest kind, refutes those (ignorant sufis: Shabbir) who declare that to them neither of them matters, (rather, it is Allah Himself Who matters: Au.).

297. Abu Hurayrah has reported that the Prophet (*saws*) said:

مَوْضِعُ سَوْطٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا

“The peg by which a whip is hung in Paradise is better than all

that is there in this world.” Read if you want, ‘And the life of this world is nothing but a (brief and) deceptive enjoyment’” (Ibn Jarir).

The *hadith* is in Bukhari, but without the words, “Read if you want...” (Au.).

He is also reported to have said, in a *hadith* of Ibn Majah, that what is in this world is no more than what one would get if he were to dip a finger in the sea and withdraw. Let him see how much does the finger come back with (Ibn Kathir).

298. Apart from various blasphemous statements that the Muslims had to hear from the Jews at Madinah, they were also the target of satires and lampoons of their poets such as Ka'b al Ashraf who had to be finally done away with because of his erotic poems directed at the kinsfolk of the Prophet (Ibn Jarir: abridged, Qurtubi).

Bukhari has an additional cause

[187] And when Allah took pledge from those who were given the Book (to the effect that), 'You shall make it known to the people and not conceal it.'²⁹⁹ But they flung it behind their backs³⁰⁰ and sold it for a small price.³⁰¹ Evil is that which they purchased.

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُونَهُ فَنَبَذُوهُ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ وَاشْتَرَوْا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا فَبَيَّسَ مَا يَشْتَرُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾

of revelation to relate. Usamah bin Zayd reports that early in Madinah the Prophet passed by on a mule a group of people comprising Jews, pagans and Muslims. As he neared, the dust kicked up by his mule reached the assembly. `Abdullah ibn Ubayy, who had not yet professed Islam, covered his nose with his cloak and said "Do not raise dust upon us." The Prophet stopped, dismounted, greeted them, recited the Qur`ān and invited them to Islam. `Abdullah ibn Ubayy said: "Man. What you say would have sounded good if it were true. Therefore, do not bother us in our assemblies. Return to your quarters and preach whosoever comes to you." At this `Abdullah ibn Rawaha interjected saying: "Rather, preach us O Prophet, for we love to hear from you." Upon this the three, Jews, pagans and Muslims exchanged harsh words and would have come to blows were not the Prophet to intervene and cool them down. Then he rode on to the house of Sa`d b. `Ubadah and mentioned to him about what

had happened. Sa`d said: "Pardon him O Messenger of Allah, for the people of this town were about to crown him king when you appeared and he was brushed aside." And Allah said: '*You might hear a lot of painful things from those who were given the Book before you, and from the idolaters...*' Then, when the Muslims returned triumphant from Badr, `Abdullah ibn Ubayy and men of his ilk told themselves that this was getting serious and hence decided to (outwardly) profess Islam (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, slightly abridged).

299. Connection: Another thing that was painful to the Prophet was the Jewish efforts at concealing the truth about him, hence Allah revealed this verse (Razi).

Majid quotes the Bible which also forbade hiding of religious knowledge: "We will not hide them for their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength and his wonderful works that he hath done' (Ps

78: 4). 'What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what we hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetop' (Mt. 10: 27)."

According to Suddi, by the personal pronoun in the words, "You shall make it known to the people," the allusion is to the Prophet. That is, once having recognized him it was the duty of the Jews to spread the word about him that he was a true Prophet. However, according to Ibn Mas'ud and Ibn 'Abbas, by the words, "And when Allah took compact with those who were given the Book", it is the Prophets and Messengers who are meant who had to give an undertaking that whenever they were given a revelation they would make it known to the people and shall not conceal it (Ibn Jarir). Another opinion is that every Prophet gave undertaking to the effect that he would inform his nation about Muhammad so that when he arrived, it shouldn't be hard for them to recognize him (Ibn Kathir).

Asad writes: "The implication of verse 187 is that the advent of the Prophet Muhammad was predicted in both the Old and New Testaments, and that the followers of the Bible had been called upon to spread

this prophecy and not as they actually have done to suppress it."

Ibn Kathir writes: In this verse there is a warning to the scholars that they ought not conceal religious knowledge from the people. The Prophet has said, in a *hadith* of Ibn Majah declared *Sahih*,

مَنْ سُئِلَ عَنْ عِلْمٍ فَكَتَمَهُ أُلْجِمَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِلِجَامٍ
مِنْ نَارٍ

"Whosoever was asked about a piece of knowledge and he concealed it, shall have a rein of fire in his mouth on the Day of Resurrection."

It is said that when Zuhri had given up narrating *hadith*, Hasan b. 'Amara went up to him and asked him to relate some *ahadith*. Zuhri told him of his resolve. Hasan told him: "Either you narrate or I will." Zuhri said: "Alright. You do." Hasan narrated 'Ali's words: "Allah did not make it obligatory upon the ignorant to ask before He had made it obligatory upon the scholars to teach." Upon hearing this Zuhri narrated forty *ahadith* to Hasan (Qurtubi).

Yusuf Ali adds: "Truth --- Allah's Message --- comes to any man or nation as a matter of sacred trust. It

[188] Think not that those who exult in what they have brought and love to be praised for what they have not done³⁰² - think not that they will escape the punishment.³⁰³ For them awaits a painful chastisement.

لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا أَتَوْا وَيُجِبُونَ أَنَّ يُحْمَدُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّهُمْ بِمَفَازَةٍ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨٨﴾

[189] To Allah belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth. Allah has power over all things.

وَاللَّهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٨٩﴾

should be broadcast and published and taught and made clear to all within reach. Privileged priesthood at once erects a barrier. But worse, when such priesthood tampers with the truth, taking what suits it and ignoring the rest, it has sold Allah's gift for a miserable ephemeral profit..."

300. Sha`bi's opinion is: those who were given the Book earlier refused to put its teachings to practice and meet its demands, although they did not fail to recite it (Ibn Jarir).

301. Hence it is strongly desirable that the scholars stay away from the rich and the influential, because their company corrupts. Scholars of past generations used to run away from the rich as they would run away from snakes and scorpions. Hence the *hadith* of Anas:

العلماء أمناء الرسل على عباد الله ما لم يخالطوا السلطان ويدخلوا الدنيا فإن خالطوا السلطان ودخلوا الدنيا فقد خانوا الرسل فاحذروهم واعتزلوهم

"Scholars are the trustees of Messengers over the people - so long as they do not intermingle with the rulers and indulge in the world. If they intermingle with the rulers and indulge in the world, they would have dishonored their trust with the Messengers. Forsake them and abandon them." Ibn Jawzi has declared this *hadith* a fabrication. But Suyuti has disagreed with him and said that there are at least forty *ahadith* that support this meaning, and so the *hadith* acquires at least a *hasan* status.

Tirmidhi has another *hadith*, which he declares *hasan*, which says:

مَنْ سَكَنَ الْبَادِيَةَ جَفًّا، وَمَنْ اتَّبَعَ الصَّيْدَ غَفْلًا، وَمَنْ أَتَى أَبْوَابَ السُّلْطَانِ افْتَنَ

"Whoever lived in the countryside will acquire a harsh nature, he who followed a game (during hunting) will become heedless,

[190] Surely, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day are signs for men of understanding.³⁰⁴

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاجْتِلَافِ
الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ
﴿١٩٠﴾

and whoever visited the rulers will face trials” (*Manar*).

302. Abu Sa`id al Khudri and Ibn Zayd have said that the hypocrites used to stay back from campaigns and then come up with excuses when the Prophet returned. They were pleased to be praised for what they hadn't done. So Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Abu Sa`id's statement is in Muslim (Ibn Kathir).

However, according to Ibn `Abbas the allusion is to the Jewish rabbis who used to misguide their people concerning the Prophet, make pretensions of piety, and loved to be praised as men of knowledge and wisdom. There have been other explanations also. It is said that Marwan sent someone to Ibn `Abbas to ask him, “Which of us does not wish to be praised for what he has not done?” Ibn `Abbas replied that the verse was revealed concerning those who were given the Book earlier, whom our Prophet enquired about something but they concealed

it from him, and were pleased with themselves for doing that (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi). Ibn `Abbas's statement is in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Nasa'i (Ibn Kathir).

303. It is reported that Thabit b. Qays said to the Prophet:

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، وَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ حَشِيتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ قَدْ
هَلَكَتُ ، قَالَ : بِمَ ؟ ، قُلْتُ : تَهَيَّ اللَّهُ الْمَرْءُ أَنْ
يُحْمَدَ بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلْ ، وَأَجِدُنِي أَحَبُّ الْحَمْدِ ، وَتَهَيَّ
اللَّهُ عَنِ الْحِيَلِ ، وَأَجِدُنِي أَحَبُّ الْحِيَلِ ، وَتَهَيَّ
اللَّهُ أَنْ تَرْفَعَ أَصَوَاتَنَا فَوْقَ صَوْتِكَ ، وَأَنَا امْرُؤٌ جَاهِلٌ
الصَّوْتِ ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ :
أَلَا تَرْضَى أَنْ تَعِيشَ حَمِيدًا ، وَتُقْتَلَ شَهِيدًا ، وَتَدْخُلَ
الْجَنَّةَ ؟ قَالَ : بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، فَقَاشَ حَمِيدًا ،
وَقُتِلَ شَهِيدًا يَوْمَ مُسَيْلَمَةَ

“I am destroyed O Messenger of Allah.” The Prophet asked him: “What makes you say so?” He said, “Allah has forbidden that we be praised for what we have not done, and I love to be praised. He has forbidden pride and I love to appear beautiful. He has forbidden that we raise our voices over yours and I am a noisy man.” The Prophet told him: “Thabit, aren't you satisfied

[191] Such as those who remember Allah standing, sitting, on their sides³⁰⁵ and ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth³⁰⁶ (concluding): 'Our Lord! You have not created this without reason. Glory to You. Save us therefore, from the punishment of the Fire.³⁰⁷

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٩١﴾

[192] Our Lord! Surely whomsoever You sent into the Fire, You have indeed disgraced him; and the transgressors shall have no helpers.

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَنْ تُدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ أَخْزَيْتَهُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴿١٩٢﴾

that you live as a praised one, die a martyr, and enter Paradise?" Accordingly, Thabit lived as a praised person and died a martyr fighting against Musaylimah the Liar (Ibn Kathir). The report is reliable (Sayyid Ibrahim).

304. Those are meant who use their minds and reach out the realities behind what is apparent, unlike those who are deaf and dumb and who do not use their heads, such as those about whom Allah said (12: 105):

وَكَايَٰنَ مِنْ آيَةٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُونَ (١٠٥) وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ [يوسف : ١٠٥ ، ١٠٦]

"And how many signs are there not in the heavens and in the earth that they pass by but they ignore them. And (even if they ponder) they believe not in Allah (the sole Creator) without ascribing part-

ners to Him" (Ibn Kathir).

Shabbir comments: Surely, not everyone who stares at the stars finds signs. It is those who acknowledge a role for their Creator that profit from such reflections. Others however great scientists they might be considered by the people of the world are not men of understanding.

305. The Prophet told `Imran b. Husayn (in a *hadith* of Bukhari: Ibn Kathir),

صَلِّ فَائِمًا فَإِنْ لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ فَقَاعِدًا، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَىٰ جَنْبٍ

"Offer your Prayers standing; but if you cannot, then sitting; and if you cannot, then (reclining) on your sides" (Zamakhshari). Qurtubi adds: `Imran b. Husayn had enquired how he should pray, because he suffered from piles.

[193] Our Lord! We heard a caller³⁰⁸ calling to faith saying, "Believe in your Lord." So, we believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, acquit us of our evil deeds, and take us (to You) accompanied by the pious.

رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ
آمِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَأَمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَأَعْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا
وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَقَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ ﴿١٩٣﴾

[194] And, our Lord, grant us what You promised us through Your Messengers and abase us not on the Day of Standing.³⁰⁹ Indeed You do not break the promise.³¹⁰

رَبَّنَا وَآتِنَا مَا وَعَدْتَنَا عَلَى رُسُلِكَ وَلَا
تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿١٩٤﴾

306. A *hadith* says,

مر النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم على قوم يتفكرون
في الله فقال: تَفَكَّرُوا فِي الْخَلْقِ وَلَا تَفَكَّرُوا فِي الْخَالِقِ
فَإِنَّكُمْ لَا تَقْدِرُونَ قَدْرَهُ

The Prophet passed by a people who were meditating. He told them: "Ponder the creations of the Creator but not the Creator Himself, for you will never encompass Him" (Qurtubi).

Although reported as a weak *hadith*, some scholars believe it is a statement of Ibn `Abbas.

Abu Sulayman al Darani has said, 'When I come out of my house my eyes fall on nothing but either there is a blessing for me in it, or a lesson.'

Hasan al Basri has said: "An hour of reflection is better than prayers of a whole night."

And `Abd b. Qays has said that he heard from several Companions

that reflection brightens faith (Ibn Kathir).

307. Surely, the nature of things demand that we, the rational beings, be called to account, punished or rewarded. Hence the prayer: "Save us from the punishment of the Fire" (Au.).

308. The Prophet was the caller when alive, after him the Qur`ān takes his place as the caller (Ibn Jarir).

309. That is, O Allah, admit us into Paradise straightaway, from the start, and not after You have punished us in Hell fire for our sins, for even a short entry into Hell along with the unbelievers who will abide therein forever, will be a humiliation to us (Thanwi).

310. Reports in Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Da`ud and others say that the Prophet used to recite the last ten verses of this *surah* when he got up

for *tahajjud*. Muslim's report goes like this. Ibn `Abbas said, "My father told me to spend a night with the Prophet and observe how he spent it. So after the night prayers I stayed back in the mosque after everyone had left. When the Prophet rose up he spotted me and asked, 'Who is it? Is it `Abdullah?' I said yes and told him about my mission. He told me to accompany him. When we reached home they gave him an oily pillow. He slept on it until we heard a light snore. Then (when a third of the night was left) he got up, raised his head towards the heaven, and said three times:

سبحان الملك القدوس

Then he recited the last ten verses of this *surah*" (Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Marduwayh has recorded `Ata' as having narrated:

انطلقت أنا وابن عمر وعبيد بن عمير إلى عائشة رضي الله عنها، فدخلنا عليها وبيننا وبينها حجاب، فقالت: يا عبيد ما يمنعك من زيارتنا، قال: قول الشاعر (زر غيباً تردد حباً)، فقال ابن عمر: ذرينا أخبرينا بأعجب ما رأيته من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم؟! فبكت وقالت: كل أمره كان عجباً، أتاني في ليلتي حتى مس جلده جلدي ثم قال "ذريني أتعبد لربي عز وجل"، قالت، فقلت: والله إني لأحب قريبك، وإني أحب أن تعبد ربك، فقام إلى القرية فتوضأ ولم يكثر صب الماء، ثم قام يصلي فبكي حتى بل لحيته، ثم سجد فبكي حتى بل

الأرض، ثم اضطجع على جنبه فبكي حتى إذا أتى بلال يؤذنه بصلاة الصبح، قالت، فقال: يا رسول الله ما يبكيك وقد غفر الله لك ما تقدم من ذنبك وما تأخر؟ فقال: "وبحك يا بلال وما يمنعني أن أبكي وقد أنزل الله عليّ في هذه الليلة: {إن في خلق السموات والأرض واختلاف الليل والنهار لآيات لأولي الأبصار}"، ثم قال: "ويل لمن قرأها ولم يتفكر فيها"

"Myself, Ibn `Umar and `Abid b. `Umayr went to see `A'isha. She spoke to us from behind a curtain. She said: 'What prevents you from visiting us oftener O `Abid?' He replied: 'The poet's words, 'Visit less often to increase love.' Ibn `Umar interjected saying: 'Leave this and tell us the strangest thing that you noticed of the Prophet.' She wept and said, 'Everything he did was so strange. One night he came in and entered the bed until my body was in contact with his. Then he said, 'Let me Pray to my Lord.' I said, 'I love to be near you, but I also love that you Pray to your Lord.' He got up, made ablution using water economically, and, starting his Prayer he began to cry until his beard was wet. Then he prostrated himself and wept until the ground was wet. Then he lied down on his side and wept until Bilal reported

[195] Therefore, their Lord answered them that, 'I do not waste the labors of any laborer from amongst you, male or female³¹¹ - some of you are from others.³¹² Therefore, those who emigrated, were expelled from their lands, were made to suffer in My way, and fought and were slain,³¹³ I shall surely acquit them of their evil deeds³¹⁴ and admit them into gardens underneath which rivers flow: a reward from Allah; and with Allah is the fairest of rewards.'

فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ بَعْضُكُم مِّنْ بَعْضٍ ۚ فَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَأُخْرِجُوا مِن دِيَارِهِمْ وَأُودُوا فِي سَبِيلِي وَقَاتَلُوا وَقُتِلُوا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ثَوَابًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ ﴿١٩٥﴾

[196] Let not the movement of the unbelievers in the lands deceive you.

لَا يَغُرَّتْكَ تَغْلِبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿١٩٦﴾

for the fajr Call. He enquired: 'What makes you weep, O Messenger, when Allah has forgiven your sins the past as well as the future ones?' He said, 'Woe unto you Bilal. Why should I not cry when Allah has revealed these verses to me: *'Surely, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day are signs for the men of understanding.'* Then he added: 'Woe unto him who recited it but did not ponder.'"

Ibn Abi Hatim and Hakim have also reported similar traditions, with the latter declaring it trustworthy (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). The same report has come through Ibn `Umar also (Zamakhshari, Razi).

311. Umm Salamah is reported to have once remarked to the Prophet: "How come Allah does not mention us women when speaking of *hijrah*?!" Accordingly, when Allah revealed this verse He named them (Ibn Jarir). Hakim has also recorded this *hadith* in his "*Mustadrak*" giving it the status of *sahih* which meets the same conditions as those set by Bukhari and Muslim (Ibn Kathir). It is also in Tirmidhi and Albani has treated it *sahih* (Sayyid Ibrahim).

Adds Majid: "(The interjection was) necessary in view of the sub human status allotted to women in almost all ancient philosophies and religions."

312. What Allah means by this is that some of you, O believers, men and women, help and support (and

are a means of strength to) others (Ibn Jarir). Ibn Kathir, however, says it means some of you are like others in the sight of Allah, (i.e. equals), so far as rewards and punishments are concerned.

313. Accordingly, when a person asked the Prophet in a report in the *Sahihayn*:

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ قُتِلْتُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ تُكَفَّرُ عَنِّي حَطَايَايَ؟ فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "نَعَمْ. إِنْ قُتِلْتُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ. وَأَنْتَ صَابِرٌ مُحْتَسِبٌ، مُقْبِلٌ غَيْرٌ مُدْبِرٌ" ثُمَّ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "كَيْفَ قُتِلْتُ؟" قَالَ: أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ قُتِلْتُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَتُكَفَّرُ عَنِّي حَطَايَايَ؟ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "نَعَمْ. وَأَنْتَ صَابِرٌ مُحْتَسِبٌ، مُقْبِلٌ غَيْرٌ مُدْبِرٌ. إِلَّا الدَّيْنَ. فَإِنَّ جِبْرِيلَ، عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، قَالَ لِي ذَلِكَ

"Messenger of Allah. What do you have to say about me if I were to fight in the way of Allah, persevering, in the hope of rewards, advancing upon the enemy and not turning my back, will Allah forgive me my sins?" The Prophet replied: "Yes." Then, after a while he turned to him and asked: "What was that you said?" The man repeated his question. The Prophet told him: "Yes, when you hold on in patience, hoping to be rewarded, charging

forward and not showing your back; except for debts. Jibril just added this to me" (Ibn Kathir).

314. According to the majority opinion, if the verse is applied to Muslims, then major sins are not included since one has to follow the proper process of repentance to be acquitted of them, although Ibn Salah's opinion is that "*qurubat*" could be forgiven (since they do not involve rights of the people: Au.). But Nawawi's opinion is that good deeds do not acquit one of the evil deeds, although they do blunt the effects. Some others have opined that good deeds might acquit one of both major as well as minor sins in view of the verse (11: 114):

إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ

"Verily. Good deeds obliterate evil deeds," and in view of the Prophet's words:

وَأَتْبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمْحُهَا

"Follow up evil deeds with good ones, they will obliterate them."

But the argument does not seem to be too strong in view of the general sense of the terms used in the Qur'ān and *hadīth* quotations, and in view of the fact that there is no disagree-

[197] A little enjoyment, then their refuge is Jahannum: an evil refuge.³¹⁵

مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ ثُمَّ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿١٩٧﴾

[198] As for those who feared their Lord, for them are gardens underneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever, a hospitality from Allah. And what is with Allah is better for the virtuous.³¹⁶

لَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا تِلْكَ أَمْثَلُ مِمَّنْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِلْأَبْرَارِ ﴿١٩٨﴾

ment among the scholars that acquittal of sins essentially requires a return or compensation of people's rights if they have been usurped by the sinner.

As for the application of the verse to new Muslims, here too there are two opinions. (The first is that all their previous sins are forgiven). The second is that, (in the words of Zarkashi as reported by Bayhaqi) embracing Islam assures only the forgiveness of sin of association (*shirk*). Others require separate repentance. His argument is based on the *hadith* (of Muslim, *Kitab al Iman*: Au.) which says:

مَنْ أَحْسَنَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ لَمْ يُؤَاخَذْ بِمَا عَمِلَ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ.
وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ أُخِذَ بِالْأَوَّلِ وَالْآخِرِ

“He who did well after embracing Islam, will not be questioned for sins committed before Islam. But if he did badly he will be ques-

tioned both for sins committed after Islam as well as those committed before Islam” (Alusi).

315. As Allah (*swt*) said elsewhere (10: 69):

قُلْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُفْتَنُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُونَ
(٦٩) مَتَاعٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ نُذِيقُهُمُ
الْعَذَابَ الشَّدِيدَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ [يونس : ٦٩ ،
[٧٠

“Tell them: ‘Surely those who fasten lies upon Allah will not succeed. (Theirs) is a short enjoyment in this world, their return is to Us, then We shall make them taste a painful chastisement because of what they used to do.’”

And, (28: 61):

أَفَمَنْ وَعَدْنَاهُ وَعْدًا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ لَاقِيهِ كَمَنْ مَتَّعْنَاهُ
مَتَاعَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ هُوَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِينَ
[القصص : ٦١]

“He then, to whom We have made a good promise, that he is going

[199] Indeed,³¹⁷ of the people of the Book is one who believes in Allah, in what has been sent down unto you, and in what was sent down to them, fearing Allah in all humility. They do not barter Allah's signs for a small price. Such, for them is their wage with their Lord. Surely, Allah is swift in reckoning.³¹⁸

وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ خَاشِعِينَ لِلَّهِ لَا يَشْتَرُونَ بآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمًّا قَلِيلًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٩٩﴾

[200] Believers! Be patient (and persevering),³¹⁹ vie with each other in patience, be on the watch (in Allah's path),³²⁰ and fear Allah,³²¹ haply you will prosper.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

to meet with ... can he be like him whom We gave a short enjoyment of this world for a brief while, and then he shall be on the Day of Judgment of those who will be presented (like prisoners, for the account of their deeds)" - Ibn Kathir.

the true spirit (Au.).

316. The allusion could be to the sighting of our Lord in Paradise (Shabbir).

318. Jabir b. `Abdullah, Qatadah and Ibn Jurayj have said that when Najashi (the king of Abyssinia) died, the Prophet Prayed for him as one would for the dead. The unbelievers objected saying, 'Look at him. He prays for a Christian whom he did not even see.'" (The report about the Prayers itself is in the *Sahihayn*: Ibn Kathir). At this Allah revealed this verse. However, Mujahid seems to be nearer the truth when he says that the verse was revealed in praise of all those of the people of the Book who believed. This is also because the report of Jabir and others have some isnad weaknesses (Ibn Jarir). The *Sahihayn* have reported that the Prophet mentioned three people whose rewards will be two fold. One of them a man of the people of the

317. People of the Book, and among them specifically the Christians, were addressed at the beginning of the *surah*. Their errors were portrayed in detail, their desire to pervert the Muslims was condemned, and their corruption of the revelations exposed. Now, at the end, it is being acknowledged that all are not the same. Among them are some who uphold the truth, follow the revelations, and believe in the Prophets in

Book who believed in his Prophet as well as in our Prophet (Ibn Kathir).

319. Of *sabr* of the original (translated as patience here), there are three kinds: *sabr* against sins, *sabr* in the observation of the *Shari`ah*, and *sabr* in times of distress (Alusi).

320. This is how Qatadah, Ibn Jurayj and Dahhak have understood the verse. That is, what is meant by *rabit* is, (guard your borders) and be watchful of the enemies of Allah. Nonetheless, Jabir b. `Abdullah, Abu Hurayrah and others have reported that the Prophet said:

أَلَا أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَى مَا يَمْحُو اللَّهُ بِهِ الْخَطَايَا وَيَرْفَعُ بِهِ الدَّرَجَاتِ؟ قَالُوا: بَلَى. يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! قَالَ: "إِسْبَاغُ الْوُضُوءِ عَلَى الْمَكَارِهِ وَكَثْرَةُ الْخُطَا إِلَى الْمَسَاجِدِ. وَاتِّظَارُ الصَّلَاةِ بَعْدَ الصَّلَاةِ. فَذَلِكَ الرَّبَاطُ

"Should I not tell you about what will wipe out your sins, and acquit you of them?" We said, "Sure do, O Messenger of Allah." He said, "It is to do ablution well even when painful (as when the weather is cold: Au.), plenty of steps to the mosque, and to wait for a Prayer after the last one. That is *ribat*."

(This *hadith* is in Muslim and Nasa'i: Ibn Kathir).

Notwithstanding the *hadith*, the

meaning offered by Qatadah and others seems to be correct (Ibn Jarir). Nevertheless, there is no contradiction between the two (Shawkani).

Ibn Kathir expounds: Several *ahadith* are reported in favor of *ribat* in the way of Allah. One in Muslim says:

رَبَاطٌ يَوْمٌ وَلَيْلَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ صِيَامِ شَهْرٍ وَقِيَامِهِ. وَإِنْ مَاتَ، جَرَى عَلَيْهِ عَمَلُهُ الَّذِي كَانَ يَعْمَلُهُ، وَأُجْرِي عَلَيْهِ رِقْدُهُ، وَأُمِنَ الْقَتْلَانِ

"To stand guard (on the borders) is better than fasts for a month and its night vigils (*tahajjud*). If he died in that state, the deeds he used to commit would be continued to be considered as performed by him. His provision will be brought to him and he will be in peace in the grave."

Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah have similar reports. Ahmad and Ibn Majah have also reported `Uthman (ibn `Affan) as saying that he heard the Prophet say:

حَرَسُ لَيْلَةٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، أَفْضَلُ مِنْ صِيَامِ رَجُلٍ وَقِيَامِهِ، فِي أَهْلِهِ، أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ

"To stand guard in the way of Allah for a day or night is better for a man than a thousand nights praying, and fasting among his homefolk."

Abu Da'ud has reported Ibn Hanza-

lah as saying that once when they went out with the Prophet, he camped at a place and offered Prayers. After the Prayers a man came to the Prophet and told him:

يَارَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي انْطَلَقْتُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ حَتَّى طَلَعْتُ جَبَلًا كَذَا وَكَذَا فَإِذَا أَنَا بِهَوَازِنَ عَلَى بَكْرَةٍ آتَاهُمْ بِظُعْمِهِمْ وَتَعْمِهِمْ وَشَائِهِمْ، اجْتَمَعُوا إِلَى حُنَيْنٍ، فَتَبَسَّمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَقَالَ: تِلْكَ عَنِيمَةُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ عَدَا إِنَّ شَاءَ اللَّهُ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: مَنْ يَخْرُسُنَا اللَّيْلَةَ؟ قَالَ أَنَسُ بْنُ أَبِي مَرْثَدٍ الْغَنَوِيُّ: أَنَا يَارَسُولَ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: فَارْكَبْ، فَارْكَبْ فَرَسًا لَهُ وَجَاءَ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: اسْتَقْبِلْ هَذَا الشَّعْبَ حَتَّى تَكُونَ فِي أَعْلَاهُ، وَلَا تُعَرِّنْ مِنْ قِبَلِكَ اللَّيْلَةَ، فَلَمَّا أَصْبَحْنَا خَرَجَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِلَى مُصَلَاةٍ فَرَكَعَ رُكْعَتَيْنِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: هَلْ أَحْسَسْتُمْ فَارِسَكُمْ؟ قَالُوا: يَارَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا أَحْسَسْنَاهُ، فَتَوَبَّ بِالصَّلَاةِ، فَجَعَلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُصَلِّي وَهُوَ يَتَكَلَّمُ إِلَى الشَّعْبِ حَتَّى إِذَا قَضَى صَلَاتَهُ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ: أَبَشِّرُوا فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ فَارِسُكُمْ، فَجَعَلْنَا تَنْظُرُ إِلَى خِلَالِ الشَّجَرِ فِي الشَّعْبِ فَإِذَا هُوَ قَدْ جَاءَ حَتَّى وَقَفَ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَسَلَّمَ وَقَالَ: إِنِّي انْطَلَقْتُ حَتَّى كُنْتُ فِي أَعْلَى هَذَا الشَّعْبِ حَيْثُ أَمَرَنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَلَمَّا أَصْبَحْتُ اطْلَعْتُ الشَّعْبَيْنِ كِلَيْهِمَا، فَتَظَرْتُ فَلَمْ أَرِ أَحَدًا، فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: هَلْ تَرَلْتَ اللَّيْلَةَ؟ قَالَ: لَا، إِلَّا مُصَلِّيًّا أَوْ قَاضِيًّا حَاجَةً، فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: قَدْ أُوجِبْتَ فَلَا عَلَيْكَ أَنْ لَا تَعْمَلَ بَعْدَهَا

"I have been to such and such (distant) hills from where I spotted the well armed Banu Hawazin with their cattle." The Prophet

smiled and said: "By Allah's will, they will be your booty tomorrow." Then he asked: "Who will guard us tonight?" Anas b. Abi Marthad said: "I, O Messenger of Allah." He told him to get his horse ready. He got it ready and came up to the Prophet. He told him: "Go to the end of this valley and be on the watch. Let not an attack take place from that side this night." When it was morning the Prophet came out, went to the Prayer spot, offered two *rak`ah*, and enquired: "What's the news of your rider?" They said, "We have no news of him yet." The Prophet then offered the congregational Prayers during which he turned towards the hill several times. After the Prayers he said: "Good news. The rider is coming." We peered in the direction of the trees shielding the valley. The man shortly came out of them and stood before the Prophet. He said: "I went to the end of the valley you had directed me to, launching myself to the highest spot. Then, by morning I also went to the peaks of the two valleys but did not sight anyone." The Prophet asked him: "Did you come down of your horse last night?" The man said:

“No. Except to Pray or to attend to a call of nature.” The Prophet told him: “(Paradise) is written for you, even if you do not do anything good after this.”

Bukhari has related through Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet said:

تَعَسَّ عَبْدُ الدِّينَارِ وَعَبْدُ الدِّرْهِمِ وَعَبْدُ الْحُمَيْصَةِ إِنْ أُعْطِيَ رِضًى وَإِنْ لَمْ يُعْطَ سَخِطَ تَعَسَّ وَاشْتَكَسَ وَإِذَا شَبَّكَ فَلَا اشْتَقَشَ طَوْنِي لِعَبْدٍ آخِذٍ بِعَنَانٍ فَرَسِهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَشَعَّتْ رَأْسُهُ مُعْبِرَةً قَدَمَاهُ إِنْ كَانَ فِي الْحِرَاسَةِ كَانَ فِي الْحِرَاسَةِ وَإِنْ كَانَ فِي السَّاقَةِ كَانَ فِي السَّاقَةِ إِنْ اسْتَأْذَنَ لَمْ يُؤْذَنَ لَهُ وَإِنْ شَفَعَ لَمْ يُشَفَّعْ

“Destroyed is the worshipper of Dinar. Destroyed is the worshipper of Dirham. Destroyed is the worshipper of silk. If he is given he is satisfied and if he is not given he is angry. He is destroyed and is perished. If he has a thorn (in the leg), he shall find no one to remove it. (In contrast), glad tidings to the man who started out in the way of Allah on his horse. His hair is disheveled, his feet are dusty. If he is asked to stand guard, he stands guard. If he is asked to follow the army at the rear, he does it. If he seeks to be let in, he is not let in. If he recommends (someone) his recommendation is not accepted. (That is, he is insignificant in the eyes of the people because of his

appearance: Au.).”

Finally, we reproduce here, in full, the following story from Ibn `Asakir who has noted in the biography of `Abdullah ibn Mubarak that he dictated a piece of poetry to Ibn Abi Sakinah in Tarsus and told him to take them to Fudayl b. `Ayad (the ascetic). They said:

يا عابدَ الحرمين لَوْ أَبْصَرْتَنَا ... لَعَلِمْتَ أَنَّكَ فِي
الْعِبَادَةِ تَلْعَبُ
من كان يَخْضِبُ خَدَّهُ بدموعِهِ ... فَتُحَوِّرُنَا
بدمائِنَا تَتَخَضَّبُ
أو كان يُثْعِبُ خَيْلَهُ فِي باطِلٍ ... فَخَيُولُنَا يَوْمَ
الصَّبِيحَةِ تَتْعَبُ
رِيحُ الْعَبِيرِ لَكُمْ وَنَحْنُ عَبِيدُنَا ... وَهَجَّ السَّنَائِكُ
وَالْغَبَارُ الْأَطْيَبُ
وَلَقَدْ أَتَانَا مِنْ مَقَالٍ نَبِينَا ... قَوْلٌ صَحِيحٌ
صَادِقٌ لَا يُكَذَّبُ
لا يَسْتَوِي وَغُبَارُ خَيْلِ اللَّهِ فِي ... أَنْفِ امْرِئٍ
وَدُخَانُ نَارٍ تَلْهَبُ
هَذَا كِتَابُ اللَّهِ يَنْطِقُ بَيْنَنَا ... لَيْسَ الشَّهِيدُ
بِمَيِّتٍ لَا يُكْذَبُ

O thou given to devotions in the Holy Harams, had you seen us,

You'd have considered your devotions mere amusement.

He who dyes his cheeks with tears that roll down,

(May know that) with blood we dye our necks.

He who exhausts his horse in playful repast,

(May know that) our horses exhaust themselves on the day of spoils.

For you be the best of perfumes, but for us,

Sweeter the (aroma of the) dust rising from the earth.

To us have come the words of our Prophet,

(Sayings true, irrefutable and undeniable).

'Shall not come together the dust in the way of Allah, in

The nostrils of, a man and the leaping flares of Fire.

Here, this is the Book of Allah that speaks between us,

A word that cannot be denied (saying): The martyr is not dead.

Ibn Sakinah says he found Fudayl in the Haram and handed over the lines to him. When Fudayl read them, he wept. Then he asked him if he knew how to write. When he said yes, he dictated the following *hadīth* of Abu Hurayrah as found in Bukhari:

جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ
دُلَّنِي عَلَى عَمَلٍ يَغْدِلُ الْجِهَادَ قَالَ لَا أَجِدُهُ قَالَ
هَلْ تَسْتَطِيعُ إِذَا خَرَجَ الْمُجَاهِدُ أَنْ تَدْخُلَ مَسْجِدَكَ
فَتُشَوِّمَ وَلَا تُفْتَرُ وَتَصُومَ وَلَا تُفْطِرَ قَالَ وَمَنْ يَسْتَطِيعُ
ذَلِكَ قَالَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ إِنَّ فَرَسَ الْمُجَاهِدِ لَيَسْتَنْ فِي
طَوْلِهِ فَيُكْتَبُ لَهُ حَسَنَاتٌ

“A man came to the Prophet and said, ‘Messenger of Allah. Teach me something that can bring me the rewards of the fighters in the way of Allah.’ The Prophet asked him, ‘Do you have the strength to Pray continuously and fast unbrokenly?’ The man said, ‘Mes-

senger of Allah. I’m weaker than that.’ He told him, ‘By Him in whose hands is my life, had you the strength to do that, you would not attain the position of those who fight in the way of Allah. Have you not known that a mujahid in the way of Allah is rewarded for the movements of the horse that has been tied up?’”

The above reply demonstrates the sincerity of Fudayl. He did not offer an excuse, but rather sent glad tidings to Ibn Mubarak for participating in Jihad (Au.).

A third possible meaning of *rabitu* expressed by Baydawi is: Let there be no let up in your acts of obedience (Thanwi).

321. That is, fear Him at all times, in all circumstances. As said the Prophet in a tradition recorded by Ahmad and Tirmidhi, to Mu`adh ibn Jabal when he sent him to Yemen:

”اتَّقِ اللَّهَ حَيْثُ مَا كُنْتَ، وَاتَّبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ
تَمْحُهَا، وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ بِخُلُقٍ حَسَنٍ“

“Fear Allah wherever you might be and follow up a bad deed with a good one, it will obliterate the evil one. And conduct yourself with the people gracefully” (Ibn Kathir).

