

Surah 7
Al A`raf

(The Heights)

Makkan¹



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
 THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Alif. Lam. Mim. Saad.²

المص ﴿١﴾

[2] A Book sent down to you (O Muhammad), so let there be no constriction³ in your heart thereof so that you might warn thereby, and (so that it be) a reminder for the believers.

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ فَلَا يَكُنْ فِي صَدْرِكَ حَرَجٌ مِّنْهُ لِتُنذِرَ بِهِ وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢﴾

1. By consensus the *Surah* is Makkan. However, according to Qatadah, a single verse, no. 163, is Madinan. According to reports (*Sahih*, in Nasa'i: S. Ibrahim) the Prophet (*saws*) often recited this *Surah* in the first two *rak'ah* of the maghrib prayers (Shawkani).

2. Although the consensus is that no one knows the meaning of these letters (*huruf al muqatta'at*), Ibn `Abbas and Sa`id b. Jubayr are reported to have said that these particular letters mean: "Allah is Supreme" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). Qadi `Ayad strongly disagrees with this meaning, objecting that this kind of interpretation, without the backing of

a principle behind it, opens up the way for the Batiniyyun (the esoteric) to interpret the Qur`an whimsically (Razi).

3. "Constriction" is the literal translation of the textual word "*haraj*." However, Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah and Suddi have all said that it is "doubt" that is meant; to which Ibn Jarir adds that constriction comes from doubts. Zamakhshari, the grammarian, supports him.

Muslim has a *hadith* which says,

وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَمَرَنِي أَنْ أُحَرِّقَ قُرَيْشًا ، فَعُلْتُ : رَبِّي إِذَا يَتَلَعُوا رَأْسِي

"Allah ordered me to set the Quraysh on fire (with my preach-

[3] Follow (O people) what has been sent down to you from your Lord, and follow not patrons besides Him. (Yet) Little do you receive admonition.

اتَّبِعُوا مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا
مِن دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣﴾

[4] How many townships We have destroyed? Our chastisement descended on it at night or while they were in their afternoon rest.⁴

وَكَمْ مِّن قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا فَجَاءَهَا بَأْسُنَا
بَيَاتًا أَوْ هُمْ قَائِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾

[5] Then they had no other assertion when Our chastisement descended upon them except to admit,⁵ 'Surely, we were the wrong doers.'⁶

فَمَا كَانَ دَعْوَاهُمْ إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا إِلَّا أَنْ
قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٥﴾

ing). I said, 'My Lord, they will break my head into pieces'" (Qurtubi).

Alternatively *haraj* could be rendered as 'to be disheartened.' The verse then would mean that the Prophet (*saws*) is being told not to be disheartened in his mission, unmindful of the poor response (Thanwi, Shabir and others).

As Allah (*swt*) said elsewhere (15: 97):

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ [الحجر : ٩٧]

"We are aware that what they say constricts your heart."

At another place it said (16: 127):

وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ
فِي صَبْرٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ [النحل : ١٢٧]

"Be patient. And your patience is not but for Allah. And do not feel

sorry for them, nor feel constricted over what they plot."

If this meaning is accepted, then the whole verse could be rendered as: "Let there be no constriction in your heart that you have to warn them thereby" (Rashid Rida).

4. Az hari has said that siesta (*qay-lulah*) with the Arabs is the mid afternoon cessation of activities, not necessarily accompanied by sleep. The implication simply is that the chastisement visited them unawares (Razi, Qurtubi).

5. The translation of the textual "qalu" as "admit" has the backing of Zamakhshari and Ibn al Anbari (as in Razi).

6. A *hadith* (of Ibn Mas`ud in Ibn Humayd: Ibn Kathir) says that no community was destroyed before it had admitted its sins (Ibn Jarir).

[6] We shall most certainly question those to whom (a Message) was sent⁷ and We shall most certainly question the Messengers.⁸

فَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الَّذِينَ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٦﴾

That is, when they saw that the chastisement was about to overtake them, they admitted that they were sinners (Au.).

7. The statement that Allah will question the nations to which Messengers were sent, seems to contradict with another Qur'anic statement which says (28: 78):

وَلَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذُنُوبِهِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ [القصص : ٧٨]

“And the criminals will not be questioned about their crimes.”

The answer is, in the Hereafter people will pass through several stages and phases. In some places they would be questioned about their deeds, in others they would not (Qurtubi).

The first thing that a Muslim would be questioned about on the Day of Judgment is his five daily prayers. Says a *hadith*:

أول ما يحاسب العبد يوم القيامة الصلاة فإن صلحت صلح سائر عمله وإن فسدت فسد سائر عمله

“The first thing a man would be questioned on the Day of Judgment is concerning his Prayers. If on examination they are found acceptable, he will be success-

ful. If found wanting, rest of his deeds will fail him.”

Tirmidhi has recorded a Hasan *Sahih hadith* which says:

لا تزول قدما عبد يوم القيامة حتى يسئل عن عمره فيم أفناه وعن علمه فيم فعل وعن ماله من أين اكتسبه وفيم أنفقه وعن جسمه فيم أبلا

“A man’s feet ill not move until he is questioned about four things: his life, as to where he exhausted it; his knowledge, as to how he acted by it; his wealth, as to how he earned it and how he spent it; and, his youth, as to how he spent it.”

Hence another *Sahih hadith* in Jami` Saghir, which says:

الْكَيْسُ مَنْ دَانَ نَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ

“Intelligent is he who took account of his self and worked for what he is to face after death (Rashid Rida).

8. Hence the Prophet’s question at the end of the last sermon at `Arafat:

وأنتم مسؤولون عني فما أنتم قائلون قالوا نشهد أن قد بلغت وأديت ونصحت فقال بإصبعه السبابة يرفعها إلى السماء ويسلها إلى الأرض اللهم اشهد اللهم اشهد ثلاثا

[7] We shall most certainly recount to them with knowledge; for We were not absent.⁹ فَلَنَقُصِّرَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ بِعِلْمٍ وَمَا كُنَّا غَائِبِينَ ﴿٧﴾

[8] The weighing of that Day is true.¹⁰ Therefore, he whose scales (of good deeds) weighed down,¹¹ they it is who shall be successful.¹² وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٨﴾

“You will be asked on the Day of Judgment whether I delivered the message to you; how will you answer? The Companions answered: ‘We shall say that you delivered the message, that you did justice (to Allah’s trust entrusted to you), and that you strived in all seriousness and sincerity.’ Thereupon, the Prophet pointed to the heavens and then down to the earth and said: ‘O Allah, be witness. O Allah, be witness,’ three times” (Shafi’).

9. Imam Razi uses this opportunity to refute the notion that Allah is in a particular direction or place. He does not agree with those who interpret Allah’s “presence” as His “knowledge,” since, according to him, when the apparent meaning is possible, tafsir rules do not allow for a metaphorical meaning.

10. The rendering here follows one of the several possible interpretations. The word “*wazn*” of the text has also been interpreted as “judgment” by Mujahid. The whole verse

would then mean, “that day’s judgment is a true (event),” or, “that day’s weighing is a true (event).” `Ubayd b. `Umayr and Mujahid have reported that a man of massive size would be brought forth that Day, but he will weigh no more than the weight of the wing of a mosquito (Ibn Jarir). A *hadith* of similar meaning is in the *Sahihbayn* (Ibn Kathir: H. bin Ibrahim).

A *hadith* about `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (whose thin legs were exposed when he climbed a tree) reports the Prophet as having said:

مَا تَعْجَبُونَ، فَوَ الَّذِي تَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ هُوَ أَثْقَلُ فِي الْمِيزَانِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ أُحُدٍ

“Are you surprised (at his thin legs)? By Him in whose Hands is my soul, they will weigh in the Scales heavier than Mount Uhud” (Ibn Kathir).

The *hadith* is in Ahmad (H. bin Ibrahim).

Ibn Kathir also writes that it is possible that sometimes deeds would be weighed and at others, those men

who committed those deeds. And, adds Shafi`, sometimes words would be weighed while at others the records themselves.

Mawdudi comments: “This means that when the Balance is fixed on the Day of Judgment, ‘truth’ and weight will be identical. The more truth one has to one’s credit, the more the weight in one’s scale; and vice versa. One will be judged solely on the basis of this weight. In other words, no consideration other than truth will enter into calculation. A life of falsehood, however long it lasted, and however full of worldly achievements, will carry no weight at all. Weighed in the Balance, the devotees of falsehood will discover that their life long deeds do not weigh so much as a bird’s feather.”

11. Although deeds are insubstantial things, they would be given substantial forms in order to be weighed. That would happen in the same manner as the chapters *al Baqarah* and *Aal`Imran*, which would appear in the form of birds, interceding on behalf of those who recited them, or good deeds appearing in the form of a beautiful person, etc. (Ibn Kathir).

12. A *hadith* preserved in Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibban and Hakim (who declared it *Sahih*), says:

يصاح برجل من امتي على رؤوس الخلائق يوم القيامة
فينشر له تسع و تسعون سجلاكل سجل مد البصر
ثم يقال له أتتكر من هذا شيئا فيقول : لا يا رب
فيقول ألك عذر أو حسنة فيهاب الرجل فيقول :
لا يا رب فيقول بلى : إن لك عندنا حسنات و أنه
لا ظلم عليك فيخرج له بطاقة فيها اشهد أن لا إله
إلا الله و أن محمدا عبده و رسوله فيقول : يا رب
ما هذه البطاقة مع هذه السجلات فيقول : إنك لا
تظلم قال فيوضع السجلات في كفه و البطاقة في
كفه فطاشت السجلات و ثقلت البطاقة - هذا
حديث صحيح الإسناد و لم يخرجاه - المستدرک
(١ / ٧١٠) -

“A man from my *Ummah* will be brought up before the creations on the Day of Judgment and his 99 volumes (of evil deeds), each of length as far as the sight goes, would be laid before him. He will be asked, ‘Can you deny any of these? Did the recorders do you any wrong?’ He will reply, ‘No, my Lord.’ He will be asked, ‘Do you have a good excuse or a good deed?’ The man, much depressed will reply, ‘No my Lord.’ Allah will say, ‘Rather, We have for you good things, and you shall not be wronged.’ Then a little card would be brought out which would have the words written on it: ‘I bear witness that there is no deity save Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger.’ The man

[9] As for he whose scales are light, they it is who lost their souls for what wrongful treatment they accorded Our signs.¹³

وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٩﴾

will cry out, ‘My Lord, of what use this little card against the 99 volumes?’ He will be told, ‘You shall not be wronged.’ The card will be placed in one pan and the 99 books in the other, and lo, the pan would prove heavier than those volumes” (Shawkani).

It is possible, adds Alusi, that the testimony that will outweigh the 99 registers would be the last thing the man had said before he was overtaken by death.

In fact, the chapter heading under which Tirmidhi mentions this *hadith* also implies this. The title there is: “Chapter on: ‘Whoever died bearing the testimony that there is no deity worthy of worship save Allah.’” In other words, the man of the *hadith* was an unbeliever who embraced Islam just before his death, and, therefore, did not have any other good deed in his account save the testimony, but the testimony over weighed his 99 volumes of evil deeds (Rashid Rida).

Nonetheless, weakness in the argument is self-evident (Au.).

13. Rashid Rida writes: This part of the sentence implies that – not only the deeds of the believers – but the deeds of the unbelievers would also be weighed. This is supported by other verses; e.g. (23: 103 105):

وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فِي جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ (١٠٣) تَلْفَحُ وُجُوهُهُمُ النَّارَ وَهُمْ فِيهَا كَالِحُونَ (١٠٤) [المؤمنون : ١٠٣ ، ١٠٤]

“Then, those whose scales go down, they it is who incurred a loss unto themselves; abiding in Jahannum. Fire will eat their faces and they shall (abide) therein with disfigured faces.

Ibn Taymiyyah seems to have committed an error, continues Rashid Rida, in saying that there will be no weighing of deeds of the unbelievers. They will be ushered into Hell straightaway. After all, are there not kinds and kinds of unbelievers? Were Abu Jahal and Abu Talib unbelievers of the same class? In every age there are unbelievers who are quite close to Islamic way of life against those who are the most corrupt. Can they both be consigned to the same compartment in Hell? Allah has said:

[10] Surely, We established you in the earth¹⁴ and placed therein for you your livelihood. Little it is that you give thanks.

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعَايِشَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] Verily, We created you,¹⁵ then gave you the form (and shape)¹⁶ and ordered the angels, 'Prostrate yourselves before Adam.'¹⁷ They prostrated themselves, save Iblis.¹⁸ He was not of those who prostrated themselves.¹⁹

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُن مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿١١﴾

“Verily, Allah shall not do injustice by a mustard seed.” True, a *hadith* says that they are rewarded for their deeds in this world itself. But, it does not mean that their deeds will not be weighed at all. Rather, it is quite possible that the exact level in Paradise or Hell should be determined by the weight of the deeds of the believers and the unbelievers alike.

Probably Rashid Rida means that some unbelievers' exact level in Jahannum would be determined from the weight of their deeds. But, there would be many who will enter Hell fire before the weighing, is a fact supported by several Qur'anic verses. Perhaps he also believed that there are some among the unbelievers who have a little amount of faith in their hearts, and who, as a result of it, perform some good deeds (Au.).

14. That is, We gave you various mental faculties and physical powers to build, control and dispose the ma-

terial world around you in the manner it suits you (Au.).

15. The words that follow lend the sense that man was “created” at one go and that he did not emerge out of an evolutionary process, even if changes in individuals or species by mutation are not ruled out. We shall have more to write on this topic later, Allah willing. Yet, we might point out here that to many scientists appearance of man in his present form and shape is quite a mystery. The theory of evolution is far from satisfactory (Au.).

16. According to Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah, Dahhak and Rabi` b. Anas, the act of creation refers to the creation of Adam and that of shaping and forming to his progeny in the wombs of their mothers (Ibn Jarir, Shawkani).

17. The prostration was that of honor and not of worship.

[12] He asked, 'What prevented you that you should not prostrate yourself when I ordered you?' He answered, 'I am better than he. You created me of fire, and him You created of clay.'²⁰

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾

18. Iblis is the other name of *Shaytan*. See *Surah al Baqarah*, note 36 for some more details.

19. The text can be understood in two ways. First, Iblis was one of those who did not prostrate themselves, that is, there were other creations too who did not prostrate themselves, perhaps because they were not required to. Second, (as Alusi has said) Iblis was never of those who prostrated themselves, neither on that occasion nor at any other time (Au.).

Ibn al `Arabiyy has said that not all angels prostrated themselves. Those in the higher level were not addressed by the command to prostrate and hence they were "of those who did not prostrate themselves." Imam Razi is also of the opinion that it is only the angels of the earth who prostrated themselves before Adam (Rashid Rida).

20. A *hadith* in Muslim says:

خُلِقَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ نُورٍ وَخُلِقَ الْجَانُّ مِنْ مَارِجٍ مِنْ نَّارٍ وَخُلِقَ آدَمُ جَمًّا وَصِيفَ لَكُمْ

"Angels were created from Light (*Nur*), the Jinn from the flame of fire (*marij*), and Adam from what has been described to you" (Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Sirin and Hasan have said that *Shaytan* was the first to employ analogy (to a false end). Hasan has added that the worship of the Sun and the Moon has nothing but false analogy behind it (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani). The above does not rule out analogy as a useful scientific or Fiqh tool. In science analogy is widely employed to test a hypothesis. In Fiqh matters, analogy is used to arrive at a workable solution, rather than to reject a command as Iblis did (Au.).

21. The textual word *saghir* implies someone who accepts his low nature or position (Alusi).

Alusi mentions the following *ahadith*: Bayhaqi has recorded a *hadith* narrated by `Umar ibn al Khattab. The Prophet said:

من تواضع لله في الدنيا رفعه الله يوم القيامة

[13] He ordered, 'Go down out of this (place). It is not for you to wax proud here. Verily, you are of the belittled ones.'²¹

قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] He requested, 'Allow me respite until (the day) they are resurrected.'

قَالَ فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] He relented, 'You are of those granted respite.'²²

قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

“Whoever humbled himself for Allah, Allah will raise him in esteem.”

But this seems to be a statement of Salman (al-Farsi) – Au.

Tirmidhi has recorded the Prophet (*saws*) as having said:

يُحْشَرُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَمْثَالَ الدَّرِّ فِي صُورَةِ الرِّجَالِ ، يَغْشَاهُمُ الدَّلُّ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ ، يُسَاقُونَ إِلَى سِجْنٍ مِنْ جَهَنَّمَ يُسَمَّى : بَوْلَسَ تَعْلُوهُمْ نَارُ الْأَثْيَارِ ، وَيُسْقَوْنَ مِنْ عَصَاةِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ ، طِينَةَ الْحَبَالِ ،

“People who acted arrogantly (during this life) would be resurrected in the size of ants, although in human form; humiliation covering them from all sides. They will be dragged into a prison inside Jahannum called ‘Bulus.’ Fire of the fires will be rising over them, and they will be fed with the wastes of the people of the Fire called *teenatu al-khabaal*.”

22. Mujahid has said that although Iblis asked for respite until the Day of Judgment, he was granted the respite but not until the Day of Judgment, rather until an appointed time as in verse (15: 38) which said:

إِلَى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ [الحجر : ٣٨]

“(Respite) Until the Day of the appointed time” (Ibn Jarir, Razi).

The words, ‘You are of those given respite’ suggest that there are others who are given respite. Who are they? Ibn Jarir answers that those who will not die when the Trumpet is blown could be the ones alluded to.

Thanwi adds: That the supplication of Iblis was accepted proves that the positive response to a supplication is not the sign of Allah’s Pleasure as the ignorant ones assume.

[16] He said, 'Now that You have misguided me,²³ I shall most certainly sit in ambush for them all along Your Straight Path.²⁴

قَالَ فِيمَا أُغْوَيْتَنِي لِأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] Then I shall come to them from their front, their rear, their right and their left,²⁵ and You will not find many of them grateful (to You).²⁶

ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

23. The interpretation that has come from Ibn `Abbas is that it was Allah who misguided him (Ibn Jarir). (Perhaps meaning, He allowed Iblis to take the path of error: Au.)

‘Will you embrace Islam and abandon your ancestral religion?’ The man disobeyed him and embraced Islam. Then he sat by the path of hijrah saying, ‘Will you emigrate abandoning your land and your sky?’ The man opposed him and emigrated. Then he sat by the path of jihad in person and with the wealth and said, ‘Will you fight to be killed, so that your wife marries another man and your wealth distributed?’ The man did not give him an ear and participated in jihad. The Prophet added, “Whoever achieved this of them and died, or was killed, will have a right on Allah to admit him into Paradise” (Zamakhshari). The *hadith* here is Ibn Kathir’s version.

Another interpretation is that Iblis attributed his own error to Allah since it is Allah who in the first place created “error” (Alusi).

24. A *hadith* (in Ahmad narrated by Sabrah ibn al Fakih: Ibn Kathir) says he heard the Prophet say:

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ قَعَدَ لِإِنِّ آدَمَ بِأَطْرَقِهِ فَعَعَدَ لَهُ بِطَرِيقِ الْإِسْلَامِ فَقَالَ لَهُ أَتَسْلِمُ وَتَذُرُ دِينَكَ وَدِينَ آبَائِكَ وَأَبَاءِ أَيْبِكَ قَالَ فَعَصَاهُ فَأَسْلَمَ ثُمَّ قَعَدَ لَهُ بِطَرِيقِ الْهَيْجَرَةِ فَقَالَ أَتُهَاجِرُ وَتَذُرُ أَرْضَكَ وَسَمَاءَكَ وَإِيمَانًا مِثْلَ الْمُهَاجِرِ كَمِثْلِ الْفَرَسِ فِي الطَّوْلِ قَالَ فَعَصَاهُ فَهَاجَرَ قَالَ ثُمَّ قَعَدَ لَهُ بِطَرِيقِ الْجِهَادِ فَقَالَ لَهُ هُوَ جِهْدُ النَّفْسِ وَالْمَالِ فَتَقَاتِلْ فَتُقْتَلَ فَتَشْكُخِ الْمَرْأَةَ وَيُقْسِمَ الْمَالُ قَالَ فَعَصَاهُ فَجَاهَدَ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَمَنْ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ مِنْهُمْ فَمَاتَ كَانَ حَقًّا عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يُدْخِلَهُ الْجَنَّةَ أَوْ يُقْتَلَ

“*Shaytan* sat in the path of Adam’s son at various points. He sat by the path of Islam and said,

25. Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah and others have said that the word “front” alludes to this world, the “rear” to the Hereafter, the “right” to good deeds and the “left” to evil deeds. Yet, he

[18] Said He, 'Go forth from here, despised and driven away (from mercy). Whosoever followed you, I shall most certainly fill Jahan-num with you all.²⁷

قَالَ اخْرُجْ مِنْهَا مَذْذُورًا مَّدْحُورًا لِمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] As for you O Adam, dwell you and your spouse in Paradise, and eat thereof whatever you wish, but approach not this tree, lest you become of the wrong doers.'

وَيَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

will not be able to come from above to veil a man from Allah's mercy (Ibn Jarir).

Most of the commentators however have said that the meaning simply is that Iblis promised that he would attack man from all sides. Thanwi has added that the verse neither denies his coming from above nor confirms it.

But see *hadith* under note 31 of this chapter which confirms the need for protection from above (Au.).

26. Abu Muslim has said that when Satan discovered Adam possessed of so many physical senses and powers pulling him down to the earth against a single power of intellect trying to raise him up toward the spiritual world, he made a fair guess that

his kind would succumb to temptations (Razi).

The following *ayah* confirms the above note (34: 20):

وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِبْلِيسُ ظَنَّهُ فَاتَّبَعُوهُ إِلَّا فَرِيقًا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ [سبأ : ٢٠]

"Iblis' conjecture came true so that most followed him, except for a group of believers" (Au.).

27. He has no power however over the people. All he can do is to provoke them. The decision to accept his bidding or not, lies with the people themselves. A verse says (15: 42):

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ [الحجر : ٤٢]

"Verily you have no power over My slaves, except for the misguided ones who follow you" (Rashid Rida).

[20] Thereupon Satan whispered unto the two, so that he might lay bare to them what was kept hidden from them of their shameful parts.²⁸ He told them, 'Your Lord did not forbid you that tree except that the two of you should become angels or attain eternity.'

فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْءَاتِهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَتَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] And he swore to the two, 'I am of the sincere counselors to you.'²⁹

وَقَامَسَهُمَا إِلَىٰ لَكُمَْا لِمَنْ النَّاصِحِينَ ﴿٢١﴾

[22] Thus he brought them down by deceit.³⁰ Then, when the two tasted the tree, their shameful parts became apparent to them,³¹ and they began to patch upon themselves the leaves of Paradise.³² Their Lord called out to them, 'Did I not prohibit you from that tree, and say to you "Verily, Shaytan is your avowed enemy?"'

فَدَلَّاهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءَاتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلْ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

28. This shows that revealing one's private parts is one of the most serious acts (Zamakhshari).

"[The abomination of the act] .. is an integral part of human nature" (Mawdudi).

29. Accordingly, some scholars have said that if someone tried to deceive us "in the name of God," we might be deceived at his hands (Ibn Jarir). That is to say that God is the weakness of the humans who are prone to be deceived in His name (Au.).

Zamakhshari adds: It is said that when `Abdullah ibn `Umar noticed piety in one of his slaves, he would

free him. He was warned, 'Your slaves feign piety and good behavior only to deceive you.' He replied, 'If someone deceives in the name of Allah, we are ready to be deceived.'

30. The textual words "*dalla*" implies letting down a thing in slow steps, gradually. It implies that Iblis brought them to the point of his own obedience in a gradual manner, gaining their hearing little by little, and convincing them in steps (Rashid Rida).

31. Wahab b. Munabbih has said that earlier to the eating of the forbidden tree the two had a cover of light on their private parts and so neither of

them could see the other's. When they ate of the tree, their private parts became visible to them (Ibn Jarir). The chain of narrators of this report is trustworthy (Ibn Kathir).

Majid remarks: "This completely negatives the Biblical version: 'And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed' (Gi., 2: 25)."

According to a report preserved by Abu Da'ud, Nasa'i, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibban and Hakim, who declared it *Sahih*, the Prophet never missed to say these prayer words any morning or evening:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِي دِينِي وَدُنْيَايَ
وَأَهْلِي وَمَالِي , اللَّهُمَّ اسْتُرْ عَوْرَاتِي وَأَمِنْ رَوْعَاتِي ,
اللَّهُمَّ احْفَظْنِي مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِي وَعَنْ يَمِينِي
وَعَنْ شِمَالِي وَمِنْ قَدَمَيْ , وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أُغْتَالَ مِنْ
تَحْتِي

"O Lord, I seek, Your pardon, and protection in my religion, my life, my household and in my property. O Lord, cover my shameful parts and give peace to my apprehensions. O Lord, protect me from my front, my rear, my right, my left and from above me. I seek Your protection that

I should be taken away unaware from underneath."

Waki` explained that by "from underneath" he meant caving in of the earth (Ibn Kathir).

Mawdudi comments: "The very first stratagem adopted by Satan in his bid to lead man astray from the Right Path consisted in undermining man's sense of modesty, to direct him towards lewdness and make him sexually deviant. In other words, the sexual instincts of man were taken by Satan as the most vulnerable aspect of human nature. Accordingly, he sought to weaken man's natural instincts of modesty and bashfulness. This devilish stratagem is still followed by the disciples of Satan in our time. For them, progress is inconceivable without exposing woman to the gaze of all."

32. `A'isha, the Prophet's wife, said:

ما رأيت منه ولا رأى مني

"Neither I saw of him nor he saw of me" (Zamakhshari).

The report is not a *hadith*, and, further, it is weak (Mursal: Munawi). (Au.)

[23] The two cried out, 'Our Lord! We have wronged our souls. If You do not forgive us and show us mercy, most certainly we shall be of the losers.'³³

قَالَ رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا
وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] He ordered, 'Get down some of you enemies unto others. You shall have in the earth an abode and a livelihood unto an (appointed) time.'³⁴

قَالَ اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] He said, 'Therein you shall live, therein you shall die, and therefrom you shall be brought forth (for Reckoning).'

قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ وَمِنْهَا
تُخْرَجُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

33. The supplication was in the spirit of the awliya' who think big of their minor sins and treat major good deeds as worth nothing (Zamakhshari).

It is reported of some of the earliest scholars that it was Hawwa' who recommended to Adam the eating of the tree. There is no *hadith* to this effect. But, as Rashid Rida points out, there is a *hadith Sahih* which says: "If not for Hawwa' a woman would never deceive her husband."

That said, the above *hadith* has not been adequately explained by the scholars (Au.).

34. The order to leave Paradise and dwell on the earth was not by way of punishment, since Adam and Eve were already pardoned, but a consequence of the act of disobedience. It also became the means to achieve the purpose of man's creation. See also note 100 of *Surah al Baqarah* (Au.).

35. Conjectures about what exact spot of the earth it was where Adam descended, with none being closer to truth than another have been wide and varied. Moreover, there is no religious profit in knowing such details (Ibn Kathir).

[26] Children of Adam! We have bestowed on you a raiment³⁶ that covers your shame³⁷ and is a (source of) adornment.³⁸ Nonetheless, the garment of piety that is better.³⁹ This is one (remove one) of the signs of Allah, haply they will take it to heart.

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُؤَارِي
سَوْءَاتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَى ذَلِكِ
خَيْرٌ ذَلِكِ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

36. The allusion is to the sending down of rains, bringing forth of plants, and to man's ability to weave material for his clothing (Au.).

37. The word in the text is "saw`ah" which is for shameful parts. What does it exactly cover? Qurtubi explains that here it has been used in the sense of `awrah, which, according to Imam Abu Hanifah is from the navel to the knees, both included. Some others have not included the navel and the knees. As for a woman, her `awrah is the whole of her body except her face and hands. But Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal has said that whole of the woman is `awrah, including her nails.

Although a detailed discussion will in sha Allah follow in *Surah Nur* and *al Ahzab*, it might be pointed out at this point that Imam Abu Hanifah's opinion is not always the opinion of the Hanafiyyah. When the later day mujtahids (*muta'akhkhirin*) differ with Imam Abu Hanifah, it is their opinion that prevails as the Hanafiyy

position. In this particular case, the Hanafiyy opinion is no different from that of the Hanabilah and the rest of the great majority (Au.).

38. The textual word rish is, literally, "plumage" a metaphorical expression derived from the beauty of birds' plumage (Asad). To the Arabs it has several connotations such as wealth, property, as well as those things that are spread, such as beds, carpets etc. Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Suddi and others have said that at this point it implies wealth. But Ibn Zayd has said that it alludes to things of adornment (Ibn Jarir).

39. Ibn `Abbas has interpreted the "libas of *taqwa*" as righteous deeds. And Hasan al Busri has reported that he saw `Uthman on the pulpit saying, "People! Fear Allah in your secret. I have heard the Prophet say,

والذي نفس محمد بيده، ما عمل أحدٌ قط سرًّا إلا
ألْبَسَهُ اللهُ رِداءً علانيَّةً، إن خيراً فخيرٌ، وإن شراً فشرٌّ

'By Him in whose hands is my life, no one ever did a thing se-

[27] Children of Adam! Let not Shaytan seduce you in the manner he got your parents leave Paradise, stripping them of their garments so as to reveal to them their shame.⁴⁰ Surely he sees you, he and his tribe, from where you see them not.⁴¹ Verily We have made the Satans patrons of those who do not believe.⁴²

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ
أَبَوَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ يَنْزِعُ عَنْهُمَا لِبَاسَهُمَا
لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوْءَاتِهِمَا إِنَّهُ يَرَاكُمْ هُوَ وَقَبِيلُهُ
مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْتَهُمْ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ
أَوْلِيَاءَ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

cretly but Allah dressed him up in that dress visible to everyone: good (dress), if good, and evil if evil.” Then he quoted this verse (Ibn Jarir, Rashid Rida).

40. Although, Rashid Rida writes, ‘A’isha has said that she and the Prophet “never saw of each other,” legally speaking, it is permissible for a husband and wife to see other’s private parts, even if not the best thing to do.

41. Basing their opinion on this verse, some people have denied that the Shayatin and Jinn can be seen by the humans. (In fact, Imam Shafe`i has ruled that he would not allow the testimony in the courts of the man who claimed that he could see the Jinn. But, it seems what he meant is that he would reject the testimony of someone who claimed that he saw the Jinn in the form in which they have been created: Alusi, Rashid Rida). But, if they appear in another form and state, they could

be seen. For instance, Abu Hurayrah saw *Shaytan* on the occasion he was asked to guard over the zakah goods. (Ibn Mas`ud saw him twice: Alusi). We also have the *Sahih* report which says that when Satan tried to distract the Prophet in his Prayer, he said he could have caught Satan and tied him to the mosque column for the children of Madinah to play with, but did not do it remembering Sulayman’s supplication (Qurtubi, Rashid Rida, Alusi). That is, it confirms that humans can see the Jinn – *Shaytan* being one of them (Au.).

Rashid Rida adds that while it is true that the common people are often fooled by those who claim they control the Jinn or have contacts with them, or can cure those who have been overpowered by them, and although most are liars and are out to monetarily exploit the ignorant masses, yet, it is not right to adopt the other extreme attitude to say that the Jinn cannot be seen at all, in any form, or contacted. True, they stay

away from the humans, being, as Ibn `Abbas has said, “more fearful of the humans than the humans are of them” but there is some truth in the claim of countless people who have reported encounters. Not everyone has been lying. Indeed, we have no less a figure than Ibn Taymiyyah himself reporting his contacts.

“Why should I not at this point,” writes Rashid Rida, (who was better known in his times as a modernist and rationalist), “narrate my personal experience? Once it so happened that in our town Qalmun (formerly) a part of Syria, a fisherman threw his net into the sea. Following that, he instantly fainted. He reported that a whole group of Jinns had attacked him on the accusation that he had kidnapped one of their women. The man also said that he saw me at his subconscious level in the posture I used to adopt in my solitary retreats of devotion in an inner chamber specially marked for that. I had a little black cane over which I used to lean, although no other man had ever seen it in my place ... he saw that I was trying to drive away the Jinn with it. His friends reported the matter to me and requested me to visit him and pray for him. Accordingly, I repaired to him. He was kind of unconscious, unaware of anything

around him. But he began to say, ‘Sheikh Rashid has arrived.’ When I saw him in that state, I turned my attention to Allah in all sincerity and humbleness. Then I placed my hand on his head and uttered:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ
السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

‘In the name of Allah, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful: Allah will suffice you against them. Verily, He is the Hearer, the Knower.’ The man immediately opened his eyes and stood up as if he had been through nothing. Then, after quite some time, the same ailment came back to him and he was treated in the same manner. However, personally I never saw any Jinn that he said I was chasing away from him. Although, I would not say with certainty that it were the Jinn alone that he saw. After all, the incident can be explained in a variety of ways. Nevertheless, the scholars of my town recounted several stories to relate of my grandfather.”

Human encounters with the Jinn are so numerous, and their descending upon those of weak faith is so common that any denial would be unreasonable. People of integrity have

[28] Whenever they commit an indecency they claim, 'Verily, we found our forefathers upon this. And (in fact), Allah has ordered us to do it.'⁴³ Say, 'Allah does not order any indecency.' Do you fasten such things upon Allah as which you have no knowledge of?'

وَإِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهَا
آبَاءَنَا وَاللَّهُ أَمَرَنَا بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَأْمُرُ
بِالْفَحِشَاءِ أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

﴿٢٨﴾

heard young girls speaking out in the voice of a male, or vice versa, when under the spell of a Jinn and regaining their selves when they left them (Au.).

42. When these people acted dishonestly, to take the Satans as their friends, as a verse of the following passage says: "They took the Satans as their patrons apart from Allah," (verse 30) then, Allah too did not intervene in their choice. He let them have patrons as they chose (Shabbir).

43. Ibn Jarir writes: Certain Arab tribes (but not the Quraysh) circumambulated the *Ka`bah* naked. When asked why they did that, they replied that thus they had found their forefathers doing, and that they had been ordered by Allah. Some women too circumambulated naked placing a patch of cloth on their shameful parts and singing out:

Today some or all of it is exposed
But I do not make lawful what goes exposed.

Ibn Kathir writes: The rule prevalent among the pre Islamic Arabs was that they would not circumambulate the *Ka`bah* in the clothes they were wearing except the Quraysh, who called themselves "*Hummas*" and could circumambulate in their ordinary clothes. Others had to either put on a new pair of clothes, or borrow a used one from one of the Quraysh. But, if someone could not do either, then he or she circumambulated naked. However, in that event women circumambulated at night. Then, after the rituals they threw away the clothes and no one touched them (Ibn Kathir). Sayyid points out that there is a *hadith* to this effect in Muslim.

44. Mujahid and Suddi have said that the textual word "qist" alludes to "justice" (Ibn Jarir). But the opinion of Ibn `Abbas is that it alludes to the formula of faith, i.e., "There is no deity save Allah." He recited the verse (3: 18):

[29] Say, 'My Lord has ordered me justice.'⁴⁴ And set your faces (toward Him)⁴⁵ at every (time of) prostration; and call upon Him making the religion sincerely His;⁴⁶ even as He began you, you shall return.⁴⁷

قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَقِيمُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ
عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ
كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ تَعُودُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] A group He guided, but a group deserved for themselves error. (Because) They took Satans as their patrons apart from Allah, and assume that they are rightly guided.

فَرِيقًا هَدَىٰ وَفَرِيقًا حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الضَّلَالَةُ
إِنَّهُمْ اتَّخَذُوا الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهم مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ
قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ [آل عمران : ١٨]

"Allah is witness that there is no god save He, and (so are) the angels and the men of learning upholding justice" (Razi).

Mujahid, Suddi and most of the commentators have however said that the allusion is to justice and firm adherence to Islam (Alusi).

45. The words in parenthesis are based on Ibn Jarir's understanding who quotes Rabi' of the same opinion (Au.).

The meaning however is, be attentive within your Prayers, and do not let yourselves be distracted (Alusi). In the words of Asad: "The term wajh (lit. "face") occurring here is often used, in the abstract sense, to denote a person's entire being or entire attention as, for instance, in the phrase (3: 20) *aslamtu wajhiya*

li'llahi, (meaning: "I have surrendered my whole being unto God").

The above explains Asad's rendering of the phrase above as: "put your whole being into every act of worship."

46. Thanwi writes: In just three little phrases the whole of the *Shari`ah* has been outlined: The rights of others in "justice," the acts of devotion and worship in "set your faces," and, purity of faith and beliefs in "make the religion sincerely His."

47. The opinion of Ibn `Abbas is: As you were created as believers and unbelievers, so will you be raised: believers and unbelievers (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). The statement is in Ibn Abi Hatim (Shawkani).

Ibn `Abbas also reports the Prophet (*saws*) as having said:

يُحْشَرُ النَّاسُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَرَاةً غُرْلًا وَأَوَّلَ الْخَلَائِقِ
يُكْسَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

“Mankind will be resurrected naked, uncircumcised. The first of the creations to be dressed would be Ibrahim.” Then he recited this verse (Ibn Jarir). The *hadith* is in the *Sahibayn* (Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Kathir quotes: Muhammad b. Ka`b al Qurazi is reported to have said in explanation of this verse that whosoever Allah created on wretchedness (*shaqawah*) will end up what he was created to be even if he did the deeds of the blessed ones (ahl al sa`adah). And whomsoever Allah created as the blessed one will end up as that, even if he committed the deeds of the wretched ones. A good example is that of Fir`awn's court magicians who acted wretchedly all their lives but ended up as the blessed ones. A report attributes this opinion to Ibn `Abbas also; and can be substantiated with a *hadith* in Bukhari which says:

قَوْلَهُ إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ أَوْ الرَّجُلَ يَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ حَتَّىٰ مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا غَيْرُ بَاعٍ أَوْ ذِرَاعٍ فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ فَيَدْخُلُهَا وَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّىٰ مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا غَيْرُ ذِرَاعٍ أَوْ ذِرَاعَيْنِ فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ فَيَدْخُلُهَا

“By Him besides whom there is no God, one of you might do the deeds of the people of the Fire until there does not remain

between him and the Fire but the distance of a span of hand. But then the decree overtakes him and he begins to do the deeds of the people of Paradise and he enters therein. And, one of you might do the deeds of the people of Paradise until there remains no more than a distance of a span of hand between him and the Paradise when the decree overtakes him and he begins to do the deeds of the people of the Fire and he enters into in.”

(For a proper understanding of the above *hadith* the words “in what appears to be” must be added in reference to the deeds committed , as in the following report: Au.).

Baghawi has a *hadith* narrated by Sahl b. Sa`d. It says:

إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَعْمَلُ فِيمَا يَرَى النَّاسُ عَمَلَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ وَيَعْمَلُ فِيمَا يَرَى النَّاسُ عَمَلَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ وَهُوَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ وَإِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِخَوَاتِيمِهَا

“A man might do in what appears to be the deeds of the people of Paradise, although he could be of the people of the Fire. And, another man might do in what appears to the people the deeds of the people of Fire, although he could be of the people of Paradise. Verily, deeds go by how things end.”

[31] Children of Adam! Take your adornment at every Prayer;⁴⁸ and eat and drink but do not commit excesses.⁴⁹ Surely, He does not approve of those who commit excesses.

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ
وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

The above *hadith* is in Bukhari also (Au.).

However, Ibn Kathir adds, if this interpretation is true then it needs to reconcile with Allah's words (30: 30):

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ
عَلَيْهَا [الروم : ٣٠]

"Then set your face to the religion, upright, the nature of Allah upon which He created the people."

The interpretation also runs in contradiction with the *hadith* in the *Sahihhayn* which says:

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ أَوْ
يُنَصِّرَانِهِ أَوْ يُمَجِّسَانِهِ

"Every new born is given birth on nature. Then, it is his parents who Judaize him or Christianize him, or Zoroastrize him."

Another *hadith* in Muslim says:

وَإِنِّي خَلَقْتُ عِبَادِي حُنَفَاءَ كُلَّهُمْ فَأَتَتْهُمْ الشَّيَاطِينُ
فَأَجْتَالَتْهُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِمْ

"I created My slaves on monotheism (*bunafa*). But Satan came to them and deviated them from their religion."

After quoting these texts, Ibn Kathir attempts a reconciliation by saying that the original creation is indeed on Tawhid, as the Qur'anic verse and the *ahadith* quoted say, but perhaps the one about Divine Decree is talking about the second nature, or second phase of creation.

None the less, the weakness in Ibn Kathir's reconciliation effort is apparent. Hence his qualification: "If this interpretation is true."

Sayyid Qutb has another point, viz., as the affair began, so it will end. They began as two groups: Adam and his wife and Satan and his tribe. Those who will (remove will) follow the Prophets will return to Paradise while those who follow the Satans will return to Hellfire: "Even as He began you, you shall return."

48. Qurtubi writes that in pre Islamic days the Arabs circumambulated the *Ka'bah* naked, would not eat anything fatty, and consumed as little as possible. Allah revealed this verse to remove the taboos.

Sayyid quotes from Kalbi that when the Muslims circumambulated the *Ka`bah* with their clothes on, the pagans objected to the act and so Allah (*swt*) revealed this verse. Then he remarks: “This is what every pagandom, including the modern Western one, does to its people: bring them down to the level of animals and strip them of their clothes all in the name of culture and civilization.”

Muslim scholars on their part have, writes Ibn Kathir, pointed out, with this verse as the clue and in the light of the traditions of the Prophet on this subject, that one ought to put on nice clothes, use miswak and some perfume before every Prayer, but especially for the Friday and `Eid Prayers. Accordingly, it is reported of Tamim al Dari that he had purchased a mantle costing a 1000 coins that he would put on for every Prayer. And the best of colors in clothes is white as said in *Sahih ahadith* such as:

عليكم بثياب البياض فالبسوها فإنها أطهر وأطيب
وكفنوا فيها موتاكم

“Use white clothes, for they are cleanest and neatest, and wrap your dead too therewith.”

49. “*Israaf*” of the text could mean “wastage,” “over indulgence,” or “excesses.” The *Salaf* have said that Allah has summarized the advice for

good health in three (textual) words: “Eat and drink but do not commit excesses.” The Prophet has said in a Hasan or Hasan *Sahih* report of Tirmidhi:

مَا مَلَأَ آدَمِيٌّ وَعَاءَ شَرًّا مِنْ بَطْنٍ، حَسْبُ ابْنِ آدَمَ
أَكْلَاتٍ يُقِمِّنُ صَلْبَهُ، فَإِنْ كَانَ لَا مَحَالَةَ، فَثَلَاثًا طَعَامًا،
وَتَلَاثًا شَرَابًا، وَتَلَاثًا لِنَفْسِهِ

“A man did not fill any vessel more evil than his stomach. It is enough for the son of man to eat a few mouthfuls that keep his back straight. But, if he has to perforce eat more, then, one third for food, one third for water and one third for breathing” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

The Prophet has also said:

الْكَافِرُ يَأْكُلُ فِي سَبْعَةِ أَمْعَاءٍ ، وَالْمُؤْمِنُ يَأْكُلُ فِي
بِعَى وَاحِدٍ

“An unbeliever fills his seven intestines when he eats, while the Muslim fills only one.”

Qurtubi explains that although this is the general rule, there could be exceptions: a believer eating a lot and an unbeliever eating little.

Other scholars have explained that the unbeliever is never satiated even if he ate a lot, while a believer is satiated with little (Au.).

Shafi` remarks: There is nothing

[32] Say, 'Who has forbidden the ornaments of Allah's creation that He brought out for His slaves, and the good things of provision?'⁵⁰ Say, 'They are for the believers during the tenure of this world, (but) exclusively for them on the Day of Judgment.'⁵¹ Thus We expound Our revelations for a people who know.

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ
وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كَذَلِكَ
تَفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

wrong then in eating, drinking and dressing well, so long as excesses are not committed. As for the Sufiya's personal renunciation, or enjoining their followers the same, that has been by way of training, not because they thought that such abstinence was a necessary demand of the *Shari`ah*.

50. Ibn `Abbas and Qatadah have said that the verse has to be understood in the background of the Arabs declaring Bahirah, Saa'ibah, Haamah etc., as unlawful unto themselves. Allah revealed: "Say, 'Who has declared unlawful ..'" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi writes: Muslim has preserved a report according to which when the Prophet said:

« لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ كِبَرٍ
« . قَالَ رَجُلٌ إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ يُحِبُّ أَنْ يَكُونَ ثَوْبُهُ حَسَنًا
وَتَعَلُّهُ حَسَنَةً. قَالَ « إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَمِيلٌ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ
الْكِبِيرُ بَطْرُ الْحَقِّ وَعَمَطُ النَّاسِ

"Whoever had an atom of pride in his heart will not enter Para-

dise," someone asked, "A man wishes that his clothes and shoes be of good quality?!" The Prophet replied, "Verily, Allah is beautiful. He approves of the beautiful. Pride is to take a stand against the truth and look down upon the people."

The Prophet (*saws*) himself used to travel with a comb, mirror, hair oil, miswak and kohl (antimony) in his outfit. However, Qurtubi adds, partaking of the good things in life is surely not of the "qurubat" those things that take one nearer to Allah. `Umar ibn al Khattab has been reported as saying, "We could have gone for the good gourmet, but the verse (46: 20): "You have already had your good things in the life of this world," restrained us. `Umar also wrote to his governors to avoid adopting the ways of the people of the conquered territories, rather, maintain a frugal life. Some scholars have said though that if they come one's way, without great effort on his

part, then there is nothing wrong in partaking of the good things of life. The Prophet is not reported to have refused any food. He ate honey, sweets, water melon, and the sort, but did not go after them, did not get them prepared, and wasted no time on them. He said,

مَنْ أُنْعِمَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلَيْهِ نِعْمَةً فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ
يُحِبُّ أَنْ يَرَى أَثَرَ نِعْمَتِهِ

“When Allah bestows a favor upon His slave, He wishes to see its happy effects on him.”

Thus, that indulgence is frowned upon which takes time off preparations for the Hereafter.

Ibn Jarir quotes Hasan (al Busri): “When Allah sent His chosen Messenger, he did not lock his door (to discourage anyone from seeing him), he did not appoint a guard for himself, who was not oppressive in the least, who sat on the ground, and ate food from that position, he licked his fingers, wore coarse cloth, rode a donkey, and accepted his slave as his pillion rider. He used to say, ‘Whoever spurned my *Sunnah* is not of me.’ And now we have,” continues

Hasan, “people, most of whom have given up his *Sunnah*. They are the perverts who devour usury and other forbidden things, fools, befooled and hated by their Lord. They believe there is no harm in eating the best of food they can lay their hands on, beautifying their homes with expensive decorations and then claim that all that is in line with this verse: ‘Say, “Who has forbidden the ornaments of Allah’s creation that He brought out for His slaves? And the good things of provision?”’ “They do not realize,” continues Hasan, that these things are for the friends of Satan” (slightly shortened).

It should be obvious that Hasan’s criticism is directed at those who go after the good things of life in sin, disobedience and excesses (Au.).

51. Ibn `Abbas, Dahhak, Hasan, Qatadah, Suddi and others have said that the ornaments of the world have been created for the believers in Allah which the unbelievers share with them in this world, but which will be denied to them in the Hereafter (Ibn Jarir).

[33] Say, 'Verily, my Lord has only forbidden indecencies be they open or concealed sin, high handedness⁵² without justice, that you should associate with Allah that for which He has not sent down an authority, and that you should fasten upon Allah what you have no knowledge of.⁵³

قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا
وَمَا بَطَّنَ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ
تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ
تَتَّخِذُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] And for every nation is an appointed term.⁵⁴ Then, when its term arrives, they cannot remain behind for a moment nor can they hasten (it).⁵⁵

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجَلُهُمْ لَا
يَسْتَخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَأْجِرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

52. The word "*baghyu*" of the original has the connotations of overdoing things, seizing upon what is not one's own, or crossing the bounds in corruption (Rashid Rida).

Mufti Shafi` adds: The difference between *ithm* and *baghyu* is that the former involves the sinner alone and affects none but himself. In contrast, the effects and repercussions of the latter touch upon others' lives.

53. Rashid Rida quotes Ibn al-Qayyim from *Madarij al Salikin*: It is one of the most serious crimes to fasten something upon Allah. In this verse Allah first said that He has forbidden all that is indecent be they open or concealed. Then He mentioned what happens to be more serious than that: sin and rebellion without cause. Then, in the third ascending order, He spoke of what is more seri-

ous than that: association with Allah that for which He has not sent down an authority. Finally, in the fourth step, Allah declared the most serious of all: that one should fasten upon Allah what one has no knowledge of. This fastening upon Allah then is the most serious of crimes committed by man, and the root of all innovations in religion. Indeed, the root of association and disbelief is in the attribution to Allah what He did not command.

54. This interjection is to answer the doubt that if people commit such serious crimes as those in the previous verse, why are they not destroyed? Why does one see them flourishing? (Shafi`)

55. Asad writes: "In Arabic usage, the term *sa`ah* (lit. "hour") signifies not merely the astronomical

[35] Children of Adam!⁵⁶ If there should come to you Messengers from among yourselves, narrating to you Our verses, then, whosoever feared and reformed himself, then, such, they shall have nothing to fear nor shall they grieve.

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ إِنَّمَا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ
يُفْصِحُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي فَمَنْ اتَّقَى وَأَصْلَحَ
فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] As for those who rejected Our revelations, and waxed proud against them, they are the companions of the Fire, abiding therein forever.

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا
أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ
﴿٣٦﴾

hour i.e., the twenty fourth part of a mean solar day but also “time” in an absolute sense, or any fraction of it, whether large or small. In the above context, it has been used in the sense of “a least fraction of time” or “a single moment.”

Rashid Rida discusses in detail how and when the term appointed for nations ends, and adds that he had asked his mentor, Sheikh Muhammad `Abduh, asked (remove) the question: “How come the rule of the British, who commit all kinds of wrongs, excesses and injustice upon their colonies, manages not merely to survive, but also shows all signs of growth and development?” He answered that no established rule or system is changed without an alternative being available. No sooner will the Muslims offer a better system of rule, than the older will be discarded.

56. Abu Yasar Sulami has said that Allah brought out the progeny of Adam in the Spiritual World and addressed them in words as in the verse in question: “Children of Adam. Whenever there come to you Messengers (raised) from among yourselves, narrating to you Our verses, then, whosoever feared, reformed himself, such, they shall have nothing to fear nor will they grieve.” Then He addressed the (would be) Messengers and said (23: 51, 52):

يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا إِنِّي بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ (٥١) وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا
رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ [المؤمنون : ٥١ ، ٥٢]

“O Messengers! Eat of the good things and do righteous deeds. Verily, I am aware of what you do. And, this, your religion (of monotheism) is one religion. And I am your Lord, so fear Me (alone)” (Ibn Jarir).

[37] Who then can do greater wrong than he who fastened a lie upon Allah or gave the lie to His messages? They: (Remove they) a portion of the Book (of Decree) shall reach them,⁵⁷ till, when Our messengers (of death) arrive withdrawing their souls, they ask, 'Where are those you were calling upon besides Allah?' They reply, 'They are lost from us.' They testify against themselves that they were unbelievers.

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا
أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ أُولَئِكَ يَنَالُهُمْ نَصِيبُهُمْ
مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُنَا
يَتَوَفَّوْنَهُمْ قَالُوا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْعُونَ مِن
دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا وَشَهِدُوا عَلَىٰ
أَنفُسِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] He will say, 'Enter then, along with other nations that passed before you of the Jinn and men: into the Fire.' Whenever a nation enters therein, it curses its sister nation; till, when they have all successively arrived therein, the last of them will say about the first of them,⁵⁸ 'Our Lord. These are the ones who misled us. Therefore, assign to them double the punishment of Fire.' He will say, 'For everyone is the double (punishment), but you realize not.'⁵⁹

قَالَ ادْخُلُوا فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ
مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ فِي النَّارِ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَتْ
أُمَّةٌ لَعَنَتْ أُخْتَهَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا دَارَكُوا فِيهَا
جَمِيعًا قَالَتْ أُحْرَاهُمْ لَأُولَاهُمْ رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ
أَضَلُّونَا فَآتِهِمْ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا مِّنَ النَّارِ قَالَ
لِكُلِّ ضِعْفٌ وَلَكِن لَّا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

57. Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Abu Salih, Suddi, Hasan and others have said that the textual words "nasibun min al kitab" (a portion of the Book) allude either to what has been pre destined for the unbelievers by way of good or evil deeds, sustenance, the term of life, etc., or, alternatively, to what they have been promised (as punishment for evil deeds) Ibn Jarir.

Ibn Kathir however quotes Ibn `Abbas as of opinion that the allusion by "a portion of the Book" is to the

writing (in the *Lawh al Mahfuz*) that whoever did good would be rewarded therewith, and whoever did evil will be recompensed therewith. (In other words, he understood the word 'kitab' as the command written in the Preserved Tablet (Au.).

58. The later ones would be late in arriving at Hell as against the earlier ones who would have arrived earlier because they would have been criminals of a more serious order to be condemned to the Fire earlier (Ibn Kathir).

[39] *The last of them will say to the first ones, 'Then you do not enjoy any advantage over us.'*⁶⁰ *'Taste then the punishment because of what you were earning.'*⁶¹

وَقَالَتْ أُولَاهُمْ لِأُولَاهُمْ فَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍ فذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

59. Yusuf Ali comments: "The earlier generations committed a double crime: (1) their own sin, (2) the bad example they set for those who followed. We are responsible not only for our own misdeeds, but for those also which our example and our teaching to our juniors may induce them to commit. But it does not lie in the mouth of the juniors to ask for a double punishment for seniors: the motive is not justice, but pure spite, which is itself a sin. Further, later generations have to answer for two things: (1) their own sins and (2) their failure to learn from the past, from the experiences of those who preceded them."

60. That is, 'today we both share the same punishment, none enjoying an advantage over the other.' Nonetheless, another implication is that although 'you acted superior to us in the previous life, though in truth you were not superior to us at all. Today, the equal treatment meted out to each of us is a proof of that' (Au.).

61. The verse here presents the same scene as elsewhere in the Qur'an, with somewhat greater clarity (34: 31-33):

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ مَوْفُوقُونَ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ يَرْجِعُ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ الْقَوْلَ يَمْوُلُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعُوا لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا لَوْلَا أَنشَأَ لَكُم مِّنَّا مُمِينِينَ (٣١) قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعُوا أَخُنُّ صَدَدْنَاكُمْ عَنِ الْهُدَىٰ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَكُمْ بَلْ كُنْتُمْ مُجْرِمِينَ (٣٢) وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعُوا لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا بَلْ مَكْرُ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ إِذْ تَأْمُرُونَنَا أَنْ نَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَنَجْعَلَ لَهُ أَنْدَادًا [سبأ : ٣١ ، ٣٢]

"If you were to see the transgressors held before their Lord, some of them exchanging words (of abuse) with the others; the weak ones saying to the arrogant ones, 'If not for you we would have been believers;' and those who had waxed proud replying to the weaker ones, 'Did we prevent you from guidance when it reached you? Rather you were criminals yourselves;' the weak ones replying to the arrogant ones, 'Rather, it was your machinations by day and night by which you ordered us that we disbelieve in Allah and that we suggest partners.'" (Ibn Kathir).

[40] Surely, those who rejected Our revelations and waxed proud against them, the gates of Heaven shall not be opened for them⁶² and they shall not enter Paradise until the camel⁶³ passes through a needle's eye. That is how We recompense the criminals.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا
لَا يُمْسِكُ لَهُمْ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ
الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ
وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

[41] Jahannum shall be a cradle for them, and from above them covering (of fire). That is how We recompense the wrong doers.

لَهُمْ مِنْ جَهَنَّمَ مِهَادٌ وَمِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ غَوَاشٍ
وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

62. Abu Hurayrah has reported the Prophet as having said:

إِنَّ الْمَيِّتَ تَحْضُرُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ فَإِذَا كَانَ الرَّجُلُ الصَّالِحَ
قَالُوا الْخُرْجِي أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الطَّيِّبَةُ كَأَنْتِ فِي الْجَسَدِ
الطَّيِّبِ الْخُرْجِي حَمِيدَةٌ وَأَبْشِرِي بِرُوحٍ وَرِيحَانٍ وَرَبِّ
غَيْرِ غَضَبَانَ قَالَ فَلَا يَزَالُ يُقَالُ ذَلِكَ حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ ثُمَّ
يُعْرَجُ بِهَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَيُسْتَفْتَحُ لَهَا فَيُقَالُ مَنْ هَذَا
فَيُقَالُ فَلَانَ فَيَقُولُونَ مَرَجَبًا بِالنَّفْسِ الطَّيِّبَةِ كَأَنْتِ فِي
الْجَسَدِ الطَّيِّبِ ادْخُلِي حَمِيدَةٌ وَأَبْشِرِي بِرُوحٍ وَرِيحَانٍ
وَرَبِّ غَيْرِ غَضَبَانَ قَالَ فَلَا يَزَالُ يُقَالُ لَهَا حَتَّى يَنْتَهِيَ
بِهَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الَّتِي فِيهَا اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَإِذَا كَانَ
الرَّجُلُ السَّوْءَ قَالُوا الْخُرْجِي أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْخَبِيثَةُ كَأَنْتِ
فِي الْجَسَدِ الْخَبِيثِ الْخُرْجِي ذَمِيمَةٌ وَأَبْشِرِي بِحَمِيمٍ
وَعَسَاقٍ وَآخَرَ مِنْ شَكْلِهِ أَرْوَاحَ فَلَا يَزَالُ حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ
ثُمَّ يُعْرَجُ بِهَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَيُسْتَفْتَحُ لَهَا فَيُقَالُ مَنْ هَذَا
فَيُقَالُ فَلَانَ فَيُقَالُ لَا مَرَجَبًا بِالنَّفْسِ الْخَبِيثَةِ كَأَنْتِ
فِي الْجَسَدِ الْخَبِيثِ الرَّجِيحِي ذَمِيمَةٌ فَإِنَّهُ لَا يُمْسِكُ لَكَ
أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ فَيُرْسَلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ تُصِيرُ إِلَى الْقَبْرِ

“When a man is about to die, angels appear before him. If he happens to be a righteous person they say, ‘Come out O clean soul. You were in a clean body. Come out praised. And for you be the

glad tidings of fragrance and a Lord not angry with you.’ With these words they take it to the heavens. When they knock (at the gates), it is asked, ‘Who is this?’ They reply that it is so and so. The guards say, ‘Welcome to the clean soul. You were in a clean body. Come in praised. And for you be the glad tidings of fragrance and a Lord not angry with you.’ That is how it is received until it arrives at the heavens where Allah is. But, if it is an evil person the angels of death say, ‘Come out you wicked soul. You were in an unclean body. Come out blame-worthy. And receive the glad tidings of boiling water and puss; and other types of punishments.’ They repeat these words until they reach the gates of the first heaven. The guards ask, ‘Who is it?’ They say it is so and so. They respond, ‘Unwelcome! You are a

[42] As for those who believed and did righteous deeds We do not charge a soul beyond its capacity⁶⁴ they are the companions of Paradise, dwelling therein forever.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَا نُكَلِّفُ
نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ
هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

wicked soul. You were in an unclean body. Go back, blameworthy. The gates of heaven shall not be opened for you.’ It is returned to the grave” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi). Imam Ahmad has preserved a longer version of this tradition. And shorter versions are in Nasa’i and Ibn Majah (Ibn Kathir).

63. Some of the *Salaf*, such as Ibn `Abbas, Sa`id ibn Jubayr and Mujahid have read the textual word “*jamal*” as “*jummal*” meaning “a thick twisted rope,” the kind used for anchoring boats or for climbing trees. According to Ibn `Abbas, this meets more with the requirement of rhetoric, since, normally camels do not pass through the needle’s eye. However, Ibn Mas`ud, Hasan, Abu al

`Aliyyah and Dahhak have said that the word is “*jamal*” i.e., camel – as it happens to be written in the Qur`an. In fact, that also happens to be a second opinion of Ibn `Abbas himself (Ibn Jarir).

Incidentally, the same usage has been employed in the New Testament. See e.g., Matthew, 19: 24; Mark, 10: 25; and Luke 18: 25, but it is for the rich while the Qur`an has drawn the simile for those who associate with God. The words of Luke are: “For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.”

64. This is a parenthetical remark brought in to stress that if some people did not believe, it was not because they were asked something beyond their capacity (Razi, Thanwi).

[43] And We shall have removed from their hearts any hard feeling,⁶⁵ rivers flowing from beneath them. They will say, 'Praise to Allah for having guided us to this. We would have never found our way if we were not guided by Allah.'⁶⁶ Indeed, our Messengers brought the truth.' And (a voice) will call out to them,⁶⁷ 'This is the Paradise that you have been allowed to inherit⁶⁸ by virtue of what you were doing.'⁶⁹

وَتَرَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غِلٍّ تَجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي
هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا
اللَّهُ لَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَنُودُوا
أَنْ تَتَّكُمُ الْجَنَّةُ أُوْرَثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ
﴿٤٣﴾

65. That is, any hard feeling that some of those in Paradise might have for others, would be removed before they enter Paradise so that none will bear grudge against any other. `Ali has been reported as saying that the allusion could also be to what happened between him, `Uthman, Talha and Zubayr. According to another version from him, the allusion is to those who participated in the battle of Badr. And, Suddi and Abu Nadrah have said that when the believers are allowed entry into Paradise, they will find a tree right at the entrance. Two founts would be springing forth from its roots. They will drink from one of them. It will remove any hard feeling they would have had for any other in their breasts. Then they will bathe in the waters of the second spring and that will cleanse them physically, never to be dirty again (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). The report is in Ibn Abi Hatim also (Alusi).

And a *hadith* in Bukhari says:

يُخْلَصُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنَ النَّارِ فَيُحْبَسُونَ عَلَى
قَنْطَرَةٍ بَيْنَ الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ فَيُقْتَضُ لِبَعْضِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ
مَظَالِمٌ كَانَتْ بَيْنَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَتَّى إِذَا هُدِّبُوا وَتَشُّوا
أُذِنَ لَهُمْ فِي دُخُولِ الْجَنَّةِ

“When the believers would have escaped the Fire, they would be held up on a bridge between Heaven and Hell. There they would settle their accounts with each other for the wrongs they would have done to each other in the life of this world. It is only after they have thus been cleansed and purified that they would be allowed to enter Paradise” (Ibn Kathir).

Zamakhshari and Imam Razi point out that the allusion could also be to the lack of any envy in the hearts of inhabitants of Paradise living at various levels thereof, entirely in contrast to those in various levels of the Fire who will be cursing each other.

Yusuf Ali adds: “A man who may have suffered or been disappointed may have a lurking sense of injury at the back of his mind, which may spoil his enjoyment on account of past memory intruding in the midst of felicity. In such cases memory itself is pain. Even sorrow is intensified by memory.”

66. A report has come to the effect that `Ali reported `Umar as saying: When the people will arrive at the gates of Paradise they will find therein a tree from whose roots two springs would be sprouting. They will take a bath in one of them. With that they will feel enraptured in blessings. After that their hair will never get unruffled again, and their faces never dusty again. Then they will drink from the other spring. That will remove any dirt or impurity they had within them. Then the gates of Paradise will be opened for them and it will be said (39: 73): “Peace upon you. You have done well. So enter herein, to abide forever.” (As soon as they enter), the first thing, they would be greeted by children. They will surround them as children surround a dear one when he returns home from a journey. The children will leap back to their spouses and announce to them about their arrival. They will give them their full

name and identity tracing their fathers and grandfathers. The women will ask: “Did you see him yourself?” They will be in great joy. The women will hurry up to the doors and wait there for them to arrive. As they enter they will find their abodes built of pearls and jewels of all kinds and colors: raised couches, ranged cups, lined up cushions and spread out carpets. They will hug their spouses and relax on the couches. It is then that they will utter these words: “Praise be to Allah for having guided us to this. We would have never found our way if we were not guided by Allah. Indeed, our Messengers brought the truth” (Ibn Jarir).

67. A *hadith* (in Muslim: Shawkani) says:

يُنَادِي مُنَادٍ إِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَصِحُّوا فَلَا تَسْقُمُوا أَبَدًا وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَحْيُوا فَلَا تَمُوتُوا أَبَدًا وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَشَبَّهُوا فَلَا تَهْرَمُوا أَبَدًا وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَنْعَمُوا فَلَا تَبْتَسِسُوا أَبَدًا

“A caller will call out in Paradise, ‘Be of good health never to be sick again, be alive never to die again, be young never to be old again, be in blessings never to be in despair again’” (Ibn Jarir).

68. That is, your belief in Prophets, and your good deeds led you to this Paradise (Ibn Jarir). Ibn Kathir adds: That is, your good deeds invoked the

[44] And the people of Paradise will call out to the people of the Fire, 'We have found what our Lord promised us to be true. Have you also found what your Lord promised to be true?'⁷⁰ They will reply, 'Yes;' whereupon a herald from their midst will proclaim, 'Allah's curse be upon the wrong doers.

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ
أَنْ قَدْ وَجَدْنَا مَا وَعَدَنَا رَبُّنَا حَقًّا فَهَلْ
وَجَدْتُمْ مَا وَعَدَ رَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا قَالُوا نَعَمْ فَأَذَّنَ
مُؤَدِّنٌ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ
﴿٤٤﴾

[45] Those who hinder the people from the Way of Allah, and seek to make it crooked, and (in addition), they are disbelievers in the Hereafter.'

الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا
عُوجًا وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

mercy by which you entered Paradise since a *hadith* of the *Sahihbayn* says,

صحيح البخاري ت - (٢٨٧ / ١٤)

لَنْ يُدْخَلَ أَحَدًا عَمَلُهُ الْجَنَّةَ قَالُوا وَلَا أَنْتَ يَا رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ قَالَ لَا وَلَا أَنَا إِلَّا أَنْ يَتَّعَمِدَنِي اللَّهُ بِفَضْلٍ وَرَحْمَةٍ

“No one will ever enter Paradise on the strength of his deeds.” The Companions asked, “Not even you O Messenger of Allah?” He replied, “No. Not even me, unless Allah covers me with His mercy and grace.” So, the entry depends upon Allah’s mercy. But, it is good deeds that invoke His mercy.

69. Suddi has said that there will be no one in Hellfire who would not be shown his place in Paradise, which he would have obtained if he had been of the righteous. Then his place will be given away to the believers. This is the inheritance the verse is talking

about (Ibn Jarir). There is a *hadith* too in Muslim which saysm

لَا يَمُوتُ رَجُلٌ مُسْلِمٌ إِلَّا أَدْخَلَ اللَّهُ مَكَانَهُ النَّارِ
يَهُودِيًّا أَوْ نَصْرَانِيًّا

“No Muslim dies but Allah admits into Hell fire in his place either a Jew or a Christian (Qur-tubi).

The *hadith* of Muslim is numbered 4969 under *Kitab al Tawbah* (Au.).

70. This is how the Prophet addressed the corpses of the Quraysh at Badr when they had been dumped into a heap in a pit. He asked them,

« يَا أَبَا جَهْلٍ بَنَ هِشَامُ يَا أُمَيَّةَ بَنَ خَلْفٍ يَا عُتْبَةَ بَنَ
رَبِيعَةَ يَا شَيْبَةَ بَنَ رَبِيعَةَ أَلَيْسَ قَدْ وَجَدْتُمْ مَا وَعَدَ رَبُّكُمْ
حَقًّا فَإِنِّي قَدْ وَجَدْتُ مَا وَعَدَنِي رَبِّي حَقًّا ». فَسَمِعَ
عُمَرُ قَوْلَ النَّبِيِّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فَقَالَ يَا
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ يَسْمَعُونَ وَأَنَّى يُجِيبُونَ وَقَدْ حَبِطُوا قَالَ
« وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا أَنْتُمْ بِأَسْمَعِ لِمَا أَقُولُ مِنْهُمْ
وَلَكِنَّهُمْ لَا يُفْقِدُونَ أَنْ يُجِيبُوا »

[46] And between the two will be a partition.⁷¹ And, (yonder over) there on the Heights⁷² will be a people⁷³ who will know each by their mark.⁷⁴ They will call out to the companions of Paradise, 'Peace be upon you' they will not have entered it yet, although very eager.⁷⁵

وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ وَعَلَى الْأَعْرَافِ رِجَالٌ
يَعْرِفُونَ كُلًّا بِسِيمَاهُمْ وَنَادُوا أَصْحَابَ
الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ لَمْ يَدْخُلُوهَا وَهُمْ
يَطْمَعُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

[47] When their eyes are turned toward the inmates of the Fire they will say, 'Our Lord! Do not place us among a wrong doing people.'

وَإِذَا صُرِفَتْ أَبْصَارُهُمْ تِلْقَاءَ أَصْحَابِ
النَّارِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ
﴿٤٧﴾

“O Abu Jahl b. Hisham, O Umayyah b. Khalf, O `Utbah ibn Rabi`ah, and O Shaybah b. Rabi`ah, have you found true the promises of your Lord made to you? I have found true the promises my Lord made to me.” `Umar heard him and asked, “Messenger of Allah, how can they hear and how will they answer when they have become corpses?” He replied, “By Him in whose Hands is my life, they hear better than you to what I am saying but are unable to answer” (Ibn Kathir).

71. Mujahid and Suddi have interpreted the “*hijab*” of the text as a partition or a wall between Paradise and Hell (Ibn Jarir).

72. Ibn `Abbas has said that A`raf is any tall construction or an elevated place. Hence a cock's crown (which is called *`Urf*). Here, the reference is to a high wall (obviously, wide

enough: Au.) between Heaven and Hell (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi). According to another report he said that A`raf is the plural of “tull” (pronounced in the same way as “dull”) which is for sand dunes (Ibn Kathir).

Shafi` adds: Tafsir Maz hari states that this would be the end piece of the Bridge (*Sirat*). Suyuti is also inclined to this opinion.

But the above is not substantiated with a *hadith* or a statement of the *Salaf* (Au.).

73. Hudhayfah (b. al Yaman), Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah and Dahhak have said that these are a people whose good and evil deeds weigh equal: deserving neither Paradise nor Hellfire. They would be retained on the high wall for some time but will ultimately enter Paradise by Allah's grace (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). There are several other opinions about the identity of

[48] *And the people of the Heights will call out to those (in the Fire) they know by their marks, 'Your numbers⁷⁶ availed you nothing, nor your proud attitude.'*⁷⁷

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْرَافِ رَجُلًا يَعْرفُونَهُمْ
بِسِيمَاهُمْ قَالُوا مَا آغَى عَنْكُمْ جَمْعُكُمْ وَمَا
كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

[49] *'Are these (of the Heights) the ones about whom you swore that Allah's mercy will not reach them?' (They will be told), 'You may enter Paradise. There is no fear upon you nor should you grieve.'*⁷⁸

أَهْلَاءَ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمْتُمْ لَا يَبَالَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ
أَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ
تَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

those on the Heights, there being no less than a dozen, such as, angels, Prophets and Messengers, chosen men of Allah, etc. But the above opinion is the most widely accepted one (Qurtubi).

That they could be those who, in the words of Hasan and Zajjaj, are "possessors [or men] of knowledge," is possible. But Asad's extension of that meaning as "those who in their lifetime were able to discern between right and wrong .. but did not definitely incline to either: in brief, the indifferent ones," expresses an opinion that is not found anywhere in the commentary books, nor has Razi adopted it (Au.).

74. Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and others have said that from those heights they would be able to perceive everyone and know from their faces those of Heaven and those of Hell (Ibn Jarir).

75. That is, the people at the heights would not have entered Paradise, although hoping that they would, by Allah's grace (Ibn Jarir).

76. Another possible rendering of "jam`" is wealth and richness.

77. Ibn `Abbas and Suddi have said that as the people on the Heights recognize some of the coxcomb unbelievers and important men in the Fire, they would address them in these words (Ibn Jarir).

78. Ibn `Abbas has explained that Allah will address the haughty ones and ask them about the people of the Heights: "Are these the ones about whom you swore that Allah will not show them His mercy?" Then He will turn to the people on the Heights and say: "You may enter Paradise. There is no fear upon you nor should you grieve" (Ibn Jarir). But some commentators have

[50] *The inmates of Fire will plead to the companions of Paradise, 'Throw (down) upon us some water, or some of what Allah has provided you.' They will reply, 'Allah has forbidden both to the unbelievers,*⁷⁹

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ أفيضوا علينا من الماء أو مما رزقكم الله قالوا إن الله حرمهما على الكافرين ﴿٥٠﴾

[51]⁸⁰ *those who treated their religion as sport and pastime, and the life of this world deceived them.'* (Allah will say) 'Today We shall forget them as they forgot the encounter of this their Day, and, as they were wont to argue against Our revelations.'

الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لُحُوءًا وَغَرَّتَهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فَالْيَوْمَ نَنْسَاهُمْ كَمَا نَسُوا لِقَاءَ يَوْمِهِمْ هَذَا وَمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

[52] *We have brought them a Book which We have expounded with knowledge: a (source of) guidance and mercy unto a people that believe.*

وَلَقَدْ جِئْنَاهُمْ بِكِتَابٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ عَلَى عِلْمٍ هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

[53] *Are they waiting but for its fulfillment? (But) the day its fulfillment comes, those who had discarded it earlier to oblivion will say, 'Surely, messengers of our Lord brought the truth. Have we then any intercessors to intercede for us? Or, can we be returned so that we can do differently from what we were doing?' Surely, they squandered their own souls and lost unto them were all that they were forging.*

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا تَأْوِيلَهُ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي تَأْوِيلَهُ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ نَسُوهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلٌ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ فَهَلْ لَنَا مِنْ شَفْعَاءَ فَيَشْفَعُوا لَنَا أَوْ نُرَدُّ فَنَعْمَلْ غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ قَدْ حَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

thought that these are the words of the people of the Heights (Au.).

79. "The dialogue between the people of Paradise, the people of the Fire, and the people of the Heights gives some indication of the tremendous range of human faculties in the Next World. These faculties would increase to such an extent that the people of the Paradise, the people of the Fire and the people of the

Heights will be able to see, hear and talk to one another. Other Qur'anic statements about the Hereafter enable us to realize that the laws operating in the Next World will be altogether different from those in the present. Notwithstanding this, men's personalities will not undergo any such change" (Mawdudi).

80. What follow are Allah's words.

[54] Surely, your Lord is Allah who created the heavens and the earth in six eons.⁸¹ Then He assumed istawa' over the `Arsh.⁸² He throws the veil of night over the day, seeking it in swift pursuit;⁸³ and the sun, the moon, the stars rendered subservient by His command. Lo! His are the creation and the command.⁸⁴ Hallowed is Allah, the Lord of the worlds.⁸⁵

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى
الْعَرْشِ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا
وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ
بِأَمْرِهِ أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾

81. Ibn Kathir once again quotes a *hadith* here from Muslim about the creation of the heavens and the earth in six periods with man's creation taking place in the last hours of the seventh day. The *hadith* is as follows: Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) says,

خَلَقَ اللَّهُ التُّرْبَةَ يَوْمَ السَّبْتِ وَخَلَقَ فِيهَا الْجِبَالَ يَوْمَ
الْأَحَدِ وَخَلَقَ الشَّجَرَ يَوْمَ الْإِثْنَيْنِ وَخَلَقَ الْمَكْرُوهَ يَوْمَ
الثَّلَاثَاءِ وَخَلَقَ النَّوْرَ يَوْمَ الْأَرْبَعَاءِ وَبَثَّ فِيهَا الدَّوَابَّ
يَوْمَ الْخَمِيسِ وَخَلَقَ آدَمَ بَعْدَ الْعَصْرِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ
أَجْرَ الْخَلْقِ فِي آخِرِ سَاعَةٍ مِنْ سَاعَاتِ الْجُمُعَةِ فِيمَا
بَيْنَ الْعَصْرِ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ

“Allah created the dust on Saturday. He created the mountains in it on Sunday. He created the trees in it on Monday. He created the makruh on Tuesday. He created “Nur” (according to another version, “Num”: Nawawi) on Wednesday. He created the beasts on Thursday. And He created Adam in the afternoon of Friday, as the last creation, in the last hours of Friday between late afternoon hours and nightfall.”

Apparently, the *hadith* has led some to misunderstandings. Ibn Kathir, and following him Rashid Rida, have expressed misgivings about the authenticity of this *hadith* since it speaks of the creation in seven days whereas the Qur'an has stated that Allah created the world in six days. Both missed to see that the *hadith* starts with the creation of the universe, but subsequently switches on to the phases through which the earth has passed in its formation. It is not speaking of the phases through which the universe has passed.

As for the word “*yawm*” rendered eons by us here, it is generally agreed that it alludes to periods. For example, *ayyam al harb*, (lit. war days but actually ‘years of war’), *ayyam al khayr wa barakah* (days of plenty) etc., are common usage in the Arabic language. In fact, in English too, it is common to hear ‘good old day,’ etc. The above *hadith* also removes any doubt that might linger about

the meaning of the term “*yawm*” as used in the Qur`ān in reference to creation. The *hadīth* says that man was created in the last hours of Friday, between late afternoon and the nightfall. Obviously, the Prophet was aware that man has been here on the earth for a very long period. When he said, “between late afternoon and the nightfall” he gave the indication that he was not speaking of 24 hour cycles. See al An`am, note 4, for a fuller discussion of this *hadīth*.

Qurtubi adds Qushayri’s remark that the allusion could not be to the 24 hour day since, after all, there was no earth and no sun before the creation of the heavens and the earth. Rather, it is the days of the pre creation phase that are meant (Au.).

Asad writes: “The word *yawm*, commonly translated as “day” ... is used in Arabic to denote any period, whether extremely long (“eon”) or extremely short (“moment”): its application to the earthly “day” of twenty four hours in only one of its many connotations.”

There are verses in the Qur`ān also which support the generally held view that it is not the 24 hour cycle which is meant. E.g.,

وَإِنَّ يَوْمًا عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ كَأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّونَ [الحج
[٤٧ :

“Verily, a day in the sight of your Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning” (22: 47).

And,

تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ
خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ [المعارج : ٤]

“The angels and the Spirit ascend unto Him on a day the measure of which is fifty thousand years” (70: 4) Au.

A doubt has been raised. Why did Allah take six days (eons or periods) to create when He is capable of creation in an instant? This can be answered in several ways. But the most appealing is that Allah’s power of creation is better expressed in gradualness. If it was done in one go, chance would have been ascribed as a factor playing its role. But when things come into being gradually, systematically, in steps, then there is no denying a Creator and His Power behind them (Alusi).

82. The word *‘Arsh*, literally throne, immediately suggests two connotations with reference to a place: (a) that which is elevated and (b) that from where commands are issued (Thanwi).

Thus, in his characteristic brevity coupled with accuracy, Thanwi has managed to state the sum and sub-

stance of a verse that has intrigued many and has been the subject of heated discussions down through the ages: Allah is high above everything, high above all imagination; and He is the One Who issues the command none else.

Yet, in the face of a tendency by the people to seek a literal meaning, it is safer to assert that the opinion of the *Salaf* to the effect that this is one of the *mutashabihat* of the Qur`ān. It has to be understood exactly as found: without any further explanation, without committing anthropomorphism, without assigning Allah a form and without stripping Him of His Qualities. That is how the great majority of the pious predecessors expressed themselves. That is, whatever else that they understood, they safely kept to themselves. Majid's piquant remark should wake up many of the so called puritanical beliefs: "It is not as the vulgars hold, the seat or throne of God" (Au.).

Asad comments: "It is noteworthy that in all the seven instances where God is spoken of in the Qur`ān [as *istawa' ala al 'Arsh*: Au.] (7: 54, 10: 3, 13: 2, 20: 5, 25: 59, 32: 4, and 57: 4), this expression is connected with a declaration of His having created the universe."

And, to the above, we might add that the root meaning of the term "*istawa*" is to turn attention to. The Qur`ān has used it in this sense in several places, such as (2: 29):

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى
إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ [البقرة : ٢٩]

"He it is who created for you all that is in the earth, then He turned to the heavens and levelled them into seven firmaments " (Au.).

Qurtubi writes: There are no less than twelve opinions concerning the words "*istawa' ala al 'Arsh*" which we have discussed in detail in another work of ours, "*Al Kitab al Asna fi Sharh Asma' 'l Husna wa Sifatih al 'Ula*." Hasan has said that by the term *'Arsh* the allusion is to dominion and authority. That is, Allah assumed authority over the creation after the act of creation. (Shabir Uthmani almost endorses this in pointing out that since Allah does not share any of His Qualities with His creation in the absolute sense, any meaning attributed to *istawa'* would be illegal). Literally speaking though, one of the connotations of the word *'Arsh* is dominion and authority: they say, 'So and so lost his *'Arsh*,' meaning he lost his kingdom and authority.

The reader is recommended at this point to see Imam Ghazali's cautionary note as quoted in the Preparatory, of this work.

Alusi writes: Qaffal has also been of the opinion that it is the authority and dominion that is meant. And Bayhaqi has reported Abu al Hasan Al Ash`ari [the founder of Ash`arism, to whose opinions most of the Ahl al *Sunnah* refer when discussing details of their doctrines: Au.] was of the opinion that Allah dealt with *`Arsh* in a manner it could be called "*istawa*" just as He dealt with so many other creations in certain ways, calling those acts "nourishing," "providing," etc.

Rashid Rida comments: (The famous lexicon "Misbah") says that one would say "*istawa` ala al sarir al mulk*" (literally, "he settled upon the throne of his kingdom) meaning he assumed authority over his kingdom, even if the man never settled on the throne once.

Qurtubi also writes: Nevertheless, the great majority of the scholars have refused to interpret the words in any other way except what they apparently say: without addition, deletion, or qualification. (This is the opinion of the great majority of the Sufiya as well: Alusi). The pious predecessors have neither said that Allah is in a specific direction, nor have

denied He being in any particular direction. (Ibn Abi al `Izz has said in his commentary on *`Aqidah al Tahawiyah* that what does not exist in six directions, enjoys no existence: Au.). None of the pious predecessors have said that Allah is settled on the *`Arsh*. Umm Salamah has said:

عَنْ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا فِي قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى {الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى} طه ٥: الإِسْتِوَاءُ مَعْلُومٌ وَالْكَيفُ مَجْهُولٌ وَالْإِيْمَانُ بِهِ وَاجِبٌ وَالسُّؤَالُ عَنْهُ بَدْعَةٌ

"*Istawa*" is known that is linguistically but the 'how' of it is unknown, belief in it is a religious requirement, and seeking further details is innovation." Hence our rendering: "He assumed *istawa*' on the *`Arsh*."

As for other details of the *`Arsh*, little else is known about it beyond that it is the earliest of Allah's creation, created even before the Pen, carried by angels and that it has *qawa'im* (posts) Au.

83. That is, the night seeks the day in swift pursuit.

We do not know the source of Razi's statement issued in the 6th century A.H., but it is certainly curious. He wrote to the effect that by the time a man raises his foot and puts it down, the upper heaven would have moved by 5000 miles. Modern information is that the earth rotates on its axis

at the speed of 1000 km an hour, goes around the sun at the speed of a 100,000 km an hour, while the sun itself goes around the axis of the Milky Way galaxy at the speed of 800,000 km an hour; and the universe itself is expanding almost at the speed of light. So, even if the statement that the cosmos would have moved 5000 miles by the time a man moves a foot may not be accurate, it remains scientific.

Imam Razi also states that some ignorant people have objected to the preponderance of statements concerning cosmology and astronomy in his commentary. He replies that, (i) Allah's Book is replete with evidences drawn from celestial bodies and phenomenon, (ii) He has ordered us to think over the creation of the heavens and the earth saying (50: 6),

أَفَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَوْقَهُمْ كَيْفَ بَنَيْنَاهَا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا
وَمَا لَهَا مِنْ فُرُوجٍ [ق : ٦]

“Have they not seen the heaven above them how We built it, adorned it, and that it has no void in it” (in modern terms: it is homogenous: Au.), (iii) Allah also said (40: 57):

لَخَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِ النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ [غافر : ٥٧]

“Surely the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater feat than the creation of mankind, but most people

know not,” and, (iv) Allah praised those who ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth. He said (3: 191):

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ
وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا
خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا [آل عمران : ١٩١]

“They ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth, (concluding), Our Lord, You did not create them in vain.”

84. Ibn Jarir reports a *hadith*. The Prophet said:

من لم يحمده الله على ما عمل من عمل صالح وحمد نفسه فقد كفر وحبط عمله ومن زعم أن الله جعل للعباد من الأمر شيئاً فقد كفر بما أنزل الله على أنبيائه“ لقوله: أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ

“Whoever did not thank Allah for whatever good deed he performed, rather, took the credit for it himself, committed disbelief, and will have his deeds wasted. And, whoever thought that any of the creation has any say in the affairs, committed disbelief. For Allah said: ‘Lo! His are the creation and the command.’”

The above *hadith*, which Ibn Jarir declares trustworthy, as does Ibn Kathir, is not found in popular *hadith* collections (Au.).

Qurtubi states that this verse proves that the Qur`an is an uncreated word

[55] Call on your Lord⁸⁶ humbly and in secret.⁸⁷ Verily, He does not approve of the transgressor.⁸⁸

ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

of Allah. For, it consists of commands (*amr*) and prohibitions (*nahyu*). These are of the same nature as the command (*amr*) in the verse under discussion. If we suppose that the Qur`ān is created, then it would mean that “*amr*” is a created entity. Now, if it is supposed that “*amr*” is a created entity, then, it would require another “*amr*” to create that “*amr*,” leading us into a vicious circle. This demonstrates that the “*amr*,” viz., Allah’s Speech, is an uncreated, eternal Word of Allah (with the Speech itself defined as one of the Attributes of Allah, inseparable from Him: Au.). Consequently, Sufyan b. `Uyaynah said that ‘Allah spoke of the “creation” and the “command” in this verse separately. Whoever thought they are one and the same, committed unbelief’ (Qurtubi, Alusi).

85. The textual word for what has been rendered as “hallowed” is “*tabaraka*.” “*Barakah*” has two aspects of meaning. Firstly, that of continuance and stability. Secondly, that of abundance of good effects. Now, if the first aspect is considered, it would mean Allah is eternal and

subsisting. If the second connotation is kept in mind then it would mean Allah possesses copious amounts of all good and beneficial things and qualities (Alusi). Manar has the same thing to say in fewer words.

86. Calling upon Allah and addressing Him in supplications is indicative of the suppliant’s admission that he is in need of bestowals, that he himself is powerless, and that all power belongs to Allah alone. A man will not apply to Allah unless he knew that Allah hears supplications and that He has the power to respond. This recognition is the essence of faith and hence a *hadith* which says that supplication is the best kind of worship (Alusi, slightly re worded).

In contrast, Majid writes, “The Hindus believe that mantras, or magic formulae, if enchanted punctiliously by a Brahmin, ‘will constrain the gods to gratify the worshipper’s wishes’ (EBr. III, p. 1012).”

87. Ibn Jarir and Zamakhshari explain the “*khufyah*” of the text as: “sincerity, concentration and secret devotion.” They quote Hasan as say-

ing: “There were people who memorized the Qur`ān but their neighbor’s did not know about it. There were people who gained great knowledge but others did not know them as scholars. There were people who stood for Prayers for a great part of the night but their guests never came to know about it. We have had the chance to know people who, if they had the power to do something secretly, would not do it openly. Earlier Muslims used to supplicate in total devotion but no one heard their voices: it used to be a secret whisper between them and their Lord. That is because Allah said: ‘Call upon your Lord in humility and in secret (devotion).’” And He said about Zakariyyah (19: 3): “When he called upon his Lord in secret” (Qurtubi).

It is reported that during one of the campaigns the Companions of the Prophet did not ascend a hill nor descend it but glorified Allah loudly. The Prophet told them:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ارْزُقُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ ، إِنَّكُمْ لَا تَدْعُونَ
أَصَمًّا وَلَا غَائِبًا ، إِنَّمَا تَدْعُونَ سَمِيعًا قَرِيبًا وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ

“People. Take it easy upon yourselves. You are not addressing someone deaf or who is away. You are calling upon One who is All hearing, close to you; and He is with you” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

The *hadīth* is in the *Sahihhayn*. And Ibn Jurayj has said that raising the voice in supplication is a disapproved act (Ibn Kathir).

Ahmad, the annotator of Kashshaf’s commentary, has the following to say: “These days you will notice people shouting and shrieking in their supplications especially in the Friday mosques. The suppliant pierces your ears with his loud voice without realizing that he is committing two innovations: first, raising his voice in supplications, and second, raising voice inside a mosque. You will also notice that these supplications move the people in a manner that sober supplications do not. But such softening is not from the heart. It is the kind which affects women and children. Had the supplications truly touched their hearts, they would react in the same way even if the supplications were not pronounced so loudly.”

The above is a complete picture of the noisy and long supplications after Tarawih Prayers conducted all over the Gulf and now gradually spreading into the rest of the Islamic world. Some 30 years ago it was never this long, nor this noisy (Au.).

On the basis of this verse (apart from other evidences) Imam Abu Hanifah has ruled that saying “Amin” loudly

is not preferable since it is a word of supplication (Razi, Qurtubi).

Mufti Shafi` Deobandi criticizes the ways of the Imams in the Indian sub continent who have made it a habit of saying supplications loudly after each of the five daily Prayers. They indulge in a "ceremonial ritual" called "du`a" which, apart from being a non *Sunnah*, disturbs the late comers trying to complete their Prayers. Were they to do that once in a while, as a way to teach the congregation the method and manner of supplication, there would be no harm. As for the common people, since they do not know the meaning of the words of supplications, their act can best be described as merely "reading out" the words of supplication, rather than seeking Allah's favors.

Qurtubi adds the following: Some people have said that the hands may not be raised in supplication. It is enough to raise a finger. They said so perhaps because several reports originating from the Prophet did not reach them. The majority of Companions and their Followers have declared it lawful. Bukhari has a report narrated by Abu Musa al Ash`ariyy to the effect that the Prophet raised his hands in supplications until the whiteness of his arm pits became vis-

ible. Ibn `Umar has reported that when Khalid ibn al Walid committed the error of killing an unknown Muslim the Prophet raised his hands and supplicated in words: "O Lord. I am quit of what Khalid has done." This report is also in Bukhari. Ibn Majah has reported the Prophet as having said in effect that Allah feels shy to disappoint a man who raises his hands to Him in supplication. Another well reported incident is that of Badr. When faced with superior man power and arms, the Prophet raised his hands and supplicated facing the Qiblah. However, facing the Qiblah is not a necessary requirement. The Prophet supplicated during Friday sermons with his back to the Qiblah. Further, Tirmidhi has reported in a *hadith* evaluated *Sahih* Gharib that the Prophet did not raise his hands during supplication but rubbed his face with them before bringing them down. Finally, one should avoid rhymes and meters of poetical kind, or punning of the words, etc., rather, use *hadith* words in supplications.

Some other supplication etiquettes are: To be in a state of ablution, vacuity of the heart from other than Allah, beginning and ending with the formula of peace to the Prophet, inclusion of the common Muslims,

[56] And spread not corruption in the land after its ordering⁸⁹ and call on Him in fear and hope.⁹⁰ Surely, Allah's mercy is near to those who excel.⁹¹

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا
وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ
مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

sincerity, and being vigilant of the right hour for supplications (Alusi).

Also see note 379 of *Surah al Baqarah* of this work.

As regards raising of the hands during supplications, there are a few other reports in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi while a report in Abu Da'ud adds that the Prophet rubbed his face with his hands after the supplications. This last report is, according to the author of *Tuhfah*, of Hasan status (Au.).

88. Such as one who aspires to achieve the rank of Prophets Abu Mijlaz; or such as to say, 'O Allah give me a place on the right hand side of Paradise as one enters the gate,' etc. Similarly, to supplicate against the Muslims is also a transgression. Ibn Jurayj has said that to supplicate in a loud voice is transgression too (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi, and others).

Ibn Jurayj has said that it is reproachable to raise the voice, shout, and lament during supplications. They must be done in low tones and in humility (Ibn Kathir).

89. An alternative rendering could be, as done by Dawood: "Do not corrupt the land after it has been purged of evil."

When Abu Bakr b. `Ayyash was enquired about this verse, he said: Allah raised Muhammad when the earth was in a state of chaos. He helped him ordered at his hands. Therefore, whoever invited to anything in opposition to what Muhammad brought, strove to corrupt the land (Manar). However, Mufti Shafi` adds, by implication, material corruption of the land could also be included. And, obviously, indiscreet utilization of the resources of the land is to corrupt it (Au.).

Mawdudi writes: "The command not to make mischief in the earth means not to vitiate the right order of life. What basically constitutes 'mischief making' is to surrender oneself to one's lusts, to commit acts in subservience to other human beings and to subscribe to base moral, social orders, civilizations, principles and laws derived from sources other than God's Guidance. This is the es-

sential mischief from which innumerable evils issue and which the Qur`ān seeks to eradicate.”

Mufti Shafi` adds: In consequence of the corruption in morals engulfing the human society and extending to the corruption in the lands, the reality that we witness today is that despite the abundance of all kinds of materials as well as nonmaterial means of comfort and pleasure, far in excess of the human needs, dissatisfaction, unhappiness and miseries rule the day. Everyone, right from the top of the human social and economic hierarchy to the bottom most person, complains of depression, hardships and loss of peace. This situation cannot be turned around without man’s return to a life guided by Revelation.

90. “This demonstrates the significance of the expression ‘mischief making’. It consists in man turning to other than God as his guardian, patron, and helper, and calling them to his aid and support. To bring about reform, therefore, consists in man turning exclusively to God as his guardian and helper” (Mawdudi).

Qurtubi writes: Hope and fear should be properly balanced allow-

ing none of the scales to tilt far too much on one side. Indeed, it is said that if at all one of them has to tilt, it is fear. That is, one’s fear may be greater than hope during the life time. But, the scale of hope should start tilting as one approaches the end of life. The Prophet has said in a report of Muslim:

لَا يَمُوتَنَّ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا وَهُوَ يُحْسِنُ الظَّنَّ بِاللَّهِ عَزَّ
وَجَلَّ

“Let not one of you die but in a state of good hope with Allah, the Mighty, the Exalted.”

91. Ibn Jarir and Qurtubi devote several lines explaining with examples from Arabic literature why “*qarib*” has been used although masculine, (instead of feminine “*qaribatun*”) despite its noun “*rahmah*” being feminine. It would be good for those who are confronted by this kind of doubts to refer to this section. Texts of this kind also deal with the reasons of singular adjectives for plural nouns and vice versa. Alusi in fact goes to a great length in discussions that run through several pages. As these lines are being written doubts of this sort are being loaded in dozens on the Internet by the Jews and Christians (Au.).

[57] He it is who sends forth the winds as heralds of His coming grace until, when they are charged with heavy clouds, We drive them to a dead land and send down water therewith. Then We bring forth therewith all manners of fruits. Even so We shall bring forth the dead, haply you will understand.⁹²

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَّاحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا أَقْلَّتْ سَحَابًا ثِقَالًا سُقْنَاهُ لِيَلْدِ مَيِّتٍ فَأَنْزَلْنَا بِهِ الْمَاءَ فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ كَذَلِكَ نُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَى لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

[58] As for the good land, comes forth its vegetation by the leave of its Lord. But that which is corrupt, does not come forth but scantily.⁹³ Thus do We give many facets to Our messages for a people who give thanks.⁹⁴

وَالْبَلَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ نَبَاتُهُ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَالَّذِي خَبُثَ لَا يَخْرُجُ إِلَّا نَكِدًا كَذَلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

92. The translation follows the understanding of Shah `Abdul Qadir and Thanwi (Au.).

Qurtubi comments: That is, if Allah is capable of giving life to the plants through rains, He is capable of giving life to the dead also. Abu Hurayrah said: "When, with first blow of the Sur people will die, Allah will send down rains from under His `Arsh. It would be called 'the life giving rain.' It would rain for forty years. With that they would start growing, just like plants grow when watered. Until, when their bodies are complete, their souls will be sent back to them. Thereafter, sleep will descend upon them. They would be asleep in their graves when the Sur will be blown a second time. With that they would wake up, with slumber still on them,

rubbing their eyes. It is then that they will say (36: 52):

قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا مَنْ بَعَثَنَا مِنْ مَرْقَدِنَا [يس : ٥٢]

"Woe unto us. Who woke us up from our places of sleep?" A caller will reply,

هَذَا مَا وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلُونَ [يس : ٥٢]

"This is what the Merciful had promised. And the Messengers spoke the truth."

Mujahid has something similar to say but in a shorter form (Ibn Jarir). Muslim too has a report near about this.

93. Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah and others have said that in this manner a similitude of the believers and unbelievers has been drawn, comparing them with the good and the corrupt lands (Ibn Jarir).

We have a *hadith* of the same meaning. The Prophet said in a report preserved by the *Shaykhayn* and Nasa'i:

مَثَلُ مَا بَعَثَنِي اللَّهُ بِهِ مِنَ الْهُدَى وَالْعِلْمِ كَمَثَلِ الْغَيْثِ الْكَثِيرِ أَصَابَ أَرْضًا فَكَانَ مِنْهَا نَقِيَّةٌ قَبِلَتْ الْمَاءَ فَأَتَيْتَتْ الْكَلَاءَ وَالْعُشْبَ الْكَثِيرَ وَكَانَتْ مِنْهَا أَحَادِبٌ أَمْسَكَتِ الْمَاءَ فَتَفَعَّ اللَّهُ بِهَا النَّاسَ فَشَرِبُوا وَسَمَوْا وَرَزَعُوا وَأَصَابَتْ مِنْهَا طَائِفَةٌ أُخْرَى إِنَّمَا هِيَ قَيْعَانٌ لَا تُمْسِكُ مَاءً وَلَا تَتْبِتُ كَلًّا فَذَلِكَ مَثَلُ مَنْ قُبِعَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ وَتَفَعَّ مَا بَعَثَنِي اللَّهُ بِهِ فَعَلِمَ وَعَلِمَ وَمَثَلُ مَنْ لَمْ يَرْفَعْ بِذَلِكَ رَأْسًا وَلَمْ يَقْبَلْ هُدَى اللَّهِ الَّذِي أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ

“The example of what Allah has sent down of the guidance and knowledge is similar to the rains which fell on the earth. A patch of the earth was good. It accepted the water and threw out good amount of vegetation. There was another kind which was hard (and impenetrable). It preserved the water so that Allah proved it of benefit to the people. They drank and drew its water for plantation. It also fell on a rocky patch of earth. It neither held water nor sent out vegetation. This is the example of someone who understood the religion of Allah so that what is sent to me proved to be of profit to him, he learnt and he taught; and of him who did not raise his head and did not accept the guid-

ance that was sent to me by Allah
“ (Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

And Bukhari has the famous *hadith* which says:

مَا مِنْ مَوْلُودٍ إِلَّا يُولَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ أَوْ يَنْصَرَانِهِ

“There is not a new born but which is born on nature (fitrah). It is his parents who Judaize him or Christianize him” (Alusi).

Rashid Rida adds: In the light of this verse, it is desirable that one should give preference to a pious and religious woman as a wife over another, beautiful, but lacking these qualities. For, good comes out of the good without much effort while one has to struggle hard to get the bare minimum out of the sterile.

Thanwi writes: This proves that aptitudes and potentials of the humans vary.

94. We have adopted Asad’s rendering for better expression. Otherwise, literally the textual words can be rendered as: “That is how We turn about the verses for a people who give thanks” (Au.).

Qurtubi adds that it is the thankful who (think, ponder and) profit from the messages of Allah, hence

[59] Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people.⁹⁵ He said, 'My people. Worship Allah. You have no god other than He. I fear for you the punishment of a Great Day.'⁹⁶

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ
اغْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنِّ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ
عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٥٩﴾

[60] Said the elites⁹⁷ of his people, 'Surely, we see you in a manifest error.'⁹⁸

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِن قَوْمِهِ إِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ
مُّبِينٍ ﴿٦٠﴾

[61] He answered, 'My people. There is no error in me. Rather, I am a Messenger from the Lord of the worlds.'

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي ضَلَالَةٌ وَلَكِنِّي رَسُولٌ
مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦١﴾

the words, "for a people who give thanks."

95. According to a *hadith* in Hakim (*Sahih*: S. Ibrahim) Nuh (asws) was the first Prophet ever to be raised. Ibn `Abbas has said that he was raised ten centuries after Adam (Shawkani). Some scholars have thought that Idris was the first Prophet. If that is correct, then perhaps he was sent to a single nation, while Nuh was a universal Prophet (Ibn Kathir).

Mawdudi writes: "Traditions similar to the story of Noah are also found in classical Greek, Egyptian, Indian, and Chinese literature. Moreover, stories of identical import have been popular since time immemorial in Burma, Malaya, the East Indies, Australia, New Guinea and various parts of Europe and America. This shows clearly that the event took place at some point in the dim past

when men lived together in one region and it was after Noah's Flood that they dispersed to different parts of the world. This is why traditions of all nations mention the Flood of the early time. This is notwithstanding the fact that the actual event has increasingly been shrouded in mystery, and the authentic elements of the event overlaid with myth and legend."

96. "This refers either to the Day of Judgment or to the approaching deluge" (Asad).

97. The textual word "*mala*" is for an assembly of men without a woman among them (Ibn Jarir). It has its root in "*mala'a*" meaning "to fill," and the connotation is the picture of a group of people (the nobles, chiefs, princes, principal persons, persons whose opinion is respected: Majid), who, by their upkeep, smart and im-

[62] I convey to you the messages of my Lord and I advise you sincerely;⁹⁹ for I know from Allah what you know not.

أُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَأَنْصَحُ لَكُمْ وَأَعْلَمُ
مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

[63] Do you think it strange that a reminder should come to you from your Lord by (the mouth) of one of your own men?¹⁰⁰ So that he might warn you, that you may learn to be Godfearing, and that haply you might be shown mercy!?'¹⁰¹

أَوْعَجِبْتُمْ أَنْ جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ وَلِتَتَّقُوا وَلَعَلَّكُمْ
تَرْحَمُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

pressive appearance, fill the eyes of the beholder (Alusi).

98. This then is the way of the world that has not changed since the Prophets of old. The religious people of today will hear the same thing from their adversaries. Patience and forbearing should alone be their resort (Thanwi).

99. The textual word for "advice" has its root in *nasihah* which could also be rendered as "admonition." In addition, it has the connotation of "sincerity" (Au.).

100. That is to say, someone who was born and raised before your eyes who is not a stranger to you (Alusi).

Imam Razi points out that what the unbelievers meant by this statement is that since in the final analysis, it was their own reason that helped in making decisions, they were in no need of a Messenger who was one

of them. If there was a need for an external agency to guide, it should have been an angel.

101. Allah's mercy depended upon the unbelievers' fear of Allah; and that in turn depended on they accepting the warning of punishment. And, delivery of the warning required the sending down of a Messenger (Alusi).

Referring to the words, "haply you might be shown mercy," Imam Razi reports Jiba'i, Ka'bi and Qadi 'Ayad as of opinion that in view of the verse saying, "So that he might warn you and you may learn to be godfearing and you may be shown mercy," it can be concluded that Allah intended belief, godfearing and mercy for those who were addressed through Prophets, as against the belief held by many that He desired of the unbeliever unbelief and that He created them for no other purpose but to fill

[64] But they gave him the lie, so We delivered him and those with him in the ship, and drowned those who gave the lie to Our signs. Surely, they were a blind people.¹⁰²

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلِكِ
وَأَعْرَفْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا
قَوْمًا عَمِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

[65] And unto `Aad (We sent) their brother Hud.¹⁰³ He said, 'My people. Worship Allah (alone). You have no god other than He. Will you not fear?'

وَإِلَىٰ عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا
اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلَهِ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ
﴿٦٥﴾

[66] Said the elites of the unbelievers of his people, 'Surely, we observe in you a (kind of) foolishness. Indeed, we reckon you of the liars.'

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ إِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ
فِي سَفَاهَةٍ وَإِنَّا لَنُظُنُّكَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ
﴿٦٦﴾

the Hell fire. After quoting the above statement, Imam Razi replies that, if deeds are not dependent upon the causes, then it is necessary that we incline to the "possible" rather than to the "preferable." But if the deeds depend on causes, then it means one is forced to do them, which would mean that Allah wished unbelief of the unbelievers, which goes against the opinion they hold.

102. The brevity of the account may lead some people to guess that the episode was a short one: a Prophet arose, presented his message, some arguments took place, his nation remained firm on rejection, and were consequently destroyed. Mawdudi clears the doubt: "The fact of the matter, however, is that the Qur'ān has narrated in just a few lines a sto-

ry that was worked out over a long period of time. The brevity of the Qur'ānic description owes itself to the fact that the Qur'ān is not interested per se in story telling; that its narration and purpose are didactic. Hence, while recounting an historical event, the Qur'ān mentions only those fragments of the event which are relevant, ignoring those details which are irrelevant to Qur'ānic purposes (at that point: Au.). Again, at different places in the Qur'ān the same event is mentioned for a variety of reasons. On every occasion only those fragments of the story which are relevant to a specific purpose are mentioned and the rest left out."

103. Asad writes: "Hud is said to have been the first Arabian prophet. He may be identical with the Bib-

[67] He replied, 'My people. There is no foolishness in me, rather, I am a Messenger from the Lord of the worlds.

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي سَفَاهَةٌ وَلَكِنِّي رَسُولٌ
مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

[68] I convey to you the messages of my Lord. And I am a faithful adviser unto you.

أُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَأَنَا لَكُمْ نَاصِحٌ
أَمِينٌ ﴿٦٨﴾

[69] Do you think it strange that a reminder should come to you from your Lord by (the mouth) of one of your men; so that he might warn you!? Remember that He made you the successors after the nation of Nuh and granted you an increase in stature among the creations.¹⁰⁴ Remember then Allah's blessings haply you will prosper.'

أَوْعَجِبْتُمْ أَن جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَلَى
رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ وَاذْكُرُوا إِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ
خُلَفَاءَ مِن بَعْدِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَزَادَكُمْ فِي الْخَلْقِ
بَسْطَةً فَادْكُرُوا آيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ
﴿٦٩﴾

lical Eber, the ancestor of the Hebrews ('Ibrim) who like most of the Semitic tribes had probably originated in South Arabia. (Reference to Eber are found in Genesis x, 24 25 and xi, 14ff.) The ancient Arabian name Hud is still reflected in that of Jacob's son Judah (Yahudah in Hebrew), which provided the subsequent designation of the Jews. The name 'Eber both in Hebrew and in its Arabic form 'Abir signifies "one who crosses over" (i.e., from one territory to another), and may be a Biblical echo of the fact that this tribe "crossed over" from Arabia to Mesopotamia in pre Abrahamic times. The tribe of 'Ad, to which Hud belonged ("their brother Hud"), inhabited the vast desert region known as Al Ahqaf, between

'Uman and Hadramawt, and was noted for its great power and influence (see 89: 8) "the like of whom has never been reared in all land"). It disappeared from history many centuries before the advent of Islam, but its memory always remained alive in Arabian tradition."

Mawdudi adds: "James R. Wellested, a British naval officer, discovered an ancient inscription in 1937 in a place called Hisn al Ghurab which contains a reference to the Prophet Hud."

104. This piece of the verse should lead us to believe that material benefits are favors of Allah. It is not asceticism to belittle them or treat them with scorn, as some ignorant Sufis do (Thanwi).

[70] They replied, 'Have you come to us that we worship Allah alone and abandon those that our forefathers worshipped? Bring then upon us that which you threaten us with, if you are truthful.'

[71] He said, 'A punishment has already settled upon you from your Lord and anger (too). Do you argue with me over some names that you have devised you and your forefathers¹⁰⁵ - for which Allah did not send down any authority? Wait then, I am also - along with you - of those who are waiting.'

[72] Therefore, We delivered him and those that were with him by Our mercy and We cut down the roots of those who gave the lie to Our signs,¹⁰⁶ and who would not believe.¹⁰⁷

قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا لِنَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَحْدَهُ وَنَدْرَ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْبُدُونَ آبَاؤَنَا فَأَنَّا بِمَا تَعِدُّنَا إِن كُنتَ مِنَ
الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾

قَالَ قَدْ وَقَعَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ رِجْسٌ
وَعَظْبٌ أَمْجَادُونَ فِي أَسْمَاءِ سَمَيْتُمُوهَا
أَنْتُمْ وَأَبَاؤُكُمْ مَا تَزَلَّ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ
فَانظُرُوا إِلَيَّ مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ ﴿٧١﴾

فَأَجِئْنَاهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَقَطَعْنَا
دَابِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَمَا كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ
﴿٧٢﴾

105. The words, "some names that you have devised," are meaningful. In the absence of any historical evidence of their existence, what is the reality behind the pagan deities but that they are some names that have been devised by their followers (Au.)?

106. It is reported that when the Prophet alighted at Hijr on his way to Tabuk he addressed the people in words:

لَا تَسْأَلُوا الْآيَاتِ وَقَدْ سَأَلَهَا قَوْمٌ صَالِحٍ فَكَانَتْ تَرُدُّ
مِنْ هَذَا الْفَجِّ وَتَصْدُرُ مِنْ هَذَا الْفَجِّ فَعَتُوا عَنْ أَمْرِ
رَبِّهِمْ فَعَقَرُوهَا فَكَانَتْ تَشْرَبُ مَاءَهُمْ يَوْمًا وَيَشْرَبُونَ
لَبَنَهَا يَوْمًا فَعَقَرُوهَا فَأَحَدَتْهُمْ صَبْحَةً أَهَمَدَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ
وَجَلَّ مَنْ تَحْتَ أَيْدِي السَّمَاءِ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا رَجُلًا وَاحِدًا
كَانَ فِي حَرَمِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قِيلَ مَنْ هُوَ يَا رَسُولَ

اللَّهِ قَالَ هُوَ أَبُو رِغَالٍ فَلَمَّا حَرَجَ مِنَ الْحَرَمِ أَصَابَهُ
مَا أَصَابَ قَوْمَهُ

"Do not ask for signs. The people of Salih asked for signs. Allah sent them a camel. She would drink off and empty their wells every second day. On the next day they drank from its milk. It used to enter the town by this gorge. They transgressed the commandment of their Lord and hamstrung her. Allah promised them a chastisement that was to descend after three days. Allah's promise was not to be broken so a huge cry was heard which killed everyone save for a single man

[73] And to Thamud¹⁰⁸ (We sent) their brother Salih. He said, 'My people. Worship Allah alone. You have no god other than He. A clear sign has come to you from your Lord: this is Allah's own she camel:¹⁰⁹ a sign for you.¹¹⁰ So leave her alone to graze in Allah's land, and touch her not in harm, lest a painful chastisement seizes you.

وَإِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنِّ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ جَاءتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فَذَرُوهَا تَأْكُلْ فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَمَسُّوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَيَأْخُذْكُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾

who had gone to Makkah for a visit.” He was asked: “Who was this man O Messenger of Allah?” He replied: “That was Abu Rughal. Ultimately, when he left the Haram, he was overtaken by what the others had been overtaken” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

The report is in Ibn Abi Hatim, Tabrani and Hakim who declared it trustworthy (Shawkani).

The Prophet also prohibited that a Muslim should visit the sites of destruction of previous nations, unless one went there weeping (Ibn Jarir).

The *hadith* is in Ahmad (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

It is also reported that the Prophet (*saws*) told `Ali:

أَحْيَمِرُ ثَمُودَ الَّذِي عَمَّرَ النَّاقَةَ وَالَّذِي يَصْرُبُكَ يَا عَلِيُّ عَلَى هَذِهِ يَعْنِي قَرْنَهُ حَتَّى تَبْلَّ مِنْهُ هَذِهِ يَعْنِي لِحْيَتَهُ

“(The most wretched of men) was Uhaymar, the one who hamstrung Thamud’s camel, and he

who will strike you here O `Ali (i.e., at the neck)” (Zamakhshari).

The wordings of the above report are from Ahmad (Au.).

107. It is reported that once `Ali (*ra*) asked a Hadrami: “Have you seen the red dune heaped with crimson stones with Arak tree growing on it and plenty of lote trees by the sides in such and such area of Hadramawt? Have you seen it?” The man replied: “You have described it as if you have seen the place.” `Ali said: “I have not. But it was described to me.” The Hadrami asked: “So what about it?” `Ali replied: “Hud’s grave is thereunder” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

The report is in the Tarikh of Bukhari (Shawkani).

108. Asad writes: “The Nabataean tribe of Thamud descended from the tribe of `Ad mentioned in the preceding passage, and is, therefore, often referred to in pre Islamic poetry as the “Second `Ad”. Apart

from Arabian sources, “a series of older references, not of Arabian origin, confirm the historical existence of the name of the people Thamud. Thus the inscription of Sargon of the year 715 B.C. mention the Thamud among the people of the eastern and central Arabia subjected by the Assyrians. We also find the Thamudaei, Thamudenes mentioned in Aristo, Ptolemy, and Pliny” (*Encyclopedia of Islam* IV, 736). At the time of which the Qur`an speaks, the Thamud were settled in the northernmost Hijaz, near the confines of Syria. Rock inscriptions attributed to them are still extant in the region of Al Hijr. As in the case of `Adite prophet Hud and the prophet Shu`ayb spoken of in verse 85 93 of this *Surah* Salih is called the “brother” of the tribe because he belonged to it.”

109. It was called Allah’s own camel out of reverence. Other examples are “House of God,” “Allah’s Fire,” etc. (Ibn Kathir).

Thanwi adds: It is perhaps in this vein that the words “`ala suratihī” (lit., in His own image) of the famous *hadīth* should be taken.

The *hadīth* alluded to by Thanwi is:

خَلَقَ اللَّهُ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ - صحيح البخاري

“Allah created Adam in His own image.”

110. Majid quotes: “Near the summit of Jebel Musa is a peculiar mark in the stone which has a strong resemblance to the imprint of a camel’s foot. It is regarded by the Bedawin with great veneration, and the girls, when tending their flocks on the mountain, often milk their goats into it as a sure means of obtaining increase and prosperity. This is called Athar Naqat en Nabi, “the footprint of the Prophet’s she camel” ... I should therefore conclude that the Nabi Salih of the tomb in the Wady es Sheikh, the prophet of the camel’s footprints, and the Salih of the Qur`an are identical” (Palmer, *Desert of the Exodus*, p. 50)”

[74] Remember that He made you the successors after `Aad and allowed you to prevail in the land in whose plain fields you build castles and whose mountains you carve for homes.¹¹¹ Remember then Allah's blessings and commit not in the earth corruption.'

وَأَذْكُرُوا إِذْ جَعَلْنَا خُلَفَاءَ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَادٍ
وَبَوَّأْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ تُحْتَدُونَ مِنْ سُهُولِهَا
فُصُورًا وَتَنْحِتُونَ الْجِبَالَ بُيُوتًا فَاذْكُرُوا
آيَاءَ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ
﴿٧٤﴾

[75] The arrogant elites of his people said to those of the weakened believers, 'Do you think Salih has been sent by His Lord?' They answered, 'We believe in that which he has been sent with.'¹¹²

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لِلَّذِينَ
اسْتَضَعُّوا لِمَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ
صَالِحًا مُرْسَلٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلَ بِهِ
مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

[76] Said those who were arrogant, 'As for us, we are, indeed, in what you believe unbelievers.'¹¹³

قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا بِالَّذِي آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ
كَافِرُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾

111. "A reference to the elaborate rock dwellings or tombs to be seen to this day which the Thamud carved out of the cliffs west of Al Hijr, in northern Hijaz, and embellished with sculptures of animals as well as many inscriptions attesting to the comparatively high degree of their civilization and power. In popular Arabic parlance, these rock dwellings are nowadays called Mada'in Salih (The Towns of Salih)" Asad.

112. "The contents of this message .. appeared to them justification enough to accept it on its own merits, without the need of any esoteric "proof" of Salih's mission. In a subtle way, this statement of faith has a meaning which goes far beyond the

story of the Thamud. It is an invitation to the skeptic who is unable to believe in the divine origin of a religious message, to judge it on its intrinsic merit and not to make his acceptance dependent on extraneous, and objectively impossible, proofs of its origin: for only through the contents of a message can its truth and validity be established" (Asad).

113. What the rejecters meant to ask the lowly believers was: 'So far as our big and important people are concerned, they are not able to figure out whether Salih is a Messenger or not. But have you, O people of low intellect, already reached the conclusion that he has been commissioned? The wise answer that the believ-

[77] Then they hamstrung the she camel,¹¹⁴ and insolently defied the order of their Lord. And they said, 'Salih. Bring down upon us that which you were threatening us with if you are one of the envoys.'

فَعَمَّرُوا النَّاقَةَ وَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقَالُوا
يَا صَالِحُ إِنَّا بِمَا نَعِدُنَا إِن كُنْتَ مِنَ
الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

[78] So an earthquake seized them, so that by morning they lay fallen on their faces.

فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ
جَاثِمِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾

ers gave was: It is not the question of knowing or not knowing, being able to figure it out or not being able to figure it out. It is beyond doubt both to us as well as to you, that Salih has been commissioned. The contention is not, therefore, over the fact of he being commissioned. The contention is over whether we should declare our belief in him or should we not. Well, you have taken your stand, and we have taken ours, viz., we have declared our belief that He is a Messenger of God.' At this point the unbelievers were forced to admit that they had decided to disbelieve in Salih as a matter of policy, irrespective of what the facts spoke. And, therefore, they meant to say to the lowly unbelievers that 'in view of our big-time fellows making that decision, your belief, O the lowly ones, is of no consequence to us' (based on Shabbir).

114. The verb `aqara primarily denotes "he hamstrung (an animal)"

i.e., before slaughtering it, so that it might not run away. This custom was widely practiced in pre Islamic Arabia, so that `aqr ("hamstringing") gradually became synonymous with slaughtering. The term hamstringing itself is defined as: "the great tendon at the back of the hock of a four footed animal," i.e., what corresponds to the tendon at the back of the knees among the humans (Au.).

Here, the act of hamstringing the camel has been attributed to the whole nation while it was only a group of people, led by an individual, who had done that. The commentators have pointed out in explanation that the rest of the people did not object to the crime. In fact, Rashid Rida points out, that according to reports those who did the hamstringing actually sought everyone's assent: entering every house for consultation. Therefore, the scourge came on all. Allah has said elsewhere (8: 25):

[79] He turned away from them saying, 'My people. Surely, I conveyed to you the messages of my Lord and sincerely counseled you but you do not seem to appreciate sincere counselors.'¹¹⁵

فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ
رِسَالَةَ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُحِبُّونَ
النَّاصِحِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾

[80] And (recall) when Lut said to his people, 'Do you commit a lewdness that no creation committed before you?'¹¹⁶

وَلَوْطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ
مَا سَبَقْتُكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ
﴿٨٠﴾

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً
[الأَنْفَال : ٢٥]

"And beware of a tribulation that will not specifically strike the transgressors alone among you."

The story behind the camel is that the Thamudians asked for a sign. A camel was given to them as the sign. She was a huge animal that came out with the split of a rock. They were told to respect her and allow her to drink from the town-well once every second day. She drank off all the water of the well on the day of her turn. The Thamudian unbelievers did not like it and formed a team to hamstring her. When one of them did that, the nation was overtaken by Allah's scourge. It destroyed them all (Au.).

115. The address was made after they were destroyed. As to the question of effectiveness of the statement, there could be several answers. First, it

could have been a remark uttered in half sarcasm, half pity (Au.). Second, it could be in the same vein as that of the Prophet to the slain chieftains at Badr. He said, "O so and so, so and so, we found the promise made to us by our Lord true. Have you also found the promises made to you true?" `Umar asked: "Are you speaking to the corpses?" The Prophet replied: "You do not hear better than they do. But they have no power to reply" (Razi, Ibn Kathir). Third, it could be in the same style as a poet's poetical piece on seeing a castle or a historical town in ruin (Shabbir).

116. `Amr b. Dinar has said that the nation of Lut was the first to indulge in homosexuality (Ibn Jarir). That is, perhaps as a people (not individuals) and at the national level (Au.).

Thanwi has written that by the words "a lewdness that no creation committed before you," the implication is that sometimes the fact that an

[81] You go into men out of lust in preference of women. You are indeed a transgressing people.¹¹⁷

إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّن دُونِ
النِّسَاءِ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

[82] His people had no answer but to say, 'Expel them from your town. These are a puritanical folk.

وَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَخْرِجُوهُمْ
مِّن قَرْيَتِكُمْ إِنَّهُمْ أَنَاسٌ يَّتَطَهَّرُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

[83] So We delivered him and his kinsfolk save for his wife: she was of those who lagged behind.¹¹⁸

فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ كَانَتْ مِّن
الْعَاقِبِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

evil was practiced by previous generations gives suggestion to the later people that it might not be an evil. But, in this case, the abominable act was entirely an innovation. Another implication is that laying the foundation of an evil is worse than being a practitioner of another's invention.

117. Yusuf Ali writes: "Lut is the Lot of the English Bible. His story is biblical, but freed from some shameful features which are a blot on the biblical narrative, (e.g., see Gen. xix, 30-36). He was a nephew of Abraham, and was sent as a Prophet and warner to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, cities utterly destroyed for their unspeakable sins. (Ibrahim asws also sometimes visited them to admonish them: Thanwi). They cannot be exactly located, but it may be supposed that they were somewhere in the plain east of the Dead Sea. The story of their destruction is told in

the 19th chapter of Genesis. Two angels in the shape of handsome young men came to Lot in the evening and became his guests by night. The inhabitants of Sodom in their lust for unnatural crime invaded Lot's house but were repulsed. In the morning, the angels warned Lot to escape with his family. "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt" (Gen. xix. 24-26).

118. Yusuf Ali also comments: "In the biblical narrative she looks back, a physical act ... Here she is a type of those who lag behind, i.e., whose mental and moral attitude, in spite of their association with the right-

[84] Thereafter We rained upon them a shower (of brim stones).¹¹⁹ See then, what was the end of the criminals!¹²⁰

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا فَأَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ
عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

teous, is to hark back to the glitter of wickedness and sin.”

119. It is said that the people of Lut lived in five major towns. Sodom was their capital. However, remains of none of them could be located till today despite intensive searches. Either they are under the Dead Sea, or, they were turned upside down so nothing remained. Commentators and Muslim historians have generally reported that when the time for punishment came, Jibril scooped up the whole of the nation with one of his wings, lifted them to the Heavens where their cries could be heard, and then banged them against the ground (ref. 11: 82). That could explain why their remains could not be found. The Dead Sea itself, the site of Lut’s nation (also known as Transjordan), about 1000 sq. km, is the lowest land level on the earth. It is even below the sea level by about 400 meters. The Dead Sea is so called because nothing ever lives in it (except brime shrimp) because of its high salt content. Its water is the saltiest collection of liquid on earth, being nine times as salty as the oceans.

In fact, nothing grows on the shore around (Au.).

Abu Hamza says he asked Muhammad b. `Ali: “Did Allah punish the nations’ women because of the crime of their men?” He answered: “Allah is more just than that. Their women committed lesbianism (Alusi). That was of course in addition to their denial – by men and women - of the Prophet sent to them, which was the primary cause of punishment (Au.).

120. There is consensus of opinion that punishment for homosexuality is death for the married, and lashes for the unmarried Muslim (Ibn Kathir). The Prophet said in a *hadith* of Abu Da’ud, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Musnad Ahmad that the active and the passive both be killed. However, there are differences over the form of punishment. Imam Abu Hanifah has said that a criminal of this kind should be thrown down a cliff and then stoned to death, in keeping with the punishment meted out to the nation of Lut (Ma`arif).

Mawdudi writes: “Now, the crime of the person who commits sodomy ...

[85] And to Madyan¹²¹ (We sent) their brother Shu`ayb.¹²² He said, 'My people! Worship Allah, you have no god other than He.¹²³ Surely, there has come to you a clear sign from your Lord.¹²⁴ So give full measure and weight, and defraud not the people of their commodities.¹²⁵ And spread not corruption in the land after its ordering.¹²⁶ That is better for you if you will believe.

وَإِلَىٰ مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ
اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنِّ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ
جَاءتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ
وَالْمِيزَانَ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا
تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا ذَلِكُمْ
خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

is not limited to that act alone. In fact he commits along with it a number of other crimes. First, he wages war against his own nature, against his inherent psychological predilection. This causes a major disorder which leads to highly negative effects on the lives of both the parties involved in that unnatural act effects which are physical, psychological as well as moral. Second, he acts dishonestly with nature since while he derives sexual pleasure he fails to fulfil the social obligations of which this pleasure is a recompense. Third, such a person also acts dishonestly with human society. For, although he avails himself of the advantages offered by various social institutions, when he has an opportunity to act, he uses his abilities in a manner which not only fails to serve that society but positively harms it. Apart from neglecting the obligations he owes to society, he renders himself incapable of

servicing the human race and his own family. He also produces effeminacy in at least one male and potentially pushes at least two females towards sexual corruption and moral depravity...

“It should also be made clear that it is altogether unlawful for the husband to perpetrate this act on his wife. The Prophet (peace be on him), according to a tradition in Abu Da’ud said: ‘Cursed be he who commits this act with a woman.’”

121. Several commentators have reported that Madyan was the name of one of the sons of Ibrahim by his third wife Qaturah. The place of his settlement acquired his name. Majid writes: “Now known as Maghair Shu`aib, the city was situated on the Red Sea coast of Arabia, south east of Mount Sinai. ‘Madyan was a station of the pilgrim route from Egypt to Mecca, the second beyond Aila

(Elath) ... the place is still known as the "cave of Sho`aib." It had considerable rivers, which have been described by Sir R. Burton' (EBr. XVIII, p. 419, 11th ed.). It is bounded on the north by Lat. 29° 29' and on the south by Lat. 27° 39'. In other words it extends from the bed of the Gulf of Akaba, and down the eastern shore of the Red Sea for about two hundred miles in all' (Marston, *The Bible is True*)."

Yusuf Ali writes: "Madyan" may be identified with "Midian". Midian and the Midianites are frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, though the particular incident here mentioned belongs to Arab rather than to Jewish tradition. The Midianites were of Arab race though, as neighbors of Canaanites, they probably intermixed with them. They were a wandering tribe: it was Midianite merchants to whom Joseph was sold into slavery, and who took him to Egypt. Their principal territory in the time of Moses was in the north east of the Sinai Peninsula, and east of the Amalekites. Under Moses the Israelites waged a war of extermination against them: they slew the kings of Midian, slaughtered all the males, burnt their cities and castles, and captured their cattle (Num. xxxi, 7-11). This sounds like total exter-

mination. Yet a few generations afterwards, they were so powerful that the Israelites for their sins were delivered into the captivity of the Midianites for seven years: both the Midianites and their camels were without number: and the Israelites hid from them in "dens ... caves, and strongholds" (Judges vii. 1-6). Gideon destroyed them again, (Judges vii. 1-25), say about two centuries after Moses. As the decisive battle was near the hill of Moreh, not far south of Mount Tabor, we may localize the Midianites on this occasion in the northern parts of the Jordan valley, at least 200 miles north of the Sinai Peninsula.

"This and the previous destruction under Moses were local, and mention no town or Midian. In later times there was a town Madyan on the east side of the Gulf of `Aqaba. It is mentioned in Josephus, Eusebius, and Ptolemy: (Encyclopedia of Islam). Then it disappears from geography. In Muslim times it was a revived town with quite a different kind of population, but it never flourished. The Midianites disappeared from history."

Nonetheless, there is no *hadith* to lend certainty to above statements.

122. Shihab has said that two different Shu`aybs have been mentioned

in the Qur`ān; one the Prophet, and the other, the father in law of Musa (Alusi).

Ibn Hibban has a long *hadith* narrated by Abu Dharr which says that “Four (prophets) were from the Arabs: Hud, Salih, Shu`ayb and Muhammad” (Manar).

Yusuf Ali writes: “Shu`aib belongs to the Arab rather than to Jewish tradition, to which he is unknown. His identification with Jethro, the father in law of Moses, has no warrant, and I reject it. There is no similarity either in names or incidents, and there are chronological difficulties... If, as the commentators tell us (rather, some of them: Au.), Shu`aib was in the fourth generation from Abraham, being a great grandson of Madyan (a son of Abraham), he would be only about a century from the time of Abraham, whereas the Hebrew *Bible* would give us a period of four to six centuries between Abraham and Moses. The mere fact that Jethro was Midianite and that another name, Hobab, is mentioned for a father in law of Moses in Num x. 29, is slender ground for identification. As the Midianites were mainly nomad tribes, we need not be surprised that their destruction in one or two settlements did not affect

their life in wandering sections of the tribe in other geographical regions. Shu`aib's mission was apparently in one of the settled towns of the Midianites, which was completely destroyed by an earthquake (vii. 91). ... The name of the highest mountain in Yemen, Nabi Shu`aib (11,000 ft.) has probably no connection with the geographical territory of the nomad Midianites, unless we suppose that their wanderings extended so far south from the territories mentioned (earlier).”

123. Sayyid Qutb writes: “The humans started on their journey as those rightly guided believing in One God. Soon they lost their moorings, to stumble into ignorance, misguidance and polytheism. This happened, and keeps happening all the time, because of the fact that complex dispositions have been placed in their souls; as well as because of factors external to them, which they encounter as they interact with each other. Then come the Messengers confirming the very truths on which they were, before they lost their orientation. As a result of the Messengers coming to them, those who must meet with their destruction are destroyed and those who have to thrive, thrive. Those who thrive are the ones who return to the original

truth. They are the ones who have known that their god is One God. To this One God they surrender themselves wholly. They are the people who treated their Messenger's call in all seriousness:

‘My people! Worship Allah, you have no god other than He.’ This is the first layer of truth over which the rest of the religion of Allah is laid, and the truth which every Messenger repeated throughout the ages. Every Messenger who was commissioned, started off with this Word, addressing the people who had been put off the Word, so that they forgot it, lost it, and declared partners to Allah despite differences in the kind and class of deities (they devoted themselves to) and despite the differences in the nature of the ignorance they succumbed to. However that be, it is on the basis of this Word that the struggle ensues between truth and falsehood. It is on the basis of this Word that Allah either seizes those who disbelieve in it or delivers those who believe in it... And the Qur’ān uses the same words to express what the countless Messengers said, despite the differences in dialects: ‘My people! Worship Allah, you have no god other than He.’ This is to impress the universality of the truth, expressed through the ages, a truth so

universal that it could be expressed in very simple words.”

He continues down the lines:

“The central point of emphasis of every call to the Truth was a single, simple statement: Man’s submission to his Lord alone, the Lord of the Worlds and to none else. That is because this declaration of submission to Allah, and the denial of all other false claimants to divinity, is the first principle and the foundation stone without which nothing in the life of the human beings can be set aright. We can notice that after making this statement, the Qur’ān did not mention much of what else the call of the Messengers constituted. That is because every detail of the religion after the statement of this cardinal principle is traced back to this principle. It cannot be extrapolated over it. The importance of this foundation rule has been expressed by the Qur’ān which dealt with it first and foremost, singling it out for mention while speaking about the caravan of faith .. rather, through and through the Qur’ān. We might also remind ourselves, as we said in the note on the chapter Al `Imran, that this is the main subject of the Makkan revelations, as it has been the subject of the Madinan revelations whenever

legal points or details of the guidance were to be enacted.

“This religion holds a basic truth, and it follows a specific method that it adopts to present that basic truth. And the method it adopts has no lack of clarity in its presentation. It is upon us therefore, to know the basic truth which this religion has presented to us, as it is also important that we adhere to the method that was adopted to present this religion. This method consists in presentation, emphasis, repetition, prominence, and singling out of the truth concerning the Oneness of Divinity.

“The stories that are presented in these passages depict for us the nature of faith and of unfaith residing in the human soul. Consequently, repeatedly it depicts through examples those hearts that are susceptible to belief. It also depicts repeatedly the examples of those hearts that are prone to disbelief. Those who believed in their Messengers had no pride in their selves against submission to Allah and obedience to His Messengers. They were not surprised at all that one of their own men was chosen to warn them or give them glad tidings. In contrast, those who disbelieved in their Messengers did that out of pride that they harbored

in their hearts. They were too arrogant to give up the authority they had usurped and hand it over back to the One it belonged Allah, whose is the Creation, and whose is the Command. They were not ready to listen and obey to someone who happened to be no more than ‘just one of them.’ They were the top brasses, the ruling classes, the eminent men of authority in their nations. This solves the enigma: the root cause of rejection. It involves the central question concerning the ‘rule’ and the ‘authority.’ The elites of the nations that were addressed knew immediately upon receiving the message, what ultimately was the demand contained in the simple sentence: ‘O my people. Worship Allah. You have no god besides He,’ and, ‘I am a Messenger from the Lord of the Worlds.’

“They realized that submission to the idea of Oneness of Divinity, and comprehensiveness of Lordship meant, first and foremost, revocation of their own authority and its restoration to none other than the true Law giver, the Lord of the Worlds. This is what they opposed tooth and nail, until they met with their destruction. The love of power led them to the situation that neither the first nor the last of them would

profit from the call, to the extent that they should run headlong into destruction ... headlong into Hell fire. The attitude of those who rejected the call as the following stories tell us follow a law that does not alter: people's heedlessness to Allah's signs and deviation from His path .. Allah's warning through His Messenger, their arrogance against submission to Him, and Him alone .. deceptions caused by the material well being .. making fun of the warnings delivered and arrogantly seeking the hastening of punishment .. rebellion, threatening of the believers and targeting them with oppression... and, in contrast, the patience of the believers and their consistency in holding fast unto the faith.

"To be sure, falsehood cannot tolerate the existence of truth, even if truth decided to live in a corner away from any contact with falsehood, waiting for Allah's intervention and victory. Falsehood does not accept this situation. Rather, it will follow the truth, chase it across, and challenge it to a duel. Shu`ayb had said, 'If there be some among you who have believed in what I have been sent with, while some who do not believe, (yet no punishment descends) then have patience (and wait) until Allah judges between us. And He is

the best of judges.' But they would not accept to wait. They could not bear to see the truth in existence and a group of people living by its light, not ruled by their authority and beyond the authority of the false gods. Therefore: 'Said the chiefs of those of his people who waxed proud, 'We shall surely expel you O Shu`ayb and your fellow believers from our city, or you should return to our religion.' At this point Shu`ayb voiced his decision, refusing to accept what falsehood was offering. He asked, 'Even though we detest (the return)? We would have forged a lie upon Allah if we returned to your religion after Allah delivered us from it.'

"This detail we offer, in order that those who are engaged in inviting to the truth should realize that their struggle with falsehood has certain repercussions and consequences that cannot be avoided, and that they would gain nothing from avoiding contacts with it. Falsehood will not let them in peace, until they have given up their religion wholly and returned to their religion after Allah delivered them from it. And, noticeably, they were delivered from the punishment merely by virtue of their rejection of the Lordship of false gods, and submission to One Allah... Thus, (for those of the older times)

there was no escape from the struggle, from patience in its face, from the endurance until victory, and their reassertion – time and again - of trust in Allah, worded by Shu`ayb as: ‘In Allah we place our trust. O our Lord! You decide between us and our people by truth. You indeed are the best of those who decide.’ Thereafter, the *Sunnah* of Allah took over, as has the *Sunnah* of Allah always been taking over .. through and through human history.”

Quotation from Sayyid Qutb ends here.

124. The words, “Surely, a clear sign has come to you from your Lord” imply that Shu`ayb presented them a miracle as a sign. Every Prophet is given a miracle specific to him as a proof of his authenticity. If he does not present any miracle, then he is a false Prophet, although, in this instance the Qur`ān did not tell us what that miracle was (Zamakhshari).

The miracle that our Prophet was given was the Qur`ān. The Prophet said:

مَا مِنَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا قَدْ أُعْطِيَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ مَا
مِثْلُهُ آمَنَ عَلَيْهِ الْبَشَرُ وَإِنَّمَا كَانَ الَّذِي أُوتِيَتْ وَحْيًا
أَوْحَى اللَّهُ إِلَيَّ فَأَرْجُو أَنْ أَكُونَ أَكْثَرَهُمْ تَابِعًا يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ

“There has not been a Prophet but he was given a miracle on the strength of which people could believe in him. I have been given the Revelation revealed to me as the miracle, and, consequently, I hope to have the largest number of followers on the Day of Judgment” (Manar).

125. The textual word “bakhs” would include not only weighing less, but, by implication, all kinds of fraud such as theft, deceit, and various kinds of commercial and other malpractices (Razi).

Alusi and Thanwi have pointed out that “bakhs” would also include withholding from a man of status what is rightfully due to him, of the nature of respect he deserves to be shown, concealment of his religious merits, and so forth, neglected because of a disease suffered by many “men of knowledge.”

126. Razi thinks that the “ordering” referred to is that of abundant provision made available to them by Allah. But Zamakhshari thinks the allusion is to the ‘order’ established by the previous Prophets.

Also see note 89 above.

[86] *And squat not in every path, threatening¹²⁷ and hindering from Allah's way those who believe in Him,¹²⁸ seeking to make it crooked.¹²⁹ And recall when you were few, then He multiplied you; yet behold, what was the end of the corrupt people.*

[87] *And, if there be some among you, who have believed in what I have been sent with, while some others do not believe, then have patience until Allah judges between us. Indeed, He is the best of judges.'*

[88] *Said the chiefs of those of his people who waxed proud, 'We shall surely expel you O Shu`ayb and your fellow believers from our town, or you should return to our religion.'¹³⁰ He asked, 'Even though we detest?*

وَلَا تَقْعُدُوا بِكُلِّ صِرَاطٍ تُوعِدُونَ وَتَصُدُّونَ
عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِهِ وَتَبْغُوتَهَا عَوجًا
وَأذْكُرُوا إِذْ كُنْتُمْ قَلِيلًا فَكَثَّرَكُمْ وَانظُرُوا
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

وَإِنْ كَانَ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ آمَنُوا بِالَّذِي
أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ وَطَائِفَةٌ لَّمْ يُؤْمِنُوا فَاصْبِرُوا
حَتَّىٰ يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ بَيْنَنَا وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ
﴿٨٧﴾

قَالَ الْمَأْلُؤُا الَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ
لَتُخْرِجَنَّكَ يَا شُعَيْبُ وَالَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا مَعَكَ
مِنْ قَرْيَتِنَا اَوْ لَنَعُوْدَنَّ فِيْ مِلَّتِنَا قَالَ اَوْلَوْ كُنَّا
كَارِهِيْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾

127. There are two interpretations of the words, "And squat not on every road threatening:" First, it refers to those who rejected Shu`ayb, threatening to assault anyone who believed in him. Second, the reference is to their crime of waylaying people, for, they were robbers too (Ibn Jarir).

128. The words, "And squat not on every road threatening and hindering from Allah's path those who have believed in Him," were perhaps never so well applicable to anyone, as they are applicable in our times to the anti Islamic forces within Muslim polity, who hold a pervert pen in their hand, and to the forces in

non-Muslim polity, who hold a gun in their hand (Au.).

129. These are the three ways by which the spread of truth is hindered: (i) threatening those who have embraced the truth with violence, (ii) preventing fresh ones from embracing it (e.g., by rewarding them for non acceptance), and (iii) endeavoring to prove it crooked unto the rest (Razi).

130. The address was to Shu`ayb as well as his followers, of whom the latter had been on the religion of their people. However, if it is assumed that it was Shu`ayb alone who had been addressed, then, in the words of Ma-

[89] We would have forged a lie against Allah if we returned to your religion after Allah delivered us from it. It is not for us to return to it¹³¹ unless our Lord were to so will.¹³² Our Lord embraces all things in His knowledge.¹³³ In Allah we place our trust. O our Lord! You decide between us and our people by truth. You indeed are the best of those who decide.¹³⁴

قَدِ افْتَرَيْنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا إِنْ عُدْنَا فِي مِلَّتِكُمْ بَعْدَ إِذْ نَجَّانَا اللَّهُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَعُودَ فِيهَا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَسِعَ رَبُّنَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا افْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ قَوْمِنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْفَاتِحِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

jid: “A reference to the old faith in the case of the Prophet Shu`aib can only mean that he, before he began to preach, was taken for an infidel by his countrymen, and not that he was really so; for a Prophet according to the teachings of Islam can, at no period of his life, be an infidel.”

131. Sayyid Qutb writes: “So what has the contemporary jahiliyyah to say about the rightly guided ones? ... What has it to say about the woman who will not display her flesh? What has it to say about the young man who turns away in disgust from cheap flesh? The Jahiliyyah actually refers to the purity and chastity of the two as reactionary, backwardness, and stagnancy! It does everything possible through its media, press, and all means of communication, to bring them back and sink their purity and chastity into the mire in which it itself has sunk.”

132. Suddi has said that since Allah (*swt*) does not approve of shirk, there

was no chance that they should be returned to paganism (Ibn Jarir).

Some others have said that the words in question are in the same vein as someone saying: “I will not do it unless the raven turns white,” meaning, since the raven will not turn white, I am not going to do it.

Another implication is: “Our faith in Allah is so strong that there is no power unless it was the power of Allah Himself that can force us abandon our religion” (Au.).

133. Jiba’i has been reported as explaining the meaning as: “If Allah willed, He could place some wisdom in the devotion to the deities since ‘our Lord embraces all things with His knowledge,’ and, following that, He would order us to serve them, in which case, of course, we would comply” (Razi).

134. Sayyid Qutb heavily comes down on non Islamic systems. Here are a few selected passages: “The pain

and suffering that accompany an exit from the submission to false gods and entry into that of the true God, however enormous it may be, is yet much lesser and lighter in comparison to the pain and suffering that one has to undergo remaining submitted to the false gods. The pain and suffering contained in submission to the false gods are simply monstrous however attractive the apparent peace, security and tranquility in life, and however abundant the material means. Those pains and sufferings are slow, but long and continuous. The pain is that of the loss of the human ness of humanity, for, in this system, a man is a slave of another man. And what slavery can be worse than that of a man bending down to the laws made for him by another man? What slavery is worse than that of a man whose wishes have to follow the wishes of another man? Of someone who is dependent upon approval and disapproval of another man? What slavery is worse than that a man's reins be in control of another who makes him dance to his tunes?

"The matter does not rest there. People in this kind of slavery sink to greater and greater depths. The powers over them extends with time to, ultimately, some people controlling the finances of another people

so that there is no law and no fence by which wealth could be kept out of their reach. The system also takes over the children, bringing them up the way it will devoid of character, morals, values, traditions, and the right concepts, apart from its hegemony over their souls and their everyday lives. It slaughters them at the altars of its carnal desires. Then it lays the foundations of its own power and glory over their skulls and corpses. Ultimately, it becomes the sole master of their honor too so that a father cannot prevent his daughter being sexually exploited by the administrators and perpetrators of the ungodly system: either through outright abduction, as has been happening throughout human history, or, through corruption of their moral values so that they are readily available for everyone's pleasure, preparing them for prostitution under some disguise... Whoever imagines that he, his wealth, his honor, his life and the life of his children are safe under the Satanic system he lives in, is either in a state of delusion, or has lost his sensibilities."

Sayyid's criticism of the non Divine systems as those in which even people's honor is not safe, is, going by historical facts, quite mild. What has actually happened throughout hu-

man history would require coinage of new words to describe the horrors. As recently as at the end of the 20th century, 50,000 women were systematically raped by the Christians in Bosnia. Muslim girls as young as thirteen were made to dance naked on table tops to the guffaws of the Christian soldiers around. It might not be said, in reply, that it was an abnormal situation. Far from that, it was a perfectly normal situation for the rest of the Christian world watching the systematic humiliation over the T.V. screens. The normalcy is recorded by the fact that they did nothing to stop it. In fact, the British diplomat sent to work out a peace formula was widely believed to have intentionally delayed it, if not made it impossible to happen. So, it was a perfectly normal situation for them. And, the victims in this case were not foreign to the Western culture. They related themselves to the West and Western culture. So, what the West did to them, was not because they were Muslims, although that was one of the factors, but because women are no worthier than that in its value system.

That was followed by inhuman behavior towards women in Abu Ghraib and other prisons in Iraq. A sixteen year old girl was brought in,

and systematically rented for 50 dollars to the American soldiers until she committed suicide. Some British soldiers made horses of women of advanced age, and rode on them in the prison corridors. They have a clever way of doing things. First they do what they want, until exposed. As soon as they are exposed, they say they are sorry about it, and transfer a couple of soldiers away from the crime scenes. Then, after a time, they are back at it.

However, apart from these glorious events in the annals of Western civilization, going back just a century, we come across other horrors practiced in the name of religion. The practice of the Hindu priestly class in the Indian sub continent is a case in point. The Brahmin class had sexual access to every Sudra woman in certain regions of the state of Kerala until the turn of this century. According to some social scientists, the practice of offering a Sudra girl to a Brahmin, for a few nights immediately after marriage, before her nuptial relationship with her husband begins, still survives in certain remote areas of the Southern Indian state: "Another custom peculiar to the Nayar community is 'sambandam.' Sambandam is cohabitation of Nayar women with Namboodri

[90] Said the chiefs of those of his people who had disbelieved, 'If you follow Shu`ayb, surely, you will be the losers.'¹³⁵

وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لِيِنِ
اتَّبَعْتُمْ شُعَيْبًا إِنَّكُمْ إِذًا لَخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾

Brahmins without marriage. A Namboodri being the direct representation of God, his 'sambandam' with Nayar women is considered to be sacred and divine. If the Namboodri is pleased, God is pleased..." ('Matrilineal System Among Malayalis,' by K.T.Parampil, Caravan, New Delhi, Sept. '67). These practices can be traced back to religious commandments. Manu Shastra, for instance, the most authoritative Law Book of the Hindus, states: "The Brahmin (the priestly caste) can misappropriate the property of the Shudra (low caste Hindus) without hesitation because the latter owns nothing. All his property belongs to his master, that is, the Brahmin" (Manu, 8: 417). The teachings in fact can be traced back to thousands of years old Hindu Scriptures: "Vishnu has said, 'If a Shudra offers his life, property and wife to the Brahmin, it can be accepted'" (Vishnu, 5:11). Refer to article "Priesthood Holds Progress to Ransom" by Ratan Lal Bansal, Caravan, Jan. 67. Our point here, however, is not the mere criticism of the systems in question, rather to point

out, firstly, that in their entire history, if in their wars the Muslims remained quite humane, in peace time too they allowed their populations, Muslim and non Muslim alike, fair amount of freedom to shape their own lives, without coercing them, directly or indirectly, into subservience and slavery to the political or religious classes. Although far from being truly Islamic, the systematic exploitation of the masses has never been the working principle of the states the Muslims set up anywhere in the globe, anytime in history. Secondly, it is to assert that Sayyid Qutb was not at all being an extremist when he criticized the jahiliyy systems in harsh terms (Au.).

135. Mawdudi comments: "One should not pass cursorily over the short sentence without reflection. What the leaders of Midian in effect told their people was that Shu`ayb's exhortations to practice honesty and righteousness, and to strictly adhere to moral values, would spell their disaster. They implied that they could not succeed in the business carried on by the people of Midian if they

[91] Whereupon an earthquake seized them and by morning they lay fallen prostrate in their dwellings.¹³⁶

فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

were totally honest and straightforward in their dealings...

“Such attitudes have not, however, been confined to the tribal chiefs of Shu`ayb. People who stray away from truth, honesty, and righteousness, regardless of their age and clime, have always found in honesty a means of great loss. People of warped mentalities in every age have always believed that trade, politics, and other worldly pursuits can never flourish unless resorted to dishonest and immoral practices. Their main objection to the Message of truth in all ages has been that the pursuit of truth spells material doom.”

136. The Qur`an has reported several kinds of punishments that visited the people of Madyan. Here it is said that they were destroyed by an earthquake. At another place (11: 94) it is stated that they were destroyed by a huge cry. In yet another place (26: 189) it said that they were seized by the “chastisement of the Day of Shadow.” In explanation, some commentators have said that the allusion

is to separate instances, involving two people: one, of Madyan and the other, of Aykah. Others have thought that it was one nation destroyed by several kinds of chastisement descending upon them together. For example, Ibn `Abbas has said that before their destruction Allah sent down severe heat that left the unbelievers restless in their homes. Then, after a couple of days a piece of cloud appeared in the sky casting its cooling shadow on the land. People gathered under it for relief. When they had all gathered thereunder, the earth shook and a huge cry seized them so that, moments later, they all lay dead. If this version is accepted then Thanwi points out the textual word “Dar” would have to be understood (not in the sense of dwellings, rather) in the sense of “the land,” as in the Arabic terms, “Dar al Islam,” “Dar al Harb,” etc. It cannot also be ruled out, adds Shafi`, that various tribes (spread over a vast area) received various kinds of punishments.

[92] As if those who had rejected Shu`ayb never flourished therein. Those who rejected Shu`ayb, they were the losers.¹³⁷

الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا شُعَيْبًا كَأَن لَّمْ يَعْنُوا فِيهَا
الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا شُعَيْبًا كَانُوا هُمُ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾

[93] He turned away from them saying, 'My people. Surely, I conveyed to you the messages of my Lord and sincerely counseled you. How should I then grieve for an unbelieving people?'¹³⁸

فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ
رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ فَكَيْفَ آسَى
عَلَى قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

[94] And We sent no Prophet to a city but We seized its inhabitants with suffering and adversity, that haply they might learn to be humble.

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّن نَّبِيٍّ إِلَّا أَخَذْنَا
أَهْلَهَا بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضُرَّعُونَ
﴿٩٤﴾

137. According to Thanwi, the verse should be rendered as: "As if those who had rejected Shu`ayb (and threatened to expel him from the town, had themselves) never flourished in those (towns). Those who rejected Shu`ayb, (and had told the believers that they would be the losers) ... (themselves) ended up the losers."

(Although some commentators believe that the people of Madyan and the As hab al Aykah were one and the same: Au.), Ibn `Asakir and Ibn Is haq have reported `Ikrimah and Suddi of the opinion that Shu`ayb was the only Prophet to be sent to two nations. He was first sent to the people of Madyan. When they rejected they were destroyed by a terrible cry. Thereafter, he was sent to the

people of Aykah (the word means "forest": Shafi`), who also rejected him and were destroyed when Allah (*swt*) seized them on the "day of the shelter (*yawm al zullah*)" Shawkani.

Ibn `Asakir has another report from Ibn `Abbas to the effect that the Masjid al Haram has no more than two graves: one that of Isma`il, which is in Hijr and the other of Shu`ayb which is in front of the Hajr al Aswad (Shawkani). However, to the writer's knowledge, the authenticity of the report has not been checked, nor it is there in any known *hadith* collection (Au.).

138. The choice of the phrase "an unbelieving people" (in the words "How should I then grieve for an unbelieving people"), instead of the simpler, "How should I grieve for

[95] Then We substituted evil with good, till they multiplied (in numbers)¹³⁹ and said, 'Surely, adversity and happiness visited our forefathers (too).'¹⁴⁰ So We seized them on a sudden,¹⁴¹ unawares.¹⁴²

ثُمَّ بَدَّلْنَا مَكَانَ السَّيِّئَةِ الْحَسَنَةَ حَتَّىٰ عَفَّوْا
وَقَالُوا قَدْ مَسَّ آبَاءَنَا الضَّرَّاءُ وَالسَّرَّاءُ
فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

the unbelievers,” have the message hidden that the mass of the unbelievers in question did not deserve to be shown any mercy (Alusi, Thanwi).

139. The rendering of the word “afaw” herewith is based on the understanding of Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Suddi and others as in Ibn Jarir.

140. This is in contrast to a believer’s attitude about whom the Prophet said:

عَجَبًا لِأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ
لِأَحَدٍ إِلَّا لِلْمُؤْمِنِ إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ سَرَّاءٌ شَكَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا
لَّهُ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَّاءٌ صَبَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ

“It is delightfully amazing of a Muslim that all his affairs turn out to be good for him – and this is for none but a true believer. If he is bestowed with good he gives thanks and it proves good for him. If he is struck with adversities, he observes patience and it proves good for him.” (Ibn Kathir).

The *hadith* is in Muslim (Hussain b. Ibrahim).

141. A *hadith* says:

موت الفجأة رحمة للمؤمن وأخذة أسف للكافر

“Sudden death is mercy for the believer and a grievous seizing for the unbeliever” (Ibn Kathir).

The *hadith* is in Abu Da’ud and Ahmad (Hussain b. Ibrahim).

142. That is, they were totally unaware of the measures that Allah (*swt*) takes against the corrupt (Alusi, modified).

Mawdudi adds: “It should be noted that the above rule (of ease and adversity: Au.) which was applied to the nations of the previous Prophets, was also applied in the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). When this *Surah* was revealed the Quraysh displayed exactly the same characteristics and attitudes as those nations which had earlier been destroyed. According to a tradition narrated by both `Abd Allah b. Mas`ud and `Abd Allah b. `Abbas (Bukhari), as the Quraysh grew in defiance to the Prophet’s call, he prayed to God that he might be assisted by inflicting famine on the

[96] Yet, had the inhabitants of the cities believed and feared (Allah), surely, We would have opened blessings of the heaven and earth upon them; but they cried lies, so We seized them for what they were earning.¹⁴³

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا
عَلَيْهِمْ بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِن
كَذَّبُوا فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

[97] Do the inhabitants of the city feel secure that Our punishment shall come upon them at night, while they are asleep?

أَفَأَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا بَيَاتًا
وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

[98] Do the people of the city feel secure that Our punishment shall come upon them in broad daylight while they are in their playful activities?¹⁴⁴

أَوْ أَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا
ضُحًىٰ وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾

[99] Do they feel secure against Allah's devising?¹⁴⁵ Lo, none feels secure against Allah's devising but a people (destined to be) the losers.¹⁴⁶

أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللَّهِ فَلَا يَأْمُرُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا
الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

Quraysh, as in the days of the Prophet Joseph. Accordingly, God subjected the Quraysh to such a severe famine that they took to subsisting on carcasses, the skins of animals, bones, and wool. Unnerved by this the Quraysh, led by Abu Sufyan, implored the Prophet (peace on him) to pray to God on their behalf. But when the Prophet's prayer helped to improve the situation somewhat, the Quraysh reverted to their arrogant and ignorant ways."

143. The verse proves by implication that obedience to Allah's commands has a say in the descending down of worldly blessings and, conversely,

sinning against Him, has a say in the descending down of worldly tragedies (Thanwi).

144. Their engagement in useless pursuits has been equated with playful acts (Zamakhshari).

Sayyid Qutb writes: "Allah's scourge is too harsh to make any difference, whether it took the people while they were awake or asleep, playing or in useful activities. But the Qur'an presents it in a manner as to touch upon the soul, in order that the warning reaches home."

145. "Makrallah' signifies God's granting a man respite or delay, and enabling him to accomplish his

worldly aims ... or His taking men little by little, so that they do not reckon upon it (LL)” Majid.

Hasan al-Busri has said: “A believer devotes himself to good deeds but is fearful that they might not be accepted of him. In contrast, a corrupt person commits sins but feels himself secure” (Ibn Kathir).

According to the Shafe`iyyah, to feel secure from Allah’s makr and to be dependant of His mercy are both major sins (Alusi). Thanwi adds: Some others have said that the two are kufr (and not simply major sins). Perhaps what is meant is, taking them in the sense of believing Allah incapable of punishment on a sudden, or sending down His mercy at will. That would amount to kufr (Au.).

146. In addition to the opinions in the above note, a *hadith* in Bazzar and Ibn Abi Hatim counts “feeling of security from Allah’s devising” as the greatest of the great sins. The explanation is, if one feels secure because he thinks that Allah is incapable of punishing him, then that is the greatest of the Great Sins (Alusi).

Rashid Rida laments the contemporary Muslim situation: “With the Book of Allah in their hands, it would have been proper for the Muslims to fear Him in the manner deserving

of Him and give some thought to the reasons of destruction of nations and their empires before them. That would have led them to the point that as against the transgressions of a few individuals, those of nations are not so easily forgiven. But, unfortunately, Muslims do not, to start with, accord these kind of verses, dealing with these kind of truths, the right interpretation. Their another failure is to draw proper inferences and lessons from the rules laid down in such verses. If they read them at all, they indulge its grammar, or syntax, or use them as a platform for debating the superiority of this or that school of law. Alternatively, they believe that these verses are specifically dealing with the unbelievers. They denounce those who tell them that these verses are equally applicable to Muslims. That is what the people of the Book used to say about other nations of their time. They thought that Allah would defend some nations simply because He had raised Prophets among them and that He would bestow upon them successes of this as well as the next world because of their special “position” among the nations, and not because of their obedience to their Prophets. This belief is now strongly saddled in the psyche of the Muslims too. Have

[100] Does it guide not those who inherit the earth after its inhabitants, that if We willed We could afflict them for their sins?¹⁴⁷ But We set a seal upon their hearts, so that they do not hear.

أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لِلَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ
أَهْلِهَا أَنْ لَوْ نَشَاءُ أَصَبْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ
وَنَطْبَعُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

[101] Those are cities of which We narrate to you their tidings. Messengers brought them clear signs.¹⁴⁸ But they were not such as to believe in what they had rejected earlier.¹⁴⁹ That is how Allah seals the hearts of the unbelieving folks.

تِلْكَ الْقُرَىٰ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِهَا
وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا
لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِمَا كَذَّبُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ
عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٠١﴾

these Muslims not given any thought to our Prophet's words, '(Surah) Hud and its sisters have hastened old age on me.'

وَجَعَلْنَا الْأَتْهَارَ بَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ
وَأَنْشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ [الأنعام : ٦]

The following appears in the footnote of Al Manar: The *hadith* referred to above is a *Sahih* report that can be found in Tabarani, Tirmidhi and Hakim. Ibn `Asakir has the Prophet's additional words, "And what was done to the nations before me."

"Do they not see how many generations We destroyed before them whom We had established in the earth in a manner that We have not established you; We made the heavens pour down upon them rains (in torrents) and set rivers rolling beneath them. Yet, We destroyed them because of their sins and gave rise to other epochs after them" (Ibn Kathir).

That is, the thought that his nation could be punished in a manner similar to the nation of Hud and other Prophets, weighed so heavily on the Prophet that it hastened old age on him. How fearful not then, should his *Ummah* be (Au.)?

148. This is another confirmation that every Prophet was given a miracle specific to him. As for the statement of the unbelievers (11: 53) to the effect "You have not brought us, O Hud, a clear sign," it was by way of rejection of the Sign that had actually been sent (Thanwi).

147. As Allah said elsewhere (6: 6):

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ مَكَانَهُمْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ مَا لَمْ نُمْكِنْ لَكُمْ وَأَرْسَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِدْرَارًا

[102] And, We did not find in most of them (any regard for) the covenant.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, We found most of them defiantly disobedient.

وَمَا وَجَدْنَا لِأَكْثَرِهِمْ مِّنْ عَهْدٍ وَإِن وَجَدْنَا
أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

149. There have been various speculations about whom the reference is to, and when was it that the rejection took place? Suddi believes it was at the time when Allah brought out the souls of Adam's progeny and asked them whether they believed in Him as their Lord. Some rejected Him then. Ubayy b. Ka`b and Rabi` believe they were in Allah's knowledge: unbelievers from the beginning. Yet Allah sent them Messengers in order that they are left with no excuse. Mujahid has said that the meaning is that, 'had those nations returned to the earth for a second time, after their destruction, they would have still not believed.' Ibn Jarir prefers this last opinion.

However, Ibn Kathir's preference is Ibn `Atiyah's statement to the effect that the reference is to the rejection that the unbelievers committed whenever their Prophets appeared among them. A *hadith* in *Sahih* Muslim reports Allah as saying:

وَإِنِّي خَلَقْتُ عِبَادِي حُنَفَاءَ كُلَّهُمْ فَأَتَتْهُمْ الشَّيَاطِينُ
فَاجْتَالَتْهُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِمْ

"I created My slaves *Hunafa'* (believing in One God) but *Shaytan*

deviated them from their religion and forbid them what I had made lawful unto them."

Another *hadith* in the *Sahihbayn* says:

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ أَوْ
يُنَصِّرَانِهِ أَوْ يُمَجِّسَانِهِ

"Every child is born on nature. It is its parents who Judaize it, Christianize it or Zoroastrize it."

150. While Ibn `Abbas thinks that the textual word "ahd" is in the sense of being able to respond to admonitions in the right spirit, Ubayy b. Ka`b's preference is that it refers to the covenant that was taken from them at the beginning of the affair, before creation, that is, in the world of Spirits (Ibn Jarir).

Rashid Rida writes: Raghib has said that Allah's covenant sometimes refers to what resides in our minds, sometimes to what the Qur'an and *Sunnah* command us, and sometimes to what one imposes upon himself, although not declared obligatory by the *Shari`ah*, such as to vow to do something. And when he says, Rashid Rida adds, that Allah's cov-

[103] Then, after them,¹⁵¹ We sent Musa with Our signs to Fir`awn¹⁵² and his chiefs. But they acted wrongfully therewith. Therefore, see what was the end of those who were corrupt.

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

[104] Musa said, 'O Fir`awn! I am indeed a Messenger of the Lord of the worlds.

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يَا فِرْعَوْنُ إِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

enant resides in our minds, he is referring to the nature on which every human being is created (believing in one God).

Mawdudi adds: "The statement that 'We did not find most of them true to their covenants' signifies the general propensity of the people not to honor their commitments. They are neither faithful to the primordial covenant which they made with God (see al A`raf: 172) which is binding on every mortal as God's servant and creature, nor faithful to the collective covenant which is binding on every human being as a member of the human fraternity. Nor are men generally faithful to the commitments which they make to God in hours of distress or in moments when their moral instincts are awake and astir. Violation of any of these covenants has been termed *fisq* (transgression)."

151. "The stories narrated in the Qur`an bring home unmistakably the point that people who reject

God's Message are not spared; rather they are destroyed. In narrating at length the story of Moses, Pharaoh and the Israelites, the Qur`an provides some important lessons for the unbelieving Quraysh, the Jews, and also the believers.

"The Quraysh are advised that the apparently large differences in the numerical strength of the forces of truth and falsehood in the early phase of the Islamic movement should not lead them to entertain any kind of illusion. History provides ample testimony that the Message of truth has always had a very humble beginning. That its proponent, initially, is in the hopelessly small minority of one; in fact, one in the whole world. He then proceeds, despite his resourcelessness, to challenge the hegemony of falsehood, to declare war against it, despite the fact that falsehood is backed by powerful states and empires. And ultimately the truth triumphs. The Quraysh are also re-

[105] It is right (of me) that I should not speak on behalf of Allah except the truth. I have brought you a clear sign from your Lord.¹⁵³ Therefore, let go with me the Children of Israel.¹⁵⁴

حَقِيقٌ عَلَىٰ أَنْ لَا أَقُولَ عَلَىٰ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ
قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِبَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعِيَ
بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

mindful that all conspiracies hatched against the Prophet and all the means employed to suppress the Message of truth are ultimately foiled. They are further told that God grants long terms of respite to the evil doing nations so that they might mend their ways and reform themselves. But when they persistently disregard all warnings and learn no lesson from instructive events, He smites them with an exemplary punishment” (Mawdudi).

152. Like Najashi for the king of Habasha, Kiswa for the king of Persia, Tubba` for the king of Yemen, or Qaysar for the king of Rome, Fir`awn was the title of the king of the Amalekites who once ruled Egypt (Alusi and others).

Majid writes: “It is to be observed that the holy Qur`ān never mentions the Egyptian king (or kings) by name. It only uses his general designation, viz., Pharaoh. Now the fact is, as ‘it has long ago been noted by many Egyptologists that in the Egyptian literature it was customary to

speak of the king as “Pharaoh” without mentioning his name. By a great number of examples from the Egyptian literature it can be found that it was precisely in the New Kingdom (1500 945 B.C.) that the proper name of the king was given only in solemn inscriptions or in purely historical records...even in royal edicts, in judicial reports and in general records, the king is simply alluded to as “Pharaoh” (Yehuda, Accuracy of the Bible, p. 42).”

Rashid Rida writes: Musa (asws) was primarily sent to the Children of Israel, and secondarily to Fir`awn and his nation. You might say that the sending to the Children of Israel was the main objective, while to Fir`awn and his hosts, a means of accomplishment of that objective.

153. “Mark the words ‘your Lord.’ The Qur`ānic God is the Universal God, the God of Egyptians as well as of the Israelites, and not the Biblical God ‘the Lord God of the Hebrews” (Majid).

[106] He replied, 'If you have brought a sign, *قَالَ إِنْ كُنْتَ جِئْتَ بِآيَةٍ فَأْتِ بِهَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾* produce it, if you are truthful.'

[107] So he cast down his staff and lo, it was a *فَأَلْقَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٠٧﴾* serpent¹⁵⁵ plain (to sight).¹⁵⁶

154. Yusuf Ali writes (under verse 136): "Where was the Council of Pharaoh held in which Moses addressed Pharaoh? Egypt's primary capital in the XVIIIth Dynasty was Thebes (=Not Ammon), but that was more than 400 miles to the south of the Delta, in whose corner Israel dwelt. Memphis, on the apex of the Delta, a little south of where Cairo is now, was also over 100 miles from Israel's habitations. The interview must have been either in a Palace near Goshen, where the Israelites dwelt, or in Zoan (=Tanis), the Deltaic capital built by a former dynasty, which was of course still available for the reigning dynasty, and which was not far from the Israelite settlement."

155 Tho`ban of the original is for a very large snake, a python. But, although it was so huge, its movements were as fast as that of a slender snake. Hence its description elsewhere as "jaann" which is for a small, fast moving snake. It is also possible that with each throw Musa's staff

acquired different shapes, sizes, and forms (Alusi).

Majid writes: "Wrong and confused as usual, the *Bible* attributes this miracle, when performed before Pharaoh, not to Moses but to Aaron. The serpent has a special prominence in Egyptian mythology and symbolism. 'Of all the animals receiving the homage of the people' none were so numerous or were so universally feared and venerated as the snakes. The serpent was adored where Amon was but a name, and where Ra was looked upon as belonging, like fine horses and clothes, to the rich and the mighty.' (Syce, Religion of Ancient Egypt, p. 208)."

Yusuf Ali adds: "The serpent played a large part in Egyptian mythology. The great sun god Ra won a great victory over the serpent Apophis, typifying the victory of light over darkness. Many of their gods and goddesses took the forms of snakes to impress their foes with terror. Moses' rod as a type of a serpent at once appealed to

[108] *And he drew out his hand and lo, it was shining bright to the onlookers.*¹⁵⁷

وَتَرَعَّ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيِّضَاءٌ لِلنَّاطِرِينَ

﴿١٠٨﴾

the Egyptian mentality. The concept which the Egyptians had entertained in their minds before was converted into terror. Here was one who could control the reptile which their great god Ra himself had such difficulty in overcoming!”

156. (The word “plain [to sight]” was added to emphasize that it was not a make believe thing): rather, something real to the observers (Zamakhshari).

Mawdudi comments: “Those who tend to play down the supernatural character of such signs or miracles, and who try to explain them in terms of natural laws of causation, in fact attempt to build mid way house between the believing and disbelieving in the statements of the Qur’ān. Such an approach can hardly be considered reasonable. What it does demonstrate, however, is how such people can be pulled in two opposite directions. On the one hand, they are not inclined to believe in a Book which abounds in narrations of a supernatural kind. On the other hand, being born followers of their ancestral religion, they are not inclined to

reject the Book which carries supernatural narrations.

“With regard to miracles, there are two basic questions that people should ask themselves. Did God, after creating the universe and establishing a system of natural causation therein, suspend Himself such that it is no longer possible for Him to interfere in the workings of the universe? Or does He still hold the reins in His own Hands so that His command is enforced every moment, and He retains the power to alter the shape of things and the normal course of events either partially or fully as and when He wills?”

157. It is reported that Musa (asws) would draw out his hand from his breast pocket and it would be shining bright but not as the hand of a leper (as in Exodus vi, 6: Asad). And when he re inserted it in his pocket, it would regain its normalcy (Ibn Kathir and others).

The word “onlookers” implies that the hand attracted attention of the onlookers, who thronged around to have a closer look at its splendor, especially so because Musa himself was

[109] Said the chiefs of the people of Fir`awn,¹⁵⁸ قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّ هَذَا لَسَاحِرٌ
'This indeed is a skilled magician. عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾

[110] He plans to drive you out of your kingdom.¹⁵⁹ So, what do you recommend?'¹⁶⁰ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنْ أَرْضِكُمْ فَمَاذَا
تَأْمُرُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾

dark brown complexion (Zamakhshari).

Yusuf Ali writes: "... the second Sign displayed by Moses was even more puzzling to the Egyptians. Moses drew out his hand from the fold of the garments on his breast, and it was white and shining ... This was to counter any suggestion of evil, which the serpent might have created. This was no work of evil, of black magic, or a trick or illusion. His hand was transfigured with a light which no Egyptian sorcerer could produce."

158. Majid quotes: 'The priests and military men held the highest position in the country after the family of the King, and from them were chosen his ministers and confidential advisers,' "the wise counsellors of Pharaoh" (HHW: I. p. 200).

159. Sayyid Qutb comments: "This was the fear that Fir`awn and his counselors felt in the wake of the message .. and this is how the rebels of every age feel threatened. We might at this point recall what a bed-

ouin had remarked in a set of neat words when he heard the Prophet invite the people to bear testimony to Allah's oneness and to his own messengership. He had said: 'These are words that the kings despise.' Another bedouin also in a neat set of words quipped: 'If that is so then the Arabs and the non Arabs will declare war on you.' The two Arabs knew the implication of the call. They knew that the testimony: 'there is no god save Allah,' falls like a hammer-blow on the heads of the kings and rulers who rule not by the Law of Allah be they Arabs or non Arabs. The testimony touched the Arabs' psyche with gravity, for they knew their language well enough. There was not one among them who thought that the testimony 'there is no god save Allah,' and rule by the laws of other than Allah, could be brought to dwell together in the heart of a man, or on any single piece of land ... that there could be any other deity where belief in Allah was established. There was not anyone then who would un-

[111] They suggested, 'Keep him and his brother (Harun) in waiting; and send across the cities musterers,'¹⁶¹

قَالُوا أَرْجِهْ وَأَخَاهُ وَأَرْسِلْ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ
خَاشِعِينَ ﴿١١١﴾

[112] To summon every knowledgeable magician to your presence.¹⁶²

يَأْتُوكَ بِكُلِّ سَاحِرٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿١١٢﴾

derstand the meaning and implication of the testimony 'there is no god save Allah' as understood today by those who call themselves Muslims."

160. It has been said that this sentence is from Fir`awn. That is, when they expressed their concern, he asked them for advice on the course of action (Ibn Jarir).

Mawdudi comments: "The above account raises the question as to how a destitute member of the slave Israeli nation could pose such a serious threat to an emperor as mighty as Pharaoh. This is especially so when one considers that Pharaoh was not only an absolute ruler over the territory which stretched in one direction from Syria to Libya and in the other direction from the Mediterranean coast to Ethiopia, but was even considered a deity deserving of worship... The answer lies in the fact that Moses's claim to prophethood implied the call to total change, obviously including political change. For, if a person lays claim to be God's Messenger, it implies that people

obey him unreservedly. For God's Messengers are not sent to the world to obey other human beings and live in subordination to them... It is this which explains why Pharaoh and his coterie felt threatened by an all out revolution political, economic and social when Moses came forth with his call."

The immediate threat, of course, was to their economy. The Israelites were in tens of thousands, deployed in homes, farms, fields and industries. Their sudden freedom or departure from the Kingdom, spelled doom to its economy. Pharaoh and his counselors could not have failed to imagine the impact (Au.).

161. The words "send across the cities musterers" suggest that every magician of some merit was brought to the capital, implying that several thousands of them must have gathered (Razi).

162. Majid quotes once again: "Egypt was then 'the true home of all kinds of magic' (EBi.c. 1221)."

[113] (When they had gathered), the magicians went up to Fir`awn and asked, 'Shall we have a reward if we should be the victors?'¹⁶³

وَجَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ قَالُوا إِنَّ لَنَا لَأَجْرًا إِن كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْغَالِبِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾

[114] He replied, 'Yes, indeed, and you shall be amongst those nearest (to me).'¹⁶⁴

قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ لِمِنَ الْمُقْرَبِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾

[115] They said, 'Musa. Either you cast (your staff) or we shall (be the first to) cast.'¹⁶⁵

قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى إِنَّمَا أَنْ تُلْفِيَ وَإِنَّا أَنْ نَكُونَ نَحْنُ الْمُلْفِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾

Yusuf Ali writes: "The advice of the Council to Pharaoh shows a misreading of the situation. They were in a panic about what the magic of this evidently powerful sorcerer could do against them. So they advised the Pharaoh to summon their most powerful sorcerers from all over the country, and in the meantime to hold Moses and Aaron to suspense, neither to yield to them nor definitely oppose them."

163. Asad writes: "The particle *la* preceding the noun *ajr* ("reward") indicates an emphasis which gives to this combination the meaning of "great reward."

Yusuf Ali comments: "Their (the magicians') art was built on trickery and imposture, and the first thing they could think of was to make a selfish bargain for themselves. The Pharaoh and his Council would in their state

of panic agree to anything. And so they did."

164. Ibn `Abbas has been reported as saying that when the magicians were collected from all over the kingdom, they enquired about the kind of magic Musa performed. When they learnt that his rod became a snake, they repaired to a city called "Furma" which housed an institute of magic. There they received special training in converting rods to snakes. When they returned they assured Fir`awn that, unless a miracle from God Himself intervened, there was no one in the earth who could beat them in turning rods into snakes (Ibn Jarir).

165. The Sufiya have said that the magicians showed respect to Musa by asking him this question and were duly rewarded by Allah who led them to faith (Razi).

[116] He said, 'You cast.' So, when they cast, they cast a spell on the people's eye and struck terror into them. Indeed, they produced a mighty work of magic.¹⁶⁶

قَالَ أَلْقُوا فَلَمَّا أَلْقَوْا سَحَرُوا أَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ
وَأَسْرَبُوهُمْ وَجَاءُوا بِسِحْرِ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١١٦﴾

[117] We revealed to Musa, 'Cast your staff.' And lo! It began to swallow what they had faked.¹⁶⁷

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَإِذَا
هِيَ تَلْفُفٌ مَّا يُفْكُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾

[118] Thus the truth came to pass and of no effect was that which they were doing.

فَوَقَعَ الْحَقُّ وَبَطَلَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾

[119] Vanquished then and there, they turned back humbled.¹⁶⁸

فَعَبُّوا هُنَالِكَ وَانْقَلَبُوا صَاغِرِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾

[120] And the magicians were thrown into prostration.

وَأُلْقِيَ السَّحَرَةُ سَاجِدِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾

[121] They cried out, 'We believe in the Lord of the worlds.'¹⁶⁹

قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢١﴾

166. It is said that they turned up in thousands, everyone armed with ropes, rods, staffs, and so forth. They threw in all that they had and lo, they appeared to the people as snakes, the whole ground teeming with them in a dreadful sight (Ibn Jarir).

167. When Musa's snake had systematically swallowed their snakes, one after another, he picked it up and it turned back into his staff (Ibn Jarir).

168. The verse is speaking of Fir`awn and his folk (and not of the magicians) Ibn Jarir.

169. (Skilled magicians themselves) they realized that what Musa had

performed could only have heavenly power behind it (since, otherwise, the ropes, staffs, etc., should not have disappeared altogether: Zamakhshari). Therefore, they were involuntarily thrown into prostration and belief in the Lord God to whom Musa had invited them Ibn `Abbas (Ibn Jarir).

Compare them, Hasan al Busri has said, with those born and brought up as Muslims, who sell their religion for a paltry price (Zamakhshari).

Imam Razi has said that the verse demonstrates, as many commentators have pointed out, the superiority of knowledge. Had not the ma-

[122] Lord of Musa and Harun.¹⁷⁰

رَبِّ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

[123] Fir`awn asked, 'Have you believed in him before I gave you leave?'¹⁷¹ Surely, this is a conspiracy that you devised together in the city in order to expel its people from it.¹⁷² But you shall soon know.

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ آدَنَ لَكُمْ إِنَّ هَذَا لَمَكْرٌ مَّكْرُومٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لِتُخْرِجُوا مِنْهَا أَهْلَهَا فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

gicians been fully knowledgeable, they would have never embraced the faith. Incomplete in the knowledge of magic, they would have remained doubting Musa's miracle as another kind of magic, albeit a superior one. How virtuous not then, asks Razi, the knowledge of Tawhid?

170. It is said that when they said, "We believed in the Lord of the worlds," Fir`awn asked, "Do you mean I?" They replied, "(Not you, but) the Lord of Musa and Harun" (Razi).

171. Sayyid Qutb writes: "Such then was the response... 'Have you believed in him before I gave you leave?' .. As if they were bound to take his permission before opening their hearts to the truth. As if they did not own their hearts... Did he think that they should seek his permission for their hearts to tremble? when they themselves had no control over them? .. Should they have sought his leave that their hearts be

filled with light? .. when they themselves had no power over their hearts? .. Or, were they required to suppress the faith that was growing in their hearts? .. Or trample down upon a conviction rising from the depths of their souls? Or, were they required to veil the light that was radiating from their faith?

"But the problem is that those who rebel against God are ignorant, idiotic, and abstruse while at the same time they are presumptuous, proud, and conceited."

172. Ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas and several others have said that back in the city, before the contest, Musa had asked the chief of the magicians whether he would embrace the truth if he lost the contest. The man irritably replied, "By God. I will put forward a feat of magic tomorrow that no one will be able to overcome. Yes, to be sure. If you can overcome, I will believe in you." Fir`awn was a witness to the conversation and was

[124] I shall at once cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides and then I shall crucify you all together.¹⁷³

لَأَقْطَعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِنْ خِلَافٍ ثُمَّ
لَأَصْلَبَنَّكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

[125] They replied, 'Surely, to our Lord we shall be returning.¹⁷⁴

قَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

[126] You do not wish to wreak vengeance on us save for the fact that we have believed in the signs of our Lord when they came to us. 'O our Lord! Pour out perseverance on us and draw our souls as those in submission.¹⁷⁵

وَمَا تَنْقِمُ مِنَّا إِلَّا أَنْ آمَنَّا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا
لَمَّا جَاءَتْهَا رَبِّنَا أَفْرُغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَتَوَفَّنَا
مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٢٦﴾

referring to it when he alleged that the two had conspired against him (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

173. "Pharaoh and his Court were doubly angry: first because they were made to look small when confronted by the power of Allah, and secondly, because their dupes and instruments were snatched away from them" (Yusuf Ali).

174. Sayyid comments: "This was a decisive point in the history of humankind when the impoverishment of materialism was demonstrated. This little group ... a moment ago looking for rewards from Fir`awn, and seeking nearness to power .. this little group has now risen above Fir`awn .. it belittles the threats of violence against it .. accepts the news of crucifixion with cool courage .. and, the interesting point is, nothing has altered in their lives .. nothing

has changed around them – that is, in the physical world. But a subtle contact took place, the contact that relates the lone star to the galaxy, and pulls back a flying particle to place it in a fixed orbit .. that connects the mortal with the Eternal .. That specific touch took place which works upon the indicator, after which the heart begins to work in a rhythm .. the inner self begins to hear the echoes of guidance .. and the sight begins to pick up the radiance of light. That contact took place which does not wait for any change in the physical world, rather, it causes changes to it, and raises Man from the physical world to those horizons that the mind had not envisaged earlier."

175. Mujahid, Qatadah and others have said that Fir`awn accomplished what he had threatened with, so

[127] Said the chiefs of the people of Fir`awn, 'Will you let Musa and his people spread mischief in the land and abandon you and your deities?'¹⁷⁶ He replied, 'We shall slaughter their sons and let live their women. Surely, we have irresistible power over them.'

وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ أَتَدْرُ مُوسَى
وَقَوْمَهُ لِيُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَيَدْرُكَ وَأَهْلَتِكَ
قَالَ سَنَقْتِلُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَنَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ
وَإِنَّا فَوقَهُمْ فَاهِرُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾

[128] Musa consoled his people, 'Seek Allah's help and be patient. The land belongs to Allah. He bestows it as heritage on whom He will of His slaves. But the ultimate end belongs to the righteous.'

قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاصْبِرُوا
إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ
وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٢٨﴾

[129] They said, 'We have been persecuted both before and after you came to us!' He replied, 'Maybe your Lord will destroy your enemy and grant you succession in the land to see how you will conduct yourselves.'¹⁷⁷

قَالُوا أُوذِينَا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَأْتِيَنَا وَمِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
جِئْتَنَا قَالَ عَسَى رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ عَدُوَّكُمْ
وَيَسْتَخْلِفَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾

that those who were magicians in the morning turned martyrs by the evening (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir).

176. Of the textual word "aalihatak," another reading, as reported of Ibn `Abbas and Mujahid, has been "ilahatak" meaning "your divinity." But others have said that the original word is, as it is now in the text meaning "your deities," since Fir`awn had his own deity whom he worshipped apart from a few he had ordered his subjects to worship such as, e.g., the cow, the heifer, and a pearl that hung by his neck to which they had to bow down (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Hence, add Zamakhshari, Razi and Qurtubi, Fir`awn's words elsewhere: "I am your highest Lord," implying that lesser gods received his sanction.

It is not imaginable too, adds Razi, that an intelligent person like Fir`awn should have said the words, "I am your highest Lord" in the sense of "I am your Lord God." Rather, he would have meant to claim that he was the sustainer of the world of his subjects, and, consequently, sanctioned the worship of a few other deities besides himself.

177. As understood by Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and `Ikrimah, this verse takes us right to the end of the epi-

[130] Then We seized Fir`awn's folk¹⁷⁸ with years of drought and scarcity of fruits¹⁷⁹ that haply they might be admonished.

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالسِّنِينَ وَنَقْصِ
مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾

sode involving Fir`awn and the Israelites: that is, at the shores where the Israelites had the sea before them and Fir`awn and his army at the horizon. They cried out, "Musa, we have been tortured both before and after you came to us." Musa reassured them that Allah will find a way out of the situation, destroy Fir`awn and his army, and give them the land in inheritance to see how they would behave in their turn. So that, with the next verse another phase of the episode is being narrated, although not in the order a common reader might expect (based on Ibn Jarir).

Yusuf Ali adds: "There is a slight note of quarrelsomeness in the people's answer. But Moses allays it by his own example and courage, and his vision of the future."

Zamakhshari writes that once `Amr b. `Ubayd happened to visit Mansur. He was having dinner with a bread or two in front of him. He invited ibn `Ubayd to join in and asked for some more bread to be brought. But they could not find any in the house. It so happened later that ibn `Ubayd once again visited Mansur when he

had become an (Abbasi) Caliph. Ibn `Ubayd recited this verse: "... to see how you will act."

178. Rashid Rida comments on the textual word "al" (tr. as folks), that originally, the word stood for a nation's individuals of grace and honor such as, Prophets, kings and elders. Eventually, it came to be used for distinctive individuals and, subsequently, for the common people too. This is the basis of the opinion of the scholars of Islam that "aal al Nabiyy" would include all those who follow him. It is in this sense that the word "aal al Nabiyy" has been used in the tashahhud viz.,

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ ، وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

"O Allah, send peace upon Muhammad and upon the folks of Muhammad."

However, not every follower of the Prophet is included in the term by default. Imam Ja`far al Sadiq was told: "People say that the whole of the *Ummah* of the Prophet is included in the term "aal al Nabiyy. Is that correct?" He replied: "They lied while they spoke the truth. They lied

[131] But, whenever a good (thing) came to them, they said, 'This is our due.' But when an evil touched them they would augur ill by Musa and those with him.¹⁸⁰ Nay! Rather their ill augury was with Allah;¹⁸¹ but most of them realized not.¹⁸²

فَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْحَسَنَةُ قَالُوا لَنَا هَذِهِ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَطَّيَّرُوا بِمُوسَىٰ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ أَلَّا إِنَّمَا طَائِرُهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣١﴾

[132] And they said, 'Whatever sign you may bring us to cast a spell upon us therewith, we are not going to believe in you.'

وَقَالُوا مَهْمَا تَأْتِنَا بِهِ مِنْ آيَةٍ لِّتَسْحَرَنَا بِهَا فَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

when they said that the whole of his *Ummah* is included in the term. But they spoke the truth if they meant to include those who follow the *Shari`ah* closely."

179. A stricter meaning of "thamaaraat" would include all kinds of produce, be they agricultural or industrial (Au.).

Sayyid Qutb writes: "When a man's true nature is disfigured then he cannot see Allah's hand behind the events happening around him. He severs the links between events and events, bereft of any relationship with the One who runs and controls the universe. So that, the only thing that a Khrushchev, (former Russian President) could say when faced up with years of crop failure, was, "Nature seems to be against us!"

180. Whenever something good happened at the national level, they would take the credit for it them-

selves. But when an ill fortune struck them they would say, 'Since the time Musa has appeared we have been facing one problem after another' (Ibn Jarir).

Asad adds: "The phrase *tatayyara bihi* signifies 'he attributed an evil omen to him' or 'he augured evil from him.' It is based on the pre Islamic Arab custom of divining the future or establishing an omen from the flight of birds. Thus, the noun *tair* (lit. 'a flying creature' or 'a bird') is often used in classical Arabic to denote 'destiny' or 'fortune', both good and evil."

The drawing of omen from the flight of birds consisted in disturbing a bird in its nest or perched on a branch. If it flew off toward the right, it was taken as a good sign. But if it flew towards the left, it was taken as an evil sign (Sayyid). The Prophet has said in a *Sahih hadith*:

[133] So, We let loose on them flood,¹⁸³ the locusts,¹⁸⁴ the lice,¹⁸⁵ the frogs,¹⁸⁶ and (water turning into) blood:¹⁸⁷ signs distinct.¹⁸⁸ But they waxed proud. They were indeed a criminal people.

[134] Whensoever a wrath fell upon them they cried out: 'O Musa. Supplicate to your Lord by what He has promised you: If you release us from this wrath, we shall believe in you and shall let go with you the Children of Israel.'

فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطُّوفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقُمَّلَ
وَالضَّفَادِعَ وَالِدَّمَ آيَاتٍ مُّفَصَّلَاتٍ
فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

وَلَمَّا وَقَعَ عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّجْزُ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى
ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ لَئِن كَشَفْتَ
عَنَّا الرِّجْزَ لَنُؤْمِنَنَّ لَكَ وَلَنُرْسِلَنَّ مَعَكَ بَنِي
إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

لَا طَيْرَةَ وَلَا عَدْوَى

“There is no such thing as drawing an omen from the birds, nor any such thing as contagion” (Au.).

Islam has rather left the outcome to proper application, good intention, hard work, etc., that result in the manifestation of Allah’s Decree (Sayyid).

This author has had the experience in his childhood in a north-Indian village of some Muslims clapping their hands to make a bird fly to decide whether one of them should travel or not.

181. That is, whatever visited them, whether good or adversity, was all from Allah Ibn `Abbas (Ibn Jarir).

182. Qurtubi writes: The Prophet has said:

الطَّيْرَةُ شِرْكٌ وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يُدْهِبُهُ
بِالتَّوَكُّلِ

“Drawing bad an omen is a (kind of) shirk, and each of us has (something of it in his heart). But Allah cures it with trust in Him.”

The report is in Abu Da’ud. According to another report, if someone finds that in his heart, he should say:

اللَّهُمَّ لَا يَأْتِي بِالْحَسَنَاتِ إِلَّا أَنْتَ وَلَا يَدْفَعُ السَّيِّئَاتِ
إِلَّا أَنْتَ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِكَ

“O Allah. None comes with the good but You, and none removes the evil but You. There is no power but with You.” Then, after that, let the man proceed with whatever he wishes to do, with faith and trust in Allah.

183. The textual word “tufan” has been variously interpreted by Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and others as death,

floods, plague, or any general calamity resulting in wide scale death and destruction (Ibn Jarir).

184. Ibn Kathir quotes several *ahadith* to prove that consumption of locusts is lawful in Islam, although the Prophet did not eat it, just as he avoided eating meat of the dubb. His wives, however, used to send across platefuls of it as gift. `Umar ibn al Khattab too seems to have been fond of locusts.

Locusts were apparently lawful for the Jews. Ch. 1, verse 6 of Luke says: "And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey" (Au.).

185. The textual word "qummal" is for any little wingless insect. It would include lice, pests that attack the grain, fleas, bed-bugs, etc. According to a statement of Sa`id b. Jubayr, it was a little insect that ate off the wheat from within, so that when ground, they got nothing out of it. Suddi however has said that it were insects that filled everything: their grain, food, clothes kind of omnipresent (Ibn Jarir).

Majid comments: "This particular plague was eminently fitted to work upon the Egyptian abhorrence of

impurity and defilement. "The Egyptians had an intense hatred of lice, and looked upon them as so impure that the priests were required to shave their entire bodies in order that no louse or other impure creature might adhere to them" (Rawlinson, Moses: His Life and Times)."

186. In trustworthy reports preserved by Abu Da`ud, Ibn Majah and others, the Prophet has forbidden killing of: "Sarad (a kind of bird that preys on sparrows), frogs, ants and hoopoe" (Qurtubi).

Majid quotes from Rawlinson's Moses, His Life and Times: "One of the Egyptian divinities, Hika, has the head of a frog, and we may presume therefore, that the head of a frog was a sacred animal which it was not lawful to destroy... How could those creatures be Divine which had aroused such hatred and loathing in the hearts of the entire people? How could they henceforth be looked upon without detestation? The whole theory of sacred animals must have suffered a shock when Hika's sacred sign, the emblem of fecundity and productiveness, became an object of hatred and abhorrence."

187. Sa`id Ibn Jubayr and Suddi have said that as soon as fetched by Pharaoh's folk, water turned into blood.

[135] But when We relieved them of the wrath until a term they were to achieve, behold, they went back (on their word).¹⁸⁹

فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ الرِّجْزَ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ هُمْ
بِالْعُودِ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُتُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

Ka`b al Qurazi has said that the trial lasted full seven days (Ibn Jarir).

Majid writes: “This plague coming out of the sacred river Nile must have caused a severe shock to the Nile worshipping Egyptians. ‘That sacred stream, so fondly worshipped as the giver of all good, was the generator of this great evil. Nile, wont to bestow nothing but blessings, brought forth this curse’ (Rawlinson, Moses: His Life and Times).”

188. The textual word “mufassilat” can both be rendered as “self evident” as well as “distinct” (Zamakhshari). Their self evidence was strengthened by the fact that they touched only Fir`awn and his subjects. The Israelites did not suffer from them. For example, water remained water for the Israelites but turned into blood once poured out from an Israelite’s pitcher into an Egyptian’s pitcher (Ibn Jarir).

Although no detail has come down from the Prophet regarding these signs all being reports of Israeli origin yet, that the signs had to be of

the specific kind, was necessary because magic and its effects were nothing new for the Egyptians. Nothing less than “distinct signs” appearing on the national level and disappearing at Musa’s supplications, could convince the least skeptic of them that they were miracles of heavenly origin.

How long did Musa tarry in Egypt? We have no authentic reports to this effect. However, Qurtubi has said that Musa lived in Egypt for 20 years from the date of the magicians falling into prostration until the drowning of Fir`awn. This should also explain why Fir`awn and his folks would not believe despite the distinct signs they experienced. That was perhaps because firstly, the signs appeared at long intervals and, secondly, they appeared and disappeared gradually, almost in a natural manner to allow skepticism to play its role in leading the disbelievers to disbelief (Au.).

189. Majid writes: “Nakatha (of the text) is to undo the threads of a garment, or to undo, or untwist a rope.”

[136] So We took vengeance on them and drowned them in the sea¹⁹⁰ for that they cried lies to our signs and were heedless of them.

فَأَنْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ بِآيَاتِهِمْ
كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

[137] And We bequeathed upon the people that were reduced weak,¹⁹¹ the eastern and western parts of the land in which We have placed Our blessings.¹⁹² And thus was fulfilled the good word from your Lord upon the Children of Israel for what they endured patiently,¹⁹³ and We destroyed the works of Fir`awn and his people, and what they had been building.¹⁹⁴

وَأَوْرَثْنَا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يُسْتَضْعَفُونَ
مَشَارِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمَعَارِبَهَا الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا
فِيهَا وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَىٰ عَلَىٰ
بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَدَمَّرْنَا مَا كَانَ
يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ وَقَوْمُهُ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْرِشُونَ
﴿١٣٧﴾

190. The word in the original “al yamm” is for a deep sea (Zamakhshari).

191. The Orientalists have framed an objection against the Prophet by saying that he had no knowledge of history and, therefore, while copying material from the Torah, committed errors. One of such errors is his claim that the Israelites inherited the Egyptian soil after the destruction of Fir`awn and his hosts, although, as Torah tells us, the Israelites actually travelled eastward to settle into Palestine, their promised land, and never went back to Egypt. The scholars of Islam have generally replied that the Qur`ān never stated explicitly that the Israelites went back to Egypt. In fact, the present verse does not even give the meaning by implication of a return to Egypt. Yes, there

is another passage of the Qur`ān that implies that. It says, “So We expelled them from gardens and springs, and treasures and a noble station; even so, and We bequeathed them upon the Children of Israel” (26: 57 59). Nevertheless, on close inspection it will be seen that the Qur`ān is talking of the inheritance of “the gardens, springs, treasures and a noble station,” and not of those lands that were formerly owned by the Egyptians. Nevertheless, admitted that the allusion is to those that were formerly owned by Egyptians, there is still nothing wrong with the statement since the Israelites, as stated by the Torah, returned to Syria and parts of Syria was then under the Pharaohnic rule.

Again, what is the basis on which it is assumed that the *Bible* is infallible?

Can a single line be quoted that can withstand a historical test?

Regardless of the above, Rashid Rida points out that historical research tells us that there is room for taking the term “inheritance” in the literal sense, viz., of the Israelites going back to Egypt. The most ancient Jewish historian Josephus has been quoted by Lang in his book “Human Origins” as having quoted from another historical work, that of the ancient historian Manetho, who wrote the following words: “After his defeat at the hands of Moses, Pharaoh escaped to Abyssinia and Moses ruled over Egypt for 13 years. Later, Pharaoh and his son returned with a huge army in their command. They overcame the resistance put up by Moses who had to ultimately relinquish (Egypt) and migrate to Syria.” This historian Manetho, Rashid Rida adds, whose words have been quoted here, appeared 300 years before Jesus Christ. On Ptolemy Philadelphus’s behest, he wrote one of the most accurate histories of the world, relying upon very authentic sources of his time. The book itself is lost. It was burned along with thousands of other manuscripts preserved in the Alexandrian Library leaving its traces only as quotes in other works.

Rashid Rida also writes that it has been speculated by some historians that possibly the death of Fir`awn (contemporary to Moses) was covered up by the Egyptian ruling class who might have told the general populace that he had migrated to Abyssinia and would soon return reinforced with Abyssinian forces. The succeeding Fir`awn (the next in line of succession) might have returned from there after preparations lasting 13 years to wage war against Musa and retake the bulk of the lost kingdom.

192. Hasan and Qatadah have been reported as saying that the allusion by the words ‘the land in which We have placed Our blessings’ is to Syria (Ibn Jarir).

Rashid Rida adds: The above is strengthened by several verses of the Qur`an, one of them being (17: 1):

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ [الإسراء
: ١]

“Glorified is He who took His slave by night from the Holy Mosque to the Furthest Mosque the surroundings of which We have blessed.”

Alusi points out that the allusion is to the spiritual blessing, as it has been the land of the Prophets. He quotes

a *hadith* from Ahmad. `Abdullah ibn Khawla al Azadi says:

خَيْرٌ لِي يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ... قَالَ عَلَيْنَاكَ بِالشَّامِ فَإِنَّهُ خَيْرٌ
اللَّهُ مِنْ أَرْضِهِ يَخْتِي إِلَيْهِ خَيْرٌهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ

“I said to the Prophet, ‘Messenger of Allah, choose for me a land to which I could migrate.’ He replied, ‘You might go to Syria, for Allah chose it from His lands to which the best of men are attracted.’”

Shu`ayb Arn`ut declared it trustworthy (Au.).

Another *hadith* in Ibn `Asakir narrated by Wathilah b. al Asqa` reports the Prophet as having said:

عَلَيْكُمْ بِالشَّامِ، فَإِنَّهَا صَفْوَةٌ اللَّهُ مِنْ بِلَادِهِ يَشُوقُ
إِلَيْهَا صَفْوَتُهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ

“Let Syria be your destination for it is the best of Allah’s lands in which the best of his slaves live.”

(Accordingly, Wathilah ultimately settled and died in Syria (Au.).

Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Tabarani, Ibn Hibban and Hakim (who declared it *Sahih*) have preserved the following words of the Prophet (*saws*):

طُوبَى لِلشَّامِ

“Blessedness be for Syria.”

Hakim has preserved the following words of `Abdullah ibn `Umar, de-

claring it *Sahih*: “A time will come upon the people when no Muslim would remain, but would have migrated to Syria.”

However, Alusi (himself a Syrian) warns, many *ahadith* that are quoted about the virtues of Syria are fake, and then discreetly adds that it is not the Syrians who are the subject of these *ahadith*, who might not be found in Alusi’s times – to match up with the desired standards of behavior!

193. Mujahid has said that the allusion is to the advent of Musa and destruction of Fir`awn and his hosts (Ibn Jarir).

Alusi writes: Hasan al Busri has said (in reference to the Muslims’ struggle against their corrupt rulers) that had the people observed patience in the face of their corrupt rulers and sought Allah’s succor, they would have had a better chance of getting rid of them. But they took to the sword and depended on it (with no results). To this statement of Hasan al Busri, Alusi adds his own remark: It is my own observation that their 1248 years of resort to the sword (against their rulers) never brought them any good.

The above of course is when Muslims are faced up with corrupt Mus-

[138] And We led the Children of Israel across the sea. They came upon a people zealously devoted to their idols.¹⁹⁵ They said, 'O Musa. Assign for us a deity as they have deities.'¹⁹⁶ He said, 'Verily, you are an ignorant people.'¹⁹⁷

وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتَوْا عَلَى قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَى أَصْنَامٍ لَهُمْ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾

[139] As for these people, bound to destruction is all that they indulge in, and wasteful all that they have been doing.'

إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ مُتَّبِعُونَ مَا هُم فِيهِ وَبَاطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾

[140] He asked, 'Shall I seek for you a god other than Allah when He preferred you over the worlds?'

قَالَ أَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ أَنْبَغِيكُمْ إِلَهًا وَهُوَ فَضَّلَكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾

[141] (Recall) when We delivered you from Fir`awn's folks who afflicted you with the worst kind of torture, slaughtering your sons and letting your women live. And, indeed, in that was for you a severe trial from your Lord.

وَإِذْ أَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يَقْتُلُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَلِكَ بَلَاءٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٤١﴾

lim rulers who have the majority behind them. If they have the support of a minority, or, are non Muslims altogether, then, as Ashraf `Ali wrote under verse 129 above: "Seeking Allah's help and observing patience in the face of the power of the unbelievers, does not necessarily mean resort to asceticism and surrender" (Au.).

194. "The story of the suffering of the Israelites during their bondage in Egypt, their deliverance through Moses, their crossing of the Red Sea (or, more probably, of what today is known as the Gulf of Suez) and the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts is narrated in considerable detail in the *Bible* (Exodus i xiv). The Qur`an,

on the other hand, does not give us a consecutive narrative: for historical narrative as such is never its purpose. Whenever the Qur`an refers to past events whether recorded in the *Bible* or alive in Arabian tradition it does so exclusively with a view to bringing out elements that are relevant to the ethical teachings which it propounds" (Asad).

195. Most commentators have said that these people were either Amalekites, or the Lakhm tribe. Majid adds: "Their idols, anyway, were images of oxen, which gave to the Israelites the impetus to the making of the golden calf."

196. In other words, the Israelites sought Musa to suggest a few deities and idols through whose worship they could reach out God better than without (Razi).

197. Baghawi has written that the request for a deity was not because the Israelites were in doubt about the Oneness of God. Their objective was to seek the Lord One God with the help and intercession of something tangible, and was under the belief that the worship of other than Allah with such objectives would do them no harm. This explains Musa's words: "Verily, you are an ignorant people" (Manar, slightly reworded).

Abu Waqid al Laythi reports:

حَرَجْنَا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَبْلَ حُنَيْنٍ ، فَمَرَرْنَا بِالسِّدْرَةِ ، فَقُلْتُ : أَيُّ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ اجْعَلْ لَنَا هَذِهِ ذَاتَ أَتْوَاطٍ كَمَا لِلْكَفَّارِ ذَاتَ أَتْوَاطٍ ، وَكَانَ الْكُفَّارُ يُتَوَطَّوْنَ سِلَاحَهُمْ بِسِدْرَةٍ وَيَعْكُفُونَ حَوْلَهَا ، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : ” اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ، هَذَا كَمَا قَالَتْ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ لِمُوسَى : { اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا هُمْ آلِهَةٌ } ، إِنَّكُمْ سَتَرْكَبُونَ سَنَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ ”

“Once we were with the Prophet in a journey (between Tayif and

Hunayn: Rashid Rida) when we came across a huge, green, lote tree. We said, ‘Assign to this lote tree, O Prophet, a merit of honor (Dhat Anwat), for our (religious needs) just as the pagans had assigned merit of honor to a lote tree by which they hung their arms and squat around it.’ He replied, ‘Allah is Great. This is similar to the Israelites asking their Prophet: “O Musa. Assign for us a deity as they have deities.” Surely, you will follow those who were before you in every little detail” (Ibn Jarir).

The *hadith* is in Ahmad (Ibn Kathir). It is also in Tirmidhi, who declared it *Sahih*, Nasa’i, Ibn Abi Hatim, Tabarani and others (Shawkani).

Arab pagans used to declare certain lote trees as sacrosanct, suspend their arms by its branches seeking blessings, and squatted around it for shorter or longer period. They called it Dhat Anwat: one by which (arms) are hung (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others).

[142] And We appointed¹⁹⁸ with Musa thirty nights¹⁹⁹ completing them with ten.²⁰⁰ Thus was completed the term²⁰¹ of his Lord of forty nights.²⁰² And Musa said to his brother Harun, 'Be my deputy in my people²⁰³ and set things right; and follow not the ways of the corrupt.'²⁰⁴

وَوَاعَدْنَا مُوسَى ثَلَاثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتَمَّمْنَاهَا بِعَشْرِ
قَتَمٍ مِيقَاتٍ رَبِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً وَقَالَ مُوسَى
لَأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ اخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾

198. The form employed for the textual word waa`ada, (lit., to promise each other), requires participation by two parties in an act. In this case, the promise from Musa was that he would devote forty days to worship at Mount Sinai, and from Allah that He would bestow Torah to him (Shafi`).

199. "Nights" instead of days has been mentioned since as Ibn `Arabiyy has been quoted in Qurtubi: "Reckoning by the sun is for this worldly affairs, while reckoning by the moon is for the other worldly affairs (lit., for devotional affairs)" Shafi`.

200. Just as the Muslims needed the Law only after migration to Madinah, the Jews also felt its need only after their exodus from Egypt. Although revelations had been coming to Musa since much earlier, he was called to the Tur at that point so that he could be given the Law to meet needs of the Israelites (Manar).

As for appointing thirty days and then completing them with ten, there has been no satisfactory explanation. Some reports that have come from the earlier scholars are not trustworthy. Of the many explanations forwarded that of Shab-bir sounds the most plausible which says that the choice of the words is to imply that it were 30 days of one month (Dhu al Qa`idah) and 10 of another (Dhu al Hijjah).

Qushayri says that the appointment at Tur was with the understanding that Musa would hear his Lord's voice once again, since, after all, the first time it was completely unexpected, while this time it was in full expectation of spiritual joy and bliss.

201. The difference between "waqt" (time) and "miqat" (pl. mawaaqit) is that the former simply denotes time, while the latter is for that period at which an affair has been scheduled such as, for instance, the mawaaqit of Hajj (Manar).

202. Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and Ibn Jurayj have said that the forty nights covered the whole of Dhu al Qa`idah and the first ten days of Dhu al Hijjah (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). The opinion of Ibn `Abbas is in Ibn Abi Hatim, Abu al Sheikh and Ibn al Mundhir (Shawkani).

The above opinion would imply that Musa was given the Torah on the 10th of Dhu al Hijjah (Qurtubi, Shafi`).

Yusuf `Ali adds: "The forty nights' reclusion of Moses on Mount may be compared with the forty days fast of Jesus in the wilderness before he took up his ministry (Matt. vi, 2). In each case the Prophets lived alone apart from their people, before they came into the full blaze of the events of their Ministry."

203. It was for the same functional and administrative reasons that the Prophet once appointed `Ali a deputy to himself before leaving Madi-nah for a campaign. When `Ali sort

of protested at being left behind, the Prophet (*saws*) asked him: "Are you not satisfied that you should be with respect to me, what Harun was with respect to Musa?" Those who are poor of knowledge deduce from that appointment that `Ali was the Prophet's deputy for good and for all times, deserving the khilafah after his death. Eventually, some of these ignorant people declared `Ali an apostate for not demanding his right when Abu Bakr was appointed caliph after the Prophet by consensus; while some others declared the Companions apostates for usurping `Ali's right. Apart from other things, those people forgot that the Prophet had appointed several others as his deputies, such as Ibn Umm Mak-tum, whenever he went out of Madi-nah in a campaign (Qurtubi).

204. The words imply that Musa (*asws*) was apprehensive of trouble from his people; a fear that coming events proved true (Au.).

[143] When Musa came to Our appointed time, and His Lord spoke with him,²⁰⁵ he said, 'My Lord! Show (Yourself) to me that I may behold You.'²⁰⁶ He replied, 'You can never²⁰⁷ see Me. But behold the mountain, if it remains firm in its place then you might be able to see Me.'²⁰⁸ Then, when He manifested Himself to the mountain, He made it dust.²⁰⁹ And Musa fell down unconscious.²¹⁰ When he recovered, he said, 'Glory to You. I turn to You in repentance and I am first of the believers.'²¹¹

[144] He said, 'O Musa, I have chosen you above all men for My Messages and my talk (to you). Therefore, take what I have given you and be of the thankful.'

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَى لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ
قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنظُرْ إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَنْ نَرَاكَ
وَلَكِنْ أَنْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ
فَسَوْفَ تَرَانِي فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ
دُغًا وَخَرَّ مُوسَى صَعِقًا فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ
سُبْحَانَكَ ثَبَّتْ إِلَيْكَ وَانَّا أَوَّلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾

قَالَ يَا مُوسَى إِنِّي اصْطَفَيْتُكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ
بِرِسَالَاتِي وَبِكَلَامِي فَخُذْ مَا آتَيْتُكَ وَكُنْ
مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

205. Ibn Abi Hatim and Hakim (who evaluated the report *Sahih*) have reported `Abdul Rahman b. Mu`awiyah as saying that Allah did not speak to Musa with the full force of His Speech. Had He done that, Musa would not have been able to bear it. Rather, He employed a very much weakened tone and pitch (Shawkani).

Suddi and Ibn Is haq have said: It was a direct effect of Allah speaking to him that aroused the desire in Musa for the Beatific Vision (Ibn Jarir).

206. Most scholars have deduced from this part of the verse that the Beatific Vision is possible. If it was impossible, surely, a great Prophet

like Musa would not have requested it. To this the Mu` tazilah, who deny that Allah can ever be seen, in this world or the next, have replied that Musa made the request out of ignorance. That is, it was not in his knowledge that Allah cannot be sighted. To this Imam Razi replies that if that be true, then surely Musa was less knowledgeable than the most ignorant of the Mu` tazilah who seem to know what Musa did not!

Shabbir sums up the argument in the following manner: Beatific Vision is not possible in this world because of the physical laws laid out for that to take place. But, reason says that it should be possible. That explains why Musa (asws) requested it. He

was not asking for the impossible. And, when it was denied to Musa but made manifest to the mountain, what was meant to communicate was: ‘You are made of two elements, the physical and the spiritual. Now, your spiritual element might be able to withstand the Vision, since, from that aspect you are stronger than the mountains (“But they refused to bear them ... and Man accepted to bear” [33: 72], and “Had We sent down this Qur’ān on a mountain, you would have seen it crumbling ...” [59: 21]). But your physical being would not be able to bear it. If you think it can, then, “behold the mountain if it remains firm in its place, then you might be able to see Me.”

207. The article “Iun” lends great emphasis to the denial. The scholars have therefore concluded that no one can ever see Allah (*swt*) in this earthly life (Ibn Kathir).

208. Alusi points out that so far as the famous “*hadīth* al Manam” is concerned, (where the Prophet said: “I saw my Lord [in my sleep] in the best form imaginable), the seeing there is that of an image. This was the opinion of Kamal ibn al Hammam. That in fact, is the “*tajalli*” that the Sufiya talk of. Suyuti has further

elaborated that the (appearance of Allah in dreams) can take any form. That is what the leading shuyukh have also said. However, the subject remains controversial. But, if what Suyuti and other shuyukh have said is true, then, Allah be praised, adds Alusi, that “I have had the opportunity to see my Lord thrice in my dreams. Once I saw Him engulfed in an ineffable radiance of Light, looking toward the East. He spoke to me in words that I could not recall when I woke up. Another time I saw Him in a long dream, finding myself in Paradise, with a kind of barrier of pearls of a variety of colors between me and my Lord. He ordered me to be taken to `Isa’s Station, and then to that of our Prophet in which places I saw what I saw. Allah’s is the Bestowal and Allah’s is the Grace.”

It is reported of Imam Abu Hanifah that he saw his Lord several times in his dreams.

And, if this writer wished he could add the experience of another person who saw in his early morning dream the Face of his Lord filling the whole of the azure, of indescribable beauty, radiating down a smile engulfing the space below (if there was any space below between the Perceived and the perceiving person), belittling but

exhilarating, awesome but tranquilizing a vision that would not allow the beholder's sight to stray (Au.).

209. Anas b. Malik reported the Prophet (*saws*) as having recited this verse and then:

قَالَ هَكَذَا يَعْنِي أَنَّهُ أُخْرِجَ طَرْفَ الْخِنْصِرِ قَالَ أَبِي أَرَانَا مُعَاذُ قَالَ فَقَالَ لَهُ مُحَمَّدُ الطَّوْبُ لِمَا تُرِيدُ إِلَى هَذَا يَا أَبَا مُحَمَّدٍ قَالَ فَضْرَبَ صَدْرَهُ ضَرْبَةً شَدِيدَةً وَقَالَ مَنْ أَنْتَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ وَمَا أَنْتَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ يُحَدِّثُنِي بِهِ أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَتَقُولُ أَنْتَ مَا تُرِيدُ إِلَيْهِ

“Showed the tip of his little finger to indicate that it was that much that Allah had manifested Himself to the mountain at which it became a heap of dust). Mu`adh (the narrator) demonstrated it (i.e., showed the tip of his little finger). At that Humayd questioned his immediate narrator Thabit: ‘What do mean by that?’ Thabit struck hard Humayd on his breast and retorted: “Who are you O Humayd? Just who are you O Humayd? Anas b. Malik narrates to me from the Prophet and you ask me ‘What do you mean by that?’” (Ibn Jarir).

The version above is Musnad Ahmad (Au.).

Ibn Kathir adds: The *hadith* of Anas is in Ahmad, Tirmidhi (who rated it

as Hasan *Sahih* Gharib) and, by another route, in Hakim (who said it is a *Sahih hadith* on the criteria of Muslim although the Sheikhayn did not narrate it), as well as in other *hadith* collections. Tirmidhi's additional words are: “The Mountain sunk to the earth and will continue sinking until the Judgment Day.”

Shawkani adds: The *hadith* of Tirmidhi is *Sahih* of status and meets the criteria of the *hadith* collector Muslim.

210. Ibn Kathir writes: A *hadith* in the *Sahihayn* that Bukhari has narrated at several points has Abu Sa`id al Khudri reporting that:

بَيْنَمَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ جَالِسٌ جَاءَ يَهُودِيٌّ فَقَالَ يَا أَبَا الْقَاسِمِ ضْرَبَ وَجْهِي رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِكَ فَقَالَ مَنْ قَالَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ قَالَ ادْعُوهُ فَقَالَ أَضْرَبْتُهُ قَالَ سَمِعْتُهُ بِالسُّوقِ يَخْلِفُ وَالَّذِي اصْطَلَقَ مُوسَى عَلَى الْبِشْرِ قُلْتُ أَيَّ حَبِيبٍ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَخَذْتَنِي غَضَبَةً ضْرَبْتُ وَجْهَهُ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا تُخَيِّرُوا بَيْنَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ فَإِنَّ النَّاسَ يَصْعُقُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَأَكُونُ أَوَّلَ مَنْ تَنْشَقُّ عَنْهُ الْأَرْضُ فَإِذَا أَنَا بِمُوسَى آخِذٌ بِقَائِمَةٍ مِنْ قَوَائِمِ الْعَرْشِ فَلَا أُدْرِي أَكَانَ فِيمَنْ صَعِقَ أَمْ حُوسِبَ بِصَعْقَةِ الْأُولَى

“While the Prophet was seated, a Jew came to him and said, ‘O Abu al-Qasim, one of your companions slapped me.’ He asked, ‘Who was it?’ He said, ‘One of the Ansar.’ He said, ‘Let him be

[145] And We wrote down for him on the Tablets²¹² everything (concerning guidance): an admonition and the explanation of all things. (We said), 'Hold it with firmness, and order your people to hold fast unto the best of precepts (therein).²¹³ I shall soon show you the abode of the corrupt.'²¹⁴

وَكَتَبْنَا لَهُ فِي الْأَلْوَابِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَوْعِظَةً
وَتَفْصِيلًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَخَذَهَا بِمُؤْتَةٍ وَأَمْرٍ
قَوْمَكَ يَا خُدُوا بِأَحْسَنِهَا سَأُرِيكُمْ دَارَ
الْقَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

brought here.' (When he came), he asked him, 'Did you hit him?' He said, 'I was passing in the market when I heard him swear saying, "By Him who preferred Musa over the people." I asked him, "Dirty man; over Muhammad too?" Then, anger got the better of me and I slapped him.' The Prophet said, 'Do not differentiate between Prophets. When the people swoon on the Day of Judgment, I would be the first for whom the earth will split, and lo, I will find Musa holding on to one of the qawaa'im (posts) of the `Arsh. I would not know whether he never fainted, or was spared because he had fainted earlier (on Mount Tur).''

Now, Ibn Kathir adds, as to everyone fainting on the Day of Judgment, either an event of great impact would cause it, or it may happen when Allah comes down for Judgment.

211. Ibn `Abbas, Abu al `Aliyyah and Mujahid have said that what

Musa meant when he said "I am the first of the believers" is, "I am the first of those who believe that you cannot be sighted by the human beings in this world" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir and others).

212. Differences in opinion prevailed among the scholars over the Tablets: whether they contained the whole of the Tawrah, or, something in addition to the Tawrah which was separately revealed later (Ibn Kathir).

213. Imam Razi comments on the use of the textual word "ahsan" (better or best): Of the commandments that were in the Tawrah, some were good, while some better. E.g., to retaliate in an equal measure, or to fight out (for one's rights), were commandments that were good by themselves. But, to forgive or observe patience was better than to retaliate.

Alusi thinks that the word "ahsan" is not an easy term to explain. Dimamini has written in his commentary on the Masabih that any term on

[146] I shall turn away from My signs those who wax proud in the land without cause.²¹⁵ If they witnessed all the signs, they will not believe in them, and, if they see the path of righteousness, they will not accept it as a path. But if they see the deviated path, they will accept it as a path. That, because they gave a lie to Our signs and were heedless of them.'

[147] Those who gave a lie to Our signs and to the encounter in the Hereafter lost are their deeds. Shall they be recompensed but for what they were doing?

سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ آيَاتِيَ الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كُلَّ آيَةٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ لَا يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الْعِغْيِ يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

this pattern can convey four kinds of meanings, of which the first itself can again be branched out to denote three more kinds of meanings.

214. Some scholars believe that by these words the allusion is to the lands of the Amalekites and other pagans who inhabited the holy land. But Ibn Kathir's preference is that the allusion is to the final abode meant for the corrupt ones - Hellfire.

215. That is, I will turn their minds away from a full understanding of the Revelation (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

In other words, the first consequences of a people's arrogance in the face of commandments based in revelation, is that they are denied further understanding. They are beset with

doubts about the nature of the commandments, and further down in their lives, about the nature of revelation itself, ending in wanderings on the craggy terrain of atheism (Au.).

Ibn Kathir writes: One of the *Salaf* has said, "A person who does not humble himself for knowledge will remain suffering the humiliation of ignorance for the rest of his life."

With reference to the words: "those who wax proud in the land without cause," the question that arises is, is pride justified for any reason? Imam Razi points out that, "to be proud when faced with falsehood would amount to being 'proud with a just cause.' Indeed, it is commonly said that to act proud when dealing with a proud person is a charitable act.

[148] And in Musa's absence his people made from their jewelry²¹⁶ a calf a mere body that had a lowing sound.²¹⁷ Did they not notice that it did not speak to them²¹⁸ nor could lead them to a path? Yet they took it (for worship): they were transgressors.²¹⁹

وَاتَّخَذَ قَوْمُ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ خَلْقِهِمْ
عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَهُ خُورٌ أَلَمٌ يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُ لَا
يُكَلِّمُهُمْ وَلَا يَهْدِيهِمْ سَبِيلًا اتَّخَذُوهُ وَكَانُوا
ظَالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾

216. It is reported that the Israelites borrowed jewelry from the Egyptians a night prior to their exodus from Egypt. Samiri, who molded the calf, gathered that gold and while melting it added a handful of dust that he had scooped out from the spot at which Jibril's horse had set its foot on the land. The molded calf acquired a lowing sound on account of that handful of dust (Razi).

217. See note 131 of *Surah al Baqarah* of this work for explanation.

Sufi commentator Thanwi adds: This implies that one should not be over impressed by supernatural acts.

218. That is, the fact that it had a lowing sound should not have led the Israelites to believe in its supernatural qualities, because they could have noticed that it was not capable of speaking to them, especially when, later, they would have learned from the seventy men testifying that their Lord had spoken to Musa. But, as Ibn Kathir quotes the *hadith* of Ahmad and Abu Da'ud:

حُبُّكَ الشَّيْءَ يَعْمي وَيُصِمُّ

“Your love of a thing blinds and deafens (you).” (But it is perhaps the words of Abu Darda': Arna'ut).

Further, the fact that it had a lowing sound, might have led them to believe that the calf was transformed into a living one.

That does not seem to be plausible, since, transformation of that sort would shake down the strongest in faith. However achieved, it was perhaps a mechanical device, learnt from the technologically fairly advanced Egyptians, placed in the hollow of the stomach, and covered with ornamental cloth, which would have done the trick (Au.).

Asad adds: “The golden calf of the Israelites was obviously a result of centuries old Egyptian influences. The Egyptians worshipped at Memphis the sacred bull, Apis, which they believed to be an incarnation of the god Ptah. A new Apis was sup-

[149] When they felt ashamed²²⁰ and realized that they had erred they cried out, 'If our Lord does not show us mercy and forgive us, surely, we shall be of the losers.'

وَلَمَّا سَقَطَ فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ وَرَأَوْا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ ضَلُّوا
قَالُوا لَئِن لَّمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ
مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

[150] When Musa returned to his people angry and sorrowful, he said, 'You have been poor successors after me. Did you (try to) outstrip Your Lord's commandment?'²²¹ He cast down the Tablets²²² and seizing his brother by his head,²²³ dragged him toward himself. He protested, 'Son of my mother.'²²⁴ My people overpowered me, and were close to murdering me.²²⁵ Give not my enemies (a chance) to gloat over me, nor count me among the transgressing people.²²⁶

وَلَمَّا رَجَعَ مُوسَى إِلَى قَوْمِهِ غَضْبَانَ أَسِفًا
قَالَ بِئْسَمَا خَلَفْتُمُونِي مِنْ بَعْدِي أَعَجِلْتُمْ
أَمْرَ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَلْقَى الْأَلْوَاحَ وَأَخَذَ بِرَأْسِ أَخِيهِ
يَجْرُهُ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ ابْنَ أُمَّ إِنَّ الْقَوْمَ اسْتَضَعُّونِي
وَكَادُوا يَفْتُلُونَنِي فَلَا تُشْمِتْ بِيَ الْأَعْدَاءَ
وَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

posed always to be born at the moment when the old one died, while the soul of the latter was believed to pass into Osiris in the Realm of the Dead, to be henceforth worshipped as Osiris Apis (the "Serapis" of the Greco Egyptian period)."

219. That is, they had no basis in reason or revelation to worship the calf, rather, were merely imitating the Egyptians whose deity it was (Rashid Rida).

220. The translation is based on Ibn Jarir's understanding.

221. Perhaps Musa meant to say, 'Have you tried to work out the Law by yourself through other than God, instead of waiting for Revelations from Allah?' (Au.)

222. The Prophet (*saws*) has said in a *hadith* recorded by Ibn Abi Hatim:

لَيْسَ الْحَبْرَ كَالْمُعَايَنَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَحَبَرَ مُوسَى
بِمَا صَنَعَ قَوْمُهُ فِي الْعَجَلِ فَلَمْ يُلْقِ الْأَلْوَاحَ فَلَمَّا عَايَنَ
مَا صَنَعُوا أَلْقَى الْأَلْوَاحَ فَانكَسَرَتْ

"Seeing is not the same as hearing. Musa was informed by his Lord about what his people had committed (behind him), but he did not cast the Tablets. But when he saw it with his own eyes, he cast them down and they broke" (Razi, Ibn Kathir).

The report is treated as *Sahih* by Shu`ayb Arna'ut (Au.).

The casting of the Tablets requires some clarification. One could imagine that Musa threw them down.

But such an action is unbecoming of a Messenger as great as Musa, on whom be peace. Probably, when he saw what had happened behind him, he flew into a rage in the face of a crime of that nature. He hurriedly placed down the Tablets, but not as ceremoniously as they deserved, turned to Harun (to vent his anger), and began to pull him by his hair. His action of not disposing the Tablets in a manner deserving of an article demanding the greatest of care in handling, has been, (in keeping with the slightest error committed by Prophets counted as serious) as “casting down” (Alusi, slightly reworded).

The Qur’ān has other instances of the use of the word “cast” but not in the sense of throwing. It tells us that Allah (*swt*) ordered Musa’s mother (28: 7):

فَإِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَأَلْقِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ [القصص : ٧]

“When you fear for him, cast him into the river” (Thanwi).

Obviously, if she had done that, the infant would have been drowned. She would have laid him in water with the greatest of care (Au.).

223. That is, he pulled him toward himself by his hair and beard as stated elsewhere in the Qur’ān (20: 94) Alusi.

224. Although pre Islamic poetry has examples of this kind of usage, Ibn Jarir explains that Harun employed the term “Ibn Ummi” instead of “Ibn Abi” out of tenderness.

There are other examples in contemporary Arabic language. For instance, during an argument an Arab might say to another, “Ya ibn al Halal” (O legitimate one) to cool him down and not by way of any insinuation (Au.).

But Majid has a better explanation: “The phrase also makes it clear that Aaron and Moses were brothers both on their father’s and their mother’s side and not half brothers or step brothers.”

225. Majid writes: “According the Jewish sources, when Hur stepped in to rebuke the Israelites for their blasphemy, ‘he was at once put to death, and Aaron was threatened with the same fate’ (JE. III. p. 509).”

226. Rashid Rida points out, that there are many reasons why the Qur’ān is a guardian (*muhaymin*, ref. 5: 47) over the older revelations. One of them is that it offers corrections to what has been introduced into them by the humans. The Tawrah puts the blame on Harun (*asws*) for worship of the calf. It says in

[151] He said, 'My Lord! Forgive me and my brother; and admit us into Your grace. Surely, you are the most Merciful of those who show mercy.'²²⁷

قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِأَخِي وَأَدْخِلْنَا فِي رَحْمَتِكَ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿١٥١﴾

[152] Surely, those who took the calf (for worship) will soon have their Lord's anger reaching them²²⁸ and ignominy in the life of this world.²²⁹ That is how We recompense the inventors (of falsehood).²³⁰

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ سَيَنَاهُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَذِلَّةٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُفْتِرِينَ ﴿١٥٢﴾

Exodus: 'When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron, and said to him, "Up, make us gods, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." And Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." So all the people took off the rings of gold which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold at their hand, and fashioned it with graving tool, and made a molten calf; and they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt' (32: 1 4).

227. In these words Musa sought forgiveness for whatever he had done in his anger (Shabbir).

228. The anger Allah spoke of here was not abated until some of the Israelites slaughtered others of those who had worshipped the golden calf. The Qur'an said (2: 54):

فَتُوبُوا إِلَىٰ بَارِئِكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِنْدَ بَارِئِكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ [البقرة : ٥٤]

"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 toward you. Indeed He is very Relenting, very Kind" (Ibn Kathir).

229. Many of the *Salaf* have said that this is how every innovator (Sahib al bid`ah) will be treated: ignominy in this life itself (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

230. Majid comments: "Compare the Jewish view of the enormity of the sin... "There is not a misfortune that Israel has suffered which is not partly a retribution for the sin of the calf" (JE. III. pp. 508, 509)."

[153] As for those who worked evil deeds, but repented thereafter and believed, then, after that your Lord is All forgiving, All compassionate.²³¹

وَالَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهَا
وَأَمَنُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ
﴿١٥٣﴾

[154] And when Musa's anger abated in him, he picked up the Tablets²³² and in the inscription there was guidance, and mercy for those who fear their Lord.

وَلَمَّا سَكَتَ عَنْ مُوسَى الْغَضَبَ أَخَذَ
الْأَلْوَابَ وَفِي نُسْحَتِهَا هُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلَّذِينَ
هُمْ لِرَبِّهِمْ يَرْهَبُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾

[155] And Musa chose from his people seventy men for Our appointed time. But when the violent quaking seized them, he said, 'My Lord! Had you willed, You could have destroyed them before me – and me too. Will you destroy us all for what the foolish ones of us have done?²³³ Surely, this is Your trial: You lead astray whom You will thereby, and guide whom you will. You are our Protector, therefore, forgive us and show us mercy. And, surely, You are the best of those who forgive.

وَاخْتَارَ مُوسَى قَوْمَهُ سَبْعِينَ رَجُلًا لِمِيقَاتِنَا
فَلَمَّا أَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ قَالَ رَبِّ لَوْ شِئْتَ
أَهْلَكْتَهُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ وَإِيَّايَ أَتَهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ
السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَّا إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا فِتْنَتُكَ تُضِلُّ بِهَا
مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَهْدِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ أَنْتَ وَلِيُّنَا
فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْغَافِرِينَ
﴿١٥٥﴾

231. Ibn Abi Hatim has recorded a report that `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud was asked about a man who fornicates with a woman and then marries her. He recited this verse in reply. They repeated the question some ten times, but his only answer was this verse: "As for those who worked evil deeds, but repented thereafter and believed, then, after that your Lord is All forgiving, All compassionate."

He said nothing else by way of approval or disapproval (Ibn Kathir).

232. Majid comments: "'Tablets', not their fragments, which implies that the tablets were whole, not broken into pieces" (as in reports originating from Jewish sources: Au.).

233. For an explanation refer to *Surah al Baqarah*, note 136 of this work.

[156] And, write for us in this world good, as also in the world to come. We have repented to You.²³⁴ He responded, 'My chastisement I smite therewith whom I will. But My mercy embraces all things.²³⁵ I shall write it down for those who fear, pay the alms, and those who truly believe in Our signs.

وَكَتُبْنَا لَنَا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي
الْآخِرَةِ إِنَّا هُدْنَا إِلَيْكَ قَالَ عَدَايُ أُصِيبُ
بِهِ مَنْ أَشَاءُ وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ
فَسَأْأَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾

[157] Those, who follow the unlettered²³⁶ Messenger Prophet²³⁷ about whom they find written with them in Tawrah and Injil.²³⁸ He commands them good (and honorable) things, forbids them the repugnant,²³⁹ declares the clean things lawful, prohibits them the unclean, and removes from them their burdens and the fetters that were upon them.²⁴⁰ Therefore, those who believed in him, strengthened him,²⁴¹ helped him and followed the Light that was sent down with him,²⁴² they such indeed are the prosperers.

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي
يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ
يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ
وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ
عَلَيْهِمْ فَاَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ
وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

234. The translation is based on the understanding of Ibn `Abbas, Sa`id ibn Jubayr, Dahhak and others as in Ibn Jarir.

235. Anwar Shah Kashmiri has pointed out that the intent of the statement is that it is "the Attribute" of Mercy that circumscribes everything. It does not mean it should touch everyone, such as for instance, Satan, who will be shown no mercy (Shafi`).

236. Ummi is someone who cannot read and write.

Imam Razi brings out the point that learning to read and write is one of the simplest things in life. In contrast, the knowledge that the Prophet (*saws*) gave to the world is of a sort that no mortal has ever presented. It is curious to note, therefore, that the Prophet was not capable of the easiest, but capable of the most difficult.

Majid writes: "Even according to the Christian writers not altogether blinded by their hatred of Islam: 'As to acquired learning, it is confessed he had none at all: having had no other education than what was cus-

tomary in his tribe, who neglected, and perhaps despised, what we call literature' (Sale). 'It is probable that he could neither read nor write, and it is almost certain that he could not have done so sufficiently' (Palmer). "There is no evidence that he was able to read' (EBr. XIII, p. 483)."

Yusuf `Ali adds: "All organized human knowledge tends to be crystalized, to acquire a partial bias or flavor of some "school" of thought. The highest Teacher had to be free from any such taint, just as a clean slate is necessary if a perfectly clear and bold message has to be written on it."

The verse offers a puzzle to the skeptics of all times. This is a Makkan chapter. During this period the Prophet was entirely in the limelight. His every movement was looked at with suspicion and carefully monitored. He had no contacts with the Jews and Christians, who were not part of the Makkan population. To add to the puzzle, he was unlettered, notwithstanding the fact that being able to read and write would not have meant much because there were no books around. How then was he able to narrate the Jewish episodes to such details as here and else where in the Qur`an? (Au.).

237. What is the difference between a Messenger and a Prophet? There seems to be no consensus except that a Messenger is more specific than a Prophet; so that, every Messenger is also a Prophet, while every Prophet is not a Messenger too. Shah Abdul Qadir seems to have put it quite succinctly when he said: "Anyone who received revelation was a Prophet, but, of them, whoever was sent to a people or given a Book, was a Messenger" (Muhammad Abdul Rashid No`mani).

238. Ibn Kathir quotes several reports from several *hadith* and non *hadith* works to prove that the people of the Book had fore knowledge of the Prophet's advent, and knew his description. But most of those reports leave a question mark before them over their authenticity. The following is in Ahmad which, as Ibn Kathir himself has pointed out, has its equivalent in the *Sahihayn*. A bedouin reports:

جَلَبْتُ جَلُوبَةً إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فِي حَيَاةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَلَمَّا فَرَعْتُ مِنْ بَيْعَتِي قُلْتُ لِأَقْرَبِ هَذَا الرَّجُلِ فَلَأَسْمَعَنَّ مِنْهُ قَالَ فَتَلَّهَانِي بَيْنَ أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرَ يَمْشُونَ فَتَبِعْتُهُمْ فِي أَقْفَانِهِمْ حَتَّى أَتَوْا عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِنَ الْيَهُودِ نَاشِرًا التَّوْرَةَ يَفْرُغُهَا يُعَزِّي بِهَا نَفْسَهُ عَلَى ابْنِ لَهُ فِي الْمَوْتِ كَأَحْسَنِ الْفَيْتَانِ وَأَجْمَلِهِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْشُدْكَ بِالَّذِي أَنْتَلَ التَّوْرَةَ هَلْ تُجِدُ فِي كِتَابِكَ دَا صِفَتِي وَمُخْرَجِي فَقَالَ

بِرَأْسِهِ هَكَذَا أَيُّ لَا فَقَالَ ابْنُهُ إِنِّي وَالَّذِي أَنْزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ
إِنَّا لَنَجِدُ فِي كِتَابِنَا صِفَتَكَ وَمُخْرَجَكَ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ لَا
إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ فَقَالَ أَقِيمُوا الْيَهُودَ عَنْ
أَخِيكُمْ ثُمَّ وَلِيَ كَفَنَهُ وَحَنَطَهُ وَصَلَّى عَلَيْهِ

“Once I went to Madinah during the Prophet’s time to sell my camel. After I had accomplished that, I said to myself that I should visit this man also (meaning the Prophet) and see what he has to say. I found him heading to some place. He was between Abu Bakr and `Umar. I followed them until we came to a Jew’s house who was reading the Torah upon his beautiful but dying son. The Prophet asked him, ‘I adjure you by Him who revealed the Tawrah, do you find me described therein, and the place of my advent?’ The man shook his head in negation. But his son spoke out, ‘By Him who sent the Torah, we do find in our Book your description and of the place of your advent. And I testify that there is no god save one Allah and that you are His Messenger.’ The Prophet said, ‘Separate the Jew from your brother.’ Later, he ordered the preparation of the lad’s funeral and Prayed over him.”

Qurtubi and Shawkani point out that Bukhari has a *hadith* (2125)

concerning the Prophet’s description in the previous Scriptures. `Ata’ b. Yasar says:

عَنْ عَطَاءِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ قَالَ لَقِيتُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عَمْرٍو
بِئِنَّ الْعَاصِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قُلْتُ أَخْبِرْنِي عَنْ صِفَةِ
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي التَّوْرَةِ قَالَ أَجَلُ
وَاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمَوْصُوفٌ فِي التَّوْرَةِ بِبَعْضِ صِفَتِهِ فِي الْقُرْآنِ
{ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا }
وَجَزْرًا لِلْأُمِّيِّينَ أَنْتَ عَبْدِي وَرَسُولِي سَمِيَّتُكَ الْمُتَوَكَّلِ
لَيْسَ يَقْطُ وَلَا عَلِيْطٌ وَلَا سَحَابٌ فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ وَلَا
يَدْفَعُ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ وَلَكِنْ يَغْفِرُ وَيَعْفُو وَلَنْ يَقْبِضَهُ
اللَّهُ حَتَّى يُقِيمَ بِهِ الْمِلَّةَ الْعُوجَاءَ بِأَنْ يَقُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا
اللَّهُ وَيَفْتَحُ بِهَا أَعْيُنًا عُمْيًا وَأَذَانًا صُمًّا وَقُلُوبًا غُلْفًا.

“I met `Abdullah ibn `Amr b. al `As. I asked him, ‘Will you tell me how the Prophet has been described in the Tawrah?’ He said, ‘I will. By Allah, he is described in the Tawrah in words that are also in the Qur`ān: O Messenger. We have sent you a witness, giver of glad tidings, a Warner and a means of security for the unlettered ones. You are My slave and Messenger. I have named you “Mutawakkil.” You are neither severe nor hard hearted, nor one shouting out in the markets... He does not respond with an evil for an evil. Rather, he forgives and overlooks. Allah will not complete his term without straightening up a crooked nation by making them believe in “There is

no god save Allah.” He will open blind eyes, deaf ears and sealed hearts.’

Majid on a lesser scale, but Rashid Rida in greater measure, deal with the subject of the prophecy concerning the Prophet in the Old and the New Testaments. Majid quotes from the Scriptures and then offers his own comments. However, wherever it was felt that the comment was not fully relevant, this writer has taken the liberty to insert his own comments:

Here are a few references with a running commentary by Majid:

1. ‘I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth: and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him’ (Dt. 18: 17, 18).

Comments: The word ‘their’ is referring to the Israelites, ‘their brethren; must clearly be the Ismailites; and thus the promised prophet must be an Ismailite. ‘Like unto thee’ obviously means ‘like unto Moses’ in having a Law of his own.’

2. ‘The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousand of saints;

from his right hand went a fiery law for them’ (Dt. 33: 2).

Comments: Coming after Moses (‘from Sinai’) and Jesus (‘from Seir’) the allusion in ‘from mount Paran’, which is in Makkah, is clearly to the prophet born in Makka. It was he who entered that city as a victor at the head of 10,000 saintly companions and holding in his hand ‘a fiery law.’

3. ‘And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him truthful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation’ (Ge. 17: 21).

Comments. This promise to bless Ismail found its complete fulfillment in the person of Muhammad (on him be peace) an Ismailite being appointed the prophet for the entire world.

4. The scepter shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he come that is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of nations’ (49: 10 DV).

Comments: It was the advent of the Ismailite ‘sent one’ that prophecy in Israel ceased, and it was he under whom the nations of the world gathered.

5. 'I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever' (Ps. 45: 17).

Comments: 'Muhammad' is literally 'the praised one.' And it is his name coupled with that of his Creator, which is being proclaimed from the mosque minarets five times every day throughout the world.

6. 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, ... he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles ... And the isles shall wait for his law' (Is. 42: 1, 4).

Comments: It is precisely Muhammad, the 'servant of God' and His 'elect' (Mustafa) who brought judgment to the Gentiles, and whose law has been awaited by the distant 'isles.'

7. 'Yes, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend' (Ps. 5: 16).

Comments: The word 'lovely' used in the English *Bible* is a substitute for the Hebrew one, "Mohammadin." As this name of our Prophet is noun adjective, the sacred poet uses it in a manner answering both the interpretation of a proper noun and an adjective' (Syed Ahmad Khan).

Majid continues: As further reference, the following may be cited: Hab. 3: 3; Hag. 2: 7 9; Mal. 3: 1.

(As for the Gospels) Even in the manipulated and mutilated New Testament of the present day the allusions are neither too scanty nor too enigmatic.

1. 'Did ye never read in the scripture, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore I say unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder' (Mt. 21: 42 44).

Comments: It was the very Prophet who was rejected by the Jews and Christians who became the corner stone of Religion. Without Muhammad's appearance, there would have remained no such thing as Religion on the face of the earth except for practices of the forest cultures. The Prophet said about himself in a *hadith* of Bukhari and others: "My example and that of other Prophets is like that of a man who built a house.

He completed it and did a good job of it except for leaving the space of a brick blank. People began to enter and go around the house admiring it, but saying, 'Had this gap been filled with a brick!' Lo. I am that brick, and I am the seal of the Prophets" (Au.).

2. 'Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high' (Lk. 24: 49).

3. 'Who art thou? And he confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, what then? Art thou Elias? And he said, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. ... And they asked him, and said unto him, why baptizes thou then, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias neither that prophet' (Lk. 24: 49).

Comments: The questions were put by the learned among the Jews to John the Baptist, which indicate that besides Christ and Elias, they expected another prophet, who was so well known as the awaited one that instead of designating him by name, a mere pronoun, 'that prophet' was deemed sufficient.

4. 'Many of the people, therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ' (Jn. 7: 40 41).

Comments: Another clear reference to the advent of the well known prophet, 'the Prophet.'

5. 'And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever' (Jn. 14: 16).

6. 'But when the Comforter is come, when I shall send unto you from the Father even the spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me' (Jn. 15: 26).

Note by Rashid Rida: The Comforter of English is Farqalit of Arabic.

7. 'And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.... Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come' (Jn. 16: 8 13).

Comments (on 5, 6 and 7): These descriptions of the Comforter exactly fit the holy Prophet. He it is who, as the Final Prophet, brought an abiding Message ('abiding with you for ever'), who testified to the truth of Jesus ('he shall testify to me'), and who 'reproved the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.' And he, above all, was the Divine

mouthpiece, reproducing the words of God precisely as he received them ('he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak').” The Qur`ān said about him (53: 3): “He does not speak on his own. It is nothing but a revelation being sent down” (Au.).

239. To mention ‘*amr bi al ma`ruf wa al nahyu`an al munkar* immediately after mentioning the sending of the revelation is perhaps to impress upon the minds the importance of this institution (Rashid Rida).

240. The reference here is to the tough measures imposed on the Israelites because of their rebellious attitudes, as in the verse (3: 160, 161):

فَبِظُلْمٍ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَفْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْبَاتٍ أُجِّلَتْ
لَهُمْ وَبِصَدِّهِمْ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا (١٦٠) وَأَخَذْنَاهُمُ
الرِّبَا وَقَدْ نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَأَكْلِهِمْ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ
وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا [النساء : ١٦٠
، ١٦١]

“Therefore, because of the transgressions of those who Judaized themselves, We made some of those good things unlawful to them that

were (originally) lawful; and because of their hindering many from the path of Allah; and, because of their acceptance of usury, although they were prohibited; and (their) consuming people’s wealth without right.”

The new measures spoken of here include those that were declared prohibited but made lawful by the priestly class, such as usury (Shab-bir).

241. Shafi` points out that the textual word for “strengthen” is `azzara which in its root signifies “preventing (something from someone) and protecting him, out of love.” Its extended meaning is to respect and honor someone to a high degree.

242. To state in the beginning of the verse: “those, who follow the unlettered Messenger Prophet,” and at the end, “followed the Light that was sent down with him,” is to emphasize that both the *Sunnah* and the Qur`ān have to be essentially followed for salvation (Shafi`).

[158] Say, (O Prophet), 'O people. Verily, I am Allah's Messenger unto you all,²⁴³ He to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. There is no god but He. He gives life and deals death. Therefore believe in Allah and His unlettered²⁴⁴ Messenger Prophet who himself believes in Allah and His words. And obey him, haply you will be (rightly) guided.'

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ
جَمِيعًا الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَأَمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ
وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ
وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

243. With regard to the universality of the Prophet the following *hadith* can be quoted:

أُعْطِيتُ خَمْسًا لَمْ يُعْطَهُنَّ أَحَدٌ قَبْلِي : نُصِرْتُ
بِالرُّعْبِ مَسِيرَةَ شَهْرٍ ، وَجُعِلَتْ لِي الْأَرْضُ مَسْجِدًا
وَطَهُورًا ، فَأَيُّمَا رَجُلٍ مِنْ أُمَّتِي أَدْرَكْتُهُ الصَّلَاةَ فَلْيُصَلِّ
، وَأَجَلْتُ لِي الْعَنَائِمَ وَمَنْ نَحَلَ لِأَحَدٍ قَبْلِي ، وَأُعْطِيتُ
الشَّفَاعَةَ ، وَكَانَ النَّبِيُّ يُبْعَثُ إِلَى قَوْمِهِ خَاصَّةً وَبُعِثْتُ
إِلَى النَّاسِ عَامَّةً

“I have been bestowed with five things that no Prophet was bestowed before me. (i) I have been helped with awe from the distance of a month. (ii) The whole of the earth has been declared clean for me. Therefore, whenever a man might be, he can pray right there when the time arrives. (iii) War spoils have been made lawful unto me. They were unlawful before me unto everyone. (iv) I have been gifted with the (general) ‘Intercession.’ Finally, (v) Prophets before me used to be sent to their own people. I

have been sent to the entire humankind” (Razi).

Ibn Kathir adds: The above report is in the *Sahihayn* narrated by Jabir b. `Abdullah. Another *hadith* of Muslim says:

وَالَّذِي تَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَا يَسْمَعُ بِي أَحَدٌ مِنْ هَذِهِ
الْأُمَّةِ يَهُودِيٍّ وَلَا نَصْرَانِيٍّ ثُمَّ يَمُوتُ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِالَّذِي
أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ إِلَّا كَانَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ

By Him in whose hand is my soul, no Jew nor Christian of this *Ummah* will hear of me and die off, without believing in what I have brought, but he will be a companion of the Fire.”

Sayyid Qutb writes, in effect: This verse in which the Prophet (*saws*) has been ordered to confront the whole of the mankind with his message, belongs to a chapter that is wholly Makkan. It thus confronts those dillettantes of the Western world who allege that the Prophet initially intended no more than to seize power

[159] And, of the people of Musa, there are some who guide to the truth and by it they judge.²⁴⁵

وَمِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَى أُمَّةٌ يَهْتَدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

[160] And We cut them up into twelve²⁴⁶ nation tribes. And We revealed to Musa when his people sought water from him that, 'you strike the rock with your staff.' And lo, gushed forth therefrom twelve springs. Every people knew their watering place. And We hung upon them the clouds, and sent down upon them Mann and the quails? 'Eat of the good things that We have provided you. And they wronged Us not, but rather, they were wronging themselves.

وَقَطَعْنَا لَهُمْ اثْنَتَيْ عَشْرَةَ أَسْبَاطًا أُمَمًا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ إِذِ اسْتَسْقَاهُ قَوْمُهُ أَنْ اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانْبَجَسَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرِبَهُمْ وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْغَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَنَّٰ وَالسَّلْوَىٰ كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

[161] And when they were told, 'Dwell in this town and eat from wheresoever you will, and say, "Hittatun," and enter at the gate prostrating. We shall forgive you your sins, (and) increase (the rewards of) those who excel.'

وَإِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمُ اسْكُنُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ وَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ وَادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا نَعْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطِيئَاتِكُمْ سَنَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾

from the Makkans. It was only when he had subdued the Makkans that he thought of extending his power to the rest of the Arabian Peninsula. Eventually, it was only after his successes in the previous ventures that he began to dream of extending his domain over the rest of the world. This allegation is one of the several slanders that they hurled against the Prophet and the universal message that he brought.

244. The repetition of the epithet "the unlettered" seems to be to em-

phasize that he remained unlettered to the end (Au.).

245. The allusion by these words could be to those Jews who believed in `Isa (asws) when he appeared as well as those who believed in Prophet Muhammad at his advent (Razi).

246. The break has been placed at this point following the explanation of Ibn Jarir of the word "asbat" being in plural and the figure "ithnatay `ashara" feminine.

[162] But those of them who transgressed, substituted the word with other than that they were told. So We sent upon them a scourge from the heaven for their (repeated) transgressions.²⁴⁷

قَبَدَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي
قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِجْزًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٦٢﴾

[163] Ask them concerning the township which overlooked the sea whose (inhabitants) were transgressing the Sabbath²⁴⁸ when their fish came to them on the day of their Sabbath swarming on the surface, while on the day they did not observe Sabbath, they did not come.²⁴⁹ That is how We tested them because of their corruptions.²⁵⁰

وَأَسْأَلُهُمْ عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةَ
الْبَحْرِ إِذْ يَعْدُونَ فِي السَّبْتِ إِذْ تَأْتِيهِمْ
حَيْثَانُهُمْ يَوْمَ سَبْتِهِمْ شُرْعًا وَيَوْمَ لَا
يَسْبِتُونَ لَا تَأْتِيهِمْ كَذَلِكَ نَبْلُوهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾

[164] When a group of them said, 'Why do you admonish a people whom Allah is wont to destroy, or will chastise them with a terrible chastisement (in the Hereafter)?' They replied, 'As an excuse to your Lord. And (who knows?) they might be godfearing.'

وَإِذْ قَالَتْ أُمَّةٌ مِنْهُمْ لِمَ تَعِظُونَ قَوْمًا اللَّهُ
مُهْلِكُهُمْ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا قَالُوا
مُعَذِّبَهُمْ إِلَى رَبِّكُمْ وَعَلَيْهِمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾

247. For an explanation of this passage, see *Surah al Baqarah* of this work, notes 137 144 (verses 160 162).

248. The allusion by "the transgression" is to the habitual violation of Sabbath taboos. The words, "on the day they did not observe Sabbath," further substantiate this (Zamakhshari).

249. Husayn b. al Fadl was asked: "Do you find anywhere in Allah's Book that the lawful comes to you in quantities just enough, whereas

the unlawful comes in abundance?" He answered, "Yes. It is in Allah's words: 'When their fish would come to them on the day of their Sabbath swarming on the surface, while on the day they did not observe Sabbath, they would not'" (Qurtubi).

Sayyid Qutb comments on the nature of the phenomenon enunciated in this passage. He writes, in effect: As to how did such a strange thing occur, so that the fishes danced before their eyes to provoke them? The answer is, it is a miracle that comes into force by the command of Al-

lah and by His will. Those who lack knowledge believe that things have to follow the 'laws of nature' and have to happen in a preset pattern. But Islamic concepts, the true concepts, suggest to us different notions. They tell us that it is Allah who created this universe and set it in motion following in the normal run of the course a set of physical laws. But these physical laws are not free to act independently. They are bound to the will of Allah. They do not bind the will of Allah. His will imposes itself upon every other will. Whenever He wishes to move things on another pattern, He abrogates the rule of the 'physical laws' to impose what His will decrees. In other words, nothing happens mechanically, automatically, on a rigid pattern, rather, is completely dependent on the Will of Allah, in its details, and in its aggregate, following either the physical laws laid down, or another, abrogating set of laws. In the final analysis, it is Allah's Active Will that prevails.

250. (The Israelites failed the test and tried to play with the rules. They would build barges on Saturdays to

trap the fish and collect them on Sundays. Or they would lay traps and baits on Saturday pulling out the fish only on Sunday: Au.). Or they, "cut canals from the sea for the fish to enter, with sluices, which they shut on the day of Sabbath, to prevent their return to the sea" (Majid).

The Prophet has warned his nation of trickery against Allah's commandments. He said in a *hadith* which can be graded as trustworthy:

لا ترتكبوا ما ارتكبت اليهود، فتستحلوا محارم الله
بأدنى الحيل

"Do not attempt to do what the Jews did: making the unlawful, lawful by playing with the rules" (Ibn Kathir).

Thanwi clarifies an issue: As for the heelah (roughly, a stratagem) that the jurists have allowed, they cannot be equated with what is described as the "playing with the rules" as mentioned in the above *hadith* because it is not the going round a commandment, or nullification of an objective that is intended or achieved by heelah.

[165] So, when they forgot all about what they were reminded, We rescued those who forbid them the evil²⁵¹ and seized those who transgressed with a severe chastisement because of what corruptions they indulged in.²⁵²

قَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ أَنجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ يَنْهَوْنَ
عَنِ السُّوءِ وَأَخَذْنَا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا بِعَدَابِ
بَئِيسٍ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿١٦٥﴾

[166] When they treated with disdain that which they were forbidden, We ordered, 'Be apes, disgraced.'²⁵³

قَلَمَّا عَتَوْا عَنْ مَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ قُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا
قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾

251. Although conflicting opinions have come down from the earliest commentators in Tabari and others, it seems they were inclined to believe that the third group, which neither violated the Sabbath nor forbid the transgressors, were among those who were rescued. Further, as Zamakhshari has hinted, the group that prevented others from admonishing them could only be those who had already tried on their own and failed to convince the Sabbath violators of the consequences of their crime. Hence, they could be counted as those who forbade. The point that `Ikrimah brought out for a worried Ibn `Abbas who said that "we too on many occasions do not forbid the wrong that we see committed before us" was that the Qur`ān itself confirms that the group which did not forbid, disapproved of the Sabbath violators and were opposed to them, hence could not be punished along with the violators. In the end

Ibn `Abbas felt convinced and gifted `Ikrimah a pair of clothes for relieving him (Au). That is also the opinion of Hasan (Zamakhshari).

252. Imam Razi and Shabbir have stated that this verse implies that the transgressors were first punished with a lower order punishment before the final, transformation into apes.

253. Ibn `Abbas has said that some people have conjectured that the young were transformed into apes while the old ones into swine (Ibn Jarir).

For details of this episode see *Surah al Baqarah* of this work, note no. 159.

It is interesting to see how close modern developments in Science have come to solving some of the enigmatic statements of the Qur`ān. Modern research in the field of molecular biology reveals that the script for the entire human body is writ-

[167] And (remember) when your Lord declared that He shall send upon them until the Day of Judgment those who will afflict them with an evil chastisement.²⁵⁴ Surely, your Lord is swift in retribution although He is very Forgiving, very Kind.

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكَ لَيَبْعَثَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ يَسُوءُهُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَسَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٦٧﴾

[168] And We cut them up into (small) communities in the lands: some of them righteous, while others among them are otherwise. And We tried them with good things and evil, that haply they will return.

وَقَطَّعْنَاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُمَّمًا مِّنْهُمْ الصَّالِحُونَ وَمِنْهُمْ دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَبَلَوْنَاهُمْ بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٦٨﴾

ten in a coded form, concealed in every cell of the body. They are in the form of chromosomes composed of nucleic acid arranged in a certain fashion and packed into the nucleus of the cells. The coded messages involving anything from hundreds to thousands of molecules are called genes. The alteration of a single molecule out of the 4 billion base pairs in which the genetic message is concealed (in biological terms a single mutation), can mean a completely different message being issued to the cell machinery. It can even spell out death for the organism. An example is that of the sickle cell disease which is caused by a single mutation. It would have, therefore, taken no more than a few mutations, or perhaps just one, at the genetic level an operation lasting a few seconds to convert the Israelites from humans

into apes or even swine. We do not assert however, that the transformation of the Israelites into apes and swine would have necessarily been brought about through mutations at the cellular level. Allah has power over all things. A command would have been sufficient without any mutational obligation. But this kind of information may offer relief to those who feel uncomfortable at the idea of transmutation (Au.).

Answering the question whether the present day swine and apes are the progeny of those transformed Jews, the Prophet said no. See *hadith* under note 170 of *Surah* al-Ma'idah (Au.).

254. Accordingly, they have always remained subservient to one power or the other (Ibn Kathir).

A highly influential American Jew

has said during an interview that if USA withdraws its support to Israel, it cannot last more than five years (Au.).

Majid quotes the Torah: "And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies; they that hate you shall reign over you; and you shall flee when none pursueth you" (Le. 26: 17). "And thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed away." (Dt. 28: 33)

Writing about 150 years earlier, Alusi stated: "They shall ever remain until the Day of Judgment under the domain of others; the fact being not contradicted by what will happen at the time of `Isa's second advent, since that will be very close to the end of the world."

Sayyid Qutb quotes this verse at an earlier point (verse 152) and offers the following comment: "Whenever it happened in a historical phase that they rebelled in the land, imposing their authority over non Jews or, as the Talmud has termed them: the Goyim they came to possess power, wealth, means of the media, dictating their oppressive terms and conditions

to achieve their objectives, humiliating Allah's creations, throwing them out of their homes into the deserts, with the backing of the misguided nations of the world, all of which we once again witness in our own times .. all of that did not contradict the promise made to them by Allah, nor what is written as their ultimate fate. Today, they are indeed hoarding hatred into the breasts of the people by their acts, and stockpiling frustration and anger against themselves .. If they happen to be so overbearing in Palestine today, it is only because their opponents have not prepared themselves religiously .. they have not yet returned to Islam; they are a divided lot, a people who get together under the banner of nationalism. They do not assemble under the banner of Islam. Therefore, they fail and Israel eats them up. Nevertheless, this situation will not last. It is a period of stupor and neglect of the great weapon: unity, a single strategy, a single banner with the help of which they overcame them for over a thousand years, with which alone they shall overcome them again, and without which they in turn shall

[169] Then came after them evil successors who inherited the Book, who accept chance goods of this lower world saying, 'We shall be forgiven.'²⁵⁵ But, when similar chance commodity comes their way, they accept it.²⁵⁶ Had not the compact of the Book taken from them that they shall not utter about Allah but the truth? while they had studied what was in it?²⁵⁷ The abode of the Hereafter is better for those who are godfearing. Will you not then contemplate?

فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ وَرِثُوا الْكِتَابَ يَأْخُذُونَ عَرَضَ هَذَا الْأَدْنَى وَيَقُولُونَ سَيُغْفَرُ لَنَا وَإِنْ يَأْتِهِمْ عَرَضٌ مِثْلُ مَا أَخَذُوا أَلَمْ يَأْخُذْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِيثَاقَ الْكِتَابِ أَنْ لَا يَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ وَدَرَسُوا مَا فِيهِ وَالذَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾

[170] As for those who hold fast unto the Book, perform the Prayer (regularly and properly), surely, We do not let go waste reward of the reformers.

وَالَّذِينَ يُمَسِّكُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّا لَا نَضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ ﴿١٧٠﴾

be overcome.”

255. Yusuf Ali writes what is applicable to many Muslim nations of today, especially those who talk about Islam the loudest whose bodies are in the east, but hearts in the West: “Merely inheriting a Book, or doing lip service to it, does not make a nation righteous. If they succumb to the temptations of the world, their hypocrisy becomes all the more glaring.”

256. That is, they would sell their religion (by misinterpreting the Law) for a paltry price; subsequently, realizing that it was not allowed, they would repent and seek forgiveness; but when a similar opportunity

showed up, they grabbed it again (Ibn Kathir).

257. This kind of behavior can be seen as prevalent in this *Ummah* also. Mu`adh ibn Jabal had said: “The Qur`ān will get worn out in the hearts just as clothes get worn out. They will recite it but will not find any pleasure therein. They will wear sheep’s clothes to cover the hearts of wolves. Their deeds would spring entirely from their avarice, with no fear (of Allah). If they fall short they will say, ‘We shall soon make up.’ If they commit evil, they will say, ‘We shall be forgiven; (after all) We do not associate partners with Allah” (Qurtubi).

[171] And (recall) when We suspended²⁵⁸ the mountain over them, as if it was a canopy, and they were apprehensive that it would fall on them. (We said then), 'Accept what We have given you and remember what is therein, happily you will (learn to) fear (Allah).²⁵⁹

وَإِذْ تَنْفَعْنَا الْجَبَلَ فَوْقَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُ ظِلَّةٌ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُ
وَاقِعٌ بِهِمْ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا
مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧١﴾

[172] And when Your Lord took from the loins of Adam's children their offspring and made them testify concerning themselves,²⁶⁰ 'Am I not your Lord?' They replied, 'Yes. We²⁶¹ do testify,²⁶² lest you should say on the Day of Judgment, 'We were completely in dark over this.'

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِن بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ
ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ
بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا أَن تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾

[173] Or you should say, 'Verily, it was our forefathers before us who set up partners. We were their descendants after them. Will You then destroy us for what the followers of falsehood did?'

أَوْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِن قَبْلُ
وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِّن بَعْدِهِمْ أَفَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ
الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿١٧٣﴾

It seems that if Yusuf Ali foresaw the rulers, Mu`adh ibn Jabal foresaw the masses of our times (Au.).

258. The word nataqa signifies pulling up a thing and lifting it, while rafa`a only implies lifting or raising it (Shafi`).

259. See *Surah al Baqarah*, note no. 157 for its explanation.

260. One opinion is that the allusion is to the birth of Adam's progeny, generation after generation, and rising of Prophets among them. The testimony in this case, by the progeny, would be to the signs of Allah's

oneness that are spread all over. The preferred meaning however is as follows (Shanqiti).

Tirmidhi has a *hadith* that he has narrated as a commentary over this verse. Abu Hurayrah says the Prophet (*saws*) said:

لَمَّا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ آدَمَ مَسَحَ ظَهْرَهُ فَسَقَطَ مِنْ ظَهْرِهِ كُلُّ
نَسَمَةٍ هُوَ خَالِقُهَا مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَجَعَلَ
بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْ كُلِّ إِنْسَانٍ مِنْهُمْ وَبَيْضًا مِنْ نُورٍ ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ
عَلَى آدَمَ فَقَالَ أَيُّ رَبِّ مَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ قَالَ هَؤُلَاءِ ذُرِّيَّتُكَ
فَرَأَى رَجُلًا مِنْهُمْ فَأَعْجَبَهُ وَبَيْضٌ مَا بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْهِ فَقَالَ
أَيُّ رَبِّ مَنْ هَذَا فَقَالَ هَذَا رَجُلٌ مِنْ آخِرِ الْأُمَّمِ مِنْ
ذُرِّيَّتِكَ يُقَالُ لَهُ دَاوُدُ فَقَالَ رَبِّ كَمْ جَعَلْتَ عُمرَهُ قَالَ
سِتِّينَ سَنَةً قَالَ أَيُّ رَبِّ زِدْهُ مِنْ عُمرِي أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً

فَلَمَّا فُضِيَ عُمُرُ آدَمَ جَاءَهُ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ أَوْمًا
يَبْقَى مِنْ عُمُرِي أَرْبَعُونَ سَنَةً قَالَ أَوْمًا تَعْطِيهَا ابْنَكَ
دَاوُدَ قَالَ فَجَحَدَ آدَمُ فَجَحَدَتْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُ وَنَسِيَ آدَمُ
فَنَسِيَتْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُ وَخَطِيءُ آدَمَ فَخَطِيئَتْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُ قَالَ أَبُو
عِيْسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ

“When Allah had created Adam He stroked his back. His entire progeny that He was to create fell out. He placed a bright spot of Light between the two eyes on everyone’s face. Then He presented them to Adam. Adam enquired: “Who are these O my Lord?” He told him that they were his progeny. Adam spotted one among them whose spot of bright light attracted his attention. He asked: “Who is this my Lord?” He answered: “This is one of your progeny to appear close to the end who’d be called Da’ud.” He asked: “What age have you determined for him my Lord?” He was told that it was sixty years. Adam said: “My Lord! I gift forty years of my life to him.” When Adam had completed his term and the angel of death appeared before him, he asked him whether another forty years of his age were still not in store. The angel reminded him that he had gifted away forty years of his life to his son Da’ud. Thus, (the Prophet

added), Adam contested and his progeny contests. Adam forgot and his progeny forgets. Adam committed an error and his progeny commits errors.”

Hakim has also narrated this *hadith* by another route grading it as *Sahih* by the criterion of the Sheikhayn although they did not narrate it themselves (Ibn Kathir).

The above *hadith*, although brought by Tirmidhi as a commentary on the verse under discussion does not mention the compact taken from Adam’s progeny. There are other *ahadith* that do, but they are, as pointed out by Ibn Kathir, weak of narrators. Nevertheless, there is one in the Musnad narrated by Imam Ahmad’s son, as well as in Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Marduwayh reported by Mujahid, `Ikrimah, Sa`id b. Jubayr, Hasan, Qatadah, Suddi and others that speaks of the compact. Yet another *hadith* is in Ahmad, reported by Ibn `Abbas, as well as in Nasa’i and Hakim, who declared it as of the same quality as one of the *Sahihayn*. It says the Prophet said:

أَخَذَ اللَّهُ الْمِيثَاقَ مِنْ ظَهْرِ آدَمَ بِنِعْمَانَ يَعْنِي عَرَفَةَ
فَأَخْرَجَ مِنْ صُلْبِهِ كُلَّ ذُرِّيَّةٍ ذَرَأَاهَا فَصَبَّرَهُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ
كَالذَّرِّ ثُمَّ كَلَّمَهُمْ قَبْلًا قَالَ { أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا }
بَلَى شَهِدْنَا .. إِلَى .. أَفَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ {

“Allah took the compact from Adam’s progeny in (a place called) No`man on the day of `Arafah bringing out everyone who was to take birth, like ants, assembling them before Himself and taking the compact speaking to them directly.” Then the Prophet recited this verse (Ibn Kathir, Manar and others).

As for the difference between the Qur’anic passage (which says Allah took compact from the offspring brought out from Adam’s progeny) and the traditions (that speak of Allah bringing out Adam’s progeny from his back), the difference is of no consequence, because, as Jurjani has pointed out (Ibn al-Qayyim, Manar), both give different details and complete the narration when taken together.

Hasan’s interpretation of the verse, however, with Ibn Kathir himself inclined towards it, is that a direct speech between Adam’s progeny and Allah might not have taken place, rather, the episode might be expressive of a condition obtained, viz., an instinctive cognition of the fact of Allah’s Lordship being placed in them. Zamakhshari is of the opinion that the episode is in essence metaphorical (e.g., “When We wish a thing to

come into being We say to “it”, ‘Be’ and it is” in this verse “the thing to be created” is addressed although, non existent). [Qadi Baydawi was also of the same opinion: Alusi].

In this instance the allegory expresses the truth that belief in Allah as the Lord of the worlds is implanted in the very nature of man. So that, the Prophet said:

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ

“Every new soul is born on fitrah.”

Another *hadith* says:

وَإِنِّي خَلَقْتُ عِبَادِي حُنَفَاءَ كُلَّهُمْ فَأَتَتْهُمْ الشَّيَاطِينُ فَاجْتَأَنَتْهُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِمْ

“(Allah says), ‘I created My slaves *hunafa*’ on pure Tawhid. Then came the Satans who broke them away from their religion.”

A third *hadith* in the *Sahihayn* says,

يُقَالُ لِلرَّجُلِ مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَرَأَيْتَ لَوْ كَانَ لَكَ مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَكُنْتَ مُقْتَدِرًا بِهِ قَالَ فَيَقُولُ نَعَمْ قَالَ فَيَقُولُ قَدْ أَرَدْتُ مِنْكَ أَهْوَنَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ قَدْ أَخَذْتُ عَلَيْكَ فِي ظَهْرِ آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكَ بِي شَيْئًا فَأَبَيْتَ إِلَّا أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي

“A man of the people of the Fire will be asked on the Day of Judgment, ‘Do you think you would ransom anything from the earth to escape punishment?’ He will

[174] That is how we expound the signs that haply they will return.²⁶³ وَكَذَلِكَ نَفْصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٧٤﴾

answer, ‘Yes.’ Allah will say, ‘I asked you for something simpler. I took compact of you while you were still in Adam’s loins that you will not suggest partners unto Me. But you would not accept less than suggesting partners unto Me.’” Manar).

Mufti Shafi` adds: The system of bay`ah resorted to by the Sufis has its justification in this verse as well as several others such as verse 10 of *Surah* al Fath, as also in a few traditions.

261. According to some commentators, the preceding “Yes” is from the souls but “We” stands for Allah in which case the sentence would be rendered as “We took the covenant” (Au.).

262. Thanwi clearly displays his impatience with the rationalists when he writes: If it is asked, ‘How could so many (billions) be placed anywhere?’ The answer is, ‘They might have been reduced to the size of ants.’ And if it is asked, ‘How could such tiny ones be endowed with reason and intelligence?’ The answer is, ‘Are not the ants intelligent enough?’

If the placement of billions on a single platform is incredible, more incredible is that a single cell invisible to the human eye has a tiny nucleus within it, which contains (apart from other things) the DNA strands made up of some 3-4 billion molecules called nucleotides (Au.).

263. Majid writes: “Thus was the covenant of Monotheism inscribed, not like the covenant of Israel upon the tablets of stone but impressed upon the heart, the soul, of man. That this will to acknowledge and obey the One God forms part of man’s rational nature has at long last been recognized by the anthropologists who have now come to believe that instead of monotheism being a development of primitive polytheism the latter itself is a degeneration of the former... ‘Evolutionary’ ethnologists and anthropologists of the nineteenth century presupposed the primeval human culture as utterly barbaric and bewilderingly polytheistic or animistic. Later ethnological researches have, however, completely reversed this conclusion. ‘The startling reports of Andrew Lang on the original monotheism of these

[175] And recite to them the tidings of him whom We gave Our signs.²⁶⁴ But he went right through them (without profiting). Wherefore Shaytan followed after him. Eventually, he went (completely) astray.

وَأَنذَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾

Pygmies and related tribes, belonging, like them, to Primeval culture, marked a new epoch in ethnological research. The Viennese ethnologist, Prof. Father W. Schmidt (now working at the Ethnographic museum of the Vatican) collected all data and reports, referring to the subject. The result of this undertaking supported Andrew Lang's ideas on the broadest basis. Monotheism appears to be really a the very beginning of religious thought ... The point which mostly concerns us in these studies is the fact that monotheism is found to have been the original form of religion.' (Ehrenfels, *The Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad, Deccan, Oct. 1940, pp. 436, 437)."

264. (Although obviously general in application: Au.) speculations abound over whom the verse could allude to. Ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah and others have said that the reference is to an Israeli called Bal`am although `Abdullah ibn `Amr and Kalbi have said that it is Umayyah ibn abi Salt who has been referred to (Ibn Jarir).

"Balam (was) of the Canaanite race... (His) story occurs in the *Bible* (Nu. 22 24)" Majid.

Ibn Kathir adds: Perhaps what was meant when Umayyah ibn abi Salt was named is that the example fitted him well. It is said that the man had obtained a good amount of knowledge of the previous religions which he expressed in his poetry to the extent that when the Prophet heard some of his poetical pieces he said: "His poetry believed but his heart denied." When offered Islam he deferred the decision until his death (Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

A third person, No`man has also been named who had adopted asceticism before the Prophet's advent. When the Prophet told him about his mission, he asked him what his religion was. The Prophet told him: "It is that of unadulterated Oneness, that of Ibrahim." The man replied that he too was on that religion. The Prophet told him: "You are not. You have introduced some new elements and left out some." But the man would not believe. Instead, he

[176] Had We willed, We could have elevated him thereby.²⁶⁵ But he inclined toward the earth²⁶⁶ and followed his lust.²⁶⁷ Therefore, his example is like that of a dog: You load him up, he lolls his tongue out. You let him off, he lolls his tongue out. That is the example of those who laid the lies against Our signs.²⁶⁸ Narrate then the narrations, haply they will reflect.²⁶⁹

[177] Evil is the example of the people who laid the lies against Our signs, it was themselves they were wronging.

[178] Whomsoever Allah guides, he is rightly guided. And whomsoever He leads astray, they indeed they are the losers.

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى
الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ
تَحْمِلَ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثُ أَوْ يَتْرِكُهُ يَلْهَثُ ذَلِكَ
مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَاقْصُصِ
الْقِصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٧٦﴾

سَاءَ مَثَلًا الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
وَأَنْفُسُهُمْ كَانُوا يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾

مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِي وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ
فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٧٨﴾

travelled to Syria to seek military aid from the Roman emperor for a campaign against the Prophet. He failed in securing the aid and so, chose to remain there for 8 long years before giving up his ghost (Ibn Kathir, Alusi and others).

Imam Razi points out that, this is one of the toughest verses for those who possess a good knowledge of Islam.

265. The meaning is, had he lived up to his knowledge, We would have surely raised him, in conformity with Our will and Law, to spiritual eminence.

266. "Love of this world is the source of all errors" (Alusi).

267. Majid writes: "'Hawa' is not simple desire, but 'blamable or evil inclination.'"

268. Asad writes: "Because his attitudes are influenced by what his earth bound desires represent to him as his immediate 'advantages' or 'disadvantages', the type of man alluded to in this passage is always whatever the outward circumstances a prey to a conflict between his reason and his base urges and, thus, to inner disquiet and imaginary fears, and cannot attain that peace of mind which a believer achieves through his faith."

269. At this point Sufi commentators Alusi and Thanwi come down

[179] Indeed We have created for Hell many of the Jinn and men.²⁷⁰ They have hearts²⁷¹ but wherewith they understand not, they have eyes but wherewith they see not, and they have ears but wherewith they hear not.²⁷² They are like cattle. Indeed, worse misguided.²⁷³ They indeed they are completely unheeding.²⁷⁴

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ
لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَّا
يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَّا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا
أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْعَافِيُونَ ﴿١٧٩﴾

heavily upon the pseudo Sufis who have made a profession of the discipline, following their lust.

Sayyid expands upon the subject. He writes: “This is the example of him whose knowledge (of Islam) does not free him from overburdening material inclinations and carnal desires. The man clings to the earth and is unable to free himself from its pull. He follows his desires, so Satan follows him, accompanying him wherever he goes .. in fact, leading him up by the halter of his carnal desires...

“The Qur’ānic method does not consist in the description of ‘doctrines and beliefs’ in the fashion of a few concepts for easy chair study. This kind of knowledge will never succeed in the growth and development (of an individual). This cold knowledge will not be able to hold its ground against carnal desires...

“The Qur’ānic method of presentation of this religion is also not as an

‘Islamic System’ that can be studied as a discipline is studied nor as a ‘System of Law,’ nor as an ‘Economic System,’ nor any ‘ism’ of that sort. It presents this religion as a faith that is dynamically progressing, living and life giving, raising and elevating. It prompts to action for the fulfillment of its demands immediately as it settles in the hearts. It awakens dead hearts, prompting them to action. It re awakens the faculties of response to the nature on which it has been created so that the soul becomes conscious of the covenant made in its pre natal existence. It raises high his aims and objectives, not letting him incline toward the earth in the least.”

270. Alusi’s comments running over several pages can be shortened in a word: The allusion is to those who will (throughout human life on this planet) insist on disbelief, which happens to be in the knowledge of Allah.

Some leading scholars have said that (in the light of another verse, which is clear of meaning [51: 56], “And We have not created the Jinn and the mankind but that they should worship Me”), the allusion here could only be to those who in Allah’s knowledge choose to disbelieve not because they are forced to do that, rather because they make a decision that way.

Shabbir adds: The laam of this verse [in li ya`budun] could be understood as the laam al ghaayah [laam of purpose], whereas the laam of the verse under discussion [in li jahannum] as laam al `aqibah [the laam of consequence]. Although the majority of scholars have said that both the laams are for ghaayah [purpose] but that of li ya`budun is tashri`i [legal], whereas that of li jahannum is takwini [creative universal].

[The above was a parenthetical remark introduced by us from Shabbir (Au.).]

Nevertheless, Alusi continues, most commentators have believed in the apparent words, adding *ahadith*, (as in the notes that follow), that speak of pre destination of things. However, this is a very difficult topic that requires a lengthy discussion, shortened to one sentence by some of the

Masha`ikh who said: “A man is free to choose by his free will, that which has been pre ordained.” Alusi concludes with Imam Ghazali’s words: “If you say, ‘With reference to myself I find that if I willed to perform a deed, I could, or, if I willed to drop it off, I could drop it off; then, that would make the deed my own earning without an outside intervention’ if you say that, then the answer would be, ‘Admitted you find that kind of feeling in your heart. But, do you also find in your heart that if you willed you could will, but if you did not wish to will, you would not will?’ In other words you have no choice when it comes to your own will. It acts entirely independent of you. And, since your acts follow your will, which itself is free to act on you, it amounts to you being forced to act by a choice which [only] apparently enjoys freedom” (Slightly reworded). This of course, Alusi hastens to add, does not simplify the issue, and accordingly, he states that he has devoted a whole book to this subject.

271. Rashid Rida writes: When the word “heart” is used with reference to the physical body, it stands for the piece of flesh in the breast of a man. Otherwise it refers to a man’s understanding, knowledge, perceptive faculty, or the seat of emotions.

Confirmed latest findings are that the heart has a mind of its own within it (Au.).

272. Rashid Rida lends his support to Alusi's commentary above (no. 270) and adds his own explanation that could be abridged as follows: They have hearts that are incapable of understanding that which should be understood, including, by default, that which should get priority, viz., the demonstrative proofs leading to Truth. They have eyes with which they do not see things that need to be recorded, including, by default, what should get priority, viz., the outspread evidences that lead to Truth. They have ears with which they hear nothing of the revealed knowledge in the manner they deserve to be heard. Eventually, they will admit that they were on the wrong in not employing their faculties of the mind to good purposes. They will say on Judgment Day (67: 10):

لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ
[الملك : ١٠]

"Had we heard and contemplated, we would not have been among the companions of the Fire." Although, to be fair, the verse is equally applicable to those Muslims who do not use their faculties diligently and so are quick to consign non Muslims to Hell, and

themselves to Paradise, even if they are steeped in evil deeds, and, consequently, forced to bank on the dead for salvation through intercession.

273. Asad comments: "... animals follow only their instincts and natural needs and are not conscious of the possibility or necessity of a moral choice."

Majid adds: "Cf. the OT: 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider' (Is. ' : 3)."

274. The Prophet said in a *hadith* recorded by Muslim:

كَتَبَ اللَّهُ مَقَادِيرَ الْخَلَائِقِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ بِخَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ - قَالَ - وَعَرْشُهُ عَلَى
الْمَاءِ

"Allah decreed the decrees of the creations fifty thousand years before their creation. His *Arsh* was then on water."

Another *hadith* of Muslim reports `A'isha (*ra*) as saying:

تُوِّفِي صَبِيٍّ فَقُلْتُ طُوبَى لَهُ عُصْمُورٌ مِنْ عَصَافِيرِ الْجَنَّةِ
فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- « أَوْلَا
تَدْرِينَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ الْجَنَّةَ وَخَلَقَ النَّارَ فَخَلَقَ لِهَذِهِ
أَهْلًا وَلِهَذِهِ أَهْلًا

"A child died and I said, 'Good luck for it: a bird among the birds of Paradise.' He said, 'Are you not

aware that Allah created Paradise and the Fire and then created a people for this and a people for that?"

(Ibn Kathir has a longer version, but we have taken from Muslim: Au.).

The *Sahihayn* have another report which says (about the embryo):

ثُمَّ يُبْعَثُ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ فَيُؤَمِّرُ بِأَرْبَعِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَيُكْتَبُ رِزْقُهُ وَأَجَلُهُ وَعَمَلُهُ ثُمَّ يُكْتَبُ شَقِيٌّ أَوْ سَعِيدٌ

"... Then Allah sends an angel to it who decrees four things: His sustenance, age, deeds and whether he will be a lucky one or wretched" (Ibn Kathir).

Rashid Rida however strongly disagrees with the standard opinion stated by Imam Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others. He says that their destiny to Hell would be entirely dependent on their choice in this world. Allah gave them intellectual powers, but they refused to employ them to good purposes. The Qur'an has said at another place about them (46: 26):

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِيمَا إِنْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِيهِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ سَمْعًا وَأَبْصَارًا وَأَفْئِدَةً فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَلَا أَبْصَارُهُمْ وَلَا أَفْئِدَتُهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِذْ كَانُوا يَجْحَدُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ [الأحقاف : ٢٦]

"We established them in (those lands) just as We have established you in (this land). And We made for them the power of hearing,

sight and heart. But of no use for them were their hearing, sight and hearts when they disputed the signs of Allah."

Eventually they would admit that the fault was theirs. Once in the Fire they will cry out (67: 10, 11):

وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ (١٠) فَاعْتَرَفُوا بِذَنبِهِمْ فَسُحْقًا لِأَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ [الملك : ١٠ ، ١١]

"Had we given the ear, or used our heads, we would not have been the companions of the Fire. Thus they would admit their error."

We have dealt with the question of Qada' and Qadr largely as the commentators have done at various points in this work. The view point of the Ahl al *Sunnah* lies between the two extremes of the Mu`tazilah and the Jabriyyah. Admitting freedom to choose would imply denial of Allah's fore knowledge. Consequently, it would mean Allah does not know what's going to happen at any given time in the future. That obviously is unthinkable. In that event the universe cannot run on an ordered pattern: if it would run at all. On the other extreme, admitting pre destination (in the absolute sense) would mean reducing the humans to automats and the universe to a clock work. The truth lies in between

[180] Allah's are the most excellent Names;²⁷⁵ so call Him by them,²⁷⁶ and let alone those who work distortion in His Names.²⁷⁷ Soon they will be recompensed for what they are doing.

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوا
الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا
كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨٠﴾

which happens to be the position adopted by the Ahl al *Sunnah*. Yet, difficulties remain. We shall therefore, Allah willing, attempt a fuller explanation later in this work (Au.).

275. Asad comments: “This passage connects with the mention, at the end of the preceding verse, of ‘the heedless ones’ who do not use their faculty of discernment in the way intended for it by God, and remain heedless of Him who comprises within Himself all the attributes of perfection and represents, therefore, the Ultimate Reality. As regards the expression *al asma al husna* (lit. “the most perfect [or “most goodly names”]), which occurs in the Qur’an four times – i.e. in the above verse as well as in 17: 110, 20: 8, and 59: 24 – it is to be borne in mind that the term *ism* is, primarily, a word applied to denote the substance or the intrinsic attributes of an object under consideration.”

But Shabbir sees a deeper connection: After the mention of the “heedless” unbelievers, the Qur’an warns the believers that they should beware

of heedlessness. And the best cure for heedlessness is Allah’s remembrance. Therefore He should be called, and called by the best of Names, while the callers shun the company of those who dispute His Names.

The Prophet has said:

لِلَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ تِسْعَةٌ وَتِسْعُونَ اسْمًا مِائَةً إِلَّا وَاحِدًا مَنْ
أَحْصَاهَا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ

“Allah has ninety nine Names a hundred, less one. Whoever comprehended them entered Paradise” (Ibn Jarir).

However, Ibn Kathir adds, His Names are not limited to ninety nine.

[What is meant by the *hadith* then is that, of the many names that Allah has, if someone comprehended ninety-nine, he will be rewarded with Paradise: Au.].

That Allah has more than ninety-nine Names is supported by a *hadith* in Ahmad narrated by Ibn Mas`ud and declared *Sahih* by Ibn Hibban, which says that the Prophet said:

مَا أَصَابَ مُسْلِمًا قَطُّ هَمٌّ أَوْ حُزْنٌ، فَقَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ

إِنِّي عَبْدُكَ، وَإِنُّ أَمِينُكَ، نَاصِبَتِي بِيَدِكَ،
مَاضٍ فِي حُكْمِكَ، عَدَلٌ فِي قَضَائِكَ، أَسْأَلُكَ
بِكُلِّ اسْمٍ هُوَ لَكَ، سَمَّيْتَ بِهِ نَفْسَكَ، أَوْ أُنزَلَتْ فِي
كِتَابِكَ، أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ، أَوْ اسْتَأْذَنْتَ
بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ الْعَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ، أَنْ تَجْعَلَ الْقُرْآنَ رِبْعَ قَلْبِي،
وَنُورَ بَصَرِي، وَجِلَاءَ حُزْنِي، وَذَهَابَ هَيْبِي، إِلَّا أَذْهَبَ
اللَّهُ هَمَّهُ، وَأَبْدَلَهُ مَكَانَ حُزْنِهِ فَرَحًا هَذِهِ الْكَلِمَاتُ؟
قَالَ: بَلَى، يَبْعِي لِمَنْ سَمِعَهُنَّ أَنْ يَتَعَلَّمَهُنَّ.

“No one was ever struck with an affliction or grievous affair, and he said, ‘O Allah, I am Your slave, the son of a slave father and slave mother, my forehead lock of hair is in Your hand, You are the Doer of Your command, just in Your judgment, I beseech You by every Name that is Yours, by which You named Yourself, or revealed it in a Scripture, or taught anyone of Your creations, or retained it in Your knowledge of the Unknown ... that You should make the Exalted Qur’ān the spring of my heart, the Light of my breast, the dispeller of my sorrow, the remover of my affliction,’ (no one said these words) but Allah will remove his affliction and grief replacing it with tranquility.’ It was asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah. Why should we not learn this (supplication)?’ He replied, ‘Indeed, everyone who

heard of it ought to learn it.”

The *hadith* is also recorded by Ibn Hibban. (Ahmad Shakir has graded it *Sahih*: S. Ibrahim). In fact Abu Bakr ibn al-`Arabiyy has written in his commentary on Tirmidhi that some scholars have worked out a thousand Names for Allah from the Qur’ān. Some have said that no limits can be imposed (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani, Manar).

Allah’s Names, as pointed out by Rashid Rida and others, are *tawqifi*: that is, they can be known only through revelation. Hence, unless proven by the Qur’ān or *hadith*, they cannot be relied upon as authentically His Names. Tirmidhi and others have listed the ninety nine Names, but as pointed out by several scholars, not all of them are from the Qur’ān and *hadith* (Au.).

276. Such as to say,

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ

“O the Living One, the Self existing by Whom all exist,” or,

يَا حَنَّانُ يَا مَنَّانُ

“O the Gracious, the Bestower without end,” etc. (Au.).

277. Asad comments: “I.e., by applying them to other beings or ob-

[181] *And, of those We have created, there are people who guide by the truth and act justly therewith.*²⁷⁸

وَمَنْ خَلَقْنَا أُمَّةً يَهْتَدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٨١﴾

[182] *As for those who lay the lies against Our signs, We shall gradually lead them (to their destruction), in a manner they do not know.*²⁷⁹

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٢﴾

[183] *And I grant them respite. Surely, My scheme is strong.*²⁸⁰

وَأْمَلِي لَهُمْ إِنْ كَيْدِي مُبِينٌ ﴿١٨٣﴾

[184] *Have they not reflected? Their companion is not seized with madness.*²⁸¹ *He is not indeed but a plain warner.*²⁸²

أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا مَا بِصَاحِبِهِمْ مِنْ حِنَّةٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٨٤﴾

jects or, alternatively, by to trying to “define” God in anthropomorphic terms and relationships, like “father” or “son” (Razi).”

278. It is generally believed that the verse is alluding to the Prophet’s followers, especially the first generation Muslims, which makes the passage that follows equally applicable to the later day believers (Au.).

279. As Allah said elsewhere (6: 44, 45):

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ (٤٤) فَطَمَعُ دَابِرِ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ [الأنعام : ٤٤-٤٥]

“When they had clean forgotten what they were reminded of, We opened unto them the gates of everything (of the nature of material prosperity) until, when they

were mighty pleased with what they were given, We seized them suddenly and they slipped into a quiet despair. Uprooted thus were the last remnants of those who transgressed. And (it was said) ‘All praise to Allah, the Lord of the worlds’” (Ibn Kathir).

Also see note 70 of *Surah al An`am*.

280. The textual word for “scheme” is kayd. It is a contrivance aimed at something not perceptible to the eye. Here it means to say that Allah gives the unbelievers respite, providing, in the meanwhile, material means, which misleads them to believe that they are on the right course, until, they are trapped on a sudden as (a prey) in a net (based on Manar).

281. It is said that the Prophet (*saws*) once climbed Mount Safa and called out every Quraysh tribe by name to

warn them. When it was over, they muttered: "This man seems to have gone mad." Allah (*swt*) revealed this verse.

Majid writes: "The Prophet's almost incredible achievements are still the wonder and admiration of an unbelieving world. 'The success of Mahomet as a law giver, ... and the stability of his institutions during a long series of generations, and in every condition of social polity, proved that this extraordinary man was formed by the rare combination of the qualities both of a Lycurgus and Alexander.' (Finlay, p. 352) Savary, who as 'an enlightened Westerner' of course, refused to 'call Mohammed a prophet,' is 'nevertheless forced to recognize him as one of the greatest men who ever lived,' and finds himself bound to concede that 'his political and military ability and his capacity to governing men were extraordinary,' and to regard him 'as one of those unusual personalities occasionally appearing in history, who remake their environment and enlist men in their triumphant train' (Andrae, pp. 245, 249).

Although we do not intend to present at this point, all that has been said by the more objective observers, concerning the Prophet and his

achievements, one or two might be necessary. Back in the nineteenth century Lamartine had said: "If the greatness of purpose, smallness of means and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? .. Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images, the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad... As regards all the standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?" (*Historire de la Turquie*, Paris 1954, pp. 276 77).

During the same century he was followed by Thomas Carlyle (d. 1881), who, in his famous lectures titled "On Heroes, Hero worship and the Heroic in History," evaluated Muhammad as the most influential of men in history. Finally, the twentieth century was not to pass without paying its own tribute to the Prophet. An American, Michael H. Hart, published a book on the lives of 100 great men entitled: "The 100: A Ranking of Most Influential Persons in History," (Carol Publishing Company, New York). Muhammad once

[186] *Have they not observed in the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and in whatever Allah has created, that their end is perhaps close.²⁸³ After what manner of discourse then, will they believe?²⁸⁴*

أَوَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا فِي مَلَكُوتِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَأَنْ عَسَى أَنْ
يَكُونَ قَدِ اقْتَرَبَ أَجَلُهُمْ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ
بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٨٥﴾

[187] *Whomsoever Allah leads astray, there is no guide unto him. He abandons them wandering blindly in their insolence.²⁸⁵*

مَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ وَيَذَرُهُمْ فِي
طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾

again topped the list as the greatest ever (Au.).

The book has mysteriously disappeared from the shelves.

282. As Allah said elsewhere (34: 46):

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَعْطُكُمْ بِوَاجِدَةٍ أَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ مثنًى وَفَرَادَى ثُمَّ
تَتَفَكَّرُوا مَا بِصَاحِبِكُمْ مِنْ جِنَّةٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ لَكُمْ
بَيْنَ يَدَيْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ [سبأ : ٤٦]

“Say, ‘I exhort you to one thing, that you should get together for the sake of God in twos and singles, and reflect, there is no madness in your Companion. He is no more than a plain warner before (your are overtaken by) an impeding severe chastisement’ (Ibn Kathir).

283. This verse is connected with the passage that follows (verses 187 188) which reports the pagans enquiring about the end of the world. They are told here that there is no point in seeking its news, since they do not know when their own term will end, which, in fact, might be closer than

that final event (with a point from Shabbir).

284. Asad writes: “Apart from a reminder of man’s utter dependence on God, the implication of the above passage is this: Since everything in the observable or intellectually conceivable universe is obviously caused, it must have had a beginning and, therefore, must also have an end. Furthermore, since the universe is not eternal in the sense of having had no beginning, and since it cannot possibly have evolved “by itself” out of nothing, and since “nothingness” is a concept devoid of all reality, we are forced to predicate the existence of a Primary Cause which is beyond to the limits of our experience and, hence, beyond the categories of our thought that is, the existence of God.”

285. Asad again: “As in verse 178 above and in many other places in the Qur’an the expression “he

[187] They question you concerning the Hour (as to) when it shall berth.²⁸⁶ Say, 'Verily, its knowledge is with my Lord alone.²⁸⁷ None shall reveal it at its appointed time but He. It weighs heavy on the heavens and the earth. It will not come on you but suddenly.'²⁸⁸ They ask you as if you are well informed of it.²⁸⁹ Tell them, 'Its knowledge is with Allah alone but most people know not.'²⁹⁰

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا
عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي لَا يُجَلِّيهَا لِوَقْتِهَا إِلَّا هُوَ
ثَقُلْتُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا تَأْتِيكُمْ
إِلَّا بَعْتَةٌ يَسْأَلُونَكَ كَأَنَّكَ حَفِيٌّ عَنْهَا قُلْ
إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾

whom God lets [or “causes to”] go astray,” indicates the natural law instituted by God (sunnat Allah), whereby a willful neglect of one’s inborn, cognitive faculties results in the loss of all ethical orientation: that is, not an act of “predestination” but a result of one’s own choice.”

286. The use of the word “berth” (first employed in the translation by Arberry, although Pickthall is very close to it), for a moment which will bring all things - now on a mad run - to a halt (as a ship berths on the dock) a usage never before employed in the Arabic language embodies a high standard of rhetoric (with a point taken from Manar).

287. In answering why the information concerning the end of the world has been held back, Rashid Rida brings out a point: There was no point in giving the people the knowledge of when the world would end. They would have only made a

jest of it, while the believers would have unnecessarily suffered anxiety.

288. The Prophet is reported to have said that the Hour will surprise the people. A man might be repairing his cistern, another husbanding his cattle, another selling his products in the market, and another with a scale in his hand” (Ibn Jarir).

A *hadith* in Bukhari of Abu Hurayra’s narration says:

ولتقوم الساعة وقد نشر الرجلان ثوبهما (أ) بينهما، فلا يتبايعانه ولا يطويانه. ولتقوم الساعة وقد انصرف الرجل بلبن لقخته فلا يطعمه. ولتقوم الساعة وهو يليلط حوضه فلا يسقي فيه. ولتقوم الساعة والرجل قد رفع أكلته إلى فيه فلا يطعمها

“The Hour would be called even as two people would have stretched a piece of cloth between themselves, but they would not be able to complete the deal or fold up the cloth; the Hour would be struck when a man would have milked an ani-

mal but he would not be able to drink thereof; the Hour would be struck when a man would have just repaired his cistern but before he would have watered thereof; and the Hour would be struck when a man would have raised food to his mouth but would not be able to put it in” (Ibn Kathir).

The above *hadith* is also in Bayhaqi’s *Shu`ab al-Iman* (Au.).

289. The use of the textual word “hafiyy” would imply that the inquirers had sought knowledge of the Hour as a kind of a right arising out of kinship with the Prophet or, as friends divulging secrets to each other, implying, in turn, that the Prophet knew all about it, and, being closely related to many of the Quraysh, he should, out of love, share the secret with them (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Asad throws light on another aspect of the meaning: “The verb *ahfa* means ‘he did [a thing] in an excessive measure’ or ‘he exceeded the usual bounds in doing [something]’. In connection with an inquiry, and especially when followed by ‘*anhu* or ‘*anha* (‘about it’), it signifies ‘he tried hard to gain insight [into something] by persistently enquiring

about it’. Thus, used as a participle, it means ‘one who has gained insight [into something] through persistent inquiry’. In the above context, the implication is that no amount of inquiry or speculation can reveal to man the prophets included the coming of the Last Hour before its actual manifestation.”

290. Accordingly, whenever the Prophet was enquired about the Hour he always said he did not know when it would be. In the famous *hadith* Jibril when he was asked when the Hour would be, he replied,

مَا الْمَسْئُولُ بِأَعْلَمَ بِهَا مِنَ السَّائِلِ

“The one enquired does not know any more than the one enquiring.”

Once a bedouin addressed him in a harsh tone asking when the Hour would be.

ويحك أن الساعة آتية فما أعددت لها“ قال ما أعددت لها كثير صلاة ولا صيام، ولكنني أحب الله ورسوله، فقال له رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: “المرء مع من أحب“ فما فرح المسلمون بشيء فرحهم

The Prophet also replied to him in the same tone: “Woe unto you man. The Hour has to strike. But what preparations have you made for it?” The man replied: “Well, not much by way of Prayers and

fasts. But I love Allah and his Messenger.” The Prophet told him: “A man will be with those he loved.” It is said that the Companions were never pleased with anything before as with this statement. Recorded by the *Sahibayn*, the report is of mutawatir status.

At other times whenever visiting tribesmen enquired about the Hour, the Prophet would point to the youngest of them and say:

إِنْ يَعْشُرُ هَذَا لَمْ يُدْرِكْهُ الْهَرَمُ قَامَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ سَاعَتُكُمْ

“Well. If this boy lives up to his old age your Hour would have struck,” meaning, by then you would be dead and that would be your Hour.

According to another report in Ahmad, reported by Abu Hudhayfah, when the Prophet was asked about the Hour, he replied:

”علمها عند ربي عز وجل لا يجليها لوقتها إلا هو، ولكن سأخبركم بمشاريطها وما يكون بين يديها، أن بين يديها فتنة وهرجاً“ قالوا: يا رسول الله الفتنة قد عرفناها فما الهرج؟ قال: ”بلسان الحبشة القتل“ قال: ”ويلقى بين الناس التناكر، فلا يكاد أحد يعرف أحداً“

“My Lord has the knowledge of

it. No one will make it appear at its time except He. However, let me tell you some of the signs and some of the conditions. Of its conditions is that you will experience a lot of tribulations and quite good amount of ‘*haraj*’. They asked, “We understand tribulations, but what is ‘*haraj*’ (an Abyssinian word)?” He replied: “Lots of killings. And,” (he continued), “a kind of estrangement, so that no one would seem to know any one else.”

The Prophet also said:

بُعِثْتُ أَنَا وَالسَّاعَةَ كَهَاتَيْنِ

“I have been sent with the Hour as close to me as this,” and demonstrated with his two fingers together in a V shape (Ibn Kathir).

Rashid Rida adds: It is not the closeness of the Hour that the Prophet meant by showing his two fingers. Rather, as Ibn Hajr has explained, he meant that there is not going to be a Prophet between him and the Day of Judgment, just as there was a gap between the two fingers. As for the statements in some of the reports that the total lifespan of this earth is

[188] Say, 'I have no power over any good or evil for myself, save for what Allah will. Had I knowledge of the Unseen, surely, I would have acquired much good (for myself) and no evil would have touched me.²⁹¹ I am not but a warrior and a bearer of good news for a people who believe.'²⁹²

قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ لَأَسْتَكْتَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوءُ إِنْ أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٨٨﴾

[189] He it is who created you from a single living being²⁹³ and then out of him brought out his spouse²⁹⁴ so that he might find repose in her. Then, when he²⁹⁵ covered her, she conceived a light burden, going about with it (in ease).²⁹⁶ (But) When she grew heavy, the two supplicated to Allah their Lord, 'If You gave us a sound²⁹⁷ (child) we shall be of the grateful ones.'²⁹⁸

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا فَلَمَّا تَعَاشَا حَمَلَتْ حَمْلًا خَفِيفًا فَمَرَّتْ بِهِ فَلَمَّا أَثْقَلَتْ دَعَا اللَّهُ رَبَّهُمَا لَئِن آتَيْتَنَا صَالِحًا لَنُكَونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٨٩﴾

7000 years, none of them is trustworthy. Most of them are of Jewish origin.

The figure also figures in Hindu philosophy (Au.).

291. Shabbir comments: Despite the fact that the Prophet was endowed with great blessings, he did not know what was in the Unseen. How many days did he not wait for revelation to tell him the truth of the matter in the case of slander involving `A'isha? Similarly, during his Hajj he remarked: "Had I known what was going to happen, I would not have brought the sacrificial animal with me." The most glaring is the statement he made after the famous

hadith-Jibril. He said it was the first time that he failed to recognize Jibril until the very end. It was only after Jibril had left that he knew who he was speaking to, although, as the biographers have pointed out, this incident happened almost at the end of his mission. This of course does not apply to the *Shari`ah*, which he knew down to every detail.

292. Asad writes: "The repeated insistence in the Qur`an on the humanness of the Prophet is in tune with the doctrine that no created being has or could have any share, however small, in any of the Creator's qualities or powers. In logical continuation of this argument, the

next passage (verses 189-198) stresses the uniqueness and exclusiveness of God's creative powers."

293. Majid comments: "I.e., Adam. The implication of which fact is, that all men belonging to one species, and that racial variations notwithstanding, there is no essential difference between man and man. If the modern world had only kept this elementary truth in mind, there would have been no occasion for it to lament that 'the progress of civilization is threatened by the serious danger of racial conflict and the still more serious evil, the demoralization caused by inter racial and color prejudice' (EBr. VI, p. 571). The time must come when it will seem absurd that French and Germans, Americans and Japanese, French and English, can even have been divided by imaginary barriers no less absurd than the recollection that the people of Burgandy and Artoris, of Mecklangbourg and Hanover, of Wessex and Nothumberland were once taught to believe themselves natural enemies.' (Fyfe, The Illusion of National Character.)"

294. Qatadah has said: Allah brought out Hawwa' out of one of Adam's ribs (Ibn Jarir). It does not imply however, that Adam had one rib less.

A *hadith* in Muslim says:

إِنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ خُلِقَتْ مِنْ ضِلْعٍ لَنْ تَسْتَقِيمَ لَكَ عَلَى
طَرِيقَةٍ فَإِنْ اسْتَمْنَعْتَ بِهَا اسْتَمْنَعْتَ بِهَا وَبِمَا عَوَجَ وَإِنْ
ذَهَبْتَ تُقِيمُهَا كَسَرْتَهَا وَكَثُرَهَا طَلَّاقُهَا

"Verily, woman has been created from the rib. She will never straighten up to your ways. Therefore, if you make use of her, you will have to do that while she remains in her bent state. But, if you undertake to straighten her up, you will break her up. And breaking her up is to divorce her" (Au.).

Thus the Qur'an rejects the theory of evolution. We shall have a few things to say about this theory later in this work, in sha Allah (Au.).

295. The words in parenthesis follow Hasan's interpretation as in Ibn Jarir and traced as trustworthy by Ibn Kathir. Qaffal also explains this passage along these lines (Razi).

296. Another reading is "maarrat" with its root in "miryah", i.e., initially she was in doubt if she was carrying or not, until she grew heavy (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

297. The textual "salehan" can only be interpreted as embodying all that is good and wholesome (Ibn Jarir).

298. Yusuf Ali writes: "The mystery

[190] But when He gave them a sound child the two assigned Him associates in what He (alone) had given them.²⁹⁹ Exalted high is Allah, above what they associate (with Him).³⁰⁰

فَلَمَّا آتَاهُمَا صَالِحًا جَعَلَا لَهُ شُرَكَاءَ فِيمَا
آتَاهُمَا فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٩٠﴾

of the physical birth of man, as it affects the father and the mother, only touches the imagination of the parents in the later stages when the child is yet unborn and yet life stirs within the body of the expectant mother. The coming of the new life is a solemn thing, and is fraught with much hope as well as much unknown risk to the mother herself. The parents in their anxiety turn to Allah. If this feeling of solemnity, hope, and looking towards Allah were maintained after birth, all would be well for the parents as well as for the rising generation. But the attitude changes, as the verses following show.”

299. The interpretation, as reported in some older works, concerning Hawwa’ being misled by Satan at the time of the first birth is completely unacceptable, since, no one with any common sense could be misled that way, far from Hawwa’ (Razi).

Further, the *ahadith* quoted in this regard are untrustworthy (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Alusi vigorously defends the above opinion and states that Abu Muslim

and al Amidi held the same view, viz., Allah started with the species and then came down to its members. In simpler words, Hawwa’ is not the subject of this verse. Rashid Rida re narrates all the *ahadith* on the subject and demonstrates the weaknesses in their chains of narration.

Indeed, the use of plural form in “Exalted high is Allah, above what they associate,” after attributing the previous acts to the two, is another indication that it is a switch from the specific in the early part of the passage, to the general, in its later part (Au.).

300. Asad comments: “Many of them (i.e., the parents) look up to the contributing factors of sound childbirth (like personal care during pregnancy, medical assistance, eugenics, etc.) as something independent of God, forgetting that all these contributing factors are like the birth of the child itself but an outcome of God’s will and grace: a manifestation of what the Qur’an calls “the way of God” (sunnat Allah). Since this kind of mental asso-

[191] (Why?!) Do they associate that which creates nothing, rather, are themselves³⁰¹ created?

أَشْرِكُونَ مَا لَا يَخْلُقُ شَيْئاً وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ ﴿١٩١﴾

[192] They have no power to help them nor can they help themselves.³⁰²

وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ لَهُمْ نَصْرًا وَلَا أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَنْصُرُونَ ﴿١٩٢﴾

[193] If you call them to guidance, they will not follow you. It is all the same to you whether you call them or hold your peace.

وَإِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ لَا يَتَّبِعُوكُمْ سَوَاءَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَدْعَوْتُمُوهُمْ أَمْ أَنْتُمْ صَامِتُونَ ﴿١٩٣﴾

ciation of “other” factors with God is not really intentional, it does not amount to the unforgivable sin of shirk (“the ascribing of divine qualities to powers other than God”); but it is close enough to it to warrant the subsequent discourse on shirk in the real meaning of the term.”

301. Note the switch from the particle “ma” (which is) used for the non living to the “hum” (they) which is used for the living. This is following the logic of the idol worshippers who consider the non living as the living (Razi).

302. The Qur`ān thus invites the people to appeal to their simple logic. But human folly knows no limits. There are hundreds of millions even in our times who are devoted to the worship of hand made idols. People of high governmental profiles beat up their chests before T.V. cameras to proudly claim the worship of idols.

It is perhaps only crude iconoclastic measures something disapproved by Islam that would demonstrate to the ardent devotees the powerlessness of their idols, although, expectedly, not all. Ibn Kathir reports that two young lads Mu`adh ibn `Amr b. al Jamuh and Mu`adh ibn Jabal, had to resort to this coarse strategy to convince `Amr b. Jamuh of their worthlessness and his own senselessness. In the darkness of the nights, the two lads would defile a deity very dear to `Amr b. al Jamuh. Initially shocked to find his beloved god in that state, he would wash it, clean it, and perfume it. But, come the night, the two would repeat their performance in its darkness. Finally, he hung a sword by the deity cajoling it to defend itself. But, when they hung the carcass of a dog by its neck, and threw it down a pit, sword, carcass, and all, it was then that `Amr b.

[194] Surely, those you call upon other than Allah, are slaves like yourselves.³⁰³ Therefore, call them. They should respond to you, if you be true.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ عِبَادٌ أَفْتَالُكُمْ فَادْعُوهُمْ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾

[195] Do they have feet wherewith they walk? Or, do they have hands wherewith they grasp? Or, do they have eyes wherewith they see? Or, do they have ears wherewith they hear? Say, call upon your associate(gods) and then lay down a scheme against me, and give me no respite.³⁰⁴

أَهُمْ أَرْجُلٌ يَمْشُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ أَيْدٍ يَبْطِشُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ يَبْصُرُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا قُلْ ادْعُوا شُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ كِيدُوا فَلَا تُنظِرُونِ ﴿١٩٥﴾

[196] Surely, my Protector is Allah who sent down the Book, and He protects the righteous.

إِنَّ وَلِيِّيَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّى الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٩٦﴾

[197] As for those whom you call upon besides Him, they have no power to help you, nor can they help themselves.

وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَكُمْ وَلَا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَنْصُرُونَ ﴿١٩٧﴾

[198] If you call them to guidance, they do not hear. You see them looking at you. But they do not perceive.³⁰⁵

وَإِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى لَا يَسْمَعُوا وَتَرَاهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٩٨﴾

al Jamuh's woke up to his stupidity and embraced Islam (Au.).

in a loss."

Rashid Rida comments: How strange that people refused to believe in the Prophet on the grounds that, as the Qur'an has put it, (23: 33, 34):

Yet, they had no problem in believing in lifeless idols.

مَا هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يَأْكُلُ مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ مِنْهُ وَيَشْرَبُ مِمَّا تَشْرَبُونَ (٣٣) وَلَئِنْ أَطَعْتُمْ بَشَرًا مِثْلَكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا لِحَاسِرُونَ [المؤمنون : ٣٣ ، ٣٤]

303. Asad comments: "I.e., (they are) created beings subservient to God's will. This refers to saints, living or dead, as well as to inanimate objects of every description, including idols, fetishes and representational images physical or mental of saints or deified persons."

"This (man) is nothing but a human being like you who eats of what you eat and drinks of what you drink. If you follow a human like yourselves, surely, you will be

304. Hasan has said that the pagans used to threaten the Prophet that if he did not give up reviling their

[199] Therefore, take to forgiving,³⁰⁶ bid to what is right, and ignore the ignorant.³⁰⁷ حُذِرِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿١٩٩﴾

deities, the deities would take out revenge on him. This verse was sent in answer to that (Razi).

305. There have been several explanations to this passage, but the nearest to being right is that it is the Prophet who has been addressed. He is being told that 'you will see them looking at you but in truth they do not see you, since they perceive not the several signs in your person' (Alusi).

Rashid Rida adds: (How could they be considered as seeing what they were seeing when) one of them had looked at the Prophet and remarked, "This is not the face of a liar," yet they rejected him?

306. It is reported that the Prophet reacted to the word "afw" and asked Jibril as to what it stood for. Jibril replied:

أَنْ تُعْطِيَ مَنْ حَرَمَكَ، وَتَصِلَ مَنْ قَطَعَكَ، وَتَعْفُو عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَكَ

"That you should join (the relationship with) one who severs it off you, give him who denies you, and forgive him who oppresses you" (Ibn Jarir, Razi, Ibn Kathir, and others).

Zamakhshari, Alusi and others write: The textual word `afw has various implications. The foremost would imply that the Prophet should accept the people on their face value, as also their deeds whatever they can manage to come up with in good grace, rather than be inquisitive about their lives and manners, or too demanding on them, or reacting harshly to their errors.

The Prophet compressed the Islamic morals in a nut shell for Jabir b. Sulaym. Jabir said, "I mounted my camel and went to the Prophet's city. I enquired about him. They led me to the mosque. He was sitting there clad in a woolen striped cloak. I said, 'Peace be upon you O Messenger of Allah.' He replied, 'On you be peace.' I said, 'We are of the deserts and are a harsh people. So teach me a few profitable words.' He said,

آدَنٌ "ثَلَاثًا، فَدَنَوْتُ فَقَالَ: "أَعِدْ عَلَيَّ" فَأَعَدْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَقَالَ: (اتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَلَا تَحْقِرَنَّ مِنَ الْمَعْرُوفِ شَيْئًا وَأَنْ تَلْقَى أَخَاكَ بِوَجْهِهِ مَنْبَسُطٍ وَأَنْ تَفْرُغَ مِنْ دَلُوكَ فِي إِهْنَاءِ الْمَسْتَسْقِيِّ وَإِنْ أَمْرٌ سَبَكَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ مِنْكَ فَلَا تَسْبِهِ بِمَا تَعْلَمُ فِيهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ جَاعِلٌ لَكَ أَجْرًا وَعَلَيْهِ وَزَرًا وَلَا تَسْبِنَنَّ شَيْئًا مِمَّا خَوْلَكَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى

'Get closer.' He said that three

[200] And, if a provocation from Satan should provoke you,³⁰⁸ seek refuge in Allah.³⁰⁹ Verily, He is All hearing, All knowing.³¹⁰

وَأِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ
بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

times. Then he said, 'Repeat the question.' So I repeated. He said, 'Be conscious of Allah and do not belittle any good deed. Meet your brother with a cheerful countenance. Empty your bucket in that of someone seeking water. If a man finds fault in you for what is not in you, do not find fault in him for what is in him. Allah will reward you for it, while he will earn the punishment. And do not curse anything that Allah has bestowed on you.'" Jabir said, 'By him in whose hands is my life, after that I did not find fault even with a camel' (Qurtubi).

307. It is reported in Bukhari that once Salim b. `Abdullah ibn `Umar passed by a camping Syrian caravan. He heard the sounds of bell. He remarked that it was prohibited. They responded, "We know better than you. It is the large bells that are prohibited, not these little ones." Salim only said in reply: "Ignore the ignorant," and moved on (Ibn Kathir).

308. It is widely reported that when the Prophet was asked to forbear, he asked Jibril about the situation in

which he gets angry (out of frustration). How should he act then? In response this verse was revealed.

309. Since *Shaytan* is invisible, there is no way to fight off his influence and avoid his presence save by seeking Allah's help (Au.).

Bukhari has a report which says that once two persons argued over something in the Prophet's presence. One of them got so angry that his face swelled up. The Prophet remarked that he knew words which, if the man could say, could cure him of his anger:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

"I seek Allah's refuge from *Shaytan* the accursed." But the man was too angry for that. When someone went across and told him that, he retorted: "Am I mad?" (Ibn Kathir)

Qurtubi adds: None can be in refuge from a dog but with the help of its master. It is reported of one of the pious predecessors that he asked his disciple, 'What will you do when confronted by a Satanic impulse?' He answered, 'I will fight it off.' He asked, 'If he returned (with an-

[201] Surely, when a thought originating from Satan assaults those who have gained piety, they remember (Allah),³¹¹ and lo, they begin to perceive.³¹²

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٠١﴾

other)?’ He answered, ‘I will fight it off too.’ He said, ‘That will prolong the affair. What do you do when you have to cross a valley grazed by goats but a dog prevents you?’ He answered, ‘Well, I suppose I’ll have to chase it away.’ He said, ‘That will take long. Rather, seek the help of its master. That would do.’

That is, the best way of chasing Satan is to seek its Master’s help, i.e., Allah’s.

310. Razi warns: A resort to refuge without belief well-seated in the heart that Allah is the All hearing, the All knowing, may not fetch the desired result.

311. The Prophet (*saws*) has explained in a *hadith* of Muslim:

إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ يَأْتِيهِ الشَّيْطَانُ فَيَقُولُ مَنْ خَلَقَكَ فَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ فَيَقُولُ فَمَنْ خَلَقَ اللَّهَ فَإِذَا وَجَدَ ذَلِكَ أَحَدَكُمْ فَلْيَبْرَأْ آمَنْتُ بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ يُذْهِبُ عَنْهُ

“Satan comes to one of you and asks, ‘Who created you?’ He answers, ‘Allah.’ Then he asks, ‘Who created Allah?’” When that happens to one of you, let him recite, ‘I believe in Allah and His

Messengers,’ for that will chase him away from you” (Qurtubi).

Qurtubi’s quote is different from ours, though of the same meaning. We have chosen the above from Ahmad because Shu`ayb Arna`ut declared it *Sahih* (Au.).

312. A good example of this was provided by Hasan b. `Ali b. Talib. `Isam b. Mustaliq says: “I entered Madinah and came across Hasan b. `Ali. I was impressed by his personality and carriage. That evoked envy in me because of the hatred I bore for his father. I asked, ‘Are you Hasan b. `Ali?’ He replied, ‘Very much so.’ I began to call him names and curse his father. He looked up at me, as if in pity. Then he said, ‘I seek Allah’s refuge from Satan the accursed and I begin in the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful. “Take to forgiving, bid to what is (just and) right, and ignore the ignorant” ... reading out until ... “those who have gained piety, when a thought originating from Satan assaults them, they recall (Allah), and lo, they begin to perceive.” Then he said, ‘Cool down man. Seek Allah’s

[202] (As for) their brothers, they lead them into error. And they never let them relax.³¹³

وَإِخْوَانُهُمْ يَمُدُّونَهُمْ فِي الْغَيِّ ثُمَّ لَا يُقْصِرُونَ

﴿٢٠٢﴾

[203] When you do not bring them a miracle, they ask, 'Why did you not choose one?'³¹⁴ Say, 'I only follow that which is revealed to Me by my Lord.³¹⁵ This (Qur`ān) is nothing but evidences³¹⁶ from your Lord, a guidance and a mercy unto a people who believe.

وَإِذَا لَمْ تَأْتِهِمْ بِآيَةٍ قَالُوا لَوْلَا اجْتَبَيْتَهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَتَّبِعُ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ مِنْ رَبِّي هَذَا بَصَآئِرٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

﴿٢٠٣﴾

forgiveness for yourself and for me. If you need our help, we shall offer you help; if you seek a companion we shall provide you one; if you seek to know the way, we shall guide you to it.' Those words went down into my body spreading remorse. He added, 'There is no blame on you man. May Allah forgive you. Verily, He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.' Then he asked, 'Are you from Syria?' I said, 'Yes.' He recited a piece of poetry and then added, 'Welcome to you and may Allah lead you to a good resort and protect you. If you need anything just call us, you will find us responding in a manner better than what you thought if Allah will.'" `Isam says, "The earth became narrow for me despite its vastness. I wished it would swallow me. I escaped fast from him in a state that there was none in my heart dearer to me than he and his father' (Qur-tubi).

313. Some commentators have explained this piece as: There is no let up from either side. Neither the devils let them escape, nor their followers abandon their company (Shawkani).

314. Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah, Suddi and others have said that unbelievers meant to say, why do you not choose one for yourself, and produce it all by yourself, if your God failed you (Ibn Jarir).

315. That is, I have not been sent to work up miracles. I have been commissioned to demonstrate to you that the message I am propounding is livable, practicable (Au.).

Majid writes: "That is the gist of prophethood in Islam. Prophets are only the faithful Messengers of God. No prophet is empowered to perform miracles on his own accord in order to please the infidels. It is only God who, in His infinite wisdom and power, can, and does sometimes,

[204] Therefore, when the Qur`ān is recited, listen to it,³¹⁷ and stay silent listening in attention, haply so you might be shown mercy.

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٢٠٤﴾

alter the working of His usual, ordinary, normal laws, and bring about what to the limited, finite, intelligence of men appears miraculous. He alone is the Author, equally of the ordinary, everyday events, of natural, extra ordinary, and ‘super’ natural events, known in human language as miracles.”

316. ‘Evidences,’ or ‘evident arguments’ is perhaps the closest to how one can understand the textual word *basā’ir* (Au.).

317. `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, Abu Hurayrah and others have reported that the Muslims used to speak out a few necessary words to each other during Prayers until this verse came down. According to Zuhri, it proscribed the recitation of the Qur`ān while the Imam is engaged in recitation during congregational Prayer. Another report comes from Ibn Kurayz who says (referring to this verse) that once he objected to the conversation between `Ubayy b. `Umayr and `Ata ibn Abi Rubah pointing out that someone around there was addressing another group of people on a religious topic. The two

looked at him, but continued with their conversation without a word to him. The third time he objected to them, they said the verse was primarily revealed for maintaining silence when the Imam recited the Qur`ān in the congregational Prayers. This is also the opinion of Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah, Sa`id b. Jubayr, Ibn Musayyib and others. Ibn `Abbas has added that one is free to listen or not to listen to the Qur`ānic recitation, if recited outside of the Prayers. Mujahid, Sa`id b. Jubayr and Hasan have extended the prohibition to the time Friday sermon is delivered (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

However, if a person asks another to recite the Qur`ān for him, then it is obligatory on him to listen and remain silent (Au.).

Muslim has a report of Abu Musa al Ash`ari that the Prophet said:

إِنَّمَا جُعِلَ الْإِمَامُ لِيُؤْتَمَّ بِهِ ، فَإِذَا كَبَّرَ فَكَبِّرُوا ، وَإِذَا قَرَأَ فَأَنْصِتُوا

“The Imam has been appointed to be obeyed. Therefore, when he says Allahu Akbar, you too say Allahu Akbar, and when he

[205] And, remember your Lord within yourself in humility and awe, without saying the word aloud, morning and evening.³¹⁸ And be not of the heedless.

وَأذْكُر رَّبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً
وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ
وَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْعَافِينَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾

recites (the Qur`ān) stay silent and listen carefully.”

Others (Nasa’i, Ibn Majah and Ahmad: Hussain b. Ibrahim) have also recorded this *hadith* as coming from Abu Hurayrah with Muslim declaring it *Sahih* although he himself did not report it.

Once Ibn Mas`ud led in Prayers. Some people began to recite behind him. After the Prayers Ibn Mas`ud said (in an irritated tone: Au.) that there ought to be no recitation behind the Imam, “rather, you should ponder over what is being recited.”

In fact, according to a report in Ahmad, the Prophet himself disapproved that his followers should recite behind him. Zuhri has added that one might not recite even if he does not hear the Imam’s recitation, being at a distance. This happens to be the rule prescribed by Imam Abu Hanifah, Ahmad b. Hanbal, Malik, and the older opinion of Imam Shafe`i who do not think that even al Fatiha need to be recited in jahri Prayers (Fajr, Maghrib and `Isha) - Ibn Kathir.

Alusi points out in defense of the above opinion that in fact there is a *hadith* in Hakim that tells us that the Prophet even disapproved of recitation of the Qur`ān behind the Imam in Zuhr and `Asr Prayers saying, “Imam’s recitation is the follower’s recitation.” Non recitation behind the Imam was the practice of `Umar, Ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas, Ibn `Umar, Zayd b. Thabit and others. Sha`bi has said that he met 70 of those who participated in Badr campaign, who objected to the recitation behind the Imam.

318. “Morning and evening”: i.e., at all times (Razi).

The *Sahihayn* have a report of Abu Musa al Ash`ari that in one of the campaigns the Companions would not go up a hill or climb down into a valley but chant glories of Allah loudly. The Prophet told them:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ارْجِعُوا عَلَيَّ أَنْفُسِكُمْ ، إِنَّكُمْ لَا تَدْعُونَ
أَصَمَّ وَلَا عَائِيًا ، إِنَّمَا تَدْعُونَ سَمِيعًا قَرِيبًا وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ
وَالَّذِي تَدْعُونَهُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيَّ أَحَدِكُمْ مِنْ عُنُقِ رَاحِلَةٍ
أَحَدِكُمْ

“People. Show mercy to your-

[206] Verily, those who are with your Lord,³¹⁹ are not too proud to worship Him. They extol His glory and to Him they prostrate themselves.³²⁰

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ
عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيُسَبِّحُونَهُ وَلَهُ يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿٢٠٦﴾

selves. You are not calling upon a deaf, or someone absent. The One you are calling upon is the Hearer, close (to you). He is with you. The One you are calling is closer to one of you than the neck of the beast he is riding” (Ibn Kathir).

Commenting on the dhikr al lisani recommended by the verse, Razi writes: It should be understood that the body and soul have mutual relationship with each other. Whatever happens to the soul is reflected back on the body and whatever happens to the body is reflected back on the soul. When a man spells out Allah’s name by his tongue in a way that he hears his own words, the effects reach the mind and heart, from where they are reflected back on to the soul. In turn, the irradiated soul reflects back its light on the body. Thus each strengthens the other, steering the man to the course of elevation, to greater and greater spiritual heights.

319. The allusion is not to physical nearness, rather to spiritual status (Razi).

320. This is the first Prostration verse of the Qur’ān. The Prophet used to prostrate himself at the end of this verse (Au.).

“It is also on record that while delivering a sermon from the pulpit the Prophet (peace be on him) came down from the pulpit to offer prostration and resumed the sermon thereafter” (Mawdudi).

When in prostration one might say, as in a report of Ibn `Abbas in Ibn Majah:

اللَّهُمَّ اكْتُبْ لِي بِهَا عِنْدَكَ ذِكْرًا ، وَاجْعَلْ لِي بِهَا عِنْدَكَ
ذُخْرًا ، وَأَعْظِمْ لِي بِهَا عِنْدَكَ أَجْرًا

“O Allah, write it down with You as words of remembrance, place it for me with You as a treasure, and enlarge for me its reward.”

Tirmidhi declared it Hasan, but Hakim treated it as *Sahih* (Au.).

Another report in Ahmad, Abu Da’ud and Tirmidhi, who graded it *Sahih*, narrates `A’isha as saying that in his night Prayers the Prophet always said the following words at the Prostration verses:



اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ سَجَدْتُ ، وَبِكَ آمَنْتُ ، وَلَكَ أَسَلْتُ
سَجَدَ وَجْهِي لِلَّذِي خَلَقَهُ وَصَوَّرَهُ فَشَقَّ سَمْعَهُ وَبَصَرَهُ
تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

“O Allah, I have prostrated for You. In You I have believed. My face prostrates itself unto Him Who created it and who split open its hearing and sight by His force and power. Exalted is Allah the best of creators” (Alusi).

According to the Hanafiyyah, one who did not intend to listen to the Qur`an, but hears the Prostration verse, has also to prostrate himself (Au.). Accordingly, Mufti Shafi` adds, it is not desirable to recite the Qur`an aloud in an assembly where the people are not listening, but obligatory for an individual to listen when someone starts to recite, or plays a tape recorder.

Fiqh Points

1. According to the Hanafiyyah, prostration at the prostration verse is obligatory (Au.).
2. There is no difference of opinion among the scholars that Qur`anic prostrations go with the same conditions as the prostrations within the

Salah, viz., major and minor ablution, cleanliness of the clothes, the right intention, and orientation toward the Qiblah (Qurtubi).

3. Imam Shafè`i, Ahmad and Is haq have ruled that one might if he will raise his hands and say the takbir, as in Prayers.

4. There is no salam after the prostration (Qurtubi).

5. One might not prostrate oneself during the forbidden hours.

According to a *hadith* in Muslim and Ibn Majah, as reported by Abu Hurayrah, the Prophet said:

إِذَا قَرَأَ ابْنُ آدَمَ السَّجْدَةَ فَسَجَدَ اعْتَزَلَ الشَّيْطَانُ
بَيْكِي يَقُولُ يَا وَيْلَهُ - وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ أَبِي كُرَيْبٍ يَا وَيْلِي
- أَمَرَ ابْنُ آدَمَ بِالسُّجُودِ فَسَجَدَ فَلَهُ الْجَنَّةُ وَأُمِرْتُ
بِالسُّجُودِ فَأَبَيْتُ فَلِيَ النَّارُ

“When Adam’s son recites a Prostration verse and prostrates himself, *Shaytan* retreats weeping, saying, ‘Woe unto me. Adam’s son was commanded to prostrate, he obeyed, and will get Paradise. I was also commanded to prostrate, but I refused, and for me is the Fire” (Qurtubi, Alusi).

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Surah 8
Al-Anfal

(The Spoils of War)

Madinan¹



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Merits of the Chapter

According to reports in Tabarani's Al-Kabir (declared trustworthy by Haythamiyy: S.Ibrahim), the Prophet recited this chapter quite regularly in his *Maghrib* Prayers (Shawkani).

Foreword to the *Surah*

The following is Yusuf Ali's abridged foreword to the *Surah*: "In (a) previous Introduction .. we have shown how each *Surah* is a step or gradation in the teaching of the Qur'in. The first seven Suras, comprising a little less than one-third of the Qur'in, form a gradation, sketching the early religious history of man and leading up to the formation of the new *Ummat* or community of the Holy Messenger. Now we begin another gradation, consolidating that *Ummat* and directing us as to various phases in our new collective life .. The date of this *Surah* is shortly after the battle

of Badr, which was fought on Friday, the 17th of Ramadan, in the second year of the *Hijra* .. The battle of Badr was a testing time, and showed how virtue and valor can conquer against odds. Steadfastness and obedience; faith, courage, and fearlessness; due preparation and free expenditure of resources and energy:- these are expected from you by Allah, and His help is all-sufficient (viii. 38-64) .. Even tenfold odds against you do not count if you are fighting for truth and faith against enemies of truth and faith; but remember clemency and consideration in the hour of victory (viii. 65-75)."

Sayyid Qutb prefaces this chapter with a long note speaking at length about the nature of the Islamic state and the *jihad* that it is required to conduct. A full translation will run into 40-50 pages. Here is a shortened account:

Often we come across the statement that this chapter was revealed after *Surah al-Baqarah* following the battle of Badr, somewhere 19 months after *Hijrah*. But we need to understand this statement. For, although *al-Baqarah* began to be revealed at the beginning of the Madinan phase, its various parts continued to be revealed right up to the end of that period. In other words, *al-Baqarah* remained open, while this chapter was being revealed. Therefore, it is more apt to say that this chapter was revealed after the first few passages of *al-Baqarah*.

Of course, its major theme is the battle of Badr. The Qur'an named it, "the Day of Criterion." Its repercussions were not only this worldly, but also next worldly. Allah said (22: 19-24), "These are two groups who disputed over their Lord. In consequence, those who disbelieved will have garments cut out of fire. Boiling water will be poured over their heads. It will melt the contents of their bellies and their skins. And for them are hooked iron rods. Every time they try to get out of it - because of the anguish - they will be pushed back to it and (said), 'Taste the punishment of the Fire.' Verily, Allah will admit those who believed and acted righteously to Gardens

beneath which rivers flow. They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and pearls. And their dresses therein will be of silk. They had been guided to a Good Word and they had been guided to a path praiseworthy." The allusion is to the two groups that fought at Badr. And the statement should give us some idea of importance of that event.

But the true nature of the event will not be obvious to us if we do not first grasping the nature of *jihad* in Islam. And, the nature of *jihad* in Islam will not be understood without first understanding the nature of the religion of Islam itself. That will lead us to an understanding of how *jihad* forms a link among the several links that go into making the body of Islam.

We might conveniently begin the discussion by first presenting a selection from Imām ibn al-Qayyim who has very neatly summarized the nature of the religion of Islam, and the importance of *jihad* in it, in his *Zad al-Ma'ad*. He wrote: "The first revelation sent to the Prophet by his Lord was, 'Read in the name of thy Lord.' That was the beginning of his mission. Allah ordered him to recite it to himself, not requiring him to take the message to others. Then He revealed, 'O you cloaked in a blan-

ket, rise and warn.’ Thus, Allah made him a Prophet by ordering, ‘Read,’ and declared him a Messenger by revealing ‘O you cloaked ...rise up and warn.’ Next, He ordered him to warn his close kinsfolk. Accordingly, the Prophet first warned his tribe. Next he warned those around Makkah. Then he warned all the Arabs. Finally, he warned the entire mankind. Thus he remained ten years or more after his Prophethood, warning the people but neither fighting them nor demanding *jizyah*. Indeed, in that state he was ordered to pursue his mission with patience and forgiveness. Finally, he was asked to migrate. That accomplished, he was asked to fight those who fought him, and spare those who spared him. Next he was ordered to fight the pagans until the Religion became Allah’s. With that, insofar as *jihad* was concerned, the unbelievers became three kinds: Those that had entered into a treaty with him, those who were at war with him, and those who had submitted themselves to him and were paying *jizyah*. In that stage he was ordered to be true to the treaties with such of those as remained true to their treaties, until the terms of the treaties expired. However, if he perceived dishonesty on their part, he was to pull out of the treaty but

was not to fight until he was sure that they had actually breached the trust. But, if he did find breach of trust, he was to fight them. When *Surah Bara’ah* (another name of *Surah al-Tawbah*) came, it gave him fresh orders concerning the three kinds of unbelievers mentioned above. He was ordered to fight his enemies from among the Scripturaries (People of the Book) until they either paid *jizyah* or entered Islam. He was also ordered therein to fight the common unbelievers and the hypocrites and, to be tough with them. Accordingly, he fought the unbelievers with the sword, and the hypocrites with the pen. That chapter also commanded him to announce that he was quit of the unbelievers, ordering him to pull out of all treaties that he had made with the unbelievers. In other words, the chapter declared those who had entered into treaties with him as of three kinds: the first kind which had broken its treaty. He was ordered to fight them. Accordingly, he fought them and overcame them. A second kind was of those who had entered into a time-bound treaty and had not broken the word of promise. He was ordered to honor the treaty with them until the expiry of the term. A third kind was of those who had not entered into any treaty with him and

had not fought him; or they had entered into a treaty, but the period was not specified. He was ordered to give them four months time. At the end of this period he was to fight them. Accordingly, he fought those who had breached the treaties and gave four months to those who had not entered into any treaty with him, or had done so but without specifying a period. As for those that had entered into a time-bound treaty and had not breached it, he left them to themselves. It is another thing that all these categories of the people entered Islam without waiting for the period to expire. As for those who had submitted, he levied *jizyah* on them. Eventually, with the revelation of *Surah Bara'ah*, the unbelievers once again became three kinds: the belligerent ones, those who had entered into a treaty, and those who had submitted and were paying *jizyah*. As regards the belligerent ones, the true situation was that they feared him. Thus, so far as he was concerned, mankind split into three kinds: (i) believers, (ii) those who had surrendered, and, (iii) the belligerent ones, but fearful of him. As for his treatment of the hypocrites, he was ordered to accept them on their face value, leaving their secrets to Allah. Nevertheless, he was

to wage a struggle against them with knowledge and evidences as his weapon. Otherwise, he was to avoid them, press hard against them, but say honorable words. He was forbidden from Praying on one of them dying, and that he should stand by his grave seeking Allah's forgiveness for him. He was informed that Allah would not forgive them, even if he sought their forgiveness seventy times. These were his ways with the unbelievers and the hypocrites."

After the above from Ibn al-Qayyim, Sayyid continues: From this short but succinct discourse on the pattern of *jihad* conducted in early Islam, a few characteristics of the nature of the Islamic movement are brought to fore. In sum and substance they could be stated as under:

(i) Realism

The strain of realism that runs through and through should be apparent. It is a realistic religion which encounters its adversaries with realism, employing means that are in reality available to it. It encounters a pagandom that is built on certain beliefs and practices, commanding a certain way of life, supported by men of material power .. it encounters it - step by step, act by act - with what is at its disposal. It is not a

movement that depends on expressions and protestations alone in the face of those in possession of material power, nor does it try to win its adversaries with the help of material power alone. Rather, it faces them off with the power of *jihad* to destroy the system and its custodians.

(ii) Plan of Action

A second characteristic stems from the first: it has a plan of action that runs through phases. Each phase employs its own means to meet the demands of the situation. Each phase leads to a well-defined next. Thus, it does not face off the situations with mere ideologies nor with frozen means and methods. Those who try to work out an understanding of the concept of *jihad* as embodied in the Qurʾān, but neglect this fact, end up with confused notions. They regard every text that they come across, as containing a textual command in itself, free of all other texts and independent by itself. They are unable to co-relate the various texts and reach an overall understanding. They say - those with defeated mentality, to such of their descendants who are left with nothing of Islam but an identity - that Islam knows of no other war but (iii) Consistency

A third point is that this religion is a persisting, continuous movement, with renewed means, never bending over its principles and never relenting on its objectives. So that, from the first day of its call, whether it addressed the close kinsfolk, whole of the Arabs, or whole of the world, whenever it called, it was the same consistent message: surrender unto one Lord alone and free yourselves from the slavery of human beings.

(iv) Relationship

A fourth point of note is the set of rules and principles governing the relationship of the world of Islam with the rest of the world, on a pattern as delineated by Ibn al-Qayyim. Its theme is that Islam is the central principle to which all peoples of the world should relate themselves. To achieve its objectives, Islam will not allow any political power to come in between its message and the individuals at large: who should be allowed to choose Islam of their own free will or reject it. But, it will not allow anyone to adopt a belligerent attitude towards it, without waging a war against him until Islam finishes him off, or he surrenders to its will.

These in short, are the characteristics of the Islamic movement in reference to *jihad*. But the defeated ones

among the Muslims who write on *jihad*, twist the meanings and concepts, in order to present Islam as one that will fight only a defensive war. They get mixed up between two operational principles: there is no coercion in Islam, and, the use of force to remove the obstacles in the way of Islamic message reaching the masses.

Let's get it clearly then: This religion is a proclamation of man's freedom from slavery to man, as well as his slavery to his own base self. In the first step it proclaims the lordship of Allah over the entire created world. This proclamation is a declaration of war on the "lordship" of man: whatever form it may take. To accept some of the humankind as the law-givers would imply their lordship. Others are automatically reduced to their slavery. This kind of lordship has to be destroyed in the first step for the reasons of establishing Allah's complete sovereignty over the earth. In the words of the Qur'in (43: 84):

وَهُوَ الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاءِ إِلَهٌ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَهٌ [الزخرف
: ٨٤]

"And, it is He who is the deity in the heaven and the deity in the earth."

And (12: 40):

إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ
الْقَيِّمُ [يوسف : ٤٠]

"The command is Allah's. He has ordered that you worship none but Him. That is the well-established religion."

And (3: 64):

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا
وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ
بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَعُوْنَا
اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ [آل عمران : ٦٤]

"Tell them, 'O people of the Book! Come to an equitable term between us and you: that we worship none but Allah and associate not aught with Him, and some of us do not declare others as Lords besides Allah.' But if they turn their backs, say, 'Bear witness that we are Muslims.'"

That understood, it must also be borne in mind that the establishment of Allah's rule on the earth, the stripping away of the powers (of legislation) from the people, acceptance of His Law as the only law in existence, and declaration of man-made laws as null and void .. all these cannot be achieved through persuasion alone. Those who hold the reins of power, and draw advantages therewith, are not going to relinquish it without struggle. On the other hand, the proclamation of the rule for Allah alone and none else, was never meant to be a philosophical idea with no plan of action and

no intention to enforce it. It always was, during the long history of the Messengers of Allah, a positive and practical proposition. This last piece of fact, accorded the struggle started by the Messengers the form of a movement; a movement that faced the ground realities, on all fronts, with every kind of means that could be employed. Islam too was obliged to continue with the task.

However, the precautionary note might be repeated that it was not Islam's objective to force the people into belief. Islam is not a set of doctrines. Islam is the other name of freeing people from the slavery of the people and binding them to the slavery of Allah. This required that the power bases be destroyed, the power brokers be broken and the power holders be stripped off their power. It is only after these are accomplished that the people can be said to be truly free of their yoke. It is after this that the people will in truth have the unrestrained choice to either accept the Islamic faiths and doctrines or reject them. They might live under the Islamic system of life. But they are free to reject its faiths and practices and follow their own religions. It is only the hindering forces that are rendered powerless. This is done through what is known

as *jihad*. *Jihad* is not conducted to force people into believing in its dogmas. It is conducted to neutralize the antagonistic forces that prevent them from making a free choice. Islam then, cannot be called a "defensive religion" or, "a religion on the defense."

Therefore, what was finally achieved through the success of the *jihad* policy, has to be kept by the Muslim community as the goal before them, and not the contingencies of the situations at the beginning, or during the middle period of the struggle. The final situation obtained by the Islamic state should be what Ibn al-Qayyim described as: "Eventually, with the revelation of *Surah Bara'ah*, the unbelievers became three kinds: (a) the belligerent ones, (b) those who had entered into a treaty, and (c) those who had submitted and were paying the tribute. As regards the belligerent ones, the true situation was that they feared him (the Prophet). Consequently, mankind split into three kinds: believers, those who had surrendered, and, the belligerent ones, but fearful of him."

Jihad has been instituted for the Muslim *Ummah* to arrive at this end and not at the ends adopted by the defeatists under the pressure of the

‘present-day situation,’ nor at the ends that have been defined by the cunning Orientalists.

What other meaning of *jihad* is affordable in view of the numerous Qur’anic injunctions, *hadith* clarifications, and the events of early Islamic history? How else one is to understand the meaning and objectives of *jihad* when one has the very first revealed in this connection before him (22: 40):

وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَهَدَمَتْ صَوَامِعُ
وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا
[الحج : ٤٠]

“If not for Allah checking the people - some at the hands of others - surely, many of the monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which Allah is remembered much, would have been demolished.” (In other words, this religion also defends other religions while it fights off the usurpers of people’s rights to choose between right and wrong: Au.).

In fact, in Makkah too - a training phase - Islam was not without the sword, except that the sword was not in its own hands. It was Banu Hashim who held the sword and defended the Prophet there. Further, armed struggle in Makkah would have meant plunging the area into a blood bath that would not have had

a short run. Every home would have turned into a battle-field, leaving in its wake a very negative effect. Already it was being said: ‘Muhammad creates discord between father and son.’ Moreover, there were many amongst the antagonist Makkans who were later to turn into the champions of Islam. With armed struggle ensuing at an early stage, their services would have been lost. These then were the reasons why *jihad* was not instituted there, at Makkah, and not because Islam is a defensive religion.

That said, what other justification is required after the plain Qur’anic injunctions in this regard? How else can one explain the following? (4: 74-76):

فَلْيُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يَشْرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
بِالْآخِرَةِ وَمَنْ يُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيُقتَلْ أَوْ يَغْلِبْ
فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (٧٤) وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا
تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ
وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ
الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا وَاجْعَلْ
لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ نَصِيرًا (٧٥) الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ الطَّاغُوتِ
فَقَاتِلُوا أَوْلِيَاءَ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا
[النساء : ٧٤ - ٧٦]

“Let them then fight - in the way of Allah - those who (readily) sell the life of this world for the next. Whoso fights in the way of Allah and is slain, or overcomes (the enemy), We shall surely bestow on

him a mighty reward. How is it with you that you do not fight in the way of Allah, while the (weak and the) oppressed men, women, and children are pleading: 'Our Lord, rescue us from the people of this tyrannous town, and appoint to us a protector from You, and appoint to us a helper from You?' The believers fight in the way of Allah, while the unbelievers fight in the way of the Devil. Fight then, against the friends of Shaytan. Shaytan's guile is weak indeed."

And (8: 38-40):

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ يَنْتَهُوا يُغْفَرْ لَهُمْ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ وَإِنْ يَعُودُوا فَقَدْ مَضَتْ سُنَّتُ الْأَوَّلِينَ (٣٨) وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ ابْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ (٣٩) وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَاكُمْ نِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ [الأنفال : ٣٨ - ٤٠]

"Say to the unbelievers, if they desist, they will be forgiven what was in the past. But, if they return (to their old ways), then, surely, the way (of punishment) of the earlier ones has already passed. (As for you, O Muslims), fight them until idolatry is no more, and the Religion - all of it - is Allah's. But if they desist, then, surely Allah is Seeing of what they do. However, if they turn away (in rejection), then (fear them not, rather) know that

Allah is your Protector - an excellent Protector and an excellent Helper."

And (9: 29-32):

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 (٢٩) وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللَّهِ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ يُضَاهِئُونَ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ قَاتِلْهُمْ أَتَى يَوْمَهُمُ الْيَوْمُ (٣٠) اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَابَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ (٣١) يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يُبَيِّنَ نُورَهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ (٣٢) هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ [التوبة : ٢٩ ، ٣٣]

"Fight those People of the Book who do not believe in Allah nor in the Hereafter, nor do they forbid what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden, nor do they accept the true religion - until they pay Jizyah by hand in humiliation. The Jews said, 'Uzayr is a son of God.' And the Christians claimed, 'Jesus is the son of God.' That is a statement from their mouths. They (blindly) repeat the claims of the unbelievers of the past. May Allah destroy them, where are they being driven? They took their scholars, monks, and Jesus the son of Mary, as lords besides Allah; although, they were not ordered but to

worship one God. There is no Lord but He. He is exalted above what they ascribe. They wish to extinguish Allah's light by (the blow of their) mouths. But Allah spurns (the idea) except that He should complete His light even if the unbelievers are averse to it."

Such are the revelations. What other justification is needed after them? How else is the Allah's sovereignty to be understood in the light of above? This is how the earliest ones understood the verses. Those of the first generation Muslims who came out in *jihad* did not say, "We came out to defend our motherland." Nor did they say, "We have come out to get rid of the Persian (or Roman) yoke on our necks." They would say what Riba`i b. `Amir, Hudhayfah b. Muhsin and Mughira b. Sho`bah said to Rustam the commander-in-chief of the Persian armies when he gave three Muslim representatives separate audiences on three different occasions. He would ask, "What has brought you here?" They'd reply, "We have come to relieve the people from the slavery of men of their own kind and bind them to the slavery of one God; and to bring them out from the constrictions of this world to usher them into the expanses of the Hereafter; and from the oppres-

sion of other religions to the justice of Islam. Allah sent His Messenger with His religion. Whoever accepted it from us, we will accept him (as a brother-Muslim), shall leave him (to himself) and go back to our lands. As for him who refused, we shall fight him until we end up in Paradise, or are granted victory."

The justification then, spelled out above, is part and parcel of this religion. It will spring to action, depending on the situation and the means available. Such action will not depend on whether the Muslims have been oppressed in the lands or not. In contrast, those who claim that *jihad* is justified on the grounds of defense of one's nation, place the religion of Allah one level below their nation. This concept is foreign to Islam. Indeed, the lands are, by themselves, worthless in the sight of Islam.

Obviously, the world of the unbelievers around the world of Islam cannot accept any threat to its survival. Those who control the reins of power will not give up their power without a struggle. Having known the nature of Islam, they will surely take the first step and strike before they are struck. (As it happened in early Islam: Au.). That will lead to

a struggle between the two worlds. There is no escape from such a struggle. There is no other choice. If Islam does not take the first action, others will. However, if that were to happen, that is, they strike first, then, although at the beginning there would seem to be no difference between the two situations - whether it was Islam that took the first step, or others - but, at the end of the road a serious difference would show up. It would mean a serious corruption in the understanding of the Islamic concepts.

Therefore, it is an Islamic duty that the first steps be taken. For Islam is not a national religion. It is not the system for running a government. It is Allah's very religion and a system for the whole of the world. It is its right that it should take the first step towards the destruction of all other systems in order to remove the obstacles - not the individuals, with whom Islam has no quarrel - rather the systems that take away the people's freedom of choice.

This religion's main objective is the freedom of man. Its target is Man: not the Arabs. Its field of action is the earth - the whole of the earth (and not a patch of it).

It is in the light of the above discussion that we are now in a better posi-

tion to appreciate the battle of Badr and the reasons that led to the clash - as a sequel to which the chapter at hand was revealed.

Nevertheless, it might also be pointed out, despite the fear of repetition, but because of the need to stress, that the battle at Badr was not the first ever *jihad* event that took place in Islam. A few skirmishes had taken place earlier, although only one of them resulted in bloodshed: the one led by 'Abdullah b. Jahash. The Prophet had not participated in it. All other clashes that had taken place earlier, followed the principles laid out above. Of course, all the skirmishes preceding the battle of Badr had targeted the Quraysh. Those people had not respected the sacredness of the Grand Mosque, neither after the advent of Islam nor before it. But that was not the only reason why they were targeted. Rather, the main reason was that Islam proclaimed man's freedom from the slavery of others. It insisted on complete sovereignty for Allah over the whole of the earth and the destruction of the devilish powers that the people worshipped. Quraysh happened to be the leaders of the devilish powers and in direct control of the power base. Therefore, they had to be taken on first. There

might have been other reasons that led to the clash at Badr, or, for that matter, to other battles. But those reasons were incidental and secondary. While studying *jihad*, we will do well not to ignore the central theme, the main principles, and the general strategy of the Islamic struggle.”

Quotation from Sayyid’s preface ends here.

1. Ibn `Abbas has said that the whole of the chapter is Madinan except for verses 30 to 36, which are Makkan (Qurtubi). A few other verses are also reported to be Madinan (Manar).

Sayyid Qutb remarks that to say with absolute certainty that this or that part of the Qur`in is Makkan or Madinan is extremely difficult. At best, what can be said is that a certain chapter belongs to this or that period, without being very specific about its entire content. It is only a few verses that can be said to belong to a certain period because of confirmed reports. Therefore, (going by approximate dates of revelation) and attempting to work out, on their basis, the sequences and stages of the Islamic revolution, is to be treading on uncertain grounds.

He also adds that the best that can be said about the exact period of revelation of the chapter at hand is that it was revealed after *Surah al-Baqarah*. However, the fact must not be lost sight of that *al-Baqarah* itself was not revealed as one whole. Quite a few verses were revealed almost at the end of the Madinan period, while some verses might have been revealed in between. In fact, when the reports speak about a particular chapter as having been revealed after another chapter, what was meant is that the opening verses were revealed after that chapter, and not necessarily the whole of that chapter.

Rashid Rida reproduces parts of a lengthy discussion taken up by Suyuti and Alusi concerning why this *Surah* was placed here in the Qur`in: after *al-A`raf* and before *al-Bara`ah*. He offers his own opinion that whatever `Uthman (*ra*) had to say about their placement, the Prophet (*saws*) himself used to recite the whole of the Qur`in in Ramadan. Had not `Uthman’s arrangement agreed with the Prophet’s recitation, the Companions would not have agreed to the order that has come down to us from them.

[1] They ask you concerning the spoils of war.² Say, 'The spoils of war belong to Allah and the Messenger.'³ Therefore, fear Allah, set things right between yourselves,⁴ and obey Allah and His Messenger, if you are believers.⁵

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَنْفَالِ قُلِ الْأَنْفَالُ لِلَّهِ
وَالرَّسُولِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ
بَيْنِكُمْ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١﴾

2. Although various interpretations have been offered to the word “*anfal*” as occurring here, there is no difference of opinion that this verse came down on the occasion of the battle of Badr, in reference to a dispute that arose over the spoils. Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah, Mujahid, Dahhak and others are of the opinion that the term “*anfal*” is a generic term applicable to all kinds of spoils of war. (Here, in this verse, the term has been employed in this sense). However, Ibn `Abbas, along with `Ata, has also said that it applies to those of the enemy materials or man-power that are left over, or secured, after the division of the spoils of war. A third opinion is that the reference is to the fifth (*khumus*) of the spoils of war after four-fifths of it has been distributed among the mujahidin. The Prophet was entitled to dispose it the way he thought appropriate (Ibn Jarir).

Razi, Ibn Kathir and Shawkani quote authorities that since, [in the words of Asad] “*nafl*” (of which *an-*

fal is the plural) denotes, in its purely linguistic sense, “an accretion or addition received beyond one’s due” or “something given in excess of one’s obligation,” (hence “*nawafil*” for supererogatory Prayers, and “We bestowed him Is-haq, and Ya`qub in addition [*nafilah*]”, 21: 72), and since the spoils of war that had remained unlawful to previous nations were declared lawful to this *Ummah*, they have been designated as “*anfal*” - being an addition over the original commandments contained in previous Scriptures.

(Another term used in the Qur`in for spoils of war is “*faiy*.” Alusi lists various opinions about the difference between this term and “*ghanimah*.” One of the opinions is that *ghanimah* is that spoils of war which is secured by a fight [before or after the battle] whereas “*faiy*” is that spoils of war which is obtained without a fight).

The term “*nafl*” has a special meaning too. It is that spoils of war which the amir bestows on someone as a

gift over and above his personal share (Shafi').

Another explanation is that it means "one-fifth of the one-fifth" (Shanqiti).

As regards what occasioned the revelation of this verse, Imām Razi states the following as one of the several reasons: There were 3 men from the Muhajirun and 5 from the Ansar whom the Prophet gave shares in the booty although they had not participated in the battle of Badr: (1) Uthman b. `Affan: because the Prophet's daughter (`Uthman's wife) was sick, so he was left behind to look after her; (2) Talha and (3) Sa'id b. Zayd: the Prophet had sent these two toward the Syrian regions to gather news. [These were the three Muhajirun]; (4) Abu Lubabah b. Marwan: he was left in charge of Madinah; (5) `Asim: the Prophet had left him in charge of the uplands of Madinah; (6) Harth b. Hatib: when the Prophet had reached Rawha' he asked him to return to attend to some affair involving `Amr b. `Awf; (7) Harth b. al-Sumh: he fell sick by Rawha' and had to return on the Prophet's order; and (8) Khuwat b. Jubayr. When the Prophet gave each of these a share in the spoils of war, others objected and this verse was revealed.

Other commentators however, such as Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani and others, do not mention the above report of Razi. They cite the following as the reason of revelation: Before the start of the battle of Badr, the Prophet had said that those who accomplished such and such feats would be rewarded in such and such a manner. Accordingly, the younger men advanced far afield but the older and matured ones stayed around the Prophet in fear of a rear attack. When the spoils were collected, those who had advanced said that they deserved it all to the exclusion of others, because it was they in truth who had defeated the enemy. The older ones maintained that if they had stayed behind, it was for the safety of the Prophet. A third group, the standard-bearers, also claimed their stake. Claims turned into arguments, in which, according to a version preserved in Musnad Ahmad, in the words of `Ubadah b. Samit, "we showed the evil side of our character" and Allah revealed this verse. (This report is in Abu Da'ud, Nasa'i, Ibn Hibban and Hakim, who declared it *Sahih*, as well as in other *hadith* collections: Shawkani).

Some contemporary commentators have thought that it was a serious failing on the part of the Compan-

ions to have quarreled over the booty. Someone has remarked, "matters went to such a head that ill feelings entered their hearts." They could have been misled by the reported words: "Our conduct was blameworthy." But the apparent words do not reflect the true situation. The fact should not be lost sight of that with the slightest of deviation from the norm, the Companions used strong words for themselves. Also, it should not be forgotten that those were a people who had either migrated leaving all their wealth and property behind them in Makkah, or those who had given them refuge in Madinah, giving them precedence over their own wives and children. They could not be fighting for booty in a cheap manner. However, that said, they were Arabs: keen on their rights. When they felt something was theirs, they vehemently claimed it. But once told it was not theirs, they would not look at it twice. Had they set an eye on another's property, or harbored ill-feelings for the companions, surely, a single command concerning whom the spoils of war belonged to in truth, would not have cured them of their moral failing. Their character was such that had some of them been given the loot while others denied, they would have

promptly gifted others from their share no sooner had they got hold of it. They had not fought for loot. If they did, Hudhayfah would not have stood quiet while his father's corpse, killed in the same battle, was dragged by and thrown into a pit. No remark should be made about them, which does not agree with their general character, which was, without being over-generous with them, nothing less than noble (Au.).

To take on the thread of the main discussion again, these verses were revealed to declare that "*anfal*" were primarily the right of Allah and His Messenger. The Prophet then distributed it equally among the participants. However, he gave away certain items to certain participants as special gifts. For instance, Sa`d b. Abi Waqqas says, "My brother `Umayr was killed during the battle of Badr. I slew (his killer) Sa`id b. al-`As and took possession of his sword. Then I went to the Prophet. He told me to deposit it along with other booty items. I obeyed, but Allah knows the thoughts that were passing through my mind. However, as I was returning Allah revealed these verses and the Prophet told me: "You may keep the sword." (This report is in Tirmidhi, who rated it *Sahih*, as well as in Nasa'i, Ibn Marduwayh and Hakim

who has also declared it trustworthy: Alusi, Shawkani).

It should be obvious that Sa`d would not have desired after that particular sword but for the fact that it had been used to kill his brother, and hence a war-memorial rather than a piece of booty (Au.).

Similarly, the Prophet gave away swords of the fallen enemy heroes to Sa`d b. Malik and Arqam b. al-Arqam. Some have said that this verse is abrogated by another verse which reduced the amount under the Prophet's discretion to one-fifth (*khumus*). It said (8: 41):

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُ [الأنفال
: ٤١]

“Know that of what you gain of the spoils of war, one-fifth belongs to Allah and the Messenger.” Accordingly, in the battles that followed the Prophet divided four-fifths among the mujahedin and one-fifth among the poor and destitute class of the general population. But the abrogation idea is incorrect. Rather, all that this first verse is saying is that in principle the spoils belong to state authorities, who will dispense of it the way they deem fit.

After quoting the above from Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir shows that these re-

ports are well preserved in Muslim, Abu Da`ud, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and others. Accordingly, Sa`id ibn al-Mussayyib used to say that after the Prophet there is no “*nafl*.” The state authorities, Ibn Jarir notes, should decide, with the Prophet's practice as the guiding principle, about how the booty should be expended.

Qurtubi states that if there are many differences in opinion over the distribution of spoils of war, it is because the Prophet's practice varied on various occasions. However, there is no difference in opinion that in view of verse 41, one-fifth was for the Prophet to dispense off the way he deemed fit. That was the *khumus* referred to by the Qur`in. He said in a *hadith*,

إِنَّهُ لَا يَحِلُّ لِي بِمِمَّا آفَاءَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ قَدَرٌ هَذِهِ إِلَّا
الْخُمْسُ ، وَالْخُمْسُ مَرْدُودٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

“I have no share whatsoever in what Allah bestows on you except one-fifth, and this one-fifth is returned to you.” (A *hadith* close to this meaning is in Muslim: Au.).

But, Rashid Rida adds, Ibn Zayd's opinion was that the Imām can give away anything from the spoils to anyone before the division, and before the one-fifth is separated out. This is the *nafl* spoken of in this first verse.

In any case, the *anfāl* that were obtained at Badr consisted of, according to Miur, “115 camels, 14 horses, an endless store of vestments and carpets, articles of fine leather, with much equipage and armour” (Majid).

3. Mawdudi comments: “Before the advent of Islam, a soldier used to appropriate all that he could lay his hands on, claiming to be its rightful owner, or else the spoils were seized either by the king or the commander of the army. In the former case, mutual conflicts ensued among soldiers of the victorious army, with the frequent result that their victory turned into defeat. On the other hand, if the spoils were seized by the commander of the army or the ruler, soldiers often concealed and stole the spoils. By declaring that the spoils belong to Allah and His Messenger, the Qurʾān made it obligatory on all soldiers to commit all spoils of war to the custody of the commander, concealing not even something as trivial as a sewing needle. Subsequently, the Qurʾān laid down an elaborate set of laws to distribute the spoils of war. According to it, one-fifth of the spoils is to be deposited in the public treasure for public welfare and to provide support for the poor, while four-fifths is to be distributed among the soldiers.”

4. Ibn Kathir writes: Abu Yaʿlah has preserved a report worth reproducing. Anas b. Malik said,

بيننا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم جالس إذ رأيناه ضحك حتى بدت ثناياه فقال له عمر : ما أضحكك يا رسول الله بأبي أنت و أمي ؟ قال : رجلان من أمتي جثيا بين يدي رب العزة فقال أحدهما : يا رب خذني مظلمتي من أخي فقال الله تبارك و تعالى للطالب : فكيف بأخيك و لم يبق من حسناته شيء ؟ قال : يا رب فليحمل من أوزاري قال : و فاضت عينا رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم بالبكاء ثم قال : إن ذاك اليوم عظيم يحتاج الناس أن يحمل عنهم من أوزارهم فقال الله تعالى للطالب ارفع بصرك فانظر في الجنان فرفع رأسه فقال : يا رب أرى مدائن من ذهب و قصورا من ذهب مكلفة باللؤلؤ لأي نبي هذا أو لأي صديق هذا أو لأي شهيد هذا ؟ قال : هذا لمن أعطى الثمن قال : يا رب و من يملك ذلك ؟ قال : أنت تملكه قال : بماذا قال : بعفوك عن أخيك قال : يا رب فيني قد عفوت عنه قال الله عز و جل : فخذ بيد أخيك فادخله الجنة

“Once, we were in the Prophet’s company when he suddenly smiled widely. `Umar asked, ‘May my parents be sacrificed for you, what made you smile O Messenger of Allah?’ The Prophet replied, ‘Two of my *Ummah* were presented to Allah. One of them said, ‘My Lord. Get him to compensate for the wrong he did to me.’ Allah said (to the other man), ‘Compensate him for the wrong you did to him.’ The man

[2] Surely, believers are those whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned,⁶ and, when His revelations are read to them, they cause increase in their faith;⁷ and they place their trust in their Lord.⁸

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٢﴾

said, “My Lord. Nothing of my good deeds is left with me.” At that, the other man said, “My Lord. In that case, let him bear some of my burden of sins.” At that the Prophet’s eyes became wet. He said, “That would be a terrible day. People would be in need of someone to off-load their sins.” At that Allah said to the man, “Look up at the gardens.” The man will look up and say, “My Lord. I see fields filled with silver, and palaces of gold embellished with pearls. To which Prophet are they assigned? For which Siddiq are they? For which martyr are they?” Allah will say, “They are for anyone who will pay the price.” He will ask, “But who possesses its price?” Allah will say, “You do.” He will ask, “What is it O my Lord?” Allah will say, “Forgive your brother.” The man will say, “O my Lord. I have forgiven him.” Allah will say, “Hold thy brother’s hand and enter you two into Paradise.” Then the Prophet recited this verse,

“Therefore, fear Allah, set things right between yourselves,” for (if they do not, then) Allah will set things right between them on the Day of Judgment.”

5. A clear inference is that he who did not fear Allah, and is not obedient to His and His Messenger’s commands, is not a believer in any degree (Shawkani).

6. What is *wajl*? Shahar b. Hawshab reports in explanation that Umm Darda’ said: “Trembling (*wajl*) of the heart is its burning: in the manner of the burning of a palm-leaf. Do you any time feel a trembling of that kind, O Shahar b. Hawshab?” I said, “Yes, I do.” She said: “Supplicate then, at that moment, because that is the state in which supplications are likely to be accepted.” It is reported of Thabit al-Bunani that he said: “So and so said, ‘I know when my Prayers would be answered.’ It was asked, ‘How do you know?’ He answered, ‘When my skin shivers, my heart trembles and the eyes are filled, then I know that it is one of those

moments when my Prayers will be answered.” `A'isha (ra) said: “*Wajl* can be likened to the spark of a burning palm-leaf. When one of you feels that, let him resort to supplications (Ibn Jarir, Alusi, Shawkani, Manar and others).

Discussing the term “*wajl*” Imām Razi points out that of “*wajl*” there are two kinds: fear of punishment, and the awe that rises out of one’s knowledge of Allah’s Greatness and Majesty. A sinner experiences the first kind. As for the second kind, there is no escape from it for anyone, whether a Prophet or an angel close to Allah. Just about everyone experiences this in some degree or the other. The allusion here is to the first kind.

Suddi has said that that person is a believer who, when he intends a sin or a wrong, is reminded of Allah and told, “Fear Allah,” his heart is shaken by fear and he desists (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi adds: This then is the quality of true believers. The Qur’ān said about them elsewhere (5: 83):

وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ تَرَى أَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ
مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا
مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ [المائدة : ٨٣]

“And when they hear what has been revealed to the Prophet,

you will see their eyes overflowing with tears for what they have known of the Truth. They say, ‘Our Lord. We have believed and, therefore, write us down among the witnesses.’”

It is reported that,

روى مسلم عن أنس بن مالك أن الناس سألو النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم حتى أحفوه في المسألة، فخرج ذات يوم فصعد المنبر

فقال: “سلوني لا تسألوني عن شيء إلا بينته لكم ما دمت في مقامي هذا.” فلما سمع ذلك القوم أرموا ورهبوا أن يكون بين (يدي) أمر قد حضر. قال أنس: فجعلت ألتفت يمينا وشمالا فإذا كل إنسان لاف رأسه في ثوبه يبكي.

Once, the people asked the Prophet questions going to extremes. So, one day he came out, climbed the pulpit and said, “Ask. You will not ask me a question but I will answer it so long as I am on this place.” When they heard those words, they thought the world’s end was at hand. Anas the reporter says I turned to look around at the audience, and did not find anyone but he had hid his face in his cloak and was crying.

‘Irbad b. Saiyyar has reported a *Sahih hadith* which he begins with words,

وعظنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم موعظة بليغة ذرفت منها العيون، ووجلت منها القلوب.

“Once, the Prophet admonished us in words that brought tears in our eyes and drove fear into our hearts.” ‘Irbad did not say, (Qur-tubi remarks), “We jumped with the Prophet’s words,” or, “We began to dance,” or, “We began to sway,” not even, “We rose up (in commotion).” Rather, he said, “We cried.” Such were the reactions of those who are an example for us and not those, who, touched by some kind of madness, shout and dance and are considered pious by the masses.

7. Going by this verse and several others of similar meaning, the great majority of scholars have ruled that faith is liable to increase and decrease (Ibn Kathir). A few example of such verses are as follows. It was said after the battle of Uhud (3: 173):

الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ [آل عمران : ١٧٣]

“Those, to whom the people said, ‘Surely, the (enemy) forces have gathered against you, therefore fear them.’ But that increased them in their faith and they said, ‘Allah is sufficient for us, an excellent Trustee (He is).’”

It was said in *Surah al-Ahzab* (33: 22):

وَلَمَّا رَأَى الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ قَالُوا هَذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَصَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَمَا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا إِيمَانًا وَتَسْلِيمًا [الأحزاب : ٢٢]

“When the believers saw the enemy troops they said, ‘This is what Allah and His Messenger had promised us. Allah and His Messenger spoke the truth. It did not cause them increase in anything but faith and obedience.’”

Or, (48: 4):

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ [الفتح : ٤]

“It is He who sent down Sakinah in the hearts of the believers so that they may add faith upon faith” (Manar).

‘Umar b. ‘Abdul ‘Aziz wrote to someone:

إِنَّ لِلْإِيمَانِ فَرَائِضَ وَشَرَائِعَ وَخُدُودًا وَسُنَنًا فَمَنْ اسْتَكْمَلَهَا اسْتَكْمَلَ الْإِيمَانَ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَكْمِلْهَا لَمْ يَسْتَكْمِلْ الْإِيمَانَ

“Faith is (the other name of) supererogatory acts, obligatory acts, and (observation of) the Law. Whoever observed them faithfully, completed his faith. Whoever did not, did not complete his faith (Zamakhshari).

The words above are from Bukhari (Au.).

Razi about how *Imān* is to be increased: The strength and quantity of faith depends upon the evidences that one obtains, of which of course, there is no end. It is a shore-less ocean. Every time one discovers the wisdom behind a creation, he moves on to the wisdom behind the creation of another, and so on, each step causing increase in his faith.

Qurtubi remarks: That is because there are states, which depend upon one's application and knowledge. Someone asked Hasan al-Busri, "O Abu Sa'id, are you a believer?" He replied, "There are two kinds of beliefs. If you are asking me about belief in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and in Paradise, the Fire, Resurrection and Reckoning, then, yes, I am a believer. But if you ask me about the verse, 'Surely, believers are those whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned (before them) .. until .. these are in truth the believers,' then I am not too sure whether I belong to this category" (Zamakhshari). Therefore, adds Qurtubi, the Ahl al-Sunnah say that true believer is he alone who is judged (in the Hereafter) as one deserving Paradise. Until then his state is a secret unto all but Allah, and, therefore, to refer to anyone as a true believer is incorrect.

Imām Abu Hanifah however disagreed that there could be any increase in faith. (He defined "*Imān*" as "testimony" of which of course no divisions can be made. It is the strength of belief that can go up and down by a scale, but testimony is indivisible. Accordingly, Abu Hanifah's opinion that faith, which to him was equivalent of testimony, does not increase or decrease: Au.).

It is said that he asked Qatadah why he should say "I am a believer, if Allah willed?" (Instead of saying with certainty that he was in truth a believer: Au.). Qatadah replied, "Following Ibrahim (asws) who said (26: 82),

وَالَّذِي أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ [الشعراء
: ٨٢]

'Of whom (i.e., Allah) I hope He will forgive me my sins.'"

Abu Hanifah replied, "Why did he not you follow him in those of his words which report to us that when Allah asked him, (2: 260),

أَوَلَمْ تَتُومِنْ قَالِ بَلَىٰ [البقرة : ٢٦٠]

'Have you not believed? He replied, 'Indeed (I have).'" (That is, he did not add, "insha Allah") - Zamakhshari.

Although one should not fail to miss the point in Allah's words above, viz., "when His Revelations are recited to

them, they cause increase in faith,” that is, Revelations alone cause increase in faith; even before any action is taken, (in fact, not all revelations contain commandments), Mawdudi goes one step aside to explain how faith could be increased through deeds. He writes: “A man’s faith grows as he is able to confirm and submit to the command of God which he comes across. This is especially so where he submits to commands which go against his own personal predilections. A man’s faith attains great heights if instead of trying to twist and distort the commands of God and the Prophet (peace be on him), he develops the habit of accepting and submitting to all the commands of God and the Prophet (peace be on him); if he strives to shape his conduct to the teaching which go against his personal opinions and conceptions, which are contrary to his habits, interests and conveniences, which are not in consonance with his loyalties and friendships. For, if he hesitates to respond positively to God’s commands, his faith is diminished. One thus learns that faith is not a static, immobile object. Nor is every act of belief or unbelief, of the same quality. An act of belief may be better or worse than another act of belief.

Likewise, an act of unbelief may differ in quality from another.

“All this concerns the essence of belief or unbelief. However, when belief and unbelief are mentioned as a basis for membership of the Muslim community or in connection with legal rights and responsibilities as necessary corollaries of that membership, a clear line of demarcation has to be drawn between those who believe and those who do not. In this respect the determination of who is a believer and who is not will depend on the basic minimum of belief, regardless of the quality of belief.”

8. Accordingly, (whenever something unpleasant results aftermath of an act of obedience), a believer’s words should be: “Allah and His Messenger spoke the truth.” His reaction should not be like that of the hypocrites who said: “Allah and His Messenger did not make but false promises to us.” Further, the three states in order may be noted: (i) Fear of Allah (ii) His obedience (iii) Trust in Him alone (Razi).

Ibn Kathir writes: True believers pin their hopes on none but Allah, aim at pleasing none but Him, seek refuge with none but Him, seek the help of none but Him, incline toward none but Him, and know that what He

willed, happened and what He did not will, did not happen, and that He alone is the Decision-maker in His Kingdom, the One God besides whom there is no other god, whose command cannot be repelled, and Who is quick at reckoning. Hence Sa`id b. Jubayr has said that trust in Allah is the sum and substance of faith in Him.

Ibn `Abbas has said in explanation of the whole verse: Nothing by way of Allah's remembrance enters the heart of a hypocrite at the time of Prayers. They do not believe in any of Allah's revelation. They have no trust in Him. They do not Pray when out of sight of the people and do not expend in charity. Allah has informed us that they are not believers. Rather, "believers are those whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned (before them). And when His Revelations are recited to them, they cause increase in their faith, and they place their trust in their Lord" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Sayyid adds: Resorting to means is not - as the common belief goes - against having trust in Allah (tawak-kul). Resorting to the means, within the limits imposed by the Shari`ah, is part of the deeds of obedience. It is indeed obedience in itself. This, de-

spite the fact, that the believer does not depend on the means as affecting the outcome. The resorting to means is for rewards. Outcome rests with Allah alone, coming down by His decree, who does not depend on the means that were adopted to execute His will, nor is affected by the quantity or quality of the measures taken. His will is independent. This is a religious truth that modern thought is also prepared to accept it - after centuries of confidence in the rigid law of cause and effect. Today, no one claims that cause "A" will definitely lead to effect "B". Rather, they are saying that cause "A" will most probably lead to effect "B" but the possibilities of effects "C", "D", or whatever, cannot be ruled out. We do not live in a world of certainties but that of possibilities.

Sayyid's could have been referring to the famous "uncertainty principle" of the Quantum mechanics, which holds that both the speed and position of a (sub-atomic) particle cannot be determined at any particular moment of time. It is in a state of uncertainty or, in other words, possibilities. Although little understood, because of its complication, but often quoted, the concept, first proposed by Heisenberg in 1927, involves "the principle that it is meaningless

[3] Those, who perform the Prayer (well)⁹ and expend of what We have provided them.

الَّذِينَ يُتِمُّونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَبِمَا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾

[4] These in truth are the believers.¹⁰ For them are ranks with their Lord,¹¹ forgiveness and noble provision.

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٤﴾

to speak of a particle’s position, momentum or other parameters, except as a result of measurements. Measuring, however, involves an interaction (such as a photon of light bouncing off the particle under study), that must disturb the particle, though the disturbance is noticeable only at an atomic scale. The principle implies that one cannot, even in theory, predict the moment-to-moment behavior of such a system.” (*The New American Desk Encyclopedia*).

It should be obvious from the above that the principle essentially holds good at the micro level, because of the minute scale of interaction. However, and generally speaking, although the principle remains true at the macro level also, the results are predictable in view of previous observations. Hence, the insistence by the Shari`ah of Islam, on the adoption of means, since, after all, from a steady state, one will only get a steady state, if no action was initiated. Nevertheless, since, the reactions are only predictable, but impossible

of precise determination, the balancing act of dependence not on the means, rather on Allah, i.e., the state of tawakkul has been suggested, both of which Muslim scholars always emphasize, as does Sayyid here (Au.).

9. Qatadah has said that “iqamatu al-salah” means to wait for the time the Prayers in anticipation, do the ablution thoroughly, as well as the bows and prostrations, while Muqatil added: “recite the Qur`in therein, recite the testimony (during the sitting posture), and send peace to the Prophet:” these are all acts that constitute iqamah (Ibn Kathir).

10. Thus we have four qualities of true believers mentioned here: two external and two internal. Prayers and charity are two external qualities, while trembling of the heart and trust in Allah are internal ones (Thanwi).

Tabarani has preserved a report which says that Haritha b. Malik happened to pass by the Prophet He asked him,

كيف أصبحت يا حارثة قال : أصبحت مؤمنا حقا قال : فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم : انظر ما تقول فإن لكل حق حقيقة إيمانك قال : فقال : عزفت نفسي عن الدنيا فأسهرت ليلتي و أطمأت نهارتي و كأني أنظر إلى عرش ربي بارزا و كأني أنظر إلى أهل الجنة كيف يتزاورون فيها و كأني انظر إلى أهل النار كيف يتعادون فيها فقال : فقال له النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم : أبصرت فالزم مرتين (و قال) مؤمن نور الله قلبه

“In what condition have you done this morning O Haritha?” He replied, “This morning I am a true believer.” The Prophet said, “Consider what you say. Everything has a reality. What is the reality of your faith?” He replied, “I have become averse to this world. So I keep vigil in the nights and keep myself thirsty during the days. And, as if I can see the `Arsh of my Lord right above me; as if I see the people of Paradise visiting each other therein, and, as if I can see the people of the Fire therein.” The Prophet said, “O Harith. You have known. Now, remain steady,” saying that twice. Then he added, “A believer whose heart Allah filled with light” (Ibn Kathir).

The *hadith* has weak narrators, but has a few lessons (Manar).

But, Haritha's later behavior confirmed his state of *Imān*. The same sources (Bayhaqi: Shu`ab) reports the following:

فنودي يوما في الخيل يا خيل الله إركبي فكان أول فارس ركب و أول فارس استشهد فجاءت أمه إلى النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم فقالت : يا رسول الله أخبرني عن ابني حارثة أين هو إن يكن في الجنة لم أباك و لم أحزن و إن يكن في النار بكيت ما عشت في الدنيا قال : فقال : لها رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يا أم حارثة إنها ليست بجنة و لكنها جنان و حارثة في الفردوس الأعلى قال : فانصرفت و هي تضحك

“Then, one of those days it was announced, ‘O soldiers of Allah, unto your horse.’ He (Haritha) was the first to respond, and the first to be martyred. His mother came to the Prophet and said, ‘Messenger of Allah. Let me know about Kharijah. Where is he? If he is in the Garden, let me not cry and let me not be sorry. But if he is the Fire, I shall cry for the rest of my life.’ The Prophet answered, ‘O mother of Haritha. It is not a Garden but Gardens. Haritha is in the Firdaws.’ She returned smiling.”

Imām Razi adds: Imām Shafe`i has said that if asked, one might not say that he is a true believer. Rather, he should say, “Insha Allah, I am;” not

out of any doubt, but rather out of humbleness. Such as if one is asked, “Are you brave?” He would reply, “Insha Allah, I am.” In contrast, Imām Abu Hanifah has said that he should say, “Yes. I am a true believer.” The difference in opinion between the two is that Imām Shafē`i includes deeds in the definition of the term *Imān*, whereas, to Imām Abu Hanifah, testimony alone is *Imān*, which can neither increase nor decrease.

Imām Razi sides with Imām Shafē`i and adduces several arguments. (So does Alusi, who, being a Hanafiyy, says that to follow an Imām’s opinion in such matters is suitable for the laity alone). Thawri however has put forward a litmus test. He said whoever said that he is surely a believer, but did not claim that he is of the Paradise, believed in only half of the verse.

11. Ibn Kathir writes: Referring to this verse, Dahhak has said that some of the people of Paradise will be over and above others in position. Those above will see those below. But those below will not be able to see those above, to regret that someone has been preferred over them. In fact, Ibn Kathir adds, there is a *hadīth* in the *Sahihayn* which says that the Prophet said:

إِنَّ أَهْلَ عِلِّيِّينَ لَيَرَاهُمْ مَنْ هُوَ أَسْفَلَ مِنْهُمْ كَمَا يُرَى
الْكَوْكَبَ فِي أَفْقِ السَّمَاءِ

“Those of the higher ranks in Paradise (*‘Ilīyyun*) will be seen by those below them as you see the stars above you.”

Another report (of the *Sahihayn*: Au.) says,

إِنَّ أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ يَتَرَاءُونَ أَهْلَ الْعَرْفِ مِنْ قَرِيبِهِمْ كَمَا
يَتَرَاءُونَ الْكَوْكَبَ الدَّرِيَّ الْعَابِرَ فِي الْأَفْقِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ
أَوْ الْمَغْرِبِ لِتَفَاضُلِ مَا بَيْنَهُمْ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
تِلْكَ مَنَازِلُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ لَا يَبْلُغُهَا غَيْرُهُمْ قَالَ بَلَى وَالَّذِي
نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ رَجُلٌ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَصَدَّقُوا الْمُرْسَلِينَ

“The people of Paradise will see those above them in the higher ranks as you see the stars as you see the lone shining star in the horizon, in the east or the west. This is because of the differences in levels between them. The Companions asked, “Are those the abodes of the Prophets, not the share of the common people?” He replied, “Nay, by Him in whose hands is my life. They are for people who believed in Allah and testified to the Messengers.

According to another *hadīth* in Ahmad, narrated by Abu Sa`id, he said,

وَإِنَّ أَبَا بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرَ لَمِنْهُمْ وَأَنْعَمَا

[5] As¹² your Lord brought you out of your dwelling¹³ with truth, although a section of the believers were reluctant;¹⁴

كَمَا أَخْرَجَكَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَيْتِكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَكَارِهِونَ ﴿٥﴾

[6] Arguing with you¹⁵ concerning the truth¹⁶ after it had become clear,¹⁷ as if they were being driven to death¹⁸ while they were looking on.¹⁹

يُجَادِلُونَكَ فِي الْحَقِّ بَعْدَمَا تَبَيَّنَ كَأَنَّمَا يُسَاقُونَ إِلَى الْمَوْتِ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٦﴾

“And Abu Bakr and `Umar would be of those blessed (that way).”

12. One of the many explanations, as for example that of `Ikrimah, for starting the verse in this abrupt manner would render the meaning as follows: ‘As your Lord brought you out of your dwelling in truth - despite the fact that a party of the believers was averse to it - so were a party of the believers arguing with you over the Truth after it had become apparent’ (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi quotes Zajjaj as of opinion that the ellipsis is, ‘As did Allah declare the spoils for you, O Muhammad, ... (so did He bring you out of your dwelling, although a group of believers was reluctant).’ There are, of course, several other explanations possible. Another being, “As your Lord brought you out ... as He did this, and that, and that, .. so, now you ought to thank Him.”

13. Although the textual word is “bayt”, the allusion is to Madinah,

since that was the Prophet’s hometown (Razi).

14. Ibn Is-haq quotes the opinion of the Companions that when the Prophet (*saws*) had started the journey hoping to catch on the trade caravan headed by Abu Sufyan, they learnt on the way that the Quraysh had already started off from Makkah and were on their way to resist his attempt. Since - being unarmed, having come out with the intention only to intercept the trade caravan - they were unprepared for an encounter with the best of fighters of the day, and a section of the believers were reluctant that they should continue with their onward march (Ibn Jarir, Razi).

15. The point of argument of those who did not advise a fight was that they had not come out but to waylay the caravan (hence not in the best shape to fight) -Razi.

Such disagreement with the Prophet, when his own inclination was

known, was something unacceptable. Hence the use of the stronger term “argument” (based on a hint from Thanwi).

16. The words “concerning the Truth” allude to the fact of being told that they had missed the caravan and had to, instead, confront the Quraysh troops (Razi). In other words, they had heard the Prophet say that they will have to fight the Quraysh - and will never encounter the caravan - but they were reluctant to believe (that they had missed the caravan), although they knew that a Prophet speaks only the truth (Ibn Kathir).

17. In explanation of the words, ‘after it had become clear,’ Ibn Jarir writes: That is, after it had become clear that in such affairs (of importance) the Prophet did not act by himself, rather, he followed the commands from on High.

Ibn Zayd however has said that this verse is in reference to the unbelievers, who argued with the Prophet over the truth as if by encouraging them to accept Islam he was driving them to death. But, Ibn Jarir adds, such an interpretation does not fit the context. The reference here is clearly to a party of the believers who, when told to fight the Quraysh, reacted as if they were being driven to death.

Imām Razi says that the words, “after it had become clear” allude to the fact that their reluctance was despite the fact that the Prophet had promised them that they would receive help from Allah.

The promise that Razi alludes to, was contained in Allah’s words that one of the two: either the caravan or the troops, would be theirs (Au.).

18. They were fearful because (i) they were greatly outnumbered (ii) they were on their feet, (with just a horse or two) and (iii) they had no arms to fight with (Razi).

19. Prompted by the Orientalists’ attack on the life of the Prophet, some contemporary commentators and writers disregarded the reports about the Prophet’s intention to intercept Abu Sufyan’s caravan. But, if their proposition is accepted, we face the following problems:

(i) If we reject the relevant *ahadīth* as untrustworthy, what shall we do with dozens of *Sirah*, Maghazi and history works, which do not always depend on *hadīth* sources, and which unanimously report that the Prophet’s original intention was to intercept the trade caravan? Are we going to re-write Islamic history in the manner of other nations who re-write their histories every hundred years?

(ii) Had the Prophet started off only after learning of the Quraysh advance, he could not have arrived at Badr earlier than them. He would have lost a few days in the communication of the news (by the prevalent slow means of transport) and, a few more days in preparations at Madinah. By that time the Quraysh would have been at the gates of Madinah.

(iii) There is a report in Muslim that the Prophet had sent a Companion to gather news about Abu Sufyan's caravan. But there are no reports to the effect that he had sent men to gather news about the Quraysh preparations at Makkah. Why did the Prophet think it unnecessary to be abreast of news about Quraysh movements on this important occasion, when he had kept an eye on them all along?

(iv) How can one explain the Prophet's refusal to allow time to some of his Companions to get ready and join him for the campaign? The report narrated by Anas b. Malik in Muslim (no. 3520) runs as follows: The Prophet sent Busaysah to bring news about Abu Sufyan's caravan. When he had returned and reported to the Prophet in private, he went out to speak to those in the mosque.

He told them: "We have a campaign before us. Therefore, whoever has his mount ready with him may join us." Some people sought his permission to get their beasts from the uplands of Madinah. He told them, "No. Let only those accompany us who have their mounts ready at hand."

(v) If there was no intention to intercept Abu Sufyan's caravan, why had the Quraysh come out of Makkah with a hastily assembled army? Surely, they'd have known that Muslims would not be less than a couple of thousands at Madinah, and so a thousand against them, in their own territory, would be quite risky. Moreover, there was no hurry. They could have prepared themselves well before leaving, just as they did later, for the Uhud campaign.

(vi) If the Prophet had learnt of the Quraysh advance at Madinah itself, why is it that he did not consult his Companions whether they should fight off the on-coming Quraysh from within the city or go out and meet them in the open? If it was necessary to consult them at the time of Uhud, why was it not so at the time of Badr?

(vii) If the Prophet had informed his Companions at Madinah itself (and not later, on the way to Badr), that

he intended to confront the Quraysh army, (something that made some of them feel that “they were being driven to death”), then, why had they started off without arms and beasts to ride?

(viii) What shall one do with the *hadith* in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ahmad and others which reports Ka`b b. Malik as saying (in connection with his failure to participate in the Tabuk expedition): “I had not participated in the Badr battle; but those who had not were not censured because the Prophet had intended only to intercept Abu Sufyan’s caravan?”

(ix) How do we explain the narration in Abu Da’ud, Ahmad, and Bazzar, declared trustworthy by Haythamiyy, which says that arriving at Badr the Muslims caught two bedouins collecting water for the Quraysh? They beat them for saying that they were working for the Quraysh army, but spared them when they said they were Abu Sufyan’s men. If they had started off from Madinah with the knowledge that they were to fight the Quraysh, why would they not believe that a huge Quraysh army was advancing toward them?

(x) How does one explain the following report? Tirmidhi, who declared

the report Hasan *Sahih*, recorded that after the Badr battle was over the Prophet intended to chase Abu Sufyan’s caravan. When ‘Abbas learnt of it he said that that would not be right since Allah had promised him one of the two groups and had already given him victory over one. Now, if the Prophet had intended to chase the caravan after the battle of Badr, why could he did not do that before?

(xi) Prefixed ideas blind. The Qur’*n* itself said in verse seven of this chapter, “Behold, when Allah promised you that one of the two parties will be yours.” Should Allah promise one of the two parties, but we should claim that the Prophet intended only one, because the cunning Orientalists do not approve of it?

Now, if it is asked, is it becoming of a Prophet that he should attack a trade-caravan for loot? The answer is, it has to be ascertained whether it is a Prophet we are talking of. If he is, then it is right of him to do that. Whatever a Prophet does, if proven by authentic reports, is right. Further, should we allow the Quraysh to raid and loot Muslim property and kill whoever of them they encounter, but refuse the Muslims retaliation of the same nature? Again, it was not

[7] When Allah was promising you that one of the two parties will be yours²⁰ although you were wishing that the one unarmed²¹ should be yours.²² But Allah was wishing that He demonstrate the Truth by His Words, and cut off the roots of the unbelievers.²³

[8] So that He might confirm the Truth and prove Falsehood as falsehood, though the criminals should be averse to it.

وَإِذْ يَعِدُكُمُ اللَّهُ إِحْدَى الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ أَنَّهَا لَكُمْ وَتَوَدُّونَ أَنَّ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ الشَّوْكَةِ تَكُونُ لَكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَيَقْطَعَ دَابِرَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧﴾
لِيُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ وَيُبْطِلَ الْبَاطِلَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٨﴾

loot. It was an attempt at weakening the enemy strength by confiscating his wealth. Had not the USA confiscated the Iranian assets (in the 80s) in the American banks without even a war between them?

Finally, with his usual subtlety, Shabir places his finger on the core of the issue: “It is strange that some people would allow the Muslims to attack the lives of the enemy, but would not allow their property to be attacked. That is, in retaliation to their enemy rendering their lives, property, and honor unsafe, the Muslims could make their lives too unsafe, but not their property!”

20. Yahya b. Bukayr and `Abdul Razzaq both have preserved with reliable chain of narrators that when the battle of Badr was over and the captives taken, someone suggested that they should now go after the Abu Sufyan caravan. But `Abbas b. Muttalib, (who was taken prisoner

and had overheard the conversation between the Muslims: Qurtubi), spoke out, “That would not be right of you.” The Prophet asked him why. He replied, “Allah had promised you one of the two groups and has already helped you overpower one of them” (Ibn Kathir).

21. The textual word is “*ghayra dhatish-shawkati*.” Abu `Ubayd has said that “*shawkah*” is any vegetational growth that has a sharp end (such as a thorn). Hence arms are known as shawkah.

22. The background story of this Qur’anic passage is as follows. Badr is one of the most important events in the history of Islam. Indeed, it is one of the most important battles in human history. The outcome changed the course of history, giving it an entirely new direction and influencing every major event since then. Allah Himself called it (8: 41),

يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ التَّمَيِّزِ [الأنفال : ٤١]

“the Day of Criterion, the day the two forces met.”

Also see note 39 below for Asad’s remarks.

The Background

With the prophetic mission made impossible to carry out at Makkah, and the hopes of the Makkans ever embracing Islam reduced to zero, the Prophet was ordered to move out 500 km to a conglomeration of settlements called Yethrib. Henceforth it would be known as Madinah, a short form of “*Madinatu al-Nabiyy*” (the Prophet’s city). If the migrant Muslims, deprived of their wealth, property, personal possessions, and livelihood, were hoping to re-build their shattered lives at Madinah, quietly and peacefully, even if painfully, they were soon to receive a few rude shocks. Whatever else, there was not going to be peace around them for some time. The Quraysh threatened the Yethrebites that if they did not evict the Prophet and his Companions to the expanses of the deserts, they, the Quraysh, would be obliged to carry out the ugly, but the necessary operation themselves. In the process they might disassemble every brick of the Yethrebite hamlets. Did the Yethrebites doubt the ability of the Quraysh to accomplish it?

If they did, they’d soon be counting not the fallen bricks, but corpses in the battle fields and damsels carried back by the mighty Quraysh. After a day’s work, the Quraysh would have some fun in the evening. Would the Yethribites then, dare to resist?

(Islam had no choice. Either it resisted, or went the way Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama, Guatemala in Central America went in the fifties, sixties and seventies of the last century, at the hands of the Americans, who brought horrendous death and destruction to these countries when their democratically elected governments refused the Americans continuous exploitation of their people and lands).

Those were not empty words of the Quraysh. When the Ansar evinced every intention to keep the words of promise they had made to the Prophet at `Aqabah, to the effect that they would defend him as they defended their wives and children, the Quraysh began to send warning signals to them. A skirmish here, an attack there, and, consequently, the trade routes were closed for the Madinans. When the Quraysh came, they would find bony structures staring at them from their hollow eyes, as starving as to be glad to be killed.

(Again, to find a parallel: Iraq after 13 years of relentless bombing by the Americans and British who well knew that Iraq had no weapons of Mass Destruction and that it did not have any connection with the bogey called Al-Qa'idah).

But, although few were the people that the Prophet had under his command, he displayed great courage and determination. He replied skirmish with skirmish, attack with attack and blocking of trade-routes with blocking of trade routes. Any reason he should have acted differently? One may ask the Orientalists, sitting pretty on the booty amassed over last two hundred years of scorch-earth policy in the East, whether a prophetic mission was unbecoming, because it employed a sword in its defense? With the erudition of past three centuries on their backs, a load aptly described by the Qur'in in 62: 5, they would all but furnish the humanity the specifications of a Prophetic mission. Would they not?

Never the less, seventeen months after the migration the Quraysh sent a huge caravan carrying prized goods to the Roman markets in Syria. It was heading back to Makkah with hundreds of camels loaded with all kinds of merchandise, under the

leadership of Abu Sufyan, escorted by some forty to seventy men, one of them `Amr b. al-`As (Au.).

Ibn Jarir presents several reports on the authority of several narrators. Here is a summary: When the Prophet heard of Abu Sufyan heading back from Syria, he summoned the Muslims and told them: 'This is the Quraysh caravan coming from Syria. So, go out and attack it. Maybe Allah will bestow it on you as booty. The people responded positively. Some of them came out armed, others took it lightly. This is because they were not expecting that a fight worth the name would ensue. On his part, when Abu Sufyan reached Hijaz he spread out his spies and personally went around questioning every traveler if he had noticed something unusual. He got wind that the Prophet and his followers were on their way to attack him. Immediately he hired a man called Damdam b. `Amr al-Ghiffari to rush up to Makkah and inform the Quraysh about it. (During those very days a sister of `Abbas saw a dream in which she saw an angel from the heaven hurling a huge rock at Makkah. Not a house of the town escaped its fragments. When Abbas spoke of the dream to Abu Jahl he quipped: "Is it not enough for Banu Hashim that one of their

men should claim prophethood, that they should now claim that they have a Prophetess also?": Razi). Damdam on the other hand, did a good job. He went to Makkah and put up such a show as to give the impression that all was lost, not only for the caravan, but also for the Quraysh, if they did not rise to answer the challenge. The panic however was understandable since there was not a family in Quraysh which had not invested some money or goods in Abu Sufyan's caravan. It is estimated that the merchandise it was carrying was worth 50,000 Dinars, equivalent of a couple of millions today (Shafi').

Consequently, within two or three days the Quraysh managed to raise a sizable force towards the expenses of which the rich contributed handsomely. `Abdullah ibn Rabi`ah donated 500 Dinars. Huwaytab b. `Abdul `Uzza contributed a similar sum. To`aymah b. `Adiyy offered 20 camels laden with provision. Whoever could not go when the army marched out, replaced another, fully equipped fighter in his stead (Sayyid from Al-Miqrizi).

In the meanwhile, the Prophet kept on marching. (On the second or third day of march he ordered a count. They told him they were 313.

He was pleased. He said, "The same numbers as the Companions of Talut.": Shawkani). He kept on going until he reached a valley called Zufran. He had not crossed it but received the news of the Quraysh contingent that had left Makkah to face him in defense of their caravan. They were about 950 men, a hundred on horse back with seven hundred camels in command. They were accompanied by musicians and singers who sang and danced for them at every halt. According to some reports, it was at that time that the Prophet received the revelation that Allah had promised him one of the two groups: one loaded with goods, and the other heavily armed. On the other side, Abu Sufyan changed his route and (traveling day and night without stoppage: Au.) managed to dodge the Muslims and escape unmolested. Once out of reach of the Muslims, Abu Sufyan sent word to the Quraysh that they could return. But Abu Jahal refused. He said they would march up to Badr, camp there for three days, slaughter animals, drink wine, sing, and dance until the news spread that the Quraysh had fitfully responded to the Prophet's challenge. When Abu Sufyan came to know of the Quraysh decision to continue marching forward, despite

the safe return of the caravan, he disagreed and expressed the fear that the Prophet and his Companions could slaughter them. (Probably he had no idea of the small numbers with the Prophet and that they were unarmed: Au.). Banu Zuhra, however, returned, finding no reason for confrontation. At that point Abu Jahl made a remark against Talib b. Abi Talib, saying he suspected the loyalty of Banu Hashim. So Talib b. Abu Talib also returned along with those who returned: Sayyid and others).

At all events, the Prophet also learnt of Abu Sufyan's escape. But he continued to march. They had seventy camels in all and one or two horses. They rode the camels in turns. The Prophet shared a camel with `Ali ibn Abi Talib and Marthad ibn Abi Marthad (i.e., Abu Lubabah. When the two suggested to the Prophet that he continue riding in their place as they could easily walk, he declined, saying, "Neither I am weaker than you, nor lesser in need of rewards": Shafi'). Hamza b. `Abdul Muttalib, Zayd b. Haritha and Abu Kabsha shared a camel. Abu Bakr, `Umar and `Abdul Rahman b. `Awf shared another camel ... and so on. His Companions, however, hoped to encounter only Abu Sufyan's caravan. The Prophet sought the counsel of

his Companions, informing them of the Quraysh contingent. (According to a report in Ibn Marduwayh, the Prophet asked: "What do you think of fighting those who have been informed about you and are heading toward you?" We said: "No, O Messenger of Allah. We do not have the strength to fight them. We came out for the caravan." The Prophet repeated: "What do you think of fighting the Quraysh?" We repeated our answer. (This is what the Qur'an was referring to when it said, "Arguing with you concerning the truth after it had become clear, as if they were being driven into death while they were looking on": Au.).

According to some other reports, the Prophet evinced signs during consultations that he was losing his cool with them. (Companions close to him noticed that, and guessed that he was inclined to fight them and so), Abu Bakr got up and spoke out. And he spoke well. Then `Umar got up and also spoke well. Then Miqdad b. `Amr got up and said: "Messenger of Allah. Go up to where you will. We are with you. By Allah, we will not tell you as the Israelites told Musa: 'Go, you and your Lord, and fight. We shall remain seated where we are.' Rather, we say, 'Go, you and your Lord, and fight, we are right

with you. By Allah, if you went up to an Abyssinian town we shall not abandon your company.” At that the Prophet spoke well of him and prayed for him. However, he continued to seek opinions saying, ‘People! Advise me.’ It was apparent that he was seeking to know the Ansar’s mind. That is because they were in the majority. (According to one report, out of the three hundred and odd men with him, 270 were of the Ansar and the rest Muhajirun). That was also because when they had entered into allegiance at ‘Aqabah, they had pledged that ‘they would be only responsible for his safety once he had set foot in Madinah.’ From those words the Prophet had deduced that the Ansar were not obliged to fight in his defense outside Madinah. They were not bound by their pledge to go out into the enemy territory and fight for him. Even as the Prophet was thinking along those lines, Sa`d b. Mu`adh (a leader of the Ansar) rose up and asked: “As if you intend us O Messenger of Allah!” The Prophet replied, “That’s right.” Sa`d said, “We believe in you, testify to you, and bear witness that what you have brought is the Truth. We have pledged our hands on that, and that, we shall hear and obey. Therefore, go ahead, O Messenger of Allah,

and attempt what you will. For, by Him Who sent you with the Truth, if you asked us to plunge into the sea, yourself plunging into it, surely, we shall plunge down too. None of us will remain behind. We are not at all averse that we shall meet with the enemy tomorrow. Indeed, we are patient in the battle-field and true to the word when we meet the enemy. Maybe Allah will show you something of us that will prove to be the cool of your eyes. Therefore, start off with us, with Allah’s mercy.” Those words of Sa`d pleased the Prophet. He praised him and said, “Go, with Allah’s mercy, and be glad to hear that Allah has promised me one of the two groups. By Allah, as if I can see the places where the members of the enemy forces will fall tomorrow.” It was at that point that he handed over the standards to ‘Ali, Mus`ab b. ‘Umayr, and Sa`d b. Mu`adh, and ordered them to display their arms. He arrived at Badr on the night of a Friday, seventeenth of Ramadan.

What happened there onward is perhaps well known. In a couple of hours the pagans were fleeing in every direction and the Muslims cutting their stalwarts of war, men known for their courage, famed warriors, like carrots.

[9] When you were beseeching your Lord,²⁴ He responded to you, 'I shall extend help unto you with a thousand angels,²⁵ (coming down) in succession.'

إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُمِدُّكُمْ بِالْفِ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُرَدِّينَ ﴿٩﴾

23. Zamakhshari placed a nice remark here: "That is to say, 'You look for immediate and superficial gains. You would like to avoid what would cause a hurt to your body or your wealth. But Allah aimed loftier ends: that which would lead to the establishment of this religion, victory for the Truth, raising aloft of the Word, and success in both the worlds. The two objectives then, (yours and His), had a great gulf between them. Accordingly, He chose for your encounter the well-armed group, destroying their strength by your weakness, overcoming their big numbers by your small numbers, humiliating them and honoring you, and He gave you what cannot be compared with what the trade-caravan was carrying."

With reference to the words, "And cut off the roots of the unbelievers" one could say that although not all of the Quraysh were killed at Badr, the most avowed enemies of Islam were eliminated, rendering the rest decimated. The following were some of the stalwarts to fall: Abu Jahl, 'Uqbah ibn Abi Mu`ayt, 'Utba b.

Rabi`ah, Shaybah b. Rabi`ah, Walid b. `Utba, Harith b. `Amir, Zam`a b. al-Aswad, Harith b. Zam`a, Nadr b. al-Harith, `Aas ibn Hisham, Umayyah ibn Khalaf and several others (Au.).

24. `Umar (*ra*) is reported to have said: "When the Prophet looked at the Quraysh and their numbers comparing them with his outnumbered followers, he turned toward the Qiblah and began to supplicate, 'O Allah. Keep the promise You made me. O Allah. If this band of believers perishes, You will not be worshiped anymore.' He kept beseeching Allah until his cloak slipped down. Abu Bakr put it back on his shoulders. Then he came up from the rear and said, 'Enough, Messenger of Allah. May my parents be sacrificed for you. Allah will keep the word He gave you.' And Allah revealed the words, 'When you were beseeching your Lord ..'" to the end of the verse (Ibn Jarir). The *hadith* is in Ahmad also (Ibn Kathir).

Imām Razi points out that usage of the plural form in "when you were

[10] He granted that not but as a good tid-
ing and so that your hearts might be comforted
thereby.²⁶ Otherwise, help is from none but
Allah. Surely, Allah is All-mighty, All-wise.

وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ بِهِ
قُلُوبُكُمْ وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

beseeking” is an indicator that just as the Prophet was beseeching his Lord, many others were also doing so (although not from behind him: Au.).

Rashid Rida comments: That day, the Prophet also supplicated in words: “O My Lord. Here are the Quraysh. They have come with their horses, full of arrogance, challenging You, and rejecting Your Messenger. O Lord. Send me the help that You had promised”: Manar).

25. According to reports in Abu Ya`la and Bazzar’s collections, declared trustworthy by Haythamiyy, a sign of the angels was powerful gusts of wind that accompanied their descent (Au.).

Some commentators have thought that although the angels did descend as promised by Allah, they did not participate in the combat. None the less, a report originating from Ibn `Abbas says that Jibril and Mika`il

each were at the head of 500 angels in front of the Muslim army. According to another report of Ibn `Abbas in Muslim, as one of the Muslims was hotly chasing a pagan, he heard the sound of a whip and that of a horse- rider from above saying, “Advance, O Hayzoom.” When he looked at the pagan again, he found him fallen with a deep green whip mark running across his face. The Ansari reported to the Prophet. He told him, “You spoke the truth. That was the help from the third heaven.” So they killed 70 that day and captured 70 (Ibn Kathir).

The above *hadith* is in the chapter titled, “Angels’ help” in the *Sahih* of Muslim (Au.).

26. Abu Sa`id (al-Khudri) used to say in his old-age when he had lost his eye sight: “Were I to be with you at Badr now, and were I not to be blind, I would show you the gorge from which the angels emerged” (Alusi).

[11] (Remember), When He was causing slumber to overcome you:²⁷ as an assurance from Him, and He was sending down water from the heaven to cleanse you therewith, remove from you Satanic defilement,²⁸ strengthen your hearts, and steady your feet therewith.²⁹

إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ النُّعَاسَ أَمَنَةً مِّنْهُ وَيُنزِلُ
عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُم بِهِ
وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُم رَجَزَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ
عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيَتَّبِعَ بِهِنَّ الْأَقْدَامَ ﴿١١﴾

27. Imām Razi writes: Since one loses his sleep in moments of fear, Allah said: “When He caused slumber overcome you.” Another miracle consisted in so many being overcome by slumber at one time. Further, it remained a slumber. Had they slept off soundly, the enemy would have attacked them.

(No report from the Prophet about slumber at Badr seems to have come down, except that: Au.), Ibn Is-haq has recorded `Ali as saying, “We did not have a horseman amongst us except for *Miqdad al-Aswad*. And I did not see anyone amongst us but fast asleep, except for the Prophet. He was under a tree - Praying and weeping - until it was morning.” (This also seems to be the situation of night: Au.). Nonetheless, it is reported in *Sahih* works that on the day of the battle, while the Prophet was in the temporary structure in the company of Abu Bakr, both in supplications, he was overtaken by slumber. He woke up smiling and said: “Be of good cheer Abu Bakr. Here is Jibril

on the mountain peaks.” Then he came out reciting Allah’s words (54: 45), “Soon the troops will be defeated and they will show their backs” (Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Mas`ud has said that slumber in the battle-field is from Allah, while in the Prayers it is from Satan (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

28. Ibn `Abbas has said that when the Muslims arrived at Badr they found that the Quraysh had already taken possession of its wells. That was a set back. Moreover, the Quraysh seemed to enjoy strategic advantage. They were on an upper plateau while the Muslims were at a lower patch of land with slippery sand under their feet. Moreover, they experienced wet dreams and were forced to Pray (on tayammum) because of shortage of water. (This was before the advice of Hubab b. al-Mundhir was accepted: Sayyid). On top of that, Satan came to them and planted doubts saying, ‘You believe you are Allah’s friends and that you have a Prophet among you! Do

you? But, here you are, thirsty, and Praying in this unclean state.’ (Being unclean was especially worrisome to them because the commandments of tayammum were revealed three years later: Sayyid). As they got real disturbed over these issues, rains came down. They washed themselves, felt cleansed, watered their beasts, and filled their buckets. (They also dug a quick pit in the earth and stored water: Razi). The rains also washed off the sands from under their feet, rendering it hard-crusted and firm for their feet once dry. (In contrast, the pagans were on a slimy ground. When it became wet, they began to slip: Razi). The allusion then, was to these issues when it was said: “He sent down water from the heaven to cleanse you therewith, remove from you Satanic defilement, ..” (Ibn Jarir).

There are reports, however, that say that the Muslims were in control of some of the wells. Probably there were several wells spread over a wide area, with a few - those of the strategic locations - in the hands of the Quraysh, and some, in less strategic locations, in the hands of the Muslims. However, the wells could not have had enough water for an army of three hundred to bathe with. From some other reports one gets

the impression that the water was in a pond which the Muslims diverted toward themselves. The report in the next note is suggestive of that (Au.).

29. Umawiyy has reported in his “Maghazi” that one of the Companions, Hubab b. al-Mundhir, disagreed with the site chosen by the Prophet and recommended that if the choice was not dictated by Allah they should move away to a better site from where they could prevent the Quraysh from drawing water, and construct for themselves a cistern in the ground. At that an angel came down and told the Prophet: “Allah sends you his Salam and says that Hubab’s suggestion is a good one.” At that the Prophet turned to Jibril and asked him who that angel was. Jibril said, “Not every angel in the heavens do I know, O Muhammad” (Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir in parts).

Malik said that Jibril asked the Prophet,

جَاءَ جِبْرِيلُ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ مَا تَعُدُّونَ أَهْلَ بَدْرٍ فِيكُمْ قَالَ مِنْ أَفْضَلِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ أَوْ كَلِمَةً نَحْوَهَا قَالَ وَكَذَلِكَ مَنْ شَهِدَ بَدْرًا مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ

“What do you think of those who participated in the battle of Badr?” The Prophet replied, “We think of them as the best of Muslims.” Jibril said, “So do we

[12] When your Lord was revealing to the angels, 'I am with you, so steady the believers.³⁰ I will soon cast terror in the hearts of the unbelievers, so, smite them above the necks, and strike them at every joint.³¹

[13] That, because they contended with Allah and His Messenger. And whosoever contended with Allah and His Messenger, surely Allah is terrible in retribution.³²

إِذْ يُوحِي رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ
فَتَثْبِتُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا سَأَلْتَنِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا الرَّعْبَ فَاصْرِبُوا فَوْقَ الْأَعْنَاقِ
وَاصْرِبُوا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ بَنَانٍ ﴿١٢﴾

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَمَنْ
يُشَاقِقِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ
الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٣﴾

reckon those of the angels who were at Badr.”

We have taken the text from Bukhari (Au.).

This is because, Qurtubi adds, the best of men are those who are the best of deeds. The best of deeds is *jihad* and the best of *jihad* was that of Badr. It was the victory at Badr that laid the foundation stone for the Islamic state.

30. It is reported that some of the angels (appearing in human form: Au.) would speak to the Muslims telling them, “I have heard the pagans say that if the Muslims attacked them, probably they would not be able to withstand the onslaught, and might retreat in disorder.” The Muslims then would spread the word among themselves spreading reassurance along with it. This is the meaning of the words: “When your Lord revealed to the angels, ‘I am with you,

so steady the believers” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

31. Other interpretations would render the translation as: “So, smite them on their heads, and strike them on every side,” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir), or, alternatively, as Asad has done, “strike off every one of their finger-tips.”

Sayyid writes: We do not know much about the angels, except that they are Allah’s creations who execute His commands faithfully and meticulously. So, when He ordered them to strengthen the feet of the believers, they did that. When He ordered them to strike them on the heads and on every joint, they did that. We do not know how.

32. Qurtubi quotes a little further up Muslim’s *hadith* which says that the Prophet left the pagan corpses unattended at Badr for three days. Then he went and called out to them,

[14] *That; taste it then, and (know) that for the unbelievers is the chastisement of the Fire.*

ذَلِكُمْ فَذُوقُوهُ وَأَنَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] *Believers! When you encounter the unbelievers in a thick array,³³ never show your backs to them.*

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا زَحْفًا فَلَا تُوَلُّوهُمُ الْأَدْبَارَ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] *Whoso showed his back to them that day, unless swinging back to fight back,³⁴ or retreating to join another group, will surely return to Allah's anger.³⁵ His abode is in the Fire: an evil resort.*

وَمَنْ يُوَلِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ دُبُرَهُ إِلَّا مُتَحَرِّفًا لِقِتَالٍ أَوْ مُتَحَرِّرًا إِلَىٰ فِتْنَةٍ فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِعَضْبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٦﴾

يَا أَبَا جَهْلٍ بَنَ هِشَامٍ يَا عْتَبَةَ بَنَ رَبِيعَةَ يَا شَيْبَةَ بَنَ رَبِيعَةَ يَا أُمَّيَّةُ بَنَ خَلْفٍ هَلْ وَجَدْتُمْ مَا وَعَدَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا فَإِنِّي وَجَدْتُ مَا وَعَدَنِي رَبِّي حَقًّا قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ تَنَادِي قَوْمًا قَدْ جِئْتُمَا قَالِ مَا أَنْتُمْ بِأَسْمَعِ لِمَا أَقُولُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَكِنَّهُمْ لَا يَسْتَنصِتُونَ أَنْ يُجِيبُوا

“O Abu Jahl b. Hisham, O `Ut-bah b. Rabi`ah, O Shaybah b. Rabi`ah, O Umayyah b. Khalaf, have you found your Lord’s promise to you true? I have found my Lord’s promise to me true.” They said, “Messenger of Allah! Are you speaking to those who have turned into carcasses? He said, “You do not hear me any better than they do, but they ca not reply.”

Then he ordered that they be dragged and thrown into one of the pits of Badr.

33. The translation expresses one of the connotations of the textual word

“*zahaf*.” Literally, it implies the act of an infant inching forward on its buttocks (from its sitting position) before it learns to stand up. The term has been employed here since the troops also inch forward slowly when in the combat field (Razi).

34. Sa`id b. Jubayr has explained it as someone first penetrating deep into the enemy lines, then turning back speedily to withdraw one or more of their soldiers out of line, then turning again to attack him (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

35. Abu Musa, Abu Sa`id al-Khudri, Nafi`, Dahhak and Hasan al-Busri are all of the opinion that the threat of Allah’s anger on those who show their backs in the battle-field was specific to the battle of Badr, for that day there was no one to withdraw to, except the Prophet. After

him however, the same rule does not apply. Accordingly, we find `Umar commenting about Abu `Ubayd's martyrdom in words, 'I wish he had withdrawn to me, I was his rallying point (fi'ah).' Abu Habib has gone so far as to say that the threat in this verse is not applicable to those who retreated during the Uhud or Hunayn battles. Ibn `Abbas however believed that the rule remains and, therefore, whoever fled from a battle-field without a good cause will face Allah's anger. Ibn Jarir seconds this opinion.

Ibn Kathir and Qurtubi however report a *hadith* of Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Abu Da'ud and Ibn Majah with Tirmidhi declaring it of Hasan status which, narrated by Ibn `Umar, says,

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ كُنْتُ فِي سَرِيَّةٍ مِنْ سَرَايَا رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَحَاصَ النَّاسُ حَيْضَةً وَكُنْتُ فِي يَمِينِ حَاصٍ فَعُلْنَا كَيْفَ نَصْنَعُ وَقَدْ فَرَزْنَا مِنَ الرَّحْفِ وَبُوْنَا بِالْعَصَبِ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لَوْ دَخَلْنَا الْمَدِينَةَ فَبَيْتْنَا ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لَوْ عَرَضْنَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَهُ تَوْبَةٌ وَإِلَّا دَهَبْنَا فَأَتَيْتَاهُ بِتِلْ صَلَاةِ الْعِدَاةِ فَخَرَجَ فَقَالَ مَنْ الْقَوْمُ قَالَ فَعُلْنَا نَحْنُ الْفَرَارُونَ قَالَ لَا بَلْ أَشْمُ الْعَكَارُونَ أَنَا فَعُتُّكُمْ وَأَنَا فِتْنَةُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ قَالَ فَأَتَيْتَاهُ حَتَّى قَبَّلْنَا يَدَهُ

"I was in a campaign when the people fled from the battle field. I was one of them. We said,

'What shall we do now? We fled from the battle-field into Allah's anger.' Finally, we decided that we shall enter Madinah, spend a night and then present ourselves to the Prophet in the morning. If repentance is possible, well and good, otherwise, we shall return. Accordingly, we presented ourselves to him before the dawn Prayers. When he came out he asked, 'Who are you?' We said, "We are the escapists." He said, "Rather, you are the ones who retreated (to a safe point). I am your rallying point (fi'ah). I am the rallying point of the Muslims." We went forward and kissed his hands.

Qurtubi and Alusi add: Most scholars are of the opinion that if the Muslims are half in numbers against their enemy, then retreat is forbidden. Alternatively, if they are 12,000 in number, they cannot retreat. This is in view of a *hadith* which says,

لَنْ يَغْلِبَ اثْنَا عَشَرَ أَلْفًا مِنْ قَلَةٍ

"Twelve thousand will not be overcome because of numbers."

The above *hadith* is from *Sahih* of Ibn Khuzaymah (Au.).

[17] Then, you did not slay them, rather, Allah slew them. And you did not throw (O Prophet), when you threw, rather, Allah threw.³⁶ So that He might confer on the believers a goodly trial from Himself. Verily, Allah is All-hearing, All-knowing.

قَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ وَلِيُبْلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْهُ بَلَاءً حَسَنًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] That; and Allah was to weaken the scheme of the unbelievers.

ذَلِكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُوهِنُ كَيْدِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

36. Muhammad b. Ka`b al-Qurazi reported: When the battle was about to begin, the Prophet tossed a handful of dust at the Quraysh saying,

شَاهَتِ الْوُجُوهُ

“Afouled are the faces.” It fell into everyone’s eye. The Prophet’s Companions fell upon them even as they were rubbing their eyes, killing them and capturing them. Their defeat then was caused by the Prophet’s throw” (Ibn Jarir).

Hakim b. Hizam has a similar report in Ibn Abi Hatim, Tabarani and Ibn Marduwayh. Another report is in Tabarani, Abu al-Sheikh and Ibn Marduwayh as narrated by Ibn `Abbas (Shawkani).

It has been pointed out however, that none of the *ahadith* on the subject are in the six *Sahih* collections. Accordingly, we find some scholars saying that the allusion is to the Prophet

throwing a short spear at Ubayy b. Khalaf on the day of Uhud (Alusi).

But the incident is well reported in biographies of the Prophet (Au.).

Imām Razi points out that this verse supports the view that man acquires the deeds that flow out of him although they are Allah’s creation. (It did not deny human’s participation by saying: “You did not throw,” rather, confirmed his participation by adding: “When you threw.” And, finally, took the credit off him for its creation by saying: “Rather, Allah threw”: Au.).

After noting what Razi has to say, Alusi writes: I believe man has power and ability over his deeds that play their role (in the appearance of the consequences) - the power and ability that have been created and invested in him by Allah, so that what He wills happens and what He does not, does not happen. It cannot be said that man has no power over any-

[19] If you were looking for a decision (O unbelievers), then surely, a decision has come to you.³⁷ But, if you desist, that will be better for you. Nevertheless, if you return (with crimes), We shall return (with punishments).³⁸ And your hosts will avail you nothing, though it be numerous. And Allah is with the believers.³⁹

إِنْ تَسْتَفْتِحُوا فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْفَتْحُ وَإِنْ
تَنْتَهُوا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نَعْدَ
وَلَنْ نَعْنِيَّ عَنْكُمْ فِئَتِكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَوْ كَثُرَتْ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

thing, as the Jabriyyah claimed, nor that he has power, but one that is, by its nature, inactive, as the Ash`ariah say, nor would it be right to say that he has the power and ability to influence his deeds independent of the Allah's Will, as the Mu`tazilah maintained.

37. Although the textual word "istaftahu" requires to be rendered literally as "(if) you seek victory", the present translation follows the explanation offered in Tabari by Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, `Ikrimah and others who have said that Abu Jahl had prayed prior to the battle: "O God. Decide between us." So Allah showed them what His decision was. Suddi, `Atiyyah and Ibn Zayd have said that before starting off from Makkah, some of the Quraysh had prayed to God with the drape of the Ka`ba in their hands, saying, "O God. Of the two of us, help the more mighty, the more honorable and the better one (thus giving Allah the choice to decide between the

two). And Ibn Is-haq has said that one connotation of the term "istiftah" is to be fair and balanced in one's supplication. Nasa'i, Hakim, who declared the report trustworthy, Ibn Abi Shaybah and several others have preserved reports of this nature (Shawkani).

38. That is, if you return to crying lies, We shall return to retribution (Ibn Jarir).

39. Muhammad Asad sums up Badr's influence on history: "It was the first open battle between the pagan Quraysh and the young Muslim community of Medina; and its outcome made the Quraysh realize that the movement inaugurated by Muhammad was not an ephemeral dream but the beginning of a new political power and a new era different from anything that the Arabian past had known. The Meccan apprehensions, which had already been aroused by the exodus of the Prophet and his Companions to Medina, found a shattering confirmation on

[20] Believers! Obey Allah and His Messenger. Do not turn away from him⁴⁰ even as you hear.⁴¹

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا عَنَّهُ وَاتَّبِعُوا تَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

the day of Badr. Although the power of Arabian paganism was not finally broken until some years later, its decay became apparent from that historic moment. For the Muslims, too, Badr proved to be a turning-point. It may safely be assumed that until then only a very few of the Prophet's Companions had fully understood the political implications of the new order of Islam. To most of them their exodus to Medina had meant, in those early days, no more than a refuge from the persecutions which they had to endure in Mecca. After the battle of Badr, however, even the most simple-minded among them became aware that they were on their way towards a new social order. The spirit of passive sacrifice, so characteristic of their earlier days, received its complement in the idea of sacrifice through action. The doctrine of action as the most fundamental, creative element of life was, perhaps for the first time in the history of man, consciously realized not only by a few select individuals but by a whole community; and the intense activism which was to distinguish Muslim history in the coming de-

cedes and centuries was a direct, immediate consequence of the battle of Badr."

40. The personal pronoun as used here in singular form, alludes to the Prophet, since Allah's obedience is included by default. Other explanations have also been suggested (Alusi).

41. What kind of listening it is if it is not followed by acts of obedience? Is it the kind of listening that the Jews were used to who said (2: 93),

سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا [البقرة : ٩٣]

"We have heard, but shall not obey."

Or, was it the kind of listening that the unbelievers did who said, as in the following verse (no. 31),

فَدَدْ سَمِعْنَا لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَقُلْنَا مِثْلَ [الأنفال : ٣١]

"We have heard. If we wished we could say something similar to it" (Shabbir).

Rashid Rida noted: Rather, you ought to be like those who said (2: 285):

سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا عُفْرَانِكَ رَبَّنَا [البقرة : ٢٨٥]

[21] And be not like those who said, 'We heard;' but they hear not.⁴² وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

"We heard and obeyed, therefore, (we seek) Your forgiveness and to You is the return;" and be among them about whom Allah said (39: 17, 18):

فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ (١٧) الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ
أَحْسَنَهُ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمْ أُولُو
الْأَلْبَابِ [الزمر : ١٧ ، ١٨]

"Therefore, give glad tidings to My slaves who listen to the word and then follow it in a goodly manner. They are the ones whom Allah has guided and they are the men of understanding."

Alusi comments that speaking out (the truth) has been preceded by hearing since, one can only speak out the truth if he listens to it.

To the above we might add that this pattern is noticeable elsewhere in the Qur'an. Whenever it mentioned man's inability to speak, it preceded it by expressing his inability to hear. This is in agreement with the biological phenomenon that a man only learns to speak if he is capable of hearing. If he cannot hear, he cannot

recognize voices and, consequently, cannot imitate them. No deaf can ever be made to speak. It must be concluded therefore, that had this been the Prophet's own writing, he could not have been careful enough to maintain a scientific point that a deaf is necessarily dumb, repeating it four times, in statements made over a period of 23 years. A sole exception is in Surah al-Isra', where the Qur'an reversed the order of the three faculties: speech, hearing, and sight, perhaps for reasons of eloquence (Au.).

42. Ibn Is-haq has said: O Muslims, do not be like the hypocrites who put up a show of obedience but they conceal disobedience (Ibn Jarir). Allah said about them (47: 16):

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ حَتَّى إِذَا خَرَجُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ
قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مَاذَا قَالَ أَنفَا [محمد : ١٦]

"And, among them are some who listen to you, until, when they go away from you they ask those of knowledge, 'What did he say just now?'" (Manar).

[22] Surely, the worst of beasts in the sight of Allah are the deaf and the dumb - those who do not use reason.⁴³

إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ
الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] Had Allah known any good in them, He would have made them hear.⁴⁴ But, if He made them hear, they would turn away in declination.

وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا لَأَسْمَعَهُمْ
وَلَوْ أَصْنَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

43. `Ikrimah has said that the allusion in this context was to the chiefs of the Quraysh who were deaf to the Prophetic message and, even if they heard, were dumb to acknowledge it as true. They were the standard bearers of the unbelievers on the day of Badr (Ibn Jarir). A report in Bukhari has ibn `Abbas saying that the allusion was to some of the men of `Abd al-Daar tribe (Qurtubi).

Rashid Rida comments: These people lack the faculties which helps distinguish between right and wrong, between vice and virtue. Had they possessed the faculty of reason, they would have conducted an enquiry. Had they enquired, they would have heard and known the difference. Had they heard, they would have spoken it out and proclaimed it. Had they proclaimed it, they would have received admonition and would have admonished others. But now the situation with them is, as if they lack all these faculties. Not because

they did not receive them. Rather, because they corrupted them.

44. “The meaning is: these infidels are totally wanting in the will to believe; had there been any such will in them, God was sure to have led them to the right path” (Majid).

Rashid Rida further clarifies: This, and along with some other texts, such as (10: 44),

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنفُسُهُمْ
يَظْلِمُونَ [يونس : ٤٤]

‘Allah does no injustice to the people, rather, the people themselves do injustice to themselves,’ throws dust into the mouth of those who claim that the verse confirms that some people are forced into disbelief by the Divine Decree and that man has no say in the choice of belief or disbelief. How many people have not been there who listened, and the listening profited them indeed? We have the example of a French physician who, upon reading what the Qur’ān has

[24] Believers! Respond to the call of Allah and His Messenger when He calls you to that which will give you life.⁴⁵ Be aware that Allah comes in between a man and his heart,⁴⁶ and that to Him you shall be mustered.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ
وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا
أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ
تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

to say on hygiene, moderation and avoiding wastage, acknowledged that it confirmed with the latest scientific ideas and so embraced Islam. Or another man called Brown who read Sale's translation of the Qur'in and concluded that Muhammad must have been a great sea-explorer. But, when he learned that Muhammad had not even seen an ocean in his life and that he was unlettered who had read no book, concluded that this book could not have been written by him. He too embraced Islam.

But the situation with the Muslims of today is that many of them hear the reciter recite the Qur'in, where-with they intend to draw no more than blessings and mental pleasure. Some of the recitals are of the musical kind: accompanied by swaying, repetition of the verses, occasional loss of the self-control or falling into trance and so forth. But they do not listen to the Qur'in in the true manner of listening.

45. While several of the Salaf have said that by the words "what will give

you life," the allusion is either to the Qur'in or Islam (Ibn Jarir), 'Urwah ibn Zubayr has said that the allusion is to *jihad* (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). Whatever the choice, this *Ummah's* existence depends on its following the call of Allah and His Messenger. Accordingly, when the Prophet called Abu Sa'id but he did not answer immediately on the grounds that he was in the Prayers, the Prophet asked him, "Has not Allah said, 'Believers! Respond to the call of Allah and His Messenger when He calls you to what will give you life?'" (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

A similar incident took place in which Ubayy b. Ka'b was involved as in Tirmidhi and Hakim (Rashid Rida).

Going by this verse Imām Shafe'i has ruled that a believer should not delay attending to a call of Islam; a rule which is applicable to its injunctions too (Qurtubi).

Ibn al-Qayyim writes: "This verse carries a few implications. One of them is that a fruitful life results

from a positive response to Allah and His Messenger. He who does not respond positively, does not possess life: although biologically he is alive. The true, good life, is of those alone who respond to the call both outwardly (with actions) and inwardly (with proper attention and intention). They are truly alive, even after death. Others are dead, even if they are physically alive. And, all that Allah and His Messenger call to, generates life in a man. Whoever missed a part of it missed that part of life, being alive in the same ratio in which he responded...

“As there is no life in a man in whom the angel of life did not blow in the spirit sent by Allah, in a similar fashion there is no life in the soul of a man in whom the Messenger of Allah did not blow the Message that Allah bestowed on him. Allah said (16: 2):

يُنزِّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ بِالرُّوحِ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ [النحل : ٢]

‘He sends down angels with the Spirit by His order upon whomsoever of His slaves He will.’

He also said (40: 15):

يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ [غافر : ١٥]

‘He casts the Spirit by His order on whomsoever of His slaves He will.’

He also said (42: 52):

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَكِنْ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ نَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا [الشورى : ٥٢]

‘And that is how We have revealed unto you a Spirit by Our command. You did not know what is a Book nor what is faith, but We made it a Light by which We guide whom We will of Our slaves.’

Thus, Allah informed us that His revelation is the Spirit and the Light. True life is the outcome of two blows: one of the angelic-messenger and the other of the human-messenger. Whoever received the two blows received the two lives. Whoever received one, missed the other. Allah said (6: 122),

أَوْ مَنْ كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَنْ مَثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِنْهَا [الأنعام : ١٢٢]

‘What? Can one who was dead, then We gave him life and appointed a Light whereby he strides among the people, be like him who is in darknesses out of which he cannot emerge?’”

Sayyid is close to these sentiments but is also closer to the earthly re-

alities. He writes: “The Messenger calls the Muslims to a faith that will quicken their hearts and minds, release them off the lassoes of ignorance and superstition, of the pressures of delusions and myths of the past, of weakness before the means and rigid rules, from obedience unto other than Allah, and from bending down before the humans or to one’s own base desires.

“The Messenger calls them to the way of life coming from Allah, that frees Man and appoints him to a high status that he enjoys before his Lord, and places the entire mankind in one row, on equal footing, in which no man rules over others, nor a class over the nation, nor a people over other people. All of them march into the future, as equals, under the banner of the Shari`ah sent down by their Lord.

“He calls them to a way of life, to a way of thought, and to a set of concepts, seeking to free them of all bonds of slavery, except the natural bonds, and to ties that help restore and preserve the constructive and creative power of man. It does not suppress these powers in any way, nor comes in the way of any constructive activity.

“He calls them to strength and honor and an ascent by means of faiths and ways, trust in their religion and in their Lord, and by directing their efforts to the world, together as one people, for the purposes of freeing men from the yoke of other men, and win back for the humans the humanness that they have been robbed off.

“He also calls them to *jihad* in the way of Allah, in order to establish the Oneness of Allah on the earth and in the life of the people, and for the destruction of those that are worshiped besides Allah and pursuit of the oppressors until they bend down to the rule of Allah.

“It is with the accomplishment of these objectives that the Religion will finally become Allah’s.”

46. After reporting several interpretations of the Salaf, Ibn Jarir reconciles them by saying that the meaning is that, Allah is the One who holds sway over a man’s inner self - whether a believer or unbeliever - and not the man himself, so that he cannot make any decision about himself without His leave. It was perhaps keeping in with this meaning, Ibn Kathir adds, that the Prophet used to pray in words:

[25] And, beware of a tribulation⁴⁷ that will not touch exclusively those among you who transgressed.⁴⁸ And beware, that Allah is severe in chastisement.

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

﴿٢٥﴾

اللَّهُمَّ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ

“O My Lord! Make my heart firm in my religion.”

When he was asked why he prayed in those words he replied,

إِنَّ الْقُلُوبَ بَيْنَ إِصْبَعَيْنِ مِنْ أَصَابِعِ الرَّحْمَنِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ
يَقْلِبُهَا

“Because people’s hearts are between two fingers of the Merciful. He turns them (how He will).”

Reports of this nature are also in the Sihah books. Zamakhshari is also close to adopting this meaning.

Rashid Rida reproduces the personal experience of someone he knew, who was soaked in vice. One day he went boating in the river Dijlah, along with his friends, singing on the tambour and drinking wine. It should so happen, that another boat passed by. Someone was reciting the Qur’in as it sailed by. When he recited the *Surah* (no. 81),

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ [التكوير : ١]

“When the Sun will be darkened,” the man was struck by the awesome note and began to listen attentively. When the reciter reached (v. 10),

وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ نُشِرتْ [التكوير : ١٠]

“When the scrolls (of deeds) will be spread,” the man’s heart was filled with remorse and fear over what his Scroll was filled with. He poured his wine into the river, broke the musical instruments, and returned home repentant.

47. “*Fitnah* has many meanings: (1) the root meaning is trial or temptation, as in ii. 102 and vii. 28; (2) an analogous meaning is trial or punishment, as in v. 71; (3) tumult or oppression, as in ii. 193, and here, and in viii. 39 (4) there is here (viii. 25) the further shade of meaning suggested: discord, sedition, civil war” (Yusuf Ali).

48. The Companions said that they realized the true meaning of the verse after `Uthman, the third caliph was murdered.

Majid explains: “The Divine chastisement visits not only those who

are the actual perpetrators of crime but it falls on those also who keep indifferent to the sin and vice around them, and do not admonish the wicked. Islam does not expect of its followers to be passive spectators of guilt and crime; it requires them to be active opponents, so far as in their power, to all forms of irreligion and impiety.”

What exactly does “transgression” imply here? The answer is, several. It could be the refusal to stand for the truth when falsehood is being perpetrated, neglect of the task of enjoining the truth and preventing vice, silence in the face of innovations, fighting shy of *jihad*, or other acts of this nature (Alusi).

Ibn `Abbas has said that Allah has warned the believers against being complacent with the wicked ones living among them (Ibn Jarir).

Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir support this latter meaning with several *ahadith* of the same content from Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Majah and Abu Da’ud. One of them says,

إِذَا ظَهَرَتِ الْمَعَاصِي فِي أُمَّتِي عَمَّهُمُ اللَّهُ بِعَذَابٍ،
قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَمَا فِي النَّاسِ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَاسٌ
صَالِحُونَ، قَالَ: بَلَى، قُلْتُ: فَكَيْفَ يَصْنَعُ أَوْلِيكَ؟،
قَالَ: يُصَيِّبُهُمْ مَا أَصَابَ النَّاسَ، ثُمَّ يَصِيرُونَ إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ
مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ (رواه أحمد بإسنادين رجال أحدهما
رجال الصحيح (الهيتمي)

“When sins appear in my *Ummah*, Allah will send down punishment covering them all.” (Umm Salamah, the narrator) said: “I asked, Messenger of Allah, will there be pious ones among them at that time?” He said, “Indeed, yes.” I asked, “So, what about them?” He answered, They will be struck by what strikes the people, but (the pious ones) will be taken away to the Mercy of Allah and His good pleasure.”

The above is from Ahmad, which Haythami recorded as coming through narrators of *Sahih* works (Au.).

Another *hadith* says:

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَتَأْمُرَنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ أَوْ لَيُوشِكَنَّ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عِقَابًا مِنْ
عِنْدِهِ ثُمَّ لَتَدْعُوهُ فَلَا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَكُمْ

“By Him in whose hands is my soul, you will enjoin the virtuous and prohibit the vice or it is feared that Allah will send down one of His chastisement on you so that you supplicate to him but you are not be answered.”

The above report has been variously graded, but others of similar meaning have been treated trustworthy by Haythamiyy (Au.).

Bukhari has a very pertinent report. Nu`man b. Bashir reports the Prophet as once delivering a sermon in which he said:

مَثَلُ الْقَائِمِ عَلَى حُدُودِ اللَّهِ وَالْوَاقِعِ فِيهَا كَمَثَلِ قَوْمٍ اسْتَهَمُوا عَلَى سَفِينَةٍ فَأَصَابَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَعْلَاهَا وَبَعْضُهُمْ أَسْفَلَهَا فَكَانَ الَّذِينَ فِي أَسْفَلِهَا إِذَا اسْتَقَوْا مِنَ الْمَاءِ مَرُّوا عَلَى مَنْ فَوْقَهُمْ فَقَالُوا لَوْ أَنَّا خَرَقْنَا فِي نَصِيبِنَا خَرْقًا وَلَمْ نُؤْذِ مَنْ فَوْقَنَا فَإِن يَنْتَرِكُوهُمْ وَمَا أَرَادُوا هَلَكُوا جَمِيعًا وَإِن أَخَذُوا عَلَى أَيْدِيهِمْ نَجَّوْا وَنَجَّوْا جَمِيعًا

“The example of one who is mindful of Allah’s prohibitions and one who intends to disregard them or actually does that, is like a people in a boat. Some of them were in the upper deck while others in the lower. Now, whenever those at the bottom felt thirsty they went up to those in the upper deck inconveniencing them. So they said to themselves, ‘If we drilled a hole in the bottom, we will save those in the upper deck from annoyance.’ Now, if those of the upper deck let them do what they intend, they would all drown. But if they prevent them, they would all be rescued.”

Another report in Musnad Ahmad says that Abu al-Riqad once chanced upon the assembly around Hudhayfah b. al-Yaman. He was saying: “A man could utter a single word during the Prophet’s life and be counted

a hypocrite because of it. Today, I hear a man using the same word four times in a single sitting. It appears to me, that very soon you will have the worst of you as your rulers, when the best of you may make supplications but will not be answered.” Accordingly, Qurtubi adds, Malik has ruled that one might not reside in an area in which vices are openly committed and people do nothing about their prevention. When that becomes common, one might emigrate. Abu Darda’, as in a *Sahih* report, left the lands ruled by Mu`awiyah when he allowed the sale of a golden goblet in exchange of gold more than its weight, which Abu Darda’ considered a kind of *riba*’.

Alusi adds: Another *hadith* of Tirmidhi says,

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا دَخَلَ النَّفْسُ عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَانَ الرَّجُلُ يُلْقَى الرَّجُلَ فَيَقُولُ يَا هَذَا اتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَدَعْ مَا تَصْنَعُ فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ ثُمَّ يُلْقَاهُ مِنَ الْعَدِي فَلَا يَمْنَعُهُ ذَلِكَ أَنْ يَكُونَ أَكْبَلَهُ وَشَرِيئَهُ وَقَعِيدَهُ فَلَمَّا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَ بَعْضِهِمْ بِبَعْضٍ

“The first corruption that entered into the polity of the Israelites is that a man would meet another and say, ‘Man. Give this up, because it is not lawful for you. But when he met him the next day he would not prevent him. That was because he was his companion in

food, drink and assembly. When they did that, Allah turned some of their hearts as similar to the hearts of the others.”

Other reports add that they were cursed by the tongue of Da'ud and 'Isa ibn Maryam. That is because they sinned and because they transgressed (Au.).

The above report also occurs in Tirmidhi who classified it as Hasan (Au.).

Mawdudi elaborates: “What is true of unsanitary conditions in a physical sense, also holds true for filth and uncleanness in a moral sense. If immoral practices remain confined to a few people here and there but the overall moral concern of the society prevents those practices from becoming widespread and public, their harmful effects remain limited. But when the collective conscience of the society is weakened to a point whereby immoral practices are not suppressed, when people indulge in evils without any sense of shame and even go around vaunting their immoral deeds, when good people adopt a passive attitude and are content with

being righteous merely in their own lives and are unconcerned with or silent about collective evils, then the entire society invites its doom. Such a society then becomes the victim of a scourge that does not distinguish between the grain and the chaff.”

Although the application is general, when Zubayr b. al-'Awwam was asked: “O Abu 'Abdullah! You allowed a Khalifah ('Uthman) to be killed! And now you have come seeking justice?!” He replied: “During the time of the Prophet and his three successors, we used to recite the verse, ‘And beware of a tribulation that will not touch exclusively those among you who transgressed,’ but it never occurred to us that it was we who could be meant until we fell in the trap of the battle of Jamal.” Suddi has said that the first to whom the verse would apply is those participants of the battle of Badr who later fell in the battle of Jamal” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi and others).

Some Companions remarked that we first realized the meaning of this verse with the murder of 'Uthman (Au.).

[26] Recall when you were few, oppressed in the land, fearful that people might abduct you.⁴⁹ Then He sheltered you, supported you with His help, and provided you with the good things, haply that you will give thanks.

وَأَذْكُرُوا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيلٌ مُسْتَضْعَفُونَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ تَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَتَخَطَّفَكُمُ النَّاسُ
فَأَوَّأَكُم بِبَنِيصِرِهِ وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ
الطَّيِّبَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] Believers!⁵⁰ Betray not Allah and the Messenger,⁵¹ nor betray your trusts, while you know.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَخُونُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ
وَتَخُونُوا أَمَانَاتِكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

49. Although Ibn Jarir disagrees that this is the right interpretation of the verse, we reproduce Qatadah's words from him, Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir and Manar, to portray the Arab situation before Islam. These words still have a meaning for those who think over these issues: "(Before the advent of Islam) The Arabs were the most wretched of people, toiling under the worst living conditions, the hungriest, dressed in tatters, and most misguided. Whoever of them lived, led a wretched life, and whoever died was sent to the Fire. They were eaten and not given to eat. By God, we do not know of any other people as wretched as the Arabs were until Allah sent Islam to them. Then on, He established them in the land by its virtue, fed them thereby, and made them rulers over the people. It was by the grace of Islam that Allah bestowed on them what He bestowed. Therefore, be grateful to Allah for His bestowals, for your Lord is the

Bestower who is pleased with the grateful and, remember, those who give thanks, receive more from their Lord."

50. The textual term in its root is "khawn" which is to give back less than the due. In contrast, "wafa" is to give back in full (Zamakhshari, Shawkani).

51. Ibn `Abbas, Ibn Is-haq, Suddi and others expressed the same meaning differently, viz., "Do not fall short on the commandments of Islam, showing two faces, doing one thing before the Prophet and another behind him" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

The Prophet has said:

أَرْبَعٌ مِّنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ كَانَ مُنَافِقًا خَالِصًا وَمَنْ كَانَتْ فِيهِ
حَلَّةٌ مِنْهُنَّ كَانَتْ فِيهِ حَلَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّفَاقٍ حَتَّى يَدْعَهَا إِذَا
حَدَّثَ كَذَبَ وَإِذَا عَاهَدَ غَدَرَ وَإِذَا وَعَدَ أَخْلَفَ وَإِذَا
خَاصَمَ فَجَرَ

"There are four qualities that, whoever has, is a pure hypocrite, and if one of them is there in a

man, he has one quality of hypocrisy until he gives up: when he speaks, he lies; when he gives his word, he betrays, when he promises, he breaks the promise; and when he quarrels, he takes to speaking foul.” According to another version, the Prophet added the following words:

وَأِنْ صَامَ وَصَلَّى وَرَعِمَ أَنَّهُ مُسْلِمٌ

“Even if he fasted, Prayed and assumed that he is a believer” (Manar).

Rashid Rida used another version, but we chose to present the version as in the *Sahihayn* (Au.).

Sayyid points out that the refusal on the part of the Muslims to bear the burden of Islam, bearing testimony to the Oneness of Allah, and the refusal to work to establish His total sovereignty over every affair of human life and activity, is to betray the trust. This *Ummah* pledged to the Prophet to defend and establish Islam. And Islam is not the name of testimony with the tongue, or of a few rituals, or the name of a few claims. It is the complete way of life that touches upon its every aspect. It is the way to build life on the principle embodied in the words, “there is no deity worthy of worship save Allah.” It is to turn the people to the

worship of one Lord alone, to make the society accept the sovereignty of its Lord, to bend the tyrants to Allah’s Lordship and His Command. It is a promise to secure justice for all, to judge between the people by the standards of justice alone, and to construct and develop the earth acting by the requirements of the vicegerency. All these are trusts. Whoever did not work on them, betrayed his trust. These things of course mean sacrifices and demand that one place the wealth and dear ones on the anvil. Hence Allah followed it up by saying, “know that your wealth and progeny are a (means of) trial.”

Apart from the general meaning, several incidents have been narrated as the context of revelation of this verse. One is that of a hypocrite who sent a message to Abu Sufyan, informing him of the likely attack by the Prophet. Another is that of Abu Lubabah. He was sent as a messenger to the Banu Qurayzah for negotiations. They asked him in apprehension what treatment could they expect (from Sa`d b. Mu`adh: Qur-tubi), for their treachery. Abu Lubabah - a bit kind on them because his wife and children lived among them - pointed to his throat, but in seconds realized that he had betrayed the Prophet. In great remorse

[28] And be aware that your wealth and your children are but a trial,⁵² and that, Allah - with Him is a great reward.

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

he went into the Prophet's mosque and tied himself to a post saying he would not eat and drink until he was forgiven or died in that state. A week passed and he had all but fainted on the post before the news of the acceptance of his repentance was revealed to the Prophet. But he vowed that he would not untie himself. So the Prophet untied him. He declared that by way of expiation he would give away all his wealth in the way of Allah. The Prophet prevented him, telling him to spend only one-third (Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

It is said that (while Abu Lubabah was tied up in the mosque) the Prophet asked his wife: "Does the man Pray, fast and bathe after intercourse?" She replied, "He Prays, fasts and bathes after intercourse. And he loves Allah and His Messenger." The Prophet perhaps make that enquiry to confirm that Abu Lubabah was not a hypocrite, leading different lives in private and public (Manar).

52. Majid comments: "I.e., a trial, a test, to find out who mishandles these gifts of God and who uses them

in a proper legitimate way. Note that 'temptation' (or trial: Au.) is not synonymous with sin, nor is the love of children or fondness for wealth in itself sinful. Such emotions, appetites, instincts, etc., are part of man, as it has pleased God to make him. It is only the human will that can shape them into sins."

Ibn Mas`ud has said: "There is not one amongst you but is to face trials. So whenever you seek refuge, seek refuge from a trial of faith" (Ibn Jarir).

The report is also in Ibn Abi Hatim and Abu Al-Sheikh (Shawkani).

Ibn Kathir writes: Rather than the love of wealth and children, it is the love of the Messenger that should precede all other love. A *hadith* of Muslim says:

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّىٰ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ وَالِدِهِ
وَوَلَدِهِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

"One of you cannot be a believer until I am dearer to him than himself, his parents, his children, and all mankind."

[29] Believers! If you fear Allah, He will grant you a Criterion,⁵³ acquit you of your sins⁵⁴ and forgive you.⁵⁵ And Allah is the possessor of great bounty.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٩﴾

53. Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, `Ikrimah and Dahhak have all interpreted the textual word “furqan” as “a way out.” Ibn Is-haq however has interpreted it as “criterion” or the “power to discern between truth and untruth (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Rashid Rida writes: Since revelation helps distinguish between right and wrong, it has also been called al-furqan. Allah said (25: 1):

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا [الفرقان : ١]

“Blessed is He who sent down the Furqan upon His slave so that he might be a warner unto the peoples of the world.”

Mawdudi explains: “‘Criterion’ signifies that which enables one to distinguish between true and false; between real and fake. This is the shade of meaning conveyed by the Qur’anic term ‘furqan.’ If a man is God-fearing and tries his best to refrain from acts which displease God, God will create in him the ability to discern for himself at every step which actions are proper and which are not; which attitude conduces to God’s

good pleasure and which is likely to incur His wrath. This inner light will serve as a pointer at every turn and crossing, at every up and down in life, guiding him as to when he should proceed and when he should refrain, telling him which is the path of truth and leads to God, and which is false and leads to Satan.”

54. One implication of “acquitting (a slave) of the sins” is to cover them up in this world, conceal them from the people, and not expose them (Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

55. Sayyid remarks: “This then - taqwa - this is the provision (for those who take up the journey towards fulfillment of the trust), and this then - furqan - is the equipment for the way. The provision of taqwa enlivens the heart mobilizing therein acts of alertness and precaution while the equipment (of furqan) helps him know the twists and turns. Doubts and skepticism do not block the vision of the path. The provision and equipment come in handy, especially, when material provisions run short and one fails to come up

[30] And, (recall O Prophet), when the unbelievers were plotting against you to either imprison you, murder you, or exile you.⁵⁶ But, (as) they were plotting, Allah was (also) plotting;⁵⁷ and Allah is the best of plotters.⁵⁸

وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ
يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ
وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

with the right quantity and quality of deeds. But of course, this taqwa and this furqan are not something that can be described successfully in words. Only he understands the meaning who has tasted and experienced them.

56. It is reported that Abu Talib asked the Prophet what his people were thinking about him. He replied that they were thinking of either imprisoning him, exiling him, or killing him. Abu Talib asked him who had told him that. "My Lord," the Prophet replied. Abu Talib said, "That's a good Lord of yours. You should wish Him well." The Prophet asked, "Should I wish Him well, or should He wish me well!?" (Ibn Jarir). Ibn Kathir however thinks this may not be a reliable report.

As for the context of revelation, Ibn Jarir writes: Ibn 'Abbas, 'Ikrimah, Suddi and others have reported that during the last days of the Prophet's stay at Makkah, one night the Quraysh assembled in their Council Hall. Shaytan also entered with

them in the form of an impressive old man. They asked him who he was. He replied, "Well, I am a chieftain of the Najd (tribe). I heard that you are to discuss the issue of this man and thought you should not miss my advice. Maybe I'll have something useful to say." They said, "Fine. You may join us." As the discussions started, one of the participants suggested that they imprison Muhammad. The Najdi Sheikh cried out, "No, by Lord. His followers will release him some way or the other." Another person suggested that they exile him. The Najdi Sheikh again interjected, "That will not do. In fact, that will work in his favor. He will join his followers and then come back on you to destroy you." Finally, Abu Jahl suggested that they take a young volunteer from every family of the Quraysh who should jointly bring down their swords upon Muhammad, so that it could never be determined with certainty as to who had killed him. In that event Banu Hashim would not want to fight all of the Quraysh tribes and will have

no recourse but to accept blood-wit.” At this suggestion the Sheikh jumped and said that he seconded the opinion of “this young man” (i.e., Abu Jahl). They dispersed having agreed on the plan. Accordingly, one night they surrounded the Prophet’s house, waiting, with unsheathed swords in their hands to strike when he emerged. The Prophet came out and walked past right through their cluster, but they were blinded from seeing him. (According to some reports, the Prophet threw a handful of dust on them saying, “Afouled are the faces,” and, reciting the first few verses of *Surah Ya-Sin*, went his way without they seeing him: Ibn Kathir). He went to Abu Bakr’s house and the two started off on their journey. In the morning the Quraysh found ‘Ali in his place who told them that he knew nothing about him. They launched a search for him while he hid in a cave for three days. A spider spread its net over the mouth of the cave. When they saw the net, they concluded that he could not have entered it. And Allah revealed this verse.

The report about the spider spreading its net is at least of Hasan sta-

tus if not above it. See *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah* by Dr. Mahdi Rizqallah (Au.).

Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir, Qurtubi and several others have also reported the above, with Shawkani tracing out similar reports in ‘Abd ‘l-Razzaq, Ahmad, ‘Abd b. Humayd, Ibn al-Mundhir, Tabarani, Abu Al-Sheikh, Ibn Marduwayh and Abu Nu`aym.

57. The word *makr* is commonly employed by the people in a bad sense, such as to scheme a conspiracy against someone. That may be, but linguistically, *makr* can include both connotations, good as well as bad. Allah said (35: 43):

اسْتِكْبَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَكْرَ السَّيِّئِ وَلَا يَحِيقُ الْمَكْرُ
السَّيِّئِ إِلَّا بِأَهْلِهِ [فاطر : ٤٣]

“Waxing proud in the land, and evil scheming (makr al-sayy’). And evil scheming does not backfire but on their authors.”

Hence also the words of a *hadith* in Abu Da’ud:

وامكُر لي ولا تمكُر عليَّ

“O Allah, scheme in my favor, not against me (Manar).

58. “So He defeated their purpose and frustrated their plots” (Majid).

[31] When Our verses are recited to them they say, '(Enough) We have heard. If we wished we could say (things) similar to this. This is nothing but fables of old.'⁵⁹

وَإِذَا تَنَمَّيَ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا قَالُوا قَدْ سَمِعْنَا لَوْ
نَشَاءُ لَقُلْنَا مِثْلَ هَذَا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسَاطِيرُ
الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

59. The textual word is *asatir*, sing. *astar*, *ustur*, etc., which is employed for anything that comes in rows, such as a row of trees (Manar); in this instance, a row of words (Au.).

Ibn Jarir comments: According to Sa`id b. Jubayr, Suddi and Ibn Jurayj, one of those who used to say that, was Nadr b. al-Harith. He was a widely travelled man and had collected some poetical masterpieces, epic works, stories, and the likes from various sources. Whenever he heard the Qur`in he would say he could produce something similar. (What prevented him? asks Alusi).

To the above Shabbir adds: "It is like saying, if my horse trotted well enough, I could reach London." It was he again who had said, 'O Lord! If this (message) be truly from You, rain down upon us stones from the heaven, or send upon us a painful chastisement.'

The reports are in Bukhari and Muslim.

Ibn Kathir adds: He also conducted his assemblies in which he recited

what he had learnt during his travels and asked his audience: "Who do you think is a better story-teller? I, or Muhammad?"

In fact, the man talked so much nonsense in refutation of the Qur`in, that more than ten verses were revealed censuring him. (It is said that verse 31 of *Surah Luqman* was also revealed to censure him: "And of the people there is one who purchases vain talk to deviate the people from the path of Allah - without knowledge - treating it as jest": Manar).

He was one of those three who were taken prisoners at Badr and ordered killed because of his persistent blasphemies against the Qur`in. The other two being To`aymah b. `Adiyy and `Uqbah b. Abi Mu`ayt (Ibn Jarir). But this (part of the report, about he being killed at Badr after being taken a prisoner) is weak (Shawkani).

Sayyid comments: "Nadr b. al-Harith's attempt at detraction was not the last one of its sort. It has been attempted again and again, in various forms and manners. The enemies of this religion have always tried to

[32] And when they said, 'O Lord! If this (message) be the truth from You, then rain down upon us stones from the heaven, or bring upon us a painful chastisement.'⁶⁰

وَإِذْ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِن كَانَ هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ
عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَابًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
أَوْ ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

turn the Muslims away from the Qur'ān unto other things, relegating the Qur'ān to the functions of musical recitation, a charm against evil, and so forth. They are led to believe that by indulging in such things they have treated the Qur'ān in a manner deserving of it. As for organization of this life, of the community and the state, as for their laws and concepts and values, the people are handed down alternatives and told, 'Look. This religion is a great religion. And this Qur'ān is a thing well-guarded. It is recited unto you morning and evening, every now and then, and on every occasion. So what more do you want of the Qur'ān? As for your ideologies, your concepts, your ways and conduct, your laws and ordinances, your values and criterion, for all these things, there is another Qur'ān to which you should turn.'

60. Bukhari's report is that this was said by Abu Jahl. It is possible that

he was the first to say that, and others followed him. Tabarani has it that it was Nadr b. al-Harith who had uttered these words. Qastalani has said in his (*hadīth*) commentary that when Nadr b. al-Harith said, "these are fables of old," the Prophet warned him, "Woe unto you man. These are Allah's words." At that he and Abu Jahl said the words, "O Lord, if this be ..." The self-conceit is apparent.

It is reported (Zamakhshari) that Mu'awiyah once said to a man from Saba' (Yemen), "What kind of ignorant blokes your people were that they appointed a woman as their head (in pre-Islamic times)." The man replied, "Your people were greater blokes in ignorance to say, 'O Lord! If this (message) be truly from You, then rain down upon us stones from the heaven, or send upon us a painful chastisement.' Why could they not say, 'O Lord, if it be truly from You, guide us to it?'" (Manar).

[33] But Allah would not punish them with you among them (O Muhammad); and Allah would not punish them while they sought forgiveness.⁶¹

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ
وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

61. Opinions have varied over the exact implication of the two verses. Some of the Salaf have said that by the words: “Allah was not to punish them while you were among them,” alluded to the situation when the Prophet had not yet migrated from Makkah. The words, “And Allah was not to punish them while they were seeking forgiveness,” alluded to those days when he had left Makkah, but the weak ones remained behind, who (as believers in secret) sought Allah’s forgiveness. (Tayyibi has said that sometimes the seeking of forgiveness by a few can turn away punishment from many: Alusi). [Hafiz (ibn Hajr) has stated in his (*hadith*) commentary that after having said, ‘O Lord, if it be truly from You ..’ they felt remorseful by the evening and cried out, ‘Your forgiveness, O our Lord’: Rashid Rida].

Finally, the words, “And what is (special) with them that Allah should not punish them when they prevent people from the Sacred Mosque,” alluded to the situation when the weak ones too had left Makkah. Another

opinion is that this *Ummah* has two barriers against Allah’s chastisement. One is gone, viz., the Prophet, but the other remains, viz., seeking of forgiveness. There are other possible meanings too (Ibn Jarir).

This last interpretation has a *hadith* in support preserved by Ahmad and Hakim, who declared it reliable, in words:

وَعِزَّتِكَ يَا رَبِّ لَا أَبْرُحُ أُعْوِي عِبَادَكَ مَا دَامَتْ
أَرْوَاحُهُمْ فِي أَجْسَادِهِمْ قَالَ الرَّبُّ وَعِزَّتِي وَجَلَالِي لَا
أَزَالُ أَعْفِرُ لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَغْفَرُونِي

“(Shaytan said), ‘My Lord. By Your honor, I shall keep trying misleading the people until they have their spirits in their body.’ Allah replied, ‘By My Greatness and Majesty, I shall keep forgiving them so long as they keep seeking forgiveness from Me’” (Ibn Kathir).

Alusi adds: The Prophet also understood the verse this way. Accordingly, Abu Da’ud and Tirmidhi (in his Shama’il) and Nasa’i note that once when Solar eclipse occurred, the Prophet got up and offered two

[34] And what is (special) with them that Allah should not punish them, when they prevent people from the Sacred Mosque, while they are not its guardians? Indeed, its guardians⁶² are the godfearing, but most of them know not.⁶³

وَمَا لَهُمْ آلَا يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ
عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَمَا كَانُوا أَوْلِيَاءَهُ إِنْ
أَوْلِيَآؤُهُ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقُونَ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

cycles of lengthy Prayers after which he supplicated in these words:

رَبِّ أَلَمْ نَعِدْنِي أَلَّا نَعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنَا فِيهِمْ ، أَلَمْ نَعِدْنِي أَنْ
لَا نَعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ

“My Lord! Have You not promised me that You will not punish them while I am with them? My Lord! Did You not promise me that You will not punish them so long as they seek forgiveness? And we seek Your forgiveness.” He finished the Prayers and the eclipse was over.

62. Abu Ja`far and Hasan seem to have believed that the personal pronoun in “Awliya-`u-hu” alludes to Masjid al-Haram (and hence the translation (Au.), although some others have said that it alludes to Allah, in which case the rendering should be, “His Friends are ...” (Alusi).

63. Alusi, although himself a Sufi, comes down heavily on the pseudo-sufis. He writes: If we accept the pronoun in awliya` to be representing Allah, the meaning would be “the most pious ones are Allah’s Friends (awli-

ya’).” But the ignorant masses of our times believe that the more outwardly mad, dressed in tattered clothes, uttering incomprehensible words, and putting up a weird appearance that can chase the decent ones away from him .. the truer waliyy the man is, and with greater authority in the kingdom of Allah. Some of them believe that the sign of a true waliyy is that he should have given up living according to the Shari`ah. Some others think that he is someone who engages himself in nothing but acts of devotion, although his inner condition happens to be in total contradiction to his outer appearance. They believe it is such as these who have known the truth. They call such a man a “murshid” (guide). No doubt, murshid he is; but to the Fire. Hujjatul Islam Imām Ghazali has said that to kill one of these pervert ones is better in the sight of Allah than killing a hundred of the unbelievers (in the battle-field). Sheikh al-Akbar, (Muhiyuddin ibn al-`Arabiyy) has also censured them strongly in his

[35] In fact, their Prayer at the House (of Allah) was nothing more than whistling and hand-clapping.⁶⁴ Therefore, taste the punishment for what you were denying.

وَمَا كَانَ صَلَاتُهُمْ عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ إِلَّا
مُكَاءً وَتَصْدِيَةً فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] Those who have disbelieved spend their wealth to hinder from the path of Allah.⁶⁵ They shall spend it,⁶⁶ and then it will be a source of regret to them and then they shall be overcome. Those who disbelieved shall be collected together in Jahannum.⁶⁷

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ لِيَصُدُّوا
عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَسَيُنْفِقُونَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ
عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَةً ثُمَّ يُغْلَبُونَ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ يُجْشَرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

[37] So that Allah might chaff out the impure from the pure, place the impure one upon another, heap it all together, and then dump it into Jahannum. They, they (indeed), are the losers.

لِيَمِيزَ اللَّهُ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَيَجْعَلَ
الْخَبِيثَ بَعْضُهُ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فَيَرْكُمَهُ جَمِيعًا
فَيَجْعَلُهُ فِي جَهَنَّمَ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ
﴿٣٧﴾

Futuhat. Alusi then quotes a poetical piece:

إلى الماء يسعى من يغص بلقمة
إلى أين يسعى من يغص بماء

One choked in his throat rushes
to water for relief

To what should one rush if
choked on water?

64. This is to criticize the Quraysh who used to clap their hands and whistle while circumambulating the Ka`ba. Sometimes they did these things to distract the Prophet from his Prayers in the Sacred Mosque (Zamakhshari, Manar, Shawkani and others).

Another meaning could be that by whistling and clapping in a holy place, they had as if replaced their devotional acts with these vile acts (Razi, Alusi).

Majid comments: "Witness also the present-day practices of many a creed which not only allow but prescribe the use of musical instruments during public worship. Worse still, dancing has formed part.. of the chief acts of devotion and worship in many religions."

65. After Allah had spoken of the corruption in the devotional acts of the unbelievers, now He comments on the corruption in their charitable acts. Badr, Uhud, Khandaq .. on sev-

[38] Say to the unbelievers, if they desist, they will be forgiven what was in the past.⁶⁸ But, if they return (to old ways), then, surely, the way (of punishment) of the earlier ones has already passed.

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ يَنْتَهُوا يُعْفَرُوا لَهُمْ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ وَإِنْ يَعُودُوا فَقَدْ مَضَتْ سُنَّتُهُ الْأُولِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

eral occasions the pagan chiefs had contributed funds to counter Islam (Shawkani).

It is widely reported that after Badr, the sons, fathers, and brothers of those who were slain at Badr went to Abu Sufyan and urging revenge, appealed for funds. Abu Sufyan, although thought to be a stingy person, donated 40 Awqiyah of gold, while each Awqiyah was equivalent of 42 Mithqal and a Mithqal was 1 and 3/7 Dirham (Zamakhshari, Manar).

(A Mithqal is 4.3 gm approx.: Au.).

66. At this point (after Badr) the Qur'an predicted that they will raise funds in the future also. Consequently, a little later we find Abu Sufyan going about among the Quraysh coaxing them to bear the cost of a new battle (Shawkani and others).

67. "The Qur'anic expression treats them (the enemies of Truth) as if they are a heap of scrap to be dumped into the Fire with least consideration" (Sayyid).

68. The Prophet has said, (in a *hadith* recorded in the *Sahihayn*: Hussain):

مَنْ أَحْسَنَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ لَمْ يُؤَاخَذْ بِمَا عَمِلَ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ أُجِدَّ بِالْأَوَّلِ وَالْآخِرِ

"Whoever did well in Islam will not be questioned about the sins of the pagan days. But whoever did badly in Islam will be questioned for the latter as well as the previous sins" (Ibn Kathir).

Ahmad, Muslim and others have entered the following report in their works: 'Amr b. al-'As says, "When Islam had entered into my heart I went up to the Prophet (*saws*) and said:

فَقُلْتُ ابْسُطْ يَمِينَكَ فَلَأُبَايِعَكَ. فَبَسَطَ يَمِينَهُ - قَالَ - فَمَبِصُتُ يَدِي. قَالَ « مَا لَكَ يَا عَمْرُو ». قَالَ قُلْتُ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أُشْتَرِطَ فُقُلْتُ ابْسُطْ يَمِينَكَ فَلَأُبَايِعَكَ. فَبَسَطَ يَمِينَهُ - قَالَ - فَمَبِصُتُ يَدِي. قَالَ « مَا لَكَ يَا عَمْرُو ». قَالَ قُلْتُ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أُشْتَرِطَ قَالَ « نَشْتَرِطُ بِمَاذَا ». قُلْتُ أَنْ يُعْفَرَ لِي. قَالَ « أَمَا عَلِمْتَ مَا أَنَّ الْإِسْلَامَ يَهْدِمُ مَا كَانَ قَبْلَهُ وَأَنَّ الْهِجْرَةَ تَهْدِمُ مَا كَانَ قَبْلَهَا وَأَنَّ الْحَجَّ يَهْدِمُ مَا كَانَ قَبْلَهُ

'Give me your hand so that I

[39] (O Muslims), Fight them until persecution is no more, and the Religion - all of it - is Allah's.⁶⁹ But if they desist, then, surely Allah is Seeing of what they do.

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ
الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا
يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

[40] But if they turn away, then know that Allah is your Protector - an excellent Protector and an excellent Helper.

وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَاكُمْ نِعْمَ
الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ ﴿٤٠﴾

can swear allegiance.' When he stretched out his hand, I withdrew mine. He asked, 'What's the matter with you?' I said, 'I have a condition.' ('Amr did it twice stating that there was a condition). The Prophet said, 'Spell it out.' I said, 'That my previous sins be forgiven.' He said, 'Have you not known that Islam obliterates previous sins, *Hijrah* obliterates previous sins, and Hajj obliterates previous sins?' (Shawkani).

Going by this verse, Imām Abu Hanifah has ruled that if an apostate repents and re-enters into Islam, he does not need to do his Prayers of the days of apostasy (Razi).

This was the opinion of Imām Malik too. Accordingly, Hanafiyy books of fiqh say that someone returning to Islam after being apostate will not be punished for his crimes of murder, theft etc. However, people's rights cannot be forgiven. He will have to pay the blood-wit (if he murdered)

or return people's property (if he stole), etc. (Alusi).

69. The fitnah of the text has been widely interpreted by the earliest scholars as polytheism (Ibn Jarir). Accordingly, when 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar b. al-Khattab was criticized for staying away from the political quarrels of his time, and was chided that he should be fighting until there was no fitnah, he replied: "That we did at the time of the Prophet: fighting until there was no fitnah and religion was Allah's. But today you fight so that there be fitnah and religion be for other than Allah" (Ibn Kathir).

In other words, the fight has to go on until polytheism is destroyed in all parts of the world, or until the Mahdi's appearance who will deal it the final death blow (Alusi).

If the Muslims do not, and drop their gauntlets, they will face a similar situation as in Spain: either Christianity, death, or exile (Shabbir). Or, as in

Bosnia (during the last quarter of the 20th century), where their enemies operated under a different guise: ethnic cleansing and killed a million of them (Au.).

Thanwi adds: The fitnah, however, according to Imām Abu Hanifah and his followers, refers to the fitnah of Arabian Peninsula paganism. Armed struggle was to continue against them until they were annihilated.

Also see *al-Baqarah*, note 397 for further discussions.

Sayyid comments: “As we have stated earlier several times over, Islam has come to free man of everything that binds him to the slavery of his kind as well as from slavery to his own base desires. This is achieved by the proclamation of divinity for none but Allah, demanding the lordship for Him alone. Apparently, this kind of proclamation is a call to a revolution that culminates in the removal of all those from the positions of power who have established their

own rule in lieu of Allah’s - in whatever form they might be functioning. That is the meaning of making religion purely for Allah ..

“A doubt commonly raised at this point needs to be clarified. By saying, ‘until religion is Allah’s,’ what is meant is the removal of those impediments and obstacles that come in the way of Allah and His servants: obstacles that take the form of rules by those who do not implement the Divine law. When these obstacles are removed, the people would have achieved the full freedom they deserve as human beings. Thereafter they might choose, freely, acting under no constraint, their faith and beliefs. But the rule remains Allah’s, which means power is taken away from those who would utilize it to influence the people into choosing other than what they would if they were free... Unto this end the believers must fight.”

70. What it means when Allah says

[41] And know⁷⁰ that whatever⁷¹ you secure as spoils of war⁷² - one-fifth thereof is: for Allah, for the Messenger,⁷³ the kin (of the Prophet),⁷⁴ the orphans, the needy, and the wayfarer⁷⁵ - if you believe in Allah and in what We sent down on Our slave⁷⁶ on the Day of Criterion,⁷⁷ the day the two forces met. And Allah has power over all things.

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ
خُمُسَهُ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ
وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ إِن كُنْتُمْ آمَنْتُمْ
بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ
الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ التَّفَىٰ الْجُمُعَانِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤١﴾

“know” is that, “know and act according to its demands,” since mere knowledge is shared by the believers and unbelievers alike (Zamakhshari).

71. It has been said that the use of the word “whatever” (min shay’in) implies that every little thing, including a needle and thread of the spoils of war, should be handed over to the authorities (Zamakhshari).

Nevertheless, Qurtubi adds, the lands of the unbelievers are excluded by consensus. `Umar (ra) did not distribute the conquered lands amongst the mujahedin. It is only movable property (taken in the battle-field) that is classified as ghanimah.

Also, he writes further, several authorities believe that the bodily possessions of the enemy soldier is not the property of the one who slew him, unless the Amir announces to that effect, such as to say, ‘whoever killed one of the enemy will have such and such a reward, (or may

keep his bodily belongings to himself: Au.)’

72. It has been reported as Qatadah’s opinion that this verse abrogates that verse of Surah al-Hashr which says (59: 7):

مَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَىٰ فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ
وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ
[الحشر : ٧]

“Whatever Allah restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns, is for Allah, for the Messenger, for (his) relatives, the orphans, the destitute and the wayfarer...”

But the difficulty is that Surah al-Hashr was revealed after the campaign of Banu Nadir which took place after Badr. (That is, an earlier verse cannot abrogate the one revealed later: Au.). Hence, some scholars have said that the verse of al-Hashr is speaking of “faiy,” whereas this present one is speaking of spoils of war in general. Obviously, he who

thinks that spoils of war and “faiy” are both at the discretion of the leader of the believers, obviously, he does not think there is any contradiction between the two verses (Ibn Jarir).

Qurtubi writes: There is no difference in opinion that “ghanimah” is that spoil of war which is obtained from the unbelievers by the believers overcoming their resistance: one requiring some efforts - even if a mere chase, (whether a fight took place or not), whereas, “faiy” is such materials which are obtained by the Muslims peacefully, without any effort on their part. These can be *kharaj*, *jizyah*, or one-fifth of the spoils of war. (There is no *khumus* over this latter kind, i.e., faiy: Rashid Rida).

73. The topic of spoils of war is dealt with quite extensively by the commentators. Here is a summary:

Spoils of War

Although reports and opinions vary, Ibn Jarir is inclined to believe in what has been reported as Qatadah’s opinion. He said that when war spoils were brought to the Prophet, he divided them into five parts. Four-fifths went to those who had taken part in the battle. The remaining one-fifth was again divided into five parts. One-fifth thereof was for Allah and His Messenger, and the

rest for the other four categories mentioned in the verse under discussion, viz., “the kin, the orphans, the needy, and the wayfarer.” Thus, one-fifth of one-fifth alone was the share of Allah and His Messenger. And, out of this one-fifth of the one-fifth, the Prophet marked out a suitable share - as some reports suggest - for the Grand Mosque at Makkah. Or - as some other reports suggest - when he had divided the whole into five parts, he took out a handful of its one-fifth, and marked it for the Haram at Makkah, and then divided the rest into five equal parts. (That is, the one-fifth was divided into six parts, one of which went for the Grand Mosque: Shawkani). [The four-fifth remained untouched: Au.]. Of these five parts, one part went to the Prophet. Yet, he spent his own share, along with the one-fifth marked out for the kin, on his kinsfolk, keeping nothing of it for himself (Ibn Jarir). But according to other reports, he spent his share on his wives (Shawkani).

It should be evident from the above, as well as other reports, that the Prophet dealt with the booty differently, on different occasions, depending perhaps on circumstances (Au.).

Ibn Kathir adds: The above is also the opinion of Ibrahim al-Nakha'i, Hasan b. Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyyah, Hasan al-Busri, Sha'bi, 'Ata' ibn abi Rabah, Mughira and several others and is confirmed by a *Sahih* report of Bayhaqi which records that a man went up to the Prophet while he was in the Qura valley examining horses. He asked him about the spoils of war and the Prophet replied: "One-fifth is for Allah and four-fifth for those who participated in the battle." And Miqdam b. Ma'dikarab al-Kindi has reported that once he was in a company which included 'Ubadah b. Samit, Abu Darda', and Harith b. Mu'awiyah al-Kindi. Abu Darda' asked 'Ubadah, "Do you recall what the Prophet said during such and such a campaign with regard to the one-fifth?" 'Ubadah replied, "(Yes), the Prophet Prayed behind the camels that had been obtained as the spoils of war. Their load was still on them. After the Prayers, he got up with a ball of wool in his hand. He said,

أَلَا إِنَّ هَذَا مِنْ غَنَائِمِكُمْ ، وَلَيْسَ لِي مِنْهُ إِلَّا الْخُمْسُ
، وَالْخُمْسُ مَرْدُودٌ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَدُّوا الْحَيْطَ ، وَالْمَخِيضَ
، وَأَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ ، وَأَكْبَرَ ، وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَالْغُلُولَ فَإِنَّ
الْغُلُولَ عَارٌّ عَلَى أَهْلِهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا ، وَالْآخِرَةِ ، وَجَاهِدُوا
النَّاسَ فِي اللَّهِ الْقَرِيبَ مِنْهُمْ وَالْبَعِيدَ ، وَلَا يَأْخُذْكُمْ
فِي اللَّهِ لَوْمَةٌ لَائِمٌ ، وَأَقْبِمُوا مُحْدُودَ اللَّهِ فِي الْحَضَرِ ،

وَالسَّفَرِ ، وَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالْجِهَادِ فَإِنَّهُ نَابٌ مِنْ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ
عَظِيمٌ يُنَجِّي اللَّهُ بِهِ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْعَمِّ

'Well. These are your spoils of war. I have no right in them but over one-fifth. And even that one-fifth will be returned to you. Therefore, hand over even thread and needle, anything smaller than that, or bigger, and deceive not. Anything obtained by deceit is a vile thing and constitutes a Fire for its owner in this world and the next. And fight the people in Allah's cause; against those near, as well as those far away, and worry not about the criticism of the critic. Execute the punishments commanded by Allah at home and during journey. And fight in the way of Allah, for *jihad* is one out of several doors leading to Paradise: a great act, by which Allah gets you rid of anxieties and worries."

After narrating the *hadith*, Ibn Kathir adds: This is a great *hadith* and parts of it are reported in other narrations such as one in Nasa'i and another in Abu Da'ud. However, at other times the Prophet marked out some of the spoil of war for himself. (It was known as "Safiyy"). For example., the sword Dhu al-Fiqar, which he kept for himself after Badr, or Safyah

(bint Huyayy b. Ukhtab) whom he reserved for himself. These reports are in Abu Da'ud and Nasa'i. Another narration in Ahmad, Abu Da'ud and Nasa'i reports Yezid b. 'Abdullah as saying that once we were in cattle yard, when a man entered with a parchment in his hand. We read it. It said, "From Muhammad the Messenger of Allah to the tribe of Zuhayr b. Uqaysh. If you testify that there is no deity save Allah, and that Muhammad is His Messenger, establish the Prayers, pay the Zakah, and hand over one-fifth of the spoils of war as the Prophet's share, and the Prophet's choice (Safiyy), then you will be in peace granted by Allah and His Messenger." We asked the man, "Who wrote this to you?" He answered, "The Prophet." All these reports confirm the opinion stated above as that of the majority of scholars.

As regards Allah's share, that of His Messenger, and that of his kinsfolk, the opinion of Ibn 'Abbas is that after the Prophet's death, it is to be spent on defense and for public welfare. We find Abu Bakr and 'Umar spending them on such causes. Someone asked Hasan b. Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyyah, (a great grandson of 'Ali: Au.), whether 'Ali agreed with that. He replied, "Well, 'Ali applied it more rigorously" (Ibn

Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

In fact, Qurtubi writes, all the four Khulafa' spent it that way. (This is also the opinion stated in the famous Hanafiyy fiqh work, Hidayah: Shafi').

However, Ibn Kathir adds, some scholars have ruled that the share of the Prophet's kinsfolk should go to Banu Hashim and Banu al-Muttalib; for, as a *hadith* of Muslim says (as well as one in Bukhari: S. Ibrahim), they are a united body in Islam, as they were a united body during paganism, when they supported the Prophet, despite remaining unbelievers themselves. Nevertheless, there are reports in Muslim, Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi and Nasa'i that mention Ibn 'Abbas as saying in reply to a question: "It is we (who are the kinsfolk, deserving the share of the 'relatives'). But the people would not agree to it."

Ibn Kathir's commentary - most of which is also in Kashshaf and Razi - ends here.

Rashid Rida adds the note that when the Prophet was boycotted in Makkah and barricaded for three years in a valley, Banu 'Abdul Muttalib stayed with them, while Banu 'Abd Shams and Banu Nawfal did not. (This is the meaning of the Prophet's words, "a united body dur-

ing paganism”: Au.).

Shawkani writes: Hakim has a report that he declared *Sahib*. It quotes `Ali as saying: “The Prophet had deputed me to distribute the share of his kinsfolk. I did that during his lifetime and continued during the time of Abu Bakr and `Umar.” (Shafi` adds: It is quite possible that the share of the kinsfolk of the Prophet, of which `Ali was given the charge of distribution during the time of Abu Bakr and `Umar, was taken out from the share of the poor).

Zamakhshari writes: Abu Hanifa’s opinion with regard to the spoils of war is that during the time of the Prophet one-fifth of one-fifth was for the Prophet, one-fifth for his kinsfolk that went to the Banu Hashim and Banu `Abdul Muttalib (excluding Banu `Abd Shams and Banu Nawfal, since the former two had stayed together both during paganism as well as in Islam). The rest of the three shares were for the orphans, the poor, and the wayfarer. After the death of the Prophet, his share stands canceled, and so does the share of his kinsfolk. (This portion is now to be used for general welfare purposes). As for the kinsfolk of the Prophet, they might be given as any poor is given, but not if they are rich. (This is how `Umar

did during his caliphate: Shafi`). It is reported of Abu Bakr that he did not divide the share of the Prophet’s kinsfolk among everyone of the Banu Hashim saying, “It is only your poor who will get a share, and not the rich.” Zayd b. `Ali is also reported to have said, “It is not for us to build palaces out of it.” (Alusi states that although the textual word is “qurba” meaning kinsfolk, the Prophet’s own practice of not giving to everyone of his kinsfolk [such as, Banu `Abd Shams but giving to Banu `Abdul Muttalib, although they did not convert in Makkah: Au.], leads us to believe that the meaning of the term “qurba” is, “those who helped.” Now, since, after the Prophet, there is no need of that kind of help, their share is written off).

According to Imām Shafè`i the division should be in the following manner: One-fifth of the one-fifth to the Prophet, which, after him, on defense, general welfare, etc.; another one-fifth to his kinsfolk as was the practice during his life-time, and the rest of the three-fifths to the orphans, the poor and the wayfarer.

Imām Malik’s opinion about the Prophet’s share and that of his kinsfolk was that the matter should be left to the discretion of the leader of the faithful. Hasan b. `Ali had the

same opinion about the 'share of the Prophet' after his death.

Zamakhshari's notes end here.

Qurtubi writes: The practice during paganism was that the leader of the tribe kept one-fourth of the choicest of the booty for himself. Islam did away with that practice. He also writes: Following a *hadith* in Bukhari, the four-fifths that is the share of the mujahedin who participated in a battle, is to be divided in the ratio of two shares for the horse and one share for the rider, while the foot-soldier gets only one share. (The government then did not provide the mujahedin with arms or beasts for ride: Au.). Abu Hanifah has ruled, however, that the horse gets a share, the rider one, and the foot-soldier one. Alusi adds that Imām Abu Hanifah's rule is based on a report of Ibn 'Abbas that the Prophet gave two shares to the rider and one to the non-rider. (A *hadith* in Muslim transmitted by Ibn 'Umar confirms that the Prophet gave two shares to the horsemen and one to the foot soldier: Au.).

Those that accompany a Muslim army as non-combatants, (such as civil service employees), they do not have any right in the spoils of war.

If women and slaves participate in a battle, then, the majority opinion is that although they are not entitled to receive a share in the booty equal to the male fighters - since women and children have been spared from fighting - yet they may be given suitable gifts.

There are differences in opinion over the unbeliever's share if he fought along with the Muslims, or those of the Muslims who wished to join but could not because of a good reason. But, with regards to those who did not participate at all, there is no difference in opinion, that they have no share at all. If the Prophet gave a few non-participants shares from the Khyber spoils, it was only to those who had participated in Hudaibiyyah, since those who had participated in that campaign, were promised spoils of war by Allah in words (48: 20): "Allah promises you great amount of spoils of war that you will be taking." As for those at Badr, who did not participate in the battle, but received shares there, there were good reasons for that. (See note 2 above: Au.).

Qurtubi's remarks end here.

74. Shafi' writes: As pointed out by Tahawi, the introduction of a "lam"

over the first three heads of expenditure: (li)Allah, (li)rrasul and (li)dhi 'l qurba, (while it is missing from the rest of the other three categories (al-yatama, al-masakin, and, ibn al-sabil) carries the hint that the Prophet enjoyed discretion on the whole. That is, he could spend on any of the six categories, in any proportion he thought fit. He could, for instance, spend on maybe four of the six categories mentioned here (or spend the whole amount on one category alone: Thanwi). Accordingly, we find that when Fatimah (*ra*) came to him seeking a slave out of the *khumus*, the Prophet told her that he could not give her anything because of the pressing need of the As-haab al-Suffa (those of the Platform: a group of indigent Muslims living on a platform in the Prophet's mosque).

[The above implies that the Prophet gave away from the share of his kinsfolk to the As-haab al-Suffah because of their greater need: Au.].

75. Ibn 'Abbas has said that by the term "wayfarer," the allusion is to those Muslim travelers who arrive at the towns in a state of destitution (Ibn Jarir).

Alusi points out that the Shi`ah interpretation of the above verse is

that the one-fifth of the spoils of war should be divided into six parts. The (three) parts meant for Allah, His Messenger and his kinsfolk, should be given to the Imām (a direct descendant of Fatimah: Au.) while the three remaining parts should be divided among the orphans, the poor and wayfarer of the kinsfolk of the Prophet (and not to the orphans, the poor and the wayfarer of the Muslims in general: Au.). Alusi then suggests that if the first three parts of (Allah, His Messenger and his kinsfolk), are supposedly to be given to the Imām, then perhaps, these are now to be buried in the ground since the twelfth Imām has gone underground!

The Shi`ah say that the above division is based on a report in Tabari which has `Abdullah b. Muhammad b. `Ali as saying that when Allah said "the orphans, the poor and the wayfarer," He meant those of the Prophet's kinsfolk. It is true that the report is in Tabari. But, firstly, the report is of dubious authenticity. Secondly, it is a single report against a dozen others in the same work which say that it is the orphan, the poor and the wayfarer of the Muslims in general that have been given their share by the Qur`in. Thirdly, `Ali himself did not distribute it according to the Shi`ah

interpretation. Further, the Shi`ah claim that the above “ghana`im” include all the earnings of the lifetime of a Shi`a Muslim, and that the whole of it must be handed over to the Imām. This is their Zakah, See “Tafsir Hasan al-`Askari,” by Imām Hasan al `Askari, “Tafsir Majma`ul Bayan” by `Ali b. Ibrahim al-Qummi, and others (Au.).

76. Allah (*swt*) emphasized belief in the distribution-ratio of the spoils as part of belief in Him and His Messenger. Accordingly, we find that when the `Abd al Qays delegation came to the Prophet he told them:

أَمْرُكُمْ بِأَرْبَعٍ وَأَنْتَهُائِمُ عَنْ أَرْبَعٍ أَمْرُكُمْ بِالْإِيمَانِ بِاللَّهِ وَخَدَهُ أَنْتَدْرُونَ مَا الْإِيمَانُ بِاللَّهِ؟ شَهَادَةُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامُ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءُ الزَّكَاةِ وَصَوْمُ رَمَضَانَ وَأَنْ تَغْطُوا مِنَ الْمَغَانِمِ الْخُمْسَ

“I order you four things and forbid you four things. The four things I order you are: (i) Belief in Allah. Now, do you know what is belief in Allah? Well, it is to testify that there is no deity save Allah, and that Muhammad is Allah’s Messenger, (ii) to Pray, (iii) pay the Zakah and (iv) fasts in Ramada; and, in addition, that you should remit one-fifth of war spoils (to the state).”

It can be seen in this *hadith* that following this verse the Prophet count-

ed paying up one-fifth of the spoils as part of *Imān* (faith) - Ibn Kathir.

77. According to `Ali ibn Abi Talib, Ibn `Abbas, Dahhak, Qatadah, Muqatil, and many others, the allusion is to the day of Badr when Allah distinguished between Truth and falsehood (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani). It was, according to most reports, the seventeenth of Ramadan, and a Friday. Some have said it was the nineteenth. A report in Hakim, of the same status as reports of the *Sahihayn*, has Ibn Mas`ud saying that the Muslims ought to look for Laylatu al-Qadr (the Night of Power) when 11 days of Ramadan are left, since the next day of this date was the Day of Badr (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Majid comments: “It is not for nothing that the Qur`in has characterized this battle as the ‘Day of Distinction’. A different result would have changed the entire fate of mankind. If there is any single episode in history of which it can be said that on it depended the march of the world’s events, it was this. Even skeptics and rejecters have not entirely failed to grasp this significance. The day ‘both for internal and external policies was of incalculable advantage to Islam.’ (EBr. XV. p. 648) ‘Seldom has such

[42] (They day) When you were on the near side of the valley, and they on the farther side with the caravan on your lower side.⁷⁸ Had you (and the pagans) agreed (to meet), you would have failed the appointment;⁷⁹ but, in order that Allah might accomplish an affair that was destined to happen. So that he who died might die on a clear evidence, and he who lived might live on a clear evidence.⁸⁰ Verily, Allah is All-hearing, All-knowing.

إِذْ أَنْتُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ
الْقُصْوَى وَالرَّكْبُ اسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَوْ
تَوَاعَدْتُمْ لِاجْتِنَافْتُمْ فِي الْمِيعَادِ وَلَكِنْ
لَيَقْضِي اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا لِيَهْلِكَ مَنْ
هَلَكَ عَنِ بَيِّنَةٍ وَيَحْيَى مَنْ حَيَّ عَنِ بَيِّنَةٍ
وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَسَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٤٢﴾

an insignificant conflict had such far-reaching consequences .. The Prophet had received undeniable proof that God was on his side.’ (Andrae, p. 205) ‘Not only was a most decisive victory gained over a force three times his own in number, but the slain on the enemy’s side included in a remarkable manner many of his most influential opponents’ (Muir, p. 236).”

78. Qatadah, Ibn Is-haq and others have explained that (before the two forces confronted each other: Au.) the Muslims were initially at one end of the valley, with their backs to Madinah while the Makkans at the other end, with their backs to Makkah. On the other hand the trade-caravan of Abu Sufyan was travelling by the sea-shore and hence at a much lower level (Ibn Jarir, Shawkani).

Qurtubi comments: The word in the

original, “rakb,” is employed for a caravan of camels. If it is of horses then this word cannot be used.

79. Ibn Is-haq explained: That is to say, if you had, O Muslims, agreed on a date and place for a battle, then, on learning of the heavy tilt of balance in favor of the pagans in terms of man-power and equipment, you would have backed off. Instead, as it should happen, both were surprised to find each other at the waters of Badr, staring into each other’s face with disbelief (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Is-haq has also written in his Sirah: When the Prophet reached the waters of Safra’, he sent Basbas b. ‘Amr and ‘Adiyy b. abi Zaghba’ to bring news about Abu Sufyan. The two went up until Badr and took position on a hill. Then they descended to the waters with an old water-skin. At the well they over-

heard two girls talking to each other. One was demanding her money back. The other was saying, "Look, tomorrow, or maybe day after, Abu Sufyan should be here. I will work for them and promise you I'll pay back the money." Another man called Majdi b. `Amr happened to be there. He interjected, "Yes, you are right." When the two heard those words, they mounted their camels and rode off to inform the Prophet. A little later Abu Sufyan showed up at the well, sniffing around for the Prophet's men. He asked if anyone had noticed anything unusual. Majdi told him that he had not noticed anything except for two riders who had tied their camels yonder there and had come down to collect water. Abu Sufyan went up to the spot, picked up fresh dung and broke it. He found it had date-stones. He said, "By God. This is Madinan fodder," and hurried away. Hitting the sea-shore, he changed the direction of his caravan and leaving Badr on his left, travelled away at a quick pace. Once in safe territory, he sent word to the Quraysh that he had escaped and that they could return. Some time later, the Prophet sent across `Ali ibn Abi Talib, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas and Zubayr ibn al-`Awwam to gather fresh news. They came up

to the waters and chanced upon two young chaps drawing water for the Quraysh. They escorted them to the Prophet. He was Praying. In the meantime the Companions began questioning them. They said they had been hired by the Quraysh. The Companions were not pleased with those words. They wished to hear that they were Abu Sufyan's men. So they beat them up. When they beat them, the two knew that they could only escape by saying that they were Abu Sufyan's men. So they said they belonged to Abu Sufyan. When they said that, the Companions let them alone. When the Prophet finished his Prayers, he remarked that they beat them when they spoke the truth and spared them when they lied. Then he enquired them about the Quraysh numbers. They said a great many but could not give the exact figure. So he asked them about the number of camels they slaughtered everyday. They said, "One day nine and the next day ten." So the Prophet knew they were between nine hundred and a thousand. Then he enquired about the nobles and the chieftains as to how many had come along. They named `Utbah b. Rabi`ah, Shaybah b. Rabi`ah, Abu al-Bakhtari b. Hisham, Hakim b. Hizam, Nawfal b. Khuwaylid, Harith b. `Amir,

Tu`aymah ibn `Adiyy, Nadr b. al-Harith, Zam`ah b. al-Aswad, Abu Jahl b. Hisham, Umayyah b. Khalaf, Nabih and Munabbih the sons of Hajjaj, Suhayl b. `Amr and `Amr b. Abd Wudd. The Prophet told his Companions, "Makkah has thrown out pieces of its liver to you." (Meaning: the best of its men).

Ibn Is-haq has also reported that before the two forces met, Sa`d b. Muadh suggested to the Prophet that they build a hut or a booth (Arish in Arabic) for him and station a few fast beasts around so that, 'if we overcome the enemy, well and good; but if we are defeated, you could use the mounts to go back to the people we have left behind in Madinah whose love for you is no lesser than their love for their own selves. They will help you continue with your mission.' The proposal was accepted with thanks and supplications, and a kind of booth was erected for him. The Prophet and Abu Bakr stayed in it, and no one else (Ibn Kathir).

Today, that spot has a mosque called Masjid al-`Arish. It overlooks a valley, pretty deep at about 10-12 meters, where a spring throws out enough water for a palm grove that covers the wide trapezoidal-shaped valley. This is the valley where the battle

took place. Although when first visited in 1980, there were a few houses around, the `Arish mosque was way out of the town of Badr. But, in recent times residential quarters have sprung up all around, and the old mosque has been replaced by a new and much larger one. The cemetery where the thirteen martyrs of Badr lie buried, is about a kilometer away from the spot and is now a town cemetery. Although it is enclosed with a full-height wall, with a guard at the gate, the graves of the thirteen Companions within it are further enclosed with a meter high blockwork. There are no markings, no tomb stone, nothing: just plain sand. But an awe-inspiring sight that steals a heart beat. With the new highway to Madinah that avoids to mention the exit for Badr, one must now, after about 150 km. on the highway, take the road to Rabigh and then, after about another 30-40 km. enter into the Badr lane (Au.).

80. Ibn Is-haq once again explained: That is, the event of Badr was accompanied by such irrefutable signs of the truth as truth, and falsehood as falsehood, that whoever died after that should die on a clear evidence (of falsehood as falsehood: Zamakhshari), and whoever lived after that should live assured that he follows

[43] When Allah was showing them to you (O Prophet) in your dream as few.⁸¹ Had He showed them as many you would have been (O believers), discouraged and would have disputed over the affair (of the battle).⁸² But Allah saved. Verily, He is aware of that which is in the breasts.

إِذْ يُرِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَنَامِكَ قَلِيلًا وَلَوْ أَرَأَيْتَهُمْ كَثِيرًا لَّفَشِلْتُمْ وَتَنَارَعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ سَلَّمَ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٤٣﴾

[44] And when He was showing them to you (O believers) - when you encountered them - as few in your eyes,⁸³ and He made you (appear) as few in their eyes,⁸⁴ so that Allah may accomplish an affair that was destined to be.⁸⁵ And to Allah are returned the affairs.

وَإِذْ يُرِيكُمُوهُمْ إِذِ الْتَقَيْتُمْ فِي آعْيُنِكُمْ قَلِيلًا وَيُقَلِّلُكُمْ فِي آعْيُنِهِمْ لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٤٤﴾

the truth (Ibn Jarir).

Another explanation is: So that, whoever wished to disbelieve, could disbelieve, and whoever wished to believe could believe after he had seen the great signs at Badr (Ibn Kathir).

81. Thanwi, himself a Sufi, brings out a subtle point for the followers of the Sufis: In this verse is a lesson for the over-zealot followers of the Sufi Shuyukh. They seem to place great trust in the so called “inspirations” or “the inner revelations” and the (esoteric) meanings derived from their dreams. How much more they would not believe in their Shuyukh were their Shuyukh to experience those things in real life situations? Yet, here we have a verse concerning no less than the Prophet himself, say-

ing: “When Allah was showing them to you (O Messenger) in your dream as few!”

(That is, although they were not few but Allah was showing them few. How then can one put his blind faith into what the Shuyukh claim they experience in their dreams: Au.)?

82. Mujahid has said that Allah showed the Prophet the enemy few in number. When he woke up he told his Companions that he thought they were not very large in numbers. That acted as morale booster (Ibn Jarir).

83. `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud said: “At Badr we reckoned that the pagans were a small bunch. I turned to the Companion by my side and asked, ‘Do you think they are 70.’ He re-

plied, ‘Nope. I believe they are a hundred.’ It was only when we had captured one of them that he told us about their real numbers” (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi). The report is in Ibn Abi Hatim (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

84. So that the pagans said to each other about the Muslims: “These (few) should prove an easy fodder (for us)” - Zamakhshari, Qurtubi.

Suddi has reported that someone suggested to the Quraysh that since Abu Sufyan had escaped unmolested, they should return. Abu Jahl vehemently opposed the move and suggested that they should use the opportunity to destroy the Muslims root and branch. He also said: “When you meet them in combat, spare the use of your arms. Instead, rope them in (so as to carry them as slaves)” - Ibn Jarir.

Majid writes: “The actual strength of the two armies according to Muir was as follows:

	Muslim	Pagan
Men	302	905
Camels	70	700
Horses	2	100

(Quraysh horsemen were all mail-

clad).

85. Ibn Kathir writes: There is no contradiction between this verse and the verse in Al-`Imran which says (3: 13):

فَدَّكَانَ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فِي فِئَتَيْنِ الَّذِينَ التَّمَنَّا فِئَةً يُقَاتِلُ فِي سَبِيلِ
 اللَّهِ وَأُخْرَى كَافِرَةٌ يَرَوْنَهُمْ مِثْلَيْهِمْ رَأْيَ الْعَيْنِ [آل
 عمران : ١٣]

“There was a sign for you in the two forces that met (at Badr). One group fighting in Allah’s cause, and the other, the unbelievers, (fighting in the Devil’s cause). They saw them - as the eye sees - twice themselves (in numbers).”

To explain, initially, when they came face to face with each other, both saw each other as lesser than actually they were. This was to encourage both to a good fight. But when the combat began, and the angels descended, the unbelievers began to see the Muslims as twice their own numbers. That disheartened them and reduced their morale.

For an alternative explanation see note 23 of Al-`Imran (Au.).

86. We have a *hadith* of the *Sahihayn*

[45] Believers! When you encounter a force, stay firm,⁸⁶ and remember Allah much, haply that you might succeed.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً فَاثْبُتُوا
وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

﴿٤٥﴾

in explanation. `Abdullah ibn Abi Awfa said: “During one of his campaigns the Prophet waited until the sun started going down. Then he got up and said,

لَا تَتَمَنَّوْا لِقَاءَ الْعَدُوِّ وَسَلُّوْا اللَّهَ الْعَافِيَةَ فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمْهُمْ
فَاصْبِرُوا وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ الْجَنَّةَ تَحْتَ ظِلَالِ السُّيُوفِ

‘(People), do not wish to meet the enemy. Instead, seek Allah’s protection. But if you meet them, then be patient and know that Paradise is in the shade of the swords.’

Then he rose again after a while and began to supplicate in words,

اللَّهُمَّ مُنْزِلَ الْكِتَابِ ، وَمُجْرِيَ السَّحَابِ ، وَهَازِمَ
الْأَحْزَابِ اهْزِمْهُمْ ، وَأَنْصُرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ

‘O our Lord. Sender of the Book, Mover of the clouds, Annihilator of the forces: inflict defeat on them and help us against them.’”

According to another report, he added the words,

فَإِنْ صَخَبُوا وَصَاحُوا فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالصَّمْتِ

‘If they shout and make noise (let them, but) you stay quiet.’

(Hakim also has a *Sahih* report about

not being noisy at the time of a battle: Shawkani).

Differences in attitudes can be observed even today. In real-time films made in the battle-fields right when fighting is going on, one can see the Americans laughing, shouting, and cursing using foul language, while the Afghans are calm and gracious (Au.).

According to another report, the Prophet said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يُحِبُّ الصُّمْتَ عِنْدَ ثَلَاثَ : عِنْدَ
تِلَاوَةِ الْقُرْآنِ وَعِنْدَ الرَّخْفِ وَعِنْدَ الْجِنَازَةِ .

“Allah approves of silence on three occasions: when the Qur’in is recited, when the battle is on and when the coffin is carried.”

Yet another report (in Tirmidhi: S. Ibrahim) reports Allah’s words:

إن عبي كل عبي الذي يذكرني وهو مناجر قرنه

“Verily, that servant is My complete servant who remembers Me on the horse-back.” That is, he remembers Allah in every situation.

Ata’ has said however, that during

[46] And obey Allah and His Messenger. Do not dispute, or you will lose heart and your strength will depart.⁸⁷ And observe patience. Surely, Allah is with the patient.

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا
وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ
الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

[47] Be not like those who came forth from their homes boastful and showing off⁸⁸ to the people,⁸⁹ and obstructing the path of Allah.⁹⁰ And Allah encompasses what they do.

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ
بَطْرًا وَرِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ﴿٤٧﴾

the battle Muslims could raise their voice slightly in remembrance of Allah (Ibn Kathir).

87. As it happened, says Mujahid, at Uhud. They disputed with the Prophet's instructions and, in consequence, met with defeat (Ibn Jarir, Shawkani).

88. The textual word for "showing off" is *riya'*. The difference between *nifaq* and *riya'* is as follows. *Nifaq* is to show off faith while concealing unfaith, and *riya'* is to show off obedience while concealing disobedience (Razi).

That is, one is the act of the heart, the other of the body (Au.).

89. Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, Suddi, Dahhak and others have said that when Abu Sufyan reached safe territory, he sent word to the Makkan army to return. But they said they would not. (Except for Banu Zuhra and Banu 'Adiyy, who returned see-

ing no point in a fight: Ibn Kathir). The Quraysh said they would rather go up to Badr, camp there for three days, drink wine, listen to songs and music, and demonstrate to the people their heroism, so that the stories of their pomp and show would be long remembered in Hejaz towns (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Zamakhshari and Razi add that earlier too, when one of the pagan chiefs sent his sons to Abu Jahl with the message that if he wished he would send his warriors to fight alongside him, Abu Jahl thanked him but turned down his offer saying, "Tell your father, 'If we are fighting Allah, as Muhammad claims, then there is no way we will win. But if we are fighting men, then, we have enough man-power.'" Then he added, "Rather, we shall go up to Badr, stay there for three days ..."

90. They did that by discouraging

[48] When Satan decked out fair to them their deeds and said, 'No one of the people can overcome you today. Indeed, I am by your side.' (But) When the two forces encountered each other, he turned on his heels saying, 'I am quit of you. I see what you do not see. I fear Allah;⁹¹ and (surely) Allah is severe of chastisement.'

وَإِذْ زَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَاهُمْ وَقَالَ لَأَغَالِبَ لَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَإِنِّي جَارٌ لَّكُمْ فَلَمَّا تَرَاءتِ الْفِئَتَانِ نَكَصَ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَقَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنْكُمْ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٤٨﴾

those who wished to embrace Islam and torturing and fighting those of them who had already embraced this religion (Ibn Jarir).

91. Ibn `Abbas, Suddi, Ibn Is-haq and others have said that when they started for Badr, Iblis appeared before the Quraysh in the form of a man called Suraqah b. Malik al-Ju`tham al-Kinani, the poet. (The Quraysh were in fact at war with this tribe and feared an attack in their absence because of old enmity: Razi). He joined their ranks and egged them on to fight the Muslims with such encouraging words as, "I am with you." He assured them that in their absence his tribe will not strike at Makkah. And, pointing to the Satans he had brought with him in men's guise he said, "These Kinanians will fight alongside you." But when the angels descended and Jibril advanced toward him while he was strolling in the field with his hand in the hand of a pagan, he disengaged

himself and began to back off quick. The pagan cried out, 'Suraqah! You were supposed to be with us?!' Iblis replied, "I am quit of you. I see what you do not see and I fear Allah. And Allah is severe of chastisement" (Zamakhshari, Ibn Jarir, Shawkani).

Reports in Waqidi and Tabarani say that when Harith tried to prevent Iblis' retreat, under the impression that he was Suraqah, Iblis gave him a big push on the chest. Harith fell down and Iblis began to run until he reached the sea, exclaiming, "O Lord. Your promise, that you will give me respite until the Day of Judgment!" Some other reports say that after Suraqa's retreat Abu Jahl told his people not to lose heart at the trick Muhammad had played on them in co-operation with Suraqah (Ibn Kathir).

It is reported that later the Quraysh questioned Suraqah b. Malik about his behavior. He flatly denied that he ever said those things (or that he had

[49] When the hypocrites and those in whose heart is sickness were saying, 'Their religion has deluded these (Muslims).'⁹² But (the truth is) whoever placed his trust in Allah, then, surely, Allah is Mighty, Wise.⁹³

إِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
مَّرَضٌ غَرَّ هَؤُلَاءِ دِينُهُمْ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى
اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٤٩﴾

accompanied them to Badr: Au.) - Shawkani.

Thanwi quotes a point from Ruh: The ineffectiveness of Satan's fear which he stated in words, "I fear Allah," proves that it is not the natural fear of Allah that is required of a believer. It is the fear which grows out of one's faith in Him which is demanded of him.

92. `Amir, Mujahid, Hasan and others have said that there were some people in Makkah who were inclined toward Islam but were held back by some doubts. They had come out along with the pagans. But when they saw a few Muslims ready to take on the formidable Quraysh, they remarked, "These have been deluded by their religion." Mujahid named them as Qays b. al-Walid b. al-Mughirah, Harith b. Zam`ah b. al-Aswad b. al-Muttalib, `Ali b. Umayyah and `Aas b. Munabbih b. al-Hajjaj (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

93. Rashid Rida, known in his own time as a "rationalist" writes: There are examples of individuals of this

Ummah who gave up all material means, placing their trust in Allah, and, so Allah placed His bounties at their disposal. Such things happened to them for which no other explanation could be offered save that Allah treated them in accordance with their trust in Him. We have the example of people such as Ibrahim b. Ad-hum. He was formerly a prince. He abandoned his kingdom and devoted himself to Allah's worship without bothering about the means of sustenance; or others, such as Ibrahim al-Khawwas, or Shaiq al-Balkhi. In fact, in our own times we encountered an example of the ancients. It was `Abdul Baqi, an Afghani scholar who, after the completion of his studies went to India to master philosophy and dialectics. But he dreamed that a very handsome person was telling him that he was playing with human secretion. He interpreted the dream as pointing to his occupation with the Greek philosophy. So he gave it up and dedicated his time to devotions. He migrated to the Arab world. He per-

[50] If you could see when the angels take the souls of the unbelievers, hitting on their faces and backs, and (saying), 'Taste the scourge of the Blazing Fire.'⁹⁴

وَأَلْو تَرَى إِذْ يَتَوَفَّى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمَلَائِكَةُ
يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبَارَهُمْ وَذُوقُوا
عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿٥٠﴾

formed Hajj on foot every year and returned to Syria, dividing his time there with us in Qalmun, Tripoli (now in Lebanon) and Hims. Then he would start off for Hijaz for the next Hajj. That was his routine every year without ever carrying with him any money. All that he would carry was a book which, after he had finished reading, would give away to someone. In free time he gave lessons in Tawhid and Principles of Religion (Usul al-Din). My own friend `Abdul Hamid Zahrawi told me that "if we had not seen this man with our own eyes, and tried him in several ways for years together, we would not have believed that this *Ummah* would have created characters such as Ibrahim b. Ad-hum or Khawas al-Balkhi."

Rashid Rida follows up with the story of his own mentor (Sheikh Muhammad `Abduh) who was living in exile in Beirut. He was approached by a close associate who told him that his father had died and he needed some

money immediately. The Sheikh says, "I had no money with me but the month's salary that I had received from the Madrasah in which I taught. And the money was meant to pay off the store from which we bought our provisions of the month. I put my trust in Allah and gave the money to the man. And what a surprise? The same day I received by telex transfer a larger sum from a man who owed it to me for a long time. The interesting part is that I had been urging the man in the past to pay back, since I was hard up, but to no avail. What other explanation was there, except that Allah had induced him to pay, and, on that particular day?"

94. Although, the immediate reference is to the pagans of Badr, but since this verse has been repeated in other chapters, it helps us understand that the application is general. Every unbeliever faces this at the time of his death (Ibn Kathir).

95. "This marks out the Just God of

[51] This is for what your hands have forwarded, and that Allah is not unjust to the slaves.⁹⁵

ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ
بِظَالِمٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ ﴿٥١﴾

[52] In the manner of Fir`awn's folk and those (who went) before them. They disbelieved in Allah's Signs. So Allah seized them for their sins. Surely, Allah is Powerful, severe of chastisement.

كَذَّابِ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ
كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٥٢﴾

[53] That because Allah would never withdraw a blessing that He conferred on a people, unless they changed what was within their selves.⁹⁶ And that, Allah is All-hearing, All-knowing.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُعَيِّرًا نِّعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا
عَلَى قَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُعَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَنَّ
اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٣﴾

[54] In the manner of Fir`awn's folk and those before them; they cried lies to the signs of their Lord, so We destroyed them for their sins and drowned Fir`awn's folk, for, they were all transgressors.

كَذَّابِ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ
كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ
وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَكُلًّا كَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ
﴿٥٤﴾

Islam from the capricious gods of polytheism and also from the 'jealous' God of the Bible. Cf. the OT: 'I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.' (Ex. 20: 5)" - Majid.

96. The immediate reference was, according to Suddi, to the Quraysh whom Allah blessed with a Prophet, but they were not grateful about it, so He turned him over to the Ansar (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Shawkani).

Zamakhshari has another point. He

asks the question as to what blessing did Fir`awn and his folk or the Quraysh possessed that was replaced with an evil? It was not after all an approved situation, that they should have been led into a disapproved one. And then answers that just as an approved situation can be altered to a disapproved one, so also, a disapproved situation can be altered to something worse than that. These people were pagans, worshiping idols: an evil situation. But, after Prophets were sent to them, but they had rejected them, their situation was turned into a worse one, calling

[55] Surely, the worst of beasts⁹⁷ in the sight of Allah are those who have rejected (this message) and, therefore, they will not believe.

إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
قَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

[56] Those, of whom you took a pledge; but every time they dishonor their pledge,⁹⁸ and they do not fear (the consequences).⁹⁹

الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتَ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ يَنْقُضُونَ
عَهْدَهُمْ فِي كُلِّ مَرَّةٍ وَهُمْ لَا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

for a punishment.

Rashid Rida adds: The wrong notion into which people keep falling, such as the Jews and Christians, or the Muslims after them, is the assumption that once Allah has placed a blessing on a people, He would not withdraw it, no matter how they respond to it. They overlook the fact that leadership of the world falls in the hands of the morally superior.

Thanwi brings out a point from Alusi's "Bab-al-Isharah": One implication of the verse is that when one gives up a voluntary good deed he used to practice, he suffers spiritual loss.

Shabbir has brought out another point from Shah `Abdul Qadir: "The textual words "ma bi-anfusihim" imply that primarily, blessings are not withdrawn without a change of heart, i.e., an alteration in beliefs and intentions. (Perhaps what he meant is that inner conditions play a greater

role than the outer ones: Au.).

97. The textual word is "dawabb" (sing. daabbah), which is employed in common parlance for beasts. Its use here for those who make little use of their power of intellect is to say in other words that they are little better than beasts (Manar and others).

98. Mujahid has said that the allusion was to Banu Qurayzah who were used to making and breaking pacts with the turn of the wind (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Zamakhshari writes: (The order in the above verse may be noted). The worst of men are the unbelievers. Then among the unbelievers the worst are those who persist in their disbelief. And the worst of those who persist are those who break their pacts after every renewal.

Shabbir adds: Those who have decided on disbelief and rebellion, and are unmindful of their ultimate end,

such indeed are the worst of animals. Pharaohs were people of the same order. The Qur'ān said about them: "Whenever a wrath fell upon them they cried out: 'O Musa. Supplicate to your Lord by the promise you have. If you will relieve us (O Musa) from this wrath, we shall believe in you and shall let go with you the Children of Israel.' But when We relieved them of the wrath until a term they were to come to, behold, they went back (on their word)." This is how the Jews behaved with the Prophet. Every time they made a treaty with him to the effect that they will not aid the pagans, they broke it. When reminded, they'd say, "Oh, we had forgotten about it."

Mawdudi comments: "After arriving in Madina, the Prophet (peace upon him) concluded a treaty of mutual co-operation and good neighborliness with them (the Jews)... But somehow the Jewish rabbis and scholars were irked by the Prophet's preaching of pure monotheism and moral uprightness, let alone his scathing criticism of the deviations which appeared in Jewish belief and conduct. They were constantly engaged, therefore, in efforts to sabotage the new religious movement. In this respect, they left no stone unturned. They collaborated with the hypocrites

who were apparently an integral part of the Muslim body-politic. To serve the same end they fanned flames to rejuvenate the old animosities between the Aws and Khazraj tribes which had brought about bloodshed and fratricide in pre-Islamic times. They attempted to hatch conspiracies against Islam in collaboration with the Quraysh and other tribes. What was all the more deplorable was that they indulged in these nefarious activities despite their treaty of friendship and co-operation with the Prophet (peace be on him.).

"... Apprehending that the victory in the battle of Badr would help the Muslims consolidate their position, they carried out their hostile activities against Islam even more vigorously. Ka'b b. Ahsraf, a Jewish chief, went to Makka personally and recited stirring elegies for their dead warriors with a view to provoking the Quraysh into hostile action against the Muslims. It was the same Ka'b b. Ashraf who considered the Muslim victory in the battle of Badr such a catastrophe that he regarded death to be better than life. In his own words: 'The earth's belly has become preferable to us than its back.' Banu Qaynuqa', a Jewish tribe, in brazen violation of their agreement of friendship and alliance with the

[57] If you come upon them in war, disperse by (means of) them those that are behind them (waiting to strike).¹⁰⁰ Haply they might remember.

فَأَمَّا تَتَقَفَّنَهُمْ فِي الْحَرْبِ فَشَرِّدْ بِهِمْ مَنْ
خَلْفَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

Muslims, took to indecent molestation and teasing the Muslim women who passed through their quarters. When the Prophet (peace be on him) reproached them for this shameful conduct, they threatened the Prophet (peace on him), saying: ‘Do not be deluded by your encounter with a people who had no knowledge of warfare, and so you had good luck with them. By God, if we were to wage war against you, you will know that we are the men.’”

Majid writes: “Of the three Jewish classes here referred to, two were sent into exile and the third exterminated. (Then he quotes): ‘They were a turbulent sect, always setting the people of Medina by the ears .. Both tribes had violated the original treaty, and had endeavored in every way to bring Mohammad and his religion to ridicule and destruction. The only question is whether their punishment was not too light. Of the third class a fearful example was made, not by Mohammad, but by an arbiter appointed by themselves’ (LSK).”

99. That is, they do not fear anything: neither the disgrace (of this world) nor the Fire (of the next) - Kashshaf.

100. The textual word “sharrid” literally stands for dispersal. But, some of the earliest commentators have said that it means, “hand down an exemplary punishment” (Razi).

Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah, Sa`id ibn Jubayr, Hasan al-Busri and others have said that the Prophet was commanded to punish those he overpowered of his opponents - who broke their pledges every now and then - in an exemplary manner so as to discourage others who were watching the events and waiting for their own chance to strike at the Muslims (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Razi comments: There are many verses that direct the Prophet to be kind and forbearing. For instance (21: 107):

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ [الأنبياء : ١٠٧]

“We have not sent you but as mercy for the worlds.”

And, (3: 159):

[58] And if you fear treachery from a people,¹⁰¹ throw back (their covenant) to them, on equal terms.¹⁰² Verily, Allah does not approve of the treacherous.¹⁰³

وَأَمَّا تَخَافَنَّ مِنْ قَوْمٍ خِيَانَةً فَانْبِذْ إِلَيْهِمْ
عَلَىٰ سَوَاءٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْخَائِنِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ [آل عمران : ١٥٩]
“But, by Allah’s grace, you are soft with them.”

But here, he was ordered to be harsh on the unbelievers because they were a people who had stayed firm on disbelief through and through (despite clear signs) and (in addition), had broken their pledges.

101. Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi and others point out that although “khawf” is the textual word used here, meaning, ‘if you fear,’ or, ‘if you are apprehensive,’ it has actually been used in the sense of “yaqin” and therefore the meaning is, “if you have definite proof of their on-coming treachery.”

102. That is, even if definite signs of treachery are noticed, the Prophet was not to strike at them immediately, rather, he was to announce that he was quit of the treaty so that they could prepare themselves for a war (that is the meaning of the words “on equal terms”), in which event he could not be said to have dishonored a treaty. This is what happened with Banu Qurayzah, who secretly lob-

bied with Abu Sufyan for revenge (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Razi points out that the rule enunciated in the verse applies to the situation where there is a strong sign of the on-coming treachery. But, when a treaty is actually broken, then, no respite need be given. For example, when the Makkans broke the treaty by attacking Banu Khuzaa`ah, there was no need to send them the information that the treaty was null and void.

Rashid Rida writes: Islam lays great stress on honoring the treaties; why not, when Allah says (8: 58):

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْخَائِنِينَ [الأنفال : ٥٨]

“Allah does not love the treacherous?”

A *hadith* preserved in Bayhaqi’s *Shu`ab al-Imān* reports Maymun b. Mahran as narrating: “In three things believers and unbelievers are ruled alike: When you have given your word, keep it, whether the other person is a Muslim or non-Muslim. If there is blood-relationship between you and another person, be

true to the relationship, whether the other person is a Muslim or a non-Muslim. And, whoever entrusted you with a trust (amanah), honor it, whether the person is a Muslim or a non-Muslim.”

Mawdudi notes: “To annul a treaty unilaterally and to launch an armed attack without any warning was a common practice in the time of ancient jahiliyyah (Ignorance). That practice remains in vogue in the ‘civilized’ jahiliyyah of the present day as well. Recent instances in point are the Russian invasion of Germany and the Russian and British military action against Iran during the Second World War. Such actions are usually justified on the ground that a previous warning would have put the enemy on the alert and would have enabled him to put up even stiffer resistance. It is also justified by saying that a military initiative has the effect of pre-emptying a similar military initiative by the enemy. If such pleading can absolve people of their moral obligations, then every offence is justifiable...”

Two decades after Mawdudi, pure jungle law prevails on the globe. The single super-power, the United State of America, goes about bombing, in peace time, any country at will, on

such false pretexts as unjustifiable to its own public (Au.).

Mawdudi also writes: “It should also be pointed out that an unannounced attack, according to Islamic law, is lawful in one situation: when the ally (perhaps he means the treaty signee: Au.) has clearly violated the treaty and has blatantly indulged in hostile action. In deriving this rule Muslim jurists have drawn on the Prophet’s own conduct in regard to the Quraysh who had breached the Hudaibiyyah Treaty in dealing with Banu Khuza`ah. In this instance, the Prophet did not notify them that the treaty had been annulled. On the contrary he invaded Makkah without a warning.”

103. “All this implies disapproval of counter-treachery even in self-defense as justified and approved by some other religions” (Majid). Therefore, Shafi` writes, no preparations for war should be made before an official announcement of annulment of the treaty is made, so that the enemy too has the same time at its disposal for preparations, as Muslims have.

Other commentators write: The earliest Muslims were very conscious of any act of treachery. Once at the time of Mu`awiyah they had made

a time-bound peace-treaty with the Romans. He wished to use the time he had until the end of the term to get his forces nearer to the enemy lines (for ease of attack as soon as the date expired). An old rider protested. He said: "Allah is Great. Allah is Great. Be true to your word and do not be treacherous. The Prophet has said,

من كان بينه وبين قوم عهد فلا يشد عقدة ، ولا
يحلها حتى يمضي أمدها ، وينبذ إليهم على سواء

"Whenever there is a treaty between a people, let them not fortify it, nor be treacherous until it expires. And then throw it back to them, on equal footing." These words reached Mu`awiyah and he gave up the idea. The Sheikh was `Amr b. `Anbasah and the narration is in Abu Da`ud, Tirmidhi, Nasa'i, and Ibn Hibban. Tirmidhi graded it Hasan *Sahih*.

Tirmidhi has also reported that once when Salman al-Farsi arrived at the foot of the (enemy) forts he told his forces: "Let me alone, until I have invited them to Islam in the manner the Prophet used to." Then he (advanced close to the walls and) called out: "I was one of you. Then Allah guided me to Islam. If you embrace Islam, you shall enjoy the same privileges as we enjoy with the same kind

of responsibilities. But if you refuse, then alternatively, agree to pay *jizyah* in humiliation. But if you refuse to do that also, then we will fight out. And Allah does not approve of the treacherous." He did that for three days. Then, on the fourth day they attacked them and by Allah's grace they were victorious. Tirmidhi graded this report Hasan *Sahih* (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi also writes: The Prophet has said in a *hadith* of Muslim:

لِكُلِّ غَادِرٍ لُؤَاءٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَرْفَعُ لَهُ بِعَدْرِ غَدْرِهِ أَلَا
وَلَا غَادِرٌ أَكْظَمُ غَدْرًا مِنْ أَمِيرٍ عَامَّةٍ

"Every treacherous person shall have a flag with him on the Day of Judgment that will go up in height in proportion to the seriousness of his treachery. Lo! There is not a treachery worse than that committed by the leader of a people."

Sayyid Qutb offers his remarks: "We might also recall at this point that these commandments were being revealed at a time when the humans did not know of any other law in affairs of war but the law of the jungle; in other words the law of force, which cannot be challenged but by force. It might also be pointed out that it was the law of the jungle which remained prevalent even after these revelations

in the rest of the non-Islamic world - until the eighteenth century. Until this time, Europe had no law of its own to follow while dealing with nations and of which we can only get some details out of what transpired between it and the Islamic world. And, even when formulated, and developed, it is still far away from the lofty ideals embodied in the Islamic law. Those who are over-impressed by the Western laws would do well to compare the two.”

Without provoking any controversy, one might point out that once again in the 21st century, the Western world demonstrated that it has returned to the jungle law. The “Iran-Contra Affair” reveals that those in charge of subversion of foreign countries in USA, openly admitted that they believed in no law when the security of their country was, presumably, involved. The Jews in Palestine regularly rape boys, the Americans raped them in Iraq, and the allied Western forces in Afghanistan cut out body parts of the fallen Afghans as trophies. They are too soon back to the jungle-law, after a brief pretense of civilization.

Here are excerpts from a single article on atrocities in Iraq:

“Casual killing started early in the invasion. Corporal Russ Aston, who later died in an assault on a police station in Al Majar, wrote, in March 2003 : “ I’ve shot 4-5 Iraqis and one of them was quite young, about 14-15 ... I felt bad at the time, but I’m OK now.” In a call to his mother he reportedly said: “It’s just killing for killing’s sake out here ... I don’t know how I am going to cope with what I’ve seen.”

Perhaps the most detailed account of the treatment of Iraqis by the British forces can be found in the legal Inquiry in to the death of Baha Mousa (26) a receptionist at Basra’s Haitham Hotel. The father of two, whose 22 year old wife had recently died of cancer, was arrested with nine others, on 14th September 2003, by personnel of the 1st Battalion, The Queen’s Lancashire Regiment. Two days later he was dead, with “at least” ninety three injuries to his body, including fractured ribs and a broken nose

Deaths at the hands of the army, disputed by the Ministry of Defence, include twenty Iraqis, which witnesses claimed were taken to the British base at Amara, on 14th May 2004. Undisputed is that the next day twenty bodies were returned

[59] *And let not the unbelievers think they have outsmarted (Us). They will not be able to frustrate (Us).*¹⁰⁴

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَبَقُوا إِنَّهُمْ لَا يُعْجِزُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

to their families. Injuries alleged included evidence of torture, mutilation, removal of eyes, and stab wounds, according to lawyers. (See source below).

The above account is not the tip of the iceberg. Thousands of pages will be required for a fuller account of the jungle law.

“... killed wantonly, tortured ... the people of that unhappy land have lost everything — their homes, their schools, their electricity, their clean water, their environment, their neighborhoods, their mosques, their archaeology, their jobs, their careers, their professionals, their state-run enterprises, their physical health, their mental health, their health care, their welfare state, their women’s rights, their religious tolerance, their safety, their security, their children, their parents, their past, their present, their future, their lives ...

“More than half the population either dead, wounded, traumatized,

in prison, internally displaced, or in foreign exile ... The air, soil, water, blood and genes drenched with depleted uranium ... the most awful birth defects ... unexploded cluster bombs lie in wait for children to pick them up ... a river of blood runs alongside the Euphrates and Tigris ... through a country that may never be put back together again.” (Source: British Military in Iraq: A Shocking Legacy, By Felicity Arbuthnot, Global Research.ca/, USA Trends, etc.)

What happened in Iraq, Afghanistan, and happens in Palestine on daily basis, is so horrendous, that it has led many intellectuals to lose hope in humanity, and consider the situation in the West as irredeemable (Au.).

104. Plainly, the allusion is to those who escaped unscathed at Badr (Qurtubi); as also those unbelievers who never participated in that battle (Razi).

[60] And prepare against them¹⁰⁵ whatever you are able of power¹⁰⁶ and tethered horses¹⁰⁷ to terrify thereby Allah's enemy, and your enemy,¹⁰⁸ and those others besides them whom you do not know.¹⁰⁹ Allah knows them. And whatsoever you expend in the way of Allah will be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged.¹¹⁰

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مِمَّا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْمِيُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَآخَرِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

105. This verse is connected with verses 57 and 58 in which the Prophet was asked to act tough with the unbelievers, fling their treacherous treaties at their faces, and prepare himself to fight against them if they chose to fight (Razi).

106. `Uqbah b. `Amir has reported that the Prophet (*saws*) spoke from the pulpit:

أَلَا إِنَّ الْقُوَّةَ الرَّمْيَ أَلَا إِنَّ الْقُوَّةَ الرَّمْيَ

“Lo! Shooting (ramyu) is the power - twice.” It should be obvious, however, adds Ibn Jarir, that what is meant is all kinds of arms and equipment.

The *hadith* is in Muslim (Qurtubi), while one in Ahmad says,

ارْمُوا وَارْكَبُوا وَأَنْ تَرْمُوا أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ أَنْ تَرْكَبُوا

“Shoot and ride, but to me, that you shoot is better than that you ride” (Ibn Kathir).

Another *hadith* (of Muslim) says:

سَنَفْتَحُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَرْضُونَ وَيَكْفِيكُمْ اللَّهُ فَلَا يَعْجِزُ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يُلْهُوَ بِأَسْهُمِهِ

“Shortly territories will be vanquished for you. Allah will be sufficient for you. But do not give up shooting practice.”

We have another tradition in Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi and Nasa'i. It says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يُدْخِلُ بِالسَّهْمِ الْوَاحِدِ ثَلَاثَةَ نَفَرٍ الْجَنَّةَ : صَانِعُهُ يَحْتَسِبُ فِي صَنْعَتِهِ الْخَيْرَ وَالرَّامِيَ بِهِ وَمُنْبِلُهُ

“Allah sends to Paradise three people because of a single arrow: the one who manufactured it seeking Allah's Pleasure, the one who shot it, and the one who collected it.”

Shooting is therefore, one of the best of military exercises. It drives fear into the enemies. The Prophet has also said:

ارْمُوا يَا بَنِي إِسْمَاعِيلَ فَإِنَّ أَبَاكُمْ كَانَ رَامِيًا

“Shoot, O sons of Isma`il. Your father was a shooter.”

Accordingly, learning to shoot and to ride horses is a conditional obligation (fard al-kifayah).

Quotations from Qurtubi end here.

Is there anything, in today's warfare better than shooting - bullets, bombs and missiles (Au.)?

107. Asad writes: ‘Lit., “tethering of horses” (ribat al-khayl): an expression which signifies “holding in readiness mounted troops at all points open to enemy invasion (thughur)”; hence, tropically, the over-all maintenance of military preparedness.’

Ibn Sirin was asked about someone who had willed that one-third of his wealth was to be spent in the construction of a fort. (But since there was no fort around under construction) what was to be done? He replied, “Let them buy a horse and send it to the front so that someone could fight on it.” They asked, “But the man had left the money for a fort!” Ibn Sirin replied, “Have you not heard the poetical piece: “Surely, the fort of horses that deters, is the wall for the villagers.”

It is reported of the Prophet that there was nothing dearer to him after women than horses. (In fact, the

Prophet was so fond of horses that) he even named the kinds and classes that might be kept. There are *ahadith* in Muslim, Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi and others to this effect (Alusi).

It is also said that the Jinn do not come near dwellings that have horses tied around (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

A *hadith* in Nasa'i transmitted by Abu Wuhayb al-Jushamiyy says:

وَأَحَبُّ الْأَسْمَاءِ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَعَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ وَأَرْبَطُوا الْخَيْلَ وَأَمْسَحُوا بِنَوَاصِيهَا وَأَكْفَأُهَا

“ The names most approved of by Allah are `Abdullah and `Abdul Rahman. And keep horses. Stroke them on their foreheads and backs” (Shortened) - Qurtubi.

A *hadith* of the *Sahihayn* says:

الْخَيْلُ لِرَجُلٍ أَجْرٌ وَلِرَجُلٍ سِتْرٌ وَعَلَى رَجُلٍ وَرْدٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِي لَهُ أَجْرٌ فَرَجُلٌ رَطَطَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَأَطَالَ بِهَا فِي مَرْجٍ أَوْ رَوْضَةٍ فَمَا أَصَابَتْ فِي طِيلِهَا ذَلِكَ مِنَ الْمَرْجِ أَوْ الرَّوْضَةِ كَانَتْ لَهُ حَسَنَاتٍ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُ انْقَطَعَ طِيلُهَا فَاسْتَنْتَّ شَرَفًا أَوْ شَرَفِينَ كَانَتْ آثَارُهَا وَأَرْوَاتُهَا حَسَنَاتٍ لَهُ وَلَوْ أَتَتْهَا مَرْتٌ بِنَهْرٍ فَشَرِبَتْ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يَسْقِيَ كَانَ ذَلِكَ حَسَنَاتٍ لَهُ فَهِيَ لِذَلِكَ أَجْرٌ وَرَجُلٌ رَطَطَهَا تَعَبًا وَتَعَفُّمًا ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْسَ حَقَّ اللَّهِ فِي رِقَابِهَا وَلَا ظُهُورِهَا فَهِيَ لِذَلِكَ سِتْرٌ وَرَجُلٌ رَطَطَهَا فَخْرًا وَرِيَاءً وَنَوَاءً لِأَهْلِ الْإِسْلَامِ فَهِيَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ وَرْدٌ

“There are three kinds of horses:

(i) that of a man for whom it is a (source of) reward, (ii) that of a man for whom it is a shield, and

(iii) that of a man upon whom it is a burden. The man who has the reward is the one who kept it for Allah's cause. When he lets it loose with a long rope into a grazing ground or in an orchard, then, whatever is circumscribed of the reeds or leaves of grass by its rope thereof, brings him as many rewards. And, if by chance it breaks loose and jumps over a few hedges, then whatever dung it throws out or the marks of its hoofs that it leaves behind, will bring him rewards. If it stops at a spring and drinks thereof, even if the owner did not intend to water it, yet, it brings rewards to him. In contrast, another man keeps a horse as a means of wealth, so that he may shield himself (from poverty). He does not forget Allah's right on its neck or the back (i.e., pays zakah on what he earns using it as a puller or as a beast of ride), then for such a man it is a shield. As for him who kept it for pride, to show off, or in offence of the Muslims, then, for such a man it is a burden." At that somebody asked him about donkeys. The Prophet (*saws*) replied,

مَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيَّ فِيهَا شَيْءٌ إِلَّا هَذِهِ الْأَيَّةُ الْجَامِعَةُ الْقَادَةُ
{ فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ
ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ }

"Nothing specific has come down to me about donkeys, except for the comprehensive verse (99: 7, 8): "Therefore, whoever did a good deed the size of an atom, will see it. And whoever did an evil deed the size of an atom, will see it (also)."

The version above is that of Bukhari. Another *hadith* in Ahmad puts it plainly. It says:

الْحَيْلُ ثَلَاثَةٌ فَفَرَسٌ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَفَرَسٌ لِلْإِنْسَانِ وَفَرَسٌ
لِلشَّيْطَانِ فَأَمَّا فَرَسُ الرَّحْمَنِ فَالَّذِي يَرْبُطُ فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ فَعَلْفُهُ وَرَوْثُهُ وَبَوْلُهُ وَذَكَرَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَأَمَّا فَرَسُ
الشَّيْطَانِ فَالَّذِي يَقَامُرُ أَوْ يُرَاهُنَّ عَلَيْهِ وَأَمَّا فَرَسُ
الْإِنْسَانِ فَالْفَرَسُ يَرْبِطُهَا الْإِنْسَانُ يَلْتَمِسُ بَطْنَهَا
فَهِيَ تَسْتُرُ

"Of horses there are three kinds: for the Rahman, for Satan and for man. The horse for the Rahman is the one which is kept for Allah's cause (i.e., *jihad*). Its fodder, dung, and urine (all bring rewards to the master). As for the horse for Satan, it is that which is kept for betting (i.e., for races). As for the horse for man, it is that which is kept for earning livelihood. It shields the master from poverty."

Another report in Bukhari has the Prophet (*saws*) saying:

الْحَيْلُ مَعْفُودٌ فِي تَوَاصِيهَا الْحَبِيرُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ الْأَجْرُ
وَالْمَعْتَمُ

[61] However, if they incline to peace, then you incline to it (also)¹¹¹ and place your trust in Allah. Surely, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.¹¹²

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦١﴾

“Horses’ forehead are bound with blessings until the day of Judgment: rewards and spoils of war” (Ibn Kathir).

Majid writes: “In ancient times of course, ‘battles were won and lost by cavalry, and campaigns were conducted in terms of cavalry,’ and ‘almost every decisive tactical movement was a movement of horse’ (Hilaire Belloc, *The Crusades*, p. 50).”

108. Asad comments: ‘Lit., “God’s enemy and your enemy” - implying that every “enemy of God” (i.e., everyone who deliberately opposes and seeks to undermine the moral laws laid down by God) is, eo ipso, an enemy of those who believe in Him.’

109. Apart from many others, Imām Razi counts the hypocrites also as those who will be terrified and may, consequently, give up their machinations. They might as well be led to adopt Islam sincerely, since they are easily impressed by the display of strength.

110. That is, whatever you will expend in preparation of defense of

Islam will bring its reward both in this world as well as in the next (Ibn Jarir).

111. “In working for peace there may be a certain risk of treachery on the other side. We must take that risk; because the men of Faith have Allah’s aid to count upon and the strength of the united body of the righteous” (Yusuf Ali).

Although, the verb form is that of a command, the Prophet (*saws*), and after him the faithful have a choice. If they think making peace would suit them, they could. Further, the words “if they incline to peace” suggest that it is the enemies who show readiness to work out a peace formula and not the Muslims. It is not the Muslims who should offer the proposal since that would be construed as weakness on their part (Shafi’).

The rule here applies however, add Qurtubi and Razi, only to the Holders of the Book. As for the polytheists, there should be no peace with them. Rather, Muslims should fight on until either they embrace Islam or cough out *Jizyah*. Further, the

[62] But if they try to deceive you, then, Allah is sufficient for you.¹¹³ He it is who supported you (O Muhammad) with His help and with the believers.¹¹⁴

وَإِنْ يُرِيدُوا أَنْ يَخْدَعُوكَ فَإِنَّ حَسْبَكَ
اللَّهُ هُوَ الَّذِي أَيْدَكَ بِبَنِيهِ
وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٢﴾

period of peace agreement will depend on the situation. If the Muslims are strong, they might allow them a year. But if they are weak, they might allow them 10 years, but no more than that. In fact, according to Imām Shafē`i it is not lawful to strike a peace deal with the pagans lasting more than ten years. This is following the Prophetic Sunnah who had allowed the pagans 10 years at Hudaibiyyah.

112. Yusuf Ali writes: "While we must always be ready for the good fight lest it be forced on us, even in the midst of the fight we must always be ready for peace if there is any inclination towards peace on the other side. There is no merit merely in a fight by itself. It should be a joyful duty not for itself, but to establish the reign of peace and righteousness and Allah's law."

113. Mawdudi comments: "In international dealings Muslims should not act with timidity. They should rather have faith in God and should act with courage and bravery. However, as soon as the enemy is in-

clined to reconciliation, they should welcome the move and should not be reluctant to make peace even if they are unsure whether or not the enemy is sincere about peace, and whether or not he intends to use the settlement as a ruse to commit later treachery. Since it is impossible to know the true intention of others, allowance should be made for their words. If the enemy is sincere in his offer of reconciliation, the Muslims should not continue bloodshed because his insincerity, in their eyes, is suspect. On the contrary, if the enemy is insincere, the Muslims should have courage, thanks to their trust in God, and should go forth for reconciliation. They should stretch out their hand of peace in answer to the enemy's outstretched hand, for that is an index of their moral superiority. As for the hand of friendship which has been hypocritically stretched out in enmity, Muslims should have the strength to smash that hand to pieces."

114. Imām Razi asks: Is there a need for any other's help after Allah's? Ob-

[63] *And He brought their hearts together (in love). Had you spent all that the earth holds, you could not have brought their hearts together.*¹¹⁵ *Rather, it was Allah who brought them together.*¹¹⁶ *Surely He is All-mighty, All-wise.*¹¹⁷

وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعاً مَّا أَلَّفْتَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ أَلَّفَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾

viously not. Why then did Allah add the support of the believers after His own? He answers that of help there are two kinds: the apparent and the unapparent. Allah's help is unapparent. But when it descends, it has to take the form of visible means. That has been termed here as the help coming from the believers.

115. The interminable wars between the Aws and Khazraj tribes can be cited as an instance of hatred and intolerance toward each other. These kinds of protracted warfare cannot be brought to an abrupt end. Every last battle demands a new one. And the people involved, in those times, were so conscious of their rights that a tribe would fight another if one of its members was slapped by a member of another tribe. But the light of belief brought the episodes to a sudden close. Even more. After Islam, a man fought against his father or son in a battle, not hesitating to kill him. It was the power of faith that had conquered the hearts. Allah said (3: 103):

وَادْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ
قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا [آل عمران : ١٠٣]

“Recall Allah’s favor unto you (such as) when you were enemies He joined your hearts in love so that by His grace you became brothers (unto each other)” (based on Razi, Ibn Kathir).

Herewith the same point in Mawdu-di’s words: “It was barely a couple of years before their acceptance of Islam that the two clans (Aws and Khazraj) virtually thirsted for each other’s blood. During the battle of Bu`ath both seemed set to totally exterminate each other. To turn such severe enmity into deep cordiality and brotherhood within a span of two or three years and to join together mutually repellent elements into a unity as firm as that of a solid wall as was witnessed in regard to the Muslim community during the life of the Prophet (peace on him) was doubtlessly beyond the power of any mortal.”

And, Ibn `Abbas has said: “Blood relationships are severed. Good turns are denied. But nothing has been observed equaling the coming together of hearts” (Ibn Kathir).

Walid ibn Abi Mughith says that once when he met Mujahid he said, “When two Muslims meet each other and shake hands, they both are forgiven their sins.” Walid asked, “Merely by virtue of a hand-shake?” Mujahid replied, “Have you not heard Allah say, ‘Had you spent all that is there in the earth, you could not have brought their hearts together?’”

According to another report when Mujahid said, “When two Muslims meet and shake hands, their sins fall like the leaves of a tree in Fall,” somebody remarked, “That’s pretty easy, is it not?” Mujahid said, “Do not say that. Has not Allah said, ‘Had you spent ...’” (Ibn Jarir).

The above narration, concerning the sins of two Muslims falling off like leaves when they greet each other with a hand-shake, has been preserved in Tabarani as a *hadīth* (Ibn Kathir).

Imām Razi adds: Only that love can be long-lasting that has a long-lasting relationship as its basis, in this case, the Hereafter. All other kinds of love

are ephemeral, because in their final analysis, they are material-based. Friends fall apart as soon as worldly reasons that brought them together disappear.

Thanwi adds a Sufistic point: The verse demonstrates that to put a good quality into the heart of a disciple is not in the power of the Sheikh.

116. Mufti Shafi` comments: The need for of unity is something over which there can be no second opinion. But, although everyone speaks of it, there are few who realize how it can be achieved. They do not understand that it cannot be achieved by material means. It is only Allah who can create it among a people and the requirement is His obedience. The Qur`in has therefore instructed us (3: 103):

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا [آل عمران :
[١٠٣

“Hold on unto the rope of Allah together, and do not differ.”

That is, if everyone held the rope of Allah, viz., the Qur`in and Sunnah, unitedly, all the differences will dissolve and a true unity will appear. The Qur`in has promised us (19: 96):

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ
وُدًّا [مريم : ٩٦]

“Surely, those who believed and

did righteous deeds, Allah will create love among them."

There would still be room for differences in opinion: but since everyone would remain within the Shari`ah directives, it will not lead to a split in the people. It is only when the Shari`ah rules are ignored, that differences leading to disunity arise. If the Shari`ah is not the basis, then, obviously, everyone will have his own opinion and hence a true unity will remain a dream, and, even if achieved, would have a short life.

A unity which has Allah's love as the basis, can never lead to disunity. When the battle of Jamal was over, fighters of both the sides - `Ali and `A'isha – met in the tents the same evening and cried bitterly for what had transpired in the battle-field (Au.).

117. Sayyid presents a few *ahadith* on the subject of 'love in God.' The Prophet has said in a *hadith* of Abu Da'ud:

”إن من عباد الله لأناساً ما هم بأنبياء، ولا شهداء، يغبطهم الأنبياء والشهداء يوم القيامة لِمَكَانِهِمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ“ قالوا: يا رسول الله تخبرنا من هم، قال: ”هم قومٌ تحابوا بروح الله على غير أرحامٍ بينهم، ولا أموالٍ يتعاطونها، فوالله إن وجوههم لنور، وإنهم لعلى نور: لا يخافون إذا خاف الناس، ولا يحزنون إذا حزن الناس“ وقرأ هذه الآية {أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ}

“There are some among the people who are neither Prophets nor martyrs. But Prophets and martyrs will envy them on the Day of Judgment because of their rank with Allah.” His Companions asked: “Messenger of Allah. Will you let us know who they are?” He replied: “They are a people who love each other in Allah, without being related by blood, nor because of monetary dealings between them. By Allah, their faces will be shining bright and they will be (seated) upon (couches of) Light. They will not be in fear when everyone will be in a state of fear and will not grieve when others grieve.”

In another report preserved by Tabarani he said:

”إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمَ إِذَا لَقِيَ أَخَاهُ فَأَخَذَ بِيَدِهِ تَحَاتَّتْ عَنْهُمَا ذُنُوبُهُمَا، كَمَا يَتَحَاتُّ الْوَرَقُ الْيَابِسُ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ فِي يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ، وَإِلَّا غُفِرَ لَهُمَا وَإِنْ كَانَتْ ذُنُوبُهُمَا مِثْلَ رَبْدِ الْبَحْرِ“

“When a Muslim meets a brother-Muslim, and holds his hand, their sins fall off, as the leaves fall down in autumn from a dried tree on a day of hard winds. And their sins are forgiven even if they be equal to the foam of the seas.”

[64] O Prophet! Sufficient for you is Allah and those who have followed you of the believers.¹¹⁸

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَسْبُكَ اللَّهُ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ
مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

[65] O Prophet! Urge on the believers to fight.¹¹⁹ If there be twenty of you - steadfast - they will overcome two hundred. And if there be a hundred of you, they will overcome a thousand of those who have disbelieved¹²⁰ - because they are a people who do not understand.¹²¹

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى الْقِتَالِ
إِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ عِشْرُونَ صَابِرُونَ يَغْلِبُوا
مِئَتِينَ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِئَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفًا
مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ
﴿٦٥﴾

118. It is widely reported of Ibn `Abbas and Sa`id ibn Jubayr - as in Zamakhshari and others - that this verse was revealed when `Umar became the fortieth man to embrace Islam.

119. Accordingly, we find that whenever the forces lined up, the Prophet urged the believers to fight for Paradise. For instance, at Badr he addressed them in words,

فُؤُمُوا إِلَى جَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ. قَالَ يَقُولُ
عُمَيْرُ بْنُ الحُمَامِ الأَنْصَارِيُّ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ جَنَّةٌ عَرْضُهَا
السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ قَالَ « تَعَمَّ ». قَالَ بِيحِ بِيحِ. فَقَالَ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - « مَا يَحْمِلُكَ
عَلَى قَوْلِكَ بِيحِ بِيحِ ». قَالَ لَا وَاللَّهِ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِلَيَّ
رِجَاءَةٌ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا. قَالَ « فَإِنَّكَ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا
». فَأَخْرَجَ تَمْرَاتٍ مِنْ قَرْيَةِ فَجَعَلَ يَأْكُلُ مِنْهُنَّ ثُمَّ
قَالَ لَبِنٌ أَنَا حَبِيبٌ حَتَّى أَكُلَ تَمْرَاتِي هَذِهِ إِنَّهَا حَيَاةٌ
طَوِيلَةٌ - قَالَ - فَرَمَى بِمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنَ التَّمْرِ. ثُمَّ
قَاتَلَهُمْ حَتَّى قُتِلَ.

“Rise up for a Paradise whose expanse is the heavens and the

earth.” At that `Umayr b. al-Humam asked, “The expanse of the heavens and the earth?!” The Prophet replied, “Yes.” He said, “Bravo. Bravo.” The Prophet asked, “What made you say that?” He replied, “Hoping to be one of its inhabitants.” The Prophet said, “You are one of its inhabitants.” The man advanced, broke the sheathe of his sword, and bringing out some dates began to chew. Then he threw them away, muttering, “If I am to stay alive until I have finished them, that would be a long life.” Then he advanced into the enemy lines until he was martyred (Ibn Kathir).

120. It has been reported that when it was said by the Qur`in that Muslims were not to retreat against a force ten times their size, they felt it hard to do that and so Allah granted

them concession. Now they are not to be disheartened confronting a force twice their size (Ibn Jarir).

A report to this effect is in Bukhari (Ibn Kathir).

Thus, the second alternative does not abrogate the first (Qurtubi).

121. To combine and summarize what Ibn Jarir has to report of the opinions of the first generation scholars is as follows: The implication of the words, "that is because they are a people who do not understand," is that the unbelievers have no understanding of the truth or falsehood, and therefore, cannot justify, in their hearts, what they are fighting for. This lack of conviction about the causes leads them to an inner weakness and consequently to defeat.

Sayyid Qutb elaborates: "What's the connection between victory and understanding? Apparently, there seems to be none. But there is an underlying powerful connection. The Muslim-group stands out because it knows its path and understands its direction. It knows the purpose of its own existence and is cognizant of its ultimate goal. It knows the truth of Divinity and the truth of submission.

It has the understanding that the Divinity has to have an over-arching position and that submission has to be for Him alone and none else. The Muslim *Ummah* knows that it has to be guided by Allah's guidance, that it has to move forward by the leave of Allah for the release of the people from the slavery of their own kind, and to bind them to the slavery of Allah. It realizes that it happens to be Allah's vicegerent on the earth: enjoying its existence not for its own sake, rather to hold aloft Allah's Word by way of its own utmost struggle, in order that the earth may be inhabited by right and the judgment among the people be by right, and, in order that Allah's kingdom be established on the earth. Realizations of this sort fill the heart of the Muslim-group with light, trust, power, and faith. These inner forces urge the group onward to *jihad* with confidence in the future adding to its power. In contrast, its adversaries are a people who "do not understand." Their hearts are locked up, eyes are blind, and strength weak - whatever the apparent material strength - for the power they possess has been severed off its source."

[66] (However) Allah has now lightened it for you¹²² knowing that there is weakness in you. So, if there be a hundred of you - steadfast - they will overcome two hundred. And if there be a thousand of you, they will overcome two thousand by the leave of Allah.¹²³ And Allah is with the steadfast.

الآن خَفَّفَ اللهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ
ضَعْفًا فَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِثَّةٌ صَابِرَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا
مِثَّتَيْنِ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أَلْفٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفَيْنِ
بِإِذْنِ اللهِ وَاللهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

[67] It is not for any Prophet that he should have captives¹²⁴ before he has inflicted massacre in the land.¹²⁵ You desire the chance goods of the world, but Allah desires the Hereafter.¹²⁶ And Allah is All-mighty, All-wise.

مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيِّ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ أُسْرَى حَتَّى
يُثَخِّنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تُرِيدُونَ عَرَصَ الدُّنْيَا
وَاللهُ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ وَاللهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ
﴿٦٧﴾

122. This part of the verse makes it clear that the earlier part was a commandment and not the statement of a fact. That is, twenty Muslims were required to fight 200 unbelievers (Razi).

123. When a few face a difficult task, everybody puts in his best efforts knowing that his slackness can lead to failure of the group. But when they are in a large number, then the individual takes the efforts of the others for granted, and assumes that his own slackness will not have a serious effect. This could be the reason why Allah lightened and ordered that if the Muslims are a thousand, they should not flee against two thousand (Thanwi).

124. Asad points out what some Qur'anic readers miss to note: 'As

almost always in the Qur'in, an injunction addressed to the Prophet is, by implication, binding on his followers as well. Consequently, the above verse lays down that no person may be taken, or for any time retained, in captivity unless he was taken prisoner in *jihad* - that is, a holy war in defence of the Faith or of freedom - and, therefore, the acquisition of a slave by "peaceful" means, and the keeping of a slave thus acquired, is entirely prohibited: which to all practical purposes, amounts to a prohibition of slavery as a "social institution".'

125. Yusuf Ali comments: 'Destruction and slaughter, however repugnant to a gentle soul like that of Muhammad, were inevitable where evil tried to suppress the good. Even

Jesus, whose mission was more limited, had to say: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword." (Matt, x. 34).'

Majid explains *Jihad* and quotes from older Scriptures. He writes: "The object of the Islamic *jihad* being the extirpation of the forces of paganism and the restoration of the kingdom of God, there was no sense in the warrior-prophet sheathing his sword until the culprits had got their desert and their capacity for mischief utterly smashed. Cf. the far more rigid military law of the OT: 'And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword' (Dt. 20: 13). 'And this is the thing that ye shall do. Ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that hath lain by man' (Ju. 21: 11). Among the Jews, 'if a city resisted their summons, the males without distinction, were put to the sword; the seven nations of Canaan were dashed to destruction; and neither repentance nor conversion could shield them from the inevitable doom, that no creature within their precincts should be left alive' (GRE. V. p. 359)."

126. The following has come down as the context of revelation. It is reported by `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud that when seventy of the Quraysh were taken captive, the Prophet sought counsel of the Companions as to what should be done with them. Abu Bakr suggested, "Messenger of Allah. They are your kinsfolk and tribesmen. So, hold on for a while. Maybe Allah will turn to them in mercy." `Umar said, "They are a people who cried lies to you and banished you. So, behead them all." Another companion, `Abdullah ibn Rawaha suggested, "Look for a wooded valley. Shut them up therein and set the whole place on fire." At that `Abbas said to him, "Man. You have severed blood-ties." The Prophet himself said nothing. So the opinion of the people got divided between the opinions of Abu Bakr, `Umar and `Abdullah ibn Rawaha. Finally, he came out to them and said, "There are people whose hearts are as soft as milk. There are others whose heart is as hard as stones. Your example, O Abu Bakr is similar to that of Ibrahim who said,

فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ كَغُورٍ رَحِيمٍ
[إبراهيم : ٣٦]

'Whoever followed me, is of me. As for him who disobeyed me, then, You are,

(our Lord,) All-forgiving, All-Kind.’
And, your example, O Abu Bakr, is
similar to that of Jesus who said,

وَإِنْ تَعْفُرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ [المائدة :
[١١٨

‘If you forgive them (today), then,
(after all) they are Your slaves.’ And
your example, O `Umar, is similar to
that of Nuh who said,

رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَيَّ الْأَرْضِ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ دَيَّارًا [نوح
[٢٦ :

‘My Lord. Do not leave of the unbe-
lievers any dwelling in the land.’ And
your example, O Abu Rawaha is that
of Musa who said,

رَبَّنَا اطْمِسْ عَلَيَّ أَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاشْدُدْ عَلَيَّ قُلُوبَهُمْ فَلَا
يُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّى يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ [يونس : ٨٨

‘O Allah, destroy their wealth and
harden their hearts so that they do not
believe until they have experienced a
severe chastisement.’ Then the Proph-
et added, “Today you are in poor
economic circumstances. Therefore,
do not release any of them without
a ransom, or behead him.” At that
`Abdullah ibn Mas`ud interjected,
“Save for Suhayl ibn Bayda’ for he
used to indulge in disinformation
against Islam.” The Prophet stayed
quiet for a while and `Abdullah ibn
Mas`ud says he was so fearful dur-
ing those moments as never before in
his life. He feared that a stone from

the heaven would crash on his head,
until the Prophet said, “Except for
Suhayl b. Bayda’.” Then came down
the verse,

مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ أَسْرَى لَهُ أُسْرَى حَتَّى يُثْخِنَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ [الأنفال : ٦٧

“And it is not for any Prophet
that he should have captives (of
war) before he has inflicted a mas-
sacre in the land.”

(The *hadith* is also in Hakim’s Mus-
tadrak and, in his opinion, of trust-
worthy narrators: Ibn Kathir).

That said, the report about the
Prophet’s words, viz., “Today you
are in poor economic circumstances”
has been declared weak by Shu`ayb
al-Arna`ut (Au.).

According to other reports, when
`Umar was consulted on that occa-
sion, he said: “I do not agree with
Abu Bakr’s opinion. I believe you
should hand over to each of us, his
kin taken captive, so that he can be-
head him. So, let `Ali kill (his brother)
`Aqil, Hamza kill (his brother)
`Abbas and let me kill so and so
(who was related to `Umar on his
wife’s side).” Later, `Umar happened
to chance upon the two - the Proph-
et and Abu Bakr - and found them
weeping. He asked, “Tell me, what
is it about that you weep so that I
could also weep, or at least make an

effort.” The Prophet replied, “I weep because of what my Companions were exposed to because of their acceptance of ransom (from the captives).” Then, pointing to a tree nearby he added, “Your chastisement was shown to me nearer than this tree.” Some other reports, e.g., one in Ibn Is-haq, say that had the chastisement come down none would have escaped (of the Companions) but `Umar and Sa`d b. Mu`adh. That is because, while the Companions were collecting booty, Sa`d’s face betrayed displeasure. He was then guarding the Prophet. He remarked: “It looks like you do not approve of what the people are doing.” Sa`d replied: “Yes. This is the first occasion and I believe a thorough massacre was the right thing to attempt” (Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others).

Sayyid adds: “There was another meaning that was meant to be impressed on the minds. It was best paraphrased by `Umar when he said: ‘(The massacre should have been carried on) in order that Allah knows that there is no soft corner for the pagans in our hearts.’”

Ibn `Abbas, Dahhak and others have said, however, that this rule (of a good measure of massacre before

prisoners are taken) applied only to Badr, because Muslims were then weak, and few in numbers. (They ought to have aimed at eliminating their enemy, especially the chiefs of the Quraysh: Au.). Subsequently, Allah revealed (47: 4):

فَأَمَّا مَنَّا بَعْدُ وَإِنَّمَا فَدَاؤُا [محمد : ٤]

“Then, after that, either confer favor (upon them) or (impose) ransom.”

With the revelation of this verse Muslims were free to either slaughter their enemies in the battle-field or take them prisoners. Thereafter, they were free to release them without ransom, or, alternatively, demand ransom (Ibn Jarir).

There is another report in Hakim’s Mustadrak which says that `Abbas was taken prisoner by an Ansari. The Ansar threatened him that they would kill him. The report reached the Prophet. He said, “I did not sleep last night, worried over my uncle `Abbas who has been threatened with death by the Ansar.” `Umar asked, “Shall I go to them?” He replied, “Yes.” So `Umar went to the Ansar and demanded that `Abbas be released. They refused. `Umar asked, “Even if we have the Prophet’s approval?” They said, “If you have the Prophet’s approval, then you can

take him with you.” Having secured his release `Umar told `Abbas, “`Abbas, I wish you would accept Islam. By Allah, your conversion to Islam is dearer to me than that of (my father) Khattab. And that is because I believe the Prophet would be pleased if you embraced Islam” (Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir also report under the following verses that the Prophet could not sleep the night after Badr-battle. When somebody inquired, he said that he could hear the sound of `Abbas' chains. So they unbound him and the Prophet slept thereafter. Bukhari also reports that the Ansar wished to free him without ransom. But the Prophet opposed the idea saying, “Do not forgive anything.” Other reports say that when ransom was demanded of `Abbas, he appealed to the Prophet saying, “Messenger of Allah, you know that I was a Muslim (all along).” The Prophet told him, “Allah knows best about your Islam. If you are true, Allah will recompense you. As for us, apparently, you were with the unbelievers. Therefore, you ought to not only release yourself on ransom but pay up for your nephews Nawfal b. Harith and `Aqil b. Abi Talib too, as well as for your ally `Utbah b. `Amr.” `Abbas protested, “Where am I going to get all the money from?” The

Prophet asked, “What about the treasure you and your wife Umm al-Fadl secretly buried? You told her, ‘If I am struck, then this money is for you, for Fadl’s children `Abdullah and Quthum.’” `Abbas said, “By Allah, O Allah’s Apostle, you are surely a Messenger of Allah. (According to another narration: “I was in some doubt about it, but today I feel very sure”). No one knew about this except me and Umm al-Fadl. In any case, if you have to take ransom from me then treat the 20 Awqiyah that I had on me when I was captured as part of the sum (It had been confiscated of him).” The Prophet told him, “That will not do. That was Allah’s bounty that He bestowed on us.” So, `Abbas released himself and the others and Allah revealed:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِمَنْ فِي أَيْدِيكُمْ مِنَ الْأَسْرَىٰ إِنِّي عَلَّمُ
اللَّهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ خَيْرًا مِّمَّا أُخِذَ مِنْكُمْ
[الأنفال : ٧٠]

“O Prophet! Say to the prisoners in your hand, ‘If Allah knows of goodness in your hearts, He will grant you better than what has been taken from you.’”

Qurtubi adds: Some reports suggest that it was on that day that `Abbas embraced Islam. It is also said that `Abbas was a huge man, while his captor was a puny Ansari. The

[68] *If not for a writing of Allah preceding, surely, a mighty chastisement would have touched you for what you took.*¹²⁷

لَوْلَا كِتَابٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ سَبَقَ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِي مَا
أَخَذْتُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٦٨﴾

Prophet told the Ansari: “An angel helped you in capturing him.”

Rashid quotes from Hafiz ibn Hajr’s “Isabah” that although ‘Abbas embraced Islam that day, he returned to Makkah to remain a Muslim in secrecy. He used to write to the Prophet the movements of the Quraysh. He migrated just before the fall of Makkah. He accompanied the Prophet in his Makkan campaign and fought with him at Hunayn.

Another incident of note is that one of those taken prisoners was Abu al-‘Aas al-Harbi. He was Zaynab’s husband, the Prophet’s daughter - still in Makkah. Zaynab sent a necklace to release him. When the Prophet saw the necklace, he recalled that originally it belonged to Khadijah. He could not suppress his feelings. He pleaded to the Ansar: “If you could release this man without a ransom?!” They agreed and let Abu al-‘Aas go free. Once in Makkah, Abu al-‘Aas allowed Zaynab to go away to her father. But, as she was leaving with her brother-in-law, they were caught up by a few Makkans who had got wind of her departure. They came

out in hot pursuit. A man called Habbar b. al-Aswad threatened her with a spear. Zaynab suffered a miscarriage. Her brother-in-law vowed to fight on. But Abu Sufyan happened to turn up. He told her not to hurt the Quraysh’s feelings more by traveling to her father so openly. She could delay the journey for a few days and then go away secretly. Accordingly, a few days later she left secretly at night. From the other side, the Prophet learnt of her departure and sent two men to escort her from a point off Makkah. She arrived safely and Abu al-Aas joined her later as a Muslim.

Ibn Jarir notes that the ransom on that occasion was 100 Awqiyah. Each Awqiyah was 40 Dirham or about 6 Dinar.

That was for those that could pay. Alternatively, those who were literate, they were required to teach the art of reading and writing to ten Muslims to regain freedom (Au.).

127. Ibn ‘Abbas, Abu Hurayrah, Hasan al-Busri and A‘mash have said that the reference is to taking of prisoners at Badr and then releasing

them on ransom. And by the words, "If not for a writing of Allah preceding," the allusion is to the spoils of war, which would have been in any case made lawful to the Muslims, after they had remained unlawful in earlier times - because that was how it was decreed. But they invited the reproach by taking the spoils of war and the ransom before the release of a specific commandment from Allah.

However, a few others, such as Sa'id, Mujahid, Qatadah and Hasan have said that by the words, "If not for a writing of Allah preceding," the allusion is to the fact that Allah had written it that He will not punish those who participated in the battle of Badr. A third opinion is that of Mujahid and Muhammad, who said that the allusion is to the rule set by Allah that He does not punish before He has sent the prohibiting commandment. Further, there are reports that the Prophet had warned his Companions that if they released their prisoners on ransom, they would have to pay a similar price in consequence, when they would lose seventy of their own men (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Reports as referred to by Ibn Jarir in his last lines above are in Tirmidhi, Nasa'i and Ibn Hibban. However,

it is a gharib report (Ibn Kathir). Gharib is a *hadith* which is difficult to explain and to reconcile with other reports on the same topic. Nonetheless, a *hadith* close in meaning, is in Ahmad also. And, Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut has said in his notes on Ibn Hibban (vol. 11, p. 119) that the *hadith*, although difficult to explain, is classified *Sahih* by Hakim with Dhahabi agreeing with him that it meets with the criterion of Bukhari and Muslim (Au.).

Mufti Shafi' further explains the situation: Tirmidhi, Nasa'i and Ibn Hibban have preserved a report by 'Ali which says that Jibril came down to say that the Prophet and his Companions had a choice between killing the captives and destroying the enemy strength forever, or, alternatively, accept ransom from them. But, in the latter case they would lose equal number of their men next year. Now, although the Companions had a choice, the inclusion of the condition gave indication that Allah preferred them to opt for the first option. Some of the Companions however thought that if they released the captives on ransom, there was a chance they would embrace Islam. The idea that the money coming in would also release them from worrisome economic woes and, in

fact, help prepare for future battles, was also at the back of their minds and which evoked Allah's displeasure. (The disapproval of the love of this world was known, anyway, through earlier revelations: Thanwi). As for equal numbers to be martyred in return, they did not think much of that: 'was it not, after all, a great thing to be martyred?' So, the censure was both for going for booty in haste, as well as for acceptance of ransom, since, in the true sense, money got out of ransom was also a kind of booty.

A fiqh principle, continues Shafi', might also be borne in mind. If today, someone makes a deal which accrues profit, but learns later that the deal was disallowed, then, the profits thus accrued are illegal, although the deal itself is forgivable. One should not be misled by the above verse to believe that the profits are also as forgivable as the collection of booty or taking of ransom was to the Companions - although promulgation about it came later.

To some it might sound strange that a people should be given a choice and then should be reproached as it happened with the Companions. They were given a choice between killing and accepting ransom. But

when they chose they were censured! The answer given by Shabbir is as follows: The choice was by way of test and was of the same nature as presented to the wives of the Prophet when they were told to choose between the riches of the world and the Prophet as their husband, or, when the Prophet was presented with milk and wine during the Mi`raj journey and then, upon choosing milk being told by Jibril that if he had chosen wine his *Ummah* would have gone astray. Further, it is likely that the Companions, although given a choice, did not exert their best efforts on making the choice. Being in the high-ranking position as they were, it amounted to a serious failure. Another example can be cited. During a campaign, a man wounded in the head experienced a wet dream. He asked the other Companions whether he was necessarily required to take a full bath. They told him yes. He washed himself head to foot and died. When the Prophet came to know, he remarked: "They killed him, may Allah kill them." That is, they had not exerted their best efforts before ruling that the man should take a full bath in that condition. Finally, by bringing the punishment as close as 'the tree yonder there,' was by way of vision of the punishment

[69] So eat now (freely),¹²⁸ of what you have secured of the spoils: lawful, goodly,¹²⁹ and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All-forgiving, All-kind.

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا غَنِمْتُمْ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٦٩﴾

[70] O Prophet! Say to the prisoners in your hand, 'If Allah knows of goodness in your hearts, He will grant you better than what has been taken from you.¹³⁰ And He will forgive you.¹³¹ Allah is All-forgiving, All-merciful.¹³²

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِمَن فِي أَيْدِيكُم مِّنَ
الْأَسْرَىٰ إِنَّ يَعْزِمُ اللَّهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ خَيْرًا
يُّؤْتِكُمْ خَيْرًا مِّمَّا أُخِذَ مِنْكُم وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٧٠﴾

(and not to threaten him); as, for example, once when in Prayers, the Prophet was shown Heaven and Hell as close as the wall in front of him.

Thanwi cautions: If a Prophet, who is saved from (grave) errors, can make an erroneous judgment, then, what about ordinary mortals? How correct are those then who, when they are handed down a wrong opinion by a Sheikh, insist that since it has come from the Sheikh, surely there must be a good thing hidden in it?

Rashid Rida discusses in some detail Ibn al-Qayyim's opinion expressed in his *Zad al-Ma'ad* to the effect that Abu Bakr's opinion - with reference to the captives of Badr - was the preferred opinion with Allah and not that of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab. Rashid Rida demonstrates that, with all respect to the great scholar, it can be definitely said that Ibn al-Qayyim committed an error here. The

Qur'anic verses 67 and 68 are pretty clear about what should have been preferably done with the captives of Badr: "It is not for a ..."

128. It is said that when the previous verse was revealed the Companions held themselves back from expending out of the booty and the ransom until Allah revealed this verse (Razi, Alusi).

129. With reference to the textual words "halalan tayyiban" Sabuni points out that they are explained by a *hadith* (in Bukhari: Au.) which says:

جُعِلَ رِزْقِي تَحْتَ ظِلِّ رُمْحِي

"My sustenance has been placed under the shade of my lance."

130. Asad comments: 'I.e., "If God finds in your hearts a disposition to realize the truth of His message, He will bestow on you faith and, thus,

the good of the life to come: and this will outweigh by far your defeat in war and the loss of so many of your friends and companions.” Although these words relate primarily to the pagan Quraysh taken prisoner in the battle of Badr, they circumscribe the Islamic attitude towards all unbelieving enemies who might fall in the believers’ hands in the course of war.’

Ibn Hajr has written that when the Prophet charged `Abbas a 100 Awqiyah for himself and 80 for `Aqil, `Abbas chided him: “Is this how you pay me for being related to you?” And Allah revealed, “Say to the captives in your hand ...”

131. Ibn Is-haq has reported that on the day of Badr the Prophet said: “A few of the Banu Hashim have been forced into this conflict against their will. Therefore, whoever comes across Abu al-Bakhtari, let him not kill him. Whoever comes across `Abbas ibn `Abdul Muttalib, let him not kill him.” Upon that Hudhayfah b. `Utbah remarked, “Are we to slaughter our fathers, sons, brothers, and kinsfolk but spare `Abbas? By Allah, if I overpower him, I shall put him to the sword.’ His words reached the Prophet. He said to `Umar, “O Abu Hafs - and this was the only time in his life that he addressed `Umar

as Abu Hafs - will the face of the Prophet’s uncle be struck?” `Umar retaliated, “Shall I kill him, O Messenger of Allah? I think the man is a hypocrite.” Ibn `Utbah says, “I was never in peace from what I said that day and was always afraid Allah (will chastise me) unless Allah were to cleanse me of it through martyrdom.” And, to be sure, he was martyred in the battle of Yamamah (Ibn Kathir).

`Abbas (*ra*), who was taken a prisoner at Badr, used to say about himself: “I am one of those who had the promise fulfilled on himself. I paid 40 Awqiyah of gold on that day for my release, but later, Allah (*swt*) gave me 40 slaves. And I hope to be forgiven my sins (as promised in the verse)” - Ibn Jarir.

Abu Bakr al-Bayhaqi has a report that much later the governor of Bahrayn region sent so much goods as the Prophet never received before or after. The Prophet ordered that it to be laid out in the yard of the mosque. He emerged for the Prayers but did not even look at the heap. After the Prayers he began to distribute. No one passed by but he called him in and gave him some. Then `Abbas showed up and said, “Give me now, O Messenger of Allah, in

[71] But if they intend to be dishonest then they have been dishonest with Allah before. But He protected you from them. Allah is All-knowing, All-wise.¹³³

وَإِنْ يُرِيدُوا حَيَاتِنَا فَقَدْ حَانُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَأَمْكَنَ مِنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾

return of what I spent on ransom.” The Prophet told him, “Help yourself.” `Abbas gathered so much in his shirt that he could not lift it. He asked someone standing there if he could help him lift it. The man declined. Then he asked `Ali to help him lift it. But he too declined. The Prophet suggested that he lessen the load and lift it himself. `Abbas did that, but could only do it with difficulty. The reporter says the Prophet fixed his gaze on `Abbas until he disappeared - wondering at his avarice. After him the Prophet (*saws*) left the place only after he was left with not a single Dirham. Bukhari has parts of this report spread over different parts of his collection (Razi in parts and Ibn Kathir).

Bahrayn of those times referred to the Western boundary of the Arabian Peninsula, minus Oman (Au.).

132. Yusuf Ali writes: “Note how comprehensive is Allah’s care. He encourages and strengthens the Muslims, at the same time condemning any base motives that may have entered their minds. He consoles the

prisoners of war and promises them better things if there is any good in them at all. And He offers comfort to those who have left their homes in His Cause, and knits them into closer fellowship with those who have helped them and sympathized with them.”

With reference to the words, ‘If Allah knows of goodness in your hearts, He will grant you better than what has been taken from you; and He will forgive you,’ Thanwi points out that this verse leads to the conclusion that obedience evokes blessings of both this world as well as the next, although the rewards of the next world are worthier.

133. The allusion is to some of those prisoners at Badr who showed signs of inclination toward Islam. However, they seemed to be merely wishing to be friendly with the Muslims without damaging their relationships with the unbelievers (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

But Qatadah has said that the allusion is to Ibn Abi Sarh who was one of the Prophet’s revelation writers.

[72] Surely, those who believed, emigrated,¹³⁴ and struggled with their wealth and their selves in Allah's cause, and those who sheltered and helped (them), they are friends of one another.¹³⁵ As for those who believed but did not migrate, you have no duty of friendship toward them until they emigrate.¹³⁶ However, if they seek your help on religious grounds, then it is your duty to help them, except against a people between whom and you there is a pact.¹³⁷ And Allah is well aware of what you do.¹³⁸

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آوَوْا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَئِكَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يُهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ وَلَايَتِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى يُهَاجِرُوا وَإِنْ اسْتَنْصَرُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ فَعَلَيْكُمُ النَّصْرُ إِلَّا عَلَى قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٧٢﴾

Subsequently, he became an apostate and joined up with the pagans at Makkah. When Makkah fell, the Prophet announced that three people were not to be given shelter. One of them was `Abdullah ibn Abi Sarh. But `Uthman brought him to the Prophet seeking his pardon. While they stood there an Ansari came up with an unsheathed sword, circling the man. Initially the Prophet did not say anything. Finally he pardoned him. Later he remarked that if he had delayed the pardon, it was because he was expecting the Ansari to behead him. The Ansari remarked that he could have signaled him with his eye. The Prophet replied, "A Prophet does not signal with his eye" (Ibn Jarir).

134. "Hijrah is not 'emigration' or 'flight' pure and simple, but emigra-

tion with a religious motive" (Majid).

135. Another verse of the Qur'in describes the nature of the "wilayah" between the Muhajirun and Ansar. It says (59: 8-9):

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنْصَرُونَ لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولَهُ أَوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ (٨) وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شَخْخِ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ [الحشر : ٨ ، ٩]

"(The spoils are) for the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties, seeking bounty from Allah, (His) approval, and supporting Allah and His Messenger. Those are the truthful ones. And (also for) those who were settled in the home (i.e., the Ansar), and (adopted) the

faith before them. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts for what they (the emigrants) were given, instead, they give (them) preference over their own selves, although they are (themselves) in want. And, whoever is saved from niggardliness of his own soul, those, they are the successful achievers."

Ibn Kathir explains the last phrase as meaning that they do not envy them over the superiority that Allah gave the Emigrants over the Helpers because of their emigration.

136. The first generation scholars have said that the "wilayah" (rendered here as friendship) as spoken of in these set of verses, (of which "ukhuwwah" is one manifestation: Au.), included inheritance between them. So that, those Muhajir and the Ansari Muslims between whom the Prophet had declared ukhuwwah (brotherhood) received their share of inheritance from each other (even before the kinsfolk could get their share: Ibn Kathir from Bukhari). In contrast, a Muslim who did not migrate to Madinah was not inherited by his Muslim relatives who had migrated, and vice versa (just as a Muslim and pagan did not inherit each other: Au.). This remained until the fall of Makkah (when mu'akha [brother-

hood pact] ended: Au.). This is what verse 75 of this chapter is speaking of, announcing (that the mu'akha rule was for the special circumstances of the early days and) that those related by blood are nearer, implying that henceforth they - the kin - will inherit each other (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Jarir's own opinion is that by "wilayah" of these verses, it is only material and moral help that is meant.

The Prophet has however plainly said in a report preserved by Hakim and declared trustworthy:

لَا يَتَوَارَثُ أَهْلُ مِلَّتَيْنِ شَيْءٌ لَا يَرِثُ الْمُسْلِمُ الْكَافِرَ
وَلَا الْكَافِرُ الْمُسْلِمَ

"Members of two religious communities will not inherit each other. Neither a Muslim can inherit an unbeliever, nor an unbeliever a Muslim."

Similar reports are found in piecemeal in the *Sahihayn* and Tirmidhi (Ibn Kathir).

A report in Muslim makes things clearer. It says that when the Prophet sent his Companions out in a campaign, he instructed them in words:

اغْرُزُوا بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَاتَلُوا مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ
اغْرُزُوا وَ لَا تَعْلُوا وَلَا تَغْدِرُوا وَلَا تَمَثَلُوا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا
وَلِيدًا وَإِذَا لَقِيتَ عَدُوَّكَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ فَادْعُهُمْ إِلَى
ثَلَاثِ خِصَالٍ - أَوْ خِلَالَ - فَأَيُّهُنَّ مَا أَحَابُوكَ

فَاقْبَلْ مِنْهُمْ وَكُفَّ عَنْهُمْ ثُمَّ ادْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ
فَإِنْ أَجَابُوكَ فَاقْبَلْ مِنْهُمْ وَكُفَّ عَنْهُمْ ثُمَّ ادْعُهُمْ إِلَى
التَّحْوِيلِ مِنْ دَارِهِمْ إِلَى دَارِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَأَخْرِجْهُمْ أَتَتْهُمْ
إِنْ فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ فَلَهُمْ مَا لِلْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَعَلَيْهِمْ مَا عَلَى
الْمُهَاجِرِينَ فَإِنْ أَبَوْا أَنْ يَتَّحِزُّوا مِنْهَا فَأَخْرِجْهُمْ أَتَتْهُمْ
يَكُونُونَ كَأَعْرَابِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ يَجْرَى عَلَيْهِمْ حُكْمُ اللَّهِ
الَّذِي يَجْرَى عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَكُونُ لَهُمْ فِي الْعَيْنِيَّةِ
وَالْفَيْءِ شَيْءٌ إِلَّا أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا مَعَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَإِنْ هُمْ
أَبَوْا فَسَلِّهُمْ الْجَزِيَّةَ فَإِنْ هُمْ أَجَابُوكَ فَاقْبَلْ مِنْهُمْ وَكُفَّ
عَنْهُمْ فَإِنْ هُمْ أَبَوْا فَاسْتَعِزْ بِاللَّهِ وَقَاتِلْهُمْ.

“Go out: in the name of Allah, in the path of Allah. Fight him who rejects Allah. When you meet your enemies, invite them to one of the three and accept from them whichever of the three they choose. Invite them to Islam. If they accept, restrain yourselves. Then urge them to migrate from their homes to the land of the emigrants (Madinah). If they do that, they shall get what the emigrants get. If they refuse, and choose to remain in their places, then tell them that they will be counted among the bedouin-Muslims, and to be ruled by Allah’s commandments - just as other Muslims. But they shall have no share in the spoils of war: of any kind, unless they fight alongside the Muslims. If they decline to accept the offer, then let them choose to pay

tribute. If they accept that, then restrain yourselves against them. But if they decline, then seek Allah’s help and fight against them” (Ibn Kathir).

Mufti Shafi` adds: In the light of the above verse, some scholars have ruled that just as the difference in religion is a bar to inheritance, difference in lands (ikhtilaf al-daarayn) is also a bar to inheritance. Details might be seen in fiqh books.

137. Although (those who remain in Dar al-Harb) are Muslims, and Allah has commanded the general body of Muslims to help them when they ask for help, an exception has been made: a situation in which the Muslims have entered into a no-war pact (with the Dar al-Harb in question) - Shafi`. However, if the Dar al-Harb Muslims sought help, while the main body of Muslims is bound by a treaty, then, they might revoke the treaty if they think that the situation demands it (Thanwi). Further, if the Dar al-Harb Muslims have entered into a pact with the non-Muslims, those of Dar al-Islam are not bound by such a treaty (Shabbir).

138. The rule remains for the future also. If, in any land, it is not possible for Muslims to follow the commandments of the Shari`ah, it is obligatory

[73] As regards those who have disbelieved, some of them are friends of the others.¹³⁹ If you do not do that, there will be sedition and great corruption in the land.¹⁴⁰

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ إِلَّا تَتَعَلَّوْهُ تَكُنْ فِتْنَةٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿٧٣﴾

[74] Those who believed, emigrated and struggled in Allah's cause, and those who sheltered and helped, they are the true believers. For them is forgiveness, and a noble provision.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آوَوْا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٧٤﴾

on them to emigrate. If they do not, without a good reason, then, even if they do not become unbelievers altogether, the law of the muhajir and non-muhajir (in Dar al-Harb) of no inheritance between them will come into force (Shafi`).

139. Accordingly, the Hanafiyyah say that all kinds of unbelievers can inherit each other; so that a Christian may inherit a Hindu, etc. (Razi).

In fact, Mufti Shafi` adds, even the division of inheritance will follow the rules that the non-Muslims normally apply to themselves. In other words, as minorities, they have the freedom to live by their Personal Law. If that is not done, it will, as the verse warns, lead to corruption in the land.

140. What the verse means to say is that 'if you do not treat the believers, wherever they might be, as your

friends and natural allies, and do not go to their help, then, there will be great sedition and corruption in the lands (Au).

Incidentally, it might be mentioned that the Prophet did not treat those as Muslims who had not emigrated to Madinah (Ibn Jarir). He has said in a tradition of Abu Da'ud and Ibn Majah:

إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِنْ كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ مُقِيمٍ بَيْنَ أَظْهُرِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ،
قَالُوا : يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، وَمَ ؟ قَالَ : لَا تَتَرَايَ نَارَاهُمَا

"I am quit of every Muslim who chooses to live in the lands of the pagans. The two should not see each other's fires." They asked, "Why is that so, Messenger of Allah?" He replied, "Fires of the two will not see each other." (Ibn Kathir). Meaning, by the last phrase, perhaps, that when the two, Muslim and non-Muslim encamp, the Muslims should keep

[75] As for those who believed thereafter, emigrated and struggled along with you, they are of you,¹⁴¹ although of the kinsfolk some have precedence over others in the Book of Allah.¹⁴² Surely, Allah has knowledge of all things.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِن بَعْدِ وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا
مَعَكُمْ فَأُولَئِكَ مِنكُمْ وَأُولَئِكَ الْأَرْحَامُ
بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٥﴾

enough distance between themselves and the pagans. Another interpretation (as in Ikmal al-Mu`allim Sharh *Sahih* Muslim) is that the two will not have houses in Paradise together (Au.).

Another *hadith* of Abu Da'ud (declared *Sahih* by Albani) says,

مَنْ جَامَعَ الْمُشْرِكَ وَسَكَنَ مَعَهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِثْلُهُ

“Whoever intermingled with a pagan and lived with him is of him.” According to another version the above *hadith* ends with the words, “he will be raised with him,” (i.e., with the pagan). If the Muslims do not do that then “there will be sedition and great corruption in the land” (Ibn Kathir).

Yusuf Ali speaks of another aspect of the meaning: “Evil consorts with evil. The good have all the more reason for drawing together and not only living in mutual harmony, but being ready at all times to protect each other. Otherwise the world will be given over to aggressions by un-

scrupulous people, and the good will fail in their duty to establish Allah’s Peace and to strengthen all the forces of truth and righteousness.”

141. Yusuf Ali also explains: “Those who come into the fold last are none the less brethren in the fullest acceptance of the term. But any special provisions made in the special circumstances of the first martyrs for the Cause will not of course apply to them as the special circumstances which made them necessary have ceased to exist.”

We have a *hadith* of the Prophet in this context. He said,

الْمُهَاجِرُونَ وَالْأَنْصَارُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةِ ، وَالطَّلَقَاءُ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ ، وَالْعَتَقَاءُ مِنْ تَقِيفٍ
بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

“Surely, Muhajirun and Ansar are each others’ supporters (awliya’). So also, the freed ones of the Quraysh and the freed ones of the Thaqif tribe are supporters of each other - until the Day of Judgment” (Ibn Kathir).

142. In the opinion of Ibn Zubayr, this verse abrogated the practice in pagan times of the two friends entering into a compact to the effect that one would inherit the other (Ibn Jarir).

Alusi adds: The verse is the basis of the recommendation that the nearest of kin should lead in the funeral Prayers.

Mufti Shafi` explains the inheritance rules: Verses 11 and 12 of *Surah al-Nisa`* had already spoken of those who receive the first preference in the division of inheritance. The inheritors named there are technically known as "Dhu al-fara'id." They are the first recipients. However, if anything is left after distribution among them, then it goes to the "*Ulu al-arham*" as stated in the present verse. But the textual word "*Ulu al-arham*", meaning "the kinsfolk" is of a general nature, applicable to every one of the family, however distantly related. In fact, it can be extended to the last man on earth since all are sons of Adam. It is *ahadith* which tell us that in matters of inheritance, the nearest of kin are considered for eligibility before the distant ones. It says: "As for the fara'id (primary heirs) distribute it among those who deserve it. What remains thereafter is for the

nearest male of the kinsfolk." In simpler words, whatever is left after the division according to the Qur'anic injunction in verses 11 and 12 of *Surah al-Nisa`* is to go to the nearest of male kin on the father's side, and then to the one more distant, and so on. These are technically known as *al`Asabat*. Finally, if anything is still left, it is to be divided among the "*Ulu al-arham*" which, when used with reference to the Laws of Inheritance, becomes a technical term comprising maternal uncles, maternal aunts, etc. Details might be seen in fiqh books.

Sayyid comments: With the *Surah* drawing to a close, it offers us the final lessons. On the one hand, it speaks of the nature of relationship that exists between members of a Muslim society, while, on the other, it delineates the society's relationship with other societies. It states the rules that bind one individual with the others. These rules also shed light on the "nature" of the Muslim society and the foundations on which it rests. Lo, they are not the relationships of blood, region, race, past history, language, or economy. These are not the basis of the relationships. It is Faith which is the basis of all relationship.. The basis is leadership .. and the Movement..

Those who believed and emigrated to the Land of Islam, cutting asunder all kinds of bindings that could hold them back: the land, the homes, the people and other considerations, .. and then fought in the way of Allah with their own souls and their own wealth, .. and those who sheltered them, helped them and took them close to themselves for the sake of Faith under a single leadership, being transformed into a single surging current .. such, they are the friends and supporters of each other .. to the extent that they were to inherit each other. As for those who disbelieved, they are friends and supporters of their likes.”

Further down the lines he writes: “The effect on the Islamic polity and the society it gave birth to, of the phenomenon that was laid out above was something incredibly wonderful. It was a society bonded by no other factor than Faith. Race, color, geographical location, language or other considerations played no role whatsoever. Consequently, the Islamic society became open for all kinds and classes of people, of variety of colors, speaking different dialects, facing no stumbling blocks of any kind. Varieties of people poured into the melting pot and then the elements were made to fuse into each other to give

rise to an admixture, within a very short period. In its sequel, this small band of men brought into being a great civilization stretching over a vast area of the globe at a lightning pace despite the fact that it was an age in which movements were slow and means of communication crude.

“The new civilization had fused into itself Arabs, Persians, Syrians, Egyptians, Moroccans, Turks, Chinese, Indians, Romans, Greeks, Indonesians, Africans and the rest of the varieties of people. Together, its parts created a massive whole that came to be known as the Islamic civilization. Yet, not for a single day it was ‘Arabic’ or ‘nationalistic.’ It was always ‘Islamic’ founded on Faith.

The new elements fused together to create a civilization in which they were all equal, bound to others by love. Everyone poured in his efforts, and everyone contributed his specialty and pooled in individual as well as collective experiences to build a civilization to which they all related themselves as equals. Their unity within it was by the bond of love for their Lord and it was their humanity alone that was brought to fore, without any obstacles .. a coming together of humankind that was never experienced before in history.

“Earlier and later, other efforts to unite the people under one banner had met with failures: the Roman empire, the British empire, the European hegemony, and finally, the Communist regimes. All of them miserably failed in their efforts to unite the people.

“It was Islam and Islam alone that succeeded. Yet, how ironic it is, that today that its own adherents should look for alternatives and bank on failed formulas to unite the Muslims?” ﷺ





Surah 9
*Al Tawbah*¹

(Repentance)

Madinan²



The Background

Here is a shortened version of what Rashid Rida had to write as the background story of this chapter: Allah Most High raised a Messenger sending down Islam through him as the final and complete religion. He revealed the Qur'ān as an all time miracle and a proof of the authenticity of His Messenger. He directed that the call be made (to His Religion) on the basis of rational evidences and practical wisdom. He forbid coercion and resort to force. But the pagans chose to oppose. They persecuted those who responded favorably preventing the common people from giving the call an ear. They reacted so violently that none who embraced the truth could feel his life and property safe unless shielded by one of them. Those who could flee, fled. The Quraysh turned their attention to the Prophet (*saws*), insulting him, hurting him, boycotting him and, finally, deciding to assassinate him. So Allah (*swt*) ordered him to move out of Makkah, which he did as well as everyone who could: seeking ref-

uge in Madinah. There they found a people who helped them for Allah's sake, giving them preference over their own selves. On the other hand, an extremely hostile situation was created between the Muslims at Madinah and the Quraysh at Makkah. The Prophet entered into a treaty of understanding and co operation with the Jews of Madinah. But they proved to be dishonest and broke their treaty. At heart they were with the Makkans and aided them whenever war broke out.

(After several years of futile opposition) the pagans also entered into a treaty with the Prophet at Hudaibiyyah for a period of 10 years. The Prophet compromised a lot for the treaty to come through: not out of weakness but out of the desire to spread his mission through peaceful means backed by evidences. In this treaty, the Khuza'ah tribe sided with him while Banu Bakr sided with the Quraysh. But, later, Banu Bakr breached the treaty by attacking Banu Khuza'ah. The Quraysh helped Banu Bakr with arms. (In

fact, they fought along with them under the cover of night: Thanwi). That led to a situation of war between the Prophet (*saws*) and the Quraysh. The Prophet's action led to the fall of Makkah. That weakened the pagans of the Peninsula. But, (although without the Quraysh on their side) whenever they could, they did not refrain from fighting against the Prophet. Some of them proved that they cared for no treaty and no word of promise. It was clear that the Muslims would never live in peace with them in the same piece of land, so long as they remained pagans. How could they be trusted for treaties if those who were expected to be mindful of the treaties the people of the Book broke their words of promise so often? Accordingly, notices were served to them through this chapter. The objective was to clear the Arabian Peninsula of paganism in order to make it a haven for Islam and Muslims.

Thanwi points out that various parts of the *surah* were revealed at various times in keeping with the needs. Although a major part of it might have been revealed as one whole, some verses were revealed at the time of the Makkan expedition, some after Hunayn battle, some before the Tabuk expedition, while others such

as the first few verses after Tabuk expedition in *Shawwal* 9 A.H.

1. Ibn `Abbas is reported to have said that this chapter, (also known as *Bara`ah*: Au.) has several other names. One of them is "The Debas-ing One." That is because it took all classes of people, (believers, unbelievers, hypocrites, city dwellers, bedouins, Pagans, Jews, Christians, just about everyone: Au.) to severe questioning of their positions, censuring them (and exposing their weaknesses: Au.) Kashshaf, Razi, Qurtubi.

2. This is the last *Surah* to be revealed, although not the last verse to be revealed is in this *Surah*. Bukhari has recorded Bara' b. `Azib as saying: The last verse to be revealed was (4: 176), They consult you (O Prophet). Tell them Allah directs you thus in the matter of a person without heir in the direct line." But, as stated above, the last chapter to be revealed was this one (Ibn Kathir).

Absence of the *Basmalah*

The *surah* is not preceded by the customary "*basmalah*" (invocatory prayer) because that is how the Companions wrote the chapter in their personal copies of the Qur'an. They followed what `Uthman had done at the time of the first compilation.

Tirmidhi has the full report. It says that Ibn `Abbas enquired `Uthman why *surah Al-Anfal* had been placed among the long ones (although short) and why *basmalah* was not written between it and *Bara'ah*? `Uthman explained, "When verses and chapters were revealed, it was customary of the Prophet to get them written down, while also indicating the position they were to occupy. *Al-Anfal* was one of the firsts to be revealed at Madinah and *Bara'ah* the last. But the Prophet did not have the opportunity to say where the latter was to be placed. Now, content wise they seem to be very close, so I put them together without a *basmalah* in between, and therefore, placed the two among the long ones" (Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

The report is also in Ahmad, Abu Da'ud, and Ibn Hibban, with the last mentioned declaring the report *sahih* on the conditions of the Sheikhayn. It is also known, however, that the first few passages of this chapter were revealed immediately after the Tabuk campaign (Ibn Kathir).

In other words, Thanwi and Shafi` explain, `Uthman did not wish to take any risk with the Qur'an. All he knew was that *al Anfal* and *Tawbah* were normally recited together. But

he did not have a clear instruction from the Prophet to combine them as one. So he separated them in his compilation. However, since he was not sure whether the two together constitute one single *surah* or not, he did not place the *basmalah* before it. Accordingly, if one recites *al Anfal* and continues down the lines to recite *Tawbah*, he might not say the *basmalah*. But, if he happens to start his recitation with *Tawbah*, or anywhere in between, he could recite the *basmalah*.

Qurtubi adds that there are a few other reasons why the *basmalah* was dropped. One of them is that the chapter starts with a threat, whereas *basmalah* promises peace and mercy. (Alusi points out that there are other chapters that start with a threat, e.g., no. 83, although, it is true that the whole *surah* is not full of harsh criticism). Another reported reason is that the chapter used to be as long as *surah al Baqarah*. But Allah made the Prophet forget a part of it, and *basmalah* went with the forgotten part. This report is in Malik's Muwatta. Further, the above leads us to another point viz., as Ibn al `Arabiyy has pointed out, `Uthman's action lends authenticity to the principle of analogy (*qiyas*).

[1] (This is) a (declaration of) disavowal of Allah and His Messenger for those of the pagans with whom you have made a treaty.³

بِرَاءةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ
مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١﴾

[2] Therefore, you may (O unbelievers) go about in the land freely for four months, but know that you will not be able to frustrate Allah, and that Allah will humiliate the unbelievers.

فَسِيحُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَلِمُوا
أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُحْزِي
الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢﴾

3. Tabari writes: Ibn Is haq has reported that the Prophet sent Abu Bakr in command of *Hajj* in the ninth year of *hijrah* so that he might lead the Muslims in the performance of *Hajj* following Islamic rules, while the polytheists observed their own *Hajj* rites. (The Prophet himself wished to perform the *Hajj* but held himself back because the pagans circumambulated the Ka`bah naked: Ibn Kathir and others). After Abu Bakr had departed, this chapter was revealed breaking the treaty between the Prophet and the pagans to the effect that no one intending the House was to be prevented nor should anyone be threatened during the pilgrimage season. This became a special treaty between the Prophet and the Makkan pagans. As for the rest of the pagan tribes, there were several separate treaties between them and the Prophet of various specified terms. These verses

were revealed concerning them as well as the disaffected ones who had remained behind the Tabuk expedition. Ibn `Abbas has said that the first few verses of this chapter prescribed a period of four months to those with whom the Prophet had entered into a treaty and specified a term, while, on the other hand, it gave time until the end of Sacred Months about 50 days from that day, the tenth of *Dhu al-Hijjah* to those who had entered into a treaty with the Prophet but had not specified a term (such as Banu Khuza`ah, Banu Mudlaj and others: Mujahid). Qatadah added that upon revelation of these verses, the Prophet sent `Ali ibn Abi Talib (with 30 40 verses: Muhammad b. Ka`b) to make the announcements (at different places and on different occasions: Au.; and adding the words: no pagan will be allowed to perform *Hajj* after this year and no one will be allowed to

circumambulate the Ka`bah naked after this: Muhammad b. Ka`b. This report is a *sahih* hasan one according to Tirmidhi: Qurtubi). Abu Bakr remained leading the Muslims in *Hajj*. (According to a report in Ibn Hibban and Ibn Marduwayh, Abu Bakr returned to ask the Prophet whether a verse had been revealed against him. The Prophet assured him: "You are my brother, my companion in the cave and at the Pond. But I would like one of my kinsfolk to deliver this message": Alusi. According to other reports, `Ali confirmed that Abu Bakr remained the leader of the faithful in *Hajj*. When he joined Abu Bakr, he asked him, "As a leader or as a follower?" `Ali replied, "As a follower." Accordingly, on the Day of *`Arafah*, it was Abu Bakr who delivered the sermon on topics concerning ways and methods of performing *Hajj*, followed by `Ali who read out the verses of *Bara`ah*: Qurtubi). Another thing "we said,"

added Abu Hurayrah (who took over the announcements whenever `Ali's voice failed due to shouting) "is that, no one but a believer will enter Paradise." However, Tabari adds his own remark, that there are differences in opinion over who exactly was allowed respite until what exact time.

Abu Hurayrah's report is in Bukhari, while other parts are in Ahmad and other *hadith* collections. However, the report as found in some works that `Ali was sent later to take back the verses from Abu Bakr and make announcements instead of him, is weak (Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

Zamakhshari, Qurtubi and Alusi add that the reason why `Ali was sent, despite Abu Bakr's presence, is that it was the practice of the Arabs of those times that when they had to break a treaty, it was done either by the one who had signed it, or by someone he deputed of his household.

[3] And (this is) an announcement from Allah and His Messenger to the people on the great day of Hajj⁴ that Allah is quit of those who associate and so is His Messenger. Therefore, if you repent, that would be better for you. But if you turn away then know that you will not be able to frustrate Allah. And give glad tidings to the unbelievers of a painful chastisement.

وَأَذَانَ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى النَّاسِ يَوْمَ الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ بَرِيءٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ وَرَسُولُهُ فَإِنْ تُبْتُمْ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ عَيْرٌ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٣﴾

[4] Except for those of the pagans with whom you have struck a treaty,⁵ and then they did not fall short of it in anyway, nor did they back anyone against you, such (of them), fulfill your treaty with them until the treaties have run their term.⁶ Surely, Allah approves of the God-conscious.⁷

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْفُصُواكُمْ شَيْئًا وَوَمَ يُظَاهِرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَحَدًا فَأَتِمُوا إِلَيْهِمْ عَهْدَهُمْ إِلَىٰ مُدَّتِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤﴾

4. Which day is this great day of *Hajj*? There are two opinions. One comes from `Umar ibn al Khattab, Sa`id ibn Musayyib, Ibn Zubayr, Mujahid and `Ikrimah and others that it is the 9th of *Dhu al-Hijjah*. But `Ali, `Abdullah (ibn Mas`ud), Ibn `Umar, Ibn abi Awfa, Ibn `Abbas, Sa`id ibn Jubayr, `Ata`, Suddi and a great many others have said that it is the day of sacrifice (10th of *Dhu al-Hijjah*). There have been other opinions too. The message itself contained in this chapter was delivered on two days. When Abu Bakr had delivered his sermon on the 9th of *Hajj* in *`Arafah*, he said: "Now, `Ali. Rise up and deliver the message the Prophet has sent you with."

`Ali got up and recited the first 40 verses of this chapter. However, `Ali thought that it was not enough since everyone could not have heard. So he went about on the 10th of *Dhu al-Hijjah* in Mina, visiting the tents and making the announcement (Ibn Jarir).

In fact, there are reports right from the Prophet himself, recorded in Abu Da`ud, to the effect that the day of sacrifice (10th of *Dhu al-Hijjah*) is the Great Day of *Hajj* (Qurtubi). Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Marduwayh have similar reports (Ibn Kathir).

5. There have been several opinions about the identity of these polytheists such as, the Quraysh, a few of

[5] So, when the Sacred Months⁸ pass away, slaughter the associators⁹ wherever you lay your hands on them, capture them, besiege them, and sit in wait for them at every point of ambush.¹⁰ But if they repent, offer Prayers¹¹ and pay the Zakah, then let them go their way.¹² Indeed Allah is All forgiving, All kind.¹³

فَإِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرْمُ فَاقْتُلُوا
الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ
وَاحْصُرُوهُمْ وَاقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصِدٍ
فَإِن تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا
الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٥﴾

Banu Khuza`ah, and some of the Banu Kinanah. But Banu Kinanah seem to qualify best (Ibn Jarir).

6. The only people that seem to fit this clause is a clan of the Banu Bakr tribe who did not participate with the main body of the tribe in their attack on Banu Khuza`ah, nor sided with the Quraysh, rather remained aloof and true to their treaty of Hudaibiyyah. This is supported by the statements of Suddi and Mujahid. Further, this class of people, in fact many others, did not wait long as Ibn al Qayyim has pointed out before entering into Islam (Sayyid).

The above is the opinion of Ibn `Abbas as in Zamakhshari who adds that 9 months were left for the treaty to expire and the Prophet completed the term of the treaty with them.

7. By relating the honoring of the treaties to piety, Allah tells us by implication that being true to a treaty is not simply a good Islamic principle, nor should it be attempted merely

because it promises to be beneficial. Rather, in Islam it acquires the status of a devotional act. A Muslim observes these kinds of things hoping to win Allah's approval. It is another thing that it saves the community from contradictions and inconsistencies. But, more importantly, it raises the human soul to higher moral plain (Sayyid).

8. The Sacred months of this context are: *Shawwal*, *Dhu al Qa`idah*, *Dhu al-Hijjah* and *Muharram* (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir however believes that what is to be understood from the statements of Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and others is that the textual term "*ash haru l hurum*" is not referring to the well known Sacred Months, rather to the four months allotted to the pagans from the day of announcement.

9. The allusion is to the pagan Arabs. Rashid Rida questions the opinion of some commentators that this

verse declares war on every pagan, in view of two reports from the Prophet. One of them is in Tabarani, but, as Ibn Hajr has said, well known among the Companions. It says,

اتْرَكُوا التُّرْكَ مَا تَرَكُوهُمْ

“Leave alone the Turks so long as they leave you alone.” (The allusion perhaps was to the Mongols: Au.).

Ibn al-Jawzi declared this *hadīth* as fabricated. But Haythamiyy said that it is a Hasan report (Au).

Abu Da’ud has the other report. It says,

اتْرَكُوا الْحَبَشَةَ مَا تَرَكُوكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَسْتَخْرِجُ كَنْزَ الْكَعْبَةِ إِلَّا ذُو السَّوِيْقَتَيْنِ مِنَ الْحَبَشَةِ

“Let alone the Abyssinians so long as they leave you alone. For, Ka’ba’s treasure will not be seized but by a wide legged man from Abyssinia.”

The *hadīth* can be trusted: Haythamiyy (Au.).

A third report in Abu Da’ud and Nasa’i combines the two. It says, “Let alone the Abyssinians so long as they let you alone and let alone the Turks so long as they let you alone.” Khattabi has said that the verse here-with might be an unconditional one, but the *hadīth* could be restricting its

application. However, Rashid Rida thinks that the verse in point cannot be used to declare war on every pagan of the world.

Whether or not is another matter, but, as pointed out, first *hadīth* is weak, and the other is not speaking of pagans. The Abyssinians then were perhaps Christians (Au.).

Qurtubi cautions against another aspect. He says that although the term is general, women, children, and the priestly class were excluded from the command of slaughter.

10. Yusuf Ali comments: “When war becomes inevitable, it must be prosecuted with vigour. According to the English phrase, you cannot fight with kid gloves.”

Hudhayfa used to say that on hearing this verse Abu Sufyan (became so fearful of his life) that he had given up going into his wife (Ibn Jarir).

11. Qurtubi writes: Imām Malik has been reported as saying that whoever believed in Allah, in His Messenger, but refused to Pray (despite being chided and warned: Au.), may be killed. (This is the prescribed Shari`ah punishment for not Praying, and not because he has altogether become an unbeliever [had-dan, la kufran]: Rashid Rida). Abu

Thawr, Hammad b. Zayd, Mak hul, Waki` and Imām Shafe`i's pupils share this opinion with him. (Imām Shafe`i has also expressed a similar opinion: Alusi). Abu Hanifah however says that the man may be imprisoned, beaten, but not killed. This is also the opinion of Ibn Shihab and Da'ud ibn `Ali. (Also of Imām Muzani, Shafe`i's famous pupil: Manar). They justify their stand by the *hadith* of the Prophet which reports him as saying: "A Muslim's life is sacrosanct, except in three cases: apostasy after belief, adultery after marriage, killing someone without cause." Nevertheless, many of the Companions were of the opinion that a man who gave up a single Prayer, without a good cause, refusing to do it even after its time had passed, and said, "I will not Pray," is an unbeliever who should be killed. His dependents cannot inherit him.

But, adds Alusi, as against the opinion of certain scholars, one who does not pray and does not pay out the *Zakah*, remains a Muslim, although a sinner. (What he means perhaps that the man does not, although admits that these two are pillars of Islam: Au.).

Rashid Rida quotes those *ahadith* that support the above opinions.

One of them is in several collections. Bukhari's version says:

أَمَرْتُ أَنْ أَقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَقُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فَإِذَا قَالُوهَا صَلَّوْا صَلَاتَنَا وَاسْتَقْبَلُوا قِبْلَتَنَا وَدَبَّحُوا ذُبِيحَتَنَا فَقَدْ حَرَمَتْ عَلَيْنَا دِمَاؤُهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَّا بِحَقِّهَا وَحِسَابُهُمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ

"I have been ordered to fight the people until they say that there is no god besides Allah. If they say that, Pray like we do, face our *Qiblah* and slaughter the way we slaughter, then their life and property is forbidden unto us save by right. (As for their other deeds), their reckoning is with Allah."

Another version, which reaches the *Tawatur* status says:

أَمَرْتُ أَنْ أَقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَقُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فَمَنْ قَالَهَا فَقَدْ عَصَمَ مِنِّي مَالَهُ وَنَفْسَهُ إِلَّا بِحَقِّهِ وَحِسَابُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ .

"I have been ordered to fight the people until they say that there is no god besides Allah and that I am Allah's Messenger. If they say that, their life and property is forbidden unto me save by right. And their (final) reckoning is with Allah."

Another report preserved by Muslim, Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi and Ahmad says:

إِنَّ بَيْنَ الرَّجُلِ وَبَيْنَ الشِّرْكِ وَالْكُفْرِ تَرَكَ الصَّلَاةِ

“Between a man and disbelief and polytheism, lie the Prayers.”

Another version reported by all the authors of the Sunan except the Sheikhayn says:

الْعَهْدُ الَّذِي بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمُ الصَّلَاةُ فَمَنْ تَرَكَهَا فَقَدْ كَفَرَ

“The covenant between us and them is the *Salah*. He who gave it up, committed disbelief.”

As for the *hadīth* in the *Sahihayn*, the one which includes *Salah* and *Zakah* apart from the testimonies, as the minimum, Hafiz ibn al Hajr has a note that the *hadīth* has to be treated with some caution. Imām Ahmad, for instance, despite the vastness of his collection, has not chronicled this *hadīth*.

Rashid Rida also reproduces an argument between Ibn Hanbal and Shafe`i. Shafe`i asked: “Do you believe that one who did not Pray committed disbelief?” Ahmad said, “Yes.” Shafe`i asked, “If he became an unbeliever, how is he to become a believer?” Ahmad replied, “By beginning to Pray.” Shafe`i said, “But the Prayer of an unbeliever is invalid.” Imām Ahmad had no answer.

Nonetheless, there is no denying the extreme importance of the Prayers. Some of the Companions also believed in one’s Kufr if he gave up Praying. A report in Tirmidhi and Hakim says that the Companions did not consider any sin that was tantamount to Kufr except abandoning of the Prayers. Prayers then, cannot be separated from the testimony.

Rashid Rida’s quote ends here.

To put it otherwise and following the Hanafiyy line: If it is a polytheist, then the minimum required of him is the testimony, “There is not god save one Allah.” If he testified to that, we shall declare him a Muslim. But, if he already believes in the Oneness of Allah, (such as a Jew: Manar), then both the testimonies (oneness of Allah and Messengership of Muhammad) will have to be pronounced before he is declared a Muslim. If he is a Christian, then apart from the two testimonies, he will be required to declare that Jesus Christ is no more than a Messenger of Allah, His Word and slave.

Finally, after their declarations, only those will be treated as true Muslims who Pray. Those who do not are of two kinds, (i) the ignorant ones: they will have to be educated, and (ii)

those who refused despite the knowledge: they will be punished.

On the negative side, only those will be treated as non Muslims who nullify their testimonies by denying them, or denying the validity of any one of Islam's well known obligations, of the nature of beliefs or deeds, by word or act, overtly or covertly.

At the community level, those who refused to pay the obligatory *Zakah* will be fought against by the Islamic state. Finally, those who embrace Islam will be are obliged to practice the whole of it at once, and not in gradual steps. However, on violation, (and of the non criminal nature), factors affecting their denunciation apart from others will be their knowledge or ignorance, newly converted or old. And, to allow fair play to people's choice, no one will be spied upon, nor would the authorities give ear to what the people do in private, so long as the evil remains confined to the individuals (Au.).

12. Ibn Zayd has said: Allah mentioned *Salah* and *Zakah* together as if He would not accept one without the other. May Allah show mercy to Abu Bakr, how well he understood this verse (to have fought those who refused to pay the *Zakah*) Ibn Jarir.

To strengthen the above, Ibn Kathir adds a *hadith* of the *Sahihayn*. It reports the Prophet as having said:

أَمَرْتُ أَنْ أُقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَشْهَدُوا أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَيَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ

“I have been commanded to fight the people until they testify to Allah's Oneness, my Prophethood, Pray and pay the *Zakah*.”

Bukhari has another version. It says,

أَمَرْتُ أَنْ أُقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَقُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
فَإِذَا قَالُوهَا صَلَّوْا صَلَاتِنَا وَاسْتَقْبَلُوا قِبَلَتَنَا وَدَجَّحُوا
ذُبِحَتِنَا فَقَدْ حُرِمَتْ عَلَيْنَا دِمَاؤُهُمْ وَأَمْوَالُهُمْ إِلَّا بِحَقِّهَا
وَحَسْبَابُهُمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ

“I have been commanded to fight the people until they testify to Allah's oneness. If they testify to this, Pray like we Pray, orient themselves to our *Qiblah*, slaughtered in the manner we slaughter, then their blood and their property is unlawful to us, except by right.

13. Note the magnanimity of Islam. The pagans persecuted, waylaid the Muslims, attacked and battled against them for over 20 years. But the Qur'an tells them that if they repent, they are still acceptable (as on par with those they persecuted, waylaid, attacked and battled against) and what's more, their past deeds

[6] And, if one of the polytheists seeks your protection, give him protection until he has heard Allah's words,¹⁴ and then deliver him to his place of safety.¹⁵ That is because, these are a people who do not know.¹⁶

وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ
حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦﴾

would be forgiven; for "Allah is All forgiving, All kind" (Sayyid).

Ibn `Abbas and Dahhak have said that this verse revoked every treaty that the Prophet had entered into, with any kind of unbelievers, to any period. And `Ali ibn Abi Talib has said in a shortened report preserved by Ibn Abi Hatim: "Allah sent four swords for the polytheist of Arabia. (As regards the first sword) Allah said: 'Slaughter the associators wherever you lay your hands on them.' The report does not speak of the other three swords. So Ibn Kathir speculates them as follows. The second sword was the Prophet's war against the people of the Book. Allah said (9: 29), "Fight those who do not believe in Allah or the Last Day and do not declare unlawful what Allah and His Messenger declared as unlawful, and do not accept the true religion, from those who were given the Book, until they pay tribute by their hands in humiliation." The third sword was the war against the hypocrites. Allah said (9: 73): "O Prophet. Fight

against the unbelievers and the hypocrites." And, the fourth sword was against the rebelling Muslims. Allah said (49: 9), "And, if two Muslim groups fight each other, then make peace between them. But if one of them rebels against the other, then fight against the rebellion group until it returns to the command of Allah." However, Ibn Kathir goes on, there is difference of opinion over the present verse, whether it remains in force, or is it abrogated by the commandment in another verse (47: 4): "Then, either (show) favor or (seek) ransom." Dahhak and Suddi have said that this present verse is abrogated. But Qatadah has said it is not, it remains "muhkam" (well grounded).

14. What if an individual Muslim offers someone protection? The majority answer is that the protection holds good. This opinion is based on a *hadith*. A variant opinion is that the ruler will have the discretion to either uphold or withdraw it (Qur-tubi).

15. This verse is a clear proof that blind following is not the best course of action in religion. One's religion should have its roots in knowledge and evidences (Razi, Manar).

16. Rashid Rida comments on the benefit of escorting the man to safety: So that the man, once in the safety of his own land and people, might feel free to either choose Islam or not to.

Obviously, the rule would apply to those who come into the Islamic state from another country (Au.). And the period allowed is a maximum of one year before they should leave the country (Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Kathir also adds: Following this rule we see that when Musaylimah the Liar's ambassador came to the Prophet, he asked him, "Do you believe that Musaylimah is a Messenger of Allah?" The man replied, "Yes, I do." The Prophet said, "If not for the rule that ambassadors should not be killed, I would have got you beheaded." But, the Prophet's words did come true. The man, identified as Ibn al Nawaha, re appeared in Kufa during the governorate of Ibn Mas'ud. He still believed in Musaylimah's messengership. Ibn Mas'ud told him that he had lost his immu-

nity since he was no more an ambassador and got him beheaded.

Imām Razi adds that the jurists have generally held the opinion that a Harbi unbeliever (of a party at war with Muslims), would be treated as a ghanimah in normal circumstances, unless he has obtained permission to enter Muslim lands. And, such permission can be granted to him both for religious reasons "until he has heard Allah's words" or for worldly purposes such as, trade.

Alusi has stated the opinion of the scholars that the words "until he has heard Allah's words" imply that until he has heard the whole of the Qur'an.

Taking cue from this verse, one might add that there is no reason why every university in the Islamic world including those of Makkah and Madinah should not offer special courses on Islam to non Muslims? Such of them as interested, could come into the Islamic world, (for a year at a stretch) and learn about Islam in Islamic environment, rather than study, as they do now, courses designed and taught by Jews and Christian in secular institutions of Europe and America (Au.).

[7] How can there be a treaty for the polytheists with Allah and with His Messenger, except for those with whom you made a treaty near the Grand Mosque? Therefore, so long as they are upright with you, be upright with them.¹⁷ Surely, Allah approves of the God-conscious.

كَيْفَ يَكُونُ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ عَهْدٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ رَسُولِهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ فَمَا اسْتَقَامُوا لَكُمْ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٧﴾

[8] How? If they overcome you, they will not regard in reference to you, any kinship¹⁸ or covenant of protection. They please you with their mouths; but their hearts spurn (complacency). And most of them are ungodly.¹⁹

كَيْفَ وَإِن يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ لَا يَرْحَمُوا فِيكُمْ إِلَّا وَلَا ذِمَّةً يُرْضُونَكُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتَأْبَى قُلُوبُهُمْ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٨﴾

[9] They bartered Allah's signs against a paltry gain²⁰ and averted (people) from His path. Surely, evil was that which they were doing.

اشْتَرَوْا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا فَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِهِ إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩﴾

[10] They will not observe toward a believer kinship or covenant of protection. They are the transgressing ones.

لَا يَرْحَمُونَ فِي مَوْمِنٍ إِلَّا وَلَا ذِمَّةً وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُعْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

17. Accordingly, the Prophet completed the four month term after which those that did not embrace Islam fled the country. Eventually, a few came back as Muslims such as `Ikrimah b. Abu Jahl and Safwan b. Umayyah (Ibn Kathir).

18. The textual word "Ill" has several connotations: (i) Kinship: this is the opinion of Ibn `Abbas. (ii) Allah: Mujahid has adopted this meaning. Hebrew and Syriac languages also use this word in this sense. (iii) Oath: Qatadah has opted for this, (iv) Pact: Ibn Zayd preferred this meaning.

However, the same authorities have expressed other opinions at other times (Ibn Jarir).

19. Literally, the textual word "fasaqa" is used for something sprouting out, or emerging. For instance, when the date fruit emerges out of its skin, they say "fasaqa al ratabu." The word then, as used in the Qur'an, has to be understood in accordance with the context in which it appears (Manar).

20. It is reported that when Abu Sufyan decided to break the Hudaibiyyah pact, he invited the Quraysh to a sumptuous dinner and obtained

[11] However, if they repent, offer the Prayers, and pay the Zakah, then they are your brothers in faith.²¹ Thus We detail out the verses for a people who (wish to) believe.

فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ
فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَتَفَصَّلَ الْآيَاتِ
لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

[12] But, if they break their oaths after their treaties and defame your religion²² then, fight the leaders of disbelief²³ who care for no oaths,²⁴ haply they will desist.

وَإِنْ نَكَثُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَهْدِهِمْ
وَطَعَنُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ فَقَاتِلُوا أَئِمَّةَ الْكُفْرِ
إِنَّهُمْ لَا أَيْمَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْتَهُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] Will you not fight against a people who broke their oaths and were determined to expel the Messenger, and they are the ones who were the first to begin (war) against you? Do you fear them? Allah is more deserving that He should be feared if you are believers.

أَلَا نَقَاتِلُونَ قَوْمًا نَكَثُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ وَهُمْ
بِإِخْرَاجِ الرَّسُولِ وَهُمْ بَدَوُوكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ
أَخْشَوْتُهُمْ فَاَللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَوْهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

their assent. The reference here is to that. Others have said that the reference is to the people of Ta'if who sent their contributions to the Quraysh to fight against the Prophet. But the earlier report seems to be more correct (Manar).

21. In the light of this verse, faith in Allah and His Messenger, Prayers and charity, can be considered as the basis of brotherhood in Islam. Hence we have Ibn Zayd's statement: "May Allah show mercy to Abu Bakr. How well he understood this verse when he said, 'I shall not differentiate between the two that Allah placed together?'" That is, *Salah* and *Zakah*. As for the doubt as to how *Zakah* could be made a condition when

there are always poor people in a society; the answer is, it is enough for such people that they should know and believe that paying out the *Zakah* is a condition for belonging to the Islamic brotherhood and to actually do so whenever it becomes obligatory on them (Manar).

22. Majid comments: "(The word ta'n) conveys more than anything else the idea of defiance. Reviling God's religion is blasphemy in its worst form and blasphemy, both in the Jewish and Christian religions, is punishable with death. 'And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him.' (Le. 24: 16). It also stood,

till recently, in the secular laws of Europe as an indictable offence punishable with the capital sentence. 'By the law of Scotland, as it originally stood, the punishment of blasphemy was death, ... In France ... the punishment was death in various forms, burning alive, mutilation, torture, or corporeal punishment.' (EBr. IV, p. 44, 11th Ed.)."

This verse is the basis of the rule that anybody who insults the Prophet deserves to be put to death. This was the opinion of Malik, Layth, Ahmad, Is haq and of Shafe`i. It is said that someone quipped before `Ali, "Ka`b b. al Ashraf was not killed but by treachery." `Ali ordered the man to be beheaded. Someone made a similar statement in the presence of Mu`awiyah. Muhammad b. Maslamah was there. He said to Mu`awiyah, "Is that uttered in your presence and you do not act? By Allah, after this I shall never share the same roof with you. And, if I come across this man elsewhere, I shall kill him."

However, if a Dhimmi insults the Prophet, he might not be killed without given the opportunity to express regret. That is because Allah has added the words, "if they break their oath." This is the opinion of Abu

Hanifah. Another opinion is that he should be killed without respite since he already broke the oath. On the topic, it might be appropriate to mention that there was a woman in Madinah during the Prophet's time who used to insult the Prophet. She was the former slave of a blind man who had attained the free status by virtue of having given birth to two sons by her master. One night she began to insult the Prophet until the blind Muslim could not stand it anymore. He killed her with an axe and admitted his crime the next day. The Prophet did not punish him (Qur-tubi).

23. Ibn Abi Hatim has recorded that when Abu Bakr was sending his troops to the Syrian region (ruled by the Romans), he instructed Ibn Jubayr b. Nufayr: "When you run into a combat with the people there, slaughter them. For, to kill one of them is better unto me than fifty others. This is because Allah has said: 'Fight the leaders of disbelief'" (Ibn Kathir).

24. It is widely reported that the al-lusion is to the Quraysh tribes that had entered into a no war pact with the Prophet but soon crossed swords with Banu Khuza`ah, one of the Prophet's ally, committing aggres-

[14] *Make war on them, Allah will chastise them at your hands. He will humiliate them and help you against them, and will heal the hearts of a believing people.*²⁵

فَاتْلُوهُمْ يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَيُخْرِجُهُمْ
وَيَنْصُرْكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيَشْفِ صُدُورَ قَوْمِ
مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] *He will remove the fury in their hearts. And Allah turns in forgiveness to whomsoever He will. Allah is the All knowing, the All wise.*

وَيُدْهِبُ غَيْظَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَيَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَى
مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾

sion in support of Banu Bakr, their ally. In fact, it is said that the battle was the result of a quarrel that started between two individuals. One of them, belonging to Banu Bakr, sang a satire against the Prophet. Another, a Khuza`i told him, "If you repeat it before me, I'll break your jaw." The man repeated and he broke his jaw. Their quarrel led to the battle, and ultimately, when the Khuza`ah complained to the Prophet, it led to the subjugation of Quraysh and fall of Makkah (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

On the basis of this verse, the Hanafiyah have said that the oath of an unbeliever is worthless (when he sets it against a believer: Au.) Manar.

25. According to Ibn `Abbas, the allusion by the words, "and will cure

the hearts of a believing people," is to those of the Banu Khuza`ah (a tribe from the interiors of Yemen and Saba') who embraced Islam and visited the Grand Mosque. But they were treated badly in Makkah. They sent a complaint to the Prophet. He said in reply, "Be of good cheer. Rescue is close" (Kashshaf, Alusi).

Ibn `Asakir has recorded that when `A'isha got angry the Prophet would hold her by her nose and say, "O `Uwaysh. Say,

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ اعْفِرْ لِي ذَنْبِي وَأَذْهِبْ غَيْظَ
قَلْبِي وَأَجِرْنِي مِنْ مُضِلَّاتِ الْفِتَنِ

"O Lord of Prophet Muhammad, forgive me my sin, remove the anger of my heart and save me from tribulations that lead to misguidance" (Ibn Kathir).

[16] Or, do you think you will be spared when Allah has not yet known those of you who fought in His cause,²⁶ and took not friends apart from Allah, His Messenger, or the believers?²⁷ And Allah is Aware of what you do.²⁸

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُشْرِكُوا وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ
الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَا رَسُولِهِ وَلَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلِيجَةً
وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

26. Verses of similar nature are many. E.g. (3: 142):

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ
جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ [آل عمران : ١٤٢]

“Do you think you will enter Paradise when Allah has not yet known those among you who fought.”

And (2: 214):

“Do you think you will enter Paradise when that has not yet come upon you which came upon those before you?”

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ
خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ [البقرة : ٢١٤]

And (29: 2 3),

أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أَمْنًا وَهُمْ لَا
يُفْتَنُونَ (٢) وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ
اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ [العنكبوت :
٣ ، ٢]

“Alif. Lam. Mim. Do the people think that they will be left alone if they said, ‘We have believed,’ without being tried? Surely, we tried those before them. Surely Allah will find out those who are truthful and those who are liars” (Ibn Jarir).

27. The words, “and took not friends apart from Allah, His Messenger or the believers,” have been added to check out the hypocrites who might fight along with the Muslims but, at heart, in sympathy with the unbelievers (Razi).

28. That is, Allah is aware of the intentions behind the deeds, nothing is hidden from Him and He will not accept, as Ibn `Abbas has said, a contradiction between the open and the secret (Razi).

Thanwi offers a fairly complicated explanation of the passage ending with verse 16 and says that he took several years to come to this conclusion, but is still not too sure if he is absolutely right. His commentary itself, although short, is pretty difficult to translate. A good amount of explanation will have to be added, which might give the commentary another coloring. We have merely intended to point out how diligent and cautious scholars have been with the Qur`ān (Au.).

[17] And, it was not for the polytheists that they tend²⁹ Allah's Sanctuaries,³⁰ while they bear witness infidelity against themselves.³¹ They .. their deeds have fallen to nothing and in Fire they shall abide forever.

مَا كَانَ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يَعْمُرُوا مَسَاجِدَ
اللَّهِ شَاهِدِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِم بِالْكَفْرِ
أُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ وَفِي النَّارِ هُمْ
خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

29. The textual word *'imarah* denotes construction (of a place), maintenance, habitation therein, as well as visit for purposes of worship, or, as Yusuf Ali has written, "fill with light and life and activity." Hence Bayt al Ma`mur meaning, the House of worship, or, the House that is served.

However, Zamakhshari has cautioned that it is not used in the sense of *i`tamara*, i.e., offering of an *'Umrah*. But, when it is said "*'amara Allaha*", it means he worshiped Allah, or "*'ammara fulanan rakatayni*" would mean, so and so offered two cycles of Prayer. Raghib has said that *'imarah* is the antonym of *khirab*, i.e., destruction. Raghib also disagrees with Zamakhshari when he says that one might not use *'amara* in the sense of *i`tamara*, i.e., he performed an *'Umrah*. According to Raghib, such usage is allowed. Deductively, the verse under discussion denies the unbelievers *'imarah* in all the above senses, that is, entry into the mosques for the purposes of worship, service, main-

tenance, building, custodianship, or pilgrimage (Manar).

In Yusuf Ali's words: "Before the preaching of Islam the Pagans built, repaired, and maintained the Mosque, and celebrated Pagan ceremonies in it. They made an income out of it. Islam protested, and the Pagans ejected Muslims and their Leader from Makkah and shut them out from the Ka`bah itself. When the Muslims were strong enough to re take Makkah (*A.H.* 8), they purified the Mosque and re established the worship of the true God. If they became Muslims, it was a different matter. Then the further question arose: should they be allowed to visit it and practice their unseemly Pagan rites? Obviously this would be derogatory to the dignity and honour of the Mosque, and was forbidden. This was the particular occasion to which the verse refers. The general deduction is clear. A house of Allah is a place of sincere devotion, not a theater for vulgar rites nor a source of worldly income."

[18] Surely, those tend Allah's Sanctuaries who believe in Allah and the Hereafter,³² offer Prayers, pay the Zakah, and fear none other than Allah.³³ These .. haply³⁴ these will be of those that are guided.

إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنِ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ
وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَن
يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

Rashid Rida also expresses the opinion that if a non Muslim donates money for the construction of a mosque, it could be used since mere donation does not entail a hold over the mosque. However, if that is feared, then it might not be accepted. Thanwi points out that that is also the ruling stated in the Hanafiyy work *Hidayah* (as also in *Radd al Muhtar*, Shami and Maraghi: Shafi').

30. Earlier, Allah announced that He and His Prophet were quit of the polytheists. The polytheists of course disapproved of this, saying, 'there should be cooperation and collaboration, especially when we are the ones who tend to the Grand Mosque.' In answer, Allah pointed out that there could be no co operation or collaboration with such glaring contradictions as disbelief in He, for whom the Grand Mosque was built and themselves who believed in stone gods (Razi).

Rashid Rida writes: When Allah got His House cleared of the filth of idols, He gives orders that the House

be cleansed of the filth of their worshippers: the polytheists.

31. Suddi has said that the unbelievers bear witness to their unbelief. If you asked a Christian what his religion is, he will reply, "I am a Christian." If you asked a Jew what his religion is, he will reply, "Judaism." If you asked a pagan what his religion is, he will reply, "I am a polytheist" (Razi, Qurtubi). That is, none of them will say he is submitted to One Allah (Au.).

32. Allah thus bore witness to the faith of him who frequents Allah's mosques. We have a *hadith* too on this topic. Preserved by Tirmidhi who declared it *hasan gharib* (a kind of weak report: Au.), [as well as in Ibn Marduwayh and Hakim: Ibn Kathir], which says,

إذا رأيتم الرجل يعتاد المساجد فاشهدوا له بالإيمان

"When you see a man frequenting the mosques, bear witness to his faith." Then the Prophet recited this verse: "Surely, those tend to Allah's Sanctuaries who

believe in Allah and the Hereafter.”

Ibn al `Arabiyy has cautioned that this frequenting the mosque, however, will not be considered enough for a man to be accepted as a witness (in the courts). For, to be a witness, one has to meet other qualifications (Qurtubi). Another *hadith* preserved by Ahmad says:

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ ذُنْبُ الْإِنْسَانِ كَذُنْبِ الْعَمَمِ يَأْخُذُ الشَّاةَ
الْقَاصِيبَةَ وَالنَّاحِيَةَ فَإِيَّاكُمْ وَالتَّيْعَابَ وَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالْجَمَاعَةِ
وَالْعَامَّةِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ

“Satan is man’s wolf, just like the wolf for sheep which seizes the stray one. Lo! Be with the people, be with the community and the common people and (frequent) the mosques” (Ibn Kathir).

The *hadith* is also in Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Hakim, who rated it *sahih* (Alusi).

On the topic of mosques, Majid has the following to quote: “After remarking that Islam ‘has preserved the character of pure monotheism much

more faithfully than the Mosaic and Christian religions,’ he (Haeckel) proceeds: ‘When I visited the East for the first time in 1873, and admired the noble mosques in Cairo, Smyrna, Brussa, and Constantinople, I was inspired with a feeling of real devotion by the simple and tasteful decoration of the interior, and the lofty and beautiful work of the exterior. How noble and inspiring these mosques appear in comparison with the majority of Catholic churches, which are covered normally with gaudy pictures and gilt, and are outwardly disfigured by an immoderate crowd of human and animal figures’ (Haeckel, Riddle of the Universe, p. 233).”

33. The “fear of none but Allah” has been coupled with “belief in Him” because fear of other than Allah betrays secret association (shirk al khafiyy) Sayyid.

34. Muhammad b. Is haq b. Yasar has said that every `asa (haply) coming from Allah is a firm promise (Ibn Kathir).

[19] Have you made the providing of the pilgrims with drinks, and tending the Grand Mosque equal to one who believed in Allah and the Hereafter, and fought in the way of Allah?³⁵ They are not equal in the sight of Allah. And Allah does not guide a transgressing people.

أَجَعَلْتُمْ سِقَايَةَ الْحَاجِّ وَعِمَارَةَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ كَمَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَجَاهَدَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَوُونَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] Those who believed, migrated, and fought in the way of Allah with their wealth and their persons, they are of higher status with Allah, and they indeed .. they are successful.

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

35. Several incidents are quoted as those occasioning this verse. Nu`man b. Bashir al *Ansāri* says, "I was sitting by the pulpit of the Prophet's mosque along with a few others. One of them said that he was not bothered about anything after Islam except that he wished he could supply water to the pilgrims. Another said, "Rather, maintain the Grand Mosque." A third said that *Jihad* in the cause of Allah was the best of deeds. `Umar interrupted and told us not to make noise near the Prophet's pulpit, rather wait for the Friday Prayer to be over to ask him about the best of deeds and this verse was revealed. (Qurtubi says that probably the verse was revealed earlier, so, when the Prophet was asked, he recited it in reply).

Another incident quoted is that of `Abbas who said, when taken prisoner at Badr, "Well, you might have overtaken us in Islam, *hijrah* and *Jihad*, but we on our part maintained the Grand Mosque, supplied water to the pilgrims, and relieved the distressed."

A third report says that Talha b. Shaybah, `Abbas and `Ali disputed between themselves over the best of deeds. Ibn Shaybah said: "I own the keys of the House of Ka`bah and can, if I wish, sleep inside it." `Abbas said: "I am the one who is in charge of supplying water to the pilgrims." `Ali remarked: "I do not know what you two are talking about. All I know is that I Prayed facing the *Qiblah* six months before the rest of the people did, and I fought in the way of Allah." In response, Allah revealed this verse.

[21] Their Lord gives them glad tiding of a mercy from Him and approval,³⁶ and of gardens for them wherein is enduring pleasure.³⁷

يُبَشِّرُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَرِضْوَانٍ وَجَنَّاتٍ
لَّهُمْ فِيهَا نَعِيمٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٢١﴾

[22] Abiding therein forever. Verily with Allah are great rewards.

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ
عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

Ibn `Abbas added that in fact the pagans were proud of their maintenance of the Grand Mosque and supply of water to the pilgrims, but turned away from Allah in arrogance. Allah said about them (23: 66 67): “Surely, My signs were recited to you but you turned away on your backs in arrogance, spending evenings in evil talk” (Ibn Jarir).

Supplying water to the pilgrims was, in those days of scarcity, of no small benefit. Scores of pilgrims died of thirst. Yet, it was counted out as a deed of no value in the absence of faith (Au.).

Yusuf Ali offers his perceptive comments applicable to peoples of all times: “Giving drinks of cold water to thirsty pilgrims, and doing material services to a mosque are meritorious acts, but they are only external. If they do not touch the soul, their value is slight. Far greater, in the sight of Allah, are Faith, Endeavour, and self surrender to Allah. Men who practice these will obtain honor

in the sight of Allah. Allah’s light and guidance comes to them, and not to those self sufficient beings who think that a little show of what the world considers piety is enough.”

36. Jabir b. `Abdullah reports the Prophet:

إذا دخل أهل الجنة الجنة، قال الله سبحانه: أعطيتكم أفضل من هذا، فيقولون: ربنا، أي شيء أفضل من هذا؟ قال: رِضْوَانِي

“When the people would have entered Paradise, Allah will say, ‘I shall give you something better than all these things.’ They will ask, ‘What could be better than these blessings?’ He will say, ‘My Approval (*ridwan*)’” Ibn Jarir.

The above *hadith* is declared trustworthy and has its equivalent in roughly the same words in Bukhari and other collections (Au.).

37. Note that in verse 20 Allah of three kinds of deeds: belief in Allah, *hijrah* and *jihad* in His cause. In verse 21 He followed it up with three kinds of rewards: mercy, be-

[23] Believers! Do not take your fathers and brothers as allies if they prefer disbelief over belief.³⁸ Then, whosoever of you took them as allies they indeed they are the transgressors.³⁹

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا آبَاءَكُمْ
وَإِخْوَانَكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنِ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْكُفْرَ
عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَوَلِيَّكَ
هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

ing pleased, and, gardens. Also note that the three deeds are in the order of their importance, higher to lower. The rewards too are in the order of their importance: higher to lower (Au.).

38. Asad comments on the general meaning: “The term *walayah* (“alliance” or “friendship”) is used in this context in the sense of an alliance against other believers, as in 3: 28. That it does not refer to “friendship” in the sense of normal human affection is obvious from the many exhortations in the Qur’an to be good to one’s parents and kinsfolk; and, more explicitly, from 60: 8 9, where the believers are reminded that friendly relations with unbelievers who are not hostile to the Muslim community are permissible..”

But Qurtubi is more specific. He writes: Obviously, the verse is of general nature, applicable to believers of all times, but at the time of its revelation, special reference was to those who had embraced Islam but had remained in the unbelievers’

lands, whether in Makkah, or other places, while the Prophet had already emigrated to Madinah. The Muslims were told, in this and the next verse, that they ought to prefer their religion over everything else. Although of course, the main point remains, viz. Muslims should not take the unbelievers to their heart. It is love of Allah alone that should reside there. One of the Sufis has said:

يقولون لي دار الاحبة قد دنت
وأنت كتيب إن ذا لعجيب
فقلت وما تغني ديار قريية
إذا لم يكن بين القلوب قريب
فكم من بعيد الدار نال مراده
وآخر جار الجنب مات كتيب

They tell me the house of the beloved is close

Yet strange that you appear downcast

I said, it matters not how close the houses

If the hearts be not close

How many distantly placed have not achieved their desires?

While another next door died gloomy.

Ibn Kathir writes: The theme of this verse is expressed in a slightly different manner elsewhere in the Qur'an. It says (58: 22):

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ
حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ
إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ
وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِنْهُ وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ [المجادلة : ٢٢]

“You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Hereafter, having affection for those who opposed Allah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers, sons, brothers, or kinsfolk. Such, Allah has written faith in their hearts and has helped them with a Spirit from Him and shall admit them into Gardens beneath which rivers flow.”

It is reported by Hafiz al Bayhaqi that during the Badr battle Abu `Ubaydah's father, al Jarrah began chanting praises of his deities. Initially Abu `Ubaydah avoided encounter with him. But when he would not stop, he confronted him. The two fought, and Abu `Ubaydah killed his father. Allah revealed the verse, “You will not find ..”

On the topic of love of Allah and His Messenger, Ibn Kathir also writes that a *hadith* of Bukhari tells us that once the Prophet was strolling with his hand in `Umar's when `Umar said,

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَأَنْتَ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا مِنْ
نَفْسِي فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا وَالَّذِي
نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ حَتَّى أَكُونَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ نَفْسِكَ فَقَالَ
لَهُ عُمَرُ فَإِنَّهُ الْآنَ وَاللَّهِ لَأَنْتَ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ نَفْسِي
فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْآنَ يَا عُمَرُ

“By Allah. You are dearer to me than anything else in this world, save for my own soul.” The Prophet remarked, “A man is not a true believer until he loves me more than his own self.” At that `Umar said, (according to some reports, being quiet for a while, consulting his inner self: Au.), “By Allah, now you are dearer to me than my own soul.” The Prophet said, “Now, O `Umar.” (That is, now you have become a true believer: Au.).

It is also reported (by Bukhari: Hus-sain b. Ibrahim) that the Prophet (*saws*) said:

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى أَكُونَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ وَالِدِهِ
وَوَالِدِهِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

“One of you does not believe in me until I am dearer to him than his father, sons and the rest

[24] Say, 'If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, your clan, the wealth you have acquired, the commerce that you fear may slacken,⁴⁰ and the dwellings in which you take pleasure are dearer to you than Allah, His Messenger and fighting in His cause,⁴¹ then, wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide a transgressing people.⁴²

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِينُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

of the people.” (There is a *hadith* that strongly disapproves of the love of this world against the love of the Hereafter: Au.).

The Prophet said in a *hadith* preserved by Abu Da’ud:

إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ بِالْعِينَةِ وَأَخَذْتُمْ أَذْنَابَ الْبَقَرِ وَرَضِيْتُمْ بِالزَّرْعِ وَتَرَكْتُمُ الْجِهَادَ سَلَطَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ ذُلًّا لَا يَنْزِعُهُ حَتَّى تَرْجِعُوا إِلَى دِينِكُمْ

“When you begin to deal in `Ina (a dealing with a tinge of usury), hold on to the tails of the oxen (i.e., cattle-breeding) and are quite satisfied with farming, and give up *Jihad*, then Allah will impose on you such humiliation that He will not remove from you until you return to your religion.”

39. The verse forbids approval of the unbelievers as long as they remain unbelievers. For, as the scholars say, to show approval of disbelief is itself disbelief and to approve of wicked-

ness is itself wickedness. The verse however, does not forbid being dutiful to unbelieving parents, or, employing an unbeliever. Forbidden is love or approval of their ways (Au.). Bukhari has a report coming down from Asma’. She asked the Prophet (*saws*),

قَدِمَتْ أُمِّي وَهِيَ مُشْرِكَةٌ.. فَاسْتَفْتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.. فَأَصْلَحَهَا قَالَ تَعَمَّ صِلِي أُمَّكَ

“My mother has come down to me (from Makkah) although she is still a pagan. I asked the Prophet, ‘Should I treat her well?’ He replied, “Treat your mother well” (Qurtubi).

A longer version of the above report is in Bukhari (Au.)

40. An alternative interpretation put forward by Ibn al Mubarak is that the allusion is to the daughters and sisters who, one fears, might not get married if the guardian emigrated.

This kind of usage has precedence in poetical works (Qurtubi).

41. A *hadith* of Bukhari and Nasa'i says the Prophet said:

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ قَعَدَ لِابْنِ آدَمَ بِأَطْرَفِهِ فَقَعَدَ لَهُ بِطَرِيقِ
الْإِسْلَامِ فَقَالَ لَهُ أَتَسْلِمُ وَتَذُرُ دِينَكَ وَدِينَ آبَائِكَ
وَأَبَاءِ أَيْبِكَ قَالَ فَعَصَاهُ فَأَسْلَمَ ثُمَّ قَعَدَ لَهُ بِطَرِيقِ
الْهِجْرَةِ فَقَالَ أَتَهَاجِرُ وَتَذُرُ أَرْضَكَ وَسَمَاءَكَ ..
فَعَصَاهُ فَهَاجَرَ قَالَ ثُمَّ قَعَدَ لَهُ بِطَرِيقِ الْجِهَادِ فَقَالَ لَهُ
.. فَتُقَاتِلُ فَتُقْتَلُ فَتُكْحَلُ الْمَرْأَةُ وَيَقْسَمُ الْمَالُ قَالَ
فَعَصَاهُ فَجَاهَدَ

“*Shaytan* sat in the path of Adam’s son at various points. He sat by the path of Islam and said, ‘Will you embrace Islam and abandon your ancestral religion?’ (The man) disobeyed him and embraced Islam. Then he sat by the path of *hijrah* saying, ‘Will you emigrate abandoning your land and your sky?’ The man opposed him and emigrated. Then he sat by the path of *jihad* in person and with his wealth and said, ‘Will you fight to be killed, your wife be married to another man and your wealth distributed?’ The man did not give him an ear and participated in *jihad*’ (Qurtubi).

The *hadith* is in Ibn Hibban and, according to Shu’ayb Arna’ut, of a good chain of narrators (Au.).

42. This is one of the toughest verses of the Qur’ān for the faithful. It offers a criterion by which everyone can check about himself whether he meets the requirement of faith or not (Zamakhshari).

At the *Ummah* level, we have the following that should drive fear into every heart. The Prophet said,

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَئِنْ
تَرَكْتُمْ الْجِهَادَ وَأَخَذْتُمْ بِأَذْنَابِ الْبَقَرِ وَتَبَايَعْتُمْ بِالْعَيْنَةِ
لَيُلْزِمَنَّكُمْ اللَّهُ مَذَلَّةً فِي رِقَابِكُمْ لَا تَنْفُكُ عَنْكُمْ حَتَّى
تَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَتَرْجِعُوا عَلَى مَا كُنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ (قال
الحافظ في ” البلوغ ” ١ / ١٧٢ : رواه أبو داود
من رواية نافع عنه و في إسناده مقال ، و لأحمد
نحوه من رواية عطاء و رجاله ثقات ، و صححه
ابن القطان) .

“If you abandoned *Jihad*, took hold of the tails of the cows, and did sale purchase by the rules of ‘*Eenah*’, surely Allah will fasten humility in your necks, that will not be removed until you repent and return to originally what you were on.”

Hafiz Ibn Hajr remarked that this report has been recorded by Abu Da’ud, but through a questionable chain. However, the one in Ahmad (which is the version here) has sound narrators that Ibn al-Qattan declared as *Sahih*.

[25] Allah has already helped you in many places and on the day of Hunayn when your numbers pleased you. But it did not avail you at all and the earth became, for all its breadth, narrow for you and you fled backwards.⁴³

لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ وَيَوْمَ
حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ أَعْجَبْتَكُمْ كَثُرْتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ
عَنكُمْ شَيْئًا وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا
رَحَبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُمْ مُدْبِرِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

And, ‘*Eenah*’ is a kind of trade in which usury is surreptitiously involved (Au.).

43. As usual, we shall collect reports on Hunayn battle as found in various tafsir works, with Ibn Jarir’s commentary coming from Qatadah as the basis:

Hunayn

Hunayn is a watering place between Ta’if and Makkah. (A deep and irregular valley, with clusters of palm trees, situated at a day’s journey from Mecca on one of the roads to Ta’if: Majid). The Prophet fought the tribes of Hawazin and Thaqif at this place. (Banu Sa’d, Banu Awza’, Banu Amir, Banu Awn and a few of Banu Hilal, were also with them: Ibn Kathir). The chief instigator of the war was Malik b. ‘Awf. He coaxed the surrounding tribes to war against the Prophet. Some responded to the call, some refused. It was he who had suggested that they take their women, children and beasts along, so that their men do not flee leaving

behind their women and children. This he though would ensure victory. When the Prophet heard of the preparations, he decided to advance to meet them in the open. (He left behind ‘Attab b. Asid as the governor of Makkah and Mu’adh ibn Jabal as the teacher: Shafi’). The Banu Hawazin were led by Malik b. ‘Awf, and Banu Thaqif by ‘Abd Ya Leel b. ‘Amr. (They first landed at a valley called Awtas: Qurtubi). It is said that the Prophet had 12,000 men with him, 10,000 of whom were from the *Ansār* and *Muhajirūn* and the rest new Muslims. (Apart from the 2,000 Makkans, a large number of uncommitted non Muslim Makkans also followed him, hoping to cash on in case of Muslim defeat: Shafi’). The forces that had lined up against the Muslims were only 8000. It is also reported that the Prophet borrowed a couple of hundred breast-shields from a pagan called Safwan ibn Umayyah b. Khalf and some 30 to 40,000 in cash from Rabi’ah al Makhzumi. (It is noticeable that the

Prophet, having subdued Makkah: Au.] could as well have seized the arms from the Makkan Pagans. But he did not, rather, took them on loan: Shafi`. The report is in Ibn Majah: Qurtubi). Thus equipped the Prophet marched out. (It is said that the request made to the Prophet to the effect that a “*Dhat Anwat*” be established for them was made during this journey: Qurtubi. It is also reported that the famous incident of a bedouin taking the Prophet by surprise under a tree also occurred in this journey. The Prophet woke up to find a bedouin flashing his sword over him. “Who will save you now?” The bedouin asked. “Allah,” was the calm answer from the Prophet. Those words struck terror into the heart of the unbeliever. His sword fell off his hand. The Prophet picked it up and asked, “Who will save you now?” The bedouin replied, “Be the best of those who take up [the sword].” The Prophet forgave him: Shafi`).

(As they descended into the Hunayn valley, the Prophet sent `Abdullah b. Hidad to spy on the unbelievers’ army. He spent two days among them. Malik b. `Awf was telling them that Muhammad was yet to face real fighters: Shafi`). As the Muslims prepared themselves for the battle, somebody remarked that they could

not lose that day’s battle for want of numbers. (The Prophet did not like the statement: Shawkani from Ibn Abi Hatim. Some others have said that the Prophet himself had made the statement: Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari. But, Imām Razi remarks that such a statement is least expected from a man of such character as the Prophet). [Some others have said that it was Salamah b. Salaamah b. Waqsh who made that statement, but all the reports narrated in this connection are weak: Dr. Mahdi Rizqullah in his Seerah: Au.].

At all events, when fighting began, most of the Muslims fled. (What happened was that) Banu Hawazin had hidden their archers behind the hills. As soon as the Muslims advanced, they showered them with arrows. As the Muslims dispersed in confusion, their swordsmen attacked them from all sides. The Muslims fled: Ibn Kathir. (‘On leaving the narrow oasis of Hunayn, the road enters winding gorges suitable for ambush. In them Malik b. `Awf awaited the Muslims, coming along in no order and not suspecting to the presence of the enemy’.. “Staggered by the unexpected onslaught, column after column fell back and choked the narrow pass. Aggravated by the obscurity of the hour and the

straitness of the ragged road, panic seized the army.. In the narrow and precipitous pass, their great numbers, of which they had been vain-gloriously proud, only added to the difficulty.: Majid from 'EI' and "W. Muir").

According to Suddi, Abu Sufyan and Ayman b. Umm Ayman (who was later martyred in the same battle: Qurtubi), were of those who did not flee. (Actually, some 100 men remained with the Prophet, including Usama b. Zayd: Ibn Kathir. Qurtubi adds: Also among those that remained with him were Abu Bakr, `Umar, and, of all, Umm Sulaym holding the reins of Abu Talha's camel, with a dagger in her hand).

According to a report originating from `Abbas himself, when he discovered that the people had fled, except for Abu Sufyan, he went to the Prophet and took the reins of his mule (a grey beast called Duldul: Qurtubi) in his hand (to prevent it from advancing any further: Ibn Kathir.). The Prophet came down his mule and asked `Abbas to call back the *Ansār* and the *Muhajirūn*. (`Abbas was a man of loud voice). He called out: 'Where are the *Ansār*? where are the *Muhajirūn*?' and added, "Where are the people of *surah al*

Baqarah?" According to another report, the Prophet told him to call out in words, "Where are the people of the Tree," i.e., of *By`ah al Ridwan*. At that the *Ansār* and *Muhajirūn* turned back and flocked around the Prophet. `Abbas said they came back running to him like a she camel hurrying toward its young one. (Shawkani reports from Ibn Abi Hatim that the *Ansār* burst into tears when they heard their name called).

The Prophet picked up a handful of sand and threw it on the pagans. (Later, the Hawazin men reported that when the Prophet threw the sand in their faces, 'Not one of us was left whose eyes were not filled with sand. And we heard the sounds of steel, as if someone was rubbing a piece of iron on a steel plate': Musnad Ahmad Ibn Kathir). Allah sent down His help and the Muslims emerged victorious collecting plenty of booty. (In fact, Hunayn was not a battle: it was the story of two routs: first of the Muslims and second of the Hawazin. The pagans retreated in such haste that they left behind their women and children, some of whom were, in fact, killed in the confusion: Majid. Even Malik b. `Awf fled and escaped to his fort having abandoned his wife and children: Shafi'). Some 6000 of them men, women and

children were taken captives. ‘And the number of camels captured were a staggering 24,000:’ Majid from ‘EI’. The number of goats captured were somewhere 40,000: Shafi’).

Abu Is haq has reported that he heard a conversation between Bara’ b. ‘Azib and another man. The man said, “Did you flee the battle field in Hunayn?” Bara’ said, “Very much, but not the Prophet. You see, what happened was that the Banu Hawazin were very good archers. When the battle began, we attacked them with swords. They could not withstand that and fled. We went after the booty. They re assembled and showered arrows on us. We fled. But the Prophet did not flee. I saw him on his white mule with Abu Sufyan holding the reins. He came down saying:

أَنَا النَّبِيُّ لَا كَذِبُ
أَنَا ابْنُ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ

I’m a Prophet, that’s not a lie

I’m a son of ibn ‘Abdul Muttalib.

With that, the Banu Hawazin were routed.

The last report cited above is in the *Sahihayn* also (Ibn Kathir).

Quote from Ibn Jarir ends here.

Jabir brought home an insightful point. He was asked by Wahab b. Munabbih if the Muslims had taken any booty at the fall of Makkah. He replied, as in Abu Da’ud, “Nothing, although they were ten thousand in numbers with their beasts all needing great amounts of provision. (They would have suffered a lot but for the fact that) Allah moved the hearts of the Banu Hawazin pagans (who came to fight for no obvious reason). He also put it in their hearts that they should carry their wealth in terms of beasts, livestock, women, children, and even slaves to the battle field.” It looked as if, Rashid Rida adds, Allah prepared the grounds for hosting the Muslims as His guests at Makkah. Further, when the pagans had lost everything, the Muslims impressed on them that they did not need their women, children, and slaves. That way Allah softened their hearts and they all turned Muslims (Rashid Rida).

[26] Then Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers⁴⁴ and sent down forces that you perceived not,⁴⁵ and punished the unbelievers.⁴⁶ And that indeed is the (right) recompense of the unbelievers.

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ جُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَعَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

44. Ibn Mas`ud is recorded by Bayhaqi and Ahmad as having said: "I was with the Prophet when the people fled - except for about 80 of the *Muhajirun* and *Ansar*. We did not show our backs. It is upon them that Allah sent down His Sakinah. The Prophet told me, "Give me a handful of dust" (Ibn Jarir).

Shawkani writes that the above report is in Hakim also, who declared it trustworthy. (But Dhahabi has disagreed with him, finding fault with two narrators. Haythamiyy on the other hand thinks only one of them has been questioned for his integrity, but has been declared trustworthy by some doctors of *hadith*: S. Ibrahim).

Rashid Rida quotes a very interesting passage from one of the Shi`ah writers which reflects their beliefs. First the writer states that none stayed with the Prophet except three: `Ali, `Abbas and Abu Sufyan. Then he extends the figure to about nine, since that is the opinion of one of the Shi`ah Shuyukh. Then he prais-

es `Ali who, while the *Muhajirun* and *Ansar* fled, stood his ground and saved the religion and the Islamic state from sure demise. Finally he asks (the Sunnis): "By your Lord, give up pretensions and tell me honestly, 'Were `Ali too to have run away, do you think the rest of the nine, who largely depended on his courage, have remained with the Prophet? Had `Ali fled, surely they too would have followed him on his heels, and the Prophet would have got killed. In consequence, neither the religion of Islam nor the Islamic state would have come to exist. `Ali's exemplary courage saved the day, in fact, save the humanity from sure destruction.' After reporting him, Rashid Rida proceeds to comment on the statements, but we drop them as unnecessary. For, anyone who believes in phantasmagorical ideas has, to say the least, an abnormal mind.

45. Ibn Jarir writes: `Abd al Rahman has also reported a man who fought on the side of the pagans that day.

He said, "Actually, we overcame the Muslims in no time. We kept pushing them until we came face to face with your man (i.e., the Prophet) upon a white mule. But, as we advanced, we encountered several fair men of beautiful countenance. They said, 'Afouled be the faces. Get back.' So we fled" (Ibn Jarir, Razi). Those were the forces the Muslims did not perceive (Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Kathir also quotes a few other narratives. Bayhaqi has an account that reports Shaybah (who was a new Muslim) as saying: "When the Muslims fled leaving the Prophet unprotected, I remembered the death of my father and uncle (at the hands of the Muslims) and those of our men that 'Ali and Hamza had killed. I said to myself, this is the time for revenge. So I tried to advance on him from his right side. But 'Abbas was there standing erect well armored. I said to myself, 'he will not betray his nephew.' So I sought to get him from the left hand side. But as I got closer, it was Abu Sufyan standing by his side. I said to myself, 'this man will not betray his cousin.' So I went back and advanced on him from the rear. But, I was not as far away as a sword's reach when a flame flashed before me blinding me. I placed my hand on my breast and tried to back

off. The Prophet turned to me and said, "Shaybah, get closer." Then he added, "O Allah, distance him away from *Shaytan*." I raised my eyes toward him and suddenly he was dearer to me than my hearing and sight. He said, "Shaybah. Go forward and fight the unbelievers." (There were others too who had come with the same intention: Shafi'). Bayhaqi has another report coming down from Shaybah's son. He said that his father Shaybah said, "By God. I did not go out with the Prophet to Hunayn for the sake of Islam. In fact, I knew nothing about Islam. But, I feared that the Hawazin guys will overcome the Quraysh. Then, as I was in the battle field, I told the Prophet, 'Messenger of Allah, I can see a black and white striped horse.' He replied, 'Shaybah! None but an unbeliever sees it.' Then he slapped me on the breast and said, 'O Allah. Guide Shaybah.' He did that three times. And, by Allah, there was not a person dearer to me after that, than him.

Ibn Is haq has another report from Jubayr b. Mut'im who said: "When the two forces met I saw a (huge) striped shroud descending from the heavens. It landed between us and the unbelievers, and, in a moment they were like ants filling the whole valley. We never doubted that those

were angels (Ibn Kathir). But, Razi and Shawkani add: As is generally accepted, angels did not take part in any battle except that of Badr. And there too, it was only to spread fear and panic among the pagans and strengthen the hearts of the believers. (What the two meant to say perhaps is that the angels came down to plant fear and dread, they did not participate in the killing: Au.).

46. Zamakhshari and Ibn Jarir (the latter placing the note against the earlier verse) write: After the battle, the Banu Hawazin's men came back to the Prophet as Muslims. (That was about 20 days after the battle: Ibn Kathir). What happened was that when the Banu Hawazin lost the battle, they shut themselves up in their forts. The Prophet laid siege. After 15 days of fruitless efforts, the Companions requested that he seek Allah's curse for them. But, instead of cursing them, the Prophet supplicated for their guidance and ordered the siege lifted. On his return journey, he stopped at Ji'rana and decided to offer an `Umrah before returning to Madinah. A great many Makkans who had accompanied his army, hoping to see him annihilated, became Muslims at this point. It was here that he decided to distribute the booty which had been left in

Abu Sufyan's charge. And then on a sudden 14 chiefs of Ta'if showed up, declaring their faith in Islam. (The emissary included the Prophet's foster uncle Abu Yerqan, and was led by Zuhayr b. Sard: Shafi', and `Awf b. Malik: Qurtubi). They went up to the Prophet and said, "Messenger of Allah. You are a good and generous man. You have with you all our wealth as well as our women and children as captives." He told them, "Choose between your wealth and women and children." They chose women and children. So the Prophet spoke to his Companions saying, "These people have chosen their women and children against their wealth. So, whoever wishes to free their captives, let him. But if someone disagrees, let him hand over his captives to us, we shall pay the compensation." The Companions said, "We shall free them unconditionally." The Prophet said, "Not this way. There might be some unwilling. So let your leaders go about seeking the consent of the individuals." That was done and the women and children were released without any ransom. (This demonstrates that in matters of rights, it is not enough that collective will is measured or sought. Each individual involved must be consulted: Shafi').

Later, Ibn Jarir continues, the Prophet assembled his men at Ji`rana and distributed the booty there, giving huge amounts to the fresh Makkan Muslims such as Abu Sufyan, Harth b. Hisham, Suhayl b. `Amr, Aqra` b. Habis and others. Someone of the *Ansār* remarked, "It looks like he is inclined to his people." When the remark was brought to his notice, the Prophet ordered the *Ansār* gathered near his leather tent. When they had assembled, he asked them,

”يا معشر الأنصار ما قالة بلغتنني عنكم؟ ووجدة وجدتموها في أنفسكم؟ ألم تكونوا ضلالاً فهداكم الله بي، وعالة فأغناكم الله، وأعداء فألف بين قلوبكم“. قالوا: بل الله ورسوله أمن وأفضل، قال: ”ألا تحيوني يا معشر الأنصار؟“. قالوا: وبماذا نجيبك يا رسول الله، والله ولسوله المن والفضل؟ قال: ”أما والله لو شئتم لقلتم فلصدقتم ولصدقتم، أتينا مكذباً فصدقناك، ومخذولاً فنصرناك، وطريداً فأويناك، وعائلاً فواسيناك. أوجدتم في أنفسكم يا معشر الأنصار في لعاعة من الدنيا؟ تألفت بها قوماً ليسلموا؟ ووكلتكم إلى إسلامكم، ألا ترضون يا معشر الأنصار أن يذهب الناس بالشاة والبعير وترجعون برسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في رحالكم؟ فوالذي نفس محمد بيده إنه لولا الهجرة لكنت امرأة من الأنصار، ولو سلك الناس شعباً لسلكت شعب الأنصار، اللهم ارحم الأنصار وأبناء الأنصار وأبناء أبناء الأنصار“.

قال: فيكى القوم حتى أخضلوا لحاهم وقالوا: رضينا برسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قسماً وحظاً. ثم انصرف رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وتفرقوا.

“O *Ansār*. What is it that I hear you saying? And what is it that you have in your hearts? Is not it true that I found you unguided and then Allah guided you by me? Is it not true that you were poor but Allah provided you: and that you were enemies unto each other, but He created love among you?” They said, “But rather, Allah and His Messengers are better as bestowers and preferable.” He asked, “Will you not answer me, O *Ansār*?” They said, “How shall we answer Messenger of Allah? Allah and His Messenger are better as bestowers and preferable.” He said, “By Allah, if you wished, you could say, and you would have spoken the truth, ‘You came to us denied, but we testified you; forsaken, but we helped you; abandoned, but we sheltered you; and impoverished but we comforted you. Do you find desire in your hearts for the little that is left of this world, O *Ansār* which I used to attract people to Islam; and left you to your Islam? Are you not satisfied O *Ansār* that the people go back with goats and camels, and you go back with the Prophet of Allah in your company? For, by Him in whose hands is Mu-

[27] Allah might turn thereafter (in mercy) to whomsoever He will.⁴⁷ And Allah is All forgiving, All Merciful.

[28] Believers! Indeed the polytheists are unclean,⁴⁸ so let them not come near the Holy Mosque⁴⁹ after this year of theirs. And, if you fear poverty,⁵⁰ Allah will soon enrich you by His bounty, if He will.⁵¹ Surely, Allah is All knowing, All wise.

ثُمَّ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَلَى مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٧﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْمُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ فَلَا يَقْرَبُوا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ بَعْدَ عَامِهِمْ هَذَا وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ عَيْلَةً فَسَوْفَ يُغْنِيكُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنْ شَاءَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

hammad's life, if not for *Hijrah*, I would have been one of the *Ansār*. If the people walk through a mountain-pass, I would go by the mountain-pass of the *Ansār*." (Then he added): "O Allah, show mercy to *Ansār*, to the children of *Ansār*, and *Ansār*'s children's children."

The narrator said: At that the *Ansār* wept until their beards were wet. They said in one voice, "We are satisfied with the Prophet's division and with our share." Then the Prophet left them and they dispersed (Au.).

Qatadah also reports that one of those days Halimah, the Prophet's foster mother, came up to him seeking the release of some of her kinsfolk. The Prophet told her, "I have no power over that. But come to me tomorrow when I am in the assembly of the people. I will give away my share which might prompt other men

to give away their shares." Accordingly, Halimah showed up the next day, spread her cloth on the ground, and sought the Prophet's help in the release of her kinsfolk. The Prophet freed for her those who were his share. At that the other people also freed those who were their shares.

47. That is, Allah (*swt*) might replace the unbelief residing in the hearts with belief (Razi).

48. Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah, Hasan and others have thought that the uncleanliness mentioned here refers to the physical uncleanliness (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn `Abbas has further elaborated by saying that it is because the pagans do not bathe after sexual intercourse and do not wash themselves after the nature's call (Razi).

But the great majority of scholars have thought otherwise since Allah has allowed Muslims to eat food

prepared by them (Ibn Kathir). That is, the allusion is to their moral and spiritual uncleanness and not physical (Au.).

Asad explains: “To this day, the bedouin of Central Arabia and Eastern Arabia who, contrary to the modern town dwellers, have preserved the purity of the Arabic idiom to a high degree describe a person who is immoral, faithless or wicked as *najas*.”

In fact, there is no difference in opinion among the earlier and the later scholars, including the four schools of Fiqh that the uncleanness mentioned in this verse is not physical. The Prophet himself ate, drank and made ablution out of their dishes as well as allowed them to enter his mosque (Shawkani). A *hadith* to the effect that one might repeat his ablution or wash his hands after hand shake with a pagan, is, according to Suyuti, untrustworthy (S. Ibrahim).

Accordingly, Qurtubi comments, it is not obligatory on one to wash himself before saying the Testimony of entry into Islam. It is only desirable. If the Prophet ordered some of them to wash themselves before saying the *Shahadah*, it was perhaps because those people were unclean after sexual intercourse.

49. Qatadah and `Umar ibn `Abdul `Aziz have said that although the textual word is “*Masjid al Haram*,” it is whole of Makkah that is meant (Ibn Jarir). Indeed, the allusion is to the boundaries of the Haram, which extend several miles around the Holy Mosque (Shafi`).

As for their entry into mosques, there are several variant opinions. Imām Shafe`i has said that apart from the Grand Mosque at Makkah, pagans may be allowed entry into any other mosque (so long as there is a good purpose). Imām Abu Hanifah has said that they could enter any mosque without any special reason, differing with Shafe`i on this point who placed the condition of “purpose” for their entry into mosques. Imām Abu Hanifah also differs with him in that he says that they could enter the *Masjid al Haram* also, if the Muslims grant permission. In other words, the verse is giving the Muslims the right of discretion, though not giving the pagans the right of entry. The purport of the verse seems to be, according to Abu Hanifah, similar as when someone says, “I would not like to see you here.” What he means is to express his unhappiness over the man’s presence, and is not expressing the unlawfulness of his entry (Shawkani).

[29] Fight those who do not believe in Allah nor in the Last Day,⁵² nor do they consider unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have declared unlawful, neither do they adopt the religion of truth of those who were given the Book (earlier)⁵³ until they pay the tribute⁵⁴ out of hand⁵⁵ and they are humbled.⁵⁶

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 ﴿٢٩﴾

Although, Mufti Shafi` adds, the Prophet has said in a *hadith*, “I do not declare a mosque lawful for one in menstruation, nor for one requiring major ablution,” Imām Shafe`i has allowed unbelievers’ entry into the mosque going by the Prophet’s precedence of tying up Thumamah b. Uthal to a column of his own mosque. Similarly, after the fall of Makkah when the pagan Tha’if emissary visited Madinah, the Prophet put them up in his mosque. And, Imām Abu Hanifa’s position, as stated in earlier paragraph, is strengthened by a *hadith* in which the Prophet said: “Let no pagan enter a mosque, unless he is a slave of a Muslim going there for a purpose.”

50. Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah, Sa`id b. Jubayr and others have said that it worried the Muslim that since the pagans had been barred from entering the Holy precincts it would affect Muslim trade and business also. So Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir).

51. Qatadah has said that Allah kept His promise and soon the Companions of the Prophet began to receive tributes on monthly and yearly basis being sent to them from across the lands (as Ibn Is haq said), by the People of the Book (Ibn Jarir).

52. Jews and Christians do not believe in physical resurrection. They believe in spiritual resurrection alone. Further, they do not believe in physical pleasures of Paradise. Now, since these are emphatically and categorically mentioned in the Qur`ān, whoever disbelieved in a Hereafter of the Qur`ānic concept, disbelieved in the Hereafter altogether (Razi).

53. These words differentiate the people of the Book from polytheists. The polytheists had two choices (in the Arabian Peninsula): Islam or war. The people of the Book had three choices: Islam, war or tribute (Razi).

It is also said that this verse commanded the Prophet to turn his struggle toward the Romans. Ac-

cordingly, he went up to Tabuk to face them off (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

As to who are included among those who are classified as “*ahl al kitab*,” Rashid Rida and others state that apart from the Jews and Christians the Prophet treated the Zoroastrians also as the “*ahl al kitab*.” For instance, the Prophet accepted *Jizyah* of the Bahrain people, although it was known that they were Zoroastrians. `Umar however hesitated to accept *Jizyah* of the Zoroastrians, until `Abdul Rahman al `Awf told him that the Prophet had accepted *Jizyah* from the people of Hajr. This is also reported of `Ali as stated by Imām Shafe`i in his work Al Umm.” As for Sabians, they are closer to being of the “*ahl al kitab*” than the Zoroastrians.

54. Imām Shafe`i and Ahmad have said that in view of this verse tribute should not be accepted from anyone but the people of the Book, or those who are close to them such as the Zoroastrians. Imām Abu Hanifah however has expressed the opinion that tribute could be accepted from anyone save Arab pagans (who should be fought against: Au.). But tribute could be accepted from Arab ‘People of the Book’ (Ibn Kathir).

Jizyah

Majid comments: “(*Jizyah*) was a tax levied on able bodied males of military age as a substitute for compulsory military service, the exemptions being the destitute, females, children, slaves, monks and hermits. Non Muslims under the Muslim state were exempted from compulsory military service, and it was only just and equitable that they should pay some little amount in return for the protection afforded by Muslim soldiery. How rigidly the Muslims observed the condition of ability to afford protection is well evidenced by an incident in the reign of the second Caliph. ‘The Emperor Heraclius had raised an enormous army with which to drive back the invading forces of the Muslims, who had in consequences concentrated all their energies on the impending encounter. The Arab general Abu `Ubaydah, accordingly, wrote to the governors of the conquered cities of Syria, ordering them to pay back the *Jizyah* that had been collected from the cities, and wrote to the people, saying, “... The agreement between us was that we should protect you, and as this is not now in our power, we return you all that we took...” In accordance with this order, enormous

sums were paid back out of the state treasury, and the Christians called down blessings on the heads of the Muslims saying, "May God give you rule over us again and make you victorious over the Romans; had it been they, they would not have given us back anything." (Arnold, *Preaching of Islam*, pp. 60-61). 'It is very noticeable that when any Christian people served in the Muslim army, they were exempted from the payment of this tax' (p. 61)."

Rashid Rida adds: "It should not be imagined however that the promise to defend the *Jizyah* paying folks was some empty talk, meant to pacify the unbelievers. Anyone who looked into the compacts made by the Companions will feel convinced that they did not make a pact and did not state a condition therein but held it hard with their teeth going to the extreme lengths to remain true to the word. Qadi Abu Yusuf (d. 179 A.H.) for instance has recorded in his *Kitab al Kharaj* reporting through Mak hul that when the Companions entered into treaties with the Christians of the north, they actually became their allies after experiencing their fair deal. They spied for them, and informed them of the troop movements of their former compatriots. Once it so happened that their news

carriers arrived from several fronts to report that the Romans were planning a huge attack on the Muslims and raising a very large army to stage a decisive battle. When the news was confirmed through other sources, Abu 'Ubaydah wrote to all his provincial governors to return the entire tribute that had been paid by the people. He told them to explain to them that they were constrained to take this action because the tribute had been collected on the condition that the Muslims would defend them against any attack on their life or property. But now the Muslims find themselves in a critical situation and do not see how they can defend others. In any case we shall be back on the same terms as agreed between you and us in the past, once Allah grants us victory over our enemies." When the provincial governors returned the tribute to the people of the towns and villages, they exclaimed, "May God help you and may you return victorious. Had they (the former rulers) been in your place, they would never return anything. In fact they would claim more, leaving nothing in our hands" (Slightly reworded).

Asad comments: "It (*Jizyah*) is intimately bound up with the concept of the Islamic state as an ideological or-

ganization: and this is a point which must always be borne in mind if the real purport of this tax is to be understood. In the Islamic state, every able bodied Muslims is obliged to take up arms in *jihad* (i.e., in a just war in God's cause) whenever the freedom of his faith or the political safety of his community is imperiled: in other words, every able bodied Muslim is liable to compulsory military service. Since this is, primarily, a religious obligation, non Muslim citizens, who do not subscribe to the ideology of Islam, cannot in fairness be expected to assume a similar burden. On the other hand, they must be accorded full protection of all their civic rights and of their religious freedom: and it is in order to compensate the Muslim community for this unequal distribution of civic burdens that a special tax is levied on non Muslim citizens (*ahl adh dhimmah*, lit., "covenanted" [or "protected"] people", i.e., non Muslims whose safety is statutorily assured by the Muslim community). Thus, *Jizyah* is no more and no less than an exemption tax in lieu of military service and in compensation for the "covenant of protection" (*dhimmah*) accorded to such citizens of the Islamic state. (The term itself is derived from the verb *jaza*, "he ren-

dered [something] as a satisfaction," or "as a compensation [in lieu of something else]" cf. Lane II, 422)."

As for the amount payable per head as *Jizyah*, Shawkani states various opinions and concludes that it is left to the discretion of the authorities.

Imām Abu Hanifa's opinion is that tribute will be levied only on those who have an earning. The unemployed and poor of the unbelievers are exempted (Zamakhshari).

Accordingly, we find a report in Muslim that once Hisham b. Hakim saw some people in Palestine that were forced to stand in the sun. He enquired the reason and was told that it was because they had not paid the tribute. He went to the Governor `Umayr b. Sa'd and told him that the Prophet had said (in a *hadīth* of Muslim: Au.),

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُعَذِّبُ الَّذِينَ يُعَذِّبُونَ النَّاسَ فِي الدُّنْيَا

"Allah will torture those who torture people in this world."

The Governor released them. On the point of inability to pay, it may be pointed out that rich individuals would not be asked to pay tribute on behalf of the poor. Abu Da'ud has related the Prophet:

أَلَا مَنْ ظَلَمَ مُعَاهِدًا وَاتَّقَصَّه وَكَلَّمَهُ فَوَقَّ طَاقَتِهِ أَوْ
أَخَذَ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا بَغَيْرِ طَيْبِ نَفْسٍ مِنْهُ فَأَنَا حَاجِبُهُ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

“Whoever wronged a Dhimmi, or disparaged, or levied on him more than he has the strength for, or took away something from him without his free consent, will find me (i.e., the Prophet) counseling in favor of him (the dhimmi) on the Day of Judgment” (Qurtubi).

Qurtubi also adds the following: There is more or less agreement among the scholars that *Jizyah* is levied on those capable of fighting. Old men, women, the disabled, children, monks, and others of the kind would be exempted. No other tax would be levied on them, save on trade (which is levied on Muslims too), and, in return they shall have full freedom to the extent that so long as they do not trade in, or consume openly, even their secret manufacture and consumption of wine would be overlooked. So also, they will be free to follow their religion in their personal lives. But if attacked by their enemies, Muslims would be obliged to defend them, they themselves being exempt of military services. But they would not be allowed to construct

new places of worship or additions over the old ones.

Mufti Shafi` writes: The tribute amount that the Prophet charged the people of Najran was a pair of shroud costing around one awqiyah silver. (Those days one awqiyah of silver was equivalent of 40 Dirhams). All in all they were to send across 2000 pairs. For the Christians of Banu Taghlib, `Umar Faruq had fixed it as twice the *Zakah* rate. In other places he had fixed it as 4 Dirhams for every well to do person, per month, 2 Dirhams for a person of average earnings and one Dirham for tradesmen. (A Dirham in those times was 3.5 masha of silver). As for the destitute, they were exempted, so were women, children, old men, priests, and monks.

55. The textual phrase “*an yadin*” is used by the Arabs for a subdued giving, a handing over despite unwillingness, or demonstration of submission (Ibn Jarir).

56. `Ikrimah has said that the term “they are humbled” implies that when they come to pay the tribute they remain standing while the Muslim accepts it while seated (Ibn Jarir). And that the receiver holds them by their beard and says, “Shell down the trib-

[30] The Jews said, ‘‘Uzayr is the son of God;’’⁵⁷ while the Christians say, ‘Jesus is the son of God.’⁵⁸ That is a (mere) utterance of their mouths. They imitate the words of those who disbelieved earlier.⁵⁹ May Allah destroy them.⁶⁰ How they are deluded!

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللَّهِ وَقَالَتِ
النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُمْ
بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ يُضَاهِئُونَ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
مِن قَبْلُ فَآتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ أَنْتَى يَوْمِ كُونُ
﴿٣٠﴾

ute’’ although, he would have come to pay the tribute. Some others have said that they should come walking and not riding (Razi, Shawkani).

Ibn Kathir adds: In other words, they ought to be humbled. According to a *hadith* in Muslim, the Prophet said:

لَا تَبْدَءُوا الْيَهُودَ وَلَا النَّصَارَى بِالسَّلَامِ فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمْ
أَحَدَهُمْ فِي طَرِيقٍ فَاضْطَرُّوهُ إِلَى أَضْيَقِهِ

‘‘Do not be the first to greet the Jews and Christians, and, if you encounter one of them in the lane, push him to its narrowest area.’’

57. According to some commentators, it was in actual fact only a single individual Finhas who had said that ‘Uzayr is the son of God, (but it was attributed to all because they did not denounce him for saying that: Au.), although another opinion says that it was a group of Jews who had said that. Ibn ‘Abbas has said (in a report preserved in Ibn Is haq, Ibn Abi Hatim, Abu al Sheikh and Ibn Marduwayh: Manar) that once

Sallam b. Muhkam, No`man b. Abi Awfa and Shas b. Qays went to see the Prophet. During the talk, they said, ‘‘How do you expect us to follow you when you do not think that ‘Uzayr was a son of God?’’ Allah revealed this verse. (Naqqash has said that no Jew is left now who believes that ‘Uzayr was a son of God: Qurtubi. But that’s not correct. See Shab-bir’s note below: Au.). Ibn ‘Abbas has also said that once the Israelites became so rebellious that Allah withdrew the *Tawrah* from their breasts and they lost its hard copy along with the (holy) Chest (Tabut). Their enemies captured it as war spoils. (According to another report, it was the ‘Amaliqa [Amalekites] who overcome them, killed their scholars, destroyed the copies of the *Tawrah*, and took away the Chest which had the [oldest] written copy). ‘Uzayr had taken refuge in the mountains. He supplicated to Allah and the *Tawrah* was re inspired to him. But the Israelites remained skeptic of the

Tawrah he was reciting, until they regained the Chest and compared the hard copy with `Uzayr's recitation. When they found the two matching they declared that he must be a son of God (Ibn Jarir, Razi).

Majid writes: "(The allusion by the term `Uzayr is to the) Ezra of the Bible, whose official title in the Jewish tradition is the 'Scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord and His statutes for Israel,' (Friedlander, Jewish Religion, p. 125) and whose work constitutes a landmark in the history of Judaism. (JE. V. p. 321) Spinoza goes so far as to attribute the composition of the Pentateuch, not to Moses, but to Ezra, which view appears to have existed even in the time of the Apocrypha' (IX. p. 590). 'He is said to have restored not only the law, which had been burnt, but also all the other Hebrew scriptures which had been destroyed, and seventy apocryphal works in addition' (EBr. IX, p. 14), 'With the Return', i.e., since the era of Ezra 'began the codification of the *Torah* and scriptures, the translation and exegesis, and the development of their intensive teaching. From now onwards Judaism can be spoken of as distinct from the religion of Israel.' (VJE. p. 339) 'He succeeded in reviving with increased strength the

old Jewish national religious ideal; and because he did so he is called the father of Judaism' (The Columbia Encyclopedia, p. 599). He was the first of the scribes or soferin. But who exactly were they? and what standing had they in the Jewish theology? Not only were they 'the great authorities on the text of the Scriptures and on its interpretation' but it was they who first 'fixed the norm of Jewish religious practice,' and they were considered competent to effect whatever changes they liked even in the Scriptures. In fact they did introduce 'eighteen changes into the text of the Pentateuch, chiefly in order to soften expressions which were considered too harsh by a later age. They also modified some of the precepts of the Pentateuch in order to meet the spirit of the age and the needs of the times. These modifications are called in the Talmud *dibre soferin*, "the words of the Scribes," and were accepted as binding by later generations' (VJE, pp. 585 586). His traditional tomb is on the bank of the Tigris, near its junction with the Euphrates (Layard, Nineveh and Babylon, p. 282 f.n.)."

Although, the interpretation of sonship as offered by Asad does not sound too convincing, we might present what he writes: "... Ezra occupies

a unique position in the esteem of all Jews, and has always been praised by them in the most extravagant terms. It was he who restored and codified the *Torah* after it had been lost during the Babylonian Exile, and 'edited' it in more or less the form which it has today; and thus 'he promoted the establishment of an exclusive, legalistic type of religion that became dominant in the later Judaism' (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1963, vol. IX, p. 15). Ever since then he has been venerated to such a degree that his verdicts on the Law of Moses have come to be regarded by the Talmudists as being practically equivalent to the Law itself: which, in Qur'anic ideology, amounts to a quasi divine law giver and the blasphemous attribution to him albeit metaphorically of the quality of 'sonship' in relation to God."

Contemporary Jewish works confirm what the classical Muslim commentators wrote. The Jewish author Max I. Dimont writes in his best seller "*Jews, God and History*" (p.69 70): "In the year 458 B.C., with the permission of the Persian king, Ezra headed the second mass exodus of 1,800 Jews from Babylonia to Jerusalem. Here Ezra joined hands with Nehemiah. The first move of the alliance between the priest and the aris-

ocrat was a ban on intermarriage between Jews and non Jews, the first in Jewish history, and the first such ban on intermarriage in the world. This action did not sit well with many nations... It did not sit well with many Jews either, and the Book of Ruth is considered to have been written at this time as a protest against such discrimination. However, it must be stressed that this action was not motivated by a philosophy of superiority, or rejection of other people as inferior, but was strictly a defense against future religious dilution. The Chosen people should stay chosen...

"As a second measure toward forging a national religious and spiritual Jewish character, Ezra and Nehemiah 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 of 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.

"... Heralds were sent into every corner of the Persian Empire to spread the news that on the Jewish New

Year's Day the Five books of Moses, written by Moses, would be read aloud to all the people."

We have another evidence from a French writer. Commenting on the Qur'anic charge that the Jews treated 'Uzayr as a son of God, he writes (Maxim Rodinson, *Mohammed*, Pantheon Books, 1971, p. 238), "The Jews claimed that 'Uzayr (Esdras, or Ezra) was the son of God, a status which the Christians attribute to Jesus.

"The first of these assertions begins to look less unjustified than it seems at first sight when we find, in a first-century Jewish 'Apocrypha' which later enjoyed great popularity, the fourth book of Esdras, the following words spoken to Esdras by an angel: 'Thou shalt be taken up from [among] men, and henceforth thou shalt remain with my son ... Let go from thee the cares of morality; cast from thee the burden of man' (Au.).

Shabbir writes that he was told by a trustworthy Muslim who had toured the Palestine region (early in the 20th century) that he had come across some Jews who held the belief of Uzayr's Divinity and were locally known as Uzayrites.

58. Majid comments: "'Children of God' and 'Sons of God' are both Biblical phrases. In the former, the favourite phrase of St. John, 'the idea of origin is most prominent'; while the latter, so frequently used by St. Paul, emphasises 'rather the notion of relation and privilege' (DG. II, p. 215). The doctrine of Jesus being 'a child of God' is distinct from his Sonship, though the two ideas later on coalesced into one. Both are equally blasphemous and derogatory to the dignity of God."

59. "Pagan mythologies and polytheistic theologies are full of the underlying notion of the fatherhood of God, man's generic relationship with Him, and community of nature between man and God. 'The idea of divine Fatherhood had not failed to make its appearance in the Jewish scriptures, canonical and uncanonical, as it indeed appears in many religions.' (EBr. XIII, p. 21). There may be special reference to the great influence on the Christian theology of Greece which 'supplied the philosophy of the Christian religion' and Rome of which 'the stubborn local traditions survive in Catholic Europe to this day.' (UHW, IV, p. 2083)" Majid.

[31] They took their rabbis and monks, and the Messiah the son of Mary, as lords besides Allah,⁶¹ while they were not commanded but that they should worship one God. There is no god besides He. Exalted is He, high above what they associate (with Him).

اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ
اللَّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا
لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ
عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

60. The literal translation of “*qatalahum Allah*” is close to the interpretation of Ibn `Abbas who said that every usage of this kind in the Qur`ān means to curse. But, Qurtubi adds, the term expresses another meaning also, viz., wonder. This kind of usage has its precedence in poetry. Asma`i has said:

يا قاتل الله ليلي كيف تعجبي
واخبر الناس أني لا أبا ليها

May Allah kill Layla, how she amazes me

While people pass the word that I do not care for her.

61. `Adiyy b. Hatim reports:

أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ -صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- وَفِي عُنُقِي
صَلِيبٌ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ قَالَ فَسَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ (اتَّخَذُوا
أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ) قَالَ قُلْتُ يَا
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُمْ لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَعْبُدُونَهُمْ. قَالَ : أَجَلٌ
وَلَكِنْ يُجْلُونَ لَهُمْ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ فَيَسْتَجْلُونَهُ وَيُحْرِمُونَ
عَلَيْهِمْ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ فَيَحْرِمُونَهُ فَبَلَكَ عِبَادَتَهُمْ لَهُمْ.

“I went up to the Prophet. I had a cross hanging by my neck. When he saw me he said, ‘O `Adiyy.

Throw that pagan mark away.’ So I threw it away. The Prophet was reciting *surah Bara`ah*. When he reached, ‘They took their scholars and monks, and the Messiah the son of Mary, as lords besides Allah,’ I protested, ‘We never worshiped them O Messenger of Allah.’ He replied, ‘Is it not true that they declared the unlawful as lawful and lawful as unlawful and you followed them? ‘That was taking them lords besides Allah.’” (Ibn Jarir). The narration is in Tirmidhi who thought that the report is of *gharib* status, i.e., weak (Qurtubi).

Ibn Kathir writes: The report is in Ahmad also wherein it ends in the following manner. The Prophet said,

يَا عَدِيُّ بْنُ حَاتِمٍ مَا أَفْرَكَ أَنْ يُقَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
فَهَلْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مَا أَفْرَكَ أَنْ يُقَالَ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ
فَهَلْ شَيْءٌ هُوَ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قَالَ فَاسْتَلَمْتُ
فَرَأَيْتُ وَجْهَهُ اسْتَبْشَرَ وَقَالَ إِنَّ الْمَعْضُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ
الْيَهُودُ وَالصَّالِيْنَ النَّصَارِي

“`Adiyy! What makes you flee from saying, ‘there is no god but

[32] They wish to extinguish Allah's Light with their mouths.⁶² But Allah refuses except to perfect His Light, though the unbelievers be averse (to it).

يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ
وَيَأْتِي اللَّهَ إِلَّا أَنْ يُنِيمَ نُورَهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ
الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

[33] He it is who sent His Messenger with Guidance and the religion of truth in order that He give it ascendancy over every other religions,⁶³ though the idolaters be averse (to it).

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَى وَدِينِ
الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ
الْمُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

Allah? Is there any deity save Allah? What makes you flee from saying, 'Allah is the greatest?' Is there anything greater than Allah?" `Adiyy said, "So I embraced Islam, and his face brightened up. He said, "Jews are 'the angered upon,' and the Christians are 'those who lost the way'" (Ibn Kathir).

62. Yusuf Ali writes: "With their mouths: there is a two fold meaning: (1) the old fashioned open oil lamps were extinguished by blowing with the mouth; the Unbelievers would like to blow out Allah's Light as it is a cause of offence to them; (2) false teachers and preachers distort the Message of Allah by the false word of their mouths."

63. Although Abu Hurayrah has been reported to be of the view that this ascendancy will be finally and fully achieved with the second com-

ing of `Isa (asws), the opinion of Ibn `Abbas is that the allusion is to the superiority that Islamic religion and Law enjoy over those of other religions (Ibn Jarir).

Imām Razi sees three possible explanations:

1. If what is meant by the ascendancy, is the ascendancy of Islam over the Arabian Peninsula, then, that was achieved.
2. If it is over the whole world that is meant, then, it will happen with the appearance of Mahdi and `Isa (asws).
3. If it is superiority of the Islamic religion over all others is meant, then that too has been achieved, except that this is a weak opinion, since that was achieved with the very first revelation.

Ibn Kathir adds: The Prophet has said,

إِنَّ رَبِّي رَوَى لِي الْأَرْضَ فَرَأَيْتُ مَشَارِقَهَا وَمَغَارِبَهَا وَإِنَّ
مُلْكَ أُمَّتِي سَيَبْلُغُ مَا رَوَى لِي مِنْهَا

“My Lord folded the earth for me and I saw its east and west and my followers’ rule will extend to was folded for me.” (The *hadith* is in Muslim: Hussain b. Ibrahim).

Another report in Ahmad says that once in a certain neighborhood when the people had done their dawn Prayer, a young man got up and said,

إِنَّهُ سَيَفْتَحُ لَكُمْ مَشَارِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمَغَارِبَهَا وَإِنَّ عُمَّالَهَا
فِي النَّارِ إِلَّا مَنْ اتَّقَى اللَّهَ وَأَدَّى الْأَمَانَةَ

“I heard the Prophet say, ‘Allah will grant you victory over the east and the west of the lands, and that the (Muslim) state officials will be in Fire, but for those who feared Allah and stayed true to the trust.’”

Shu`ayb Arna`ut thought that the *hadith* is weak.

The Musnad of Ahmad also has a report coming through Tamim Dariyy. The Prophet said,

لَيَبْلُغَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرُ مَا بَلَغَ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَلَا يَسْرُكُ اللَّهُ
بَيْتَ مَدْرٍ وَلَا وَبَرَ إِلَّا أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ هَذَا الدِّينَ بِعِزِّ عَزِيزٍ
أَوْ بِذُلِّ ذَلِيلٍ عِزًّا يُعِزُّ اللَّهُ بِهِ الْإِسْلَامَ وَذُلًّا يُذِلُّ اللَّهُ
بِهِ الْكُفْرَ

“This religion will ultimately reach the lands that are visited by the day and night. Allah will not leave out a house or tent but this religion would have entered it: by the honor of an honorable person, or by the humiliation of a disgraced person: an honor whereby Allah honors Islam and a disgrace whereby Allah disgraces disbelief.”

Yet another report, also in Ahmad, narrates `Adiyy b. Hatim as saying, I visited the Prophet. He told me,

يَا عَدِيُّ بْنُ حَاتِمٍ أَسْلِمُ تَسْلَمُ ثَلَاثًا قَالَ قُلْتُ إِنِّي
عَلَى دِينٍ قَالَ أَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِدِينِكَ مِنْكَ فُكُلْتُ أَنْتَ
أَعْلَمُ بِدِينِي مِنِّي قَالَ تَعَمَّ أَلَسْتَ مِنَ الرُّكُوسِيَّةِ وَأَنْتَ
تَأْكُلُ مَرْبَاعَ قَوْمِكَ قُلْتُ بَلَى قَالَ فَإِنَّ هَذَا لَا يَجِلُّ
لَكَ فِي دِينِكَ قَالَ فَلَمْ يَعُدْ أَنْ قَالَهَا فَتَوَاضَعْتُ لَهَا
فَقَالَ أَمَا إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا الَّذِي يَمْنَعُكَ مِنَ الْإِسْلَامِ تَقُولُ
إِنَّمَا اتَّبَعْتَهُ ضَعْفَهُ النَّاسِ وَمَنْ لَا قُوَّةَ لَهُ وَقَدْ رَمَتْهُمْ
الْعَرَبُ أَتَعْرِفُ الْحَيْرَةَ قُلْتُ لَمْ أَرَهَا وَقَدْ سَمِعْتُ بِهَا قَالَ
فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَيَبْلُغَنَّ اللَّهُ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ حَتَّى تُخْرَجَ
الطَّعِينَةُ مِنَ الْحَيْرَةِ حَتَّى تَطُوفَ بِالْبَيْتِ فِي غَيْرِ جَوَارٍ
أَحَدٍ وَلَيَفْتَحَنَّ كُنُوزَ كِسْرَى بِنِ هُرْمُزٍ قَالَ قُلْتُ
كِسْرَى بِنِ هُرْمُزٍ قَالَ تَعَمَّ كِسْرَى بِنِ هُرْمُزٍ وَلَيَبْدُلَنَّ
الْمَالُ حَتَّى لَا يَقْبَلَهُ أَحَدٌ قَالَ عَدِيُّ بْنُ حَاتِمٍ فَهَذِهِ
الطَّعِينَةُ تُخْرَجُ مِنَ الْحَيْرَةِ فَتَطُوفُ بِالْبَيْتِ فِي غَيْرِ جَوَارٍ
وَلَقَدْ كُنْتُ فِيمَنْ فَتَحَ كُنُوزَ كِسْرَى بِنِ هُرْمُزٍ وَالَّذِي
نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَتَكُونَنَّ الثَّالِثَةُ لِأَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَدْ قَالَهَا

“O `Adiyy, enter the religion and enter security.’ I said, ‘I’m already on a Religion.’ He replied,

'I know your religion better than you do.' I said, 'Do you?' He said, 'Yes, I do. Do you not follow a religion that is half Christian, half Sabian? Do you no charge your people one fourth of their produce (for religious services)?' I admitted, 'That's true.' He said, 'Well. That is not allowed in your religion, is it?' `Adiyy said, 'With that I felt a bit subdued.' He added, 'I know what prevents you from Islam. You say, "Weak sections of the society follow it: those who have no power and those whom the Arabs discarded." Then he said, 'Have you seen Hira?' I said, 'Well, I have not. But I have heard about the place.' He said, 'By Him in whose Hand is my life, this affair (Islam) will reach a stage when a camel riding (woman) will travel from Hira and circumambulate the Ka`ba without anyone in her company. And surely the treasures of Kisra b. Hurmuz will be captured.' I exclaimed, 'Kisra b. Hurmuz?' He replied, 'Sure. Kisra b. Hurmuz. And a time will come when wealth will be distributed and there will be no takers.' `Adiyy used to say, 'I have seen a woman traveling alone all the way from Hira and circumam-

bulating Ka`ba without anyone harming her. I was one of those who participated in the Persian battles to capture the treasures of Kisra b. Hurmuz. And, I am sure the third prophecy will also come true.'" (It came true during the time of `Umar b. `Abdul `Aziz: Au.).

Yet, having said the above, we might add, says Ibn Kathir, that historical events will turn back the clock so that as a *hadith* of Muslim reports `A'isha's words,

لَا يَذْهَبُ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ حَتَّى تَعْبَدَ اللَّاتُ وَالْعُزَّى.
فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُ لَأَطْنُ حِينَ أُنزِلَ اللَّهُ
(هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَى وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ
عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ) أَنَّ ذَلِكَ تَأْمًا
قَالَ إِنَّهُ سَبَّحُونَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ
رِيحًا طَيِّبَةً فَتَوَفَّى كُلَّ مَنْ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ حَبَّةِ خَزْدَلٍ
مِنْ إِيْمَانٍ فَيَبْقَى مَنْ لَا خَيْرَ فِيهِ فَيَرْجِعُونَ إِلَى دِينِ
آبَائِهِمْ.

"I heard the Prophet say, 'Days and nights will not stop their rotation before Lat and `Uzza are once again worshipped.' I asked, 'Messenger of Allah. When Allah revealed the verse, "He it is who sent His Messenger with Guidance and the religion of truth ..", I thought that was the end of it.' He replied, "That surely will be fulfilled. None the less, Allah will send a pleasant breeze thereafter

[34] Believers! Surely, many of the priests and monks⁶⁴ devour people's wealth by false means⁶⁵ and hinder from the way of Allah.⁶⁶ As for those who treasure up⁶⁷ gold and silver and do not expend in Allah's cause, give them glad tidings of a painful chastisement.⁶⁸

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْأَحْبَارِ
وَالرُّهْبَانِ لَيَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ
وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ
الدَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يَنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٤﴾

which will take the life of every individual who has even the slightest of Faith in his heart. Only those will remain who have no good in them. They will return to the religion of their predecessors (before Islam).”

With his usual brevity Yusuf Ali expresses a good amount of meaning in this short comment: “Every religion which commends itself widely to human beings and lasts through some space of time has a glimpse of Truth in it. But Islam being the perfect light of Truth is bound to prevail. As the greater Light, through its own strength, outshines all lesser lights, so will Islam outshine all else, in spite of the displeasure of those to whom light is an offence.”

Majid adds clarity: “Note that it is the religion of Islam, as such, that is to outshine and outlive all other religions; and there is no necessary connection between the religious su-

periority of Islam and the political supremacy of the Muslim states.”

64. According to Suddi, the reference by the word “ahbar” is to Jewish priestly class, and by the word “ruhban” to Christian priestly class (Ibn Jarir). Accordingly, Sufyan b. `Uyayna used to say, “Whoever of the scholars of this *Ummah* became corrupt, will be found on the pattern of the Jews, and whoever of the Muslim masses got corrupt will be on the pattern of the Christians.” And the Prophet has said,

لَتَتَّبِعَنَّ سَنَنَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ سِبْرًا بِشِيرٍ وَذِرَاعًا
بِذِرَاعٍ حَتَّىٰ لَوْ دَخَلُوا فِي جُحْرٍ ضَبَّتْ لَاتَّبَعْتُمُوهُمْ.
قُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ قَالَ فَمَنْ

“You will follow the ways of those that preceded you, hand-span by hand-span, foot by foot. So that, if they entered a lizard hole, you will follow them.” We asked, “You mean Jews and Christians?” He replied, “Who else?” (Ibn Kathir).

The above text is from Bukhari, which varies slightly from Ibn Kathir's text (Au.).

Zamakhshari writes that it is possible that the criticism is directed against Muslims, and the crime of those who do not pay the *Zakah* is compared in seriousness to the wealth devouring attitudes of the people of the Book.

65. The allusion is to the tith, other taxes, and fee the Jewish and Christian religious scholars, priests and monks received from their masses for issuing religious decrees. This practice prevented them from embracing Islam although they were convinced of its truth (Ibn Kathir).

Majid quotes from the Biblical and Christian sources: "As regards the Jews: 'The heads thereof judge for reward and the priests thereof teach for hire' (Mi. 3: 11). 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses (Mt. 23: 14)'... As regards the Christians: 'The morality of the clergy was exposed to no ordinary temptation by their growing power and wealth; and specially by the right which the Church acquired under Constantine of holding landed property and inheriting it by bequest' (DCA. II. p. 1916)."

66. Imām Razi points out that if someone closely watched the deceptive behavior of those who profess to be highly religious among the Muslims, he would think that this verse was revealed in reference to them.

67. The textual term is "*yaknizun*" which means those who treasure or hoard up. Now what does a treasure constitute? That is, when can a hoarded amount be called a treasure?

Kanz

According to Ibn `Umar, any kind of wealth of which *Zakah* has not been paid is treasure (*kanz*), even if kept open and, conversely, any kind of wealth over which *Zakah* has been paid is not treasure even if it is buried deep in the earth. Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah and Suddi are with him in this opinion. (`Umar b. al Khat-tab and `Umar ibn `Abd al `Aziz were also of the same opinion: Ibn Kathir). In fact, Bukhari and Ibn Majah have a report of Ibn `Umar which says: "This was before the revelation of the *Zakah* verses. Now *Zakah* is the purifying agent. So, I do not care if I have a huge treasure of wealth over which I pay the *Zakah* and expend the rest seeking Allah's Good Pleasure" (Shawkani).

`Ali's opinion however is that any wealth above 4,000 Dirham is a treasure. (But this is a rare opinion: Ibn Kathir. `Ali was stating the preferable situation. Otherwise, there were many among the Companions who were rich. Nobody ever criticized them for their wealth. But, of course, everything has a limit: Zamakhshari).

A third opinion is that anything that is beyond one's needs is treasure. It is reported that when the above verse came down the Companions got worried. `Umar (ra) told them that he will get their doubt cleared. He asked the Prophet, "What kind of wealth can we keep?" He replied,

لساناً ذاكراً وقلباً شاكراً وزوجة تعين أحدكم على
دينه

"A tongue that remembers Allah much, a heart that is grateful, a believing woman who helps in religious affairs." (The *hadith* is in Ahmad, as also in different words in Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah.

A similar report declared *sahih* on the conditions of Bukhari and Muslim by Hakim, has been recorded by Abu Hatim and Abu Da'ud. In that report the additional words of the Prophet are,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَمْ يَغْرِضِ الرِّكَاتَةَ إِلَّا لِلطَّيِّبِ بِهَا وَإِنَّمَا
فَرَضَ الْمَوَارِيثَ فِي أَمْوَالٍ تَبَقَّى بَعْدَكُمْ

"Zakah has not been instituted but to purify the remaining wealth and Allah has instituted the laws of inheritance for what you leave behind you." Then he added,

أَلَا أُخْبِرُكَ بِخَيْرِ مَا يَكْبُرُ الْمَرْءُ ، الْمَرْأَةُ الصَّالِحَةُ إِذَا
نَظَرَ إِلَيْهَا سَرْتُهُ ، وَإِذَا أَمْرَهَا أَطَاعَتْهُ ، وَإِذَا غَابَ
عَنْهَا حَفِظَتْهُ .

"May I not tell you about the best of wealth? It is a woman who pleases you when you look at her, when you ask her to do something she does it, and when you are away from her, she guards [the property and her own honor]": Ibn Kathir).

It is also reported that once one of the people of the Platform died. They found a Dinar on him. The Prophet said, "That is one stamping (in the Fire)." Later, another died and they found 2 Dinar on him. The Prophet (*saws*) said, "That's two stampings" (Ibn Jarir, Razi, Alusi). One version of the *hadith* above has come through `Ali b. Abi Talib as in Ahmad (Ibn Kathir).

It is clear from the *Zakah* rules, adds Ibn Jarir, that whatever amount of

wealth over which *Zakah* has been paid, cannot be the treasure of the above verse. When a man is asked to pay the *Zakah*, over say a mountain of gold, and he did it, then he is blameless and cannot be punished for keeping the rest. This is also supported by a *hadith* which tells us in clear terms as to who it is who will be stamped with their hoarded wealth on the Day of Judgment. The Prophet (*saws*) said,

مَا مِنْ صَاحِبٍ كَنْزٍ لَا يُؤَدِّي حَقَّهُ إِلَّا جُعِلَ صَفَائِحَ
يُحْمَى عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَى بِهَا جِبْهَتُهُ وَجَنْبُهُ
وَوَظْهُرُهُ حَتَّى يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بَيْنَ عِبَادِهِ فِي يَوْمٍ
كَانَ مَقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعْلُدُونَ ثُمَّ يَرَى
سَبِيلَهُ إِمَّا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَإِمَّا (إِلَى النَّارِ .. إِلَى آخِرِ
الجديث)

“Whoever did not pay *Zakah* over his wealth will have it turned to hot plates with which he will be stamped throughout the Day which will be 50,000 years long by your count. It is then that he will know what his destination is: whether Paradise or Hell .. to the end of the *hadith*. (In different words the *hadith* is in Muslim also: Ibn Kathir).

Abu Dharr however was of the opinion that any wealth over and above one's needs is treasure. It is said that Zayd b. Wahab passed by Abu Dharr who was living in Rabdha (some 20

km off Madinah.” He asked him, “What brought you here?” Abu Dharr replied, “I was in Syria. But I and Mu`awiyah disagreed over the verse concerning the treasure. I said it applies to every kind of wealth. Mu`awiyah said it applied to the people of the Book. He complained to (the then Khalifah) `Uthman. He asked me to come back to Madinah. But when I arrived at Madinah people followed me like flies. I complained to `Uthman. He told me to go a little out of Madinah, but not too far. But I shall not give up saying what I had been saying (Ibn Jarir).

Alusi adds that some people had pointed out to Abu Dharr that if savings were disallowed in Islam, why did Allah institute the laws pertaining to inheritance!

Ibn Kathir adds: The above report of Tabari is in Bukhari also. And Abu Dharr's opinion is well known. He believed that any hoarding, small or big, deserved the warning the verse pronounces. He used to openly preach that opinion in Syria and crowds followed him until Mu`awiyah felt that he might cause commotion and so wrote to `Uthman. Mu`awiyah also tested Abu Dharr whether he practiced what he said. He sent him a thousand gold

pieces. Abu Dharr promptly spent it in charity by the end of the day. Next day the man returned and said, “I made a mistake about the gold pieces I gave you yesterday. They were meant for someone else. So, do you think you can return the money?” Abu Dharr told him, “It is all gone. However, give me some time, until I get some money. When that happens I shall return you the money.” Abu Dharr has also reported a *hadith* (collected by Bukhari: Hus-sain b. Ibrahim), which says that the Prophet told him,

مَا يَسْرُنِي أَنَّ لِي أُحَدِّثًا دَهَبًا تَأْتِي عَلَيَّ ثَالِثَةً وَعِنْدِي مِنْهُ دِينَارٌ إِلَّا دِينَارٌ أَرْضُدُّهُ لِدَيْنِ عَلَيَّ

“It does not please me that I should have gold equal to Mount Uhud, three days pass by, and I am still left with any of it, except for maybe a Dinar to pay my debt.”

Imām Ahmad has another report of `Abdullah b. Samit I visited the Prophet. He told me, who says that he was with Abu Dharr when he received his allowance. His slave girl was with him. He began to pay off for various needs until he was left with seven. He told his slave girl to buy fish-scales with it. “I said,” says ibn Samit, “You could have saved it for your needs.” Abu Dharr replied,

إِنَّ خَلِيلِي عَهْدَ إِلَيَّ أَنْ أُمَّمَا دَهَبٍ أَوْ فِضَّةٍ أُوكِي عَلَيْهِ فَهُوَ جَمْرٌ عَلَى صَاحِبِهِ حَتَّى يُفْرَعَهُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

“My friend (meaning the Prophet) told me that any piece of gold or silver that is hoarded will be a piece of fire, until he spends it in the way of Allah the Mighty.”

Imām Razi writes that although it is true that any wealth left after the payment of *Zakah* cannot be treated as “*kantz*,” and that some of the Companions of the Prophet were extremely rich, there are several reasons why one should not go after wealth:

- (1) When a man works hard to earn wealth, it is because it happens to be of carnal pleasure to him to be possessing it. So, every time he adds wealth, he adds carnal pleasure. It goes on without end. Therefore, it is better not to start the cycle.
- (2) Earning wealth itself is hard but maintaining to be rich is harder. So, a man tires himself out, either for obtaining wealth, or for maintaining it, although he makes use of very little of it.
- (3) Increase in wealth normally leads to rebellion against Allah’s commands. Allah said (96: 6): “Man rebels because he sees himself self sufficient.”

[35] The Day when it will be heated up on the Fire of Jahannum, then their foreheads, sides and backs stamped therewith.⁶⁹ 'This is what you hoarded for yourselves. Taste then what you were hoarding.'⁷⁰

يَوْمَ يُحْمَى عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فُتْكُوى
بِمَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وظُهُورُهُمْ هَذَا مَا
كَنتُمْ لَأَنفُسِكُمْ فَدُوقُوا مَا كُنتُمْ تَكْتَبُونَ

﴿٣٥﴾

(4) Allah has declared *Zakah* as obligatory which results in decrease of wealth. Had an increase been of advantage, He would not have prescribed the *Zakah*.

Imām Razi also mentions that according to the school of Law he follows (Shafe`i), *Zakah* is due on jewelry that women wear. A single report from the Prophet against this has been declared weak by Abu `Isa Tirmidhi.

68. Yusuf Ali writes: "Misuse of wealth, property, and resources is frequently condemned, and in three ways: (1) do not acquire anything wrongfully or on false pretences; (2) do not hoard or bury or amass wealth for its own sake but use it freely for good, whether for yourself or for your neighbors; and (3) be particularly careful not to waste it for idle purposes, but only so that it may fructify for the good of the people."

Sufi commentator Thanwi adds: The threat in this verse is also applicable to the Shuyukh who accept gifts

from their followers but fail to tell them the bitter truth (concerning their religious situation), out of the fear of losing their following.

69. It has been said that there is a relationship between the stamping on the foreheads, sides and backs and the attitude of the rich toward the poor in this world. When in their earthly lives they encountered a poor, they displayed lines of scorn on their "foreheads," when asked for help, they turned "sideways" and when persisted, showed their "backs" (based on Zamakhshari).

70. Ahnaf b. Qays says, "I traveled to Madinah. One day I found a group of Quraysh sitting together. A man turned up. He was coarse of countenance, coarse of gait, coarse of clothes. He stood over them and, after a while said, 'Give glad tidings to the hoarders of stamping with the fire of Hell. It will be placed on the breast and it will emerge from his shoulder blades. It will be placed on the shoulder blades and will emerge from the breast.' I noticed," contin-

[36] Surely, the number of months with Allah are twelve months in the Book of Allah from the day He created the heavens and the earth,⁷¹ of which four are consecrated.⁷² This is the right religion, therefore, wrong not yourselves concerning them.⁷³ And fight the pagans together,⁷⁴ as they fight you together, and know that Allah is with the pious⁷⁵

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرْمٌ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ فَلَا تَظْلِمُوا فِيهِنَّ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَقَاتِلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَافَّةً كَمَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ كَافَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

ues Ahnaf, “that the folks lowered their heads. Not one of them spoke a word. The man who had spoken those words turned back. I followed him. He sat down a little distance away. I told him, ‘I do not think they liked to hear what you told them.’ He replied, ‘These people have no sense’” (Ibn Jarir). That was Abu Dharr (Au.).

However, and to repeat, there is general agreement that the warning in the verse is for those who do not pay the *Zakah*. A *hadith* reported by Thawban says,

مَنْ تَرَكَ كَثِيرًا فَإِنَّهُ يُمَثَّلُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ شُجَاعًا أَقْرَعٌ يَتَّبِعُهُ لَهُ زَيْبَانٌ فَمَا زَالَ يَطْلُبُهُ يَقُولُ وَيُنَادِي مَا أَنْتَ قَالَ يَقُولُ أَنَا كَثْرُكَ الَّذِي تَرَكْتَ بَعْدَكَ قَالَ فَيُلْقِمُهُ يَدَهُ فَيَقْضِمُهَا ثُمَّ يَتَّبِعُهُ بِسَائِرِ جَسَدِهِ

“Whoever left a treasure behind him will have it turned into an extremely poisonous snake. It will follow him on the Day of Judgment. He will say, ‘Woe unto you, what are you?’ The snake

will say, ‘I am the treasure you left behind.’ It will keep on following him until it will chew his hand and then proceed to the rest of the body” (Ibn Jarir).

The *hadith* is in the *Sahihayn* coming from Abu Hurayrah of varying textual contents (Au.).

71. Imām Razi writes: The decision that there would be twelve months in a year was written down in the Book of Allah, i.e., the *Lawh al Mahfuz*. A second opinion is that although the decision had been taken right at the beginning, the commandment came through the *Qur’an* later.

72. It is reported in explanation of this verse that the Prophet (*saws*) gave a sermon in the Tashriq Days of the Farewell *Hajj*. He said,

إِنَّ الزَّمَانَ قَدْ اسْتَدَارَ كَهَيْئَتِهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ السَّنَةُ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرْمٌ ثَلَاثَةٌ مُتَوَالِيَاتٌ ذُو الْقَعْدَةِ وَذُو الْحِجَّةِ وَالْمُحَرَّمُ وَرَجَبٌ شَهْرٌ مُضَرٌّ الَّذِي بَيْنَ جُمَادَى وَشَعْبَانَ

“Time has taken a full circle to return to what it was when Allah created the heavens and the earth. Months are twelve, of which four are consecrated. Three are continuous: *Dhu al Qa`idah*, *Dhu al Hijja* and *Muharram* And (the fourth) is *Rajab* of *Mudar* (tribe) which comes between *Jumada* and *Sha`ban*” (Ibn Jarir).

The above *hadith* is in Bukhari in greater detail (Ibn Kathir).

73. What exactly does the “zulm” of the text imply? Ibn Is haq has said that the meaning is, “Do not treat its lawful as unlawful and unlawful as lawful” (Ibn Jarir).

Qatadah has said: Transgression in the consecrated months is a greater sin than in other months, though transgression is always a great sin. But Allah enhances significance as He will. For instance, Allah chose the best of angels and men to be His envoys, chose His own remembrance from all speech, of the earth He chose the mosques, of the months He chose Ramadan and the consecrated months, of the days He chose Friday, of the nights He chose the Night of Qadr. Therefore, treat those as important which Allah declared important (Ibn Jarir). Ibn `Abbas has made a similar statement (Ibn Kathir).

In fact, adds Ibn Kathir, according to Imām Shafe`i, blood wit will be enhanced for a murder committed in these consecrated months.

Mufti Shafi` adds: This verse shows that so far as the Shar`i obligations are concerned, they will go by the lunar calendar (which is “easily observable” and “more natural”: Asad): such as *Zakah*, Fasts, *Hajj*, etc. However, following the solar calendar (which has “arbitrarily fixed months”: Asad), for other purposes it is not unlawful. This is in light of the verse (10: 5) which said,

لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ [يونس : ٥]

“So that you might count (the years) and reckon (the time),” though not preferable.

74. What is the connection between this part of the verse, with its earlier parts? The answer is that although Allah has declared four months of the year to be sacrosanct, but, if you are attacked by the pagans, then you may retaliate and fight them all (Ibn Ashur).

The translation of “*kaffatan*” as “together all of you” is the understanding of Suddi as in Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir. But the understanding of Ibn `Abbas and Qatadah is, as also endorsed by Ibn Jarir, “fight them all.”

[37] Verily, the transposing⁷⁶ (of a consecrated month) is an addition to unbelief by which the unbelievers are led away from the truth. They make it lawful one year and unlawful another year in order to agree with what Allah has forbidden and to make lawful for themselves what He has forbidden. Their evil deeds have been made pleasing to them. Allah does not guide an unbelieving folk.

إِنَّمَا النَّسِيءُ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ يُضَلُّ بِهِ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُحِلُّونَهُ عَامًا وَيُحَرِّمُونَهُ عَامًا
لِيُؤَاظِمُوا عِدَّةَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ فَيُحِلُّوا مَا
حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ زَيْنَ هُمْ سُوءَ أَعْمَالِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا
يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

75. The scholars are divided over the issue of war in the consecrated months. Some say, the verse above is abrogated since the Prophet fought a few times in the holy months. See *al Baqarah* note 448.

76. As Ibn Jarir has explained, textually the word “nasi” is employed both for increase as well as decrease, and hence transposing could be the nearest single word and the reference is to the practices of the pagan Arabs involving Quraysh, Banu Hawazin, Ghatafan, Banu Sulaym and Banu Kinanah. They shifted the months as they liked in order to declare the lawful of them as unlawful, and unlawful as lawful. Ibn `Abbas and others have explained that in the pagan days one of their leaders would announce that the approaching month of Safar, for instance, would be treated as consecrated and the people would treat it so. Another year he would declare *Muharram* as non consecrated

and they would treat it so. They did that to make fighting lawful in those months. They also played with the months, renaming say *Muharram* as *Dhu al-Hijjah* and playing up with pilgrimage to have it twice in a single year. In addition, they kept shortening the year or lengthening it by means of addition or deletion of months, until when the Prophet came for his Farewell *Hajj*, *Dhu al-Hijjah* once again matched with the true and original *Dhu al-Hijjah*. This explains his words, “Time has turned a full circle.” One year earlier Abu Bakr had in fact made his pilgrimage in the month of *Dhu al-Qa`idah*. Ibn Hajr offers an explanation similar to this in his *Fath al-Bari* (Manar).

Ibn Kathir disagrees with that part of the above report which says that Abu Bakr performed *Hajj* in *Dhu al-Qa`idah*. He argues that in this *Surah* itself the year in which he performed *Hajj* was referred to as “the

[38] Believers! What is the matter with you that when you are told, 'Go forth in the way of Allah,' you cling to the earth?⁷⁷ Are you content with the life of this world in preference to that of the Next?⁷⁸ But the comforts of this life in comparison with the Next are but little.⁷⁹

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ
انفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ اثَّاقَلْتُمْ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ
أَرْضَيْتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ فَمَا
مَتَاعَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ

﴿٣٨﴾

Great Day of *Hajj*.” How could Allah do that, if the month itself was *Dhu al-Qa`idah* and not *Dhu al-Hijjah*? To him, “nasi” was nothing but interchanging of the months (and not shortening of the year: Au.).

But, Ibn Kathir’s disagreement with the great majority over shortening of the years, does not seem to be well placed since interchanging of the months also entailed that the *Hajj* was performed in the wrong months. Nevertheless, he could be right in that Abu Bakr’s *Hajj* was performed in *Dhu al-Hijjah* and not *Dhu al-Qa`idah*.

As for “the Great Day of *Hajj*,” any day on which *Hajj* is performed, is the “Great Day of *Hajj*.” Error in moon-sighting does not render the performance of deeds with important days or nights (such as “*Laylatu al-Qadr*”) as null and void (Au.).

77. Mujahid has said that the reference is to the Tabuk expedition. After the expeditions of Makkah,

Ta’if, and Hunayn, following each other on close heels, the Muslims were asked to march out to Tabuk. The time was midsummer when the shade of a tree was one of the most pleasant things and, in addition, just at that moment the trees were full with fruits ready to be plucked. They began to say, “Amongst us some are old, others impoverished and some have work to do.” Allah revealed this verse in response (Ibn Jarir).

We shall present an account of the Tabuk expedition presently. (See note 172 below). For the moment, here is a short account as given by Yusuf Ali in his “introduction” to the chapter: “Tabuk is a place near the frontier of Arabia, quite close to what was then Byzantine territory in the Province of Syria (which includes Palestine). It is on the Hijaz Railway, (or, used to be, until it was destroyed and never rebuilt: Au.) about 350 miles (600 km.) north west of Madinah, and 150 miles south of Ma’an. It had a fort and a spring of sweet water. In

view of strong and persistent rumors that the Byzantines (Romans) were preparing to invade Arabia and that the Byzantine Emperor himself had arrived near the frontier for the purpose, the Prophet (*saws*) collected as large a force as he could, and marched to Tabuk. (The Romans had actually sent their armies across to the borders and the Emperor had ordered the soldiers be paid their salaries in advance for a whole year: Shafi'). The Byzantine invasion did not come off. (They actually dispersed when they heard that the Prophet was himself advancing towards them: Shafi'). But the Prophet took the opportunity of consolidating the Muslim position in that direction and making treatise of alliance with certain Christian and Jewish tribes near the Gulf of `Aqaba."

Mufti Shafi` adds: With the Prophet's instruction that the Muslims prepare themselves for the Tabuk expedition, the people got divided into six categories:

(1&2) Those who registered themselves immediately, and those who did that only after some hesitation. The great majority belonged to this category, some 30,000, who were mentioned in the verse (9: 117) which said:

لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ الْعُسْرَةِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيغُ قُلُوبَ فَرِيقٍ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّهُ بِهِمْ رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ
[التوبة : ١١٧]

"Surely, Allah turned (in mercy) to the Prophet, the Emigrants, the Helpers, and those who helped them in the hour of difficulty, after the hearts of some of them had well-nigh swerved. Then He turned to them (in mercy); surely, he was Kind and Merciful to them."

(3) Those who had a good reason for staying back. It was said about them (9: 91):

لَيْسَ عَلَى الضُّعَفَاءِ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضَى [التوبة : ٩١]
"There is no sin upon the weak, the sick .."

(4) Those who did not have a good reason for staying back, but were sincere Muslims. They were dealt with in the verse (9: 102):

وَأَخْرُؤُونَ اغْتَرَفُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ [التوبة : ١٠٢]

"And there are others who admitted their sins ...", and in verse (9: 106),

وَأَخْرُؤُونَ مُرْجُونَ لِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ [التوبة : ١٠٦]

"And others deferred until the command came...," and (9: 118),

وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خُلِّفُوا [التوبة : ١١٨]

"And (He turned in mercy) towards those three who were kept waiting (to be judged)..."

[39] *If you do not go forth (in Allah's cause), He will inflict you with a painful chastisement and replace you with a people other than you, and you will not harm Him in the least.⁸⁰ And Allah has power over all things.*

إِلَّا تَنْفَرُوا يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا وَيَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ وَلَا تَضُرُّهُ شَيْئًا وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

(5) Hypocrites who could not conceal their hypocrisy. They proffered false reasons and stayed back.

(6) Finally, those hypocrites who were able to conceal their hypocrisy in the beginning, but exposed themselves during the campaign. Indeed they had only gone to sow seeds of discord and to spy on the Muslims. They were spoken of in verse (no. 47):

وَفِيكُمْ سَمَّاعُونَ لَهُمْ [التوبة : ٤٧]

“And amongst you are their spies ..”

78. Imām Razi points out that in view of this verse *Jihad* is obligatory on the *Ummah* as a whole, although *fard kifayah* on the individual. Had it been obligatory only when the Muslims are attacked, Allah would not have censured those who stayed back from Tabuk, which in fact was a preemptory act of the Prophet (*saws*).

79. The Prophet has said in a *hadith* preserved by Muslim:

وَاللَّهِ مَا الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا مِثْلُ مَا يَجْعَلُ أَحَدُكُمْ إِصْبَعَهُ هَذِهِ - وَأَشَارَ يَحْيَىٰ بِالسَّبَابَةِ - فِي الْيَمِّ فَلْيَنْظُرْ بِمَ يَرْجِعُ

“This world when compared to the next is no more than what if one of you were to dip his finger – (the narrator) Yahya pointed to his little finger - in a sea and let him see how much (water) is there when withdrawn” (Ibn Kathir).

80. Some scholars have said that this verse is abrogated by another of this chapter (no.122) which says,

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفَرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ [التوبة : ١٢٢]

“And, it is not right of the believers to go forth together (in an expedition) all at once. Why should it not be that from every group of them a few people go forth so that they may understand the religion and warn their people when they return to them, so that they may act cautiously.”

But that's not correct, since, the reference in the present verse is to a battle which was commanded by the Prophet himself.

[40] If you do not help him, then surely Allah helped him when the unbelievers drove him out, second of the two,⁸¹ when they were in the cave, when he was saying to his companion,⁸² 'Grieve not. Allah is with us.'⁸³ Then Allah sent down His *sakinah* on him⁸⁴ and helped him with forces you perceived not and made the word of the unbelievers the lowest. And Allah's word is the uppermost.⁸⁵ And Allah is All Powerful, All Wise.

إِلَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِيًا أَتَيْنَا إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ
إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا
فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَمْ
تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَى
وَكَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

81. Imām Razi points out that according to Arabic usage, when it is said, "second of the two," then the reference can be to either of the two.

82. It is reported by Al Harith that once Abu Bakr asked someone to recite this chapter for him. When he reached this verse, Abu Bakr remarked, "I am the one mentioned here," (that is, second of the two), and then wept (Ibn Jarir).

In fact, Imām Razi and Rashid Rida add, Abu Bakr was the "second of the two" in great many affairs of the Prophet: in preaching Islam, converting six immediately after his own conversion, remaining by the Prophet's side and in his service during every battle, deputing him in the Prayers before his death when he himself (Prophet) fell sick, his deputy after him as the first caliph, and, finally, buried by his side as the second

of the two. (According to a *hadith*, Abu Bakr will be by the side of the Prophet at the Pond also: Alusi).

Angered by the Shi'i scholars corrupting their masses, Rashid Rida follows Alusi in presenting several reasons to demonstrate the important position held by Abu Bakr. Here are some:

(a) The Prophet trusted none but Abu Bakr when confronted with the most difficult venture of his mission, *hijrah*.

(b) In a verse which left none of the Companions of the Prophet uncensored, Allah exempted Abu Bakr by saying, "the second of the two." This opinion has reportedly come from none other than `Ali himself.

(c) When `Ali was sent to Makkah during the *Hajj* days to announce that Allah was quit of the unbeliev-

ers, the verse in question was also included in the recitation which should open the eyes of the Shi`ah.

(d) The Prophet himself gave Abu Bakr a place that no one else could covet. Bukhari reports that once Abu Bakr and `Umar exchanged heated words. Subsequently, Abu Bakr sought forgiveness from `Umar. `Umar refused. It was mentioned to the Prophet. He said, "May Allah forgive Abu Bakr (three times)." Subsequently, `Umar felt sorry that he had not forgiven Abu Bakr. He went to his house but he was not there. From there he proceeded to the Prophet. As he arrived he greeted him. But the Prophet's face became red with anger, so that Abu Bakr (who was present) went down on his knees and said, "It was my fault, Messenger of Allah (twice)." The Prophet only said, "Allah commissioned me as a Messenger. You said, 'You are lying.' But Abu Bakr said, 'You are speaking the truth.' He pressed his own person and his wealth to my service. Will you then leave to me my Companion?"

(e) Allah sent down Sakinah on Abu Bakr.

(f) He aided him with unseen forces.

(g) Although not named, but Abu

Bakr was the only one of the Companions who was praised by Allah.

Even Ibn Umm Maktum does not share this honor with Abu Bakr, since there (in the verses of ch. `Abasa, no. 80), it is a quality that has been praised and not the person.

Rashid Rida also pointed out (at other places) that while all other misguided sects have died down, it is only the Shi`ah sect that survives. The foundation stone of Shi`a's hatred of Abu Bakr and `Umar, was laid down by the early atheist fifth-columnists, working among the Muslims to divide them. The earliest Shi`ah leaders were especially angry with Abu Bakr and `Umar because it is they who sent their armies to Persia and subdued their land to Islam. Today's Shi`ah scholars, they are on the footsteps of the secret fifth column of the earlier times, blackening pages against senior Companions, sowing hatred in the hearts, although in today's scenario it is of no profit to anyone, yet they do that only to please their fanatical followers on whom depend their leadership and material interests.

Quote from Rashid Rida ends here and, in this context we might present as an aside, the following from Muhammad Asad's "The Road to

Makkah” (Adam Publishers, p. 277-279): “When, in the middle of the seventh century, the armies of Caliph Umar conquered the ancient Sasanian Empire, bringing Islam with them, Iran’s Zoroastrian cult had already long been reduced to rigid formalism and thus was unable to oppose effectively the dynamic new idea that had come from Arabia. But at the time the Arab conquest burst upon it, Iran was passing through a period of social and intellectual ferment which seemed to promise a national regeneration. This hope of an inner, organic revival was shattered by the Arab invasion; and the Iranians, abandoning their own historic line of development, henceforth accommodated themselves to the cultural and ethical concepts that had been brought in from outside.

“The advent of Islam represented in Iran, as in so many other countries, a tremendous social advance; it destroyed the old Iranian caste system and brought into being a new community of free, equal people; it opened new channel for cultural energies that had long lain dormant and inarticulate; but with all this, the proud descendants of Darius and Xerxes could never forget that the historic continuity of their national life, the organic connection between

their Yesterday and Today, had suddenly been broken. A people whose innermost character had found its expression in the baroque dualism of the Zand religion its almost pantheistic worship of the four elements – air, water, fire and earth – was now faced with Islam’s austere, uncompromising monotheism and its passion for the Absolute. The transition was too sharp and painful to allow the Iranians the supranational concept of Islam. In spite of their speedy and apparently voluntary acceptance of the new religion, they subconsciously equated the victory of the Islamic idea with Iran’s national defeat; and the feeling of having been defeated and irrevocably torn out of the context of their ancient cultural heritage – a feeling desperately intense for its vagueness – was destined to corrode their national self-confidence for centuries to come. Unlike so many other nations to whom the acceptance of Islam gave almost immediately a most positive impulse to further cultural development, the Iranians’ first – and, in a way, most durable – reaction to it was one of deep humiliation and repressed resentment.

“That resentment had to be repressed and smothered in the dark folds of the subconscious, for in the

meantime Islam had become Iran's own faith. But in their hatred of the Arabian conquest, the Iranians instinctively resorted to what psychoanalysis describes as 'overcompensation': they began to regard the faith brought to them by their Arab conquerors as something exclusively their own. They did it by subtly transforming the rational, unmystical God-consciousness of the Arabs into its very opposite: mystical fanaticism and somber emotion. A faith which to the Arab was presence and reality and a source of composure and freedom, evolved, in the Iranian mind, into a dark longing for the supernatural and symbolic. The Islamic principle of God's ungraspable transcendence was transfigured into the mystical doctrine (for which there were many precedents in pre-Islamic Iran) of God's physical manifestation in especially chosen mortals who would transmit this divine essence to their descendants. To such a tendency, an espousal of the Shia doctrine offered a most welcome channel: for there could be no doubt that the Shiite veneration, almost deification, of Ali and his descendants concealed the germ of the idea of God's incarnation and continual reincarnation – an idea entirely alien to Islam but very close to the Iranian heart.

“It had been no accident that the Prophet Muhammad died without having nominated a successor and, indeed, refused to nominate one when a suggestion to that effect was made shortly before his death. By his attitude he intended to convey, firstly, that the spiritual quality of Prophethood was not something that could be ‘inherited’, and, secondly, that the future leadership of the community should be the outcome of free election by the people themselves and not of an ‘ordination’ by the Prophet (which would naturally have been implied in his designation of a successor); and thus he deliberately ruled out the idea that the community's leadership could ever be anything but secular or could be in the nature of an ‘apostolic succession.’ But this was precisely what the Shia doctrine aimed at. It not only insisted – in clear contradiction to the spirit of Islam – on the principle of apostolic succession, but reserved that succession exclusively to the ‘Prophet's seed’, that is, to his cousin and son-in-law Ali and his lineal descendants.

“This was entirely in tune with the mystical inclination of the Iranians. But when they enthusiastically joined the camp of those who claimed that Muhammad's spiritual

essence lived on in Ali and the latter's descendants, there was yet another, sub-conscious motivation for their choice. If Ali was the rightful heir and successor of the Prophet, the three Caliphs who preceded him must obviously have been usurpers – and among them had been Umar, that same Umar who had conquered Iran! The national hatred of the conquest of the Sassanid Empire could be rationalized in terms of religion – the religion that had become Iran's own: Umar had 'deprived' Ali and his sons Hasan and Husayn of their divinely ordained right of succession to the Caliphate of Islam and, thus, had opposed the will of God; consequently, in obedience to the will of God, Ali's party was to be supported. Out of a national antagonism, a religious doctrine was born."

83. The reference is to the *hijrah* journey of the Prophet and Abu Bakr. They lay hidden in a cave called Thawr of a mountain called Nur. When the pagans came searching after them, Abu Bakr evinced signs of worry. The Prophet assured him by asking, "Abu Bakr, what do you think of the two whose third is Allah?" When the pagans got very close, Abu Bakr said that if they merely peeped down they could spot them. The Prophet reassured him by

saying: "Grieve not. Allah is with us."

Alusi wrote: Ibn `Asakir has a report which says that once the Prophet asked Hassan b. Thabit, the poet of Islam, if he had said something about Abu Bakr. He recited the following:

وثاني اثنين في الغار المنيف
وقد طاف العدو به إذ صاعد الجبلا
وكان حب رسول الله قد علموا
من البرية لم يعدل به رجلا

And the second of the two in the cave, the outstanding

While the enemy was prowling around, when the two climbed the hill

He is the beloved of Allah's Messenger, they knew that

Those of all lands, none of the men being equal to him.

In connection with concealment because of fear of persecution, Alusi writes: Just as the Prophet, Imām Ahmad too had to abscond and remain hidden for a few days during the disturbing days in connection with the question concerning the Qur`ān (whether it was a created Word or uncreated). "And so had I to," adds Alusi, "conceal myself and lay hidden for three days after the fall

of Baghdad in the year 1247 *A.H.*, fearing the masses and a few of the elites because of false accusations spread against me by some hypocrites. But, thereafter, Allah sent His special succor, and I came into the open safe and sound.”

It has been pointed out that this verse is a proof of the Prophet’s authenticity. For, if he was not a true Prophet, he would not have been sitting calmly in the cave while Abu Bakr was restless. As a false Prophet he should have been in great fear. Indeed, he should have been in greater fear than Abu Bakr, and Abu Bakr should have been telling him not to worry, because it was he that the pagans were after and not Abu Bakr. Further, the situation in the cave cannot be denied as having been truly as depicted by the Qur’ān. For, if the Qur’ānic verse was not narrating the true situation in the cave, Abu Bakr would have been the first to repudiate. He would have told the Prophet: “Come on. At least this part is no revelation from Allah. I was there with you and you were shaking like a leaf out of fear, were you not?” This writer first heard this argument from a Canadian new Muslim, a professor of Mathematics, Garry Miller (Au.).

The Shi`ah however, writes Imām Razi, have used this verse to cast aspersions on the personality of Abu Bakr. They say e.g. that the Prophet did not take him along except for the reasons that he was afraid that Abu Bakr would betray him if he left him behind. But, as some scholars have said, did not Abu Bakr have the chance to betray the Prophet while they were in the cave? (Going by this argument, could not someone say something similarly absurd, viz., the Prophet did not leave `Ali in his bed the night of his *hijrah* journey, but to get rid of him since the Quraysh could have killed him in the dark only to discover later that they had killed the wrong man?: Rashid Rida). The Shi`ah also say that Abu Bakr earned Allah’s reproach for being full of anxiety in the cave, in comparison to `Ali who slept peacefully in the Prophet’s bed, as instructed by the Prophet. The scholars have answered that (when the danger is right on your head, then) to be fearful is human. Allah said about Musa (20: 68): “Do not fear. You will have the upper hand.”

Abu Bakr’s fear was on account of the Prophet and not himself – something entirely praiseworthy (Au.).

84. Whom does the personal pronoun in “alayhi” refer to? Ibn Abi Hatim, Abu al Sheikh, Ibn Mardwayh and others have reported the opinion of Ibn `Abbas, that it refers to Abu Bakr. And, there is no inconsistency in saying that the personal pronoun in “ayyadahu” refers to the Prophet. Arabic language and Qur’anic style allow for such expressions, although one opinion is that in this instance also the personal pronoun refers to Abu Bakr. In fact there is a report to this effect coming down right from the Prophet (Alusi). Rashid Rida is of the same opinion, although the report coming from the Prophet could not be traced for its authenticity (Au.).

85. By the textual word “kalimah” the allusion is to the testimony, “La ilaha illa Allah” (Ibn Kathir).

Most of the commentators have mentioned in parts event of the *hijrah* journey while Rashid Rida has done it with his usual thoroughness. Here is an account from different sources:

The Hijrah Journey

It was in Allah’s wisdom that when He sent the final Messenger He prepared for his mission a people who were straight in their logic, strong in application, intelligent in their af-

fairs, highly developed of language and previously never enslaved by any ruling class, political or religious. It was also in His wisdom that the Prophet’s own powerful tribe should be the one to oppose his mission. This removed any doubt that establishment of tribal hegemony was the objective.

Protected by his uncle Abu Talib and quietly backed by his wife Khadijah, the Prophet could in the beginning face off the opposition of the Quraysh. But, in the seventh year, both these pillars answered to the call of death within a week. That emboldened the Quraysh who left no method untried to force the Prophet give up his mission. Finally, they decided to do away with him. Even as they were planning and scheming, the believers were allowed to move out first to Habasha (Abyssinia), and later to Yethrib. Ultimately, the Prophet himself was ordered to move out to the latter place which thenceforth came to be known as Madinatu al Nabiyy – the City of the Prophet.

Bukhari has the following narration to offer in his Kitab al *Hijrah*: `A’isha said “I did not step out of childhood to become conscious of things around me but found my parents Muslims; and a day did not pass by when the

Prophet did not visit us, either in the morning or in the evening. Now, as the Muslims were being persecuted, Abu Bakr decided to migrate to Habasha. He had not been up to Bark al Ghimad, a place five days journey from Makkah, but met Ibn al Dughna, a powerful man of the Qara tribe. He asked Abu Bakr as to where he was heading. He replied that his people had thrown him out and so he had decided to go about in the land worshipping none but his Lord. Ibn al Dughna told him, 'A man of your sort should not leave and should not be expelled. You work for the unemployed, do good to the kin, help the orphan, treat the guests well and support every good cause. (Rashid Rida adds: Perhaps `A'isha borrowed these words from the description made by Khadijah to describe the Prophet). I am your protector. So, go back to your place and worship your Lord in the manner you see is right.' Ibn al Dughna traveled with Abu Bakr and repeated his words in front of the Quraysh. (The possibility exists that either the Prophet or both he and Abu Bakr had known of Ibn al Dughna's regard for Abu Bakr and sent him across to Bark al Ghimad to gain his sympathy and protection: Au.). The Quraysh told him to ask Abu Bakr to Pray within his

house and recite what he will (of the Qur'an) but not to irk them much, nor influence their women and children. Ibn al Dughna placed these conditions on Abu Bakr who agreed. But, subsequently, Abu Bakr constructed a little niche for worship in the front yard of his house where he recited the Qur'an in his Prayers. His recitation attracted Qurayshi women and their young ones what with Abu Bakr's crying and sobbing during his recitation! That alarmed the Quraysh. So they sent word to Ibn al Dughna, reminding him of the conditions and informing him that Abu Bakr had half kept, half broken his words of promise by constructing a mosque in his front yard. They insisted that the original understanding was that Abu Bakr will Pray inside his house, within the rooms. The Quraysh asked Ibn al Dughna to withdraw his protection since they did not wish to spoil their relations with him. So Ibn Dughna spoke to Abu Bakr who readily returned him his protection, opting for Allah's protection.

"In the meanwhile, the Prophet told his Companions, 'I have been shown your place of migration between two lava stretches and some orchards.' So, not only the freshers, but also those who had gone to Habasha be-

gan to re migrate to Madinah. Abu Bakr also prepared himself to leave for Madinah. The Prophet told him, 'Hold on for a while. It may be that I will also be granted the permission to migrate.' So, Abu Bakr held himself back in the hope that he will accompany the Prophet. He got ready two camels for that purpose.

"One day," continues `A'isha, "as we were sitting around in the house of Abu Bakr at noon when somebody said, 'Here's the Prophet.' That was a time of the day when he never visited them. He sought permission to be let in and asked for privacy. Abu Bakr told him that there was not anyone around but the household people. He told him that he had been allowed to migrate. Abu Bakr asked him if he was allowed to accompany him and was told yes. (And, by Allah, `A'isha added, never before had we seen Abu Bakr weep with joy). Abu Bakr offered one of his two beasts but the Prophet accepted it only at cost. [Rashid Rida adds in the footnote: It is said that the Prophet preferred to buy the beast despite the fact that Abu Bakr had earmarked all his wealth in the cause of Islam, because he wished to earn the reward in a cause as great as *hijrah*]. So we quickly prepared for the two," continues `A'isha. "As

they started off, they hid themselves in the Thawr cave, staying put for three nights. `Abdullah, Abu Bakr's young sharp son, used to sleep with them, leaving them before dawn to mingle with the Quraysh and bring back news by the evening. `Amir b. Fuhayra, Abu Bakr's freed slave, used to tend his flock near about, watching movements, and supplying them with milk (and mutton: Ibn Is haq) by the evenings. (Incidentally, his flock removed any trace of `Abdullah's footmarks: Au.).

The Makkans, having discovered that the Prophet was gone, quickly spread volunteers to lay hold of them, announcing reward of a hundred camels for each. One of their search parties came so close to the cave that, as Abu Bakr put it, had they looked down at their feet they would have discovered them. In fact, they saw the cave. But a spider had in the meanwhile spun her nest at the mouth. They said to themselves that had anyone entered through the hole, the nest could not be there in tact.

The Prophet and Abu Bakr had hired an expert guide, a pagan called `Abdullah ibn Urqud, to lead them to Yethrib. He arrived at the appointed hour on the third day. (It was on this last day that Asma', Abu Bakr's

daughter, had brought them food to carry. Having forgotten to bring a rope, when she found nothing else, she tore her girdle [or belt] into two to use one for tying the bundle to the camel. Thereafter, she came to be known as the Dhat al Nitaq [“she of the girdles”]: Ibn Is haq). The guide took them by the shore route. Abu Bakr ordered `Amir b. Fuhayrah to accompany them.

(In the meanwhile the original heat was dissipated, the enthusiasm ran low, and the Quraysh cooled down a bit, resigned to having lost their prize. One of those evenings while Suraqah ibn Malik sat in the company of his tribesmen Banu Mudlaj a traveler dropped in and said to him that he had spotted on the horizon figures which he suspected to be the Prophet and his companion. Suraqah knew immediately that it must be the two. But he said, emphatically, “That’s not correct. Rather, they are so and so, who left us a while ago.” Then, allowing for a respectable gap of time, he left the company and heading home he ordered his slave girl to lead his horse to such and such a place and wait for him. Then, slipping out from the rear, he rushed to his horse and galloped away in the direction the traveler had pointed. And, for sure, it was the Prophet that

he had caught up with. But, as he advanced, his horse sank into the sand. He jumped down and pulling out the divining arrows tried to ascertain if he should proceed or stop there. The arrows told him what he feared. A firm no. So he ignored them and pulling out the horse he tried to gallop forward again. He was as near as to hear the recitation of the Prophet, who paid him no attention, when his horse sank again. Suraqah consulted the arrows again, and, blast them, he received the same hateful answer. He also saw a lightening in the sky accompanied by smoke. That convinced him that the affair was a bit different from what he had thought. “There must be some truth to this,” Suraqah told himself. He says in the continuation of the story, “I advanced upon them and told them the story of the prize of hundred camels on their heads. (According to another version, Suraqah knew that the sinking of the horse was the work of Muhammad. He sought peace and assured them that he will keep the news concerning the direction of their escape, secret: Alusi). ‘I also offered them provision for the rest of the journey, but it was promptly rejected. They did not ask anything in return except for saying, ‘keep the news about us to yourself.’ ‘I asked

for (the covenant of peace between me and him) to be written down and he ordered `Amir b. Fuhayrah to do it on a parchment. I thrust it into the sheath of my sword and traced back my trail, speaking nothing about it to anyone. Several years later, when the Prophet had overcome Makkah, had lifted the Ta'if siege and was camping at Ji'rana that I went forward to meet him. But the *Ansār* kept beating me and saying, 'Be off with you man, what on earth do you want?' But I kept pursuing until when the Prophet mounted his beast and I could see his shank in the stirrup which looked like a trunk of a palm tree, I closed in on him and lifted my hand with the document and told him who I was. He said, 'Let him. Today, it is the day for repaying goodness.' So I closed up and embraced Islam. Then I remembered something that I had wanted to ask. I said, "Sometimes my cistern is full of water, and camels not belonging to me stray up to it. Will I be rewarded for letting them drink?" He replied, 'Yes. For watering every thirsty creature, there is a reward.'

`Abdullah ibn Urqud took them along the sea lane, crossing the road below `Usfan, then below Amaj; then, after passing Qudayd by way

of al Kharrar and Thaniyyatu 'l Marra to Liqf. From there he took them down to Maljatu Mahaj, Marjih Mahaj, Marjih Dhu al Ghadwayn, then across the valley of Dhu Kashr; then by al Jadajid, al Ajrad, Dhu Salam of A`da', the water hole of Ta`hin, then by al `Abadid, Fajja, to `Arj. Here one of his mounts dropped back, so another guide from the Aslam tribe, Aws b. Hajr, took over and led them to Madinah through Thaniyyatu 'l A'ir, to the right of Rakuba, through the valley of Ri'm, to finally arrive on a Monday, the 12th of Rabi` al Awwal at Quba' by noon.

The Madinans, who had received the news of the Prophet's departure from Makkah, went out every morning to the edge of the town and waited until the sun was high. One day, as they had just returned, a Jew spotted the two from his balcony and instantly shouted: "Here is your man, O Madinans." They rushed out the young of them and the old full of joy. Meanwhile, the Prophet had alighted and was sitting under a palm tree. The advancing Madinans did not know who was who the two being of equal age until as the shadow slipped, Abu Bakr held a cloth over the Prophet to protect him from the sun.

[41] Go forth, whether you be light or heavy,⁸⁶ and fight with your wealth and your own selves in the way of Allah, that is good for you, only if you knew.⁸⁷

انْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ
وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

[42] Had the gain been immediate, and the journey short, surely they would have followed you. But the hardship made them feel it far away. They will surely swear by Allah, 'Had we the means, we would have gone forth with you.' They destroy their own souls. And Allah knows that they are liars.

لَوْ كَانَ عَرَضًا قَرِيبًا وَسَفَرًا قَاصِدًا
لَاتَّبَعُوكَ وَلَكِنْ بَعَدَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الشُّقَّةُ
وَسَيُخَلِّفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَوِ اسْتَطَعْنَا لَخَرَجْنَا
مَعَكُمْ يُهْلِكُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُمْ
لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

Back at Makkah, `Ali, having handed over the people's trusts back to them, as instructed by the Prophet, also followed them, joining them at Quba. `Ali used to say that an unmarried Muslim woman lived nearby his quarters (in Quba'). He noticed that a man came in the middle of the night, knocked on her door and, as she opened it, handed over something to her. `Ali became very suspicious of what was going on. He asked her to explain the meaning of this nightly performance as she was a Muslim and without a husband. She told him that it was Sahl b. Hunayf who knew that she was alone and so broke the idols of his tribe and secretly brought the pieces to her which she promptly used as fuel. `Ali used to talk of this incident until Sahl died in Iraq while he was with him.

The Prophet stayed for a while in Quba', and then moved into Madinah, on to where the Grand Mosque now stands.

86. The terms "light" and "heavy" have been explained by some as "poor" and "rich," by others as "inactive" and "active," and yet as "the unmounted" and the "mounted." (Fat and thin, healthy and sick, old and young are other explanations: Zamakhshari). Hasan, Abu Saleh, Mujahid and others have said that by the words "light" and "heavy" the allusion is to the young and old. In fact, it is reported of Abu Talha that he explained the terms that way and then said, "Allah will not accept anyone's excuse" and left for Syria (to fight in the way of Allah) until he died. Another incident concerns an old man who went to Sa'd b. Waqqas (a local commander) seek-

ing his permission to participate in *jihad*. Sa'd told him, "You are too old." The man replied, "Allah says, "Go out, be you light or heavy." So he went to fight and was martyred. Subsequently `Umar asked, "What happened to the old man of Banu Hashim?" They told him, "He was martyred." Hibban b. Zayd has narrated another story. He says, "We were led in the Hims zone by Safwan b. `Amr. I met an extremely old man from Dimashq whose eye lashes had fallen down on his eyes. He was marching forward in full swing toward the front. I told him, 'Uncle dear. Allah has exempted you.' The man lifted up his eye lashes with his hand and said, 'Dear nephew. Allah has commanded the light and the heavy to go out and fight. Allah puts to test whomsoever he loves. And then He brings him back and keeps him alive (if He wills). He tests only those of His slaves who are grateful, persevering, remember Him much, and are devoted to none but Him.'" Again, Abu Rashid al Harrani says, "I found Miqdad al Aswad, the horseman of the Prophet, placed in a litter to be taken to the battle field of Hims. I said, 'Allah has exempted you.' He replied, 'The (Qur'anic) chapter commanding expedition has reached us'" (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir adds: Another report tells us that when Abu Talha read this verse he said, "As I see it, our Lord demands that we go out to fight, the young of us and the old of us." He ordered his sons to make preparations for him. They said, "May Allah show you mercy. You fought with the Prophet (*saws*) until he died. You fought with Abu Bakr until he died. Then you fought with `Umar until he died. So, stay back and let us your sons fight now." But he would not listen. He mounted a ship but died on the way. They did not find any land for seven days so as to bury him. But his body did not get decompose. Finally, they found an island and buried him there.

87. That is, fighting in the way of Allah is entirely good for you, even if you dislike it. Muslim has preserved a report coming from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (*saws*) said: "The best of livelihood is that of a man who is ever ready with the reins of his horse in his hand to jump on its back in the way of Allah. Every time he hears a cry, or a fearful noise, he flies in that direction earnestly seeking death" (Ahmad).

The Prophet (*saws*) once told a man to embrace Islam. The man said, "I have a dislike for it in my heart." The

[43] Allah has forgiven you.⁸⁸ Why did you exempt them?⁸⁹ until the truthful had become distinguished to you and you had known the liars.⁹⁰

عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْكَ لِمَ أَذِنْتَ لَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَّبِعَ
لَكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَتَعْلَمَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

Prophet told him, “Embrace Islam, even if you have a dislike for it.” The lesson is, we should carry out the commandments - in this case *ji-had* - whether we like it or not (Ibn Kathir). Another lesson contained in the *hadith* last quoted is, Islam is wholly good. If someone has some reservations, let him not attach it a lot of importance. Once he embraces Islam and begins to live by it, that dislike would be gone. He would never regret having embraced Islam (Au.).

88. In the words of Yusuf Ali, “Imām Razi understands the expression to mean an exclamation, as one might say in English, “God bless you!”

89. Ibn `Awn is reported by Ibn Abi Hatim as having said, “Have you heard of a better manner of reproach? The Prophet’s forgiveness was announced before he was reproached” (Ibn Kathir).

Mufti Shafi` adds: It would have been unbearable for the Prophet

(*saws*), seeing his great love for Allah, to be merely asked, “Why did you exempt them?” even if he was to be forgiven later. Therefore, the order was reversed. He was first forgiven and then addressed with a mild reproach. Further, it was not a sin that the Prophet (*saws*) had committed. Rather, out of several choices he preferred one that did not prove to be Allah’s first choice.

90. When the occasion for the expedition of Tabuk came, the hypocrites began showing up seeking the Prophet’s permission to stay back, citing various pretexts. The Prophet (*saws*) let everyone stay back who wished to stay back. This verse told him that he should not have because, these were the kind of people who would have stayed back anyway, whether you had allowed them or not. If you had not allowed them, they would have stayed back all the same and exposed themselves (Based on Ibn Jarir).

[44] *Those who believe in Allah and the Last Day will not seek exemption from you, that they should fight with their wealth and their selves. And Allah is Aware of the pious.*⁹¹

لَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

[45] *Surely, only those seek exemption from you who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, and their hearts are in doubts so that they go backward and forward in their doubts.*⁹²

إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَازْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي
رَيْبِهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

[46] *Had they indeed intended to go, they would have prepared some provision for it. But, rather Allah disliked their setting forth and so He dispirited them*⁹³ *and it was said to them, 'Sit (back) among those who sit.'*

وَلَوْ أَرَادُوا الْخُرُوجَ لَأَعَدُّوا لَهُ عُدَّةً وَلَكِنْ
كَرِهَ اللَّهُ انبِعَاتِهِمْ فَتَبْطِئُهُمْ وَقِيلَ اقْعُدُوا
مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

[47] *Had they gone forth with you, they would not have added (anything) except disorder. And surely, they would have placed in your midst (discord), intending to stir up sedition among you. And, amidst you are spies (working) for them. Allah is well Aware of the transgressors.*

لَوْ خَرَجُوا فِيكُمْ مَا زَادُوكُمْ إِلَّا خَبَالًا
وَلَأَوْضَعُوا خِلَالَكُمْ يِغْوُونَكُمْ الْفِتْنَةَ
وَفِيكُمْ سَمَاعُونَ هُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ
﴿٤٧﴾

91. Following the hint concealed here, it is said that a man should not wait, or seek a brother's leave, to do him good. Similarly, a host should not ask his guest if he wishes to eat or drink something. To inquire (if it is apparent that they are in need) is another way of communicating the idea that you do not wish to do it out of your heart. We have the example of Ibrahim (*asws*) who slipped out in secret (11: 69 and 51: 26) to roast a calf for his guests without asking them if they needed some food (Alusi).

Rashid Rida goes one step further to say that if (you happen to be a guest and) your host asks you if you'd like to eat or drink something, then you better say no since he never intended to host you.

92. It is said that in total they were 39 men (Zamakhshari).

93. The meaning of "dispirited them," is from Razi.

`Abdullah ibn Abi Sallul, Jadd b. Qays, Rifa`ah b. al Tabut, and Aws

[48] *Indeed, they had planted sedition before⁹⁴ and upset matters with you until the Truth came, and Allah's command became supreme, even though they were averse (to it).⁹⁵*

لَقَدْ ابْتَعَوْا الْفِتْنَةَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَقَلَّبُوا لَكَ الْأُمُورَ حَتَّى جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَظَهَرَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَهُمْ كَارِهُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

[49] *Among them are some who say, 'Exempt me and do not expose me to temptation.'⁹⁶ Lo. They fell into temptation (already). And surely, Jahannum is circumscribing the unbelievers.*

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ ائْذَنْ لِي وَلَا تَفْتِنِّي أَلَا فِي الْفِتْنَةِ سَقَطُوا وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

b. Qayzi all of them important men were some of those who did not go and whom Allah did not approve that they should go (Ibn Jarir).

Thanwi relates it to those weak in faith: "The verse demonstrates the error of those who delay in taking up good works for one reason or another. The truth is, they never make up their minds resolutely. Had they done that, they would not have gone forward and backward thinking over the issue but never taking any action, rather, would have taken some firm steps towards accomplishing it."

94. That happened several times. For instance, at the time of Uhud, `Abdullah b. Ubayy broke off with 300 of his followers, in an effort to dishearten the Muslims (Ibn Jarir).

95. It is reported by several narrators that when the Prophet (*saws*) intended to travel to Tabuk, he announced his destination, and the purpose: to

take on the Romans, as against the normal habit of not letting them know his intentions. That increased the dislike of some people who did not think they could fight the Romans. However, the Prophet (*saws*) began to make preparations and appealed for material help to meet with the cost. Then, as he set out, he pitched his camp at Thaniyyatu al Wada`. But `Abdullah ibn Ubayy pitched his camp a little lower down the valley. When the Prophet (*saws*) started off after a few days, `Abdullah ibn Ubayy remained behind and marched back to Madinah.

96. Ibn `Abbas has said that when the Prophet ordered the Companions to prepare themselves for Tabuk, Jadd b. Qays came up and told him, "You know that the Roman women are pretty. I do not think I can restrain myself if I am to encounter them. So, do not put me into trial, but rather let me stay back. I'll help you with

[50] If a good thing happens to you, it grieves them. But if a hardship befalls you they say, 'We had indeed taken precautions beforehand.' Then they return and they are mighty pleased.

إِنْ تُصِيبَكَ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ وَإِنْ تُصِيبَكَ مُصِيبَةٌ يَقُولُوا قَدْ أَخَذْنَا أَمْرًا مِنْ قَبْلٍ وَيَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ فَرِحُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

[51] Say, 'Nothing will strike us but what Allah has ordained for us. He is our Protector. And, indeed, it is in Allah alone that the believers should place their trust.'⁹⁷

قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا هُوَ مَوْلَانَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

[52] Say, 'Do you expect for us but either of the two good things: (martyrdom or victory)?'⁹⁸ But we expect for you that Allah will either strike you with a punishment from Him or by our hands. Therefore, wait. We are also waiting with you.

قُلْ هَلْ تَرْتَضُونَ بِنَا إِلَّا إِحْدَى الْحُسَيْنَيْنِ وَنَحْنُ نَتَرْتَضُ بِكُمْ أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِعَذَابٍ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ أَوْ بِأَيْدِينَا فَتَرْتَضُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُتَرْتَضُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

[53] Say, 'Expend willingly or unwillingly: it shall never be accepted of you,⁹⁹ for you are a wicked people.'¹⁰⁰

قُلْ أَنْفِقُوا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا لَنْ يُتَقَبَلَ مِنْكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

funds." The Prophet allowed him to stay back and this verse was revealed. He was the chief of the Banu Salamah tribe. Displeased, the Prophet asked the Banu Salamah people as to who their leader was. They said, "Jadd b. Qays, except that he is a miser and a coward." The Prophet said, "What disease could be worse than miserliness. Rather, your chief is Bara' b. Ma`rur" (Ibn Jarir). Ibn Kathir however identifies him as "Bishr b. Bara' b. Ma`rur.

It might be remembered that when the Prophet the Companions were pledging their hands to fight to the

end during the Hudaibiyah affair, Jadd b. Qays was hiding behind a camel (Au.)

97. The placing of trust in Allah does not preclude putting up efforts, rather, it is dependence on them for the outcome which is disapproved (Alusi). "Trust" (tawakkul) is certainly not the other name of despair (Shafi').

98. The words in parenthesis are explanation offered by Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and others as in Ibn Jarir.

99. What is meant by non acceptance is "that acceptance which entails rewards in the Hereafter." Otherwise,

[54] And nothing prevented their contributions from being accepted from them except that they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger. They come not to the Prayers except as sluggards¹⁰¹ and expend not but unwillingly.¹⁰²

وَمَا مَنَعَهُمْ أَنْ تُقْبَلَ مِنْهُمْ تَفَقَاتِهِمْ
إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَلَا يَأْتُونَ
الصَّلَاةَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كُسَالَى وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا
وَهُمْ كَارِهُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

the charitable works of an unbeliever are (accepted and) rewarded in this world itself. The Prophet said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مُؤْمِنًا حَسَنَةً يُعْطَى بِهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَيُجْزَى بِهَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَأَمَّا الْكَافِرُ فَيُطْعَمُ بِحَسَنَاتِ مَا
عَمِلَ بِهَا لِلَّهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَتَّى إِذَا أَفْضَى إِلَى الْآخِرَةِ لَمْ
تَكُنْ لَهُ حَسَنَةٌ يُجْزَى بِهَا

“Allah does not do injustice to a believer who is led to a good deed in this world and rewarded in the Hereafter. In contrast, the unbeliever is rewarded for his good deeds in this world itself, until when he rises on the Day of Judgment, he will have no deed left to be rewarded for” (Qur-tubi).

Yusuf Ali explains why the alms of a hypocrite are not acceptable:

“They Hypocrites, who secretly plotted against Islam, might sometimes (and they did) make a show of making some contribution to the Cause in order to keep their pretense. Their contributions were not acceptable, whether they seemed to give will-

ingly or unwillingly, because rebellion and disobedience were in their hearts. Three reasons are specifically given for their rejection, in the next verse: (1) they did not believe; (2) their prayers were not earnest, but for mere show; and (3) in reality their hearts were not behind the contributions which they offered. Nothing is acceptable to Allah which does not proceed from a pure and sincere heart.”

100. (Though general to all hypocrites: Razi), Ibn `Abbas has said that the verse was revealed in reference to Jadd b. Qays who wished to stay away from *Jihad* on a pretext offering monetary help instead. He was told that whether he expended willingly or unwillingly, in either case his expending will do him no any good (Ibn Jarir).

101. The implication of the word “kusala” is that they are sluggish and half hearted about the Prayers, doing them when in congregation and abandoning them in private (Razi).

[55] So let not their wealth and children amaze you.¹⁰³ Allah desires only to punish them therewith in the life of this world¹⁰⁴ and that their souls should depart while they are in a state of disbelief.¹⁰⁵

فَلَا تَعْجَبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِمَا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

Zamakhshari adds: “Kusala” is the plural of “kaslan”, a sluggard, lazy person. Probably taking cue from the usage here, it is reported that a believer should never say he was “kaslan” about one of the good acts he did not do.

102. “Such is the condition of the hypocrites of all times: fear and appeasement, a heart twisted and a conscience disturbed, appearances devoid of the spirit, and putting up shows against what the inner self conceals” (Sayyid).

The verse tells us by implication that acts of worship have to be out of heart to please the Lord. Not done in that spirit, they could be profitless; in fact, even harmful (Razi).

The above does not absolve, rather only warns. The obligations of Islam, of whatever nature they be, must be performed, whatever the condition of the heart, and then forgiveness should be sought for deficiencies (Au.).

103. Mawdudi comments: “Almost all the hypocrites of Madinah were rich and elderly people. According to the description of the hypocrites in Ibn Kathir’s “Al Bidayah wa al Nihayah,” (vol.3, pp. 237 41), only one of them was young and absolutely none of them was poor.”

Sayyid writes: “Sometimes, wealth and children are a blessing from Allah that are sent down upon one of His slaves. That proves to be so when he is also granted the inducement to gratitude, repair the damage done to the earth, turn to Allah much thereof. If he does that, he is peaceful of heart, cool of inner self, and clear of conscience. Every time that he spends, he counts it as a treasure that he deposited for himself in the Hereafter. On the other hand, if he suffers a loss in wealth or children, he counts it too as a means of reward. His soul is peaceful and his hope on Allah moves him on. However, sometimes wealth and children are a curse from Allah. That happens when man does

[56] They swear by Allah that they are of you although they are not of you, but rather they are a people who dread.¹⁰⁶

وَيَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ إِيَّاهُمْ لِمَنْكُمْ وَمَا هُمْ
مِنْكُمْ وَلَكِنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ يَفْرُقُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

nothing but corruption. His worries over his wealth and children turn his life into Hell. His greed eats him up and saps his strength. Whenever he spends, it goes waste and brings back only pain and regret. He is at pain with his children when they are sick and when they are healthy. How many people have not been targets of torment because of their children?"

104. Majid comments in his succinct style: "Imagine not (O reader: Au.), that the hypocrites with their portion of wealth and offspring are the favourites of God; they are but ensnared therewith."

Yusuf Ali brings out the same point more elaborately: "If they appeared to be prosperous, with their purses and their quivers full (metaphorically), they were not to be envied. In reality their wealth and their sons might themselves be a snare: Cf. viii, 28. On this particular occasion this was proved to the hilt. The wealth of the Pagans filled them with pride, darkened their understanding, and led to their destruction. Their sons and followers adopted the Faith which their fathers had fought

against, much to the chagrin of the fathers, whose spiritual death was even worse than their discomfiture in this world."

105. The translation herewith follows the textual arrangement.

The understanding of Ibn `Abbas as in Tabari, is that there has been what is known as "taqdim" of the phrase "in the life of this world." The verse should therefore be understood in the following way: 'Let not their wealth and their children dazzle you in the life of this world. Allah only desires to punish them therewith in the Hereafter.'

Hasan al Busri and Ibn Zayd however believed that the literal meaning is likelier. Allah wishes to punish the hypocrites in this world itself. Ibn Jarir is himself inclined to this second opinion, as are Razi and Ibn Kathir.

106. The textual word "yafraqun" has in its root in "farq" meaning fear. It is said, "rajulun faruqun" meaning, "a frightened man" (Razi).

What it means is that the hypocrites are afraid that their true identity will be exposed.

[57] If they could find a shelter, or some caverns, or any place to creep into,¹⁰⁷ surely they would turn about thereto as they bolt away.¹⁰⁸

لَوْ يَجِدُونَ مَلْجَأً أَوْ مَعَارِزًا أَوْ مُدْخَلًا
لَوَلَّوْا إِلَيْهِ وَهُمْ يَجْمَحُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

[58] Of them there are some who find fault with you over Zakah (funds).¹⁰⁹ If they are given thereof, they are satisfied. But if they are not given thereof, behold, they are indignant.

وَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَلْمِزُكَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ فَإِنْ
أَعْطُوا مِنْهَا رَضُوا وَإِن لَّمْ يُعْطُوا مِنْهَا إِذَا
هُمْ يَسْتَخْطُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

“The hypocrites on the one hand concealed their infidelity lest the Muslims should treat them like the open infidels, and on the other never hesitated to declare their contempt and hatred of Islam when they thought they could do so with impunity” (Majid).

107. The textual word “muddakhalan” is understood by Ibn `Abbas and Qatadah as a hole, an opening, or a tunnel into the earth (Ibn Jarir).

108. The textual word jamaha implies, in the words of Yusuf Ali, “to be ungovernable, to run like a runaway horse, to rush madly and obstinately.”

109. Abu Sa`id has said that once the Prophet was distributing (some gold and silver) when Ibn Dhi al Khuwaysarah happened to drop in. He remarked, “Be just O Messenger of Allah.” The Prophet replied, “Woe unto you man. If I did not administer justice, who will?” `Umar

said, “Allow me O Allah’s Messenger to chop his head off.” The Prophet replied, “Leave him alone. He shall have companions who will be of such order that in comparison to their Prayers and fasts you will consider your own as worthless. But they would have left Islam just as an arrow through a hunted animal. The man looks at the feather but finds no sign (of the arrow having hit the game). Then he looks at the head but finds nothing. Then he looks at its shaft but finds nothing. That is because the arrow left the body before the blood or waste could come into contact with it. Their sign is that one of their men will have his hands swollen as a woman’s breast, or like a piece of flesh that shakes. They will appear among the people after a while.” This verse came down in reference to that incident (Ibn Jarir). Slightly differently worded, the above report is in the *Sahihayn* also (Ibn Kathir).

[59] If only they had been content with what Allah and His Messenger had bestowed on them and said, 'Sufficient unto us is Allah. Surely Allah will give us out of His bounty, and (so will) His Messenger, and to Allah we turn in hope.'¹¹⁰

[60]¹¹¹ Surely,¹¹² Zakah (funds)¹¹³ are for the¹¹⁴ poor, the needy,¹¹⁵ those who are in charge thereof,¹¹⁶ those whose hearts are to be won over,¹¹⁷ for¹¹⁸ the bonded,¹¹⁹ those in debt,¹²⁰ in the way of Allah¹²¹ and for the wayfarer¹²² a decree from Allah.¹²³ And Allah is All knowing, All wise.¹²⁴

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوا مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ سَيُؤْتِينَا اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَرَسُولُهُ إِنَّا إِلَى اللَّهِ رَاغِبُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾

Another incident happened at the time of distribution of the Hunayn booty. When the Prophet was finished with its distribution, someone remarked, "This is a division by which Allah's Pleasure was not sought." Ibn Mas'ud transmitted the words to the Prophet. He remarked, "Musa was said more painful things, but he bore with patience" (Alusi).

110. That is, had they said that, it would have been better for them (Au.).

The verse shows by implication that to hanker after the world, seeking after more than what is necessary for a man, leads to hypocrisy. It is better to have trust in Allah and fasten good hope on Him rather than hanker for more and more (Razi).

111. When the hypocrites criticized the Prophet over the spending of the *Zakah* funds, Allah revealed this verse to say that after all His Messenger was not pocketing the *Zakah* funds himself. He was spending on the kinds and classes of people listed herewith (Ibn Jarir, Razi).

112. Razi points out quoting poetical pieces in support that the use of the textual article "inna" (translated here as "surely") is indicative of the fact that *Zakah* sums have to be spent exclusively on one of the eight categories mentioned here.

113. There is no difference in opinion that although the term used here is "*sadaqat*" (which today means voluntary charity), it is "*Zakah*" (obligatory poor due) that is meant (Razi).

In fact, adds Qurtubi, unless the context proves otherwise, whenever the term “*sadaqah*” is used in the Qur’an, the allusion is to “*Zakah*.”

Imām Razi writes: In *Zakah* is a cure for excessive love of wealth; which in its turn leads to forgetfulness of Allah and takes time off preparations for the Hereafter. In addition, wealth invariably leads to power. And power has its own allurements. Once a man has tasted power, he wishes more of it. The desire for more power leads him to seeking more of what brought it originally, viz., wealth. This leads a man into a vicious circle: more wealth, more power, more wealth, more power there is no end to it. *Zakah* cuts open the circular course to weaken the love of power and wealth and introduce love of Allah. A third consequence of excessive wealth is arrogance. Allah said (96: 6):

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُفٍ (٦) أَنْ رَأَاهُ اسْتَعْجَلَى [العلق]:
[٧، ٦]

“Man rebels, that he sees himself self sufficient.” *Zakah* checks this tendency. Again, wealth is a cause of envy. But when a man expends on *Zakah*, and the more wealth, the more he spends, he becomes lovable in the eyes of the people, who pray for his well being. He lives a life bet-

ter than others. This is the meaning of Allah’s words (13: 17):

وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُتُ فِي الْأَرْضِ [الرعد]:
[١٧]

“As for that which is beneficial to the people, it survives on the earth.”

These are some of the advantages of paying the *Zakah*. Conversely, of course, non payment will result in economic imbalance and increase in crimes.

114. The “lam” preceding “*fuqara*” serves the functions of both “lam al takhsis” (denoting specificity) as well as “*lam al tamlik*” (denoting possession). See Fiqh notes below.

115. Differences prevailed between the scholars over the distinction between “*faqir*” and “*misikin*.” According to Ibn `Abbas, Hasan, Zuhri, Ibn Zayd and Mujahid, “*faqir*” is that destitute who does not ask whereas “*misikin*” is the one who asks. (Hence Imām Shafe`i’s position that they are one and the same: Qurtubi. That is, economically they are of the same class, except that one asks and the other does not: Au.). There are other opinions but this one is the preferred one. This is because unto the Arabs “*maskanah*” implies humility. We have the example of this usage in the following verse (2: 61):

وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ [البقرة : ٦١]

“Humiliation and wretchedness (maskanah) were stamped upon them.”

“*Miskin*” therefore, is that destitute who earns humiliation by stretching his hand before the people. This is supported by a *hadith* of the Prophet in which he said,

لَيْسَ الْمَسْكِينُ الَّذِي تَرُدُّهُ التَّمْرَةُ وَالتَّمْرَتَانِ ، وَلَا اللَّقْمَةُ وَاللَّقْمَتَانِ . إِنَّمَا الْمَسْكِينُ الَّذِي يَتَعَفَّفُ .
اقْرءُوا إِنَّ شِئْتُمْ (لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِحْفَافًا)

“(A true) *miskin*’ is not the one who can be turned back with a date or two, a mouthful or two. Rather ‘*miskin*’ is someone who does not ask. Read if you will (2: 273), “They do not ask the people importunately.”

This *hadith* has not been stated for distinguishing the two the “*faqir*” and the “*miskin*.” In fact, the Prophet used the term ‘*miskin*’ in place of ‘*faqir*’ because of the closeness in meaning and application. Otherwise, what he meant is that there are two types of people in want: one who goes about asking, another who does not. Now, which of them is a ‘*miskin*’ is determined by the verse that the Prophet quoted. It says (2: 273):

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أُحْضِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ
ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَحْسَبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَعْيَابًا مِنْ النُّعُفِ
تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِحْفَافًا [البقرة :
٢٧٣ :

“(Charity is) due to the destitute who are (wholly) preoccupied in Allah’s cause, (and hence) cannot travel in the land (in quest of providence). The ignorant supposes them prosperous on account of their restraint. (But) You can recognize them by their looks. They do not beg of men importunately.” [Note the use of the word “*fuqara*” in this verse] Ibn Jarir.

What Ibn Jarir means is that although the Prophet was not trying to draw a distinction between the two class of destitute people the “*faqir*” and the “*miskin*,” it can be deduced from the verse he quoted that since “*faqir*” is one who does not ask, by implication, “*miskin*” is one who asks (Au.).

There is no any notable difference between the great majority that a “*faqir*” is more needy than a “*miskin*” and hence more deserving of *Zakah*. In fact, a “*miskin*” can own something such as, for example the “*masakin*” whose boat Khadir broke. It was said (18: 79),

أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسَاكِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ فِي الْبَحْرِ
[الكهف : ٧٩]

“As for the boat, it belonged to the *masakin* working at sea...”

So, they were *miskin*, despite owning a boat. Further, the Prophet sought to be a *miskin* in his supplications, (while seeking to be spared “*faqr*” Qurtubi), although he possessed meager means of life. He used to say:

اللَّهُمَّ أَحْيِنِي مِسْكِينًا

“O Allah, let me live the life of a “*miskin*.”

Again, the Qur’an said (51: 19):

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ [الذاريات : ١٩]

“In their wealth is a share for the beggar and the destitute.”

The textual word “mahrum” also leads us to believe that the destitute who begs is the “*miskin*” and the non begging destitute the “*faqir*” (Razi).

That said, interestingly, although the Hanafiyyah accept that “*miskin*” is one who asks, they conclude that he must be greater in need to be forced to ask (Al Arba`ah), and, therefore, more deserving of *Zakah* (Au.).

As to who is a destitute to begin with, once again various opinions prevail. Most of the scholars have said that whoever possesses 40 Dirhams is not a destitute. Daraqutni has even a *hadith* to this effect. In any case, it is reported by Abu Da’ud that the Prophet said: “Charity is not lawful unto the rich and able bodied, capable

of work” (Qurtubi). In simpler words, adds Mufti Shafi`, *faqir* and *miskin* are those who do not have anything in excess of their very basic necessities of life. A house, furniture, utensils are included in basic necessities. Anybody who has something in addition to these basic necessities is not qualified to receive *Zakah* funds. Another way to put it is to say that anyone who is not himself obliged to pay *Zakah* and is not able bodied, or cannot work for himself (for one reason or another), is eligible to receive *Zakah*.

The above said, since the term “*miskin*” is often misunderstood, the following might help. Rashid Rida quotes Ibn `Arafah through Fairoz-abadi: “If the maskanah be because of poverty, then the person is eligible to receive *Zakah*: he is a *miskin* cum *faqir*. But, if his maskanah is due to other reasons, and not poverty then he is not eligible. For, (*miskin* is also one who is extremely humble), so that the people say, “The *miskin* was badly treated by so and so,” or, “they did wrong to the *miskin*,” although the man concerned could have been financially well off.” *Miskin* then, can also be a quiet, mild, gentle and genteel person who can take a lot without reacting agitatedly. Perhaps it is in this sense that the Prophet would pray:

اللَّهُمَّ أَحْبِبْنِي مِسْكِينًا وَتَوَفَّنِي مِسْكِينًا وَاحْشُرْنِي فِي
زُمْرَةِ الْمَسَاكِينِ

“O Allah, grant me the life of a *miskin*, the death of a *miskin* and raise me up (on the Day of Judgment) among the *masakin*” (Au.).

116. The allusion is to those who are hired by the government for the collection, accounts, distribution and other such purposes. They must be Muslims (Au.).

Citing the example set by `Umar ibn al Khattab, Zuhri and Ibn Zayd have said that (it is not one eighth of the whole that will be necessarily spent on the collectors and distributors or accountants employed thereof, rather: Au.), they will be paid in accordance with their services. This is the preferred opinion (Ibn Jarir).

Further, Ibn Kathir adds, the kinsfolk of the Prophet can be neither given out of *Zakah* funds nor employed (at cost) for the purpose. This is in view of the *hadith* in Muslim which reports that `Abdul Muttalib b. Rabi'ah and Fadl b. `Abbas went to the Prophet requesting to be employed for the collection of *Zakah*. He told them,

إِنَّ الصَّدَقَةَ لَا تَتَّبَعِي لِأَلِ مُحَمَّدٍ. إِنَّمَا هِيَ أَوْسَاحُ
النَّاسِ

“Charity money is not fit for Muhammad and his kinsfolk. They are dirt of the people.”

117. Under this head, funds may be paid to those who are on the border, hesitating about their Islam, or, are yet to set their feet firmly, even if they have crossed the borders and come into the fold of Islam, or, even if they are entirely on the other side, but it is believed that a hand out will win them over to the Islamic cause (Au.).

Majid quotes a Christian historian: “These ‘costly presents’ in the case of half hearted converts ‘wrought effectively,’ and ‘in most cases a genuine conversion followed in time.’”

According to Yahya ibn Kathir, in his time the Prophet paid out under this definition to Abu Sufyan, Al Harth b. Hisham, Safwan b. Umayyah, Suhayl b. `Amr, Hakim b. Hizam, Aqra` b. Habis, `Abbas b. al Mardas, and others. He gave them in the hope of winning them to Islam. The dividends paid off. Safwan b. Umayyah for instance said after receiving the money (while still a pagan), “The Messenger of Allah gave me in a state when he was the most hateful in my sight. But he kept on giving until he became the most beloved of the people to me” (Ibn Jarir).

Qurtubi adds: One of those the Prophet gave, belonging to this category was Hakim b. Hizam, who lived 60 years of his life as an unbeliever and 60 years as a believer. (Hawaytab b. `Abdul `Uzza was a second known case). It is reported that a few years later Hakim spent off in charity all that he had ever received from the Prophet out of the *Zakah* funds.

Ibn Kathir writes that the above report is both in Muslim and Tirmidhi and adds that to some the Prophet gave in order to strengthen them in their religion. For instance he gave a hundred camels each to the Quraysh leaders (who had already embraced Islam) saying (Bukhari and Muslim),

إِنِّي لَأُعْطِي الرَّجُلَ وَعَيْمِرُهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْهُ حَشِيَّةً أَنْ
يَكْبَهُ اللَّهُ فِي النَّارِ

“Some times I give a man while another is dearer to me. That I do because I’m afraid that otherwise Allah might shove him headlong into Hellfire.”

Zuhri said that the Prophet gave out of these funds even to those Jews and Christians who had newly converted to Islam. He was asked if they could be given even if they were rich? In reply he said yes (Ibn Jarir).

However, Hasan, `Amir, and even `Umar ibn al Khattab believed that

those days had passed. No more should those be given whose Islam is sought. When `Uyayna b. Hisn went to `Umar, (he refused to give him). Instead, he recited the verse (18: 29):

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِرْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ
[الكهف : ٢٩]

“The Truth is from your Lord. So let him who will, believe, and let who will, disbelieve.”

It is said that `Uthman and `Ali also did not allot these kind of people any share. This happens to be the opinion of Imām Abu Hanifah, and Shafe`i (Manar).

But others have maintained that this category remains forever until the end of the world. This however is the correct opinion since the Prophet gave the Makkans after the fall of Makkah when he did not need their services, rather, purely hoping to win them to Islam (Ibn Jarir, Razi, Ibn Kathir). Ibn al `Arabiyy has said that the situations when the class of people whose Islam is coveted may arise in the future, and therefore, the rule will remain in force. After all, has not the Prophet said,

إِنَّ الْإِسْلَامَ بَدَأَ غَرِيبًا ، وَسَيَعُودُ غَرِيبًا

“Islam began as a stranger and will become a stranger again” (Qurtubi).

118. The introduction of “fi” (on “al riqab”) seems to emphasize the greater need of the latter four categories because (despite the “lam” preceding earlier), a “fi” was added, Zamakhshari, Shafi`.

119. There is no difference in opinion that any slave who has entered into a deal with his master over his emancipation, might be helped out of the funds. But differences in opinion prevail over whether slaves could be outright purchased and set free with the funds. Some are found saying yes, others saying no. The problem here is that *Zakah* funds have to be handed over to a recipient. Now, in this case, the amounts cannot be handed over to the master of a slave, since he does not deserve it. And, if handed over to the slave, the amount becomes the master’s by default (since the slaves property is the master’s property). Perhaps it is complications of this sort that has led the great majority of the fuqaha’ to rule that the funds cannot be used for freeing slaves unless they have entered into a deal (mukatabah) with their masters (Shafi`).

120. In the words of Asad: “the term “gharimun” describes people who are overburdened with debts contracted in good faith , which through no

fault of theirs they are subsequently unable to redeem.” Therefore, an added condition is that the man may not have entered into debts because of sinful activities. This is the opinion of Abu Ja`far, Mujahid and Qatadah (Ibn Jarir).

Similarly, those who run into debts because of unnecessary marriage expenses may not be helped out of *Zakah* funds (Shafi`).

121. The introduction of another “fi,” (despite a “fi” and “lam” preceding), seems to emphasize that this category should receive precedence over all others (Zamakhshari, Shafi`).

Jihad is exclusively “the way of Allah.” So that, the sums may be utilized to equip a Mujahid (if he is not a paid soldier: Hanabilah) heading to the battle front. According to some of the authorities, the rule remains in force even if he is rich, but according to most others if only he is poor. Other categories of “ways of Allah” are not included by implication, such as, propagation work, publications, support of religious studies, or institutions.

122. Just about any wayfarer is included in this class, even if he happens to be rich, but for the moment cut off from his wealth. This is the

opinion of Mujahid, Zuhri and Dahhak (Ibn Jarir). Indeed, a destitute starter might also be paid out of *Zakah* funds (Ibn Kathir).

123. There can be no addition or deletion to these eight categories. The Prophet has said, “Allah did not wish anyone’s say, neither of a close angel, nor of a Messenger sent, in the distribution of *Zakah* funds. He did it Himself” (Razi).

In another context Qurtubi quotes this *hadith* from Abu Da’ud in full. It says that a man went to the Prophet asking to be helped. The Prophet told him,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَرْضَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ بِكُمْ نَبِيٌّ وَلَا غَيْرُهُ
حَتَّى جَعَلَهَا ثَمَانِيَةَ أَجْزَاءَ ، فَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْهُمْ أَعْطَيْتَكَ
حَقَّكَ

“Allah did not wish anyone’s say, neither of a close angel, nor of a Messenger sent, in the distribution of *Zakah* funds. He did it Himself. Now, if you belong to one of the eight categories, I shall give you.”

Shafi` added: After having determined the categories that could receive *Zakah* funds, Allah commanded His Prophet to specify the rates of *Zakah*. And, the Prophet attached so much importance to the affair that he got *Zakah* rates written down by

`Umar, `Amr b. al-Hazm, and others so that no one could ever have any say in the affair any time in the future.

124. There is not any notable difference in opinion that the one who pays out, or disburses, may spend the *Zakah* amount on anyone of the eight categories that he deems fit (Ibn Jarir).

Fiqh Points:

1. *Zakah* funds are to be spent on Muslims alone. This is in view of the Prophet’s instruction to Mu`adh ibn Jabal that he dictated to him at the time he dispatched him to Yemen. He said then, “You are going to a people who had received the Holy Scriptures earlier. Call them to the testimony that there is no deity save Allah and that I am His Messenger. If they obey you in that, then let them know that Allah has declared obligatory on them five Prayers for every day. If they obey you, then let them know that He has declared obligatory charity that will be taken from their rich and distributed among their poor. If they obey you in that then be careful and avoid taking the best part of their wealth. And fear the supplications of the oppressed. For, there is no barrier between it and Allah.”

2. Although it is preferable to distribute the *Zakah* funds in the area of collection alone, it is allowable to transfer the funds to other areas, if there is no need for it locally or, the need elsewhere is more pressing. Mu`adh ibn Jabal used to send cloth from Yemen to Madinah. In fact, if someone has kinsfolk spread out in other towns, he can transfer his sums to them to gain the double reward promised in the *ahadith*: of joining the kin and paying the *Zakah* (Shafi'). The Hanabilah and Shafe`iyyah have set some additional conditions (Au.).

3. If a man has wealth overseas, he is still required to spend the *Zakah* in his own town.

4. Although some differences prevail, one opinion is that *Zakah* can be collected both in cash as well as in kind. For instance, it would do if someone gave the value of goats due in currency (Qurtubi). The Hanabilah are notably in disagreement with this (Au.).

5. However, as Imām Abu Hanifah has pointed out, if cash is due, then simply any kind is not acceptable. For instance, if an amount of 10 is due, a man cannot let a poor man live in his house and adjust the rent (Qurtubi).

6. If someone gave away *Zakah* funds in good intention but discovered to his surprise that the man was undeserving, *Zakah* would be considered paid (Qurtubi). But some fuqaha' have said that the man must make an effort to recover the amount from the undeserving person (Au.).

7. The kinsfolk of the Prophet the Hashimites are not eligible to receive the *Zakah*, nor even the *sadaqat*. (They are eligible to receive gifts alone). A rare opinion of some of the Hanafiyy scholars however is that a Hashimite can give *Zakah* to another Hashimite.

8. Similarly, a Hashimite can also give a Hashimite *sadaqat*, although they cannot receive from non Hashimites. The above is in view of the fact that `Abbas, `Ali and Fatimah had, in their times, opened trusts (*awqaf*) in favor of some of the Banu Hashim (Qurtubi).

9. *Zakah* money cannot be given to one's husband, wife, children, parents or grand parents, since one is obliged to support them anyway (Shafi').

10. The state can collect *Zakah* funds. However, if it is suspected that the authorities do not spend on right causes, it is suggested that the man should himself hand over to the deserving (Manar).

11. It is not allowed that organizations handling *Zakah* funds, invest the funds in business, and then support one or more of the above categories, out of profits accrued. That is because the “laam” preceding the eight categories is “*laam al tamlik*” (the “*laam*” of possession), and, therefore, carries the implication that the *Zakah* amount should be handed over to a recipient and become his property for it to be deemed paid (Au.).

12. Except for “reconciling the hearts” (*ta’lif al qulub*), *Zakah* funds cannot be spent on non Muslims; they can only receive from *sadaqat* funds. Nor can *Sadaqat* al Fitr be given to them. This is the Hanafiyy position (Shafi’).

13. According to the Hanafiyyah, the cost of those hired to collect and administer *Zakah* can at most run as high as one half of the *Zakah* collected. In simpler words, the cost of hiring the *Zakah* collectors and distributors should not exceed one half of the total *Zakah* collected. If it goes beyond that, then their hiring costs must be reduced.

14. *Zakah* funds once collected by the collectors cannot be saved for a rainy day. They must be distributed as early as possible (Shafi’).

15. By consensus of the four schools of Fiqh, *Zakah* funds cannot be utilized for general welfare purposes, nor for constructing mosques, religious schools, etc. Had these been included in the category called “in the way of Allah,” there was no need to categorize the deserving into eight kinds. The following have dealt with this subject thoroughly in their works: Among the Hanafiyyah, Sarahsi in his “*Al Mabsut*” and “*Sharh Seer*,” among the Shafi’iyyah Abu ‘Ubayd in “*Kitab al Amwal*,” among the Malikiyyah Dardiz in his “*Sharh Mukhtasar al Khalil*,” and among the Hanabilah Muwaffaq (in his “*Al Mughni*”) Shafi’.

16. Without any second opinion, the four Fiqh schools are agreed that *Zakah* funds cannot be invested in business on behalf of the recipients. Rather, they should be first handed over the sums. If the recipients – in full agreement - hand back a whole or part of it for business purposes, after having gained complete possession of the sums, then there can be no objection. Similarly, feeding the poor out of the funds, is also disallowed. The poor must be handed over the sums or commodity for *Zakah* which alone would be considered as the payment of *Zakah* (Shafi’).

[61] And of them there are some who cause pain to the Prophet, and say, 'He is (all) ear.'¹²⁵ Say, 'He is (all) ear for your good.'¹²⁶ He believes in Allah and in (reports of the) faithful and is a mercy unto those of you who have believed. Those who cause pain to the Messenger of Allah, theirs shall be a painful chastisement.¹²⁷

وَمِنْهُمْ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ أُذُنٌ قُلْ أُذُنٌ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَيُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦١﴾

17. When paid to the kinsfolk, it is not necessary that they be told that it is *Zakah* money. They could be led to assume that it is a gift – if such be the need (Shafi`).

18. According to the Malikiyyah, a trustworthy unbeliever if employed as a spy, could also be paid under the head “in the way of Allah” (Al Arba`ah).

19. It would not be right to hand over *Zakah* to atheists or irreligious persons: those that sit in the cafeterias sipping tea and smoking even while Friday Prayers are being held in mosques right in front of the cafeterias. Instead, one may look out for practicing Muslims (Manar).

125. It is reported that some of the hypocrites passed remarks on the Prophet. One of their kind told them not do that out fear that they might be conveyed to him. Jullas b. Suwayd said, “Rather, we shall say what pleases us. If reported to him,

we shall deny on oath, and he will hear because he is ‘all ear’” (Razi).

That is, he listens to everyone’s report, believing in everyone; in other words, gullible (Au.).

126. The translation here follows one opinion. Another understanding is: “The Prophet listens only to the good and not to the evil.” This is the understanding of the majority (Ibn Jarir). A possible interpretation is that the Prophet is a good listener in the sense that he does not pass on all that he hears to others, exposing the hypocrites, and, further, does not open up inquiries to bring out what lies concealed in the hearts, rather, accepts the excuses presented to him in good faith (Zamakhshari).

What the hypocrites meant is that the Prophet ought not to believe in what was being reported of their words and deeds. If he believed in their lies, it was alright (Au.).

[62] They swear by Allah in order to please you,¹²⁸ although Allah and His Messenger have the greater right that they should please him,¹²⁹ if they are (truly) believers.

يَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَكُمْ لِيَرْضَوْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُرْضَوْهُ إِنْ كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٢﴾

Mawdudi elaborates: “The Qur’ānic response to these taunting remarks is an exhaustive one and covers two points: First, the Prophet (peace be upon him) does not pay any attention to reports that are likely to give rise to evil and mischief; he acts only on those reports which bring good to all, the reports which are conducive to the best interests of Islam and Muslims. Second, that the Prophet’s propensity to listen to everybody is in fact in the interests of the hypocrites themselves. For had the Prophet (peace be on him) not been forbearing and cool tempered he would not have listened with patience to their false professions to faith, to their specious protestations of goodwill, to their lame excuses to justify their shying away from fighting in the way of God. Had he been otherwise, the Prophet (peace be on him) would have dealt severely with the hypocrites and would have made their life in Madinah extremely difficult. In short, the hypocrites have every reason to be thankful for this trait in the Prophet’s character.”

127. Some scholars have said that just as causing pain to the Prophet (*saws*) in his life time was tantamount to disbelief, it is the same even after his death, so that, one could not marry one of his wives after him. Another example is to speak harshly of his parents, since that would have caused him pain if he was alive although, this latter act would not be considered equal to disbelief, rather, only a sinful act. Nevertheless, this should not be taken too far to say, for instance, that whoever caused pain to one of his kinsfolk, caused pain to him (Manar).

128. It is reported that one of the hypocrites said, “By God, these (that is, hypocrites of his sort) are the most honorable of us. If what Muhammad says is true then surely, these are worse than donkeys.” A Muslim who heard him retorted in anger, “Rather you are worse than a donkey,” and then reported the words to the Prophet. But when the Prophet summoned the man he denied that he had said any such thing. He swore on God and began to curse. The

[63] Have they not learnt that whoever opposes Allah and His Messenger, shall have the Fire of Hell (as abode), abiding therein forever? That surely is the supreme disgrace.

أَمْ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ مَن يُحَادِدِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَأَنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا ذَلِكَ الْحَزْبُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٦٣﴾

[64] The hypocrites are fearful lest a chapter should be revealed against them, informing them what is in their hearts.¹³⁰ Say, 'Mock on. Allah is about to expose what you fear.'¹³¹

يَخَذَرُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ أَن نَّمُرَّ بِعَلَيْهِمْ سُورَةً تَسْبِيحُهُمْ بِمَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ قُلِ اسْتَهْزِئُوا إِنَّا اللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا تَخَذِرُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

[65] Should you question them, they will surely say, 'We were merely indulging (in idle talk)¹³² and jesting.'¹³³ Say, 'Were you mocking at Allah, His revelations and His Messenger?'¹³⁴

وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ قُلْ أَبِاللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

Muslim said, "O Allah, expose the liar and the truthful." In response Allah sent down this verse (Ibn Jarir).

Prophet is to please Allah, especially when the previous verse speaks of the hypocrites displeasing him.

129. The singular pronoun here (in place of the dual) is for the Prophet and it draws the following comment from Alusi and Rashid Rida: The use of the singular personal pronoun (in "an yurduhu" "that they should please him"), is meant to bring out (in inimitable elliptic form so characteristic of the Qur'an: Asad) the idea that Allah's pleasure is in following His Messenger. (Or, the good pleasure of one of them, was the good pleasure of the other: Zamakhshari). Using the dual pronoun (huma) would not have been right since, it might be thought that one needs to please both, whereas, pleasing the

However, Ibn Jarir believes the personal third person pronoun is for Allah, while Ibn 'Aashour states that both are covered by a single pronoun.

130. Although the hypocrites could not restrain their tongues, they dearly hoped half in seriousness, half in jest that God would not reveal to others what they talked amongst themselves in private.

131. The earliest generation of Muslims used to call this surah "Al Fadihah," i.e., "the Exposer," because it exposed the hypocrites (Tabari).

132. (Although the common meaning of the textual word "khawd" is

to indulge), literally it refers to any stepping into dirt, such as, for instance, stepping into a pool of filthy water (Razi).

133. One of the hypocrites told `Awf b. Malik during the Tabuk expedition, (perhaps imagining that he was one of them), "What's wrong with these (Qur'anic) reciters? They seem to be the most gluttonous, the most lying, and the most chicken hearted when faced with an enemy." `Awf cried out, "You are lying, and you are a hypocrite. I shall report this to the Prophet." However, the Revelation overtook him. That is, it came down before `Awf could report to the Prophet. `Abdullah ibn `Umar says, "I saw the man holding on to the Prophet's camel's side strap, with the stones hurting his feet, pleading, 'We were merely jesting, O Messenger of Allah,' and the Prophet (paying him no attention: Ibn Kathir). He only remarked, 'Were you jesting with Allah, His revelations, and His Messenger?'" (Ibn Jarir).

It might be noticed that the hypocrites mocked the Companions alone; but Allah said, 'Were you jesting with Allah, His revelations, and His Messenger?' This demonstrates the status of the Companions in the sight of Allah (Au.).

134. It is reported by Qatadah that while the Prophet and some of his Companions were passing by a group of hypocrites during the Tabuk expedition one of them remarked: "Do you think this kind of people will be able to conquer the forts and palaces of the Romans? Huh." Allah informed His Messenger about it. He asked them to be presented. When they came, he asked them, "Did you say, such and such a thing?" They swore to God that they were merely jesting (Ibn Kathir).

It should be obvious that jesting is disallowed in religious matters (Razi and Qurtubi).

Qurtubi adds: In fact, there are other issues in which jesting is not allowed. Even if someone did one of them out of jest, it will be considered an act in earnest with the legal binding. For instance, if somebody entered into a marriage and then said he was jesting, it would not be accepted of him. This is in view of the Prophet's *hadith*, reported by several authorities, with varying degree of reliability, that he said:

ثَلَاثٌ لَيْسَ فِيهِنَّ لَعِبٌ النِّكَاحُ وَالطَّلَاقُ وَالْعِتْقُ

"There is no jesting in three things: marriage, divorce and enfranchisement" (Qurtubi).

[66] Do not offer excuses now. You disbelieved after declaring your faith.¹³⁵ Even if We forgive a few of you, We shall punish a few others, because they are criminals.¹³⁶

لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا فَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ إِنَّ نَعْفَ عَنْ طَائِفَةٍ مِّنْكُمْ تُعَذِّبُ طَائِفَةً بِأَتْهُمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

[67] The hypocrites men and women¹³⁷ some of them are of the others:¹³⁸ they enjoin evil, forbid the virtuous, and keep their hands closed.¹³⁹ They forgot Allah¹⁴⁰ so He He has forgotten them. Surely, the hypocrites they are the wicked ones.¹⁴¹

الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ مِّن بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمُنْكَرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَقْبِضُونَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَنَسِيَهُمْ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

135. Explaining this verse `Ikrimah said, “I used to know a man whom I hope Allah will forgive. He used to say, ‘O Allah, I hear a verse that drives fear into the heart. O Lord! Let my death be in Your path in such a way that nobody should say, ‘I washed him. I wrapped him in the shroud, I buried him.’ The man fell on the Day of Yamamah (battle) and every fallen Muslim’s body was found but his (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

presses the doctrine that in His final judgement God will take into account all that is in a sinner’s heart, and will not indiscriminately condemn everyone who has been sinning out of weakness or out of an inner inability to resolve his doubts, and not out of a conscious inclination to evil.”

Perhaps what `Ikrimah meant was that it was one of those hypocrites who passed remarks against the Prophet but repented later and sought to die unknown. Some reports identify this person as Makhshiyy b. Himyar (Au.).

While the above is worth noting, Yusuf Ali has another explanation: “Hypocrisy is a half way house, a state of indecision in the choice between good and evil. Those who definitely range themselves with good obtain forgiveness; those who pass definitely to evil suffer the penalties of evil.”

136. Asad adds a useful point here: “The above Qur’anic sentence ex-

137. The two unbelieving men and women have been separately mentioned in order to register the message that the female hypocrites were

no better than male hypocrites, but rather, possessed the same qualities (Razi).

That the female hypocrites were separately addressed is a sign of Allah's mercy. In contrast to the male hypocrites who were occasionally named by their acquaintances, nobody knew of the female ones, nor did anyone ever speak of them. If Allah had not spoken of them, nobody would have even suspected, including themselves, that hypocrisy existed among them also. But Allah did not deny them His warning and admonition (Au.).

138. The translation is literal. But commentators such as Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir have understood the words to mean 'they are similar to each other,' i.e., they are alike in their attitudes towards truth and falsehood. And, in explanation of the article "min" (of), Alusi says that the sentence is of the same order as the Prophet's words to `Ali:

أَنْتَ مَعِيَ بِمَنْزِلَةِ هَارُونَ مِنْ مُوسَى

"You are unto me (anta minni) like what Harun was to Musa."

That is, when the Prophet (*saws*) said anta minni, (lit. you are 'of' me), he meant, 'you are unto me' (Au.).

Sayyid writes: "The hypocrites men and women are from one soil and are of one nature .. in every place and in every epoch. Their deeds and words might differ but it all amounts to the same, and spring out from the same springs. They are of evil designs, mean guiles, full of jibes, intrigues, afraid to look straight into the eyes, and fearful of openness. These are their unfailing signs. As for their deeds, they forbid the good and bid the evil, niggardly of wealth unless they be spending in order to put up a show .. They have completely forgotten Allah and, therefore, are concerned about nothing except material advantages."

139. Since opening the hands means to be very liberal, its opposite, closing them means to be parsimonious. That is, the hypocrites do not spend anything in the right cause (Alusi and others).

140. Since a man cannot forget God, the obvious implication is that they ignored to act by His commandments. And He in turn denied them His mercy (Razi).

141. The textual word is "fasiq" and the meaning is, they are perfect in fisq. The use of this word in such a strong manner to describe the hypocrites, should be a warning to those

[68] Allah has promised the hypocrites, men and women, and the unbelievers Fire of Jahannum, abiding therein forever. Sufficient it is for them.¹⁴² Allah has cursed them;¹⁴³ and for them is an abiding punishment.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْكُفَّارَ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا هِيَ حَسْبُهُمْ وَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ وَعَذَابٌ مُّهِيمٌ ﴿٦٨﴾

[69] Like those before you: they were mightier than you in power and more abundant of wealth and offspring. They enjoyed to their full their share, as you have enjoyed your share, exactly as those who were before you enjoying their share.¹⁴⁴ You have also indulged (in wrongs) as they indulged. Those their works failed in this world and the next; those it is they who are the losers.

كَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْكُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَكْثَرَ أَمْوَالًا وَأَوْلَادًا فَاسْتَمْتَعُوا بِخَلْقِهِمْ فَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِخَلْقِكُمْ كَمَا اسْتَمْتَعَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ بِخَلْقِهِمْ وَخُضْتُمْ كَالَّذِي خَاضُوا أُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

of the believers whose life style evokes the same criticism from the tongues of the believers (from Zamakhshari with some addition).

Asad offers the rejoinder, “It is to be borne in mind that this and the following verses refer to the conscious hypocrites spoken of in the last sentence of the preceding verse, and not to the waverers, whose hypocrisy is an outcome of inner fears and uncertainties.”

142. That is, it is enough of a chastisement, to which nothing need be added for severity (Alusi and others).

143. Yusuf Ali explains the meaning of Allah’s curse: “Curse, here as elsewhere, is deprivation of grace and

mercy, brought about by the rejection of Allah by the Unbelievers.”

144. The repetition of the words, “you enjoyed,” “they enjoyed,” confuse some people. The commentators, such as Zamakhshari, have explained that it is like telling someone: ‘You are like Fir`awn. He used to do this and that, etc. You also do like he used to do. So, you are like Fir`awn in doing things that he did.’

145. “The reference to “Abraham’s people” seems to point to the Babylonians, who rejected the monotheism preached by him, and to the overthrow of their first empire, at about 1100 B.C., by the Assyrians” (Asad).

[70] Has not the news of the past peoples reached them: the people of Nuh, `Ad, Thamud, the people of Ibrahim,¹⁴⁵ the men of Madyan,¹⁴⁶ and those (towns) that were turned upside down?¹⁴⁷ Their Messengers went to them with clear signs. Allah was not such as to wrong them, rather they were wronging themselves.¹⁴⁸

أَلَمْ يَأْتِهِمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَقَوْمِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَأَصْحَابِ مَدْيَنَ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَاتِ أَتَتْهُمُ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا لِيُظْلَمَهُمْ وَلَكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

146. The reference is to the people of Shu`ayb.

147. The allusion is to the people of Lut. They dwelt in three towns which were turned upside down when they denied their Messenger and continued with their evil ways (Tabari and others).

148. That is, if they were destroyed it was because they had committed wrongs despite warnings conveyed to them by their messengers. They were given every opportunity to choose the right course, but they scoffed at them and insisted on doing things their way. The destruction that followed, in the form of various calamities, was in consequence of their repeated wrong choices. They were not destroyed, as the secularist historians portray, for no fault of theirs (Au.).

Sayyid comments: "A deviated soul is encouraged to recklessness by power and, therefore, does not re-

spond to reminders. It is blinded by the material welfare and so, does not see. Stories of the past and admonitory sentences do not benefit it. That cannot happen unless someone were to open his eyes to realize that the ways of Allah (*Sunnatu Allah*) do not alter over time, are not suspended, and do not spare any of the nations. But, most of those whom Allah tries with power and wealth are blinded by them. They cannot see the end of the powerful that went before them nor do they observe the fate of the rebellions. When they persist in denial, then Allah's *Sunnah* takes over. It is then that Allah seizes them the seizing of the Powerful, the All capable, the while they are in their enjoyments and gloating over their power. But in the meanwhile Allah is circumscribing them from their rear. It is nothing but heedlessness, blindness, and ignorance that we see as characteristics of the rich and the

[71] The believers men and women they are patrons unto each other.¹⁴⁹ They enjoin the virtuous, forbid evil, Pray, pay the alms¹⁵⁰ and obey Allah and His Messenger.¹⁵¹ These Allah will show them mercy. Surely, Allah is All mighty, All wise.

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيَطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾

powerful. And we see them in every place, in every epoch, save for a few to whom Allah showed mercy.”

149. Imām Razi raises the question. Why did Allah say about the hypocrites that ‘some of them are of the others,’ whereas He said about the believers that they are believing men and women, awliya’ unto each other (and not some of them of others)? Then he answers that the hypocrites were a people who followed the example of hypocritical men of the past. So they were of them. In contrast, the believers used the faculty of the intellect provided to them to decide between right and wrong, and, as a reward, were made awliya’ unto each other.

On the topic of the believers being awliya’ unto each other, a few of the Prophet’s traditions can be quoted here. He said in a *hadīth* (of Bukhari: Hussain),

المؤمن للمؤمن كالبنیان يشد بعضه بعضا

“(The example of) a believer as related to another is like a wall, some of which strengthens the others” then he inserted the fingers of one hand into the other to demonstrate.

In another *hadīth*, (also of Bukhari: Hussain) he said,

مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادِّهِمْ وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ وَتَرَاحُمِهِمْ مَثَلُ الْجَسَدِ إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ عُضْوٌ تَدَاعَى سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ بِالسَّهْرِ وَالْحُمَى

“The example of the believers in their love, tenderness, and kindness toward each other is like a body. When one of its limbs feels pain the whole of the body responds to it with fever and sleeplessness” (Ibn Kathir).

150. Thus, the believers are endowed with qualities that are the opposite of the qualities of hypocrites: against the hypocrites enjoining evil, they enjoin virtue; against the hypocrites forbidding virtue, they forbid evil; against their heedlessness to Allah,

[72] Allah has promised the believing men and believing women¹⁵² gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever,¹⁵³ and dwellings pleasant in the Gardens of Eden.¹⁵⁴ But the Good Pleasure of Allah is the greatest (of blessings).¹⁵⁵ That indeed is the great triumph.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
وَمَسَاكِينَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ وَرِضْوَانٌ
مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ
﴿٧٢﴾

the believers perform the Prayers; and against their withholding of the wealth, the believers expend in charities. Finally, while the believers obey Allah in all matters, the hypocrites are always sinning, the fasiqun (Au.).

151. Mawdudi comments: “The Muslims and hypocrites stood apart, each a separate entity. Superficially they seemed identical insofar as both groups recognized Islam as their religion and outwardly followed the same set of religious practices. Nevertheless, they differed in character, temperament, behaviour, and habits; in short, in their total orientation. In the case of the hypocrites, faith was a mere verbal claim devoid of true conviction. This claim was repudiated by their life style. Their case is similar to that of a man who fills up a container with filth, and labels it perfume; a claim which will instantly be known to be false by the stench it gives off.

“In the case of the true believers, their claim can be verified by reference to their character and conduct. The label of perfume is justified by the sweet smell. The hypocrites and true believers passed off as members of the same Muslim community due to the label of Islam. Nevertheless, the characteristics of the two were so different that they could not be considered one community. The hypocrites, by dint of their heedlessness to God, their instinctive interest in evil, their revulsion against goodness, their unwillingness to co operate with good causes, were a community by themselves. On the other hand, the true believers men and women constituted a distinct community because they shared many traits.”

152. To mention believing women separately is to impress that in Islam both men and women are treated equal in rewards (Manar).

153. Ibn Kathir quotes several *ahadith* that describe Paradise. The Prophet (*saws*) said,

إن للمؤمن في الجنة خيمة من لؤلؤة واحدة مجوفة طولها ستون ميلاً في السماء! للمؤمن فيها أهلون يطوف عليهم لا يرى بعضهم بعضاً

“For the believer there will be a tent in Paradise made up of a single hollow pearl of length sixty miles in the heavens. There will be spouses for him whom he will visit, but they wo not be seeing each other” (*Sahihayn*).

In another *hadith* of the *Sahihayn* he said:

مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَصَامَ رَمَضَانَ كَانَ حَقًّا عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يُدْخِلَهُ بَعْضَ الْجَنَّةِ هَاجِرًا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ مَاتَ فِي أَرْضِهِ الَّتِي وُلِدَ فِيهَا «. قَالُوا : يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تُبَيِّنُ النَّاسَ بِذَلِكَ قَالَ : « إِنَّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ مِائَةَ دَرَجَةٍ مَا بَيْنَ كُلِّ دَرَجَتَيْنِ كَمَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَعَدَّهَا اللَّهُ لِلْمُجَاهِدِينَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ فَسَلُّوهُ الْفَرْدَوْسَ فَإِنَّهُ وَسْطُ الْجَنَّةِ وَأَعْلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَمِنْهُ تَجَعَّرَ أَشْهُارُ الْجَنَّةِ وَفَوْقَهُ عَرْشُ الرَّحْمَنِ

“Whosoever believed in Allah and His Messenger, Prayed and fasted in Ramadan, it is binding on Allah that He admit him into Paradise, whether he migrated in the way of Allah or was restricted to the land he was born in.” The people asked, “Messenger of Allah. Should we not inform the people?” He said, “There are a hundred levels of Paradise that Allah has prepared for the

mujahidin in His cause. Between each level is the distance like between the earth and the heavens. So, when you supplicate, supplicate for Firdaws Paradise. It is the highest of Paradises and is in the best part of them. From here spring forth the rivers of Paradise and above it is `Arsh of the All-merciful.”

In another *hadith*, also of the *Sahihayn* he said,

إِنَّ أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ لَيَرَوْنَ الْعُرْفَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ كَمَا تَرَوْنَ الْكَوْكَبَ فِي السَّمَاءِ

“The inhabitants of Paradise will see each other’s chambers as you see stars in the heavens.”

In another *hadith* of Ahmad reported by Abu Hurayrah he said in answer to how Paradise was constructed:

لَبِنَةٌ ذَهَبٍ وَلَبِنَةٌ فِضَّةٍ وَمِلَاطُهَا الْمِسْكَ الْأَذْفَرُ وَحَصْبَاؤُهَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْيَاقُوتُ وَثَرَابُهَا الرَّعْفَرَانُ مَنْ يَدْخُلُهَا يَنْعَمُ وَلَا يَبْئَسُ وَيَخْلُدُ وَلَا يَمُوتُ لَا تَبْلَى ثِيَابُهُ وَلَا يَفْئَى شَبَابُهُ

“A brick of gold over a brick of silver cemented with misk and gravel of white and red pearls and plaster of saffron. Whoever entered will be in bliss, never wretched, eternal, and never dying. His clothes will never get worn and his youth will never slip into old age.”

The *hadith* has been evaluated as *Sahih* by Arna'ut (Au.).

154. In explanation of what is 'Adn (Eden), opinions among the Salaf varied between a place of permanent habitation, a place completely unknown and unimaginable to the humans, a lush green garden, a place in the center of Paradise, a very special palace, a city with a river around on the two banks of which is Paradise (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir quotes a *hadith* of Bukhari and Muslim. The Prophet said,

جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ فَضَّةٍ أَيْبُهُمَا وَمَا فِيهِمَا وَجَنَّاتٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ
أَيْبُهُمَا وَمَا فِيهِمَا وَمَا بَيْنَ الْقَوْمِ وَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى
رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا رِذَاءُ الْكَبِيرِ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ فِي جَنَّةٍ عَدْنٍ

“Two gardens with all dishes and goblets and what they contain in silver. And two gardens with dishes and goblets and what they contain in gold. And, there will be nothing between the people and the sight of their Lord but the Veil of Greatness on His face in the Garden of Eden.”

155. In explanation of this verse, the following may be quoted. Abu Sa'id al Khudri reports the Prophet:

يَا أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ فَيَقُولُونَ لَبَّيْكَ رَبَّنَا وَسَعْدَيْكَ فَيَقُولُ
هَلْ رَضِيْتُمْ فَيَقُولُونَ وَمَا لَنَا لَا تَرْضَى وَقَدْ أَعْطَيْتَنَا
مَا لَمْ نَعْطِ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ فَيَقُولُ أَنَا أُعْطِيكُمْ
أَفْضَلَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ قَالُوا يَا رَبِّ وَأَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ
ذَلِكَ فَيَقُولُ أَحِلُّ عَلَيْكُمْ رِضْوَانِي فَلَا أَسْخَطُ عَلَيْكُمْ
بَعْدَهُ أَبَدًا

“Allah will address the inhabitants of Paradise with these words, ‘O people of Paradise.’ They will answer, ‘Here we are O our Lord, at Your service.’ He will ask, ‘Are you satisfied?’ They will answer, ‘Why should we not be satisfied when You have given us what You did not give any of Your creation?’ He will say, ‘I shall give something better than that.’ They will ask, ‘What could be better than this?’ He will reply, ‘My good pleasure, so that I shall never be angry at you again’” (Ibn Jarir, Razi).

The *hadith* is in Bukhari (Hussain).

[73] O Prophet! Fight against the unbelievers and hypocrites,¹⁵⁶ and be tough with them.¹⁵⁷ Their abode is Jahannum a wretched destination.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ
وَأَعْلِظْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَيَسَّنْ
الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٧٣﴾

156. Ibn `Abbas has said: (The Prophet was required to) fight against the unbelievers with sword and against the hypocrites with words (Ibn Jarir).

`Ali (ra) has said that the Prophet was sent with four swords. A sword against the pagans. Allah said (9: 5):

فَإِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرْمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ [التوبة : ٥ :

'So, when the Sacred Months have passed, slaughter the associators (with Allah).'

A sword against the people of the Book. He said (9: 29):

فَاتْلُوا 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 nor in the Last Day, nor do they treat unlawful what Allah has declared unlawful, and what His Messenger (has declared unlawful), neither do they adopt the religion of truth of those who were given the Book (earlier) until they pay the tribute out of hand and they are humbled.'

Third, a sword against the hypocrites. He said (9: 73):

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ [التوبة : ٧٣ :

Fight against the (common) unbelievers and the hypocrites.'

Fourth, a sword against the rebellious. He said (49: 9):

فَقَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ [الحجرات : ٩ :

'Fight against the rebelling party until it submits to Allah's commands.'

This means that if the hypocrites openly display their hypocrisy, they may be fought against with sword. Most other scholars believe however that the hypocrites are to be fought with words alone (Ibn Kathir).

The Shi`ah claim that the Ahl al Bayt (People of the House [of the Prophet]) have read the verse to mean: "O Prophet, fight the unbelievers with the help of the hypocrites." (The allusion by the 'hypocrites' is to the Companions, who according to the Shi`ah, were either hypocrites or turned apostates after the death of the Prophet: Au.). After reporting

[74] They swear by Allah that they said no such thing.¹⁵⁸ But, in actual fact, they did say the word of unbelief, disavowed after their surrender, and strived to achieve what they could not.¹⁵⁹ And they took not revenge but (for the fact) that Allah had enriched them by His grace, and (so had) His Messenger.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, if they repent, that will be better for them.¹⁶¹ But if they turn away, Allah will chastise them with a painful chastisement in this world and in the next. And they shall not have in the land a protector or a helper.¹⁶²

يَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ مَا قَالُوا وَلَقَدْ قَالُوا كَلِمَةَ
الْكُفْرِ وَكَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِسْلَامِهِمْ وَهُمْ يُرِيدُونَ
لَمَّا يَسْأَلُونَ وَمَا يَنْتَقِمُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ أَغْنَاهُمُ اللَّهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ فَإِنْ يَتُوبُوا يَكُ خَيْرًا
لَهُمْ وَإِنْ يَتَوَلَّوْا يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ
وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٧٤﴾

[75] And, of them there are some who promised Allah, 'If He bestowed on us of His bounty, we shall expend in charity, and be truly of the righteous.'

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنُ عَاهَدَ اللَّهُ لَئِنْ آتَانَا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
لَنَصَّدَّقَنَّ وَلَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

this lovely commentary, Alusi offers a livelier comment: "No such thing is reported of the Ahl al Bayt, rather they the Shi'ah (who make idols of the Ahl al Bayt) are a Bayt al Kadhib (House of Liars)."

Mufti Shafi` strengthens the above point by quoting a Qur'anic verse (3; 159):

وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَأَقْبَضُوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ [آل
عمران : ١٥٩]

157. Qurtubi points out that acting tough with the hypocrites means, being tough in the application of Islamic laws and rules of conduct. It does not mean misbehaving with them or using uncivilized language. A *hadith* says,

"Had you been (O Prophet) foul of mouth, insensible of heart, surely, they would have dispersed away from you." He then remarks that it is sad to note that what has been prohibited for the unbelievers is a fashion among the believers today.

إِذَا زَنَتْ أَمَةٌ أَحَدِكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنْ زَنَاهَا فَلْيَجْلِدْهَا الْحَدَّ وَلَا
يُمْرَبْ عَلَيْهَا

"If one of your slave girls fornicates, she may be flogged, but do not address her in foul language."

158. Some scholars have said that the reference is to Jullass b. Suwayd. Another opinion is that the allusion is to `Abdullah ibn Ubayy. It is reported that when two Muslims belonging to two different tribes squabbled over

something, he called his henchmen saying, "By God. Muhammad's example is like someone who said, 'Fatten your dog and it will eat you up.'" But when questioned, he denied that he had said any such thing (Ibn Jarir, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

The report is Mursal, a kind of weak narration (Au.).

Tabarani, Abu al Sheikh and Ibn Marduwayh have another report which says that the Prophet was resting under the shade of a tree when he remarked, "A man is about to appear before you who sees with the eyes of Satan. When he comes do not speak to him." It was not too long when a neat and clean person appeared. The Prophet beckoned him to himself. When he came close he asked him, "Why do your friends speak evil of me?" The man turned back and swiftly brought back his companions. They swore that they said nothing about him and prevailed until they extracted his pardon and Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani and others).

The report is in Majma' al Zawa'id with Haythami declaring it trustworthy (Syed Ibrahim).

159. The allusion is to the attempts by the unbelievers and the hypocrites

to assassinate the Prophet (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir reports Hudhayfah b. al Yaman who said in narrations of Ahmad and others, "I was holding the reins of the Prophet's camel (during the Tabuk return journey). Either me or 'Ammar were in the lead. When we were in a narrow pass I encountered some twelve men who tried to scare the camel. The Prophet shouted at them. They dispersed. He asked, "Did you recognize them?" We said, "No, O Messenger of Allah. They had covered themselves. But we could recognize their mounts." He said, "They were hypocrites who will remain so until the Day of Judgment. Do you know what they intended?" We said, "No." He said, "They tried to crowd around the Messenger of Allah and push him down into the gorge" (Shortened).

They were all either from the Yethrib tribe or their allies. Ibn Kathir has picked up the names from Tabarani. They were: Mu'tab b. Bashir, Wadi'ah b. Thabit, Jadd b. 'Abdullah, Harith b. Yezid al Ta'iyy, Aws b. Qayzi, Harith b. Suwayd, Sa'd b. Zurarah, Qays b. Fahd, Suwayd and Da'is of the Banu al Hubla, Qays b. 'Amr, Zayd b. al Lasit and Sulalah b. al Hammam (Manar).

[76] Nevertheless, when He bestowed on them of His bounty, they were niggardly therewith¹⁶³ and went back (on the promise)¹⁶⁴ being averse (to fulfilling it).¹⁶⁵

قَلَمَّا آتَاهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ بَخِلُوا بِهِ وَتَوَلَّوْا
وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾

It is reported of Imām Baqir that he believed 8 of them were from the Quraysh. But the report is not worth looking at. There was not a single Qurayshi among them (Alusi).

The report could be of Shi`ah concoction (Au.).

160. According to Ibn `Abbas, `Urwah and Qatadah, the allusion is to the Prophet's monetary assistance they received in connection with blood wit on behalf of one, or a few of them (Ibn Jarir).

161. It is said that Jullas was one of those who had repented (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi and others).

162. The hypocrites were rich and powerful men of their tribes. Time and again, their tribesmen defended their leaders against any calamity befalling them. Allah informed them that when His chastisement descends they will not find them around for help and protection (Ibn Jarir).

163. Abu Hafs has defined "bukhl" (niggardliness) as "the refusal to give preference to the needs of others in situations of want" (Thanwi).

164. Ibn `Abbas and Umama al Bahiliyy have reported that the verse came down in response to an incident involving Tha`labah b. Hatib al *Ansāri*. He went to the Prophet and requested him to supplicate for his wealth. The Prophet told him, "Little that is thanked for is better than a lot whose burden you cannot bear." But he persisted promising that if enriched he would give everyone his due. Finally the Prophet supplicated for him and his wealth. He reared some goats which began to multiply like insects until Madinah became too constricted for him. He moved out of the town to a valley, coming in only for the `Asr and Zuhr Prayers. But the goats kept on multiplying in numbers until he gave up coming to the mosque except for Friday Prayers. Finally, he stopped showing up for Friday Prayers also. The Prophet enquired about him and was told that the man seemed to be busy with his goats. Then he sent two men to collect *Zakah* from him and another man of Banu Sulaym. When Tha`labah read the Prophet's letter, he remarked, "I can not see a

difference between this and *Jizyah* (tribute). This is *Jizyah's* sister. I do not know what this is." Then he added, "Alright. Pass by me on your way back."

When the Sulaym man read the letter, he chose the best of his camels. But the Prophet's envoy refused to accept on the grounds that the Prophet had forbidden that the best of the people's wealth be accepted as *Zakah*. But the man insisted saying that he was offering it willingly. On their way back they stopped at Tha`labah's place. He told them, "Let's see that letter again." Then, looking into it he remarked, "I do not think this is any different from *Jizyah*. Why do not you go back now and allow me time to think?" So they left him and reported to the Prophet; and Allah revealed this verse in response. Some scholars have thought that two men were involved: one Tha`labah and the other Mu`tab b. Qushayr (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir adds: A relative of Tha`labah informed him about the revelation of this verse. He hurried up to the Prophet offering his *Zakah*. The Prophet told him that Allah had ordered him not to accept his charity. Tha`labah began to weep, threw dust on his head and returned. Dur-

ing Abu Bakr's caliphate he went to him offering *Zakah*. Abu Bakr told him that he was not going to accept it from someone from whom the Prophet had not accepted. `Umar and `Uthman during whose reign he died also refused to accept his *Zakah*.

Qurtubi writes that Tha`labah b. Hatib was one of those who had participated in the Badr battle. Therefore, there is something wrong with the report. He narrates Ibn `Abbas as of opinion that the person involved was Hatib b. Balta`ah. Imām Razi uses both the names Hatib b. Balta`ah as well as Tha`labah, which speaks of the confusion over the identity of the person. Rashid Rida also wonders how a man who wept when told that his charity was not acceptable could be regarded as a hypocrite. (Unable to recall the details now, this writer remembers having read a well researched article a long time back proving that there was a mix up in names - if there were not two Tha`labahs). Moreover, although Tha`laba's incident is widely quoted by the commentators, S. Ibrahim notes that the report has been declared "very weak" by Haythami in his "Majma` al Zawa'id." Finally, the plural form suggests that

[77] So, as a consequence He placed hypocrisy in their hearts (to last) until the Day they meet Him for that they failed Allah in what they promised Him and for that they were lying.¹⁶⁶

فَأَعْتَبَهُمْ نِفَاقًا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ يَلْقَوْنَهُ
بِمَا أَخْلَفُوا اللَّهَ مَا وَعَدُوهُ وَبِمَا كَانُوا
يَكْذِبُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

there were a few other men who went back on their promise (Au.).

Abu al Sheikh has reported that the verse actually came down concerning one of the *Ansār* who promised Allah that if he was bestowed wealth he would give everyone his due. It should so happen that a rich cousin of his died, leaving his entire wealth to him. But the man went back on his promise and began to act parsimoniously (Shawkani).

165. The allusion by the term *sadaqah* as used above is not to *Zakah* since Allah added that the man acted niggardly (bukhl); and the term bukhl becomes applicable when one does not spend what is obligatory on him (Razi).

166. Asad comments on the reasons that give birth to hypocrisy: "Thus, the Qur'an states that it is excessive love of worldly possessions which gives rise, in certain type of man, to the attitude of mind described as "hypocrisy" and not vice versa."

Ibn Jarir points out that the verse gives us two signs of hypocrisy: ly-

ing and turning back on promises. (*Ahadith* count a few more). A *hadith* reported by `Abdullah ibn `Umar and Muhammad b. Ka`b al Qurazi says:

آيَةُ الْمُنَافِقِ ثَلَاثٌ إِذَا حَدَّثَ كَذَبَ وَإِذَا أُؤْتِيَ حَانَ
وَإِذَا وَعَدَ أَخْلَفَ

"The marks of a hypocrite are threefold: when he speaks, he lies; when he promises, he breaks his promise; and when he is trusted, he betrays." (The *hadith* is in Bukhari also: Hussain).

Another version reported by Hasan adds the words:

وَإِنْ صَامَ وَصَلَّى وَرَعِمَ أَنَّهُ مُسْلِمٌ

"Even if such a man Prayed and fasted."

It is reported of `Amr b. Wa'il that when his death approached he said, "So and so had asked me for my daughter's hand. I had told him something about her going through the waiting period. (A device he concocted for refusal: Au.). But, by Allah, I shall not meet with Allah as "one third hypocrite." Be witness

that I give my daughter in marriage to the man.” In fact, some people have included one’s intentions in the application of the term “promise.” Sulayman al Taymi says that he traveled by sea. “They were struck by a storm and everybody vowed something or the other. I did not say a word but vowed to myself without uttering it. When I returned, I asked Abu Sulayman his opinion.” He said, “You better act according to your intention.”

When Sa`id b. Thabit was asked about such situations as when people promise something without spelling it out, he recited the verse (78), “Do they not know that Allah knows their secret (thoughts) and what they conspire together, and that Allah knows well the Unseen?”

Razi however maintains that so long as one has not spoken out his intention, he is not bound to fulfill it. The verse under discussion refers to what the particular man had spoken out (and not simply intended). A *hadith* says,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَاوَزَ عَنِ أُمَّتِي مَا حَدَّثْتُ بِهِ أَنْفُسَهَا مَا لَمْ
تَعْمَلَنَّ أَوْ تَتَكَلَّمَنَّ

“Allah has forgiven my *Ummah* what the inner self considers so long as one does not do it or speak about it.”

(In view of this *hadith*, Qatada’s opinion as in Bukhari with regard to divorce was that it does not come into effect if someone merely intended it Au.).

As regards the application of hypocrisy to someone who possesses one or more of the qualities stated in the *ahadith*, Hasan al Busri’s opinion was that anyone afflicted with any of the three traits is surely a hypocrite. But Wasil b. `Ata reports that someone went up to him and asked, “Allah has narrated to us the story of Ya`qub’s sons. They lied, gave the word but broke it, were trusted and failed in the trust. Were they hypocrites?” Hasan had no reply.

Probably Hasan could not think of an immediate reply. But the scholars have explained that when these things are committed habitually, they point to hypocrisy (Au.).

[78] Do they not know that Allah knows their secret (thoughts) and what they whisper (to each other),¹⁶⁷ and that Allah is the Knower of the Unseen?

أَمْ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ ﴿٧٨﴾

[79] Those who find fault with such of the believers who give freely in charity, as well as with those who do not find but their paltry saving.¹⁶⁸ They ridicule them.¹⁶⁹ Allah ridicules them; and for them is a painful chastisement.¹⁷⁰

الَّذِينَ يَلْمِزُونَ الْمُطَّوِّعِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ إِلَّا
جُهْدَهُمْ فَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ سَخِرَ اللَّهُ
مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٩﴾

167. Both the words “sirr” and “naja” of the text have the connotation of secrecy but the former is applied to thoughts and ideas that one conceals in his heart, while the latter to that which is secretly shared with others (Razi).

168. The word “juhd” refers to a trifle amount, being the utmost that one can manage to offer (Rashid Rida).

169. Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah, Ibn Is haq and others have said that once `Abdul Rahman b. `Awf brought in 40 Awqiyah of gold as charity while another person brought in a small measure (of grain). The hypocrites remarked, “By God. `Abdul Rahman did not intend anything but to make a show of charity. As for the other man, surely, Allah and His Messenger do not stand in need of his paltry contribution.” Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Bukhari has a similar report without naming the persons and without stating their charitable amounts (Au.).

Another report says that once the Prophet appealed for charity, a punitive black man, ugly of appearance, came up riding a beautiful camel to offer his charity. One of the hypocrites remarked in a low voice: “His camel is better than he.” The Prophet heard him and said angrily, “Rather, he is better than the camel and better than you,” and this verse came down (Ibn Kathir and others).

Imām Razi points out that what the hypocrites failed to realize was that the worth of charity is not in the amount of it. The rewards depend on sincerity and the situation of the person concerned. He might himself have been in great need of the little that he spent, but he spent it seeking Allah’s good pleasure. Or, the little

[80] Whether you seek forgiveness for them (O Prophet) or do not seek forgiveness (it is all the same) even if you sought forgiveness for them seventy times, Allah will not forgive them.¹⁷¹ That because they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger, and (because) Allah does not guide an ungodly people.

اسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ أَوْ لَا تَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ إِنْ تَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً فَلَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

that he donated, might be all that he possessed. Should it earn the same reward as that charity which was large but only one half of what one possessed? The former demonstrates the donor's total self control, and complete trust in Allah Most High.

170. Asad has a point: "The above verse, however, does not allude merely to these historical incidents but serves to illustrate the mentality of the hypocrite whose own sincerity colors his view of all other people."

171. It is said that `Abdullah ibn Ubayy used to say to his friends, "If you stopped spending on Muhammad and the men around him, they will abandon him and disperse." When he died, his son came requesting the Prophet to attend his burial. He also asked him for his shirt. The Prophet gave him his shirt and attended his funeral service, Praying over him despite `Umar's protest (as in Bukhari, Tirmidhi and others: Shawkani), and then stood near his

grave for a while. In fact, according to some reports (in Muslim: Rashid Rida) the corpse was placed in the pit when the Prophet arrived. So he got his body out, applied his saliva to him, and then let him be buried. (This part is in Bukhari and Muslim, with some modifications: Husain). So Allah revealed, "Whether you seek forgiveness for them (O Prophet) or did not seek forgiveness (it is all the same) even if you sought forgiveness for them seventy times, Allah will not forgive them." The Prophet said, "In that case I shall seek forgiveness for them more than seventy times." So Allah added (9: 80), "It is the same for them whether you seek forgiveness for them or do not seek forgiveness for them. Allah will never forgive them."

Some other reports add that Ibn `Ubayy himself had sent for the Prophet from his death bed. When the Prophet entered he said, "Love of the Jews destroyed you." Ibn `Ubayy replied, "Prophet of Allah, I have not

called you in to reproach me. I wish you could seek forgiveness for me.”

Yet other reports say that after his burial the Prophet said, “Neither my shirt nor my Prayers will do him any good with Allah. I did all that hoping to win over a thousand of his tribesmen.” And, in fact, moved by this gesture, a thousand of his tribesmen are reported to have embraced Islam (Ibn Jarir and others).

The fuller version in Bukhari is as follows:

لَمَّا تَوَيَّعَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي جَاءَ ابْنُهُ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَسَأَلَهُ أَنْ يُعْطِيَهُ فَمِيصَّةً يُكْفِنُ فِيهِ أَبَاهُ فَأَعْطَاهُ ثُمَّ سَأَلَهُ أَنْ يُصَلِّيَ عَلَيْهِ فَقَامَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِيُصَلِّيَ عَلَيْهِ فَقَامَ عُمَرُ فَأَخَذَ بِتَوْبِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ تُصَلِّيَ عَلَيْهِ وَقَدْ تَهَاكَ رَيْثُكَ أَنْ تُصَلِّيَ عَلَيْهِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِمَّا حَيْرِيَنِ اللَّهُ فَقَالَ {اسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ أَوْ لَا تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ إِنْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً وَسَأَزِيدُهُ عَلَى السَّبْعِينَ قَالَ إِنَّهُ مُنَافِقٌ قَالَ فَصَلَّى عَلَيْهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأْتَرَلَّ اللَّهُ: وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ مَاتَ أَبَدًا وَلَا تَقُمْ عَلَى قَبْرِهِ

When Ibn `Ubay was dead, his son came to the Prophet requesting his shirt to wrap him up with. The Prophet gave it to him. Then he asked that he Pray for him. However, when the Prophet intended to do so, `Umar caught him by his shirt tail and said,

“Messenger of Allah. Will you Pray for him when Allah has prevented you? The Prophet replied, “Allah has given me the choice (by saying, ‘Whether you seek forgiveness for them or do not seek forgiveness for them. Even if you sought forgiveness for them seventy times ...’).’ And I shall supplicate for him over and above seventy times. `Umar said, “He is a hypocrite.” But the Prophet prayed for him and Allah revealed these two verses, ‘And do not Pray for any of them that dies...’ (Shawkani).

Commentary works offer detailed discussions over how the Prophet prayed for the man although everyone knew he was a hypocrite (Au.)? Imām Razi points out that the Prophet gave his shirt when the man was still alive. There was every possibility that putting on the shirt, he would have felt remorse and embraced Islam in sincerity. Further, the Prophet was asked the shirt, so, he had to give it because Allah had instructed him (93: 10), “As for the one who asks, do not repulse him.” Finally, the person who had gone to him with the request was a proven true Muslim (although the son of a hypocrite). The Prophet had to oblige him.

Zamakhshari points out (and Ibn Kathir seconds him) that the Prophet gave Ibn Ubayy his shirt in return of the shirt he had given to `Abbas. When the latter was captured and brought to Madinah, no shirt would fit him because of his size but that of Ibn `Ubayy. It is also reported that once when `Umar intended to attend a funeral Prayer, during his tenure, Hudhayfah b. al Yaman signaled him to stay away.

The standing itself, by the grave, is a proven practice of the Prophet. Abu Da'ud has reported:

كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا فرغ من دفن الميت وقف عليه وقال: "استغفروا لأخيكم واسألوا له التثبيت فإنه الآن يسأل"

"When someone died, the Prophet Prayed for him and stood by the side of the grave for a while. He would say, 'Seek forgiveness for your brother and pray for his steadfastness. At the moment he is being questioned'" (Ibn Kathir).

Zamakhshari raises a question and then answers it. Herewith a slightly modified translation: It is commonly known that the Arabs use the number seventy only to express the

largeness of a number, and not in the literal sense. Was this unknown to the Prophet who was one of the most eloquent of the language? The answer is, the Prophet knew well the exact implication of the word, yet said what he said and did what he did in demonstration of his kindness toward the people. Had not Ibrahim said (14: 36):

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- إِذَا فَرَغَ مِنْ دَفْنِ الْمَيِّتِ وَقَفَ عَلَيْهِ فَقَالَ: اسْتَغْفِرُوا لِأَخِيكُمْ وَسَلُّوا لَهُ التَّحْيِيتَ فَإِنَّهُ الْآنَ يُسْأَلُ

"As for him who disobeyed me, well, You (O Allah) are the Forgiving, the Merciful"?"

In simpler words, the Prophet said he would supplicate more than seventy times and actually offered the Prayer for a hypocrite because he did not wish to give up so long as he saw a streak of light at the end of the tunnel. Ibn Hajr has dealt with the verse in great detail but which still leaves some issues unclear. Ibn `Abbas seems to have preceded others in summing up the issue by saying, as in Zamakhshari, "I do not know what kind of Prayer it was that the Prophet offered for Ibn Ubayy except that I know that a Prophet never acts dishonestly (Au.).

[81] Rejoice those who were left behind¹⁷² at their sitting back behind the Messenger of Allah and hated that they should struggle with their possessions and their selves in Allah's cause. They said, 'Do not venture out in the heat.'¹⁷³ Say, 'The Fire of Hell is hotter.'¹⁷⁴ If only they understood.

فَرِحَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ بِمَقْعَدِهِمْ خِلَافَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَكَرِهُوا أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَالُوا لَا تَنْفِرُوا فِي الْحَرِّ قُلْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ أَشَدُّ حَرًّا لَوْ كَانُوا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

172. Now onward, the Tabuk expedition will be often referred to. It will be in order therefore, to present the background story:

The Tabuk Expedition

It was the 9th year after *Hijrah*. Makkah had fallen. The Prophet (*saws*) was in Madinah when he received the news that the Romans were raising a huge army at Tabuk to launch an attack on Madinah. He decided to take the initiative and ordered preparations for an immediate march to Tabuk. It was not the right time though. The crops in Madinah were near ready for harvest; the Muslims were feeling both the economic as well as the physical strains of previous excursions; and this year's summer was exceptionally hot. But no excuses were acceptable. Every able person was to go. And, as against the normal practice of concealing the intent of an expedition, this time the Prophet publicly announced that he was making for the Romans in Tabuk. The journey was long some

600 km the weather dry, provisions low, and the enemy in great strength.

The Prophet urged his Companions to help out those who intended to go but could not because they lacked means. In response, `Uthman and `Abdul Rahman b. `Awf donated huge sums. Others too brought in what they could.

Hypocrites began to stream in presenting false excuses and requesting permission to be left behind. The Prophet allowed them to stay back. He learnt that the hypocrites were assembling in the house of Suwaylim the Jew keeping men away from joining him in the expedition. He sent Talha b. `Ubaydullah along with a few others, with orders to burn down the house. When his orders were executed, Dahhak b. Khalifa jumped down from the top of the house and broke his leg. His companions rushed out and escaped.

After a hectic preparation lasting a week or so, the Prophet set off with some 30,000 men. Some of the true

believers were slow to make up their minds. Ka`b b. Malik, Murara b. Rabi` and Hilal b. Umayyah were among them. Their Islam was above suspicion, but by the time they could make up their mind, the Prophet and his Companions were far afield.

Having set out, the Prophet pitched his first camp by Thaniyat al Wada`. `Abdullah ibn Ubayy pitched his camp separately below him at a distance. At Madinah, the Prophet had ordered `Ali to remain behind. The hypocrites spoke ill of him saying that he was a burden on the Prophet and that he wanted to get rid of him. So `Ali seized his weapons and hastened to catch up with the Prophet. He informed him of what the hypocrites were saying about him. The Prophet told him, "Are you not content that you stand to me as Harun stood to Musa except that there will be no Prophet after me?" So `Ali returned and the Prophet continued with his march. Abu Khaythumah was also one of those who had delayed his decision. But, when he went to his orchard, after the Prophet had left, he told himself, "Here I am in the cool of the orchard, while the Prophet is out in the sun." Ashamed, he did not even enter the farm house, rather, went straight to his camel, saddled it, picked up his journey

stuff, and hastened at full speed to join up with the Prophet. `Umayr b. Wahb was another late starter. Abu Khaythumah caught up with him on the way yet the two were able to catch up with the Prophet only at Tabuk. When they got close, Abu Khaythumah told `Umayr to tarry behind a while until he had gone and seen the Prophet. As he approached, the Companions drew his attention to a man on the road. The Prophet involuntarily said, "Be it Abu Khaythuma." And so it was.

When they passed by al Hijr the Prophet covered his face with his cloak, urged his camel on and said, "Do not go among the houses of those who sinned (and were destroyed) unless you are riding fast, weeping, for fear that you meet with the same end." Some people collected water from its wells. But he ordered them to empty their pitchers saying, "Do not drink or make ablution with it. If you have made dough with it, feed it to the camels." The men did as they were told. He allowed them water from the well from which Saleh's camel used to drink. He also disallowed that any man venture out alone except with a companion. Two men however disobeyed him and went afield alone. One was choked (although he re-

covered) and another blown away by the winds that dropped him in the mountains of Tayy. Next day when the Companions complained of water, the Prophet prayed for it and the rains came in a heavy downpour. When one of the hypocrites was asked if he still harbored doubts about the Messengership of the Prophet, he replied, "It was a passing cloud."

The hypocrites that had accompanied created several problems on the way. One of them remarked, "Do you think fighting the Romans is like fighting the Arabs? By God I can see ourselves bundled up in ropes tomorrow." When at one point the Prophet's camel strayed away, one of them remarked, "Look at this man. He claims to be a Prophet giving you news of the heavens but he does not even know where his camel is." When informed the Prophet said, "By Allah I know only what Allah tells me. And He has (just now) informed me that it is in such and such a glen of such and such a valley." They went after it and brought it back.

As he advanced, hypocritical men began to drop behind. Whenever the Messenger was told that so and so had dropped behind, he would remark, "Let him. There was no

good in him." Until, when he was told that Abu Dharr had dropped behind, he said the same thing. Actually, Abu Dharr's camel had failed him. So, when he felt that it was no use prodding it up on the road, he dropped the camel behind and began to march on foot. He caught up with the Prophet as he pitched his camp for a halt. When they spotted someone plodding up the desert track, the Prophet said, "Be it Abu Dharr." And when told that it was indeed he, he remarked, "May Allah show him mercy. He walks alone, will die alone and will be raised alone."

The journey proved to be strenuous and they reached Tabuk in 22 days, hungry and thirsty. Sometimes a dozen men chewed a single date in turns. At Tabuk the Prophet addressed them on several occasions. Once he leaned against a tree trunk and said: "Should I not tell you about the best of the people and the worst of the people? The best of the people is he who goes into the way of Allah on the back of his horse, or camel, or on his feet, (and continues) until death overtakes him. And the worst of the people is that audacious man who reads the Qur'an but pays no attention to its demands."

The Romans, impressed by the Prophet's courage, seemed to have dispersed and no fighting took place. Some say that although there had been some movement of the troops, the rumors had gone too far. In any case, the Prophet sent troops to surrounding areas to subdue the tribes. Yuhanna b. Ru`aba submitted and agreed to pay tribute. Khalid b. Walid was dispatched to the governor of Duma, Ukaydar b. `Abdul Malik. He was captured and brought to the Prophet, his golden brocaded gown having preceded him. Some say Ukaydar had sent it as a gift. The Muslims were feeling and admiring it. The Prophet said, "Do you admire this? By Allah Sa`d's (b. Mu`adh) napkin in Paradise is better than this." The Prophet made peace with Ukaydar and released him. He had agreed to pay tribute. A few other tribes also submitted and agreed to pay *Jizyah*.

In another 20 days time the Prophet and his men were back on the same trail, marching home through the same difficult terrain. On the way back they stopped at a place called Mushaqqaq where water was issuing forth from a rock in quantity just enough for two or three riders. The Prophet ordered that none was to draw water from it until he came.

But a number of the hypocrites got there and drew water. When he arrived he found it dry. He asked who had drawn the water, and cursed them when told their names. He dismounted from his camel, sprinkled some water on the rock and prayed until water burst forth. He remarked, "If you lived long enough, you will hear that this valley is more fertile than its neighbors." (A prediction which is reported to have come true: Au.). During the journey a Companion died. `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud reports that I woke up in the middle of the night. I saw light near the camp. I went up to find that the Messenger, Abu Bakr, `Umar and `Abdullah Dhu `l Bijadayn had dug a grave. Abu Bakr and `Umar had lifted the corpse and the Prophet was inside the grave. He was saying, 'Gently. Hand me over your brother.' As he placed him in the niche he said, 'O Allah, I am pleased with him. Be You pleased with him too.' Ibn Mas`ud used to say, 'Would that I had been in the grave.'

Abu Ruhm Kulthum was one of those who had traveled to Tabuk. He reports, "During one of those night journeys, sleep was heavy on me. I only woke up when my mount got too close to the Prophet's. Once my camel jostled against the Prophet's. I

heard a voice, 'Watch out.' I asked his pardon and moved my mount away. He began to ask me about those who had dropped out from Banu Ghifar. I named them. He asked me about the people with long straggling red beards and I told him that they had dropped out too. Then he asked me about men with short curly hair and I confessed that I did not know that they were of us. 'But yes,' he exclaimed, 'they are the ones who own camels in Shabakatu Shadakh.' Then I remembered that they were of the Banu Ghifar, but I did not remember them until I recalled that they were a clan of Aslam who were our allies. When I told him that, he remarked, 'What prevented one of these when he fell out from mounting a camel in the way of Allah? The most painful thing to me is that any of the *Muhajirūn*, *Ansār*, B. Ghifar and Aslam should stay back.'" (There was somebody there who was worried about those who had fallen out, in the middle of the night during that arduous journey: Au.).

It was during one of those night journeys that twelve of the hypocrites tried to bolt off the Prophet's camel so that he might fall down a cliff. He also learned through revelation of the construction of a mosque by disaffected ones for the purpose

of planning mischief against Islam and Muslims. He got it destroyed after his return. When he entered Madinah, he first entered the mosque, offered two rak'ah of prayers before going home. The hypocrites began to stream in seeking to be excused for not having participated. He accepted their excuses.

173. Majid quotes: "The summer is the worst and the hardest season in Arabia. Wells, few as they are, are dried up, even the last vestiges of posture are burnt up, and the intensity of the blazing, scorching sun is ferocious. 'Painful indeed was the distress of the march; lassitude and thirst were aggravated by the scorching and pestilential winds of the desert' (GRE. V.p.372)."

No few words will ever faithfully describe the summer heat of the Arabian Peninsula. Birds drop down dead, the sky is silvery, the land pale, and the spirits broken. To venture into the open even for a few minutes is a voyage postponed for the evening. Nothing moves. Restricted to the shades, the restless body demands nothing but liquids. The inexperienced who stray into the desert are collected dead after a couple of hours. Carpets left in the sun can be collected as dust at the end of the

season. Perhaps the best single sentence describing the heat came from T.E.Lawrence in his Seven Pillars of Wisdom. On arrival at Jeddah he described the first shock in words, “The heat left us speechless” (Au.).

It is reported that when the Prophet urged the Companions to the Tabuk expedition, a man went and told him, “Messenger of Allah. It’s extremely hot. We can not venture out. So, do not go forth.” In response Allah revealed, “Say, the Fire of Hell is hotter” and the Prophet told him to join in (Ibn Jarir). The report is also in Ibn Marduwayh (Shawkani). This of course does not rule out, as pointed out by Rashid Rida, that the hypocrites urged each other to stay back (Au.).

174. Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah and Muhammad b. Ka`b al Qurazi have said that the reference is to the hypocrites sitting back from the Tabuk expedition which took place in mid summer and in conditions of drought (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir notes that the *Sahihayn* have a *hadith* according to which the

Prophet said,

نَارَكُمْ جُزْءٌ مِنْ سَبْعِينَ جُزْءًا مِنْ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ

“Your fire is one seventieth of the Fire of Hell.”

According to another *sahih* report of Tirmidhi and Ahmad he said,

إِنَّ نَارَكُمْ هَذِهِ جُزْءٌ مِنْ سَبْعِينَ جُزْءًا مِنْ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ
وَضُرْبَتْ بِالْبَحْرِ مَرَّتَيْنِ وَلَوْلَا ذَلِكَ مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهَا
مَنْفَعَةً لِأَحَدٍ

“This fire of yours is one seventieth part of the Fire of Hell. Moreover, it has been dipped into the sea twice. If not for that, it would have been of no use to any creature.”

The above is Ahmad’s version (Ahmad).

Another *hadith* (of Muslim: Husain) says,

أَدْنَى أَهْلِ النَّارِ عَذَابًا رَجُلًا يُجْعَلُ لَهُ تَعْلَانِ يَغْلِي
مِنْهُمَا دِمَاغُهُ

“The least punished people of the Hell fire will wear shoes of Fire. That will boil his brain.”

The above is Ahmad’s version (Au.).

[82] Let them, then, laugh a little (now) and weep a lot (later):¹⁷⁵ a recompense for what they were earning.¹⁷⁶

فَلْيَضْحَكُوا قَلِيلًا وَلْيَبْكُوا كَثِيرًا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

175. Abu Razin is widely reported as having said: This life has a short span during which the unbelievers may laugh. But the Hereafter is for ever. There they will cry forever (Ibn Jarir). The Prophet said in a *hadith* preserved by Ibn Majah,

يا أيها الناس ابكوا فإن لم تبكوا فبناكوا فإن أهل النار يبكون حتى تسيل دموعهم في وجوههم كأنها جداول حتى تنقطع الدموع فتسيل الدماء فتقرح العيون, فلو أن سفناً أزرجت فيها لجرت

“People! Cry. And if you cannot cry, make crying faces. The companions of the Fire will cry until they will shed tears of blood running like water in the canals. It will damage their eyes. They’d cry so much that you could sail a boat in their tears” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

The above report has been termed weak (Au.).

In another report of Tirmidhi the Prophet said,

لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ مَا أَعْلَمَ لَصَحَحْتُمْ قَلِيلًا وَلَبَكَيْتُمْ كَثِيرًا وَمَا تَلَدَدْتُمْ بِالنِّسَاءِ عَلَى الْفُرُشِ وَلَخَرَجْتُمْ إِلَى الصُّعَدَاتِ بِخُزَّارُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى

“By Allah, if you knew what I know, you would laugh little and

cry a lot. You would not go into the women in the beds, but would go out into the deserts seeking Allah’s protection.”

The above report was thought as weak by Tirmidhi (Au.).

Therefore, a person like Hasan al Busri never laughed out of the fear of the Hereafter. However, the Companions laughed. It is only the excess that is undesirable. According to a *hadith* excessive laughing deadens the heart (Qurtubi).

176. Sufi Thanwi cautions that the verse does not contain a command to cry as some people have thought. They go to the Shuyukh and complain about themselves “I am not able to cry, try however much I may.” Do they not notice that the verse adds, “a recompense for what they were earning (of the evil deeds)”? That is, they will cry a lot in the Hereafter as a recompense for what they earned in this life. Yes, it is laudable that one cry over the sins of the past, or for other legitimate reasons, but to cry or not is not in the power of man. And what is not in the power of man is not declared obligatory.

[83] If, then, should Allah bring you back to face some of them,¹⁷⁷ and they seek your permission to go forth (in an expedition), say, 'You will never go forth with me (to any expedition) nor will you ever fight an enemy together with me. You were well pleased to sit back on that first occasion.¹⁷⁸ Sit back now with those who sat back.'¹⁷⁹

فَإِنْ رَجَعَكَ اللَّهُ إِلَى طَائِفَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ
فَأَسْتَأْذِنُواكَ لِلْخُرُوجِ فَقُلْ لَنْ تَخْرُجُوا مَعِيَ
أَبَدًا وَلَنْ نُّقَاتِلُوا مَعِيَ عَدُوًّا إِنَّكُمْ رَضِيتُمْ
بِالْمُعُودِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ فَاقْعُدُوا مَعَ الْخَالِفِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

177. At the time of the revelation of this verse, the Prophet was in Tabuk. It was possible that by the time he returned, some of the hypocrites in Madinah would have died. Accordingly, Allah said, "If, then, should Allah bring you face to face with some of them .." (Shabbir).

Another possibility is that they would have absconded, avoiding to see him altogether (Au.).

178. That is, 'since you were well pleased to stay back the first time, surely, even if you are allowed to accompany in the future expeditions, you will again sit back on one pretext or the other. You will never fight an enemy with us. Therefore, it is better that you sit back with those who sit back (i.e. with women)' - Thanwi.

179. As noted by Ibn Jarir earlier, it is also reported of Ibn `Abbas as saying that when the Prophet ordered his Companions to participate in the Tabuk expedition, some people came

to him to say that it was too hot and so he better postpone the journey. In reply Allah revealed, "Say, 'The Fire of hell is hotter.'"

Nevertheless, some people preferred to stay back. Only three of them felt sorry and caught up with him as he was journeying. The rest remained behind to the end. Allah revealed this verse during the journey, "If, then, should Allah take you back to some of them," ... until, "those who stay back" (Ibn Jarir).

Another opinion is that the allusion by the words "those who stay back" is to women, children, old men, the sick and handicapped who were not required to participate in *jihad*. A third opinion is that the textual word "khalifin" has been used in the sense of the pervert, the corrupt or the evil as, for example, the word "khaluf," i.e., foul smell (of the fasting man's mouth) Alusi.

[84] And Pray not ever, over any of them that dies, nor stand by his grave.¹⁸⁰ They disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger and died while they were perversely rebellious.¹⁸¹

وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلَىٰ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّتَّ أَبَدًا وَلَا
تَقُمْ عَلَىٰ قَبْرِهِ إِنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

[85] Let not their wealth and offspring amaze you. Allah wishes to punish them therewith in the life of this world and let their souls depart while they are unbelievers.

وَلَا تَعْجَبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَوْلَادُهُمْ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ
اللَّهُ أَنْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ
أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

180. This is in reference to the Prophet's participation in the burial of `Abdullah ibn Ubayy. After the revelation of this verse the Prophet gave up attending the burial of known hypocrites (Ibn Jarir). Similar reports are in Bukhari and others (Ibn Kathir).

Alusi uses the occasion to discuss the issue of the Prophet's visit to his mother's grave. (How could he do it, knowing that apparently she died on kufr)? He points out that although the verse in question speaks of hypocrites, by analogy it can be extended to the polytheists. It might be said that the visit took place in the year of Hudaybiyyah (6 A.H.) whereas the prohibition came after the expedition of Tabuk (9 A.H.); but, had not the Prophet sought Allah's permission and was granted to visit his mother's grave? So, what does the visit imply? Well, it implies that his mother died believing in Oneness of

Allah. Had she been a polytheist, Allah would not have allowed him to visit her grave. He also points out that although there is difference in opinion over visits to the graves of the unbelievers, he is inclined to believe that it is undesirable to do so. (With due respect to his mother, it might be pointed out however, that the Prophet was not given the permission to seek forgiveness for his mother. The text of the *hadith* is: I sought my Lord's permission to visit my mother's grave and pray for her. He allowed me to visit but did not allow me to pray for her forgiveness: Au.).

Thanwi has another useful note. The Prophet's action of standing near the grave and supplicating for the dead implies that such standing and supplication is profitable to the dead. This is confirmed by the condition added in the later part of the verse, viz., "they disbelieved in Allah and

[86] When a chapter is revealed (enjoining) that 'You should believe in Allah and fight along with His Messenger,' the affluent ones among them seek excuse of you, saying, 'Leave us behind to be with those who sit (back).'

وَإِذَا أَنْزَلَتْ سُورَةٌ أَنْ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَجَاهِدُوا
مَعَ رَسُولِهِ اسْتَأْذَنَكَ أُولَئِكَ الطَّوَلُ مِنْهُمْ
وَقَالُوا ذَرْنَا نَكُنْ مَعَ الْفَاعِلِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

[87] They were well pleased to be with those left behind.¹⁸² A seal is set upon their hearts, therefore, they will not understand (anything).¹⁸³

رَضُوا بِأَنْ يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ وَطُبِعَ
عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾

[88] But the Messenger and the believers with him struggled with their possessions and their selves. For them are the good (returns); and they are the ones that are prospererers.

لَكِنَّ الرَّسُولَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ جَاهَدُوا
بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَيْرَاتُ
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾

[89] Allah has prepared for them gardens underneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever. That is the great success.

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ
﴿٨٩﴾

His Messenger and died while they were perversely rebellious.” (That is, his standing would have profited them, had they not been unbelievers who died in the state of unbelief). The verse also implies that supplicating near the grave for the dead is not just the same as supplicating from anywhere else away from their graves. The former course is more beneficial to the dead.

Thanwi also adds in another note that if visitation to the graves leads to religious corruption, then such visits should be disallowed.

181. It is reported that out of the great many hypocrites of the Proph-

et's time, twelve were to die as hard core hypocrites. They did not repent as most others did. These were the same twelve who had attempted to push him down a ravine during the Tabuk return journey. The Prophet knew their identity and had shared the secret with Hudhayfah b. al Yaman. Accordingly, during his caliphate `Umar watched Hudhayfah if he would participate in the funeral Prayers of a dead person. If he slipped away, `Umar too would not Pray for him (Au).

182. Ibn `Abbas, `Atiyyah, Dahhak and others have said that the reference by the textual word “khawalif”

[90] And those with excuses from among the bedouins¹⁸⁴ came up to you to be permitted (to stay back),¹⁸⁵ while those sat back (without permission) who were false to Allah and His Messenger.¹⁸⁶ Surely, a painful chastisement will strike those of them who disbelieved.¹⁸⁷

وَجَاءَ الْمُعَذِّرُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ لِيُؤْذَنَ لَهُمْ
وَقَعَدَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ سَيُصِيبُ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٩٠﴾

is to women who are not required to participate in *Jihad* (Ibn Jarir).

183. Sayyid writes: “Had those people understood the benefits of *ji-had*, in terms of power, honor, and an honorable living, they would not have showed their backs to it out of weakness, so unmindful of humiliation, and disgraceful destruction. Surely, there is a price to be paid for dishonor as there is a price to be paid for honor. But, most of the time the price of dishonor is more over-burdening than that to be paid for honor. But weak personalities imagine that the price of honor is a back breaking one. They opt for dishonor and ignominy in their effort to escape from the burdensome requirements of honor. In consequence, they live a worthless, cheap life, always fearful, worrisome, scared of their own shadows, and startled by their own echoes. (As the Qur`ān said), ‘They believe every calamity is upon them; you will find them the most greedy of this life..’. These dishonored ones

pay the price for their choice greater than what they would pay for honor. They pay a whole lot of price for their choice. They pay them by way of their shrunk personalities, by way of the loss of values, by way of reputation, by way of peace, and, quite often by way of their lives and property, although they do not realize. Who is it we are talking of? Well, none other than those ‘Who were well pleased to be with those left behind. A seal is set upon their hearts; therefore, they do not understand.’”

184. After speaking of the town hypocrites, Allah now takes up the case of the country hypocrites (Alusi).

185. The understanding of Ibn `Abbas, based on a variant reading, is that the reference by this part of the verse (“The excuse seeking bedouins showed up asking for leave [to stay back]”) is to a few bedouins who had good reasons to be excused from participating in the Tabuk expedition. So, they were excused. The later part of the verse (“and sat back those who

[91] *There is no sin upon the weak,¹⁸⁸ nor upon the sick, neither upon those who do not find anything to spend,¹⁸⁹ so long as they are true to Allah and His Messenger.¹⁹⁰ There is no ground (for punishment) of those who do (things) well,¹⁹¹ and Allah is All-forgiving, All-kind.*

لَيْسَ عَلَى الضَّعَفَاءِ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضَى
وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ مَا يَنْفِقُونَ
حَرْجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ مَا عَلَى
الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ
﴿٩١﴾

were false to Allah and His Messenger”) starting with an “and” is indicative of another meaning derived from the earlier part of the verse. This verse then, is speaking of two kinds of people. Those Bebouins who sought excuse on good grounds, and so were excused, and others who sat back being false to Allah and His Messenger. Another opinion is that the whole verse is speaking of one class of people. But the opinion of Ibn `Abbas seems to be more correct (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

This happens to be the opinion of Zajjaj, Farra’ and Ibn al Anbari also (Shawkani).

Rashid Rida writes: Another possible reading of the term mu`azzirun is mu`zirun (with single ‘z’ those seeking forgiveness). The beauty in the choice of the word is that the two readings together allow for several meanings, covering a wide range of bedouin attitudes. Among them were some who had good reasons to stay back. Others thought they had

good reasons, but actually did not, (they needed to look hard into their situation), since at heart they knew that they did not have a honest reason to stay back. Then there were some who had weak reasons. They knew that investigation could expose the true cause for staying back. And there were others who had no reason whatsoever. They were liars. The readings cover all these kinds of people. This is the power of the Qur`an that no man can imitate.

186. That is, this class of people never showed up. They did not bother to either seek exemption before the expedition, nor offered any excuse thereafter (based on Rashid Rida).

187. Many of those who stayed back became true Muslims later. Hence the addition of the clause “of them” in the verse, viz., “A painful chastisement will strike those of them who remain unbelievers” (Au.).

188. Men of advanced age, women, children and the handicap are covered by the term “weak.”

189. Rashid Rida clarifies a point: The mujahidin are required to bear their own expenses of *Jihad*. Therefore, those who do not find means for the journey, or for the dependents they leave behind, will be excused. However, if the state provides the expenses, then there can be no excuse.

Ibn Kathir, Shawkani and others state a few *ahadith* about those who could not participate because of a good reason. One *hadith* in ibn Abi Hatim (and Abu Da'ud: Qurtubi) says,

لقد خلفتم بالمدينة أقواماً ما أنفقتم من نفقة ولا قطعتم وادياً ولا نلتهم من عدو نبياً إلا وقد شركوكم في الأجر“ ثم قرأ: وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَا اتَّوَكَّلُوا لِيْتَخِمَلَهُمْ قُلْتُ لَا أَجِدُ مَا أُحْمَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ

“You did not spend anything, did not cross a valley, nor did you meet with an enemy, but there are people you have left behind in Madinah who shared the rewards with you.” Then he recited the verse, “Nor is there (any blame) on such of those who came to you for you to mount them. You said to them, ‘I do not find anything to mount you

The *Sahibayn* have a similar narration. It says,

إِنَّ بِالْمَدِينَةِ أَقْوَامًا مَا سِرْتُمْ مَسِيرًا وَلَا قَطَعْتُمْ وَادِيًا إِلَّا كَانُوا مَعَكُمْ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَهُمْ بِالْمَدِينَةِ قَالَ وَهُمْ بِالْمَدِينَةِ حَبَسَهُمُ الْغَدْرُ

“There are people in Madinah who, you did not travel (on plain ground), nor did you cross a valley, but they were with you.” They asked, “Messenger of Allah, while they are in Madinah?” He replied, “(Yes) while they are in Madinah. A good reason held them back.”

190. What is the meaning of the word “nasahu” translated here as being true? Qurtubi notes that “nasihah” implies a deed devoid of any deception. Hence “tawbatu al nasuh” of the Qur’an (66: 8). Naftawayh has said that “nasihah” is sincerity. The Prophet said in a *hadith* of Muslim,

قال: “الَّذِينَ النَّصِيحَةُ”: قُلْنَا لِمَنْ قَالَ: لِلَّهِ وَلِكِتَابِهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِأَيِّمَةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَعَامَّتِهِمْ

“Religion is nasihah,” repeating it three times. They asked, “Nasihah for whom O Messenger of Allah?” He replied, “Nasihah for Allah, His Messenger, His Book, leaders of the ‘mmah and the ordinary Muslims.”

In this *hadith*, nasihah has been used in the sense of sincerity. Scholars

[92] Nor is there (any blame) on such of those who came to you for you to mount them. You said to them, 'I do not find anything to mount you upon,'¹⁹² they turned with their eyes overflowing with tears of grief, because they could not find anything to spend.¹⁹³

وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَا أَتَوْكَ لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ
قُلْتَ لَا أَجِدُ مَا أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ تَوَلَّوْا
وَأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا أَلَّا
يَجِدُوا مَا يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

have explained that “nasihah” for Allah would mean to believe in His Oneness, attributing to Him the Attributes of Lordship and declaring Him free of any defect. It would include hastening up to act according to His commands and avoiding those deeds that evoke His anger. “Nasihah” for Allah’s Book would imply studying, understanding, and living in accordance with it. “Nasihah” for the Messenger requires belief in his Messengership, obedience him in all affairs, loving him and his kinsfolk, befriending his friends and antagonizing his enemies, respecting him and his *Sunnah*, and reviving them after his death. “Nasihah” for the leaders would mean not revolting against them, guiding them to what is right, obeying them, and reminding them about their duties toward the Muslims. And “nasihah” for the Muslims in general would mean to look after their interests, supplicating for them, and loving the pious among them (Qurtubi).

Imām Razi adds that in this particular context, exercising nasihah toward Allah and His Messenger meant that if they opted to stay in the town, in preference of going out to participate in a campaign, they were not to spread mischief, rather attend to the needs of the Mujahidin who left for the front, and serving the families they left behind.

191. Ibn Kathir notes that once Bilal b. Sa’d was leading the Prayers for rain (Salat al Istisqa). He turned to the people and asked, “People. Do you not admit that you who have committed evil?” They said, “By Allah, yes, we do.” He supplicated, “O Allah, we have heard You saying, ‘There is no ground (for punishment) of those who do well.’ Now, we admit that we have done evil. Therefore, forgive us, show us mercy and send down rains.” He raised his hands, the people raised their hands, and the rains came down.

192. The beauty in not naming the kind of mount in the words, “I do

[93] Surely there are grounds (for punishment) against those who seek excuse of you although they are rich. They were well pleased to be with those who stayed back.¹⁹⁴ Allah has set a seal on their hearts, therefore, they realize not.

إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ وَهُمْ أَغْنِيَاءُ رَضُوا بِأَنْ يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ وَطَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾

not find anything to mount you,” is that room is left for the means of conveyance that would be developed later by the humans (Rashid Rida).

193. It is reported that a group of people, including `Irbad b. Sariyyah and `Abdullah ibn Mughaffal (as well as Ma`qal b. Yasar: Shawkani) went up to the Prophet requesting him to provide them with mounts so that they could participate in the Tabuk expedition. The Prophet expressed his inability to do so. (To some he did provide as recorded by Bukhari and Muslim: Qurtubi). They returned disappointed with their eyes overflowing with tears of grief (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

The textual word haml (of “ahmilukum”) can also be understood as something that can carry the weight of a person on his feet, such as, a pair of shoes (Au.).

Ibn al Mundhir has reported someone of Juhaynah tribe as saying, “We met some of those who had gone to the Prophet seeking something to mount. They told us, ‘We did not ask for camels. We had only asked for shoes that could carry us’” (Shawkani).

194. The verse hit those who prided on strength, courage, masculinity and warring abilities hardest where it hurt most: You seem to be pleased to sit back with women and children! (Based on a point from Rashid Rida).

[94] They will put forward excuses to you when you return to them. Say, 'Offer no excuses. We will never believe you. Allah has already informed us of your tidings.¹⁹⁵ Nevertheless, Allah will observe your (future) actions, and (so will) His Messenger. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the Seen, and He will let you know what you were doing.'¹⁹⁶

[95] When you return to them they will swear by Allah so that you ignore them. Shun them.¹⁹⁷ They are unclean. Their abode is Jahannum, a recompense for what they were earning.¹⁹⁸

يَعْتَذِرُونَ إِلَيْكُمْ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ قُلْ لَّا تَعْتَذِرُونَ لَن نُّؤْمِنَ لَكُمْ قَدْ تَبَّأْنَا اللَّهَ مِن أَحْبَابِكُمْ وَسِيرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ ثُمَّ تَرْدُونَ إِلَىٰ عَلِيمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

سَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَكُمْ إِذَا انْقَلَبْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لِنُعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ رَجِسٌ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

195. Ibn Abi Hatim and Abu al Sheikh have reported Suddi as saying that the Prophet instructed his Companions, "Do not talk to them, do not sit with them. Avoid them as Allah has instructed you" (Shawkani).

196. Sayyid clears a doubt that often arises in the minds of those who cannot distinguish between the human point of view and the Divine point of view: "The Unseen and the Seen are with reference to the humans. Equal unto Allah are the Unseen and the Seen."

197. With some modification, Zamakhshari's note could be paraphrased in the following words:

"Avoid them": that is, do not reproach them. It is decent men who care for their character and when reproached over sins and errors, feel ashamed. But these people are unclean: unclean of heart and tainted of faith. Reproach will have no effect on them.

198. It is reported that when the Prophet (*saws*) returned from the Tabuk journey, those who had stayed behind began to roll in, swearing that they had very good reasons for staying back. They were upward of eighty men. The Prophet accepted them and their excuses on their face value. Allah (*swt*) revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir).

[96] They swear for your sake, so that you may be pleased with them. But, even if you are pleased with them, surely Allah is not pleased with an ungodly people.¹⁹⁹

يَخْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ لِتَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فَإِن تَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَرْضَىٰ عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٩٦﴾

[97] The bedouin Arabs²⁰⁰ are severest in disbelief and hypocrisy²⁰¹ and deserve not to know the bounds²⁰² of what Allah has sent down on His Messenger.²⁰³ And Allah is All knowing, All wise.

الْأَعْرَابِ أَشَدُّ كُفْرًا وَنِفَاقًا وَأَجْدَرُ أَلَّا يَعْلَمُوا حُدُودَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٩٧﴾

199. The textual word is “fasiqin.” In its original the word “*fasaqa*” means to come out. Here it means to come out with the intention of corruption. Hence a rat is called “fuwaysqa” because it comes out of its hole to spread pollution. When dates appear in their bunch, it is said, “*fasaqat al rutbatu.*” In Islamic terminology, “*fasaqa*” is to cross the boundaries of Islamic law, although verbally acknowledging the legitimacy of Islam. Further, the verse implies that if Allah is not pleased with certain people, for whatever reason, then anyone who is pleased with them would be considered a fasiq as well (Au.).

200. Imām Razi points out that the textual word “A` raab” is not the plural of `Arab; rather, it is the plural of A` raabiyy. Linguistically, A` raabiyy is someone who lives in the deserts. In contrast, those who live in the (Arabian) towns are called “`Arab”, singular: “`Arabiyy” on the con-

dition that they speak the Arabic language. Accordingly, *Muhajirūn* and *Ansār* cannot be referred to as A` raab. In fact, even a bedouin is upset when addressed as an A` raabiyy, but pleased when called an `Arab. And, Arabic language of course, is the most eloquent of languages.

Then, perhaps noting the complete decline (by his time) of the Arab contribution to science, arts, culture and civilization, he adds that he read somewhere the following: The wisdom of the Romans is in their brains, for the wonderful devices that they invent; the wisdom of the Indians is in their superstitious beliefs; the wisdom of the Greeks is in their hearts for all their intellectualization; and the wisdom of the Arabs is in their tongue for the sweetness of their words!

201. With these words Allah warned the Prophet that (just as the city

dwellers), the bedouin Arabs could also be divided into three categories: unbelievers, hypocrites and believers, probably meaning that political or economic reasons were not the only causes of hypocrisy and unbelief. The Prophet had to be warned that unbelief and hypocrisy of the bedouins was of the severest type, coming from a people coarse of manners, tough of bodies, and hard of hearts (Au.).

202. The term “hudud” refers to the obligatory commands vis a vis the lawful and unlawful in Islam.

203. Why should the bedouin Arabs be so described? It is because living away from the civilizing life of the cities, in the difficult climate of the deserts, more in the company of animals than mankind, exposed to extreme heat, cold, hunger, thirst and other hardships, they are rendered tough of body and coarse of mind and sentiment. In addition, they miss the company of the learned men. These factors made the quality of the bedouin hypocrisy so severe that it was best for them not to know the revelations of Allah. They would only apply the commandments to everyone’s disadvantage. Hence we notice that the Prophet insisted that the Arabs of the outlying areas neces-

sarily visit him after their Islam and spend some time in Madinan atmosphere (Au.).

In the words of Asad: “Owing to their nomadic way of life and its inherent hardship and crudity, the bedouin find it more difficult than do settled people to be guided by ethical imperatives unconnected with their immediate tribal interests a difficulty which is still further enhanced by their physical distance from the centers of higher culture and, consequently, their comparative ignorance of many religious demands. It was for this reason that the Prophet often stressed the superiority of a settled mode of life to a nomadic one: cf. his saying, “He who dwells in the desert (al badiyah) becomes rough in indisposition”, recorded by Tirmidhi, Abu Da’ud, Nasa’i and Ibn Hanbal on the authority of Ibn `Abbas, and a similar tradition on the authority of Abu Hurayrah, by Abu Da’ud and Bayhaqi.”

It is reported that Zayd b. Sawhan was talking to his students when a bedouin happened to drop by. Ibn Sawhan had lost a hand in the famous Nahawind battle. The bedouin remarked, “By Allah, your words sound beautiful but your hand renders me skeptic.” Sawhan asked,

“Why should my hand render you skeptic when it is the left hand?” The bedouin replied, “By God. I do not know whether they cut the left or the right hand (when one commits theft).” Zayd b. Sawhan said, “Allah spoke the truth when he said, ‘The bedouin Arabs are the severest in disbelief and hypocrisy and deserve that they remain ignorant of the bounds of what Allah has sent down to His Messenger’” (Ibn Jarir).

The verse tells us by implication, how important it is to seek the company of scholars (Thanwi).

Ibn Kathir adds: Accordingly, the Prophet has said in a *hadith* of Abu Da’ud, Tirmidhi and Nasa’i,

مَنْ سَكَنَ الْبَادِيَةَ جَفَا وَمَنْ تَبَعَ الصَّيْدَ عَقَلَ وَمَنْ أَتَى
السُّلْطَانَ افْتِنَ.

“Whoever lived in the deserts suffered hardness of heart; whoever followed a game, became heedless; and whoever went to a ruler (seeking material help), faced a trial.” (The *hadith* is *sahih*: S. Ibrahim).

Accordingly Allah did not send a Messenger to the countryside as He said (12: 109):

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ
الْقُرَى [يوسف : ١٠٩]

“And We did not raise a Messenger before you but men, and of the people of the cities sending messages to them.”

And hence too, when the Prophet was given a gift by a bedouin, he had to return in good measure before the man was happy. That led him to say,

لَقَدْ هَمَمْتُ أَنْ لَا أَقْبَلَ هَدِيَّةً إِلَّا مِنْ قُرَشِيٍّ أَوْ
أَنْصَارِيٍّ أَوْ ثَقَفِيٍّ أَوْ دَوْسِيٍّ

“I intend not to accept a gift from anyone but a Qurashi, Thaqafi, *Ansari* or Dawsii.”

Those mentioned by him lived in the major towns of the time: Makkah, Ta’if, Madinah and Yemen, much softer of hearts when compared to the hard hearted bedouins. There is another report which confirms the hardened attitudes of the bedouins. It is in Muslim. It reports `A’isha as saying,

قَدِمَ نَاسٌ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله
عليه وسلم- فَقَالُوا أَنْتَقِبُلُونَ صَبِيَانَكُمْ فَقَالُوا تَعَمَّ.
فَقَالُوا لَكِنَّا وَاللَّهِ مَا تَقْبَلُ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى
الله عليه وسلم- وَأَمْلِكُ إِنْ كَانَ اللَّهُ تَرَعَ مِنْكُمْ
الرَّحْمَةَ

“Some bedouins came into town. One of them asked while in the presence of the Prophet, ‘Do you kiss your children?’ The people replied, ‘Yes, we do.’ They

[98] Among the bedouin Arabs are those who treat what they expend as a penalty²⁰⁴ and await disasters for you. Upon them is an evil disaster. And Allah is All hearing, All knowing.

وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مَا يُنْفِقُ مَغْرَمًا وَيَتَرَبَّصُّ بِكُمُ الدَّوَائِرَ عَلَيْهِمْ دَآئِرَةُ السَّوْءِ
وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٩٨﴾

[99] On the other hand, among the bedouin Arabs there are some who believe in Allah and the Last Day and treat what they expend as (a means of) nearness to Allah and (for obtaining) supplications²⁰⁵ of the Messenger. Lo! For them it is a (means of) nearness (to Allah).²⁰⁶ Allah will surely admit them into His mercy. Surely, Allah is All forgiving, All merciful.

وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَن يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ وَيَتَّخِذُ مَا يُنْفِقُ قُرْبَاتٍ عِنْدَ
اللَّهِ وَصَلَوَاتِ الرَّسُولِ أَلَا إِنَّهَا قُرْبَةٌ لَّهُمْ
سَيُدْخِلُهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ
رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٩٩﴾

said, ‘We never do.’ The Prophet remarked, ‘Do I have any say if Allah has withdrawn kindness from your hearts?’”

Alusi warns however, that one need not be swept into prejudice, for it is some of them that were so described by the Qur’ān, not all. Ibn Sirin used to say therefore, that whoever reads this verse should also read the next one which speaks of the believing bedouins.

204. Thanwi notes from Ruh that whoever thought himself as the owner of what he possesses will reckon giving away a little in the way of Allah as plenty.

205. The textual word is “salawat” plural of “*Salah*” which has its root in “sala.” In the noun-form “*Salah*”

means prayers and supplications. Here it means supplications (of forgiveness that the Prophet would make for them) Au.

Rashid Rida comments: When Allah uses the word *Salah* for Himself, such as in verse 43 of *surah* Al Ahzab, then it means “to send mercy.” When it is used for angels as in verse 56, or when used by the Prophet, as in this present verse and, when used by the believers for the Prophet, as again in verse 56, then it means “to supplicate” or “to seek forgiveness” from Allah.

Alusi cautions that by common agreement the supplicatory words “*Salat wa salam*” may not be used for other than the Prophets. It would not be appropriate to say, for instance,

[100] As for the early outrunners of the Immigrants and Helpers²⁰⁷ and those who followed them in good stead,²⁰⁸ Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. He has prepared for them gardens underneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever. That is the great triumph.²⁰⁹

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأُولُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ
وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٠٠﴾

“Ali `alayhi al salam.” Not that linguistically or religiously that’s not allowable. But the understanding is that the honorific phrase is reserved for Prophets and Messengers; just as linguistically it will not be wrong to say, “Muhammad, `azza wa jalla,” since, the Prophet was after all, the honored and exalted one; but, the words have been reserved for Allah `azza wa jalla.

The above of course has to be observed when the phrase, either “salla Allah `alayhi” or “`alayhi al salam” is used for individuals other than Prophets and Messengers. When others of the lower order are included along with one of them, then there is no harm. In fact we say all the time: “Allah humma salli `ala Muhammad, wa `alaa alihi wa ashabihi ajma`in” (Au.).

206. If these bedouin Arabs were different from other hypocritical Arabs, it was because having believed, they enjoyed access to the scholars

and were able to get rid of the evil side of character (based on Thanwi).

Shabbir notices the normally unnoticed. He writes: Glory to Allah. It is the same bedouin Arabs, who, (exposed to the difficult climate of the deserts, more in the company of animals than mankind, exposed to extreme heat, cold, hunger, thirst and other hardships: Au.), tough of body and coarse of heart, who did not deserve to know the revelation, were turned by the miraculous Qur`an and by the company of the Prophet, into such `arifin (as to earn Allah’s praise).

207. Who are the “early outstripers” from among the large body of Emigrants and Helpers (seeing that migration continued till the fall of Makkah: Au.)? While Sha`bi and `Amir believed that it is those who preceded the Ridwan pledge (of the sixth *Hijrah* year), Abu Musa al Ash`ari, Sa`id b. al Musayyib and Qatadah were of the opinion that

those are entitled to the honor who embraced Islam before the *Qiblah* was changed from Bayt al Maqdis to Ka`bah (in the second year after *Hijrah*). However, some others have said that all the Companions of the Prophet are included in this category (including those who committed some errors later, but not of course the hypocrites: Au.). [In which case the “min” of the text will be treated as “bayaniyyah” {explanatory}: Shafi` from Tafsir Maz hari].

Humayd b. Ziyad’s following story is quoted in support. He says he asked Ka`b al Qurazi (formerly a Jew: Au.), about the Companions, ‘I meant to know what to think of them in view of their quarrels among themselves after the Prophet.’ Ka`b said, “Allah forgave their sins and promised them Paradise in His Book those who were exemplary as well as those who were not. Ibn Ziyad says, “I asked him, ‘Where did He promise them that?’” Ka`b replied, “Allah be glorified. Did he not say, ‘As for the early outrunners of the Migrants and the Helpers, and those who followed them in good stead, Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him?’ You can see that He promised His good pleasure and Paradise unto all of them and declared those who follow them as deserving of the same

treatment, except for placing a condition.” Ibn Ziyad asked, “What is that condition?” Ka`b replied, “It is expressed in the words, ‘And those who followed them in good stead.’ That is, they should follow them in good deeds and not in those that are not of the same class.” Ibn Ziyad said, “I felt as if I had never read the verse earlier” (Imām Razi).

The subtle point that Ka`b brought out is that when Allah said, “And those who followed them in good stead,” it meant that He was speaking of a group of people whose deeds were both good as well as otherwise. This meant that all of the Companions were included, including those who erred in some of their judgments later (Au.).

Imām Razi adds that Abu Bakr is included by default. How could he be left out who was the first among men to embrace Islam, the first to have brought to the Prophet six new converts including such figures as Talha, Zubayr and `Uthman and the one who accompanied the Prophet in his *hijrah* journey. How could he be left out and, instead, cursed, as the Shi`ah do? Again, he was of those about whom Allah said that He was pleased with them. Now, if it is said that those who outstripped

others in faith, with whom Allah was pleased, later became hypocrites, as the Shi'ah allege, then, the words of Allah should not have been unconditional; rather, the words should have been, "Allah is pleased with them, on condition that they do not change later."

The following from Qurtubi should be of general interest:

(a) There is a general agreement among the scholars that the best of the Companions were the four *Khulafa'* followed by the rest of the ten that were given the tidings of Paradise (*'ashara mubashsharah*: Abu Bakr, 'Umar ibn al Khattab, 'Uthman b. 'Affan, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, Talha b. 'Ubaydullah, Zubayr b. al 'Awwam, 'Abd al Rahman ibn 'Awf, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas and Sa'id b. Zayd).

(b) After them, it were the *Badri* Companions, then those of *Uhud* and then

(c) those who participated in the *Ridwan* pledge.

(d) Of the Followers (*Tabe'iyun*), the most virtuous was Sa'id b. al Musayyib, then 'Alqamah, then Al Aswad.

(e) Others who followed them are Qays, Abu 'Uthman, Masruq, 'Ata' and Hasan.

(f) The best scholars among them were known as "the Seven Jurists of Madinah." They were, Sa'id b. al Musayyib, Qasim b. Muhammad, 'Urwah ibn Zubayr, Kharijah b. Zayd, Abu Salamah b. 'Abd al Rahman, 'Abdullah b. 'Utba ibn Mas'ud and Sulayman b. Yasar.

(g) Among the female Followers the best were Hafsa bint Sirin, 'Umrah bint 'Abd al Rahman and Umm Darda'.

208. An interesting incident reveals how meticulously the Companions listened to every recitation of the *Qur'an*, and how meticulously it was preserved. Once 'Umar heard someone recite this verse in the manner it is now in the *Qur'an*. He was surprised. He asked the man who had taught him to read it that way, because, 'Umar had all along read that there was no "waw" ("and") after the word *Ansār*. That meant, the verse was to be understood as: "As for the early outrunners of the Migrants and the Helpers who followed them in good stead," instead of the present day recitation: "As for the early outstrunners of the Migrants and the Helpers and those who followed them in good stead." (The introduction of a "waw" makes them three categories: Au.). The man named

[101] And among those around you of the bedouin Arabs, (some) are hypocrites; as also (some) of the city dwellers. They are obstinate in hypocrisy.²¹⁰ You do not know them.²¹¹ We know them.²¹² We shall punish them twice.²¹³ Then they will be returned to a great chastisement.

وَمِنَ حَوْلِكُمْ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مُنَافِقُونَ
وَمِنَ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ مَرَدُوا عَلَى النَّفَاقِ لَا
تَعْلَمُهُمْ نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ سَنُعَذِّبُهُمْ مَرَّتَيْنِ
ثُمَّ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾

Ubayy b. Ka`b (the *Ansāri*) as the one who had taught him that way. `Umar went up to Ubayy and asked him to explain. Ubayy told him, “That is how the Prophet taught me while you were away selling (bean) pods at Baqi`. `Umar said, “True. If you wished you could add, ‘We were present when you were away, helped him (the Messenger) when we abandoned him, and sheltered him when you expelled him’” (Zamakhshari).

209. It is significant that when the Companions had to decide a starting date for the Islamic calendar, the choice fell on the event when the Hijra journey was undertaken, a turning point in the history of Islam, and an event by which the first batch of the *Muhajirūn* and *Ansār* came together into a religion which has its strength in emigration by some, and help by others (Au.).

210. Rashid Rida points out that the worst of hypocrites in our own times are the Muslim ruling classes. They

befriend the enemies of Islam and with their help enslave the Muslim masses. Some of them are in secret league with the enemies of Islam and co operate with them to ravage the Muslim lands. Where the Muslim masses are educated, these hypocrites deceive them and where they are not, they do not bother to conceal their intentions. The worst of such hypocrites are the rich and influential men who act against the interest of the Muslims, and the most harmful are those who pretend to be scholars while they are in the service of the rulers.

211. That is, “O Prophet, you do not know all of them.” So, the Prophet knew only some of them. Once when someone complained to him of an indecent remark he heard from another, the Prophet bent down to him and confided, “Some of those who (profess to) follow me are hypocrites.” But he was not keen on knowing their identities. Ibn `Asakir has reported that

a man called Harmalah went up to him and said, "Here pointing to his tongue is faith, but here pointing to his heart is hypocrisy, and it does not remember Allah but little." The Prophet supplicated for him to cure him of his hypocrisy. The man said, "Messenger of Allah. I used to be in the company of hypocrites. And I was their ring leader. Shall I expose them by bringing them to you? The Prophet replied, "Whoever comes to us (following his free will), we shall supplicate for him. As for those who turn away, Allah is their custodian. (As for you), never expose anyone's secrets to others." (Ibn Kathir).

The authenticity of the *hadith* could not be traced (Au.).

Qatadah has said: It is strange of the people that they say, so and so is in Paradise and so and so is in Hellfire, whereas, when they are asked about themselves, as to where they will be, they say they are not sure. How can they, being doubtful of themselves, although they know their own deeds better than those of others, judge the fate of others? They speak out on issues over which the Prophet stayed silent (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

212. In this is an unequivocal denial of the Prophet's knowledge of

the unknown and the unseen (Alusi, Thanwi).

213. Opinions vary over which two punishments have been alluded to. A report coming from Ibn `Abbas and Abu Malik says that once the Prophet (*saws*) interrupted his sermon to say, "O so and so, get out. You are a hypocrite. O so and so, get out. You are a hypocrite." He expelled several of them from the mosque. As they were going out, they encountered `Umar coming in. He was late for the Friday prayer. And, seeing them leaving, he thought that the Prayer was over, and so, out of shame, he concealed himself from them and they concealed themselves from him because they did not wish him to know them as hypocrites. But when `Umar entered, he found that they had not done the Prayers yet. Someone told him, "Be of good cheer, `Umar. Allah exposed the hypocrites today." This was, Ibn `Abbas says, the first punishment. The second punishment will be in the grave. Others however have said that the reference is to the adversities of various kinds in this life, and torture in the grave respectively (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

[102] Then there are others who confessed their sins, mixing good deeds with other evil ones.²¹⁴ It may be that Allah will relent towards them;²¹⁵ surely, Allah is All forgiving, All merciful.

وَأَخْرُونَ اعْتَرَفُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَآخَرَ سَيِّئًا عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾

214. To whom is the allusion? A tradition originating with Ibn `Abbas says that there were ten Companions who did not join with the Prophet in the Tabuk campaign. When he came back, five to eight of them went to the Prophet's mosque and tied themselves to its columns, in shame and atonement. The Prophet enquired about them and was told who they were, and that they wished to be unbound by him. He said he was not going to do that until Allah accepted their excuse and sent down His pardon. They vowed that they would not untie themselves until Allah sent down His pardon. Finally, Allah sent this verse. Other versions add that when the pardon came down, Abu Lubaba (who was one of them) was so pleased that he went to the Prophet and said, "I think it is right that as a way of fulfilling my repentance I should move out of the place where I committed the sin and spend all my wealth in the way of Allah." The Prophet told him, "It would be enough if you spent one third" (Ibn Jarir).

215. Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others explain that the verse is applicable to everyone who mixes up good deeds with evil ones. He quotes Bukhari who narrated the following *hadith* in explanation of the verse. The Prophet said,

أَتَانِي اللَّيْلَةُ آتِيَانِ فَأَبْتَعَتَانِي فَأَتَيْتُهُمَا إِلَى مَدِينَةِ مَبِيئَةٍ يَلِينِ ذَهَبٍ وَلَيْنِ فِضَّةٍ فَتَلَقَانَا رِجَالٌ شَطْرٌ مِنْ خَلْقِهِمْ كَأَحْسَنِ مَا أَنْتَ رَأَيْتَ وَشَطْرٌ كَأَسْوَأِ مَا أَنْتَ رَأَيْتَ قَالَا هُمْ أَذْهَبُوا فَمَعُوا فِي ذَلِكَ النَّهْرِ فَوَقَعُوا فِيهِ ثُمَّ رَجَعُوا إِلَيْنَا قَدْ ذَهَبَ ذَلِكَ السُّوءُ عَنْهُمْ فَصَارُوا فِي أَحْسَنِ صُورَةٍ قَالَا لِي هَذِهِ جَنَّةٌ عَدْنٌ وَهَذَاكَ مَنْزِلُكَ قَالَا أَمَا الْقَوْمُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا شَطْرٌ مِنْهُمْ حَسَنٌ وَشَطْرٌ مِنْهُمْ قَبِيحٌ فَأَيْتَهُمْ خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَآخَرَ سَيِّئًا بِجَاوَزَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ

"Last night two incoming beings came to me. They took me to a city that was built with bricks, one of gold and the next of silver. There we came across men whose one half was the most beautiful ever seen, but the other, the worst spotted ever. The two (angels) told them, 'Go to that stream and take a dip.' They did that and came back to us in a most beautiful form, all their

[103] (So) accept from their wealth alms,²¹⁶ cleansing and purifying them therewith.²¹⁷ And supplicate for them. Surely, your supplication for them is a source of comfort for them. And Allah is All hearing, All knowing.

حُذِّ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ
بِهَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ
وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾

ugliness gone. The two told me, “This is Paradise and this is your abode.” And then they added, ‘As for those you saw: one half beautiful, another half ugly, they were people who had adulterated their good deeds with evil ones. Allah forgave them.’”

Some scholars have said that this verse holds out the most hope: “Then, there are others who admitted sins, adulterating good deeds with other evil ones ..” to the end of the verse. Mutarraf is reported to have said, “When I lie down in my bed and think over the Qur’anic verses, I compare my deeds with the deeds of those who will be in Paradise. Their deeds were of a high order. Little did they sleep at night (51: 17). They spent their nights in prostrations and standing (25: 64). Is he then who spends the night in prostrations and standing [before his Lord equal to someone who does not] (39: 9). I do not find myself belonging to this group. Then I compare my deeds with those about whom the Qur’an said

(74: 42), ‘What led you to Hell fire? They will say, “We were not of those who Prayed.”’ I do not find myself belonging to this group either. Then, as I search, I come across this verse, “Then, there are others who admitted sins, adulterating good deeds with other evil ones ..” to the end of the verse. I hope,” Mutarraf concluded, “myself and yourself, all of us belong to this group” (Alusi).

216. Ibn ‘Abbas, Zayd b. Aslam, Sa`id b. Jubayr and others have said that initially when Abu Lubaba and other true repentant men offered their wealth in charity, the Prophet said that he had not received any directive about it from Allah. So Allah revealed this verse. But Ibn Zayd has said that even those are included who suffered a strain of hypocrisy and so had remained behind without a good cause. Nevertheless, after the Prophet’s return they expressed sincere regret and repented anew. Allah revealed this verse concerning them (Ibn Jarir).

[104] Have they not known that it is Allah who accepts repentance from His slaves, and accepts alms, and that Allah is the Oft turning, Most Kind?²¹⁸

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَأْخُذُ الصَّدَقَاتِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٠٤﴾

[105] Tell them, 'Keep working.' Allah, His Messenger and the believers will observe your deeds.²¹⁹ And then you will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the Seen and He will let you know (the truth of) what you were doing.²²⁰

وَقُلْ اْعْمَلُوا فَسَبْرَى اللّٰهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَسَتُرَدُّونَ اِلَىٰ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

Asad points out that the reason why their charity was not accepted initially is that its acceptance implied that they were Muslims: then a matter of doubt because of their hypocritical behavior.

217. Shabbir comments: Although they had repented sincerely, and were forgiven, meaning that they would not be questioned for that sin in the Hereafter, in this world, however, sins leave a mark on the sinner's soul. *Zakah* cleanses it.

After the Prophet, his successors, or governments in place will collect the *Zakah*. Further, *Zakah* is not a tax. It is for purification of wealth, although it might help in solving economic problems of the poor. But that is secondary. Hence, in nations previous to Islam, *Zakah* was put to fire. If it was a tax, it would not have been burnt (Shafi`).

(Shafi`'s allusion to the religious practice, as stated in the *Torah*, whereby the Israelites placed their alms. A fire appeared from the heaven and burnt it down – Au.).

218. This was to impress on the Companions that the Prophet had little to do in their affairs with Allah. It was Allah who accepted their repentance, or their alms (based on Ibn Jarir's note).

219. Although the reference is to the hypocrites, Ibn Kathir uses the occasion to draw attention to a *hadith* about deeds of the living brought to the notice of the dead believers. Jabir b. `Abdullah narrates in a report in Ahmad that the Prophet said,

إِنَّ أَعْمَالَكُمْ تُعْرَضُ عَلَىٰ أَقَابِرِكُمْ وَعَسَائِرِكُمْ مِنَ الْأَمْوَاتِ فَإِنْ كَانَ خَيْرًا اسْتَبَشَرُوا بِهِ وَإِنْ كَانَ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ لَا تُنَبِّئُهُمْ حَتَّىٰ تَهْدِيَهُمْ كَمَا هَدَيْتَنَا

[106] And those others who were held on hope (waiting) for Allah's decision, He might punish them or might relent towards them.²²¹ Allah is All knowing, All wise.

وَأَخْرُونَ مُرَجُونَ لِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِمَّا يُعَذِّبُهُمْ وَإِمَّا يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾

[107] As for those who established a mosque out of mischief and disbelief,²²² to divide the believers²²³ and a place of ambush for him who warred against Allah and His Messenger aforetime²²⁴ .. they will surely swear, 'We intended nothing but good.' Allah bears witness that they are liars.

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مَسْجِدًا ضِرَارًا وَكُفْرًا وَتَفْرِيقًا بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِرْصَادًا لِمَنْ حَارَبَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَيَحْلِفْنَ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

“Your deeds are reported to your dead kinsfolk. If they are good, they rejoice. But if they are otherwise, they say, O Allah, do not deal them death until you have guided them as You guided us.”

The *hadith* was declared weak by Haythamiyy (Au.).

220. In other words, mere words of repentance or feelings or remorse, were not sufficient. They had to be backed by deeds. And, although they would be judged by their deeds alone in this world, in the Hereafter sincerity would also count when they are presented to the Knower of the Unseen and the Seen who will let them know the truth of what they were doing (Au.).

221. It was widely believed by the earliest scholars that the allusion is to Ka`b b. Malik, Hilal b. Umayyah

and Murarah b. al Rabi`. These three did not bind themselves to the pillars in the mosque and did not seek to be excused. They knew that they had committed a wrong by not joining in the campaign and felt so dejected that they spoke nothing on the subject, not even to the Prophet. They knew that they had no case for themselves and so deserved to be punished and, therefore, moved about in fear and apprehension (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

222. The following report has come from several sources. As the Prophet was preparing for Tabuk, a few people came to him and said, “Messenger of Allah, we have built a mosque in our neighborhood for the sick and the old and for nights of bad weather. We should like you to come and pray in it.” The Prophet told them

that he was busy with the Tabuk affair, but would, Allah willing, come and pray in it after the expedition. But, as he was an hour's journey or so during his return journey to Madinah, Allah revealed this verse to inform him that the mosque had been built by the hypocrites for nefarious purposes. The Prophet sent a few men to destroy it. (Wahshi the killer of Hamza at Badr was one of those sent: Zamakhshari, Qurtubi). They pulled it down and burnt it. According to some reports, the Prophet had even asked for his outer shawl to be brought to him so he could go to the new mosque when this verse was revealed (Ibn Jarir).

Zamakhshari adds the warning note: It is said that any mosque that is built in competition, show off, or for reasons other than pleasing Allah, or out of unlawful income, is of the class as the original mosque of mischief. Accordingly, when large enemy territories fell to Islamic power during the time of `Umar, he ordered that mosques be built everywhere, but warned that no two mosque were to be in one locality in such a way that one affected (attendance of) the other.

Qurtubi points out that this is the reason why some jurists have disal-

lowed two congregations with two Imams in the same mosque. This breaks up the congregation into two.

Asad adds: "Although the whole of this verse relates primarily to the historical occasion explained (above), it has a definite bearing on all attempts at creating sectarian divisions among the Muslims..."

223. The newly built mosque was quite close to the Quba' mosque and the intention was to divide the Muslims congregation between the two mosques and cause division. It was so close that they promised that when it was not raining and the night clear, they would pray in the Quba' mosque itself (Ibn Jarir).

224. The reference is to a man called Abu `Amir, the Khazraji, who had acquired knowledge of the Christian religion and was heavily influenced by it, if he had not converted to that religion for all intents and purposes.

`Amir al-Rahib

He was given to ascetic ways and was nick named "Al Rahib" (the Monk). When the Prophet arrived he decided to disbelieve and began to conspire against Islam. (When the Quraysh were defeated at Badr, he could not take it anymore. He told the Prophet, "So long as I find some-

one fighting you, I shall fight against you along with him,” and migrated to Makkah.

He was one of those who had instigated Makkan invasion in revenge of the defeat at Badr, resulting in the assault of Uhud. It was he who had dug a few pits in that battle field into one of which the Prophet fell and injured himself. He invited the *Ansār* to a duel but they refused to fight him and cursed him: Ibn Kathir). It was he who had worked to convince the Quraysh and other tribes to attack Madinah as one body rather than fight him singly, and had succeeded in bringing them together at the gates of Madinah in the 5th year after *Hijrah* for the famous Battle of the Ditch.

Subsequently, with the failure of the invasions, and the expected fall of Makkah, he moved out to Syria to join with the Romans and seek their help in overthrowing the Prophet. He remained in constant correspondence with his followers at Madinah. Following a scheme hatched out in Syria, he wrote to his tribesmen, Banu Ghanam b. `Awf and other secret followers, to build a mosque which could be used as an assembly point for them and a shelter for him when he decided to return: a rally-

ing place for all the disgruntled ones, if he prevailed upon the Romans to raid Madinah.

It is said that it is his efforts that resulted in the Roman decision to take the first step toward uprooting the new political entity at Madinah by raising an army at Tabuk comprised mainly of the same class of men as Muslims: tough bedouins of the desert, so that steel could meet steel. When that scheme also failed, but instead, the Prophet surprised them by taking the initiative, which resulted in the dispersion of the bedouins off the area of recruitment, Abu `Amir remained with the Romans, kicking the bucket some time later. No wonder when somebody referred to the man as `Amir the Rahib (the Monk), the Prophet remarked, “Do not say ‘`Amir the Rahib,’ rather, say ‘`Amir the Fasiq.’”

An interesting point about Abu `Amir is that he was the father of the famous Hanzala who was given a wash by the angels when he was martyred in the battle of Uhud because he was in an unclean state when he heard of the battle call, and rushed to join the ranks without taking a bath. A second interesting part of the man's episode is that whatever Abu `Amir's companions experienced in the Ro-

[108] Do not ever stand therein. Rather, a mosque that was established on piety²²⁵ from the first day is worthier that you stand therein. Therein are men who love to be cleansed. And Allah approves of those who seek to be cleansed.²²⁷

لَا تَقُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا لَّمَسْجِدٌ أُسِّسَ عَلَى
التَّقْوَى مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُومَ فِيهِ
فِيهِ رِجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَطَهَّرُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ
الْمُطَهَّرِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

man lands, and, surely, it could not have been very salubrious, the result was that most of them changed their minds, returned to Madinah and embraced Islam at the Prophet's hand in earnest. Lastly, during one heated conversation with the Prophet, the man had lost his temper and had said, "May Allah cause the lying one between me and you to die as an outcast in a lonely state" (Au.).

Ibn `Abbas has said that actually the man had conspired before he left, ordering his followers to construct a mosque and use it for concealing weapons until he came back with a Roman army to oust the Prophet. The Prophet had come to know of their construction and at one point had asked one of the hypocrites what they were up to. He was told, "We wish nothing but good." Others have added that the man first went to Makkah where he recruited a few others to his cause and traveled to Syria in their company seeking Roman help (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir reports that the smoke was noticed kept billowing out of the burnt mosque for several years.

225. Opinions are divided over which mosque has been alluded to. The opinion of Ibn `Umar, Zayd b. Thabit, Abu Sa`id, and Sa`id b. al Musayyib is that it is the Prophet's mosque: the Masjid al Nabi. In fact, Abu Sa`id al Khudri even narrated from the Prophet that it was his mosque that was "built on piety." (The narration is in Muslim: Ibn Kathir). But Ibn `Abbas and `Urwa ibn Zubayr held the opinion that it was the mosque at Quba' that was alluded to in this verse. Al `Awfa too narrated that he heard the Prophet say that it was the mosque at Quba' that is the one "built on piety" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi and others).

Ibn Kathir points out that there is no reason why both the mosques should not be the mosque "built on piety," for both the mosques were built on piety from day one. The Prophet visited the Quba' mosque every now

and then, both on mount as well as on foot and said in a *hadith* preserved by Ibn Majah,

صَلَاةٌ فِي مَسْجِدِ قُبَاٍ كَعُمْرَةٍ

“Prayer in the Quba’ mosque is equal to an ‘Umrah.”

There has been no consensus over trustworthiness of this *hadith*. Hakim declared it *Sahih*. But Tirmidhi himself, who placed it in his compilation, declared it weak; but Ibn Kathir said it is *Sahih* (Au.).

226. Over half a dozen narrators have reported that when this verse was revealed the Prophet asked the people of Quba’, “What is it you do that Allah said about you, ‘in it are people who liked to be cleansed.’” They replied, “We always use water after the nature’s call (as against many others in those times who used stones or mud balls to cleanse themselves: Au.)” Ibn Jarir.

One version of the above report is in the *Sahih* of Ibn Khuzaymah. And some versions say that the people

of Quba’ had picked up the practice from the Jews (Ibn Kathir).

Rashid Rida thinks however that the allusion is to the acts of devotion, Prayers and remembrance of Allah morning and evening that evoked the remark.

227. Ibn Kathir comments: Staying clean and pure is a habit that has Allah’s approval. It is reported in a *hadith* of Ahmad that once the Prophet recited *surah* al Rum but committed an error in the recitations. When he was finished he said,

إنه يلبس علينا القرآن إن أقواماً منكم يصلون معنا
لا يحسنون الوضوء, فمن شهد الصلاة معنا فليحسن
الوضوء

“We get confused over the Qur’ān. Among you are men who do not perform their ablution well. Let him who comes here for Prayers do his ablution well.”

Shu’ayb Arna’ut thought the report is weak.

[109] Is he then, who laid the foundation of his house on Allah's fear and (His) good pleasure, better, or he who laid the foundation of his house on the edge of a cliff,²²⁸ ready to crumble? So it crumbled along with him into the Fire of Hell? And, surely, Allah does not guide a transgressing folk.

أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُيُوتَهُ عَلَى تَقْوَىٰ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ أَسَّسَ بُيُوتَهُ عَلَىٰ شَفَا جُرُفٍ هَارٍ فَاتَهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

[110] The structure that they constructed will remain a (source of) doubt within their hearts unless their hearts are cut to pieces.²²⁹ And Allah is All knowing, All wise.

لَا يَرَالُ بُيُوتَهُمُ الَّذِي بَنَوْا رِيْبَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَقَطَّعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١١٠﴾

[111] Behold, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their possessions (in exchange) for that there is for them Paradise;²³⁰ they fight in the cause of Allah,²³¹ slay, and are slain a true promise binding on Him in the Tawrah, the Injil and the Qur'an. And who could be more faithful to his promise than Allah? Rejoice then in the deal that you have struck with Him.' That indeed is the supreme triumph.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ هُمْ الْجَنَّةَ يَفْعَلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بَبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١١١﴾

228. What has been rendered as "cliff" has in its original the word "juruf" which is used for the bank of a river the underside of which has been eroded of its sand (Au.).

229. Zamakhshari explains that since the mosque was built with mischievous intentions, the destruction left a deep mark of anger, disappointment, and regret in the hearts of those who had built it. That caused an increase in their hypocrisy and in doubts. Hence Allah's words, "The structure

that they constructed will remain a (source of) doubt in their hearts until their hearts are cut to pieces."

230. It is reported as context of revelation that `Abdullah ibn Rawaha said to the Prophet (on the occasion of the second `Aqabah pledge: Qur-tubi, Ibn Kathir), "Set your terms." He replied, "My terms with respect to my Lord is that you shall worship Him and not associate partners with him. As far as I am concerned, my terms are that you will shield me

against what you shield your lives and properties.” They asked him, “What do we get if we did that?” He replied, “Paradise.” They said, “That’s a good bargain.” And Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Sayyid Ibrahim adds that the report about `Abdullah ibn Rawaha is weak. But, there are other reports, as presented by Shawkani, of similar content that confirm its authenticity (Au.).

When they said that a certain incident was the cause of revelation of a verse, what the earliest scholars meant is that the particular incident could be related to that verse and explained in its light; although it may happen that the verse in question would have been revealed several years earlier, or even later. In this case also, the event of the pledge at `Aqabah was applicable to this verse although it was revealed a decade after the event. Obviously, it sustains its general meaning and application (Au.).

Commenting on the importance of *Jihad*, evident from this verse, Ibn Kathir ends by saying: Hence we have a *hadith* in the *Sahihayn* which says,

تَضَمَّنَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ خَرَجَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَا يُجْرِيهِ إِلَّا جِهَادًا
فِي سَبِيلِي وَإِيمَانًا بِي وَتَصَدِيقًا بِرُسُلِي فَهُوَ عَلَيَّ
ضَامِنٌ أَنْ أُدْخِلَهُ الْجَنَّةَ أَوْ أَرْجِعَهُ إِلَى مَسْكَنِهِ الَّذِي
خَرَجَ مِنْهُ نَائِلًا مَا نَالَ مِنْ أَجْرٍ أَوْ غَنِيمَةٍ

“Allah has guaranteed that whoever started off in His cause, ‘to which nothing prompted him but *Jihad* in My cause and belief in My Messenger,’ then it is under My assurance that I should admit him to Paradise or return him to his home from which he started, having either gained reward or booty.”

Hasan al Busri has remarked that Allah entered into a deal with the believers, offering them Paradise, but setting a high price.

Mawdudi comments: “... it is evident that God is the Owner of all that man has his life, his wealth, his everything for He is the Creator of man as well as of all his possessions. Viewed from this angle, any transaction of sale and purchase between man and God is, strictly speaking, out of the question. For man does not possess anything of his own which he might sell. Nor is there anything which God does not own and which would necessitate purchase on His part. Nonetheless, God has bestowed upon man free

will and freedom of choice and this is the basis of the transaction mentioned above...”

Further down, he writes, “... Paradise is not given for merely professing that one has sold one’s life and possessions to God. Rather it is a reward granted to him who abstains from using his life and wealth as though he has the right to use them as he pleases. Thus, the transaction will mature only when the life of man the seller will come to an end and it is proved that he did truly abide by the terms of the transaction he had made with God. Then, but not before, can it be decided how he should be recompensed.

“It will be illuminating to look at this matter by reference to its circumstantial context in the Qur’ān. It occurs in connection with those who claimed to be believers and yet had not lived up to that claim. When put to test, they preferred not to sacrifice their time, wealth, material interests and lives for the sake of God and His religion. They were either lazy, insincere or downright hypocritical. The attitude demonstrated by these

groups of people was subjected to a severe reproach in the Qur’ān, and the people themselves were told unequivocally that faith does not consist of a mere verbal affirmation of God’s existence and unity. True profession of faith rather amounts to affirming that one’s life and wealth all belong to God alone. If some people do not sacrifice their lives and wealth in compliance with God’s command and use those possessions in opposition to the Will of God, their profession of faith is blatantly false.”

231. If it is asked, how does the deal become effective so that the believers can be said to have paid out, the answer is, “They fight in the cause of Allah” (Shawkani with some modification).

In other words, Alusi explains, if it is asked, how do the believers pay out their lives and properties, the answer is, by fighting in the cause of Allah. And hence the Prophet has said,

الْجَنَّةُ تَحْتَ ظِلِّ السُّيُوفِ

“Paradise is under the shade of the swords.”

[112] (Those who) repent,²³² the devoted, those who praise (Him), who fast,²³³ bow down (to Him), prostrate themselves, those who enjoin virtue and forbid vice,²³⁴ and those who observe the bounds of Allah,²³⁵ and give (O Prophet) glad tidings to the believers.²³⁶

التَّائِبُونَ الْعَابِدُونَ الْحَامِدُونَ السَّائِحُونَ
الرَّاكِعُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ الْأَمْرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَالنَّاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَالْحَافِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ
اللَّهِ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٢﴾

232. These are the qualities of the believers spoken of at the end of the previous verse (Shawkani).

In the light of the general meaning of the word 'taba' being 'to return to', Ibn Jarir explains it here as those who 'return' from acts of Allah's disapproval towards those that win His good pleasure: in common terms, those who repent. Hasan al Busri emphasized however that the allusion is to give up association with Allah and hypocrisy. Rashid Rida points out that there is no need to restrict the meaning; it is applicable to the polytheists who repent Association, to the hypocrites who embrace Islam sincerely, to the sinning believers who repent their sins, and even to those who had stayed behind at the time of Tabuk expedition. All of them could return to Allah, which is the literal meaning of the term 'ta'ib.'

233. Abu Hurayrah reports a *hadith* which says that by the term "sa'ihun" the allusion is to those who fast (Ibn Jarir). Ibn Kathir however believes

this is Abu Hurayrah's personal opinion. Sa'id b. Jubayr, 'Ata, Dahhak and others have held the same opinion. At another place the Qur'an has used the same term in the sense of those who fast. It is in *surah* Tahrir, verse 5, where it described believing women as:

عَابِدَاتٍ سَائِحَاتٍ [التحرير : ٥]

"The devoted women, those who fast .."

Other explanations are: i) those who travel for knowledge and, 2) the Mujahidin, in the light of the following *hadith*.

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ائْتِدْ لِي فِي السِّيَاحَةِ فَقَالَ: «إِنَّ سِيَاحَةَ أُمَّتِي الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

A man sought the Prophet's leave to lead the life of a hermit. The Prophet replied, "Jihad in Allah's cause is my Ummah's asceticism" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Rashid Rida points out that Imām Ghazali has an incomparably beautiful article on this topic in his epic

[113] It was not (proper) for the Prophet and the faithful to seek pardon for the polytheists,²³⁷ even if they were near of kin, after it became clear to them that they are companions of the Fire.²³⁸

مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا
لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أُولِي قُرْبَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ
مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١١٣﴾

work Ihya al `Ulum al Din under the chapter Travels.

234. Hasan al Busri has said that a man cannot be counted as one enjoining virtue until he himself lives by what he enjoins and cannot be counted as one forbidding vices until he himself gives them up (Ibn Jarir).

What he meant perhaps is that a non practicing man should also practice what he preaches; and not that he should give up enjoining or forbidding altogether because he cannot practice (Au.).

235. Allah's bounds are those acts that have a commandment or a prohibition behind them (Ibn Jarir). In simpler words, the obligations and the forbidden (Au.).

236. Ibn `Abbas has said that the preceding qualities are a condition that Allah has placed on those who fight in His cause. They ought to be endowed with these qualities (Shawkani). But some others are of the opinion that the qualities mentioned in the verse are of those who

cannot (because of a good reason) participate in a *Jihad* (Qurtubi). That is, if they do not participate in a *Jihad*, they do not sit back in relaxation. Rather, they are such as to turn to Allah, pray a lot, fast, etc. (Au.).

237. Although opinions vary as to the exact cause of revelation of this verse, the weighty opinion is that it was revealed when the Prophet (*saws*) wished to supplicate forgiveness for his mother. Once he visited his mother's grave

إني استأذنت ربي في زيارة قبر أمي فأذن لي واستأذنته
في الاستغفار لها فلم يأذن لي“ فما رأيي باكياً أكثر
من يومئذ

“He said, ‘I sought my Lord’s leave to visit my mother’s grave and He allowed me. I also sought His leave to pray for her forgiveness but He refused me that.’” And he was not seen crying as much as he did that day.

Once when a Muslim’s Jewish father died, the son did not participate in his funeral ceremony. Ibn `Ab-

[114] Ibrahim's prayer of forgiveness for his father was not except because of a promise he had made him. Nevertheless, when it became apparent to him that he was an enemy to Allah, he disavowed him. Indeed Ibrahim (was) a pleading (nature),²³⁹ much forbearing.

وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَن مَّوْعِدَةٍ وَعَدَّهَا إِيَّاهُ قَلَمًا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ أَنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ لِلَّهِ تَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَأَوَّاهٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١١٤﴾

bas commented that he could have participated in the services without seeking Allah's forgiveness for him.

Another cause of revelation cited in connection with this verse is that once `Ali ibn abu Talib heard a man say, "O Allah forgive my parents." He asked him, "Do you seek forgiveness for those who died in pre-Islamic times?" The man replied, "Why not, when Ibrahim sought forgiveness for his parents?" `Ali reported it to the Prophet and this verse was revealed (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). `Ali's report is in Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Abi Hatim and many others, with Hakim declaring it trustworthy (Shawkani).

238. Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and others have explained that by the words, "after it had become clear to them," the allusion is to their death. In other words, once a man has died on polytheism, it is confirmed that he is Allah's enemy and that he will enter Hell fire. His forgiveness could be

sought so long as he was alive. But once dead, forgiveness for him cannot be sought (Ibn Jarir).

239. The translation follows the explanation offered by the Prophet to the term "awwah" as in Ibn Kathir. Another explanation is that the allusion is to the suppliant. Another opinion, being that of Ibn `Abbas, `Ata, `Ikrimah and others, is that the allusion is to a firm believer. 'A man of understanding,' 'someone fearful of Allah,' are other explanations that have also been offered (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Mawdudi comments: "The word awwah used in respect of Abraham in the above verse denotes a tender hearted, lamenting, tearful and wistful person. The other word which has been used here halim denotes someone who can keep control over himself, who does not lose control of himself in anger, hostility and opposition.

[115] *And, it is not for Allah to misguide a people after He has guided them until He has made clear to them what they should avoid.*²⁴⁰ Verily, Allah is Knowing of all things.

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ قَوْمًا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَاهُمْ حَتَّى يُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ مَا يَتَّقُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾

[116] *Verily, Allah's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He grants life and deals death;*²⁴¹ *and there is not for you, besides Allah, either a protector or a helper.*

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١١٦﴾

240. The meaning seems to be that those who died on unbelief and whose forgiveness is forbidden to ask, were not led into error by Allah. He made His message clear to them, and they made their choice. However, Mujahid's interpretation as in Tabari is that the reference is to the believers. They have been warned not to seek forgiveness for the pagans. It is up to them now to comply or not to comply.

But, obviously, the verse can be understood differently also. Rashid Rida picks up a report from Ibn al-Mundhir that `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud used to conduct classes for his students every Thursday evening. He would always end up by saying, "Whoever of you wishes to become a scholar or a student, may make an intention to that effect. Let him not intend anything else. For, the scholar and the student are equal in rewards. People, I am not afraid that you will be taken to task for what has not

been made clear to you since Allah has said: 'It is not for Allah to misguide a people after He has guided them until He has made clear to them what they should avoid.' And, (as you know) He has made clear to you what you should avoid." And, Rashid Rida continues, one of the offshoots of the meaning offered by the verse is that when one comes across a verse which carries a somewhat ambiguous commandment, but one's own mind is inclined to a meaning that is certain to him, then, he ought to act by the meaning that is certain to him. (Unless, of course, the scholars have explained differently, in which case, the meaning offered by the scholars has to be accepted as the intended meaning: Au.).

241. Attention is drawn to one of the qualities of the believers: they fight in the cause of Allah. Why should they not when Allah gives life and deals death? (Ibn Jarir).

[117] Surely, Allah turned (in mercy)²⁴² to the Prophet, the Immigrants, the Helpers - those who helped him in the hour of difficulty,²⁴³ after the hearts of some of them had well-nigh swerved.²⁴⁴ Then He turned to them (in mercy); surely, He was Kind and Merciful to them.²⁴⁵

لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ
وَالْأَنْصَارِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ
الْعُسْرَةِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيغُ قُلُوبَ
فَرِيقٍ مِّنْهُمْ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّهُ
يَرْؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

﴿١١٧﴾

242. When the word “taba,” which literally means to turn to, is used for Allah in reference to His slaves, it has two connotations: (a) His turning in mercy and (b) His inducement to repentance (Manar).

“Relenting” expresses another aspect of the meaning, but, by itself it is a weak word and does not carry the full connotation. However, sometimes it fits into the translation better (Au.).

243. The reference is to the difficult expedition of Tabuk when the Muslims were short of water, food and beasts of ride. When `Umar was asked about the “hour of difficulty,” he explained, “We started off with the Prophet at a time when the weather was intensively hot. On the way, we encountered extreme thirst to the extent that we thought our necks would sever off our heads. A man would scout around for water but find none. It came to such a pass that a man was forced to slaughter his camel. He would squeeze its

intestine and drink what it would yield of water, and then place the intestines on his breast for cooling himself. Abu Bakr suggested to the Prophet, ‘Messenger of Allah. Allah answers your prayers. Why should you not pray for us?’ He asked, ‘Do you wish me do that?’ Abu Bakr said, ‘Yes.’ So he raised his hands and prayed until the rain began falling, for everyone to fill his vessels. Then, as we started off, we discovered that outside the camp it had not rained at all” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

This report is found in several works, with Hakim declaring it *sahih* (Shawkani).

244. The reference is to those who, unable to bear the hardships of the journey, intended to fall back, but did not (Alusi).

245. The original terms are “Al-ra’fa and Arahmah.” The first has the connotation of kindness towards the weak, whereas the latter is general in application (Manar).

[118] And (He turned in mercy too) towards those three²⁴⁶ who were kept waiting (to be judged)²⁴⁷ until, when the earth for all its vastness became (too) narrow for them and their own souls became constricted,²⁴⁸ and they knew that there was no refuge from Allah but in Him. Then He turned to them (in mercy) so that they may repent. Verily, Allah is Oft turning, Most Merciful.²⁴⁹

وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خُلِفُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا
ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ
وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوا أَن لَّا
مَلْجَأَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ
لِيَتُوبُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١١٨﴾

246. They were Ka`b b. Malik, Hilal b. Umayyah and Murarah b. Rabi`ah, all from the *Ansār* (Ibn Jarir).

Shabbir wrote under an earlier verse: All in all, there were three kinds of people who stayed away from the Tabuk expedition.

(i) The hypocrites who offered false excuses when the Prophet returned to Madinah;

(ii) those who bound themselves to the pillars of the Prophet's mosque, spoken of in verse 106; and

(iii) those who neither offered false excuses nor tied themselves to the pillars of the Prophet's mosque.

247. The opinion of most early commentators is that the allusion is to the three named above, who stayed back from the Tabuk expedition, who repented, but whose repentance was not accepted, rather they were kept waiting (Ibn Jarir).

248. When Abu Bakr al Warraq was asked about what constituted "Tawbatun Nasuh?" He replied that when the earth, despite all its vastness, becomes narrow to the repentant, and his own soul feels constricted like that of Ka`b b. Malik, then that is Tawbatun Nasuh (Alusi).

249. The following narration of Ka`b himself is a widely reported story (Ibn Jarir), as found in Bukhari, Muslim and Ahmad (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

The following is primarily based on Ibn Is haq's version as translated by Alfred Guillaume.

The Story of the Deferred Three

`Abdullah b. Ka`b, one of the sons of Ka`b who used to be his guide when Ka`b had gone blind, said that Ka`b b. Malik said, "I had never held back from any expedition that the Prophet undertook except that of Tabuk. Of course I was absent from that of

Badr also, but nobody was censured for having remained behind then because the Prophet had gone out chasing the (trade) caravan. It was only coincidence that had brought him and the Quraysh face to face at Badr. I was present with the Prophet at `Aqabah when we pledged faith in Islam, and I would not have preferred to be at Badr, rather than at `Aqabah although the battle of Badr is more famous. The fact was that when I stayed behind in the expedition of Tabuk, I had never been stronger and wealthier. By Allah, I never possessed two mounts as I had at the time of the expedition.

“The Prophet started off at the time of intense heat. He was aware of a long journey to face a powerful enemy. He made clear the difficulties to the Muslims and told them of his destination so that they might prepare themselves well. And the Muslims too who accompanied him were many, beyond the record of registers so that, if someone stayed back, nobody could notice, unless Allah revealed concerning him. Also, the Prophet started on that expedition at a time when the fruits were ripe on the trees, and the shades under the trees enticing.

“Anyway, the Prophet prepared himself, and so did the Muslims. As for me, I would want to prepare myself, but do nothing about it. Next day I would again wish to prepare myself but do nothing about it. Finally, they all left while I kept procrastinating. Then I thought I would catch up a day or two later, but I did not. I wish I had. But it was not destined that I should.

“After the Prophet had gone, I would go out and it would pain me to see that no one was left but he who had a mark of hypocrisy on his face or someone whom Allah had excused because of women to look after. The Prophet did not mention me until he had reached Tabuk. As he was sitting with some people, he asked, ‘What happened to Ka`b b. Malik?’ One of the Banu Salamah said, ‘He was prevented by his fine clothing and the conceit of his appearance. The Prophet remained silent.

“While he was in that state he noticed a man in a white cloak emerging out of the mirage. The Prophet remarked, ‘Be he Abu Khaythumah.’ He happened to be Abu Khaythumah of the *Ansār*. He was the one who had given a bunch of dates in charity which the hypocrites had belittled.

“When I learnt that the Prophet was returning from Tabuk, I was overtaken by various thoughts and began to consider lying to him to escape his anger and get my home folk to support me in that. Nevertheless, when I heard that the Prophet was near at hand, falsehood left me and I knew that I could only escape by speaking the truth.

“Now, whenever the Prophet returned from an expedition, he would first enter the mosque, do two rak'ah of Prayers and then sit down to receive the people. Those who had stayed behind began coming in seeking to be excused swearing falsely. They were some eighty men. The Prophet accepted their declarations and oaths and asked Allah's forgiveness, leaving their hidden motives to Allah, until I went in. When I greeted him, he smiled the smile of an angry man. Then he said, 'Get closer.' I went up to him and sat down right in front of him. He asked, 'What held you back? Had you not bought your mount?' I said, 'Allah's Messenger. By Allah, if someone else of the people were to be sitting before me, I could count on escaping his anger with an excuse, and I am astute in argument. But, by Allah, you know that if I spoke out a lie today that would satisfy you, but it is possible

that Allah will invoke in you anger against me. In contrast, if I spoke the truth, you might be displeased, but Allah might forgive me. By Allah, I had no excuse. I was never stronger and in easier circumstances than at the time I stayed behind.' The Prophet remarked, 'As for this man, he has spoken the truth. Now, get up until Allah decides about you.' So I got up.

“Some of Banu Salamah men followed me in annoyance. They said, 'We have not known you having committed a wrong earlier. Could you not have sought excuse like so many others who stayed behind did? The Prophet's supplication for your forgiveness would have been sufficient for you.' They kept pressing until I was about to go back to the Prophet and give the lie to myself. Then I asked them if there was anyone else who was in the same state. They said, 'Yes. Two more men have also admitted to what you admitted and they too have been given the same reply.' I asked them who they were. They named me persons who had participated in the Battle of Badr. So, I decided I would rather do nothing.

“The Prophet forbade anyone to speak to the three of us, so people

avoided us and showed demeanor that changed the world around me completely. We endured this for fifty nights. As for my companions, they felt humiliated and stayed at home. But I was younger and hardier and used to go about, attend to Prayers with the Muslims, and go around the markets. But no one spoke to me. I would go to the Messenger, greet him while he sat with the people after the Prayers, asking myself if his lips moved in reply or not. Then I would pray near him and steal a look. I found that when I was engaged in my Prayers, he would look at me but when I paid him attention, he would turn away.

When the hardship from the Muslims became long for me, I went and climbed Abu Qatadah's wall. He was my cousin and the dearest of men to me. I saluted him. By Allah, he did not return my greeting. I said, 'O Abu Qatadah. I adjure you, do you not know that I love Allah and his Messenger?' He said not a word in reply. I adjured him again and repeated my question. He again remained silent. Once again I adjured him. He only said, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' My eyes were filled with tears. I climbed down the wall and returned.

"Then, as I was walking through the Madinan market a Nabti from the Syrian region who had come to town to sell food was asking, 'Can someone lead me to Ka'b b. Malik. The people guided him to me. He handed over a letter from the ruler of Ghassan, and I knew how to read and write. It said, 'We hear that your companion (meaning Muhammad) has treated you badly. God has not meant you to be humiliated and lost. Come and join us. We will treat you most fairly.' I told myself that this too was a trial from Allah. I threw the letter into the oven.

"Thus went on forty of the fifty nights when a messenger of the Messenger of Allah arrived to say that I was to separate from my wife. I asked if I was to divorce her? He said, 'No. But do not go near her.' The other two were also sent similar orders. I told my wife, 'Go and live with your family until Allah sends His command.' But Hilal's wife went to the Prophet and told him that he was an old man, lost without a servant, was there any objection to her staying with him? He said, 'No. But do not go near him.' She said, 'By God, he made no movement towards me. In fact, he has been crying all the time.' Some people suggested to me that I too should seek from the Prophet

that my wife remain with me. I said I was not going to ask him that, not knowing what would he say to me. After all, I am a young man.

“Ten more nights passed over us to make it fifty.” (According to some reports Ka`b said that what he feared most was that either he should die in that state, unforgiven, or the Prophet should die, in which event his case would remain undecided forever. The people would not ever pray for him Alusi).

Ka`b continued, “One morning I did my Fajr Prayers on top of one of our (tribal) houses. Then, as I sat there very much in the state which Allah had described as the earth having become narrow despite all its vastness when I suddenly heard the voice of a crier coming over the mountain saying, ‘Good news, Ka`b b. Malik.’ I fell into prostration knowing that the relief had come.

(According to a report in Bukhari, Umm Salamah was very kind to say some words of recommendation to the Prophet, assuring him that this was a good man. The Prophet was in her house when the revelation about the acceptance of repentance came. It was the early part of the night. Umm Salamah asked him if she should announce the acceptance of revelation

to the people. The Prophet told her, ‘Do not. The people will start milling around in celebration and will not let us get any sleep this night’ Alusi).

“The Prophet announced the acceptance of repentance of we three in the morning Prayers. People started pouring out to convey the good news. Some people went to the other two to announce the good news while a horseman galloped off to me. And a runner from Banu Salamah ran up towards me until he reached the mountain. His voice was faster than the horse. Then, as the crier announcing the good news appeared, I took off my clothes and gave them to him in jubilation. By Allah, I did not have clothes other than them. (That is, good quality outer garments: Au.). I borrowed two pieces of clothes and set off for the Prophet. On the way, streams of people met me to congratulate me on the acceptance of my repentance. I entered the mosque. The Prophet was sitting there with people around him. Talha b. `Ubaydullah got up and hurried towards me to congratulate me. No one else of the immigrants rose up for me except him. (Ka`b never forgot that good gesture). I saluted the Prophet. His face was shining with happiness. He said, ‘Good news of

[119] Believers! Fear Allah and be among those who are truthful.²⁵⁰

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ
الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾

a day better than which has never passed over you from the day your mother gave birth to you.’ I asked, ‘Is the pardon from you O Messenger of Allah, or from Allah?’ He replied, ‘Rather, from Allah.’ We knew that when the Prophet was happy, his face shone like the moon.

“When I sat down before him I said, ‘As an act of penitence I should offer all my wealth as charity to Allah and His Messenger.’ He said, ‘Hold back some of your wealth with you. That’s better for you.’ I said, ‘I shall retain my share at Khayber.’ I also said, ‘Messenger of Allah. Allah saved me because of truth. And, it is part of my penitence that I should not speak but the truth the rest of my life.’ And, by Allah, since the day I said those words to the Prophet, no one was ever treated better for his truthfulness than me from that day onwards. By God, I never even intended to lie since that day, and I hope it will remain so until I remain. And Allah revealed, ‘As for the three ...’

Imām Razi points out that one of the lessons of the story is that it is

not binding upon Allah to accept repentance. In the case involving Ka`b and the other two, they had already repented, and quite sincerely. But, repentance was accepted until after some 50 days.

Rashid Rida adds: The story of the three touches the soft parts of the heart. It is said that no other verse of the Qur`ān would induce Imām Malik to weep more than this verse and the story that goes with it.

250. Hence `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud has reported in a *hadīth* of the *Sahihayn* the Prophet’s words,

عَلَيْكُمْ بِالصِّدْقِ فَإِنَّ الصِّدْقَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْبِرِّ وَإِنَّ
الْبِرَّ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَمَا يَزَالُ الرَّجُلُ يَصْدُقُ وَيَتَحَرَّى
الصِّدْقَ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ صِدِّيقًا وَإِنَّا كُنْمُ وَالْكَذِبِ
فَإِنَّ الْكَذِبَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْفُجُورِ وَإِنَّ الْفُجُورَ يَهْدِي
إِلَى النَّارِ وَمَا يَزَالُ الرَّجُلُ يَكْذِبُ وَيَتَحَرَّى الْكَذِبَ
حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَذَّابًا

“Always speak the truth. Truthfulness leads to virtue, and virtue leads to Paradise. A man keeps on speaking the truth and being truthful until he is written with Allah as a truthful person. And avoid lies. Lies lead to perversion and corruption, and perversions

[120] It was not (proper) for the people of Madinah and the bedouin Arabs of their neighborhood that they should stay behind the Messenger of Allah or prefer their lives to his. That because they (the believers) did not suffer thirst, or fatigue, or hunger in the cause of Allah, nor they tread a place that angered the unbelievers, nor scored any gain from an enemy, but a good deed was registered thereby in their account. Verily, Allah does not allow for the wastage of the reward of those who do good.²⁵¹

مَا كَانَ لِأَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ أَنْ يَتَخَلَّفُوا عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَرْغَبُوا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَنْ تَقْسِمِهِ ذَلِكَ بِأَتْهُمْ لَا يُصِيبُهُمْ ظَمَأٌ وَلَا نَصَبٌ وَلَا مَخْمَصَةٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَطَؤُونَ مَوْطِئًا يَغِيظُ الْكُفَّارَ وَلَا يَنَالُونَ مِنْ عَدُوِّ نِيْلًا إِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ بِهِ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾

and corruption lead to the Fire. A man keeps lying and practicing lies until he is written with Allah as a liar.”

Ibn Mas`ud has himself said, “Lying is disallowed in all circumstances, whether seriously or jokingly. And, let not one of you promise a thing to his child and then not keep it. Consider Allah’s words, ‘And be among the truthful.’ Do these words leave license to anyone?” (Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi adds in this context that scholars do not accept *hadith* narration of a person who lied at any time, on any occasion, even if such lying was in worldly matters, unrelated to *hadith* narrations.

Alusi points out however that there are instances when lying is allowable.

Ibn Abi Shaybah has preserved the *hadith* that says,

كُلُّ الْكَذِبِ يُكْتَبُ عَلَى ابْنِ آدَمَ إِلَّا ثَلَاثَ خِصَالٍ رَجُلٌ كَذَبَ عَلَى امْرَأَتِهِ لِيَرْضِيَهَا أَوْ رَجُلٌ كَذَبَ فِي حَدِيثِهِ حَرْبٍ أَوْ رَجُلٌ كَذَبَ بَيْنَ امْرَأَتَيْنِ مُسْلِمَتَيْنِ لِيُصْلِحَ بَيْنَهُمَا

“Every lie that Adam’s son utters is recorded against him, except for three: a man lying to his wife in order to win her good pleasure, or a man speaking as deception in war, or a man speaking to make peace between two people.”

The above *hadith* has been thought to be weak because of one narrator, although that narrator himself was half accepted, half rejected (Au.).

251. Qatadah and others have said that this verse was applicable only at

[121] And they did not expend anything, small or big, nor crossed a valley, but it was registered in their account in order that Allah may requite them with better than what they were doing.²⁵²

وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ نَفَقَةً صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً وَلَا يَقْطَعُونَ وَادِيًا إِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾

[122] And, it is not right of the believers to go forth together (in an expedition) all at once. Why should it not be that from every group of them a few people go forth so that they may understand the religion²⁵³ and warn their people when they return to them, so that they may act cautiously?²⁵⁴

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا تَفَرَّ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

the time of the Prophet. (That is, *Jihad* was wajib on every Muslim during the time of the Prophet: Alusi). After him, it is verse 122 of this chapter that will remain in force. It says,

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً [التوبة : ١٢٢]

“And, it is not right of the believers to go forth together (in an expedition) all at once”

252. At the time of its revelation, the verse was applicable to `Uthman b. al `Affan most. Imām Ahmad has preserved the report that while preparing the army for the Tabuk expedition, the Prophet climbed the pulpit and appealed for funds. `Uthman got up and offered a hundred camels, fully equipped. The Prophet came down. He climbed up again to appeal for funds. `Uthman offered an-

other hundred fully equipped camels. Then the Prophet made a third appeal, and `Uthman offered another fully equipped hundred camels. The Prophet was well pleased with him and remarked, ‘Nothing that `Uthman does after this will do him any harm’ (Ibn Kathir).

253. The term in the original for “understanding” has its root in “faqihah.” Fiqh in Islamic literature is applied to knowledge of the Shari`ah and what would help obtain it, such as knowledge of the Arabic language, its grammar, or knowledge of principles of religion (Shawkani).

Speaking of knowledge, Qurtubi quotes several *ahadith* attributed to the Prophet expressing its importance. In one report he said,

فَضَّلُ الْعَالِمَ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِي عَلَى أَدْنَاكُمْ

“The superiority of a knowledgeable person over one devoted to acts of worship (‘alim) is like my superiority over the lowest of you.”

Tirmidhi recorded it but declared it weak (Au.).

Imām Shafē’i has said that to engage in obtaining knowledge is better than supererogatory prayers. Another *hadīth* of Muslim says:

مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُفَقِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَا تَرَآلْ عَصَابَةَ
مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ عَلَى الْحَقِّ ظَاهِرِينَ عَلَى مَنْ
نَاوَأَهُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

“Whosoever Allah wished to show His grace, gave him the knowledge of this religion. And, a group of my *Ummah* will keep fighting for the truth, overcoming those who oppose them, until the Day of Judgment.” Qurtubi believes that the first part of the *hadīth* is directly related to the second. (That is, knowledge of the religion leads to *Jihad*: Au.).

Alusi however has the following to offer. Imām Ghazali has said that among the first generation Muslims the word *fiqh* was used for:

- i) knowledge of the Hereafter,
- 2) knowledge of the things harmful to the soul,

3) those things that destroyed the good effects of deeds,

4) the power to belittle this world,

5) an impassioned desire to obtain the blessings of the next world, and

6) the heart being overtaken by the fear (of Allah).

It was not used in the sense of the knowledge of the rules of divorce, trade, renting out buildings, etc. It is said that when Hasan (al Busri) replied to Farqad al Sanji over a question he had asked, Farqad told him ‘But the Fuqaha’ have a different opinion.’ Hasan told him, ‘May your mother cry over you. Have you ever set your eyes on a Faqih? A Faqih is someone who is not inclined to this world, rather, is inclined to the Hereafter, well aware of the quality of his religion, all the time devoted to his Lord, abstains from touching upon the honor of the Muslims, disinterested in their possessions, and always concerned of their welfare.

254. As to who should teach whom, there have been two explanations: (i) those that go out into an expedition may gain circumstantial evidences of their religion and teach those that stayed back when they return; and (ii) those who stay back may engage themselves in learning their religion

so as to teach the religion to their brothers returning from *jihad*. Tabari prefers the former explanation.

Alusi points out that one would have expected the Qur'ān to say here 'so that they might teach them,' in place of 'warn their people when they return to them,' and, 'so that they may learn' instead of 'so that they may act cautiously.' This is to throw the hint that the objective of the teacher should be to warn, and the end result of the learning process should be to learn to fear.

With reference to the Mujahidin obtaining knowledge through their *Jihad* excursions, so that they could warn those who had stayed back, Sayyid discusses issues that have been missed by almost all commentators. He writes:

"Several opinions have come to us concerning the identity of those who should learn their religion and concerning those they should warn when they return. What seems to us as the right interpretation is that, not all believers should go out at once in an expedition. Rather, from every group of them, a few should go, others waiting for their turn in order that the group that sets out may understand, through *Jihad*, and, when they return, warn those who did not go in the expedition.

"This is the opinion of Ibn `Abbas and Hasan al Busri, and preferred by Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir. That is because this religion is a religion of the active people. Those who do not get active cannot understand it. Those who go out in *Jihad* are the most qualified to understand this religion, because of the realities, meanings and secrets of religion that they grasp as they travel about in the land, and because of the practical application of the verses of the Qur'ān to real situations. Those who sit back need to obtain this understanding from those who were in the field for they would not have witnessed what those that had gone forth would have witnessed, and so would not understand the way they understand, failing to obtain the secrets of knowledge that those obtained who went forth, especially, when they were in the company of the Prophet...

"Maybe, what comes to mind as the meaning is the opposite of what we have stated that those who did not go forth, may engage themselves in learning, behind those who did. But this does not match with the spirit of this religion. Movement is the foundation stone of this religion. None will derive a good comprehension of this religion except those who move

[123] Believers! Fight against those of the unbelievers who are nearest to you;²⁵⁵ and let them find harshness in you.²⁵⁶ And be aware that Allah is with the righteous.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ
مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلِيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلْظَةً وَاعْلَمُوا
أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

[124] Whenever a chapter is sent down, there are some among them who ask, 'Which of you had his faith increased thereby?' As for those who have believed, it surely increased their faith and they rejoice.

وَإِذَا مَا أُنزِلَتْ سُورَةٌ فَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَسْأَلُ
أَيُّكُمْ زَادَتْهُ هَذِهِ إِيمَانًا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا فَرَّادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَهُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ
﴿١٢٤﴾

about (in a struggle), to establish this religion, to make it overcome pagandom - of all kinds by means of struggle in the field.

“Experience tells us that those who refuse to move out in the struggle, do not have a good understanding of this religion, notwithstanding how much they free themselves for its cold studies. The secrets of this religion open up for those alone who venture out in *Jihad* in order to establish the religion in the world of reality. It does not open up for those who are sunk in books, depending on written material alone...”

255. Ibn Kathir explains: The meaning is, first fight those unbelievers who are nearest to you, then those that come after them, and so on. That is what the Prophet did. He first fought the Makkans. Then he turned to Ta'if, Yemen, Yamamah, Hijr, Khayber, Hadr Mawt respec-

tively. After he had subdued them, he traveled to Tabuk to take on the Romans, who were the closest. He would have extended the struggle but for his death. However, his successors carried on. Abu Bakr sent forces against the Romans and Persians. They fell to Islam during `Umar's reign when Egypt also fell. `Uthman the third caliph also pursued the policy of fighting those closest, extending the Islamic rule to parts of Africa, Asia and other territories. In consequence, the Islamic faith spread all over the globe. All this was following the directive given in this verse: 'Believers! Fight those of the unbelievers who are nearest to you.' Then weakness set in, and the Muslims, greedy of this world, busied themselves with themselves. Whenever they did that, and neglected *Jihad*, they lost territories, and whenever they took up the struggle, in the cause of Allah, they regained territories, in proportion

to their obedience to Allah's commands.

Faced with the Judaeo Christian Western hypocrisy, we might reproduce here Yusuf `Ali's comments, (which he wrote under verse 111): "The Jewish wars were ruthless wars of extermination. The Old Testament does not mince matters on this subject. In the New Testament St. Paul, in commending the worthy fruits of Faith, mentions Gideon, Barak, and other warriors of the Old Testament as his ideals, "Who through faith subdued kingdoms ... waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens .." (Hebrews, xi, 32 34). The monkish morality of the Gospels in their present form has never been followed by any self respecting Christian or other nation in history. Nor is it commonsense to ignore the lust of blood in unregenerate man as a form of evil which has to be combated "within the limits," set by Allah (Q. ix. 112).

Sayyid Qutb however, has a long commentary here on the importance of conducting *Jihad*. Here are some important passages:

"We are ordered here to fight those of the unbelievers who are nearest to us. The verse does not say that the fighting should be against those

alone who attack us or our homes. From this verse we can deduce that this is the guiding principle that will remain in force: that is, ours has to be an offensive *Jihad*. It is not defensive, as was the rule in early Islam, when the rules were of provisional nature.

"But those who speak on the Islamic rules related to international relations, or *Jihad* ordinances, or, comment on verses of *Jihad*, wish to bind this final, unconditional call and command to the conditional commands sent down for the initial, temporary, phase. They make it conditional to an actual attack or a preemptive attack on the life and property of Muslims. But the Qur'anic text here is unconditional. And it is the last of the texts to be revealed. We also know from the Qur'anic style, that when delivering ordinances, it is very specific, clear and unambiguous. It chooses very specific words, not ignoring the exceptions, conditions and specialities, if there happen to be, in the same text...

"But the problem is, those who speak on international relations as directed by Islam, or on *Jihad* ordinances, or explanation of verses speaking of *Jihad*, for them it is hard to swallow that these are Islamic injunctions,

and that Allah himself should ask them to fight against the unbelievers nearest to them, and that they should thereafter fight those next to them, that is, every time they find the unbelievers close to them they should fight them. They find this hard to understand. Therefore, they try to make conditional what is unconditional.

“They forget, however, that *Jihad* in Islam is *Jihad* in the way of Allah. It is an effort to establish Allah’s lordship on the earth and to do away with those who usurp Allah’s rights. It is a *Jihad* to liberate man from the slavery of others of his kind .. from the tribulations of a religion that is not Allah’s – “until there is no tribulation and the religion is Allah’s, altogether.” It is not a fight for imposing one kind of rules made by humans in place of another kind of rules also made by humans. It is for imposing Allah’s rule over the rule of men. It is not conducted for the establishment of a human rule over the earth. It is conducted to establish Allah’s rule and sovereignty over the earth. Hence, it is necessary that it should be applied to the whole of the earth, for the liberation of the whole of the mankind, without exception: whether they be within the borders of Islam or outside of it, as long as

it is inhabited by the humans who are ruled by those who rebel against Allah...

“But, unfortunately, the Muslim apologists have to face the Western, Christian, cunning, dirty propaganda that says, ‘Islam spread by the sword...’

“If that was the case, then, obviously, it could not have been acceptable. But the affair in truth is far different from how it is presented. Islam is based on a firm principle: ‘There is no coercion in Islam.’

“But, if that is so, why does the Mujahid come out with a sword? And why has Allah purchased from the believers their life and property in return of Paradise? Why do they fight in the way of Allah, kill and get killed? The answer is that *Jihad* has nothing to do with faith and beliefs. It is not conducted to coerce people into believing. Rather, it is conducted to guarantee freedom of opinion, faith and beliefs. Islam conducts *Jihad* against those who are opposed to man’s total freedom, allowing him to choose his faith and beliefs. But those who have established their own rule on the earth, take away this freedom, in a subtle, unfelt manner. Islam comes in to break up these powers. *Jihad* liberates the people. After

[125] But, as for those in whose heart is a disease, it added evil to their (pre existing) evil so that they died in a state of unbelief.²⁵⁷

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَتْهُمْ
رِجْسًا إِلَىٰ رِجْسِهِمْ وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ
﴿١٢٥﴾

[126] Do they not observe that they are tried every year once or twice?²⁵⁸ Yet they do not repent nor do they take heed.²⁵⁹

أَوَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُمْ يُفْتَنُونَ فِي كُلِّ عَامٍ مَّرَّةً
أَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ لَا يَتُوبُونَ وَلَا هُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ
﴿١٢٦﴾

that they are free to embrace Islam or reject it. If they choose to come in, they are brothers unto old Muslims, with the same rights and obligations as others. If they choose not to accept, then, they pay the tribute, a symbol of submission to the rule of Islam, and as a return for the safety provided to them from the oppression of their likes. (Otherwise, they are free to choose their faith)."

256. That is, there need be no compassion. Unbelief must be uprooted. Compassion is reserved for the believers. The Prophet said about himself,

أنا الضحوك القتال

"I am the smiling warrior." That is, he smiled when among the believers, but fought vigorously with the unbelievers (Ibn Kathir).

The *hadith* is found in Ibn Faris, but in none of the other collections, whether well-known, or obscure;

and is declared weak. It seems to have spread around because of Ibn Taymiyyah who mentioned it in several of his books, Ibn Qayyim who also mentioned in his works, and, of course Ibn Kathir who mentioned it twice in his Tafsir (Au.).

257. Yusuf `Ali comments: "Just as the light, which to healthy eyes gives enlightenment, causes pain to the diseased eye, which emits unclean matter, so to those spiritually diseased. Allah's grace is unwelcome, and they put forth more doubts to cover their diseases. And they die in their disease, and of their disease.

258. To what is the allusion? The answer is, either there happened an expedition or two organized against the pagans every year, which tried the hypocrites and exposed their hypocrisy, or, a false rumor or two circulated which put them into fresh doubts about Islam (Ibn Jarir).

[127] And, whenever a chapter comes down, they glance at each other, 'Does anyone see you?' Then they slip away. Allah has turned their hearts away, because they are a people who do not understand.²⁶⁰

وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلَتْ سُورَةٌ نَّظَرَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ هَلْ يَرَاهُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ ثُمَّ انصَرَفُوا صَرَفَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾

A related *hadith* is in Ibn Majah. Anas says,

لا يزداد الأمر إلا شدة ولا يزداد الناس إلا شحاً وما من عام إلا والذي بعده شر منه

“Things will get more and more difficult. People will get greedier. And there will not be a year but the one following it would bear greater evil. I heard this from your Prophet (Ibn Kathir).

The *hadith* is not to be found in any collection; and, although Ibn Kathir traces it to Ibn Jarir, it is not to be found in his Tafsir either (Au.).

The Hanafiyyah (and perhaps also the Hanabilah) have, however, deduced from this verse that an Islamic state should conduct *Jihad* at least once or twice every year (Au.).

259. It is said that when a man falls sick, regains health subsequently, but does not receive a lesson to correct his ways, then the angels say about him, “We administered him the medicine but the medication did not seem to have cured him” (Alusi).

260. Mawdudi offers the following comment: “Whenever a *surah* was revealed to the Prophet (peace be on him), he recited it at a public gathering of Muslims. While the Prophet (peace be on him) recited it, the true believers listened to it in rapturous attention. The hypocrites, however, behaved at such gatherings in an altogether different way. They attended those meetings as it was obligatory for every believer to do so and their absence would have exposed their hypocrisy. Nonetheless, they evinced no interest in the Prophet’s recitation, and their presence was only half hearted. Their only concern was to register their physical presence at the gathering, and they would depart at the first opportunity. The above Qur’ānic verse presents a graphic account of their conduct.”

Yusuf `Ali takes us to a wider horizon of meaning, mixing admonition with illustration: “Even the Unbelievers, in their heart and conscience, feel uncomfortable when they turn away from Faith and Truth, and therefore

[128] Indeed, a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves. Grievous it is to him what (might make) you suffer, very concerned about you,²⁶¹ and, towards the faithful most tender and compassionate.²⁶²

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٨﴾

their turning aside is figured by furtive glances, such as we may suppose literally to have been cast by the Hypocrites in the assemblies of the Holy Prophet. Then they slink away, feeling superior in their minds. And yet, if they only knew it, their contumacy deprives them of Allah's grace and light. They are turning Grace away, when Allah withdraws it altogether, they perish utterly."

261. The Prophet drew a simile to explain his concern of the *Ummah*. He said in a *hadith* preserved by Ahmad, reported by Ibn `Abbas:

أَتَاهُ فِيمَا يَرَى النَّائِمُ مَلَكَانِ فَقَعَدَ أَحَدُهُمَا عِنْدَ رِجْلَيْهِ وَالْآخَرُ عِنْدَ رَأْسِهِ فَقَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَ رِجْلَيْهِ لِلَّذِي عِنْدَ رَأْسِهِ اضْرِبْ مِثْلَ هَذَا وَمِثْلَ أُمَّتِهِ فَقَالَ إِنَّ مِثْلَهُ وَمِثْلَ أُمَّتِهِ كَمِثْلِ قَوْمٍ سَفَرُوا إِلَى رَأْسِ مَقَارَةٍ فَلَمْ يَكُنْ مَعَهُمْ مِنَ الرَّادِّ مَا يَقْطَعُونَ بِهِ الْمَقَارَةَ وَلَا مَا يَرِجَعُونَ بِهِ فَبَيَّتَمَا هُمْ كَذَلِكَ إِذْ أَتَاهُمْ رَجُلٌ فِي حُلَّةٍ حَبْرَةٍ فَقَالَ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ وَرَدْتُ بِكُمْ رِيَاضًا مُّغَشَّبَةً وَحِيَاضًا رُؤَاءً أَتَّبِعُونِي فَقَالُوا نَعَمْ قَالَ فَاَنْطَلِقْ بِهِمْ فَأَوْرَدَهُمْ رِيَاضًا مُّغَشَّبَةً وَحِيَاضًا رُؤَاءً فَأَكَلُوا وَشَرِبُوا وَسَمِنُوا فَقَالَ لَهُمْ أَلَمْ أَلْفِكُمْ عَلَى تِلْكَ الْحَالِ فَجَعَلْتُمْ لِي إِنْ وَرَدْتُ بِكُمْ رِيَاضًا مُّغَشَّبَةً وَحِيَاضًا رُؤَاءً أَنْ تَتَّبِعُونِي فَقَالُوا بَلَى قَالَ فَإِنَّ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ رِيَاضًا أَعْشَبَ مِنْ هَذِهِ وَحِيَاضًا هِيَ أَرْوَى مِنْ هَذِهِ فَاتَّبِعُونِي قَالَ فَقَالَتْ

طَائِفَةٌ صَدَقَ وَاللَّهِ لَتَتَّبِعَنَّهُ وَقَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ قَدْ رَضِينَا بِحَدِّ نَقِيمٍ عَلَيْهِ - مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد: رواه أحمد والطبراني والبيهقي وإسناده حسن.

"Two angels came down to the Prophet in his dream. One of them stood at the head of the bed, while the other at the foot of it. The one at the foot asked the one at the head to give an example of him and his followers. He said, 'The example of him and his followers is like a people who traveled to reach close to their destination. But they did not have enough provision to complete the little bit left, nor were they able to return. They were in that state when a man appeared in a silken shawl. He said, 'Would you follow me if I led you to a rich garden with free flowing streams?' They said, 'Yes.' So he led them to a rich garden with free flowing streams. They ate, drank and grew fat. (The man came back and) asked them, 'Is it not true that I found you in that state and you prom-

[129] Yet, if they turn away, say, 'Allah suffices me. There is no god besides He. I place my trust in Him. And He is the Lord of the Great `Arsh²⁶³.'"

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿١٢٩﴾

ised to follow me if I led you to a rich garden with free flowing streams?' They replied, 'Yes.' He asked, 'There lies ahead of you another garden richer than this one and with streams flowing more freely. Therefore, follow me.' Thereupon, a group said, 'He spoke the truth and by Allah we shall follow him.' But another group said, 'We are satisfied with this and shall stay put here' (Ibn Kathir).

262. It is said that `Umar would not accept any verse to be written in the

Mus haf without two witnesses. But for this verse he said he did not need any witness since the Prophet indeed was as described in this verse (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

263. Some scholars have explained the term `Arsh as appearing here to mean "kingdom" (Alusi).

According to Ubayy b. Ka`b the last two verses of this chapter are the last to be revealed (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). But there are other opinions about what was revealed last. Ibn `Abbas has said that the last to be revealed was verse 281 of *Al Baqarah* (Alusi).

بَقَّتْ



Surah 10

Yunus¹

Makkan²



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. Asad offers a short summary on the *Surah*: The central theme of chapter Yunus is revelation in particular, the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad, and the impossibility of its having been composed by the latter and fraudulently attributed by him to God, as the deniers of the truth assert (verses 15 17, 37 38 and 94). Woven around this theme are references to earlier prophets all of whom were given the lie by the majority of their people as well as a many sided exposition of the fundamental tenets of Islam: the oneness, uniqueness and omnipotence of God, the continuity of His revelation to man, the certainty of resurrection and of God's final judgment culminating in the reminder (in verse 108) that whoever chooses to follow the right path, follows it but for his own good; and whoever chooses to go astray, goes astray but to his own hurt.

Sayyid Qutb has a long prologue. Here are some points:

“The principal theme of this chapter indeed of the whole Qur'an, especially of the Makkan revelations is that the Lordship the whole of it, undivided is for Allah, and Him alone, and hence all devotion physical and spiritual should be reserved for Him alone. This is followed by an explanation of what it means when applied to life and its demands.

“A sound and healthy human civilization on this earth cannot be established without the realization and acceptance of the above cardinal principle.

“Interacting with the elements of this world – whether living things or non living man cannot lead a successful life if he is devoted to these very elements living or non living worse, treating them as deities and gods. Can the people (ever be happy), while they belittle themselves in front of the (powerless) deities in such a ridiculous manner as they do? They offer them – and have done so

in every age and in every place the best of their earnings, following the directives of their priestly classes, or the superstitions of their masses .. They offer them blessings that are in fact endowed by their Lord. Indeed, some of them offer their very souls, while these deities living and non living have no power to harm or benefit them. They swing between pain and pleasure, between peace and anxiety, between devotion and intimation, all in the cause of those that are no more than creations like them!

“This is the price in terms of wealth and progeny that the people have to pay for slavery to other than Allah!

“It has always happened that when people refused to accept a religion that is based on devotion to One God, they allowed some of their own kind to assume authority over them, ultimately ending up as slaves to them. In consequence, slavery eats away their humanness, their honor, and not merely their freedom, notwithstanding what system they fall prey to – whether capitalistic, communist, or any other.

“In its effort to escape from the clutches of the corrupt and tyrannical Christianity, the West turned to democracy, parliamentarianism,

freedom of speech, guarantees of an equitable socio political life and so on and so forth. But to what end?

“Another set of people abandoned the capitalists and embraced the paupers. To what end? Every time they dopted a system designed by men, for men of their own kind, they had to pay to their lords, false gods, material and spiritual prices as penalty.

“The *Surah* under consideration is not discussing the devotion to idols and deities, pure and simple, of the past forgotten times. It discusses man’s situation, in every age, in every place, and addresses every pagandom of the pre historical times, of the historical times, and of the modern times - every pagandom that is structured on the principle of man’s devotion to man .. This *Surah* demonstrates the error in such devotion, pointing out that the Lordship the whole of it, undivided is for Allah alone, and hence all devotion physical or spiritual should be reserved for Him alone. In this is man’s salvation and in nothing else. Hence the concluding passage of this *Surah*: Say, ‘O people. If you are in any doubt regarding my religion (then, know that) I do not worship what you worship besides Allah. Rather, I worship the God who deals you death. I have

[1] *Alif. Lam. Ra.*³ *These are verses of a Wise Book.*⁴

الر تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿١٠﴾

been ordered to be of the believers.' And (I have been commanded), 'Set your face to the religion, of pure faith, and be not of the idolaters. Do not call on gods besides Allah: those that cannot harm or benefit you. If you did that, then, in that event you will surely be of the transgressors. And, if Allah were to give you the taste of an affliction, there is none to remove it but He. And, if He wished a good thing, none can turn His blessing away. He causes it to visit whom He will of His slaves. He is the Most forgiving, the Most Merciful.' Say, 'People. The truth has come to you from your Lord. So, whoever received guidance, received it for his own benefit. And, whosoever chose to go astray, then his straying away is to his own loss. I am not a guardian over you. (As for you, O Muhammad), follow that which is revealed unto you. And observe patience until Allah sends down His judgment. Surely, He is the best of judges.'

2. The opinion of Ibn `Abbas is that this *Surah* is Makkan but for three verses 94-96. Muqatil however said that only two verses, 94 and 95, are Madinan. There are other opinions as well (Qurtubi, Shawkani).

3. As explained earlier (in *Surah al Baqarah*), the meaning of these letters, known as *huruf al muqatta`at*, is not definitely known. At this point, several guesses have been made. Ibn `Abbas and Dahhak have said that they are: *Alif* for Ana, *Lam* for Allah and *Ra* for Ara, meaning, together, 'I am the Lord who sees.' Another opinion of Ibn `Abbas says that the letters are part of the word "*Al Rahman*" of which the first three letters *Alif*, *Lam* and *Ra* appear here, *Ha Mim* appear (in *Surah al Ghafir*), and *Nun* (in *al Qalam*) to make up together *Al Rahman* (the Most Merciful) Tabari.

Qurtubi writes that the opinion of Ibn `Abbas to the effect that *Alif*, *Lam*, *Ra*, are short form of I am Allah who sees, is seconded by Abu Is haq, as reported by Nuhhas. Sibawayh (the linguist) in fact cited an example from Arabic poetry:

بالخير خيراتٍ و إن شراً فا

و لا أريد الشر إلا أن تآ

Good to the do gooders, for, if good, good, but if evil, then evil.

I do not wish evil unless you wish it.

[2] Is it strange for the people that We have revealed to a man from among them that,⁵ 'Warn the people and give glad tidings to the believers that they have a sure footing⁶ with their Lord?' (But) the unbelievers said, 'This (person) is surely an obvious magician.'⁷

أَكَانَ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا أَنْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى رَجُلٍ
مِّنْهُمْ أَنْ أَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا أَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ قَالَ
الْكَافِرُونَ إِنَّ هَذَا لَسَاحِرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢﴾

In the above couplet *sharran fa* stands for *sharran fa sharran* and *ta* stands for *Atasha*.

It might also be noted, writes Razi, (seconded by Shawkani) that the letters here at the head of this *Surah* do not constitute a verse by themselves, in contrast to, e.g., *Ta Ha* which is a complete verse by itself.

4. Or, in simpler words, though linguistically not very accurate, a Book full of wisdom in the words of Yusuf Ali, Each verse is a nugget of wisdom (Au.).

5. It was not only strange to them that Allah should reveal to a man, and reveal what He revealed, condemning their age old religion, but also that He should choose Muhammad as the instrument. They asked, 'Could He not find anyone better than an orphan from the house of Abu Talib?' (Zamakhshari, Shawkani).

Majid probes into the mind of the rejectionists, "The pagans of Arabia, like the pagans elsewhere, had no conception of Prophethood and

Revelation at all. They would understand incarnation God becoming man or else explain the fact of Messengership by attributing it to magic and sorcery. In idolatrous communities it is the sorcerers or magicians who are credited with supernatural powers the principal of which is the power of foretelling the future."

Sayyid Qutb considers the antagonists' psyche from a different angle. He writes: "Every messenger sent by Allah had to face this question: Has a man been made a Messenger?! At the root of the question lies a poor evaluation of the humankind. They cannot believe that this insignificant being can come into contact with God (if they would grant Him existence); that he can be given revelations for the guidance of humankind. If they would allow for guidance to come down, they would suggest that the one chosen ought to be an angel, or some other creation. But man? No.

"they keep asking: How can a human being, after all a material entity,

(composed of chemical elements) achieve contact with the incorporeal or the supra physical Being?

“This kind of question can only be answered by someone who has understood the two beings: God and man, in the fullest sense: someone who knows all about the hidden potentials of man, including those that can ever be brought out to the light of the day.

“They forget that man possesses powers and potentials that none but God has the full knowledge of. The fact is, some people possess powers and abilities that not even they themselves are aware of. Only Allah knows who these individuals are, what their possibilities are, what their limitations and extents are, and chooses of them for His Messengership whom He will. Is not He, the One who created every cell, every sinew and every bone in man, knows who can bear the burden of Messengership and who cannot?

“Some of the contemporary Qur’anic commentators seem also to have not paid enough attention to this aspect. They try to accord a new meaning to Revelation. But, knowledge of the material world is one thing, and that of the spiritual another. Each of it has its domain in which it should

remain. As regards what is presented as ‘spiritual knowledge,’ most of it is plagued with confusion and doubts both in its intent as well as purposes. Except for what the Qur’ān and *Sunnah* have informed us about the topic, there is no other approach to this knowledge, and to unravel the secret.

“As for the need to send guidance through revelation, it is quite evident. By nature man has the potential both for good as well as evil. Reason is the faculty which judges between the two. But, (even after it is convinced) the intellect remains in need of a firm anchor to hold fast against doubts, vagaries, whims and fancies. This is where the need for revelation arises.”

6. “*Qadama sidqin*” is an interesting combination, rich of meaning. The reader will have to integrate several connotations to appreciate its full significance. One possible rendering, on the authority of Ibn `Abbas and Dahhak, is that it means, “true rewards.”

Mujahid says that the allusion is to “good deeds.” That is, their good deeds are reserved (for rewards) with their Lord. There are other opinions. Ibn Jarir is inclined towards the latter.

[3] Verily it is your Lord Allah who created the heavens and the earth in six aeons,⁸ then assumed *istawa'* on the `Arsh.⁹ He disposes the affair.¹⁰ There is no intercessor save after His leave.¹¹ That is Allah, your Lord. Worship Him then. Will you not receive admonition?

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى
الْعَرْشِ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مَا مِنْ شَفِيعٍ إِلَّا مِنْ
بَعْدِ إِذْنِهِ ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ أَفَلَا
تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣﴾

Another connotation is, “precedence of truth,” i.e., “they remained true (to their faith) all along (in the past).” Yet another possible rendering is, “their good fortune has precedence in the previous Scriptures,” i.e., finds mention therein also (Qurtubi). Another is, “they shall have precedence over others in entry into Paradise” (Alusi).

The word *qadama* could also be referring to the fact that the acts of a person precede him to his Lord .. (and) the word *sidq* qualifies these acts with sincerity and genuineness” (Yusuf Ali). There are a few other connotations that are difficult to render in English.

7. At this point Rashid Rida has commentary that runs into 147 pages in connection with design, purpose and objectives of the Qur’ānic revelation to counter in detail the arguments of those who reject the Message and the Messenger, especially the Orientalists.

8. The original text uses the word “*yawm*” day in Arabic. What days are these? Are they the 24 hour cycle as mentioned in the Bible? No. Ibn `Abbas said that these were six days of the previous world when a day was a thousand years, for, before the creation there was neither day nor night of the kind we are familiar with now (Razi, Alusi).

9. We have avoided all polemics and possibilities of error by translating the phrase as, “then He assumed *istawa'* on the `Arsh,” following the well known stand of the Ahl al *Sunnah*, viz., “We know what `Arsh is. We also know what ‘*istawa'* is. But we do not know its ‘how.’ Therefore, any question regarding its ‘how’ is an innovation in religion.” Imām Razi therefore, tries to remove a misunderstanding viz., is it in the sense of, “He rested on the `Arsh?” He answers with an emphatic no. (“It cannot in any sense of the word be described as His ‘Dwelling place,’” : Majid). Razi explains that such a sense would im-

ply that if not for the 'Arsh, Allah would fall off, which is an absurdity. It would also imply that there was a time when He was without this support kind of in an unstable situation, which is another absurdity. The apparent meaning, therefore, is categorically ruled out.

He raises another question. We know what an 'Arsh is. (Lit. a throne). But the question is, is it the 'Arsh of our understanding which is mentioned here? Abu Muslim Asfahani was of the opinion that it is not. For, in Arabic, everything that is above another is its 'Arsh. Allah said (16: 68):

وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنِ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا
وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ

“And your Lord inspired the bee, “Take for yourself among the mountains, hives and among the trees, and in that which they construct.”

In the above example the word 'Arsh has been used in the sense of construction. Allah said at another place (2: 259):

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَىٰ قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا

“Or, like him who passed by a town which was fallen on its roofs.” Here Allah used the word 'Arsh in the sense of a roof. Therefore, the meaning of the

verse in question could be that after Allah had created the heavens and the earth, He turned His attention to the construction of a roof over them, or some sort of a structure to cover them. Allah said at another place (79: 27, 28):

أَأَشْتُمْ أَسْفُدًا خُلُقًا أَمْ السَّمَاءُ بَنَاهَا (٢٧) رَفَعَ سَمَكَهَا
فَسَوَّاهَا [النازعات : ٢٧ ، ٢٨]

“Or, are you a more difficult creation or the heaven which He built, raised its height and proportioned it?”

The allusion then, according to Abu Muslim Asfahani, is to this raising of the height and proportioning it.

Imām Razi also expresses the possibility that it is the dominion or the assumption of control that is meant by the words, “He assumed *istawa*’ on the 'Arsh.” Alusi writes that this is how most of the scholars have accepted as the intended meaning at this point, just as one would say, “the Sultan sat on the thrown (on such and such a day),” though actually, the Sultan might never have climbed it once. What is meant is, he assumed authority.

Imām Razi also reports that great many commentators believed that by the word 'Arsh, the allusion is to the great structure above the heavens with which Qur'an and *Sunnah*

have made us familiar. He also reminds us that trustworthy traditions say that in the beginning there was nothing except for the 'Arsh which was on water. Obviously, the meaning of He resting on it in any sense is ruled out, since here, at this point, it says, Aathen' He assumed *istawa'* on the 'Arsh." (Note the word 'then' in the text). That is, if He did not need to rest on the 'Arsh earlier to its creation, He could not have been in its need later.

We might therefore, take the safe line and conclude with the Qur'anic statement which says (3: 7):

وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ
 آمَنَّا بِهِ [آل عمران : ٧]

"And no one knows its true meaning save Allah. As for those who are well grounded in knowledge, they say, 'We have believed in it'" (Au.).

10. That is, "He is not only the Creator but also the constant Ruler and continuous Disposer of the affairs" (Majid).

11. That is, there was no intercessor in the sense of advisor to suggest to Allah Most High how things ought to be designed, constructed and placed. He made all the decisions by Himself.

Majid points out errors of previous religions: "This (the idea of intercession) refuses not only the doctrine of the pagans who imagined that their gods were intercessors with the Great God for them but also the Christian dogma of Mediation. The Christian position briefly is this, 'God and man have been estranged. The relation which normally subsists between them has been destroyed and the work of the mediation is to restore it .. There is one mediator between God and man, Himself man, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself a ransom for all' (Ebr. VIII, p. 856)."

Rashid Rida attempts at removing the misconceptions concerning intercession held by the common Muslims: First of all, no one can intercede without Allah's leave; as Allah said (in 2: 255),

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ [البقرة : ٢٥٥]

"Who is it that can intercede with Him but by His leave?"

The revelation has not named anyone who has the right of intercession with Allah. Far from that, Allah has added the condition that He will not allow anyone to intercede with him without His own approval. He said (20: 109),

[4] Unto Him is your returning, all together. Allah's promise is true. Surely, He begins the creation¹² then repeats it;¹³ so that He might reward those who believed and did good deeds, justly. As for those who disbelieved, theirs is a drink from a boiling fluid¹⁴ and a painful chastisement for that they were rejecting.¹⁵

إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ حَقًّا إِنَّهُ
يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ بِالْقِسْطِ وَالَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٤﴾

يَوْمَئِذٍ لَا تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَرَضِيَ
لَهُ قَوْلًا [طه : ١٠٩]

"The Day when intercession will be of no profit save for him whom the Merciful allows, and approves of his word."

On their part the intercessors too will not intercede except for him whom Allah approves. Allah said (21: 28),

وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ ارْتَضَى [الأنبياء : ٢٨]

"They will not intercede but for him with whom Allah is pleased."

This is following the general principle I'd down in the Qur'an that intercession is entirely Allah's prerogative. He said (39: 44),

قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ جَمِيعًا [الزمر : ٤٤]

"Say, 'All intercessions are for Allah alone.'"

Abu Muslim Asfahani points out another meaning. He sees the word Ashafi`" in the sense of Aeven" as against "Odd" (*witr*), in which case it would mean that until Allah wills

there is no Aeven" to His "Odd". He is the only "*witr*" (odd) unless He will allow. For instance, He is "*Al-Hayy*" (the Living). Now, there was no "*hayy*" until He created other hayy (living beings), who come into existence by His leave (Razi).

12. In view of the Revelation which does not allow for acceptance of the view held by science that life arose only once, and that all subsequent life, including that of the human beings is replication of that first life, we might point out that while the scientists claim (although without any proof) that the process of creation took place only once, through chance circumstances, they also admit that the process cannot be repeated because the conditions through which the earth was then passing, 3.5 billion years ago, cannot be repeated. And, despite great progress in science, there is also a general agreement among the scientists that creation of life, that is, turning dead

matter into a living one, through artificial methods, is just out of the question. At best what they can do is to assemble bits and pieces of DNA from chemical substances and plant them in a bacterium replacing its original DNA. In such experiments, the bacterium continues to generate proteins. But this is not artificial life. Artificial life would be to start with atoms, and construct a DNA chain copying none existing and then build around it a protein coat similar to that of the bacteria, copying, once again, none of the protein coat of a bacterium. Copying is not creation (Au.).

13. There is room for translation of the verb used here both in the present as well as the future tense. Therefore, some translators have chosen to put it as “He repeats it,” while others have preferred, “He will repeat it.”

14. “Hamim” is that state of liquid in which it has reached its boiling point and begins to evaporate (Qurtubi).

15. Leaving aside other conclusions that are drawn from this verse, we might lift Ka`bi’s quote from Razi’s commentary. Ka`bi pointed out the difference between the words that have been chosen here for mentioning rewards for some, and punishment for some. It is said about those

who will be rewarded, Surely, He begins the creation then repeats it; so that He might reward those who believed and did good deeds, justly.” Note the words *Aso that*.” Whereas when mentioning the punishment Allah (*swt*) said, in the same verse, “As for those who rejected, theirs is a drink from boiling fluids and a painful chastisement for that they were rejecting.” This sentence is not preceded by *Aso that*” (the *Lam al ta`lil*). Allah did not say, *Aso that* He might punish ...” What does that lead us to understand? The answer is that in principle human beings have been created (He begins the creation and then repeats it) *Aso that*” Allah might show them mercy and reward them. He did not create them *Aso that*” He might put them to torture. It is they who earn the punishment.

Another point may be noted. While speaking of rewards Allah used the word *Ajustly*,” but while speaking of punishment He did not use the same word. Why? It is because while rewarding Allah will do full justice. In fact, He will reward more than what justice demands. But while punishing, He will not do full justice. He will show mercy and make the punishment less severe, or of shorter duration, although justice might demand otherwise.

[5] It is He who made the sun a radiant light, and the moon a light (reflected).¹⁶ And He determined its¹⁷ phases so that you might know the number of years and (m"Int"In) account (of time). Allah did not create it except in Truth. He expounds the signs for a people who know.

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ
نُورًا وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ
وَالْحِسَابَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ
يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥﴾

Mawdudi demonstrates the logical connection between the fourth and fifth verses and demonstrates the need for resurrection. He writes: “the present verse sets forth the rationale of resurrection. The preceding verses had conclusively established that resurrection is possible, that there is no reasonable ground to dub it as a far fetched idea. Drawing upon the above, the verse under consideration points out that the requirements of justice and reason can only be fulfilled by resurrection, and that this calls for a repetition of the original act of creation by God.

“the point that is being made here is that those who accept God as their One and the Only Lord and truly live in service and devotion to Him deserve to be fully rewarded for the righteous conduct. Likewise, those who reject the truth and act according to their own whim deserve to be fully punished for their unrighteous conduct. The present life is so constituted that reward and punish-

ment are not being meted out and cannot be meted out in the manner described above. This is a pl”In fact, and one which is evident to all except those who are obstinate. This being the case, reason and justice demand fresh creation in order that such reward and punishment be meted out.”

16. While Allah used “*diya*” for sun’s light, He used “*nur*” for that of the moon. Majid explains the reason, “the moon has no light of its own. It only shines by the reflected light of the sun.. The Holy Qur’ān indicates this distinction by the use of two different expressions.”

Asad adds: “... many philologists are of the opinion that the term *diya*’ (or *daw*) has a more intensive connotation, and is used to describe “A light which subsists by itself, as that of the sun and fire” that is, a source of light while *nur* signifies “A light that subsists by some other thing” (Lane V, 1809, on the authority of *Taj al `Arus*).”

[6] Verily, in the alternation of the night and the day, and in what Allah has created in the heavens and the earth, are signs for a godfearing people.¹⁸

إِنَّ فِي اخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا خَلَقَ
اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦﴾

[7] Surely, those who do not expect the meeting with Us, and are well pleased with the life of this world, being satisfied with it,¹⁹ and those who are heedless to Our signs

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا وَرَضُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَاطْمَأَنَّنُوا بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا
غَافِلُونَ ﴿٧﴾

17. Although the textual case is singular, apparently applicable only to the moon, but the commentators have said that it is applicable both to the sun as well as the moon. Usage of this type is common in Arabic language.

Nonetheless, another opinion is that the allusion is to the moon alone. Further, from moon to moon, it is easy to compute the month, while computing with the sun requires some mathematical calculation. This could be the reason why the *Shari`ah* has preferred the computation of the months and years with reference to the moon while that of the day and night with reference to the sun. All Islamic affairs in which the dates play a role, will consider lunar calendar alone, or, to be specific, *Hijri* calendar. Accordingly, the jurists have said that maintaining the *Hijri* calendar is a *fard al kifayah* (conditional obligation) on the Muslims (Shafi`).

Yusuf Ali adds: “the simplest observation can keep pace with the true lunar months and lunar years, which are all that is required by a pastoral people. For agricultural purposes, solar years are required, as they indicate the changes of the season.”

18. According to Ibn `Abbas, the textual word “*Al muttaki*” demands as a minimum, renunciation of any kind of association with Allah (Qur-tubi).

19. Hence you will find that these people, whether they are happy, or in grief, or angry, or pleased – work only for the sake of this world (Ibn Jarir).

Sayyid Qutb comments: “

“Those who refuse to think on the lines that this world has a creator, sustainer and nourisher, do not understand that that the Hereafter is a necessary corollary of this system wherein justice will be fully rendered,

[8] Their refuge is the Fire for what they were earning.²⁰

أُولَئِكَ مَاوَاهُمْ النَّارُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨﴾

[9] Surely, those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will guide them²¹ for their F'ith (to) springs flowing underneath them²² in Gardens of Bliss.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِإِيمَانِهِمْ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٩﴾

and the humans will reach the apex of their development. Therefore, they do not hope to meet with God. In consequence, they remain bound to the life of this world: with all its defects and deficiencies, and stooping low to meet with its requirements. They are satisfied with the world as it is, and are immersed in it. They do not accept that there are deficiencies in the system that governs their lives, and do not understand that it is not right that the humans should end up here, and that they are departing from this life, in order to receive the rewards for the good deeds they forwarded, or the evil deeds that they invented. They do not aspire for the profound status that is the reward waiting for humanity. This halting of the people actually leads to their continuous fall because they do not raise their heads to higher realities, and do not lift their eyes to the horizons. They and their sights are always downcast, staring at the world and its possibilities, heedless to the signs spread all over of God and

His manifestations – such signs that touch the heart and lift the soul and which prompt to achieve perfection” (Sayyid Qutb).

The humans do not realize that pleasures do not add up to happiness, and, consequently, they are always striving to add material pleasures to this life, although always unhappy and without peace (Au.).

20. Shafi` asks: Are the Muslims of today any different from the description here?

21. Mujahid has said that the meaning is: Allah will guide them on the *Sirat* (Bridge) by means of a *nur* that He will provide them on that occasion (Qurtubi).

Qatadah said that the following report reached him. The Prophet said, “When a believer emerges from his grave, his deeds will appear in a beautiful form. He will ask, ‘Who could you be? By Allah, it appears that you are a true person.’ It will reply, ‘I am your deeds.’ It will be his light and

[10] Their prayer therein (would be),²³ 'Glory unto You our Lord;²⁴ their greeting therein, 'Peace,' and their final words, 'All praise to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.'²⁵

دَعَوَاهُمْ فِيهَا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَتَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلَامٌ وَأَخْرَجُوا دَعَوَاهُمْ أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

guidance to Paradise. In contrast, when an unbeliever emerges from his grave, he will encounter his deeds in the form of an ugly person, foreboding evil. He will ask, 'Who are you? By Allah, I don't think you are a good person.' He will reply, 'I am your deeds.' Then he will take him along until he is shoved into the Fire" (Ibn Jarir).

The report however is *mursal* (a kind of weak report) S. Ibrahim.

22. Ibn Jarir Tabari writes: People often get confused over the words A(springs) flowing beneath..." They think the springs of Paradise will be literally flowing beneath the feet of the Paradise dwellers. That is incorrect. What it means is that the springs will be running all around. The Qur'an has reported to us the words of Fir'awn (43: 51),

أَلَيْسَ لِي مُلْكُ مِصْرَ وَهَذِهِ الْأَنْهَارُ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِي
[الزخرف : ٥١]

"Is not Egypt's kingdom my own, and these rivers that flow beneath me?"

Obviously, the rivers of Egypt were not literally flowing beneath his feet. He meant to ask if the rivers flowing throughout Egypt were not his.

In any case, running through hollow earth, all rivers flow below men's feet (Au).

23. With reference to the textual word *Ada`wa hum*," Qurtubi points out that the use of the term in the sense of 'words of remembrance' (*tasbih, tahlil, tahmid*, etc.) is not uncommon. We might cite the example of the *du`a* known as *Du`a al Karb* (supplication for the situations of distress). The Prophet used to recite it when faced with a difficulty. It says,

لا إله إلا الله العظيم الحليم . لا إله إلا الله ربُّ
العَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ لا إله إلا الله ربُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْكَرِيمِ

"There is no deity save Allah the Great, the Forbearing. There is no deity save Allah, the Lord of the Great `Arsh. There is no deity save Allah the Lord of the heavens and the Lord of the earth and Lord of the noble `Arsh."

[11] *And, if Allah were to hasten for the people the evil (they invoke), in the manner of the good that they seek to be hastened (which in fact are hastened), surely, their term would have been (long) settled.²⁶ Rather, We leave those who do not expect the meeting with Us wandering blindly in their insolence.*

وَلَوْ يُعَجِّلُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ الشَّرَّ اسْتِعْجَالَهُمْ
بِالْخَيْرِ لَفَضِّي إِلَيْهِمْ أَجَلُهُمْ فَتَدَّرُ الَّذِينَ
لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١١﴾

It might be noticed that it is not a supplication proper. It only glorifies Allah. Yet the Salaf used to refer to it as a *du`a*.” Bukhari and Muslim have preserved this report.

Similarly, the *du`a* of Yunus in the fish’ stomach is also not a supplication proper. But it is known as a *du`a*. It says (21: 87)

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

“There is no deity save You, Glory to You. Surely, I was of the transgressors.”

Therefore, in this Qur’anic usage (*da`wa hum*) the allusion is to ‘the words of remembrance,’ and not to ‘the words of supplication.’ In short, what it means is that the people of Paradise will glorify their Lord, such as to say, as in this verse “All praise to Allah, Lord of the worlds” (Qur-tubi).

24. In explanation of the word “*subha naka*” the Prophet (*saws*) has been reported as saying that it denotes

Allah’s freedom from any weakness (Tabari).

25. Ibn Jurayj has said that when the dwellers of Paradise see a bird flying, they would say, ‘Glory to Allah.’ That would be to express their wish to have its meat. An angel will appear bearing what they had desired. They would say to them, ‘*Salam*.’ And, when finished eating they would say, ‘All praise to Allah, Lord of the Worlds’ (Ibn Jarir).

Alusi reports Sheikh al Islam (Juwayni) as saying that when the people will enter Paradise, they will be amazed by the blessings there, of the kind that no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined. They will involuntarily cry out, “Subhana Allah” (glory to Allah). Their amazement will finally end with “All praise to Allah, Lord of the worlds.”

26. That is, the people would have met with their destruction. And, to paraphrase the verse: man evokes evil

[12] And when an affliction visits man, he begins to supplicate Us: reclining, sitting, or standing.²⁷ But when We remove his affliction from him, he passes by²⁸ as if he never supplicated Us for the affliction that visited him.²⁹ That is how We deck out f'Ir unto the transgressors the things they do.

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنبِهِ أَوْ قَاعِدًا أَوْ قَائِمًا فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ ضُرَّهُ مَرَّ كَأَن لَّمْ يَدْعُنَا إِلَى ضُرِّ مَسَّهُ كَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَ لِّلْمُتَّسِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

through his wrong deeds carried out either in ignorance or out of sheer arrogance. Some of them even challenge Allah and say, "If He is able, let Him send down His scourge." But, were Allah to hasten His response, as He hastens His response when man supplicates for good, surely, mankind would have met with their destruction long ago (Au.).

Accordingly, the Prophet has said in a *hadith* of Abu Da'ud,

لَا تَدْعُوا عَلَيَّ أَتُفْسِكُمْ وَلَا تَدْعُوا عَلَيَّ أَوْلَادِكُمْ وَلَا تَدْعُوا عَلَيَّ أَمْوَالِكُمْ لَا تَوَافِقُوا مِنِّي سَاعَةً يُسْأَلُ فِيهَا عَطَاءٌ فَيَسْتَجِيبُ لَكُمْ

"Do not supplicate against yourselves. Do not supplicate against your children. Do not supplicate against your wealth. Do not allow for concurrence between your words and the hour of Allah's response, so that He responds (to your supplications and you are ill affected)" Ibn Kathir.

The above *hadith* is also in Muslim (S. Ibrahim).

Another possibility is that the allusion is to the arrogant statements of the pagan Arabs paraphrased by the Qur'an elsewhere (8: 32),

وَإِذْ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِن كَانَ هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوْ ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ [الأنفال : ٣٢]

"Of God. If this be truly from You, then rain down on us stones from the heavens" (Qurtubi).

27. That is, writes Shabbir, although man acts so arrogantly as to demand to be punished, he is actually so weak that as soon as a calamity touches him, he begins to plead. And he is so ungrateful too.

28. Sayyid comments: "Passes by: without stopping to express thanks, to consider, to change."

29. Imām Razi comments: When a believer is tried with tribulations or

[13] We destroyed generations³⁰ before you when they indulged in wrong doing. Their Messengers brought them clear evidences. But, they were not such as to believe. That is how we requite a criminal people.

[14] Then we placed you as successors in the land after them so that We might see how you act.³¹

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونََ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا وَجَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لِنَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

afflictions he ought to act in the following manner:

- (i) He should bear it without any complaint: neither with his tongue nor in the heart. He should say to himself that the situation in which he happens to be is the best thing possible for him at that moment. If Allah chooses to keep him in that state then, surely, it is following the rules of justice. If He grants him relief, then that is out of His blessing.
- (ii) He should spend time more on the remembrance of Allah than on supplications. Nevertheless, if he supplicates, he should supplicate more for religious blessings than for worldly blessings.
- (iii) When the affliction is removed, he should engage himself in thanksgiving and being dutiful in complete earnest.
- (iv) There is a higher state thereafter. It is said that he who is thinking of

the blessing at the time he receives the blessing, Rather than thinking of the One who granted the blessing, or, thinking of the affliction instead of the One who sent the affliction, is, in either case, undergoing an affliction. It is those who are thinking of the One who blessed, and the One who caused the affliction, that are truly in blessings through and through.

30. The textual word “*qurun*” (sing., *qarn*) has, according to Lisan al `Arab, several connotations such as, a people, a nation, a generation or an epoch. A period of time, specifically a century, is another connotation; while it is also used for the chief of a tribe. Another interesting connotation in the present context is that of a fort (Au).

31. `Umar used to say to the people (after reciting this verse), “Allah spoke the truth. He did not make us succeed others except to see what our

[15] When Our self evident verses are recited to them, those who do not expect to meet Us say, 'Bring us a Qur'ān other than this or alter it.'³² Say, 'It is not for me that I should alter it on my own. I only follow what is revealed to me.'³³ I fear the chastisement of a Great Day, if I disobeyed my Lord.'³⁴

وَإِذَا تُلِيٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ
الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا اِنَّتِ بُرْهَانَ غَيْرِ
هَذَا اَوْ بَدَّلَهُ فُلْ مَا يَكُوْنُ لِيْ اَنْ اُبَدَّلَهُ
مِنْ تَلْقَاءِ نَفْسِيْ اِنْ اَتَّبِعْ اِلَّا مَا يُوْحٰى
اِلَيَّ اِنِّيْ اَخَافُ اِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّيْ عَذَابَ
يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١٥﴾

deeds will be. Therefore, show good deeds to Him, morning and evening, in open and in secret.”

32. The two demands were different. One demand was, ‘Bring us another Qur’ān,’ that is, one completely other than this, a different message, different words, different style and so on. On the other hand, the alteration that was demanded, meant, ‘Remove the objectionable passages.’ Now, alteration was simpler than producing an entirely different Qur’ān. The Prophet was directed to tell them that he could not attempt even the easier option, viz. alteration. That meant that their other demand that he produce a Qur’ān other than this, was entirely out of the question (Razi).

33. Mawdudi comments on the intention concealed behind such demands. He writes: “they virtually told the Prophet (peace on him), that if he wanted to lead them, he

should come forth with something that would be of benefit to them and ameliorate their worldly life. And if this was not possible, then he should at least show some flexibility in his attitude which would enable them to strike a compromise with him by effecting mutual accommodation between the Makkan unbelievers and the Prophet (peace be on him) himself.

“In other words, the Makkans felt that the Prophet’s doctrine of God’s unity should not totally exclude their polytheism; that his conception of devotion to God should be such as to allow them some scope for their worldliness and self indulgence; that the call to believe in the Hereafter should be such that it might still be possible for them to behave in the world as they pleased and yet entertain hope of somehow attaining salvation in the Next World. Likewise, the absolute and categorical nature of moral principles enunciated by the

[16] Say, 'Had Allah willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have made it known to you. Surely, I remained a lifetime among you before it. Will you not then reason?'³⁵

قُلْ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا تَلَوْتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَدْرَاكُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ عُمُرًا مِّن قَبْلِهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

Prophet (peace be on him) was also unpalatable to them. They wanted moral principles to be pronounced in a manner that would provide concessions to their predilections and biases, to their customs and usages, to their personal and national interests, and to the lusts and desires that they wished to satisfy.”

34. (It is a beautiful reply suggested to the Prophet for those who asked for a different Qur’ān or alterations in the revealed one). He was to say that he feared a great chastisement, if he committed a sin, however slight, against his Lord. What would happen to him if he committed the unforgivable act of altering the revelation? (Manar)

35. Asad sums up several commentaries here: “This argument placed in the mouth of the Prophet has a twofold implication. Ever since his early youth, Muhammad had been renowned for his truthfulness and integrity, so much so that his Meccan compatriots applied to him the epithet *Al Amin* (‘The Trustworthy’). In

addition to this, he had never composed a single line of poetry (and this in contrast with a tendency which was widespread among the Arabs of his time), nor had he been distinguished by particular eloquence. ‘How, then,’ goes the argument, ‘can you reconcile your erstwhile conviction based on the experience of a lifetime that Muhammad was incapable of uttering a lie, with your present contention that he himself has composed the Qur’ān and now falsely attributes it to divine revelation? And how could he who, up to the age of forty, has never displayed any poetic or philosophic gifts and is known to be entirely unlettered (*ummi*) have composed a work as perfect in its language, as penetrating in its psychological insight and as compelling in its inner logic as the Qur’ān?’”

Rashid Rida sheds light on another aspect of the argument articulated by the Qur’ān. He writes: Could the pagans not use their reason to ask themselves that someone who had lived and grown among them for full

[17] *Who then can do greater wrong than he who fastened a lie on Allah, or gave the lie to His revelations?*³⁶ *Surely, the criminals will not succeed.*³⁷

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا
أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

forty years, who had not read a single book, was not taught by anyone, did not pursue any religious studies, knew nothing about rules, regulations or laws (of life and society), did not learn different kinds of rhetoric, different forms of speech, neither in poetry nor in prose, nor delivered sermons displaying knowledge or wisdom .. how could such a person suddenly start delivering a literary masterpiece that was beyond their powers, Rather beyond the powers of peoples of all times to produce something, of which no other example exists, not even in the existing Scriptural works?

Finally, Mawdudi follows up with what the Quraysh or antagonists of any other age – have had to say when the above argument (that the Prophet authored the Qur’ān), became untenable: “This (the absurdity of the claim: Au.) explains the fact that when some of the more crafty Makkan unbelievers realized the sheer absurdity of their allegation that the Prophet (peace on him) was the author of the Qur’ān, they chose

to propagate that there must be some other person who had taught the Prophet (peace on him) the Qur’ān. Such a statement, however, was even more preposterous since they failed to convincingly point out who that other person was who was the true source of the Qur’ān. Even leaving aside Makka, the fact is that there was not a single person throughout the length and breadth of Arabia who possessed the competence needed for the authorship of the Qur’ān. Had such an extraordinary person existed, how could he have remained hidden from the sight of others?”

36. Skeptics of all times have been warned through the passage, Who then can do greater wrong than he who fastened a lie on Allah, or gave the lie to His revelations?” There are two kinds of people who commit wrongs that are greater than any other wrong: first, those who fasten a lie on Allah, claiming that they received revelation although they did not. The other kind is of those who, despite being convinced of its authenticity, deny that the revelation is

[18] They worship besides Allah that which neither harms them nor benefits them; and say, 'These are our intercessors with God.' Say, 'Will you tell Allah what He knows not in the heavens, nor in the earth?' Glorified is He and Exalted high above what they associate.

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ
وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شُفَعَاؤُنَا
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ قُلْ أَتَشْتُمُونَ اللَّهَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ
فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ سُبْحَانَهُ
وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] Mankind were not but one community.³⁸ Then they fell at variance. And, were it not for a word that preceded from your Lord, surely it would have been (long) judged between them concerning that over which they were differing.

وَمَا كَانَ النَّاسُ إِلَّا أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَاخْتَلَفُوا
وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِن رَّبِّكَ لَفُضِّي
بَيْنَهُمْ فِيمَا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

from Allah. Now, since the Prophet was not fastening a lie on Allah, the attention shifted to the second kind: those who were denying the fact of revelation to the Prophet. Who could do greater wrong than them? (Au.).

37. Mawdudi explains what it is that “does not” constitute success. He writes: “the Qur’anic term *falah* (prosperity, success) used in the above verse has been understood by some to signify such things as longevity, worldly prosperity and other worldly achievements... it should be remembered that it has been amply elucidated in the Qur’an that God does not punish evil doers instantly; that He Rather grants them a fair opportunity to mend their ways. Not

only that, if the evil doers misuse the respite granted by God to perpetrate further wrongs, they are sometimes granted an even further respite.

“In fact, at times a variety of worldly favours are bestowed upon such evil doers in order that the potential for wickedness inherent in them might be fully exposed by their actions, proving that they do indeed deserve a very severe punishment.”

38. That is, they were on the true religion. That was the situation, writes Zamakhshari, starting with Adam until Qabil killed Habil. Another opinion is that the reference is to the time of Nuh (*asws*), at the end of his mission when every unbeliever was wiped out by the flood.

[20] They say, 'Only if a miracle had been sent down to him from his Lord!'³⁹ Say, 'The Unseen is for Allah. Therefore, wait. I am with you among those who are waiting.'⁴⁰

وَيَقُولُونَ لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَقُلْ
إِنَّمَا الْعَيْبُ لِلَّهِ فَانْتَظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ
الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] And when We let the people taste mercy after an affliction had touched them, lo, there they are, plotting against Our signs.⁴¹ Say, 'Allah is faster at plotting.' Assuredly, Our (angel-)messengers are writing down what you plot.

وَإِذَا أَدَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَاءٍ
مَسَّتْهُمْ إِذَا لَهُمْ مَكْرٌ فِي آيَاتِنَا قُلِ اللَّهُ
أَسْرَعُ مَكْرًا إِنَّ رُسُلَنَا يَكْتُبُونَ مَا تَمْكُرُونَ
﴿٢١﴾

Majid criticizes Western misguided notions: "the holy Qur'an clearly repudiates and negatives the current opinion that monotheism has been evolved out of polytheism. It openly proclaims that monotheism was the original, universal religion of mankind gradually debased into polytheism."

Asad has a subtle point: "In the present context, this expression alludes not merely to mankind's one time homogeneity, but also by implication to the fact, repeatedly stressed in the Qur'an (e.g., in 7: 172), that the ability to realize God's existence, oneness and omnipotence is innate in man, and that all deviation from this basic perception is a consequence of the confusion brought about by man's progressive estrangement from his inborn instincts."

39. What the unbelievers meant, Zamakhshari points out, is a sign and

a miracle of the kind that they desired. Otherwise there was no shortage of miracles, not to say anything about the Qur'an, the greatest of all miracles.

40. "the Prophet's statement conveys the idea that he had faithfully presented to them whatever God had revealed to him. As for the things which had not been revealed to the Prophet (peace on him), they constitute the ghayb (the realm of the unseen). Now, it is only God and none else who can decide whether to reveal any part of the ghayb (the unseen) or not. Hence, if some people's believing was contingent upon their observing the signs which god had not revealed, they might as well keep waiting indefinitely for these signs" (Mawdudi).

41. Mujahid has explained the textual word "makr" in this context as meaning mockery and denial (Ibn

Jarir). That is, when Allah sends relief to the pagans after their suffering, they begin to mock at His revelations, denying their validity (Au.).

While on the subject we might remind ourselves of a *hadith* (in Bukhari: S. Ibrahim). One morning, which was preceded by a rainy night, the Prophet stood up after the Prayers and said,

« هَلْ تَدْرُونَ مَاذَا قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ؟ ». قَالُوا : اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ
أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ : « قَالَ : أَصْبَحَ مِنْ عِبَادِي مُؤْمِنٌ فِي
وَكَافِرٌ ، فَأَمَّا مَنْ قَالَ مُطِرْنَا بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَتِهِ فَذَلِكَ
مُؤْمِنٌ فِي وَكَافِرٌ بِالْكَوْكَبِ ، وَأَمَّا مَنْ قَالَ مُطِرْنَا بِنَوْءٍ
كَذًّا وَكَذًّا فَذَلِكَ كَافِرٌ فِي وَمُؤْمِنٌ بِالْكَوْكَبِ . »

“Do you know what your Lord said the last night?” They replied, “Allah and His Messenger know best.” He said, “He said, “This morning, some of My slaves turned believers in me, and some turned unbelievers. Those who said, “We were sent the rains by Allah’s bounty and mercy,” believed in Me and disbelieved in the stars. While those who said, “We were sent rains because of such and such a star,” disbelieved in Me and believed in the stars” (Ibn Kathir).

Taking the cue from Ibn Hajr, Alusi points out that it is not against the spirit of *Tawhid* to believe that the

material objects, or laws of nature, cause rains to descend. Just as it will not be a denial of Allah’s sole authority to say said that fire burns. It would be against *Tawhid* to believe that the material objects, or laws of nature, are free to act, independent of Allah’s active will. In fact, as Sheikh Akbar (Muhiyuddin ibn al ‘Arabiyy) has pointed out, cosmic objects do have their effect on the life on earth, but they do not act independent of Allah’s will (slightly reworded).

We cannot be sure what exactly Ibn al-‘Arabiyy meant when he spoke of cosmic objects affecting human life, but it is a fact that nothing happens in the cosmos, no matter how distantly, but it has its effects on life on earth, no matter how slightly. Scientifically, this is undeniable (Au.).

Imām Razi points out that in a previous verse of this chapter (no. 12) Allah said, “And when an affliction visits man, he begins to supplicate to Us: reclining, sitting, or standing. But when We remove his affliction from him, he passes by as if he never supplicated to Us for the affliction that visited him.” Whereas in this present verse Allah added that when He sends relief, the unbelievers begin to plot against His revelation. That is, the two verses are speaking of two

[22] It is He who conveys you about in the land and the sea; till when you are in the ships⁴² and they sail with them with a favorable wind, and, as they are pleased therewith, there comes upon it a strong wind.⁴³ Waves surge upon them from all sides so that they are sure they have been encircled⁴⁴ (then) they begin to call upon Allah declaring the religion sincerely for Him⁴⁵ (saying), 'If You rescued us from this, we shall surely be of the grateful (ones).'⁴⁶

هُوَ الَّذِي يُسَيِّرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلِكِ وَجَرَيْنَ بِهِم بِرِيحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ وَفَرِحُوا بِهَا جَاءَتْهَا رِيحٌ عَاصِفٌ وَجَاءَهُم الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ أُحِيطَ بِهِمْ دَعَوُا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ لَئِن لَّا أَجَبْتَنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

classes of unbelievers, the latter kind being the more intransigent.

42. The textual word "fulk" is used both for the singular as well as plural, masculine as well as feminine, for a ship or a large boat (Ibn Jarir).

43. The change from plural to singular is common in the Qur'an and in the Arabic literature. Qurtubi cites both from the Qur'an as well as from pre Islamic poetry, instances of similar usages.

44. Like a besieged people encircled by an army assaulting them from all sides (Qurtubi).

45. Another rendering could be, as Majid has done, Amaking their faith pure for Him."

Alusi, Shawkani and others write: (This is what happened with 'Ikrimah b. Abu Jahl, except that he remained true to the promise he made to his

Lord: Au.). When Makkah was captured, he escaped and embarked a ship to leave the land. They were struck by high winds. The captain of the ship told the passengers, "Call upon one Lord, for your idols cannot do anything for you now." 'Ikrimah said to himself, "If nothing but calling upon one Lord will save me in the sea, no one else can save me on the land either. O Lord! I give You my word that if you rescued me from what I am in, I shall go to Muhammad and place my hand in his. And I am sure I will find You the Forgiving One, the Generous."

The report is in Nasa'i and Abu Da'ud and is *sahih* of status (S. Ibrahim).

46. Rashid Rida comments: (The Qur'an has depicted a reaction that is natural and common among mankind, since belief in one God resides at the sub conscious level of every

[23] But when He rescues them,⁴⁷ behold, there they are, rebelling in the earth unjustly.⁴⁸ People, surely your rebellion is agst your own souls,⁴⁹ a short enjoyment of the life of this world, then to Us is your return and then We shall inform you of what you were doing.⁵⁰

قَلَّمَا أَنْجَاهُمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَبْعُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
بِعَيْرِ الْحَقِّ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا بَعَيْتُمْ
عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ مَتَاعَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ
إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَتُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

human being. But how painful it is to see that when – not non-Muslims – but even Muslims, experience this kind of situation, they do not call upon Allah, making their religion pure for Him. The corruption in faith and beliefs has reached such levels that they call upon other than Allah even in situations where an unbeliever invokes one God. Many reliable sources have reported that when some boats filled with the so called Muslims were battered by storms, cries such as “O Badawi”, “O Rifaa`i”, “O `Abd al Qadir Jeelani” were heard from the occupants. It is said that on one occasion there happened to be a true believer among them. He was so upset that he cried out, “O my Lord. Drown us, drown us. There seems to be no one left who acknowledges You.” The Indian scholar Hasan Siddiq, as well as Sayyid Mahmud Alusi, have similar observations to make. In Egypt for instance, Rashid Rida continues, “We were not able to raise the voice

of round faith in one Lord God, until the English occupied our lands and allowed us freedom of expression. Despite that, when for the first time I spoke on unblemished and unadulterated *Tawhid* during a talk in a mosque, there was a great uproar among the audience who went so wild that I was afraid they’d kill me.”

47. Asad remarks: “It is to be noted that at this point the discourse changes abruptly from the direct address ‘you’ to the third person plural (‘they’): a construction which is evidently meant to bring out the allegorical character of the subsequent narrative and to turn it into a lesson of general validity.”

To the above it would be right to add that whatever the nature of the narrative, it does reflect a practical truth (Au.).

48. There is a *hadith* (in Abu Da’ud and Ibn Majah: S. Ibrahim) which says,

مَا مِنْ ذَنْبٍ أَجْدَرُ أَنْ يُعَجِّلَ اللَّهُ لِصَاحِبِهِ الْعُقُوبَةَ فِي
الدُّنْيَا مَعَ مَا يَدَّخِرُ لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْبَغْيِ وَقَطِيعَةِ
الرَّحِمِ

“There is not a sin more deserving that Allah hasten its scourge in this world, apart from what He has reserved for him in the Hereafter than rebellion and severing off the blood relationships” (Ibn Kathir).

The above *hadith* has been declared *Sahih* by Albani (Au.).

It is said that someone asked Imām Ja`far al Saadiq for a proof of God’s existence. He asked the man what his trade was. He said he worked at the sea. Imām Ja`far asked him to narrate an (unforgettable) situation out there in the seas. The man described a situation when his boat sank and he clung to a wooden plank frantically waiting for help. Ja`far Sadiq asked him if he felt like imploring and supplicating. The man said yes. Ja`far told him that the feeling then experienced was a proof of God’s existence (Razi).

49. Few people can perceive in everyday life or in world politics the truth of the Prophetic statement as quoted here by Shawkani. He is reported to have said in a narration preserved by

Abu al Sheikh, Ibn Marduwayh, Abu Nu`aym, Khatib and Daylami,

ثلاث من كن فيه فهي راجعة على صاحبها : البغي
والمكر والنكث

“There are three things that recoil on their originators: Rebellion (against an established authority), machinations, and breaking of a promise.” Then the Prophet recited the verse under discussion, “People, surely your rebellion is against your own souls.”

Ibn `Abbas has another narrative from the Prophet, preserved by Ibn Marduwayh. He said,

لو أن جبلاً بغى على جبلٍ لَدُكَّ الباغِي

“If a mount”In were to rebel against another mount”In (i.e., attack it unjustly), surely the oppressing one would be rendered to dust.”

Rashid Rida proposes a correction to the effect that the narration about the two mountains is weak as a *hadith*. More correctly, they are the words of Ibn `Abbas as in Adab al Mufrad of Imām Bukhari.

50. These two verses, 22 and 23, expand upon what was said in brief in verse 21 (Razi).

[24] Indeed, the likeness of the life of this world is like water that We sent down from the heaven. The vegetation of the earth mingled with it (to bring forth) what people and the cattle consume, till, when the earth has taken on its glitter, it has becomes enchanting, and its inhabitants think they enjoy complete control over it, Our command came upon it, by night or by day; and We turned it into (the like of) mowed down harvest, as though it had not flourished⁵¹ just yesterday.⁵² That is how We turn about the verses for a people who reflect.⁵³

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ تَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخَذَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ أَهْلُهَا أَنَّهُمْ قَادِرُونَ عَلَيْهَا أَتَاهَا أَمْرُنَا لَيْلًا أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَاهَا حَصِيدًا كَأَن لَّمْ تَغْنَبْ بِالْأَمْسِ كَذَلِكَ تُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

51. The usage of the word “*taghna*” in the original, with its root in “*ghana*” draws the following comment from Alusi and Rashid Rida: When it is said, so and so *ghana fi al makan*”, it means, the man stayed in that place for a long while.

52. (We have a *hadith* which depicts the worth of this world). The Prophet said (Ibn Majah: Sayyid Ibrahim),

« يُؤْتَى بِأَنْعَمِ أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَيُصْبَغُ فِي النَّارِ صَبْعَةً ثُمَّ يُقَالُ يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ هَلْ رَأَيْتَ خَيْرًا قَطُّ هَلْ مَرَّ بِكَ نَعِيمٌ قَطُّ فَيَقُولُ لَا وَاللَّهِ يَا رَبِّ. وَيُؤْتَى بِأَشَدِّ النَّاسِ بُؤْسًا فِي الدُّنْيَا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ فَيُصْبَغُ صَبْعَةً فِي الْجَنَّةِ فَيُقَالُ لَهُ يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ هَلْ رَأَيْتَ بُؤْسًا قَطُّ هَلْ مَرَّ بِكَ شِدَّةٌ قَطُّ فَيَقُولُ لَا وَاللَّهِ يَا رَبِّ مَا مَرَّ بِي بُؤْسٌ قَطُّ وَلَا رَأَيْتُ شِدَّةً قَطُّ. »

“A man who had spent his entire life in great luxury would be brought forth on the Day of Judgment. He will be given a dip

into the Fire and asked, ‘Have you ever tasted a good thing? Have you ever enjoyed comforts?’ He will reply, ‘Never, O my Lord.’ Then another man who had spent his life in harrowing circumstances will be brought forth and given a dip in Paradise. He will be asked, ‘Have you ever tasted an evil? Did you ever experience any hardship?’ He will reply, ‘Never. O My Lord. I never faced any harrowing circumstances; nor did I ever experience any hardship.’” (That is, such is the worth of the pains and pleasures of this life, when compared to those of the Hereafter: Au.).

The above is from Muslim (Au.).

53. Shah `Abd al Qadir (Muwadhah al Qur`an) has beautifully ap-

[25] Allah invites to the abode of peace⁵⁴ and guides whom He will to a straight path.⁵⁵ وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

plied the simile in this verse to the life of the humans on this planet. He writes: “Like water, the spirit came down from the heavens. It gathered strength by mixing itself with the body of dust. When the two mingled, man came into being. He committed acts both human as well as beastly. When he achieved skill and his acquaintances began to depend on him, suddenly death appeared (on the stage) and destroyed the whole play. The man disappeared leaving no trace of himself.”

54. Abu Qilabah reports the following. The Prophet (*saws*) said,

لِتَنِمَ عَيْنُكَ وَلِتَسْمَعَ أُذُنُكَ وَلِيَعْقِلَ قَلْبُكَ ، قَالَ :
فَنَامَتْ عَيْنِي وَسَمِعْتُ أُذُنِي وَعَقَلَ قَلْبِي ، قَالَ : فَقِيلَ
لَهُ : سَيِّدُ بَنِي دَارًا وَصَنَعَ مَأْدُبَةً فَأَرْسَلَ دَاعِيًا فَصَنَعَ
أَجَابَ الدَّاعِيَ دَخَلَ الدَّارَ ، وَأَكَلَ مِنَ الْمَأْدُبَةِ ،
وَرَضِيَ عَنْهُ السَّيِّدُ ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يُجِبِ الدَّاعِيَ لَمْ يَدْخُلِ
الدَّارَ ، وَلَمْ يَنْبَلِ الْمَأْدُبَةَ ، وَسَخَطَ عَلَيْهِ السَّيِّدُ ،
فَالسَّيِّدُ اللَّهُ ، وَالدَّاعِيَ مُحَمَّدٌ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
، وَالْمَأْدُبَةُ الْجَنَّةُ

“I was told: ‘Let your eye sleep, let your heart ponder, let your ear hear.’ So my eyes slept, my heart pondered, and my ears heard. Then I was told: ‘A Master built a house. Then he got a feast ar-

ranged. After that he sent a caller. Whoever answered the caller entered the house, ate the food, and the Master was pleased with him. But whoever did not answer the caller, did not enter the house, did not eat from the food, the Master was displeased with him. Now, Allah is the Master. The caller is Muhammad and the food is Paradise.”

Another version of this report comes from Jabir b. `Abdullah. This version starts with the words,

خَرَجَ عَلَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَوْمًا
فَقَالَ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ فِي الْمَنَامِ كَأَنَّ جِبْرِيْلَ عِنْدَ رَأْسِي
وَمِيكَائِيلَ عِنْدَ رِجْلَيَّ يَقُولُ أَحَدُهُمَا لِصَاحِبِهِ اضْرِبْ
لَهُ مَثَلًا فَقَالَ اسْمِعْ سَمِعْتَ أُذُنُكَ وَأَعْقَلَ عَقْلَ قَلْبِكَ
إِنَّمَا مَثَلُكَ وَمَثَلُ أُمَّتِكَ كَمَثَلِ مَلِكٍ اتَّخَذَ دَارًا ثُمَّ بَنَى
فِيهَا بَيْتًا ثُمَّ جَعَلَ فِيهَا مَائِدَةً ثُمَّ بَعَثَ رَسُولًا يَدْعُو
النَّاسَ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَجَابَ الرَّسُولَ وَمِنْهُمْ
مَنْ تَرَكَهُ فَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْمَلِكُ وَالدَّارُ الْإِسْلَامُ وَالْبَيْتُ
الْجَنَّةُ وَأَنْتَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ رَسُولٌ فَمَنْ أَجَابَكَ دَخَلَ
الْإِسْلَامَ وَمَنْ دَخَلَ الْإِسْلَامَ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَنْ دَخَلَ
الْجَنَّةَ أَكَلَ مَا فِيهَا

“One of those days the Prophet came out. He said, ‘I saw in a dream as if Jibra’il was at my head and Mika’il at my feet. One of them said to the other, “Draw

a simile for him.” So the other said, “Listen. May your ears hear. Think. May your mind think. And the example of yourself and your followers is like that of a master who took a place and then built a house in it. Then he prepared a banquet and sent a messenger to invite the people to the food. Some of them answered the messenger, while others ignored him. Now, Allah is the King, the place is Islam, the house is Paradise and you, O Muhammad, the Messenger. So, whoever answered you entered Islam and whoever entered Islam entered Paradise; and whoever entered Paradise ate thereof.” (Ibn Jarir).

The first version is *mursal* (the Companion’s name is missing from the chain) but the second version is *marfu’* (i.e., does not have any such defect) Ibn Kathir.

Hakim has also recorded the substance of this report declaring it trustworthy with Dhahabi seconding it (S. Ibrahim).

The above *hadith* is narrated in parts by Bukhari, Tirmidhi and Darimi, but even if they are all pieced together, they do not match up fully with the version as presented here (Au.).

55. With reference to this verse, Qatadah has said, “We have been told that the following is written in the *Torah*, ‘O seeker of virtue, hurry up; and O seeker of evil, halt.’ And, Abu Darda’ narrated: The Prophet said,

مَا طَلَعَتْ شَمْسٌ قَطُّ إِلَّا بِجَنَّتَيْهَا مَلَكَانِ يُنَادِيَانِ
يُسْمِعَانِ مَنْ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ غَيْرَ الثَّقَلَيْنِ : أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ!
هَلُّمُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ ، مَا قَلَّ وَكَفَىٰ خَيْرٌ بِمَا كَثُرَ وَأَهْيَىٰ ،
وَلَا غَرَبَتْ إِلَّا بِجَنَّتَيْهَا مَلَكَانِ يُنَادِيَانِ : اللَّهُمَّ! أَعْطِ
مُنْفِقًا خَلْفًا ، وَأَعْطِ مُسِيئًا تَلْفًا

“There is never a fresh day but w two angels appear announcing what the whole of the creation hear except men and Jinn. It is said, ‘People. Hasten to your Lord. Surely, what will suffice, although little, is better than the plenty which diverts (attention from Allah)’” Ibn Jarir.

The substance of the *hadith* is found in *sahih* reports of Ahmad, Hakim and others (S. Ibrahim).

[26] To those who do good is the good (reward) and more,⁵⁶ neither will their faces be covered by darkness nor by humiliation. They are companions of the Garden abiding therein forever.

لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ وَلَا يَرْهَقُ وُجُوهَهُمْ قَتَرٌ وَلَا ذِلَّةٌ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] As for those who earned evils, the recompense of an evil is the like thereof. They will be covered with ignominy. They will have no savior apart from Allah as if their faces are covered with patches of a dark night. They are companions of the Fire, abiding therein forever.

وَالَّذِينَ كَسَبُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ جَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ بِمِثْلِهَا وَتَرَهَّقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ مَّا هُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ غَاصِمٍ كَأَنَّمَا أُغْشِيَتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ قِطْعًا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ مُظْلِمًا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

56. Although the words are open and include every good reward and, in addition, forgiveness from Allah, the two words “*Al husna*” and *Azi-yadah*” have been widely interpreted as meaning, respectively, “Paradise” and the “Beatific Vision.” In fact, Abu Musa al Ash`ari has even narrated a *hadith* to this effect (Ibn Jarir). This is the opinion of Abu Bakr, Hudhayfa b. al Yamaan, Ibn `Abbas, Sa`id b. al Musayyib, `Abd *Al Rahman* ibn Abi Laylah, `Abd *Al Rahman* b. Thabit, Mujahid, `Ikrimah, `”Amir b. Sa`d, `Ataa’, Dahhaak, Hasan, Qataadah, Suddi, Ibn Ishaq and many others (Ibn Kathir).

قَالَ: فَيُكشَفُ الحِجَابُ، فيَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْهِ، فَوَالَّذِي تَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا أَعْطَاهُمْ شَيْئًا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّظَرِ إِلَيْهِ

“When the people of Paradise would have entered Paradise Allah will ask, ‘Do you wish anything more?’ They will reply, ‘Have You not tilted our Scales, and brightened our faces? Have You not admitted us into Paradise and saved us from the Fire?’ So, Allah will remove the veil and lo, they will find that nothing is dearer to them than looking at their Lord.” In fact, Qurtubi adds, there are versions in which the Prophet recited this present verse after speaking these words.

This view is supported by a *hadith* of Muslim which says,

يَا أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ، إِنَّ لَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَوْعِدًا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُنَجِّزَكُمُوهُ، فَيَقُولُونَ: وَمَا هُوَ؟ أَلَمْ يَتَّقِلْ مَوَازِينَنَا، وَيُبَيِّضُ وُجُوهَنَا، وَأَدْخَلَنَا الْجَنَّةَ، وَأَخْرَجَنَا مِنَ النَّارِ،

Imām Razi writes: There are linguistic grounds to say that the allusion by “more” is to the Beatific Vision alone. If it is said, “I gave you ten

[28] The day We shall gather them all together and say to those who associated (with Us, 'Hold on) to your places you and those you associated (with Allah).' Then We shall cause a split between them,⁵⁷ those they associated (with Allah) will say, 'It was not us that you were worshipping.

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا مَكَانَكُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَشُرَكَائِكُمْ فَرَيْلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَقَالَ شُرَكَائُهُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ إِلَّا نَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

[29] Allah is enough for a witness between us and you. We were certainly unaware of your worship.⁵⁸

فَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ إِنْ كُنَّا عَنْ عِبَادَتِكُمْ لَغَافِلِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] At that point every soul will be tried with what it forwarded⁵⁹ and they will be restored to Allah their rightful Lord, and lost from them (all) that they were forging.

هُنَالِكَ تَبْلُو كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مِمَّا أَسْلَفَتْ وَرُدُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمْ الْحَقَّ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

kilos of wheat and more,” it would mean more than ten kilos of wheat was given. But when it is said, “I gave you wheat and more,” then the “more” of the sentence is not wheat. Similarly, the grammatical construction of the sentence does not allow for “more” to be understood as, say, luxuries of Paradise and more of them; or good rewards and more of them. In each case the “more” (ziyadah) has to be different from what is covered by “the good” (*Al husna*). Therefore, they can only be, respectively, luxuries of Paradise and the Beatific Vision.

57. That is, all relationships between the worshipers and the worshiped will be severed (Ibn Jarir).

58. Mujahid is reported to have said that on the Day of Judgment, idols, deities and all those inanimate objects that the people worshiped in this world would be gathered together. Their worshipers will be asked: Are these the ones you worshiped? Their devotees will say yes. But the worshiped objects will deny that they were worshiped. They will seek Allah’s testimony that inanimate as they were, they could not have allowed their worship, but were, in fact, unaware of their devotions (Ibn Jarir).

59. The allusion is to the trial situation between the worshipers and the worshiped, expressed in preceding two verses (Mujahid). However,

[31] Say, 'Who provides you out of the heaven and the earth? Or, who owns the hearing and sight? And who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living?⁶⁰ And who directs the affair?' They will surely say, 'Allah.' Say, 'Then why do you not shun (association with Allah?).'

قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمَّنْ
يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَمَنْ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ
مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ
يُدِيرُ الْأَمْرَ فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ فَقُلْ أَفَلَا
تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

[32] This then is your Lord in truth. So what is there, after truth, save error? How then are you being turned (away)?

فَذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمُ الْحَقُّ فَمَاذَا بَعَدَ الْحَقِّ
إِلَّا الضَّلَالُ فَأَنَّى تُصْرَفُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

[33] That is how Allah's word proved true with regard to the ungodly that they will not believe.⁶¹

كَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
فَسَقُوا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

the opinion of some others is that the textual word *Atablu*" is used in the sense of seeing. That is, "Everyone will see what it forwarded" (Ibn Jarir).

60. Qurtubi writes: Examples of the living from the dead are: man from the sperm, plants from the seeds, chicken from the egg and the believer from the unbeliever.

Rashid Rida warns that the above explanations might not be acceptable to the modern mind. We should Rather cite the first appearance of life on earth (whenever it originated) as an example of the living from the dead. Another example is that of the food we eat. It is broken down in the stomach to molecules and then, carried by the blood, enters into the cell,

to be processed there and become the living matter that replicates itself (slightly reworded).

Modern scientific discoveries can cite viruses, prions and viroids as examples of the living from the dead. These are absolutely nothing more than specks of dust, but which, once they penetrate a living cell, take charge of it and start producing their own kind from the cell material, generating billions upon billions, until the cell burst and they spread out to invade other cells (Au.)

61. The allusion by "Allah's word" is to His law which dictates that He does not guide those who show no inclination to receive guidance, who do not use their power of reasoning when it comes to religious truths,

[34] Say, 'Is there any of those you associate (with Allah) who begins the creation and then repeats it?' Say, 'Allah begins the creation and then repeats it. How then are you being deluded?'⁶²

قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ قُلِ اللَّهُ يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ فَأَنْتُمْ تَوَفُّكُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

[35] Say, 'Is there any of those you associate (with Allah) who guides to the truth? It is Allah who guides to the truth. Is He then who guides to the truth more deserving of being followed or someone who does not find guidance⁶³ unless he himself is guided?⁶⁴ What "Is you then? How do you judge?"⁶⁵

قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ قُلِ اللَّهُ يَهْدِي لِلْحَقِّ أَفَمَنْ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُتَّبَعَ أَمْ لَا يَهْدِي إِلَّا أَنْ يَهْدَىٰ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

and who are bent upon rejection, evidences being of no consequence to them. Allah's law is not to force guidance upon anyone (based on Rashid Rida).

62. Mawdudi comments on How then are you being deluded": "Addressing the generality of the unbelievers, the Qur'an inquires, 'How then, are you being turned away?' The question that is posed here makes it clear that it is not the unbelievers themselves who are guilty of turning away, Rather they are being made to turn away from the right way and that this is happening under the influence of some person or group who is engaged in misleading people. It is for this reason that in effect people are being asked: 'Why should they go about blindly fol-

lowing those who are out to mislead people. Why should they not use their brains and think for themselves why they are being turned in a direction which is contrary to reality?"

63. The textual word *Ayahiddi*" was originally *Ayahtadi*." The letter "A" was dropped for some reason to render it as *Atahiddi*" with some necessary diacritical changes (Ibn Jarir).

64. The point is, if these objects cannot guide their followers, how do they deserve worship? (Thanwi)

65. Majid reproduces the comments of a Christian priest Rev. E. Wherry: "This passage contains very cogent reasoning against the idolaters, and very justly represents their folly in worshiping inferior deities, while re-

[36] And, most of them follow not but conjecture, and conjecture can be of no av"il ag"Inst the truth.⁶⁶ Surely, Allah is Aware of the things they do.

وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا إِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

[37] This Qur'ān is not such as to be alleged to anyone other than Allah. But rather, it is a confirmation of that which was before it, and explanation of the Book⁶⁷ wherein there is no doubt from the Lord of the worlds.

وَمَا كَانَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ أَنْ يُفْتَرَى مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] Or, do they say that he (Muhammad) forged it. Say, 'Bring a chapter similar to it. And call whom you wish besides Allah (as helpers), if you are true.⁶⁸

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَلَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

garding God as the source of all their blessings, and fleeing to him in every time of trouble. These teachings account for much of the success of Islam as a missionary religion. Its pure monotheism stands out in strong contrast with the polytheism of the idolaters."

66. Alusi writes that this verse is in support of the opinion that in matters of faith and beliefs blind following (taqlid of another person's opinion) is inadmissible as against fiqh (legal) matters where such following is allowed and the permission can be substantiated with the help of the Qur'ān.

67. "the statement that it is 'a confirmation of the revelation made before it' underscores the fact that the

Qur'ān lays no claim of introducing anything novel, of coming forth with any innovation at variance with the fundamental teachings already communicated to man through the Prophets (peace be upon them). The Qur'ānic claim only consists of confirming and authenticating those teachings. Had the Qur'ān been the product of imagination of the founder of an altogether new religion, the outcome of a creative brain, it would have borne traces of novelty in order to emphasize its distinctiveness" (Mawdudi).

68. Thanwi's comment at this point can be paraphrased in the following manner: Some people have tried to escape facing the challenge by saying that every writer has a style that is

characteristically his own and which cannot be successfully imitated by others. The answer to this shallow argument is four fold:

First: It might be true that a successful imitation of another's writing, especially when it is of a good literary quality, is, generally, not possible. But, it is quite possible for someone who has a good command over the language, to produce a short passage similar to it.

Second: Not all of the Prophet's speeches are similar to one another. His traditions for instance, are of a completely different literary style than the Qur'an. How can this be explained? How did Muhammad f"ll to achieve the rhetorical and other literary qualities noticeable in the Qur'an, in his other productions, viz., the *hadith*?

Third: How come he became capable of producing the Qur'an only after he had reached the age of forty?

Fourth: How can a challenge go unanswered (until now), which claims that it will last up to the Day of Judgment?

For more details see *al Baqarah*, note 57 of this work.

Sayyid Qutb narrates an interesting incident in demonstration of the

Qur'anic charm. Its abridged version is as follows: "We were six who called ourselves Muslims in a ship in the Atlantic heading towards New York. Although not as regular in the Prayers as required, but, since there were some 120 non Muslim passengers in the ship, the idea that we should offer the Friday Prayers on the ship, sailing across the Atlantic excited us. The captain offered us a place and also allowed his Nubian Muslim off duty seamen to join us. Since it was quite a sight, the passengers gathered around us while I delivered the sermon. After the Prayers many of the onlookers came to us congratulating on the success of the "Service." But a Christian lady surprised us. She came forward and told us very warmly in her broken English how much she was impressed by the spirit, the sincerity, and solemnity of the Prayers. She was especially impressed by the Sermon. "Those were beautiful words' she said, although she admitted she did not understand a word thereof. But they had, she said, a kind of internal music concealed in them. It was only after considerable exchange of words that we realized she was referring to the Qur'anic passages that I had used during the Sermon and in recitation within the Prayers!"

[39] Rather, they cried lies to what their knowledge could not encompass, and whose true interpretation has not reached them.⁶⁹ That is how those who went before them earlier cried lies. See then what was the end of the transgressors.

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا بِعِلْمِهِ وَلَمَّا
يَأْتِهِمْ تَأْوِيلُهُ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظَّالِمِينَ
﴿٣٩﴾

[40] Of them there are some who believe in it while others do not. Your Lord is well Aware of the corrupt (folk).

وَمِنْهُمْ مَن يُّؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن لَّا يُّؤْمِنُ
بِهِ وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

[41] If they reject you (O Muhammad) tell them, 'For me my deeds and for you your deeds. You are free of any responsibility for what I do, as I am free of any responsibility for what you do.'⁷⁰

وَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ لِي عَمَلِي وَلَكُمْ
عَمَلُكُمْ أَنْتُمْ بَرِيئُونَ مِمَّا أَعْمَلُ وَأَنَا
بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

69. Two meanings are possible. One, the unbelievers never understood the true purport of the message because of intransigence and insensitivity to finer feelings and, therefore, denied it. Another possible meaning is that the unbelievers were in a great hurry to deny, even before they would try and understand the intent and purposes of the message. In doing so they were impelled by their love of the religion their forefathers followed. However, since the Qur'an is a miracle both in its form as well as in its contents, when the pagans considered its meaning, they felt convinced that it could only be a revelation. Yet, out of envy of the Prophet and hatred of the truth, they decided to denounce it all the same. And, of

course, both these tendencies can be noticed among the modern antagonists of this message as well (Au.).

Qurtubi notes that Hussain b. Fadl was asked if he found anything in the Qur'an to support that a man ignorant of something will have a dislike for it? He said, "Yes. In two places. In one place Allah said, "They cried lies to what their knowledge could not encompass' (verse 39); and another (46: 11), 'If they are not guided to it they will say, "This is an old fib."

70. Thanwi has a note relevant to da'wah workers which can be paraphrased as follows: This is the habit of the sincere callers to Islam, that when they find that the person addressed is bent on denial, they leave

[42] And, there are some among them who (pretend to be) listening to you. (But), can you make the deaf hear, if, (in addition), they do not attempt an understanding?⁷¹

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

[43] Ag" In, there is one, who looks at you, but, can you make the blind see, if, (in addition), they do not attempt to perceive?

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنْتَ تَهْدِي الْعُمْيَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَبْصُرُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

[44] Surely, Allah does not wrong the people by a bit but rather, the people wrong themselves.⁷²

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

him alone, as against the disputants and debaters who strive to have the last word.

71. Mawdudi comments: "In its most elementary sense even animals are possessed of the faculty of hearing. But 'hearing' in its true sense is applicable only when the act of hearing is accompanied with the attention required to grasp the meaning of what one hears, and with the readiness to accept it if it is found reasonable. Those who have fallen prey to prejudices, who have made up their minds that they will not hear, let alone accept anything, howsoever reasonable it might be, if it goes against their inherited beliefs and behavior patterns, or is opposed to living a life of heedlessness, as the animals do, or who focus all their attention on the gratification of their palate, or who recklessly pursue their

lusts in total disregard of all consideration of right and wrong, may also be rightly characterized as incapable of hearing. Such people are not deaf of hearing, but their minds and hearts are certainly deaf to the truth."

That said about the unbelievers, Rashid Rida precedes Mawdudi in asking, 'Aren't there plenty of believers now who hear whole of the Qur'an recited to them in the month of Ramadan, or in assemblies of recitation, but they comprehend nothing, act by nothing, as if they heard nothing?'

72. At this point Ibn Kathir repeats a relevant *hadith* of Muslim and, therefore, shortens it. It reports Allah as saying,

يا عِبَادِي إِنِّي قَدْ حَرَمْتُ الظُّلْمَ عَلَى نَفْسِي وَجَعَلْتُهُ حُرْمًا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَظَالَمُوا .. يا عِبَادِي إِنَّمَا هِيَ

[45] *The Day He shall gather them together (they will feel), as if they tarried not (in the world) but an hour of the day, mutually recognizing each other.*⁷³ *Surely, those who denied meeting with Allah made no gains, and they were not such as to be guided.*⁷⁴

وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُهُمْ كَأَن لَّمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا سَاعَةً
مِّنَ النَّهَارِ يَتَعَارَفُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ قَدْ حَسِرَ
الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِلِقَاءِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ

﴿٤٥﴾

أَعْمَالِكُمْ أَجْعَلُهَا عَلَيْكُمْ فَمَنْ وَجَدَ خَيْرًا فَلْيَحْمَدِ اللَّهَ
، وَمَنْ وَجَدَ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ فَلَا يَلُومُ إِلَّا نَفْسَهُ

“O My slaves. I have forbidden transgression unto Myself and have declared it forbidden to you, therefore, do not commit transgression against one another...” ending with, “O My slaves. It is your deeds that I reckon and then I reward you for them in full. Therefore, whoever finds goods, let him thank Allah. And whoever finds it otherwise, let him blame none but himself.”

73. In the manner of those who, having lived together in this life, did not part after death, but for a short while (Alusi).

Another possible meaning is expressed by Rashid Rida: They will recall having known and interacted with each other in the past life.

74. It is possible, as Zamakhshari has said, that the words, Surely, those who denied meeting with Allah made no gains, and they were not such as to be guided,” are the words of those who will mutually recognize each other.

The translation herewith treats them as Allah’s words (Au.).

Asad comments: “In its wider sense, however it is addressed to every believer who might find it incomprehensible that life long suffering is often the lot of the righteous, while many wrongdoers and deniers of the truth apparently remain unscathed and are allowed to enjoy the good things of life. The Qur’an solves this apparent paradox by making it clear that, in comparison with the life to come, the life in this world is but a brief moment, and that it is only in the hereafter that man’s destiny reveals itself in all its true aspects.”

[46] Whether We show you (O Muhammad) a part of that We promise them (of punishment) or complete your life term⁷⁵ (before that), to Us is their return. And, Allah is witness over the things they do.

وَأَمَّا نُزُيِّنَكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ
تَتَوَفَّيَنَّاكَ فَإِنَّمَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ اللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ
عَلَىٰ مَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

[47] For every nation there is a Messenger.⁷⁶ When their messenger goes to them (and is rejected), the issue is settled between them with justice, and they are not wronged.

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ رَسُولَهُمْ
قُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

[48] They ask, 'When will this promise (be) if you are true?'

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَذَا الْوَعْدِ إِن كُنْتُمْ
صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

75. Shah `Abd al Qadir has said that since the complete dominance of Islam was achieved partly during the Prophet's life and partly after him, during the life of the four great caliphs, Allah used the expression, "Whether We show you (O Muhammad) a part of that We promise them, or complete your life term .." (Shabbir).

In simpler words, it can be said that the above words cont "In a prophesy (Au.).

76. Mawdudi comments on the textual term *Ummah*: "the Qur'anic term *Ummah* is not to be taken in the narrow sense in which the word 'nation' is used... All those who, after the advent of a Messenger, happen to live in an age when the teachings of that Messenger are extant or at least it is possible for people to know

about what he had taught, constitute the *Ummah* of that Messenger... In this respect all human beings who happen to be living in the age which commences with the advent of Muhammad (peace be on him) ... are his *Ummah*..."

The verse could also be understood to mean, "For every nation there has been a Messenger." This is in the light of this present verse and another of the Qur'an which said (35: 24)

وَأَنَّ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا حَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ [فاطر : ٢٤]

"And there has not been a nation but a warner had been to them."

People often inquire about nations which, presumably did not receive a Prophet in the past, such as, e.g., the Russians or Indians. If can be said in reply that nations which did not preserve their history, cannot now

claim that a Prophet was not raised among them. Another question that is raised is, "Is it possible that famous figures such as Buddha, Confucius, or Indian mythological figures were Messengers?" Some people assume that those were Messengers, since, as they argue, "For every nation there has been a Messenger." A proper explanation may be offered along the following lines:

Firstly, the Qur'ān has used a term (*AUmmah*) of its own definition and which is not equivalent of a nation. However, with nation as the term of reference, it might be asked, were the Russians in living memory, or according to authentic historical accounts, ever a nation prior to the advent of Islam? The same question can be asked about the Australians, or Indians. A nation is a well organized unit, over a well defined geographical area, ruled by a central authority, inhabited by a homogenous people who share a language (or a few languages), culture and religion. Its identity as a nation lasts through several centuries. Has that been the case with Russia, or Australia or India in the past? To take the example of Indians, it was never a nation in the true sense of the term. In ancient times India was no more than a land mass, supporting a vast number of

villages and settlings. The peninsula was divided into as many regions as there were interrupting forests, range of mountains, rivers or other such natural boundaries. At best there were conglomerations of villages spread all over perhaps several thousands of them that could have been (though we are not sure) ruled by a chieftain, but which broke into disparate elements with his death. A few villages of that group were then incorporated by the adjoining rulers, if there were any, while others remained scattered - without a central town or inhabitation as the seat of political, military, or religious power controlling them, without a common culture, and without a single unifying language. The areas that were nominally ruled by a chief "In, a ruler, or a so called king, (in truth a war lord) were never cemented into a nation with its citizens acquiring that kind of identity, and they relating themselves to the state in that manner. A major difficulty, apart from the lack of well organized civilized life, means of transportation and communication, etc., was the absence of a unifying language. Never did any sizable territory in India have a language that was understood in its four corners. (There are hundreds of active dialects in present day

[49] Say, 'I have no power over any harm unto myself or any benefit save for what Allah will.'⁷⁷ Every people have a deadline. When their deadline arrives, they cannot delay it by an hour, nor can they hasten it.

قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ إِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ فَلَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ

﴿٤٩﴾

India). Had there been a Messenger, he would have had to receive revelation in dozens of languages at a time to be able to communicate his message effectively.

As regards the ancient and mythological figures, whether they could have been Messengers, it is anybody's guess. However, if one considers the teachings of the Messengers as mentioned in the Qur'an, (however compressed to a few points as done by Rashid Rida: constituting Allah's oneness, a rough concept of the Hereafter, and emphasis on righteous deeds), then, one might open the "so called" Holy Scriptures and look for these basic elements of Prophetic messages in the teachings of the Messenger candidates. A short exercise will categorically rule out Messengership for the candidates proposed.

It might be suggested that their followers could have corrupted their pristine message. But, if that is granted, then that would qualify many past figures to Messengership. Every pervert person's teachings can be said to be the corrupt forms of a true Messenger's message (Au.).

77. When Prophet Muhammad could not cause any harm or profit unto himself, could he do that to any other? Further, if he could not do when alive, can he do it now when he is in the grave? How strange of the faithful who imagine that the past Prophets or the so called "Ints in their graves, or angels, can cause them good or evil? If the noblest of creatures, Muhammad (on whom be peace) was ordered to announce that he had no power of good or evil unto himself, on what grounds can the Muslims of today seek help from those much lower than him? (Rashid Rida).

[50] Say, 'Have you considered? Supposing His chastisement comes upon you by night, or by day? (Can you stop it)?'⁷⁸ What part of it then the criminals are wishing hastened on?⁷⁹

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُهُ بَيَاتًا أَوْ تَهَارًا
مَاذَا يَسْتَعْجِلُ مِنْهُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾
أَنْتُمْ إِذَا مَا وَقَعَ آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ آلَانَ وَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ
بِهِ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

[51] Is it that when it has occurred you will believe therein? (It will be said), 'Ah now? while it was you who were wishing it hastened on!?'

[52] Then it will be said to those who transgressed, 'Taste now the everlasting punishment; are you being rewarded for anything but what you were earning?'

ثُمَّ قِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ
هَلْ تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

[53] They seek to know from you, 'Is it really true?'⁸⁰ Say, 'Yes, by my Lord. It is altogether true. And you will not be able to frustrate (Allah).'

وَيَسْتَنْبِئُونَكَ أَحَقُّ هُوَ قُلْ إِي وَرَبِّي إِنَّهُ
أَحَقُّ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

78. The expression, 'by night or by day' occurring in this context denotes the suddenness and unexpectedness with which Allah's punishment comes. For all its appearance, it could take the form of a natural calamity, and so, as usual, unpredictable (Au.).

79. Seeing that none of its parts will treat them kindly, which of its parts are they demanding to be hastened? (Zamakhshari).

80. Some scholars have suggested that the questioning has been assumed, since the pagans would not have asked the Prophet, having re-

jected him anyway. Rashid Rida believes that it is fairly possible that they actually asked him the question. The Arabs of that time were an upright people, who trusted others as upright. Lying was extremely uncommon among them. So, someone might have asked the question in earnest, besides those who raised questions of this kind in jest. We have a few traditions on the topic, such as the one preserved by the Sheikhayn, in which Damaam b. Tha'labah abjured the Prophet to tell him 'by the Lord' if he was really the sent one, and was well satisfied when assured that 'by Him' that was the case.

[54] If every soul that transgressed were to possess all that is in the earth, it will surely ransom itself therewith. They will try to conceal their remorse⁸¹ when they behold the punishment. (The issue) will be judged between them in full equity, and they will not be wronged.

وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِكُلِّ نَفْسٍ ظَلَمَتْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
لَافْتَدَتْ بِهِ وَأَسْرُوا النَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا رَأَوُا
الْعَذَابَ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا
يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

[55] Lo. To Allah belongs whatever there is in the heavens and the earth. Lo. Allah's promise is true. But most of them know not.

أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
أَلَا إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

[56] It is He who gives life and deals death, and to Him will you be returned.

هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

[57] People! To you has already reached an admonition from your Lord, and a cure for what is in the breasts,⁸² a guide and a mercy unto the believers.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ
رَبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى
وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

81. Quoting a poetical piece of Imra' al Qays, Alusi points out that the textual word "Asarr" is one of those words of the Arabic language that opposite meanings. In the present context, the word can yield both the meanings: "they will conceal" as well as, "they will reveal." To explain, while the common unbelievers will betray their remorse, their artful leaders, being already recognized by their followers, will try to conceal it.

used the word *qalb*" (heart) in the Qur'an, the allusion is to knowledge or intellect. Some have believed that it is also used in the sense of the soul. Allah said (50: 37),

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرًا لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ

Surely, in this is a reminder for him who has a heart" , i.e., he who has knowledge.

Or, (9: 87),

وَطَبَعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ

"And their hearts have been sealed, so they do not understand." That is, their minds have been sealed.

82. Although the textual word is *Sudoor*" (sing, *sadr*, breast) the intended meaning is the hearts. Imām Raghīb Asfahani has discussed the issue of hearts and breasts in the following manner: Whenever Allah

Or, Allah said (33: 10),

وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ

“And (when) the hearts will reach the throats.” That is, their souls reached the throats (out of fear). In contrast, when He used the term *Asadr*” He alluded not only to knowledge and intellect, but also to the emotive powers such as love, hatred, anger, etc. The present verse is an example of this usage. The Qur’ān is a cure for these “Ilments of the heart.

Rashid Rida adds: Intellect is the judicial power that differentiates and distinguishes between right and wrong, good and bad, beneficial or harmful, etc. In contrast, the “Ilments of the heart and the breast comprise of faith, doubt, hypocrisy, envy, hatred, evil intentions, etc. (paraphrased).

Some scholars have said that just as it is a cure for the hearts, the Qur’ān is also a cure for the body. But Hasan al Busri has denied such a possibility since Allah said (, “A cure for the hearts” and not Afor the body.” Those who believe otherwise quote the following *hadīth* of Ibn Mardawayh. Abu Sa’id al Khudri reports that a man came to the Prophet complaining of pain in his chest. The Prophet told him, ARecite the Qur’ān for it is a cure for the hearts.” Another report in Bayhaqi’s *Sho`ab al Iman* says that a man complained

of pain in his throat. The Prophet told him also to recite the Qur’ān (and eat some honey). [The *hadīth* is weak: Manar]. After reporting the above *abadīth* Alusi notes that both the *abadīth* can be interpreted to mean differently from the apparent meaning. For, in the first case, it can be said that the treatment suggested was psychological, while in the second case it was simply a way of clearing the throat. Nonetheless, Alusi’s personal opinion is that the Qur’ān could be a cure for bodily “Ilments, although the verse under discussion does not support such a meaning.

Curing certain diseases with the help of *Surah al Fatebah*, adds Rashid Rida, if recited by one of strong faith, free of doubt and cynicism, is possible, although, this too cannot be substantiated with the present verse.

However, Ibn Kathir himself states that he cured his asthma with a passage of the Qur’ān. Further, there is no difference in opinion among the scholars that the Qur’ān is a cure for physical “Ilments and disturbances caused by magic. See note 118 below (Au.).

Thanwi points out that the verse demonstrates that there are diseases of the heart that are more serious than those of the body.

[58] Say, 'By Allah's grace and mercy;⁸³ in this let them rejoice. It is better than what they amass.⁸⁴

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

83. The textual term for rejoice, Af-arh" is used for over joyousness and is normally disapproved of. (It also bears an element of boastfulness: Au.). Allah said in reference to Qarun (28: 76),

لَا تَفْرَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِينَ

"Do not indulge in over joyousness. Allah does not approve of the over joyous."

He said at another place (57: 23),

لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ

"So that you might not despair over what missed you and not be over joyous over what He gave you."

84. Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and Hasan have said, apart from some others, that the words Agrace," and Amercy" allude to Islam and the Qur'an (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir adds: When the `Iraqi tribute arrived at Madinah, `Umar came out counting the camels, but gave up because of the huge numbers. One of his slaves remarked, "This is by Allah's grace and mercy." `Umar reacted, "You have lied. Allah has said in reference to the Revela-

tion (and not in reference to worldly goods), '(This is) by Allah's grace and mercy. In this let them rejoice. It is better than what they amass.' Indeed, this exactly is what they (the people like to) amass (i.e., worldly things)."

Sayyid comments: "the primary theme of the social model that this religion creates is that of freedom of man from the servility to man which is replaced with servility to Allah. With this change in the basic theme of life which serves as the basis to further work upon. In this manner, man's ideals, morals and values are elevated, in turn freeing his whole life from subservience to other humans.

"It is after this that come the worldly things and material possessions. As it happened with the very first generation of Muslims, when the pagan ways were swept away; they took hold of the keys to Allah's power on the earth, and, in consequence, drove the people to Allah in order that they could also receive His mercy.

"In contrast, those who concentrate on material values and material pro-

ductions, unmindful of this basic principle, they indeed are the enemies of mankind. They do not wish that man should ever rise above the animals, and should never want anything beyond the subsistence of the animals.

“their invitation to dopt a life of their design is not guileless. Whatever they claim outwardly, it is in truth indirectly aimed at the destruction of any belief and every such value that stands in their way of material progress. They alter the objectives of life of the people who come under their influence: from the soul lifting values to mere search for food, shelter and sex – in the same order as the animals do.

“the continuous cry that is heard about material values and increased productions is simply to overcome people’s resistance, and alter their ideas and ideals so that they can be transformed to function as cogs in the machines, those that have forgotten all about soul lifting ideals. The incessant cries of higher and higher production, is to shout down every cry of the soul, give the people new ideals and use those ideals to achieve higher material production. This call then is not a guileless call. It is a firm step towards the replacement of de-

votion to stone idols of the pagan days with contemporary material idols.

“Once the incessant cry for increase in material production acquires the status of an idol, the people begin to toil for them and circumambulate around them. Every other value of life is then disregarded and destroyed if it comes in the way: morality, family, honor, freedom just about everything. Anything that stands against it deserves to be destroyed. The new idols are not made of wood or stones. They are the new material values, slogans, catch words, icons and symbols.”

85. The reference of course is to the pagan practice (continued down to this age, even by Muslims) of arbitrarily declaring Allah’s lawful as unlawful and His unlawful as lawful. The Prophet (*saws*) illustrated this attitude in a *hadith* of Ahmad when he saw `Awf b. Malik’s father in a shabby state. He asked him,

هَلْ لَكَ مَالٌ قَالَ قُلْتُ تَعْمَ قَالَ مِنْ أَيْ الْمَالِ قَالَ
قُلْتُ مِنْ كِلَى الْمَالِ مِنَ الْإِبِلِ وَالرَّقِيقِ وَالْحَيْلِ وَالْعَتَمِ
فَقَالَ إِذَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ مَالًا فَلْيَبْرِعْ عَلَيْكَ

“Do you have any wealth?” The man said, “Yes.” He asked, “What sort of wealth?” He replied, “Of all sorts: Camels, slaves, horses, sheep.” The Prophet said, “When

Allah bestows a blessing on you, then, let it be seen on you.”

He further added,

ثُمَّ قَالَ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكَ إِذْ يُلْقَىٰ أَصْحَابًا أَذَانَهَا فَأَعْمَدُوا
إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ فَتَمَطَّعُوا أَذَانَهَا فَنَقُولُ هَذِهِ بُحُورٌ وَتَشْتَمُّهَا أَوْ
تَشْتُقُّ جُلُودَهَا وَتَقُولُ هَذِهِ صُرْمٌ وَتَحْرِمُهَا عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ
أَهْلِكَ قَالَ تَعَمَّ قَالَ فَإِنَّ مَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَكَ
وَسَاعِدُ اللَّهِ أَشَدُّ وَمُوسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

“Is it true that your camels give birth to camels with whole ears, but you take a knife, split its ears and declare, ‘This is Buhur.’ You split their skin and declare, ‘This is Surum.’ Thereafter, you declare such of them unlawful unto yourself and the family?’ The man replied, ‘Yes. We do that.’ The Prophet said, ‘Surely, what Allah has given you is yours, but Allah’s arm is tougher than your arm; and Allah’s knife is sharper than your knife.’” After presenting this shortened version of the *hadith*, Ibn Kathir remarks that the report, as found in two places in Ahmad, has a strong chain of narrators.

(What the Prophet meant perhaps is to warn the man of wealth that he should not mistreat his cattle because Allah’s arm is stronger and His knife sharper: Au.).

Zamakhshari warns: The verse conceals a strong warning to those who are used to arbitrarily declaring this or that lawful or unlawful. Such declarations should only be made when they can be backed by clear evidences. When one does not have them, let him hold his peace. Otherwise he will be fastening a lie on Allah.

Hence we see that, according to the Hanafiyy scholars, an unequivocal textual commandment (*nass qata`i*) is necessarily required to declare a thing unlawful (Au.).

Sufi commentator Thanwi adds that this verse refutes those who, for ascetic reasons, treat some of Allah’s bounties as unlawful to themselves. All that can be said is that there is no harm if it is temporarily resorted to, (as a cure for certain base desires or tr”Its, or a firmer control over one’s self: Au.).

[59] Say, 'Have you considered what Allah has sent down for you as providence? Of which you treat some as unlawful and some as lawful.' Ask, 'Is it Allah who has allowed you to do that, or are you fastening (a lie) on Allah?'⁸⁵

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ فَجَعَلْتُمْ مِنْهُ حَرَامًا وَحَلَالًا قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَدِنَ لَكُمْ أَمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

[60] So, what do those who fasten a lie on Allah think of the Day of Judgment? Surely, Allah is full of grace for the people,⁸⁶ but most of them do not render thanks.⁸⁷

وَمَا ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

[61] And, you are not (O Prophet) engaged in an affair (at any time), nor reciting any (part) of the Qur'ān,⁸⁸ neither do you (O people) carry out a deed except that We⁸⁹ are witnesses over it when you press on it.⁹⁰ Indeed, not away from your Lord is (anything) as much as the weight of an atom, whether in the earth or in the heavens, smaller than that or bigger, but it is in a clear Book.

وَمَا تَكُونُ فِي شَأْنٍ وَمَا تَتْلُو مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْآنٍ وَلَا تَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُودًا إِذْ تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ وَمَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْ رَبِّكَ مِنْ مِثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَا أَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرَ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٦١﴾

86. So, it is by His grace and mercy that He has declared most things on earth as lawful unto His slaves, declaring not anything as unlawful but what harms them (Ibn Kathir).

87. The implication of the words with which the verse ends is that Allah has been very generous in giving the people the tools of intelligence and sending to them His Messages. But the people do not use reason and do not accept the invitation to think.

88. The expression, "You are not engaged in an affair, nor reciting any

(part) of the Qur'ān," aptly reflects the Prophet's way of life. All his time, either he was working to spread his mission, which required extensive Qur'ānic recitation, or he was engaged in his personal devotional acts which also required plenty of its recitation (based on Manar).

89. The "We" here is the Majestic We (Asad).

90. With reference to the textual word Awitness", we might remind ourselves of the *hadith* in which Jibril defined "*Ihsan*" as "You should

[62] Lo! Allah's friends⁹¹ have nothing to fear nor will they ever grieve.⁹²

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

[63] Those who believed and were ever God conscious.

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

worship Allah as if you are seeing Him. For, if you cannot see Him, He sees you" (Ibn Kathir).

91. The textual words "*Awliya' Allah*" often evoke the question, "Who are they?" Ibn 'Abbas, Sa'id b. Jubayr, Abu al Duha have said that it is those who remind of Allah when you look at them. There are *ahadith* that define the term in this manner. (One is in Bazzar: Ibn Kathir).

There is another *hadith* that can be quoted in this connection. Narrated by 'Umar ibn al Khattab and Abu Hurayrah, one of them says,

« إِنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ لَأُنَاسًا مَا هُمْ بِأَنْبِيَاءَ وَلَا شُهَدَاءَ يَعْطِفُهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ وَالشُّهَدَاءُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِمَكَانِهِمْ مِنْ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى ». قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ تُخْبِرُنَا مَنْ هُمْ. قَالَ « هُمْ قَوْمٌ تَحَابُّوا بِرُوحِ اللَّهِ عَلَى غَيْرِ أَرْحَامٍ بَيْنَهُمْ وَلَا أَمْوَالٍ يَتَعَاطَوْنَهَا قَوْلَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ وُجُوهَهُمْ نُورٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ عَلَى نُورٍ لَا يَخَافُونَ إِذَا خَافَ النَّاسُ وَلَا يَحْزَنُونَ إِذَا حَزَنَ النَّاسُ ». وَقَرَأَ هَذِهِ آيَةَ (أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ).

"Among Allah's slaves are some who will be sitting on raised platforms on Judgment day an object of envy for Prophets

and martyrs." The Companions asked, "Describe them to us O Messenger of Allah, so that we might love them." He replied, "they are a people who love each other for the sake of Allah although not related to each other by blood, or by wealth. Their faces will be bright with Light, not fearing when others will be in fear, not grieving when others will be grieving." And then he recited this verse, "Lo! Allah's friends have nothing to fear nor shall they ever grieve." Ibn Jarir traces this *hadith* through a dozen chains of narrators.

Ibn Kathir points out that reports similar in meaning have been preserved by Bazzar, Abu Da'ud and Ahmad, but all of them suffer some weakness or the other.

Rashid Rida adds that although Hakim has declared one version of the above *hadith* as trustworthy, it does not seem to be so. In fact, not all the reports that Hakim declared trustworthy are in truth trustworthy. (But

Dhahabi has also declared it trustworthy: S. Ibrahim). The problem with this one, Rashid Rida continues, is that it places the *Awliya'* above *Anbiya'*.

Alusi writes that anyone who thought that the *Awliya'* are higher in status than the *Anbiya'*, is an unbeliever. However, if what is meant is that the *wilayah* of a *Nabiyy* is of a greater caliber than the *Nubuwwah* of a *Nabiyy*, then that is alright.

92. Imām Razi says that it is impossible for a man to be free of fear and apprehensions in this life, and, further, the *Awliya'* are expected to be at least fearful of the Hereafter, how then should one reconcile these facts with the statement “Lo! Allah’s friends have nothing to fear nor shall they ever grieve?” He himself replies that this is with reference to the Hereafter. It is there that the *Awliya'* will have nothing to fear and will not grieve over anything. As for this world, there is no escape. He quotes an incident involving Ibrahim al Khawwas. It seems he was traveling in the company of a pupil through the deserts. One night he was overwhelmed by *kashf* (vision of the Unseen). Soon wild animals gathered around him. His pupil climbed a tree in fear of the beasts. But the

Sheikh was unmoved. By morning the Sheikh’s condition had changed and the animals had dispersed. Next night an insect fell on the Sheikh’s hand. He was in a dread. The pupil enquired as to why was it that he dreaded an insect when last night he did not fear the ferocious beasts. He replied, “That was an entirely different situation that descended on me from the Unknown. When that situation changed, (and I resumed normalcy), I am one of the weakest creations of Allah.”

Alusi has a deeper explanation: The term *Awaliyy*” is from the root *Awala*” of which one connotation is: “to get near.” *Awliya'* are those who are spiritually near to Allah. Another definition is that *waliyy* is someone who devotes himself to his Lord in such a complete manner that nothing remains of his person. He seems to have no entity of his own, no attributes, no acts - in sum no himself. He is fully occupied in His obedience and completely submerged in His knowledge. Does it mean such people commit not sin? No. They do. When Junayd was asked if the *Awliya'* could commit adultery, he answered, “Yes” and quoted, ‘And Allah’s decree was to be accomplished’ *Al Ahzab*, v. 37). But, let there be no confusion about it. They Acan” does

not mean they do.” Only the impossibility is denied. If and when one of them falls into a sin, he knows that he was not the safeguarded one, and not the approved one, no matter what the common people think of him: in that specific situation he was not one of the *Awliya’* Allah (until he repents, reworks, and rebuilds the relationship). The preceding characteristics were of the “*Al wilayah al kubra.*” There is another, of the lower order, called the “*Al wilayah al sughra.*” Someone belonging to this category might commit minor sins, though not on a regular basis.

In connection with the second half of the verse, Alusi writes the following: They are not afraid of what might befall them and are not grieved by what misses them. This is because they are in a spiritual bliss all the time. That does not mean that nothing untoward ever happens to them. They do. But they are not afraid and are not grieved by whatever happens. In fact, it does not mean at all that no fear or grief ever touches them. They do. But those are passing winds that ruffle their feathers a bit, but do not disturb their peace to a great degree. Soon the spiritual bliss is back to normal. (As against those at the other end of the spectrum who are always fearful of something distaste-

ful happening to them, and are always fretting over what they missed of the opportunities: Au.). If they are afraid, they are afraid of Allah. He said (35: 28), “Lo! It is the knowledgeable who fear Allah.” And, the more knowledgeable they become, the more they fear Him. (And the more they fear Him, the less they fear anything else apart from Him: Au.). Further, their concerns are not this worldly. This worldly objectives, low as they are, are disdainful to them. To them this world is filthier than a dead pig’s limb, over which a dog had urinated, and is now in the hands of a leper. Apart from the filthiness, this worldly objectives have both the possibilities of failure as well as success. In contrast, the other worldly objectives are bound to come true. So, with such objectives before them, what should disturb their peace?

At all events, Rashid Rida warns against false *Sufis* and Shuyukh who exploit the concept of *wilayah*. Discussing the issue over several pages, he points out that false *Sufis* have created an imaginary figure of a *waliyy*, entirely irrational, with esoteric powers, with knowledge of the Unseen, and capable of executing what he will, both on the earth as well as in the heavens. They allowed

the *Awliya'* powers that even the pagans did not allow their deities. The concept of a *waliyy* that they have popularized among the laity, in fact among the educated too, is in complete contradiction to the meaning and concept that the Qur'an and *hadith* would allow. This they did by first dressing up the imaginary figure with the *Shari'ah* outfit, and then giving it the name of Tariqah which itself stands in complete contrast to the *Shari'ah*. Whereas, great scholars like Abu Hanifah and Shaf'e'i have said, "If the scholars of Islam are not the *Awliya'* Allah, then there are no *Awliya'* around."

A commonly quoted and much misused *hadith* on this topic, continues Rashid Rida, is from Bukhari, but it is of a kind with which one does not feel comfortable because none of the others of the six canonical works have recorded it nor is it in Ahmad. It says,

مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَنْتُهُ بِالْحَرْبِ

"Whoever antagonized My *waliyy*, I declare war on him."

It originates with Khalid b. Mukhlid. Ibn Rajab has said that the man Khalid was not trusted by Imām Ahmad. It has been reported through other chains of narration but none of them without a defect. Hafiz has

said in *Tahdhib al Tahdhib* that this personality is a disputable one. Abu Hatim has said that his reports may be recorded but not used for evidential purposes. Ibn Sa'd had said about him that he used to report some strange *ahadith*. In fact, Imām Bukhari himself has no more than a single *hadith* this one coming via this person. What places a question mark before the *hadith* is the rest of the text. It says,

وَمَا تَقْرَبُ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ ، وَمَا يَبْزُلُ عَبْدِي بِتَقَرُّبٍ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ ، فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ ، وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يَبْصُرُ بِهِ ، وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا

"My slave does not gain nearness to Me with anything but with what I have made obligatory on him. And My slave keeps gaining nearness to Me until I begin to love him. And when I love him I become his ear by which he hears, his eyes by which he sees, the hands by which he holds and the feet by which he walks." This in fact has led some people to the concept of *wahdatu al wujud*.

(But this is not a good reason for doubting the authenticity of the *hadith*. Further, the great majority of the scholars have accepted this as a trustworthy report: Au.).

Down the lines, Rashid Rida presents as example some of the words and ways of the false *Sufiyya* as found in some of their biographies. Sha`rani for instance, who was an Az hari, mentions many ranks among the *Sufiyya*. If one were to compare the life and deeds of some of the earliest *Sufiyya* that he presents, he will find that they were no different from the Mu-haddithun, the *Fuqaha'* and others of that order. But as soon as one reads the life of the *Sufiyya* of the Middle Ages, as presented by Sha`rani, he fails to find any difference between them and a pack of crazy guys with disheveled hair, unkempt beards, clothes un-washed for months, and a fearful appearance. He writes highly of Sheikh Rifa`i, but his contemporary scholars rejected him, accusing him of several un-Islamic practices, one of them is that he allowed intermingling of men and women in his circles. Sha`rani writes about Dusuqi that he knew the language of the animals and birds. He sent a piece of writing in the language of the beasts to one of his disciples. He even sent a letter to the Prophet through pilgrims which has words and phrases that are nothing more than gibberish. He also reports that the Prophet told him (Dusuqi) that he was created out of the Light of the Messenger of

Allah (Muhammad). Books written by the followers of Rifa`i state that once Rifa`i handed over a fish to his disciples to cook. But the fire would not cook it. So they complained to Rifa`i. He told them that the Most Powerful had promised him that anything that he touched would not be burned by fire in this or the next world. It is reported in some of the books written about Sheikh `Abd al Qadir al Jeeli that when one of his disciples died and his mother complained to him, he gave a chase to the angel of death as he was flying to the heavens and asked him to hand back his disciple's soul to him. When the angel refused, he snatched open his bag and all the spirits of the day were dispersed. Sha`rani writes about Muhammad al Hadari that he said, "People's bodies are like glass to me. I can see their inner selves."

Rashid Rida states in conclusion that if a man like Sha`rani, who was otherwise a reasonably good scholar, and an Az hari, wrote things of the sort presented above, then what should one expect of others in the same line of business? He also tries to clear the smoke around some of the Sufi powers. For instance, it is reported that they could see things or hear voices that others could not. But, this is something which happens with fol-

lowers of other religions too. For instance, the Christian Rashid Beg (then living in Paris) was often able to see Mary. He purportedly sought explanations to mysteries from her, and she would explain. Shakib Arsalan himself told him (Rashid Rida) that once the man (Rashid Beg) inquired Mary about our Prophet and she spoke highly of him. Obviously, continues Rashid Rida, it is Shaytan that they hear and see. He appears and speaks to them to strengthen them in their error. In fact, Sha`rani himself has reported that once `Abd al Qadir Jeelani saw a *nur* (Light) that had filled the earth and the heavens. He heard a voice emanating from it saying, "I am your Lord and I declare everything unlawful, lawful to you." `Abd al Qadir replied, "Get lost, you accursed one." The Light suddenly turned into darkness. The voice said, "You escaped because of your knowledge." (`Abd al Qadir replied, "Shut up you cunning one. I did not escape because of my knowledge. I escaped because of Allah's help.") But, Rashid Rida continues, how many false *Sufis* have not been misled by voices and appearances of this sort?

Another concept exploited is that of *kashf*, although, there is no difference in opinion among the *Sufiya* themselves, that they can be experi-

enced by just anyone: believer and unbeliever "Like. Yes, there is the true type of *kashf* in which one sees the (inner or spiritual) realities. But, as the *Sufis* have pointed out, there is no way to differentiate between the real and the false *kashf*, and hence it is safe to disregard all kinds of them. They have no religious value. When they are experienced, they must be checked against the *Shari`ah* and only those could be accepted as trustworthy which do not contradict it.

As regards the thaumaturgies (*karamat*), many of them are of the order of supernatural acts performed by the followers of every religion. They are *karamat* only when they appear at the hands of practicing Muslims. When they appear at the hands of the unbelievers or corrupt Muslims, they are known as "*istidraj*." However, whatever the origin, they are again of no religious value. Great *Sufis* have said, "If you see a man walking on water and flying in the air, pay him no attention unless he is a close follower of the Qur`an and *Sunnah*." After all, will not Dajjal perform such miracles as raising the dead? Hence, as Sha`rani himself notes, Junayd said, "Whoever acted against the Qur`an and *Sunnah*, lost the Straight Path."

[64] There are good tidings for them in the life of this world⁹³ as well as in the next.⁹⁴ There is no changing Allah's words. That indeed is a great triumph.

لَهُمْ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ
لَا يَتَّبِعُونَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٦٤﴾

Abridged quotation from Rashid Rida ends here.

93. What good tidings is it that the *Awliya'*-Allah receive in this world? Ibn Jarir has more than a dozen reports with different chains as explanations from the Prophet (*saws*). `Ubadah b. Samit preceded everyone in asking the Prophet about this issue. He replied,

لَقَدْ سَأَلْتَنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ مَا سَأَلَنِي عَنْهُ أَحَدٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي
أَوْ أَحَدٌ قَبْلَكَ قَالَ تِلْكَ الرُّؤْيَا الصَّالِحَةُ يَرَاهَا الرَّجُلُ
الصَّالِحُ أَوْ تُرَىٰ لَهُ

“You have asked me about a thing that no one ever of my followers preceded you in asking.” Then he explained, “It is true dreams that a man sees, or those that are shown to him.”

On other occasions, Abu Hurayrah and Abu al Darda' also asked the same question and received the same answer. `Abdullah ibn `Amr's version has the additional words,

الرُّؤْيَا الصَّالِحَةُ جُزْءٌ مِنْ سِتَّةٍ وَأَرْبَعِينَ جُزْءًا مِنَ النَّبُوَّةِ

“And true dreams are one forty sixth part of Prophethood.”

(The reports are in Bukhari: Au.).

And, Umm Kurz al Ka`biyyah reported the Prophet,

ذَهَبَتِ النَّبُوَّةُ وَبَقِيَتْ الْمُبَشِّرَاتُ

“Prophethood has ceased, but good tidings (*mubashshirat*) remain” (Zamakhshari, Razi, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Imām Razi adds: Of dreams there are three kinds:

- (i) What one sees or does during the day, which the mind replays in sleep,
- ii) The result of Satan's play on the mind and,
- iii) True dreams.

Ibn Kathir adds a relevant *hadith*. Found in Muslim it says that Abu Dharr asked about those deeds that win people's praise. (How to treat such praises?) The Prophet answered,

تِلْكَ عَاجِلُ بُشْرَى الْمُؤْمِنِ

“That is the believer's immediate good tidings.”

It might be noted however that the textual expression “they have noth-

[65] So, let not their uttering sadden you. Surely, all power and glory is Allah's.⁹⁵ He is the Hearer, the Knower.⁹⁶

وَلَا يَحْزُنُكَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦٥﴾

[66] Unquestionably, to Allah belongs whoever is in the heavens and whoever is in the earth. And those who invoke other than Allah, do not follow the Associates;⁹⁷ they follow only surmise, and attempt at nothing but guess work.⁹⁸

أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

ing to fear nor shall they ever grieve,” has been quite often promised for true believers, the God conscious and the righteous. For example see, 2: 62, 5: 73, 6: 48, 7: 43 and 49 (Rashid Rida).

94. What good tidings of the Hereafter are referred to? Zamakhshari says, “They are the comforting words the *Awliya'*-Allah will receive from the angels as they rise from the grave, the Light they will carry on their faces thereafter to the Field of Judgment, the receiving of the Book of Deeds by the right hand, etc.”

Much of the above is supported by the Qur'an. Accordingly, Rashid Rida and others quote e.g., (21: 103),

لَا يَحْزَنُهُمُ الْفَزَعُ الْأَكْبَرُ [الأنبياء : ١٠٣]

“The Great Terror will not grieve them.”

95. Asad comments: “The noun *izzah* comprises the concept of superior might as well as of honor and glory. Its rendering into another language depends upon the context, and sometimes as in this case necessitates a combination of two terms.”

96. When Allah closed all avenues of argument, the unbelievers began to threaten and abuse the Prophet. So Allah said, “So, let not their uttering grieve you. Surely, all (power and) glory is Allah's. He is the Hearer, the Knowing” (Razi).

97. That is, those who are devoted to other than Allah, are not devoted to something tangible. Their objects of worship are lifeless beings. Their devotion is to some imaginary figures of imaginary qualities. They do not truly worship those they worship.

98. The textual word “*kharasa*” is used for guess work. For instance,

[67] It is He who made for you the night so that you may find repose therein,⁹⁹ and (made) the Day light giving. Surely, in that are signs for a people who listen.

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ
وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

[68] They say, 'God has taken a son.'¹⁰⁰ Glory to Him.¹⁰¹ He is Self sufficient. To Him belong all that is in the heavens and the earth. You have no authority for this.¹⁰² Do you fasten on Allah what you do not know?'¹⁰³

قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَانَ هُوَ الْعَنِيِّ
لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ
عِنْدَكُمْ مِّنْ سُلْطَانٍ بِهَذَا أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى
اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

for estimating the number of fruits there are on a tree, one would use the word “*kharasa*” (Manar).

99. Thanwi writes that following the rationale behind the creation of night, one would be simply falling in the scheme of things, if he devoted a part of the night for resting himself.

100. Sayyid comments: “When all that there is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah, what pressing need was there for Him to take a son? .. At this point the Qur’ān does not enter into the polemics concerning the Divine essence, or metaphysical questions dealing with His Being: topics that happen to be the favorite issues of the dialecticians and philosophers. That is because the Qur’ān deals with the problem from a realistic and natural point of view. It deals directly with the main question and not with its hypothetical offshoots

that threaten to acquire the status of the main issue.

“Here it restricts itself to discussing the question of the ‘son’ that they (the Christians) thought the Divinity was in need of... to deny it from the point of redundancy; pointing out that He is Self Sufficient who owns the whole of the universe. The Qur’ān avoided discussing the side issue to remain close to the main topic and not allow itself to be weakened by such diversion.”

101. The textual word “*Sub hanah*” is both an exclamatory remark (as one would say, Anow, come on,” or Areally?!)” as well an extolling and exonerating term, declaring Allah free of defects or wants (Qurtubi, Rashid Rida).

102. In this kind of usage, the textual “In” carries a negative sense. That

[69] Say, "Those who fasten lies on Allah will not prosper."¹⁰⁴

قُلْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتُرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ
لَا يُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

[70] A short enjoyment in this world and then to Us is their return. We shall then let them taste a severe punishment for what they were denying.

مَتَاعٍ فِي الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ
نُذِيقُهُمُ الْعَذَابَ الشَّدِيدَ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

is, in present context it is equivalent of "ma" meaning, "no" or "not."

103. This is to discourage men from uttering anything about Allah's Being, His essence, or His Attributes which can only come from conjectures. Many scholars seem to have also fallen into the error of resorting to guess work in these matters (Thanwi).

104. Mawdudi sums up the arguments that Muslims often use while trying to convince the Christians. We reproduce it at length although similar arguments by others may be found elsewhere in this work: ATo be a son can have only two meanings: either he has sprung from his father's loins, that is, he is his father's son in the true sense of the term, and thus of his father's loins, or that he is not a son in the literal sense of the word but has merely been dopted as such. Now, if someone is considered to be a son of God in its true, literal sense that would obviously

amount to considering God akin to a mortal. Like any other mortal, God is conceived to belong to one gender or the other, and to stand in need of a spouse, and of some sort of conjugal relationship to enable the birth of offspring, and thus to ensure the continuity of his progeny. Alternatively, God is believed to have dopted someone as His son. Such a statement could either mean that God is akin to that issueless human who resorts to doption in order that the dopted son might inherit Him and thus secure Him against the loss that would ensure from his being issueless, or at least partially offset that loss. The other possibility is that God also has certain emotional predilections and it is for this reason that He has fallen in love with one of His creatures to the extent of dopting him as His son. In each of the above mentioned cases, the concept of God is marred by investing Him with several flaws, defects and weaknesses, and He is conceived as One

[71] Recite to them the story of Nuh¹⁰⁵ when he said to his people, 'If my staying and my reminding (you) of Allah's signs be overbearing to you, then in Allah I have placed my trust.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, get your acts together,¹⁰⁷ (and call upon) your associate (gods).¹⁰⁸ Further, let not your decision be ambiguous to you.¹⁰⁹ Then go ahead and do to me (what you will) without giving me respite.¹¹⁰

[72] But, if you turn away, then I have not asked you for a wage. My wage is on Allah. And I have been ordered to be of those who submit.'

وَأْتِلْ عَلَيْهِمْ تَبَأَ نُوحٍ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ
إِنْ كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَقَامِي وَتَذِكْرِي
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَعَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ فَأَجْمَعُوا
أَمْرَكُمْ وَشُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُنْ أَمْرُكُمْ
عَلَيْكُمْ غُمَّةً ثُمَّ اقْضُوا إِلَيَّ وَلَا تُنظِرُونِ
﴿٧١﴾

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَمَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ
أَجْرِي إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾

lacking self sufficiency, as One Who perform must depend on others.”

105. The story of Prophet Nuh has been narrated here because our Prophet was facing the same determined refusal and denial at Makkah as Nuh had faced in his time. Nuh's story should have made it easier for our Prophet to bear the refusal in view of the famous axiom: 'When a misfortune spreads, bearing it becomes easier' (Razi).

106. That is, "I do not even bank on the support of my followers. I have placed my trust entirely in Allah."

107. Other possible renditions are, "Settle your dispute", "make a firm resolution," or, "take a firm decision" (Ibn Jarir).

108. Depending on the ending vowel mark, whether accusative or nominative (a fat ha or damma) the word "*shuraka'ukum*" can yield different meanings. The present translation follows the standard reading, i.e., the word is considered in its accusative form. But a second reading is with a damma in which case the translation would be "Aget your acts together, (you and) your associates" (Qurtubi).

109. Or, do not consider the execution of your decision as a formidable task. Take it as a thing of easy accomplishment and go "Head to do whatever you wish to do (Au.).

Another shade of meaning provided by the textual word "*ghummah*" would render it as, "Let it not be in

[73] But they gave him the lie. So, we delivered him and those with him in the ship, made them successors, and drowned those who cried lies to Our signs.¹¹¹ See then, what was the end of those who were warned.¹¹²

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلِّ
وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ خَلَائِفَ وَأَعْرَفْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا
بِآيَاتِنَا فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُنذَرِينَ

﴿٧٣﴾

the dark,” or, “make it open for everyone to know what your resolve is” (Zamakhshari), or as some commentators have put it, do not be in any doubt about the affair. Set your resolve without any hesitation or dilly dallying about it.”

110. This is the strongest challenge reported by the Qur’an by a Prophet to his people which by implication was thrown at the face of the Quraysh. The closest to this is Hud’s call to his people (11: 54 56),

إِنِّي أَشْهَدُ اللَّهَ وَاشْهَدُوا أَنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ (٥٤)
مِنْ دُونِهِ فَكَيْدُونِي جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ لَا تُنظِرُونِ (٥٥) إِنِّي
تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ رَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ [هود : ٥٤ - ٥٦]

“I make Allah the witness and you too may bear witness that I am quit of those that you associate apart from Him. Therefore, plot against me, all together, and then do not allow me respite. I have placed my trust in Allah my Lord and your Lord.”

In comparison, that of Nuh is much stronger, and intended to evoke the angriest possible response (Au.).

Sayyid writes: “A challenge so infuriating could not come but from a person who had the power to back it. What power did Nuh have? Of course it was the power of faith and trust in Allah. It was faith which belittled the power confronting it, which held in contempt the huge numbers before it, and looked at the means they could employ with total disd”In. There was no arrogance behind this challenge, no rashness, nor a suicidal wish. It was a challenge which had the full backing of a Power before which all powers melt away to insignificance.”

111. Although at variance with the majority opinion, Majid believes that the flood was not of universal nature. He writes: “That ‘those who were warned’ by Noah, that is, his countrymen inhabiting the Tigris and Euphrates valley were overtaken by an extremely distressful flood is confirmed Rather than contradicted by modern exploration. ‘Inundations are of normal occurrence,’ says Sir Leonard Woolley, Director of

[74] Then we sent forth, after him¹¹³ Messengers to their nations.¹¹⁴ They carried to them clear signs. But they were not such as to believe in what they had denied earlier.¹¹⁵ That is how We seal the hearts of the transgressors.¹¹⁶

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رُسُلًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ
فَجَاءُوهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا
بِمَا كَذَّبُوا بِهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ كَذَلِكَ نَطْبَعُ عَلَىٰ
قُلُوبِ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾

[75] Then we sent forth, after them, Musa and Harun to Fir'aun and his chiefs with Our signs. But they waxed proud. Indeed they were a criminal lot.

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِم مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ إِلَىٰ
فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَأَتْهُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا
قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

the Joint British and American expedition to Mesopotamia, 'in Lower Mesopotamia, but no ordinary rising of the rivers would leave behind it anything approaching the bulk of this clay bank; 8 feet of sediment imply a very great depth of water, and the flood which deposited it must have been of a magnitude unparalleled in local history' (Woolley, *Ur of the Chaldeans* P. 29). This deluge was not universal, but a local disaster confined to the lower valley of the Tigris and Euphrates, affecting an area perhaps 400 miles long and 100 miles across; but for the occupants of the valley that was the whole world' (p. 31)."

We have reported the above in line with our habit of reproducing anything that has educative or informative value. Nevertheless, Woolley's conclusion is woolly. When it comes to a statement of religious nature,

one has to take the statements of Western scholars with a pinch of salt. They are pretty prone to pulling a fast one, albeit, in scholarly parlance.

For other details see *Surah* Hud, note 58.

112. Yusuf Ali writes: "the reference to Noah's story here is only incidental, to illustrate a special point.. The special point here is that Noah's life and preaching among his wicked people was a cause of offence to them. But he feared nothing, trusted in Allah, delivered his Message, and was saved from the Flood."

113. Ibn 'Abbas has said that there were ten generations between Adam and Nuh all of them believers (Ibn Kathir). But there is no *hadith* to support this (Au.).

114. Such as Hud, Saleh, Ibrahim, Lut, Shu'ayb and others, peace be upon them all (Razi).

[76] When the truth from us reached them they said, 'Verily, this is a manifest magic.'

قَلَمًا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوا إِنَّ هَذَا لَسِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٧٦﴾

[77] Musa said, 'Do you say (that) to the truth when it has reached you? Is it magic? But magicians do not prosper!?'

قَالَ مُوسَى أَتَقُولُونَ لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَكُمْ أَسِحْرٌ هَذَا وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّاجِرُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

[78] They asked, 'Have you come to us to turn us away from that upon which we found our forefathers? And, so that dominance in the land should be for you two?¹¹⁷ (Well), We are not going to believe in you two.'

قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا لِنَلْفِتَنَّا عَمَّا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا وَتَكُونَ لَكُمُ الْكِبْرِيَاءُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكُمُ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾

115. Although Yusuf Ali does not substantiate his opinion, nor does the present verse fully support it, his opinion could be given a thought: "I understand the meaning to be that there is a sort of spiritual influence descending from generation to generation, among the Unbelievers as among the men of Faith. In history we find the same problems in many ages, denial of Allah's grace, defiance of Allah's law, rejection of Allah's Message. These influences cause the hearts of the contumacious to be sealed and impervious to the Truth.. What they do is to prejudge the issue even before the Prophet (*saws*) explains them."

بَلْ طَعَّ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰهَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
[النساء : ١٥٥]

"Rather, Allah has sealed their hearts because of their disbelief so they will not come to believe save a few of them." (That is, although it is stated in the earlier part of the verse that their hearts were sealed, the latter part expresses the possibility that a few of them could come to believe: Au.).

116. Imām Razi differs with Qadi Ayad, but reports him to the effect that such sealing of the heart did not mean that they could not believe thereafter, even if they wished. They could. Allah said elsewhere (4: 155),

117. Sayyid Qutb comments: "This then is the justification, ancient and modern, that the rebels forward for standing up against the call of Islam, for the use of a variety of stratagems to kill the call, and for accusations that are leveled against the callers .. It is the dominance in the land and what false beliefs rest on: those false doctrines that the ruling authorities compel their masses to dopt as their faith, despite their falseness and perversion, and despite the cart load of

[79] Fir`awn said, 'Bring me every skilled magician.'

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ائْتُونِي بِكُلِّ سَاحِرٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٧٩﴾

[80] When the magicians came, Musa told them, 'Cast whatever you wish to cast.'

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالَ لَهُمْ مُوسَى اَلْقُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ مُلْفُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

[81] When they had cast, Musa said, 'What you have brought is magic. Surely, Allah will render it ineffective. Surely, Allah sets not right the work of the corrupters.'

فَلَمَّا أَلْقَوْا قَالَ مُوسَى مَا جِئْتُمْ بِهِ السِّحْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَيَبْطِلُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُصْلِحُ عَمَلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٨١﴾

[82] Allah establishes the truth by His words, though the criminals be averse.¹¹⁸

وَيُحِقُّ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

superstitions that accompany those doctrines. Why is there such opposition to the Call to the Truth? It is because the Call opens the hearts for right beliefs and fills the mind with new light; and because it happens to be a threat to the inherited values. It is a threat to the ruling authorities and to the dread that they instill into the hearts of their subjects. It is a threat to the founding principles over which the dread rests. It is the fear of losing the authority that banks on masses holding on to false superstitions and to false gods. It is the fear of losing slavish obedience of the masses to deities other than Allah.. And the Islamic call?.. by the Prophets? Well, it "Imms at establishing lordship for Allah alone and for the destruction of the spurious lords who usurp the rights of the true

Lord's lordship.. Therefore, it is not for these covert lords to let the word of truth reach their masses. They will not allow an open pronouncement calling for Allah's lordship and freeing of the people from 'slavery of the people to the people'. They will not allow this open call to reach the people's ears. They realize very well that this is a declaration of war on their lordship, their powers and their rule, and a move in the direction of an atmosphere of freedom: a freedom which is deserving of a noble creature: Man (who is not so noble in their sight)."

118. Yusuf Ali writes: "the incidental reference here (to the story of Musa) is to illustrate a special point, viz., that the wicked are arrogant and bound up in their sin, and prefer deception to Truth: they do not

[83] But believed not in Musa¹¹⁹ except a few¹²⁰ of his people for fear of Fir`awn and their chiefs that they would persecute them. Surely, Fir`awn was mighty on the earth and indeed he was of those given to excesses.¹²¹

[84] Musa said, 'O my people, if you have believed in Allah, then have trust in Him, if you are Muslims.'

فَمَا آمَنَ لِمُوسَى إِلَّا ذُرِّيَّةٌ مِّن قَوْمِهِ عَلَى خَوْفٍ مِّن فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِمْ أَن يَفْتِنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ لَعَالٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

وَقَالَ مُوسَى يَا قَوْمِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ آمَنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

hesitate to charge the men of Allah, who work unselfishly for them, with mean motives, such as would actuate them in similar circumstances.”

Ibn Abi Hatim has reported through Abu Sulaym, “We have received from our previous generations that reciting these two verses of *Surah Yunus* (81 and 82), five verses of *Al A`raf* (118 122) and the 29th verse of *Surah Taha* is a cure for magic by Allah’s will. They might be recited over water in a bowl and then poured over the head of the one affected by magical spell” (Ibn Kathir).

That is, after reciting the verses, one must blow powerfully (to the extent of spitting) on the water (Au.).

119. Asad suggests a possibility: A... the sequence shows that not belief as such but its open profession is referred to here ...”

120. Although literally Adhurriyah” is for offspring, Ibn `Abbas and Dah-

hak have explained the term as meaning “A few.” Mujahid and A`mash have however held the opinion that since Musa (*asws*) had been commissioned after most of those among whom he was raised had died, to be replaced by their offspring, the word Adhurriyah” was used in reference to them. A third opinion is that the allusion is to a few people of Fir`awn’s folk who believed in Musa. This happens to be a second opinion of Ibn `Abbas. A few grammarians have believed that the believing ones were called Adhurriyah” because their fathers were Copts while their mothers Israelites (since Fir`awn had been slaughtering the males: Au.) Ibn Jarir, Razi.

121. The Qur`an did not say Ahis chiefs” Rather “their chiefs.” Why? One answer given by the commentators is that the allusion is to the ruling class, who were also the rulers over Israelites. A second opinion

[85] They said, 'In Allah we have placed our trust. (So) O Lord! Do not allow us to be made an object of oppression for the transgressors.¹²²

فَقَالُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً
لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

[86] And deliver us by Your mercy from an oppressive people.'

وَنَجِّنَا بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ
﴿٨٦﴾

[87] So We revealed to Musa and his brother that, 'The two of you take for your people in Egypt some houses,¹²³ and make your houses the direction (for prayers).¹²⁴ And, establish the Prayers¹²⁵ and give glad tidings to the faithful.'

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَأَخِيهِ أَنْ تَبَوَّءَا
لِقَوْمِكُمَا مِمَّصْرَ بُيُوتًا وَاجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ
قِبْلَةً وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
﴿٨٧﴾

is that the allusion is to the chiefs of the Fir`awn's folk (and not chiefs of the Israelites). And a third is that perhaps those who believed were a few young men of the Fir`awn's folk who feared persecution at the hands of their own chiefs. It is also possible that the Qur`ān, by using this single term, meant to cover all these possibilities (Au.).

122. There have been two opinions. First, as expressed in the translation. Mujahid and Ibn Zayd are of this opinion. Tabari is with them. Abu Mijlaz however thought that the meaning is, 'O Allah, do not expose us to them as better than them (enjoying a happier life), which will invoke their anger all the more.'

Razi, Ibn Kathir and others allow for both possibilities.

123. Since the directives to the Israelites about making their homes a place of worship had to pass through Musa and Harun, it is they who were first addressed (Shafi`).

124. The textual word *Qiblah*" is understood by Ibn `Abbas, Ibrahim, Mujahid and others as *masajid*" i.e., places of worship (in plural). This is because they could not pray openly and so were ordered to pray at home. However, Ibn `Abbas himself, in a second opinion, as well as Mujahid, Qatadah, Dahhah and others believe that the meaning is, Aconvert your houses into places of worship facing the *Qiblah*, albeit the Ka`bah" (Ibn Jarir, Razi).

Ibn Kathir expresses the possibility that when the tribulation grew real hard, the Israelites were ordered to resort to Prayers at home.

[88] (At length) Musa prayed, 'Our Lord! You have bestowed on Fir`awn and his chiefs splendor and wealth in the life of this world in order that¹²⁶ they may mislead away from Your path. Our Lord! Destroy¹²⁷ their wealth and harden their hearts so that they do not believe until they have witnessed a painful chastisement.'

وَقَالَ مُوسَى رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ آتَيْتَ فِرْعَوْنَ
وَمَلَآءَهُ زِينَةً وَأَمْوَالًا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا رَبَّنَا
لِيُضِلُّوهُ عَنِ سَبِيلِكَ رَبَّنَا اطْمِسْ عَلَيَّ
أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَاشْدُدْ عَلَيَّ قُلُوبَهُمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوا
حَتَّى يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٨٨﴾

[89] He replied, 'The prayer of you two has been answered.¹²⁸ Therefore, keep to the straight path, and follow not you two the path of those who do not know.'

قَالَ قَدْ أُجِيبَت دَعْوَتُكُمَا فَاسْتَقِيمَا وَلَا
تَتَّبِعَانَّ سَبِيلَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾

[90] And we took the Children of Israel across the sea. Fir`awn and his army followed them in (downright) insolence and spite; until, when the drowning overtook him he cried out, 'I confess that there is no deity save the One in whom the Children of Israel have believed, and I am of those who have submitted.'¹²⁹

وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتْبَعَهُمْ
فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُودُهُ بَغْيًا وَعَدُوًّا حَتَّى إِذَا
أَدْرَكَهُ الْعَرَقُ قَالَ آمَنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا
الَّذِي آمَنْتُ بِهِ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ وَأَنَا مِنَ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾

125. Majid quotes from the Jewish Encyclopedia that at least one Prayer a day was obligatory on the Jews from the time of Moses until Ezra's advent.

Ibn `Abbas was of the same opinion (Ibn Kathir).

126. Imām Razi discusses the probability that the Alaam” of Ali yudillu” is Alaam al `”Aqibah” meaning, “In consequence of,” or, “As a result of” although he concedes that it does not have a strong case.

Another opinion is that their gold and silver became stones (Ibn Jarir, Razi and others).

Alusi however is skeptic about gold and silver becoming stones.

127. The translation of Autmus” follows Mujahid’s understanding as in Ibn Jarir.

128. The clause is dual because either both supplicated, or when Musa supplicated, Harun said “Amin.

129. Abu Hurayrah has reported Jibra’il as saying to the Prophet,

يَا مُحَمَّدُ لَوْ رَأَيْتَنِي وَقَدْ أَحْذَتْ حَالًا مِنْ حَالِ الْبَحْرِ
فَدَسَّيْتُهُ فِيهِ خِشْفَةً أَنْ تَسْأَلَ الرَّحْمَةَ

“O Muhammad. Only if you had seen me! I was filling Fir`awn’s mouth with clay in fear that Allah’s mercy might touch him.” (Ibn Jarir).

The *hadith* is in Tirmidhi and various other collections, and has been variously evaluated, from da`if to hasan to *sahih* (Ibn Kathir).

It must not be overlooked though, that figuratively treated, the *hadith* is a beautiful illustration of Allah’s quality of mercy. Scientific precision may not be sought in religious literature (Au.).

Zamakhshari accepts the above *hadith*, but rejects the ending part which says, “ .. in fear that Allah’s mercy might touch him.” His objection is, (a) a dying man’s faith is unacceptable anyway, (b) belief does not necessarily require utterance faith resides in the heart as in the case of a dumb person, (c) whoever wishes a man to die on disbelief, is a disbeliever himself. Imām Razi raises similar objections.

Shawkani comes down heavily on Zamakhshari who he thinks is, after all, an upstart in *hadith*, not capable

of distinguishing between the trustworthy and the spurious one.

What Shawkani means is that once a *hadith* is proven trustworthy, it must be treated religiously, whether we can understand it or not (Au.).

Mubarakpuri has, in his *Tuhfah*, summed up Khazin’s answer to Zamakhshari’s objection. This summary can be further summed up in one line as: Jibril’s action had Allah’s approval who knew that Fir`awn would not believe until he had seen the punishment, which is the time when the disbeliever’s belief is of no profit. Every unbeliever is a passionate believer at the time of his death.

The Qur`ān has a verse that denies the acceptance of repentance in the situation of final despair. It said (4: 18),

وَلَيْسَتِ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا
حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ إِنِّي تُبْتُ الْآنَ وَلَا الَّذِينَ
يُمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ [النساء : ١٨]

“It is no repentance at all of those who work evil until when death comes to one of them he says, ‘Now I repent.’ Nor is there any repentance of those who die in the state of unbelief” (Rashid Rida).

[91] Now!?! While you had disobeyed earlier and you were of those who work corruption.¹³⁰

الآن وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلَ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ
الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

[92] So, today We shall rescue you in body¹³¹ so that you may be a sign to those behind you.¹³² But surely, a great many of the people are oblivious of Our signs.

فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيكَ بِبَدْنِكَ لَتَكُونَ لِمَنْ
خَلَقَكَ آيَةً وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ عَنْ
آيَاتِنَا لَعَافُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

130. When all signs of imminent death have appeared, and the Unseen becomes the Seen, then declaration of faith is of no avail. In fact, the scholars have said that it is such a difficult situation that, were a believer to utter words of disbelief, they would not be taken seriously. At that moment they are not well thought out utterances (Shafi').

131. It is said that after Fir'awn's army was drowned, the Israelites expressed the fear that Fir'awn himself might have escaped. (They held him in such "We as to consider him above being drowned in that humiliating manner: Zamakhshari). So Allah brought his dead body to the surface. It looked like a red bull (Ibn Jarir).

Zamakhshari states that an alternative explanation of *Abi badanika* is *Abody alone*, i.e., barren of clothes, or, naked, and quotes a poetic piece in support.

Interestingly, it is well known that quite often a drowned person's body shows up on the beaches naked. This is another example of the Qur'anic usage of words and phrases that allow for a variety of reconcilable meanings (Au.).

132. Majid quotes the *Jewish Encyclopedia*: "His mummy has been found at Thebes, and is now in the Museum at Cairo."

Shafi' has his reservations saying that Fir'awn, a title for every ruler of Musa's time, has not been identified beyond doubt.

But Maurice Buc"ille (*The Bible, the Qur'an and Science*), is almost certain that the mummy discovered by Loret in 1898 at Thebes (where it lay in the underground tomb for 3000 years) and which now lies in the Cairo Museum, is of Mernepath, (son of Ramesses II) who was Musa's contemporary. In 1975 special investigations were conducted on

[93] And We sheltered the Children of Israel in a goodly shelter,¹³³ and provided them with good sustenance.¹³⁴ And they did not differ (among themselves) until (after) knowledge had come to them.¹³⁵ Verily, your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Standing in what they were differing.

وَلَقَدْ بَوَّأْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مُبَوَّأً صَدِيقٍ
وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا حَتَّى
جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يُفْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾

the mummy involving radiographic studies. Endoscopic examination of the thorax and the abdomen was also conducted. Although it was not possible to determine definitely, but drowning seemed to be the cause of death, or from very violent shocks preceding the moment when he was drowned.

133. Literally “*Sidq*” is truth. In this context it could mean in its extension that the promise of settling the Israelites in their desired land (Palestine), was fulfilled.

The allusion is, according to Dahhak, Qatadah and others, as in Ibn Jarir, to Egypt and Syria. Ibn Kathir believes that Musa established his rule in Egypt after Fir`awn's drowning, and he is not far from modern research results. See note 191 of *Surah Al A`raf*.

134. The words that the reader is expected to supply here are: ‘but, instead of giving thanks for those blessings, the Israelites worked up

mischief by creating differences amongst themselves’ (Au.).

135. This verse draws the following commentary from Mawdudi: “Here reference is made to the schism and dissensions which the Israelites caused and the ever new religious cults which they invented. It is pointed out here that they had not acted in ignorance of the truth; their actions Rather emanated from mischievous designs. For they had been provided by God with the true religion and they knew its fundamental principles, its requirements and the features which distinguish the true faith from the false ones. They were also well aware of what constitutes disobedience, on what matters man will be held to account by God, and on what principles man should fashion his life. Despite these clear directives the Israelites transformed their true faith into a multitude of religious cults, and developed them all on foundations altogether divergent from those provided by God.”

[94] If you are in any doubt over what We have sent down to you, ask those who recite the Book (given to them) before you.¹³⁶ Surely, the truth has indeed come to you from your Lord. Therefore, be not of the doubters.¹³⁷

فَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ فَاسْأَلِ الَّذِينَ يَقْرَأُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَقَدْ جَاءَكَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾

[95] Nor be of those who cried lies to Allah's signs, lest you be of the losers.

وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَتَكُونُوا مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

[96] Surely, those about whom your Lord's word has come into effect will never believe.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

[97] Even if every sign came to them until they have seen a painful punishment.

وَأَوْ جَاءَتْهُمْ كُلُّ آيَةٍ حَتَّى يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٩٧﴾

136. That is, if the Prophet was in any doubt about the differences that arose among the previous nations, he could ask the people of the Book whether it was true or not. That is how Ibn `Abbas, Ibn Zayd and other have understood the verse. They have also pointed out that it is only those of the people of the Book who had believed in Prophet Muhammad that were to be consulted; (since they were the only honest ones among them: Au.). It is another thing that the Prophet said, "I do not doubt and I do not ask" (Ibn Jarir). These words of the Prophet are from a mursal (stubbed) report, and so a kind of weak *hadith* (Shawkani).

tions that came to him? But, that is because people forget that such constructions are common in every language. For instance, Ibn Jarir explains, one might say to his son, "If you are my son, don't you do such and such a thing." Obviously, it does not mean the man is in doubt about his son's parentage.

Zamakhshari has another explanation. He says the form chosen is not to cast doubt on the Prophet's belief, Rather, to confirm the correctness of the knowledge of Israeli scholars (especially those who had, in consequence of such information coming from an unlettered Prophet, embraced Islam).

The sentence might surprise some: could the Prophet doubt revela-

Imām Razi however takes the bold step to suggest that the Prophet was,

[98] Why, there was not a township that believed so that its belief profited it,¹³⁸ except for the nation of Yunus?¹³⁹ When they believed We removed from them a punishment of disgrace in the life of this world and We allowed them enjoyment for a time.¹⁴⁰

قَلِيلًا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةً آمَنَتْ فَتَمَعَهَا إِيمَانُهَا
إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُونُسَ لَمَّا آمَنُوا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ
عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ
إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٩٨﴾

after all, a human. And human hearts are prone to occasional visitation of doubts and skepticism. A man has no control over passing thoughts. Verses of this kind were for the treatment of such passing thoughts.

Further, such usage is not foreign to the Qur'an. For example verse 89 above, which says, addressing Musa and Harun, "Therefore, follow not you two the path of those who do not know." Obviously, it was not expected of Musa and Harun that they would, being in doubt over what was revealed to them, follow the path of the ignorant. There are several verses of this nature in the Qur'an (Au.).

137. Although Ibn Jarir has said that any other interpretation except the apparent meaning has no evidence in its support, Ibn Kathir hints at, as against Zamakhshari's clear expression, the possibility that these words are directed at the Prophet's followers.

138. The translation here is literal. However, Ibn Jarir, Razi, Ibn Kathir

and others have understood this passage as, "There has not been a town that believed and profited from its belief, (so that the punishment to be sent down was withheld), except the people of Yunus." Ibn Jarir traces this understanding to Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid and Qatadah. Imām Razi quotes from W'Ahidi that Ibn 'Abbas was of the opinion that whenever the Qur'an used Alaw l'A" it meant, Awhy not?" except in two places. One, here, and the other in verse (11: 116). In both these places the meaning is, simply, "There was not."

In simpler words, the *ayah* could be saying, 'Why haven't there been cities other than that of Yunus, who believed so that their belief profited them? (Au.).

It has been further explained by the same authorities that when the people of Yunus l'Id the lies on him, and he lost all hopes that they would mend their ways, he warned them of the punishment about to descend on them. Following that he left the town

[99] *And, had your Lord wished, surely, whoever is in the earth would have believed, everyone of them, all together.¹⁴¹ Will you then compel mankind until they have become believers?*

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مَن فِي الْأَرْضِ
كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّى
يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٩﴾

in anger. Behind him the people regretted and feared that they could be punished. And that was true. The punishment had almost struck them when they came out of the town, en masse, and supplicated for forgiveness. They were forgiven and the punishment was withdrawn.

139. It was widely believed by the Salaf that the people of Yunus (Biblical Jonah) occupied lands in Nineveh near today's Mosul (in present day Iraq) Ibn Kathir.

Yusuf Ali adds: "Its site is believed to be marked by the two mounds on the left bank of the Tigris, opposite the flourishing city of Mosul on the right bank, about 320 miles north north west of Baghdad. One of the mounds bears the name of "the Tomb of Nabi Yunus."

Majid writes: "A Son of Amitt" I, he lived probably in the middle of the 8th century B.C. 'He spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amitt" I, the prophet, which was of Gath hepher.' (2 Ki. 14: 25). 'The story presupposes a pre exilic date, when Assyria was at the height of

its power and Nineveh was the metropolis of the world' (VJE. p. 325)." Mawdudi has a few more details, but, perhaps originating from the Biblical sources, are not too trustworthy.

140. Mufti Shafi` cites the following commentary by Mawdudi: However, were one to reflect on the allusions to the story of Yunus in the Qur'an, and on the information provided by the 'Book of Jonah', it comes out very clearly that Prophet Yunus fell short in his Prophetic duties. Perhaps in his impatience he left his place before it was appropriate." (Unless there are two versions of the original commentary in Urdu. Quotation cited by Shafi` do not match the present English version, although quite close in sum and substance: Au.).

After citing the above, Shafi` raises the objection to the use of such strong terms of disrespect for a Prophet, when it is well known that Prophets can neither commit a sin nor abandon their duty. Further, he points out, Biblical texts as claimed by the said commentator might support his conclusions, but the Qur'an

does not: neither here, nor in *Surah al Saffaat*. Moreover, the supposition that Allah broke His own rule (as the commentator has stated) is nowhere in the Qur'an. (Shafi` cites another example of Allah forgiving a people after the Punishment was brought close: "We raised the Tur (saying), hold fast unto what I give you"- 2: 63). Also, where does the Qur'an or the *Sunnah* state that "Yunus left the place before it was appropriate?" The supposition that Allah broke His own rule of punishing a people (for their denial) because Yunus had failed in his duties is a completely wrong understanding of the verse.

In contrast, commentary works such as Bahr, Maz hari, Ruh al Ma`ani, as well as of Tabari, Qurtubi and Zamakhshari, have all expressed a different opinion. They have said that the people of Yunus were spared the punishment after they had seen its signs because they earnestly sought forgiveness and not because Yunus failed in his duties. Zajjaj has said that actually they saw the signs of punishment and not the punishment itself, a view supported by Qurtubi. Ibn Mas`ud is close to this opinion. None of the above mentioned commentators have said that Yunus fell

short of his duties. As for Allah's censure (directed at Yunus [*asws*] in *Surah al Saffat*), it was because after warning his people and leaving the town, Yunus wished to leave the land altogether. But since he was not yet ordered to migrate, his further journey was, in keeping with Qur'anic way of strong reprimands over minor errors committed by Prophets and, in view of their high position with Allah, was deemed as Arunning away." This is how, more or less, Alusi has explained the verse in question.

When these details were pointed out to Mawdudi, Shafi` continues, he cited the opinion of a few authorities, who actually did not hold such an extreme opinion, except for Wahab b. Munabbih about whom it is well known that he relied on Israeli reports. Shafi` cautions that although he himself has relied on some Israeli reports in the explanation of Yunus' intended emigration, they must be taken with a grain of salt. Infallible Qur'anic texts should not be interpreted in the light of Jewish reports.

141. The textual addition of *Ajami'an*" after *Akulluhum*" is for emphasis (Ibn Jarir).

[100] It is not for any soul to believe but by Allah's leave. He places the abomination (of disbelief)¹⁴² upon those who do not think.

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ
وَيَجْعَلُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

[101] Say, 'Look at what is there in the heavens and the earth.' But, signs and warnings¹⁴³ are of no use to a people not ready to believe.

قُلْ انظُرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَمَا تُغْنِي الْآيَاتُ وَالنُّذُرُ عَنْ قَوْمٍ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾

[102] Are they then waiting for (a day) similar to the days of those who went before them? Say, 'Then wait. I am also with you among those who are waiting.'

هَلْ يَنْتَظِرُونَ إِلَّا مِثْلَ أَيَّامِ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قُلْ فَانْتَظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ
الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

[103] Then We deliver Our Messengers¹⁴⁴ and those who believed. That is a binding upon Us (that) We should deliver the believers.

ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كَذَلِكَ حَقًّا
عَلَيْنَا نُنَجِّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

142. Our rendering is literal. The meaning offered by Ibn `Abbas for the Qur'anic word Arijs" however, is, as in Ibn Jarir, "Anger."

143. "Nudhur" can either be the plural of "Indhaar" (the choice made here: Au.) or the plural of Anadbeer" meaning Awarners" (Shawkani).

144. The term Messengers" (in plural) offers a difficulty. The previous verse addressed Prophet Muhammad's contemporary unbelievers. They were told to wait for days like the days of the previous unbelievers who were destroyed. The following verse should have said, to a common reader, "then (when the day comes) We shall deliver the Mes-

senger (meaning Muhammad);" but instead, it says, "then We deliver the Messengers." The answer is, after the declaration of what could happen to the unbelievers of the Prophet's time, this present verse leaves out what is understood without being stated, a technique called "Ijaz" in Arabic and ellipsis in English. What has been left out after the concealed threat to the unbelievers in verse 102 is the following, "the days of the past nations (mentioned in verse 102) were evil days: the days when they were punished. Now, if you are waiting for similar days, then you should know that whenever such days visited the past nations, Our rule happened to be what remains today, viz., We de-

[104] Say, 'O people! If you harbor any doubt regarding my religion, then (know that) I do not worship those you worship besides Allah.¹⁴⁵ Rather, I worship the God who deals you death.¹⁴⁶ And I have been ordered that I should be of the believers.'

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِّن دِينِي فَلَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنِ أَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

[105] And that, 'Set your face¹⁴⁷ to the religion in an upright manner. And by no means be of those who associate.'

وَأَنْ أَقِمَّ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

[106] And never invoke, besides Allah, that which cannot benefit you nor harm you. If you did that, then surely you will be of the transgressors.

وَلَا تَدْعُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ فَإِن فَعَلْتَ فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا مِن الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

liver the Messengers and their followers, punishing only the unbelievers.” With the missing sentence supplied, verses 102 and 103 should be understood in the following manner: “[102] Are they then waiting for (a day) similar to the days of those who went before them? Say, ‘(If that is so) then wait. I am also with you among those who are waiting.’ (Those were the days when the past nations were destroyed for their denial. And, Our rule is that when such punishments descend) [103] We deliver Our Messengers and those who believed. It is Our bound duty (that) We should deliver the believers” (Au.).

Rashid Rida has called this verse (103) as, in the words of Asad, “One of the most outstanding examples of

the elliptic mode of expression (ijaz) to be found in the Qur’ān.”

145. Asad comments: “the use of the pronoun alladhina in the phrase Athose whom you worship” shows that it relates here to rational beings like s”Ints, etc. and not to inanimate representations.”

146. That is, if you are in any doubt concerning my religion, then, is it not more fitting that it is your religion that you should be doubting? After all, I am devoted to the One who deals you death, whereas, those you call upon, cannot do that. So, whose religion should you be doubting? (Ibn Jarir).

147. Asad notes: “In classical Arabic usage, and particularly in the Qur’ān,

[107] And, were Allah to visit you with an affliction, there is no remover thereof, save He. And, if He wished you any good, there is none to bar His bounty. He affects therewith whom He will of His slaves. He is the All forgiving, the All merciful.

وَإِنْ يَمَسُّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَادَّ لِفَضْلِهِ يُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٠٧﴾

[108] Say, 'O people! The truth has come to you from your Lord. Therefore, whosoever is guided, is guided to his own benefit, and whosoever went astray, his going astray is to his own loss. I am not a guardian over you.'

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾

[109] And, follow (O Prophet) that which is being revealed to you. And observe patience until Allah judges. And He is the best of judges.¹⁴⁸

وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَاصْبِرْ حَتَّىٰ يَخُذَكَ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

the word 'face' is often employed as a metonym for one's whole being because it is the face, more than any other part of the human body, that expresses man's personality."

148. If we are to follow Ibn Zayd's understanding, as in Ibn Jarir, the rendering of the last part of the verse should be, "Until Allah sends His command, and He is the best of those who send commands." The

command itself was sent down later in Madinah. It was to wage *jihad* against them.

End note: Imām Razi writes at this point that he completed the commentary of this *Surah* in great distress because of his father's demise and requests that the readers pray for "That poor soul (*miskin*)" and "This poor soul" (meaning himself).

Surah 11

Hūd¹

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Prefatory Note

Asad more or less paraphrases Alusi's note on the chapter except for adding a sentence of his own at the end: "Revealed very shortly after the tenth *Surah* (Yunus) that is, during the last year of the Prophet's sojourn in Mecca Hud bears a great resemblance to the former, both in method and subject matter. As in Yunus, the main theme is the revelation of God's will through His prophets and the manifestation of prophethood as such. Some of the stories of earlier Prophets mentioned in Yunus are developed in the present *Surah* in greater detail, and are illuminated from various angles, with a particular stress on just dealings between man and man. Paramount in this connection is verse 117, which states that Anever would thy Sustainer destroy a community for wrong (beliefs alone) so long as its people behave righteously (towards one another)."

Tirmidhi has a report which says that Abu Bakr told the Prophet, "You seem to have grown old." He answered,

شَبَّبْتَنِي هُودٌ وَالْوَاقِعَةُ وَالْمُرْسَلَاتُ وَعَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ وَإِذَا
الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ

"Chapters *Hud*, *al Waqi'ah* (no. 56), *al Mursalat* (no. 77), *'Ammā Yatasā'alun* (78), and "When the sun is.." (*al Shams*, no.99) hastened old age on me.

Hafiz Abu Ya'ala, Hakim and others have similar reports (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Tirmidhi, whose version is quoted above, declared it as weak. But Haythami treated the following as carrying trustworthy chain of narrators:

شَبَّبْتَنِي هُودٌ وَأَخَوَاتُهَا

"Hud and its sisters have hastened old-age on me."

[1] Alif. Lam. Ra. A Book whose verses have been set clear² and, moreover,³ explained in detail⁴ by One (who is) All wise, All aware,⁵

الرَّكِتَابِ أَحْكَمَتْ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ ﴿١﴾

2. *Uhkimat*: Lit. “well established”, “well founded,” that is, free of defect; like a well built structure that does not require further modification (Zamakhshari, Razi).

Imām Razi summarizes the reasons why the Qur’ānic verses have been called “*muhkamat*” (void of ambiguity: Penrice): There are several qualities of the Qur’ānic revelations to allow for the usage of the word “*muhkamat*” (sing. *muhkam*). First, the concepts they deal with such as Tawhid, Prophethood, the Hereafter, the final Judgment, etc.: the nature of these concepts is such that they are not subject to abrogation or alteration, and hence they are *muhkamat*. Second, the injunctions and commandments that they contain do not suffer from any contradiction between themselves. Contradiction is the antithesis of *ihkam* (being well set, well-established, un-abrogated). Third the language that is employed achieves the very acme of rhetorical beauty, eloquence of high order, and literary perfection. Nothing can be compared to it. Fourth, religious knowledge is either theoretical or practical. The theoretical part is con-

cerned with the concepts of Divinity, angels, revelations, messengers and the Hereafter. This Book deals with these concepts in such a manner as to leave out no essential detail un-discussed. As regards the practical aspect, they are either concerned with the reformation and betterment of the external aspect (of the humans), termed as *fiqh*, or those that are concerned with the internal aspect, better known as spiritual purification. (Both these human needs are thoroughly attended to). There is no other book under the sky that deals with what has been delineated above to such perfection. This explains, though partially, the usage of the term “*muhkamat*” for the verses of the Qur’ān.

3. This is how Zamakhshari understands the “*thumma*” of the text. Asad writes: “According to Zamakhshari and Razi, the conjunction *thumma* at the beginning of the clause *thumma fussilat..* does not denote a sequence in time, rather, a co ordination of qualities or conditions..”

4. There are several opinions about the allusions that this expression car-

[2] 'That you should not worship but Allah,⁶ (and that) I am for you a warner and a bearer of glad tidings from Him.

أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ
وَبَشِيرٌ ﴿٢﴾

ries. One coming from Hasan says that the term "*uhkimat*" (from "ihkam", lit. "well-established, or, as translated here, "set clear" or, "unambiguous of meaning," etc.), alludes to the commandments and prohibitions, while the following term "*fussilat*" (from "*tafsil*" translated here as "explained in detail") alludes to the promises of rewards and punishments. Nonetheless, from Hasan we also have an explanation that reverses the meanings.

A second opinion originates with Qatadah and is of Ibn Jarir's preference viz., "The verses are guarded (*uhkimat*) against corruptions, and then explained (*fussilat*) with commandments and prohibitions."

Imām Razi adds: The evidences for tawhid, prophethood, commandments, and episodes of the past, could also be termed as being explained (*fussilat*). Another opinion is that the term refers to division of the Qur'ān into chapters and verses. Yet another opinion is that "*fussilat*" is in the sense of "*furriqat*", that is, revealed gradually, part by part and not as one whole.

Again, *fussilat* would also refer to 'turning about;' that is, state the same text in a variety of ways until all aspects of the meaning are opened up. Finally, "*fassala*" also means to separate out. The Qur'ānic verses separate out the truth from untruth (Au.).

One can see that one needs to integrate all these meanings in his mind to arrive at the correct perception (Au.).

5. Zamakhshari points to a subtle connection between the opening part of the verse and the concluding part of it. It is as if being said, the verses of this Qur'ān have been *uhkimat* (well set) by a Hakim (the All wise) and *fussilat* (well explained) by a Khabir (the All aware).

That is, the two Qur'nic qualities have Divine Qualities as their source (Au.).

6. Connecting this clause with the previous clause, what the revelation seems to be telling us is, points Razi, that the revelation has been "Well set" (*uhkimat*) and then "Well explained" (*fussilat*) in order that you

[3] And that you should seek forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him (in repentance),⁷ He will grant you a fair enjoyment until a fixed term,⁸ and bestow on every man of grace⁹ His grace.¹⁰ However, if you turn away, then, I fear for you the punishment of a Great Day.

[4] To Allah is your return. And He has power over all things.'

وَأَن اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُغْفِرْ لَكُمْ
مَتَاعًا حَسَنًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَيُؤْتِ كُلَّ
ذِي فَضْلٍ فَضْلَهُ وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنِّي أَخَافُ
عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ كَبِيرٍ ﴿٣﴾

إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤﴾

devote yourselves to none but Allah. That is the prime objective of revelation. If someone spent his entire life over other aspects of this revelation, but without this prime objective in his view, he would have wasted his life-time efforts.

7. That is, seek forgiveness for the past sins of Association and disobedience, and turn to Him anew with good deeds devoting yourself to none but Him (Ibn Jarir).

Alusi draws distinction between *istighfar* and *tawbah* - although, literally, *istighfar* is to seek to be covered, or concealed; and, on the other hand, *tawbah* is to return - one feels inclined to believe that at this point *istighfar* alludes to sincere repentance and *tawbah* to remain true to it.

8. That is, He will let you live a life free of excruciating worries, a fairly enjoyable one in every sense, material as well as spiritual, until your death. Is that not something that

seems today as far away from man's reach as the planet Pluto? (Au.).

Asad writes: "...it is only reasonable to assume as Rashid Rida does in *Manar* xii, 7ff. that Athe goodly enjoyment of life" (i.e., in this world) promised in the above sentence relates to the community of the believers as a whole, and not necessarily to individuals."

Imām Razi raises a question and then answers it. Does not the *hadith* literature inform us that Athis world is like a prison for the believer and paradise for the unbeliever?" And, "The most tested (with hardships) of the people are prophets, then those closest to them and then those closest to them?" How do we reconcile with this verse saying, "He will grant you a fair enjoyment until a fixed term?" Then he answers in what can be freely rendered as: Whoever is in love with a thing, he cannot bear to part with it. He feels himself in bliss

[5] Lo, they fold their breasts¹¹ that they may hide from Him.¹² Lo! When they wrap up their clothes (around them) He knows what they conceal and what they reveal. Verily, He is Aware of what the breasts hold.

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ يَنْتُونَ صُدُورَهُمْ لِيَسْتَخْفُوا
مِنْهُ أَلَا حِينَ يَسْتَعْتُونَ ثِيَابَهُمْ يَعْلَمُ
مَا يُسْرُونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ
الصُّدُورِ ﴿٥﴾

so long as he is engaged with the object of his love. Now, since a believer is in love with Allah, he cuts himself off anything that is apart from Allah, viz., this world. And so, to him this world simply ceases to be of any concern. The more he devotes himself to Allah, the greater internal bliss he enjoys and is happy with himself, within himself. (For the truly devoted, even afflictions taste like blessings: Alusi). As against them, those devoted to this world might possess all the riches of the world, but, unable to predict when the material objects will be taken away from them, or they themselves be seized by sudden death, are driven into a state of anxiety, pressure, and tension robbing them of their peace, throwing cold water on their pleasures and enjoyments. Therefore, being limited of action and possession (Aimprisoned”, as in the *hadith*), causes no serious loss and no worries to the true believers and reduces none of their happiness.

9. By the textual word “*dhu fadl*,” (rendered here as Aman of grace”)

the allusion is to anyone who does better than the averagely required when fulfilling religious obligations (Au.).

10. The explanation coming from Ibn Mas`ud is as follows. Whoever did an evil deed will have one evil deed written in his account. Whereas, whoever did a good deed will have ten good deeds written in his account. Now, if he is punished for his evil deed in this world, he is left with ten good deeds (because of the one he did). If he is not, then out of the ten, one will be struck off in the Hereafter; so that he is left with nine. Therefore, Ibn Mas`ud concluded, “Destroyed will be he whose singles overcame his tens” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

11. Literally, “*thana sadrahu `an al shayy*” (he folded his breast from something) is used for turning away from something, or showing disinclination to it (Zamakhshari).

The most plausible explanation of the terms “*yathnuna sudurahum*” is that (the unbelievers) covered their

[6] And, there is not a moving creature¹³ in the earth but its provision is on Allah.¹⁴ He knows its longer place of residence as well as its shorter place of residence.¹⁵ All is in a clear Record.

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقَهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا كُلٌّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٦﴾

heads because they “harbored great doubts about the Qur’ān.” That is how Mujahid understood it. Another opinion is that the words refer to the unbelievers’ practice of bending their heads down while passing by the Prophet in order not to hear the Qur’ān, while the reference by the words, “When they fold up their clothes” is to their act of folding their cloaks tight around their bodies, once again, to avoid hearing the Prophet (Ibn Jarir).

Bukhari however has another explanation coming from Ibn ‘Abbas. It says that the Muslims felt uncomfortable at the time of sexual intercourse, especially, when lying down and facing the heaven naked. The first part of the verse refers to it. As for the second part, his opinion, also in Bukhari, is that it refers to the people’s doubts and skepticism concerning Allah and concerning evil deeds. In further explanation he, as well as Mujahid, Hasan and others have said that the reference is to the unbelievers’ act of covering their

heads hoping to conceal their words or deeds from Allah (Ibn Kathir).

12. According to Mujahid, the pronoun “Him” refers to Allah. That is, the unbelievers thought they could conceal themselves from Allah by simply treating the revelation brought by the Prophet with doubt (Ibn Jarir).

Asad puts it coherently: “Since the people referred to in this verse obviously do not believe in the divine origin of Muhammad’s message, their ‘hiding from God’ can have, in this context, only one meaning namely, that of a metaphor for their unwillingness to listen to the truth which emanates from Him: and this also explains the statement that they are ‘enshrouding their heart’ (lit. “bosoms”, as at the end of the verse), i.e., are allowing their hearts and minds to remain wrapped up in prejudices, thus making them impervious to spiritual perception.”

13. “*Daabbah*” is any moving creature of the animal kingdom; anything that walks, creeps, or crawls

[7] And He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six aeons.¹⁶ His `Arsh was then on water¹⁷ so that He might test you (as to) which of you is best in deed. Yet, if you tell them that 'you will be raised after death,' the unbelievers will surely say, 'This is only¹⁸ a manifest sorcery.'¹⁹

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُوكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَلَئِن قُلْتُمْ إِنَّكُمْ مَرْسُوفُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْمَوْتِ لَيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٧﴾

upon the earth (Majid with slight modification).

Actually, an exact translation of the word is difficult since *dabbah* in its verb form has its root in "dabba" which is used for a very slight and slow movement such as that of an infant on all its fours, or that of an old person, or that of a crawling insect. Hence, "Daabbah" is any living creature that moves on the earth including fish in water, birds in the air, and, of course, human beings (based on Manar).

14. So that it might well die out of hunger but the provision comes, and it comes from no other quarter but Allah's (Ibn Jarir).

15. The translations for the textual words "mustaqarr" and "mustawda" as adopted here are literal. But Ibn `Abbas explained them as the point of return by the evening, and the place where one dies respectively. There are other explanations too (Ibn Jarir).

The above opinion of Ibn `Abbas has *Al Farra'*, the grammarian's support. Ibn Mas`ud has said in a trustworthy report in Hakim and others that the former refers to the womb while the latter to where it dies (Shawkani). In simpler words, Allah takes care of the provision from conception in the womb until death (Au.).

Alusi adds: There is no contradiction between trust (*tawakkul*) in Allah's promise as the Provider, and efforts to obtain one's share of the world, because Allah is the Mover of the means. It is dependence on the means that goes counter to trust in Allah. One might resort to means, but without the belief that one's share can never be obtained without the means. The heart should be with Allah and the belief that 'what He willed happened, and what He did not, did not,' should override all other thoughts.

16. Ibn Jarir repeats at this point the narrations that speak of creation in six days. Ka`b, Dahhak and others

have said that Allah began the creation on Sunday and ended on Friday, creating man in its last hours. And, they add, every day at that time was of the length of a thousand years. He also reports the following: “The Prophet (*saws*) addressed Banu Tamim saying

« اقْبَلُوا الْبُشْرَى يَا بَنِي تَمِيمٍ ». قَالَوا قَدْ بَشَّرْتَنَا فَأَعْطَنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. قَالَ : فَدَخَلَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْاسٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْيَمَنِ فَقَالَ : « اقْبَلُوا الْبُشْرَى يَا أَهْلَ الْيَمَنِ إِذْ لَمْ يَقْبَلْهَا بَنُو تَمِيمٍ ». قَالَوا : قَدْ قَبَلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ جِئْنَا لِنَتَفَقَّهَ فِي الدِّينِ وَنَسْأَلَكَ عَنْ أَوَّلِ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ مَا كَانَ قَالَ : « كَانَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْءٌ قَبْلَهُ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ ثُمَّ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَكَتَبَ فِي الدُّكْرِ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ »

‘Accept the good news.’ They said, ‘You have given us enough good news. Now give us (some material help).’ The Prophet then turned to the group of people that had come from Yemen and said, ‘Accept the good news O people of Yemen.’ They said, ‘We accept. So, tell us about the beginning of this affair as to what it was like?’ He replied, ‘Allah was there before anything else. His *‘Arsh* was on water. Then He wrote everything (that was to be) in the Tablet.’

But just then a man came up to the narrator ‘Imran b. Hussain, and said,

يَا عِمْرَانَ بْنَ حُصَيْنٍ رَاجِعِيكَ أَذْرِيكَ نَاقَتَكَ فَقَدْ ذَهَبَتْ. فَأَنْطَلَقْتُ فِي طَلَبِهَا فَإِذَا السَّرَابُ يَنْقَطِعُ دُونَهَا وَيَأْتِي اللَّهُ لَوْ دِدْتُ أَتَمَّهَا ذَهَبَتْ وَأَنْتِي لَمْ أَقُمْ

‘Imran, your camel has broken loose.’ I ran after it and the mirage seems to have cut her (from view), and by Allah, I wish she was lost and I hadn’t stood up.”

The *hadith* is in Bukhari, Muslim and other collections in varying words.

Ibn Jarir has a narrative coming from Wahab b. Munabbih (who is known for reporting from the Scriptures of old). He said, “*‘Arsh* was in existence before the heavens and the earth were created. Allah took a handful of clear water and opened his Hand. And lo! Smoke spread out. Thereafter He made them seven heavens in two days. After that he took some dust and placed it where the Ka`bah is. Then He spread the earth around it. (If we are to follow Hejazi dialect the translation should go as, “He gave it a spherical shape around it: Au.). Then He created the provisions in another two days. He created the seven heavens in two days and the earth in two days. He finished His work of creation by the evening of the seventh day.”

The above is not a *hadith* (Au.).

Ibn Kathir adds: Muslim has a *hadith* coming through `Abdullah b. `Amr. The Prophet said,

كَتَبَ اللَّهُ مَقَادِيرَ الْخَلَائِقِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ بِخَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ - قَالَ - وَعَرْشُهُ عَلَى
الْمَاءِ

“Allah determined the measures (quality and quantity) of everything that He was to create fifty thousand years before the creation of the heavens and the earth. And His `Arsh was on water.”

Imām Bukhari records another *hadith* in explanation of this verse. Abu Hurayrah reports,

قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنْفِقْ أَنْفِقْ عَلَيْكَ وَقَالَ يَدُ اللَّهِ
مَلَأَى لَا تَغِيضُهَا نَفَقَةً سَحَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَقَالَ
أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا أَنْفَقَ مُنْذُ خَلَقَ السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ فَإِنَّهُ لَمْ
يَغِيضْ مَا فِي يَدِهِ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ وَبِيَدِهِ الْمِيزَانُ
يَخْفِضُ وَيَرْفَعُ

“Allah Most High said, ‘Spend and I shall spend on you.’ Then the Prophet added, ‘Allah’s hands are full. Spending during the day and the night does not empty them.’” He also said, “Consider this. His spending since the day He created the heavens and the earth has not exhausted what is in His hand. And His `Arsh was on water. The Scale is in His hand. He raises and lowers.”

17. Reports coming from Ibn `Abbas and others say that the water itself was on currents of air (Ibn Jarir). Thus, before the creation of the heaven and earth, `Arsh, water, and if we are to accept the opinion of Ibn `Abbas, air, were already in existence (Au.).

The *Bible* has a statement that is akin to the Qur’ānic statement but with a blasphemy added as salt. Majid quotes: “And the earth was without form and void: and darkness was upon the face of the earth. And the spirit of God waved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis, 1: 2).

For further discussions on `Arsh refer *Surah Yunus* note 9.

Sayyid reminds however, that we do not know what water it was, where, and in what form and condition; nor do we know the manner of the `Arsh resting on it. We have no way to answer these questions. It is impossible to add a note to the text for lack of a reliable source of knowledge. It would not be right either, to try and reconcile scientific theories with Qur’ānic statements in which the truth is embodied. Scientific theories, after all, are subject to alterations. They are constructed on a set of data with the help of a few hypothetical ideas: themselves de-

duced from results of experiments. Whenever new experiments lead to different results, the hypothesis and theories undergo alterations. Hence all scientific theories are subject to change. It would be wrong then to explain the Qur'anic truths in the light of scientific findings.

He further warns: "To search for concurrence of the Qur'anic truths in scientific statements is betrayal of seriousness in one's faith in the Qur'an as the revelation of Allah something that is beyond any doubt. This kind of attempt is the result of over rating scientific achievements and according it a position higher than what it deserves a position so high that nothing would be accepted or rejected but in its light. The faith that depends on confirmation coming from scientific fields deserves a fresh look for its existence. The Qur'an is the true basis. Whether scientific hypothesis and theories agree with it or not is secondary. As for research involving scientific experimentation, they have a different field of action. The Qur'an has allowed human intellect complete freedom to engage itself in such pursuits and reach conclusions that are not swayed by prejudices, superstitions, and fetishes. (Its findings do not directly affect the faith). Hence we see that the Qur'an

does not directly deal with scientific truths. It makes references to them only in passing, such as, e.g., all living beings are created out of water, or, every living creature, including the plants, come in pairs of male and female, etc."

The cautionary note well placed in our system of thought, it might yet be pointed out that with the astonishing scientific advancements, especially those of the second half of the last century, and the more astonishing confirmation of their truths by the Qur'an, which has led many non Muslim to Islam, and which has as well helped many Muslims to win back their lost faith, the above cautionary note from Sayyid Qutub needs to be qualified, especially in the light of the Qur'anic statement (41: 53), "Soon We shall show them Our signs in the heavens and in their own selves, until it becomes clear that it (the Qur'an) is the Truth from their Lord."

Sayyid's main point is that faith ought not to depend on scientific knowledge, waiting for confirmation from it before acceptance or rejection of Qur'anic truths. He could not have assumed that faith can be altogether isolated, and completely unaffected by human discoveries that prove the

veracity of those Qur'ānic statements that had hitherto remained enigmatic, or which proved capable of giving out new meanings and interpretation. Sayyid himself had clarified this point earlier while discussing verse 189 of *Surah al Baqarah*. He wrote there: "The central theme of the Qur'ānic message is man himself: his inner self and his life. It endeavors to give a general understanding of his own being and his relationship with his Creator, and to establish, on the basis of this relationship, a system and order of life that will allow man to use all his inherent powers, including the power of knowledge to his benefit. This power itself, however, has been properly humanized and civilized, to work within the limits imposed, to reach conclusions through hypotheses and deductions, but which, whatever else, are not to be treated as final truths.

"What is disconcerting to note," Sayyid points out, "is that some simple minded people should try to work out certain scientific details that sound like additions to the Qur'ān, attributing to it what it did not intend, as if they think they can cause an increase thereby to its glory.

That said, one might add that so long as there is no dependence on

scientific knowledge to confirm the Qur'ānic knowledge, there is no harm in their pursuit and in benefiting from modern findings. For instance, the Qur'ān says (25: 2), "He created everything and then gave it its (due) measure." Now, man discovers that all the distances in the planetary system are well proportioned: between the earth and the sun, between the earth and the moon, between one planet and another, between the respective sizes of the sun, the earth, the moon and other planets, between the motion of one and the other all measurements seem to be well proportioned and well balanced, without which the planetary system could not have come to exist. Facts of this kind of course help us to understand better the meaning of the Qur'ānic verses better.

"But, on the other hand, the Qur'ān says (23: 12), 'He created man from a quintessence of clay,' and we find some scientists postulating that the first living cell perhaps came into being in slimy conditions, and that, since then it has been evolving to arrive at the final shape of man. Now, if this postulation is referred to while explaining the above Qur'ānic verse, then, obviously, we have to point out that this is not what the Qur'ān intended. That is because, first of all,

[8] And, if We are to delay the punishment from them until a reckoned moment,²⁰ they will surely ask, 'What prevents it (from coming)?' Lo! The day it comes to them, it shall not be averted from them. Rather, that (very thing) will overwhelm them which they were mocking.²¹

وَلَيُنْ أَخْرَجْنَا عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابَ إِلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ
مَّعْدُودَةٍ لِّيَقُولُوا مَا يَخْبِئُهُ إِلَّا يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمْ
لَيْسَ مَصْرُوفًا عَنْهُمْ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا
بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٨﴾

scientists have no definite proof that the first living cell came into being in slimy conditions, nor do we accept the theory that is subsequently built on that hypothesis. Both the hypothesis (of appearance of life in slimy conditions) and the theory (of evolution) are only conjectural, subject to change, whereas the Qur'ānic statement is fundamental, final, unalterable."

18. Literally, the textual "*in hadha illa*" is better rendered as "Athis is only" (Au.).

19. "The term *sibr*, which is often used in the sense of 'sorcery' or 'magic', denotes, primarily, "the turning of something from its proper [i.e., its natural] condition into another condition (*Taj al 'Arus*); hence signifies any act which causes something that is false or unreal to assume the appearance of reality" (Asad).

20. Authorities such as Ibn 'Abbas, Dahhak, Mujahid and others have interpreted the term *ummah* of the

text as "*ajal*", i.e., "a reckoned moment." Ibn Jarir then explains that since one *ummah* takes over after the previous *ummah*'s term expires, the moment when the exchange takes place, has come to be identified as the *ummah*.

Qurtubi explains that the word *ummah*, as used in the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*, gives out several different meanings:

i). A group of people. The Qur'ān said (28: 23),

وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ أُمَّةٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ [القصص : ٢٣]

"He found a group of people there."

ii). Anyone endowed with fine qualities, who can be cited as an example and followed. Allah said about Ibrahim (16: 120),

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً [النحل : ١٢٠]

"Ibrahim was a man of fine qualities, devout to Allah, upright."

iii). Religion or nation. The Qur'ān

[9] And, if We give man a taste of mercy from Us, and then withdraw it from him, lo, he is despairing, ungrateful.²²

وَلَيْنَ أَذَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً ثُمَّ نَزَعْنَاهَا مِنْهُ إِنَّهُ لَكَيْفُوسٌ كَفُورٌ ﴿٩﴾

[10] And if We let him taste prosperity after hardship had visited him, he will surely say, 'Evils have gone from me (for good).' He is indeed exulting, boastful.²³

وَلَيْنَ أَذَقْتَاهُ نِعْمَاءَ بَعْدَ ضِرَاءٍ مَسَّتْهُ لَيُفْوِلَنَّ ذَهَبَ السَّيِّئَاتِ عَنِّي إِنَّهُ لَفَرِحٌ فَخُورٌ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] Except for those who are patient (in adversity)²⁴ and work righteous deeds, for them is forgiveness and a great reward.

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُم مَّغْفُورٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾

said (43: 23),

إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ [الزخرف : ٢٣]

"We found our forefathers on a religion."

iv). A moment in time, or a period of time; as in this present verse, and as also (12: 45),

وَأَذَكَّرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ [يوسف : ٤٥]

"He remembered after a while."

v). A singular man, alone on his religion, no one sharing the religion with him. The Prophet said about Zayd b. 'Amr

فَإِنَّهُ يُبْعَثُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أُمَّةً وَحَدَهُ

"He (Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl) will be raised up, alone, by himself."

21. Asad comments on the use of the word "*haqa bihim*": "According to almost all the commentators, the use of the past tense in the verb *haqa*,

despite the fact that it refers to the future, has the syntactic value of a stress, implying the inevitability of the happening to which it relates."

22. Asad gets to the heart of the matter: "... inasmuch as he attributes his past happy state to a merely accidental chain of causes and effects in short what is commonly regarded as 'luck' and not to God's grace. Hence, the term *ya'us*, in its Qur'anic usage, is indicative of spiritual nihilism."

23. Literally, "very exulting" and "very boastful" (Au.).

24. Being patient and grateful are the special qualities of the believers. A *hadith* of *sahihayn* says,

عَجِبًا لِأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَلَيْسَ ذَاكَ لِأَحَدٍ إِلَّا لِلْمُؤْمِنِ إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ سَرَّاءٌ شَكَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَّاءٌ صَبَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ

"A believer's every affair is won-

[12] Would you then possibly leave out (undelivered) some of what has been revealed to you and (may be) your heart is constricted therewith because they say, 'Why has a treasure not been sent down to him, or an angel accompanied him?'²⁵ Verily, you are only a warner. And Allah is the custodian over all things.

فَلَعَلَّكَ تَارِكٌ بَعْضَ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ
وَضَائِقٌ بِهِ صَدْرُكَ أَنْ يَقُولُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ
عَلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ أَوْ جَاءَ مَعَهُ مَلَكٌ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ
نَذِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ ﴿١٢﴾

derfully good. And this is not for anyone else except a believer. If he is struck with something good, he is grateful. That it is good for him. If he is visited by an evil, he observes patience. And that is good for him” (Ibn Kathir).

The above version is from Muslim (Au.).

25. That is, are you going not to convey the message in full in the hope of improving the response? (Ibn Jarir)

The situation has to be both properly imagined as well as fully understood. In a sea of deities and a storm of false gods, the Prophet's was a single voice that condemned them outright. He was surrounded by the multitudes. One here ridiculed him; another there abused him, a third called him a magician, a fourth poked fun at him, and, if anyone could, took a step further and physically molested him. (Ahmad has recorded Anas as saying that one night Jibril visited the Prophet.

He found him bleeding, sad. Some Makkans had beaten him up. Jibril asked him, “What happened?” The Prophet answered that so and so, and so and so had beaten him: Au.). Imagine the Prophet in that situation and imagine the courage of that Great Preacher. He is alone. He has no one to turn to. Finding himself up against a band of powerful enemies totally opposed to his message and his mission, and faced up with walls of hatred and rejection, he sits down in desperation every time he is too tired to carry on. He appeals to Allah. Allah consoles him. His consolation renews his energies. He rises up again to face the challenge of the waves of rejectionists. It is in such a situation, under those pressures, following the thoughts that any mind will suggest, that the above verse was revealed (expanded on a point from Shabbir).

Yusuf `Ali has a sweetish way of solving a ticklish question that the verse may give rise to in some minds. He

[13] Or, do they say, 'He has forged it?' Say, 'Then bring ten chapters the like of it,²⁶ forged, and call (to your aid) whomsoever you can apart from Allah, if you are true (in your allegation).'²⁷

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ
مِثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيَاتٍ وَاَدْعُوا مَن اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ
دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] But if they do not respond to you, then be of knowledge (O unbelievers), that it was revealed by Allah's knowledge, and that there is no deity save He. Therefore, will you submit?

فَاِنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوْا لَكُمْ فَاعْلَمُوْا اَنَّ مَا اُنزِلَ
بِعِلْمِ اللّٰهِ وَاَنْ لَّا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ فَهَلْ اَنْتُمْ
مُسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾

writes, "Every prophet of Allah, when he not only encounters opposition, but is actually accused of falsehood and those very evils which he is protesting against, may feel inclined, in his human weakness, to ask himself the question, 'Supposing I omit this little point, will Allah's Truth then be accepted more readily?' Or he may think to himself, 'If I had only more money to organize my campaign, or something which will draw people's attention, like the company of an angel, how much better can I push my Message?' He is told that truth must be delivered as it is revealed, even though portions of it may be unpalatable, and that, resources and other means to draw people to him are beside the point. He must use just such resources and opportunities as he has, and leave the rest to Allah."

The verse and Yusuf Ali's explanation

might be kept in sight by every sincere, learned caller to Islam, speaker or writer, who discovers that in contrast to the material he presents, so accurately reflecting the truth, it is actually the peddlers of questionable ideas, under holy banners, that seem to score the hearing both of the audiences as well as the financiers. What they have to realize is that it is the Truth which has the upper hand, even if followed by a few. If an idea gains a quick popularity, its depth of commitment to the truth needs careful scrutiny (Au.).

26. Classical scholars have said that there was an order in the Qur'anic challenge. It first asked the unbelievers to produce something equal to the whole of the Qur'an. Then it reduced the quantity to ten chapters. Next it came down to one chapter. Many of the later generation commentators however have disagreed

with them on grounds that the order of revelation does not allow for such an assumption. Alusi tried to explain that the challenge earlier (in *Surah Yunus*, v. 38) was to produce a single chapter. Here it is for ten chapters. It is probable that the demand was for one chapter equal to that of the Qur'an in the beauty of the language as well as in meaning. Then, when they failed to do it, they were challenged to produce ten chapters equal in beauty of language alone, without the requirement of the kind of meaning that the Qur'an carries. In simpler words, the earlier challenge was to produce one chapter equal in both the form as well as the content of the Qur'an. When they failed to produce, they were told to produce ten chapters equal to Qur'an in form alone, if not content.

Incidentally, this challenge to produce ten chapters of its like, comes after ten chapters, this one being the eleventh; and, further to the challenge to produce one or ten chapters, the challenge was reduced to producing any amount, not necessarily a whole *Surah*. It said (52: 33, 34):

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقَوَّلَهُ بَلْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (٣٣) فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ
مِثْلِهِ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ [الطور : ٣٣ ، ٣٤]

*"Or, do they say he has forged it?
So, let them bring a speech simi-*

lar to this if they are true" (Au.).

Rashid Rida thought that the challenge to produce ten chapters was to produce similar stories as in the Qur'an. These stories numbered ten, counting in chapters revealed till the revelation of this *Surah*. Sayyid Qutb holds that there is no need for complicated explanations. Rather, the Qur'an was facing different situations at different times. In some situation it addressed its adversaries to produce a single chapter. At another time it was addressing a different set of people, in a situation different from the earlier situation and so challenged them to produce ten chapters. In another situation it challenged them simply to produce something equal to the Qur'an. In every case, the challenge was to produce the "kind" and not the "quantity."

27. Majid quotes, "The best of Arab writers has never succeeded in producing anything equal in merit to the Qur'an" (Palmer, *The Qur'an*, Introduction, p. LV). And, "We find even so bigoted an opponent of Islam as Alvar acknowledging that the Qur'an was composed in such eloquent and beautiful language that even Christians could not help reading and admiring it."

[15] Whoever desires the life of this world and its splendors, We recompense them in full for their works therein²⁸ and they are not wronged in that (by the least).²⁹

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا
ثَوَفَ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا
يُبْخَسُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

28. That is, whoever intends this worldly rewards, he is rewarded for his works in this world itself. There is nothing in store for them in the next. Many of the classical scholars have added that the rule also applies to the good deeds of a believer, which, either done with this world in sight, or done badly, are rewarded for in this world itself (Ibn Jarir).

29. Shufay b. Maati` says he entered Madinah and found a man surrounded by a crowd. He asked, ‘Who is this man?’ They said, ‘Abu Hurayrah.’

فدنوت منه حتى قعدت بين يديه وهو يحدث الناس فلما سكت وخلا قلت له : أنشدك بحقي لما حدثني حديثا سمعته عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عقلته وعلمته فقال أبو هريرة : أفعال لأحدثنك حديثا حدثنيه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عقلته وعلمته ثم نشغ أبو هريرة نشغة فمكث قليلا ثم أفاق فقال : لأحدثنك حديثا حدثنيه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وأنا وهو في هذا البيت ما معنا أحد غيري وغيره ثم نشغ أبو هريرة نشغة أخرى فمكث كذلك ثم أفاق فمسح عن وجهه فقال : أفعال لأحدثنك حديثا حدثنيه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وأنا وهو في هذا البيت ما معه أحد غيري وغيره ثم نشغ نشغة شديدة ثم مال خارا على

وجهه واشتد به طويلا ثم أفاق فقال : حدثني رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : (أن الله تبارك وتعالى إذا كان يوم القيامة ينزل إلى العباد ليقضي بينهم وكل أمة جاثية

فأول من يدعو به رجل جمع القرآن ورجل يقتل في سبيل الله ورجل كثير المال فيقول الله تبارك وتعالى للقارىء : ألم أعلمك ما أنزلت على رسولي صلى الله عليه وسلم ؟ قال : بلى يا رب قال : فماذا عملت فيما علمت ؟ قال : كنت أقوم به آناء الليل وآناء النهار فيقول الله تبارك وتعالى له : كذبت وتقول له الملائكة : كذبت ويقول الله : بل أردت أن يقال : فلان قارىء فقد قيل ذاك

ويؤتى بصاحب المال فيقول الله له : ألم أوسع عليك حتى لم أدعك تحتاج إلى أحد ؟ قال : بلى يا رب قال : فماذا عملت فيما آتيتك ؟ قال : كنت أصل الرحم وأتصدق ؟ فيقول الله له : كذبت وتقول الملائكة له : كذبت ويقول الله : بل إنما أردت أن يقال : فلان جواد فقد قيل ذاك

ويؤتى بالذي قتل في سبيل الله فيقال له : في ماذا قتلت ؟ فيقول : أمرت الجهاد في سبيلك فقاتلت حتى قتلت فيقول الله له : كذبت وتقول له الملائكة : كذبت ويقول الله : بل أردت أن يقال : فلان جريء فقد قيل ذاك

ثم ضرب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ركبتي فقال : يا أبا هريرة أولئك الثلاثة أول خلق الله تسعر بهم النار يوم القيامة

“So,” says Shufay, “I closed in on him and sat close to him. When

the crowd had dispersed I said, ‘I implore you by the Truth, and by the Truth you spoke, narrate to me something that you heard directly from the Prophet and understood it well.’ Abu Hurayrah said, ‘I will. I will narrate a *hadith* that I heard directly from the Prophet and understood it well enough.’

But, before he could say anything he swooned. When he recovered in a short while, he said, ‘I will narrate you a narration that the Prophet spoke to me in this house when there was no one else around.’ Then he swooned again. When he recovered, he said, ‘I will narrate you a narration that the Prophet spoke to me in this house when there was no one else around.’ Then he swooned again and fell on his face. He was in that condition for a long while. When he recovered, he said, ‘The Prophet told me that when Allah would have gathered mankind on the Day of Judgment, He will come down to judge between them. And everyone will be on his knees. The firsts to be called will be: a man who had learnt the Qur’ān, a man who was killed in the way of Allah, and a man giv-

en wealth.

Allah will ask the Qur’ānic scholar, ‘Did I not teach you what I revealed to My Messenger?’ The man will reply, ‘Indeed, my Lord.’ Allah will ask: ‘So, how did you use the knowledge of what you had learnt?’ The man will reply, ‘Well, I stood reciting it the whole of the night and day.’ Allah will say, ‘You have lied.’ And the angels will say, ‘You have lied.’ Allah will say, ‘Rather, you wished to hear that so and so is a scholar. And that has been said about you.’

Then the man of wealth will be brought forth. Allah will ask him, ‘Did I not give you so much that you did not need to ask anyone?’ He will reply, ‘Indeed, my Lord.’ He will ask, ‘What did you do with what I gave you?’ He will reply, ‘Well, I used to join the kin (by spending on them), and spend in charity.’ Allah will say, ‘You have lied.’ And the angels will say, ‘You have lied.’ Allah will say, ‘You wished that you be called generous. And you have been called that.’

Then the man who died in the way of Allah will be brought

[16] Those are the ones for whom there is nothing but Fire in the Hereafter. What they manufactured therein collapsed (in a heap) and worthless the things they were doing.³⁰

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا
النَّارُ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوا فِيهَا وَبَاطِلٌ مَّا
كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

forth. Allah will ask him, 'In what connection were you killed?' The man will reply, 'You ordered me to fight in Your way. So I fought until I was killed.' He will be told, 'You have lied.' And the angels will say, 'You have lied.' Allah will say, 'Rather you wished that it be said, so and so is so courageous.'

At this point the Prophet (*saw*s) hit me on my knee, continued Abu Hurayrah, and said, "Those three would be the first to be sent to the Fire as its fuel."³⁰

Ibn Hibban followed with the following report (Au):

قال أبو عثمان الوليد : وحدثني العلاء بن أبي حكيم أنه كان سيفاً لمعاوية قال : فدخل عليه رجل فحدثه بهذا عن أبي هريرة فقال معاوية : قد فعل بمؤلاء مثل هذا فكيف بمن بقي من الناس ؟ ثم بكى معاوية بكاء شديداً حتى ظننا أنه هالك وقلنا : قد جاءنا هذا الرجل بشر ثم أفاق معاوية ومسح عن وجهه فقال : صدق الله ورسوله - من كان يريد الحياة الدنيا وزينتها نوف إليهم أعمالهم فيها وهم فيها

لا يخسرون

(صحيح ابن حبان بتحقيق الأرناؤوط - قال شعيب الأرناؤوط : إسناده صحيح)

And `Ali b. Abu Hakim (who was Mu`awiyah's sword bearer) reports that when this narration of Abu Hurayrah was narrated to him, Mu`awiyah also almost swooned. When he recovered he said, "Allah spoke the truth. He said, "Whoever desires the life of this world and its splendors, We pay them in full for their works therein and they are not wronged in it (by a bit)"³⁰ Ibn Jarir, Razi.

The above is from the *sahih* of Ibn Hibban about which Shu`ayb al-Arna'ut said that it is trustworthy.

30. Majid comments, "i.e., want of right belief has rendered all their good works fruitless, and what apparent merit these works possessed has faded away in the world of stern realities, where there is no more of

[17] Is he then who is on a clear evidence from His Lord, and a witness from Him recites it,³¹ and before it Musa's book a guide and a mercy (is he, or he who rejects it, better)? They believe in it. And whoever of the factions³² denies it, the Fire is his promised meeting place.³³ So, be not in any doubt about it. It is the Truth from your Lord but most people believe not.

أَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ وَيَتْلُوهُ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْهُ وَمِن قَبْلِهِ كِتَابُ مُوسَىٰ إِمَامًا وَرَحْمَةً أُولَٰئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهِ مِنَ الْأَحْزَابِ فَلِنَارٍ مَّوْعِدُهُ فَلَا تَكُ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْهُ إِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

sham and no more of make belief.”

31. Of the several opinions available regarding the identification of the Awitness” the one nearest to being correct is that it is Jibril, although some others have said that it is Prophet Muhammad himself (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Nakha`i, Dahhak, `Ikrimah, Abu Saleh and Sa`id b. Jubayr were of the opinion that the allusion is to Jibril (Baghawi). They also maintained that the “bayyinah” of the text is for the Qur`an itself (Alusi).

Razi reports (while Shawkani traces it to Ibn al Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Tabarani in Awsat and Abu al Sheikh) that Muhammad b. `Ali asked `Ali ibn abi Talib, “I hear that you are the one who is the witness, is that correct?” `Ali replied, “I wish I was. But it is the Prophet.”

32. The reference, apart from the

Arab heathens, is to the Jews and Christians.

33. Sa`id ibn Jubayr said, “I have never come across a *hadith* of the Prophet but found its equivalent in Allah’s Book. When I heard him say,

وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَا يَسْمَعُ بِأَحَدٍ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ يَهُودِيٍّ وَلَا نَصْرَانِيٍّ ثُمَّ يَمُوتُ وَلَمْ يُؤْمَرْ بِالَّذِي أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ إِلَّا كَانَ مِنَ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ

‘No one of this *Ummah* who heard of me, neither a Jew nor Christian, and then did not believe in what I have been sent with, but he will enter the Fire,’ when I heard this narration, I asked myself, now, where is this in Allah’s Book? Until when I came across this verse saying, ‘As for those who deny it of the factions, the Fire is their promised meeting place’” (Ibn Jarir, Razi, Ibn Kathir).

[18] *And who can do greater wrong than he who forged a lie on Allah? Such of them will be presented to their Lord and the witnesses will say, 'these are the ones who lied against their Lord.'*³⁴ Behold. Allah's curse upon the wrong doers³⁵

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا
أُولَٰئِكَ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَقُولُ
الْأَشْهَادُ هَٰؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
أَلَا لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] *Those who bar from Allah's path desiring to make it crooked; and they are unbelievers in the Hereafter.*

الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا
عِوَجًا وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] *They were not such as to frustrate (Us) in the land and they do not have any allies apart from Allah. The chastisement will be doubled for them. They were incapable of hearing and they were not seeing.*

أُولَٰئِكَ لَمْ يَكُونُوا مُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا
كَانَ لَهُمْ مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ مِن أَوْلِيَاءٍ يُضَاعَفُ
لَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مَا كَانُوا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ السَّمْعَ
وَمَا كَانُوا يَبْصُرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] *They are the people who squandered their souls and lost from them what they were forging.*³⁶

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ
عَنَّهُم مَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

[22] *No doubt about it that they will be the greatest losers in the Hereafter.*

لَا جَزْمَ لَنَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ الْأَخْسَرُونَ
﴿٢٢﴾

The text quoted above is in Muslim (Au.).

34. It has been reported through several sources such as Ibn `Umar, that Allah (*swt*) will conceal a believer's sin from others. As for the unbelievers and hypocrites, it will be announced over the heads of the witnesses, 'Lo. These are the ones who lied against their Lord. Lo. Allah's curse upon the wrong doers' (Ibn Jarir).

35. Since, for the want of a suitable word in English, the term "curse" is

employed for expressing the word *la`nah* of Arabic, Asad offers a useful point, "The term *la`nah* which is usually, but inexactly, translated as "curse" is in its primary meaning, synonymous with *ib`ad* ("alienation", "estrangement" or "banishment") in the moral sense; hence it denotes Arejection from all that is good" (*Lisan al `Arab*) and, with reference to God, the sinner's "exclusion from His grace" (Manar ii, 50)."

36. Asad offers a deeper than obvious meaning, which relates the verse to

[23] (In contrast), those who believed and did righteous deeds and humbled themselves before their Lord,³⁷ they are the inhabitants of the Garden, abiding therein forever.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
وَأَحْبَبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ
هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] The likeness of the two groups is like the blind and the deaf, and the seeing and the hearing. Are they equal in likeness? Will you not be admonished?

مَثَلُ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ كَالْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْأَصْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرِ
وَالسَّمِيعِ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيَانِ مَثَلًا أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ
﴿٢٤﴾

[25] Indeed We sent Nuh to his people (saying), 'I am indeed for you a clear warner.'

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ
نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] That you worship not any but Allah.³⁸ Verily, I fear for you the chastisement of a painful day.'

أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ
عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٦﴾

the modern situation too. He comments on Awhat they were forging” in words: “..a phrase which implies not merely false imaginings regarding the existence of any real ‘power’ apart from God (i.e., the existence of supposedly divine or semi divine beings) but also deceptive ideas and ‘glittering half truths meant to delude the mind’ .. such as luck, wealth, personal power, nationalism, deterministic materialism, etc. all of which cause men to lose sight of spiritual values and thus to ‘squander their own selves.’”

37. The textual word “*akhbata ila rabbih*” is literally for someone who has found repose in his Lord having cut himself of every encumbrance

that acts as a barrier to his devotion to Him - in submission and humility (Zamakhshari). Other meanings that have been given are, “to be satisfied” (Mujahid), and “humble devotion” (Qatadah) Ibn Jarir.

Yusuf Ali offers us his usual balancing act: “Note that the humility is to be ‘before their Lord,’ i.e., in Allah’s sight. There is no virtue, quite the contrary, in rubbing our noses to the ground before men. We are not to be arrogant even before men because we are humble as in Allah’s sight. Nor does true humility lose self confidence; for that self confidence arises from confidence in the support and help of Allah.”

38. And give up the worship of false

[27] Thereupon the chiefs of those who disbelieved among his people said, 'We do not see you but a human being like ourselves. And we do not see you followed except by the meanest of us,³⁹ (men) of superficial opinion;⁴⁰ nor do we perceive in you any superiority over us. In fact, we think you are all liars.'⁴¹

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا تَرَاكَ إِلَّا بَشَرًا مِثْلَنَا وَمَا تَرَاكَ اتَّبَعَكَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَرَادُوا بِرَأْيِ الرَّأْيِ وَمَا تَرَى لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍ بَلْ نَظُنُّكُمْ كَاذِبِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

deities such as Wadd, Suwa`, Ya-ghuth, Ya`uq and Nasr (Thanwi).

39. Such as carpenters, weavers, barbers and small time traders. This has been always the case. Modestly placed people always embrace the truth first. Accordingly, when Abu Sufyan met Heraclius, he asked him about what kind of people believed in the man who claims to be a Messenger. When Abu Sufyan said they were the lowly ones, Heraclius remarked, "That is how it is with all Prophets. It is the lowly who follow them first" (Ibn Kathir).

40. Although some of the Salaf have suggested that the term "baadiyar ra'yi" means, "in the first suggestion" or, "apparently" (Ibn Jarir, Shawkani), Ibn Kathir, who has the backing of Zamakhshari, thinks that the meaning is, 'people of low or poor opinion who fall onto something without much consideration and preceding thought.' Then he adds that to think of a people low of opinion simply

because they accept the Truth in the first instance, is itself a low opinion. Nuh's adversaries judged the Truth by who had accepted it rather than judging the people by 'who among them had accepted the Truth.' Those who accepted the Truth were the noble ones, even if financially badly off, in contrast to those who rejected it, who were the meanest of people, even though financially well off. Truth in fact demands immediate acceptance. What's there to think and ponder when Truth becomes apparent? The truly intelligent and the pure of heart will go for it in the first go. Accordingly, we find our Prophet telling us, "There was not anyone to whom I offered Islam, but he hesitated (for a short or long time) except Abu Bakr. He did not hesitate for a moment."

Zamakhshari asks: Is it not this the situation with most of those who claim to be Muslims is the same? They judge a man and treat him

[28] He said, 'My people! Have you considered? If I happen to be on a clear (truth) from my Lord, and He accorded me mercy from Himself, but it has been obscured unto you, shall we then force it on you, while you are averse to it?'⁴²

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كُنْتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ
مِّن رَّبِّي وَأَتَانِي رَحْمَةً مِّن عِنْدِهِ فَعَمَّيْتُ
عَلَيْكُمْ أَنزِلُكُمْ مَوْهَا وَأَنْتُمْ لَهَا كَارِهُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

honoring him or belittling him by the criteria of how much material means he possesses. They forget that worldly possessions do not take them nearer to Allah. In fact, in most cases, worldly possessions deviate them away from Him. Prophets did not build the world. Just the opposite. They treated it with scorn and neglect.

41. Yusuf Ali summarizes a long story into a short passage: "The unbelievers were impelled by three powerful human motives of evil to resist Grace. (1) jealousy of other men; they said, 'Why, you are no better than ourselves,' half perceiving the Prophet's superiority, and half ignoring it; (2) contempt of the weak and lowly, who are often better intellectually, morally, and spiritually; they said, 'We cannot believe or do what these fellows, our inferiors in social rank, believe or do!'; (3) arrogance and self sufficiency, which is a vice

cognate to (2), looked at from a different angle; they said, "We are really better than the lot of you!" Now the claim made on behalf of Allah's Message attacked all these three attitudes. And all they could say against it was to abuse impatiently, and call it a lie."

42. Yusuf Ali carries on: "Noah's answer (like that of the Prophet of Allah who spoke in later ages in Makkah and Madinah), is a pattern in of humility, gentleness, firmness, persuasiveness, truth and love for his own people. First, he meekly (not exultingly) informs them that he has got a Message from Allah. Secondly, he tells them that it is a Message of Mercy even in its warning, though in their arrogance the Mercy may be hidden from them. Thirdly, he tells them plainly that there can be no compulsion in Religion: but will they not accept with goodwill what is for their own benefit? He pleads

[29] 'My people! I do not ask of you any material benefits for this (message). My wage is only upon Allah. And, I am not going to drive away those who have believed. They are to meet their Lord.⁴³ But rather, I see you as a people ignorant.'

وَيَا قَوْمِ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَلَكِنِّي أَرَأَيْتُمْ قَوْمًا يَجْهَلُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] 'My people! Who will help me against Allah if I drove them away? Will you not then be admonished?'

وَيَا قَوْمِ مَنْ يَنْصُرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ طَرَدْتُهُمْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

[31] 'And I do not say to you that I possess Allah's treasures, nor (do I claim that) I know the Unseen.⁴⁴ I do not say either that I am an angel. Nor would I say about those whom your eyes hold in contempt, that Allah will not grant them any good. Allah knows best what is in their hearts. (If I said that then) Surely, I would be (counted) among the wrong doers.'

وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ وَلَا أَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ تَزْدَرِي أَعْيُنُكُمْ لَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنِّي إِذَا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

[32] They replied, 'O Nuh! You have argued with us and have exceeded in argument with us. Now bring on upon us that which you threaten us with, if you are of the truthful.'⁴⁵

قَالُوا يَا نُوحُ قَدْ جَادَلْتَنَا فَأَكْثَرْتَ جِدَالَنَا فَأْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

[33] He said, 'Surely, it is Allah who will bring it to you if He will. And you will not be able to frustrate (Him).'

قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ إِنْ شَاءَ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

with them as one of them."

43. What Nuh meant by saying, "They are to meet their Lord" is: "The reason you cite for me to drive them away is not well established. You say they are a people of poor opinion who have embraced my faith in haste. But, I can not split open their breasts to look into them for the

reason behind their acceptance. It is only Allah who knows that for sure. They will meet their Lord, and He will make the judgment" (Alusi).

44. Those ignorant ones were of belief that a Messenger of Allah should necessarily have access to the Unseen (Thanwi).

45. "To Noah's address the worldly

[34] And, (it seems) my sincere counsel will do you no good, even if I wish (to offer you) good counsel, if it be that Allah wishes to destroy you.⁴⁶ He is your Lord and to Him you will be returned.'

وَلَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ نُصْحِي إِنْ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَنْصَحَ لَكُمْ إِنْ كَانَ اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُغْوِيَكُمْ هُوَ رَبُّكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

[35] Do they say, 'He has forged it?' Say, 'If I forged it then the crime is on me. And I am quit of the crimes you commit.'⁴⁷

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ إِنْ افْتَرَيْتُهُ فَعَلَيَّ إِجْرَامِي وَأَنَا بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُجْرَمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] Then it was revealed to Nuh that, 'No one will believe of your people (any further) except for he who has already believed. So, do not be distressed by what they are doing.'

وَأَوْحِيَ إِلَى نُوحٍ أَنَّهُ لَنْ يُؤْمِنَ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ إِلَّا مَنْ قَدْ آمَنَ فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

chiefs give a characteristic reply. In its aggressive spirit it is the very antithesis of the gentle remonstrance of Noah. Because he had gently and patiently argued with them, they impatiently accuse him of 'disputing with them' and 'prolonging the dispute.' They are unable to deal with his points. So they arrogantly throw out their challenge, which is a compound of hectoring insolence, unreasoning skepticism, and biting irony. 'You foretell disaster to us if we do not mend our ways! Let us see you bring it on! Now, if you please! Or shall we have to call you a liar?'" (Yusuf Ali).

46. The original "yughwiya kum" (with its root in "ghawa" lit. to be lost, and hence *aghwa*, i.e., misguid-

ed: Au.) is also used in the sense of destruction. Allah said, (19: 59),

فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَوْنَ عَذَابًا مَرِيمَ : ٥٩]

"Soon they shall meet with destruction" (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir mentions this meaning also, along with the literal: "misguide you."

47. The abrupt break from the past to the present, from Nuh's times to those of Muhammad, is apparent. Yusuf Ali comments: "The fine narrative of dramatic power is here interrupted by a verse which shows that the story of Noah is also a Parable for the time and the ministry of Muhammad the Prophet. The wonderful force and aptness of the story cannot be denied. The enemy there-

[37] And build the boat under Our supervision and instruction,⁴⁸ and speak not to me about the wrong doers. They are to be drowned.'

وَاصْنَعِ الْفُلَكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] So, he set himself to building the boat. Now, whenever the chiefs of his people passed by him, they poked fun at him. He said, 'If you poke fun at us today, then, surely, we are soon to poke fun at you the way you are poking fun (at us now).⁴⁹

وَيَصْنَعِ الْفُلَكَ وَكَلَّمَا مَرَّ عَلَيْهِ مَلَأَ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُ قَالَ إِنْ تَسْخَرُوا مِنَّا فَإِنَّا نَسْخَرُ مِنْكُمْ كَمَا تَسْخَرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

[39] Soon you shall know to whom comes the chastisement disgracing him and on whom will be loosened a lasting punishment.'

فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَيَجِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُثْقِمٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

[40] At length when Our command came and the oven⁵⁰ gushed forth, We directed, 'Load into it two of every (kind of animal) male and female, as also your family, and those who have believed, except for him about whom the word has preceded. And, (the truth is), believed not with him but a few.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّورُ قُلْنَا احْمِلْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ وَمَنْ آمَنَ وَمَا آمَنَ مَعَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

[41] So he (Nuh) said (to his followers), 'Embark on to it. In Allah's name is its sailing and its anchoring. Verily, my Lord is Very Forgiving, Very Kind.'

وَقَالَ ارْكَبُوا فِيهَا بِسْمِ اللَّهِ جَرَّاهَا وَمُرْسَاهَا إِنَّ رَبِّي لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٤١﴾

fore turns and says, 'Oh! But you invented it!' The answer is, 'No! But it is Allah's own truth! You may be accustomed to dealing in falsehoods, but I protest that I am free from such things.'"

48. Ibn `Abbas and others have said that Nuh did not know how to build a ship. Therefore he was ordered to build following Allah's direction and supervision (Ibn Jarir).

49. It was a large boat and took several years to build. Whenever the chiefs of the town passed by, they made fun of him. Someone would say, "So, now you have become a carpenter after you were a Prophet?!" Another would say, "So, you are making a boat. Are you? But where is it going to sail? In the sands?" (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari).

50. Although there have been mi-

[42] And it was sailing with them amidst mountain like waves.⁵¹ And Nuh called out to his son who was at another place 'My son. Embark with us and be not among the infidels.'

وَهِيَ تَجْرِي بِهِمْ فِي مَوْجٍ كَالْجِبَالِ وَنَادَى نُوحٌ ابْنَهُ وَكَانَ فِي مَعْزِلٍ يَا بُنَيَّ ارْكَبْ مَعَنَا وَلَا تَكُنْ مَعَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

[43] He replied, 'I shall take refuge on a mountain. That will save me from the water.' Said (Nuh), 'There is no savior this day from Allah's decree, except for him whom He showed mercy.' And a wave came in between the two and he was of the drowned.

قَالَ سَأُوِي إِلَى جَبَلٍ يَعْصِمُنِي مِنَ الْمَاءِ قَالَ لَا عَاصِمَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ وَحَالَ بَيْنَهُمَا الْمَوْجُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمَغْرُقِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

[44] It was said, 'O earth, swallow your water, and O heavens withhold.'⁵² So the water abated, the affair ended, and it berthed on Judiyy.⁵³ And it was said, 'Away with a wrongdoing people.'

وَقِيلَ يَا أَرْضُ ابْلَعِي مَاءَكِ وَيَا سَمَاءُ أَفْلِعِي وَغِيضَ الْمَاءِ وَفُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَاسْتَوَتْ عَلَى الْجُودِيِّ وَقِيلَ بُعْداً لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

[45] And Nuh cried out to his Lord saying, 'O my Lord! My son is of my family and surely, Your promise is true. However, You are the Most Just of the judges.

وَنَادَى نُوحٌ رَبَّهُ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ ابْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِي وَإِنَّ وَعْدَكَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنْتَ أَحْكَمُ الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

nority opinions saying that "tan-nur" is the face of the earth, and a second opinion is that it is the break of the dawn, the great majority of the Salaf believed that the allusion is to the fire pit made in the earth for baking bread (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

51. This is no exaggeration. The tallest recorded waves measured 112 feet (Random House Encyclopedia, 1990 ed., p. 226).

52. The earth had been ordered to

throw out its underground water and the sky was ordered to empty itself. A verse in another part of the Qur'an says (54: 11, 12),

فَمَتَّحْنَا أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَاءٍ مُنْهَمِرٍ (١١) وَفَجَرْنَا الْأَرْضَ عُيُونًا فَالْتَمَى الْمَاءُ عَلَى أَمْرٍ قَدْ قُدِرَ [القمر : ١١ ، ١٢]

"Then We opened up the doors of heaven with water and we caused the earth to gush forth with springs" (Shawkani).

53. There is nothing in the *hadith* literature neither *sahih* nor *da'if*

[46] He said, 'O Nuh! Surely, he is not of your family.⁵⁴ He is an unrighteous deed.⁵⁵ Therefore, ask me not about which you have no knowledge. I admonish you not to be of the ignorant (ones).⁵⁶

قَالَ يَا نُوحُ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنِّي أَعِظُكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

[47] He said: 'My Lord, I seek Your refuge that I should ask You about what I have no knowledge. And, unless You forgive me and show me mercy, surely, I will be of the losers.'

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أَسْأَلَكَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَإِلَّا تَغْفِرْ لِي وَتَرْحَمْنِي أَكُنَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

identifying Judiyy. Therefore, opinions have varied among the classical commentators with each opinion as indeterminate as the other (Au.).

Although what the so called modern research concludes is quite inconclusive, we may note what Asad has to say at this point, 'This mountain, known in ancient times as Qardu, is situated in the regions of Lake Van, almost twenty five miles north east of the town of Jazirat Ibn `Umar, capital of the modern Syrian district of Al Jazirah.' It 'owes its fame to the Mesopotamian tradition which identifies it, and not Mount Ararat, with the mountain on which Noah's ark rested... This localization of the ark's resting place ... is certainly based on Babylonian tradition' (*Encyclopedia of Islam I*, 1059). We should, however, remember that the designation Ararat (the Assyrian Uratu) at one time included the whole area

to the south of Lake Van, in which Jabal Judi is situated: this might explain the Biblical statement that 'the ark rested ... upon the mountains of Ararat' (Genesis, viii, 4)."

54. Moved by the words, "He is not of your family," and "He is an unrighteous deed", and the words in *Surah al Tabrim* (66: 10), "the two of them were dishonest to their husbands", some of the classical commentators have expressed the opinion that the son mentioned here was not truly Nuh's progeny, rather his wife's son, born of adultery. It could be a report of Israeli origin. But Ibn `Abbas, Sa'id b. Jubayr, Mujahid, `Ikrimah, Dahhak, Maymun b. Mahran, and many others have strongly opposed this opinion. They have said that no Prophet's wife ever committed adultery. Ibn `Abbas has explained the words "He is an unrighteous deed," as meaning, he was

[48] It was said, 'O Nuh. Disembark in peace from Us and blessings be on you and on the people with you,⁵⁷ and nations whom We shall grant provision for a while, and then a painful chastisement shall strike them.⁵⁸

قِيلَ يَا نُوحُ اهْبِطْ بِسَلَامٍ مِنَّا وَبَرَكَاتٍ
عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّمَّنْ مَعَكَ وَأُمَّمٌ
سَنُنزِّلُغَنَمًا لِّئَلَّا يَمَسَّهُمْ مِنَّا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

﴿٤٨﴾

different from his father in deeds and intentions. As for the words, “he is not of your family” the meaning is, “he is not of those of your family that We had promised to rescue from the punishment (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

55. A second opinion that has come down from Ibn `Abbas is that the words following words should be translated as,

إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرٌ صَالِحٍ [هود : ٤٦]

“that indeed is an unrighteous deed,” meaning, “Your request that We save your son from drowning, although you are aware that he is an unbeliever, is not a righteous deed.” Mujahid was also of this opinion (Ibn Jarir).

56. It is reasonable to believe that Nuh (*asws*) was not too sure of his son, whether he was a believer or not, either because the son had not opened up with his father, as it happens in many father son relationships, or, he acted hypocritically all the time to leave the father in doubt (Au.).

57. The construction of the phrase

allows for the meaning that peace will be upon those who were with Nuh in the boat as well as with their progeny. Ka'b al Qurazi, Ibn Jurayj, Ibn Zayd and others were inclined to this meaning, and is preferred by Ibn Jarir.

58. In view of this verse, there was general agreement among the earliest commentators that today's entire mankind is the progeny of those who were with Nuh on that boat. This view is supported by another verse (69: 11), “When the waters rose We took you onto the boat.” Ibn `Abbas in fact is reported to have said (Qurtubi) that Nuh was second Adam (*asws*). That implies that the flood was universal, drowning everyone except those in the boat. If the flood was local, how does one account for mountain like waves? That is either possible if the boat was set adrift by high waters into the sea, or, alternatively, a powerful tsunami had struck.

As regards the difficulties in accepting the universality of the flood, the

following might be noted.

First, the period of Nuh's advent is unknown. It could have been millions of years ago. Scientific evidences that are now emerging which suggest that man might have inhabited the earth as early as ten million years ago. But, there is no reason why man should not have been there prior to that. Lack of evidence does not rule out the possibility. In fact, hard evidences are impossible to obtain beyond a million years. The earth destroys everything. If fossil evidences of other life forms many million years older are available, it could be because those life forms were so common then. Out of millions, a few fossils survived. In contrast, early humans could not have been but a few thousand in numbers if not a few hundred.

Secondly, it is possible that humankind occupied only a specific area of the total land mass then above water. Another possibility is that all continents were then no more than just one land mass. (The scientists believe [The McGraw Hill *Encyclopedia of Science and Technology*, art., Evolution of Continents] that it was some 200 million years ago that the continents started to split from a single land mass. But, there is no firm evi-

dence yet). At all events, if the land mass was one, then the flood was universal.

Thirdly, with regard to the question as to what was the sin of the rest of the world to be destroyed by a universal flood, the commentators have said that if Allah wished He could destroy everyone on the earth whether falling in Nuh's jurisdiction or not. Why can not one who creates, destroy his creation at will?

Fourthly, it is possible that the people whom Nuh did not address directly, were as criminally disposed to truth, or more, as Nuh's own nation.

Finally, as to the question, where did all the water come from, the answer is as follows. Firstly, the earth has been losing water molecules into space. Although an infinitesimally tiny amount every year, but how much has it lost over millions of years is beyond assessment now. If that water is put back on the earth's surface, surely, the ocean levels would rise high submerging much part of land. In fact, scientists believe that millions of years ago, when all the waters were in the skies (Asimov's *New Guide to Science*, p. 229), at one time it rained continuously for hundreds of years at a stretch. Secondly,

[49] These are tidings of the Unseen that We reveal unto you. You did not know about it, nor your people, before this.⁵⁹ So observe patience. Surely the (good) end is for the godfearing.

تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَا أَنْتَ وَلَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ الْعَاقِبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

the present depth of the oceans varies from 3.7 km. (average) to 11 km. (maximum). In comparison, the land surface is only about less than a kilometer above the sea level. How and when did the land under the sea sink to the present level? If the depth of the oceans was not always the same as now, then, the land mass above water would have been much less. In that case several weeks of heavy down pour, plus the bursting out of water from below due to geological reasons, accompanied by a powerful tsunami, would have brought enough water on the surface to sink the entire land mass except for the mountains over one of which the boat anchored.

Having said that, we might also point out that there is no consensus of opinion among the Muslim scholars over the issue of universality of the flood. That is because, although asserted by the *Bible*, the Qur'ān does not state this in categorical terms. We have presented a few points only to demonstrate that for it to have happened, several possibilities could

have existed. While Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh believed that the floods were universal, and Rashid Rida said that the land mass must have been one, Alusi was inclined to believe that the floods were not universal, and Nuh was ordered to carry with him just those animals in the boat that he and his followers would have needed for immediate survival after leaving the boat.

The fact that Nuh could not have possibly taken all the animals of the planet on to his boat, is also indicative that the flood was perhaps not universal (Au.).

59. Asad notes: "Although the story of Noah had been vaguely known to the Arabs even before the advent of the Prophet Muhammad, they and the Prophet with them were entirely unaware of the details as narrated in the preceding Qur'ānic account (Razi)...In this connection it should be remembered and it cannot be stressed too often that Anarrative" as such is never the purpose of the Qur'ān. Whenever it relates the sto-

[50] And to 'Ad⁶⁰ (We sent) their brother Hud.⁶¹ He said, 'My people! Worship Allah. You have no other god besides He. Surely, you are but fabricators (of false gods).

وَالِى عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا
اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ إِنَّ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا
مُفْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

[51] My people! I do not ask you any material benefits for this (message). My wage is upon Him alone who originated me. Do you not reflect?

يَا قَوْمِ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِنْ أَجْرِي
إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ
﴿٥١﴾

[52] And O my people! Seek forgiveness of your Lord and then turn to him (in repentance). He will open up the sky in torrents upon you (pouring rain);⁶² and will grant you strength over your strength. And do not turn back criminals.'

وَيَا قَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ
يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا وَيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً
إِلَى قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

[53] They replied, 'O Hud! You have not brought us a clear (sign) and we are not going to abandon our deities because of your word. Nor are we going to believe in you (anytime in the future).

قَالُوا يَا هُودُ مَا جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ
بِتَارِكِي آلِهَتِنَا عَنْ قَوْلِكَ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ
بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

ries of the earlier prophets, or alludes to ancient legends or historical events that took place before the advent of Islam or during the lifetime of the Prophet, the aim is, invariably, a moral lesson; and since one and the same event, or even legend, has usually many facets revealing as many moral implications, the Qur'an reverts again and again to the same stories, but every time with a slight variation of stress on this or that aspect of the fundamental truths underlying the Qur'anic revelation as a whole."

60. Majid comments: "(The 'Ad were) the ancient Arab tribe which inhabited Yaman and Hadramaut, extending from the coasts of the Persian Gulf to the borders of Mesopotamia."

61. "In the province of Hadramaut, at some distance from east of Qasm, there still 'stands the shrine of Nabi Hud.' (Ebr. XI, p. 62)" Majid.

62. Durr al Mansur and others have a report that the rains were held back from the people of 'Ad for three years.

[54] In fact, we believe some of our deities have smitten you with some evil.⁶³ He said, 'I call Allah to witness. You (too) bear witness that I am quit of those you associate

إِنْ تَقُولُ إِلَّا اعْتَرَاكَ بَعْضُ آلِهَتِنَا بِسُوْءٍ
قَالَ إِنِّي أَشْهَدُ اللَّهَ وَاشْهَدُوا أَنِّي بَرِيءٌ
مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

[55] apart from Him. Therefore, plot against me, all together, and allow me no respite.⁶⁴

مِنْ دُونِهِ فَكِيدُونِي جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ لَا تُنظِرُونِ
﴿٥٥﴾

Ibn Kathir comments: Whoever is endowed with the qualities stated here will have Allah bring his sustenance easily to him. His affairs will be smoothed, and he will be saved from nagging problems of life. A *hadith* of the Prophet (*saws*) is in the same vein. It says, (as recorded in Abu Da'ud and Ibn Majah: H. Ibrahim),

مَنْ لَرِمَ الْإِسْتِعْفَارَ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ مِنْ كُلِّ هَمٍّ فَرَجًا ،
وَمِنْ كُلِّ ضَبَقٍ مَخْرَجًا وَرَزَقَهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

“Whoever sought forgiveness of Allah often, will have Allah make for him an opening out of every nagging problem, an easy way out of every tight situation, and will feed him from quarters he did not reckon.”

The above *hadith* however, has been declared as of Hasan status (Au.).

63. The mentality of the idol worshipers does not change over time. When a slave girl went blind after she embraced Islam, the Makkan pa-

gans told her that it was a curse of their deities that had descended on her. And, probably because the belief was so powerfully prevalent among them that it needed a miraculous refutation. The Prophet prayed for her and she regained her sight (Ibn Is haq and Sirah al Nabawiyah, Dr. Mahdi Rizqallah, p. 191). This, and similar kind of superstitions still prevail among the polytheists of today (Au.).

64. What Hud (*asws*) meant is that “I have not kept my disdain for your deities in secret. If you believe any of them has smitten me, then, let me tell you point blank that I am quit of them.” Then he added salt to injury by challenging them to bring on him whatever they and their deities could; and added, “Let you be quick about it. Indeed, far from doing me any harm, you are not even free to act as you wish in other affairs of your life. You are all held by your fore lock by none other than your Lord” (Thanwi - paraphrased).

[56] Verily, I have placed my trust in Allah: my Lord and your Lord. There is not a moving creature but He holds it by its fore lock.⁶⁵ Surely, my Lord is (to be found) on the straight path.

إِنِّي تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ رَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ مَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ آخِذٌ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٦﴾

Sayyid adds: “(For a fuller understanding, the background has to be kept in mind. When Hud challenged them in those words, it was not addressed to a people who could not be counted as nobody. That was a mighty nation at whom Hud had recklessly thrown that challenge). The Qur’an told us about them elsewhere (26: 123 138),

كَذَّبَتْ عَادَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ (١٢٣) إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ هُودٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ (١٢٤) إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ (١٢٥) فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا (١٢٦) وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (١٢٧) أَتَيْتُونَ بِكُلِّ رِيعٍ آيَةً تَعْبَثُونَ (١٢٨) وَتَتَّخِذُونَ مَصَانِعَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَخْلُدُونَ (١٢٩) وَإِذَا بَطَشْتُمْ بَطَشْتُمْ جَبَّارِينَ (١٣٠) فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا (١٣١) وَاتَّقُوا الَّذِي أَمَدَّكُمْ بِمَا تَعْلَمُونَ (١٣٢) أَمَدَّكُمْ بِاتِّعَامٍ وَبَيْنَ أَمَدِكُمْ (١٣٣) وَجَنَاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ (١٣٤) إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ (١٣٥) قَالُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْنَا أُوَعِّظْتُمُ أَمْ لَمْ تَكُنْ مِنَ الْوَاعِظِينَ (١٣٦) إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا خُلُقُ الْأَوَّلِينَ (١٣٧) وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ [الشعراء : ١٢٣ ، ١٣٨]

“Ad gave a lie to the Messengers. When their brother Hud told them, ‘Do you not fear? I am a trustworthy Messenger to you. Therefore, fear Allah

and follow me. And, I have not asked you wages over this. My wages are upon Allah, the Lord of the worlds. Do you build in every prime place a landmark in vain? And you construct palatial structures as if you will live for ever. And, when you seize, you seize in the manner of tyrants. Therefore, fear Allah and follow me. Fear the God who extended you with what you know very well. He extended you with cattle and children; and orchards and springs. Indeed, I fear a mighty chastisement for you.’ They said, ‘It is the same to us whether you admonished us or you were not of the admonishers. This is nothing but a custom of the past. Surely, we are not going to be subjected to chastisement.’” (It was this kind of people, strong, rich, confident, merciless tyrants at whom Hud had flung the challenge). Obviously, Hud could not have done it without full confidence in Allah and strong faith in His Powers.”

65. Asad explains, “When describ-

[57] But if you turn away⁶⁶ then, surely, I have conveyed to you what I was sent with unto you. My Lord will replace you with a people other than you. And you will not be able to harm Him in the least. Verily, my Lord is a Guardian over all things.'

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ مَّا أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ إِلَيْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفُ رَبِّي قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ وَلَا تَضُرُّونَهُ شَيْئًا إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيظٌ ﴿٥٧﴾

[58] At length when Our command came, We delivered Hud and those who had believed with him by a grace from Us.⁶⁷ Indeed, We delivered them from a severe chastisement.

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا هُودًا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَنَجَّيْنَاهُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ ﴿٥٨﴾

[59] That was 'Ad.⁶⁸ They disputed the signs of their Lord and disobeyed their Messengers, but rather followed the bidding of every tyrant, obstinate transgressor.

وَتِلْكَ عَادٌ جَحَدُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَصَوْا رُسُلَهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ كُلِّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ ﴿٥٩﴾

ing a person's humility and subjection to another person, the ancient Arabs used to say, "The forelock of so and so is in the hand of so and so."

And it has been their practice that when a criminal is to be presented to the authorities he is pulled by his fore lock (Au.).

66. The textual "tawallaw," was originally "tatawallaw" of which one "ta" has been dropped out for the reason of two "tas" coming together, hence the meaning is (if) "you turned away" and not "if they turn away" (Qurtubi).

67. Commentators have clarified, at this point and elsewhere, that in the normal circumstances when Allah's scourge comes down, both the

believers as well as the unbelievers can be affected. In that event, the believers are rewarded in the Hereafter for the pain they bore. But when it happens because of the rejection of a Prophet, then the believers are saved because if they were also punished, the Prophet of the time would lose credit. In fact, it could lead people to believe that it makes no difference whether you believed in a Prophet or you do not – when the time comes, you get destroyed all the same (Au.).

68. Majid has a historical note: "In an Himyaric inscription discovered in 1834 in the ruins of Hisn Ghurab occurs the following:

1. We dwelt at ease for ages within the court of the castle. A life without

[60] They were pursued by a curse in this world and (so will it be) on the Day of Judgment. Lo! Surely 'Ad rejected their Lord. Lo! Away with 'Ad, the people of Hud.⁶⁹

وَأَتَّبِعُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
أَلَا إِنَّ عَادًا كَفَرُوا رَبَّهُمْ أَلَا بُعْدًا لِعَادِ
قَوْمِ هُودٍ ﴿٦٠﴾

[61] And (We sent) to Thamud their brother Salih. He said, 'My people. Worship Allah. You have no other god besides He. It is He who brought you out of the earth and granted you a long life in it.⁷⁰ Therefore, seek His forgiveness and then turn to Him in repentance. Surely, my Lord is Near, Responsive.'

وَإِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ
اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ
أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا
فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ
مُجِيبٌ ﴿٦١﴾

[62] They said, 'O Salih! You have been amongst us a promising man before this.⁷¹ Do you forbid us that we worship what our forefathers worshiped? Indeed, we are in doubt concerning what you invite us to in (grave) disquiet.

قَالُوا يَا صَالِحُ قَدْ كُنْتَ فِينَا مَرْجُوًّا قَبْلَ
هَذَا أَتَنْهَانَا أَنْ نَعْبُدَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا وَإِنَّا
لَفِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ ﴿٦٢﴾

strait, and above wants...

2. Kings reigned over us, far removed from baseness. And vehement against the people of perfidy and fraud...

3. They sanctioned for us, from the religion of Hud, right law. And we believed in miracles, the resurrection, and the resurrection of the dead by the breath of God... (Forster, Historical Geography of Arabia, II, p. 93).

This establishes, in the first place, the historical personality of the Prophet Hud, and secondly, the fact that his followers were the only people of the tribe of 'Ad, who survived the Divine

catastrophe."

69. They had to be qualified as 'Ad, the people of Hud," because there were two nations called 'Ad: this one to whom Hud was sent, and the other one named as the 'Ad of Iram (Zamakhshari).

70. By the particle "it" the reference is not to the earth as a whole, rather to the Thamud lands (Au).

71. Majid reproduces the mournful cry of another bleeding heart, prefacing it with his own comment: "With the sense of regret, curiously similar, and a sentiment almost identical, over what might have been does a

[63] He replied, 'My people! Have you considered? If I happen to be on a clear (path) from my Lord, and He accorded me mercy from Himself, who will then defend me against Allah if I disobeyed Him? You will, therefore, cause me increase in nothing except loss.⁷²

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كُنْتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ
مِّن رَّبِّي وَأَتَانِي مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً فَمَن يَنْصُرُنِي
مِنَ اللَّهِ إِن عَصَيْتُهُ فَمَا تَزِيدُونَنِي غَيْرَ
تَخْسِيرٍ ﴿٦٣﴾

modern Christian speak of the holy Prophet: 'Had Muhammad, stern to his early convictions, followed the leading of Jewish and Christian truth, and inculcated upon himself their simple doctrine, there might have been a 'saint Muhammad,' more likely a 'Muhammad the Martyr,' laying the foundation stone of the 'Arabian Church.' (Muir, op. cit. Intro. p. xcviij)."

72. Asad has something quite pertinent to say, not so much for the unbelievers, as the believers: "Although this dialogue is related in the context of the story of Salih (*asws*) and the leaders of the Thamud, its implications have as is always the case with Qur'anic stories and parables a universal, timeless import. The stress here is on the intrinsic impossibility of reconciling belief in the One God, whose omniscience and omnipotence embraces all that exists, with an attribution of divine or semi divine qualities and functions to anyone or anything else. The subtly veiled suggestion of the Thamud .. and its re-

jection by Salih has a bearing on all religious attitudes based on a desire to 'bring God closer to man' through the interpretation of alleged 'mediators' between Him and man. In primitive religions, this interposition led the deification of various forces of nature and, subsequently, to the invention of imaginary deities which were thought to act against the background of an undefined, dimly perceived Supreme Power (for instance, the Moira of the ancient Greeks). In higher religious concepts, this need for mediation assumes the form of personified manifestations of God through subordinate deities (as is the case, in Hindus, with personifications of the Absolute Brahma of the Upanishads and the Vedanta in the forms of Vishnu or Shiva), or in His supposed incarnation in human form (as represented in the Christian idea of Jesus as 'God's son' and the Second Person of the Trinity). And, lastly, God is supposedly 'brought closer to man' by the interposition of hierarchy of saints, living or dead,

[64] *And O my people! This is Allah's she camel: for you a sign.⁷³ So, let her alone to feed on Allah's earth (freely). Do not touch her with evil, or a swift punishment will overtake you.'*

وَيَا قَوْمِ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فَدَرُوهَا
تَأْكُلْ فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَمَسُّوهَا بِسُوءٍ
فَيَأْخُذْكُمْ عَذَابٌ قَرِيبٌ ﴿٦٤﴾

[65] *But they hamstrung her. So he said, 'Enjoy yourself in your dwellings for three days. This is a promise that will not be proven false.'*

فَعَقَرُوهَا فَقَالَ تَمَتَّعُوا فِي دَارِكُمْ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ
ذَلِكَ وَعَدٌ غَيْرٌ مَكْذُوبٍ ﴿٦٥﴾

[66] *So, when Our command came, We rescued Salih and those who had believed with him by Our grace - (as also) from the humiliation of that day. Surely, your Lord is Strong, Mighty.⁷⁴*

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا صَالِحًا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَمِن خِزْيِ يَوْمِئِذٍ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
هُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ ﴿٦٦﴾

whose intercession is sought even by people who consider themselves to be 'monotheists' and this includes many misguided Muslims who do not realize that their belief in saints as 'mediators' between man and God conflicts with the very essence of Islam. The ever recurring Qur'anic stress on the oneness and uniqueness of God, and the categorical denial of the idea that anyone or anything whether it be a concrete being or an abstract force could have the least share in God's qualities or the least influence on the manner in which He governs the universe aims at freeing man from the self imposed servitude to an imaginary hierarchy of 'mediating powers', and at making him realize that 'wherever you turn, there is God's countenance' (2:

115), and that God is '[always} near, [to the call of whosoever calls unto Him]' (2: 186; also, in a condensed form, in verse 61 of this *Surah*)."

73. She bore a number of signs: She was brought out of a rock, she was pregnant without the touch of a male, she alone drank off all the water of a well, and, she yielded a very large amount of milk (Razi).

74. Jarir b. 'Abdullah has said that when the Prophet passed by the Hijr area (where the Thamud dwelt) he said,

لا تسألوا الآيات فقد سأها قوم صالح فكانت -
يعني الناقة - ترد من هذا الفج وتصدر من هذا
الفج فعتوا عن أمر ربهم فعقروها وكانت تشرب
ماءهم يوماً ويشربون لبنها يوماً فعقروها فأخذتهم
صيحة أهد الله من تحت أديم السماء منهم إلا رجلاً
واحداً كان في حرم الله" فقالوا: من هو يا رسول

[67] And a (mighty) cry seized those who had wronged,⁷⁵ so that by morning (they lay) in their homes fallen dead.

وَأَخَذَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةَ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دِيَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

[68] As if they never dwelt there. Lo! Thamud surely disbelieved in their Lord. Lo! Away with Thamud.

كَأَن لَّمْ يَعْنُوا فِيهَا آلَا إِنَّ ثَمُودَ كَفَرُوا رَبَّهُمْ آلَا بَعْدًا لِّثَمُودَ ﴿٦٨﴾

الله ؟ قال: ”أبو رغال فلما خرج من الحرم أصابه ما أصاب قومه“ وهذا الحديث ليس في شيء من الكتب الستة وهو على شرط مسلم (ابن كثير)

“Do not ask your Messenger for signs. Salih’s people asked for a sign, so Allah sent them a camel. It used to come from this glen and go out from that glen. But they rebelled against the command of their Lord and hamstrung her. She used to drink their water one day and they used to drink its milk another day. When they hamstrung her, a Cry seized them which destroyed everyone under their sky except for a single man who was in the Haram.” They asked, “Who was he, Messenger of Allah?” He replied, “That was Abu Rughal. When he came out of the Haram, he was struck by what his people had been struck.”

Ibn Kathir remarks that although this *hadith* is not in any of the six *hadith* collections, it meets with the conditions set by Muslim.

Another report coming through Ibn `Umar transmits him as saying,

لَا تَدْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونُوا بَاكِينَ أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمْ مِثْلُ مَا أَصَابَهُمْ

“Do not enter the dwellings of those who wrong their own souls, unless you are weeping, lest that befalls you what befell them” (Ibn Jarir).

The above is in Bukhari (Au.).

75. At another place the Qur`an has said that they were seized by a massive quake (7: 78).

{فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ} [الأعراف: ٧٨]

Perhaps a massive earthquake accompanied by a huge blast was the cause of their destruction (Ma`arif). According to modern scholars, the “rajfah” of the text refers to the shaking caused by sound waves. It might be noted that bombs actually release high energy at high frequency – turned into sound waves, which demolish building far away, as in the

[69] Surely, Our envoys went to Ibrahim with the good news.⁷⁶ They said, 'Peace.' He answered, 'Peace.' And he did not tarry long before he brought in a roasted calf.

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى
قَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ فَمَا لَبِثَ أَنْ جَاءَ
بِعِجْلٍ حَنِيدٍ ﴿٦٩﴾

[70] But when he saw their hands not reaching for it,⁷⁷ he felt wary of them and felt some apprehension on their account.⁷⁸ They said, 'Fear not. We have been sent to the people of Lut.'

فَلَمَّا رَأَى أَيْدِيَهُمْ لَا تَصِلُ إِلَيْهِ نَكِرَهُمْ
وَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّا
أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَى قَوْمِ لُوطٍ ﴿٧٠﴾

case of atomic bombs (Au.).

76. Asad has a significant point especially in the second half of the passage which has been overlooked by most, if not all commentators: "The reason for prefacing the story of Lot with an episode from Abraham's life lies in the latter's subsequent pleading in behalf of the sinful people of Sodom (verses 74-76) and also, possibly, in God's earlier promise to him, 'Behold I shall make thee a leader of men' (see 2: 124), which must have imbued him with an enhanced sense of moral responsibility not only for his own family but also for the people with whom he was indirectly connected through his nephew Lot (Lut in Arabic)."

Yusuf Ali adds: "According to the sequence of *Surah* vii, the next reference should be to the story of Lut, but it is introduced by a brief reference to an episode in the life of his uncle Abraham, from whose seed

sprang the peoples to whom Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad Al Mustafa were sent with the major Revelations. Abraham had by this time passed through the fire of persecutions in the Mesopotamian valleys: he had left behind him the ancestral idolatry of Ur of the Chaldees; he had been tried and he had triumphed over the persecution of Nimrud: he had now taken up his residence in Canaan, from which his nephew Lot (Lut) was called to preach to the wicked Cities of the Plain east of the Dead sea which is itself called Bahr Lut. Thus prepared and sanctified, he was now ready to receive the Message that he was chosen to be the progenitor of a great line of Prophets, and that Message is now referred to."

77. Majid points out a Biblical error: "This corrects the Biblical misstatement that 'they did eat' (Gen. 19: 7-8)."

78. Qatadah has said that among

[71] His woman was standing by.⁷⁹ She laughed.⁸⁰ So We gave her the good tidings of Is haq and after Is haq, Ya`qub.⁸¹

وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ قَائِمَةٌ فَضَحِكَتْ فَبَشَّرْنَاَهَا
بِإِسْحَاقَ وَمِنْ وَرَاءِ إِسْحَاقَ يَعْقُوبَ ﴿٧١﴾

the Arabs, if the guests did not eat from the food presented to them, it signaled an ill foreboding (Ibn Jarir).

Asad paraphrases the summary of interpretations at this point: "... since in the Arabian tradition of hospitality, a stranger's refusal to partake of the food offered him is an indication of unfriendly intent, Abraham who until then had not realized that his guests were angels became apprehensive of possible hostility on their part."

Thanwi adds: In fact, Ibrahim had not only felt some fear, he frankly expressed it as elsewhere in the Qur'an. He said (15: 52), "We are apprehensive of you." Also, his penetrating eye told him that the good tiding could not have been the ultimate objective. They must have another errand on hand. Hence he asked them, as at another place in the Qur'an (15: 57): "So, what's your mission?"

79. That was Sarah (some say Sarrah: meaning 'one who brings happiness,' or 'the happy one'), standing behind the curtains. Another opinion is that she was serving the guests while Ibra-

him sat with them (Ibn Jarir).

80. Suddi has said that she smiled at the funny scene: the sight of Ibrahim who did the roasting and the connected works in great haste, brought them the food, but they would not eat .. and, Ibrahim in fear...! (Ibn Jarir). Another possibility is that she felt relieved when she realized that the angels had not come with an ill intent directly affecting them, and so, she laughed (Au.).

"Dahika" is literally to show the teeth (in happiness). However, it is also applicable to turning a bright face. You will say, "I visited someone and he was *dahikan*" i.e., he was bright faced. Hence a *hadith* which says,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَنْشِئُ السَّحَابَ فَيَنْطِقُ أَحْسَنَ
الْمَنْطِقِ وَيُضْحِكُ أَحْسَنَ الضَّحِكِ

"Allah sends clouds and they speak out in a beautiful manner and shine out in a beautiful manner."

(The *hadith* is in Musnad Ahmad and *sahih*; and note the usage of the word dahika: Au.).

Mujahid and `Ikrimah have, howev-

[72] She said, 'Woe unto me. Will I bear a child, seeing that I am an old (woman) and this my husband is of an advanced age?!⁸² This indeed is something amazing.'

قَالَتْ يَا وَيْلَتَى أَأَلِدُ وَأَنَا عَجُوزٌ وَهَذَا بَعْلِي
شَيْخًا إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ ﴿٧٢﴾

[73] They said, 'Are you amazed at your Lord's ways? Allah's mercy and grace is upon you (O) people of the House. Surely, He is worthy of all praise and full of glory.'⁸³

قَالُوا أَتَعْجَبِينَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ رَحِمْتُ اللَّهَ
وَبَرَكَاتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ إِنَّهُ حَمِيدٌ
مُجِيدٌ ﴿٧٣﴾

[74] When the awe had left Ibrahim and good tidings came to him, (he began to) dispute with us concerning the people of Lut.⁸⁴

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الرَّوْعُ وَجَاءَتْهُ
الْبُشْرَى يُجَادِلُنَا فِي قَوْمِ لُوطٍ ﴿٧٤﴾

er, thought that the allusion is to she suffered period. They support their opinion with examples from Arabic literature (Baghawi). Ibn `Abbas held the same opinion (Ibn Kathir).

81. That is, a grandson, Ya'qub (Ibn Jarir).

82. It is said that she was then in her nineties while Ibrahim was a hundred and two scores.

83. This demonstrates that the angels can speak to other than Prophets (Thanwi).

84. It should be obvious that Ibrahim could not have argued with his Lord, seeing that it involved the exchange of a series of questions and answers. It must have been angels with whom he would have argued. The pronoun "us" therefore refers to the angels. It is also reported that he began to

ask them how they could destroy a nation when there were so many believers among them. The angels told him that obviously they would not, if there were so many believers in the towns. At the end Ibrahim learnt that there were no believers there at all except Lut and his two daughters. So he asked (29: 33) "But Lut is among them." The answer was (29: 33), "We know better who are in there. Surely, we shall save him and his home folk except his woman: she is the one to stay behind" (Ibn Jarir).

Shawkani adds, "Similar reports are in `Abdur Razzaq and Abu al Sheikh in reference to *Surah al Mujadalah*.

Another possibility is that to argue with the angels carrying a commandment of Allah was tantamount to disputing with His command, hence the pronoun "Us", referring to Allah

[75] Surely, Ibrahim was slow to anger, given to pleading and oft returning.⁸⁵

﴿٧٥﴾ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ

[76] (We said), 'O Ibrahim, leave this alone.⁸⁶ Your Lord's command has already come. Surely, a punishment is coming upon them that cannot be averted.

يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَا إِنَّهُ قَدْ جَاءَ أَمْرٌ رَبِّكَ وَإِنَّهُمْ آتِيهِمْ عَذَابٌ غَيْرُ مَرْذُودٍ ﴿٧٦﴾

[77] When Our Messengers came to Lut, he was anguished on their account,⁸⁷ felt distressed because of them and said, 'This is a difficult day.'⁸⁸

وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا سِيءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَقَالَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ غَصِيبٌ ﴿٧٧﴾

[78] His people came to him rushing towards him.⁸⁹ And from earlier times they had been committing vices.⁹⁰ He pleaded, 'My people. These are my daughters.⁹¹ They are purer for you. Fear Allah and do not humiliate me over my guests.⁹² Is not there a single decent man among you?'

وَجَاءَهُ قَوْمُهُ يُهْرَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ وَمَنْ قَبْلَ كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ هَؤُلَاءِ بَنَاتِي هُنَّ أَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُخْزُونِ فِي ضَيْفِي أَلَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ رَجُلٌ رَشِيدٌ ﴿٧٨﴾

(Au.).

85. "Like Al Mustafa, Abraham had three qualities in a pre eminent degree, which are here mentioned: (1) he was long suffering with other people's faults; (2) his sympathies and compassion were very wide; and (3) for every difficulty or trouble he turned to Allah and sought Him in prayer" (Yusuf Ali)

86. Although, apparently Ibrahim seemed to be pleading for Lut, (by saying, "But Lut is among them"), Allah knew that his name was taken as a pretext. The true objective was to try and save the nation of Lut. There-

fore, he had to be told, "Ibrahim, leave this (matter) alone" (Thanwi).

87. Lut felt anguished because, after leaving Ibrahim, the angels had come to him in the form of handsome young men. A few reports say that he had already warned them that his people were one of the most pervert people on the face of the earth (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

88. The rendering here of "asib" with the addition of the remark in parenthesis combines the explanation of Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and others as in Ibn Jarir.

89. Kisa'i, Farra' and other linguists

[79] They said, 'O Lut. You know that we have no right to your daughters.⁹³ And surely, you know what we are looking for.'

قَالُوا لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَمَا لَنَا فِي بَنَاتِكَ مِنْ
حَقِّ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا نُرِيدُ ﴿٧٩﴾

[80] He said, 'Would that I had a power against you or take refuge in a strong corner.'⁹⁴

قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ آوِي إِلَىٰ رُكْنٍ
شَدِيدٍ ﴿٨٠﴾

have said that “*ahra`a*” (from which is derived “*yuhra`un*”) is never used but to express the act of running with excitement (Shawkani).

90. The allusion is to homosexuality.

91. The allusion was to their women.

The women of a Prophet's nation are his daughters he being the father of his nation and his (believing) wives being their mothers (as in verse 6 of *al Ahzab*, no. 33) which says,

النَّبِيِّ أُولَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ
[الأحزاب : ٦]

“The Prophet has precedence over them (in all affairs) and his wives are their mothers” Qatadah, Mujahid, Sa`id b. Jubayr and others (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

92. The word “*dayf*” is used both in singular as well as plural (Ibn Jarir).

93. It is possible that although they knew that Lut was referring to their women when he said “my daughters,” they punned on his word and, to make fun of him, took it literally

to say, “we have no right over your daughters” (Au.).

94. He meant a tribe that could offer him help and support against them Qatadah, Hasan and others. And the Prophet said,

وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ لُوطٍ إِنْ كَانَ لِيَأْوِي إِلَىٰ رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ

“May Allah show Lut mercy. He was seeking a strong corner for support” [Ibn Jarir through Hasan, Sa`id ibn al Musayyib and others].

Tabari's footnote says in explanation that “He sought people's help while Allah was the best to help.”

But another *hadith*, (as in *Tuhfah*: H. Ibrahim) says,

رحمة الله على لوط لقد كان يأوي إلى ركن شديد .
يعني الله عز وجل . فما بعث الله بعده من نبي إلا
في ثروة من قومه

“May Allah show mercy to Lut. He sought a strong support, that is, of Allah, and hence no Prophet has been raised after Lut but

[81] They (the angels) broke in, 'O Lut. We are messengers of your Lord. They will never get at you.⁹⁵ Move out with your family during a (late) portion of the night⁹⁶ and let not any of you look back. Except for your wife,⁹⁷ (she may not be taken along).⁹⁸ She will be struck by that which will strike them. Early morning is their appointed hour.⁹⁹ Is not the morning close?'¹⁰⁰

قَالُوا يَا لُوطُ إِنَّا رُسُلُ رَبِّكَ لَنْ يَصِلُوا
إِلَيْكَ فَأَسْرِ بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ
وَلَا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا أَمْرَاتَكَ إِنَّهُ
مُصِيبُهَا مَا أَصَابَهُمْ إِنَّ مَوْعِدَهُمُ الصُّبْحُ
أَلَيْسَ الصُّبْحُ بِقَرِيبٍ ﴿٨١﴾

in a powerful and numerous family” (Ibn Kathir).

The *hadith* has been declared Hasan (Au.).

Bukhari and Muslim have only the following words: “May Allah show mercy to Lut. He sought a strong support” (Shawkani).

What it would mean in the light of the report (in Bukhari) is that Lut (*asws*) did well by seeking Allah’s support. In which case the rendering would be: ‘Would that I had a power against you or, (maybe) I should take refuge in a strong corner (i.e., Allah) Razi.

95. It is said that as Lut stood at his door, trying to convince them into returning, and they trying to convince him that he should not stand in the way leaving them with no choice but to force their entry, Jibril appeared at the door and blinded them

all, so that they spent the rest of the night bumping into walls, doors and obstacles (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

96. Opinions vary over what exactly is meant by “*qita’am min al layl*” : any part of the night (Qatadah), midnight (*qit’ah*: half), and late night, almost at dawn (Ibn `Abbas Razi, Qurtubi).

97. She had sneaked out to tell her people that Lut had guests of such beautiful features as never seen before (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

98. The words in parenthesis are in relation to the present diacritical mark of the textual word “*imra’atak*” (your woman) which, being in the accusative which connects it with the words “move out,” to yield the meaning, “You may move out but not your woman.” A variant, but unpopular opinion reads it as “*imra’atuk*” which would mean, “Let none turn, except for your wife (who will turn)” Ibn

[82] So, when Our command came, we made its uppermost the bottom most,¹⁰¹ and rained on it stones of baked clay, layer upon layer.

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا عَلَيَّهَا سَافِلَهَا
وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا حِجَارَةً مِّن سِجِّيلٍ
مَنْصُودٍ ﴿٨٢﴾

Jarir.

99. Sa'id b. Musayyib, Suddi and others are reported of opinion that when the angels said they had come down to destroy the nation, Lut told them to go "Head and do it, then and there, without delay. They told him that the morning was the appointed hour, and was not the morning close?

100. It is widely reported that they were blinded before the punishment came. Allah said (54: 37),

وَلَقَدْ زَاوَدُوهُ عَن ضَيْفِهِ فَطَمَسْنَا أَعْيُنَهُمْ [القمر :
[٣٧

"Surely, they desired his guests. So we blinded their eyes" (Ibn Jarir).

101. It is said that Jibril swept them with his wing, scooped them up with it, everyone and everything, men and the buildings, including their animals, lifted them to the heavens, so high that the dwellers of the heavens heard the barking of their dogs, turned them upside down and then banged them down sending them crashing against the earth's crest.

That was followed by stones raining down on them from the heavens (Ibn Jarir).

The above, not originating from Prophetic statements (not even from the Companions, but a few Followers: Manar), seems to have Israeli reports at its root. Accordingly, Shawkani is skeptic about it. This has led some contemporary commentators to reject them. They offer their own theory that it was after all an earthquake accompanied by a volcanic shower of stones. But they fail to offer a proper explanation for the turning upside down of the dwellings. Further, not all the details that are given by the early commentators are found in the present day *Bible*. (See Genesis ch. 19). Although, the Biblical narrative, comes close to the Qur'anic narration. However, the Biblical story ends shamefully by alleging that after escaping from the punishment that struck his people, Lut committed a crime worse than what his people were destroyed for. Let the *Bible* speak:

"Now Lot went up out of Zo'ar,

and dwelt in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to dwell in Zo'ar; so he dwelt in a cave with his two daughters. And the first born said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve offspring through our father. So they made their father drink wine that night; and the first born went in, and lay with her father; he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. And on the next day the first born said to the young, "Behold, I lay last night with my father; let us make him drink wine tonight also; then you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve offspring though our father. So they made their father drink wine that night also; and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he did not know when she lay down and when she arose. Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. The first born bore a son, and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. The younger also bore a son, and called his name Ben ammi; he is the father of the Ammonites to this day."

Bible commentators accept the incest story as true, and defend it. One

of the commentaries mentions it as, "... the valliant attempt of Lot's daughters to continue the human race at all costs." The Jerome Biblical Commentary (Prentice Hall, 1968).

The story speaks of the purity of minds of those who put it in the Holy Scripture as God's own revelation, every word of it! It also reflects the state of mind of those who would like the story remain in the *Bible*. How could any sane mind believe that a Prophet could get so heavily drunk as to be unable to know that he was having sex with his own daughters? How could the daughters be so sure of success in getting him heavily drunk twice unless they knew that their father was a heavy drinker? How could the two be so sure that just one session would definitely load them with the sin and that too of a male issue? Did not the grotesqueness of the story strike those who forged it? But, evil motives blind men's hearts. The Israelites were and are desperate to prove that the people around them, Palestinians, Syrians, Lebanese ... were, and are, the progeny of illegitimate progenitors while they themselves are of noble stock. The following is from Encyclopedia Judaica:

The present form of the Lot narrative leaves an unmistakable impres-

[83] *Marked by your Lord.¹⁰² And it is not far from the (Makkan) transgressors.*

مُسَوَّمَةٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ وَمَا هِيَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ
بَعِيدٍ ﴿٨٣﴾

[84] *And to Madyan (We sent) their brother Shu'ayb. He said, 'My people! Worship Allah, you have no god other than He. And, do not short measure or weigh. In fact, I see you in prosperity. And indeed, I fear for you a chastisement of an encompassing day.*

وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ وَلَا تَنْقُصُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ إِنِّي أَرَاكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ وَإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُّحِيطٍ
﴿٨٤﴾

[85] *And, my people. Give full measure and weight in all fairness, and do not defraud the people of their goods.¹⁰³ And commit not mischief in the land spreading corruption.*

وَيَا قَوْمِ أَوْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

[86] *Allah's remainder is better for you¹⁰⁴ if you are believers. And I am not over you a guardian.'*

بَقِيَّةُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ ﴿٨٦﴾

sion of Israelite ascendancy over Ammon and Moab: Haran, Lot's father and the grandfather of Ammon and Moab, was the youngest of Terah's sons, while Abraham was the oldest; Lot was continually in need of Abraham's protection and help; the incestuous union between Lot and his daughters disgraces their offspring, the Ammonites and Moabites.

To add salt to injury, *Bible* believers have taken the pains to produce obscene bright-color paintings depicting Lot in a cave getting drunk on wine served by his half-clad daughters (Au.).

102. While the people of the towns

were destroyed in the above manner, those that were out for one reason or another, and spread over a wide area, the stones were targeted at them. It is said that one of them would be somewhere (in another village) talking to people when a stone would crash on him and flatten him down (Ibn Kathir).

103. The repetition, almost thrice, was because of the wide prevalence of the practice of weighing less and measuring short (Razi).

104. Ibn Jarir reports Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah and others as saying that the allusion by "baqiyyatu Allah" is to His obedience. But his

[87] They replied, 'Does your Prayer command you that we abandon what our forefathers worshiped or, do as we will with our wealth?'¹⁰⁵ Surely, you are much forbearing, decent-minded.¹⁰⁶

قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ أَصَلَاتُكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ تَتْرَكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا أَوْ أَنْ تَفْعَلَ فِي أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشَاءُ إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ الْحَلِيمُ الرَّشِيدُ ﴿٨٧﴾

own preference is that the allusion is, "what remains after you have given away to the people that which is rightfully theirs, is better than what you amass by defrauding them." So, what is given away is "*baqiyyatu Allah*" (Au.).

105. The allusion was to their habit of cutting off a piece of the silver coins, or adulterating them with other minerals: Ibn Ka'b al Qurazi, Ibn Zayd (Ibn Jarir). But Ibn Kathir reports Thawri as of opinion that the allusion is to the refusal to pay Zakah.

Mawdudi comments on another aspect: "This is a full blooded expression of the world view of Ignorance (*Jahiliyyah*) as distinguished from that of Islam. The Islamic view is that all worship except that of God is erroneous. It is erroneous because worshiping any other than the One True God is supported by nothing neither reason, knowledge, nor revelation. Moreover, God should not only be worshiped in the limited sphere of life called 'religion.' God's

worship should extend to all aspects of life social, cultural, economic and political. For all that man has in the world belongs only to God. Man, therefore, has no right to consider any aspect of his life to be independent of God's guidance.

"The contrary to this is *Jahiliyyah*. According to this view, man ought to observe the customs and usages he inherits from his ancestors, and he ought to do so merely because they come down from the past. This world view considers religion to be confined to the domain of ritual: the ritual of worship.

"It is thus clear that there is nothing so 'modern' about the tendency of driving a wedge between the religious and secular spheres of life. For some three and half thousand years ago the nation of Shu'ayb was so emphatically insistent on bifurcating life into two water tight compartments the secular and the religious as Western and their Eastern disciples of our time are wont to do. There seems little justification, there-

[88] He said, 'My people. Have you considered? If I am upon a clear sign from my Lord, and He has provided me from Him a good provision? Further, I do not wish to do against what I forbid you. I only wish a betterment so far as it is in my power while my own good-guidance is up to Allah. I have put my trust in Him and I turn to Him (in repentance).¹⁰⁷

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كُنْتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَرَزَقَنِي مِنْهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَمْلِكُكُمْ إِلَّا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنْتَهُمْ عَنْهُ إِن آُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ ﴿٨٨﴾

[89] And, O my people! Let not your breach with me lead you to be struck with what the people of Nuh, or of Hud or of Salih were struck with.¹⁰⁸ And, the people of Lut are not far away from you.¹⁰⁹

وَيَا قَوْمِ لَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شِقَاقِي أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمْ مِّثْلُ مَا أَصَابَ قَوْمَ نُوحٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ هُودٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ صَالِحٍ وَمَا قَوْمُ لُوطٍ مِّنكُمْ بِبَعِيدٍ ﴿٨٩﴾

[90] Rather seek forgiveness of your Lord and then turn to Him (in repentance). Surely my Lord is Kind, Affectionate.¹¹⁰

وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي رَحِيمٌ وَدُودٌ ﴿٩٠﴾

fore, to categorize the attitude that has emerged in modern times as a result of the cumulative intellectual progress of mankind. Far from it, the new fangled ideology which is being played up everywhere for its freshness and newness is, in fact, the same stale, old fashioned obscurantism which characterized *Jahiliyyah* several thousand years ago.”

106. Most of the commentators have said that these words were said half in sarcasm, half in mockery. But Shabbir reports Shah Abdul Qadir of the opinion that they were earnest about it, meaning, “You are a reasonable man. Why can you not agree on the principle, ‘to you your religion and

to us ours?’”

107. Ibn Kathir writes: It has come to us that whenever `Umar ibn `Abd al `Aziz wrote a letter to his governors he ended with these words:

وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ

108. It is reported that when `Uthman (*ra*) was besieged in his house, once he peeped from above his house and recited this verse (Ibn Kathir).

109. The allusion could either be to time or place. That is, either to the nation of Lut who were not far away in time, or to their dwellings that were not far away in space (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

[91] They replied, 'O Shu'ayb. We do not comprehend much of what you say.¹¹¹ Indeed, we perceive you as weak amongst us.¹¹² In fact, were it not for your family, we would have stoned you, considering that you are not great in esteem in our sight.'

قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ مَا نَفْقَهُ كَثِيرًا مِّمَّا تَقُولُ
وَإِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِينَا ضَعِيفًا وَلَوْلَا رَهْطُكَ
لَرَجَمْنَاكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْنَا بَعِيزٌ ﴿٩١﴾

[92] He asked, 'My people! Do you hold my folk in greater esteem than Allah? You have cast Him behind your backs! Surely, my Lord encompasses the things you do.'

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَهْطِي أَعَزُّ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ
اللَّهِ وَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُ وَرَاءَكُمْ ظَهْرًا إِنَّ رَبِّي بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ﴿٩٢﴾

[93] And, O my people! Keep working in your place. I am also working. Soon you shall know to whom comes a chastisement that humiliates him, and who is a liar. Watch then. I am also a watcher along with you.'

وَيَا قَوْمِ اعْمَلُوا عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ
سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ
وَمَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ وَارْتَبِعُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ رَقِيبٌ
﴿٩٣﴾

[94] So when Our command came, We delivered Shu'ayb and those who believed with him by a mercy from Us, and a huge cry seized those who wronged (themselves), so that by morning (they lay) in their homes fallen on their faces .

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا شُعَيْبًا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَأَخَذَتِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
الصَّيْحَةَ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دِيَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ
﴿٩٤﴾

[95] As if they never flourished therein. Lo! Away with the Madyanites as the Thamud remained away (from mercy).

كَأَن لَّمْ يَعْنُوا فِيهَا إِلَّا بُعْدًا لِّمَدْيَنَ كَمَا
بَعَدَتْ ثَمُودُ ﴿٩٥﴾

110. Rashid Rida points out that linguistically "A loving" might not accurately reflect the meaning of "wadud." The difference being, "wadud" is someone who demonstrates his love through action while "mawaddah" (love) does not require it.

111. Mawdudi comments: "When Shu'ayb's people stated that they

did not understand much of what Shu'ayb said, they did not say so because Shu'ayb (peace be upon him) spoke in some foreign language, or because he talked in an ambiguous or complicated manner... The difficulty in understanding Shu'ayb's teachings arose from the fact that his people had become simply too perverse to grasp it.

[96] Indeed, We sent Musa with our signs and a clear authority.¹¹³

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٩٦﴾

[97] To Fir'awn and His chiefs. But they followed Fir'awn's bidding. And Fir'awn's bidding was not rightly guided.

إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَاتَّبَعُوهُ أَمْرٌ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَا أَمْرٌ فِرْعَوْنَ بِرَشِيدٍ ﴿٩٧﴾

[98] He will head his nation on the Day of Judgment and lead them to the Fire¹¹⁴ an evil coming to an evil destination.

يَقْدُمُ قَوْمَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَأَوْرَدَهُمُ النَّارَ وَبِئْسَ الْوَرْدُ الْمَوْرُودُ ﴿٩٨﴾

“It is always the case that when some people become fully seized by their prejudice, are overpowered by their lusts, or begin to move vehemently in one particular intellectual direction, they hardly have the patience to give ear to any idea which is different from their own. But even if they were to listen to any unfamiliar idea, it would only sound to them as gibberish, as something coming to them from some other planet.”

112. A narration in Hakim declared *sahih* by him, reports Ibn `Abbas as of opinion that “*da'if*” here is synonymous of “*darir*” meaning blind. (In Himyari dialect, “*da'if*” is “*darir*”). That is, either Shu'ayb (*asws*) was blind, or had temporarily gone blind. Alusi draws our attention to the fact that not all reports declared *sahih* by Hakim are truly so. He was as quick at declaring reports *sahih*, in contrast to Ibn Jawzi, who was quick in declaring them *da'if*. The addi-

tion of the words, “amongst us” also does not lend credence to the story of blindness.

113. Alternatively, the textual word “sultan” could be rendered as arguments or proofs (Razi).

114. Yusuf Ali writes: “*Awrada* = to lead, as cattle, down to their watering place. The metaphor is apt. The true herdsman is trusted by his normal flock, and he leads them in the heat of the day down to pleasant and cool watering places in order that they may slake their thirst and be happy! And yet men sin against their own intelligence, and follow the false leader like cattle without intelligence!”

Ibn Kathir writes that the application of the verse is not specific to Fir'awn. Anyone who led in disbelief here in this world, will be a leader of those who preferred to follow him, there in the Hereafter too. Says a *hadith* in

[99] They were pursued by a curse in this (life), and so (will it be) on the Judgment day: an evil rewarding unto an evil one receiving it.¹¹⁵

وَأَتَّبِعُوا فِي هَذِهِ لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُنَسَّ
الرِّفْدُ الْمَرْفُودُ ﴿٩٩﴾

[100] Those are some of the tidings of the towns that We narrate you.¹¹⁶ Of them, some are existent, others have been harvested (by the sickle of chastisement).¹¹⁷

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نَقَّصْنَاهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنْهَا
قَائِمٌ وَحَصِيدٌ ﴿١٠٠﴾

[101] And We did them no wrong. But rather, they wronged themselves. Their deities that they worshiped apart from Allah availed them not in the least when Your Lord's command came to pass. In fact, they did not add anything to their lot but ruin.

وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِنْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَمَا
أَغْنَتْ عَنْهُمْ آلِهَتُهُمُ الَّتِي يَدْعُونَ مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ لَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ
وَمَا زَادَهُمْ غَيْرَ تَتَابَعٍ ﴿١٠١﴾

Ahmad reported by Abu Hurayrah,

أَمْرُ الْقَيْسِ صَاحِبِ لَوَاءِ الشُّعْرَاءِ إِلَى النَّارِ

“Imra ‘l Qays will be the bearer of the banner of the pre Islamic poets leading them to the Fire.”

Haythamiyy remarked that except for one narrator who is unknown, the rest are trustworthy.

115. Asad has an insightful passage here: “The short passage dealing with Pharaoh and his followers (verses 96-99) connects with, and amplifies, the reference to the tribe of ‘Ad, who ‘followed the bidding of every arrogant enemy of truth’ (verse 59 of this *Surah*). Thus, the main point of the passage is the problem of immoral leadership and, arising from it, the

problem of man’s individual, moral responsibility for wrongs committed in obedience of a ‘higher authority’. The Qur’ān answers this question emphatically in the affirmative: the leader and the led are equally guilty, and none can be absolved of responsibility on the plea that he was but blindly following orders given by those above him. The indirect allusion is to man’s relative free will i.e., his freedom of choice between right and wrong fittingly concludes the stories of the earlier prophets and their wrongdoing communities narrated in this *Surah*.”

116. These are some and not all of the stories of the Prophets narrated in the Qur’ān in keeping with the

[102] Such is your Lord's seizing when He seizes the towns while it is transgressing.¹¹⁸ Indeed, His seizing is painful, severe.

وَكَذَلِكَ أَخْذُ رَبِّكَ إِذَا أَخَذَ الْقُرَىٰ وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ إِنَّ أَخْذَهُ أَلِيمٌ شَدِيدٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾

[103] Surely, in that is a sign for him who fears the chastisement of the Hereafter. That is a Day mankind are to be gathered to. And that is a Day which will be witnessed.¹¹⁹

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّمَنْ خَافَ عَذَابَ الْآخِرَةِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ تَجْمُوعٌ لَّهُ النَّاسُ وَذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَّشْهُودٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾

[104] We delay it not, but for a reckoned moment.

وَمَا نُوَخِّرُهُ إِلَّا لِأَجَلٍ مَّعْدُودٍ ﴿١٠٤﴾

[105] The day it comes, no soul shall speak except by His leave.¹²⁰ Then, of them some will be wretched while (others) blessed.¹²¹

يَوْمَ يَأْتُ لَا تَكَلِّمُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ فَمِنْهُمْ شَقِيٌّ وَسَعِيدٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾

needs and Athe purpose being,” in the words of Asad, “as always in the Qur’ān, the illustration of an ethical principle or principles, and of men’s varying reaction to the guidance which God offers them directly through His prophets and indirectly through the observable phenomena of His creation.”

117. The terms “qa’im” (existent), has been explained by Qatadah as meaning Athose that are visible as ruins” while “hasid” (harvested) is explained as Athose that have left no mark on the earth” (Qurtubi). Our rendering as above is following the explanation offered by Ibn `Abbas who declared that “qa’im” are those that are still inhabited (such as Egypt: Shafi’), and “hasid” those that are in ruins (such as Hijr) Ibn Jarir.

118. A *hadīth* of the *sahihayn* confirms this. It says,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيَمْلِي لِلظَّالِمِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخَذَهُ لَمْ يُغْلَنَّهُ

“Allah lends reprieve to a transgressor, until, when He seizes, He does not allow him any respite” (Ibn Kathir).

119. A Day which will be widely witnessed, by the angels, men and jinn, so there is no possibility of anyone not being there to witness the proceedings (Ibn Kathir and others).

120. Yusuf Ali explains comprehensibly and forcefully: “Speak, i.e., either in self defense or in accusation of others or to intercede for others, or to enter into conversation or to ask questions, one with another. It will be a solemn Day, before the

[106] Then, as for those who were wretched, they will be in the Fire. Theirs shall be panting and roaring therein,¹²²

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ شَفَعُوا فِي النَّارِ لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ
وَشَهِيقٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾

Great Judge of all, to whom everything will be known and whose authority will be unquestioned. There will be no room for quibbling or equivocation or subterfuge of any kind, nor can any one lay the blame on another or take the responsibility of another. Personal responsibility will be enforced strictly.”

Prophetic emphasis in this regard comes through Ibn Kathir. The Prophet said,

وَلَا يَتَكَلَّمُ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا الرُّسُلَ وَكَلَامِ الرُّسُلِ يَوْمَئِذٍ
اللَّهُمَّ سَلِّمْ سَلِّمْ

“No one will speak on that Day except for the Messengers. And the Messengers will be supplicating, ‘O Allah. Rescue (us), rescue (us).”

(The above *hadith* is in the *sahihayn*: H. Ibrahim).

121. It is reported of `Umar (*ra*) that when this verse was revealed he went to the Prophet to ask,

يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ فَعَلَى مَا تَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ قَدْ فُرِعَ مِنْهُ أَوْ
عَلَى شَيْءٍ لَمْ يُفْرَعْ مِنْهُ قَالَ بَلْ عَلَى شَيْءٍ قَدْ فُرِعَ

مِنْهُ وَجَرَتْ بِهِ الْأَقْلَامُ يَا عُمَرُ وَلَكِنْ كُلُّ مُيَسَّرٍ لِمَا
خُلِقَ لَهُ قَالَ أَبُو عَيْسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ غَرِيبٌ

“Prophet of Allah. With what view should we work: following something that (is written) and done with, or something not done with? He answered, “But rather, something that is done with (i.e. pre determined), and the Pens have run (their course), O `Umar. Indeed, every soul runs the course for which it has been created” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

The *hadith* is in Tirmidhi who classified it as *hasan gharib* (Qurtubi). That is, it is a kind of weak report (Au.).

122. According to Layth the linguist, *zafir* is for a grievous inhaling of a deep breath without letting it out while *shahiq* is used for letting it out, (i.e., violent inhaling and exhaling: Au.). *Zafir* and *shahiq* are also used in another sense. *Zafir* is used for the powerful first noise emerging from a donkey’s throat when it starts to bray, while *shahiq* is for the final

[107] Abiding therein forever, so long as the heavens and the earth abide:¹²³ except as Your Lord will.¹²⁴ Surely, Your Lord is the Doer of what He will.

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ
وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَّالٌ
لِّمَا يُرِيدُ ﴿١٠٧﴾

weak noise that emerges from its chest (Ibn Jarir, Razi, from Ibn `Abbas, "Abu al `Aliyyah and others).

123. Tabari's interpretation may be presented here in Asad's words. He said that "in ancient Arabic usage the expression 'as long as the heavens and the earth endure', or 'as long as night and day alternate', etc., were used metonymically in the sense of Atime beyond count (abad)."

However, Hasan al Busri has expressed the opinion that it is the heavens and the earth of the next world that are meant since, according to the Qur`an the present earth and heavens will not last: ("the Day when the earth will be replaced with another earth, and the heavens [too]": 14: 48), Further, there was wide agreement among the Salaf that the verse applies to those who will initially enter the Hell fire, but shall come out later, sooner: if their evil deeds were not many, but much later, after eons provided they bore faith in Allah even if it happened to be the size of an atom (Ibn Kathir).

124. Qurtubi demonstrates that these words could, in this context, lend ten different meanings depending on how they are treated grammatically: none of them easy to appreciate, even if successfully rendered into English, so we should rather leave it unattempted (Au.).

The commentators, both modern as well as classical, are almost unanimous that those who entered the Fire, as unbelievers in Allah or attributing partners unto Him, will remain in the Fire forever. According to them, the exception in this verse refers to the sinning believers who would initially enter the Fire but shall be removed from it ultimately. Shawkani is the only commentator who mentions the opinions of `Umar (ibn al Khattab), Abu Hurayrah, Ibrahim, Ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas, `Abdullah bin `Amr, Jabir, Abu Sa`id, Abu Mijlaz and `Abdul Rahman ibn Zayd, that a time will come when the Fire will be destroyed and its dwellers relieved, even if takes (in modern terms) billions of years. There are two more verses which hold out this

hope. One of them says (6: 128):

قَالَ النَّارُ مَثْوَاكُمْ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ
[الأنعام : ١٢٨]

“He will say, ‘The Fire is your abode, abiding therein forever, except as Allah will.’”

The second verse is (78: 21 23):

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا (٢١) لِلطَّاغِينَ مَأْبًا (٢٢)
لَا يَتَّبِعُونَ فِيهَا أَخْفَابًا [النبا : ٢١ - ٢٣]

“Verily, Jahannum will be (a place of) ambush; for the rebels a resort; to abide therein for ages” (Au.).

We might also cite here passages on this topic from `Ali ibn abi al `Izz's commentary on “*Aqidah Tahawiyyah*” discussing the eternity of the Fire:

“Nevertheless, insofar as the eternity of the Fire goes, there are various opinions. There are some who have believed in its ultimate destruction. Such as, `Umar, Ibn Mas`ud, Abu Hurayrah, Abu Sa`id al Khudri and others. They said that Fire is the manifestation of Allah's anger, whereas Paradise is the manifestation of His mercy. And the Prophet has said: ‘When Allah had created His creations, He inscribed a writing, which is with Him above the `Arsh, (in words), “My mercy shall prevail over My anger.”’ These are the

words of Bukhari. Further, Allah has told us about the Fire that it would be the punishment of ‘a great day,’ or, of ‘a painful day,’ or, of ‘a barren day.’ But He did not use the words ‘of a day’ even in one instance while describing the blessings of Paradise. In contrast, He said: ‘(That’s) My punishment wherewith I shall punish whom I will. And My mercy has encompassed everything’ (*Al A`raf*, 156).

“It is indispensable therefore, that His mercy should be the share of those subjected to chastisement. If they remain in the Fire, forever, without His mercy ever touching them, then His mercy could not be said to encompass everything. Further, there is no wisdom in the Ultimate Sovereign creating a creation for no other purpose than to torture them forever. In contrast, if He creates beings for no other purpose than to do them good and bless them forever, then, surely, that is entirely in tune with His mercy. The people who hold this opinion have also explained that whatever has been reported of those in the Fire remaining therein forever, and never coming out, is also true. There are no two opinions about that. The texts demand that this is how the words about their eternity in the Fire be understood, viz., so long as the

[108] As for those who were blessed, they shall be in the Garden, abiding therein forever, so long as the heavens and the earth abide: except as Your Lord will a bestowal uninterrupted.¹²⁵

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ سُعِدُوا فَفِي الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ عَطَاءٌ غَيْرٌ مَجْدُودٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾

[109] Therefore, be not thou in any doubt about what these (people) worship.¹²⁶ They worship not except as (blindly) as their forefathers worshiped before (them). Surely, We shall award them in full their share (of punishment), undiminished.¹²⁷

فَلَا تَكُ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِمَّا يَعْبُدُ هَؤُلَاءِ مَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُهُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَإِنَّا لَمَوُفُّوهُمْ نَصِيْبُهُمْ غَيْرِ مَنْقُوصٍ ﴿١٠٩﴾

Fire itself remains in existence. The monotheists would be removed from it during its existence. Thus, there is a difference between him who will be removed from the prison, while the prison remains in existence, and him whose prison term will be annulled because of the destruction of the prison itself.”

يَا أَهْلَ النَّارِ فَيْسِرْتُمْ وَيَنْظُرُونَ فَيَقُولُ هَلْ نَعْرِفُونَ هَذَا فَيَقُولُونَ نَعَمْ هَذَا الْمَوْتُ وَكُلُّهُمْ قَدْ رَأَهُ فَيَذْبُحُ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ يَا أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ خُلُودٌ فَلَا مَوْتَ وَيَا أَهْلَ النَّارِ خُلُودٌ فَلَا مَوْتَ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ

Quote from Ibn Abi al ‘Izz ends here.

125. Although the abiding in Paradise seems to have been made conditional to the abiding of the heavens and the earth, the addition of the words “a bestowal unbroken” suggests that the abiding therein would be forever by Allah’s will (Ibn Jarir).

“Death will be brought forth in the form of a brownish lamb and a caller will call, ‘O dwellers of Paradise.’ They will stretch their necks and look. He will ask, ‘Do you know this?’ They will say, ‘Yes. This is death.’ Every one of them had seen it. Then the caller will call, ‘People of the Fire?’ They will stretch their necks and see. He will ask, ‘Do you know this?’ They will say, ‘Yes. This is death.’ Every one of them had seen it. Then it will be slaughtered and it will be said, ‘O people of Paradise, you will abide forever without tasting death. And, O people of the Fire, you

Ahadith offer further elucidation. One *hadith* in the *sahihayn* says,

يُؤْتَى بِالْمَوْتِ كَهَيْئَةِ كَبْشٍ أَمْلَحَ فَيُنَادِي مُنَادٍ يَا أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ فَيْسِرْتُمْ وَيَنْظُرُونَ فَيَقُولُ هَلْ نَعْرِفُونَ هَذَا فَيَقُولُونَ نَعَمْ هَذَا الْمَوْتُ وَكُلُّهُمْ قَدْ رَأَهُ ثُمَّ يُنَادِي

[110] Surely, We gave Musa the Book. But it was differed with. And, were not for a word (of command) that had preceded from Your Lord, surely, (the affair) would have been settled between them. In fact, they (themselves) are in doubt concerning it, full of suspicion.¹²⁸

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ فَاخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مُرِيبٍ ﴿١١٠﴾

[111] Surely, to everyone will your Lord give (the wage) of their deeds in full. Surely, He is well Aware of what they do.

وَإِنَّ كُلًّا لَّمَّا لِيُؤْفَقِينَ رَبُّكَ أَعْمَاهُمْ إِنَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١١١﴾

will abide forever without tasting death” (Ibn Kathir).

126. Mawdudi explains: “This does not mean that the Prophet (peace be on him) entertained any ‘doubt’ concerning the deities whom the unbelievers associated with God in His divinity. Though this verse is ostensibly addressed to the Prophet (peace be on him), it is really aimed at conveying a message to the people of Makka. The thrust of the verse is that no sensible person should entertain the notion that those who worship false gods and pray to them have any plausible grounds for doing so and for expecting some benefit from such worship.”

In Asad’s words, “I.e., do not think that their beliefs are based on reason”: a reference primarily to the pagan Arabs who like all wrongdoers spoken of in the preceding passages

rejected God’s message on the plea that it conflicted with their ancestral beliefs; and, more generally, to all people who are accustomed to worship (in the widest sense of the word) false values handed down from their ancestors who, consequently, observe false standards of morality; an attitude which must unavoidably as the last sentence of this verse shows results in future suffering, be it in this world or in the hereafter, or in both.”

127. Ibn ‘Abbas and Mujahid have said that the allusion is to the destined good or evil that the unbelievers would receive in this world: they shall receive them in full measure without any deduction. But Ibn Zayd’s opinion was that the reference is to the punishment in the Hereafter (Ibn Jarir).

128. That is, Musa (*asws*) was given

[112] Pursue, then (O Muhammad) the right course, as you have been commanded,¹²⁹ (as also) those who turned (to Allah) with you, and transgress not.¹³⁰ Surely He sees well what you do.

[113] And incline not¹³¹ towards those who do wrong, lest the Fire touches you, and you will not have any protectors, apart from Allah. And you will not be helped.

فَأَسْتَقِيمَ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَمَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١١٢﴾

وَلَا تَرْكَبُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَمَا سَسَّكُمْ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾

a Scripture, but, some believed in it while others did not. Those who did not, remained in great doubt about its source and authenticity (Ibn Jarir).

129. Imām Razi says that when the Prophet said that (*Surah*) Hud and its sisters hastened old age on him, it was perhaps this verse that he had in mind. Then he goes on to explain through an example why it could have been so. Look at a shadow on the earth. There is a line at which the blackness of the shadow and the brightness of the light meet. Now, try to draw a line exactly at the point the two meet and you will realize how difficult it is to do so. Similar is the case with religious concepts and commandments. You have got to tread the middle of the way: without ever straying into the forbidden on either side. That's what has been ordered in the verse, "Pursue then the

right course as you have been commanded": meaning follow firmly the middle path of the religion of Islam without inclining towards the two extremes. (Hence the next verse: "And incline not towards those who do wrong": Au.).

130. That is, do not cross the boundaries of the lawful committing excesses therein, be they Prayers, or be they pleasurable things (based on Shawkani).

Sufyan b. `Abdullah Thaqaafi asked Ibn `Abbas to admonish him. He told him, "be always conscious of Allah, pursue the right course, follow (the predecessors) and do not commit innovations" (Qurtubi, Ma'arif).

131. The word "rukun" (done as "inclination" here) that has been forbidden here is to approve the transgressions of the tyrants, show consent to their ways, express approval before

them or others, and to cooperate with them in their affairs of wrong doing, befriending them, visiting them, and putting on appearances like them (Zamakhshari, Razi, Shawkani).

Further, to the question, who exactly is alluded to by the term "Athe wrong doers" whether the non believers or the believers?, the answer by Ibn `Abbas is that the allusion is to both for, (in understanding the Qur`ān) what is of consideration is the generality of the application and not the specificity of the occasion (Shawkani).

"Just think," Zamakhshari adds: "Mere inclination is disapproved!!" He also writes that once Muwaffaq (the caliph) was praying behind an Imām who recited this verse. He swooned. When asked he said, "Allah threatened those who incline towards those who do wrong. What about the wrong doers then?"

Visiting the Rulers

Zamakhshari gives this verse some serious attention. He reports Sufyan (Thawri) as saying, "There is a valley in Hell where none will live but the scholars who visited the rulers." Awza'i has said, "There is nothing more hateful to Allah than a scholar visiting the rulers." Muhammad b. Maslamah has said, "A fly sitting on the excrement is better than one

knocking at the doors of these people." Sufyan (Thawri) was once asked about a tyrant who was close to death in a desert. Could he be given water? He replied, "No." He was told, "He might die." He answered, "Let him die." It is said, Zamakhshari continues, that when *Zuhri* began to visit the rulers, one of his well wishers wrote to him: "May Allah protect us and you, O *Zuhri*. You have entered a state in which it is right that those who know you should pray for Allah's mercy for you. You have grown into old age in a state that Allah has made you weighty with the knowledge of the Qur`ān and *Sunnah*. But what you are doing now is not what Allah has taken the compact for, from the scholars. Allah has said, 'So that you may make it plain to the people and not conceal it.' You should know that the least that you have done and the least that you have borne the burden of. is that you have lessened the uneasiness of the transgressors making it easier for them to continue in their wrongful ways. This is because your getting close to one of them was not for the sake of administering justice or giving up a wrong when he took you close to himself. They have taken you as a pole to use you as the axis of their wrongs and as a bridge to go over you to their

[114] And perform the Prayers (properly) at the two ends of the day¹³² and at the approach of the night.¹³³ Surely, good deeds drive away the evil deeds.¹³⁴ That is a reminder unto those who (wish to) remember.

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفَيْ النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ
إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبُنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ذَلِكَ
ذِكْرَىٰ لِلذَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾

[115] And observe patience. Surely, Allah does not waste away the wages of those who do good.

وَاصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ
﴿١١٥﴾

iniquities, and a ladder to climb over you to their errors. Through you they will now place a question mark on other scholars and misguide the commoners by you. Whatever they gave you is much less than what they destroyed in you. They took away from you more of your religion than they gave you. Be not then in peace from the verse which said (19: 59), ‘Then came after them a posterity who missed the Prayers and followed their lust. So soon they will meet with destruction.’ For, you are dealing with One who is not ignorant, and are making Him remember who does not forget. So, look for a cure, for, disease has entered your religion and prepare your provision, for, the long journey is about to begin ‘and not hidden from Allah is anything in the earth or the heavens’ wassalam.”

Razi clarifies, and Shawkani seconds him strongly, that so far as dealing with them (the ruling class) in order

to avoid a harm feared of them, or to draw a quick rightful advantage is concerned, there is no harm in that and it would not amount to the inclination that is forbidden.

Hasan al Busri has said that our religion is between the two “*las*” of “*la tatghaw*” and “*la tarkanu*” (Zamakhshari). That is, do not exceed the limits (of the lawful) and incline not towards the wrong and the wrong doers. It is also reported of him that a tailor asked him, “I stitch the clothes of the ruling class. Will I be counted as ‘those inclined towards them?’” Hasan replied, “No. You will not be counted among those who inclined towards them. Rather, you are one of them” (Au.).

132. Among a variety of opinions, that of Dahhak, Muhammad b. Ka’b and Hasan is widely reported that it is the *fajr* and ‘*asr* Prayers that are al-luded to, falling at two ends of the day. However, Ibn ‘Abbas believed

that it is *fajr* and *maghrib* Prayers (Ibn Jarir).

Imām Razi points out that Abu Hanifa’s opinion about the *fajr* and ‘*asr* Prayers was that they should be delayed to bring *fajr* as close to the beginning of the day as possible and the ‘*asr* as close to the end of it as possible – that is, when the shadow of a thing is twice its length. For, if *fajr* is done in complete darkness and ‘*asr* far earlier to the sun set, we would not have done them at the two ends of the day as the verse recommends here.

133. Most of the opinions coming from the earliest scholars home in on *maghrib* and ‘*isha*’ Prayers as having been alluded to here. In fact, we have a *hadith* from the Prophet declaring that the allusion is to *maghrib* and ‘*isha*’ Prayers (Ibn Jarir).

Sa`id b. Mansur, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Marduwayh and Bayhaqi in his *Sunan* have preserved that following this verse, Ibn `Abbas preferred to delay the ‘*isha*’ Prayers (Shawkani).

Commentators have pointed out however, that this chapter is Makkan of a time when five daily Prayers were not yet obligatory. It was during the Prophet’s ascension, which took place later in his mission, that

the five daily Prayers were promulgated (Au.).

134. Although the generality of the meaning cannot be overlooked, there are reports coming from the Prophet suggesting that here the term “*hasanat*” refers to the five Prayers of the day. Al Harth, the freed slave of ‘Uthman reports that one day he was in an assembly of men around him when the caller called for Prayers. He asked for a little amount of water. He made his ablution with it and said, “I have seen the Prophet make his ablution in the manner I did today. After that he (the Prophet said),

وَمَنْ تَوَضَّأَ وَضُوءِي ثُمَّ قَامَ فَصَلَّى صَلَاةَ الظُّهْرِ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا كَانَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ الصُّبْحِ ثُمَّ صَلَّى الْعَصْرَ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ صَلَاةِ الظُّهْرِ ثُمَّ صَلَّى الْمَغْرِبَ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ صَلَاةِ الْعَصْرِ ثُمَّ صَلَّى الْعِشَاءَ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ صَلَاةِ الْمَغْرِبِ ثُمَّ لَعَلَّهُ أَنْ يَبْتَئِمَ يَتَمَرَّعُ لَيْلَتَهُ ثُمَّ إِنْ قَامَ فَتَوَضَّأَ وَصَلَّى الصُّبْحَ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ وَهُنَّ الْحَسَنَاتُ يُدْهَبْنَ السِّيِّئَاتِ

‘Whoever made ablution in my manner of making ablution, stood up and did *zubr* Prayer, then what was (of the sins) between *fajr* and *zubr* Prayers would be forgiven. Then, when he does his ‘*asr* Prayer, he will be forgiven (the sins) between *zubr* and ‘*asr* Prayers. Similarly, when he does his *maghrib* Prayer, he is forgiven (the sins) between ‘*asr*

and *maghrib* Prayers. Likewise, when he does his *'isha'* Prayer, (the sins) between *maghrib* and *'isha'* are forgiven. Thereafter, he might spend his night sleeping. Then when get he gets up, makes ablution, and does the *fajr* Prayer, he is forgiven the sins between *'isha'* and *fajr* Prayers. They are the ones then, that drive the sins away.” (Ibn Jarir)

The report is in Ahmad (Ibn Kathir). It has been declared as of Hasan status by al-Arna'ut (Au.).

There is another, shorter report in the *sahihayn* which says that once 'Uthman made *wudu* and then remarked that the Prophet made a similar *wudu* and said,

مَنْ تَوَضَّأَ وَضُوءِي هَذَا ثُمَّ يَصَلِّي رَكَعَتَيْنِ لَا يَحْدِثُ
نَفْسَهُ فِيهِمَا بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا عُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

“Whoever made a *wudu* the way I did and then offered two *rak'ah* of Prayer during which he did not think of anything, but his past sins are forgiven” (Ibn Kathir).

Another report in Muslim's collection says,

الصَّلَوَاتُ الْخَمْسُ وَالْجُمُعَةُ إِلَى الْجُمُعَةِ وَرَمَضَانَ إِلَى
رَمَضَانَ مُكَفِّرَاتٌ لِمَا بَيْنَهُنَّ مَا اجْتَنَبَتِ الْكِبَائِرُ

“Five daily Prayers, Friday to Friday (Prayers), Ramadan to Rama-

dan (Prayers) expiate the sins, so long as major sins are avoided” (Ibn Kathir).

Another report comes from 'Uthman al Nahdi. He was with Salman when he shook the branch of a tree (in autumn). Leaves fell all around. He said, “Ask me why I did that.” I said, “Why did you do that? He said,

هَكَذَا فَعَلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، كُنْتُ
مَعَهُ تَحْتَ شَجَرَةٍ، فَأَخَذَ غُصْنًا مِنْ أَغْصَانِهَا يَابِسًا،
فَهَزَّهُ حَتَّى نَحَاتَ وَرَفَّهُ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: “أَلَا تَسْأَلُنِي لِمَ أَفْعَلُ
هَذَا يَا سَلْمَانَ؟” فَقُلْتُ: “وَلِمَ تَفْعَلُهُ؟” فَقَالَ: “إِنَّ
الْمُسْلِمَ إِذَا تَوَضَّأَ، فَأَحْسَنَ الْوُضُوءِ، ثُمَّ صَلَّى
الصَّلَوَاتِ الْخَمْسَ تَحَاتَّتْ خَطَايَاهُ، كَمَا نَحَاتَتْ هَذَا
الْوَرَقَ”، ثُمَّ تَلَا هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ: { أَوْفِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفِي النَّهَارِ
وَرُفْلًا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبَنَّ السَّيِّئَاتِ

“This is how the Prophet did. I was with him under a tree when he shook a branch and the dry leaves fell. He asked me, ‘Will you not ask me why I did that?’ Salman asked, ‘Why did you do that?’ The Prophet said, ‘When a Muslim does his ablution well and then does his five Prayers of the day, his sins fall off him just as these leaves fell down.’ Then he recited this verse, ‘Offer the Prayers at the two ends of the day and at the approach of the night’” (Ibn Kathir).

The above report is in Musnad Ah-

mad: H. Ibrahim).

It has been declared da`if. But the general structure, content, and form do not suggest that it is fabricated (Au.).

However, the meaning and application remain general. This is supported by several reports. One of them says that once a man came to the Prophet and said,

إِنِّي عَاجِزٌ امْرَأَةٌ فِي أَقْصَى الْمَدِينَةِ وَإِنِّي أَصَبْتُ مِنْهَا
مَا دُونَ أَنْ أَمْسَهَا فَأَنَا هَذَا فَاقْضِ مِنِّي مَا شِئْتَ. فَقَالَ
لَهُ عُمَرُ لَقَدْ سَتَرَكِ اللَّهُ لَوْ سَتَرْتَ نَفْسَكَ - قَالَ -
فَلَمْ يَرِدْ النَّبِيُّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- شَيْئًا فَعَامَ
الرَّجُلُ فَاذْطَلَقَ فَاتَّبَعَهُ النَّبِيُّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم-
رَجُلًا دَعَاهُ وَتَلَا عَلَيْهِ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ (أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفِي
النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفًا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ
ذَلِكَ ذِكْرِي لِلذَّاكِرِينَ) فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ يَا نَبِيَّ
اللَّهُ هَذَا لَهُ حَاصَةٌ قَالَ: بَلَى لِلنَّاسِ كَافَّةً

“I met a woman outside the town. I did to her everything except intercourse. So, here I am, punish me how you will.” `Umar said, “Allah concealed you and only if you had concealed yourself.” But the Prophet did not say anything. As the man began to leave he recalled him and recited this verse, “And establish the Prayers at the two ends of the day .. until the end of the verse. A man asked (according to some reports it was `Umar), “Is it for him alone O

Messenger of Allah, or is it for everyone?” He replied, “It is for everyone.”

The above version is from Muslim (Au.).

Other reports say that the man had first gone to `Umar who had advised him not to expose himself but the man did not feel comfortable until he went to Abu Bakr. But Abu Bakr also advised him in the manner `Umar had. Still uncomfortable about it, he finally went to the Prophet (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir adds: The above report is in Musnad Ahmad and, in varied and shorter forms, in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Nasa'i also.

sahih collections have yet another report. It says,

أَرَأَيْتُمْ لَوْ أَنَّ تَهْرًا بِيَابِ أَحَدِكُمْ يَغْتَسِلُ فِيهِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ
خَمْسًا مَا تَمُوتُ ذَلِكَ يَبْقَى مِنْ دَرَنِهِ قَالُوا لَا يَبْقَى مِنْ
دَرَنِهِ شَيْئًا قَالَ فَذَلِكَ مِثْلُ الصَّلَوَاتِ الْخَمْسِ يَمْحُو
اللَّهُ بِهِ الْخَطَايَا

“Do you think if there was a spring at the door of one of you and he bathed himself therein every day five times? What is your opinion, will any dirt be left on him?” They answered, “No dirt will be left on him.” He said, “Such is the effect of the five

daily Prayers. Allah erases the sins thereby.”

The above is Bukhari’s version (Au.).

Scholars have cautioned however that it is the minor sins that the verse is alluding to, and not major, which require proper repentance, atonement and retribution. The *hadith* of Muslim quoted above makes it clear: “Five daily Prayers .. are atonement for what is between them if major sins are avoided” (Au.).

With reference to the words of the Qur’an: Surely, good deeds drive away evil deeds, the following report of Ahmad may be noted,

إن الله قسم بينكم أخلاقكم كما قسم بينكم أرزاقكم وإن الله يعطي الدنيا من يحب ومن لا يحب ولا يعطي الدين إلا من أحب فمن أعطاه الله الدين فقد أحبه والذي نفسي بيده لا يسلم عبد حتى يسلم قلبه ولسانه ولا يؤمن حتى يأمن جاره بوائقه قال: قلنا: وما بوائقه يا نبي الله؟ قال: ”غشه وظلمه ولا يكسب عبد مالاً حراماً فينفق منه فيبارك له فيه ولا يتصدق فيقبل منه ولا يتركه خلف ظهره إلا كان زاده إلى النار إن الله لا يمحو السيء بالسيء ولكن يمحو السيء بالحسن إن الحبيث لا يمحو الحبيث

“Allah has divided between you good qualities as He has divided between you provision. Indeed, Allah gives the (wealth of) this world to him He loves as well as to him He does not. But, He does not bestow the religion save

on him whom He loves. So, whoever He gave religion, loved him. And, by Him in whom is my soul a man does not become a Muslim until his heart and tongue also become Muslims. And one of you is not a believer until his neighbor is in peace from his bawa’iq.” We asked, “Messenger of Allah, what are his bawa’iq?” He replied, “His deceit and aggression. And a man earns unlawful wealth, to spend out of it, but he is not blessed thereby; and he gives in charity but is not accepted of him; and he does not leave it behind him but is a provision for him to the Fire. Surely, Allah does not erase evil with evil. Rather, He erases sin with good deeds. Filth does not erase filth.”

The Prophet also advised Abu Dharr in a report preserved by Imām Ahmad in words:

اتق الله حيث كنت وأتبع السيئة الحسنة تمحها،
وخالق الناس بخلق حسنٍ

“Fear Allah wherever you are. And follow up an evil deed with a good one. It will obliterate it. And, deal with the people following the best rules of conduct” (Ibn Kathir).

Hakim said about the above report

[116] So, why there were not¹³⁵ some left overs¹³⁶ of the generations (that went) before you, who would forbid corruption in the land,¹³⁷ except for a few of those among them whom We rescued. As for the wrongdoers, they only pursued those (of the) luxuries they were given. They were in fact criminals.

فَلَوْلَا كَانَ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ أُولُوا بَقِيَّةٍ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْفَسَادِ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّمَّنْ أَجْبَأْنَا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَا أُتْرِفُوا فِيهِ وَكَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١١٦﴾

[117] And your Lord is not such as to destroy the towns unjustly, while its inhabitants are righteous.¹³⁸

وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ لِيُهْلِكَ الْقُرَىٰ بِظُلْمٍ وَأَهْلِهَا مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾

that it meets with the conditions set by the Shaykhayn; and Dhahabi agreed with him (Au.).

135. We have come across a similar usage of “law la” in *Surah Yunus*, verse 98. See note 138 there for explanation.

136. (“Left overs” is the literal rendering of “*ulu baqiyyatin*”). The expression has another meaning: that of the best of a people. For instance, when you say, so and so is “*ulu al qawm*” it means he is the best of them (Zamakhshari, Razi).

137. The Prophet has said in a *sahih hadith* of Tirmidhi,

إِنَّ النَّاسَ إِذَا رَأَوْا الْمُنْكَرَ فَلَمْ يَنْكُرُوهُ أَوْشَكَ أَنْ يُعَذِّبَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِعِقَابِهِ

“When the people see a censurable thing but do not prevent it, then it is feared that a common punishment will seize them”

(Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

138. The verse also implies that Allah does not destroy a people, even if they associate in His divinity so long as their dealings between themselves are carried out in justice. It is only when they begin to wrong each other on a large scale that they meet with their destruction. Hence it is said that a dominion lasts despite disbelief but not despite injustice (Zamakhshari, Shawkani).

Razi’s commentary is better paraphrased by Asad: “God’s chastisement does not afflict any people merely on account of their holding beliefs amounting to shirk or kufr, but afflicts them only if they persistently commit evil in their mutual dealings, and deliberately hurt [other human beings] and act tyrannically [towards them]. Hence those who are learned in Islamic Law (*al fuqaha*)

[118] *And, had your Lord willed, surely He would have made mankind one community.*¹³⁹
*But, they shall remain differing.*¹⁴⁰

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً
 وَلَا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾

hold that men's obligations towards God rest on the principle of [His] forgiveness and liberality, whereas the rights of man are of a stringent nature and must always be strictly observed' the obvious reason being (Asad adds), that God is almighty and needs no defender, whereas man is weak and needs protection."

Of course, excluded is the situation where a Prophet is raised among a people. When that happens, then they are destroyed for rejection, even if they are just among themselves (Au.).

139. That is, they would have all become Muslims.

Mawdudi elaborates this point: ".. God's will with regard to human beings does not consist of binding them to follow an inalterable course of conduct in the manner of plants, animals and other similar living beings who, as we know, have no choice except to follow the course determined for them either by the laws of nature or their instincts. Had such been the case, there would be no point in inviting human beings to believe, raise Prophets, to reveal the Scriptures. All

human beings would have been born as ones who would believe and submit to God's command. However, it was God's will regarding man that he should be granted free will and be vested with the power to follow the ways of his choice. Thus, whatever one is able to acquire is the fruit of his own labour.

"Now, the very scheme of man's creation consists of granting him free will and providing the opportunity to choose between belief and unbelief. In such a case it is simply inconceivable that a nation would willfully decide to go astray and God compel it to righteousness."

The notion expressed in the last sentence above is obviously true, but its opposite is not "always" true. Therefore, to the paragraph above we might offer a slight correction by rephrasing it in the following manner: "Now, the very scheme of man's creation consists of granting him free will and providing the opportunity to choose between belief and unbelief. In such a case it is simply inconceivable that a nation would willfully decide to go aught and God compel

[119] Except for him whom your Lord showed mercy.¹⁴¹ To this end He has created them.¹⁴² And the word of your Lord shall be fulfilled (that on rejection) 'I shall fill Jahannum with Jinn and Men all together.'¹⁴³

إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ رَبُّكَ وَلِذَلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ وَتَمَّتْ
كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لِأَمْلَانِ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ
وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾

it to unrighteousness.” Further, the modification takes care of the Salaf’s understanding that “man has been created so that Allah may show him mercy” (Au.).

Asad however speaks from a higher intellectual plane in explaining this verse, which is partly based on the stance of Rashid Rida: “Thus, the Qur’ān stresses once again that the unceasing differentiation in men’s views and ideas is not incidental but represents a God willed basic factor of human existence. If God had willed that all human beings should be of one persuasion, all intellectual progress would have been ruled out, and ‘they would have been similar in their social life to the bees and the ants, while in their spiritual life they would have been like the angels, constrained by their nature always to believe in what is true and always to obey God” (Manar XII, 193) that is to say, devoid of that relative free will which enables man to choose between right and wrong and thus endows life its distinction from all

other sentient beings with a moral meaning and a unique spiritual potential.”

140. That is, divided into sects and following various false beliefs (Au.).

141. That is, those who uphold the truth: the Muslims.

142. Ibn `Abbas has said, “Allah created them as two groups. A group to whom He showed mercy. So they do not differ. And a group that He did not show mercy. So they differ. Others, such as Hasan, have said that (the humans have been created) in order that they might differ among themselves. (Apparently meaning that to differ is a quality that is embedded in their nature: Au.).

However, according to Mujahid, Qatadah, `Ikrimah, Ta’us and Dahhak, the meaning of “To this end He has created them” is: it is to show mercy that He has created them. This in fact is a second opinion of Ibn `Abbas also who added that Allah did not create them for the purpose of chastising them (Ibn Jarir,

[120] And, all that We convey to you¹⁴⁴ of the tidings of the Messengers is to strengthen your heart.¹⁴⁵ And the truth has come to you in this:¹⁴⁶ an admonition, and a reminder for the believers.

وَكُلًّا نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا
ثَبَّتْنَا بِهِ فَعَرَّفَكَ وَجَاءَكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَقُّ
وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَذِكْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾

[121] And say to those who do not believe, 'Keep working in your place. We are also at work.

وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ اعْمَلُوا عَلَيَّ
مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنَّا عَامِلُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾

Ibn Kathir).

Asad quotes: "According to Zamakhshari, it refers to the freedom of moral choice which characterizes man and is spoken of in the preceding passage: and since it is this freedom which constitutes God's special gift to man and raises him above all other created beings."

143. We have a relevant *hadith* in the *sahihayn*. The Prophet said,

اِحْتَصَمَتِ الْجَنَّةُ وَالنَّارُ فَقَالَتِ الْجَنَّةُ أَيُّ رَبِّ مَا لَهَا
يَدْخُلُهَا ضِعْفَاءُ النَّاسِ وَسَقَطُهُمْ وَقَالَتِ النَّارُ يَا رَبِّ
مَا لَهَا يَدْخُلُهَا الْجَبَّارُونَ وَالْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ قَالَ لِلْجَنَّةِ أَنْتِ
رَحِمِي أُصِيبُ بِكَ مِنْ أَشَاءِ وَقَالَ لِلنَّارِ أَنْتِ عَذَابِي
أُصِيبُ مِنْكَ مِنْ أَشَاءِ وَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِنْكُم مَلْؤُهَا
قَالَ فَأَمَّا الْجَنَّةُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَا يَطْلُمُ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ
أَحَدًا وَإِنَّمَا يَنْشَأُ لَهَا مِنْ خَلْقِهِ مَا شَاءَ وَأَمَّا النَّارُ
فَيُلْقَوْنَ فِيهَا وَتَقُولُ { هَلْ مِنْ مَزِيدٍ } وَيُلْقَوْنَ فِيهَا
وَتَقُولُ { هَلْ مِنْ مَزِيدٍ } حَتَّى يَضَعَ رَبُّنَا عَزَّ وَجَلَّ
فِيهَا قَدَمَهُ فَهُنَالِكَ تَمْلِكُ وَيَبْتَزِي بَعْضُهَا إِلَى بَعْضٍ
وَتَقُولُ قَطُّ قَطُّ

"Heaven and Hell argued between themselves. The Heaven

said, 'What's the matter that none but the weak and lowly ones enter it?' The Fire said, 'What's the matter that the tyrants and the proud enter it.' Allah the Most High said to Paradise, 'You are a manifestation of My mercy wherewith I show mercy unto whom I will.' And He said to the Fire, 'You are My chastisement striking whomsoever I will. And each of you shall have your fill.' So, as for Paradise, Allah does not wrong any of His creation by the least. He will create a creation for it. As for the Fire, it will not cease asking after every entry (of people in it), 'Is there some more?' until your Lord places His foot into it. It is then that it will get filled up, and some of it spirals over other parts of it, and it will say, 'Enough, enough'" (Ibn Kathir).

The above is Ahmad's version (Au.).

[122] *And, wait. We are also waiting.'*

[123] *To Allah belongs what is in the Unseen of the heavens and the earth. To Him return the affairs all of them. Therefore, worship Him and have trust in Him. Your Lord is not heedless of what you do.*

وَانتَظِرُوا إِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ الْأَمْرُ كُلُّهُ فَاعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِعَافِيٍّ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

144. The difference between “*qalb*” and “*fu’ad*” is that the latter (which is used here) is for the depth of the heart. The Prophet used both the words together. He said,

أَتَاكُمْ أَهْلُ الْيَمَنِ هُمْ أَرْقُ قُلُوبًا ، وَأَلْيَنُ أَفْئِدَةً

The people of Yemen are ar-riving. They are tender of *qulub* (sing. *qalb*) and gentle of *af’idah* (sing. *fu’ad*) (Au.).

145. AThe stories of the Prophets in the Qur’an are not mere narratives or histories; they involve three things:

- (1) they teach the highest Spiritual Truth;
- (2) they give advice, direction, warning, as to how we should govern our lives, and

(3) they awaken our conscience and recall to us the working of Allah’s Law in human affairs” (Yusuf Ali).

146. The article “*hadhihi*” being in feminine, the explanation by Ibn `Abbas, Abu Musa, Mujahid and others is that it refers to this *Surah*. That is, the truth has been made manifest to you, O Muhammad, in this *Surah* (which has many stories of the previous Prophets and their denying nations) Ibn Jarir.

End note:

Imām Razi once again interrupts the work to say that he finished the commentary on this chapter before *fajr* of a Monday, Rajab, 601 A.H. He did it while his heart was on fire from the pain of losing his son, a righteous

مَشَتْ