

# AL-MĪZĀN

**An Exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān**

*BY:*

**al-'Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad  
Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī**

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***In the Name of Allāh,  
The All-compassionate, The All-merciful***

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

\* \* \* \* \*

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

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ  
أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ  
أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ  
وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى  
سَيِّدِ رُسُلِكَ وَخَاتَمِ أَنْبِيَائِكَ  
مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ  
وَصَلِّ عَلَى جَمِيعِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالرُّسُلِينَ

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**TRANSLITERATION  
ARABIC LETTERS**

Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration
ء	’	ك	k
ب	b	ل	l
ت	t	م	m
ث	th	ن	n
ج	j	ه	h
ح	ḥ	و	w
خ	kh	ي	y
د	d	ة	ah, at
ذ	dh		(construct state)
ر	r	ال	article al- and ’l
ز	z		(even before the antepalatals)
س	s		<b><u>Long Vowels</u></b>
ش	sh	آ	ā
ص	ṣ	و	ū
ض	ḍ	ي	ī
ط	ṭ		<b><u>Short Vowels</u></b>
ظ	ẓ	ا	a
ع	‘ <i>or</i> ’	و	u
غ	gh	ي	i
ف	f		
ق	q		



## تصدير

١- العلامة الشَّهير والمفكّر والفيلسوف الاسلامي المعاصر، السيّد محمّد حسين الطّباطبائي (١٣٢١/١٩٠٤ - ١٤٠٢/١٩٨١) رحمه الله سبق وأن عرّفناه بعض التعريف في تصديرا للجزء الأوّل من الترجمة الانجليزية للميزان، الذي سينشر، بحول الله وقوته، في القريب العاجل.

٢- اشتهر العلامة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله بالعديد. من آثاره وأهمّها تفسيره الكبير (الميزان في تفسير القرآن) الذي يصحّ أن يعدّ الدّعامة الأساسيّة للتّقدير العلميّ الذي ناله العلامة الطّباطبائي في العالم الاسلامي.

٣- شعرنا بالضرورة الملحة إلى نشر تفسير للقرآن الكريم بالانجليزية، و بعد مداورات واستشارات، وقع اختيارنا على (الميزان) لأننا وجدناه يجمع الى حدّ ما، بين النّقاط التي لا بدّ منها في تفسير متكامل للقرآن الكريم و بين ما تتطلبه الذّهنيّة المعاصرة للقارئ المسلم فاقترحنا على الأستاذ العلامة السيّد سعيد أختر رضي القيام بهذه المهمّة، لما نعهد فيه من القدرة العلميّة على فهم النّصّ العربي، وكفاءته الأدبيّة في التعبير والترجمة، وقد اعتمدنا عليه في ذلك، ليكون هو الزّعيم بالترجمة الانجليزية والمسئول عنها، كما كان العلامة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله هو الزّعيم ببحوث الكتاب والمرجع المسئول عنها.

٤- ونحن إذ ننشر (الجزء الثامن) من الترجمة الانجليزية لتفسير (الميزان) و يطابق النّصف الثاني من الجزء الرابع للنّصّ العربي، لندرجو من الله سبحانه إن يأخذ بأيدينا و يعيننا على إعداد الترجمة الكاملة للكتاب و نشره. و قد وضعنا قائمتين: (الأولى) بأسماء المؤلفين الوارد ذكرهم في مجموع أجزاء (الميزان) و (الثانية) بأسماء الكتب التي هي بحاجة إلى التعريف، و قد ألحقنا هاتين القائمتين بالجزء الأوّل من الترجمة الانجليزية، ولكننا وضعنا جدولين آخرين يجد هما القارئ ملحقين بكلّ جزء من أجزاء الترجمة.

\* \* \*

و من الله سبحانه نسال، و اليه نبتهل أن يجعل عملنا خالصا لوجهه الكريم، و أن يوفّقنا لا تمام ما بدأنا و يسدّدنا في خطوتنا هذه و خطواتنا المقبلة، إنه نعم المولى و نعم النصير.

المؤسسة العالمية للخدمات  
الاسلامية  
(لجنة التأليف والترجمة والنشر)  
طهران - ايران

## FOREWORD

1. al-‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī (1321/1904 — 1402/1981) may Allāh have mercy upon him — was a famous scholar, thinker and the most celebrated contemporary Islamic philosopher. We have introduced him briefly in the first volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān*.

2. al-‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī is well-known for a number of his works of which the most important is his great exegesis *al-Mīzān fī tafsīri ‘l-Qur’ān* which is rightly counted as the fundamental pillar of scholarly work which the ‘Allāmah has achieved in the Islamic world

3. We felt the necessity of publishing an exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān in English. After a thorough consultation, we came to choose *al-Mīzān* because we found that it contained in itself, to a considerable extent, the points which should necessarily be expounded in a perfect exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān and the points which appeal to the mind of the contemporary Muslim reader. Therefore, we proposed to al-Ustādh al-‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Sa‘īd Akhtar ar-Raḍawī to undertake this task, because we were familiar with his intellectual ability to understand the

4. We have now undertaken the publication of the eighth volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān*. This volume corresponds with the second half of the fourth volume of the Arabic text. With the help of Allāh, the Exalted, we hope to provide the complete translation and publication of this voluminous work.

In the first volume, the reader will find two more appendixes included apart from the two which are to appear in all volumes of the English translation of *al Mīzān*: One for the authors and the other for the books cited throughout this work.

\* \* \* \*

We implore upon Allāh to effect our work purely for His pleasure, and to help us to complete this work which we have started. May Allāh guide us in this step which we have taken and in the future steps, for He is the best Master and the best Helper.

**WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES**  
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# **al-Mīzān**

## **Volume Nine**

*ch.4, vrs. 77 – 176*

*ch.5, vrs. 1-3*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ قِيلَ لَهُمْ كُفُّوا أَيْدِيَكُمْ

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ  
مِّنْهُمْ يَخْشَوْنَ النَّاسَ كَخَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَشَدَّ خَشْيَةً وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا لِمَ  
كُتِبَ عَلَيْنَا الْقِتَالُ لَوْ لَا أَخْرَجْنَا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ قُلْ مَنْعَ الدُّنْيَا  
قَلِيلٌ وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا ﴿٧٧﴾ أَيْنَمَا  
تَكُونُوا يَدْرِكَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّشِيدَةٍ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ  
حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَقُولُوا  
هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قُلْ كُلُّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ فَمَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ  
يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا ﴿٧٨﴾ مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ  
سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنَ نَفْسِكَ وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿٧٩﴾  
مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ  
عَلَيْهِمْ حَافِظًا ﴿٨٠﴾

*Have you not seen those to whom it was said: "Withhold your hands, and establish prayer and pay zakāt"; but when fighting is prescribed for them, lo! a party of them fear men as they ought to have feared Allāh, or (even) a greater fear, and say: "Our Lord! why hast Thou ordained fighting for us Wherefore didst thou not grant us a delay to a near end?" Say: "The provision of this world is short and the hereafter is better for him who guards (against evil); and you shall not be wronged the husk of a date-stone" (77). Wherever you are, death will overtake you, though you are in lofty towers; and if benefit comes to them, they say: "This is from Allāh"; and if a misfortune befalls them, they say: "This is from you." Say: "All is from Allāh;" but what is the matter with these people that well-nigh they do not understand what is told (them)? (78). Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allāh, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself; and We have sent you (O Prophet) to mankind as a Messenger, and Allāh is sufficient as a witness (79). Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allāh; and whoever turns back, so We have not sent you as a keeper over them (80).*

\* \* \* \* \*

### COMMENTARY

The verses are connected to the preceding ones, and all together are in one context. These verses throw light on the affairs of another group of the believers of weak faith; they contain admonition and remind them that this world is transient while the blessings of the hereafter are ever-lasting; and they explain a Qur'ānic reality concerning good and evil.

**QUR'ĀN:** *Have you not seen those to whom it was said . . . or (even) a greater fear:* To withhold hands implies refraining from fighting – as the killings (which are a part of fighting) are done by hands. This verse shows that the Muslims, when faced in the beginning with tyrannies and oppressions of the unbelievers, felt unable to restrain themselves and bear the oppressions with patience. They were



eager to draw sword. But Allāh ordered them to refrain from fighting; they were rather exhorted to establish the religious rites such as prayer and *zakāt*, in order to strengthen the religious tenets and faith and establish them on firm footing; only then would Allāh allow them to fight His enemies. Otherwise, the structure of religion would crumble, its pillars would fall down and all its parts would deteriorate.

Obviously, the verses blame those believers: It were they who were impatient to fight the unbelievers, and did not like to withhold their hands even at a time when they did not have any power or armaments to stand before the enemies. But when fighting was prescribed and ordained, a group among them felt terrified of the enemy (who were human beings like themselves) as they should have feared Allāh – or even a greater fear than that.

**QUR'ĀN: and say: "Our Lord! why hast Thou ordained fighting for us . . ."** : Apparently, it is in conjunction with, *a part of them fear men*; this explanation looks more appropriate when we ponder on the change of tense from "fear men" (aorist tense) to "say" (which in original text is "said", i.e., past tense). Therefore, the complainants were those very people who in the beginning were so eager to fight and had claimed that they could not bear patiently all those tyrannies of unbelievers; and who at that time were told to restrain themselves.

Again, the sentence, {"Our Lord! why hast Thou ordained fighting for us Wherefore didst Thou not grant us a delay to a near end?"} may be an exposition of their hidden feelings and real condition. Or, it may be a narration of their actual saying. We find many dramatic expressions in the Qur'ān.

The "end" – i.e., death in normal way – is called "near"; it does not mean that they wanted deliverance from being killed so that they could live a little longer. Rather, it brings into open their feelings that even if they were not killed until they died a natural death, it would still be a short life and near end; so why was not Allāh willing to let them live that short period? Why did He afflict them with quick death? Why did He put them in danger of being killed?

They speak in this manner because their hearts are entangled with this life – which in Qur'ānic view is but a short provision which is going to end quickly without leaving any trace; and then will come the life hereafter which is the eternal and real life, the really good, rather better, life. That is why their views are rebutted in the words: *Say: "The provision of this world is short"*.

**QUR'ĀN: Say: "The provision of this world is short . . . the husk of a date-stone"** : Allāh orders the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to reply to these people of weaker faith by exposing their misconception; by showing to them how mistaken they are in preferring this world's short life over the dignity of *jihād* and martyrdom in the way of Allāh. In short, they are expected to be pious in their belief, when compared to the hereafter, is a short provision, and the hereafter is better for pious ones who guard against evil. Therefore, they should opt for the hereafter which is better than the short provision of this world, for they are believers and on the path of piety. Do they fear that Allāh will harm them or do injustice to them? Is it for this fear that they prefer immediate provision in their hands over the promised good? They should not entertain such ideas because Allāh will never do any injustice to them even like the husk of a date-stone.

This description shows that the word, "for him who guards (against evil)", in a way puts the adjective in place of its qualified noun in order to disclose the underlying reason of this statement and asserts its applicability to the subject in hand. The implication is this – and Allāh knows better: The hereafter is better for you because you, being believers, are supposed to be the people of piety, and the piety makes one achieve the good of the hereafter. In a way, the word, "for him who guards (against evil)", is an indirect criticism of that group.

**QUR'ĀN: Wherever you are death will overtake you, though you are in lofty towers** : *al-Burūj* ( الْبُرُوجُ ) is plural of *al-burj* ( الْبُرْجُ = tower). It is constructed on forts with extremely strengthened foundation, for repelling the enemy from it and with its help. Its original meaning is show, appearance; and from it is derived *al-tabarruj* ( التَّبَرُّجُ = displaying the adornments, etc.) *at-Tashyīd* ( التَّشْيِيدُ = setting up) is derived from *ash-shayd* ( الشَّيْدُ = mortar), because it strengthens and raises the building and decorates it. *al-Burūju 'l-mushayyadah* ( الْمُشَيِّدَةُ الْبُرُوجُ ) = strong lofty edifices built on forts, into which man takes shelter from advancing enemy.

This sentence describes a reality wrapped in an example. The "lofty towers" stands for every strong edifice used as shelter against calamities. In short, it says: Death is something you cannot escape from even if you take refuge in strong shelters. Therefore, you should not think that if you were absent from battle-field or if *jihād* was not prescribed for you, you would have remained safe from death or that death could not have overtaken you. The death decreed by Allāh will surely reach you.

**QUR'ĀN:** *and if a benefit comes to you, they say: "This is from Allāh;" and if a misfortune befalls them, they say: "This is from you." Say: "All is from Allāh;" but . . .* : Two more examples of their foolish talks have been quoted here, and then Allāh orders His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to give its rebuttal by describing the reality about benefit or harm which comes to a man.

The context shows that it was said by the same believers of weaker faith who are mentioned in preceding verses.

It may be based on their actual words, or an inference from their behaviour. There is nothing new in it, because Mūsā (a.s.) also was confronted with a similar accusation; as Allāh has described in the Qur'ān: *But when good came to them they said: "This is due to us;" and when evil afflicted them, they attributed it to the ill-luck of Mūsā and those with him; surely their evil omen is only from Allāh, but most of them do not know (7:131).* The same attitude is reported, from all nations *vis-à-vis* their prophets; and this *ummah* in its dealings with its Prophet was not behind other nations. Allāh says: . . . *their hearts are all alike . . .* (2:118; moreover, they resemble most of all to the Children of Israel; and the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said: "They (the Israelites) would not have entered a burrow of a lizard but you too would enter it." We have earlier quoted traditions to this effect from both sects.

Many exegetes have artfully tried to show that these verses were revealed about the Jews, or the hypocrites, or the Jews and the hypocrites together; but obviously the context rejects such interpretation.

In any case, the verse, in this context, shows that the benefit and misfortune here refer to some things which could be attributed to Allāh; but they attributed one group, i.e., benefits and good fortunes to Allāh, and the other group, i.e., harm and misfortunes to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). The good fortunes and misfortunes refer to those occurrences which they were faced with when the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) came to them and began raising the edifice of religion and spreading his Call through *jihād*; so these words refer, respectively, to victory and war-booty in the encounters and battles which they won, and being slain and wounded and getting troubles in the others. They attributed the misfortunes to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) saying that it was his ill omen, or accusing him of unsound decision and mismanagement. Allāh, then, ordered His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to refute their claim in these words: *Say: "All is from Allāh."* These are the

happenings and misfortunes arranged by the highest authority of this universe, i.e., Allāh alone, Who has no partner or colleague, inasmuch as all things submit to Allāh only – and to no one else – in their existence, continuity and all forthcoming events and incidents. This is what the Qur’ān teaches us.

Then He asks, like the one who is astonished to see their petrified understanding and dull mind: *but what is the matter with these people that well-nigh they do not understand what is told (them)*, and are unable to know and grasp such a clear reality.

**QUR’ĀN: *Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allāh, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself:*** It was told that: *well-nigh they do not understand what is told (them)*. Therefore, now that Allāh intends to explain the reality, this verse particularly addresses the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) [in 2nd person singular] ignoring those people of low understanding. It explains the reality of good fortune and misfortune that come to a man. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is not different from others in this reality which is common to all existing things, or at least covers all human beings, believers and disbelievers, virtuous and evil, prophets and common men.

Good or beautiful are the things which man likes by nature, like health, bounties, security and comfort; and they are all from Allāh. Evil or ugly are the things which he dislikes, like disease, humiliation, poverty and mischief; all this in final analysis is caused by man, and is not attributed to Allāh. The verse, in this sense, is not very far from the verse: *This is because Allāh does never change a bounty which He has conferred upon a people until they change their own condition, and because Allāh is Hearing, Knowing (8:53)*. This reality is not contrary to another universal fact – that all good and evil emanates from Allāh, when looked from another angle, as will be explained below.

**QUR’ĀN: *and We have sent you (O Prophet!) to mankind as a Messenger, and Allāh is sufficient as a witness:*** Your only distinction, bestowed by Us, is that you are Our Messenger; you are responsible for conveying Our message to them; and your prestige is of the Divine Messengership. You do not have any other status, nor do you have any power in these affairs. Consequently, you are not responsible for any good luck or misfortune coming to them. You could not bring evil to the people nor can you keep any good away

from them. It is an indirect refutation of those who attributed bad luck to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and said: "*This is from you*", perceiving him as an ill omen. Then the refutation is strengthened with the words: "and Allāh is sufficient as a witness".

**QUR'ĀN: *Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allāh; and . . .*** : A new sentence strengthens and reconfirms the preceding statement: *and We have sent you to mankind as a Messenger*. It also gives the reason for the order given here: You are but Our Messenger; whoever obeys you because of Messengership *he indeed obeys Allāh and whoever turns back, so We have not sent you as a keeper over them*.

Obviously, the phrase, "Whoever obeys the Messenger", is a sort of adjective put in place of its noun, and it points to the underlying reason of this declaration, as was the case with the sentence: *and the hereafter is better for him who guards (against evil); and you shall not be wronged the husk of a date-stone*. Accordingly, the theme continues in the same direction, without turning from 2nd person (*and We have sent you*) to the 3rd. (*Whoever obeys the Messenger*) and again to the 2nd (*We have not sent you . . .*).

#### ATTRIBUTION OF GOOD AND EVIL TO ALLĀH, THE HIGH.

[*al-Hasanah* (الحَسَنَةُ) = good, merit, benefit, beautiful) is opposite of *as-sayyiah* (السَّيِّئَةُ) = evil, sin, ugly, misfortune.)] Probably, man first became aware of the sense of "beauty" by looking at his fellow human beings' good feature, i.e., balanced stature, well-proportioned limbs and lovely face. Then the meaning was extended to other material objects and phenomena; and finally it was used for "conformity of a thing with its natural purpose".

A human face is called beautiful when its eyes, eye-brows, ears, nose and mouth, etc. are exactly in the shape they should be, and are aligned to one another properly; This in its turn attracts the hearts and excites admiration and love.

If a thing is bereft of beauty, it is called bad, evil and ugly – various words used in different contexts. Ugliness therefore is a negative connotation as beauty is a positive one.

Then the concepts were extended to actions, abstract ideas and other characteristics found in a social set-up, keeping in view whether

they were in conformity with society's purpose or not; whether they agree with felicity of human life and its enjoyment or not. Justice is good; doing good to a deserving person is a merit; it is a virtue to educate, to train, to give good advice, etc., where it is needed. Injustice, transgression and similar things are evil and ugly. Why? Because the first group of actions is in accord with the man's felicity and happiness and enables him to enjoy fully the benefits his society offers, while the second is not so. This merit and virtue (and this evil and demerit ) get their characteristics from the actions they are related to. There are some actions whose virtue is ever-lasting and perpetual, e.g., justice, because their consistency with the society's aim and purpose is enduring and permanent. Likewise, there are some perpetual demerits like injustice.

On the other hand, there are some actions whose characteristics differ from time to time, place to place and society to society. Laughter and jokes are good in friends' gatherings, but not in presence of elders; in joyous functions, not in mourning assemblies nor in mosques and other places of worship. Fornication and liquor-drinking is good in the Western societies, but evil and sin in the Muslims' eyes.

You should not listen to those who say that [ethical values are relative, and no action has inherent merit or demerit in itself. They say that] virtue and evil are always changing, they have no permanency, no endurance; they are not absolute. They give example of justice and injustice; a system which a group considers based on justice, is diametrically opposed to that which another nation calls just and fair. Flogging a fornicator is justice in Islam, but not so in the Western countries; and so on and so forth. Thus meaning of justice is not fixed and permanent.

But such people are totally confused. They do not differentiate between the meaning [of justice, for example,] and its practical application. We should have no track with people of such a low intelligence.

The fact is that man is ready to change all his social customs, at once or gradually, according to the changing circumstances of the society; but he will never agree that he is deprived of the attribute of "justice", i.e., he is called "unjust". Even if he sees a friend oppressing someone, he will try to find excuses for him [but will not admit that his friend was unjust]. This topic needs detailed discussion, but this is not the place for it, because we are in the middle of a more important discourse. Lastly, the meaning of good and evil was further extended to cover all external happenings which man is faced with in his life

owing to various factors. These are the individual or collective events, some of which agree with his expectations and conform with his individual or collective life's felicity, like health and comfort. These are called good or benefits. There are other happenings on the opposite side like calamities and sorrows, poverty or sickness, humiliation or imprisonment, etc.; and they are called evil or misfortune.

It appears from the above that when good and evil are attributed to various affairs or actions, it is done with this criterion in mind: Are these affairs or action in conformity with human perfection or felicity or not. Good and evil are two attributes which are seen in relation to human felicity. This relationship in some cases is lasting and perpetual; while in other things it is changing. For instance, monetary help is good if given to a deserving person, and bad if dished out to an underserving man.

Good is always a positive thing, while evil and ugliness has negative connotation. That is, an evil thing or action lacks the above-mentioned conformity with human felicity. Otherwise, if we ignore this conformity or non-conformity, then the thing or action by itself is one and the same without any difference whatsoever.

Earthquake and flood devastate a community; they are evil and misfortune in their eyes, but their enemies will count them as blessings and good fortune for themselves. Every general calamity, looked from the religion's view-point, is good if it visits the unbelievers, who create mischief in the earth; but the same will be seen as evil and bad if it attacks a believing and good community. Eating food is good and lawful, if it is prepared from one's own money; and the same will become evil and unlawful if it is a part of another man's property taken without his permission. Why? Because it lacks obedience to the prohibition in respect of eating other people's property without permission; or the obedience to the imperative order of restricting oneself to those things only which Allāh has allowed. Sexual intercourse between a man and a woman is good and lawful if it follows marriage; and is evil and sin if it is illicit, without marriage – because the latter lacks conformity with divine commandment. In short, good is a positive aspect of things and actions, and evil is their negative aspect, although the thing or action itself is the same in both cases.

According to Qur'ān, all that is called "thing" (except Allāh Himself) is created by Allāh. *Allāh is the Creator of every thing* (39:62); . . . *and He created every thing, then ordained for it a*

*measure* (25:2). The two verses show that every thing is His creation. Then Allāh says: [Allāh] *Who made good every thing that He has created* (32:7). Thus, every created thing is good, and this goodness is an integral part of creation which cannot be separated from it; if it is Allāh's creation, it is good.

Every thing has its share of beauty according to its share in creation and existence. If you ponder on the meaning of beauty, described earlier, you will understand our stand more clearly. A thing is good and beautiful if it conforms with the purpose it is intended for; and all parts of existence and all portions of this universe are consistent and in complete harmony with each other. Far be it from the Lord of the universe to create a thing whose parts lack consistency and harmony, or work against each other, as it would negate the intended purpose. Can a created thing overpower the Creator? Or, negate the purpose intended for this wonderful system which astonishes the intelligence and stuns the mind? Allāh says: *He is Allāh, the One, the Subduer* (of all) (39:4); *and He is the Supreme above His servants* (6:18); *and Allāh is not such that any thing in the heavens or in the earth should weaken Him; surely He is the Knowing, the Powerful* (35:44). Thus, nothing can overpower Allāh or weaken Him in anything He intends from His creatures and wishes about His servants.

Consequently, every good blessing in creation is attributed to Him. Likewise, every evil calamity, when seen by itself, and looked according to the basic relationship encompassing the whole creation, is attributable to Allāh – although it seems evil when looked from another angle. It is this reality which is described in some verses of the Qur'ān: *and if a benefit comes to them, they say: "It is from Allāh;" and if a misfortune befalls you, they say: "This is from you." Say: "All is from Allāh;" but what is the matter with these people that well-nigh they do not understand what is told (them)?* (4:78); *But when good came to them they said: "This is due to us;" and when evil afflicted them, they attributed it to the ill-luck of Mūsā and those with him; surely their ill omen is only from Allāh, but most of them do not know* (7:131). There are other verses of the same theme.

As for misfortune, the Qur'ān attributes that of the man to the man himself. Allāh says: *Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allāh, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself* (4:79); *And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought, and (yet) He pardons most* (of your faults) (42:30); *Surely Allāh does not change the condition of a people until*



*they change their own condition (13:11); This is because Allāh does never change a bounty which He has conferred upon a people until they change their own condition (8:53); there are many such verses.*

In more clear words, the preceding verses show that the calamities and misfortunes too, like good fortunes, are good and beautiful in their creation. Then how do they turn into misfortunes? It is only because they do not agree with some people's, or some thing's, nature and these things or people get hurt by them. It means that Allāh had not created in these items what would agree with these people or things. It is this withholding of generosity which is considered misfortune or calamity for the people or things that get harmed by them, as is clearly seen in the verse: *Whatever Allāh grants to men of (His) mercy, there is none to withhold it, and what He withholds there is none to send it forth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise (35:2).*

Therefore, Allāh states that this withholding of generosity (when it is withheld), or increase or decrease in sending His mercy forth depends on the ability or capacity of the subject: How much is a person or thing able to benefit from His mercy? Allāh explains it in a similitude: *He sends down water from the cloud, then the valleys flow (with water) according to their measure (13:17).* Also, He says: *And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure (15:21).* Thus, Allāh bestows a favour on a thing according to what it deserves and keeping its condition in consideration. *Does He not know Who has created? And He is the Knower of the subtleties, the Aware (67:14).*

We that blessing and affliction, tribulation and comfort from one thing to another according to its particular situation and condition, as Allāh says: *And every one has a direction to which he would turn (2:148).* Every thing turns to that direction and seeks that item which agrees with its situation.

From the above discourse you will easily understand that happiness and distress, blessing and affliction, *vis-à-vis* this man, who lives with a free will in the light of the Qur'ānic teachings, are strongly connected to his own free will; because he is proceeding on a path which will lead him to happiness if followed properly, while deviation from it will put him in turmoil and distress. This, of course, concerns those subjects for which he has been granted free choice.

The Qur'ān confirms this understanding. Allāh says: *That is because Allāh would never change a bounty which He has conferred upon a people until they change their own condition (8:53).* Their pure intentions and good deeds have influence on the bounty which they

have been blessed with; but when their intention is polluted with insincerity and actions tainted with evil, Allāh changes their condition by withholding His mercy from them. He says: *And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought, and (yet) He pardons most (of your faults) (42:30)*. Their actions have a hand in the calamities and misfortunes which befall them, although Allāh pardons most of their misdeeds. Also Allāh says: *Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allāh, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself (4:79)*.

However, you should not imagine that when Allāh revealed this verse to His Prophet (s.a.w.a.), He had forgotten the clear reality which has been stated in the verses which say: *Allāh is the Creator of every thing . . . (39:62)*; *[Allāh] Who made good every thing that He has created . . . (32:7)*. These verses clearly show that every thing has been created by Allāh and is good in itself. And He says: *. . . and your Lord is not forgetful (19:64)*; *. . . errs not my Lord, nor does He forget (20:52)*. So, the verse (*Whatever benefit comes to you . . . [4:79]*) means that: The good which comes to you – and all that comes to you is good – is from Allāh; and the misfortune which befalls you, it is misfortune for you because it does not agree with your aims and desires, although in itself it is good; you have brought it to yourself by your wrong choice and also you have asked Allāh in the same manner. Allāh is too great to initiate any evil, harm or misfortune for you.

As explained earlier, the verse is particularly addressed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), yet the meaning covers all human beings. In other words, this verse, like the other two (*That is because Allāh would never change a bounty which He has conferred . . . [8:53]*; *And whatever affliction befalls you . . . [42:30]*) looks at social affairs as well as individual matters; the human society has its own existence, will and choice distinct from individual ones.

The society is a living entity in which the past generations and ancient people are dissolved [succeeded by coming generations]; in this way, the followers are held responsible for the evil deeds of their predecessors, the living bear the burden of the dead, and the innocent share in the punishment of the wrong-doers – while in the cases of the individuals it is never allowed. We have written about this subject in the second volume of this book in the Essay on the rules governing actions.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.3, pp.251-73. (tr.)

Look at the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) in the battle of Uud. He was inflicted grievous wounds in the face and upper teeth, (and the Muslims too suffered great losses), and he (s.a.w.a.) was sinless prophet. If we attribute this adversity to the society – because they had disobeyed the order given by Allāh and His Messenger – it was a misfortune wrought by the society, and he (s.a.w.a.) was a part of that society. And if it is attributed to his august person, then it was a divinely ordained trial which befell him in the way of Allāh and in course of his sacred divine mission, of which he had full insight and in that case it was rather a grace of Allāh which raised his spiritual status and rank.

Likewise, whatever misfortune befalls a people is attributed to their actions from the Qur'ānic point of view – and the Qur'ānic view is but truth; and whatever bounty or benefit comes to them, it is from Allāh.

Of course, there are many verses which attribute the benefits to men themselves to some extent. For example: *And if the people of the towns had believed and guarded (against evil), We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth . . .* (7:96); *And We made of them Imāms to guide by Our command as they were patient and they were certain of Our signs* (32:24); *And We caused them to enter into Our mercy; surely they were of the good ones* (21:86).

But at the same time Allāh says that nothing in His creation has power to reach its intended goal or to proceed to any good, except when Allāh gives it such power and guides it to that goal; as He says: *"Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal)"* (20:50); *. . . and were it not for Allāh's grace upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been pure, but Allāh purifies whom He pleases . . .* (24:21). These two verses in conjunction with the preceding ones show from another angle how the good comes from Allāh, that is, the man does not possess any good unless Allāh gives it into his possession; therefore all the good is from Allāh and the evil is from the man himself. This further explains the verse: *Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allāh, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself.*

To sum it up, all good comes from Allāh, because every good thing is His creation and the creation is not separable from goodness; and all good is from Him, because it is good, and He is the owner of all good – others receive goodness only when He gives it into their possession. No harm, evil or misfortune is attributable to Allāh,

because evil, *per se*, is not created, and He is the Creator. So, what is misfortune? When Allāh withholds His mercy from people because of what their hands have done, it is called misfortune, calamity or evil.

As for the good and evil in the meaning of obedience and disobedience, we have discussed about its attribution to Allāh under the verse: *Surely Allāh is not ashamed to set forth any parable . . .* (2:26), in volume one of this book.<sup>2</sup>

If you see what other exegetes have written on this subject, you will find a great many different views, a lot of conflicting opinions and various objections that will confound you. We hope that what we have written here will be enough for one who contemplates in the words of God. Be careful to keep various aspects of this topic separate from one other, ponder on the Qur'ānic usage of the words, *good* and *evil*, *bounty* and *punishment*, and differentiate between the entities of society and individual, then you will understand this subject clearly.

### TRADITIONS

It is written in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* under the verse, *Have you not seen those to whom it was said: "Withhold your hands . . ."*: It is narrated by an-Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Hātim, al-Hākim (who said that this tradition is 'correct') and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) from 'Ikrimah from Ibn 'Abbās that he said: 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf and his group came to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and said: 'O Prophet of Allāh! We did have power when we were polytheists, but since we accepted the faith, we are humiliated.' The Prophet said: 'I have been ordered to forgive (them); therefore do not fight (these) people.' When Allāh brought him to Medina, He ordered him to fight. But then they withheld (their hands). So, Allāh sent down the verse, *Have you not seen those to whom it was said: . . .?*

'Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Jarīr and Ibnu 'l-Mundhir have narrated from Qatādah that he said about this verse: "There were some companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who were in a hurry to wage war while they were at Mecca before *hijrah*. They said to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), 'Allow us to take (our) pickaxes in order to fight these polytheists.' And we have been told that 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf was among those who had said it. But the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) forbade them to do so and said, 'I have not been ordered this.' When *hijrah*

<sup>2</sup> *al-Mīzān*, (Eng.), vol.1, pp.131-5. (tr.)

came and they were ordered to fight, those people disliked it, and did in this connection what you have heard. Then Allāh said: *Say: 'The provision of this world is short, and the hereafter is better for him who guard (against evil); and you shall not be wronged the husk of a date-stone.'*" (*ibid.*)

Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā narrated from Abu 'l-Ḥasan (a.s.) that he said: "Allāh, the High, has said: 'O son of Adam! By My will you have become such that you wish and say; and by My power you discharged the duties imposed by Me (on you); and by My bounty you got power to disobey Me. *Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allāh; and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself.* And it is so because I have more rights on your good deeds than you have yourself; and you are more liable to your sins than Me. And it is because I cannot be questioned concerning what I do, and they shall be questioned.'" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)

**The author says:** A slightly different version of this tradition has been quoted in volume one of this book under the verse: *Surely Allāh is not ashamed to set forth any parable . . . (2:26)*, and we have discussed it there.<sup>3</sup>

[al-Kulaynī has narrated] through his chains from 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥajāj that he said: "Trial and tribulation was mentioned near Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.), and how Allāh reserves it for the believer. [The Imām, a.s.] said: 'The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was asked as to who was most severely put to trial in the world. He said: 'The Prophets, then the closer to perfection, and then the closer; and the believer is put to test in promotion to his faith and the merit of his deeds; he whose belief is correct and his deeds good, his trial is harder, and he whose belief is feeble and his deeds weaker, his trial is lesser'." (*al-Kāfī*)

**The author says:** There is the famous tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.): "The world is the prison of the believer and the paradise of the unbeliever."

It is narrated through several chains from the fifth and the sixth Imāms: "Verily when Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, loves a servant, He immerses him in tribulation thorough immersing." (*ibid.*)

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<sup>3</sup> *al-Mīzān*, (Eng.), vol.1, p.143. (*tr.*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: "The believer is but like the scale of a balance; the more his faith increases, the more his trouble increases." (*ibid.*)

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: "Verily Allāh takes care of a believer through trials as a man takes care of his family through gifts during (his) absence; and denies to him the world as a physician denies harmful food to a patient." (*ibid.*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said: 'Allāh does not need a servant in whose property and body there is no share for Allāh.'"

‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn has narrated from his father (peace be on both) that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said: 'If a believer were to live on a mountain, Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, would surely send someone to him to annoy him, in order that He should give him [the believer] its reward.' " (*‘Ilalu ‘sh-sharāi‘*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: "Worries and griefs always remain with a believer until they wipe out his sins." (*Kitābu ‘t-Tamhīs*)

The same Imām (a.s.) said: "A believer does not pass forty nights without some thing sorrowful happening to him, which reminds his Lord to him." (*ibid.*)

‘Alī (a.s.) said: "Even if a mountain loved me it would break down." Also, he (a.s.) said: "He who loves us, the *Ahlu ‘l-bayt*, should prepare for himself a cover against tribulation." (*Nahju ‘l-balāghah*)

**The author says:** Ibn Abil-Ḥadīd says in his *Commentary of Nahju ‘l-balāghah*: "It is confirmed that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had said to him [‘Alī, a.s.]: 'No one will love you except a believer, nor will hate you except a hypocrite;' and also it is definitely known that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had said: 'Tribulation runs quicker to the believer than water to a downward slope.' These two premises together lead us to the correct conclusion that even if a mountain were to love ‘Alī, it would break down."

You should know that there are so many traditions of this theme, and they support the Commentary written above.

Ibnul-Mundhir and al-Khaṭīb have narrated from Ibn ‘Umar that he said: "We were with the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) together with a group of his companions. He said: 'O people! Don't you know that I am the Messenger of Allāh sent to you?' They said: 'Certainly.' He (again) said: 'Don't you know that Allāh has revealed in his Book that whoever obeys me, he obeys Allāh!' They said: 'Certainly. We bear witness that whoever obeys you, he obeys Allāh, and that

obeying you is a part of His obedience.' Then he said: 'So, it is a part of Allāh's obedience that you should obey me; and it is a part of my obedience that you should obey your Imāms; if they pray in sitting position, you should pray in sitting position.' "

**The author says:** The last sentence shows that it is obligatory to follow them completely.

\* \* \* \* \*

وَيَقُولُونَ طَاعَةٌ فَإِذَا بَرَرُوا مِنْ  
 عِنْدِكَ بَيَّتَ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ غَيْرَ الَّذِي تَقُولُ وَاللَّهُ يَكْتُبُ  
 مَا يُبَيِّتُونَ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا  
 ﴿٨١﴾ أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا  
 فِيهِ أٰخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٨٢﴾ وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِنَ الْأَمْنِ  
 أَوْ الْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا بِهِ وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَىٰ أُولِي  
 الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ  
 اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَاتَّبَعْتُمُ الشَّيْطَانَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٨٣﴾  
 فَقِنْدِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا تُكَلَّفُ إِلَّا نَفْسَكَ وَحَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
 عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكُفَّ بَأْسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاللَّهُ أَشَدُّ بَأْسًا  
 وَأَشَدُّ تَنكِيلًا ﴿٨٤﴾

*And they say: "Obedience." But when they go out from your presence, a party of them hatch by night a plan other than what you say; and Allāh writes down what they hatch by night, therefore turn aside from them and trust in Allāh, and Allāh is sufficient as a protector (81). Do they not then meditate on the Qur'ān? And if it were from any other than Allāh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy (82). And when there comes to them news of security or fear, they spread it; and if they had referred it to the Messenger and to those in authority among them, those among them who (can) draw out the truth in it would have known it, and were it not for the grace of Allāh upon you and His mercy, you would have certainly followed the*



*Satan, save a few (83). Fight then in Allāh's way; this is not imposed on you except in relation to yourself, and rouse the believers to ardour; maybe Allāh will restrain the fighting of those who disbelieve, and Allāh is strongest in prowess and strongest to give an exemplary punishment (84).*

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### COMMENTARY

The verses are not without some connection with the preceding ones. Apparently, they supplement the previous talk which had admonished the Muslims of weak faith. It aims at exhorting them in a manner that would open their eyes, if they pondered and reflected.

**QUR'ĀN: *And they say: "Obedience."* . . . :** Obedience is predicate of a deleted subject, as the scholars have said; and the full sentence is, 'Our business is obedience', that is, 'We obey you totally.' *al-Burūz* (الْبُرُوزُ = to go out); *at-tabayīt* (التَّبْيِيتُ = to hatch an evil plan by night); the phrase translated here as, *other than what you say*, may also be rendered as, *other than what they say*.

The verse says – and Allāh knows better: When you call them to *jihād*, they say to you that they will obey you totally in all matters. But when they go out of your presence, they plan at night to do opposite of what they had told you or opposite of what you had told them. It is reflection on their determination to act against the orders of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). Then Allāh tells His Messenger to turn aside from them and have trust in Allāh, as He says: *therefore turn aside from them and trust in Allāh, and Allāh is sufficient as a protector*.

There is no proof that the verse speaks about the hypocrites, as some exeget have claimed; the continuation of the context shows that the talk is about the same believers of weaker faith mentioned above.

**QUR'ĀN: *Do they not then meditate on the Qur'ān?* . . . :** It is an exhortation in the form of 'question'. *at-Tadabbur* (التَّدْبِيرُ = translated here as meditation) literally means to take one thing after another. In this verse it may mean to ponder on one verse after another; or, to ponder on a verse repeatedly. However, as it aims at showing that

there was no discrepancy in the Qur'ān, and it naturally means looking at more than one verse, the former explanation (pondering on one verse after another) seems more appropriate, although the latter cannot be ruled out completely.

It is an exhortation for them to ponder on the Qur'ānic verses. Whenever they want to look at a revealed order, an expanded wisdom, a story, an admonition or any other themes, they must look at all the relevant verses, of the Meccan period or Medinite, the decisive and the ambiguous ; then they should put them all together to realize that there was no discrepancy or contradiction at all. Rather it will be seen that the earlier verses verify the later ones, and each confirms the other – without a trace of any imaginable discrepancy. There is no contradiction: nowhere a verse negates another, nor do they oppose one another. There is no disharmony: no two verses are asymmetrical in beauty of style or firmness of meanings and themes, because no part of it is weaker or less perfect than the other. It is a Book confirming in its various parts, oft-repeating, whereat do shudder the skins.

This total absence of discrepancy will make them believe that the Qur'ān is a Book revealed by Allāh, and no one else. If it were from someone else, it could not avoid a lot of discrepancy. Every thing found in this universe – and especially man, who the doubters allege, has written this Book – in its very existence and by its nature is founded on constant movement and change; is always in pursuit of perfection. Every single entity in this world in its life's journey passes through different stages and acquires varying dimensions.

It is hard to find a man who does not think that today he is wiser than he was yesterday. Everyone believes that the work he has done or the opinion he has formed lately is much better and reasonable than the one he had had earlier. Even you ponder on a single but prolonged work, like a book written, a poem composed or a lecture delivered, you will find that its last portion is better than the first, or that some parts excel the others in quality.

No man is free from discrepancy and difference in his work, or even in his own self; and it is not one or two differences or contradictions, but a lot. This is a common trend running throughout the world (including man) which is governed by the laws of gradual change and general advancement towards perfection. Nothing in this creation remains in one condition for two consecutive moments; its specificity and situation constantly change.

This shows the true significance of the word 'many' in *many a discrepancy*. It is an explanatory adjective, not a restrictive one. It says: If this Qur'ān were from someone other than Allāh, they would have found discrepancy in it, and those discrepancies would have been in a large quantity, because it is the intrinsic nature of every thing which emanates from other than Allāh. In other words, the verse negates all discrepancies, whether a few or many; not that it denies only 'numerous discrepancies' leaving the door open for a few contradictions.

In short, a meditator on the Qur'ān will at once realize that it is a book which deals with all the affairs related to humanity. It expounds the knowledge of genesis and resurrection; creation and existence; it explains the general human virtues, and lays down the social and personal laws which encompass the whole human species and guide them in all big and small affairs; then there are stories, lessons and sermons. And all this in such an excellent and succinct style that it challenged the whole world to bring its like. [Then, this book was not written all together in a short period;] it is made up of verses which were revealed piece-meal in a long period of twenty three years, in [different times and] various conditions: at night and in day time, in heat of war and tranquility of peace, in good days and bad, in hardship and ease; [but its excellence remained unaffected]. There never was any change in its miraculous and supernatural rhetorics, nor any discrepancy in its excellent knowledge and sublime wisdom, nor in its social and personal laws. Its later parts agree with what its earlier parts had established, and its details and branches are consistent with its roots and stems.

Analyse its laws and rules and you will find them firmly based on pristine monotheism; and that monotheism when looked *vis-à-vis* divinely gifted wisdom appears in the details of *sharī'ah*. So this is the Qur'ān.

A man, pondering on it in this manner, is bound to admit – because of his vital intelligence and natural discernment – that this book was not written by someone who was subject to change and gradual development which permeate the universe, nor was he affected by passage of time. This is nothing but the speech of Allāh, the One, the Subduer.

The verse shows that:

1. The Qur'ān is within the reach of the normal understanding;
2. The Qur'ān is a Book which is not liable to abrogation or nullification; it does not need any completion or refinement; no one

has any authority to judge or control it. Because, it is subject to these things, naturally it will have to undergo change and alternation; but inasmuch as the Qur'ān is free from discrepancy, it cannot admit any change or alternation. Consequently, it is not liable to abrogation, nullification, etc. It follows that the *sharī'ah* of Islam will continue upto the Day of Resurrection.

**QUR'ĀN:** *And when there comes to them news of security or fear, they spread it: al-Idhā'ah* (الإذاعة = to publish, to spread, to announce). The verse contains a sort of condemnation and reproach to them for this rumour-mongering. The following sentence, *and were it not for the grace of Allāh upon you and His mercy, you would have certainly followed the Satan, save a few*, clearly shows that the believers were in danger of going astray because of this adverse propaganda. The danger was of disobeying the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); because this is the theme of these verses. This view is supported by the next verse where the Prophet is ordered to fight the disbelievers even if he remained alone without any helper.

All this together proves that the "news of security or fear" refers to the false rumours which the disbelievers' agents used to bring to Medina for creating disharmony and discord among the believers; and the believers of weaker faith spread it without thinking over it. This in its turn caused loss of courage and vigour in the believers. However, Allāh saved them from following those Satans who had brought such news for discouraging the believers.

These verses fit completely on the events of the Lesser Badr,<sup>4</sup> which was described in the chapter of "The House of 'Imrān". The verses agree in theme with those in that chapter, as will be clear on meditation. Allāh says there: (As for) *those who responded to the call of Allāh and the Messenger (even) after the wound had afflicted them, those among them who do good (to others) and guard (against evil) shall have a great reward. Those to who the people said: "Surely men have gathered against you, therefore fear them"; but this (only) increased their faith, and they said: "Allāh is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is (He)". So they returned with favour from Allāh and (His) grace; no evil touched them and they followed the pleasure of Allāh; and Allāh is the Lord of the mighty grace. That is only the Satan that frightens his friends; so do not fear them, and fear Me if you are Believers (3:172-5).*

<sup>4</sup> *al-Mīzān*, (Eng.), vol.7, pp.110-13 (tr.).

As you see, these verses describe how the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was calling the people, "after the wound had afflicted them" in the calamity of Uḥud, to come with him to meet the disbelievers, and how some people were demoralizing the believers, trying to turn them away from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and frightening them that the polytheists were gathered together against the believers. Then, the verses assert that all this was a plan of the Satan who spoke through his friends; and exhort the believers not to fear the Satan and his friends; rather they should fear Allāh if they were believers.

Ponder on these verses and then again on the verses under discussion (*And when there comes to them news of security or fear . . .*). You will find no room for doubt that the verses under discussion too describe the same episode of the Lesser Badr. The Qur'ān includes that episode in the list of the behaviours for which it blames the believers of the weaker faith. For example: *but when fighting was prescribed for them . . . ; "Our Lord! why hast Thou ordained fighting for us" . . . and if a benefit comes to them . . . ; And they say: "Obedience"*. And then it goes on to say in the same tone: "And when there comes to them news of security or fear, they spread it."

**QUR'ĀN:** *and if they had referred it to the Messenger and to those in authority among them, those among them who (can) draw out the truth of it, would have known it:* Here they are not required to refer it to Allāh as was done in the preceding verse 59: *then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger if you believe in Allāh and the last day*. It is because in that verse the talk was about a disputed legislative order; and on one has any authority in that field except Allāh and His Messenger. But in the verse under discussion they are told to refer a news of security or fear, and such a news cannot be referred to Allāh and His book; the people who could decide about it were the Messenger and those in authority among them. If the news were referred to them they could find out its reality and explain to the believers whether it was true or false, right or wrong.

The knowledge [in "would have known"] means distinguishing truth from falsehood and right from wrong; it is the same connotation as is found in the verses: *that Allāh might know who fears Him in secret (5:94); And most certainly Allāh will know those who believe, and most certainly He will know the hypocrites (29:11)*.

*Istinbāt* (إِسْتِنْبَاطٌ) = to draw out a talk from ambiguity to distinctness and knowledge); it is derived from *an-nabṭ* (النَّبْتُ = to

gush out, to stream forth). The phrase, "those among them who (can) draw out the truth of it", may point to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and those in authority; that they may investigate the matter and find out the truth. Or, it may point to those who are required to refer it to the Messenger and the people of authority; in that case, it would mean that the believers would know the truth as shown by the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and those in authority.

According to the former interpretation (which is the obvious meaning of the verse), the verse says that the Messenger and the people of authority will distinguish the truth if they draw out the reality, that is, if they think that doing so is in the interest of the religion and society. According to the second interpretation, it will mean: Those believers who ask and are eager to know the truth of the matter will know it [from the Messenger and the people of authority].

The phrase, *ulu 'l-amr* ( = أولو الأمر those vested with authority; those in authority) has the same connotations in the preceding verse 59: *O you who believe! obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you.* As described there, the exegetes have differed much in the explanation of this phrase; however mainly there are five interpretations. The meaning which we have mentioned here is more obvious from this verse [as is explained below].

1. The view that *ulu 'l-amr* means the leaders of the fighting detachments is not relevant here. Those leaders had no authority except over a particular band of fighters in a particular combat; they had no knowledge or authority beyond that. But the verse here talks about something much bigger and more important: Disturbance of security, spreading of fear and general fright which the polytheists caused by infiltrating spies and secret agents who spread rumours to demoralize the believers. What concern the leaders of fighting bands had with such matters? How could they explain the truth or otherwise of such news if the people referred it to them?

2. The opinion that *ulu 'l-amr* means scholars is equally irrelevant. The scholars – and in that era they were the narrators of traditions, jurists, reciters of Qur'ān and theologians – had expertise in tradition, jurisprudence, etc. But this verse speaks about matters of security and general feeling of terror; it is concerned with such news which was deeply connected with political affairs, which if ignored or wrongly handled could disturb the Muslims' lives and result in such sociological calamities which no reformer could ever put right. It could nullify the nation's endeavours in the path of its felicity; or

could rob them of their supremacy and make them prey of humiliation and degradation, or leave them to be killed or imprisoned. What expertise did the scholars – in their capacity as narrators of traditions, experts of jurisprudence or reciters of Qur’ān and so on – have in these matters, that Allāh would order the people to refer such news to them? How could they solve such problems in the political arena?

3. The opinion that it refers to the 'rightly guided' caliphs (Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī) is more baseless. First of all, there is no proof for it in the Book of Allāh or a definitely accepted tradition. Secondly, we have a right to ask: Was the order given in this verse limited to the time of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.)? Or, was it general – for his time as well as after him? If it was meant for his time only, then the four personalities should have been known as the people of authority of all the people and particularly to the Companions of the Prophet; but the history and traditions do not record any such especial status for them at all. In case it was valid for the post-Prophetic era too, then its validity was bound to expire after those four caliphs had passed away. If so, then the verse should have contained some indication to that effect as is the case with other verses which announce some especial rules for the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); but the verse does not hint at any such limitation.

4. The interpretation of *ulu 'l-amr* as the people who 'tie and open', the influential persons, is equally out of place. Such exegetes know that there was no group, in the days of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), known as *ahlu 'l-halli wa 'l-'aqd*, like other civilized societies which do have well-defined committees and councils, e.g. cabinet of ministers, delegations sent to conferences, etc. At that time the only rule implemented in the *ummah* was of Allāh and His Messenger. This difficulty compelled him to say that *ulu 'l-amr* were those Companions whose advice was sought and whom the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) consulted.

But, the fact remains that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) included in his consultations not only the believers but even hypocrites like ‘Abdullāh ibn Abī and his band. The story of his consultation in the battle of Uḥud is well-known. How can Allāh order the believers to refer such sensitive news to such people?

Moreover, no one denies that ‘Abdu'r-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf was among those who had this status in the life of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and even after him. And these verses, which admonish the believers of weaker faith and put them to shame for what they had done, have begun with exposing him and his group in these words: *Have you not*

*seen those to whom it was said: "Withhold your hands . . ."* This tradition has been narrated by an-Nasāī (in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*), al-Ḥākim (in his *al-Mustadrak*, declaring that it is a correct tradition) and at-Ṭabarī and others in their books of *tafsīr*. And the said traditions have been given under "Traditions" under the preceding verses. Keeping this in view, how can one say that the believers were ordered to refer this matter to such people?

Now, remains only the fifth interpretation which we had preferred under the verse: *obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you . . .* (4:59). [That is: The *ulu 'l-amr* are the Twelve sinless successors of the Holy Prophet, s.a.w.a.]

**QUR'ĀN:** *and were it not for the grace of Allāh upon you and his mercy, you would have certainly followed the Satan save a few:* As stated earlier, the verses apparently point to the events of the Lesser Badr when Abū Sufyān had sent Na'im ibn Mas'ūd al-Ashja'i to Medina to spread fear and fright among the people in order that they should not go forth to Badr. Hence, following of Satan means acceptance of the said news and failure to go to Badr.

In that case, the exception, "save a few", is quite in place; there is no need to strive artfully and stretch its meaning. Na'im had informed the Muslims that Abū Sufyān had gathered many groups and readied a huge armies; therefore the Muslims should not go out to fight against them, otherwise they (the Muslims) would be annihilated. This rumour demoralized the people and they offered many excuses for not going to Badr. Only the Prophet and a few persons nearest to him remained steadfast, and it is they who are mentioned in the exception phrase, "save a few". Most of the people had wavered and tried to avoid going out, except a few steadfast ones; then some more joined them and the group proceeded out.

This interpretation of the exception clause is supported by the earlier-mentioned context and association, and the meaning is quite clear.

The exegetes have, however, interpreted this clause in various artful ways, none of them free from distortion or misrepresentation. For example:-

1. The grace and mercy of Allāh points to the divine guidance which led them to the obedience of Allāh, His Messenger and those in authority; and the excepted 'few' refers to the good-natured pure-hearted believers. Thus, the verse means: If Allāh had not guided you



to the obedience by ordering you to refer the matter to those in authority, you would certainly have followed the Satan by falling into error and going astray, except a few good-natured believers among you who would not have deviated from truth and goodness.

**COMMENT:** This interpretation confines the divine grace and mercy to a certain order while there is no reason for such restriction. It is not in keeping with the Qur'ānic style. Moreover, the verse apparently describes Allāh's favour for something which had already passed and was completed.

2. The verse means what it apparently says. The believers of weaker faith need extra grace and mercy from Allāh, although the sincere ones too cannot manage without divine care.

**COMMENT:** If it is its apparent meaning, then the Qur'ān, in its sublime literary style, must have rebutted it here and now. But it has not. Allāh says: *and were it not for Allāh's grace upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been pure* (24:21); and He says to His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who was the best of the human beings: *And had it not been that We had already established you, you would certainly have been near to incline to them a little; in that case We would certainly have made you to taste a double (punishment) in this life and a double (punishment) after death . . .* (17:74-75).

3. The divine grace and mercy means the Qur'ān and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

4. It means the victory. The exception then is perfectly in place; because the majority stands firm on truth only when their hearts are happy as a result of victory and similar [worldly] benefits, which prove to them that God cares for them. Otherwise, if they were to taste bitter truth, then only a few believers would submit to it, that is, those only who might be having deep insight of the religion.

5. The exception, "save a few", is related to the verb, "they spread it".

6. No. It is related to the verb, "who (can) draw out the truth of it".

7. The exception is in word only; it actually has the connotation of comprehensiveness. Thus the verse actually means, 'and were it not for the divine grace and mercy, all of you would have certainly followed the Satan'. It is not unlike the verse: *We will make you recite so you shall not forget, except what Allāh pleases* (87:6-7). Because in this case too, the exception emphasises the comprehensiveness of "not forgetting".

**COMMENT:** All these explanations are merely literary affection and trickery.

**QUR'ĀN:** *Fight then in Allāh's way; this is not imposed on you except in relation to yourself, and rouse the believers to ardour . . .*  
**exemplary punishment:** *at-Taklīf* (التكليف) is derived from *al-kulfah* (الكلفة = discomfort, hardship) and means imposition of duty and responsibility, because the person concerned undergoes hardship in discharging his duties. *at-Tankīl* (التنكيل) is derived from *an-nakāl* (النكال = exemplary punishment). According to *Majma'u 'l-bayān*, it means: a punishment which discourages the guilty from committing that error again and makes him into a lesson to others; in short, a punishment fear of which prevents people from doing such mischief in future.

"*Fa*" (ف = then, so) in "Fight then in Allāh's way" signifies that the order to fight, [even alone, if necessary] is based on the sum-total of the preceding verses, that is, the people's apathy and lethargy in going forth to face the enemy. It is clearly reflected in the sentences that follow: "this is not imposed on you except in relation to yourself . . ." The meaning, therefore, is as follows: As they are lethargic concerning *jihād* and are unwilling to fight, then you, O Messenger of Allāh! should fight the unbelievers on your own; do not be disheartened because of their apathy and disobedience of the divine command; you will not be asked about their obligation, you are responsible only for your own duties. As for the others, your only responsibility is to exhort and rouse them to fight. Therefore, you go forth for fighting and at the same time rouse the believers to ardour. May be, in this way Allāh will prevent the unbelievers from fighting. The sentence, "this is not imposed on you except in relation to yourself", actually means, 'except concerning your own deed'. In other words, there is in this excepted clause a deleted first construct of possessive case.

"may be Allāh will restrain . . .": I was mentioned that '*asā* (عسى = may be) expressed hope. That hope can be found in the mind of the speaker, or the addressee, or it may arise because of the situation. As such, there is no need to assert that 'may be', when used by Allāh, denotes certainty.

Through this verse, Allāh further reviles those people who showed apathy towards *jihād* until Allāh ordered His Prophet to go forth for fighting alone; and told him to turn aside from those sluggish people. He should not exhort them to answer the call for *jihād*; rather

he should leave them alone. He should not be discouraged by their behaviour. His only responsibility is in relation to his own self; apart from that, he should rouse the believers to ardour – and then let him who wants answer the call, and him who wants disobey Allāh and His Prophet.

### TRADITIONS

[al-Kulaynī narrates] through his chains from Muḥammad ibn ‘Ajlān that he said: "I heard Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) saying: 'Allāh had put some people to shame because of their spreading [rumours], as He, the Mighty, the Great, says: *And when there comes to them news of security or fear, they spread it.* Therefore, take care not to spread [rumours].'" (*al-Kāfi*)

Also he narrates from ‘Abdul-Ḥamīd ibn Abi d-Daylam from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, has said: *Obey Allāh and the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you;* also He has said: *and if they had referred it to the Messenger and to those in authority among them, those among them who (can) draw out the truth in it would have known it.* Thus He has returned the people to *ulu 'l-amr* from among them, ordering them (the people) to obey them (*ulu 'l-amr*) and refer all affairs to them." (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** This *ḥadīth* supports the explanation given by us that *ulu 'l-amr* in this verse refers to the same Imāms who were mentioned in the 59th verse.

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Ajlān narrates from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *and if they had referred it to the Messenger and to those in authority among them,* that he (the Imām, a.s.) said: "They are the Imāms." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyāshī)

**The author says:** This meaning has also been narrated from ‘Abdullāh ibn Jundab from ar-Riḍā (a.s.) in a letter which the Imām (a.s.) had written about the al-Wāqifiyyah. The same meaning is narrated by al-Mufīd in *al-Ikhtisāṣ* from Ishāq ibn ‘Ammār from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.), *inter alia*, in a long tradition.

Muḥammad ibn al-Fuḍayl narrates from Abu 'l-Ḥasan (a.s.) about the word of Allāh: *and were it not for the grace of Allāh upon you and His mercy,* that [the Imām, a.s.] said: "Grace is the Messenger of Allāh and His mercy is the Commander of the Believers." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyāshī)

Zurārah has narrated from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.), and Ḥumrān from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.), that they said: "Allāh's grace is His Messenger and His mercy is *al-wilāyah* (الولاية = love and obedience) of the Imāms." (*ibid.*)

Muḥammad ibn al-Fuḍayl narrates from al-‘Abdu ‘Ṣ-Ṣāliḥ [the 7th Imām, a.s.] that he said: "The mercy is the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and the grace, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s.)." (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** These traditions are based on the flow of the Qur’ān; and they explain the divine grace and mercy in terms of messengership and imāmat. These are the two connected ropes with which Allāh has rescued us from the pit of straying and the trap of the Satan. One of them is the source of bringing the Truth, while the other is the means of keeping it alive. The last tradition is more in keeping with the Qur’ānic point of view, because Allāh has named His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) 'Mercy', as He says in His book: *And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the world* (21:107).

‘Alī ibn Ḥadīd narrates through Murāzīm from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "Allāh imposed a duty on the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) which He had not imposed on anyone before him; then he imposed on him to go forth all alone against all the people, even if he did not find any group to stand by him; and He had not obliged anyone before or after him to do so." Then he recited this verse: *Fight then in Allāh's way; this is not imposed on you except in relation to yourself.* Then the Imām (a.s.) said: "And Allāh granted him to take for himself what Allāh has taken for himself. Thus Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, says: *Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it.*"<sup>5</sup> And likewise He has made *Ṣalawāt* for the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) (equal to) ten good deeds." (*al-Kāfi*)

Sulaymān ibn Khālid says: "I informed Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) about what the people said concerning ‘Alī (a.s.): 'If he had any right then what prevented him from standing up for it!' (The Imām, a.s.) said: 'Verily Allāh has not imposed such duty to anyone except the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) as He says: *Fight then in Allāh's way; this is not imposed on you except in relation to yourself, and rouse the believers to ardour.* So, this is not except for the Messenger; and He has said about the others: [*And whoever shall turn his back to them on that day*] unless he turns aside for the sake of fighting or withdraws to

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<sup>5</sup> *Qur’ān*, 6:160 (tr.)

*a company . . .*<sup>6</sup>; and at that time there was no group to support him ('Alī, a.s.) in his affair." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)

Zayd ash-Shahhām narrates from Ja'far ibn Muḥammad (peace be on both) that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) never said 'No' when he was asked for anything. If he had it, he gave it; if he did not have it, he said: 'It will be if Allāh so wishes'; and he never took revenge of any evil (done to him); and he never met any expedition but he himself was on head of it – ever since the verse was revealed to him: *Fight then in Allāh's way; this is not imposed on you except in relation to yourself.* (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** There are other traditions too of the same meaning.

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<sup>6</sup> *Qur'ān*, 8:16 (*tr.*)

مَنْ يَشْفَعُ شَفْعَةً حَسَنَةً يَكُنْ لَهُ  
 نَصِيبٌ مِّنْهَا وَمَنْ يَشْفَعُ شَفْعَةً سَيِّئَةً يَكُنْ لَهُ كِفْلٌ مِّنْهَا  
 وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقِينًا ﴿٨٥﴾ وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِنَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا  
 بِأَحْسَنِ مِمَّا أَوْرَدُوهَا إِنْ اللَّهُ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا ﴿٨٦﴾  
 اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لِيَجْمَعَنَّكُمْ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ  
 وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حَدِيثًا ﴿٨٧﴾ ﴿٨٧﴾ فَمَا لَكُمْ فِي الْمُنَافِقِينَ  
 فِتْنَتَيْنِ وَاللَّهُ أَرْكَسَهُم بِمَا كَسَبُوا أَتُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَهْدُوا مَنْ  
 أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ﴿٨٨﴾ وَذُوالِ  
 تَكْفُرُونَ كَمَا كَفَرُوا فَتَكُونُونَ سَوَاءً فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ  
 حَتَّىٰ يَهَاجَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَخُذُواهُمْ وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ  
 حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ وِلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٨٩﴾  
 إِلَّا الَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ أَوْ جَاءُوكُمْ  
 حَصِرَتْ صُدُورُهُمْ أَنْ يَقْتُلُوكُمْ أَوْ يَقْنَلُوا قَوْمَهُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ

اللَّهُ لَسَّاطَهُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَلَقْنَلُوكُمْ فَاِنِ اَعْتَزَلُوكُمْ فَلَمْ يُقِنَلُوكُمْ  
 وَالْقَوَا اِلَيْكُمْ اَلْسَلَمَ فَمَا جَعَلَ اَللَّهُ لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سَكِيلاً ﴿٩٠﴾  
 سَتَجِدُونَ اءَاخِرِينَ يُرِيدُونَ اَنْ يَأْمَنُوكُمْ وَيَأْمَنُوا قَوْمَهُمْ كُلَّ  
 مَا رُدُّوْا اِلَى الْفِتْنَةِ اُرْكَسُوا فِيهَا فَاِن لَّمْ يَعْزَلُوكُمْ وَيَلْقُوا اِلَيْكُمْ  
 اَلْسَلَمَ وَيَكْفُوا اَيْدِيَهُمْ فَخُذُوهُمْ وَاَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ  
 ثَقَّفْتُمُوهُمْ وَاُولَئِكَ جَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنًا مِّبْيٰنًا ﴿٩١﴾

Whoever intercedes a good intercession shall have a share of it, and whoever intercedes a bad intercession shall have the responsibility of it; and Allāh controls all things (85). And when you are greeted with greeting, greet with a better (greeting) than it or return it; surely Allāh takes account of all things (86). Allāh, there is no god but He – He will most certainly gather you together on the Resurrection Day, there is no doubt in it; and who is more true in word than Allāh (87) What is the matter with you, then, that you have become two parties about the hypocrites, while Allāh has made them return (to unbelief) for what they have earned? Do you wish to guide him whom Allāh has forsaken to stray? And whomsoever Allāh forsakes to stray, you shall by no means find a way for him (88). They desire that you should disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you might be (all) alike; therefore take not friends from among them until they migrate in Allāh's way; but if they turn back, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them, and take not from among them a friend or a helper (89). Except those who reach a people between whom and you there is a covenant, or who come to you, their hearts shrinking from fighting you or fighting their own people; and if Allāh had pleased, He would have given them power over you, so that they would have certainly fought you; therefore if they withdraw from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allāh has not made for you a way against them (90). Shortly you will

*find others who desire that they should be safe from and secure from their own people; as often as they are sent back to the mischief they get thrown into it headlong; therefore if they do not withdraw from you, and (do not) offer you peace and restrain their hands, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them; and against these We have given you a clear authority (91).*

\* \* \* \* \*

### COMMENTARY

The verses are connected with the preceding ones, as these are concerned with the order of fighting against a particular group of polytheists – the double-faced among them. On meditation it is seen that they were revealed about some polytheists who claimed to accept Islam in presence of the believers, and then they returned to their homes and joined the polytheists in disbelief. [When a chance came to fight them], the believers were divided; one group said that they should be fought against, while the other opposed it and interceded for them because they had accepted Islam. But Allāh offers them only two alternatives: they should [leave their original place and] migrate to medina otherwise they should be struck at. Then He warns the believers against interceding for such people.

Such people will be repeatedly followed by others like them; all of them will be required to offer peace to the Muslims; if they fail to do so, they should be fought. This is the main theme, for which the ground is paved by describing the condition of intercession in one verse, and offering of greetings in another, as it is relevant to offering of peace.

**QUR'ĀN:** *Whoever intercedes a good intercession . . . : an-Naṣīb (النَّصِيبُ) and al-kifl (الكِفْل) both have the same meaning, that is, share [although we have translated the latter as 'responsibility'].* Intercession is a sort of mediation aimed at making up a deficiency or gaining a benefit out the desire defect. Therefore, it cannot escape its responsibility, and will have to share the blame or reward of the thing interceded for. The interceder will have his share of good or evil resulting from the intercession. That is why Allāh says: *Whoever intercedes . . . shall have the responsibility of it.*



By mentioning this reality, Allāh reminds the believers and warns them to be careful when interceding for someone. They should refrain if the subject of intercession was undesirable and likely to cause evil and mischief. For example, some believers had interceded on behalf of the double-faced polytheists that they should not be attacked. Those interceders should have realized that if a small evil is left unopposed and allowed to grow and spread, it would result in such a great evil that no one would be able to stand against it and it would destroy the tilth and the stock. The verse therefore contains a prohibition of bad intercession, that is, intercession of those indulging in oppression and transgression, hypocrisy and polytheism – in short for those who create mischief on the earth.

**QUR'ĀN:** *And when you are greeted with a greeting . . .* : A greeting should be returned with a better or a similar greeting. It is a general order covering all greetings; but in this context it is applicable to the greeting of peace which might be addressed to the Muslims, as the following verses show.

**QUR'ĀN:** *Allāh, there is no god but He – He will most a certainly gather you . . .* : Its meaning is clear. It gives a sort of reason to the orders given in the preceding two verses: Adhere to the order given to you regarding good and bad intercession; and do not ignore the greetings offered to you, by turning aside or rejecting it; because a day is sure to come when Allāh will gather you all and reward or punish you for acceptance or rejection of His commandments.

**QUR'ĀN:** *What is the matter with you, then, that you have become two parties about the hypocrites, while Allāh has made them return (to unbelief) for what they have earned? . . .* : *al-Fi'ah* (الْفِيءَةُ = group, party); *al-irkās* (الْإِرْكَاسُ = to return). The theme shows that the verse in a way branches out from the preceding one which had paved the way for it, that is, *Whoever intercedes a good intercession . . .* The meaning will be as follows: As a bad intercession makes the interceder share in its bad effects, then what has happened to you, O believers, that you have become divided into two groups regarding the double-faced polytheists? Why are you disputing among yourselves? One party says that those polytheists should be fought against, while the other intercedes for them and exhorts the believers not to fight. This latter group wants you to leave the tree of mischief alone; not

realizing that the tree will go on growing with the polytheists' growth, and will bear fruit when those polytheists become stronger. The fact remains that Allāh has let them return to straying after they had got out of it; it was done as a punishment for what they had earned of evil deeds. Do you want – through your intercession – to guide those whom Allāh has left to go astray? But whosoever is left by Allāh to go astray, cannot get to the path of guidance.

The sentence, *And whomsoever Allāh forsakes to stray, you [2nd person singular] shall by no means find a way for him*, is addressed directly to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), instead of the believers; it is intended to show that those Muslims who had interceded on behalf of the double-faced polytheists were not capable of understanding this speech property; otherwise, they would not have interceded. That is why Allāh has turned away from them and addressed the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), who had true and clear knowledge of these realities.

**QUR'ĀN:** *They desire that you should disbelieve . . . or a helper:* It is a further explanation of the words, *while Allāh has made them return (to disbelief) for what they have earned? Do you wish to guide him whom Allāh has forsaken to stray?* The meaning: They disbelieved, and then went further in disbelief, until now they wish you to join them in their disbelief, so that you too might become like them. Then Allāh forbids the Muslims to take friends from among them except when they leave their homes and migrate in the way of Allāh. If they fail to do so, then your only duty towards them is to seize them and kill them wherever they are found; the believers must refrain from befriending them or seeking their help. The clause, "but if they return back", indicates that the believers must ask them to migrate; if they migrated then they should be taken as friends, otherwise they are to be killed.

**QUR'ĀN:** *Except those who reach a people . . . for you a way against them:* Allāh has excepted two groups from the above order (*if they turn back then seize them and kill them wherever you find them*). One: Those who reach a people who have made a covenant with the Muslims. Two: Those disbelievers who find themselves in a dilemma; they do not like to fight the Muslims, nor do they relish the idea of fighting against their own people. Thus they withdraw from the believers and offer them peace; they are neither with the believers nor against them. These two groups are excepted from the above order.

**QUR'ĀN:** *Shortly you will find others . . . against these We have given you a clear authority:* It is a forecast that shortly you will face another group, like the second excepted one. They will try to be safe from you as well as from their own people. But Allāh tells the believers that those people are hypocrites; no trust should be put in their covenants or their offer of peace. That is why Allāh has changed the two positive conditions imposed on the former group (*if they withdraw from you and do not fight you and offer you peace*) with the negative conditions for this latter one: *if they do not withdraw from you, and (do not) offer you peace and restrain their hands*. It is a sort of warning that the believers should remain on guard against them. The meaning is clear.

#### ON GREETINGS

The peoples and nations, civilized and uncivilized, developed and less developed, all have their own ways of greetings used when one person meets another; these greetings take various forms: there is nodding of head or bowing it, raising hand in various ways, removing the hat and many similar gestures. It all depends on different factors active in the society, concerned.

Look at different forms of greetings found in various societies, and you will find that all of them demonstrate a sort of submission, self-abasement and degradation, offered by a lowly person to an august personality, by a plebeian to a high-bred, by an obedient follower to the one in authority, by a slave to his master. In short, all these customs are relics of the slavery system which has prevailed throughout the world from the early primitive ages in one form or the other. That is why these greetings are always offered by a follower to his leader, and a subordinate to his superior. This, in short, is a result of idolatry nurtured by the system of slavery.

As you know, the most important aim of Islam is to erase idolatry and every rite resulting from or based on it. That is why Islam has initiated a system of greeting free from such defects, in contrast to the relics of idol-worship and slavery. The Islamic greeting offers peace to the greeted one. It offers him safety from transgression against his rights, and assures him that he has nothing to fear from the greeter concerning his natural freedom bestowed on him by the Creator. Obviously, it is the first requirement of a social order based on mutual cooperation that the individual members should feel secure

and safe from one another as far as their lives, honour and properties are concerned. Every social trouble emanates from one of these three factors .

This is the *as-salām* (السَّلَامُ = peace, greeting) which Allāh has prescribed for the people when they meet each other. He says: *So when you enter houses greet your people with a salutation from Allāh blessed (and) goodly (24:61); O you who believe! do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked permission and saluted their inmates; this is better for you, that you may be mindful (24:27).* Allāh has taught His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) to greet the believers – although he is their Chief: *And when those who believe in Our signs come to you, say: "Peace be on you, your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself, . . . "* (6:54); and also ordered him to offer peace to the others: *So turn away from them and say, "Peace!" for they shall soon come to know (43: 89).*

Greeting, by offering 'peace', was common in pre-Islamic Arabia, as is seen in the poetry and other forms of literature transmitted from them. *Lisanu 'l-'Arab* says: "The Arabs in pre-Islamic days greeted each other in various ways: one said to one's companion: 'Good morning to you', and 'You be safe from disdain'; also it was said: 'Peace be on you'; in a way it was a symbol of mutual peace and a declaration that there was to be no fighting between them: Then Allāh sent Islam to them and they were told to use only the 'Peace' formula for greeting, and ordered to say it loudly."

At the same time, Allāh mentions it several times in the stories of Ibrāhīm (a.s.). It provides an evidence that this was, like *hajj*, etc., a relic of the pure religion of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) among the Arabs. Allāh describes him as saying to his father [i.e., uncle]: *He said: "Peace be on you! I will pray to my Lord to forgive you; . . . "* (19:47). Also He says: *And certainly Our messengers came to Ibrāhīm with good news. They said: "Peace!" " Peace," said he . . . (11 :69).* This story is narrated in more than one place in the Qur'ān.

Allāh has taken it as His own greeting and used it in various places in His book: *Peace be on Nūḥ in all the worlds (37:79); Peace be on Ibrāhīm (37:109); Peace be on Mūsā and Hārūn (37:120); Peace be on Ilyāsīn (37:130); And peace be on the messengers (37:181).*

Then Allāh says that it is the greeting of the honoured angels: *Those whom the angels cause to die in a good state, saying: "Peace be on you! . . . " (16: 32); . . . and the angels will enter in upon them from every gate: "Peace be on you," (13:23-24)* And the same will be the

greeting of the people of the Garden: *and their greeting in it shall be: "Peace," . . .* (10:10); *They shall not hear therein vain or sinful discourse except the word: "Peace, peace!"* (56:25-26).

### TRADITIONS

It is written in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* under the verse, And when you are greeted . . . : 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm has narrated in his *at-Tafsīr* from the two Truthful ones [the 5th and the 6th Imāms, a.s.] "In this verse, greeting means 'Peace' and other [acts of] kindness."

[al-Kulaynī narrates] through his chains from as-Sakūnī that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said: 'To offer (greeting of) peace is an [act of] voluntary righteousness, and to give its reply is obligatory.'" (*al-Kāfī*)

Jarrāh al-Madāinī narrates from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "A younger should offer greeting to an elder; a walker to the sitter and a small group to the bigger one." (*ibid.*)

'Uyaynah<sup>7</sup> narrates through Mus'ab from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "A small group should begin salutation to the bigger one; a rider to the walker; riders of mulea to the riders of donkeys and the riders of horses to the riders of mules." (*ibid.*)

Ibn Bakīr narrates from one of his fellows from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) that he heard him saying: "The rider salutes the walker, and the walker (salutes) the sitter; and when [two] groups meet, the smaller one salutes the bigger one; and when one person meets a group, he will offer greeting to the group." (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** A nearly similar tradition has been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from al-Bayhaqī from Zayd ibn Aslam from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Abū 'Abdillāh ( a.s. ) said: "When a group passes by [another] group, it is enough if one of them offers greeting; and if greeting was offered to a group then it is sufficient if one of them replies." (*al-Kāfī*)

ash-Shaykh narrates through his chains from Muḥammad ibn Muslim that he said: "I visited Abū Ja'far (a.s.) and he was praying; so I said: 'Peace be on you;' he said: 'Peace be on you;' then I said; 'How do you do?' But he [the Imām, a.s.] remained silent [i.e., did not reply]. When he finished the prayer, I said: 'Should one reply to the salutation

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<sup>7</sup> 'Anbasah

when one is praying?' He said: 'Yes, in the same words he was saluted with.'" (*at-Tahdhīb*)

Manṣūr ibn Ḥāzim narrates from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "When a man salutes you and you are praying, you will return [the same words] as he had used (but) in a low voice." (*ibid.*)

[aṣ-Ṣadūq narrates] through his chains from Mas'adah ibn Ṣadaqah from Ja'far ibn Muḥammad from his father (peace be on both) that he said: "Do not greet the Jews, nor the Christians, nor the Fire-worshippers, nor the idol-worshippers; (greet) neither (those who are sitting) on tables where liquor is being used, nor on the people (playing) chess and backgammon; (salute) not an effeminate person, nor a poet who slanders married women; (you should) not greet one who is praying because he is unable to return (your) greeting (inasmuch as greeting a Muslim is a voluntary good act while to return it is obligatory); (likewise, do not greet) an interest-eater, nor a man sitting for evacuating the bowels, nor a person who is in Turkish bath, nor a sinful person who manifests his sins." (*Man lā yahḍuruḥu 'l-faqīh*)

**The author says:** There are numerous traditions of the above-quoted themes. The preceding commentary sufficiently explains the traditions. 'Peace' as a greeting announces that there is peace, security and safety extended between the two parties on the basis of equality and balance, and that neither wants to overpower the other. Of course, the traditions guide that a younger should salute his elder; a smaller group or a single man should greet a larger group; but it is not against the principle of equality; it only shows that everyone is bound to respect the others' rights. Islam does not want people to neglect others' rights, or ignore the virtues and excellent found in others. On the contrary, it has ordered its followers to pay respects to those who are more virtuous, and to recognize the rights of the right-holders. At the same time Islam does not allow a virtuous person to be proud of his virtues or to think himself as superior to others, or to transgress the limit by showing arrogance or haughtiness against fellow human beings. Because, such behaviour would disturb the balance between various sections of the society.

The prohibition of saluting some groups is based on the Qur'ānic injunction against befriending them or inclining towards them. Allāh says: *do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends* (5:51); *do not take My enemy and your enemy for friends* (60:1); *and do not incline to those who are unjust* (11:113).

Of course, some times it appears in the interest of Islam to go near some unjust people with an aim to convey the message of religion or to make them hear the word of truth; and then it becomes necessary to greet them in order to establish good rapport with them. For instance, Allāh has told the Prophet (s.a.w.a.): *So turn away from them [the unbelievers] and say, "Peace!"* . . . (43:89). Also, He praises the believers in these words: . . . *and when the ignorant address them, they say: "Peace."* ( 25: 63).

It is narrated that a man said to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.): "Peace be on you." He (the Prophet) said: "And on you be peace and mercy of Allāh." Then another man said: "Peace be on you and mercy of Allāh"; and (the Prophet) said: 'And on you be peace and mercy of Allāh and His blessings.' Then a (third) man said: "Peace be on you and mercy of Allāh and His blessings"; and (the Prophet) said: "And on you?" That man said: "You decreased me (i.e. shortened the reply to my greeting); then where is the word of Allāh: *And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet with a better (greeting) than it* The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: 'You did not leave for me anything to add, so I returned to you the like of it.'" (*at-Tafsīr*, aṣ-Ṣāfi)

**The author says:** A similar tradition has been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from Aḥmad (in *az-Zuhd*) , Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, at-Ṭabarānī and Ibn Marduwayh through good chain from Salmān al-Fārisī.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: "The Commander of the Believers (a.s.) passed by a group and greeted them. They said: 'On you be peace and mercy of Allāh and His blessings and His pardon and His pleasure.' The Commander of the Believers (a.s.) said to them: 'Do not take us beyond that which the angels had said to our father, Ibrāhīm; they had said: *The mercy of Allāh and His blessings be on you, O people of the house* (11:73)" (*al-Kāfi*).

**The author says:** It indicates that the *sunnah* in complete greeting (i.e., the words of the greeter, 'Peace be on you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings') is taken from the pure religion of Ibrāhīm (a.s.), and it supports what we have written earlier that the greeting with 'Peace' is a part of the religion of Ibrāhīm (a.s.).

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: "The completion of greeting for a resident is to shake hands, and completion of salutation for a traveller is to embrace." (*ibid.*)

The Leader of the Faithful (a.s.) said: "When one of you sneezes, say: 'May Allāh have mercy on you', and he should reply: 'May Allāh forgive you and have mercy on you.' Allāh, the Sublime, says: *And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet with better (greeting) than it . . .*" (al-Khiṣāl)

"A maid brought a bouquet of flowers to al-Ḥasan (a.s.). He said to her: 'You are freed for the sake of Allāh. 'Someone told him something about it. He (a.s.) said: 'Allāh, the High, has taught us manners and said: *And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet with a better (greeting) than it . . .* And better than it (flower bouquet) was her emancipation.'" (*al-Manāqib*)

**The author says:** As you see, these traditions extend the meaning of 'greeting' in this verse.

It is written in *Majma' u 'l-bayān*, under the verse: *What is the matter with you, then, that you have become two parties . . .*; that commentators differed in opinion as about whom this verse was revealed. It is said that it was revealed about a group who came to Medina from Mecca and pretended before the Muslims that they were believers. Then they returned to Mecca claiming that Medina's [climate] was unhealthy; and at Mecca they showed polytheism. Later they travelled with the merchandise of the polytheists to Yamāmah. The Muslims wanted to fight them, but then they differed among themselves. Some said: "We should not do so because they are believers." Others said: "They are polytheists." Therefore, Allāh revealed this verse. aṭ-Ṭabrisī says that it has been narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.).

It is narrated in *at-Tafsīr* of al-Qummī under the verse: *They desire that you should disbelieve as they have disbelieved . . .*: "It was revealed about two tribes, the Ashja' and Banū Ḍamrah. It happened that when the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) proceeded to Hudaibiyyah, he passed by their places. The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had concluded a truce with Banū Ḍamrah and made an agreement with them. The companions of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'O Messenger of Allāh: Here are Banū Ḍamrah nearer to us, and we are afraid they might attack Medina violating [our agreement,] or help the Quraysh against us; so [it would be prudent] if we begin with them.' The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Never. Surely they are the most dutiful of Arabs towards parents, the best to join relationships and the strictest in keeping a promise among them.'



The place of the Ashja' was nearer to that of Banū Ḍamrah – and they were a clan of Kinānah. There was an alliance between the Ashja' and Banū Ḍamrah for mutual care and security. There came drought in the area of the Ashja' while that of Banū Ḍamrah was green. Therefore, the Ashja' proceeded towards Banū Ḍamrah. Hearing this, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) prepared to go to the Ashja' for fighting, because of the agreement that he had with Banū Ḍamrah [and he wanted to defend them from the Ashja']. Then Allāh revealed: *They desire that you should disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you might be (all) alike; therefore take not friends from among them until they migrate in Allāh's way; but if they turn back, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them, and take not from among them a friend or a helper.'*

"Then Allāh excepted the Ashja' and said: *Except those who reach a people between whom and you there is a covenant, or who come to you, their hearts shrinking from fighting you or fighting their own people; and if Allāh had pleased, He would have given them power over you, so that they would have certainly fought you; therefore if they withdraw from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allāh has not made for you a way against them.*

"The area of the Ashja' comprised of al Bayḏā', al-Ḥill and al-Mustabāh, and they had reached in vicinity of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). They were frightened because of this proximity to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) that he might send someone to fight them, while the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was apprehensive that they might attack his outer regions. Therefore, he thought of proceeding towards them. When he was thinking about it, the Ashja' came and descended at the reef of Sala' – their chief was Mas'ūd ibn Rujaylah and they were seven hundred strong. It was in the month of Rabī'u 'l-Awwal, 6 A.H. The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) called Usayd ibn Ḥuṣayn and said to him: 'Go with some of your companions to find out why the Ashja' have come here.'

"Usayd went out with three of his companions and stood before them [the Ashja'] and asked: 'What has brought you here?' Mas'ūd ibn Rujaylah, the Chief of the Ashja', went towards Usayd and greeted him and his companions. Then the Ashja' said: 'We have come to make an agreement with Muḥammad.' Usayd returned and informed the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'They were afraid that I might fight them; therefore they wanted peace between me and them.' Then he sent to them ten camel-load of

dates, and said: 'It is a good thing (to send) present before (a serious) work.' Thereafter he went to them and said: 'O people of Ashja'! what has brought you here?' They said: 'Our home is near you, and there is none in our nation [i.e., tribe] smaller in number than us; so we were disturbed at the thought of fighting you because we are in close proximity to you; and also we were disturbed at the thought of fighting our own tribe because of the smallness of our number among them; therefore we have come to conclude an agreement with you.' The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) accepted it and made an agreement with them. They stayed there that day and then returned to their area. It was about them that the verse was revealed: *Except those who reach a people between whom and you there is a covenant . . . then Allāh has not made for you a way against them.*"

al-Faḍl Abu 'l-'Abbās narrates from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the word of Allāh: *or who, come to you, their hearts shrinking from fighting you or fighting their own people*, that he said: "It was revealed about Banū Mudlij; because they came to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and said: 'Our hearts are not ready to bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allāh; therefore we are not with you nor with our people, [i. e., tribe] against you.'" al-Faḍl says: "I said: 'How did the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) treat them? [The Imām, a.s.] said: 'He entered into a truce with them, until he is finished with [other] Arabs; then he would invite them [to Islam]; if they accepted [then well and good]; otherwise, he would fight them.'" (*al-Kāfi*)

Sayf ibn 'Umayrah says: "I asked Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about [the verse], . . . *hrinking from fighting you or fighting their own people; and if Allāh had pleased, He would have given them power over you, so that they would have certainly fought you*. He said: 'My father used to say: "It was revealed about Banū Mudlij; they remained neutral, so they did not fight the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and were not with their people.'" I said: 'Then what did he do with them?' He said: 'The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) did not fight them, until he finished with his enemy; then he threw it at them in the same way.'" (*at Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)

It is narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said: "The words of Allāh, *a people between whom and you there is a covenant*, refers to Hilāl ibn 'Uwaymir as-Salamī; he made a covenant with the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) on behalf of his people; and he said during that covenant: 'On the condition that we do not frighten whoever comes to us [from you], O Muḥammad! and you do not frighten whoever comes to you [from us].' So Allāh forbade standing

against someone with whom agreement was made." (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

**The author says:** These and nearly similar themes have been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*, through various chains from Ibn 'Abbās and others.

Also, it is written therein: Abū Dāwūd (in his *an-Nāsikh*), Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Hātim, an-Nahhās and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) have narrated from Ibn 'Abbās regarding the verse: *Except those who reach a people . . .*, that it was abrogated by the verse of the chapter of "Repentance": *So when the sacred months have passed away, then slay the idolaters wherever you find them . . .* [Qur'ān, 9:6].

\* \* \* \* \*

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَنْ يَقتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَأً وَمَنْ قَتَلَ  
 مُؤْمِنًا خَطَأً فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٌ وَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَى  
 أَهْلِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَصَّدَّقُوا فَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَدُوِّكُمْ  
 وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٌ وَإِنْ كَانَ  
 مِنْ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُم مِيثَاقٌ فَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ  
 إِلَى أَهْلِهِ وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٌ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ  
 فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَكَانَ  
 اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَمَنْ يَقتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا  
 مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ  
 اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٣﴾ يَتَأْتِيهَا  
 الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا  
 لِمَنْ أَلْفَقَىٰ إِلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَبْتَغُونَ  
 عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِندَ اللَّهِ مَغَانِمُ كَثِيرَةٌ

كَذَٰلِكَ كُنْتُمْ مِّن قَبْلُ فَمَنْ أَلَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ  
فَتَيَّبِنُوا إِن يَتْلُوكَ اللَّهُ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَيْرًا ﴿٩٤﴾

*And it does not behove a believer to kill a believer except by mistake, and whoever kills a believer by mistake, he should free a believing slave, and blood-money should be paid to his people unless they remit it as alms; but if he be from a tribe hostile to you and he is a believer, the freeing of a believing slave (suffices); and if he is from a tribe between whom and you there is covenant, the blood-money should be paid to his people along with the freeing of a believing slave; but he who does not find (means to do this) should fast for two months consecutively, a penance from Allāh, and Allāh is Knowing, Wise (92). And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is hell; he shall abide in it and Allāh will send His wrath on him and curse him and prepare for him a great chastisement (93). O you who believe! when you march forth (for fighting) in Allāh's way, make investigation, and do not say to any one who offers you (salutation of) peace: "You are not a believer" coveting the goods of this world's life. But with Allāh there are abundant gains; you were such before, then Allāh conferred (His) grace on you; therefore make investigation; surely Allāh is aware of what you doff (94).*

\* \* \* \* \*

#### COMMENTARY

**QUR'ĀN:** *And it does not behove a believer to kill a believer except by mistake:* *al-Khatā'* (الخطأ = mistake) has no elongation; to read it with elongation (*al-khata'*) is wrong; here it gives a meaning opposite of 'intentionally', as the following verse (*And whoever kills a believer intentionally . . .*) shows.

"It does not behove" in this verse denotes negation of demand or requisition. In other words, it says: When a believer enters the

sanctuary of faith and belief, there remains in him nothing to demand the killing of another believer who like himself is within the same sanctuary, except if it happens without his intention. Thus the exception is joined, not isolated. The meaning in simple words is as follows: A believer does not want to kill a believer, *per se*; he cannot think of killing him knowing that he too is a believer. There are other verses like this sentence in the same style and the same negation of requisition. For a example: *And it is not for any man* [lit: It does not behove a man] *that Allāh should speak to him . . .* (42:51); *it is not possible for you* [lit: it does not behove you]; *that you should make the trees thereof to grow . . .* (27:60); *but they would not believe* [lit: it would not behove them to believe] *in what they had rejected before* (10:74) ; and other similar verses.

All the same, the verse indicates a legal prohibition in the form of a statement. That is: Allāh has never allowed, nor will He ever allow, that a believer should kill another believer. He has made it unlawful except in the case of unintentional killing, inasmuch as the killer did not have any intention of killing a believer; therefore the unlawfulness is not applicable there. It could happen if, for example, he had no intention of killing at all, or if he thought that the victim was an unbeliever whose killing was justified.

Some exegetes have said that the said exception was isolated. According to them, if it is taken as a joined and real exception it would mean that unintentional killing is ordered or allowed. However, it has been explained above that its only significance is removal of prohibition from unintentional killing; not that such killing was allowed. There is no difficulty in accepting this interpretation, and the exception is therefore real and joined.

**QUR'ĀN: *and whoever kills a believer by mistake . . . remit it as alms:*** *at-Taḥrīr* (التَّحْرِيرُ = to free a slave); *ar-raqabah* (الرَّقَبَةُ = neck; used metaphorically for slave); *ad-diyah* (الدِّيَّةُ = blood-money; indemnity for bodily injury). It is incumbent (*wājib*) upon a believer, if he kills a believer unintentionally, to emancipate a believing slave and pay blood-money to the victim's heirs. However, if the victim's heirs leave the blood-money and remit it then it is waived and the killer is not obliged to pay it.

**QUR'ĀN: *but if he be from a tribe hostile to you . . .*** : The pronoun, 'he', refers to the slain believer; hostile tribe means the

unbelievers who fight the Muslims. If the person slain by mistake was a believer but his heirs were hostile unbelievers, the obligation to free a believing slave will remain in place, but there will be no payment of blood-money, because a fighting unbeliever does not inherit any thing a believer.

**QUR'ĀN:** *and if he is from a tribe between whom and you there is a covenant . . .* : As the context shows, in this sentence too the pronoun, 'he', refers to the slain believer. 'Covenant' refers to agreement, whatever its nature; it includes the agreement of *adh-dhimmah* (الذِّمَّة) [by which an unbeliever puts himself under the protection of the Muslims]. Meaning: If the slain believer is from a tribe which has an agreement with the Muslims, the killer is required to pay blood-money together with freeing a slave. In this sentence, payment of blood-money is mentioned first to emphasize the importance of compliance with the agreement.

**QUR'ĀN:** *but he who does not find . . . should fast for two months consecutively:* That is: he who is unable to free a slave – as it is the nearest item before this clause – *must fast for two consecutively.*

**QUR'ĀN:** *a penance from Allāh . . .* : This order of fastig is a penance and mercy from Allāh for the person who does not have means to free a slave; and this fits with lightening burden. This order lightens the burden of the believer who financially incapable of freeing a slave.

Also, it is possible to take the 'penance' as a description of the whole laid down reparations beginning from: *he should free a believing slave.* Thus the meaning will be as follows: The prescription of these various reparations for a believer who kills another believer by mistake is a divine providence and penance for cleansing the killer from that filth. He should therefore be cautious and should not carelessly indulge in killing. It is like the words of Allāh: *And there is life for you in the (law of) retaliation ( 2:17)*

At the same time it is a divine providence and penance for the society, because through this reparation their loss of one free man will be made up with addition of another free person, and the financial loss of the slain believer's family will be made up with the blood-money.

It is clear from the above that Islam deems freedom as life and looks at slavery as a sort of murder; also in its eyes a complete

indemnity equals the average earning of a man. This topic will be dealt with in detail somewhere else.

The definitions and exact designation of unintentional and intentional killings, emancipation, indemnity, family of the slain person, and agreement, etc., as mentioned in this verse, may be found in *sunnah*. For further details see the books of *fiqh* (jurisprudence).

**QUR'ĀN:** *And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is hell; . . . : at-Ta'ammud* ( التَّعَمُّدُ = intention of an act with its specific aspect). Every intentional act must be having a specific aspect; and it is possible for an act to have more than one aspect. It is therefore possible that a single act may be intentional from one angle and unintentional from the other. Let us say that a hunter fires at an indistinct shape thinking that it was an animal, while in fact it was a man, in this case, if that man is killed, the act will be called intentional and wilful hunting but unintentional killing of the man. Likewise, if he beats a child with a stick for teaching him good manners and the child dies of the blow, it will be an unintentional killing. Consequently, killing a believer intentionally means that the killer had the intention of killing the believer, knowing that the blow or fire would kill him and realizing that the victim was a believer.

Allāh has spoken very harshly concerning the punishment of the person who wilfully kills a believer and declared that he would abide in hell for ever. But the verses, *Surely Allāh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases* (4:48); and, *surely Allāh forgives the faults altogether* (39:53), may restrict to a certain extent the theme of the verse under discussion. Although it threatens the punishment of everlasting fire, it does not indicate an irreversible and final decree; therefore it may be forgiven through repentance or intercession.

**QUR'ĀN:** *O you who believe! when you march forth (for fighting) in Allāh's way, make investigation, . . . : ad-Darb* ( الضَّرْبُ ) in this context means marching, travelling; the qualifying phrase, "in Allāh's way," shows that it means marching forth for *jihād*. *at-Tabayyun* ( التَّبَيُّنُ = to distinguish); here it means to differentiate between believer and unbeliever, as the next sentence shows: *and do not say to any one who offers you (salutation of) peace: "You are not a believer."* Offering peace means offering the salutation of the believers, i.e., peace. Some reciters have recited it *as-salām* ( السَّلَامُ = submission; surrender).



*Coveting the good of this world's life*, indicates greed of riches and war-booty. *But with Allāh there are abundant gains: al-Maghānim* ( الْمَغَانِمُ ) is plural of *al-maghnām* ( الْمَغْنَمُ = gain, war-booty). What is with Allāh is more excellent than this world's benefits; because, the hereafter's gains are limitless and ever-lasting; you should therefore look forward to it.

**QUR'ĀN: you were such before, then Allāh conferred (His) grace on you, therefore make investigation; . . .** : You too, before entering the fold of Islam, had the same tendency, i.e., were covetous of the worldly riches and booties; then Allāh bestowed His favour and grace on you; as a result, you turned from this world's gains towards the abundant gains of the hereafter, which is with Allāh. In this background it is incumbent upon you to investigate and distinguish a believer from unbelievers. The order to investigate properly is repeated here for emphasis.

The verse obviously shows that there had actually occurred a killing of a believer. It contains admonition, but does not indicate that it was an intentional killing. Apparently someone among the believers had killed by mistake someone (from among polytheists) who had greeted him with peace. The said believer was not sure that the greeter was really a Muslim; he thought that he was using that salutation and presenting himself as a believer only to save his life. The verse admonishes the killer that Islam only looks at the appearance; the reality inside the hearts is known only to Allāh, the Subtle, the Knower.

According to the above explanation, the clause: *coveting the goods of this world's life*, is an allusion to the state and condition of the people concerned. It means: Your behaviour in killing someone who presents himself as a Muslim, without looking properly into his credentials, without investigating whether his claim was right, resembles the behaviour of a person who covets riches and booties, and kills a believer who announces his belief, on petty unacceptable excuses. Of course, all the believers did have the same tendency before they accepted Islam; their only objective at that time was the riches of this world. But now they have been favoured with true faith and Allāh has shown them the right path. Now they should have investigated properly before taking any action. They must discard the behaviour of the days of ignorance and cleanse themselves of all its motives.

### TRADITIONS

It is reported in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*, under the verse, *And it does not behove a believer to kill a believer except by mistake*: Ibn Jarīr has narrated from 'Ikrimah that he said: "al-Ḥārith ibn Yazīd ibn Nubayshah (from the tribe of Banū 'Āmir ibn Luw'ayy), in company of Abū Jahl, used to torture 'Ayyāsh ibn Rabī'ah. Then he [accepted Islam and] went forth migrating to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). [When hereached near Medina], 'Ayyāsh saw him at al-Ḥarrah and attacked [and killed] him with sword, thinking that he [al-Ḥārith] was still an unbeliever. Then ['Ayyāsh] came to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and informed him. Thereupon, the verse was revealed: *And it does not behove a believer to kill a believer acept by mistake . . .* The Prophet recited it to him and said: 'Stand up and free [a believing slave].'"

**The author says:** This theme has been narrated throug other chains too. Some of them say that 'Ayyāsh had killed him at Mecca on the day Mecca was conquered; 'Ayyāsh, who till then was imprisoned by the polytheists who tortured him, came out [of prison], and met al-Ḥārith who by that time had accepted Islam although 'Ayyāsh didn't know it. So 'Ayyāsh killed him there at that time. But the report of 'Ikrimah seems more probable and more in keeping with the time of the revelation of the chapter, "The Women".

Ibn Zayd says that the verse was revealed about Abu 'd-Dardā'. He was in an expedition; and went to a gorge to relieve nature. There he saw a man with his sheep. [Abu 'd-Dardā'] attacked him with sword; he said, 'There is no god except Allāh'; but Abu 'd-Dardā' killed him and brought his sheep to his group. Then some doubt occured in his mind, and he came to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and informed him. Thereupon this verse was revealed. (*at-Tafsīr*, at-Ṭabarī)

Another report quoted in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*, and transmitted by ar-Rūyānī, Ibn Mandah and Abū Nu'aym from Bakr ibn Ḥārithah al-Juhanī narrates al-Juhanī's claim that it was revealed about him and he tells a story similar to that of Abu 'd-Dardā'. However, all these traditions are merely attempts to fit the verse on some events or episodes.

al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd narrates through his chain from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Wherever emancipation of slave is prescribed, [freeing of even] a child suffices, except in reparation of killing, because Allāh, the High,

says, *he should free a believing slave*; it means a slave who has accepted Islam, that is, has reached the age of responsibility [i.e., has attained maturity] . . . " (*Tahdhību 'l-aḥkām*)

Mūsā ibn Ja'far (a.s.) was asked: "How should a believing slave be recognized?" He said: "According to birth." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) was asked about a Muslim [living] in a land of polytheists who was killed by Muslims, and the leader [of the Muslims] came to know of it afterwards. He (a.s.) said: "He should free in his place a believing; slave; and it is the word of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great: *but if he be from a tribe hostile to you . . .*" (*Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu 'l-faḥīh*).

**The author says:** A similar *ḥadīth* is narrated by al-'Ayyāshī. The word of the Imām (a.s.), "should free in his place", indicates that the emancipation aims at adding a free Muslim to take the place of the free Muslim who was killed, as we have written earlier. Also it may be inferred from it that the underlying reason of prescribing the emancipation as atonement of some other sins is to add a free person who has not committed any sin to fill the gap of the one who has gone out of the line as a result of that sin.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) has said: "If a man is required to fast for two months consecutively, and he breaks the fast or becomes sick during the first month, he will have to repeat the fast; but if he has fasted the first month and also fasted a few days from the second month, and then is prevented from continuing because of some genuine cause, then he will have to repay the remaining days [only]. (*al-Kāfī*)

**The author says:** That is, he will fast only the number of the days he could not fast from the second month. The ruling is inferred from the word, *consecutively*.

The same Imām (a.s.) was asked: "Does a believer who intentionally killed a believer have [a chance of] repentance?" He said: "If he had killed him because of his belief, then there is no repentance for him; but if he had killed him in anger or because of some worldly matter, then his repentance is that he should undergo retaliation [i.e., he should be killed in retribution;] and if he is not recognized [i.e., if people do not know the identity of the killer,] he should himself go to the heirs of the killed believer and own his [guilt of] killing their relatives; then if they forgive him and do not kill him, he should pay them the blood-money, emancipate a [believing] slave, fast two months consecutively and feed sixty needy persons – all this for

repenting [and returning] to Allāh, the Mighty, the Great." (*al-Kāfi; at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyāshī)

[ash-Shaykh narrates] through his chains from Abu 's-Safātij that Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) said about the word of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, *And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is hell*: "His recompense is hell if Allāh meted out the punishment to him." (*Tahdhību 'l-aḥkām*)

**The author says:** The same meaning has been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from aṭ-Ṭabarānī and others from Abū Hurayrah from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). The above traditions contain many fine points we have already mentioned in the Commentary. There are many traditions on killing and its retribution which may be seen in the books of traditions.

[aṭ-Ṭabrisī] says about the verse: *And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is hell*, that it was revealed about Muqīs ibn Dabābah al-Kinānī. He found his brother, Hishām, killed in [the place of] Banu 'n-Najjār; he described it to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), who sent Qays ibn Hilāl al-Fihrī with him and said to him: "Tell Banu 'n-Najjār, 'If you know the killer of Hishām, surrender him to his brother in order that he may avenge himself, and if you do not know him then pay him his blood-money.'" al-Fihrī conveyed the message and they paid the blood-money. When he was returning with al-Fihrī, the Satan tempted him and said: "You achieved nothing. You took your brothers? blood-money and it will be a disgrace for you. Kill him who is with you, and it will be a life for a life and the blood-money will be an extra [bonus]." Thereupon he struck al-Fihrī with a rock and killed him; and rode a camel and returned to Mecca as an unbeliever; and recited (a poem, in which) he said:

*I killed Fihrī in his (Hishām's) retaliation while I was given his blood-money too,*

*By the leaders of Banu 'n-Najjār, the noble and beautiful;*

*Thus I got my revenge and lied down on pillow,*

*And I was the first to return to the idols.*

Then the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: "I shall not grant his safety, neither in the sanctuary nor outside it." It has been narrated by aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk and a group of exegetes. (*Majma‘u 'l-bayān*)

**The author says:** A nearly similar tradition is narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās, Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr and others.

It is written in *at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī about the verse: *O you who believe! when you march forth (for fighting) in Allāh's way . . .* : "It was revealed when the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) returned from the expedition of Khaybar and sent Usāmah ibn Zayd with some horsemen to some Jewish villages in vicinity of Fadak in order that he might call them to Islam. There was, in one of the villages, a man called Mirdās ibn Nahīk al-Fadakī. When he heard of the horsemen of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), he gathered his family and property at the side of the mountain and came forward, saying: 'I bear witness that there is no god but Allāh and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh.' Usāmah ibn Zayd passed by him, and speared him to death. When he came back to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), he informed him of it. The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said to him: 'You killed a man who was bearing witness that there was no god except Allāh and that I was the Messenger of Allāh' He said: 'O Messenger of Allāh! he had said it only to save his life.' The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Neither did you remove the covering from his heart [to see what was inside it], nor did you accept what he said by his tongue, nor did you know what was inside his soul!' Usāmah then swore an oath that after that he would never kill any one who bore witness that there was no god except Allāh and that Muḥammad was the Messenger of Allāh. Therefore, he did not join the Commander of the Believers in his battles. It was about this incident that the verse was revealed: *and do not say to any one who offers you (salutation of) peace: "You are not a believer," coveting the goods of this world's life . . .* "

**The author says:** The same story has been narrated by aṭ-Ṭabarī in his *at-Tafsīr* from as-Suddī. *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* quotes several other traditions describing why this verse was revealed; some of them say that the event concerned Miqdād ibn al-Aswad al-Kindī; others mention Abu 'd-Dardā'; yet others, the name of Muḥlim ibn Juthāmah; while some others have left the story vague without mentioning the name of the killer or the killed. Be as it may, the history books mention the oath of Usāmah ibn Zayd and the excuse he offered to 'Alī (a.s.) for remaining aloof from his battles. And Allāh knows better.

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ  
فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ  
وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ  
الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٥﴾ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً  
وَرَحْمَةً ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿٩٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْتَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ  
ظَالِمِينَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ  
قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضَ اللَّهِ وَسِعَةً فَهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَا وَعَدْنَاهُمْ  
جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿٩٧﴾ إِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ  
وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانَ لَيْسْتَ تَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةَ وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩٨﴾  
فَأُولَٰئِكَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَن يَعْفُو عَنْهُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَفُورًا غَفُورًا ﴿٩٩﴾  
❖ وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَافِقًا كَثِيرًا وَسِعَةً  
وَمَنْ يُخْرَجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ  
فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿١٠٠﴾

*The holders back from among the believers, not having any injury, and those who strive hard in Allāh's way with their property and their persons are not equal; Allāh has made the strivers with their property and their persons to excel the holders back in rank, and to each Allāh has promised good; and Allāh has distinguished the strivers above the holders back (by) a great recompense (95): (High) degrees from Him and pardon and mercy, and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful ( 96). Surely (as for) those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls they shall say: "In what state were you?" They shall say: "We were weak in the earth." They shall say: "Was not Allāh's earth vast (enough), so that you should have emigrated therein?" So these it is whose abode is hell, and it is an evil resort (97); Except the weak ones from among the men and the women and the children who have not in their power the means nor can they find a way (to escape) (98); So these, it may be, Allāh will pardon them, and Allāh is Pardoning, Forgiving (99). And whoever emigrates in Allāh's way, he will find in the earth many a place of refuge and abundant resources; and whoever goes forth from his house emigrating to Allāh and His Messenger, and then death overtakes him, his reward is surely incumbent upon Allāh, and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful (100).*

\* \* \* \* \*

#### COMMENTARY

**QUR'ĀN:** *The holders back from among the believers . . . are not equal:* *aḍ-Ḍarar* ( = الضَّرَرُ the damage and defect in body) which prevents one from participating in *jihād* and fighting, e.g., blindness, lameness and sickness. Striving hard with their property means spending it in the way of Allāh in order to gain victory over the enemies of the religion; striving with their persons denotes fighting in Allāh's way.

The phrase: *and to each Allāh has promised good*, indicates that the verse is speaking about those holders back who had not gone forth for *jihād* at a time when their participation was not very vital – because a sufficient number of warriors had already joined the Islamic

force. Accordingly, the verse aims at encouraging and exhorting the believers to participate in *jihād*, to hasten to it and hurry in joining it.

As a further proof, see that Allāh has exempted from *jihād* those who are not physically fit; then He says that the holders back [with exception of the unfit ones] are not equal to the fighters – yet the fact remains that the physically unfit ones too are not equal to the fighters in the way of Allāh. [So, why this exception?] We may say that Allāh will compensate their inability because their intention was good. Even then, the fighting, and martyrdom or victory over the enemies of Allāh are really great distinctions for those who fight in the way of Allāh over the non-participators.

In short, the verse serves to exhort and encourage the believers and re-awaken their spirit of faith in order that they should hasten and race towards good deeds and excellence.

**QUR'ĀN:** *Allāh has made the strivers with their property and their persons to excel the holders back in rank, . . .* : The sentence gives the reason why the two groups are not equal; that is why there is no conjunction etc., attached to it. *ad-Darajah* ( الدَّرَجَةُ = degree, rank); *ad-darajāt* ( الدَّرَجَاتُ = rank after rank; degree after degree). As for the phrase, *and to each Allāh has promised good*, it may refer to the two groups of the holders back and the strivers, or to all the three groups: the holders back without any injury, the holders back because of an injury and the strivers in the way of Allāh. The word, "good", is an adjective whose related noun is omitted; it may mean good outcome, good recompense or similar things. This sentence is put here to remove a possible misunderstanding: A holder back from among the believers – hearing the preceding declaration – could have thought that now he had nothing to his credit and that his faith and all other good deeds were now of no value at all. Allāh assures them that to each of them He has promised good.

**QUR'ĀN:** *And Allāh has distinguished the strivers above the holders back (by) a great recompense: (high) degrees from Him and pardon and mercy. . . .* : This distinction and excellence explains in detail the distinction mentioned above. Also it contains another important message: The believers should not remain content with the good promise offered by the phrase: *and to each Allāh has promised good*; they should not be indolent in striving in the way of Allāh, should not neglect their duty in putting utmost effort to raise the word



of truth and to erase the falsehood, because the strivers have been granted considerably great excellence and distinction above the holders back; they shall get very high degrees of forgiveness and mercy.

The verse contains a remarkable style:-

**First:** The "strivers" have been qualified initially with the phrase: *in Allāh's way with their property and their persons*; then it has come down to, *with their property and their persons*; and finally they are mentioned without any qualification or restriction.

**Second:** Their distinction is described first in singular, rank or degree and then it goes to plural, "degrees from Him."

Why?

As for the qualifications of the strivers, the verse aims at description of the distinction and excellence of *jihād* on holding back. *Jihād* can only be of any value if it is done in the way of Allāh, not in the way of one's desires, by giving away the most precious thing, i.e., wealth and property, and sacrificing what is even dearer than that, i.e., one's person and life. That is why at the first opportunity it was fully explained with all details, *those who strive hard in Allāh's way with their property and their persons*, so that no room is left for any misunderstanding or doubt. When it was said, *Allāh has made the strivers with their property and their persons to excel . . .* there was actually no need to mention any qualifying phrase, because every thing had already been clarified; but as the sentence was to be followed by the phrase, *and to each Allāh has promised good*, it was appropriate to explain the reason of excellence and distinction, (i.e., spending the wealth and sacrificing the life in spite of their attraction); that is why only these two factors were used to qualify the strivers. When the time came to say, "and Allāh has distinguished the strivers above the holders back (by) a great recompense," there was no need to mention any attribute at all; not even partially. As for the change of singular 'rank' or 'degree' to the plural 'degrees', in the first, (*Allāh has made the strivers . . . to excel the holders back in rank*) the word *darajah* (دَرَجَةٌ = rank, degree) is accusative of specification, and it only describes that the excellence is in rank and degree, without going into detail as to whether the said degree is one or more. On the other hand, when it says: "and Allāh has distinguished the strivers . . . (by) a great recompense: (High) degrees from Him", the word, 'distinguished', implies bestowal, and the word, "(High) degrees", is in explicative apposition to the preceding "a great recompense", or stand for it. The meaning: Allāh, has given the strivers a great recompense,

distinguishing them over the holders back by a great reward, that is, the high degrees from Allāh. In short, the speech mentions at first only that the strivers excel the holders back in rank, without saying whether the rank is one or more; while the next sentence says that it is not a single rank, rather there are many degrees and ranks, and that it is the great recompense given to the strivers.

On a cursory glance, it may look as if there was some contradiction in mentioning the rank or degree in singular and then in plural. But the above explanation may remove any such misunderstanding. Many other exegetes have tried to explain this apparent contradiction, but almost all their explanations seem far-fetched. For example:

1. The singular describes their excellence over the holders back who are unfit to fight, while the plural shows the excellence over those not having any injury;

2. The singular indicates the worldly benefits, e.g., war-booty and high prestige etc., while the plural points to the ranks of the hereafter, which surely are much superior, as Allāh says: *and certainly the hereafter is much greater in respect of degrees.* (17:21)

3. The singular 'rank' shows their status in presence of Allāh which is a spiritual reality, while the plural indicates the grades of the Garden and its high ranks which is a phenomenal affair.

You may see for yourself that there is nothing in the Qur'ānic text to support any of these explanations.

In the phrase, "(High) degrees from Him," the pronoun 'Him' refers to Allāh, and this explanation is supported by the next words, "and pardon and mercy", assuming that these words describe the degrees, and obviously pardon and mercy comes from Allāh. Alternatively, the pronoun may relate to the "great recompense" preceding it. [In this case, the translation will be changed to 'High degrees from it.']

The words, "and pardon and mercy", obviously describe the high degrees; the degrees, i.e, the ranks bestowed by Allāh, whatsoever their nature, are manifestation of divine pardon and mercy; and it has already been explained somewhere that the mercy, i.e, divine bestowal of bounties, depends on removal of all impediments and obstacles which might prevent one from receiving those bounties – and this removal of obstacles is the pardon. Now, each level of divine bounty and favour and each rank and status [is mercy in itself, but it also prepares man to receive still higher rank; in this way] it is 'pardon' when seen in relation to the next higher rank. It

is therefore perfectly right to say that the ranks of the hereafter – whatever their nature – are divine pardon and mercy. In most places where mercy, bounty or similar realities are mentioned in the Qur'ān, it is usually joined with pardon and forgiveness. For example: *they shall have forgiveness and a mighty reward* (5:9); *and forgiveness and an honourable sustenance* (8:4); *they shall have forgiveness and a great reward* (11:11); *and forgiveness from Allāh and (His) pleasure* (57:20); *and forgive us and have mercy on us* (2:286). There are many such verses in the Qur'ān.

The verse ends on the words: *and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful*. Its appropriateness with the theme of the verse is quite clear, particularly as it ends on "pardon and mercy".

**QUR'ĀN: Surely (as for) those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls:** *Tawaffāhum* (تَوَفَّاهُمْ) translated here as "cause to die" is in aorist tense; in that case its original form is *tatawaffāhum* (تَتَوَفَّاهُمْ) from which one "ta" (ت) has been removed for easy pronunciation. The complete form is given in 16:28: *Those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to themselves. Then would they offer submission.*

Alternatively the verb may be taken as a past tense.

As evidenced by this latter verse, the injustice mentioned here refers to the harm they had inflicted on themselves by turning away from the divine religion and neglecting to establish its practices – all because they lived in the midst of unbelievers, among polytheists, and had no means of learning the religion's tenets and implanting what the belief in Allāh's lordship demands. This may be clearly seen from the words: *they shall say: "In what state were you?" They shall say: "We were weak in the earth", . . .* [Read upto the end of the verse 100.]

Allāh has explained the adjective, 'unjust', (used without a qualifying word) in these words: . . . *the curse of Allāh is on the unjust who hinder (people) from Allāh's way and seek to make it crooked . . .* (7:44-45; 11:18.-19). These verses define the injustice as turning away from Allāh's way and seeking to make it crooked and altered. This definition fits on the theme of the verse under discussion.

**QUR'ĀN: they shall say: "In what state were you" :** That is: What was the state and condition of your religion? *ma* (مَا) [in *fīma* فِيمَا = in what] is the shortened form of *mā* (مَا = what).

The verse points in a general way to the 'questioning in grave' as the traditions say: that the angels ask the dead person about his religion, This phenomenon is described also in another place: *Those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to themselves. Then would they offer submission: "We used not to do an evil." Aye! Surely Allāh knows what you were doing, Therefore enter the gates of hell, to abide therein; so certainly evil is the dwelling place of the proud. And it is said to those who are pious: "What is it that your Lord has revealed?" They say: "Good . . ."* (16 : 28-30).

**QUR'ĀN:** *They shall say: "We were weak in the earth." They shall say: "Was not Allāh's earth vast (enough), so that you should have emigrated therein?" . . .* : The angels' first question. *In what state were you?* was an enquiry about their religious condition; but the position of the unjust persons in that respect was not satisfactory; therefore they, instead of giving direct answer, tried to explain the reason of their objectionable condition: that they lived in a place, [country or town] where they could not obey the dictates of religion, because its inhabitants were powerful polytheists who oppressed them and prevented them from learning the rules of *sharī'ah* and acting upon them.

But their weakness – even if their claim was right – emanated from their abiding under the polytheists' sway, in a land under their domination. The enemies had no control or authority outside their boundary. Therefore, these 'weak' people were not really weak; they could easily have changed their condition by emigrating from that place. That is why the angels refuted their claim of weakness, reminding them that Allāh's earth was vast enough for them to go forth and be free from the polytheists' oppression; it was not beyond their power to leave the land of oppression and emigrate to some other place. They actually were not weak people as they could have removed the fetters of oppression from themselves. It was their own wrong choice which had put them in that bad state.

The question, "Was not Allāh's earth vast (enough) so that you should have migrated therein?" is for reprimand and rebuke, as is the first question, "In what state were you?" Alternatively this first question could be just an enquiry, because in the verses 28-30), of chapter 16 the same question has been addressed to the unjust and the pious ones. But in any case the second question is for reprimand.

The angels called the earth "Allāh's earth"; it may be a pointer to the fact that Allāh first gave this vastness to the Earth, and it was

later that He called them to the faith and good deeds. The same idea may be inferred from the verse coming at the end: *And whoever emigrates in Allāh's, way he will find in the earth many a place of refuge and abundant resources.*

As the earth has been described as 'vast', the preposition 'in' has been used for emigration: "so that you should have emigrated therein," i.e., migrated from one of its places to another. Had it not been vast enough, the phrase would have been, emigrated *from* it.

Then after this questioning, Allāh judged their case and said: *So these it is whose abode is hell, and it is an evil resort.*

**QUR'ĀN:** *Except the weak ones from among the men and the women and the children who have not in their power the means nor can they find a way (to escape):* The exception is isolated. Allāh calls this group weak and their weakness is explained in this very verse. It proves that the previously mentioned unjust people were not weak because they could liberate themselves from the fetters of oppression by emigrating from that land. Weak in reality are these people mentioned in this verse. To mention them with such detail, "the men and the women and the children" makes the divine order clearer and removes all possible misunderstandings. *Hīlah* (حيلة = translated here as 'means') is derived from *al-haylulah* (الحيلولة = to interpose, to come between); then it was used for a device which comes between a person and his goal; it is mostly used for what is done secretly and for objectionable activity – artifice, ruse, subterfuge. Its root contains a connotation of change, as ar-Rāghib has written in his *Mufradātu 'l-Qur'ān*.

The meaning: These people are unable to do anything to avert from themselves the oppression perpetrated against them by the polytheists; they cannot find a way to get out from the enemies' clutch. The 'way' in this context means the real path (e.g., the way to Medina for the intending emigrants from Mecca) as well as the metaphorical way, i.e., every means which could free them from the polytheists' hands and put an end to their oppression and tyranny.

#### ON THE "WEAK ONES"

The verse shows that ignorance of religious tenets is a valid excuse in Allāh's eyes, provided it is caused by such inadequacy and

weakness which were not contributed to by the ignorant person himself.

Allāh says that ignorance of religion and inability to establish religious rites and tenets is an inequity which will not be forgiven by Him. Then He makes an exception of the weak persons and accepts their plea of 'weakness', and defines that weakness in a way which includes others too: that is, they are unable to avert the danger from themselves. Now, this inability manifests itself in two ways:

**One:** A man lives in a place where he does not have access to religious knowledge because there is no scholar there who could teach him the necessary details; or he is unable to act according to *sharī'ah* because the enemies forcefully prevent him from it and put him under unbearable torture and oppression; and he cannot leave that place to emigrate to a Muslim land and join his fellow Muslims. As a result, this inability may emanate from weakness of mind, sickness physical handicap, lack of money or other such factors.

**Two:** A man is oblivious of the established truth of the religion and its tenets, and his thoughts have not led him to it, but at the same time he has no enmity towards truth, is not averse to it at all; if he knew the reality he would have readily accepted it; but the truth has remained hidden from him because of some factors [and, therefore, he does not know it].

This too is a 'weak' person who does not have a means and does not find a way to escape from his ignorance – not because of any enemies who might be threatening him from all sides with swords and spears – but because of other factors which have overpowered his thinking and put him under oblivion. Obviously, with this oblivion he has no power and with this ignorance he cannot find a way to the truth.

This explanation is based on the generality of the verse which shows that the given cause is unrestricted [and covers cases of unavoidable ignorance and oblivion]. The theme is supported by some other verses too. For example: *Allāh does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability; for it is (the benefit of) what it has earned, and upon it is (the evil of) what it has wrought (2:286)*. Obviously, a thing, which one is unaware of, is beyond one's ability in the same way as is a thing which one is forcefully prevented from.

This verse of the second chapter absolves one from responsibility in cases of lack of ability, and at the same time lays down a criterion for distinguishing a genuine inability from a false one. That is, the man should not have contributed towards that

inability; if his total or partial ignorance of religion emanates from his own negligence or wrong choice then he should be held responsible for it. In other words, it is he who has committed that sin. On the other hand, if that ignorance is caused – not by his own actions – but by some factors beyond his power, then it cannot be attributed to his own choice – he cannot be accused of committing a sin, or of being arrogant; he has not opposed the truth nor has he rejected it intentionally. In short, for him is what he has earned, and upon him is what he has wrought.

It appears from the above, that a 'weak' person is empty-handed. There is nothing for or against him in his account, because he has not earned anything. His judgement is in the hands of his Lord. This is clear from the next verse: *So these it may be, Allāh will pardon them and Allāh is Pardoning, Forgiving*; and from the verse 106 of ch. 9: *And others are made to await Allāh's command, whether He will turn to them (in mercy); and Allāh is Knowing, Wise*. And His mercy is ahead of His wrath.

**QUR'ĀN:** *So these, it may be, Allāh will pardon them, . . .* : The weak ones have not earned any sin, because they were unable to remove their ignorance. Yet, as explained before man's affairs are either good or evil, and it is enough for one's infelicity if one does not earn good for himself. Man, whether he is good, evil or just empty-handed, can never be free from the need of Allāh's pardon and forgiveness; it is this divine pardoning which erases the traces of evil and infelicity. That is why Allāh has offered them here a hope of pardon.

First the hope is offered to them of being pardoned, and it is immediately followed by the declaration: *and Allāh is Pardoning, Forgiving*. It makes it almost definite that the divine forgiveness will cover them [on the day of judgement], as they have been separated, through exception, from the unjust ones who have been threatened that their abode is hell and it is evil resort.

**QUR'ĀN:** *And whoever emigrates in Allāh's way, he will find in the earth many a place of refuge and abundant resources:* ar-Rāghib has written: "*ar-Raghām* (الرَّغَامُ = fine dust or soil); [they say] his nose fell in the dust, or someone rubbed his nose in dust; it is an idiom to show displeasure. A poet says:

*When those noses are rubbed in dust, I do not (try to) please them,*

*No do I seek their pardon; rather I increase their displeasure.*

As the word is placed in opposition to seeking pleasure, it shows that rubbing nose in dust means to enrage, to embitter. That is why it is said: May Allāh rub his nose in dust [i.e., May Allāh cause him to be indignant]; *arḡhamahū* ( ارْغَمَهُ = he made him angry); *rāḡhamahu* ( رَاغَمَهُ = They both tried to spite each other); then *al-murāḡhamah* ( الْمُرَاغَمَةُ ) was taken to mean "to quarrel with each other". Allāh says: "He will find in the earth many a *murāḡhaman* ( مُرَاغَمًا )", that is, ways and paths which he might use and if he saw something undesirable he would feel indignant; as you say: "I was displeased to so-and-so from such and such, [i.e., I did not like that thing so I turned to so-and-so to express my displeasure]."

The meaning is therefore as follows: And whoever emigrates in Allāh's way (i.e., seeking His pleasure by full involvement with religion in theory and practice), he will find in the earth many places, so that if someone prevents him in one place from following the religious tenets he would turn and emigrate to another place, thus rubbing the adversary's nose in dust and letting him be embittered and angry. [It is to convey this connotation that we have translated *murāḡhaman* as place of refuge.] And he will find abundance of resources in those new places.

Earlier, the angels had asked: *Was not Allāh's earth vast (enough), so that you should have emigrated therein?* As the verse under discussion is based on it, it would apparently look appropriate to say, 'And whoever emigrates, he will find in the earth abundant resources.' But as Allāh has added "many a place of refuge", and this refuge was of importance to a person who wanted to proceed in the way of Allāh, the migration too was qualified by the phrase, "in Allāh's way"; thus the whole verse is perfectly integrated and well-adapted to the main theme, i.e., admonishing the believers living in polytheists' midst, exhorting them to emigrate in the way of Allāh, and assuring them of abundant, resources if they emigrated.

**QUR'ĀN:** *and whoever goes forth from his house emigrating to Allāh and His Messenger . . . Forgiving, Merciful:* Emigration to Allāh and His Messenger stands for emigrating to the place of Islam, where one can learn the Book of Allāh and the *sunnah* of His Messenger, and act accordingly. The phrase: "death overtakes him", is an extended metaphor alluding to occurrence of death or sudden death. 'Overtaking' creates a mental image of a person pursuing



another until he catches up with him. Likewise, the words, "his reward is surely incumbent on Allāh", literally mean, his reward has surely fallen on Allāh; this too is an extended metaphor alluding to the meaning given in the translation. There is certainly good reward and abundant recompense offered to the servant; and Allāh will deal with him in His divinity, for Whom nothing is difficult, nothing is formidable; whatever He wills happens; and whatever He promises is fulfilled. The speech ends on the phrase, "and Allāh is forgiving, Merciful". It emphasizes the good promise to assure them of full reward and recompense.

In these verses, Allāh has divided those who claim to be believers into various groups according to their residence in the place of Islam or that of polytheism; and has described the appropriate recompense for each. The aim is first to admonish and warn, then to encourage and exhort them to emigrate to the land of Islam and assemble therein in order to strengthen the Islamic society. Thus they shall be able to unite and cooperate with each other in righteousness and piety, to bring up the word of truth and raise the standard of *tawhīd* and flag of the religion.

The first main group was of the believers who lived in the land of Islam: among them were those who strived hard in the way of Allāh with their property and their souls. Then there were those who held back without any injury or disability; and finally those who held back because of disabling injury. Allāh promised good to each sub-group, but He made the strivers to excel the holders back in ranks.

Another main group is of those who stayed in the land of polytheism; it is an unjust group which does not emigrate in the way of Allāh; its abode is the hell and it is an evil resort. There is another sub-group of truly weak man, women and children, which is not unjust, they have no means nor do they find any way to escape; and lastly there are those who were not weak, they went forth from their houses emigrating to Allāh and His Messenger, but were overtaken by death; their reward is surely incumbent upon Allāh.

The verses, with all the classifications, are applicable to the Muslims in all eras and periods, although, to begin with, they were revealed to describe the Muslims' condition in Arabia during the Prophet's time between his' emigration to Medina and the conquest of Mecca. The land was divided in those day in two parts:

1. *Dāru 'l-Islām* ( دارُ الإسلام = the House of Islam) that is, Medina and the neighbouring regions, dominated by the Muslims (who had complete freedom to observe their religion). Of course, there were

some polytheists and followers of other religions too in that land, but they did not interfere with the Muslims because of various agreements, etc., they had with them.

2. *Dāru 'sh-shirk* (دَارُ الشِّرْكَ = the House of polytheism) that is, Mecca and its neighbouring regions, dominated by the polytheists who persisted in idol-worship and prevented those Muslims who lived in their midst from following their religion; they oppressed and tortured those Muslims and put them under utmost pressure hoping to turn them away from Islam.

The principle laid down in these verses provides guidance to the Muslims for all times to come. A Muslim is required to live in a place where he can acquire the knowledge of Islamic tenets and beliefs, can perform religious ceremonies and follow the *sharī'ah's* commands and rules. He must emigrate from a country where he is unable to learn religion's realities and finds no way to live according to Islamic principles. It makes no difference whether today that country is called *Dāru 'l-Islām* or *Dāru 'sh-Shirk*, because these days the names have changed, the actual meanings have been discarded, religion is just a citizenship and Islam merely a name – without caring whether one called Muslim actually believes in its reality and follows its rules or not.

But according to the Qur'ān, results emanate from the reality of Islam, not its name; and it obliges the Muslims to follow the spirit of its rules, not merely the letters. Allāh says: *This shall not be in accordance with your vain desires nor in accordance with the vain desires of the People of the Book; whoever does evil he shall be required with it, and besides Allāh he will find for himself neither a guardian nor a helper. And whoever does good deeds whether male or female, and he is a believer – these shall enter the garden and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly (4:123-124). Surely those who believe and those who are Jews and the Christians, and the Sabaeans, whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve (2: 62).*

## TRADITIONS

Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Hātim, Ibn Marduwayh and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) have narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that he

said: "A group of Meccans had accepted Islam, but they kept it secret. The polytheists brought them out [i.e., forced them to come out] with them on the day of Badr; some were afflicted, other were killed. The Muslims said: 'These our companions were Muslims and were forced; so let us pray for their forgiveness.' Then the verse was revealed: *Surely (as for) those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls . . .*" He further said: "This verse was then written to those Muslims who were still at Mecca, that they had no excuse (to remain there). So they came out, but the polytheists over-took and harried them [so they returned to Mecca]. Then was revealed the verse: *And among men is he who says: "We believe in Allāh;" but when he is persecuted in (the way of) Allāh, he thinks the persecution of men to be as the chastisement of Allāh; . . .* (29:10) The Muslims wrote it to them; so they were afflicted with grief and lost hope of every good. Thereupon the verse was revealed: *Yet surely your Lord, with respect to those who emigrate after they are persecuted, then they struggle hard and are patient, surely your Lord after that is Forgiving, Merciful* (16:110). The Muslims again wrote to them about it that Allāh has made for you a way out, so come away (from Mecca). They came out, the polytheists (again) overtook them, but the Muslims (this time) fought with them until was saved who was saved and was killed who was killed." (ad-Durru 'l-manthūr)

Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated from aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk about this verse that he said: "They were some hypocrites who remained behind the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) at Mecca and did not emigrate with him to Medina; thereafter they came out with Qurayshite idol-worshippers to Badr, and were afflicted in the battle with [other polytheists]. Then Allāh revealed this verse about them." (*ibid.*)

Ibn Jarīr has narrated from Ibn Zayd about this verse that he said: "When the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was sent and the (true) faith appeared and spread, hypocrisy too spread side by side. Some people came to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and said: 'O Messenger of Allāh! If we were not afraid of these people that they would torment us and would do and do [unbearable things to us], we would have accepted Islam [openly]; nevertheless we bear witness that there is no god except Allāh and that you are the Messenger of Allāh.' They used to say this to him. When the day of Badr came the polytheists stood up [to fight] and said: 'No one will remain behind from us but that we shall demolish his house and seize his property.' [Hearing it,] those people too went forth (with polytheists) who used to say those words

to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); some of them were killed; some others were taken prisoners."

Then (Ibn Zayd) said: "As for those who were killed, they were those about whom Allāh has said: *Surely (as for) those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls . . . Was not Allāh's earth vast (enough) so that you should have emigrated therein – leaving these oppressors behind? So these it is whose abode is hell and it is an evil resort.*

"Then Allāh excused those with genuine inability and said: *Except the weak ones from among the men and the women and the children who have not in their power the means nor can they find a way where they can head to; if they went forth they would be destroyed, so these it may be Allāh will pardon them their staying in the midst of idol-worshippers.*

"As for those who were captured, they said: 'O Messenger of Allāh: you know that we used to come to you and bear witness that there was no god except Allāh and that you were His Messenger; yet we had to come out with these people fearing (their reprisals)' Allāh said: *O Prophet! say to those of the captives who are in your hands: "If Allāh knows anything good in your hearts He will give to you better than that which has been taken away from you and will forgive you the misdeed you have done"; i.e., your coming out with the polytheists against the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) . . . And if they intend to act unfaithfully towards you, so indeed they acted unfaithfully towards Allāh before – when they joined the polytheists in coming out – but He gave (you) mastery over them.*" (8:70-71)

'Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Jarīr have narrated from 'Ikrimah about the verse, *Surely (as for) those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls . . . and it is an evil resort, that he said: "It was revealed about Qays ibn al-Fākih ibn al-Mughīrah al-Ḥārith ibn Zam'ah ibn al-Aswad, Qays ibn al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah, Abu 'l-Āṣ ibn Munabbih ibn al-Ḥajjāj and 'Alī ibn Umayyah ibn Khalaf."* He further said: "When the polytheists of Quraysh and their followers went forth to protect Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb and the caravan of the Quraysh from the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and his companions and also intending to take revenge of what they had suffered at Nakhlah; they took with them some youths who were unwilling (to join them as) they had (secretly) accepted Islam. They faced the Muslims at Badr without prior rendezvous. So (those youths) were killed at Badr while they were *kāfīrs* and have

turned away from Islam; and they were those we have named above." (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** There are a lot of traditions, from the Sunnī sources, of the same theme. Apparently all these are attempts to apply the verses to some suitable incidents, yet it is a good application. The most important information gleaned from these traditions as well as from meditating on the said verses is the existence of hypocrites in Mecca [even] before *hijrah* as well as after it. This fact has a direct bearing on discussion about the hypocrites as will be seen in the chapter of "Repentance", God willing.

Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: "There was a man, Ḍamrah from Banū Bakr, who was [very] sick. He told his people, 'Take me out of Mecca, because I find it hot (here). 'They said: 'Where should we take you to?' He indicated with his hand towards the way of Medina. They took him out but he expired at (only) two miles from Mecca. Then this verse was revealed: *And whoever goes forth from his house emigrating to Allāh and His Messenger, and then death overtakes him . . .*" (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** There are many traditions of similar theme, but there is much discrepancy about identity of the believer who expired in the way. Various traditions name him as Ḍamrah ibn Jundab, Aktham ibn Ṣayfī, Abū Ḍamrah ibn al-‘Īṣ az-Zurqī, Ḍamrah ibn al-‘Īṣ al-Laythī and Junda‘ ibn Ḍamrah al-Junda‘ī. Some traditions say that it was revealed about Khālīd ibn Ḥizām who went out intending to emigrate to Ethiopia, and was bitten by a snake on the way and died.

Some traditions narrate from Ibn ‘Abbās that it was Aktham ibn Ṣayfī. The narrator asked him: "Then where is al-Laythī?" Ibn ‘Abbās said: "It was before al-Laythī, and it is particular (and) general."

**The author says:** That is, the verse was revealed for Aktham in particular, then it is applied to others in general. It may be gleaned from the traditions that three Muslims had met their death while on their way to *hijrah*: Aktham ibn Ṣayfī, al-Laythī and Khālīd ibn Ḥizām. But [it is difficult] to pinpoint as to whom the verse was revealed about; and the traditions are probably the narrators' attempts to apply the verse to this or that person.

Zurārah says: "I asked Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) about the *mustaḍ‘af* المُسْتَضْعَف = weak, weakened). He said: 'He is the one who does not

have a means to disbelief (that he may disbelieve), nor does he find a way to belief; he is unable to believe and unable to reject (the belief); among them are the children as well as those men and women whose understanding is like that of the children; they are freed from responsibility." (*al-Kāfi*)

**The author says:** The tradition is extensively narrated from Zurārah; al-Kulaynī, aṣ-Ṣadūq and al-‘Ayyāshī have narrated it from him through numerous chains.

al-Kulaynī narrated through his links from Ismā‘īl al-Ju‘fī that he said: "I asked Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) about the religion which no one can afford to be ignorant of. He said: 'The religion is spacious, but the Khārijites, as a result of their ignorance, have cramped it for themselves.' I said: 'May I be your ransom! should I then relate to you the religion which I follow?' He said: 'Yes.' So I said: 'I bear witness that there is no god except Allāh, and Muḥammad is His servant and His Messenger; and I acknowledge (and believe in) what he has brought from Allāh, the High; and I love you and I keep away from your enemies and those who oppressed you and [wrongfully] became your rulers and usurped your rights.' He said: 'By Allāh you have not overlooked anything. It is, by Allāh! the [religion] we are on.' Then I said: 'Can someone not knowing this matter be saved?' He said: '[None] except the weak ones.' I said: 'Who are they?' He said: 'Your women and your children.' Then he said: 'Had you seen Umm Ayman? I bear witness that she was from the people of the garden, but she did not know [in such detail the religion] you are on.'" (*ibid.*)

Sulaymān ibn Khālid narrates that he asked Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) about the weak ones. The Imām (a.s.) said: "A simple-minded woman in her private room; a slave-girl that you tell her to pray and she prays, she does not know except what you tell her; a foreign slave who does not understand except what you tell him; an aged old man; a child, a small boy: these are the weak ones. But a thick-necked man, disputatious (and) antagonist, who deals in sale and purchase, whom you cannot tire in anything: Will you say, he is weak? No; by no means." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyāshī)

Sulaymān has narrated from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said about this verse: "O Sulaymān! In these weak ones there are those who have thicker necks than yours. Weak are the people who fast and pray, keep their stomachs and genitals away [from forbidden things]; they do not believe that the right is with our adversaries; they are holding the tree's branches; these are that Allāh may pardon them if they keep the hold

of the tree's branches and know those. Then if Allāh pardons them it will be by His mercy, and if He punishes them it will be because of their error." (*Ma'āni 'l-akhbār*)

**The author says:** The words, "they do not believe that the right is with our adversaries", mean that they do not have ill-feelings towards us, or that such ideas are not based on their own negligence, as is clear from the following traditions.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) has said that weak ones are of many kinds, differing among themselves; and anyone among the People of the *Qiblah* (i.e., Muslims) who is not inimical to us, is *mustaḍ'af*, weak. (*ibid.*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said explaining this verse: " 'who have not in their power the means' to our enmity, so that they could have got ill-feelings [towards us], 'nor can they find a way' to the truth, that they could come on the right path; they will enter the garden because of their good deeds and their abstaining from the unlawful things forbidden by Allāh, but they will not get the rank of the righteous ones." (*ibid.*; *at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)

Durays al-Kunāsī narrates that he said to Abū Ja'far (a.s.): "May I be made your ransom! What is the condition of those who believe in the One God and the prophethood of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), who have committed sins and die without believing in an imām and do not know about your love and obedience?" He said: "As for these, they shall remain in their graves, and not come out; whoever (among them) had done good deeds and did not show any animosity [towards us], a tunnel will be opened for him to the garden which Allāh has created in the west; thus refreshing breeze will continue reaching him in his grave upto the Day of Resurrection until he comes before Allāh; He will take account of his good and evil, then he will go either to the paradise or to the fire. These are they who depend on the decision of Allāh. "Then he (a.s.) said: "And likewise is done to the weak ones, the idiots, the children and the minor children of the Muslims. And as for [our] antagonists among the People of the *Qiblah*, a tunnel is dug for them to the fire which Allāh has created in the east, and will reach to him the flames, sparks, smoke and the hell's out-bursts upto the Day of Resurrection; then their destination is the hell." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) narrates from his father, from his and father, from 'Alī (a.s.) that he said: "Surely the Garden has eight gates: from one gate will enter the Prophets and the Truthful ones; from another

gate will enter the Witnesses and the Good servants; and from five gates will enter our Shī'ahs and lovers; . . . and from [the eighth] gate will enter all the Muslims who bear witness that there is no god but Allāh and in whose heart there is not an atom's weight of animosity towards us, the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.). (*al-Khiṣāl*)

Ḥumrān narrates: "I asked Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the word of Allāh: *Except the weak ones*. He said: 'They are the People of *al-wilāyah* (الولاية = friendship, authority, power, guardianship.)' I said: 'Which *wilāyah*?' He said: 'It is not the *wilāyah* in religion, but the *wilāyah* in marrying each other, inheriting from each other and mixing with each other; they are neither believers nor *kāfirs*, they are the ones made to await Allāh's command.'" (*Ma'āni 'l-akhbār; at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)

**The author says:** It refers to the verse: And others are made to await Allāh's command, whether He will chastise them or whether He will turn to them (in mercy) . . . (9:106)

'Alī (a.s.) said: "The name of weakness is not used for him to whom the proof has reached, and his ears heard it and his heart understood it." (*Nahju 'l-balāghah*)

al-Kāzzim (a.s.) was asked about the weak ones. He (a.s.) wrote: "The weak is he to whom proof has not been conveyed and who is unaware of [religious] difference. But he is no more weak once he knew the difference." (*al-Kāfī*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) was asked: "What do you say about the weak ones?" He replied in a dismayed manner, 'Have you left anyone who could be called weak? Where are the weak ones? Because, by Allāh! this affair of yours [i.e., Shī'ite faith] has been taken by ladies in their boudoirs to other ladies, and have discussed it the water-carriers in the streets of Medina." (*ibid.*)

'Umar ibn Ishāq says: "Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) was asked as to what was the definition of the weak which has been mentioned by Allāh. He said: 'He who does not properly recite any of the Qur'ānic chapters, while Allāh has created it in such a way that no one should fail to recite it properly.'" (*Ma'āni 'l-akhbār*)

**The author says:** There are several other Traditions; but what has been quoted above covers all the themes mentioned therein. Although the traditions apparently seem to differ with one another, yet if we overlook the particulars which throw light on various degrees of weakness, all of them jointly prove one fact which the generality of



the verse shows: that weakness means not finding one's way to the right path – without any negligence on one's own part.

\* \* \* \* \*

وَإِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ  
أَنْ يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ الْكَافِرِينَ كَانُوا لَكُمْ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٥١﴾  
وَإِذَا كُنْتَ فِيهِمْ فَأَقَمْتَ لَهُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَلْتَقُمْ طَائِفَةٌ  
مِنْهُمْ مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ فَإِذَا سَجَدُوا فَلْيَكُونُوا  
مِنْ وَّرَائِكُمْ وَلَتَأْتِ طَائِفَةٌ أُخْرَى لَمْ يُصَلُّوا  
فَلْيُصَلُّوا مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا حِذْرَهُمْ وَأَسْلِحَتَهُمْ وَدَّ الَّذِينَ  
كَفَرُوا لَوْ تَغْفُلُونَ عَنْ أَسْلِحَتِكُمْ وَأَمْتِعَتِكُمْ فَيَمِيلُونَ  
عَلَيْكُمْ مَّيْلَةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ كَانَ بِكُمْ  
أَذَى مِنْ مَطَرٍ أَوْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَى أَنْ تَضَعُوا أَسْلِحَتَكُمْ  
وَخُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ﴿١٥٢﴾  
فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُودًا وَعَلَى  
جُنُوبِكُمْ فَإِذَا اطْمَأْنَنْتُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ

كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَّوْقُوتًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَلَا تَهِنُوا  
 فِي ابْتِغَاءِ الْقَوْمِ إِنْ تَكُونُوا تَأْلَمُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْلَمُونَ كَمَا  
 تَأْلَمُونَ وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ  
 وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٠٤﴾

*And when you journey in the earth, there is no blame on you that you shorten the prayer, if you fear that those who disbelieve will cause you distress; surely the unbelievers are your open enemy (101). And when you (O Prophet!) are among them and establish the prayer for them, let a party of them stand up with you, and let them take their arms; then when they have prostrated themselves let them go to your rear, and let another party who have not prayed come forward and pray with you, and let them take their precaution and their arms; (for) those who disbelieve desire that you may be inattentive to your arms and your luggage, so that they may then turn upon you with a sudden united attack; and there is no blame on you, if you are troubled by rain or if you are sick, that you lay down your arms, and take your precaution; surely Allāh has prepared a disgraceful chastisement for the unbelievers (102). Then when you have finished the prayer remember Allāh standing and sitting and reclining; but when you are secure, keep up prayer; surely prayer is a timed ordinance for the believers (103). And be not weak-hearted in pursuit of the enemy; if you suffer pain, then surely they (too) suffer pain as you suffer pain, while you hope from Allāh what they do not hope; and Allāh is Knowing, Wise (104).*

\* \* \* \* \*

#### COMMENTARY

The verses ordain the prayer of fear and shortened prayer in journey, and they end on exhortation of the believers to pursue the

polytheists; they are well-connected with the preceding verses which dealt with *jihād* and its various aspects.

**QUR'ĀN:** *And when you journey in the earth there is no blame on you that you shorten the prayer* : *al-Junāḥ* (الْجُنَاحُ = sin, impediment, renunciation); *al-qasr* (الْقَصْرُ = shortening of prayer). [aṭ-Ṭabrisī] has said in *Majma'u 'l-bayān*: "The root *q-ṣ-r* when used for prayer comes in three stems: The base stem, *qaṣara* (which has been used in the Qur'ān), *qaṣṣara* (the stem, *taf'īl*) and *aqṣara* (the stem, *if'āl*)."

Meaning: When you are in journey then there is no impediment or sin for you if you shorten the prayer. The phrase, "there is no blame on you", apparently shows permission only, but the context points to obligation and incumbency; as is seen in the verse: *Surely the Ṣafā and the Marwah are among the signs of Allāh; so whoever makes a pilgrimage to the House or performs 'umrah thereof there is no blame on him to go round them both* (2:158); although *aṭ-ṭawāf* (الطَّوَّافُ = to go round) is *wājib* (compulsory). The reason why this expression shows obligation is that the position here is that of legislation, and it is enough in this place just to disclose that a certain order has been laid down; there is no need to explain all its aspects and particulars in a comprehensive manner. To a certain extent the same is the position of the verse: *and that you fast is better for you if you know* (2:184)

**QUR'ĀN:** *if you fear that those who disbelieve will cause you distress; . . .* : *al-Fitnah* (الْفِتْنَةُ = translated here as causing distress) is used for numerous meanings; however when the Qur'ān uses it in connection with disbelievers and polytheists, it refers to the atrocities, like murder, torture, etc., which they inflicted on the Muslims; and the context too points to this meaning, i.e., if you fear that the enemies will attack you putting you to the sword.

This clause is a proviso, limiting the preceding order: *there is no blame on you that you shorten the prayer*. It shows that shortening of prayer was ordained when there was a fear of disbelievers' mischief. As a second step the rule was extended to all cases of legal journey even if there was no fear. It means that the Qur'ān explained one case where this law was to be applied, and the *sunnah* of the Prophet described all other situations and cases will be seen in the Traditions.

**QUR'ĀN:** *And when you (O Prophet!) are among them . . . and let them take their precaution and their arms:* It explains how to perform prayer of fear. The verse is addressed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) supposing him to be the *imām* of that prayer; the order is thus explained through an example – it makes the rule clearer in a fewer words and beautiful style; "and establishing the prayer for them" refers to congregational prayer; "let a party of them stand up with you" points to their standing behind the Prophet following him in the prayer; and it is they who are required to take their arms with them; "when they have prostrated themselves . . ." means, when they have prostrated and completed their prayers, they should go to the rear to take the place of those who have not prayed yet, enabling them to come forward and pray with you and this second group too should "take their precaution and their arms".

The meaning then is as follows – and Allāh knows better: When you, O Messenger of Allāh! are among them, and the situation is fraught with danger, and you establish the prayer for them, i.e., the congregational prayer with you as its leader, then the whole group should not join in the prayer together; only a party of them should stand behind you for prayer (taking their arms with them) and the other group should protect them and guard their possessions; when those who are praying behind you finish their *sajdah* and their prayer, they should go to the rear to relieve those who were until now protecting them and guarding their possessions. Now, this second group who have not prayed yet should come and join you in the prayer, and they too should take their precaution and their arms with them.

*Another party who have not prayed:* *aṭ-Ṭāifah* ( الطَّائِفَة ) = party, group) is of feminine gender, but it refers here to those who are able to fight, i.e., men; the feminine adjective *ukhrā* ( أُخْرَى = another) agrees with the noun *ṭāifah* which it refers to, while the masculine pronouns in "have not prayed" etc., look at the people described.

The words, "take their precaution and their arms" contain an interesting metaphor, as it treats "precaution" as a sort of arms for defence, using the verb 'take' for both.

**QUR'ĀN:** *(for) those who disbelieve desire that you may be inattentive to your arms and your luggage, so that they may turn upon you with a sudden united attack:* It gives the reason for the above law; its meaning is clear.

**QUR'ĀN:** *and there is no blame on you... a disgraceful chastisement for the unbelievers:* The rule is further relaxed for those who are troubled by rain or are sick, that they may lay down their arms; however it is very much emphasized that they should take their precaution, and not be inattentive to the unbelievers, because they are on the look out for the weak points of the Muslims.

**QUR'ĀN:** *Then when you have finished the prayer, remember Allāh standing and sitting and reclining:* *Qiyāman* قِيَامًا = standing) and *qu'ūdan* قُعُودًا = sitting) are either plurals or verbal nouns, and in either case they are circumstantial clauses; the same applies to 'reclining'. These words emphasize that the believers should continuously remember Allāh, in all conditions and in every place.

**QUR'ĀN:** *but when you are secure, keep up prayer:* As the context shows, the clause, "when you are secure", is in opposition to: *when you journey in the earth*, and thus obviously means, when you return to your homes. Accordingly, "keep up prayer" would mean to pray full 4 *raka'āt*; because the prayer of fear and danger was called "shortened prayer"

**QUR'ĀN:** *surely prayer is a timed ordinance for the believers :* *al-Kitābah* (الكتابة = writing, translated here as ordinance) implies obligatoriness and imperativeness, as Allāh says: ... fasting is prescribed (lit.: written) for you as it was prescribed for those before you (Qur'ān, 2:183). *al-Mawqūt* (المؤقت = timed), shows that prayer is an obligation prescribed for fixed times to be established at known intervals.

Apparently, timeliness of prayer implies its permanence and imperativeness – it mentions a requirement (of time) to imply the obligatory (prayer). When it says that prayer is a timed ordinance, it means that it is an obligation, confirmed and permanent, not subject to any change; it cannot be avoided or waived at any time. The adjective, 'timed', if taken in its literal meaning has no relevance to the context, because the preceding statements have no connection with prayer being a timed ordinance; while this sentence is meant to explain the reason for the preceding one, that is, *when you are secure keep up prayer*. Thus apparently, 'timed' means a firm obligation which can never be waived; it is unalterable and can never be replaced by any alternative, unlike the fast which some times is changed to redemption.

**QUR'ĀN:** *And be not weak-hearted in pursuit of the enemy; . . . : al-Wahn* (الْوَهْن = weakness); *al-ibtighā'* (الِإِتِّغَاءُ = pursuit), *al-alam* (الْأَلَمُ = pain, to suffer pain); the clause: *while you hope from Allāh what they do not hope*, is a circumstantial one. You and your enemies both equally suffer pain, so you are not in a worse position than your enemies; rather you are in a more pleasant and comfortable condition, inasmuch as you expect victory over them and hope for forgiveness from your Lord who is your guardian; as for your enemies, they have no guardian, nor do they entertain any hope to cheer themselves or which could incite them to work energetically and push them towards their goal. And Allāh knows what is beneficial to His servants; He is Wise in His orders and prohibitions.

#### TRADITIONS

According to *Tafsīr* of al-Qummī, the verse (prescribing the prayer of fear) was revealed when the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was proceeding towards Ḥudaybiyyah, en route to Mecca. When the Quraysh heard the news, they sent Khālid ibn al-Walīd with two hundred horses to encounter the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). He hindered the (progress of the) Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) on the mountains. Somewhere on the way, the time of *zuhr* prayer came, Bilāl said the *adhān*, and the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) led the people in the prayer. Khālid ibn al-Walīd then said: "If we had attacked them when they were praying, we would have got them, because they do not break their prayer. However, now the time of their another prayer is approaching which they love more than their eye-sight; and when they start that prayer we shall raid them. Then Jibrīl (Gabriel) brought to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) the (verses of) prayer of fear: And when you are among them . . .

*Majma' u 'l-bayān* says about the verse, and there is no blame on you, if you are troubled by rain . . . , that it was revealed when the Prophet was at 'Uṣfān and the polytheists at Ḍajnān; both parties stopped there; and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) prayed *zuhr* with the Muslims with perfect *rukū'* and *sujūd*; then the polytheists wanted to attack them; and some of them said: "[Although we missed this chance] they will pray another prayer [ i.e., *aṣr* ] which is dearer to them from this one." Then Allāh revealed to the Prophet this verse,

and he prayed the *'aṣr* with them as the prayer of fear. And this was the reason why Khālid ibn al-Walīd accepted Islam.

Abū Ḥamzah [ath-Thumālī] has written in his *Tafsīr* that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) went to fight Banū Anmār, and Allāh vanguished them and the Muslims captured the enemy's children and property. Then the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and the Muslims alighted; not a single enemy was in sight; so they laid down their arms; the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) went away to relieve himself (and he too had laid down his arms), and he went so far that a [dry] valley sheltered him from his companions. By the time he was finished the river-bed was flowing copiously and the rain was coming down; the flowing valley came between him and his companions. He sat down under a tree. Then al-Ghawrath ibn al-Ḥārith al Muḥāribī saw him, and his companions said to him: "O Ghawrath! (Look,) here is Muḥammad, separated from his companions." He said: "May Allāh kill me if I don't kill him." He came down the hill with a sword; and the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) did not notice him until he stood over him with his unsheathed sword in hand. He said: "O Muḥammad! Who will now protect you from me?" The Messenger (s.a.w.a.) said: "Allāh." [All of a sudden] the enemy of Allāh fell down on his face. Now, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) stood up and took his sword, and said: "O Ghawrath! Now, who will save you from me?" He said: "No one." The Messenger of Allāh said: "Do you bear witness that there is no god but Allāh, and that I am the servant of Allāh and His Messenger?" He said: "No. But I promise that I'll never fight you nor will ever help any enemy against you." Then the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) gave his sword back to him. [Seeing this magnanimity,] Ghawrath said to him: "By Allāh! you are certainly better than me." He (s.a.w.a.) said: "I am more entitled to it,"

Then Ghawrath went back to his companions. They said: "O Ghawrath! We saw you standing over his head with sword, then what prevented you from [killing] him?" He said: "Allāh. I inclined towards him with the sword to kill him; then I don't know who it was that pushed me between my shoulders, and I fell down on my face; my sword fell down and Muḥammad took it before I could reach it." Then the valley calmed down and the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) went to his companions and told them what had happened; and recited before them: and there is no blame on you if you are troubled by rain . . . (*ibid.*)

aṣ-Ṣadūq has narrated through his chains from 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmān ibn Abī 'Abdillāh from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said: The



Prophet (s.a.w.a.) prayed with his companions in the battle of Dhātu 'r-Riqā'; and he divided them in two groups; he told one group to stand before the enemy and the other stood [praying] behind him; so he said *takbīratu 'l-iḥrām*, and they said too, and he recited and they listened, then he did *rukū'* and they did, and he did *sajdah* and they did; thereafter, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) continued in his prayer standing [in the second *rak'ah*] while the companions prayed their second *rak'ah* individually and said *salām*. Then they rushed to their companions and stood before the enemy, and their companions came and stood behind the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and he said *takbīr* and they said too, and he recited and they listened, and he did *rukū'* and they did, and he did *sajdah* and they did; then the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) sat down and recited *tashahhud* and *salām*; and they stood up and completed the [second] *rak'ah* by themselves and then recited [*tashahhud* and] *salām*. And Allāh had said to his Prophet: *And when you are among them and establish the prayer for them . . . surely prayer is a timed ordinance for the believers.* And this is the prayer of fear about which Allāh had ordered His Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

He (a.s.) also said: One who leads (his) people in *maghrib* in prayer of fear, will pray one *rak'ah* with the first group and two *raka'āt* with the second one . . . (*Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu 'l-faqīh*)

ash-Shaykh has narrated through his chains from Zurārah that he said: "I asked Abū Ja'far (a.s.) about the prayer of fear and the prayer of journey, will both of them be shortened? He said: 'Yes; and the prayer of fear is more deserving to be shortened than the prayer of journey in which there is no fear.'" (*Tahdhību 'l-aḥkām*)

aṣ-Ṣadūq narrates through his chains from Zurārah and Muḥammad ibn Muslim that they said: "We said to Abū Ja'far (a.s.): 'What do you say about prayer in journey? How is it and how many [*raka'āt*]?' He said: 'Verily Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, says: And when you journey in the earth, there is no blame on you that you shorten the prayer; accordingly, shortening of prayer during journey is compulsory, as is completing it when in presence [i.e., when not in journey].'" They said: "But Allāh only says; *there is no blame on you*; He did not say: 'Do it'; how can it convey the connotation of obligatoriness like that of praying full prayer in presence?" He (a.s.) said: "Has not Allāh said: *Surely the Ṣafā and the Marwā are among the signs of Allāh; so whoever makes a pilgrimage to the House or performs 'Umrah thereof, there is no blame on him to go round them both* [2:158]? Don't you see that *ṭawāf* [i.e., *sa'y*] between the two is

*wājib*? It is because Allāh has mentioned it in His Book, and His Prophet had done it. Likewise, shortening of prayer during journey is a thing which the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had done [and] Allāh has mentioned it in His Book." Then we said to him: "Then a person who prayed four (*raka'āt*) in journey, should he repeat (that) prayer or not?" (The Imām) said: "If the verse of shortening (of prayer) was read and explained to him, and yet he prayed four (*raka'āt*), he will repeat it [i.e., will repeat praying two *raka'āt*]; and if the verse was not read before him and he did not know it, then there is no repetition. And all *wājib* prayers during journey are two *raka'āt* except *maghrib*, as it is three *raka'āt*, (and) there is no shortening in it; the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) left it three *raka'āt* in journey and in presence . . ." (*Man lā yahḍuruḥu 'l-faqīh*)

as-Suyūfī writes: Ibn Abī Shaybah, ‘Abd ibn Hamīd, Aḥmad, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasāī, Ibn Mājah, Ibnu 'l-Jārūd, Ibn Khuzaymah, at-Taḥāwī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnul-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, an Naḥḥās (in his *an-Nāsikh*) and Ibn Ḥibbān have narrated from Ya‘lā ibn Umayyah that he said: "I asked ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb about the verse: *there is no blame on you that you shorten the prayer, if you fear that those who disbelieve will cause you distress*, [is it valid now when] the people are secured and safe? ' ‘Umar said to me: 'I too was wondering about it as you do, so I asked the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) about it and he said: "It is a charity which Allāh has bestowed upon you, so you should accept His charity.'" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd, an-Nasāī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) have narrated from Umayyah ibn Khālīd ibn Asad that he asked Ibn ‘Umar: "Do you think that the prayer should be shortened in journey? Surely we do not find it in the Book of Allāh; all that is mentioned therein is the prayer of fear." Ibn ‘Umar said: "O my nephew: Surely Allāh sent Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and we did not know anything; so we do only as we saw the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) doing; and the shortening of prayer in journey is the system established by the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)." (*ibid.*)

Ibn Abī Shaybah, at-Tirmidhī (who has said that it is correct) and an-Nasāī have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: "We prayed with the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) between Mecca and Medina two *raka'āt* while we were safe and had no fear of anything." (*ibid.*)

Ibn Abī Shaybah, Aḥmad, al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidhī and an-Nasāī have narrated from Ḥārithah ibn Wahb al-Khuzā‘ī that he said: "I prayed with the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) *zuhr* and

'aṣr at Minā two *raka'āt*, with most numerous multitude of people and in most secured condition." (*ibid.*)

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain of narrators from Dāwūd ibn Farqad that he said: "I asked Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the word of Allāh, *surely prayer is a timed ordinance*. He said: '[It means] firm ordinance; however if you make haste a little or delay a little it will do you no harm, provided you do not neglect it altogether, because Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, says: . . . *neglected prayers and followed the sensual desires, so they will certainly meet perdition*'" (19:59) (*al-Kāfī*)

**The author says:** It is an indication that *wājib* prayers have some latitude so far as their timings are concerned, as other traditions show.

Muḥammad ibn Muslim narrates from the fifth or the sixth Imām (a.s.) that he said about the *maghrib* prayer in the journey: "Do not leave if you are delayed for some time; then you may pray it when you wish to pray the '*ishā*'; and if you wish you may continue the journey for sometime until the reddish colour [on the horizon] goes away. Surely, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had prayed *zuhr* and 'aṣr together and *maghrib* and '*ishā*' together, and he used to delay and advance. Allāh, the High, has said: *surely prayer is a timed ordinance*, [and by this expression] He only meant that it was obligatory for the believers, He did not mean anything else. Otherwise, if it meant what they say, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) would not have prayed like this, and he was most knowledgeable and had all the information; and he was as they say; and if it [i.e., always praying separately] were good, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) would certainly have ordered it.

"And in the battle of Ṣiffīn, people, including the Commander of the Believers (a.s.), could not pray *zuhr*, 'aṣr, *maghrib* and '*ishā*' and 'Alī, the Commander of the Believers (a.s.) ordered them and they said *Allāhu akbar*, and *lā ilāha illa 'llāh*, and *subhāna 'llāh* on foot and horse, because Allāh has said: *But if you are in danger, then (say your prayer) on foot or on horse-back* [2:239].

"So 'Alī (a.s.) ordered them [to do so] and they did." (*at-Tafsīr*. al-'Ayyāshī)

**The author says:** These traditions, as you see, agree with the preceding Commentary. There are very many traditions of this meaning, and especially from the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.), but we have quoted only a few of them as example. Of course, there are some other

traditions from the Sunnī sources which oppose it, but they themselves contradict each other. However, to review those traditions and have a look at all *aḥādīth* describing the prayer of fear in particular and prayer during journey in general, is in the domain of Islamic Jurisprudence, not of *tafsīr*.

It is written in *at-Tafsīr* of al-Qummī that the word: And be not weak-hearted in pursuit of the enemy . . . , is in conjunction with the verse 139 of the chapter of "The Family of 'Imrān": *If a wound has afflicted you, a wound like it has also afflicted the (unbelieving) people . . .* And we have explained there the reason why that verse was revealed.

\* \* \* \* \*

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ  
 النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَبَكَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَكُنَ لِلْخَائِبِينَ خَصِيمًا ﴿١٠٥﴾  
 وَأَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَلَا تُجَادِلْ  
 عَنِ الَّذِينَ يَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَن كَانَ  
 خَوَّانًا أَثِيمًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يَسْتَخْفُونَ  
 مِنَ اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مَعَهُمْ إِذْ يُبَيِّتُونَ مَا لَا يَرْضَى مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَكَانَ  
 اللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ هَتَأْتُمْ هَوًّا لَّآءِ جَدَلْتُمْ  
 عَنْهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَمَنْ يُجَادِلِ اللَّهَ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ  
 الْقِيَامَةِ أَمْ مَنْ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ  
 سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا  
 رَحِيمًا ﴿١١٠﴾ وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ إِثْمًا فَإِنَّمَا يَكْسِبُهُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ  
 وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١١١﴾ وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ خَطِيئَةً أَوْ إِثْمًا  
 ثُمَّ يَرْمِ بِهِ بَرِيئًا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلَ بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلَوْلَا

فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَتُهُ هَلَمَّتْ طَائِفَةً مِنْهُمْ أَنْ  
 يُضِلُّوكَ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَضُرُّونَكَ مِنْ  
 شَيْءٍ وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ  
 مَا لَمْ تَكُن تَعْلَمُ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٣﴾  
 ✽ لَآخِرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ نَّجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ  
 أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ  
 ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٤﴾ وَمَنْ  
 يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بُيِّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ  
 سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ ۖ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ  
 مَصِيرًا ﴿١١٥﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ ۖ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ  
 ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا  
 ﴿١١٦﴾ إِنْ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا إِنثًا وَإِنْ يَدْعُونَ  
 إِلَّا شَيْطَانًا مَّرِيدًا ﴿١١٧﴾ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَقَالَ لَا أُخِذَنَّ  
 مِنْ عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا ﴿١١٨﴾ وَلَا ضَلَّتْهُمْ وَلَا أُمْنِيَتْهُمْ  
 وَلَا مَرَّنَهُمْ فَلْيُبْتِكُنَّ إِذَا نَالُوا الْأَنْعَامَ وَلَا مَرَّنَهُمْ  
 فَلْيُغَيِّرْ خَلْقَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذِ الشَّيْطَانَ وَلِيًّا  
 مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرَانًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١١٩﴾

يَعِدُّهُمْ وَيَمْنِيهِمْ وَمَا يَعِدُّهُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ﴿١٢٥﴾  
أُولَئِكَ مَا وَلَّهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ عَنْهَا مَحِيصًا ﴿١٢٦﴾  
وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ  
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا وَعَدَّ  
اللَّهُ حَقًّا وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ قِيلًا ﴿١٢٧﴾ لَيْسَ بِأَمَانِيكُمْ  
وَلَا أَمَانِي أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَى بِهِ  
وَلَا يَجِدْ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَمَنْ  
يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنْثَى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ  
فَأُولَئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَمَنْ  
أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَاتَّبَعَ  
مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَأَتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا ﴿١٣٥﴾ وَاللَّهُ مَا  
فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ

بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُحِيطًا ﴿١٣٦﴾

*Surely We have revealed the Book to you with the truth that you may judge between people by means of that which Allāh has shown you; and be not an advocate on behalf of the treacherous (105). And ask forgiveness of Allāh; surely Allāh is forgiving, Merciful (106). And do not plead on behalf of those who act unfaithfully to their souls; surely Allāh does not love him who is treacherous, sinful (107). They hide themselves from men and*

*do not hide themselves from Allāh, and He is with them when they meditate by night words which please Him not, and Allāh encompasses what they do (108). Behold! You are they plead for them in this world's life, but who will plead for them with Allāh on the Resurrection Day, or who shall be their protector? (109). And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his soul, then asks forgiveness of Allāh, He shall find Allāh Forgiving, Merciful (110). And whoever commits a sin, he only commits it against his own soul; and Allāh is Knowing, Wise (111). And whoever commits a fault or a sin, then accuses of it one innocent, he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a calumny and a manifest sin (112). And were it not for Allāh's grace upon you and His mercy, a party of them had certainly designed to mislead you and they do not mislead but their own souls, and they shall not harm you in any way, and Allāh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know, and Allāh's grace on you is very great (113). There is no good in most of their secret counsels except (in his) who enjoins charity or goodness or reconciliation between people; and whoever does this seeking Allāh's pleasure, We will give him a mighty reward (114). And whoever acts hostilely to the Messenger after that guidance has become manifest to him, and follows other than the way of the believers, We will turn him to that to which he has (himself) turned and make him enter hell; and it is an evil resort (115). Surely Allāh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and He forgives what is besides this to whom He pleases; and whoever associates any thing with Allāh, he indeed strays off into a remote error (116). They do not call besides Him on any thing but females, and they do not call on any thing but a rebellious Satan (117). Allāh has cursed him; and he said: "Most certainly I will take of Thy servants an appointed portion (118). And most certainly I will lead them astray and exist in them vain desires, and bid them so that they shall slit the ears of the cattle, and most certainly I will bid them so that they shall alter Allāh's creation;" and whoever takes the Satan for a guardian rather than Allāh he indeed shall suffer a manifest loss (119). He gives them promises and excites vain desires in them; and the Satan does not promise them but to deceive (120). These are they whose abode is hell, and they shall not find any refuge from it (121). And (as for) those who believe and do good, We will*



*make them enter into gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein for ever; (it is) a promise of Allāh, true (indeed); and who is truer of word than Allāh (122). (This) shall not be in accordance with your vain desires not in accordance with the vain desires of the People of the Book; whoever does evil, he shall be requited with it, and besides Allāh he will find for himself neither a guardian nor helper (123). And whoever does from good deeds whether male or female and he (or she) is a believer – these shall enter the garden, and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly (124). And who has a better religion than he who submits himself entirely to Allāh And he is the doer of good (to others) and follows the faith of Ibrāhīm, the upright one, and Allāh took Ibrāhīm as a friend (125). And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's; and Allāh encompasses all things (126).*

\* \* \* \* \*

### COMMENTARY

Ponder on these verses and you will realize that all are revealed in one context. They exhort one to adhere to justice in judgement and admonish a judge not to incline towards wrong-doers in his decision, as it would be an injustice to the rightful party.

This is done by pointing to some incidents which had happened at the time of their revelation; then they discuss relevant religious realities, telling the Muslims to adhere and abide to them; in this process, they remind the believers that religion is a reality, not only a name; what is important is putting it into practice, not just calling oneself a Muslim.

Obviously, it was that incident to which the Qur'ānic words refer: *And whoever commits a fault or a sin, then accuses of it one innocent, he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a calumny and a manifest sin.* It clearly shows that there was some such crime which could be attributed to someone else, like theft, murder, plunder or damage, etc., and there was a possibility that the perpetrators would try to mislead the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in his judgement, but the verses assure the Prophet that Allāh was there to protect him.

Apparently, it was the same incident to which the preceding verses refer, as it is clear from the words: . . . *and be not an advocate*

*on behalf of the treacherous . . . They hide themselves from men . . . Behold! you are they who plead for them in this world's life.* Treachery and perfidy is obviously used for breach of trust, when one embezzles or meddles with something given to him in trust; but the context of the words, *surely Allāh does not love him who is treacherous, sinful. They hide themselves from men . . .* shows (as will be explained later) that they refer to treachery concerning theft, etc. It is because all the believers are like one soul, and all are responsible to look after a property belonging to one of them – they have to guard it and keep it secure; in this background, if one embezzles or steals it, it is tantamount to being unfaithful to one's own self.

Meditation on the verses shows that probably someone had committed the theft, the matter was brought to the Prophet's notice, but the thief accused someone else who had nothing to do with the crime, then the relatives of the thief urged the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to give judgement in their favour against the innocent one; but these verses were revealed and Allāh exonerated the accused from their false allegation.

Thus, the verses squarely fit the event narrated concerning their revelation when Abū Ṭu'mah ibn al-Ubayriq had committed the theft, although, as we have repeatedly said, the traditions giving the reasons of revelation, most of the times, are mere attempts to fit the narrated stories on pertinent verses.

The verses prove authoritativeness of the Prophet's judgement, and his sinlessness as well as some other realities which, God willing, will be explained later.

**QUR'ĀN: *Surely We have revealed the Book to you with the truth that you may judge between people by means of that which Allāh has shown you*** : Judging between people, apparently, means hearing the cases of their disputes and contentions – the matters dealt by judiciary – and removing their discord through the judgement. This verse says that judging between people was the main objective for which the Book was revealed. This theme squares with the verse 2:213, which says: *Mankind was but one people; so Allāh sent the prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and He sent down with them the book with the truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in which they had differed . . .*

The verse under discussion (*Surely We have revealed the Book to you . . .*) in its particularity is like the other (*Mankind was but one people . . .*) in its generality; and it further shows that the right of

judge was given to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and that his opinion and view had been stamped with divine authority. Arriving at a judgement, after looking into often-conflicting arguments of the parties concerned, invariably compels a judge to exercise his mental power and form an opinion based on his knowledge of abstract laws and regulations governing the issues at hand. It is one thing to have the knowledge of the laws of jurisprudence and the rights of various people, and quite another to arrive at a definite decision as to which rule is applicable to a particular issue. It all leads us to believe that the word, *arāka* (أَرَاكَ = translated here as "has shown you") in the clause, "that you may judge between the people by means of that which Allāh has shown you", actually means creation of opinion in his mind and leading him to correct decision, rather than teaching him abstract laws and general rules.

The verse in this context means: Surely Allāh has revealed the Book to you and taught you its laws and regulations; and then has allowed you to exercise your opinion which He has created in you in order that you may judge between the people and thus dispel their strife and dispute.

**QUR'ĀN: *and be not an advocate on behalf of the treacherous*** : The sentence is in conjunction with the preceding one, which, although a declarative one, has the sense of an imperative; the meaning thus will be as follows: Judge between them and do not be an advocate of the treacherous. *al-Khaṣīm* (الْخَصِيم = advocate) is the one who speaks in favour of a claim, etc. The sentence orders the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) not to defend the treacherous and dishonest ones, as it would result in nullification of the right of the rightful claimants.

The order to judge between them is unrestricted and general; therefore the second order (which is in conjunction with it) gives the connotation that treachery and dishonesty too refers to general transgression against the others' rights, that it is not restricted to breach of trust only. (Of course, sometimes a particular clause may be placed in conjunction with a general one because of some special reasons, but there is no such reason here at all. We shall further explain it later on.)

**QUR'ĀN: *And ask forgiveness of Allāh; surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful***: [The literal meaning of *al-istighfār* (الِاسْتِغْفَار) is to want to hide, although here it has been as usual translated as asking

forgiveness. However, in this context it has been used in the literal meaning; and] apparently it tells the Prophet to ask Allāh to keep in him under cover the natural human tendency of inclining towards desire or violation of others' rights. It has repeatedly been explained that *al-'afw* (العَفْوُ) and *al-maghfirah* (المَغْفِرَةُ) are used in the divine speech for various connotations, all of which may be combined under the heading "moving away somehow from truth or justice".

The meaning, therefore, is as follows: Do not be advocate of the treacherous, nor be inclined to them; ask Allāh to help you in this endeavour, and protect you from defending their treachery and keep you free from coming under the influence of desire. This meaning is clearly understood when we look at a latter verse which says: *And were it not for Allāh's grace upon you and His mercy, a party of them had certainly designed to mislead you and they do not mislead but their own souls, and they shall not harm you in any way.* It clearly says that they cannot harm the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) even if they tried their utmost to arouse his feelings in order that he might opt for injustice and neglect the justice. They can never succeed in this endeavour, because the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was under divine protection from such harmful influence, and Allāh was guarding him [in his words and actions]; he did not commit injustice in his judgements, and was not liable to partiality; nor did he follow his desires. It would certainly be a gross injustice and a reprehensible misdeed if one was to differentiate, when sitting for judgement, between strong and weak, friend and foe, believer and unbeliever, near and far. In this context, the Prophet was ordered to "ask forgiveness" not because he had committed any sin which could have brought evil consequences, nor does it show that he was about to do any such improper thing. It only says that the Prophet should ask Allāh to give him power to subjugate his desires; and undoubtedly he was always in need of such divine protection and was never independent of Allāh, although he was *ma`ṣūm* (protected); and Allāh does what He wills.

This 'protection' covers all that comes under the headings of obedience and disobedience, all actions for which one may be praised or blamed. But it does not cover actual happenings. In other words, the verses show that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was protected from following his desires and inclining towards falsity. But they do not prove whatever judgement a judge gives, based of the rules and regulations enacted for judicial procedures (e.g., the claimant's responsibility is to bring the proof, and the defendant has only to deny

on oath) invariably always agree with reality and truth, or that this procedure always gives victory to the rightful person and brings defeat to the wrongful party. Nor do the laid down rules always lead to truth and justice. These procedures and regulation are meant to distinguish between truth and falsity in most of the cases, but not always; and what applies to majority of the cases only, cannot be deemed to apply to all cases.

It becomes clear from the afore-said explanations where an exegete has gone wrong. He says that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was ordered to ask forgiveness of Allāh, because he had intended to defend and protect that treacherous man (mentioned in the verse), as that man's people had requested the Prophet to be his advocate against a Jew. But this exegesis is wrong, because that putative intention would show that he had come under their reprehensible influence, while Allāh says that they could not influence him in any harmful manner.

**QUR'ĀN: *And do not plead on behalf of those who act unfaithfully to their souls . . .*** : It is said that unfaithful action has been linked to "their souls" because in the end its evil consequences turn back to the souls. Alternatively, it may count every sin as a treachery against one's own soul, as it has been counted as an injustice against it. Also Allāh says: *Allāh knew that you were acting unfaithfully towards your souls* (2:187).

If we look at this verse in conjunction with other Qur'ānic realities that all the believers are like one soul, and one's property in a way belongs to the whole group inasmuch as all are responsible to guard and protect it against loss and waste, then possibly it may be inferred from this verses that a believer usurping or stealing another's property, in fact, acts unfaithfully towards his own soul, his own self.

The divine words: *surely Allāh does not love him who is treacherous, sinful*, shows that those transgressors persistently indulged in their treachery. It is further emphasized by the word, *athīmā* ( اٰثِيْمًا ) which, being an adjective with force of a noun, shows that they were deep-dyed in sins. Even the clause, "act unfaithfully to their souls", alludes to their continued faithlessness; the same is the implication of the adjective, 'treacherous', which has been used [in 4:105], rather than the phrase, "those who act unfaithfully". (The latter has been used in 8:71 where it says: *so indeed they acted unfaithfully towards Allāh before, but He gave [you] mastery over them.*)

It appears from these associations among others that the verse, in context of the reason of its revelation, means as follows: Do not be

an advocate on behalf of these people and do not defend them, because they are persistent in their treachery, deep-dyed in unfaithfulness, submerged in sins and transgressions; but Allāh does not love treacherous and sinful persons. This connotation supports the stories that the verses were revealed about Abū Ṭu'mah ibn al-Ubayriq, as will be seen in Traditions

Apart from that story, the verse gives the following guidance: While sitting for judgement, do not support those who persistently indulge in treachery and perfidity; because Allāh does not like treacherous and sinful people. As He dislikes big treacheries, He also dislikes small ones. If it was possible for Allāh to like small treachery, it would have been possible to like big ones too. As it is, Allāh forbids to defend and support small treachery as He forbids supporting big treachery. Of course, if one acted unfaithfully in one case, and later lodged a case about another matter in which he was on right, then the verse does not forbid to defend him, and such advocacy and support is not covered by the sentence: *and be not an advocate on behalf of the treacherous*.

**QUR'ĀN:** *They hide themselves from men and do not hide themselves from Allāh, . . .* : This is one more indication that the verses 105 to 126 were revealed in one context regarding a particularly event and that is the one alluded to in the verse: *And whoever commits a fault or a sin, then accuses of it one innocent . . .* (4:112). Obviously, hiding can only be tried for deeds like theft, etc., blame for which could be laid at the other's door. It shows that the event mentioned in the verse under discussion and the preceding one is the same which is described in 4:112.

No one can hide oneself from Allāh, because nothing in the earth or in the heavens is hidden from Him. Consequently, its opposite, i.e., not hiding from Allāh, too is a compulsory thing, beyond the orbit of man's power. As such one cannot be blamed or shamed for it as the verse seems to imply. However, "hiding himself" here is apparently an indirect allusion to "feeling shy". That is why the clause, "and [they] do not hide themselves from Allāh", is followed by the clause, "and He is with them when they meditate by night words which please Him not". It exposes their conspiracy which they hatched at night in order that they could deny before the people any involvement in it, and during which they talked what was not pleasing to Allāh. Then the verse goes on to declare, "and Allāh encompasses what they do". It shows that Allāh encompasses them in all conditions,

including the time when they committed the crime. These two provisos describe a general condition after the specific restriction; and actually give at first a particular reason why they cannot hide from Allāh, and then describe a general reason.

**QUR'ĀN: *Behold! You are they who plead for them in this world's life, but who will plead for them with Allāh . . .*** : The question shows futility of people's pleading for the treacherous ones; such pleading, even if of any use, may help them only in this life, which has no value in the eyes of Allāh. But who will plead for them or argue on their behalf in the life hereafter, which is particularly honoured in Allāh's presence, and where they will really need some advocate to support their cause? There will be no one then to look after their affairs or to explain away their misdeeds.

**QUR'ĀN: *And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his soul, . . .*** : It is an exhortation to those treacherous persons to return to their Lord and ask His forgiveness. This placing of evil and injustices as two alternatives and ascending from evil to injustice may reflect on the fact that evil is done to others while injustice is ascribed to one's own soul. Or it may be because evil is less serious than injustice – not unlike a small sin *vis-à-vis* a great sin. And Allāh knows better.

This and the following two verses all together throw light on the same theme, i.e., description of the sin resulting from a man's action; and each in its turn looks at a particular aspect of the sin:-

This (first) verse explains that when a man commits a sin, it is his own soul which is held responsible for it and it is recorded in his scrolls of deed. However, he still has been given an opportunity to return to Allāh and beseech Him for forgiveness. If he does so, he will find Allāh Forgiving, Merciful.

The next verse reminds man that the sin he commits affects his own soul; and it cannot be transferred to another person, by means of false accusation, etc.

The third verse explains that if, after committing a fault or sin, he accuses an innocent person for it, that accusation will be a new sin or crime, over and above the original one.

**QUR'ĀN: *And whoever commits a sin, he only commits it against his own soul; and Allāh is Knowing, Wise*** : As explained above, this verse is connected with the next one, and as such is a sort of preamble to it. The clause, "he only commits it against his own soul", focuses the responsibility on the perpetrator, and admonishes those who, after

committing a crime, try to put the blame on the others. The meaning therefore is as follows: Whoever commits a crime, he does so against his own soul, and it is not written in someone else's account; it is he who has done it, not the other man, even if he accuses that man of it, and even if that another man had undertaken to carry that load on his shoulders. Allāh is Knowing, He knows that the sin was done by this sinner, and not by that accused man; and He is Wise, He does not hold responsible for a sin except that actual sinner, and does not put the burden of a crime except on the actual criminal. Allāh says: . . . *for it is* (the benefit of) *what it has earned, and upon it* (the evil of) *what it has wrought . . .* (2:286); . . . *and no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another . . .* (6:164); *And those who disbelieve say to those who believe: "Follow our path and we will bear your wrongs." And never shall they be the bearer of any of their wrongs; most surely they are liars* (29:12).

**QUR'ĀN:** *And whoever commits a fault or a sin, then accuses of it one innocent, he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a calumny and a manifest sin* : ar-Rāghib says in *Mufradātu 'l-Qur'ān* : "When one wants to do one thing and inadvertently does another, it is said, he did a mistake; and if it happens as he had intended, it is said, he has found [his target]. Also if he does something not good, or intends to do something unworthy, he is said to have done a mistake. That is why they say in Arabic: 'He found (i.e., did) the mistake [which he wanted to do]; he missed the right [which he wanted to do]; he found the right; he missed the error or mistake.' Thus the word is used for opposite meanings, and one must ponder before deciding its intended connotation."

Again he says: "*al-Khaṭī'ah* (الْخَطِيئَةُ = mistake, fault) and *as-sayyi'ah* (السَّيِّئَةُ = evil, sin) have nearly similar connotations. But *al-khaṭī'ah* is mostly used when the result that appeared was not the one actually intended; for example , one fires at a wild animal and kills a man, or drinks liquor and commits a crime while intoxicated. Now, the cause of that effect can be either lawful or unlawful. If the cause was unlawful, like drinking liquor, the resulting effect or crime cannot be pardoned; however if it was lawful, like firing at a wild animal, [it might be dealt with leniently]. Allāh says: *there is no blame on you concerning that in which you made a mistake, but* (concerning) *that your hearts do purposely* (blame may rest on you) [33:5]; and He has said [in the verse under discussion]: *And whoever commits a fault or a*



*sin*. Therefore, *al-khaṭīah* (fault), here means that mistake which just happened inadvertently."

I think that the word, *al-khaṭīah*, is an adjective which, because of frequent use, does not need any noun. In this respect it is similar to *al-muṣṭabah* (المُصِيبَةُ = misfortune), *ar-raziyyah* (الرَّزِيَّةُ = tragedy) and *as-salīqah* (السَّلِيْقَةُ = inborn disposition) inasmuch as all these are adjectives but are used as nouns. The paradigm, *faʿīl* (فَعِيلٌ) shows the stocking up and permanency of the root-word; thus *al-khaṭīah* is an action in which *al-khaṭāʾ* (الْخَطَاءُ = mistake) is permanently settled down; while *al-khaṭāʾ* refers to an unintended mistake like manslaughter. This was the original meaning. Then it was extended to include those actions which a man would not do if he had not lost his natural uprightness. This extended meaning covers every disobedience and its effect. Thus *al-khaṭīah* is that action or its effect which was done inadvertently (and it will not be called a disobedience) or which one should not have intended (and it will be counted as a disobedience or its effect).

Allāh has ascribed *al-khaṭīah* (fault) in this verse to *al-kasb* (الْكَسْبُ = earning; translated here as 'commits'). Therefore, it must mean the fault which is a disobedience. As such, it means the fault done intentionally; although it was an action which a right-minded man should not have intended.<sup>8</sup>

It was explained under the verse 2:219: (*Say: "In both of them is a great sin . . ."*) that sin is an action whose evil consequences deprive man of many good and virtues, e.g., drinking liquor, gambling, stealing – the evils which prevent man from acquiring this life's good, and degrade him in the society to such an extent that people do not place any trust in him and do not believe him.<sup>9</sup>

The verse under discussion mentions fault and sin as alternatives and ascribes both to 'earning', that is, wilful action (*And whoever commits a fault or a sin*). Clearly both have been used in their particular meanings. Thus the meaning will be as follows: Whoever commits a fault whose effect is perpetual (like, unlawful murder or theft) and then puts its blame on an innocent man, then certainly he has burdened himself with a fresh calumny and another clear sin.

The word *ar-ramiyy* (الرَّمِي = translated here as 'accuses') literally means shooting an arrow; and the liability of the sin of

<sup>8</sup> Here the author rebuts the last part of ar-Rāghib's explanation. (tr.)

<sup>9</sup> *al-Mizān*, (Eng. transl.), vol.3, p.280.

calumny is described as being burdened with it. The two together present a fine metaphor: The false accuser shoots the arrow at the innocent victim and kills him; and this crime burdens him with a load which he cannot throw away and which prevents him from every good throughout his life.

From the preceding explanations, it may easily be understood why in these verses disobedience has been variously named sin, fault and evil, or injustice, treachery and misleading. Each word perfectly fits the context where it is placed.

**QUR'ĀN:** *And were it not for Allāh's grace upon you and His mercy, a party of them had certainly designed to mislead you* : The context shows that this design of theirs to mislead the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) refers to their attempts to urge him to defend and support those whom Allāh has named in the beginning as "the treacherous". Obviously this group is the same whom Allāh has addressed in these words: *Behold! you are they who plead for them in this world's life . . .* This fits on the people of Abū Ṭu'mah, as will be described later.

**QUR'ĀN:** *and they do not mislead but their own souls and they shall not harm you in any way* : The two sentences taken together clearly show that their attempt to mislead the Prophet, harms their own souls only; it does not affect him in any way. They have misled themselves through their evil designs; it is nothing but a sin and every sin is delusion.

This expression also has another connotation, given in the exegesis of chapter 3, verse 69: *and they lead not astray but themselves, and they do not perceive.*<sup>10</sup> But that connotation is not fit in this context.

The verse says: *and they shall not harm you in any way, and Allāh has revealed to you the Book*; it absolutely dismisses their ability to harm the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); it appears to be qualified by the clause: *and Allāh has revealed to you the Book*, which is a circumstantial clause related to the pronoun 'you' in the preceding clause. Thus, it totally rebuts the idea that anyone can harm the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in any way whether in knowledge or action.

**QUR'ĀN:** *and Allāh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know* : As pointed out above

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<sup>10</sup> *al-Mīzān*, (Eng. transl.) vol.6, pp.107-9 (tr.)

it gives the reason why they cannot harm the Prophet in any way. Or may be it shows the reason of the full statement, *and they do not mislead but their own souls, and they shall not harm you in any way.* In any case, this revelation of the Book and this teaching of the Wisdom is the reason why their attempts to mislead the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) can never succeed. This is the foundation of his al-'iṣmah (العصمة = sinlessness, infallibility).

#### THE MEANING OF AL-'IṢMAH

The verse apparently shows that the basic factor from which *al-'iṣmah* emanates is a sort of knowledge which prevents the knower from indulging in sin and mistake. In other words, knowledge prevents one from going astray. Likewise, all good characteristics, like bravery chastity and generosity are the forms of knowledge which are deep rooted in psyche and create their effects and at the same time prevent one from indulging in their opposites like cowardice or rashness, lack of desire or greed, miserliness or extravagance.

Although beneficial knowledge and perfect sagacity keep one clean and prevent his falling in quagmire of depravity or being soiled with filth of sins, (as we see in the people who have knowledge and wisdom, and steeped in piety and religion). However, it is such a cause as brings its effects most of the times but not always. The same is the case with all material and natural causes which are found in the universe. Look at anyone who is perfect in any field; you will find that his perfection does not protect him from mistake always and without any fail. It is a common trait of all causes which we see and observe.

The reason is that man possesses various powers of consciousness and at times some of them push the others to the back of the mind and man becomes oblivious of those factors. A man with faculty of piety will not be inclined to follow base desires as long as he is conscious of the virtue of his piety; but a time may come when the fire of desire is inflamed and he being tempted by that desire becomes oblivious of the virtue of piety or his consciousness of piety becomes weak, and he commits what piety would never tolerate and indulges in base desires. The same is the case with all conscious causes found in man. Otherwise, man will never deviate from the effects of any of these causes as long as the cause remains intact. In short, whenever man goes against the dictates of virtue, it happens

because some causes overpower the others and man forgets dictates of virtue. But as for this faculty which is called the power of *al-‘iṣmah* it is a conscious cause emanating from knowledge which can never be overpowered. Had it been like other consciousness and comprehensions, it could have sometimes failed and deviated from the right path. This knowledge is not like other knowledge and comprehensions which we are familiar with and which can be acquired and learned from teachers.

Allāh has pointed to this unique knowledge in this talk addressed particularly to His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) when he says: *and Allāh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom and He has taught you what you did not know*. It is an exclusive talk which we cannot properly understand because we have not tasted this type of knowledge and consciousness. However, if we look at some of the Divine speeches – for example: *Say: "Whoever is the enemy of Jibrīl – for surely he brought it down to your heart by Allāh's command . . ."* (2:97). *The faithful spirit has descended wit it upon your heart that you may be of the warners in plain Arabic language* (26:193-5) – we will clearly see that this sending down of the Book is rooted in knowledge. Some other verses show that this sending down of the Book refers to revelation and talking as may be seen in the following verses: *He has made plain to you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ and that which We have revealed to you and that We enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and ‘Īsā . . .* (42:13); *Surely, We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nūḥ and the prophets after him . . .* (4:163); *" . . . I do not follow aught save that which is revealed to me . . ."* (6:50); *" . . . I only follow what is revealed to me from my Lord . . ."* (7:203).

It is inferred from these various verses that *al-inzāl* (الإنزال = sending down) means revelation of the Book and the Wisdom – and it is a sort of divine teaching to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Nevertheless, the teaching referred to by the words: *and He has taught you what you did not know*, is something quite different from the teaching through revelation of the Book and the Wisdom; the verses deal with the judicial decisions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in various events and in the litigations which are brought to him for judgement, and that judgement is given by his own opinion. It has nothing to do with the Book and the Wisdom – although it depends on them – it is the result of his own view and opinion.

It appears from the above that the sending down and the teaching in the words: *and Allāh has sent down to you the Book and Wisdom and He has taught you what you did not know*, refer to two categories of knowledge: one, teaching through revelation and sending of the faithful spirit to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); two, teaching through inspiration created in the heart and the secret divine thought without the agency of any angel. This is what is supported by the traditions which have come to us about the prophetic knowledge. Therefore, the sentence: *and He has taught you what you did not know*, means: Allāh has given you a particular knowledge which you could never get through the normal means which help man in learning acquired knowledge; that particular knowledge is given only by Allāh to His chosen ones.

Clearly, this Divine gift which we call *al-‘iṣmah* is a sort of knowledge and consciousness which is totally different from all other types of knowledge inasmuch as this knowledge is never overpowered by any other faculty; rather it overpowers all other faculties and uses them according to its own wisdom. In this way, it fully protects the holder of *al-‘iṣmah* from going astray and committing mistakes. It has come in the traditions that the Prophet and the Imāms do have a spirit which is called the Holy Spirit; and it supports them and protects them from sin and mistake. It is this Spirit which is mentioned in the verse: *And thus did We reveal to you a Spirit by Our command. You did not know what the Book was nor (what) the faith (was), but We made it a light guiding thereby whom We please of Our servants (42:52)*. (This meaning may be inferred if we take the apparent meaning of the verse that a guiding Spirit was sent to the Prophet, s.a.w.a.) Similarly there is the verse: *And We made them Imāms who guided (people) by Our command and We revealed to them the doing of good and the keeping up of the prayer and the giving of the alms and Us (alone) did they worship (21:73)*. We shall explain in its place the meaning of this verse, God willing, that it refers to the support given by the Holy Spirit to the Imāms for doing good and worshipping Allāh.

The above explanations also show that the Book mentioned in the verse: *and Allāh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom and has taught you what you did not know*, refers to the revelations sent for removing the peoples' conflicts; as was mentioned in the verse: *Mankind was but one people; so Allāh sent the prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and He sent down with them the book with the truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in*

*which they differed . . .* (2:213), as was explained in the second volume of this book.<sup>11</sup>

The wisdom mentioned in the verse refers to all Divine cognition sent through revelation which were beneficial for this world and the hereafter. The sentence: *and He has taught you what you did not know*, refers to something totally different from general cognition obtained from the Book and the Wisdom.

The above explanations show the shortcomings of some exegetes regarding exegesis of this verse. Some have taken the Book as the Qur'ān and the Wisdom as the commandments found in it and have said that: *what you did not know* refers to the *sharī'ah* and the knowledge of the unseen. Others have explained the Book and the Wisdom as the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* and *what you did not know* as the *sharī'ah* and the stories of the previous prophets and other such informations. There are other such explanations; but what we have written in the explanation shows how weak such other explanations are.

**QUR'ĀN:** *and Allāh's Grace on you is very great* : It reminds the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) of the Divine favours.

**QUR'ĀN:** *There is no good in most of their secret counsels except (in his) who enjoins charity or goodness or reconciliation between people:* ar-Rāghib has said: "*Nājaytuhu* ( نَاجَيْتُهُ = I whispered in his ear). Its literal meaning is that you remain alone with him in a *najwah* ( نَجْوَاهُ = rising ground)." Thus *an-najwā* ( النُّجْوَى ) means secret counselling, whispered talk. Sometimes the word is used for conspirators or whisperers themselves. Allāh says: when they take counsel secretly (17:47).

The talk, "there is no good in most of their secret counsels", reverts to the preceding sentence, *when they meditate by night words which please him not*, because all these verses are connected together. Here it condemns all secret consultations whether they are done at night or in daytime. The statement that "there is no good in it" covers all secret counselling or plotting even if it is not done during night time. The same is the coming words: *whoever acts hostilely to the Messenger*; Allāh did not say, *whoever whispers secretly to become*

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<sup>11</sup> *al-Mīzān*, (Eng. transl.), vol.3, pp.167-227.

hostile to the Messenger, because the described order is for acting hostilely, no matter whether it is done after secret whispering or not.

The exception, "except (in his) who enjoins charity . . ." is isolated. The meaning: but whoever orders charity or goodness there is some good in his order. Secret counselling to do good work has been called enjoinder and order; it is a metaphorical expression. Allāh has mentioned three good works which secret whispering enjoins: charity, goodness and reconciliation between the people. Charity is a part of goodness, yet Allāh has mentioned it separately because it is the most perfect and prominent example of goodness and by nature it entails secret consultation.

**QUR'ĀN: *and whoever does this seeking Allāh's pleasure, We will give him a mighty reward*** : It categorises secret counselling describing how it may earn good reward or punishment. It shows what goodness is found in good secret counselling and as for the objectionable counselling, why it is not good.

In short, it shows that those who indulge in secret whispering are of two types: One, there are those who do it seeking Allāh's pleasure; he calls to goodness or strives to bring reconciliation between people seeking nearness to Allāh, and Allāh will surely give him a great reward; two, there are others who plan secretly acting hostilely to the Messenger and following a way other than that of the believers. His recompense is that Allāh leaves him into what he himself has chosen, makes him enter hell and it is an evil resort.

**QUR'ĀN: *And whoever acts hostilely to the Messenger after that guidance has become manifest to him, and follows other than the way of the believers We will turn him to that to which he has (himself) turned and make him enter hell; and it is an evil resort . . .*** : *al-Mushāqqah* (المُشَاقَّةُ = acting hostilely) is derived from *shiqq* (شَقَّ = a part removed from a whole). Thus, *al-mushāqqah* and *ash-shiqāq* (الشَّقَاقُ) show that you are in the opposite side of your fellow's. It is a metaphorical way to describe difference and disagreement. Acting hostilely to the Messenger after manifestation of the guidance means acting against the Messenger and indulging in his disobedience. Therefore, the phrase, "and follows other than the way of the believers", further explains hostility to the Messenger. The way of the believers means obeying the Messenger because his obedience is the obedience of Allāh. Allāh says: whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allāh (4:80).

The believers are united in the belief and their way is the unity on the obedience of Allāh and His Messenger – you may say in short "the obedience of His Messenger". This preserves the unity of their way as Allāh has said: *But how can you disbelieve while it is you to whom the communications of Allāh are recited and among you is His Messenger? And whoever holds fast to Allāh he indeed is guided to the straight path. O you who believe! fear Allāh with the fear which is due to Him and do not die unless you are Muslims. And hold fast by the cord of Allāh all together and be not divided . . .* (3:101-3). We have explained this verse in volume three of this book.<sup>12</sup> Also Allāh has said: *And (know) that this My Path, the Right one, therefore follow it, and follow not (other) ways, for they will lead you away from His way; this He has enjoined you with that you may guard (against evil)* (6:153). As the way of Allāh is the way of piety, the way of guarding against evil, and the believers are called to that way; so when they unite on that way they will cooperate with one another in piety. Allāh says: *. . . and help one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression . . .* (5:2). The verse, as you see, forbids the believers to disobey Allāh and to create friction in the Islamic Society; and this is what we have explained about the way of the believers.

The meaning of the verse (*and whoever acts hostilely to the Messenger after that Guidance has become manifest to him and follows other than the way of the believers*) is similar to the verse which says: *O you who believe! when you confer together in private, do not give to each other counsel of sin and revolt and disobedience to the Messenger, and give to each other counsel of goodness and piety . . .* (58:9).

The phrase, "We will turn him to that to which he has (himself) turned", means that We will let him continue in the behaviour he has chosen for himself and will let him follow other than the way of the believers; as Allāh says: *All do We aid – these as well as those – out of the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of your Lord is not confined* (17:20).

"and make him enter hell; and it is an evil resort": the conjunction, 'and' shows that the whole episode, that is, turning him to his own chosen way and sending him to hell is a single Divine order, some parts will be implemented in this world (letting him proceed to

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<sup>12</sup> *al-Mīzān*, (Eng. transl.), vol.6, pp.271-8.



his chosen path) and some will appear in the life hereafter and that is sending him to hell; and it is an evil resort.

**QUR'ĀN:** *Surely Allāh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and He forgives what is besides this to whom He pleases; and whoever associates anything with Allāh, he indeed strays off into a remote error* : Apparently, the verse explains the reason of the preceding statement: *We will turn him to that to which he has (himself) turned and make him enter hell*; because all these verses are interconnected. This verse proves that being hostile to the Messenger is the same as associating something to Allāh, and Allāh surely does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him. The same idea may be inferred from the following verses of ch.47: *Surely those who disbelieve and turn away from Allāh's way and oppose the Messenger after that guidance has become clear to them cannot harm Allāh in any way, and He will make null their deeds* (32). *O you who believe! Obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and do not let your deeds be forfeited* (33). *Surely those who disbelieve and turn away from Allāh's way, then they die while they are unbelievers, Allāh will by no means forgive them* (34). Apparently, the verse 34 gives the reason of the order given in verse 33 regarding obedience of Allāh and of His Messenger. Clearly, disobedience to Allāh and His Messenger is a disbelief which will never be forgiven; in other words, it is nothing but polytheism.

The addition of the phrase, "and He forgives what is besides this to whom He pleases", aims at completing the talk; also it shows how great is this cursed sin, that is, hostility to the Messenger. We have explained shortly this verse at the end of the volume four.<sup>13</sup>

**QUR'ĀN:** *They do not call besides Him on any thing but females:* *al-Ināth* (الإناث) is plural of *al-unthā* (الأنثى = female). They say in Arabic, *anatha 'l-ḥadīd* (الحدِيدُ أَنثٌ = the iron became soft). *Anatha 'l-makān* (المكان أَنثٌ = the place brought out its vegetation fast). This word shows the idea of passibility, of being influenced, and that is why a female is called *unthā*. This verse describes the idols and all those who are worshipped besides Allāh as females, because all of them are manipulated and influenced by man; they have no power to affect any thing which their worshippers expect from them. Allāh says: *Surely those whom you call upon besides Allāh cannot create a fly, though*

<sup>13</sup> *al-Mīzān*, (Eng. transl.), vol.8, pp.250-3.

*they should all gather for it, and should the fly snatch away anything from them they could not take it back from it, weak are the invoker and the invoked. They have not estimated Allāh with the estimation that is due to Him; most surely Allāh is Strong, Mighty (22:73-74). Also He says: And they have taken besides Him gods who do not create anything while they are themselves created and they control not for themselves any harm or profit, and they control not death, not life, nor raising (the dead) to life (25:3).*

Apparently, the femininity points to utter passivity which is the characteristic of a created thing *vis-à-vis* the Creator. This interpretation is better than the one which some people have written that the word females refers to Lāt, ‘Uzzā and Manāt, etc. every tribe had its own idol which was called goddess of that tribe; it was said either because their names were of feminine gender or because they were made of inanimate matters, which are generally given feminine gender. But this interpretation does not conform with the exclusivity which is found in the verse, "they do not call besides Him on anything but females", because among those who are worshipped besides Allāh there are some males like the Jesus Christ, Barahma and Buddha.<sup>14</sup>

**QUR’ĀN: and they do not call on anything but a rebellious Satan :** *al-Marīd* (المَرِيدُ = stripped of every good; naked). al-Bayḍāwī has said: "*al-Mārid* (المَارِد) and al-marīd: he who is unrelated with any good. The root word denotes touching and that is why they say *ṣarḥun mumarrad* (صَرْحٌ مُّمَرَّدٌ = plastered castle), *ghulāmun amrad* (غُلَامٌ أَمْرَدٌ = beardless boy), *shajaratun mardā* (مَرْدَاءُ شَجَرَةٌ = leafless tree)."

Apparently, this sentence explains the preceding one; 'calling' metaphorically denotes worshipping because worship had spread among people for calling the deity to fulfil their needs. Allāh has given to obedience the name of worship as He says: *Did I not charge you, O Children of Adam! that you should not serve the Satan? Surely he is your open enemy, and that you should serve Me! this is the right way (36:60-61)*. The sentence denotes that when they worship anything other than Allāh they actually worship and call the rebellious Satan because it is done in obedience to his suggestion.

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<sup>14</sup> Barahma is a mythical figure; and Buddha is not worshipped as God because Buddhism doesn't have any concept of Divinity. Rāmā and Krishnā would serve as better example.

**QUR'ĀN: Allāh has cursed him :** *al-La'n* (اللعن = to keep away from mercy). It is another adjective for the Satan and describes the reason of the previous adjective, 'rebellious'.

**QUR'ĀN: and he said: "Most certainly I will take of Thy servants an appointed portion:** It points to what Allāh has quoted from the Satan's claim: *Then by Thy Might I will surely lead them astray, all, except Thy servants from among them, the purified ones* (38:82-83). The phrase, "of Thy servants", confirms that those who go astray are even then Allāh's servants. They cannot discard this servitude; He is their Lord who will decide about them whatever He pleases.

**QUR'ĀN: And most certainly I will lead them astray and excite in them vain desires, and bid them so that they shall slit the ears of the cattle, and most certainly I will bid them so that they shall alter Allāh's creation;" and whoever takes the Satan for a guardian rather than Allāh he indeed shall suffer a manifest loss :** The phrase, "they shall slit the ears of the cattle", describes the custom of the Arabs in the days of Ignorance when they used to slit the ears of a particular type of she-camel and bullocks to make their meat unlawful for eating. All the customs mentioned in the verse are errors and straying. First, it is said that Satan will lead them astray; it is a general statement; then some examples of that straying are given for putting more emphasis on them. The Satan says: "Most certainly I will lead them astray by making them worship other than Allāh and encouraging them to commit sins. I will excite in them vain desires which will divert their attention from their obligations and duties. I will bid them to slit the ears of the cattle and exhort them to make unlawful what Allāh has made lawful, and I will order them so that they shall alter Allāh's creation." This last phrase may denote castration and various types of mutilations as well as sodomy and lesbianism.

Possibly, alteration of Allāh's creations may connote going against the natural law and discarding the upright religion. Allāh says: *Then set your face upright for religion in the right state – the nature made by Allāh in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allāh's creation; that is the right religion* (30:30).

When one calls the Satan, that is, obey his commands, Allāh counts it as taking the Satan for a guardian, as He says: "And whoever takes the Satan for a guardian rather than Allāh he indeed shall suffer a manifest loss." It should be noted that Allāh has not said: Whosoever

the Satan is his guardian; because the previous verses have clearly shown that the guardian is Allāh alone and no one else has any guardianship on anything even if someone takes him as his guardian.

**QUR'ĀN:** *He gives them promises and excites vain desires in them; and the Satan does not promise them but to deceive. These are they whose abode is hell, and they shall not find any refuge from it :*

The context shows that it gives the reason to the preceding verse, *he indeed shall suffer a manifest loss*. What loss can be more manifest than the one who changes real happiness and perfection of creation with false promises and imaginary desires. Allāh says: *And (as for) those who disbelieve, their deeds are like the mirage in a desert, which the thirsty man deems to be water, until when he comes to it he finds it to be naught, and there he finds Allāh, so He pays back to him his reckoning in full; and Allāh is quick in reckoning (24:39)*. The promises refer to direct Satanic temptations and desires spring up from those temptations whose imaginary beauties enrapture the mind. That is why Allāh says, "and the Satan does not promise them but to deceive". It should be noted that the Satanic promise has been called deception but not the desires.

Then their end result is described in the next verse: "These are they whose abode is hell, and they shall not find any refuge from it". *Maḥīṣ* (مَحِيصٌ = the place to escape; translated here as refuge).

**QUR'ĀN:** *And (as for) those who believe and do good, We will make them enter into gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein forever; (it is) a promise of Allāh, true (indeed); and who is truer of word than Allāh :*

This describes the believers' position to complete the picture by giving a clear contrast with the unbelievers'. In the verse, pronouns have changed from second person plural to the third person. The reason is that Allāh wants to show the importance of the situation and its greatness by using the proper name, Allāh, instead of pronouns of second plural.

There is one more fine point in the phrase, "We will make them enter into gardens"; it indicates that soon they will be present before God Almighty and He will not conceal Himself from His believing servants as He is their guardian.

"And who is truer of word than Allāh": It presents a contrast with what has been said in the preceding verse about the Satanic

promises that it is nothing but deception while Allāh's promise is a reality and His words true.

**QUR'ĀN:** (This) *shall not be in accordance with your vain desires nor in accordance with the vain desires of the People of the Book; whoever does evil, he shall be requited with it, and besides Allāh he will find for himself neither a guardian nor helper* : The talk returns to the topic it had started with. It gives in short the conclusion of the detailed speech. It has been narrated about the actions and speeches of some believers who insisted before the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he must take their side, and help them against their opposite parties in their mutual conflict and litigation. It shows that they thought that by believing in Allāh and His Messenger they had done a favour to Allāh and established a right over the Prophet, by which Allāh and His Messenger were obliged to take their side and give judgement in their favour, no matter whether they are on right or on wrong, and whether that judgement would be just or unjust. It is the same phenomenon which we find in the followers of the leaders of error and the retinues of oppressive rulers; each of them, while humiliating himself before the leader and obeying him, thinks that by attaching himself to the leader he has done a favour to him; as a result he believes that he has a right on his leader because of which the leader must protect his interests and compulsorily give him precedence over others.

Also, the People of the Book entertained the same ideas as Allāh narrates in His Book about them: *And the Jews and the Christians say: "We are the sons of Allāh and His beloved ones"* (5:18). Also He says: *And they say: "Be Jews or Christians, you will be on the right course"* (2:135). Again He says: *This is because they say: "There is not upon us in the matter of the unlearned people any way (to reproach)"* (3:75).

Allāh has refuted such ideas of that group of believers and joined them with the People of the Book. Allāh has called these assumptions vain desires, because like the desires, these presumptions are merely imaginary forms which have no reality outside the mind. Allāh tells them: 'O group of the Muslims! It is not going to be in accordance with your vain desires nor with the vain desires of the People of the Book; it all depends on deeds; if your deeds are good you will get good reward and if evil, then evil.' The evil has been mentioned in the verse before the good deeds because they had committed great sins. "Whoever does evil he shall be requited with it and besides Allāh he will find for himself neither a guardian nor

helper": The sentence begins without any conjunction. It means it is a separate speech; and in a way gives reply to the following unasked question: If entering into the fold of Islam and true belief does not bring every good to a man and does not protect his interests in life then what is the way and where will the man go? And the same is the situation in Judaism and Christianity. In reply Allāh declares: "Whoever does evil he shall be requited with it and besides Allāh he will find for himself neither a guardian nor helper; and whoever does from good deeds, . . . "

The verse, "he shall be requited with it", is general and covers worldly punishments prescribed by the Islamic laws, like retaliation for criminals, cutting of fingers for thief and stoning or whipping for fornicator, etc., as well as the punishments in the hereafter which Allāh has promised in His Book and through His Prophet.

This generality fits perfectly with the occasion of the revelation of these verses. It has been described that the verses were revealed concerning a theft which some Muslims had committed and had accused a Jew or a Muslim for it and then insisted before the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he should give judgement against the accused.

The words, "neither a guardian nor helper", are also general. No guardian or helper can avert a punishment of a crime from the culprit; even the Prophet or Imām and the honour of Islam and religion cannot help in this matter. The punishment prescribed by Allāh cannot be removed from the doer of the evil by anyone. Also, it covers guardian and helper who would be able to remove from him the punishment in the hereafter except what the next verse mentions.

**QUR'ĀN:** *And whoever does from good deeds, whether male or female, and he (or she) is a believer – these shall enter the garden, and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly* : This is the other alternative which describes the recompense of the doer of good deeds, that is, the garden. In this verse, Allāh has attached a condition which restricts the recompense; and on the other side has given latitude which has expanded the circle of reward. It is the condition of being rewarded with the garden that the doer of a good deed should be a believer, because the reward stands face to face with good deed and an unbeliever has no good deed to his credit. Allāh says: . . . *and if they had set up others (with Him) certainly what they did would have been forfeited* (6:88). Also, He said: *These are they who disbelieve in the signs of their Lord and His meeting, so their deeds become null, and*

*therefore We will not set up a balance for them on the Day of Resurrection (18:105).*

On the other hand, Allāh has said, "And whoever does from good deeds", the word 'from' indicates a part, and it means whoever does some of the good deeds. This expands the circle of the promise of the garden. If Allāh had said: 'and whoever does good deeds' and the context requires precise description of the recompense – it would have meant that the garden was for a believer who performed all good deeds; but the Divine Grace has spread the good reward for every believer who performs some good deeds and if he has left any good deed undone or committed any sin, Allāh will make it up through repentance or intercession, as He has said: *Surely Allāh does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him and He forgives what is besides this to whom He pleases; . . . (4:116)*; we have explained in detail about repentance while explaining the words of Allāh: *Repentance with Allāh is only for those who do evil in ignorance . . . (4:17)* in the fourth volume<sup>15</sup>; and about intercession under the verse: *And be on the guard against a day when one soul shall not avail another in the least, . . . (2:48)* in the first volume of this book<sup>16</sup>.

Then Allāh says: "whether male or female"; the Divine Decree covers males and females both without any difference of gender. This is totally opposite to the pretensions of ancient people of various religions and communities like India, Egypt and all the idol worshippers. They believed that whatever good deed the womenfolk did it was not credited to their account and they did not get any reward for their virtuous deeds. The same was the ideology of Judaism and Christianity: that all honour and respect is reserved for the men; and the women are disgraced in the eyes of Allāh; there are shortcomings in their creation and they will not get full reward for their deeds. The Arabs' thinking was not much different from these superstitions. Therefore, Allāh has made both sexes equally deserving for His Grace and said, "whether male of female".

Probably, it is for this reason that the sentence, ". . . these shall enter the garden" is followed by, "and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly". The first sentence shows that the women do have their

<sup>15</sup> *al-Mīzān*, (Eng. transl.), vol.8, pp.54-77.

<sup>16</sup> *al-Mīzān*, (Eng. transl.), vol.1, pp.221-249.

shares in the good reward like the men; and the second sentence shows that there shall be no excess or shortfall between their shares in quantity; as Allāh has said: *so their lord accepted their prayer: "That I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other . . . "* (3:195).

**QUR'ĀN:** *And who has a better religion than he who submits himself entirely to Allāh. And he is the doer of good (to others) and follows the faith of Ibrāhīm, the upright one, and Allāh took Ibrāhīm as a friend. And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's, and Allāh encompasses all things :* It appears that this is a reply to an unspoken question: If the Islam of a Muslim or belief of the People of the Book has no effect in bringing the good to him and to protect his interest – in short, when belief in Allāh and His signs is worthless and its existence and non-existence make no difference – then what is the honour of Islam? Or the privilege of faith?

The reply is given that the religion's honour is a fact without any doubt. It cannot be doubted nor any wise man can be oblivious of its goodness. This ideal is hidden in the phrase, "And who has a better religion than he who submits himself entirely to Allāh" The question takes it for granted that there is goodness in the religion. Man cannot get himself freed from religion and the best of the religion is to submit oneself entirely to Allāh who is the Owner of whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Man has to surrender himself to Allāh and worship Him; also he should follow the faith of Ibrāhīm, the upright one, because that is the natural religion. And Allāh took Ibrāhīm as a friend; Ibrāhīm was the first to submit himself entirely to Allāh doing good to others and following the upright religion.

Nevertheless, no one should entertain the idea that the Divine friendship is like the friendship found between man and man which overshadows all right and wrong and opens for them the door of recklessness and despotism. Allāh is the owner, not the owned, He encompasses all things and is not surrounded. He is not like the rulers, presidents and kings because when they get any authority over their servants or subjects, they hand over something of their own freedom in its lieu to the public. They overpower some groups with help of some others and rule over one people with help of the other people; when a time comes where their will is opposed by the public's will then they cannot hold their ground, they fall down and their helplessness is clearly seen by one and all.



It is to describe this idea that the speech ends with the verse, "And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's, and Allāh encompasses all things".

### TRADITIONS

It is narrated by al-Qummī in his *at-Tafsīr* that all these verses were revealed about a group of the Helpers from Banū Ubayriq. There were three brothers, all hypocrites; Bashīr, Bishr and Mubashshir. They dug a hole in the wall of the uncle of Qatādah ibn an-Nu‘mān – and Qatādah was a *badrī*\* – and stole food grain which he had stored for his family together with a sword and coat of mail.

Qatādah complained about it to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and said "O Messenger of Allāh, some people dug a hole in the wall of my uncle and took away the food grain he had saved for his family and a sword and a coat of mail, and they are the people of a bad family." A believer man, Lubayd ibn Sahl, was with them when they were planning (the theft). Banū Ubayriq said to Qatādah, "This is the work of Lubayd ibn Sahl." This news came to Lubayd's ears, he took his sword and went to them and said, "O Banū Ubayriq! Do you accuse me of the theft while you are more deserving for it? You are hypocrites, you lampoon the Messenger of Allāh and ascribe the poems to the Quraysh. You must prove this (accusation), otherwise I will fill my sword with your blood." So, Banū Ubayriq talked with him in a friendly way and said to him, "You go back, may Allāh have mercy on you; because you are free from this claim."

Now, Banū Ubayriq approached a man from their clan, Usayd ibn ‘Urwah by name; he was a good eloquent speaker. He went to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and said, "O Messenger of Allāh! Qatādah ibn an-Nu‘mān singled out a family of our clan, a distinguished people of high regard and good family tree, and he accused them of theft and charged them of what they are innocent of<sup>17</sup>

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\* i.e., one who participated in the battle of Badr with the Holy Prophet of Islam (*ed.*).

<sup>17</sup> & <sup>11</sup> The next *ḥadīth*, narrated by same Qatādah, is almost identical to this one, with one difference: These two sentences, in the next narrative, end with the proviso, "without evidence of proof." That crucial phrase makes it clear why the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) listened to Usayd (Usayr) and why he admonished

Hearing this, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was grieved. Then Qatādah came to him, and looking at him the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, "You pointed out a distinguished family, a people of high honour and good family tree, and you accused them of theft"<sup>18</sup>. (In this way) he admonished him severely. Qatādah was grieved because of it and went back to his uncle and said, "Oh, would that I had died and not spoken to the Messenger of Allāh (in this matter); because he has talked to me in a way I did not like." His uncle said, "Allāh is He Whose help to be sought."

Then Allāh sent down these verses to His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) about this incident: *Surely We have revealed the Book to you with the truth . . . when they meditate by night words which please Him not.* al-Qummī says: The word, 'words', here means deeds. Allāh has used the word to indicate action: *Behold: You are they who plead for them in this world's life . . . And whoever commits a fault or sin then accuses of it one innocent;* al-Qummī said: Lubayd ibn Sahl – *he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a calumny and a manifest sin.*

The same *tafsīr* narrates: Abu 'l-Jārūd narrates from Abū Ja'far (a.s.): "Some people from the near relatives of Bashīr said: 'Let us go to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), so that we should talk to him about our fellow or explain to him that our fellow is innocent.' When Allāh revealed: *They hide themselves from men and do not hide themselves from Allāh . . . who shall be their protector?* Then the clan of Bishr turned on him and said: 'O Bishr, seek forgiveness from Allāh and repent to Him from the sins.' He said: 'I swear by whom I swear that nobody stole it except Lubayd.' Then the verses were revealed: *And whoever commits a fault or a sin then accuses of it one innocent he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a calumny and a manifest sin.*

Then Bishr renounced Islam and fled to Mecca and Allāh revealed about the group who had come to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to plead for Bishr: *And were it not for Allāh's Grace upon you and His mercy, a party of them had certainly designed to mislead you, and they do not mislead but their own souls, and they shall not harm you in any way, and Allāh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know, and Allāh's grace on you is very great.* (at-Tafsīr, al-Qummī)

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Qatādah. It was because Qatādah had not offered any evidence or proof for his case and his claim was untenable from legal point of view. (tr.)

as-Suyūṭī writes: at-Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Hātim, Abu 'sh-Shaykh and al-Hākim (who said that this tradition is correct) have narrated from Qatādah ibn an-Nu'mān that he said: "There was a family in our clan who were called Banū Ubayriq – Bishr, Bashīr and Mubashshir. Bishr was a hypocrite. He used to compose poems satirizing the companions of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and then ascribe it to some other Arabs. He used to say: 'That man has said this and this and that man has said so and so.' But when the companions of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) heard that poem, they used to say, 'By Allāh! no one has said this poem except this wretched one himself. Then he (Bishr) said: 'What! whenever people say some poem they join together and say Ubayriq's son has said it!'"

(Qatādah) said: "They were a needy poor family before Islam and in Islam. The usual food of the people of Medina was dates and barley. If a man was well to do, and a caravan came from Syria loaded with white flour, that man would buy some of it and reserve it for himself. The other members of the family had to be content with date and barley. So, a loaded caravan arrived from Syria and my uncle, Rufā'ah Ibn Zayd, purchased a bag of the white flour and kept it in his attic room; and in that room were his arms – two coats of mail and two swords and things connected with them. Someone sneaked in the darkness of the night and dug into the wall of the attic and took the food and arms. In the morning, my uncle, Rufā'ah, came to me and said, 'O my nephew! do you know that someone sneaked to us during night and my attic has been dug into and they took our food and our arms!'"

He (Qatādah) continues: "We inquired in the neighbourhood and asked the people. Somebody told us, 'We did see Banū Ubayriq lighting fire in the night and we are sure that it was lit only to bake some of your flour.' When we were inquiring in the neighbourhood, Banū Ubayriq told us, 'By God! we don't think any one has done it except Lubayd ibn Sahl' – he was a man of our clan who was a Muslim of good character. When Lubayd heard it, he raised his sword and went to Banū Ubayriq and said, 'What! I steal? By God! you should prove this accusation or the sword will mingle in your body.' Then they said, 'Go away, O man! By God! you are not the thief.' We continued our investigation in the neighbourhood until we were sure that these Banū Ubayriq were the thieves. Then my uncle said to me, 'O my nephew, if you only go to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and inform him about it.'"

Qatādah said: "I came to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and said, 'O Messenger of Allāh, a family among us, a loathsome people went to my uncle, Rufā'ah ibn Zayd, and dug a hole in his attic and took away his arm and food. They should return to us our arm. As for the food, we don't want it.' The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'I will look into this matter.' When Banū Ubayriq heard about it, they went to a man of their clan who was called Usayr ibn 'Urwah, and they told him of this development, and some people of the neighbourhood also joined them. Now, they went to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! Qatādah ibn an-Nu'mān and his uncle proceeded against one of our families who are Muslims of good character, and they have accused them of theft without any evidence of proof.'"

Qatādah continues: "Then I came to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and talked to him. He said, 'You have proceeded against a family who have been described (to me) as Muslims of good character and you have accused them of theft without evidence of proof.'"

Qatādah says: "I came back and I wished that I would have lost some of my wealth but had not talked to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) about it. Then my uncle, Rufā'ah, came to me and asked, 'O my nephew, what (progress) have you made?' I informed him of what the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had told me. My uncle said, 'Allāh is He Whose help to be sought.'"

Without any delay, the verses were revealed: *surely we have revealed the Book to you with the truth that you may judge between people by means of that which Allāh has shown you; and be not advocate on behalf of the treacherous, i.e., Banū Ubayriq. And ask forgiveness of Allāh, i.e., from what you had said to Qatādah, surely Allāh is forgiving, merciful. And do not plead on behalf of those who act unfaithfully to their souls . . . then asks forgiveness of Allāh, He shall find Allāh Forgiving, Merciful. i.e., if they ask forgiveness of Allāh, He will forgive them. And whoever commits a fault or a sin, then accuses of it one innocent, he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a calumny and a manifest sin – it refers to their accusation of Lubayd. And were it not for Allāh's grace upon you and His mercy, a party of them had certainly designed to mislead you – i.e., Usayr ibn 'Urwah and His companions. And they do not mislead but their own souls, and they shall not harm you in any way, and Allāh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know, and Allāh's grace on you is very great. There is no good in most of their secret counsels except (in his) who enjoins charity or*

*goodness or reconciliation between people; and whoever does this seeking Allāh's pleasure, We will give him a mighty reward.* When the verses were revealed the arms were brought to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and he returned them to Rufā'ah.

Qatādah said, "When I brought the arms to my uncle – he was of old age and I used to think that his faith was weak – when I brought the arms to him, he said, 'O my nephew, this is the path of Allāh: Then I understood that his Islam was correct.'"

When the verses were revealed, Bishr went (to Mecca) and joined the polytheists. He stayed with Sulāfah bint Sa'd. Then Allāh revealed the verses: *And whoever acts hostilely to the Messenger after that guidance has become manifest to him, and follows other than the way of the believers, We will turn him to that to which he has (himself) turned and make him enter hell; and it is an evil resort. Surely Allāh does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and He forgives what is besides this to whom He pleases; and whoever associates anything with Allāh, he indeed strays off into a remote error.* When he stayed with Sulāfah, Ḥassān ibn Thābit shot at her some lines of poetry. She took his (i.e., Bishr's) baggage and putting it on her head, went out and threw it in the open valley and said, "You have brought to me the poem of Ḥassān as gift! You were never to bring any good to me." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

**The author says:** This theme is narrated through other chains of narrators also.

The same author writes: Ibn Jarīr has narrated from Ibn Zayd about this verse: He said: "There was a man who stole an iron coat of mail and sword during the days of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and put the blame on a Jew. The Jew said, 'By God! I have not stolen it O Abu 'l-Qāsim! but it has been (wrongly) attributed to me.' There were some neighbours of the thief who claimed that he was blameless and they too accused the Jew. Also they said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! Surely, this Jew is a wicked person. He does not believe in Allāh, nor in your prophethood.' This continued until the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) spoke to the Jew on this matter.

"Thus, Allāh censured the Prophet and revealed: *Surely We have revealed the Book to you with the truth that you may judge between people by means of that which Allāh has shown you; and be not an advocate on behalf of the treacherous. And ask forgiveness of Allāh – about what you have told that Jew – Surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.* Then Allāh turned to his neighbours and said: *Behold! You*

*are they who plead for them in this world's life; but who will plead for them with Allāh on the Resurrection Day or who shall be their protector? Then Allāh gave them a chance of repentance and said: And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his soul, then asks forgiveness of Allāh, he shall find Allāh Forgiving, Merciful. And whoever commits a sin, he only commits it against his own soul; and Allāh is Knowing, Wise – Why have you involved yourselves, O people! in this man's error pleading on his behalf? And whoever commits a fault or a sin, then accuses of it one innocent – even if he is a polytheist: he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a calumny and a manifest sin . . . And whoever acts hostilely to the Messenger after that guidance has become manifest to him and follows other than the way of the believers, We will turn him to that to which he has (himself) turned and make him enter hell; and it is an evil resort. But he refused to avail himself of the repentance which Allāh had offered to him. He went to the polytheists at Mecca. There, he dug hole in a house with intention of theft and the house fell down upon him and he was killed." (ibid.)*

**The author says:** This meaning too is narrated through many chains of narrators with minor differences among them.

The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said, "There is no servant who committed a sin then stood up and performed *wuḍū'* and asked forgiveness of Allāh from his sin but it shall be incumbent on Allāh to forgive him, because He says: *And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his soul, then asks forgiveness of Allāh, he shall find Allāh Forgiving, Merciful.*"

Also he (s.a.w.a.) has said, "Verily Allāh puts the servant in suffering (though He loves him) in order to hear his entreaties." Also he (s.a.w.a.) has said, "Allāh was not to open the door of prayer and shut the door of its acceptance, because He says: *Call Me, I will answer to you.* And He was not to open the door of repentance and shut the door of forgiveness, while He says: *And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his soul, then asks forgiveness of Allāh, he shall find Allāh Forgiving, Merciful.*" (at-Tafsīr, al-'Ayyāshī)

'Abdullāh ibn Ḥamād al-Anṣārī narrates from 'Abdullāh ibn Sinān, that he said: Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) said, "Backbiting is that you say about your brother what is (actually) found in him but Allāh has kept it hidden. But if you say what is not in him, then it comes under the words of Allāh: . . . *he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a calumny and a manifest sin.*" (ibid.)

al-Qummī writes under the verse: *There is no good in most of their secret counsels . . .* : "My father has narrated to me from Ibn Abī 'Umayr from Ḥammād from al-Ḥalabī from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said, 'Verily, Allāh has made *at-tamaḥḥul* obligatory in the Qur'ān.' I asked, 'And what is *at-tamaḥḥul*, may I be made your ransom!?' He said, 'That you should maintain a brighter face than that of your brother (in faith), and have an intent look on him (i.e., you should not turn away your face from him when he consults you); and this is the word of Allāh: *There is no good in most of their secret counsels.*'" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī)

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chains from 'Abdullāh ibn Sinān from Abu 'l-Jārūd that he said, "Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said, 'When I narrate any *ḥadīth* to you, you should ask me (its proof) from the Book of Allāh. Then he said in some of his talks, 'Verily the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has prohibited much talking, squandering the property and too much questioning.' He was asked, 'O son of the Messenger of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, says: *There is no good in most of their secret counsels except (in his) who enjoins charity or goodness nad reconciliation between people*; and He says: *And do not give away your property which Allāh has made for you a (means of) support to the weak of understanding (4:5)*; and He says: *O you who believe! do not put questions about things which if declared to you may trouble you, . . . (5:101).*' (*al-Kāfī*)

Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abdi 'l-Ḥamīd narrates through some reliable persons from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the verse: *There is no good in most of their secret consels except (in his) who enjoins charity or goodness or reconciliation between people*, that goodness means giving loan. (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)

**The author says:** al-Qummī also has narrated it in his *at-Tafsīr* through the same chain and this meaning has also been narrated through Sunnī chains of narrators. In any case, it is based on the flow of the verse and description of a relevant example.

as-Suyūfī writes: Muslim, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasāī, Ibn Mājah and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Sufyān ibn 'Abdillāh ath-Thaqafī that he said, "I said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! give me an order I should hold fast to it in Islam.' He (s.a.w.a.) said, 'Say: "I believe in Allāh," then remain steadfast to it.' I said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! What is the most dreadful thing you fear about me?' He said, 'This.' (and the Messenger of Allāh [s.a.w.a.] caught the tip of his own tongue)." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

**The author says:** There are very numerous traditions condemning excessive talks and praising the silence in the books of the Shī'īs and the Sunnīs.

The same book says: Abū Naṣr as-Sijzī has narrated in *al-Ibānah* from Anas that he said, "A bedouin came to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); the Prophet said to him, 'O bedouin! Verily Allāh has revealed to me in the Qur'ān: *There is no good in most of their secret counsels except* (in his) *who enjoins charity or goodness or reconciliation between people, and whoever does this seeking Allāh's pleasure, We will give him a mighty reward.* O bedouin! the mighty reward is the paradise.' The bedouin said, 'Praise be to Allāh who guided us to Islam.'" (*ibid.*)

The same book writes about the words of Allāh: *And whoever acts hostilely to the Messenger . . .* : at-Tirmidhī and al-Bayhaqī (in his *al-Asmā' wa 'ṣ-Ṣifāt*) have narrated from Ibn 'Umar that he said, "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said, 'Allāh will never gather this *ummah* on error and Allāh's hand is on the *jamā'ah*, and whoever separates (from it) he separates (for entering) into hell.'" (*ibid.*)

Also at-Tirmidhī and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said, "Allāh will never gather my *ummah* (or, this *ummah*) on error and Allāh's hand is on *jamā'ah*." (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** The tradition is well known and al-Hādī (a.s.) has narrated it from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in his letter to the people of Ahwāz as has been quoted in vol.3 of *Bihāru 'l-anwār*. The meaning of this tradition has been explained in the preceding commentary.

Ḥarīz has narrated from some of our companions from the fifth and sixth Imām (a.s.) that he said, "When the Commander of the Believers (s.a.) was in Kūfah, the people came to him and said, 'Appoint for us an imām who will lead us (in *tarāwīh*) in the month of Ramaḍān.' The Imām (a.s.) said, 'No' and forbade them to pray it with the *jamā'ah*. When night came, they began saying, 'Weep in Ramaḍān, alas for Ramaḍān.' Then al-Ḥārith al-A'war came to the Imām (a.s.) with some people and said, 'O Commander of the Believers, people are raising a hue and cry and they have not liked your talk.' At this juncture, the Imām (a.s.) said, 'Leave them to do what they like. Whoever wants should lead them in prayer.' Then he recited: *Whoever follows other than the way of the believers, We will*



*turn him to which he has (himself) turned and make him enter hell; and it is an evil resort." (at-Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyāshī)*

It is written in *ad-Durru ‘l-manthūr* about words of Allāh, the Almighty: *and who is truer of word than Allāh*: al-Bayhaqī has narrated in *ad-Dalāil* from ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Āmir (*inter alia* describing the journey of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) to Tabūk):

"Then (the Messenger of Allāh [s.a.w.a.]) arrived at Tabūk and praised Allāh and glorified Him as is His due, and then he said, (after the praise of Allāh): 'Verily the most truthful talk is the Book of Allāh; the most reliable grip is the word of piety; the best of the religions is the religion of Ibrāhīm; the best custom is the custom of Muḥammad; the noblest talk is the remembrance of Allāh; the best story is this Qur’ān; the best affair is the determined one and the worst affairs are the innovated ones; the most excellent guidance is that of the Prophets; the noblest death is martyrdom; the darkest blindness is going astray after guidance; the best knowledge is that which gives benefit; the best guidance is that which is acted upon; the most evil blindness is the blindness of the heart; upper hand is better than the lower hand,<sup>19</sup> that little which satisfies is better than the abundance which makes one forgetful; the worst apology is (the one offered) when death arrives; the worst remorse is the one (shown on) the Day of Resurrection. Some people don't come to prayer except near the end and some don't remember Allāh but they talk nonsense; the biggest sin is the lying tongue; the best wealth is one's self reliance; the best provision is the piety; the pinnacle of the wisdom is the fear of Allāh, the mighty, the Great; the best thing established in the hearts is certainty. To entertain doubt is a sort of disbelief; to lament for dead is an act of the *jāhiliyyah* (Ignorance); embezzlement is altogether in the hell; hoarded treasure is (the instrument of) branding with the fire; poetry is among the musical instruments of Satan; wine is the vessel of sin; women are the snares of Satan; youth is a branch of lunacy; the most evil earning is interest; and the most wicked food is the property of the orphan. The blissful is he who learns lesson from (conditions of) the others; wretched is the one who becomes wretched in the womb of his mother; the resort of every one of you is a place of four arms (grave); the affairs (are decided) by their ends; the worst thinking is that of falsity. Everything which is to come is near; to abuse a believer is immorality; to fight him is disbelief; eating his flesh (backbiting him) is the disobedience to Allāh; and the sanctity of

<sup>19</sup> i.e., the hand that gives is better than the hand that receives. (*tr.*)

his property is like that of his blood. He who (falsely) sears by Allāh, He will refute him; he who forgives will be forgiven; he who pardons, Allāh will pardon him; he who controls his anger, Allāh will give him good reward; he who is patient in misfortune, Allāh will recompense him. He who hankers for good reputation, Allāh makes him disreputable. He who keeps patience, Allāh multiplies (the reward) for him. He who disobeys Allāh, He will give him punishment. O Allāh! forgive me and my *ummah* (he said it three times); I seek pardon of Allāh for me and for you."

Muḥammad ibn Yūnus has narrated through some of his companions from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.); also Jābir has narrated from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.), about the words of Allāh: *And most certainly I will bid them so that they shall alter Allāh's creation*, that the Imāms said, "Allāh's creation means the commandments of Allāh." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyāshī)

In the same book, Jābir narrates from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) about the same words of the Qur’ān that he said, "It is Allāh's religion".

**The author says:** Both traditions give the same meaning and it is as we have explained in the Commentary that Allāh's creation means the natural religion.

The words of Allāh: *And bid them so that they shall slit the ears of the cattle*, have been explained in *Majma‘u ‘l-bayān* that they will cut the ears from its base; and it is written there that this meaning has been narrated from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.).

Muḥammad ibn Muslim narrates from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said, "When the verse was revealed: *whoever does evil, he shall be requited with it*, some companions of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'How hard is this verse!' the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said to them, 'Are not you afflicted in your properties, your offsprings and in yourselves?' They said, 'Certainly.' He (s.a.w.a.) said, '(This is) through which writes good deeds for you and erases the bad deeds.'" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyāshī)

**The author says:** This meaning is narrated through many chains from the companions in the Sunnī books of traditions.

as-Suyūfī writes: Aḥmad, al-Bukhārī, Muslim and at-Tirmidhī have narrated from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī that he said, "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'No believer is afflicted by hardship or sickness, grief or sorrow, trouble or sadness – even a thorn which

pricks him – but Allāh grants remission to his faults." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

**The author says:** This theme has been narrated through numerous chains from the Prophet and the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.).

aṣ-Ṣadūq has narrated through his chains from al-Ḥusayn ibn Khālid that Abu 'l-Ḥasan ar-Riḍā (a.s.) said, "I heard my father narrating from his father (a.s.) that he said, 'Surely Allāh took Ibrāhīm as a friend because he never returned anyone (empty handed) and never asked anyone (for his needs) other than Allāh, the mighty, the Great.'" (*'Uyūnu 'l-akhbār*)

**The author says:** This is the most correct tradition about the meaning of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) as the friend of Allāh because it fits perfectly with the literal meaning of the word; الخُلَّةُ (*al-khullah*) means need; therefore your *khalīl* (friend) is the one who asks his needs only from you. And there are other narrations giving other reasons for his title.

\* \* \* \* \*

وَيَسْتَفْتُونَكَ فِي النِّسَاءِ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ  
 فِيهِنَّ وَمَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ فِي يَتِمَّى النِّسَاءِ  
 الَّتِي لَا تُؤْتُونَهُنَّ مَا كُتِبَ لَهُنَّ وَتَرْغَبُونَ أَنْ تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ  
 وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الْوُلْدَانِ وَأَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلْيَتَامَىٰ  
 بِالْقِسْطِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِهِ عَلِيمًا ﴿١٢٧﴾  
 وَإِنْ امْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلَا جُنَاحَ  
 عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يَصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ وَأُحْضِرَتِ  
 الْأَنْفُسُ الشُّحَّ وَإِنْ تُحْسِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ  
 بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا  
 بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمِيلِ  
 فَتَذَرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ وَإِنْ تُصْلِحُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ  
 كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَإِنْ يَنْفَرَا بَعْضُ اللَّهِ كُفْلًا  
 مِنْ سَعْتِهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ وَسِعًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي

السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ  
 مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ  
 مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَنِيًّا حَمِيدًا ﴿١٣١﴾  
 وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٣٢﴾  
 إِنْ يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ وَيَأْتِ بِآخَرِينَ وَكَانَ  
 اللَّهُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ قَدِيرًا ﴿١٣٣﴾ مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ  
 اللَّهِ ثَوَابُ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ﴿١٣٤﴾

*And they ask you a decision about women, say: "Allāh makes known to you His decision concerning them, and that which is recited to you in the Book concerning female orphans whom you do not give what is appointed for them while you desire to marry them, and concerning the weak among children, and that you should deal towards orphans with equity; and whatever good you do, Allāh surely knows it" (127). And if a woman fears ill-usage or desertation on the part of her husband, there is no blame on them, if they effect a reconciliation between them, and reconciliation is better, and avarice has been made to be present in the (people's) minds; and if you do good (to others) and guard (against evil), then surely Allāh is aware of what you do (128). And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you may wish (it), but be not disinclined (from one) with total disinclination; so that you leave her as it were in suspense; and if you effect a reconciliation and guard (against evil), then surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful (129). And if they separate, Allāh will render them both free from want out of His ampleness, and Allāh is Ample-giving, Wise (130). And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's, and certainly We enjoined those who were given the Book before you and*

(We enjoin) *you too that you should be careful* (of your duty to) *Allāh; and if you disbelieve, then surely whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's and Allāh is Self-sufficient, Praise-worthy* (131). *And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's, and Allāh is sufficient as a protector* (132). *If He pleases, He can make you pass away, O people! and bring others; and Allāh has the power to do this* (133). *Whoever desires the reward of this world, then with Allāh is the reward of this world and the hereafter; and Allāh is Hearing, Seeing* (134).

\* \* \* \* \*

### COMMENTARY

These verses are in conjunction with the ones in the beginning of the chapter which cover the subjects concerning women like marriage, prohibited degrees and inheritance, etc. Keeping it in view, it appears that these verses were revealed after those previous ones when the people asked the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) about the affairs affecting the women. The verses in the beginning of the chapter had resurrected the rights of women in property and social interactions, etc., which the people had previously killed.

Allāh orders the Prophet to tell them in reply to their various queries that the laws establishing their rights on men are Divine decisions about which the Prophet has no say; not only that, but what is recited to them in the Book about the female orphans is also Divine order in which the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has no say; not only that, but Allāh orders them to deal with all the orphans with equity. Then come some rules concerning the discord and dispute between a woman and her husband which are generally found in every society.

**QUR'ĀN:** *And they ask you a decision about women, say: "Allāh makes known to you His decision concerning them:* ar-Rāghib has said: "*al-Futyā and al-fatwā (الفتوي ، الفتيا)* means reply to difficult rulings; and they say: 'I asked him a decision so he replied to me in this way'."

It is understood from various usages of this word that it means a man's reply concerning difficult affairs according to his opinion based

on his *ijtihād*; or means the opinion itself concerning difficult matters, as is seen from this verse where *al-fatwā* has been attributed to Allāh.

Although this verse may possibly be explained in various ways (based on different analyses of the full verse); yet, if we join this verse to those in the beginning of the chapter which are also concerned with women's problems, it will be seen that this verse was revealed after those first ones. It means that their enquiries were concerned in a general way with the laws regarding women which Islam had legislated with which the people were not familiar in the days of *jāhiliyyah*; those laws were exclusively concerned with women's rights regarding inheritance and marriage. Those questions were not about the orphan girls as this subject is not general; it is limited to a certain group and the rule about them has been laid down by the next sentence: *And that which is recited to you in the Book concerning female orphans whom you do not give what is appointed for them while you desire to marry them.* In short, the enquiry was about those things which cover the whole womenfolk, e.g., inheritance.

Consequently, the words: "Say: 'Allāh makes known to you His decision concerning them . . .'", refers to verses in the beginning of the chapter and shows that decision is reserved for Allāh and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) doesn't have any authority in this respect. The meaning is: They ask you to give them your decision concerning the women. Say: The right to give decision belongs to Allāh and He has given you His decision when He revealed the verses at the beginning of the chapter.

**QUR'ĀN:** *"And that which is recited to you in the Book concerning female orphans whom you do not give what is appointed for them while you desire to marry them, and concerning the weak among children:* As described above, the context shows that the rules for female orphans and the weak children has been added here because they have some link with the rules concerning women. Obviously, they were not included in their original enquiry which was limited to the women's affairs only. The sentence, "and that which is recited to you", is in conjunction with the pronoun, "them", preceding it; such conjunction has been allowed by al-Farrā', although other grammarians do not agree with him. Accordingly, the verse, "and that which is recited to you in the Book concerning female orphans . . ." refers to those rules and ideas which were revealed at the beginning of the chapter. *at-Tilāwah* (التلاوة = recital) denotes recital of the words as well as description of the meaning of the words. The meaning is: Say:

'Allāh makes known to you His decision about the laws which are recited to you in the Book concerning female orphans.

Some people take the word *aliftā'* in the meaning of explanation. According to them the meaning will be: Say: 'Allāh explains to you that which is recited to you in the Book.'

Many people have given various other constructions to these two sentences, but none of them is free from arbitrariness and inaccuracy which are not suitable for the Divine speech. For example, someone has said that the phrase, "that which is recited to you", is in conjunction with the name, 'Allāh'; or with the implied pronoun in the phrase, 'makes known'. Some have said that it is in conjunction with, 'women', in the first sentence which says: *a decision about women*. Another one has said that the word, 'and', in 'and that which is recited', begins a new sentence, it has no connection with the preceding verse; according to them, "that which is recited to you", is the subject and, "in the Book", is its predicate. Still, others have said that '*wa*' in the verse '*wa mā yutlā 'alaykum*' is for oath and the verse concerning female orphans explains the words concerning them in the preceding sentence. According to him, the meaning will be: Say: 'Allāh makes known to you His decision – I swear with that which is recited to you in the Book – concerning female orphans . . . ' There is no need to point out the absurdities of these explanations.

"Whom you do not give what is appointed for them while you desire to marry them": The speech describes the female orphans and points to their deprivations which were the main cause why Allāh laid down the rules which were revealed earlier. Those just rules abrogated the prevalent customs and removed the hardships which the women were suffering. It was their custom that they used to take female orphans as their wards together with their properties; if she was beautiful, they married her and enjoyed both her beauty and her property. If, on the other hand, she turned out to be ugly or of plain features, they would not themselves marry her nor would they allow her to marry another man. In this way, they appropriated her property.

It shows that:

**First:** The words of Allāh, "what is appointed for them", refer to the natural demands ingrained in the creation and that is the Divine Decree. The creation and the ingrained instincts pave for the human beings the path of their lives. It is that decree which has been appointed for him/her and tells him/her to marry when he/she reaches a certain age and which gives him/her the freedom to manage his/her



property the way he/she likes. To prevent him/her from marrying or from managing his/her own property is depriving him/her from what Allāh has appointed for him/her at the beginning of the creation.

**Second:** "while you desire to marry them": It actually means, 'while you are averse to marry them'. Therefore, the preposition 'an (عَنْ = off, away from) is omitted but understood here. This omission is understood from the preceding phrase, "whom you do not give what is appointed for them", and the following words, "and concerning the weak among children".

"the weak among children" is in conjunction with, "female orphans". They used to neglect orphaned children and deprive them from inheritance on the pretext that they were unable to ride and could not fight in defence of the women.

**QUR'ĀN: "and that you should deal towards orphans with equity :** This is in conjunction with, *His decision concerning them*. The meaning is: Say: 'Allāh makes known to you His decision that you should deal towards orphans with equity. This widens the circle of this rule from a limited group, that is, female orphans and weak children to all the orphans and in all their affairs, be it their property or other matters.

**QUR'ĀN: "and whatever good you do, Allāh surely knows it" :** It is a reminder to them that the rules which Allāh has imposed on them about the women and the orphans are for their own good and Allāh knows it. This encourages them to act on these rules because it is for their own good; and also warns them against disobeying the rules because surely Allāh knows what they do.

**QUR'ĀN: *And if a woman fears ill-usage or desertion on the part of her husband, there is no blame on them, if they effect a reconciliation between them, and reconciliation is better; and avarice has been made to present in the (people's) minds; and if you do good (to others) and guard (against evil), then surely Allāh is aware of what you do* :** This subject was not included in their enquiry but it has a sort of relevance with it, just like the order coming in the next verse: *And you have it not in your power to do justice*.

The order is given when the woman feels fear of mistreatment or desertion – and not the actual appearance of mistreatment or desertion – because attempts of reconciliation should be undertaken as soon as some symptoms and signs of ill-usage raise their head. The

context shows that reconciliation here should take place when the wife forgoes some or all of her matrimonial rights in order to affect love, accord and genial relations for avoiding separation; and reconciliation is better.

"and avarice has been made to be present in the (people's) minds": *ash-Shuḥḥ* (الشُّحُّ = miserliness, avarice); it means that avarice has been ingrained in the human nature in order to guard his interests and avoid loss. Thus, every person looks after his own interest; a woman does not want to leave any of her matrimonial rights like dress, maintenance, accomodation and conjugal relationship; and the man does not show any affection and harmony when he wants to separate from the wife and does not like living with her. Therefore, there is no blame on them if they affect a reconciliation between them by forgoing some of their rights.

"and if you do good (to others) and guard (against evil) then surely Allāh is aware of what you do": It is an admonition to men that they should not deviate from the path of doing good and avoiding evil; they should always keep in mind that Allāh knows whatever they are doing; they should not oppress the women in domestic life and should not make them so frustrated that they forego their due rights just to keep peace in the family.

**QUR'ĀN:** *And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you may wish (it), but be not disinclined (from one) with total disinclination . . .* : It gives further explanation of the order given in the beginning of the chapter where it was said: *But if you fear that you will not do justice (between them), then (marry) only one.* The same ideal of justice is seen in the preceding verse where it says: *And if you do good (to others) and guard (against evil) then surely Allāh is aware of what you do.* Obviously, this preceding verse contains a shade of threatening. Thus, man is bewildered as to how to affect real justice between the wives. Justice is the exact middle between the two extremes and to pinpoint it exactly is extremely difficult; especially so, because the relationship between the spouses is that of love and one does not have much control on the inclinations of the heart. Therefore, Allāh explains here that justice between the wives in its true sense – to stand exactly in the middle of the extremes – is beyond human power even if one may wish it. What a man is obliged to do is that he should not be totally inclined to one of them, leaving the other one as it were in suspense; that is, she does not feel as if she has a husband because she gets no attention from him, nor is

she free of marriage so that she may marry someone else and go her own way. It is *wājib* (necessary) on the husband to do justice between his wives, that is, he should treat all of them in equal manner and should fulfil their rights without excessiveness. And it is *sunnah* for him to do good to all of them without showing any dislike to any of them and without subjecting any of them to ill-treatment; this was the behaviour of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) with his wives.

The proviso, "but be not disinclined (from one) with total disinclination, so that you leave her as it were in suspense", proves that the preceding sentence: *And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you may wish (it)*, doesn't mean that man cannot do justice between his wives at all, as some people have thought. And joining this misconception with the divine words: *but if you fear that you will not do justice (between) them, then (marry) only one*, they have claimed that Islam does not allow polygamy!

The proviso clearly shows that what has been negated is the real justice in which there is no excess at all and man stands in the exact middle; and what is allowed and made lawful is the practical justice in which minor inclinations are tolerated. Apart from that, the *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet and the polygamy practised before the eyes of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), as well as the custom prevalent among the Muslims without any break since that time is enough to remove such erroneous impressions. Apart from that, to think that the divine words: *then marry such (other) women as seen good to you, two and three and four*, are merely imaginary suppositions which have no practical application, will bring down the Divine words to the level of a riddle.

It should be noted that the words: *And if you affect a reconciliation and guard (against evil), then surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful*, encourage the men with emphasis that whenever any signs of discord and dispute appear, they should try to bring reconciliation; then it goes on to say that it is a part of piety and with piety comes divine forgiveness and mercy. In the preceding verse, it was stated that reconciliation is better and they were exhorted to do good and guard against evil; then comes this verse which puts emphasis over emphasis.

**QUR'ĀN:** *And if they separate, Allāh will render them both free from want out of His amplenness, and Allāh is Ample-giving, Wise.:* If the man and the woman separate by divorce, Allāh will make them both free from want out of His amplenness. Making them free from want

in this context means that Allāh will give them this freedom in all matters connected with matrimony, like harmony, intimacy and the wife's maintenance and clothing, etc. Allāh has not reserved either party for the other one; so, it is not that if they separate from each other, they will not get another spouse in their long life; rather it is a natural custom which is wide-spread among all the human beings and everyone by nature is inclined to marry.

The words: "and Allāh is Ample-giving, Wise. And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's", give the reason of the statement "Allāh will render them both free from want out of His Ampleness".

**QUR'ĀN:** *And certainly We enjoined those who were given the Book before you and (We enjoin) you too that you should be careful (of your duty to) Allāh; . . .* : It puts emphasis on the call addressed to them that they should pay special consideration to piety in all the stages and in every situation of their matrimonial life. It also shows that going against piety is being ungrateful to Divine favours; the piety which is acquired by Allāh's obedience proves one's gratefulness to Divine favours. Alternatively, we may say that it is only because of disbelief that one discards Allāh's fear: it may be open disbelief (as in the case of unbelievers and polytheists) or hidden disbelief (as in the case those believers who indulge in Allāh's disobedience).

The above explanation makes clear the words of Allāh, *and if you disbelieve, then surely whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's, and Allāh is Self-sufficient, Praise-worthy*. The meaning is: If you do not remember what We have enjoined you and those who were before you and if you neglect this order and do not acquire piety – and it is disbelief in Allāh or emanates from disbelief in Allāh – it will not harm Allāh at all. Allāh is not in need of you or of your piety, and surely whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's, and Allāh is Self-sufficient, Praise-worthy.

**Question:** Why have the words: *Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's*, repeated three times in three consecutive verses

**Reply:** In the first instance, it explains the reasons of preceding sentence: *and Allāh is Ample-giving, Wise*. The second instance is a response to the conditional clause: *and if you disbelieve*. It means, if you disbelieve, then Allāh is not in need of you; it is made more clear by the ending phrase: *and Allāh is Self-sufficient, Praise-worthy*. The

third sentence starts a new topic and gives a sort of reason to the Divine words: *If He pleases, He can make you pass away.*

**QUR'ĀN:** *And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's, and Allāh is sufficient as a protector* : We have repeatedly explained the meaning of the ownership of Allāh. He is the Protector who manages His servants' affairs and enough is He as a protector. He does not need any help in His work. If He was not pleased with the deeds of a people and was angry with their behaviour, He could easily make them pass away and bring other people in their place, or He could pull them behind and let others go ahead of them. This meaning, which is pointed out by the context, establishes a connection between this verse and the next one: *If He pleases, He can make you pass away O people!*

**QUR'ĀN:** *If He pleases, He can make you pass away, O people! and bring others; and Allāh has the power to do this* : The preceding verse gives a clarion call for adherence to piety which Allāh has enjoined this *ummah* and those who were before them from the People of the Book. In this context, it is clear that the declaration that Allāh does not need anything is closely related to the order of piety. The meaning, therefore, will be like this: Allāh has enjoined you all to adhere to piety, so be careful or your duty towards Allāh. If you disbelieve, then Allāh is Self-sufficient and He is the Owner of everything. He can manage it in any way He pleases, and for any purpose He pleases. If He pleases that He should be worshipped and people should adhere to piety but you did not follow His commands in a proper way, then Allāh has the power to keep you behind and let others to precede you. Those people will do what Allāh is pleased with; and clearly Allāh has power to do so. Accordingly, the verse describes the possibility of exchanging unpious people with the pious ones. al-Bayḍāwī has narrated a tradition in his *tafsīr* that when this verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) patted his hand on the back of Salmān and said, " Surely they are his people." This tradition supports the meaning given by us; and you should ponder on it.

Some exegetes have said that probably it means: If Allāh pleases, He will destroy you all and bring other people in your place or other creation in place of human beings. But this meaning is not supported by the context. Of course, this explanation could be given for the verse: *Do you not see that Allāh created the heavens and the*

*earth with truth If He pleases He will take you off and bring a new creation. And this is not difficult for Allāh (14:19-20).*

**QUR'ĀN:** *Whoever desires the reward of this world, then with Allāh is the reward of this world and the hereafter; and Allāh is Hearing, Seeing.*: It is another statement which exposes the error of him who discards piety and neglects Divine enjoinder, thinking that he only needs this world's reward and booty. In fact, such a person has fallen into confusion, because the reward of this world and of the hereafter, both are with Allāh, and in His hand. So, why should a man concentrate on the lower item of the two? Why should he not strive for the higher reward or both of them together? This meaning has been given by others; but more apparently, the meaning is this, and Allāh knows better: Surely the reward of this world and the hereafter and the felicity of both together is with Allāh. Therefore, man should strive to be nearer to Him, even he who wants only the reward and felicity of this world, because man cannot achieve felicity without fear of Allāh and piety which can be obtained only through the Divine religion which He has ordained. Religion is the exclusive path to the real felicity and happiness. How can one get any reward unless Allāh gives and issues it to him, and Allāh is Hearing, Seeing.

### TRADITIONS

as-Suyūfī says: Ibn Jarīr and Ibnu 'l-Mundhir have narrated from Sa'īd ibn Jubayr that he said: "Inheritance was not given except to a matured man who could manage and look after the property; children and women were not given any share in inheritance. When the verses of inheritance were revealed in the chapter of 'The Women', it proved very difficult to the people. They said, 'What! will a child inherit one who cannot manage the property? and the women who are exactly in the same position? will they inherit as a man inherits?' They hoped that something will come down from the heavens to rectify the situation. They kept waiting. When they saw that nothing was happening, they said, 'If it was established then it would become an unavoidable obligation.' So, they decided to enquire further. They asked the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); then Allāh sent down the verse: *And they ask you a decision about women, say, 'Allāh makes known to you His decision concerning them, and that which is recited to you in the Book*

*concerning female orphans who you do not give what is appointed for them while you desire to marry them . . . "* (ad-Durru 'l-manthūr)

‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd and Ibn Jarīr have narrated from Ibrāhīm that he said about this verse: "If an orphaned girl was ugly, they did not give her anything from the inheritance and prevented her from marrying until when she died, they would take her inheritance. Therefore, Allāh revealed this verse." (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** These connotations have been narrated from numerous Shī‘ī and Sunnī chains, some of which was given at the beginning of the chapter.

The words: *whom you do not give what is appointed for them*, mean what has been appointed for them in inheritance. at-Ṭabrisī has said that this meaning is narrated from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.). (*Majma‘u ‘l-bayān*)

al-Qummī has said that the verse: *If a woman fears ill-usage or desertion on the part of her husband . . .*, was revealed about the daughter of Muḥammad ibn Maslamah. She was the wife of Rāfi‘ ibn Khadīj, and her age had advanced. He married another young woman and she looked more attractive to him than the daughter of Muḥammad ibn Maslamah. So, she said to him: "Don't I find you turning away from me and preferring her?" Rāfi‘ said: "She is a young woman and is more attractive. If you wish, you may agree on this arrangement that she is given two or three days with me, and you have one day." The daughter of Muḥammad ibn Maslamah refused. So, he gave her one divorce. Then he gave her another divorce. Still, she said, "By Allāh, I will never agree unless you treat both of us in equal manner." (Allāh says: *and avarice has been made to be present in the (people's) minds.*) And the daughter of Muḥammad ibn Maslamah was not ready to forgo her share and persisted in her demand. Then Rāfi‘ told her that either she should agree or he would give her the third divorce. She did not like separation from her husband and agreed. She effected the reconciliation as described. So, Allāh said: *there is no blame on them if they effect a reconciliation between them, and reconciliation is better.* When she agreed and settled down, he could not do justice between them. Then the verse was revealed: *and you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you many wish (it), but be not disinclined (from one) with total disinclination; so that you leave her as it were in suspense.* It is not proper that you should attend to one wife and leave the other in suspense as though she is neither a widow nor married. When the

woman agrees and accepts the terms which the husband had offered for reconciliation, then there is no blame on the husband or the wife to live according to the agreed terms. If she does not agree to forgo any of her rights, then he should either treat them equally or divorce her. There is no third alternative. (*at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī)

**The author says:** as-Suyūfī has narrated it in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from Mālik, 'Abdu 'r-Razzāq, 'Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and al-Ḥākim (who has confirmed this tradition as correct).

as-Suyūfī has said: "aṭ-Ṭayālisī, Ibn Abī Shaybah, Ibn Rāhawayh, 'Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib that he was asked about this verse, and he said: "It is about a man who has two wives; one has become old or is ugly; so he wants to separate from her; she offers a compromise that he should remain with her for one night and with the other one several nights and should not divorce her. As long as it is done on her own free will, there is no difficulty in it. If she returns, he will treat both of them equally." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain of narrators from al-Ḥalabī, from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "I asked the Imām about the words of Allāh: *And if a woman fears ill-usage or desertion on the part of her husband*. The Imām said, 'It is about a woman who is married to a man and he dislikes her and says to her, "I want to divorce you." She says to him, "Don't do it, I hate that you should make me an object of ridicule in the society. Instead, take away my night and do with it whatever you want. If there is any other thing, that will also be given to you and let me be." This is the meaning of the words of Allāh: *there is no blame on them if they effect a reconciliation between them*, and this is the reconciliation.'" (*al-Kāfī*)

**The author says:** There are other traditions of the same meaning narrated in *al-Kāfī* and *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī.

al-Qummī narrates about the Divine words: *and avarice has been made to be present in the (people's) minds*, that he said, "Avarice is ingrained in nature; some things she chooses to keep, some things she forgoes." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī)

Hishām ibn Sālim narrates from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you may wish (it)*, that he said, "It refers to love." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)



al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain of narrators from Nūḥ ibn Shu‘bah and Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan that they said, "Ibn Abi 'l-'Awjā' asked Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam and said, 'Is not Allāh Wise?' He said, 'Certainly; He is the Most Wise.' He said, 'Then tell me about the Divine words: *then marry such (other) women as seem good to you, two and three and four; but if you fear that you will not do justice (between them), then (marry) only one.* Is it not a decisive order?' He said, 'Certainly.' Then he said, 'Now, tell me about the Divine words: *And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you may wish (it), but be not disinclined (from one) with total disinclination; so that you leave her as it were in suspenses.* Does a wise one talk like this?' Hishām could not reply. So, he went to Medina to Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.). The Imām (a.s.) said, '(You have come) when it is neither the time of *ḥajj* nor of *'umrah!*' Hishām said, 'Yes, may I be made your ransom! I have come for a problem which has kept me worried. Ibn Abi 'l-'Awjā' asked me a question and I could not reply him.' The Imām (a.s.) said, 'What is that ?' Hishām narrated the full story.

"Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) said to him, 'As for the verse: *then marry such (other) women as seem good to you, two and three and four; but if you fear that you will not do justice (between them) then (marry) only one,* it speaks about the maintenance; and as for the verse: *And you have not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you may wish (it), but be not disinclined (from one) with total disinclination; so that you leave her as it were in suspense,* it speaks about love.'

"When Hishām went to Ibn Abi 'l-'Awjā' and told him the reply, he said, 'By Allāh, it is not from you.'" (*al-Kāfi*)

**The author says:** A similar *ḥadīth* has been narrated from al-Qummī which says: An atheist asked Abū Ja‘far al-Aḥwal exactly the same question. He went to Medina and asked Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) for the reply and the Imām (a.s.) replied him exactly in the same way. Abū Ja‘far returned to the man and gave him the reply, on hearing which he said, "This you have brought from Ḥijāz."

aṭ-Ṭabrisī explains the Qur’ānic words: *so that you leave her as it were in suspense,* in this way: You leave the one you are disinclined towards her as if she is neither married to a husband nor is free from marriage. He has said that this meaning is narrated from Abū Ja‘far and Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.). (*Majma‘u 'l-bayān*)

The same book states about the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he used to distribute (provisions, time, etc.) among his wives, and then used to pray: "O Allāh! This is my distribution of the things which I possess; do not blame me for the thing which you do possess and I do not." (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** This tradition has been narrated in Sunnī books through several chains. The phrase, "which you do possess and I do not", refers to the love. Yet there is something wrong in this tradition. Allāh is far above blaming someone for some thing not in his possession, not in his control. He Himself has said: *Allāh does not lay on any soul a burden except to the extent to which He has granted it* (66:8); and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was fully cognizant of His Lord's dignity to ask Him to bring into existence a thing already existing.

al-Kulaynī has narrated through his chain of narrators from Ibn Abī Laylā that he said: "Narrated to me 'Āṣim ibn Ḥamīd and said, 'I was with Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) when a man came to him and complained of his poverty. The Imām (a.s.) ordered him to get married. 'Āṣim said that (after that) the man's poverty became more serious; so he came to Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.). The Imām (a.s.) enquired about his condition; and he said that the poverty had increased. The Imām (a.s.) said, 'Now, separate (from her).' So, he divorced her. 'Āṣim reports that he again came to the Imām (a.s.) who asked him how did he do. He said, 'I have become rich and my condition is very good.' Then Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) said, 'I told you to do two things which Allāh had ordered. Allāh has said: *And marry those among you who are single and those who are fit among your male slaves and your female slaves; if they are needy, Allāh will make them free from want out of his grace; and Allāh is Ample-giving, Knowing* (24:32). And He has also said: *And if they separate, Allāh will render them both free from want out of His ampleness* (4:130).

\* \* \* \* \*

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ  
 وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا  
 أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَن تَعْدِلُوا وَإِن  
 تَلَوْتُمْ أَوْ لَمْ تُنْقِطُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٣٥﴾

*O you who believe! be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness for Allāh's sake, though it may be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives; if he be rich or poor, Allāh is nearer to them both in compassion; therefore do not follow (your) low desires, lest you deviate; and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allāh is aware of what you do (135).*

\* \* \* \* \*

#### COMMENTARY

**QUR'ĀN:** *O you who believe! be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness for Allāh's sake:* *al-Qist* (القِسْطُ = justice). To stand with justice means to enforce it, to maintain it. Maintainers of justice are those who fully and perfectly establish justice without deviating from, or inclining against, it because of some low desire or sentiment, fear, or greed, or other such factors.

This virtue is the most perfect cause and nearest factor for following the truth and protecting it from getting lost. One of its corollaries is adherence to truth in giving evidence.

This verse has been revealed to describe the rule of evidence, but it has started with talk of justice, and then it proceeds to the rule of evidence. In other words, first a general ideal has been described and then it focuses on one of its aspects. It is as though it says: 'You should be bearers of witness for Allāh's sake but it will be difficult for you unless you become maintainers of justice.' So, you should be maintainers of justice in order to become bearers of witness for Allāh's sake.

The words, "bearers of witness for Allāh's sake", show the purpose of the action; bear witness so that your witness should be for Allāh, as Allāh has said: *And give testimony for Allāh* (63:2). An evidence will be for the sake of Allāh when it is given in truth for the sake of demonstrating the truth and reviving it, as is clear from the sentence: *therefore do not follow (your) low desires, lest you deviate.*

**QUR'ĀN:** *though it may be against your ownelves or (your) parents or near relatives* : Even if the evidence goes against your own interest or against the interest of your parents or near relatives, it should not prompt you to alter the evidence or hide it. Giving evidence against oneself or against one's parents or relatives means that the evidence, when given, will harm the testifier or his parents or relatives. It makes no difference whether the party which would suffer damage is the one against whom the evidence is given directly; for example, if there is a case between his father and someone else and he testifies against his own father; or the damage may reach them indirectly.

**QUR'ĀN:** *If he be rich or poor, Allāh is nearer to them both in compassion:* The dual pronoun of "them both" refers to "rich or poor" because the same person can be rich at one time and poor at another; thus the conjunction, 'or' brings the two alternatives together just for describing the situation. There is no plurality in actual fact. This is what has been described by some exegetes. The meaning: Allāh is nearer to the rich in his wealth and to the poor in his poverty. What the verse emphasises is that the wealth of the rich should not cause you to deviate from the truth and incline to him; nor should the poverty of the poor incite you to try to better his condition by twisting the truth in his favour. You should bear witness for the sake of Allāh and then leave Him to look at the rich and the poor. He is nearer to them and more Merciful to their condition. It is a reflection of His Mercy that He has obliged you to follow the truth compulsorily and has enjoined you

to maintain the justice; when the justice is maintained and the truth becomes manifest, then the humanity will enjoy felicity and it will strengthen the rich and improve the condition of the poor.

A rich or poor may benefit in one or two cases from an evidence which is twisted or hidden, but in the long run it makes the truth feable and the justice dead. It gives life to oppression and strengthen to falsehood and injustice; and this is the incurable disease which destroys the humanity.

**QUR'ĀN: *therefore do not follow (your) low desires, lest you deviate:*** There is a danger that you will deviate from truth and justice by following your low desire and by not giving the evidence for the sake of Allāh. The words, "lest you deviate", describe the reason of this order. It may also be translated as, do not follow your low desires to deviate from truth.

**QUR'ĀN: *and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allāh is aware of what you do:*** Swerving with evidence means twisting it, and turning aside means not giving evidence and hiding it.

Some people have recited this sentence "*wa in talū*" (وَإِنْ تَلَوْا); in that case, the meaning will be, if you are given responsibility of giving evidence and you fulfil it or turn aside; in both cases, surely Allāh is aware of what you do and He will give you its recompense.

## TRADITIONS

Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) has said, "A believer has seven rights on another believer. The most obligatory of them is that the man should tell truth, even if it goes against his own self or against his parents, he should not deviate from truth for their sake." Then the Imām (a.s.) recited: *therefore do not follow (your) low desires, lest you deviate, and if you swerve or turn aside, from the truth.* (at-Tafsīr, al-Qummī)

**The author says:** This tradition generalises the meaning of evidence to include general truthfulness. at-Ṭabrisī says: It is said that the last phrase means: If you change the evidence or hide it; and he has said that it is narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.).

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يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا

ءَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ءَوَالِكُنَّبِ الَّذِي نَزَلَ  
عَلَى رَسُولِهِ ءَوَالِكُنَّبِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ  
بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ءَوَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ  
ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١٣٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ ءَامَنُوا  
ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ ءَزْدَادُوا كُفْرًا لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ  
سَبِيلًا ﴿١٣٧﴾ بَشَرِ الْمُنْفِقِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٣٨﴾ الَّذِينَ  
يَتَّخِذُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَيْبَسُّنَا  
عِنْدَهُمُ الْعِزَّةَ فَإِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٣٩﴾ وَقَدْ نَزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي  
الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا  
تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ءَإِنَّكُمْ إِذًا مِثْلَهُمْ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنْفِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٤٠﴾  
الَّذِينَ يَتَرَبَّصُونَ بِكُمْ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِتْحٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ

نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ وَإِنْ كَانَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نَصِيبٌ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَسْتَحِذْ  
 عَلَيْكُمْ وَنَمْنَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ  
 الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤١﴾  
 إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى  
 الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كَسَالَى يُرَاءُونَ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا  
 قَلِيلًا ﴿١٤٢﴾ مُذَبَّذِينَ بَيْنَ مَا هُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ وَإِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ  
 وَمَنْ يَضِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤٣﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
 لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَمْرٌ يَتُرِيدُونَ  
 أَنْ يَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا ﴿١٤٤﴾ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ  
 فِي الدَّرَكِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا ﴿١٤٥﴾  
 إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِاللَّهِ وَأَخْلَصُوا  
 دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِي اللَّهُ  
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٤٦﴾ مَا يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ  
 إِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ وَءَامَنْتُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيمًا ﴿١٤٧﴾

*O you who believe! believe in Allāh and His Messenger and the Book which He has revealed to His Messenger and the Book which He revealed before; and whoever disbelieves in Allāh and His angels and His books and His messengers and the last day, he indeed strays off into a remote error (136). Surely (as for) those who believe then disbelieve, again believe and again disbelieve, then increase in disbelief, Allāh will not forgive them nor guide them in the (right) path (137). Announce to the hypocrites that they shall have a painful chastisement (138). Those who take the unbelievers for guardians rather than believers. Do they seek honour from them? Then surely all honour is for Allāh (139). And indeed He has revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allāh's communications disbelieved in and mocked at, do not sit with them until they enter into some other discourse; surely then you would be like them; surely Allāh will gather together the hypocrites and the unbelievers all in Hell (140). Those who wait for (some misfortune to befall) you; then if you have a victory from Allāh they say: "Were we not with you?" And if there is a chance for the unbelievers, they say: "Did we not acquire the mastery over you and defend you from the believers?" So Allāh shall judge between you on the Day of Resurrection; and Allāh will by no means give the unbelievers a way against the believers (141). Surely the hypocrites strive to deceive Allāh, while He is deceiving them, and when they stand up for prayer, they stand up sluggishly; they do it only to be seen of men and do not remember Allāh save a little (142). Wavering between that (and this), (belonging) neither to these nor to those; and whomsoever Allāh causes to err, you shall not find a way for him (143). O you who believe! do not take the unbelievers for friends rather than the believers; do you desire that you should give to Allāh a manifest proof against yourselves (144). Surely the hypocrites are in the lowest stage of the Fire, and you shall not find a helper for them (145). Except those who repent and amend and hold fast to Allāh and are sincere in their religion to Allāh; these are with the believers, and Allāh will grant the believers a mighty reward (146). Why should Allāh chastise you if you are grateful and believe? And Allāh is the Appreciator, Knowing (147).*



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## C O M M E N T A R Y

**QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe! believe in Allāh and His Messenger and the Book which He revealed to His Messenger and the Book which He revealed before*** : The believers have been ordered to believe again. The second belief is related to the objects detailed, that is, believing in Allāh and His Messenger and the Book; and they have been threatened if they did not believe in each of these realities. In short, the believers are told to spread their belief to include the details of these realities as they are the matters of belief which are interrelated and one leads to another. Allāh, there is none to be worshiped except Him. His are the beautiful names and lofty adjectives. His Knowledge and Power was the reason that He created the creatures and guided them to their true destination and felicity; and then He will revive them for the day of recompense. This could not be effected without sending the messengers, to bring good news and warn, and sending down the Books which would decide among them in what they had differed, and to explain to the people the realities of genesis and resurrection, as well as the fundamentals of *sharī'ah* and laws.

Belief in any of these realities cannot be complete unless one believes in all of them without exception. To reject some of them and adhere to some others is disbelief or hypocrisy – depending on whether the partial rejection was shown to others or kept secret. It is an aspect of hypocrisy that the believer takes a path which would lead him to reject some of these realities, e.g., if he separates from the society of the believers and goes nearer to unbelievers' society and befriends them, and confirms them in some of their accusations which they direct against the belief and the believers; or the objections or mockery which they lay down against the truth. That is why Allāh has described in the next verses the hypocrites' condition and threatened them with painful chastisement.

The meaning which has been given above is clear from the verse. It is more appropriate than what some other exegetes have written that the words of Allāh, "O you who believe! believe", means: O you who believe apparently by acknowledging the truth of Allāh and His Messenger, believe in your heart also in order that your appearance conforms with your inner self. The same is the case of

another one's exegesis that the order to believe again means remain steadfast in your belief. Likewise, our exegesis is more relevant than what some others have said that the verses were addressed to the believers among the People of the Book, that is, O you who believe from among the People of the Book! believe in Allāh and His Messenger, Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), and the Book which He has revealed on His Messenger, i.e., Qur'ān. These themes may be correct in themselves but the context of the speech rejects them and the last explanation is the worst.

**QUR'ĀN:** *and whoever disbelieves in Allāh and His angels and His Books and His Messengers and the last day, he indeed strays off into a remote error* : The preceding part of the verse (*O you who believe! believe . . .*) was a call to the believers to combine all the mentioned realities in belief, showing that the parts of this total are interrelated and none of them can be separated from the others. Now, those parts of the belief are mentioned again, but here, the conjunctive, 'and', is used in the meaning of 'or'. The meaning: Whoever disbelieves in Allāh or His angels or His Book or His Messengers or the last day – whoever disbelieves in any of these essential parts of belief, he indeed strays off into a remote error.

The conjunctive, 'and', doesn't mean that all these ingredients taken together will form one object of faith. In other words, it does not mean that when one disbelieves in all these realities taken together then he will stray off into a remote error. Moreover, the Qur'ānic verses in several places declare that whoever disbelieves in any one of these, will be a disbeliever.

**QUR'ĀN:** *Surely (as for) those who believe then disbelieve, again believe and again disbelieve, then increase in disbelief, Allāh will not forgive them nor guide them in the (right) path* : If we look at this verse alone, separate from the preceding and the following verses, it will show how Allāh will give recompense to the apostates who repeatedly renounce the faith. They believe then disbelieve, then again believe, then disbelieve and then increase in their disbelief. Allāh threatens if their condition remains like that – that He will never forgive them nor guide them in the right path. He should not hope to receive Divine Mercy at all because he is not firm in true belief and treats the Divine commandment like a plaything. Whoever is in such a condition, his profession of belief is merely a show which will never

be accepted. If they had seriously believed, then they would have been covered with Divine forgiveness and guidance. When one truly repents by believing in Allāh, Allāh never rejects His repentance and faith as He has promised His servants. We have explained this subject under the verse: *Repentance with Allāh is only for those who do evil in ignorance . . .* (4:17), in volume four<sup>20</sup> of this book. The verse declares that normally and naturally such people are totally deprived of the Divine Mercy. But there can be exceptions if someone truly believes and remains steadfast in the true faith – in rare cases. Allāh says: *How shall Allāh guide a people who disbelieve after their believing, and they have borne witness that the Messenger was true, and clear arguments had come to them? And Allāh does not guide the unjust people . . . Except those who repent after that and amend, then surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful. Surely those who disbelieve after believing, then increase in unbelief, their repentance shall never be accepted, and these are they that have gone astray* (3:86-90).

As you see, the verses have made exception of those who disbelieve after believing and says that Allāh will not forgive them nor guide them to the right path. Then He again declares non-acceptance of the repentance of those who increase in their disbelief. Such people disbelieve after believing and after bearing witness that the Messenger was true, and clear arguments had come to them and yet they became apostates. This apostasy is based on obstinacy and stubbornness, and increase in this disbelief proves that this obstinacy and insolence has taken deep roots in their hearts; and oppression and arrogance has taken their souls in their clutch. Now, returning to Allāh and repentance is normally not expected from such a person.

This meaning is understood if we take the verse alone, separately. But all these verses together are apparently revealed in a single context and are interrelated.

Accordingly, the words, "Surely as those who believe then disbelieve . . .", give the reason for the preceding sentence: *whoever disbelieve in Allāh and His angels and His books and His Messengers and the last day, he indeed strays off into a remote error*. Thus, both verses will have one application, that is, he who disbelieves in Allāh and the angels, the Divine Books, the messengers and the last day is the one who believes then disbelieves, then again believes, again disbelieves, and then increases in disbelief. Also he will be among the

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<sup>20</sup> *al-Mīzān*, (Eng. transl.), vol.8, pp.64-74. (tr.)

hypocrites about whom Allāh declares in the next verse onwards: *Announce to the hypocrites that they shall have a painful chastisement .*

Keeping it in view, the explanations of the Divine words: "Surely (as for) those who believe then disbelieve . . .", will change according to the explanations given for the first verse: *O you who believe! believe in Allāh and His Messenger . . .*, as we have mentioned earlier.

If the first verse is taken to mean that you should believe in Allāh and His Messenger in your heart as you have believed in them in appearance, then the belief, then disbelief, then again belief, then disbelief will show the situation of the hypocrites, as their condition and behaviour keeps changing continuously; when they meet the believers they say one thing and on meeting disbelievers, they speak its opposite.

If the first verse means that you should be steadfast on the belief which you have acquired, then the belief, then disbelief and so on will mean apostasy after apostasy.

If it is said that the verse calls the People of the Book to believe in Allāh and His Messenger, then the belief, then *kufr*, and so on will refer to their believing in Mūsā (Moses), then disbelieving in him by worshipping the calf, then believing in ‘Uzayr (Ezra) or in Jesus, then disbelieving in him, then increasing in disbelief by rejecting Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and what he had brought from Allāh.

And if the first verse means to spread your overall belief to cover the detailed realities, as we have said, then the words, "Surely (as for) those who believe, then disbelieve . . .", will show its reason which will perfectly fit the condition of the hypocrites who are discussed soon after that; one of whose characteristics is described in these words: *Those who take the unbelievers for guardians rather than believers*. Obviously, he who remains in close contact with unbelievers separated from the believers' society, cannot avoid visiting their gatherings and being intimate to them, joining their conversations and confirming some of their talks which Allāh is not pleased with; because they ascribe to the true religion and the leaders of the religion calumnies and vilifications, making a mockery of them. Such a man when meets the believers and joins in any of their religious functions shows himself as a believer; and when he meets unbelievers and confirms some of their false assertions, becomes an unbeliever. At one time he is a believer, and at another, he is an unbeliever. He continues in this manner until when this characteristic takes firm roots, he increases in disbelief. And Allāh knows better.

His everchanging condition and instability of mind destroy his chance of repentance; because even if at times he feels remorse on his misdeeds, he doesn't remain firm in that remorse too. Of course, if he repents and remains steadfast in his repentance in a way that the changing situations cannot shake it and desires cannot bend it, then his repentance will be acceptable. And it is for this reason that Allāh has put some tough conditions for acceptance of repentance from such a hypocrite in order that there remains no room for any change or deviation: *Except those who repent and amend and hold fast to Allāh and are sincere in their religion to Allāh . . .*

**QUR'ĀN:** *Announce to the hypocrites that they shall have a painful chastisement. Those who take the unbelievers for guardians rather than believers* : It is a threat to the hypocrites; Allāh describes them as having the unbelievers as guardians rather than believers. This condition is a bit general and is not restricted to the hypocrites who in their hearts had never believed and were only making a show of belief; because a group of true believers also were afflicted with this malady. They enjoyed friendship of unbelievers, or were cut off from the believers' society. Even in the days of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) some believers had secret contacts with unbelievers and were on intimate terms with them.

It supports to a certain extent the view that the hypocrites mentioned in this verse were actually a group of the believers who had taken unbelievers as their friends and guardians in preference to the believers. It is further supported by the apparent meaning of the next verse: *And indeed He has revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allāh's communications disbelieved in and mocked at, do not sit with them until they enter into some other discourse; surely then you would be like them.* This verse, in fact, is a threat to the hypocrites but is addressed to the believers. Moreover, this view is strengthened by the description of their condition in their hypocrisy where Allāh says: *. . . and do not remember Allāh save a little*; as this sentence confirms that they used to remember Allāh although very little. This could not be said about the hypocrites who had not believed in their hearts at all.

**QUR'ĀN:** *Do they seek honour from them? Then surely all honour is for Allāh*: It is an interrogative in the sense of negative, and the reply, then surely all honour is for Allāh", confirms the negative sense. The honour emanates from kingdom and kingdom belongs to Allāh only: *Say: "O Allāh! Master of the Kingdom! Thou givest the kingdom*

*to whomsoever Thou pleasest and takest away the kingdom from whomsoever Thou pleasest, and Thou exaltest whom Thou pleasest and abasest whom Thou pleasest" (3:26).*

**QUR'ĀN:** *And indeed He has revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allāh's communications disbelieved in and mocked at, do not sit with them until they enter into some other discourse; surely then you would be like them; . . . :* It points to what was revealed in the chapter of "The Cattle": *And when you see those who enter into false discourses about Our communications withdraw from them until they enter into some other discourse, and if the Satan causes you to forget, then do not sit after recollection with the unjust people (6:68).* The chapter of "The Cattle" was revealed in Mecca while "The Women" was revealed in Medina. The verse 6:68 uses second person singular pronouns. It proves that some Qur'ānic speeches were addressed directly to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) but they were meant for the whole *ummah*. The sentence, "Surely you would be like them", gives the reason of this prohibition: We have forbidden you because if you would sit with them in this situation you would become like them and "Surely Allāh will gather together the unbelievers and the hypocrites all in hell".

**QUR'ĀN:** *Those who wait for (some misfortune to befall) you; then if you have a victory from Allāh, they say: "Were we not with you?" And if there is a chance for the unbelievers, they say: "Did we not acquire the mastery over you and defend you from the believers" :* *at-Tarabbuṣ* (التَّرَبُّصُ = waiting); *al-istihwādh* (الِاسْتِحْوَاذُ = mastery, over-coming). This describes another characteristic of these hypocrites: they have preserved the contact with both parties ⇨ the believers and the unbelievers. They seek to profit from both groups and try to take advantage from whoever is in a better position. If the believers are victorious, they say: "Were we not with you?" Therefore, we are entitled to have a share in whatever you have gathered as booty, etc. If the unbelievers get some chance, they say: "Did we not acquire the mastery over you and defend you from the believers" i.e., we stopped you from believing in what the Muslims do believe. Therefore, we are entitled to a part of whatever you have got; we have done a favour to you as we provided you with this chance.

It is said: The believers' triumph has been called victory because that is what Allāh has promised them; and the unbelievers'

success is described as a chance to show its insignificance; because whatever the interim success, in the end, Allāh has promised the believers that they will be victorious and that Allāh is their guardian. Probably it is for this reason that the victory has been ascribed to Allāh but not the chance.

**QUR'ĀN: *So Allāh shall judge between you on the Day of Resurrection; and Allāh will by no means give the unbelievers a way against the believers*** : The verse is addressed to the believers although the judgement will cover the hypocrites and the unbelievers as well. The sentence, "and Allāh will by no means give the unbelievers a way against the believers", means that the judgement on that day will be in favour of the believers and against the unbelievers; and this reality will never change. This deprives the unbelievers of any hope because on the last day the believers will be triumphant over the unbelievers.

Possibly the declaration, that the unbelievers will not be given a way against the believers, covers both worlds – this and the hereafter – because the believers will always be victorious as long as they adhere to the demands of their faith. Allāh says: *And be not infirm, and be not grieving, and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers* (3:139).

**QUR'ĀN: *Surely the hypocrites strive to deceive Allāh while He is deceiving them***: *al-Mukhāda'ah* (المُخَادَعَةُ) denotes continuous or intensified deception, because in Arabic, when some letters are added in a root word the meaning also increases. The words, "while He is deceiving them", describes the condition, that is, they are trying to deceive Allāh while He is deceiving them. In short, these people, with their hypocritical deed – pretension of faith, remaining near the believers and attending their gatherings – want to deceive Allāh, i.e., the Prophet and the believers; and their intention is to seek benefits from them through their unreal belief and deeds. They do not understand that it is Allāh Who is deceiving them by leaving them free to commit these deeds, without putting any hinderance against them; it is their requital because of their impure intentions and wicked deeds. So, when they try to deceive Allāh it is actually Allāh who is deceiving them exactly through the showy deeds and bad faith.

**QUR'ĀN:** *and when they stand up for prayer, they stand up sluggishly: they do it only to be seen of men and do not remember Allāh save a little* : It is another characteristic of the hypocrites. When they stand up to pray, they do so sluggishly and for showing the people. The prayer is the best act of worship through which Allāh is remembered. If their hearts had been inclined to their Lord with true belief, they would not have felt sluggish and dispirited; they would have prayed with full attention and true remembrance of Allāh; they would not have done it merely to be seen by people, rather they would have remembered Allāh very often as happens when the heart is inclined to someone.

**QUR'ĀN:** *Wavering between that (and this), (belonging) neither to these nor to those; . . .* : aṭ-Ṭabrisī has explained in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* that this word denotes setting in pendulous motion, as when a thing is suspended in air and is moved to and fro. A thing is called *mudhabdhab* when it moves between two extremes without having any attachment to either. This is exactly the characteristic of hypocrites. They move between belief and disbelief, they belong exclusively neither to the believers like the true Muslims nor to the disbelievers like open infidels.

The sentence, "and whomsoever Allāh causes to err, you shall not find a way for him", gives the reason of the preceding description of pendulous motion. The reason why they move to and fro, without adhering to any side, is that Allāh has made them go astray from the path and now they cannot find the true path.

**QUR'ĀN:** *O you who believe! do not take the unbelievers for friends rather than the believers; . . . and you shall not find a helper for them:* *as-Sulṭān* (السُّلْطَان = proof); *ad-darak* and *ad-dark* (الدَّرَكُ، الدَّرَكُ): ar-Rāghib has said: "*ad-Dark* is synonymous with *ad-darj* (الدَّرَج = stair-case), but *ad-darj* is used to describe ascending steps while *ad-dark* is used for descending. That is why we see that the ranks of the Garden are called *ad-darajāt* (الدَّرَجَات = ranks) and the stages of the Fire; *ad-darakāt* (الدَّرَكَات = stages); also because there is an idea of descending down in the hell, it is called *al-hāwiyah* (الْهَوِيَّة = infernal depth) [which is derived from *hawā* = to fall down]."

The verse, as you see, forbids the believers to establish friendship with unbelievers in preference to the believers' friendship; and the next verse gives its reason by a severe threat which is



addressed to the hypocrites. The reason is that Allāh counts such friendship as hypocrisy, and warns the believers from indulging in it.

The context shows that these two verses give the sum total of the preceding speech. This makes us almost certain that the previous verses had exposed the condition of those believers whose faith was weak and hearts diseased; and therefore the verses called them hypocrites. Or at least such believers are joined with the hypocrites in those verses. Then it admonishes the believers that they should not go near that line, otherwise they would make themselves liable to displeasure of Allāh. They should not give Allāh any proof against themselves; otherwise He will leave them, to go astray and put them in deception, leaving them oscillating in this life. Then He will join them with unbelievers in the hell and put them in the lowest stage of the Fire; there will be no connection between them and anyone who could help them or intercede for them.

These two verses clearly show two things:-

First: Leaving someone to go astray, deceiving him and any such display of Divine displeasure emanates from clear proof which the people's deeds provide against them. These humiliations and degradations are decreed as recompense of their actions. The Divine Majesty is too high to initiate any evil or misfortune for them without there being a reason for it from their side. Therefore, the sentence, "do you desire that you should give to Allāh a manifest proof against yourselves", has the same connotation as the words: *He does not cause to err by it (any) except the transgressors (2:26)*.

Second: In the hell, people are divided in various stages which differ in lowliness and ignominy. Naturally, their chastisement goes increasing according to the lowliness of their grade which Allāh has named descending stages. [The lower the stage, the harsher the torture.]

**QUR'ĀN: *Except those who repent and amend and hold fast to Allāh and are sincere in their religion to Allāh; . . .*** : This is an exception from the threat given to the hypocrites in the preceding verse: *Surely the hypocrites are in the lowest stage of the Fire . . .* It follows that these people have separated from the hypocrites and joined the believers. That is why the exception is followed by these words, "these are with the believers"; and then the reward of all the believers has been mentioned together, "and Allāh will grant the believers a mighty reward."

This group, excepted from the hypocrites, has been described with several difficult characteristics without which the hypocrisy cannot be uprooted. It begins with repentance, that is, returning to Allāh; this returning and repentance will be of no value unless they rectify all that has gone bad in their thoughts and deeds. Even this rectification will not avail them anything until they adhere to Allāh; in other words, until they follow the Divine Book and the *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.); because there is no path leading to Allāh except that which He has laid down Himself, all other paths are those of Satan. This adherence too will not benefit them unless they are sincere in their religion to Allāh, because polytheism is such a sin which can never be forgiven. When they have repented and amended every defect in their character, have held fast to Allāh and are sincere in their religion to Allāh, then they will be true believers without any taint of polytheism. Then they will be protected from hypocrisy and will be guided aright. Allāh says: *Those who believe and mix not their faith with inequity, those are they for whom is security and they are (the ones) guided aright (6:82).*

The context shows that the word, 'believers', refers to pure believers who are sincere in their faith. They have been introduced by the attributes, "those who repent and amend and hold fast to Allāh and are sincere in their religion to Allāh". These virtues cover all the details which Allāh has counted in His Book as the believers' characteristics and attributes. For example, see the following verses:-

*Indeed successful are the believers, those who in their prayers are humble and those who keep aloof from what is vain (23:1-3). And the servants of the Beneficent (Allāh) are they who walk on the earth humbly; and when address them the ignorants, say they: "Salām (Peace)". And those who pass the night in prostrating unto their Lord and standing (25:63-64).*

This is what the Qur'ān means when it uses the word, 'believer', without any condition and without any association which would give it another shade of meaning.

Allāh has said, "These are with the believers", rather than saying, "these are among the believers". The reason is that as soon as these qualifications are found in them they are attached to the believers; but they would not be a part of the believers until these characteristics firmly take roots in their hearts.

**QUR'ĀN:** *Why should Allāh chastise you if you are grateful and believe? And Allāh is the Appreciator, Knowing.:* Apparently, this

verse too, like the preceding speech, is addressed to the believers. They have been addressed in these words as if they were devoid of belief, as speakers use this style in such talks.

The verse indicates that Allāh has no need to chastise them.

Had they not invited the punishment by discarding gratitude and faith, there was nothing from the side of Allāh to inflict them with chastisement. Allāh gets no benefit from their punishment nor does He get any harm by their existence, so that He should be inclined to punish them. The meaning, therefore, is: There is no reason why you should be punished if you express your gratitude for the favours Allāh has bestowed on you by giving Him His due rights and if you truly believe in Him; and Allāh appreciates virtues of him who thanks Him and believes in Him; and He is All-knowing and puts everything in its proper place.

This verse shows that the chastisement which covers some people emanates from their side, not from Allāh's side. Likewise, all the things which invite punishment, like going astray, polytheism and sins and errors, do not originate from Allāh; they are done by the people themselves. If any of these things had originated from Allāh, then the resulting punishment also would have been from Allāh, because the effect is related to its cause.

## TRADITIONS

Zurārah, Ḥumrān and Muḥammad ibn Muslim have narrated from Abū Ja'far and Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *Surely as for those who believe, then disbelieve, again believe and again disbelieve, then increase in disbelief*, that they said, "It was revealed about 'Abdullāh ibn Abī Sarḥ, whom 'Uthmān had sent to Egypt as Governor. Then his disbelief increased until not an iota of belief remained in him." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)<sup>21</sup>

Abū Baṣīr has said: "I heard him (Abū 'Abdillāh, a.s.) saying about this same verse: 'Whoever believes that intoxicant is unlawful and then drinks it, and whoever believes that fornication is unlawful

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<sup>21</sup> Obviously this explanation is based on the principle of the "flow of the Qur'ān". (*tr.*)

and then does it and whoever believes that *zakāt* is *wājib* (obligatory) and does not pay it (are included in this verse)." (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** This *ḥadīth* generalizes the verse to cover all stages of disbelief, one of which is neglecting the obligatory com-mandments and committing forbidden things. It somewhat supports what we have written in the Commentary.

Muḥammad ibn al-Fuḍayl narrates from Abu 'l-Ḥasan ar-Riḍā (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *And indeed we have revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allāh's communications disbelieved in or mocked at, . . . surely then you would be like them*, that he said, "When you hear a man denying the truth, refuting it and disparaging the people of truth, then stand up from near him and do not sit with him." (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** There are other traditions too of the same meaning.

Abu 'ṣ-Ṣalt al-Harawī narrates from ar-Riḍā (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *and Allāh will by no means give the unbelievers a way against the believers*, that he said: "Allāh says that He will by no means give the unbelievers a proof against the believers. Allāh has given us the news about the unbelievers who killed their prophets without any right, yet in spite of their killing them, Allāh had not given them any proof against his prophets." (*ibid.*)

as-Suyūfī writes: "Ibn Jarīr has narrated from 'Alī [a.s.] about the words of Allāh: *and Allāh will by no means give the unbelievers a way against the believers*, that he said, 'In the hereafter.'" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

**The author says:** It has been explained that the context apparently points to the hereafter; but if the sentence is taken separately, on its own, it may be generalised to cover the proof in this world.

aṣ-Ṣadūq narrates through his chain of narrators from al-Ḥasan ibn Faḍḍāl that he said, "I asked 'Alī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *Surely the hypocrites strive to deceive Allāh, while He is deceiving them*.

"The Imām (a.s.) said, 'Allāh does not deceive; rather He gives them recompense of their deception.'" (*'Uyūnu 'l-akhbār*)

Mas'adah ibn Ziyād narrates through Ja'far ibn Muḥammad (a.s.) from his father (a.s.) that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was

asked, "In what lies the salvation tomorrow?" He (s.a.w.a.) said, "Salvation is that you should not deceive Allāh, lest He deceives you; because whoever deceives Allāh, He will deceive him and will take off the *īmān* (faith) from him; and (the man) deceives his own self, had he but known it." Again, it was said to him (s.a.w.a.), "How does one deceive Allāh?" He said, "He performs what Allāh has ordered him to, but his aim is (to please) someone other than Allāh. Therefore, be on guard against dissimulation, because it is associating someone with Allāh. Surely, a dissimulator will be called on the Day of Resurrection with four names: O *kāfir*, O debauchee, O treacherous, O profligate! your deeds are forfeited, your recompense is nullified; there is no share for you today; you seek your recompense from him you were doing for." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyāshī)

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain of narrators from Abu ‘l-Ma‘zā al-Khaṣṣāf that he said, The Commander of the Believers (a.s.) said, "Whoever remembers Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, in secret, He remembers Him most often. Verily, the hypocrites used to remember Allāh openly but did not remember Him in secret; therefore, Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, said: *they do it only to be seen of men and do not remember Allāh save a little*". (*al-Kāfi*)

**The author says:** This is another fine meaning for scantiness of remembrance of Allāh.

Ibnu ‘l-Mundhir has narrated from ‘Alī [a.s.] that he said, "No deed is small with piety, and how can that be small which is accepted." (*ad-Durru ‘l-manthūr*)

**The author says:** This too is a fine meaning and in reality it goes back to what has been described in the preceding tradition.

Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and al-Bayhaqī (in his *Sunan*) have narrated from Anas that he said, "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'That is the prayer of a hypocrite; he remains sitting and looking at the sun until when it reaches between the two horns of Satan, he stands up and pecks (on the earth) four times and does not remember Allāh in it except a little.'" (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** This is another meaning of paucity of remembrance because such a worshipper merely turns towards Allāh by standing for prayer and does not get time to remember Allāh while it was possible for him to submerge himself in His remembrance with presence (of heart) and tranquility.

The sun reaching between the two horns of Satan is a metaphor which denotes its nearness from the western horizon. It is as though the day and the night are two horns of satan with which he rams human beings.

‘Abd Ibn Ḥamīd, al-Bukhārī (in his *Tārīkh*), Muslim, Ibn Jarīr and Ibnu ‘l-Mundhir have narrated from Ibn ‘Umar that he said, "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'The likeness of a hypocrite is that of a wandering goat between two flocks, once it goes to this and once to that; it doesn't know which to follow.'" (*ibid.*)

‘Abdu 'r-Razzāq, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās, that he said, "Wherever the word *sulṭān* occurs in the Qur’ān, it means 'proof.'" (*ibid.*)

Ibn Abī Shaybah, al-Marwazī (in *Zawāidu 'z-zuhd*) and Abu 'sh-Shaykh ibn Ḥibbān have narrated from Makḥūl that he said, "I have been told that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said, 'No servant remains sincere to Allāh for forty mornings but the springs of wisdom appears fro his heart on his tongue.'" (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** This tradition is a famous one and has been narrated in the same words or with the same meaning through other chains of narrators.

al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidhī has narrated in *Nawādiru 'l-uṣūl* from Zayd ibn Arqam that he said, "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'Whoever sincerely says, *Lā ilāha illa 'llāh*, will enter the Garden.' It was said to him, 'O Messenger of Allāh, what is its sincerity? He said, 'That it prevents him from unlawful things.'" (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** This tradition's meaning is narrated through numerous chains of narrators in the collections of *aḥādīth* (traditions) of the both sects from the Prophet and the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt*, may Allāh's mercy and blessings be on them. And, God willing, we shall quote most of its narrated words in some appropriate place.

Many traditions have been written under these verses showing diverse and different reasons of their revelation; we have not quoted them here because apparently they are based on the flow of the Qur’ān, which the people have used to fit the verses on some likely events. And Allāh knows better.

\* \* \* \* \*

لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلِمَ وَكَانَ  
 اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا ﴿١٤٨﴾ إِنْ بُدِّوْا خَيْرًا أَوْ تُخَفُّوهُ أَوْ تَعْفُوا عَنْ  
 سُوءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُوًّا قَدِيرًا ﴿١٤٩﴾

*Allāh does not love open utterance of evil in speech except (by) one to whom injustice has been done; and Allāh is Hearing, Knowing (148). If you do good openly or do it in secret or pardon an evil, then surely Allāh is Pardoning, Powerful (149).*

\* \* \* \* \*

#### COMMENTARY

**QUR'ĀN:** *Allāh does not love open utterance of evil in speech except (by) one to whom injustice has been done; . . . : [al-Jahr (الْجَهْرُ = loudly speaking; translated here as 'open utterance')]. ar-Rāghib has said under the root *j-h-r* [جهر]: "It is used for excessive manifestation of a thing before the sense of sight or hearing. As for the sight, it is said: 'I saw him openly'; Allāh, the Sublime, says: 'O Mūsā! We will not believe in you until we see Allāh manifestly' (2:55); They said: 'Show us Allāh manifestly' (4:153) . . . As for hearing, Allāh says: Alike (to Him) among you is he who conceals (his) words and he who speaks openly" (13:10).*

*as-Sū' (السُّوءُ = evil); evil speech – every talk which hurts the feeling of the person about who it is said; for example, cursing him*

and abusing him and accusing him of some bad characteristics, no matter whether those defects are really found in him or not. Allāh does not love that these things should be loudly announced and spoken. It is known that Allāh is free from love and hate, which is found in human beings and many animals; however, as our commandments and prohibitions naturally emanate from love and hate, Allāh metaphorically uses the words, love and hate, to describe His pleasure and displeasure, His commandment and prohibition.

Therefore, the words, "Allāh does not love open utterance of evil in speech", metaphorically show legislation covering both prohibition and dislike.

The phrase, "except (by) *one to whom injustice has been done*", is isolated exception. It means that it is alright for the one who is oppressed and to whom injustice has been done, to loudly speak evil about the oppressor regarding the injustice done to him. This context shows that he is allowed to utter evil publicly to describe the injustice done to him and to expose the bad character of the oppressor which led him to that injustice. However, there is no indication here that he can speak loudly about other things which are not found in the oppressor or which have no connection with this particular oppression.

The exegetes have differed in explanation of "evil in speech"; some say that it means cursing; others say that it is a description of his oppression and injustice, etc.; the fact is that all these things are included in this phrase which is unrestricted. Therefore, there is no reason why it should be restricted to certain types of evil talk.

The words, "and Allāh is Hearing, Knowing", emphasize the prohibition understood from "Allāh does not love open utterance of evil in speech". In other words, it is not allowed for the one to whom injustice has not been done to speak loudly evil words about someone because Allāh is the Hearing Who hears every word, and Knowing Who knows what one is doing.

**QUR'ĀN: *If you do good openly or do it in secret or pardon an evil, then surely Allāh is Pardoning, Powerful*** : The verse has some relation with the preceding one because it implies manifestation of good words showing gratitude for a favour which someone has done to you, and also shows merit of forgiveness of an evil, so that you should not utter evil words against your oppressor.

Doing good openly means manifesting it clearly whether it is manifested in deed – for example, showing that one is spending on



some deserving person; likewise, other good deeds; as this showing arouses in other people the desire to do good and strengthens the religion – or in words, like openly thanking the benefactor and mentioning him with good attributes, as it would incite other well to do persons to follow the suit.

Keeping the good work secret is also commendable, because it keeps one away from dissimulation and nearer to sincerity, as Allāh has said: *If you give alms openly, it is well, and if you hide it and give it to poor, it is better for you; and this will remove from you some of your sins (2:271).*

Pardoning an avil is to cover it in words – that he does not describe his oppressor for his oppression, does not disgrace him before the people and does not speak openly against him – and in deed, that he should not confront him with similar mistreatment for retribution, even when *sharī'ah* allows him to do so. Allāh has said: *whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict the like aggression on him as he has inflicted on you; and fear Allāh (2:194).*

If you pardon an evil, you will acquire an attribute from the Divine attributes of perfection – He pardons His servants although He has power to punish them. Doing good deed openly or in secret, that is, doing favour to the needy in all conditions is also among the Divine attributes because He is Allāh.

## TRADITIONS

aṭ-Ṭabrisī has said: "Allāh does not like abusing while seeking someone's aid except the one to whom injustice has been done; he is allowed to seek help against the oppressor in the matters in which seeking help is allowed by religion." He says that it is narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.). (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

Abu 'l-Jārūd narrates from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "*Open utterance of evil in speech* means describing a man with the defects which are found in him." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)

Another *ḥadīth* explains this verse in this way: If a man came to you and he spoke ascribing to you such merit, praise and good deeds which you do not have, then do not accept it from him and refute him; because he has done injustice to you. (*at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī)

al-Faḍl ibn Abī Qurrah narrates from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *Allāh does not love open utterance of evil in*

*speech except (by) one to whom injustice has been done*, that he said, "Whoever invited some people for feast and did not serve them properly, he is among those who do injustice; and there is no blame on them in whatever they say about him." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyāshī)

**The author says:** It has been narrated in *Majma‘u ‘l-bayān* from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) as a *mursal ḥadīth*; also it has been narrated through Sunnī chains from Mujāhid. However, these traditions clearly show that the verse is general and not restricted, as we have shown earlier.

\* \* \* \* \*

## إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ

بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ، وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ،  
وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُونَ  
أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٥٠﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ  
حَقًّا وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُّهِينًا ﴿١٥١﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ، وَلَمْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ سَوْفَ  
يُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرَهُمُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿١٥٢﴾

*Surely those who disbelieve in Allāh and His messengers and desire to differentiate between Allāh and His messengers, and say: "We believe in some and disbelieve in others"; and desire to take a way between (this and ) that (150). These it is that are truly unbelievers, and We have prepared for the unbelievers a disgraceful chastisement (151). And those who believe in Allāh and His messengers and do not differentiate between any of them; they (are those whom) He will grant them their recompense; and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful (152).*

\* \* \* \* \*

### COMMENTARY

Now, the talk turns to the People of the Book describing the reality of their disbelief and explaining some of their injustices, sins and scandalous talks.

**QUR'ĀN: *Surely those who disbelieve in Allāh and His messengers ... We have prepared for the unbelievers a disgraceful chastisement*** : These are the People of the Book, the Jews and the Christians; the Jews believe in Mūsā and disbelieve in 'Īsā and Muḥammad while the Christians believe in Mūsā and 'Īsā and disbelieve in Muḥammad – Allāh's mercy be on all of them. These people think that they believe in Allāh and in some of His messengers and disbelieve in only a few of them; but Allāh has clearly stated that they are disbelievers in Allāh and all His messengers. Therefore, it was necessary to explain the all-encompassing sentence, "Surely those who disbelieve in Allāh and His messengers". This explanation is given in the next phrase which is given as explicative apposition, "and desire to differentiate between Allāh and His messengers, and say: "We believe in some and disbelieve in others". This phrase is self-explanatory. They are disbelievers in Allāh and His Messengers because when they say: "We believe in some and disbelieve in others", they actually want to differentiate between Allāh and His messengers; when they disbelieve in some of His messengers although he has been sent by Allāh, they are rejecting the Divine choice; thus rejection of any messenger is rejection of Allāh's Divinity.

Again it is explained with another explanatory conjunctive, "and desire to take a way between (this and) that". They want to chart out a way between two opposites: believing in Allāh and all His messengers and disbelieving in Allāh and all His messengers; and that middle way is believing in some and rejecting some others. However, the only way to Allāh is to believe in Him and all His messengers together. A messenger in his capacity of messengership has no authority over his ownself or on his mission; everything is done under Divine guidance. To believe in him is to believe in Allāh and to reject him is to reject Allāh.

Disbelieving in some and believing in others together with Allāh is an attempt to differentiate between Allāh and His messengers. In this way, they want to make the messenger independent, unrelated to Allāh. According to the, belief in the prophet has no connection with the belief in Allāh and rejection of a prophet is unconnected with

disbelief in Allāh; the messenger is accordingly marginalised and removed from his central position. How can one be called a messenger if believing or disbelieving in him is unrelated to belief or disbelief in Allāh

Now, it is clear without any doubt that believing in such a messenger is tantamount to ascribing someone to Allāh, the great, the High. That is why Allāh, after describing their attempt to believe in some and disbelieve in others, in order to differentiate between Allāh and His messengers and to find a via media, says that, "These it is that are truly unbelievers", and then threatens them saying, "and We have prepared for the unbelievers a disgraceful chastisement".

**QUR'ĀN: *And those who believe in Allāh and His messengers and do not differentiate between any of them; they (are those whom) He will grant them their recompense; and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful :***

After exposing the disbelief of those who differentiate between Allāh and His messengers, and stating that they were disbelievers in Allāh and all His messengers, now Allāh describes those who stand opposite to them, that is, those who believe in Allāh and all His messengers without any differentiation. This completes the division of the people in two groups. We find in the second and third verses that the pronouns describing Allāh have been changed from first person plural to third person singular; first it was said: *and We have prepared for the unbelievers a disgraceful chastisement*, and now it says, "they (are those whom) He will grant them their recompense". Probably, ascribing award of punishment to first person shows that it would surely happen; this certainty is not so clear in third person pronoun; and the same reason justifies the change of pronoun in the second verse. The verse is addressed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and contains good tidings. The Prophet knows that Allāh would surely fulfil His promise and this recompense is certain to be awarded.

\* \* \* \* \*

يَسْأَلُكَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ  
أَنْ تَنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ كِتَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فَقَدْ سَأَلُوا  
مُوسَىٰ أَكْبَرًا مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَقَالُوا أَرِنَا اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ  
الصَّاعِقَةُ بِظُلْمِهِمْ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ  
الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَعَفَوْنَا عَن ذَلِكَ وَءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ سُلْطَانًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٥٣﴾  
وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ الطُّورَ بِمِيثَاقِهِمْ وَقُلْنَا لَهُمُ ادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا  
وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ لَا تَعْدُوا فِي السَّبْتِ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿١٥٤﴾  
فِيمَا نَقَضُوا مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَكُفِّرُوا بِنَائِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَّلُوا الْأَنْبِيَاءَ  
بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَقَوْلِهِمْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ بَلْ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا بِكُفْرِهِمْ  
فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٥٥﴾ وَبِكُفْرِهِمْ وَقَوْلِهِمْ عَلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ  
بِهِتْنَا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٥٦﴾ وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَىٰ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ  
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَٰكِن شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ  
أَخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا أَنْبَاعُ الظَّنِّ

وَمَا قَنَلُوهُ يَقِينًا ﴿١٥٧﴾ بَل رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا  
 ﴿١٥٨﴾ وَإِنْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا لِيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهِ وَيَوْمَ  
 الْقِيَامَةِ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا ﴿١٥٩﴾ فَيُظْلَمُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا  
 حَرَمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ طَيِّبَاتٍ أُحِلَّتْ لَهُمْ وَبِصَدِّهِمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ  
 كَثِيرًا ﴿١٦٠﴾ وَأَخَذَهُمُ الرِّبَا وَقَدْ نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَأَكْلِهِمْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ  
 بِالْبَاطِلِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٦١﴾ لَكِنِ  
 الرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا  
 أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَالْمُقِيمِينَ الصَّلَاةَ وَالْمُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ  
 وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أُولَئِكَ سَنُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٦٢﴾  
 ﴿١٦٣﴾ إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ  
 وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ  
 وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَعِيسَى وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَهَارُونَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ  
 وَءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زَبُورًا ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ  
 مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى  
 تَكْلِيمًا ﴿١٦٤﴾ رُسُلًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ  
 لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا  
 ﴿١٦٥﴾ لَكِنِ اللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ يُعَلِّمُهُ

وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ يَشْهَدُوْنَ وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿١٦٦﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ  
 كَفَرُوْا وَصَدُّوا عَنِ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ قَدْ ضَلُّوا ضَلٰلًاۙ بَعِيْدًا  
 ﴿١٦٧﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَظَلَمُوْا لَمْ يَكُنِ اللّٰهُ لِيَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَلَا  
 لِيُهْدِيَهُمْ طَرِيْقًا ﴿١٦٨﴾ اِلَّا طَرِيْقَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَاۙ اَبَدًا  
 ﴿١٦٩﴾ وَكَانَ ذٰلِكَ عَلٰى اللّٰهِ يَسِيْرًا

The People of the Book ask you to bring down to them a book from heaven; so indeed they had demanded of Mūsā a greater thing than that, for they said: "Show us Allāh manifestly"; so the lightning seized them on account of their injustice. Then they took the calf (for a god) even after clear signs had come to them, but We pardoned this; and We gave to Mūsā a clear authority (153). And We lifted the mountain over them at their covenant, and We said to them: "Enter the door prostrating"; and We said to them: "Do not exceed the limits of the Sabbath"; and We took from them a firm covenant (154). Therefore, for their breaking their covenant and their disbelief in the communications of Allāh and their killing the prophets unjustly and their saying: "Our hearts are covered"; Nay! Allāh has set a seal upon them owing to their disbelief, so they shall not believe except a little (155). And for their disbelief and for their having uttered against Maryam a griveous calumny (156). And for their saying: "Surely we have killed the Messiah, 'Isā son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allāh"; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so (like 'Isā); and most surely those who differ therein are only in doubt about it; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture; and certainly they killed him not (157). Nay! Allāh raised him up to Himself; and Allāh is Mighty, Wise (158). And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Resurrection, he ( 'Isā) shall be a witness against them (159). Wherefore for the inequity of those who are Jews, We did forbid them those good things which had been made lawful for them, and for their



*hindering many from Allāh's way (160). And for their taking interest, though indeed they were forbidden it, and their devouring the property of people wrongfully; and We have prepared for the unbelievers from among them a painful chastisement (161). But the firmly rooted in knowledge among them and the believers believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you, and those who keep up prayers and those who give the zakāt and the believers in Allāh and the Last Day, these it is whom We will give a mighty reward (162). Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nūh, and the prophets after him, and We revealed to Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl and Ishāq and Ya'qūb and the tribes, and 'Īsā and Ayyūb and Yūnus and Hārūn and Sulaymān, and We gave to Dāwūd Zabūr (163). And (We sent) messengers We have mentioned to you before and messengers We have not mentioned to you; and Allāh addressed His word to Mūsā directly speaking (164). (We sent) messengers as the givers of good news and as warners, so that people should not have an argument against Allāh after the (coming of) messengers; and Allāh is Mighty, Wise (165). But Allāh bears witness by what He has revealed to you that He has revealed it with His Knowledge; and the angels bear witness (also); and sufficient is Allāh for a witness (166). Surely (as for) those who disbelieve and hinder (men) from Allāh's way they indeed have strayed off into a remote error (167). Surely (as for) those who disbelieve and act unjustly, Allāh will not forgive them nor guide them to a path (168), except the path of Hell, to abide in it forever, and this is easy to Allāh (169).*

\* \* \* \* \*

### COMMENTARY

The verses describe the demand of the People of the Book that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) should bring down to them a book from heaven, because they were not satisfied by the piecemeal revelation of the Qur'ān through Gabriel, and then replies to it.

**QUR'ĀN:** *The People of the Book ask you to bring down to them a book from heaven; . . .* : "The People of the Book" refers to the Jews and the Christians, as is known from the Qur'ānic style in such places. It means that the demand had come from both groups and not only the Jews.

Of course, the injustice and the crimes enumerated in these verses were exclusively committed by the Jews; for example, the demand to see Allāh, the worship of the calf, breaking the covenant when the mountain was raised over their heads and when they were ordered to do *sajdah* (prostration) and prohibited to cross the limits of the sabbath and things like that. But both groups had grown from the same root, that is, the tribe of Isrā'īl to whom Mūsā and 'Īsā (a.s.) were sent (although the mission of 'Īsā [a.s.] spread after his being raised to the heaven to the non-Israilites like Rome, Arabia, Ethiopia and Egypt, etc.) and the injustice done to 'Īsā by his people was not less than the injustice done by the Jews to Mūsā (a.s.).

As the two groups had a common root and the injustice described was done by the Jews only when the time came to describe their punishment, Allāh mentioned only the Jews as He says: *Wherefore for the inequity of those who are Jews, We did forbid them those good things which had been made lawful for them.* And it was because of this common root that the list of the Messengers described later includes 'Īsā (a.s.) too like Mūsā (a.s.); if the talk were reserved to the Jews only, this could not be justified. Also, it is for this reason that after these verses it has been said: *O People of the Book! do not exceed the limits in your religion, and do not speak (lies) against Allāh, but (speak) the truth; the Messiah, 'Īsā son of Maryam is only a Messenger of Allāh.*

In short, the demand had come from the People of the Book together and the speech is addressed to them both, because they share the national trait, that is, despotism, speaking lies, recklessness and disregard of agreements and covenants. The talk covers both in common characteristics but when any group deserves some special comment, it is mentioned separately.

They had asked the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) to bring down to them a book from heaven. Obviously, they had not asked it before the Qur'ān was revealed and recited before them. This event had taken place in Medina and they had heard the Qur'ān as much as was revealed at Mecca and the parts which were revealed at Medina upto that time. Yet, they were not satisfied that it was a sufficient proof of his Prohethood; they were not prepared to count it as a Divine Book,

although the Qur'ān had been sent armed with the challenge and the claim of its miraculousness, as we see in the chapters of "The Night Journey", "Yūnus", "Hūd" and "The Cow", all of which were revealed before this chapter of the "Women".

Clearly, their asking for bringing down a book from the heaven (when they were witnessing the Qur'ānic revelation), was merely a foolhardy demand which could not come except from a person who stubbornly refuses to submit to the truth and does not follow the reality. Such a person talks irrationally and raves without thinking, as his desires overpower him; he doesn't stand on any firm ground nor does he feel constrained by any limit. This arrogance was not unsimilar to that which the Quraysh had adopted as soon as the Qur'ānic revelations began and its mission became known; as Allāh quotes them as saying: *Why is not a sign sent to him from His Lord? (10:20), or you should ascend into heaven, and we will not believe in your ascending until you bring down to us a book which we may read (17:93).*

It was in this background that Allāh has replied to their demand.

First: These are a people gone far in their ignorance and straying. They do not desist from any injustice, however great it might be; from disbelief and rejection of truth even when clear proofs have come to them; nor from breaking the covenants however sacred they might be; nor do they avoid falsehood, wrong accusation or any type of injustice. A man of such characteristics does not deserve that his demand be granted or his proposal accepted.

Second: The Book which Allāh has sent down, that is, the Qur'ān, contains in itself the witness of Allāh and His angels. Moreover, it offers challenge after challenge in its noble verses.

Continuing the reply, Allāh says: *so indeed they had demanded of Mūsā a greater thing than that*, that is, greater than what they are asking you, to bring down to them a book from heaven: *for they said: "Show us Allāh manifestly"*, that is, show Him to us clearly so that we see Him with our eyes; this was the peak of ignorance, delirium and transgression; *so the lightning seized them on account of their injustice*. The story is mentioned in the chapter of "The Cow" (vrs. 55-56) and that of "The Elevated Places" (vr. 155).

Then Allāh says: *Then they took the calf (for a god) even after clear signs had come to them*, they indulged in this idol-worship when its falsity was clearly shown to them and it was explained to them that Allāh is far from the taint of corporal traits and transience; and this was the most heinous ignorance: *but We pardoned this; and We gave*

to Mūsā a clear authority. Mūsā (a.s.) had ordered them in this connection to repent to Allāh by killing each other; they started doing it but Allāh pardoned them before the killings had taken toll of them all; and this is what pardon means in this verse. He gave Mūsā (a.s.) clear authority inasmuch as his orders were implemented on them and on as-Sāmirī and his calf. This story is mentioned in the chapter of "The Cow" (vr. 54).

Then Allāh says: *And We lifted the mountain over them at their covenant.* It was the covenant which Allāh had taken from them and then raised the mountain over them. The story has been described twice in the chapter of "The Cow" (vrs. 63 & 93). Further, Allāh says: *and We said to them: "Enter the door prostrating"; and We said to them: "Do not exceed the limits of the Sabbath"; and We took from them a firm covenant.* The two stories are mentioned in the chapter of "The Cow" (vrs. 58-65) and the chapter of "The Elevated Places" (vrs. 161-163). Probably, the covenant mentioned here is related to these two stories as well as others, because the Qur'ān repeatedly mentions making the covenant with them, as Allāh says: *And when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: "You shall not worship (any) but Allāh; . . ."* (2:83); *and when We made a covenant with you: "You shall not shed your blood and you shall not turn your people out of your cities"; then you gave a promise while you witnessed* (ibid.: 84).

**QUR'ĀN: Therefore, for their breaking their covenant and their disbelief in the communications of Allāh . . . : Fa** ( فَ = therefore). This particle shows that the coming statement has resulted from the preceding ones. "For their breaking their covenant" refers to their crimes mentioned after a few verses. These verses aim at describing the humiliating recompense which Allāh has reserved for them in this world and the hereafter. They also describe some of their evil characteristics not mentioned before.

The words of Allāh, "Therefore for their breaking their covenant", refers together to their breaking the covenant, some of which have been mentioned in the Qur'ān and some have not. "And their disbelief in the communications of Allāh", refers to their various types of disbelief which they committed during the life of Mūsā (a.s.) and after him. The Qur'ān has described several instances of it including the two mentioned in the beginning of the verses, that is: *So indeed they had demanded of Mūsā a greater thing than that, for they said: "Show us Allāh manifestly", and: they took a calf (for a god)*

*even after clear signs had come to them.* These two instances of their disbelief were described before other things in the beginning, but have been put here after the description of their breaking the covenant; because the context is different. Beginning of the verses mentions their demand to bring down a book from heaven and it was more relevant to follow it with their asking something greater than that and their worshipping the calf. But the verse under discussion describes their recompense for their evil deeds after their accepting the call to the truth; and in this context beginning the speech with description of their breaking their covenant was more appropriate.

The phrase: *and their killing the prophets unjustly*, points to Zakariyyā, Yaḥyā and other prophets whom the Qur'ān has mentioned without naming. Then Allāh says: *and their saying: "Our hearts are covered"* : *Ghulf* (غُلف) is plural of *aghlaf* (أغلف = under cover) which prevents it from listening to the prophetic call and accepting the truth. They uttered this sentence in order to reject the call and at the same time putting the responsibility of that rejection on Allāh. In a way they claimed that their hearts were put under cover by Allāh, or that they could not hear any call except that of Mūsā, and all this was beyond their choice and authority. That is why Allāh has refuted their claim by saying: *Nay! Allāh has set a seal upon them owing to their disbelief, so they shall not believe except a little.* Thus, it is explained that the refusal of their hearts to listen to the true call is connected to the Divine creation, but not in the sense which they were claiming that they had no hand in it. Rather, Allāh has done it to them because of their disbelief and denial of truth, and consequently these people will not believe except a few of them. We have described in detail about this exception; they were afflicted with this Divine retribution as a society and nation. The whole group taken together is under that punishment and their hearts have been sealed and it is impossible for that society to believe in the Prophet, although a few of them may enter into the fold of Islam.

**QUR'ĀN:** *And for their disbelief and for their having uttered against Maryam a griveous calumny* : It refers to their calumny against Maryam (a.s.) that 'Īsā (a.s.) was a product of fornication. It is disbelief and false accusation all together; and 'Īsā (a.s.) had talked to them soon after his birth and said: *"Surely I am a servant of Allāh; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet."* (19:30).

**QUR'ĀN:** *And for their saying: "Surely we have killed the Messiah, 'Īsā son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allāh;" and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so (like 'Īsā):* It was described in the stories of 'Īsā (a.s.) in ch.3 that they had different versions concerning his killing: whether it was by crucifixion or some other means. Allāh first mentions their claim of killing the Messiah, then refutes their claim joining the killing and crucifixion together; probably this mode has been adopted for total refutation, in order to remove all possible doubts; crucifixion is a special method of torture but it does not necessarily lead to killing and when killing is mentioned, crucifixion doesn't come into mind. [Therefore, refuting killing and crucifixion together refutes the idea of 'Īsā's death altogether.]

If only the killing were refuted, it was possible to say that they had not killed him in normal way, that he could have been killed by crucifixion. That is why Allāh added after "they did not kill him" the words, "nor did they crucify him" to make the meaning utmost clear. Then He says explicitly that 'Īsā (a.s.) did not die on their hands, neither by crucifixion nor in any other way; rather it appeared to them so. They caught another person in place of the Messiah and killed him or crucified him. This could have happened easily in those circumstances; in such a riotous and barbaric mobs often the actual target slips away and some other person is held and beaten up. He was arrested by the Roman soldiers who had no full prior knowledge of his features and conditions; it was possible for them to catch someone else in his place. Moreover, there are traditions saying that Allāh had put his likeness on another person who was caught and killed in his place.

Some research scholars of history have written that the historical stories recorded about 'Īsā (a.s.) and the events connected with his call as well as the stories of his contemporaries among the rulers and preachers fit completely on two persons, both named the Messiah, and the time gap between them is of more than 500 years. The earlier one was the true Messiah but he was not killed and the later one was the false Messiah who was crucified. According to that scholar it is doubtful whether the present Christian calendar is correct. In that case, what the Qur'ān mentions as 'appearance' would refer to

the similarity of the Messiah, `Īsā son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allāh, with the crucified Messiah.<sup>22</sup>

*And most surely those who differ therein, that is, differ about `Īsā or about his killing: are only in doubt about it, that is, they are ignorant of his affairs, they have no knowledge respecting it; but only follow a conjecture, that is, they surmise according to what they have been told by others without firm knowledge: and certainly they killed him not, it may also be translated as: 'they did not kill him, I give you the confirmed news'.*

Someone has said that the pronoun 'him' in "they did not kill him" refers to knowledge in the preceding sentence, that is, they did not kill the knowledge certainly; according to the dictionary killing of knowledge means purifying it from doubt and suspicion. Some others have said that the pronoun refers to conjecture, that is, they did not verify their conjecture. These meanings are very strange and the Qur'ānic words do not tolerate them.<sup>23</sup>

**QUR'ĀN: Nay! Allāh raised him up to Himself; and Allāh is Mighty, Wise :** Allāh has narrated this story in the chapter of "The Family of `Imrān" where He says: *And when Allāh said: "O `Īsā! I am going to take you away completely and cause you to ascend unto Me" (3:55).* So, this verse mentions first his being taken away and then his being raised.

The context of the verse refutes their claim that they had killed and crucified `Īsā (a.s.). Rather he was protected from murder and crucifixion. Also, it is clear that the one about whom the claims of murder and crucifixion were made (i.e., `Īsā, [a.s.] with his body) was the one whom Allāh raised to Him and saved him from their conspiracy. In short, `Īsā (a.s.) was raised up with his body and soul together. It was not that he had died and then his soul was raised to Allāh, because the context of the verse doesn't agree with such a hypothesis; the adverb, 'rather', would be meaningless if it were to show that his soul was raised up after death, because such raising up could happen even after his murder or natural death.

This raising up was a sort of rescue with which Allāh saved him from their hands. [This verse by itself does not make it clear] whether

<sup>22</sup> Such hypothesis is not worthy of attention and should not be included in a serious book like ours. (tr.)

<sup>23</sup> Such far-fetched meanings serve only to create confusion in the minds of the readers. (tr.)

he had died at that time a natural death or by some means other than murder and crucifixion or was alive and Allāh had given him perpetual life in a way we do not know. It was not impossible for Allāh to give death to ʿĪsā (a.s.) and then raise him and protect him; or He could preserve his life in some extra-natural way.<sup>24</sup> This phenomenon is not different from other events described in the Qurʾān regarding ʿĪsā's miracles concerning his birth and his life among his people as well as the miracles of Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, Ṣāliḥ, and others. All that is in the same category; the Book of Allāh confirms those happenings so clearly that they cannot be ignored. Of course, some people had tried to reinterpret those miracles thinking that such supernatural events would nullify the general system of the cause and effect; in the first volume of this book, we have discussed in detail the phenomenon of miracle and supernatural events.<sup>25</sup>

However, the next verse proves or points that ʿĪsā (a.s.) is alive and has not died yet.

**QURʾĀN:** *And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Resurrection, he (ʿĪsā) shall be a witness against them* : The third person singular pronouns in "believe in him" and "he shall be" refer to ʿĪsā (a.s.). As for the pronoun in "before his death" there are various interpretations:

Some people have said: The pronoun refers to 'one' in "one of the People of the Book", meaning: each and every one among the People of the Book will believe in ʿĪsā (a.s.) before that one dies. It will become clear to him just before his death that ʿĪsā was the Messenger of Allāh and His servant; even though that faith at that time will not benefit him at all, and ʿĪsā will be a witness over them all on the Day of Judgement. It makes no difference whether they believed in him in a way that was beneficial to them or at a time when it was of no avail like believing at the time of death.

If we say that the pronoun "before his death" refers to ʿĪsā (a.s.), it would support what has been narrated in some traditions that ʿĪsā is

<sup>24</sup> This statement does not agree with the above explanation that the same one -ʿĪsā with his body and soul- who was claimed to have been killed and crucified was the one who was raised up. There was no need, after that clear and categorical declaration, to insert here these speculative possibilities and confuse the readers. (tr.)

<sup>25</sup> *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.1, pp.106-127 (tr.)



alive, has not died and that he will come down before the Day of Resurrection and then the People of the Book, the Jews and the Christians, will believe in him. But this interpretation particularizes, without any reason, the generality of the phrase, "and there is not one of the People of the Book". But according to this explanation, the verse would mean that only those People of the Book would believe in 'Īsā who would be present when he would come down from the heavens, while all others who came and went after his being raised and before his coming down would not believe in him. This restricts without any reason the general meaning of the verse.

However, some have opted for this explanation and said that the pronoun refers to 'Īsā (a.s.) and points to their belief in him at the time of his coming down from heaven in the last days. This view relies on a tradition as we have mentioned above.

But the verse with its two parts clearly shows that 'Īsā (a.s.) will be a witness on all of them on the Day of Resurrection as will all of them believe in him before death. And Allāh has quoted the speech of 'Īsā regarding this evidence in a particular way: *And I was a witness over them so long as I was among them; when You did take me up You were the watcher over them and You are witness over all things* (5:117). In this verse, 'Īsā limits his evidence for the period when he was alive among them before his being taken away, and the verse under discussion says that he would be a witness over all those who could believe in him; now if all would believe in him it means that he would not die but after all of them. This brings us to the second interpretation, that is, he is alive until now and he will return to them again so that they could believe in him. Utmost that can be said is that the one who will not be present when he will return to them second time will believe in him at the time of his death and the one who will be present at that time will have to believe in him whether willingly or under compulsion.

This verse coming after the Divine words: *and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so* (like 'Īsā); . . . *Rather Allāh raised him up to Himself, and Allāh is Mighty, Wise,* indicates that 'Īsā has not died and is still alive; because there seems no useful purpose in saying that all of them would believe in him under compulsion. This supports the view that their believing in 'Īsā before death refers to their believing in him before 'Īsā's death.

However, there are other verses which apparently go somehow against it. For example: *And when Allāh said: O 'Īsā! I am going to take you away completely and cause you to ascend unto Me and purify*

*you of those who disbelieve, and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve to the Day of Resurrection (3:55).* It shows that some disbelievers in ‘Īsā will continue upto the Day of Resurrection. Also, the verse: . . . *and their saying: "Our hearts are covered"; Nay! Allāh has set a seal upon them owing to their disbelieve, so they shall not believe except a little"*, shows that it is an affliction written against them, and their society, as a Jewish society, will not believe upto the Day of Resurrection. Also, the verse: *And I was a witness over them so long as I was among them; when You did take me up You were the watcher over them (5:117)*, shows that they will be continuing after ‘Īsā (a.s.) was taken away completely.

However, the fact is that these three verses do not go against the idea of ‘Īsā (a.s.) being alive. The verse: . . . *and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve to the Day of Resurrection*, doesn't say that they would continue upto the Day of Resurrection with their identity as the People of the Book. Likewise, the Divine words: *Nay! Allāh has set a seal upon them owing to their disbelief, so they shall not believe except a little*, only says that the true belief will not be accepted by all of them together and if at sometime they believed, that belief would cover only a few of them. Moreover, if the verse, "And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death", shows that they would believe in him before his death, it only mentions the belief, *per se*; it does not say that it would be an acceptable belief.

Likewise, the verse: *When You did take me up You were the watcher over them*, refers to the people, not to the Christians or the People of the Book, because the verse begins with these words: *And when Allāh will say: "O ‘Īsā son of Maryam! did you say to the people, take me and my mother two gods beside Allāh"* (5:116). Apart from that, ‘Īsā (a.s.), as one of the *ulu 'l-‘azm* Messengers, was sent to all the people, and when he will give evidence over their deeds it would cover the Israelites as well as others, whether they believed in him or continued as unbelievers.

In short, the verses, seen in their context and in conjunction with other related verses, show that ‘Īsā (a.s.) did not die; he was not killed nor crucified nor did he die a natural death as we have mentioned earlier and we have written on this subject under the verse: *O ‘Īsā! I am going to take you away completely . . . (3:55)* in the third volume of this book.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.6, pp.33-39. (tr.)

A very strange explanation has been given by az-Zamakhsharī in *Tafsīru 'l-kashshāf*. He says: "This verse could possibly be interpreted in this way that there is none among all the People of the Book but he will believe in 'Īsā (a.s.); Allāh will give them life in their graves at the time of coming down of 'Īsā (a.s.) and will inform them of his coming down and why he has come; so they will believe in him when their believing will give them no benefit. Is it not the belief of *ar-raj'ah* (الرَّجْعَةُ = partial return)?"

There are some other unsound explanations written for this verse:

1. az-Zajjāj appears to think that the pronoun, "before his death" refers to the individual man of the Book. In other words, all of them unitedly say that we believe in that 'Īsā (a.s.) who will appear in later days. It is a ridiculous interpretation because the verses describe their claim of killing and crucifying 'Īsā (a.s.) and refutes that claim. It does not deal directly with their disbelief in 'Īsā (a.s.) and it has no connection with their accepting that the Messiah will appear in the later days to revive and restore the honour of the Israeli nation. Moreover, if that were the intended meaning, there was no need to say "before his death" because the meaning would have been clear without this phrase, and the same would be the case with the sentence. *And on the day of Resurrection he ('Īsā) shall be a witness over them*, because there would be no need for such a statement at all.

2. Some exegetes have said that the verse means: and there is no one of the Book but he must certainly believe in Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) before the death of that man of the Book.

It is just like the previous explanation in absurdity, because there was no mention of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) in the preceding verses, so that the pronoun could refer to him; nor is this interpretation relevant to the theme of the verses. So, it is a claim without any proof. Of course, this meaning has been given in some traditions as we will read in the coming traditions but that is on the principle of the Qur'ān as we shall describe; and such applications have been given very often in traditions as is known to everyone who looks minutely in such traditions.

**QUR'ĀN: *Wherefore for the inequity of those who are Jews, We did forbid them those good things which had been made lawful for them, . . .*** : "Wherefore" shows that the coming statement is a result of what has been described so far. "Inequity" has been used as a common noun to show the greatness of their injustice or to cover it in

vagueness (because no important purpose depends on indentifying their inequities). This one word refers to some of their transgressions and inequities mentioned earlier. It doesn't refer to all the inequities mentioned above but only to some of them. Allāh had forbidden some of the good things to them because of that inequity, and it was forbidden in the *sharī'ah* of Mūsā which was revealed in the Torah; while some of the inequities were committed by them long after Mūsā, for example, slandering Maryam (a.s.), etc. That is why we have said that the word, 'inequity', refers to some of their great transgressions because of which some good things were forbidden to them after they had been made lawful.

The verse goes on to say: *and for their hindering many from Allāh's way.* it refers to their repeated deviation from the way of Allāh: *And for their taking interest, though indeed they were forbidden it, and their devouring the property of people wrongfully.*

**QUR'ĀN:** *And We have prepared for the unbelievers from among them a painful chastisement* : It is in conjunction with: *We did forbid them.* Because of their inequities, they had attracted two punishments from Allāh; one in this world which affected all of them and that was the forbidding of some previously legalised good things; the other concerns the life hereafter which is reserved for the unbelievers among them and that is a painful chastisement.

**QUR'ĀN:** *But the firmly rooted in knowledge among them and the believers believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you, and those who keep up prayers and those who give the zakāt and the believers in Allāh and the Last Day, these it is whom We will give a Mighty reward* : It is a sort of exception and emendation separating some persons from the People of the Book. "The firmly rooted in knowledge" and "the believers" are the subject and "believe" is predicate; "among them" is connected with "the firmly rooted in knowledge" and "among" shows partialness.

Apparently, the word "the believers" too has a connection with "among them". thus the meaning will be: but the firmly rooted in knowledge and the true believers from among the People of the Book believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you. This meaning gets support from the next verse which says: *Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nūḥ...* Apparently, the verse wants to say that they have believed in you because they have realised that your prophethood and the revelation

which We have sent to you is similar to the revelation which was brought to them by the previous prophets of Allāh, Nūḥ and the prophets after him, and the prophets from the progeny of Ibrāhīm and progeny of Ya‘qūb and the others whose stories we have not told you and there is no difference between these revelations.

You will appreciate that this meaning is more appropriate for the believers among the People of the Book than for the believers from the Arabs about whom Allāh has said: *That you may warn a people whose fathers were not warned, so they are heedless* (36:6).

"And those who keep up prayers" is in conjunction with "the firmly rooted in knowledge", but unlike the "firmly rooted" it is in accusative case to emphasize their praise. Likewise, "those who give the *zakāt*" is in conjunction with the same. "The believers in Allāh and the Last Day" is the subject and "these it is whom We will give a mighty reward" is its predicate. In the Qur’ān of Ibn Mas‘ūd, "those who keep up prayers" was in nominative case and according to that, all the four adjectival phrases would be the subject, and "these it is whom We will give a mighty reward" its predicate.

aṭ-Ṭabrisī has said in *Majma‘u ‘l-bayān* : "The grammarians have differed as to why 'those who keep up prayers' has been revealed in accusative case. Sībawayh and the scholars of Baṣrah have said that it is meant so to describe their praise." [Then after mentioning some other interpretations, he says:] "There is a narration of ‘Urwah from ‘Ā’ishah that he asked her about the Divine words, 'those who keep up prayers', and, *the Sabeans* [5:69], and, *these two are certainly two sorcerers* [20:63], and she said, 'O my nephew! this is the work of the scribes; they made mistakes in writing'. And there is a narration from some of them [‘Uthmān] that, 'there are some [ungrammatical] words in the Book of Allāh and the Arabs will soon correct it by their tongues.' And some of them has said that the phrase: 'those who keep up prayers' was in the nominative case in the Qur’ān of Ibn Mas‘ūd. But such reports are not worthy of attention; the companions could not teach the people wrong recitals because they were the leaders and had learnt the words of the Qur’ān from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.)."

The phrase, "but the firmly rooted in knowledge", is the exception from the People of the Book. As we have explained earlier, their demand from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he should bring down to them a book from heaven meant that what the prophet had brought to them – the Book and the Wisdom – which confirmed the Divine communications revealed to the Prophets and Messengers before him, was not enough to attract them to the truth and prove its veracity,

while in reality the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had not brought to them but what the prophets before him had brought to their people and he lived among them and with them exactly as they had lived among and with their people. Allāh says: *Say: "I am not first of the Messengers . . ."* (46:9); *And We did not send before you any but men to whom We sent revelation, so ask the followers of the Reminder if you do not know. And We did not make them bodies not eating the food, and they were not to abide (for ever) . . . certainly We have revealed to you a Book in which is your good remembrance; what! do you not then understand?* (21:7-10).

Thus, Allāh describes about those People of the Book that they do not have a disposition to follow the truth nor they are firm in their views; they have no determination nor any opinion. There were many clear signs which they neglected and many calls to the truth from which they hindered the people. Of course, those among them who are firmly rooted in knowledge (because of their firmness in their knowledge and the clarity of the truth before their eyes), and likewise, those who are true believers among them (because they are disposed to follow the truth), these two groups of people believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you, as they have found out that what has been revealed to you is similar to what was revealed to all the prophets before you – Nūḥ and other prophets who came after him.

It appears from the above that:

**First:** The reason why those People of the Book who followed the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) have been given the adjectives "firmly rooted in knowledge", and "the believers". The previous verses have adversely commented on the People of the Book that they are not firmly rooted in what they have known, are not firm on any truth even if it was entrusted to them with very firm covenants, and they do not believe on the communications of Allāh and hinder people from them even when clear proofs have come to them. In this backdrop, these people whom Allāh has excepted are firmly rooted in knowledge and true believers.

**Second:** The reason why the previously revealed Books have been mentioned with the Qur'ān in the phrase, "believe in what has been revealed to you and what has been revealed before you". The purpose is to show that there is no difference between the two revelations.

**Third:** The Divine words in the coming verse: *Surely We have revealed to you as We have revealed to Nūḥ and the prophets after him*", describe the reason of the belief of these believers.

**QUR'ĀN: Surely We have revealed to you as We have revealed to Nūḥ and the Prophets after him, . . . :** As we have said just now, it gives the reason for their belief. The meaning: They have believed in what has been revealed to you because We have not given you any new thing, new claim or new aspect which was not found with the previous prophets. The whole affair runs on one system without any difference. We have revealed to you as We have revealed to Nūḥ and the prophets after him. Nūḥ was the first prophet to come with the Book and a *sharī'ah*. It is the same as We revealed to Ibrāhīm and later to his progeny. These People of the Book know them and understand how they were sent and how they called their people to the Right Path; some were given a Book as Dāwūd was given Zabūr [Psalms] which was a prophetic revelation. Mūsā was addressed directly and that was another type of prophetic revelation; and there were others like Ismā'īl, Ishāq and Ya'qūb who were sent without any Book and they too received prophetic revelations.

Whatever their peculiarities, all of them were messengers giving good news of Divine reward and warning against Divine punishment. Allāh had sent them to complete His proof against the people, as they were to explain what was beneficial for them in this life and the hereafter and what was harmful, in order that the people should not have any proof against Allāh after coming of the messengers.

**QUR'ĀN: the tribes, . . . :** It was explained under the verse: *and Ya'qūb and the tribes* (3:84) that the word refers to the prophets from the progeny of Ya'qūb.

**QUR'ĀN: and We gave to Dāwūd Zabūr . . . :** It is said that the word *az-Zabūr* means 'the written'; they say *Zabarahu* (زَبَّرَهُ = he wrote it), thus *az-Zabūr* is synonymous with *al-mazbūr* (الْمَزْبُورُ = the written).

**QUR'ĀN: (We sent) messengers as the givers of good news and as warners, . . . :** As translated, the word "messengers" is the object and "givers of good news and warners" are its adjectives. It may also be translated as: The messengers, the givers of good news and the warners; in which case all three words will be circumstantial words.

In ch.2 vr.213 (in vol.2)<sup>27</sup>, we have extensively discussed the meaning of sending of the messengers and completion of proof by Allāh against the people, and that the reason alone is not sufficient to guide the people on the right path unless the prophets are sent with Divine Laws.

**QUR'ĀN: *and Allāh is Mighty, Wise*** : When unlimited power and unlimited wisdom is reserved for Allāh, then it is impossible for anyone to prevail over Him in argument. Rather, the conclusive proofs are with Him. Allāh says: *Say: "Then Allāh's is the conclusive argument"* (6:149).

**QUR'ĀN: *But Allāh bears witness by what He has revealed to you that He has revealed it with His Knowledge; and the angels bear witness (also); and sufficient is Allāh for a witness*** : It is sort of isolated exception from the rejection of their demand that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) should bring down to them a Book from the heaven. What Allāh has described in refutation of their demand beginning with: *So indeed they had demanded of Mūsā a greater thing . . .*, means that their demand has been rejected. The reason for the rejection is that whatever has been brought by the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) through the Divine Revelation is certainly not different from the revelations brought by all other prophets. Whoever claims that he believes in what was brought by those prophets is duty – bound to believe in what has been brought by this prophet – without any difference. Now, Allāh adds that He bears witness by what He has revealed to His Prophet and the angels bear witness too and Allāh is sufficient for a witness. The item witnessed is that "He has revealed it with His knowledge". Merely coming down from the heavens was not sufficient to prove the claim because it could have been done through satanic agencies. The Satan could have polluted the affairs of Divine guidance by opening in front a wrong path in place of the right one; or he could have mixed some falsity in the Divine revelation to confuse the minds. Allāh has pointed to such pollution by refuting it in these words: *The Knower of the unseen! so He does not reveal His secrets to any, except to him whom He chooses as a messenger; for surely He makes a guard to march before him and after him, so that He may know that they have truly delivered the messages of their Lord, and He encompasses what is with them, and He records the number of all things* (72:26-28).

<sup>27</sup> *al-Mīzān*, (Eng.), vol.3, pp.167-227 (tr.)



Also, Allāh says: . . . *and most surely the Satans inspire their friends . . .* (6:121). In short, giving witness for coming down of, or sending down the Book, still leaves the claim somewhat in ambiguity; but the words, "with His Knowledge", make the meaning crystal clear, and show that Allāh has revealed it to His Messenger, and He knew what He was revealing; He encompasses him and protects him from deception of the Satan.

This witness is for revelation and revelation was through the angels, as is clear from the words of Allāh: *Say: "Whoever is the enemy of Gabriel: for surely he revealed it to your heart by Allāh's command . . ."* (2:97); and He has said describing this honoured angel: *Most surely it is the Word of an honoured Messenger, the possessor of strength, an honourable place with the Lord of the Dominion, One (to be) obeyed, and faithful in trust* (81:19-21). The adjective, "one (to be) obeyed", shows that there are other angels under his command and it is they who are mentioned in ch.80, vrs.11-16: *Nay! Surely it is an admonishment. So let him who pleases mind it; in honourable books, exalted, purified in the hands of (Our) ambassadors, noble, virtuous.* In short, as the angels were the means of bringing the revelation to the Prophet, so they too are witnesses like Allāh and Allāh is sufficient as a witness.

To see how Allāh has borne witness for the Qur'ān, we should look into the verses which have thrown challenges to the adversaries. For example: *Say: "If men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of this Qur'ān, they could not bring the like of it, though some of them were aiders of others"* (17:88); *Do they not then meditate on the Qur'ān? And if it were from any other than Allāh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy* (4:82); *Say: "Then bring a chapter like this and invite whom you can besides Allāh, if you are truthful."* (10:38).

**QUR'ĀN: Surely (as for) those who disbelieve and hinder (men) from Allāh's way they indeed have strayed off into a remote error :**

The preceding verses have described the convincing argument for the messengership of His Messenger showing that his Book was revealed from Allāh; also that it is the same sort of revelation that was sent to the prophets before him, and that it is accompanied by the witness of Allāh and His angels, and enough is He for a witness. Now, this verse establishes the error of those who disbelieve in Him and hinder others even if they are from the People of the Book.

The speech started with the topic of revelation of the Book from Allāh. Now, the word, 'Book', has been changed to Allāh's way (*hinder men from Allāh's way*). This simple change has beautifully abbreviated a lengthy premises. It is as though it says: Surely, as for those who disbelieve and hinder men from this Book and from the revelation it contains, they are the disbelievers who hinder people from Allāh's way, and those who disbelieve and hinder men from Allāh's way . . .

**QUR'ĀN:** *Surely (as for) those who disbelieve and act unjustly, Allāh will not forgive them nor guide them to a path, except the path of hell, to abide in it forever, and this easy to Allāh* : It re-emphasizes the reality mentioned in the preceding verse. Accordingly, injustice would point to their hindering men from the way of Allāh as is clear in this context. Also, possibly this verse gives the reason of their straying into a remote error. The meaning is clear.

### TRADITIONS

It is narrated in *Tafsīru 'l-burhān* under the Divine words: *and for their having uttered against Maryam a grivious calumny*, from Ibn Bābawayh through his chain from 'Alqamah that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said, *inter alia*, in a *ḥadīth* : "Did not they ascribe to Maryam bint 'Imrān that she was pregnant by a carpenter named Yūsuf?"

al-Qummī writes under the words of Allāh: *And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death*. "Narrated to me my father, from al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad, from Sulaymān ibn Dāwūd al-Minqarī, from Abū Ḥamzah, from Shahr ibn Ḥawshab that he said, 'al-Ḥajjāj said to me, "O Shahr! one verse of the Book of Allāh has fatigued me." I said, "O Amīr! which verse is it?" He said, "The verse: *And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death*. By Allāh! certainly I sentence a Jew or a Christian and he is beheaded. And I stare at him but I don't see him moving his lips until he dies." I said, "May Allāh ameliorates the Amīr! This verse doesn't mean what you have interpreted." He said, "How is it?" I said, "Surely 'Īsā will come down to this world before the Day of Resurrection. Then no follower of any religion, Jew or non-Jew, will remain but he would believe in him before his death and he will pray behind al-Mahdī." He said, "Woe unto thee! From where did you get it, and whence have

you brought it" I said, "Narrated it to me Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s.)." He said, "By Allāh! you have brought it from a pristine spring." (at-Tafsīr)

as-Suyūṭī writes: Ibnu 'l-Mundhir has narrated from Shahr ibn Ḥawshab that he said, "al-Ḥajjāj said to me, 'O Shahr! There is a verse in the Book of Allāh that whenever I read it, something happens against it in my mind. Allāh has said: *And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death*; and prisoners are brought before me and I kill them but I do not hear them saying anything.' I said to him, 'This has not been explained to you in a correct way. When a Christian dies, the angels hit from the front and from behind and say: "O wicked! The Messiah about whom you believed that he was god or son of god or one of the three persons is (in fact) servant of Allāh, His Spirit and His Word." So, he believes when his belief would not benefit him at all. And when a Jew dies, the angels hit him from the front and from behind and say: "O wicked! The Messiah whom you thought that you had killed him is (in fact) the servant of Allāh and His Spirit." So, he believes in 'Īsā when that belief would not benefit him at all. At the time of coming down of 'Īsā, the living People of the Book will believe in him as their dead ones had believed.' He said, 'From where have you taken it?' I said, 'From Muḥammad ibn 'Alī.' He said, 'Surely you have taken it from its mine.'" Then Shahr said, "By Allāh! No one had narrated it to me except Umm Salamah; but I liked to irritate him." (ad-Durru 'l-manthūr)

**The author says:** as-Suyūṭī has also narrated it in abbreviated form from 'Abd ibn Ḥamīd and Ibnu 'l-Munthir, from Shahr ibn Ḥawshab, from Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (and that is Ibnu 'l-Ḥanafīyyah). Apparently, Shahr ibn Ḥawshab had narrated from Muḥammad ibn 'Alī but the later narrators differed in identification whether it was Ibnu 'l-Ḥanafīyyah or al-Bāqir (a.s.). However, as you see the tradition supports the explanation we gave earlier for this verse.

as-Suyūṭī says: Aḥmad, al-Bukhārī, Muslim and al-Bayhaqī (in *al-Asmā' wa 'ṣ-ṣifāt*) have narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, "How will your condition be when the Son of Maryam will descend among you and your Imām will be from among you?" (*ibid.*)

Ibn Marduwayh has narrated from Abū Hurayrah that he said: The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said, "It is not far that will

descend among you the son of Maryam, a just ruler; he will kill Dajjāl and the pig, and will break the cross, and will remove the *jizyah* and will take over the property and there will be one *sajdah* for Allāh, the Lord of the worlds. Read if you want: *And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death*, before the death of 'Īsā son of Maryam." (Abū Hurayrah repeated this phrase three times) (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** There are nearly *mutawātir* traditions describing descension of 'Īsā (a.s.) at the time of the appearance of al-Mahdī (a.s.) from the Sunnī chains of narrators and likewise, from the Shī'ī chains from the Prophet and the Imāms of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.).

al-Hārith ibn Mughīrah narrates from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Resurrection, he ('Īsā) shall be a witness over them* that he said, "It means the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)

**The author says:** Its apparent meaning goes against the apparent context of the verses which deal with the affairs of 'Īsā (a.s.). Yet, it is possible to justify it on the principle of the flow of the Qur'ān. Then the meaning will be as follows: When the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was sent and he brought a Book and a *sharī'ah* which abrogated the *sharī'ah* of 'Īsā (a.s.), then it was incumbent on all the People of the Book to believe in him, and the belief in Muḥammad included the belief in 'Īsā and other preceding prophets. Now, if a man of the Book comes to realize at the time of his death after the advent of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) that 'Īsā (a.s.) was true messenger then that realization will come together with the realization of the veracity of Muḥammad's messengership. In this way, a man of the Book would only be counted as believing in 'Īsā (a.s.) if he believed in Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) in the first place and in 'Īsā (a.s.) as a secondary matter. It is Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), after the advent of Islam, in whom every man of the Book should believe in reality and it is he who will be a witness over them on the Day of Resurrection although, 'Īsā (a.s.)'s position is similar to this and there is no contradiction in both beliefs; and the following tradition somewhat shows the same meaning.

Ibn Sinān narrates from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) concerning the words of Allāh: *And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Resurrection, he ('Īsā) shall be a witness over them*, that he said, "The

belief of the People of the Book will be for Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.)." (*ibid.*)

Jābir narrates from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said concerning the same verse, "There is no one from all the religions but, when dying, he certainly sees the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and the Commander of the Believers (a.s.), be he from the ancient ones or the later (people)." (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** Obviously, the tradition is based on the flow of the Qur’ān. Apart from that, the tradition does not say clearly that what the Imām (a.s.) had mentioned was as an exegesis of the verse; there is a possibility that it was a separate matter which the Imām described when speaking on this verse. We may find such examples in the traditions.

al-Mufaḍḍal ibn ‘Umar said, "I asked Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death.* The Imām (a.s.) said, "This verse was revealed especially about us. No one from the progeny of Fāṭimah dies and departs from this world until he acknowledges the Imām and his Imāmate; as the sons of Ya‘qūb acknowledged (the superiority of) Yūsuf when they said: *"By Allāh! Allāh has certainly chosen you over us."* [12:91]." (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** The tradition is a solitary one and it is *mursal*. There are other traditions of the same meaning which have been narrated under the words of Allāh: *Then We made inheritors of the Book those whom We chose from among Our servants; and of them is he who causes himself to suffer a loss, and of them is he who follows the middle course, and of them is he who is the foremost in goodness by Allāh's permission: This is that which is the greatest excellence (35:32);* and we shall write there on this topic in detail, God willing.

Zurārah and Ḥumrān have narrated from Abū Ja‘far and Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) that they said: *"Surely We have revealed to you as We have revealed to Nūḥ and the prophets after him. Thus every revelation was gathered for him (Muḥammad, s.a.w.a.)."* (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** Apparently, it means that the revelation sent to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was not unfamiliar to them which would have caused deviation from the path and difference in the prophetic call. It doesn't mean that every revelation sent to every prophet with all its peculiarities was sent to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.),

because such a notion has no meaning. Nor does it mean that the revelation sent to him is so comprehensive that all previous *sharī'ahs* are included in it, because the topic of the verse is unrelated to this them. The following tradition supports the meaning given by us.

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chains from Muḥammad ibn Sālim that Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said, "Allāh said to Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.): *Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nūḥ and the prophets after him; and every prophet was ordered (to follow) the way and (the good) custom.*" (*al-Kāfī*)

Abū Ḥamzah ath-Thumālī narrates from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said, "And there were between Adam and Nūḥ prophets unknown and manifest and for this reason, they were not mentioned in the Qur'ān, they were not named as the manifest prophets have been named and this is the meaning of the words of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great: *And messengers We have mentioned unto you, and Allāh spoke to Mūsā; directly discoursing* [4:164]. It means that I have not named the hidden prophets as I have named the manifest ones." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)

**The author says:** This tradition has been narrated in *al-Kāfī* from 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, from his father, from al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb, from Muḥammad ibn Fuḍayl, from Abū Ḥamzah, from Abū Ja'far (a.s.); and that tradition says: "There were among the prophets who remained concealed and that is why they were not mentioned in the Qur'ān, they were not named as were named the manifest prophets; and this is the word of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great: *And messengers We have (already) mentioned to you before and messengers We have not mentioned to you.*" It means that I have not named the hidden prophets as I have named the manifest ones. In any case, the tradition means to say that Allāh did not mention the stories or the names of those prophets who had remained unknown, while He has mentioned the stories of some of the well-known prophets and named some of them. The words "It means that I have not named the hidden prophets . . ." could possibly be from the narrators.

Abū Ḥamzah ath-Thumālī says, "I heard Abū Ja'far (a.s.) saying: *'But Allāh bears witness by what He has revealed to you about 'Alī, that He has revealed it with His knowledge; and the angels bear witness (also); and sufficient is Allāh for a witness.'*" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)

**The author says:** al-Qummī has narrated this theme in his *at-Tafsīr* through his chain of narrators from Abū Baṣīr, from Abū

‘Abdillāh (a.s.). It is based on the flow of the Qur’ān and applies the verse on a proper example; because there are in the Qur’ān verses which were revealed concerning the *wilāyah* of ‘Alī (a.s.). It doesn’t want to say that there was alteration in the Qur’ān; nor can it be taken to be a particular recital of this verse by the Imām (a.s.).

Likewise, it has been narrated in *al-Kāfi* and *at-Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) and in *at-Tafsīr* of al-Qummī from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) that they recited: "*Surely (as for) those who disbelieve and do injustice to the progeny of Muḥammad (usurping) their right, Allāh is not going to forgive them; (4:168).*" Also it has been narrated in *Majma‘u ‘l-bayān* from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said about the words of Allāh: "*Surely, the Messenger (Muḥammad) has come to you with truth, that is, with the wilāyah of him whose wilāyah Allāh has ordered.* All these traditions are to be interpreted like the previous one.

\* \* \* \* \*

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ  
الرَّسُولُ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَآمِنُوا خَيْرًا لَكُمْ وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا  
فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٧٠﴾  
يَتَأَهَّلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَعْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا  
عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ  
اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ  
وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةً انْتَهَوْا خَيْرًا لَكُمْ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَهٌ  
وَاحِدٌ سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ  
وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٧١﴾ لَنْ يَسْتَنْكِفَ  
الْمَسِيحُ أَنْ يَكُونَ عَبْدًا لِلَّهِ وَلَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ  
وَمَنْ يَسْتَنْكِفْ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيَسْتَكْبِرْ فَسَيَحْشُرُهُمْ  
إِلَيْهِ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٧٢﴾ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ  
فَيُوفِّيهِمْ أَجْرَهُمْ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ؕ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ



أَسْتَكْفُوا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فَيُعَذِّبُهُمُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا وَلَا  
 يَجِدُونَ لَهُمْ مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿١٧٣﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ  
 قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بُرْهَانٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٧٤﴾  
 فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِهِ ۖ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ  
 فِي رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمًا ﴿١٧٥﴾

*O people! Surely the Messenger has come to you with the truth from your Lord, therefore believe, (it shall be) good for you; and if you disbelieve, then surely whatever is in the heavens and the earth is Allāh's; and Allāh is Knowing, Wise (170). O People of the Book! do not exceed the limits in your religion and do not speak about Allāh except the truth; the Messiah, 'Isā son of Maryam is only a Messenger of Allāh and His Word which He conveyed to Maryam and a spirit from Him; believe therefore in Allāh and His messengers, and say not, Three. Desist, it is better for you; Allāh is only one God: far be it from His glory that He should have a son; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; and Allāh is sufficient for a Protector (171). The Messiah does by no means disdain that he should be a servant of Allāh, nor do the angels who are near to Him, and whoever disdains His worship and is proud, He will gather them all together to Himself (172). Then as for those who believe and do good, He will pay them fully their rewards and give them more out of His grace; and as for those who disdain and are proud, He will chastise them with a painful chastisement. And they shall not find for themselves besides Allāh a guardian or a helper (173). O people! Surely there has come to you manifest proof from your Lord and We have sent to you clear light (174). Then as for those who believe in Allāh and hold fast by Him, He will cause them to enter into His mercy and grace and guide them to Himself on a straight path (175).*

\* \* \* \* \*

### COMMENTARY

In previous section Allāh had rebutted their demand to His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) that he should bring to them a book from the heaven; and clearly stated that the Messenger has come with truth from his Lord, and the Book which he has brought from Him was a convincing proof in which there was no doubt. Consequently, it was perfectly right to call in this section all the people to believe in the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and the Book brought by him.

It was also described that all His messengers and prophets, including ‘Īsā (a.s.), were sent on one pattern, with similar framework and comparable religion; and that was the pattern of revelation from Allāh. It was but natural that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) should call the Christians (being the People of the Book and revelation) not to exceed the limit in their religion; rather they should join hands with all other monotheist believers by believing about ‘Īsā (a.s.) what they and others do believe about other prophets: that they were the servants of Allāh and messengers to His creation.

Allāh has begun this section of His speech by calling all the people to believe in His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) because the previous section had clearly described the truth of his prophethood when He has said: *Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nūḥ and the prophets after him . . .*

Then He calls them not to exceed the limit concerning ‘Īsā (a.s.) because ‘Īsā’s status has been described in the above verses.

Then He calls them to follow His Book, that is the Honoured Qur’ān, because it was described clearly in the last part of the previous section: *But Allāh bears witness by what He has revealed to you that He has revealed it with His knowledge . . .*

**QUR’ĀN: *O people! Surely the Messenger has come to you with the truth from your Lord, therefore believe, (it shall be) good for you*** : It is addressed to all the people, be they the People of the Book, or others, and it branches out from the previous speech addressed to the People of the Book. Now, the talk is addressed to the whole mankind because the Prophet's messengership was all-encompassing and the belief in the Messenger was incumbent for all.

The phrase, *khayran lakum* (خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ) = translated here as: [it shall be] good for you) is grammatically the circumstantial clause of the

verb 'believe'. It is a concomitant condition and would literally mean: believe as it is inseparable virtue of belief that it is good for you.

**QUR'ĀN:** *and if you disbelieve, then surely whatever is in the heavens and the earth is Allāh's; and Allāh is Knowing, Wise :* If you disbelieve, that disbelief will not increase anything to you nor decrease anything from Allāh. Everything that is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allāh. It is impossible for anyone to take away anything from Allāh because it exclusively belongs to Him. All that is in the heavens and the earth is by nature a property of Allāh who has no partner or colleague. To say that a thing exists, is exactly the same as saying that it belongs to Allāh. How can a thing be removed from Allāh's Ownership as long as it exists

This verse is a comprehensive and all-encompassing speech; the deeper you contemplate it, the finer the points come before your eyes; and a comprehensive and wondrous vista appears before you. When you will look at the comprehensive Ownership of Allāh which covers the things and their effects, you will find out wonderful connotations of belief and disbelief, obedience and disobedience. It will do you good to ponder on it more and more.

**QUR'ĀN:** *O People of the Book! do not exceed the limits in your religion and do not speak about Allāh except the truth; . . . :* Apparently, it is addressed to the Christians because it describes the affairs of the Messiah (a.s.). They have been addressed with the words "People of the Book" which is a common adjective covering Jews and Christians both. But it was preferred because their being among the People of Book demands that they should not exceed the limit of what Allāh has revealed and explained in His Books, and one of the things described therein is that they should not speak about Allāh except the truth.

Also, it could be an address to both the Jews and the Christians because the Jews too were not different from the Christians in their exceeding in religion and speaking about Allāh other than truth, as Allāh has said: *And the Jews say: "Uzayr is the son of Allāh!"* (9:30). Also, He says: *They have taken their scholars and their monks for Lords besides Allāh* (9:31); *Say: "O People of the Book! come to a word, common between us and you . . . and (that) some of us shall not take others for Lords besides Allāh* (3:64).

In view of this interpretation, the words: *the Messiah, 'Īsā son of Maryam is only a Messenger of Allāh . . .* narrows the talk after its

generality, by addressing a particular group of the audience regarding its particular straying. However, this view does not correspond with the context: The words, "the Messiah, 'Īsā son of Maryam is only a Messenger of Allāh . . . ", give apparently the reason for the preceding clause, "do not exceed the limits in your religion". [As the two sentences are connected together, it follows that the verse is addressed to the Christians only.] The title, "the Messiah", has been further explained with the words, "'Īsā son of Maryam"; this explicit mention of his and his mother's names prevents the word, Messiah, to be explained or applied to some other person. Also, it proves that he was a human being, created, like any human being born of his mother. *and His Word which He conveyed to Maryam*: it explains the meaning of the 'word'; he was the word 'Be', which was conveyed to Maryam. His creation had not taken place through normal causes like marriage and father. Allāh says: *Allāh creates what He pleases; when He has decreed a matter, He only says to it: "B" and it is* (3:47). In fact, everything is the word of Allāh; however, other things come into being through the agency of normal cause, while 'Īsā (a.s.) was born without some of the normal causes. That is why he was called "the Word". *and a spirit from Him*: The spirit is from the command. Allāh says: *Say: "The soul is from the command of my Lord . . . "* (17:85); as 'Īsā (a.s.) was the creative word, "Be" and it is a command, therefore, he was called "the spirit". We have discussed this verse in detail in the third volume of this book.<sup>28</sup>

**QUR'ĀN: believe therefore in Allāh and His messengers, and say not, Three. Desist, it is better for you; Allāh is only one God :** It is based on the beginning clauses and springs from the words: *the Messiah, 'Īsā son of Maryam is only a Messenger of Allāh*. In this situation, you are obligated to believe in the prescribed way, that is, belief in Allāh and His Lordship and His messengers (including 'Īsā [a.s.]) and their prophethood. "and say not, Three." Desist from the belief in trinity. This desistance or this belief in Allāh and His messengers and rejection of trinity is good for you. "Three" refers to the three persons of trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. We have discussed it in detail in the third chapter, "The Family of 'Imrān".

**QUR'ĀN: far be it from His glory that He should have a son; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; . . . :**

<sup>28</sup> *al-Mīzān*, (Eng.), vol.6, p.12. (tr.)

*Subhāna* (سُبْحَانَ = translated here as "far be it from His glory"). Grammatically, it is a cognate accusative for emphasis, with its verb, *usabbiḥu* (أُسَبِّحُ = I glorify) omitted but understood; "that He should have a son" is attached to that accusative case. The meaning is: I glorify Him to the utmost degree that He should have a son. This is a paranthetical clause for acknowledging the glory of Allāh. "Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His". It could be circumstantial clause or an independent sentence. Anyhow, it gives the proof why Allāh has no son. A son resembles the father in the origin of his person and existence and development of his body. When all that is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allāh in its person and effects, and when He manages everything alone, then nothing in the universe can resemble Him. Consequently, nothing can be called "His offspring".

The connotation is that no existing thing can be called Allāh's son; as such, the words, "whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth", are an extended metaphor to show that everything other than Allāh belongs to Him. (The heavens and the earth themselves are included in this argument while they are not in the heavens or in the earth.

This verse contains imperative and prohibitive orders and gives a comprehensive guidance to their good in this world and the hereafter. That is why the speech ends with the words: *and Allāh is sufficient for a Protector*. He is your guardian, manages your affairs, guides you to what is good for you and calls you to the straight path.

**QUR'ĀN: *The Messiah does by no means disdain that he should be a servant of Allāh, nor do the angels who are near to Him*** : It is another argument for refutation of divinity of Messiah (a.s.), no matter whether he is supposed to be son of God or one of the three persons of God. The Messiah is a servant of Allāh and he by no means disdains worshipping Allāh; even the Christians do not deny it as the Gospels found with them explicitly say that he was worshipping Allāh; and it is unimaginable that a son who is similar to his father in origin and make-up would worship him; nor that he would worship his own self; nor for one of the three persons of trinity to worship the other two when he is equal in rank to them. We have already explained it while describing the affairs of 'Īsā (a.s.) in the third chapter, "The Family of 'Imrān".

The words, "nor do the angels who are near (to Him)", extend the talk to the angels because the argument exactly applies to them

too, as the polytheists of Arabia used to say that they were the daughters of Allāh. The sentence is a digression from the main topic.

The verse refers to 'Īsā (a.s.) as the Messiah and describes the angels as the near ones; and in this way alludes to the reason why they would not disdain Allāh's worship. How can 'Īsā disdain the worship of Allāh when he is the Messiah; anointed and blessed; or the angels when they are near to Allāh? Had there been any possibility of their disdaining Allāh's worship, Allāh would not have blessed 'Īsā nor brought the angels nearer. By the way, Allāh has depicted Messiah too as the one near to Allāh, as He says: . . . *worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter and of those who are made near (to Allāh)*, (3:45).

**QUR'ĀN: *and whoever disdains His worship and is proud, He will gather them all together to Himself. . . .*** : It points to the condition of the Messiah and the angels, and gives the reason why they wouldn't disdain His worship. How can they do so when they know that those who disdain His worship and are proud – be they human beings, jinn or angels – will be gathered all together to Him and will be requited according to their deeds? The Messiah and the angels believe in Him and fear Him and know these realities.

We have said that the words, "and whoever disdains His worship and is proud" show that the Messiah and the near angels are fully aware that the disdainers shall be gathered to Him all together. This idea is depicted by the word, "and is proud". Mere disdaining, if it is not the result of pride, does not attract Divine wrath, as happens in those who are ignorant or weak; but if the Messiah and the angels were to disdain His worship it would only be a result of pride because they know the status of their Lord. The meaning of the verse would be that they are well aware that "whoever disdains His worship and is proud . . ."

The words, "will gather them all together" encompass good servants as well as bad ones. This paves the way for the categorization coming in the next verse: *Then as for those who believe and do good, He will pay them fully their rewards and give them more out of His grace; and as for those who disdain and are proud, He will chastise them with a painful chastisement.*

**QUR'ĀN: *And they shall not find for themselves besides Allāh a guardian or a helper*** : The negation of guardian or helper stands face to face with their belief in Divinity of Messiah and the angels.

**QUR'ĀN: *O people! Surely there has come to you manifest proof from your Lord and We have sent to you clear light*** : ar-Rāghib has said: "*al-Burhān* (الْبُرْهَان = exposition of argument). It is on the paradigm of *fu'lān* [ فُعْلَان ] like *ar-rujḥān* [الرُّجْحَان]. Some people say that it is a verbal noun of *baraha*, *yabrahū* [بَرَهُ، يَبْرَهُ = it became white])." In any case, it is a verbal noun. Sometimes, it is used in the meaning of active participle, e.g., when it is used for the argument and proof itself.

The light refers to the Qur'ān as the word "sent down to you" shows. Possibly, the "manifest proof" also means the same. Thus, the two sentences do strengthen each other.

Another possibility: The light may mean the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). This idea is strengthened when we see that the verse comes in the wake of the verses showing the truthfulness of the Prophet in his prophethood and the revelation of the Qur'ān from Allāh; and then realize that the verse has branched from the previous verses. Also, the words of Allāh in the coming verse: *and hold fast by Him*, support this view, as we have explained in the chapter of "The Family of 'Imrān" vr.101 (*And whoever holds fast to Allāh, he indeed is guided to the straight path*) that holding fast to Allāh means accepting His Book and following His Messenger.

**QUR'ĀN: *Then as for those who believe in Allāh and hold fast by Him, He will cause them to enter into His mercy and grace and guide them to Himself on a straight path*** : It describes the reward of those who follow the proof of their Lord and the light which has descended from Him. The verse is drawn from the preceding verse which describes the reward of those who believe and do good: *Then as for those who believe and do good, He will pay them fully their rewards and give them more out of His grace; . . . (3:57)*. Perhaps, that is why this verse does not mention the recompense of those who shrink from following the proof and the light. As the same punishment as mentioned in the previous verse applies in this case too, there was no need to repeat it again; this verse has shown that the reward of the followers here is the same as that given to the followers in the preceding verse; and there are only two groups: the followers and the transgressors.

Accordingly, the clause in this verse, "He will cause them to enter into His mercy", goes parallel to: *He will pay them fully their rewards*, and it is the garden. And the word 'grace' in this verse is

parallel to the clause in that verse: *and give them more out of His grace*. The ending clause, "and guide them to Himself on a straight path" gives the result of holding fast to Allāh (mentioned in this verse) as Allāh says: *And whoever holds fast to Allāh, he indeed is guided to the straight path* (3:101).

\* \* \* \* \*



يَسْتَفْتُونَكَ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِي الْكَلَالَةِ إِنِ امْرُؤٌ هَلَكَ  
 لَيْسَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَهُ أُخْتٌ فَلَهَا نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ وَهُوَ يَرِثُهَا  
 إِن لَّمْ يَكُنْ لَهَا وَلَدٌ فَإِن كَانَتَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُمَا الثُّلُثَانِ مِمَّا تَرَكَ  
 وَإِن كَانُوا إِخْوَةً رِّجَالًا وَنِسَاءً فَلِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنثِيَيْنِ  
 يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ أَن تَضِلُّوا وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٦﴾

*decision concerning the person who has neither parents nor offspring; if a man dies (and) he has no child and he has a sister, she shall have half of what he leaves, and he shall be her heir if she has no child; but if there be two (sisters), they shall have two-thirds of what he leaves; and if there are brothers (and sisters), men and women, then the male shall have the like of the portion of two females; Allāh makes clear to you, lest you err; and Allāh knows all things" (176).*

\* \* \* \* \*

#### COMMENTARY

The verse explains the prescribed shares of consanguine or agnate relatives – other than the parents and the children as the explanatory traditions make clear. The shares of relatives – other than

the parents and the children – described in the beginning of the chapter, were related to the uterine relatives as the prophetic traditions had explained. It may also be understood from the fact that the shares prescribed here are greater than those described in the beginning of the chapter. It is inferred from the verses that the males' share is greater than that of females.

**QUR'ĀN:** *They ask you for a decision of the law. Say: "Allāh gives you a decision concerning the person who has neither parents nor offspring; if a man dies (and) he has no child :* In previous verses of this chapter, we have given the meaning of *al-istiftā'* (الاستفتاء = seeking decision), *al-iftā'* (الافتاء = giving decision) and *al-kalālah* (الكلالة = a relative other than the parents and children).

"he has no child": It encompasses male and female children as is understood when the word, child, is used without any restriction. aṭ-Ṭabrisī has said in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* : "It means he has neither child nor parent; according to consensus, parent is omitted but understood in this verse." Moreover, if either parent were present, the verse would not have neglected prescribing his/her share. Therefore, it is understood that they are not present.

**QUR'ĀN:** *and he has a sister, she shall have half of what he leaves and he shall be her heir if she has no child; . . . :* It describes the share of the sister from her brother and share of the brother from his sister. It also implies the share of the sister from her sister and share of the brother from his brother; if there were difference in the shares of the latter two, the verse would have mentioned it clearly. "he shall be her heir", it means that if there is a brother in place of the sister, he will take the whole inheritance. *but if there be two (sisters), they shall have two-thirds of what he leaves; and if there are brothers (and sisters), men and women, then the male shall have the like of the portion of two females*, that is, the share of two sisters. The share of the brothers and sisters will remain the same whether the deceased was male or female.

The verse has explicitly explained the shares of one sister, one brother, two sisters and a mixed group of brothers and sisters. Other prescribed shares may be understood from the above. For example: two brothers will inherit the whole property dividing it half and half; it is known from the share of one brother who takes the whole property; likewise, if there is a brother and a sister, they will be governed by the clause, "and if there are brothers (and sisters), men and women, then

the male shall have the like of the portions of two females". Moreover, the traditions have clearly explained it.

The above shares will apply when there are only agnate or only consanguine relatives. However, if both types of relatives gather together, for example: a consanguine sister with an agnate sister, the agnate will get nothing, as we have discussed it under the verses in the beginning of the chapter.

**QUR'ĀN: *Allāh makes clear to you, lest you err; . . .*** : The literal translation of the end clause will be: that you err; but it implies "lest you err"; such usage is found in every language. 'Amr ibn Kulthūm has said, "We made haste in your entertainment that you abuse us", that is, lest you abuse us.

### TRADITIONS

Jābir ibn 'Abdillāh al-Anṣārī said, "I was sick and I had nine – or seven – sisters. The Prophet came to me and blowed at my face and I became conscious. Then I said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! should not I bequeath two-third to my sisters?' He said, 'Good.' I said, 'A part of it!' He said, 'Good.' Then he went out and left me. Again he returned to me and said, 'O Jābir! I do not see you dying from this illness of yours and surely Allāh has sent down regarding the share of your sisters and has prescribed for them two-third.'" They said, "Jābir used to say, 'This verse was revealed for me.'" (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

**The author says:** A tradition is narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* which is near to this in meaning.

Ibn Abī Shaybah, al-Bukhārī, Muslim, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasā'ī, Ibn Darīs, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and al-Bayhaqī (in his *ad-Dalā'il*) have narrated from al-Barā' that he said, "The last complete *sūrah* to be revealed is 'Barā'ah' [or 'at-Tawbah', ch.9] and the last verse to be revealed is the end of the chapter, 'The Women': *They ask you for a decision of the law, Say: 'Allāh gives you a decision concerning the person who has neither parents nor offspring . . .'*" . (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

**The author says:** The same book narrates various traditions that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and the companions used to call it 'the verse of the summer'. at-Ṭabrisī says in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* : "It was because Allāh had revealed two verses about *al-kalālah*; one in

the winter; and it is the one which is placed in the beginning of this chapter and the other in the summer, and it is this verse."

Abu 'sh-Shaykh has narrated in *al-Farā'id* from al-Barā' that he said, "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was asked (the meaning of) *al-kalālah*. He said, '(Relatives) other than the child and parent.'" (*ibid.*)

al-Qummī says, "Narrated to me my father from Ibn Abī 'Umayr from Ibn Udhaynah from Bukayr from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said, 'When a man dies and he has a sister, she will get half of what he has left in inheritance by virtue of this verse (as will take a daughter if she is alone) and the remaining half will be returned to her by virtue of kinship when the deceased doesn't have any heir nearer than her. If there is a brother in place of the sister, he will take the whole inheritance by authority of the words of Allāh: *and he shall be her heir if she has no child*. If there are two sisters, they will take two-third by virtue of this verse and the remaining one-third will be theirs by kinship. If there are brothers and sisters (men and women) the males shall have the lie of the portion of two females. All this is when the deceased has no child or parent or wife.'" (*at-Tafsīr*)

**The author says:** al-'Ayyāshī has narrated in his *Tafsīr* the last part of this tradition in several *aḥādīth* from Abū Ja'far and Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.).

There is a tradition narrated from Bukayr that he said, "A man came to Abū Ja'far (a.s.) and asked him about a woman who (died and) left a husband and uterine brothers and an agnate sister. He said, 'The husband will have a half, three [out of six] portions and the uterine brothers one-third, two portions, and agnate sister one portion.' The man said, 'O Abū Ja'far! the computation of Zayd and Ibn Mas'ūd and the system of inheritance of the general Muslims and the *qāḍīs* is different from it. They say the consanguine sister will take three portions from six and the six portions will change to eight.' Abū Ja'far said, 'Why do they say this?' He said, 'Because Allāh has said: *he has no child and he has a sister, she shall have half of what he leaves*.' Then Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said, 'Then why did you reduce (the share of) the brother if you are arguing through Allāh's commandment? Because Allāh has prescribed for her the half and He has prescribed for the brother the whole, and the whole is bigger than the half. He [Allāh] has said: *she shall have half*, as He has said about the brother: *he shall be her heir*, that is, the whole estate: *if she has no child*; so sometimes

in your computations you do not give anything to him whom Allāh has given the whole and you give her whom Allāh has prescribed the half, the whole estate!" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyāshī)

‘Abdu ‘r-Razzāq, Ibnu ‘l-Mundhir, al-Ḥākim and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he was asked about a man who died leaving his daughter and a consanguine sister. He said, "The daughter will have the half and the sister gets nothing and the residue is for his agnates (paternal relations)." He was told, "Verily ‘Umar had prescribed the (remaining) half for the sister." Ibn ‘Abbās said, "Are you more knowledgeable or Allāh Allāh says: *If a man dies (and) he has no child and he has a sister, she shall have half of what he leaves*, but you people say she will have a half even if he has a child!" (*ad-Durru ‘l-manthūr*)

**The author says:** There are other traditions on the above themes.

\* \* \* \* \*

# Chapter Five

*al-Mā'idah*

**(The Table)**

**120 verses - Medina**

*vs. 1-3*

## بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ أُحِلَّتْ لَكُمْ بَهِيمَةُ  
الْأَنْعَامِ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرِ مُحْلِ الصَّيْدِ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿١﴾ يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُحْلُوا شَعْبِيرَ اللَّهِ  
وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهُدَى وَلَا الْقَلْبَيْدَ وَلَا ءَامِينَ الْبَيْتِ  
الْحَرَامِ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا  
وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَا نُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ  
الْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُوا وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا  
عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢﴾  
حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخَنزِيرِ وَمَا أَهَلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ  
بِهِ، وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ  
السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا  
بِالْأَزْوَاجِ لَكُمْ فَسَقٌ الْيَوْمَ يَبْسُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ

فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَأَخْشَوْنَ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ  
 عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي  
 مَخْصَصَةٍ غَيْرِ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

***In the Name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.***

*O you who believe! fulfil the covenants. The cattle quadrupeds are made lawful for you except that which is recited to you, not violating the prohibition against game when you are under pilgrimage restrictions; surely Allāh orders what He desires (1). O you who believe! do not violate the signs appointed by Allāh nor the sacred month, nor the offering, nor the symbolic garlands, nor those going to the Sacred House seeking the grace and pleasure from their Lord. And when you are free from (the restrictions of) the pilgrimage, then (you may) hunt; and let not hatred of a people – because they hindered you from the Sacred Mosque – incite you to exceed the limits. And help one another in righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression; and fear Allāh; surely Allāh is severe in punishment (2). Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that on which any other name than that of Allāh has been invoked, and the strangled (animal) and that beaten to death, and that killed by a fall and that killed by being smitten with the horn, and that which wild beasts have eaten, except what you slaughter and what is sacrificed on stones set up (for idols) and that you divide by arrows; that is a transgression. This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me. This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion; but whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful (3).*

\* \* \* \* \*



### GENERAL COMMENT

If we meditate on the beginning and end of this chapter and ponder on the general verses which have been revealed in it and look at the admonitions and the stories which it contains, we will find that the general theme of the chapter is to call the people to fulfil the covenants and to uphold the valid agreements whatever they might be. It warns against breach of agreement and cautions those who take the covenants lightly. It shows that Allāh has made it His habit to deal with mercy and lighten the burden of those who guard themselves against evil and belief, and then again guard themselves against evil and do good work. On the contrary, He deals harshly with those who commit outrage, exceed the limit and overstep the bounds by throwing away the collar of obedience and going out of the boundary of covenants which have been made in the religion.

That is why you will see that the chapter contains many laws concerning legal punishment and retribution; there are stories of the dinner table, of questioning of the Messiah and of the incident of the two sons of Adam; it also points to a lot of injustices of the Israelites and how they broke the covenants which were taken from them; also there are many verses in which Allāh describes His Grace on the people in various matters like perfecting the religion, completing His favour, making the good things lawful to man and legislating the ways of purification without putting the people into any difficulty and hardship.

This was in confirmity with the time when the chapter was revealed. All reporters agree that it was the last detailed chapter which was revealed to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) nearing the end of his life. It has come in both sects' traditions that it is the abrogating chapter, not the abrogated; and it was proper in this background to emphasize the admonition to fulfil and safeguard the agreements which Allāh has taken from His servants, and to remain firm on it.

### COMMENTARY

**QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe! fulfil the covenants* : *al-'Uqūd* ( الْعُقُودُ )** is plural of *al-'aqd* ( الْعَقْدُ ), and it means to tie two things together in such a way that it becomes very difficult to separate one from the other. For example, tying a rope or thread with a similar rope or

thread. Obviously, both adhere to each other and remain tied. First, this word was used for such phenomenon which could be perceived by the senses; then it was used metaphorically for abstract things like the offer and acceptance in trade or employment, etc. It covers all the covenants and agreements. All these things are called '*al-'aqd*' because the effect of the 'tying' is present there, that is, adherence to each other.

*al-'Aqd*, that is covenant, is used for all the religious covenants which Allāh has taken from His servants, like monotheism and all the fundamental cognition and perception, the acts of worship and the laws which were laid down anew or were allowed to continue from previous times, including the proposal and acceptance in trade, etc. The verse contains the word *al-'uqūd* which is plural of *al-'aqd* having *al* (أل) which signifies comprehensiveness; therefore, this word in this verse encompasses all which could be called '*aqd*' (عقد = tie, covenant).

The above explanation shows the weakness of what various exegetes have written in its interpretation. Some have said that the covenants refers to those agreements or contracts which people make one with another, like trade deal, marriage and promise or which man binds himself with like oath.

Likewise, some others have said that it refers to those agreements which the people of the time of ignorance had contracted with one another that they will help and support each other against those who would proceed against them with evil intention or transgress against them. It means the pact or treaty which was common in those days.

Similarly, some others have said that it refers to the covenants taken from the People of the Book that they would follow what was written in the Torah and the Gospel. All these interpretations are without any support from the wording of the verse. Moreover, as we have said that a plural joined with '*al*' and the common usage of the word *al-'aqd* for every type of covenant, renders all such explanations inappropriate. Therefore, the word should be taken in its comprehensive and general meaning.

### **A DISCOURSE ON THE MEANING OF *AL-'AQD***

The Qur'ān manifestly orders man to honour the covenants as is clear from the Divine words, "fulfil the covenants". Apparently, the

order is general and covers all affairs which could be called a covenant, fulfilling which is necessary. *al-'Aqd* is every deed or word which is analogous to the literal tying – a sort of connecting one thing with another in such a way that they become inseparable; the tie of trade deal which attaches the merchandise to the buyer giving it into his ownership with full authority to do with it whatever he likes, and the seller after that deal loses the right of ownership and management of the merchandise; or like the *'aqd* of marriage which binds the woman with the man giving him the right to establish sexual relations with her and the woman has no right to allow another man to touch her for this purpose; or like an agreement in which one man binds himself to do for the other party the work agreed upon and he has no right to dishonour that agreement.

The Qur'ān has emphatically exhorted the people to fulfil the covenant and agreement (with all its meanings and applications), and has put utmost emphasis on it. It has condemned those who break the agreements and threatened them very severely; it has praised those who fulfil their covenants when they make it; there are a lot of verses of this connotation, which need not be quoted here.

The said verses have referred to the covenants without defining them in so many words; it shows that the meaning of covenant was understood by the people with their natural wisdom. It is so, because covenant and its fulfilment are the things which man cannot do without in his life; this essentiality of fulfilment of covenant affects individuals and societies both. If we ponder upon human beings' social life, we will find that all the privileges which we enjoy and all the rights which we take for granted are based on general social covenant and the resulting agreements which spring from it. All the duties towards the society which we feel ourselves bound to fulfil and all the rights which we think we have over the society are based on a practical covenant (even if we have not put it into words). If a man were to break an agreement which he had made with his own free will – merely because now he has power or authority or strength to break it – the first victim would be the social justice, while this justice is the first principle on which man relies for freeing himself from exploitation and servitude.

That is why Allāh has highly emphasized the importance of fulfilling the covenant. He says: *And fulfil the promise; verily promise shall be questioned about* (17:34). This verse covers individual agreements a man makes with another person (like most of the verses which praise fulfilling the agreement and condemn its breach) as well

as collective agreements like the ones made between two nations or two people; rather fulfilling inter-communal agreements is more important in the eyes of religion than the individual ones, because it has more effect in completing the justice; and the disadvantages of their breach will be more pronounced.

We find that the Divine Book forbids very clearly breaking a covenant even in such a place and in such circumstances where it would have been very easy to break it. Allāh says: *(This is a renouncement by Allāh and His Messenger towards those of the idolators with whom you made an agreement. So move about in the land for four months and know that you cannot weaken Allāh and that Allāh will bring disgrace to the unbelievers. An announcement from Allāh and His Messenger to the people on the day of the great pilgrimage that Allāh and His Messenger are free from all responsibilities towards the idolators; therefore if you repent, it will be better for you, and if you turn back, then know that you will not weaken Allāh; and announce painful punishment to those who disbelieve. Except those of the idolators with whom you made an agreement, then they have not fauled you in anything and and have not backed up any one against you, so fulfil their agreement to the end of their term; surely Allāh loves those who are careful (of their duty). So when the sacred months have passed away, then slay the idolators wherever you find them (9:1-5).* The verses, as the context shows, were revealed after the conquest of Mecca when Allāh had humiliated the idolators, destroyed their power and crushed their valour. These verses obliged the Muslims to cleanse the land which they had conquered from the impurity of polytheism, and encouraged them to spill the blood of the polytheists without any restriction or condition, except if they come into the fold of Islam. In spite of that, the same verses make exception for those polytheists with whom the Muslims had a valid agreement of non-aggression; the verses do not allow the Muslims to attack them even when they have weakened and lost their power, even when they have no way of defending or protecting themselves. All this was done to uphold the sanctity of the agreement and out of regard for piety.

Of course, if somebody breaks a covenant after its confirmation, he shall be requitted exactly as he had done. Allāh says: *How can there be an agreement for the idolators with Allāh and with His Messenger; except those with whom you made an agreement at the Sacred Mosque? So long as they are true to you, be true to them; surely Allāh loves those who are careful (of their duty) . . . They do*

*not pay regard to ties of relationship nor those of covenant in the case of a believer; and these are they who go beyond the limits. But if they repent and keep up prayer and pay zakāt they are your brethren in faith; and We make the communications clear for a people who know. And if they break their oaths after their agreement and revile your religion, then fight the leaders of unbelief – surely their oaths are nothing – so that they may desist (9:7-12). Also He says: . . . whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict the like aggression on him as he has inflicted on you; and fear Allāh . . . (2:194); again He says: . . . and let not hatred of a people – because they hindered you from the Sacred Mosque – incite you to exceed the limits. And help one another in righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression; and fear Allāh . . . (5:2).*

In short, Islam believes in sanctity of covenant and obliges man to fulfil it without reservation; it makes no difference whether the said man benefits from that covenant or is harmed by it once the pact has been made. After all, consideration of the social justice is more compulsory and obligatory than the consideration of a private or personal benefit. Of course, if one of the parties breaks his agreement, then the other party can break it to the same extent and act aggressively against him to the same degree. This principle liberates the society from servitude and exploitation; after all the main purpose of religion is to erase the arrogance of the powerful.

By my life! this is one of the lofty teachings brought by Islam for the guidance of the people, that they should pay attention to the human nature and preserve the social justice on which the human society is based; and that they should remove the injustice of subjugation and exploitation. The Mighty Book has made it clear and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) proceeded on the same path throughout his noble life. The discourse is related to the Qur’ān, otherwise, we would have written for you some of his stories. If you want to know in detail, you should study his biographies.

Compare how Islam had preserved the sanctity of covenant with the behaviour of civilized and less civilized nations nowadays – especially what we see and hear everyday concerning the dealings of the powerful nations with the weaker ones in their agreements and pacts, and how they fulfil the agreements so long as it is beneficial to them or supports their national interests and break them unhesitatingly when it goes against their interest, offering for it lame excuses – then you will see the difference between the two systems and realize who pays regard to the truth and serves the reality.

That is more appropriate for the religion and this suits these people's selfish behaviour. We find two types of logic here: one says that the truth and reality must be preserved with all possible means as only in this way the society will prosper; and the other says that the national interest must be protected by any possible means even if it crushes the truth and reality. The first is the logic of religion; and the second, the logic of all other societies, be they barbaric or civilized, be they dictatorial, democratic or communist, etc.

You must have understood from the above that Islam in its determination concerning agreement and pact is not restricted to the legal agreements only; its decree encompasses all those things on which an edifice is built be it explicit or implicit; Islam admonishes the Muslims to pay full attention to it. There are some other points concerning this theme which you will come across as you read on, God willing.

**QUR'ĀN: *The cattle quadrupeds are made lawful to you except that which is recited to you*** : *al-Iḥlāl* ( الإِطْلَالُ = to make lawful); *al-bahīmah* ( البَهِيمَةُ = quadruped from terrestrial and marine animals), as has been explained in *Majma'u 'l-bayān*. Accordingly, the genitive construction, relating quadruped to the cattle, relates the species to its classes, as we say human species, animal genus. Some have said that *al-bahīmah* is the foetus of the cattle. In any case, the sentence; "the cattle quadrupeds are made lawful for you", means that eating the meat of eight pairs<sup>29</sup> is made lawful to you. The words, "except that which is recited to you", point to the law described later: *Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself* . . .

**QUR'ĀN: *not violating the prohibition against game when you are under pilgrimage restrictions; . . .*** : It is a circumstantial clause related to the second person pronoun in the word, "are made lawful for you", and it indicates that even this lawful category will become unlawful if it was hunted in the condition of *iḥrām*; for example, if one hunts wild deer, cow or zebra in that condition. Some people have said that the said circumstantial clause is related to the word 'fulfil'; others have said that it is related to the second person pronoun in the words: *except that which is recited to you*. *aṣ-Ṣayd* ( الصَّيْدُ = to hunt) is a verbal noun used here in the meaning of passive participle, that is, hunted game; *al-ḥurum* ( الْحُرْمُ ) is plural of *al-ḥarām* ( الْحَرَامُ ) giving

<sup>29</sup> It refers to ch.6, vrs. 142-3. (tr.)

here the meaning of active participle, that is, he who puts himself under restriction of pilgrimage.

**QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe! do not violate the signs appointed by Allāh nor the sacred month, nor the offering, nor the symbolic garlands, nor those going to the Sacred House seeking the grace and pleasure from their Lord*** : The believers are addressed again in this verse to indicate importance of maintaining the respect of the things sanctified by Allāh. It was explained earlier that *al-ihlāl* means to make lawful; as this idea is closely connected to indifference towards respect or honour of the thing made lawful, therefore, it is metaphorically used here in the sense of violating. Its specific meaning will be decided in the contexts of the second construct of the genitive; the signs and symbols appointed by Allāh are violated if one does not pay respect to them or neglects them, a sacred month is violated if one begins fighting in it, and so on.

*ash-Sha'āir* (الشَّعَائِرُ) is plural of *ash-sha'īrah* (الشَّعِيرَةُ = sign). Probably here it refers to the guide posts of *hajj* and its rites. The sacred months are those lunar months in which fighting has been prohibited by Allāh; they are al-Muḥarram, Rajab, Dhi 'l-qi'dah and Dhi 'l-ḥijjah. *al-Hady* (الْهَدْيُ) refers to goat, sheep, cow and camels that are taken to the pilgrimage. *al-Qalāid* (الْقَلَائِدُ) is plural of *al-qalāidah* (الْقَلَادَةُ); it refers to the garland of shoes, etc. which is put in the neck of a sacrificial animal to show that it is meant for sacrifice, in order that nobody should appropriate it. *al-Āmmīn* (الْأَمِّيْنُ) is plural of *al-āmm* (الْأَمُّ) which is the active participle of *amm* (أَمَّ = he headed to); here it refers to those who are on their way to the pilgrimage of the Sacred House "Seeking the grace" is the circumstantial clause to "those going"; *al-faḍl* (الْفَضْلُ = grace) refers to property or material profit. The same is the connotation of the Divine words: *So they returned with favour from Allāh and (His) grace; no evil touched them* (3:174); there are other verses too of the same meaning; also it may mean the reward of hereafter; or it may have a meaning encompassing the both senses. The exegetes have given several other meanings of the words used here like *ash-sha'āir* and *al-qalāid*; what we have mentioned is more appropriate in the context, and no purpose will be served by mentioning other interpretations.

**QUR'ĀN: *And when you are free from (the restrictions of) the pilgrimage, then (you may) hunt*** : When an imperative comes after

prohibition, it only indicates that now the thing or action is allowed and the prohibition is lifted. *al-Ḥall* and *al-iḥlāl* ( الحَلُّ ، الإِخْلَالُ ) give the same meaning, that is, becoming free from the restrictions of *iḥrām*.

**QUR'ĀN: *and let not the hatred of a people – because they hindered you from the Sacred Mosque – incite you to exceed the limits* :** *Jarama* ( جَرَمَ ) means 'he carried it', 'he bore it'; that is why disobedience and sin is called *al-jarīmah* ( الجَرِيمَةُ ) because the culprit bears its responsibility; this word is also used for monetary fine because it is borne by the culprit. ar-Rāghib says that its real meaning is 'to cut'. *ash-Shan'ān* ( الشَّنْأَنُ = hatred, enmity); *an ṣaddūkum* ( أَنْ صَدُّوكُمْ = because they prevented you); it is an explicative apposition or oppositional substitute for 'hatred'; the meaning: and let not hatred of a people they hindered you from the Sacred Mosque – incite you to exceed the limits when you have vanquished them.

**QUR'ĀN: *And help one another in righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression; and fear Allāh; . . .* :** The meaning is clear. This is the foundation of Islamic culture and ethics. Allāh has explained righteousness in His Book as belief and doing good in the acts of worship and in mutual dealings, as we have explained under the Divine words: . . . *but righteousness is the one who believes in Allāh and the Last Day . . .* (2:177). *at-Taqwā* ( التَّقْوَى = to be on one's guard regarding orders and prohibitions of Allāh). To cooperate with one another in righteousness and piety means to join together in true faith and good deeds on the basis of the fear of Allāh; it is the collective good and piety. Its opposite is cooperating with one another in sin and aggression; sin is the evil action which brings regression in a blissful life; aggression is usurping peoples' genuine rights, giving rise to a feeling of insecurity for their lives, honour or property. We have explained this topic under the Divine words: *O you who believe! be patient and help each other in patience and remain lined up; and fear (the wrath of) Allāh, that you may be successful,* (3:200), in the fourth volume of this book<sup>30</sup>.

Then Allāh has emphasized the prohibition of joining together in sin and aggression by saying: *and fear Allāh; surely Allāh is severe in punishment.* Actually, it is an emphasis over emphasis.

<sup>30</sup> *al-Mīzān*, (Eng.), vol.7, pp.143-202. (tr.)



**QUR'ĀN: *Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that on which any other name than that of Allāh has been invoked:*** These four were prohibited in the revelations sent long before this chapter. See , for example, in the chapters of "The Cattle" and "The Bee", both of which were revealed in Mecca and in the chapter of "The Cow" which was the first detailed chapter revealed in Medina. Allāh has said: *Say: "I do not find, in that which has been revealed to me, anything forbidden for an eater to eat of except that it be what has died of itself, or blood poured forth, or flesh of swine – for that surely is unclean – or that which is a transgression, other than (the name of) Allāh having been invoked on it; but whoever is forced (to it), not revolting nor exceeding the limit, then surely your Lord is Forgiving, Merciful"* (6:145); and He has said: *He has only forbidden to you what dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that over which any other (name) than (that of) Allāh has been invoked; but whoever is forced (to it), not revolting, nor exceeding the limit, no sin shall be upon him; surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful* (2:173).

As you see, all these verses forbid the four things mentioned in the beginning of this verse and the exception too is similar to this verse where it says: *but whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.* So, this verse's only purpose is to emphasize the previously and repeatedly revealed prohibition of the four items. In fact, this prohibition and especially of the first three items, (that which dies of itself, blood and flesh of swine) was promulgated long before the revelation of the chapters of "The Cattle" and "The Bee" (of Meccan period) because the verse of the chapter of "The Cattle" explains the reason of prohibition that "it is unclean"; it shows that eating unclean things was forbidden; and Allāh says in the ch.74: *And uncleanness do shun* [vr.5]. This chapter was revealed in the early Meccan period. [It was the second chapter revealed.]

*And the strangled (animal) and that beaten to death, and that killed by a fall and that killed by being smitten with the horn, and that which wild beasts have eaten.*: Actually it is not a new legislation, because all these come under "that which dies of itself", (as may be understood from the exception, *except what you slaughter*); yet they have been mentioned separately to describe various types of dead animals.

Likewise, the words of Allāh, *and that is sacrificed on stones set up* (for idols) *and that you divide by arrows; that is a*

*transgression*, forbid these two items for the first time in this chapter, but Allāh has given the reason of their prohibition (or that of the second item) that it is a transgression, and He had before that prohibited transgression in the verse of the chapter of "The Cattle". Also, the following words: *not inclining wilfully to sin*, show that the things mentioned here have been forbidden because they are sins; and many verses revealed before it say that sin is prohibited. For example, the verse 173 of the chapter "The Cow", says: *but whoever is forced (to it), not revolting, nor exceeding the limit, no sin shall be upon him*. Also, He says: *And abandon open and secret sin (6:120); Say: "My Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed, and sin . . ."* (7:33)

Now, it is clear that the verse with this list of forbidden items has not promulgated any new order which was not given in previously revealed verses of the Meccan or early Medinite period which had listed the forbidden meats.

**QUR'ĀN: and the strangled (animal) and that beaten to death, and that killed by a fall and that killed by being smitten with the horn, and that which wild beasts have eaten, except what you slaughter :** *al-Munkhaniqah* ( الْمُنْخَنِقَةُ ) is the cattle which dies as a result of strangulation. It makes no difference whether it was accidental or intentional; also, the instrument of strangulation has no effect on this ruling; may be a rope was tied around its neck and becoming tight, it clocked breathing or its neck was pressed between two rods; this and similar methods were common in the days of ignorance. *al-Mawqūdhah* ( الْمَوْقُودَةُ ) is an animal which is beaten until it dies. *al-Mutaraddiya* ( الْمُتَرَدِّيَّةُ ) is an animal which falls from a high place like a mountaintop or well, and so on. *an-Naṭīḥah* ( النَّطِيحَةُ ) is an animal which dies as a result of being gored with horns or tusks of another animal. "and that which wild beasts have eaten", that is, a beast of prey has eaten some of its flesh resulting in its death. A beast of prey indicates carnivorous animals like lion, wolf, tiger, etc.

"except what you slaughter", this exception applies to all the five groups mentioned before that. If any of these animals shows some signs of life like breathing or twitching of its tail, etc., and it is at once slaughtered according to the rules of the *sharī'ah* (i.e., its four jugular veins are cut), then it is allowed to be eaten. As mentioned just now, the exception covers all five groups and not only the last one. The five groups are included in the term *al-maytah* ( الْمَيْتَةُ = that which dies by itself). Animals killed by a fall or gored by another animal with horns

are forbidden when they die as a result of that fall or those wounds. It may be understood from the exception "except what you slaughter". Obviously, they will not be eaten when they are alive; but when the soul goes out then they can be eaten. Now, either they were slaughtered according to *sharī'ah* or not; and Allāh has excepted the slaughter. Therefore, they will only be unlawful when they die as the result of the fall or the said wound without being slaughtered. If a goat, for example, falls into a well and is taken out alive and uninjured and then after a short or long time it dies by itself or is slaughtered then it will not be called an animal that was killed by a fall. The context shows that only such animals are forbidden which are killed *ordie* because of the causes mentioned in the verse.

These groups of dead animals have been singled out here to remove any possible misunderstanding that probably they were not included in the word, *al-maytah* because they are not common types. Therefore, Allāh mentioned these rare types with their names in order that there should be no confusion and the prohibition remains clear.

**QUR'ĀN: and what is sacrificed on stones set up (for idols):** ar-Rāghib says in *Mufradātu 'l-Qur'ān*: "*an-Naṣb* ( النَّصْبُ ) of a thing means setting it down in a projecting position like setting a spear or stone; *an-naṣīb* ( النَّصِيبُ ) a stone which is set on something in a projecting manner. Its plural is *an-naṣāib* ( النَّصَائِبُ ) and *an-nuṣub* ( النَّصْبُ )." [This latter is used in this verse.] The Arabs had various stones which they worshipped and on which they slaughtered sacrifices. Allāh says: . . . *as if they were hastening unto a signpost* (70:43); and He has said, "and what is sacrificed on stones set up (for idols)"; also its plural comes as *al-anṣāb* ( الْأَنْصَابُ ). Allāh says: . . . (dedication of) *stones* (i.e., idols) *and* (divination by) *arrows* . . . (5:90). *an-Nuṣb* and *an-naṣb* ( النَّصْبُ ، النَّصْبُ ) = trouble, exertion.

The verse forbids eating the flesh of an animal slaughtered on stone; in this way, it prohibits adoption of the customs of the days of ignorance. They had set up around the Ka'bah stones which they venerated and over which they offered sacrifices. It was a custom of idolatry.

**QUR'ĀN: and that you divide by arrows; . . . :** *al-Azlām* ( الْأَزْلَامُ = arrows without head). The division by arrows was done in this way: A camel or another animal was taken and its shares divided; then, the arrows were used to identify the one who would get a share and the one who would not have any; also, the number of shares a man would

get was decided by the same arrows. It was a clear gambling and we have given the details under the verse: *They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance . . .* (2:219) in vol.2 of this book<sup>31</sup>.

ar-Rāghib says: "*al-Qism* ( الْقِسْمُ = setting apart the shares). It is said: I divided such and such thing in parts; division of inheritance or war-booty means dividing them to the rightful persons. Allāh says: . . . *for each gate there shall be a separate party of them* (15:44); *And inform them that the water is shared between them* (54:28). *Istaqsamtuhu* ( اسْتَقْسَمْتُهُ = I asked him to divide); also, sometimes it is used in the meaning of division itself, as Allāh says: *and that you divide by arrows.*"

**COMMENT:** To say that *istaqsamah* is used here for division is correct in practical application, but the literal meaning still remains the same, that is, to want to divide through arrows, which were used as tools of this game; using the tools is in itself a demand for getting the intended result. Therefore, using the arrow is in itself asking for the division. However, the verse, as the context shows, forbids using the arrows for the camels, etc. to get an apportioned share of the meat.

Some people have said that this phrase forbids using the arrows for divination to find out the good or bad of a course of action and to distinguish a beneficial deed from the harmful one, as for example, when someone wants to go on a journey or to marry or to begin a new work, etc., and uses the arrows to find out whether it is beneficial for him or not. They said that it was a well established custom among the Arabs in the days of ignorance; it was a sort of forecasting with omens and its details will come in the coming traditions.

**COMMENT:** The context does not allow the use of this phrase for this meaning. The verse describes and counts the prohibited items of food and has pointed to this in the beginning when it said: *The cattle quardrups are made lawful for you except that which is recited to you;* then it goes on giving the list of ten forbidden food items: that which dies of itself, blood, flesh of swine, an animal on which any other name than that of Allāh is invoked, the strangled one, the one beaten to death, or killed by fall, or as a result of being smitten with the horn, or that which wild beasts have eaten and what is sacrificed on stones set up for idols; then it mentions *al-istiqsām bi 'l-azlām* (الاستقسام بالازلام) which can be used in two meanings: i) Dividing meat

<sup>31</sup> *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.3, p.280 (tr.)

by gambling, and ii) Divination of good or evil in the future. How can any one think, after this clear context and the repeated associations, that this phrase in this verse does not denote dividing the meat through arrows? Can anyone who knows the styles of speech entertain any doubt about its meaning?

Let us look at another similar example, *al-'umrah* (العُمْرَةُ) is a verbal noun which denotes construction, and it has another meaning, that is, pilgrimage of the Sacred House. If this word is used in relation to a house, both meanings can be applied; but when it comes to the Divine words: *And complete the hajj (pilgrimage) and 'umrah for Allāh* (2:196), then only the second meaning can be applied. There are many such examples.

The indicative in, *that is a transgression*, may be pointing to the whole list, or to the last two items described after the words, *except what you slaughter* (because the exception has separated the two groups), or to the last item. Probably, the middle view is the best of all.

**QUR'ĀN:** *This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me* : The positioning of this speech in midst of this verse and then its connotation are all amazing. If you ponder on the beginning of this verse, that is: *Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself, and blood . . . that is a transgression* and then join to it the end part, *but whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful*, you will see that it is a complete sentence and does not depend for completion of its meaning and explanation of its theme to this part of the verse at all. If you take out these sentences, then the remaining part will perfectly correspond with previously revealed verses in the chapters, "The Cattle", "The Bee" and "The Cow", which give the list of the forbidden food items. The verse in the chapter of "The Cow" says: *He has only forbidden to you what dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that over which any other (name) than (that of) Allāh has been invoked; but whoever is forced (to it), not revolting, nor exceeding the limit, no sin shall be upon him; surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful* (2:173). Similar wordings are found in the chapters of "The Cattle" and "The Bee".

It is clear that the Divine words, "This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, . . .", is a paranthetical speech placed in the midst of this verse, yet the main verse does not depend on it for its exposition or explanation. We may say that this speech

was actually revealed in the middle of this verse separating the preceding part from the following one; or that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) himself ordered the scribes to put this speech in this place even though it had no connotation with this verse, and was not even revealed at the same time; or that the compilers put it in this place at the time of compilation although both the parts were revealed at totally different times. None of these probabilities can affect the view we have just mentioned that it is a paranthetical speech.

This view is strengthened by the fact that most, if not all the traditions describing the reason of its revelation – and there are a lot of such traditions – particularly talk about the words of Allāh, "This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion . . .", without hinting even once to the beginning of the verse, that is: *Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself. . . This proves that the Divine words, "This day have those who disbelieve . . .", were independently revealed and have no connection with the preceding or the following verses. Thus, the present positioning of this speech in the middle of the verse will have to be attributed either to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) or to the compilers of the Qur'ān after him.*

A tradition in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* somewhat supports this view. It is narrated from 'Abd ibn Ḥamīd from ash-Sha'bī that he said, "The verse: *This day I have perfected for you your religion . . .*, was revealed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) while he was in 'Arafāt; and when any verses much pleased him, he used to put them in the beginning of the chapter." He also said, "And Jibrīl used to teach him how to do it."

The two sentences, that is: *This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion . . .*, and: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . .*, have identical themes and no one can have any doubt that the meaning of both are connected with each other. There is very close connection between the despairing of the disbelievers from the Muslims' religion and the perfection of the Muslims' religion; both connotations are joined together in a single theme, both sentences are interconnected and their sides are combined with one another. Add to it the singularity of context in these two sentences.

Further support of this view can be found in the convention of the ancient and modern exegetes – right from the companions of the Prophet and their followers to our contemporaries in these days. All of them take the two sentences jointly as if one completes the other. This unanimous way of explanation shows that all of them believed that these two sentences were revealed together and both of them jointly describe one meaning.

It appears from the above that this paranthetical verse: *This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion . . .*, and: *chosen for you Islam as a religion*, is a single speech and its parts are interconnected and the whole speech leads to a single theme which is reflected in the two sentences jointly. It makes not difference whether we say that this speech is connected with the preceding and following sentences or not. The two sentences will remain as one speech; they can never be treated as two talks having two separate aims. Also, it is clear that the word "this day" repeated in both sentences refers to a single day when the disbelievers were despaired and the religion was perfected.

To which day does the adverb, "this day", refer in these two sentences

1. Does it refer to the time when the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was commanded to call the people to Islam? Does it mean that Allāh sent to you the Islam, perfected the religion for you, and completed His favours on you and made the disbelievers despaired of your religion?

**COMMENT:** It cannot be. The context shows that the Muslims already had a religion which the disbelievers were eager to change or destroy altogether, while the Muslims were afraid of them concerning their religion, but Allāh deprived the disbelievers of their nefarious goal and made Muslims secure and safe; that religion was imperfect and Allāh made it perfect on that day and completed His favours on them. But the Muslims had no religion of their own before the advent of Islam, so, where was the question of the disbelievers having some hope of destroying that religion or of Allāh perfecting it and completing His favours on them? Moreover, if that interpretation is taken seriously, then the sentence: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . .*, should have preceded the sentences: *This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion . . .* Only in this way, could literary perfection be achieved.

2. Or does "this day" refer to the era after the conquest of Mecca? Because on that day, Allāh had nullified the intrigues of the Qurayshite polytheists and destroyed their power; their religion was uprooted and their idols shattered; in this way, they had lost all hope of standing on their feet to prevent the spread of Islam and to fight against it.

**COMMENT:** This too cannot be. The verse announces that on the day under discussion the religion was perfected and the Divine favours

completed; but the religion was yet incomplete in the year 8 AH when Mecca was conquered; there were many obligatory laws promulgated and many permissions and prohibitions laid down between the conquest of Mecca and the death of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Apart from that, "those who disbelieve" covers all the idolaters of Arabia and not all of them and despaired of the Muslims' religion. There were many covenants still valid which obligated the Muslims and many disbelieving tribes not to stand against each other; they still performed the *hajj* of *jāhiliyyah* according to the custom of the idolaters; their women still performed *hajj* completely naked. This had continued until the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) sent 'Alī (a.s.) with the verses of the chapter of the "Repentance" and thus the remnants of the customs of the days of Ignorance were erased.

3. Or does "this day" refer to the period after the revelation of the chapter of "Repentance" [end of the year 9 AH]? Because Islam had spread to almost all areas of the Arabian Peninsula; the customs of the Days of Ignorance were wiped out and the signs of polytheism obliterated. Now, the Muslims did not encounter any polytheist during the *hajj* rituals and their life was free from the shadow of disbelief; Allāh had given them peace and order (while before that they were scared and afraid), they worshipped Allāh and ascribed none to Him.

**COMMENT:** This too cannot be. Although the idolaters of Arabia had despaired of the Muslims' religion after the revelation of the chapter of "Repentance" when the customs of the *jāhiliyyah* were wiped out and polytheism had gone out of the Peninsula, yet the religion was not completed at that time. A lot of rules and regulations were revealed after that, including this chapter of "The Table" which, all agree, was revealed during the last days of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and this chapter contains a lot of laws about lawful and unlawful things, penal code and retribution.

It is now clear that the adverb "this day" cannot be taken to mean a long period which might be apparently relevant to the connotation of this verse, for example, the era of the advent of Islam, or the time after the conquest of Mecca or after the revelation of the verses of "Repentance". The only alternative is to say that "this day" refers to the particular day when this verse was revealed. Does it mean the day when Mecca was conquered or the day when the chapter of "Repentance" was revealed? The objections which we have raised against the second and the third possibilities above are enough to refute these suggestions altogether.



Or does it mean the day of ninth Dhi 'l-hijjah of the last pilgrimage [10 AH] as claimed by many exegetes and shown in some traditions? If so, then we will have to decide how the unbelievers had despaired of the Muslims' religion on that day. Does it mean that the polytheists of Quraysh had lost all hope of overpowering the Muslims' religion? But this had happened on the day Mecca was conquered in the year 8AH not on 9th Dhi 'l-hijjah 10 AH. Or does it refer to the despairing of the polytheists of the whole Arabia? But this had already happened at the time of the revelation of the chapter of "Repentance" in the year 9 AH. Or does it relate to the despairing of all the disbelievers – the Jews, the Christians, the fire-worshippers and others (And this all-inclusive meaning is more in keeping with the unrestricted phrase "those who disbelieve"). But those people had not yet despaired of overcoming the Muslims because Islam had not acquired any foothold or power beyond the Arabian peninsula on the day of 'Arafāt in the year 10 AH.

Looking from another angle, we should again ponder on this day (9th Dhi 'l-hijjah 10 AH): What importance it had which could be in keeping with the Divine words: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you.*

1. It may probably be said that it means perfecting the rituals of *ḥajj* in the presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) himself there, as he practically taught them the *manāsik* of *ḥajj* and gave verbal explanations.

**COMMENT:** Merely teaching the *manāsik* of *ḥajj* cannot be called perfection of religion by any stretch of imagination. First of all, he had ordered them to do *ḥajju 't-tamattu'* and not many years had passed that it was discontinued<sup>32</sup>. Secondly, many important pillars of religion had been established long before that, like prayer, fast, *ḥajj*, *zakāt*, *jihād*, etc. How can teaching an obligatory ritual of the religion be called perfection of that obligatory thing? And how can teaching

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<sup>32</sup> The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had himself performed *ḥajju 'l-qiran*, then came the order of *ḥajju 't-tamattu'*, which the Prophet ordered all Muslims to do. But 'Umar was highly critical of this order and during his caliphate announced that "two *mut'ahs* were prevalent in the days of the Prophet; I declare them unlawful and shall punish those who would do them: the *mut'ah* of women and the *ḥajju 't-tamattu'*". However, this prohibition was later ignored by the Muslims (*tr.*)

one obligatory part of religion be called perfection of the whole religion?

Moreover, this view cuts the connection between the first sentence (*This day have those who disbelieve . . .*) with the second one (*This day have I perfected for you your religion . . .*). And what is the relevance of despairing of the disbelievers to teaching the people *hajju 't-tamattu'* ?

2. It may be said that the perfection of the religion points to the revelation of all pending lawful and unlawful things "this day" in the chapter of "The Table"; after that there came no new *halāl* or *harām*. And with perfection of religion the disbelievers were overwhelmingly despaired and its signs appeared on their faces.

**COMMENT:** First, we have to decide who were the disbelievers described by the phrase "those who disbelieve". If it refers to the disbelievers of Arabia, then Islam had already engulfed them and there was nobody who did not publicly declare to be Muslim. So, who were the despairing disbelievers

And if it is taken to refer to the non-Arab disbelievers who lived around Arabia, then we have described earlier that they had not despaired on that day of overpowering the Muslims.

Then the claim that the door of legislation was closed on the day of 'Arafāt is nonsense. There are a lot of traditions which mention revelations of rules and regulations after that day. See, for example, the verse of the summer<sup>33</sup> and the verses of interest. It has been narrated from 'Umar that he said *inter alia* in a sermon: "Among the last verses of the Qur'ān to be revealed is the verse of interest; the Messenger of Allāh died without explaining it to us. Therefore, leave whatever you feel doubtful about and go to that about which you have no doubt." Also, al-Bukhārī has narrated in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Ibn 'Abbās that he said, "The last verse revealed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was the verse of interest." There are many similar traditions.

Nobody should try to say that these traditions are weak; therefore, the verse should have precedence over them; because the verse doesn't explicitly say which day it talks about. The day of 'Arafāt is just a possibility and for the definite identification of the day, first all other possibilities have to be discarded; and these traditions offer at least opposing views.

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<sup>33</sup> It is the verse of *al-kalālah* at the end of the chapter of the "Women".  
(Author's note)

3. Somebody may say that the perfection of the religion points to the fact that the Sacred House had exclusively come into their hands and the polytheists were banished from it, the Muslims performed their *hajj* and there was no polytheist to mingle with them.

**COMMENT:** We have already said that this had happened one year before the day of 'Arafât. Then, why should it be restricted with the adverb "this day" in the verse: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . .* Even if we accept that this exclusive hold on the Ka'bah was the completion of the Divine favour, it cannot be said that it was the perfection of the religion. Why should the exclusive possession of the Ka'bah be called perfecting the religion, when religion is nothing except a collection of the beliefs and regulations? Religion could only be perfected if some more parts or chapters were added to it. That the environment became conducive for the implementation of the rules of religion and the snags and the hurdles were removed from practising it is not called perfecting the religion.

Moreover, the difficulty concerning the despair of the disbelievers remains in its place.

4. A writer has tried to combine the above hypotheses which we are giving here in short before commenting on it. He says that perfecting the religion means that Allâh has described these forbidden items of food in detail in order that the Muslims may follow it without being afraid of the disbelievers, because the disbelievers have despaired of the Muslims' religion and Allâh has given strength and power to the Muslims and made them victorious over the infidels.

Why did Allâh mention only the four forbidden things (that which dies of itself, blood, flesh of swine and that on which any other name than that of Allâh has been invoked) in the early days of Islam in some chapters of the Meccan period? And why did He delay giving the details of what comes within its circle which Islam does not like the Muslims to use until Mecca was conquered? It was done to promulgate the prohibition of these filthy things gradually and to show their intense undesirability. It was the same policy which was used in prohibition of liquor step, so that the Arabs should not have an aversion to Islam and should not find it intolerable; and would continue hoping that their poverty-ridden folks (who constituted the majority of the early converts to Islam) would return to their original infidelity.

This detailed description of the forbidden things was revealed after Islam gained strength and Allâh gave the Muslims wealth and

power. This was after the polytheists had lost the hope that the Muslims would ever turn away from Islam, they had realized that they could not defeat the Muslims nor could they make them renounce their religion under duress. Now, the believers were in a position where they were not afraid of the disbelievers about their religion or their lives and had no need to deal with them politely.

Thus the adverb "this day" means the day of 'Arafāt in the year of the Last Pilgrimage. It was the day when this verse was revealed which describes whatever laws had remained undisclosed uptil now; through these laws Islam nullified the remnants of the abasements, evils and superstitions of the days of ignorance. This verse brought the good news to the Muslims that they have gained the upper hand over the polytheists, who were now despaired of the Muslims' religion; now the Muslims did not have any need to deal with them in soft manners or any fear of their reprisals.

Thus, Allāh informs them in this verse that the disbelievers themselves are despaired of their religion; and now that Allāh has changed their weakness to power, their apprehension to tranquility and their poverty to riches, the Muslims should not be afraid of anyone other than Allāh and should refrain and abstain from using the things forbidden in detail in this verse because in this lies the perfection of their religion.

**COMMENT:** This writer wanted to gather together several of the previously mentioned hypotheses in order to dispel the objections levelled against one possibility with the help of another possibility. But he became embroiled in all the perils together and in the process he corrupted the words and meaning of the verse completely.

He failed to realize that if the disbelievers' despair refer to that despair which had resulted from the victory and power of Islam, then it had happened on the day Mecca was conquered or, let us say, when the verses of the chapter of "Repentance" were pronounced. Therefore, it would not be correct to announce on the day of 'Arafāt in the year 10 AH: *This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion*, because they had despaired of it one or two years before. Had it been the case, the verse should have said: *Those who disbelieve have already despaired of your religion* (as this writer had himself used the same wording while giving his explanation). Or alternatively, it could be said: *They are despaired*.

Also, he seems oblivious of the fact that if this supposed gradual prohibition of various food items (for which he has mentioned

the analogy of prohibition of the intoxicant) means that some food items were prohibited after some others, then you have seen that this verse does not mention any other prohibited items than the previously revealed verses of prohibition had done, that is, the verses of the chapters of "The Cow", "The Cattle" and "The Bee"; keeping in view that the strangled animals, etc., are merely the details of the dead animals.

And if he means that the previous descriptions were general and this verse gives the details, and it was done because there was a possibility of people refusing to follow the rules, then it is out of place; what was explicitly mentioned in the previous chapters, that is, "the dead animal, blood, flesh of swine and that on which any other name than that of Allāh has been invoked", were more commonly used in the society, and people should have revolted against that rule more readily than against the rule against strangled animal and that beaten to death, etc., because these situations occur very rarely. If there was any danger of opposition then the first mentioned four things should not have been prohibited so explicitly; and when they were prohibited without any fear, why should there be any hesitation in relatively unimportant examples.

Moreover, even we accept his interpretation, it could not be called perfection of religion. How can legislation of some rules be named 'religion'? And how can its promulgation and explanation be called perfection of religion? Even if we accept it, it would be perfection of a small part of religion and completion of some of the favours, rather than the whole religion and all the favours; while Allāh says: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you*; here, the perfection and completion are all-encompassing without any restriction.

Moreover, Allāh had legislated a lot of rules and laws during all the preceding years. What was the speciality of this rule on this day that its legislation or explanation should be called perfection of religion and completion of grace?

Or does the perfection of religion mean that Allāh perfected it by closing the door of legislation after revealing this verse which gives the details of forbidden food items? Then what will be said about those rules which were revealed after revelation of this chapter and before the death of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.)? Rather, what will be said about all the rules which were revealed in this very chapter of "The Table" after this verse? Think over it.

Until now, we have left untouched the last clause: *and chosen for you Islam as a religion*, which means: This day I have chosen for you Islam as a religion. If the speech ends at describing the favours of Allāh on the Muslims by detailing the forbidden food on the day of ‘Arafāt in the year 10 AH, then what will be the relevance of this clause? What special thing happened on that day that Allāh chose Islam as their religion? There was nothing most of the objections levelled against the preceding interpretations apply to this too; and there is no need to repeat them here.

Or does "This day" point to any particular day between the day of ‘Arafāt and the arrival of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) at Medina when the disbelievers were despaired and the religion was perfected? But again the objections described earlier against other interpretations would be levelled against this, with the same details.

Up to here, we have discussed this verse looking at what has been or could be said about it regarding its interpretation. Now, we shall look at it in the way that is more consistent with the special style of this book.

*This day have those who disbelieve despaired or your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me* : Despair and disappointment is opposite of hope; and the religion was sent down gradually. In this backdrop, this sentence indicates that disbelievers in the early days of Islam had some hope regarding the Muslims' religion, expecting it to somehow die with the passage of time. This idea of theirs posed a great threat against Islam from time to time and such a situation necessitated for the believers to be always on guard and live in fear. In this background, the words, "so fear them not" reassure the believers that Allāh would protect them from the danger which was facing them and which had caused them such a fear. Allāh says: *A party of the People of the Book desire that they should lead you astray (3:69)*; also He says: *Many of the People of the Book wish that they could turn you back into unbelievers after your faith, out of envy on their part, (even) after the truth has become manifest to them. But pardon and forgive (them) until Allāh should bring about His command. Surely Allāh has power over all things (2:109)*. The disbelievers were not waiting for something to happen to the Muslims except because of their religion, and they were not angry with them and their hearts were not burning against them but for one reason: The religion of Islam posed a challenge to their supremacy and was ruining their dominance. It puts hinderance against their indulging in the pleasures they were inclined

to, and to which they were accustomed all their lives; it was putting a stop to their unrestricted debauchery and wanton behaviour.

What they hated was the religion, not the followers of the religion. Of course, they disliked the Muslims, but it was because of their acceptance of the Divine religion. The reason why they wanted to annihilate the Muslims and destroy their society was their intention to put out the Light of Allāh; they wanted to restrengthen the pillars of polytheism which had been shaking because of the impact of Islam; They hoped against hope that they would one day turn the believers into disbelievers, as has been described in the Divine words: *that they could turn you back into unbelievers*; and He has said: *They desire to put out the light of Allāh with their mouths, but Allāh will perfect His light, though the unbelievers may be averse. He it is who sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, so that He may make it triumph over the religions, though the polytheists may be averse* (61:8-9); *Therefore call upon Allāh, being sincere to Him in religion though averse be the unbelievers* (40:14).

In short, their only plan was to cut this blessed tree from its root and demolish this lofty structure from its foundation; they tried to ensure the believers in various ways, spreading hypocrisy in their midst and creating doubts in their hearts in order to corrupting their religion.

In the beginning, they tried to weaken the determination of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and enfeeble his resolve for religious *da'wah* (propaganda) by offering him worldly riches and honour; as the Divine words point to it: *And the chief persons of them break forth, saying: "Go and steadily adhere to your gods; this is most surely a thing sought after"* (38:6). Alternatively, they tried flattery and friendly intercourse, as may be seen in the following verses: *They wish that you should be pliant so they (too) would be pliant* (52:9); *And had it not been that We had already firmly established you, you would have been near to incline to them a little* (17:74); *Say: "O unbelievers! I do not worship that which you worship. Nor do you worship Him Whom I worship."* (109:1-3), as is understood from the traditions giving the reasons of their revelation.

The last thing, which they hoped would bring downfall to Islam, and toll the death bell of the *da'wah*, was the idea that Islam would certainly die with the death of its Prophet (s.a.w.a.), as he did not have a male offspring. In their eyes, the Prophet wanted to establish a kingdom in the guise of prophethood, and begin his reign in the name of Divine call and Messengership. When he died or was

killed, his traces would be erased, his memory would die and his religion would be forgotten. After all, this is what generally and habitually happens with kings and despotic rulers; no matter how great a power they acquire, how much arrogance they show, their memory dies with their death, and their laws and codes which had kept the people in their bondage are buried with them in their graves. The chapter of "Abundance" refers to this ultimate hope of theirs when it says: *Surely your enemy is the one who shall be without posterity* (108:3), as is clear from the reason of its revelation<sup>34</sup>.

These and similar expectations had kept their hope alive, and they believed that one day they would extinguish the light of the religion. They were under erroneous impression that this pure Divine call was merely a fiction whose falsity will become obvious in the coming days; and the passage of time will erase its tracks and finish it. But gradually, the Islam overcome all its adversaries – the false religions and their believers; the fame of Islam spread far and wide, and the religion acquired strength and power to defeat its enemies; these developments rooted out their hopes, they became despaired as they knew that they could not spoil the determination of the Prophet, nor could they diminish his zeal; and they had found earlier that he could not be bought by wealth or honour.

Islam's strength and power engulfed them with despair and pessimism; all the endeavours for defeating the Prophet had proved futile; yet one hope was still alive: The hope that he did not have any male offspring who could succeed him in his mission, to keep the religious *da'wah* alive as he was doing; so they hoped that his religion would die with him. It was self-evident that a religion, however perfect it may be in its *sharī'ah* and ideology, could not protect itself in the absence of a protector. Clearly, any established tradition and any religion with all its followers could not maintain its purity and freshness by itself, no matter how much its fame had spread in the world and how many people had entered into its fold. It needed

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<sup>34</sup> It is interesting to note that even the polytheists of Arabia knew that the continuity of the religion of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) depended on his having a male offspring. They never thought that the Prophet's companions could keep his religion alive, nor did Allāh console the Prophet in this chapter that he should not worry, as there were his companions who would strengthen and develop his religion after him. Instead, Allāh gave him the good news that he would be given abundant offsprings to continue his mission. But the Muslims did not realize this fact. (*tr.*)



someone who could protect it from deterioration and pollution. Also, it was clear that a religion could not be obliterated or annihilated by force or coercion, threats or mischief; or torture and things like that. It could die only with the death of its protectors and those who were appointed to manage its affairs.

All this shows that the total despair of unbelievers could take place only if Allāh was to appoint someone who would stand in the place of the Prophet for protection of religion and management of its affairs, in order that he could properly lead the Muslim *ummah* on the right path. This was sure to bring in its wake the disappointment and despair of the disbelievers concerning the Muslims' religion. Then the enemies would realize that the religion has already developed and reached the stage where it is not dependent on the person of the Prophet alone; rather it is placed under the care of a group who are true successors of the Prophet. This would be the perfection of the religion as it would discard the transient nature and acquire continuity and eternity; and this would be the completion of the Divine favour. Let us look at the Divine words: *Many of the People of the Book wish that they could turn you back into unbelievers after your faith, out of envy on their part, (even) after the truth has become manifest to them. But pardon and forgive (them) until Allāh should bring about His command. Surely Allāh has power over all things (2:109).* Very probably, the words: *until Allāh should bring about His command,* point to this very theme.

This explanation supports what has been narrated in the traditions that the verse was revealed on the day of Ghadīr Khumm, the 18th day of Dhi 'l-hijjah, the year 10 AH, regarding the successorship of 'Alī (a.s.). In this way, the two sentences will be very clearly connected with each other, and none of the objections mentioned earlier could be levelled against this explanation.

Now, that you have understood the meaning of desparation in this verse, you will appreciate that "this day" in the Divine Speech, "This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion", is an adverb of time related to the verb "have despaired". The adverb has been placed at the beginning of the sentence in order to show this day's importance and grandeur; as it was on this day that the religion passed the stage of personal guardianship of the Prophet and entered into the stage of collective guardianship of the Imāms; in this way, it rose from transiency to permanence and eternity.

On going ahead, we shall find a similar construction in the verse: *This day (all) the good things are allowed to you . . . (5:5).* But

the verse under discussion cannot be compared with this verse, because the contexts of the two verses are totally different. The verse: *This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion*, is a sort of expostulation against the unbelievers, while the verse: *This day (all) the god things are allowed to you*, begins a new subject. Also, the connotations are different. The former is a creative decree which contains good news on one side and warning on the other, while the latter is a legislative decree and describes the Divine grace and favour to the Muslims. *This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion*, shows the grandeur of the day because it brought a very highly beneficial good to the Muslims, that is, desparation of the unbelievers regarding the Muslims' religion. "those who disbelieve" refers to all the disbelievers, be they idolworshippers, Jews, Christians or others, because the clause is unrestricted, as we had described earlier.

The prohibition in the Divine words: *so fear them not, and fear Me*, is advisory, not obligatory. The connotation is that now that those who until now had posed as a danger to you have despaired, you have no reason to fear them; a man does not spend his energies for something when he has lost all hopes of attaining it; so now you are safe from their side and you should not fear them concerning your religion; therefore, "fear them not, and fear Me".

The words, "fear Me" in this context show that the Muslims should now fear Allāh in the matter concerning which they until then were afraid of the disbelievers, because now they cannot deprive you of your religion. It is clear that this is a sort of warning to the Muslims; and that is why we have not taken this verse as a statement of favour. This explanation gets strengthened if we remember that the fear of Allāh is obligatory in any case. It is not that it is *wājib* in this state but not in that; or with this condition and not with that; therefore, there was no reason to add "and fear Me" after the clause, "fear them not" if it does not indicate a very special fear in a particular situation.

These sentences should not be compared with the Divine words: *... so do not fear them, and fear Me if you are believers* (3:175); because the order to fear Allāh in this verse is made conditional to believing; the order is obligatory and the connotation is that the believers are forbidden to fear the disbelievers regarding their safety; rather, they are obliged to fear Allāh alone. The verse, therefore, forbids them to do what was not proper for them, that is, their fearing the disbelievers concerning their ownselves; it makes no difference here whether they are told to fear Allāh or not. That is why the order

to fear Allāh has been made conditional to their being the believers, and this condition also expounds the reason of this order.

But the Divine words in the verse under the discussion, "so fear them not and fear Me", are not like that. The believers' fear in this verse was the fear concerning their religion; and such a fear was not disliked by Allāh, because in reality it meant the pursuit of the Divine pleasure. When Allāh forbids this fear, it is because the reason causing that fear was no more. They feared the disbelievers because the disbelievers had not despaired of their religion yet; but now that the situation has changed, they no more needed to fear them. Thus, the prohibition here is advisory; and consequently, the order to fear Allāh also is in advisory capacity. The connotation, in short, is that it is necessary that you should be cautious and fearful in the matters of religion; but the cause of fear until now had come from disbelievers and you were afraid of them because till today they had hoped to divert you from your religion; but today they have despaired, and now the cause of fear emanates from Allāh. Therefore, you should be afraid of Him alone. Ponder on it.

The verse because of the words, "so fear them not, and fear Me", gives a hint of a warning and threat, because it orders the believers to have a special fear. It is not the general fear which is *wājib* for the believers in all conditions and at all times. Let us think on the speciality of this fear and find out why it has been made obligatory.

There is no doubt that the two sentences of this verse, that is: *This day have those who disbelieve . . .*; and, *This day have I perfected for you your religion*, are inter-related and express the same theme, as we have explained before. The religion which Allāh had perfected this day and the bounty which He has completed this day (in reality both are the same thing) was the thing regarding which the disbelievers had entertained all those hopes and because of which the believers were afraid of them; now Allāh made the disbelievers despaired of that religion, perfected it and completed it and then forbade the believers to fear the disbelievers in this respect; now when He orders them to fear His Ownself, it must refer to the same type of fear, that is, about the religion; they should remain on guard lest Allāh takes away the religion from their hands and remove this gifted favour from them.

Allāh has made it clear that He does not take away any favour except when the recipient of that favour shows ingratitude; and He has threatened the ungrateful person very severely: *This is because*

*Allāh does never change a bounty which He has conferred upon a people until they change their own condition; and because Allāh is Hearing, Knowing (8:53); . . . and whoever changes the favour of Allāh after it has come to him, then surely Allāh is severe in requiting (evil) (2:211). And Allāh has set a general parable for its bounties and how it changes when people become ungrateful. He says: And Allāh sets forth a parable: (consider) a town safe and secure to which its means of subsistence come in abundance from every quarter; but it became ungrateful to Allāh's favour, therefore Allāh made it to taste the utmost degree of hunger and fear because of what they wrought (16:112).*

The verse beginning from "This day have those who disbelieve", and ending at "Islam as a religion". announces that the religion of the Muslims is completely secured against the disbelievers and is safe from every danger which could come from that side; and no corruption or destruction can infiltrate into it except from the Muslims themselves. That would happen if the Muslims showed ingratitude towards this perfect Divine bounty and rejected this complete religion chosen by Him; then Allāh would take away His favour from them and change it to retribution and affliction and would make them taste the utmost degree of hunger and fear. Unfortunately, the Muslims have done it and Allāh has made them suffer the consequences.

If anyone wants to understand how true is the prophecy of tribulation and trial (which is inferred from the Divine words: *fear them not, and fear Me*), he should ponder on the condition of the Islamic world today, then he should go back analysing the historical events until he reaches at the roots of these misfortunes and afflictions.

The verses of *al-wilāyah* (الولاية = guardianship, mastership) in the Qur'ān are fully connected with the threat and warning contained in this verse. Allāh has not cautioned His servants of Himself except when it concerns the *wilāyah*; and has said in this respect, time and again: . . . *and Allāh cautions you of Himself*. . . (3:28 & 3:30). To go more deeply in this subject will take us of the scope of this book.

**QUR'ĀN:** *This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion:* *al-Ikmāl* (الأكمال = to perfect) and *al-itmām* (الإتمام = to complete) are near to each other in meaning.

ar-Rāghib has said: "A thing is called perfect when it serves the purpose which it is intended for; and it becomes complete when it reaches a stage where it doesn't need anything extra; a thing is called incomplete when it needs something more."

You can differentiate the meaning of the two words in another way: Effects of the things are of two kinds; some effects spring from it when all its parts and ingredients are in place; if any of its ingredients or conditions is missing, the effect will not take place. We can take the example of the fast; if any of its conditions is violated even for a very small part of the day the fast will be void. Such things are described with the word 'complete'. Allāh says: . . . *then complete the fast till night . . .* (2:187); *And the word of your Lord has been completed truly and justly . . .* (6:115).

On the other hand, there are the effects which spring from a thing without waiting for completion of all its ingredients. When one part is found, its related effect will appear; if all ingredients are present the desired effect will appear in its entirety. This is described as perfection. Allāh says: . . . *but he who cannot find (any offering) should fast for three days during the ḥajj and for seven days when you return; these (make) ten (days) perfect . . .* (2:196); . . . *and that you should perfect the number . . .* (2:185). The effect of some parts of this number are seen as are the effects of the whole number. Arabs say: His affairs are complete and his understanding is perfect; but they do not say: His understanding is complete and his affairs are perfect.

There is a difference between *al-ikmāl* and *at-takmīl* (الأَكْمَالُ، التَّكْمِيلُ) as there is between *al-itmām* and *at-tatmīm* (الْإِتْمَامُ، التَّتْمِيمُ). It is the difference between the paradigms of *al-if'āl* and *at-taf'īl* (الْأَفْعَالُ، التَّفْعِيلُ). *al-If'āl* basically shows instantaneousness of a work while *at-taf'īl* shows graduality. However, in a wider sense or as a result of literary evolution, the meanings in both paradigms change; sometimes, they become very different from the meaning of the root word, e.g., *al-ifrāt* (الإِفْرَاطُ = excess) and *at-tafrīt* (التَّفْرِيطُ = negligence), etc. Actually, these meanings were attached to such words at some particular occasions and then regular usage made them inseparable and they became like actual meanings.

It appears from the above discourse that the sentence, "This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you", shows that something has been added to the religion, (which is a collection of beliefs, ideologies and laws) today making it perfect; and the Divine bounty and favour (which was something spiritual) was

incomplete and without effect until today when it was completed and now the expected effect is going to result from it.

The favour and bounty is the thing which has affinity with nature of the recipient of that bounty. All the things are interconnected with each other because they are parts of the system of Divine management and in the long run all have affinity with one another; and most, rather all of them are Divine bounties when they are put parallel to each other, as Allāh says: . . . *and if you count Allāh's bounties you will not be able to number them . . .* (14:34); . . . *and made complete to you His favours outwardly and inwardly . . .* (31:20).

However, Allāh has described some of these favours naming them as evil, vile, game and play and using similar adjectives which are not praiseworthy; as He says: *And let not those who disbelieve think that Our granting them respite is good their souls; We grant them respite only that they may increase in sins; and they shall have a disgraceful chastisement* (3:178); *And this life of the world is nothing but a sport and a play; and as for the next abode, that most surely is the life . . .* (29:64); *Let it not deceive you that those who disbelieve go to and fro in the cities (fearlessly). A brief enjoyment! then their abode is hell, and evil is the resting place* (3:196-7). There are many other verses like these.

All these verses show that the things which are counted as bounties and Divine favours would really be bounties when they conform with the Divine purpose for which they were given to man. They have been created to serve as the Divine help to man in order that the man could use them in the way of his real felicity; in other words, when they help the man to be nearer to Allāh through worship and submission to His Mastership. Allāh says: *And I have not created the jinn and the human beings except that they should worship Me* (51:56).

All the things and faculties which the man uses with the aim of attaining nearness to Allāh and seeking Divine pleasure are the bounties and favours. Otherwise, they will become an affliction and trial. It means that the things in themselves are neutral. They become favour and bounty because they have in themselves the spirit of servitude and with that praiseworthy usage they come under the Divine *wilāyah*. This *wilāyah* results in Divine management of the servants' affairs. It follows that the favour in reality is the Divine *wilāyah* (mastership, guardianship); and a thing will become bounty when it contains something of that *wilāyah*. Allāh says: *Allāh is the*

*guardian (master) of those who believe; He brings them out of the darkness into the light . . . (2:257); That is because Allāh is the Master of those who believe, and because the unbelievers have no master for them (47:11); and He says about His Messenger (s.a.w.a.): But no! by your Lord! they do not believe until they make you a Judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find any straitness in their hearts as to what you have decided and submit with total submission (4:65). You may find other similar verses in the Qurʾān.*

Islam is a religion because it is a collection of what was sent down from Allāh for guidance of His servants, so that they may worship Him properly; and it is a Divine favour and bounty inasmuch as practically it contains in itself the *wilāyah* of Allāh, the *wilāyah* of His Messenger and of those vested with authority (*ulu 'l-amr*) after him.

The *wilāyah* of Allāh (i.e., His management of the servants' affairs through the religion) cannot be complete except through the *wilāyah* of His Messenger; nor will the *wilāyah* of His Messenger be complete without the *wilāyah* of those vested with authority after him; and that *wilāyah* means their management of the religious affairs of the *ummah* with Divine permission. Allāh says: *O you who believe! obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you (4:59)*, we have fully explained this verse before. Again, Allāh says: *Only Allāh is your guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the zakāt while they bow (5:55)*; and we shall explain the verse, God willing, in its place.

Thus, the verse means as follows: Today, and it is the day when those who disbelieve have despaired of your religion, I have perfected for you the whole religious perceptions (which I had revealed to you before) by making the *wilāyah* obligatory for you; and I have completed My bounty on you, and it is the *wilāyah* which means management of the religious affairs with Divine guidance. Until now, you were under the *wilāyah* of Allāh and His Messenger only; but it could work only upto the time the revelations would be coming down from Allāh; it could not work later when the revelation would be cut off, when the Messenger would not remain among the people to safeguard the Divine religion and defend it. It was essential that somebody should be appointed to carry on this responsibility and be vested with the authority after the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), to act as the overall authority in the affairs of the religion and the *ummah*.

The *wilāyah* is a single project; it was incomplete until it was completed with appointment of the one who was vested with the authority after the Prophet.

Now that the religion has become perfect in its legislation and the bounty of *wilāyah* is completed, I have chosen for you the Islam as religion, which is the religion of monotheism, in which no one is worshipped except Allāh and no one is obeyed (and obedience is a sort of worship) except Allāh and those whose obedience He has made obligatory for you, that is, the Messenger and the *waliyy*.

The verse makes it clear that the believers are today enjoying the security after they were afraid before, and that Allāh has chosen for them that they should devotedly adhere to Islam, the religion of monotheism. It is compulsory for them that they should worship Allāh without associating anything with Him; they have only to obey Allāh or him whose obedience has been ordered by Allāh. Now, ponder on the Divine words: *Allāh has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them successors in the earth as He made successors those before them, and that He will most certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that He will most certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchange; they shall worship Me, not associating aught with Me; and whoever disbelieves after this, these it is who are the transgressors* (24:55). Then place it parallel to the verses under discussion: *This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me. This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion*. You will at once appreciate that this verse is the fulfilment of the promise given in the chapter of "The Light"; the words: *they shall worship Me, not associating aught with Me*, describe the real purpose of this exercise as may be understood also from the end sentence: *and whoever disbelieves after this, these it is who are the transgressors*.

The chapter 24, "The Light", was revealed long before the chapter of "The Table" as it contains the story of slander, the verse of flogging, and that of *ḥijāb* (veil) and other such commandments.

**QUR'ĀN: but however is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful : *al-Makhmaṣah* (المَحْمَصَة) = hunger); *at-tajānuf* (التَّجَانُف) = to incline); it denotes inclination of the feet to the outer side; its oposite is *at-taḥānuf***



(الْخَائِف) which denotes their inclination to the inner side. The verse, in this context, shows three things:

1. This order is secondary, meant only for emergencies.
2. The permission to take unlawful food is limited to that small amount which removes the pangs of hunger and averts the emergency.
3. The Divine forgiveness and mercy is used in relation to the sins which make one liable to punishment; and likewise, it may be used in connection with the source of those sins, that is, the law contravening which results in sin and brings punishment in its wake.

## A DISCOURSE ON SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS

### 1. Various Views Concerning Eating of Meat:

There is no doubt that man, like all other animals and vegetables, has been provided with alimentary system with which he ingests those material ingredients which he can process to make them a part of his body and thus keep himself alive. So far as the nature is concerned, there is nothing to prevent him from eating whatever he can chew and swallow, the exceptions being the things which bring harm to him or create aversion.

As for harmfulness, the realization comes when he recognizes that the thing which he wants to eat is harmful to his body as, e.g., it is poisonous or things like that; then he restrains himself from eating it; or when he finds that eating it will cause him spiritual harm, like the things which are forbidden in various religions. This self-restraint is ideational.

As for aversion, it emanates from odiousness and dirtiness which repulses man from the thing; a man does not eat his faeces because by nature he thinks it is dirty (although some children and insane persons have been seen eating it). To this natural repulsion is added what results from religious beliefs or various customs prevalent in different societies. For example, the Muslims treat pork as dirty and unclean while the Christians enjoy eating it. In the same way, the Western people eat many animals which the orientals treat as unclean, like crabs, frogs and rats, etc. This type of aversion results from acquired disposition which we call second nature.

It shows that so far as eating of meats is concerned, mankind is divided in numerous categories. The spectrum shows on one side total prohibition and on the other unrestricted indulgence. When he uses

some meats he follows the dictates of nature, and when he refrains from some items, it emanates from some ideology, or is a result of his second nature.

The Buddhist system prohibited use of all animals altogether. This is one extreme, and its opposite is the excess which was prevalent among uncivilized people, in Africa and elsewhere, who had no hesitation in eating any meat, even the flesh of man.

The Arabs used to eat the meat of quadrupeds and other animals, even rats and lizards; they ate all types of dead cattle which they killed by slaughtering or which died by itself, was strangled or beaten to death; they ate what died as a result of a fall, or by being gored by another animal, or which was killed by beasts of prey. They ridiculed the Muslims saying: Why is it that you eat what you kill yourselves and do not eat what has been killed by Allāh? Many people offer similar objections even today. Some people say: What is the difference between one flesh and the other, when the human body does not get any harm from, especially if it is hygienically prepared, because the digestive system does not differentiate between this and that

The Arabs also used to eat blood; they filled the intestine with blood, roasted it and offered it to the guests. During famine days, they used to wound their camels with arrows and drank the blood which came gushing out. Even today, eating of blood is common among many non-Muslims communities.

The Chinese Buddhists are more liberal than the ancient Arabs; reportedly, they eat all types of animals including dogs and cats, even the worms, sea-shells and all types of insects.

Islam has charted a middle course, and has allowed the meats which are agreeable to the normal human nature. It has selected in quadrupeds the cattles like sheep, goats, cows and camels (also horse and donkey, although with dislike); among the birds, it disallowed the birds of prey and allowed those other birds which have crawl and those which flap their wings more often and do not have talon; in marine animals, it has allowed some categories of fish, details of which may be found in books of *sharī'ah*.

Even while allowing above-mentioned animals, it has prohibited its blood and that which has died of itself and on which the name of Allāh has not been invoked. The purpose behind these rules is to revitalize the natural canon, inasmuch as the man naturally likes to eat meat. Together with it, Islam respects the correct thinking and normal nature as these too are repulsed from eating those things which

may prove harmful to human being or which the human nature thinks odious and unclean.

**2. How Allāh Allowed Killing of Animals When the Mercy Rejects it:**

It may be asked: The animal has a spirit which is endowed with feelings similar to that which a man has: man hates the torture of slaughtering, the bitter taste of death and is endowed with the natural love of self. These are the feelings which incite a man to flee from every disliked and dangerous situation. This realization of our own feelings demands from us that we should look with respect and mercy on other human beings, because they too feel the same pain as we do, and all souls are equal. The same argument can be advanced for animal species. How can we inflict on animals the sufferings which we ourselves do not accept? How can we exchange their sweet life with bitter death? What right do we have to deprive them of the bounty of life which is the best of the bounties? Allāh is the most Merciful of all. How can His Mercy allow us to kill an animal for enjoying its meat when both of us are equally His creatures?

**Reply:** This question gives precedence to the feelings over the realities. Legislation follows the real good of humanity and not the emotional feelings. We may expound it as follows: Look minutely at all the things which you find around yourselves; you will see that all of them in their creation and continuity follow the law of continuous change. All things without exception do change to other things; and those other things in their turn do change into these things – directly or indirectly. Nothing comes into being unless another thing loses its existence in the process. Nothing continues living on this earth without something else going out of existence. This material world is the world of change and exchange; or you may say, the world of the eater and the eaten. The earthly compounds eat the earth itself by absorbing its chemicals to themselves changing them to their own images; then after sometime, the earth again eats and destroys them. Again, the vegetable world gets its nourishment from the earth and absorbs the air then later the earth eats it down to its original ingredients, the first elements: and this cycle continues.

How comes the animal world which gets its nourishment from vegetables, water and air. Some animals feed themselves on other animals, like the wild beasts which eat of their preys; and likewise predatory birds eat the pigeons and sparrows. The digestive systems of these carnivorous animals and birds do not accept any other food. The

small birds in their turn feed on grain, flies, fleas, insects and mosquitoes, while the mosquitoes feed on blood of man and other animals. Then, finally, the earth devours them all.

Clearly, the system of creation which has overall control on all the creatures, has ordained that man should get nourishment from meats, etc.; then it has guided the various parts of existence towards it. It is the system which has created in human beings the ability to get sustenance from both animals and vegetables. He has in the front of his alimentary system the teeth some of which are made to cut, the others to break, some to tear and others to grind; they are called canines, molars, premolars and incisors; man is not like goat or cow which cannot cut or tear apart, nor is he like beasts of prey which cannot grind or incise.

The faculty of taste with which his mouth is equipped finds the taste of meats pleasant; then other organs of his digestive system likewise find the meats delicious and long for it. All this is a part of creative guidance which proves that the Creator has given him permission to use and eat various meats. How can we separate this creative guidance from lawfulness of the work which this guidance leads to.

Islam is a natural religion. Its only aim is to revive the tracks of nature which the human ignorance has obliterated. It is bound to declare lawful what the creation guides to and the nature decrees. Islamic legislation revives this natural commandment; and in the same way it restores other arrangements which the Creator has ingrained in our nature. We have already mentioned that it confirms the decree of reason that one should abstain from such meats which are harmful physically or spiritually; and it strengthens the inner feelings by prohibiting what the normal human nature dislikes or feels aversion from. These two principles ultimately are based on the Divine management of the creation; and Islam has given credence to them. It has prohibited that which harms the growth of body and has forbidden that which is injurious to the well-being of human society; for example, that which has been slaughtered in the name of other than Allāh or that which has been obtained through gambling and dividing with arrows and so on; and it has prohibited those repulsive things which the nature abhors.

As for the idea of mercy which prevents one from torturing or killing other living beings, there is no doubt that mercy is a fine gift of Allāh which has been ingrained in the human nature, and in many animals as well, as we have sometimes observed. But the Creator has

not given it the status that it should enjoy absolute power over all affairs, or should command unqualified obedience. The creation itself has not given the mercy free rein; otherwise, there would not have been in this world any trace of grief, disease, suffering and various types of tortures and oppressions.

Moreover, human mercy in itself is not like justice, inasmuch as it is not an absolute noble characteristic which admits no restriction. Had it been so, then it would not have been proper to punish an oppressor for his oppression or to penalize a criminal for his crime; nor would we have been allowed to confront a transgression with similar action. If mercy means this, then the earth and all that is on it would perish.

However, Islam has not neglected the demands of mercy altogether, because it is among the creation's gifts. It has ordered us to deal with the animals with mercy. It has forbidden us to torture the animal at the time of slaughter; it doesn't allow to dissect the limbs of the slaughtered animal before it has died, nor is it allowed to skin it while it is alive. The prohibition of strangling an animal or beating it to death comes under this category of rules. Also, it has forbidden to slaughter an animal with another one looking at it. At the time of slaughtering, many rules based on mercy have been laid down, as for example, the animal should be given water before slaughtering, and so on, details of which can be seen in books of jurisprudence.

When all is said and written, the fact remains that Islam is a religion of reason, not of sentiments; it does not give precedence to the dictates of sentiments over the rules which are meant to bring reform in the human society. It accepts only that sentiment which is accepted by the reason; so in the end, that too becomes the dictate of reason.

As for the talk of Divine Mercy and His being the most Merciful of all, do they think that Allāh is a tender-hearted being? Or that His senses are influenced and He feels pity on some things? Obviously, these are material and physical characteristics and Allāh is far above such things. The Divine Mercy means that Allāh bestows good on someone who deserves it as much as he deserves it. That is why sometimes what we think is punishment turns out to be the Mercy from Him, and *vice versa*. Consequently, according to the reason, it is not good to neglect or discard a beneficial action by listening to what is suggested by our false mercy. Nor is it allowed to be negligent in legislating the *sharī'ah*, keeping in view the realities of the creation.

It appears from the above, that Islam follows the dictates of nature when it allows eating of meat, and enforces the the conditions for that, or explains the rules which it has laid down: . . . *the nature made by Allāh in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allāh's creation; that is the right religion, but most people do not know* (30:30).

### 3. Why Does Islam Insist on Slaughter?

It is another question branching from the previous one: We accept that eating meats is allowed by the human nature. Then why did not Islam restrict it to that meat which comes into hand after an animal's death? It could have allowed that meat which is obtained when an animal dies by itself. Such a rule would have reconciled the creative order of lawfulness of meat with the demand of Mercy which forbids man to torture an animal by killing or slaughter; there was no need to lay down special rites of slaughtering.

Its reply is clear from what we have said in the preceding question. Mercy in this meaning is not to be necessarily pursued; in fact, following the dictates of such mercy will nullify the norm of realities. However, as explained earlier, Islam has not spared any effort to deal with the animals mercifully, as much as was possible in this respect; it has been done in response to this fine human instinct.

Moreover, if we restrict the lawfulness of meat to the one obtained from a dead body, the only result will be the spread of diseases and physical harm which in itself is against the demands of mercy. Such an order will create a critical situation in general which the reason says must be avoided<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> **Why invoking the Name of Allāh?:** The animals have not been created by us; they are the creatures of Allāh. It is His favour and grace that He has allowed us to use their meat. Therefore, it is necessary to invoke His name at the time of slaughtering them, so that we may show our gratitude to Allāh and establish our right for killing and eating them.

**Why facing the qiblah?:** As for facing the direction of *qiblah*, its reason is not difficult to understand. It is the same reason for which we are ordered to face towards Mecca during prayers. And that reason is the manifestation of the universal unity of the Muslims, all of whom turn towards the Ka`bah for prayers and on certain prescribed occasions like slaughtering. (*Your Questions Answered*, vol.7, by S.S. Akhtar Rizvi)

## TRADITIONS I

‘Ikrimah narrates from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said, "No verse was revealed (with the words): *O you who believe!* but ‘Alī is its chief and its head. Allāh has admonished the companions of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) in more than one place, but He has never mentioned ‘Alī except with good (words)." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyāshī)

**The author says:** The same *ḥadīth* upto the words "its head" has been narrated in *Tafsīru ‘l-burhān* from Muwaffaq ibn Aḥmad from ‘Ikrimah from Ibn ‘Abbās; al-‘Ayyāshī also has narrated it from ‘Ikrimah; and we have quoted this *ḥadīth* earlier from *ad-Durru ‘l-manthūr*. Some traditions quote ar-Riḍā (a.s.) as saying: "There is not in the Qur’ān: *O you who believe!* except about us." This *ḥadīth* is based on the flow of Qur’ān or describes the esoteric meaning of the revelation.

‘Abdullāh ibn Sinān says, "I asked Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *O you who believe! fulfil the covenants.* He said, '(It means) agreements'" (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** al-Qummī has also narrated it in his *at-Tafsīr* from him.

ash-Shaykh at-Ṭūsī narrates through his chain from Muḥammad ibn Muslim that he said, "I asked of one the two (i.e., the 5th or the 6th Imām, a.s.) about the words of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great: *The Cattle quadrupeds are made lawful for you.* The Imām said, 'The foetus in the womb of its mother when hair or wool grows on its body, then its mother's slaughter is also its slaughter and this is what Allāh has meant (here).'" (*at-Tahdhīb*)

**The author says:** This *ḥadīth* is narrated in *al-Kāfi* and *al-Faqīh* from Muḥammad ibn Muslim from one of the two (a.s.); al-‘Ayyāshī in his *Tafsīr* has narrated this theme from Muḥammad ibn Muslim from one of the two, and from Zurārah from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.); and al-Qummī has also narrated it in his *Tafsīr*; and at-Ṭabrisī has narrated it in *Majma‘u ‘l-bayān* from Abū Ja‘far and Abū ‘Abdillāh (peace be on them).

al-Qummī writes in his *Tafsīr* under the words of Allāh: *O you who believe! do not violate the signs appointed by Allāh . . .* : The signs: *Ihrām*, *ṭawāf*, prayer in the place of Ibrāhīm, running between Ṣafā and Marwā and other rituals are all among the signs appointed by Allāh. Also, it is among the signs that when a man drives his sacrifice

for *hajj* and puts some signs on it, as for example, if he wounds the camel's hump or some other part of its skin or puts a garland (of old shoes) on its neck in order to make the people know that it was a sacrificial animal so that nobody would meddle with it. This is called *ash-sha'air* (الشَّعَائِر = sign, indications) because it indicates to the people its purpose. The words: *nor the sacred month*, indicate here the month of Dhi 'l-ḥijjah which is one of the sacred months; *nor the offerings*, points to the animal which is driven by the pilgrim after he wears *ihrām*; *nor the symbolic garlands* – the garland is made of the shoes in which he has prayed; *nor those going to the Sacred House* – those who go for pilgrimage of the House. (*at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī)

aṭ-Ṭabrisī says, "Abū Ja'far al-Bāqir (a.s.) said, 'This verse was revealed concerning a man from Banū Rabī'ah who was called al-Ḥuṭam.'" aṭ-Ṭabrisī goes on to say, as-Suddī has said, 'al-Ḥuṭam ibn Hind al-Bakrī came until he reached the Prophet alone, and he had left his group outside Medina; then he asked, "To what do you call (us)?" – The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had already told his companions, "Today will come to you from Banū Rabī'ah (a man) who speaks with the tongue of Satan" – When the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) replied, he said, "Give me some time; probably I will accept Islam; and there are people who I should consult." Then he went out. The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, "Surely he entered with a *kāfir* face and went out with a treacherous back." Then, al-Ḥuṭam passed by some camels of Medina which were left to pasture, and he took all of them and went away; and he was singing (the following lines):

*Tonight Ḥuṭam rolled up with animal drivers,  
He is not a herdsman of camels nor a shepherd,  
Nor is he a butcher working on a butcher's block,  
They all were asleep, but the son of Hind did not sleep,  
The night was passing and a young man was enduring it  
who is straight like an arrow,  
With well-developed legs and smooth feet.*

Then, next year he came for *hajj* and had put symbolic garlands on the neck of (those) camels. The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was thinking of sending some people to him. Then this verse was revealed: *nor those going to the Sacred House.*" (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

aṭ-Ṭabrisī further says, "Ibn Zayd has said that it was revealed on the day Mecca was conquered about those polytheists who were coming to the House and saying *talbiyyah* of *'umrah*. The Muslims said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! These too are polytheists like these (Meccans). Let us aid them.' Then Allāh revealed this verse."



**The author says:** at-Ṭabarī has narrated the first story from as-Suddī and ‘Ikrimah and the second one from Ibn Zayd; *ad-Durru ‘l-manthūr* narrates the second story through Ibn Abī Ḥātim from Zayd ibn Aslam and there it is said that it was on the day of al-Ḥudaybiyyah; but neither story conforms with what is almost unanimously agreed by the exegetes and the narrators that the chapter of "The Table" was revealed in the last pilgrimage. In other words, the Divine orders: . . . *the idolators are nothing but unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this (very) year . . .* (9:28); . . . *then slay the idolaters wherever you find them . . .* (9:5), were already revealed before the Divine words: *nor those going to the Sacred House*. So, there is no reason why should this last order be taken to forbid confronting the idolworshippers when they go to the Sacred House, [because they had already ceased to visit it].

Probably, something from these two or similar stories was the reason of the traditions narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās, Mujāhid, Qatādah and aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk that the words: *nor those going to the Sacred House*, are abrogated by the words: *then slay the idolators wherever you find them*, and the words: *the idolators are nothing but unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this (very) year*. al-Qummī also has written about this abrogation in his *Tafsīr* and it seems that that too is a tradition. But all these traditions should be discarded because the chapter of "The Table" was the last to be revealed and it has been narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu ‘l-bayt* (a.s.) that this chapter is abrogating, not abrogated. Moreover, the Divine words: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . .*, totally refute the idea that some of its verses would be abrogated. Keeping all this in view, the words: *nor those going to the Sacred House*, may be taken to be an explanation of the words which follow: *and let not the hatred of a people – because they hindered you from the Sacred Mosque – incite you to exceed limits*. You should not violate the sanctity of the House they had in the past hindered you from the Sacred House; Nor should you commit transgression against those who had hindered you from the sacred Mosque before; don't commit any sin like murder against them, nor any lesser transgression and injustice; rather you should cooperate with each other in righteousness and piety.

Aḥmad and ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd have narrated about the verse: *and help one another in righteousness and piety*; and al-Bukhārī has narrated in his *Tārīkh* – all from Wābiṣah that he said: "I came to the

Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and I had intended that I would not leave any item of righteousness and sin without asking him about it. (The Prophet) said to me: 'O Wābiṣah! Should I tell you what you have come to ask about or you would ask?' I said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! You tell me.' He said, 'You have come to ask about righteousness and sin.' Then the Prophet joined his three fingers and kept poking them at my chest and he was telling, 'O Wābiṣah! Ask your heart, ask your heart, righteousness is which the heart gets tranquility and you get peace of mind, and the sin is that which upsets (your) heart and creates uncertainty – even if people give you rullings and rullings.'" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

Aḥmad, 'Abd bin Ḥamīd, Ibn Ḥibbān, aṭ-Ṭabarānī, al-Ḥākim (and he has said that it is correct) and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Abū Amāmah (that he said), "A man asked the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) about sin. The Prophet said: 'Whatever makes your soul restless, leave it.' He said: 'Then what is *īmān*?' The Prophet said, 'Whoever is grieved for his evil (deed) and is pleased with his good (deed) is a believer.'" (*ibid.*)

Ibn Abī Shaybah, Aḥmad, al-Bukhārī (in *al-Adab*), Muslim, at-Tirmidhī, al-Ḥākim and al-Bayhaqī (in his *Shu'abu 'l-īmān*) have narrated from an-Nawwās ibn Sam'ān that he said, 'The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was asked about righteousness and sin. He said, 'Righteousness is good behaviour and sin is that which keeps your soul restless and you do not like that people should come to know about it.'" (*ibid.*)

**The author says:** As you see, these traditions are based on the words of Allāh: *And the soul and Him who made it perfect, then He inspired it to understand what is wrong for it and right for it* (91:7-8); and they support what we have written earlier about the meaning of sin.

aṭ-Ṭabrisī has written: There is a difference of opinion about it (i.e., the Divine words: *nor those going to the Sacred House*). It has been said that it is abrogated by the words of Allāh: *then slay the idolaters wherever you find them*, and this has been written by most of the exegetes; on the other hand, it is said that nothing from this chapter has been abrogated nor from this verse, because it was not lawful to start fighting with the polytheists in the sacred months except when they start it. Then he has said that it is narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.).

aş-Şadūq narrates through his chain from Abān ibn Taghlib from Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Bāqir (blessings of Allāh be on them) that he said: "Dead body, blood and flesh of swine is known: *that on which any other name than that of Allāh has been invoked*, that is, what has been slaughtered on idols. As for the strangled (animal), the fire-worshippers did not eat slaughtered animals rather they ate dead ones; they used to strangle cow and sheep, and when it died, they ate it; *and that beaten to death*: they used to tie its legs and beat it until it died and then they ate it; *and that killed by a fall*: they used to blindfold it and throw it from a roof, when it died, they ate it; *and that killed by being smitten with the horn*: they made the rams fight each other and when one of them died, they ate it; *and that which wild beasts have eaten, except what you slaughter*: they used to eat what was killed by wolf, lion and bear; so Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, prohibited; *and what is sacrificed on stones set up* (for idols): they (the zoroastrians) used to sacrificed animals in their fire-temple; and the Qurayshites used to worship trees and stones and slaughtered animals on them; *and that you divide by arrows; that is a transgression*:" He said: "They used to take an animal and divide it into ten parts<sup>36</sup>, then they gathered and took out the arrows (and they gave it to a man) and there were 10 arrows, seven of which had got shares and three were without any share. Those with shares were: *al-fadhḥ*, *at-taw‘am*, *al-musbil*, *an-nāfis*, *al-ḥils*, *ar-raqīb* and *al-mu‘allā*, *al-fadhḥ* had one share, *at-taw‘am* two, *al-musbil* three, *an-nāfis* four, *al-ḥils* five, *ar-raqīb* six and *al-mu‘allā* had seven shares. Those without share were *as-safīḥ*, *al-munīḥ* and *al-waghad*; and the animals price was paid by those who did not get any share; and it was gambling, therefore, Allāh prohibited it." (*Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu ‘l-faqīḥ*)

**The author says:** The meanings given in the tradition in explanation of the strangled animal, that beaten to death and that killed by a fall, aim at explaining the verse through examples (as is clear from the next tradition). Also, the exception of *except what you slaughter*, attached to *and that which wild beasts have eaten*, and likewise the words, *that is a transgression*, which qualifies *and that you divide by the arrows*, do not mean that this exception or qualification is limited to these single items.

‘Ayyūq ibn Qasūṭ narrates from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) concerning these words, that he said, "The strangled animal is that

<sup>36</sup> It should be 28 parts. (tr.)

which is strangulated in the neck; that beaten to death is such a sick animal which doesn't feel the pain of slaughter, it does not agitate its limbs nor blood comes out of it; that killed by a fall is that animal which falls down from roof, etc.; that killed by being smitten with the horn is that which is gored by another animal. (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyāshī)

al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī al-Washshā’ narrates from Abu ‘l-Ḥasan ar-Riḍā (a.s.); he says, "I heard him saying that the animals which fall from high place, those smitten with the horn and those which wild beasts have eaten, if you get chance of slaughtering it, then (you may) eat it." (*ibid.*)

Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh narrates from one of his companions that he said, "I said to Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.), 'May I be made your ransom! Why did Allāh forbid the dead animal, blood and flesh of swine?' He said, Verily when Allāh, the Blessed, the High, prohibited these to His servants and made the other things lawful to them, it was not because Allāh liked these prohibited things for Himself, Blessed and High is He, nor did He dislike other things so allowed His servants to use it. The fact is that He created the creatures and knew what would sustain their bodies and keep them in good health. Therefore, He made it lawful for them as a favour from Himself for their own well-being; and He knew what would be harmful to them, so He forbade it to them and made it unlawful; yet He allowed it for those facing emergencies, and made it lawful to him when his body could not be sustained otherwise; so He ordered him to partake from it to that amount which would avert the emergency, but not any more.' Then the Imām (a.s.) said, 'As for the dead body, nobody goes near it or eats it but his body becomes weak and thin, and his strength is lost and his generation is discontinued; and one who (habitually) eats dead body will not die but unexpectedly. As for blood, it creates burning thirst and hard-heartedness, mercilessness unkindness; one cannot be sure that he would not kill his child or parents; he cannot be trusted about his firends or companions. As for the flesh of swine, verily Allāh had transformed some groups in various forms, resembling swine, monkey, bear and other such animals; then He prohibited (His servants) to eat the animals of similar shapes in order that they should not be polluted by it and should not take the Divine punishment lightly. As for intoxicants, Allāh has made it unlawful because of its effect and disorder.' Then he said, 'Verily the one addicted to liquor is like the idolwshipper; it creates in him tremor and takes away his radiance; it destroys his sense of honour, and incites him to indulge in unlawful activities like bloodshed and fornication; when he is

intoxicated, there is no guarantee that he would not assault sexually the women who are within his prohibited degree [like mother, daughter or sister] without being aware of it. The liquor does not lead the drinker except to every type of evil." (*ibid.*)

## TRADITIONS II

Abu 'l-Muayyad Muwaffaq ibn Aḥmad [al-Khwārazmī] has written in his book *Faḍāil 'Alī*; he says, "Informed me the chief of the memorisers Shahrđār ibn Shīrwayh ibn Shahrđār ad-Daylamī among what he wrote to me from Hamadān, informed us Abu 'l-Faṭḥ 'Abdūs ibn 'Abdillāh ibn 'Abdūs al-Hamadānī in writing, narrated to us 'Abdullāh ibn Ishāq al-Baghawī, narrated to us al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī al-Ghanawī, narrated to us Muḥammad ibn 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmān az-Zarrā', narrated to us Qays ibn Ḥafṣ, narrated to us 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, narrated to us Abū Hurayrah from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, 'Verily, the day the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) called the people to Ghadīr Khumm, he ordered so that the thorns under the trees were swept aside, and that was a Thursday, when he called the people to 'Alī and holding his arm, he lifted it until people were looking at the whiteness of his armpits; then both did not separate from one another until this verse was revealed: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and have completed My favour on you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.* Then the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, "*Allāhu Akbar!* for perfecting the religion and completing the bounty and for pleasure of the Lord with my Messengership and the *wilāyah* of 'Alī." Then he said, "O Allāh! Love him who loves him ('Alī) and be enemy of him who has enmity with him ('Alī) and help him who helps him ('Alī) and forsake him who forsakes him ('Alī)."

"Ḥassān ibn Thābit said, 'Do you allow me, O Messenger of Allāh! to compose some lines of poetry?' He said, 'Say it, Allāh will send it down (to you).' So, Ḥassān ibn Thābit said:

*On the day of Ghadīr their Prophet was calling them,  
At Khumm, and how loud was the Prophet as a caller!  
That verily I am Your Mawlā, Yes, and your Waliyy,  
So they all said and did not show there any blindness:  
Your God is our Mawlā and you are our Waliyy.  
And you will not find anyone in the creation disobeying this  
order.  
So he said to him, 'Stand up O 'Alī! because surely,*

*I am pleased for you to be the Imām and Leader after me.' "*  
(*Ghāyatu 'l-marām*)

al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Nu‘aym has narrated a similar *ḥadīth* through his chains from Qays Ibn Rabī‘ from Abū Hārūn al-‘Abdī from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī; and he has added four lines more at the end of the poem:

*So whomsoever I am the Master then this is his Master,  
Therefore you must be his true helpers and lovers.  
Then he prayed (saying): "O Allāh! be friend of his lover  
and be the enemy of him who has enmity towards ‘Alī."  
(Nuzūlu 'l-Qur‘ān fī Amīri 'l-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib)*

Also, he narrates through his chains from ‘Alī ibn ‘Āmir from Abu 'l-Ḥajāf from al-A‘mash from ‘Aḍḍah that he said: "This verse came down to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) about ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib: *O Messenger! deliver what has been revealed to you from Your Lord . . .*; and (also) Allāh has said: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and have completed My favour on you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.*" (*ibid.*)

Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥamawaynī said, informed me ash-Shaykh Ṭāju 'd-Dīn Abū Ṭālib ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Abdillāh al-Khāzin; he said, informed us al-Imām Burhānu 'd-Dīn Nāṣir ibn Abi 'l-Makārim al-Maṭrazī through Ijāzah; he said, informed us al-Imām Akhtab Khwārazm Abu 'l-Muayyad Muwaffaq ibn Aḥmad al-Makkī al-Khwārazmī; he said, informed me the Chief of the memorizers in what he wrote to me from Hamadān; informed us ar-Rāis Abu 'l-Faḥ in writing; narrated to us ‘Abdullāh ibn Ishāq al-Baghawī; informed us al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Aqīl al-Ghanawī; informed us Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh az-Zarrā‘; informed us Qays ibn Ḥafṣ, he said, narrated to me ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-‘Abdī from Abū Hārūn al-‘Abdī from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (and he narrated like the first tradition). (*ibid.*)

al-Ḥamawaynī has also narrated from the Chief of the memorizers and Abū Manṣūr Shahrḍār ibn Shīrwayh ibn Shahrḍār ad-Daylamī; he said informed us al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥaddād al-Muqri’ al-Ḥāfiẓ from Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdillāh ibn Aḥmad; he said, informed us Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī; he said, informed us Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Abī Shaybah; he said, informed us Yahyā al-Ḥammānī; he said, informed us Qays ibn ar-Rabī‘ from Abū Hārūn al-‘Abdī from Abū Sa‘īd al-Kudrī (and narrated like the first tradition) (*ibid.*)

al-Ḥamawaynī has said after this tradition: "This tradition has many paths to Abū Sa‘īd ibn Mālīk al-Khudrī al-Anṣārī."

as-Sayyid ar-Raḍī (r.a.) has narrated from Muḥammad ibn Ishāq from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) from his father, from his grandfather that he said, "When the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) returned from the Last Pilgrimage, he came down at a place called Ḍawjān; then this verse came down: *O Messenger! deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message, and Allāh will protect you from the people* (5:67). When it was revealed that he would be protected from the people, he (ordered to) call: The prayer in congregation! So, the people gathered near him. He said, 'Who has more authority on you than you have yourselves' All of them cried out and said, 'Allāh and His Messenger.' So he held the hand of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and said, 'Whomsoever I am the Master, ‘Alī is his Master. O Allāh! befriend him who befriends him, and be enemy of him who is his enemy, and help him who helps him, and forsake him who forsakes him; because he is from me and I am from him, and his status with me is like that of Hārūn with Mūsā except that there is no prophet after me.' It was the last obligation which Allāh, the High, imposed on the *ummah* of Muḥammad. Then Allāh, the High, revealed to His Prophet: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and have completed My favour on you and have chosen for you Islam as a religion.*"

Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) said, "So they accepted from the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) all the obligations that Allāh had imposed on them: the prayer, fast, *zakāt* and *ḥajj*, and confirmed his truthfulness in all these things."

Ibn Ishāq said, "I said to Abū Ja‘far (a.s.), 'When was that' He said, 'On 19th<sup>37</sup> Dhi 'l-ḥijjah 10 AH<sup>38</sup> during his return journey from the last pilgrimage and there were between that and [the death of] the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) 100 days<sup>39</sup>, and had heard the Messenger of Allāh at Ghadīr Khumm twelve<sup>40</sup>.'" (*al-Manāqibu 'l-fākhirah*)

Ibn 'l-Maghāzilī narrates through his chains from Abū Hurayrah that he said, "Whoever will fast on the 18th day of Dhi 'l-ḥijjah, Allāh will write for him the fast of sixty months; and that is the day of Ghadīr Khumm. At that place, the Prophet took (from the Muslims) the *bay‘ah* of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and said, 'Whomsoever I

<sup>37</sup> *al-Burhān*, says, 17th. (*Author's note*)

<sup>38</sup> The correct date is 18th Dhi 'l-ḥijjah, not 17th or 19th. (*tr.*)

<sup>39</sup> This too is not correct. Between Ghadīr day and the death of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) were 70 days (according to the Shī‘ah and Sunnī traditions). (*tr.*)

<sup>40</sup> *al-Burhān*, says, twelve men. (*Author's note*)

am the Master 'Alī is his Master, O Allāh! befriend him who befriends him, and be enemy of him who is his enemy, and help him who helps him.' Then 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said to him, 'Congratulations! Congratulations! to you, O son of Abū Ṭālib! you became my *mawlā* and *mawlā* of every believing man and woman.' Then Allāh, the High, sent down the verse: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and have completed . . .* " (*al-Manāqib*)

There are traditions like the first one narrated from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī in *al-Manāqib* of Ibn Marduwayh and in *Saraqātu 'sh-shi'r* of al-Marzubānī.

**The author says:** as-Suyūṭī has narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* the two traditions from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī and Abū Hurayrah, and has said that the chains of narrators of both are weak. And it has been narrated through many chains that end at the companions like 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Mu'āwiyah and Sumrah that the verse revealed on the day of 'Arafah in the Last Pilgrimage and it was a Friday. The reliable among these traditions is that which has been narrated from 'Umar. (as-Suyūṭī) has narrated it from al-Ḥamīdī, 'Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Aḥmad, al-Bukhārī, Muslim, ar-Tirmidhī, an-Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) from Ṭāriq ibn Shahāb from 'Umar; and has narrated from Ibn Rāhawayh (in his *al-Musnad*) and 'Abd ibn Ḥamīd from Abu 'l-'Āliyah from 'Umar; and also, from Ibn Jarīr, from Qubayṣah ibn Abī Dhuyayb from 'Umar; and also from al-Bazzāz from Ibn 'Abbās and apparently, he narrates from 'Umar.

As for the weakness of the chains of narrators of the two traditions, it will not help him at all in proving the weakness of the text of the tradition. We have explained clearly in the foregoing Commentary that the theme of the noble verse does not fit on any hypothesis except the even of Ghadīr. All other meanings claimed for it are clearly off the mark. Therefore, the two traditions and others of the same meaning conform with the Book of Allāh – contrary to all other traditions – therefore, only these traditions have to be accepted.

Moreover, these traditions which show that the verse was revealed on the subject of *al-wilāyah* – there are more than twenty traditions from the Sunnī and Shī'ah chains – are closely related to the traditions describing the reason of revelation of the Divine words: *O Messenger! deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord . . .* (5:67) – and there are more than fifteen such traditions narrated by both the sects – and all this together is connected with the tradition of Ghadīr: 'Whomsoever I am the Master, 'Alī is his Master;' and it is a



*mutawātir* tradition narrated by a huge number of the companions and a great many scholars of both sects have accepted that it is *mutawātir*.

And it is agreed upon that this had happened when the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was returning from Mecca to Medina; and this *wilāyah* (if it is not to be taken as a jest or joke) is an obligatory order like loving the friends of Allāh and keeping aloof from His enemies, which have been explicitly ordered in many verses of the Qur'ān. Keeping all this in view, it is not possible to say that this obligatory order of *wilāyah* was revealed after the revelation of the verse: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . .* Obviously, this verse must have been revealed after the legislation of *al-wilāyah*. If there are traditions which show something different from this reality, then they are not to be relied upon.

You have already known what is the position of the tradition which as-Suyūfī has narrated from 'Umar. However, there is one thing to which attention should be drawn. If we look at the two noble verses: *O Messenger! deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His Message, and Allāh will protect you from the people* (as we shall describe its meaning later on), and: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . .*, together with the traditions written about them by both sects, and the *mutawātir* traditions of Ghadīr; and then we study the internal condition of the Islamic Society during the last days of the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.), and deeply ponder on all this phenomenon, we will feel certain that the order of *al-wilāyah* was already revealed some days before the day of Ghadīr, but the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was hesitating to announce it before the masses, fearing that people would not accept it or would confront the Prophet with evil intentions, which would result in damaging his mission; he was postponing its announcement from today to tomorrow until the the Divine order came: *O Prophet! deliver what has been revealed to you . . .*, and this did not leave him any room for delaying.

Accordingly, it may be surmised that Allāh had revealed a major part of this chapter including: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . .*, together with the order of *al-wilāyah*; and all this happened on the day of 'Arafah; but the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) postponed the announcement of *al-wilāyah* upto Ghadīr Khumm, although he recited the verse referring to it on the day of 'Arafah. As for the traditions which sho its revelation on the day of Ghadīr, it is not improbable that the idea sprang because the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had

recited this verse at the time when he announced the order of *al-wilāyah* as the verse was revealed for the same purpose.

If we accept this hypothesis, then there would not remain any contradiction between those traditions which say that the verse was revealed about *al-wilāyah* and those which say that it was revealed on the day of ‘Arafah, as has been narrated from ‘Umar, ‘Alī, Mu‘āwiyah and Sumrah. There would have been contradiction if one group of the traditions had said that it was revealed on the day of Ghadīr Khumm and the other had said that it was revealed on the day of ‘Arafah.

As for those traditions which take the verse to mean that the religion was perfected by *hajj*, etc., these are merely the narrators' own interpretations. They are supported neither by the Book of Allāh nor by any reliable explanation of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

The hypothesis given above may be inferred from the tradition narrated by al-‘Ayyāshī in his *Tafsīr* from Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Khuzā‘ī from his father that he said, "I heard Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) saying, 'When the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) reached ‘Arafah on Friday, Jibrīl came to him and said, "Verily Allāh sends you salutations and tells you: 'Say to your *ummah*: "This day I have perfected your religion with *wilāyah* of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and completed on you My favour and chosen for you Islam as a religion; and I will not descend on you people after this. I have brought for you the prayer, *zakāt*, fast and *hajj* and this is the fifth obligation and I shall not come to you after these four except with that (fifth one).'" ""

A part from that, there is another difficulty in the tradition narrated from ‘Umar regarding the revelation of this verse on the day of ‘Arafah. All these traditions together describe that some People of the Book – and some name him as Ka‘b – said to ‘Umar, "Verily there is a verse in the Qur‘ān if like that would have been revealed on us, the Jews, we would have taken the day of its revelation as an *‘īd* (feast) and the verse is: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . .* " ‘Umar said to him, "By Allāh! Surely I know the day and it was the day of ‘Arafah during the Last Pilgrimage."

The wording of the tradition as narrated by Ibn Rāhwayh and ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd from Abu ‘l-‘Āliyah is as follows: He says, "They were near ‘Umar and mentioned this verse. A man from the People of the Book said: 'Had we known on which day this verse was revealed we would have taken it as an *‘īd*.' ‘Umar said, 'All praise is for Allāh who has made it *‘īd* for us and also the next day; it was revealed on the day of ‘Arafah and the next day is the day of sacrifice; thus He

perfected the affairs for us; and we understood that the affairs after this will go on deteriorating."

The theme mentioned at the end of this tradition has been narrated in another way. It is written in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from Ibn Abī Shaybah and Ibn Jarīr from 'Antarah that he said, 'When the verse was revealed: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . .* – and it was the day of the great *hajj* – 'Umar started weeping; the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to him, 'Why are you weeping?' He said, 'The thing which has made me weep is that we were (until now) enjoying the increase in our religion. Now that it has become perfect then nothing ever becomes perfect but starts deteriorating.' The Prophet said, 'You are right.'"

There is another tradition resembling a little with the above which is narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from Aḥmad from 'Alqamah ibn 'Abdillāh al-Muznī who said, "Narrated to me a man who said, 'I was in the gathering room of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. 'Umar said to one of those present, "How did you hear the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) describing Islam?" He said, "I heard the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) saying, 'Verily Islam started [and grew as a camel grows from] a newborn calf, then it grows two teeth<sup>41</sup>, then four, then six and then it reaches its peak strength with last set of teeth.' 'Umar said, "Then there is nothing after completion except deteriorating.'"

As you see, these traditions are intended to show that this verse of "Perfection of Religion" was revealed on the day of 'Arafah for a specific purpose. According to them, it wanted to draw the attention of the people to what they were witnessing of triumph of the religion and its independence at Mecca during *hajj* season.

They want to interpret the perfection of religion and completion of Divine favour as the cleanness of Meccan atmosphere from pollution of polytheism, as all the affairs had come under the Muslims' control; on that day there was no religion there except Islam; and the Muslims had no need to fear their enemies or to remain on guard.

In other words, perfection of religion and completion of the bounty means perfection of what they had been given; they acted upon it without there being any enemy to mingle with them. According to this interpretation, the religion here does not refer to the *sharī'ah* which was laid down by Allāh and which contained tenets, ideologies,

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<sup>41</sup> "Two teeth" means two in the upper jaw and two in the lower. The same is the case with four and six teeth. (*tr.*)

beliefs and the religious laws; and likewise, Islam in this verse refers to that Islam which was in their hands and which they followed. We may say that according to these traditions, religion means the form of the religion which could be witnessed in their actions and the same will be the status of Islam. It is this phenomenon which could be subjected to deterioration after reaching its peak; but as for the basic ideologies, faith and the laws laid down by Allāh, they cannot deteriorate after perfection (the idea which is inferred from 'Umar's words: 'nothing ever becomes perfect but starts deteriorating'). Surely it is the system prevalent in the creation throughout the human history; and the society too is governed by this law; but the religion cannot come under the sway of these social laws. Of course, we are not talking here with those who believe that the religion too is a social phenomenon which is subject to change and evolution like other social formulas.

When you ponder on these matters, you will realize that this interpretation of 'Umar is not free from shortcomings:

**First:** What he understood about the meaning of perfection of religion is not applicable to the Divine words: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . .*, as we have explained earlier.

**Second:** How is it possible that Allāh should count the religion, in the form with which it appeared to the people, as perfect and could ascribe it to His Ownself as a matter of benevolence, just because the land was free from apparent idolworshippers and the society was apparently made up of the Muslims and cleansed from the polytheist enemies – while the very society contained those who were more harmful than the polytheists and more undermining to the Islamic system. They were the hypocrites who had their own secret societies and had infiltrated the inner circle of Islam. They sabotaged the system, turned the affairs upside down, created doubts in the believers' hearts and surreptitiously put in the religion un-Islamic ideas. They posed a greater threat to Islam; and a great number of Qur'ānic verses and chapters had warned the Muslims of their machinations; as for example, the chapter of "The Hypocrites", and the warnings given in the chapters of "The Cow", "Women", "The Table", "The Spoils". "Repentance" and "The Confederates" and so on.

I wish I knew where did their gang go? How their fire died out? By which strategy their plots were thwarted? And how their falsity was obliterated? When they were present among the Muslims, how was it possible for Allāh to remind the Muslims of His Benevolence just because the exterior of religion had been perfected and apparent

bounties had been completed for them? How could He be pleased by the apparent features of Islam merely because He had banished their idolworshipping enemies from Mecca, while the hypocrites were more inimical towards the Muslims, their danger was greater and it has left bitter results after the prophet. All this may be confirmed from the words of Allāh when He addresses His Prophet about them: *They are the enemy, therefore beware of them* (63:4).

How could Allāh portray it as His Benevolence to the Muslims and describe as perfect the appearance of religion whose inner reality was this? Or praise His Bounties as complete when they were mixed with afflictions? Or announce His pleasure with the shape of an Islam whose reality was such? Allāh, the High, the Great, has said: *Nor could I take those who lead (others) astray for aiders* (18:51); and He has said about hypocrites – *but if you are pleased with them, yet surely Allāh is not pleased with the transgressing people* (9:96). (In this verse, the pleasure of Allāh is exclusively related to their hypocrisy.)

The verse under discussion is absolutely general and no word has been restricted in any way; it speaks about unconditional perfection, completion and pleasure and unrestricted religion, bounty and Islam.

**Objections:** The verse, as mentioned earlier, is the fulfilment of the promise given in the chapter of the "Light": *Allāh has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them successors in the earth as He made successors in the earth as He made successors those before them, and that He will most certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that He will most certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchange; they shall worship Me, not associating aught with Me*; (24:55).

This verse, as you see, promises them to establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them. Parallel to that, we find in this verse: *I have perfected for you your religion, and, I have chosen for you Islam as a religion*. Thus, perfection of their chosen religion means establishing it for them, i.e., cleansing it from mingling of the polytheists. As for the hypocrites, their problem was different, not connected with this mingling. It is the connotation to which those traditions point which say that it was revealed on the day of 'Arafah. That is why it is said that it refers to the fact that the religious rites, and the Muslims who performed it, had been rescued from mingling of the polytheists.

**Reply:** There is no doubt that: *This day I have perfected . . .*, points to the fulfilment of the promise given in the verse: *Allāh has promised to those of you who believe and do good . . .* (24:55); Also, it is accepted that: *perfected for your your religion* is parallel to the words: *most certainly establish their religion which He has chosen for them*; but the verse of the chapter of the "Light" begins with the words: *Allāh has promised to those of you who believe and do good*. Obviously, it was a selected group of the Muslims; appearance of whose deeds fully tallied with their realities, their exterior was one with their inner condition their religious actions were parallel to the religion which was ordained by Allāh. Therefore, establishment of their chosen religion meant perfecting that chosen religion which was in the knowledge, and under the decree, of Allāh, by moulding it in the mould of legislation and gathering all its parts together for them, in order that they should worship Allāh according to that religion, when the unbelievers had despaired of their religion.

That is, as we had said earlier, that perfection of religion means that Allāh perfected it from the point of legislation; now no new obligation was to be revealed after this verse. It does not mean that their actions and particularly their *ḥajj* was cleansed from the rites and *ḥajj* of the idolworshippers. In other words, perfection of religion did happen when Allāh raised it to the highest level of development until there was no question of its ever getting deteriorated after completion.

al-Qummī says: "Narrated to me my father from Ṣafwān ibn Yahyā from al-‘Ulā’ from Muḥammad ibn Muslim from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said, 'The last obligatory order which Allāh revealed was *al-wilāyah*; therefore no obligatory order was revealed; then was revealed: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . .* at Kurā‘ al-Ghamīm; and the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) established (announced) it at Juhfah. After that, no obligatory order was revealed.'" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī)

**The author says:** This theme has been narrated by aṭ-Ṭabrisī in *Majma‘u ‘l-bayān* from al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.); and al-‘Ayyāshī has narrated it in his *Tafsīr* from Zurārah from al-Bāqir (a.s.).

ash-Shaykh has narated through his chain from Muḥammad ibn Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad from his father Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) from the Commander of the Believers ‘Alī (a.s.) that he said, "I heard the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) saying, 'The foundation of Islam is on five characteristics, on the two *shahādahs* and two associates.' He was

told, 'As for the two *shahādahs*, we know them, but what are the two associates? He said, 'The prayer and the *zakāt*, because one of them will not be accepted without the other; and the fast and the pilgrimage of the House of Allāh upon the one who can afford the journey to it; and he completed it with *al-wilāyah*; then Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, revealed: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and have chosen for you Islam as a religion.*" (*al-Amālī*)

There is in *Rawḍatu 'l-wā'izīn* (by al-Fattāl) a tradition from Ibnu 'l-Fārisī from Abū Ja'far (a.s.). The tradition narrates the story of the journey of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to pilgrimage and then his appointing 'Alī for *al-wilāyah* at the time of the return journey to Medina and revelation of this verse; that tradition contains the speech of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) on the day of Ghadīr, and it is a very lengthy speech.

**The author says:** A similar tradition has been narrated by aṭ-Ṭabrisī in *al-Ihtijāj* through a well connected chain from al-Ḥaḍramī from Abū Ja'far al-Bāqir (a.s.); also, al-Kulaynī in *al-Kāfi* and aṣ-Ṣadūq in *al-Uyūn* have narrated on revelation of the verse of *al-wilāyah*, both through their chains from 'Abdu 'l-'Azīz ibn Muslim from ar-Riḍā (a.s.). The same theme has been narrated by ash-Shaykh in his *al-Amālī* through his chain from Ibn Abī 'Umayr from al-Mufaḍḍal ibn 'Umar from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) from his grandfather, the Commander of the Believers (a.s.). Also, it has been narrated by aṭ-Ṭabrisī in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* through his chain from Abū Hārūn al-'Abdī from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī; also, by ash-Shaykh in his *al-Amālī* through his chain from Ishāq ibn Ismā'īl an-Naysābūrī from aṣ-Ṣādiq from his father from al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī (peace be on them all). We are not quoting those traditions for the sake of brevity. Whoever wants to see them should consult the books referred to. And Allāh is the Guide.

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End of al-Mīzān, volume 9