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Al-Mizan;

An Exegesis of the Qur'an, vol 9

From Ch. 4 [Surah An-Nisaa], Verses 77-176 To Ch.5 [Surah al-Mã’idah], vrs. 1- 3

This volume opens with the exposition of the verses 77-80 of the Surah An-Nisaa, and ends with the xposition of Surah al-Mã’idah verses 1-3. Translated by Allamah Sayyid Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi

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Publisher(s): World Organization for Islamic Services [W.O.F.I.S.]

[www.alhassanain.org/english](http://www.alhassanain.org/english)

English translation:

First edition 2000/1421

Translated from the Arabic:

Al -Mīzān fī tafsīri ’l - Qur’ān, vol. 5, Beirut, 1394/1974 (2nd ed.)

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Published by:

World Organization for Islamic Services,

P. O. Box No.11365 - 1545, Tehran – IRAN

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,

Muhammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.

Also send your blessings to all your

prophets and envoys.



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TRANSLITERATION



FOREWORD [IN ARABIC]





FOREWORD

1. al ‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabātabā’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 at-Tabātabā’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-Radawī to undertake this task, because we were familiar with his intellectual ability to understand the the Arabic text of al-Mīzān and his literary capability in expression and translation. So we relied on him for this work and consider him responsible for the English translation as al-‘Allāmah at-Tabātabā’ī was responsible for the Arabic text of al-Mīzān and its discussions.

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

(Board of Writing, Translation and Publication)

13/7/1412

19/1/1992

Tehran - IRAN.

al-Mīzān

Volume Nine

From Ch. 4 [Surah An-Nisaa], Verses 77-176 To Ch.5 [Surah al-Mã’idah], vrs. 1- 3

CHAPTER 4, VERSE 77-80

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ قِيلَ لَهُمْ كُفُّوا أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَخْشَوْنَ النَّاسَ كَخَشْيَةِ اللَّـهِ أَوْ أَشَدَّ خَشْيَةً ۚ وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا لِمَ كَتَبْتَ عَلَيْنَا الْقِتَالَ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنَا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ ۗ قُلْ مَتَاعُ الدُّنْيَا قَلِيلٌ وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا ﴿٧٧﴾ أَيْنَمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِككُّمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّشَيَّدَةٍ ۗ وَإِن تُصِبْهُمْ حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَـٰذِهِ مِنْ عِندِ اللَّـهِ ۖ وَإِن تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَـٰذِهِ مِنْ عِندِكَ ۚ قُلْ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّـهِ ۖ فَمَالِ هَـٰؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا ﴿٧٨﴾ مَّا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّـهِ ۖ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِن سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِن نَّفْسِكَ ۚ وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّـهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿٧٩﴾ مَّن يُطِعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّـهَ ۖ وَمَن تَوَلَّىٰ فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا ﴿٨٠﴾

Have you not seen those to whom it was said: “Withhold your hands, and establish prayer and pay zakãt”; but when fighting is prescribed for them, lo! a party of them fear men as they ought to have feared Allãh, 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 Allãh”; and if a misfortune befalls them, they say: “This is from you.” Say: “All is from Allãh;” 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 Allãh, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself; and We have sent you (O Prophet) to mankind as a Messenger, and Allãh is sufficient as a witness (79). Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allãh; 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’ãnic reality concern-ing good and evil.

QUR’ÃN: 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 begin-ning 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 Allãh ordered them to refrain from fighting; they were rather exhorted to establish the religious rites such as prayer and zakãt, in order to strengthen the religious tenets and faith and establish them on firm footing; only then would Allãh 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 Allãh - or even a greater fear than that.

QUR’ÃN: 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’ãn.

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 Allãh 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’ãnic 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’ÃN: Say: “The provision of this world is short . . . the husk of a date-stone” : Allãh 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 jihãd and martyrdom in the way of Allãh. 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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’ÃN: Wherever you are death will overtake you, though you are in lofty towers : al-Burūj (الُبرُوُج) is plural of al-burj (اْلُبْرُج = 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 itis derived altabarruj (اْلَّبَّرُج = displaying the adornments, etc.) at-Tashyīd (اَلتَّشْيِيدُ = setting up) is derived from ash-shayd (اّلشَّيْدُ = mortar), because it strenghtens and raises the building and decorates it. al-Burūju 'lmushayyadah (الْمُشَيَّدَة اَلْبُرُوجُ =) 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 jihãd was not prescribed for you, you would have remained safe from death or that death could not have overtaken you. The death decreed by Allãh will surely reach you.

QUR’ÃN: and if a benefit comes to you, they say: “This is from Allãh;” and if a misfortune befalls them, they say: “This is from you.” Say: “All is from Allãh;” but . . . : Two more examples of their foolish talks have been quoted here, and then Allãh 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 Mūsã (a.s.) also was confronted with a similar accusation; as Allãh has described in the Qur’ãn: 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 Mūsã and those with him; surely their evil omen is only from Allãh, 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. Allãh says: . . . their hearts are all alike . . . (2:118; moreover, they resemble most of all to the Children of Israel; and the Messenger of Allãh (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 Allãh; but they attributed one group, i.e., benefits and good fortunes to Allãh, 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 jihãd; 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. Allãh, then, ordered His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to refute their claim in these words: Say: “All is from Allãh.” These are the happenings and misfortunes arranged by the highest authority of this universe, i.e., Allãh alone, Who has no partner or colleague, inasmuch as all things submit to Allãh only - and to no one else - in their existence, continuity and all forthcoming events and incidents. This is what the Qur’ãn 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’ÃN: Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allãh, 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 Allãh 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 Allãh. 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 Allãh. The verse, in this sense, is not very far from the verse: This is because Allãh does never change a bounty which He has conferred upon a people until they change their own condition, and because Allãh is Hearing, Knowing (8:53). This reality is not contrary to another universal fact - that all good and evil emanates from Allãh, when looked from another angle, as will be explained below.

QUR’ÃN: and We have sent you (O Prophet!) to mankind as a Messenger, and Allãh 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 not 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 Allãh is sufficient as a witness”.

QUR’ÃN: Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allãh; 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 Allãh 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 ALLÃH, THE HIGH

[al-Hasanah (اَلْحَسَنَة = good, merit, benefit, beautiful) is opposite of as-sayyiah اَلْسَّيِّئَةُ = 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, wellproportioned 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 Allãh 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’ãn, all that is called “thing” (except Allãh Himself) is created by Allãh. Allãh 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 Allãh says: [Allãh] 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 Allãh'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? Allãh says: He is Allãh, the One, the Subduer (of all) (39:4); and He is the Supreme above His servants (6:18); and Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh - although it seems evil when looked from another angle. It is this reality which is described in some verses of the Qur’ãn: and if a benefit comes to them, they say: “It is from Allãh;” and if a misfortune befalls you, they say: “This is from you.” Say: “All is from Allãh;” 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 Mūsã and those with him; surely their ill omen is only from Allãh, but most of them do not know (7:131). There are other verses of the same theme.

As for misfortune, the Qur’ãn attributes that of the man to the man himself. Allãh says: Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allãh, 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 Allãh does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition (13:11); This is because Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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, Allãh 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? Allãh explains it in a similie: 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, Allãh 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 Allãh 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’ãnic 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’ãn confirms this understanding. Allãh says: That is because Allãh 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, Allãh 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 Allãh pardons most of their misdeeds. Also Allãh says: Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allãh, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself (4:79).

However, you should not imagine that when Allãh 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: Allãh is the Creator of every thing . . . (39:62); [Allãh] Who made good every thing that He has created . . . (32:7). These verses clearly show that every thing has been created by Allãh 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 Allãh; 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 Allãh in the same manner. Allãh 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 Allãh 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.1

Look at the Messenger of Allãh (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 Allãh 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 Allãh and in course of his sacred divine mission, of which he had full insight and in that case it was rather a grace of Allãh which raised his spiritual status and rank.

Likewise, whatever misfortune befalls a people is attributed to their actions from the Qur’ãnic point of view - and the Qur’ãnic view is but truth; and whatever bounty or benefit comes to them, it is from Allãh.

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 Imãms 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 Allãh says that nothing in His creation has power to reach its intended goal or to proceed to any good, except when Allãh 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 Allãh's grace upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been pure, but Allãh purifies whom He pleases . . . (24:21). These two verses in conjunction with the preceding ones show from another angle how the good comes from Allãh, that is, the man does not possess any good unless Allãh gives it into his possession; therefore all the good is from Allãh and the evil is from the man himself. This further explains the verse: Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allãh, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself.

To sum it up, all good comes from Allãh, 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 Allãh, because evil, per se, is not created, and He is the Creator. So, what is misfortune? When Allãh 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 Allãh under the verse: Surely Allãh is not ashamed to set forth any parable . . . (2:26), in volume one of this book.2

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’ãnic 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-Nasã’ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Hãtim, al-Hãkim (who said that this tradition is 'correct') and al-Bayhaqī (in his as-Sunan) from ‘Ikrimah from Ibn ‘Abbãs that he said: ‘Abdu 'r-Rahmãn ibn ‘Awf and his group came to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and said: 'O Prophet of Allãh! 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 Allãh brought him to Medina, He ordered him to fight. But then they withheld (their hands). So, Allãh sent down the verse, Have you not seen those to whom it was said: . . .?

‘Abd ibn Hamīd, Ibn Jarīr and Ibnu 'l-Mundhir have narrated from Qatãdah 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-Rahmãn 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 came and they were ordered to fight, those people disliked it, and did in this connection what you have heard. Then Allãh 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.)

Safwãn ibn Yahyã narrated from Abu 'l-Hasan (a.s.) that he said: “Allãh, 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 Allãh; 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-‘Ayyãshī)

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

[al-Kulaynī has narrated] through his chains from ‘Abdu 'r-Rahmãn ibn al-Hajãj that he said: “Trial and tribulation was mentioned near Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.), and how Allãh reserves it for the believer. [The Imãm, a.s.] said: 'The Messenger of Allãh (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-Kãfī)

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 Imãms: “Verily when Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, loves a servant, He immerses him in tribulation thorough immersing.” (ibid.)

as-Sãdiq (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-Bãqir (a.s.) said: “Verily Allãh 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.)

as-Sãdiq (a.s.) said: “The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) has said: 'Allãh does not need a servant in whose property and body there is no share for Allãh.”

‘Alī ibn al-Husayn has narrated from his father (peace be on both) that he said: “The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) has said: 'If a believer were to live on a mountain, Allãh, 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-sharãi‘)

as-Sãdiq (a.s.) said: “Worries and griefs always remain with a believer until they wipe out his sins.” (Kitãbu 't-Tamhīs)

The same Imãm (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-balãghah)

The author says: Ibn Abil-Hadīd says in his Commentary of Nahju 'l-balãghah: “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-Khatīb have narrated from Ibn ‘Umar that he said: “We were with the Messenger of Allãh (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 Allãh sent to you?' They said: 'Certainly.' He (again) said: 'Don't you know that Allãh has revealed in his Book that whoever obeys me, he obeys Allãh' They said: 'Certainly. We bear witness that whoever obeys you, he obeys Allãh, and that obeying you is a part of His obedience.' Then he said: 'So, it is a part of Allãh's obedience that you should obey me; and it is a part of my obedience that you should obey your Imãms; 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.

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CHAPTER 4, VERSE 81-84

وَيَقُولُونَ طَاعَةٌ فَإِذَا بَرَزُوا مِنْ عِندِكَ بَيَّتَ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ غَيْرَ الَّذِي تَقُولُ ۖ وَاللَّـهُ يَكْتُبُ مَا يُبَيِّتُونَ ۖ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّـهِ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّـهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٨١﴾ أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ ۚ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِندِ غَيْرِ اللَّـهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٨٢﴾ وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوِ الْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا بِهِ ۖ وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَىٰ أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ ۗ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّـهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَاتَّبَعْتُمُ الشَّيْطَانَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٨٣﴾ فَقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّـهِ لَا تُكَلَّفُ إِلَّا نَفْسَكَ ۚ وَحَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۖ عَسَى اللَّـهُ أَن يَكُفَّ بَأْسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۚ وَاللَّـهُ 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 Allãh writes down what they hatch by night, therefore turn aside from them and trust in Allãh, and Allãh is sufficient as a protector (81). Do they not then meditate on the Qur’ãn? And if it were from any other than Allãh, 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 Allãh upon you and His mercy, you would have certainly followed the Satan, save a few (83). Fight then in Allãh's way; this is not imposed on you except in relation to yourself, and rouse the believers to ardour; maybe Allãh will restrain the fighting of those who disbelieve, and Allãh 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’ÃN: 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 (اَلْبُرُوزُ = to go out); at-tabyīt (اَلْتَّبْيِيْتُ = 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 Allãh knows better: When you call them to jihãd, 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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.). Then Allãh tells His Messenger to turn aside from them and have trust in Allãh, as He says: therefore turn aside from them and trust in Allãh, and Allãh 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’ÃN: Do they not then meditate on the Qur’ãn? . . . : It is an exhortation in the form of 'question'. at-Tadabbur (اَلتَّدَبُّرُ = 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’ãn, 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’ãnic 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’ãn is a Book revealed by Allãh, 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’ãn were from someone other than Allãh, 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 Allãh. 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’ãn 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’ãn.

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 Allãh, the One, the Subduer.

The verse shows that:

1. The Qur’ãn is within the reach of the normal understanding;

2. The Qur’ãn 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 it is subject to these things, naturally it will have to undergo change and alternation; but inasmuch as the Qur’ãn 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’ÃN: And when there comes to them news of security or fear, they spread it: al-Idhã‘ah (اَلأِذَاعةُ = 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 Allãh 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, Allãh 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,4 which was described in the chapter of “The House of ‘Imrãn”. The verses agree in theme with those in that chapter, as will be clear on meditation. Allãh says there: (As for) those who responded to the call of Allãh 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: “Allãh is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is (He)”. So they returned with favour from Allãh and (His) grace; no evil touched them and they followed the pleasure of Allãh; and Allãh 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).

As you see, these verses describe how the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was calling the people, “after the wound had afflicted them” in the calamity of Uhud, 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 Allãh 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 . . .). Your will find no room for doubt that the verses under discussion too describe the same episode of the Lesser Badr. The Qur’ãn 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’ÃN: 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 Allãh as was done in the preceding verse 59: then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allãh and the Messenger if you believe in Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh might know who fears Him in secret (5:94); And most certainly Allãh will know those who believe, and most certainly He will know the hypocrites (29:11).

Istinbãt (اِسْتِنْبَاطُ = to draw out a talk from ambiguity to distinctness and knowledge); it is derived from an-nabt (اَلْنَّبَط = 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 Allãh (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 Allãh (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 (أُولُوالأَمْر = those vested with authority; those in authority) has the same connotations in the preceding verse 59: O you who believe! obey Allãh 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, jurisprudents, reciters of Qur’ãn 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’ãn and so on - have in these matters, that Allãh 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, ‘Uthmãn and ‘Alī) is more baseless. First of all, there is no proof for it in the Book of Allãh 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 o 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 Allãh 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 ‘Abdullãh ibn Abī and his band. The story of his consultation in the battle of Uhud is well-known. How can Allãh order the believers to refer such sensitive news to such people?

Moreover, no one denies that ‘Abdu 'r-Rahmãn 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-Nasãī (in his Sahīh), al-Hãkim (in his al-Mustadrak, declaring that it is a correct tradition) and at-Tabarī 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 Allãh 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’ÃN: and were it not for the grace of Allãh 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 Sufyãn had sent Na‘īm ibn Mas‘ūd al-Ashja‘ī 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‘īm had informed the Muslims that Abū Sufyãn 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 Allãh points to the divine guidance which led them to the obedience of Allãh, His Messenger and those in authority; and the excepted 'few' refers to the good-natured pure-hearted believers. Thus, the verse means: If Allãh 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’ãnic style. Moreover, the verse apparently describes Allãh'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 Allãh, although the sincere ones too cannot manage without divine care.

COMMENT: If it is its apparent meaning, then the Qur’ãn, in its sublime literary style, must have rebutted it here and now. But it has not. Allãh says: and were it not for Allãh'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’ãn 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 Allãh 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’ÃN: Fight then in Allãh's way; this is not imposed on you except in relation to yourself, and rouse the believers to ardour . . . exemplary punishment: at-Taklīf (اَلتَّكْلِيف) is derived from al-kulfah اَلْكُلْفَه) = discomfort, hardship) and means imposition of duty and responsibility, because the person concerned undergoes hardship in discharging his duties. at-Tankīl (اَلتَّنْكِيْل) is derived from an-nakãl (اَلنَّكَال = exemplary punishment). According to Majma‘u 'l-bayãn, 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” (فَ = then, so) in “Fight then in Allãh'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 jihãd and are unwilling to fight, then you, O Messenger of Allãh! should fight the unbelievers on your own; do not be disheartened because of their apathy and disobedience of the divine command; you will no 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 Allãh 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 Allãh will restrain . . .”: I was mentioned that ‘asã (عَسي = 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 Allãh, denotes certainty.

Through this verse, Allãh further reviles those people who showed apathy towards jihãd until Allãh 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 jihãd; 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 Allãh and His Prophet.

## TRADITIONS

[al-Kulaynī narrates] through his chains from Muhammad ibn ‘Ajlãn that he said: “I heard Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) saying: 'Allãh 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-Kãfī)

Also he narrates from ‘Abdul-Hamīd ibn Abi d-Daylam from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: “Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, has said: Obey Allãh 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 hadīth supports the explanation given by us that ulu 'l-amr in this verse refers to the same Imãms who were mentioned in the 59th verse.

‘Abdullãh ibn ‘Ajlãn narrates from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) about the words of Allãh: and if they had referred it ot the Messenger and to those in authority among them, that he (the Imãm, a.s.) said: “They are the Imãms.” (at-Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyãshī)

The author says: This meaning has also been narrated from ‘Abdullãh ibn Jundab from ar-Ridã (a.s.) in a letter which the Imãm (a.s.) had written about the al-Wãqifiyyah. The same meaning is narrated by al-Mufīd in al-Ikhtisãs from Ishãq ibn ‘Ammãr from as-Sãdiq (a.s.), inter alia, in a long tradition.

Muhammad ibn al-Fudayl narrates from Abu 'l-Hasan (a.s.) about the word of Allãh: and were it not for the grace of Allãh upon you and His mercy, that [the Imãm, a.s.] said: “Grace is the Messenger of Allãh and His mercy is the Commander of the Believers.” (at-Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyãshī)

Zurãrah has narrated from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.), and Humrãn from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.), that they said: “Allãh's grace is His Messenger and His mercy is al-wilãyah (اَلْوِلأَيَة = love and obedience) of the Imãms.” (ibid.)

Muhammad ibn al-Fudayl narrates from al-‘Abdu 's-Sãlih [the 7th Imãm, a.s.] that he said: “The mercy is the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and the grace, ‘Alī ibn Abī Tãlib (a.s.).” (ibid.)

The author says: These traditions are based on the flow of the Qur’ãn; and they explain the divine grace and mercy in terms of messengership and imãmat. These are the two connected ropes with which Allãh 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’ãnic point of view, because Allãh 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 Hadīd narrates through Murãzim from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: “Allãh imposed a duty on the Messenger of Allãh (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 Allãh's way; this is not imposed on you except in relation to yourself. Then the Imãm (a.s.) said: “And Allãh granted him to take for himself what Allãh has taken for himself. Thus Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, says: Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it.”5 And likewise He has made Salawãt for the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) (equal to) ten good deeds.” (al-Kãfī)

Sulaymãn ibn Khãlid says: “I informed Abū ‘Abdillãh (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 Imãm, a.s.) said: 'Verily Allãh has not imposed such duty to anyone except the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) as He says: Fight then in Allãh'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 a company . . . 6; and at that time there was no group to support him (‘Alī, a.s.) in his affair.” (at-Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyãshī)

Zayd ash-Shahhãm narrates from Ja‘far ibn Muhammad (peace be on both) that he said: “The Messenger of Allãh (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 Allãh 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 Allãh'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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CHAPTER 4, VERSE 85-91

مَّن يَشْفَعْ شَفَاعَةً حَسَنَةً يَكُن لَّهُ نَصِيبٌ مِّنْهَا ۖ وَمَن يَشْفَعْ شَفَاعَةً سَيِّئَةً يَكُن لَّهُ كِفْلٌ مِّنْهَا ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقِيتًا ﴿٨٥﴾ وَإِذَا حُيِّيتُم بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّـهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا ﴿٨٦﴾ اللَّـهُ لَا إِلَـٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ لَيَجْمَعَنَّكُمْ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ ۗ وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّـهِ حَدِيثًا ﴿٨٧﴾ فَمَا لَكُمْ فِي الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِئَتَيْنِ وَاللَّـهُ أَرْكَسَهُم بِمَا كَسَبُوا ۚ أَتُرِيدُونَ أَن تَهْدُوا مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّـهُ ۖ وَمَن يُضْلِلِ اللَّـهُ فَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ﴿٨٨﴾ وَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ كَمَا كَفَرُوا فَتَكُونُونَ سَوَاءً ۖ فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ حَتَّىٰ يُهَاجِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّـهِ ۚ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَخُذُوهُمْ وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ وَجَدتُّمُوهُمْ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٨٩﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُم مِّيثَاقٌ أَوْ جَاءُوكُمْ حَصِرَتْ صُدُورُهُمْ أَن يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ أَوْ يُقَاتِلُوا قَوْمَهُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّـهُ لَسَلَّطَهُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ فَلَقَاتَلُوكُمْ ۚ فَإِنِ اعْتَزَلُوكُمْ فَلَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ وَأَلْقَوْا إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَمَ فَمَا جَعَلَ اللَّـهُ لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩٠﴾ سَتَجِدُونَ آخَرِينَ يُرِيدُونَ أَن يَأْمَنُوكُمْ وَيَأْمَنُوا قَوْمَهُمْ كُلَّ مَا رُدُّوا إِلَى الْفِتْنَةِ أُرْكِسُوا فِيهَا ۚ فَإِن لَّمْ يَعْتَزِلُوكُمْ وَيُلْقُوا إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَمَ وَيَكُفُّوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَخُذُوهُمْ وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ ۚ وَأُولَـٰئِكُمْ جَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا مُّبِينًا ﴿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 Allãh controls all things (85). And when you are greeted with greeting, greet with a better (greeting) than it or return it; surely Allãh takes account of all things (86). Allãh, 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 Allãh (87) What is the matter with you, then, that you have become two parties about the hypocrites, while Allãh has made them return (to unbelief) for what they have earned? Do you wish to guide him whom Allãh has forsaken to stray? And whomsoever Allãh 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 Allãh'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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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’ÃN: Whoever intercedes a good intercession . . . : an-Nasīb (اَلنَّصِيْبً) and al-kifl (اَلْكِفْل) 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 Allãh says: Whoever intercedes . . . shall have the responsibility of it.

By mentioning this reality, Allãh 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’ÃN: 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’ÃN: Allãh, 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 Allãh will gather you all and reward or punish you for acceptance or rejection of His commandments.

QUR’ÃN: What is the matter with you, then, that you have become two parties about the hypocrites, while Allãh has made them return (to unbelief) for what they have earned? . . . : al-Fi’ah (اَلْفِئَةُ = group, party); al-irkãs (اَلأِركاسُ = 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 Allãh 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 Allãh has left to go astray? But whosoever is left by Allãh to go astray, cannot get to the path of guidance.

The sentence, And whomsoever Allãh 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 Allãh has turned away from them and addressed the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), who had true and clear knowledge of these realities.

QUR’ÃN: They desire that you should disbelieve . . . or a helper: It is a further explanation of the words, while Allãh has made them return (to disbelief) for what they have earned? Do you wish to guide him whom Allãh 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 Allãh forbids the Muslims to take friends from among them except when they leave their homes and migrate in the way of Allãh. 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’ÃN: Except those who reach a people . . . for you a way against them: Allãh 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’ÃN: 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 Allãh tells the believers that those people are hypocrites; no trust should be put in their covenants or their offer of peace. That is why Allãh 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-salãm (اَلسَّلَامُ = peace, greeting) which Allãh has prescribed for the people when they meet each other. He says: So when you enter houses greet your people with a salutation from Allãh 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). Allãh 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 desdain'; 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 Allãh 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, Allãh mentions it several times in the stories of Ibrãhīm (a.s.). It provides an evidence that this was, like hajj, etc., a relic of the pure religion of Ibrãhīm (a.s.) among the Arabs. Allãh 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 Ibrãhīm with good news. They said: “Peace!” “ Peace,” said he . . . (11 :69). This story is narrated in more than one place in the Qur’ãn.

Allãh has taken it as His own greeting and used it in various places in His book: Peace be on Nūh in all the worlds (37:79); Peace be on Ibrãhīm (37:109); Peace be on Mūsã and Hãrūn (37:120); Peace be on Ilyãsīn (37:130); And peace be on the messengers (37:181).

Then Allãh 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-bayãn under the verse, And when you are greeted . . . : ‘Alī ibn Ibrãhīm has narrated in his at-Tafsīr from the two Truthful ones [the 5th and the 6th Imãms, 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 Allãh (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-Kãfī)

Jarrãh al-Madãinī narrates from Abū ‘Abdillãh (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.)

‘Uyaynah7 narrates through Mus‘ab from Abū ‘Abdillãh (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 rideras of donkeys and the riders of horses to the riders of mules. (ibid.)

Ibn Bakīr narrates from one of his fellows from Abū ‘Abdillãh (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 ‘Abdillãh (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-Kãfī)

ash-Shaykh narrates through his chains from Muhammad 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 Imãm, a.s.] remaind silent [i.e., did not reply]. When he finished the prayer, I said: 'Should one reply to the salutation when one is praying?' He said: 'Yes, in the same words he was saluted with.” (at-Tahdhīb)

Mansūr ibn Hãzim narrates from Abū ‘Abdillãh (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.)

[as-Sadūq narrates] through his chains from Mas‘adah ibn Sadaqah from Ja‘far ibn Muhammad 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 slenders 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 lã yahduruhu '1-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’ãnic injunction against befriending them or inclining towards them. Allãh 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, Allãh 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 Allãh.” Then another man said: “Peace be on you and mercy of Allãh'; and (the Prophet) said: 'And on you be peace and mercy of Allãh and His blessings.” Then a (third) man said: “Peace be on you and mercy of Allãh 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 Allãh: 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, as-Sãfī)

The author says: A similar tradition has been narrated in ad-Durru '1-manthūr from Ahmad (in az-Zuhd) , Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu '1-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Hãtim, at-Tabarãnī and Ibn Marduwayh through good chain from Salmãn al-Fãrisī.

al-Bãqir (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 Allãh 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, Ibrãhīm; they had said: The mercy of Allãh and His blessings be on you, O people of the house (11:73)'“ (al-Kãfī).

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 Allãh and His blessings') is taken from the pure religion of Ibrãhīm (a.s.), and it supports what we have written earlier that the greeting with 'Peace' is a part of the religion of Ibrãhīm (a.s.).

as-Sãdiq (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 Allãh have mercy on you', and he should reply: 'May Allãh forgive you and have mercy on you.' Allãh, the Sublime, says: And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet with better (greeting) than it . . .” (al-Khisãl)

“A maid brought a bouquet of flowers to al-Hasan (a.s.). He said to her: 'You are freed for the sake of Allãh. 'Someone told him something about it. He (a.s.) said: 'Allãh, 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-Manãqib)

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

It is written in Majma‘u '1-bayãn, 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 Yamãmah. 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, Allãh revealed this verse. at-Tabrisī 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 Damrah. It happened that when the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) proceeded to Hudaybiyyah, he passed by their places. The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had concluded a truce with Banū Damrah and made an agreement with them. The companions of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'O Messenger of Allãh: Here are Banū Damrah 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 Allãh (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 Damrah - and they were a clan of Kinãnah. There was an alliance between the Ashja‘ and Banū Damrah for mutual care and security. There came drought in the area of the Ashja‘ while that of Banū Damrah was green. Therefore, the Ashja‘ proceeded towards Banū Damrah. Hearing this, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) prepared to go to the Ashja‘ for fighting, because of the agreement that he had with Banū Damrah [and he wanted to defend them from the Ashja‘]. Then Allãh 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 Allãh'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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh has not made for you a way against them.

“The area of the Ashja‘ comprised of al Baydã’, al-Hill and al-Mustabãh, and they had reached in vicinity of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.). They were frightened because of this proximity to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) that he might send someone to fight them, while the Messenger of Allãh (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 '1-Awwal, 6 A.H. The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) called Usayd ibn HuSayn 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 Muhammad.' Usayd returned and informed the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.). The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said: ''They were afraid that I might fight then; 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 Allãh has not made for you a way against them.”

al-Fadl Abu 'l-‘Abbãs narrates from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about the word of Allãh: 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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and said: 'Our hearts are not ready to bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allãh; therefore we are not with you nor with our people, [i. e., tribe] against you.” al-Fadl says: “I said: 'How did the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) treat them? [The Imãm, 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-Kãfī)

Sayf ibn ‘Umayrah says: “I asked Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about [the verse], . . . hrinking from fighting you or fighting their own people; and if Allãh 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-‘Ayyãshī)

It is narrated from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said: “The words of Allãh, a people between whom and you there is a covenant, refers to Hilãl ibn ‘Uwaymir as-Salamī; he made a covenant with the Messenger of Allãh (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 Muhammad! and you do not frighten whoever comes to you [from us].' So Allãh forbade standing against someone with whom agreement was made.” (Majma‘u 'l-bayãn)

The author says: These and nearly similar themes have been narrated in ad-Durru ’1-manthūr, through various chains from Ibn ‘Abbãs and others.

Also, it is written therein: Abū Dãwūd (in his an-Nãsikh) , Ibnu ‘l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Hãtim, an-Nahhãs and al-Bayhaqī (in his as-Sunan) have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbãs 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’ãn, 9:6].

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CHAPTER 4, VERSE 92-94

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَن يَقْتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَأً ۚ وَمَن قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا خَطَأً فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُّؤْمِنَةٍ وَدِيَةٌ مُّسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ إِلَّا أَن يَصَّدَّقُوا ۚ فَإِن كَانَ مِن قَوْمٍ عَدُوٍّ لَّكُمْ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُّؤْمِنَةٍ ۖ وَإِن كَانَ مِن قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُم مِّيثَاقٌ فَدِيَةٌ مُّسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُّؤْمِنَةٍ ۖ فَمَن لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِّنَ اللَّـهِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٩٢﴾ وَمَن يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُّتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ اللَّـهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٣﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّـهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْقَىٰ إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِندَ اللَّـهِ مَغَانِمُ كَثِيرَةٌ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ كُنتُم مِّن قَبْلُ فَمَنَّ اللَّـهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّـهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿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 Allãh, and Allãh is Knowing, Wise (92). And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is hell; he shall abide in it and Allãh 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 Allãh'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 Allãh there are abundant gains; you were such before, then Allãh conferred (His) grace on you; therefore make investigtion; surely Allãh is aware of what you doff (94).

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## COMMENTARY

QUR’ÃN: And it does not behove a believer to kill a believer except by mistake: al-Khatã’ (اَلْخَطَاٌ = 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 Allãh should speak to him . . . (42:51); it is not possibe for you [lit: it does not hehove 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: Allãh 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’ÃN: and whoever kills a believer by mistake . . . remit it as alms: at-Tahrīr (التَّحْرِيْرُ = to free a slave); ar-raqabah (اَلرَّقَبَةُ = neck; used metaphorically for slave); ad-diyah (اَلدِّيةُ = blood-money; indemnity for bodily injury). It is incumbent (wãjib) 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’ÃN: 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’ÃN: 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 adhdhimmah (اَلذِّمَّةً) [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’ÃN: 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’ÃN: a penance from Allãh . . . : This order of fastisg is a penance and mercy from Allãh 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 Allãh: 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’ÃN: And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is hell; . . . : at-Ta‘ammud (اَلتَّعَمُّدُ = 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 viction was a believer.

Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 ever-lasting fire, it does not indicate an irreversible and final decree; therefore it may be forgiven through repentance or intercession.

QUR’ÃN: O you who believe! when you march forth (for fighting) in Allãh's way, make investigation, . . . : ad-Darb (اَلضَرْبْ) in this context means marching, travelling; the qualifying phrase, “in Allãh's way,” shows that it means marching forth for jihãd. at-Tabayyun (اَلتَّبَيُّن = 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-salãm (اَلسَّلَمُ = submission; surrender).

Coveting the good of this world's life, indicates greed of riches and war-booty. But with Allãh there are abundant gains: al- Maghãnim (اَلْمَغَانِمُ) is plural of al-maghnam (اَلْمَغْنَم = gain, war-booty). What is with Allãh 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’ÃN: you were such before, then Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh. 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 occured 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 Allãh, the Subttle, 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 Allãh 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-Hãrith ibn Yazīd ibn Nubayshah (from the tribe of Banū ‘Ãmir ibn Luw’ayy), in company of Abū Jahl, used to torture ‘Ayyãsh ibn Rabī‘ah. Then he [accepted Islam and] went forth migrating to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). [When hereached near Medina], ‘Ayyãsh saw him at al-Harrah and attacked [and killed] him with sword, thinking that he [al-Hãrith] was still an unbeliever. Then [‘Ayyãsh] 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 aceept 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 ‘Ayyãsh had killed him at Mecca on the day Mecca was conquered; ‘Ayyãsh, who till then was imprisoned by the polytheists who tortured him, came out [of prison], and met al-Hãrith who by that time had accepted Islam although ‘Ayyãsh didn't know it. So ‘Ayyãsh 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-Dardã’. He was in an expedition; and went to a gorge to relieve nature. There he saw a man with his sheep. [Abu 'd-Dardã’] attacked him with sword; he said, 'There is no god except Allãh'; but Abu 'd-Dardã’ 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-Tabarī)

Another report quoted in ad-Durru '1-manthūr, and transmitted by ar-Rūyãnī, Ibn Mandah and Abū Nu‘aym from Bakr ibn Hãrithah al-Juhanī narrates al-Juhanī’s claim that it was revealed about him and he tells a story similar to that of Abu ’d-Dardã’. However, all these traditions are merely attempts to fit the verse on some events or episodes.

al-Husayn ibn Sa‘īd narrates through his chain from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: “The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Wherever emancipation of slave is prescribed, [freeing of even] a child suffices, except in reparation of killing, because AlIãh, 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 '1-ahkãm)

Mūsã ibn Ja‘far (a.s.) was asked: “How should a believing slave be recognized” He said: “According to birth.” (at-Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyãshī)

as-Sãdiq (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 Allãh, the Mighty, the Great: but if he be from a tribe hostile to you . . . “ (Man lã yahduruhu '1-faqīh).

The author says: A similar hadīth is narrated by al-‘Ayyãshī. The word of the Imãm (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.

as-Sãdiq (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-Kãfī)

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 Imãm (a.s.) was asked: “Does a believer who intentionally killed a believer have [a chance of] repentence?” 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 Allãh, the Mighty, the Great.” (al-Kãfī; at-Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyãshī)

[ash-Shaykh narrates] through his chains from Abu 's-Safãtij that Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) said about the word of Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is hell: “His recompense is hell if Allãh meted out the punishment to him.” (Tahdhību 'l-ahkãm)

The author says: The same meaning has been narrated in ad-Durru 'l-manthūr from at-Tabarãnī 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.

[at-Tabrisī] says about the verse: And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is hell, that it was revealed about Muqīs ibn Dabãbah al-Kinãnī. He found his brother, Hishãm, killed in [the place of] Banu 'n-Najjãr; he described it to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), who sent Qays ibn Hilãl al-Fihrī with him and said to him: “Tell Banu 'n-Najjãr, 'If you know the killer of Hishãm, 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 (Hishãm's) retaliation while I was given his blood-money too, By the leaders of Banu 'n-Najjãr, 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 ad-Dahhãk and a group of exegetes. (Majma‘u 'l-bayãn)

The author says: A nearly similar tradition is narrated from Ibn ‘Abbãs, 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 Allãh's way . . . : “It was revealed when the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) returned from the expedition of Khaybar and sent Usãmah ibn Zayd with some horsemen to some Jewish villages in vicinity of Fadak in order that he might call them to lslam. There was, in one of the villages, a man called Mirdãs ibn Nahīk al-Fadakī. When he heard of the horsemen of the Messenger of Allãh (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 Allãh and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allãh.‘Usãmah ibn Zayd passed by him, and speared him to death. When he came back to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), he informed him of it. The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said to him: 'You killed a man who was bearing witness that there was no god except Allãh and that I was the Messenger of Allãh' He said: ‘O Messenger of Allãh! he had said it only to save his life.' The Messenger of Allãh (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!' Usãmah then swore an oath that after that he would never kill any one who bore witness that there was no god except Allãh and that Muhammad was the Messenger of Allãh. 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 at-Tabarī 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 Miqdãd ibn al-Aswad al-Kindī; others mention Abu 'd-Dardã’; yet others, the name of Muhlim ibn Juthãmah; 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 Usãmah ibn Zayd and the excuse he offered to ‘Alī (a.s.) for remaining aloof from his battles. And Allãh knows better.

CHAPTER 4, VERSE 95-100

لَّا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّـهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ ۚ فَضَّلَ اللَّـهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً ۚ وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّـهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۚ وَفَضَّلَ اللَّـهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٥﴾ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿٩٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنتُمْ ۖ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّـهِ وَاسِعَةً فَتُهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا ۚ فَأُولَـٰئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۖ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿٩٧﴾ إِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩٨﴾ فَأُولَـٰئِكَ عَسَى اللَّـهُ أَن يَعْفُوَ عَنْهُمْ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ عَفُوًّا غَفُورًا ﴿٩٩﴾ وَمَن يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّـهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَاغَمًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً ۚ وَمَن يَخْرُجْ مِن بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّـهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّـهِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿١٠٠﴾

The holders back from among the believers, not having any injury, and those who strive hard in Allãh's way with their property and their persons are not equal; Allãh has made the strivers with their property and their persons to excel the holders back in rank, and to each Allãh has promised good; and Allãh has distinguished the strivers above the holders back (by) a great recompense (95): (High) degrees from Him and pardon and mercy, and Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful (96). Surely (as for) those whom the angels cause to die while the 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 Allãh'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, Allãh will pardon them, and Allãh is Pardoning, Forgiving (99). And whoever emigrates in Allãh'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 Allãh and His Messenger, and then death overtakes him, his reward is surely incumbent upon Allãh, and Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful (100).

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## COMMENTARY

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

The phrase: and to each Allãh has promised good, indicates that the verse is speaking about those holders back who had not gone forth for jihãd 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 jihãd, to hasten to it and hurry in joining it.

As a further proof, see that Allãh has exempted from jihãd 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 Allãh. [So, why this exception?] We may say that Allãh will compensate their inability because their intention was good. Even then, the fighting, and martyrdom or victory over the enemies of Allãh are really great distinctions for those who fight in the way of Allãh 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’ÃN: Allãh 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 (اَلدَّرَجَةُ = degree, rank); ad-darajãt (اَلدَّرَجَاتُ = rank after rank; degree after degree). As for the phrase, and to each Allãh 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 Allãh. 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. Allãh assures them that to each of them He has promised good.

QUR’ÃN: And Allãh 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 Allãh has promised good; they should not be indolent in striving in the way of Allãh, 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 Allãh'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 jihãd on holding back.

Jihãd can only be of any value if it is done in the way of Allãh, 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 Allãh's way with their property and their persons, so that no room is left for any misunderstanding or doubt. When it was said, Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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, (Allãh has made the strivers . . . to excel the holders back in rank) the word darajah (دَرَجَةً = 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 Allãh 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: Allãh, has given the strivers a great recompense, distinguishing them over the holders back by a great reward, that is, the high degrees from Allãh. 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 Allãh says: and certainly the hereafter is much greater in respect of degrees. (17:21)

3. The singular 'rank' shows their status in presence of Allãh 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’ãnic text to support any of these explanations.

In the phrase, “(High) degrees from Him,” the pronoun 'Him' refers to Allãh, 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 Allãh. 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 Allãh, 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’ãn, 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 Allãh and (His) pleasure (57:20); and forgive us and have mercy on us (2:286) . There are many such verses in the Qur’ãn.

The verse ends on the words: and Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful. Its appropriateness with the theme of the verse in quite clear, particularly as it ends on “pardon and mercy”.

QUR’ÃN: Surely (as for) those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls: Tawaffãhum (تَوَفّاهُمُ) translated here as “cause to die” is in aorist tense; in that case its original form is tatawaffãhum (تَتَوَفَّاهُمُ) from which one “ta” (تَ) 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 Allãh'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.]

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

QUR’ÃN: they shall say: “In what state were you” : That is: What was the state and condition of your religion? ma (مَ) [in fīma فِيْمَ = in what] is the shortened form of mã (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 Allãh 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’ÃN: They shall say: “We were weak in the earth.” They shall say: “Was not Allãh'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 Allãh'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 Allãh'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 “Allãh's earth”; it may be a pointer to the fact that Allãh first gave this vastness to the Earth, and it was Iater 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 Allãh'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, Allãh judged their cas e and said: So these it is whose abode is hell, and it is an evil resort.

QUR’ÃN: 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. Allãh 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 (حِيْلَةً = translated here as 'means') is derived from al-haylulah (اَلْحَيْلُوْتَةُ = to interpose, to come between); then it was used for a device which comes between a person and his goaI; 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-Rãghib has written in his Mufradãtu '1-Qur’ãn.

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 Allãh's eyes, provided it is caused by such inadequacy and weakness which were not contributed to by the ignorant person himself.

Allãh 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: Allãh 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, Allãh will pardon them and Allãh is Pardoning, Forgiving; and from the verse 106 of ch. 9: And others are made to await Allãh's command, whether He will turn to them (in mercy); and Allãh is Knowing, Wise. And His mercy is ahead of His wrath.

QUR’ÃN: So these, it may be, Allãh 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 Allãh's pardon and forgiveness; it is this divine pardoning which erases the traces of evil and infelicity. That is why Allãh 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 Allãh 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’ÃN: And whoever emigrates in Allãh's way, he will find in the earth many a place of refuge and abundant resources: ar-Rãghib has written: “ar-Raghãm (اَلرَّغَام = 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 Allãh rub his nose in dust [i.e., May Allãh cause him to be indignant]; arghamahū (اَرْغَمَهُ = he made him angry); rãghamahu (رَاغَمَهُ = They both tried to spite each other); then almurãghamah (اَلْمُرَاغَمَةُ) was taken to mean “to quarrel with each other”. Allãh says: “He will find in the earth many a murãghaman 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 Allãh'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 murãghaman as place of refuge.] And he will find abundance of resources in those new places.

Earlier, the angels had asked: Was not Allãh'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 Allãh has added “many a place of refuge”, and this refuge was of importance to a person who wanted to proceed in the way of Allãh, the migration too was qualified by the phrase, “in Allãh'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 Allãh, and assuring them of abundant, resources if they emigrated.

QUR’ÃN: and whoever goes forth from his house emigrating to Allãh and His Messenger . . . Forgiving, Merciful: Emigration to Allãh and His Messenger stands for emigrating to the place of Islam, where one can learn the Book of Allãh 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 Allãh”, literally mean, his reward has surely fallen on Allãh; 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 Allãh 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 Allãh is forgiving, Merciful”. It emphasizes the good promise to assure them of full reward and recompense.

In these verses, Allãh 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 Allãh 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. Allãh 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 Allãh; 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 Allãh and His Messenger, but were overtaken by death; their reward is surely incumbent upon Allãh.

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. Dãru 'l-Islãm (دَارُالاِسْلَام = 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. Dãru 'sh-shirk (دَارُالشِرْك = 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‘ahs 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 Dãru 'l-Islãm or Dãru '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’ãn, 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. Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Hãtim, Ibn Marduwayh and al-Bayhaqī (in his as-Sunan) have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbãs 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: “W e believe in Allãh;” but when he is persecuted in (the way of) Allãh, he thinks the persecution of men to be as the chastisement of Allãh; . . . (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 Allãh 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 Hãtim have narrated from ad-Dahhãk about this verse that he said: “They were some hypocrites who remained behind the Messenger of Allãh (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 Allãh 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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and said: ‘O Messenger of Allãh! 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 Allãh and that you are the Messenger of Allãh.' 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 Allãh has said: Surely (as for) those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls . . . Was not Allãh'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 Allãh 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 Allãh will pardon them their staying in the midst of idol-worshippers.

“As for those who were captured, they said: ‘O Messenger of Allãh: you know that we used to come to you and bear witness that there was no god except Allãh and that you were His Messenger; yet we had to come out with these people fearing (their reprisals)' Allãh said: O Prophet! say to those of the captives who are in your hands: “If Allãh 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 Allãh before - when they joined the polytheists in coming out - but He gave (you) mastery over them.” (8:70-71)

‘Abd ibn Hamīd, Ibn Abī Hãtim 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-Fãkih ibn al- Mughīrah al-Hãrith ibn Zam‘ah ibn al-Aswad, Qays ibn al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah, Abu ’l-‘Ãs ibn Munabbih ibn al-Hajjãj and ‘Alī ibn Umayyah ibn Khalaf.” He further said: “When the polytheists of Quraysh and their followers went forth to protect Abū Sufyãn ibn Harb and the caravan of the Quraysh from the Messenger of Allãh (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 kãfirs 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 Hãtim have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbãs that he said: “There was a man, Damrah 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 Allãh 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 Damrah ibn Jundab, Aktham ibn Sayfī, Abū Damrah ibn al-‘Īs az-Zurqī, Damrah ibn al-‘Īs al-Laythī and Junda‘ ibn Damrah al-Junda‘ī. Some traditions say that it was revealed about Khãlid ibn Hizãm who went out intending to emigrate to Ethiopia, and was bitten by a snake on the way and died.

Some traditions narrate from Ibn ‘Abbãs that it was Aktham ibn Sayfī. The narrator asked him: “Then where is al-Laythī?” Ibn ‘Abbãs 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 Sayfī, al-Laythī and Khãlid ibn Hizãm. 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.

Zurãrah says: “I asked Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) about the mustad‘af (اَلْمُسْتَضْعَف = 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-Kãfī)

The author says: The tradition is extensively narrated from Zurãrah; al-Kulaynī, as-Sadūq and al-‘Ayyãshī have narrated it from him through numerous chains.

al-Kulaynī narrated through his links from Ismã‘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 Khãrijites, 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 Allãh, and Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger; and I acknowledge (and believe in) what he has brought from Allãh, 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 Allãh you have not overlooked anything. It is, by Allãh! 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.)

Sulaymãn ibn Khãlid narrates that he asked Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) about the weak ones. The Imãm (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-‘Ayyãshī)

Sulaymãn has narrated from as-Sãdiq (a.s.) that he said about this verse: “O Sulaymãn! 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 Allãh may pardon them if they keep the hold of the tree's branches and know those. Then if Allãh pardons them it will be by His mercy, and if He punishes them it will be because of their error.” (Ma‘ãni 'l-akhbãr)

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.

as-Sãdiq (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 immical to us, is mustad‘af, weak. (ibid.)

as-Sãdiq (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 Allãh, but they will not get the rank of the righteous ones.” (ibid.; at-Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyãshī)

Durays al-Kunãsī 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 Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), who have committed sins and die without believing in an imãm 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 tunnal will be opened for him to the garden which Allãh has created in the west; thus refreshing breeze will continue reaching him in his grave upto the Day of Resurrection until he comes before Allãh; 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 Allãh. “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 Allãh 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)

as-Sãdiq (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 Allãh and in whose heart there is not an atom's weight of animosity towards us, the Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.). (al-Khisãl)

Humrãn narrates: “I asked Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about the word of Allãh: Except the weak ones. He said: 'They are the People of alwilãyah (اَلْوِلَايَة = friendship, authority, power, guardianship.)' I said:

'Which wilãyah' He said: 'It is not the wilãyah in religion, but the wilãyah in marrying each other, inheriting from each other and mixing with each other; they are neither believers nor kãfirs, they are the ones made to await Allãh's command.” (Ma‘ãni 'l-akhbãr; at-Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyãshī)

The author says: It refers to the verse: And others are made to await Allãh'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-balãghah)

al-Kãzzim (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-Kãfī)

as-Sãdiq (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 Allãh! 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 Ishãq says: “Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) was asked as to what was the definition of the weak which has been mentioned by Allãh. He said: 'He who does not properly recite any of the Qur’ãnic chapters, while Allãh has created it in such a way that no one should fail to recite it properly.”' (Ma‘ãni '1-akhbãr)

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.

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CHAPTER 4, VERSE 101-104

وَإِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَن تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَن يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۚ إِنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ كَانُوا لَكُمْ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٠١﴾ وَإِذَا كُنتَ فِيهِمْ فَأَقَمْتَ لَهُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَلْتَقُمْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُم مَّعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ فَإِذَا سَجَدُوا فَلْيَكُونُوا مِن وَرَائِكُمْ وَلْتَأْتِ طَائِفَةٌ أُخْرَىٰ لَمْ يُصَلُّوا فَلْيُصَلُّوا مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا حِذْرَهُمْ وَأَسْلِحَتَهُمْ ۗ وَدَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ تَغْفُلُونَ عَنْ أَسْلِحَتِكُمْ وَأَمْتِعَتِكُمْ فَيَمِيلُونَ عَلَيْكُم مَّيْلَةً وَاحِدَةً ۚ وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِن كَانَ بِكُمْ أَذًى مِّن مَّطَرٍ أَوْ كُنتُم مَّرْضَىٰ أَن تَضَعُوا أَسْلِحَتَكُمْ ۖ وَخُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّـهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُّهِينًا ﴿١٠٢﴾ فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّـهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ ۚ فَإِذَا اطْمَأْنَنتُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ ۚ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَّوْقُوتًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَلَا تَهِنُوا فِي ابْتِغَاءِ الْقَوْمِ ۖ إِن تَكُونُوا تَأْلَمُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْلَمُونَ كَمَا تَأْلَمُونَ ۖ وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ اللَّـهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ 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 Allãh has prepared a disgraceful chastisement for the unbelievers (102). Then when you have finished the prayer remember Allãh 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 Allah whath they do no hop; and Allah is Knowing and, Wise (104.)

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## COMMENTARY

The verses ordain the prayer of fear and shortened prayer in polytheists; they are well-connected with the preceding verses which dealt with jihãd and its various aspects.

QUR’ÃN: And when you journey in the earth there is no blame on you that you shorten the prayer : al-Junãh (اَلْجُنَاح = sin, impediment, renunciation); al-qasr (اَلْقَصْر = shortening of prayer). [at-Tabrisī] has said in Majma‘u '1-bayãn: “The root q-s-r when used for prayer comes in three stems: The base stem, qasara (which has been used in the Qur’ãn), qassara (the stem, taf‘īl) and aqsara (the stem, if‘ãl).”

Meaning: When you are in journey then there is no ipediment 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 Safã and the Marwah are among the signs of Allãh; 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 at-tawãf (اَلطَّوَاف = to go round) is wãjib (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 acomprehensive 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’ÃN: if you fear that those who disbelieve will cause you distress; . . . : al-Fitnah (الْفِتْنَة = translated here as causing distress) is used for numerous meanings; however when the Qur’ãn 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’ãn 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’ÃN: 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 imãm 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 Allãh knows better: When you, O Messenger of Allãh! 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 uptil 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: at-Tãifah (اَلطَّآئفَة = party, group) is of feminine gender, but it refers here to those who are able to fight, i.e., men; the feminine adjective ukhrã (اُخْري = another) agrees with the noun tãifah 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’ÃN: (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’ÃN: 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’ÃN: Then when you have finished the prayer, remember Allãh standing and sitting and reclining: Qiyãman (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 Allãh, in all conditions and in every place.

QUR’ÃN: 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‘ãt; because the prayer of fear and danger was called “shortened prayer”

QUR’ÃN: surely prayer is a timed ordinance for the believers : al-Kitãbah (اَلْكِتابه = writing, traslated here as ordinance) implies obligatorness and imperativeness, as Allãh says: . . . fasting is prescribed (lit.: written) for you as it was prescribed for those before you (Qur’ãn, 2:183). al-Mawqūt (اَلْمَوْقًوت = 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 imperetiveness - 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’ÃN: And be not weak-hearted in pursuit of the enemy; . . . : al-Wahn (اَلْوَهْن = weakness); al-ibtighã’ (اَلْاِبْتِغَآء = pursuit) , al-alam (اَلْاَلَم= pain, to suffer pain); the clause: while you hope from Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was proceeding towards Hudaybiyyah, en route to Mecca. When the Quraysh heard the news, they sent Khãlid ibn al-Walīd with two hundred horses to encounter the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.). He hindered the (progress of the) Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) on the mountains. Somewhere on the way, the time of zuhr prayer came, Bilãl said the adhãn, and the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) led the people in the prayer. Khãlid 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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) the (verses of) prayer of fear: And when you are among them . . .

Majma‘u 'l-bayãn 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 ‘Usfãn and the polytheists at Dajnãn; 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., ‘asr] which is dearer to them from this one.” Then Allãh revealed to the Prophet this verse, and he prayed the ‘asr with them as the prayer of fear. And this was the reason why Khãlid ibn al-Walīd accepted Islam.

Abū Hamzah [ath-Thumãlī] has written in his Tafsīr that the Prophet (s.a.w.a,) went to fight Banū Anmãr, and Allãh vanguished them and the Muslims captured the enemy's children and property. Then the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and the Muslims alighted; not a single enemy was in sight; so they laid down their arms; the Messenger of Allãh (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-Hãrith al Muhãribī saw him, and his companions said to him: “O Ghawrath! (Look,) here is Muhammad, separated from his companions.” He said: “May Allãh kill me if I don't kill him.” He came down the hill with a sword; and the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) did not notice him until he stood over him with his unsheathed sword in hand. He said: “O Muhammad! Who will now protect you from me?” The Messenger (s.a.w.a.) said: “Allãh.” [All of a sudden] the enemy of Allãh fell down on his face. Now, the Messenger of Allãh (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 Allãh said: “Do you bear witness that there is no god but Allãh, and that I am the servant of Allãh 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 Allãh (s.a,w.a.) gave his sword back to him. [Seeing this magnanimity,] Ghawrath said to him: “By Allãh! 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: “Allãh. 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 Muhammad took it before I could reach it.” Then the valley calmed down and the Messenger of Allãh (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.)

as-Sadūq has narrated through his chains from ‘Abdu ‘r-Rahmãn ibn Abī ‘Abdillãh from as-Sãdiq (a.s.) that he said: The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) prayed with his companions in the battle of Dhãtu 'r-Riqã‘; 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-ihrãm, 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 Allãh (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 salãm. Then they rushed to their companions and stood before the enemy, and their companions came and stood behind the Messenger of Allãh (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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) sat down and recited tashahhud and salãm; and they stood up and completed the [second] rak‘ah by themselves and then recited [tashahhud and] salãm. And Allãh 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 Allãh 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‘ãt with the second one . . . (Man lã yahduruhu 'l-faqīh)

ash-Shaykh has narrated through his chains from Zurãrah 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 '1-ahkãm)

as-Sadūq narrates through his chains from Zurãrah and Muhammad 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‘ãt]?' He said: 'Verily Allãh, 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 Allãh 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 Allãh said: Surely the Safã and the Marwã are among the signs of Allãh; 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 tawãf [i.e., sa`y] between the two is wãjib? It is because Allãh 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] Allãh has mentioned it in His Book.” Then we said to him: “Then a person who prayed four (raka‘ãt) in journey, should he repeat (that) prayer or not” (The Imãm) said: “If the verse of shortening (of prayer) was read and explained to him, and yet he prayed four (raka‘ãt), he will repeat it [i.e., will repeat praying two raka‘ãt]; and if the verse was not read before him and he did not know it, then there is no repetition. And all wãjib prayers during journey are two raka‘ãt except maghrib, as it is three raka‘ãt, (and) there is no shortening in it; the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) left it three raka‘ãt in journey and in presence . . . “ (Man lã yahduruhu 'l-faqīh)

as-Suyūtī writes: Ibn Abī Shaybah, ‘Abd ibn Hamīd, Ahmad, Muslim, Abū Dãwūd, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasãī; Ibn Mãjah, Ibnu 'l-Jãrūd, Ibn Khuzaymah, at-Tahãwī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnul-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Hãtim, an Nahhãs (in his an-Nãsikh) and Ibn Hibbãn have narrated from Ya‘lã ibn Umayyah that he said: “I asked ‘Umar ibn al-Khattãb 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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) about it and he said: “It is a charity which Allãh has bestowed upon you, so you should accept His charity.”'“ (ad-Durru 'l-manthūr)

‘Abd ibn Hamīd, an-Nasãī, Ibn Mãjah, Ibn Hibbãn and al-Bayhaqī (in his as-Sunan) have narrated from Umayyah ibn Khãlid 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 Allãh; all that is mentioned therein is the prayer of fear.” Ibn ‘Umar said: “O my nephew: Surely Allãh sent Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and we did not know anything; so we do only as we saw the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) doing; and the shortening of prayer in journey is the system established by the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.).” (ibid.)

Ibn Abī Shaybah, at-Tirmidhī (who has said that it is correct) and an-Nasãī have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbãs that he said: “We prayed with the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) between Mecca and Medina two raka‘ãt while we were safe and had no fear of anything.” (ibid.)

Ibn Abī Shaybah, Ahmad, al-Bukhãrī, Muslim, Abū Dãwūd, at-Tirmidhī and an-Nasãī have narrated from Hãrithah ibn Wahb al-Khuzã‘ī that he said: “I prayed with the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) zuhr and ‘asr at Minã two raka‘ãt, with most numerous multitude of people and in most secured condition.” (ibid.)

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain of narrators from Dãwūd ibn Farqad that he said: “I asked Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about the word of Allãh, 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 Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, says: . . . neglected prayers and followed the sensual desires, so they will certainly meet perdition'“ (19:59) (al-Kãfī)

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

Muhammad ibn Muslim narrates from the fifth or the sixth Imãm (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 ‘ishã’; and if you wish you may continue the journey for sometime until the reddish colour [on the horizon] goes away. Surely, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had prayed zuhr and `aSr together and maghrib and ‘ishã’ together, and he used to delay and advance. Allãh, 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 Allãh (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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) would certainly have ordered it.

“And in the battle of Siffīn, people, including the Commander of the Believers (a.s.), could not pray zuhr,‘asr, maghrib and ‘ishã’ and ‘Alī, the Commander of the Believers (a.s.) ordered them and they said Allãhu akbar, and lã ilãha illa 'llãh, and subhãna 'llãh on foot and horse, because Allãh 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-‘Ayyãshī)

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 '1-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 ahãdīth 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 ‘Imrãn”: 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.

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CHAPTER 4, VERSE 105-126

إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَاكَ اللَّـهُ ۚ وَلَا تَكُن لِّلْخَائِنِينَ خَصِيمًا ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَاسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّـهَ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّـهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَلَا تُجَادِلْ عَنِ الَّذِينَ يَخْتَانُونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّـهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَن كَانَ خَوَّانًا أَثِيمًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ اللَّـهِ وَهُوَ مَعَهُمْ إِذْ يُبَيِّتُونَ مَا لَا يَرْضَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ هَا أَنتُمْ هَـٰؤُلَاءِ جَادَلْتُمْ عَنْهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَمَن يُجَادِلُ اللَّـهَ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَم مَّن يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَمَن يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّـهَ يَجِدِ اللَّـهَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿١١٠﴾ وَمَن يَكْسِبْ إِثْمًا فَإِنَّمَا يَكْسِبُهُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١١١﴾ وَمَن يَكْسِبْ خَطِيئَةً أَوْ إِثْمًا ثُمَّ يَرْمِ بِهِ بَرِيئًا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلَ بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّـهِ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَهَمَّت طَّائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ أَن يُضِلُّوكَ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ ۖ وَمَا يَضُرُّونَكَ مِن شَيْءٍ ۚ وَأَنزَلَ اللَّـهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُن تَعْلَمُ ۚ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّـهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٣﴾ لَّا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّن نَّجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ۚ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّـهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٤﴾ وَمَن يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِن بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصْلِهِ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿١١٥﴾ إِنَّ اللَّـهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَن يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّـهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١١٦﴾ إِن يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ إِلَّا إِنَاثًا وَإِن يَدْعُونَ إِلَّا شَيْطَانًا مَّرِيدًا ﴿١١٧﴾ لَّعَنَهُ اللَّـهُ ۘ وَقَالَ لَأَتَّخِذَنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا ﴿١١٨﴾ وَلَأُضِلَّنَّهُمْ وَلَأُمَنِّيَنَّهُمْ وَلَآمُرَنَّهُمْ فَلَيُبَتِّكُنَّ آذَانَ الْأَنْعَامِ وَلَآمُرَنَّهُمْ فَلَيُغَيِّرُنَّ خَلْقَ اللَّـهِ ۚ وَمَن يَتَّخِذِ الشَّيْطَانَ وَلِيًّا مِّن دُونِ اللَّـهِ فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرَانًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١١٩﴾ يَعِدُهُمْ وَيُمَنِّيهِمْ ۖ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ﴿١٢٠﴾ أُولَـٰئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ عَنْهَا مَحِيصًا ﴿١٢١﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۖ وَعْدَ اللَّـهِ حَقًّا ۚ وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّـهِ قِيلًا ﴿١٢٢﴾ لَّيْسَ بِأَمَانِيِّكُمْ وَلَا أَمَانِيِّ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ ۗ مَن يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ بِهِ وَلَا يَجِدْ لَهُ مِن دُونِ اللَّـهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَـٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا ﴿١٢٤﴾ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِّمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّـهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَاتَّبَعَ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا ۗ وَاتَّخَذَ اللَّـهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَلِلَّـهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطًا ﴿١٢٦﴾

Surely We have revealed the Book to you with the truth that you may judge between people by means of that which Allãh has shown you; and be not an advocate on behalf of the treacherous (105). And ask forgiveness of Allãh; surely Allãh is forgiving, Merciful (106). And do not plead on behalf of those who act unfaithfully to their souls; surely Allãh does not love him who is treacherous, sinful (107). They hide themselves from men and do not hide themselves from Allãh, and He is with them when they meditate by night words which please Him not, and Allãh encompasses what they do (108). Behold! You are they plead for them in this world's life, but who will plead for them with Allãh 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 Allãh, He shall find Allãh Forgiving, Merciful (110). And whoever commits a sin, he only commits it against his own soul; and Allãh 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 Allãh'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 Allãh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know, and Allãh'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 Allãh'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 Allãh 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 Allãh, 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). Allãh 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 Allãh's creation;” and whoever takes the Satan for a guardian rather than Allãh 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 Allãh, true (indeed); and who is truer of word than Allãh (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 Allãh 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 Allãh And he is the doer of good (to others) and follows the faith of Ibrãhīm, the upright one, and Allãh took Ibrãhīm as a friend (125). And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh's; and Allãh encompasses all things (126).

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## 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’ãnic 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh exonerated the accused from their false allegation.

Thus, the verses squarely fit the event narrated concerning their revelation when Abū Tu‘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’ÃN: Surely We have revealed the Book to you with the truth that you may judge between people by means of that which Allãh 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 Allãh 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 ot judge was given to the Messenger of Allãh (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, arãka (اَرَاكَ = translated here as “has shown you”) in the clause, “that you may judge between the people by means of that which Allãh 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 Allãh 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’ÃN: 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-Khasīm (اَلْخَصِيْم = 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’ÃN: And ask forgiveness of Allãh; surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful: [The literal meaning of al-istighfãr (اَلْاِسْتِغْفَار) 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 Allãh 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 (اَلْعَفْوُ) and al-maghfirah (اَلْمَغْفِرَةُ) 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 Allãh 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 Allãh'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 Allãh 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 Allãh to give him power to subjugate his desires; and undoubtedly he was always in need of such divine protection and was never independent of Allãh, although he was ma`sũm (protected); and Allãh 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 Allãh, 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 Allãh says that they could not influence him in any harmful manner.

QUR’ÃN: 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 Allãh says: Allãh knew that you were acting unfaithfully towards your souls (2:187).

If we look at this verse in conjunction with other Qur’ãnic 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 Allãh does not love him who is treacherous, sinful, shows that those transgressors persistently indulged in their treachery. It is further emphasized by the word, athīmã (اَثِيْمًا) 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 Allãh 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 Allãh does not love treacherous and sinful persons. This connotation supports the stories that the verses were revealed about Abū Tu‘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 Allãh does not like treacherous and sinful people. As He dislikes big treacheries, He also dislikes small ones. If it was possible for Allãh to like small treachery, it would have been possible to like big ones too. As it is, Allãh 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’ÃN: They hide themselves from men and do not hide themselves from Allãh, . . . : 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 Allãh, because nothing in the earth or in the heavens is hidden from Him. Consequently, its opposite, i.e., not hiding from Allãh, 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 Allãh”, 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 Allãh. Then the verse goes on to declare, “and Allãh encompasses what they do”. It shows that Allãh 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 Allãh, and then describe a general reason.

QUR’ÃN: Behold! You are they who plead for them in this world's life, but who will plead for them with Allãh . . . : 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 Allãh. But who will plead for them or argue on their behalf in the life hereafter, which is particularly honoured in Allãh'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’ÃN: 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 Allãh 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 Allãh and beseech Him for forgiveness. If he does so, he will find Allãh 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’ÃN: And whoever commits a sin, he only commits it against his own soul; and Allãh 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. Allãh 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. Allãh says: . . . for it is (the benefit of) what it has earned, and upon it (the evil of) what it has wroght . . . (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’ÃN: 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-Rãghib says in Mufradãtu 'l-Qur’ãn : “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-Khatī’ah (اَلْخَطِيْئَة = mistake, fault) and assayyi’ah (اَلْسَّيِّئَة = evil, sin) have nearly similar connotations. But alkhat īah 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]. Allãh 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-khatīah (fault), here means that mistake which just happened inadvertently.”

I think that the word, al-khatīah, is an adjective which, because of frequent use, does not need any noun. In this respect it is similar to al-musībah (اَلْمُصِيْبَة = misfortune), ar-raziyyah (اَلرَّزِيَّة = tradgedy) and as-salīqah (اَلسَّلِيقَة = inborn disposition) inasmuchas all these are adjectives but are used as nouns. The paradigm, fa‘īl (فَعِيْل) shows the stocking up and permanency of the root-word; thus al-khatīah is an action in which al-khatã’ (اَلْخَطَاّء = mistake) is permanently settled down; while al-khatã’ 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-khatīah 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).

Allãh has ascribed al-khatīah (fault) in this verse to al-kasb (اَلْكَسْب = 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.8

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.9

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 (اَلرَّمِي = translated here as 'accuses') literally means shooting an arrow; and the liability of the sin of 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’ÃN: And were it not for Allãh'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 Allãh has named in the beginning as “the treacherous”. Obviously this group is the same whom Allãh 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 Tu‘mah, as will be described later.

QUR’ÃN: 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 mislead 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.10 But that connotation is not fit in this context.

The verse says: and they shall not harm you in any way, and Allãh 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 Allãh 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’ÃN: and Allãh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know : As pointed out above 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-‘ismah (اَلْعِصْمَة = sinlessness, infallibility).

### THE MEANING OF AL-‘ISMAH

The verse apparently shows that the basic factor from which al-‘ismah 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-‘ismah 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.

Allãh has pointed to this unique knowledge in this talk addressed particularly to His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) when he says: and Allãh 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 Allãh'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 Nūh and that which We have revealed to you and that We enjoined upon Ibrãhīm and Mūsã and ‘Īsã . . . (42:13); Surely, We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nūh 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-inzãl (اَلْاِنْزَال = 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 Allãh 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: Allãh 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 Allãh to His chosen ones.

Clearly, this Divine gift which we call al-‘ismah 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-‘ismah from going astray and committing mistakes. It has come in the traditions that the Prophet and the Imãms 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 Imãms 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 Imãms for doing good and worshipping Allãh.

The above explanations also show that the Book mentioned in the verse: and Allãh 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 Allãh 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.11

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’ãn 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’ãn 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’ÃN: and Allãh's Grace on you is very great : It reminds the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) of the Divine favours.

QUR’ÃN: There is no good in most of their secret counsels except (in his) who enjoins charity or goodness or reconciliation between people: ar-Rãghib has said: “Nãjaytuhu (نَاجَيْتُهُ = I wispered in his ear). Its literal meaning is that you remain alone with him in a najwah (نَجْوَه= rising ground).” Thus an-najwã (اَلنَّجْوي) means secret counselling, whispered talk. Sometimes the word is used for conspirators or whisperers themselves. Allãh 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; Allãh did not say, whoever whispers secretly to become 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 enjoinment and order; it is a metaphorical expression. Allãh has mentioned three good works which secret whispering enjoins: charity, goodness and reconciliation between the people. Charity is a part of goodness, yet Allãh has mentioned it separately because it is the most perfect and prominent example of goodness and by nature it entails secret consultation.

QUR’ÃN: and whoever does this seeking Allãh'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 Allãh's pleasure; he calls to goodness or strives to bring reconciliation between people seeking nearness to Allãh, and Allãh 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 Allãh leaves him into what he himself has chosen, makes him enter hell and it is an evil resort.

QUR’ÃN: 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-Mushãqqah (اَلْمُشَاقَّه = acting hostilely) is derived from shiqq (شِقًّ = a part removed from a whole). Thus, al-mushãqqah and ash-shiqãq (اَلْشِّقَاق) 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 Allãh. Allãh says: whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allãh (4:80).

The believers are united in the belief and their way is the unity on the obedience of Allãh and His Messenger - you may say in short “the obedience of His Messenger”. This preserves the unity of their way as Allãh has said: But how can you disbelieve while it is you to whom the communications of Allãh are recited and among you is His Messenger? And whoever holds fast to Allãh he indeed is guided to the straight path. O you who believe! fear Allãh with the fear which is due to Him and do not die unless you are Muslims. And hold fast by the cord of Allãh all together and be not divided . . . (3:101-3).We have explained this verse in volume three of this book.12 Also Allãh 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 Allãh 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. Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 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’ÃN: Surely Allãh 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 Allãh, 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 Allãh, and Allãh 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 Allãh's way and oppose the Messenger after that guidance has become clear to them cannot harm Allãh in any way, and He will make null their deeds (32). O you who believe! Obey Allãh and obey the Messenger and do not let your deeds be forfeited (33). Surely those who disbelieve and turn away from Allãh's way, then they die while they are unbelievers, Allãh will by no means forgive them (34). Apparently, the verse 34 gives the reason of the order given in verse 33 regarding obedience of Allãh and of His Messenger. Clearly, disobedience to Allãh 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.13

QUR’ÃN: They do not call besides Him on any thing but females: al-Inãth (اَلْاِنَاث) is plural of al-unthã (اَلْاُنْثي = female). They say in Arabic, anatha 'l-hadīd (الْحَدِيْد اَنَثَ = the iron became soft). Anatha 'l-makãn (الْمَكاَن اَنَثَ = the place brought out its vegetation fast). This word shows the idea of passibity, of being influenced, and that is why a female is called unthã. This verse describes the idols and all those who are worshipped besides Allãh 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. Allãh says: Surely those whom you call upon besides Allãh cannot create a fly, though 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 Allãh with the estimation that is due to Him; most surely Allãh 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 inter-pretation is better than the one which some people have written that the word females refers to Lãt, ‘Uzzã and Manãt, 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 Allãh there are some males like the Jesus Christ, Barahma and Buddha.14

QUR’ÃN: and they do not call on anything but a rebellious Satan:

al-Marīd (اَلْمَرِيْدُ = stripped of every good; naked). al-Baydãwī has said: “al-Mãrid (اَلْمَارِد) and al-marīd: he who is unrelated with any good. The root word denotes touching and that is why they say sarhun mumarrad (صَرْحٌ مُمَرَّد = plastered castle), ghulãmun amrad (غُلَامٌ اَمْرَد = beardless boy), shajaratun mardã’ (شَجَرَةٌ مَرْدَآء = 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. Allãh 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 Allãh they actually worship and call the rebellious Satan because it is done in obedience to his suggestion.

QUR’ÃN: Allãh has cursed him : al-La‘n (اَلْلَّعْن = to keep away from mercy). It is another adjective for the Satan and describes the reason of the previous adjective, 'rebellious'.

QUR’ÃN: and he said: “Most certainly I will take of Thy servants an appointed portion: It points to what Allãh 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 Allãh's servants. They cannot discard this servitude; He is their Lord who will decide about them whatever He pleases.

QUR’ÃN: 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 Allãh's creation;” and whoever takes the Satan for a guardian rather than Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh has made lawful, and I will order them so that they shall alter Allãh's creation.” This last phrase may denote castration and various types of mutilations as well as sodomy and lesbianism.

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

When one calls the Satan, that is, obey his commands, Allãh counts it as taking the Satan for a guardian, as He says: “And whoever takes the Satan for a guardian rather than Allãh he indeed shall suffer a manifest loss.” It should be noted that Allãh has not said: Whosoever the Satan is his guardian; because the previous verses have clearly shown that the guardian is Allãh alone and no one else has any guardianship on anything even if someone takes him as his guardian.

QUR’ÃN: 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. Allãh says: And (as for) those who disbelieves, 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 Allãh, so He pays back to him his reckoning in full; and Allãh 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 Allãh 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”. Mahīs (مَحِيْص = the place to escape; translated here as refuge).

QUR’ÃN: 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 Allãh, true (indeed); and who is truer of word than Allãh : 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 Allãh wants to show the importance of the situation and its greatness by using the proper name, Allãh, 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 truerof word than Allãh”: It presents a contrast with what has been said in the preceding verse about the Satanic promises that it is nothing but deception while Allãh's promise is a reality and His words true.

QUR’ÃN: (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 Allãh 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 Allãh and His Messenger they had done a favour to Allãh and established a right over the Prophet, by which Allãh 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 leaderand 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 Allãh narrates in His Book about them: And the Jews and the Christians say: “We are the sons of Allãh 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).

Allãh has refuted such ideas of that group of believers and joined them with the People of the Book. Allãh has called these assumptions vain desires, because like the desires, these presumptions are merely imaginary forms which have no reality outside the mind. Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh declares: “Whoever does evil he shall be requited with it and besides Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Imãm and the honour of Islam and religion cannot help in this matter. The punishment prescribed by Allãh cannot be removed from the does 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’ÃN: 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, Allãh 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. Allãh 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, Allãh 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 Allãh 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, Allãh will make it up through repentance or intercession, as He has said: Surely Allãh 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 Allãh: Repentance with Allãh is only for those who do evil in ignorance . . . (4:17) in the fourth volume15; 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 book16.

Then Allãh 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 Allãh; 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, Allãh 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 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 Allãh 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’ÃN: And who has a better religion than he who submits himself entirely to Allãh. And he is the doer of good (to others) and follows the faith of Ibrãhīm, the upright one, and Allãh took Ibrãhīm as a friend. And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh's, and Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh” 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 Allãh who is the Owner of whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Man has to surrender himself to Allãh and worship Him; also he should follow the faith of Ibrãhīm, the upright one, because that is the natural religion. And Allãh took Ibrãhīm as a friend; Ibrãhīm was the first to submit himself entirely to Allãh 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. Allãh 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 Allãh's, and Allãh 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 Qatãdah ibn an-Nu‘mãn - and Qatãdah was a badrī\* - and stole food grain which he had stored for his family together with a sword and coat of mail.

Qatãdah complained about it to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and said “O Messenger of Allãh, 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 Qatãdah, “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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and said, “O Messenger of Allãh! Qatãdah ibn an-Nu‘mãn 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 of17

Hearing this, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was grieved. Then Qatãdah came to him, and looking at him the Messenger of Allãh (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”18. (In this way) he admonished him severely. Qatãdah 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 Allãh (in this matter); because he has talked to me in a way I did not like.” His uncle said, “Allãh is He Whose help to be sought.”

Then Allãh 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. Allãh 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-Jãrūd narrates from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.): “Some people from the near relatives of Bashīr said: 'Let us go to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), so that we should talk to him about our fellow or explain to him that our fellow is innocent.' When Allãh revealed: They hide themselves from men and do not hide themselves from Allãh . . . who shall be their protector? Then the clan of Bishr turned on him and said: 'O Bishr, seek forgiveness from Allãh 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 Allãh revealed about the group who had come to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to plead for Bishr: And were it not for Allãh'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 Allãh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know, and Allãh's grace on you is very great. (at-Tafsīr, al-Qummī)

as-Suyūtī writes: at-Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Hãtim, Abu 'sh-Shaykh and al-Hãkim (who said that this tradition is correct) have narrated from Qatãdah ibn an-Nu‘mãn 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 Allãh (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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) heard that poem, they used to say, 'By Allãh! 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!.”

(Qatãdah) 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 while 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, Rufã‘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, Rufã‘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 (Qatãdah) 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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and inform him about it.!.”

Qatãdah said: “I came to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and said, 'O Messenger of Allãh, a family among us, a loathsome people went to my uncle, Rufã‘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 Allãh (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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and said, 'O Messenger of Allãh! Qatãdah ibn an-Nu‘mãn 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.!”

Qatãdah continues: “Then I came to the Messenger of Allãh (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.!”

Qatãdah says: “I came back and I wished that I would have lost some of my wealth but had not talked to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) about it. Then my uncle, Rufã‘ah, came to me and asked, 'O my nephew, what (progress) have you made?' I informed him of what the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had told me. My uncle said, 'Allãh 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 Allãh has shown you; and be not advocate on behalf of the treacherous, i.e., Banū Ubayriq. And ask forgiveness of Allãh, i.e., from what you had said to Qatãdah, surely Allãh is forgiving, merciful. And do not plead on behalf of those who act unfaithfully to their souls . . . then asks forgiveness of Allãh, He shall find Allãh Forgiving, Merciful. i.e., if they ask forgiveness of Allãh, 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 Allãh'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 Allãh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know, and Allãh'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 Allãh's pleasure, We will give him a mighty reward. When the verses were revealed the arms were brought to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and he returned them to Rufã‘ah.

Qatãdah 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 Allãh: Then I understood that his Islam was correct.”

When the verses were revealed, Bishr went (to Mecca) and joined the polytheists. He stayed with Sulãfah bint Sa‘d. Then Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh, he indeed strays off into a remote error. When he stayed with Sulãfah, Hassãn ibn Thãbit 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 Hassãn 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-Qãsim! 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 Allãh! Surely, this Jew is a wicked person. He does not believe in Allãh, nor in your prophethood.' This continued until the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) spoke to the Jew on this matter.

“Thus, Allãh censored 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 Allãh has shown you; and be notan advocate on behalf of the treacherous. And ask forgiveness of Allãh - about what you have told that Jew - Surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful. Then Allãh 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 Allãh on the Resurrection Day or who shall be their protector? Then Allãh gave them a chance of repentance and said: And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his soul, then asks forgiveness of Allãh, he shall find Allãh Forgiving, Merciful. And whoever commits a sin, he only commits it against his own soul; and Allãh 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 gudiance 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 Allãh 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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) has said, “There is no servant who committed a sin then stood up and performed wudū’ and asked forgiveness of Allãh from his sin but it shall be incumbent on Allãh to forgive him, because He says: And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his soul, then asks forgiveness of Allãh, he shall find Allãh Forgiving, Merciful.”

Also he (s.a.w.a.) has said, “Verily Allãh puts the servant in suffering (though He loves him) in order to hear his entreaties.” Also he (s.a.w.a.) has said, “Allãh 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 Allãh, he shall find Allãh Forgiving, Merciful.” (at-Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyãshī)

‘Abdullãh ibn Hamãd al-Ansãrī narrates from ‘Abdullãh ibn Sinãn, that he said: Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) said, “Backbiting is that you say about your brother what is (actually) found in him but Allãh has kept it hidden. But if you say what is not in him, then it comes under the words of Allãh: . . . 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 Hammãd from al-Halabī from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said, 'Verily, Allãh has made at-tamahhul obligatory in the Qur’ãn.' I asked, 'And what is at-tamahhul, 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 Allãh: There is no good in most of their secret counsels.” (at-Tafsīr, al-Qummī)

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chains from ‘Abdullãh ibn Sinãn from Abu 'l-Jãrūd that he said, “Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) said, 'When I narrate any hadīth to you, you should ask me (its proof) from the Book of Allãh. Then he said in some of his talks, 'Verily the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) has prohibited much talking, squandering the property and too much questioning.' He was asked, 'O son of the Messenger of Allãh, 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 Allãh 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-Kãfī)

Ibrãhīm ibn ‘Abdi ‘l-Hamīd narrates through some reliable persons from Abū ‘Abdillãh (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-‘Ayyãshī)

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-Suyūtī writes: Muslim, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasãī, Ibn Mãjah and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Sufyãn ibn ‘Abdillãh ath-Thaqafī that he said, “I said, 'O Messenger of Allãh! give me an order I should hold fast to it in Islam.' He (s.a.w.a.) said, 'Say: “I believe in Allãh,” then remain steadfast to it.' I said, 'O Messenger of Allãh! What is the most dreadful thing you fear about me?' He said, 'This.' (and the Messenger of Allãh [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 Nasr as-Sijizzī has narrated in al-Ibãnah from Anas that he said, “A bedouin came to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); the Prophet said to him, 'O bedouin! Verily Allãh has revealed to me in the Qur’ãn: 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 Allãh's pleasure, We will give him a mighty reward. O bedouin! the mighty reward is the paradise.' The bedouin said, 'Praise be to Allãh who guided us to Islam.” (ibid.)

The same book writes about the words of Allãh: And whoever acts hostilely to the Messenger . . . : at-Tirmidhī and al-Bayhaqī (in his al-Asmã’ wa 's-Sifãt) have narrated from Ibn ‘Umar that he said, “The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) has said, 'Allãh will never gather this ummah on error and Allãh's hand is on the jamã‘ah, and whoever separates (from it) he separates (for entering) into hell.” (ibid.)

Also at-Tirmidhī and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbãs that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said, “Allãh will never gather my ummah (or, this ummah) on error and Allãh's hand is on jamã‘ah. (ibid.)

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

Harīz has narrated from some of our companions from the fifth and sixth Imãm (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 imãm who will lead us (in tarãwīh) in the month of Ramadãn.' The Imãm (a.s.) said, 'No' and forbade them to pray it with the jamã‘ah. When night came, they began saying, 'Weep in Ramadãn, alas for Ramadãn.' Then al-Hãrith al-A‘war came to the Imãm (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 Imãm (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-‘Ayyãshī)

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

“Then (the Messenger of Allãh [s.a.w.a.]) arrived at Tabūk and praised Allãh and glorified Him as is His due, and then he said, (after the praise of Allãh): 'Verily the most truthful talk is the Book of Allãh; the most reliable grip is the word of piety; the best of the religions is the religion of Ibrãhīm; the best custom is the custom of Muhammad; the noblest talk is the remembrace of Allãh; the best story is this Qur’ãn; 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,19 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 Allãh 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 Allãh, the mighty, the Great; the best thing established in the hearts is certainty. To entartain doubt is a sort of disbelief; to lament for dead is an act of the jãhiliyyah (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 Allãh; and the sanctity of his property is like that of his blood. He who (falsely) sears by Allãh, He will refute him; he who forgives will be forgiven; he who pardons, Allãh will pardon him; he who controls his anger, Allãh will give him good reward; he who is patient in misfortune, Allãh will recompense him. He who hankers for good reputation, Allãh makes him disreputable. He who keeps patience, Allãh multiplies (the reward) for him. He who disobeys Allãh, He will give him punishment. O Allãh! forgive me and my ummah (he said it three times); I seek pardon of Allãh for me and for you.”

Muhammad ibn Yūnus has narrated through some of his companions from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.); also Jãbir has narrated from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.), about the words of Allãh: And most certainly I will bid them so that they shall alter Allãh's creation, that the Imãms said, “Allãh's creation means the commandments of Allãh.” (at-Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyãshī)

In the same book, Jãbir narrates from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) about the same words of the Qur’ãn that he said, “It is Allãh's religion”.

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

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

Muhammad 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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'How hard is this verse!' the Messenger of Allãh (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-‘Ayyãshī)

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

as-Suyūtī writes: Ahmad, al-Bukhãrī, Muslim and at-Tirmidhī have narrated from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī that he said, “The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'No believer is afflicted by hardshipor sickness, grief or sorrow, trouble or sadness - even a thorn which pricks him - but Allãh 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 Imãms of Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.).

as-Sadūq has narrated through his chains from al-Husayn ibn Khãlid that Abu 'l-Hasan ar-Ridã (a.s.) said, “I heard my father narrating from his father (a.s.) that he said, 'Surely Allãh took Ibrãhīm as a friend because he never returned anyone (empty handed) and never asked anyone (for his needs) other then Allãh, the mighty, the Great.” (‘Uyūnu ’l-akhbãr)

The author says: This is the most correct tradition about the meaning of Ibrãhīm (a.s.) as the friend of Allãh because it fits perfectly with the literal meaning of the word; اَلْخُلَّة (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.

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CHAPTER 4, VERSE 127-134

وَيَسْتَفْتُونَكَ فِي النِّسَاءِ ۖ قُلِ اللَّـهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِيهِنَّ وَمَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ فِي يَتَامَى النِّسَاءِ اللَّاتِي لَا تُؤْتُونَهُنَّ مَا كُتِبَ لَهُنَّ وَتَرْغَبُونَ أَن تَنكِحُوهُنَّ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الْوِلْدَانِ وَأَن تَقُومُوا لِلْيَتَامَىٰ بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّـهَ كَانَ بِهِ عَلِيمًا ﴿١٢٧﴾ وَإِنِ امْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ مِن بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَن يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا ۚ وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ ۗ وَأُحْضِرَتِ الْأَنفُسُ الشُّحَّ ۚ وَإِن تُحْسِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّـهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَلَن تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَن تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ ۖ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمَيْلِ فَتَذَرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ ۚ وَإِن تُصْلِحُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّـهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَإِن يَتَفَرَّقَا يُغْنِ اللَّـهُ كُلًّا مِّن سَعَتِهِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ وَاسِعًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَلِلَّـهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنِ اتَّقُوا اللَّـهَ ۚ وَإِن تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّـهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ غَنِيًّا حَمِيدًا ﴿١٣١﴾ وَلِلَّـهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّـهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٣٢﴾ إِن يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ وَيَأْتِ بِآخَرِينَ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ قَدِيرًا ﴿١٣٣﴾ مَّن كَانَ يُرِيدُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا فَعِندَ اللَّـهِ ثَوَابُ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ﴿١٣٤﴾

And they ask you a decision about women, say: “Allãh 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, Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful (129). And if they separate, Allãh will render them both free from want out of His ampleness, and Allãh is Ample-giving, Wise (130). And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh'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) Allãh; and if you disbelieve, then surely whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh's and Allãh is Self-sufficient, Praise-worthy (131). And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh's, and Allãh is sufficient as a protector (132). If He pleases, He can make you pass away, O people! and bring others; and Allãh has the power to do this (133). Whoever desires the reward of this world, then with Allãh is the reward of this world and the hereafter; and Allãh is Hearing, Seeing (134).

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## 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 Allãh (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.

Allãh 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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) has no say; not only that, but Allãh 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’ÃN: And they ask you a decision about women, say: “Allãh makes known to you His decision concerning them: ar-Rãghib has said: “al-Futyã and al-fatwã (اَلْفَتْوي ، اَلْفُتْيَا) means reply to difficult rullings; 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 ijtihãd; or means the opinion itself concerning difficult matters, as is seen from this verse where al-fatwã has been attributed to Allãh.

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 begining 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 jãhiliyyah; 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: 'Allãh makes known to you His decision concerning them . . . “, refers to verses in the beginning of the chapter and shows that decision is reserved for Allãh 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 Allãh and He has given you His decision when He revealed the verses at the beginning of the chapter.

QUR’ÃN: “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 conjuction has been allowed by al-Farrã’, 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-Tilãwah (اَلتِّلَاوَة = recital) denotes recital of the words as well as description of the meaning of the words. The meaning is: Say:

'Allãh 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 aliftã’ in the meaning of explanation. According to them the meaning will be: Say: 'Allãh 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 conjuction with the name, 'Allãh'; or with the implied pronoun in the phrase, 'makes known'. Some have said that it is in conjuctionwith, '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 mã yutlã ‘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: 'Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh, “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 Allãh 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 conjuction 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’ÃN: “and that you should deal towards orphans with equity : This is in conjuction with, His decision concerning them. The meaning is: Say: 'Allãh 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’ÃN: “and whatever good you do, Allãh surely knows it” : It is a reminder to them that the rules which Allãh has imposed on them about the women and the orphans are for their own good and Allãh 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 Allãh knows what they do.

QUR’ÃN: 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 Allãh 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 metrimonial 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-Shuhh (اَلشُّحُّ = 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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’ÃN: 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 Allãh 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, Allãh 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 wãjib (necessary) on the husband to do justice between his wives, that is, he should treat all of them in equal manner and should fulfiltheir 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 Allãh (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 reconcili-ation and guard (against evil), then surely Allãh 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 emphsis.

QUR’ÃN: And if they separate, Allãh will render them both free from want out of His ampleness, and Allãh is Ample-giving, Wise.: If the man and the woman separate by divorce, Allãh will make them both free from want out of His amplenes. Making them free from want in this context means that Allãh will give them this freedom in all matters connected with matrimony, like harmony, intimacy and the wife's maintenance and clothing, etc. Allãh 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 Allãh is Ample-giving, Wise. And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh's”, give the reason of the statement “Allãh will render them both free from want out of His Ampleness”.

QUR’ÃN: 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) Allãh; . . . : 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 Allãh's obedience proves one's gratefulness to Divine favours. Alternatively, we may say that it is only because of disbelief that one discards Allãh'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 Allãh's disobedience).

The above explanation makes clear the words of Allãh, and if you disbelieve, then surely whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh's, and Allãh 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 Allãh or emanates from disbelief in Allãh it will not harm Allãh at all. Allãh is not in need of you or of your piety, and surely whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh's, and Allãh is Self-sufficient, Praise-worthy.

Question: Why have the words: Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh's, repeated three times in three consecutive verses Reply: In the first instance, it explains the reasons of preceding sentence: and Allãh is Ample-giving, Wise. The second instance is a response to the conditional clause: and if you disbelieve. It means, if you disbelieve, then Allãh is not in need of you; it is made more clear by the ending phrase: and Allãh 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’ÃN: And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh's, and Allãh is sufficient as a protector : We have repeatedly explained the meaning of the ownership of Allãh. 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’ÃN: If He pleases, He can make you pass away, O people! and bring others; and Allãh has the power to do this : The preceding verse gives a clarion call for adherence to piety which Allãh 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 Allãh does not need anything is closely related to the order of piety. The meaning, therefore, will be like this: Allãh has enjoined you all to adhere to piety, so be careful or your dutytowards Allãh. If you disbelieve, then Allãh 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 Allãh has the power to keep you behind and let others to precede you. Those people will do what Allãh is pleased with; and clearly Allãh has power to do so. Accordingly, the verse describes the possibilty of exchanging unpious people with the pious ones. al-Baydãwī has narrated a tradition in his tafsīr that when this verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) patted his hand on the back of Salmãn 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh (14:19-20).

QUR’ÃN: Whoever desires the reward of this world, then with Allãh is the reward of this world and the hereafter; and Allãh is Hearing, Seeing.: It is another statement which exposes the error of him who discards piety and neglects Divine enjoinment, 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 fereafter, both are with Allãh, 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 Allãh knows better: Surely the reward of this world and the hereafter and the felicity of both together is with Allãh. 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 Allãh 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 Allãh gives and issues it to him, and Allãh is Hearing, Seeing.

## TRADITIONS

as-Suyūtī 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 Allãh sent down the verse: And they ask you a decision about women, say, 'Allãh 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 Hamīd and Ibn Jarīr have narrated from Ibrãhīm 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, Allãh 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-Tabrisī has said that this meaning is narrated from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.). (Majma‘u 'l-bayãn)

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 Muhammad ibn Maslamah. She was the wife of Rãfi‘ ibn Khadīj, and her age had advanced. He married another young woman and she looked more attractive to him than the daughter of Muhammad ibn Maslamah. So, she said to him: “Don't I find you turning away from me and preferring her?” Rãfi‘ 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 Muhammad ibn Maslamah refused. So, he gave her one divorce. Then he gave her another divorce. Still, she said, “By Allãh, I will never agree unless you treat both of us in equal manner.” (Allãh says: and avarice has been made to be present in the (people's) minds.) And the daughter of Muhammad ibn Maslamah was not ready to forgo her share and persisted in her demand. Then Rãfi‘ 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, Allãh 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 disiclined (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-Suyūtī has narrated it in ad-Durru ’l-manthūr from Mãlik, ‘Abdu 'r-Razzãq, ‘Abd ibn Hamīd, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu ’l-Mundhir and al-Hãkim(who has confirmed this tradition as correct).

as-Suyūtī has said: “at-Tayãlisī, Ibn Abī Shaybah, Ibn Rãhawayh, ‘Abd ibn Hamīd, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu ’l-Mundhir and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from ‘Alī ibn Abī Tãlib 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-Halabī, from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: “I asked the Imãm about the words of Allãh: And if a woman fears ill-usage or desertion on the part of her husband. The Imãm 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 Allãh: there is no blame on them if they effect a reconciliation between them, and this is the reconciliation.” (al-Kãfī)

The author says: There are other traditions of the same meaning narrated in al-Kãfī and at-Tafsīr of al-‘Ayyãshī.

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)

Hishãm ibn Sãlim narrates from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about the words of Allãh: 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-‘Ayyãshī)

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain of narrators from Nūh ibn Shu‘bah and Muhammad ibn al-Hasan that they said, “Ibn Abi 'l-‘Awjã’ asked Hishãm ibn al-Hakam and said, 'Is not Allãh 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 disiclined (from one) with total disinclination; so that you leave her as it were in suspenses. Does a wise one talk like this' Hishãm could not reply. So, he went to Medina to Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.). The Imãm (a.s.) said, '(You have come) when it is neither the time of hajj nor of ‘umrah!' Hishãm said, 'Yes, may I be made your ransom! I have come for a problem which has kept me worried. Ibn Abi 'l-‘Awjã’ asked me a question and I could not reply him.' The Imãm (a.s.) said, 'What is that ?' Hishãm narrated the full story.

“Abū ‘Abdillãh (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 Hishãm went to Ibn Abi 'l-‘Awjã’ and told him the reply, he said, 'By Allãh, it is not from you.” (al-Kãfī)

The author says: A similar hadīth has been narrated from al-Qummī which says: An atheist asked Abū Ja‘far al-Ahwal exactly the same question. He went to Medina and asked Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) for the reply and the Imãm (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 Hijãz.”

at-Tabrisī explains the Qur’ãnic 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 ‘Abdillãh (a.s.). (Majma‘u 'l-bayãn)

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 Allãh! 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. Allãh is far above blaming someone for some thing not in his possession, not in his control. He Himself has said: Allãh does not lay on any soul a burden except to the extant to which He has granted it (66:8); and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was fully cognizantof 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 Laylã that he said: “Narrated to me ‘Ãsim ibn Hamīd and said, 'I was with Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) when a man came to him and complained of his poverty. The Imãm (a.s.) ordered him to get married. ‘Ãsim said that (after that) the man's poverty became more serious; so he came to Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.). The Imãm (a.s.) enquired about his condition; and he said that the poverty had increased. The Imãm (a.s.) said, 'Now, separate (from her).' So, he divorced her. ‘Ãsim reports that he again came to the Imãm (a.s.) who asked him how did he do. He said, 'I have become rich and my condition is very good.' Then Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) said, 'I told you to do two things which Allãh had ordered. Allãh 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, Allãh will make them free from want out of his grace; and Allãh is Ample-giving, Knowing (24:32). And He has also said: And if they separate, Allãh will render them both free from want out of His ampleness (4:130).

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CHAPTER 4, VERSE 135

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّـهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ ۚ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّـهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا ۖ فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَن تَعْدِلُوا ۚ وَإِن تَلْوُوا أَوْ تُعْرِضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّـهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٣٥﴾

O you who believe! be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness for Allãh's sake, though it may be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives; if he be rich or poor, Allãh 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 Allãh is aware of what you do (135).

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## COMMENTARY

QUR’ÃN: O you who believe! be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness for Allãh's sake: al-Qist (اَلْقِسْط = 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 Allãh'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 Allãh's sake.

The words, “bearers of witness for Allãh's sake”, show the purpose of the action; bear witness so that your witness should be for Allãh, as Allãh has said: And give testimony for Allãh (63:2). An evidence will be for the sake of Allãh 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’ÃN: though it may be against your ownselves 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 hsi 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’ÃN: If he be rich or poor, Allãh 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: Allãh 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 Allãh and then leave Him to look at the rich and the poor. He is nearer to them and more Merciful to 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’ÃN: therefore do not folow (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 Allãh. 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’ÃN: and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allãh 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” (وَاِنْ تَلُوْ) 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 Allãh is aware of what you do and He will give you its recompense.

## TRADITIONS

Abū ‘Abdillãh (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 Imãm (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-Tabrisī 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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CHAPTER 4, VERSES 136-147

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا بِاللَّـهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ مِن قَبْلُ ۚ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّـهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١٣٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ ازْدَادُوا كُفْرًا لَّمْ يَكُنِ اللَّـهُ لِيَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٣٧﴾ بَشِّرِ الْمُنَافِقِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٣٨﴾ الَّذِينَ يَتَّخِذُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِن دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ أَيَبْتَغُونَ عِندَهُمُ الْعِزَّةَ فَإِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّـهِ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٣٩﴾ وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّـهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ۚ إِنَّكُمْ إِذًا مِّثْلُهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّـهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٤٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يَتَرَبَّصُونَ بِكُمْ فَإِن كَانَ لَكُمْ فَتْحٌ مِّنَ اللَّـهِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَكُن مَّعَكُمْ وَإِن كَانَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نَصِيبٌ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَسْتَحْوِذْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَنَمْنَعْكُم مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ فَاللَّـهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ وَلَن يَجْعَلَ اللَّـهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤١﴾ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّـهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كُسَالَىٰ يُرَاءُونَ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّـهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٤٢﴾ مُّذَبْذَبِينَ بَيْنَ ذَٰلِكَ لَا إِلَىٰ هَـٰؤُلَاءِ وَلَا إِلَىٰ هَـٰؤُلَاءِ ۚ وَمَن يُضْلِلِ اللَّـهُ فَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤٣﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِن دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ أَتُرِيدُونَ أَن تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّـهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٤٤﴾ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرْكِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا ﴿١٤٥﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِاللَّـهِ وَأَخْلَصُوا دِينَهُمْ لِلَّـهِ فَأُولَـٰئِكَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۖ وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِ اللَّـهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٤٦﴾ مَّا يَفْعَلُ اللَّـهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ إِن شَكَرْتُمْ وَآمَنتُمْ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيمًا ﴿١٤٧﴾

O you who believe! believe in Allãh and His Messenger and the Book which He has revealed to His Messenger and the Book which He revealed before; and whoever disbelieves in Allãh 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, Allãh 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 Allãh (139). And indeed He has revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allãh'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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh shall judge between you on the Day of Resurrection; and Allãh will by no means give the unbelievers a way against the believers (141). Surely the hypocrites strive to deceive Allãh, 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 od not remember Allãh save a little (142). Wavering between that (and this), (belonging) neither to these nor to those; and whomsoever Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh and are sincere in their religion to Allãh; these are with the believers, and Allãh will grant the believers a mighty reward (146). Why should Allãh chastise you if you are grateful and believe? And Allãh is the Appreciator, Knowing (147).

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## COMMENTARY

QUR’ÃN: O you who believe! believe in Allãh 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 Allãh 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. Allãh, there is none to be worshed 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 Allãh 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 Allãh, “O you who believe! believe”, means: O you who believe apparently by acknowledging the truth of Allãh 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 Allãh and His Messenger, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), and the Book which He has revealed on His Messenger, i.e., Qur’ãn. These themes may be correct in themselves but the context of the speech rejects them and the last explanation is the worst.

QUR’ÃN: and whoever disbelieves in Allãh 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 conjuctive, 'and', is used in the meaning of 'or'. The meaning: Whoever disbelieves in Allãh 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 conjuctive, '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’ãnic verses in several places declare that whoever disbelieves in any one of these, will be a disbeliever.

QUR’ÃN: Surely (as for) those who believe then disbelieve, again believe and again disbelieve, then increase in disbelief, Allãh 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 Allãh 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. Allãh 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 Allãh, Allãh never rejects His repentance and faith as He has promised His servants. We have explained this subject under the verse: Repentance with Allãh is only for those who do evil in ignorance . . . (4:17), in volume four20 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. Allãh says: How shall Allãh 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 Allãh does not guide the unjust people . . . Except those who repent after that and amend, then surely Allãh 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 Allãh 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 arguements had come to them and yet they became apostates. This apostacy is based on obstinacy and stubborness, 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 hypocrites about whom Allãh 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 Allãh and His Messenger . . . , as we have mentioned earlier.

If the first verse is taken to mean that you should believe in Allãh 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 Allãh and His Messenger, then the belief, then kufr, and so on will refer to their believing in Mūsã (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 Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and what he had brought from Allãh.

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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 couse, 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 Allãh has put some tough conditions for acceptance of repentancefrom 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 Allãh and are sincere in their religion to Allãh . . .

QUR’ÃN: 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; Allãh 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 suports 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 Allãh'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 Allãh says: . . . and do not remember Allãh save a little; as this sentence confirms that they used to remember Allãh although very little. This could not be said about the hypocrites who had not believed in their hearts at all.

QUR’ÃN: Do they seek honour from them? Then surely all honour is for Allãh: It is an interrogative in the sense of negative, and the reply, then surely all honour is for Allãh”, confirms the negative sense. The honour emanates from kingdom and kingdom belongs to Allãh only: Say: “O Allãh! 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’ÃN: And indeed He has revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allãh'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’ãnic 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 Allãh will gather together the unbelievers and the hypocrites all in hell”.

QUR’ÃN: Those who wait for (some misfortune to befall) you; then if you have a victory from Allãh, 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-Tarabbus (اَلتَّرَبُّص = waiting); al-istihwãdh (اَلْاِسْتِحْواذ = 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 Allãh has promised them; and the unbelievers' success is described as a chance to show its insignificance; because whatever the interim success, in the end, Allãh has promised the believers that they will be victorious and that Allãh is their guardian. Probably it is for this reason that the victory has been ascribed to Allãh but not the chance.

QUR’ÃN: So Allãh shall judge between you on the Day of Resur-rection; and Allãh 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 Allãh 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. Allãh says: And be not infirm, and be not grieving, and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers (3:139).

QUR’ÃN: Surely the hypocrites strive to deceive Allãh while He is deceiving them: al-Mukhãda‘ah (اَلْمُخَادَعَة) 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 Allãh 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 Allãh, 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 Allãh 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 Allãh it is actually Allãh who is deceiving them exactly through the showy deeds and bad faith.

QUR’ÃN: and when they stand up for prayer, they stand up sluggishly: they do it only to be seen of men and do not remember Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh; they would not have done it merely to be seen by people, rather they would have remembered Allãh very often as happens when the heart is inclined to someone.

QUR’ÃN: Wavering between that (and this), (belonging) neither to these nor to those; . . . : at-Tabrisī has explained in Majma‘u 'l-bayãn 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 Allãh causes to err, you shall not find a way for him”, gives the reason of the preceding discription of pendulous motion. The reason why they move to and fro, without adhering to any side, is that Allãh has made them go astray from the path and now they cannot find the true path.

QUR’ÃN: 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-Sultãn (اَلسُّلْطَان = proof); ad-darak and ad-dark (:(اَلدَّرْكُ ، اَلدَّرَك ar-Rãghib has said: “ad-Dark is synonymous with ad-darj (اَلدَّرج = stair-case), but ad-darj is used to describe ascending steps while addark is used for descending. That is why we see that the ranks of the Garden are called ad-darajãt (اَلدَّرَجَات = ranks) and the stages of the Fire; ad-darakãt (اَلدَّركَات = stages); also because there is an idea of descending down in the hell, it is called al-hãwiyah (اَلْهَاوِيَة = infernal depth) [which is derived from hawã = 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 Allãh 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 Allãh. They should not give Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh has named descending stages. [The lower the stage, the harsher the torture.]

QUR’ÃN: Except those who repent and amend and hold fast to Allãh and are sincere in their religion to Allãh; . . . : 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 Allãh 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 Allãh; 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 Allãh; 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 Allãh 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 Allãh, 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 Allãh and are sincere in their religion to Allãh, then they will be true believers without any taint of polytheism. Then they will be protected from hypocrisy and will be guided aright. Allãh 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 Allãh and are sincere in their religion to Allãh”. These virtues cover all the details which Allãh 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 Beneficient (Allãh) are they who walk on the earth humbly; and when address them the ignorants, say they: “Salãm (Peace)”. And those who pass the night in prostrating unto their Lord and standing (25:63-64).

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

Allãh 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’ÃN: Why should Allãh chastise you if you are grateful and believe? And Allãh 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 Allãh has no need to chastise them.

Had they not invited the punishment by discarding gratitude and faith, there was nothing from the side of Allãh to inflict them with chastisement. Allãh 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 Allãh has bestowed on you by giving Him His due rights and if you truly believe in Him; and Allãh 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 Allãh's side. Likewise, all the things which invite punishment, like going astray, polytheism and sins and errors, do not originate from Allãh; they are done by the people themselves. If any of these things had originated from Allãh, then the resulting punishment also would have been from Allãh, because the effect is related to its cause.

## TRADITIONS

Zurãrah, Humrãn and Muhammad ibn Muslim have narrated from Abū Ja‘far and Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about the words of Allãh: Surely as for those who believe, then disbelieve, again believe and again disbelieve, then increase in disbelief, that they said, “It was revealed about ‘Abdullãh ibn Abī Sarh, whom ‘Uthmãn had sent to Egypt as Governor. Then his disbelief increased until not an iota of belief remained in him.” (at-Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyãshī)21

Abū Basīr has said: “I heard him (Abū ‘Abdillãh, a.s.) saying about this same verse: 'Whoever believes that intoxicant is unlawful and then drinks it, and whoever believes that fornication is unlawful and then does it and whoever believes that zakãt is wãjib (obligatory) and does not pay it (are included in this verse).” (ibid.)

The author says: This hadīth 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.

Muhammad ibn al-Fudayl narrates from Abu 'l-Hasan ar-Ridã (a.s.) about the words of Allãh: And indeed we have revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allãh'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 ’s-Salt al-Harawī narrates from ar-Ridã (a.s.) about the words of Allãh: and Allãh will by no means give the unbelievers a way against the believers, that he said: “Allãh says that He will by no means give the unbelievers a proof against the believers. Allãh has given us the news about the unbelievers who killed their prophets without any right, yet in spite of their killing them, Allãh had not given them any proof against his prophets.” (ibid.)

as-Suyūtī writes: “Ibn Jarīr has narrated from ‘Alī [a.s.] about the words of Allãh: and Allãh 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 appar-ently points to the hereafter; but if the sentence is taken separately, on its own, it may be generalised to cover the proof in this worl.

as-Sadūq narrates through his chain of narrators from al-Hasan ibn Faddãl that he said, “I asked ‘Alī ibn Mūsã ar-Ridã (a.s.) about the words of Allãh: Surely the hypocrites strive to deceive Allãh, while He is deceiving them.

“The Imãm (a.s.) said, 'Allãh does not deceive; rather He gives them recompense of their deception.” (`Uyūnu ’l-akhbãr)

Mas‘adah ibn Ziyãd narrates through Ja‘far ibn Muhammad (a.s.) from his father (a.s.) that the Messenger of Allãh (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 Allãh, lest He deceives you; because whoever deceives Allãh, He will deceive him and will take off the īmãn (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 Allãh” He said, “He performs what Allãh has ordered him to, but his aim is (to please) someone other than Allãh. Therefore, be on guard against dissimulation, because it is associating someone with Allãh. Surely, a dissimulator will be called on the Day of Resurrection with four names: O kãfir, 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-‘Ayyãshī)

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

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

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 Dãwūd and al-Bayhaqī (in his Sunan) have narrated from Anas that he said, “The Messenger of Allãh (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 Allãh in it except a little.” (ibid.)

The author says: This is another meaning of paucity of remembrance because such a worshipper merely turns towards Allãh by standing for prayer and does not get time to remember Allãh 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 Hamīd, al-Bukhãrī (in his Tãrīkh), Muslim, Ibn Jarīr and Ibnu ’l-Mundhir have narrated from Ibn ‘Umar that he said, “The Messenger of Allãh (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-Razzãq, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Hãtim and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbãs, that he said, “Wherever the word sultãn occurs in the Qur’ãn, it means 'proof.” (ibid.)

Ibn Abī Shaybah, al-Marwazī (in Zawãidu 'z-zuhd) and Abu 'sh-Shaykh ibn Hibbãn have narrated from Makhūl that he said, “I have been told that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said, 'No servant remains sincere to Allãh 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-Hakīm at-Tirmidhī has narrated in Nawãdiru 'l-usūl from Zayd ibn Arqam that he said, “The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'Whoever sincerely says, Lã ilãha illa 'llãh, will enter the Garden.' It was said to him, 'O Messenger of Allãh, 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 ahãdīth (traditions) of the both sects from the Prophet and the Imãms of Ahlu 'l-bayt, may Allãh'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’ãn, which the people have used to fit the verses on some likely events. And Allãh knows better.

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CHAPTER 4, VERSES 148-149

لَّا يُحِبُّ اللَّـهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَن ظُلِمَ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا ﴿١٤٨﴾ إِن تُبْدُوا خَيْرًا أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ أَوْ تَعْفُوا عَن سُوءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّـهَ كَانَ عَفُوًّا قَدِيرًا ﴿١٤٩﴾

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

\* \* \* \* \*

## COMMENTARY

QUR’ÃN: Allãh does not love open utterance of evil in speech except (by) one to whom injustice has been done; . . . : [al-Jahr (اَلْجَهْرُ = loudly speaking; translated here as 'open utterance')]. ar-Rãghib 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'; Allãh, the Sublime, says: 'O Mūsã! We will not believe in you until we see Allãh manifestly' (2:55); They said:

'Show us Allãh manifestly' (4:153) . . . As for hearing, Allãh says:

Alike (to Him) among you is he who conceals (his) words and he who speaks openly” (13:10).

as-Sū’ (اَلسُّوْء ~ = 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. Allãh does not love that these things should be loudly announced and spoken. It is known that Allãh 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, Allãh metaphorically uses the words, love and hate, to describe His pleasure and displeasure, His commandment and prohibition.

Therefore, the words, “Allãh 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 opressor 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 praticular 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 Allãh is Hearing, Knowing”, emphasize the prohibition understood from “Allãh 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 Allãh is the Hearing Who hears every word, and Knowing Who knows what one is doing.

QUR’ÃN: If you do good openly or do it in secret or pardon an evil, then surely Allãh 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 Allãh 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. Allãh has said: whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict the like aggression on him as he has inflicted on you; and fear Allãh (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 Allãh.

## TRADITIONS

at-Tabrisī has said: “Allãh 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-bayãn)

Abu 'l-Jãrūd narrates from Abū ‘Abdillãh (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-‘Ayyãshī)

Another hadīth 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-Fadl ibn Abī Qurrah narrates from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about the words of Allãh: Allãh 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-‘Ayyãshī)

The author says: It has been narrated in Majma‘u 'l-bayãn from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) as a mursal hadīth; also it has been narrated through Sunnī chains from Mujãhid. However, these traditions clearly show that the verse is general and not restricted, as we have shown earlier.

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CHAPTER 4, VERSES 150-152

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّـهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَن يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّـهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَن يَتَّخِذُوا بَيْنَ ذَٰلِكَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٥٠﴾ أُولَـٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ حَقًّا ۚ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُّهِينًا ﴿١٥١﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّـهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَمْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ أُولَـٰئِكَ سَوْفَ يُؤْتِيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿١٥٢﴾

Surely those who disbelieve in Allãh and His messengers and desire to differentiate between Allãh 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 Allãh and His messengers and do not differentiate between any of them; they (are those whom) He will grant them their recompense; and Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful (152).

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## 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’ÃN: Surely those who disbelieve in Allãh 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 Mūsã and disbelieve in ‘Īsã and Muhammad while the Christians believe in Mūsã and ‘Īsã and disbelieve in Muhammad - Allãh's mercy be on all of them. These people think that they believe in Allãh and in some of His messengers and disbelieve in only a few of them; but Allãh has clearly stated that they are disbelievers in Allãh and all His messengers. Therefore, it was necessary to explain the all-encompassing sentence, “Surely those who disbelieve in Allãh and His messengers”. This explanation is given in the next phrase which is given as explicative apposition, “and desire to differentiate between Allãh and His messengers, and say: “We believe in some and disbelieve in others”. This phrase is self-explanatory. They are disbelievers in Allãh and His Messengers because when they say: “We believe in some and disbelieve in others”, they actually want to diffentiate between Allãh and His messengers; when they disbelieve in some of His messengers although he has been sent by Allãh, they are rejecting the Divine choice; thus rejection of any messenger is rejection of Allãh's Divinity.

Again it is explained with another explanatory conjuctive, “and desire to take a way between (this and) that”. They want to chart out a way between two opposites: believing in Allãh and all His messengers and disbelieving in Allãh and all His messengers; and that middle way is believing in some and rejecting some others. However, the only way to Allãh 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; everthing is done under Divine guidance. To believe in him is to believe in Allãh and to reject him is to reject Allãh.

Disbeliving in some and believing in others together with Allãh is an attempt to differentiate between Allãh and His messengers. In this way, they want to make the messenger indifendent, unrelated to Allãh. According to the, belief in the prophet has no connection with the belief in Allãh and rejection of a prophet is unconnected with disbelief in Allãh; 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 Allãh Now, it is clear without any doubt that believing in such a messenger is tantamount to ascribing someone to Allãh, the great, the High. That is why Allãh, after describing their attempt to believe in some and disbelieve in others, in order to differentiate between Allãh 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’ÃN: And those who believe in Allãh and His messengers and do not differentiate between any of them; they (are those whom) He will grant them their recompense; and Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful : After exposing the disbelief of those who differentiate between Allãh and His messengers, ans stating that they were disbelievers in Allãh and all His messengers, now Allãh describes those who stand opposite to them, that is, those who believe in Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh would surely fulfil His promise and this recompense is certain to be awarded.

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CHAPTER 4, VERSES 153-169

يَسْأَلُكَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَن تُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ كِتَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ ۚ فَقَدْ سَأَلُوا مُوسَىٰ أَكْبَرَ مِن ذَٰلِكَ فَقَالُوا أَرِنَا اللَّـهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ بِظُلْمِهِمْ ۚ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَعَفَوْنَا عَن ذَٰلِكَ ۚ وَآتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ سُلْطَانًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ الطُّورَ بِمِيثَاقِهِمْ وَقُلْنَا لَهُمُ ادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ لَا تَعْدُوا فِي السَّبْتِ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُم مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿١٥٤﴾ فَبِمَا نَقْضِهِم مِّيثَاقَهُمْ وَكُفْرِهِم بِآيَاتِ اللَّـهِ وَقَتْلِهِمُ الْأَنبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَقَوْلِهِمْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ ۚ بَلْ طَبَعَ اللَّـهُ عَلَيْهَا بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٥٥﴾ وَبِكُفْرِهِمْ وَقَوْلِهِمْ عَلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ بُهْتَانًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٥٦﴾ وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّـهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَـٰكِن شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ ۚ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ ۚ مَا لَهُم بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا اتِّبَاعَ الظَّنِّ ۚ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا ﴿١٥٧﴾ بَل رَّفَعَهُ اللَّـهُ إِلَيْهِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٥٨﴾ وَإِن مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا لَيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهِ ۖ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا ﴿١٥٩﴾ فَبِظُلْمٍ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ طَيِّبَاتٍ أُحِلَّتْ لَهُمْ وَبِصَدِّهِمْ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّـهِ كَثِيرًا ﴿١٦٠﴾ وَأَخْذِهِمُ الرِّبَا وَقَدْ نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَأَكْلِهِمْ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ ۚ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٦١﴾ لَّـٰكِنِ الرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ ۚ وَالْمُقِيمِينَ الصَّلَاةَ ۚ وَالْمُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّـهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أُولَـٰئِكَ سَنُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٦٢﴾ إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِن بَعْدِهِ ۚ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَعِيسَىٰ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُونُسَ وَهَارُونَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ ۚ وَآتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ زَبُورًا ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِن قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَّمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ ۚ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّـهُ مُوسَىٰ تَكْلِيمًا ﴿١٦٤﴾ رُّسُلًا مُّبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّـهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٦٥﴾ لَّـٰكِنِ اللَّـهُ يَشْهَدُ بِمَا أَنزَلَ إِلَيْكَ ۖ أَنزَلَهُ بِعِلْمِهِ ۖ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَشْهَدُونَ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّـهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿١٦٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّـهِ قَدْ ضَلُّوا ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١٦٧﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَظَلَمُوا لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّـهُ لِيَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ طَرِيقًا ﴿١٦٨﴾ إِلَّا طَرِيقَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۚ وَكَانَ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّـهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿١٦٩﴾

The People of the Book ask you to bring down to them a book from heaven; so indeed they had demanded of Mūsã a greater thing than that, for they said: “Show us Allãh 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 Mūsã 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 Allãh and their killing the prophets unjustly and their saying: “Our hearts are covered”; Nay! Allãh 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, ‘Īsã son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allãh”; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so (like ‘Īsã); 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! Allãh raised him up to Himself; and Allãh 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 (`sã) 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 Allãh'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 zakãt and the believers in Allãh 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 Ibrãhīm and Ismã‘īl and Ishãq and Ya‘qūb and the tribes, and ‘Īsã and Ayyūb and Yūnus and Hãrūn and Sulaymãn, and We gave to Dãwūd Zabūr (163). And (We sent) messengers We have mentioned to you before and messengers We have not mentioned to you; and Allãh addressed His word to Mūsã directly speaking (164). (We sent) messengers as the givers of good news and as warners, so that people should not have an argument against Allãh after the (coming of) messengers; and Allãh is Mighty, Wise (165). But Allãh 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 Allãh for a witness (166). Surely (as for) those who disbelieve and hinder (men) from Allãh's way they indeed have strayed off into a remote error (167). Surely (as for) those who disbelieve and act unjustly, Allãh 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 Allãh (169).

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## COMMENTARY

The verses describe the demand of the People of the Book that the Messenger of Allãh (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’ãn through Gabriel, and then replies to it.

QUR’ÃN: 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’ãnic 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 Allãh, 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 Isrã’īl to whom Mūsã and ‘Īsã (a.s.) were sent (although the mission of ‘Īsã [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 ‘Īsã by his people was not less than the injustice done by the Jews to Mūsã (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, Allãh 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 ‘Īsã (a.s.) too like Mūsã (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 Allãh, but (speak) the truth; the Messiah, ‘Īsã son of Maryam is only a Messenger of Allãh.

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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) to bring down to them a book from heaven. Obviously, they had not asked it before the Qur’ãn was revealed and recited before them. This event had taken place in Medina and they had heard the Qur’ãn 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’ãn 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’ãnic 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 grond 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’ãnic revelations began and its mission became known; as Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh has sent down, that is, the Qur’ãn, contains in itself the witness of Allãh and His angels. Moreover, it offers challege after challenge in its noble verses.

Continuing the reply, Allãh says: so indeed they had demanded of Mūsã 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 Allãh 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 lightening 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 Allãh 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 Allãh is far from the taint of corporal traits and transience; and this was the most henious ignorance: but We pardoned this; and We gave to Mūsã a clear authority. Mūsã (a.s.) had ordered them in this connection to repent to Allãh by killing each other; they started doing it but Allãh pardoned them before the killings had taken toll of them all; and this is what pardon means in this verse. He gave Mūsã (a.s.) clear authority inasmuch as his orders were implemented on them and on as-Sãmirī and his calf. This story is mentioned in the chapter of “The Cow” (vr. 54).

Then Allãh says: And We lifted the mountain over them at their covenant. It was the covenant which Allãh 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, Allãh 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’ãn repeatedly mentions making the covenant with them, as Allãh says: And when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: “You shall not worship (any) but Allãh; . . . “ (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’ÃN: Therefore, for their breaking their covenant and their disbelif in the communications of Allãh . . . : 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 Allãh has reserved for them in this world and the hereafter. They also describe some of their evil characteristics not mentioned before.

The words of Allãh, “Therefore for their breaking their covenant”, refers together to their breaking the covenant, some of which have been mentioned in the Qur’ãn and some have not. “And their disbelief in the communications of Allãh”, refers to their various types of disbelief which they committed during the life of Mūsã (a.s.) and after him. The Qur’ãn has described several instances of it including the two mentioned in the beginning of the verses, that is: So indeed they had demanded of Mūsã a greater thing than that, for they said: “Show us Allãh 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 Zakariyyã, Yahyã and other prophets whom the Qur’ãn has mentioned without naming. Then Allãh says: and their saying: “Our hearts are covered” : Ghulf (غُلْف) is plural of aghlaf (اَغْلف = 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 Allãh. In a way they claimed that their hearts were put under cover by Allãh, or that they could not hear any call except that of Mūsã, and all this was beyond their choice and authority. That is why Allãh has refuted their claim by saying: Nay! Allãh 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, Allãh 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’ÃN: And for their disbelief and for their having uttered against Maryam a griveous calumny : It refers to their calumny against Maryam (a.s.) that ‘Īsã (a.s.) was a product of fornication. It is disbelief and false accusation all together; and ‘Īsã (a.s.) had talked to them soon after his birth and said: “Surely I am a servant of Allãh; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet.” (19:30).

QUR’ÃN: And for their saying: “Surely we have killed the Messiah, ‘Īsã son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allãh;” and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so (like‘Īsã): It was described in the stories of ‘Īsã (a.s.) in ch.3 that they had different versions concerning his killing: whether it was by crucifixion or some other means. Allãh first mentions their claim of killing the Messiah, then refutes their claim joining the killing and crucifxion 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, crucification doesn’t come into mind. [Therefore, refuting killing and crucifixion together refutes the idea of ‘Īsã'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 Allãh 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 ‘Īsã (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 rioteous 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 Allãh had put his likeness on another personwho was caught and killed in his place.

Some research scholars of history have written that the historical stories recorded about ‘Īsã (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’ãn mentions as 'appearance' would refer to the similarity of the Messiah, `Īsã son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allãh, with the crucified Messiah.22

And most surely those who differ therein, that is, differ about ‘Īsã 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’ãnic words do not tolerate them.23

QUR’ÃN: Nay! Allãh raised him up to Himself; and Allãh is Mighty, Wise : Allãh has narrated this story in the chapter of “The Family of ‘Imrãn” where He says: And when Allãh said: “O ‘Īsã! 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 ‘Īsã (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., ‘Īsã, [a.s.] with his body) was the one whom Allãh raised to Him and saved him from their conspiracy. In short, ‘Īsã (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 Allãh, 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 Allãh saved him from their hands. [This verse by itself does not make it clear] whether he had died at that time a natural death or by some means other than murder and crucifixion or was alive and Allãh had given him perpetual life in a way we do not know.It was not impossible for All`ah to give death to ‘Īsã (a.s.) and then raise him and protect him; or He could preserve his life in some extra-natural way.24 This phenomenon is not different from other events described in the Qur’ãn regarding ‘Īsã's miracles concerning his birth and his life among his people as well as the miracles of Ibrãhīm, Mūsã, Sãlih, and others. All that is in the same category; the Book of Allãh confirms those happenings so clearly that they cannot be ignored. Of course, some people had tried to reinterprete 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.25

However, the next verse proves or points that ‘Īsã (a.s.) is alive and has not died yet.

QUR’ÃN: 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 (‘Īsã) shall be a witness against them : The third person singular pronouns in “believe in him” and “he shall be” refer to ‘Īsã (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 ‘Īsã (a.s.) before that one dies. It will become clear to him just before his death that ‘Īsã was the Messenger of Allãh and His servant; even though that faith at that time will not benefit him at all, and ‘Īsã 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 ‘Īsã (a.s.), it would support what has been narrated in some traditions that ‘Īsã is 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 explanatio, the verse would mean that only those People of the Book would believe in ‘Īsã 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 ‘Īsã (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 ‘Īsã (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 Allãh has quoted the speech of ‘Īsã 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, ‘Īsã 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 tose 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 ‘Īsã); . . . Rather Allãh raised him up to Himself, and Allãh is Mighty, Wise, indicates that ‘Īsã 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 ‘Īsã before death refers to their believing in him before ‘Īsã's death.

However, there are other verses which apparently go somehow against it. For example: And when Allãh said: O ‘Īsã! 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 ‘Īsã will continue upto the Day of Resurrection. Also, the verse: . . . and their saying: “Our hearts are covered”; Nay! Allãh 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 ‘Īsã (a.s.) was taken away completely.

However, the fact is that these three verses do not go against the idea of ‘Īsã (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! Allãh 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 Allãh will say: “O ‘Īsã son of Maryam! did you say to the people, take me and my mother two gods beside Allãh” (5:116). Apart from that, ‘Īsã (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 conjuction with other related verses, show that ‘Īsã (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 ‘Īsã! I am going to take you away completely . . . (3:55) in the third volume of this book.26

A very strange explanation has been given by az-Zamakhsharī in Tafsīru ’l-kashshãf. 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 ‘Īsã (a.s); Allãh will give them life in their graves at the time of coming down of ‘Īsã (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 (اَلرَّجْعَة = partial return)?”

There are some other unsound explanations written for this verse:

1. az-Zajjãj 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 ‘Īsã (a.s.) who will appear in later days. It is a riduculous interpretation because the verses describe their claim of killing and crucifying ‘Īsã (a.s.) and refutes that claim. It does not deal directly with their disbelief in ‘Īsã (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 (‘Īsã) 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 Muhammad (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 Muhammad (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’ãn 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’ÃN: 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 (becuae 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. Allãh had forbidden some of the good things to them because of that inequity, and it was forbidden in the sharī‘ah of Mūsã which was revealed in the Torah; while some of the inequities were committed by them long after Mūsã, 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 Allãh's way. it refers to their repeated deviation from the way of Allãh: And for their taking interest, though indeed they were forbidden it, and their devouring the property of people wrongfully.

QUR’ÃN: And We have prepared for the unbelievers from among them a painful chastisement : It is in conjuction with: We did forbid them. Because of their inequities, they had attracted two punishments from Allãh; 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’ÃN: 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 zakãt and the believers in Allãh 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 Nūh . . . 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 Allãh, Nūh and the prophets after him, and the prophets from the progeny of Ibrãhīm 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 Allãh 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 conjuction 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 zakãt” is in conjuction with the same. “The believers in Allãh and the Last Day” is the subject and “these it is whom We will give a mighty reward” is its predicate. In the Qur’ãn 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.

at-Tabrisī has said in Majma‘u 'l-bayãn : “The grammarians have differed as to why 'those who keep up prayers' has been revealed in accusative case. Sībawayh and the scholars of Basrah 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 [‘Uthmãn] that, 'there are some [ungrammatical] words in the Book of Allãh 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’ãn 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’ãn 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 prphet 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. Allãh 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, Allãh 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 neglacted 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 calrity 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 - Nūh 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 Allãh and hinder people from them even when clear proofs have come to them. In this backdrop, these people whom Allãh has excepted are firmly rooted in knowledge and true believers.

Second: The reason why the previously revealed Books have been mentioned with the Qur’ãn 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 Nūh and the prophets after him”, describe the reason of the belief of these believers.

QUR’ÃN: Surely We have revealed to you as We have revealed to Nūh 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 Nūh and the prophets after him. Nūh was the first prophet to come with the Book and a sharī‘ah. It is the same as We revealed to Ibrãhīm 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 Dãwūd was given Zabūr [Psalms] which was a prophetic revelation. Mūsã was addressed directly and that was another type of prophetic revelation; and there were others like Ismã‘īl, Ishãq 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. Allãh 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 Allãh after coming of the messengers.

QUR’ÃN: 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’ÃN: and We gave to Dãwūd Zabūr . . . : It is said that the word az-Zabūr means 'the written'; they say Zabarahu (زَبَرَهُ = he wrote it), thus az-Zabūr is synonymous with al-mazbūr (اَلْمَزْبُورْ = the written).

QUR’ÃN: (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 circumstancial words.

In ch.2 vr.213 (in vol.2)27, we have extensively discussed the meaning of sending of the messengers and completion of proof by Allãh 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’ÃN: and Allãh is Mighty, Wise : When unlimited power and unlimited wisdom is reserved for Allãh, then it is impossible for anyone to prevail over Him in argument. Rather, the conclusive proofs are with Him. Allãh says: Say: “Then Allãh's is the conclusive argument” (6:149).

QUR’ÃN: But Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh has described in refutation of their demand beginning with: So indeed they had demanded of Mūsã 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, Allãh adds that He bears witness by what He has revealed to His Prophet and the angels bear witness too and Allãh 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. Allãh 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).

Also, Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh: Say: “Whoever is the enemy of Gabriel: for surely he revealed it to your heart by Allãh'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 Allãh and Allãh is sufficient as a witness.

To see how Allãh has borne witness for the Qur’ãn, 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’ãn, 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’ãn? And if it were from any other than Allãh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy (4:82); Say: “Then bring a chapter like this and invite whom you can besides Allãh, if you are truthful.” (10:38).

QUR’ÃN: Surely (as for) those who disbelieve and hinder (men) from Allãh'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 Allãh; 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 Allãh 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 revelationof the Book from Allãh. Now, the word, 'Book', has been changed to Allãh's way (hinder men from Allãh'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 Allãh's way, and those who disbelieve and hinder men from Allãh's way . . .

QUR’ÃN: Surely (as for) those who disbelieve and act unjustly, Allãh will not forgive them nor guide them to a path, except the path of hell, to abide in it forever, and this easy to Allãh : It re-emphasizes the reality mentioned in the preceding verse. Accordingly, injustice would point to their hindering men from the way of Allãh 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-burhãn under the Divine words: and for their having uttered against Maryam a grivious calumny, from Ibn Bãbawayh through his chain from ‘Alqamah that as-Sãdiq (a.s.) said, inter alia, in a hadīth : “Did not they ascribe to Maryam bint ‘Imrãn that she was pregnanted by a carpenter named Yūsuf?”

al-Qummī writes under the words of Allãh: 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-Qãsim ibn Muhammad, from Sulaymãn ibn Dãwūd al-Minqarī, from Abū Hamzah, from Shahr ibn Hawshab that he said, 'al-Hajjãj said to me, “O Shahr! one verse of the Book of Allãh 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 Allãh! 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 Allãh ameliorates the Amīr! This verse doesn’t mean what you have interpretated.” He said, “How is it” I said, “Surely ‘Īsã 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 brough it” I said, “Narrated it to me Muhammad ibn ‘Alī ibn al-Husayn ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Tãlib (a.s.).” He said, “By Allãh! you have brought it from a pristine spring.”'“ (at-Tafsīr)

as-Suyūtī writes: Ibnu ’l-Mundhir has narrated from Shahr ibn Hawshab that he said, “al-Hajjãj said to me, 'O Shahr! There is a verse in the Book of Allãh that whenever I read it, something happens against it in my mind. Allãh 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 no 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 Allãh, 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 Allãh and His Spirit.” So, he believes in ‘Īsã when that belief would not benefit him at all. At the time of coming down of ‘Īsã, 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 Muhammad ibn ‘Alī.' He said, 'Surely you have taken it from its mine.” Then Shahr said, “By Allãh! No one had narrated it to me except Umm Salamah; but I liked to irritate him.” (ad-Durru ’l-manthūr)

The author says: as-Suyūtī has also narrated it in abbreviated form from ‘Abd ibn Hamīd and Ibnu ’l-Munthir, from Shahr ibn Hawshab, from Muhammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Tãlib (and that is Ibnu 'l-Hanafiyyah). Apparently, Shahr ibn Hawshab had narrated from Muhammad ibn ‘Alī but the later narrators differed in identification whether it was Ibnu 'l-Hanafiyyah or al-Bãqir (a.s.). However, as you see the tradition supports the explanation we gave earlier for this verse.

as-Suyūttī says: Ahmad, al-Bukhãrī, Muslim and al-Bayhaqī (in al-Asmã’ wa 's-sifãt) have narrated that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, “How will your condition be when the Son of Maryam will descend among you and your Imãm will be from among you?” (ibid.)

Ibn Marduwayh has narrated from Abū Hurayrah that he said: The Messenger of Allãh (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 Dajjãl 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 Allãh, 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 ‘Īsã son of Maryam.” (Abū Hurayrah repeated this phrase three times) (ibid.)

The author says: There are nearly mutawãtir traditions describing descension of ‘Īsã (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 Imãms of the Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.).

al-Hãrith ibn Mughīrah narrates from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about the words of Allãh: 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 (‘Īsã) shall be a witness over them that he said, “It means the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.). (at-Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyãshī)

The author says: Its apparent meaning goes against the apparent context of the verses which deal with the affairs of ‘Īsã (a.s.). Yet, it is possible to justify it on the principle of the flow of the Qur’ãn. Then the meaning will be as follows: When the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was sent and he brought a Book and a sharī‘ah which abrogated the sharī‘ah of `Isã (a.s.), then it was incumbent on all the People of the Book to believe in him, and the belief in Muhammad included the belief in ‘Īsã and other preceding prophets. Now, if a man of the Book comes to realize at the time of his death after the advent of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) that ‘Īsã (a.s.) was true messenger then that realization will come together with the realization of the veracity of Muhammad's messengership. In this way, a man of the Book would only be counted as believing in ‘Īsã (a.s.) if he believed in Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) in the first place and in ‘Īsã (a.s.) as a secondary matter. It is Muhammad (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, ‘Īsã (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 Sinãn narrates from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) concerning the words of Allãh: 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 (‘Īsã) shall be a witness over them, that he said, “The belief of the People of the Book will be for Muhammad (s.a.w.a.).” (ibid.)

Jãbir 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 Allãh (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’ãn. Apart from that, the tradition does not say clearly that what the Imãm (a.s.) had mentioned was as an exegesis of the verse; there is a possibility that it was a separate matter which the Imãm described when speaking on this verse. We may find such examples in the traditions.

al-Mufaddal ibn ‘Umar said, “I asked Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about the words of Allãh: And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death. The Imãm (a.s.) said, 'This verse was revealed especially about us. No one from the progeny of Fãtimah dies and departs from this world until he acknowledges the Imãm and his Imãmate; as the sons of Ya‘qūb acknowledged (the superiority of) Yūsuf when they said: “By Allãh! Allãh 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 Allãh: 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 Allãh's permission: This is that which is the greatest excellence (35:32); and we shall write there on this topic in detail, God willing.

Zurãrah and Humrãn have narrated from Abū Ja‘far and Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) that they said: “Surely We have revealed to you as We have revealed to Nūh and the prophets after him. Thus every revelation was gathered for him (Muhammad, 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 Allãh (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 Muhammad ibn Sãlim that Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) said, “Allãh said to Muhammad (s.a.w.a.): Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nūh and the prophets after him; and every prophet was ordered (to follow) the way and (the good) custom.” (al-Kãfī)

Abū Hamzah ath-Thumãlī narrates from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said, “And there were between Adam and Nūh prophets unknown and manifest and for this reason, they were not mentioned in the Qur’ãn, they were not named as the manifest prophets have been named and this is the meaning of the words of Allãh, the Mighty, the Great: And messengers We have mentioned unto you, and Allãh spoke to Mūsã; directly discoursing [4:164]. It means that I have not named the hidden prophets as I have named the manifest ones.” (at-Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyãshī)

The author says: This tradition has been narrated in al-Kãfī from ‘Alī ibn Ibrãhīm, from his father, from al-Hasan ibn Mahbūb, from Muhammad ibn Fudayl, from Abū Hamzah, 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’ãn, they were not named as were named the manifest prophets; and this is the word of Allãh, 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 Allãh 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 Hamzah ath-Thumãlī says, “I heard Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) saying: 'But Allãh 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 Allãh for a witness.” (at-Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyãshī)

The author says: al-Qummī has narrated this theme in his at-Tafsīr through his chain of narrators from Abū Basīr, from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.). It is based on the flow of the Qur’ãn and applies the verse on a proper example; because there are in the Qur’ãn verses which were revealed concerning the wilãyah of ‘Alī (a.s.). It doesn’t want to say that there was alteration in the Qur’ãn; nor can it be taken to be a particular recital of this verse by the Imãm (a.s.).

Likewise, it has been narrated in al-Kãfī and at-Tafsīr of al-‘Ayyãshī from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) and in at-Tafsīr of al-Qummī from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) that they recited: “Surely (as for) those who disbelieve and do injustice to the progeny of Muhammad (usurping) their right, Allãh is not going to forgive them; (4:168).” Also it has been narrated in Majma‘u 'l-bayãn from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said about the words of Allãh: “Surely, the Messenger (Muhammad) has come to you with truth, that is, with the wilãyah of him whose wilãyah Allãh has ordered. All these traditions are to be interpreted like the previous one.

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CHAPTER 4, VERSES 170-175

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمُ الرَّسُولُ بِالْحَقِّ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ فَآمِنُوا خَيْرًا لَّكُمْ ۚ وَإِن تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّـهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّـهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٧٠﴾ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّـهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ ۚ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّـهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِّنْهُ ۖ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّـهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۖ وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةٌ ۚ انتَهُوا خَيْرًا لَّكُمْ ۚ إِنَّمَا اللَّـهُ إِلَـٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۖ سُبْحَانَهُ أَن يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ ۘ لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّـهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٧١﴾ لَّن يَسْتَنكِفَ الْمَسِيحُ أَن يَكُونَ عَبْدًا لِّلَّـهِ وَلَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ۚ وَمَن يَسْتَنكِفْ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيَسْتَكْبِرْ فَسَيَحْشُرُهُمْ إِلَيْهِ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٧٢﴾ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدُهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ ۖ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْتَنكَفُوا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فَيُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا وَلَا يَجِدُونَ لَهُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّـهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿١٧٣﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَانٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٧٤﴾ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّـهِ وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِهِ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِي رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَيْهِ صِرَاطًا مُّسْتَقِيمًا ﴿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 Allãh's; and Allãh is Knowing, Wise (170). O People of the Book! do not exceed the limits in your religion and do not speak about Allãh except the truth; the Messiah, ‘Īsã son of Maryam is only a Messenger of Allãh and His Word which He conveyed to Maryam and a spirit from Him; believe therefore in Allãh and His messengers, and say not, Three. Desist, it is better for you; Allãh 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 Allãh is sufficient for a Protector (171). The Messiah does by no means disdain that he should be a servant of Allãh, 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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).

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## COMMENTARY

In previous section Allãh 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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and the Book brought by him.

It was also described that all His messengers and prophets, including ‘Īsã (a.s.), were sent on one pattern, with similar framework and comparable religion; and that was the pattern of revelation from Allãh. 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 ‘Īsã (a.s.) what they and others do believe about other prophets: that they were the servants of Allãh and messengers to His creation.

Allãh 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 Nūh and the prophets after him . . .

Then He calls them not to exceed the limit concerning ‘Īsã (a.s.) because ‘Īsã's status has been described in the above verses.

Then He calls them to follow His Book, that is the Honoured Qur’ãn, because it was described clearly in the last part of the previous section: But Allãh bears witness by what He has revealed to you that He has revealed it with His knowledge . . .

QUR’ÃN: 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 (خَيْرًلَكُمْ = 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 means: believe as it is inseparable virtue of belief that it is good for you.

QUR’ÃN: and if you disbelieve, then surely whatever is in the heavens and the earth is Allãh's; and Allãh is Knowing, Wise : If you disbelieve, that disbelief will not increase anything to you nor decrease anything from Allãh. Everything that is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allãh. It is impossible for anyone to take away anything from Allãh because it exclusively belongs to Him. All that is in the heavens and the earth is by nature a property of Allãh who has no partner or colleague. To say that a thing exists, is exactly the same as saying that it belongs to Allãh. How can a thing be removed from Allãh'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 wonderous vists appears before you. When you will look at the comprehensive Ownership of Allãh 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’ÃN: O People of the Book! do not exceed the limits in your religion and do not speak about Allãh 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 Allãh has revealed and explained in His Books, and one of the things described therein is that they should not speak about Allãh 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 Allãh other than truth , as Allãh has said: And the Jews say: “`Uzayr is the son of Allãh!” (9:30). Also, He says: They have taken their scholars and their monks for Lords besides Allãh (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 Allãh (3:64).

In view of this interpretation, the words: the Messiah, ‘Īsã son of Maryam is only a Messsenger of Allãh . . . 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, ‘Īsã son of Maryam is only a Messenger of Allãh . . . “, 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, “‘Īsã 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. Allãh says: Allãh 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 Allãh; however, other things come into being through the agency of normal cause, while ‘Īsã (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. Allãh says: Say: “The soul is from the command of my Lord . . . “ (17:85); as ‘Īsã (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.28

QUR’ÃN: believe therefore in Allãh and His messengers, and say not, Three. Desist, it is better for you; Allãh is only one God : It is based on the beginning clauses and springs from the words: the Messiah, ‘Īsã son of Maryam is only a Messenger of Allãh. In this situation, you are obligated to believe in the prescribed way, that is, belief in Allãh and His Lordship and His messengers (including ‘Īsã [a.s.]) and their prophethood. “and say not, Three.” Desist from the belief in trinity. This desistance or this belief in Allãh 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 ‘Imrãn”.

QUR’ÃN: 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; . . . : Subhãna (سُبْحَانَ = translated here as “far be it from His glory”). Grammatically, it is a cognate accusative for emphasis, with its verb, usabbihu (اُسَبِّحُ = 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 Allãh. “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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh'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 Allãh 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 comprehesive guidance to their good in this world and the hereafter. That is why the speech ends with the words: and Allãh 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’ÃN: The Messiah does by no means disdain that he should be a servant of Allãh, 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 Allãh and he by no means disdains worshipping Allãh; even the Christians do not deny it as the Gospels found with them explicitly say that he was worshipping Allãh; 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 ‘Īsã (a.s.) in the third chapter, “The Family of ‘Imrãn”.

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 Allãh. The sentence is a digression from the main topic.

The verse refers to ‘Īsã (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 Allãh's worship. How can ‘Īsã disdain the worship of Allãh when he is the Messiah; anointed and blessed; or the angels when they are near to Allãh Had there been any possibility of their disdaining Allãh's worship, Allãh would not have blessed ‘Īsã nor brought the angels nearer. By the way, Allãh has depicted Messiah too as the one near to Allãh, as He says: . . . worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter and of those who are made near (to Allãh), (3:45).

QUR’ÃN: 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 requitted 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’ÃN: And they shall not find for themselves besides Allãh 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’ÃN: O people! Surely there has come to you manifest proof from your Lord and We have sent to you clear light : ar-Rãghib has said: “al-Burhãn (اَلْبُرْهَان = exposition of argument). It is on the paradigm of fu‘lãn [فُعْلَان] like ar-rujhãn [اَلرُّجْحَان]. Some people say that it is a verbal noun of baraha, yabrahu (بَرَهَ، 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’ãn 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’ãn from Allãh; and then realize that the verse has branched from the previous verses. Also, the words of Allãh in the coming verse: and hold fast by Him, support this view, as we have explained in the chapter of “The Family of ‘Imrãn” vr.101 (And whoever holds fast to Allãh, he indeed is guided to the straight path) that holding fast to Allãh means accepting His Book and following His Messenger.

QUR’ÃN: Then as for those who believe in Allãh 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 Allãh (mentioned in this verse) as Allãh says: And whoever holds fast to Allãh, he indeed is guided to the straight path (3:101).

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CHAPTER 4, VERSE 176

يَسْتَفْتُونَكَ قُلِ اللَّـهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِي الْكَلَالَةِ ۚ إِنِ امْرُؤٌ هَلَكَ لَيْسَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَهُ أُخْتٌ فَلَهَا نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ ۚ وَهُوَ يَرِثُهَا إِن لَّمْ يَكُن لَّهَا وَلَدٌ ۚ فَإِن كَانَتَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُمَا الثُّلُثَانِ مِمَّا تَرَكَ ۚ وَإِن كَانُوا إِخْوَةً رِّجَالًا وَنِسَاءً فَلِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ ۗ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّـهُ لَكُمْ أَن تَضِلُّوا ۗ وَاللَّـهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٦﴾

They ask you for a decision of the law, say: “Allãh gives you a 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; Allãh makes clear to you, lest you err; and Allãh 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’ÃN: They ask you for a decisionof the law. Say: “Allãh 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-istiftã’ (اَلاِسْتِفْتاَءُ = seeking decision), al-iftã’ (اَلاِفْتَاءُ = giving decision) and al-kalãlah (اَلْكَلَاله = 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. at-Tabrisī has said in Majma‘u 'l-bayãn : “It means he has neither child nor parent; according to concensus, 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’ÃN: 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’ÃN: Allãh makes clear to you, lest you err; . . . : The literal translationof 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

Jãbir ibn ‘Abdillãh al-Ansãrī 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 Allãh! 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 Jãbir! I do not see you dying from this illness of yours and surely Allãh has sent down regarding the share of your sisters and has prescribed for them two-third.” They said, “Jãbir used to say, 'This verse was revealed for me.” (Majma‘u 'l-bayãn)

The author says: A tradition is narrated in ad-Durru ’l-manthūr which is near to this in meaning.

Ibn Abī Shaybah, al-Bukhãrī, Muslim, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasã’ī, Ibn Darīs, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu ’l-Mundhir and al-Bayhaqī (in his ad-Dalãil) have narrated from al-Barã’ that he said, “The last complete sūrah to be revealed is 'Barã’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: 'Allãh 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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and the companions used to call it 'the verse of the summer'. at-Tabrisī says in Majma‘u 'l-bayãn : “It was because Allãh had revealed two verses about al-kalãlah; 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-Farãid from al-Barã’ that he said, “The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was asked (the meaning of) al-kalãlah. 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 ofthe sister, he will take the whole inheritance by authority of the words of Allãh: 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-`Ayyãshī has narrated in his Tafsīr the last part of this tradition in several ahãdīth from Abū Ja‘far and Abū ‘Abdillãh (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 qãdīs 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 Allãh 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 Allãh's commandment Because Allãh has prescribed for her the half and He has prescribed for the brother the whole, and the whole is bigger than the half. He [Allãh] 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 Allãh has given the whole and you give her whom Allãh has prescribed the half, the whole estate!'“ (at-Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyãshī)

‘Abdu 'r-Razzãq, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, al-Hãkim and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbãs 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 ‘Abbãs said, “Are you more knoledgeable or Allãh Allãh 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.

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Chapter Five

al-Mã’idah

(The Table)

120 verses - Medina

vrs.1-3

CHAPTER 5, VERSES 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّـهِ الرَّحْمَـٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ ۚ أُحِلَّتْ لَكُم بَهِيمَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرَ مُحِلِّي الصَّيْدِ وَأَنتُمْ حُرُمٌ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّـهَ يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿١﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُحِلُّوا شَعَائِرَ اللَّـهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهَدْيَ وَلَا الْقَلَائِدَ وَلَا آمِّينَ الْبَيْتَ الْحَرَامَ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا ۚ وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا ۚ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَآنُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُوا ۘ وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّـهَ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّـهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢﴾ حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللَّـهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ وَأَن تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَامِ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ فِسْقٌ ۗ الْيَوْمَ يَئِسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ ۚ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا ۚ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرَ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِّإِثْمٍ ۙ فَإِنَّ اللَّـهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

In the Name of Allãh, 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 Allãh orders what He desires (1). O you who believe! do not violate the signs appointed by Allãh 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 Allãh; surely Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful (3).

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## 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh (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 Allãh has taken from His servants, and to remain firm on it.

## COMMENTARY

QUR’ÃN: O you who believe! fulfil the covenants : al-‘Uqūd (اَلْعُقودْ) is plural of al-‘aqd (اَلْعَقْدْ), 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 Allãh 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 (اَلْ) which signifies comprehensiveness; therefore, this word in this verse encompasses all which could be called ‘aqd (عَقْد = 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 expalantions inappropriate. Therefore, the word should be taken in its comprehensive and general meaning.

### A DISCOURSE ON THE MEANING OF AL-‘AQD

The Qur’ãn 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’ãn 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 effects 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 Allãh 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. Allãh says: (This is a) renouncement by Allãh 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 Allãh and that Allãh will bring disgrace to the unbelievers. An announcement from Allãh and His Messenger to the people on the day of the great pilgrimage that Allãh 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 Allãh; and announce painful punishment to those who disbelieve. Except those of the idolaters with whom you made an agreement, then they have not fauled you in anthing and and have not backed up any one against you, so fulfil their agreement to the end of their term; surely Allãh loves those who are careful (of their duty). So when the sacred months have passed away, then slay the idolaters wherever you find them (9:1-5). The verses, as the context shows, were revealed after the conquest of Mecca when Allãh had humiliated the idolaters, 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. Allãh says: How can there be an agreement for the idolaters with Allãh 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 Allãh 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 zakãt 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 Allãh . . . (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 Allãh . . . (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 religionis to erase the arrogance of the powerful.

By my life! this is one of the lofty teachings brought by Islam for the gudiance 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’ãn, 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 fulfilthe agreements so long as it is beneficial to them or supports their national interests and break them unhesitating-ly 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’ÃN: The cattle quadrupeds are made lawful to you except that which is recited to you : al-Ihlãl (اَلْاِحْلَالُ = to make lawful); albahīmah (اَلْبَهِيْمَةُ = quadruped from terrestrial and marine animals), as has been explained in Majma‘u 'l-bayãn. 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 pairs29 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’ÃN: 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 ihrãm; 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. as-Sayd (اَلصَّيْدُ = to hunt) is a verbal noun used here in the meaning of passive participle, that is, hunted game; al-hurum (اَلْحُرُم) is plural of al-harãm (اَلْحَرَام) giving here the meaning of active participle, that is, he who puts himself under restriction of pilgrimage.

QUR’ÃN: O you who believe! do not violate the signs appointed by Allãh 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 Allãh. It was explained earlier that al-ihlãl 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 genetive; the signs and symbols appointed by Allãh 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‘ãir (اَلشَّعَآئِر) is plural of ash-sha‘īrah (اَلشَّعِيْرَة = 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 Allãh; they are al-Muharram, Rajab, Dhi 'l-qi‘dah and Dhi 'l-hijjah. al-Hady (اَلْهَدْى) refers to goat, sheep, cow and camels that are taken to the pilgrimage. al-Qalãid (اَلْقَلآئِد) is plural of alqalãdah (اَلْقَلاَدَة); 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-Ãmmīn (اَلاَمِّيْن) is plural of al-ãmm (اَلاَمّ) which is the active participle of amm (اَمَّ = 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-fadl (اَلْفَضْل = grace) refers to property or material profit. The same is the connotation of the Divine words: So they returned with favour from Allãh 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‘ãir and al-qalãid; what we have mentioned is more appropriate in the context, and no purpose will be served by mentioning other interpretations.

QUR’ÃN: 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-Hall and al-ihlãl (اَلْاِحْلَالُ ، اَلْحَلُّ) give the same meaning, that is, becoming free from the restrictions of ihrãm.

QUR’ÃN: 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 (اَلْجَرِيْمَة) because the culprit bears its responsibility; this word is also used for monetary fine because it is borne by the culprit. ar-Rãghib says that its real meaning is 'to cut'. ash-Shan’ãn (اَلشَّنْأن = hatred, enmity); an saddūkum (اَنْصَدُّوْ همْ = because they prevented you); it is an explicative apposition or appositional 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’ÃN: And help one another in righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression; and fear Allãh; . . . : The meaning is clear. This is the foundation of Islamic culture and ethics. Allãh 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 Allãh and the Last Day . . . (2:177). at-Taqwã (اَلتَّقْوي = to be on one's guard regarding orders and prohibitions of Allãh). 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 Allãh; 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) Allãh, that you may be successful, (3:200), in the fourth volume of this book30.

Then Allãh has emphasized the prohibition of joining together in sin and aggression by saying: and fear Allãh; surely Allãh is severe in punishment. Actually, it is an emphasis over emphasis.

QUR’ÃN: 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 Allãh 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. Allãh 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) Allãh 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) Allãh has been invoked; but whoever is forced (to it), not revolting, nor exceeding the limit, no sin shall be upon him; surely Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh, 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 Allãh 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’ÃN: 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 (اَلْمُنْخَنِقَة) 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 (اَلْمَوْقُوْذَةُ) is an animal which is beaten until it dies. al-Mutaraddiya (اَلْمُتَرَدِّيَّةُ) is an animal which falls from a high place like a mountaintop or well, and so on. an-Natīhah (اَلنَّطِيْحَةُ) 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 (اَلْمَيْتَةُ = 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 Allãh 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, Allãh mentioned these rare types with their names in order that there should be no confusion and the prohibitionremains clear.

QUR’ÃN: and what is sacrificied on stones set up (for idols): ar-Rãghib says in Mufradãtu 'l-Qur’ãn : “an-Nasb (اَلنَّصْبُ) of a thing means setting it down in a projecting position like setting a spear or stone; an-nasīb (اَلنَّصٍيْبُ) a stone which is set on something in a projecting manner. Its plural is an-nasãib (اَلنَّصَآئبُ) and an-nusub (اَلنُّصُبُ).” [This latter is used in this verse.] The Arabs had various stones which they worshipped and on which they slaughtered sacrifices. Allãh 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-ansãb (اَلْأنْصَابُ). Allãh says: . . . (dedication of) stones (i.e., idols) and (divination by) arrows . . . (5:90). an-Nusb and an-nasb (اَلنُّصْبُ، اَلنَّصْبُ) = 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 idolatory.

QUR‘ÃN: and that you divide by arrows; . . . : al-Azlãm (اَلْأزْلَامُ = 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 book31.

ar-Rãghib says: “al-Qism (اَلْقِسْمُ = 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. Allãh 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 (اٍسْتَقْسَمْتُهُ = I asked him to divide); also, sometimes it is used in the meaning of division itself, as Allãh 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 forcastingwith 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 quardrupeds 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 Allãh 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-istiqsãm bi 'l-azlãm (اَلْاِسْتِقْسَامُ بِالْاَزْلَامِ) which can be used in two meanings: i) Dividing meat by gambling, and ii) Divination of goodor 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 (اَلْعُمْرَةُ) 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 realtion to a house, both meanings can be applied; but when it comes to the Divine words: And complete the hajj (pilgrimage) and ‘umrah for Allãh (2:196), then only the second meaning can be applied. There are many such example.

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’ÃN: 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 Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful, you will see that it is a complete sentence and does not depend for completion of its meaning and explanationof 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) Allãh has been invoked; but whoever is forced (to it), not revolting, nor exceeding the limit, no sin shall be upon him; surely Allãh 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 sribes 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 Allãh, “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’ãn after him.

A tradition in ad-Durru ’l-manthūr somewhat supports this view. It is narrated from ‘Abd ibn Hamīd 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 ‘Arafãt; 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 Allãh 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 cncerning their religion, but Allãh deprived the disbelievers of their nefarious goal and made Muslims secure and safe; that religion was imperfect and Allãh 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 Allãh 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, Allãh had nullified the intriques 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 jãhiliyyah according to the custom of the idolaters; their women still performed hajj completely naked. This had continued until the Messenger of Allãh (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; Allãh had given them peace and order (while before that they were scared and afraid), they worshipped Allãh 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 jãhiliyyah 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 ‘Arafãt 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 hajj in the presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) himself there, as he practically taught them the manãsik of hajj and gave verbal explanations.

COMMENT: Merely teaching the manãsik of hajj cannot be called perfection of religion by any stretch of imagination. First of all, he had ordered them to do hajju 't-tamattu‘ and not many years had passed that it was discontinued32. Secondly, many important pillars of religion had been established long before that, like prayer, fast, hajj, zakãt, jihãd, etc. How can teaching an obligatory ritual of the religion be called perfection of that obligatory thing? And how can teaching 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 revelance 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 halãl or harãm. And with perfection of religion the disbelievers were overwhelmigly 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 ‘Arafãt 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 summer33 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’ãn to be revealed is the verse of interest; the Messenger of Allãh 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-Bukhãrī has narrated in his Sahīh from Ibn ‘Abbãs 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 ‘Arafãt 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.

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 ‘Arafãt. Then, why should it be restricted with the adverb “this day” in the verse: This day have I perfected fro 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 condusive 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 Allãh 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 Allãh has given strength and power to the Muslims and made them victorious over the infidels.

Why did Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 ‘Arafãt 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, Allãh informs them in this verse that the disbelievers themselves are despaired of their religion; and now that Allãh 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 Allãh 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 ‘Arafãt 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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, Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh on the Muslims by detailing the forbidden food on the day of ‘Arafãt in the year 10 AH, then what will be the revelance of this clause? What special thing happened on that day that Allãh 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 ‘Arafãt 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 nessecitated 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 Allãh would protect them from the danger which was facing them and which had caused them such a fear. Allãh 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 Allãh should bring about His command. Surely Allãh 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 accptance 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 Allãh; 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 Allãh with their mouths, but Allãh 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 Allãh, being sincere to Him in relgion 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 shouldbe 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 revelation34.

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 knewthat 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 furtile; 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 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. I could die only with the death of its protectors and those who were apointed to manage its affairs.

All this shows that the total despair of unbelievers could take place only if Allãh 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 Allãh should bring about His command. Surely Allãh has power over all things (2:109). Very probably, the words: until Allãh 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 begining 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 Imãms; 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 Allãh in the matter concerning which they until thenwere 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 Allãh is obligatory in any case. It is not that it is wãjib 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh or not. That is why the order to fear Allãh 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 Allãh, because in reality it meant the pursuit of the Divine pleasure. When Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh. 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 wãjib 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh takes away the religion from their hands and remove this gifted favour from them.

Allãh has made it clear that He does not take away any favour axcept when the recepient of that favour shows ingratitude; and He has threatened the ungrateful person very severely: This is because Allãh does never change a bounty which He has conferred upon a people until they change their own condition; and because Allãh is Hearing, Knowing (8:53); . . . and whoever changes the favour of Allãh after it has come to him, then surely Allãh is severe in requiting (evil) (2:211). And Allãh has set a general parable for its bounties and how it changes when people become ungrateful. He says: And Allãh 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 Allãh's favour, therefore Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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-wilãyah (اَلْوِلأيَة = guardianship, mastership) in the Qur’ãn are fully connected with the threat and warning contained in this verse. Allãh has not cautioned His servants of Himself except when it concerns the wilãyah; and has said in this respect, time and again: . . . and Allãh 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’ÃN: This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion: al-Ikmãl (اَلأِآْمَالُ = to perfect) and al-itmãm (اَلأِتْمَامُ = to complete) are near to each other in meaning.

ar-Rãghib 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”. Allãh 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. Allãh says: . . . but he who cannot find (any offering) should fast for three days during the hajj 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-ikmãl and at-takmīl (اَلأِآْمَالُ، اَلْتَكْمِيْلُ) as there is between al-itmãm and at-tatmīm (اَلتَّتْمِيْمُ، اَلأِتْمَامُ). It is the difference between the paradigms of al-if‘ãl and at-taf‘īl (اَلتَّفْعِيْلُ، اَلأِفْعَالُ). al-If`ãl basically shows instantaneousness of a work while attaf‘ 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-ifrãt (اَلأٍفْرَاطُ = excess) and at-tafrīt (اَلتَّفْرِيْطُ = 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 inter-connected 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 Allãh says: . . . and if you count Allãh'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, Allãh has described some of these favours naming them as evil, vile, game and play and using similar adjectives which are not paiseworthy; 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 cold use them in the way of his real felicity; in other words, when they help the man to be nearer to Allãh through worship and submission to His Mastership. Allãh 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 Allãh 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 wilãyah. This wilãyah results in Divine management of the servants' affairs. It follows that the favour in reality is the Divine wilãyah (mastership, guardianship); and a thing will become bounty when it contains something of that wilãyah. Allãh says: Allãh is the guardian (master) of those who believe; He brings them out of the darkness into the light . . . (2:257); That is because Allãh 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 Qur’ãn.

Islam is a religionbecause it is a collection of what was sent down from Allãh 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 wilãyah of Allãh, the wilãyah of His Messenger and of those vested with authority (ulu 'l-amr) after him.

The wilãyah of Allãh (i.e., His management of the servants' affairs through the religion) cannot be complete except through the wilãyah of His Messenger; nor will the wilãyah of His Messenger be complete without the wilãyah of those vested with authority after him; and that wilãyah means their management of the religious affairs of the ummah with Divine permission. Allãh says: O you who believe! obey Allãh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you (4:59), we have fully explained this verse before. Again, Allãh says: Only Allãh is your guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the zakãt 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 wilãyah obligatory for you; and I have completed My bounty on you, and it is the wilãyah which means management of the religious affairs with Divine guidance. Until now, you were under the wilãyah of Allãh and His Messenger only; but it could work only upto the time the revelations would be coming down from Allãh; 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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.), to act as the overall authority in the affairs of the religion and the ummah.

The wilãyah 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 became perfect in its legislation and the bounty of wilãyah is completed, I have chosen for you the Islam as religion, which is the religion of monotheism, in which no one is worshipped except Allãh and no one is obeyed (and obedience is a sort of worship) except Allãh 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 Allãh has chosen for them that they should devotedly adhere to Islam, the religion of monotheism. It is compulsory for them that they should worship Allãh without associating anything with Him; they have only to obey Allãh or him whose obedience has been ordered by Allãh. Now, ponder on the Divine words: Allãh 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 onece 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 hijãb (veil) and other such commandments.

QUR’ÃN: but however is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful : al-Makhmasah (اَلْمَخْمَصَة = hunger); at-tajãnuf (اَلتَّجَانُف = to incline); it denotes inclination of the feet to the outer side; its oposite is at-tahãnuf لتَّحَانُف)) 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 comess 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 quardrupeds and other animals, even rats and lizards; they ate all types of dead catle which they killed by slaughteringor 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 rediculed the Muslims saying: Why is it that you eat what you kill yourselves and do not eat what has been killed by Allãh 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 quardrupeds 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 craw 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 growthof 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 Allãh or that which has been obtained through gambling and dividingwith 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 Allãh 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 Allãh 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 Allãh is far above such things. The Divine Mercy means that Allãh 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 Allãh in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allãh'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 avoided35.

## TRADITIONS I

‘Ikrimah narrates from Ibn ‘Abbãs that he said, “No verse was revealed (with the words): O you who believe! but ‘Alī is its chief and its head. Allãh has admonished the companions of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) in more than one place, but He has never mentioned ‘Alī except with good (words).” (at-Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyãshī)

The author says: The same hadīth upto the words “its head” has been narrated in Tafsīru ’l-burhãn from Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad from ‘Ikrimah from Ibn ‘Abbãs; al-‘Ayyãshī also has narrated it from ‘Ikrimah; and we have quoted this hadīth earlier from ad-Durru ’l-manthūr. Some traditions quote ar-Ridã (a.s.) as saying: “There is not in the Qur’ãn: O you who believe! except about us.” This hadīth is based on the flow of Qur’ãn or describes the esoteric meaning of the revelation.

‘Abdullãh ibn Sinãn says, “I asked Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about the words of Allãh: O you who believe! flfil 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-Tūsī narrates through his chain from Muhammad ibn Muslim that he said, “I asked of one the two (i.e., the 5th or the 6th Imãm, a.s.) about the words of Allãh, the Mighty, the Great: The Cattle quadrupeds are made lawful for you. The Imãm said, 'The foetus in th wom of its mother when hair or wool grows on its body, then its mother's slaughter is also its slaughter and this is what Allãh has meant (here).” (at-Tahdhīb)

The author says: This hadīth is narrated in al-Kãfī and al-Faqīh from Muhammad ibn Muslim from one of the two (a.s.); al-‘Ayyãshī in his Tafsīr has narrated this theme from Muhammad ibn Muslim from one of the two, and from Zurãrah from as-Sãdiq (a.s.); and al-Qummī has also narrated it in his Tafsīr; and at-Tabrisī has narrated it in Majma‘u 'l-bayãn from Abū Ja‘far and Abū ‘Abdillãh (peace be on them).

al-Qummī writes in his Tafsīr under the words of Allãh: O you who believe! do not violate the signs appointed by Allãh . . . : The signs: Ihrãm, tawãf, prayer in the place of Ibrãhīm, running between Safã and Marwã and other rituals are all among the signs appointed by Allãh. 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 choes) 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‘ãir (اَلشَّعَائِر = sign, indications) because it indicates to the people its purpose. The words: nor the sacred month, indicate here the month of Dhi 'l-hijjah which is one of the sacred months; nor the offerings, points to the animal which is driven by the pilgrim after he wears ihrãm; 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)

at-Tabrisī says, “Abū Ja‘far al-Bãqir (a.s.) said, 'This verse was revealed concerning a man from Banū Rabī‘ah who was called al-Hutam.” at-Tabrisī goes on to say, as-Suddī has said, 'al-Hutam 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 wil accept Islam; and there are people who I should consult.” Then he went out. The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, “Surely he entered with a kãfir face and went out with a treacherous back.” Then, al-Hutam 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 Hutam rolled up with animal drivers, He is not a herdsman of camles 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 Allãh (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-bayãn)

at-Tabrisī 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 talbīyyah of `umrah. The Muslims said, 'O Messenger of Allãh! These too are polytheists like these (Meccans). Let us aid them.' Then Allãh revealed this verse.”

The author says: at-Tabarī 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 Hãtim from Zayd ibn Aslam and there it is said that it was on the day of al-Hudaybiyyah; 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 ‘Abbãs, Mujãhid, Qatãdah and ad-Dahhãk 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 Imãms 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 transgretion 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.

Ahmad and ‘Abd ibn Hamīd have narrated about the verse: and help one another in righteousness and piety; and al-Bukhãrī has narrated in his Tãrīkh - all from Wãbisah that he said: “I came to the Messenger of Allãh (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 Wãbisah! Should I tell you what you have come to ask about or you would ask?' I said, 'O Messenger of Allãh! You tellme.' 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 Wãbisah! 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)

Ahmad, ‘Abd bin Hamīd, Ibn Hibbãn, at-Tabarãnī, al-Hãkim (and he has said that it is correct) and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Abū Amãmah (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 īmãn?' The Prophet said, 'Whoever is grieved for his evil (deed) and is pleased with his good (deed) is a believer.’” (ibid.)

Ibn Abī Shaybah, Ahmad, al-Bukhãrī (in al-Adab), Muslim, at-Tirmidhī, al-Hãkim and al-Bayhaqī (in his Shu‘abu 'l-īmãn) have narrated from an-Nawwãs ibn Sam‘ãn that he said, 'The Messenger of Allãh (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 Allãh: 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.

at-Tabrisī 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 Allãh: 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.).

as-Sadūq narrates through his chain from Abãn ibn Taghlib from Abū Ja‘far Muhammad ibn ‘Alī al-Bãqir (blessings of Allãh be on them) that he said: “Dead body, blood and flesh of swine is known: that on which any other name than that of Allãh 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 Allãh, 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 parts36, 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-fadhdh, at-taw’am, al-musbil, an-nãfis, al-hils, ar-raqīb and al-mu‘allã, al-fadhdh had one share, at-taw’am two, al-musbil three, an-nãfis four, al-hils five, ar-raqīb six and al-mu‘allã had seven shares. Those without share were as-safīh, al-munīh and al-waghad; and the animals price was paid by those who did not get any share; and it was gambling, therefore, Allãh prohibited it.” (Man lã yahduruhu 'l-faqīh)

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 Qasūt narrates from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) concerning these words, that he said, “The strangled animal is that 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-‘Ayyãshī)

al-Hasan ibn ‘Alī al-Washshã’ narrates from Abu 'l-Hasan ar-Ridã (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.)

Muhammad ibn ‘Abdillãh narrates from one of his companions that he said, “I said to Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.), 'May I be made your ransom! Why did Allãh forbid the dead animal, blood and flesh of swine?' He said, Verily when Allãh, the Blessed, the High, prohibited these to His servants and made the other things lawful to them, it was not because Allãh 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 Imãm (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 Allãh 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, Allãh has made it unlawful because of its effect and disorder.' Then he said, 'Verily the one addicted to liquor is like the idolwoshipper; 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 Ahmad [al-Khwãrazmī] has written in his book Fadãil ‘Alī; he says, “Informed me the chief of the memorisers Shahrdãr ibn Shīrwayh ibn Shahrdãr ad-Daylamī among what he wrote to me from Hamadãn, informed us Abu 'l-Fath ‘Abdūs ibn ‘Abdillãh ibn ‘Abdūs al-Hamadãnī in writing, narrated to us ‘Abdullãh ibn Ishãq al-Baghawī, narrated to us al-Husayn ibn ‘Alīl al-Ghanawī, narrated to us Muhammad ibn ‘Abdu 'r-Rahmãn az-Zarrã‘, narrated to us Qays ibn Hafs, narrated to us ‘Alī ibn al-Husayn, 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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, “Allãhu Akbar! for perfecting the religion and completing the bounty and for pleasure of the Lord with my Messengership and the wilãyah of ‘Alī.” Then he said, “O Allãh! 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).” '

“Hassãn ibn Thãbit said, 'Do you allow me, O Messenger of Allãh! to compose some lines of poetry?' He said, 'Say it, Allãh will send it down (to you).' So, Hassãn ibn Thãbit 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 Mawlã, Yes, and your Waliyy, So they all said and did not show there any blindness:

Your God is our Mawlã 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 Imãm and Leader after me.' “

(Ghãyatu 'l-marãm)

al-Hãfiz Abū Nu‘aym has narrated a similar hadīth through his chains from Qays Ibn Rabī‘ from Abū Hãrūn 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 Allãh! be friend of his lover and be the enemy of him who has enmity towards ‘Alī.”

(Nuzūlu ’l-Qur’ãn fī Amīri ’l-Mu’minīn ‘Alī ibn Abī Tãlib)

Also, he narrates through his chains from ‘Alī ibn ‘Ãmir from Abu 'l-Hajãf from al-A‘mash from ‘Addah that he said: “This verse came down to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) about ‘Alī ibn Abī Tãlib: O Messenger! deliver what has been revealed to you from Your Lord . . . ; and (also) Allãh 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.)

Ibrãhīm ibn Muhammad al-Hamawaynī said, informed me ash-Shaykh Tãju 'd-Dīn Abū Tãlib ‘Alī ibn al-Husayn ibn ‘Uthmãn ibn ‘Abdillãh al-Khãzin; he said, informed us al-Imãm Burhãnu 'd-Dīn Nãsir ibn Abi 'l-Makãrim al-Matrazī through Ijãzah; he said, informed us al-Imãm Akhtab Khwãrazm Abu ’l-Muayyad Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad al-Makkī al-Khwãrazmī; he said, informed me the Chief of the memorizers in what he wrote to me from Hamadãn; informed us ar-Raīs Abu ’l-Fath in writing; narrated to us ‘Abdullãh ibn Ishãq al-Baghawī; informed us al-Hasan ibn ‘Aqīl al-Ghanawī; informed us Muhammad ibn ‘Abdillãh az-Zarrã‘; informed us Qays ibn Hafs, he said, narrated to me ‘Alī ibn al-Husayn al-‘Abdī from Abū Hãrūn al-‘Abdī from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (and he narrated like the first tradition). (ibid.)

al-Hamawaynī has also narrated from the Chief of the memorizers and Abū Mansūr Shahrdãr ibn Shīrwayh ibn Shahdãr ad-Daylamī; he said informed us al-Hasan ibn Ahmad ibn al-Hasan al-Haddãd al-Muqri’ al-Hãfiz from Ahmad ibn ‘Abdillãh ibn Ahmad; he said, informed us Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn ‘Alī; he said, informed us Muhammad ibn ‘Uthmãn ibn Abī Shaybah; he said, informed us Yahyã al-Hammãnī; he said, informed us Qays ibn ar-Rabī‘ from Abū Hãrūn al-‘Abdī from Abū Sa‘īd al-Kudrī (and narrated like the first tradition) (ibid.)

al-Hamawaynī has said after this tradition: “This tradition has many paths to Abū Sa‘d ibn Mãlik al-Khudrī al-Ansãrī.”

as-Sayyid ar-Radī (r.a.) has narrated from Muhammad ibn Ishãq from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) from his father, from his grandfather that he said, “When the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) returned from the Last Pilgrimage, he came down at a place called Dawjãn; 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 Allãh 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, 'Allãh and His Messenger.' So he held the hand of ‘Alī ibn Abī Tãlib and said, 'Whomsoever I am the Master, ‘Alī is his Master. O Allãh! 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 Hãrūn with Mūsã except that there is no prophet after me.' It was the last obligation which Allãh, the High, imposed on the ummah of Muhammad. Then Allãh, 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 Allãh (s.a.w.a.) all the obligations that Allãh had imposed on them: the prayer, fast, zakãt and hajj, and confirmed his truthfulness in all these things.”

Ibn Ishãq said, “I said to Abū Ja‘far (a.s.), 'When was that' He said, 'On 19th37 Dhi 'l-hijjah 10 AH38 during his return journey from the last pilgrimage and there were between that and [the death of] the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) 100 days39, and had heard the Messenger of Allãh at Ghadīr Khumm twelve40.” (al-Manãqibu 'l-fãkhirah)

Ibnu 'l-Maghãzilī narrates through his chains from Abū Hurayrah that he said, “Whoever will fast on the 18th day of Dhi 'l-hijjah, Allãh 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 Tãlib and said, 'Whomsoever I am the Master ‘Alī is his Master, O Allãh! befriend him who befriends him, and be enemy of him who is his enemy, and help him who helps him.' Then ‘Umar ibn al-Khattãb said to him, 'Congratulations! Congratulations! to you, O son of Abū Tćlib! you became my mawlã and mawlã of every believing man and woman.' Then Allãh, the High, sent down the verse: This day have I perfected for you your religion and have completed . . . “ (al-Manãqib)

There are traditions like the first one narrated from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī in al-Manãqib of Ibn Marduwayh and in Saraqãtu 'sh-shi‘r of al-Marzubãnī.

The author says: as-Suyūtī 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-Khattãb, ‘Alī ibn Abī Tãlib, Mu‘ãwiyah 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-Suyūtī) has narrated it from al-Hamīdī, ‘Abd ibn Hamīd, Ahmad, al-Bukhãrī, Muslim, ar-Tirmidhī, an-Nasã’ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu ’l-Mundhir, Ibn Hibbãn and al-Bayhaqī (in his as-Sunan) from Tãriq ibn Shahãb from ‘Umar; and has narrated from Ibn Rãhawayh (in his al-Musnad) and ‘Abd ibn Hamīd from Abu ’l-‘Ãliyah from ‘Umar; and also, from Ibn Jarīr, from Qubaysah ibn Abī Dhuayb from ‘Umar; and also from al-Bazzãz from Ibn ‘Abbãs 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 hyphothesis 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 Allãh - 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-wilãyah - 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 mutawãtir tradition narrated by a huge number of the companions and a great many scholars of both sects have accepted that it is mutawãtir.

And it is agreed upon that this had happened when the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was returning from Mecca to Medina; and this wilãyah (if it is not to be taken as a jest or joke) is an obligatory order like loving the friends of Allãh and keeping aloof from His enemies, which have been explicitly ordered in many verses of the Qur’ãn. Keeping allthis in view, it is not possible to say that this obligatory order of wilãyah 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-wilãyah. 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-Suyūtī 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 Allãh 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 mutawãtir 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-wilãyah 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 announcment 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 Allãh had revealed a major part of this chapter including: This day have I perfected for you your religion . . . , together with the order of al-wilãyah; and all this happened on the day of ‘Arafah; but the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) postponed the announcement of al-wilãyah 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-wilãyah 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-wilãyah and those which say that it was revealed on the day of ‘Arafah, as has been narrated from ‘Umar, ‘Alī, Mu‘ãwiyah 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 Allãh 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-‘Ayyãshī in his Tafsīr from Ja‘far ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Khuzã‘ī from his father that he said, “I heard Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) saying, 'When the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) reached ‘Arafah on Friday, Jibrīl came to him and said, “Verily Allãh sends you salutations and tells you: 'Say to your ummah: “This day I have prefected your religion with wilãyah of ‘Alī ibn Abī Tãlib 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, zakãt, 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’ãn 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 Allãh! 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 Rãhwayh and ‘Abd ibn Hamīd from Abu ’l-‘Ãliyah 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 Allãh 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 Ahmad from ‘Alqamah ibn ‘Abdillãh al-Muznī who said, “Narrated to me a man who said, 'I was in the gathering room of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattãb. ‘Umar said to one of those present, “How did you hear the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) describing Islam?” He said, “I heard the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) saying, 'Verily Islam started [and grew as a camel grows from] a newborn calf, then it grows two teeth41, 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 interprete 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 ther 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 Allãh and which contained tenets, ideologies, 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 Allãh, 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 Allãh 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 then 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’ãnic 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”. “Repentence “ 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 Allãh 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 Allãh when He addresses His Prophet about them: They are the enemy, therefore beware of them (63:4).

How could Allãh 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 Allãh, 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 Allãh is not pleased with the transgressing people (9:96). (In this verse, the pleasure of Allãh is exclusively related to their hypocricy.)

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”: Allãh 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: Allãh 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: Allãh 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 Allãh. Therefore, establishment of their chosen religion meant perfecting that chosen religion which was in the knowledge, and under the decree, of Allãh, by moulding it in the mould of legislation and gathering all its parts together for them, in order that they should worship Allãh 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 Allãh 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 hajj was cleansed from the rites and hajj of the idolworshippers. In other words, perfection of religion did happen when Allãh 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 Safwãn ibn Yahyã from al-‘Ulã’ from Muhammad ibn Muslim from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said, 'The last obligatory order which Allãh revealed was al-wilãyah; therefore no obligatory order was revealed; then was revealed: This day have I perfected for you your religion . . . at Kurã‘ al-Ghamīm; and the Messenger of Allãh (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 at-Tabrisī in Majma‘u 'l-bayãn from al-Bãqir and as-Sãdiq (a.s.); and al-‘Ayyãshī has narrated it in his Tafsīr from Zurãrah from al-Bãqir (a.s.).

ash-Shaykh has narated through his chain from Muhammad ibn Ja‘far ibn Muhammad from his father Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) from the Commander of the Believers ‘Alī (a.s.) that he said, “I heard the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) saying, 'The foundation of Islam is on five characteristics, on the two shahãdahs and two associates.' He was told, 'As for the two shahãdahs, we know them, but what are the two associates' He said, 'The prayer and the zakãt, because one of them will not be accepted without the other; and the fast and the pilgrimage of the House of Allãh upon the one who can afford the journey to it; and he completed it with al-wilãyah; then Allãh, 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-Amãlī)

There is in Rawdatu 'l-wã‘izīn (by al-Fattãl) a tradition from Ibnu 'l-Fãrisī 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-wilãyah at the time of the return journey to Medina and revelation of this verse; that tradition contains the speech of the Messenger of Allãh (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 at-Tabrisī in al-Ihtijãj through a well connected chain from al-Hadramī from Abū Ja‘far al-Bãqir (a.s.); also, al-Kulaynī in al-Kãfī and as-Sadūq in al-‘Uyūn have narrated on revelation of the verse of al-wilãyah, both through their chains from ‘Abdu ’l-‘Azīz ibn Muslim from ar-Ridã (a.s.). The same theme has been narrated by ash-Shaykh in his al-Amãlī through his chain from Ibn Abī ‘Umayr from al-Mufaddal ibn ‘Umar from as-Sãdiq (a.s.) from his grandfather, the Commander of the Believers (a.s.). Also , it has been narrated by at-Tabrisī in Majma‘u 'l-bayãn through his chain from Abū Hãrūn al-‘Abdī from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī; also, by ash-Shaykh in his al-Amãlī through his chain from Ishãq ibn Ismã‘īl an-Naysãbūrī from as-Sãdiq from his father from al-Hasan 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 Allãh is the Guide.

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NOTES

1 al-Mīzãn (Eng.), vol.3, pp.251-73. (tr.)

2 al-Mīzãn, (Eng.), vol.1, pp.131-5. (tr.)

3 al-Mīzãn, (Eng.), vol.1, p.143. (tr.)

4 al-Mīzãn, (Eng.), vol.7, pp.110-13 (tr.).

5 Qur'ãn, 6:160 (tr.)

6 Qur'ãn, 8:16 (tr.)

7 ‘Anbasah

8 Here the author rebuts the last part of ar-Rãghib's explanation. (tr.)

9 al-Mīzãn, (Eng. transl.), vol.3, p.280.

10 al-Mīzãn, (Eng. transl.) vol.6, pp.107-9 (tr.)

11 al-Mīzãn, (Eng. transl.), vol.3, pp.167-227.

12 al-Mīzãn, (Eng. transl.), vol.6, pp.271-8.

13 al-Mīzãn, (Eng. transl.), vol.8, pp.250-3.

14 Barahma is a mythical figure; and Buddha is not worshipped as God because Buddhism doesn't have any concept of Divinity. Rãmã and Krishnã would serve as better example.

15 al-Mīzãn, (Eng. transl.), vol.8, pp.54-77.

16 al-Mīzãn, (Eng. transl.), vol.1, pp.221-249.

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

17 & 11 The next hadīth, narrated by same Qatãdah, 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 Qatãdah. It was because Qatãdah had not offered any evidence or proof for is case and his claim was untenable from legal point of view. (tr.)

19 i.e., the hand that gives is better than the hand that receives. (tr.)

20 al-Mīzãn, (Eng. transl.), vol.8, pp.64-74. (tr.)

21 Obviously this explanation is based on the principle of the “flow of the Qur’ãn”. (tr.)

22 Such hypothesis is not worthy of attention and should not be included in a serious book like ours. (tr.)

23 Such far-fetched meanings serve only to create confusion in the minds of the readers. (tr.)

24 This statement does not agree with the above explanation that the same one -‘Īsã 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.)

25 al-Mīzãn (Eng.), vol.1, pp.106-127 (tr.)

26 al-Mīzãn (Eng.), vol.6, pp.33-39. (tr.)

27 al-Mīzãn, (Eng.), vol.3, pp.167-227 (tr.)

28 al-Mīzãn, (Eng.), vol.6, p.12. (tr.)

29 It refers to ch.6, vrs. 142-3. (tr.)

30 al-Mīzãn, (Eng.), vol.7, pp.143-202. (tr.)

31 al-Mīzãn (Eng.), vol.3, p.280 (tr.)

32 The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had himself performed hajju 'l-qiran, then came the order of hajju '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 hajju 't-tamattu` “. However, this prohibition was later ignored by the Muslims (tr.)

33 It is the verse of al-kalãlah at the end of the chapter of the “Women”. (Author's note)

34 It is interesting to note that even the polytheists of Arabia knew that the continuity of the religion of Muhammad (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 Allãh 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, Allãh gave him the good news that he would be given abundant offsprings to continue his mission. But the Muslims did not reaize this fact. (tr.)

35 Why invoking the Name of Allãh?: The animals have not been created by us; they are the creatures of Allãh. 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 Allãh 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)

36 It should be 28 parts. (tr.)

37 al-Burhãn, says, 17th. (Author's note)

38 The correct date is 18th Dhi 'l-hijjah, not 17th or 19th. (tr.)

39 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.)

40 al-Burhãn, says, twelve men. (Author's note)

41 “Two teeth” means two in the upper jaw and two in the lower. The same is the case with four and six teeth. (tr.)

End of al-Mīzãn, volume 9

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