

Surah 60

*Al-Mumtahanah*¹

Madinan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Introduction to the *Surah*

Sayyid runs an introduction to the *Surah*: “This *Surah* aims at establishing a heavenly state in the heart of the faithful; a world whose fulcrum is belief in Allah, to which alone every believer is bound with a binding that does not sever; as it also aims at breaking them loose of every other kind of binding: whether it is on the basis of the nation, race, land, family or kin. It endeavors to replace all these, with another, single binding, that of faith. They are to be flanked by the side of Allah’s banner, as forces of Allah.

The world that Islam wishes to create is divinely-human. It is divine in the sense that it reinforces and strengthens (in the human society) every element of Allah’s directives, and turns to Allah in full awareness and in all of its works. It is human in the sense that it includes the whole of the humanity, in which the differences of

race, land, language and lineage, and everything else that differentiates between man and man are obliterated, save that of faith. This is that lofty world order in which man – honored by Allah - deserves to live.

Before the establishment of such a world order, many hurdles and obstacles have to be faced. The community of Muslims of that time, as of all other times until now, faced the hurdles of prejudices favoring the house, the family, the nation, race and region, along with obstacles of other kinds such as, lusts and desires of the inner base self, greed, love of the good things for their own sake, personal pride and perversities – and, of course, many other kinds of internal obstacles.

It was necessary for Islam to treat and cure all these diseases if it had to build a society and create an environment to accomplish Allah’s own design in real and practical terms.

This chapter happens to be just one link in the chain of *Surahs* revealed for this purpose.

Some of the emigrants who had left their homes, properties and kinsfolk in the cause of Islam still had fond memories of, and emotional attachments to what they had left behind of their wives, children and kinsfolk. And despite what they had experienced of the torture and severity at their hands, some of their hearts still remained wishing an amicable and goodly relationship with them and the Quraysh at large. They wished that the state of belligerency that existed between them and the Quraysh and which had led them to fight their own kith and kin in the battlefields, could be changed to peaceful conditions, making it possible to re-join the severed relationships.

Allah on the other hand wished to cleanse their hearts and get them rid of their inclinations towards their kith and kin to release them wholly for this religion, its faith and its program.

Allah of course knew of the weight of the pressure because of the natural inclinations as He also knew of the sediments of *Jahiliyyah* residing in their hearts. Noticeably, the Arabs were, by their nature, strongly connected to their tribes, clans and families. And hence Allah would treat them, through events spanning over days and months, in order that the treatment should take place on the active stage of life, through real events.

1. It has been pronounced both as *Mumtahanah* as well as *Mumtahinah* (Shawkani).

[1] O those who have believed, take not My enemy and your enemy as close friends,² offering them love while they have disbelieved in what has come to you of the Truth,³ expelling the Messenger and your because you believe in Allah your Lord. If you came out in My path, seeking My good pleasure (then beware).⁴ You confide to them secretly, out of love, while I know what you conceal and what you reveal,⁵ yet whosoever of you does that (here after), has certainly gone astray from the right way.⁶

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ حَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِي سَبِيلِي وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي تُسِرُّونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿١﴾

2. Yusuf Ali comments: “The immediate occasion for this was a secret letter sent by one Hatib, a Muhajir, from Madinah, to the Pagans at Makkah, in most friendly terms, seeking for their protection on behalf of his children and relatives left behind in Makkah. The letter was intercepted, and he confessed the truth. He was forgiven as he told the truth and his motive did not appear to be heinous, but this instruction was given for future guidance. This was shortly before the conquest of Makkah, but the principle is of universal application. You cannot be on terms of secret intimacy with the enemies of your Faith and people, who are persecuting your Faith and seeking to destroy your Faith and you. You may not do so even for the sake of your relatives as it compromises the life and existence of your whole community.”

3. The connection between this and the previous *Surah* is that the previous *Surah* ended with the description of some of the Attributes of Allah. This one opens with the directive that those who deny those Attributes, may not be befriended. The Prophet has said,

«الرَّجُلُ عَلَى دِينِ خَلِيلِهِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَحَدُكُمْ مَنْ يُخَالِلُ»

“A man is upon the religion of his friend. So, you may look into whom you befriend” (Razi).

The above version is from Tirmidhi which he himself declared weak but which Nawawi declared trustworthy (*Tuhfah*). Other *hadith* collectors have also recorded this *hadith* (Au.).

The Prophet also said, continues Razi,

أوثق عري الإيمان الموالاة في الله و
المعاداة في الله و الحب في الله

The strongest of Iman's bonds is befriending for the sake of Allah, enmity for the sake of Allah, and love in Allah."

The above *hadith* is in Tabarani declared *Sahih* by Albani. We may add in passing Yahya b. Mu`adh's words:

قَالَ يَحْيَى بْنُ مُعَاذٍ: حَقِيقَةُ الْحُبِّ فِي اللَّهِ
أَنْ لَا يَزِيدَ بِالْبِرِّ وَلَا يَنْقُصَ بِالْجَفَاءِ

"The truth of 'love in Allah' is that it neither increases with beneficence, nor lessens with rough treatment (from Him)" - Au.

4. Ibn Jarir and Qurtubi suggest that there has been what is known as "*taqdim wa ta'khir*" in this passage. It may be read as, "O those who have believed, take not My enemy and your enemy as close friends, offering them love while they have disbelieved in what has come to you of the Truth, if you came out in My path, seeking My good pleasure, expelling the Messenger and your because you believe in Allah your Lord."

However, a simpler explanation is offered by Zamakhshari, Razi and Ibn Kathir to the effect that if you have come forth in Allah's path, seeking His good pleasure, then avoid befriending His and your foes.

5. Imām Razi points out that the word used here for concealment is "*akhfa*." This word conceals greater emphasis on concealment than "sir." Allah said:

فَإِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ وَأَخْفَى (طه: ٧)

6. The commentators have unanimously said that these verses were revealed in connection with an incident involving Hatib b. abi Balta`ah. He was one of the immigrants (but not a Qurayshi), a Badri companion, with his folks and property in Makkah. (It is reported that his mother was also in Makkah: Qurtubi). He did not have the protection of any clan, except that he was allied to `Uthman. When the Prophet decided to raid Makkah because they had breached the treaty, he announced his intention to start off, but did not reveal the destination. He said, "O Allah, conceal our news from them." He ordered his Companions to make preparations. Noticing all this, Hatib wrote a letter addressed to the Makkan chiefs and sent it through a woman. It was to inform them of the Prophet's intention. He intended to score a good turn on them (so that, if things went awry, his family folk would be spared by the Makkans). Allah informed the Prophet about it

and he sent a few men to retrieve the letter.

The incident is widely reported in *hadith* literature. Here is a version from Bukhari:

عَنْ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ بَعَنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَبَا مَرْثَدَ الْعَنَوِيَّ وَالزُّبَيْرَ بْنَ الْعَوَّامِ وَكُلَّنَا فَارِسٌ قَالَ انْطَلِقُوا حَتَّى تَأْتُوا رَوْضَةَ خَاخَ فَإِنْ بَهَا امْرَأَةٌ مِنْ الْمُشْرِكِينَ مَعَهَا كِتَابٌ مِنْ حَاطِبِ بْنِ أَبِي بَلْتَعَةَ إِلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ فَأَدْرِكْنَاهَا تَسْبِرُ عَلَيَّ بَعِيرٍ لَهَا حَيْثُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقُلْنَا الْكِتَابُ فَقَالَتْ مَا مَعَنَا كِتَابٌ فَأَنْخَاهَا فَانْتَمَسْنَا فَلَمْ تَرَ كِتَابًا فَقُلْنَا مَا كَذَبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِنُخْرِجَنَّ الْكِتَابَ أَوْ لِنَجْرِدَنَّكَ فَلَمَّا رَأَتْ الْجِدَّ أَهَوَتْ إِلَى حُجْرَتِهَا وَهِيَ مُحْتَجِزَةٌ بِكِسَاءٍ فَأَخْرَجْتُهُ فَأَنْطَلَقْنَا بِهَا إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ عُمَرُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَدْ خَانَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَدَعْنِي فَلَاضْرِبَ عَنْقَهُ. فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا حَمَلَكَ عَلَيَّ مَا صَنَعْتَ قَالَ حَاطِبٌ وَاللَّهِ مَا بِي أَنْ لَا أَكُونَ مُؤْمِنًا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لِي عِنْدَ الْقَوْمِ يَدٌ يَدْفَعُ اللَّهُ بِهَا عَنِّي أَهْلِي وَمَالِي وَلَيْسَ أَحَدٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِكَ إِلَّا لَهُ هُنَاكَ مِنْ عَشِيرَتِهِ مَنْ يَدْفَعُ اللَّهُ بِهِ عَنِّي أَهْلِي وَمَالِي. فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ صَدَقَ وَلَا تَقُولُوا لَهُ إِلَّا خَيْرًا فَقَالَ عُمَرُ إِنَّهُ قَدْ خَانَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَدَعْنِي

فَلَاضْرِبَ عَنْقَهُ فَقَالَ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَدْرٍ فَقَالَ لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ اطَّلَعَ إِلَى أَهْلِ بَدْرٍ فَقَالَ اعْمَلُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ فَقَدْ وَجِبَتْ لَكُمْ الْجَنَّةُ أَوْ فَقَدْ غَفَرْتُ لَكُمْ فَدَمَعَتْ عَيْنَا عُمَرَ وَقَالَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ.

`Ali (ra) narrated: The Prophet sent me, Abu Marthad and Zubayr b. al-`Awwam, all horsemen, saying, "Go until the Khakh orchard (about 29 km from Madinah towards Makkah: Qurtubi's editor). You will find a woman there among the pagans. She has a letter from Hatib b. abi Balta`ah addressed to the (Makkan) pagans." We found her riding her camel at the place the Prophet had said. We told her, "Out with the letter." She said, "We have no letter." So we brought her down the camel and searched, but could not find the letter. We said, "The Prophet will not lie, so either you will bring the letter out or we shall denude you." When she saw that there was no alternative, she brought it out from her waist band as she was well covered with clothes. (According to other reports she had hidden it in her plait). We took it to the Prophet. `Umar said, "Messenger of Allah, he has betrayed Allah,

[2] If they get the better of you,⁷ they will be your enemies and stretch their hands and tongues at you in evil, and they ardently desire if you could disbelieve.

إِنْ يَتَمَفَّؤُكُمْ يُكُونُوا لَكُمْ أَعْدَاءَ وَيَبْسُطُوا
إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَأَلْسِنَتَهُم بِالسُّوءِ وَوَدُّوا
لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٢﴾

His Messenger and the believers.
Let me behead him.“

The Prophet asked, “What induced you to do what you did?” Hatib replied, “By Allah, what is with me that I should not believe in Allah and His Messenger? I wished to gain a point with my people whereby they would defend my homefolk and property. There is none of your Companion but he has a supporter there who will defend his homefolk and property.” The Prophet said, “He spoke the truth, and do not attribute to him but good.” `Umar said, “He has betrayed Allah, His Messenger and the believers. So let me behead him.” The Prophet replied, “Is he not of those who fought at Badr? Maybe Allah looked at those at Badr and said, ‘Do what you will. Paradise is yours, or (He said) I have forgiven you.’” Thereupon, `Umar’s eyes shed a few tears and he said, “Allah and His Messenger know best.”

Zamakhshari and Qurtubi add that actually the woman, named Sarrah, a slave-woman of the Banu Hashim, had come to Madinah (from

Makkah). The Prophet had asked her as to why had she come? Was she a Muslim? She said no, and explained that her supporters had died at Badr and now she was in an extremely distressful situation. (She was a singer. So the Prophet asked her, “And what about the youth of Makkah? Do they not need you anymore?” She replied, “No more after Badr”: Qurtubi). So, (on the Prophet’s recommendation: Qurtubi) the `Abd al-Muttallib clan collected funds and provision for her and set her on the road to Makkah well supplied. Hatib b. Abi Balta`ah met her and gave her 10 Dinar to carry his letter.

Zamakhshari and Qurtubi also mention that among the four that the Prophet had declared that they be killed at the time of Makkan conquest, one was Sarrah. But there must have been other reasons for the order. At all events, she went underground during the Makkan campaign and later appeared to embrace Islam.

7. Yusuf Ali’s note seems to advance a premonition. He writes, “Besides the

[3] Neither your blood-kindred nor your children wil benefit you on the day of Standing; He will separate you,⁸ and Allah is, of what you do, Aware.

لَنْ تَنْفَعَكُمْ أَرْحَامُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣﴾

[4] There surely is a good example for you in Ibrahim and those with him,⁹ when they said to their people, 'We are quit of you and of whatever you worship, apart from Allah. We disown you, and enmity and hatred has appeared between you and us for ever,¹⁰ until you believe in Allah alone' – except for Ibrahim's words to his father,¹¹ 'I shall certainly seek forgiveness for you, but I have no power on behalf of you against Allah,¹² in the least. Our Lord! Upon You we have placed trust, to You we turn, and to You is the homecoming.

فَدَكَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قَالُوا لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَاءُ مِنْكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّىٰ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحَدَهُ إِلَّا قَوْلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ لَأُبْتَغِيَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِن شَاءَ رَبِّيَ لَأَسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ وَمَا أَمْلِكُ لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ رَبَّنَا عَلَيْنِكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ أَتَيْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٤﴾

question of your fidelity to your own people, even your own selfish interests require you to beware of secret intrigues with enemies. They will welcome you as cat's paw. But what will happen when they have used you and got the better of you and your people! Then they will show you their hand. And a heavy hand it will be! Not only will they injure you with their hands but with their tongues! The only words they will use for you will be 'Traitors to their own'! If they intrigue with you now, it is to prevent you from the Path of Truth and righteousness and win you over to their evil ways."

8. The rendering of "yafsilu" as "separate [you]" is based on Ibn Jarir's understanding; i.e., Allah will separate the good from the evil, sending one to Paradise and the other to Hell. Zamakhshari and Qurtubi also state the same meaning.

9. Ibn Jarir understands "those with him" as referring to Prophets (of earlier times); but Alusi suggests that the reference could be to believers in him (however few).

10. For all his soft-heartedness, Yusuf Ali demonstrates firmness of a believer, writing in the style of Sayyid Qutb, "The enemies of Allah are enemies of the righteous, and they hate

[5] Our Lord! Do not make of us a temptation to those who disbelieve;¹³ forgive us, O our Lord, indeed You, You alone, are the Mighty, the Wise.'

رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاعْفِرْ
لَنَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٥﴾

the righteous. Therefore the righteous must cut themselves off eternally from them, unless they repent and come back to Allah. In that case they receive Allah's mercy and are entitled to all the rights of love and brotherhood. This shows that our detestation is for evil, not for men as such so long as there is a chance for repentance. See also verse 7 below. But we must give no chance to Evil for working evil on our Brotherhood at any time."

11. Mujahid, Qatadah and Ibn Zayd said that the believers are to follow the good example of Ibrahim and those with him in all matters except for seeking forgiveness for the pagans. Ibrahim was an exception (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

And Ibrahim's act in any case, was because of a promise he had made. Allah said,

مَا كَانِ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا
لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أُولَىٰ قُرْبَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ
مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ، وَمَا
كَانَ اسْتَغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَن

وَعِدَةٍ وَعَدَهَا إِيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ أَنَّهُ
نَدُوٌّ لِلَّهِ تَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَأَوَّاهٌ حَلِيمٌ
التوبة: ١١٣-١١٤

"It was not (proper) for the Prophet and the faithful to ask pardon for the polytheists, even if they were near of kin, after it became clear to them that they are companions of the Fire. (As for) Ibrahim (he) sought not pardon for his father except because of a promise he had made to him. Nevertheless, when it became apparent to him that he was an enemy to Allah, he disavowed him. Indeed, Ibrahim (was of) a pleading (nature), much forbearing" (Ibn Kathir).

12. That is, I cannot do anything else for you beyond seeking forgiveness for you (Zamakhshari).

13. Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and Qatadah said: The meaning is, "O Allah, neither punish us at their hands, nor punish us at Your hands, lest the unbelievers say, 'Their faith proved useless,' or, 'Had they been on the right, they would not have been punished'" (Ibn Jarir, Kashshaf, Razi, Ibn Kathir).

[6] There surely is in them a good example: for whomsoever longs for Allah and the Last Day. But if any turned away, then surely Allah is All-sufficient, All-laudable.¹⁴

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيهِمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٦﴾

[7] It may be that Allah will yet establish love between you and those of them you had antagonised.¹⁵ Allah is Able; and Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.¹⁶

عَسَى اللَّهُ أَن يَجْعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ عَادَيْتُم مِّنْهُمْ مَّوَدَّةً وَاللَّهُ قَدِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾

14. Sayyid comments: This passage connects this new community of Muslims with the earlier community of *Tawhid*-bearers. This caravan is the caravan of faith. It extends into past times, quit of every affinity that contradicts the affinity of faith. This community is an extension of that of Ibrahim: their ancient father. He offers an example, not merely in matters of faith, but in matters of life and its experiences; those that he encountered and during which he manifested his tenderness for the kin. But he got over it: he and those with him, purifying their faith.

A Muslim of today may look into that example, that of Ibrahim, not in matters of faith alone, but also in his life and its experiences to realize that he, Ibrahim, had experienced more consequential experiences than his own personal experiences. This extended caravan which travels through the ravines of Time, of be-

lievers standing by the banner of Allah, faces the same situations and circumstances as did the past ones. The affair is not new, nor innovative, nor a kind of demand that the believers of any time find difficult to meet.

15. That's exactly what happened. After the fall of Makkah, the pagans turned Muslim and antagonism was removed from their hearts (Ibn Jarir).

We have a good example in Abu Sufyan. After he had embraced Islam, the Prophet sent him to a Yemeni province as a governor. He was there when he heard of the Prophet's death. As he was coming he encountered a man who had turned apostate. Abu Sufyan fought him until he killed him. Thus he was the first to fight the apostates (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

16. Islam is the religion of peace. It is faith, and love. It is a system that aims to bring whole of the world under its shade; and execute its program

[8] Allah does not forbid you as regards those who did not fight you in religion's cause, and did not expel you from your homes, that you should do good to them and deal justly with them.¹⁷ Surely Allah approves of the just.

لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٨﴾

[9] Allah only forbids you as regards those who fought you in religion's cause, expelled you from your homes and supported your expulsion, that you should take them as close friends;¹⁸ and, whosoever takes them as close friends, those, such are the transgressors.

إِنَّمَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَاهَرُوا عَلَىٰ إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَن تَوَلَّوهُمْ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٩﴾

in it. It endeavors to collect together humankind under one banner, as brothers in Allah, full of love for each other. And there is nothing to come as an obstacle in the accomplishment of this endeavor but attack on it and its followers. However, if they come to peace with it, Islam has no desire for conflicts. In fact, even the while enmity prevails, it looks for creation of love and amity through good behavior and just dealing – waiting for the day when its enemies will realize that their own interests and advantages lie in being under the same banner: It may be that Allah will yet establish love .. (Sayyid).

17. Once again, the application is general, and includes unbelievers of all kinds, but the revelation could be specifically related to an incident. Qutaylah bint `Abdul `Uzza, a (divorced woman: *Ma`arif*) wife of Abu

Bakr and the mother of Asma' bint Abu Bakr, still on paganism, visited her. She brought her gifts of sauce, butter, and cheese, but Asma' told her, "I shall not accept any of it, nor should you enter my house." `A'isha mentioned this to the Prophet and this *ayah* was revealed (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

The above report is in Ibn abi Hatim, *Nasikh of Nahhas*, Ibn Mardawayh and Hakim who treated it as trustworthy (Shawkani).

18. The obvious reference is to the Makkans.

19. It is said that those days when a Makkan woman had trouble with her husband, she would threaten that she will go away to Muhammad. So Allah revealed this verse (Qurtubi).

Ibn `Abbas was asked about how exactly women were tested? He ex-

[10] O those who have believed, when there come to you believing women as emigrants, test them.¹⁹ Allah is better knowing of their faith. If you find them as believers then do not turn them back to the unbelievers.²⁰ Neither are they lawful to them nor are they (the unbelieving men) lawful to them. And give them (back) what they (the unbelievers) have expended.²¹ And there is no sin upon you that you marry them after you have given them their dowers.²² But hold not (marital) ties of the unbelieving women.²³ And ask what you expended, as they may ask what they expended. Such is Allah's judgment; He judges between you; and Allah is All-knowing, All-wise.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا جَاءَكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ
مُهَاجِرَاتٍ فَاِمْتَحِنُوهُنَّ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِهِنَّ
فَإِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوهُنَّ مُؤْمِنَاتٍ فَلَا تَرْجِعُوهُنَّ
إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ لَا هُنَّ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحِلُّونَ
لَهُنَّ وَأَتَوْهُنَّ مَا أَنْفَقُوا وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ
أَنْ تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ وَلَا
تُمْسِكُوا بِعِصَمِ الْكُوفَارِ وَاسْأَلُوا مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ
وَلَيْسَ أَسْأَلُوا مَا أَنْفَقُوا ذَلِكَمُ حُكْمُ اللَّهِ
يُحْكِمُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

plained that the Prophet would ask them whether, “By Allah, she had not come on account of differences with the husband,” and, “By Allah, she was not trying to abandon her town for another,” and, “By Allah, she was not vying for a worldly gain,” and, (“She had not come forth being in love with a man among us”: Ikrimah) and, “By Allah, she had not come except in love of Allah and His Messenger” (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari & Razi [without naming Ibn `Abbas], Ibn Kathir).

When a woman testified to these things, the Prophet told her, “Go, I have accepted your pledge.” By Allah, the Prophet’s hand never touched a woman’s” (Ibn Jarir).

20. This verse was revealed because one of the clauses of the Hudaibiyyah Treaty was that any Makkan escaping to Madinah to join the Prophet would be returned while any Muslim who decided to join the pagans at Makkah would not be returned. Therefore, the Prophet rejected any Muslim who wished to join him. He rejected them even the while he was there at Hudaibiyyah. Nevertheless, when Umm Kulthum bint `Uqbah b. Abi Mu`ayt came to him requesting refuge, he accepted her. When her family members came to reclaim her, the Prophet refused following the directive of this verse (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

The report is in Bukhari (Au.).

The Prophet retained women who had fled to him from their non-Makkan pagan husbands too. Such as, for example, Umaymah bint Bishr al-Ansariyyah, and another woman from the Aws tribe: their husbands were unbelievers (Ibn Jarir).

21. Ibn Zayd explained that when the pagans insisted on the clause in the Hudyabiyyah Treaty that anyone of them coming to the Prophet would be returned, and so also, anyone who deserted the Prophet and returned to Makkah would be returned, the Prophet said, "If there happens to be anyone from among the believers who wishes to return to Makkah, we have no need of him, he may stay stay back." But Allah declared the exception of believing women from among the Makkan pagans joining him. However, if there was any woman who escaped to Madinah from Makkah as a Muslim, then the Muslims (Islamic state) were bound to pay up her husband the amount of dower he had spent on her (Ibn Jarir).

22. When Allah said, "after you have given them their dowers," to whom were the dower amounts to go? The answer that Zuhri gave was that they were to go to the former pagan hus-

bands. In other words, Muslims were not to marry believing women who had escaped from the pagans, before their former pagan husbands had received the sums they had expended on them at the time of marriage (Ibn Jarir).

23. Following this directive, `Umar ibn al-Khattab divorced his pagan wife called Quraybah at Makkah, the daughter of Abu Umayyah b. al-Mughirah, (whom Mu`awiyah b. Abu Sufyan married thereafter: both pagans at Makkah), and another of his wives, the daughter of Jarwal of Khuza`ah (whom Abu Jahm b. Huzafah subsequently married). Similarly Talha b. `Ubaydullah divorced his wife called Arwa the daughter of Rabi`ah b al-Harith b. `Abd al-Muttalib (whom Khalid b. Sa`eed b. al-`Aas married next in Makkah). Thus, the rule was established, added Ibn Zayd, that if a man became Muslim but if his pagan wife did not follow, they were automatically separated (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). Zamakhshari names two more women that were divorced because they chose to remain pagan and adds that the Prophet paid their dowers to their Muslim husbands from the spoils of war.

[11] But if you lose any of your wives to the unbelievers,²⁴ and you have pursued (the affair),²⁵ then give those whose wives have gone away the like of what they expended (as compensation).²⁶ And fear Allah, in whom you believe.

وَإِنْ فَاتَكُمْ شَيْءٌ مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ إِلَى
الْكَفَّارِ فَعَاقِبْتُمْ فَاتُوا الَّذِينَ ذَهَبَتْ
أَزْوَاجُهُمْ مِّثْلَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي
أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١﴾

24. According to Mujahid and Qatadah, the allusion is to such women who deserted the Muslims and joined such of the unbelievers with whom the Prophet had not entered into any treaty (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

25. By the term “*aqabtum*” the allusion is to spoils of war. That is, if a Muslim woman deserted and joined with the pagans, and the pagans refused to pay the amount the husband had spent on her, then the Muslims were to wait until they could win some booty to pay up to the man whose wife had deserted him and joined the pagans (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

26. When the rule about paying the dower of an immigrant believing woman was announced, Muslims readily accepted it and in fact paid the dowers of such women to Makkan husbands. But, on the other hand, the Makkans refused to accept the rule that they should pay for the dower of a believing woman from Madinah joining them. Therefore,

Allah directed through this verse that in such a case it was the (Islamic) state which was to pay the amount to the Muslim husbands at Madinah of such women who deserted and joined the pagans at Makkah (Ibn Jarir).

A sole case of a Muslim woman joining the pagans was that of Umm Hakeem bint Abu Sufyan, who was married to `Abbas b. Tameem al-Qurashi. She became apostate. However, subsequently she reverted to Islam (Razi).

Apart from her, Qurtubi lists five more of those who refused to migrate when their husbands did.

Actually, they were already unbelievers. But when this *ayah* came, and they came to know that Islam did not allow interfaith marriages involving a pagan and a Muslim, they opted to remain back in Makkah and accept separation from their Muslim husbands at Madinah. However, even these five later turned Muslims (Mufti Shafi').

[12] O Prophet.²⁷ If there come to you believing women pledging to you that they will not associate aught with Allah, will not steal,²⁸ will not commit adultery,²⁹ will not slay their children, will not bring a slander that they have forged between their hands and feet,³⁰ and will not disobey you in any goodly matter³¹ – then, accept their pledge and seek Allah’s forgiveness for them, surely Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Kind.³²

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ
يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا
وَلَا يَسْرِفْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يُفْتَلِنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ
وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ
وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِيَنَّ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ
قَبَائِعَهُنَّ وَاسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لهنَّ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ
رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

27. “Now come the directions as to the points on which women entering into Islam should pledge themselves. Similar points apply to men, but here the question is about women, and especially such as were likely, in those early days of Islam, to come from Pagan society into Muslim society .. A pledge on these points would search out their real motives: (1) to worship none but Allah; (2) not to steal; (3) not to indulge in sex outside the marriage tie; (4) not to commit infanticide; (the Pagan Arabs were prone to female infanticide); (5) not to indulge in slander or scandal; and (6) generally, to obey loyally the law and principles of Islam. The last was a comprehensive and sufficient phrase, but it was good to indicate also the special points to which attention was to be directed in those special circumstances. Obedience was of course to be in all things

just and reasonable: Islam requires strict discipline but not slavishness. 7) ‘That they will not utter slander intentionally forging falsehood’. Literally, ‘...nor produce any lie that they have devised between their hands and feet’. These words mean that they should not falsely attribute the paternity of their illegitimate children to their lawful husbands thereby adding to the monstrosity of their original sin of infidelity” (Yusuf Ali).

28. Excluded is that situation in which a wife does not get enough for her and her children’s maintenance from her husband. The following is reported in the *Sahihayn*. This particular version is in Ahmed:

نَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: دَخَلَتْ هِنْدُ بِنْتُ عُتْبَةَ،
رَأُوهُ أَبِي سُفْيَانَ، عَلَىٰ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
لِيهِ وَسَلَّمَ. فَقَالَتْ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ أَبَا
سُفْيَانَ رَجُلٌ شَحِيحٌ، لَا يُعْطِينِي مِنَ النَّفَقَةِ

ا يَكْفِينِي وَيَكْفِي بَنِيَّ، إِلَّا مَا أَخَذْتُ مِنْ
 إِلَيْهِ بَعِيرٍ عَلَيْهِ، فَهَلْ عَلَيَّ فِي ذَلِكَ مِنْ
 تَنَاحٍ؟ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
 وَسَلَّمَ: "خُذِي مِنْ مَالِهِ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ، مَا
 كُفِيكَ وَيَكْفِي بَنِيكَ"

‘A’isha said, “Hind bint ‘Utbah, the wife of Abu Sufyan entered upon the Prophet and asked, ‘Messenger of Allah. Abu Sufyan is a stingy man. He does not give me what would suffice me for my and my children’s maintenance, unless I am to take from his wealth without his knowledge. Is there any sin upon me because of this?’ He replied, ‘You may take from his wealth in a goodly manner what will suffice you and your children’” (Ibn Kathir).

29. Adultery as such was quite uncommon among decent families of the Arabs. When the Prophet mentioned adultery during a pledge session at Makkah, Hind bint ‘Uqbah remonstrated, “Does a free woman commit adultery?” He replied, “No, she does not.” And ‘A’isha reports that when Fatimah bint ‘Utbah was pledging and the Prophet said, “and will not commit adultery” she was so taken aback (in amazement and) shame that she placed her hand on her head. The Prophet was pleased

by her reaction. ‘A’sha spoke out, “Say yes O woman. By Allah, he did not seek pledge from us except on this.” She said, “If that is the case, then, yes” (Ibn Kathir).

30. The allusion by the words, “a slander that they have forged between their hands and feet” is to attribution of children to other than their real fathers (Ibn Jarir).

We have a *hadith* too to this effect. It is in Abu Da’ud. It says,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ حِينَ نَزَلَتْ آيَةُ الْمُتَلَاعِنِينَ: "أَيُّمَا امْرَأَةٍ أَدْخَلْتَ عَلَى قَوْمٍ مِنْ لَيْسَ مِنْهُمْ، فَلَيْسَتْ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ، وَلَنْ يُدْخِلَهَا اللَّهُ جَنَّتَهُ. وَأَيُّمَا رَجُلٍ حَادَّ وَلَدَهُ وَهُوَ يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِ احْتَجَبَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى مِنْهُ وَفَضَحَهُ عَلَى رُؤُوسِ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ."

Abu Hurayrah said that when the *ayah* regarding “mutual curse” (24: 7-9) was revealed the Prophet remarked, “Whichever woman admitted into a people him who is not of them, is upon nothing in the sight of Allah. He will never admit her into Paradise. And, whichever man denied his son, while he is in his sight, will have Allah veil the heaven from him, and will humiliate him before the firsts and the lasts” (Ibn Kathir).

The report is also in the *Sahih* of Ibn Hibban and in Hakim whose declaration of trustworthiness was corroborated by Dhahabi although, Ibn Hajr was not too comfortable with one of the narrators (Au.).

31. The best explanation that we have for the conditional clause “in goodly matters” is that none but Allah deserves that He be obeyed in whatever He dictates. As for humans, their obedience is conditional to their ordering what is just, right and true. The condition placed here is to emphasize the point that even a Prophet is no exception (Alusi, Mufti Shafi’).

32. *Hadith* works report many cases of women’s pledges at the Prophet’s hand. One of them is in Ahmed, declared trustworthy (by Tirmidhi),

عَنْ أُمِّمَةَ بِنْتِ رُقَيْقَةَ قَالَتْ أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ -
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- فِي نِسَاءِ تَبَايَعَهُ فَأَخَذَ
عَلَيْنَا مَا فِي الْقُرْآنِ أَنْ لَا نُشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا
الآيَةَ. قَالَ «فِيمَا اسْتَطَعْتُنَّ وَأَطَعْتُنَّ». قُلْنَا
اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَرْحَمُ بِنَا مِنْ أَنْفُسِنَا. قُلْنَا يَا
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَلَا تُصَافِحُنَا. قَالَ «إِنِّي لَا
أُصَافِحُ النِّسَاءَ إِذَا قَوْلِي لِامْرَأَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ
كَقَوْلِي لِمِائَةِ امْرَأَةٍ».

Umaymah bint Ruqayqah said: I went to the Prophet along with some other women in order to enter into pledge with him. He

took the pledge on what is in the Qur’ān viz., that we shall not associate aught with Allah .. the rest of the verse .. but added, “to the extent that you have the power (to act according to your pledge).” We said, “Allah and His Messenger are kinder upon us than we are upon ourselves.” Then we said, “Messenger of Allah, will you not shake hands with us?” He said, “I do not shake hands with women. And my word to a single woman is as good as my word to a hundred women.”

Qurtubi adds: Sometimes the Prophet would ask for a bowl of water, dip his hands in it after the pledge and ask the women to dip their hands in it.

The Prophet employed the same words on other occasions, e.g., when he sought fresh allegiance from women on the day of `Eid. We have the following from Bukhari:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ شَهِدْتُ
الصَّلَاةَ يَوْمَ الْفِطْرِ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَبِي بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ وَعُثْمَانُ فَكُلُّهُمْ
يُصَلِّيهَا قَبْلَ الْخُطْبَةِ ثُمَّ يَخْطُبُ بَعْدُ فَنَزَلَ
نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَكَأَنِّي أَنْظَرُ
إِلَيْهِ حِينَ يُجْلِسُ الرَّجَالَ بِيَدِهِ ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَ
يَشْفَعُهُمْ حَتَّى أَتَى النِّسَاءَ مَعَ بِلَالٍ فَقَالَ

{يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يَبَايَعَنَّكَ عَلَيْ
 أَنْ لَا يَشْرِكْنَكَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ
 وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِمُهْتَنٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ
 بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ} (الْمُمْتَحَنَةُ: ١٢)
 حَتَّى فَرَغَ مِنَ الْآيَةِ كُلِّهَا ثُمَّ قَالَ حِينَ فَرَغَ
 أَتْنَنَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ فَقَالَتْ امْرَأَةٌ وَاحِدَةً لَمْ يُجِبْهُ
 غَيْرُهَا نَعَمْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَا يَذْرِي الْحَسَنُ
 مَنْ هِيَ قَالَ فَتَصَدَّقْنِ وَبَسَطَ بِلَالٌ ثَوْبَهُ
 فَجَعَلْنَ يُلقِينَ الْفَتَحَ وَالْحَوَاتِيمَ فِي ثَوْبِ
 بِلَالٍ.

Ibn `Abbas said that he attended the `Eid al-Fitr Prayer with the Prophet, Abu Bakr, `Umar and `Uthman. All of them first offered the Prayer and then delivered the sermon. (On this occasion) the Prophet came down and, "As if I can still see him when he made the men sit down with the wave of his hands and then went forward splitting them until he arrived at the women's rows. He recited this verse, *'If there come to you believing women pledging to you that they will not associate aught with Allah, will not steal, will not commit adultery, will not slay their children, will not bring a slander that they have forged between their hands and feet,'* .. until the end of the verse. Then, after completing the verse he asked, 'Do you stand

by these (words)?' None of the woman answered except for one. She said, 'Yes, Messenger of Allah.' (The narrator said he was not sure who the woman was). The Prophet said, "Then give in charity," and they began to throw their studded and un-studded rings into Bilal's cloth" (Ibn Jarir).

Perhaps the most interesting pledge is that of Hind bint `Utba, the wife of Abu Sufyan, at the time Makkah fell. Qurtubi writes that when shortly before the fall of Makkah, Abu Sufyan became a Muslim and informed his wife, she held him by his beard and yelled, "Kill this old misguided man." When women's pledge-session started, she was also there. She had veiled herself because of what she had done to Hamza on the Day of Uhud. When they drew near to pledge their loyalty, he said, "Promise that you will not associate aught with Allah." Hind said, "By God. You ask us something that you didn't ask men. In any case, we shall grant it to you." He said, "And that you shall not steal." She said, "By God, I used to take small amounts of money from Abu Sufyan's pocket. I don't know if that was lawful." Abu Sufyan was present. He said, "I declare lawful unto you whatever you took in

the past.” The Prophet asked, “Are you Hind, the daughter of ‘Utbah?” She replied, “I am Hind bint ‘Utbah. Forgive me for what happened in the past, and Allah will forgive you.” He continued, “And that you will not commit adultery.” She asked, “Does a free woman commit adultery?” He said, “And you will not kill your offspring.” She interjected again, “We reared them when they were young, but you killed them at Badr when adult. You and they know better.” ‘Umar laughed at her words. The Prophet said, “And you will not bring up slander which you would have invented.” She said, “By God! Slander is a dirty thing but it is better to ignore them.” The Prophet ended by saying, “You will not disobey me in virtuous matters,” and asked ‘Umar to complete the formalities of the allegiance.

The above report is on the authority of Ibn Jarir from whom Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir reproduce. Ibn Kathir does not trust it, but, being of historical nature, it has been reproduced by many Sirah works (Au.).

Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir add: The words of this *ayah* were more or less the words with which the Prophet took the pledge at ‘Aqabah before

migration, when there were 12 people in front of him. He also renewed pledges with the same words in later times. We have the following in the *Sahihayn*:

عَنْ عُبَادَةَ بْنِ الصَّامِتِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ
كُنَّا عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي
مَجْلِسٍ فَقَالَ بَايَعُونِي عَلَى أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكُوا
بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا تَسْرِقُوا وَلَا تَزْنُوا وَقَرَأَ هَذِهِ
الْآيَةَ كُلَّهَا فَمَنْ وَفَى مِنْكُمْ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ
وَمَنْ أَصَابَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا فَعُوقِبَ بِهِ فَهُوَ
كَفَّارَتُهُ وَمَنْ أَصَابَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا فَسَتَرَهُ
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ شَاءَ غَفَرَ لَهُ وَإِنْ شَاءَ عَذَّبَهُ.

On the authority of ‘Ubadah b. Samit, he said, “We were with the Prophet in an assembly when he said, ‘Pledge me your hands on that you will not associate aught with Allah, will not steal, will not commit adultery ..’ he recited the whole *ayah*, and then added, ‘So whoever of you stayed true to it has his reward with Allah. As for he who committed any of these to any degree, and then he is punished for it, then that is his expiation, while he who committed any of these to any degree, but Allah covered it, then He will either forgive Him or, if He will, punish him’” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

[13] O those who have believed, do not take as close friends a people against whom Allah is angry,³³ those that are already despaired of the Hereafter, as despaired are the unbelievers about those in the graves.³⁴

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا
غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ فَدَيَسُوا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ
كَمَا يَيَسُ الْكُفَّارُ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْقُبُورِ

﴿١٣﴾

33. The allusion is to the Jews (Ibn Jarir).

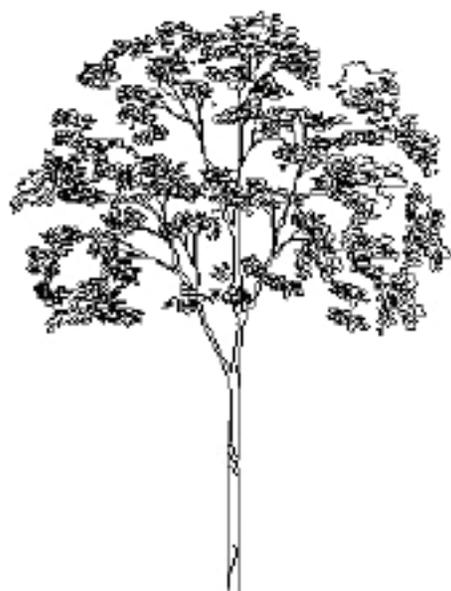
34. The verse is explained in various ways. One of them is that the people mentioned (viz., the Jews) are as in despair regarding their salvation in the Hereafter as the pagans are in despair regarding their dead returning from the grave. Another meaning, as that given by Ibn Mas`ud, `Ikrimah, Muqatil, Ibn Zayd and others is that, "as despaired are the unbelievers in the graves, about anything good happening to them then and thereafter" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Yusuf Ali comments: "The Unbelievers, who do not believe in a Future Life, can therefore have no hope beyond this life. Miserable indeed is this life to them; for the ills of this life are real to them, and they can

have no hope of redress. But such is also the state of others - People of the Book or not - who wallow in sin and incur the divine Wrath. Even if they believe in a Future Life, it can only be to them a life of horror, punishment, and despair. For those of Faith the prospect is different. They may suffer in this life, but this life to them is only a fleeting shadow that will soon pass away. The Reality is beyond; there will be full redress in the Beyond, and Achievement and Felicity such as they can scarcely conceive of in the terms of this life."

It may be noted, writes Qurtubi, that the *Surah* started with the prohibition to befriend the unbelievers, and ends with the prohibition to befriend the unbelievers. ﴿١٣﴾





Surah 61
Al-Saff
 Madinan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
 THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] *Whatever is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah, and He is the All-mighty, the All-Wise.*

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١﴾

[2] *O those who have believed, why do you say that which you do not do?*¹

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا
 تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢﴾

1. This *ayah* is not prohibiting invitation to what someone does not practice himself. It is prohibiting that one should claim to having done what one has not done. In fact, inviting people to good acts, quite often leads he who invites to practice those acts himself (Thanwi).

When asked, about this *ayah* as well as a few others on the topic, the Salaf replied that one ought to prohibit the wrong, whether one practices himself or not, for, if the condition is to practice before you preach, then, how many can preach?

As further elucidation of the cause of revelation, the following may be quoted. The preferred opinion is that some of the Companions said,

among them `Abdullah ibn Rawaha, “Had we known the best of deeds in the sight of Allah, we would have attempted it.” But when verses pertaining to *Jihad* were revealed, some betrayed aversion, so Allah revealed this passage. But `Abdullah ibn Rawaha said, at the time of revelation, that he would remain in *Jihad* untill death; and, true to his word, he died a martyr (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

The report above is trustworthy (Alusi).

Ibn Kathir points out that there is a report in Ahmad which narrates `Abdullah b. Salam as saying that “a group of us were discussing amongst ourselves as to who would volunteer

[3] Greatly hateful it is in the sight of your Lord that you should say what you do not do.² كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣﴾

to go and ask the Prophet what the best of deeds was. But none volunteered. By coincidence, right then the Prophet sent us a man to take us all to him one after another. When we went to him he recited this chapter.”

Ibn Zayd said however that this passage refers to the hypocrites who promised to help the Muslims (in war) but never kept their promise (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Yusuf Ali points to the possibility that the reference could be to the failure of some of the Companions at Uhud.

2. The disapproval includes saying to others what we refuse to attempt ourselves. A *hadith* reports the Prophet as having said,

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -
صلى الله عليه وسلم- «مَرَرْتُ لَيْلَةَ أُسْرِي
بِى عَلَى قَوْمٍ تُقْرَضُ شِفَاهُهُمْ بِمَقَارِيضٍ مِنْ
نَارٍ قَالَ قُلْتُ مَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ قَالُوا خُطَبَاءُ مِنْ أَهْلِ
الدُّنْيَا كَانُوا يَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَيَنْسَوْنَ
أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ»

“I passed by a people, the night I was taken up, whose lips were being clipped with scissors of fire. I asked Jibril, ‘Who are these people?’ He answered, ‘These are sermonizers of the world. They commanded others to goodness but forgot themselves, although they recited the Book. Should they have not considered?’” (Qurtubi).

The above narrative is in Ahmad, Ibn Hibban’s *Sahih* and several other works (Au.).

The rule applies to minor affairs also. We have a report in Ahmad and Abu Da’ud which reports ‘Abdullah b. ‘Amir as saying that “Once the Prophet visited our house. I was then a child and started off to play outside. My mother called me back and said, ‘Abdullah, come and have this.’ The Prophet asked, ‘What is it that you intended to give him?’ She replied, ‘Dates.’ He said:

«أَمَا إِنَّكَ لَوْ لَمْ تَفْعَلِي كُتِبَتْ عَلَيْكَ كَذِبَةٌ»

“Had you not done it, a lie would have been written against you.”

[4] Allah certainly approves of those who fight in His cause in rows as if they are a leaded structure.³

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا كَأَنَّهُمْ بُنْيَانٌ مَّرْصُوصٌ ﴿٤﴾

3. That is, as one body, each joined to the rest as if welded together (Au.).

Yusuf Ali comments: “A battle array, in which a large number of men stand, march, or hold together against assault as if they were a solid wall, is a striking example of order, discipline, cohesion, and courage. ‘A solid cemented structure’ is even a better simile than the usual ‘solid wall’ as the ‘structure’ or building implies a more diversified organisation held together in unity and strength, each part contributing strength in its own way, and the whole held together not like a mass but like a living organism.”

The Prophet is reported to have said in a narrative preserved by Ahmad and Ibn Majah:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- «ثَلَاثَةٌ يَضْحَكُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِمُ الرَّجُلُ يَقُومُ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ وَالْقَوْمُ إِذَا صَفُّوا لِلْقِتَالِ وَإِذَا صَفُّوا لِلصَّلَاةِ».

“There are three at whom Allah laughs (i.e., is pleased with): A man who rises up for late-night Prayers, a people when they form

rows for a battle, and when they form rows for the Prayers.”

The *hadith* could not be located in Ibn Majah, and this particular version is not quite trustworthy. But Ibn Kathir adds the following to strengthen it. It reports Mutarrif b. ‘Abdullah as saying:

عن مطرف بن عبد الله قال : كان يبلغني عن أبي ذر حديث فكنيت أشتهي لقاءه فلقيته فقلت: يا أبا ذر كان يبلغني عنك حديث فكنيت أشتهي لقاءك. قال : لله أبوك فقد لقيتني قال: قلت: حدثني بلغني أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم حدثك قال: إن الله يحب ثلاثة و يبغض ثلاثة قال: فلا أتحالي أكذب على خليلي قال قلت: من هؤلاء الذين يُحبهم الله؟ قال: رجل غزا في سبيل الله صابرا مُحْتَسِباً مُجَاهِداً فَلَقِيَ الْعَدُوَّ فقاتل حتى قتل و أنتم تَجِدُونَهُ عِنْدَكُمْ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ الْمُرْتَلِ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ { إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا كَأَنَّهُمْ بُنْيَانٌ مَّرْصُوصٌ } (الصف: ٤)

“I was narrated a *hadith* of Abu Dharr and I wished all along I could meet him (to confirm it). I did happen to meet him and I asked him, ‘O Abu Dharr, a

hadith of yours reached me and I wished to meet you.’ He said, ‘May Allah bless your father, now you have found me.’ I said, ‘I have learnt that the Prophet told you, “Allah loves three and detests three..” He said, ‘He did not befriend me that I should forge a lie on my friend.’ I asked, ‘So who are those that Allah loves?’ He said, ‘A man who fought in Allah’ Cause, in patience and hoping to be rewarded – a mujahid. Then he met the enemy and fought until he died. And you find this in Allah’s Book.’ Then he recited this *ayah*, ‘Surely, Allah approves of those who fight in His cause as if they are a leaded structure.’”

This report is declared trustworthy by Hakim in his *Mustadrak* and confirmed by Dhahabi (Au.).

The following from Majid should be of interest: “The recognized military formation,’ in the early history of Islam, ‘whether on parade, on the march, or in battle, was the ta`biyyah. In it the army was divided into five main divisions, namely centre, right and left wings, van (*muqaddamah*) and rear-guard (*sava*) .. The ‘five formation’ was in use as early as the Prophet’s own time, e.g., at the battle of Badr and Muta, and to

its invention and introduction has been attributed much of his success against his opponents who were still using the old, irregular method of attack.’ (Levy, *Sociology of Islam*, II, pp. 296, 297). The ordinary method of fighting in vogue till then was ‘that of the raid, in which a sudden charge was followed by prompt retreat and sudden return to the onslaught’ (p. 297). The Prophet, the great military leader that he was, changed this, and at the battle of Badr ‘introduced the new formation of the ta`biyyah for the first time, with great success. He had very few more than three hundred men, of whom only one was mounted. He arranged them in straight, regular ranks, which he put in order himself, walking along the ranks with an arrow in order to push back any man who was out of the line with the rest.’ (p. 298).”

Sayyid adds: “Islam does not desire warfare. It declares *Jihad* obligatory because of the ground realities .. It offers the humanity a program of life, a system: the final to come from their Lord. Now, this system and this program of life, which in truth corresponds well with nature – except that it requires the humans to put in some efforts of their own, so that they may rise up above others – is opposed by forces that do not agree

[5] And (recall) when Musa said to his people, 'O my people, why do you torture me while you know that I am Allah's Messenger to you.'⁴ But when they deviated, Allah caused their hearts to deviate;⁵ and Allah does not guide a rebelliously corrupt people.⁶

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ لِمَ تَتُودُونَنِي
وَقَدْ تَعْلَمُونَ أَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ فَلَمَّا
زَاعُوا أَرْوَاحَ اللَّهِ فُتِنُوا بِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي
الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٥﴾

with it. For, this program threatens to take away advantages that those who command influence, draw from the older systems. These forces declare a war on the Islamic program, to root it out. In their own efforts they rely on weak elements within the Islamic community, as they also depend on ignorance of some, and love of the heritage of the past. The ensuing evil is pretty vicious. Falsehood is a brag-gart, and Shaytan, meanly.

"It becomes necessary then on the caravan of faith and defenders of the system, to be strong in order to overcome the agents of evil and allies of the Devil. They have to be equally strong in their morals, especially, at the time they face their enemies. Yet, it is conditional upon them that they should fight only when fighting is the final recourse to guarantee their freedom of faith, freedom to execute their program of life, and freedom to preach their faith.

"They fight in Allah's Cause; not for their own sake, not for tribal, clan-

nish, or nationalistic, regional solidarity's sake. They fight in Allah's Cause, pure and simple, in order that Allah's Word may prevail. The Prophet has said, 'He who fought in order that Allah's Word may prevail, is in Allah's Cause.'"

4. That is, when you know for sure that I am Allah's Messenger (Razi, Qurtubi).

See note 151 of *Surah al-Baqarah* for details of Musa's torture at the hands of the children of Israel.

5. As Allah said elsewhere:

وَنَقَلَبْ أَفْئِدَتَهُمْ وَأَبْصُرَهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ
أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَنَذَرَهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ
(الأنعام: ١١٠)

"And We turn their hearts and their sights because they did not believe in the first instance, and leave them in their rebellion, wandering about (blindly)."

That is "On the one hand I have been foretold in *Tawrah* – as the final Prophet among the children of

[6] (Also recall) when `Isa the son of Maryam said, 'O Children of Israel, certainly I am Allah's Messenger to you, testifying the Tawrah which was before me, and (I myself am, a) harbinger of glad tidings of a Messenger who will come after me.⁷ His name will be Ahmad.⁸ But when he came to them carrying clear evidences, they said, 'This is clear sorcery.'⁹

وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ
إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ
يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ
بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٦﴾

Israel, and, on the other, I am informing you about the appearance of a Prophet after me” (Ibn Kathir).

6. “The sinner’s own will deviates, i.e., goes off from the right way, and he does wrong. That means that he shuts off Allah’s grace. Allah then, after his repeated rebellion, withdraws the protecting Grace from him, and the sinner’s heart is tainted: there is ‘a disease in his heart’, which is the centre of his being: his spiritual state is ruined. Allah’s guidance is withdrawn from him” (Yusuf Ali).

7. Majid comments and quotes from the Britannica: “That the teachings of Jesus (on whom be peace) as a universal code of conduct, was singularly inadequate and incomplete, and necessitated the advent of another Teacher is admitted by the Christian apologists themselves, and accounted for in ways that are more amusing than convincing. ‘The Savior refrained from all attempts to guide

His followers by rule, but gradually taught them .. that their lives were to be quickened by the Holy Spirit whose indwelling was to them to be their strength and inspiration for all time. In view of this prospect, we can understand why His ethical teaching was so suggestive but so paradoxical, so figurative and so incomplete. It was designed, not to save us from the trouble of thinking but to turn our thoughts to the Comforter whom He promised to send.’ (ERE, XII, p.621).”

Ibn Jarir quotes a *hadith* of this context. We break it into two:

عَنْ عِرْبَاضِ بْنِ سَارِيَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
-صلى الله عليه وسلم- «إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ
لِخَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ وَإِنْ آدَمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ لَمُنْجِدٌ
فِي طِينَتِهِ وَسَأْتِبُكُمْ بِأَوَّلِ ذَلِكَ دَعْوَةَ أَبِي
إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَبَشَارَةَ عِيسَى بِي وَرُؤْيَا أُمِّي الَّتِي
رَأَتْ وَكَذَلِكَ أُمَّهَاتُ النَّبِيِّينَ تَرَيْنَ» -
(وتكملة الرواية بأنّها) رَأَتْ حِينَ وَضَعَتْهُ
نُورًا أَضَاءَتْ لَهُ فَصُورَ الشَّامَ.

On the authority of `Irbad b. Sariyyah, the Prophet said, "I am `Abdullah, seal of the Prophets while Adam was yet in his dust. And, let me tell you about the beginning of the affair: (I am) My father Ibrahim's prayer, a glad tiding of `Isa about me, and the dream that my mother saw. And that is how mothers of the Prophets see."

The above is the first part. The second, separate part occurs separately in many reports. It says, "When she gave him berth, a Light emerged that illuminated the palaces of Syria."

The above reports are in Ahmad, Tabarani, Ibn Hibban and Hakim who both declared the reports trustworthy, the latter with Dhahabi in his support. Of course, Ibn Kathir does not miss them (Au.).

That the people of the Book had received tidings from their Prophets about the Final Messenger is evidenced by the way some kings and rulers received the Prophet's letters inviting them to Islam. Ibn Kathir presents the story of Negus, the Abyssinian Christian king. When `Amr b. al-'Aas failed to convince the Negus to hand over Muslim emigrants to him, he thought he will play his last card. He informed him that these

people were opposed to his views about Jesus Christ. So Negus asked the Muslims what they thought of Jesus. They said they were taught that `Isa, the son of Maryam, was no more than a Messenger of Allah, created by a Word, through Maryam the Virgin, whom no man had touched. At that Negus picked up a twig from the ground and said, "Jesus Christ was no more or less than the twig against what they have described him." He added that if he had not been a king, he would have visited the Prophet. The full story is in Ibn Is-haq's Life of the Prophet.

8. Alusi remarks that the word used in the Gospels is "*Farqalit*" which has been explained by some Christian scholars as meaning "Hamid", i.e., one who praises.

Thanwi writes that according to Indian Mawlana Rahmatullah Kayraanawi who produced the famous treatise *Izhar al-Haq* (which the Christians have not been able to answer to this day: Au.), the word used in Hebrew was Ahmad, meaning he who praises. The translators of those times usually translated proper nouns also. Accordingly, the word Ahmad was translated from Hebrew into Greek as Parakletos or Periklytos, or, as in modern rendering Parcalete.

Then, when it was re-translated into Hebrew, the word was changed to *Farqalit*. Some Hebrew *Bibles* of the nineteenth century carried the name Ahmad. (Thanwi's commentary is in Urdu, and the references he gives is that of a work entitled "*Apology*" by Godfrey Higgins, a London publication of 1829).

Christian missionaries invested lots of efforts towards the destruction of "*Izhar al-Haq*" but somehow it survived. It was originally in Arabic and has been translated into Turkish, English and Urdu (Mufti Shafi').

Qurtubi writes: Literally, Ahmad means someone who - out of all those who praise - is the most praising of Allah, while Muhammad means he who was praised severally or frequently. The Prophet could not have been Muhammad before being Ahmad.

The *Sahibyan* have a pertinent *hadith*:

إِنَّ لِي أَسْمَاءَ أَنَا مُحَمَّدٌ وَأَنَا أَحْمَدُ وَأَنَا
الْمَاحِي الَّذِي يَمْحُو اللَّهُ بِي الْكُفْرَ وَأَنَا
الْحَاشِرُ الَّذِي يُحْشِرُ النَّاسَ عَلَى قَدَمِي وَأَنَا
الْعَاقِبُ.

The Prophet said, "I have several names so that I am Muhammad, I am Ahmad, I am Mahi by whom Allah will obliterate unbelief, I

am Hashir after whom Allah will muster together the people and I am `Aqib (after whom there will be no Prophet)" - Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir.

Another narration in Muslim and Ahmad is on the authority of Abu Musa al-Ash`ari:

عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى قَالَ سَمَى لَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- نَفْسَهُ أَسْمَاءً مِنْهَا مَا
حَفِظْنَا قَالَ «أَنَا مُحَمَّدٌ وَأَحْمَدُ وَالْمُقَفَّى
وَالْحَاشِرُ وَنَبِيُّ التَّوْبَةِ وَالْمَلْحَمَةَ».

The Prophet used to name himself. Of those that we remember, he said, "I am Muhammad, Ahmad, *Muqaffa*, (last of the Prophets), Hashir, the Prophet of Repentance and of the Final War" (Ibn Kathir).

The concept of Armageddon seems quite close to the "*malahim*" of *hadith* predictions (Au.).

Razi quotes several passages from the Gospels that prophesize the advent of Prophet Muhammad by the tongue of Jesus Christ. One of them is as follows: "But the Comforter, [who is] the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said to you (John 14: 26)."

Imām Razi comments on the above that the Christians say that the Comforter mentioned in the above verse is Jesus himself, who re-appeared after his crucifixion. But this argument is untenable because, although according to the Gospels Jesus did appear after crucifixion, but that was for a few moments during which he taught nothing of what the above verse is promising.

Hereunder a summary of Mawdudi's long commentary:

The Gospel of St. John bears evidence that at the advent of the Prophet Jesus Christ, the Israelites were awaiting the appearance of three persons: the Christ, Elias (i.e. the second coming of the Prophet Elias) and of "that prophet". In the words of the Gospel:

"And this is the record of John (the Prophet John: Yahya) when the Jews sent, priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 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 saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said,

I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness! Make straight the way of the Lord as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" (John, 1: 19-25)

"These words expressly show that the Israelites were awaiting another Prophet besides the Prophet Christ and the Prophet Elias, and he was not the Prophet John. The belief about the coming of that Prophet was so well known and well established among the Israelite that a mere reference to him as 'that prophet' was enough to call attention to him without any need to add: 'The one who has been foretold in the Torah.' Furthermore, it also shows that the advent of the prophet to whom they were referring was absolutely confirmed, for when these questions were asked of the Prophet John, he did not say that no other prophet was to come and therefore the questions were irrelevant.

Consider now the predictions that have been cited in the Gospel of St. John from chapter 14 to chapter 16:

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter,

that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” (14: 16-17)

“These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, ‘he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” (14: 25-26)

“Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” (14: 30)

“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.” (15: 26)

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” (16: 7)

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. 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 show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.” (16: 12-15)

In order to determine the exact meaning of these passages one should first know that the language spoken by the Prophet Jesus and his contemporary Palestinians was a dialect of the Aramaic language, called Syriac. More than 200 years before the birth of Jesus when the Seleucids came to power Hebrew had become extinct in this territory and been replaced by Syriac. Although under the influence of the Seleucids and then the Roman empires, Greek also had reached this area, it remained confined only to that class of the people, who after having access to the higher government circles, or in order to seek access to them, had become deeply Hellenized. The Common Palestinians used a particular dialect of Syriac, the accents and pronunciations and idioms of which were different from the Syriac spoken in and around Damascus. The common people of the country were wholly unaware

of Greek. So much so that when in A.D. 70 the Roman General Titus, after taking Jerusalem, addressed the citizens in Greek, he had to be translated into Syriac. This makes it evident that whatever the Prophet Jesus spoke to his disciples must necessarily be only in Syriac.

Secondly, one should know that all the four Gospels were written by the Greek-speaking Christians, who had entered Christianity after the Prophet Jesus. The traditions of the sayings and acts of the Prophet Jesus reached them through the Syriac speaking Christians not in the written form but as oral traditions, and they translated these Syriac traditions into their own language and incorporated them in their books. None of the extant Gospels was written before A.D. 70; the Gospel of St. John was compiled a century after the Prophet Jesus probably in Ephesus, a city in Asia Minor. Moreover, no original copy even of these Gospels in Greek, in which these were originally written, exists. None of the Greek manuscripts that have been discovered and collected from here and there and which all belong to the period before the invention of printing date before the 4th century. Therefore, it is difficult to say what changes might have

taken place in these during the first three centuries. What makes it particularly doubtful is that the Christians have been regarding it as quite lawful to temper with their Gospels intentionally as and when they liked. The author of the article "Bible" in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Ed. 1973) writes:

"The main source of the evidence and of the variations are the manuscripts of the N.T., dating from the 2nd to the 10th century or even later. In the process of copying, these manuscripts underwent the revisions that necessitate textual criticism. Some of these revisions were unintentional, as the scribe skipped a word or a line or as he mistook one character for another. Other revisions came from the desire of the scribe to harmonize the text of one Gospel with another or of one Testament with the other, or from his pious wish to 'correct' or clarify the text at another point. But now that variations in the text exist, collection of the manuscripts is a difficult task." (See "Bible" in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1973).

Under such conditions as these, it is very difficult to say with absolute certainty that the sayings of the Prophet Jesus (peace be on him) found in the Gospels, have been preserved, repro-

duced and cited faithfully and accurately, and that no change has taken place anywhere

(Another) vital point is that even after the conquest by the Muslims, for about three centuries, the Palestine Christians retained Syriac, which was not replaced by Arabic until the 9th century A.D. The information that the Muslim scholars of the first three centuries obtained through the Syriac speaking Christians about the Christian traditions, should be more authentic and reliable than the information of those people whom it reached through translation after translation from Syriac into Greek and then from Greek into Latin. For there were greater chances of the original Syriac words spoken by the Prophet Jesus remaining preserved with the Palestinian Christians than with others.

Now, it is interesting to note that in Greek itself there is another word *Pericytos*, which means "the Praised One". This word is exactly synonymous with "Muhammad." In pronunciation it closely resembles *Paracletus*. It cannot be a remote possibility that the Christians who have been used to making alterations in their religious books as and when they liked, might have effected

a little variation in the spelling of this word in the prophecy related by St. John when they saw that it went against their set belief and creed. The original Greek Gospel composed by St. John does not exist either; therefore it is not possible to check which of the two words had actually been used in it.

But the decision is not solely dependent on this as to which word had St. John actually used in Greek, for in any case that too was a translation and the Prophet Jesus' language, as we have explained above, was Palestinian Syriac. Therefore, the word that he might have used in his good news must necessarily be a Syriac word. Fortunately, we find that original Syriac word in the *Life of Muhammad* by Ibn Hisham. Along with that we also come to know its synonymous Greek word from the same book. Ibn Hisham, on the authority of Ibn Ishaq, has reproduced the complete translation of 15: 23-27 and of 16: 1 of the Gospel according to Yuhannus (Yuhanna : John), and has used the Syriac word *Munhamanna* instead of the Greek *Paraclete*. Then, Ibn Ishaq or Ibn Hisham has explained it thus: The *Munhamanna* in Syriac means Muhammad and in Greek the *Paracletus* (Ibn Hisham, vol. 1, p. 248).

Now, historically, the language of the common Palestinian Christians until the 9th century A.D. was Syriac. This land was included in the Islamic territories in the first half of the 7th century. Ibn Ishaq died in 768 A.D. and Ibn Hisha in 828 A.D. This means that in the time of both the Palestinian Christians spoke Syriac, and for neither it was difficult to have contacts with the Christian subjects of their country. Moreover, in those days there also lived hundreds of thousands of Greek speaking Christians in the Islamic territories. Therefore, it was also not difficult for them to find out which particular word of Greek was synonymous with a certain word of Syriac. Now, if in the translation reproduced by Ibn Ishaq the Syriac word *Munhamanna* has been used, and Ibn Ishaq or Ibn Hisham has explained that its Arabic equivalent is Muhammad and Greek Paracletus, there remains no room for the doubt that the Prophet Jesus had given the good news of the coming of the Holy Prophet himself by name along with that it also becomes known that in the Greek Gospel of John the word, actually used was *Periclytos*, which the Christian scholars changed into *Paracletus* at some later time.”

Mawdudi's note ends here.

Asad has almost the last word: “This prediction is supported by several references in the Gospel of St. John to the *Parakletos* (usually rendered as ‘Comforter’) who was to come after Jesus. This designation is almost certainly a corruption of *Periklytos* (‘the Much-Praised’), an exact Greek translation of the Aramaic term or name *Mawhamana*. (It is to be borne in mind that Aramaic was the language used in Palestine at the time of, and for some centuries after, Jesus, and was thus undoubtedly the language in which the original – now lost – texts of the Gospels were composed.) In view of the phonetic closeness of *Periklytos* and *Parakletos* it is easy to understand how the translator – or, more probably, a later scribe – confused these two expressions. It is significant that both the Aramaic *Mawhamana* and the Greek *Periklytos* have the same meaning as the two names of the Last Prophet Muhammad and Ahmad, both of which are derived from the verb *hamida* (‘he praised’) and the noun *hamd* (‘praise’). An even more unequivocal prediction of the advent of Prophet Muhammad – mentioned by name, in its Arabic form – is said to be forthcoming from the so-called Gospel of Saint Barnabas, which, though now regarded as apocryphal, was ac-

cepted as authentic and was read in churches until the year 496 of the Christian era, when it was banned as 'heretical' by a decree of Pope Gelasius. However, since the original text of the Gospel is not available (having come to us only in an Italian translation dating from the sixteenth century), its authenticity cannot be established with certainty."

Asad's note ends here.

This author may add the following. But before further discussion, here-with a short (and selected) account of, first Barnabas, and then the Gospel of Barnabas:

The Gospel of Barnabas

The Gospel of Barnabas was written (or perhaps dictated) by one of the 11 chosen disciples of Jesus Christ, called Barnabas. It was written to remove the misconceptions and illusions that had begun to surround the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. It states in the preamble: "Dearly beloved, the great and wonderful God hath during these past days visited us by his Prophet Jesus Christ in great mercy of teaching and miracles, under pretence of piety, by reason thereof many, being deceived of Satan, under pretence of piety, are preaching most impious doctrine,

calling Jesus son of God, repudiating the circumcision ordained of God for ever, and permitting every unclean meat: among whom also Paul hath been deceived."

Hereunder a brief summary of an article on the Gospel in the Wikipedia:

The Gospel of Barnabas

"It is a work purporting to be a depiction of the life of Jesus by his disciple Barnabas. Two known manuscripts have been dated to the late sixteenth century, and are written respectively in Italian and in Spanish.

Earlier occurrences of a Gospel of Barnabas

A "Gospel according to Barnabas" is mentioned in two early Christian lists of apocryphal works: the Decretum Gelasianum (no later than the sixth century), as well as a 7th-century List of the Sixty Books.

This work should not be confused with the surviving Epistle of Barnabas, which may have been written in 2nd century Alexandria; neither should it be confused with the surviving Acts of Barnabas, which narrates an account of Barnabas' travels, martyrdom and burial; and which is generally thought to have been written in Cyprus sometime after 431.

Spanish Manuscript

The known Spanish manuscript was lost in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries; however an eighteenth century copy of it was discovered in the 1970s in the University of Sydney's Fisher Library among the books of Sir Charles Nicholson, labelled in English "Transcribed from ms. in possession of the Revd Mr Edm. Callamy who bought it at the decease of Mr George Sale...and now gave me at the decease of Mr John Nickolls, 1745".

Religious themes

The Gospel of Barnabas was little known outside academic circles until recent times, when a number of Muslims have taken to publishing it in order to argue against the orthodox Christian conception of Jesus. It generally resonates better with existing Muslim views than with Christianity: it foretells the coming of Muhammad by name; rather than describing the crucifixion of Jesus, it describes him being raised up into heaven, similar to the description of Elijah in 2 Kings, Chapter 2; and it calls Jesus a "prophet" whose mission was restricted to the "house of Israel".

However, it differs from Islamic conceptions in at least two important

respects; it reports that Muhammad, not Jesus, was the Messiah, whereas the Qur'an and *hadith* both describe Jesus as the Messiah, and no orthodox variety of Islam calls Muhammad the Messiah.

The Gospel also takes a strongly anti-Pauline tone at times, saying in the Italian version's beginning: "many, being deceived of Satan, under pretence of piety, are preaching most impious doctrines, calling Jesus son of God, repudiating the circumcision ordained of God for ever, and permitting every unclean meat: among whom also Paul has been deceived."

Prediction of Muhammad

The name of "Muhammad" is frequently mentioned verbatim in the Gospel of Barnabas, as in the following quote:

"Jesus answered: "The name of the Messiah is admirable, for God himself gave him the name when he had created his soul, and placed it in a celestial splendour. God said: "Wait Mohammed; for thy sake I will to create paradise, the world, and a great multitude of creatures, whereof I make thee a present, insomuch that whoso bless thee shall be blessed, and whoso shall curse thee shall be accursed. When I shall send thee into the world I shall send thee as my

messenger of salvation, and thy word shall be true, insomuch that heaven and earth shall fail, but thy faith shall never fail." Mohammed is his blessed name.' Then the crowd lifted up their voices, saying: 'O God, send us thy messenger: O Admirable One, come quickly for the salvation of the world!" Barnabas 97: 9-10. The Italian manuscript replaces "Admirable One" with "Muhammad".

Jesus not God or Son of God

According to the Gospel of Barnabas, Jesus foresaw and rejected his own deification:

'And having said this, Jesus smote his face with both his hands, and then smote the ground with his head. And having raised his head, he said: "Cursed be every one who shall insert into my sayings that I am the son of God"' (53:6).

'And having said this Jesus went out of the Temple. And the common people magnified him, for they brought all the sick folk whom they could gather together, and Jesus having made prayer gave to all their health: whereupon on that day in Jerusalem the Roman soldiery, by the working of Satan, began to stir up the common people, saying that Jesus was the God of Israel, who was come to visit his people' (69:6).

'Jesus answered: "And you; what say you that I am?" Peter answered: "You are Christ, son of God". Then was Jesus angry, and with anger rebuked him, saying: "Begone and depart from me, because you are the devil and seek to cause me offences"' (70:1).

Jesus said again: "I confess before heaven, and call to witness everything that dwells upon the earth, that I am a stranger to all that men have said of me, to wit, that I am more than man. For I am a man, born of a woman, subject to the judgment of God; that live here like as other men, subject to the common miseries" (94:1).

'Then answered the priest, with the governor and the king, saying: "Distress not yourself, O Jesus, holy one of God, because in our time shall not this sedition be any more, seeing that we will write to the sacred Roman senate in such wise that by imperial decree none shall any more call you God or son of God." Then Jesus said: "With your words I am not consoled, because where you hope for light darkness shall come; but my consolation is in the coming of the Messenger, who shall destroy every false opinion of me, and his faith shall spread and shall take hold

of the whole world, for so has God promised to Abraham our father” (97:1).

Although the Gospel of Barnabas is, in several respects, inconsistent with Islamic teaching, some Muslim scholars cite this as evidence of the genuineness of the gospel by arguing that no Muslim would fake a document and have it contradict the Qur’ān. They believe the contradictions of the Qur’ān in the Gospel of Barnabas are signs of textual corruption (which Muslims already ascribe for a majority of the *Bible*), but that the Gospel of Barnabas would not be as corrupt as other religious works, and would still maintain the truth about Jesus not being crucified and not being God or son of God.” (Source: Encyclopaedia “Wikipedia”).

(Quotation by this author ends here).

Herewith a summary of Mawdudi’s notes on the Gospel of Barnabas:

“Wherever this Gospel is mentioned in Christian literature, it is condemned as a forged Gospel, which perhaps some Muslim has composed and ascribed to Barnabas. But this is a great falsehood which has been uttered only for the reason that it contains at several places clear

prophecies about the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah’s peace and blessings).. But no mention of any kind is found of the Gospel of Barnabas in the books of Muslim writers like Tabari, Ya`qubi, Mas`udi, Al-Bayruni, Ibn Hazm and others, who were fully conversant with Christian literature. The best catalogues of the books found in the libraries of the Islamic world were Al-Fihrist of Ibn an-Nadim and Kashf at-Zunun of Haji-Khalifah, and these too are without any mention of it. The most important argument to refute the claim that the Gospel has been written by a Muslim is that about 75 years before the birth of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), in the time of Pope Gelasius 1, the list prepared of uncanonical books, which were banned for reading by a Papal decree, also included the Gospel of Barnabas (Evangelium Barnabe). The question is: Who was the Muslim at that time, who forged this Gospel? The Christian scholars themselves have admitted that the Gospel of Barnabas remained prevalent in Syria, Spain, Egypt, etc. during the early days of Christianity for a long time and that it was banned as heretical in the 6th century.”

(Mawdudi’s quote ends here).

In conclusion, we may add the following. The Gospel of Barnabas mentions the Prophet - always naming him as Muhammad - at least 10 times. In a few other places it refers to him as the Messenger, or Messiah. It is unthinkable that a Muslim should introduce the Prophet's name and do it 10 times over. Only a scholar could have ever laid his hand on a manuscript of this sort, and he would have been sensible enough to introduce the name twice or thrice, but not 10 times.

Further, nowhere is the Prophet named "Ahmad." This is another indication that this Gospel was not adulterated by a Muslim as the Christians claim. If a Muslim had interpolated it, he would have used the word "Ahmad" and not Muhammad, considering the fact that the Qur'an used the word Ahmad.

Again, there are several passages that may meet with the Islamic standard of judgment, such as,

"If thine eye be an offense to thee, pluck it out; for it is better that thou go with one eye only into paradise than with both of them into hell. If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, do likewise; for it is better that thou go into the kingdom of heaven with one foot or one hand, than with two

hands and two feet go into hell' (ch. 87).

"And verily I say unto you, that whoso hath the light of his eyes clear, seeth everything clear, and draweth light even out of darkness itself; but the blind doeth not so. Wherefore I say that, if man had not sinned, neither I nor thou would have known the mercy of God and his righteousness. And if God had made man incapable of sin he would have been equal to God in that matter; wherefore the blessed God created man good and righteous, but free to do that which he pleaseth in regard to his own life and salvation or damnation' (ch. 154).

Yet, there are passages spread over every page that only a Christian, with thorough scholarship of the Torah, Talmud and Gospels, could have written. The style and the entire content are definitely pre-Islamic.

In addition, there are a few other reasons why this Gospel could not be an interpolated version of an original Gospel, i.e., a work originally written by a Christian of the earliest times, adulterated and interpolated by a Muslim. There are passages that are so obviously un-Islamic that no Muslim would commit himself to. E.g. (a) it mentions that God wrote

on the thumb-nail of Adam's one hand, "There is only one God," and on the other thumb-nail, "Muhammad is the messenger of God" (ch. 39). But there is nothing in the Islamic literature equivalent of this: neither in weak *ahadith* nor among the forged ones. In fact, computer search shows that such a story is not there in hundreds of history and biographical works. (b) It refers to Prophet Muhammad as "the Messiah" which every Muslim knows he was not, rather, Jesus Christ himself was. (c) It presents the idea of Prophet David's unity with God:

"Wherefore, albeit our father David verily saw them, I tell you he saw them not with human eye, for God took his soul unto himself, and thus, united with God, he saw them.." (ch. 169).

This is a concept abhorrent to Islam. Or, in chapter 135, (d) demons are depicted as tormenters of the believers in Hell, while the Islamic concept is that they will themselves suffer punishment therein. It is angels who will deliver punishment to both humans as well as demons. Another un-Islamic concept is that (e) when Jesus Christ tried to make peace between Satan and God, and informed Satan that all he needed to be forgiven was

to say, "I have sinned; have mercy on me." Satan insisted that God should admit the same, that is, He should say to Satan, "I have sinned; have mercy on me." Jesus cursed Satan saying that God was sinless (ch.51). This is a blasphemy that a Muslim would neither introduce in a book he was interpolating, nor leave it unaltered if he was editing. He would have surely removed it knowing that Muslims would reject a Scripture that contains such non-sense (Au.).

9. The allusion by "when he came with clear signs" could be either to 'Isa ibn Maryam, or to Muhammad (Razi, Qurtubi).

With reference to 'Isa (*asws*) we have the following from Majid: "The accusation of magic is frequently brought against Jesus. Jerome mentions it, quoting the Jews ... There were even Christian heretics who looked upon the founder of their religion as a magician, and public opinion at Rome accused all Christians of magic. The apostles were regarded in the same light.' (JE., VII, p. 171). 'According to Celsus and to the Talmud, Jesus learned magic in Egypt and performed his miracles by means of it... Different in nature is the witchcraft attributed to Jesus in the Toledot.' (ib). 'The Talmud sto-

[7] *And who can do greater wrong than he who fastened lies on Allah while he is being invited to Islam? And Allah does not guide a transgressing people.*

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ
وَهُوَ يُدْعَى إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي
الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٧﴾

[8] *They wish to put off the Light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His Light,¹⁰ even though the unbelievers are averse (to it).*

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ
وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨﴾

[9] *He it is who sent His Messenger¹¹ with guidance and the religion of truth so that He may make it prevail over all religions,¹² even though the polytheists may be averse (to it).*

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَى وَدِينِ
الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ
الْمُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٩﴾

ries allow that he did indeed work signs and wonders, but by means of magic.’ (Klaurmen, op. cit., p. 19). According to a Talmudic authority, ‘Yeshu practiced sorcery and beguiled and led Israel astray’ (p. 25). ‘And the scribes which came down from Jeruslaem said, He hath Beelzebub, and, by the prince of the devils, he casteth out devils’ (MK. 3: 22). ‘The Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.’ (Mt.9: 34). ‘When the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of devils’ (Mt., 12: 24).”

If the allusion is assumed as to our Prophet, then the following can be offered from Yusuf Ali: “Our holy Prophet was foretold in many ways; and when he came, he showed forth

many Clear Signs, for his whole life from beginning to end was one vast miracle. He fought and won against odds. Without learning from men he taught the highest wisdom. He melted hearts that were hard, and he strengthened hearts that were tender and required support. In all his sayings and doings men of discernment could see the working of Allah’s hand; yet the ignorant Unbelievers called it all Sorcery! - called that unreal which became the most solid fact of human history!”

10. The allusion is to the light of Islam (Ibn Jarir), or, light of the Qur’an (Ibn Zayd).

11. That is, Prophe Muhammad.

12. The term for “religions” in the Qur’anic text is actually in singular,

perhaps because, as Yusuf Ali points out, there is only one true religion.

Ibn Jarir is of the opinion that the complete prevalence of Islam will only take place when Jesus Christ appears a second time. (Mujahid was also of the same opinion: Alusi). Ibn Jarir quotes a *hadith* (now in Muslim). It reports `A'isha's words, "I heard the Prophet say, 'Days and nights will not stop their rotation before Lat and Manat are once again worshiped.' I asked, 'Messenger of Allah. When Allah (*swt*) revealed the verse, 'He it is who sent His Messenger with Guidance and the religion of truth ..', I thought that that was the end of it all!?' He replied, 'That surely will be fulfilled. None the less, Allah will send a pleasant breeze thereafter which will take the life of every individual who had even the littlest of faith in his heart. Only those will remain who have no good in them. They will return to the religion of their (pre-Islamic) ancestors.'"

Qurtubi presents another *hadith* on the same lines. It is in Muslim. The Prophet said:

نَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى
لَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- «وَاللَّهِ لَيَنْزِلَنَّ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ
كَفًّا عَادِلًا فَلْيَكْسِرَنَّ الصَّلِيبَ وَلْيَقْتُلَنَّ
الْخِنْزِيرَ وَلْيَضَعَنَّ الْحِزْيَةَ وَلْيَتْرَكََنَّ الْفِلاَصُ فَلَا
سَعَى عَلَيْهَا وَلْيَتَذَهَبَنَّ الشُّحْنَاءُ وَالْتَبَاعُضُ
الْتَحَاسُدُ وَلْيَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْمَالِ فَلَا يَقْبَلُهُ
حَدٌّ».

"By Allah, Ibn Maryam will descend down as a just (ruler). He will surely break the cross, destroy swine, abolish *Jizyah* and young camels will be mounted without contention. Enmity, hatred and envy will be gone, and, people will be invited to wealth, but there will be no takers."

The meaning of "without contention" is that there will be so many of the camels that there will be no contention to own them.

See *Surah Tawbah*, *ayah* 32 and accompanying notes for fuller discussion.

[10] O those who have believed, shall I lead you to a bargain that will deliver you from a painful chastisement?

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنَجِّيكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] You shall believe in Allah and His Messenger and fight in Allah's cause with your wealth and your selves. That is best for you, only if you knew.

تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

[12] He will forgive you your sins and admit you into gardens beneath which rivers flow, and into splendid mansions in Gardens of Eternity. That is the supreme triumph.

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] And another (favor) that you love: help from Allah and a victory close (at hand);¹³ and, (therefore) give glad tidings to the believers.

وَأُخْرَىٰ تُحِبُّونَهَا نَصْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ وَبَشِيرٌ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] O those who have believed, be Allah's helpers as said `Isa the son of Maryam to the disciples, 'Who will be my helper unto Allah?'¹⁴ The disciples said, 'We will be Allah's helpers.'¹⁵ Then a party of the children of Israel believed, and a party disbelieved.¹⁶ So We helped those who believed against their enemies, so that they became dominant.¹⁷

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا أَنْصَارَ اللَّهِ كَمَا قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ لَلْحَوَارِيِّينَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ فَأَمَّنْتَ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَكَفَرْتَ طَائِفَةٌ فَأَيَّدْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَىٰ عَدُوِّهِمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا ظَاهِرِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

13. The allusion could either be to the conquest of Khayber, or Makkah, or even Rome and Persia (Mufti Shafi' and others).

14. The textual word "hawwari" has several meanings. The simplest being those who are the closest companions of a Prophet (Qurtubi).

For other explanation see *ayah* 52 of *Surah Al-`Imran*.

Majid quotes from the Gospels: "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach." (Mk. 3: 14). "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come." (Lk. 10: 1)

15. Ibn Jarir comments: So were the Companions of the Prophet.

And among them, twelve were the “*hawwari*” of this *Ummah*. Qatadah named them as: Abu Bkr, `Umar, `Uthman, `Ali, Hmaza, Ja`far, Abu Ubaydah, `Uthman b. Maz`un, `Abd al-Rahman b. `Awf, Sa`d b. Abi Waqqas, Talha b. `Ubaydullah and Zubayr b. al-`Awwam. They were all from the Quraysh (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

16. Asad notes: “I.e., some of them recognized him as a Prophet – and, therefore, as no more than a created human being – whereas others denied this truth in the course of time by regarding him as ‘the son of God’ – and, therefore, as ‘God incarnate’ – while still others rejected him and his message altogether. The fact that the earliest followers of Jesus Christ regarded him purely as human is evident from the many theological controversies which persisted during the first three or four centuries of the Christian era. Thus, some renowned theologians, like Theodotus of Byzantium, who lived towards the end of the second century, and his followers – among them Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch in the year 260 – maintained that the ‘sonship of God’ mentioned in the then-existing texts of the Gospels was purely symbolic, denoting no more than

that Jesus was a human being exalted by God. The original wide-spread teachings of Bishop Arius (280-326) centered in the concept of Jesus as a mortal man chosen by God for a specific task, and in the concept of God as absolutely One, unknowable, and separate from every created being; this doctrine, however, was ultimately condemned by the Councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381), and gradually ceased to have any influence on the Christian masses.”

17. Qurtubi suggests that the prevalence was the prevalence of proofs and evidences, which became manifest when the 12 Apostles sent out by `Isa (*asws*) spread into adjoining lands propagating the new faith (which overcame the Jewish beliefs).

Quoting Ibn Is-haq, Qurtubi gives the following details concerning the mission of the disciples of Jesus Christ: He sent Peter and Paul to the Roman lands; Andrew and Matthew to Cannibals; Thomas to Babylon; Philips to Africa; John to Damacus the town of the seven-sleeper; Jacob to Jerusalem; Ibn Talma to the Arab world; Simon to the Berbers; Yehuda and Bard to Alexandria. Allah aided them with points of right argument and they prevailed.

The report is also in the *Tarikh Dimashq* by Ibn `Asakir but with name variations (Au.).

Thus Allah gave the upper hand to believers in `Isa over the unbelievers in him (Zamakhshari).

The above, however, offers some difficulty since we know that early in the history of Christianity, it was not the believers in `Isa as a Messenger of Allah who dominated after a struggle between them and those who claimed that he was a son of God, or God Himself. Nor were it the Christians (of whatever denomination) who gained the upper hand against the Jews, during the early Christian history. That happened only after Constantine, the Roman emperor had embraced Christianity in the fourth century. So, the question remains: who were it that were given the upper hand, and over whom? The following narrative quoted by Ibn Jarir also does not give a satisfactory answer:

Ibn `Abbas said that when Allah decided to raise `Isa ibn Maryam to the heavens, he assembled his 12 students in a house. His hair was dropping water droplets. He told them that one of them was going to betray his faith 12 times. Then he asked, "Which of you would volunteer that

he should be transformed into my face. He will be killed and then he will be with me in Paradise." A young man got up and said, "I." Jesus told him to sit down and posed the same question. Again the young man got up as the volunteer. He told him to sit down. But when he got up a third time he agreed and said, "Alright, let it be you." So the young man was transformed into his face and he himself was lifted out through a light hole to the heavens. The Jews came after him, caught hold of the young man and crucified him. After that the Christians became three factions: (i) A group said, "God was with us for as long as He wished. Now He is in the heavens. These were called as Jacobites. (ii) Another faction said, the son of God was with us as long as he willed. He has been raised unto the heavens. These were called Nestorians. (iii) A third group said, "He was a slave of Allah and a Messenger, and has now been raised to the heavens." These were Muslims. But the other two sects oppressed the Muslims and slaughtered them. Thus Islam remained suppressed until Allah sent Prophet Muhammad. And Allah kept helping those who had believed in `Isa, Maryam's son, until the Prophet came with whose advent they became the prevailers.

And, Ibn Kathir adds: The *Ummah* of Muhammad will remain prevalent until the last of them will fight along with `Isa against Dajjal.

The above was from Ibn Jarir which is also preserved by Nasa'i, in his *Sunan al-Kubra* (Ibn Kathir).

No *hadith* doctor seems to have passed a judgment about the authenticity of the above report (Au.).

The above interpretation however, remarks Alusi, does not agree with the apparent meaning viz., the believers in `Isa were given dominance over disbelievers in him.

Shawkani's interpretation is: We allowed dominance to the believers in Muhammad over both the factions of the Jews: those who believed in `Isa, as well as those who disbelieved. This, Qurtubi and Shawkani note, was also the opinion of Ibn `Abbas, as in Ibn Abi Hatim. The two Muqatils also suggested this meaning (Razi).

But, treating the verse in the general and according it an overall perspective, Yusuf Ali has the last word on the topic. It might be kept in mind that when these lines were written the madness called "Israel" had not yet been created. And, it is not 60 years since the establishment of the

Jewish state, but thinking Jews are saying, it cannot last long: "A portion of the Children of Israel - the one that really cared for Truth - believed in Jesus and followed his guidance. But the greater portion of them were hard hearted, and remained in their beaten track of formalism and false racial pride. The majority seemed at first to have the upper hand when they thought they had crucified Jesus and killed his Message. But they were soon brought to their senses. Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus in A.D. 70 and the Jews have been scattered ever since. 'The Wandering Jew' has become a bye-word in many literatures. On the other hand, those who followed Jesus permeated the Roman Empire, brought many new races within their circle, and through the Roman Empire, Christianity became the predominant religion of the world until the advent of Islam. So is it promised to the people of Islam: they must prevail if they adhere to the Truth. Badr (A.H. 2) was a landmark against Pagan Arabia; Qadisiya (A.H. 14) and Madain (A.H. 16) against the might of Persia: Yarmuk (A.H. 15) against the might of the Byzantine Empire in Christian Syria; and Heliopolis (A.H. 19) against the same Empire in Christian Egypt and Africa. These were symbols in

external events. The moral and spiritual landmarks are less tangible, and more gradual, but none the less real. Mark how the arrogance and power of Priesthood have been quelled; how superstition and a belief in blind Fate have been checked; how the freedom of human individuals has been reconciled with the sanctity of marriage in the law of Divorce; how the civil

position of women has been raised; how temperance and sobriety have been identified with religion; what impetus has been given to knowledge and experimental science; and how economic reconstruction has been pioneered by rational schemes for the expenditure and distribution of wealth.” مَقَات



Surah 62
*Al-Jumu`ah*¹

Madinan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
 THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Whatever is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah, the Sovereign, the Holy,² the All-mighty, the All-Wise.³

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿١﴾

1. Muslim has a report that the Prophet used to recite this *Surah* and *Surah al-Munafiqoon* during every Friday Prayers (Ibn Kathir). *Surah al-Munafiqoon* follows this *Surah* (Au.).

Herewith a report on the importance of the day:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
 قَالَ خَيْرُ يَوْمٍ طَلَعَتْ عَلَيْهِ الشَّمْسُ يَوْمَ
 الْجُمُعَةِ فِيهِ خُلِقَ آدَمُ وَفِيهِ أُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ وَفِيهِ
 أُخْرِجَ مِنْهَا وَلَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ إِلَّا فِي يَوْمِ
 الْجُمُعَةِ (صحيح مسلم)

Abu Hurayrah reported the Prophet: “The best of days on which the sun arose is Friday: therein was created Adam, there-

in admitted into Paradise, therein removed from it and the Hour will not strike but on this day” (Qurtubi).

The report is in Muslim and others (Au.).

2. *Al-Quddus*: The one who is free of whatever the polytheist ascribe to Allah, ascribing such attributes as which do not belong to Him (Ibn Jarir). “Blessed” is another meaning (Razi).

3. Everything that exists whether animate or inanimate, whether an atom or the galaxies, whether an ameba or the human beings, exist to such amazing perfection, that by their very existence they sing the glory of Allah (Au.).

[2] It is He who raised among the unlettered⁴ ones a Messenger from among themselves⁵ reciting to them His Revelations, purifying them⁶ and teaching them the Book and the Wisdom,⁷ although before that they were in clear misguidance.⁸

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ
يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ
لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢﴾

4. *Ummi* is someone who does not know how to read and write, though he need not be a “*jaahil*” (ignorant, or worse, ignoramus) for that reason. The Arabs were *Ummi* in the original literary sense (Au.).

A second opinion is that the Arabs were called *Ummi* because they had not received a Book earlier (Ibn Jarir).

That is, the Jews and Christians were not *Ummis*, although they too did not know how to read and write, because they had a Revelation (Au.).

Asad comments: “The term ‘unlettered people (*Ummiyun*) denotes a person or community who had not previously had a revealed scripture of their own (Razi). The designation of the Prophet as a man ‘from among themselves’ is meant, in this context, to stress the fact that he, too, was unlettered (*Ummi*) in the primary sense of this word (cf. 7: 157 and 158), and could not, therefore, have ‘invented’ the message of the Qur’an or ‘derived’ its ideas from earlier scriptures.”

It might be added here, in passing, that had the Prophet been a lettered person, and attempted to derive ideas from earlier scriptures, he would have failed because firstly, many of the Qur’anic ideas are fresh and new which are not to be found in any other literature. And that stands true even to this date, despite the appearance of millions of books, and, secondly, because some of the ideas that the Jews and Christians allege he took from their Scriptures, are so well buried in unknown works, as to be foreign to the scholars even until this date. How did the Prophet access them? (Au.).

Mawdudi looks into the three senses in which the word has been used in the Qur’an: (i) At one point the word *Ummi* has been used for a people who do not possess a revealed scripture. E.g.,

وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْأُمِّيِّينَ ءَأَسْلَمْتُمْ
(آل عمران: ٢٠)

“Ask those who possess the Book and those who do not know (the Ummis): will you surrender?” (3: 20) Here the allusion is to Arab polytheists. (ii) In the sense of illiterates among the people of the Book:

وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا أَمَانِيً
(البقرة: ٧٨)

“Among them are the illiterate ones who know anything about the Book but fanciful ideas” (2: 78). (iii) A term covering all non-Jews from Jewish point of view:

لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ سَبِيلٌ (آل عمران: ٧٥)

“There is no questioning us concerning the non-Jews” (3: 75).

(Back to the main theme), a narrative preserved in the *Sahihayn* and several other works reports the Prophet as having said,

عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ إِنَّا
أُمَّةٌ أُمِّيَّةٌ لَا نَكْتُبُ وَلَا نَحْسِبُ الشُّهُرَ هَكَذَا
وَهَكَذَا.

“We are an unlettered people. We do not write nor do we know how to count: a month is like this and like this (signaling with the fingers).”

What he meant is that ‘we are a people who were never taught how to write, and have, consequently, remained in the natural state (Alusi).

The above said, the Qur’anic *ayah* is not restricting the Prophet’s mission to the Arabs. There are other verses of the Qur’an which speak of the universality of his mission, such as, e.g. (7: 158),

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ
جَمِيعًا (الأعراف: ١٥٨)

“Say, ‘O mankind! I am indeed Allah’s messenger to you all’” (Ibn Kathir).

Majid leads us to a historical fact with the help of a quote: “Before the days of Muhammad, Arabia was steeped in idolatry: female babies were buried alive as unwanted, and other hideous atrocities were committed. Truly can it be said of the Arabian Prophet that he accomplished nothing short of a miracle in raising the country from its slough of crime and ignorance to a united nation with a deep sense of its religious obligations and duties, a nation which was shortly after his death to conquer and lead the world in culture, knowledge and scientific attainments, while the faith of Islam spread from sea to sea.” (Lady Cabbold, op. cit. pp. 105, 106).

5. Being one of them, the Makkans knew all about him and his past. There was not a tribe among the Quraysh but to whom the Prophet

was related, one way or another (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir), except for Banu Taghlib, among whom some were Christians (Qurtubi).

The Prophet was raised among the Arabs because the Children of Israel had proven, through their long history, during which numerous Prophets and Messengers were raised among them, that they could not be relied on for carrying on the burden of a new Revelation. As an *ayah* portrayed them in this *Surah* itself, they had become, with reference to Allah's Revelations, like a donkey that carries a weight on its back without knowing what in reality it is. *Torah* and its interpretations, whether Talmud or Mishnah or whatever else, were no more than a donkey's load for the Jewish scholars. Any new revelation would have meant no more than addition of weight upon weight. Those who entered Egypt, and those who left it with Musa, were two different people: differing in beliefs, practices, values, morals, outlook, and sincerity towards their Lord. When they left Egypt, they carried with them seeds, fruits and trees of corruption. They at them, planted them in Palestine and tended them until fresh fruition. With those fruits as their intellectual diets, they became more corrupt than the corrupt of other

nations, other countries, other races, and other cultures. They were in the same state as Nuh (*asws*) remarked about his own nation:

لَا يَلِدُوا إِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا (نوح: ٢٧)

"They will not give birth to any but flagrant transgressors, unbelievers."

It was in this situation that the Arabs, untouched by any other faith, of the dozens of powerful and influential faith-systems, were chosen to bear the burden of a new revelation. There was not much to be done with the Arabs except to remove the loosely planted paganism from their hearts, minds, culture and moral system. That done, they were as raw as the first generation of Adam (*asws*): on the *fitrah* of Allah's creation, as sincere, frank, honest, forthright, courageous and true to their words that any people could be (Au.).

Sayyid writes: Another factor in the choice of the Arabs was the answer to Ibrahim's prayer. He had said, (in the very words that *ayah* 2 of this *Surah* repeats),

رَبَّنَا وَأَبْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ (البقرة: ١٢٩)

“O Our Lord, raise among them a Messenger from among themselves reciting to them Your Revelations, teaching them the Book and the Wisdom, purifying them..”

And, a well-reported *hadith* says:

حَدَّثَنَا لُقْمَانُ بْنُ عَامِرٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا أَمَامَةَ
قَالَ قُلْتُ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ مَا كَانَ أَوَّلُ بَدْءِ أَمْرِكَ
قَالَ «دَعْوَةُ أَبِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَبُشْرَى عِيْسَى
رَزَاتُ أُمِّي أَنَّهُ يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا نُورٌ أَضَاءَتْ مِنْهَا
قُصُورُ الشَّامِ» (مسند أحمد)

Abu Umamah asked the Prophet, “What was it like at the start of your mission?” He answered, “(It was an) answer to Ibrahim’s supplication, glad tidings given by `Isa, and my mother’s dream that a Light emerged from her that set the palaces of Syria alight.”

6. That is, purifying them from *shirk* and its associated evils (Zamakhshari).

7. That is, the Book and the *Sunnah* (Zamakhshari). It has also been said that by the Book the allusion is to writing with the pen, and by wisdom to in-depth understanding of the religion (Shawkani).

8. This *ayah* leads us to the opinion that an unlettered can attain to the highest state in knowledge, if he receives proper instructions from a Master (Alusi, Thanwi).

With reference to the words, “although before that they were in clear misguidance” Sayyid writes: When `Amr b. al-`Aas was sent to Najashi to try and get back the Muslims from Abyssiniyyah, and Najashi asked the Muslims to explain what they were doing in his country, Ja`far b. Abi Talib answered, “O King.. We were an ignorant people. We worshipped idols, ate carrion, committed obscenities, severed blood relationships, mistreated the neighbors, and our strong devoured the weak. We were in that state when Allah raised a Messenger from amongst us. We know his lineage, his truthfulness, trustworthiness and his morality. He invited us to Allah, that we should believe in His oneness, should worship none but Him, and give up whatever we practiced of devotion to stones and idols. He ordered us to speak the truth, honor the trusts, treat the kin with generosity, do good to the neighbors, restrain ourselves from the unlawful and shedding of blood. He also prohibited that we should commit any obscenity or deceit, as he also prohibited us devouring of the orphan’s property, and slandering virtuous women. He also commanded us that we worship Allah alone without associating aught with Him, as he also ordered us to Pray, expend in charity, and fast.”

[3] And (to) others of them,⁹ who have not yet joined them, and He is the All-mighty, the All-wise.

وَأَخْرَيْنَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣﴾

[4] That is the bounty of Allah which He bestows upon whom He will; Allah is the possessor of great bounty.

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٤﴾

9. That is, the Messenger was sent to the *Ummis* of the Prophet's time, in a particular geographical location, but ultimately to all the rest of the people who will ever join them until the Day of Judgment (Au.).

Mujahid is widely reported as having said that the allusion is to non-Arabs. This is supported by a *hadith* which says,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: كُنَّا جُلُوسًا عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَنْزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ سُورَةُ الْجُمُعَةِ {وَأَخْرَيْنَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ} (الجمعة: ٣) قَالَ قُلْتُ مَنْ هُمْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَلَمْ يُرَاجِعْهُ حَتَّى سَأَلْنَا ثَلَاثًا وَفِينَا سَلْمَانَ الْفَارِسِيُّ وَضَعَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَدَهُ عَلَى سَلْمَانَ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَوْ كَانَ الْإِيمَانُ عِنْدَ الثَّرَيَّا لَتَأْتَهُ رِجَالٌ أَوْ رَجُلٌ مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ.

Abu Hurayrah reported: "We were in a company with the Prophet when *Surah al-Jumu`ah* came down and he (Abu Hurayrah) asked thrice about

who were meant by the words, 'And others of them..' but the Prophet did not answer. At the third asking he placed his hand on Salman al-Farsi's shoulder and said, 'If *eiman* (belief) was in Pleiades, men of his race will retrieve it'" (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Another report on the topic comes from Sahl b. Sa`d. He said,

مَنْ سَهَّلَ بِنِ سَعْدٍ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: "إِنَّ فِي أَصْلَابِ صِلَابِ أَصْلَابِ رِجَالٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِي، رِجَالًا نِسَاءً يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ" ثُمَّ قَرَأَ: {وَأَخْرَيْنَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ} - رواه الطبراني وإسناده جيد: الهيثمي

"I heard the Prophet say, 'Surely, from the loins of the loins of the loins of my Companions will appear men and women who will enter Paradise without undergoing reckoning.' Then he recited, 'And others of them who have not yet joined them. And He is

[5] The similitude of those who were entrusted with the Tawrah, but who did not shoulder it,¹⁰ is as the likeness of a donkey which carries a load of books;¹¹ evil is the likeness of a people who laid the lie against Allah's revelations. Allah does not guide a wrongdoing people.

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا
كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا بِئْسَ مَثَلُ
الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا
يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥﴾

[6] Say, 'O those who adopted Judaism,¹² if you claim that you are friends of Allah, to the exclusion of other people,¹³ then, wish for death if you are truthful.'¹⁴

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ هَادُوا إِنْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ
أَوْلِيَاءُ اللَّهِ مِنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٦﴾

the Mighty, the Wise” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Howl out whatever you wish, you will find supporters.

Haythami declared it trustworthy (Au.).

Bundle together any number of books, you will find a donkey,

10. That is, did not live by its demands.

To carry whatever you place of of the loads

11. According to Dahhak, *sifr* (of which *asfaar* is the plural), is for “a book” in the Nabataean language (Ibn Jarir); but actually, add Razi and Shawkani, “*sifr*” is for a large-sized book.

Carrying it like a donkey burdened with a load.

The similitude is pretty close to the realities. The West produced hundreds of philosophical and even so-called scientific ideas that were not worth a donkey-load. A few poetical lines quoted by Qurtubi, apply to this situation:

12. Zamakhshari realizes that perhaps at one point in their history, the Children of Israel Judaized themselves, having been non-Jews earlier.

Majid comments: “By a legal fiction persons not of the Hebrew blood were admitted to its union as members’ (JE. V. p.336). Judging by the names preserved most of the Jews in Arabia must have been Judaized Aramaens and Arians rather than descendants of Abraham’ (Hitti, op. cit. p. 101).

انعق بما شئت تجد أنصارا
ووزم أسفارا تجد حمارا
يحمل ما وضعت من أسفار
يحملة كمثال الحمار

In Yusuf Ali's words: "(To be) Of Jewry is a very different thing from following the Law and Will of Allah. An arrogant claim to be a chosen people, to be the exclusive possessors of divine teaching, to be exempt from any punishment for breaches of the divine law, (cf. ii. 88), is presumptuous blasphemy. It may be Judaism, but it is not in the spirit of Moses."

13. In the words of the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, and as quoted by Majid: "The whole Jewish thought may be summed up in this, that as surely there is only one God, so surely is there one sacred community" (ERE. VII. p.520).

The Jews said (and endlessly repeat with the approval of the Christian Zionist Armageddonists: Au.),

عَنْ أَبْنَاءِ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبُّوهُ (المائدة: ١٨)

"We are Allah's own children and His beloved ones" (Qurtubi).

Reports say that when the Prophet appeared, the Jews of Madinah wrote to the Jews of Khayber: "If you follow the Prophet, we shall follow him. If you oppose him, we shall oppose him." The Khaybarite Jews wrote back: "We are God's children. `Uzayr was raised among us, as were many other Prophets. Even if the

Prophet was to appear in Arabia, he should have been of us. There is no way that we should follow him," and so Allah revealed this verse (Alusi).

Asad writes: "Connecting the idea – implied in the preceding passage – that God's revelation is a sacred trust as well as a bounty, the discourse turns now to the problem of man's betrayal of his trust, exemplified by the Jews of post-Biblical times. They had been entrusted by God with the task of carrying the message of His oneness and uniqueness to all the world: but they failed in this task inasmuch as they came to believe that they were 'God's chosen people' because of their descent from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and that, therefore, the divine message was meant for them alone and not for people of other nations. Hence, too, they came to deny the possibility of prophethood being bestowed on anyone who did not belong to the children of Israel (cf. 2: 90 and 94), and so they summarily rejected the idea of Muhammad's prophethood despite the clear predictions of his advent in the *Torah* itself.. By thus corrupting the innermost purport of the divine will bestowed on Moses, they themselves became unable to derive any real spiritual benefit from it, and to live up to its teachings."

[7] But they will never wish for it because of what their hands have forwarded;¹⁵ and Allah is knowing of the wrongdoers

وَلَا يَتَمَنَّوْنَہٗ اَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيهِمْ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ بِالظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٧﴾

Sayyid adds: “The example of those who were burdened with the *Torah*, and then did not shoulder the burden – all those who were entrusted with the faith (in Allah) but did not honor it, the Muslims too who wear the dust of many generations, as well as those who live in the contemporary world, those who carry Muslim names but without living the way Muslims should live, especially those who read the Qur’ān and other religious literature, but pay no attention to what is in them .. all of them, are like a donkey that carries a load of fat books on its back .. and they are aplenty, aplenty. This is not the question of books, carrying them forward, or teaching them to others. It is the question of understanding and putting to action what is in the books.

The Jews used to boast, as they boast even now, that they are a chosen race and that they are God’s friends, to the exclusion of others, that people other than them are ‘goyim’, or the unlettered ones, while they do not respond to the demands of their religion when it comes to dealing with

non-Jews, saying, ‘There is no way against us for the unlettered ones’, to the last of the claims that are lies laid against Allah, they are being suggested that if they are true in their claims, then come out and meet the Prophet in mutual invocation of destruction. But, as we know, they refused.”

14. That is, if you find yourself in trouble after trouble, chastisement after chastisement descending on you, and, if you are true in your claim that you are Allah’s friends, then, why should you not wish for death, and die off to get rid of the troubles of this life and enter into the unlimited pleasures of the Next world? (Ibn Jarir).

15. Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others comment: Had the Jews truly wished to die, they would have all met with their death. A report of Ahmad reports Ibn `Abbas as saying,

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو حَهْلٍ لَيْنُ رَأَيْتُ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُصَلِّي عِنْدَ الْكَعْبَةِ لَا يَتَبَّهُ حَتَّىٰ اَطَأَ عَلَىٰ عُنُقِهِ قَالَ فَقَالَ لَوْ فَعَلَ لَأَخَذْتُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ عِيَانًا وَلَوْ أَنَّ الْيَهُودَ تَمَنُّوا الْمَوْتَ لَمَاتُوا وَرَأَوْا مَقَاعِدَهُمْ فِي النَّارِ

وَلَوْ خَرَجَ الَّذِينَ يُبَاهِلُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَرَجَعُوا لَا يَجِدُونَ مَا لَا وَلَا
أَهْلًا (رواه البيهقي) —
أهلاً (رواه البيهقي)

“Abu Jahl had said, ‘Were I to see the Prophet praying near the Ka`bah, I would surely go to him and place my foot on his neck.’ The Prophet remarked, ‘Had he attempted it, the angles would have openly seized him. And, had the Jews wished for death (sincerely) they would have died and seen their places in the Fire. And, had those who challenged to enter into mutual invocation of curse with Allah’s Messenger, come out, they would have returned to discover their folks and property gone” (Ibn Kathir).

Haythami remarked that the report is also in Bazzar and is trustworthy (Au.).

Kashshaf and Shabbir portray the contrasting picture of the Companions who greeted death with joy. For example, when Bilal was in his death bed, his wife said, “Woe unto me.” He replied, do not say that, but rather say,

غَدًا نَلْقَى الْأَحْيَةَ
مُحَمَّدًا وَحِزْبَهُ

“Tomorrow we shall meet the beloved Muhammad and his party” (Shabbir).

‘Ammar b. Yasir said the same thing before his martyrdom during the battle of Siffin (Zamakhshari).

Ja`far b. Abi Talib said before his martyrdom in the battle of Yama-mah:

يَا حَبْدًا الْحَنَّةُ وَاقْتِرَابَهَا ... طَيِّبَةٌ وَبَارِدٌ
شَرَابُهَا

“O my! Paradise and its closeness Goodly, whose drinks are cold” (Shabbir).

When Mu`adh b. Jabal was struck by plague in Syrian lands he said in the throes of death:

مرحبًا بالموت، مرحبًا زائر حبيب جاء على
فاقة

“Welcome to death, welcome to a dear one that arrives while he is starving” (Shabbir).

Hudhayfa (ra) uttered more or less the same words when his death arrived (Zamakhshari).

It is reported of ‘Ali that he said in the battle of Siffin addressing his son Hasan:

ابني لا يبالي أبوك أعلى الموت سقط أم
نليه يسقط الموت

[8] Say, 'The death, from which you flee, will surely encounter you,¹⁶ then you shall be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the Open, He will then inform you of what you were doing.'

قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

﴿٨﴾

[9] O those who have believed! When the call to Prayer¹⁷ is proclaimed on Friday,¹⁸ hasten¹⁹ to the remembrance of Allah²⁰ and leave off trade.²¹ That is better for you if you but knew.²²

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

﴿٩﴾

“My son! Your father does not mind whether he falls on death, or death falls on him” (Zamakhshari, Shabbir).

16. Sayyid presents the following in explanation of the uselessness of trying to escape death. Will the Western mind, which tires not searching for ways to lengthen lives, understand the beauty in this *hadith*?

وعن سَمْرَةَ بن جندب قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "مثل الذي يفر من الموت كمثل الثعلب تطلبه الأرض بدين فجعل يسعى حتى إذا أعيأ وابتهر دخل ححره فقالت له الأرض: يا ثعلب ديني، فخرج وله حصاص فلم يزل كذلك حتى تقطعت عنقه فمات. (رواه الطبراني في الكبير والأوسط وفيه معاذ بن محمد الهذلي قال العقيلي: لا يتابع على رفع حديثه مَجْمَع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

The Prophet said, “The example of he who flees death is similar to a fox from whom the earth demands back its loan. So it began to run about until when it was tired and had done all it could, it entered into its hole. The earth told him, ‘O fox. My loan?’ So the fox left, farting, and kept (running about) until its neck broke and it died.”

Haythami remarked that one of the narrators may not be trusted when he takes his narration right up to the Prophet. That is, a narrator is missing in the chain (Au.).

17. The allusion is to the prayer-call made when the Imām takes his position in the pulpit and the caller begins the call to the start of the Prayer. During the Prophet’s time, there use to be one *adhan* for the Prayers, (im-

mediately followed by the sermon) and one iqaamah (Ibn Jarir).

18. The majority have read the word as “*Jumu`ah*” except for the sole exception of A`mash who read it as “*jum`ah*” (Ibn Jarir). Farra’ has also allowed that it be pronounced as “*jum`ah*” (Qurtubi).

The first *Jumu`ah* was organized at Madinah by Mus`ab b. `Umayr even before the Prophet’s arrival. The Prophet himself organized his first *Jumu`ah* among the Banu Salim b. `Awf on the way to Madinah, after having spent a few days in Quba. And the third was organized in a town in the Bahrayn district called Juwaathaa (Qurtubi). The mosque still exists in Hofuf (Alusi).

It happens to be still there (Au.).

Ibn Seereen has pointed out, as in Musannaf of `Abd al Razzaq, that the choice of Friday for special Prayers and sermon, as independently made by the earliest Companions early at Madinah, corroborates the fact stated in a *hadith*: “We were guided to *Jumu`ah*” (Mufti Shafi’).

Commentators add:

Jumu`ah is the day on which Adam was created, the day in which he was admitted into Paradise, the day on which he was removed from Para-

dise, and in which the Day of Judgment will take place (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

There are trustworthy *ahadith* to the above effect in Ahmad and others (Shawkani).

There is an hour in this day when no one will ask Allah a thing but He will grant it. According to a report in Ibn Abi Hatim, the day was so named because it was on this day that Adam and Hawwa’ met with each other on the earth. (The report is also in Hakim who declared it trustworthy: Sami). A *hadith* in Bukhari records Abu Hurayrah as saying that the Prophet said,

نَحْنُ الْآخِرُونَ السَّابِقُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَسُدُّ
أَنْفُسَهُمْ أَوْثُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا ثُمَّ هَذَا يَوْمُهُمْ
الَّذِي فُرِضَ عَلَيْهِمْ فَاحْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ فَهَدَانَا اللَّهُ
فَالنَّاسُ لَنَا فِيهِ تَبِعَ الْيَهُودُ عَدَا وَالتَّصَارَى بَعْدَ
عَدِي

“We are the last but the first on the day of Judgment despite the fact that those who went before us were given the Book before us. Moreover, this day (Friday) was declared obligatory on them but they differed therein, but Allah guided us. So, the people are our followers: the Jews tomorrow and the Christians, the day after” (Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Majid quotes: “Pope Nicholas I had declared abstinence from meat on Fridays to be obligatory throughout the Church (C.D. p. 384). ‘Brides have shunned Friday (and still do!) owing to superstition. Christian peoples have always considered it an unlucky day for weddings because our Lord was crucified on that day and tradition says that it was Friday that Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit.’”

That, and the beauty of Friday devotions are not lost on Christians. Majid quotes again, “In dignity, simplicity and orderliness,” says another Christian historian with reference to the Friday assembly, “it is unsurpassed as a manner of collective worship. Standing erect in self-arranged rows in the mosque and following the leadership of the Imām with precision and reverence, the worshippers present a sight that is always impressive” (Hitti, op. cit. p. 132).

19. `Umar and Ibn Mas`ud reportedly read “*fas`aw*” as “*famdu*” (meaning, “proceed”) – Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir.

The report about Ibn Mas`ud is weak, and consensus of the *Ummah* is on “*fas`aw*” meaning “hasten up” (Qurtubi).

20. The hastening, it may be noted, does not refer to physical hastening,

but to the remembrance of Allah at the heart and spiritual level. (“*Sa`aa*” in any case also means to attend to a task seriously: various commentators). And the “*dhikr*” of the text alludes to the sermon (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

The *Sahihayn* have recorded the Prophet as having said,

إِذَا أُقِيِمَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَلَا تَأْتُوهَا تَسْعُونَ وَأَتُوهَا
نَمْشُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ السَّكِينَةَ فَمَا أَدْرَكْتُمْ فَصَلُّوا
وَمَا فَاتَكُمْ فَأْتِمُوا.

“After the Prayers have started, do not come to it hastily but rather come walking: calm and composed. Then, whatever you can manage to get of it, Pray. As for what you miss, complete it” (Ibn Kathir).

Another report preserved by the *Sahihayn* has the following to say,

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي قَتَادَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: بَيْنَمَا
نَحْنُ نُصَلِّي مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
إِذْ سَمِعَ حَلْبَةَ رَجُلًا فَلَمَّا صَلَّى قَالَ مَا
شَأْنُكُمْ قَالُوا اسْتَعْجَلْنَا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَالَ فَلَا
تَفْعَلُوا إِذَا أَتَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالسَّكِينَةِ فَمَا
أَدْرَكْتُمْ فَصَلُّوا وَمَا فَاتَكُمْ فَأْتِمُوا

One of the Companions reported: “While we were in Prayers behind the Prophet, he heard noises of some men. After the

termination of the Prayer he asked, ‘What was happening?’ They told him, ‘We were hurrying up to the congregation.’ He said, ‘Do not do that. When you come to the Prayer, observe calmness and composure. Thereafter, whatever that you get of the congregational Prayer, do it, and whatever you miss, you complete” (Ibn Kathir).

Zamakhshari adds the pointer that to walk at a slightly faster pace to join up with the congregation should do no harm. It is reported in Muhammad b. Hasan’s *Muwatta’* that when Ibn `Umar heard the *iqamah* in Baqi` he increased the pace of his walk. (That is, the prohibition in the *hadith* refers to the state of rushing up and hurtling down to the mosque in confusion and commotion: Au.).

21. There used to be only one *adhan* during the time of the Prophet. But due to population pressures, `Uthman (*ra*) got another introduced (said a little while before the *adhan* with which the sermon started: Au.), without any (of the Companions) objecting to it (Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir).

We have a report in Bukhari:

عَنْ السَّائِبِ بْنِ يَزِيدَ قَالَ: كَانَ النَّدَاءُ يَوْمَ
الْجُمُعَةِ أَوَّلَهُ إِذَا جَلَسَ الْإِمَامُ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ
عَلَى عَهْدِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَبِي
بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا فَلَمَّا كَانَ
عُثْمَانُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ وَكَثُرَ النَّاسُ زَادَ النَّدَاءَ
الثَّالِثَ عَلَى الزُّوْرَاءِ. قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ
الزُّوْرَاءُ مَوْضِعٌ بِالسُّوقِ بِالْمَدِينَةِ

On the authority of Sa’ib b. Yazid: “The first *adhan* used to be when the Imām took his position in the pulpit: during the time of the Prophet, Abu Bakr and `Umar. During the time of `Uthman when population increased, he got another Call added, made from Zawraa’.” Abu `Abdullah added that *Zawraa’* was a place in the Madinan market (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others). Some reports suggest that the call was made from `Uthman’s property there (Au.).

Ibn Kathir (who follows the Shafe`i school of *Fiqh*) writes that it is the second *adhan* that makes trade and commerce unlawful. But Alusi presents the Hanafiyy view-point that it is the first *adhaan* that makes worldly dealings unlawful. The point is that if the people are to suspend

trade and commerce with the second *adhaan* (when the Arabic sermon starts) and start off for the mosque (from market-places), then, not only could they miss the sermon, but the Prayer itself.

Mufti Shafi` points out that the use of the word “*bay*” is perhaps because, firstly, suspension of sale suspends purchase, and, secondly, to indicate that not all transactions or works need be suspended such as, for example, farming, since, Friday is not obligatory on village dwellers. Nonetheless, the prohibition through the directive covers all activities that prevent from joining the congregation, including study of books.

22. Friday Prayer is an obligation on all free men of a town; (but not of villages that do not have a commercial centers, schools, hospitals, nor is directly governed by a government, in other words hamlets). Women, children, travelers and slaves are excused, as also the sick and those who look after the sick (Au.).

Early in Islam, they used to offer *Jumu`ah* Prayers pretty early. It is said that the first bid`ah into which people fell is delaying of the *Jumu`ah* Prayer. During the days of the *Salaf* the people would begin to head to the mosque right after sunrise. Once Ibn

Mas`ud thought he will be the first. But when he entered the mosque he found thirteen people already sitting there (Zamakhshari).

However, the great majority of scholars believe that mid-day is the best time for Friday Prayers (Qurtubi).

A *hadith* from the *Sahihayn* and other books speaks of the importance of Friday Prayer.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَكَرَ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ. فَقَالَ: "فِيهِ سَاعَةٌ لَا يُوَافِقُهَا عَبْدٌ مُسْلِمٌ، وَهُوَ يُصَلِّي، يَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا، إِلَّا آعْطَاهُ إِيَّاهُ"

Abu Hurayrah reports that the Prophet mentioned Friday and said, “There is an hour in it that no Muslim will chance to coincide with, while he is in Prayer, seeking something from Allah, but He will grant it.” According to another version, the Prophet signaled with his hands to indicate that the “hour” was a short one. However, there is no consensus among the Companions or scholars of the *Ummah* as to which hour it is (Au.).

Qurtubi presents another *hadith* from Muslim. The Prophet said from his pulpit,

(عن) عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ وَأَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ .. أَنَّهُمَا سَمِعَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ عَلَى أَعْوَادٍ مَبْرُورَةٍ لَيَنْتَهِينَ أَقْرَامَ عَنْ وَدَعِهِمُ الْجُمُعَاتِ أَوْ لَيَخْتِمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَيَكُونُنَّ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ.

“Let the people cease ignoring the Friday Prayer or Allah will set a seal on their hearts, and so they become of those who are heedless.”

A bath is preferred. Says a *hadith* of the *Sheikhyan*,

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدُكُمْ الْجُمُعَةَ فَلْيَغْتَسِلْ.

“When one of you has *Jumu`ah* come on him, let him take a bath.”

Another report in Muslim says,

عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ فِي كُلِّ سَبْعَةِ أَيَّامٍ يَوْمٌ يَغْسِلُ رَأْسَهُ وَجَسَدَهُ.

“It is binding upon every Muslim that once in every seven days he should wash his head and body.”

Another narrative, also in the *Sahihayn* is as follows:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَنْ اغْتَسَلَ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ غُسْلَ الْجَنَابَةِ ثُمَّ رَاحَ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَرَّبَ بَدَنَةً وَمَنْ رَاحَ فِي السَّاعَةِ الثَّانِيَةِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَرَّبَ بَقْرَةً وَمَنْ رَاحَ فِي السَّاعَةِ الثَّلَاثَةِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَرَّبَ كَبْشًا أَقْرَنَ وَمَنْ رَاحَ فِي السَّاعَةِ الرَّابِعَةِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَرَّبَ دَحَاةً وَمَنْ رَاحَ فِي السَّاعَةِ الْخَامِسَةِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَرَّبَ بَيْضَةً إِذَا خَرَجَ الْإِمَامُ حَضَرَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الذِّكْرَ - صحيح البخاري

On Abu Hurayra's authority: The Prophet said, “Whoever washed himself, the way a man seeking purification after intercourse does – and then went (to the mosque) is like him who offered a camel (as sacrifice). He who went in at the second hour, is as if offered a cow. He who went in at the third hour, is as if offered a goat. He who went in at the fourth hour, is as if offered a chicken. And he who went in at the fifth hour, is as if offered an egg. But once the Imām has emerged, the angels present themselves to listen to the sermon” (Zamakhshari [without quoting the *hadith*], Ibn Kathir).

One may apply perfume if he can afford it. Several *ahadith* are reported on this subject. One is in Abu Da'ud. Another of the same meaning is in Ahmad which Haythami declared trustworthy. It says:

عَنْ عِكْرَمَةَ أَنَّ أَنَسًا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْعِرَاقِ جَاءُوا
فَقَالُوا يَا أَبْنِ عَبَّاسٍ أَرَتِي الْغُسْلَ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ
وَاجِبًا قَالَ لَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَظْهَرَ وَخَيْرٌ لِمَنْ اغْتَسَلَ
وَمَنْ لَمْ يَغْتَسِلْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ بِوَاجِبٍ
وَسَأَخْبِرُكُمْ كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْغُسْلَ كَانَ النَّاسُ
مَجْهُودِينَ يَلْبَسُونَ الصُّوفَ وَيَعْمَلُونَ عَلَى
ظُهُورِهِمْ وَكَانَ مَسْجِدُهُمْ ضَيْقًا مُقَارِبَ
السَّقْفِ إِنَّمَا هُوَ عَرِيضٌ فَخَرَجَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي يَوْمٍ حَارٍّ وَعَرِقَ
النَّاسُ فِي ذَلِكَ الصُّوفِ حَتَّى تَارَتْ مِنْهُمْ
رِيَّاحٌ آذَى بِذَلِكَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا فَلَمَّا وَجَدَ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تِلْكَ الرِّيحَ
قَالَ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِذَا كَانَ هَذَا الْيَوْمَ فَاغْتَسِلُوا
وَلَيْسَ أَحَدُكُمْ أَفْضَلَ مَا يَجِدُ مِنْ دُهْنِهِ
وَطَبِيبِهِ. (سنن أبي داود)

Ikrimah said that some people from Iraq visited Ibn `Abbas and asked him about a bath on Friday whether it was obligatory. He answered, "No. But it is cleaner and better for him who would wash. As for him who did not wash, well, it is not an obligation. Let me tell you how the Friday washing came to be. People those days

worked hard and wore wool (out of poverty). They would work (carrying weight on their) shoulders. Their mosque was small, with a low ceiling. It was a hut you see. The Prophet came out (to the mosque) on a hot day while the people were sweating in the wool of theirs until the smell rose up and some felt uneasy because of others. When the Prophet felt this he said, 'People. When it is this day, wash yourself, and let one of you perfume himself with the best possible oil or perfume'" (Au.).

Again, a clean pair of clothes is recommended. A report in Ibn Majah and Abu Da'ud says the following:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ سَلَامٍ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ فِي
يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ مَا عَلَى أَحَدِكُمْ لَوْ اشْتَرَى
ثَوْبَيْنِ لِيَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ سِوَى ثَوْبٍ مِهْنَتِهِ (سنن
ابن ماجه)

Abdullah b. Salam said that he heard the Prophet say from his pulpit on Friday, "What would go wrong if one of you purchased a pair of clothes for Friday, apart from the pair in which he labors?" (Ibn Kathir).

Listening to the Sermon is the obligatory part of "*dhikr*" which should

[10] Then, when the Prayer is over, spread out²³ in the land and seek Allah's bounty.²⁴ And remember Allah much, haply you will prosper.²⁵

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَابْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

deal with matters directly related to religious. It should not, therefore, consist of praises for the rulers, mentioning whom with praises is to praise Shaytan, which, Zamakhshari remarks sarcastically, “is some distance away from *dhikr* of Allah.”

A *hadith* (of Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abu Da'ud and others: Au.) says,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ تَوَضَّأَ فَأَحْسَنَ الْوُضُوءَ ثُمَّ أَتَى الْجُمُعَةَ فَاسْتَمَعَ وَأَنْصَتَ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجُمُعَةِ وَزِيَادَةُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ وَمَنْ مَسَّ الْحَصَى فَقَدْ لَعَا.

“Whoever made ablution, and did it well, came to the Friday Prayer, and then heard (the sermon) without speaking, has his sins of Friday to Friday forgiven, plus three days. On the other hand, whoever played with the pebbles, committed an unwarranted act” (Au.).

[A *hadith* predicts that the Friday sermons will get longer near the end of the world, than the Prayers themselves: Au.].

23. This “scatter” or “dispersion” is to be understood in the light of the previous verse which directed the Muslims to hasten to the remembrance of Allah. After the Prayer is over, they can disperse. In other words, it is not a command, but a suggestion that now, after the Prayers are finished, they may go their ways, if they so will (or stay in mosque, if they so wish) – Ibn Jarir.

Ibn `Abbas said that this is not a commandment to leave and seek out the world, but to visit the sick, accompany the biers, and visit a friend for the sake of Allah (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Shawkani). It is also reported as a *hadith* but quite weak (S. Ibrahim).

24. That is, now you are free to disperse in the land and seek Allah's bounty, or stay back in the mosque, you have both the options (Ibn Jarir and others). Shah `Abdul Qadir wrote that the Jews were forbidden any worldly transaction (on day of Sabbath). In contrast, the Muslims could trade on Friday (Shabbir).

[11] *But when they see merchandise or some diversion,²⁶ they break up for it, leaving you standing.²⁷ Say, 'That which is with Allah is better than diversion and from merchandise. And Allah is the best of providers.'*

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ هَمًّا انْفَضُّوا إِلَيْهَا
وَتَرَكَوْكَ قَائِمًا قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِّنَ
اللَّهِ وَمِنَ التِّجَارَةِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

﴿١١﴾

Many of the *Salaf* understood this verse in the literary sense of Allah, if not directing, according approval to economic activities immediately after Friday Prayers. Some of them in fact – as reported by some commentators - preferred to trade in hours following Friday Prayers (Au.).

25. Yusuf Ali compares directives and practices in the three major religions: “The idea behind the Muslim weekly ‘Day of Assembly’ is different from that behind the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday) or the Christian Sunday. The Jewish Sabbath is primarily a commemoration of Allah’s ending His work and resting on the seventh day (Gen. ii. 2; Exod. xx. 11): we are taught that Allah needs no rest, nor does He feel fatigue (ii. 255). The Jewish command forbids work on that day but says nothing about worship or prayer (Exod. xx. 10); our ordinance lays chief stress on the remembrance of Allah. Jewish formalism went so far as to kill the spirit of the sabbath, and call

forth the protest of Jesus: ‘the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath’ (Mark. ii. 27). But the Christian Church, although it has changed the day from Saturday to Sunday, has inherited the Jewish spirit: witness the Scottish Sabbath; except in so far as it has been secularised. Our teaching says: ‘When the time for *Jumu`a* Prayer comes, close your business and answer the summons loyally and earnestly, meet earnestly, pray, consult and learn by social contact; when the meeting is over, scatter and go about your business.’”

26. One of the reports concerning Dihya’ Kalbi’s trade caravan, (whose arrival had caused consternation in the Prophet’s mosque), speaks of a singer playing on a drum. Up until then, Dihya had not yet embraced Islam (Razi, Ibn Kathir). Actually, every trade caravan employed drummers to attract attention at arrival (Zamakhshari).

27. The allusion is to an incident that took place at the time when, early in Madinah, the Prophet used to deliver the sermon after the Friday Prayers (like in `Eid Prayers). On one occasion while he was delivering the sermon after the Prayers were over, someone came in and announced that Dihya Kalbi's long-awaited trade caravan had arrived. Now, those were days of shortages and high inflation. So, hearing the news, the Companions started to leave, one after another, until no more than twelve men and a solitary woman were left, and Allah revealed this *Surah*. The Prophet had then said,

لَوَاتَّبَع آخِرَهُمْ أَوْلَاهُمْ لَأْتَّبَع عَلَيْهِم الْوَادِي نَارًا.

“Had the last of them followed the first of them, surely the valley would have been filled with flaming fire.” But some other reports suggest that forty persons remained in the mosque while the rest left (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir), and that the Companions thought there was no sin involved in their departure; after all, the Prayers were over. Further, not all left for commerce. Some left merely to watch, which, being of no profit,

was referred to as “*lahw*” (Qurtubi).

With that experience, and after the revelation of this *Surah*, the Prophet altered the sequence. He began to deliver the sermon to follow up with the Prayers (Ibn Kathir, Mufti Shafi`).

Alusi comments on the aspersions cast on the Companions, by the *Shi`ah*, with reference to this *ayah*. He reminds them that Allah (*swt*) simply reproached them. He did not rebuke them, nor threaten them with a punishment. Moreover, all narratives in this connection inform us that the Companions close to the Prophet – such as the four Khulafa’ and many others - did not leave the mosque. Therefore their censor is unwarranted.

A contemporary commentator - known for criticizing the Companions (in his other writings) - censors the *Shi`ah* for criticizing the Companions, but then proceeds to defend his own position of their criticism! His point is: Why can't we criticize the Companions when Allah Himself criticized them: a logic he would not extend to the *Shi`ah* but which he extended to cover his own criticism of the Prophets!

28. Majid cites the opinion of a historian which, if accurate, sheds a new light on the pre-Islamic Arab's proclivities and economic tendencies, miraculously reformed by the Prophet, but, with his influence waning, is now quite reflective in the contemporary Arab world. He writes and quotes: "This (assurance of Allah as the Provider) required special emphasis in view of the very great preoccupation of the Arabs with money matters and financial transactions. 'In the money-changers' books, men speculated on the currency exchange: they gambled on

the rise and fall of foreign monies, on caravan freights, on their arrival and also on their lateness. The influx of Byzantine, Sasanid and Yemenite coins, the complications of the old monetary system and knowledge necessary for this manipulation, gave rise to an infinity of operations and to the most lucrative transactions .. Given this business activity there is no cause for astonishment if we find out Makkan merchants who in our day would be classed as millionaires.' (Lammus, op. cit., pp. 15, 16).

﴿قَالَ﴾





Surah 63

Al-Munafiqun¹

Madinan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] When the hypocrites² come to you they say, 'We bear witness that you are indeed the Messenger of Allah.' Allah knows that you are indeed His Messenger,³ and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are truly liars.

إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ قَالُوا نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُهُ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١﴾

1. This *Surah* is connected with the previous one in that the previous one spoke of the believers, while this one speaks of the feigned believers. Not surprisingly, the Prophet used to recite the previous *Surah* in the first *rak`ah* of the Friday Prayer, and this one in the second *rak`ah*. Also, as Abu Hayyan has pointed out, the dispersal from before the Prophet to meet with the trade-caravan, of which the previous *Surah* spoke, was perhaps given impetus by the hypocrites (Alusi).

2. Hypocrisy is to disclose belief while concealing disbelief.

Of hypocrites there were several kinds: (i) The true in hypocrisy who had adopted hypocrisy as a policy;

who did not believe in anything that the Prophet had brought, but finding themselves caught in a whirlpool of events, decided to profess faith while their hearts were either with another faith, or no faith at all. They were waiting for the worst to befall the Muslims, ready to offer aid to anyone working to that end; and biding time. (ii) Those who were in doubts. Faith was like a blinking light in their hearts. When Islam flourished, the light came on, when things went awry, it went off. (iii) Those who felt convinced of Islam at one point in their lives and so embraced it in good earnest. But with the passage of time and occurrence of events, they lost faith, but remained professing Islam outwardly. There would have

[2] They have taken their oaths as a shield, and have obstructed from the path of Allah. Truly, evil are the things they have been doing.

اتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢﴾

[3] That because they believed and then disbelieved,⁴ therefore a seal has been set on their hearts. Consequently, they do not understand.⁵

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا فَطُبِعَ عَلَى
قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٣﴾

been other kinds. However, most of them could not resist Islam for long and ended up being good Muslims. A few remained die-hard hypocrites to the end. The Prophet had known them and had confided their names to Hudhayfa b. al-Yaman (Au.).

Sayyid writes: “The Prophet knew them by their characteristics, yet observed patience against them, without revealing their names so that the common people may not begin to judge each other by outward signs, while it is Allah alone who knows what the breasts conceal. It is only at the end of his mission that he informed one of his Companions, and him alone, of their names. The common people did not know them, that is, in certain terms; so that even `Umar would go to Hudhayfah and

ask him whether he was in the list of hypocrites. Hudhayfah would assure him: ‘Not you, `Umar.’ The Prophet had been ordered not to pray on them nor seek forgiveness for them after they were dead. After his death, `Umar would watch Hudhayfah. If he was there in the final rites, `Umar would pray over the dead man. If Hudhayfah was absent, `Umar stayed away.”

3. That is, the Sender knows that He has sent, no one need inform Him (Au.).

4. That is, outwardly they professed faith, but inwardly they disbelieved (Razi, Qurtubi and others).

5. They do not understand the difference between right and wrong, true and false (Ibn Jarir).

[4] When you look at them, their figures please you.⁶ And, if they speak, you will listen to their words.⁷ They are like propped-up timbers.⁸ They think every cry is against them.⁹ They are the enemy; so beware of them. May Allah destroy them, how are they being deluded!

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ وَإِنْ
يَقُولُوا تَسْمَعُ لِقَوْلِهِمْ كَأْتَهُمْ خُشْبٌ
مُسْنَدَةٌ يَحْسِبُونَ كُلَّ صَيْحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ هُمْ
الْعَدُوُّ فَاحْذَرُهُمْ قَاتِلُهُمْ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكُونُوا
يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٤﴾

6. They please an onlooker because of their smart figures and attractive carriage (Ibn Jarir).

In Yusuf Ali's words: "The hypocrites at all times are plausible people, and so were the hypocrites of Madinah. They present a fine exterior; they dress well; they can usually afford the equipage; they try to win the confidence of every one, as they have no scruples in telling lies, and apparently expressing agreement with everyone. Their words are fair-spoken, and as truth does not check their tongues, their flattery and deception know no bounds. But all this is on the outside. As they have no sincerity, nothing that they say or do is worth anything."

7. Their speech impresses one for the logic, diction and eloquence that it employed.

8. That is, like wood these hypocrites have no knowledge, no understanding, bodies without soul, minds without intellect (Ibn Jarir).

The right place for wooden planks is in the roof, or other functional places in a house. When they are left propped up against a wall, high and dry, then they are hardly of any use except as fire wood (Shabbir).

9. Because they realize deep in their hearts that they are at a game, which can turn dangerous, in that a revelation could come down to the Prophet, revealing them and their attitude and ordering him to capture and execute them, they were always on a pin-prick and, therefore, whenever they heard that a new revelation had come, their hearts jumped in fear and apprehension (Ibn Jarir).

Another *ayah* portrays them:

أَشِحَّةً عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ فَإِذَا جَاءَ الْخَوْفُ رَأَيْتَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ
إِلَيْكَ تَدُورُ أَعْيُنُهُمْ كَالَّذِي يُغْتَنَىٰ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمُوتِ ۖ
فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ الْخَوْفُ سَلَقُوكُمْ بِالْأَسِنَّةِ جِدَادًا
أَشِحَّةً عَلَى الْخَيْرِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا فَأَحْبَطَ
اللَّهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ۗ وَكَانَ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا
(الأحزاب: ١٩)

[5] When they are told, 'Come, the Messenger of Allah will seek forgiveness for you,' they twist their heads, and you see them turning away, waxing proud.¹⁰

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا يَسْتَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ لَوَّأُ لَوَّاءُ زُؤُوسَهُمْ وَرَأَيْتَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ وَهُمْ مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٥﴾

[6] It is equal unto them whether you sought forgiveness for them or you did not seek their forgiveness. Allah will never forgive them. Surely Allah does not guide the rebellious people.

سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَسْتَغْفَرْتَ لَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ لَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٦﴾

"Being niggardly towards you; then, when fear strikes, you see them looking at you, their eyes rolling like one who swoons of death. But when fear subsides, they assail you with sharp tongues, covetous of the good (things). They had never believed, so Allah quashed their deeds; and that was ever easy for Allah."

And the Prophet gave us the signs wherewith to recognize a hypocrite. He said,

نَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- قَالَ «إِنَّ لِلْمُنَافِقِينَ عَلَامَاتٍ يُعْرِفُونَ بِهَا نَجِيَّتَهُمْ لَعْنَةً وَطَعَامُهُمْ نُهْبَةً وَغَنِيمَتُهُمْ لُئُولٌ وَلَا يَقْرَبُونَ الْمَسَاحِدَ إِلَّا هَجْرًا وَلَا أَتُونَ الصَّلَاةَ إِلَّا ذُبْرًا مُسْتَكْبِرِينَ لَا يَأْلَفُونَ إِلَّا يُولْفُونَ خَشَبٌ بِاللَّيْلِ صُحْبٌ بِالنَّهَارِ». قَالَ يَزِيدُ مَرَّةً «سُحْبٌ بِالنَّهَارِ» - (مسند حمد)

"Hypocrites carry signs by which they can be recognized. Their

greeting is curse (i.e. they curse too often), their food is loot, their booty is theft, they do not come to the mosques but to leave (quickly), do not join in the Prayers but at the end, waxing proud, lacking affection for others, nor others have any affection for them, timbers at night, quarrelsome during the day" (Ibn Kathir).

Haythami comments that one of the critics of *hadith* trusted one of the narrators of this report, while another did not. But there are trustworthy *ahadith* that condemn the qualities above, without naming the hypocrites, but which could only be the qualities of a hypocrite or of an extremely corrupt person (Au.).

10. This was revealed in reference to 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy. When he was told that Allah had sent down reproachful verses in his reference, and

that he would do better to go to the Prophet and ask him to seek forgiveness, he twisted his head and taunted back: "Look, you suggested that I should become a Muslim, I did. Then you suggested that I should pay *Zakah* off my wealth, I did. Now nothing remains for me except to prostrate myself before Muhammad."

Many intellectuals who have studied Islam find themselves in the same dilemma. They feel convinced that the Qur'an cannot be explained except as having been sent by an outside Agency. For example, the Orientalists quite comfortably quote the Qur'an to prove a point, (see a few articles in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*). But they realize that acknowledging the Qur'an as a revelation, necessarily demands submission to the Prophet. This they find themselves unable to do. They would all but say, "What! Shall we prostrate ourselves before Muhammad?" (Au.)

An anecdote: Hasan b. 'Ali was told:

عن الحسن بن علي رضي الله عنهما أن
جلاً قال له: إن الناس يزعمون أن فيك
بهاً قال: ليس بتيه ولكنه عزة فإن هذا العز
لذي لا ذل معه والغنى الذي لا فقر معه،
تلا هذه الآية (تفسير الرازي)

"People say about you that you are affected by pride." He answered, "It is not pride, it is self-respect and dignity. This is the self-respect that is not accompanied by humility, and a self-sufficiency which is not affected by poverty," and then he recited this verse (Zamakhshari, Razi).

A thin line divides arrogance from the sense of self-respect. Those with sight can distinguish between the quality of looking down upon others or defiance against the Truth, and attitude of someone whose self-evaluation results in a carriage that the ignorant attribute to arrogance (Au.).

Imām Razi adds: Self-respect (or dignity) is not the same thing as pride. It is not for a believer to belittle himself. Pride comes from not knowing oneself while self-respect comes from knowing one's own worth. Apparently, the quality of self-respect resembles pride but is not the same in reality. Humbleness is praiseworthy, but humility is not.

Alusi attributes the above passage to the Sufi Abu Hafs Suhrawardi.

[7] They are the ones who say, 'Do not spend on those with the Messenger of Allah until they disperse.' Yet, to Allah belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth,¹¹ but the hypocrites do not understand.

هُمُ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ لَا تُنْفِقُوا عَلَيَّ مَنْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يَنْفَضُوا وَلِلَّهِ خَزَائِنُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٧﴾

[8] They say, 'If we return to Madinah, surely, the honorable ones shall expel from there the meaner ones.'¹² But honor belongs to Allah, His Messenger and the believers, but the hypocrites do not know.¹³

يَقُولُونَ لَئِنْ رَجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْأَذَلَّ وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨﴾

11. With reference to Allah's words,
وقال الحنيد: خزائن السموات الغيوب،
وخزائن الارض القلوب، فهو علام الغيوب
بمقلب القلوب.

"To Allah belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth," Junayd is reported to have remarked beautifully:

"Allah's treasures in the heavens are the hidden things, while the treasures of the earth are the hearts. Therefore, He is the Knower of the Unseen things, and the Turner of the hearts" (Razi, Qurtubi).

12. It was `Abdullah b. Ubayy b. Sallul who had said that during a military expedition known as Muraysi` or Banu Mustaliq (two names for the same campaign). There are several well-preserved reports covering this incident, some long, some short, one complimenting another –

in Bukhari, Muslim and others. We present a brief account in Arabic, filling some details in translation:

(عن) جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ كُنَّا فِي غَزَاةٍ قَالَ سَفِيَانُ مَرَّةً فِي حَيْشٍ فَكَسَعَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ رَجُلًا مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ فَقَالَ الْأَنْصَارِيُّ يَا لَأَنْصَارٍ وَقَالَ الْمُهَاجِرِيُّ يَا لَلْمُهَاجِرِينَ فَسَمِعَ ذَلِكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ مَا بَالُ دَعْوَى الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَسَعَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ رَجُلًا مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ فَقَالَ دَعُوهَا فَإِنَّهَا مُنْتَنَةٌ فَسَمِعَ بِذَلِكَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي قَحْلَةَ فَقَالَ فَعَلَوْهَا أَمَا وَاللَّهِ لَئِنْ رَجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْأَذَلَّ { (المنافقون: ٨)

What happened was that a *Muhajir* slapped an *Ansari* on his buttocks at a watering point, in a dispute over water. The *Ansari* called the *Ansar* for help and the

Muhajir called the *Muhajirun* for help. They almost came to blows. The Prophet rushed in and asked, "What's the matter with you that you appeal in the name of *Jabiliyyah*?" When told what had happened, he said, "Give it up. It stinks." It was then that the arch hypocrite ibn Ubayy said to his compatriots, "By God. Our example and that of Muhammad is, as the saying goes,

سَمِّنْ كَلْبَكَ يَا كَلْبَكَ

'Fatten your dog and it will eat you.' By God, if we return to Madinah, surely, the honorable ones shall expel the meaner ones."

People around him were a few of the *Ansar* but none from the *Muhajirun* except for Zayd b. Arqam, still a lad, and he flashed up in anger and said that Ibn Ubayy, indeed, was the mean one. Ibn Ubayy realized that he had gone too far. He told him, "Come on, I was only joking." But Zayd reported to the Prophet. Initially the Prophet would not believe in Zayd and questioned him in a variety of ways to reconfirm. When convinced, he did not like the statement. `Umar b. al-Khattab also flew into a rage and suggested to the Prophet that he should ask `Abbaad b. Bishr to decapitate the man. But he replied,

'فكيف إذا تُحدث الناس يا عمر أن مُحمداً
يقتل أصحابه، لا، ولكن ناد يا عمر:
لرحيل"

"What will you say O `Umar when the people say, 'Muhammad kills his own Companions?' But rather send the call to resume the march" - although that was not the hour at which he decamped. When Usayd b. Hudayr inquired why he had decamped at an unusual hour, the Prophet explained to him what had happened. Usayd said, "Forgive him Messenger of Allah. The Yethrebites had agreed to crown him king. The crown was getting ready when you entered and the event was cancelled. He is sore on that score. He thinks you deprived him of kingship."

The Prophet kept marching the whole of the day until evening, as well as the whole of the following night until daybreak. At last when he ordered camp, the people were so exhausted that they did not touch the ground but sleep overtook them. The Prophet had done that to make them forget the affairs of the quarrel and Ibn Ubayy's behavior.

Later, Ibn Ubayy came up to the Prophet but flatly refused on oath

that he had said any such thing. The Prophet believed in Ibn Ubayy and disbelieved in Zayd. That left Zayd pretty aggrieved. No less than his own uncle reproached him for reporting something that could not be proven true. He sat back in his house in fear that if he went out people would say, "Here is a man who carried a lie to the Prophet." Ultimately, Allah revealed this *ayah*. The Prophet sent for Zayd and told him that Allah had testified to his report (Ibn Jarir, Kashshaf, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

This man, `Abdullah ibn Ubayy b. Sallul, was quite an interesting bloke. When the Prophet arrived and he saw that the chance of him being crowned as a king were diminishing by the day, he adopted a wait and see policy. The momentum of the Islamic movement required that he profess faith outwardly. Like everyone attempting a show, on Fridays he would take a position in the mosque – more or less reserved for him because of his status in the society – and, before the Prophet would stand up for the sermon, he would rise up and say, "People. Here is Allah's Messenger before you. Allah has honored you through him, and has exalted you. Therefore, help him, strengthen him, listen to him and

obey him." Then he would sit down and the Prophet would begin his sermon. However, after the battle of Uhud, where he betrayed the Muslims by pulling out with 300 of his followers, when he stood up, as usual, to deliver his short sermon, Muslims pulled him down by his shirt saying, "Sit down man. You do not deserve to address the people after what you have done." He left the mosque jumping over the people's shoulders. Outside he met with some people who asked him what the matter was. He said, "I only meant to strengthen (the Prophet) but they behaved with me as if I had done something awful." They told him, "Go back man. The Prophet will seek forgiveness for you." He twisted his head and said, "By God. I don't need that he should seek forgiveness for me" (Ibn Kathir).

13. Ibn Ubayy had a son called *Hubab*. He was a true Muslim whose name the Prophet had changed to `Abdullah. When they reached Madinah, he blocked Ibn Ubayy's path with an unsheathed sword and said, "Get back." He asked, "What's with you?" He answered, "You claim that the honored ones will expel the meaner ones! Well, you know that the Prophet is the honored one.

[9] O those who have believed! Let not your wealth nor your children divert you from Allah's remembrance.¹⁴ Whosoever does that, such indeed are the losers.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ
وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ
ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

Therefore, you are not entering Madinah until the Prophet allows.” Ibn Ubayy sought the help of the Khazraj tribe but they thought unwise to interfere in a father-son squabble. Other people kept passing by until the Prophet’s mount neared the scene. On inquiry Ibn Ubayy complained to him of his son’s behavior. The Prophet sent word to `Abdullah to let his father go.

Actually, Ibn Ubayy’s son had on several occasions sought the Prophet’s permission to kill his father since he abused the Prophet. But each time he refused saying, “Do not kill your father.”

But of course, Ibn Ubayy was not the one to reform himself. One day `Abdullah said to the Prophet, “I hear that you intend to order my father killed. By Allah, the Khazraj tribe knows that there is none among them who is so well behaving with his father as I am. So, if you ordered

someone to kill him, I do not think I’ll be able to restrain myself. I will kill him in retaliation. Therefore, if you intend to get him killed at all, let me do the job myself.” The Prophet assured him that he had no such intention. But since Ibn Ubayy could not reform himself, great many of the Khazraj began to rebuke him for his bad attitudes and unseemly behavior to a point that Ubayy lost his respect among the people. At that point the Prophet told `Umar: “Do you realize now that had I allowed you to kill him, it would have resulted in a huge commotion. But now, if someone killed him no one will be stirred” (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

14. Although five daily Prayers and Hajj have been identified by Ibn `Abbas, as being alluded to, most commentators believe that the allusion by “remembrance” here, is to various Islamic obligations.

[10] And expend of what We have bestowed on you¹⁵ before death comes upon one of you and he says, 'My Lord, only if You would defer me for a little while, so that I expend in charity and become of the righteous.'¹⁶

وَأَنْفِقُوا مِنْ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمْ
أَحَدُكُمْ الْمَوْتُ فَيَقُولَ رَبِّ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنِي
إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ فَأَصَّدَّقَ وَأَكُن مِنَ
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] But Allah will never defer a soul, once its term has arrived. And Allah is Aware of what you do.

وَلَنْ يُؤَخِّرَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِذَا جَاءَ أَجَلُهَا
وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١١﴾

15. The implication is that expending in the way of Allah can be a cure for the disease of hypocrisy (Au.).

teousness in that I left (behind).'
By no means! It is but a word that he utters; and ahead of them is Barzakh until the Day they shall be raised." (Ibn Kathir).

16. This is in the same vein as another *ayah*,

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ
ارْجِعُونِي، لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ
كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ
بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ (المؤمنون: ٩٩-١٠٠)

Ibn 'Abbas has said that the verse applies to those Muslims too who fail to perform their religious duties. They too will, at the time of death, wish that they could be deferred so that they could do better there onward (Kashshaf, Ibn Kathir). مَشَتْ

"Till when death comes to one of them he says, 'My Lord! Send me back. Haply I could work righ-



Surah 64

Al-Taghabun

Madinan¹

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Whatever is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah. His is the Sovereignty, and His the Praise; and He has power over all things.

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١﴾

[2] It is He who created you, yet some of you are unbelievers while some of you are believers;² and Allah sees all that you do.

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْكُمْ وَكَافِرٌ
مِنْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢﴾

1. Opinions are split over whether this *Surah* is Makkan or Madinan, with some saying that a few verses could be Makkan (Qurtubi, Shawkani).

2. Following the commentary of Ibn `Abbas that the allusion is to the creation of some people as believers while others as unbelievers, Qurtubi quotes the well-known *ahadith* of *Qadr* and then offers the opinion of a group of scholars who explained the verse with a “yet” as in the rendering above. He then quotes the *hadith* which says that every newborn takes birth on *fitrah*. It is its parents who Christianize him, Judaize him, or Zoroastrize him and then quotes the

opinion of Zajjaj, who spoke for the great majority of scholars when he said:

إن الله خلق الكافر، وكفره فعل له
وكسب، مع أن الله خالق الكفر. وخلق
المؤمن، وإيمانه فعل له وكسب، مع أن الله
خالق الإيمان. والكافر يكفر ويختار الكفر
بعد خلق الله إياه، لأن الله تعالى قدر ذلك
عليه وعلمه منه. ولا يجوز أن يوجد من
كل واحد منهما غير الذي قدر عليه وعلمه
منه، لأن وجود خلاف المقدور عجز،
ووجود خلاف المعلوم جهل، ولا يليقان
بالله تعالى.

“Indeed Allah created the Unbeliever, while his disbelief is his own earning and his own doing, not forgetting that disbelief itself

[3] He created the heavens and the earth with truth; He shaped you, and did well your shapes;³ and to Him is the return.

خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٣﴾

is a creation of Allah. Similarly He created the Believer, while his faith is his own earning and his own doing, not forgetting that faith is a creation of Allah. The Unbeliever disbelieves, and chooses disbelief after Allah has created him because Allah has so determined for him and has known about him. It is not possible for either of the two to be found existing but in the state which was determined for him and known about him. For, existence of anything other than that which has been determined is a weakness, and existence of anything other than that which has been known is ignorance, which both do not befit Allah.”

And a Bedouin said, when asked about *Qadr*,

أمر تغالت فيه الظنون، واختلف فيه
المختلفون، فالواجب أن نرد ما أشكل
علينا من حكمه إلى ما سبق من علمه.

“It is an affair over which guess-works worked exaggerations, in which the differing ones differed. The obligation on us is

to return that commandment of Allah which we are unable to resolve, to that knowledge of Allah which has preceded.”

Yusuf Ali handles the difficulty quite adeptly: “It is not that He does not see Rebellion and Evil, nor that He cannot punish them. He created all things pure and good, and if evil crept in by the grant of a limited free-will by Him, it is not unforeseen: it is in His wise and universal Plan, for giving man a chance of rising higher and ever higher.”

3. How do we know that the form and shape given by Allah is, objectively, a good one? The answer is, says Zamakhshari, humans do not want their shapes to be altered. However, variations within a given form, to one or the other extreme, making one attractive while another not, does not mean absence of beauty in the form and shape generally, in one and all.

With regard to alteration, if we were to ask a man whether he would like his nose to be shifted to his forehead, or eyes placed on the sides, so that

[4] He knows whatever is in the heavens and the earth and knows what you conceal and what you publish; and Allah is knowing of what is in the breasts.⁴

يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ
مَا تُسْرُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ
الصُّدُورِ ﴿٤﴾

[5] Has there not come to you the tidings of those of old who disbelieved, they tasted the grievousness of their conduct, and yet there awaits them a painful chastisement?

أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ فَذَاقُوا
وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٥﴾

[6] That because there would come to them their Messengers with clear signs, but they would say, 'Will human beings guide us?'⁵ So they disbelieved, and turned away; and Allah was in no need of them; Allah is All-sufficient, All-laudable.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُ كَانَتْ تَأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
فَقَالُوا أَأَبْشَرُ يَهْدُونَنَا فَكَفَرُوا وَتَوَلَّوْا
وَاسْتَغْنَى اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿٦﴾

he can have a fish's eye-view, or that his arms should be one foot longer to increase his outreach, he will say, "Thank you. Not me." And, although there have been millions of artists in the world, none has ever been able to create on paper a form and shape more beautiful than that of Man (Au.).

4. One may note: Allah warned of His knowledge of all that there is in the heavens and the earth, then He warned of His knowledge of what the people say out loudly or secretly, and, finally, He warned of His knowledge of what is hidden in the hearts. Thus, His knowledge covers all and everything (Razi).

Yusuf Ali comments: "Not only does He create and develop and sustain all things; but all thoughts, motives, feelings, ideas, and events are known to Him. Therefore, we must not imagine that, if some evil seems to go unpunished, it is not known to Him or has escaped His notice. His Plan is wise and good in its fullest compass: sometimes we do not see its wisdom and goodness because we see only a broken fragment of it, as our own intelligence is narrow."

5. Zamakhshari has a pointed remark here, but is it pointed enough for the idol-worshippers?:

انكروا أن تكون الرسل بشراً، ولم ينكروا
أن يكون الله حجراً.

[7] The unbelievers claim that they will never be raised up. Say, 'Yes indeed, by my Lord, you shall certainly be raised up and then shall be informed of what you did; and that is easy for Allah.'

زَعَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ لَنْ يُرْعَثُوا قُلْ بَلَىٰ
وَرَبِّي لَتُرْعَثُنَّ ثُمَّ لَتُنَبَّؤَنَّ بِمَا عَمِلْتُمْ وَذَلِكَ
عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٧﴾

[8] Believe then, in Allah and His Messenger, and in the Light that We have sent down;⁶ and Allah is Aware of what you do.

فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالنُّورِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلْنَا
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٨﴾

[9] The day he will gather you together: on the day of gathering, that will be a day of mutual loss.⁷ But he who believed in Allah and did righteous deeds, He will remove from him his evil deeds and admit him into gardens underneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever;⁸ that is the supreme triumph.

يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ
التَّعَابِنِ وَمَنْ يَأْمِن بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا
يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا
ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٩﴾

“They refused that a Messenger should be a human, but would not refuse that God should be a stone.”

6. That is, the Qur'an.

7. Mutual loss: It has been said that *Yawm al-taghabun* is one of the names of the Day of Judgment.

This refers to the gain of one thing at the loss of another on that Day. The fortunate ones will see themselves escaping the places of the wretched ones that they would have inherited, had they been wretched ones; and the wretched ones will see the places of the fortunate ones escape them that they would have inherited, had

they been the fortunate ones. Thus, it will be a mutual loss. There are *ahadith* to this effect (Zamakhshari).

Perhaps in plain terms, since everyone will lose something or the other of his good deeds to others, as penalty for wrongs done, it will be a day of mutual loss for all - since, anything they lose, of the good deeds, will be a loss. So, every human will bewail the loss of good deeds (Au.).

8. At the most basic level, to expect to be rewarded is unreasonable. A father offers money to his son to go and buy a shirt for himself. Having purchased it, the son cannot ask for a reward. The shirt is his reward (Au.).

[10] As for those who disbelieved and laid the lie against Our signs, they are the companions of the Fire, abiding therein - an evil destination.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] No affliction befalls, but by Allah's leave. And whoever believes in Allah, He guides his heart.⁹ And Allah is knowing of all things.

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾

[12] And obey Allah and obey the Messenger; but if you turn away, then there is no more upon Our Messenger but clear deliverance.

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأِنَّمَا عَلَىٰ رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] Allah, there is no deity but He; and in Allah let the believers place trust.

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَعَلَىٰ اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] O those who have believed, surely among your wives and children there are enemies to you; so beware of them. But if you pardon, overlook and forgive, then Allah is All-forgiving, All-kind.¹⁰

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ وَإِنْ تَعَفَّوْا وَتَصْفَحُوا وَتَعْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾

9. In what sense does Allah guide a man's heart? Zamakhshari says it refers to the tranquility of the heart and its inclination to obey the commandments.

Ibn `Abbas and `Alqamah (as also Mujahid: Kashshaf) said that He fills his heart with faith so that he realizes that what struck him could not have missed him and what missed him could not have struck him (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Shawkani).

10. Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah and Dahhak are reported to have said that when some of the Muslims (that of

`Awf b. Malik al-Ashja'i is a case in point) wished to migrate to Madinah (from Makkah or the countryside), their wives and children pleaded against the plan, so that, ultimately when they did migrate, they found that in the meantime others had learnt a lot of Islam. They felt angry about it and wanted to punish their folks (for having prevented early migration). Allah revealed these words directing them to pardon, overlook and forgive (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

[15] Surely, your wealth and your children are only a trial,¹¹ and with Allah is a great reward.

إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾

On the other hand, `Ataa b. Yasaar's opinion was that the verses were referring to those who sat back from a campaign or two being influenced by their wives and children who prevented them by pleading, "And who is going to look after us after you?" (Ibn Jarir, Shawkani).

The above report is in Tirmidhi who declared it trustworthy (Ibn Kathir).

In Yusuf Ali's words: "In some cases, the demands of families, i.e., wife and children, may conflict with a man's moral and spiritual convictions and duties. In such cases, he must guard against the abandonment of his convictions, duties, and ideals to their requests or desires. But he must not treat them harshly. He must make reasonable provision for them, and if they persist in opposing his clear duties and convictions, he must forgive them and not expose them to shame or ridicule, while at the same time holding on to his clear duty."

11. It is in their love that a man commits many evils, and on their account disobeys Allah, such as, earning in

an unlawful way to meet with their needs and desires (Razi, reworded).

Qurtubi warns that the rule is reversible. That is, sometimes a husband is enemy to his wife.

It is reported in connection with this verse that,

(عن) أَبِي بُرَيْدَةَ يَقُولُ: "كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَخْطُبُنَا إِذَا جَاءَ الْحَسَنُ وَالْحُسَيْنُ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ قَمِيصَانِ أَحْمَرَانِ يَمْشِيَانِ وَيَعْتُرَانِ فَنَزَلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنَ الْمِنْبَرِ فَحَمَلَهُمَا وَوَضَعَهُمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ: صَدَقَ اللَّهُ { إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ } (التغابن: ١٥) نَظَرْتُ إِلَى هَذَيْنِ الصَّبِيَّيْنِ يَمْشِيَانِ وَيَعْتُرَانِ فَلَمْ أَصْبِرْ حَتَّى قَطَعْتُ حَادِيثِي وَرَفَعْتَهُمَا".

Once the Prophet was addressing a congregation when Hasan and Husain appeared in pink shirts, sauntering and jumping. He came down the pulpit, lifted them and placed them before him. Then he remarked, "Allah spoke the truth: 'Surely, your wealth and your children are only a trial.' I saw these two children saunter-

[16] Therefore, fear Allah as far as you are able,¹² and listen and obey, and expend, that is better for your own souls; and whosoever is saved from the avarice of his own soul, those, they are the prosperers.

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَأَسْمِعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا
وَأَنْفِقُوا خَيْرًا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ
نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

ing and jumping and I could not restrain myself until I interrupted my speech to pick them up” (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

The above report is in Tirmidhi (who declared it as not so trustworthy). It is also in Ibn Hibban’s collection (who said it is trustworthy), as well as in Nasa’i and Ahmad (Au.).

The Prophet has said about children in a report preserved by Bazzar and declared trustworthy by Haythami:

"إن الولد مبخله مُجهلة مُجبنة". (رواه
البيزار ورجاله ثقات - مجمع الزوائد ومنبع
الفوائد.

“Children make (one) miserly, ignorant and cowardly” (Au.).

12. A *hadith* of Bukhari and Muslim states the same thing. We present Bukhari’s version:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ دَعَوْنِي مَا تَرَكْتُكُمْ إِتْمَا هَلَكَ مَنْ
كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ بِسُؤَالِهِمْ وَاحْتِيَالِهِمْ عَلَيَّ
أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ فَإِذَا نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ فَاحْتَنِبُوهُ وَإِذَا
أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِأَمْرٍ فَأْتُوا مِنْهُ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ.

The Prophet said, “So long as I leave you alone, you leave me alone. Those before you were destroyed because of their much questioning and disagreements with their Prophets. When I ask you to avoid something, you avoid it; and when I ask you to do something, do it to the best of your ability” (Ibn Kathir).

The opinion of Zayd b. Aslam was that this ayah abrogates an earlier ayah of *Surah Al ‘Imran* because of the hardships that the former had caused. It said,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُونُوا
بِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ (آل عمران: ١٠٢)

“Believers, fear Allah in the manner He should be feared, and die not but as Muslims.” People thought that it was too difficult for them to fear Allah in the manner He should be feared and, therefore, Allah revealed this verse to offer concession. This was also the opinion of Abu al-‘Aliyyah, Zayd b. Aslam, Qatadah, Rabi` b. Anas,

[17] If you lend Allah a goodly loan, He will multiply it for you, and will forgive you,¹³ and Allah is All-appreciative, All-clement.

إِنْ تَقْرَضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُضَاعِفْهُ لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] Knower of the Unseen and the visible, the All-mighty, the All-wise.

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٨﴾

Suddi and Muqatil b. Hayyan (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Jarir disagrees with this opinion and Razi thinks that the two verses are dealing with different issues.

That is, fearing Allah to the extent of one's ability is one thing, and to fear Him in the manner His Greatness requires, is another. A man's ability increases with his attainment of the possible. And it being the demand that he fear in the manner that Allah should be feared, a man's every successful attempt to achieve the possible, results in the increase of the range of possibility. It can go on endlessly (Au.).

13. We could quote a *hadith* to this effect. It is from Muslim's collection:

نَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "يَنْزِلُ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا لِشَطْرِ اللَّيْلِ، أَوْ لِنِثْلِ اللَّيْلِ الْآخِرِ، فَيَقُولُ: مَنْ يَدْعُونِي فَأَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُ أَوْ يَسْأَلُنِي فَأَعْطِيهِ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ: مَنْ يَقْرِضُ نَيْرَ عَادِيْمٍ وَلَا ظُلْمٍ"

The Prophet said, "Allah comes down to the firmament closest to the earth at midnight or last-third part of the night and says, 'Who will supplicate Me that I should respond to Him, or ask Me so that I give him? Who will give a loan to Him who is neither poor nor an oppressor?'" (Ibn Kathir).

Shawkani traces another *hadith* in this context. It is in *Hakim*, (declared trustworthy by Dhahabi: S. Ibrahim). The Prophet reported Allah's words:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- قَالَ «يَقُولُ اسْتَقْرَضْتُ عَبْدِي فَلَمْ يَقْرَضْنِي وَيَسْتَمْنِي عَبْدِي وَهُوَ لَا يَدْرِي يَقُولُ وَأَدَهْرَاهُ وَأَدَهْرَاهُ وَأَنَا الدَّهْرُ» (مسند أحمد)

"I sought a loan from My slave but he did not give Me, but rather My slave abuses Me without knowing: he says 'O bad times, O bad times,' while I am the 'Time.'"

مَلِكًا

Surah 65
Al-Talaq¹

Madinan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] O Prophet, when you (all)² divorce women, divorce them at³ their periods,⁴ and reckon the period. And fear Allah, your Lord, and do not expel them from their homes,⁵ and let them not leave,⁶ except that they commit a flagrant obscenity.⁷ These are Allah's bounds; whosoever crossed Allah's bounds, indeed wronged his own soul. (A soul) does not know that perchance Allah will bring about thereafter something new to pass.⁸

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ
لِعَدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ
لَا تُخْرِجُوهُنَّ مِنْ بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا يُخْرَجْنَ إِلَّا
أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ
اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ
نَفْسَهُ لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ
ذَلِكَ أَمْرًا ﴿١﴾

1. Ibn Mas`ud referred to this Surah as “Surah Nisa’ al-Qusra” (the shorter Nisa’) as in Ibn Jarir. However, relevant portions of Surah al-Baqarah and al-Nisa’ may be studied for a fuller understanding of this Surah (Au.).

2. “Note that in the first instance the Prophet is himself addressed individually, as the Teacher and representative of the Community. Then the actual directions: ‘when ye ... : are addressed to the Community collectively’” (Yusuf Ali)

3. The article “at” is for “li” of the text and is a literal translation; but, as Imām Razi points out, it must be understood in the same sense as in another usage of the Qur’ān,

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ (الإسراء: ٧٨)

“Establish the Prayer at the decline of the sun.”

Or,

هُوَ الَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ
بَنِيهِمْ لِأَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ (الحشر: ٢)

“He it is who brought out from their dwellings the unbelievers among the People of the Book at the fist mustering.”

In both the above verses, as well as the one under discussion, the “li” of the text should be understood as “inda” meaning, during, or at.

4. The textual word for “period” is *’iddah*. What period is this? Is it the period of menstruation or of cleanliness? A *hadith* makes this clear (Au.).

Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir quote the following. (It is in Bukhari, Muslim and others).

(عن) سَالِمٍ أَنَّ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عَمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّهُ طَلَّقَ امْرَأَتَهُ وَهِيَ حَائِضٌ فَذَكَرَ عُمَرُ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَتَعَيَّظَ فِيهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ثُمَّ قَالَ لِيُرْاجِعَهَا ثُمَّ يُمْسِكُهَا حَتَّى تَطْهَرَ ثُمَّ نَحِيضَ فَتَطْهَرَ فَإِنْ بَدَا لَهُ أَنْ يُطَلِّقَهَا فَلْيُطَلِّقَهَا طَاهِرًا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَمْسَسَهَا فَيْلِكَ الْعِدَّةُ كَمَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

’Abdullah ibn ’Umar divorced his wife while she was in her menstrual cycle. ’Umar mentioned it to the Prophet. He was quite upset about it. He said, “Let him take her back and retain her until she becomes clean; then she goes into her next cycle, and becomes clean once again. If at that time

he feels that he should divorce her during her period of cleanliness, without having touched her (in that period), then he might divorce her. That is the period that Allah has ordered.”

Ibn Kathir writes: According to the version in Muslim, the Prophet then recited the first verse of this *Surah*.

This then was the opinion of ’Abdullah ibn Mas’ud, Ibn ’Umar, Ibn ’Abbas, ’At a’, Mujahid, Hasan, Ibn Sirin, Qatadah, Maymun b. Mahran, Muqatil b. Hayyan, ’Ikrimah and Dahhak.

Accordingly, legal experts have said that there are three types of divorces: (i) the *Sunnah* divorce (which is above), (ii) the *Bid’ah* divorce (which is to divorce during the monthly cycle, or after intercourse during the period of cleanliness), or, (iii) divorcing a minor, or a woman in her menopause phase (i.e., does not expect to undergo a monthly cycle).

Ibn Jarir writes: Someone told Ibn ’Abbas that he had pronounced a hundred divorces to his wife. He said, “You have disobeyed your Lord. However, your wife is separated from you. You did not fear Allah so that He could show you a way out.” (I.e., you cannot take her back because it was an irrevocable divorce: Au.). Ac-

According to another report, Ibn `Abbas responded in the same way when someone told him that he had pronounced three divorces in one go.

Qatadah explained the right way: "You wait for her to emerge clean. Then, if you have not touched her, pronounce one divorce. Then you wait for her to enter into her cycle and, after she becomes clean, pronounce the second divorce. Finally, wait for another menstrual cycle and let her emerge clean when you can pronounce your third divorce."

Now, the question is, is the pronouncement of three divorces in one session allowed? The answer is, says Razi, yes, but it is a sin. Imām Razi presents a *hadith* to support it. Ibn `Abbas was firmly of the same opinion, as many others were.

There is no difference in opinion among the four schools of thought that if three divorces are pronounced at a time, the woman is irrevocably divorced (Mufti Shafi').

For further details *Fiqh* books may be consulted. Nonetheless, due to spread of ignorance, the question of three divorces in one session has been subjected to fresh discussions by the Fuqaha'. Recent *Fiqh* books and research papers may be consulted for details (Au.).

Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir add: Actually, the Prophet had divorced Hafsa bint `Umar, at one time. But he was told to take her back because she Prayed a lot and fasted much, and who will be his wife in Paradise. So he took her back. The *hadith* is as follows:

فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: "أتاني جبريل عليه السلام فقال: راجع حفصة فإنها صوامة قوامة وإنها زوجتك في الجنة". (رواه الطبراني ورجاله رجال الصحيح: الألباني - مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

There seem to be more than one version of this *hadith*, but others are not so trustworthy (Au.).

5. That is, until the end of the term. And the term itself applies to several monthly cycles and states of cleanliness, until the third divorce is pronounced. Until this irrevocable divorce she lives in the same quarters as her husband (Ibn Jarir).

Yusuf Ali writes: "As Islam treats the married woman as a full juristic personality in every sense of the term a married woman has a right, in the married state, to a house or apartment of her own. And a house or apartment implies the reasonable expenses for its upkeep and for her own and her children's maintenance.

And this is obligatory not only in the married state, but during the 'iddat, which is necessarily a most trying period for the woman. During this period she must not only not be turned out, but it is not decent for her to leave of her own accord, lest the chances of reconciliation should be diminished."

6. That is, the divorced woman should also not leave the house. If she does, then, she relinquishes the living allowance from her husband (Ibn Jarir).

7. The allusion is to fornication and according to Hasan and Ibn Zayd she will not be expelled except to be stoned to death (Ibn Jarir). That is, her crime has to be proven in the court of Law (Au.). But Ibn Jarir extends it to other obscenities such as a crime that involves capital punishment.

That the allusion is to adultery was the opinion of Ibn Mas'ud, Ibn 'Abbas, Sa'eed b. al-Musayyib, Sha'bi, Hasan, Ibn Sirin, Mujahid, 'Ikrimah, Sa'id b. Jubayr, Abu Qila-

bah, Abu Saleh, Dahhak, Zayd b. Aslam, 'Ataa al-Khurasani, Suddi, and others (Ibn Kathir).

8. That is, Dahhak, Ibn Zayd, Suddi and others said, maybe Allah will inspire the husband to take her back before the irrevocable divorce is pronounced (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Yusuf Ali explains how one should go about it: "A reconciliation is possible, and is indeed recommended at every stage. The first serious difference between the parties are to be submitted to a family council on which both sides are represented; divorce is not to be pronounced when mutual physical attraction is at an ebb; when it is pronounced, there should be a period of probationary waiting: dower has to be paid and due provision has to be made for many things on equitable terms; every facility has to be given for reconciliation till the last moment, and impediments are provided against hasty impulses leading to rupture. "Thou knowest not if perchance Allah will bring about thereafter some new situation."

[2] Then, when they have reached their term, retain them honorably⁹ or part with them honorably;¹⁰ and call in to witness two men of equity from among yourselves;¹¹ and establish the testimony for the sake of Allah. Thus is admonished hereby he who believes in Allah and the Last Day; and whosoever fears Allah, He will find a way out for him.¹²

فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ
أَوْ فَارِقُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَأَشْهِدُوا ذَوَيْ عَدْلٍ
مِّنكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ لِلَّهِ ذَلِكَ يُوَعِّظُ
بِهِ مَن كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَمَن يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا ﴿٢﴾

9. That is, before the third irrevocable divorce. The husband may change his mind and retain her. But he should do that honorably and behave in a goodly manner (Ibn Jarir).

10. Alternatively, a husband may decide to send his twice-divorced wife away with her mahr, gifts, etc. (Ibn Jarir).

11. That is, if the woman completes her third *'iddah*, she is now automatically irrevocably divorced. As for witnesses, the husband is required to bring in two equitable persons to bear witness either to revocation of the divorce after the second divorce, or to his final irrevocable divorce (Ibn Jarir).

12. Yusuf Ali again: "In these very delicate and difficult matters, the wisdom of jurists provides a less satisfactory solution than a sincere

desire to be just and true, which is described as the 'fear of Allah'.

Where such a desire exists, Allah often provides a solution in the most unexpected ways or from the most unexpected quarters; e.g., the worst enemies may be reconciled, or the cry or the smile of an infant baby may heal seemingly irreparable injuries or unite hearts seemingly alienated for ever. And Faith is followed at once by a psychological feeling of rest for the troubled spirit."

Imām Ahmad has a *hadīth* in this context:

عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ قَالَ جَعَلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله
عليه وسلم- يَتْلُو عَلَيَّ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ { وَمَن يَتَّقِ
اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا } (الطلاق: ٢) حَتَّى فَرَغَ
مِنَ الْآيَةِ ثُمَّ قَالَ «يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ لَوْ أَنَّ النَّاسَ
كُلَّهُمْ أَخَذُوا بِهَا لَكَفَنَتْهُمْ». قَالَ فَجَعَلَ يَتْلُو
بِهَا وَيُرَدِّدُهَا عَلَيَّ حَتَّى نَعَسْتُ ثُمَّ قَالَ «يَا
أَبَا ذَرٍّ كَيْفَ تَصْنَعُ إِنْ أُخْرِجْتَ مِنْ
الْمَدِينَةِ». قَالَ قُلْتُ إِلَى السَّعَةِ وَالذَّعَةِ أَنْطَلِقُ
حَتَّى أَكُونَ حَمَامَةً مِنْ حَمَامِ مَكَّةَ. قَالَ

«كَيْفَ تَصْنَعُ إِنْ أُخْرِجْتَ مِنْ مَكَّةَ». قَالَ
 قُلْتُ إِلَى السَّعَةِ وَالدَّعَةِ إِلَى الشَّامِ وَالْأَرْضِ
 الْمُقَدَّسَةِ. قَالَ «فَكَيْفَ تَصْنَعُ إِنْ أُخْرِجْتَ
 مِنْ الشَّامِ». قَالَ قُلْتُ إِذَا وَالَّذِي بَعَثَكَ
 بِالْحَقِّ أَضَعَّ سَيْفِي عَلَى عَاتِقِي. قَالَ «أَوْ
 خَيْرٍ مِنْ ذَلِكَ». قَالَ قُلْتُ أَوْ خَيْرٍ مِنْ ذَلِكَ.
 قَالَ «تَسْمَعُ وَتُطِيعُ وَإِنْ كَانَ عَبْدًا حَبَشِيًّا»
 (مسند أحمد)

Abu Dharr reports: The Prophet began to recite this verse to me: “and whoever fears Allah, He will find a way out for him”, until he finished reciting it. Then he said, “O Abu Dharr, if the people were to take it (in the right spirit) it would suffice them.” Then he began to recite it and repeat it upon me until I began to slumber. Then he said, “O Abu Dharr, how will you react if you are expelled from Madinah?” I answered, “To the spacious places and peace. I shall travel until I am a pigeon among the pigeons of Makkah.” He said, “How will you react if you are expelled from Makkah?” I answered, “To the spacious places and peace of Syria and the Holy Lands.” He asked, “How will you react if you are expelled from Syria?” I answered, “By Allah, in that case I shall take up the sword.” He said,

“Or, maybe something better than that.” I repeated after him, “Or, maybe something better than that.” He said, “Listen and obey, even if it is an Abyssinian slave.”

The report is in the *Sahih* of Ibn Hibban. Its first half is in Hakim which Dhahabi treated as *Sahih*; and, as predicted, Abu Dharr was asked to leave Syria because of the consternation he was causing criticizing the wealthy, and had to be sent out to Rabdha (a place outside Madinah) because of the same problem at Madinah (Au.).

One could quote another *hadith* in this context. It is from Musnad of Ahmad:

عَنْ ثَوْبَانَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ
 عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- «لَا يَزِيدُ فِي الْعُمْرِ إِلَّا الْبِرُّ وَلَا
 يُرَدُّ الْقَدَرُ إِلَّا الدُّعَاءُ وَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَحْرَمُ
 الرِّزْقَ بِالذَّنْبِ يُصِيبُهُ». (سنن ابن ماجه)

On the authority of Thawban, the Prophet said, “Nothing increases one’s life-term but good deeds, nothing can revoke the Divine Decree but supplications; and, a man can be denied providence because of the sins that he commits” (Ibn
 .(Kathir

[3] And He will provide for him from whence he did not reckon. And whosoever placed trust in Allah, He is sufficient for him; Allah will accomplish His purpose;¹³ except that Allah has appointed a measure for everything.

وَيَرْزُقُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ
عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ
قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا ﴿٣﴾

[4] As for those of your women who have passed the age of menstruation, if you are in doubt,¹⁴ their period is three months, as well as of those who never menstruated. As regards the pregnant ones, their term is that they deliver their burden.¹⁵ And whoever fears Allah, He renders for him his affairs easy.

وَاللَّائِي يَيْسَنَ مِنَ الْمَحِيضِ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ
إِنْ ارْتَبْتُمْ فَعِدَّتُهُنَّ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْهُرٍ وَاللَّائِي
لَمْ يَحْضَنْ وَأُولَاتِ الْأَحْمَالِ أَجَلُهُنَّ أَنْ
يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ
أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا ﴿٤﴾

The above report is also in *Sahih* of Ibn Hibban, Ibn Majah, and Hakim. Dhahabi agreed with Hakim in declaring it trustworthy (Au.).

This *hadith* could not be traced in any other major work (Au.).

Another report on the topic of dependence on Allah is from Ahmad:

13. “Our anger and our impatience have to be curbed. Our friends and our mates or associates may seem to us ever so weak and unreasonable, and the circumstances may be ever so disheartening; yet we must trust in Allah. How can we measure our own weakness or perhaps blindness? He knows all. His universal Purpose is always good. His Will must be accomplished, and we should wish for its accomplishment. His ordering of the universe observes a due, just, and perfect proportion” (Yusuf Ali).

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- «مَنْ تَوَلَّى بِهِ حَاجَةً فَأَنْزَلَهَا بِالنَّاسِ كَانَ قَمِينًا مِنْ أَنْ لَا تَسْهَلَ حَاجَتُهُ وَمَنْ أَنْزَلَهَا بِاللَّهِ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ بِرِزْقٍ عَاجِلٍ أَوْ بِمَوْتٍ آجِلٍ» (مسند أحمد)

The Prophet said, “Whosoever is visited by a pressing need, and he takes it to the people, then it is deserving that the need should not be eased out; but whoever took it to Allah, Allah bestows on him either an immediate provision, or a deferred death” (Ibn Kathir).

14. There are two opinions regarding the words “if you are in doubt.” (i) If you are in doubt about an old woman whether her blood is that of menstruation or is it “*istihaadha*” (post-

[5] That is Allah's command that He has sent down to you; and whoever feared Allah, He will acquit him of his evil deeds and will enlarge his reward.

ذَلِكَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ أَنْزَلَهُ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهُ أَجْرًا ﴿٥﴾

[6] House them wherein you house yourselves,¹⁶ according to your means, and harass them not so as to constrict them; and if they are pregnant, expend on them until they deliver their burden.¹⁷ Further, if they suckle for you, then give them their wages and counsel together in a goodly manner.¹⁸ But if you both make difficulties, let another suckle him.¹⁹

أَسْكِنُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ سَكَنْتُمْ مِنْ وُجْدِكُمْ وَلَا تُضَارُّوهُنَّ لِتُضَيِّقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ وَإِنْ كُنَّ أَوْلَاتٍ حَمَلٍ فَانْفِقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ فَإِنْ أَرْضَعْنَ لَكُمْ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ وَأَمِّرُوا بَيْنَكُمْ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَإِنْ تَعَاَسَرْتُم فَاِتْرَابًا فَاسْتَرْضِعْ لَهُ أُخْرَىٰ ﴿٦﴾

menstrual bleeding) .. then their period is .. to the end of the verse and, (ii) The sentence construction is something like this: “If you are in doubt about what should be the *‘iddah* for an old woman or a young one who has not yet menstruated, then, you should know that their *‘iddah* is three months. The latter is the preferred opinion (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

عَنْ الْمِسْوَرِ بْنِ مَخْرَمَةَ أَنَّ سَبِيْعَةَ الْأَسْلَمِيَّةَ تُرِفِي عَنْهَا زَوْحَهَا وَهِيَ حَامِلٌ فَلَمْ تَمُكْتُ إِلَّا لَيْلِي حَتَّىٰ وَضَعَتْ فَلَمَّا تَعَلَّتْ مِنْ نَفَاسِهَا حُطِبَتْ فَاسْتَأْذَنَتِ النَّبِيَّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- فِي النِّكَاحِ فَأُذِنَ لَهَا أَنْ تَنْكِحَ فَنَكَحَتْ. (مسند أحمد)

Miswar reported that Subay`ah's husband died leaving her pregnant. It was not but a few days when she gave birth. When her bleeding ceased, she received an offer for marriage. She spoke to the Prophet about the proposal. He allowed her, and she got married” (Ibn Kathir).

15. This applies to both situations: when a man divorces a woman in her pregnancy, or he dies leaving his wife pregnant. In both cases, the waiting period ends with the delivery, even if the delivery takes place a few days after the divorce, or death of the husband. There is consensus of the jurists over this issue. There are several *ahadith* clarifying this. We may present one from the *Sahihyan* and others:

16. Although provision has not been mentioned along with housing, but it should be obvious that one eats in a house he or she lives in (Shabbir).

17. There is no difference in opinion between the jurists that a pregnant woman – if divorced - has to be provided with food and shelter by the former husband, until she delivers. But, what if three divorces have been pronounced, (or she has obtained a khul') and she is not pregnant? Does she get the living allowance? Here there is disagreement. According to Imām Shafe`i and Ahmad, a woman divorced thrice in a single session, does not deserve the living quarters and food expenses. But, according to Imām Abu Haneefah, it is an obligation on the husband – until termination of the woman's `iddah (Mufti Shafi` Deobandi).

Those who believe that a thrice-divorced woman does not deserve food and housing, depend on the following widely reported *hadith* of Muslim, Abu Da'ud, Nasa'i and others:

(عن) فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتِ قَيْسٍ أَنَّ أَبَا عَمْرٍو بْنَ حَفْصِ الْمَخْزُومِيَّ طَلَّقَهَا ثَلَاثًا فَأَنْطَلَقَ خَالِدُ بْنُ الْوَلِيدِ فِي نَفَرٍ مِنْ بَنِي مَخْزُومٍ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ أَبَا عَمْرٍو بْنَ حَفْصِ طَلَّقَ فَاطِمَةَ ثَلَاثًا فَهَلْ لَهَا نَفَقَةٌ فَقَالَ «لَيْسَ لَهَا نَفَقَةٌ وَلَا سَكْنَى». (سنن النسائي)

Fatimah bint Qays reported that Abu `Amr b. Hafs of the Makhzum tribe pronounced three di-

vorces. Khalid b. al-Waleed went up to see the Prophet along with a few Makhzumis and told him, "Messenger of Allah. Abu `Amr b. Hafs has divorced Fatimah thrice. Does she get the living allowance?" He answered, "She gets neither provision nor housing" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others).

Other reports add the detail that she was offered food allowance but she thought it was inadequate and hence had to complain to the Prophet (Au.).

However, when a similar situation arose during `Umar's caliphate, and he was told of Fatima's *hadith*, he refused to accept her report. He said, "We cannot abandon Allah's Book and the Prophet's *Sunnah* because of a single woman's report." (Badruddin `Ayni adds: According to other reports, Umar said, "A report about which we do not know how much she remembered and how much she forgot." Yet another report added that he said, "Let her bring forth two equitable witnesses, otherwise we do not abandon Allah's Book and the Prophet's *Sunnah*," and he recited this *ayah*: Au.). By *Sunnah*, `Umar was perhaps referring to his own *hadith*, now in Tabarani, wherein he reported, "I have heard the Prophet

[7] Let the man of means expend according to his means, while he whose resources are restricted, let him expend out of what Allah has bestowed on him. Allah does not burden a soul but to the extent He has given him. Allah will soon bring about ease after hardship.²⁰

لِيُنْفِقَ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّن سَعَتِهِ وَمَن قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ تَفْسًا إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا ﴿٧﴾

declare food and housing as an obligation on the husband in case of tripple divorces” (Mufti Shafi’).

Moreover, Fatimah bint Qays’ case seems to have been a special one. Firstly, reports say that she had actually been offered provision but she thought it was too low. (In fact, according to some reports she was angry at the offer: Au.). Perhaps when the Prophet told her that she gets no provision, he meant over and above what she had already been offered. Secondly, and with regard to housing, reports suggest that she was somewhat of a sharp-tongued woman and her in-laws had a tough time dealing with her. Therefore, the Prophet told her, “you have no housing.” Now, if she did not get housing with her in-laws, then allowance went with it. Indeed, the rule is, if a woman leaves her housing on her own accord, she loses the right to provision (Shabbir).

18. That is, even after the woman has left her husband’s house, the

divorced wife has the first right to suckle her child, but has to be paid for the suckling (Ibn Jarir), and, even if the child is suckled by another woman, it cannot be separated from the mother (Mufti Shafi’).

19. That is, if both are unreasonable with each other, creating problems (she demanding high, or he offering low), then, let the child be suckled by another woman, (who of course does it voluntarily, or is paid: Au.). The mother cannot be forced to breast-feed (Ibn Jarir).

20. Sayyid reviews the laws, commandments and injunctions for women and concludes: “It was not in the Arab world alone that a woman suffered variety of injustices, was deprived of every right, and was treated as a chattel. Her condition was no better, if not worse, in the rest of the world. (Even as late as 700 years after Islam, it was possible in Britain for a woman to be tide up to a horse and moved about forcibly: Au.). In the European religious circles she was

treated as something unclean and no less than Satan. Taking her from there, Islam raised her to the lofty position about which we have spoken in above lines. Islam raised her to a high position, giving her rights unheard of before. She was now an infant that could not be buried alive or humiliated; a respectable lady – previously married or virgin - who could not be married off without her consent, a wife who had the law guaranteeing her upkeep, a divorcee whose rights were firmly stated as in this chapter and in *Surah Al-Baqarah*.

“Islam gave her all this not because women in the Arabian Peninsula, or anywhere in the world, realized that they were being maltreated, not because the conscience of males over the world felt any pain on her account, not because women had an Arab or international union seeking rights and justice, or because women had entered into parliaments and senates demanding better treatment, or a voice from anywhere in the world spoke on their behalf; but rather, it was Islam: a heavenly law, a heavenly justice and the Divine Will, that had decided that that humans, men and women, should be raised to a new and higher level of honor and respect.”

Ibn Kathir writes: Ahmad has preserved a *hadith* for us. It says,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ دَخَلَ رَجُلٌ عَلَى أَهْلِهِ
فَلَمَّا رَأَى مَا بِهِمْ مِنَ الْحَاجَةِ خَرَجَ إِلَى
الْبَرِيَّةِ فَلَمَّا رَأَتْ امْرَأَتُهُ قَامَتْ إِلَى الرَّحَى
فَوَضَعَتْهَا وَإِلَى التَّنُّورِ فَسَجَرَتْهُ ثُمَّ قَالَتْ
اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْنَا. فَنظَرَتْ فَإِذَا الْحَفْنَةُ قَدْ امْتَلَأَتْ
- قَالَ - وَذَهَبَتْ إِلَى التَّنُّورِ فَوَجَدَتْهُ مُمْتَلِئًا
- قَالَ - فَرَجَعَ الزَّوْجُ قَالَ أَصَبْتُمْ بَعْدِي
شَيْئًا قَالَتْ امْرَأَتُهُ نَعَمْ مِنْ رَبَّنَا قَامَ إِلَى
الرَّحَى فَذَكَرَ ذَلِكَ لِلنَّبِيِّ -صلى الله عليه
وسلم- فَقَالَ «أَمَا إِنَّهُ لَوْ لَمْ يَرْفَعَهَا لَمْ تَزَلْ
تُدْوِرُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ»

A man entered upon his family, but when he saw how much in want they were, he left for the outskirts. When his wife saw this, she placed the grinder on the hand-mill stone and went up to the oven and lighted it. Then she said, “O Allah feed us.” Then, as she looked at the bowl, lo, it was full. She went up to the oven and found it full. Later, her husband returned and asked, “Did you find something?” She said, “Yes – from our Lord. He set right the mill-stone.” This was mentioned to the Prophet. He remarked, “If you had not lifted it (the millstone), it would have kept going round (yielding) until the Judgment Day.”

[8] And how many a town transgressed the commandment of its Lord and His Messengers, wherefore We subjected it to a harsh account;²¹ and We chastised it with a horrible chastisement.²²

وَكَايِن مِّن قَرْيَةٍ عَتَتْ عَن أَمْرِ رَبِّهَا وَرُسُلِهِ
فَحَاسَبْنَاهَا حِسَابًا شَدِيدًا وَعَدَّبْنَاهَا
عَذَابًا نُكْرًا ﴿١٨﴾

[9] So it tasted the grievousness of its conduct, and the end of its affair was ruin.

فَذَاقَتْ وَبَالَ أَمْرِهَا وَكَانَ عَاقِبَةُ أَمْرِهَا
حُسْرًا ﴿١٩﴾

[10] Allah has prepared for them a sever chastisement. Fear Allah then, O men of understanding;²³ those who have believed; Allah has already sent down to you a reminder.²⁴

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا
أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَدْ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
إِلَيْكُمْ ذِكْرًا ﴿٢٠﴾

Haythamiyy treated the above report as trustworthy.

And, it was the habit of the Companions to conceal their personal virtues. It would be quite interesting to find out whether it was not an incident involving Abu Hurayrah himself. But major *hadith* books and their commentaries are quiet about it (Au.).

21. That is, said the *Salaf*, they were subjected to a merciless accounting (Ibn Jarir).

22. This is to remind the Muslims that they ought not to take the above

commandments lightly, treating them with contumely or disdain. They may know that there have been many nations before who rejected Allah's commandments in pride, and, therefore, tasted severe chastisement (Shabbir).

23. *Taqwa* has levels. The first level is to have faith in Allah's oneness. So, when an unbeliever is exhorted to *Taqwa*, (the invitation is to belief in Allah and His oneness). On the other hand, when it is believers who are addressed, then the call is to desist from sins (Razi).

24. That is, the Qur'an.

[11] A Messenger reciting to you clear revelations of Allah, to bring out those who believe and do righteous deeds from darkneses into light; and He will admit whosoever believes in Allah and does righteous deeds, into Gardens underneath which rivers flow, abiding therein, forever; Allah has prepared for him a goodly provision.

رَسُولًا يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ لِّيُخْرِجَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا قَدْ أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ لَهُ رِزْقًا ﴿١١﴾

[12] It is Allah who created the seven heavens and of the earth their like;²⁵ the command descends between them²⁶ so that you may know that Allah has power over all things and that Allah has encompassed everything with knowledge.²⁷

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَتَنَزَّلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِيَتْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ﴿١٢﴾

25. Ibn `Abbas said, “In every earth there are the likes of Ibrahim, and a creation like the creation on this earth.” And Mujahid (his pupil) reported that Ibn `Abbas said, “If I were to interpret this verse rightly, you would turn disbelievers. Your denial would tantamount to disbelief” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Yet another report that has come to us from Ibn `Abbas is that he said with reference to this verse,

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما أنه قال :
 { اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ }
 (الطلاق: ١٢) قال: سبع أرضين في كل
 أرض نبي كنبينكم و آدم و نوح كنوح و
 إبراهيم كإبراهيم و عيسى كعيسى
 (المستدرک علی الصحیحین للحاکم مع

تعليقات الذهبي في التلخيص) قال الحاكم:
 هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد و لم يُخرجاه
 (تعليق الذهبي في التلخيص: صحيح)

“There are seven earths, in each earth a Prophet like your Prophet, and Adam; Nuh like your Nuh, and Ibrahim like your Ibrahim, an `Isa like your `Isa” (Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Kathir picks the *hadith* from Bayhaqi’s *al-Asma’ wa al-Sifaat*, but we have taken it as it appears in Hakim about which Dhahabi said that it has a trustworthy chain of narrators (Au.).

Ibn Mas`ud said in this regard, “Allah created seven firmaments; between each of them a travel distance

of 500 years. Above the seven heavens is Water. Above Water is Allah. Nothing of the deeds of Adam's children is hidden from Him. And, there are seven earths, between each other the travel distance of 500 years, and the depth of each earth is 500 years." Mujahid said, "Each firmament in comparison to another is like a ring thrown in the desert" (Ibn Jarir)

And Qatadah said, "Of the seven firmaments, in each there is an earth, a creation specific to it, commandments specific to it and Allah's Decree specific to it" (Ibn Jarir, Kashshaf).

Ibn Jarir also quotes the long *hadith* of Tirmidhi which we have presented while explaining *ayah* 3 of *Surah al-Hadid* (57), under comment no. 7.

Qurtubi writes: There have been two interpretations of this *ayah*: (i) There are seven earths, one over another with the same distance between one earth and another as between one firmament and another, and (ii) there are seven earths but they are one upon another as layers. This was Dahhak's opinion. But the first mentioned interpretation is the correct one. That there are seven earths is proven by several *ahadith*. One in Bukhari says,

مَنْ ظَلَمَ قِيدَ شِبْرٍ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ طَوَّفَهُ مِنْ سَبْعِ
أَرْضِينَ.

The Prophet said, "Whoever transgressed by a hand-span of land, will have seven earths hung by his neck."

Another version is also in Bukhari:

مَنْ أَحَدَ شَيْئًا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ بَعِيرٍ حَقَّهُ حُسْفٌ
بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَى سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ.

The Prophet said, "Whoever took anything of the land without right, will be made to sink into the earth on the Day of Judgment (to the depth of) seven earths."

Some scholars have thought that the seven earths refer to seven layers of one, our earth. But the geologists generally divide the earth's layers into five: (i) Crust, (ii) Upper Mantle, (iii) Lower Mantle, (iv) Outer Core and, (v) Inner Core.

However, a more detailed description makes it ten layers: (i) Lithosphere, (ii) Asthenosphere, (iii) Transition Zone, (iv) Mohorovicic Discontinuity, (v) Upper Mantle, (vi) Transition Zode, (vii) Lower Mantle, (viii) Gutenberg Discontinuity, (ix) Outer Core and (x) Inner Core. A few of those of our contemporary world

who hold the opinion that there is one earth with seven layers, count differently and include the atmosphere as one layer, ignoring some of the zones stated by geologists.

Nonetheless, the following *ahadith* strengthen the position of the majority who hold that there are seven earths:

«يَطْوِي اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ السَّمَوَاتِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ يَأْخُذُهُنَّ بِيَدِهِ الْيُمْنَى ثُمَّ يَقُولُ أَنَا الْمَلِكُ أَيْنَ الْجَبَّارُونَ أَيْنَ الْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ ثُمَّ يَطْوِي الْأَرْضِينَ بِشِمَالِهِ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ أَنَا الْمَلِكُ أَيْنَ الْجَبَّارُونَ أَيْنَ الْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ». (صحيح مسلم)

The Prophet said, as in a *hadith* of Muslim: “Allah will wrap the heavens on the Day of Judgment around his Right Hand and say, ‘I am the Compeller. Where are the tyrants? Where are the proud ones?’ Then He will fold the earths in His Left Hand and say, ‘I am the King. Where are the tyrants? Where are the proud ones?’”

Another *hadith* is found in various books. The following is from the Musnad of Bazzar, treated as trustworthy by Dhahabi, Shu`ayb Arna`ut, and others:

قَالَ كَعْبُ الْأَحْبَارِ: مَا أَنَّى مُحَمَّدٌ قَرْيَةً يُرِيدُ دُخُولَهَا إِلَّا قَالَ حِينَ يَرَاهَا: اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا أَظْلَمَتْ، وَرَبَّ الْأَرْضِينَ السَّبْعِ وَمَا أَقْلَمَتْ، وَرَبَّ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَمَا أَضَلَّتْ، وَرَبَّ الرِّيَّاحِ وَمَا ذَرَيْنِ، فَإِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ وَخَيْرَ أَهْلِهَا، وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهَا وَشَرِّ أَهْلِهَا، أَوْ مِنْ شَرِّهَا وَشَرِّ مَا فِيهَا. (تعليق الحافظ الذهبي في التلخيص: صحيح)

Ka`b al-Ahbar said, “The Prophet never intended to enter a town but said when he saw it, ‘O Allah, Lord of the heavens and what they cover, Lord of the seven earths and what they carry, Lord of the devils and what they misguide, Lord of the winds and what they blow: We ask you for the best of this town and the best of its folks, and seek Your refuge against its evil and the evil of its folks (or he said), from its evil and evil of what it contains” (Au.).

Qurtubi (7th century A.H.) mentions in passing that the earth could be round.

26. Yusuf Ali’s note is quite adequate at this point: “But in all spheres of life and Creation, whatever concep-

tion we are able to form of them, it is certain that the Command or Law of Allah runs through them all, for His knowledge and power extend through all things.”

27. Ibn al-Qayyim has stated in his “badaai` wa fawaa'id” that Allah brought the creation into existence to manifest two of His Attributes mentioned here: Power and Knowledge. According to him, all other At-

tributes can be related to these two. The famous statement of the Sufis, adds Shabbir, which is not a *hadith*, has perhaps been inspired by this *ayah*:

كُنْتُ كَنْزًا مَخْفِيًّا فَأَحْبَبْتُ أَنْ أَعْرَفَ.

“I was a hidden treasure and wished to be known” (Shabbir).

مَقْتَدَاتُ



Surah 66
Al-Tahrim

Madinan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
 THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] O Prophet, why do you treat as forbidden what Allah has made lawful to you;¹ seeking the goodwill of your wives?² And Allah is All-forgiving, All-kind.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ
 تَبْتَغِي مَرْضَاتَ أَزْوَاجِكَ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ
 رَحِيمٌ ﴿١﴾

1. It was honey that the Prophet had declared he would not drink (Shafi'). See details below.

As regards forbidding something to oneself, one might remember the following: (i) If someone treats, despite knowledge, a lawful of Allah as unlawful, then, it amounts to disbelief. (ii) If he does not believe that it is unlawful, but declares it unlawful to himself, then, he is merely a sinner. If he has sworn against it, he should break the oath and seek to expiate: an obligation on him. (iii) If he does not think a lawful of Allah is unlawful, nor declares it unlawful for himself, but decides to avoid it for the rest of his life then there are two situations: (a) he thinks this is a virtue: if so, it is a bid`ah and an

act of asceticism which is forbidden. (b) alternatively, he treats a thing unlawful, for a time, for health reasons: either spiritual or physical, then, it is allowed. The stories that have come to us of the Sufis shunning some delicacies, are of this nature (Shafi').

2. There are a variety of reports that explain the context, but most are not trustworthy except for what is reported in Bukhari, Muslim and Ahmad. To sum them up:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ كَانَتْ
 رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُحِبُّ
 الْغُسْلَ وَالْحُلُوءَ وَكَانَ إِذَا انْصَرَفَ مِنْ
 الْعَصْرِ دَخَلَ عَلَى نِسَائِهِ فَيَدْنُو مِنْ إِحْدَاهُنَّ
 فَيَدْخُلُ عَلَى حَفْصَةَ بِنْتِ عُمَرَ فَاحْتَبَسَ أَكْثَرَ
 مَا كَانَ يَحْتَبِسُ فَعِيرَتْ فَسَأَلَتْ عَنْ ذَلِكَ

فَقِيلَ لِي أَهَدَتْ لَهَا امْرَأَةٌ مِنْ قَوْمِهَا عُكَّةً مِنْ
عَسَلٍ فَسَقَتِ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْهُ
شَرْبَةً فَقُلْتُ أَمَا وَاللَّهِ لَتَحْتَالَنَّ لَهُ فَقُلْتُ
لِسَوْدَةَ بِنْتُ زَمْعَةَ إِنَّهُ سَيَدْنُو مِنْكَ فَإِذَا دَنَا
مِنْكَ فَقُولِي أَكَلْتَ مَغَافِيرَ فَإِنَّهُ سَيَقُولُ لَكَ
لَا فَقُولِي لَهُ مَا هَذِهِ الرِّيحُ الَّتِي أَجِدُ مِنْكَ
فَإِنَّهُ سَيَقُولُ لَكَ سَقَنْتَنِي حَفْصَةُ شَرْبَةَ عَسَلٍ
فَقُولِي لَهُ جَرَسَتْ نَحْلُهُ الْعُرْفُطُ وَسَأَقُولُ
ذَلِكَ وَقُولِي أَنْتِ يَا صَفِيَّةُ ذَلِكَ قَالَتْ تَقُولُ
سَوْدَةُ فَوَاللَّهِ مَا هُوَ إِلَّا أَنْ قَامَ عَلَيَّ الْبَابُ
فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَبَادِيَهُ بِمَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ فَرَفَا مِنْكَ
فَلَمَّا دَنَا مِنْهَا قَالَتْ لَهُ سَوْدَةُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
أَكَلْتَ مَغَافِيرَ قَالَ لَا قَالَتْ فَمَا هَذِهِ الرِّيحُ
الَّتِي أَجِدُ مِنْكَ قَالَ سَقَنْتَنِي حَفْصَةُ شَرْبَةَ
عَسَلٍ فَقَالَتْ جَرَسَتْ نَحْلُهُ الْعُرْفُطُ فَلَمَّا دَارَ
إِلَيَّ قُلْتُ لَهُ نَحْوُ ذَلِكَ فَلَمَّا دَارَ إِلَيَّ صَفِيَّةُ
قَالَتْ لَهُ مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ فَلَمَّا دَارَ إِلَيَّ حَفْصَةُ
قَالَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَلَا أَسْقِيكَ مِنْهُ قَالَ لَا
حَاجَةَ لِي فِيهِ قَالَتْ تَقُولُ سَوْدَةُ وَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ
حَرَمْنَاهُ قُلْتُ لَهَا اسْكُبِي.

`A'isha, who has been reproached in this Surah, is herself the narrator. She said: The Prophet loved honey and sweets. Now, usually, when he had done his `Asr Prayer, he would visit his wives and then get close to one of them (i.e., stay on with one whose turn it was). Once he entered into Hafsa's house and was held back

more than the usual. I felt jealous and sought to find out what was going on. I was told that a woman had gifted a bag of honey out of which she made some sort of drink for him (which seemed to have delayed him). I said to myself that I shall play a trick on him. I told Sawda that he was likely to come to her and that when he comes near you tell him, "Have you eaten maghafir" (a bad smelling gum). He will say no. Then you tell him, "Then what kind of smell is that I find coming from you?" He will say, "Hafsa gave me a honey-drink." Then you tell him, "Perhaps the bees visited the `Urfut plant." I (`A'isah) will say the same thing and, you O Safiyyah, will say the same thing. Later, Sawdah said (to `A'isha), "By Allah it wasn't long when he was at the door and I thought I will tell him all about what you had said (but did not) because of your fear."

When he came in Sawdah asked him, "Messenger of Allah, have you of late eaten maghafir?" He said, "No." She said, "Then what smell is this, coming from you?" He said, "Hafsa gave me a honey-drink." She said, "Perhaps the bees visited the Urfut plant (which yields maghafir)." When he

visited me (`A'isha) I said the same things as Sawdah. When he visited Saifyyah, she said the same thing. Now, when he visited Hafsa again she asked, "Messenger of Allah, shall I serve you with the same drink?" He replied, "I don't need it." Sawdah told `A'isha, "By Allah, we have deprived him of it." I said, "Be quiet about it."

However, we have a second report in Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Da'ud, Nasa'i and others, that say that it was Zaynab bint Jahsh's house where the Prophet was served with the honey-drink. It comes from `A'isha herself. She said:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا - أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ -
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - كَانَ يَمُكْتُ عِنْدَ
زَيْنَبَ ابْنَةَ جَحْشٍ، وَيَشْرَبُ عِنْدَهَا عَسَلًا،
فَتَوَاصَيْتُ أَنَا وَحَفْصَةَ أَنْ أَبْتِنَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا
النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - فَلْتَقَلَ إِلَيَّ
أَجْدُ مِنْكَ رِيحَ مَعَافِيرٍ، أَكَلْتَ مَعَافِيرَ فَدَخَلَ
عَلَيَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَقَالَتْ لَهُ ذَلِكَ، فَقَالَ «لَا بَلُ
شَرِبْتُ عَسَلًا عِنْدَ زَيْنَبَ ابْنَةَ جَحْشٍ وَلَنْ
أَعُودَ لَهُ». فَنَزَلَتْ {يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَا حَرَّمَ مَا أَحَلَّ
لَهُ لَكَ} (التحریم: ١) إِلَى {إِنْ نُوِيَ إِلَى اللَّهِ}
(التحریم: ٤) لِعَائِشَةَ وَحَفْصَةَ {وَإِذَا أَسَرَ
لِنَبِيِّ إِلَى بَعْضِ أَرْوَاجِهِ} (التحریم: ٣) لِقَوْلِهِ
«بَلُ شَرِبْتُ عَسَلًا» (صحيح البخارى)

The Prophet would drink honey in the house of Zaynab bint Jahsh and stay there for some time until myself and Hafsa agreed that whichever of us he entered upon, we shall say to him that he had perhaps taken maghafir and that "I found you emitting the smell of maghafir." (When we did that) he said, "No. But rather I used to drink a honey-drink at Zaynab's house, and I shall never do it again." Thereupon it was revealed in reference to `A'isha and Hafsa: "O Prophet, why do you treat as forbidden what Allah has made lawful to you; seeking the approval of your wives?" .. until .. "Now, if you two turn to Allah in repentance..",

And in reference to the Prophet, it was revealed, "And when the Prophet confided to one of his wives a certain matter.."

Other versions add that the Prophet said when asked about the bad smell,

قَالَ «لَا وَلَكِنِّي كُنْتُ أَشْرَبُ عَسَلًا عِنْدَ
زَيْنَبَ ابْنَةَ جَحْشٍ فَلَنْ أَعُودَ لَهُ وَقَدْ حَلَفْتُ
لَا تُخْبِرِي بِذَلِكَ أَحَدًا»

"But rather I used to drink honey in Zaynab's house. I shall not do it again. I have indeed sworn, but do not mention it to anyone."

He told the two not to reveal to anyone, adds Mufti Shafi`, because he did not wish to hurt Zaynab.

Another report, coming from Ibn `Abbas through Bukhari, Muslim and Imām Ahmad also confirms that it was `A'isha and Hafsa who were reproached in this Surah. It says:

(عن) ابن عباس - رضى الله عنهما -
يحدث أنه قال مكثت سنة أريد أن أسأل
عمر بن الخطاب عن آية، فما أستطيع أن
أسأله هيبة له، حتى خرج حاجاً فخرجت
معه فلما رجعت وكنا ببعض الطريق عدل
إلى الأراك لحاجة له - قال - فوقفتم له
حتى فرغ سيرت معه فقلت يا أمير المؤمنين
من اللتان تظاهرتا على النبي - صلى الله
عليه وسلم - من أزواجه فقال تلك حفصة
وعائشة. قال فقلت والله إن كنت لأريد أن
أسألك عن هذا منذ سنة، فما أستطيع هيبة
لك. قال فلا تفعل ما ظننت أن عندي من
علم فاسألني، فإن كان لي علم خبرتك به.
قال: ثم قال عمر والله إن كنا في الجاهلية
ما نعد للنساء أمراً، حتى أنزل الله فيهن ما
أنزل وقسم لهن ما قسم - قال - فبينما أنا
في أمر أأمره إذ قالت امرأتي لو صنعت
كذا وكذا - قال - فقلت لها مالك ولما
ها هنا فيما تكلفك في أمر أريدك. فقالت لي
عجبا لك يا ابن الخطاب ما تريد أن تراجع
أنت، وإن ابتكت لتراجع رسول الله - صلى

الله عليه وسلم - حتى يظل يومه غضبان.
فقام عمر فأخذ رداءه مكانه حتى دخل
على حفصة فقال لها يا بنية إنك لتراجعين
رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - حتى
يظل يومه غضبان. فقالت حفصة والله إننا
لتراجعنه. فقلت. تعلمين أني أحذرك عقوبة
الله وغضب رسوله - صلى الله عليه وسلم
- يا بنية لا يعرثك هذه التي أعجبها
حسنتها حب رسول الله - صلى الله عليه
وسلم - إياها - يريد عائشة - قال ثم
خرجت حتى دخلت على أم سلمة لقرآتي
منها فكلمتها. فقالت أم سلمة عجبا لك يا
ابن الخطاب دخلت في كل شيء، حتى
تبتغي أن تدخل بين رسول الله - صلى الله
عليه وسلم - وأزواجه. فأخذني والله أخذا
كسرتني عن بعض ما كنت أجد، فخرجت
من عنديها، وكان لي صاحب من الأنصار
إذا غبت أتاني بالخبر، وإذا غاب كنت أنا
أتبه بالخبر، ونحن نتخوف ملكا من ملوك
عسان، ذكر لنا أنه يريد أن يسير إلينا، فقد
امتلات صدورنا منه، فإذا صاحبي
الأنصاري يدق الباب فقال افتح افتح.
فقلت جاء العسائي فقال بل أشد من ذلك.
اعتزل رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم -
أزواجه. فقلت رغم أنف حفصة وعائشة.
فأخذت ثوبي فأخرج حتى جئت فإذا
رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - في
مشربة له يرفي عليها بعجلة، وغلام لرسول

اللَّهُ - صلى الله عليه وسلم - أَسْوَدُ عَلَيَّ
رَأْسِ الدَّرَجَةِ فَقُلْتُ لَهُ قُلْ هَذَا عُمَرُ بْنُ
الْخَطَّابِ. فَأَذِنَ لِي - قَالَ عُمَرُ - فَقَصَصْتُ
عَلَيَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ - صلى الله عليه وسلم -
هَذَا الْحَدِيثَ، فَلَمَّا بَلَغْتُ حَدِيثَ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ
تَبَسَّمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صلى الله عليه وسلم -
وَأِنَّهُ لَعَلَى حَصِيرٍ مَا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهُ شَيْءٌ، وَتَحَتَ
رَأْسِهِ وَسَادَةٌ مِنْ أَدَمٍ حَشَوْهَا لَيْفٌ، وَإِنَّ عِنْدَ
رِجْلَيْهِ قَرْظًا مَصْبُوبًا، وَعِنْدَ رَأْسِهِ أَهْبُ
مُعَلَّقَةٌ فَرَأَيْتُ أَنْزَلَ الْحَصِيرَ فِي جَنْبِهِ فَبَكَيتُ
فَقَالَ «مَا يُبْكِيكِ». فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنْ
كَسَرْتَنِي وَقَيْصَرَ فِيمَا هُمَا فِيهِ وَأَنْتَ رَسُولُ
اللَّهِ. فَقَالَ «أَمَا تَرْضَى أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُمُ الدُّنْيَا
وَلَنَا الآخِرَةُ» (صحيح البخارى)

I waited for a year to ask `Umar ibn al-Khattab about a verse of the Qur`ān but was overawed to do it, until he started off for pilgrimage and I too went with him. At one point in the journey he left us to go behind acacia trees to relieve himself. I waited for him until when he came back, I accompanied him and asked, “Leader of the Believers, who were the two wives of the Prophet that had backed each other against the Prophet?” He answered, “Those were `A’isha and Hafsa.” I told him, “By Allah, I have been wanting to ask

you since a year but could not because of your dread.” He answered, “Don’t do that. If you think I have a piece of knowledge, ask me. If I know about it, I’ll let you know.”

Then `Umar added, “By Allah, in pre-Islamic times, we never counted women as worth anything until Allah revealed about them what He revealed and allotted them what He allotted. Now, while I was engaged in something when my wife said, ‘If you did it this way..’ I said, ‘What’s the matter with you? And why do you interfere in an affair of mine?’ She answered, ‘It is strange of you O Ibn al-Khattab that you do not wish that you should be answered back while your daughter answers back the Prophet – to the extent that sometimes he remains angry the whole day.’”

[So `Umar got up, gathered his cloak and entered upon Hafsa. He told her], ‘My dear daughter. Do you answer back the Prophet to the extent that he remains angry the whole day?’ She answered, “By Allah, we do answer back.’ I said, ‘I warn you of Allah’s punishment and His anger for His Messenger. My dear

daughter, do not be misled by the other one whose beauty has led the Prophet to her love.' [He meant `A'isha].

Then, "I left and entered upon Umm Salamah because of my relationship with her and spoke to her. She answered, 'Strange of you O Ibn al-Khattab, you have begun to poke your nose into everything to the extent that you wish to interfere in affairs of the Prophet and his wives!' Then she took me on, and (I tell you) by Allah, so severely that it broke some of what I was finding within me. (According to other reports she said at that time: "Now, are not the Prophet's admonitions enough for us that want to add your own?"). So I left her. Now, I had an Ansari friend who would bring me news when I was absent, and when he was absent I would take the news to him.

Those days we were afraid of one of the Ghassani rulers. We were informed that he had decided to march against us. Our minds were full of him, and there was my Ansari companion knocking at the door and saying, 'Open the door, open the door.' I said, 'What, has the Ghassani arrived?'

He answered, 'Something worse than that. The Prophet has withdrawn from his wives.' I said to myself, 'May Hafsa's and `A'isha's nose be in the dust.'" I put on my clothes, went up to find the Messenger of Allah in an upper quarter which you reached by a ladder. The Prophet's dark slave sat at the door. I told him to tell the Prophet that here was `Umar ibn al-Khattab. He allowed me in and I spoke of my talks with his wives and when I described my encounter with Umm Salamah, the Prophet smiled. He was then on a mat without anything between him and the mat, with a leather pillow filled with frond. There was some tanning-grass near his feet and an untanned leather bottle dangling near his head. I saw the imprint of the mat on his side and wept. He asked, 'What makes you cry?' I said, 'Messenger of Allah here are Kisra and Caesar, in the condition in which they are, and here you are while you are a Messenger of Allah!' He answered, 'Are you not satisfied that they should have this world and we the Hereafter?'"

Thus, the whole story with reference to the early part of the Surah is no

more than a minor family affair, but, when a Prophet is involved, then it acquires a serious status. Further, there seem to be several other family events that seem to have distracted the Prophet's concerns. For example, as pointed out by Shabbir, one was about maintenance allowance. It was a pittance. His wives surrounded the Prophet and demanded that their allowance be increased. He did not like it and took to seclusion for a month. In fact, it is not clear whether his month-long seclusion was due to their demands, or due to one of them divulging something he had told her not to reveal to others. The report about their demand for increased allowance is in Muslim:

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ دَخَلَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ
يَسْتَأْذِنُ عَلَيَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه
وسلم- فَوَجَدَ النَّاسَ جُلُوسًا بِيَابِهِ لَمْ يُؤْذَنَ
لِأَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ - قَالَ - فَأَذِنَ لِأَبِي بَكْرٍ فَدَخَلَ
ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَ عُمَرَ فَاسْتَأْذَنَ فَأَذِنَ لَهُ فَوَجَدَ النَّبِيَّ
-صلى الله عليه وسلم- جَالِسًا حَوْلَهُ نِسَاءَهُ
وَاحِمًا سَاكِتًا - قَالَ - فَقَالَ لِأَقْرَبِنَّ شَيْئًا
أَضْحِكُ النَّبِيَّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فَقَالَ
يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ رَأَيْتَ بِنْتَ خَارِجَةَ سَأَلْتَنِي
الثَّفَقَةَ فَقُمْتُ إِلَيْهَا فَوَجَّأْتُ عَنْقَهَا. فَضَحِكَ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- وَقَالَ
«هُنَّ حَوْلِي كَمَا تَرَى يَسْأَلْنَنِي الثَّفَقَةَ».

فَقَامَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ إِلَى عَائِشَةَ يَجَأُ عَنْقَهَا فَقَامَ
عُمَرُ إِلَى حَفْصَةَ يَجَأُ عَنْقَهَا كِلَاهُمَا يَقُولُ
نَسْأَلُنَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم-
مَا لَيْسَ عِنْدَهُ. فَقُلْنَا وَاللَّهِ لَا نَسْأَلُ رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- شَيْئًا أَبَدًا لَيْسَ
عِنْدَهُ ثُمَّ اعْتَزَلْنَهُنَّ شَهْرًا (صحيح مسلم)

Jabir reported that Abu Bakr arrived into the mosque to find people at the door and none was being allowed in. He sought permission and was allowed in. Then `Umar came in and he too was allowed. He found the Prophet surrounded by his wives: squatting, aggrieved and quiet. He said to himself, "Let me say something that will make him smile. So I said, 'Messenger of Allah, do you know about Kharijah's daughter? She asked me for higher food allowance so I jumped at her and poked her in the neck.' The Prophet smiled and said, 'As you see them, they are around me, demanding higher allowances.'" So Abu Bakr got up and slapped `A'isha's neck. And `Umar got up and slapped Hafsa's neck; both saying, "Do you demand of the Prophet what he does not have?" They said, "By Allah, we shall never ask for what the Messenger of Allah does not have." Then he

[2] Allah has already ordained for you the dissolution of your oaths; and Allah is your protector, He is the Knowing, the Wise.

قَدْ فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ تَحْلَةَ أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢﴾

[3] And when the Prophet confided to one of his wives a certain matter, and when she divulged it,³ and Allah disclosed it to him, he (in turn) letting (her) know a part thereof, and ignoring a part;⁴ then, when he informed her about it, she asked, 'Who informed you this?,'⁵ he said, 'Informed me the All-knowing, the All-aware.'

وَإِذْ أَسَرَّ النَّبِيُّ إِلَىٰ بَعْضِ أَزْوَاجِهِ حَدِيثًا فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَتْ بِهِ وَأَظْهَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَرَفَ بَعْضَهُ وَأَعْرَضَ عَن بَعْضٍ فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَهَا بِهِ قَالَتْ مَنْ أَنْبَأَكَ هَذَا قَالَ نَبَّأَنِيَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣﴾

withdrew from them for a month (Au.).

As regards the stories in connection with Maariyyah, (quoted by many commentators), to the effect that he lay with her in Hafsa's house, which displeased her, to the end of it, they have not been quoted by the Sihah works, and outside of them, the narratives suffer from a variety of technical defects and, therefore, untrustworthy (Imām Nawawi and Qurtubi).

It might be remembered in this connection that Mariyyah Qibtiyyah did not live near the mosque. She lived quite a distance away in another neighborhood. As for the Prophet having intercourse with her in Hafsa's house, far from him, it is difficult to imagine of any man, with several wives, and at liberty to visit them in

their homes any time, would attempt it, at an odd time, with the constraint of time on someone who was extremely busy in his life. As regards Allah's strong words of reproach, as Shabbir has pointed out, most serious family troubles start with a scuffle over a minor affair; hence Allah dealt with it firmly to put a complete stop to it (Au.).

3. The matter that the Prophet had asked one of his wives to keep to herself was that he would not take any honey-drink. But she disclosed it to another (Shafi` and others). But this is an opinion and not a hadith (Au.).

4. That is, after Allah had informed the Prophet of the matter, (whatever it was) he in turn did not divulge all that he had been told, but informed his wife of a part ignoring the rest, out of kindness to her (Ibn Jarir).

[4] Now, if you two turn to Allah in repentance - although the hearts of you two are already deviated,⁶ but if you support one another against him, then surely Allah is his supporter, Jibril, and the righteous among the believers; and, after that, the angels are backers.⁷

إِنْ تَتُوبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا
وَإِنْ تَظَاهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ مَوْلَاهُ
وَجِبْرِيلُ وَصَالِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ
بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ ظَهِيرٌ ﴿٤﴾

[5] It is possible that if he divorced you all, his Lord will give in exchange wives better than you:⁸ women who have surrendered, believers, devout,⁹repentant, worshippers, given to fasting, previously married and virgins.

عَسَىٰ رَبُّهُ إِنْ طَلَّقَكُنَّ أَنْ يُبَدِّلَهُ أَزْوَاجًا
خَيْرًا مِنْكُنَّ مُسْلِمَاتٍ مُّؤْمِنَاتٍ قَانِتَاتٍ
تَآئِبَاتٍ عَابِدَاتٍ سَائِحَاتٍ ثَيِّبَاتٍ
وَأَبْكَارًا ﴿٥﴾

5. `A'isha and Hafsa were good friends. They trusted each other and did not divulge their personal secrets to others. When one of them confided to the other something that she was not supposed to reveal, it was because of mutual trust. But of course, it was to remain between the two. Accordingly, when the Prophet informed one of them of what she had divulged, she was surprised. Had the other one betrayed? It could not be she. So she asked, "Who informed you that?" (Au. based on a point in Shabbir).

6. The textual word "qulub" is in plural, instead of dual which the context requires, perhaps because more than two of the wives of the Prophet were involved, with `A'isha and Hafsa being in the forefront; which also explains the personal pronouns in plural in the following verses (Thanwi).

7. Sufi commentator Thanwi offers a note that is at some distance from the matter-of-fact approach of the majority of commentators: The word "mawla" ("supporter", or "companion" – as Thanwi translates), acquires different connotations with the change of the object. When it is used for Allah, it is in the real and true sense (of Bestower). When used for Jibril, it is in the sense of 'the transmitter of spiritual bequeathals.' When used for the righteous Believers, it is in the sense of 'adherents (to the transmitted values)' and, when used for ordinary angels, it is in the sense of 'carriers of tranquility' (slightly reworded).

8. Bukhari has recorded that when `Umar went around visiting the wives of the Prophet (hijab-verses had not yet been revealed), he warned them in these very words, "It is possible that if he divorced you all.."

[6] O those who have believed, save yourself and your families from a Fire whose fuel are men and stones, over which are angels harsh and severe, who disobey not Allah in what He commands them, and do what they are ordered.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ
نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا
مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا
أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٦﴾

[7] O those who have disbelieved, make no excuses today; you are only being recompensed for what you were doing.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا الْيَوْمَ إِنَّمَا
تُجْرَوْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧﴾

[8] O those who have believed, turn to Allah in sincere repentance,¹⁰ haply your Lord will acquit you of your sins and admit you to gardens underneath which rivers flow: upon the day Allah will not disgrace the Prophet and those who have believed with him;¹¹ their Light running before them and on their right side;¹² they saying, 'O our Lord, perfect for us our Light and forgive us, surely You have power over all things.'

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً
تَصُوحًا عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يَكْفِرَ عَنْكُمْ
سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُم جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِي اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَىٰ بَيْنَ
أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَتْمِمْ لَنَا
نُورَنَا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ ﴿٨﴾

On several other occasions `Umar's words coincided with Allah's words. E.g., when he suggested to the Prophet that Muslim women ought to observe hijab, or when he suggested that the prisoners at Badr be slaughtered, or that the Prophet may offer Prayer near the Station of Ibrahim (Ibn Kathir).

9. Some scholars have understood the textual "qanitat" as meaning, "the obedient ones" (Ibn Jarir).

10. The opinion of most of the Salaf was that "tawbatu al-nasuh" is that sin which is never repeated after repentance (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Other scholars explain that "tawbatu al-nasuh" is one which has four elements. One should: (i) give up the sin in which one has fallen, (ii) regret over what had been in the past, (iii) resolve that he will not repeat it and (iv) if someone's right is involved, clear it.

One question, is it necessary for a tawbatu al-nasuh's validity that one should remain in the state (of abjuration)? The answer may be sought in the hadith which can be generally applied to many situations. Ibn Mas`ud reported, as in Bukhari,

عَنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَجُلٌ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَنْوَاحُ بَمَا عَمَلْنَا فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ قَالَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ لَمْ يُؤَاخَذْ بِمَا عَمِلَ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ أُخِذَ بِالْأَوَّلِ وَالْآخِرِ.

Someone asked the Prophet, “Messenger of Allah. Shall we be questioned for what we did in pre-Islamic times?” He answered, “Whoever did well in Islam, will not be held responsible for what he did in pre-Islamic times. On the other hand, whoever did badly in Islam, will be held for the earlier and the later (deeds) - Ibn Kathir.

11. We have a hadith pertinent to this ayah:

عَنْ رَجُلٍ مِنْ بَنِي كِنَانَةَ قَالَ صَلَّى خَلْفَ النَّبِيِّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- عَامَ الْفَتْحِ فَسَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ «اللَّهُمَّ لَا تُخْزِنِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ». (رواه أحمد ورجاله ثقات: الهيثمي)

A man from the Kinanah tribe reported, “I prayed behind the Prophet the year of the fall of Makkah. I heard him say, ‘O Allah, do not disgrace me on the Day of Judgment’” (Ibn Kathir).

Imām Razi asks: We know that a Prophet will not be disgraced on

that day. What does this mean? He answers (as also Thanwi in slightly different words) that the primary objective is to mention that the believers will be in the company of their Prophet.

12. One may refer to ayah 12 of Surah al-Hadid for a fuller explanation. We might add at this point a hadith from Imām Ahmad (which is close to being trustworthy: Sami). The Prophet said,

عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- «أَنَا أَوَّلُ مَنْ يُؤَذَّنُ لَهُ بِالسُّجُودِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ مَنْ يُؤَذَّنُ لَهُ أَنْ يَرْفَعَ رَأْسَهُ فَأَنْظُرَ إِلَى بَيْنِ يَدَيَّ فَأَعْرِفَ أُمَّتِي مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأُمَمِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِي مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ وَعَنْ يَمِينِي مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ وَعَنْ شِمَالِي مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ». فَقَالَ لَهُ رَجُلٌ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ تُعْرِفُ أُمَّتَكَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأُمَمِ فِيمَا بَيْنَ نُوحٍ إِلَى أُمَّتِكَ قَالَ «هُمْ غَرٌّ مُحَجَّلُونَ مِنْ أَنْتَرِ الْوَضُوءِ لَيْسَ أَحَدٌ كَذَلِكَ غَيْرَهُمْ وَأَعْرِفُهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ يُؤْتُونَ كُنُفَهُمْ بِأَيْمَانِهِمْ بِنُورِهِمْ يَسْعَى بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ» (مسند أحمد)

“I will be the first to be allowed to prostrate myself on the Day of Judgment, and the first to be allowed to raise his head. I will look around and see in front of me my followers between other nations, and similarly behind me,

[9] O Prophet, strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites,¹³ and be harsh with them;¹⁴ their abode is Jahannum, an evil destination.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ
وَأَعْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَيُسْ
الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٩﴾

[10] Allah has struck a similitude for the unbelievers, of the wife of Nuh and the wife of Lut. They were under two righteous servants from among Our servants; but they betrayed them,¹⁵ so availed not the two aught against Allah, and they were told, 'Enter the Fire - you two - along with those who enter.'¹⁶

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأةَ نُوحٍ
وَامْرَأةَ لُوطٍ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا
صَالِحِينَ فَخَانَتَاهُمَا فَلَمْ يُغْنِيَا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ
اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَقِيلَ ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّاخِلِينَ
﴿١٠﴾

on my right side and on my left side.” Someone asked, “Messenger of Allah, how will you recognize your followers from among the nations of Nuh until your times?” He answered, “They will bear the mark of ablution that none else will bear, and I will know them because they will be given their Records by their right hands, and I will know them by the Light running before them” (Ibn Kathir).

13. That is, struggle against one with the sword while against the other with the tongue (Ibn Jarir).

14. Because he treated them mildly and kindly (Shabbir).

15. They betrayed them in faith and not by indulging in immoral deeds. Wives of Prophets are saved from committing obscenities. Ibn `Abbas

specifically stated that their wives did not indulge in sexual indecency. The opinion of `Ikrimah, Sa`eed b. Jubayr and Dahhak was that the betrayal of Nuh's wife consisted in passing information to the unbelievers about those who embraced Islam at Nuh's hand and in calling him “insane,” while the betrayal of Lut's wife consisted in passing information to the unbelievers, concerning visitors to her husband's house (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

16. The suggestion by some people that the example of the two unbelieving women was cited for the wives of the Prophet to take lesson from, is incorrect. The example is in reference to verse 6 above where the believers have been urged to save themselves and their families from Hellfire (Thawni).

[11] And Allah has struck a similitude for the believers of the wife of Fir`awn when she said, 'O my Lord, build for me by You a house in Paradise¹⁷ and deliver me from Fir`awn and his deed,¹⁸ and deliver me from the wrongdoing people.

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَةً فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١١﴾

[12] And Maryam, the daughter of `Imran, who guarded her private parts;¹⁹ so We blew into it²⁰ of Our spirit.²¹ She testified to the words of her Lord and His Books, and she was of the devout ones.²²

وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِنَا وَصَدَقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتُبِهِ وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْقَائِمِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

17. She chose the Company before the house. They say in Arabic:

الجار قبل الدار.

"The neighbor, before the lodge"
(Au.).

18. That is, deliver me from him and deliver me from the kind of deed he commits, foremost among them is his disbelief in Allah (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

19. Lit., "faraj" is an opening. The term here is "farj" which is for private parts, but allows for translation as "opening" (Au.).

20. That is, in the opening of her shirt since every opening is called "farj" (Ibn Jarir, Razi, Qurtubi).

21. "Min ruhinaa": that is, a spirit from among Our other spirits (Qurtubi).

22. "The fact that "qanitun" (devout) is not in the feminine form implies that the highest spiritual dignity is independent of sex" (Yusuf Ali).

We have ahadith that speak of the virtues of these two women. The following is in the Sahihayn and other works. The Prophet said:

عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَمَلَّ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ كَثِيرٌ وَلَمْ يَكْمَلْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا آسِيَةُ امْرَأَةِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَرْيَمُ بِنْتُ عِمْرَانَ وَإِنَّ فَضْلَ عَائِشَةَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ كَفَضْلِ الثَّرِيدِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الطَّعَامِ.

"Among men those who attained perfection, there have been many. But among women few attained perfection except Aasiyah the wife of Fir`awn and Maryam the daughter of `Imran. And,

`A'isha's superiority over rest of the women is like that of tharid over other dishes." (Tharid was a tasty meat and butter dish (Au).

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ خَطَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فِي الْأَرْضِ أَرْبَعَةَ خُطُوطٍ قَالَ «تَدْرُونَ مَا هَذَا». فَقَالُوا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- «أَفْضَلُ نِسَاءِ أَهْلِ الْحَيَّةِ خَدِيجَةُ بِنْتُ خُوَيْلِدٍ وَفَاطِمَةُ بِنْتُ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآسِيَّةُ بِنْتُ مُزَاحِمٍ امْرَأَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَرْيَمُ ابْنَةُ عِمْرَانَ».

Once the Prophet drew four lines on the earth and asked,

“Do you know what these are?” They answered, “Allah and His Messenger know best.” He said, “The best among the women of Paradise: Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, Fatimah bint Muhammad, Asiyah bint Muzahim, the wife of Fir`awn and Maryam the daughter of `Imran” (Zamakhsahir in brief, Ibn Kathir).

(Haythami declared the above report of Ahmad as trustworthy: Sami).

مَشْنُونًا



Surah 67
Al-Mulk¹

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Blessed is He² in whose hand is the dominion, and He has power over all things.³

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١﴾

1. There are several reports in a variety of *hadith* collections that speak of the good qualities of this *Surah*. However, many of them suffer weaknesses of one kind or the other. But one of them has been declared *Sahih* by Haythami and Dhahabi, in his notes on Mustadrak (Au.). It is as follows:

عن أنس قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "سورة من القرآن ما هي إلا ثلاثون آية خاصمت عن صاحبها حتى أدخلته الجنة وهي سورة تبارك".

The Prophet said, "There is a *Surah* of the Qur'an, no more than thirty verses long, that will argue in favor of anyone (who knew it) until it will usher him into Paradise. It is *Surah Tabarak*" (Qurtubi, Shawkani).

The above report is also in Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Nasa'i (S. Ibrahim).

2. "*Tabaraka*" has its root in "bara-ka." In this form it means,

تبارك: تفاعل من البركة وهي الزيادة والنماء والكثرة والاتساع أي البركة تكنسب وتنال بذكره ويقال تبارك تعظيم ويقال تقديس والقدس الطهارة (التبيان في تفسير غريب القرآن)

"Increase, growth, abundance, and expanse. That is, increase that can be earned and attained through His remembrance. (The meaning is also) stated as 'He achieved greatness (by Himself),' as well as, 'consecrated,' which is equivalent of saying 'became (or is) holy.'"

Majid quotes: “*Tabaraka* Allah: God has made Himself (is become of and through Himself) blessed, perfect, above all (WGAL. I. p. 39).”

3. Sometimes a question is asked: If God has power over all things, has He the power to destroy Himself? The questioners do not understand that God is a Necessary Being. That is, the world cannot be explained without Him. If there was no God, there would be no world. The question about who created this world, and then, who created its creator, will go on in a vicious circle. To break that circle, one has to stop at one point and say, “this One” created all. If it is suggested that “this one” could have been created by “that One” then “this one” is automatically a created being, and “that One” becomes the Creator. And, without “that Creator” there would be no created world.

We might quote from our own writing in the Educational Encyclopedia of Islam:

“... To the question concerning matter, as to where it came from, and, indeed, why it came into existence at all, since it could as well have not existed, those who deny God, have no answer. Muslim scholars have offered an answer which appeals to reason.

We may quote here from a recent work, *The Non-existence of God*, by Nicholas Everitt, (Routledge, London and New York, 2004):

“Craig continues that we may plausibly argue that the cause of the universe is a ‘personal being’ (by which he means a being capable of free choice) (ibid. p.64). For we need an explanation of why the universe began to exist when it did, rather than earlier or later. The ‘plausible argument’ which he in fact invokes for saying that the cause must be a personal one is ‘an Islamic principle of determination’, according to which ‘when two different states of affairs are equally possible and one results, this realization of one rather than the other must be the result of a personal agent who freely chooses one rather than the other.’” (Sandage and Tamam, quoted in Craig and Smith 1995: 43).

God being the Necessary Being also implies that God did not create Himself. This in turn implies that God cannot be destroyed. Terms like “created” and “creations” are for human reference. When it is asked, e.g., what are human beings, or trees, or stars, the answer will be “created beings” - Allah being their Creator. The meanings and implications behind

[2] He who created death⁴ and life so that He might test you⁵ as to which of you is best in deed,⁶ and He is the All-mighty, the All-for-giving.

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ
أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَفُورُ ﴿٢﴾

these terms cannot be applied to Allah, except to say that, with reference to the creations, He is the Creator. This Quality of His, is above the act of creation, and a part of His Being. That is, He remains a Creator, even if He did not create.

From another perspective, what is created (by an agency), cannot destroy itself. E.g. matter cannot destroy itself. Why? because it did not create itself. Another matter cannot destroy it; because that other matter did not create it. Matter can be forced into another form, because Allah ruled it that such a thing should be possible; but it cannot be given non-existence. No one but its creator can destroy it. He knows how He brought it into existence, and, therefore, He knows how to reduce it to non-existence.

Now, God is a Necessary Being. He was always there. He was not created by another. In fact, logically, He could not have been created by another. (He did not give birth, nor was given birth: *Surah* 112). If He had been created by another, He could be destroyed by that creating

agency. But God was not given birth, nor can He die. To be Living is His Necessity Quality, which cannot be separated from Him. He is eternal, and His Qualities are eternal (Au.).

4. Majid comments: "This corrects and contradicts the Jewish view, 'God created man to be immortal ... nevertheless through envy of the devil came death into the world. For God made no death.' (JE. IV p. 483)."

Discussing old age and death, a scientist writes in desperation, "It would be pleasant to eliminate the pains and discomforts of old age, but ought we to create a species consisting of the old, the tired, the bored, the same, and never allow for the new and better?"

"Perhaps the prospect of immortality is worse than the prospect of death." (Asimov's *New Guide to Science*, p. 695).

Thus, death is a created being (Ibn Kathir). Imām Razi adds that its annihilation on the Judgment Day, brought on in the form of a fat ram

[3] He who created the seven heavens one over another.⁷ You will not see in the creation of the All-compassionate any inconsistency.⁸ So, return your gaze, do you see any fissure?⁹

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَّا تَرَى
فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَاقُوتٍ فَارْجِعِ
الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِن فُطُورٍ ﴿٣﴾

and slaughtered, will be merely to impress upon the people that neither will they die in Hell, nor in Heaven; in short, shall remain immortal.

Noticeably, death has been mentioned before life perhaps because lifelessness precedes the cycle of life and death (Au).

5. Majid writes: “In the words of a distinguished scientist, ‘death came that life may be worth living.’”

6. Note the words “best in deed” and not “more in deed” (Mufti Shaf’). It is the correctness of a deed that gives it an intrinsic value which is multiplied by the quantity. If the intrinsic value is zero, the sum of large quantities of good deeds is zero (Au.).

7. They are seven heavens, one upon another, but separate, with the distance of 500 years between them, as stated in a *hadith* (Ibn Kathir).

The seven heavens concept is entirely Qur’anic. The *Torah* and the Gospels do not mention the number of heavens. The Gospel of Barnabas speaks of nine heavens. But curiously the concept of 500 years distance be-

tween one firmament and another is mentioned in this Gospel: “Verily I say unto thee that the heavens are nine, among which are set the planets, that are distant one from another five hundred years’ journey for a man; and the earth in like manner is distant from the first heaven five hundred years’ journey” (Section 178) – Au.

8. Majid quotes: “But the more it (reason) knows, the more grounds it finds for confidence that the appearance of capriciousness is due only to its ignorance. Nature, it grows to believe, is, in this sense, rational through and through, that it corresponds to this fundamental demand of reason for law and order in all things. This faith in a universal order – a faith continually more and more fully justified – is what makes science possible.”

9. The scientists refer to this phenomenon of non-inconsistency or lack of a detectable fissure, as the “problem of homogeneity.” That is, at the super-cluster level, the universe seems to be homogenous; no

[4] Then return your gaze again, and again, the sight returns to you humbled, and it is aweary.¹⁰

ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ ﴿٤﴾

matter where you look, the image is the same. And this homogeneity is a problem. If the big bang theory is correct, matter should be scattered in an odd manner. But it is not so. Why? There is no satisfactory answer yet (Au.).

10. That is, any defect. Science in the meanwhile, seems to have lost its moorings. It is in no position to say anything in definite about time, space, or even the physical universe. While the Qur'an gave us the concept of seven firmaments, science is now asking us to believe in infinite universes. Today's high-profile scientific language is weirder than that of the Sufis of the past. A recent book from a prize-winning scientist should give some idea of the ideas floating among the scientists about the realities of existence. He is considered to be moderate. Other scientists discuss ideas that he too would consider weird. We present key points picked up from his work *The Goldilocks Enigma*, Paul Davies, Allen Lane Publications, 2006:

(a) The universe began with a hot big bang 13.7 billion years ago, and is

still expanding. The expansion is best envisaged as the stretching of space between the galaxies. (p.55)

(b) The universe has no discernible centre or edge. (p.55)

(c) Even though space is warped locally, by stars and galaxies, overall the geometry of the universe seems to be flat (Euclidean). Einstein's general theory of relativity then predicts that the universe should have zero mass: the positive mass-energy of matter is exactly cancelled by the negative mass-energy of the gravitational field of all the matter in the universe. (p.55). [We might remind that so far, in the observable world, billions of galaxies have been sighted containing 1080 atoms: Au.].

(d) There may be additional dimensions of space over and above the three we perceive. Some theories of physics require this. Extra dimension can be concealed from view, for example by rolling them up to a tiny size. (p.55)

(e) The big bang may or may not have been the ultimate origin of the universe. If it was, then time and space

did not exist before the big bang. Cosmologists have attempted to explain scientifically the origin of the universe from nothing (no time, no space, no matter) by appealing to quantum mechanics. The resulting subject of quantum cosmology is exciting, but not rigorous. (p.97). [By saying, “not rigorous” he means, the theory is not scientifically satisfactory].

(f) If the big bang was not the ultimate origin of the universe, the question arises of what came before it. In a currently popular theory known as eternal inflation, our universe is just one ‘bubble’ of expanding space among many, and big bangs occur throughout time in the wider ‘super-structure’. Taking a god’s-eye view, most of space is inflating at a fantastic rate, and the ‘bubbles’ or pocket universes, emerge spontaneously from this as a result of quantum processes. (p.97)

(g) Eternal inflation is one mechanism for generating a multiplicity, or ensemble, of universes. Known collectively as a multiverse. Individual universes within the multiverse could be very different from one another. Only a small fraction might be fit for life. (p.97-98)

(h) Most of the universe is made of something that is still not identified.

Ordinary matter (billions of galaxies: Au.) makes up just a few percent. (p.145)

(i) Dark matter is probably made of heavy, weakly interacting particles coughed out of the big bang in profusion. (p.145)

(j) Our universe may be a fragment of a vast (probably infinite) and heterogeneous system called the multiverse. The other ‘universes’, or cosmic regions, may be observationally inaccessible to us. Their existence would be inferred from theory plus some direct evidence. (p. 215)

(k) The laws of physics and the initial state of the universe could vary from one ‘universe’ to another. What we have taken to be absolute laws might be more akin to local by-laws, with key features, including those relevant to life, which ‘froze’ out of the big bang in the first split-second. (p.215-216)

(l) Some (science: Au.) philosophers argue that simulated universes (e.g. virtual reality run on gigantic computers) may be possible. Multiverses might then include simulated as well as real universes. Some simplistic calculations hint that the fakes may greatly outnumber the real ones, so we could be living in a simulation. (p. 216)

[5] We have indeed adorned the nearest heaven with lamps, and have made them missiles for the Shayateen;¹¹ and have prepared for them a blazing chastisement.

وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ
وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيَاطِينِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ
عَذَابَ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٥﴾

[6] As for those who have disbelieved in their Lord, for them is the chastisement of Jahannum; an evil homecoming.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَيَسُ
الْمُصِيرِ ﴿٦﴾

[7] When they are cast therein, they will hear it drawing in its breath, while it boils.

إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيهَا سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهِيقًا وَهِيَ تَفُورُ
﴿٧﴾

[8] It would all but burst asunder in rage. Every time a group is cast into it, its keepers ask, 'Had not come to you a warner?'

تَكَادُ تَمَيَّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ كُلَّمَا أُلْقِيَ فِيهَا
فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَذِيرٌ
﴿٨﴾

[9] They will reply, 'Yes indeed, a warner had in fact come to us. But we cried lies and said, "Allah has not sent down anything. You are only in a great misguidance."'

قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَاءَنَا نَذِيرٌ فَكَذَّبْنَا وَقُلْنَا
مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ مِن شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي
ضَلَالٍ كَبِيرٍ ﴿٩﴾

[10] They will also say, 'If only we had listened and understood, we would not have been among the companions of the blaze.'¹²

وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي
أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] Thus they will confess their sin; so away with the people of the blaze.

فَاعْتَرَفُوا بِذَنبِهِمْ فَسُحْقًا لِأَصْحَابِ
السَّعِيرِ ﴿١١﴾

How befitting then the words, "Then return your gaze again, and again, the sight returns to you humbled, and it is weary" (Au.)

11. Zamakhsari of the 12th Christian century writes: That is, the Devils (who try to fly beyond the limits set for them) are struck with meteorites that are drawn from the stars. It is not the stars themselves that are cast at them. These stars are bodies by themselves.

The word meteorite might or might not be the right term. All that the Qur'an is saying is that when the devils try to cross a certain boundary drawn for them in space, in order to gain a hearing of what goes on in the first firmament, they are pelted with heavenly burning bodies. The nature of the burning bodies has not been described (Au.).

12. Asad writes: "Reason, properly used, must lead man to a cognition

[12] Surely those who feared their Lord in the Unseen,¹³ they shall have forgiveness and a great reward.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] And, whether you keep secret your word or say it aloud, He is indeed the Knower of what is in the breasts.

وَأَسْرُوا قَوْلَكُمْ أَوِ اجْهَرُوا بِهِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] Should He not know who created, while He is the All-subtle, the All-aware?

أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] It is He who made the earth humbled to you, therefore, walk about in its tracts and eat out of His provision: to Him is the resurrection.

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِهِ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] Do you feel secure from He who is in the heavens¹⁴ that He should make the land swallow you, the while it rocks?

أَأَمِنْتُمْ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ بِكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] Or, do you feel secure that He who is in the heaven should send against you a pebble-storm, then you would surely know how was My warning.

أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرِ ﴿١٧﴾

of God's existence and, thus, of the fact that a definite plan underlies all His creation. A logical concomitant of that cognition is the realization that certain aspects of the divine plan touching upon human life – in particular, the distinction between right and wrong – are continuously disclosed to man through the medium of the revelation which God bestows on His chosen message-bearers, the prophets. This innate “bond with God” (referred to in 2: 27 and explained in the correspond-

ing note 19) may be broken only at the expense of man's spiritual future, with suffering in life to come as the inevitable alternative.”

13. The words, “in the Unseen” have two connotations: (i) They have not seen Allah, but they fear Him out of awe and, influenced by it, restrain themselves from sin. (ii) They fear Him in their private, and remember Him with hopes and fears (Shabbir).

14. Although the allusion by “He in the heaven” apparently appears to

[18] *Those that went before them did cry lies, so, how was My reproach!?*¹⁵

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَكَيْفَ
كَانَ نَكِيرٍ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] *Have they not regarded the birds above them, outspreading the wings and folding (them) in? None holds them (aloft) except the All-merciful; surely He is the Watcher of all things.*

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ صَافَاتٍ
وَيَقْبِضْنَ مَا يُمَسِّكُهُنَّ إِلَّا الرَّحْمَنُ إِنَّهُ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] *Or, who is it that is your force that can help you, apart from the All-merciful? The unbelievers are only in a delusion.*

أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَكُمْ يَنْصُرُكُمْ
مِّنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي
غُرُورٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] *Or, who is it that could provide for you if He held back His provision? Nay, but they persist in insolence and aversion.*

أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ أَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهُ
بَلْ جَبَّوْا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ ﴿٢١﴾

be to Allah, Zamakhshari, Razi, and Qurtubi do not rule out that the allusion could be to Jibril who brings down chastisements when commissioned by Allah.

As for Allah, He was there before anything was there. It is He who created time and space and hence is above and beyond time and space. (As to where is He located now, the question is absurd). Qurtubi writes:

لانه خلق الامكنة وهو غير محتاج إليها،
كان في أزله قبل خلق المكان والزمان.
لا مكان له ولا زمان. وهو الآن على ما
لديه كان. (تفسير القرطبي)

He created space, without needing it. He was ever there, before the creation of time and space so that He is not bound to time and

space. And now He is as He was (before anything was created).

15. “The security that is denied to man by these verses, is different from the peace that a believer enjoys. The security denied here is the insecurity which grows in man because of his heedlessness of Allah, His Powers and His forces. It is not that ‘peace of heart’ or ‘tranquility’ that arises from belief in Allah, doing His bidding, and dependence on His mercy, which is alluded to here. This, other sense of peace, does not lead man to heedlessness, or to try and make the best of this material life, but rather leads to a conscious effort to avoid provoking Allah’s anger, and taking up measures to safeguard oneself against what will displease Him.

Imām Ahmad has recorded `A'isha as having said, 'I never saw the Prophet laugh out boisterously; the kind of laugh that would reveal all his teeth. He would only smile.' She also said that when it was windy or cloudy, the effects could be seen on his face. Once she asked him, 'Messenger of Allah. When people see the clouds they rejoice for the hope that they carry rains within them. But when I look at your face, I get to feel that you do not sort of like it?' He answered, 'O `A'isha, what will give me the assurance that punishment is not concealed in them. A past nation was punished by the winds. Another people saw the clouds and said, "This is a cloud that will bring us rains."'

"The above portrays the sense and sensitivity, wakefulness and ever-watchfulness of Allah and His powers. It does not deny the peace the heart enjoys from its belief in Allah's mercy and bounty.

"Moreover, all external causes lead to a single primary Cause, and the affairs return to the hands of Him in whose hands is the dominion, and who has power over all things. So, the sinking of the earth, or sand storms, volcanoes, earthquakes, tornadoes and all the forces of nature: human hands have no power over any of them. It

is Allah who controls them. All that the humans can do is to conjecture, theorize and explain their occurrence, but they have no say in their happening, nor can save themselves from them and their effects. All that they build on the earth is wiped out by the calamities in one stroke, as if they were pawns on a paper turned over. Therefore, it is best for humans that they should turn their attention from them to their Creator and Regulator, of the laws that govern and control them. They should face up to the heaven and remind themselves of Him who has true dominion and who has power over all things.

"Man is powerful, but within the limits granted to him. He knows a lot, but to the extent knowledge is extended to him. But the universe he lives in is frighteningly too large, too vast and too complicated for him. Its control is in the hands of its Creator. The laws employed have been brought to existence by Him. The forces of nature are in accordance with what is designed by Him. These forces act according to the laws put in place by Him. What man has received of the powers are a measured quantity, and what man learns of them is a quantity pre-determined. On the other hand, the events that

[22] Is he then who trudges fallen on his face,¹⁶ better guided or he who walks upright on a straight path?¹⁷

أَفَمَنْ يَمْشِي مُكِبًّا عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَىٰ
أَفَمَنْ يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] Say, 'He it is who produced you and made for you hearing, sights and consciousness; little it is that you give thanks.'

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ
السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا
تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] Say, 'He it is who scattered you in the earth and to Him you will be mustered.'

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ
تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

occur day and night, place man before them hand-shackled, hopelessly armed to face them. What is it he can do except to be reminded of his Lord and His powers?

“But when man forgets this reality, is deceived and becomes a victim of vanity because of what little knowledge and powers that Allah has given him, he becomes a distorted being, cut off from true knowledge that could have raised his soul up to the heavens. He remains earth-bound, disconnected from the true spirit of life and existence; while the knowledgeable believer plunges into the beautiful spectacle of life and existence, reaching out to the Originator of life: a joy that no one understands but he who experiences it” (Sayyid).

16. That is, someone who moves forward, face down, without look-

ing right or left, or in front of him (Qurtubi).

Literally, “walks” as the word in the text is “yamshi”. If applied to the Hereafter, the following *hadith* may be quoted, as in Ibn Jarir, for explanation. (We find it in Tirmidhi: Au.):

«يُحْشَرُ النَّاسُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ثَلَاثَةَ أَصْنَافٍ
صِنْفًا مَشَاةً وَصِنْفًا رُكْبَانًا وَصِنْفًا عَلَىٰ
وُجُوهِهِمْ». قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَكَيْفَ
يَمْشُونَ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ قَالَ «إِنَّ الَّذِي
أَمْسَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَفْئِدَتِهِمْ قَادِرٌ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يُمَشِّيَهُمْ
عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ أَمَا إِنَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ بِوُجُوهِهِمْ
كُلَّ حَدَبٍ وَشَوْكٍ» (قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا
حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ - سنن الترمذی)

The Prophet said, “People will be raised on the Day of Standing as three kinds: a kind that will be on foot, a second kind that will be mounted and a third that will be on their faces.” He was asked,

[25] They ask, 'When will this promise come to pass, if you should you be truthful?'¹⁸

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] Say, 'The knowledge is with Allah alone, and I am merely a plain warner.'

قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] But when they see it close at hand, grief-stricken will become the faces of those who disbelieved and it will be said, 'This is that which you were seeking.'¹⁹

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ زُلْفَةً سَيئَتْ وُجُوهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقِيلَ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَدْعُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

“Messenger of Allah, how will they walk on their faces?” He answered, “He who made them walk on their feet, has the power to make them walk on their faces. Indeed, they will be maneuvering every mound and clearing every thorn with their faces.”

Tirmidhi classified the above as a kind of weak *hadith*, but Dhahabi declared it *Sahih* in his critical re-examination of Hakim’s Mustadrak.

17. “... (This is) a metaphor of the spiritual obtuseness which prevents a person from caring for anything beyond his immediate, worldly concern, and thus makes him resemble an earthworm that ‘goes along prone upon its face’” (Asad).

18. “In the first preaching of Islam,” (writes Majid), ‘the announcement of the Day of Judgment is much more prominent than the Unity of

God; and it was against His revelations concerning Doomsday that the opponents directed their satire during the first twelve years. It was not love of their half-dead gods but anger at (someone) who was never tired of telling them, in the other world they would be outcasts, which opened the floodgates of irony and scorn against Muhammad’ (Hurgronje, Moham-medanism, p. 34).”

19. The reference here is to the pagans’ audacious demands worded by the Qur’an elsewhere as (8: 32):

وَإِذْ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِن كَانَتْ هَذِهِ حَقًّا
مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَابًا مِنَ
السَّمَاءِ أَوْ آتِنَا وَعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ (الأنفال: ٣٢)

“When they said, ‘O God, if this happens to be the Truth from You, then rain down upon us stones from the heaven or bring upon us a painful chastisement” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

[28] Say, 'Have you considered, if Allah were to destroy me and those with me, or showed us mercy, who can protect the unbelievers from a painful chastisement?'²⁰

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكَنِیَ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ مَعِيَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا فَمَنْ یُجِیئُ الْكَافِرِینَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِیمٍ ﴿٢٨﴾

[29] Say, 'He is the All-merciful in whom we have believed and upon Whom we have placed our trust;²¹ assuredly you will soon know who is in a manifest error.'

قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ أَمَّنًا بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِینٍ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] Say, 'Have you considered, if your water were to go deep down, who will then bring you flowing water?'²²

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَنْ یَأْتِیْكُمْ بِمَاءٍ مَّعِینٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

20. That is, your punishment is dead certain. It little matters to you what happens to us Muslims. Instead of waiting for a catastrophe falling on us, you better worry about your own destiny (Au., with a point from Qurtubi).

21. That is, it is the All-merciful in whom we have believed and in whom we place our trust. It does not seem very likely that He will destroy us (Au.).

22. Asad comments: "Apart from a further reminder of God's providential power (thus continuing with the argument touched upon in verses 19-21), the above verse has a parabolic significance as well. Just as water is an indispensable element of all organic life, so is a constant flow of moral consciousness an indispensable prerequisite of all spiri-

tual life and stability: and who but God could enable man to regain that consciousness after the older ethical values have dried up and 'vanished underground.'"

Groundwater

The liquid water in the form of lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, springs and puddles is merely 1.5 percent of earth's fresh (drinkable) water. The other 98.5% resides in porous regions beneath the earth's surface. The ground beneath our feet normally consists of what the geologists call as the unsaturated zone, anything between 0 to perhaps a few hundred feet deep, followed by a saturated layer where water collects and stays. To get water, humans have to dig beyond the unsaturated zone to strike at the water table under it. The point at which water is struck in such

quantities as which can be drawn up, is known as the water table. A water table itself can be, depending on the soil, several hundred feet deep from the point of start. The depth of the water level from the surface, (through the unsaturated zone) varies. In times of drought it goes down, to rise up when there have been good rains. But water is always there. The water level of most ponds and lakes is the water level below the ground surface adjacent to it. In short, the ground around a lake, for example, has water underneath the surface, to the same level as the level of water in the lake. In other words, the land around is sitting on a water table – a kind of an island.

Where large tracts of water are found under the ground, the area is called aquifer. Half of the United States is said to have aquifer below the land. One such aquifer is said to stretch from South Dakota to Texas and from Colorado to Arkansas (roughly the size of Arabia). This is Allah's gift. If the water level in the aquifers was to go down, or the aquifers disappear, helpless humans above will have to move out or perish.

An amazing thing about the water table below is that the water level seems to follow the land level above, rising, where the land rises to form mounds, hills and mountains, and falling where

the land falls forming depressions, valleys, through and through the downward gradient. Thus, digging, say to a depth of 400 feet can yield water at any place over a stretch of land consisting of hills as well as valleys. In other words, if one can dig say 400 feet deep to obtain water in a valley, then, water can also be reached by digging roughly to the same 400 feet depth on say a 1000 feet high hill in the same vicinity. Had water settled to its natural way of leveling off, then, those at the top of the hill would not have been able to obtain any water unless they dug 1400 feet. This is by Allah's grace, mentioned in the verse.

Then there are huge clay pots, or basins below the surface of the earth, which catch water coming down from the top, but, which retain it in their hollow, not allowing it to move down further. These hollow pots too, explain the water wells on top of mountains. E.g., on top of a mountain hill say 3000 feet high, wells, not very deep, yield drinking water serving the needs of the settlers on top. This is because of the clay bowl or pots that retain water. Without these clay bowls or pots, arranged by Allah Most High, there would be no water, springs, beautiful trees covering the mountains, and no human habitation over them (Au.). ﴿قُلْتُمْ﴾

Surah 68
*Al-Qalam*¹

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Noon.² By the Pen³ and what they⁴ in-
scribe.⁵

ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ ﴿١﴾

1. According to Ibn `Abbas and Qatadah, there are both Makkan and Madinan verses in this *Surah*, though some have thought that it is entirely Makkan (Qurtubi, Shawkani).

The *Surah* has also been referred to as *Surah Nun* (Zamakhshari).

2. For want of a *hadith*, opinions vary about “Nun” from (i) one of the *huruf al-muqatta`at*, (ii) ink-pot, (iii) a tablet of Noor, to (iv) not known (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Imām Razi points out that some of the *Salaf* took the meaning as “fish” as Allah said,

وَدَا النُّونَ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا [الأنبياء/٨٧]

“And recall when the Companion of the fish (Yunus), when he went off, angry.”

Prophet Yunus is mentioned in this *Surah* itself, in verses 48-50.

Yusuf Ali comments: “The Pen and the Record are the symbolical foundations of the Revelation to man. The adjuration by the Pen disposes off the flippant charge that Allah’s Messenger was mad or possessed. For he spoke words of power, not incoherent, but full of meaning, and through the Record of the Pen, that meaning unfolds itself, in innumerable aspects to countless generations. Muhammad was the living Grace and Mercy of Allah, and his very nature exalted him above abuse and persecution.”

3. It is widely believed that the allusion is to that Pen which was used at the beginning of the affair to write down all that was to happen. Said the Prophet,

« إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْقَلَمَ فَقَالَ لَهُ اكْتُبْ فَجَزَى بِمَا هُوَ كَاتِبٌ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ ». (الترمذى: قَالَ هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ غَرِيبٌ)

[2] You are not by the grace of your Lord, insane.

﴿٢﴾ مَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ بِمَجْنُونٍ

[3] You shall definitely have a wage unfailing.⁶

﴿٣﴾ وَإِنَّ لَكَ لَأَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُونٍ

[4] Surely, you are on a sublime character.⁷

﴿٤﴾ وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

[5] So, soon you will see, and they will see.

﴿٥﴾ فَسَتَبْصُرُ وَيَبْصُرُونَ

“The first thing that Allah created was the Pen. He ordered it, ‘Write down.’ Thereon it ran with all that was to happen until eternity” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

The above report is also in Abu Da’ud, as well as in Hakim where Dhahabi noted that it is trustworthy, while a report of the same meaning is in Ahmad too (Au.).

4. By the pronoun “they” the allusion is to angels (Ibn Kathir).

5. That is, “what they write” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

It could be said that Allah swears by, “all that is written in books,” or, as “was ever said;” the allusion being to the entries made in the Records of Deeds of the humans (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

6. That is, a reward which will neither come to an end, nor will be limited (Ibn Jarir).

7. That is, you possess, O Prophet, a character which has the Qur’an

as its source and foundation. When ‘A’isha was asked about the Prophet’s character, she replied:

(عن عائشة .. قَالَتْ: كَانَ خُلُقُهُ الْقُرْآنَ - مسند أحمد

“The Qur’an was his character” (Ibn Jarir, Kashshaf, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Kathir writes: Ahmad has another report. Someone asked ‘A’isha about the Prophet’s character. She replied,

عَنْ رَجُلٍ مِنْ بَنِي سُوَءَاءَ قَالَ سَأَلْتُ عَائِشَةَ عَنْ خُلُقِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَتْ أَمَا تَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ { إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ } قَالَ قُلْتُ حَدِّثِي عَن ذَاكَ قَالَتْ صَنَعْتُ لَهُ طَعَامًا وَصَنَعْتُ لَهُ حِفْصَةً طَعَامًا فَقُلْتُ لِجَارِيَتِي اذْهَبِي فَإِنْ جَاءَتْ هِيَ بِالطَّعَامِ فَوَضَعْتُهُ قَبْلَ فَاطْرَحِي الطَّعَامَ قَالَتْ فَجَاءَتْ بِالطَّعَامِ قَالَتْ فَأَلْقَيْتُهُ الْجَارِيَةُ فَوَقَعَتْ الْقُصْعَةَ فَانْكَسَرَتْ وَكَانَ نِطْعًا قَالَتْ فَجَمَعَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَقَالَ افْتَصُّوا أَوْ افْتَصِّبِي

“Have you not read the Qur’an which says, ‘Surely, you are on a sublime character?’” The man said, “Give me an example.” She narrated, “I prepared some food.

[6] Which of you is the afflicted one.⁸

[7] Indeed, your Lord knows well those who have strayed away from His path, as He knows well those who follow guidance.

[8] So, obey not those who cry lies.

بِأَيِّكُمْ الْمَفْتُونُ ﴿٦﴾

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ
وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٧﴾

فَلَا تُطِعِ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٨﴾

Hafsa also prepared. I said to my maidservant, 'If she brings in the dish (as gift), just throw it away.' (Because she herself was not good at cooking: Au.). Indeed she came in with the dish. The maidservant threw the food. The bowl also fell off her hand and broke. The Prophet began to gather it together and said, 'Send her back something similar.'

On another occasion when asked about the Prophet's character and conduct, `A'isha replied with the first ten verses of *Surah al-Mu'miNun* (Qurtubi).

Ibn Kathir added: Another tradition in Ahmad is as follows (We have picked up a longer version from Ahmad: Au.):

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ مَا لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- مُسْلِمًا مِنْ لَعْنَةٍ تُذَكَّرُ وَلَا اتَّقَمَ لِنَفْسِهِ شَيْئًا يُؤْتَى إِلَيْهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُسْمِعَكَ حُرْمَاتِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَلَا ضَرَبَ بِيَدِهِ شَيْئًا قَطُّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَضْرِبَ بِهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا سُئِلَ شَيْئًا قَطُّ فَمَنَعَهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يُسْأَلَ مَأْتَمًا فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ أَبْعَدَ النَّاسِ مِنْهُ وَلَا حُيْرَ بَيْنَ أَمْرَيْنِ قَطُّ إِلَّا الْاِخْتَارَ

أَيُّسَرُهُمَا وَكَانَ إِذَا كَانَ حَدِيثَ عَهْدٍ يُجْرِيَلِ عَلَيْهِ
السَّلَامُ يُدَارِسُهُ كَانَ أَجْوَدَ بِالْحَيِّرِ مِنَ الرِّيحِ الْمُرْسَلَةِ.

`A'isha reported: "The Messenger of Allah did not curse any Muslim, so far as memory goes. He did not avenge himself, except that Allah's commands should be trampled. He did not strike anyone ever, except to strike in the way of Allah. He was never asked but he refused except that he should be asked something sinful. He was the most distant away from the people therein (i.e. sins). He was never given a choice but he chose the easier way. And, at the time he was taught by Jibril, he was more generous those days than a wind driven."

The above report is also in Hakim, and was declared by Dhahabi as meeting with the conditions set by Bukhari and Muslim (Au.).

8. The pagans said about the Prophet (*saws*) that he was insane. The Qur'an answers, "Soon you will know who

[9] They wish that you should soften so that they also soften.⁹

﴿٩﴾ وَدُّوا لَوْ نُذِهْنُ فَيُدْهِنُونَ

[10] And yield not to every mean, habitual swearer.

﴿١٠﴾ وَلَا تُطِعْ كُلَّ حَلَّافٍ مَّهِينٍ

was afflicted with madness, is deranged or is possessed.” This is how Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Dahhak and others explained it (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

9. That is, Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and other said, the pagans wished to strike a compromise deal with the Prophet. If he softened his stand towards their deities, they would in return soften their stand towards his mission and message (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Sayyid Qutb cites a few instances of the pressure on the Prophet to make a compromise with the Makkans, but which he refused: The first instance as documented by Ibn Hisham through Ibn Is-haq says, “When the Prophet first began to call his people to Islam and then openly preach, the Quraysh paid no attention to him until he began to condemn their deities. When he did that, they began to take notice and deny him. They became united against him in enmity except for a few that had turned Muslims. However, the Prophet’s uncle protected him, and the Prophet continued to preach freely.

When the Quraysh saw that their reaction to his call did not bother the Prophet, that he continued to denounce their deities, and that his uncle stood before his nephew in defense, then some of the Quraysh chiefs decided to see Abu Talib. They were `Utbah and Shaybah: sons of Rabi`ah, Abu Sufyan, Abu al-Bakhtari, Aswad b. `Abd al-Muttalib b. Asad, Abu Jahal, Waleed b. al-Mughirah, and the two sons of Hajjaj b. `Amr. They said, “O Abu Talib. Your nephew denigrates our deities, finds fault with our religion, laughs at our ambitions, ridicules our forefathers. Therefore, either you prevent him or move away from between us and him - after all, you are also as much against him as we – or we shall be sufficient for you, against him.” Abu Talib pacified them with a few soft words and so they returned.

But the Prophet continued with his call: presenting Allah’s religion and inviting them to it. Consequently, the Quraysh anger continued to rise and some of them urged others to take some action. So they went up to Abu

Talib once again. They said, "O Abu Talib. You are the eldest among us, and the most honorable. We sought from you to prevent your nephew but you haven't done anything about it. By God, we shall not hold our peace against him anymore while he ridicules our forefathers, laughs at our ambitions, and denounces our deities. So, we expect you to move out from between us and him until one of us is destroyed." Having thus warned him they left.

Now, it was hard for Abu Talib to abandon his tribe, but he did not find himself willing to hand over the Prophet to them.

He sent for the Prophet and told him, "My nephew. Your people came to me and told me this and this. So, please be kind upon me and upon yourself. Do not make me bear what I do not have the strength for." The Prophet felt that that was the beginning with his uncle, and that ultimately he will hand him over to the Quraysh, finding himself weak against their pressures. But he answered him, "My uncle. By Allah, if they placed the sun in my one hand and the moon on the other on condition that I give up this affair or I be destroyed, I am not going to give it up." His eyes swelled with tears as

he started to leave. Abu Talib called him back. When he came closer, he told him, "Go my nephew and say what you wish to, for, by God, I shall never abandon you in favor of anything."

The above then, writes Sayyid, was the stand of the Prophet against the pagans, when faced with the chance of losing the last fort that had been his refuge.

Another picture is also from Ibn Is-haq. This was in direct contact with the pagans, at a time when persecution of his weak followers was at its peak.

`Utbah b. Rabi`ah, one of the chiefs of the Quraysh, suggested to a group of the Quraysh in the Holy house, while the Prophet sat alone at some distance, "O Quraysh. Should I not go up to Muhammad and offer him things in return of which he will spare criticizing us?" Those were days when Hamzah had just embraced Islam and they could see that the numbers around the Prophet was growing. They told him to go ahead. So `Utbah went up to the Prophet and addressed him thus: "My cousin. You are from a noble family. But you have brought a dreadful thing to your tribe. You have divided their

house, destroyed their ambitions, reviled their religion, ridiculed their deities, and have been ungrateful to the fathers of past. So, listen to my offer. May be it will interest you. Listen, if you are aiming to get rich, we shall make you the richest of Arabs. If you are after leadership, we shall declare you one. If you wish kingship, we shall crown you one. On the other hand, if you see that a demon comes to you, we shall get you fully treated." When he was finished, the Prophet asked him, "Are you through O Abu Waleed? If so, listen to me.." Then he began to recite: "*Ha Mim*. A sending down from the Kind, the Compassionate. A Book whose verses have been explained – an Arabic recitation for a people who understand; giving good tidings and warning, but most of them turn away, so they hear not. They said, 'Our hearts are in a covering from what you invite us to; and in our ears there is a heaviness; and there is a veil between us and you. Therefore, keep working, we are also working.' Say, 'I am only a human like you, (except that) it has been revealed to me that your God is One God. Therefore, take the straight path to Him and seek His forgiveness. And woe unto those who Associate .." until he fell into prostration.

'Utbah remained listening to him reclined backwards with his weight on his hands. When he was finished, the Prophet said, "Have you heard O Abu Walid? Well, that's my answer." 'Utbah went back to his people. As he was advancing, someone remarked, "The man is not coming back with the face he went." When he joined them he said, "By God, I heard from him what I never heard before. By God, it is not poetry, nor magic, nor soothsaying. O Quraysh, listen to me: leave him alone. By God, what I have heard is a great speech. If he is destroyed by the Arabs, they would have done to him what you wish to do. But if he overcomes them, then you will win the rule (over the people). His honor will be your honor." They said, "By God, he has cast a magical spell on you." He said, "This is my opinion. You may do what you wish."

According to another report, adds Sayyid, when the Prophet reached the verse, "I have warned you of a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt of 'Aad and Thamud," 'Utbah placed his hand on the Prophet's mouth and adjuring by the right of kinship begged him to stop.

In any case, continues Sayyid, we have before us a third incident: The

[11] A backbiter,¹⁰ going about with slander.

هَمَّازٍ مَّشَاءٍ بَنَمِيمٍ ﴿١١﴾

[12] Hinderer of good, a guilty aggressor, great sinner.

مَنَّاعٍ لِّلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿١٢﴾

Prophet was going round the Ka`bah when he encountered Aswad b. `Abd al-Muttalib b. Asad, Walid b. al-Mughirah, Umayyah b. Khalaf, `As b. Wa'il al-Sahmi: all chiefs of the Quraysh. They said, "Come on Muhammad. Let us worship what you worship, and, in return you worship what we worship. We can thus meet each other at some point. If there is any good in your deity, we would have taken a share of it; while if there is any good in our deities, you would have got a share of it." (Of course, the Prophet was not going to make any such ridiculous compromise. Later) it was revealed, "Say, 'O unbelievers, I do not worship what you worship..'" to the end of the chapter. Thus, the Prophet remained true to his mission, and rejected all chances of a compromise with those who opposed his mission.

10. Imām Muslim documented the following:

عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ هَمَّازِ بْنِ الْحَارِثِ قَالَ كَانَ رَجُلٌ يَنْتَقِلُ الْحَدِيثَ إِلَى الْأَمِيرِ فَكُنَّا جُلُوسًا فِي الْمَسْجِدِ فَقَالَ الْقَوْمُ هَذَا يَمُنُّ بِتَنْقُلِ الْحَدِيثِ إِلَى الْأَمِيرِ. قَالَ فَجَاءَ حَتَّى جَلَسَ إِلَيْنَا. فَقَالَ حَدِيثُهُ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ

-صلى الله عليه وسلم- يقول « لا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ قَتَاتٌ ». (صحيح مسلم)

"Someone used to pass on news about the people to the governor. Once we were sitting around when someone said (about a man approaching), 'This is the man who passes on news to the governor.' He came and sat down. Hudhayfah said, 'I have heard the Prophet say, 'A backbiter will not enter Paradise'" (Au.).

Ahmed has two reports of the same meaning, as also Ibn Majah:

عَنْ أَسْمَاءَ بِنْتِ يَزِيدِ الْأَنْصَارِيَّةِ قَالَتْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- « أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِخَيْرِكُمْ ». قَالُوا بَلَى. قَالَ « فَخَيْرِكُمُ الَّذِينَ إِذَا رُؤُوا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِشَرِّكُمْ ». قَالُوا بَلَى. قَالَ « فَشَرِّكُمْ الْمُفْسِدُونَ بَيْنَ الْأَحِبَّةِ الْمَشَاءُونَ بِالنَّمِيمَةِ الْبَاغُونَ الْبِرَاءَ الْعَنَتُ »

On the authority of Asma' bint Yezid, the Prophet said, "May I not inform you of the best of you?" They said, "Please do?" He said, "The best of you are those who, when sighted, remind of Allah. May I not inform you of the worst of you?" They said,

[13] Violent¹¹ and, moreover, attributor of self to higher lineage.¹²

عُتِّلَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ زَنِيمٌ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] Because he is possessor of wealth and children.

أَنْ كَانَ ذَا مَالٍ وَبَنِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] When Our revelations are recited to him he says, 'Fibs of the ancients.'

إِذَا تَنكَلَى عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

“Please do.” He said, “The worst of you are those who create misunderstanding between brothers (in faith); those who carry slander; those who seek to harm the innocent” (Ibn Kathir).

Haythami remarks that except for Shahr b. Hawshab (declared weak by some), the rest of the narrators are trustworthy (Au.).

11. `Utul is a combination of several base qualities: a dry coarse man, gluttonous, an evil preventer of good, a vulgar, meanly and gatherer of wealth, etc. (Sayyid and others).

We have a *hadith* in this context in the *Sahihayn*:

(عَنْ) ابْنِ وَهْبٍ الْحِزَاعِيِّ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - يَقُولُ « أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِأَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ كُلِّ ضَعِيفٍ مُتَضَعِّفٍ لَوْ أَقْسَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِأَبْرَةٍ ، أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِأَهْلِ النَّارِ كُلِّ عُتْلٍ جَوَاطِ مُسْتَكْبِرٍ »

Ibn Wahb said that he heard the Prophet say, “My I not inform you of the inhabitants of Paradise: every weak (person), treated

weak, but who, if he swore by Allah, Allah would fulfill his oath. And, may I not inform you of the inhabitants of the Fire: Every violent, gatherer of wealth but stingy, arrogant” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

12. “Zanama” can be explained in two ways. If it is referring to a specific person, then, it has one connotation; but if it is not referring to any specific person, but rather, is of general descriptive nature, then it has another meaning. If it is referring to a specific person, then, he has to be identified. The commentators have not been able to identify him. Some names that are taken are: Walid b. al-Mughira, Akhnas b. Shariq of Thaqif tribe, Aswad b. `Abd Yaghuth the Zuhri, and Abu Jahl. In that case, the meaning is, a man who attributes his lineage to a people of high or noble line without truly belonging to them. It is said that Walid b. al-Mughira was not of the Quraysh

[16] We shall soon brand him on the snout.¹³

سَسِمُهُ عَلَى الْخُرْطُومِ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] Indeed, we have tried them¹⁴ even as we tried the owners of the orchard,¹⁵ when they vowed that they would surely pluck its fruit by morning.

إِنَّا بَلَوْنَاهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ إِذْ أَقْسَمُوا لَيَصْرِمُنَّهَا مُصْبِحِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

tribe, but attributed himself to it to get a share of the honor in which this tribe was held.

But if the reference is not to any individual, then the meaning that the word carries is as stated in an Arabic lexicon:

الزنيمة الذي له زئمة من الشر يعرف بها كما تعرف الشاة بزئمتها (التبيان في تفسير غريب القرآن)

“*Zanim* is someone who carries a mark of mischief on his person, (and is thus recognized) just as a sheep is recognized by its mark (Au.).

Sa`id b. Jubayr and Hasan adopted this latter meaning. Ibn `Abbas said that the allusion is to a mark the man had on his neck. The word has several other connotations such as, an oppressor, a doubting person, a dry boor, glutton given to eating and drinking, lowly, despised, ignoble, mean, of illegitimate birth, stranger, outsider, etc. (Ibn Jarir).

13. That is, this will be a punishment for him in this world as well as the

Hereafter (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). Other, allegorical meanings have also been suggested (Au.).

The word used “*khurtum*” actually refers to an animal’s nose. And, significantly, it being a sensitive area, a beast is controlled by a rope inserted through its snout (Au.).

14. “Them,” i.e., the Makkans against whom the Prophet prayed so that they were struck with famine for several years (Alusi and others).

15. We do not know what the source of the story was, but it was said by the *Salaf* that these belonged to the People of the Book whose father was a pious man. When the fruit was plucked he would hand over his homelands a year’s providence out of it, and spend the rest on the poor. When he died and his children inherited the orchard they said, “Our father was not a clever person. He used to expend on the poor. If we save that portion, it will come handy in future.” When they had firmly decided to act according to their intent,

[18] *And they made no exception.*¹⁶

وَلَا يَسْتَنْتُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] *Then visited over it a visitation from your Lord*¹⁷ *while they were asleep.*

فَطَافَ عَلَيْهَا طَائِفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ وَهُمْ

نَائِمُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] *So by morning it became as though (a garden) plucked.*¹⁸

فَأَصْبَحَتْ كَالصَّرِيمِ ﴿٢٠﴾

Allah punished them so that, nothing remained: neither the principal, nor the profit, nor the charitable part (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Yusuf Ali adds: “‘Why do the wicked flourish?’ is a question asked in all ages. The answer is not simple. It must refer to (1) the choice left to man’s will, (2) his moral responsibility, (3) the need of his tuning his will to Allah’s Will, (4) the patience of Allah, which allows the widest possible chance for the operation of (5) His Mercy, and (6) in the last resort, to the nature of the Punishment, which is not a merely abrupt or arbitrary act, but a long, gradual process, in which there is room for repentance at every stage. All these points are illustrated in the remarkable Parable of the People of the Garden, which also illustrates the greed, selfishness, and heedlessness of man, as well as his tendency to throw the blame on others if he can but think of a scapegoat. All these foibles are shown, but

the Mercy of Allah is boundless, and even after the worst sins and punishments, there may be hope of an even better orchard than the one lost, if only the repentance is true, and there is complete surrender to Allah’s Will. But if, in spite of all this, there is no surrender of the will, then, indeed, the punishment in the Hereafter is something incomparably greater than the little calamities in the Parable.”

16. That is, they did not say, “Allah willing” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and others).

Another possible meaning is that, “they would not separate out a part (for the poor)” – Shafee’ from Mazhari.

17. That is, a chastisement descending down from their Lord manifested through a storm (Au.).

18. Another connotation of “*sarim*” is “a dark patch of night.” That is, shred of the leaves, the garden looked

[21] Then, by morning they called out to one another,

﴿٢١﴾ فَتَنَادُوا مُصْبِحِينَ

[22] 'Go early to your crop, if you would pluck.'

أَنِ اْعَدُوا عَلَىٰ حَرْثِكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَارِمِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] So they set out, lowering their tones (while saying),

﴿٢٣﴾ فَانطَلَقُوا وَهُمْ يَخْفَتُونَ

[24] 'No destitute should enter it today upon you.'

أَنْ لَا يَدْخُلَهَا الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَسْكِينٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] And they set out (early) in the morning, determined upon their purpose.¹⁹

﴿٢٥﴾ وَعَدَوْا عَلَىٰ حَزْدٍ قَادِرِينَ

[26] But when they saw it, they said, 'Surely, we have lost our way.'²⁰

﴿٢٦﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهَا قَالُوا إِنَّا لَضَالُونَ

[27] Nay, we are deprived.'²¹

﴿٢٧﴾ بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُومُونَ

[28] Said the most judicious of them,²² 'Did I not tell you? Why should you not glorify (Allah)?'²³

﴿٢٨﴾ قَالَ أَوْسَطُهُمْ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ لَوْلَا تُسَبِّحُونَ

[29] They said, 'Glory to our Lord, we were surely transgressors.'

﴿٢٩﴾ قَالُوا سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ

like a dark patch of night (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

19. Or, confident in their ability to act according to their resolve (Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and others: Ibn Jarir).

20. That is, "we have perhaps arrived at the wrong place" (Ibn Kathir).

21. That is, when they felt convinced that it was their own orchard, they uttered these words (Zamakhshari).

22. This is how Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and others understood it (Ibn Jarir).

23. That is, do not blame Allah, but rather glorify Him and seek forgiveness for your wrong intention (Qurtubi).

It has been said that it was this same judicious man who had told them to say "Allah willing," and who, when his brothers decided on not giving the zakah, had warned them that they might face chastisement if they would not repent for their determi-

[30] Then some of them turned to others, blaming each other.

فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتْلَاوَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

[31] They said, 'Woe unto us, surely we were insolent.

قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا طَاغِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

[32] It may be that our Lord will give us in exchange better than it. Surely, to our Lord do we turn.²⁴

عَسَى رَبُّنَا أَنْ يُبَدِّلَنَا خَيْرًا مِنْهَا إِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا رَاغِبُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

[33] Such is the chastisement, but the chastisement of the Hereafter is greater, only if they knew.²⁵

كَذَلِكَ الْعَذَابُ وَلَئِنَّ الْعَذَابَ الْآخِرَ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] Verily, for the godfearing shall be Gardens of Bliss with their Lord.

إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٍ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٣٤﴾

[35] Or, shall We treat those who surrendered like the guilty?²⁶

أَفَتَجْعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ كَالْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] What is the matter with you, how do you judge?

مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

nation to hold back the zakah. It was the same man now who, after seeing the punishment, reminded them that he had warned them earlier (Razi).

24. Were they Muslim? We do not know. When Qatadah was asked whether they were believers or unbelievers, he answered, "You have placed a heavy responsibility on me" (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

25. Bayhaqi has documented a report of this context:

عَنْ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ : أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- تَهَى عَنِ الْجَدَادِ بِاللَّيْلِ ، وَالْحُصَادِ بِاللَّيْلِ. قَالَ جَعْفَرٌ : أَرَاهُ مِنْ أَجْلِ الْمَسَاكِينِ. (سنن البيهقي)

"The Prophet prohibited plucking and reaping at night."

One of the narrators, Ja'far remarked that the prohibition is perhaps because of the poor (who might be deprived) – Ibn Kathir.

The above report could not be checked for its authenticity (Au.).

26. Yusuf Ali comments: "The spiritual arrogance which rejects faith in Allah is perhaps the worst Sin, because it makes itself impervious to the Mercy of Allah, as a bed of clay is impervious to the absorption of water. It sets up its own standards and its own will, but how can it measure

[37] Or, have you a Scripture in which you study?

﴿٣٧﴾ أَمْ لَكُمْ كِتَابٌ فِيهِ تَدْرُسُونَ

[38] Wherein there is for you that which you choose?²⁷

﴿٣٨﴾ إِنَّ لَكُمْ فِيهِ لَمَا يَتَخَيَّرُونَ

[39] Or do you have a pledge binding on Us, extending to the Day of Judgment that yours shall be that which you judge?²⁸

﴿٣٩﴾ أَمْ لَكُمْ أَيْمَانٌ عَلَيْنَا بِالْعَقَّةِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ لَكُمْ لَمَا تَحْكُمُونَ

[40] Ask them, which of them will vouch for that?²⁹

﴿٤٠﴾ سَلِّمُوا إِلَيْهِمْ بِذَلِكَ زَعِيمٌ

[41] Or, do they have associates (in Divinity)? Then let them produce their associates, if they are truthful.

﴿٤١﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ فَلْيَأْتُوا بِشُرَكَائِهِمْ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ

or bind the Will of Allah? It sets up its own fetishes, idols, priests, gods, or godlings. The fetishes may be even God-given gifts or faculties. Intellect or Science, if pushed up to the position of idols. If they are made rivals to Allah, question them: Will they solve Allah's mysteries, or even the mysteries of Life and Soul?"

27. "It is clearly against both logic and justice that men of righteousness should have the same End as men of sin. Even in this life, man cannot command whatever he chooses though he is allowed a limited freedom of choice. How can he expect such a thing under a reign of perfect Justice and Truth?" (Yusuf Ali).

28. "Nor can the Pagans plead that they have any special Covenants with Allah which give them a favoured position above other mortals. The 'Chosen Race' idea of the Jews is also condemned. It is quite true that a certain race or group, on account of special aptitude may be chosen by Allah to uphold His truth and preach it. But this is conditional on their following Allah's Law. As soon as they become arrogant and selfish, they lose that position. They cannot have a perpetual and unconditional lease till the Day of Judgment" (Yusuf Ali).

29. Or, "will be a guarantor" (Ibn Jarir).

[42] Upon the day when the shin is bared³⁰ and they are summoned to prostrate, but they will not be able.

يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَن سَاقٍ وَيُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

30. Some scholars have suggested that this verse is of the “*mutashabihat*” type whose meaning cannot be unraveled (Thanwi).

Majid echoes the understanding of the *Salaf* (as in Ibn Jarir) when he comments: “i.e., some very special form of Divine Manifestation will take place (Th.). But the expression ‘uncovering the shank in Arabic has also another meaning, and is indicative of a grievous and terrible calamity.”

Ibn Kathir writes: The allusion is to the Day of Judgment when events of extraordinary significance will take place. Bukhari said explaining this *ayah*:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - يَقُولُ « يَكْشِفُ رَبُّنَا عَنْ سَاقِهِ فَيَسْجُدُ لَهُ كُلُّ مُؤْمِنٍ وَمُؤْمِنَةٍ ، وَيَبْقَى مَنْ كَانَ يَسْجُدُ فِي الدُّنْيَا رِئَاءَ وَشَمْعَةً ، فَيَذْهَبُ لِيَسْجُدَ فَيَعُودُ ظَهْرُهُ طَبَقًا وَاحِدًا »

Abu Sa`id said that he heard the Prophet say, “Our Lord will lay bare His shank. Every believing man or woman will fall prostrate, there remaining those who used to fall prostrate in the world only

to be seen and heard (making a show off). Such a one will try to make a prostration but his back will harden up to become a stiff plate.”

To the above, Ibn Kathir adds: This is how Ibn Jarir understood this verse, and this is how Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and others explained it.

Hafiz ibn Hajr points out that another version of the *hadith* (as in Muslim) does not use the word “*an saqih*” but rather “*an saq*” (without the pronoun) which takes the report closer to the Qur`anic text.

Ibn Jarir produces several reports carrying the same meaning as the one in the collection of Muslim, which we reproduce here, although not the whole of it.

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ أَنَّ نَاسًا فِي زَمَنِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَلْ تَرَى رَبَّنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- « نَعَمْ ». قَالَ « هَلْ تُضَارُونَ فِي رُؤْيَةِ الشَّمْسِ بِالظَّهْرِ صَحْوًا لَيْسَ مَعَهَا سَحَابٌ وَهَلْ تُضَارُونَ فِي رُؤْيَةِ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةً الْبَدْرِ صَحْوًا لَيْسَ فِيهَا سَحَابٌ ». قَالُوا لَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. قَالَ « مَا تُضَارُونَ فِي رُؤْيَةِ اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَّا كَمَا تُضَارُونَ فِي رُؤْيَةِ أَحَدِهِمَا إِذَا كَانَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَذَّنَ مُؤَدِّنٌ لِيَسْمَعَنَّ

كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ. فَلَا يَبْقَىٰ أَحَدٌ كَانَ يَعْبُدُ غَيْرَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَهُ مِنَ الْأَصْنَامِ وَالْأَنْصَابِ إِلَّا يَتَسَاقَطُونَ فِي النَّارِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا لَمْ يَبْقَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَرٍّ وَقَاجِرٍ وَعَبْرَ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ فَيُدْعَىٰ إِلَيْهِمْ فَيَقَالُ لَهُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ قَالُوا كُنَّا نَعْبُدُ عَزِيرَ ابْنِ اللَّهِ. فَيَقَالُ كَذِبُكُمْ مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ صَاحِبَةٍ وَلَا وَلَدٍ فَمَاذَا تَبْعُونَ قَالُوا عَطِشْنَا يَا رَبَّنَا فَاسْقِنَا. فَيُسَارُ إِلَيْهِمْ أَلَّا تَرُدُّونَ فَيُحْشَرُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ كَأَنَّهَا سَرَابٌ يَحْطِمُ بَعْضُهَا بَعْضًا فَيَتَسَاقَطُونَ فِي النَّارِ. ثُمَّ يُدْعَى النَّصَارَى فَيَقَالُ لَهُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ قَالُوا كُنَّا نَعْبُدُ الْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ اللَّهِ. فَيَقَالُ لَهُمْ كَذِبُكُمْ. مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ صَاحِبَةٍ وَلَا وَلَدٍ. فَيَقَالُ لَهُمْ مَاذَا تَبْعُونَ فَيَقُولُونَ عَطِشْنَا يَا رَبَّنَا فَاسْقِنَا. - قَالَ - فَيُسَارُ إِلَيْهِمْ أَلَّا تَرُدُّونَ فَيُحْشَرُونَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ كَأَنَّهَا سَرَابٌ يَحْطِمُ بَعْضُهَا بَعْضًا فَيَتَسَاقَطُونَ فِي النَّارِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا لَمْ يَبْقَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ تَعَالَىٰ مِنْ بَرٍّ وَقَاجِرٍ أَتَاهُمْ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ سُبْحَانَ تَعَالَىٰ فِي أَدْنَىٰ صُورَةٍ مِنَ الَّتِي رَأَوْهُ فِيهَا.

قَالَ فَمَا تَنْتَظِرُونَ تَتَّبِعُ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ. قَالُوا يَا رَبَّنَا فَارْقِنَا النَّاسَ فِي الدُّنْيَا أَفْقَرُ مَا كُنَّا إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَمْ نُصَاحِبِهِمْ. فَيَقُولُ أَنَا رَبُّكُمْ. فَيَقُولُونَ نَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْكَ لَا نُشْرِكُ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا - مَرَّتَيْنِ أَوْ ثَلَاثًا - حَتَّىٰ إِنَّ بَعْضَهُمْ لَيَكَادُ أَنْ يَنْقَلِبَ. فَيَقُولُ هَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُ آيَةٌ فَتَعْرِفُونَهُ بِمَا فَيَقُولُونَ نَعَمْ. فَيُكْشَفُ عَنْ سَاقِي فَلَا يَبْقَىٰ مَنْ كَانَ يَسْجُدُ لِلَّهِ مِنْ تَلْقَاءِ نَفْسِهِ إِلَّا أَدْرَأَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِالسُّجُودِ وَلَا يَبْقَىٰ مَنْ كَانَ يَسْجُدُ اتِّقَاءً وَرِيَاءً إِلَّا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ ظَهْرَهُ طَبَقَةً وَاحِدَةً كُلَّمَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَسْجُدَ حَرَّ عَلَىٰ قَفَاهُ. ثُمَّ يَرْتَفِعُونَ رُءُوسَهُمْ وَقَدْ حَوَّلَ فِي صُورَتِهِ الَّتِي رَأَوْهُ فِيهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمْ. فَيَقُولُونَ أَنْتَ رَبُّنَا. ثُمَّ يُضْرَبُ الْجِسْرُ ... الحديث إلى آخره (صحيح مسلم)

On the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, the Prophet was asked, "Messenger of Allah, shall we see our Lord on the Day of

Judgment?" He answered, "Yes." Then he added, "Do you doubt seeing the sun at noon in a clear sky? Do you doubt seeing the full moon in a cloudless sky?" They said no. He said, "You will not doubt seeing Allah on the Day of Judgment any more than you doubt seeing one of the two (mentioned above).

A caller will call on the Day of Judgment, 'Let every people follow that which he was worshipping.' No one will be left of those who worshipped other than Allah of the worshippers of idols and graven images but they would fall upon each other in the Fire, until none is left but those who worshipped Allah, including the pious and the impious ones. The People of the Book will be left. Then the Jews will be asked, 'Who is it you were worshipping.' They will say, 'We were worshipping 'Uzayr, the son of God.' They will be told, 'You have lied. Allah did not take a spouse nor a son. In any case, what is it that you want?' They will say, 'We are thirsty Our lord. Give us a drink.' They will be pointed (to a drink and told), will you not go to that source of drink?' They will be gathered together near a Fire that will appear as a

mirage, waves upon waves. They will fall into the Fire one upon another. Then the Christians will be called and asked, 'Who is it you were worshipping?' They will reply, 'We were worshipping Jesus Christ, the son of God.' They will be told, 'You have lied. Allah did not take a spouse nor a son. In any case, what is it that you want?' They will say, 'We are thirsty Our lord. Give us a drink.' They will be pointed (to a drink and told), 'will you not go to that source of drink?' They will be gathered together near a Fire that will appear as a mirage, waves upon waves. They will fall into the Fire one upon another. When none is left but those who had been worshipping Allah, the pious and the impious, the Lord of the worlds, the Blessed, the Exalted, will appear in a form other than the form in which they had been seeing Him.

He will say, 'What are you waiting for? Let every nation follow what it worshipped.' They will say, 'Our Lord. We parted company with those in the world at a time we needed their company most, yet never took their company.' He will say, 'I am your Lord.' They will say, 'Allah's refuge from you. We shall not associate anything with Allah' – twice or

thrice, until some of them would be close to turning back. He will say, 'Is there a sign between you and Him by which you could recognize Him?' They will say, 'Yes.' Then the shank will be bared. Then none will remain who had prostrated himself to Allah by his free will, but will be allowed prostration; and none will remain who prostrated to show off, or in hypocrisy, but Allah will turn his back into a single plate. Every time he wished to prostrate, he would fall backward. Then they will raise their heads. In the meanwhile, He would have changed to the form in which they saw Him the first time and will say, 'I am your Lord.' They will say, 'Yes, You are our Lord.' Then the Bridge will be laid ..." until the end of the report.

(For a fuller version of the *hadith*, see *Surah al-Muddaththir* [no. 74], note 34).

Commenting on the words, "then the shin will be bared," Imām Nawawi writes the following:

وَفَسَّرَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ وَجُمْهُورُ أَهْلِ اللُّغَةِ وَعَرِيبِ الْحَدِيثِ
السَّاقَ هُنَا بِالشَّيْئَةِ أَيُّ يُكْشَفُ عَنْ شِدَّةٍ وَأَمْرٍ مَهُولٍ
، وَهَذَا مَثَلٌ تَضْرِبُهُ الْعَرَبُ لِشِدَّةِ الْأَمْرِ ، وَلِهَذَا يَقُولُونَ
: قَامَتْ الْحَرْبُ عَلَى سَاقٍ ، وَأَصْلُهُ أَنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ إِذَا
وَقَعَ فِي أَمْرٍ شَدِيدٍ سَمَّرَ سَاعِدَهُ وَكَشَفَ عَنْ سَاقِهِ
لِلْإِهْتِمَامِ بِهِ . قَالَ الْقَاضِي عِيَّاضُ - رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ - :
وَقِيلَ الْمُرَادُ بِالسَّاقِ هُنَا نُورٌ عَظِيمٌ ، وَوَرَدَ ذَلِكَ فِي

حَدِيثَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّ فَوْزَكُمْ : وَمَعْنَى ذَلِكَ مَا يَسْجُدُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ عِنْدَ رُؤْيَا اللَّهِ تَعَالَى مِنَ الْفَوَائِدِ وَالْأَلْطَافِ . قَالَ الْقَاضِي عِيَّاضُ : وَقِيلَ : قَدْ يَكُونُ السَّاقُ عِلَامَةً بَيِّنَةً وَبَيِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ ظُهُورِ جَمَاعَةٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ عَلَى خِلْقَةِ عَظِيمَةٍ ... وَقِيلَ : كَشَفَ الْخَوْفَ وَإِزَالََةَ الرُّعْبَ عَنْهُمْ وَمَا كَانَ غَلَبَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مِنَ الْأَهْوَالِ ، فَتَطَمَّئِنَّ حِينَئِذٍ نَفْسُهُمْ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ ، وَيَتَجَلَّى لَهُمْ فَيَخْرُونَ سُجَّدًا .
(شرح النووي على مسلم)

“Ibn `Abbas and majority of the linguists as well as experts of *hadith* vocabulary have explained the ‘saq’ here as hardship; i.e., terrible hardships and dreadful events will be laid bare. The Arabs use this metaphor for events bearing hardship. They say, ‘The war has stood on (its) saq.’ The origin comes from the fact that when a man faces a difficult affair, he rolls up his sleeves and bares his shin because of his occupation with it. Qazi `Iyad said, may Allah show him mercy, ‘It is said that the allusion by the term ‘saq’ at this point is to a great Light,’ which is also reported in a *hadith*. Ibn Fawrak has said that the allusion is to what of the benefits and benevolence that the believers will obtain when the Beatific Vision is granted. Qadi `Iyad added, ‘It is also said that the “shin” would be a sign

between Allah and the believers in the appearance of angels in a form that will stun (everyone)’ ... Another opinion is that the allusion (by the usage of the words “laid bare the shin”) could be to the removal of fear and awe and other feelings (of terror) in their hearts following which their hearts will feel relaxed. It is then that the Beatific Vision will be granted and they will fall into prostration.’

Shawkani adds: `Abd b. Humayd, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim and Hakim (who declared it *Sahih*), as well as Bayhaqi in his *Al-Asma' wa al-Sifat*, have reported that when Ibn `Abbas was asked about “the day the shin is bared”, he answered, “If you are not able to understand anything of the Qur`an, look for its meaning in Arab poetry. Have you not heard the poet say,

و قامت الحرب بنا على ساق

“The war has stood for us on its shin.”

Qurtubi offers four examples from poetry to emphasize the point.

31. That is, they were whole and healthy in this world, but when invited to embrace Islam and attend to five-time Prayers, they refused (Ibn

[43] *Their eyes humbled, humiliation covering them; for they had been summoned to prostration while they were whole.*³¹

خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهُهُمْ ذِلَّةً وَقَدْ
كَانُوا يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ وَهُمْ سَالِمُونَ
﴿٤٣﴾

[44] *So leave Me alone with those who cry lies to this discourse. We shall draw them on, little by little, from directions they perceive not.*³²

فَذَرْنِي وَمَنْ يُكَذِّبُ بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ
سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ
﴿٤٤﴾

[45] *And I shall respite them; truly My guile is powerful.*

وَأْمَلِي لَهُمْ إِنَّ كَيْدِي مَتِينٌ ﴿٤٥﴾

Jarir).

Qurtubi comments: Accordingly, although Rabi` b. Khaytham was struck with paralysis, he used to be brought to the mosque on two people's shoulders. It was suggested that he had a good reason for staying back. He replied, "Whoever heard the adhan should report to the mosque even if he has to drag himself." When Sa`id b. al-Musayyib was told that (governmental) forces were after him to capture and kill him and so he should go underground, he answered, "Should I try to escape from Allah's reach?" When told he might at least stay at home (and not come to the mosque) he replied, "Should I hear the call, 'Come to success,' and do not respond?" (Qurtubi).

Ultimately, he was captured and killed in court by Hajjan b. Yusuf (Au.).

32. That is, He draws them on gradually into doing what they wish, extending His provision to them, leading them to believe that they were doing fine, until one day He seizes them the seizing of the Most Powerful (Ibn Kathir).

Allah said elsewhere:

كَمَا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
حَتَّى إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ
مُبْلِسُونَ [الأنعام/٤٤]

"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 lo, they slipped into a quiet despair" (Ibn Kathir).

Yusuf Ali adds: "We must not be impatient if we see the wicked flourish. It may be that the very appearance of flourishing here may be a part of the

[46] Or do you ask them a wage³³ so they feel burdened with debt?

أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِّن مَّعْرَمٍ مُّثْقَلُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

[47] Or do they have the Unseen with them, so they are writing down?

أَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

[48] Therefore, be patient for the command of your Lord, and be not like the Companion of the fish,³⁴ when he called, choking inwardly.³⁵

فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُن كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوتِ إِذْ نَادَى وَهُوَ مَكْظُومٌ ﴿٤٨﴾

Punishment. There may be an eventual punishment by a sort of Cataclysm; but evolutionary punishment is gradual and sure. Allah may punish wicked people by granting them respite and providing them worldly benefits in abundance, which encourages them in sin and transgression. So when they are finally seized by the Wrath of Allah they are caught suddenly and utterly unprepared, as it were, red handed while engrossed in disbelief, a life of impiety and open revolt against their Lord!

33. "It costs the Unbelievers nothing to hear the Prophet, for the Prophet asks for no reward, and indeed suffers for their benefit. Al-Mustafa is addressed in the first instance, but there is always a universal interpretation. The righteous man asks for no reward for his preaching or example:

if he did, the value would be too great for the world to pay for. The Unbelievers behave as if they had the secret of the Unseen, but they are empty triflers, for, if they only tried to formulate spiritual laws, they would fail" (Yusuf Ali).

34. A possible meaning is, "Do not – O Muhammad - hastily ask for the destruction of your people, as the Companion of the fish had done" (Thanwi).

35. The translation is literal. Ibn `Abbas and Mujahid explained the word as meaning, "(he was) aggrieved" (Ibn Jarir).

The call was:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ
[الأنبياء/٨٧]

"There is no deity except You, glory to You, I was of the wrongdo-

[49] Had there not overtaken him a blessing from his Lord, he would have been cast into the open, (in a) blameworthy state.³⁶

لَوْلَا أَنْ تَدَارَكَهُ نِعْمَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ لَنُبِذَ بِالْعَرَاءِ
وَهُوَ مَذْمُومٌ ﴿٤٩﴾

[50] But His Lord chose him and placed him among the righteous.³⁷

فَاجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَجَعَلَهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾

ers" (Qurtubi).

36. One meaning attributable is that he was cast out in a state un-blame-worthy (Qurtubi, Thanwi).

37. That is, restored the revelations, forgave him, accepted his intercession (for his people), and sent him to another people numbering a hundred thousand or more (Qurtubi).

Sayyid comments: "To put it briefly, he was sent to a town, said to be Naynawa now in Mosul (Iraq). The townspeople delayed their decision about him and his message. This angered him. He left them in anger saying to himself, 'Allah will not place me in the constriction of staying with these rebellious, unbelieving people.' He thought to himself that he could be sent to another town. His anger took him to the shore where he boarded a ship. However, when they were in the middle of the waters the boat experienced a storm and following a lot drawn, he was cast into the sea. A large fish devoured him and

he called to his Lord from the depth of darkness. His Lord heard him and the fish threw him out on to the shore."

The Prophet has said, as recorded by the *Sahihayn*:

مَا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ أَنْ يَقُولَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْ يُونُسَ بْنِ مَتَّى.

"It does not behoove anyone that he should say, "I (i.e., Prophet Muhammad) is better than Yunus b. Matta" (Ibn Kathir).

Yusuf Ali adds: "Jonah was asked to preach to the people of Nineveh, a wicked city. He met with hostility and persecution, fled from his enemies, and took a boat. He was caught in a storm and thrown into the sea. He was swallowed by a fish or whale, but he repented in his living prison, and was forgiven. But the people of Nineveh were also forgiven, for they, too, repented. Here is a double allegory of Allah's mercy and forgiveness, and a command to patience, and complete and joyful submission

[51] And the unbelievers would almost strike you down with their looks,³⁸ when they hear the reminder, and they say, 'Surely, he is insane.'

وَإِنْ يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَيُزْلِقُونَكَ
بِأَبْصَارِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَيَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُ
لَمَجْنُونٌ ﴿٥١﴾

to the Will of Allah.”

38. That is, shoot you down with their looks, O Muhammad, if they could (various commentators).

Ibn Kathir comments: This confirms that evil eye is a fact. There are many reports from the Prophet confirming this. He said, as in a report of Muslim:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
”الْعَيْنُ حَقٌّ، وَلَوْ كَانَ شَيْءٌ سَابِقَ الْقَدَرِ سَبَقَتْهُ
الْعَيْنُ، وَإِذَا اسْتَعْصِمْتُمْ فَأَغْسِلُوا

“The evil eye is a fact. If anything could overtake the Divine Decree, it would be evil eye. Therefore, when you are asked to take a wash, then wash (for the victim).”

That is, the one who cast the evil eye may take a bath, save the water, and give the victim a wash with that water. See *Surah* 113 for more details (Au.).

Another *hadith* is in Bukhari,

عن ابن عباس قال: ”كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُعَوِّذُ الْحَسَنَ وَالْحُسَيْنَ يَقُولُ: أُعِيدُكُمْ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّةِ، مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ وَهَامَّةٍ، وَمِنْ كُلِّ عَيْنٍ لَأَمَةٍ. وَيَقُولُ: هَكَذَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ يُعَوِّذُ إِسْحَاقَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ.“

Ibn `Abbas reported that the Prophet used to seek Allah’s refuge for Hasan and Husein. He would say, “I seek refuge for you two with the help of Allah’s complete words: from every Shaytan and Jinn, from every evil eye.” He also said, “This is how Ibrahim (*asm’s*) used to seek Allah’s shelter for Isma`l and Is-haq.

Another *hadith* can be quoted from Bukhari:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا - قَالَتْ أَمَرَنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - أَوْ أَمَرَ أَنْ يُسْتَرْجَى مِنَ الْعَيْنِ

`A’isha said, “The Prophet asked me – or ordered (in general) - to treat the evil eye with the help of

[52]But it is nothing but a reminder for the worlds.³⁹

﴿٥٢﴾ وَمَا هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

charms” (Ibn Kathir).

39. “This is a powerful reminder, made early in Makkah, when migration to Madinah was not present in

any imagination, that this message is for the whole world” (Sayyid).

مَقَاتِلَ



Surah 69

Al-Haqqah

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] *The inevitable reality.*¹

الْحَاقَّةُ ﴿١﴾

[2] *What is that Inevitable Reality?*

مَا الْحَاقَّةُ ﴿٢﴾

[3] *And what will teach you what the Inevitable Reality is?*

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحَاقَّةُ ﴿٣﴾

[4] *Thamud and 'Aad denied the Clatterer.*²

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ وَعَادٌ بِالْقَارِعَةِ ﴿٤﴾

1. The allusion is to the Day of Judgment. Some scholars have said that “*Al-haqqah*” is one of the names of the Day of Judgment (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Yusuf Ali expands: “*Al-haqqah*: the sure Truth; the Event that must inevitably come to pass; the state in which all falsehood and pretence will vanish, and the absolute Truth will be laid bare. The questions in the three verses raise an air of wonder. The solution is suggested in what happened to the Thamud and the ‘A ad, and other people of antiquity, who disregarded the Truth of Allah and came to violent end, even in this life, symbolically suggesting the

great Cataclysm of the Hereafter, the Day of Doom.”

At the conceptual level, we might hear Asad’s comments: “The Day of Resurrection and Judgment, on which man will become fully aware of the quality of his past life and, freed from all self-deception, will see himself as he really was, with the innermost meaning of all his past doings – and thus of all his destiny in the hereafter – blindingly revealed.”

2. “*Al-Qari`ah*” is a name for the Hour (Ibn Jarir); because it will literally knock people down with its grave events (Qurtubi and others).

[5] As for Thamud, they were destroyed by the Screamer.³

فَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَأُهْلِكُوا بِالطَّاغِيَةِ ﴿٥﴾

[6] As for `Aad, they were destroyed by a fierce⁴ roaring wind.⁵

وَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَأُهْلِكُوا بِرِيحٍ صَرْصَرٍ عَاتِيَةٍ ﴿٦﴾

[7] Which He imposed upon them seven nights and eight days in succession; so you could see the people therein fallen, as if they were stumps of hollow palm-trees.

سَحَّرَهَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ وَثَمَانِيَةَ أَيَّامٍ حُسُومًا فَتَرَى الْقَوْمَ فِيهَا صَرْعَى كَأَنَّهُمْ أَعْجَازُ نَخْلٍ خَاوِيَةٍ ﴿٧﴾

[8] So, do you see any remnants of them?

فَهَلْ تَرَى لَهُم مِّن بَاقِيَةٍ ﴿٨﴾

[9] Likewise, Fir`awn, those before him, and the overturned towns⁶ came up with the great error.⁷

وَجَاءَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَنْ قَبْلَهُ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَاتُ بِالْخَاطِئَةِ ﴿٩﴾

[10] They disobeyed the Messenger of their Lord, so He seized them with a severe seizure.

فَعَصَوْا رَسُولَ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَهُمْ أَخْذَةً رَّابِيَةً ﴿١٠﴾

[11] Lo. When the waters rose high, We bore you⁸ in the boat.

إِنَّا لَمَّا طَغَى الْمَاءُ حَمَلْنَاكُمْ فِي الْجَارِيَةِ ﴿١١﴾

3. This is how Qatadah explained the word “*taghiyyah*.” However Mujahid’s interpretation was “sin”, i.e., “they were destroyed because they were covered by sins” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Yet another possible meaning is: “They were destroyed because of a rebellious group (*taghiyyah*) which had hamstrung the camel” (Razi, Qurtubi).

4. “*Sarsar*” has also been explained as a bitterly cold wind (Ibn Jarir, Zamaqshari, Razi, Ibn Kathir).

5. We have the famous *hadith* of the *Sahihayn*. The Prophet said,

لُصِرْتُ بِالصَّبَاِ وَأُهْلِكْتُ عَادٌ بِالذَّبْوْرِ.

“I was helped by an easterly wind, while the nation of `A ad was destroyed by a westerly wind” (Ibn Kathir).

6. That is, the nation of Lut (*asws*) – Ibn Jarir.

7. That is, the great error of polytheism, rejection of Allah and His Messengers (Au.).

8. That is, mankind.

[12] That We might make it a reminder,⁹ and that preserving ears may preserve it.

لِنَجْعَلَهَا لَكُمْ تَذْكِرَةً وَتَعْبِيهَا أُذُنٌ وَأَعْيَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] Then, when the Trumpet is blasted - a single blast.¹⁰

فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ نَفْحَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] And the earth and the mountains are heaved up, and the two are crushed - a single crushing.

وَحُمِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ فَدُكَّتَا دَكَّةً وَاحِدَةً ﴿١٤﴾

[15] That day then, the great Occurrence will occur.

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] The heaven shall split - and that day it shall be frail.

وَانشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَهِيَ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاهِيَةٌ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] The angels shall be at its edges,¹¹ and that day, eight shall carry above them the `Arsh of your Lord.¹²

وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ عَلَىٰ أَرْجَائِهَا وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَانِيَةٌ ﴿١٧﴾

9. To what does the pronoun "it" refer to. Ibn Kathir thinks it refers to the boat: not Nuh's boat, but the generic noun.

10. That will be the first blast (Ibn Jarir). But some say it will be the last blast, there being three in all. The first blast will be of fright that will frighten every living being. The second blast will destroy all life on earth, and the third will resurrect (Ibn Kathir).

11. That is, at the edges, or borders, of the heaven (Mujahid, Sa`eed, Dahhak, etc. - Ibn Jarir).

12. Ibn `Abbas is widely reported to have said that the allusion is to eight rows of angels whose numbers no one knows (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Some reports suggest that the bearers of the `Arsh are angels in the shape of wild goats. However, all such reports are weak (Au.).

Ibn Kathir quotes a *hadith* from Abu Da'ud:

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "أُذُنٌ لِي أَنْ أُحَدِّثَ عَنْ مَلَكٍ مِنْ مَلَائِكَةِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى مِنْ حَمَلَةِ الْعَرْشِ، إِنَّ مَا بَيْنَ شَحْمَةِ أُذُنِهِ إِلَىٰ عَاتِقِهِ مَسِيرَةٌ سَبْعِمِائَةِ عَامٍ."

[18] *That day you shall be presented, no hider from among you able to hide.*¹³ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُونَ لَا تَخْفَى مِنْكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ ﴿١٨﴾

The Prophet said, “I have been allowed to mention to you an angel of Allah who bears the *‘Arsh*, between whose ear-lobe and the shoulder, the (travel) distance is seven hundred years.”

Another version, slightly different, is in Tirmidhi which he declared *Sahih* (Au.).

Qurtubi comments: The angels bear the *‘Arsh*, and none bears the carriers of *‘Arsh* but Allah.

In other words, it will be outlandish to think that the *‘Arsh* would then be occupied by the Most High. There is nothing to this effect in the Qur’ān or *hadīth*, and in fact, some scholars have suggested that we are not even sure whether it is the same *‘Arsh* that the Qur’ān has spoken of in other places as associated with Allah. To conclude, this is another of the *mutashabihat* (Au.).

13. Another possible connotation as suggested by some of the *Salaf* is: none will be able to hide his deeds.

Sayyid comments: “So, everyone is exposed .. exposed in body .. exposed in spirit .. exposed in deeds .. exposed to the ultimate end. All veils that used to cover the secrets will fall down, and the people shall stand bare and naked. Man will be stripped of his cunning, schemes, and (false) perceptions. Even that which he wished to remain unexposed to his own self will stand exposed. Allah sees all, at all times. But man did not take account of it. Now he stands fully exposed. The earth has been leveled. There are no ups and downs. The heaven is rendered asunder concealing nothing behind it. And the bodies of men are naked.

“It is a horrendous situation for man, more horrible than the leveling up of the earth, or rendering asunder of the heaven .. his standing naked: naked of body, naked of the soul, naked of perceptions .. his deeds exposed, good or evil .. in front of the creations.”

[19] Then, as for him who is given his record in his right hand, he shall say, 'Here! Read my Record.'¹⁴

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَيَقُولُ هَذَا مَا
أَقْرَأُوا كِتَابِيهِ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] Indeed, I was certain¹⁵ that I shall encounter my reckoning.'

إِنِّي ظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي مُلَاقٍ حِسَابِيهِ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] He shall be in a life pleasing.

فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ ﴿٢١﴾

[22] In a lofty garden.

فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] Its cluster low and near.

فُطُوفُهَا دَانِيَةٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] 'Eat and drink freely, for what you did in days gone by.'¹⁶

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا أَسْلَفْتُمْ فِي الْأَيَّامِ
الْحَالِيَةِ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] As for him who is given his record in his left hand, he shall say, 'I wish I was never given my record.

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ فَيَقُولُ يَا
لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُوتَ كِتَابِيهِ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] And had not known what my reckoning was.

وَلَمْ أَدْرِ مَا حِسَابِيهِ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] Ah, would that it was the end.'¹⁷

يَا لَيْتَهَا كَانَتِ الْقَاضِيَةَ ﴿٢٧﴾

14. The grammatical suffix "um" lends the meaning of "you all." That is, "come on, you all, read my Record" (Ibn Kathir).

According to a *hadith* in Tirmidhi,

إِذْ نَادَاهُ أَعْرَابِيٌّ بِصَوْتٍ لَهُ جَهْوَرِيٌّ يَا
مُحَمَّدُ. فَأَجَابَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه
وسلم- عَلَى نَحْوِ مِنْ صَوْتِهِ هَاؤُمْ وَقُلْنَا لَهُ
وَيَحَلِكَ اغْضَضُ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ.

When a bedouin called out in a loud voice "O Muhammad", the Messenger answered him almost in the same pitch, "HaaUmi".

We told the man, "Woe unto you man, lower down the pitch of your voice" (Qurtubi).

15. This is how Ibn 'Abbas and Qatadah understood the word. Ibn Zayd added that a believer's "zann" is certainty (Ibn Jarir).

16. That is, the good deeds that you sent forward from the previous life (Ibn Jarir).

17. That is, he would wish that the death, which he hated most in the world, could swallow him now (Qatadah, Ibn Zayd: Ibn Jarir). Dahhak

[28] My wealth has not availed me

﴿٢٨﴾ مَا أَعْنَى عَنِّي مَالِيهِ

[29] My authority has perished from me.¹⁸

﴿٢٩﴾ هَلَكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيهِ

[30] 'Seize him and shackle him.

﴿٣٠﴾ خُذُوهُ فَغُلُّوهُ

[31] Then cast him into the blazing Fire.

﴿٣١﴾ ثُمَّ الْجَحِيمِ صَلُّوهُ

[32] Then into a chain of length seventy cubits insert him.¹⁹

﴿٣٢﴾ ثُمَّ فِي سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوهُ

[33] This one would not believe in Allah, the Great.

﴿٣٣﴾ إِنَّهُ كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ

[34] Nor would encourage feeding of the destitute.²⁰

﴿٣٤﴾ وَلَا يَحْضُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ

[35] So, there is not for him here this day, a loyal friend.

﴿٣٥﴾ فَلَيْسَ لَهُ الْيَوْمَ هَاهُنَا حَمِيمٌ

[36] Nor a food but foul puss from the washing of the wounded.

﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَا طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ غَسَلِينِ

[37] That none shall eat except the erroneous ones.

﴿٣٧﴾ لَا يَأْكُلُهُ إِلَّا الْخَاطِئُونَ

has said that every “zann” from a believer as used in the Qur’ān is in the sense of “certainty” while every “zann” from an unbeliever as used in the Qur’ān is “uncertainty” (Qur-tubi).

Another possible meaning, and, quite a legitimate one, has been pointed out by Razi which would render the verse as, “I wish my first death was the last one.”

18. According to another understanding, “sultan” here alludes to

arguments (that he could put forth that day to defend his erstwhile response to the call of truth) - Ibn Jarir.

19. The chain will be inserted through his one orifice and brought out of another; according to some others, brought out of the nostrils – and then roasted in Hell (like chicken) - Ibn Jarir and others.

20. The importance in Islam, of feeding the poor cannot be exaggerated (Au.).

[38] Nay,²¹ I do swear by what you see.

﴿٣٨﴾ فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصِرُونَ

[39] And by what you do not see.²²

﴿٣٩﴾ وَمَا لَا تُبْصِرُونَ

21. That is, the matter regarding Muhammad and his Message is not as the pagans say, but rather it is as follows .. (Qurtubi).

22. Asad has a philosophic comment: “The phrase ‘all that you can see’ comprising all the observable phenomenon of nature – including man himself and the organic conditions of his own existence – as well as the configuration of human society and the perceptible rules of its growth and decay in the historical sense; whereas ‘that which you cannot see’ relates to the intangible spiritual verities accessible to man’s intuition and instinct, including the voice of his own conscience; all of which ‘bear witness’, as it were, to the fact that the light which the divine writ (spoken of in the sequence) casts on the innermost realities and interrelations of all that exists objectively – or, as the case may be, manifests itself subjectively in man’s own psyche – must be an outcome of genuine revelation, inasmuch as it goes far beyond anything that unaided human intellect could ever achieve.”

Sayyid Qutub has another point of view: “Surely those who confine themselves within the boundaries of the sight and perception .. are the poor luckless ones. They are imprisoned in their limited perceptions by physical senses. They are bound to a small, constricted world; small, when compared to the vast world.

“During various phases in the history of man there were few or large number of people who imprisoned themselves in a little prison of what can be seen and felt, shutting against themselves the windows of knowledge and cognition, refusing any contact with the Truth through belief and true knowledge. And they try to shut these windows – after having shut them for themselves – sometimes in the name of false knowledge, and sometimes in the name of secularism. This is the prison in which they live..”

We might add: Angels, Shayateen, microbes, our own cells are things that we do not see. Nor do we see how the brain works or the child learns. Radio waves, electromagne-

tism, gravity, nucleic arrangement, or the other forces of nature, are things we do not see and will never see. In fact, what we do not see is more than what we see. The universe is made up of four elements: visible matter, dark matter measurable energy and dark energy. Visible matter makes up for 4% of the mass of the universe. About 22% is dark matter; so called because it is invisible. The rest of the 74% is in the form of dark energy that prevails everywhere in space.

Stars at the edge of the spiral galaxies are revolving around the center of the galaxies much too fast than they should. At that speed, they should break away from the pull of the galactic center; just as a rocket accelerated to a speed of more than 12 km. per second, breaks away from the earth's gravitational pull. Similarly, calculations show that galaxies in the clusters should have by now broken away from the clusters and receded far into empty space, beyond vision.

What holds the stars at the edge of the galaxies, and the galaxies themselves in the clusters? It is this mysterious dark matter that works against gravity of known and visible matter. The theoretical, but reliable studies that have been augmented by X-ray satellite observations, have led to the

conclusion that there is far more of invisible matter around us than there is visible matter.

The discovery in 1990 that the universe is accelerating in its expansion shocked the cosmologists and has led to revision of many theories. Even the Big Bang theory is now being questioned. A mysterious antigravity force seems to be opposing gravity and, so to say, is tearing the visible matter apart at speeds that are accelerating all around. This antigravity force, which cannot be seen, or measured, is known as the Dark Energy; and because of its effect, it is speculated that much visible matter might have already been pushed out so far that light emanating from them may never reach the earth. Thus, once again, the visible world is not only much less than the invisible, it is likely to get lesser because of the ever increasing rate of expansion. As light leaves one part of the universe to chase the part on the other accelerating side, matter of the two sides increase their space at speeds greater than the speed of light, which can never catch up, and so anyone on one side will never know whether there is any matter on the other side.

Science is ever adding newer invisible materials to the list. For instance,

[40] Surely, this is the words of a noble messenger.²³

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿٤٠﴾

[41] It is not the words of a poet.²⁴ Little it is that you believe.

وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَاعِرٍ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَتُومُنُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

[42] Nor the words of a soothsayer.²⁵ Little it is that you heed.²⁶

وَلَا بِقَوْلِ كَاهِنٍ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

String Theory predicts that matter could be made up of not three or four dimensions but ten. The matter of this class will remain invisible. And how much of this matter could there be? Well, scientists say that infinite numbers of whole universes of this class could be there, which will ever remain invisible because of the dimensional problem (Au.).

23. The allusion is to Prophet Muhammad (Ibn Jarir). That is, it is he who delivers (Ibn Kathir).

But Hasan, Kalbi and Muqatil said that the allusion is to Jibril, although the other opinion has also been held as true (Qurtubi).

24. Shabbir addresses the unbelievers: "It is apparent that impressed by the Qur'anic style and content, some amount of faith grows in your heart. But you tend to dismiss it by saying that this is poetry. Really! Can you assure yourself that this is poetry? You know that poetry has rhyme

and rhythm. But the Qur'an is free of them. Poets make statements that have no basis in reason. Most of their ideas are windy and abstruse. In contrast, the Qur'an offers distinct concepts based on sound principles of logic. (How do you compare this with that)?"

25. Shabbir again addresses the skeptics: "Think about it. This cannot be a soothsayer's speech. Among the Arabs of the past there were plenty of soothsayers (as there are plenty of them now in the east and the west: Au.). They had contacts with the demons, Jinn, ghouls and witches. They used to feed these soothsayers with news of the future in words and phrases that could be best described as incongruous and mysterious. But their orations were not unique. One soothsayer's oration matched with another's. Anyone with a will could learn to say the same things. But this Qur'an is inimitable, unmatchable. The orations of the soothsayers are

[43] A sending down by the Lord of the worlds.²⁷

﴿٤٣﴾ تَنْزِيلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

[44] And, had he fastened upon us some sayings.

﴿٤٤﴾ وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقَاوِيلِ

filled with redundant words. But the Qur'an has not a word in its entire content which is redundant. Soothsayers' orations bore no message. The Qur'an has a coherent message that appeals to reason. It has laws and principles, a constitution and a model, information about this world and the next, past, present and future. (How does this compare with the orations of the soothsayers)?"

26. It is reported that when the Quraysh gathered together to arrive at a common response to the Prophet and his message, Nadr b. al-Harith said, "O Quraysh. By God you face a challenge, to face which you have not yet come up with any proper strategy. Muhammad has been among you the most pleasing person, the most trustworthy one, until when you had seen grey hair on his cheek, he came with that which you know. Now you say he is a sorcerer. No by God, he is not one. We have seen sorcerers, their blowing and their knots. Then you said he is a soothsayer. No by God, he is no soothsayer. We have seen soothsay-

ers, their enigmatic sayings and utterances. Then you said he is a poet. Nay, he is no poet either. We have heard poetry of all kinds and classes. Then you said he is mad. But we have seen madness. None of its signs can be discerned here. O Quraysh, look into your situation, for you are facing a great challenge" (Sayyid).

27. We have a report in Ahmad's collection,

قَالَ عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ خَرَجْتُ أَنْتَعَرِضُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- قَبْلَ أَنْ أَسْلِمَ فَوَحَدْتُهُ قَدْ سَبَقَنِي إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ فَقُمْتُ خَلْفَهُ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ سُورَةَ الْحَاقَةِ فَجَعَلْتُ أَعْجَبُ مِنْ تَأْيِيفِ الْقُرْآنِ. قَالَ فَقُلْتُ هَذَا وَاللَّهِ شَاعِرٌ كَمَا قَالَتْ فَرِيشٌ. قَالَ فَقَرَأَ {إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ، وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَاعِرٍ قَلِيلًا مَّا تُؤْمِنُونَ} (الْحَاقَةُ: ٤٠-٤١) قَالَ قُلْتُ كَاهِنٌ قَالَ {وَلَا يَقُولُ كَاهِنٌ قَلِيلًا مَّا نَذْكُرُونَ، نَنْزِيلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقَاوِيلِ، لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ، ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ، فَمَا يَنْكُرُ مِنْ أَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حَنْجِرِينَ} (الْحَاقَةُ: ٤٢-٤٧) إِلَى آخِرِ السُّورَةِ. قَالَ فَرَوَعَ الْإِسْلَامُ فِي قَلْبِي كُلِّ مَوْقِعٍ.

[45] We would have surely seized him by the right hand.²⁸

لَأَخْذَنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ ﴿٤٥﴾

[46] Then We would have surely severed the life-vein.

ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

[47] And none of you could have been a shield before it.²⁹

فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حَاجِزِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab said, “Once I went out hoping to encounter the Prophet. That was before I embraced Islam. I found that he had overtaken me to the Grand Mosque. I stood behind him. He had started reciting *Surah Al-haqqah*. I was amazed by the composition of the Qurʾān. I said, ‘By Allah, this is a poet as the Quraysh have been saying.’ Then he recited, ‘Surely, it is the words of a noble messenger. *It is not the words of a poet; little it is that you believe.*’ I said, ‘(He must be a) soothsayer.’ He recited, ‘*Nor the words of a soothsayer.* Little it is that you heed. A sending down by the Lord of the worlds’ .. to the end of the chapter. It was then that Islam entered into my heart to take firm root there” (Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

Haythami remarks that the above report is on the authority of Shurayh b. ʿUbayd. But he had not met ʿUmar (Au.).

28. Another connotation is, “We shall seize him strongly” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir), and Naftawayh explained that it means, “We would have strongly held him from interpolating in the Qurʾān” (Qurtubi).

Thanwi says that the rule is applicable in a lesser degree to the common men. If a charlatan claims “*wilayah*,” sooner or later he is exposed. If not, a simple rule may be employed. When scholars begin to doubt someone who lays a claim, he may be shunned.

29. That is, before the punishment.

That is, the pronoun “it” refers to the punishment. In other words, none of you could come between him and the punishment (Ibn Kathir, Thanwi).

[48] Assuredly it is³⁰ a sure reminder unto the righteous.

﴿٤٨﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لَتَذِكْرٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

[49] While We know for certain that among you are deniers.

﴿٤٩﴾ وَإِنَّا لَنَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مِنكُم مُّكَذِّبِينَ

[50] But surely, it³¹ will definitely be a (cause of) regret for the unbelievers.

﴿٥٠﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لَحَسْرَةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

[51] Yet indeed, it is the truth of certainty.³²

﴿٥١﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لِحَقُّ الْيَقِينِ

[52] So, glorify the name of your Lord, the Great.³³

﴿٥٢﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

30. That is, the Qur'an.

31. "It", i.e., either this Reminder, or alternatively, this rejection (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

32. Majid comments: "Every truth is itself certain, but certainty has degrees. First there is a certainty of reasoning or inference, known as *علم اليقين*. Next there is a certainty of sense-perception called *عين اليقين*. Last, there is a certainty, the highest degree of it, the absolute certainty, with no possibility of error, either of judgment or perception, and this is what is termed as *حق اليقين*."

33. That is, writes Shafi` Deobandi, ignore, O Prophet, the reaction and responses of the pagans, polytheists and other unbelievers, and busy yourself with the exaltation of your Lord, as it was said elsewhere:

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرَكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ ،
فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ
(الحجر: ٩٧-٩٨)

"And, certainly We are aware that your heart constricts over what they say. Therefore, celebrate the praises of your Lord and be of those who prostrate themselves." مَلَّتْ



Surah 70

Al-Ma`arij

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] An inquirer inquires concerning the chastisement bound to befall.¹

سَأَلَ سَائِلٌ بِعَذَابٍ وَاقِعٍ ﴿١﴾

[2] For the unbelievers of which there is no averter.

لِّلْكَافِرِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَافِعٌ ﴿٢﴾

[3] From Allah, the Lord of the Stairways.²

مِّنَ اللَّهِ ذِي الْمَعَارِجِ ﴿٣﴾

1. It was Nadr b. al-Harith who had said,

اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ
فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوْ اتَّبِنَا
بِعَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ [الأنفال: 32]

“O Allah, if this is the Truth from You, then rain down upon us stones from the heaven or bring us a painful chastisement” (Kashshaf, Razi). The report is in Nasa’i (Ibn Kathir). The report is also in Al-Faryabi, `Abd b. Humayd and Hakim who declared it trustworthy (Shawkani).

Some others have also been named. However, it was Nadr b. al-Harith

and `Uqbah b. abi Mu`ayt, (and none others named) who were killed after having been taken prisoners at Badr (Qurtubi).

2. While Ibn `Abbas and Qatadah explained the textual “ma`arij” as possessor of Exaltedness and Excellences, Mujahid explained it as Stairway. “Ranks” is another interpretation. It comes from Ibn `Abbas (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

It is called “ma`arij (singular “mi`raj), meaning “stairways” because angels use them to climb up (Razi from Ibn `Abbas, Qurtubi). There have been other explanations (Qurtubi).

[4] Angels and the Ruh³ ascend up to Him in a day the measure whereof is fifty thousand years.⁴

تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ
مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ ﴿٤﴾

[5] So, be patient with a graceful patience.

فَاصْبِرْ صَبْرًا جَمِيلًا ﴿٥﴾

[6] They do see it as far off.

إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا ﴿٦﴾

[7] But We see it quite close.

وَنَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا ﴿٧﴾

[8] The day the heaven will be like murky oil.

يَوْمَ تَكُونُ السَّمَاءُ كَالْمُهْلِ ﴿٨﴾

3. Some scholars have thought that the allusion is to Jibril, but spirits of the humankind could also have been meant (Ibn Kathir).

4. There are two interpretations. Mujahid said that the allusion is to the travel distance between the lowest earth and the highest heaven which happens to be fifty thousand years; while Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah, Mujahid, Dahhak and others said that the allusion is to the length of the Day of Reckoning which will be fifty thousand years (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Some *ahadith* also refer to the length of the Judgment Day as fifty thousand years (Ibn Kathir).

Shawkani adds: This does not contradict with another verse which says,

وَإِنَّ يَوْمًا عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ كَأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّونَ
(الحج: ٤٧)

“And surely, a day with your Lord is like a thousand years by your count.”

That is, by using the term “by your count” this *ayah* is speaking of this world’s day, of which thousand years are no more than a day for the Lord. However, Ibn Jarir and Razi add: for the believers the length of that Day will be quite short. The Prophet said,

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ قِيلَ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ
-صلى الله عليه وسلم- يَوْمًا كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ
خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مَا أَطْوَلَ هَذَا الْيَوْمَ فَقَالَ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- «وَالَّذِي
نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ إِنَّهُ لَيُخَفَّفُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِ حَتَّى
يَكُونَ أَحْفَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ صَلَاةٍ مَكْتُوبَةٍ يُصَلِّيهَا
فِي الدُّنْيَا».

On the authority of Abu Sa`id al-Khudri, the terribly long length of the Judgment-day was mentioned before the Prophet, he remarked, “By Him in whose hands is my life, it will be quite short for a believer to the extent that it will be

[9] And the mountains will be like (colored) flakes of wool.⁵

وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ ﴿٩﴾

[10] No loyal friend will inquire after a loyal friend.

وَلَا يَسْأَلُ حَمِيمٌ حَمِيمًا ﴿١٠﴾

[11] (Although) they are shown them.⁶ The criminal will wish, if only he could redeem himself from the chastisement of the day by ransoming his children.

يُبْصِرُونَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِ لَوْ يُفْتَدِي مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِئِذٍ بَنِيهِ ﴿١١﴾

[12] And his wife, and his brother.

وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَأَخِيهِ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] And the kin who shelter him (now).

وَفَصِيلَتِهِ الَّتِي تُؤْوِيهِ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] And whosoever is on the earth, all together, so that it could deliver him.

وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يُنْجِيهِ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] By no means! It is indeed a blazing fire.⁷

كَأَلَّا إِتَهَا لَطْفَى ﴿١٥﴾

[16] Snatching away the limbs.⁸

تَرَاعَةً لِلشَّوَى ﴿١٦﴾

[17] Inviting him who turned back and retreated.⁹

تَدْعُو مَنْ أَدْبَرَ وَتَوَلَّى ﴿١٧﴾

shorter than an obligatory Prayer he used to offer in the world.”

The above *hadith* is also in Ahmed but which Haythami declared weak. However, Ibn Hibban placed it in his *Sahih* collection (Au.).

5. The mountains will undergo several color-changes during the Final Hour, which explains their various descriptions at various places in the Qur'an (Au.).

6. Although they will be shown one another, they would like to flee from each other, rather than help out each other (Ibn Jarir).

7. Some scholars have said that “*Laza*” is one of the names of Hell (Ibn Jarir).

8. “*Shawa*” is for hands, legs, head and skin. But quite a few have thought that the allusion is to the fire eating off the skins of the face, head and limbs (Ibn Jarir, Shawkani from the language experts and others).

9. Yusuf Ali comments: “The analysis of sin is given in four master-strokes, of which the first two refer to the will or psychology of the sinner, and the last two to the use he makes of the good things of this life. (1) Sin be-

[18] Who amassed and hoarded.¹⁰

﴿١٨﴾ وَجَمَعَ فَأَوْعَى

[19] Surely, man has been created fretful.¹¹

﴿١٩﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا

[20] When evil touches him, (he is) lamenting.

﴿٢٠﴾ إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا

[21] And when good touches him, (he is) nig-gardly.

﴿٢١﴾ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا

[22] Save those who Pray.¹²

﴿٢٢﴾ إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ

[23] Those who are consistent in their Prayers.¹³

﴿٢٣﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ

gins with turning your back to the Right, refusing to face it squarely, running away from it whether from cowardice or indifference. (2) But Conscience and the sense of Right will try to prevent the flight; the Grace of Allah will meet the sinner at all corners and try to reclaim him; the hardened sinner will deliberately turn away his face from it, insult it, and reject it. (3) The result of this psychology will be that he will abandon himself to greed, to the collection of riches, and the acquisition of material advantages to which he is not entitled; this may involve hypocrisy, fraud, and crime. (4) Having acquired the material advantages, the next step will be to keep others out of them, to prevent hoarded wealth from fructifying by circulation, to conceal it from envy or spite. This is the spiritual Rake's Progress."

10. It is reported that in view of this verse, `Abdullah b. `Ukaym would not tie the string around his cash pouch (Ibn Jarir).

11. "Halu" is a fretful, greedy person (Ibn Jarir from the *Salaf*).

12. This is one of the strongest of evidences that good deeds enjoy profound influence on a man's moral and spiritual condition. They help a man bear what others cannot, as we can see examples all around us (Thanwi).

13. Allah approves of those, who even if they pray little, are consistent and steadfast. The Prophet said in a report of Bukhari and others,

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ سَدُّوا وَقَارِبُوا وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ لَنْ يُدْخِلَ أَحَدَكُمْ عَمَلُهُ الْجَنَّةَ وَأَنَّ أَحَبَّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَدْوَمُهَا وَإِنْ قَلَّ.

[24] And those in whose wealth is a well-known right (for others).¹⁴

وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] For the beggars and the deprived.¹⁵

لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] And those who testify to the Day of Reckoning.

وَالَّذِينَ يُصَدِّقُونَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] And those who are fearful of their Lord's punishment.

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

[28] Surely, the punishment of their Lord is not a thing to feel secure from.

إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّهِمْ غَيْرُ مَأْمُونٍ ﴿٢٨﴾

[29] And those who guard their private parts.

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأُزْوَاجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] Save from their wives or what their right hands own, then they are un-blameworthy.

إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

[31] But whoever sought beyond that, they are the transgressors.

فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

[32] And those who are mindful of their trusts¹⁶ and their covenant.

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

On `A'isha's authority, the Prophet said, "Be moderate and get as close as possible (to the ideal) and know that none of you will enter Paradise on the strength of his deeds; and that the most approved of the deeds in Allah's sight are those performed consistently, even if little."

«إِنَّ فِي الْمَالِ لَحَقًّا سِوَى الرِّكَائِةِ».

14. That is, *zakah*. However, many of the *Salaf* have said that,

i.e., there are rights in the wealth apart from the *zakah* (Ibn Jarir).

15. The *Salaf* have explained that "*al-mahrum*" is someone who fails in his every venture, to sit back defeated and distressed (Ibn Jarir).

16. All that the *Shari`ah* has made obligatory, whether beliefs, words, states, deeds, people's rights extending from wife, children, neighbors, the poor and the rest of mankind, are all trusts placed in the hands of a believer. They include by default

[33] And those who stand firm by their testimonies.¹⁷

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَاتِهِمْ قَائِمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] And those who guard their Prayers.¹⁸

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

[35] They will be in gardens - honored.

أُولَئِكَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ مُّكْرَمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] So, what is with the unbelievers fleeing away from you¹⁹ with outstretched necks?²⁰

فَمَا لَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قِبَلَكَ مُمْهِطِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

[37] From the right and from the left, in groups?

عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ عِزِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] Does every man of them longs that he be ushered into the Garden of bliss?

أَيَطْمَعُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يُدْخَلَ جَنَّةَ نَعِيمٍ ﴿٣٨﴾

[39] By no means! We have indeed created them out of what they know.

كَلَّا إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِمَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

what man possesses of Allah's direct bestowals such as the body, health, etc. Whoever used them in places disallowed, did not honor the trust placed in him (Alusi).

17. Such as, their testimony of Allah's oneness (Au.).

18. Doing the Prayers regularly and consistently is one thing, and to be doing it rightly is another. The allusion by guarding the Prayers is to do them on time, diligently and correctly with the heart and the soul in full attention (Au.).

19. The Prophet has also used the textual word. Muslim reports that,

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ سَمُرَةَ قَالَ: خَرَجَ عَلَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَرَأَانَا حِلْقًا. فَقَالَ: "مَا لِي أَرَاكُمْ عِزِينَ؟"

The Prophet came upon us and said, "What's with me that I see you sitting in small groups?" (That is, get together) – Ibn Kathir and others.

20. Some scholars have thought that the complicated structure of this verse yields exactly a meaning opposite to the apparent, viz., what is wrong with these unbelievers that they come rushing to you in groups with outstretched necks (Au.).

[40] No! I swear by the Lord of the easts and the wests,²¹ surely, We are able..

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِرَبِّ الْمَشَارِقِ وَالْمَغَارِبِ إِنَّا
لَقَادِرُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

[41] To substitute with better than them; and We shall not be outstripped.

عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُبَدَّلَ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَمَا نَحْنُ
بِمُسْبُوغِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

[42] So, leave them alone to indulge and play, until they encounter the day of theirs that they are promised.

فَدَرَهُمْ يَحْوِضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَلَاقُوا
يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

[43] The day they will emerge from their tombs hastily, as if they are racing to a waymark.²²

يَوْمَ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ سِرَاعًا كَأَنَّهُمْ
إِلَىٰ نُصْبٍ يُوفُضُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

[44] Their eyes humbled, ignominy covering them. That is the day that they were being promised.

حَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ذَٰلِكَ
الْيَوْمِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

21. Yusuf Ali comments: “Here the witness placed before us is His own power and glory manifested in the splendor of sunrise and sunset at different points through the solar year.”

plane of revolution around the Sun. This axial inclination creates the seasons and causes the earth to receive varying degrees of energy from the sun at various regions (Au.).

The sun’s rise from different points every new day, and its setting (its easts and the wests), is because of the earth’s 23.50 tilt with reference to its

22. “Waymark or landmark”: this is how the great majority have understood. However, “*nusub*” is also for the erected stone-idols (Ibn Jarir).

مَلَقْنَا





Surah 71

Nuh

Madinan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Verily, We sent Nuh to his people¹ (saying), 'Warn your people before a painful chastisement comes to them.'

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ أَنْ أَنْذِرْ قَوْمَكَ
مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١﴾

[2] He said, 'My people, I am for you a plain warner.

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢﴾

[3] That you should worship Allah,² fear Him and follow me.

أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرًا

1. *Ahadith* tell us that Nuh was the first of the Messengers sent to entire mankind and hence, when they disbelieved, the whole humanity was drowned (Qurtubi).

2. Once again Sayyid Qutb devotes a passage to discuss why Prophets began with this call. We paraphrase a few points. He writes: "Repeated historical experience tells us that humanity will never reach up to the level of perfection designated and determined for it by any means other than belief in Allah taking deep root in its heart and soul; and that, human life will never rise up to the heights to which it arose in

the past by any other means except by this means; and that, the periods during which this was attained [i.e. belief in Allah] were the only periods when the humans reached the fullest heights of their mental, moral and spiritual development. Indeed, such attainment would have remained beyond any dream of realization, except for the fact that it did take place in real life experience.

"It must be firmly realized that humanity will never rise by means of any philosophy, knowledge, technology, any of the prevalent religions, or an organizational framework, to the

[4] *He will forgive you of your sins³ and defer you to an appointed term.⁴ Surely, when Allah's appointed term arrives, it cannot be deferred, if only you knew.'*

يَعْفِرُ لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُؤَخِّرُكُمْ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى إِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾

[5] *(At length) He said, 'My Lord. I have called my people by night and by day.*

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِي لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا ﴿٥﴾

heights to which it arose, or can rise, without the establishment of faith in Allah in the hearts of the people, in their lives, running through their morals, ideas, values and ideals.. and that whenever humanity lost the guidance and leadership coming from true believers, nothing could save it from degeneration and final destruction. It lost its values, ideals, and even its humanness, as it also sank into ideological puzzlement, and psychological disorders – despite having achieved progress and development in all fields of venture; and despite the availability of all means of material comfort. Despite all these, humanity never felt its heart at rest, its soul in tranquility and its mind at peace.

This reality not only explains why the Prophets began their call with belief in Allah, but also justifies the stress on this point by the later Callers, the efforts that they put in, and the sacrifices they offered in its cause ..

“Consequently, even if the Callers are rejected, jeered at, ridiculed, or even persecuted, the least that should happen is that this belief should take deep roots in the hearts of the Callers themselves, remaining there until the end of their lives; which in fact, is the true reward for all the efforts they put in, the difficulties they go through, and the sacrifices they make. This, in fact, will tilt the balance in their favor on the Day of Judgment too.”

3. “*He will forgive you of your sins,*” i.e., some of your sins. There are two kinds of sins: (a) against Allah, and (b) against His creations. An unbeliever coming into faith receives the guarantee of forgiveness of all his sins committed against his Creator. But, on the other hand, not all the sins committed against his fellow beings are forgivable (Mufti Shafi`).

Further, sins and crimes are two different things. A Muslim fresh in Is-

[6] But nothing augments them my calling
but in flight.⁵

فَلَمْ يَزِدْهُمْ دُعَائِي إِلَّا فِرَارًا ﴿٦﴾

lam is still answerable for the crimes he committed before Islam (Au.).

4. This, and other verses of similar nature, have been used in evidence that good deeds lead to lengthening of life, as says a *hadith*:

صلة الرحم تزيد في العمر.

“Doing good to the kin increases life-span.” (Ibn Kathir).

Although the above *hadith* of Ahmad has been declared Hasan by Haythami, there are many versions of it that have been preserved. There is a *hadith* which counts *Hajj* and *Umrah* as also those deeds that increase life-span (Au.).

Mufti Shafi` adds: Divine Decree is of two kinds. One, absolute (*mubram*) and another conditional (*mu`allaq*). For example, “*mu`allaq*” may say that such and such a man should die at the age of sixty, while the “*mubram*” decree might say he will die at seventy. The reconciliation is that the “*mu`allaq*” would be written as: the age of such and such person would be sixty; but if he does certain good deeds, it will be increased to seventy;

which happens to be the “*mubram*” decree.

Thus, when it was said, “(He will) defer you to an appointed term,” the reference was to the “*mu`allaq*” decree, whereas the words, “Surely, when Allah’s appointed term arrives, it cannot be deferred,” refer to the “*mubram*” decree. E.g., rains destined for the people of Nuh. They were perhaps held back as a warning (as some reports speak of drought at that time); yet came down in torrents to drown them all because of their stubborn refusal (Au.).

5. Yusuf Ali remarks: “When convincing arguments and warnings are placed before sinners, there are two kinds of reactions. Those who are wise receive admonition, repent, and bring forth fruits of repentance, i.e., amend their lives and turn to Allah. On the other hand, those who are callous to any advice take it up as a reproach, fly farther and farther from righteousness, and shut out more and more the channels through which Allah’s healing Grace can reach them and work for them.”

[7] And, indeed, every time I called them, so that You may forgive them, they placed their fingers in their ears, wrapped their clothes (around them),⁶ stayed defiant, and haughtily waxed proud.

وَإِذِ كَلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِيَتَغَفَرَ لَهُمْ جَعَلُوا
أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَاسْتَعْشَوْا ثِيَابَهُمْ
وَاصْرُورًا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا اسْتِكْبَارًا ﴿٧﴾

[8] Then I called them openly.

ثُمَّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُهُمْ جِهَارًا ﴿٨﴾

[9] Then I preached publicly, and (then) confided to them confidentially,

ثُمَّ إِنِّي أَعْلَنْتُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرْتُ لَهُمْ إِسْرَارًا
﴿٩﴾

[10] I said, "Seek forgiveness of your Lord. Surely, he is ever Forgiving.

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا
﴿١٠﴾

[11] He will set loose the heaven upon you in torrents.

يُرْسِلُ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا ﴿١١﴾

[12] He will extend you with wealth and sons. He will make for you gardens and will make for you rivers.⁷

وَيُمَدِّدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ
جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا ﴿١٢﴾

[13] What ails you that you do not project Majesty for Allah?

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا ﴿١٣﴾

[14] Seeing that He created you in varying states and stages.⁸

وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا ﴿١٤﴾

6. The earliest commentators have noted that perhaps some of Nuh's people enwrapped their heads with their shrouds not to hear him while others did it to avoid being recognized. (Au.).

7. It should not be imagined, writes Thanwi, that these promises are for everyone who accepts Islamic faith (or leads a virtuous life). Perhaps after Nuh felt that the spiritual benefits did not interest his people, or

perhaps because they were passing through testing times, he (by Allah's leave) offered these earthly rewards (in his effort not to leave any leaf unturned to save them from perdition).

All that a true believer is promised, is an "easy" life, (or ease in life), which is not equivalent of life of plenty (Au.).

8. Allah created man in stages such as: dust, then the sperm, then blood clot and so on (Zamakhshari and

[15] *Have you not considered how Allah has created the seven heavens one upon another?*⁹

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ
طَبَاقًا ﴿١٥﴾

[16] *And set the moon therein for a light,¹⁰ and set the sun for a lamp?*

وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ
سِرَاجًا ﴿١٦﴾

[17] *And Allah caused you to grow out of the earth, in (an amazing) growth.¹¹*

وَاللَّهُ أَنْبَتَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ نَبَاتًا ﴿١٧﴾

[18] *Then He will return you therein and will bring you forth, (a definite) bringing forth.*

ثُمَّ يُعِيدُكُمْ فِيهَا وَيُخْرِجُكُمْ إِخْرَاجًا
﴿١٨﴾

[19] *And Allah has laid the earth for you as a carpet.*

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ بِسَاطًا ﴿١٩﴾

[20] *So that you may tread about therein, in broadways.”*

لِتَسْلُكُوا مِنْهَا سُبُلًا فِجَاجًا ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] *Nuh said, ‘My Lord, they have disobeyed me and followed him whose wealth and children only increase him in loss.¹²*

قَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ إِنَّهُمْ عَصَوْنِي وَاتَّبَعُوا مَنْ
لَمْ يَزِدْهُ مَالَهُ وَوَلَدَهُ إِلَّا حَسَارًا ﴿٢١﴾

others); or perhaps, first infancy, then childhood, then teenage, and so on (Qurtubi).

9. While stating the revolving periods of various heavenly bodies, Ibn Kathir notes that the orbital period of Saturn is 30 years. This is close to the modern observation which puts it as 29.4 years.

10. A doubt occurs. Is our moon part of our own firmament or is it part of the seven firmaments? The commentators have answered that all celestial bodies, no matter where

they are, large or infinitely small, are within the seven firmaments; hence the words, “*placed therein.*”

11. This is how Imām Razi understands the textual “*nabata.*” However, “gradual growth” is another possible connotation (Au.).

12. It was the wealthy class that acted arrogantly against Nuh, advising those they influenced – the poorer layers of the society – that they should in no case abandon the deities mentioned in this passage later (Thanwi).

[22] *And have schemed, a great scheming.*¹³

﴿٢٢﴾ وَمَكْرُوهَا مَكْرًا كَبِيرًا

[23] *And they said, "Never abandon your deities; never abandon Wadd, nor Suwaa', nor Yaghuth nor Ya'uq and Nasr."*¹⁴

وَقَالُوا لَا تَدْرُنَّ أَهْلَكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُنَّ وُدًّا وَلَا سُوعًا وَلَا يَعُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا ﴿٢٣﴾

13. The allusion could be to a detailed plot that the rich and the priestly class of Nuh's people would have drawn to frustrate his efforts (Au.).

14. Qatadah said that these idols were imported from there into the Arab world too (Ibn Jarir).

Of them, Wadd was in the form of a man, Suwaa' had a woman's shape, Yaghuth in the form of a lion while Nasr had the shape of an eagle (Alusi and others).

Mahdi Rizq Allah notes in his *Sirah* work: "Banu Kalb b. Murra of Dumatu al-Jandal had a deity called Wadd. Banu Hudhayl, who lived in a place called Rihat, some three nights off Makkah, owned a deity called Suwa', and Banu At'am possessed a deity called Yaguth, which was also the deity of the Jahash tribe of Muzhaj al-Yemeniyyah. Another idol was Ya'uq which belonged to Banu Khaywan the Hamdani tribes, while Nasr was the chief god of Dhu al-Kila' of Himyar."

It may be asked, how could the deities come into the Arab world when the people of Nuh were obliterated? The answer is, perhaps the flood was not universal and the deities, imported at earlier times survived. A second and more plausible answer is that Nuh's people would have mentioned to their offspring stories of deities that had caused to bring the flood. The knowledge was conveyed from generation to generation until, several generations later, when idols reappeared, they were given the same names, and then imported from there into the Arab world (Au.).

Majid cites quotations: "...it would be a mistake to conclude that this cult was obsolete in Muhammad's time, for we have sufficient evidence to the contrary. The poet Nabigha says, 'Wadd, greet thee.' .. 'The list of Arabian deities includes a Lion-god (Yaguth) and a Vulture-god (Nasr).' (Robertson Smith, Religion of the Semites.. Ya'uc is said to have been god of the Hamdan or of the Moad or of both tribes' .. 'The Talmud and

[24] They have led many astray,¹⁵ and (so) do not increase the transgressors but in misguidance.'

وَقَدْ أَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَلَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا
ضَلَالًا ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] (So) because of their sins they were drowned¹⁶ and ushered into a Fire;¹⁷ and they found not for themselves apart from Allah, helpers.

مِمَّا خَطِيئَاتِهِمْ أُغْرِقُوا فَأَدْخَلُوا نَارًا فَلَمْ
يَجِدُوا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْصَارًا ﴿٢٥﴾

the Syriac doctrine of Addai, mention *Nashre*, the Aramaic form of Nasr, as an Arabian god.”

15. The Sufi commentator Thanwi warns: It is images of the virtuous ones of the past generations that ultimately led their offspring to worship them. Inordinate love and respect ended in declaring them gods besides Allah. By extension it may be said that inordinate respect for the relics of the pious people of the past can have the same effect on the hearts. They might create images in the heart. It would be best to avoid having anything to do with the relics.

16. If the flood was universal, because mankind of Nuh's time lived in one area, then apart from various other factors coming together at that spot and at that time, including a tsunami, should be considered. There are millions of comets. One of them passing by the earth in close range has the power to draw the wa-

ter of the seas towards the face of the earth facing the comet; in the like manner of the moon, which from a distance of 385,000 km. exerts such tremendous pull on the waters of the earth as to draw them to one side of the earth raising the level sometimes by two meters. In our own solar system, Pluto of diameter 2300 km, has a moon of its own (Charon, of diameter 1200 km), which is just about 19,000 km from Pluto. Had there been water on Pluto, it would all be on the side facing Charon (Au.).

17. That is, into a specific Fire. (Au.). This ayah supports the *Ahadith* concerning “*barzakh*.” (Razi).

Yusuf Ali comments: “The Punishment of sin seizes the soul from every side and in every form. Water (drowning) indicates death by suffocation, through the nose, ears, eyes, mouth, throat, and lung. Fire has the opposite effects: it burns the skin, the limbs, the flesh, the brains, the bones, and every part of the body.

[26] And Nuh said, 'My Lord! Leave not on the earth of the unbelievers any inhabitant.'¹⁸

وَقَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَيَّ الْأَرْضِ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ دَيَّارًا ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] Surely, if You left them, they will misguide Your slaves and will beget not any but wicked, downright ungrateful (ones).¹⁹

إِنَّكَ إِن تَذَرَهُمْ يُضِلُّوا عِبَادَكَ وَلَا يَلِدُوا إِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا ﴿٢٧﴾

[28] My Lord! Forgive me, my parents, and whosoever entered my house²⁰ as a believer,²¹ and (also forgive) the believing men and believing women and increase not the wrongdoers but in destruction.'

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِمَن دَخَلَ بَيْتِي مُؤْمِنًا وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَلَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا تَبَارًا ﴿٢٨﴾

So the destruction wrought by sin is complete from all points of view. And yet it is not death (xx. 74); for death would be a merciful release from the Penalty, and the soul steeped in sin has closed the gates of Allah's Mercy on itself. There they will abide, unless and 'except as *Allah willeth*' (vi. 128). For time and eternity, as we conceive them now, have no meaning in the wholly new world."

18. Qatadah said that Nuh prayed against his people in that manner only after it had been revealed to him the following:

رَأَوْحِي إِلَى نُوحٍ أَنَّهُ لَنْ يُؤْمِنَ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ إِلَّا مَنْ قَدْ ءَامَنَ (هود: ٣٦)

"And it was revealed to Nuh that none of your people will believe except he who had already believed." (Ibn Jarir).

However, Thanwi warns, that was for a Prophet. Ordinary believers are not allowed to pray for their Muslim opponents' destruction, as noticed of some of the pseudo Sufis.

19. It is said that they had become such die-hard disbelievers that a father would pass by Nuh and instruct his child, "This is Nuh, a liar. Do not believe in anything he says. This is how my father would warn me" (Ibn Jarir, Kashshaf, Razi, Ibn Kathir).

20. By saying "my house," Nuh meant "his place of worship." (Ibn Jarir from Dahhak).

21. That is, not as a hypocrite (Razi). Hence the Prophet's advice, as recorded by Ahmad, Tirmidhi and Abu Da'ud:

«لَا تَصْحَبُ إِلَّا مُؤْمِنًا وَلَا يَأْكُلُ طَعَامَكَ إِلَّا تَقِيًّا»

“Let not your companion be but a believer, and let not your food be shared but by a godly person.”
(Ibn Kathir).

That is, let not your guests be, but godly persons. The *hadith* was declared as bearing trustworthy narrators by Munawi, as in *Tuhfah*. (Au.).

﴿قُلْتُمْ﴾





Surah 72
Al-Jinn

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Say, 'It has been revealed to me that a group of the Jinn listened¹ and then said, "Indeed, we have heard an amazing recitation.

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ
فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا عَجَبًا ﴿١﴾

1. Basing his opinion on this verse, Ibn `Abbas said that the Prophet never met nor saw the Jinn. But Ibn Mas`ud's reports say he did. Now, Ibn Mas`ud's report is that of a witness, whereas, Ibn `Abbas' opinion is that of a deductive type. Therefore, Ibn Mas`ud's version prevails (Qurtubi).

Mufti Shafi` clarifies that since the verse here does not specifically say that the Prophet did not see the Jinn, the allusion in the verse could be to the occasion when he was returning from his Ta'if mission, where he was rejected. He spent the night at *Nakhlah*, where, while he was performing *Fajr* prayer reciting aloud, a group of Jinn passed by, listened to his recitation, and submitted to the Call. (On that occasion the Prophet

did not see the Jinn). On the other hand, Ibn Mas`ud's report is speaking of another incident. Working through trustworthy reports, `Allamah Khifaji has deduced that there were altogether six occasions when the Jinn met the Prophet.

Ibn Mas`ud's report is indirectly confirmed by a report in Bukhari. It says,

فَقُلْتُ (أبو هريرة): مَا بَالُ الْعَظْمِ وَالرَّوْتَةِ
قَالَ: هُمَا مِنْ طَعَامِ الْجِنِّ، وَإِنَّهُ أَتَانِي وَقَدْ
جَنَّ نَصِيبَيْنِ وَنَعَمَ الْجِنُّ، فَسَأَلُونِي الرَّادَّ،
فَدَعَوْتُ اللَّهَ لَهُمْ أَنْ لَا يَمُرُّوا بَعْظَمٍ وَلَا
بِرَوْتَةٍ إِلَّا وَحَدُّوا عَلَيْهَا طَعَامًا (صحيح
البخارى)

(In part of a longer report, Abu Hurayrah) said, "What is it (that you reject) bones and dung?"

[2] It leads to rectitude, and so we believed in it. Therefore, we shall never associate any with our Lord.²

يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا ﴿٢﴾

[3] And He - exalted be our Lord's Majesty³ - has not taken (unto Himself) either a wife or a son.

وَأَنَّهُ تَعَالَى جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا ﴿٣﴾

[4] And that the foolish ones amongst us used to fasten extravagant lies on Allah.

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ يَفْعُولُ سَفِيهِنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ شَطَطًا ﴿٤﴾

[5] While we had thought that men and Jinn would never fasten a lie upon Allah.⁴

وَأَنَّا ظَنَنَّا أَن لَّنْ نَقُولَ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا ﴿٥﴾

The Prophet answered, "They are food for the Jinn. A delegation of the Nasibin Jinn had been to me - and what a nice group of Jinn they were - and asked me for provision. I prayed to Allah that they may not pass by a bone or dung but should find food upon them" (Au.).

Nasibin were the name of two towns: one in Iraq, another in Yemen (Qur-tubi).

A detailed explanation of the Prophet's encounter with the Jinn has been presented at *ayah* 27 of *Surah al-Ahqaf* (Au.).

2. In other words, we shall never return to paganism again. (Zamakhshari).

3. "Jaddu rabbina" has been explained by Ibn `Abbas as meaning:

His acts, His commands and His Powers (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). Other explanations match with our translation (Au.).

Imām Razi points out that the word has been used in a *hadīth* (of the *Sahihayn*: Au.),

وَلَا يَنْفَعُ ذَا الْجَدِّ مِنْكَ الْجَدُّ.

That is, "No rich man's wealth is of any avail against You."

4. That is, we did not imagine that the Jinn and humans would fasten a lie upon Allah when they ascribed partners unto Him (Zamakhshari, Razi and others).

Thus, it was their attitude of refusal to be with those who fasten lies upon Allah that led them to belief in Him when they heard the fresh call (Sayyid).

[6] And that there were some men among mankind who took refuge with some men among the Jinn,⁵ and they increased them in folly.⁶

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنْسِ يَعُوذُونَ
بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقًا ﴿٦﴾

[7] They too imagined, as you imagined, that Allah will never send any (Messenger).⁷

وَأَتَّهُمْ ظَنُّوا كَمَا ظَنَنْتُمْ أَن لَّن يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ
أَحَدًا ﴿٧﴾

[8] And that we pried into the heaven but found it filled with stern guards and flaming missiles.⁸

وَأَنَّا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مَلِئَتْ
حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهُبًا ﴿٨﴾

5. The allusion is to a pagan practice. When one of them had to spend a night in a valley, he would say, "I seek the refuge of the chief of the Jinn of this valley" (Ibn Jarir from Ibn `Abbas and others, Zamakhshari, Razi, Ibn Kathir).

6. Thus encouraged, the Jinn felt themselves superior to men and added fear and folly to men through phantasm and trickery to maintain their status among them (Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir).

And, Ibn Abi Hatim documented Ibn Abi Sa'ib al-Ansari as saying, "Once we started off from Madinah those days when the Prophet had just begun his mission. We spent a night in a valley with one of the shepherds. At midnight a wolf snatched one of his sheep. The shepherd jumped and said, "O leader of the Jinn, your neighbor" (Meaning, "after all, I am your neighbor"). They heard a voice

saying, "O Sirhan, release her." The sheep returned unscratched.

Shawkani traces the report to Ibn al-Mundhir, Abu Sheikh, Ibn Mar-duwayh and Ibn `Asakir, but its authenticity could not be traced (Au.).

After quoting the above, Ibn Kathir remarks that most probably the wolf was actually a Jinn.

Ibn Zayd added that after Islam came, they began to seek the refuge of Allah (Ibn Jarir).

7. That is, some men of the Jinn also believed, as some men among the pagans believed, that Allah will never raise a Messenger (Ibn Jarir).

8. Clouds seem to be the upper limit of the Jinn-reach into space. A *hadith* of Bukhari seems to be fixing this limit. It says,

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا - زَوْجِ النَّبِيِّ
- صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - أَنَّهَا سَمِعَتْ

[9] And surely, earlier we used to sit in some of its stations for eavesdropping. But whosoever listens now, finds for himself a flaming missile in ambush.⁹

وَأَنَّا كُنَّا تَفْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ فَمَنْ يَسْتَمِعِ الْآنَ يَجِدْ لَهُ شِهَابًا رَصَدًا ﴿٩﴾

[10] And so we know not whether evil is intended for those on the earth, or their Lord intends for them rectitude.

وَأَنَّا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرٌّ أُرِيدَ بِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا ﴿١٠﴾

رَسُولِ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - يَقُولُ «إِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَنْزِلُ فِي الْعَنَانَ - وَهُوَ السَّحَابُ - فَتَذَكُرُ الْأَمْرَ قُضِيَ فِي السَّمَاءِ، فَتَسْتَرْقُ الشَّيَاطِينُ السَّمْعَ، فَتَسْمَعُهُ فَتُوجِّهِهِ إِلَى الْكُهَّانِ، فَيَكْذِبُونَ مَعَهَا مِائَةَ كَذِبَةٍ مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِهِمْ» (صحيح البخارى)

‘A’isha reports that she heard the Prophet say, “Angels descend down into the clouds and mention the affairs decreed in the heaven. The Shayatin steal the news and deliver them to the soothsayers. They add a hundred lies to it from their side.”

However, a report in Muslim indicates that this happens in the first firmament. To be sure, Muslim’s report could be reconciled with the one above by saying that decrees are first announced in the first firmament, before they are discussed in the clouds from where the devils pick up a piece or two (Mufti Shafi’).

Although Shafi` has a point, it seems the *hadith* is telling us about the place where the devils pick up news of the heavens, as angels come down to execute them; it is not telling us the limits of Jinn outreach. (Au.).

9. Ibn Kathir writes that the Shayatin used to be pelted with fiery missiles even earlier than during the phase of Qur’anic revelation, though less frequently. But, with the advent of the Prophet, they were chased harder. Bukhari, Muslim and others have preserved the report that when they were altogether prevented from picking news, they reported back to Iblis who told them surely something new must have happened that they are being prevented from previous places of watch. He sent them across to search out whether any new event had taken place. They passed by the Prophet in *Nakhlah*, heard him recite the Qur’an during the *Fajr* Prayer, and reported back to

their kind warning them (Shawkani and others).

Majid reconfirms from history. He writes, “It is a fact too curious to be overlooked by history that a century or two before the birth of the holy Prophet, the ancient oracles found themselves gradually and automatically becoming dumb – a fitting prelude to the advent of Islam. Even the voice of the great Delphi Oracle, so well-known and so important to antiquity, became still. ‘As a force in history it had long lost all power; in the first century after Christ, Delphi and Ammon had given place to Chaldean astrologers, as Strabo and Juvenal agree in saying, and Plutarch wrote a treatise inquiring into the reason; and in the fourth century, when Julian sent to consult the Delphic Oracle, the last response was uttered for him: “Tell the king, to earth has fallen the beautiful mansion; no longer has Phoebus a home, nor a prophetic laurel, nor a fort that speaks; gone dry is the talking water.”’ (DB. V. p. 155).”

Sayyid offers a rejoinder: “As to where exactly the guardians take their places in space, who are they, how exactly are the ‘*shihab*’ shot at them, are details that the Qur’ān did not elaborate upon, and hence are such details

as knowing them will not add to our store of useful knowledge...

“Nor is there room for asking the functions of the ‘*shihab*.’ The meteorites have been there from the beginning, and will be there in future. Are they the missiles pelted at the devils? We do not know and need not inquire.

“Yet, those who see nothing in such Qur’ānic statements, including the measures appointed by Allah to prevent corruption of His message, are not right in their such suppositions. The problem with these people is that they approach the Qur’ān with prejudiced minds filled with ideas borrowed from sources other than the Qur’ān. They attempt to understand the Qur’ān in the light of the ideas they bring from sources other than it. Therefore, they see angels as representing goodness and obedience, the devils as representing evil and disobedience, the shooting of missiles as metaphorically speaking of measures of safety and preservation. This is because, the ideas and system of thought that they bring with them when they approach the Qur’ān, do not allow for the existence in reality of angels, devils and Jinn.

The right approach to understanding the Qur’ān and its explanation is

[11] *And that, among us some are righteous while others among us are otherwise: we have been of divergent ways.*¹⁰

وَأَنَا مِنَّا الصَّالِحُونَ وَمِنَّا دُونَ ذَلِكَ كُنَّا
طَرَائِقَ قِدَدًا ﴿١١﴾

[12] *But we think we can never frustrate Allah in the earth, nor can we escape Him by flight.*¹¹

وَأَنَا ظَنَنَّا أَنْ لَنْ نُعْجِزَ اللَّهَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَلَنْ نُعْجِزَهُ هَرَبًا ﴿١٢﴾

[13] *Therefore, when we heard the guidance, we believed in it. Indeed, whosoever believes in his Lord, may fear neither deprivation nor a burden.*¹²

وَأَنَا لَمَّا سَمِعْنَا الْهُدَى آمَنَّا بِهِ فَمَنْ يُؤْمِن
بِرَبِّهِ فَلَا يَخَافُ بَحْسًا وَلَا رَهَقًا ﴿١٣﴾

[14] *And that, among us some have submitted, while others are deviated. Then, those who submitted, they have sought rectitude.*

وَأَنَا مِنَّا الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَمِنَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ فَمَنْ
أَسْلَمَ فَأُولَئِكَ تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا ﴿١٤﴾

[15] *As for the deviated ones, they have become fuel for Jahannum.”*

وَأَمَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ فَكَانُوا لِجَهَنَّمَ حَطَبًا
﴿١٥﴾

to come free of concepts, intellectual presumptions, or ideas embedded at the sub-conscious level. They must rather build their entire thought-system based on nothing but what the Qur'an and *hadith* have to state as realities. Further, (if there is a conflict between human thought and revelations), then, none other than the Qur'an and *hadith* should be the arbitrators; no outside point of reference can be allowed to judge; and nothing can be denied or subjected to interpretation which the Qur'an affirms in clear terms, nor should anything be confirmed as true which the Qur'an denies or declares as falsehood. It is only in matters which are not clearly affirmed by the Qur'an or

rejected in clear terms that one can hypothesize and seek the truth in the light of logic and sound reasoning.”

10. That is, some of us are believers while others are don (Ibn Kathir and others).

Suddi (and others) said that among the Jinn the same kind of sects and divisions are found as among men, such as, Jews, Christians, the Qadariyyah, Rawafidh, Khawarij, etc. (Imām Razi).

11. That is, we can neither frustrate Him on the earth nor fly away from it into space (Zamakhshari).

12. Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah and Ibn Zayd said the meaning is: whoever

[16] Yet, had they been steadfast on the path,¹³
We would have given them water to drink in
abundance.¹⁴

وَأَلَوْ اسْتَقَامُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ لَأَسْقَيْنَاهُم
مَاءً غَدَقًا ﴿١٦﴾

[17] So that We might test them thereby. Nev-
ertheless, whoever turned away from the re-
membrance of his Lord, He shall thrust him
into a rigorous chastisement.¹⁵

لِنَقْتَبِنَهُمْ فِيهِ وَمَنْ يَعْزُضْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِ
يَسْلُكْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا ﴿١٧﴾

[18] And that places of worship are for Allah
alone, therefore, invoke not any besides Him.¹⁶

وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ
أَحَدًا ﴿١٨﴾

believed may not fear any diminu-
tion of his good deeds nor any addi-
tion upon his evil deeds (Ibn Jarir).

13. That is, the path of Islam: Ibn
`Abbas, Mujahid, Sa`eed b. Jubayr,
Sa`eed b. al-Musayyib and others
(Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

14. That is, after having declared
faith, had they remained steady with
Islam, Allah would have bestowed
on them – the Jinn – abundant po-
table water (Ibn Jarir from Mujahid
and others); while some others inter-
preted the “water” of the verse with
“provision” `Umar (ra) remarked,
“Wherever there is water, there is
wealth, and wherever there is wealth,
there is corruption.” This is in keep-
ing with other verses of this nature.
Allah said,

يَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ
إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَأَكَلُوا مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ
تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ (المائدة: ٦٦)

“Had they established the Tawrah
and Injil, and what was sent down
to them from their Lord, surely,
they would have eaten from their
above and from below their feet.”

The *ayah* could have been aimed at
the Makkans from whom Islam had
received similar response: some be-
lieving, others not, and the unbel-
ievers were undergoing a seven year
drought (Ibn Kathir and others).

15. Or, an ever-increasing, rising
chastisement. (Ibn Jarir from Ibn
`Abbas).

16. It is reported that when Jews and
Christians entered their places of
worship, they worshipped other than
Allah and hence this *ayah* (Ibn Jarir,
Ibn Kathir).

The above is the meaning of the ma-
jority. But two other meanings are
possible for the word “masajid”: (i)
Prostration, meaning, all prostra-

[19] And that when the slave of Allah stood invoking Him, they were well-nigh upon him in swarms.¹⁷

وَأَنَّهُ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يَدْعُوهُ كَادُوا يَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَدًا ﴿١٩﴾

[20] Say, 'I invoke my Lord alone, and associate not any with Him.'¹⁸

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَدْعُو رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ أَحَدًا ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] Say, 'I have no power to cause you harm or rectitude.'

قُلْ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا رَشَدًا ﴿٢١﴾

[22] Say, 'No one will ever protect me from Allah, nor will I ever find, apart from Him, a refuge.'

قُلْ إِنِّي لَنْ يُجِيرَنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ أَحَدٌ وَلَنْ أَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] Save deliverance from Allah,¹⁹ and His Messages. And, whoso disobeyed Allah and His Messenger, he shall indeed have the Fire of Jahannum, abiding therein forever.'

إِلَّا بِلَاغًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِسَالَاتِهِ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا أَبَدًا ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] Until when they see that which they are promised, then they will surely know who is weaker in helpers and fewer in numbers.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ أَضْعَفُ نَاصِرًا وَأَقَلُّ عَدَدًا ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] Say, 'I know not whether what you are promised is nigh, or my Lord will appoint for it a distant term.'²⁰

قُلْ إِنْ أَدْرِي أَقْرَبٌ مَّا تُوعَدُونَ أَمْ يَجْعَلُ لَهُ رَبِّي أَمَدًا ﴿٢٥﴾

tions should be reserved for Allah alone, and (ii) those parts of the body on which a man rests when in prostration: the two feet, knees, hands, and nose - in all seven bones. (Razi).

17. That is, when the Prophet (and his followers) stood in Prayers in the Haram, pagan men and Jinn surrounded him in swarms in amazement (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

18. The newly witnessed Prayer amazed them, but when anger over-

took them, they began to press on the Prophet to give up his mission and re-join them. This verse could be in response to that situation (Ibn Kathir, differently worded).

19. That is, "I have no power of good or evil for you, except that I am but able to deliver the messages of Allah (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

20. In this context we might quote a *hadith* preserved by Abu Da'ud:

[26] *Knower of the Unseen. He discloses not His Unseen to anyone.*²¹

عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا
﴿٢٦﴾

[27] *Save only to such a Messenger as He approves, and is well-pleased with, in which case He sends before him and behind him watchers.*²²

إِلَّا مَنْ أَرْضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ
مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا ﴿٢٧﴾

[28] *So that he may know they conveyed the messages of their Lord.*²³ *And He encompasses all that is with them, and He has enumerated all things in numbers.*

لِيَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رَسُولَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ
وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ
عَدَدًا ﴿٢٨﴾

عَنْ سَعْدِ بْنِ أَبِي وَقَّاصٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ -صَلَّى
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- أَنَّهُ كَانَ يَقُولُ «لَا تَعْجِزُ
أُمَّتِي عِنْدَ رَبِّي أَنْ يُؤَخَّرَهَا نِصْفَ يَوْمٍ».
وَسَأَلْتُ رَاشِدًا هَلْ بَلَغَكَ مَاذَا التَّصْفُ يَوْمٍ
قَالَ خَمْسُمِائَةَ سَنَةٍ. (مسند أحمد)

On the authority of Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, the Prophet used to say, "My *Ummah* is not weaker in the sight of my Lord, than that He should defer her by half a day." When asked, Sa'd explained that the "half a day" allude to 500 years.

The above *hadith* has been explained (ref. Munawi) as referring to the Day of Judgment, where this *Ummah* will not be detained by 500 years. Some others have thought that it refers to the term allotted to this *Ummah* on this planet: 500 years.

Ibn Hajr remarked, however, that the *hadith* does not declare it unlikely that the deferment cannot be beyond half a day.

However, this report, which is also in other collections, has been declared weak by Haythami. But Hakim remarked, with Dhahabi agreeing with him, that this is trustworthy by the standards set by the *Sheikhayn*: Bukhari and Muslim. (Au).

In this connection we might mention another *hadith* recorded by Ahmad. It is of interest because it is in the context of the Last Hour and matches in its contents with other reports.

عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ جُبَيْرٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ
سَمِعْتُ أَبَا ثَعْلَبَةَ الْخُسَنِيَّ صَاحِبَ رَسُولِ
اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- أَنَّهُ سَمِعَهُ
يَقُولُ وَهُوَ بِالْفُسْطَاطِ فِي خِلَافَةِ مُعَاوِيَةَ

وَكَانَ مُعَاوِيَةَ أَعَزَى النَّاسِ الْقُسْطَنْطِينِيَّةَ
فَقَالَ «وَاللَّهِ لَا تَعْجُزُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةُ مِنْ نَصْفِ
يَوْمٍ إِذَا رَأَيْتَ الشَّامَ مَائِدَةً رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ
وَأَهْلَ بَيْتِهِ فَعِنْدَ ذَلِكَ فَتْحُ الْقُسْطَنْطِينِيَّةِ».

A narrator reports Abu Tha'labah al-Khushani, a Companion of the Prophet, as saying in Fustat during the caliphate of Mu`awiyah, while the latter was planning an attack on Constantinople, "By Allah, this *Ummah* cannot be weaker (than that it should not be deferred) by half a day. So when you see in Syria that a single man's food is (shared) by his whole family, then, that will be the time that Constantinople will fall."

Some scholars have mooted that the time allotted to this *Ummah* is one day, which is 1000 years, over which another five hundred could be added. However, as Ibn Hajr notes, some scholars have thought that humans have been granted 50,000 years (i.e., one day by Allah's count: Au.), out of which no one knows how much has passed and how much has remained.

Nonetheless, the above report matches with other reports which say that Muslims will be besieged in Syria by the (Western) Christians. Later, they will bring an army of a million, but

would not be able to defeat the Muslims (Au.).

21. The above Qur'anic statement does not mean that Allah does not let anyone know any of the *ghayb*. A difference has to be made between "news of the *ghayb* (*anba' al-ghayb*)" and "*al-ghayb*" (the Unseen per se). Prophets are given some "news of the *ghayb*" such as, those pertaining to heaven and hell, angels, affairs of the Judgment Day, etc. (Thanwi, Ma`arif),

Imām Razi points out that it should not be surprising that Allah should inform something of the "news of the *ghayb*" to one of his slaves. (E.g., Fir`awn's dream: Au.). However, Alusi points out, such passing of information is not revelation and not wholly dependable.

Qurtubi writes that when `Ali was about to start off for the battle (against the Khawarij), someone told him to delay his departure by three hours; otherwise he risked defeat. `Ali rebuked him saying that they did not need any fortune-teller after the Prophet's appearance. Of course, he emerged victorious despite the prediction.

We may add that in our times while Abul Hasan Ali was in an airport waiting for his flight, a friend and

follower whispered to him not to fly by that flight because he had dreamed that the craft had crashed. Abul Hasan Ali advised him not to mention his dream to anyone, and to just forget about it, because he was going fly by that aircraft anyway. Of course, he survived dozens of plane journeys after that (Au.).

22. Dahhak said that when Allah sent an angel carrying revelations, He also sent with him guards from among the angels, accompanying the Message-carrier, to ascertain that the devils do not introduce anything into the message (Ibn Jarir).

23. That is, this system of guard-angels accompanying the message was adopted in order that the Prophet would know that the messages were

delivered correctly. Ibn `Abbas however explained that the system was adopted so that the pagans should feel assured that they – the carrier-angels – had delivered the messages intact (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Another possibility is that the pronoun is for Allah, i.e., so that “Allah knows that the message was properly delivered,” where, “Allah knows” would be taken in the sense of “Allah took care.”

There are equivalents of this method of making a statement, e.g.,

فَلْيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلْيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ
(العنكبوت: ٣)

“So that Allah may know those who were truthful, and may know the liars” (Razi, Ibn Kathir). مَتَّ





Surah 73

*Al-Muzzammil*¹

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] O you, the enwrapped one.²

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُزَّمِّلُ ﴿١﴾

[2] Stand by night, except a little.³

قُمْ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٢﴾

[3] Its half, or make it a little less than that.

نِصْفَهُ أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا ﴿٣﴾

1. Except for the last *ayah*, the rest of the *Surah* is Makkan. A few other verses are also said to have been revealed at Madinah (Qurtubi, Shawkani).

2. Ibn `Abbas said that that the Prophet was enwrapped in a blanket – after a rough treatment by the pagans - when these verses were sent down (Ibn Kathir).

What Asad has to say in a longer note may be rephrased as follows: The term “*muzzammil*” definitely has, (apart from the literal), metaphorical connotation; viz., “wrapped up in oneself,” implying a call of heightened consciousness and deeper spiritual awareness on the part of the Prophet.

3. The “*Salah al-tahajjud*” was “*wajib*” on the Prophet alone, being supererogatory (*nafl*) for the rest of the Ummah (Ibn Kathir). However, Qurtubi points out, there is no consensus to the effect that it was obligatory on the Prophet.

In any case, it appears it was at the start obligatory on all since this is an early Makkan revelation, until the five-daily Prayers were made obligatory during “*mi`raj*” which took place perhaps during the last year of Makkan stay (*Ma`arif*).

With regard to the importance of *tahajjud*, we have several traditions. One in Muslim says,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- قَالَ «يَنْزِلُ رَبُّنَا تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا حِينَ يَبْقَى ثُلُثُ اللَّيْلِ الْآخِرِ فَيَقُولُ مَنْ يَدْعُونِي فَأَسْتَجِيبَ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَسْأَلُنِي فَأُعْطِيَهُ وَمَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُنِي فَأَغْفِرَ لَهُ».

“Our Lord descends down to the heaven closest to the earth every night when a third of the night is left and says, ‘Who will call Me that I may respond to him. Who will ask me that I may grant him. Who will seek forgiveness from Me that I may forgive him.’”

As for the best time for *tahajjud*, it is anytime after *Salah al-Isha* but the preferable is anytime after midnight, and the best of all times, the last third part of the night (Qurtubi).

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar reported about himself, as in the *Sahihayn*:

كُنْتُ غُلَامًا شَابًّا، وَكُنْتُ أَنَا فِي الْمَسْجِدِ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- فَرَأَيْتُ فِي النَّوْمِ كَأَنَّ مَلَكَينِ أَخَذَانِي فَذَهَبَا بِي إِلَى النَّارِ فَإِذَا هِيَ مَطْوِيَّةٌ كَطَيِّ البُرِّ، وَإِذَا لَهَا قَرْنَانِ، وَإِذَا فِيهَا أَنَاسٌ قَدْ عَرَفْتَهُمْ فَجَعَلْتُ أَقُولُ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ النَّارِ - قَالَ - فَلَقِينَا مَلَكَ آخَرَ فَقَالَ لِي لَمْ تُرَعْ. فَقَصَصْتُهَا عَلَيَّ حَفْصَةَ فَقَصَّتْهَا حَفْصَةَ عَلَيَّ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -

صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- «نَعِمَ الرَّجُلُ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ لَوْ كَانَ يُصَلِّي مِنَ اللَّيْلِ».

“I was in my early youth and used to sleep in the Prophet’s mosque during his life. I dreamed that two angels took me to the Fire, and lo, it was folded upon itself like the folding of a well. And it had two horns. I found some people there that I knew. I began to say, ‘I seek Allah’s refuge from the Fire.’ Then a third angel met us. He said, ‘You need not fear.’”

(Another report adds that the third angel told the other two, “Let him alone).”

“I mentioned this to Hafsa (his sister) and she to the Prophet. He remarked, “Abdullah is a nice person, only if he would Pray at night.”

Salim said that thereafter ‘Ibn ‘Umar did not sleep at night but for a short time (Qurtubi).

The above version is from Muslim (Au.).

There are secrets of the soul during *Salah al-tahajjud* whose details one may seek from the “companions of solitude” (Thanwi).

[4] Or (maybe) add to it;⁴ and recite the Qur'ān in measured intonation.⁵

أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا ﴿٤﴾

[5] Surely, We shall presently cast on you a weighty word.⁶

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا ﴿٥﴾

4. Ibn `Abbas, Hasan and Qatadah said that the Prophet and his Companions stood for the night vigil for almost a year, to such lengths that their feet got swollen until Allah revealed, "Therefore, recite of the Qur'ān, so much as easily possible." Some others have said that they kept the night vigil for ten years before the relaxation *ayah* came (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

5. Or, in a calm, distinctive, unhurried, rhythmic tone.

`A'isha describe the Prophet's recitation. It used to be done unhurriedly, in slow pace, lengthening the syllables and stopping at the end of each verse. And a report preserved by Ahmad, Abu Da'ud, and Tirmidhi - who declared it trustworthy - says,

عن زُرِّعَ بنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بنِ عَمْرٍو قال قال رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "يُقَالُ لِصَاحِبِ الْقُرْآنِ اِقْرَأْ وَاَرْتَقِ وَرَتِّلْ كَمَا كُنْتَ تُرْتِّلُ فِي الدُّنْيَا فَإِنَّ مَنَزَلَكَ عِنْدَ آخِرِ آيَةٍ تَقْرَأُهَا".

"A companion of the Qur'ān will be told, 'Recite the Qur'ān and

ascend; and recite as slowly as you used to recite in the world; your final destination will be the last verse that you recite'" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Another tradition preserved by Bukhari and others says,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - «لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَتَعَنَّ بِالْقُرْآنِ» وَزَادَ غَيْرُهُ «يَجْهَرُ بِهِ».

"He is not of us who does not chant the Qur'ān." The narrator also added, "(He who) does not recite it aloud" (Ibn Kathir).

6. The revelation weighed heavy on the Prophet when it came down (Ibn Jarir).

The Prophet was asked, as in a report of Ahmad and others, what did it feel like when the revelations came. He answered,

نعم أسمع صلاصل ثم أسكت عند ذلك فما من مرة يوحى إلي إلا ظننت أن نفسي تفيض.

[6] Indeed, the rising up at night⁷ is heavier in tread,⁸ and more conducive to speech.⁹

إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْءًا وَأَقْوَمُ
قِيَلًا ﴿٦﴾

[7] Truly, during the day you have prolonged occupation.¹⁰

إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيلًا ﴿٧﴾

“Yes, I hear clattering of chains and I fall silent at that moment. And, never it happened that the revelation came but I thought that my body will burst asunder.”

At other times the weight of the revelation could be observed on the camel he was riding. It would crouch down, and place its neck on the ground (Ibn Kathir and others).

The revelation was heavy on the Prophet for another reason: the demand to spread it across and bring people closer to Allah (Alusi, Thanwi).

Thus, standing in Prayers during the night, was in preparation of the Qur’anic revelations and their demands (Au.).

7. The great majority of the *Salaf* have said that any rising up by night for reasons of prayer is considered as “*nashi’ah*.” Thus, it covers the whole night after *’Isha* (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Yusuf Ali remarks: “For contemplation, prayer, and praise, what time

can be so suitable as the night, when calm and silence prevail, the voices of the market-place are still, and the silent stars pour forth their eloquence to the discerning soul?”

8. That is, the effects of night prayer leave greater impression on the heart than those of the day (Ibn Jarir).

Or, perhaps, it is easier to suppress the carnal self in the stillness of the dark, devoted to remembrance of Allah (Thanwi, reworded).

9. Or, as *Tafhim* translation puts it: “Makes the speech most upright and sound.”

Various other meanings have been offered for the words “*aqwamu qila*”: (a) (night-time recitation) offers a better understanding, (b) easier time to remember the words, (c) generally, a better time-frame (for recitation), etc. (Ibn Jarir).

10. Two opposite but reconcilable meanings have been attributed to the words “*sabhan*.” Ibn ‘Abbas said that the Prophet was to free his nights for Prayers because during the

[8] And remember the Name of your Lord, and cut yourself in devotion to Him completely.¹¹

وَاذْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا ﴿٨﴾

[9] Lord of the East and the West,¹² there is no deity but He; so take Him as a Disposer (of your affairs).

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا ﴿٩﴾

[10] And observe patience against what they say and forsake them graciously.

وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيلًا ﴿١٠﴾

[11] Leave Me to those who cry lies: those possessed of bounties, and respite them a while.

وَذَرْنِي وَالْمُكَذِّبِينَ أُولِي النَّعْمَةِ وَمَهِّلْهُمْ قَلِيلًا ﴿١١﴾

[12] Surely, with us are fetters and a furnace.

إِنَّ لَدَيْنَا أَنْكَالًا وَجَحِيمًا ﴿١٢﴾

[13] And food that chokes and a painful chastisement.¹³

وَطَعَامًا ذَا غُصَّةٍ وَعَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٣﴾

day he had long hours during which he could rest. However, others have thought that the meaning is that since he is busier during the day, attending, primarily, to the works of his mission, he should use the hours of the night for Prayers (Qurtubi and others).

11. Hence Maryam was called “*butul*” because she had cut herself from every occupation that could prevent her from devotions to her Lord (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

12. If we could open the globe, at where Makkah falls, we could look at the opened map and rightly include all parts of it when saying, “its east and west belong to Allah” (Au.).

13. Asad writes: “Explaining this symbolism of torment in the hereafter, Razi says: ‘These four conditions may well be understood as denoting the spiritual connotation [of one’s doing in life]. As regards the ‘heavy fetters,’ they are a symbol of the soul’s remaining shackled to its [erstwhile] physical attachment and bodily pleasures... and now that the realization has become impossible, those fetters and shackles prevent the [resurrected] human personality (an-nafs) from attaining to the realm of the spirit and of purity. Subsequently, those spiritual shackles generate spiritual ‘fires,’ inasmuch as one’s strong inclination towards bodily concerns, together with the impossi-

[14] Upon the day when the earth and the mountains will quake and the mountains will become a heap of crumbling sand.¹⁴

يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَكَانَتِ
الْجِبَالُ كَثِيرًا مَّهِيلًا ﴿١٤﴾

[15] Surely, We have sent a Messenger to you as a witness upon you, as We sent to Fir`awn a Messenger.

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولًا شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ
كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُولًا ﴿١٥﴾

[16] But Fir`awn disobeyed the Messenger, so We seized him a grievous seizure.¹⁵

فَعَصَى فِرْعَوْنُ الرَّسُولَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُ أَخْذًا
وَبِيًّا ﴿١٦﴾

bility of attaining to them, give rise, spiritually, to [a sensation of] severe burning...: and this is [the meaning of] ‘the blazing fire’ (*al-jahim*). Thereupon [the sinner] rises to swallow the choking agony of deprivation and the pain of separation [from the object of his desire]: and this is the meaning of the words, ‘and food that chokes.’ And, finally, because of these circumstances with the blessed ones: and this is the meaning of the words ‘and grievous suffering’... But [withal], know that I do not claim to have exhausted the meaning of these [Qur’anic] verses by what I have stated [here].”

Imām Razi adds the final sentence perhaps to impress that apart from the literal meaning of the passage, other, metaphorical meanings could also be derived, although such derived meanings cannot attain the certainty of the meaning contained in the apparent words (Au.).

14. That is, this is how the mountains will be, a heap of crumbling sand, at this stage of general destruction. Subsequently, it will be reduced to dust, and reduced flat, so that the whole of the earth will be leveled as a single, smooth surface with no ups and downs (Ibn Kathir, expanded).

15. “Pharaoh, the earthly king, faces Moses, the prophet of Allah. In earthly eyes, it was Moses who disobeyed Pharaoh. In spiritual relations, it was Pharaoh who disobeyed Moses. Pharaoh represented an ancient and mighty kingdom, with a long history behind it, and a pride in its learning and science, art, organization, and power. Moses led a depressed people, hewers of wood and drawers of water. But the might of Allah was behind him. What became of the wisdom, power, and armies of Pharaoh?” (Yusuf Ali)

[17] So, how will you save yourself - if you disbelieved - on a Day that will turn children white-haired?¹⁶

فَكَيْفَ تَتَّقُونَ إِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ يَوْمًا يَجْعَلُ
الْوِلْدَانَ شِيبًا ﴿١٧﴾

[18] Whereon the heaven is rent asunder with it:¹⁷ His promise must needs be accomplished.

السَّمَاءِ مُنْفَطِرٌ بِهِ كَانَ وَعْدُهُ مَفْعُولًا
﴿١٨﴾

16. Yusuf Ali again: “If already you deny and disobey Allah in this life of probation, how can you stand up to the Day of Judgment, the Day of the terrible Reality? That Day is described in two metaphors: (1) It will be a time of such stress that even children will become like hoary-headed men; (2) What we look upon as the eternal sky, ever the same, will be cleft asunder; cf. lxxxii. 1. In other words, the shape of things will be completely altered, both within man and in outer nature, and all true values will be restored. For the Promise of Allah, in this, as in all other respects, cannot but be fulfilled.”

The following narrative could be quoted in explanation:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ
- عَنِ النَّبِيِّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ -
قَالَ «يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى يَا آدَمُ . فَيَقُولُ
لَبَّيْكَ وَسَعْدَيْكَ وَالْخَيْرُ فِي يَدَيْكَ . فَيَقُولُ
أَخْرَجْتُ بَعَثَ النَّارَ . قَالَ وَمَا بَعَثَ النَّارَ قَالَ
مِنْ كُلِّ أَلْفٍ تِسْعِمِائَةٍ وَتِسْعَةَ وَتِسْعِينَ ،

فَعِنْدَهُ يَشِيبُ الصَّغِيرُ، وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ
حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا، وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَارَى، وَمَا
هُم بِسُكَارَى، وَلَكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ»

Allah will say, “O Adam!” He will reply, “Here I am, My Lord! All good is in Your hand.” He will say, “Bring out the portion of the Fire.” He will ask, “And what is the portion of the Fire?” He will reply, “Out of every thousand, nine-hundred and ninety-nine.” It is then that children will become old and, every pregnant one will deliver its load; and you will see the people drunk while they will not be drunk; but Allah’s punishment is severe” (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Jarir quotes a slightly different version of the above report. We have taken it from the *Sahihayn*. (Au.).

17. Or, as many of the *Salaf* have said, “The heaven is heavy therewith” (Ibn Jarir). That is, so heavy that it could burst asunder (Au.).

[19] Surely, this is a Reminder. So let him, who will, take a way to His Lord.

[20] Surely your Lord knows that you stand up (in Prayer) less than two-thirds of the night, or its half, or a third of it, and (so does) a group of those with you.¹⁸ Allah determines (lengths of) the night and the day. He knew that you cannot compute it.¹⁹ So He turned to you (in mercy). Therefore, recite of the Qur'ān, so much as easily possible.²⁰ He knows that among you some are sick while others journeying in the land, seeking Allah's bounty, while others could be fighting in the way of Allah.²¹ Therefore, recite of it so much as easily possible.²² And, do the Prayers regularly and diligently,²³ pay the Zakah, and lend to Allah a goodly loan.²⁴ And, whatever of the good you send forward for yourselves, you will find it with Allah. It is better and greater as a wage.²⁵ And seek Allah's forgiveness. Surely, Allah is All-forgiving, All-merciful.

إِنَّ هَذِهِ تَذْكِرَةٌ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٩﴾

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ تَقُومُ أَدْنَىٰ مِنْ ثُلُثِي اللَّيْلِ وَنِصْفَهُ وَثُلُثَهُ وَطَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ مَعَكَ وَاللَّهُ يُقَدِّرُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ عَلِمَ أَنْ لَنْ تُحْصُوهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ عَلِمَ أَنْ سَيَكُونُ مِنْكُم مَّرْضَىٰ وَآخَرُونَ يَضْرِبُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَبْتَغُونَ مِن فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَآخَرُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَاقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنْهُ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاقْرَءُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِن خَيْرٍ نَّحْدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ وَأَعْظَمُ أَجْرًا وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

18. The words “a group” should not lead anyone to believe that not everyone kept the night-vigil in early Islam. They did, but, while some joined the Prophet, others would have been doing it at home. (Thanwi).

19. The above is a literal translation, otherwise Sa`eed and Hasan explained it as meaning, “you are not able” (Ibn Jarir) i.e., you will not be able to continue with such lengthy night vigils. (Au.).

Qurtubi prefers the meaning that “you will not be able to count the wisdom in such determination as which allows the night and day to lengthen and shorten.” Another possible meaning is, “you will not be able to compute the time to know when it is midnight, and hence, leeway is being granted: you can now pray in any part of the night, to any length you wish.” Yet another meaning, as stated by Shafi` is that “you will not be able to keep the night vigil to the

lengths ideally required, and, therefore, Allah turned in mercy.”

Thanwi adds: This is a clear indication that the *Shuyukh* should adopt a gradual process and not overload their “seekers on the path” with what they cannot bear.

20. Ibn Kathir points out that according to Abu Hanifah, if one recites any, even if a single verse of the Qur’ān in a rak’ah, it should suffice in view of this verse which does not specify any specific length or part of the Qur’ān. However, he points out, in view of *ahadīth* in Bukhari and other works, the Prophet declared that, that Prayer is incomplete in which *Surah al-Fatihah* is not recited. And, therefore, its recitation is obligatory; which happens to be the opinion of the great majority.

We might add that the Hanafiyyah have a jurisdiction rule: If a *hadīth* statement clashes with a Qur’ānic requirement, then, first reconciliation should be attempted. If it is not possible to reconcile the two by any means, then, the Qur’ānic dictum should prevail. In this particular case, they say that for he who does not know *Surah al-Fatihah*, such as a new Muslim, reciting any verse, or a part of it will suffice. But for those

who know the *Surah* by heart, it is *wajib*. If someone does not recite it intentionally, his Prayer is invalid. But if he forgets to recite, then Prayer is valid with Sajdah Sahw. If someone asks: how come you allow validity of a Prayer without recitation of *Surah al-Fatihah*, the Hanafiyyah will answer: This is in view of the Qur’ānic dictum. And, if someone asks: how come you declare a Prayer invalid without the recitation of *Surah al-Fatihah*, they will answer: in view of the *hadīth* dictum. This is how they reconcile the Qur’ān and *hadīth*, according each of them the respect due to them. (Au.).

21. In this verse is the proof of the revelation’s authenticity. The Prophet had foreseen that fighting would erupt between his followers and those opposed to the Message.

22. That is, recite as much as you can of the Qur’ān within the Prayers. (Ibn Jarir).

23. This leads us to believe that at least this verse was revealed after the Nocturnal Journey. (Shafi’).

24. That is, in addition to *Zakah*, expend in the way of Allah. (Ibn Jarir).

25. We have a *hadīth* in this context, preserved by Bukhari and others:

The Prophet asked, “To which of you is his inheritor’s wealth dearer than his own wealth?” They said,

عَنْ الْحَارِثِ بْنِ سُوَيْدٍ قَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ قَالَ
النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَيُّكُمْ مَالُ
وَارِثِهِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ مَالِهِ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ مَا مِنَّا أَحَدٌ إِلَّا مَالُهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ فَإِنَّ
مَالَهُ مَا قَدَّمَ وَمَالُ وَارِثِهِ مَا أَخَّرَ.

“Messenger of Allah, there is none among us but his own wealth is dear to him.” He said, “His wealth is that which he forwarded, while, what he left behind is his inheritor’s wealth.” (Ibn Kathir). مَقْتَبَاتُ



Surah 74

Al-Muddaththir¹

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] O the one shrouded (in a mantle).²

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ ﴿١﴾

[2] Arise, and warn.

فُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ ﴿٢﴾

1. “After the Prophet’s earliest revelation – consisting of the first five verses of *surah* 96 – a period elapsed during which he received no revelation at all. The length of this break in revelation (*fatratu al-wahy*) cannot be established with certainty; it may have been as less as six months or as much as three years. It was a time of deepest distress for the Prophet: the absence of revelation almost led him to believe that his earlier experience in the cave of Mount Hira was an illusion; and it was only due to the moral support of wife Khadijah and her undaunted faith in his prophetic mission that he did not entirely lose his courage and hope. At the end of this intermission the Prophet had a vision of the Angel Gabriel ‘sitting between heaven and earth’. Almost immediately afterwards, the present

surah was revealed, and then on, in Muhammad’s own words, ‘revelations became intense and continuous’ (Asad).

2. We can start with Yusuf Ali’s soothing remarks: “In these wonderful early verses there is a double thread of thought: (1) A particular occasion or person is referred to; (2) a general spiritual lesson is taught. As to (1), the Prophet was now past the stage of personal contemplation, lying down or sitting in his mantle; he was now to go forth boldly to deliver his Message and publicly proclaim the Lord: his heart had always been purified, but now all his outward doings must be dedicated to Allah, and conventional respect for ancestral customs or worship must be thrown aside; his work as a Messenger was the most generous gift that could

flow from his personality, but no reward or appreciation was to be expected from his people, but quite the contrary; there would be much call on his patience, but his contentment would arise from the good pleasure of Allah. As to (2), similar stages arise in a minor degree in the life of every good man, for which the Prophet's life is to be a universal pattern."

From among the *Salaf*, `Ikrimah said that by enwrapping the allusion is to the shrouding of the Prophet with the Prophetic mission (Ibn Jarir). The above has usage in the Arabic language for its support (Razi). However, the majority have believed that the revelation came when the Prophet was enwrapped in a mantle. Details are in *hadith* collections. A report of this context says that Jabir b. `Abdullah said,

(عن) جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ ثُمَّ فَتَرَ عَنِّي الْوَحْيَ فَتَرَةً فَبَيْنَمَا أَنَا أَمْشِي سَمِعْتُ صَوْتًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَرَفَعْتُ بَصَرِي قِبَلَ السَّمَاءِ فَإِذَا الْمَلَكُ الَّذِي جَاءَنِي بِحِرَاءٍ قَاعِدٌ عَلَى كُرْسِيِّ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَجِئْتُ مِنْهُ حَتَّى هَوَيْتُ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ فَجِئْتُ أَهْلِي فَمَلْتُ رَمْلِي رَمْلِي فَأَنْتَلَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ إِلَى قَوْلِهِ وَالرُّجُزَ فَاهْجُرْ قَالَ أَبُو سَلَمَةَ وَالرُّجُزُ الْأَوْتَانُ.

He heard the Prophet say, "Thereafter the revelation ceased coming to me for a while. Then, as I was walking, I heard a voice from the heaven. I raised my eyes up and lo, the angel that had come to me in Hira was seated in a chair (spread over) between the heaven and the earth. I felt scared of him and fell down. I went back to my homefolk and said, 'Cover me up, cover me up,' and Allah revealed, 'O the one shrouded (in a mantle). Arise, and warn. Your Lord, magnify. Your clothes purify. And defilement shun.'"

Abu Salamah (one of the narrators) added: "Rijz is for idols." (Ibn Jarir).

The report is in Muslim. And Bukhari's report adds that when the Prophet returned he asked to be covered and cold water poured on him, which was done; and Allah revealed this *Surah* (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

In other words, as Zuhri said, this *Surah* was revealed immediately after the first revelation which were five verses of *Surah al-Iqra'* (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir and others).

[3] Your Lord, magnify.³

﴿٣﴾ وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرْ

[4] Your clothes purify.⁴

﴿٤﴾ وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ

[5] And the abomination shun.⁵

﴿٥﴾ وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ

[6] Bestow not (in charity) to gain increase.⁶

﴿٦﴾ وَلَا تَمَنَّ نَسْتَكْبِرُ

[7] And, observe patience for your Lord.⁷

﴿٧﴾ وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ

[8] When it is blown into the Trumpet.⁸

﴿٨﴾ فَإِذَا نُفِثَ فِي النَّافُورِ

3. That is, your Lord alone, and none else should you magnify (Alusi).

4. The great majority of the *Salaf*, who cited poetical pieces, said the allusion is to cleansing oneself of sins (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Arabic usage allows us to include cleansing of the clothes as well as purification of the heart (Razi, Ibn Kathir).

Asad sums up: “.. almost all the classical commentators point out that the noun *thawb* and its plural *tHiyab* is often metonymically applied to that which a garment encloses, i.e., a person’s ‘body’ or, in a wider sense, his ‘self’ or his ‘heart’ or even his ‘spiritual state’ or ‘conduct’ (*Taj al-`Arus*). Thus, commenting on the above verse, Zamakhshari draws the reader’s attention to the well-known idiomatic phrase *tahir ath-tHiyab* (lit., ‘one who is clean in his garments’) and *danis ath-tHiyab* (‘one

who is filthy in his garments’), and stresses their tropical significance of ‘free from faults and vices’ and ‘vicious and perfidious’, respectively. Razi states with approval that ‘according to most of the [earlier] commentators, the meaning of the verse is, “purify thy heart of all that is blameworthy.”’

5. The translation is literal, but the majority has thought that the allusion is to idols (Ibn Jarir, Razi, Ibn Kathir).

6. That is, offer not a gift in the hope of getting better than that (Ibn Jarir from the *Salaf*); but many other explanations have come. Qurtubi offers some 11 of them.

7. That is, for the sake of your Lord.

8. The Prophet is reported to have said,

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- « كَيْفَ أَنْتَعَمُ وَقَدِ التَّقَمَّ صَاحِبٌ

[9] That Day will be a hard day.

فَذَلِكَ يَوْمًا عَسِيرٌ ﴿٩﴾

[10] Upon the unbelievers⁹ - not (at all) easy.¹⁰

عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ غَيْرٍ يَسِيرٍ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] Leave Me alone with him I alone created.¹¹

ذَرْنِي وَمَنْ خَلَقْتُ وَحِيدًا ﴿١١﴾

[12] And appointed for him extensive wealth.

وَجَعَلْتُ لَهُ مَالًا مَمْدُودًا ﴿١٢﴾

الْقَرْنَ الْقَرْنَ وَحَىٰ جَبْهَتَهُ وَأَصْعَىٰ سَمْعَهُ يَنْتَظِرُ أَنْ يُؤْمَرَ أَنْ يَنْفُخَ فَيَنْفُخَ «. قَالَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ فَكَيْفَ تَقُولُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ « قُولُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ تَوَكَّلْنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ رَبِّنَا ».

“How should I relax when the one in charge of the Trumpet has placed his mouth on the Trumpet, has bent his forehead forward, and is waiting in all-attention to be ordered to blow, so that he may blow.” They asked, “What shall we say, O Messenger of Allah?” He answered, “Say, (see the Arabic text)” – meaning, “Allah is sufficient for us, He is the best of those on whom one can rely. Upon Him we have placed our trust, our Lord” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

The *hadith* is in Tirmidhi who declared it weak, but Hafiz (ibn Hajr) thought it is strong (Sami).

9. Asad writes: “(*Kafir*) is one who denies [or ‘refuses to acknowledge’] the truth, in the widest, spiritual sense of this latter term, i.e., irrespec-

tive of whether it relates to a cognition of the supreme truth – namely, the existence of God – or to a doctrine or ordinance enunciated in the divine writ, or to a self-evident moral proposition, or to an acknowledgement of, and therefore, gratitude for, favors received.”

10. It is reported to us that Zurarah b. Awfa – the Qadi of Basrah – led in the Prayers at *Fajr*. He recited this *Surah*. When he reached this verse, he gave out a cry and fell down dead (Ibn Kathir).

11. That is, he came into the world alone, will die alone and will be raised alone (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). Alternatively, (or additionally) it could mean “He, whom I alone have created, none partnering Me in creation” (Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi).

Although the address is open to anyone who so *qualifies*, the immediate reference was to al-Walid b. al-Mughirah (Ibn Jarir).

[13] *And sons, present.*¹²

وَبَيْنَ شُهُودًا ﴿١٣﴾

[14] *And prepared for him ample comfort.*

وَمَهَّدَتْ لَهُ تَمَهِيدًا ﴿١٤﴾

[15] *Yet he is eager that I should grant (him) more.*

ثُمَّ يَطْمَعُ أَنْ أَزِيدَ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] *By no means!*¹³ *He has been hostile to Our revelations.*¹⁴

كَلَّا إِنَّهُ كَانَ لِآيَاتِنَا عَنِيدًا ﴿١٦﴾

[17] *Soon I shall force him to a hard ascent.*¹⁵

سَأَرْهِفُهُ صَعُودًا ﴿١٧﴾

[18] *Lo, He reflected, and determined.*

إِنَّهُ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ ﴿١٨﴾

Interestingly, the man was unique in terms of wealth, children, and status among the Quraysh, although he was not one of them, but who attributed himself to them for the honor, and referred to himself as unique (*waheed*); and, consequently, was nicknamed “*Waheed*” by his compatriots. There have been differences in opinion over how he ended. Some say he was killed by Najashi of Abyssinia for a murder he had committed (there); others that he was killed at Badr, and, strangely, yet others that he became a Muslim, which idea Ibn Hajr refuted (Alusi). It is possible that the confusion has arisen from the fact that one of his sons was also named Walid, who had become Muslim (Au.).

12. That is, sons who stood by him to serve him. It is said that Walid had 10 or 13 sons, who never left his

company. Khalid b. Walid was one of them. Two others of his sons who embraced Islam were Hisham and Walid b. Walid.

13. It is said that thereafter he suffered losses all around (farms, cattle, business across continents, etc.) and died poor (from most commentators).

14. Asad explains: “The noun *anid*, derived from the verb `anada, denotes one who opposes or rejects something that is true, knowing it to be true (*Lisan al-`Arab*). The element of human contrariness and stubbornness is implied in the use of the auxiliary verb *kana*, which indicates here a permanently recurring phenomenon despite its past-tense formation.”

15. (Though literally it means to subject someone to an arduous task), here it means he will be subjected to harsh punishment (Ibn Jarir).

[19] So, he be killed, how he determined!

﴿١٩﴾ فَمَتَّلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] Again, he be killed, how he determined!

﴿٢٠﴾ ثُمَّ قَتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] Then he looked.

﴿٢١﴾ ثُمَّ نَظَرَ ﴿٢١﴾

[22] Then he frowned and scowled.

﴿٢٢﴾ ثُمَّ عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] Then he turned and waxed proud.

﴿٢٣﴾ ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] And said, 'This is nothing but magic'¹⁶ handed down (from the past).

﴿٢٤﴾ فَقَالَ إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْتَرُ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] This is nothing but words of a human being.¹⁷

﴿٢٥﴾ إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ ﴿٢٥﴾

16. "The term *sibr*, which usually denotes 'sorcery' or 'magic', primarily signifies 'the turning of something from its proper [or "natural"] state of being into another state', hence, it is often applied to the fascination or enchantment caused by exceptional, 'spell-bounding' eloquence (*Taj al-'Arus*)" – Asad.

17. The following is reported as the cause of revelation of these verses:

(روي أنه) الوليد بن المغيرة اجتمع إليه نفر من قريش، وكان ذا سبيهم وقد حضر الموسم فقال لهم يا معشر قريش، إنه قد حضر هذا الموسم وإن وفود العرب ستقدم عليكم فيه وقد سبغوا بأمر صاجيكم هذا، فأجمعوا فيه رأياً واجداً، ولا تختلفوا فيكذب بعضهم بعضاً، ويرد قولكم بعضهم بعضاً؛ قالوا: فأنت يا أبا عبد شمس، فقل وأقم لنا رأياً تقول به قال بن أئتم فقولوا أسمع قالوا: تقول كاهن قال لا والله ما هو بكاهن لقد رأينا الكهان فما هو بزومة الكاهن ولا سحبه قالوا: فتقول مجنون

قال ما هو بمجنون لقد رأينا الجنون وعرفناه فما هو بخنقه ولا تخالجه ولا سوسيته قالوا: فتقول شاعر قال ما هو بشاعر لقد عرفنا الشعر كله رجزه وهزجه وقريصه ومقبوضه ومبسوطه فما هو بالشعر قالوا: فتقول ساجر قال ما هو بساجر لقد رأينا السحار وسحرهم فما هو بنفهم ولا عقدهم قالوا: فما تقول يا أبا عبد شمس؟ قال والله إن لقوله لحلاوة، وإن أصله لعذق وإن قرعته جناة وما أئتم بقائلين من هذا شيئاً إلا عرف أنه باطل وإن أقرب القول فيه لأن تقولوا ساجر جاء بقول هو سحر يفرق به بين المرء وأبيه وبين المرء وأخيه وبين المرء وعشيرته. فتفرقوا عنه بذلك فجعلوا يجلسون بسبل الناس حين قدموا الموسم لا يمر بهم أحد إلا حذروه إياه وذكروا لهم أمره. فأنزل الله تعالى في الوليد بن المغيرة وفي ذلك من قوله { ذرني ومن خلقت وحيداً وجعلت له مالا ممدوداً وتبين شهوداً ومهدت له تمهيداً ثم يطمع أن أزيد كلا إنه كان لياتينا عبيداً } - سيرة ابن هشام (١/ ٢٦٩)

It is reported that when the *Hajj* season arrived, some of the Quraysh gathered around Walid

b. al-Mughira. He was the most senior of them. He told them, “O Quraysh, the season has arrived and the Arabs will enter on you. They will hear about your man (meaning Muhammad). So, come around to one opinion about him. If you differ, you will end up contradicting each other.” They said, “O `Abd Shams, you decide about what we should say.” He said, “Rather, you suggest and I’ll hear.” They said, “We shall say he is a soothsayer.” He said, “That will not do. He is not a soothsayer. We have seen plenty of soothsayers. Neither there is any rumbling nor any murmuring.” They said, “So we will say he is mad.” He objected, “He is not mad. We have seen plenty of mad men. He neither suffers choking, nor any discomfiture, nor yet any vacillation.” They said, “Let us then say that he is a poet.” He responded, “But he is not a poet. We know all classes of poetry... (His material) does not resemble any kind of poetry.” They said, “Then let us say he is a magician.” He disagreed by saying, “He is no magician. We have experienced magicians and their magic. He neither blows nor does he tie knots.” They asked,

“Then what shall we say, O Abu `Abd Shams?” He answered, “By Allah what he says has a kind of sweetness; it is fertile; all its branches are fruitful. So, you will not be able to say anything but it will be immediately realized that it is not true. I suppose the nearest of what you can think of is to say that he is a magician who separates a father and his son, a brother from his brother, and a man and his family.”

So they dispersed and thereafter each of them assigned a path to himself, so that when the *Hajj* season arrived, no one passed by but they warned him about him (the Prophet) and explained to him about his affair. So Allah revealed about Walid b. al-Mughira saying: *Leave Me alone with him I alone created ...*

Verse 18 seems to be referring to the above incident when it said, “*So, he be killed, how he determined!*” And, verse 19, which says, “*Again, he be killed, how he determined!*”

seems to be referring to the following incident, thus, two incidents required two threats of death:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا ، أَنَّ الْوَلِيدَ بْنَ
الْمُغِيرَةَ جَاءَ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَرَأَ عَلَيْهِ
الْقُرْآنَ ، فَكَأَنَّهُ رَفَى لَهُ قَبْلَهُ ذَلِكَ أَبَا جَهْلٍ ، فَأَتَاهُ

فَقَالَ : يَا عَمُّ ، إِنَّ قَوْمَكَ يَرُونَ أَنَّ يَجْمَعُوا لَكَ مَالًا .
 قَالَ : لَمْ ؟ قَالَ : لِيُعْطُوكَ فَإِنَّكَ أَتَيْتَ مُحَمَّدًا لِنِعْرَضَ
 لِمَا قِيلَ لَهُ قَالَ : فَذَعَلِمْتُ فَرَيْشُ أَبِي مِنْ أَكْثَرِهَا مَالًا
 . قَالَ : فَثُلَّ فِيهِ قَوْلًا يَبْلُغُ قَوْمَكَ أَنَّكَ مُنْكَرٌ لَهُ أَوْ
 أَنَّكَ كَارِهِ لَهُ قَالَ : وَمَاذَا أَقُولُ فَوَاللَّهِ مَا فِيكُمْ رَجُلٌ
 أَعْلَمُ بِالشُّعَارِ مِنِّي ، وَلَا أَعْلَمُ بِرَجَزٍ وَلَا بِمَصِيدَةٍ مِنِّي
 وَلَا بِالشُّعَارِ الْجَنِيِّ وَاللَّهِ مَا يُشْبِهُ الَّذِي يَقُولُ شَبِيًّا مِنْ
 هَذَا وَوَاللَّهِ إِنَّ لِقَوْلِهِ الَّذِي يَقُولُ خَلَاوَةً ، وَإِنَّ عَلَيْهِ
 لَطَلَاوَةً ، وَإِنَّهُ لَمُتَمِّرٌ أَعْلَاهُ مُعْدِقٌ أَسْفَلُهُ ، وَإِنَّهُ لَيَعْلُو
 وَمَا يَغْلَى وَإِنَّهُ لَيَحْطِمُ مَا تَحْتَهُ قَالَ : لَا يَرْضَى عَنْكَ
 قَوْمُكَ حَتَّى تَقُولَ فِيهِ . قَالَ : فَدَعْنِي حَتَّى أَفَكِّرَ
 ، فَلَمَّا فَكَّرَ قَالَ : هَذَا سِحْرٌ يُؤْتَرُ بِأَثَرِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِهِ
 فَتَرَلْتُ { دُرِّي وَمَنْ حَلَفْتُ وَحِيدًا } . - المستدرک -
 هَذَا حَدِيثٌ صَحِيحٌ الْإِسْنَادِ عَلَى شَرْطِ الْبُخَارِيِّ وَمَمْ
 يُخْرِجَاهُ . (وتعليق الذهبي في التلخيص : على شرط
 البخاري)

Ibn `Abbas reported that Walid b. al-Mughira visited the Prophet. He recited some Qur`ān to him. (Or he heard him recite the Qur`ān in the Grand Mosque). It seems it struck chord with him to soften him. Abu Jahl came to know about it. He went up to him and said, “Uncle. Your people intend to gather together some money for you.” When he asked why, he said, “In order to gift you. It seems you went to Muhammad for financial gains.” He retorted, “The Quraysh know that I am the richest of them.” Abu Jahl said, “Say something about him so that your people know that you reject him.” He

answered, “What can I say? By God there is none among you who knows poetry and its various genre’s better than me – nor yet it is the poetry of the Jinn. By Allah, what he says has no resemblance with these. By Allah, what he says has a sweetness, it is covered by brightness, its upper is fruitful while its bottom is watery; and that it will overcome and will not be overcome; and that it will crush what is below it.” Abu Jahl said, “Your people will not be satisfied with you until you can criticize him.” He replied, “Wait, until I think about it.” Then, having done some thinking he said, “This is nothing but magic handed down; being handed down by others.” So, it was revealed, “Leave Me alone with him I alone created; and appointed for him extensive wealth; and sons, present...”

Other reports suggest that he had gone to Abu Bakr and not to the Prophet (Ibn Jarir, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

To explain further, two incidents took place where Walid b. al-Mughira acted arrogantly against the Prophetic revelation, apart from being dishonest to himself. This was

[26] I shall roast him¹⁸ in Saqar.¹⁹

سَأُصْلِيهِ سَقَرَ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] And what will make you know what is Saqar?

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سَقَرٌ ﴿٢٧﴾

[28] It spares not, nor leaves alone.

لَا تَبْقِي وَلَا تَذَرُ ﴿٢٨﴾

[29] Scorching the skin.

لَوَّاحَةٌ لِلْبَشَرِ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] Over it are nineteen.²⁰

عَلَيْهَا تِسْعَةَ عَشَرَ ﴿٣٠﴾

perhaps the reason why it was said twice, “*He be killed ..*” He did great damage to the cause of Islam. Its spread among the Bedouin was seriously impaired, which explains why Allah used strong words in reference to him viz. “*He be killed ..*” (Au.)

18. Or, “I shall take him (to Saqar).”

19. Saqar is one of the names of Hell.

20. It could be that these 19 are the angels in charge, with others under their command (Zamakhshari, Razi).

In reference to the figure 19, although not in the context, we have a report:

عن جابر بن عبد الله قال قال ناس من اليهود لأناسي من أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: هل يعلم نبيكم كم عدد خزنة جهنم؟ قالوا لا ندري حتى نسأل نبينا، فجاء رجل إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال يا محمد غلب أصحابك اليوم، قال: وما غلبوا؟ قال سألتهم يهود هل يعلم نبيكم كم عدد خزنة جهنم، قال: فما قالوا؟ قال قالوا لا ندري حتى نسأل نبينا، قال: أئغلب قوم سئلوا

عما لا يعلمون فقالوا: لا تعلم حتى نسأل نبينا، لكنهم قد سألوا نبيهم فقالوا أرنا الله جهنم، علي بأعداء الله إني سألتهم عن خزنة الجنة وهي الدرهمك، فلما جاؤوا قالوا يا أبا القاسم كم عدد خزنة جهنم؟ قال: هكذا، وهكذا في مرة عشرة وفي مرة تسعة، قالوا نعم، قال لهم النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ما خزنة الجنة؟ قال فسكنوا هنيئة ثم قالوا أخبيرة يا أبا القاسم؟ فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: الخبز من الدرهمك. قال أبو عيسى: هذا حديث إنما تعرفه من هذا الوجه من حديث مجالد.

Some Jews said to the Companions of the Prophet: “Does your Prophet know the number of keepers of Hell?” They said, “We have no idea until we ask him.” So, a man went up to the Prophet and said, “Muhammad. Today your Companions were overcome.” He asked, “In what manner?” He said, “The Jews asked them whether their Prophet knew the number of keepers of Hell.” He asked, “And how did they answer?” He said they did not know until they ask their

Prophet. The Prophet remarked, “Are a people overcome when they are asked a thing they do not know and so they say, ‘We have no idea and shall ask our Prophet?’ In fact, the others are a people who asked their Prophet that he show them God, openly. (In any case) bring me those enemies of Allah. I will ask them about the constituent of the surface of Paradise, which, in any case, is made up of fine flour powder.”

When they came they said, “O Abu al-Qasim, what is the number of keepers of Paradise?” He answered them by showing them all the fingers of the two hands, and then once again, all of them, concealing one. They said, “You are right.” The Prophet asked them, “What is the constituent of the surface of Paradise?” They were quiet for a while and then said, “Bread, O Abu al-Qasim.” He said, “Bread from fine flour-powder” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

The *hadith* was preserved by Tirmidhi (who declared it weak), Ahmad, Bazzar, but is not too weak (Sami).

Although the following would not receive the approval of the *Salaf*, who did not look for the abstract when the concrete raised no problems for them, which, indeed, afforded them

concrete ideas, we reproduce here a note from Razi through Asad, to give our readers an idea of how much of Razi (or even Alusi) is not represented in this work of humbler – though practical – objectives. Asad skillfully translates what this writer could not do: “Whereas most of the classical commentators are of the opinion that the ‘nineteen’ are the angels that act as keepers or guardians of hell, Razi advances the view that we may have here a reference to the physical, intellectual and emotional powers within man himself; powers which raise man potentially far above any other creature, but which, if used wrongly, bring about a deterioration of his whole personality, and, hence, intense suffering in the life to come. According to Razi, the philosophers (*ashab al-kalam*) identify these powers or faculties with, firstly, the seven organic functions of the animal – and therefore also human – body (gravitation, cohesion, repulsion of noxious foreign matter, absorption of beneficial external matter, assimilation of nutrients, growth, and reproduction); secondly, the five ‘external’ or physical senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste); thirdly, the five ‘internal’ or intellectual senses, defined by Ibn Sina – on whom Razi probably relies – as (1) perception of

isolated sense-images, (2) conscious apperception of ideas, (3) memory of sense-images, (4) memory of conscious apperceptions, and (5) the ability to correlate sense-images, and higher apperceptions; and lastly, the emotions of 'internal' sense-categories – thus bringing the total of the powers and faculties which preside over man's spiritual fate to nineteen. In their aggregate, it is these powers that confer upon man the ability to think conceptually, and place him, in this respect, even above the angels."

We may add the following: Sometime back a person called Rashad *Khalifah* (perhaps of Swiss origin, though this is not certain) presented a computer-based hypothesis that number 19 is mysteriously related to the Qur'an. He pointed out that there are 19 letters in the *basmalah*, and, although a difficult number to divide any other number roundly, the number of chapters of the Qur'an, i.e., 114, is divisible by 19, yielding an exact figure of 6. In a 300-page book, full of computer prints and charts, he presented dozens of examples of how 19 could be used to roundly divide the total number of letters, words, verses and other divisions of the Qur'an. For example, since ancient times, Arabic alphabets have been grouped in the following manner:

أبجد / هوز / حطي / كلمن / سغفص / قرشت /
ثخذ / ضظغ

And each letter is allotted a specific number; such as, *alif* = 1, *baa* = 2, *jeem* = 3, *daal* = 4, *haa* = 5, *waaw* = 6, *zaa* = 7, *haa* = 8, *taa* = 9, *yaa* = 10, *kaaf* = 20, *laam* = 30, *meem* = 40, *noon* = 50, *seen* = 60, *'ayn* = 70, *faa* = 80, *saad* = 90, *faa* = 100, *raa* = 200, *sheen* = 300, *taa* = 400, *thaa* = 500, *khaa* = 600, *dhaal* = 700, *daa* = 800, *zaa* = 900 and *ghayn* = 1000.

(Following the above system, the total gematric value of *basmalah* is 786. That is why, in olden times people placed 786 at the top of their letters to each other, to avoid writing the *basmalah* that could be desecrated).

Now, the Qur'an has 114 chapters. This figure is divisible by 19, yielding a round figure of 6. The *basmalah* has 19 letters. Working out the gematric value of *Surah al-Fatihah* (including the *basmalah* as the first *ayah*) gives a figure of 10143. The total number of verses is 7. The total of seven numbers (1+2+3+4+5+6+7) is 28. The total number of letters in the *Surah* is 139. Summing up, 7 + 28 + 139 + 10143, yields the figure 10317. Now, this 10317, a very odd number, is yet roundly divisible by 19 yielding the round number 543.

His book sold like hot cakes until it was discovered that he had perhaps done some manipulations in determining the numbers before dividing them with the number 19, to obtain round figures. It was also discovered that he was perhaps a Bohri (or Ismaili?), with whom the number 19 has some sort of religious significance. It is said that he opened his own Church in the USA, announced his messengership, and some time later was found murdered.

Nonetheless, it may be of interest to note that the number nineteen is in some ways a curious figure. E.g., it is a prime number (i.e., it cannot be divided by any number except itself). It is composed of the first digit (1) and last digit (9). The sum of 91 and 101 is 19. If you subtract the second power of 9 from the second power of 10, you get 19. ($10^2 = 100$, and $9^2 = 81$; and $100 - 81 = 19$). Its compliment is 81. Now, when 1 is divided by 81, it yields the following result ($1/81 = 0.01234567890, 1234567890, 1234567890, ..$ you can go on endlessly with the repetition of 1234567890). Another example:

Take any two-digit number whose total is 100 (but where no digit carries a 0) and add up the digits. They will yield the number 19. E.g. $42 + 58 = 100$ and adding up $4 + 2 + 5 + 8$ gives us the figure 19. Or, $55 + 45 = 100$; and $5 + 5 + 4 + 5 = 19$.

Many examples of strangeness can be quoted. Some examples have been quoted from biology also. For example, proteins in the human body are made up of 20 amino acids. No more, no less. Now, 19 of them are left-handed, whereas one is neither left-handed nor right-handed. Chemists on the other hand point out that the number 19 appears significantly in the periodic table. (Details are complicated to explain without a chart).

It may also be pointed out that for some religious denominations, number 19 holds a special value, and hence, it is possible that with number 19 in the mind, people have searched for strange occurrences, and found them. Perhaps, if another figure is taken and its strange occurrences searched out, similar remarkable results would be discovered (Au.).

[31] *And, We have not appointed keepers of the Fire except angels. And We have not appointed their numbers but a trial for the unbelievers;²¹ so that those who were given the Book may feel convinced,²² and those that have believed, may experience increase in faith;²³ and so that those that were given the Book as well as the believers, may not fall in doubt; and in order that those in whose heart is a sickness²⁴ and the unbelievers, may ask, 'What did Allah mean by such an illustration?' That is how Allah leads astray whom He will and guide whom He will. And no one knows the forces of your Lord save He.²⁵ And it²⁶ is not but a reminder to mankind.*

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ إِلَّا مَلَائِكَةً
وَمَا جَعَلْنَا عِدَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
لِيَسْتَيْقِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَيَزِدَّادَ
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِيمَانًا وَلَا يَرْتَابَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
الْكِتَابَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَلِيَقُولَ الَّذِينَ فِي
قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ
بِهَذَا مَثَلًا كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَن يَشَاءُ
وَيَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ
رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَمَا هِيَ إِلَّا ذِكْرَى لِلْبَشَرِ
﴿٣١﴾

[32] *Nay! By the moon.*

كَلَّا وَالْقَمَرَ ﴿٣٢﴾

[33] *And by the night as it retreats.*

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا أَدْبَرَ ﴿٣٣﴾

21. When Abu Jahl heard of this verse he spoke to the Quraysh, "Your companion says that there are 19 keepers of Hell. Now, we are a big group. Can ten of us not handle an angel each?" (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Razi, Ibn Kathir).

22. Ibn `Abbas and others said that it is stated in the Bible also that Hell has nineteen keepers (Ibn Jarir).

23. When the believers hear about the number of keepers being 19 in the revelation, they believe therein without questioning. This leads to increase in their faith (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari).

24. That is, the sickness of hypocrisy (Ibn Jarir). They may not have been hypocrites per se, that is, the kind that appeared later in Madinah, but some of the Makkans could have borne doubts about the Prophet and his mission, which has been termed here as "sickness" (Zamakhshari, Razi).

25. With reference to the forces of Allah, that none has the knowledge of but He, we have the Night Journey report in Bukhari and Muslim a part of which says,

يُصَلِّي فِيهِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ ، إِذَا خَرَجُوا لَمْ
يَعُودُوا إِلَيْهِ آخِرَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ

[34] And by the morning as it brightens.²⁷

وَالصُّبْحِ إِذَا أَسْفَرَ ﴿٣٤﴾

“Thereat (i.e. at *Bayt al-Ma`mur*) seventy thousand angels offer prayers every day. After they leave they will never be able to come back again.”

Another report preserved by Ahmad and Tirmidhi, although the latter declared it weak, says,

عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- « إِنِّي أَرَى مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ وَأَسْمَعُ مَا لَا تَسْمَعُونَ أَطَّتِ السَّمَاءُ وَحُقَّ لَهَا أَنْ تَنْطَطَّ مَا فِيهَا مَوْضِعُ أَرْبَعِ أَصَابِعٍ إِلَّا وَمَلَكٌ وَاضِعٌ جَبْهَتَهُ سَاجِدًا لِلَّهِ لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ مَا أَعْلَمُ لَصَحَحْتُمْ قَلِيلًا وَلَبَكَيْتُمْ كَثِيرًا وَمَا تَلَدَّذْتُمْ بِالتَّسَاءِ عَلَى الْفُرْشِ وَخَرَجْتُمْ إِلَى الصُّعَدَاتِ بِجَأْرُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ »

On the authority of Abu Dharr, the Prophet said, “I see what you do not see, and hear what you do not hear. The heaven is creaking, and it is right of it that it should creak. There is not a space of four fingers but there is an angel with his forehead on the ground, in prostration before Allah. If you knew what I know, you would have laughed less and cried more, and you would not have laid with women in your beds, but rather you would go out into the open

spaces, supplicating to Allah” (Ibn Kathir).

Albani trusted the tradition as trustworthy (Au.).

Thanwi points out that there are other reports that tell us something about the number of angels. One of them preserved by Muslim says,

عن عبد الله، قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ”يؤتى بجهنم يومئذ لها سبعون ألف زمام. مع كل زمام سبعون ألف ملك يجرونها

The Prophet said, “Hell will be brought forth with seventy thousand reins, each rein pulled by seventy thousand angels.”

26. Qatadah and Mujahid have said that by the pronoun “it” the allusion is to *Saqar* of verse 34 (Ibn Jarir), being one of the levels of Hell (Razi).

“*Hiya*” is feminine (rendered here as “it”), that is applicable to *Saqar* which is also feminine.

27. Ibn `Ashur comments that the allusion by the three verses above is to the gradual rise of the light of Islam and ultimate fading away of the *jahiliyyah*.

[35] It²⁸ is one of the mighty ones.²⁹

إِنَّهَا لِأَحَدَى الْكُبَرِ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] A warning to mankind.

نَذِيرًا لِلْبَشَرِ ﴿٣٦﴾

[37] To whosoever of you choosing to press forward or lag behind.

لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَتَقَدَّمَ أَوْ يَتَأَخَّرَ

﴿٣٧﴾

Sayyid's comment is worth noting:

“The scenes of the moon, of the night when it begins to retreat, and the morning when it brightens up, are scenes that by themselves whisper meanings. They speak several things directly to the human heart; pouring down many secret thoughts into the depth of it; giving rise to several feelings within it. The Qur'an alludes to the secret whisperings and deep feelings of the hearts that it addresses – quite aware of what lies there, deep in its ravines.

Seldom it is that a heart should be conscious of the moon when it appears, when it travels in the azure, and when it disappears ... but it should not been affected at all by the scenes, by what they whisper into the hearts, while a little time spent observing the moon can give the feeling of one's heart being bathed by its soothing shine.

Seldom it is that a heart should be conscious of the departing hours of the night, at the quiet hours when the full brightness of the dawn is still

away, when the whole of existence opens the eyes to the cures (of the heart), but the heart should not be affected by any feeling at the scene and fail to receive at its depth, flamboyant thoughts and ideas.

Seldom it is that a heart should be conscious of the morning when the brightness has spread, without perceiving a radiance and the feeling of movement from a state to state, preparing him (at the spiritual level) for the glittering blaze that is about to spread in the outside world, as it first enters into the heart.

The Lord who created the human heart is aware of the profound effects that these sceneries have on it, He touches upon it directly, alluding to what thoughts the shining moon, the retreating night, the brightness of the dawn, have on it – bringing it closer to realities of life and existence, and causing awareness of the truths of Revelation.”

28. Once again, the pronoun is for *Saqar* (Ibn Jarir from the ancients).

[38] Every soul, for what it has earned, is a hostage.³⁰

﴿٣٨﴾ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ

[39] Except the companions of the right hand.³¹

﴿٣٩﴾ إِلَّا أَصْحَابَ الْيَمِينِ

[40] In gardens, inquiring each other.

﴿٤٠﴾ فِي جَنَّاتٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ

[41] About the criminals.

﴿٤١﴾ عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

[42] What thrust you into Saqar?

﴿٤٢﴾ مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ

[43] They will say, 'We were not of those who Prayed.

﴿٤٣﴾ قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ

[44] And were not of those who fed the poor.

﴿٤٤﴾ وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمِ الْمَسْكِينِ

[45] But we would indulge along with those who indulged.³²

﴿٤٥﴾ وَكُنَّا نَحْوُضُ مَعَ الْخَائِضِينَ

[46] And would deny the Day of Reckoning.

﴿٤٦﴾ وَكُنَّا نَكْذِبُ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ

29. That is, *Saqar* is one of the mighty ones, others being *Sa`eer*, *Ja-beem*, *Hutamah*, etc. (Razi).

30. That is, everyone is hostage to his or her deeds. But since the Day of Reckoning will not be the time to pay back with good deeds, the person concerned will have to move on to Hellfire (Au.).

31. That is, except for those of the right hand, who will not be subjected to reckoning. And who are the ones on the right side? `Ali is reported to have said that the allusion is to children (Ibn Jarir).

Hakim judged Ali's report as trustworthy (Shawkani).

But the allusion could be to those who were on the right side of Adam when the Prophet visited him in the heaven, or those who will be given their Records in their right hands, which of course does not contradict other opinions (Alusi).

Asad adds: “.. an expression based on the tropical significance of yamin as ‘righteous’, and, consequently, ‘blessedness.’”

32. That is, indulged in such things as prohibited by Allah (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari); or indulged in the Prophet's person discussing how he could be condemned and his efforts thwarted (Qurtubi).

[47] Until the Certainty came to us.³³

حَتَّىٰ أَتَانَا الْيَقِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

[48] So, the intercession of the intercessors shall profit them not.³⁴

فَمَا تَنْفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةُ الشَّافِعِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

[49] So, what is the matter with them that they turn away from the admonition?

فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذْكَرَةِ مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

[50] As if they are affrighted donkeys.

كَأَنَّهُمْ خُمُرٌ مُّسْتَنْفِرَةٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

33. That is, death, which is a certainty.

34. This confirms the validity of intercession (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari).

The usage of the words, “intercession of the intercessors” gives rise to the question as to who are the intercessors. In this writer’s knowledge, no commentator dealt with this question. I decided therefore to recount the intercessors, however, in connection with the Hereafter alone. *Ahadith* explain that the believers, martyrs, Prophets, angels, and Allah Himself will intercede to bring out some of those condemned to Fire. The following *hadith* mentions a few classes of intercessors, while also touching upon the overarching mercy of Allah. It is from Muslim. It says:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ أَنَّ نَاسًا فِي زَمَنِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَلْ تَرَى رَبَّنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - « نَعَمْ ». قَالَ « هَلْ تُضَارُّونَ فِي رُؤْيَاكُمْ

السَّمْسِ بِالظَّهْرِ صَحْوًا لَيْسَ مَعَهَا سَحَابٌ وَهَلْ تُضَارُّونَ فِي رُؤْيَا الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةً الْبَدْرِ صَحْوًا لَيْسَ فِيهَا سَحَابٌ ». قَالُوا لَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. قَالَ « مَا تُضَارُّونَ فِي رُؤْيَا اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَّا كَمَا تُضَارُّونَ فِي رُؤْيَا أَحَدِيهَا إِذَا كَانَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَذَّنَ مُؤَدِّنٌ لِيَتَّبِعَ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ. فَلَا يَبْقَى أَحَدٌ كَانَ يَعْبُدُ غَيْرَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَهُ مِنَ الْأَصْنَامِ وَالْأَنْصَابِ إِلَّا يَتَسَاقَطُونَ فِي النَّارِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا لَمْ يَبْقَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَرٍّ وَفَاجِرٍ وَعَبَّرَ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ فَيُدْعَى الْيَهُودُ فَيَقَالُ لَهُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ قَالُوا كُنَّا نَعْبُدُ عَزِيرَ ابْنِ اللَّهِ. فَيَقَالُ كَذَّبْتُمْ مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ صَاحِبَةٍ وَلَا وَلَدٍ فَمَاذَا تَبْعُونَ قَالُوا عَطِشْنَا يَا رَبَّنَا فَاسْقِنَا. فَيُسْأَلُ إِلَيْهِمْ أَلَا تَرُدُونَ فَيُحْشَرُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ كَأَنَّهَا سَرَابٌ يَحْطِمُ بَعْضُهَا بَعْضًا فَيَتَسَاقَطُونَ فِي النَّارِ. ثُمَّ يُدْعَى النَّصَارَى فَيَقَالُ لَهُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ قَالُوا كُنَّا نَعْبُدُ الْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ اللَّهِ. فَيَقَالُ لَهُمْ كَذَّبْتُمْ. مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ صَاحِبَةٍ وَلَا وَلَدٍ. فَيَقَالُ لَهُمْ مَاذَا تَبْعُونَ فَيَقُولُونَ عَطِشْنَا يَا رَبَّنَا فَاسْقِنَا. - قَالَ - فَيُسْأَلُ إِلَيْهِمْ أَلَا تَرُدُونَ فَيُحْشَرُونَ إِلَى جَهَنَّمَ كَأَنَّهَا سَرَابٌ يَحْطِمُ بَعْضُهَا بَعْضًا فَيَتَسَاقَطُونَ فِي النَّارِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا لَمْ يَبْقَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى مِنْ بَرٍّ وَفَاجِرٍ أَنَاهُمْ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى فِي أَدْنَى صُورَةٍ مِنَ الَّتِي رَأَوْهُ فِيهَا.

قَالَ فَمَا تَنْتَظِرُونَ تَتَّبِعُ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ. قَالُوا يَا رَبَّنَا فَارْقِنَا النَّاسَ فِي الدُّنْيَا أَفْقَرٌ مَا كُنَّا إِلَيْهِمْ وَمَنْ

شَفَعَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَشَفَعَ النَّبِيُّونَ وَشَفَعَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَلَمْ يَبْقَ إِلَّا أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ فَيُخْبِضُ قَبْضَةً مِنَ النَّارِ فَيُخْرِجُ مِنْهَا قَوْمًا لَمْ يَعْمَلُوا خَيْرًا قَطُّ قَدْ عَادُوا حَمًا فَيُلْقِيهِمْ فِي نَهْرٍ فِي أَقْوَاهِ الْجَنَّةِ يُقَالُ لَهُ نَهْرُ الْحَيَاةِ فَيُخْرِجُونَ كَمَا تَخْرُجُ الْحَيْةُ فِي حِمِيلِ السَّبِيلِ أَلَا تَرَوْنَهَا تَكُونُ إِلَى الْحَجَرِ أَوْ إِلَى الشَّجَرِ مَا يَكُونُ إِلَى الشَّمْسِ أَصْيْفُرٌ وَأَخْضُرٌ وَمَا يَكُونُ مِنْهَا إِلَى الظِّلِّ يَكُونُ أَبْيَضَ». فَقَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَأَنَّكَ كُنْتَ تَرَعَى بِالْبَدَايَةِ قَالَ « فَيُخْرِجُونَ كَاللُّؤْلُؤِ فِي رِقَابِهِمُ الْخَوَاتِمَ يَعْرِفُهُمْ أَهْلُ الْجَنَّةِ هَوْلًا وَعَتَاءً اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ أَدْخَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ الْجَنَّةَ يَغَيِّرُ عَمَلَ عَمَلِهِ وَلَا خَيْرَ قَدَمُوهُ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ فَمَا رَأَيْتُمُوهُ فَهُوَ لَكُمْ.

فَيَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَعْطَيْتَنَا مَا لَمْ نَعْطِ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ. فَيَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي أَفْضَلُ مِنْ هَذَا فَيَقُولُونَ يَا رَبَّنَا أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ هَذَا. فَيَقُولُ رِضَائِي فَلَا أَسْحَطُ عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْدَهُ أَبَدًا». (صحيح مسلم)

On the authority of Abu Sa' id al-Khudri, the Prophet was asked, "Messenger of Allah, shall we be able to see our Lord on the Day of Judgment?" He answered, "Very much so." Then he added, "Do you doubt sighting the sun at noon in a clear sky? Do you doubt seeing the full moon in a cloudless sky?" They said no. He said, "You will not doubt seeing Allah on the Day of Judgment any more than you doubt seeing one of the two (mentioned above).

A caller will call on the Day of Judgment, 'Let every people follow that which they were wor-

نُصَاحِبُهُمْ. فَيَقُولُ أَنَا رَبُّكُمْ. فَيَقُولُونَ نَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْكَ لَا نُشْرِكُ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا - مَرَّتَيْنِ أَوْ ثَلَاثًا - حَتَّىٰ إِنَّا بَعْضَهُمْ لَيَكَاذُ أَنْ يَتَّقِلَب. فَيَقُولُ هَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُ آيَةٌ فَتَعْرِفُونَهُ بِهَا فَيَقُولُونَ نَعَمْ. فَيُكْشَفُ عَنْ سَاقٍ فَلَا يَبْقَىٰ مَنْ كَانَ يَسْجُدُ لِلَّهِ مِنْ تَلْقَاءِ نَفْسِهِ إِلَّا أَدْرَأَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِالسُّجُودِ وَلَا يَبْقَىٰ مَنْ كَانَ يَسْجُدُ اتِّقَاءً وَرِيَاءً إِلَّا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ ظَهْرَهُ طَبَقَةً وَاحِدَةً كُلَّمَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَسْجُدَ خَرَّ عَلَىٰ قَعَاهُ. ثُمَّ يَرْفَعُونَ رُءُوسَهُمْ وَقَدْ تَحَوَّلَ فِي صُورَتِهِ الَّتِي رَأَوْهُ فِيهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمْ. فَيَقُولُونَ أَنْتَ رَبَّنَا. ثُمَّ يُضْرَبُ الْحِيسْرُ عَلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ وَيَحُلُّ الشَّفَاعَةَ وَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُمَّ سَلِّمْ سَلِّمْ». قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا الْحِيسْرُ قَالَ « دَخَضٌ مَرَّةً. فِيهِ خَطَاطِيفٌ وَكَلَالِيْبٌ وَحَسَنٌ تَكُونُ يَبْجِدُ فِيهَا شَوْكِيَّةٌ يُقَالُ لَهَا السَّعْدَانُ فَيَمُرُّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ كَطَرْفِ الْعَيْنِ وَكَالْبَرْقِ وَكَالرِّيحِ وَكَالطَّيْرِ وَكَالْجَاوِيدِ وَالْحَيْلِ وَالرِّكَابِ فَتَاج مُسَلَّمٌ وَمُخَدَّوْشٌ مُرْسَلٌ وَمَكْدُوسٌ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ. حَتَّىٰ إِذَا خَلَصَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ مِنَ النَّارِ قَوْلَ الَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ بِأَشَدَّ مُنَاشِدَةً لِلَّهِ فِي اسْتِصْوَاءِ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِلَّهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لِإِحْوَانِهِمُ الَّذِينَ فِي النَّارِ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا كَانُوا يَصُومُونَ مَعَنَا وَيُصَلُّونَ وَيُحْجُونَ. فَيَقَالُ لَهُمْ أَخْرَجُوا مِنْ عَرْشَتِهِمْ. فَتُحَرَّمُ صُورُهُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ فَيُخْرِجُونَ خَلْقًا كَثِيرًا قَدْ أَخَذَتِ النَّارُ إِلَىٰ نِصْفِ سَاقِيهِ وَإِلَىٰ رِجْلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا مَا بَقِيَ فِيهَا أَحَدٌ مِمَّنْ أَمَرْتَنَا بِهِ. فَيَقُولُ ارْجِعُوا فَمَنْ وَجَدْتُمْ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالَ دِينَارٍ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَأَخْرِجُوهُ. فَيُخْرِجُونَ خَلْقًا كَثِيرًا ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا لَمْ نَذَرْ فِيهَا أَحَدًا مِمَّنْ أَمَرْتَنَا. ثُمَّ يَقُولُ ارْجِعُوا فَمَنْ وَجَدْتُمْ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالَ نِصْفِ دِينَارٍ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَأَخْرِجُوهُ. فَيُخْرِجُونَ خَلْقًا كَثِيرًا ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا لَمْ نَذَرْ فِيهَا مِمَّنْ أَمَرْتَنَا أَحَدًا. ثُمَّ يَقُولُ ارْجِعُوا فَمَنْ وَجَدْتُمْ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَأَخْرِجُوهُ. فَيُخْرِجُونَ خَلْقًا كَثِيرًا ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا لَمْ نَذَرْ فِيهَا خَيْرًا». وَكَانَ أَبُو سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيُّ يَقُولُ إِنَّ لَمْ تُصَدِّقُونِي بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ فَاقْرَأُوا إِنَّ شَيْئَكُمْ (إِنَّ) اللَّهُ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإِنْ تَكُ حَسَنَةً يُضَاعَفْهَا وَيُوْتِ مِنْ لَدُنْهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا) « فَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

shipping' No one will be left of those who worshipped other than Allah of the worshippers of idols and graven images but they would fall upon each other into the Fire (following their deities leading them), until none is left but those who worshipped Allah alone comprising of the pious and the impious. The People of the Book will be left too.

The Jews will be asked, 'Who is it that you were worshipping?' They will reply, 'We were worshipping 'Uzayr, the son of God.' They will be told, 'You have lied. Allah did not take a spouse, nor a son. In any case, what is it that you want now?' They will say, 'We are thirsty Our lord. Give us a drink.' They will be pointed (to a drink and told), will you not go to that source of drink?' They will be gathered together near a Fire that will appear as a mirage, waves upon waves. They will fall into the Fire one upon another.

Then the Christians will be called and asked, 'Who is it that you were worshipping?' They will reply, 'We were worshipping Jesus Christ, the son of God.' They will be told, 'You have lied. Allah did not take a spouse, nor a

son. In any case, what is it that you want now?' They will say, 'We are thirsty our Lord. Give us a drink.' They will be pointed (to a drink and told), will you not go to that source of drink?' They will be gathered together near a Fire that will appear as a mirage, waves upon waves. They will fall into the Fire one upon another.

When none is left but those who had been worshipping Allah alone, the pious and the impious, the Lord of the worlds, the Blessed, the Exalted, will appear in a form other than the form in which they had known Him. He will ask, 'What are you waiting for? Let every nation follow what it worshipped.' They will reply, 'Our Lord. We parted company with those in the world at a time we needed their company most, yet never took their company.' He will say, 'I am your Lord.' They will answer, 'Allah's refuge from you. We shall not associate aught with Allah' – twice or thrice, until some of them would be close to turning back. He will ask, 'Is there a sign between you and Him by which you could recognize Him?' They will answer, 'Yes.' At that point the shank will be bared. Then none will

remain who had prostrated himself to Allah by his free will, but will be allowed prostration; and none will remain who prostrated to show off, or in hypocrisy, but Allah will transform his back into a single plate. Every time he wishes to prostrate, he would fall backward. Then they will raise their heads. In the meanwhile, He would have changed to the form in which they saw Him the first time and will say, 'I am your Lord.' They will say, 'Yes, You are our Lord.'

Then the Bridge will be laid on Jahannum, intercession will be allowed, and people will say, 'O Allah, save (us), save (us).' The Companions asked, 'Messenger of Allah, what is the Bridge?' He replied, 'A slippery (thing) on which are spikes, snatchers, pincers, and tough thorny thistle (plant) of the type that grows in Najd known there as Sa`dan. The believers will cross it in the blink of an eye, like lightning, like the wind, like the birds, like fast horses, like the mounted ones. Thus, (there would be the) escapee unhurt, the spiked but who crossed, and the one pushed into the Fire of Jahannum.'

When the believers have escaped the Fire, then, by Him in whose hands is my life, none of you will be less than any other believer in seeking to release their brothers from the Fire. They will say, 'O our Lord. They used to fast with us, offer Prayers, and perform *Hajj!*' They will be told, 'Take out those you know.' Their faces will be prohibited to the Fire, so they will remove many of such people whom the Fire would have eaten up to half of their calves, or their knees. They will say, 'O Lord, none is left as described by You.' He will say, 'Return and bring out any one with any good of the weight of a Dinar in his heart.' So they will remove a huge number of creation and say, 'O Lord, we have left none there whom You described us.' He will say, 'Return and whomsoever you find who has an atom-weight of good in him – remove him.' So they will remove a lot of creation and say, 'Our Lord, we have left none who had any good in him.'

At this point Abu Sa`id al-Khudri used to say, 'Read if you feel like, Allah's words (4: 40), "*Surely, Allah does not wrong (anyone) even so much as by an atom. Rather, if there were to be a good (deed) He*

shall double it up and shall bestow from Himself a great reward.”

Allah will say, ‘Angels, prophets and believers have interceded, and none is left but the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.’ Then He will scoop out a handful and bring out a people who never did any good, ever. They would have become charcoals. He will dip them in the springs at the entrances to Paradise, called the Spring of Life. They will start growing like the grain grows in the passages of the floods; you might have seen them by the side of a stone or a tree, that which faces the sun yellowish green, while that which is in the shade is whitish.’ (They remarked, ‘Messenger of Allah, as if you were brought up in the deserts’). He continued, ‘So, they will emerge as if they are pearls, with rings in their necks. The dwellers of Paradise will know them as Allah’s freed ones whom Allah admitted into Paradise without they ever attempting any virtue, nor sending forward any good.’

He will tell them, ‘Enter Paradise, and whatever you can see there, is yours.’ They will say, ‘Our Lord. You have given us what You have not given anyone else

in the worlds.’ He will say, ‘I have for you something better than this.’ They will ask, ‘Our Lord, what can be better than this?’ He will answer, ‘My rida (approval). I shall never be angry with you anytime again.’

Our Prophet will enjoy the Great Intercession (see *Surah al-Isra*’ note 133 for the concerned *hadith*). Here are two *ahadith* in reference to our Prophet’s intercession.

عَنْ .. أَنَسًا - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - يَقُولُ « إِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ سُفِّعَتْ ، فَمُلَّتْ يَا رَبِّ أَدْخِلِ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ حَرْدَلَةٌ . فَيَدْخُلُونَ ، ثُمَّ أَقُولُ أَدْخِلِ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ أَذَى شَيْءٍ » . (البخاري)

Anas says he heard the Prophet say, “I shall intercede and say, ‘My Lord. Admit into Paradise any one who has a grain of (of faith).’ So, they will be admitted. Then I will say, ‘(My Lord). Admit into Paradise any one who has the littlest (of faith) in his heart” (Bukhari).

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - شَفَاعَتِي لِأَهْلِ الْكِبَائِرِ مِنْ أُمَّتِي (صحيح - سنن الترمذی)

Anas reported the Prophet as having said, “My intercession will be for those who committed major sins.”

Here is a *hadith* pertaining to Ibrahim's intercession (peace upon him):

عَنْ حَدِيثَةٍ ، عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، قَالَ :
يَقُولُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ : يَا رَبَّاهُ ، فَيَقُولُ الرَّبُّ
جَلَّ وَعَلَا : يَا لَبَّيْكَاهُ ، فَيَقُولُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ : يَا رَبَّ
حَرَّقْتَ بَنِيَّ ، فَيَقُولُ : أَخْرَجُوا مِنَ النَّارِ مَنْ كَانَ فِي
قَلْبِهِ ذَرَّةٌ أَوْ شَعِيرَةٌ مِنْ إِيْمَانٍ . (صحيح ابن حبان)

Hudhayfa reports the Prophet, "Ibrahim (*asws*) will say on the Day of Judgment, 'My Lord.' The Lord the Most High will answer, 'Here I am.' Ibrahim will say, 'My Lord. You have burned my progeny.' He will order, 'Bring out of the Fire every one who has the littlest of faith in his heart.'"

Martyrs will also intercede:

المقدم بن معدي كرب - رضي الله عنه - أن رسول
الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - قال : « لِلشَّهِيدِ عِنْدَ
اللَّهِ سِتُّ خِصَالٍ : يَعْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَهُ فِي أَوَّلِ دُقُقَةٍ ، وَيُرَى
مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ ، وَيُجَاوِزُ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ ، وَيَأْمَنُ
مِنَ الْفِرْعِ الْأَكْبَرِ وَيُوضَعُ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ تَاجُ الْوَقَارِ ،
الْيَاقُوتَةُ مِنْهُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا ، وَيُزَوِّجُ ثِنْتَيْنِ
وَسَبْعِينَ زَوْجَةً مِنَ الْحُورِ الْعِينِ ، وَيُشَقَّقُ فِي سَبْعِينَ
مِنَ أَقْرَابِهِ . » أَخْرَجَهُ التِّرْمِذِيُّ . [إسناده صحيح]

Miqdam b. Ma`di Karab (ra) reported the Prophet as having said, "The martyr enjoys six advantages: Allah forgives him in the very first instance (of martyrdom); he is shown his place in Paradise and is rescued from punishment in the grave; he will

be in peace at the time of the Great Terror (when the Trumpet is blown); a crown of Reverence will be placed on his head, whose pearl will be better than the world and what it contains; he will be paired with seventy wide, black eyed spouses; and he will intercede for seventy of his kinsfolk."

Renowned individuals will also be allowed to intercede. We have a *hadith* in this connection. The Prophet said,

« يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ بِشَفَاعَةِ رَجُلٍ مِنْ أُمَّتِي أَكْثَرَ مِنْ
بَنِي تَمِيمٍ . » . قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ سِوَاكَ قَالَ « سِوَايَ
» . قَالَ أَبُو عِيْسَى (الترمذى) هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ
صَحِيحٌ غَرِيبٌ

"By the intercession of a person of my *Ummah*, more people will enter Paradise than the population of Banu Tameem." He was asked, "(Will he be) other than you?" He answered, "Other than me."

Those will be allowed to intercede whose *Hajj* was accepted:

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى .. فَيُبَاهِي بِكُمْ الْمَلَائِكَةَ (يوم
العرفة و) ، يَقُولُ : عِبَادِي جَاءُونِي شَعْنًا مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ
عَمِيقٍ يَرْجُونَ جَنَّتِي ، (وفيه) أْفِيضُوا عِبَادِي مَغْفُورًا
لَكُمْ وَلِمَنْ شَفَعْتُمْ لَهُ .. وقال الهيثمي في "المجمع":
رواه البزار ورجاله موثقون .

It is reported in connection with *Hajj* that Allah says on the day of *Arafah*, "My slaves have come

from every deep ravine hoping for My Paradise .. scatter now My slaves, forgiven, and whoever you intercede for ...”

The Qur'an will also intercede, especially *Surah al-Baqarah* and *Aal-`Imran*:

أَبُو أُمَامَةَ الْبَاهِلِيُّ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- يَقُولُ « اقْرءُوا الْقُرْآنَ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ شَفِيعًا لِأَصْحَابِهِ اقْرءُوا الْقُرْآنَ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْتِي وَسُورَةُ آلِ عِمْرَانَ فَإِنَّهُمَا تَأْتِيَانِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كَأَنَّهُمَا عَمَامَتَانِ أَوْ كَأَنَّهُمَا غَيَابَتَانِ أَوْ كَأَنَّهُمَا فِرْقَانِ مِنْ طَيْرٍ صَوَافٍ تُحَاجَّانِ عَنِ أَصْحَابِهِمَا اقْرءُوا سُورَةَ الْبَقَرَةِ فَإِنَّ أَحَدَهَا بَرَكَةٌ وَتَرَكَّهَا حَسْرَةٌ وَلَا تَسْتَطِيعُهَا الْبَطْلَةُ ». قَالَ مُعَاوِيَةُ بَلَّغَنِي أَنَّ الْبَطْلَةَ السَّحْرَةُ. (صحيح مسلم)

Abu Umama al-Bahili reported the Prophet as having said, “Recite the Qur'an because it is going to appear on the Judgment Day as an intercessor for those who recite it. Read the two roses: *Al-Baqarah* and *Aal-`Imran*, for they will appear on the Judgment Day as clouds or as two flight of birds with outspread wings, arguing in favor of those who recited them. Recite *surah al-Baqarah* for holding on to it is a source of *barakah*, ignoring which is a matter of remorse, and the magicians have no power over it.”

Muslim children who died before attaining puberty will also intercede for their parents:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمَيْنِ بَمُوتِ هُمَا ثَلَاثَةٌ أَوْ لِأَوْلَادِهِمْ يَبْتَاعُوا الْحِنْتَ إِلَّا أَدْخَلَهُمَا اللَّهُ وَإِيَّاهُمْ بِفَضْلِ رَحْمَتِهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَقَالَ يُقَالُ لَهُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ فَيَقُولُونَ حَتَّى يَجِيءَ أَبَوَانَا قَالَ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ فَيَقُولُونَ مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ فَيُقَالُ لَهُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ أَنْتُمْ وَأَبَوَاكُمْ - مسند أحمد بن حنبل، تعليق شعيب الأرنؤوط : إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

On Abu Hurayrah's authority, the Prophet said, “There are no two Muslims (parents) whose three sons die before maturity but they will admit them and the two into Paradise by His grace. They will be told, ‘Enter the Paradise.’ They will say, “(Not) until our parents arrive.’ They will be told that three times, with they replying in the same manner, until they are told, ‘Enter the Paradise, you and your parents.’”

Here is another of the above class and a beautiful one:

عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ بْنِ قُرَّةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ أَنَّ رَجُلًا كَانَ يَأْتِي النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَمَعَهُ ابْنٌ لَهُ فَقَالَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَتُحِبُّهُ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَحَبُّكَ اللَّهُ كَمَا أُحِبُّهُ فَقَفَّدهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ لِي مَا فَعَلَ ابْنُ فُلَانٍ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَاتَ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِأَبِيهِ أَمَا تُحِبُّ أَنْ لَا تَأْتِيَ بَابًا مِنْ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ إِلَّا وَجَدْتَهُ يَنْتَظِرُكَ فَقَالَ الرَّجُلُ

[51] *Fleeing from a lion.*³⁵

قَرَّتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ ﴿٥١﴾

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَلَهُ خَاصَّةٌ أَمْ لِكُلِّنَا قَالَ بَلْ لِكُلِّكُمْ -
مسند أحمد بن حنبل - تعليق شعيب الأرنؤوط :
إسناده صحيح

Mu`awiyah b. Qurrah reports his father that a man used to come to the Prophet along with his son. On one occasion the Prophet asked him, "Do you love your son?" He replied, "Messenger of Allah, may Allah love you the way I love him." Then the Prophet missed him after a while and so asked, "Whatever happened to the son of so and so?" They said, "Messenger of Allah he died." He told his father (when he came), "Do you not approve of it that you do not arrive at any door to Paradise but you find him waiting for you there?" The man asked, "Messenger of Allah, is it especially for me, or common to all?" He replied, "Common to you all."

However, certain class of believers will not be allowed to intercede:

عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه
وسلم- يَقُولُ « إِنَّ اللَّعَّانِينَ لَا يَكُونُونَ شُهَدَاءَ وَلَا
شُفَعَاءَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ». (صحيح مسلم)

Abu Darda' said that he heard the Prophet say, "Those who curse a lot will never be of the witnesses on Judgment Day nor will they be intercessors."

35. Although a few scholars have explained "*qaswarah*" as archers, or hunters, Abu Hurayrah and others said that the allusion is to lions (Ibn Jarir).

Since there were no forests in Arabia, nor the Arabs ever went to Africa to hunt, it might be assumed with fair amount of accuracy that the allusion is to donkeys wildly fleeing a lion, a sight not visible to man until photography was developed. This is but a beautiful description of donkeys fleeing away from the Prophet, then, as even now into later times. It is also a proof of his authenticity since neither he nor any of the Arabs could have witnessed a pack of donkeys fleeing a lion (Au.).

[52] But rather, every man of them desires to be given scrolls unrolled.³⁶

بَلْ يُرِيدُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ أَنْ يُؤْتَىٰ صُحُفًا
مُنشُورَةً ﴿٥٢﴾

[53] Nay, but rather, they fear not the Hereafter.

كَلَّا بَلْ لَا يَخَافُونَ الْآخِرَةَ ﴿٥٣﴾

[54] Nay, this surely is an exhortation.³⁷

كَلَّا إِنَّهُ تَذَكُّرَةٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

[55] So, whosoever wished, may remember it.

فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرْهُ ﴿٥٥﴾

[56] But, they will not remember, except that Allah should will.³⁸ He is worthy of fear, Lord of forgiveness.³⁹

وَمَا يَذْكُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ هُوَ أَهْلُ
التَّقْوَىٰ وَأَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ ﴿٥٦﴾

36. That is, each one of the Quraysh chieftains demanded that if the Prophet was truly addressed, they too should be addressed, individually, confirming that he was indeed a Messenger, and that they too have been forgiven their sins, if any, inscribed in a parchment, to be discovered under their pillows, one fine morning; the parchment so fresh from heaven, and so raw, as not even rolled (Alusi).

37. That is, this Qur'ān (Ibn Jarir).

38. None has the power to do anything of his choice, except that Allah should allow him first. It is He who confers the power to man to do what he wills, before he can successfully accomplish it (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, and others); and the word *dhikr* as used here, is for Divine inducement (*tawfiq*) which is granted by Allah to

him who deserves it, for the hearts are between the two Fingers of the All-merciful, He turns them as He will. When He knows of the sincerity of a slave, He turns him to obedience. Of course, the slave himself does not know what Allah has willed for him. This is of the Unseen, which remains invisible to him (throughout his life). But he knows what is it that his Lord requires of him. This is something that has been made clear to him. When pure intentions are adopted by the heart, intending to do what Allah has made incumbent on the individual, Allah helps the individual and guides him in accordance with His unrestricted will (Sayyid).

We might add the following verses (4: 78-79) which explain very well the subject:

{ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قُلْ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ فَمَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا (٧٨) مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنَ نَفْسِكَ [النساء: ٧٨، ٧٩]

"If a good thing happens to them, they say, 'This is from Allah.' But when an evil befalls them they say, 'This is from you (O Muhammad). Tell them, 'Everything is from Allah.' What then is the matter with these people that they come nowhere near to understanding the discourse? Whatever good happens to you, it is from Allah. And whatever evil befalls you, it is from your own self" – (Au.).

Another possible meaning is that the decision of the Makkan unbelievers not to believe is so firm that nothing will make them believe except that Allah Himself should force them to it (Zamakhshari).

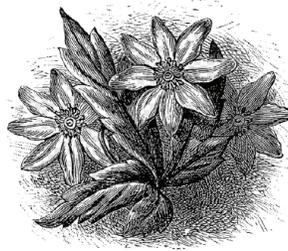
39. Ibn `Ahsur offers a nice poetical stanza here which he says he took from Kashshaf. It says:

أَلَا يَا اِرْحَمُونِي يَا إِلَهَ مُحَمَّدٍ
فَإِنْ لَمْ أَكُنْ أَهْلًا فَأَنْتَ لَهُ أَهْلٌ

Lo! Show me mercy O the Lord of Muhammad

If I am not deserving of it, You are deserving of (exercising) it.

مَكشَفًا



Surah 75

Al-Qiyamah

(The Day of Standing)

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] I do swear¹ by the Day of Standing.

لَا أَقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ﴿١﴾

[2] And I do swear by the reproachful soul.²

وَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ ﴿٢﴾

[3] Does man think We will never assemble
his bones?

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَلَّن نَجْمَعُ عِظَامَهُ ﴿٣﴾

1. The starter “*laa*” has been variously understood. Some say it is “*laa*” of “*sila*” (conjunctive), while others that it is for emphasis. There have been other explanations too and it could be translated as “*nay*” also; or, “the affair (of the Hereafter) is not as you think” (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). However, Qurtubi points out that this kind of “*laa*” occurs only at the beginning of a sentence.

2. Hasan al-Basri said: “A believer’s inner self keeps reproaching him saying, ‘What did I intend when I said those words?’ or, ‘What was I aiming at by eating this food?’ or, ‘What was my objective in thinking out this

way?’”, and so on, while a corrupt person moves forward, hardly ever reproaching himself” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

But perhaps even a corrupt Muslim, indeed, an unbeliever too, finds his inner self reproaching them. But they ignore the reproach (Au.).

Another possible meaning is that every soul will reproach itself on the Day of Judgment for not having done enough in the world to earn rewards in the Hereafter (Razi).

Alusi has a short note on three kinds of “*nafs*”, which we reproduce here slightly expanded. The three kinds, characteristics, and stages are:

[4] Nay, We are able to shape together the very tips of his fingers.³

بَلَىٰ قَادِرِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُسْوِيَ بَنَانَهُ ﴿٤﴾

النَّفْسُ الْأَمَّارَةُ ، النفس اللّوامة ، النفس الْمُطْمَئِنَّة

“*Al-nafsu al-ammarah*” (Yusuf: 53), commands evil, unless disciplined, so that, after a certain level of righteousness is achieved, it does not command but good and virtue. However, in most cases, and with the majority of the people, it commands evil, pulling them down by making them indulge wholly in worldly affairs. Above it comes “*al-nafs al-lawwamah*” which reproaches after both good and evil deeds. If it is a good deed, it reproaches why the man did not do better, and if it is an evil deed, it reproaches why he did it at all. It grows weaker if evil deeds are piled up, and stronger when good deeds are overwhelming. Then comes “*al-nafs al-mutma’innah*” (*al-Fajr*: 27). This characteristic or level of the “*nafs*” is obtained when there is no room left for the “*al-nafs al-lawwamah*” to reproach. This is the highest degree. Depending upon how a man succumbs to the two kinds of “*nafs*” below it, he earns peace and tranquility in proportionate measures.

This is observable in everyday life too. Never will the “*nafs*” say, after a man has come out of a mosque af-

ter Prayers, “Why did you go in at all?” Never will a man light a cigarette because of the strong urge but with the first puff his “*nafs*” will tell him, “you made a mistake.” In fact, psychologists point out that never does a man buy a commodity (a refrigerator, a piece of furniture, a toy, anything), but as soon as he unpacks it he has a sense of regret. Realizing this function of the “*nafs al-lawwamah*”, products now carry a folder within the package, which assures the purchaser that he did not make a mistake. It says, “Rest assured, you have purchased the right product.” It might also be pointed out that no “holy” literature has listed these three kinds of “*nafs*” (Au.).

3. Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah, Hasan and others took a meaning other than in the translation saying, had Allah willed He could have made a man’s fingers joined together like a hoof, in which case he would have been forced to pick his food with his mouth (Ibn Jarir).

Indeed, the fetus in the womb has the five fingers joined together until the 6th week of pregnancy. They split apart and the paw-like shape

[5] But rather, man desires to continue sinning (in days) ahead of him.⁴

بَلْ يُرِيدُ الْإِنْسَانُ لِيَفْجُرَ أَمَامَهُ ﴿٥﴾

[6] He asks, 'When shall be the Day of Standing?'

يَسْأَلُ أَيَّانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ ﴿٦﴾

[7] When the sight is dazed.

فَإِذَا بَرِقَ الْبَصَرُ ﴿٧﴾

[8] The moon is eclipsed.⁵

وَحَسَفَ الْقَمَرَ ﴿٨﴾

[9] And the sun and the moon are brought together.

وَجُمِعَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ ﴿٩﴾

[10] That day, man will say, 'Where is the place of escape?'

يَقُولُ الْإِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَيْنَ الْمَفْرُ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] By no means, (there is) no refuge.

كَلَّا لَا وَزَرَ ﴿١١﴾

[12] Unto your Lord that day, is the place of rest.

إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمُسْتَقَرُّ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] That day man will be informed of what he sent forward and what he held back.⁶

يُنَبِّئُ الْإِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ ﴿١٣﴾

becomes fingers by the 8th week of pregnancy. And, as is well-known, each man's finger tips are peculiar to him, which no other human shares with him, and hence a successful and widely used method of identification by the finger prints (Au.).

4. That is, he wishes to continue committing injustice, dishonesty, wickedness and debauchery during the rest of his life. He realizes that his admission of the occurrence of the Hereafter necessarily implies that he should bring himself to control and accept certain moral and ethical values as restraints to his complete

and unhindered freedom. Thus, his rejection is not the result of intellectual reasoning, but a straightforward illogical and dishonest demand of his carnal self (Au.).

5. That is, its shine will be gone (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

6. Or, as Ibn `Abbas explained "left behind" - being an allusion to what a man leaves behind as his example that people after him follow (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Sa`id b. Jubayr said, "He sent forward sins, delaying repentance" (Zamakhshari).

[14] But rather, man is a witness against his own self.⁷

بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] Even though he casts his excuses.

وَلَوْ أَلَّمَىٰ مَعَاذِيرَهُ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] Move not your tongue along with it, to hasten it.

لَا تُحْرِكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] Surely, upon Us is its collection, and upon Us is its recital.⁸

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] Therefore, when We recite, follow its recital.⁹

فَإِذَا قَرَأْنَاهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] Then upon Us is the expounding thereof.¹⁰

ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ ﴿١٩﴾

7. Or perhaps, man sees himself very well (Ibn Jarir). That is, knows about himself as to where he stands (Ibn Kathir).

8. In the earliest stages of revelation, the Prophet would repeat the words while they were being revealed by Jibril in fear of forgetting them. He was assured that making him remember, and then, putting them all together, at the end of the process (which was to take several years), would be accomplished by none other than Allah Himself (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

This is one of the strongest proofs that this is a Revelation. The revelations came in bits and pieces, short and long.

9. Most commentators have thought that the meaning of “*ittabi` qur’nah*”

is: Follow the recital, listening carefully with full attention of mind and heart, and then put it to practice.

10. One possible meaning is contained in the fact that one part of the Qur’an explains another part of it. A second possibility is that the explanation was given to the Prophet through what is known as the “*wahyu ghayr matlu*,” or, the *hadith*. The Prophet said, as in a *hadith* of Ahmad, but whose meaning has been repeated in a variety of ways in other narratives, one being in *Sahih of Ibn Hibban*, and others in Hakim’s *Mustadrak* which Dhahabi declared trustworthy:

عَنِ الْمُقَدَّامِ بْنِ مَعْدٍ يَكْرِبُ الْكِنْدِيِّ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- « أَلَا إِنِّي أُوتِيتُ الْكِتَابَ وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ أَلَا إِنِّي أُوتِيتُ الْقُرْآنَ وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ

[20] *Nay, but you love the immediate.*

كَلَّا بَلْ تُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] *And neglect the Hereafter.¹¹*

وَتَذَرُونَ الْآخِرَةَ ﴿٢١﴾

[22] *That day, some faces will be radiant.*

وُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاصِرَةٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] *Gazing upon their Lord.¹²*

إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] *While some faces that Day, will be contorted.*

وَوُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَاسِرَةٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] *Feeling sure that they will be dealt with a back-breaking deal.¹³*

تَظُنُّنَ أَنْ يُفْعَلَٰ بِهَا فَاكِرَةٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

أَلَا يُؤْشِكُ رَجُلٌ يَنْتَنِي سَبْعَانًا عَلَىٰ أَرِيكَتِهِ يَمْشِي
عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْقُرْآنِ فَمَا وَجَدْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ حَلَالٍ فَأَجْلُوهُ وَمَا
وَجَدْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ حَرَامٍ فَحَرِّمُوهُ.

“Lo. I have been given the Book and its equal along with it. Lo. It is possible that a well-fed man with one leg over another in his easy chair say, ‘Follow the Qur’ān; so that what you find therein as lawful, take it as lawful, and what you find therein as unlawful, take it as unlawful.’” (That is, abandon the *Sunnah* of the Prophet which contains the other, “equal, along with it” (Au.).

11. Majid comments: “That it was really the enjoyment of this material life and material gains that was at the root of the obstinate pagans’ opposition to the teachings of the Qur’ān and the Prophet is recognized even by historians hostile to Islam: ‘The

more clearly they perceived that Muhammad’s claim as a Prophet might endanger their priestly position and their lucrative privileges as guardians of the holy temple, the more fiercely did their anger burn, and the more vehement became their threats and abuses’ (WHW, VIII, pp. 115-116).”

12. Although Mujahid is widely reported as having said that the meaning is, “People will wait in anticipation of the rewards,” the majority have thought that the allusion is to the Beatific Vision that will be granted to those in Paradise (Ibn Jarir). But the allusion could also be to the Beatific Vision granted to the believers in the Field of Reckoning itself (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

13. That is, sure that they will be shoved into the Fire (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

[26] Nay, when it reaches the collar-bone.

﴿٢٦﴾ كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ النَّرَاقِي

[27] And it is said, 'Who is an enchanter?'¹⁴

﴿٢٧﴾ وَقِيلَ مَنْ رَاقٍ

[28] And he realizes that it is (the moment of) parting.

﴿٢٨﴾ وَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ

[29] And the shank is intertwined with shank.¹⁵

﴿٢٩﴾ وَالْتَفَتِ السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ

[30] Unto your Lord that day is the driving.

﴿٣٠﴾ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ

[31] But he testified not, nor Prayed.

﴿٣١﴾ فَلَا صَدَقَ وَلَا صَلَّىٰ

[32] But rather, cried lies and turned away.

﴿٣٢﴾ وَلَكِن كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ

[33] Then he went to his homefolk strutting along.

﴿٣٣﴾ ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ يَمْتَطِي

[34] Woe unto you, then woe.

﴿٣٤﴾ أُولَىٰ لَكَ فَأُولَىٰ

[35] Again woe unto you, then woe.¹⁶

﴿٣٥﴾ ثُمَّ أُولَىٰ لَكَ فَأُولَىٰ

14. That is, someone who could recite a chant to chase away the disease, or a doctor who could chase the death away (Ibn Jarir).

15. The allusion is to the excruciating pangs of death. Another opinion is, it is the moment of death when the two shanks – of this world and the next – or, when the boundaries of this life and the next get intertwined: the last day of this world and the first of the Hereafter; when the people of the world prepare themselves to deal with their body, while angels prepare themselves to deal with their souls (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

As such, “*saag*” is commonly used in the Arabic language for hardship. So, it could be said that hardships descend one after another on a dying man (Razi).

16. It is reported that the Prophet recited these two verses to Abu Jahl (while they were passing together between two hills). Abu Jahl replied, “Muhammad, Do you threaten me? You and your Lord have no power over me. I am the most honored person of those who ever walked between these two hills” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

[36] Does man think that he will be left alone (unaddressed)?¹⁷

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى ﴿٣٦﴾

[37] Was he not a sperm drop, emitted?¹⁸

أَلَمْ يَكْ نُطْفَةً مِنْ مَّيِّ يَمُنِي ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] Then he was a blood-clot. Then He created and proportioned?

ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً فَحَلَقَ فَسَوَّى ﴿٣٨﴾

[39] Then He made of him two kinds, male and female.¹⁹

فَجَعَلَ مِنْهُ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَى ﴿٣٩﴾

[40] Is not that (Creator) able to quicken the dead?²⁰

أَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَى أَنْ يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَى ﴿٤٠﴾

17. That is, without being commanded and prohibited (Ibn Jarir from the Salaf, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

According to Razi another connotation is the questioning in the Hereafter. Does man think he will not be questioned? If so, then it means Lord our God is unmindful of whatever the humans do on this earth; which is unthinkable (seeing that such an absurd idea – of unquestionable freedom – is unacceptable to the humans themselves).

18. Of course, every sperm drop is emitted, so why did Allah Most High add the word emitted? The answer is, says Razi, it is to remind man of the moment when he was emitted: an insignificant thing.

Majid adds: “Incidentally, this repudiates the doctrine of the sanctity of

human semen. Even Christian sects have been known to deify the seminal secretion. The Carpocrations, for instance, while forbidding procreation, ‘divinized the spermatic fluid. It is quite probable that the Cathers were given to similar excesses, and specially that his disciples, the troubadours, were.’ (Dr. Rongemont, *Passion and Society*, p. 111).”

19. Although sex-determination process in a growing fetus is known to the scientists, and well researched, but no one ever knows, firstly, why there are two sexes, and, secondly, why is it that they appear in the same proportion in any human population; the female is around 95 for every 100 male.

20. It is reported that when the Prophet ended with the recitation of

these verses he would respond with,

سُبْحَانَكَ بَلِي

“Glory to You, surely yes” (Ibn Jarir, *Kashshaf*, Qurtubi).

Ibn Kathir quotes several other *ahadith* to this effect, but Albani declared them weak (S. Ibrahim).

مَقَات



Surah 76
Al-Insan

(Man)

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Did there come upon man a time¹ when he was not a thing (worth) mentioning?²

هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ
لَمْ يَكُن شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا ﴿١﴾

[2] Verily, We have created man from a mingled sperm-drop³ that We might try him, so We made him hearing, seeing.

إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ
تَّبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ﴿٢﴾

1. Since “*dahr*” is endless, and “*heen*” a part of it, the term “*heenum min al-dahr*” implies a considerable length of time; some of the *Salaf* have said that the allusion is to the event of Adam’s creation who was made of dust and then left alone for a long time before the spirit was blown into him. Until then no one knew in the heaven or the earth what would be made of him (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi); but Man in general could also be in reference (Razi).

However, there is no *hadith* to the above effect (Au.).

2. It may be noted that the last chapter ended with the mention of the

sperm drop while this one continues with the theme of its insignificance (Au.).

It is reported of Abu Bakr that when someone recited this ayah before him, he remarked, “Only if the period (of being in dust) had not ended, so that (there was no creation and) no trial (Qurtubi, Razi). Similar statements are reported of `Umar (Qurtubi), and of Ibn Mas`ud (Alusi).

3. Until the development of powerful microscopes in the 18th century, the belief among the biologists was that it is man’s spermatozoa dropped into the womb that alone grows as a man. In fact, illustrations in some

[3] Indeed, We have guided him to the way, to be grateful or ungrateful.⁴ إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا ﴿٣﴾



biology books of the 17th century depicted a little human being in the spermatozoa. To the Qur’anic statement, 1000 years before the discovery, the Prophet added his own clarification at a time many women did not know that they secreted any liquid at the time of fertilization or contributed an ovum. See Umm Saleem’s *hadith* in Muslim, no. 738, *Kitab al-Taharah* (Au.).

4. We have a *hadith* on the topic of humans choosing their own fate after Allah guided them to both good and evil). Ibn Kathir quotes it:

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- قَالَ لِكَعْبِ بْنِ عُجْرَةَ « أَعَاذَكَ اللَّهُ مِنْ إِمَارَةِ السُّفَهَاءِ ». قَالَ مَا إِمَارَةُ السُّفَهَاءِ قَالَ « أُمَرَاءُ يَكُونُونَ بَعْدِي لَا يَقْتَدُونَ بِحَدِيٍّ وَلَا يَسْتَنْتُونَ بِسُنَّتِي فَمَنْ صَدَّقَهُمْ بِكَذِبِهِمْ وَأَعَاتَهُمْ عَلَى ظَلْمِهِمْ فَأُولَئِكَ لَيْسُوا مِنِّي وَلَسْتُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَا يَرُدُّوا عَلَيَّ حَوْضِي وَمَنْ لَمْ يُصَدِّقْهُمْ بِكَذِبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يُعِنُّهُمْ عَلَى ظَلْمِهِمْ فَأُولَئِكَ مِنِّي وَأَنَا مِنْهُمْ وَسِرِّدُوا عَلَيَّ حَوْضِي يَا كَعْبُ بْنُ عُجْرَةَ الصَّوْمُ جَنَّةٌ وَالصَّدَقَةُ تُطْفِئُ الْخَطِيئَةَ وَالصَّلَاةُ قُرْبَانٌ - أَوْ قَالَ بُرْهَانٌ - يَا كَعْبُ بْنُ عُجْرَةَ إِنَّهُ لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى تَبْتَ مِنْ سُحْتِ النَّارِ أَوْ لِي بِهِ يَا كَعْبُ بْنُ عُجْرَةَ النَّاسُ غَادِيَانِ فَمُبْتَاعٌ نَفْسَهُ فَمُعْتَقُهَا وَبَائِعٌ نَفْسَهُ فَمُؤَبِّمُهَا » (رواه أحمد والبخاري ومسلم والبيهقي)

The Prophet said to Ka`b b. `Ujrah: “May Allah save you from the leadership of the foolish.” He asked, “What about the leadership of the foolish?” He answered, “Leaders who will come after me but who will not follow my guidance, nor my Sunnah. So, whoever testified them in their lies and helped them in their tyranny, they are not of me and I am not of them. They will not come to my Pond. But he who did not testify them in their lies and did not help them in their tyranny, they are of me and I am of them. They will come to my Pond. O Ka`b b. `Ujrah, fast is a shield, and charity obliterates minor errors. And Prayers are an offering, (or maybe he said, “an evidence”). O Ka`b b. `Ujrah, Fire is better deserving of the flesh that grew on the forbidden. O Ka`b b. `Ujrah, people are two types that start off in the morning: He who buys his soul and frees it, or he who sells away his soul and destroys it.”

[4] Surely, We have prepared for the unbelievers chains,⁵ iron-collars,⁶ and a Blaze.

إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَلَاسِلًا وَأَغْلَالًا
وَسَعِيرًا ﴿٤﴾

[5] Surely, the righteous shall drink of a cup (a drink) whose mixing will be with camphor.⁷

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِنْ كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا
كَافُورًا ﴿٥﴾

[6] A spring wherefrom drink the slaves of Allah, making it gush forth plenteously.⁸

عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ يُفَجِّرُونَهَا
تَفْجِيرًا ﴿٦﴾

[7] They fulfill the vows⁹ and fear the day whose evil flies wide.

يُوفُونَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهُ
مُسْتَطِيرًا ﴿٧﴾

Haythami declared the above report as trustworthy (Au.).

5. By which they will be dragged (Alusi).

6. By which they will be shackled (Alusi).

7. Asad comments: “*The Lisan al-`Arab* gives ‘the calyx (kimm) of the grape before its flowering’ as the primary significance of *kafur*; according to other lexicologists (e.g., Taj al-`Arus), it denotes ‘the calyx of any flower’; Jawhari applies it to the ‘spathe of a palm tree’. Hence, this – and not ‘camphor’ – is evidently the meaning of *kafur* in the above context ..”

We may be reminded here once again of the statement of Ibn `Abbas that all that has been named in the Qur`an as blessings are but names. In

their reality, they have nothing to do with the blessings they will carry in Paradise.

8. That is, the dwellers of Paradise will be able to sprout forth the springs wherever they want, whenever they want (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari).

9. Ibn Kathir reminds that fulfilling a vow is obligatory when it is in Allah’s obedience, otherwise not. Says a *hadith* of Bukhari:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَنْ نَذَرَ أَنْ يُطِيعَ اللَّهَ فَلْيُطِعهُ وَمَنْ نَذَرَ أَنْ
يَعْصِيَهُ فَلَا يَعْصِيهِ.

On the authority of `A’isha, the Prophet said, “Whoever vowed that he will obey Allah, may obey Him, but whoever vowed that he will disobey Allah, may not disobey Him.”

[8] And they serve the food, despite it being dear,¹⁰ to the needy, the orphan and the captive.¹¹

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا
وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾

[9] 'We serve you for the countenance of Allah, desiring from you neither recompense nor thanks.¹²

إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ
جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكُورًا ﴿٩﴾

Perhaps with the Prophet's indirect disapproval of vows (*nadhhr*) Yusuf Ali offers a reminder about the nature of disapproved vows: "The vows must be vows of spiritual service, which of course includes service to humanity, such as is mentioned in the next verse. They are Devotees of Allah, and they must perform all vows and contracts. Vows of the Pagan sort, savouring of a sort of 'bribe' to the Deity, are not approved."

10. Another possible meaning is that they feed others, in love of Allah (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). This was the opinion of Fudayl b. 'Iyad (Zamakshari).

Ibn Kathir adds: We have a *Sahih* report (of Muslim) which says,

“أَنَّ تَصَدَّقَ وَأَنْتَ صَاحِبٌ شَحِيحٌ تَحْسَى الْفَقْرَ”

“(The best of charity) is that you should spend while you are healthy, fond of wealth, and fear poverty.”

11. Qatadah, 'Ikrimah and Hasan have pointed out that the prisoners or captives of this mention were always pagans at the time of the Prophet, whom he ordered to be treated well. However, the term is now applicable to every kind of captive: Muslim or non-Muslim (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir), and every prisoner (Qurtubi). When the Prophet distributed captives among Muslims, he instructed them to treat them well and so, some of them fed them remaining hungry themselves (*Kashshaf*).

Adds Asad: “The term *asir* denotes anyone who is 'captive' literally (e.g., a prisoner) or figuratively, i.e., a captive of circumstances which render him helpless: thus, the Prophet said, 'Thy debtor is thy captive, be, therefore, truly kind to thy captive' (Zamakshari, Razi, et al.).”

12. It is reported of 'A'isha that when she sent gifts to the people, she instructed the messenger to inform her how they reacted. If they supplicated

[10] Indeed, We fear from our Lord a frowning, distressful day.'

إِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ رَبِّنَا يَوْمًا عَبُوسًا قَمْطَرِيرًا ﴿١٠﴾

[11] So, Allah saved them from the evil of that day and shed over them brightness and blissful joy.¹³

فَوَقَاهُمْ اللَّهُ شَرَّ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَلَقَّاهُمْ نَضْرَةً وَسُرُورًا ﴿١١﴾

[12] And recompensed them for their patience with a Garden, and silk.

وَجَزَّاهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرُوا جَنَّةً وَحَرِيرًا ﴿١٢﴾

[13] Reclining therein on couches. They shall experience therein neither sun nor bitter cold.¹⁴

مُتَّكِنِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ لَا يَرُونَ فِيهَا شَمْسًا وَلَا زَمْهَرِيرًا ﴿١٣﴾

[14] Down upon them its shades and its clusters hanging low.

وَدَانِيَةً عَلَيْهِمْ ظِلَالُهَا وَذُلِّلَتْ قُطُوفُهَا تَذِيلًا ﴿١٤﴾

[15] And, there will pass around them vessels of silver and crystal-goblets.¹⁵

وَيُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِآنِيَةٍ مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ كَانَتْ قَوَارِيرًا ﴿١٥﴾

for her, she too supplicated for them in the same words so as to make sure that that the fullest reward remained reserved for her gift (Zamakhshari).

13. Thus, on that hard day, the righteous will have bright faces and peaceful hearts (Ibn Kathir)

14. We have a *hadith* in this context. The Prophet said,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَ « أَشْتَكِبُ النَّارَ إِلَى رَبِّي فَأَقَالَتْ رَبِّي أَكُلُ بَعْضِي بَعْضًا فَتَقْسِنِي. فَأَذِنَ لَهَا فِي كُلِّ عَامٍ بِنَفْسَيْنِ فَأَشَدُّ مَا تَجِدُونَ مِنَ الْبَرْدِ مِنْ زَمْهَرِيرِ جَهَنَّمَ وَأَشَدُّ مَا تَجِدُونَ مِنَ الْحَرِّ مِنْ حَرِّ جَهَنَّمَ »

“The Fire (of Hell) complained to Allah saying, ‘some of me is eating of my other parts.’ So, Al-

lah allowed it two breathings every year. So, the worst that you find of the cold is from the cold blast of Jahannum, while the worst of heat that you experience is from the heat of Jahannum” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

The *hadith* is in Ahmad as well as *Sahih* of Ibn Hibban (Au.).

15. The textual word for what we have rendered as “goblet” is “*kub*” which is for an earless (and spoutless: Ibn Kathir) cup, while “*ka’s*” of the 17th verse is for that glass which has been filled with wine. If it is not filled with wine then the Arabs would not refer to it as a “*ka’s*” (from Ibn Jarir).

[16] Crystal-goblets made of silver,¹⁶ that they¹⁷ would have filled to right measure.¹⁸

﴿١٦﴾ قَوَارِيرَ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ قَدَرُوهَا تَقْدِيرًا

[17] And they will be served drinks therein whose mixing will be with ginger.

﴿١٧﴾ وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا زَنْجَبِيلًا

[18] A spring therein named Salasabeel.

﴿١٨﴾ عَيْنًا فِيهَا تُسَمَّى سَلْسَبِيلًا

[19] There will go around them eternal lads.¹⁹ If you saw them you would think they are scattered pearls.

﴿١٩﴾ وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُخَلَّدُونَ إِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ حَسِبْتَهُمْ لُؤْلُؤًا مَنثورًا

[20] If you saw there, you would see therein bliss and a great kingdom.

﴿٢٠﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ ثَمَّ رَأَيْتَ نَعِيمًا وَمُلْكًا كَبِيرًا

[21] Upon them apparels of green silk and brocade. And they shall be adorned with bracelets of silver, and their Lord shall give them a drink, pure.

﴿٢١﴾ عَلَيْهِمْ ثِيَابٌ سُنْدُسٌ خُضْرٌ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٌ وَخُلُوهَا أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ وَسَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُورًا

[22] This indeed is a recompense for you, and your striving has been appreciated.

﴿٢٢﴾ إِنَّ هَذَا كَانَ لَكُمْ جَزَاءً وَكَانَ سَعْيُكُمْ مَشْكُورًا

[23] We have indeed sent down upon you the Qur'ān in piece-meal.

﴿٢٣﴾ إِنَّا نَخُذُ نَزْلَنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ تَنزِيلًا

[24] Therefore, wait in patience for the command of your Lord, and yield not to any of them: a sinner or an unbeliever.²⁰

﴿٢٤﴾ فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تُطِعْ مِنْهُمْ آثِمًا أَوْ كَفُورًا

16. Ancient scholars have said that if you beat silver to the thickness of a fly's wing, you will still not see through it. But the silver goblets of Paradise will be transparent.

17. "They," i.e., those appointed to serve them (Au.).

18. Filling a glass to the right measure is an art in which hotel waiters receive instructions (Au.).

19. That is, the lads will ever stay lads. They will not grow old (Ibn Jarir).

20. "Affairs and events of the world are mortgaged to their Lord's predetermined Plan. He lends reprieve to falsehood; allows rope to evil, and elongates the period of trial, appraisal, and purification for the believers .. So, be patient .. Until the ap-

[25] And mention the Name of your Lord, morning and evening.²¹

وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلاً ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] At the (early) part of the night²² prostrate yourself to Him, and extol His glory for long during the (later part of) night.²³

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَاسْجُدْ لَهُ وَسَبِّحْهُ لَيْلًا طَوِيلًا ﴿٢٦﴾

pointed hour .. Be patient in the face of torture and tribulation .. be patient when faced up with the seemingly triumphant falsehood .. and of course, patiently hold on to what of the truth has been revealed to you .. Hold on in patience; and listen not to the proposals of compromise presented to you: proposals that suggest you meet them half-way, but which can only be at the cost of faith. But, 'follow not any of them: a sinner or an unbeliever.' They will never invite you to the obedience of the Lord, nor to any good, neither to virtue. They are, after all, sinners, unbelievers in the Lord of the worlds. They invite you to sin and disobedience when they invite you to meet half-way; when they offer you wealth and damsels, and even power.. After all, this is all that the followers of falsehood can offer the people of faith.

'Wait in patience for the command of your Lord, and yield not to any of them: a sinner or an unbeliever,' for there can be no place where you and they can meet; nor is it possible

to build a bridge between the huge abyss dividing your and their ways, your thoughts and ideas and their thoughts and ideas, your truth and their falsehood, your belief and their disbelief, your light and their dark-nesses, your knowledge and their ignorance" (Sayyid)

21. The allusion by "*bukrah*" is to *Fajr* Prayers, while by the "aseel" it is to *Zuhr* and *'Asr* Prayers (Qurtubi); because "aseel" covers the period between noon and sunset (Alusi).

22. The allusion is to *Maghrib* and *'Isha* Prayers (Qurtubi).

23. That is, in *tahajjud* (Razi).

"This then," writes Sayyid, "is your provision along the way: remember the Name of your Lord morning and evening .. and spend the night in devotional acts .. This will be your contact-line with the source that sent down the Qur'an and laid the responsibility on you to take the word forward. This remembrance is the fountain of strength and the source of help and aid.. For the way is long,

[27] Surely, these (people) love the fleeting and leave behind them a burdensome day.

إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ يُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ وَيَذَرُونَ وَرَاءَهُمْ
يَوْمًا ثَقِيلًا ﴿٢٧﴾

[28] We have created them and have strengthened their joints;²⁴ and, if We wished, We shall exchange their likes: (in) a complete alteration.

نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاهُمْ وَشَدَدْنَا أَسْرَهُمْ وَإِذَا شِئْنَا
بَدَّلْنَا أَمْثَلَهُمْ تَبْدِيلًا ﴿٢٨﴾

the burden is heavy, and so, the provision has to be plentiful, and the help required much. And it is to be found there: where the slave is alone with his Lord, in nearness and in intimacy, from which contact spring out peace and tranquility .. rest after the hardships .. and which allays the effects of the thorns laid down on the way.

While this is the provision for the Prophet, it is also the provision of everyone who treads this path, those who call to Islam, in every generation, throughout the ages. For this is the same call, with similar situations, similar responses, similar stance, perspective and approach; and similar means. They must all follow the same methodology and go through the same situations.

Further, this call does not accept any adulteration between truth and falsehood: those which the sinning unbelievers suggest. There can be

no co-operation between this truth and their falsehood; nor can the two meet in between, half-way down. They are two different paths, in different directions, leading to two different ends.

But what when falsehood overcomes the believers in truth because of the material strength of the former and some weaknesses of the latter? Well, the answer is, they must wait in patience for Allah's decisions. They must continue standing long hours in the nights, in remembrance, Prayers. This will provide them the provision for the way, the way to their Lord.”

24. A solitary interpretation offered by Mujahid is that the allusion is to man's anus (Qurtubi).

Had Allah not given the organ its strength, and allowed man control over its functioning, it would have been impossible to develop civilization and culture (Au.).

[29] Surely, this is a reminder. So whoever wished may take a way to his Lord.²⁵

إِنَّ هَذِهِ تَذْكِرَةٌ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ
سَبِيلًا ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] But you cannot will, except that Allah should will.²⁶ Surely, Allah was ever Knowing, ever Wise.

وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٣٠﴾

[31] He admits whom He will into His mercy. As for the transgressors, He has prepared for them a painful chastisement.²⁷

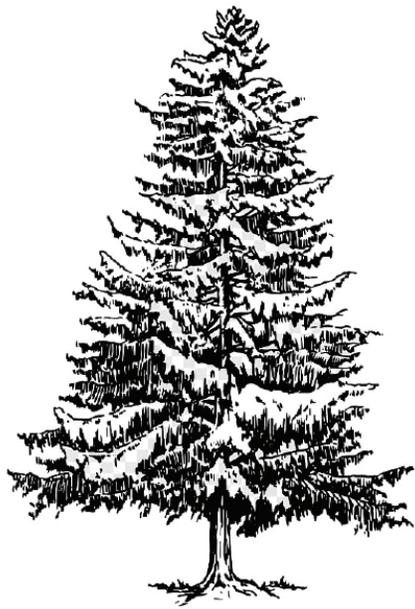
يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ وَالظَّالِمِينَ
أَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾

25. Thus, there is the freedom of choice, stated in the earlier part of the Surah, to choose right or wrong (Au.).

26. It is another thing that man is not completely free to choose what he wants in the sense of being able to do what he chooses. Sometimes he may choose a wrong act or attitude, but Allah's love and mercy intervenes, and he is prevented from acting according to it (Au.).

27. Thus, Allah chooses for His mercy whom he will: him the creations think deserves, as well as him the creations think does not deserve. As for the wrongdoers, if they make a firm decision about choosing a wrong course, and are not interested in their Lord's mercy, such then, they have the painful chastisement prepared for them (Au.). **مَقْتَدًا**





Surah 77

Al-Mursalat¹

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] By the (winds) sent across in gusts.²

وَالْمُرْسَلَاتِ عُرْفًا ﴿١﴾

[2] And by the storms³ (let loose) tempestuously.

فَالْعاصِفَاتِ عَصْفًا ﴿٢﴾

1. This particular *Surah* was revealed in a cave as says a *hadith* of the *Sahihayn*. Ibn Mas`ud said,

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ بَيْنَمَا نَحْنُ
مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي غَارِ بَمْنَى
إِذْ نَزَلَ عَلَيْهِ وَالْمُرْسَلَاتِ وَإِنَّهُ لَيَتْلُوهَا وَإِنِّي
لَأَتَلَقَّهَا مِنْ فِيهِ وَإِنْ فَاهُ لَرَطْبٌ بِهَا إِذْ وَتَبْتُ
عَلَيْنَا حَيَّةٌ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
أَقْتُلُوهَا فَابْتَدَرْنَاهَا فَذَهَبَتْ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَفِيَتْ شَرَّكُمْ كَمَا وَفِيْتُمْ
شَرَّهَا.

“We were in a cave in Mina with the Prophet, when this *Surah* came down. He was reciting it and I was taking it right from his mouth when a snake surprised us. The Prophet said, ‘Kill it.’ So we went after it but it escaped. The Prophet said, ‘It was saved from

your evil as you were saved from its evil.” This also happens to be the last *Surah* the Prophet (*saw:s*) recited in his *Maghrib* Prayer as reported by Umm Fadl. (Ibn Kathir).

2. That the allusion is to the winds is the opinion of `Ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and others. But Masruq’s opinion was that the allusion is to angels, in which case the word “`urf” will have to be translated as “good.” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

3. `Ali, Ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas and others agreed that “`asifat” refers to (stormy) winds. There is no second opinion about it (Ibn Jarir).

[3] *And by the scatterers scattering (far and wide).*⁴

وَالنَّاشِرَاتِ نَشْرًا ﴿٣﴾

[4] *And the separators,*⁵ *separating.*

فَالفَارِقَاتِ فَرْقًا ﴿٤﴾

[5] *Then by those casting the reminder.*⁶

فَالْمُلْقِيَاتِ ذِكْرًا ﴿٥﴾

[6] *By way of excuse or warning.*⁷

عُذْرًا أَوْ نُذْرًا ﴿٦﴾

[7] *Surely, that which you are promised is bound to happen.*⁸

إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَوَاقِعٍ ﴿٧﴾

4. Although Ibn Mas'ud and others believed that the allusion is to winds, others of the *Salaf* thought that it is to rains, or to angels who will spread the records. All three could have been meant. (Ibn Jarir).

5. Once again, the opinions are divided. Ibn 'Abbas said the allusion is to angels who separate the truth from falsehood, others said it is the Qur'an. Both could have been meant. (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

6. The allusion is to the angels who bring down the Reminder. (Ibn Jarir). There is no difference in opinion over this (Qurtubi).

7. That is, a justification (*'uzr*) from Allah, and a warning unto the mankind. (Ibn Jarir).

That is, "justification" for sending down chastisement. (Au.).

All of the above have been understood in a variety of other ways.

Those interested might see Qurtubi. (Au.).

8. Some commentators have dealt with this passage in detail, describing how it may be understood and how one verse is connected with the other. But the discussions are too complicated for reproduction. One may look into Alusi at this point. But perhaps combining a few notes of Yusuf Ali will help: "This *Surah* begins with an appeal to five things, as pointing to the substantive statement in verse 7, that the Day of Justice and Judgment is bound to come, and we must prepare for it. It is difficult to translate, but easy to understand, if we remember that a triple thread of allegory runs through this passage (verses 1-7). The five things or phases, which will be presently considered in detail, refer to (a) Winds in the physical world, (b) Angels in the Kingdom of Allah, and (c) Prophets

in the human world, connecting it with the Kingdom of Allah.

Understanding the reference to Winds, we can see that they are powerful factors in the government of the physical world. (1) They come gently as harbingers of the blessings of rain and fertility (xv. 22; xxx. 48); but (2) they can come as violent tornadoes, uprooting and destroying (li. 41-42); (3) they can scatter seeds far and wide, and (4) they can separate chaff from grain, or clear the air from epidemics; and (5) they literally carry sound, and therefore Messages. All these things point to the power and goodness of Allah, and we are asked to believe that His promise of Mercy and Justice in the Hereafter is indeed true. Cf. this passage with li. 1-6 (*Dhariyat*) with which it has many affinities.

(With ref. to verse 2) If we understand the reference to be, not to Winds, but to Angels, they are agencies in the Kingdom of Allah, which carry out similar functions, changing and revolutionizing the face of the world. (1) They come softly, on beneficent errands of Mercy; (2) they are charged with the mission of punishment and destruction for sin as in the case of the two angels who came to Lut (xv. 57-66); (3) they distrib-

ute Allah's Mercies as the Winds distribute good seeds; (4) they sort out the good from the evil among men; and (5) they are the agency through which Allah's Messages and Revelations are conveyed to the Prophets (see No. 5 in the last note).

(With reference to verse 5) If we understand the reference to Prophets or Messengers of Allah, or the verses of Revelation which would be particularly appropriate for verses 5-6, we also get a satisfactory solution of the allegory. (1) The Prophets have followed one another in a series: the verses of the Qur'an came, one after another as needed; in both cases it was for man's spiritual profit; (2) they caused great disturbance in a spiritually decadent world; they pulled down evil institutions root and branch, and substituted new ones; (3) they proclaimed their truths far and wide, without fear and without favor; (4) through them were sorted out men of Faith and rebels against Allah's Law; and (5) they gave a Message, through which just men were justified through repentance, and evil men were warned of their sins. Some commentators take one or other of these allegories, and some apply one allegory to a few of these verses, and another to another few.

[8] Then, when the stars are extinguished.

﴿٨﴾ فَإِذَا النُّجُومُ طُمِسَتْ

[9] When the heaven is split.

﴿٩﴾ وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ فُرِجَتْ

[10] When the mountains are blown away.

﴿١٠﴾ وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ نُسِفَتْ

[11] And when the Messengers' appointment is set.⁹

﴿١١﴾ وَإِذَا الرُّسُلُ أُقِنَتْ

[12] To what day was it deferred?

﴿١٢﴾ لِأَيِّ يَوْمٍ أُجِّلَتْ

[13] For the day of separation.¹⁰

﴿١٣﴾ لِيَوْمِ الْفَصْلِ

[14] And what will teach you what the day of separation is?

﴿١٤﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ

[15] Woe that day to those who cried lies.¹¹

﴿١٥﴾ وَيَلَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

[16] Did We not destroy the earlier ones?

﴿١٦﴾ أَلَمْ تَهْلِكِ الْأَوَّلِينَ

[17] Then We made later ones follow them?

﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ تَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْآخِرِينَ

In my opinion the allegory is wide enough to comprehend all the meanings which I have sketched. I wish a translation could do justice to those marvelously terse sentences in the original.”

9. That is, an appointed day when they will be brought together to bear witness against their people. Another, out of several other possible meanings is that the Messengers were sent to their people at predetermined, appointed times. (Qurtubi).

10. That is, the day when the true and the false will be separated: the

true ones heading to Paradise while the false ones ushered into Hell-fire. (Ibn Jarir). The word has also been understood as meaning “judgment.” (Qurtubi).

11. The repetition of the *ayah* after description of a variety of crimes indicates that there will be several kinds of punishment meted out to the unbelievers in accordance with their various crimes, to express which a single *ayah* of threat has been used again and again, but at each point with a different meaning held within. (Qurtubi).

[18] Thus do We deal with the criminals.¹²

﴿١٨﴾ كَذَلِكَ نَفْعَلُ بِالْمُجْرِمِينَ

[19] Woe that day to those who cried lies.

﴿١٩﴾ وَيُنَادِ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

[20] Did We not create you of a mean liquid?

﴿٢٠﴾ أَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُمْ مِّنْ مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ

[21] Then We placed it in a safe lodging.¹³

﴿٢١﴾ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ

[22] Until a known term?¹⁴

﴿٢٢﴾ إِلَىٰ قَدَرٍ مَّعْلُومٍ

[23] Then we determined, and excellent determiners We are.¹⁵

﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَدَرْنَا فَنِعْمَ الْقَادِرُونَ

[24] Woe that day to those who cried lies.

﴿٢٤﴾ وَيُنَادِ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

[25] Have We not made the earth a container?

﴿٢٥﴾ أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ كِفَاتًا

[26] (For) the living and the dead?

﴿٢٦﴾ أَحْيَاءٍ وَأَمْوَاتًا

[27] And We have placed therein pegs¹⁶ standing tall; and have provided you with sweet water as a drink.

﴿٢٧﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ شَاخِجَاتٍ وَأَسْقَيْنَاكُمْ مَّاءً حَرَاتًا

[28] Woe that day to those who cried lies.

﴿٢٨﴾ وَيُنَادِ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

[29] 'Depart you now¹⁷ to what you were wont to crying lies.

﴿٢٩﴾ انطَلِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَا كُنتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ

[30] Depart you now to a shadow three-pronged.

﴿٣٠﴾ انطَلِقُوا إِلَىٰ ظِلٍّ ذِي ثَلَاثِ شُعَبٍ

12. And that is how We shall deal with the present-day unbelievers. (Alusi and others).

13. That is, in the womb. (Ibn Jarir).

14. That is, the birth.

15. That is, He determined their size, weight, color, shape, intelligence, stupidity, etc. There are other opinions too (Qurtubi); some commentators have understood the two

verses as: "A term is appointed for every child in the womb, and it is none other than We who have determined this term, so see how perfect is the determination of Ours."

16. That is, mountains.

17. "At last, after what seemed to be an eternally long time of waiting, after all the suffering through and through, after being held cap-

[31] Neither providing shade nor availing against the flames.

﴿٣١﴾ لَا ظَلِيلٍ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنَ اللَّهَبِ

[32] Indeed, it casts sparks like dry faggots.¹⁸

﴿٣٢﴾ إِثْمًا تَرْمِي بِشَرِّرٍ كَالْقَصْرِ

[33] As if they are yellow camels.¹⁹

﴿٣٣﴾ كَأَنَّهُ جِمَالَتٌ صُفْرٌ

[34] Woe that day to those who cried lies.²⁰

﴿٣٤﴾ وَيَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَئِمَّا يَوْمَ الْيَوْمِ لَمَّا يَمِيزُ الْيَقِينِ

[35] This is the day they shall not speak.²⁰

﴿٣٥﴾ هَذَا يَوْمٌ لَا يَنْطِقُونَ

[36] Nor are they allowed so that they can offer excuses.

﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَا يُؤْذَنُ لَهُمْ فَيَعْتَذِرُونَ

[37] Woe that day to those who cried lies.

﴿٣٧﴾ وَيَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَئِمَّا يَوْمَ الْيَوْمِ لَمَّا يَمِيزُ الْيَقِينِ

[38] This is the day of severance. We have gathered you and the ancients together.

﴿٣٨﴾ هَذَا يَوْمُ الْفُصْلِ جَمَعْنَاكُمْ وَالْأُولَىٰ

[39] So, if there is a guile with you, then used the guile against Me.²¹

﴿٣٩﴾ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ كَيْدٌ فَكِيدُوا

tives in the Field of Resurrection... after all that.. the unbelievers hear: ‘Depart now! You are free to go!’ A word of relief? Rather not. Yes, ‘go.’ But where to? To a three-branched shadow of smoke. A shadow, yes, but which does not offer a shade from the scorching heat from above; but rather from a Fire which rages below it. That is their abode, where flames leap out to kiss their faces. That is where they are now free to go. Depart? ‘Yes.’ But where to? Well, perhaps it is unnecessary to name the place. To a place which shoots out sparks like a huge house. [The Arabs named every house built of stone as

‘*qasr*,’ even if not very large]. If that is the size of the sparks, how about the fire? Woe indeed, unto those who cried lies.” (Sayyid).

18. A number of other renditions are possible but this seems to fit the context. (Au.).

19. Many of the *Salaf* understood “*sufr*” as “dark,” (because the Fire will be dark in color: Qurtubi) although there have been several other interpretations (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

20. There will be several stages and situations during the long Day of Judgment; during some of them un-

[40] Woe that day to those who cried lies.

﴿٤٠﴾ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

[41] Surely, the God-fearing shall be among shades and fountains.

﴿٤١﴾ إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي ظِلَالٍ وَعُيُونٍ

[42] And such fruits as they desire

﴿٤٢﴾ وَفَوَاكِهَ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ

[43] 'Eat and drink freely (O unbelievers), for that you were working.

﴿٤٣﴾ كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

[44] Indeed, that is how We recompense those who do good.

﴿٤٤﴾ إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

[45] Woe that day to those who cried lies.

﴿٤٥﴾ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

[46] Eat and enjoy yourselves a little, you are indeed criminals.'

﴿٤٦﴾ كُلُوا وَتَمَتَّعُوا قَلِيلًا إِنَّكُمْ كُنتُمْ جُحُومُونَ

[47] Woe that day to those who cried lies.

﴿٤٧﴾ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

[48] When they are told to bow down, they do not bow down.²²

﴿٤٨﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ ارْكَعُوا لَا يَرْكَعُونَ

[49] Woe that day to those who cried lies.

﴿٤٩﴾ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

believers will not be allowed to speak, in others they will be questioned, and in yet others they will seek excuses, as Ibn `Abbas explained to the Khariji leader Nafi` b. Azraq (Qur-tubi and others).

21. That is, your life, O unbelievers, was filled with guiles against the truth and truth bearers; why do you not try out a new one now? – obviously a taunt, but which is meant to remind them now, in this life, that their guiles are not hidden from their Lord, nor from the believers in Him (Au.).

22. It has been generally understood that the verse is chiding the unbelievers to be humble (Razi, Qurtubi); i.e., give up your pride, believe in Allah, follow the Messenger, and worship one God. (Thanwi and Ma`arif).

“*Rak`a*” of the text could also mean to pray. It is said that once when Imām Malik entered into a mosque after `Asr Prayers, he sat down without offering the customary two *Rak`ah* of “*tahiyatu al-masjid*,” since he did not believe in any Prayer between `Asr and *Maghrib*. A young

[50] So, in what discourse after this will they believe?²³

فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

lad reproached him, “Offer the two *Rak`ah*, old man!” Imām Malik stood up and offered two cycles of Prayer. He was asked why he did it when he did not think it desirable. He answered, “I was afraid I would be counted among those mentioned in this verse: ‘When they are told to

bow down, they do not bow down.’” (Qurtubi).

23. That is, if they meet this Qur`ān, so full of wonders, with denial, then, in what other discourse will they believe? (Qurtubi and others). ﴿٥٠﴾



Surah 78
Al-Naba'

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Concerning what do they (- the unbelievers in the Resurrection) question each other?

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿١﴾

[2] Concerning the awesome Tiding?¹

عَنِ النَّبَاِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢﴾

The Connection

The connection between the previous chapter and this one is that the last verse of the previous chapter warned of an impending day when the unbeliever will look at the deeds he forwarded and wish that he were dust rather than face accountability. This chapter starts with the moment when the soul is withdrawn. It is from this moment onward that the unbeliever will begin to regret (Shanqiti).

1. What is it about, that these unbelievers are disputing with the believers as well as among themselves? Is it concerning the Great News that they have been given - that of the Day of Judgment?! Well, it is not a matter of dispute. It shall happen. That's Allah's promise.

The opinion expressed by Ibn `Abbas, however, is that by the term "Awesome Tiding" the allusion is to the Qur'an, as Allah (*swt*) said in another place (38: 67, 68):

{قُلْ هُوَ نَبَأٌ عَظِيمٌ (٦٧) أَنتُمْ عَنْهُ مُعْرِضُونَ} [ص:
٦٨، ٦٧]

"Tell (them, O Muhammad) this is a great News, from which you are turning away" (Qurtubi). This is also the opinion of Mujahid (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Nonetheless, the prevalent opinion among the commentators is that the allusion is to the Day of Reckoning (Qurtubi). Qatadah is of this view (Ibn Jarir).

Yusuf Ali writes: "There is practically nothing about the Resurrection in the Old Testament, and the Jewish

[3] (An event) over which they are in disagreement?²

الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٣﴾

[4] No indeed, they shall soon know.

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾

sect of Sadducees even in the time of Christ denied the Resurrection altogether. The Pagan ideas of a future life - if any - varied from place to place and from time to time. Even in the early Christian Church, as we learn from Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, there were contentions in that little community (I Corinthians, i, 11), and some definitely denied the resurrection of the dead (ib., xv, 12)."

Asad comments: "The question which preoccupies man above all others - the question as to whether there is life after death - has been variously answered throughout the ages. It is, of course, impossible to describe the innumerable variations of those answers; nevertheless, a few main lines of thought are clearly discernible, and their mention may be useful for a better understanding of the Qur'ān in treatment of this problem. Some people - probably a minority - seem to be convinced that bodily death amounts to total and irreversible extinction, and that, therefore, all talk about a hereafter is but an outcome of wishful think-

ing. Others are of the opinion that after individual death the human 'life-essence' returns to the supposed sources of its origin - conceived as the 'universal soul' - and merges with it entirely. Some believe in a successive transmigration of the individual soul, at the moment of death, into another body, human or animal, but without a continuation of individual consciousness.

"Others, again, think that only the soul, and not the entire human 'personality', continues to live after death - that is, in a purely spiritual, disembodied form. And, lastly, some believe in an undiminished survival of the individual personality and consciousness, and regard death and resurrection as the twin stages of a positive act of re-creation of the entire human personality, in whatever form this may necessarily involve: and this is the Qur'ānic view of the life to come."

2. That is, the Muslims and the non-Muslims: one believing in the Resurrection, and the other denying it. Alternatively, the allusion could be to the differences among the unbeliev-

[5] Once again, no indeed, they shall soon know.³

ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥﴾

[6] Have We not made the earth a cradle?

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهَادًا ﴿٦﴾

[7] and the mountains pegs?⁴

وَالْجِبَالِ أَوْتَادًا ﴿٧﴾

[8] and created you in pairs?

وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ﴿٨﴾

[9] and made your sleep a (means of) rest?⁵

وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا ﴿٩﴾

ers themselves over the issue of Resurrection. Some do not believe in it at all. Others believe in the spiritual resurrection but not in the physical and bodily resurrection, as, for instance the main body of the Christians (Qurtubi, Ruh).

3. Those who refuse to believe in the day of Reckoning shall soon know the consequences of their disbelief (Qurtubi).

(Although emphasis seems to be a reason for repetition), Dahhak has said that the first verse: "No indeed, they shall soon know," addresses the unbelievers, while the following: "Once again, no indeed, they shall soon know," addresses the believers (Ibn Jarir).

4. That is, He placed the mountains in the earth and anchored them in it for its stabilization (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). A *hadith* says that when Allah (*swt*) created the earth

it began to shake, so He placed the mountains and stabilized it (*Ruh*).

Mountains as Pegs

What the Qur'an has stated here is confirmed by modern research. Details are as follows:

Traditionally the geologists divided the earth's solid body (approx. diameter 12,800 km) into three main regions: The core, which is probably fluid, (of dia. approx. 7,000 km), mantle (of dia. about 12,650 km) and the crust (which varies in thickness from 50-70 km below the continents and about 8 km below the oceans).

But according to the "Plate Tectonic Theory," developed in the 1960's, the earth has more layers. Its upper layer is now known as the lithosphere (of thickness 100 km under the continents and 70 km under the oceans). This lithosphere is said to consist of the upper crust and part of the up-

per layer of the central mantle. The lithosphere floats on another and more easily deformed, plastic layer called asthenosphere (about 200 km thick). The lithosphere is again broken up into about 12, large, rigid plates. Each of these plates is said to be in motion independently, slipping past one another in different directions, carrying the continents with them which are now drifting at the approximate rate of 3-6 cm per year. Lithospheric plates move about in response to the way in which heat arrives (from the core) at the base of the lithosphere, and perhaps also as an effect of the motion of the Earth about its own axis. Both processes are believed to have been more active in the geological past, and hence it has been predicted that plate movements operated more rapidly before and has been slowing down due to the steady building up of mountainous chains and accretion of continents. These movements, and the collision of plates, more vigorous in the past, are said to be responsible for the formation of the mountains, as well as for determining their heights. Thus, over centuries, these mountains grow from below the surface, where they have their root, exactly similar to the roots of plants, but much deeper than what is above the surface of the

earth. They help stabilize the surface movements as well as act as balancing pegs (like lead pieces in a car wheel) to remove the vibrations due to the earth's rotation around its axis (Au.).

Dr. Zeghlul El-Naggar writes: "Mountains have always been looked upon as conspicuous land forms ... Nevertheless the Qur'an consistently describes them (no less than 22 times) as stabilizers for the Earth that hold its outer surface firmly, lest it should shake with us, and as pickets (or pegs) which hold that surface downwardly as a means of fixation. So, simply stated, the Qur'an describes the outward protrusions of mountains from the Earth's surface and emphasizes their downward extensions within the Earth's lithosphere, as well as their exact role as stabilizers and as a means of fixation for such a lithosphere.

"These facts started to come to light only in the middle of the nineteenth century ... when it was realized through experiments that the excess mass of the mountain above sea level is compensated by a deficiency of mass in the form of underlying roots ... the ratio of which to its elevation can go up to 15:1...

"Facts and theories started appearing more rapidly in the early 1960's

[10] and made the night a mantle?⁶

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا ﴿١٠﴾

[11] and made the day a (time to seek) livelihood?⁷

وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا ﴿١١﴾

when the theory of Plate Tectonic was developed...

“The role of the mountains as stabilizers for the Earth’s crust can be clearly seen in their very deep roots, and can be justified by the fact that the motions of the lithospheric plates only come to a halt when a continent collides with another, producing a collisional type mountain, which is believed to be the last phase in mountain-building. Without mountains, the movement of lithospheric plates would have been much faster and their collision more drastic... hence the *hadith* which says that ‘When Allah created the Earth, it started to shake and jerk, then Allah stabilized it by the mountains’” (The Geological Concept of Mountains in the Qur’an, The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1993).

5. According to Ibn al-Anbari, the word in the original (*subata*) is primarily used for stretching a thing. That is, ‘made the night a time in order that you could stretch yourself’ (Qurtubi). Another linguistic possibility is: “(a time for) cessation (of activities).” And a third meaning

is “death,” since sleep is symbolically death (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Razi and others).

Muhammad Shafi` remarks: “Not only humans, but even the animal world, by and large, comes to rest at night. Obviously, if that did not to happen, even humans could not have found rest.”

6. The word in the original is “*libasa*” which has been interpreted by Ibn `Abbas as “(a means of) repose and relaxation” (Qurtubi). This is also the opinion of Qatadah (Ibn Kathir). Another possible meaning is “He made it a mantle,” i.e., a means of covering, by giving the night its darkness (Ibn Jarir - quoting Qatadah, Qurtubi).

7. That is, by providing light to the day, He made it a time when you can go about in search of your livelihood (Ibn Jarir from Mujahid, Ibn Kathir).

Night, a Global Phenomenon

Majid writes: “This gives expression, incidentally though, to a very profound scientific fact. `The food of all living things comes ultimately from

[12] and built over you seven mighty (heavens)?⁸

وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا ﴿١٢﴾

[13] and set (therein) a blazing lamp?

وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا ﴿١٣﴾

plants which, in the presence of sunlight, and only in their presence ... manufacture starch and sugar from the carbonic acid ... whilst they are also thus enabled to take up nitrogen, and so to form their living substance or protoplasm. At night these particle or cells of the living protoplasm of plants ... cease this work. They necessarily repose from their labor because the light has gone. This is the simplest example of the sleep of living things ... This alternation of activities in day and night occurs even in the invisible microscopic vegetation of pools and streams. Animals, even the most minute, only visible with a strong microscope - move about in search of 'bits' of food - in fact, bits of other animals or plants - and they, too, are, with special exceptions, checked in their search for food by the darkness, for even extremely minute and simple animals are guided in their search by the light, that is to say, by a more or less efficient sense of light (Lankester, Science from an Easy Chair, pp. 157-159)."

8. The opinions held by the earliest Muslims about the nature of heavens were, of course, following the astronomical knowledge then in current, which, as presented by Alusi, seem to have been based in conjectures (Au.).

Ancient Muslim scholars were of the opinion that the space beyond the visible world is neither filled nor void (*la khala' wa la mala'*) - Syed Hussein Nasr (Sufi Essays, p. 31, New York Press).

It may be added that Muslim scholars are generally of the opinion that all that is in vision, or that can be observed at any time in the future, either with the naked eye or with the help of scientific instruments, falls within the first firmament: and that there are six more to it. With regard to modern science, although the proofs of the so-called Big Bang model are so far inconclusive, it might yet be briefly stated that for the past 20 years or so, astrophysicists and cosmologists have begun to admit the possibility of the existence of multiple universes, though they caution that contacts with other

[14] and brought down water from the (rain-bearing) clouds⁹ in heavy pour? وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا ﴿١٤﴾

universes might not be possible because they are likely to be composed of ten or more dimensions as against our own which is merely four-dimensional. One such theory that is being proposed is termed as the "Inflationary Theory." It postulates, in the words of Andrei Linde: "Instead of being an expanding ball of fire (of the Big Bang model: Au.) the universe is a huge, growing fractal. It consists of many inflatory balls that produce new balls, which in turn produce more balls (our universe being one of them: Au.)... Cosmologists did not arbitrarily invent this rather peculiar vision of the universe. Several workers, first in Russia and later in the U.S., proposed the inflationary hypothesis that is the basis of its foundation. We did so to resolve some of the complications left by the big bang idea" (Andrei Linde, *The Self-Reproducing Inflationary Universe*, *The Scientific American*, November 1994).

The above was written way back in 1994. Since then the scientists have not been able to make any progress on how the universe came into be-

ing. The Big-bang theory, with the questions it raises but stubbornly refuses to answer, is still the best bet. The Max Planck limits do not allow for any further progress. String Theory is also stuck in Quantum quagmire. All that the scientists agree over is that the Big-bang took place some 14 billion years ago, that the universe is expanding (almost at the speed of light), that the expansion is accelerating, that there seems to be a new force referred to as Dark Force (so christened because the nature of this immensely powerful immeasurable force is in dark) and that the universe is 93 trillion light years wide, end to end, but we humans will never know what is beyond 14 billion light years, because the equation $E=mc^2$ does not allow anything to travel at speeds greater than that of light, and any information originating beyond 14 billion light years can never reach the earth, because of the expansion of the universe (Au.).

9. "Clouds" is the preferred meaning of the original "*mu`sirat*" as stated by `Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah, Abu al-`Aliyyah, Dahhak, Hasan, Rabi` b.

[15] so that We may bring forth therewith grain and (varied) plants,

لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا ﴿١٥﴾

[16] and (lush green) gardens thick with foliage.¹⁰

وَجَنَّاتٍ أَلْفَافًا ﴿١٦﴾

Anas and Thawri. However, Ibn `Abbas and `Ikrimah, backed by Mujahid, Qatadah, Muqatil, Kalbi, Zayd b. Aslam, Aslam and his son Abdul Rahman (and others: Au.), have said that by “*mu`sirat*” the allusion is to “winds.” This is because *mu`sir* is used for something that squeezes, and the winds squeeze out rains from the clouds. But “clouds” remain the preferred meaning (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). This meaning comes from the root `asira which is to hold back, or retain. A woman for instance whose periods are at hand, but who has not yet begun to bleed is referred to as *mu`sirah* since she is holding back the discharge. Hence, the clouds which retain or hold back rain water (Qurtubi, Shawkani and others).

10. “Note how the evidences of God and His beneficence are set out in four groups. (1) Look to external nature on the earth, around you (verses 6-7); (2) your own nature, physical,

mental and spiritual (verses 8-11); (3) the starry heavens, and the glory of the sun (verses 12-13); and (4) the interdependence of earth, air and sky in the cycle of water, clouds, rain, corn and gardens, all serving in their several ways to further the whole plan of the World as it affects us. Can you not then believe that a Creator who does this will sort out the Good and Evil on an appointed Day with real justice and power?” (Yusuf Ali)

Asad adds: “(The above implies that) the overwhelming evidence of purpose and plan in all observable nature points to the existence of a conscious Creator who has ”not created [anything of] this without meaning and purpose” (3: 191), and who - as is stressed in the sequence - will one day pronounce His judgment on every human being’s willingness or unwillingness to live up to the standards of morality made clear to him through inborn instinct as well as through divine revelation.”

[17] Verily, the day of Sorting Out¹¹ (the believers from the unbelievers) is an appointed (event).

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا ﴿١٧﴾

[18] The day when the Trumpet is blown and you shall come (to Us) in groups.¹²

يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَتَأْتُونَ أَفْوَاجًا ﴿١٨﴾

11. It is called “the day of Sorting Out” because that day the unbelievers will be sorted out and separated from the believers.

12. There will be two mighty blows of the Sur (the Trumpet). The first will destroy all life and the present world order, and the second will herald a new phase, when everyone will come to life again. Mankind will be assembled on this earth which will be rendered flat, in the shape of a disk. It is on this earth that the Reckoning will be conducted and Judgment pronounced (Au.).

The reference here is to the second blow (Razi).

The Prophet (*saws*) has given us some details. In a *hadith* (preserved by Bukhari) he said:

مَا بَيْنَ النَّفْخَتَيْنِ أَرْبَعُونَ قَالَ أَرْبَعُونَ يَوْمًا قَالَ أَبَيْتُ
قَالَ أَرْبَعُونَ شَهْرًا قَالَ أَبَيْتُ قَالَ أَرْبَعُونَ سَنَةً قَالَ
أَبَيْتُ قَالَ ثُمَّ يُنَزَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَيَنْبُتُونَ كَمَا
يَنْبُتُ الْبَقْلُ لَيْسَ مِنَ الْإِنْسَانِ شَيْءٌ إِلَّا يَبْتَلَى إِلَّا
عَظْمًا وَاحِدًا وَهُوَ عَجْبُ الدَّنْبِ وَمِنْهُ يَرْكَبُ الْخَلْقُ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

“Between the two blows (of the *Sur*) there will be a gap of forty.” They enquired, “Will it be forty days?” He replied, “I do not say that.” They asked, “Forty months?” He said, “I do not say that.” They asked, “Forty years?” He said, “I do not say that either.” Then he said, “Allah will then send down water from the heavens and they will start growing out like plants. There is nothing from the body of a man that remains (uneaten by the earth) but a single bone. It is the tail-bone. It is from this that mankind will be resurrected” (Ibn Kathir).

According to another version mankind will be recreated from an atom surviving from the tail-bone (see surah 80, note 10). It might also be of interest to note that medical science tells us that in the order of creation, the tail-bone happens to be the first bone to be formed in the embryo (Au.).

[19] When the heaven is opened and it will be (as if) all doors.¹³

﴿١٩﴾ وَفُتِحَتْ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا

[20] And the mountains set in motion (and appear) like a mirage.¹⁴

﴿٢٠﴾ وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا

[21] Verily (that day) Jehannum will be (a place of) ambush;¹⁵

﴿٢١﴾ إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا

[22] for the rebels a resort;

﴿٢٢﴾ لِلطَّاغِيْنَ مَأْبَأًا

[23] to abide therein for ages;¹⁶

﴿٢٣﴾ لَا يَبْقَيْنَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا

13. That is, so many doors will be opened that it will appear as if the heaven is nothing but countless doors. Obviously, a beautiful description. The sight of millions of doors in the vault opening, and angels - of all kinds and shapes - pouring out in millions would be entirely awe-inspiring (Au.).

“And when the mountains will be like plucked wool-tufts” (Ibn Kathir).

14. That is, one would think there was something like a mountain, but there would be nothing. It would prove to be a mirage. Allah (*swt*) said in another place (27: 88):

The mountains have been differently described in other parts of the Qur'an, implying that the references are to various stages or phases of the Day of Judgment (Au.).

﴿وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدًا وَهِيَ تَمْرٌ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ﴾ [النمل: ٨٨]

15. Hasan and Qatadah have said in explanation of the word *mirsad* (ambush) that no one will enter Paradise without first crossing the Fire. Only those who arrive with a pass would be allowed to go through; those not carrying it would be refused entry (Qurtubi).

“You will see the mountains and imagine that they are fixed but they would be moving - like the clouds.”

And Sufyan Thawri has said that there would be three bridges spanning the Fire (Ibn Kathir).

And, in another place (101: 5):

16. The word in the original (*ahqab*, sing. *huqb*) is for an unknown but a very lengthy period of time. It is re-

﴿وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ﴾ [القارعة: ٥]

[24] *tasting therein neither coolness¹⁷ nor a (good) drink;*

لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] *save boiling fluid¹⁸ and pus¹⁹ -*

إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَعَسَاقًا ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] *a fitting recompense,*

جَزَاءٍ وَّاقًا ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] *(for) those indeed who expected not a reckoning,*

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا ﴿٢٧﴾

ported of `Ali (*ra*) that he said: "It is 80 years. Each year of twelve months. Each month of thirty days. And each day a thousand years." This is also the opinion of Ibn `Abbas, Sa`id b. Jubayr, `Amr b. Maymun, Hasan, Qatadah, Rabi` b. Anas, and Dahhak. There are other opinions too. However, there would be no end to the punishment as one *huqb* would be followed by another because the unbelievers will abide in Hell for ever (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Razi, Alusi, Shawkani and others).

Nevertheless, since the unbelievers will remain in the Fire for ever, if *huqb*, as it occurs here, is taken to mean a limited period - however long - then it will be applicable to the "*ahl`l-Tawhid*," i.e., those who did not ascribe partners unto Allah (Shawkani and others). Bazzar has reported that the Prophet (*saws*) said: "By Allah. No one who entered the Fire will come out before remaining there a few *ahqab*" (Ibn Kathir).

Therefore, anyone who believes that those who commit shirk will also be let out of the Fire - even if after a long spell - are wrong in their opinion. Several verses of the Qur`an speak clearly of their eternal stay in the Fire. To quote one, (5: 37):

{ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُخْرَجُوا مِنَ النَّارِ وَمَا هُمْ بِخَارِجِينَ مِنْهَا
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ } {المائدة: ٣٧}

"They would want to come out of the Fire, but they shall not come out of it. They shall face an eternal chastisement there" (Razi, Alusi).

A second opinion of some of the Salaf was that the "abad" itself of the above is quantified.

17. Linguistically, it is possible to render the word of the original as "sleep," as is the opinion of Mujahid, Suddi, Kisa'i, and Abu Mu`adh. Nonetheless, from Ibn `Abbas we have both the opinions: sleep as well as coolness (Qurtubi).

18. The word in the original is "*hamim*" which is for water that has

[28] and denied Our Signs vigorously.²⁰

﴿٢٨﴾ وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَابًا

[29] While We kept a written record of everything (they did),

﴿٢٩﴾ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ كِتَابًا

[30] (and shall say on that Day), 'Taste, then,' (what you denied), 'We shall cause increase in nothing for you (today) save in torment.'²¹

﴿٣٠﴾ فَذُوقُوا فَلَآنَ نَزِيدُكُمْ إِلَّا عَذَابًا

[31] Verily, for the godfearing there shall be a place of fulfillment;

﴿٣١﴾ إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا

[32] Gardens²² and vineyards;

﴿٣٢﴾ حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا

[33] and maidens with swelling breasts²³ - of equal age;²⁴

﴿٣٣﴾ وَكَوَاعِبَ أَتْرَابًا

[34] and (drinks from) a cup overflowing.

﴿٣٤﴾ وَكَأْسًا دِهَاقًا

[35] They shall not hear therein idle talk, nor any falsehood.

﴿٣٥﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا كِذَابًا

[36] A (fitting) recompense from your Lord and a bestowal in full measure:

﴿٣٦﴾ جَزَاءً مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءً حِسَابًا

been heated to its boiling point (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Qurtubi, Kathir). When drunk, it will tear the intestine to pieces (*Ma'arif*).

19. The translation of the word *ghassaq* as pus is perhaps not very accurate. For the word *ghassaq* is used for pus, sweat, tears and blood, put together (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). The intensity of thirst will be so great that the inhabitants of the Fire will drink any liquid offered to them.

20. So they denied both the messages: the one ingrained in the human soul, as well as that which came

to them from the external sources, such as that brought by the Prophets (Au.).

21. According to a report of Abu Barzah, the Prophet (*saws*) said that this is the harshest verse in the Qur'an (Qurtubi). Ibn Kathir however thinks this is a weak report. And Shawkani has declared it a statement of Abdullah b. `Amr.

22. The word in the original (*hadiq*, sing. *hadiqah*) implies a fenced garden (Qurtubi).

23. A literal translation should be: "swelling, rising up, and round

[37] the (sole) Lord of the heavens and the earth and what lies in between - the Compassionate - with Whom they shall have no right of audience.

رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا
الرَّحْمَنِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُ خِطَابًا ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] On the Day when Al-Ruh²⁵ and the angels shall line up in rows; none speaking, save him whom the Compassionate would allow - and who spoke aright.²⁶

يَوْمَ يَفُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا لَا
يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَدِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ
صَوَابًا ﴿٣٨﴾

[39] That Day is a certainty. So let him who will seek a way back to his Lord (do it now).

ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ
مَآبًا ﴿٣٩﴾

breasts.” That would cover the full range of the meaning in kawa`ib of the text (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Razi, Shawkani, Sabuni and others). Shawkani states however that according to Dahhak another meaning of kawa`ib is “virgins.” He presents two pieces of pre-Islamic poetry to prove the point.

24. Abu Umamah reports the Prophet (*saws*) as having said:

إِنْ قُضِيَ أَهْلُ الْجَنَّةِ لَتَبْدُو مِنْ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ، وَإِنْ
السَّحَابَةُ لِتَمْرَ بِحَمِّ فِتْنَادِيهِمْ: يَا أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ، مَاذَا
تَرِيدُونَ أَنْ أَمْطَرَكُم؟ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا لَتَمَطَّرَهُمُ الْكَوَاعِبُ
الْأَتْرَابُ

“The rida of Allah will be evident even from the shirts that the people of Paradise would wear.” Then he added, “A piece of cloud will pass over them and it will be asked, ‘What is it, O

people of Paradise, that you want Me to rain down on you?’ Then heavy bosomed (houris) of equal age will rain down on them” (Ibn Kathir).

Obviously, a beautiful description of houris descending down from the clouds; and the report is from the Tàrik Isbahan by Abu Nu`aym (Au.).

25. There are at least six opinions about who is meant by *Al-Ruh*:

- The spirits of mankind (Ibn `Abbas),
- the children of Adam (Hasan, Qatadah),
- a creation of Allah - neither men nor jinn - who eat and drink like us (Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Abu Saleh, and Al-A`mash),

[40] Lo! We have forewarned you of an imminent scourge. The Day when a man shall look at what (of the deeds) his hands have forwarded, and the unbeliever shall cry out, 'Oh me! Would that I were dust.'²⁷

إِنَّا أَنْذَرْنَاكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ
مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَا لَيْتَنِي
كُنْتُ تُرَابًا ﴿٤٠﴾

d) Jibril (Sha`bi, Sa`id ibn Jubayr and Dahhak): supported by the verse (26: 193):

{ تَزَلُّ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ { [الشعراء: ١٩٣]

“*Ruh al-Amin (Jibril) has brought it down*”,

e) the Qur`an: supported by the verse (42: 52):

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا

“*This is how We have revealed unto you a Ruh by Our leave;*” and

f) one of the angels of Allah as massive as all the creations of Allah put together (Ibn `Abbas) - Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir.

26. The opinion of Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Abu Saleh and `Ikrimah is that

by the words, “and spoke aright,” the allusion is to the one who bore witness to the truth of Allah’s oneness (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Also note that if *Al-Ruh*, the angels, and Prophets will not be able to speak without leave, then what about criminals? (Zamakhshari).

27. That day justice will be done to all creations including the animals. A *hadith* of Abu Hurayrah states, a hornless goat that had been struck by a horned goat without any cause would be allowed to seek revenge. That accomplished, both will be reduced to dust. It is then that the unbeliever will wish that he be also reduced to dust (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). مَقْتَدًا



Surah 79
Al-Nazi`at

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] (I swear) By those (angels) who tear out
(souls of the unbelievers) violently.¹

وَالنَّازِعَاتِ غَرْقًا ﴿١﴾

[2] and those who withdraw (souls of the be-
lievers) gently.²

وَالنَّاشِطَاتِ نَشْطًا ﴿٢﴾

1. The word in the text is *gharqa* which implies tearing out the soul from the inmost parts of the body such as tearing it off from down under the nails, the root of every hair, and from down under the skin, etc., in a most rough and cruel manner (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Alusi, Shawkani). You will say *naza`a fi l-qaws* when one pulls the arrow in the bow so hard as to touch the arrow-head to the bow (Razi).

2. The term *nasht* is used for untying a knot, or removing a stopper. For example, removal of the stopper from the mouth of a water-skin to allow water to escape freely is *nasht* (*Ma`arif*).

Nasht is also used for withdrawing something gracefully, such as withdrawing of water from a well with a pail (Razi).

The Withdrawal of Souls

The difference between the two terms - *gharq* for the unbelievers and *nasht* for the believers - is that, with the removal of the veil between this world and the next at the approach of the angels, (or the soul-snatchers, as the Qur`an has put it), the soul of the former sees the punishment before its eyes and tries to hide around in every nook and corner of the body, requiring the angels to pull it out forcibly. In contrast, the soul of the believers, perceiving a blissful jour-

neying into the realm of the Hereafter, offers no resistance, rather is too eager to be transported to the next world - painful though it is for the body to part with the soul, although not as painful as to the unbeliever.

The latter three verses speak of the speed at which the angels fly through the space carrying the soul to the heavens, trying to outstrip each other in doing so, and who will, when the time comes, conduct the affairs of the Day of Judgment, as ordered by Allah, the Almighty, the Powerful, the Self-sufficient.

That it is the angels that are alluded to in verses 1-5 is the opinion of the first and second generation scholars such as Ibn `Abbas, Masruq, Sa`id b. Jubayr, Abu Saleh, Abu al-Dhuhha and Suddi, as reported by Ibn Kathir, Alusi and Shawkani; although there have been other minority opinions also. Razi, for instance, quotes five other possibilities, each supported by more than one scholar (Au.).

Nafs and Ruh

Mufti Shafi` has abridged the following on *Nafs* and ruh from “*Tafsir al-Maz-hari*” of Qadi Thana`ullah Panipati.

“Humans are made up of three components: the body, *Nafs* and the ruh

(the soul). Similar to the body, the *Nafs* is also composed of the four basic elements of nature - hence it is very much physical - but is much refined, subtle and almost ethereal in its substance. It pervades the whole of the dense physical being. The philosophers and the medical men mistakenly refer to it as the soul. It is not. It is only the *Nafs. Ruh* (soul) is something more refined and subtle a substance which is related to *Nafs* in a very complex manner. The existence of *Nafs* itself depends on that of the ruh exactly as the existence of the body is dependent on that of the *Nafs. Ruh* is directly from Allah: non-material, incorporeal. Nothing more is known about it since only Allah has the knowledge of it.

Nafs on the other hand is like a mirror which reflects light when placed before a shining body and itself begins to shine. This happens to it when a body incorporating it lives by the commandments of Allah. If it does not, then it tends to accept influences of the physical world which causes it to lose its shine and become dark. It is *Nafs* which is taken up to the heavens and is ordered to be returned to the earth - either to be punished or receive blessings in accordance with what it made of itself during its earthly sojourn. It is this

[3] and those who cross (through the space) speedily.³

﴿٣﴾ وَالسَّابِحَاتِ سَبْحًا

[4] and those who (in obedience of the commands) outstrip (each other) swiftly.

﴿٤﴾ فَالسَّابِقَاتِ سَبْقًا

[5] and those that conduct the affairs (as ordered).⁴

﴿٥﴾ فَأَلْمَدِيرَاتِ أَمْرًا

[6] On the Day when the rattling (noise) will rattle (the world) violently.

﴿٦﴾ يَوْمَ تَرْتَجِفُ الرَّاجِفَةُ

[7] followed by thunderous blast.⁵

﴿٧﴾ تَتْبَعُهَا الرَّادِفَةُ

[8] The Day when the hearts (of the unbelievers) will throb (with fear).

﴿٨﴾ قُلُوبٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاجِفَةٌ

[9] Their sights downcast.

﴿٩﴾ أَبْصَارُهَا خَاشِعَةٌ

[10] They ask, 'Are we to be given a new life in the graves?

﴿١٠﴾ يَسْأَلُونَ أَئِنَّا لَمَرْدُودُونَ فِي الْحَافِرَةِ

subtle but corporeal being (*Nafs*) about which a verse of the Qur`ān says that it has been made of the earth and will be returned to it. It is *Nafs* which has to face the questioning in the grave and be punished or receive blessings. As for ruh, it is taken back to the heavens. Nonetheless, it also feels pain or pleasure at the pain and pleasure of the *Nafs*, because of its subtle relationship with it. Hence, in one sense it is right to say that the ruh is being punished or blessed in the grave, as it is also correct to say that it is in the heavens.”

The above, it might be noticed, goes some way in solving some of the riddles and apparent contradictions

surrounding ruh and *Nafs*, but is not as well substantiated as one would wish (Au.).

3. Another interpretation is that by the term *al-Sabihat* the allusion is to stars (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir); perhaps because they are swimming in their orbits (Au.).

4. The word *amran* has been used in the generic sense, hence verbally, it is in the *nakirah* form but can be understood in the plural sense (Razi).

5. The rattle and the blast refer to the first and second blow of the Sur. The first will destroy all life, and the second quicken the dead (Qurtubi). According to a *hadith* the interval be-

[11] When we would be old hollow bones!?

أَيُّدَا سَكْنَا عِظَامًا نَّحْرَةً ﴿١١﴾

[12] If that is so then that surely will be a ruining return.'

قَالُوا تِلْكَ إِذَا كَرَّةٌ حَاسِرَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] That indeed will (will) be (but) a single blast.

فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] And behold! They will be on the surface of the earth.⁷

فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] Have you received the story of Musa?

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى ﴿١٥﴾

tween the first and the second blow will be forty (unspecified periods). See *surah* 78, n. 12 (Ibn Jarir, Alusi).

Razi adds that during this period it will continuously rain.

Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatim have reported a *hadith* according to which the Prophet (*saws*) said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "جاءت الراجفة، تتبعها الرادفة، جاء الموت بما فيه". فقال رجل: يا رسول الله، أرايت إن جعلت صلاتي كلها عليك؟ قال: "إِذَا يَكْفِيكَ اللهُ مَا أَهَمَّكَ مِنْ دُنْيَاكَ وَأَخْرَتَكَ".

“The rattle has come. It will be followed by the blast. Death has come, with all that it implies.’ Someone asked: ‘Supposing, O Messenger of Allah, I were to gift all my Prayers to you?’ The Prophet answered: ‘If you do that then Allah will suffice you against everything that is of con-

cern to you, both in this world as well as the next” (Ibn Kathir).

The above narrative has been evaluated as *Hasan* (Au.).

6. The translation of this verse is based on the explanation offered by Mujahid as stated in Ibn Kathir, Zamakhshari and Alusi.

7. Sahira of the original is for bright, white earth. But it is also applicable to an eye that has lost its sleep - in this case because of fear. However, the interpretation of Ibn `Abbas, Sa`id b. Jubayr, Qatadah, Abu Saleh, `Ikrimah, *Hasan*, Dahhak and Ibn Zayd is that the allusion is to the “earth.” The rendering then would be: “it will be but a blast, and, suddenly, they will be on the surface of the earth” (Ibn Kathir).

The addition of the word “surface” is from Qurtubi (Au.).

[16] When his Lord called out to him in the holy valley of Tuwa?⁸

إِذْ نَادَاهُ رَبُّهُ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ﴿١٦﴾

[17] (Saying) Go to Fir`awn. Truly he has crossed all bounds.

أَذْهَبَ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى ﴿١٧﴾

[18] And tell him: 'Would you like to reform yourself?⁹

فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَى أَنْ تَزَكَّى ﴿١٨﴾

[19] And may I help you on unto your Lord so that you may (learn to) fear?¹⁰

وَأَهْدِيكَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَى ﴿١٩﴾

[20] And he showed him the great sign.¹¹

فَأَرَاهُ الْآيَةَ الْكُبْرَى ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] But he laid the lie and rebelled.

فَكَذَّبَ وَعَصَى ﴿٢١﴾

[22] Then he retreated in haste,

ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ يَسْعَى ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] summoned (his courtiers) and proclaimed:

فَحَشَرَ فَنَادَى ﴿٢٣﴾

8. "Tuwa is probably the name of a valley which lies to the right of Mount Tur, as one comes up from Madyan in North Hijaz" (Sayyid Qutb).

9. Note the softness of the words, but, as Sayyid Qutb has said, "This warm, friendly attitude, however, cannot win over a heart that has been hardened by tyranny, and, ignorance of the Lord of the universe."

10. That is, let me guide you to the ways that will lead you to the *ma`rifah* of Allah. It is with *ma`rifah* that *taqwa* grows in the heart, as Allah (*swt*) said (35: 28):

{ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ } [فاطر: ٢٨]

"Verily. It is the knowledgeable of His slaves who fear Allah (truly)," and, as in a *hadith* (of Tirmidhi: Alusi),

من خاف أدلج ، ومن أدلج بلغ المنزل

"He who feared will travel the whole night; and he who traveled the whole night will reach his destination" (Zamakhshari, Razi).

11. Opinions vary between "the Rod that became snake;" "the Hand which shone brightly," and the "whole of the nine signs given to Musa" as being alluded to by the 'Great Sign.'

12. Majid observes: "The Pharaohs believed themselves to be the visible gods, begotten by God, and them-

[24] 'I'm your Supreme Lord,' he said.¹²

﴿٢٤﴾ فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَى

[25] So Allah seized him with the chastisement of the life to come as well as of this first one.¹³

﴿٢٥﴾ فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْأَخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى

[26] In this indeed is a lesson for him who fears.

﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِمَن يَخْشَى

[27] What? Are you stronger in constitution than the heavens that He built?

﴿٢٧﴾ أَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ حَلْقًا أَمْ السَّمَاءُ بَنَاهَا

selves the Divine begetters of the sun-god, invested with the attributes of Divinity, and presumed to be of the like nature with the gods. `While it easily happened that conspicuous individuals after death came to be regarded by a later generation as effective gods, the cult of the actually living king prevailed in north Babylonia and Egypt and royal statues were objects of worship. In the Amarna Letters (about 1400 B.C.) the petty princes of Syria and Palestine address the reigning Pharaoh as "my sun-god" or "my god" (EMK. II. p. 1046).

Razi has another point to make. When Fir`awn said: "I am your Supreme Lord," he did not obviously mean that he was the Creator and Sustainer of the world. He was an atheist and was merely denying the existence of a Creator and Sustainer who would conduct the Resurrection and Reckoning. Now, since accord-

ing to him there was no such Being in existence, he considered himself the Supreme Lord in the sense of being the sole law-giver in his Kingdom to whom all were required to submit ungrudgingly.

13. The word in the original for chastisement is nakal, which is used for an exemplary punishment (*Ma`arif*).

The present translation is in the light of one possible meaning of the original. The other is that Fir`awn had made two unforgivable statements. One (28: 38):

{ مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَهِ غَيْرِي } [القصص: ٣٨]

"I do not know of a Lord for you other than I," and the other, mentioned here: "I am your Supreme Lord." (There was a gap of several decades between the two statements). Allah punished him for both the blasphemies, to which the present verse is alluding. This is the opinion of Mujahid, Sha`bi, Sa`id ibn Jubayr, and

[28] He increased its expanse¹⁴ and then organized (and arranged) it.

رَفَعَ سَمَكَهَا فَسَوَّاهَا ﴿٢٨﴾

[29] Then He darkened its night and brought out its daylight.¹⁵

وَأَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ ضُحَاهَا ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] Then, after that, He readied¹⁶ its earth.¹⁷

وَالْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ دَحَاهَا ﴿٣٠﴾

also of Ibn `Abbas. The translation then should be: "Then Allah seized him as punishment for both the earlier and the later (crimes)" - Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi, Shawkani.

14. When a thing is measured from its surface downwards then it is called "umq" (depth). When it is measured from the surface upwards then it is called "samk" (thickness). Here Allah (*swt*) used the word samk, which is said to be the distance of 500 years (Razi). Hence the rendering here as "increased its expanse" (Au.).

The cosmologists say that the depth of the Universe is immeasurable. With the construction of every new and more sensitive telescope, the expanse of the Universe is increased by several million light years. And the speculation is that the exact expanse of the Universe might never be known since, with the distant-most bodies running away at speeds near to that of light, the signals emitted by them would never reach the earth. Theoretically however, it is be-

ing said that the universe is 93 billion light years, edge to edge (Au.).

15. "The succession of darkness at night and light in the morning is a phenomenon recognized by all, but it may be overlooked because of its being so familiar. Here, the Qur`an reminds us of its permanent novelty. For it is repeated anew everyday, producing the same effects and reactions. The natural laws governing this phenomenon are so precise and miraculous that they continue to impress and astonish man as his knowledge increases" (Sayyid Qutb).

16. The translation of the original *daha* as "readied" is based on the explanation of Ibn `Abbas as in Ibn Kathir. Linguistically, the word means 'to spread, stretch,' etc. However, in practice the root "*daha*" is used as derivative for several round things. E.g., the hole that an ostrich makes for its eggs is called "*mad-ha*." "*Al-dahwu bi 'l hijarah*" is throwing stones by the hand. The pebbles or small stones that children play with,

(in lieu of glass balls) is known as “*ad dahwu*” and the game of throwing them into a small hole dug in the ground is called as “*mad-ha*.” The round hole itself is known as “*mid-ha*” (Lisan). Muhammad Mohar Ali writes in his “*Sirat al-Nabi and the Orientalists*” (vol. 1, p. 305): “.. the exact and correct meaning of the term (*dahaba*), keeping in view its root, rather provides a very positive Qur’ānic evidence in support of the spherical shape of the earth, as ‘*daha*’ means ‘to shape like an egg’, its noun being *dahiyah*, which the (Hijazi) Arabs still use to mean an egg” (Au.).

Sayyid elaborates: “Spreading out the earth (Sayyid’s translation of the word *daha*) is a reference to the leveling of its surface so that it becomes easy to walk on, and to the formation of a layer of soil suitable for cultivation. Setting the mountains firm is a result of the final shaping of the surface of the earth... Allah also brought out water ... and pastures.

“All this happened after the heaven was built, the night darkened, and the earth spread. The recent theories of geology support this Qur’ānic statement, for they assume that the earth was moving in its orbit, with day and night succeeding each other for hundreds of millions of years be-

fore it was leveled and spread out, became suitable for growth of vegetation, and before its surface took its final shape of plains, valleys and mountains.”

17. That is, the earth of the first firmament.

It is reported that a man went to Ibn `Abbas and said, “I find two verses in the Qur’ān which contradict each other:

{ قُلْ أَتَيْتُكُمْ لَتَكْفُرُونَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَتَّبِعُونَ لَهُ أَتْدَادًا ذَلِكَ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٩) وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سَوَاءً لِّلنَّاسِ لِيُنذِرَ } [فصلت: ٩، ١٠]

‘Tell them, “Do you disbelieve in Him who created the earth in two days and set up equals unto Him - that is the Lord of all being. And then He placed pegs in it from above and blessed it and placed in it sustenance in measured quantity - (all) in four days,” 41: 9, 10), and this present verse: “Then, after that, (i.e.. after the creation of the heavens) He readied its earth.”

(That is, the first verse says that Allah created the earth first, while the second verse says that He created the earth after the heavens. So, which is correct?: Au.). Ibn `Abbas told him: “Allah created the earth before He created the heavens. Subsequent to that He created the heavens. Then, after the creation of the heavens, He

[31] Therefrom brought out its water and its pastures.¹⁸

﴿٣١﴾ أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَاءَهَا وَمَرْعَاهَا

[32] And pitched its mountains.¹⁹

﴿٣٢﴾ وَالْجِبَالَ أَرْسَاهَا

[33] (All) for your benefit as well of your cattle.

﴿٣٣﴾ مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ

[34] Then, when the all-embracing great Catastrophe comes.

﴿٣٤﴾ فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الطَّامَةُ الْكُبْرَى

[35] Man will that day call to mind what he earned (of the deeds).

﴿٣٥﴾ يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا سَعَى

prepared and leveled the earth” (Alusi, Shawkani).

Alusi adds that it is possible that the basic matter for the heavens was there, already created, even before the earth was brought into being, but, given the present shape only after the creation of earth.

The verse, touching upon a scientific subject, is open to interpretation. The allusion could be to the darkness generally prevalent in the Universe which the weak background radiation is unable to overcome. The first part of the verse (Then He darkened its night) might be alluding to that situation. It was the creation of the sun, some 5 billion years ago (while the Universe is estimated to be about 10-12 billion years old), that brightened the area immediately surrounding it (Au.).

18. It is speculated that some of the newly-formed water molecules must have got trapped into the interior of the earth as the dust and gas clouds cooled and condensed to form the planet earth, early in its history. In the subsequent stages jets of steam spewed out to collect in oceans as water. The allusion here could be to that process of bringing out the water to its surface. See ch. 80, note 12 for reconciliation of this verse with the one occurring there speaking of water being sent down from the heavens (Au.).

19. Imām Ahmad has preserved a *hadith* of Anas b. Malik who reports that the Prophet said:

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَمَّا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ الْأَرْضَ جَعَلَتْ تَمِيدٌ فَخَلَقَ الْجِبَالَ فَأَلْقَاهَا عَلَيْهَا فَاسْتَقَرَّتْ فَتَعَجَّبَتْ الْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ خَلْقِ الْجِبَالِ فَقَالَتْ يَا رَبِّ هَلْ مِنْ

خَلَقَكَ شَيْءٌ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ قَالَ تَعَمُّ الْحَدِيدُ قَالَتْ
 يَا رَبِّ هَلْ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ شَيْءٌ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْحَدِيدِ قَالَ
 تَعَمُّ النَّارُ قَالَتْ يَا رَبِّ هَلْ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ شَيْءٌ أَشَدُّ مِنْ
 النَّارِ قَالَ تَعَمُّ الْمَاءُ قَالَتْ يَا رَبِّ فَهَلْ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ
 شَيْءٌ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْمَاءِ قَالَ تَعَمُّ الرِّيحُ قَالَتْ يَا رَبِّ
 فَهَلْ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ شَيْءٌ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الرِّيحِ قَالَ تَعَمُّ ابْنُ
 آدَمَ يَتَصَدَّقُ بِبَيْمِنِهِ يُخْفِيهَا مِنْ شِمَالِهِ

“When Allah created the earth it began to quiver. He created the mountains and placed them in the earth. That stabilized it. The angels were amazed. They asked: “O Lord. Have you created anything more powerful than the mountains?” He said: “Yes. Iron.” They asked: “Have You created anything more powerful than iron?” He said: “Yes. Fire.” They asked: “Have You created anything more powerful than fire?” He said: “Yes. Water.” They asked: “And have you created anything more powerful than water?” He replied: “Yes. The winds.” They said: “And have you created anything more powerful than the winds?” He said: “Yes. Son of Adam who spends with the left hand without the knowledge of the right hand” (Ibn Kathir).

The report is in Tirmidhi who evaluated it as Ghareeb (Au.).

Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir report a statement of `Ali, which runs as follows:

لما خلق الله الأرض قمصت وقالت: تخلق عليّ آدم وذريته، يلقون عليّ تنتهم ويعملون عليّ بالخطايا، فأرساها الله بالجبال، فمنها ما ترون، ومنها ما لا ترون، وكان أول قرار الأرض كلحم الجزور إذا نحر، يخلج لحمه

“When Allah created the earth it protested and said, ‘Will you place Adam and his progeny to contaminate me and commit sins upon me?’ So Allah placed the mountains on it, of which you see some part and do not see the rest. With that the earth stabilized, like the quivering flesh of the lamb just slaughtered.”

Ibn Kathir calls this report also Gharib (a variety of report considered weak because of its meaning; which of course must have sounded strange in those early times: Au.). At all events, it is interesting to note how close it comes to describing what the geologists have begun to say since the 60’s of this century. They say that the mountains have roots that extend below the earth, several times their elevation above the surface, and that the outer portion might have once been elastic (quivering, flesh-like) which has only lately stabilized.

[36] And Hell-Fire²⁰ will be brought nigh for him who'll see.

وَبُرْزَتِ الْجَحِيمِ لِمَنْ يَرَى ﴿٣٦﴾

[37] Then, as for him who rebelled.

فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَى ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] And preferred the life of this world (over the next),²¹

وَأَثَرِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ﴿٣٨﴾

[39] Hell-Fire shall be the abode.

فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى ﴿٣٩﴾

[40] And as for him who feared standing before his Lord, and curbed the self's base desires,²²

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَتَوَّاهَى النَّفْسَ
عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ﴿٤٠﴾

See note 4 of the previous *surah* for more details.

20. The word in the text is Jahim which is for extremely hot fire. Ibn Jurayj has said that Hell has seven levels. Jahim is one of them (*Lughat al-Qur`an*).

21. What does this preference of this world over the next imply? The answer is, it is to do something for the sake of ease of this world at the risk of punishment in the Hereafter (*Ma`arif*).

22. Hence wise men say that if you (are in doubt about an affair, and) want to find out the truth, look for what your base self tells you; then do the opposite (Alusi).

Sayyid Qutb writes: "There are two types of freedom. The first is that which is achieved through scoring a victory over one's desires and releasing oneself from the chains of

caprice. When man achieves such a victory, he finds himself able to fulfill his desires and caprices in a balanced and controlled way which emphasizes his freedom of choice. This type of freedom is the human type, the one which suits the honor Allah has bestowed on man. The other type is the animal freedom, represented in man's defeat, his enslavement by his desires, and his loss of control over himself. This type of freedom is advocated by those who have lost their humanity. So they try to cover their slavery with a dress of deceptive freedom."

Mufti Shafi` points out that according to Maz-hari there are three stages in this "curbing of one's base desires." One, to abandon all that is opposed to the true faith and belief coming from Islam. Two, to oppose one's wishes as soon as one realizes that what he is doing is sin. In this

[41] surely, Paradise shall be the abode.²³

فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى ﴿٤١﴾

[42] They ask you concerning the Hour of Doom, 'When will it come'?

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا ﴿٤٢﴾

[43] In what way are you concerned with it?²⁴

فِيمَ أَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرَاهَا ﴿٤٣﴾

[44] (It is) your Lord for Whom is the final word concerning it.

إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ مُنْتَهَاهَا ﴿٤٤﴾

[45] You are but a warner to him who fears it.

إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ مَنِ يَخْشَاهَا ﴿٤٥﴾

[46] The day they see it, (they will feel) as if they did not tarry (in the world) but an evening or a morning.

كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَهَا لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحَاهَا ﴿٤٦﴾

stage, one gives up even that which has any trace of doubt, in fear of falling into sin. And three, to busy oneself so much with what is approved by Allah that the inner self does not even think of committing a wrong. The Prophet (*saws*) was referring to this last stage of perfection in belief when he said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم : لا يؤمن أحدكم حتى يكون هواه تبعا لما جئت به - حديث حسن صحيح

“You will not attain to (true) faith without the wishes of your base self confirming to what I have brought.”

The report from Nawawi's *Arba`een* was declared *Hasan Sahih* by him (Au.).

23. These verses, although common for all, were first applicable to two brothers: `Uzayr b. `Umayr and Mus`ab ibn `Umayr. According to some reports Mus`ab had killed his brother, but according to other, his brother was taken prisoner and dealt kindly because of Mus`ah. But Mus`ab instructed that he be shown no mercy. Mus`ab himself was killed defending the Prophet during the battle of Uhud. A man of riches before Islam, they could not find a cloth large enough to cover his head as well as his feet at the time of burial (Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi, Alusi).

24. A *hadith* of `A'isha (*ra*) says that the Prophet used to quite often inquire about the Hereafter (probably

under pressure of the unbelievers: Au.) until Allah (*swt*) revealed this verse. After this he stopped enquiring (Zamakhshari, Razi).

Alusi and Shawkani add: “The above *hadith* is in Bazzar, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduwayh and Hakim. (The last mentioned has evaluated it as a trustworthy report). A similar report is in Nasa`i.”

Ibn Marduwayh has also reported `A`isha (*ra*) as saying that:

كَانَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ جُفَاءً يَأْتُونَ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَيَسْأَلُونَهُ مَتَى السَّاعَةُ فَكَانَ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى أَصْغَرِهِمْ فَيَقُولُ إِنْ بَعِثَ هَذَا لَا يُدْرِكُهُ الْهَرَمُ حَتَّى تَقُومَ عَلَيْكُمْ سَاعَتُكُمْ

Whenever a group of Bedouins came to the Prophet (*saw:s*) and enquired about the Hour, he would say, pointing to the youngest of them: “If he lived long enough, it would have arrived upon you” (Shawkani).

That is, you will die if this lad lives long enough, and your death would be ‘the Hour’ for you. The report is in Bukhari (Au.).

Summary of Interpretations

“This *surah* is just one example of many in this thirtieth part of the Qur`an which have one common objective, namely, to drive home to man the reality of the hereafter, its

inevitability, its awesome and serious nature, and to stress its importance to the Divine planning of man’s life in this world. Such planning culminates in man’s death and subsequent resurrection for the life to come. As it sets out to drive the idea home, the *surah* touches the emotions in different ways which are directly relevant to its central idea.

“First we have an ambiguous opening which creates an air of fear and worried expectation. The rhythm here is quick and throbbing: it helps evoke feelings of fear, surprise and wonder.

“This equivocal, shaking opening is followed by the first of the scenes of the hereafter. The scene shares style and tempo with the opening which thus serves as a framework for the scene...

“Having spread an air of awe, the *surah* gives an account of the end met by some of the disbelievers in the story of Moses and Pharaoh. Here the rhythm is quieter and more relaxed to suit the narrative style...

“Leaving history aside, the *surah* takes up the open book of the universe. It paints some of the great scenes of the universe which testify to the limitless power and careful planning of Allah, the Creator of the universe, Who

controls its destiny both in this life and in the life to come. These scenes are drawn here with powerful style and strong rhythm in harmony with the opening of the *surah* and its general cadence...

“After all these introductory scenes and inspiring touches comes the statement concerning the “Greatest Catastrophe” accompanied by the distribution of rewards for actions alone for this life. The rewards are portrayed in scenes which fit in harmoniously with the “Greatest Catastrophe”...

“At this point when we are overwhelmed with the effects of the scenes of the Greatest Catastrophe, Hell brought near, the end of the transgressors who prefer this life to the next, and that of the godfearing who restrain themselves and do not give in to their caprice - at this point, the *surah* turns to those who deny the Resurrection and ask the Prophet to fix its time. The rhythm here is superb: it adds to the feeling of the awe produced by the account of the Hour of Doom” (Sayyid Qutb).

مَقَاتِلُ



Surah 80

'Abas

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] He frowned and turned away.

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى ﴿١﴾

[2] That the blind man came to him.

أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى ﴿٢﴾

[3] How could you tell? He might have sought
to purify himself.

وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَكَّى ﴿٣﴾

Introductory Note

Ibn 'Umar reports the Prophet as having said that he who wishes to see the Day of Resurrection with his own eyes may read this, the next, and the 84th chapter of the Qur'ān. The *hadīth* is *hasan gharib* according to Tirmidhi (Qurtubi). It is also in Ahmad (Ibn Kathir); as also in Ibn al-Mundhir, Tabarani, and Hakim who adjudicates it *Sahih* (Alusi, Shawkani).

Sayyid Qutb writes: "This *surah* may be divided into two parts, each of them treating one major principle of faith. The first is the principle of Resurrection ... and the second principle ... is that of revelation."

"The rhythm of the *surah* is one of violent movement which leaves nothing in its place. Everything is thrown, smashed or scattered away. The movement is so violent that it excites and frightens. It alters every familiar situation and shakes men's hearts violently for a long period so that they feel deprived of both shelter and reassurance. In such a violent destructive storm the human heart is no more than a little feather, blown in every direction. No protection and, indeed, no safety can then be found except what is granted by Allah the Eternal Being."

[4] Or, he might heed the reminder and the reminder avail him.¹

أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى ﴿٤﴾

1. It is widely reported by the commentators (Tirmidhi has classified it as *hasan*, and Ibn Marduwayh as *Sahih*: Shawkani) that once the Prophet (*saws*) was engrossed in a conversation with `Utba b. Rabi`a, Abu Jahal b. Hisham, `Abbas b. `Abdul Mutalib (and some others, who were all important Makkan pagans). He coveted their Islam because of their influence on the Makkans, (and because, they were the people - in the words of Sayyid Qutb - who had “managed to freeze Islam in Makkah and hinder its progress elsewhere”). At that moment `Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum, a blind Muslim, appeared and repeatedly sought elucidation of certain earlier revelation of the Qur`ān. But the Prophet (*saws*) did not appreciate the “interruption of what he momentarily regarded as a more important endeavor (Asad).” The disapproval showed itself on his face in the form of a frown. He did not answer him and continued to speak to the Makkan chieftains. When he had concluded his talk with them and was on his way back home, these verses were revealed. He returned to Ibn Umm Maktum and spoke to him kindly.

According to another version, Ibn Umm Maktum was led by another man to whom the Prophet (*saws*) gestured that he keep Ibn Umm Maktum quiet for a while, but Ibn Umm Maktum, being blind, did not notice and persisted in seeking his attention.

Some versions say that after this incident the Prophet (*saws*) would “greet Ibn Umm Maktum with these words of humility: ‘Welcome to him on whose account My Sustainer rebuked me’” (Asad).

It is also said that when Ibn Umm Maktum visited the Prophet, he would ask him: “Is there anything that I can do for you?” Or, “Do you need anything from me?” etc. But Ibn Kathir says this additional portion of the *hadith* has come down through unreliable narrators.

Nevertheless, records show that after the hijrah the Prophet twice appointed Ibn Umm Maktum as his deputy in Madinah in his own absence. Anas b. Malik adds that he saw him in the battle of Qadisiyyah wearing a coat of mail and holding aloft a black flag (Au.).

[5] As for him who considers himself self-sufficient.²

﴿٥﴾ أَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَعْتَىٰ

[6] To him do you pay attention?

﴿٦﴾ فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّىٰ

[7] Although you will earn no blame if he does not cleanse himself.

﴿٧﴾ وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَرْكَبَ

[8] As to him who comes to you with zeal.

﴿٨﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنِ جَاءَكَ يُسَعَىٰ

[9] And he is fearful (of his Lord).

﴿٩﴾ وَهُوَ يَخْشَىٰ

Sayyid Qutb adds: “The use of the third person form here (in verses 1-2) is significant. It suggests that the subject-matter is so distasteful to Allah that He does not like to confront His beloved messenger with it. This in itself is a gesture of mercy and kindness to the Prophet. Thus, the action which necessitated the reproof has been disguised with great subtlety.”

Thanwi and Shafi` Deobandi have expressed similar views.

Asad writes: “Indirectly, the sharp Qur’anic rebuke... implies, firstly, that what would have been a minor act of discourtesy on the part of an ordinary human being, assumed the aspect of a major sin, deserving a divine rebuke, when committed by a prophet; and, secondly, it illustrates the objective nature of the Qur’anic revelation: for, obviously, in conveying God’s reproof of him to the world at large, the Prophet ‘does not

speak out of his own desire; (cf. 53: 3).”

Zamakhshari remarks: Our scholars have learned the lesson well. It is said that in the assemblies of Sufyan Thawri, the poorest of the pupils were treated like kings.

Alusi adds: It has been wrongly alleged by some commentators that Ibn Umm Maktum was a Madinan (and not Makkan). He was very much a Makkan (and related to the Prophet: Au.).

Ibn Hajr has also ascertained that he was an early Makkan Muslim (Mawdudi).

2. “I.e., who does not feel the need of divine guidance: a reference to the arrogant pagan chieftains” (Asad).

What the verses told the Prophet is: Although the disease of the others was more serious and required greater and immediate attention than that of the latter, who did not require

[10] Him do you ignore?

﴿ ١٠ ﴾ فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّى

[11] No indeed. This is a Reminder

﴿ ١١ ﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ

[12] And whoso is inclined will remember it³

﴿ ١٢ ﴾ فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرْهُ

[13] (Written) On Pages honored.⁴

﴿ ١٣ ﴾ فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكْرَمَةٍ

[14] Elevated,⁵ Pure.

﴿ ١٤ ﴾ مَرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ

[15] By the hands of the messenger-scribes.

﴿ ١٥ ﴾ بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ

[16] (That are) noble, pious.⁶

﴿ ١٦ ﴾ كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ

[17] Man be destroyed. What makes him disbelieve?⁷

﴿ ١٧ ﴾ قُتِلَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ

immediate attention because of the mildness of his maladies, the former lost the right of immediate attention because of a lack of interest in the healing measures, and the other earned it because of the seriousness with which he treated his minor afflictions (Thanwi).

3. “The Qur’ān is described here, as in many other places, as ‘a reminder’ because it is meant to bring man’s instinctive - though sometimes hazy or unconscious - realization of God’s existence into the full light of consciousness” (Asad).

Nevertheless, Ibn ‘Abbas’ interpretation of the verse is: “So He (Allah) will send the revelation to whom He will” (Qurtubi).

4. It is *Al-Lawh al-Mahfuz* that is meant by *subhuf-im-mukarramah* of the text (Ibn Jarir).

5. The reason why the adjective “elevated” has been employed is because *Al-Bayt al-Ma`mur*, in which *Al-Lawh al-Mahfuz* is preserved, is directly under the ‘Arsh (Ma`arif: from Durr al-Manthur, *surah* Al-Buruj).

6. That is, this is an honored message in response to which the haughty Makkans ought to go down on their knees and accept it. Otherwise, it can do without them, and their pride will be smashed to pieces (Mawdudi, abridged).

7. An alternative meaning is, “How ungrateful he is.”

[18] (Did he consider) Out of what did He (his Lord) create him?

﴿١٨﴾ مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ

[19] He created him from a sperm-drop and then proportioned him.

﴿١٩﴾ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ خَلَقَهُ فَقَدَرَهُ

[20] Then He made the path (from the womb to the world) smooth for him.⁸

﴿٢٠﴾ ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسَّرَهُ

[21] Then He causes him to die and sends him to the grave.⁹

﴿٢١﴾ ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ

Ibn al-Mundhir has reported from `Ikrimah that the cause of revelation of these verses was `Utbah b. Abu Lahab who quarreled with his father and in anger embraced Islam. Later he made peace with his father who gave him lots of money and sent him to Syria along with a trade caravan. `Utbah renounced Islam saying, as a pretext, that he was an unbeliever in “the Lord of the star when it plunges (53: 1).” (In his fury during an argument, he also spat in the direction of the Prophet: Au.) The Prophet (*saws*) prayed against him and he was torn to pieces by a lion in the desert (Qurtubi, Alusi). However, there seems to be some confusion with regard to the name. It was perhaps `Utabah and not `Utbah who had renounced Islam. Alusi has himself quoted two pieces of poetry which praise `Utabah and Mu`tab for having embraced Is-

lam, even if somewhat lately. See ch. 111, note 8 (Au.).

A variant interpretation should render the translation as: “Man be destroyed. How ungrateful of him!?” Zamakhshari prefers this meaning.

8. The words in parenthesis are based on the interpretation of Ibn `Abbas, Abu Saleh, Suddi and Qatadah. There have been other opinions also (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Razi adds: The infant’s emergence, head first, from the norm which is head up legs down - safe, sound and alive - through a passage so difficult and constricted, is a great miracle.

9. That is, He honored him by sanctioning that he be buried after death and not thrown away as carcass of animals for vultures and wild animals to feed on (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

[22] Then, when He wills, He will bring him back to life.¹⁰

ثُمَّ إِذَا شَاءَ أَنْشُرَهُ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] No indeed. He did not accomplish His bidding.¹¹

كَلَّا لَمَّا يُفْضِ مَا أَمَرَهُ ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] Let man reflect on his food.

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] How We poured the rain in torrents.¹²

أَنَا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] Then it is We who split the earth asunder.

ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] And brought forth from within it the corn.

فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا ﴿٢٧﴾

10. Ibn Abi Hatim reports Abu Sa`id as saying that the Prophet (*saws*) said:

عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ يَا أَكْمَلَ التُّرَابِ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مِنَ الْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا عَجَبَ ذَنْبِهِ قِيلَ وَمِثْلُ مَا هُوَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ مِثْلُ حَبَّةِ خَرْدَلٍ مِنْهُ تَنْبُثُونَ

“The earth eats off everything of a man except his tail end.” It was asked: “What is it, O Messenger of Allah.” He answered: “It is the size of an atom. You’ll be resurrected from it.”

The *hadith* is also in Bukhari and Muslim but without the latter part, (Ibn Kathir) i.e., without the words “What is it ...” to the end (Au.).

11. That is, he did not obey his Lord. Asad comments: “In other words, man has failed to make adequate use of the intellectual and spiritual endowment referred to in verse 20.

Whereas some commentators are of the opinion that this relates only to the type of man spoken of in verse 17 above, others maintain, with greater plausibility, that it is a reference to man in general - thus: ‘No human being has ever fulfilled all that was imposed on him as a [moral] duty’ (Mujahid, as quoted by Tabari, with a similar statement attributed by Baghawi to Al-*Hasan* al-Busri); or “From the time of Adam to this time, no human being has ever been free of shortcomings’ (Zamakhshari, Baydawi). This is in tune with the Qur’anic doctrine that perfection is an attribute of God alone.”

12. Sayyid Qutb comments: “Pouring down the rain is a fact known to every human being... As man’s knowledge has increased, he is now able to appreciate the meaning of

[28] *Grapes and vegetables.*¹³

وَعَبَبًا وَقَضْبًا ﴿٢٨﴾

this verse more fully. He knows that something happened a long time before the daily phenomenon of rain came to be established... A contemporary scientist says on this subject: 'If it is true that the temperature of the earth at the time of its separation from the sun was about 12,000 degrees, or that of the surface of the sun, then all the elements were free and, therefore, no chemical combination of importance could exist. Gradually, as the earth, or the earth-forming fragments, cooled, combinations would take place and a nucleus of the earth as we know could be formed. Oxygen and hydrogen could not combine until the temperature was reduced to 4,000 degrees Fahrenheit. At this point these elements would combine together to form water. What we know as the atmosphere must have been enormous at that time. All the oceans were in the sky and all those elements not combined were in the air as gases...' (A. Cressy Morrison, *Man Does Not Stand Alone*, London, 1962, pp. 25-6)."

The creation and retention of large amounts of water on earth is a special characteristic of the earth and

seems to have a complicated story behind it. Hydrogen and helium are the most common elements in the Universe. In the earlier stages, hydrogen would have combined with oxygen to form water vapors. While that gave birth to the early atmosphere (that was replete with other gaseous combinations), quite some of it would have got trapped in the dust and gas, cooling off and condensing into a planetary body, just as air gets trapped in snowballs. Thus, water could also have got trapped in the interior of the earth, to be later emitted through volcanic eruptions. In fact, even now, volcanic eruptions are accompanied by steam.

Thus, the water that is there now in oceans, could have its origin from the early thick atmosphere raining down torrents of water as the earth cooled, (as alluded to here), as well as that which came sweeping out from its interiors, to which verse 31 of *surah* 79 is perhaps alluding (Au.).

13. This is the meaning given by Raghīb (Abdul Rashid). However, the opinion of Ibn `Abbas, Dahhak, Maqatil and others is that it is "dates" which is meant by the qadb of the original.

[29] Olives and palm.

﴿٢٩﴾ وَزَيْتُونًا وَنَخْلًا

[30] And dense tree'd gardens.

﴿٣٠﴾ وَحَدَائِقِ غُلَبًا

[31] And fruits and pastures.¹⁴

﴿٣١﴾ وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا

[32] For your benefit and that of your cattle.

﴿٣٢﴾ مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ

[33] Then, when the deafening blast is sounded.¹⁵

﴿٣٣﴾ فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الصَّاحَّةُ

[34] On that day when man will flee from his brother,

﴿٣٤﴾ يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ

14. The word in the original for “pastures” is abba. It is reported of `Umar ibn al-Khattab (by Ibn Mundhir, Bayhaqi and others, including Hakim who has declared it trustworthy: Shawkani) that when he recited this chapter and reached this verse he remarked, “We know what is fawakih. But what is abba?” Then he added, “But this is an unnecessary search.” According to another version `Umar added: “Follow what you understand, and leave alone what you do not” (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Alusi). It is also reported that when Abu Bakr (ra) was asked about abba he said: “What heaven will shelter me and what earth will give me refuge if I say in the Qur`an what I have no knowledge of” (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

All the same, Ibn `Abbas, Abu Razin, Mujahid, Hasan and others have interpreted it as fodder or pasture.

Ibn Kathir adds: The report (concerning `Umar’s statement about abba is trustworthy. What he meant by saying he did not know its meaning is that he did not know what exact species of the plant was meant. Otherwise everyone knows that abba is that vegetation which is used as fodder and on which the animals feed themselves.

What he was trying to demonstrate was that so far as the primary message of the Qur`an was concerned it would not be seriously affected if one did not know the meaning of a word that did not hold any moral, legal or social implication. So why waste efforts over it? He was of course not discouraging exploration of the hidden Qur`anic meanings (Au.).

15. Ibn `Abbas has said that *Saa-khkhah* of the original is one of the names of the Day of Judgment (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

[35] His father and mother,

وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] His wife and children.¹⁶

وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ ﴿٣٦﴾

[37] For every man that day will be an affair that will occupy him.¹⁷

لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] Some faces that day shall be bright.¹⁸

وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ ﴿٣٨﴾

[39] Laughing and rejoicing.

ضَاحِكَةٌ مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

[40] While others that day will be covered with dust.

وَوُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

[41] Overshadowed with darkness (of grief).

تَرَهَّقَهَا قَتَرَةٌ ﴿٤١﴾

[42] Those - they will be the unbelievers, the (utterly) corrupt.

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرَةُ الْفَجِرَةُ ﴿٤٢﴾

16. Afraid that they might demand the rights he had ignored, man will flee everyone he knew in his life (Au.).

Note the ascending order in nearness of relationship: brother, parents, wife and children (Zamakhshari, Razi).

17. There are several versions of a *hadith* quoted by the commentators. One runs roughly as follows: 'A'isha (*ra*) once asked the Prophet:

سَأَلْتُ عَائِشَةَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَتْ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ بَأبِي أَنْتَ وَأُمِّي، إِي سَأَلْتُكَ عَنْ حَدِيثٍ أَخْبَرَنِي أَنْتَ بِهِ، قَالَ: "إِنْ كَانَ عِنْدِي مِنْهُ عِلْمٌ" قَالَتْ: يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ يُحْشَرُ الرِّجَالُ؟ قَالَ: "حِفَاءَ عُرَاةٍ"، ثُمَّ انْتَهَرْتُ سَاعَةَ فَقَالَتْ: يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ يُحْشَرُ النِّسَاءُ؟ قَالَ: "كَذَلِكَ حِفَاءَ عُرَاةٍ"، قَالَتْ: وَاسْوَأَاتَهُ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ، قَالَ: "وَعَنْ ذَلِكَ تَسْأَلِينِي؟ إِنَّهُ قَدْ نَزَلَتْ عَلَيَّ آيَةٌ لَا يَصْرُكُ

كَانَ عَلَيْكَ ثِيَابٌ أَمْ لَا"، قَالَتْ: أَيُّ آيَةٍ هِيَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: (لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ)

"I'd like you to answer me one or two questions." He said: "Sure, if I have the answer." She asked: "How will the people be resurrected?" He said: "Naked of body and feet." (One version adds: "uncircumcised"). She was quiet for a while and then asked: "What about women?" He answered: "In the same state." She exclaimed: "Will they not look at each other?" The Prophet answered: "The affair will be much more serious than that." Then he recited this verse, "For every man that day will be an affair that will occupy him (wholly)" - Ibn Jarir

A similar report is in Tirmidhi (Ibn Kathir). The version in Tirmidhi has been evaluated as *hasan Sahih* (Qurtubi).

18. It is reported of Ibn `Abbas that he said: “He who lengthened his Prayers in the night, will have a bright face in the morning” (*Kashshaf*). قَالَ



Surah 81
Al-Takwir

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

- [1] When the sun shall be turned dark,¹
[2] And when the stars shall be dispersed,
[3] And when the mountains shall be set moving,
[4] And when the full-pregnant camels shall go unattended,

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ ﴿١﴾
وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انكَدَرَتْ ﴿٢﴾
وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ ﴿٣﴾
وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ ﴿٤﴾

1. It may be noted that beginning with this statement: “When the sun will be darkened,” Allah has spoken of twelve events that will take place before “shall a soul see what it has brought forward” (Razi).

Ubayy b. Ka`b however holds a different opinion which may be seen in note 3 below (Au.).

The opinion of Ibn `Abbas is that the allusion by *kuwwirat* is the darkening and ultimate disappearance of the sun. Mujahid, Dahhak and Qatadah are very near this opinion (Ibn Kathir).

Although it is difficult, and even dangerous, to co-relate scientific knowledge with that of the events of the Hereafter, modern science does confirm the possibility of some of the events taking place as stated in the Qur`an. See for instance, ch. 101, note 6, for some information about the future of the sun as science foresees it.

Ibn Jarir (and Zamakhshari) say that since the primary meaning of *takwir* is to fold or wind up a thing, as one winds the `Imamah around the head, it appears that the sun will be folded up in the sense of some of its

[5] *And when the wild beasts shall be brought together,*²

وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ ﴿٥﴾

parts overlapping others, which will cause it to lose its shine, before it is finally discarded.

A *hadith* however says that the sun will be ushered into Hell, which is alluded to by the word *kuwwirat* (Ibn Kathir).

It is said that when this verse was recited in the presence of Abu al-Wafa ibn `Uqayl, someone remarked: “That mankind, jinn and others should be resurrected for reckoning is understandable. But what about the sun, moon, stars and mountains? Why should they be destroyed?” He replied: “These have been created for the benefit of the people. They make their lives comfortable. They are also for the humankind to ponder over the wisdom of their creation, and, through them, reach their Lord, the sole Creator. Now, at the end of their term, when they will be transported to a new world, into a new life, these things will be destroyed in order to impress on them that these were but creations of their Lord who had them in His full control. It will also be for the worshipers of the sun, moon and various other celestial objects to see

their objects of worship destroyed before their eyes, so that they will know that they were in great error” (Ibn al-Qayyim, abridged).

Sayyid Qutb phrases it differently: “The *surah* aims to give this idea of the inevitable upheaval well established in men’s hearts and minds so that they learn to attach little or no importance to the values and riches of this world, though these may seem to be of lasting consequence. The hearts and minds of people should establish a firm bond with the everlasting truth, i.e.. the truth of Allah the Eternal.”

2. One statement ascribed to Ibn `Abbas as well as Rabi`, Suddi, and Qatadah, is that all that Allah has created, to the last fly, will be mustered and judged by Allah in the light of principles He knows best. This, says Qurtubi, is the correct and accepted opinion.

Ibn Kathir adds: Their physical mustering (on the Day of Judgment) seems to be more plausible in view of the statement in the Qur’an about the birds: *wa al-tayr mahshurah*, i.e., the birds will be mustered (38: 19).

[6] *And when the seas shall be set*³

وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ ﴿٦﴾

Alternatively, the allusion could be to an earlier phase, when they will escape from the forests and invade towns and cities because of the terror preceding the doomsday (Shabbir). Ubayy b. Ka`b's opinion, as noted in Ibn Kathir, seems to be very near to this.

For Ubayy's opinion, see note 3 below (Au.).

3. Another opinion, coming from Rabi`, Kalbi, Maqatil, Hasan and Dahhak is that the seas will be filled up as all of them now separated will be joined up including the rivers and lakes (Qurtubi).

The Boiling Seas

Yet another possible meaning has been pointed out by Sayyid Qutb. He says, "The Arabic expression may also mean that the seas will experience explosions which set them ablaze, as mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'an: "When the oceans are made to explode (82: 3)."

`Ali, Ibn `Abbas and others however believe that the seas will be boiled and turned into Hell (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). Qurtubi states the possibility that there could be fire under the

seas which would be further intensified at that time to boil the waters of the seas, and that there is possibility that this may happen before the destruction of the world, as one of the many signs preceding the Judgment day. He also reports Mu`awiyah b. Sa`id as saying that the Mediterranean Sea has fire beneath it. Accordingly, the opinion of `Abdullah b. `Amr b. al-`As was that the water of the seas may not be used for ablution purposes since it is the water of Hell.

It should be of interest to note that Qurtubi's guess that there could be fire under the seas or Mu`awiyah b. Sa`id's statement that there is fire under the Mediterranean sea, is not at variance with the facts of modern science. Latest scientific information is that there is, in fact, fire under the seas in the sense that the crust being thinner at the sea-bed, the temperature is higher and, therefore, it is as if the seas are being heated up from below. As for there being fire beneath the Mediterranean Sea, it is confirmed by modern science that there are a number of volcanoes in the seas that erupt from time to time throwing out lots of very hot lava. As

[7] *And when the souls shall be coupled,*⁴

وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ ﴿٧﴾

for the Red sea, it has been pointed out by a Muslim scientist (Zeghlul al-Naggar: *Qafilah Al-Zayt*), that at excavation of samples from certain points, (geologically known as the “hot spots”) the drilling and scooping tools become so hot that they have to be left suspended for several hours in the air before they can be touched.

Mufti Shafi` quotes Maz-hari: There is no contradiction between the apparently different interpretations. It might happen that first the sweet and bitter waters of the ponds, lakes, rivers and seas will be joined up together as a result of upheavals on earth and then the sun, moon and stars (or planets?) dipped into it, and, finally, the whole thing set ablaze, to be ultimately ushered into Hell.

Alusi precedes him with a similar opinion.

Ubayy b. Ka`b has said that six signs will precede the destruction of this world (and six more enumerated later in the chapter in verses 7-13, will take place after the resurrection): As the people would be engaged in their normal activities, the sun would lose its shine and darken up. With that

the stars would become visible in the heavens. That would amaze everyone and as they'd be looking upwards the stars would begin to fall off in all direction. As they'd be watching this scene (with horror), the mountains would break up and fall to pieces. This would drive mankind to jinn and jinn to mankind. Wild beasts, domestic animals, birds and insects will also come close to each other. The jinn will say, 'Wait. We'll get you the news from the seas.' But when they go there they'd find them boiling. Then, as they will be in that state, the earth and the heavens will split. This will be followed by winds that will destroy all life (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

Imām Razi however observes that there is nothing in these verses to suggest that the first six signs (as mentioned in verses 1-6) would take place before or after the destruction of life on earth, although, the latter six seem to be of the kind that would take place after the Resurrection.

4. The predominant opinion (of the *Salaf*) about “*Wa idhan-nufusu zuw-wijāt*” is that it refers to the grouping together of the people: the good ones

[8] *And when the buried alive infant-girl shall be asked*

وَإِذَا الْمَوْؤُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ ﴿٨﴾

[9] *For what crime was she killed.*⁵

بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ ﴿٩﴾

with the good ones, the evil ones with the evil ones, Jews with Jews, Christians with Christians, etc. (Abdul Razzaq, Firyabi, Sa'id b. Mansur, Ibn Abi Shaybah, `Abd b. Humayd, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Marduwayh, Abu Nu`aym, and Hakim - who declares the report trustworthy - have reported that this is how `Umar ibn al-Khattab understood it: Shawkani). This interpretation is based on the following (56: 7-9):

{وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً (٧) فَأَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ مَا
أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ (٨) وَأَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ مَا
أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ} [الواقعة: ٧ - ٩]

“And you shall be sorted out into three groups. So that (there will be) Companions of the right hand. And who (do you know) will be the Companions of the right hand?! And the Companions of the left hand; and who (do you know) will be the Companions of the left hand?!”

Although an equally strong opinion, also coming from the *Salaf*, is that the verse is alluding to the bringing together of the body and the soul of all

living beings (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi).

Thanwi adds: The former interpretation is also strengthened by the *hadith* which says that a man will be raised up among those he loved.

5. It is said that in pre-Islamic times some Arab women would make a pit in the ground and give birth there. If it was a female child they would fill it up with sand, bringing back the infant only if it was a male. Nonetheless, there were some good people who prevented the practice. Farazdaq's grand-father Sa'sa'ah, for instance, is reported to have saved the lives of seventy new-born girls by purchasing them off (Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi, Alusi).

Some others brought up the female child until she was six years old. At that age the father would ask the mother to dress her up, perfume her and get her ready. Then he would take her to a previously dug pit, push her in and cover her up with sand. This they did either out of shame of having to give their daughters away to someone in marriage when they

grew up, or from fear of poverty (Zamakhshari). Others did so because they feared kidnap (Alusi).

Female Infanticide

(If female infanticide was not an uncommon practice in the pre-Islamic Arabs, it was not unfashionable too in the lands of their cousins-in-faith of India, down to our times: Au.). Majid quotes: “Among all the races of India, there is none more noble than the Rajput; and among the Rajputs, the first rank belongs to the Chuhans ... These people are numerous in the United Province. In the district of Manipuri there are more than 30,000 of them, and not fifty years ago it was discovered that among them was not a single girl. Every daughter that was born was killed. The higher the rank of the family the more constant and systematic was the crime ... This not relative but the statement of a fact. In 1856 special inquiries were instituted. It was found that this practice of infanticide although equally prevalent among the Rajputs, was by no means confined to them, and it was common not only in the North-Western Provinces but also in Oudh, the Punjab, and in parts of the Bombay Presidency. Numbers of villages were visited where there was not a

single girl and where there had never been one within the memory of man. In 1869 another investigation showed that there was little change for the better (Strachy, India, pp. 396, 397).’ And: ‘Infanticide of female infants has been practiced in India from unknown times amongst the ancient Gukhar race in the Punjab, and it has been a constant custom, and continued in several parts of India down to the later third of the 19th century (EIn. II, p. 397).’ As a matter of fact, wherever polyandry is in existence baby-girls are killed in large numbers.”

The custom, however, has not entirely died down. Even today, thousands of abortions of female fetus are being carried out in India (Au.).

There are several reports narrated by ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab that Qays b. ‘Asim came to the Prophet (*saws*) and confessed having buried alive eight (or thirteen) female children. The Prophet (*saws*) told him to sacrifice a camel for each in expiation, which he did (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Mawdudi remarks: It is reported in *Sunan Darimi* that once a man came to the Prophet (*saws*) and narrated how he pushed into a pit one of his daughters who loved him much. The last of her that he heard from was:

“My father, My father.” It is said that the Prophet (*saws*) asked him to repeat the story and cried so much that his beard became wet. Picking up from there, what tremendous change Islam brought among the Arabs should be apparent (to every student of history). This was achieved through such moral exhortations of the Prophet (*saws*) as:

a)

مَنْ ابْتُلِيَ مِنَ الْبَنَاتِ بِشَيْءٍ فَأَحْسَنَ إِلَيْهِنَّ كُنَّ لَهُ
سِتْرًا مِنَ النَّارِ

“He who is tested in any way by these girls, will have them shielding him from the Fire” (Bukhari, Muslim).

b)

مَنْ عَالَ جَارِيَتَيْنِ حَتَّى تَبْلُغَا جَاءَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَنَا وَهُوَ
«. وَضَمَّ أَصَابِعَهُ».

“He who brought up two girls until they reached adulthood will arrive for reckoning with me by his side (as close to me)” – he closed his fingers” (Muslim).

c)

ما من مسلم تدركه ابنتان فيحسن صحبتهما إلا
أدخلته الجنة

“No Muslim will have two daughters whom he treats well but they will usher him into Paradise” (Bukhari, *Al-Adab al-Mufrad*).

d)

ألا أدلكم على أفضل الصدقة ؟ ابتكت مردودة إليك
ليس لها كاسب غيرك - تعليق الذهبي في التلخيص
: على شرط مسلم

The Prophet (*saws*) told Suraqa b. Ju`tham: “May I not tell you about the greatest charity?” He said: “Sure, O Apostle of Allah.” He said: “Supporting your daughter after she is rejected (by her husband, especially), when she has no one to support her except you” (Ibn Majah, abridged).

Mawdudi’s quotation ends here.

Shanqiti states that it is reported of `Umar (*ra*) that he used to say: “Two incidents of the days of Jahiliyyah: one of them makes me cry and the other makes me laugh. What I cry about is the incident of a daughter of mine removing sand from my beard while I dug a hole in the ground to bury her. And what I laugh at is that I would make an idol of dates which I would place on guard near my head at night but which I would eat off when starving.”

Muslim, Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi, Abu Da’ud and Nasa’i have preserved the following report: `Ukasha’s sister Judhamah says :

حضرت رسول الله { صلى الله عليه وسلم } في أناس
وهو يقول لقد هممت أن أنهي عن الغيلة فنظرت

في الروم وفارس فإذا هم يغيلون أولادهم فلا يضر
أولادهم ذلك شيئاً ثم سأله عن العزل فقال رسول
الله {صلى الله عليه وسلم} ذلك الوأد الخفي وهي
(وإذا الموءودة سئلت)

“Once I went to the Prophet. He was among the people and saying: ‘I thought I would prohibit men from going into their women during their suckling period. But I noticed that the Romans and the Persians do that and yet children born of pregnancy during that period do not seem to suffer from any deficiency.’ Then, (continues Judhamah), he was asked about coitus interruptus and he said: ‘This is the secret burying alive of the infant (*wa’d l-khafiy*) that the Qur’ān has spoken of’” (Ibn Kathir, Shanqiti);

hadith literature does not disallow coitus interruptus. Yet, there are several *ahadith* that recommend Muslims to procure numerous children and warns them against birth prevention. And the reconciliation consists in allowing the former on pressing need and disallowing birth control methods as a matter of policy and an enduring practice (Alusi, Shanqiti, Shafi’).

Legal Points

1. Abortion is a major sin (*kabirah*) after the completion of four months of pregnancy (Shafi’).

2. If a person causes death of the fetus after completion of four months, by a stroke on the womb for instance, he has to pay blood wit equal in amount to that of a slave (Shafi’); i.e., half the amount payable for a free man.

3. If the child emerges alive, after such a stroke, (but dies later) then the blood wit is equal to that of a free adult man (Shafi’). See *surah Al-Baqarah*, note 365 for details of the value: Au.

4. All such medicines or operations are prohibited (*haram*) that may cause permanent disability to bear child (Shafi’).

5. Some scholars say that masturbation follows the same rule, that is, if someone fears falling into sin he may resort to it, otherwise it is forbidden (Alusi).

Alusi observes: A complication has risen because of a *hadith* which states that both the one who buried an infant alive as well as the infant that was buried will be in Fire. This is

[10] And when the scrolls (of people's deed) shall be unrolled,⁶

وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ نُشِرتُ ﴿١٠﴾

understandable in case of a polytheist who buried his offspring, since polytheists will anyway be in Fire. But what is the sin of the one buried? Will pagan children be straightaway ushered into Fire? In answer he quotes Nawawi as saying, in his commentary on *Sahih* Muslim, that there are three opinions. The majority opinion is that they will be in Hell-fire in view of *ahadith* to this effect. One of the report says,

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَذَرَأُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَقَالَ « هُمْ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ ». فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ بِلَا عَمَلٍ قَالَ « اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا كَانُوا عَامِلِينَ ». قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَذَرَأُ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَالَ « مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ ». قُلْتُ بِلَا عَمَلٍ قَالَ « اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا كَانُوا عَامِلِينَ ».

'Aisha asked the Prophet about the children of the faithful. He said, "They will be with their parents." She asked, "Messenger of Allah, without any deed?" He answered, "Allah knows best what their deeds would have been." She asked about the pagan children. He answered, "With their parents." She asked, "Messenger of Allah, without any deed?" He answered, "Allah knows best what their deeds would have been had they grown up."

The second opinion is: "No opinion;" i.e., we have no definite knowledge. The third and right opinion is that they will be in Paradise in view of the *hadith* in Bukhari. It says that our Prophet saw Ibrahim (during *mi`raj*) surrounded by children of all faiths who died before adulthood. This opinion is backed by a verse of *surah al-Tawbah* which states the general principle about pagans of the past in words:

{ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّى تَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا } [الإسراء: ١٥]

"And We were not going to destroy them before sending a warner to them."

These were the opinions stated by Nawawi. Alusi adds a few other opinions. One for instance is that some scholars, including Ibn Taymiyyah and Jalaluddin Suyuti, believe that they will be subjected to a test of *Tawhid* and obedience, and will be rewarded or punished in accordance with the results.

6. Umm Salamah reports the Prophet having said that the people will be resurrected naked and barefooted. She asked about women. He said the people will be too busy for that. She

[11] And when the heavens shall be stripped,

وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ ﴿١١﴾

[12] And when Hell shall be set ablaze,

وَإِذَا الْجَحِيمُ سُعِرَتْ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] And when Paradise shall be brought nigh,

وَإِذَا الْجَنَّةُ أُزْلِفَتْ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] Then shall a soul see what it has brought forward.⁷

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا أَحْضَرَتْ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] No!⁸ I swear by the revolving (planets),

فَلَا أُفْسِمُ بِالْحَنَّسِ ﴿١٥﴾

asked him what will they be busy with. He replied:

نشر الصحف فيها مثاقيل الذر ومثاقيل الخردل

“With the scrolls that will be laid open; with weights like dust particles and weights like mustard seeds” (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

The above *hadith* is from *Majm`u al-Fawa'id*, treated trustworthy, but varies slightly from that quoted in Zamakhshari and Qurtubi.

Sayyid Qutb adds: “This is a reference to the records of people’s deeds. They are laid open in order that they may be known to everybody. This, in itself, is hard to bear. Many a breast has closely hidden a secret, the remembrance of which brings a feeling of shame and a shudder to its owner. Yet all secrets are made public on that eventual day. This publicity, representative of the great upheaval which envelops the whole universe,

is part of the fearful events which fill men’s hearts with horror on the day.”

7. The Prophet has said:

مَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا سَبَّحَهُ اللَّهُ لَيْسَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهُ تَرْجُمَانٌ فَيَنْظُرُ أَيْمَنَ مِنْهُ فَلَا يَرَى إِلَّا مَا قَدَّمَ وَيَنْظُرُ أَشْأَمَ مِنْهُ فَلَا يَرَى إِلَّا مَا قَدَّمَ وَيَنْظُرُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ فَلَا يَرَى إِلَّا النَّارَ تَلْقَاءَ وَجْهِهِ فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ وَلَوْ بِشِقِّ تَمْرَةٍ

“There is none among you but who will speak to his Lord directly, without a mediator. At that time a man will look to his right and find nothing but his deeds. He will look to his left and see nothing but his deeds. He will look in front of him and will find himself facing the Fire. So let him who wishes to save himself from the Fire, do it now, even if it is with a single date” (Bukhari and Muslim: Qurtubi).

8. The “*la*” here is *zaidah* (Qurtubi); and is not a negative *la*. The “no” in the translation is for emphasis (Au.).

[16] *And by the stars that disappear,*⁹

﴿ ١٦ ﴾ الْجَوَارِ الْكُنَّسِ

[17] *And by the night when it recedes.*

﴿ ١٧ ﴾ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا عَسْعَسَ

9. In explanation of “*al-khunnas, al-jawar al-kunnas*” (verses 15-16), there are two opinions. One, “it is the planets that disappear.” Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Alusi, Ashraf `Ali, Shafi`, say these are five: *Bahram* (Mars), *Zuhal* (Saturn), *Utarid* (Mercury), *Zuhra* (Venus) and *Mushtari* (Jupiter).

Qurtubi replaces *Bahram* with *Mirrikh* and adds that a similar opinion has come from *Farra`*. This is the opinion that originated from `Ali (*ra*) and gained currency among Hasan, Qatadah, and Ibn Zayd (although it is not clear whether `Ali meant stars or had planets in mind: Au.).

Alusi adds the rejoinder that by his time (d. 1270 A.H.) they had discovered five more planets, which he names and says he could give the diameter, distance, rotational periods and other details of each, if not for the fear of space. He also adds that the new-generation astronomers pioneered by Herschel (Sir Frederick Williams Herschel 1738-1822, British, of German origin: Au.) exclude

the moon from the list of planets and include the earth, being of opinion that the earth also revolves around the sun.

Another opinion about the words “*al-khunnas, al-jawar al-kunnas*” is that the allusion is to “the wild cow that takes shelter in its den in the forest.” This is the opinion of Ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas, Dahhak and Sa`id ibn Jubayr. Mujahid says: “We always used to hear that it is the wild cow that has been alluded to, but now a days people say something else.”

`Abdul Razzaq, Firyabi, Ibn Sa`d, Sa`id b. Mansur, `Abd b. Humayd, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Tabarani and Hakim (who declares the report trustworthy), have all reported that the above is the opinion of Ibn Mas`ud (Shawkani).

A third opinion is that the reference is to “the gazelle” (Qurtubi, Alusi).

Ibn Jarir mentions all the three opinions but does not state his own preference (Ibn Kathir).

[18] *And by the dawn when it breathes.*¹⁰

وَالصُّبْحِ إِذَا تَنَفَّسَ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] *This is truly the word of an honored messenger (Jibril)*

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] *(Who is) powerful, held in high regard by the Lord of the `Arsh.*¹¹

ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] *Of authority,*¹² *(in the angelic kingdom) and moreover trusted.*¹³

مُطَاعٍ ثَمَّ أَمِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾

[22] *And neither is your own Companion (Muhammad) possessed,*¹⁴

وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِمَجْنُونٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

10. With reference to verses 15-18 some have said that in the appearance, movement, brief stop, continuation of the journey and final disappearance of the stars and planets is a simile drawn to illustrate the sending down of the (light) of revelation to the Messengers of Allah, the effects of such revelations lasting over a period, its dimming off and then finally disappearing over a period. The appearance of the night and the spread of its darkness (in verse 17) refers to the period of lull between our own and the previous prophet, when the light of revelation had completely disappeared. The breath of the dawn refers to the appearance of prophet Muhammad, and the coming of a new revelation to him filling the cosmos with the light of guidance (Shabbir).

11. Ibn `Abbas has said: Jibril's power can be inferred from the way he scooped the people of Lut up from the ground with two of his wings and then smashed them against the ground (Qurtubi). Alusi adds that "the power" could also be an allusion to memory power.

12. "Accordingly," Ibn `Abbas has said, "we notice that when our Prophet went to the heavens in the nocturnal journey Jibril ordered Ridwan, the keeper of Paradise, to open the door for them and he was obeyed. Similarly, he ordered Malik, the keeper of Hell, to open the door for them and he did it" (Qurtubi).

13. That is, he is not an ordinary angel, rather an outstanding one.

14. The use of the word "your companion" has a hint for the Quraysh that this Prophet is your own well-

[23] He truly saw him (the arch-angel) on the clear horizon,¹⁵

وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ بِالْأَفُقِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] Neither is he (the Prophet) as such to grudgingly withhold (knowledge of) the unseen,¹⁶

وَمَا هُوَ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ بِضَنِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

known colleague whom you have known over a long period as an entirely dependable, sagacious and intelligent person. Does the coming down of revelation qualify him for madness?

15. That is, Muhammad (*saws*) saw Jibril in his true form and shape which, with its six hundred wings, was so enormous as to cover the whole of the horizon (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Since this verse was revealed before night journey (*al-isra' wa l-mi'raj*) took place, it can possibly be only Jibril who could have been meant here as one whom the Prophet (*saws*) saw. He saw him twice in his original shape and size. The second sighting is mentioned in another set of verses which say (53: 4-10):

إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَى (٤) عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَى (٥)
ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَى (٦) وَهُوَ بِالْأَفُقِ الْأَعْلَى (٧) ثُمَّ دَنَا
فَتَدَلَّى (٨) فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى (٩) فَأَوْحَى
إِلَى عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَى

“This is naught but a revelation being revealed; taught by one (i.e., Jibril) terrible in power, very strong. He stood poised, being on the higher horizon, then drew near and suspended hung, two bow’s lengths away, or nearer, then he revealed to His seroant what he revealed” (Ibn Kathir).

16. That is, the Prophet is not such as to withhold anything of what is revealed to him out of miserliness: Mujahid, Qatadah, Hasan, Sufyan, Ibn Zayd and others. Alternatively, he is not one who can be accused of withholding any part of the Message: Ibn `Abbas, Sa`id b. Jubayr, Ibrahim, Zirr and Dahhak (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

What is meant is that, misled by his prophecies you think that the Prophet is a soothsayer. But he is not. For, soothsayers give out their information grudgingly, incomplete, in return of monetary rewards, and, consequently, in proportion to how much they are paid (Shabbir).

[25] Nor is this (Qur'ān) the utterance of Satan the accursed,¹⁷

﴿٢٥﴾ وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِيمٍ

[26] So where are you going?¹⁸

﴿٢٦﴾ فَأَيْنَ تَذْهَبُونَ

[27] Verily this is no less than a reminder unto all beings,

﴿٢٧﴾ إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

[28] For whoever of you that wills to go straight (and follow the truth),

﴿٢٨﴾ لِمَن شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَن يَسْتَقِيمَ

17. That is, it is beyond Shaytan to be able to receive it or teach it to others. Allah (*swt*) said in another place (26: 210-212):

{ وَمَا تَنَزَّلَتْ بِهِ الشَّيَاطِينُ (٢١٠) وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُمْ
وَمَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ (٢١١) إِيَّاهُمْ عَنِ السَّمْعِ لَمْعَزُولُونَ }
[الشعراء: ٢١٠ - ٢١٢]

“Satan never brought it down. It behooves them not, neither are they able. In fact, they are barred from listening” (Ibn Kathir).

Sayyid Qutb remarks: “They (the Makkans) knew the Prophet perfectly well. They knew that he was a man of steady character, great sagacity and complete honesty. But in spite of all this they claimed that he was mad, and that he received his revelations from the devil. Some of them adopted this attitude as a basis for their sustained attack on the Prophet and his Islamic message. Others did so out of amazement and wonder at his revelation, which is unlike any-

thing said or written by man. Their claim confirmed their traditional belief that each poet had a devil who wrote his poems, and each monk had a devil who uncovered for him the secrets of the unknown world. They also believed that the devil may come in contact with some people causing them to say some very strange things.”

They also believed that the Prophet (*saws*) was concealing part of what was shown to him by the devils, was not revealing the whole truth, and hence Allah said in refutation, “Neither is he (i.e., the Prophet) as one to grudgingly withhold (knowledge of) the unseen” (Au.).

18. What is meant is that a word’s value depends on its narrator. Now this revelation has come through two narrators, Jibril and Muhammad. And these are their qualities. So where are you going? (Shabbir).

[29] Yet, you cannot will, unless wills Allah, رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾
 the Lord of the Creation.¹⁹

19. As Allah said (6: 111):

{وَلَوْ أَنَّمَا تَرْغَبُنَا إِلَىٰ إِيهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَىٰ
 وَحَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قَبْلًا مَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا أَن
 يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ} [الأنعام: ١١١]

“Were We to send the very angels to them, and the dead were to speak to them, and brought up everything right before them, they would still not believe unless Allah were to wish so...”

And (10: 100):

{وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ} [يونس:
 ١٠٠]

“It is not for a soul to believe but with the will of Allah...”

And (28: 56):

{إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ
 يَشَاءُ} [القصص: ٥٦]

“You will not be able to guide whomsoever you love, rather, Allah guides whom He will...” (Qurtubi, Alusi, Shawkani).

It is said that when the previous verse: “(This is a reminder) for whoever of you that wishes to go straight,” was revealed, Abu Jahl said: “If that is the case then it is up to us. If we wish we’ll take the straight path (and if we

do not, we will not).” Upon this Allah revealed this verse: “Yet, you cannot will unless wills Allah, the Lord of the Creation” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Shawkani adds: the report comes from Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) and is in Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Marduwayh.

Hasan (al-Busri) has remarked: “By God. The Arabs never wished for Islam. It was Allah who decided it for them” (Qurtubi).

Sayyid Qutb writes: “The *surah* concludes by stating that the operative will behind everything is the will of Allah... We notice that the Qur’an makes a statement of this type whenever the will of human beings or creatures is generally mentioned. The reason for this is that the Qur’an wants to keep the fundamental concepts of faith absolutely clear. These include the fact that everything in the universe is subject to the will of Allah. No one has a will which is independent of that of Allah. That He grants man a free will is part of His own Divine Will, like everything else.”

Predetermination and Free Will

The concepts of freedom and determinism are quite complicated ones and require much space for a detailed discussion. For the moment it might help to quote what Laplace had to say on the possibility of prediction: "If an ideal observer knew the position of all the particles at a given instant and knew all the laws governing their movements, he could predict and retrodict the entire history of the universe." (John Searle: *Minds, Brains and Science*, p. 87). To this we can add to say that were the observer to have the 'power' too - in addition to knowledge - then, obviously, he could, not only predict, but also determine the course of events. In that case his knowledge would circumscribe the accomplishments of his power. Further, it must be obvious that without these elements, viz., Knowledge and Power, nothing could come into existence nor an event could take place. A single will, therefore, is the elementary requirement of the system to work.

Moreover, what has been said by Laplace, applies, of course, primarily to the physical world. Humans with 'freedom to will' and the 'power to act' can be said to be able to determine their own future. They can, af-

ter all, move their hands at will, and do and say what they wish to. But, in the ultimate analysis, these can also be shown to be of the pre-determined nature, or, in other words, Allah's own creation, like any other creation. In fact, physicists have been unable to decide whether the laws of nature are deterministic or statistical. The former will require an external "agency" to create them, and the latter will allow them to come into existence by themselves. The century-long debate among the scientists has produced no satisfactory results. Nevertheless even if the latter were to be proved as true, the question that will then arise is, who determined their "orderly" appearance and behavior?

Hence the standard Islamic position in this regard is, in the words of Sheikh `Abdul Qadir Jeelani, (who was perhaps echoing the idea promulgated by Abul Hasan al-Ash`ari in his "Confession of Faith"): "Our actions belong to Allah in point of creation (*khalq*), and to His servants in point of acquisition (*kasb*)." (*Futuh 'l-Ghayb*: tr. Muhtar Holland).

Imām Ghazali took a step forward in trying to resolve the issue by stating, in the words of Murad Hoffman: "God, the only cause of the action

of His creatures, does not prevent them from accomplishing willful action through acquisition (*maqdura*); for God created will (*qudra*) and that which is willed (*maqdur*), the ability to choose as well as that which is chosen.” “How can acquired actions be completely attributed to inevitability (*jabr*), when everyone instinctively understands the difference between voluntary and involuntary (*daruri*) reflexes?” (Islam the Alternative, Garnet Publishing, 1993, pp. 59-60).

The above is not only in theory. The world of physical science has long been facing intriguing phenomena in nature that lead the scientists to believe that they live in a world which is both determined as well as undetermined and that the matter that they encounter can both be considered living as well as dead. Consider for instance the fact that the sub-atomic particles behave both as particles as well as waves and that during experiments it has been found that the wave-particles ‘remember’ their form and shape before their collision to return to their original form and shape afterwards. These particles can tunnel through an otherwise impenetrable barrier - as if they know which ways to turn in a complex structure so that they do not end up coming

out on the same side that they entered. Or, consider the ‘uncertainty principle,’ which in scientific terms dictates that an event will only happen if it is not observed!

Experiments have also revealed that when a pair of photons were fired in the opposite directions, and their polarization changed selectively, the change in one automatically altered the polarization of the other. And this, the scientists predict, can happen even if the other photon were to be at the other end of the universe!

To be sure, Allah’s Will is easily discernable in the living organisms. For instance, it has been found out by experiments that if all the soldier ants of a nest are destroyed, more number of soldier ants (than the worker ants) emerge out of the previously laid eggs, and, contrarily, if the worker ants are destroyed, more worker ants and less soldier ants hatch out of the eggs laid previous to destruction. If we rule out Allah’s Will, it would mean that the genes in the eggs lying in the nests know what’s happening outside!

If such is the pattern of behavior of matter at the smallest level, organic or inorganic, how can humans, who are made up of these determinable as well as indeterminable elements, and

who share the same environment as the organic matter, said to be acting either entirely independently, or, conversely, endowed with volition and will, declared totally exempt of any responsibility?

In fact, the tables have almost turned full. Today it is the scientists who are inclined to a greater degree to believe that human actions are predetermined than the religious people. Physiologists of our age do not believe that the 'mind' (very near to the concept of *nafs* in Islam) is a separate entity able to interfere physically with the neuronal activities that go on in the brain during the decision making process conducted entirely within it. The dominant idea is that the brain is independent in making its choices and that the decisions made by it are physically determined. It is only because of the information fed to the brain by way of current inputs, which in turn play an important role in the process of making decisions, that the scientist would admit that the humans are capable of making independent choices.

Therefore, with such uncertainty existing both at the basic levels of the brain as well as matter - it is almost impossible to decide whether men's actions are acquired or created. Fur-

ther, to what extent do we enjoy freedom in the *kasb* allowed to us, within the framework of thought and action imposed upon us by their creation that precedes acquisition, and, the power that the outside world enjoys in influencing our decisions, are truly mind-boggling questions. Hence, not only the philosophers, but even the scientists admit that (in the words of John Searle again) "the problem (of free will and determinism) will stay with us."

It might also be interesting to quote the following. Hoffman (The Alternative, p. 62) writes: "Surprisingly this stance (of *kasb* and *khalq*: Au.) has been rehabilitated by modern physics. As has been well-known since Werner Heisenberg's discovery of the uncertainty principle in 1952, physics has learned to describe the inner-atomic reality not using alternatives but complementary states (particle versus waves). It was discovered that particle physics can be well-grasped using the Islamic theory of predestination, i.e., its concept of simultaneously determined and undermined behavior. And, by the same token, Muslims - as Ulrich Schoen has shown - can point out that their own attempts to explain a theoretical and scientific problem (the problem of causality as a part of

the problem of predestination) can no longer be belittled as medieval obscurantist nonsense.”

Accordingly, there is wisdom in the statement of Muslim scholars that “*qadr*” is one of the well-guarded secrets of Allah and in the Prophet’s counsel that it be left to itself. `Ali illustrated the dubious nature very well when asked by someone about the extent to which one was bound

by the *Qada’* and *Qadr* and the extent to which free. `Ali asked him to lift one of his feet. When he did that, he asked him to lift the other one also. The man said he could not. `Ali told him that those were the limits of his freedom and choice.

Also see *surah* 91 note 9, and *surah* 92 note 7 for relevant *ahadith* (Au.).

﴿قَدْرًا﴾





Surah 82
Al-Infitar

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] When the heaven is split open,

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْفَطَرَتْ ﴿١﴾

[2] When the stars scatter,

وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انتَثَرَتْ ﴿٢﴾

[3] When the oceans are suffered to burst
forth,¹

وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِّرَتْ ﴿٣﴾

[4] And the graves hurled over,²

وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ ﴿٤﴾

Relationship

Suyuti has said that Allah's grace inspired in him the key to a subtle connection between this chapter, the two earlier ones and the one that follows it. Most of the two preceding chapters, i.e., *surah Al-Takwir* and *Al-Inshiqaq* dealt with the breaking in of the Day of Judgment. When that would have taken place, there will be a lull. That is referred to in this *surah Al-Mutaffifin*. The next major event on that Day will be that of the handing over of Records of deeds to the people, either in the right or the left

hand. This theme is taken up in the next *surah* i.e. *Al-Inshiqaq* (Alusi).

1. That is, they will burst forth, cross boundaries and join up with each other (Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah, Hasan and others: Ibn Jarir). Hasan's opinion is that the sea (beds) will split open, devour the waters, and the whole of the land will become a single flat dry bed (Zamakhshari, Razi, Ibn Kathir).

2. Ibn `Abbas has interpreted these words as: "When the graves shall be searched" (Ibn Jarir).

[5] (Then) Shall a soul know what it has sent forward and what it left behind.³

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ ﴿٥﴾

[6] O Man! What has deceived you as to your Gracious Lord?⁴

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّبَكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ ﴿٦﴾

[7] Who created you, shaped you and wrought you in symmetry,⁵

الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ فَعَدَلَكَ ﴿٧﴾

3. To Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah, Qatadah and others it means, “What a man fulfilled of his obligations and what he left undone.” But to Qurazi it means, “What a man did in his life and what he left behind as his example” (Ibn Jarir).

A *hadith* reported by Hudhayfah, classified authentic by Hakim, says:

مَنْ اسْتَنَّ خَيْرًا فَاسْتَنَّ بِهِ كَانَ لَهُ أَجْرُهُ كَامِلًا وَمَنْ
أُجُورَ مَنْ اسْتَنَّ بِهِ وَلَا يَنْقُصُ مِنْ أُجُورِهِمْ شَيْئًا وَمَنْ
اسْتَنَّ سُنَّةً سَيِّئَةً فَاسْتَنَّ بِهِ فَعَلَيْهِ وِزْرُهُ كَامِلًا وَمَنْ أُوْزَارَ
الَّذِي اسْتَنَّ بِهِ وَلَا يَنْقُصُ مِنْ أُوْزَارِهِمْ شَيْئًا وَصَحِيحٌ
سنن ابن ماجه

“Whoever left behind him a good example is rewarded for his good deed as well as for those who followed him in that good example after him, without they suffering the least loss. In contrast, whoever left behind a bad example will have the sin upon him as well as that of those who followed his example, without

their sin suffering the least loss.” Hudhayfah then recited this verse (Shawkani).

4. `Umar and Ibn `Umar have said that it is ignorance that has deceived man (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Ghalib al-Hanafi and Saleh b. Mismar have reported a *hadith* also to this effect. Nevertheless, this does not rule out Shaytan’s seductions. In addition, some have said that it is the Graciousness of our Lord, who does not punish at the first instance of sin that deceives man (Qurtubi).

5. That is, He balanced you. So that He did not make one of your limbs longer than the other, or made part of your body dark and part fair, or one of the eyes larger than the other (Razi). It could also mean that He straightened you up so that you can stand erect in contrast to the animals (Ibn `Abbas: Razi).

[8] In whatever form He wished, He cast you.⁶

﴿٨﴾ فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ

[9] No indeed, you deny the Judgement.

﴿٩﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ تُكَذِّبُونَ بِالَّذِينَ

6. It is reported that the Prophet (*saws*) asked one of his Companions what he thought his wife would give birth to? The man said he was not sure whether it would be a male or a female. He asked him whom he thought he or she would resemble. The man replied that it was obvious that the child would resemble either of the two parents. The Prophet told him: “Do not say that. With pregnancy Allah brings back all (the shapes and forms) that have passed earlier since Adam (to choose from). Have you not read in the Qur’an: ‘In whatever shape He wished, He cast him’” (Ibn Jarir). This particular *hadith* is, however, weak. But there are authentic traditions in Bukhari and Muslim that speak of man inheriting from beyond his parents (Ibn Kathir).

Inherited Traits

The statement about man inheriting from beyond his parents is very near to today’s knowledge of biological inheritance. Each human cell has 46 chromosomes, half of which are contributed by each parent. Therefore, there is every likelihood of the

earliest chromosome being there in every new fertilized egg. And the likelihood of inheritance from distant ancestors will increase if it is discovered that - by some complex mechanism - genes are also inherited directly and not merely whole chromosomes, since each cell carries anything between a hundred thousand to five million genes, the exact number being undetermined.

Another amazing discovery of modern science is that every newly fertilized egg receives a cellular organelle called mitochondria, from the mother’s side alone (although occasionally, a male mitochondria might also slip through, but that perhaps is abnormal). And mitochondria has its own DNA within it, whose exact function is not very well understood. Thus, the mitochondria that each human has in every of his cell, could have been coming down from Hawwa’ (*asws*).

Further, there is no difference in opinion among the scientists that since instructions at the cell level for all surviving life forms are written in similar language, they must

have one origin. To which statement we can add the correction that the sudden appearance of Adam (*asws*) at the behest of Allah (*swt*), in the middle of the chain of evolutionary development, is not a remote impossibility. Currently, it is known to the scientists that the so called evolution of life on earth does not take place in gradual steps, as thought earlier, rather by a process - named by some as "Punctuated Equilibria" - in which new life forms, with new designs and advanced organs, appear abruptly and quite suddenly, all set to confront new life conditions. Consequently, the Being that is capable of such big steps in mutations that result in a new species, is also capable of giving rise to one independent of the chain (Au.).

A report of Bishr b. Jahsh says that,

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَصَقَ يَوْمًا فِي كَفِّهِ
فَوَضَعَ عَلَيْهَا أُصْبَعَهُ ثُمَّ قَالَ قَالَ اللَّهُ ابْنُ آدَمَ أُنِّي
تُعْجِزُنِي وَقَدْ خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ مِثْلِ هَذِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا سَوَّيْتُكَ
وَعَدَلْتُكَ مَشَيْتَ بَيْنَ بُرْدَيْنِ وَلِالأَرْضِ مِنْكَ وَبِيَدٍ
فَجَمَعْتَ وَمَنْعْتَ حَتَّى إِذَا بَلَغْتَ التَّرَاقِي قُلْتَ
أَتَصَدَّقُ وَأُنِّي أَوَانُ الصَّدَقَةِ

Once the Prophet spat in his palm and pointing at it with his finger said: "Allah says, 'Son of Adam. Do you think you will be able to frustrate Me when I have created

you from a thing like this? When I shaped you and gave you symmetry you began to strut about, clad in two cloaks, while the earth is going to swallow you! Then you amassed (wealth) and refused to spend it until you approached death. Then you say, "I give (so much) in charity (to so and so)." But this is not the time for acceptance of charity." The report is in Musnad of Ahmad, of Hasan status, and another, similar, is in Ibn Majah (Ibn Kathir).

With reference to the wonders of the body, Sayyid Qutb quotes A.C. Morrison: "A part of the human ear is a series of some four thousand minute but complex arches graduated with exquisite regularity in size and shape. These may be said to resemble a musical instrument, and they seem adjusted to catch, and transmit in some manner to the brain, every cadence of sound or noise, from the thunder-clap to the whisper of the pines and the exquisite blending of the tones and harmonies of every instrument in the orchestra. If in forming the ear the cells were impelled to evolve strict efficiency only that man might survive, why did they not extend the range and develop a superacuteness? Perhaps the power behind these cells'

[10] But, lo! Over you are preservers (of your deeds),⁷

وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لِحَافِظِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] Honored (scribes) writing down (everything that you do, and),⁸

كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ ﴿١١﴾

[12] Who are aware of all that you do.⁹

يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

activities anticipated man's coming need of intellectual enjoyment, or did they by accident build better than they knew?" (*Man Does Not Stand Alone*, London, 1962, pp. 63-64)

7. Ibn `Abbas has said that these are four angels, two during the day and two during the night, who record everything that a man does (Shawkani).

One of them is on the right side and the other on the left. The Qur'an said (50: 17-18):

{ إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيَانِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ }
{ (١٧) مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ }
[ق: ١٧، ١٨]

"When the two angels meet together, one sitting on the right and another on the left, not a word does he utter, but by him is an observer ready (to jot down)."

It is also known (from a *hadith*: Au.) that they do not write down an evil deed for the first six hours after it has been committed, in the hope that the man will repent. If he does, it is not recorded at all (Alusi).

Shanqiti adds: An additional possible meaning is that they guard him, as in verse (6: 61):

{ وَيُرْسِلْ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً } [الأنعام: ٦١]

"And He sends guards over you."

8. It is reported that the Prophet said:

أكرموا الكرام الكاتبين الذين لا يفارقونكم إلا عند إحدى حالتين: الجنابة والغائط. فإذا اغتسل أحدكم فليستتر بحرم حائط أو ببعيره، أو ليستره أخوه

"Honor the honored scribes. Those, who do not part company except in two situations: in the water closet and during intercourse. Therefore, when one of you takes a bath let him either get behind a wall, or a camel, or seek a brother's help in shielding him with a piece of cloth" (Qurtubi).

The report is in *Sahih* of Ibn Hibban (Ibn Kathir).

Also see ch. 6, note 97 of this work.

9. Thanwi observes: Their knowledge includes people's intentions. As for the *hadith* in Suyuti that they do not hear the *dhikr 'l-khafiy* (sub-

[13] Surely, the pious shall be in bliss;

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] And surely the wicked shall be in a fiery furnace;¹⁰

وَأِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] Into which they shall enter on the Day of Judgement,

يَصَلُّونَهَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] Nor shall they be able to get away from it.

وَمَا هُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] And what will explain you what the Day of Judgement is?

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] Again, what will explain you what the Day of Judgement is?

ثُمَّ مَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] A day when no soul shall have any power (of interference) on behalf of any other soul.¹¹ Rather, the affair shall be entirely Allah's.

يَوْمَ لَا تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَالْأَمْرُ
يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ ﴿١٩﴾

vocal remembrance), taken as a special case, it does not contradict the general rule that they are aware of intentions.

10. It is said that Sulayman b. Abdul Malik passed by Madinah on his way to Makkah. When Abu Hazim met him, he asked him:

حكى أن سليمان بن عبد الملك مر بالمدينة وهو يريد مكة ، فقال لأبي حازم : كيف القدم على الله غداً ؟

“What kind of presentation will it be tomorrow before our Lord?”
Abu Hazim replied:

قال : أما المحسن فكالغائب يقدم من سفره على أهله ، وأما المسيء فكالأبق يقدم على مولاه ، قال : فبكى ، ثم قال :

“As for the virtuous, it will be like a man returning home after a journey. But for the evil-doer, it will be like a runaway slave (arrested) and brought before his lord.” Sulayman wept and said:

ليت شعري ما لنا عند الله

“Only if we knew how we will be treated.” Abu Hazim told him:

فقال أبو حازم : أعرض عملك على كتاب الله ، قال : في أي مكان من كتاب الله؟

“You can know that from the Qur’ān.” “From which part?” Sulayman asked anxiously. Abu Hazim recited these verses:

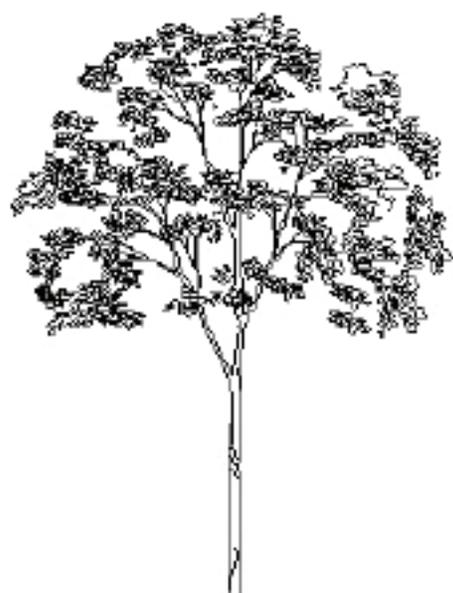
قال : { إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ * وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ }

“Surely, the pious shall be in bliss; and surely the wicked shall be in a fiery furnace” (Razi, Sabuni).

11. This does not negate intercession. Rather, it negates an indepen-

dent interference on the part of the intercessors. When Allah wishes, He will allow intercession for a deserving person (*Ma`arif*). مَقَات





Surah 83

*Al-Mutaffifin*Makkan/Madinan¹

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Woe unto those who deceive.²

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ ﴿١﴾

Introductory Remark:

Two main qualities are evident in this *surah*: its quiet rhythm and its earnest message. Both are evident even in the images of the universal upheaval the *surah* contains, which are portrayed with much more violence elsewhere (*surah* 81). Here the attitude of sympathetic and compassionate cautioning is adopted. The cautioning is gradual, easy and presented in a quiet, inspiring statement beginning with the words “O man”. This awakens the conscience (Sayyid).

1. According to Ibn Mas`ud and Dahhak, this is a Makkan *surah*. But according to Hasan and `Ikrimah, it is Madinan. From Ibn Abbas we have two reports. One, it is Madinan except for the last eight verses, and the other, that it was the last *surah* to be revealed at Makkah. Kalbi and

Jabir b. Zayd have said that it was revealed between Makkah and Madinah (Qurtubi).

Therefore, coming as it did, at the beginning of the Prophet’s mission at Madinah, it is significant that the chapter took up the question of right weights and measures, because the created world’s existence depends on the prevalence of right balance. A major disturbance can cause catastrophe, threatening the very survival of the universe as it exists. The question is of significance for the humans too. Tilting the balance one way or the other way will unbalance the moral life that will have its immeasurable ramifications on the social and, hence, spiritual life (Au.).

2. The word in the original is *mutaffifin* which is applicable to those who deceive in weights and measures. It has the implication of deceit

by “a small amount” (Zamakhshari, Shawkani).

Deception in Weights and Measures

Imām Malik has reported Ibn Abu al-Ja'd in his Al-Muwatta' as saying that *tatfif* (deceit in weights and measures) can be in every thing, such as, for instance, in *salah* (Qurtubi). In fact, when `Umar (*ra*) saw a man doing Prayers badly, he reproached him using the same word *taffa* (*Ma`arif*).

(In a report preserved by Nasa'i and Ibn Majah: Ibn Kathir), Ibn `Abbas says that when the Prophet (*saws*) arrived at Madinah, its people were the worst at weights and measures. But after Allah revealed, “Woe unto those who deceive,” they became the best to weigh and measure” (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari).

Qurtubi adds: Until this day they are the best of those who weigh and measure.

The tradition has continued to this day (Au.).

According to one report the Prophet recited this verse upon revelation and added:

خَمْسٌ بِخَمْسٍ، قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا خَمْسٌ بِخَمْسٍ؟
قَالَ: مَا نَقَصَ قَوْمٌ الْعَهْدَ إِلَّا سَلَطَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَدُوَّهُمْ،
وَمَا حَكَمُوا بِغَيْرِ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا فَشَا فِيهِمُ الْفَقْرُ،

وَلَا ظَهَرَتْ فِيهِمُ الْفَاحِشَةُ إِلَّا فَشَا فِيهِمُ الْمَوْتُ، وَلَا
طَفِقُوا الْمَكْبَالَ إِلَّا مُنِعُوا النَّبَاتَ وَأُخِذُوا بِالسِّنِينَ، وَلَا
مَنَعُوا الزَّكَاةَ إِلَّا حُسِبَ عَنْهُمْ الْقَطْرُ.

“Five for five.” People asked: “What is five for five?” He answered: “A people did not break their promises but Allah gave their enemy dominance over them; they did not abandon judging by the Laws of Allah, but Allah imposed poverty upon them; obscenity did not appear among them but death became common; they did not deceive in weights and measures but they were denied good harvests and Allah set famine upon them; and, they did not refuse to pay *Zakah* but Allah held back rains from them.”

(A part of the report is in Ibn Mar-duwayh: Shawkani).

And it is reported of `Abdul Malik b. Marwan that a Bedouin reproached him in words: “You know how Allah has threatened those who deceive in weights and measures.” What he meant was that you know how severe is Allah’s threat for those who take away “a little” while weighing or measuring. What then, do you think of yourself, who take away people’s wealth without measure?! (Zamakhshari, Razi, Alusi).

[2] Those, who when they measure against the people, take full,

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ ﴿٢﴾

[3] But when they measure or weigh for them they give them less than due.³

وَإِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَوْ وَّزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ ﴿٣﴾

[4] Do they not consider that they will be raised up,⁴

أَلَا يَظُنُّ أُولَئِكَ أَنَّهُمْ مَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٤﴾

Razi adds: One may wonder at the great threat at such a seemingly minor lapse. But that's not so. For all dealings with the people, or a great part of them, depend upon how they weigh and measure for each other. Allah said elsewhere (55: 7-9):

{وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ (٧) أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ (٨) وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ} {الرحمن: ٧ - ٩}

And (Allah) raised the” firmaments and set the balance, in order that you may not transgress in (matters of) balance. And, therefore, establish the weights with justice and do not fall short in (weighing) with the “.balance

He also said (57: 25),

{لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ {الحديد: ٢٥}

Earlier, We sent messengers” with clear signs and sent with “.them the Book and the Balance

3. The point raised in verse number one was that the defrauders always demand their own rights full. Therefore, the mention of the act of measuring alone sufficed. Whereas, in verse two the emphasis is on their deceitful ways; accordingly, both the acts of measuring as well as weighing needed to be mentioned (Thanwi).

4. Razi has pointed out that the verse might sound too harsh for an act apparently of such inconsequential nature. But, he explains, it should not be overlooked that the person who deceives the people by such small amounts, cannot be expected to deal with them justly in affairs of greater consequence (Au.).

It is reported that `Ali (ra) saw a trader weighing and tilting the balance in favor of the buyer. He told him to first balance it even, and then add on to tilt it down in favor of the buyer. This in order that the people do not take it for granted that they deserve more than what they pay for (Razi).

[5] On a mighty Day.⁵

لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٥﴾

5. It is said that people will stand before their Lord for 300 years, without anything happening either in the heavens or on the earth, waiting for the affair of the reckoning to start. `Abdullah ibn `Umar reported (in a *hadith* of Bukhari and Muslim: Ibn Kathir) that the Prophet (*saws*) said:

حَتَّى يَغِيَّبَ أَحَدُهُمْ فِي رَشْحِهِ إِلَى أَنْصَافِ أُذُنَيْهِ

“(On that Day) Some of them will be in sweat up to their ears” (Ibn Jarir).

The Standing on the Day of Judgment

Reports in Muslim, Tirmidhi and Ahmad say that while the sun will be as close as a mile from the people, boiling their brains as soup is boiled in a pot, the quantity of sweat covering a man will be in proportion to his sins: some, up to their ankles, some, up to their waists and others up to their ears (Ibn Kathir).

Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) reports that the Prophet asked Bashir Ghiffari:

فكيف تصنع بيوم يقوم الناس لرب العالمين فيه مقدار ثلثمائة سنة من أيام الدنيا لا يأتيهم خبر من السماء؟ قال بشير: المستعان الله يا رسول الله فقال له: إذا آويت إلى فراشك فتعوذ بالله من كرب يوم القيامة وتعوذ بالله من سوء الحساب

“How will you fare on a day when the people will stand before their Lord 300 years, by the reckoning of this world, without a word from above about what is to happen next?” Bashir answered, “In Allah is the refuge, Messenger of Allah.” He said: “When you go to bed, seek Allah’s shelter from the tortures of the Day of Judgment, and from an evil Reckoning” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Abu Da’ud, Nasa’i and Ibn Majah have narrated through `A’isha (*ra*), evaluated as *Sahih*, that:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُكَبِّرُ عَشْرًا وَيَحْمَدُ عَشْرًا وَيُسَبِّحُ عَشْرًا وَيُهَلِّلُ عَشْرًا وَيَسْتَغْفِرُ عَشْرًا وَيَقُولُ اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَاهْلِبْ لِي وَارْزُقْ لِي وَعَافِي أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ ضَيْقِ الْمَقَامِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

When the Prophet stood for his night vigil (*tahajjud*) he would say *Allahu Akbar* ten times, *al-hamdulillah* 10 times, *subhana-Allah* 10 times, and *istighfar* 10 times. After that he would say the following words: “O Allah, forgive me, guide me, feed me, and guard me. I seek Allah’s refuge from the hardships of the ‘Standing before the Lord,’ on the Day of Judgment” (Ibn Kathir).

[6] A day when people will stand before the Lord of the worlds?!⁶

يَوْمَ يَقُومُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦﴾

[7] No indeed. The Book of the libertines is (preserved) in Sijjin.

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَّارِ لَفِي سِجِّينٍ ﴿٧﴾

[8] And what will explain you what Sijjin is?

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سِجِّينٌ ﴿٨﴾

However, Qatadah (and Ibn `Abbas: Qurtubi), has said that for the believers the Day will be no longer than the length of a single Prayer.

6. Shawkani reports a *hadith* from Tabarani, Abu al-Sheikh, Hakim, Ibn Marduwayh, (who attests that it is a trustworthy report) and Bayhaqi, that the Prophet (*saws*) recited this verse and said:

كَيْفَ بِكُمْ إِذَا جَمَعَكُمْ اللَّهُ كَمَا يُجْمَعُ النَّبَلُ فِي الْكِنَانَةِ
خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْكُمْ

“How will it be with you when Allah will assemble you all, as one assembles arrows in the quiver, (on a day of length) fifty thousand years, without paying any attention to you?”

At closer look it will be seen that there is no contradiction between this *hadith* and the one above, since in the former it was only the “standing” that the Prophet (*saws*) was speaking of, which will be of length 300 years (Au.).

It is related of Ibn `Umar that once he began to recite this *surah*, but when he reached this verse he wept so much that he had to discontinue reading it (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Razi).

Reverence Rules

With reference to the “standing” used here, a legal point may be noted. It is allowed to stand up and receive a person, if it is out of a spontaneous feeling of joy and love, such as when a person is back from a journey or reappears after a long absence. This is in view of the Prophet rising and receiving Ja`far when he came back from Habasha. However, if the incoming man expects that he be stood for, then he should not be stood for in view of the *hadith*:

مَنْ سَرَّهُ إِذَا رَأَتْهُ الرِّجَالُ مُقْبِلًا أَنْ يَتَمَطَّلُوا لَهُ قِيَامًا
فَلْيَتَبَوَّأْ بَيْتًا فِي النَّارِ

“Whomsoever it pleases that people stand up for him, may find his abode in the Fire” (Qurtubi).

[9] A written Book.⁷

كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ ﴿٩﴾

[10] Woe that Day to the deniers -

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] Who deny the day of Judgment.

الَّذِينَ يُكَذِّبُونَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿١١﴾

[12] And denies it not but every transgressing (confirmed) sinner.

وَمَا يُكَذِّبُ بِهِ إِلَّا كُلُّ مُعْتَدٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] (He) to whom, when Our revelations are read out says, 'Fables of old.'

إِذَا تَمَثَّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

7. Ibn `Abbas and Dahhak have said that *Sijjin* is the lowest earths. Mujahid and Qatadah have said that it is the seventh earth (Ibn Jarir). Ibn Kathir adds that the center of the seventh earth is the lowest and the narrowest point in creation. Everything above it is wider, so that the widest is the seventh firmament.

Sijjin

A long report coming from Bara' ibn `Azib, reports the Prophet as having said: "They (the angels) carry the spirit of the libertine towards the heavens. They do not pass by a group of angels but they remark, 'Whose filthy soul is this?' In reply they give its identity using the worst of names by which he was known during his life. When they arrive at the seventh firmament they seek the door to be opened but it remains firmly shut. Then the Prophet recited the verse (7: 40),

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا لَا تَتَخَّرُ لَهُمْ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ ﴾ [الأعراف: ٤٠]

"Surely, those who laid the lie against Our signs and waxed proud against them, shall not have the gates of heaven opened for them. They shall not enter Paradise until a camel passes through the hole in a needle's head." Then Allah orders, 'Register down his Book in the *Sijjin* in the lowest of the earths' (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn al-Mubarak has a similar report. Ibn Majah and others have reported that when Ka`b was dying, Umm Bishr, the daughter of Bara' went to him and said, "If you happen to meet my son give him my regards." Ka`b told her, "May Allah forgive you, but I think I will be busier with other affairs." She told him: "Haven you

[14] No indeed. But what they used to earn (of the evil deeds) has cast a layer of rust⁸ over their hearts.⁹

كَلَّا بَلْ زَانَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] No indeed. That Day they shall be veiled from (the sight of) their Lord.

كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَمَحْجُوبُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] Then they will enter the Hell Fire,

ثُمَّ إِنَّهُمْ لَصَالُو الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] And it will be said, 'This is what you used to deny'.

ثُمَّ يُقَالُ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] Lo. The Book of the virtuous is (preserved) in 'Illiyun.

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَبْرَارِ لَفِي عِلِّيِّينَ ﴿١٨﴾

not heard the Prophet say, 'The spirit of the believers fly about as they wish within the precincts of Paradise, and that those of the unbelievers are in *Sijjin*.'" Ka'b said: "You are right" (Shawkani).

8. Ibn Kathir says that the word *Kitab* of verse 7 should be understood as "*kitabah*" i.e., "(the act of) writing down," and the *marqum* of verse 9 should be understood as *makhtum*, i.e., "sealed." Further, the phrase, "A written Book," has nothing to do with the previous sentence, i.e., "And what will explain you what *Sijjin* is." Rather, this ninth verse should be read in conjunction with the seventh, skipping the eighth, as follows: "No indeed! The writing down of the (deeds of the) libertines

(has been done) in *Sijjin* - a written Book."

Alternatively, the meaning could be as follows: "The end of the evil-doers is in *Sijjin*. This is written in a Book." That is, it is something already written down, (or printed, as a cloth is printed: Sabuni) and hence no change or alteration is possible. Razi and Alusi also accept the possibility of this meaning.

9. The word in the original is "rana" with its root in "*rayn*." It refers to the layer of rust on the heart of the unbeliever. What stains the hearts of the virtuous (because of their sins) is known as "*ghaym*" whereas, that which stains the hearts of "the near ones" is known as "*ghayn*" (Ibn Kathir).

[19] And what will explain you what 'Illiyun is?¹⁰

﴿١٩﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا عِلِّيُّونَ

[20] A written Book.

﴿٢٠﴾ كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ

[21] Seen by those who are near (to the Lord).

﴿٢١﴾ يَشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ

[22] Surely, the virtuous shall be in bliss,

﴿٢٢﴾ إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ

[23] (Reclining) On (curtained and canopied) couches, gazing (around pleasurable).

﴿٢٣﴾ عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ يَنْظُرُونَ

[24] You shall perceive in their faces the brightness of bliss.

﴿٢٤﴾ تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيمِ

[25] They shall be served pure wine (taken) from sealed (containers).

﴿٢٥﴾ يُسْقَوْنَ مِنْ رَحِيقٍ مَخْمُومٍ

[26] Whose seal is musk¹¹ - and it is in such things that the emulators ought to emulate (each other) -

﴿٢٦﴾ خِتَامُهُ مِسْكٌ وَفِي ذَلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ

10. This is explained by a *hadith*. Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) reports the Prophet (*saws*) as having said in a report preserved by Tirmidhi (who declared it *hasan Sahih*: Qurtubi), Nasa'i and Ibn Majah (Ibn Kathir), and Hakim who says the *hadith* is *Sahih*: (Shawkani, Alusi) as well as many others:

(إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ إِذَا أَخْطَأَ خَطِيئَةً نَكَتَتْ فِي قَلْبِهِ نُكْتَةً سَوْدَاءَ ، فَإِذَا هُوَ نَزَعَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ وَتَابَ صَقَلَ قَلْبَهُ ، وَإِنْ عَادَ زِيدَ فِيهَا حَتَّى تَعْلُو قَلْبَهُ ، وَهُوَ الرَّاغِبُ الَّذِي ذَكَرَ اللَّهُ (كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ)

“When a man sins, a black dot is inscribed on his heart. If he repents, it is washed off. But if he repeats, it reappears until it cov-

ers the whole heart. This is the rust that Allah spoke of in His statement, “No indeed! But what they were earning has cast a layer of rust over their hearts” (Ibn Jarir).

To the above Hasan al Busri has added: “Sins upon sins blind the heart until it dies of” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

11. Ka'b, Qatadah, Zayd, and Mujahid have said that *'Illiyun* is the seventh firmament. Ibn 'Abbas, however, has said that the allusion is to Paradise. There are other non-contradictory opinions too (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

[27] Whose mixing shall be with (the waters of) Tasneem.¹²

﴿٢٧﴾ وَمِزَاجُهُ مِنَ تَسْنِيمٍ

[28] A spring from which the near ones shall drink.

﴿٢٨﴾ عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا الْمُقَرَّبُونَ

[29] Lo, those that committed crimes (against their Lord) used to laugh at the believers.

﴿٢٩﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ

[30] They winked at one another as they passed by them.

﴿٣٠﴾ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامِرُونَ

[31] And when they went back to their people, they went back wallowing.¹³

﴿٣١﴾ وَإِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ انْقَلَبُوا فَكِهِينَ

[32] When they saw them they (would) remark, 'Surely, these are a misguided lot'.

﴿٣٢﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَوْهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ لَضَالُونَ

[33] Although they had not been appointed monitors over them.¹⁴

﴿٣٣﴾ وَمَا أُرْسِلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ حَافِظِينَ

And a *hadith* of Abu Umamah in Ahmad, Abu Da'ud, Tabarani and Ibn Marduwayh says the Prophet said:

وَصَلَاةٌ عَلَىٰ إِثْرِ صَلَاةٍ لَا لَعْوَ بَيْنَهُمَا كِتَابٌ فِي عِلِّيِّينَ

“*Salah* after *Salah*, sans vain (talk or act) in between, is a document (*kitab*) in ‘*Illyyyun*’ (Shawkani).

12. Another interpretation coming from Ibn Mas`ud (*ra*) and others (in a report in Firyabi, Tabarani and Hakim who declares it *Sahih*: Shawkani) is that the word *khitam* stands for mixing. That is, wine (*rahiq*) will be poured out and then musk will be added to it (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

13. Most commentators have said that generally wine is mixed with some water to soften it. In Paradise, wine will be mixed with the waters of Tasnim.

Ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas, Masruq and Qatadah have said that Tasnim is a spring in Paradise, that flows through the air, from which the near ones (*muqrrabun*) will drink unadulterated. The rest of the dwellers of Paradise will have its water added to their wine for better taste (Razi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

14. The word in the original is *fakihin* which predominantly refers to the act of luxuriously eating fruits,

[34] Therefore, today the believers laugh at the unbelievers.

فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

[35] On couches (reclining), looking (down upon the unbelievers in Hell),¹⁵

عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] Have the unbelievers been rewarded for what they used to do?¹⁶

هَلْ ثَوَّبَ الْكُفَّارُ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

and hence being joyful. However, some commentators prefer the meaning of jest, acting evil, boasting, etc., which are also inherent in the original word. The Qur'an has combined the two senses in one word and given us the picture of a group of well-fed naughty boys, returning home with pockets stuffed with nuts and dry fruits, in a festive mood, laughing their way down, winking and tossing a few jokes at the believers they pass by (Au.).

15. That is, these criminals were not asked to monitor the lives of the believers. Why did they make them a target of their attention? Therefore, as the Qur'an said elsewhere (23: 108-111):

{ قَالَ احْسَبُوا فِيهَا وَلَا تُكَلِّمُونِ (١٠٨) إِنَّهُ كَانَ
فَرِيقًا مِّنْ عِبَادِي يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا
وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ (١٠٩) فَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُمْ سِحْرِيًّا
حَتَّىٰ أَنْسَوَكُمُ ذِكْرِي وَكُنْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ تَضْحَكُونَ (١١٠)
إِنِّي جَزَيْتُهُمُ الْيَوْمَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا أَلَيْسَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ }
[المؤمنون: ١٠٨ - ١١١]

“He will say (to them on the Day of Judgment), ‘Be you driven into ignominy and speak not unto Me. For, some of My servants used to say, ‘O our Lord. We have believed, therefore forgive us and show us mercy. Truly Thou are the best of those who show mercy.’ But you took them for jest until it made you forget My message while you used to laugh at them. This day I have rewarded them for their patience, and they indeed are (the ones that have emerged) successful» (Ibn Kathir).

16. Ibn `Abbas has said that the walls dividing Paradise and Hell will have doors that will be opened for the believers reclining on their couches to observe the state of the unbelievers in the Fire whenever they wish to (Ibn Jarir).

And it is said that the unbelievers will be shown a door through which they could escape out of Hell. They will make to it (with great difficulty), but it will be shut in their faces when

they arrive at it. The believers will laugh at the scene (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

Sayyid Qutb comments: "It must be noted that the only consolation offered by Allah to the believers who were subjected to harsh treatment and painful ridicule was Heaven for the believers and Hell for the disbelievers. This, again, was the only promise the Prophet (peace be on him) made to the believers when they pledged their wealth and their lives for the cause of Islam. Victory in this life was never mentioned in the Makkan chapters of the Qur'an as a consolation or as an incentive for perseverance. The Qur'an was cultivating the hearts of the believers, and it was necessary that these hearts should attain a high standard of

strength and self-denial so that they would give up everything and suffer all hardship without hoping for any reward in this life. They seek only the Hereafter and to win the pleasure of Allah. They should be prepared to go through the whole journey of life suffering all sorts of hardships and deprivations without the promise of any reward in this life - not even victory for the cause of Islam. ...

"All those Qur'anic verses which speak of victory were revealed later in Medina when this was no longer an issue. Victory was given because Allah willed that successive human generations should have an actual, definite and practical example of the Islamic way of life. It was not a reward for sacrifices made or hardships suffered." ﷻ





Surah 84

Al-Inshiqaq

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] When the sky shall split open.

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انشَقَّتْ ﴿١﴾

[2] And obey¹ its Lord - as in truth it must.

وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحَقَّتْ ﴿٢﴾

[3] And when the earth shall be stretched out.²

وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ ﴿٣﴾

[4] And cast forth its contents and become
empty (of the dead).

وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ ﴿٤﴾

[5] And obey its Lord - as in truth it must.

وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحَقَّتْ ﴿٥﴾

Introductory Remark

This chapter addresses the issue of persecution that the neo-Muslims were facing in Makkah at the hands of the Quraysh: death, exposure to the boiling sun in mid summer days, placement of hot rocks upon them, and torture in a variety of other ways. While it warns the persecutors of similar fate as their predecessors in these acts, it also soothes the believers by pointing out to them that if you are being persecuted, well, others before you were also tested with greater persecutions, but they withstood it, did not weaken down, rath-

er, remained steadfast in their faith to the end (Alusi from Bahr).

1. The word in the original is “*adhinat*” which, although literally means to seek permission, has been interpreted here as meaning, “will obey” (by authorities such as Ibn `Abbas, Sa`id, Mujahid, Qatadah and : Ibn Jarir) - Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani.

2. According to a *hadith*, (which according to Suyuti is a trustworthy narration: Shawkani), the Prophet (*saws*) said:

تمد الأرض يوم القيامة لعظمة الرحمن ولا يكون فيها
لأحد إلا موضع قدمه

[6] O Man! You are a toiler, toiling your way to the Lord.³ And you shall (soon) meet Him.⁴

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ
كَذٰحًا فَمَلَأَيْتَهُ ﴿٦﴾

[7] Then he who is handed over his Book in the right hand,

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ ﴿٧﴾

[8] Shall surely receive an easy reckoning,⁵

فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾

“When the Day of Judgment is called the earth will be unfolded until every man will have just enough standing space on it” (Qurtubi).

3. Sayyid observes: “Man certainly labors here in this life, shouldering his responsibilities and exerting himself. All this he does in order to return, in the end, like all the rest of creation, to Allah. Man labors even for what he enjoys! Nothing in this life comes easily or without effort: if sometimes no physical labor is needed, then surely some mental and emotional effort will be required.”

4. Another possibility, as said by Ibn `Abbas is that you will, O man, meet with your deeds, good or bad (Ibn Kathir).

5. A *hadīth* (preserved by Bukhari, Muslim and Tirmidhi: Ibn Kathir), reports `A'isha as having said:

وَأَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَنْ حُوسِبَ
عُدِبَ قَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ فَقُلْتُ أَوْلَيْسَ يَقُولُ اللَّهُ
تَعَالَى {فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا} قَالَتْ فَقَالَ
إِنَّمَا ذَلِكَ الْعَرْضُ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ نُوقِشَ الْحِسَابَ يَهْلِكُ

“I heard the Prophet say: ‘Whoever is taken up for reckoning will surely be punished.’ I asked him, ‘Hasn’t Allah said: “He shall surely be given an easy reckoning?”’ He said, ‘It is not reckoning that is meant in the verse. It is the presentation. Anyone subjected to scrutiny will perish’” (Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

According to another report (trustworthy by the standards of Muslim: Ibn Kathir; Hakim has evaluated it as *Sahih*: Shawkani) `A'isha reported:

اللَّهُمَّ حَاسِبِنِي حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا فَلَمَّا انْصَرَفَ قُلْتُ يَا
نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ مَا الْحِسَابُ الْيَسِيرُ قَالَ أَنْ يَنْظُرَ فِي كِتَابِهِ
فَيَتَجَاوَزَ عَنْهُ إِنَّهُ مَنْ نُوقِشَ الْحِسَابَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَا عَائِشَةُ
هَلَكَ

“I heard the Prophet say: ‘O Allah, subject me to an easy reckoning.’ I asked him, ‘What is ‘easy reckoning.’ He replied, “That evil deeds be glanced over and forgiven. Whoever is subjected that day to a strict censure of accounts will be destroyed” (Ibn Jarir, Razi).

[9] And return to his people rejoicing.⁶

وَيَنْقَلِبُ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا ﴿٩﴾

[10] As for him who is given his Book behind his back,

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] He shall cry out for (death and) destruction,

فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُو ثُبُورًا ﴿١١﴾

[12] And shall enter into the Fire.

وَيَصَلَّىٰ سَعِيرًا ﴿١٢﴾

[13] For (in his life on earth) he lived among his family joyfully.

إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا ﴿١٣﴾

[14] Imagining that he would never return (to His Lord).⁷

إِنَّهُ ظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ يَحُورَ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] Yes indeed, his Lord was ever watchful over him.

بَلَىٰ إِنَّ رَبَّهُ كَانَ بِهِ بَصِيرًا ﴿١٥﴾

[16] No indeed. I swear by the glow (of sunset),⁸

فَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] And by the night; and what it gathers back.

وَاللَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ ﴿١٧﴾

6. For, they had experienced a lot of pain and suffering in their lives on earth as the Qur'an said about them (52: 26, 27):

{قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلَ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ (٢٦) فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَانَا عَذَابَ السَّمُومِ} [الطور: ٢٦، ٢٧]

"Earlier, while with our families (in the earthly life), we were in difficulties. But Allah favored us and has (in this world) saved us from the poisonous Fire" (Ibn Zayd: Qurtubi).

7. Ibn 'Abbas is reported to have said: "I did not know what 'Yahura' was, until I heard a Bedouin woman

urge her daughter, 'Huri, Huri', i.e., 'come back, come back'" (Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi).

8. Sayyid Qutb writes: "The oath, which is indirect in the Arabic text, serves to draw man's attention to these scenes of the universe. The connotations here are in perfect harmony with those of the opening of the surah and the scenes portrayed there. The twilight refers to that period of stillness after sunset when the soul is overwhelmed by a deep feeling of awe. The heart feels, at such a time, the significance of parting

[18] And by the moon when it has achieved its full.

﴿١٨﴾ وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ

[19] You shall surely ride upon event after event.⁹

﴿١٩﴾ لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَن طَبَقٍ

[20] So what is wrong with them that they do not believe?

﴿٢٠﴾ فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

with a beloved companion, and the feelings of quiet sadness and deep melancholy this involves. It also experiences a feeling of fear of the approaching darkness.”

9. According to Ibn `Abbas, (whose opinion is in Bukhari: Ibn Kathir), `Ikrimah, Hasan, Sa`id, Mujahid, and Qatadah, it is the Prophet who is the subject of this verse. It means to say that he will pass through various (difficult) stages in his mission. `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud's opinion is that the allusion is to the Prophet passing through various heavens (during *isra*). But Ibn Zayd's opinion is that the allusion is to the people passing through various stages of (creation and resurrection) - Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir.

A fourth possible meaning expressed by Suddi is that you will, O Muslims, pass through various stages treading the footsteps of the Jews and Chris-

tians before the Day of Judgment arrives. *Mak-hul* has supported the statement by saying, as in a report of Abu Hatim, that Muslims will face a new situation every twenty years. Other meanings are also likely such as that the verse is addressing the people in general and saying that you will pass through various stages of life: youth and old age, poverty and richness, health and sickness, etc. (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Asad remarks: “Since the inexorable movement of all that exists from stage to stage or from one condition into another corresponds to a fundamental law evident in all creation, it is unreasonable to assume that man alone should be an exception, and that his onward movement should cease at the moment of his bodily death, not to be followed by a change-over into another state of being.”



[21] And when the Qur'ān is read out to them do not prostrate themselves?¹⁰

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْآنُ لَا يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

[22] Instead, those that have disbelieved, cry lies.

بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُكْذِبُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] And Allah is aware of what they conceal.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُوعُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] Therefore, give them glad tidings of a painful chastisement.

فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] Save for those who (repented), believed, and did good works. For (such of) them shall be a reward undiminished.

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ هُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

10. A *hadith* in Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi, Nasa'i and Ibn Majah says that the Prophet (*saws*) prostrated himself (at this point) and so did those behind him when he recited this *surah*, and so he did when he recited *surah Al-'Alaq* (Alusi and Ibn Kathir in introduction).

However, there is a difference of opinion among the scholars over whether such prostration is obligatory or *sunnah*. According to Abu Hanifah it is *wajib* (Qurtubi, Alusi, Shafi').

And, to the Hanafiyyah, *wajib* is one degree less than fard (Au.).

مَشَا





Surah 85
Al-Buruj

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Introductory Remark

Khalid al-`Udwani reports from his father Abu Habl al-`Udwani that when the Prophet visited Tayif seeking help from Banu Thaqif, he stood before them resting himself on either a bow or a cane he was carrying. He recited the whole of *surah Al-Tariq* (to those he was seeking help from: Au.), which, although then an unbeliever, I memorized on the spot. When I went back to my people they asked me what was it that Muhammad was saying. I recited these verses to them. At this some of the Quraysh that were there with the Banu Thaqif remarked: "We know this man better than you. If we knew he was right we would not have hesitated to follow him (Ibn Kathir from Ahmad). The *hadith* is also reported by Tabarani, Ibn Marduwayh and Imām Bukhari in his *Tarikh al-Kabir* (Shawkani).

Sayyid Qutb comments: "It has been stated in the introduction to this

thirtieth part of the Qur'ān that its *surahs* are like continuous loud and violent knocks, or like shouts addressed to people who are fast asleep. Both knocks and shouts repeatedly strike their senses with the same message and the same warning: "Wake up! rise! reflect! look around! think! consider! There is a God. There is an organization and a deliberate system of creation. There is trial and liability, reckoning and reward, sever chastisement and endless happiness". The present *surah* is a typical example of these qualities. Its tone is sharp. The scenes portrayed, the rhythm chosen, the sounds of the individual words and their meanings all contribute to this sharpness of tone. The scenes include the night visitor, the star piercing with brightness. The meanings include watching over souls, ... the lack of strength and help, ... (and) the complete seriousness."

[1] By the heaven of constellations,¹

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ ﴿١﴾

[2] And by the Promised Day,

وَالْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُودِ ﴿٢﴾

[3] And by the witness and the witnessed,²

وَشَاهِدٍ وَمَشْهُودٍ ﴿٣﴾

[4] Slain be the makers of the pit

قَتِيلٍ أَصْحَابِ الْأَحْدُودِ ﴿٤﴾

Yusuf Ali remarks: “In the last *surah* we considered the persecution of Allah’s votaries, and how Allah protects them. Here (in this *surah*) the same theme is presented in another aspect. In the darkest sky shines out most brilliantly the light of the most brilliant star. So in the night of spiritual darkness - whether through ignorance or distress - shines the glorious star of Allah’s revelation.”

1. Hasan, Mujahid and Qatadah have said that by buruj the allusion is to stars. There are other explanations. One of them, coming from `Ikrimah and Mujahid (and Ibn `Abbas also: Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi Shawkani) is that it alludes to palaces as Allah said (4: 78):

{أَيْنَمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِككُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ
مُشِيدَةٍ} {النساء: ٧٨}

“Wherever you may be, death will find you, even if you are in fortified forts” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

The word was originally coined for anything that appeared tall and con-

spicuous and hence visible from all sides.

In the above sense it came to be applied (to fortified forts, and: Au.) to palaces since in those days they resembled fortified forts (Alusi).

While discussing various theories about what the word buruj means, what Alusi has to say at this point seems partly to criticize the attitude of those of his times who were impressed to an extraordinary degree by the progress of science, and were eager to somehow reconcile scientific theories with the Qur’ānic statements. It is also pertinent to our situation today. “When some people came to know,” Alusi writes, “from the astronomers that there were nine planets to the sun, they immediately jumped to the conclusion that the first seven planets were the seven heavens of the Qur’ān, the eighth the *Kursi* and the ninth the *‘Arsh!*”

2. According to several *ahadith* reported by Abu Hurayrah (in Tirmidhi as well as Hakim who has declared

it *Sahih*: Shawkani), as well as Sa`id and Abu Malik al-Ash`ari that the Prophet said:

الْيَوْمُ الْمَوْعُودُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَالْمَشْهُودُ يَوْمَ عَرَفَةَ،
وَالشَّاهِدُ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ، مَا طَلَعَتِ الشَّمْسُ، وَلَا غَرَبَتْ
عَلَى يَوْمٍ أَفْضَلَ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ، وَفِيهِ سَاعَةٌ لَا يَرُدُّ
فِيهَا مُسْلِمٌ يَدْعُو اللَّهَ بِخَيْرٍ إِلَّا اسْتَجَابَ لَهُ، وَلَا
يَسْتَعِيدُهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَعَادَهُ اللَّهُ

“The words *al-yawm al-maw`ud* refer to the Day of Judgment, the *yawm al-mash-hud* is the Day of `Arafah, and *shahid* refers to Friday. Further, the sun does not shine nor set upon a day better than Friday. It has an hour in which no believer will ask for a good thing nor seek refuge from an evil but shall be granted.”

This is also the opinion of `Ali, Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah, Ibn Zayd. There are several other opinions coming both from the Companions as well as the Followers (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). Nonetheless, the most reliable of all reports is that the terms refer to Friday and the day of `Arafah (Shawkani). This is also the opinion of Baghawi (Ibn Kathir).

Yusuf Ali comments: “... metaphorical application (of the words *shahid*

and *mash-hud*) has been explained in a variety of ways by different commentators. The words are fairly comprehensive, and I think, must be understood in connection with Judgment. There the Witnesses may be:

- a) the Prophets (3: 81);
 - b) Allah Himself (3: 81, & 10: 61);
 - c) the Recording Angels (50: 21);
 - d) the Sinner’s own misused limbs (24: 24);
 - e) his record of deeds (17: 14);
- or,
- f) the Sinner himself (14: 14).

The subject of the witness may be the deed or crime, or the Sinner against whom the testimony cries out. The appeal to these things means that the Sinner cannot possibly escape the consequences of his crime. He should repent, seek Allah’s Mercy, and amend his life.”

Shanqiti has, independently, presented a similar argument (Au.).

[5] Of the well-stoked fire,³

النَّارِ ذَاتِ الْوُفُودِ ﴿٥﴾

[6] When they sat by it,

إِذْ هُمْ عَلَيْهَا قُعُودٌ ﴿٦﴾

[7] And were witness to what they did to the believers.

وَهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَفْعَلُونَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ ﴿٧﴾

[8] And they took not vengeance on them, but because they believed in Allah, the Mighty, the Praiseworthy,

وَمَا تَتَّخَمُوا مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَن يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿٨﴾

[9] Whose is the dominion of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is witness over all things.

الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٩﴾

3. There are several opinions about the identity of the makers of the Pit. Ibn abi Hatim has reported Ibn Jubayr as saying that history is replete with pits being dug, fires set and believers burned. It happened in Yemen during the time of Tubba', (who, influenced by the Jews, burned thousands of Christians to death: Au.); in Constantinople at the time of Constantine who persecuted the Christians as heretics, in Iraq at the time of Nebuchadnezzar who got an idol of himself planted in Jerusalem and condemned to flames those Jews who refused to bow down to it. Suddi has also said that pit-burning took place in Iraq, Syria and Yemen. According to Maqatil that happened in Persia, Syria and Yemen, of which Allah spoke of only the one that took place in Yemen (Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Jarir has stated that Persian pit-burning took place when the king of that country committed adultery with his sister, tried to legalize incest and threw into fire those who disagreed with him.

As-hab al-Ukhdud

Ibn Ishaq's version, of the pit-burning incident that took place in Yemen, as reported by *Kashshaf*, *Qur-tubi* and *Ibn Kathir*, is as follows. The translation here is largely that of Alfred Guillaume (*Seerah Rasulallah*, Ibn Ishaq, Oxford Pub.).

“Yazid b. Ziyad told me on the authority of Muhammad b. Ka'b al-Qurazi, while a man of Najran also told me, that according to his people they used to worship idols. Najran is the largest town in which the people of the neighboring districts congre-

gated, and in a village hard by there was a sorcerer who used to instruct the young men of Najran in his art. When Faymiyyun came there - they did not call him by the name that Wahb b. Munabbih gave him but simply said a man came there - he put up a tent between Najran and the place where the sorcerer was. Now the people of Najran used to send their young men to that sorcerer to be taught sorcery and al-Tamir (according to some versions al-Thamir: Au.) sent his son `Abdullah along with them. When he passed by the man in the tent the boy was immensely struck by his prayers and devotions and began to sit with him and listen to him until he became a Muslim and acknowledged the unity of God and worshipped Him. He asked questions about the laws of Islam until, when he became fully instructed therein, he asked the man what was the Great Name of God al-Ism al-A`zam: Au.). Although he knew it he kept it from him saying: 'My dear young man, you will not be able to bear it; I feel you are not equal to the task.'

'Now al-Tamir had no idea that his son `Abdullah was not visiting the sorcerer along with the other young men. `Abdullah seeing that his master had kept the knowledge from

him and was afraid of his weakness, collected a number of arrows and whenever he taught him a name of Allah he wrote that name on a stick. When he had got them all he lit a fire and began to throw them in one by one until when he reached the arrow with the Great Name inscribed on it he threw it in, and it immediately sprang out untouched by the fire. Thereupon he took it and went and told his master that he knew the Great Name which he had concealed from him. The latter questioned him and when he learned how he had found out the secret he said, 'O my young friend you have got it, but keep it to yourself, though I do not think you will.'

'Thereafter, whenever `Abdullah b. al-Tamir entered Najran and met a sick person he would tell him, 'O servant of God, will you acknowledge the unity of God and adopt my religion so that I may pray to God that he may heal you of your affliction?' The man would agree, acknowledge the unity of God, and become a Muslim, and he would pray for him and he would be healed, until in the end there was not a single sick person in Najran but had adopted his religion and become whole from his sickness. When the news reached the king he sent for him and said: 'You

have corrupted the people of my town so that they are against me and have corrupted my religion and the religion of my fathers. I will make a terrible example of you.' He replied: 'You have not the power to do that.' The king had him taken to a high mountain and thrown down headlong, but he reached the ground unhurt. Then he had him thrown into deep waters in Najran from which no one had ever emerged alive, but he came out safely.

"Having thus got the better of him, 'Abdullah told him that he would not be able to kill him until he acknowledged the unity of God and believed in his religion; but that if he did that he would be given the power to kill him. The king then acknowledged the unity of God and pronounced the creed of 'Abdullah, and hitting him a moderate blow with a stick which he had in his hand he killed him and died himself on the spot. The people of Najran accepted the religion of 'Abdullah b. al-Tamir according to the Gospel and the law which 'Isa b. Maryam brought. Afterwards they were overtaken by the misfortune which befell their co-religionists...

To continue, Dhu Nuwas brought against them his Himyarite army and

invited them to Judaism, giving them the choice between that or death: they chose death. (According to Ibn Ishaq, the real name of Dhu Nuwas was Yusuf. But Prof. G. Ryckmans discovered in 1952 an inscription at Qara on which His name is written as Yaf's'ar: A. Guillaume in footnote: Au.). So Dhu Nuwas dug trenches for them; burnt some in fire, slew others with the sword, and mutilated great many until he had killed nearly twenty thousand of them ... It was concerning Dhu Nuwas and his armies that Allah revealed these verses...

"I (Ibn Ishaq) was told by 'Abdullah b. Abu Bakr b. Muhammad b. 'Amr b. Hazm that he was told that in the days of 'Umar b. al-Khattab a man of Najran dug up one of the ruins of Najran intending to make use of the land, when they came upon 'Abdullah b. al-Tamir under a grave; he was in a sitting posture with his hand covering a wound in his head and holding firmly to it. When his hand was removed blood began to flow; when they let go off his hand it returned to its place and the flow of blood ceased. On his finger was a ring inscribed 'Allah is my Lord.' A report was sent to 'Umar (*ra*) and he replied: 'Leave him alone and cover him up in the grave.' His orders were duly carried out."

Ibn Kathir adds (from Ibn Is-haq): A solitary survivor escaped to the Romans and sought their help in revenge. The Romans ordered the (Christian: Au.) Abyssinian king to raid Yemen. The Abyssinians, commanded by two men: Aryat and Abraha (the man who later raided Makkah: Au.), overcame Dhu Nuwas who fell into the sea and was drowned. That is how the Christians came to power in Yemen and ruled it for next seventy years (during the latter half of the sixth Christian century: Yusuf Ali and others).

Majid has written: "In the early part of the sixth century the Hebrew religion had such a hold upon al-Yaman that the last Himyarite King Dhu-Nuwas was a Jew ... Rivalry between the South Arabian converts of the two newly introduced monotheistic religions led to active hostility. Evidently Dhu-Nuwas representing the nationalistic spirit, associated the native Christian with the hated rule of the Christian Abyssinians. To this Jewish monarch (is) ascribed the famous massacre of the Christians of Najran in October 523 (Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 62). The event is of great historical importance, since it led to the intervention of the Negus of Ethiopia, at the instance of the Emperor Justinian, in the Ya-

man and capture by him (Cf. JE. II, p.363)."

hadith literature has another story of believers burned for their faith. It does not state where it took place, nor, as Ibn Kathir has pointed out, is it clear that the Prophet (*saws*) related it to the verses in question. But, having come as it does, in the books of Imām Ahmad, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Nasa'i, we reproduce one here. The source is Muslim.

A Second Incident

Suhayb reports that the Prophet said: "In earlier times there used to be a king who had a sorcerer (in his employment). When the sorcerer got old he told the king, 'I've gotten old and am near my end. Send me a boy whom I can train in my art'. (According to another version, "send me a talented boy.") The king nominated a boy whom he began to teach.

Now, on the path between the king and the sorcerer there lived an ascetic. The boy happened to drop in at his place. He was much impressed by the man and his talk. However, when he sat with the ascetic the sorcerer beat him for arriving late, and so would the folks at home when he arrived late there. He complained of this to the ascetic who told him to tell the magician when he was late

that he was held up by his folks at home, and tell the folks at home that he was delayed by the sorcerer. It went on until one day the boy came across a huge beast that had blocked the people's passage. He said to himself, 'Today I'll know which of the two ways is dearer to God: that of the sorcerer or of the ascetic.' He picked up a stone and said,`

'O Allah if the ways of the ascetic are dearer to You than those of the sorcerer then kill it so that the people can cross the road.' Saying that he flung it at the beast. The stone killed it. The path was freed for the people. Later he spoke of the incident to the ascetic. He told him, 'Yes my son. You have an edge over me now and you'll be tested. But if you are tested don't reveal my identity.'

So the young man began to treat the blind, the leper and those with various diseases, curing them all. Now, the king had a courtier who became blind. He came to him loaded with gifts and said, 'Cure me and these are yours.' The boy said, 'It is not me who cures anyone. It is Allah the Mighty, the Exalted who does it. If you'll believe in Him I'll pray to Him to cure you.' The man accepted the faith. So the boy prayed for him and he was cured.

When the courtier went to the king and occupied his usual place the king asked him about who had cured his blindness. He said, 'My Lord.' The king asked, '(You mean) I?' The man said, 'No. Your, and My Lord.' The king retorted, 'Do you have a Lord besides me?' 'Yes,' the courtier replied, 'He is my Lord and your Lord.' The king tortured him until he revealed the name of the boy. He sent for the boy and when he was presented to him he said, 'Son. You seem to have made great progress in magic, now that you can heal the blind, the leper and the other diseased.' The boy replied, 'I do not cure anyone. It is Allah the Mighty, the Exalted who cures.' The king asked, 'Is it I you mean?' The boy replied, 'No.' The King asked, 'Do you have a Lord besides me?' The boy answered, 'My Lord and your Lord is Allah.'

So the king tortured him until he led him to the ascetic. He got the ascetic brought up and ordered him to accept him as his Lord. He refused. So he ordered a saw run through the middle of his head that slit him into two. Then he ordered the once blind courtier to abandon his religion. He refused. So he got him slit into two also. Then he ordered the boy to abandon his religion. When he refused he ordered his soldiers to

take him to such and such a cliff and, 'give the boy a last chance there, if he refuses hurl him down.' When they climbed the mountain the boy prayed: 'My Lord. Be Thou sufficient for me against these in the manner You will.' The mountain shook and scattered them dead. The boy came down and found his way back to the king. He inquired about the soldiers. He told him, 'Allah was sufficient for me against them.' So the king ordered his soldiers to take him into the sea in a large vessel. If the boy would not recant he was to be tossed into the sea. When they entered deep waters the boy prayed: 'My Lord. Be Thou sufficient for me against these in the manner You will.' They all sank but the boy made it back to the king. He enquired about the soldiers. He said, 'Allah was sufficient for me against them.' Then he added, 'You'll not be able to kill me until you'll do as I say.' He asked, 'What is it?' He replied, 'You'll gather the people in a plain field. Then you'll tie me up to a cross, take an arrow from my quill and shoot it at me saying: "In the name of Allah the Lord of the boy." If you do that you'll be able to kill me.'

The king did as he was told. He placed the arrow in his bow and shot it out saying, "In the name of Allah the Lord of the boy." The arrow hit the boy at the ear lock. The boy put his hand to where the arrow had hit and died. At this the people cried out: "We believe in the Lord of the boy." The king was told: "Isn't this what you were afraid of? By God, you fell into the trap and the people have all entered into Allah's faith." The king ordered pits dug in every street and every lane of the town and fires lit. Then he ordered, 'Give the people a choice. Whoso renounces his new faith, spare him. The rest, cast them into the flames.' The believers began to appear in droves surrendering themselves without the least hesitation. Then came a woman with an infant she was breast feeding. She hesitated for a moment. The infant said: 'Mother! Stay firm. You are on the truth'" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

It is said that it was this boy who was discovered in a grave during the time of `Umar, with his hand on his forelock. (Ibn Kathir from Tirmidhi who classifies this report as hasan gharib.)

[10] Surely those who burned⁴ the believing men and women and thereafter repented not,⁵ theirs shall be the punishment of Hell and theirs the punishment of burning.⁶

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَتَلُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
تَمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ جَهَنَّمَ وَلَهُمْ
عَذَابُ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] Surely, those who believed and did good works, theirs shall be gardens underneath which rivers flow. That is the great triumph.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ
جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ذَلِكَ
الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿١١﴾

[12] Surely, fierce is the seizure of your Lord.⁷

إِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] Verily, it is He who originates and He who shall repeat.⁸

إِنَّهُ هُوَ بَيِّدٌ وَيُعِيدُ ﴿١٣﴾

4. The word in the original is fatanu which is very commonly used for burning things as Allah said (51: 13):

{ يَوْمَ هُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ يُفْتَنُونَ } [الذاريات: ١٣]

The day when they shall
be roasted on the Fire (Razi,
(Qurtubi, Shawkani

5. “(The chastisement of burning) ...assumes a special significance in the background of the cruel burning of the faithful by the “makers of the Pit.” These criminals would be duly retributed by being subjected to a similar kind of suffering that they had caused their innocent victims” (Yusuf Ali).

6. Hasan (al-Busri) said: Note the generosity. They burned His friends and He offered them repentance and forgiveness (Ibn Kathir).

Razi said: “The story of those who were burned to death implies that when facing a similar situation one should preferably take the hard line opting to die rather than live as an apostate. Nevertheless, the other choice is also open which is to outwardly profess unbelief as did a Companion when Musaylimah the Liar asked him if he believed in him. He said yes. When the Prophet learnt of it he said, “As for him who was released because he took the easy line, there is no sin upon him.”

7. As Allah said in *surah* Hud, verse 102:

{ وَكَذَلِكَ أَخْذُ رَبِّكَ إِذَا أَخَذَ الْقَرْيَ وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ إِنَّ
أَخْذَهُ لَيَمُّ شَدِيدٌ } [هود: ١٠٢]

Such is the seizure of your Lord” when He seizes the cities that are evildoing. Verily His seizure is
(painful, severe” (Qurtubi

[14] *And He is the Oft-Forgiving, the All-Loving.*⁹

﴿١٤﴾ وَهُوَ الْعَفُورُ الْوَدُودُ

[15] *Lord of the `Arsh, the Noble.*

﴿١٥﴾ ذُو الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدُ

[16] *Doer of what He will.*¹⁰

﴿١٦﴾ فَعَّالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيدُ

[17] *Have you received the story of the armies?*

﴿١٧﴾ هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْجُنُودِ

[18] *Of Fir`awn and the Thamud?*¹¹

﴿١٨﴾ فِرْعَوْنَ وَثَمُودَ

[19] *But the unbelievers are in (a mood of) denial.*

﴿١٩﴾ بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي تَكْذِيبٍ

[20] *While Allah is encircling them from behind them.*

﴿٢٠﴾ وَاللَّهُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ مُحِيطٌ

[21] *Nay, this is a Noble Qur`ān.*

﴿٢١﴾ بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَّجِيدٌ

[22] *(Preserved) in a well-guarded Tablet.*¹²

﴿٢٢﴾ فِي لَوْحٍ مَّحْفُوظٍ

8. That is, it is He who began the punishment of those who persecuted the believers in Him and did not repent, and it is He who is going to repeat the punishment in the Hereafter (Zamakhshari).

9. The wadud of the original can also be translated as “The Beloved” (Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

10. When Abu Bakr was dying he was asked: “Did you consult a doctor?” He answered, “Yes.” They asked: “What did he say?” He said: “Well, He told me, ‘Verily I am the Doer of what I intend’” (Ibn Kathir).

11. Allah gave the example of Fir`awn in connection with the story of the “People of the Pit” perhaps because

both had claimed divinity (Shanqiti), and followed up with the mention of Thamud perhaps because the people of Fir`awn and Thamud both produced mighty constructions that gave them the cause for pride (Au.).

Ibn Abi Hatim has reported from `Amr b. Maymun that once the Prophet (*saws*) passed by a woman who was reciting this verse: “Have you received the stories of the armies, Fir`awn and Thamud?” He responded: “Yes, it has reached me” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Yusuf Ali notes: “In contrast to the real, all-embracing, and eternal power of Allah, what are the forces of man at their best? Two examples are

mentioned. (1) Pharaoh was a proud monarch of a powerful kingdom, with resources and organization, material, moral and intellectual, as good as any in the world. When he pitted himself against Allah's Prophet, he and his forces were destroyed. See 79: 15-26. (2) The Thamud were great builders, and had a high standard of material civilization. But they defied the law of Allah and perished. See 7: 73-79."

12. Abu al-Shaykh has reported Ibn 'Abbas as saying through a chain of narrators which, according to Suyuti is reliable: "Allah first created *Al-Lawh al-Mahfuz* (the well preserved Tablet) of length a hundred years. Then, before creating other things,

He ordered the Pen (Al-Qalam) to write down saying: 'Write down My knowledge about My creations.' It began to write all that is to take place until the Day of Judgment" (Shawkani).

According to some scholars this *Lawh al-Mahfuz* has an airy existence. Mujahid has said that it is the same thing as the *Umm al-Kitab* (Mother of the Book) [of verse 39, ch. 13: ed.] - (Ibn Jarir). Anas b. Malik's opinion is that it is called Al-Mahfuz because it is preserved on the forehead of the angel Israfil (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

No *hadith* has been quoted to substantiate the above opinions (Au.).

بِسْمِ



Surah 86
Al-Tariq

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
 PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] *By the heaven and by the night visitor.*¹

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ ﴿١﴾

The Connection

It will be noticed that the previous *surah* broached upon the subject of the creation of humans. This *surah* speaks of the creation of vegetation in verse four: “Who brought forth the pasturage” (Alusi).

Merits of the *Surah*:

‘Ali has reported that the Prophet loved this *surah*. Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Da’ud, Tirmidhi and Nasa’i have all recorded that the Prophet used to recite this and *surah Al-Ghashiyyah* (the next *surah*, no. 88) during the ‘Eid and Friday Prayers. And, if the ‘Eid happened to fall on a Friday, he would recite them both. According to a report in Ahmad, as well as with others, the Prophet used to recite this *surah*, along with *Al-Kafirun* (109) and *Al-Ikhlās* (no. 112) in the witr Prayers. The *Sahihayn* have also

transmitted that the Prophet advised Mu’adh (about whom the people complained that he was reciting long chapters in the Prayers) to recite in place *Al-A’la*, *Al-Shams* and *Al-Ghashiyyah* (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

The Prophet also recited other *su’ar* such as: *Al-Munafiqun*, *Al-Jumu’ah* and *Qaf*, but more frequently *Al-A’la* and *Al-Ghashiyyah* - Nawawi in Muslim: Au.

Alusi adds: According to a *hadith* in Tabarani the Prophet recited this *surah* along with *Al-Kafirun* in the last *maghrib* Prayer of his life.

1. *Taraqā* is to move about in the night, and hence *tariq* one who comes unexpectedly by night. Accordingly, the verb *taraqā* is for knocking, since in those days it was the night-comer who knocked at the door (Qurtubi and Rashid No`mani).

[2] And what will explain to you what the night visitor is?²

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ ﴿٢﴾

[3] (It is) the bright³ star,⁴

النَّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ ﴿٣﴾

During the day the people would not knock, rather, called out the name of the master of the house at the door (Au.).

Hence, all stars are *tariq* since they appear only in the night (Shawkani).

The Prophet used the same word in the following *hadith*:

تَهَى أَنْ يَطْرُقَ الرَّجُلُ أَهْلَهُ لَيْلًا

“He forbid that a man knock at the door of his house unexpectedly at night” (Razi, Ibn Kathir).

Unexpected arrival is disapproved of because it does not allow women at home time to make themselves presentable to their husbands (Au.).

In another *hadith* the Prophet is reported to have said:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ طَوَارِقِ هَذَا اللَّيْلِ إِلَّا طَارِقًا
يَطْرُقُ بِخَيْرٍ يَا رَحْمَنَ

“I seek Your refuge (O Allah) from the evil of the knocker during the day or night, save for him who knocks with good news - O Rahman.” In this *hadith* also the Prophet used the same root *taraqa* (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani, Shanqiti).

2. Sufyan ibn `Uyaynah has said that wherever Allah said *ma adraka*, He informed the Prophet of the subject. But when He said *ma yudrika*, He did not inform him of the subject, as in verse (42: 17):

{ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ قَرِيبٌ } [الشورى: ١٧]

“And what will teach you that the Hour may be close at hand?” (Razi, Shawkani).

Nevertheless, the above statement can only be applied generally and not specifically to every instance (Shanqiti).

3. The *thaqib* of the original has been interpreted as “the bright one” by Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah, Mujahid and others (Ibn Jarir).

4. There are various opinions about which “star” is meant, most of them homing in upon Saturn. (In ancient times *tariq* was for a particular star that used to appear just before dawn, as in a poetical piece of Hind b. `Utbah: Shawkani).

However, there have been other explanations to the word. Ibn `Abbas has related that once the Prophet was

[4] Verily. There is no soul but it has a guardian (angel) over it.⁵

إِنْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ ﴿٤﴾

[5] So, let man consider of what he is created,

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ ﴿٥﴾

sitting with Abu Talib when a star burst forth and filled the heaven and earth with its light. It scared Abu Talib. “What was that?” He exclaimed. “That was a star hurled down. A sign of Allah,” the Prophet replied. And Allah revealed these verses (Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi).

Fixed and Moving Stars

It may be recalled in this context that in ancient times a clear distinction between planets and stars did not exist, even if the Qur’ān used different terms for both: *kawkab* for planets and *najm* for stars. Hence *najm* here has been understood by the ancients to mean the planet Saturn, which, in the words of The Random House Encyclopedia: “The outermost of the planets known in the ancient times, is a conspicuous naked-eye object, although in pre-telescopic times there was no means of distinguishing its rings, which are one of the most beautiful sights in the entire sky.”

However, with the passage of time the difference between *kawkab* and *najm* of the Qur’ān began to ap-

pear. Shihabuddin Ahmad b. Abdul Wahhab, of the eighth (fourteenth century of the Christian era) writes in *Nihayatu al-Arab Fi Funun al-Adab*: “What are known as ‘fixed stars’ are those that fall beyond the seven planets. They are so called (i.e. fixed) because of their relatively slow movement when compared with the seven planets that move much faster. Otherwise all of them are in a circular movement around the hub of the universe” (*Bab fi Kawkab al-Thabitah*) - Au.

5. As Allah said in another place (13: 11):

لَهُ مُعَقِّبَاتٌ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمَنْ خَلْفَهُ يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ (الرعد: ١١)

“He has attendant angels, before and behind him, watching over him by Allah’s command” (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Thanwi writes: The meaning of watchers or preservers is also possible in view of verses 10 and 11 of *surah* 82:

{وَأَنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لِحَافِظِينَ (١٠) كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ} [الانفطار: ١٠، ١١]

[6] He is created of a gushing liquid.⁶

﴿٦﴾ خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّاءٍ دَافِقٍ

[7] That issues from between the loins and the breast-bones.⁷

﴿٧﴾ يُخْرَجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ

“But, lo! Over you are preservers (of your deeds). Honored (scribes) writing down (all that you do).”

And the implication is that you are surely accountable for your deeds which have been preserved, but will be brought to light only at the proper time, as does the morning star appear at its proper time.

6. “Let man consider his origins and what has become of him. It is a very wide gulf which divides the origins from the final product, the gushing water from man the intelligent, rational being with his highly sophisticated organic, neurological, mental and psychological systems. The reference to this great gulf which the gushing water crosses in order to be made into a communicating being suggests that there is a power beyond the province of man which moves that shapeless and powerless fluid along its remarkable and impressive journey until it is shaped into its magnificent, ultimate form. It implies that there is a guardian appointed by Allah to look after that moist germ, and to guide it through its remarkable journey, which is full

of wonders much greater than those met by man throughout life” (Sayyid).

7. *Sulb and Tara'ib:*

The words in the original are *sulb* and *tara'ib*. *Sulb* is almost unanimously understood to mean the back - here of the male. As for *tara'ib*, there are wide speculations, but most of them come very near to each other, such as, the bones of the chest including the collar bones (linguistically), the lower ribs, (*Zajjaj*) the area between the two shoulders just above the breast (Mujahid), the area between the breasts and just above them, or where the necklace-end rests, (Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah) and the two hands, legs and the two eyes of a woman (Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah and) - Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir.

However, another possible interpretation is that the liquid gushes forth from between the *sulb* and *tara'ib* of the man and the *sulb* and *tara'ib* of the woman (Qurtubi).

The preferred meaning however is that it is the area between the two breasts and just above them (Za-

[8] Verily. He (who does this) is capable of bringing him,⁸ (back to life).

إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ ﴿٨﴾

[9] (On) The day when the secrets shall be laid bare.⁹

يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ ﴿٩﴾

[10] And he shall have no power nor helper.

فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَلَا نَاصِرٍ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] By heaven of the returning (rains).¹⁰

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ ﴿١١﴾

makhshari, Shawkani). This is how our poets have used the word (Ibn Jarir).

Yusuf Ali adds: “A man’s seed is the quintessence of his body. It proceeds from his loins, i.e., from his back between the hip-bones and his ribs. His back-bone is the source and symbol of his strength and personality. In the spinal cord and in the brain is the directive energy of the central nervous system, and this directs all action, organic and psychic. The spinal cord is continuous with the Medulla Oblongata in the brain.”

8. That is, if Allah can make a man out of a small amount of liquid, He can also create him anew, (Qurtubi); as Allah said elsewhere in the Qur’an (30: 27):

{وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ وَهُوَ أَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ} [الروم: ٢٧]

“It is He who begins the creation and then repeats it. And that is easier for Him” (Ibn Kathir).

Yusuf Ali comments: “The Creator who can mingle the forces of psychic and physical muscular action in the creation of man, ... can surely give a new life after physical death here, and restore man’s personality in the new world that will open out in the Hereafter.”

9. That is, when all secrets will be laid bare, open for everyone to see what the man used to hide from others including his deceptive dealings. Accordingly, a *hadith* in Bukhari and Muslim says:

إِنَّ الْعَادِرَ يُنْصَبُ لَهُ لُؤَاءٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَيَتَمَالُ هَذِهِ عَدْرَةُ فُلَانٍ بِنِ فُلَانٍ

“The deceiver will have a flag on the Day of Judgment, and it will be said, “This is the deception of so and so, son of so and so” (Ibn Kathir)

10. Qurtubi remarks: The meaning popularly accepted of *raj* is “rains” which return year after year. Poets have also used it in that sense, as in the poetical piece extolling a sword:

[12] And by the earth splitting (with greenery).¹¹

﴿۱۲﴾ وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ الصَّدْعِ

[13] This indeed is a decisive word.¹²

﴿۱۳﴾ إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلٌ فَصْلٌ

[14] And no idle talk.

﴿۱۴﴾ وَمَا هُوَ بِأَهْزَلُ

أَبْيَضُ كَالرَّجَعِ رَسُوبًا إِذَا... مَا تَأَخَّ فِي مُخْتَلِفٍ يَخْتَلِي

White, as the rains, that cuts through
and disappears in the body severing it.

This is the opinion of Ibn `Abbas, Hasan, Mujahid and Qatadah (Ibn Jarir). This is also the proper linguistic meaning according to *Zajjaj* (Shawkani).

In calling the rains *raj`* the ancient Arabs were perhaps led by their belief that the clouds take their water from the sea and then return it to the earth in the form of rains (Zamakhshari, Razi, Shawkani).

Yet another possibility is that it is the verdure of the spring season which has been alluded to by the word *raj`*, which is another sense in which the word is used in the Arabic language (Qurtubi).

The verse would then mean: “By the heaven which causes (by means of its

rains) the spring verdure to come to surface” (Au.).

Some contemporary scholars have voiced the opinion that the allusion is to the harmful rays of the sun (such as the radiation), which the earth’s atmosphere (in a sense heaven of the earth), reflects away. Otherwise, life would have been impossible on the earth (Au.).

11. *Al-Sad`* of the earth is its splitting up for the verdure: Ibn `Abbas, Hasan, `Ikrimah, Mujahid, Qatadah and others (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

12. The Prophet (*saws*) has said in a *hadith* narrated by `Ali (*ra*):

كِتَابُ اللَّهِ فِيهِ تَبَأُ مَنْ قَبْلَكُمْ وَخَبْرُ مَنْ بَعْدَكُمْ
وَحُكْمُ مَا بَيْنَكُمْ

“The Book of Allah. In it is the news of those before you as well as those after you. It is the judge in your affairs” (Shafi`).

[15] Verily, they are plotting a scheme.¹³

﴿١٥﴾ إِنَّهُمْ يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا

[16] And I am plotting a scheme.¹⁴

﴿١٦﴾ وَأَكِيدُ كَيْدًا

13. This refers to the schemes that the pagans were plotting against the Prophet and his followers (Qurtubi).

14. That showed its effectiveness at Badr (Qurtubi).

Allah's Schemes

It must be understood that there is no difference of opinion among the scholars that the term kayd should not be applied to Allah unless it is in comparison with the planning and scheming of man against Him. Kayd in fact has in its root two-fold meaning. One, that of adopting a strong course of percussive measures; and two, of secretive planning. The second meaning is also applicable here. Badr can be cited as an example. The pagans mustered the best of their forces there and were quite confident of defeating the Muslims without any great effort. But Allah reversed the tables on them. First He showed the Muslims lesser in their sight than they actually were, so that the pagans saw no cause for a retreat without a fight. Second, He sent down rains that wetted the earth beneath their feet. Now, the Muslims were

on a sand track (that absorbed all the water). But the pagans were on a swampy patch that turned slimy and they began to slip. These (and others: Au.) were the kayd (secret measures) of Allah that He employed to trap and defeat them (Shanqiti).

Sayyid Qutb observes: "Those people who are created out of gushing water issuing between the loins and the breast bones, brought forth without any strength, ability or will of their own, guided along their long journey by the Divine power and destined to that return when the secrets are searched and tried and where they have no strength or support - are devising a scheme against the Prophet and the Muslims! I - the Creator who guides, preserves, directs, brings back to life and puts to trial; the Able; the Victor Who has made the sky, the night visitor, the gushing water and man; the Maker of the universe with its returning rain and the earth splitting with verdure - I, Allah, am devising a scheme of My own. So, there are the two schemes and a battle. It is, in truth,

[17] So grant a delay to the unbelievers, allow them a short respite.¹⁵

فَمَهِّلِ الْكَافِرِينَ أَمْهَلُهُمْ رُوَيْدًا ﴿١٧﴾

a one-sided battle but described as one between two sides for the sake of sarcasm.”

15. “Gentle forbearance with Evil shows our trust in Allah and Allah’s Plan: for it can never be frustrated.

This does not mean that we should assist or compromise with evil, or fail to put it down where we have the power. It means patience and humility where we have no power to prevent Evil” (Yusuf Ali). مَقْتَدًا



Surah 87

Al-A`la

Makkan¹

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Glorify the Name of your Lord, Most
High,²

سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى ﴿١﴾

Merits of the Surah

Imām Malik has reported Ibn Qays as having asked Nu`man b. Bashir about what *surah* the Prophet recited along with *surah Al-Jumu`ah* in the Friday Prayers. He told him: “*Al-Ghashiyyah*”. The *hadīth* is in Abu Da`ud, Nasa`i, Muslim and Ibn Majah. And Ibn Abi Hatim has reported that once the Prophet heard a woman recite this *surah*. He stopped there to listen to her. When she said: “Have you received the story of the Enveloper?” he responded: “Yes, I have” (Ibn Kathir).

1. The *surah* is certainly Makkan in view of the report in Bukhari in which Bara` b. `Azib says: “Mus`ab b. `Umayr and Ibn Umm Maktum were the first to migrate to Madinah. They began to teach us the Qur`ān. They were followed by Bilal, `Am-

mar and Sa`d. Then came `Umar ibn al-Khattab among twenty others. Finally the Prophet himself arrived whose arrival occasioned a joy in Madinah that it had never witnessed before. Even little boys were jumping around singing, ‘Here, the Prophet has arrived.’ And he had not arrived before I had learnt ‘Glorify the Name of your Lord Most High,’ (that is, this *surah*: Au.) and other such short chapters” (Ibn Kathir).

2. That is, glorified be His Name, and be He declared above all that is attributed to Him but does not befit Him and His Greatness. Consequently, His Name or Attributes may not be given meaning or interpretation that smack of something that is anything but glorious, nor should His Names and Attributes be used in any way for anyone else save Him.

And hence too, His Name ought not to be spelled or remembered in unclean places such as the water closet. (Accordingly, the Prophet would remove his ring on which was inscribed the word Allah, before entering those places: Shanqiti). It also includes remembrance of His name with great dignity, fear and awe and may not be uttered in situations where it is not likely to be received in that spirit. Imām Malik for instance, when he did not have anything to offer to a beggar would say, "I shall give you something when I have" etc., in place of the usual, "May Allah feed you," or "May Allah treat you well," etc. When asked why he did not use those standard catch-phrases he replied: "Allah's name is more sublime than that it should be spelled at a time when the other person may not be in a fit state, because of attendant disappointment, to receive it cheerfully (Alusi).

Accordingly, no one should be called by the names specific to Allah such as *Al-Rahman*, *Al-Razzaq*, *Al-Ghaffar*, *Al-Quddus* etc. Further, glorification would also include, in the understanding of the commentators, all efforts to refute wrong ideas about Allah, His Being or Attributes (Au.).

It is also reported that when `Ali, Ibn `Umar, and Ibn `Abbas recited this verse, they used to say:

”سبحان ربي الأعلى“.

”Glorified is my Lord, Most High”
(Ibn Jarir).

The report is in Abu Da`ud (Qurtubi & Ibn Kathir).

The Prophet himself used to say these words in his ruku` and sujud (Razi).

According to a *hadith* in Ahmad, (also in Abu Da`ud, Ibn Majah, Ibn al-Mundhir and Ibn Marduwayh: Shawkani), when Allah revealed

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

”And Glorify the Name of your Lord, Most Great,” the Prophet told his Companions: “Do this in your ruku` (deep bow),” and when,

سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى

”And Glorify the Name of your Lord Most High” was revealed he instructed them: “Do this in your sujud [prostration]” - Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir.

The chain of transmitters of the above *hadith* is free from any dubious person (Shawkani).

It is reported of `Ali (*ra*) that once when he passed over this verse during recitation in a Prayer he responded with:

[2] Who created and shaped,

﴿٢﴾ الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى

[3] Who determined³ and guided,⁴

﴿٣﴾ وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى

[4] Who brought forth the pasturage,

﴿٤﴾ وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَى

سبحان ربي الأعلى

He was asked, “Do you add upon the Qur`an?” He said, “No. We have been ordered to do something and I did it” (Alusi, Shawkani).

It is also reported of Ibn `Umar, Ibn Zubayr and Abu Musa al-Ash`ari that when they recited this *surah* in their Prayers they responded with:

سبحان ربي الأعلى

(Shawkani).

3. A report in Muslim records the Prophet as having said:

أَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدَّرَ مَقَادِيرَ الْخَلَائِقِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِخَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ , وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ

“Allah quantified and qualified every creation 50,000 years earlier to the creation of the heaven and earth. At that time, His `Arsh was on water” (Ibn Kathir).

Shafi` adds: This means that not only does Allah create what He will, He also gives the creation the size, weight, shape, color, volume and various other qualities and puts them on to the course He has determined for them.

4. Mujahid has said that it means, “He showed them the paths both of good as well as of evil.”

Others (e.g. Ibn `Abbas, Suddi, Maqatil and Kalbi: Qurtubi), have said that it means that He gave the instinct to the male to go into the female.

But, obviously, the application can be general to include guidance to good and evil as well as to actions inspired by natural instincts (Ibn Jarir).

Zamakhshari comments: This refers to the guidance shown by Allah to all that is of profit or of harm to His creations, whether it be in matters of food, medicine or anything else pertaining to the countless human needs, as it also refers to the instincts in the animals, birds, creepers and all. This is a chapter that no illustrator can successfully illustrate. So, glory to our Lord, Most High.

Shanqiti remarks: (If in the outer world we see) celestial bodies guided to their course, then, (in our own world we see that when a seed is sown) the root is guided downwards and the plant upwards.

(Seeds have two sides. One side, known to the planters, sends out the root, while the other side sends out the stem. If the seed is planted upside down, then, as the stem comes out, it travels downwards [earthwards] for a suitable distance, after which it takes a U-turn to rise out of the earth skywards: Au.).

Majid writes: "The allusion is also to the special spiritual faculties of man."

Perfection in Allah's Creation

Sayyid Qutb comments: "Everything Allah has created is well proportioned and perfected. Every creature is assigned its own role and given guidance so that it may know its role and play it. It is told the purpose of its creation, given what it needs for sustenance and guided to it. This is clearly visible in everything around us big or small, important or trivial. All things are also collectively perfected so that they may fulfill their collective role.

"The single atom is well balanced between its electrons and protons to the same degree as the solar system, its sun, planets and satellites are well balanced. Each of the two know the way it is assigned in travel and fulfills its role. The single living cell is also perfect and well equipped to do everything it is asked to do, in the

same measure as the most advanced and complex species. This perfect balance, in the individual and the collective sense, is easily noticeable in every one of numerous kinds of creation that fill the gap between the single atom and the solar system or between the single cell and the most advanced living creature.

"This basic fact, evidenced by everything in the universe, is well recognized by the human heart as it contemplates what is in the universe. This sort of inspiration and recognition is within the reach of every man in every age, regardless of his standard of education. All that is required for it is an open mind which contemplates and responds. Increased knowledge then endorses and emphasizes with individual examples what inspiration has already proven with the first glance...

"The American scientist, A Cressay Morrison, Head of the Science Academy in New York, says in his book "Man Does Not Stand Alone":

'Birds have homing instinct. The robin that nested at your door may go south in the autumn, but will come back to his old nest the next spring. In September, flocks of many of our birds fly south, often over a thousand miles of open sea, but they

do not lose their way... The bee finds its hive while the wind waving the grasses and trees blots out every visible guide to its whereabouts...

“The honey-bee workers make chambers of different sizes in the comb used for breeding. Small chambers are constructed for the workers, larger one for the drones, and special chambers for the prospective queens. The queen bee lays unfertilized eggs in the cells designed for males, but lays fertilized eggs in the proper chambers for the female workers and the possible queens. The workers, who are the modified females, having long since anticipated the coming of the new generation, are also prepared to furnish food for the young bees by chewing and predigesting honey and pollen....

“The young salmon spends years at sea, then comes back to his own river, and what is more, he travels up the side of the river into which flows the tributary in which he was born... If a salmon going up a river is transferred to another tributary he will at once realize he is not in the right tributary and will fight his way down to the main stream and then turn up against the current to finish his destiny... Do atoms and molecules when combined ... have a sense of direc-

tion and will power to exercise it?

“In the melee of creation many creatures have come to exhibit a high degree of certain forms of instincts, intelligence, and what not. The wasp catches the grasshopper, digs a hole in the earth, stings the grasshopper in exactly the right place so that he becomes unconscious but lives as a form of preserved meat. The wasp lays her eggs exactly in the right place, perhaps not knowing that when they hatch, her children can eat without killing the insect on which they feed, which would be fatal to them. The wasp must have done all this right the first and every time, or there would be no wasps of this species. Science cannot explain the mystery, and yet it cannot be attributed to chance. The wasp covers a hole in the earth, departs cheerfully, and dies. Neither she nor her ancestors have reasoned out the process, nor does she know what happens to her offspring. She doesn't even know that she has worked and lived her life for the preservation of her species...

“The examples we have quoted above are but few of the large number of remarkable aspects science has recorded in the worlds of plants, insects, birds and animals. But all these reflect only a part of the import of the

[5] *And then turned it into withered grass;*⁵

﴿٥﴾ فَجَعَلَهُ عُتَاءً أَحْوَى

[6] *We shall soon make you recite⁶ and you shall not forget.*⁷

﴿٦﴾ سَنُقْرِئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَى

[7] *Save for what Allah will. Surely He knows the open and the hidden.*⁸

إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى

﴿٧﴾

two verses: Who created and shaped, Who determined and guided.”

(Quotation from Sayyid ends here).

5. This is an example of how the riches of the world fade away (Qur-tubi).

Sayyid adds: “The reference here to the life of plants carries also an implicit connotation that all plants are reaped and harvested. Similarly, every living being will come to its appointed end. This connotation fits in well with the reference to the two worlds of man: ”Yet you prefer this present life, while the life to come is better and more lasting.” This life is a pasture which comes to its end when it withers away and blackens, while the life to come is the one which lasts.”

6. That is, prepare yourself with sufficient adhkar in order to be ready to receive the oncoming revelations (Alusi).

7. Mujahid has said that the Prophet (saws) used to repeat the words of

revelation out of fear of forgetting them. He was assured in these words that he will not, save for what Allah will remove from his memory (when their temporary function has been served: Au.) - Ibn Jarir.

Many commentators have explained, however, that this promise excludes momentary forgetfulness (Au.).

Zamakhshari remarks: Linguistically it could also mean that forgetfulness will not overtake you, but seldom.

Fa-la tansa of the Arabic text could also mean, “Do not forget,” that is, do not neglect its recitation and practice in accordance to its dictates, otherwise you will forget it, save for what Allah wills (Zamakhshari, Razi).

8. That is, Allah knows what you repeat of the revelation with your tongue, along with Jibril, and what you repeat in your heart. It could also mean, Allah knows what is obvious and what is not, what is apparent now and what is going to be

[8] And We shall ease your way unto the Ease.⁹

وَيَسِّرْ لِّلْيَسْرَى ﴿٨﴾

so later, and, therefore, He shall, in accordance with the needs, let you forget what He will of the revelation (replacing it with others) - Zamakhshari.

9. That is, We shall make it easy for you to act (by this revelation) - Ibn Jarir. The yusra then alludes to the *Shari`ah* which is easy, simple, straightforward and comfortable to live by (Ibn Kathir).

It could also mean that we will take you by the easiest way in the memorization of the Qur`ān, which (Razi states elsewhere) proved miraculously true in view of the fact that although unlettered and hence depending only on the recitation of Jibril, the Prophet still mastered the whole of the Qur`ān.

Sayyid comments: "This is a glad tidings for the Prophet personally and for the Islamic nation at large. It is furthermore a statement of the nature of Islam, its role in human life and in the universe..."

"The Prophet's traditions urging the adoption of an easy, gentle, and tolerant attitude in all matters, especially those which concern religious

duties are numerous. From among these we may quote:

إِنَّ الدِّينَ يُسْرٌ وَلَكِنْ يُشَادُّ الدِّينَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا غَلَبَهُ

'This religion is of an easy nature. No one will pull hard against it will overcome him (Bukhari).

لَا تُشَدُّوْا عَلٰى اَنْفُسِكُمْ فَيُشَدِّدَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاِنَّ قَوْمًا شَدَّدُوْا عَلٰى اَنْفُسِهِمْ فَشَدَّدَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِمْ فَبَقَايَاهُمْ فِي الصَّوَامِعِ وَالدِّيَارِ

'Do not be hard on yourselves lest it should be made hard for you. A former nation chose to be hard and it was made harder for them; so there they are: their places of worship and devotion' (Abu Da`ud).

فَاِنَّ الْمُنْبِتَّ لَا اَرْضًا قَطَعَ ، وَلَا ظَهْرًا اَبْتَى

'A rider driving hard neither reaches his destination (earlier) nor keeps his transport' (Bazzar).

The above report has not been trusted for its authenticity by Haythamiyy (Au.).

With regard to social dealings, the Prophet said:

رَحِمَ اللهُ رَجُلًا سَمَحًا اِذَا بَاعَ وَاِذَا اشْتَرَى وَاِذَا اقْتَضَى

'May Allah have mercy on any who is tolerant at the time he

buys, sells, and seeks his rights' (Bukhari).

المؤمن هين لين

A believer is gentle and friendly' (Bayhaqi).

This particular *hadith* has been termed weak, but others that are *Sahih* exist of the same meaning (Au.).

المؤمن يألف ويؤلف، ولا خير فيمن لا يألف ولا يؤلف

'A believer gets on well with others and is easy to get on well with. There is no good in someone who does not go easy with (people) and with whom (people) cannot go easy' (Dara Qutni).

Sayyid Qutb quotes only first half of the above reported evaluated as trustworthy by Hathamiyy (Au.).

'The type of man Allah dislikes most is the quarrelsome one who does not budge' (Bukhari, Muslim).

أَبْعَضُ الرِّجَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ الْأَلَدُّ الْخَصِيمُ

"Accordingly," continues Sayyid, "When we look carefully through this religion we find that care has been taken to make it easy for men to follow, without they having to overstretch themselves. It takes into consideration the different situations man finds himself in, and the conditions he faces in different environ-

ments. The faith itself is based on concepts which are easy to grasp: a single God; none like Him; He has created everything; He has guided everything to realize the purpose of its existence; He has also sent messengers to remind people of their role in life and to call them back to their Lord Who has created them. All obligations imposed by this faith fit in perfectly together; there are no conflicts, no contradictions. People have to fulfill these obligations according to their abilities; there need be no overstraining, no heavy burdens. The Prophet said, (as in Bukhari):

فَإِذَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ فَأَتُوا مِنْهُ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ ، وَإِذَا تَهَيَّئْتُكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ فَدَعُوهُ

'If I command you to something, fulfill it as much as you can; but leave off totally what I forbid you.' Prohibition may be also relaxed (6: 119),

{إِلَّا مَا اضْطُرِرْتُمْ إِلَيْهِ} [الأنعام: ١١٩]

'.. *Save under compulsion of necessity.*' These basic principles provide the limits within which the Islamic commandments and principles operate."

Quotation from Sayyid ends here.

Shafi' remarks: The point in saying "And We shall ease your way unto the Ease," rather than, "We shall

[9] Therefore, admonish - if admonition will bear fruit.¹⁰

﴿٩﴾ فَذَكِّرْ إِنْ نَفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَى

[10] Surely, he who fears will be admonished.

﴿١٠﴾ سَيَذَكَّرُ مَنْ يَخْشَى

[11] And turn aside from it (none but) the most wretched,¹¹

﴿١١﴾ وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْأَشْقَى

[12] Who shall enter the Great Fire.¹²

﴿١٢﴾ الَّذِي يَصَلَّى النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى

[13] Wherein he shall neither die nor live.¹³

﴿١٣﴾ ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَى

make the *Shari`ah* easy for you” is that it is as if to say that, ‘We shall mold you so that you may easily fit into (the frame-work, rules and etiquettes of) the *Shari`ah*.’

10. The sentence is not necessarily conditional. It could be taken in the positive sense also, making a demand on the admonished to take heed. For instance, when it is said (Razi), “I have made this clear for you, if you will consider,” it is not meant that the person may or may not consider. Rather it is meant that he better pay special attention to it (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi). That is, the “in” of the original is synonymous with “inna” (Majid).

11. “If a man does not listen to the warning given, then he is absolutely ‘the most wretched.’ He lives in a void, uninspired by the facts surrounding him, turning a deaf ear and a senseless mind to the evidence they

give. Such a person lives in constant worry, striving hard to attain the paltry pleasures of this world. Hence he is the most wretched in this life. But he is also the most wretched in the hereafter as he suffers there endless torment” (Sayyid).

12. It is said (Hasan: Razi, Qurtubi) that the fire of this world is the small fire and the fire of the hereafter is the Great fire (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari).

And the *Sahihayn* record the *hadith* that the fire of the hereafter is seventy time more intensive than the fire of this world (Alusi).

However, it could also mean that he will enter the most intensive of the fires of Hell (Qurtubi, Razi, Alusi).

13. As in a *hadith* in Muslim. The Prophet said:

« أهل النار الذين هم أهلها فإنهم لا يموتون ولا يحيون ، ولكن أناس - أو كما قال - فتصيبهم النار بذنوبهم - أو قال : بخطاياهم - قال : هكذا ، قال

[14] Surely, he prospered who cleansed (himself).¹⁴

﴿١٤﴾ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى

[15] Remembered his Lord's Name,¹⁵ and Prayed.¹⁶

﴿١٥﴾ وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى

أبو نضرة - فيميتهم حتى إذا صاروا فحما أذن في الشفاعة ، فيجاء بهم ضبائر فينبتون على أحمار الجنة ، فيقال لأهل الجنة : أفيضوا عليهم ، فينبتون كما تنبت الحبة في حميل السيل ، قال رجل من القوم : كأن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في البادية

“As for the people of the Fire, they shall stay in it forever. They shall neither die therein nor live. But some people, who will be there because of their sins, shall stay in until they become like charcoal. It is then that the intercessors will be allowed (to intercede). They will be brought out like burnt out logs and placed on the shores of the springs of Paradise. It will be announced: ‘O people of Paradise, pour down water on them.’ At this they will start growing like the seed in the pathways of flood waters.” Upon this one of those present remarked: “As if the Prophet was brought up in the deserts” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

14. That is, he cleansed himself of “association of others with Allah” (Ibn `Abbas).

`Ata' and `Ikrimah have held the same opinion. But Hasan (also Rabi`, Ma`mar and Qatadah: Qurtubi) have said that it means to say that he purified himself “with the help of deeds.”

`Ikrimah's opinion is, “by declaring faith in the oneness of Allah” or, as others have said, purified himself by giving out the *Zakah* of `Eid al-Fitr (Ibn Jarir).

During his reign `Umar ibn `Abdul `Aziz would exhort people to expend their Zakatu al-Fitr before the `Eid Prayers and recite this verse during his exhortations (Ibn Kathir).

15. That is, he declared faith in the oneness of Allah (Ibn `Abbas: Ibn Jarir). According to another report Ibn `Abbas said: “He remembered Allah's Name on the way to the Prayers of `Eid.”

However, since the *Surah* is, according to the majority, Makkan, where there was no `Eid, it could mean that the ayah was educating the Muslims for the time when `Eid Prayers would be prescribed (Qurtubi).

[16] But you prefer the life of this world.¹⁷

بَلْ تُوْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ﴿١٦﴾

[17] Whereas, the Hereafter is better and longer lasting.

وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى ﴿١٧﴾

[18] Surely this is in the Scriptures of old.

إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى ﴿١٨﴾

16. According to Ibn `Abbas, he remembered all that is going to happen after death and the situation when he would stand alone before his Lord, leading him to Allah's worship. This is the meaning of the words, "He remembered his Lord's Name, and Prayed." But Abu Sa`id al-Khudri and Ibn `Umar are of the opinion that it applies to the Prayers of `Eid (Qurtubi).

Razi adds: The words "remembered the Name of his Lord" point to the perfection of the soul attained through the cognizance of Allah and "prayed" points to the perfection of the body and the limbs with the obedience of Allah.

17. The Prophet has said in a *hadith* of Ahmad narrated by `A'isha:

الدُّنْيَا دَارٌ مِّنْ لَا دَارَ لَهَا وَمَالٌ مِّنْ لَا مَالَ لَهَا وَهِيَ يَجْمَعُ مَن لَّا عَقْلَ لَهَا

Shu`ayb al-Arna'ut thought that the above report is weak (Au.).

"This world is the abode of he who has no abode in the Hereafter, the

wealth of he who has no wealth in the Hereafter, and only he amasses its wealth who lacks intelligence."

In another report in Ahmad, narrated by Abu Musa al-Ash`ari, the Prophet said:

مَنْ أَحَبَّ دُنْيَاهُ أَضَرَ بِآخِرَتِهِ ، وَمَنْ أَحَبَّ آخِرَتَهُ أَضَرَ بِدُنْيَاهُ ، فَأَثَرُوا مَا يَبْقَى عَلَى مَا يَفْنَى

"Whoever loved this world, will do harm to his Hereafter, and whoever loved the Hereafter, will do harm to this world. Therefore, you ought to prefer the everlasting over the ephemeral" (Ibn Kathir).

Haythamiyy analyzed the above report as brought to us by trustworthy narrators (Au.).

Malik ibn Dinar has said: "Were this world to be gold but perishable, and the next world rags but lasting, the next world would be given preference. How much more not when this world is rags and perishable, while the next is gold and everlasting?!" (Qurtubi).

[19] - Scriptures of Ibrahim¹⁸ and Musa.¹⁹

صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى ﴿١٩﴾

18. "There must have been some Testament of Abraham, which, like so many other Scriptures is now lost to the world. A book, said to be 'apocryphal,' entitled the Testament of Abraham was translated from the Greek original and published for the first time in 1892, at Cambridge, by M.R. James. 'Ethiopic, Slavonic and Romania versions also have been found and some of them published.'" (As for the Scripture of Musa (*asws*) the present Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament: Au.) is a surviving recension" (Majid).

19. Although the allusion could be to the whole chapter, it seems more likely that the verses (14-17), "Surely he prospered who cleansed, remembered his Lord's Name and Prayed. But you prefer the life of this world, whereas, the Hereafter is better and longer lasting," are the teachings that are in the Scriptures of old - of Ibrahim and Musa (Ibn Jarir). Ibn Jarir's preference seems to be strong (Ibn Kathir).

Scriptures of Old

'Abd b. Humayd, Ibn Marduwayh and Ibn 'Asakir (also Ajuri: Qurtu-

bi), have reported Abu Dharr that he asked the Prophet:

عن أبي ذر، ... قال: قلت: يا رسول الله، كم كتاب أنزله الله؟ قال: "مائة كتاب وأربعة كتب، أنزل الله على شيث خمسين صحيفة، وعلى خنوخ ثلاثين صحيفة، وعلى إبراهيم عشر صحائف، وأنزل على موسى من قبل التوراة عشرة صحائف، وأنزل التوراة والإنجيل والزبور والفرقان" قال: قلت: يا رسول الله، ما كانت صحف إبراهيم؟ قال "كانت كلها يا أيها الملك المسلط المتبلى المغرور إني لم أبعثك لتجمع الدنيا بعضها على بعض، ولكني بعثتك لترد عني دعوة المظلوم، فإني لا أردّها ولو كانت من كافر، وكان فيها أمثال، وعلى العاقل أن يكون له ساعات: ساعة يناجي فيها ربه، وساعة يحاسب فيها نفسه، وساعة يفكر في صنع الله، وساعة يخلو فيها لحاجته من المطعم والمشرب، وعلى العاقل أن لا يكون ضاعناً إلا لثلاث: تزود لمعاد، أو مرمّة لمعاش، أو لذة في غير محرم، وعلى العاقل أن يكون بصيراً بزمانه، مقبلاً على شأنه: حافظاً للسانه، ومن حسب كلامه من عمله قل كلامه إلا فيما يعنيه". قال: قلت: يا رسول الله، فما كانت صحف موسى؟ قال "كانت عبراً كلها، عجبت لمن أيقن بالموت ثم هو يفرح، عجبت لمن أيقن بالقدر ثم هو ينصب، وعجبت لمن يرى الدنيا وتقلبها بأهلها ثم يطمئن إليها، وعجبت لمن أيقن بالحساب غداً ثم هو لا يعمل". قال: قلت: يا رسول الله، فهل في أيدينا شيء مما كان في أيدي إبراهيم وموسى، وما أنزل الله عليك؟ قال "نعم اقرأ يا أبا ذر ﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَرَكَّى وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى بَلْ تُؤَظُّبُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى﴾

“How many Books did Allah reveal O Messenger of Allah?” He answered: “A hundred Scriptures (or scrolls) and four Books. Shith received fifty, Idris thirty, Ibrahim ten, and Musa, before the revelation of *Tawrah*, ten. And, of the Books, He revealed the *Tawrah*, *Injil*, *Zabur* and *Al-Furqan*.” I asked him: “What was in the Scripture of Ibrahim?” He said: “Mostly allegories and paradigms (*amthal*) such as, ‘O proud, tyrannous, conceited king. I have not appointed you to amass wealth upon wealth. I have placed you there, so that you may attend to the complaints of the oppressed. I myself do not reject the petition of an oppressed, even if it were to be from an unbeliever.’ And, ‘The intelligent man should divide his time into three parts. A part in which he will address himself to his Lord; a part in which he will take stock of his own deeds and ponder over the creation of God; and a part devoted to earning his livelihood...’” I asked him, “What was in the Scripture of Musa?” He replied: “Admonitions and alert words (*‘ibar*) such as: ‘I wonder at him who is certain of death yet seeks pleasures...’” I asked him,

“Do we have such things in our Scripture?” He replied: “Yes,” and recited these verses, ‘Surely he prospered who cleansed, remembered his Lord’s Name and Prayed. But you prefer the life of this world; although the Hereafter is better and longer lasting. This is in the Scriptures of old - Scriptures of Ibrahim and Musa’ (Razi, Alusi, Shanqiti, abridged).

Shawkani also quotes a part of this *hadith*.

Asad wrote: “These two names are given here only as examples of earlier revelations, thus stressing, once again, the twofold fact of continuity in mankind’s religious experiences and of the identity of the basic truth preached by all the prophets... The noun *subuf* (sing. *sahifah*), which literally denotes “leaves [of a book]”, is synonymous with *kitab* in all the sense of this term [Jawhari]...”

Sayyid writes: “In conclusion, the *Surah* points out that the message of Islam is not new; its roots go back far deep in time.”

And Shanqiti concludes: “These words show that admonitions are the links that connect the Books and Scriptures of old into one chain.”

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ



Surah 88

Al-Ghashiyyah

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Have you received the story of the En-
veloper?¹

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْعَاشِيَةِ ﴿١﴾

[2] Some faces that Day shall be downcast,

وُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ ﴿٢﴾

[3] Laboring,² weary,

عَامِلَةٌ نَاصِبَةٌ ﴿٣﴾

[4] Roasting at a blazing Fire,

تَصَلَّى نَارًا حَامِيَةً ﴿٤﴾

1. The word in the original, *ghashiyyah*, has been interpreted by Ibn `Abbas and Qatadah as referring to the Day of Judgment which will envelop everyone with its terrifying events. But, according to Sa`id it refers to the Fire that will envelop the faces of the unbelievers (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

2. This refers to their labors and the resultant weariness in the Fire (Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah), since the man in question did not work for Allah in his life on earth and so shall not be allowed to sit quiet in the Fire (Hasan: Ibn Jarir).

Two other opinions have been voiced. 1) The verse refers to him who labored hard in the world for his well-being, and therefore will be weary in the Fire. 2) The reference is to the priests and ascetics in the Churches and Synagogues (or the unbelievers generally: Qurtubi), who toil in their places of worship, praying, fasting, and standing in vigil, (but not believing in Allah as their sole Lord, and so will be ushered into Hellfire) - Zamakhshari.

The latter is the opinion of Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah, Suddi and Sa`id b. Jubayr. According to a report, `Umar (ra) passed by a hermitage. He stood

[5] (And) Watered at a steaming Spring.³

تُسْقَى مِنْ عَيْنٍ آتِيَةٍ ﴿٥﴾

[6] No food for them but of the poisonous, putrid grass,⁴

لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيْعٍ ﴿٦﴾

[7] That will neither fatten nor satisfy (their) hunger.

لَا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنْ جُوعٍ ﴿٧﴾

[8] Other faces that day shall be exuberant,

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَاعِمَةٌ ﴿٨﴾

[9] Satisfied with (the results of) their labors,⁵

لِسَعْيِهَا رَاضِيَةٌ ﴿٩﴾

there and called out: "O hermit." The hermit came out. (Marks of penance and devotion were manifest on him: Qurtubi). When `Umar saw him in that state he wept. When asked why, he recited this verse: "Some faces that day will be downcast. Laboring, weary" (Ibn Kathir). That is, they labored in vain in this world (Au.).

Bukhari has reported Ibn `Abbas as of opinion that it is the Christians that are alluded to (Ibn Kathir).

Thanwi adds: Such will be the end of those that follow innovations (*ahl l-bid`ah*). Their long vigils will bear no fruit.

3. That is, a spring of which the water would have reached the boiling point (Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah: Ibn Jarir).

4. *Dari`* of the original denotes, according to Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah, Mujahid (whose statement is in

Bukhari: Ibn Kathir), and Qatadah, to a special kind of grass in Arabia, which is known as *Shabraq* when green, and as *Dari`* when dry. When *Shabraq*, it turns into a poisonous substance that the cattle know by instinct and avoid eating it. Other reports suggest Ibn `Abbas and Ibn Zayd as saying that *Dari`* is a tree in the Fire (Ibn Jarir).

If it is asked, how come the Qur`an has stated in another place that their food will be nothing but pus (69: 36)? The answer is, there will be kinds and varieties of people in the Fire, some of whom will receive *Dari`*, others pus, and yet others *Zaqqum* and so on (Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi); and, some, who knows, will receive all varieties (Au.).

5. Verse eight spoke of the external condition, and nine speaks of the internal condition (Razi).

[10] (Dwelling) in a lofty garden,

﴿ ١٠ ﴾ فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ

[11] Hearing therein no loose talk,⁶

﴿ ١١ ﴾ لَا تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا لِأَغْيَةٍ

[12] Wherein shall be bubbling springs,

﴿ ١٢ ﴾ فِيهَا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ

[13] Couches raised high,⁷

﴿ ١٣ ﴾ فِيهَا سُرُرٌ مَّرْفُوعَةٌ

[14] Glasses set in place,⁸

﴿ ١٤ ﴾ وَأَكْوَابٌ مَّوْضُوعَةٌ

[15] Cushions lined up,

﴿ ١٥ ﴾ وَمَنَارِقُ مَصْفُوفَةٌ

6. Laghiyyah is loose or idle talk, a false, or a harsh and angry word: Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and Qatadah. But some Kufi scholars have suggested that what is meant is false oath. However, if the Companions and their Followers have agreed upon a meaning, then it is not permissible to interpret the word in a way that would contradict the meaning given by them (Ibn Jarir).

Sayyid adds: "This is ... that kind of joy and happiness, which is better felt when one remembers the first life and its increasing polemics, disputes, contentions, quarrels, din and uproar. When one remembers all this, one relaxes with the feeling of complete calmness, total peace and pleasant happiness generated by the Qur'anic expression: 'Hearing therein no loose talk.'"

7. Ibn `Abbas has, however, said that the couches will be in tiers, one upon the other (Ibn Jarir).

Razi remarks: The couches will be raised in order that the inhabitants can have a good view of their kingdom.

Ibn Kathir adds: These couches will be lowered down whenever they wish.

8. *Akwab*: These are goblets or cups that have no handles and no pouts projecting out (Qurtubi). They will be lined up at the banks of the rivers of Paradise, which, whenever picked up will be found filled (Ibn Jarir).

Mufti Shafi` observes: The words "in place" bear in them a cultural hint that things that are shared by the members of a house, ought to be replaced at places marked for them, for the next user's ease.

[16] *And carpets outspread.*⁹

﴿١٦﴾ وَزَّرَابِيُّ مَبْثُوثَةٌ

[17] *Do they not - then - consider the camels, how they have been created?*¹⁰

أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ

﴿١٧﴾

[18] *And the heaven, how it has been raised?*

﴿١٨﴾ وَإِلَى السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ

[19] *And the mountains, how they have been pitched?*

﴿١٩﴾ وَإِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ

9. Zarabiyy is finely woven, soft carpet. Hence the usage in the report of `Abdullah b. `Ammar who said he saw `Umar ibn al-Khattab praying on a prayer-rug made of Zarabiyy.

10. Sa`id ibn Jubayr has reported that once he ran into Shurayh (the famous Qadi appointed by `Umar) while he was preparing to go out. He asked him about where he was heading. Shurayh told him he was going to the camel-pen. When asked why, he answered, "To look at them (and contemplate) - Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari.

Signs of Allah in the Camel

One of the signs in the camel is that although it is such a huge, powerfully built beast, it is meek enough to be controlled by a child (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

Further, it is the only animal that can be used for all purposes, and by which alone a man can survive to the

exclusion of all other domestic animals such as goats, cows and horses. It yields milk, meat, (hide, fine wool: Sayyid) while horses cannot. It can be used for transport as well as cultivation, while sheep cannot. It can be used for carrying loads, while goats and cows cannot. It can be used for riding, while, again, cows and goats cannot be used for such purposes. Moreover, as a species it is advantageous over all others in everyone of its qualities. For instance, if it is used for transport, it can carry weights no other animal can. If it is used for meat, no other animal can yield the quantity it can. If it is used for milk, it can produce large quantities of it. Also, it is a tough animal that can survive on thorny bushes and little fodder, as it can also bear thirst for days on - some times ten days at a stretch. (It will carry a load of 500 to 1000 lb. 25 miles a day for three days without drinking: EBr. IV. p. 657 - Majid). Further, it is the only

animal that can squat down (in a way that is special to it: Au.), for loading, unloading, mounting and dismounting, and then can rise up on its legs, with the load on. Other animals cannot be loaded that way. Furthermore, it can, by its instinct, help locate lost trails (and even water: Au.). And finally, it is a graceful animal (especially its flock, forcing Arabs and non-Arabs alike, off their vehicles on highways to admire its passage with each of its individual filling the horizon with its contour in a way no other beast can as gracefully do: Au.). [It is (also) inexpensive to keep, and its food is easy to find: Sayyid].

Thus, there is no animal in which a combination of all these qualities can be found, (not to forget that it can run, while many domestic animals cannot: Au.).

Thus it stands unique in many of its individual qualities which should lead man to reflection (Razi).

“It is also an intelligent animal, that can be vengeful and vicious if misbehaved with.” (T.E.Lawrence - the well-known Lawrence of Arabia - in his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*). Majid quotes an Indian military writer of 1943: “For lengths of service the camel stands alone. Properly cared

for, its average life is 18 years. Few army merchandised vehicles last even half that time. The camel is not fussy about its food, and is far less liable to injury than the horse, mule or even motor truck.”

The advantages in the camels were obviously not hidden from the Arabs, especially at the Prophet’s time when it was truly the “ship of the desert.” For thousands of years they were more dependent on the camel than the Hindus were on the cow. When too hungry, the Bedouin would punch a hole and drink its blood. Yet the sturdy beast survived. But, note the difference: while, for much lesser advantages, the Hindu declared the cow a goddess, the Prophet (*saws*) actually condemned the camel. He called them the devils, and prohibited that Prayers be offered in camel-stables or places where they are tied up, although he allowed that Prayers be offered in goats’ pens. In one *hadith* he said,

ما من بعير إلا في ذروته شيطان، فاذكروا اسم الله عليها إذا ركبتموها كما أمركم، ثم امتهنوها لأنفسكم
فإنما يحمل الله عز وجل

“There is not a camel but there is a Shaytan on its hump. Therefore, when you ascend them, recall Allah’s blessings on you, as has Allah ordered you. And then

[20] And the earth, how it has been leveled up?¹¹

﴿٢٠﴾ وَإِلَى الْأَرْضِ كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ

[21] Therefore, remind (them), for you are only a Reminder,

﴿٢١﴾ فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ

[22] And not a Compeller.¹²

﴿٢٢﴾ لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ

humble them for yourselves, as has Allah overpowered you over them” (*Jami` Saghir*, 8014).

There are a few other reports of this nature in the *hadith* literature which are proofs of the Prophet’s authenticity as a Prophet. A phony Prophet would have actually declared them holy and a national animal (Au.).

A second, though rare, to the degree of the unknown, but legitimate meaning of *ibil* is ‘clouds’ (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

11. The order is as follows. Camels were the chief means of transport for the Arabs. As a man came out into the open, riding his camel, he would, (especially if he was alone, forced to contemplate over the beast he was riding: Razi), then, raising his eyes, he would see the sky, and then, the contemplative sight traveling downwards, he would see the mountains (another common feature in the tractable lands of Arabia, and an eye-catching sight anywhere else: Au.).

Finally, the sight would rest on the earth (laid out in fields of such great variety as to attract attention: Au.) - Qurtubi.

Some people have argued from this verse that the earth is flat and not round. But that is incorrect. What the verse means to convey is that it has been leveled up in such a way that it is possible for the humans to settle on. And this has been possible because of its large radius (Razi in the 12th century).

Further it could have been made entirely mountainous and craggy, as many difficult and inhabitable terrains of the earth or of other planets), so that man could not have created cities - a necessary requirement for developments of a civilization (Au.).

12. (Although, linguistically the word *Musaytir* implies someone who oversees, or is in charge of an affair: Au.), the meaning that has come from Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and Ibn Zayd is “compeller” (Ibn Jarir).

[23] None that turned away and disbelieved,¹³

إِلَّا مَنْ تَوَلَّى وَكَفَرَ ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] But Allah shall chastise him with a Great chastisement.

فَيُعَذِّبُهُ اللَّهُ الْعَذَابَ الْأَكْبَرَ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] Surely, unto Us is their return,

إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] Then, on Us is their reckoning.

ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ ﴿٢٦﴾

A *hadith* in Tirmidhi narrated by Jabir says that the Prophet (*saws*) said:

أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أُفَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَقُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ،
فَإِذَا قَالُوا : لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فَقَدْ عَصَمُوا مِنِّي وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ
إِلَّا بِحَقِّهِمْ وَحِسَابُهُمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ

“I have been ordered to fight the people until they say, ‘There is no deity save Allah.’ If they say that they will save themselves and their property from me, except for what is due by the law. Their reckoning will be left to Al-

lah.” Then he recited this verse: “Therefore, remind, for you are only a Reminder, and not a Compeller.” (Au.).

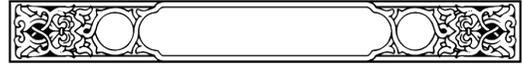
13. The words of verse 23 are such that it can either be connected to verse 21 rendering the meaning: “Warn (O Muhammad) ... save those who turn away and disbelieves (such you may ignore),” or, alternatively, it could be linked to the previous and following verses meaning: “You are not a Compeller. As for him who turns away and disbelieves, him, Allah will chastise him” (Ibn Jarir).

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ





Surah 89
Al-Fajr
 Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
 PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] By the dawn,¹

وَالْفَجْرِ ﴿١﴾

[2] And the ten nights,

وَأَيَّامٍ عَشْرٍ ﴿٢﴾

[3] And by the even and the odd,²

وَالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ ﴿٣﴾

1. There have been many explanations of the term *al-fajr*. Many of the commentators (Masruq and Muhammad b. Ka`b: Ibn Kathir), believe that the allusion is to the dawn of the tenth of *Dhu al-Hijjah* (Razi and others). Hakim has judged the report *Sahih*. (Shawkani, Alusi).

2. Ibn `Abbas, Masruq, `Ikrimah and Mujahid have said that by the ten nights the allusion is to the first ten nights of (the 12th month) *Dhu al-Hijjah*; by the “even” the tenth of *Dhu al-Hijjah* and by the “odd” the day of *`Arafah*. Mujahid and Masruq have added that so far as nights are concerned, these ten nights are the best of nights in the entire year (Ibn Jarir).

To be sure, a *hadith* narrated by Ibn `Abbas is in Bukhari wherein the Prophet said that no deeds are better than those performed during the first ten days of *Dhu al-Hijjah* - not even *jihad* (of ordinary times) unless the man were to go out in the way of Allah, by himself and his wealth, and were never to return (Ibn Kathir).

But the above neither confirms nor rejects that the verses under discussion are alluding to the ten days of *Dhu al-Hijjah* (Shawkani, Alusi).

There are *ahadith* in Ahmad, Nasa'i, Bazzar, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Hakim and Ibn Marduwayh, with Hakim declaring one of them as of *Sahih* status, which records the Prophet's words:

[4] And by the night when it journeys on.³

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ ﴿٤﴾

[5] Is there in that an oath (worth pondering) for a person of intellect?

هَلْ فِي ذَلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِذِي حِجْرٍ ﴿٥﴾

[6] Are you not aware how your Lord dealt with (the people of) `Ad?

أَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ ﴿٦﴾

العشر عشر الأضحى والوتر : يوم عرفة والشفع :
يوم النحر

“The ‘ten’ (of *Surah al-fajr*) are the ten of *Dhu al-Hijjah*, the ‘odd’ is the day of *`Arafah* and the ‘even’ the day of sacrifice [the tenth of *Dhu al-Hijjah*] (Shawkani).

However, Albani’s opinion is that the above *hadith* is weak (Au.).

Another *hadith* of the Prophet reported by `Imran b. Hussein says that what is meant by the “even” and the “odd” is the five daily Prayers that are either even in number of cycles: rak`at) or odd. But it is safer to say, because of transmission weaknesses, that this is not a *hadith*, rather the opinion of `Imran b. Hussein himself (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Nonetheless, we have an additional explanation for the “even” and the “odd” of the context coming from Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Abu Saleh and Hasan. They have said that by the “even” the allusion is to the creations of Allah (that have been created in

even numbers i.e., in pairs) and by the “odd” the allusion is to Allah who is alone, “odd” in number, being One (Ibn Jarir).

Finally, we have a report in Ibn al-Mundhir and Hakim, recording Ibn `Abbas as of opinion that the allusion is to the last ten nights of Ramadan. Tabrizi has in fact claimed that he did not know of anyone who disagreed with this opinion (Alusi).

3. (“The dawn”), “apparently symbolizes man’s spiritual awakening” (and) ... (“By the night when it journeys on”) “(is) an allusion to the night of spiritual darkness which is bound to ”run its course” (Asad)

4. `Ad: These were a massively built people of extraordinary physical strength as Allah said about them (7: 69):

{وَأَذْكُرُوا إِذْ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَزَادَكُمْ فِي الْخَلْقِ بَسْطَةً فَاذْكُرُوا آلَاءَ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ }
[الأعراف: ٦٩]

“And remember that He made you successors in the land after the

[7] (Of the) Pillared⁴ (city of) Iram?⁵

إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ ﴿٧﴾

[8] (That nation) the like of which has never been created in the lands?⁶

الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿٨﴾

[9] And Thamud who hewed the mountains in the valley?

وَتَمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُوا الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ ﴿٩﴾

people of Nuh and added to your physical strength. Therefore, remember Allah's bounties that happily you will succeed."

And (41: 15),

{ فَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَقَالُوا مَنْ أَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُمْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً } [فصلت: ١٥]

"As for `Ad strutted the earth with pride without right and claimed, 'Who is stronger than we in might?' Did they not realize that Allah who created them, is stronger than they in might?"

5. The word in the original is "`imad" meaning pillars, or columns. According to Ibn `Abbas and Mujahid the allusion is to the people (of Iram) who were of heights like pillars; as one would say in Arabic, "*rajulun mu`ammad*" i.e., "an extraordinarily tall person" (Ibn Jarir).

Another explanation (of Ibn Jarir's preference) coming from Mujahid and Qatadah is that the reference is to certain nomadic tribes who did not settle anywhere but kept moving

on, living in tents erected on pillars or poles (Ibn Jarir).

6. Iram: Opinion among the earliest scholars varies from "a city" [either Alexandria or Dimashq (Damascus)], "a people (or tribe)" to "the ancient" in explanation of the term "Iram." [The meaning will depend upon whether the term be joined with the word preceding it, viz. `Ad, in the genitive form, or, should it be treated as a noun of the following genitive, viz. dhat al-`imad - Razi.] - Ibn Jarir.

However, Qatadah and Suddi have said that Iram was the name of a kingdom of `Ad which I believe is a very strong opinion (Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Jarir's preference is that it is a tribe of the people of `Ad that is alluded to, and the interpretation to the effect that it is "a city" is ruled out since Allah (swt) has said (in 46: 21):

{ وَادُّكُرُ أَحَا عَادٍ إِذْ أَنْذَرَ قَوْمَهُ بِالْأَحْقَافِ }
[الأحقاف: ٢١]

[10] *And, Fir`awn - he of the Stakes?*⁷

﴿١٠﴾ وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ

[11] *All those that rebelled in the lands?*

﴿١١﴾ الَّذِينَ طَغَوْا فِي الْبِلَادِ

[12] *And amassed mischief therein?*

﴿١٢﴾ فَأَكْتَرُوا فِيهَا الْفَسَادَ

“And remember the brother of `Ad when he warned his people (who inhabited) in the sands (of alhqaf).”

And neither Alexandria nor Dimashq have been built on sands. Rather, the sands referred to (in the verse 21 of ch. 46) are those of the north of Hadr al-Mawt (in Yemen).

An alternative translation of the verse 7 could thus be: “(Those of the people called) Iram of the tent cities” (Au.).

Zamakhshari points out, however, that by the addition of the term Iram (to `Ad) the allusion might be to the earlier nation of `Ad (`Ad I), as distinct from the later `Ad (`Ad II). Ibn Kathir and Thanwi agree with this notion and add that it is the same `Ad to whom Hud (*asws*) was sent as a Messenger.

In his famous work “*Ard al-Qur`an*”, Sayyid Sulayman Nadwi has fixed the period of `Ad I or Iram, as between 2200 and 1700 B.C. They ruled a vast area in the South-East of the Arab Peninsula, starting from Hadramawt, running through the

coastal areas of the Persian Gulf, up to and including Iraq. From Iraq its people migrated to other parts of the world. In fact, their journeys beyond Iraq were, as portrayed in Arab poetry, legendary (Au.).

7. *Awtad*: Once again there are several explanations to the term “*aw-tad*” (sing. *watad*, stakes, pegs) all of which could be correct at one and the same time (Razi). They are as follows. Ibn `Abbas: Forces, armies. Mujahid: pegs (used for fastening those committed to die - Sa`id b. Jubayr, Mujahid). Qatadah: Pegs for tents from where the Fara`ina watched the games. There are other explanations too.

Thabit al-Bunani has however said that it refers to Fir`awn’s action of punishing his believing wife by tying her down to the earth with four pegs and then placing a big rock on her back until she died.

Hakim has classified this as a trustworthy statement of Ibn Mas`ud (Shawkani).

[13] Therefore, your Lord unleashed upon them diverse scourge.⁸

فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] Surely, your Lord is ever on the watch.⁹

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبَالْمِرْصَادِ ﴿١٤﴾

[15] As for man, when his Lord puts him to test, honors him and bestows upon him, he boasts, 'My Lord has (rightly) honored me.'¹⁰

فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَتَعَمَّهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ ﴿١٥﴾

Abu Hurayrah is also reported to have expressed the same opinion (Razi).

It is reported that Fir`awn thus tortured not only his wife Asiyah but also his daughter Nashitah (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi).

Ibn Jarir quotes the above opinions without stating his own preference.

8. Linguistically, what is meant by "sawta `adhab" is a painful, devastating, punishment that could have taken diverse forms for diverse people (Ibn Jarir).

9. The translation follows Ibn `Abbas's explanation of the term "mirsad." (Literally, mirsad or marsad is a place from where one watches. Hence, in science, an observatory: Au.). However, `Amr b. Qays and Sufyan have said (Hakim and Bayhaqi, who grade it trustworthy, have quoted it as Ibn Mas`ud's statement: Shawkani), that over the Bridge (*sirat*) will be three

bridges. One will have Trust sitting on it that will point out at the passing crowds saying: 'O Lord, this was a trustworthy man, O Lord this was an untrustworthy man.' The second will have rahm (kinship by the womb) sitting on it that will point out at the passing crowds saying, 'O Lord, this man joined it, this man broke it.' And on the third will be Allah Himself (Ibn Jarir).

10. Man does not understand that his trial is hidden in those bestowals, as Allah said in another place (23: 55, 56):

﴿أَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّمَا نُمِدُّهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ مَّالٍ وَبَنِينَ نُسَارِعُ لَهُمْ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ بَلْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ﴾ [المؤمنون: ٥٥، ٥٦]

"What? Do they think of what We provide them with wealth and offspring, We are hastening good things unto them? Rather, they perceive not" - Ibn Kathir.

[16] But when He tries him and restricts his sustenance, he clamors, 'My Lord has humiliated me.'¹¹

وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] Rather, you do not honor the orphan.¹²

كَلَّا بَلْ لَا تُكْرِمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] Nor encourage one another to feed the poor.

وَلَا تَحَاضُّونَ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] And devour the inheritance with great relish.

وَتَأْكُلُونَ التُّرَاثَ أَكْلًا لَمًّا ﴿١٩﴾

[20] And love wealth with great passion.

وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] No indeed. When the earth will be smashed and pounded to powder.¹³

كَلَّا إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا ﴿٢١﴾

11. This attitude reflects the superficiality of the unbelievers' ideas about this life (who presume that he who has wealth is the honored one in the sight of God: Qurtubi). Elsewhere, the Qur'an has said about them (30: 7):

{ يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَافِلُونَ } {الروم: ٧}

"They know only the outward aspect of the present life and are heedless of the Hereafter" - Razi.

12. A *hadith* quoted by Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) says:

خَيْرُ بَيْتٍ فِي الْمُسْلِمِينَ بَيْتٌ فِيهِ يَتِيمٌ يُحْسَنُ إِلَيْهِ، وَشَرُّ بَيْتٍ فِي الْمُسْلِمِينَ بَيْتٌ فِيهِ يَتِيمٌ يَسَاءُ إِلَيْهِ، أَنَا وَكَافُلُ الْيَتِيمِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ كَهَاتَيْنِ ” يُشِيرُ بِإِصْبَعِهِ

“The best Muslim-house is one in which there is an orphan who

is treated well. And the worst Muslim house is one in which there is an orphan who is treated badly.” Then the Prophet raised his two fingers and said: “I and the caretaker of the orphan shall be (together) in Paradise like this.”

The last part of the *hadith* is in Abu Da'ud also (Ibn Kathir).

The first half has not been trusted as above all suspicion, but the second part is *Sahih* (Au.).

13. Razi, Qurtubi and Alusi are of the opinion that our Lord does not move from place to place, and so what is meant by the verse is that He will turn His attention to the Judgment of the people. Ibn al-Qayyim is silent on the subject. However,

[22] And your Lord will arrive,¹⁴ and the angels, (in) rows upon rows.

وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] And Jahannum will be brought forth.¹⁵ That Day man will remember. But to what avail his remembrance?

وَجِيءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَى ﴿٢٣﴾

Ibn Kathir is clearly of the opinion that our Lord will arrive. Shanqiti adds that we ought to believe in the movement of our Lord, following the apparent meaning of the words but without seeking or describing the “how” of it, except to add that He will move in the manner that suits His Greatness and Uniqueness. Sabuni - quoting Kalbi - is also inclined towards this view. Thanwi adds that “His coming” is of the *mutashabihat*, whose reality is beyond human comprehension.

Sayyid comments: “Allah’s coming with the angels is unexplained, but the expression overflows with connotations of reverence, awe and fear. The same applies to the bringing closer of Gehanna: we take it to mean that Gehanna will be on that day very close to its prospective dwellers. What actually happens and how it happens is part of Divine knowledge Allah has chosen to withhold until that day. These verses with their captivating rhythm and sharp notes, portray nevertheless a scene which strikes fear

into the hearts, and makes it apparent in the eyes. The earth is being systematically leveled down: Allah the Almighty sits to judge everyone: the angels stand there rank on rank and Gehanna is brought near and set in readiness. At that moment “man will remember”. Man, who lived unaware of the wisdom behind the trial with worldly riches or with deprivation; who devoured the inheritance of orphans greedily; who craved for money and did not care for the orphans or the needy; who tyrannized, spread corruption and turned away from the Divine guidance will then remember the truth and take account of what he beholds. But alas! It is too late: “But how that remembrance will profit him?”

14. The word in the original is *dakka* which is applicable when one breaks a thing by smashing it against another (Shafi’).

15. A *hadith* says that when this verse was revealed, the Prophet’s face darkened. When asked why, he recited this verse and explained that

[24] He will say: 'O my woes. Would that I had sent forward (deeds for this) my (real) life!'¹⁶

﴿٢٤﴾ يٰقَوْلُ يَا لَيْتَنِي قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِي

[25] For that Day none else can inflict a punishment like His (the Lord's).

﴿٢٥﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُعَذِّبُ عَذَابُهُ أَحَدًا

[26] And no one will hold to his agreement (as will the Lord).

﴿٢٦﴾ وَلَا يُؤْتِقُ وَآفَاةُ أَحَدًا

[27] As for you),¹⁷ 'O tranquil¹⁸ soul!¹⁹

﴿٢٧﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ

يُؤْتَى بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَهَا سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ زِمَامٍ ، مَعَ كُلِّ زِمَامٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ يُجْرُونَهَا

“Jahannum will be brought on that Day. It will have seventy-thousand reins. Every of its reign will be dragged by seventy thousand angels, pulling it” (Zamakhshari, Razi).

The *hadith* is also in Muslim and Tirmidhi (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

16. That is, both who did evil in this life as well as those who did good will regret. The former will regret that he did not do good deeds, and the latter that he did not do more than what he did, as says a *hadith* preserved by Imām Ahmad and narrated by Muhammad b. `Umrah:

عَنْ عُثْبَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: “لَوْ أَنَّ رَجُلًا يُجْرُ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ مِنْ يَوْمٍ وُلِدَ إِلَى أَنْ يَمُوتَ هَرَمًا فِي مَرَضَةٍ اللَّهُ لَحَقَرَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.”

“Were a man to devote himself to the obedience of Allah from the day of his birth to the day he died in old age, he would think nothing of it in the Hereafter” (Ibn Kathir).

There are several versions of the *hadith*, one of which was declared trustworthy by Haythamiyy (Au.).

17. Verses 19-24 spoke of those that were satisfied with the “present life.” From here onwards they speak of those who were satisfied with the “knowledge and obedience” of Allah (Razi).

18. According to Mujahid “mutma’innah” is for a soul that is satisfied with its Lord, obeying Him in all circumstances.

Razi writes: As for how a soul can gain “peace,” there are two ways. Firstly, by remembering Allah much, as Allah said (13: 28):

{أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ} [الرعد: ٢٨]

“Lo. It is with the remembrance of Allah that the hearts find peace.”

Secondly, through proper reasoning. To explain: when a man of reason looks at the world he finds that his needs are bound with certain means (with the help of which alone can he meet with those needs). However, as he looks further up in the chain, he finds that those means are themselves dependent upon another set of means or causes. And, as he looks further up he finds another set behind them. And so on, until he reaches the final Cause, the wajib al-wujub, viz. Allah. It is here that he stops, with a sure heart that he has no need to go any further than One for Whom nothing is out of the range of possibility. This evokes tranquility in him. This also demonstrates that anyone who gives preference to the knowledge pertaining to this world over the knowledge of the Divine, will possess a restless soul. In contrast, he who gave preference to the knowledge of the Divine to the knowledge of this world will have a peaceful soul. It is these that will be addressed with these words at the time of their departure from this world: “O tranquil soul! Return thou to your Lord, well-pleased and well-pleasing.”

Ibn Abi Hatim has reported through Sa`id b. Jubayr that Ibn `Abbas died in Tayif. A strange bird came from the heavens and entered into his coffin but nobody saw it leaving the body. When he was buried a voice was heard saying, and nobody knows who said it, “O tranquil soul! Return thou to your Lord, well-pleased and well-pleasing. Enter thou among My slaves. Enter thou My Paradise” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Tabarani has a similar report, and so has Abu Nu`aym originating from `Ikrimah (Shawkani).

And Hafiz Muhammad ibn al-Mundhir has recorded the following story told by Razin Abu Hashim. He says, “Four of us were taken prisoner by the Romans. We were presented to the ruler who gave us the choice of Christianity or death. Three of us chose to renegade. The fourth refused. So he got him beheaded and threw his head in a nearby stream. It drowned in the water, but, after a while it showed up again. It looked at the three and said, ‘O you, son of so and so. O you, son of so and so, (naming them), Allah has said in his Book: ”O tranquil soul! Return thou to your Lord, well-pleased and well-pleasing (unto the Lord). Enter thou among My (chosen) slaves. Enter

[28] Return thou²⁰ to your Lord, well-pleased and well-pleasing.²¹

اَرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَةً ﴿٢٨﴾

[29] Enter thou among My (chosen) slaves.²²

فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي ﴿٢٩﴾

thou My Paradise.” Then it drowned again. The Christians almost embraced Islam, the throne of the ruler shook, and the three of us came back to Islam. Later, Mansur sent ransom and got us released” (Ibn Kathir).

19. (Although the meaning is general) it is widely reported that the verse is specifically addressed to (1) Hamza b. `Abdul Muttalib, the hero of Badr and `Uhud, (2) to `Uthman b. `Affan who could not be matched by others for his generous aid to the cause of Islam, and, (3) to Khubayb b. `Adiyy who was captured and martyred by the Quraysh in Makkah, who said at the time of his death, “O Allah, if I am of any worth in Your sight, turn my head towards the qiblah.” Allah did that and no one was able to turn his head back (Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Alusi, Shawkani).

According to a *hadith* in Tabarani and Ibn `Asakir, as reported by Abu Umamah (a prayer of the Prophet was):

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ نَفْسًا بِكَ مُطْمَئِنَّةٌ، تُؤْمِنُ بِلِقَائِكَ،
وَتَرْضَى بِمُضَائِكَ، وَتَنْعَمُ بِعَطَائِكَ

“O Allah, I ask You for a tranquil soul that believes in meeting You, is satisfied with what You decree, and is content with what You bestow” (Alusi).

Haythamiyy said about it that the chain of the above narrative has a narrator who is foreign to him (Au.).

20. The word “return” indicates that originally the soul was with Allah, and is being asked to return to its origin. This strengthens what is generally believed that the souls of all the believers who have departed are in “`Illiyun” which is in the shade of the `Arsh. It is from here that they are brought to the body and it is to this that they are returned after death (Shafi`).

21. Differences in opinion exist among the ancients over whether this will be said at the time the soul departs the world or at the time it will be returned to the body on the Day of Judgment (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari).

22. This is spiritual union with the chosen ones (Razi).

[30] Enter thou My Paradise.²³

وَأَدْخُلِي جَنَّتِي ﴿٣٠﴾

Shafi` adds: To be among the righteous in the Hereafter is something even the Prophets have coveted. For instance Sulayman (*asws*) had said (27: 19):

{وَأَدْخُلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ} [النمل:
[١٩]

“Admit me – by Your mercy - into (the company) of the righteous.”

Yusuf (*asws*) had said (12: 101):

{وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ} [يوسف: ١٠١]

“Join me with the righteous.”

23. This is the physical ascension (Razi). مَقْتَات





Surah 90
Al-Balad

Makkan¹



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] I swear² by this city.

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ ﴿١﴾

[2] And you are allowed (O Muhammad, a
free hand) in the city.³

وَأَنْتَ حِلٌّ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ ﴿٢﴾

Introductory Remarks

“This *surah*, which maintains a single rhyme and keeps the same musical beat throughout, starts with several aesthetic touches which seem to spring out from the surrounding universe and its phenomena. These phenomena form the framework which encompasses the great truth which is the subject matter of the *surah*, namely, the nature of man, his inherent abilities, his choice of his line of action, and his responsibility in determining his own fate” (Sayyid).

Merits of the *Surah*

According to a report in Ahmad and Nas’ai, of *Sahih* status, the Prophet used to recite *al-Shams* and chapters

of similar size in his *’Isha* Prayers (Shawkani).

1. There is no difference in opinion among the scholars that this is a Makkan *surah* (Shawkani).

2. The verse starts with a “*la*,” but it is not a negative *la*, rather, what is known as a *la za’idah*, which is either placed for emphasis, or for refutation of a statement or allegation, real or presumed, coming from someone at variance with the speaker (Qurtubi and others). Accordingly, it is possible to place a “*nay*” as its equivalent (Au.).

3. According to Ibn ‘Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah and ‘Ata’, the city referred to is Makkah (Ibn Jarir).

Another possible meaning advanced by the commentators is: “And you are a resident of this city” (Shabbir).

Sanctity of the Haram

(Ordinarily, and throughout history, bloodshed remained forbidden in this city). But it was made lawful unto the Prophet to (wage war or), shed blood there - if necessary - on the occasion of his triumphant entry (in the eighth year after *hijrah*). That was the only occasion when he could wage war in the city. Accordingly, at the time of his triumphant entry into Makkah, he ordered that Ibn Khatal be executed, even if found holding the covering of the Ka`bah. (Which was done, as reported by Hakim who declared it a trustworthy report. He was killed between the rukn and the maqam: Shawkani). After him no one has been allowed this special privilege - Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Mansur and Qatadah. `Ata' has added that no Prophet was ever allowed bloodshed there, and even to our Prophet it was declared lawful only for a very short time (Ibn Jarir).

A *hadith* in the *Sahihayn* says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ ، عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ، حَرَّمَ مَكَّةَ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ ، فَهِيَ حَرَامٌ مِنْ حَرَامِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ، لَا يَحِلُّ لِأَمْرِي يَوْمُنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ، أَنْ يَسْنِفَكَ فِيهَا دَمًا ، وَلَا يَعْضِدَ بِهَا شَجَرًا ، لَمْ تَحْلُلْ لِأَحَدٍ كَانَ قَبْلِي ، وَلَا تَحِلُّ لِأَحَدٍ يَكُونُ بَعْدِي ، وَلَمْ

تَحْلُلْ لِي إِلَّا هَذِهِ السَّاعَةَ غَضَبًا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا ، إِلَّا أَنْتُمْ قَدْ رَجَعْتُمْ كَحُرْمَتِهَا بِالْأَمْسِ ، إِلَّا فَلْيُبَلِّغِ الشَّاهِدُ مِنْكُمْ الْغَائِبَ

“Allah declared this city Sacred the day He created the heavens and the earth. It will remain so by the decree of Allah until the Day of Judgment. Its tree might not be uprooted nor its grass cut. It was not declared lawful for anyone before me, nor will it be allowed for any one after me. And, it was not declared lawful unto me but for a short while, because of His anger with its inhabitants. Lo! Let those present pass this message to those not present.”

Another version has the following words appended to it:

فَإِنْ أَحَدٌ تَرَحَّصَ لِقِتَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِيهَا فَفَعُولُوا لَهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَذِنَ لِرَسُولِهِ وَمَنْ يَأْذُنْ لَكُمْ

“If anyone makes fighting lawful here on grounds that the Prophet did so, then, let him be told that Allah had made it lawful unto His Messenger, and has not done so for you” (Ibn Kathir).

Another version says that when the Prophet (*saws*) was speaking `Abbas (*ra*) b. `Abdul Muttalib interjected that the *idhkhir* grass be excepted since it was of common use. The

[3] And (I swear) by the sire and the offspring.⁴

وَوَالِدٍ وَمَا وَلَدٌ ﴿٣﴾

[4] Indeed, We have created man in toil.⁵

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ ﴿٤﴾

Prophet amended: “Except for the *idhkhir*” (Zamakhshari).

Apart from legal implications, Shurahbil has pointed out that the message that has to be noted here, in this passage, is that although the sanctity of this place has always been well known and well respected, to the extent that even a plant was not uprooted there, how ironical it is, O Muhammad, that the Makkans have made your persecution lawful unto themselves?! (Zamakhshari, Razi).

4. There are several interpretations to the words: “the sire and the offspring”:

- a) Anything that begets; and that which does not beget (because it is sterile) (Ibn `Abbas and `Ikrimah) - in which case the ‘ma’ of ma walad will have to be treated as a negative ma with alladhi concealed. But the usage in this form of sentence is uncommon: Qurtubi, Shawkani,
- b) Adam and his progeny (Mujahid, Qatadah, Abu Saleh and Dahhak), and,
- c) Ibrahim (*asws*) and his progeny (Abu `Imran).

`Atiyyah al-`Awfi has said that the terms can be applied to anything that begets and that which it begets. This seems to be the most appropriate meaning (Ibn Jarir, Shawkani).

5. *Kabad*: The preferred meaning is given in the translation. In this context it also implies that man attempts at arduous (and hence challenging: Au.) tasks, and heroically accepts to face difficulties that arise. Another meaning of *Kabad* coming from Ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid `Ikrimah and others is: “Upright” (as against animals that are not capable of standing upright: Dahhak). A second meaning advanced by Abu Saleh is that it means “one of medium height” - Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir.

However, the sense that overrides is that of endless hardships and toil that man undergoes through and through from birth until death (Qurtubi). This was glaringly visible to the Arabs living in that harsh climate and geographical locale (Shahbir), and which should weaken down man and render him humble, but, instead, he behaves as if he cannot be overpowered by anyone (Thanwi).

[5] Does he think none has power over him?⁶

﴿٥﴾ أَيَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَنْ يَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ

[6] He boasts, 'I've squandered immense wealth.'⁷

﴿٦﴾ يَقُولُ أَهْلَكْتُ مَالًا لُبَدًا

[7] Does he think none observes him?

﴿٧﴾ أَيَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَمْ يَرَهُ أَحَدٌ

[8] Have We not made for him a pair of eyes?

﴿٨﴾ أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ

6. Due to want of an authentic report it cannot be clearly established who this verse is particularly referring to, if any (Au.). Kalbi has, however, reported that it was revealed in reference to Abu 'l Ashaddayn, a member of the Jumah tribe who was so powerful that he would stand up on a leather piece and invite ten people to pull him. The leather piece would be torn to pieces, but he couldn't be unsettled.

7. (The verse could be referring to) the act of bestowing huge amounts on poets who, in turn, bestowed lavish praises on the donors, spending big amounts on social ceremonies of various sorts ... and opening up the purse on various other useless occasions, with the intention to impress the people of their wealth, generosity and lavishness (Mawdudi).

Yusuf Ali remarks: "The man who feels no responsibility and thinks that he can do what he likes in life

forgets his responsibility to Allah. He boasts of his wealth and scatters it about, thinking that he can thus purchase the support of the world. For a time he may; but a rude awakening must come soon, for he bases his hopes on unsubstantial things. Or if he spends his substance on self-indulgence, he is weakening himself and putting himself into snares that must destroy him."

A *hadith* tells us that a man will be brought forth on the Day of Judgment and asked, what he did with his wealth. He will say he spent it in charity. He will be told:

كذبت إنما كنت تتصدق و تصل ليقال إنك سمح
جواد وقد قيل اذهبوا به إلى النار

"You have spoken a lie. You spent and gave to the kin in order that you are called forgiving and generous. That has been said. Then it will be said, "Take him to the Fire"" (Qurtubi).

[9] A tongue and two lips?⁸

وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ ﴿٩﴾

8. “The tongue can be more destructive than a bullet ... In a report of Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Nasa’i and Ibn Majah ... Mu`adh ibn Jabal said:

كُنْتُ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي سَفَرٍ فَأَصْبَحْتُ يَوْمًا قَرِيبًا مِنْهُ وَنَحْنُ نَسِيرُ فَقُلْتُ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهُ أَحْبَبْتَنِي بِعَمَلٍ يُدْخِلُنِي الْجَنَّةَ وَيُبَاعِدُنِي مِنَ النَّارِ قَالَ لَقَدْ سَأَلْتُ عَنْ عَظِيمٍ وَإِنَّهُ لَيْسِيرٌ عَلَيَّ مَنْ يَسْرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ تَعَبُدُ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَتَقِيمُ الصَّلَاةَ وَتُؤْتِي الرِّكَاتَ وَتَصُومُ رَمَضَانَ وَتُحُجُّ الْبَيْتَ ثُمَّ قَالَ أَلَا أَدُلُّكَ عَلَىٰ أَبْوَابِ الْخَيْرِ الصَّوْمُ جَنَّةٌ وَالصَّدَقَةُ تُطْفِئُ الْخَطِيئَةَ وَصَلَاةُ الرَّجُلِ فِي جَوْفِ اللَّيْلِ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ قَوْلَهُ تَعَالَى { تَتَجَافَىٰ جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ حَتَّىٰ بَلَغَ يَعْْمَلُونَ } ثُمَّ قَالَ أَلَا أَحْبَبْتُكَ بِرَأْسِ الْأَمْرِ وَعَمُودِهِ وَذُرُوءَهُ سَنَامِهِ فَقُلْتُ بَلَىٰ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ قَالَ الْأَمْرُ وَعَمُودُهُ الصَّلَاةُ وَذُرُوءُهُ سَنَامُهُ الْجِهَادُ ثُمَّ قَالَ أَلَا أَحْبَبْتُكَ بِمَلَكَ ذَلِكَ كَلِمَةٍ فَقُلْتُ لَهُ بَلَىٰ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ فَأَخَذَ بِلِسَانِهِ فَقَالَ كَفَىٰ عَلَيْكَ هَذَا فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّا لَمُؤَاخِدُونَ بِمَا تَكَلَّمُ بِهِ فَقَالَ ثَكَلْتُكَ أُمَّكَ يَا مُعَاذُ وَهَلْ يَكُفُّ النَّاسَ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ فِي النَّارِ أَوْ قَالَ عَلَىٰ مَنَاحِرِهِمْ إِلَّا حَصَائِدَ أَلْسِنَتِهِمْ؟

“I was with the Prophet during a journey and one day happen to be walking beside him. I said, ‘Messenger of Allah! Lead me to something which will take me nearer to Paradise and away from Hell!’ He said, ‘You have indeed asked for something great, yet it is quite attainable by those whom Allah made easy to attain:

Worship Allah assigning no partner to Him, offer your prayers regularly, give out of your wealth what is due to the poor, fast in the month of *Ramadan* and offer pilgrimage.’ Then he added, ‘Shall I point to you the doors of (all) good?’ I said, ‘Yes, Messenger of Allah, please do.’ He said, ‘Fasting is a shield and a means of protection; charity obliterates your errors just as water extinguishes a burning fire; and your praying at the late hours of the night is a sign of piety.’ Then he recited the verse (32: 16-17), ‘(Those) who forsake their beds as they call on their Lord in fear and in hope; and who give in charity out of what We have bestowed on them. No soul knows what bliss and comfort is in store for them, as reward for their labor.’ The Prophet went on, ‘Shall I tell you what the heart of the matter is, its backbone and its apogee?’ I said, ‘Yes, Messenger of Allah, please do.’ He said, ‘The heart is Islam, (i.e. submission to Allah), the backbone is Prayers, and the apogee is *Jihad*.’” Then he said, ‘Shall I tell you what has com-

[10] And shown him⁹ the two highways¹⁰ (of good and evil)?¹¹

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ﴿١٠﴾

mand over all these?’ I said, ‘Yes, Messenger of Allah, please do.’ He said, ‘Control this.’ And he pointed to his tongue. I said, ‘Are we, O Prophet of Allah, accountable for what we say?’ He said, ‘Your mother may lose you,’ (a censuring but loving phrase: Au.) ‘for what other reason are people dragged on their faces in Hell-fire save for what their tongues yield?’” (Sayyid).

Shu`ayb al-Arna`ut: Although the chain of narrators of the above narration is broken, overall the *hadith* is trustworthy (Au.).

9. It could be another way of saying, ‘We gave him the power to distinguish between the two’ (Au.).

10. Najd in Arabic is the path that coils around through the mountains. Apart from imagery, clarity could have been another point in the choice of the word: a mountain path is clearly visible to the eye. So are clearly distinguishable the right and the wrong (Au.).

Al-Najdayn

Referring to al-najdayn the Prophet said:

هُمَا نَجْدَانِ: نَجْدٌ حَيْرٌ، وَنَجْدٌ شَرٌّ، فَمَا جَعَلَ نَجْدَ الشَّرِّ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ نَجْدِ الْحَيْرِ

“The two are the good and the evil, with none of them being made dearer to you than the other” (Ibn Jarir).

Some doubt has been cast on the authenticity of this report. However, there are several others to this effect - Ibn Kathir, Shawkani, (which elevate it to the status of *hasan*: Au.).

An additional meaning has come to us from Ibn `Abbas and Dahhak to the effect that it is the mother’s breast that is meant that yields the means of sustenance for the child (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani). This happens to be the opinion of `Ali also (Qur-tubi).

Ibn Mas`ud has, in a reliable report, interpreted it as the path of good and evil (Shawkani).

11. With the power to see things, the capability to discuss affairs, and, the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, shouldn’t man address himself to the removal of glaring inequalities in the society? It might be an arduous task, but better than

[11] Yet he did not assault¹² the steep one.¹³

فَلَا اَتَّحَمَ الْعُقْبَةَ ﴿١١﴾

[12] And what will teach you what the steep one is?

وَمَا اَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعُقْبَةُ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] (It is), freeing of a neck (yoked in bondage).¹⁴

فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] Or feeding, in a day of hunger,

اَوْ اِطْعَامٌ فِي يَوْمٍ مَسْعَبَةٍ ﴿١٤﴾

boasting that he has spent fabulous amounts on causes that were, anyway, wasteful, and which were intended to win status in the eye of the public (Au.).

12. *Iqtahama* of the original implies plunging into something without a thought of the consequence (Shawkani).

13. *'Aqabah* of the text has been widely interpreted by the early commentators as, either a hill in Hell, a bridge there, or Hell itself. However, in general terms it can also be translated as "ascent," since, literally ('Abdul Rashid), it has the connotation of a difficult mountainous path (Au.).

Thanwi adds: "The choice of the words indicates that one has to struggle in the path of religion: it can never be an easy going affair."

Sayyid writes, in effect: In this is a challenge for man. He has been created in afflictions. He likes to face

challenges and plunge into risky ventures. He will attempt at various things anyway. Here he is being told that since struggle he must, and prefers to, why then should he not attempt at this? Why should he not assault this ascent - the obstacle that is depriving him of an enormous fortune? Putting the message this way, in these words, serves as a powerful incentive and a stimulus to the human heart to take up the challenge.

14. "... the phrase, *fakku raqabah*, may be rendered as 'the freeing of a human being from bondage,' with the latter term covering all those forms of subjugation and exploitation - social, economic, political - which can be rightly described as 'slavery'" (Asad).

It would include helping out those in debt ... which is better than spending on social ceremonies that entail wastage of wealth, humiliation in both the worlds, and Allah's displeasure (Shabbir).

Freeing of a Slave

Hasan has said that no Muslim will release another's neck from the yoke of slavery but Allah will liberate him from Hell-fire. According to `Uqbah b. `Amir, when the Prophet (*saws*) was asked about the most virtuous kind of emancipation, he replied: "Of the most expensive" (Ibn Jarir).

In fact, there is a *hadith* in Ahmad to this effect narrated by Abu Hurayrah (*ra*). It says:

مَنْ أَعْتَقَ رَقَبَةً مُؤْمِنَةً أَعْتَقَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ إِرْبٍ مِنْهُ إِرْبًا مِنَ النَّارِ حَتَّىٰ أَنَّهُ لَيَعْتِقُ بِالْيَدِ الْبَيْدِ وَبِالرِّجْلِ الرَّجْلَ وَبِالْفَرْجِ الْفَرْجَ فَقَالَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ حُسَيْنٍ أَنْتَ سَمِعْتَ هَذَا مِنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ فَقَالَ سَعِيدٌ نَعَمْ فَقَالَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ حُسَيْنٍ لِعَلَّامٍ لَهُ أَفْرَةٌ غُلْمَانِهِ ادْعُ لِي مُطْرَبًا قَالَ فَلَمَّا قَامَ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ قَالَ أَذْهَبَ فَأَنْتَ حُرٌّ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

"Whoever freed a slave will have Allah freeing from the Fire his every limb against a limb of him he freed, so that in return of his hand he will have his hand freed of the Fire, in return of his foot, his foot, and in return of his sexual organ, his sexual organ."

When Hasan b. `Ali heard this from Sa`id (the next narrator in the chain of transmitters), he asked him: "Did you hear this from Abu Hurayrah yourself?" When he said yes, he called his own slave Mutarraf. When he stood before him, he told him

"Go free, for the sake of Allah" (Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Kathir presents a few other *ahadith* on the virtues of freeing slaves. One of them – in Bukhari: Au.) - says:

مَنْ أَعْتَقَ رَقَبَةً مُؤْمِنَةً أَعْتَقَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ عَضْوٍ مِنْهَا عَضْوًا مِنْ أَعْضَائِهِ مِنَ النَّارِ حَتَّىٰ فَرَجَهُ بِفَرْجِهِ

"He who freed a believer's neck, will have Allah free for every limb of the freed, his limb from the Fire, including his private part for his private part."

In reply to a Bedouin's enquiry about the best of deeds in Islam the Prophet (*saws*) told him:

أَعْتَقَ النَّسَمَةَ وَفَكَرَ الرَّقَبَةَ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَوْلَيْسَتْهَا بِوَاحِدَةٍ قَالَ لَا إِنَّ عُنُقَ النَّسَمَةِ أَنْ تَفَرَّدَ بِعِتْقِهَا وَفَكَرَ الرَّقَبَةَ أَنْ تُعِينَ فِي عِتْقِهَا

"That you free a slave, and release a neck." The Bedouin asked: "Aren't both the same?" The Prophet replied: "No. Freeing a slave is to do it entirely on your own. Whereas, releasing a neck is to co-operate with others (and sharing the cost) in freeing someone" (Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi).

The report is in Ahmad related by Bara' b. `Azib. Another *hadith* says:

مَنْ بَنَىٰ لِلَّهِ مَسْجِدًا لِيُذَكَّرَ اللَّهُ ، عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ، فِيهِ ، بَنَىٰ اللَّهُ لَهُ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ ، وَمَنْ أَعْتَقَ نَفْسًا مُسْلِمَةً ،

كَانَتْ فِدْيَتُهُ مِنْ جَهَنَّمَ ، وَمَنْ شَابَ شَيْبَةً فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ ، عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ، كَانَتْ لَهُ نُورًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ .

(The Prophet said), “He who built a mosque so that Allah may be remembered therein, will have Allah build a house for him in Paradise. He who freed a Muslim’s neck will have that as ransom for him from Jahannum, and he who spent his youth in Allah’s path, will have Nur on the Day of Standing” (Ibn Kathir).

The above seems to be a combination of several *ahadith*, all pieces trustworthy (Au.).

Sayyid quotes Ibn Is-haq: “While in Makkah, before emigration to Medina, Abu Bakr freed a total of seven people: `Amir ibn Fuhayrah, who fought in the battle of Badr and was killed in the battle of Bir Ma`unah, was the only other man freed by Abu Bakr (apart from Bilal). The other five were all women. The first two were Umm `Obays and Zanneerah, who lost her eyesight when she was freed. Some people of Quraysh claimed that the two idols Al-Lat and Al-`Uzza caused her loss of her eyesight. Zanneerah said, ‘Rubbish! Al-Lat and Al-`Uzza are absolutely powerless.’ Allah then willed that she recover her eyesight. Abu Bakr also freed a woman called An-Nahdiyyah

and her daughter, who belonged to a woman of the clan of Abdud-dar. One day he passed by the two women as their mistress was sending them on an errand to prepare some flour. As she gave them her instructions, she declared: ‘By God, I will never set you free.’ Abu Bakr said to her ‘Release yourself of your oath.’ She rejoined, ‘It was you who spoiled them. Why don’t you set them free?’ He asjed, ‘How much do you want for them?’ She named her price. He said, ‘It is a deal, and they are free.’ He turned to the two women and told them to give the woman her flour back. They suggested that they should finish preparing it for her first and he agreed.

The fifth woman was a Muslim slave of Mu`ammal’s clan. She was being tortured by Umar ibn al-Khattab, who was then still a disbeliever. He beat her until he was tired and said to her, ‘I apologize to you. I have only stopped beating because I am tired, to which she would reply, ‘And so shall Allah thrash you.’ Abu Bakr bought her and set her free.”

Since, in these verses, the emancipation of slaves has been given precedence in mention over other forms of charity, Imām Abu Hanifah’s opinion is that the freeing of

[15] *Of an orphan near of kin.*¹⁵

يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] *Or a destitute (down) in the dust.*¹⁶

أَوْ مَسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] *And then, to be of those who believed,*¹⁷ *exhorted one another to perseverance, and exhorted*¹⁸ *one another to mercy.*¹⁹

ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ ﴿١٧﴾

a slave is of greater virtue than any other form of charity. His two pupils' opinion is otherwise, but Abu Hanifah's opinion is weightier (Zamakshari, Razi). Sha`bi also held the same opinion (Qurtubi).

15. The Prophet has said in a *hadith* of Ahmad, reported by Salman b. `Amir:

إِنَّ صَدَقَتَكَ عَلَى الْمَسْكِينِ صَدَقَةٌ ، وَإِنَّهَا عَلَى ذِي الرَّحْمِ اثْنَانِ صَدَقَةٌ وَصِلَةٌ

“Charity to a needy person is one charity, but charity to a needy who is also a kin has double the reward: one for charity and another for joining the kin” (Ibn Kathir).

The report is in Ahmad and other collections, with Shu`ay Arna`ut declaring it *Sahih* (Au.).

16. *Al-matrabah* according to the earliest scholars could mean a dusty person; a person assigned to dust because he is shelterless; or, someone who is in an extremely penurious

condition; or one with a large family to support (Ibn Kathir).

17. It is reported that:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، ابْنُ جُدْعَانَ كَانَ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَصِلُ الرَّحِمَ ، وَيُطْعِمُ الْمَسْكِينِ وَيَقْرِي الضَّيْفَ وَيُعَلِّمُ الْعَابِي وَيُحْسِنُ الْجَوَارِ ، فَهَلْ يَنْتَفِعُهُ ذَلِكَ ؟ قَالَ : ” لَا ، إِنَّهُ لَمْ يَفْعَلْ يَوْمًا قَطُّ : رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ

`Aisha (*ra*) asked the Prophet (*saws*) About Ibn Jud`an who in pre-Islamic days used to join the kin, feed the poor, honor the guests, release the imprisoned, and treat well the neighbors: whether all that would benefit him in the Hereafter? The Prophet replied: “No. It will not. He did not say once, ‘O my Lord. Forgive me my sins on the Day of Judgment’” (Qurtubi).

The above – taken from Ahmad and others, is treated as *Sahih* by many *hadith* Doctors (Au.).

(But the good deeds of an unbeliever do not seem to be entirely worthless:

Au.) In one report when Hakim b. Hizam asked the Prophet about what would happen to his good deeds of the pre-Islamic days, he replied:

أَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَىٰ مَا أَسَلَّمْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ

“It is those deeds that led you to Islam” (Qurtubi, Razi).

The above is on the authority of Qurtubi (Au.).

18. The form of the verb in *tawassaw* is indicative of the fact that the believer belongs to a social group, of which, not only the individual, but the entire society is engaged in facing the challenging task of feeding the poor and liberating the weak, so that not only do its members need to observe patience and be merciful to others, but, in addition, they need to enjoin each other to observe patience and continue showing mercy to the less fortunate ones, in order that there is no slackness in their collective efforts to uplift the weaker sections of the society (Au.).

A Communal Responsibility

Sayyid notes: “The society formed by the believers is an integrated structure whose elements share the same feelings and the same awareness of

the need of exerting hard efforts in order to establish the Divine system on earth and to carry out its duties fully. Hence, they counsel each other to persevere as they shoulder their common responsibilities. They rally to support one another in order to achieve their common objective. This is something more than the perseverance by the individual although it builds on it, which indicates the individual’s role in the believers’ society, namely, that he must be an element of strength and a source of hope and comfort to the whole society the idea of the ‘community’ is evident in this injunction, as it is emphasized elsewhere in the Qur’an and in the traditions of the Prophet. The idea is central to the concept of the religion of Islam, which is a religion and a way of life of a community.”

19. A *hadith* of Abu Da’ud, narrated by ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr reports the Prophet as having said:

من لم يرحم صغيرنا ويعرف حقَّ كبيرنا، فليس منا

“He who does not show kindness to our children, and is not concerned with the rights of our elders, is not of us” (Ibn Kathir).

[18] Such are the Companions of the Right Hand.²⁰

﴿١٨﴾ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ

[19] As for those who denied Our revelations, they are the Companions of the Left Hand.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا هُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] Over them (shall be) a vaulted Fire.²¹

﴿٢٠﴾ عَلَيْهِمْ نَارٌ مُّؤَصَّدَةٌ

20. They are called 'Companions of the right hand,' because on the Day of Judgment, they shall be on the right side of the 'Arsh and, shall be handed over their Book of Deeds in their right hands (Qurtubi).

21. Mu'sadah has the connotation of a fire that will cover them from their

above, like a lid: Abu Hurayrah, Ibn 'Abbas, 'Ikrimah, Sa'id b. Jubayr, Mujahid, Muhammad Ibn Ka'b, 'Atiyyah al-'Awfi, Hasan, Qatadah and Suddi (with no door to escape through: Dahhak), as also stated in *surah Al-Lumazah* - Ibn Kathir.

مَقْتَدَةٌ



Surah 91
Al-Shams

Makkan¹



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] By the sun and its brightness.

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا ﴿١﴾

[2] By the moon that follows it.²

وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّهَا ﴿٢﴾

[3] By the day which it brightens up.³

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّاهَا ﴿٣﴾

1. There is no difference of opinion among the scholars that this *surah* is Makkan (Shawkani).

2. In explanation of the attached pronouns (*dama'ir*) of *dubaha* (verse 1) and *talaha* (verse 2), Ibn `Abbas has said that the two verses must be understood in the following manner: "By the sun and its day, and by the moon that follows it (i.e. the day)."

Imām Razi and Qurtubi quote Al-Farra' (of the 2nd. *hijrah* century/ 8-9th century C.E.) as saying that the *tala* of the original has been used in the sense of borrowing, since the moon derives its light from the sun.

Man and the Moon

"Between the moon and the human heart there is an age-long fascination

that is well established in men's inmost souls. It is a fascination that is born anew every time the two meet. The moon issues her own special whispers and inspirations to the human heart, and she sings her songs of praise to the Creator, which a poet can almost hear through the tenderness of moonlight. On a clear moonlit night, one can almost feel himself sailing through the moonlight, clearing off one's worries and enjoying a perfect bliss as one feels the hand of the Maker beyond this perfect creation" (Sayyid Qutb).

3. In explanation of the attached pronoun in *jallaha* (verse 3) Qatadah has said that the verse should be understood as: "By the day which the sun brightens up" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn

[4] *By the night which enshrouds it.*⁴

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا ﴿٤﴾

[5] *By the heaven and (Him) who made it.*⁵

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا ﴿٥﴾

[6] *By the earth and (Him) who stretched it.*⁶

وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا ﴿٦﴾

Kathir). However, some have understood the verse as: “By the day when it brightens it (the earth)” - Qurtubi.

4. According to Qatadah the “it” of the verse refers to the sun. That is: “By the night which enshrouds the sun,” (and spreads its own darkness) - Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir. But, according to others, the “it” stands for the earth. That is: “By the night that enshrouds it (the earth) with its darkness (Qurtubi).

5. That is, by the heaven and by Allah who created it (Ibn `Abbas in a *Sahih* report: Shawkani).

Although ma is generally used for the non-living, here it has been used in the sense of mun (to be pronounced on the same pattern as “none”), as in verse (4: 22):

و لا تَنْكِحُوا مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ

“And of the women, do not marry those who have earlier been in the marriage of your fathers...” or, in the same fourth surah, verse 3:

فَأَنْكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ

“Therefore, marry of the women those that please you ...” In both these verses ma has been used in the sense of mun (Ibn Jarir, Razi).

Although the above meaning is preferred by Ibn Jarir, there is room for treating the ma of the verse as ma masdariyyah, and translate the verse as: “By the heaven and its construction.” The following two verses could also be interpreted similarly (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

6. Taha has been used in the sense of daha (see 79: 30), and both mean ‘to spread’ or ‘stretch,’ since, as `Ata’ and Kalbi have said, Allah stretched the land over water (Razi). According to al-Mawardi, another possible allusion could be to what the earth throws out of its plants, springs and minerals (Qurtubi).

Man and Nature

Sayyid Qutb writes: “There exists some kind of a special language through which the human heart communicates with the universe and its marvelous scenes and phenom-

[7] And, by the soul and (Him) who molded it.⁷

وَتَنْفُسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ﴿٧﴾

[8] Then He inspired to it, its wickedness and its piety.⁸

فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ﴿٨﴾

ena. This language is part of human nature. It is a language which does not use sounds and articulation. It is a communication to the hearts and an inspiration to the souls which come alive whenever man looks up to the universe for an inspiring touch or a cheerful sight. Hence, the Qur'an frequently urges man to reflect upon the surrounding universe ... These explicit directives and indirect hints are very frequent in this thirtieth part of the Qur'an. There is hardly one *surah* in it which does not encourage man, in one way or another, to communicate with the universe, in their secret language, so that he may appreciate its signs and understand its address."

7. That is, molded it on *fitrah* or Allah's Original (state) [that is, on *Tawhid*]; as Allah said (in 30: 30):

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ
النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ

"So set thy face to the pure, incorrupt religion, Allah's Original (*fitrah*), upon which He originated mankind. There is no changing Allah's Religion."

And the Prophet said in a *hadith* of Abu Hurayrah in the *Sahihayn*: "Every child is born on *fitrah*. It is his parents who Judaize him, Christianize him or Zoroastrize him - as the little ones of the animals are born with both the ears in tact. Do you find any among their newborn with a severed earlobe?" (Ibn Kathir).

8. ("Inspired" is a verbal translation: Au.). Ibn 'Abbas however explained the verse as, "He made clear to the soul its good and evil.

According to Ibn Zayd, the meaning of *alhamaha* is: "placed therein." That is, "He placed in it (i.e., in the soul) its wickedness and its piety (in measures He knows)." This is supported by a *hadith* (in Muslim, reported by 'Azrah b. Thabit: Ibn Kathir), which states that,

Someone asked the Prophet whether what men strive for and earn of the deeds is something that has been predetermined and a thing of the past, or is it something they choose of what the Messengers have brought and thus argument is sealed against them. He replied: "Rather, it is some-

thing which has been predetermined and is a thing of the past. This you will find supported by the verses:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ، فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا
[الشمس: ٧ - ٨]

“And, by the soul and (Him) Who molded it. Then He inspired to it, its wickedness and its piety” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

The *hadith* is also in the collections of Ahmad, `Abd b. Humayd, Ibn al-Mundhir and Ibn Marduwayh (Shawkani).

Ibn Taymiyyah wrote: This is the only verse concerning *qada'* and *qadr* which the Prophet elaborated.

Qada' and Qadr

The whole *hadith* as in Muslim is as follows:

عَنْ أَبِي الْأَسْوَدِ الدَّؤَلِيِّ ، قَالَ : قَالَ لِي عَمْرَانُ بْنُ حُصَيْنٍ : أَرَأَيْتَ مَا يَعْمَلُ فِيهِ النَّاسُ وَيَتَكَادِحُونَ فِيهِ أَشْيَاءَ قُضِيَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَضَى عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ قَدَرٍ قَدْ سَبَقَ أَوْ فِيمَا يَسْتَقْبِلُونَ مِمَّا أَنَاهُمْ بِهِ نَبِيَّهُمْ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَأَتَّخَذَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْحِجَّةُ ؟ قُلْتُ : بَلَى شَيْءٍ قُضِيَ عَلَيْهِمْ ، قَالَ : فَهَلْ يَكُونُ ذَلِكَ ظُلْمًا ؟ قَالَ : فَفَرَعْتُ مِنْهُ فَرَعًا شَدِيدًا ، قُلْتُ : إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ إِلَّا هُوَ خَلَقَهُ وَمَلَكَ يَدَهُ ، لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ قَالَ : سَدَدَكَ اللَّهُ ، إِنَّمَا سَأَلْتُكَ لِأُخْرِجَ عَقْلَكَ ، إِنَّ رَجُلًا مِنْ مُزَيْنَةَ أَوْ جُهَيْنَةَ أَتَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، فَقَالَ : يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، أَرَأَيْتَ مَا

يَعْمَلُ النَّاسُ فِيهِ وَيَتَكَادِحُونَ فِيهِ ، أَشْيَاءَ قُضِيَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَضَى عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ قَدَرٍ قَدْ سَبَقَ ، أَوْ فِيمَا يَسْتَقْبِلُونَ مِمَّا أَنَاهُمْ بِهِ نَبِيَّهُمْ وَأَتَّخَذَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْحِجَّةُ ؟ قَالَ : بَلَى فِي شَيْءٍ قَدْ قُضِيَ عَلَيْهِمْ ، قَالَ : فَفِيمَ نَعْمَلُ ؟ قَالَ : مَنْ كَانَ اللَّهُ خَلَقَهُ لِأُخْرِجَ مِنَ الْمُنزَلَتَيْنِ يَهْتَبُهُ لَهَا ، وَتَصْدِيقُ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ : وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ، فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا [الشمس: ٧-٨].

“Abu al-Aswad ad-Dayli says `Imran ibn al-Hussein asked me, ‘What have you to say about what the people do and strive for. Is it something predetermined, done with, and in proportions predestined, or, are they of the nature of what they will encounter of what their prophets brought them that serves as an argument against them?’ He answered, ‘Rather, it is of the nature of what has been predetermined and predestined for them.’ He remarked, ‘Is that not injustice?’ I was shocked to hear this and shaken to my core with fear. I told him, ‘All that exists is Allah’s creation and belong to Him. (He may deal with them the way He will). No one can question Him for what He does, rather they will be questioned for what they do.’ He said, ‘May Allah show you mercy. By asking you this question I did not mean anything but to test your intelligence.

(Let me tell you), two people of Muzaynah went up to the Prophet (*saws*) and asked him, ‘O Messenger of Allah, what have you to say about what men strive for and earn, is it something that has been predetermined and a thing of the past, or is it something they choose of what the Messengers have brought and thus argument is sealed against them?’ He answered: ‘Rather, it is something which has been predetermined and is a thing of the past. This you will find supported by the verses: “And, by the soul and (Him) Who molded it. Then He inspired to it, its wickedness and its piety”’ (Ibn Kathir).

Also see *surah* 81 note 19 for a detailed discussion of the subject and note 7 of the following chapter for a few more *ahadith*.

Allah’s Inspiration of Good and Evil

Ibn Kathir comments: Although Dahhak’s statement in Ibn Abi Hatim to the effect that Ibn ‘Abbas has said that, “That soul succeeded which Allah purified” is weak because of a narrator, Juwaybir, (who was *matruk al-hadith*: one whose narrations were abandoned) and because of the fact that Dahhak did not meet Ibn ‘Ab-

bas, there are several *ahadith* that support such a meaning. One is in Ibn Abi Hatim itself, another in Musnad of Ahmad and a third in Muslim. That of Muslim, narrated by Zayd ibn Arqam, says that the Prophet used to supplicate in words:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَالْهَرَمِ وَالْجُبْنِ
وَالْبُخْلِ وَعَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ قَلْبٍ
لَا تُحْسِنُ وَنَفْسٍ لَا تَشْبَعُ وَعِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ وَدَعْوَةٍ
لَا يَسْتَجَابُ لَهَا

“O Allah. I seek your protection from weakness and laziness, from extreme old-age and cowardice, from parsimony and torture in the grave. O Allah, grant my soul its piety and purify it, for You are the best of those who purify. You are its Friend and its Lord. O Allah, I seek your protection from a heart that does not fear, an inner self that does not satiate, a knowledge that is not profitable, and a supplication that is not granted.”

Zayd added, “The Prophet used to teach us these words, and we teach them to you in turn.”

According to another report whenever the Prophet recited this verse: “Then He inspired to it, its wickedness and its piety,” he would supplicate in words:

[9] Surely, succeeded he who purified it.⁹

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا ﴿٩﴾

[10] And surely, ruined (himself) he who se-
duced it.

وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا ﴿١٠﴾

اللهم آتِ تَمْسِي تَقْوَاهَا وَزَكَّاهَا أَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

“O Lord. Give my soul its piety. You are its Protector, and its Owner. And purify it, for You are the best of those who can purify it” (Razi, Qurtubi).

The report is also in Ibn al-Mundhir, Tabarani and Ibn Marduwayh, as narrated by Ibn `Abbas (Shawkani).

Ilham

The ilham of wickedness and piety refers to their knowledge, understanding and distinction (which is placed in every soul) - Zamakhshari. This is the opinion of Al-Wahidi (Razi).

Thanwi quotes a point from Ruh: In the attached pronouns returning to the noun nafs of the previous verse, (in the words: “its wickedness” and “its piety,”) there is a hint that the nafs is inspired in accordance to its own propensity and disposition.

That is, the inmost self of a person is granted what it holds dear to its heart and prepares the grounds for (Au.).

Thanwi and Shafi` further explain: “Actually, the word *ilham* alludes here to *ilqa*’, or the creation in the heart of the inclination or disposition: both for good as well as evil. Although, of the two, the earlier i.e., the *ilqa*’ of the good, takes place through an angel as the agent, while the latter, that is, the *ilqa*’ of evil, at the hands of Satan. Then, subsequently, that original inclination gets worked up into a firm intention (‘*azm*), by man’s conscientious choice and free will. It is because of this firm intention and free will that the doer becomes deserving of reward or punishment. It is after this that the firm intention appears in the form of an action by the will of Allah, since He is the Creator of all deeds (including those that issue from a man). However, sometimes the originally placed inclination and disposition do not reach up to the level of firm intention, in which case the man is not held accountable for it.” (Also see next note).

9. Two different opinions have come in explanation of this verse. One is that of Ibn `Abbas and Ibn Zayd which would render the translation

[11] *Thamud cried lies in their insolence,*¹⁰

﴿١١﴾ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَاهَا

[12] *When the most wicked of them rose up (to slaughter the camel).*¹¹

﴿١٢﴾ إِذْ انبَعَثَ أَشْقَاهَا

as: "Surely, succeeded he whose soul Allah purified." And the other, by Mujahid, Sa'id b. Jubayr, `Ikrimah and Qatadah (Ibn Jarir), which supports the present translation.

Muhammad ibn Ka'b has said: "When Allah intends good for a man, He inspires good deeds in him, and when He intends evil, He inspires evil deeds in him" (Shawkani).

But, what will the purification of nafs mean if a man were to intend it? Shabbir answers that it is to submit the two forces, the carnal (*quwwat al-shahwiyyah*) and the emotive (*quwwat al-ghadbiyyah*) to reason, and, in addition, submit reason itself to revelation.

10. Thamud: Thamud were a people who lived in the north of Hejaz, in an area known as Mada'in al-Saleh. Their period was (Syed Sulayman Nadwi) somewhere between 1800 and 1600 B.C. The buildings they carved in the mountains last to this day (Au.).

A prophet called Saleh (*asws*) was raised among these powerful people. They promptly rejected him. They

demanded that he produce a sign as a proof of his authenticity. Accordingly, a rock split and a camel came out, alive and pregnant: out of a rock perhaps because the Thamud took pride in hewing houses out of rocks. It was a bulky beast and Saleh divided the waters of a spring between her one day, (when she emptied it), and the people the next day. But the Thamud denied her the water, cried lies to the Prophet and killed the camel. In response Allah sent His scourge. They were destroyed and their corpses left scattered like logs, leaving behind their hewn dwellings.

11. Reciting this verse the Prophet said that it was a powerful, most wicked, nevertheless the most popular man of the tribe - similar to Abu Zam'ah - who volunteered to slaughter her. His name was Uhaymar (Ibn Jarir).

The report is in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Nasa'i (Ibn Kathir).

The man has also been named as Qudar b. Salif. And, although he alone had hamstrung her (actively supported by eight others: Au.), the act

[13] Their Messenger warned them: '(Beware, she is) Allah's (own) camel!¹² Therefore, let her and her drinking (be unhindered).'

فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا ﴿١٣﴾

[14] (But) They cried lies to him and hamstrung her. So their Lord crushed them for their sin and leveled them (to the ground).

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ فَسَوَّاهَا ﴿١٤﴾

[15] And He fears not its consequence.¹³

وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَاهَا ﴿١٥﴾

has been ascribed to the entire nation because the rest endorsed his action (Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi).

According to a report in Ibn Ishaq the Prophet (*saws*) said to `Ali (*ra*):

«ألا أحدثك بأشقى الناس؟ قال بلى، رجلا ن أحيمر ثمود الذي عقر الناقة، والذي يضربك يا علي على هذا - يعني قرنه - حتى تبتل منه هذه»

“Ali. May I not tell you about the most wretched of men?” He replied, “Please do.” The Prophet said: “Two men: one, Uhaymar of Thamud who hamstrung the

camel, and the other, the one who will strike you, here (pointing to `Ali's neck) until your beard will be wet (with blood)” - Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir.

12. That is, sent by Allah as His sign (Razi).

13. This is to illustrate the utter insignificance of His creations who fear the consequences of their actions, whereas Allah cares not for the consequences of what He does (Zamakhshari, Razi). ﴿١٥﴾



Surah 92
Al-Layl

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] By the night when it enshrouds.

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَى ﴿١﴾

[2] By the day when it appears (in) brightness.

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّى ﴿٢﴾

[3] And by Him¹ Who created the male and
the female.²

وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَى ﴿٣﴾

[4] Surely, your endeavors are diverse.

إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتَّى ﴿٤﴾

[5] As for him who gives and is Godfearing,

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى ﴿٥﴾

1. Here again there is room for understanding the *ma* of the text as meaning *mun* (to be pronounced on the same pattern as “none”), meaning “Him” i.e. Allah. Alternatively, it could be treated as part of the *masdariyy* sentence that follows in verse 4 as its *khavar*. Nonetheless, Ibn Mas`ud, Abu Darda' and *hasan* used to recite this verse without the first two letters, i.e., *wa ma*, the first two claiming that that is how they had heard the Prophet recite it (Ibn Jarir).

The statement of the two Companions is in Muslim (Qurtubi), and in

Bukhari. But the majority follow the way it was written in Uthman's compilation (Ibn Kathir).

Also see note 6 of the previous chapter.

2. Zamakhshari says: Allah has created His creations either as male or as female. As for the eunuch, he is either of the two, since no third sex exists, except that in this case it is a matter of doubt and hence an undetermined and undecided case for us humans with regard to the sex. But Allah knows for sure whether he is a male or female.

The Two Sexes

This emphatic statement of the sixth (12th Christian) century (in explanation of a Qur'ānic statement), is supported by modern medical science which confirms that no third sex exists. A hermaphrodite is either male or female (Au.).

Sayyid comments: "In man and the mammals it all starts with a living germ settling in a womb, a sperm which unites with a cell. What is the reason then for this difference in outcome? What is it that says to one germ, "Be a male," and to another, "Be a female?" Discovery of the operative factors does not make the matter any different. ... Is it all coincidence? ... The only explanation is that there is a Controller in charge Who creates the male and the female according to a carefully worked-out plan which has a definite objective. There is no room for chance in the order of this universe. ... Moreover, the male and female division is not limited to mammalian alone: it is applicable to all animate species, including plants. Singularity and oneness belong only to the Creator Who has no parallel whatsoever.

"Allah swears by these contrasting aspects of the universe and of man's creation and constitution that the

striving of human beings is diverse, the roads they follow lead to different ends. Hence, their reward is also diverse. Good is not the same as evil, following the right guidance is unlike wrong-doing, and righteousness is different from corruption. Generosity and godfearing are unlike hoarding and conceit. The faithful are unlike those devoid of faith. Variances of ways necessitates variances of destination."

Sayyid's comment ends here.

Asad adds: "This, taken together with the symbolism of night and day, darkness and light, is an allusion - similar to the first ten verses of the preceding *surah* - to the polarity evident in all nature and, hence, to the dichotomy (spoken in the next three verses) which characterizes man's aims and motives."

We might add that the Evolutionists are at their wits end to explain why there are two sexes. Their latest emphasis is that the genes are anxious to produce more and more of themselves. They blacken not hundreds but thousands of pages to demonstrate how the genes go to extreme lengths to replicate the biological body that houses them. The question that arises is, why did the genes have taken the longer route of waiting for a

[6] And testifies to the Ultimate Good,³

﴿وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى﴾ ﴿٦﴾

[7] We shall surely make smooth for him (the path to) the Ease.⁴

﴿فَسَنِّيئِرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى﴾ ﴿٧﴾

male to impregnate the female. The female body could have by a simple process biological impregnated the female egg within the female body. To this question, the evolutionists have no answer, and, therefore, have to blacken thousands of pages (Au.).

3. *Al-husna* (the Good) has been interpreted by Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah and Mujahid as *khalaf*, that is, the good things that Allah has prepared as a reward for righteous deeds. There have been other interpretations, such as it is the testimony *la ilaha illa Allah* that has been alluded to by the term *al-husna*. But the statement of Ibn `Abbas is supported by a *hadith* in which the Prophet (*saws*) said:

«ما من يوم غربت فيه شمسه إلا وجنبتيهما ملكان يناديان يسمعهما خلق الله كلهم إلا الثقلين: اللهم أعط منفقاً خلفاً وأعط ممسكاً تلفاً» وأنزل الله في ذلك القرآن "فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى، وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى، فَسَنِّيئِرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى، وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَى، وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَى، فَسَنِّيئِرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَى"

“The sun does not set any day but it has two angels crying out in a voice that all creatures hear ex-

cept men and jinn, saying, `O Allah, award the man who spends in charity best rewards (*khalaf*), and the one who holds back, depletion.’

Then Allah revealed in the Qur`ān, ‘As for him who gives and is God-fearing, and, testifies to the Good, We shall surely make smooth for him (the path to) Ease. As for him who is miserly and self-sufficient, and cries lies to the Good, We shall surely make smooth for him the (path of) Hardship.’” According to some reports, the first to whom this and the last three verses were applicable was Abu Bakr (*ra*) who enfranchised no less than seven slaves in Makkah and helped the poor in a variety of ways (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani),

4. What the verse means is that whoever intends good, Allah shows him the path of good, and whoever intends evil, Allah shows him the path of evil. Further, whether this or that, all fall within *qada’* and *qadr* (Ibn Kathir).

[8] As for him who is miserly⁵ and deems himself self-sufficient,

﴿ ٨ ﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَىٰ

[9] And cries lies to the Ultimate Good,

﴿ ٩ ﴾ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ

[10] We shall surely make smooth for him⁶ the (path to) Hardship⁷

﴿ ١٠ ﴾ فَسَنيسِرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَىٰ

[11] His wealth shall not avail him when he falls headlong (into Hell).

﴿ ١١ ﴾ وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّىٰ

[12] Verily, upon Us is the guidance.

﴿ ١٢ ﴾ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَىٰ

[13] And to Us belong the First and the Last.

﴿ ١٣ ﴾ وَإِنَّ لَنَا لَلْأُولَىٰ وَالْآخِرَةَ

5. In Islamic terminology “generous” is one who spends when there is need for it, even if he holds back at times when there is no pressing need for it. And “miser” is one who does not spend when there is need for it, even if he spends when there is no pressing need for it. So spending in right proportion, on occasions of need, determine whether a man will be categorized as generous or miser. Allah has not approved of those that spend when there is no pressing need. He has declared that those who overspend are the brothers of Satan.

Islam. And when Allah intends to lead someone astray, He constricts his heart tight as if he is climbing up to the heaven” (Zamakhshari).

6. As the Qur’an says (in 6: 125):

7. *Qada’* and *Qadr*: A widely reported *hadith* (which is in Bukhari: Ibn Kathir), narrated by ‘Ali (ra) says, “We were sitting in *Jannatu al-Baqi’* (Madinan cemetery) around the Prophet (while a grave was being dug). The Prophet (*saws*) was drawing lines in the dust with a twig. He raised his head and said, ‘There is none among you but whose fate has not been written down as a dweller either of the Fire or Paradise.’ We asked him, ‘Shouldn’t we then, O Messenger of Allah, depend on that?’ He said, ‘No. Keep working. For, each will be led to what has been made easy for him.’ Then he recited the verses, ‘As for him who gives and is Godfearing, and testifies to the

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ ۗ
وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَأَمَّا
يَصْعَدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ ۗ [الانعام: ١٢٥]

“When Allah intends to guide someone, He opens his heart for

[14] Now, I have warned you of a blazing Fire,⁸

فَأَنْذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظَّى ﴿١٤﴾

[15] In which none shall burn but the most wretched.

لَا يَصْلَاهَا إِلَّا الْأَشْقَى ﴿١٥﴾

[16] He who laid the lie and turned away.

الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى ﴿١٦﴾

[17] And surely, the most Godfearing shall be preserved from it.

وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتْقَى ﴿١٧﴾

[18] He who gave his wealth to purify himself.

الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى ﴿١٨﴾

[19] And there is none in his mind whose favors he has to repay.

وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ تُجْزَى ﴿١٩﴾

good, We shall surely make smooth for him (the path to) Ease. As for him who is miserly and deems himself self-sufficient, and cries lies to that which is the Best, We shall surely make smooth for him the (path of) Hardship” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

There are several narrations of this nature in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, and Musnad of Ahmad. For instance, one in Tirmidhi (of *hasan sahib* status) and Musnad is as follows:

قال عمر: يا رسول الله، أرايت ما نعمل فيه؟
أني أمر قد فرغ أو مبتدأ أو مبتدع؟ قال: «فيما
قد فرغ منه، فاعمل يا ابن الخطاب، فإن كلا
ميسر، أما من كان من أهل السعادة فإنه يعمل
للسعادة، وأما من كان من أهل الشقاء فإنه
يعمل للشقاء».

“Umar asked the Prophet, ‘What have you to say about what we

do. Is it something Allah is done with or something that we originate?’ He replied, ‘Rather, what Allah is done with. Nevertheless, keep working `Umar. For, to each his choice has been made easy, so that he who is of the lucky ones will attempt deeds of the lucky ones, and he who is the wretched one will attempt deeds of the wretched ones” (Ibn Kathir).

Also see *surah* 91 note 9 for more *ahadith* and *surah* 81 note 19 for relevant discussion.

8. A *hadith* in Bukhari reports Nu`man b. Bashir as saying:

سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ:
”إِنْ أَهْوَنَ أَهْلَ النَّارِ عَذَابًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ رَجُلٌ
تَوَضَّعَ فِي أَحْمَصِ قَدَمَيْهِ جَمْرَتَانِ يَغْلِي مِنْهَا
دَمَاعُهُ“.

[20] *Save that he seeks the Face of his Lord, the Most High.*⁹

﴿٢٠﴾ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَى

[21] *And he shall indeed be satisfied.*¹⁰

﴿٢١﴾ وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَى

“I heard the Prophet addressing the people. He was saying, “The least punished on the day of Judgment will be he who will have two burning pieces of coal under his feet that will boil his brain” (Ibn Kathir).

9. Such as Abu Bakr whom his father Abu Quhafa reproached in words: “Son. I see you freeing weak slaves. If you were to free strong ones, they’d be of help to you.” Abu Bakr told him:

“Father, I’m aiming at what I’m aiming” (Razi, Qurtubi). According to another report: “I’m aiming at Allah’s approval” (Shabbir).

10. “At this point the reward comes as a surprise, but it is a surprise awaited by the one who attains the standard of the righteous, whose main qualifications are spending for self purification and seeking the pleasure of Allah. Such a person will be well pleased and well rewarded” (Sayyid).

مَقَات



Surah 93
Al-Duha

Makkan



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] By the splendid morning,

وَالضُّحَى ﴿١﴾

[2] And by the night when it is still,

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَى ﴿٢﴾

[3] Your Lord did not abandon you (O Prophet), nor did He hate you,¹

مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَى ﴿٣﴾

Relationship

Shanqiti writes: If it can be said that the last chapter ended with the allusion to Abu Bakr Siddiq, then this chapter started with the address to the Prophet: “By the splendid morning, and by the night when it is still, your Lord did not abandon you (O Prophet), nor did He hate you. Surely, the Last shall be better for you than the First. And surely, your Lord shall give you and you shall be satisfied.” Thus there is a subtle connection. (And, from this angle the next chapter is a continuation of this one: Au.).

Summary

Just as the appearance of night after the day is not a sign of Allah’s anger

- rather, the mechanism of a system placed therein, which works in turns and cycles - so is the pause in revelation not a sign of His anger. It is as if being said, ‘Far from abandoning you, your every following day will be better than your previous one (Your Last shall be better than your First). You shall be, in fact, given so much that you will be satisfied. After all, did not Allah find you an orphan, needy and lost, and then gave you so much? How can then anyone imagine that He has abandoned you? (Shabbir).

1. When, after some initial revelations, there was a momentary cessation, a woman came to the Prophet and told him, your Lord seems to have abandoned you. (Others told

him He hates you). The Prophet felt disturbed. Allah revealed these verses (Ibn Jarir).

The *hadith*, as in Bukhari, Muslim and others is as follows:

(عن) جُنْدُبِ بْنِ سُفْيَانَ - رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ
 اشْتَكَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللهِ - صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - فَلَمْ
 يَنْمُ لَيْلَتَيْنِ أَوْ ثَلَاثًا ، فَجَاءَتِ امْرَأَةٌ فَقَالَتْ يَا مُحَمَّدُ
 إِنِّي لِأَرْجُو أَنْ يَكُونَ شَيْطَانُكَ قَدْ تَرَكَكَ ، لَمْ أَرَهُ
 قَرَبَكَ مُنْذُ لَيْلَتَيْنِ أَوْ ثَلَاثًا . فَأَنْزَلَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ()
 وَالصُّحَى * وَاللَّيْلُ إِذَا سَجَى * مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا
 قَلَى ()

Jundub b. Sufyan reports that the Prophet fell ill and so did not rise for his night-prayer for two or three nights. Following that a woman came to him and said, “Muhammad. I hope your Shaytan has abandoned you. I do not see him near you for two or three nights.” So Allah revealed this *Surah*. (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

According to a few reports it was the wife of Abu Lahab who had said that (Zamakhshari).

It is not clearly established as to how long the cessation lasted. Miqrizi has said that there are statements that fix the period between 3 days (which is in Bukhari) to two and a half years (Munir Ghadban, *Al-Manhaj al-Harak*).

Some biographers of the Prophet have said that most probably the break lasted 15 days, others that it lasted six months, but there is no *hadith* to this effect (Au.).

Sayyid observes: “Revelation, Jibril’s visit and the link with Allah were the Prophet’s whole equipment along his precarious path. They were the only solace in the face of hard rejection and his sole comfort against outright repudiation. They were the source from which he derived his strength to stand steadfast against the unbelievers who were intent on rebuff and refusal, and bent on directing a wicked, vile attack against the Prophet’s call, faith and guidance.

“So when the Revelation was withheld, the source of strength for the Prophet was cut off. His lifespring was sapped and he longed for his heart’s friend. Alone he was left in the wilderness, without sustenance, without water, without the accustomed companionship of the beloved heart. It was a situation which taxes human endurance heavily.

“Then the *Surah* was revealed and it came as a rich flow of compassion, mercy, hope, comfort and reassurance.”

Quotation from Sayyid ends here.

[4] Surely, the last shall be better for you than the first,²

وَلَا خَيْرَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأُولَى ﴿٤﴾

What would the temporary cessation of revelation have meant to the Prophet, during those early days, when the heart and the sole would not have had their fill, can be judged from the following report in Darimi. After the death of the Prophet Abu Bakr and `Umar visited an old lady called Umm Ayman. She burst into tears. They asked her the reason. She said she that the cessation of revelation after the death of the Prophet, was agonizing her. Then, as they did not catch the full significance of what she was saying, she added that this meant that the link of this world with the heavenly world was severed for ever. At this fresh realization the three wept together (Au.).

Razi asks, was it necessary for Allah to say that He did not hate Muhammad? Then he answers: Ordinarily no. But in response to allegation of the sort that were made, it became necessary. It is like somebody informing a courtier that the king hates him. When the king wants to refute that, he will say to the courtier, "Neither I hate you nor dislike

you. Rather, you shall soon know what status you enjoy with me."

2. That is, Hereafter will be better for you than this world (Ibn Jarir).

The Prophet therefore opted for the Hereafter whenever he was given the choice. Once he slept on a mat that left marks on his body. When he woke up he began to rub the area. Ibn Mas`ud, the narrator, remarked that had he allowed they could have spread something soft for him. He replied:

مَا لِي، وَلِلدُّنْيَا، إِنَّمَا مَثَلِي وَمَثَلُ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ رَاكِبٍ،
قَالَ فِي ظِلِّ شَجَرَةٍ فِي يَوْمٍ صَائِفٍ، ثُمَّ رَاحَ وَتَرَكَهَا

"What do I have to do with this world? My example and that of this world is like that of a rider who took a siesta under a tree on a hot day, and then left the place and was gone."

The *hadith*, of *Hasan sahih* status, is in Tirmidhi (Ibn Kathir).

The verse could also imply that the latter days shall be better for you than the present (Yusuf `Ali).

[5] And surely, your Lord shall give you and you shall be satisfied.³

وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَى ﴿٥﴾

3. According to Ibn `Abbas (in a *sahih* report: Ibn Kathir), the Prophet was presented with all the treasures that would be opened for his followers after him. That filled him with joy. Allah then revealed this verse and built for him a thousand palaces in Paradise, each with spouses and servants that befit them (Ibn Jarir).

The Prophet's Love of the *Ummah*

Other reports suggest that it is the intercession on behalf of his *Ummah* that is referred to as what will please him the most. This is the interpretation of `Ali, and this is in the light of a *hadith* in Muslim narrated by `Abdullah ibn `Umar. It says that,

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِي أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- تلا قول الله عز وجل في إبراهيم (رَبِّ إِنِّي مَنعْتُكَ كَثِيرًا مِنَ النَّاسِ فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي) الآية. وقال عيسى عليه السلام (إن تعذبهم فأتهم عبادك وإن تغفر لهم فإنك أنت العزيز الحكيم) فرفع يديه وقال « اللهم أمتي أمتي ». وبكى فقال الله عز وجل يا جبريل اذهب إلى محمد وربك أعلم فسأله ما يبكيك فأتاه جبريل - عليه الصلاة والسلام - فسأله فأخبره رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - بما قال. وهو أعلم. فقال الله يا جبريل اذهب إلى محمد فقل إننا سنرضيك في أمتك ولا نسوءك. - صحيح مسلم

Once the Prophet recited Ibrahim's words in the Qur'an, 'My Lord. Surely these (deities) have misguided many a people. But he who followed me, is of me,' to the end of the *ayah*; and the words of `Isa ibn Maryam in the Qur'an, 'If You punish them (O Lord), then they are your slaves. But if You forgive them, then, surely you are the Most Mighty, the Most Wise.' Then the Prophet raised his hands and said, 'O Allah. My *Ummah*, my *Ummah*,' and wept. Allah said, 'Jibril. Go to Muhammad and ask him - and He knows - what makes him cry.' The Prophet told him what made him cry and he informed Allah, while He knows. Allah said, 'Jibril. Go to Muhammad and tell him We shall surely please you in the affair of your *Ummah*. We shall not displease you.'

Accordingly, `Ali used to say to the Iraqis, 'People, you consider the verse bearing greatest hope as (that of *Surah Al-Zumar*, verse 53), 'O those of My slaves who have wronged their souls, do not despair of Allah's mercy.' The people said, 'Yes, we do

[6] Did He not find you an orphan, and sheltered you?⁴

﴿٦﴾ أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ

[7] Did He not find you lost, and guided you?⁵

﴿٧﴾ وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ

believe that.’ `Ali said, ‘But we, the kinsfolk of the Prophet, believe that the verse bearing most hope is, ‘Your Lord shall give you and you shall be satisfied’ (Qurtubi, Shawkani).

4. The allusion is to the death of his father before the Prophet’s birth, the death of his mother when he was six, and the death of his guardian grandfather when he was eight. Then Allah provided him his uncle Abu Talib as his guardian. When he died, the Makkans began to stretch their ugly hands at him, but Allah provided him shelter in Madinah and helped him with his followers (Ibn Kathir).

Asad adds: “... however, every human being is an ‘orphan’ in one sense or another, inasmuch as everyone is ‘created in a lonely state’ (cf. 6: 94), and ‘will appear before Him on Resurrection Day in a lonely state (19: 95).”

5. *Dallan*: There are several interpretations to the verse of which the simplest one is as follows: Allah found the Prophet groping in the dark, and guided him as He said in another verse of the Qur’an (42: 52):

تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَكِنْ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا
تَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ نَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا

“And that is how We have revealed unto you a Spirit of Our Command. You knew not (before that) what the Book is, nor what is iman. But We have made it a Light with which We guide whomsoever we will” (Ibn Kathir).

Qurtubi has said, however, that when the Arabs found a solitary tree in a tract of land, without a companion tree, they named it “*dallan*,” and used it as a landmark. Allah referred to Prophet Muhammad “*dallan*” in that sense. He found him a solitary figure, without anyone with him in his search for truth, and chose him for the humankind to be guided to Him through him (and a landmark in history: Au.).

Allah has also used the term “*dallan*” in this revelation in the sense of “lost,” as in *Surah Al-Sajdah*, verse 10, in which the unbelievers are reported saying:

أِذَا ضَلَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَإِنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ

“What, when we are lost in the earth, shall we be recreated?”

Another example (47: 1):

{الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَضَلَّ أَعْمَاهُمْ}
[محمد: ١]

“Those who disbelieved and prevented people from Allah’s path, their deeds were lost.”

Dallan could also mean “unaware,” as in verse 52 of Taha:

“My Lord is neither unaware (*dallan*) nor does He forget.”

It could also mean mere deviation as in the following *ayah* of *al-Furqan* (25: 29):

{لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِي عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَنِي وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ
لِيَإِنْسَانٍ خَدُوعًا} [الفرقان: ٢٩]

“He (my evil companion) deviated me from the Reminder after it had come to me” (Au.).

Jawhari defines “*dalaal*” in a variety of ways; one of which is as follows:

يقال أضل الميت، إذا دفن. (الصحاح للجوهري)

“It is said, ‘adallah’ the dead, when a man is buried” (Au.).

Ibn `Aashur points out that “*dalaal*” is that state in which a man feels lost, unguided, and perplexed as to which path he should take. It is not necessary that he should have taken a wrong path. If he stands puzzled, he is *dallan*.

Indeed, there is room for accepting the word *dallan* in the sense of love, and understanding the present verse as: “And we found you in love of guidance, and, therefore, guided you.” Such a usage is not uncommon among the poets. Shawkani then quotes an example from a poet.

Thus, the reader may keep all the meanings of “*dallan*” before his eyes and then read the verse again and again (Au.).

Zamakhshari remarks: It has been said that the Prophet (*saws*) was on the ways of his people until forty. If what is meant when that is said is that he did not have anything of the revealed knowledge of old, then the statement is correct. But if it is meant that the Prophet followed the religion of his people, then it is wrong, because Allah (*swt*) guarded all Prophets from the worship of idols before they were commissioned.

Qurtubi adds: He (the Prophet) was with his people in the sense that he did not show his dissent, (finding it of no practical use: Au.).

Majid writes: “That the character of the Prophet was even in his youth exemplary and exceptional in the most tempting environment of Makkah is borne out by hostile biographers, ‘It is quite in keeping with

[8] Did He not find you needy, and enriched you?⁶

وَوَجَدَكَ غَائِلًا فَأَغْنَى ﴿٨﴾

[9] Therefore, the orphan - oppress not,⁷

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ﴿٩﴾

[10] The beggar - repulse not,⁸

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ﴿١٠﴾

the character of Muhammad that he should have shrunk from the coarse and licentious practices of his youthful friends. Endowed with a refined mind and delicate taste, reserved and meditative, he lived much within himself, and the ponderings of his heart no doubt supplied occupation for leisure hours spent by others of a lower stamp in rude sports and profligacy. The fair character and honorable bearing of the unobtrusive youth won the approbation of his fellow-citizens; and he received the title, by common consent, of Al-Amin, the Faithful' (Muir, The Life of Muhammad)."

6. The Prophet has said:

إِنَّمَا الْغِنَىٰ غِنَىٰ الْقَلْبِ ، وَالْفَقْرُ فَقْرُ الْقَلْبِ - صحيح
ابن حبان

"Richness is richness of the heart, and poverty is the poverty of the heart" (Au.).

Ibn Kathir cites another *hadith* which says, "A rich man is not someone who has lots of material wealth. Rich is he who has a contented heart."

Ibn Hisham the writer of the *Seerah* notes that the word 'Aa'il has the connotation of a "difficult, or heavy affair" also (Au.).

7. According to a report a man complained to the Prophet of his own hard-heartedness. The Prophet told him:

إِنْ أُرِدْتَ أَنْ يَلِينَ قَلْبُكَ ، فَأَطْعِمِ الْمِسْكِينَ ،
وَامْسَحْ رَأْسَ الْيَتِيمِ

"If you want to soften your heart, feed the poor and pat the orphan on his head" (Qurtubi, Shanqiti).

(The report has been termed weak by Shu`ayb al-Arna'ut: Au.).

Accordingly, whenever `Abdullah ibn `Umar encountered an orphan, he would pat him on his head kindly, and give him something (Qurtubi).

8. The sa'il of the original can also be translated as the seeker, and hence it would mean, do not repulse the seeker of knowledge (Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir).

[11] As for your Lord's blessing⁹ - declare it.¹⁰

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ﴿١١﴾

Beggars:

The Prophet has said:

رُدُّوا السَّائِلَ وَلَوْ بِظُلْفٍ مُحْتَرِقٍ أَوْ مُحْرِقٍ - مسند أحمد

“Return the beggar with something, even if it is a burnt paw.”

The report is in Ahmad declared *Hasan* (Au.).

And Ibrahim Al-Nakha`i used to say, “Beggars are the postmen of the Hereafter. He comes to your door and cries out, ‘Would there be anything you would want to send to the Hereafter?’” (Qurtubi)

But the true beggar is not, as a *hadith* explains, who goes door to door seeking pennies and morsels; but it is the truly destitute, unable to earn, unable to ask (Au.).

9. The allusion is to prophethood (Ibn Jarir).

10. The Prophet has said in a *sahih hadith* of Tirmidhi:

مَنْ لَمْ يَشْكُرِ النَّاسَ لَمْ يَشْكُرِ اللَّهَ

“He who did not thank the people will not thank Allah.”

(There is a similar version in Ahmad, declared *Sahih*: Au.).

According to another narration:

عَنْ أَنَسٍ أَنَّ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ذَهَبَتْ الْأَنْصَارُ بِالْأَجْرِ كُلِّهِ. قَالَ « لَا مَا دَعَوْتُمْ اللَّهَ هُمْ وَأَتَيْتُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ ». «

The Prophet (*saws*) was told by the immigrants that great rewards were bagged by the Ansar (because they spent in charity but the *Muhajirun* could not because of poverty). The Prophet assured them:

“No. So long as you keep Praying to Allah for them, and praise them” (Ibn Kathir).

The *hadith* is in Abu Da`ud, Ahmad and others, declared *Sahih* (Au.).

According to a *hadith* in Nasa`i, (declared *Sahih*),

عَنْ أَبِي الْأَخْوَصِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، قَالَ: كُنْتُ جَالِسًا عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَرَأَيْتُ رِثَ الثِّيَابِ فَقَالَ: «أَلَيْكَ مَالٌ» قُلْتُ: تَعَمْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مِنْ كُلِّ الْمَالِ، قَالَ: «فَإِذَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ مَالًا فَلْيُرْ أَثَرُهُ عَلَيْكَ»

Abu al-Ahwas reported his father: “I was sitting with the Prophet (*saws*). He saw me is in a shabby state and asked, ‘Do you

have any money?’ I said, ‘Plenty – of all kinds.’ He said, ‘When Allah bestows upon you something, let its effects be seen on you.’” (Qurtubi)

Abu Nadirah has said: “From the earliest times we have heard from the Muslims that a way to thank for blessings of Allah is to declare them” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Finally, Abu Firas `Abdullah b. Ghalib used to say to his friends, “Today I Prayed so much, recited the Qur`ān so much.” And so on. His friends would say, ‘Does a man of your sort say that?’ (That is, publicize your good acts?) He would say, ‘Sure. Allah has said, “As for the blessing of your Lord, declare it.” And what better blessing is there than these?’ The same is reported of Ayyub As-

Sakhtiyani and Abu `Ata’ al-`Utaridi (Qurtubi).

Allahu Akbar at the End of Recitation

Abu `I Hasan, one of the great recitation experts of the Qur`ān, used to teach his students that they say “Allahu Akbar” at the end of every chapter after this one. But Abu Hatim and Ja`far al-`Uqayli, both have distrusted the narrator. Nonetheless, when someone recited this chapter in a Salah and said “Allahu Akbar” at its end, Imām Shafe`i approved of it, which goes to prove that it is Sunnah to do it (Qurtubi).

Ibn Kathir adds: Some have said that one may say: “*Allahu Akbar, La ilaha illa Allahu, Allahu Akbar.*”

بِقَاتِ





Surah 94
Al-Sharh

Makkan

8 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Did We not (O Muhammad) open up¹
your heart² for you?³

أَمْ نَشْرَحُ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ ﴿١﴾

1. The meaning of *sharh* is to “open up” by way of removal of what comes in the way of understanding (Shawkani). Hence Ibn ‘Abbas in Bukhari: “Allah opened up his heart for Islam.” And the Qur’ān said (39: 22):

أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ [الزمر: ٢٢]

“Can he then, whose heart is opened up for Islam, so that he is upon a light from his Lord (be equal to him who has not received the same blessing?)” - Shanqiti.

2. Although the opening of the heart and its cleansing took place at the time of the Night Journey and Ascension to the heavens (*al-isra’ wa ‘l mi`raj*), it could also be applicable to

an incident that took place earlier, as reported by Imām Ahmad.

Opening of the Heart

Ubayy b. Ka`b says Abu Hurayrah was far more bold in putting up questions to the Prophet than anyone else. One day he asked the Prophet:

عن أبي بن كعب: أن أبا هريرة كان جريئاً على أن يسأل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن أشياء لا يسأله عنها غيره، فقال: يا رسول الله، ما أول ما رأيت من أمر النبوة؟ فاستوى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم جالسا وقال: «لقد سألت يا أبا هريرة، إني لفي الصحراء ابنُ عشر سنين وأشهر، وإذا بكلام فوق رأسي، وإذا رجل يقول لرجل: أهو هو؟ قال: نعم فاستقبلاني بوجهه لم أرها لخلق قط، وأرواح لم أجدتها من خلق قط، وثياب لم أرها على أحد قط. فأقبلنا إلي يمشيان، حتى أخذ كل واحد منهما بعضدي، لا أجد لأحدهما مسا، فقال أحدهما لصاحبه: أضجعه. فأضجعني بلا قصر ولا قصر.

فقال أحدهما لصاحبه: افلق صدره. فهوى أحدهما إلى صدري ففلقه فيما أرى بلا دم ولا وجع، فقال له: أخرج الغلّ والحسد. فأخرج شيئاً كههيئة العلقة ثم نبذها فطرحها، فقال له: أدخل الرأفة والرحمة، فإذا مثل الذي أخرج شبه الفضة، ثم هز إصمّ رجلي اليمنى فقال: اغدّ واسلم. فرجعت بما أغدو، رقة على الصغير، ورحمةً للكبير»

“What is it that you first noticed in your life as a sign of Prophethood?” The Prophet sat up and said, “That’s a question Abu Hurayrah! Well I was about ten year old and in the desert, when I heard someone talking above me. I looked up and saw two men, one saying to the other, ‘Is this he?’ They alighted in front of me. They were different from anyone I had seen before with a kind of clothes that were entirely new to me. They walked up to me and each of them held me by my shoulder. I can feel the coolness of their touch even now. One said to the other, ‘Lay him down.’ They laid me down without any effort. Then one of them said to the other, ‘Open his chest.’ That was done without any blood and

without any pain. He said, ‘Remove deceit and jealousy.’ He removed something like a blood clot and threw it away. Then he said, ‘Implant compassion and kindness.’ He brought out something of the same size as earlier but silver like. Then he held my right toe and said, ‘Return. Be as you were before.’ In a moment I was alright, running back - compassionate towards the young and kind towards the old” (Ibn Kathir). The report about the opening of the heart is also in Muslim (Sabuni).

Shabbir has added: Although it is a fact that the opening of the heart took place, and, indeed, more than once, but that does not seem to be alluded to here in this verse. Rather, it seems the allusion is to the opening up and expanding of the heart to accommodate the great burden of prophethood and face up the difficulties that arose with the start of the mission.

3. “For you,” i.e. for your sake, or, for your satisfaction (Razi, Thanwi).

[2] And relieve you of your burden?⁴

وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ ﴿٢﴾

[3] That had weighed down heavily on your back?

الَّذِي أَنْقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ ﴿٣﴾

4. Sins of the Prophet:

According to Mujahid, Qatadah, and Ibn Zayd, the *wizr* of the original (translated as burden) refers to sins or errors committed by the Prophet previous to his Prophethood, (which, although minor, weighed down heavily upon his sensitive soul) - Ibn Jarir. Hussein b. al-Fadl has qualified the sins as those committed out of errors (of Judgment) and forgetfulness (Qurtubi).

Qurtubi also writes: This verse is in the same sense as the verse (48: 2) which said:

لِيَعْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِن ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ
[الفتح: ٢]

“So that Allah might forgive you your sins - the preceding and the following.”

Shanqiti writes: There is no difference of opinion among the scholars that the prophets are safeguarded from sins. We have the statement of Abu Talib, quoted by Alusi. Abu Talib one day told his brother `Abbas: “I took him under my care and since then I did not part company

with him for a day or night. Nor did I trust anyone about him.” He also mentioned the fact that he would let Muhammad sleep between his sons during the first part of the night and subsequently shift him to another place during the rest, as a measure of precaution. Then he added: “I did not hear a lie from him, nor an outburst of laughter, nor an obscenity, neither did I ever see him standing over the boys and watch them playing.”

Scholars have therefore offered various explanations about what sins are alluded to if *wizr* is to be understood in that sense. The best perhaps is that of Junayd Baghdadi who has said:

حَسَنَاتُ الْأَبْرَارِ سَيِّئَاتُ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ

“Virtues of the virtuous are sins of the near ones.”

The allusion could also be to the great concern that the Prophet (*saws*) felt before his prophethood for his misguided people (Razi). As Allah said, (in 18: 6):

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ مُّقْسِكَ عَلَى آثَارِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ
يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا [الكهف: ٦]

[4] And raised high your esteem?⁵

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ ﴿٤﴾

[5] Verily, with hardship comes ease,

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٥﴾

“You will perhaps destroy yourself out of concern of these (people), if they will not believe in this message” (Shanqiti).

(In other words they understand wizr as burden (Au.).

Sayyid Qutub adds: “This suggests that the Prophet was troubled in his soul for some reason concerning the message he was entrusted with, and the obstacles in its way and the plots against it. These verses also suggest that the difficulties facing his mission weighed heavily on his heart and made him feel that he urgently needed help and backing. Hence came this comforting address and the delightful discourse.”

5. So that whenever My own name is mentioned, yours will also mentioned, such as in the testimony, “*La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammadur rasulullah*” - Mujahid, Qatadah (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

“The primary meaning of the term dhikr is ‘reminder’ or ‘remembrance’; and secondarily, ‘that by which something [or “someone”] is

remembered’, i.e., with praise: hence, it signifies ‘fame’ or ‘renown’, and, tropically - as in the present context – ‘eminence’ or ‘dignity’” (Asad).

Raising of the Prophet’s Esteem

Pickthall notes: “It (the chapter) refers to the inward assurance which the Prophet had received by revelation, and speaks of future events as accomplished, as is usual in the Koran, the revelation coming from a plane where time is not. Verse 4, speaking of his face as exalted, must have seemed particularly absurd at that time of humiliation and persecution. But today, from every mosque in the world, the Prophet’s name is cried, as that of the messenger of God, five times a day, and every Muslim prays for blessings on him when his name is mentioned.”

Ibn `Abbas has reported the Prophet as saying:

”سَأَلْتُ رَبِّي مَسْأَلَةً وَدَدْتُ أَنِّي لَمْ أَكُن سَأَلْتَهُ، قُلْتُ: قَدْ كَانَتْ قَبْلِي أَنْبِيَاءُ، مِنْهُمْ مَنْ سَخَرَتْ لَهُ الرِّيحُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَحْبِي الْمَوْتَى. قَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ، أَلَمْ أَجِدْكَ بَيْتِي مَا فَاوَيْتَكَ؟ قُلْتُ: بَلَى يَا رَبِّ. قَالَ: أَلَمْ أَجِدْكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَيْتَكَ؟ قُلْتُ: بَلَى يَا رَبِّ. قَالَ: أَلَمْ أَجِدْكَ عَائِلًا فَاعْتَيْتَكَ؟ قَالَ: قُلْتُ: بَلَى يَا رَبِّ. قَالَ: أَلَمْ

[6] Indeed, with hardship comes ease.⁶

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٦﴾

أشرح لك صدرك؟ ألم أرفع لك ذكرك؟ قلت: بلى يا رب

“I asked my Lord something that I regretted I should have. I said, ‘There have been Prophets before for whom You tamed the winds, and others who quickened the dead.’ He asked, ‘Muhammad, did I not find you an orphan and sheltered you?’ I said, ‘Certainly yes, My Lord.’ He asked, ‘Did I not find you lost and guided you?’ I said, ‘Certainly yes, my Lord.’ He asked, ‘Did I not find you destitute and enriched you?’ I said, ‘Surely yes, my Lord.’ He asked, ‘Did I not I open your heart?’ I said, ‘Surely yes, my Lord.’ He asked, ‘Did I not raise you in esteem?’ I said, ‘Surely yes, my Lord.’” (Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Abi Hatim, Tabarani, Ibn Mar-duwayh, Bayhaqi, Abu Nu`aym and Ibn `Asakir have also recorded this hadith with Hakim declaring it sahih of status (Shawkani in surah 93).

6. Hasan and Qatadah have reported that when these two verses were revealed the Prophet (*saws*) came out and told them: “Be of good cheer. For one hardship will not overcome two eases” (Ibn Jarir).

(Since *yusr* has been brought in the nakirah form, which would mean a new *yusr* each time, and `usr in *ma`rifah* form, which would mean the same `usr as the previous one, it can be concluded that two *yusrs* have been brought up against one `usr: Au.)

The report however, is *mursal* (Shawkani). That is, the narrator immediate to the Prophet is missing (Au.). According to another report the Prophet (*saws*) said: “If hardship were to enter through an opening, ease would follow it in close pursuit and chase it out” (Ibn Kathir).

This report, although widely quoted, is also weak (Syed Ibrahim).

However, Qurtubi has noted that when Abu `Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah wrote to `Umar ibn al-Khattab about the huge Roman armies that were gathering at the Syrian borders against the Muslims, `Umar wrote back: “After praises to the Lord! You should know that never will a hardship appear before a believer but Allah will send behind it an ease ... and that one hardship will not overcome two eases.”

[7] Therefore, when you have completed your task, resume your toil.⁷

﴿٧﴾ فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ

[8] And direct your quest towards your Lord.

﴿٨﴾ وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ

Qurtubi also points out that the repetition in the sixth verse is without the precedence of a fa or waw, which is an indication that the *yusr* spoken of in this verse is entirely a new one, and further, that it is for all Muslims, not specifically for the Prophet, even if originally the verse was addressed to him.

7. Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Dahhak and Qatadah have said that what it means is that when you are done with your Prayers, busy yourself with supplications. Hasan and Ibn Zayd have said that what it means is that when you are done with the struggle and jihad against the unbelievers, turn your attention to Prayers and supplications. And Mujahid has said that when you are finished with your worldly affairs, turn your attention to the other world. It will not

be wrong, adds Ibn Jarir, to conclude that all the above are implied at the same time.

In one word, what it means is that follow up one kind of worship and devotion with another kind of worship and devotion (Razi).

Qurtubi has noted that Ibn al-`Arabi has read it as "*fansib*" and interpreted it as meaning: "Appoint someone as your *khalifah*." (Ibn al-`Arabiyy meant the "*khalifah*" of the *sufiya*: Au.). Such recitation and interpretation is baseless. No scholar has supported it.

Zamakhshari has said that the *Shi`a* also recite it as *fansib*, and what they mean is that the Prophet ought to have appointed `Ali (*ra*) as his *khalifah*. They are equally wrong. ﴿٧﴾



Surah 95

Al-Tin

Makkan

8 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] By the fig¹ and the olive,²

وَالزَّيْتُونِ ﴿١﴾

1. According to Ibn `Abbas the allusion by teen is to the mosque of Nuh (*asws*) on mount Judiyy (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). But many others have understood it as the fig fruit.

The Fig

Majid writes: “Fig is the most approved of fruits and the most nutritious and the least flatulent: drawing, dissolvent, having the property of opening obstructions of the liver and spleen, and laxative: ... it is a pleasant fruit, having nothing redundant, and a nice food, quick of digestion, and a very useful medicine, for it has a laxative property, dissolves phlegm, purifies the kidneys, removes sand of the bladder, opens obstructions of the liver and spleen, and fattens the body.”

Fig is one of the strangest of fruits. In fact, it is not a fruit. It is a flower. But not one, rather, many. Hence its description as a ‘flower cup.’ But the description is not complete. For, the flowers ripen within the fruit, albeit very small ones with the seed at the tip and a pulpy base. Appropriately, some scientist call it a garden turned inside out. It represents a complete inflorescence.

Botanically classified as *Ficus Carica*, the fig is a pear shaped fruit with a thick outer skin: green, yellow, rose, black or brown in color. The inner walls of its chamber are lined with hundreds of flowers. Depending on species, the flowers are either only female, only male, or both male and female. It is a delicious fruit of high sugar content that can be eaten fresh,

dried or canned. But it consists largely of fructose which is a less harmful class of sugars. It is also rich in calcium, iron, and copper. Bustani has cited several healing qualities of the fig including piles. Its mild laxative quality is well recognized. In fact, like dates, it is a poor man's diet in the Middle-east. Substandard figs are used as feed for cattle. They are eaten as whole, the inner chamber rarely opened and examined closely. If that was done, for which one might need a lense, one will discover, if he knew how to recognize, corpses of biological organisms.

The fig tree is a broad plant whose height can reach up to 10 meters and the diameter of its trunk up to 1 meter. It can also have multiple trunks climbing around the trunk of another tree: squeezing and eventually killing it and then living on its own. It is primarily a Mediterranean plant grown in the Syrian region, Iraq, Turkey, Algeria, Greece, Portugal, Spain and Italy. Its plant was taken to the United States in 1880. But it failed to produce any fruit. Everything was tried. Frustrated, the growers began to pull them out and clear the ground until they learnt from the Turkish experience the incredible manner of its pollination. A tiny insect, the fig wasp, had to be

imported. That was unbelievable to many. According to accounts when a scientist Gustav Eisen announced in California the necessity of importing these wasps, he was "hooted down and some of the mob whistled." But, ultimately wasps had to be brought in.

There are four main types of figs: (1) wild figs, (2) Smyrna figs, (3) common figs and (4) San Pedro figs. The famous southern-Asian Banyan tree, which is revered by the Hindus and Buddhists, is an example of the wild fig tree. As it grows this tree sends down roots from seeds deposited on its stem and branches, that sink into the soil as new roots. However, its fruit is inedible. The Banyan tree is only one of the many kinds of wild fig tree plants. Every region has its own species of wild fig trees, especially those regions where edible fig is cultivated. The wild figs (also called Caprifig) are important for pollination. All kinds of Smyrna figs, which are edible, depend on wild fig trees for their pollination. Tiny wasps (a kind of fly), measuring some 2 mm, roughly the height of letter "i" as here, are born inside the wild fig fruit. The fruit has a tiny hole at the outer end through which the grown up wasps leave covered with the pollen. These pollen-covered wasps then

enter into other fruits of the same tree as well as the Smyrna figs and pollinate them. Hence, growers of Smyrna figs also grow wild fig plants nearby. Without them the Smyrna tree will not produce any fruit.

In contrast, the common fig fruit, (also known as “Adriatic fig”), does not require any pollination to produce the fruit. It is self pollinated. Hence it has no seeds. But the San Pedro variety produces fruits of both kinds: those that do not need pollination, and those that need to be pollinated. This tree produces two crops a year. The first crop, which comes in early summer, does not need pollination for the development of its fruit. But the second crop which comes in fall, requires to be pollinated by the wasps. Hence the need of the wild fig plant for the San Pedro variety also. Wasps then are a key to the development of the fig fruits. There are approximately a thousand species of the fig tree, and equal number of fig wasp species. (A species is one which cannot interbreed with another). Each species of wasp serves only a specific species of the fig tree. They are interdependent. Without the fig trees, there would be no wasps. And without the wasps, there would be no fig. We might, therefore, look

more closely into the fig-wasp relationship.

In the spring, the wild fig tree produces figs which contain numbers of both male and female flowers. However, the two flower sexes do not develop together (although within the walls of the same fruit). Female flowers develop first, and are ready to receive the pollen. At that stage the female wasp enters the flower cup (the fig) through a tiny hole at one end. It lays its eggs inside the short-styled female flowers. (Male flowers, also found within the same fruit, have long styles). Flowers into which the wasp lays eggs, develop into tiny galls each of which has a developing wasp larva feeding inside. Sometimes, the wasp also injects a fluid which induces the formation of galls within which the larvae develop.

By early summer, the fig reaches its maturity. The wasp larvae too are about to hatch. However, it is the male larvae that hatch first. They munch their way out of the gall. Then they chew holes through the adjacent galls in which the female larvae is still buried (and still under development) and mates with it. When the female emerges from the gall after some time, it finds itself surrounded by male flowers (as men-

tioned earlier, strategically placed at the entrance of the fruit). So that, when it emerges and is ready to fly out (it has wings, against the male which has no wings), it is fully covered with the pollen. Once out, the female searches for fig fruits in which it could lay its eggs. The wasp enters into the female flower of the edible fruit and tries to lay eggs into its styles. But they are too long for that. Her egg laying apparatus - called ovipositor, a tube at the end of her abdomen - has to match with the length of the style. It is the inedible fruit which has the right kind of female flowers with the right length of style. So, unable to lay the eggs, the wasp moves on. But, in the meantime, she would have pollinated the female flowers. The wasp leaves the fruit to look for another fruit with the right flowers (with short styles). Attempting on another edible fruit, with female flowers, she pollinates it also. It goes on in succession until she has pollinated a large number of fruits. Finally, as the time passes, the same fig tree now begins to produce another type of small, inedible fruits in its upper branches. This fruit has both male and female flowers in its inner chamber. It has short styles. The wasp enters into the fruit and is able to deposit its eggs. Young male

and female larvae hibernate in them and, with the male hatching out first, the cycle begins again.

The above described one of the many sequences, in one of the many species of the fig - although details will vary from plant to plant and wasp to wasp. Here is another cycle and a little bit more in detail. Here too, we can begin with the female wasp laying her eggs in the tiny flowers. As days and nights pass by, one season departing, another arriving, the wasp eggs (laid down earlier) mature in the inner fig chamber. As the larvae grow, they eat the flowers. In time, the larvae become a pupae, and they hatch into grubs. But not all at a time. It happens in two phases. In the first phase, it is the male wasps that hatch out. The male wasp is distinctly different from their mother wasp, or sister wasps still in the pupae stage. In fact, it is so different in its body structure that it is hard to call it a wasp. It has no wings. It has, obviously, no egg-laying apparatus. It has a huge mandible: an apparatus for fighting duels, apart from other functions. It is tough looking and quite fearsome. They immediately start to feed on the flowers. At last well fed, the male individual wasp begins to search for the female pupae. That brings it into competition with

other males wasps. As usual, fights ensue. They cut, maim and kill each other mercilessly. Many die out and the triumphant ones set about locating the female pupae. Having found one, still in its (flower) gall, the male chews open two holes (one at the top and the other at the side) and copulates with the bride couched within the capsule. A little later the female wasp too wakes up, yawns and chewing its way out, emerges as a mature wasp. Thus, every female wasp already carries as it emerges from its capsule, a bag of eggs that it is going to lay in future. It need not copulate anymore as an adult.

The female wasp is different from the male in many aspects. It has no mandibles to fight, and body structure is entirely different. Also, it has wings. Once grown to full size, the female wasps have no job in the fig fruit in which they are born. Already pregnant with eggs, they must leave the place and look for another fruit to lay their eggs. Some species of wasps escape through the hole at the tip of the fig. But some figs do not have these holes. So, how can the female get out of the fig fruit? Well, it is the male wasp's turn to labor. But the job of making a gateway for the female wasp is beyond the scope of a single male wasp. The answer is in

co-operation. The bitter hostilities of the past are forgotten and many male wasps join hands and drill a hole in the fig wall. Once the hole is big enough, the female wasps fly out. Incidentally, the fresh air entering through the holes bored by the males causes a drop in carbon dioxide within the fig; this, in turn, stimulates pollen formation by the flowers. As for the male wasps, they have completed their life-cycle, and are allowed a peaceful death. They never leave their dark world and never see their offspring for whose appearance into the world, they fought, killed, and got killed

As for the winged female wasp, there is another thing that it does before leaving. It has brushes on its arms, and pockets on its breasts. It uses the brushes to fill its pockets with the pollen. It is a deliberate act, like that of the female farm workers in the flower fields, collecting flowers for the perfume manufacturer. Having filled its breast pockets, the wasp departs to fly into the world of sound and vision. But it is not particularly fond of the open world. It has twin objectives for the rest of her life. It is to dislodge her load of eggs and, secondly, pollinate the female fig flowers. (In her case it is a deliberate act when compared to other pol-

linating insects who crawl about on the flowers incidentally pollinating them). Having found a fig, the wasp enters through the tiny hole at its far end. The hole is too narrow for her. In fact, it is too narrow even for ordinary ants to enter. As she struggles to crawl in through the narrow tunnel, she loses her wings. But that doesn't matter since she will not need the wings any more as she will not come out again. (The fig growers check for pollination of the fruits by checking the holes. If they find wings stuck there, they know that the wasp has entered). Once having wiggled itself through the hole, the wasp immediately begins to work in the dark, visiting the flowers, to either drop a bit of her cargo of pollen, once again with the help of her brush, doing it very deliberately, like a farm worker taking out seeds from the coat pockets and burying them in the earth. She also drops an egg wherever she feels the spot is right - into the styles of the flowers.

Having gone around the fruit, pollinated the flowers, and having dislodged her reserve of eggs, she too has done all that was required of her. She is now ready to lie down and die in peace. She does not live long enough to see her offspring come alive either.

Nor does she leave the fruit again. And, none of the offspring ever see either of their parents, nor do the parents ever see their offspring.

As a result of the co-operation between the fig tree and the wasps, the figs emerge. If the wasp didn't enter into a fruit at all, the fruit would not ripen and, consequently, would be dropped off by the tree in a shriveled form. Alternatively, if the wasp happens to lay too many eggs, then too the fruit is dropped off by the tree. If the tree did not drop such a fruit off, the emerging grubs from the larvae would eat off all the flowers, none fructifying into fruits and seeds and the farmer would be sorry for a bad crop. But the wasp doesn't do that. It lays just enough eggs and pollinates the rest of the flowers for them to develop into fruits. Obviously, if she laid too many eggs, and the fruit was dropped off by the tree, her own offspring would die with it. It is another thing that the wasp would never know, whether or not the tree dropped that fruit off in which she had laid more eggs than necessary. The wasp dies earlier than the fruit dropping by the tree. So, it is a mystery why the wasp does not lay eggs on every flower inside the fig although some do.

There is a reason why we have allotted so much space to the fig is that the fruit debunks the story of evolution. Instead of admitting defeat, the evolutionists rather advance far-fetched fictitious ideas such as, «the fig-wasp relationship is an example of co-evolution, or mutualism in evolution.» In the words of a scientist: “The fig and fig wasp story is an extreme example of the co-evolution of plants and their animal pollinators. Without the wasp, the fig would not be pollinated; without the fig, the wasp would have no egg-laying site or food for its larvae. And the timing of the fruit maturation on the part of the fig, and of larval development and egg-laying on the part of the wasp, is incredibly precise and precisely coordinated, as it must be for this mutually beneficial system to work. Each species has become adapted through natural selection to better exploit the other, influencing the course of each other’s evolutionary trajectory through their interactions.” (Pollination, the art and science of floral sexuality, Nancy C. Prat and Alan M. Peters, Zoogoer, July/August 1995).

Statements of this sort completely ignore the difficult questions that arise. The big question is why? Why should the fig and fig wasp have had

to evolve together to get locked to each other in this fashion? There are millions of species of plants. They all have open flowers. The fig is unique. It is a flower turned inside out. Why? For what evolutionary advantage, when none of the millions of flowers are having any problem getting pollinated as open flowers? They are happily replicating their DNA without the aid of the wasps or any other agent. Again, why did the fig tree choose only one pollinator, and that too, of it only one species. By various stratagems, it locks out not only a variety of other insects, but of the wasps too, allowing a single species alone to enter in? What is the evolutionary advantage in limiting itself in that manner? Does the survival chances of the fig increase or decrease by this exclusiveness?

However, the issues are more complicated than a few questions raised above. We need to explain the various synchronized actions and characteristics of the two, fig and wasp. For example, (1) the intricate hole at the far end (ostiola), which permits only specialized pollinators to enter and excludes predators such as ants. In other words, the fig locks out all except the entry of a specific wasp. (Does the fig fruit have a complete list of predators, small and big, ev-

eryone of those hundreds of millions of species, including their inability to bore holes)? (2) The perfect adaptation of the female flowers for development of the larvae in the galls. (3) Asynchronous development of the two flower sexes, male and female, at different times within the same fruit. The female flower ripens at the time the female wasp enters for pollination. But the male flowers ripen with the emergence of the new adult wasps. (4) Ripening of the fig is delayed until the wasp has emerged. (5) Mandible among the males. (6) Telescoping abdomen for the males for copulation with the pre-emergent females. (7) Emergence of more of females than males. These are some of difficult issues that need an outside Hand, an external Power to coordinate.

Now we can move another step forward on the road of confusion and talk about the wasp parasites. Fig wasps justify their existence by providing pollination service to the fig. In turn, the fig provides the wasp with the specially designed galls to lay their eggs in. Arrived at a happy agreement between themselves, the wasp lays eggs only on about half of the flowers. The other half then can develop into fruits and seeds. But the drama takes another turn. No sooner

has the wasp laid its eggs, and found a niche to die off within the fruit, than a parasite appears on top of the fruit. This is also a wasp, but not the kind that can or will enter the fruit. It has got its own ways of exploiting both the fig as well as the wasp, without offering any service to either of them. This one is well equipped. In fact, it is another wonder of nature. It has a long, tough ovipositor, cum drilling machine, cum sensor, cum egg-laying apparatus. With this machine, the tiny creature is capable of drilling a hole (on her scale equivalent of a 100 foot wall: Dawkins) through the fig from the outside. Having drilled a hole in the fig, the operation itself conducted almost in the manner of drilling rigs, the tip of the long ovipositor locates deep inside the fig the flower galls in which the fig-wasp has laid its eggs, and deposits one of its own eggs on top of it. Her offspring will now feed on the developing wasp-egg. It does not pollinate any flower. The evolutionists forget to talk about the role of this amazing wasp in the so-called co-evolution; nor do they talk about how the parasite wasp knows of the eggs inside the fig.

As if the plot is not thick enough, there are parasites over parasites. For instance, no sooner the parasite wasp

with its long drilling machine closes the site office and departs, another parasitic wasp promptly moves in. It has a much shorter ovipositor. It uses the hole dug by the long-ovipositor wasp, and deposits its own egg. There are no less than 32 species of parasites attached to certain species of figs: none of them pollinating, but all of them profiting from the fig. The system allows for multiple species to develop side by side in a single fig. Most of the interactions between the fig, the pollinators, and non-pollinating exploiter biological organisms (not to speak of microorganisms) are not understood by the biologists who work mostly on the simple wasp-fig relationship. All the facts that are stated and the speculations that are forwarded, are devoted to a very small portion of the phenomena which brings the fig to our tables. And, even within that, individual scientists specialize on one or two aspects, devoting the best of their research years to understand the role played by a 'part' of 'the incomplete whole.' But that 'part' itself is extremely complicated and cannot be understood in whole. In the words of a biologist, "The symbiotic relationship of the fig and the wasp, each dependent on the other

(Ramirez 1969) similar to the yucca month and the yucca plant (Riley 1878) is a strange and difficult to explain phenomenon in the plant-insect relationship."

The truth is, the 'whole' story, that covers everything about the figs, all their varieties, their pollinating wasps, other minute creatures, parasites and microorganisms, offers a branch of knowledge beyond the comprehension of a single mind. As another scientist has put it (in another context), "Understanding the basic processes of pollination reveals the intricate purpose that underlies the beauty of flower and opens our eye to the amazing natural event going on all around us" (Au.).

2. According to Ibn 'Abbas, Ka'b al-Ahbar, Qatadah, Ibn Zayd and others, the allusion by the *zaytun* of the text is to (the mosque at: Ibn 'Abbas) *Bayt al-Maqdis*. But Mujahid and 'Ikrimah have said that it is "olive" itself that is meant (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Majid writes about the olive: "It is the first tree, of those now known, mentioned in the *Bible*. Its wealth of nourishment made it a natural candidate for the position of King of trees" (P. XVIII, n. 26).

[2] By the (mount) Tur of Sinai,³

وَطُورِ سَيْنِينَ ﴿٢﴾

[3] And this Secure City (Makkah),⁴

وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ ﴿٣﴾

3. Tur is that mount in Sinai where Allah (*swt*) spoke to Musa (*asws*).

4. According to some scholars, Allah swore by the three most holy sites: *Bayt al-Maqdis* (known as the city of fig and olives), mount Tur, and Makkah following the statement in the *Bible*: God came from mount Sinai, then appeared in *Bayt al-Maqdis* and rose up from mount Faran, i.e. Makkah (Ibn Kathir).

A Prediction of the *Tawrah*

The *Biblical* text Ibn Kathir has alluded to is as follows:

This is a blessing with which”
Moses the man of God blessed
the children of Israel before his
,death. He said

,The Lord came from Sinai
;and dawned from Se’u upon us
The shone forth from Mount
,Paran

The came from the ten thousands
,of holy ones

with flaming fire at his right
«.hand

(Deuteronomy, ch. 33, verses 1-2)

The above verses of the *Tawrah* are a clear reference to the fall of Makkah.

Faran is the name of a series of mountains surrounding Makkah. (The “F” of Arabic is changed to “P” in other languages. For example, Palestine for Filasteen). It was in these mountain ranges that the Prophet (*saws*) encamped with 10,000 of his followers on the eve of the invasion. He had ordered his followers to kindle flames all over the camp in order to impress Abu Sufyan, the commander-in-chief of the Makkans, of his numbers to discourage him from resistance (Au.).

Fig, Olive, Tur and the Haram

Nonetheless, it might be noticed that if we are to follow Ibn `Abbas’s interpretation, it is the mosques at Judiyy, Mount Tur, *Bayt al-Maqdis*, and Makkah, and by these the five ‘Ulu al-`Azm Prophets, (Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, `Isa and Muhammad - on them be peace), who have been alluded to in the first three verses (Au.).

However, most commentators, such as Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and Shawkani believe that there is no reason to sacrifice the apparent meaning of *teen* and *zaytun* for any other

[4] We have indeed created Man in the fairest form.⁵ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

[5] Then We flung him to the lowest of the low,⁶ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ ﴿٥﴾

interpretation. But, if the apparent meaning is accepted, then, as Thanwi has pointed out, Allah (*swt*) has sworn by two plants of great material benefit to mankind, (fig and olive), and by two places of great spiritual benefit (mount Tur and the Haram at Makkah) - Au.

Asad adds: "The ‹fig› and ‹olive› symbolize, in this context, the lands in which these trees predominate; i.e., the countries bordering on the eastern part of the Mediterranean, especially Palestine and Syria. As it was in these lands that most of the Abrahamic prophets mentioned in the Qur'an lived and preached, these two species of tree may be taken as metonyms for the religious teachings voiced by the long line of those God-inspired men, culminating in the person of the last Judaic prophet, Jesus. ‹Mount Sinai›, on the other hand, stresses specifically the apostleship of Moses, inasmuch as the religious laws valid before, and up to, the advent of Muhammad - and in its essentials binding on Jesus as well

- was revealed to Moses on a mountain of the Sinai Desert. Finally, ‹this land secure› signifies undoubtedly Mecca, where Muhammad, the Last Prophet, was born and received his divine call. Thus, verses 1-3 draw our attention to the fundamental ethical unity underlying the teachings - the genuine teachings - of all the three historic phases of monotheistic religion, metonymically personified by Moses, Jesus and Muhammad.»

5. To such perfection that any improvement by way of modification of the limbs or organs, internal or external is out of question. Or, can an artist improve upon the human face? (Au.).

6. The opinion of Ibn 'Abbas, 'Ikrimah, Qatadah, and that of my own preference is that by the "lowest of the low" is meant "extreme old age", although, according to Hasan (and also Mujahid, Abu 'Aliyyah, Ibn Zayd and others: Ibn Kathir), the allusion is to "Hellfire" (Ibn Jarir).

[6] Save for those that believed and did good works.⁷ For such is a reward undiminished.⁸

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ﴿٦﴾

The Lowest of the Low

The meaning preferred by most of the modern commentators has been worded by Sayyid in the following manner: “The emphasis here is on man’s spiritual qualities since these drag man down to the most ignoble state when he deviates from the upright nature, and turns away from belief in Allah which is perfectly harmonious with this nature. ... Moreover, the superiority of man’s creation is most clearly apparent in the spiritual qualities. (Even the angels were made to prostrate themselves before him: Shabbir). He is made in a way which enables him to attain a sublime standard, superior to that of the highest-ranking angels. This is illustrated by the event of the Prophet’s ascension to Heaven. Jibril stopped at a certain stage and Muhammad, the human being, was taken to higher elevations.

“At the same time, man is given the dubious ability to sink down to the levels unattained by any other creature. ... In this latter case, animals become superior to him and more

upright since they do not violate their nature. They praise the Lord and fulfill their function on earth as they are guided to do. But man, who has been given the fairest form and abilities, denies his Lord and sinks right down to the bottom.”

7. Ibn `Abbas’s interpretation is that the verse applies to those “younger days” when a man sends forward good deeds before old age overtakes him (Ibn Jarir).

8. According to Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah and Qatadah the words “for such,” apply to those who spend their younger and better days in good works. When they reach their extreme old age and lose control over their body and senses, they shall be deemed to be continuing with the deeds of the past and, consequently, rewarded for them, even if not attempted. Further, they shall not be held responsible for whatever evil, sins or wrongdoing that they might commit because of their senility (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

9. Another possible meaning is: “And who can (O Muhammad) cry lies to

[7] So what makes you (O man) cry lies to the Day of Judgment?⁹

﴿٧﴾ فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدُ بِالذِّينِ

[8] Is not Allah the most Just of the judges?¹⁰

﴿٨﴾ أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمِ الْحَاكِمِينَ

you (after all these signs)?” (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi and others).

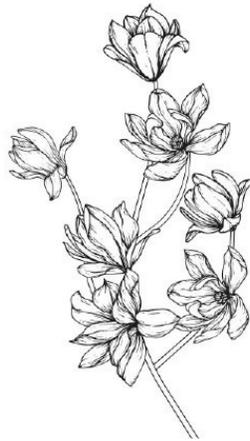
“Indeed so, and I am one of those who bear witness” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

10. It is reported of the Prophet (*saws*) that when he recited this verse he would respond with:

In fact, in a *hadith* of Tirmidhi the Prophet has ordered his followers to also say these words when they hear or recite these verses (Qurtubi).

بَلَىٰ وَأَنَا ذَلِكُ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

مَلَقْنَا





Surah 96

Al-`Alaq

Makkan

19 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Read¹ in the name of thy Lord Who cre-
ated,²

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾

1. Majid quotes Asad: “The primary duty of a Prophet, in contrast with that of any other spiritual leader, is not to produce images and ideas born in his own mind: it consists only in the reading out of the unseen book of Divine Truth and reproducing of its meanings to mankind without additions or subtractions. In the word ‘Read!’ which opened the first revelation to Muhammad this call to Perfect Prophethood is already fully expressed. The Law of God, the Eternal Truth behind the perceptible things, was laid bare before him, waiting to be understood by him in its innermost meaning.” (Sahih Bukhari: translation).

2. The First Revelation: `A`isha, Abu Musa al-Ash`ari, al-`Utaridi, Muja-

hid, `Ubayd b. Bukayr, `Ata` b. Yasar and several others have reported that the first verse to be revealed was: ‘Read in the name of your Lord.’ `A`isha reports:

أَوَّلُ مَا بُدِئَ بِهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - مِنَ الْوَحْيِ الرَّؤْيَا الصَّالِحَةَ فِي النَّوْمِ، فَكَانَ لَا يَرَى رُؤْيَا إِلَّا جَاءَتْهُ مِثْلَ فَلَقِ الصُّبْحِ، ثُمَّ حُبَّبَ إِلَيْهِ الْخَلَاءَ، وَكَانَ يَخْلُو بَعَارِ حِرَاءٍ فَيَتَحَنَّنُ فِيهِ - وَهُوَ التَّعَبُّدُ - اللَّيَالِي ذَوَاتِ الْعَدَدِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَنْزِعَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ، وَيَنْزُودُ لَذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ إِلَى خَدِيجَةَ، فَيَنْزُودُ لِمِثْلِهَا، حَتَّى جَاءَهُ الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ فِي غَارِ حِرَاءٍ، فَجَاءَهُ الْمَلَكُ فَقَالَ «اقْرَأْ». قَالَ «مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ». قَالَ «فَأَخَذَنِي فَعَطَّنِي حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ «اقْرَأْ». قُلْتُ مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ. فَأَخَذَنِي فَعَطَّنِي الثَّانِيَةَ حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ «اقْرَأْ». فَقُلْتُ مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ. فَأَخَذَنِي فَعَطَّنِي الثَّلَاثَةَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ (اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي

خَلَقَ (١) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ (٢) أَمْرًا
 وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ (٣) ». فَرَجَعَ بِهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -
 صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - يَرْجِفُ فَوَادُهُ، فَدَخَلَ
 عَلَيْهِ خَدِيجَةُ بِنْتُ خُوَيْلِدٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا فَقَالَ
 «زَمَلُونِي زَمَلُونِي». فَمَزَلُوهُ حَتَّى ذَهَبَ عَنْهُ الرَّوْعُ،
 فَقَالَ لِحَدِيجَةَ وَأَخْبَرَهَا الْخَبِيرَ «لَقَدْ خَشِيتُ عَلَى
 نَفْسِي». فَقَالَتْ خَدِيجَةُ كَلَّا وَاللَّهِ مَا يُخْزِيكَ
 اللَّهُ أَبَدًا، إِنَّكَ لَتَتَّصِلُ الرَّحِمَ، وَتَحْمِلُ الْكَلَّ،
 وَتَكْسِبُ الْمَعْدُومَ، وَتَقْرَى الضَّيْفَ، وَتَعِينُ عَلَى
 نَوَائِبِ الْحَقِّ. فَانْطَلَقَتْ بِهِ خَدِيجَةُ حَتَّى أَتَتْ بِهِ
 وَرَقَةَ بْنَ نَوْفَلِ بْنِ أَسَدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْعُزَّى ابْنَ عَمِّ
 خَدِيجَةَ - وَكَانَ أَمْرًا تَنْصَرُّ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ، وَكَانَ
 يَكْتُبُ الْكِتَابَ الْعِبْرَانِيَّ، فَيَكْتُبُ مِنَ الْإِنجِيلِ
 بِالْعِبْرَانِيَّةِ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ، وَكَانَ شَيْخًا
 كَبِيرًا قَدْ عَمِيَ - فَقَالَتْ لَهُ خَدِيجَةُ يَا ابْنَ
 عَمِّ اسْمَعْ مِنْ ابْنِ أُخِيكَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ وَرَقَةُ يَا ابْنَ
 أُخِي مَاذَا تَرَى فَأَخْبَرَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ
 عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - خَيْرَ مَا رَأَى. فَقَالَ لَهُ وَرَقَةُ هَذَا
 النَّامُوسُ الَّذِي نَزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَى مُوسَى - صَلَّى
 اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - يَا لَيْتَنِي فِيهَا جَدَعًا، لَيْتَنِي
 أَكُونُ حَيًّا إِذْ يُخْرِجُكَ قَوْمُكَ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
 - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - «أَوْخُرْجِي هُمْ».
 قَالَ نَعَمْ، لَمْ يَأْتِ رَجُلٌ قَطُّ بِمِثْلِ مَا جِئْتَ بِهِ إِلَّا
 عُودِي، وَإِنْ يُدْرِكُنِي يَوْمَكَ أَنْصُرَكَ نَصْرًا مُؤَزَّرًا.

“The first sign of prophethood vouchsafed to the apostle were true visions, resembling the brightness of daybreak, which were shown to him in his sleep. Then Allah made solitude dear to him so that he would retreat to the cave of Hira and spend a number of days in devotion

returning to his family to equip himself with some more provisions in preparation of another trip - until the Truth made its surprise appearance to him. He (angel Jibril) told him: ‘Muhammad you are Allah’s Messenger.’ The Prophet said: ‘I knelt down involuntarily.’”

“I returned home trembling. I said to Khadijah, ‘Wrap me up, wrap me up,’ until the fright left me.’ Then he came again and said, ‘Muhammad. I am Jibril and you are Allah’s Messenger.’ The Prophet said, ‘I (was so disturbed) that I thought I would throw myself down a cliff. Once when I had made up my mind about it he came to me in a human form and said, ‘Muhammad, I am Jibril and you are Allah’s Messenger.’ Then he said, ‘Read.’ I said, ‘What shall I read?’ Upon this he hugged me three times, until I was exhausted. Then he said, ‘Read in the name of thy Lord Who created, created Man of blood-clot. Read! Your Lord is Most Generous, Who taught by the pen. Taught Man what he knew not.’ So I read. Then when I went back to Khadijah I told her, ‘I fear for myself,’ and related to her the story. She as-

[2] Created Man of blood-clot.³

﴿٢﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾

[3] Read! Your Lord is Most Generous,

اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾

sured me, 'Be of good heart, for, by Allah, He will never disgrace you. You do good to the kinsfolk, speak the truth, are faithful to the trust, help the poor, are hospitable to the guest, and you help in every just cause.' (Subsequently she took him to Warqah b. Nawfal and told him, 'Listen to what your cousin has to say.') He asked me and I narrated to him the whole story. He said, "This is the same Namus (Jibril) that had come down to Musa. I am afraid it is going to be a difficult affair for you. I wish I am alive the day your people will expel you.' I said, 'Will my people expel me?' He said, 'No one ever came before you with what you have brought but he was expelled from his city. If I am alive until then, surely I shall lend you all my support.'"

"Then, (the Prophet continued), 'the next revelation that came down after *iqra'* was (68: 1-5):

ن - وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ، مَا أَنْتَ بِبِعِزَّةِ رَبِّكَ
بِعَجُنُونَ، وَإِنَّ لَكَ لَأَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُونٍ، وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَى خُلُقٍ
عَظِيمٍ، فَاسْتَبْصِرْ وَبَصِّرْ بُونٍ.

"Nun. By the pen and by what they write down. You are not, by the grace of your Lord, mad. Indeed, for you is a reward unfailing. Indeed, you have a great character. So you shall see (what happens) and they shall also see.'

And then came down (74: 1-2),

بِأَيُّهَا الْمَدِّيرُ - قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ.

'O one wrapping himself, rise and warn.' And then, 'By the bright morning, and by the night when it is still'" (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

The *hadith* is in Bukhari and Muslim (Ibn Kathir).

According to another version, narrated by Ibn Zubayr, the first time Jibril came he brought with him a book encased in a box of rich material and said, 'Read!' (Ibn Jarir).

3. Maurice Bucaille disagrees with the rendering of the word '*alaqah* as 'blood clot'. He writes: "Once the egg has been fertilized in the Fallopian tube it descends to lodge inside the uterus; this is called the 'implantation of the egg.' ... it is the result of the development of villousities, verita-

ble elongation of the egg, which, like roots in the soil, draw nourishment from the thickness of the uterus necessary to the egg's growth. These formations make the egg literally cling to the uterus. This is a discovery of modern times.

“The act of clinging is described five times in the Qur`ān. Firstly in verses 1 and 2 of *surah* 96:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ - خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ
مِنْ عَلَقٍ

“Read, in the name of they Lord
Who fashioned,
Who fashioned man from some-
thing that clings.”

‘Something that clings’ is the translation of the word `alaq. It is the original meaning of the word. A meaning derived from it, ‘blood clot’, often figures in translation; it is a mistake against which one should guard; man has never passed through the stage of ‘blood clot’. The same is true for another translation of this term, ‘adhesion’ which is equally inappropriate. The original sense of ‘something which clings’ corresponds to today’s firmly established reality.” - *The Bible, the Qur`ān, and Science*, American Trust Publication, 1979, pp. 203-204.

Blood-clot

Keith Moore, however, who is a specialist on the subject, has allowed the following entry in the addenda of his internationally acclaimed work *The Developing Human*:

“`*alaqah* in Arabic means leech, a suspended thing, or a blood clot. The leech is pear-shaped and thrives on blood sucking. In its early stages the embryo resembles a leech and this resemblance is more marked if seen from the side where projections of the nural folds forms a median prominence. At this stage the cardiovascular system starts to appear and the embryo is now dependent on the maternal blood for its nutrition like a leech. At this stage, when the embryo is suspended in the chorionic cavity by the body stalk and is surrounded by fluids of the amnion and the yolk sac, if abortion takes place, the conceptus will resemble a blood clot.” (*The Developing Human*, third edition, Dar al-Qiblah Publications, 1983, p. 56a).

Asad writes: “It is ... noteworthy that this very first Qur`ānic revelation alludes to man’s embryonic evolution out of a ‘germ-cell’ - i.e. out of a fertilized female ovum - thus contrasting the primitiveness and simplicity of the biological origins with his in-

[4] Who taught by the pen,⁴

الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾

[5] Taught Man what he knew not.⁵

عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾

[6] Nay. But Man transgresses all bounds,

كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِكَيْطَعَى ﴿٦﴾

[7] That he sees himself self-sufficient.⁶

أَنْ رَّاهُ اسْتَعْتَى ﴿٧﴾

[8] Surely, unto your Lord is the Returning.

إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَىٰ ﴿٨﴾

[9] Have you seen him who forbids -

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَىٰ ﴿٩﴾

[10] A slave (of Ours) when he Prays.⁷

عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّىٰ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] Have you considered. Were he to be on a Guidance?

أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ الْهُدَىٰ ﴿١١﴾

tellectual and spiritual potential: a contrast which clearly points to the existence of a conscious design and purpose underlying in the creation of man.”

4. A *Sahih hadith* says:

أول ما خلق الله: القلم، فقال له اكتب، فكتب ما يكون إلى يوم القيامة، فهو عنده في الذكر فوق عرشه

The first thing that Allah created was the Pen. He ordered: ‘Write.’ It wrote down all that was to happen until the Day of Judgment. That writing is with Him in the Scroll on the *‘Arsh* (Qurtubi).

5. That is, if Allah is capable of teaching a blood clot by the pen why can you not, O Muhammad, even if unlettered, be taught and made a Mas-

ter unto all masters? (Shah `Abdul `Aziz - Shabbir).

6. That is, he became rich in wealth and progeny (Qurtubi).

It might be noticed that at the beginning of the chapter knowledge stood honored. By this verse wealth stands condemned (Razi).

7. Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and Qatadah have said that these verses were occasioned by Abu Jahl’s threats to the Prophet. He asked his henchmen whether, despite his objection, Muhammad still place his head in the sand (meaning in prostration) in their presence. They said yes. He threatened that if he saw him doing that he would step on his neck.

[12] Or, enjoined righteousness?⁸

﴿١٢﴾ أَوْ أَمَرَ بِالتَّقْوَى

[13] Have you considered? If he (the objector) cried lies and turned back?

﴿١٣﴾ أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى

[14] Does he not know that Allah sees all?

﴿١٤﴾ أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَى

[15] Nay indeed. If he does not desist, We shall drag him by the forelock,⁹

كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهِ لَنَسْفَعًا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ ﴿١٥﴾

Shabbir adds: This is the height of ignorance and arrogance. Man not only refuses to prostrate himself before his Lord, he cannot even bear to see another person prostrate himself before Him.

And Qatadah says it used to be said during his times that every nation has a Fir`awn of its own. Abu Jahl was the Fir`awn of this Ummah (Ibn Jarir).

It is said that `Ali (ra) saw some people Praying before the sermon of the `Eid Prayers. He said, 'I have not seen the Prophet Pray (at this time).' It was said, 'Why do you not stop them?' He said, 'I'm afraid that Allah's words "Have you seen him who forbids," would become applicable to me.'

8. *Salah* induces some amount of piety even in a casual onlooker (Razi).

9. The reference to the forelock could possibly be because Abu Jahl was es-

pecially attentive of his forelock, dyeing it and perfuming it (Razi).

Promises Come True

It is said that once Ibn Mas`ud (ra) recited the Qur`an near Ka`ba. Abu Jahl pounded upon him and beat him up. It is significant to note, therefore, that it was Ibn Mas`ud (ra) who finally beheaded Abu Jahl at Badr. When he found Abu Jahl lying injured, he was initially afraid to go near him - Abu Jahl being such a powerful man. So Ibn Mas`ud first pricked him on his nose with his spear. That was thus, the first occasion of Allah's promise coming true (68: 16):

سَنَسِمُهُ عَلَى الْخُرْطُومِ [القلم: ١٦]

'We shall brand him upon the muzzle.' Assured that Abu Jahl could not rise Ibn Mas`ud went closer and placed his foot on his face to behead him. Recognizing him, Abu Jahl re-

[16] A lying, sinful forelock.¹⁰

نَاصِيَةٍ كَاذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] Then let him call on his henchmen (for help).¹¹

فَلْيَدْعُ نَادِيَهُ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] We shall call on the Guards of Hell.

سَنَدْعُ الزَّبَانِيَةَ ﴿١٨﴾

marked, ‘You have climbed high O Shepherd.’ After beheading him Ibn Mas`ud carried his head by his forelock. And thus the first manifestation of the words:

لَنَسْفَعًا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ، نَاصِيَةٍ كَاذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ [العلق:
[١٦-١٥]

‘We shall drag him by the forelock. A lying, sinful forelock’ (Based on Razi).

10. The man is so much soaked in sin that his every hair is drenched in it (Shabbir).

The above commentary apart, it had always been intriguing that the Qur`ān referred to the “forelock” as the “sinful forelock.” Modern science has come to our rescue. Researches going back a few decades have established that it is the anterior portion of the frontal lobes, the prefrontal area of the brain, just behind the forelock on the head which performs the functions of motivation and foresight to plan and initiate movements. Also known as the “region of

association cortex,” it is also thought to be the functional center for aggression. Julian Huxley has called it in his *Man in the Modern World*, (A Mentor Book, p. 103) as “the seat of intelligence and learning” (Au.).

11. Ibn `Abbas said that once Abu Jahl found the Prophet Praying near the Station of Ibrahim. He rebuked the Prophet and reminded of his warning. The Prophet replied to him sternly (and threatened him with divine punishment). Abu Jahl retorted: “Do you threaten me, Muhammad? I’ve the largest number of followers behind me.” Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir).

Then, on another occasion, Abu Hurayrah and Ibn `Abbas report, the Prophet arrived and began to Pray. Abu Jahl made a move towards him and then retreated in haste trying to fend off something with his hands. He was asked, ‘What happened to you man?’ He said, ‘Between me and him I found a trench of fire.’ According to another report, ‘Between



[19] Nay! Do not obey him. Rather, prostrate yourself, and draw nigh.¹²

كَلَّا لَا تُطَعُّهُ وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ ﴿١٩﴾

me and him I found the space filled to darkness with soldiers.’ And the Prophet remarked, ‘Had he stepped closer, angels would have seized him and torn him to pieces right there before the people’ (Ibn Jarir). Reports identical to this are in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nasa’i and others (Ibn Kathir).

12. The Prophet has said in a *hadith* preserved by Muslim:

«أقرب ما يكون العبد من ربه وهو ساجد،
فأكثرُوا الدعاء»

“The closest a man gets to his Lord is during his prostration. Therefore make much supplications (during it)” - Ibn Kathir.

مَقْتَبَاتُ



Surah 97

*Al-Qadr*Makkan/Madinan¹

5 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] We have indeed revealed this (Qur'ān)² in
the night of Qadr.³

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿١﴾

Introductory Remarks

Imām Ahmad has preserved a nar-
ration of Malik b. `Amr b. Thabit
al-Ansari that when this chapter was
revealed, Jibril told the Prophet:

“Recite this to Ubayy (b. Ka`b).”
The Prophet told Ubayy: “Jibril
has asked me to recite it to you.”
Ubayy asked: “Did he name me?”
When the Prophet yes, he began
to cry.

A report in *Bukhari* and *Muslim*
coming from Sho`bah says it was
Allah who had ordered him to re-
cite it to Ubayy. And, it seems likely
that the recitation by the Prophet to
Ubayy was to give people a lesson in
humility (Qurtubi). Ibn Taymiyyah
wrote: “There is nothing odd in his
recitation to Ubayy. It was in the

same spirit and to the same ends as
his recitation to the Jinn. To this Ibn
Kathir adds: It was to teach Ubayy,
to give him the message therein, and
to warn him.

Notwithstanding the notes of Ibn
Taymiyyah and his pupil Ibn Kathir,
it is obvious that Qurtubi has a point
(Au.).

1. Most commentators have said that
this is a Makkan chapter. But Tha`labi
has said that according to some it is
Madinan. Although Ibn `Abbas, Ibn
Zubayr and `A'isha have said that it
is a Makkan chapter, Waqidi has said
that this was the first chapter to be
revealed at Madinah (Shawkani).

2. Ibn `Abbas says that Allah revealed
the entire Qur`ān (from *Al-Lawh al-
Mahfuz*: Zamakhshari) in the night

[2] And what will tell you⁴ what the night of Qadr is?⁵

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٢﴾

of *Qadr* in Ramadan to the firmament closest to the earth (in *Bayt al-Izzah*: Ibn Kathir). From there He sent it down in segments following exigencies on the earth over twenty three years and got them arranged according to His own plan (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

3. *Qadr* is power, honor, glory, decree and destiny (Majid).

Ibn `Abbas has said that the whole of the Ramadan is the night of *Qadr* (Ibn Jarir).

That the night of *Qadr* falls in Ramadan can be deduced from the following verse (2: 185):

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ [البقرة]:
[١٧٥]

"It is the month of Ramadan in which the Qur'an was revealed" (Ibn Kathir).

A *hadith* in the *Sahihayn* says that whoever stood in Prayers in the night of *Qadr* with faith and devotion shall have his past sins forgiven (Ibn Kathir).

Sayyid notes: "It is the night which marked the beginning of the revela-

tion of the Qur'an to Muhammad (peace be upon him), an event unparalleled in the history of mankind for its splendor and the significance it has for the life of mankind as a whole."

4. Ibn `Uyayna has said that whenever it is said in the Qur'an,

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ

then its knowledge was given to the Prophet (*saws*). In contrast, when it is said,

وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ

(such as in ch. 33, v.62: Au.) then its knowledge was withheld from him (Bukhari).

In other words, according to Ibn `Uyayna the Prophet knew about when exactly the night of *Qadr* occurs (Ibn Hajr).

The literal meaning of *wa ma yudrika* is: "And what would make you learn" (Au.).

5. An abridge version of what Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir have to write at this point is as follows:

The Night of *Qadr*

There is no consensus of the *Ummah* over when the night of *Qadr* occurs. Some have said it falls on any night of the year. But this statement is weak. Others have said that it falls on any night in Ramadan. Yet others have said that it falls on a particular night of Ramadan, not shifting from year to year. The *hadith* in their support is in Bukhari. It says that the Prophet (*saws*) came out of his house to inform the people of the night of *Qadr*. He found two people quarrelling. He said: "I had come out to tell you about the night of *Qadr* but found such and such of you quarrelling and its knowledge was taken away from me. However, it might be good for you. Therefore, seek it in the nights of 29th, 27th and 25th." Obviously, if it was not to fall on a particular night, the Prophet would not have said, "I had come out to tell you about the night of *Qadr*," since, it is not expected that he would have come out to inform of the night of its occurrence in that year alone. Nevertheless, the exact occurrence apart, his saying, "it might be good for you," is from the point of view that you might Pray in all the nights of Ramadan, which will earn you much reward.

Others have said that the night may be sought in all the odd nights of Ramadan in view of another *hadith* in Bukhari which says "Look for it in all the nights of the last ten nights of Ramadan: when nine nights are left, when seven are left, when five are left."

But some have conjectured that it might be searched in the even nights of Ramadan as the *hadith* of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri in Muslim would imply (which says that "seek it after 21 days of Ramadan have passed ... after 23 days have passed ..." until the rest of the *hadith*. (The night that arrives after say 22nd day is the night of 23rd : Au.).

That said, there is room for its occurrence on the 27th of Ramadan. This is in view of the *hadith* in Muslim which records Zirr b. Hubaysh as saying "I asked 'Ubayy b. Ka'b, 'Your brother Ibn Mas'ud says that whoever prayed in the nights the year round, will find the night of *Qadr*.' He replied, 'May Allah show him mercy. What he intended perhaps is that the people should not sit back without trying. Otherwise I'm sure he knew that it falls in Ramadan, and that it falls in the last ten nights, and that it falls on the 27th night of it.' Then he swore that it is the night

of 27th of Ramadan. I asked him, 'On what basis do you say that O Abu Mundhir?' He replied, 'By the signs that the Prophet spoke to us, such as the following day the Sun rises without its (usual, intense heat and: Au.) radiation.'"

But Malik, Thawri, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Is-haq b. Rahwayh, Abu Thawr, Al-Muzani, Ibn Khuzaymah and even Imām Shafe`i believe that it might shift from year to year. This can be supported by the *hadith* in *Bukhari* and *Muslim* which says that the Prophet (*saws*) said:

"I see that most of your dreams (about the night of *Qadr*) converge on the last seven nights of Ramadan. So, let him who would like to look for it, do it in the last seven nights."

Ibn Hajr adds: It seems many of the Companions had dreamt of the night of *Qadr* as falling on one of the last seven nights of Ramadan. And the Prophet's confirmation leads us to the conclusion that so long as dreams do not contradict with the *Shari`ah*, they hold some value (Fath).

The Prophet has also said in a *hadith* reported by `A'isha (*ra*) and preserved by Bukhari "Seek the night of *Qadr* in the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramadan."

Imām Malik said that the best thing seems to be to increase Prayers and supplications in the entire Ramadan, specifically seeking it in its last ten nights, and concentrating on the odd nights of it.

The Prophet himself - until his death - sought seclusion (*i`tikaf*) in the mosque during the last third of Ramadan, that is, the last ten days. According to Bukhari and Muslim, after him, his wives also took to *i`tikaf* during the last ten days. `A'isha has reported in the *Sahihayn* "When the last ten days entered upon him (the Prophet) he would enliven the nights (with Prayers), wake up his wives and tie up his girdle."

The best words of supplication in these nights are to say:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوفٌ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي

"O Allah. You are the Forgiver who loves to forgive. Therefore, forgive me," as reported by `A'isha (*ra*) in a *hadith* in Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Nasa'i and Ibn Majah, in reply to her inquiry as to what should she say if she found it. Tirmidhi has adjudicated it hasan *Sahih*. Hakim has said that it is *Sahih* by the criteria of Bukhari and Muslim."

Quotations from Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir end here.

The substance of what Alusi has to write about the differences in opinion regarding the night of *Qadr* is that we know that when it is night in one place of the globe, it is day in another place. Also, it can be an even night in one place and odd night in another. Consequently, it can be said that the night of *Qadr* might fall on any night - even or odd - any day of Ramadan. In fact, it could well be in Allah's scheme that were the night of *Qadr* to be in a particular area of the globe, He would award full rewards to those that might happen to be living in the day-area and making their own efforts toward seeking it. In fact it is possible that each nation has its own night of *Qadr*.

Razi has a few novel points to offer: Allah (*swt*) concealed its knowledge from His slaves since his *rida* (Approval and Pleasure) is concealed in devotions to Him, and concealment of the night results in increase in devotions. This is following His general method. He concealed His Friend (*waliyy*) among the people in order that all the people might be revered. He concealed His response

to supplications in order that they might resort to it oftener. He concealed the *Ism al-A'zam* in order that all of His Names might be revered. He concealed *salah al wusta* in order the people pay special attention to every Prayer. He concealed the time of death in order that people never become forgetful of it.

Again, had the night of *Qadr* been known, the sins of the sinners in that night would have weighed heavily against them. That is because, to commit sins on a known blessed occasion is greater in enormity than when committed on the same blessed occasion but without the sinner knowing that it is a blessed occasion. Hence it is reported of the Prophet (*saws*) that when he found a man sleeping in the mosque he ordered 'Ali (*ra*) to wake him up. 'Ali did so and then asked him why he had asked him to do that when he himself could have done it? The Prophet replied: "Because, had I told him to rise and he hadn't, he would be sinning. But not responding to you he wouldn't be sinning."

Razi's quotation ends here.

[3] The night of *Qadr* is better than a thousand months.⁶

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿٣﴾

6. Mujahid has said that the night of *Qadr* is better than a thousand months in the sense that Prayers and devotions of this night are better than those of a thousand months in which this night does not fall. (A thousand months is 83.34 years: Au.).

It is also reported of Mujahid that he said that an Israelite used to fight in *Jihad* during the day and Pray in the nights. He did that for a thousand months and Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Abi Hatim has a report quite similar to this coming from `Urwah ibn Zubayr (Ibn Kathir). A report to this effect has come from Ibn Mas`ud (*ra*) also (Qurtubi).

Some scholars have said that this could be a way for compensating this *Ummah* for its shorter life span when compared to that of the ancients (Au.).

Yusuf Ali rejoins: "This does not refer to our ideas of time, but to 'timeless Time.' One moment of enlightenment under Allah's Light is better than thousands of months or years of animal life..."

Razi Remarks: The objective in stating that it is a thousand times better than ordinary nights is primarily to encourage a man to greater devotion. So that, sometimes he is told that a certain deed will be rewarded ten times more than other deeds; about another deed he is told that he will be rewarded seven hundred times more than others. At times he is told that a deed of a certain "occasion" is more valuable; at other times that a deed of a certain "place" is more valuable - all to induce him to good works, cut him from the affairs of this world and turn him to the affairs of the Hereafter. It is following this scheme that preference is declared of the House over all other places, or of Ramadan over all the other months, or of Friday over all other days of the week, or of the night of *Qadr* over all the other nights, and so on.

Sayyid adds: "The Islamic method of character building links worship with faith and the truth it establishes in the heart and conscience of the individual... The theoretical understanding of this truth cannot, on its own and without worship, establish

[4] In it descend (group after group of) angels and the Ruh,⁷ by the leave of their Lord, with every (blissful) decree (of the year).⁸

تَنْزِلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ
مِّن كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾

[5] Peace it is until the break of the dawn.

سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿٥﴾

it or give it the necessary impetus for its operation in the life of the individual or the life of the society.”

7. According to the great majority, it is Jibril who is meant by the Ruh of the text. Although he is automatically included when angels are mentioned, he has been specifically named in order to stress the importance of the night (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani and others).

The reader may also turn back to verse 38 of *Al-Naba'* for a few other explanations (Au.).

Qushayri has said that *Ruh* is the name of a species of beings that monitor the angels. Angels do not see them as we do not see the angels (Qurtubi).

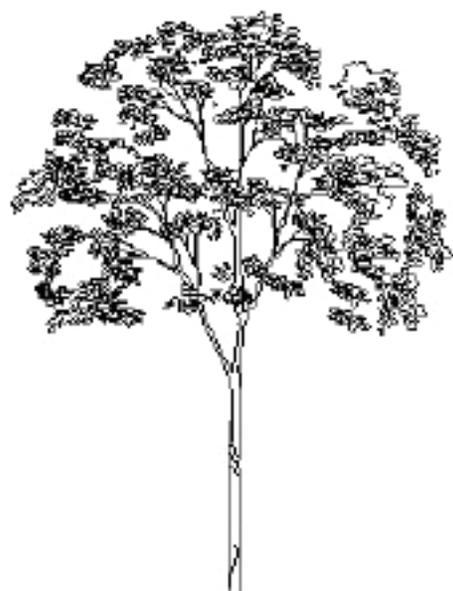
8. As Allah said elsewhere (44: 4):

فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ

“In it are decided every affair of wisdom” (Zamakhshari, Razi and others).

مَلَكًا





Surah 98

*Al-Bayyinah*Makkan/Madinan¹

8 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Relationship

When a person reads in the last verse of the *surah*, “Their reward with their Lord is gardens of Eden, underneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever,” then, his mind asks: “When will that be?” This following chapter is an answer to that question. It is as if saying: While the world will be in terror, you shall be in peace, waiting to be rewarded (Razi).

Importance of the *surah*

There are several reports that say that this *surah* is equal to one fourth of the Qur’ān. There is one that reaches hasan status is recorded in Tirmidhi and is narrated by Anas b. Malik. It says that,

The Prophet asked one of his Companions whether he had wed. He said he could not afford that because he had nothing. The Prophet asked him: “Do you

not have with you, ‘Say, Allah is One’ (*surah al-Ikhlās*)?” He answered, “Yes I do.” The Prophet said: “That is one third of the Qur’ān.” Then he asked, “Do you not have with you, ‘When Allah’s help comes to you, and victory’ (*surah al-Nasr*)?” He said, “Yes I do.” The Prophet said: “That is one fourth of the Qur’ān.” Then he asked: “Do you not have with you, ‘When the earth will be rattled with its rattling’ (*surah al-Zalzalah*)?” He replied, “Yes I do.” The Prophet said: “That is one fourth of the Qur’ān. Go get married” (Ibn Kathir).

Hakim has also recorded one version of this *hadīth* and classified it among the *sahih* (Shawkani).

But Albani believes the whole is *sahih* except for the part speaking of *surah al-Zalzalah* (Sayyid Ibrahim).

[1] Those that disbelieved - of the people of the Book and the pagans - were not such as to desist until the clear evidence had come to them.²

لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ
وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنْفَكِّينَ حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ



1. The majority opinion is that the chapter is Makkan. And so is the opinion of `A'isha. However Ibn `Abbas has said that it is Madinan (Shawkani).

2. Wahidi has said that this is one of the most difficult and complicated verses of the Qur`ān to explain (Razi, Qurtubi).

The translation follows the preferred understanding of several commentators such as Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and Shawkani viz., the unbelievers of both categories, those that were given the Book earlier and those who did not received any such thing, such as the pagans, were not such as to give up (their respective religions) until a sign had come to them.

Ibn Jarir's understanding however, along with many others who accept the possibility, such as Zamakhshari, Qurtubi and Razi of this and the following verse would render the meaning of *munfakkina* as "divided" or "disagreeing." (It is also the opinion of a few other scholars: Shawkani). Therefore, the verses could be ren-

dered as follows: "Those who disbelieved - of the people of the Book and the pagans - were not divided among themselves (over the affair of Muhammad) until a clear evidence had come to them." To elaborate: the people of the Book and the pagans were not divided among themselves over the issue that a new Messenger was to come shortly. The people of the Book derived that knowledge directly from their Scriptures, and the polytheists followed them in their expectation. Thus both were both awaiting a Prophet. This was the situation until a clear evidence (i.e. the Prophet himself as stated in verse two) appeared. When that happened their unanimity was shattered and they stood divided over him: some believing, others rejecting.

Although Ibn Taymiyyah gives equal credence to the above understanding, he builds up, however, a long argument to show that the preferred meaning is that the people of the Book and the pagans were not such as to be left alone without being ordered the right thing done and the

[2] A Prophet from Allah reciting pages³ sanctified.

رَسُولٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ يَتْلُو صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً ﴿٢﴾

[3] Therein are Scriptures firmly established (in truth).

فِيهَا كُتِبَ قِيمَةً ﴿٣﴾

[4] And differed not those that were given the Book but after the clear evidence had come to them.⁴

وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَةُ ﴿٤﴾

[5] While they were ordered not but to worship Allah (alone)⁵ - making the religion pure for Him, upright,⁶ and establish the Prayers and give the Zakah. This is the firmly established religion.⁷

وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقِيمَةِ ﴿٥﴾

wrong forbidden, without a prophet being sent to them, yet freedom being granted to live out their lives as they deemed fit. In other words *munfakkina* is to be translated as: “abandoned (to themselves, without guidance)” - Kabir and Asad.

3. The *kutub* of the original can also be understood as commandments, (Qurtubi) as in verse 68, ch.8 in which Allah said:

لَوْلَا كُتِبَ مِنَ اللَّهِ سَبَقٌ

“Had a commandment from Allah not preceded...” (Shafi’).

4. (Although the apparent meaning is that the people of the Book did not differ among themselves over the affair of Muhammad, except after clear evidence about him

had reached them: Shafi’), in general terms the meaning can also be that the Jews and Christians did not divide themselves into sects but after the truth had come to them, as the Prophet said “The Jews divided themselves into 71 sects, the Christians into 72, and this *Ummah* will divide itself into 73 sects, all but one in Fire.” He was asked: “And who are they, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied: “Those who will follow that upon which I and my Companions are” (Ibn Kathir).

5. Whoever thought that *‘ibadah* (worship) is the synonym of *ita’ah* (obedience) is mistaken. For, there have been people who worshipped angels, idols and Jesus Christ without obeying them (Razi).

[6] Surely, those who disbelieved of the people of the Book and the pagans, they are in the Fire of Jahannum abiding therein for ever. They are the worst of creatures.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ
وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
أُولَئِكَ هُمْ شَرُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ ﴿٦﴾

[7] Surely, those who believed and did righteous deeds, they are the best of creatures.⁸

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَئِكَ
هُمْ خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ ﴿٧﴾

6. For a definition of the term *hanif* see *surah 2*, note 273.

Primarily it means to disincline from all kinds of association with Allah and incline towards (the concept of) His Oneness (Shawkani).

Ibn Jarir quotes Ibn `Abbas as saying that *hanifiyyah* is to perform Hajj, and Qatadah as saying that it is circumcision, forbiddance of the mothers, daughters, sisters and aunts, and - rituals of Hajj.

7. Discussing the verse "...the firmly established religion (of an upright people)": Majid quotes Edward Monter from Arnold's *Preaching of Islam*, "A creed so precise, so stripped of all theological complexities and consequently so accessible to the ordinary understanding, might be expected to possess and does indeed possess, a marvelous power of winning its way into the conscience of men."

8. The following *hadith* narrated by Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) is in Imām Ahmad's record. The Prophet said,

"May I not tell you about the best of creations?" They said: "Sure, do, O Apostle of Allah." He said: "The man who held the reins of his horse in the way of Allah. Whenever there was the a threatening noise from the enemy lines, he straightened himself up on its back." Then he said: "May I not tell you about the best of creations?" They said: "Sure, do, O Apostle of Allah." He said: "A man who is in a pack of his sheep, Prays and gives the *Zakah*." Then he said: "May I not tell you about the worst of people?" They said: "Sure, do so, O Apostle of Allah." He said: "The man who takes by the name of Allah, but does not give in His name" (Ibn Kathir).

The *hadith* is also in *sahih* Albani, no. 255 (Syed Ibrahim).

[8] Their reward with their Lord is gardens of Eden,⁹ beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein for ever. Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him.¹⁰ This, for him who feared his Lord.¹¹

جَزَاؤُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ
حَشِيَ رَبَّهُ ﴿٨﴾

9. 'Adn of Arabic is the central and the best part of a place (Razi, Qur-tubi).

10. Shafi` raises the question, "What does this being pleased with Him" mean when a slave is required to be pleased with Him, in any case?" Then he answers from Maz-hari that what it means is that they will be given so much in rewards that they will be left with nothing that they could desire, as said Allah in ch.93, v.5: "And surely, your Lord shall give you and you shall be satisfied."

11. This last verse throws the hint that mere faith and good deeds will not take one to the last stages of Allah's good pleasure - which is the greatest thing - without fear of the Lord. And fear itself is a product of knowledge, as Allah said (35: 28): "Surely, it is only the knowledgeable that (truly) fear Allah." Accordingly Junayd has said: The "rida (of Allah) is obtained in proportions to knowledge and understanding" (Ruh, Thanwi).

مَلَّتْ





Surah 99

*Al-Zalzalah*Makkan/Madinan¹

8 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Relationship

When a person reads in the last verse of the last *surah*, “*Their reward with their Lord is gardens of Eden, underneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever,*” then, his mind asks: “When will that be?” This following chapter is an answer to that question. It is as if saying: While the world will be in terror, you shall be in peace, waiting to be rewarded (Razi).

Importance of the *surah*

There are several reports that say that this *surah* is equal to one fourth of the Qur’ān. There is one that reaches *hasan* status is recorded in Tirmidhi and is narrated by Anas b. Malik. It says that,

The Prophet asked one of his Companions whether he had wed. He said he could not afford that because he had nothing. The Prophet asked him: “Do you not have with

you, ‘Say, Allah is One’ (*surah al-Ikhlās*)?” He answered, “Yes, I do.” The Prophet said: “That is one-third of the Qur’ān.” Then he asked, “Do you not have with you, ‘When Allah’s help comes to you, and victory’ (*surah al-Nasr*)?” He said, “Yes, I do.” The Prophet said: “That is one-fourth of the Qur’ān.” Then he asked: “Do you not have with you, ‘When the earth will be rattled with its rattling’ (*surah al-Zalzalah*)?” He replied, “Yes, I do.” The Prophet said: “That is one-fourth of the Qur’ān. Go get married” (Ibn Kathir).

Hakim has also recorded one version of this *hadīth* and classified it among the *sahih* (Shawkani).

But Albani believes the whole is *sahih* except for the part speaking of *surah al-Zalzalah* (Sayyid Ibrahim).

1. According to Ibn ‘Abbas and Qatadah, this chapter is Madinan. But

[1] When the earth will be rattled (with) its rattling,

﴿١﴾ إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا

[2] And the earth² will throw out its burden,³

﴿٢﴾ وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا

[3] And man will say: `What's the matter with her?`

﴿٣﴾ وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا لَهَا

[4] On that day it will give her news,⁴

﴿٤﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا

[5] For your Lord would have inspired her,⁵

﴿٥﴾ بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا

Ibn Mas`ud, `Ata' and Jabir have said that it is Makkan (Shawkani).

but they would decline (Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

2. This repetition of the word “*the earth*” while a pronoun “it” could do is perhaps because after the rattling the new earth will be a different one as implied in the verse (14: 48): “*The day when the earth shall be changed to other than the earth..*” (Au.).

4. She will give her news about the deeds committed on her surface: Mujahid, Sufyan, Ibn Zayd (Ibn Jarir).

3. By the term “*burden*” the allusion is to the dead - Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid (Ibn Jarir).

There is a *hadith* in Tirmidhi reported by Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) that the Prophet (*saws*) recited this verse and said: “Her news will be the deeds committed on its surface” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

In addition, the earth will also throw out, as a *hadith* in Muslim says, its gold and silver in heaps so that a murderer will say, ‘This is what I murdered for;’ a man who did not give his kin their rights will say, ‘This is what I cut them asunder for,’ and a thief will say, ‘This is what I had my hand amputated for.’ They will then be invited to pick up some of the gold and silver for themselves

Hakim has declared the report trustworthy (Shawkani).

It is said of `Ali (*ra*) that when he emptied the treasury he would offer two cycles of Prayer in it and say, “You might bear witness that I filled you by right and emptied you by right” (Razi).

5. That is, commanded her (Mujahid: Ibn Jarir).

[6] On that day mankind shall issue forth in bands⁶ to be shown their deeds.

يَوْمَئِذٍ يُصْدَرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِّيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٦﴾

[7] Then, whosoever did an atom's⁷ weight of good shall see it.

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ﴿٧﴾

[8] And whosoever did an atom's weight of evil shall see it (also).⁸

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ﴿٨﴾

6. People will either be divided into bands such as thieves, rapists, adulterers and so forth, or as inmates of Hell and of Paradise (Shabbir).

7. The *dharra* of the original is for a tiny red ant-like insect that has no weight (Ibn Jarir). It is also employed for the specks of dust that are visible in a ray of light (Zamakhshari).

8. Muhammad b. Ka'ab al-Qurazi has said that an unbeliever would be shown his evil deeds on the Day of Judgment and punished for them, while his good deeds would bear no fruit, since he would have already been rewarded for them during his life on earth. In contrast, the believers would have been punished for their evil deeds in their life itself, and the good deeds would be rewarded for in the Hereafter.

Rewards for Good Deeds

Anas, Abu Idris and Abu Qulabah have severally reported that when this verse was revealed, Abu Bakr (*ra*) was

eating. When he heard this verse, he paused and asked: "Am I going to be shown my evil deeds, O Apostle of Allah?" The Prophet told him: "As for the evil deeds of a believer, they are compensated for by way of misfortunes that happen to him. As for the good deeds, they are preserved for him for the Hereafter."

The report is *mursal* [disconnected at the Companion level] - *Faid al-Qadir*: S. Ibrahim.

According to another report when Abu Bakr heard of these verses, he wept. When asked by the Prophet why he was crying, he said that this *surah* had made him cry. The Prophet said:

"If you were not to err or sin and He forgive you, surely, Allah would create another set of people that would err and sin and He would forgive them" (Ibn Jarir).

The report is of *hasan* status *Fath al-Qadir*: S. Ibrahim.

According to another narration, Salman b. `Amir went to the Prophet to enquire about the good deeds of his father. The Prophet asked him if he had died in the pre-Islamic days. Ibn `Amir said yes. The Prophet told him that they would be of no profit to him. After a while, the Prophet ordered the man to be brought back. When he appeared, he said: "His good deeds will not profit him (in the Hereafter), rather will be of profit to his progeny who will not fail (in their ventures), will not be disgraced and, will never be struck by poverty."

Ibn Jarir's reports end here.

Minor Sins

Minor sins should not be dealt with casually. The Prophet has warned us: "Be careful of minor sins. They can heap up and destroy a man."

He illustrated with the following example

A people encamped in a desert. They spread around. Someone brought back a twig, another, a piece of wood until it became a heap that they could cook their food with. (*Musnad of Ahmad*).

Bukhari has recorded the Prophet as having said: "Save yourself from the Fire, even if it is with a single date or a good word."

He also advised women: "Let not one of you neglect her neighbors, (give them their rights) even if it be with the lower shank of a sheep."

It is also said that once `A'isha gave a single grape in charity and said: "How many atom's weights (*dharrat*) are not there in it" (Ibn Kathir).

مَنْعًا



Surah 100

*Al-`Adiyat*Makkan/Madinan¹

11 Verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] By the panting chargers,²

وَالْعَادِيَاتِ ضَبْحًا ﴿١﴾

1. Ibn Mas`ud, Jabir, Hasan, `Ikrimah and `Ata have said that this chapter was revealed in Makkah. But Ibn `Abbas, Anas b. Malik and Qatadah have said that it is Madinan (Shawkani).

2. What is alluded to by the word “*Al-`Adiyat*?” According to Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, `Ikrimah, `Ata, Qatadah and Dahhak, the allusion is to horses. But according to `Ali and `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, it is to camels. Ibn `Abbas himself reports that once he was sitting in the Hijr area when someone came and asked him what was meant by *al-`Adiyat*. He told him that it is horses that charge in the day. When the riders return by evening, the fire is set for them. The second verse is speaking of that. The man left him and went to `Ali (*ra*)

who was sitting near Zamzam well, and put up the same question. `Ali asked him if he had asked the same question to someone else earlier. The man told him about Ibn `Abbas and his statement. `Ali asked him to bring Ibn `Abbas to him. When he went to him, he told him, ‘Do you speak about things you do not know? The first battle in Islam was fought at Badr where we had just two horses. How could then this (Makkan) verse be referring to horses? Rather, they refer to camels that move from `Arafat to Muzdalifah where they light the fire’ (Hakim graded the report *sahih*: Shawkani).

Shawkani also writes that if that meaning is accepted, then the word *dub-han* (snorting, panting) will be read as *dab`an* meaning the act of

[2] The sparking strikers,³

﴿٢﴾ فَالْمُورِيَاتِ قَدْحًا

[3] The morning attackers,⁴

﴿٣﴾ فَالْمُغِيرَاتِ صُبْحًا

[4] Blazing a trail of dust therein,

﴿٤﴾ فَأَثَرْنَ بِهِ نَقْعًا

[5] And storming forthwith into the midst of the (enemy) ranks.⁵

﴿٥﴾ فَوَسَطْنَ بِهِ جَمْعًا

the camels stretching their necks forward.

The great majority of commentators, however, maintain that it is horses that are meant since it is horses that snort and the camels do not (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Yet, if the meaning given by `Ali and Ibn Mas`ud is accepted, then the interpretation would be on the following lines: "The first verse refers to the camels that start off from `Arafat. The second verse, to the lighting of the fires at Muzdalifah. The third, to the chargers early morning to Mina; the fourth, to the dust that they raise and fifth, to the groups of people who try to occupy a central position at Mina. According to Imām Razi (although he prefers Ibn `Abbas's interpretation) the sixth verse supports this interpretation, which speaks of ungratefulness of man on whom Allah bestows great blessings, but he refuses to give thanks by journeying to the House.

3. According to `Ikrimah, Qatadah, `Ata' and Dahhak the allusion is to the sparks that are flashed by the hoofs of horses. Others have said that the allusion is to the fires that are lit after a day of ride (Ibn Jarir).

4. (The Arabs in those times preferred to attack early in the morning when the people were most likely to be taken unaware). The Prophet also used to attack early in the morning. He would wait for the *mu'adhhdhin's* call from the village or settlement. If he did not hear the *adhan* he ordered the attack (Ibn Kathir). Perhaps, he waited to hear the *adhan* in the hope that the enemy might have converted to Islam, after he had last heard of them (Au.).

5. It will be noticed that each of the three verses that follow the first one is preceded by a "fa." This is to indicate the order of occurrence (Shawkani). That is, each event in the verse is in consequence of what is stated in the verse earlier to it (Au.).

[6] Truly, man is ungrateful⁶ to his Lord.⁷

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُودٌ ﴿٦﴾

[7] And he is a witness to that.⁸

وَإِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ لَشَهِيدٌ ﴿٧﴾

[8] And truly, he is passionate in the love of good things.

وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿٨﴾

[9] But, has he not known? - when that which is in the graves is tossed out,

أَفَلَا يَعْلَمُ إِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِي الْقُبُورِ ﴿٩﴾

[10] And that which is in the breast is laid bare.⁹

وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ ﴿١٠﴾

6. According to Wasti *kanud* of the original is applicable to someone who spends his money on forbidden things (Qurtubi).

7. If horses are what is taken to mean by *`adiyat*, then the first five verses are extolling the *mujahidin* who attack on horseback early in the morning with such speed and ferocity that although, at dawn, the earth is wet with dew, the hoofs of the horses cause sparks to flash. In this vein, the verses that follow are criticizing the idlers - those that stay back and do not participate in *jihad* - that if they remain behind it is because they are ungrateful to their Lord, miserly and passionate lovers of good things. They should learn from the horse, whom his master gives but a few straws of grass and a liter of water, but, grateful for that, the horse is ready, on a single command from his master, to charge through the fier-

est of enemy ranks, unmindful of its own safety. Should not man, (to borrow the words of Yusuf Ali), show that fidelity to his Lord? (Thanwi, Shabbir).

8. Most commentators have said that the verse could also mean that His Lord is witness to his ungratefulness.

9. The reference is to the hidden motives and intentions following which man does things. They will be laid bare in order that he might be judged: not merely in the light of his deeds, but also in the light of the motives and intentions behind them. Even in this world, we see that intentions of the criminals influence the verdict of the judges. But the judges have no way to find the real motives. Whereas Allah knows what transpires in the hearts. He will lay it all bare on the Day of Judgment for all to see with their eyes and so that full justice may be meted out (Mawdudi).

[11] Surely that day their Lord is the best-informed.¹⁰

إِنَّ رَبَّهُم بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾

10. Sayyid comments: “This *surah* is a swift, vehement and breathless piece, with a sudden terminus of meaning,

expression and rhythm. It reflects a unique Qur’anic method of expression. مَقَاتِلًا



Surah 101

Al-Qari`ah

Makkan

11 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] *The Clatterer!*¹

﴿١﴾ الْقَارِعَةُ

[2] *What is the Clatterer?*

﴿٢﴾ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ

[3] *And what shall teach you what is the
Clatterer?*

﴿٣﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ

[4] *The Day when the people shall be like
scattered moths.*²

﴿٤﴾ يَوْمَ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوثِ

1. *Al-Qar`* of the original is a firm, powerful strike. In time, it began to be used for every event of grave consequences. Allah (*swt*) said (13: 31):

وَلَا يَرَّالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا نُصِيبُهُمْ بِمَا صَنَعُوا قَارِعَةً
[الرعد: ٣١]

"Great upheavals (*qari`ah*) keep striking the unbelievers for what they do" (Razi, Qurtubi).

Al-Qari`ah is another name for the Day of Resurrection, which has also been called as the Overwhelming One, the Demeaning Shout, the Deafening Blast and the Enveloper

(Razi, Ibn Kathir, Sayyid Qutb and others).

2. The people have been likened to moths because of their frequent and rapid movements on that fateful Day, their dispersal, their state of total weakness and subjugation, and their response (in waves after waves: Razi) to the Caller rushing from every side on to him like moths falling into fire (Zamakhshari).

As Allah has said in another verse (7 of *al-Qamar*): "As if they are scattered moths" (Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

[5] And the mountains shall be like colored tufts of carded wool.³

﴿٥﴾ وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ

[6] Then he whose balance will weigh heavy,

﴿٦﴾ فَأَمَّا مَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ

[7] Shall be in a life well-pleasing.

﴿٧﴾ فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ

[8] But he whose balance will weigh light,

﴿٨﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ

In a *hadith* of Muslim, the Prophet (*saws*) likened the people of his times to moths. He said: “My example with you is that of a fire lit by someone. Moths and locusts began to be attracted to it and he began to hold them back from it. I am holding you back by your waists and you are slipping away from my grip” (Qurtubi).

Yusuf Ali adds: “Moths are frail light things. To see them scattered about in a violent storm gives some idea of the confusion, distress, and helplessness in which men will be at first overwhelmed on the Day of Account.”

3. “The mountains are solid things, which seem as if nothing could move them. But in that tremendous cataclysm they will be scattered about like flakes of leased or carded wool. This is a metaphor to show that what we consider very substantial in this life

will be as an airy nothing in the next world” (Yusuf Ali).

Sayyid writes: “The *surah* starts with the single word “*Al-Qari`ah*” ... It is thrown alone like a shot without any further information or any predicate or adjective. As such, it creates, through its sound and connotations, a feeling of resounding awe. The word is immediately followed by a question suggesting something alarming (What is “*Al-Qari`ah*”?). It is that dreadful and formidable thing which arouses curiosity and questioning. Then comes the answer in the form of a cryptic exclamation, giving no clear indication: (‘Would that you knew what the “*Al-Qari`ah*” is!’). It is too great to be comprehended or imagined. Then follows the answer which states what takes place in it but refrains from stating its exact nature: “The day when ...”

[9] Will have a pit to mother him.⁴

فَأُمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ ﴿٩﴾

[10] And what shall teach you what that (pit) is?⁵

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا هِيَ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] It is a blazing Fire.⁶

نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ ﴿١١﴾

4. *Umm* could here mean ‘mother,’ and ‘mother’ itself is synonymous to the abode, as a child’s abode is his mother. But the term is variously used. Qatadah has said that when a man faced difficulties people referred to his situation as: *hawat ummuhu* i.e. he has fallen into hardships. Ash`ash b. `Abdullah reports that when a man dies his soul is taken to the souls of the believers. They say, ‘Make it comfortable for your brother for he was in troubles.’ Then they ask him about so and so, as to how he is doing. The man says, ‘Well He died. Didn’t he turn up here?’ They say, (since he did not):

ذُهِبَ بِهِ إِلَى أُمِّهِ هَاوِيَةٌ

‘They must have taken him to his abode in the Pit’ (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Marduwayh has recorded this last report as a *hadith* related by Anas b. Malik (Ibn Kathir).

The *umm* of the original has also been interpreted by Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah, Abu Saleh and Qatadah as

“the head” and alludes, in this context, to his falling headlong into the Pit (Ibn Kathir).

5. Sayyid notes: “It is to his mother that a child turns for help and protection as he seeks shelter and security at home. But such people with light scales can turn and resort only to the abyss! The expression is a fine one, beautifully ordered. It has also a shade of obscurity preparing the way for subsequent clarification which adds to the depth of the intended effect.”

6. When Allah said that it is a blazing Fire, it implies that the rest of the fires that we see in this world are in fact cool when compared to this blazing Fire (Razi).

Intensity of the Hell-fire

Bukhari has reported through Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) that the Prophet (*saws*) said:

The Hell-fire in which the children of Adam will be roasted will be seventy times hotter than the fire of the

sun. They exclaimed, ‘Messenger of Allah, even as hot as the sun would have been enough.’ He said, ‘But it is sixty-nine times more intense.’ Similar statement is in Muslim. Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah have recorded Abu Hurayrah narrating the Prophet as having said: “(The fire of Hell) was heated until it became red. Then it was heated until it became white. And then it was heated until it became black so that now it is pitch black.”

Imām Ahmad has reported through Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (*saws*) said: “The least punished of the Fire will be he whose brain will be boiling.”

The *Sahihayn* have reported that: The Fire complained to its Lord saying: “O Lord. Some of me is eating away some of myself.” So Allah permitted it to take in two breaths: one in winter and another in summer. Therefore, the worst of its cold you taste in winter and the worst of its heat in summer.”

According to another *hadīth*, also in the *Sahihayn*: “When the day gets

hot, then let it cool down for your Prayers, for its intensity has its origin in Hell-fire” (Ibn Kathir).

With reference to the *hadīth* about the fire being heated to redness, then whiteness and finally to blackness, it might be of interest to note that the burning celestial bodies, like the stars, are also postulated to pass through these phases. Our sun, for instance, is one day expected to exhaust its supply of hydrogen fuel. The next stage of solar evolution will be its expansion to the red giant size when its luminosity will be increased by 100 times. It will have an intensely hot core using its nuclear energy to burn. But when all the nuclear energy is used up, the sun will collapse, into a very small, very dense, white dwarf. The final stage of the sun will be a black dwarf. The difference between the *hadīth* description and that of modern science is that the scientists postulate that in its final stages the sun will have no heat left, whereas the *hadīth* says that the fire of Hell reduced to a black spot is intensely hot (Au.). مقتض

Surah 102

*Al-Takathur*Makkan/Madinan¹

8 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] *The race for riches distracts you,*²

أَهَاكُمُ التَّكَاثُرُ ﴿١﴾

1. According to the majority of scholars this is a Makkan chapter. But Bukhari thought it was Madinan (Shawkani).

2. “(This distraction) keeps you heedless of the Hereafter, having no time for things spiritual” (Majid).

The Race for Riches

Asad writes: “The term *takathur* bears the connotation of “greedily striving for an increase”, i.e., in benefits, be they tangible or intangible, real or illusory. In the above context, it denotes man’s obsessive striving for more and more comforts, more material goods, greater power over his fellow-men or over nature, and unceasing technological progress. A passionate pursuit of such endeavors, to the exclusion of everything else, bars man from all spiritual insight and, hence, from the acceptance of any

restrictions and inhibitions based on purely moral values - with the result that not only individuals but whole societies gradually lose all inner stability and, thus, all chance of happiness.’

Qatadah has said that the verses are referring to “the Arab tribes who used to compete with each other and claim boastfully, ‘we are wealthier than you, more than you in progeny,’ and so forth. That kind of boasting even led them to fights. By God! They remained in that state until they went into their graves.”

A *hadith* also explains *takathur* as a race for riches (which distracts people from the Hereafter). `Abdullah ibn Shikhhkir has reported from his father that once, when he visited the Prophet (*saws*) he found him recit-

[2] Until you visit³ (your) graves.⁴

حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ ﴿٢﴾

[3] No indeed, but you shall soon know.

كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣﴾

[4] Again, no indeed, before long you shall know.⁵

ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾

[5] No indeed, were you to know with the knowledge of certainty.

كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٥﴾

ing, ‘The race of riches distracts you ... until you visit your graves’ and then he added: “Son of Adam. You have no wealth but that which you consumed and destroyed, or what you wore and threw away or you gave away in charity and spent it off.” Ka`b al-Ahbar has said: “In fact, (for a long time) until *surah al-Takathur* was revealed, we used to consider the following words of the Prophet (*saws*) as part of revelation:

‘If the son of Adam had two valleys of riches, he would vie for a third, while nothing will fill his stomach but dust. Allah turns in Mercy to him who turns to Him (in repentance)’” - Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi.

Ka`b’s words are in Bukhari while Ibn Shikhhir’s narration is in Muslim, which has another report which has the following words in addition: “And what you leave behind is for others.”

Bukhari has another *hadith* which says: “Three things follow a dead man’s funeral procession. Two of them return, the third remains with him: his wealth, home-folk and deeds. Of these, his wealth and home-folk return and the deeds remain.”

Another *hadith* in the *Sahihayn* says: “Son of Adam gets old but two things remain with him: greed and hope (of a long life: Au.)” - Ibn Kathir.

Ibn al-Qayyim adds: It will be noticed that Allah did not specify what exactly it is of this world that distracts man from his Lord. It is, indeed, anything of this world that distracts, such as wealth, slaves, construction, plantation, knowledge which is not sought for Allah’s Pleasure, or a deed that does not take a man closer to Him.

3. `Umar ibn `Abdul `Aziz has said that whoever entered the grave has to be necessarily transferred either

[6] (That) You shall behold Hell-fire.⁶

لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ ﴿٦﴾

[7] And then you shall see it with the eye of certainty.

ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٧﴾

[8] Then, on that day, you shall be questioned about the blessings (of this life).⁷

ثُمَّ لَتَسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٨﴾

to Paradise or Hell. Hence the term “visit” (which implies a short stay) - Ibn Kathir, Alusi.

4. The allusion here is to those whom the world distracts from the remembrance of Allah until they land in their graves.

It is reported that two Yethrabi tribes of the pre-Islamic times boasted against each other regarding their prominent men, asking, “Do you have anyone the like of this one, or this one?” Then they began to boast about their dead personalities to the extend that they went to the graveyard where they asked each other, “Do you have among your dead,” pointing to a grave, “the like of this one? Or the like of this one?” (Ibn Kathir).

Visiting the graves is, by itself, a good way of softening the heart. The Prophet (*saws*) has said: “I used to forbid you from visiting the graves. Lo! You might visit them now, for it cures over-indulgence in the world

and reminds you of the Hereafter.” Muslim has a similar report (Qurtubi).

5. The repetition is for a threat after threat (Hasan al-Busri: Ibn Kathir).

6. Everyone will behold Hell-fire since the *sirat* (the Bridge) will be placed over it. Allah said (19: 71): “There is none among you but will encounter it” (Qurtubi).

7. “Blessings”, of course, include all that life affords of good things such as good health, security and material comforts.

Blessings of this World

According to a *hadith* even the so-called minor blessings are blessings of this world. So that the Prophet has, according to a *hadith* in Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, counted the two black items - dates and water - as blessings (Ibn Kathir).

Once (in a report by Abu Hurayrah in Muslim: Qurtubi), the Prophet saw Abu Bakr and `Umar sitting

together in the mosque. He asked them what had brought them out. They said, 'Hunger.' He said: 'By Him Who sent me with Truth, it is nothing but hunger that has brought me here too.' They proceeded to the house of an *Ansari*. They enquired with his wife of the whereabouts of her husband and were told that he had gone out to fetch sweet water. In time, he arrived loaded with a water-skin. He said, 'Welcome. There isn't a host more honored than me today.' He hung up his water-skin, went out and came back with a bunch of dates. 'Why a whole bunch? You could have brought us a few,' the Prophet remarked. He answered, 'Well. I thought you could choose any kind of it, the fully ripe as well as the half ripe ones.' Then he picked up a knife. The Prophet told him, 'Spare the one with milk.' He slaughtered a goat for them and when they had had their meal, the Prophet told them: "You will be questioned about this on the Day of Judgment. Hunger drove you out of your homes and you did not return but you had eaten these things. These are part of the blessings (that you will be questioned about)."

Other reports name the *Ansari* as Abu al-Haytham ibn al-Tayyihan (Ibn Jarir).

Muslim has recorded the same report with Yezid b. Kaisan as the narrator.

According to a report in Tirmidhi and the *sahih* of Ibn Hibban (a *sahih* report: Shawkani), a man will be questioned about the blessings and told: "Did We not give you a healthy body and sweet water!?"

Nonetheless, according to a report of Ahmad there is no harm in the blessings for him who fears Allah. 'Abdullah ibn Habib reports through his father, and he through his uncle that, once, the Prophet came out with a wet hair and signs of cheerfulness on his face. We remarked, "We see you in a cheerful state, O Apostle of Allah!?" He said: "That's right." Then he sat down and spoke to them about the blessings of Allah concluding: "Wealth does not harm him who fears Allah. But good health is better than wealth for him who fears Allah. And cheerfulness is a blessing."

According to another *hadith* of Bukhari, Tirmidhi, Nasa'i and Ibn Majah, the Prophet (*saws*) said: "There are two blessings that people generally neglect: health and leisure" (Ibn Kathir).

The Prophet (*saws*) has also said in a *hadith*: "A man will not be able to move his feet until he has been ques-

tioned about four things: his life-span as to how he spent it, his youth as to where he drained it, about his wealth as to how he earned it and

how he dispensed with it, and his knowledge as to how much he practiced it” (Razi). **مَنْعًا**



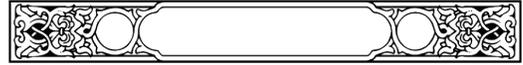


Surah 103

Al-`Asr

Makkan

3 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] *By the Time.*¹

وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾

[2] *Surely man is in certain loss.*²

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾

[3] *Save for those who believe, do righteous deeds, counsel one another to (follow) the Truth,³ and counsel one another to be patient (and persevering).*⁴

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿٣﴾

1. Popular opinion, as well as that coming from Ibn `Abbas is that `asr in this context signifies Time through the Ages. However, commentators such as Qatadah and Maqatil have said that the allusion is to afternoon (Ibn Kathir).

2. At the individual's level the implication is that Time is one's capital. If it is wasted away, all is gone. There is no way his situation can be turned into a profitable one. It is similar to the closing time of a market. If one hasn't done business and made profit before it closes down, what is he going to place in the hands of his wife

when he returns home? It is reported of a certain earlier scholar that he said: "I saw a hawker in the market-square selling ice. He was crying out: 'People. Be kind upon him whose capital is melting away.' I said to myself: 'By the Time! Surely man is in utter loss'" (Razi).

3. Qatadah and Hasan have said that *al-Haq* (translated as 'truth' above) alludes to the Book of Allah (Ibn Jarir).

4. Tabarani has reported that when two Companions of the Prophet met, the last thing they would do before saying *salam* and parting company was to recite this chapter.

To the above, Sayyid adds his remark: "This was indicative of a pledge to accept this doctrine fully, to preserve faith and remain steadfast. It was a mutual compact to remain good elements in an Islamic society established according to that doctrine and to preserve the foundation of this society."

Imām Shafe`i has said that this *surah* should suffice the people if they ponder over its meaning (Ibn Kathir).

Summary:

"This short *surah* of three verses outlines a complete system for human life based on the Islamic viewpoint. It defines, in the clearest and most concise form, the basic concept of faith in the context of its comprehensive reality. In a few words, the whole Islamic constitution is covered and, in fact, the nation of Islam is described in its essential qualities and its message in one verse only: the third. This is the eloquence of which Allah alone is capable.

The great fact which this *surah* affirms is simply that throughout the history of man there has been one worthwhile and trustworthy path - that which the *surah* indicates and describes. All other paths lead only to loss and ruin. As it says in outline, that path is, first, the adoption of

faith, followed up with good deeds and exhortation to follow the truth and to steadfastness.

What does the adoption of faith then signify? We shall not give here its juristic definition. Instead, we shall describe its nature and its importance in human life. Faith is the characteristic by which the minute, transient, human being attains closeness to the Absolute and Everlasting Originator of the universe and all that exists in it. He, thus, establishes a link with the whole world, which springs from that One Origin, with the laws governing it and with the powers and potentialities created in it. As a result, he breaks away from the narrow boundaries of his trivial self to the broadness of the universe, from his inadequate power to the immensity of the unknown universal energies, and from the limits of his short life to the "Eternity" that Allah alone comprehends. This proximity grants the human being a certain power, limitless scope and freedom. It endows him with great enjoyment of life, its beauty and its constituents with whose "souls" he lives in mutual friendship. Thus, life becomes a pleasant journey for mankind everywhere and at all times. From this everlasting happiness, delightful joy and true, intimate, understanding of

life and all creation are derived. This is the invaluable gain, to lack which is an immeasurable loss.

The qualities of faith are also precisely those of sublime and dignified humanity, such as the worship of one God which elevates man above servitude to others and establishes, within him, the truth of the equality of all men, so that he neither yields nor bows down his head to any but the One, the Absolute. The result is that man will enjoy true liberty, which radiates from within his conscience, following his realization of the fact that there is only one power and one Lord in this world. This liberation is spontaneously developed from such an awareness, for it is the only logical sequence.

Godliness is the second quality of dignified humanity. This quality determines for man the source from which he derives his concepts, values, criteria, considerations, doctrines, laws and whatever brings him into relation with Allah, the world at large and with human beings. Thus, equity and justice replace personal desires and self-interest. This strengthens the believer's realization of the value of his way of life and keeps him above ignorant concepts, values and interests and, above all, strictly mundane

values. This is so even when the believer is the only one of his kind. For he counters these features with those which he derives directly from Allah and which, therefore, rank highest in value and are the most sound and the most deserving of devotion and esteem.

A third quality of faith and dignified humanity is the clarity of the relationship between the Creator and the created: the restricted creature is connected with the Everlasting Truth without any mediator. It supplies man's heart with light, his soul with contentment and gives him confidence and purpose. It eliminates, from his mind, perplexity, fear, anxiety and agitation as well as unlawful haughtiness on earth and unjustifiable tyranny over people. Steadfastness along the path ordained by Allah is the next quality of such humanity. This must be maintained so that good does not occur casually, incidentally or without deliberation, but springs from definite motives and heads towards certain aims. People united for Allah's cause collaborate. Thus, with a single definite purpose and a single distinguished banner, the Muslim community is raised. This is true for all generations that are similarly welded together. Another quality is belief in the dig-

nity of man in the sight of Allah. This heightens man's regard for himself and restrains him from aspiring for a position higher than that which the Creator has defined for him. For man to feel that he is dignified in Allah's sight is the loftiest conception he may attain of himself. Any ideology or concept which abases this valuation and scribes a dishonourable origin to man, separating him from the Highest Society of Allah is, in effect inviting him to abjection and derogation, though it may not say so openly. Hence, the effects of Darwinism, Freudianism and Marxism are among the most horrid disasters human nature has encountered.

For they teach mankind that all abasement and downright animalism are natural phenomena with which we should be familiar and of which we need not be ashamed. Purity of motivation is yet another quality of the dignified humanity established by faith. This directly follows the realization of man's dignity in Allah's sight, His supervision over men's conscience and His knowledge of their innermost undertakings. The normal human being whom the theories of Freud, Karl Marx and their type have not deformed is bashful that another human being may come to know what incidental, unhealthy,

feelings he may have. The believer feels the awesome presence of Allah in his innermost consciousness and his awareness makes him tremble. He, therefore, attends to self-purification and spiritual cleansing. A refined moral sense is the natural fruit of faith in a just, kind, compassionate, generous and forbearing God who abhors evil and loves goodness and who knows the furtive look and the secret thought. From this follows the responsibility of the believer which results from his free will and the comprehensiveness of Allah's supervision over him. It stimulates within him healthy awareness, sensitivity, serenity and foresight. It is a communal responsibility rather than an individual one and it is a responsibility towards all humanity in relation to goodness, pure and simple. The believer feels all these in every action. He achieves a higher degree of self-respect and calculates the results before taking any steps. He is of value in the world and the whole realm of existence and has a role in its smooth running.

The final quality is man's elevation above greed for worldly gains and the choice of Allah's richer, everlasting reward for which all men should strive, as the Qur'an directs them to do and which results in elevation,

purification and cleansing of their souls. Of immense help in this regard is the fact that the believer has a broad scope to move in: between this life and the next and between the heavens and the earth. The elevation of man lessens his anxiety about the results and fruits of his deed. He does good only because it is good and because Allah requires it. It is never his concern whether it leads to further goodness in his own short life time. Allah, for whom he performs the good, never dies nor does He forget nor ignore any of men's deeds.

The reward is not to be received here, for this life is not the last. Thus, the believer acquires the power to continue to perform good deeds sustained by this overwhelming belief. This it is that guarantees that doing good becomes a deliberate way of life and not a casual incident or motiveless event. It is this belief that supplies the believer with the power and the fortitude to face evil, whether manifested in the despotism of a tyrant or in the pressures of Ignorance or in the frailty of his will-power to control his passions which arise primarily from his feeling of the shortness of his life to achieve aims and enjoyments and from his inability to comprehend the deeper results of the good and witness the victory of right

over evil. Faith tackles these feelings radically and perfectly.

Faith is the great root of life from which goodness springs in its various forms and to which all its fruits are bound. What does not spring from faith is a branch cut from a tree: it is bound to fade and perish, it is indeed a devilish production, limited and impermanent! Faith is the axis to which all the fine fabric of life's network is connected. Without it, life is a loose event, wasted through the pursuit of yearnings and fantasies. It is the ideology which collects diversified deeds under a consonant system, following the same route and geared to the same mechanism, possessing a definite motive and a predetermined goal.

Hence, all deeds not stemming from this origin, and not related to that path, are completely disregarded by the Qur'an. Islam is invariably candid over this. In *surah* 14, "Abraham", we read what may be translated as:

The likeness of those who disbelieve in their Lord: their works are like ashes which the wind blows furiously on a .tempestuous day
They have no power over .anything they have earned

In *surah* 24, "Light", we have:

As for those who disbelieve, their deeds are like a mirage in a desert. The thirsty traveler thinks it is water, but when he comes near, he finds that it is nothing.

Now these are clear statements discrediting every deed not related to faith, which, in turn, gives it a motive that is connected with the origin of its existence and an aim that is compatible with the purpose of the world in all creation. This is a logical view of an ideology that attributes all events to Allah. Whoever dissociates himself from Him, vanishes and loses the reality of his existence.

Faith is a sign of health in a person's nature and soundness in his disposition. It also indicates man's harmony with the nature of the whole universe, and a sign of mutual effect between man and the world around him. His life, as long as his behavior is straightforward, must bring about an orientation which ends up in his adoption of faith because of what this universe itself possesses of signs and testimonies about the absolute power that so created it. Were the contrary the case, something must then be wrong or lacking in the state of the recipient - i.e. the human being - which would be a sign of corruption that only leads to loss and nullifies

any deed which might somehow give an appearance of righteousness.

So extensive and comprehensive, so sublime and beautiful, so happy is the believer's world that the world of the disbelievers around appears to him minute, trivial, low, feeble, ugly and miserable - that is, in a state of ruin and complete loss.

Doing what is righteous is the natural fruit of faith and a spontaneous activity generated at the same time as the reality of faith settles inside the human heart and mind. For faith is a positive and active concept which, once it has pervaded the human conscience, hastens to activate it to the outside world in good deeds. This is the Islamic view of faith. It must be dynamic. If it is not, then it is either phony or non-existent, just as a flower cannot withhold its fragrance which, if present, naturally spreads, or else it is not in the flower at all.

From all this, we recognize the values of faith: dynamism, activity, creativeness and productiveness devoted to Allah's pleasure and not narrowness, negativity or isolation into self. It is not just sincere and innocent intentions, that never develop into actions. This is the distinguishing characteristic of Islam that makes it a creative power in practical life.

All this is logical only as long as faith remains the link with the Divinely ordained path. This path is characterized by perpetual dynamism in the world among people. It is founded according to a specific plan and orientated towards a definite goal. Moreover, faith propels humanity towards implementing that which is good, pure, constructive and utilitarian.

Counseling one another to follow the truth and to steadfastness reveals a picture of Islamic society which has its own very special entity, a unique inter-relationship between its individual members and a single destination and which fully understands its entity as well as its duties. It realizes the essence of its faith and what it has to do of good deeds which include, among other tasks, the leadership of humanity along its own path. To execute this tremendous duty, counseling and exhortation becomes a necessity.

From the meaning and nature of the very word "counsel" appears the loftiest and most magnificent picture of that integrated, coordinated, righteous and enlightened nation or society which caters for right, justice and goodness on this earth. This exactly is how Islam wants the Islamic nation

to be. Mutual counsel aimed at that which is right is a necessity because it is hard always to maintain what is right, bearing in mind that the obstacles in its way are innumerable: egoistic passions and predilections, the false concepts in the environment, and the tyranny, inequity and despotism of some. Hence the mutual exhortation urged here means reminding, encouraging and expressing the unity in aim and destination and equality in responsibility and charge. It also collects the individual efforts into a unified whole and thus increases the feelings of brotherhood in every guardian of truth, that there are others with him to exhort, encourage, support and love him. This is precisely the case with Islam, the righteous way of life whose establishment requires the care of a coordinated, interdependent, self-sufficient and self-supporting community.

Counsel and exhortation to be steadfast are also a necessity because the sustenance of faith and good deeds and catering for right and equity are the hardest tasks ever to carry out. This makes endurance utterly indispensable. Endurance is also necessary when adapting oneself to the Islamic way of life, when confronting others, when afflicted with maltreatment and hardship. Steadfastness is nec-

essary when evil and falsehood triumph. It is necessary for traversing the length of the route, putting up with the slowness of the process of reform, the obscurity of road-posts and the lengthy road leading to the destination.

Exhortation to endurance and steadfastness widens the capacities by inspiring unity of aim and direction and the feeling of togetherness in everyone, equipping them with love, fortitude and determination. It generates vitality in the community where the truth of Islam can survive and through which it is implemented.

Judging by the doctrine which the Qur'an outlines for the life of the successful group which attains salvation, we are gravely shocked to see the loss and the ruin in which humanity finds itself everywhere on this earth today. We are shocked by the frustrations humanity suffers in this present world and by witnessing how humanity turns away, in vain, from the goodness Allah has bestowed upon it. We are the more

distressed by the absence of a righteous and faithful authority to stand up for the Truth. Moreover, the Muslims, or rather people claiming to be Muslims, are the farthest of all from what is good and the most averse to the ideology Allah ordained for their nation and the one route He prescribed for their deliverance from loss and ruin. People, in the very realm where this righteousness took its roots, have deserted the banner Allah raised for them, that of faith, to raise, instead, banners of race which have never done them any good all through their history or given them any reputation either on earth or in the heavens. Islam it was that raised for them the banner totally conforming to Allah's will, flying in His name only and identified with Him alone. Under this banner, the Arabs triumphed, were predominant and gave humanity a righteous, strong, enlightened and successful leadership for the first time in their history and the long history of humanity" (Sayyid). ﷺ

Surah 104

Al-Humazah

Makkan

9 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Woe¹ to every backbiter, slanderer,²

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ ﴿١﴾

1. The *wayl* of the original has also been said to be a valley in Hell (Ibn Jarir).

2. From the varying interpretations that have come to us from authorities such as Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah Abu al-'Aliyyah and others, the two words *humazah* and *lumazah* (translated as backbiter and slanderer) seem to be synonymous and interchangeable (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn Kathir disagrees: *Humazah* is someone who slanders in words, whereas *lumazah* is one who does it in action.

And Sufyan Thawri has said that *humazah* is one who slanders while *lumazah* someone who makes signs with his eyes (i.e. a winker) - Qurtubi.

Grammatical construction of the two terms suggests that the allusion is to someone who habitually indulges in backbiting and slander (Zamakhshari).

The commentators have suggested Akhnas b. Shurayq, Walid b. al-Mughira, Jamil ibn 'Amir Thaqafi and Ubayy b. Khalf, (or Umayyah b. Khalf) as the possible candidates who all used to backbite the Prophet and his followers, mimic them and make fun of them in a variety of ways. Nonetheless, the verses are general in their application and not specific to them (Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi and others).

The inclusion of Akhnas b. Shurayq's name sounds doubtful since Ibn Hajr has stated in his *'Isabah* that

[2] Who amassed riches and counted them over.³

الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ ﴿٢﴾

[3] Thinking that his riches will make him immortal.⁴

يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ ﴿٣﴾

[4] No indeed. He shall be hurled into the Crusher.⁵

كَلَّا لَيُنْبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ ﴿٤﴾

[5] And what will tell you what the Crusher is?

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحُطَمَةُ ﴿٥﴾

[6] It is Allah's own kindled Fire⁶

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوَقَّدَةُ ﴿٦﴾

[7] That will rise up to the hearts.⁷

الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ ﴿٧﴾

[8] It will be vaulted over them

إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّوَصَّدَةٌ ﴿٨﴾

he became a Muslim at the fall of Makkah (Alusi).

3. A second meaning is “he lay up (or hoarded) for the future” (Shawkani and others).

4. The implication of conditions stated along with the efforts to amass riches, is that it is the inordinate love of wealth and excessive devotion to it that invoked the censor (Thanwi).

5. It is also said that *hutamah* (translated as Crusher) is one of many names of Hell-fire, such as *Jahannum*, *Saqar* and *Laza* (Ibn Jarir).

6. To say that it is Allah's own kindled Fire means it is not any ordinary fire, rather of a very special nature, that remains burning, never cooling down.

'Ali (*ra*) has said: ‘Strange of a man who disobeys Allah on the surface of the earth while the Fire is being kindled for him under him!’

And a *hadith* says that Hell-fire was burnt for a thousand years until it became red. Then it was burnt for another thousand years until it became white, and then it was burnt for another thousand years until it became black. Now it is pitch dark (Razi). Also see note 6 of chapter 101 (Au.).

7. The sentence has two other implications. One, that the Fire straight-away reaches the heart and burns it from within, which will be a very painful experience for the victim, the heart being the most tender and sensitive part of the body. And sec-

[9] In towering columns.⁸

فِي عَمَدٍ مُّمَدَّدَةٍ ﴿٩﴾

ond, the heart has been expressly mentioned because it is the home of denial, pride against truth and the like qualities (Razi).

8. The *'amad* of the original has been variously understood. After stating various opinions Ibn Jarir rounds off with his own remark that he prefers it be left to what Qatadah has said, viz., the dwellers of Hell will be punished with columns or pillars of some sort.

Maqatil has said that after their portion of Hell has been vaulted over the inhabitants, columns of steel (*'amad*, pl. of *'amud* or *'imad*) will be used to seal it. It is also said that the allu-

sion could be to the chains that will be used to bind them (Shawkani). The term is also used for wooden fetters with which the legs of criminals used to be bound (Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi).

However, the interpretation that has generally come from the *mufassirin* at this point is that after Hell-fire has been capped up from the top, nothing will be able to escape out nor penetrate in. Therefore, the cries of the inmates will not be heard from the outside. Allah will forget them and they will remain within it forever and ever. May Allah save us all (Alusi and others). مقتنا





Surah 105

Al-Fil

Makkan

5 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Have you not seen how your Lord dealt
with the people of the elephant?¹

أَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ ﴿١﴾

[2] Did He not make their guile² to go astray?³

أَمْ يَجْعَلُ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضْلِيلٍ ﴿٢﴾

Introductory Remarks

“This *surah* refers to a widely famous incident in the Arabian Peninsula which took place before the commencement of the Islamic message. The incident shows very clearly how Allah protected the Holy land, which He willed to be the focal point of the last enlightenment, the cradle of the new ideology, from where it was to begin its blessed and holy march to exterminate Ignorance from all corners of the world and to establish, in its place, Allah’s infallible guidance..” (Sayyid)

1. Is there, in referring to them as the “people of the elephant” an allusion

to the fact that they were as dumb as the elephant they rode? (Razi)

2. Allah (*swt*) used the word “*kayd*” which means guile or a hidden scheme, although Abraha had expressly stated his intention to demolish the Ka`ba, because what he concealed in his heart was jealousy of the Arabs and the esteem that the Holy House enjoyed (Razi).

It has been suggested that destruction of the Arab trade could also have been another hidden objective (Au.).

3. Imām Razi says that this historical incident is very hard upon atheists who are able to somehow explain other kinds of Allah’s punishments,

[3] He loosed upon them flights of birds,

وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ ﴿٣﴾

[4] That pelted them with stones of baked clay.⁴

تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ ﴿٤﴾

such as the shaking of the earth, pelting of stones upon a people or storms that swept them away, as natural phenomena. But what can they say about an event that took place not more than 40 years before the revelation itself which was recited in the face of those who were physically present at the time of the event, and they did not have a word of objection against it?

The following story might be an eye-opener for the skeptics:

It was reported by Reuters (on the 22nd of Oct. 2012) that Russian crows attacked MPs cars with stones. The report went like this:

In a scene reminiscent of Alfred Hitchcock's thriller *The Birds*, a number of crows stoned several expensive vehicles parked near a regional legislative body in the Russian Urals.

"When leaving the office, I saw a group of drivers of ministers' and deputies' cars who were moving chaotically and swinging their arms," local lawmaker Maksim Ryapasov wrote in his blog.

The drivers told the MP that fuss was caused by crows that were grabbing rocks from the roof of the building and "bombarding" cars with them for several hours.

The MP noted that there is a "stone garden" on the assembly's roof, which was set up under the initiative of the legislature's chairwoman Lyudmila Babushkina. Apparently, it was those stones the crows used as weapons.

As a result of the "bird protest," the windshields of at least three cars were broken.

"I really don't know whose cars were there. But I personally saw a crow that threw a stone and then flew to get another one from the terrace," Ryapasov, the head of Liberal-Democratic fraction in the regional parliament wrote.

Experts though have their own explanation for birds' "extremism." Most likely, the crows were simply having fun, ornithologist Tatiana Surkova told 'Aktualno' information agency.

4. The term in the original is *sijjil* which is explained by Ibn `Abbas

and others as pebbles of baked clay (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir and others). An additional meaning of the term, add Razi and Zamakhshari, is “a writing” or “record,” as if the reference is to the record of punishments which had the chastisement pre-ordained for the people of the elephant.

The Story of Abraha

The story of the people of the elephant is as follows. Dhu Nuwas, the man who had burnt Christians in fire pits, was the last king of the Himyar tribe in Yemen. When he was condemning the Christians to the pit - they were about 20,000 - one man called Daus escaped and traveling all the way up north and presenting himself to the Roman emperor sought his help against the polytheist Dhu Nuwas. The emperor in turn wrote to Najashi the Christian king of Abyssinia to look into the matter. Najashi sent two of his commanders Aryat and Abraha with a large force to Yemen. They overcame the resistance of Dhu Nuwas who ultimately drowned himself in the sea, and established their own rule. After some time the two commanders quarreled among themselves and decided to settle the matter with a duel. Abraha emerged alive from the encounter and became the sole vice-

roy. But gradually he usurped power and became the de facto ruler of Yemen. He found that the Arabs venerated the Holy House of Ka`aba and made pilgrimage to it. He thought he would replace it with another in Yemen itself. He built a tall, massive and beautiful cathedral there and began to prevent the people from traveling to Makkah. This angered the Qahtani and `Adnani tribes, one of whom entered the cathedral in secret and defiled it. (According to some it was a Qurayshi who did it). This angered Abraha who vowed that he would travel to Makkah and destroy the Ka`ba.

He started out with a huge army that had elephants in its retinue (according to some accounts only one), and overcoming separate resistances of the Arab tribes enroute arrived at Makkah. He encamped a few kilometers outside the town. One of his raiding parties captured a huge number of camels, two hundred of which belonged to `Abdul Muttalib, the grand-father of Prophet Muhammad. In the meantime Abraha sent word to the Makkans that he had nothing against them and would spare them if they would not interfere in his attempt. The Quraysh found themselves too weak against the 60,000 plus Abraha's army and

decided not to resist. They sent `Abdul Muttalib as their envoy to Abraha. When he presented himself, Abraha was much impressed by his handsome figure and imposing personality. But he was surprised that instead of seeking to save the Ka`ba, and the ancient religion that went with it, `Abdul Muttalib only spoke about the release of his two hundred camels. When he let `Abdul Muttalib know his feelings, he replied that he was the owner of the camels and so was seeking their release. As for the House it had its own owner (meaning God) who would defend it if He thought it fit. So Abraha returned him his camels and the Quraysh emptied the town dispersing in the mountains.

The next day when Abraha tried to enter the town the elephant refused. Whenever they urged it forward towards Makkah, it held its ground. But when its face was turned away from Makkah, it moved. While they were trying to induce the elephant to move forward, flights after flights of birds started arriving from the sea side. They had three pebbles with them: two held in the claws and one in the beak. They dropped them on the Abrahan army. The pebbles came down powerfully piercing their

heads. By next day small pox and measles broke out amongst them: first time seen in the Arabian Peninsula. Soon the army was in a medley and scrambling for safety. Many ran helter and skelter and lost their lives in the desert. Abraha himself, whose flesh, beginning with the fingers, had begun to fall apart, withdrew and managed to reach Yemen. But soon he too died (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir and others from Ibn Is-haq).

Mawdudi notes: According to Imām Nawawi the people of the elephant were destroyed in the valley of Mu-hassir where the pilgrims are forbidden to stay while returning from `Arafat.

Ibn Kathir adds: We have mentioned in *surah al-Fat`* that when the Prophet (*saws*) reached Hudaibiyyah, (in the sixth year after *hijrah*), his camel sat down and would not rise despite best efforts. The Prophet then said: "Let her alone, for none has held her but He who had made the elephant of Abraha refuse to move in the direction of the Haram." This report is in Bukhari. The *Sahihayn* have another report that says that when the Prophet (*saws*) entered Makkah triumphant he remarked: "It was Allah who had prevented the elephant of Abraha from entering the city, and it is He

[5] Thus He made them like (left over of) devoured dry leaves.⁵

﴿٥﴾ فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ

who has subdued it for His Messenger and the believers. Now its consecration is being returned to it and it is as consecrated from now on as it was yesterday. Let those present transmit this message to those absent.”

Pre-Islamic Arab poetry is replete with the theme of Abraha and his army. The following is from Ibn Sa'd, as translated by Alfred Guillaume:

Withdraw from the vale of Makkah for

From of old its sanctuary has not been violated.

When it was sanctified, Sirius had not been created.

No mighty man has ever attacked it,
Ask the commander of the Abyssinian what he saw.

He who knows what happened will tell the ignorant,

Sixty thousand men returned not home,

Nor did their sick recover after their return.

`Ad and Jurhum were (in Makkah) before them,

God has set it above all creatures.

(Sirius is a star: Au.)

5. `Asf is leaves or stalks of corn, of which the grain has been eaten off by the cattle (John Penrice: *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Qur'an*).

Concluding Remarks:

“.. the significance of this event is far reaching and the lessons deduced from mentioning it in the Qur'an are numerous. It ... suggests that Allah did not want the polytheists to take the responsibility of protecting His House, in spite of the fact that they held it in deep respect and sought security in being its neighbors... The polytheists did not have the chance to hold protection of the House as a `favor they did to Allah' or as `an act of honor.' ... The incident was so well known to the Arabs that they used to consider it a sort of beginning of history. They used to say, "This incident happened in the Elephant year", and "That event took place two years before the Elephant year", or, "This dates to ten years after the Elephant year". It is well known that the Prophet was born in the Elephant year itself. This is perhaps one of the fascinating perfect arrangement of the Divine will" (Sayyid). مَشَتْ



Surah 106

*Al-Quraysh*Makkan/Madinan¹

4 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] For the familiarity of the Quraysh,²

لَا إِلَافَ قُرَيْشٍ ﴿١﴾

The Relationship

Allah's blessings are of two kinds: those that protect one from harm and those that cause blessings to descend. The earlier chapter spoke of Allah's protection from the harm of the people of the elephant. This one speaks of the grant of benefits. Thus, with His blessings fully realized, the Quraysh should have turned to Allah in thanks (Razi).

1. Although the great majority believe that this is a Makkan *surah*, Dahhak and Kalbi have said that it is Madinan (Shawkani).

2. The starting verse "For the familiarity of the Quraysh" could be connected with the previous *surah*, in which case it would mean, 'We destroyed the people of the elephant

... for creating the situation for the Quraysh in which they could travel around the land without fear." But most commentators believe that the first verse is saying that since the Quraysh are familiar with the fact of their travel with ease through the lands they ought to worship the Lord of this House (who has made that possible for them while it is not so for adjoining tribes). Some have said that the *lam* of *li-'ilaf* (translated as "for") is for expression of wonder at the behavior of the Quraysh who are provided with peace and comforts by their Lord but they give thanks to the idols (Razi).

Qurtubi remarks: The Prophet (*saws*) has said in a report of Bukhari and Muslim: "Allah chose Kinanah from the sons of Isma'il, from Kinanah he

[2] Their familiarity with the winter and summer journeys,³

﴿٢﴾ إِيَّالْفِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ

[2] They ought to worship the Lord of this House,⁴

﴿٣﴾ فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ

[4] Who feeds them against hunger and secures them from fear.⁵

الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ ﴿٤﴾

chose Quraysh, from Quraysh He chose Banu Hashim and from Banu Hashim He chose me.”

3. The allusion is to the two traditional journeys of the Makkans for trade to Syria in summer and to Yemen in winter.

4. Majid quotes: “This temple, which Abraha al-Ashram had wished to destroy, had been throughout the ages the object of greatest veneration; it was looked on as a present made by Jehovah to the Arab race to bear witness to its condition privileged beyond all others. It was the oratory of Abraham and Ishmael, the house of Allah ... The Sabians, the fire worshippers, sent their offerings to it; even the Jews showed a deep respect for this reverend spot. The guardians of the temple, the Koraish clan, had a sort of religious authority which was willingly recognized by all.” (HHW, VIII, p.132). “Though in an inhospitable and barren valley with an in-

clement and unhealthy climate, this sanctuary at Makka made Al-Hijaz the most important religious center in North Arabia.” (Hitti, p. 101).”

5. This is an allusion to the peace the Quraysh enjoyed in contrast with the tribes in the outlying areas who did not feel themselves secure either in their homes or in their journeys. They were subject to loot, plunder and attack. In contrast, the Quraysh could move about freely unharmed because they were the custodians of the Ka`ba. Allah said about them (in 28: 57): “Did We not establish for them a Sanctuary secure, to which fruits of all kinds are brought in?” (Ibn Jarir).

The Qur`an also said (29: 67):

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا جَعَلْنَا حَرَمًا آمِنًا وَيَسْخَطُونَ النَّاسُ مِنْ حَوْلِهِمْ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ يَكْفُرُونَ [العنكبوت: ٦٧]

“Do they not see that We have made it a peaceful Sanctuary, while the people are snatched away

from (places) around them. Will they then, believe in falsehood and keep denying the blessings of Allah?" (Au.).

The Central Position of Makkah

Majid quotes: 'Mecca is a place almost at an equal distance, a month's journey, between Yemen on the right, and Syria on the left hand. The former was the winter, the latter the summer station of her caravans: and their seasonable arrival relieved the ships of India from the tedious and troublesome navigation of the Red Sea. ... The lucrative exchange diffused plenty and riches in the streets of Mecca: and the noblest of her sons united the love of arms with the profession of merchandise' (GRE. v. p.318). The extent and degree of business activity carried by means of these caravans were truly astonishing. 'Few caravans set forth in which the whole population, men and women, had not a financial interest'... On departure the caravans carried leather, spices, precious essences, and metals, particularly, silver, from the Arabian mines (Lammans). 'On their return every one received a part of the profits proportionate to his stake and number of shares subscribed. The dividend was never less than 50 p.c. and often amounted even to a double.'... 'Makka owed its

economic prosperity to its geographical position and to its relations with the important trade route to India... From Babylon, from the ports of the Persian Gulf as well as from the Yaman, flowed the rich products of the Middle East and of India: from Syria those of the Mediterranean world. We see Makka opening negotiations with the neighboring states, obtaining safe conducts, free passage for her caravans, and concluding the equivalent of commercial treaties with Byzantium, Abyssinia, Persia and the Emirs of Yaman. (Lammans).'

Sayyid observes: "In spite of very poor conditions of security in all parts of the Arabian Peninsula at the time, ... the sanctity of the House in the eyes of all Arabs guaranteed security and peace in their flourishing business to those who lived near it and were its custodian..."

"This is the specific grace of which Allah reminds the Quraysh, as He had reminded them of the Elephant incident in the previous *surah*. It is the grace of their being accustomed to the trips of winter and summer, and the abundance with which He endowed them in these two fruitful journeys. It is by the grace of Allah that while their land is desolate and dry, they still live a comfortable life.

Out of His grace He secured them from fear whether in their hearths and homes, next to Allah's house, or in their trips and journeys. Their se-

curity is the result of their being the custodians of the House, the sanctity of which is ordained and preserved by Allah against any violence.” ﴿قُلْتُمْ﴾



Surah 107

Al-Ma`un

Makkan/Madinan¹

7 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Have you seen him who denies the Day of
Judgment?

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْأَيِّمِ ﴿١﴾

[2] Such is the one who repulses the orphan,

فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ ﴿٢﴾

[3] And urges not the feeding of the needy.

وَلَا يُحِضُّ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ ﴿٣﴾

[4] Woe then to the worshippers,

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٤﴾

[5] Who are neglectful of their Prayers,²

الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ ﴿٥﴾

1. `Ata', Jabir, and, according to one narration, Ibn `Abbas also, have said that this chapter is Makkan. Nevertheless Qatadah and others have said that it is Madinan (Shawkani).

2. According to Sa`d (ibn Waqqas: Razi), Ibn `Abbas, Masruq and others, the allusion is not to the lack of concentration or inattention in Prayers, rather, to their neglect until the time overlaps. However, Ibn `Abbas has also said that it refers to not Praying altogether, which the hypocrites did, i.e. Prayed when in congregation but not when alone.

Mujahid, Qatadah and Ibn Zayd are very near when they say that it refers to their neglect of Prayers in the sense that it hardly matters to them whether they Pray or do not (Ibn Jarir).

As a matter of fact, the verse is aimed at all these kinds of worshippers. The Prophet has referred to those who procrastinate in Prayers as hypocrites. He said: "That is the Prayer of the hypocrite, that is the Prayer of the hypocrite. He sits watching the sun. When it is about to set he rushes to knock his forehead down on

[6] Those who put on a show,³

الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَآؤُونَ ﴿٦﴾

[7] And withhold charity.⁴

وَيَمْتَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ ﴿٧﴾

the ground four times during which he hardly remembers Allah.”

The Qur`ān has said (4: 142): “The hypocrites (seek to) deceive Allah - while it is He who is deceiving them (by not punishing them immediately). When they stand up to Pray they stand lazily, showing off to the people and not remembering Allah but a little” (Ibn Kathir). Allah also said about them (9: 54): “They do not spend but unwillingly” (Qurtubi).

`Ata' b. Dinar has said: Thank goodness that Allah did not say, ‘(Those) who are neglectful in their Prayers’, rather, He said, ‘(Those) Who are neglectful of their Prayers’, (since there is none of us who does not lack concentration, or is not, occasionally, inattentive ‘in’ his Prayers) - Ibn Kathir.

3. Nifaq and Riya’: The difference between a hypocrite and someone who shows off his actions is that the former lacks faith altogether. He conceals unbelief and puts up a show of belief. In contrast, the latter has some faith and goodness in his heart but tries to show greater amounts of them.

In this context, it must be understood that it is desirable to publicize one’s obligatory deeds such as *salah* and *zakah*, in order to encourage others to emulate. But the non-obligatory (*nawafil*) must be concealed from the eyes of the people. Though of course, if they have to be performed in public, the non-obligatory, might not be given up altogether from the fear of the people coming to know of them. The important thing is not to make a show of them. It is said that someone saw another person making a long prostration in the mosque. He remarked: “How nice it would have been had it been in your house!” And *riya’* is, as has been said, “As imperceptible as the footsteps of the black ant in a black night on a black stone” (Razi).

4. Several reports coming from `Ali record him as saying that by *ma`un* of the original it is *zakah* that is meant. Mujahid, Qatadah, Hasan, Sa`id b. Jubayr and Dahhak are with him. (So are `Ikrimah, `Ata’, Qatadah and others: Ibn Kathir). However Ibn `Umar, Ibn `Abbas and Ibn Mas`ud are of the opinion that it

encompasses everything that can be given out as charity or lent out for use such as an axe or a household utensil (Ibn Jarir).

Best perhaps, notes Ibn Kathir, is the explanation of `Ikrimah who

said that the highest form of charity (*ma'un*) is *zakah* and its lowest form is to lend out things of common usage. مقتضا





Surah 108

*Al-Kawthar*Makkan/Madinan¹

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Indeed, We have bestowed on you (O
Muhammad) *Kawthar*.²

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ﴿١﴾

1. Ibn `Abbas, Kalbi and Muqatil have said that this chapter is Makkan, but the opinion of Hasan, `Ikrimah, Mujahid and Qatadah is that it is Madinan (Shawkani).

2. *Kawthar* is literally 'A large quantity, or number, of property or cattle.' As a proper noun it signifies: 'A certain river in Paradise...' (Majid). In fact, when someone asked a woman what her son had brought back from his trade voyage, she replied, "*kawthar*" (i.e., plenty) - Razi, Qurtubi.

Asad notes: "The term *kawthar* is an intensive form of the noun *katharah* (Zamakhshari), which, in its turn, denotes "copiousness", "multitude" or "abundance"; it also occurs as an adjective with the same connotations (*Qamus, Lisan al-'Arab*, etc.). In the above context, which is the sole in-

stance of its usage in the Qur'an, *al-Kawthar* obviously relates to the abundant bestowal on the Prophet of all that is good in an abstract, spiritual sense..."

Kawthar, the Spring

Ibn `Umar, Ibn `Abbas, `A'isha and Anas are of the opinion that *Kawthar* is the name of a spring in Paradise that has jewel-studded banks, whose water is whiter than milk, sweeter than honey and more fragrant than *misk*. (A *hadith* to this effect has been recorded in Tirmidhi: Qurtubi; and in Ibn Majah: Ibn Kathir). Another *hadith* of Ahmad runs as follows:

سُئِلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- عَنِ الْكَوْثَرِ
فَقَالَ «هُوَ نَهْرٌ أَعْطَانِيهِ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ ثَرَابُهُ
الْمِسْكُ مَائُهُ أَبْيَضُ مِنَ اللَّبَنِ وَأَخْلَى مِنَ الْعَسَلِ تَرْدُهُ
طَيْرٌ أَعْنَاقُهَا مِثْلُ أَعْنَاقِ الْجُرُزِ». قَالَ قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ يَا
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهَا لِنَاعِمَةٌ. فَقَالَ «أَكَلْتُمَا أَنْتَعَمُ مِنْهَا»

“I entered Paradise and came upon a river whose banks had tents made of pearls. I thrust my hand into its flowing water and found that it smelt strongly of musk. I asked, “What is this, Jibril?” He answered, “This is the *Kawthar* that Allah the Mighty, the Majestic has given you.” According to another *Sahih* report:

The Prophet was asked about Kawthar. He replied, “It is a river that Allah Most High has bestowed on me. It is in Paradise. Its sand is misk, its water whiter than milk and sweeter than honey. Birds whose necks are like the necks of camels, come down to it.” Abu Bakr remarked, “Messenger of Allah, they must be tender. He answered, “Their yield is tenderer than that” (Ibn Kathir).

Jazur of the above text was used for a sheep or camel that yielded tender meat (Au.).

However, another opinion coming from Ibn `Abbas is that it alludes to abundance. When asked if it was not the spring in Paradise, he said, ‘abundance is included by it.’ `Ikrimah, Sa`id ibn Jubayr and Mujahid are also of the same opinion. But the former opinion prevails in view of some *ahadith* which report that when the

Prophet was taken to Paradise during his nocturnal journey he was shown a long river of the above description and told that it was the *Kawthar* he was given. According to other reports, when the Prophet (*saws*) was asked what *Kawthar* was, he said that it is a river in Paradise that Allah has bestowed on him (Ibn Jarir).

The above is confirmed by a *hadith* in Muslim according to which, the Prophet slumbered for a few moments (in Madinah: Au.) and then, raising his head, smiled. Someone asked him the reason. He said: “Just now a *surah* has been revealed to me: ‘Indeed We have bestowed on you *Kawthar*...’ Then he asked: “Do you know what *Kawthar* is?” We said: “Allah and His Messenger know best.” He said: “It is a river in Paradise that my Lord has promised me. It is a great gift. It is a huge Pond which my followers will visit on the Judgment Day. Its glasses are as numerous as the stars in the heaven. Then someone will be pulled out of the crowd (by the angels). I will say, ‘O My Lord. He is one of my followers!’ I will be told, ‘You do not know what he did after you.’” (That, and many others besides him, would be a hypocrite, or those who apostatized after him: Au.).

[2] Pray to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him).³

فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحَرْ ﴿٢﴾

[3] Surely, he who hates you⁴ is the one cut off.⁵

إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ ﴿٣﴾

As for the *hadith* about he being shown *Kawthar* as a river during his nocturnal journey, it stands confirmed by reports in Bukhari and Muslim (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). The *hadith* is also in Ahmad, Abu Da'ud, Nasa'i and others (Shawkani). In fact, *ahadith* reporting that *Kawthar* is a river in Paradise reach the status of *tawatur* (Ibn Kathir).

Ahadith also tell us that whoever drank from it will never be thirsty again (Zamakhshari).

The above and other *ahadith* confirm that *Kawthar* is both a river in Paradise as well as the Pond from which the Prophet will hand out water to his followers.

Thanwi adds: Some *ahadith* say that *Kawthar* is in Paradise, others that it is a Pond in the Field of Judgment. It is possible that the main river is in Paradise from which the Pond in the Field will be fed.

Ibn Kathir writes: Reports suggest that two heavenly runnels will be spewing water into it.

3. According to several reports coming from Ibn 'Abbas, Abu Ja'far, Mujahid, Hasan, Qatadah and 'Ata', the allusion by the term *inhar* is to sacrifice. Consequently, the overall meaning is, turn away from all else save Allah, pray to Him and sacrifice to Him, in contrast to the pagans who pray to deities and sacrifice to them (Ibn Jarir).

Reports coming from 'Ali about where and how to fold the hands during the Prayers as explanation of the term *inhar* are weak (Ibn Kathir).

4. Literally, *shana'an* is hatred, and *shani'* is hater (Razi).

According to Ibn 'Abbas here *shani'* means an enemy and, according to him as well Sa'id ibn Jubayr, Mujahid, Qatadah and Ibn Zayd, the allusion is to 'As b. Wa'il al-Sahmi. That is to say that he was the first man to whom the verse was applicable (Ibn Jarir).

5. The word in the original is *abtar* which is used to describe one who leaves no male issue behind him and

is, therefore, forgotten after he is dead. (A tail-less animal is also called *abtar*: Qurtubi).

The Quraysh used to taunt the Prophet using this term when his male issues died in infancy (Qasim and `Abdullah: Qurtubi, and Ibrahim: Razi), implying that with his own death it will be the end of his mission. Allah refuted them by assuring the Prophet that it is his enemies who are cut off (Ibn Kathir).

It is said that whenever the Prophet (*saws*) was mentioned before `As b. Wa'il he would say: "Let him alone. He is an *abtar*".

The Branchless

`As b. Wa'il, however, was not alone in using the term for the Prophet. The Quraysh in general, and several of their men in particular seem to be fond of employing the word for the Prophet in trying to disparage him. Once when Ka'b b. al-Ashraf - the Jewish poet - had come down to Makkah they asked him: "You are a chief of your people. Tell us what

you think of us and this branchless (*abtar*) Muhammad? We are the keepers of the House, servants of the pilgrims, and those who water the pilgrims. Are we better or Muhammad?" He ruled pontifically: "You are better" (Qurtubi). This last report is trustworthy (Ibn Kathir).

Majid adds: "Apart from the superstitious pagans, the Jews also have considered it as the greatest curse for a man to remain childless. 'Since the days of Abraham, to possess a child was always considered as the greatest blessing God could bestow; and to be without children was regarded as the greatest curse. The Rabbis regarded the childless man as dead; while the Cabalists in the Middle Ages thought of him who died without posterity as of one who had failed in his mission in the world' (JE. IV. p. 27)."

Ibn Taymiyyah has said that in every age Allah will destroy the enemies of Muhammad in such a way that history will leave no trace of them behind them (Thanwi from *Ruh*).

ﷻ

Surah 109

*Al-Kafirun*Makkan/Madinan¹

6 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Introductory Remarks

A *hadith* of Ahmad, Nasa'i and Tirmidhi tells us that Ibn `Umar followed the Prophet in his Prayers for about a month and found him reciting this *surah* in the *sunnah* Prayers of the pre-*fajr* Prayers and the post-*maghrib* Prayers.

(The narration is *sahih*: Sayyid Ibrahim. It is also in Ibn Hibban, no. 2459, declared *sahih* by Ibn Balban).

Reports say that the Prophet has recommended - while he himself practiced - recitation of this *surah* before sleep, saying that it will ensure that one is free of *shirk* (Ibn Kathir).

The narration is in Ahmad, Tirmidhi and Abu Da'ud, and is of *sahih* status (Shawkani).

A narration of Ubayy b. Ka'b in Ibn Hibban (2450), declared *sahih* by Ibn Balban, says that the Prophet recited this chapter along with *Al-A'la*

(87) and *Al-Ikhlās* (112) in his *witr* prayers. When he terminated the prayer he would say thrice:

Merits of the Surah

Some reports suggest that this *surah* is one fourth of the Qur'an (Ibn al-Qayyim.) This could be understood in the following manner: the Qur'an is about what one is supposed to do and what he is not supposed to do. Now, all commandments and prohibitions pertain to either a deed of the limbs or of the heart. This *surah* is concerned with the deeds of the heart. Hence, it is one fourth of the Qur'an (Razi).

1. Ibn Mas'ud, Hasan and `Ikrimah have said that the chapter is Makkan. And so is reported of Ibn `Abbas, (although he seems to have had a second opinion). But `Abdullah b. Zubayr considered it Madinan (Shawkani).

[1] Say, 'O unbelievers,²

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿١﴾

[2] I do not worship what³ you worship,

لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢﴾

[3] Nor do you worship what I worship,⁴

وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ﴿٣﴾

[4] Nor am I going to worship what you worship,

وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُمْ ﴿٤﴾

2. Ibn `Abbas says that the Quraysh promised the Prophet that they would give him any amount of wealth and any number of women he wished if he would give up deriding their idols. If he could promise that, they were prepared for a compromise on a single condition that promised to be of benefit to him and to them. He asked them what it was. They said he would worship their idols for a year and they will worship his Lord for a year. The Prophet told them he would wait for a suitable reply from His Lord and Allah revealed this chapter. He also revealed other verses in addition such as (39: 64-66), "Tell them. Do you suggest I worship other than Allah, O ignorant people..." until ... "therefore worship (Him) and be of the grateful."

(This report is not too strong because of a minor problem: Sayyid Ibrahim in Shawkani).

According to another report, more trustworthy, coming from Sa`id

b. Mina', a freed slave of al-Bakhtari, Walid ibn al-Mughira, `As b. Wa'il, Aswad ibn al-Muttalib and Umayyah b. Khalf had gone to the Prophet with a similar proposition. In response, Allah revealed this *surah* after which they lost all hopes of a compromise (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi).

3. Asad observes: "... the particle *ma* ('what') alludes, on the one hand, to all positive concepts and ethical values - e.g., belief in God and the believer's self-surrender to Him - and, on the other, to false objects of worship and false values, such as man's belief in his own supposed "self-sufficiency."

4. **The God of Islam:** "What these verses mean to say is that the God of qualities and attributes that I worship is not the God of qualities and attributes that you worship. This makes for all the difference between the religion that the Prophet (*saws*) brought and the religion of the rest of the peoples. The concept he gave

[5] Neither are you (ever) going to worship what I worship,⁵

وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ﴿٥﴾

of God is totally different from the concepts they hold. For instance, some of them believe in a God who created the world in six days and then needed to rest on the seventh day; who is not the Lord of the worlds but the Lord of the Israelites; who is related to a certain race in a way he is not related to others; who wrestles with Jacob and cannot defeat him; who has a son called 'Uzayr. Others have a God who has a solitary son named Jesus Christ; who, for the salvation of others' sins sends His own son to the cross. There are others whose God has spouses and offspring, but all females. There are some whose God incarnates Himself and takes the form of men, coming down to earth to live like them. There are others whose God is the Contingent Being, the Necessarily Existent, or the First Cause, who after giving the universe the first push, has disengaged Himself so that the system now works by itself, automatically, following certain laws, a system in which neither man has any contact with Him nor He with man. In other words, those others that believe in a God, do not believe

in that One God Who is the Creator, Prime Mover, Sustainer and Lord of all being, Who has not only created the universe, but also runs it and whose command alone does it; Who has no defects, no weaknesses and Who does not err; Who is above all similitude and above any incarnation, and in no need of any partners or associate... There isn't anyone on this earth who worships a Lord of these Qualities and Attributes save Whom Muhammad worshipped and his followers do today. Even if the others worship a God, it is not the real God, rather a God of their own invention (who has no existence in reality)" - Mawdudi.

5. According to most scholars, the second and third verses are to be understood in the past tense and the fourth and fifth verses should be understood in the future tense. (This is the opinion of Bukhari: Ibn Kathir). But according to others, they have been repeated for emphasis (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). A third opinion is that the second and third verses express the existing situation, while the fourth and fifth deny any future possibility (Ibn Kathir).

[6] To you your religion and to me my religion.⁶

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ ﴿٦﴾

6. In addition to the apparent meaning, it could mean, 'to you your rewards and to me my rewards in accordance with the religions you and me follow.' Further, this verse does not abrogate *jihad* (Qurtubi).

According to Imām Shafe`i, in lumping together the followers of various religions in the verse, "to you your religion" the implication is that all the other religions besides Islam are one religion and so their followers may inherit each other. (So that, for example, a Christian son may inherit his Buddhist father, but a Muslim son cannot). However, following a *hadith*, Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal believed that Jews and Christians are exempt to the rule and cannot inherit from each other (Ibn Kathir).

Sayyid comments: (The last verse sums up the whole argument - of the impossibility of co-existence of faith and disbelief: Au.), which says, 'You have your religion and I have mine', meaning that you (disbelievers) and I (Muhammad) are very far apart, without any bridge to connect us - a complete distinction and a precise, intelligible demarcation.

"Such an attitude was essential then in order to expose the fundamental discrepancies in the essence of the two beliefs and doctrines, in the source of the two concepts and in the nature of the two paths of monotheism and polytheism, faith and disbelief. Faith on the one hand, is the way of life which directs man and the whole world towards Allah alone and determines for him the source of his religious concepts, laws, values, criteria, ethics and morals. That source is Allah and nobody else. Thus, life proceeds for him accordingly, devoid of any form of polytheism which, on the other hand, represents another way of life entirely dissimilar to that of faith. The two never meet."

(Consequently, for one who is taking the message of Islam to societies that exhibit the mixed traits):

"The existence of noble and base beliefs and thoughts in those societies may tempt the advocate of the Islamic system to hope for their quick return, thinking he may be able to strengthen the good aspects of their life and rightly correct undesirable features! This temptation is danger-

ously misleading. For Ignorance is nothing but Ignorance and Islam is altogether different from it. The only way to bridge the gulf between the two is for Ignorance to liquidate itself completely and substitute for all its laws, values, standards and concepts their Islamic counterparts.”

(Ibn al-Qayyim has – spread over ten pages - some very original and brilliant remarks to make about the *surah* that are straight from the heart and not, in the knowledge of the translator, based on anything in print. But, apart from the fact that

the subtle points require elaboration, a proper appreciation will require some knowledge of the Arabic language. Therefore, even a summary is difficult to attempt. Those who know the language might look into the original writing in *Bada'i' al-Fawa'id*, vol. 1, p. 133-142 or into *Tafsir Ibn al-Qayyim*, as collected by Muhammad Uways Al-Nadwi. The reading will also give some idea of the two approaches, the modern and the classical, and how, lacking which, the modern approach has been reduced to superficiality).

بَقِيَّةٌ



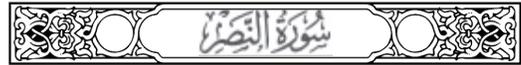


Surah 110

Al-Nasr

Madinan

3 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Introductory Remarks

This *surah* is a natural corollary to *surah Al-Ikhlās* as *Tawhid* has two parts: first, denial of all else besides Allah, and second, acknowledgement of Allah as the sole God. The testimony *la ilaha illa Allah* also consists of these two parts: denial and acknowledgement. This *surah* has the denial of all besides Allah, while *surah al-Ikhlās* qualifies the Lord that we are required to believe in (Ibn al-Qayyim).

According to Ibn `Abbas this was the last *surah* that was revealed as a whole and at one time. The statement is in Muslim (Qurtubi and others).

Merits of the Surah

According to a *hadith* (in Bazzar reported by Anas), the Prophet said: “*Surah al-Nasr* is equal to one fourth of the Qur`ān (Ibn Kathir). See *surah*

al-Zalzalah (no. 99) for fuller version of the *hadith*.

Period of Revelation

According to reports in Bazzar and Bayhaqi (in his *Dala'il*, as also in Ibn Abi Shaybah, `Abd b. Humayd, Abu Ya`la and Ibn Marduwayh: Shawkani), narrated by Ibn `Umar, this *surah* was revealed in *Hajjatu 'l-Wada`* (the Farewell Pilgrimage), during the *ayyam al-tashriq* in Mina and the Prophet realized that it would be his last Pilgrimage (since he had completed his mission: Au.). Thereat, he prodded his she-camel which went forward, until he pulled its reins and delivered the famous sermon (Ibn Kathir).

[Note: Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir and Shawkani have all quoted the above *hadith* without assigning a status to it: Au.].

[1] When Allah's help comes, and victory,¹

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ ﴿١﴾

Sabuni adds: Qurtubi has stated that the first word “*idha*” of the chapter should be understood as “*qad*” (meaning, certainly, surely, verily, etc.: Au.), since the *surah* was revealed much later to the appearance of the signs mentioned therein.

Bayhaqi has also recorded Ibn `Abbas as saying that when this *surah* was revealed, the Prophet spoke to Fatimah and told her that he had been informed of his death. At that, she cried. Then she smiled. (Later) she explained: “When he told me about his death, I cried. Then he told me, ‘Hold your ground, for you would be the first of the family to join me.’ At that, I smiled.” Nasa’i has also recorded this *hadith* but without naming Fatimah (Ibn Kathir).

1. Mujahid has said that the allusion is to the Makkan victory. However, on another occasion the Prophet (*saws*) referred to the Yemeni entry into Islam as the victory. Ibn `Abbas reports that, ‘Once, when we were with the Prophet, he said: “Allah is Great. Allah is Great. Allah’s help and victory has arrived. The people of Yemen have arrived.” He was asked:

“Who are the people of Yemen?” (Meaning, ‘what’s their specialty,’ or, alternatively, ‘of which part of Yemen?’: Au.), he replied: “A people of soft hearts and mild natures. Faith is in the Yemen. Understanding is in Yemen. And wisdom is Yemeni” (Ibn Jarir).

A similar report is in Nasa’i (Ibn Kathir).

This *hadith* derives its strength from another, in slightly different words, in Ahmad. Also see *Sahih* of Albani, no. 1775 (Sayyid Ibrahim).

It is said that they were seven hundred in number, many busy with the recitation of the Qur`an, others engaged in other kinds of devotional acts. They pleased the Prophet and `Amr b. `Abbas cried at the sight. It is also said that the Prophet said: “I find the breath of your Lord coming from the direction of Yemen” (Qurtubi).

Sayyid writes: “The beginning of the first verse implicitly presents a concept of what goes on in this universe: the events that take place in this life, the role of the Messenger of Allah

[2] And you see people entering Allah's religion in throngs,²

وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ
أُفْوَجًا ﴿٢﴾

[3] Then glorify the name of your Lord with praises and seek His forgiveness,³ for He is Oft-turning.⁴

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ
تَوَّابًا ﴿٣﴾

and his followers in the progress of Islam, and to what extent it depends on their efforts. 'When the victory granted by Allah,' denotes that it is Allah's victory and Allah is the One who brings it about in His own good time, in the form He decides and for the purpose He determines. The Prophet and his companions have nothing to do with it at all, and they obtain no personal gain from it. It suffices them that He does it through them, appoints them as its guards and entrusts it to them."

2. This is because the adjoining Arabs used to say about the Prophet, 'Let him settle the issue with his own people. If he overcomes their resistance, then he is the true Prophet.' ['After all,' they used to say, 'Allah had protected them against the people of the elephant, hadn't He?' - Qurtubi, Shawkani]. Therefore, when Makkah was subdued, the Arabs of the outlying areas began entering into Islam in droves and throngs, until, in about two years time (after

the fall of Makkah), the entire Peninsula became Islamic (Ibn Kathir).

Majid quotes: "Delegations flocked from near and far to offer allegiance to the prince-prophet Tribes and districts which had sent no representations before, sent them now. They came from distant 'Uman, Hadramaut and al-Yaman. The 'Tayyi' sent deputies and so did the Hamdan and Kindah. Arabia, which had hitherto never bowed to the will of one man, seemed inclined to be dominated by Muhammad and be incorporated into his new scheme. Its heathenism was yielding to a nobler faith and a higher morality" (Hitti, p. 119).

3. 'A'isha (*ra*) says that (towards the end of his life) the Prophet used to frequently repeat these words:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

I asked him: "(How come) I hear you repeating these words so often (these days)?" He answered: "My Lord had told me that He would show me some signs in my *Ummah* and

that, should I see them, I should frequently say these words. Now, I have been shown those signs in: ‘*When Allah’s help comes and victory*’, (it was the conquest of Makkah), ‘*And you see people entering Allah’s religion in throngs ... until the end.*”

(The *hadīth* is in Muslim: Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Umm Salamah has a similar *hadīth* to narrate. Reports coming from Ibn Mas‘ud, ‘Amr and Abu al-‘Aliyyah suggest that the Prophet used to say these words quite frequently during the last few months of his life. According to Ibn ‘Abbas, the Prophet understood that through these verses he had been informed of his approaching death (Ibn Jarir).

In this context, it might be stated that it is *sunnah* to offer eight *raka‘ah* of *salah* as the first thing upon entry of a town when it falls to Islamic forces. This is what the Prophet did when Makkah fell, and this is what Sa‘d b. Abi Waqqas did on the day Mada’in fell (Ibn Kathir).

The above then is another interpretation of verse 3 (Au.).

The Meaning of the Prophet’s *Istighfar*

As for the Prophet seeking Allah’s forgiveness, there are various inter-

pretations. Apart from the obvious meaning that at the end of his mission he was ordered to seek forgiveness for the acts of commission and omission, it has also been said that his *istighfar* and of all the Messengers was a ‘method of worship’ specific to them and not the *istighfar* of the face value. It is also said that he was required to seek forgiveness for his *Ummah* and not for his own sins. The first opinion is, however, the weightier. Nonetheless, Hasan has said that it was a means of increase in good deeds before death (Shawkani).

The Prophet (*saws*) himself used to supplicate in words:

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي خَطِيئَتِي وَجَهْلِي وَإِسْرَافِي فِي أَمْرِي كُلِّهِ
وَمَا أَنْتَ أَعْلَمُ بِهِ مِنِّي اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي خَطِيئَةً وَعَمْدِي
وَجَهْلِي وَهَزْلِي وَكُلُّ ذَلِكَ عِنْدِي اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي مَا
قَدَّمْتُ وَمَا أَخَّرْتُ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُ وَمَا أَسْرَرْتُ وَأَنْتَ
الْمُقَدِّمُ وَأَنْتَ الْمُؤَخِّرُ وَأَنْتَ عَلَيَّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

“O my Lord! Forgive me my faults, my ignorance, my overdoing of things, and that which You know better than me. O Allah, forgive me my faults, what I committed, my ignorance, my taking things lightly, and surely I find all these (faults) in me. O Allah, forgive me for what I have sent forward and what I have left back, what I have made known and what I have concealed. You

are the One who grants precedence and the One who puts off. Surely you have power over all things” (Qurtubi).

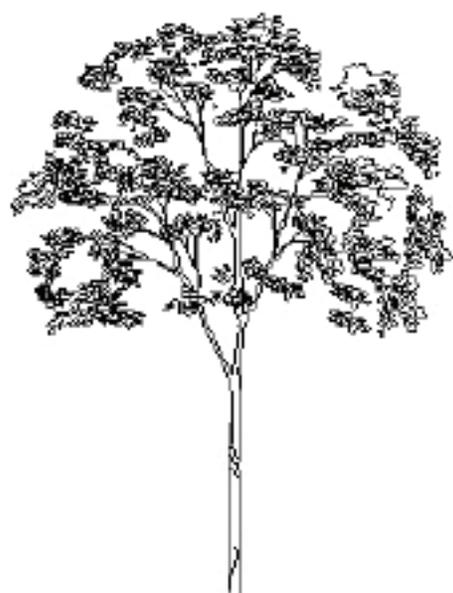
Sayyid adds: “Another touching thought is that seeking forgiveness at the moment of triumph arouses in one’s mind the feeling of impotence and imperfection at a time when an attitude of self-esteem and conceit seems natural. All these factors guarantee that no tyranny will afflict the conquered... So it was with Prophet Yusuf (Joseph), when all he wanted was achieved and his dream came true ... Then, at that moment of climax, Yusuf took himself away from the jubilations and from the embracing arms to turn towards his Lord, praising Him with a pure feeling of gratitude (12: 100): *‘My Lord! You have given me something of sovereignty and power and have taught me something of the interpretation of visions. Creator of the heavens and the earth! You are my Protector in this world and the hereafter. Let me die in submission and join the righteous.’*

.. So it was with Muhammad all through his life. In the moment of triumph, as the conquest of Makkah was accomplished, he entered it on the back of his camel with head bowed down.”

4. Ibn `Abbas said that `Umar (*ra*) used to give him preference over others in his assemblies. One day, `Abdul Rahman protested: “We too have sons like him!” `Umar rejoined: “He is of those that (I’m sure) you know.” Then, one day, he asked him about Allah’s words: “*When Allah’s help comes, and victory ...*” Ibn `Abbas answered: “Allah informed the Prophet through this *surah* of the termination of his life.” `Umar said: “I too do not understand it but that way” (Ibn Jarir).

The report in Bukhari has more details such as that `Umar first asked others in the assembly to explain *surah al-Nasr*. Some answered, differently, while others remained silent (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

﴿﴾



Surah 111

Masad (or Lahab)



Makkan

5 verses

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Perished be the hands¹ of Abu Lahab² and
ruined he be,³

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ﴿١﴾

The Relationship

Surah Al-Kafirun (no.109) announced that the Prophet has abandoned all false deities and worships one true God. The question arose as to what is the reward. The next *surah*, *al-Nasr* (no. 110) replied that it is help and victory in this world and forgiveness in the Hereafter. Now, this *surah* - *Masad*, numbered 111 - announces the reward reserved for those who opposed the Prophet (Razi).

1. There are several explanations to the words “perished be the hands”. One is: the deeds he wrought with his hands stand destroyed (Ibn Jarir and others).

It has been said that the first part of the verse (“Perished be the hands of

Abu Lahab”) is a curse on Abu Lahab and the second part (“and ruined be he”) a prediction of what is going to happen to him (Razi). The origin of the statement is Farra’ (Qurtubi).

It is also said that once Abu Lahab picked up a stone intending to fling it at the Prophet though he did not actually do it. But the revelation said: “Perished be the hands of Abu Lahab” (Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi and others).

2. Abu Lahab’s real name (literally “the Father of Flame”) was `Abdul `Uzza b. `Abdul Muttalib. He was a real uncle, but a hostile enemy of the Prophet. He was nicknamed Abu Lahab because of his beautiful countenance which glowed. Probably the Qur’an preferred the nickname over

the real because spelling out `Abdul Uzza (the slave of the deity `Uzza) would imply recognition of slavery to an idol (Qurtubi).

3. The background of revelation is as follows. Ibn `Abbas reported that when the verse (26: 214), "And warn thy near kin" was revealed the Prophet climbed Mount Safa and called out, "Hearken unto me." (Until then, about three years after the prophethood, he had concealed his message, Praying in a valley out of sight of the public: Razi). In response the people started to arrive at the foot of the hill. He who could come, came, and he who could not, sent someone in his place. When they had gathered he addressed them in words: "O Banu `Abdul Hashim, O Banu `Abdul Muttalib, O Banu Fihir, O so and so, supposing I tell you that an army lies in wait to ambush you from behind this hill, will you believe me?" They said, "Yes, indeed." He said, "Then let me tell you that I am a forewarner of a painful chastisement that is right on your heels." Upon this Abu Lahab said: "May you perish (*tabban laka*) the entire day." Allah revealed these verses (Ibn Jarir).

The *hadith* is in Bukhari, Muslim and others (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

It is also reported by `Abdul Rahman b. Zayd that once Abu Lahab went to the Prophet and enquired, 'What do I get if I embrace Islam?' The Prophet replied, 'The same as any other Muslim.' Abu Lahab retorted, 'That means I will have no advantage over others'?! The Prophet asked him what was in his mind. Abu Lahab shot back, 'Destroyed be (*tabban*) the religion in which I and the common man stand on the same footing.' Allah revealed these verses (Razi, Qurtubi).

Musnad of Ahmad has another *hadith* which reports Rabi'ah b. `Abbad as saying: "Before my own Islam I used to see the Prophet in Dhu al-Majaz markets calling out: 'People, say there is no deity save Allah and you will prosper.' People would gather around him but a man, bright faced, intelligent looking, with two locks of hair (hanging down), would appear from the rear and say: 'This man has renounced the religion (of his forefathers). He is a liar.' He followed the Prophet wherever he went. The people would enquire who he was to learn that it was his (the Prophet's) uncle."

(Qurtubi, Razi and others have narrated this report but the words here are those of Ibn Kathir).

[2] Neither his wealth⁴ nor what he has earned shall avail him.⁵

﴿٢﴾ مَا أَعْنَى عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ

[3] He shall shortly roast in a flaming fire.⁶

﴿٣﴾ سَيَصْلَى نَارًا ذَاتَ هَبٍ

[4] And his wife - laden with faggots,⁷

﴿٤﴾ وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ

4. Ibn Mas`ud (*ra*) has said that when the Prophet (*saws*) warned them of the Fire, Abu Lahab said he would ransom himself with his wealth and progeny. Allah revealed this verse in refutation (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

5. Ibn `Abbas has explained the terms *ma kasab* (what he - Abu Lahab - earned) as the allusion to "his offspring."

Significantly, it is reported that once Abu Lahab's sons came to Ibn `Abbas to settle a dispute that arose between them. In the course of talk they began to quarrel among themselves. When Ibn `Abbas tried to intervene and separate them they pushed him aside and he fell. He lost his temper and said: "Send these out. These are what Abu Lahab earned." Mujahid is also of the same opinion (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi).

`A'isha has also said, according to a statement in Abu Da'ud, that one's offsprings are what he earns. She quoted this verse (Qurtubi, Shawkani).

6. Sayyid writes: "... he was one of the most unbending foes of the Messenger and the ideas he was propagating...

"... when the Hashimite clan (the Prophet's own clan) decided on grounds of tribal loyalties, under the leadership of Abu Talib, to protect the Prophet despite their rejection of the religion he was preaching, Abu Lahab was the only one to take a different stand. He joined with the Quraysh instead, and was with them in signing the document to boycott the Hashimite clan completely and starve them till they gave up the Prophet to them."

7. "*Hammalatu 'l-Hatab*": Ibn `Abbas, Ibn Zayd, `Atiyyah and Dahhak have said that Abu Lahab's wife used to carry thorny branches and twigs and cast them in the path of the Prophet to hurt him. This is the preferable meaning, although Mujahid and Qatadah have said that she slandered the Prophet which is the metaphorical meaning of "*hammalatu 'l-hatab*" (since the carrier of

[5] Shall have a rope of palm fiber round her neck.⁸

فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ ﴿٥﴾

evil tales of slander from one person to another kindles the flames of hatred between them: Zamakhshari, Asad) - Ibn Jarir, Razi, Qurtubi.

Another interpretation is that when her husband would be burned in Hell-fire, she will carry the wood as the fuel (Ibn Kathir).

8. Another interpretation of “*hablum min masad*”, coming from ‘Urwah ibn Zubayr and Sufyan, is that it refers to a steel chain; while Mujahid and ‘Ikrimah are of opinion that it refers to a steel ring (Ibn Jarir). But Ibn ‘Abbas is of the opinion, as reported by Abu Saleh, that the phrase means a rope of fire of length 70 yards. Sa`id b. al-Musayyib has said that Umm Jamil (Abu Lahab’s wife) used to wear a necklace studded with pearls and used to say that she would spend its worth in opposing the Prophet. In consequence, its fiery form would be awarded to her in the Hereafter as a means of torture. There have been other opinions too (Qurtubi).

Obviously, since they do not contradict each other, all the opinions could be correct (Au.).

(The name of Abu Lahab’s wife was Arwa’. She was a daughter of Harb and also known as Umm Jamil. She was one eyed. She gave unfailing support to her husband in his opposition to the Prophet: Au.).

It is reported by Humaydi that when this *surah* was revealed and she came to know of what it had to say of her, she went looking for the Prophet. (According to some reports, ‘with a stone in her hand’: Au.). He was in the Holy Mosque in the company of Abu Bakr. She headed for them but spoke to Abu Bakr alone saying: “Your companion has satirized me!” Abu Bakr replied, “No he has not. You know that he is not a poet.” She agreed. Then she recited her own poetry:

We reject the reprobate,
His religion we loathe and hate,
His commandments we repudiate.

Then she left. When she was gone Abu Bakr turned to the Prophet who was by his side and remarked: “She did not seem to have seen you.” He replied: “No, she did not. Allah had taken away her sight off me as He said in the Qur’an (17: 45):

“And when you recite the Qur’ān We place between you and those who do not believe in the Hereafter a curtain obstructing” (Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, with versions slightly varying).

Ibn Abi Hatim and Abu Zur`ah have also recorded similar reports. The one in Bazzar carries his comment that it has a good chain of transmitters (Shawkani).

When Abu Bakr said that the Prophet did not satirize her, he was speaking the truth because she was referring to revelation (Au.).

A Proof of the Prophet’s Authenticity

The *surah* predicted that Abu Lahab would perish. That is what happened. When the Quraysh army returned to Makkah after its defeat at Badr, one of the participants described it as, ‘A total defeat in which the Muslims were able to strike at will. Moreover, they seemed to be aided by men who were total strangers to them. Riding horses, they descended from the sky and came across none but slew him.’ Upon this Abu Rafi`, who was a slave of `Abbas b. `Abdul Muttalib, spontaneously interjected that those must have been angels. At that Abu Lahab lost his temper and slapped him. The two came to blows but

Abu Lahab overpowered him. Umm Fadl, the wife of `Abbas, came to the rescue of Abu Rafi` and hit Abu Lahab several times with a rod saying, ‘You dare hit him because his master is away?!’ Abu Lahab suffered a wound in the head and backed off much debunked. A little later he was struck by a disease similar to small pox and died in a week of wounds that refused to heal. The Quraysh feared the disease as much as plague and so nobody went near the corpse for three days until it began to decompose. Finally, his sons splashed water on the corpse from a distance, pushed it down a high wall and heaped it up with stones. Thus the prediction came true and the *surah* became a sign of the Prophet’s authenticity as a messenger (Qurtubi).

The idea has been expressed by other commentators also, and what they mean is that all that Abu Lahab and his wife had to do to discredit the Prophet and the Qur’ānic prediction, was to announce of their Islam, even if hypocritically. In fact, two of his sons later embraced Islam and became good Muslims. The two – Abu Lahab and his wife - had twelve years to do that but they did not, and let the prediction come true. It can be further said that if the Prophet could conceal anything of the Qur’ān, he

would have wished to conceal this chapter, until the death of Abu Lahab and his wife, fearful that if they embraced Islam after the announcement of their destruction he would have a difficult time explaining how it will happen. But he trusted the words of Allah and announced of their destruction which goes to prove his authenticity as a Prophet (Au.).

Razi wrote: Prior to his own destruction, one of his sons too had been destroyed in consequence of the Prophet's supplication against him. The story is as follows. The Prophet's two daughters Ruqaiyyah and Umm Kulthum were married to two of Abu Lahab's sons `Utbah and `Utaybah respectively. (But the marriages were waiting consummation: Au.). Angry with the Prophet, Abu Lahab ordered his sons to divorce his daughters. In compliance `Utbah, who was married to Umm Kulthum, went to the Prophet and told him in

a very rough manner that he believed in none of the revelation that he had brought. Then he spat in the direction of the Prophet and announced that he had divorced his daughter. The Prophet supplicated in words: "O Allah, set one of Your dogs upon this man." `Utbah returned. Some-time later, he accompanied a trade caravan to Syria. *En route*, when the caravan had encamped for a night and everyone was fast asleep with `Utbah right in the middle of the crowd of men and beasts, a lion came up straight to him, hauled him away.

However, as stated under 80, note 7, there is confusion about names. Alusi has stated that, in all, Abu Lahab had three sons. Two of these, `Utbah and Mu`tab, embraced Islam at the fall of Makkah and took part in the battles of Hunayn and Tayif. So it was `Utaybah who was killed by the lion (Au.). ﴿قَتَلَ﴾



Surah 112

*Al-Ikhlās*Makkan/Madinan¹

4 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Context of Revelation

If we are to put together reports coming from Ubayy b. Ka`b, `Ikrimah, Sa`id and Qatadah, either the pagans of Makkah or the Jews asked the Prophet to explain to them who exactly the God was that he was inviting the people to. According to some versions, they asked him to lay down His genealogy. Allah revealed this chapter (Ibn Jarir reworded: Au.). At least one version is in Tirmidhi (Ibn Kathir). Muslim has a similar report (Sayyid Ibrahim).

Merits of the *surah*

Some interpreters have pointed out that this is the only *surah* in the Qur`ān which talks nothing of either this world or the next. Allah is its sole subject (Ibn Jarir). It has also been pointed out that this is the only *surah* in the Qur`ān in which two

new Attributes of Allah - *Al-Ahad* and *Al-Samad* – have appeared. They have not appeared elsewhere; and significantly, together. This could be the reason why it has been said to be equal to one-third of the Qur`ān (Qurtubi).

`Ā'isha has reported in a *hadith* of Bukhari (also in Muslim and others: Shawkani), that:

The Prophet sent out a group of people in a campaign. Their leader always ended his (recitations in the) Prayers with this chapter. When they came back they spoke of it to the Prophet. He ordered them to find out why he did that. The man answered that he loved to recite it because it depicted the Attributes of *Al-Rahman*. The Prophet remarked: “Let him know that Allah loves him too” (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Bukhari has another report coming from Anas. It says that, the Quba mosque had a leader in the Prayers who recited this *surah* (after *al-Fatiha* and) before any other recitation and even ended up with it. Finally, his followers spoke to him objecting that it did not look like it was permissible. He could either recite from other parts of the Qur'an, which would suffice, or recite the *surah* alone if he wished to. But the man refused to budge. He told them that they were free to look for another person to lead them in Prayers if they were not satisfied with him. But they considered him better than anyone else and, as a matter of fact, did not wish him to be replaced. So when the Prophet visited them, they mentioned this to him. He asked the man: "O so and so! What prevents you from doing as they say? Why do you insist on its recitation?" He answered: "I love the *surah*." The Prophet assured him: "Your love of it will usher you into Paradise" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Another report from Bukhari coming through Abu Sa'id says that a man heard another repeatedly reciting this *surah*. When he mentioned it to the Prophet - in belief that it could not be much of a virtue to be doing so - he told him: "It is equal to

one-third of the Qur'an" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Yet another report from Bukhari (also in Muslim: S.Ibrahim) with Abu Sa'id as the transmitter says that once the Prophet (*saws*) asked his Companions: "Is anyone of you weaker than that he should recite one-third of the Qur'an every night?" They exclaimed: "Which of us can do that O Apostle?" He replied that this chapter is one-third of the Qur'an. (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir) Some reports say it "is one-third of the Qur'an" while others say it is "equal" to one third of the Qur'an. In fact, one report in Ahmad says it is equal to one-half of the Qur'an (Ibn Kathir).

Finally, Imām Ahmad, and Tirmidhi with his approval, report `Uqbah b. `Amir saying that once when he met the Prophet he took the initiative by holding his hand and asking him: "O Apostle of Allah, in what lies the salvation of a Muslim?" He replied, "O `Uqbah. Hold your tongue, let your home be enough for you and weep at your sins." Next time when he met him, the Prophet took the initiative to hold his hand and said: "O `Uqbah! May I not tell you about three chapters better than anything in the Torah, the Gospels,

[1] Say, He, Allah, is the One,²

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿١﴾

the Psalms of David and the Magnificent Qur'ān itself?" I replied, "Sure do that, may my parents be sacrificed for you." In reply, he recited *surah al-Ikhlās* and the following two chapters and added: "Uqbah! Do not forget them. Do not let a night pass before you have recited them." Uqbah says: "When I met the Prophet another time, I again took the initiative and held his hands in mine. I asked him: "O Apostle of Allah. Let me know of the best of good deeds". He said: "Uqbah! Join him who cuts you asunder. Give him who denies you. And forgive him who wrongs you" (Ibn Kathir).

And here is at least one *hadīth* about seeking Allah's protection from sicknesses with the help of these three last chapters of the Qur'ān. Bukhari has recorded 'A'isha as saying that, before sleep the Prophet used to recite these on his bed, blow into his hands and pass them over to the extent the hands reached his face, hands and body. He would do it three times (Ibn Kathir).

1. Ibn Mas'ud, Hasan, 'Ata', 'Ikrimah and Jabir have said that this is a Makkan chapter. On the other

hand, Ibn 'Abbas, Qatadah, Dahhak and Suddi have said that it is Madinan, although Ibn 'Abbas seems to have expressed a second opinion (Shawkani).

2. The *Ahad* (of the text is different from *Wahid* and) has the added connotations of absolute, continuous unity and the absence of equals (Sayyid Qutb).

Ahad is someone who is alone in His Being and Attributes, who has no associates, no equals, no partners, who has none similar to Him.

In contrast, by popular Hindu account, the Hindu gods number some 33 million (Shabbir).

The statement can also be found in "Great Religions of the World," a *National Geographic* publication. It states there (*Hinduism*, Amia Chakravarty, p. 39): 'By popular Hindu account, the Hindu gods number some 33 million.. Overarching all is Brahman, to be metamorphosed in the trinity of: Brahma, the Creator, Vishnu, the Preserver and Shiva, the Destroyer... Each of these have their consorts (e.g., Vishnu's consort is Lakhshmi - who is a goddess in her own right -

[2] Allah, the Eternal,³

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ﴿٢﴾

[3] He beget not,⁴ nor was He begotten,

مَّ يَلِدْ وَمَ يُولَدْ ﴿٣﴾

Shiva's consort is Durga and Krishna's is Radha). They all appear on earth as *avatars*. The triad is sometimes worshipped under the symbol of the mystic syllable *Om*.⁷

That is to say that the followers of other religions have treated God as if He belongs to a species (Mawdudi).

3. *Samad*: Literally the word is applied to one who has no stomach and, therefore, does not eat or drink. (That is, one who is not dependent on anything: Au.). That is the opinion of Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Sa`id ibn Jubayr, Dahhak and many others. (It is also the opinion of Ibn Mas`ud: Shawkani). Yet, according to one report, Ibn `Abbas has explained the term as meaning one whose attributes have reached the apex of development, and therefore, cannot be improved any further. Ibn Mas`ud (*ra*) has made a similar statement (Ibn Kathir).

“Eternal - One with no beginning and no end,” is another interpretation that has come from the *Salaf*. Another is that of someone who supersedes all and who cannot be superseded by any (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Rabi` b. Anas has said that the term *samad* has been actually explained by what follows, that is, “He did not beget nor was He begotten” (Ibn Jarir). This is a good explanation (Ibn Kathir). Literally, *samad* would also imply one who stands in no one's need while everyone stands in need of him (Zamakhshari). In other words, one before whom people put forward their needs (Razi, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani).

Asad comments: “Consequently, the *quality* of His being is beyond the range of human comprehension or imagination: which also explains why any attempt at “depicting” God by means of figurative representation or even abstract symbols must be qualified as a blasphemous denial of the truth.”

4. The first two lines of the eight lines of the Apostolic Creed, a statement of faith used in the Roman Catholic Church, and so called because according to tradition it was composed by the 12 apostles, although actually developed from early baptism in the 3rd and 4th centuries, is as follows:

[4] And there is none comparable to Him.⁵

وَمَا يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ﴿٤﴾

“I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord...”

(*Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 1, entry “The Apostolic Creed”) - Au.

Majid writes: “According to popular Hinduism, the creation was brought about by Brahma’s incest with his daughter (See ERE., II, p. 811).”

5. Bukhari has preserved the Prophet’s statement: “Allah, the Exalted, said, ‘Son of Adam cries lies to Me - while it behooves him not to do that; and he calls Me names - while it behooves him not to do that. As for his crying lies, he says ‘He will

not give me a new life after He has created me,’ while creating him the first time was not easier than a repeat can be. As for him calling Me names, it is to say that I have taken a son while I am One, the Eternal. I have not given birth nor was I given birth. There is none comparable to Me” (Ibn Kathir).

We have quoted Majid earlier (*Al-Baqarah*, note 233), where he wrote: “According to the Christians, God the Son, is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. He is the only begotten and eternal Son of the Father. He is consubstantial with the Father” (Au.). ﴿٤﴾





Surah 113

Al-Falaq

Makkan/Madinan1

5 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Merits of the Surah**A Misconstrued Controversy**

Ibn Kathir has said: Ahmad has a report which says that Ibn Mas`ud did not consider these last two chapters - also called *Al-Mu`awwidhatayn* - as revelations. Accordingly, his own copy of the Qur`an did not include these chapters. He believed, so goes the report, that they were only meant for seeking refuge from various evils. It is also reported that he would not recite them in his Prayers. Bukhari has other reports that say that when Ubayy b. Ka`b was asked about the last two chapters and Ibn Mas`ud's opinion regarding them, he said: "I had asked the Prophet himself about them. He told me, 'I was told: "Say", and so I said.' And therefore", continues Ubayy, "we say as the Prophet used to say."

[The point that is to be understood here is that the Prophet was a Messenger. No part of the Qur`an, not even a syllable, is his creation. He simply passed on what he was told, to the extent that when he was told: "Say, I take refuge ...", he did not ask his scribes to write down: "I take refuge ..." (dropping out the word 'Say'), rather, he dictated to his scribes: "Say, I seek refuge ..." This is what he meant when he said: 'I was told: "Say," and so I said.' - Ibn al-Qayyim].

Therefore, (continues Ibn Kathir) it is possible that Ibn Mas`ud did not receive the information of their inclusion from sources he trusted and maybe not from enough number of transmitters that he set us as a condition. Therefore, he took the precautionary line to let them remain excluded. Nonetheless, it is also likely

that he had changed his opinion after the Companions had unanimously agreed upon their inclusion in the compilation prepared in their time.

(Perhaps, the change in opinion went unreported since it is the sensational that is always picked up: Au.)

Quotation from Ibn Kathir ends here.

Ibn Hajr has said: "Some people have expressed the opinion that the report itself is a false accusation against Ibn Mas`ud, since such an opinion is unthinkable from a person of his status. But that does not seem to be likely since they have reached us through more than one chain of trustworthy narrators. Rather, the opinion of Abubakr Baqilani seconded by Qadi `Iyad is worth considering. It has some difficulties but not unresolvable. Abubakr Baqilani has said that Ibn Mas`ud did not think that the two chapters were not revelations. He did. Rather he was opposed (until the consensus of the Companions) to them being included in the Qur`an since the Prophet did not get them written down himself (as was his custom with other chapters and verses: Au.).

Further, Ubayy b. Ka`b's statement itself does not confirm either this or that. In fact, according to one report,

and even if it might be by error, the statement of Ubayy ("we say as the Prophet used to say"), has been attributed to Ibn Mas`ud himself," (which really takes the heat off: Au.) - *Fat` al-Bari, Tafsir Surah Al-Nas*, abridged.

Qurtubi adds: If Ibn Mas`ud did not write these two chapters in his copy of the Qur`an, then, it should not be forgotten that he had also not written *surah al-Fatiha* in it. Obviously not because he thought it was not part of the Qur`an, but probably because he relied on his memory.

Finally, adds Alusi, it must be understood that Ibn Mas`ud did not doubt that the *mu`awwidhatayn* were revelations sent down from the heavens. But he doubted whether they were to be included in the compilation of the Qur`an and recited in the Prayers, since, in his opinion - although revelations - they were meant for seeking Allah's refuge alone. (Abu Bakr Baqilani has expressed similar opinion: Shabbir). Further, it might also be kept in mind that the reports of Ibn Mas`ud not considering them part of the Qur`an have come to us through *ahad* (singleton) narrations, those, which cannot be treated as of equal in weight to those reports that have to come to us confirming

their inclusion in the Qur'ān and are of *tawatur* status, and which, as we know, are of irrefutable nature.

In addition to the arguments offered above, this writer would like to state that it must be understood at the outset that rejection of a part of the Qur'ān is not a minor issue. Were Ibn Mas'ud (*ra*) to have done that, in as coarse a sense as some people believe, misled by the reports, the Companions would not have let the matter rest there. We know of 'A'isha (*ra*) that when she heard Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) quote the Prophet (*saws*) that 'ill omen is in three things: women, horses and houses,' she censured him for not quoting the *hadith* in full, which she said should start with the words: "The Jews say ..." Now, if Ibn Mas'ud had not recanted his opinion - if he had held it at all - then, surely 'Umar (*ra*) would not have appointed him instructor in the Qur'ān for the Iraqi territories, nor any of his Iraqi students, who must have been in hundreds, went about with a Qur'ān different from what the general public had.

Therefore, it is quite likely that he never meant what he was understood as saying by the later transmitters. We have a very good example of how confusion can arise over a long

period in Ibn al-Qayyim's treatment of the two last chapters as one, while commenting on them. Now, if it happens in the course of time, that his commentary is lost, then after a thousand years some people might draw the conclusion from the statement to the effect that 'he treated the two chapters as one,' that he considered them one, and not two chapters, and hence, perhaps, thought that the Qur'ān consists of only 113 chapters!

As for the question as to why it is that so many *hadith* books have recorded the reports; the answer is, this was the habit of the *muhaddithin* who had acquired the practice from their transmitters. The scholars those days transmitted precisely and truthfully all they had heard, without bothering about the meaning or intent. For them, authenticity of a report was enough of a qualification for it to be transmitted to the next generation. Abu Hurayrah himself, for instance, continued to transmit the *hadith* about omens as he had heard, despite the censure by 'A'isha, because he had heard only those words from the Prophet. If 'A'isha had heard those additional words, he must have thought, surely it was for her to transmit them.

Moreover, were Ibn Mas`ud to hold the opinion that he is alleged to have held, his scores of Kufi students, (many of whom were to later become, in that foremost center of learning, *fuqaha'* of great repute), would have surely discussed the issue to form their own opinions. True, the Hanafiyyah do not declare a man *kafir* who refuses to acknowledge that the *mu`awwidhatayn* as part of the Qur`an. But, this is another case of extreme precaution on the part of the Hanafiyyah. They confer on the accused all benefits of doubt, and refrain, sometimes on flimsy grounds, from declaring a person *kafir*. They follow the famous dictum of Abu Hanifah: "Everyone who faces the Ka`bah is a Muslim."

It is not surprising to note, therefore, that many commentators have ignored the issue altogether. Ibn al-Qayyim, for instance, fails to mention the issue in his inordinately long commentary on the two chapters. This writer had to take up the issue because its discussion by some commentators gives it the color of a big controversy among the *Ummah*, while, as a matter of fact, none exists but in the hidden corners of *hadith* books (Au.).

Imām Ahmad, Abu Da`ud and Nasa`i have preserved, a hadith one version of which reports `Uqbah b. `Amir as saying:

"While I was leading the mule of the Prophet through a mountainous region, he asked me, 'Will you not mount, `Uqbah?' I thought I would be sinning (so I did not). But the Prophet alighted and I climbed the beast, with him leading it. After a while, he said, 'May I not tell you about two of the finest chapters that the people have ever recited?' I said, 'Sure, do it, O Prophet.' He taught me the last two chapters. Then, when we had encamped, he recited the two while leading in the Prayers. Subsequently, when he passed by me he rejoined, ``Uqbah, how about reciting them every morning and every evening?!"

Several other reports say that the Prophet said that these two were the best of revelations with which to seek Allah's refuge. Bukhari (and Muslim also: Qurtubi) has recorded `A'isha as saying that, when unwell, the Prophet would recite these chapters, blow on his hands and pass them over the body. During his final sickness when he was unable to do it himself, she recited these, blew on the hands of

[1] Say, `I take refuge with the Lord of the Daybreak,²

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْقَلْقِ ﴿١﴾

the Prophet and rubbed them on his body (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Abu Sa`id has said that the Prophet was wont to seek (Allah's) protection from the evil eye of the *Jinn* and mankind. But, after these chapters were revealed, he began to recite them and gave up everything else. Tirmidhi has rated the report as *hasan sahih* (Ibn Kathir).

Tabarani has reported `Ali, in his *Al-Saghir*, (a *hasan* report: S. Ibrahim) as saying that once the Prophet was stung by a scorpion while he was Praying. When he finished the Prayer, he said: "May Allah curse the scorpion. It spares neither the one in prayers nor anyone else." Then he ordered for some water and salt. He began to rub them reciting: "Say, O unbelievers..., "Say He is Allah..., "Say, I take refuge will Allah..., and "Say, I take refuge with the Lord of men..." (i.e. the four *Quls*: Au.) – Shawkani.

The above proves that charms or spells (*ruqyah*) and blowing for cure is lawful in Islam. According to several other reports, the Prophet used to blow *ruqyah* upon himself.

Muhammad b. al-Ash`ath recounted: "I was taken to `A'isha. She murmured a charm and blew it over me" (Qurtubi).

As for the reports that speak of *ruqyah* with disfavor, perhaps those are meant that (either have disapproved words or phrases, or those that) have meaningless phrases. This also applies to amulets (*ta`widh*) [Razi]. As for the *hadith* in Nasa'i which says: "Whoever tied a knot and then blew in it, indulged in magic; whoever played magic associated with Allah; and whoever hung a thing is entrusted to it," has been declared weak by Albani (S. Ibrahim).

(Imām Razi has an interesting overview of these last two chapters. But it is too subtle for reproduction in an attenuated form: Au.).

1. Hasan, `Ikrimah, `Ata' and Jabir have said this *surah* is Makkan. That is one of the two opinions of Ibn `Abbas also. He has been reported as calling it Madinan also. Such is also the opinion of Qatadah (Shawkani).

2. According to a *hadith* quoted by Abu Hurayrah *falaq* is a pocket in

[2] From the evil of what He has created,

مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ﴿٢﴾

[3] From the evil of darkness³ when it gathers,

وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ ﴿٣﴾

Hell covered by a lid. (But the *hadith* is weak: S.Ibrahim).

Ibn `Abbas, Suddi and Muhammad b. Ka`b al-Qurazi are very near that report when they say that it is a prison in Hell. So are others who say it is another name of Hell.

But Ibn `Abbas, Hasan, Sa`id b. Jubayr, Jabir b. `Abdullah and many others have also said that *falaq* is daybreak. This in fact, is the preferred meaning since daybreak is the first meaning that strikes an Arab when he hears the word *falaq*. That of course does not exclude the possibility that it is also the name of a section in Hell (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). And, in view of Allah (*swt*) not confirming this or that, the question remains open. After all, Allah is the Lord of both (Ibn Jarir).

Generally speaking, the verse could mean that He who is able to disperse all darkness by the morn is also capable of sheltering people from all that they fear (Razi).

3. The translation has the backing of authorities such as Ibn `Abbas,

Hasan, Muhammad b. Ka`b and Mujahid. But Abu Hurayrah has reported a *hadith* that says that the allusion is to a star, in which case waqab would mean “when it falls.” According to another report, narrated by `A`isha,

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ ، قَالَتْ : أَخَذَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِيَدِي ، فَظَنَرُ إِلَى الْقَمَرِ ، فَقَالَ : يَا عَائِشَةُ تَعُوذِي بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ ، هَذَا غَاسِقٌ إِذَا وَقَبَ .

The Prophet held her hand in a moonlit night, pointed to the moon and said: “Seek Allah’s refuge from this ghasiq when it sets.” (The report is also in Tirmidhi, who evaluates it as hasan sahih: Qurtubi and Nasa’i, who rates it trustworthy: Ibn Kathir). Therefore, to put it together, what the Prophet meant is that one ought to seek Allah’s refuge from any darkness that gathers. That is applicable to the evening, which when it sets in, spreads darkness; to the moon, as well as to the star since their setting is also followed by darkness (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

[4] From the evil of those (women) that blow on knots,⁴

وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ ﴿٤﴾

Razi adds: As regards the Prophet calling the moon ghasiq, Ibn Qutaybah has said that maybe when he said ‘when it sets’ he meant ‘when it eclipses.’ In fact, magicians get active only after the moon has disappeared leaving the earth unlit.

Ibn al-Qayyim writes: Note that when Musaylimah the Liar was asked to describe how his revelations came to him, he replied: “In extremely dark nights,” whereas when the Prophet was asked about how the revelations came to him, said: “In brightness, like that of a (well-lit) day.” From his statement itself we know that it was the Devil who visited Musaylimah as against the visits of Jibril. (Apart from the fact that what Musaylimah claimed as revelation was so much nonsense: Au.) It is significant therefore that we are told to seek refuge with the Lord of the Daybreak. The Prophet has in fact ordered us to withdraw the children into the homes after sunset because with darkness Satanic spirits begin to pour into the towns and dwellings.

4. The allusion by the textual word “naffathat” is to the witches and magicians who tied knots in cords

or strings and muttered over them magical formulae in their efforts to bewitch their victims. This is the opinion of Ibn ‘Abbas, Mujahid, ‘Ikrimah, Qatadah and others (Ibn Jarir).

With regard to the feminine form of the verb, the speculation is that since it was the daughters of the Jew Labid b. A’sam who had blown into the knots to cast magic on the Prophet, that the feminine form has been adopted (Razi).

Ibn al-Qayyim comments: The above is not a very strong point for it was Labid who had cast the spell and not his daughters. Perhaps what is meant by the naffathat is the spirits and souls of those who blow, be they males or females. Hence the feminine form.

(Notwithstanding what Ibn al-Qayyim has said, it is not certain who had done the blowing on the knots. It is quite possible that the whole family was involved: Au).

The magicians, of course, have no power of their own and hence pose no danger to anyone, save by the will of Allah. But Allah allows magical ef-

fects to take place to test the people whether they would attribute the effects to the powers of the magicians and sorcerers or will they attribute all power to Allah and turn to Him for a cure (Zamakhshari).

Magical Spell on the Prophet

`A'isha is on record in Bukhari as saying:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - سُجِرَ حَتَّى كَانَ يَرَى أَنَّهُ يَأْتِي النَّسَاءَ وَلَا يَأْتِيهِنَّ . قَالَ سُفْيَانُ وَهَذَا أَشَدُّ مَا يَكُونُ مِنَ السِّحْرِ إِذَا كَانَ كَذَا . فَقَالَ « يَا عَائِشَةُ أَعْلِمْتِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَتَانِي فِيمَا اسْتَفْتَيْتُهُ فِيهِ ، أَتَانِي رَجُلَانِ فَصَعَدَ أَحَدُهُمَا عِنْدَ رَأْسِي ، وَالْآخَرُ عِنْدَ رِجْلِي ، فَقَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَ رَأْسِي لِالْآخَرِ مَا بَالَ الرَّجُلِ قَالَ مَطْبُوبٌ . قَالَ وَمَنْ طَبَّهُ قَالَ لَبِيدُ بْنُ أَعْصَمٍ ، رَجُلٌ مِنْ بَنِي زُرَيْقٍ حَلِيفٌ لِيَهُودَ ، كَانَ مُنَافِقًا . قَالَ وَفِيمَ قَالَ فِي مُشْطٍ وَمُشَافِقَةٍ . قَالَ وَأَيْنَ قَالَ فِي جُفِّ طَلْعَةِ ذَكَرٍ ، تَحْتَ رَعُوفَةٍ ، فِي بَغْرِ دَرَوَانَ » . قَالَتْ فَأَتَى النَّبِيَّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - الْبَيْتُ حَتَّى اسْتَحْرَجَهُ فَقَالَ « هَذِهِ الْبَيْتُ الَّتِي أُرِيئُهَا ، وَكَأَنَّ مَاءَهَا نِقَاعَةُ الْحِنَاءِ ، وَكَأَنَّ لِحْلَهَا رُؤُوسَ الشَّيَاطِينِ » . قَالَ فَاسْتَحْرَجَ ، قَالَتْ فَقُلْتُ أَفَلَا أَمْنٌ تَنْشُرْتِ . فَقَالَ « أَمَا وَاللَّهِ فَقَدْ شَفَانِي ، وَأَكْرَهُ أَنْ أُبَيَّرَ عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِنَ النَّاسِ شَرًّا »

“Magical spell was cast on the Prophet so that he thought he had been to his wives while he had not been to them.” (Sufyan interjected: “That’s the worst kind of magic”). `A'isha continued, saying that the Prophet told her: “Are you aware `A'isha,

that Allah answered me when I sought His help (regarding certain matters)? Accordingly, two people came to me. One of them sat down near my head and the other near my feet. The one at the head asked the other, ‘What’s wrong with this man?’ The other answered, ‘He has been affected by magic.’ The first asked, ‘Who did it?’ It was answered, ‘Labi b. A`sam (a Jewish man of the Banu Zurayq, who had embraced Islam hypocritically).’ He inquired, ‘By what?’ The other answered, ‘By a comb and the hair (that are stuck in its teeth).’ The first asked: ‘Where is it?’ The other answered, ‘Under a rock in the well of Dharwan, hidden in a dried bark of a male date-palm tree.’ So the Prophet, continued `A'isha, went up to the well and got it removed. (According to some versions, He sent `Ali, Zubayr and `Ammar b. Yasir to the well and got it removed). After that he told me, “This was the well I was shown. Its water was colored as if with henna. The date-palms (watered by the well) were as if the heads of the devil.’ I asked him, ‘Why do you not you make (the affair) public?’ He replied, ‘I do not wish to spread

something that might cause evil to someone. (According to some reports he added: ‘After all Allah has cured me.’ And, according to other reports, the man admitted and when asked why, gave the simple reason: “In love of money.” In any case, the Prophet pardoned him: Fath).’

Other reports (such as in Muslim, Nasa’i and Ahmad) suggest that a Jewish boy who served the Prophet was coaxed into stealing the comb and the hair. (Ibn Kathir).

As for the length of the spell on the Prophet, Ibn Kathir writes that it lasted a few days (*ayyaaman*), without quoting any *hadith* in support (Au.).

Reports also suggest that it was then that the last two chapters of the Qur’ān were revealed and that Jibril had himself recited and blown them on the knots that had been tied on the teeth of the comb as he opened them one after another (Razi, Qurtubi, Alusi).

Alusi adds: Some people have refused to accept the reports of the Prophet being affected by magic on grounds that this throws his prophecy into doubt. But that’s not correct. What they have to understand, as pointed out by Qadi `Iyad, is that it had only a mild and physical effect

on him (similar to the physical effects of bodily ailments: Au.). It had no effect on his mind or soul. As for the statement that he thought he had gone to his wives while he had not, it was not indicative of a mental affliction. It was something that everyone experiences in his sleep, and some even when awake. (As, for instance, one thinks he has placed the keys in the drawer, while he would not have. But no one would say that the man has lost control over his mind, although, undeniably, the Prophet’s case was slightly more serious: Au.).

Ibn al-Qayyim also writes: As for the objection that had the Prophet been affected by magic, the pagans would have had a good case against him who used to deride in the words of the Qur’ān (17: 48):

{إِنْ تَسْبُغُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا} [الإسراء: ٤٧]

“You follow not but a bewitched person.” Well, it is not an intelligent argument since a truly bewitched man loses control over his mind and body and does not know what he is saying or doing. (He does not even realize that he has been bewitched and does nothing to get himself cured. It is others who have to do it for him: Au.). Nor, continues Ibn al-Qayyim, were the pagans of earlier epochs of human history serious when they

alleged that their prophets were bewitched. They leveled such allegations because they did not know what else to say. In the case of our Prophet also, they did not know how to give good grounds to their refusal and so had to take shelter behind such meaningless allegations. Accordingly, sometimes they said he was enchanted, at others that he was a poet, or that he had lost control over his senses, and so forth. Allah commented upon their allegations in words (17: 48): "Behold, how they strike similitude for you."

Cure for Magic

According to a *hadith* in Muslim, Jibril asked the Prophet: "Are you unwell?" He said: "Yes." Jibril said:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ أَزْقِيكَ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ يُؤْذِيكَ مِنْ شَرِّ كُلِّ نَفْسٍ أَوْ عَيْنٍ حَاسِدٍ اللَّهُ يُشْفِيكَ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ أَزْقِيكَ

"In the name of Allah I disenchant you; of everything that torments you, from the evil of every soul, and from everyone that envies may Allah cure you. In the name of Allah I disenchant you."

It is reported in Muwatta' that Ka' b (b. Malik) said: "If not for some words that I had learnt from the Torah, the Jews would have made a donkey of me (with their magic). Those words are:

أَعُوذُ بِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ الَّذِي لَا شَيْءٌ أَعْظَمَ مِنْهُ،
وَبِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّاتِ الَّتِي لَا يَجَاوِزُهُنَّ بَرٌّ وَلَا فَاجِرٌ،
وَبِأَسْمَاءِ اللَّهِ الْحُسْنَى مَا عَلِمْتُ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَمْ أَعْلَمْ، مِنْ
شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ وَذَرَأَ وَبَرَأَ

"I take refuge by the Face of Allah, the Mighty, greater than Whom nothing exists, and (I seek refuge) by the Complete Words, that neither the virtuous nor the wicked can overcome, and (I take refuge) by all the Good Names of Allah - with those that I know and those that I do not know - from the evil of what He has created: all that He scattered and originated" (Ibn al-Qayyim).

Ibn al-Qayyim also suggests ten ways by which one might protect himself from the effects of magic, the Evil Eye or envy. Those ways are topped by one's efforts to strengthen faith in *Tawhid* by trying and meeting with its demands and contemplating over the fact that the chain of events is firmly in the Hands of Allah without whose leave nothing can move, nor can the cycle of cause and effect work. He it is who protects, and He it is who heals (10: 107): "If Allah visits you with an affliction, no one can remove it but He; and if He desires any good for you, no one can repel His bounty."

The Prophet told Ibn `Abbas:

[5] And from the evil of an envious (person)⁵
when he envies.⁶

وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ ﴿٥﴾

“Remember. If the people (of the world) unite on doing you a good, they will not be able to accomplish any of it save for what Allah has decreed for you. And, if they unite on causing you a harm, they would not be able to accomplish any of it save for what Allah has decreed for you.”

Therefore, when one fills his heart and mind with *Tawhid*, it becomes empty of fear of all else, which itself acts as a protection, apart from the fact that Allah is the “Friend of the believers,” and “Defends the believers.” But this defending is to the extent and in proportion to how much the believer trusts Him, as some of the Salaf have said: If one turns to Allah wholly, He turns to him wholly. If he turns away from Allah wholly, He turns away from him wholly. But if someone is once this way and once that way, then Allah is also once this way and once that way with him. *Tawhid* then is the invincible fort against all evil.

Quotation from Ibn al-Qayyim ends here.

As precautionary measure, one may follow the following to escape the ef-

fects of magic and other evil influences:

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا - قَالَ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - يُعَوِّدُ الْحَسَنَ وَالْحُسَيْنَ وَيَقُولُ « إِنَّ أَبَاكُمْ كَانَ يُعَوِّدُ بِهَا إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ:

Ibn `Abbas narrates that the Prophet (*saw*s) used to seek Allah’s refuge for Hasan and Husayn with the following words, and would say, ‘Your father used to seek Allah’s protection for Isma`il and Is-haq with these words’:

”أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّةِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ وَهَامَّةٍ ،
وَمِنْ كُلِّ عَيْنٍ لَامَّةٍ « - صحيح البخارى

“I seek Allah’s refuge - with the complete words – from every Shaytan, creeping poisonous creature, and from every sickening eye.”

5. This is an open statement, that is, all those are included who envy or cast Evil Eye (Ibn Jarir).

6. What is meant by the last statement, “when he envies” is that when envy is translated into action (Zamakhshari, Shawkani).

Hasad

Certain kind of envies are lawful (Zamakhshari).

Qurtubi wrote: Hasad is that envy in which a man wishes that the person he envies lose the thing that he envies. In contrast, when one envies but does not wish the fall of the thing he envies, then that is known as munafasah or ghibt. Ghibt is lawful. Further, in the *hadith* which says that ‘the two can be envied,’ the Prophet used the word hasad in the sense of ghibt (Qurtubi).

The *hadith* referred to by Qurtubi is in Bukhari and as follows: Ibn Mas`ud (*ra*) says the Prophet (*saws*) said,

”لَا حَسَدَ إِلَّا فِي اثْنَتَيْنِ: رَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْقُرْآنَ فَهُوَ
يَتْلُوهُ آتَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ، فَيَقُولُ: لَوْ أُوتِيتُ مِثْلَ مَا
أُوتِيَ هَذَا لَفَعَلْتُ كَمَا يَفْعَلُ، وَرَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَالًا
فَهُوَ يُنْفِقُهُ فِي حَقِّهِ، فَيَقُولُ: لَوْ أُوتِيتُ مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ
هَذَا عَمِلْتُ مِثْلَ مَا يَعْمَلُ”

“Hasad is not allowed but of two. One, a man whom Allah gave the Qur`ān so that he recites it the whole night and day, so that (another man) says, ‘Were I to be given the liked of what he has been given, I too would do as he does.’ And a man whom Allah gave wealth and he spends it richly, so that (another man)

says, ‘Were I to be given the like of what he has been given, I too would do as he does.’ (Au.).

Hasad, it should be noted, is the first sin committed in the heavens, when Iblis envied Adam, and the first sin committed on earth when Habil envied Qabil (Qurtubi).

The Evil Eye and Its Cure

In the present context some commentators have discussed the issue of Evil Eye, with Ibn al-Qayyim and Shanqiti going into greater details. Herewith is a summary of the two. To start with there is no difference of opinion among the scholars that Evil Eye is a fact. Indeed, there is a sahih *hadith* which says:

الْعَيْنُ حَقٌّ

“Evil Eye is a fact.”

Another says:

لو كَانَ شَيْءٌ سَابِقَ الْقَدَرِ لَسَبَقْتَهُ الْعَيْنُ

“If anything could overtake Qadr, it could be the Evil Eye”

(The *hadith* is in Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah. Suyuti has declared it sahih: Munawi - Au.).

Its effects on the people are undeniable. People have seen a man falling down on the road or running high temperature immediately after

someone cast an Evil Eye on them. This happens when someone with a powerful spirit looks at another and remarks: “How beautiful!” or “How wonderful!” and the like. Kalbi has reported that there was an Arab who would starve himself for two or three days. Then he would choose a cattle as a herd passed by and say: “Oh, I haven’t seen a camel or a goat as beautiful as this one!” Then he would send his slave girl behind the herd with some money to fetch its meat. It wouldn’t be too long before the beast would fall (and the owners forced to slaughter and sell its meat). In fact, it is said that the verse (68: 51):

{ وَإِنْ يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَيْرِثُونَكَ بِأَبْصَارِهِمْ }
[القلم: ٥١]

“The unbelievers well nigh strike you with their glances,” is speaking of the Evil Eye. Hence we find that Bukhari has devoted a whole chapter on the cure of the Evil Eye in which he reports `A’isha as saying:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَأْمُرُهَا أَنْ تَسْتَرْقِيَ مِنَ الْعَيْنِ

“The Prophet ordered me to seek cure for the Evil Eye with (a suitable) charm” (Ibn al-Qayyim).

Shanqiti adds: Muwatta’ has an incident recorded that,

موارد الظمان إلى زوائد ابن حبان (ص: ٣٤٤)

ن مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ بْنِ سَهْلِ بْنِ حُنَيْفٍ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ أَبَاهُ يَقُولُ اعْتَسَلَ أَبِي سَهْلٍ بْنُ حُنَيْفٍ بِالْحَرَارِ فَتَرَغَ جُبَةً كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِ وَعَامِرُ بْنُ رَبِيعَةَ يَنْظُرُ قَالَ وَكَانَ سَهْلٌ رَجُلًا أَبْيَضَ حَسَنَ الْجِلْدِ قَالَ فَقَالَ عَامِرُ بْنُ رَبِيعَةَ مَا رَأَيْتُ كَالْيَوْمِ وَلَا جِلْدَ عَذْرَاءَ فَوَعَكَ سَهْلٌ مَكَانَهُ فَاشْتَدَّ وَعْكَهُ فَأَتَى رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَخْبَرَ أَنَّ سَهْلًا وَعَيْكَ وَأَنَّهُ غَيْرُ زَائِحٍ مَعَكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَأَتَاهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَخْبَرَهُ سَهْلٌ بِالَّذِي كَانَ مِنْ شَأْنِ عَامِرِ بْنِ رَبِيعَةَ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ”عَلَامٌ يَقْتُلُ أَحَدَكُمْ أَحَاهُ أَلَا بَرَكْتَ إِنَّ الْعَيْنَ حَقٌّ تَوْضًا لَهُ“ فَتَوْضًا لَهُ عَامِرُ بْنُ رَبِيعَةَ فَرَاخَ سَهْلًا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَيْسَ بِهِ بَأْسٌ.

“Abu Sahl b. Hunayf removed his shirt for a bath. `Amir b. Rabi`ah was staring at him. He passed a remark at Abu Sahl’s beautiful skin: “I have never seen such a beautiful skin.” Abu Sahl fell down right there in pain. Somebody went to the Prophet and told him that Abu Sahl was in great pain and was not in a position to make it to him himself. The Prophet betook to him. Abu Sahl explained what had happened. The Prophet remarked: “Why do you want to kill your brother? Why did he (i.e. `Amir) not rather invoke Allah’s blessings (by saying Subhana Allah, or, Allahu Akbar, or Masha Allah, or the like: Au.)” Then he

ordered that `Amir wash himself for Abu Sahl, which he did and Abu Sahl was cured.”

As regards the washing, to remove the effects of the Evil Eye, it is reported of Zuhri that he described what his scholars prescribed as a cure: “The man who has cast the Evil Eye should be called. A tub filled with water should be held high above the ground. The man should cup his hand, scoop out water and gargling the water spit it back into the tray. Next he should wash his face once in the tub. Next scoop water with his left hand and splash the back of his right palm once. Next splash the back of the left hand with the right hand, once. Next scoop water with his left hand and splash it over his right elbow. Next scoop water with his right hand and splash it over the left elbow. Then scoop water with his left hand and splash it over his right foot, once, inside the tub. Next scoop water with the right hand and splash it over the left foot into the tub. Then scoop water with his left hand and splash it over his right knee. Next scoop water with his right hand and splash it over the left

knee. Of course, all the time once, inside the tub, and while the tub is held above the ground. Finally, the inner loose end of his loin cloth over which the other loose end is tied up (and therefore is touching his skin, while it is not visible from outside, because of the external fold: Au.) be dipped into the water in the tub and rinsed. That over, the whole tub should be emptied over the affected man’s head in one go, from the rear, preferably without his knowledge. The tub itself be placed upside down behind him. (Quotation from Shanqiti ends here).

Concluding Remarks

In this *surah* Allah first exhorted us to seek refuge with Him generally from all that is evil. Then, (in the following verses) He specifically named three evil things (Shawkani).

It might also be noticed that while *ghasiq* and *hasid* are in *nakirah* form, *al-naffathat* is in *ma`rifah* form. This is because not every *ghasiq* or *hasid* intends evil and causes harm, whereas every *naffath* intends evil (*Zamakhshari, Razi*). ﴿﴾

Surah 114

Al-Nas

Makkan/Madinan¹

6 verses



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COM-
PASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Say, 'I take refuge with the Lord of men

﴿١﴾ قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ

[2] the King of men,

﴿٢﴾ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ

[3] the God of men²

﴿٣﴾ إِلَهِ النَّاسِ

[4] From the evil of the slinking prompter,³

﴿٤﴾ مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ

Merits of the Surah

The Prophet has said in a report of Muslim:

“This night some verses were revealed to me the like of which I have not heard earlier. Then he recited: ‘Say, I take refuge with the Lord of the Daybreak,’ and, ‘Say, I take refuge with the Lord of men’” (Qurtubi).

Also see merits of the previous chapter.

1. See the previous *surah* for notes on period of revelation.

2. Allah Most High first reminded man that he has a Lord, ‘the Lord of men’, who created him, developed

him and gave him various faculties including that of mind and thought. With the help of this faculty man can easily perceive that he is not independent, rather dependent, and a slave of a King who has all powers in his Hands: hence ‘the King of men.’ Then, when that was clear, Allah reminded him that since he is not the master, rather the slave of a King, it is right that he should worship none else besides Him and hence the third attribute Ilaha through: ‘the God of men’ (Razi).

3. The word ‘slinking’ here is the translation of khannas and ‘prompt-

[5] Who whispers⁴ in the breasts of men,⁵

الَّذِي يُوسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ ﴿٥﴾

er' that of waswas. This is following the tafsir of Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and Qatadah, (Ibn Jarir) who have said that the allusion is to Satan by the term waswas who has been called khannas (one who hides, appears and disappears often), because he prompts a man to evil whenever he finds him forgetful of Allah, withdraws when he finds his heart filled with His remembrance, to reappear when he finds it devoid of His remembrance.

Qurtubi reports that Abu Tha`labah al-Khushani supplicated to Allah that he be shown Iblis. He saw him as one whose limbs were branching out from all sides with a muzzle like the muzzle of a dog.

4. Shaytan and the Humans: A sahih narration (of Muslim: Ibn Ibrahim) reports the Prophet as having said:

مَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا وَقَدْ وَكَّلَ بِهِ قَرِينَهُ مِنَ الْجِنَّ .
قَالُوا وَإِيَّاكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ « وَإِيَّايَ إِلَّا أَنَّ اللَّهَ
أَعَانَنِي عَلَيْهِ فَأَسْلَمَ فَلَا يَأْمُرُنِي إِلَّا بِمَحْتَرٍ

“There is none amongst you but has a Devil appointed over him.”
He was asked: “Even you, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied: “Yes, even over me except that

Allah has helped me over him so that he has become a Muslim. He does not suggest to me anything but good.” In another report of Bukhari and Muslim,

عَنْ صَفِيَّةَ بِنْتِ حُجَيْبٍ قَالَتْ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- مُعْتَكِفًا فَأَتَيْتُهُ أُرْوَرُهُ لَيْلًا فَحَدَّثْتُهُ ثُمَّ قُمْتُ لِأَتَقَلِّبَ فُقَامَ مَعِيَ لِيَقْلِبَنِي . وَكَانَ مَسْكُوتًا فِي دَارِ أُسَامَةَ بْنِ زَيْدٍ فَمَرَّ رَجُلَانِ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ فَلَمَّا رَأَى النَّبِيَّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- أَسْرَعَا فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- « عَلَى رِسْلِكُمَا إِتْمَا صَفِيَّةُ بِنْتُ حُجَيْبٍ . » فَقَالَا سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ . قَالَ « إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَجْرِي مِنَ الْإِنْسَانِ بِجَرَى الدَّمِ وَإِنِّي حَشِيتُ أَنْ يُغْدَفَ فِي قُلُوبِكُمَا شَرًّا . » أَوْ قَالَ « شَيْعًا . »

once when the Prophet (*saw*s) was in seclusion in the mosque (mu`takif) his wife Safiyyah visited him by the night. When she was returning he went some distance with her. On the way two Ansari men happened to chance upon them, and tried to hurry away. He called them back and told them: “This is Safiyyah bint Huyayy.” They exclaimed, “Allah be praised, O Messenger of Allah!” (i.e. we never thought of anything evil). He said: “Satan indeed runs through a man like blood runs through him. I was

afraid he will inspire something - or evil - in your hearts.”

Finally, Abu Tamimah has said in a strong report of Musnad Ahmad that once when he was the pillion rider of the Prophet, the donkey stumbled. He said, ‘May the Devil perish.’ The Prophet remarked:

لَا تَقُلْ نَعَسَ الشَّيْطَانُ فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا قُلْتَ نَعَسَ الشَّيْطَانُ
تَعَاظَمَ وَقَالَ يُقْوَتِي صَرَغَتُهُ وَإِذَا قُلْتَ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ
تَصَاعَرَ حَتَّى يَصِيرَ مِثْلَ الذُّبَابِ

“Do not say that. For when you say that the Devil is encouraged and says, ‘By my power I shall overcome him.’ Rather, when you say ‘Bismillah,’ he is reduced in size until he becomes as small as a fly” (Ibn Kathir).

Ibn al-Qayyim wrote: Bukhari has a *hadith* in his compilation narrated by Abu Hurayrah which says that the Prophet said:

يَعْقِدُ الشَّيْطَانُ عَلَى قَافِيَةِ رَأْسِ أَحَدِكُمْ إِذَا هُوَ نَامَ
ثَلَاثَ عُقَدٍ ، يَضْرِبُ كُلَّ عُقْدَةٍ عَلَيْكَ لَيْلٌ طَوِيلٌ فَارْتَدُّ
، فَإِنْ اسْتَيْقَظَ فَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ انْحَلَّتْ عُقْدَةٌ ، فَإِنْ تَوَضَّأَ
انْحَلَّتْ عُقْدَةٌ ، فَإِنْ صَلَّى انْحَلَّتْ عُقْدَةٌ فَأَصْبَحَ نَشِيطًا
طَيِّبَ النَّفْسِ ، وَإِلَّا أَصْبَحَ حَبِيبَ النَّفْسِ كَسَلَانًا

“When a man sleeps Shaytan ties three knots over his head opening each one of them at the proper time, saying, you have a long night before you so sleep. If he wakes up and remembers

Allah, one knot opens up. When he makes ablution another knot opens up. When he Prays all the three knots open up. In consequence he is fresh and facile of heart. But if he does not, he ends up lazy and vile of heart.” According to another report, also in Bukhari, Shaytan urinates in the ears of a believer so that he sleeps until sunrise. The Prophet was told about a man who did not wake up for his *fajr*. He remarked:

عَنْ أَبِي وَائِلٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ
ذُكِرَ عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - رَجُلٌ فَقِيلَ
مَا زَالَ نَائِمًا حَتَّى أَصْبَحَ مَا قَامَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ . فَقَالَ
« بَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ فِي أُذُنِهِ »

“That’s a man in whose ears Shaytan urinated.”

Shafi` adds: Allah has taught us how to defend ourselves against the prompting of Shaytan. He said (16: 98-100):

{فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ
(٩٨) إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَى
رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ} [النحل: ٩٨، ٩٩]

“And when you recite the Qur`an seek refuge in Allah from Satan the accursed. He has no power over those who believe and place their trust in their Lord. His power is over those alone who befriend him and ascribe associates to Allah.”

5. Thus we know that there are Shayatin of the *Jinn* as well as of men, as the Qur'an has said (6: 112):

{وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيَاطِينَ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرْهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ} [الأنعام: ١١٢]

“And that is how We have appointed for every Prophet enemies from men and Jinn.”

Further, the Shayatin, as they whisper into men's breasts, also whisper into the *Jinn's* breast (Qurtubi).

Ahmad and Abu Da'ud, while Nasa'i with some additions, have reported Ibn `Abbas as saying that once a man went to the Prophet and said:

جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي أَخَذْتُ نَفْسِي بِالشَّيْءِ لِأَنِّي أَجْرَمُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ أَنْ أَتَكَلَّمَ بِهِ. قَالَ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- « اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي رَدَّ كَيْدَهُ إِلَى الْوَسْوَسَةِ »

“I find things in my heart that I would prefer the heavens crash down rather than that I should speak of them.” The Prophet replied: “Allah is Great. Allah is Great. Allah be praised who turned the suggestions of Satan into mere whispers” (Ibn Kathir).

As explanation it might be added that when the person added that those thoughts were so heavy upon him that he preferred the heavens to fall rather than they should occur to him, it meant that those were not doubts (*shukuk*), rather mere Satanic suggestions (*wasawis*). In other words the difference between doubts and passing evil thoughts is that the former is firmly established in the heart, does not worry the person and, depending on how serious they are, can even render him a munafiq. The person concerned is in truth in a skeptical state of mind about the thing that he doubts. In contrast, Satanic suggestions are mere passing thoughts that do not take root in the heart, which the person has a great dislike for, and which, in turn, is a sign of his sincerity in faith (Au.).

Shanqiti adds: No more can Shaytan do than whisper in the breast of men. When the Orientalists had gathered in Beirut for a conference, a complaint was generally voiced that despite their massive efforts over thirty years to spread Christisnity, they hadn't been able to convert a single Muslim to Christianity. The chair-man remarked: “Maybe not. But we have surely implanted doubts, which is no small an achievement.”

[6] - from among the Jinn and men.⁶

مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَ النَّاسِ ﴿٦﴾

6. Imām Ahmad has reported Abu Dharr as saying:

عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ قَالَ أَتَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- وَهُوَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ فَجَلَسْتُ فَقَالَ يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ هَلْ صَلَّيْتَ . قَالَ لَا . قَالَ « فَمُ فَصَلِّ » . قَالَ فَمُتُّ فَصَلَّيْتُ ثُمَّ جَلَسْتُ . فَقَالَ « يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ تَعَوَّدُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَرِّ شَيْطَانِ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ » . قَالَ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهِ وَلِلْإِنْسِ شَيْطَانٌ قَالَ « تَعَمَّ » .

قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ الصَّلَاةُ . قَالَ « خَيْرٌ مَوْضُوعٍ مِنْ شَاءَ أَقَلٍّ وَمَنْ شَاءَ أَكْثَرَ » . قَالَ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَمَا الصَّوْمُ قَالَ « فَرَضَ مُجْرِيٌّ وَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَزِيدٌ » . قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَالصَّدَقَةُ قَالَ « أضعافٌ مُضَاعَفَةٌ » . قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَأَيُّهَا أَفْضَلُ قَالَ « جَهْدٌ مِنْ مُقِلٍّ أَوْ سِرٌّ إِلَى فَقِيرٍ » . قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَيُّ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ كَانَ أَوْلَى قَالَ « آدَمُ » . قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَنَبِيٌّ كَانَ قَالَ « تَعَمَّ نَبِيٌّ مُكَلِّمٌ » . قَالَ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَمْ الْمُرْسَلُونَ قَالَ « ثَلَاثُمِائَةٍ وَبِضْعَةَ عَشَرَ جَمًّا غَفِيرًا » . وَقَالَ مَرَّةً « حَمْسَةَ عَشَرَ » . قَالَ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ آدَمُ أَنَبِيٌّ كَانَ قَالَ « تَعَمَّ نَبِيٌّ مُكَلِّمٌ » . قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَيُّهَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ أَعْظَمُ قَالَ « آيَةُ الْكُرْسِيِّ (اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ) »

“Once I went to the Prophet while he was in the mosque. I sat down by him. He asked me: “Did you Pray, Abu Dharr?” I said: “No.” He said: “Do it now.” So I Prayed and went back to him. He said: “Abu Dharr, seek Allah’s help against the Devils from among the *Jinn* and men.”

(i.e., from the Devil who made you forget the Prayer as you entered the mosque: Au.). I asked: “O Apostle of Allah, are there Devils from among the men?” He replied: “Yes.” I asked: “O Apostle of Allah, what about Prayers?” He said: “They are the best thing, so one might do more or less of them.” I asked: “What about fasts?” He answered: “An obligation that will be well rewarded. And Allah has more.” I asked: “And what about charity?” He said: “(They are rewarded) in heaps upon heaps.” I asked: “Which is the best of it?” He answered: “What best the straitened can offer. (A phrase is unclear here: Au.). I asked: “Who was the first Prophet, O Apostle of Allah?” He replied: “Adam?” I asked: “O Apostle of Allah, was he a Prophet?” He said: “Yes. A Prophet spoken to (by Allah directly).” I asked: “How may Messengers were sent?” He said: “Three hundred and odd. A large number.” (According to another version he said: “Three hundred and fifteen.” I asked: “What is the

greatest revelation made to you?”
He answered: “Ayah al-Kursiyy.”
With some variations Nasa’i has
also recorded this narration (Ibn
Kathir).

A Piquant Point

Imām Razi presents his usual piquant observations. He says it might be noticed in comparison with the earlier *surah* that both deal with “refuge” (*isti`adhah*). In the earlier *surah* ‘the Refuge’ was mentioned by one Attribute, the Lord, and the ‘refuge from’ were mentioned as of three kinds - the ghasiq, the naffathat and

the hasid. In contrast, in this *surah* ‘the Refuge’ has been mentioned by three Attributes (the Lord, the King, the Ilaha), while the ‘refuge from’ is only one entity - the Devil. This is because in the previous *surah* one was seeking the protection of the physical body, whereas here, one is seeking the protection of one’s religion, which is of greater importance and consequence. The supplication, therefore, for that which is of greater importance had to be preceded by greater amount of praises to the Lord, (hence the mention of ‘the Refuge’ by three of His Attributes).

