An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 18

From Surah al-Mujadalah (58) to Surah al-Qiyamah (75)

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, *"An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an"* compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

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Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward"[1].

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful"[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir'.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation

from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10]**.**

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the

commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11]**.**

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12]**.**

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18]
.

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21]**.**

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3

21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-

ul-Islam:

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

"O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur'an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest."[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur'an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement".[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

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A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah Mujadila, Chapter 58

(The Disputing Woman)

Section (juz')

Number of Verses: 22

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Chapter in question has twenty-two Verses and it was revealed in Medina. The blessed Chapter opens with a question of disputation hence the designation. The blessed Chapter treats of the law of zihar, a kind of divorce in pre-Islamic times; positive and negative aspects of whispering; greeting with those entering a meeting; distinction of the party of God and that of Satan.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

Two traditions have been narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and Imam Sadiq (as).

According to the former:

"One who recites Surah al-Hadid and Surah al-Mujadila and reflects and acts upon them, will be regarded as a member of the party of God."

The latter says:

"One who recites Surah al-Hadid and Surah al-Mujadila in their obligatory prayers will neither be afflicted with any torment in his life, nor will he or his family suffer from evil, nor will he be entangled with poverty and destitute."

The contextual meaning of these Chapters is clearly consistent with the said rewards indicating that the goal of reciting them is to apply them in one's life rather than mere recitation devoid of reflecting and acting upon them.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ

1. Verily Allah has heard the statement of the woman who disputed with you concerning her husband and complained to Allah. And Allah hears the argument between you both. Indeed, Allah is All-Hearer, All-Seer.

There was a kind of divorce in pre-Islamic times called zihar as per which the husband was not allowed to revoke the divorce nor was the wife allowed to remarry.

A certain man divorced his wife in this manner at the time of the Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) thus addressing her:

"You are to me like my mother's back."

The man came unto the Noble Prophet (S) and informed him of the case.

The Noble Prophet (S) said:

"Allah has not specified such law."

Terrified, the woman said:

"I complain to Allah about my misfortune and my lost youth and health. If I leave my children to my husband, they will be ruined. If they stay with me, they will starve."

The blessed Verses of the Chapter in question were revealed before long according to which whoever acts in this fashion will be required to expiate. Further, it is said that there is no divorce.

Since the husband could not afford to purchase a slave and act upon the manumission ordainment nor could he feed sixty poor people nor was he able to fast for two months, the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) rendered him some sufficient aid such that he could feed sixty poor people and thus expiated his sin and returned to his former life.[1]

It is worthy of note that in the blessed Verse in question, God Almighty says three times that He is the All-Hearing (sami') and people may speak unto Him. Thus, it is incumbent upon us to take heed of our words, since God Almighty hears them. He hears our supplications and invocations. Therefore, we may invoke him to answer our prayers. We may take refuge in God Almighty in vicissitudes.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 2

الَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنكُم مِّن نِّسَائِهِم مَّا هُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِهِمْ إِنْ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ إِلَّا اللَّائِي وَلَدْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَقُولُونَ مُنكَرًا مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ وَزُورًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُوٌّ غَفُورٌ

2. Those among you who make their wives unlawful to them by saying to them "You are like my mother's back" (zihar), they cannot be their mothers. None can be their mothers except those who gave them birth. And indeed, they utter an ill word and a lie. And indeed, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Oft-Pardoning.

Mention was made in the preceding Verse of the type of divorce in pre-Islamic times as per which the husband said:

"Sleeping with you is like sleeping with my mother."

Islam sanctioned this type of divorce and obliged the husband to expiate for this sin. Úihar, as an instance of injustice done to women, was sanctioned by the Islamic law and those committing such sin had to pay dearly for expiating it.

Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that those of you who say unto their wives:

"You are like my mother to me"

utter falsehood, since their wives are note like their mothers as their mothers are those who gave birth to them. Being a mother or a child depends neither on words nor sophistry, but it is an indisputable reality. If a husband says one hundred times unto his wife that she is like his mother, it would be merely falsehood and superstition.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say:

"they utter an ill word and a lie and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Oft-Pardoning."

Therefore, in case a Muslim committed such vice prior to the Revelation of these Verses will be forgiven by God Almighty. It is noteworthy that the Arabic word zur denotes untruth and lie.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 3

وَالَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِن نِّسَائِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَتَمَاسَّا
ذَٰلِكُمْ تُوعَظُونَ بِهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

3. And those who make unlawful to them their wives by zihar and wish to redeem themselves of what they uttered, [the expiation] in that case is the manumission of a slave before they touch each other. That is an admonition to you. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.

Manumission as an expiation for involuntary homicide, unredeemed oath, and zihar is attested in the Holy Qur'an[2].

Since such abominable act could not be ignored by the Islamic faith, the blessed Verse in question says:

"Those who make unlawful to them their wives by zihar and wish to redeem themselves of what they uttered, [the expiation] in that case is the manumission of a slave before they touch each other."

Qur'an exegetes have thought of different interpretations regarding the blessed Verse in question and in his Tafsir Kanz al-'Irfan, FaÃil Miqdad presents six interpretations.

However, the literal sense of the word, taking into account the clause:

"before they touch each other,"

is that they repent their words and intend to return to their family life and sexual intercourse. Such interpretation is also attested in traditions narrated from Ahl al-Bayt.[3]

The blessed Verse proceeds to say:

"That is an admonition to you. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do,"

i.e. He is All-Aware of your zihar, refraining from expiation, and your intentions.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 4

فَمَن لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يَتَمَاسَّا ۖ فَمَن لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَإِطْعَامُ سِتِّينَ
مِسْكِينًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۚ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ۗ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

4. And he who finds not a slave for manumission must fast to successive months before they both touch each other. And he who is unable to do so, should feed sixty poor people. That is in order that you may have faith in Allah and His Messenger. These are Divine Laws. And for disbelievers, there is an excruciating torment.

The word hudud denoting limits and connoting laws is attested more than ten times in the Holy Qur'an most of whose instances are pertained to family law. Failure to act upon Divine Laws and indifference to the same are on a par with disbelief. It is worthy of note that Divine chastisement lead

to loss of property and physical strength, but one may thereby increase one's faith.

The blessed Verse is saying that one who cannot find a slave, as in our time, or may not afford to purchase one for manumission, he must fast for two consecutive months before touching his wife.

Jurisprudents maintain that the Arabic word mutatabi‘in in the blessed Verse designates two consecutive lunar months or sixty days; however, if one fasts for a month and a day, but breaks the fast thereafter and fast the remaining days later on, the fast is still valid, but he may not touch his wife before the completion of the two month fast.

Now, one who is unable to fast owing to decrepitude, weakness, or any other reason, it is incumbent upon such person to feed sixty poor people with the food, e.g. bread, wheat, and rice, consumed by the majority of the inhabitants of the city.

The Arabic word ta‘am (“food”) seemingly indicates that the person is supposed to fill them up in one meal. However, the measure has been specified in Islamic traditions as almost 750 grams, though some jurisprudents have specified the quantity as double the amount.

The blessed Verse proceeds to reiterate the main goal of such expiations, saying:

“That is in order that you may have faith in Allah and His Messenger.”

Compensation for the sins through expiating strengthens the pillars of faith and makes man knowingly and practically committed to acting upon Divine Laws.

To make all Muslims regard such expiation as a serious question, the blessed Verse says:

“These are Divine Laws. And for disbelievers, there is an excruciating torment.”

Surah Mujadila - Verse 5

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ كُبِتُوا كَمَا كُبِتَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

5. Indeed, those who oppose Allah and His Messenger have been crushed, as those before them were crushed. And We have sent down clear Àyat (signs, Verses). And for the believers is a disgracing torment.

The Arabic clause yuhaddun Allah denotes “opposed Divine Bounds through either use of power and weaponry or animosity, sabotage, and conspiracy.” The verbal form kubitu derives from the root k-b-t (“crush, subdue”).

The last clause in the preceding blessed Verses warned all people against transgressing Divine Bounds and the blessed Verse in question treats of those who transgress such Bounds and thereby struggle against God Almighty and His Messenger (S) whose fate in this world and the Hereafter is explicated herein.

The blessed Verse opens by saying that those who oppose God Almighty and His Messenger (S) are disgraced as the same was in store for their predecessors. Then, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that God Almighty

sent down clear Signs and Verses. Thus, ultimatum has been given leaving no room for any pretext as to opposition.

However, if they oppose God Almighty and His Messenger (S), they shall be chastised in this world and a humiliating torment shall be in store for disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection. Therefore, the preceding sentence makes a reference to the torments in store for them in this world and this sentence refers to the torment in store for them in the Hereafter.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 6

يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا عَمِلُوا ۚ أَحْصَاهُ اللَّهُ وَنَسُوهُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

6. On the Day when Allah will resurrect them all together and inform them of what they did. Allah has kept account of it, while they have forgotten it. And Allah is Witness over all things.

Depicting the torment in store for them in the Hereafter, the blessed Verse in question says that on the Day of Resurrection God Almighty shall resurrect and inform them of what they have done. God Almighty has kept account of their deeds even if they have consigned them to oblivion.

Consequently, when they see their record of deeds, they will cry:

"Woe to us! What kind of Book is this that leaves neither a small thing nor a big thing, but has kept account of them all"[4].

It will be an excruciating torment when God Almighty reminds them of their forgotten sins hereby they shall be disgraced before all men on the Day of Resurrection.

The blessed Verse in question closes by saying:

"God Almighty is Witness over all things [and is Omnipresent]."

The closing clause substantiates the previous one by saying that Divine Omnipresence requires that He keeps account of not only our deeds but also of our intentions and He will disclose them all on the Day of Emergence (yawm al-buruz) such that those who committed the deeds and others know the reason behind severe chastisements and torments.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 7

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ مَا يَكُونُ مِن نَّجْوَىٰ ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا أَدْنَىٰ مِن ذَٰلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرَ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا ۖ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا عَمِلُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

7. Have you not seen that Allah knows whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth? There is no confidential talk of three but He is their fourth, nor of five but He is their sixth, nor of less than that or more, but He is with them wherever they may be and afterwards on the Day of Resurrection. He will inform them of what they did. Indeed, Allah is the Omniscient.

The verbal form tara ("you saw") deriving from r-'-a denotes "see" but also connotes "perceive," intended herein.

Further, to emphasize Divine Omnipresence and Omniscience, mention is made of "confidential talk" (najwa), saying:

"Do you know not that God Almighty is All-Aware of whatever is in the heavens and the earth."

The blessed Verse is addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), but It is actually addressed to all mankind.

It is in fact a prelude to the question of confidential talks:

"There is no confidential talk of three but He is their fourth, nor of five but He is their sixth, nor of less than that or more, but He is with them wherever they may be and afterwards on the Day of Resurrection. He will inform them of what they did. Indeed, Allah is the Omniscient."

It is worthy of note that God Almighty being the fourth or sixth of them connotes that He is Omniscient and Omnipresent rather than His Pure Essence were limited to spatial bounds or specified by numbers. His Unity is not subject to measurement, but the blessed Verse connotes that He is Unique and Unrivalled.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 8

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نُهُوا عَنِ النَّجْوَىٰ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَيَتَنَاجَوْنَ بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَتِ الرَّسُولِ وَإِذَا جَاءُوكَ حَيَّوْكَ بِمَا لَمْ يُحَيِّكَ بِهِ اللَّهُ وَيَقُولُونَ فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ لَوْلَا يُعَذِّبُنَا اللَّهُ بِمَا نَقُولُ حَسْبُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ يَصْلَوْنَهَا فَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

8. Have you not seen those who were forbidden to hold confidential talks, and afterwards returned to that which they had been forbidden and conspired together for sin and wrong doing and disobedience to the Messenger. But when they come to you, they greet you with a greeting wherewith Allah greets you not, and say unto themselves: "Why should Allah chastise us not for what we say?" The Hell will be sufficient for them in which they will enter. And worst indeed is that place and destination.

Two Occasions of Revelation have been transmitted regarding the blessed Verse in question each of which is related to one part of the blessed Verse. According to the former, a group of Jews and hypocrites held confidential talks and at times cast unpleasant glances at believers.

Thus, believers thought that Jews and hypocrites had been informed of unpleasant news about their kith and kin who had joined jihad. Sorrowful, they complained to Allah's Messenger (S) about their unpleasant glances.

The Noble Prophet (S) warned them against holding secret counsels before Muslims, but his warnings fell upon dead ears. Then, the blessed Verse in question was revealed and severely threatened them against holding such counsels.[5]

The second Occasion of Revelation is mentioned in Bukhari's and Muslim's Sahihayn and many exegetic sources according to which, a group of Jews came unto the Noble Prophet (S) and instead of greeting him by saying al-salamu ‘alayka they said al-samu ‘alayka ya Aba al-Qasim intending to say death, weariness, and reproach be unto you.

The Noble Prophet (S) replied:

"The same unto you."

"À'isha is reported as saying:

"I noticed that they had said may death, God's curse and wrath be upon him. However, the Noble Prophet (S) asked me to be tolerant and refrain from violence and slander. I insisted:

"Do you not hear that they said: 'Death unto you'?"

He asked me:

"Did you not hear that I replied by saying 'Unto you'?"

Then, the blessed Verse was revealed saying that when such group come unto you, they greet you in a manner by which God Almighty has never greeted you."[6]

The blessed Verse in question resumes the discussion on confidential talk by asking:

"Did you not see those who were forbidden from holding confidential talk but they engage themselves in the same thereby committing sins and disobeying Allah's Messenger (S)?"

It is explicitly mentioned that they had been forbidden from holding confidential talk and thereby casing suspicion and concern in others. Nonetheless, they did not act upon Divine Command but committed sins and disobeyed Allah and His Messenger (S).

The Arabic terms ithm, 'udwan, and ma'siyat al-rasul are different in semantic terms in that the first denotes sins against oneself, such as drinking alcoholic beverages, the second constitutes instances of transgressing the rights of other people, and the third is concerned with disobeying the commands issued by the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith as the head of the Islamic state regarding the interests of the Muslim community.

Therefore, they raised any wrong in their secret counsels regarding themselves, others, Muslim state, and the Noble Prophet of Islam (S). The present verbal forms ya'udun and yatanajun connote the recurrence of their deed thereby aiming to hurt believers. The point is that the blessed Verse disclosed their evil deed as a piece of news from the unseen thus revealing their deviation.

The blessed Verse makes mention of another evil deed committed by hypocrites and Jews, saying:

"When they come unto you, they greet you such that God Almighty has never greeted you."

The Arabic verbal form hayyuka, cognate with tahiyya ("greeting, salutation") connotes praying for someone else's health and life.

The clauses:

"greeting unto you" (al-salamun 'alayka)

and,

"God's greeting unto you" (salam Allah 'alayka)

are intended herein which is also recurrently attested in the Holy Qur'an an instance of which is:

"And peace be on the Messengers"[7]**.**

However, they uttered the sentence:

"Death, censure, and weariness be unto you" (asamun 'alayka).

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that they not only commit such grave sins but also are they so self-conceited that they say if their deeds are evil and God Almighty is All-Aware of them, how come that He does not chastise us for our words and deeds. Thus, they proved their disbelief in the Prophethood of Allah's Messenger (S) and Divine Omniscience.

Thus the Holy Qur'an replies to them:

"Hell is sufficient for them and there is no need to other chastisements. They will enter Hell before long and what a worst place it is."

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse does not negate the torments in store for them in this world, but it is explicitly expressing the truth that even if there will be no other torment for them but Hell, it will be sufficient for them since they will meet the recompense of all their deeds there.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 9

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَنَاجَيْتُمْ فَلَا تَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَتِ الرَّسُولِ وَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

9. O you who believe! When you hold confidential talk, do it not from sin and wrong-doing and disobedience toward the Messenger, but do it for righteousness and fear of God and fear Allah unto Whom you shall be gathered.

Holding secret counsels and confidential talks may lead to disclosure of secrets and thus it is obligatory when such act entails benefits to the Islamic faith and Muslims. It is unlawful and forbidden when it leads to fear and anxiety for others. It is supererogatory when it assists others and enjoins them to fear God Almighty.

The blessed Verse is saying that believers must heed that when they hold confidential talks, they should not thereby commit sins and disobey God Almighty and His Messenger (S), but their confidential talks should be pure and divine. Believers are supposed to hold secret counsels regarding good deeds and fear of God Almighty. It is incumbent upon them to refrain from disobedience to God Almighty to Whom they shall all return.

The blessed Verse is saying that holding confidential talks by believers will create neither suspicion nor concern since such talks aim at enjoining righteous good deeds. But holding secret counsels by Jews and hypocrites is unlawful since they aim at hurting pure hearted believers let alone when the contents of such talks be satanic.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 10

إِنَّمَا النَّجْوَىٰ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ لِيَحْزُنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَيْسَ بِضَارِّهِمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

10. Secret counsels are only from Satan in order that he may cause grief to the believers. But he cannot harm them in the least, except as Allah permits. Therefore, let the believers put their trust in Allah.

Any explicit or implicit talk leading to causing fear and anxiety among Muslims is satanic. Thus, the blessed Verse as the last one treating of the question reflects that such talk only stems from satanic temptations aiming at Muslims' concerns and grieves. However, Muslims should know that without Divine Permission, Satan may not harm believers, since no cause in the world of existence is dependent on Divine Command.

Even fire and sword may neither burn nor sever without God's Command. When God Almighty forbids something, even His friend may not do anything. Thus, it is incumbent upon believers to put their trust solely in God Almighty and set their hearts on no one but Him nor are they

supposed to fear one but Him. Relying on their trust in God Almighty, they may easily remove such problems and neutralize the designs and stratagems of Satan's followers.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 11

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَإِذَا قِيلَ انشُزُوا فَانشُزُوا يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

11. O you who believe! When you are told to make room in the assemblies, make room. Allah will give you room. And when you are told to rise up, rise up. Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe and those who have been granted knowledge. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.

Regarding the Occasion of Revelation of the blessed Verse, some Qur'an exegetes, e.g. Tabarsi in Majma' alBayan and Àlusi in Ruh al-Ma'ani, maintain that the Noble Prophet (S) sat on a huge ledge (suffa) beside the Noble Prophet's (S) mosque on a Friday when he was encircled by people and there was enough room for others.

It was the Noble Prophet's (S) habit to revere Badr warrior irrespective of being from immigrants (muhajirun) or helpers (ansar). Then, a group of Badr warriors entered and paid homage to the Noble Prophet (S). The Noble Prophet (S) returned their greetings. They exchanged greetings with those present there. They were still standing awaiting people to make room for them, but none of them moved.

Annoyed by such conduct, the Noble Prophet (S) turned to some of the people encircling him asking them to move such that the newcomers may sit. Thus, he gave them a lesson to revere the veterans of jihad and faith. Those who had moved to make room for newcomers were annoyed such that their faces reflected such annoyance.

Taking advantage of the opportunity as usual, hypocrites said that the Noble Prophet (S) had failed to administer justice as he had made those lovingly encircling him move to make room for newcomers. Thus, the blessed Verse was revealed indicating the manners required for attending meetings.[8]

The preceding Verses treated of abstention from holding secret counsels at meetings and restricting the same to few specific instances and the blessed Verse reflects another instance of etiquette to be observed at meetings, saying:

"O you who believe! When you are told to make room in the assemblies, make room. Allah will give you room. And when you are told to rise up, rise up. Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe and those who have been granted knowledge. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do."

The blessed Verse is saying that if believers act upon the same, God Almighty will grant you spacious abodes in Paradise and better provisions, sustenance and a nobler heart in this world.

The verbal form tafassahu deriving from f-s-h denotes give room as a precept of etiquette according to which when a newcomer arrives at a meeting, those already present are supposed to make room for him lest he may be perplexed, weary, or ashamed. Such manners strengthen the ties of friendship. Au contraire, holding secret counsels at meetings, as reflected in the preceding blessed Verses, lead to hatred, suspicion, and animosity.

It is worthy of note that many a delicacy of moral questions and social life of Muslims are treated in the Holy Qur'an which is the constitutional law of Muslims where such delicate points are also mentioned amongst fundamental injunctions such that Muslims bear in mind that following general rules is sufficient for them. Those who act upon such precepts will be rewarded by God Almighty in this world.

It is to be noted that the blessed Verse in unconditional and its contextual meaning reflects Divine Generosity in this world, paradise, soul, thought, life, and sustenance. It is not a source of wonder that God Almighty, out of His Graciousness and Generosity bestow such great reward against such seemingly insignificant act as Divine Reward is bestowed upon people out of His Generosity rather than the significance of our deeds.

At times, meetings are so crowded that those already present must rise up to make room for newcomers lest there will be no suitable room for them to be seated. The blessed Verse proceeds to say that when people are told to rise, they are supposed to rise without procrastination or annoyance, since newcomers may be weary, weak owing to their advanced age, or highly respected as a consequence of which others must make a sacrifice and observe such Islamic precept of etiquette.

It was in the same vein that as mentioned above, the Noble Prophet (S) ordered some people to rise up and give their place to some newcomers who were amongst the warrior fighting in the battle of Badr and were superior to others in terms of knowledge and virtue.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that rising is herein employed in a broader sense such that it reflects rising at the meeting as well as rising for jihad, establishing prayers, and doing other righteous good deeds. The blessed Verse proceeds to treat of the rewards of such Divine Injunction saying that if you do so, God Almighty will grant elevated ranks to those who believe and possess knowledge.

"Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe and those who have been granted knowledge. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do"

reflects that obeying such Injunctions indicate faith, knowledge, and awareness. It may also reflect that if the Noble Prophet (S) ordered some people to rise and make room for newcomers since he aimed at a sacred and Divine goal which is revering forerunners in faith and knowledge.

The Arabic plural noun darajat connotes the exalted ranks bestowed by God Almighty upon those who possess both faith and knowledge. In fact, those who make room for newcomers beside them enjoy such rank and those who possess knowledge and faith and make room for newcomers, will be granted even more elevated ranks.

The blessed Verse closes with:

"Allah is All-Aware of what you do"

saying that God Almighty is fully Aware of those who are satisfied to do so and they are sincere in their acts and also those who are dissatisfied and annoyed or they act upon hypocrisy and dissimulation.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 12

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَةً ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ فَإِن لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

12. O you who believe! When you intend to hold confidential talks with the Messenger, spend something in charity before your private counsel. That will be better and purer for you. But if you fail to afford it, then indeed, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Gracious.

The blessed Verse completes the preceding discussion on holding private counsels, saying that if you want to hold private counsels with Allah's Messenger (S), expend alms in Allah's Cause beforehand.

According to the Occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verse, some people particularly some among the affluent bothered him by holding private counsels with him such that they annoyed others or aimed to seek privileges in vain. Besides, they wasted the precious time of the Noble Prophet (S). Revelation of the blessed Verse was a trial for them, a source of charitable offerings for the poor, and an efficient means for lessening such troubles.

The blessed Verse further adds:

"It s better and purer for you."

Expending alms was better for the affluent since it was to the benefit of them as well as the poor. It was purer since expending in the Cause of Allah purifies the hearts of the affluent from cherishing worldly possessions and those of the needy from hatred and grief. When the affluent were supposed to expend alms before holding private counsels with the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) they held less counsels leading to purity for the intellectual and social milieu of the Muslim community.

The blessed Verse says:

"If you fail to afford [expending in Allah's Cause], God Almighty is Oft-Forgiving and Most Gracious,"

thereby the poor were able to hold private counsels with the Noble Prophet (S).

Therefore, those who could afford expending in Allah's Cause, had to pay alms and those who failed to afford it were still able to hold private counsels with the Noble Prophet (S). The majority of Shi'i and Sunni exegetes maintain that the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), was the only one who acted upon the Injunction.

According to a tradition narrated from Imam 'Ali (as), transmitted by Tabarsi, the Noble Imam (as) said:

"There is a Verse in the Qur'an upon which no one but me has acted or will act. I had a dinar which I converted to ten dirhams and whenever I intended to hold private counsels with the Noble Prophet (S), I expended a dirham before meeting with him."[9]

Surah Mujadila - Verse 13

أَأَشْفَقْتُمْ أَن تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَاتٍ فَإِذْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَتَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

13. Are you afraid of spending in charity before your private consultation? If then you do it not and Allah has forgiven you, then establish prayers and pay alms-tax and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.

The Injunction mentioned in the preceding Verse served as an interesting trial and engendered a wondrous effect such that except the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as), no one acted upon it. Muslims took a clear lesson out of the Injunction.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question abrogated the Injunction by saying:

“Are you afraid of spending in charity before you private counsel?”

It is then clear that loving worldly possessions is stronger than that for holding private consultations with the Noble Prophet (S). It also reflects that significant issues were not raised in such private consultations, otherwise such people could pay alms before holding such private counsels as no specific amount had been specified for paying alms and they could conveniently afford a meager amount to solve the problem.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that now that you failed to act upon the Injunction and noticed you negligence and God Almighty is Oft-Forgiving and accepted your repentance, establish prayers, pay alms-tax, obey God Almighty and His Messenger (S), and know that He is All-Aware of what you do.

It is worthy of note that the word repentance (tawba) reflects that they had committed sins in holding their private consultations either through dissimulation and hypocrisy or hurting the Noble Prophet (S) and poor believers.

Although there is no explicit permission in holding private counsels, but the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse reflects that the former Injunction was abrogated, but owing to their significance, people were called to establish prayers, pay alms-tax, and obey God Almighty and His Messenger (S). It also alludes that such private consultations should aim at the exalted goals of the Islamic faith and obedience to God Almighty and His Messenger (S).

The Arabic word ishfaq denotes concern for some loss.[10] The blessed Verse reflects that paying alms before holding private consultation with the Noble Prophet (S) served as a test to distinguish sincere and loving believers from others rather than a retreat through the abrogation of the Divine Injunction.

The Arabic particle wa (“and”) in
“and Allah has forgiven you”

reflects that abrogation of the Injunctions was not due to people's failure to act upon it. Since some of the Companions of the Noble Prophet (S) abandoned holding private counsels with him owing to their fear of expending in Allah's Cause, they were censured by God Almighty though holding private consultations with the Noble Prophet (S) was neither obligatory nor supererogatory.

Surah Mujadila - Verses 14-15

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِم مَّا هُم مِّنكُمْ وَلَا مِنْهُمْ وَيَحْلِفُونَ عَلَى الْكَذِبِ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

14. Have you not seen those who take as friends a people upon whom is the Wrath of Allah? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to a lie to be amongst you while they know.

15. Allah has prepared for them a severe torment. Evil indeed is that which they do.

The blessed two Verses partially disclose hypocrites' conspiracies reflecting their tokens as well. Such disclosure preceded by the blessed Verses treating of holding private counsels reveals that there were also hypocrites holding private consultations with the Noble Prophet (S) who used such stratagems to take advantage of their intimacy with the Noble Prophet (S).

Thus, the Holy Qur'an treats the same on general terms, asking:

"Have you not seen those who take as friends a people upon whom is the Wrath of Allah?"

"A people upon whom is the Wrath of Allah"

seemingly reflects Jewish people, since they have been referred to in the Holy Qur'an by the clause

"They drew upon themselves the Wrath"[11].

The blessed Verse 14 proceeds to say

"They are neither of you nor of them [Jews]."

They are neither you friends in hardships nor are they their intimate friends, but they are hypocrites changing their masks each and every single day. They take false oaths to indicate that they stand by you, but they know that they are dissimulating. Hypocrites habitually cover their ugly and disgusting countenances through resorting to false oaths, whereas their deeds reflect their true identity.

The blessed Verse 15 makes a reference to such obstinate hypocrites saying:

"Allah has prepared for them a severe torment."

Such torments are just, since:

"Evil indeed is that which they do"

and evil deeds entail Divine torment and retribution.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 16

اتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

16. They have made their oaths a shield and hindered men from the Path of Allah. Therefore, they shall have a humiliating torment.

They take oaths saying that they are Muslims aiming at nothing but improvement, but they use such oaths as pretexts for their corruption, sabotage, and conspiracy. In fact, they take advantage out of the Sacred Name of God Almighty to impede men from treading the Path of Allah.

Taking false oaths disclose hypocrites. Their attributes are also found elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[12].

The blessed Verse closes by saying that as a consequence of their hypocrisy;

"they shall have a humiliating torment."

Surah Mujadila - Verse 17

لَّن تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

17. Their children and their wealth will avail them nothing against Allah's Wrath. They will be the dwellers of the Fire to dwell therein forever.

Qur'anic warnings are quite serious. Worldly possessions and children shall be of no avail in the Hereafter. Hypocrites often rely on their worldly possessions and children as economic and labor resources.

In this vein, the Holy Qur'an says that their worldly possessions and children may never be of any avail against Divine torment, but they serve as shackles and fetters leading to their excruciating torment. There shall be no refuge but God Almighty on the Day of Resurrection, since besides Him all others shall be inefficient.

The same theme is also reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[13].

"All their relations shall be cut off from them."

The blessed Verse closes by the warning:

"They will be the dwellers of the Fire to dwell therein forever."

The torments in store for them have been depicted as severe, humiliating, and everlasting, each of which proportionately reflects their evil deeds.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 18

يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَحْلِفُونَ لَهُ كَمَا يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ ۖ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ ۚ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ

18. On the Day when Allah will resurrect them all together, they will swear to Him as they swear to you imagining that they rely on something. Indeed, they are liars.

When lying turns into a natural disposition, liars even falsely swear on the Day of Resurrection. Thus, the blessed Verse in question is reminding people of the Day when God Almighty shall resurrect them and He shall present their evil deeds unto them.

God Almighty shall question them at His Just Tribunal, but they falsely swear to Him in the same manner that they falsely swore to people in this world. The Day of Resurrection shall be the scene of manifestation of human deeds and intentions.

Hypocrites take their intentions and deeds to their graves and purgatory, but they shall be manifest on the Day of Resurrection. They know that God Almighty is All-Aware of the Unseen. Nothing is concealed from Him. However, they are habitually inclined toward taking false oaths.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say:

They imagine that they rely on something through taking such false oaths and may thereby gain benefits and ward off loss, but it will be sheer

illusions. They had been accustomed to resort to such pretexts in order to ward off predicaments and losses from themselves, hence the reinforcement of such natural dispositions and their manifestations.

The blessed Verse closes by saying:

"Indeed, they are liars."

They are disgraced before all men in this world and the Hereafter.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 19

اسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَأَنسَاهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ حِزْبُ الشَّيْطَانِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ الشَّيْطَانِ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

19. Satan has overpowered them. Thus, he has made them forget the remembrance of Allah. They are the party of Satan. Indeed, it is the party of Satan that will be the losers!

The more we neglect remembering God Almighty, the closer we will be to the party of Satan. Real loss lies in following Satan.

The antecedent of the pronoun

"them" ('alayhim)

are hypocrites overpowered by Satan such that they forget God Almighty and follow devils and concupiscent desires.

It is incumbent upon believers to be aware that the hosts of Satan have incurred loss, namely they have wasted their precious lives.

Satan works such that he absorbs men by steps, as it is reflected in 24:21:

"Follow not the footsteps of Satan."

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[14] that:

"Satan threw [some falsehood]."

At times, men follow Satan and he totally overpowers them. The blessed Verse is saying that the more we neglect remembering God Almighty, the closer we will be to the party of Satan. In this vein, two traditions have been narrated.

It is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as):

"Distinction between truth and falsehood does not entail evil consequence but confusion of the twain leads to seditions and Satan's conquest."[15]

Imam Husayn (as) is reported as saying unto Yazid's hosts at Karbala':

"Satan has overpowered you and made you forget remembrance of God Almighty…"[16]

Surah Mujadila - Verses 20-21

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي الْأَذَلِّينَ

كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَأَغْلِبَنَّ أَنَا وَرُسُلِي إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

20. Those who take a stance against Allah and His Messenger will be among the most humiliated people.

21. Allah has decreed: "Verily, it is I and My Messengers who shall triumph over hypocrites and disbelievers. Indeed, Allah is the Omnipotent, the Invincible.

Hypocrisy and dissimulation lead man to take a stance against God Almighty and His Messenger (S). As the Messenger's (S) commands are

those issued by God Almighty, struggling against him is on a par with struggling against God Almighty. We should know that God Almighty and His Messenger (S) are triumphant, so those who take a stance against them are amongst the most humiliated and disgraced people.

Thus, the blessed Verse 20 says:

"Those who take a stance against Allah and His Messenger will be among the most humiliated people."

It is substantiated by the blessed Verse 21, saying:

"Verily, it is I and My Messengers who shall triumph over hypocrites and disbelievers."

God Almighty and His Messengers are triumphant, since

"Indeed, Allah is the Omnipotent, the Invincible."

It is worthy of note that according to traditions, the Divine Promise as to the decisive conquest of truth over falsehood shall be actualized upon the rise of the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his arrival).

Surah Mujadila - Verse 22

لَّا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ أُولَٰئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

22. You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, befriend those who take a stance against Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers, their sons, their brothers, or their kindred. For such He has strengthened faith in their hearts and strengthened them with true guidance from Himself. And He will admit them to Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever. Allah is pleased with them and they with Him. They are the Party of Allah. Indeed, it is the Party of Allah that will be the triumphant and saved.

Satisfaction is more elevated in rank than submission, namely God's servant is not only submits to Divine Ordainments and His Commands, but also he is satisfied with them in his heart and accepts them out of satisfaction.

Thus in the last blessed Verse which is one of the most decisive Qur'anic Verses, God Almighty warns believers that one may not love God and His enemies, but they are supposed to select one of the two. If they are true believers, they should refrain from befriending God's enemies; otherwise they should not pretend being Muslims.

One who believes in God Almighty and the Day of Resurrection should not befriend the enemies of God Almighty and His Messenger (S), even if the enemies happen to be their fathers, children, siblings, or other relatives. One may not foster love for the twain and those who claim to befriend both, are either weak of faith or hypocrites.

Thus, Muslims struggled against and even killed some of their own relatives in battles, since their relatives had joined the hosts of enemies. It is befitting to love one's father, children, siblings, and other relatives as such

love is a token of humane emotions, but when such love confronts that of God Almighty, it loses its value.

The blessed Verse further treats of the great rewards bestowed upon those who solely love God Almighty. In this vein, the blessed Verse treats of five points concerned with Divine assistance and triumph some of which are the fruits of such love.

The first two points indicate that such people are those upon whose hearts God Almighty has written faith in Him and His Messenger (S) and has also strengthened their faith;

("For such He has strengthened faith in their hearts and strengthened them with true guidance from Himself").

The third point is that:

"He will admit them to Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever."

The fourth point is that

"Allah is pleased with them and they with Him."

There is no Blessing more exalted that such bilateral satisfaction as it leads to further Blessings and Bounties. When God Almighty is satisfied with someone, He will grant him whatever he desires, since He is All-Generous and Omnipotent. The expression is quite of interest, reflecting that God Almighty is satisfied with them and they are also satisfied with Him, namely they have attained to such rank that they and their satisfaction is mentioned beside God Almighty and His Satisfaction.

The last point which is a call addressed to all reflects another Blessing:

"They are the Party of Allah. Indeed, it is the Party of Allah that will be the triumphant and saved."

Such people are not only triumphant in the Hereafter and will be granted all kinds of material and spiritual Blessings and Bounties on the Day of Resurrection, but as mentioned in the preceding blessed Verses, thanks to Divine Grace, they are also triumphant over enemies and the rule of truth and justice will be in their hands in the last days of the world.

In this vein, mention will be made of some traditions. Salman, the Persian, said unto the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) that whenever he had gone to the Noble Prophet (S), he put his hand on his shoulder, referred to repentance and said:

"O Salman! This man and his party are triumphant."[17]

According to another tradition, the Noble Prophet (S) said:

"For believers, love for God Almighty is one of the most significant bases of faith."[18]

According to the third tradition, Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"No one's faith in God Almighty may be purified unless he loves God Almighty more than his life, father, mother, children, possessions, and all people."[19]

O my Lord! If you bestow such spirit of faith upon us, you have granted these weak servants the greatest of Bounties and they will grieve no more.

Notes

1. Tafsir Qurtubi; Durr; Ruh al-Bayan; al-Mizan; Fakhr Razi; Fi Úalal al-Qur'an; Abu al-Futuh Razi; Kanz al-'Irfan, and many other historical and tradition sources with minor alterations.
2. 4:92; 5:89; 58:3 respectively
3. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan.
4. 18:49
5. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
6. Tafsir Maraghi, vol. 28, p. 13.
7. 37:181
8. Tafsirs by Fakhr Razi, Qurtubi, and Suyuti; see also Fi Halal al-Qur'an.
9. Traditions with the same theme have been transmitted by Shawkani (on the authority of 'Abd al-Razzaq), Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Íatim, and Ibn Marduya and they are also attested in al-Bayan, Sayyid Qutb's Fi Halal al-Qur'an, and Suyuti's Durr al-Manthur and also exegetic works by Fakhr Razi and Tabari. Such virtue is attributed to Imam 'Ali (as) in most of exegetic and tradition sources and it is so well-known that there is no need to quote further sources.
10. Tafsir al-Mizan.
11. ba'u bi-ghaab-in; 2:61, 91; 3:112; 5:60
12. 63:2
13. 2:166
14. 22:52
15. Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 50.
16. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
17. The tradition is mentioned in Tafsir Burhan (under the blessed Verse in question) transmitting it on the authority of Sunni sources.
18. Usul Kafi, vol. 3, Chapter on Love for God (hubb Allah), tradition no. 3; Safinat al-Bihar.
19. Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 1, p. 201.

Surah al-Hashr, Chapter 59

(The Gathering)

Section 28 (juz')

Number of Verses: 24

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter has twenty-four Verses and it was revealed in Medina.

The Arabic word

hashr ("gathering")

is mentioned in the second Verse, hence the designation of the Chapter. The word does not denote gathering on the Day of Resurrection, but it connotes people's gathering for migration.

The blessed Chapter opens and closes with the glorification of God Almighty by all the world of existence. The blessed Chapter mainly treats of hypocrites' collaboration with Medinan Jews against the Muslims, though the Holy Qur'an says that their stratagems lead to nothing but their humiliation and defeat.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

Numerous merits have been mentioned for the recitation of the blessed Chapter in question.

According to a Prophetic tradition, whoever recites Surah al-Hashr, Paradise, Hell, Throne, the seven heavens and the earth, as well as animals, winds, birds, trees, creatures, the sun, the moon, and all angels invoke God Almighty that He may bestow His Mercy upon him and forgive him. Had he died on that day or night, he will be a martyr.[1] Such blessings will be bestowed upon the recite owing to reflection upon its contents as the same reflects in man's life.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

1. Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorifies Allah. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

The Arabic word sabbaha is attested 85 times in the Holy Qur'an. It is also used in different units of daily prayers in prostration and genuflexion. The word originally denotes moving rapidly in water and in the air but as a term, it connotes glorification of God of defects and promptness in worshipping him.

God Almighty possesses two kinds of attributes: affirmative and negative. The former reflect His Perfect Attributes, e.g. Omniscience and

Omnipotence, and the latter glorify Him of defects, e.g. need, ignorance, and weakness.

The words

hamad ("praise")

and

tasbih ("glorification")

allude to such affirmative and negative qualities. It is also worthy of note that by tasbih existential rather than legislative glorification, namely all the world of existence glorify God Almighty dispositionally rather than verbally.

It is also maintained that glorification by the world of existence is both dispositional and verbal, as it is thus attested in the Holy Qur'an[2]:

"But you comprehend not their glorification."

Detailed arguments on the same are to be found in exegetic works.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that whatever exists in the heavens and on the earth glorify Him and He is All-Mighty and All-Wise. All existent beings, including angels, mankind, plants, and inanimate things may verbally or dispositionally glorify God Almighty, since the wondrous system of the creation of each and every particle dispositionally reflect Divine Omniscience, Omnipotence, Glory, and Wisdom.

Some scholars also hold that each and every being possesses some share of reason, comprehension, and intelligence, though we may not be aware of the same. As a consequence, each and every being glorifies God Almighty in its own language, even if we may fail to hearken the glorification.

Glorification of God Almighty is widespread in the world of existence, but we are ignorant of the same. However, those who have transcended the inanimate realm and have attained to proximity to God Almighty possess eyes through which they may see the unseen and share the secrets with all the world of existence.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 2

هُوَ الَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِن دِيَارِهِمْ لِأَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ ۚ مَا ظَنَنتُمْ أَن يَخْرُجُوا ۖ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُم مَّانِعَتُهُمْ حُصُونُهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ فَأَتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوا ۖ وَقَذَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ يُخْرِبُونَ بُيُوتَهُم بِأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَيْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ

2. He it is Who drove out the disbelievers among the people of the Scripture from their homes at the first gathering. You did not think that they would get out [easily despite their utmost power]. And they thought that their strongholds would defend them from the Wrath of Allah. But Allah's [Wrath] reached them from a way whereof they expected it not, and He cast terror into their hearts so that they destroyed their own dwellings with their own hands and the hands of the believers. Then take admonition, O you with eyes [to see].

Three Jewish tribes, i.e., Banu Nadhir, Banu Quraytha, and Banu Qaynuqa', emigrated to Medina and settled there and made a non-violation pact with the Noble Prophet (S). However, following the Battle of Uhud, some of them collaborated with Meccan polytheists against Muslims of which the Noble Prophet (S) was apprised and confronted them.

It was in the course of such confrontation that one of their notables, Ka‘b ibn Ashraf, fell and the Jews retreated and took refuge in a fortress to which the Muslims laid siege at the Noble Prophet's (S) behest. Consequent to the siege and confrontation, the Jews admitted to leave Medina.

They took away whatever property of theirs that they were able to but demolished their homes by their own hands lest they fell to the hands of the Muslims. The Arabic word hashr connotes gathering and driving out of one's inhabitation.

It would be of interest to know that inspiring fear into the hearts of the enemies is regarded as a Divine means of assistance:

(“He cast terror into their hearts”),

since it causes the enemies to flee as a consequence of which the Muslims attain to triumph without bloodshed. It is mentioned in traditions that three armies shall come to Mahdi (as) to render him assistance: angels, believers, and fear.[3]

The blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty is He Who expelled disbelievers from amongst the People of the Book from their homes upon their first gathering and confrontation with the Muslims.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that you could never surmise that they would leave their inhabitation and they held that their strongholds could ward off defeat and Divine torment;

(“You did not think that they would get out [easily despite their utmost power]. And they thought that their strongholds would defend them from the Wrath of Allah”).

They were so self-conceited that they relied on their power and strongholds. The expression reflects that the Medinan Banu Nadhir Jews had been affluent in terms of means such that it neither crossed their minds nor those of others that they could be defeated with facility, but since God Almighty had willed to make it manifest to all that nothing might resist His Omnipotence, He caused them to be driven out of their inhabitation without any engagement.

Thus, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that since they did not expect anything to befall on them, God Almighty inspired fear into their hearts such that they demolished their homes by their own hands as well as by those of believers;

(“But Allah's [Wrath] reached them from a way whereof they expected it not, and He cast terror into their hearts so that they destroyed their own dwellings with their own hands and the hands of the believers. Then take admonition, O you with eyes [to see]”).

God Almighty sent fear, the invisible army, to render assistance to the Muslims in many an engagement thereby He cast terror into the hearts of disbelievers and held them back from any confrontation with Muslims. Disbelievers had prepared themselves to confront with armies but were ignorant of the inward army that led them to cooperate with their own foes in demolishing their own homes.

The blessed Verse in question concludes by saying:

“Then, take admonition, O you who have eyes,”

i.e., those who possess insight.

The Arabic words basar and basira denote "eye, sight" and "insight" respectively.[4]

"Possessors of eyes" (uli 'l-absar)

connotes those who are prepared to take admonitions. Thus, the Holy Qur'an warns them to take a lesson out of the incident.

In this vein, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) says:

"Fortunate is he who takes admonitions."[5]

Surah al-Hashr - Verses 3-4

وَلَوْلَا أَن كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجَلَاءَ لَعَذَّبَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابُ النَّارِ

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُّوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَمَن يُشَاقِّ اللَّهَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

3. And had it not been that Allah had decreed exile for them, He would certainly have chastised them in this world and in the Hereafter the torment of the Fire shall be in store for them.

4. Such torment is the consequence of their enmity against Allah and His Messenger and whoever entertain enmity against Allah, then indeed, Allah is Severe in chastisement.

The Arabic word jala' connotes exile owing to affliction and entanglement. The blessed Verse 3 is saying that had it not been that God Almighty had decreed exile for them such that they leave their land, He would certainly have chastised them in this world. Going into exile and leaving behind most of their property accrued in their lifetime was an excruciating torment for them.

The blessed Verse is saying that had it not be decreed by God Almighty to be driven out of their land, another affliction would befall on them that was being slain or captivated at the hands of the Muslims, but God Almighty willed that they roamed homeless in the world and such homelessness was more excruciating to them, since whenever they reminisced their strongholds, mansions, farms, and orchards fallen into the hands of others and recalled that they had become deprived of their possessions roaming homeless in the world, they saw that it was owing to their violation of their pact and involvement in conspiracies against Allah's Messenger (S) that they suffered so many torments and harms.

Thus, God Almighty willed that such self-conceited and deceitful unfaithful people be afflicted with such dire fate, though it was solely their torments in this world. The blessed Verse concludes by saying that torment in the Fire shall be in store for them in the Hereafter. Such is the dire fate in this world and the Hereafter of those who turn away from the truth and justice and immerse themselves in self-conceit and vanity.

Such incident alludes to Divine Omnipotence and the veracity of the Noble Prophet's Call. It also warns all people who act like Banu Nadhir Jews.

The blessed Verse 4 is saying that such torment in this world and the Hereafter befalls them owing to their disobedience to God Almighty and His Messenger (S). Whoever rises in enmity against God Almighty shall be chastised by Him since He is Severe in chastisement.

It is worthy of note that the Arabic verbal form

shaqu (“they opposed”)

derives from the root sh-q-q (“split”). The Arabic verbal noun shiqaq originally denotes “splitting” and the same is applied to confrontation of the enemies since they split themselves from others.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 5

مَا قَطَعْتُم مِّن لِّينَةٍ أَوْ تَرَكْتُمُوهَا قَائِمَةً عَلَىٰ أُصُولِهَا فَبِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلِيُخْزِيَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

5. What you cut down of the palm-trees, or you abandoned them, it was by Allah's Command such that He might disgrace and humiliate the disobedient.

The blessed Verse provides a response to the criticism raised by Banu Nadhir Jews directed at the Noble Prophet (S), as mentioned above in the occasion of Revelation. It was at the behest of the Noble Prophet (S) that some of the palm-trees adjacent to the strongholds of the Jews were felled such that the Jews may leave their strongholds and confront the Muslims.

Then, the Jews asked the Noble Prophet (S):

“Did you not forbid such acts?”

The blessed Verse was revealed saying:

“What you cut down of the palm-trees, or you abandoned them, it was by Allah's Command such that He might disgrace and humiliate the disobedient.”

The Arabic word layna is applied to an exquisite kind of palm-tree. Such decree as to felling palm-trees is an exceptional one the Islamic law as per which upon attacking the enemy, trees should not be felled nor animals be killed nor farms be set ablaze.

Such exceptions exist and according to the exception in question, trees may be cut down in order to provoke the enemies to leave their strongholds, to prepare the battlefield, and the like requisites. Likewise, the Islamic law forbids the consumption of carcasses, but the same is allowed as necessity arises.

The expression:

“such that He might disgrace and humiliate the disobedient”

reflects that at least one of the goals behind such act was to disgrace and humiliate the enemies and shatter their morale.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 6

وَمَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ مِنْهُمْ فَمَا أَوْجَفْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ خَيْلٍ وَلَا رِكَابٍ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَلِّطُ رُسُلَهُ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

6. And what Allah gave to His Messenger from their property, for this you made no expedition with either cavalry or camelry. But Allah gives power to His Messengers over whomsoever He wills. And Allah is All-Able to do all things.

The Arabic word afa’ derives from f-a-’ (“return”) and is cognate with fay’ (“return”) but it connotes the property and booties seized without bloodshed and expedition and put at the disposal of the leader of the Muslim community.

The sense "return" may allude that such property returns or is restored to the original possessor, namely friends of God Almighty, since God Almighty has created all the Bounties in this world for believers preceded by His Messengers and although others own them by religious or civil law, but they originally belong to these noble figures.

The Arabic verbal form awjaftum denotes galloping on horse or camel back. The Arabic words khayl and rikab denote "horse" and "camel" respectively.

The property falling into the share of Muslims fall into the following categories: booties falling into the hand of Muslims in battlefields which belong to warriors; the property fallen into the share of Muslims without engagement termed fay' whose law is stipulated in the blessed Verse in question; the property, e.g. uncultivated lands, mountains, reed beds, and rivers, which as per the blessed Verse falls without engagement into the disposal of the Noble Prophet (S) rather than warriors and such property will be distributed upon the Noble Prophet's discretion amongst certain groups of people.

Islamic injunctions are based on wisdom according to which warriors the booties in battlefields but what is accrued without toil belongs to the Divinely appointed guide.

It is in this vein that the blessed Verse is saying that what God Almighty returned to His Messenger had not been fallen into the share of warriors through galloping on horse and camel back;

("And what Allah gave to His Messenger from their property, for this you made no expedition with either cavalry or camelry. But Allah gives power to His Messengers over whomsoever He wills. And Allah is All-Able to do all things").

Such property is to be totally falls into the disposal of the head of the Muslim community which will be distributed amongst Muslims based on Divine Injunctions and his discretion.

The blessed Verse closes by saying that triumphs are not always owing to the battles fought by Muslims, but God Almighty makes His Messengers conquer whoever He wills;

("But Allah gives power to His Messengers over whomsoever He wills. And Allah is All-Able to do all things").

In other words, conquering powerful enemies like Banu Nadhir Jews were owing to Assistance from the Unseen such that Muslims may know that God Almighty is Omnipotent since He may disgrace and humiliate a powerful people and make them be conquered by a limited number of people and transfer all the opportunities from one group to another. Thus, Muslims may learn Divine Admonitions in such battlefields as well as notice the tokens of veracity of the Noble Prophet's (S) Call, and devotion to and reliance on the Pure Essence of God Almighty in the course of their life.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 7

مَّا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَىٰ فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنكُمْ ۚ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانتَهُوا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

7. What Allah gave as booty to His Messenger from the people of the townships, it is for Allah, His Messenger, the kindred, the orphans, the poor, and the stranded such that it may not become a fortune used by the rich among you. And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain [from it] and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Severe in chastisement.

The blessed Verse provides an exposition regarding the use of booties mentioned in the preceding Verse by formulating a general rule as per which what God Almighty restored to His Messenger (S) from the inhabitants of such townships belongs to God Almighty, His Messenger, his kindred, orphans, the poor, and the stranded;

("What Allah gave as booty to His Messenger from the people of the townships, it is for Allah, His Messenger, the kindred, the orphans, the poor, and the stranded").

In other words, such property does not resemble war booties solely one fifths of which fall into the share of the Noble Prophet (S) and the needy and four fifths of which belong to warriors.

In like manner, when the preceding Verse is saying that all such property belongs to Allah's Messenger (S) it does not intend to say that the Noble Prophet (S) uses the same for his own benefit, but since he is the head of the Islamic state and he is particularly the protector and guardian of the rights of the needy, he uses the same to their benefits.

Generally speaking, the blessed Verse enumerates six uses for fay':

1. Allah's share since He is evidently the Possessor of all things though He is Needless of anyone or anything. It is a legislative relation whose purport is that other groups may not feel any inferiority but regard themselves on a par with Allah in this respect and thereby they may not lose their prestige in public.

2. The Noble Prophet's (S) share through which his personal needs as well as the requirements of his station and the people's expectations from him may be met.

3. The share of the Noble Prophet's kindred by which that of his relatives and Banu Hashim is being intended since they are not allowed to receive the alms-tax (zakah) which is regarded as the property shared by all Muslims.[6]

It would be basically meaningless had the word kindred designated all people, since it would unexceptionally include all Muslims since all people are relatives. Qur'an exegetes disagree on the conditions of need and poverty in being kindred, but the evidence attested in the close of the blessed Verse in question and the following blessed Verse substantiates such conditions.

4-6. The shares of orphans, the poor, and the stranded. Exegetes also disagree on the identity of such people since they are not unanimous regarding whether they should be from Banu Hashim or all the orphans, the

poor, and the stranded. The majority of Sunni Qur'an exegetes and jurisprudents maintain that the injunction applies to all people.

However, different traditions have been narrated from Ahl al-Bayt in this respect some of which designate that these three shares belong to the orphans, the poor, and the stranded from Banu Hashim. Nevertheless, some of such traditions explicitly reflect that the injunction applies to all people. In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that the shares of Allah's Messenger (S) and the kindred belonged to them and they share with people the remainder of the shares.[7]

The blessed Verses 8 and 9 provide an exposition for the blessed Verse in question as per which this share does not belong to Banu Hashim, since the contextual meaning makes a reference to all the poor from Meccan Emigrants (muhajirun) and Helpers (ansar).

Furthermore, Qur'an exegetes have reported that following the disobedience of Banu Nadhir, the Noble Prophet (S) distributed their property amongst the Meccan Emigrants who generally led a hard life in Medina and three people from Helpers who were in dire need to the same.

It substantiates the general application of the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question and even if certain traditions be inconsistent with the same, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse should be taken into account.[8]

The blessed Verse proceeds to treat of the reason behind such well-measured distribution, saying that the reason behind such distribution is that such abundant property be not used by the rich amongst you and the needy be not thereby deprived of the same;

("such that it may not become a fortune used by the rich among you. And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain [from it] and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Severe in chastisement").

Some Qur'an exegetes make mention of an occasion of Revelation for the blessed Verse in question to which reference was made above according to which following the defeat of Banu Nadhir, a number of Muslim notables came unto the Noble Prophet (S) asking him to take his own share as well as one fourths of the booties and leave the rest unto them so that they may distribute them amongst themselves as it was the common practice of pre-Islamic Arabs.

Then, the blessed Verse was revealed warning them against leaving them at the disposal of the affluent.

The blessed Verse reflects a fundamental principle of Islamic economy according to which despite respecting private ownership, the property is not supposed to be at the disposal of a limited number of people.

However, it does not intend to say that we may legislate laws of our own and thereby seize the property of a certain group and leave them at the disposal of another group, but it reflects that in case Islamic laws concerning the acquisition of property as well as the taxes like one-fifths tax (khums), alms-tax (zakah), and tributes and the laws of the Muslim public treasury (bayt al-mal) and war booties be properly attended to, public interests will

be met and Muslim community will not be polarized into a minority of the affluent and a majority of the poor.

Thus the blessed Verse closes:

"And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain [from it] and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Severe in chastisement."

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse was revealed regarding the distribution of the booties acquired from Banu Nadhir, but the general context implies an injunction applicable to all the spheres of Muslims' lives as per which it is incumbent upon Muslims to obey the Noble Prophet's (S) commands in terms of the Islamic state as well as economic and devotional issues. The blessed Verse also warns the disobedient against severe torments.

In this vein, it would be of interest to make a reference in passing to the tragic account of Fadak, a prospering village located in the vicinity of Medina, 14 km from Khaybar.

It was in the seventh year after the Noble Prophet's (S) migration (hijra) to Medina that the strongholds at Khaybar fell one after the other and the central power of the Jews collapsed as a consequence of which the inhabitants of the village surrendered to the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and handed over half of their orchards and land lots to the Noble Prophet (S) and kept the rest for themselves and assumed the responsibility to cultivate the lands transferred to the Noble Prophet (S) but received some remuneration for their work on them.

The blessed Verse in question reflects that the property belonged to the Noble Prophet (S) and the property or its proceeds could be used by him. Then, the Noble Prophet (S) transferred the property to his daughter, Hadhrat Fatima . The account has been narrated by many Shi'i and Sunni Qur'an exegetes.

For instance, see the exegetic work titled Durr al-Manthur, vol. 4, p. 177, where it is narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas that when the blessed Verse:[9]

"Therefore give unto the kindred his due and to the poor and to the stranded. That is best for those who seek Allah's Countenance and it is they who shall find deliverance"

was revealed, he gave it to his daughter, Fatima , as a gift.

It is mentioned in Kanz al-'Ummal[10], on the margin of Ahmad ibn Hanbal's Musnad that concerning the question of the observation of blood ties (sila rahim) it is narrated on the authority of Abu Sa'id Khudri that upon the Revelation of the blessed Verse in question, the Noble Prophet (S) summoned Fatima saying:

"O Fatima, Fadak belongs to you."

In his historical work, Hakim Nayshaburi reports the same account.[11] In his commentary on Nahj al-Balagha, Ibn Abi al-Hadid provides a detailed account of Fadak.[12] The account is to be found in many other sources.

Following the sad demise of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), certain people thought that possessing such economic means by Imam 'Ali's (as)

wife, Fatima , could intervene with their political power and thereby decided to fully seclude Imam ‘Ali's (as) adherents.

It was in this vein that they resorted to the fabricated tradition:

“We Prophets will not leave any inheritance”

and confiscated Fatima's property. It was against the law to ask for evidence and testimony for some property in someone's possession. However, Hadhrat Fatima produced testimony to the effect that the Noble Prophet (S) had transferred Fadak to her as a gift, but they ignored the testimony.

Later when each of the caliphs desired to show their respect to the Ahl al-Bayt, they restored Fadak to them, but it was shortly confiscated once more later on. Such instances of restoration and confiscation repeatedly occurred under Umayyad and ‘Abbasid caliphs.

The account of Fadak and the ensuing incidents in the early history of Islam and in later times are amongst the most tragic and admonishing events of the history of Islam which deserve precise studies that may reveal different occurrences in the history of Islam.

It is worthy of note that in his well-known work titled Sahih Muslim, the Sunni traditionist, Muslim ibn Hajjaj Qushayri Nayshaburi provides a detailed account of Hadhrat Fatima's claim to be the rightful owner of Fadak before the First Caliph, Abu Bakr, and narrates from ‘À’isha that following the refusal of the Caliph to restore Fadak to her, she refused to talk to him to her last day.[13]

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 8

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِن دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنصُرُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

8. [And there is also a share in this booty] for the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their property, seeking Divine Bounties and Satisfaction, and helping Allah and His Messenger. Such are verily the truthful.

The blessed Verse is saying that the booties acquired from Banu Nadhir Jews which fell into the share of the Noble Prophet (S) belong to Allah, His Messenger (S), and the kindred as well as the poor emigrants who had lost their possessions when they left their homes, possessions, and land and emigrated with Allah's Messenger (S) from Mecca to Medina seeking Divine Bounties and Satisfaction.

They were the supporters of the Islamic faith and Allah's Messenger (S) and they were true in faith in Allah and His Messenger (S).

The point is that there is a token for everything thereby it may be known. The believers in the early period of the Islamic faith were tried by leading hard lives and leaving their possessions, children, peoples, and lands in the cause of the Islamic faith. They even sacrificed their lives. It is remarkable that such sacrifices were made by people who had been accustomed to idolatry all their lives.

Thus, they abandoned the religions of their ancestors and converted to monotheism. The believers in the early history of the Islamic faith made

such remarkable endeavors. Thus, those who are truthful in their belief are supposed to support Allah's religion and His Messenger (S) despite living in poverty and homelessness.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 9

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَن يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

9. And [it is also for] those who before them had homes [in Medina] and had adopted the faith [before the Emigrants], love those who emigrate from Mecca to them and in their hearts they feel no need for the booties granted to Emigrants though they live in dire poverty, but give Emigrants preference over themselves. And those who are delivered from covetousness, such are they who shall find deliverance.

The Arabic verbal for

tabawwa'u ("had homes")

derives from b-w-' ("settle down, inhabit") and is cognate with bawa' ("settle, take place"). The Arabic noun khasasa is applied to poverty leading to split in life. The passive verbal form yuqa ("delivered, saved") derives from w-q-'. The Arabic nominal form shuhh denotes covetousness tinged with avarice.[14]

Following praising the Emigrants and those who emigrated with the Noble Prophet (S) from Mecca to Medina, the blessed Verse in question proceeds to praise the Helpers who had converted to the Islamic faith prior to the Noble Prophet's (S) entering Medina and had awaited him;

("And [it is also for] those who before them had homes [in Medina] and had adopted the faith [before the Emigrants]").

The blessed Verse may allude to the believers who had settled in Medina. It may also make a reference to the point that in the same manner that they had settled in Medina, they were also rooted in their faith.

Following praising the Emigrants and those who emigrated to Medina with the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse praises the Helpers who had converted to the Islamic faith in Medina prior to the Noble Prophet's (S) arrival there and looked forward to his arrival.

"And [it is also for] those who before them had homes [in Medina] and had adopted the faith [before the Emigrants]"

alludes to the believers residing in Medina. It may also reflect that in the same manner that they resided in Medina, they were also deeply rooted in their faith.

The blessed Verse treats of some of the noble attributes and merits of the Helpers.

Firstly,

"And [it is also for] those who before them had homes [in Medina] reflects that the Helpers had converted to the Islamic faith before the Emigrants."

It may also indicate that they had converted to the Islamic faith prior to the Noble Prophet's (S) arrival in Medina and their faith was so deeply

rooted in their hearts that it resembled their settlement in their homes, namely they were firm in their beliefs. Secondly, they favored that the Emigrants stay in their homes and be hospitable to them.

"Love those who emigrate to them"

reflects that they made no distinction among Muslims, but what mattered to them was faith and emigration. Such love was regarded as one of their permanent characteristics.

Thirdly, they were not envious of what the Noble Prophet (S) granted to the Emigrants from Banu Nadhir's property nor did they expected any remuneration which bears witness to the Helpers' high-mindedness and generosity of spirit.

Fourthly,

"And give them [Emigrants] preference over themselves even though they were in need of that"

reflects that despite their need and poverty, they sacrificed whatever they had to the Emigrants and preferred them over themselves. Thus, love, making sacrifice, and high-mindedness are the glorious attributes of the Helpers.

Regarding

"and in their hearts they feel no need for the booties granted to Emigrants though they live in dire poverty, but give Emigrants preference over themselves,"

Qur'an exegetes say that when the booties were seized from Banu Nadhir, the Noble Prophet (S) distributed them amongst the Emigrants and the Helpers were satisfied with the distribution, hence the Revelation of the blessed Verse.

However, some exegetes narrate that the Noble Prophet (S) summoned the Helpers and informed them of the distribution of the booties amongst the Emigrants inquiring if they expected a share of the booties seized from Banu Nadhir.

The Helpers said:

"O Allah's Messenger (S)! We expect that you distribute them amongst the Emigrants and they stay with us since their stay is a blessing bestowed upon us."

The Noble Prophet (S) prayed for them and the blessed Verse was revealed, saying that despite their need and poverty, the Helpers preferred the Emigrants over themselves. It is narrated by 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud that one evening, following the establishment of the early and late evening prayer at the Mosque of Allah's Messenger (S), a man rose up saying that he was a stranded traveler in need of food.

The Noble Prophet (S) asked:

"Who will meet his demand for the night to receive the recompense of Paradise in return?"

The commander of the Faithful, 'Ali (as), rose up taking the man's hand.

He took him to Fatima Zahra's home, saying:

"O daughter of Allah's Messenger! Feed the guest."

Hadhrat Fatima said:

"O cousin! There is some meager food at home and Hasan and Husayn (as) are hungry and your are taking fast. The food is only for one person."

'Ali (as) replied:

"Prepare the food."

Fatima prepared the food for the guest thinking that if she ate with the guest, he would not be able to take his fill but if she did not eat, he might be ashamed. Therefore, she pretended that she was lighting the lamp and made the lighting take longer such that the guest help himself to the food. When she brought the lamp, she noticed that the food was untouched.

'Ali (as) inquired:

"Why did you not eat?"

The man replied:

"I took my fill."

Then the Commander of the Faithful (as), Fatima , their children, and the neighbors took their fill but the food was still there. 'Ali (as) went to the Noble Prophet (S) the other day. Upon the Noble Prophet's (S) inquiry concerning feeding the guest he replied that it was alright. Then, the Noble Prophet (S) told him the story of the guest, the food, and the lamp.

The Commander of the Faithful (as) asked:

"Who did inform you of the story?"

The Noble Prophet (S) replied:

"Gabriel came to me and let me know, revealing the blessed Verse

'and give them preference over themselves even thought they were in need of that.'"

The tradition is also narrated by 'Àsim ibn Kalb, a transmitter of traditions whose narrations are acknowledged by Sunnis and Shi'is. It is also narrated in exegetic works like Burhan, Nur al-Thiqalayn, Safi, Makhzan al-'Irfan, and Manhaj al-Sadiqin and some Sunni exegetic works.

The blessed Verse closes with further emphasis on such virtues and their consequences saying;

"and those who are delivered from covetousness, such are they who shall find deliverance."

In his Mufradat, Raghib says that the Arabic word shuhh denotes miserliness tinged with avarice such that the same becomes a permanent disposition.

The Arabic verbal form

yuqa ("is saved")

reflects that whoever is saved by God Almighty from such vice shall be delivered.

According to a tradition, Imam Sadiq (as) said unto a companion of his:

"Do you know who shahih is?"

He replied:

"Miserly."

The Noble Imam (as) said:

"shahih is far worse than miserly (bakhil) as the latter is miserly regarding what he possesses, but the former is also miserly regarding the possessions of his as well as other people's. Such person is not satisfied

with what Allah has provided him with but intends to possess whatever possession he sees though lawful or unlawful means."[15]

According to another tradition, miserliness, avarice, and faith may not gather in the heart of a Muslim.[16]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The best of you are your manly and generous people and the worst of you are the misers. Doing good to one's brethren and making efforts to meet their demands springs from pure and unadulterated faith."[17]

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 10

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِن بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

10. And those who came after them [the Emigrants and the Helpers] say: "Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are verily full of kindness, Most Merciful."

Qur'anic attestations of forgiveness and the related vocabulary exceed two hundred in number. It is incumbent upon us to invoke Allah for forgiveness and also ask Allah's friends to pray for our forgiveness. The blessed Verse treats of another group of early Muslims designated as Successors (tabi'un) after the Qur'anic designation.

Next to the Emigrants and the Helpers, they form the third largest group of Muslims. They are also praised by the enumeration of their virtues and merits. Firstly, they invoke God Almighty for forgiveness not only for themselves but also for their brethren. It alludes to the fact that true faith may not be tinged by self-conceit as a true believer wishes for himself what he does for others.

Secondly, another virtue of the believers is that all their virtuous attributes springs from their pure heart unadulterated by hatred and enmity against believers.

It was in the same vein that believers in the early days of Islam invoked God Almighty to bestow purity upon their hearts and their prayer was seemingly answered such that they could united and defeat the enemies and raise the banner of the Islamic faith.

Today, we are indebted to them. Had we been treading the path of our ancestors, we would be pure in heart and our hearts would be unadulterated by covetousness, miserliness, hatred, envy, self-conceit, and other vices. Thus, we were even able to exceed our ancestors in making the Muslim community more prosperous and rid ourselves of the tyranny, disbelief, and bondage to unbelievers and cooperate with each other to add further glory to the Islamic faith and Muslims.

It is also worthy of note that the antecedent of

"and those who came after them"

is seemingly

"the poor Emigrants"

reflecting that the booties do not solely fall into the share of the Emigrants and the Helpers, but the Muslims in need down the centuries should have their own shares.

The word

"brethren"

and invoking Allah, the Compassionate, the Most-Gracious reflects the spirit of love, purity, and brotherhood that should prevail over the Muslim community such that it is incumbent upon believers to wish all good things for themselves and others and all members of the Muslim community are supposed to cooperate for the good of the community. The Arabic word ghill denotes hatred, enmity, and covetousness.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 11

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا يَقُولُونَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَئِنْ أُخْرِجْتُمْ
لَنَخْرُجَنَّ مَعَكُمْ وَلَا نُطِيعُ فِيكُمْ أَحَدًا أَبَدًا وَإِن قُوتِلْتُمْ لَنَنصُرَنَّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

11. Have you not observed the hypocrites who say to their friends among the people of the Scripture who disbelieve: "If you are expelled, we verily will go out with you, and we will never obey anyone against you; and if you are attacked, we will verily help you." But Allah is Witness that they indeed are liars.

Following praising the Emigrants, the Helpers, and the Successors mentioned in the previous Verses, the blessed Verse in question depicts the hypocrites and disbelievers who were united in resisting them.

It is worthy of note that some people attend to Divine Forgiveness and some others are preoccupied with obstinacy and resisting the believers. Hypocrites sent a message to the Jews who had violated their covenant and were disfavored by the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) not to leave their vicious act since they supported them.

Thus, addressing the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), the blessed Verse is raising the question:

"Did you not see that hypocrites said unto their brethren from amongst the people of the Scriptures that if they were driven out of their land, they were prepared to wage war against the Muslims since they did not obey the Noble Prophet (S) and his Companions?"

The blessed Verse concerns a tribe of disbelievers residing in Medina. They were Banu Nadhir who failed to convert to the Islamic faith and were ordered by the Noble Prophet (S) to leave Medina or prepare themselves for a battle.

A group of hypocrites led by Ibn Ubayy and Ibn Nabtal deceived them asking them to prepare themselves for waging war against Muslims and they would render them aid and fight the Muslims and had Muslims defeated them they would accompany them in leaving their land.

Hypocrites were those who pretended to have converted to the Islamic faith but inwardly, they were disbelievers. It is in the same vein that the Holy Qur'an is explicitly saying that God Almighty bears witness that they are liars. It is the hypocrites' stratagem that they neither stand on their word nor do they keep their promise.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 12

لَئِنْ أُخْرِجُوا لَا يَخْرُجُونَ مَعَهُمْ وَلَئِن قُوتِلُوا لَا يَنصُرُونَهُمْ وَلَئِن نَّصَرُوهُمْ لَيُوَلُّنَّ الْأَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا يُنصَرُونَ

12. Surely, if they [disbelievers] are expelled, never will they [hypocrites] go out with them; and if they are attacked, they [hypocrites] will never help them. And if they do help them, they will turn their backs, and they [disbelievers and hypocrites] will not be victorious.

The blessed Verse is saying unto Muslims that they should not be afraid of the hypocrites' pompous propaganda, since they are not people of their words but they flee the ground before long. The decisive and determined style of these Verses inspires awe in the hearts of all hypocrites and opponents.

It should be borne in mind that although the blessed Verse was revealed on this occasion, but it is applicable to all instances where hypocrites closely cooperate with other enemies of the Islamic faith and promise to render aid to each other, but all their promises are unfounded.

Similar instances are to be found in not only the early history of Islam but also in the intimate cooperation between hypocrites in Muslim countries with the enemies of the Islamic faith in modern times. If true believers act upon their obligations, they will conquer their enemies and their designs will become undone.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 13

لَأَنتُمْ أَشَدُّ رَهْبَةً فِي صُدُورِهِم مِّنَ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُونَ

13. Indeed, the awe inspired by you in the hypocrites' hearts far exceeds their fear of Allah. That is because they are a people who comprehend not.

Being afraid of people rather than of Allah is an explicit token of hypocrisy. However, hypocrites are unaware of the fact that the Muslims' glory and might depend on Divine Will and Favor.

The blessed Verse analyses the reason lying behind the hypocrites' defeat saying that the awe inspired by you in their hearts exceeds that of Allah, since they are not afraid of God Almighty but they are fearful of everyone and everything, particularly of believing and persevering enemies like you, since they are ignorant. The Arabic word rahba originally denotes fear tinged with anxiety and self-consciousness. Such fear truly is deeply rooted and its tokens are to be found in their acts.

Although the blessed Verse concerns the Jews from Banu Nadhir and the reasons lying behind their defeat against the Muslims, but it is generally addressed to all hypocrites since human heart may not simultaneously entertain fear of Allah and fear all besides Him.

Everything depends upon Divine Will and whoever fears God Almighty and be aware of His Omnipotence should not be afraid of others besides Him, but the root of all misfortunes lies in ignorance of the truth of monotheism.

If Muslims today happen to be believers and Muslims in the true sense of the words, they will not entertain fear of the military and industry

superpowers but those superpowers will be afraid of them as its instances are evident such that they are afraid of a small but believing and sacrificing nation.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 14

لَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ جَمِيعًا إِلَّا فِي قُرًى مُّحَصَّنَةٍ أَوْ مِن وَرَاءِ جُدُرٍ ۚ بَأْسُهُم بَيْنَهُمْ شَدِيدٌ ۚ تَحْسَبُهُمْ جَمِيعًا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ شَتَّىٰ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَعْقِلُونَ

14. [Hypocrites are so fearful that] they fight not against you even together, except in fortified townships or from behind walls. Their enmity among themselves is more intense. You would think they were united, but their hearts are divided. That is because they are a people who reflect not.

The Arabic word qura is applied to a place of gathering and settlement be it a town or a village. The word muhassana denoting fortified is cognate with hisn ("castle"). The noun phrase qura muhassana is applied to places fortified by walls, moats, and towers. Judur is a plural noun denoting "walls" and the singular form is jidar. The word shatta is the plural form of shatit ("scattered").

Resuming the discussion in the preceding Verses, the blessed Verse is saying that hypocrites are so afraid of the believers that whenever the latter confront them, they hide behind walls and wage war against them from behind castle walls. Muslims may imagine that hypocrites are united and unanimous but the fact is that outwardly they are together but it is out of ignorance that their hearts are quite scattered and they intensely bear animosity against one another.

Reflecting upon these blessed Verses clearly indicates that the attributes ascribed to hypocrites herein are to be found in many a Muslim nowadays such that if they get together to decide on certain significant issues, they are not unanimous since they attend to their personal benefits and interests even if they lead to other people's loss.

Thus, the Muslim community is supposed to prevail over all nations in the world as addressing the believers, the Qur'anic Verse[18]:

"Therefore, do not become weak [against your enemy], nor be sad, and you will be the most triumphant people in the world, if they be firmly established in terms of faith."

Our backwardness reflects that we Muslims do not act upon the conditions on which faithfulness rests, otherwise, as reflected in the blessed Verse quoted above, we should have been the most triumphant and the mightiest of nations in the world.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 15

كَمَثَلِ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ قَرِيبًا ذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

15. [In the similitude of the Jews from Banu Nadhir] they are like their immediate predecessors [deceived by the hypocrites' empty promises]. They tasted the bitterness and afflictions consequent to their deviation and for them a painful torment.

The Arabic word wabal denotes the evil consequences of something. Believers may not be stung from the same hole but the Jews from Banu

Nadhir were deceived by hypocrites' promises failing to be reminded of similar empty promises made to the Jews from Banu Qaynuqa‘. Believers are supposed to attend to people's backgrounds.

There are certain permanent laws and traditions in history. Disbelievers went astray and tasted the bitter consequences of their error. You will reap the same if you tread the same path. Favorable and unfavorable things are the consequences of our own deeds.

Cooperation with hypocrites entails torment in this world and the Hereafter

(“and for them is excruciating torment”).

Divine excruciating torment is in store for them.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 16

كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنسَانِ اكْفُرْ فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ قَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ

16. The people of the Scriptures' being deceived by hypocrites resembles that by Satan, when he said unto man: “Disbelieve in Allah.” Then when [man] disbelieved in Allah, Satan said: “I hate you and I detach myself from you. I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

The blessed Verse reminds the believers of another attribute of hypocrites resembling a hypocrite to Satan who following having deceived his followers he uses different designs to tempt them to disbelieve in Allah. Satan does not keep his promise but leads his followers astray saying that he is fearful of the Lord of the worlds. It is to be noted that the hypocrites' temptations and provocations resemble those by Satan, but it is man who chooses to be led astray from the true path.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 17

فَكَانَ عَاقِبَتَهُمَا أَنَّهُمَا فِي النَّارِ خَالِدَيْنِ فِيهَا وَذَٰلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ

17. The end of both [Satan and disbelievers is that they] will be in the Fire for good. Such is the recompense of the wrong-doers.

The blessed Verse clearly expresses the fate of Satan and his followers as well as hypocrites and their disbelieving allies which is abiding in the Fire for ever. The general rule is that cooperation with disbelievers, hypocrites, Satan, and his allies entails defeat, misfortune, and torment in this world and the Hereafter; whereas, the cooperation of the believers and their allies is permanent and everlasting and it will entail triumph and being granted Divine Mercy in both worlds.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 18

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

18. O you who believe! Fear Allah and refrain from disobedience to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for the morrow, and fear Allah since He is All-Aware of what you do.

Addressed to the believers, the blessed Verse draws a conclusion of the dire and excruciating fate of Banu Nadhir, hypocrites, and Satan saying:

"O you who believe! Fear Allah and refrain from disobedience to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for the morrow."

To lay further emphasis, the blessed Verse adds:

"Fear Allah since He is All-Aware of what you do."

Fear of Allah leads man to reflect upon his fate on the Day of Resurrection and purify his deeds. As mentioned above, reiteration of fear of Allah lays further emphasis, since the springhead of all righteous deeds is fear of Allah.

The Arabic word ghad originally denotes "tomorrow" but it ad hoc connotes the Day of Resurrection, since taking into account the life of the world, we notice that the Day of Resurrection will arrive soon.

To reflect its significance, the Arabic word ghad is used in the indefinite form. The Arabic word nafs may connote everyone, namely each and every person is supposed to reflect upon his morrow without expecting others to do anything for him, since so long as he is in this world, he may send forth whatever he may.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 19

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنسَاهُمْ أَنفُسَهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

19. And be not like those who forgot Allah and He caused them to forget their own selves. Those are the disobedient.

Resuming the discussion on fearing Allah and attending to one's fate on the Day of Resurrection, the blessed Verse emphasizes fear of God Almighty saying:

"Be not like those who forgot Allah and He caused them to forget themselves."

Fear of God Almighty basically rests on two things: remembrance of God Almighty, namely permanently attending toward God Almighty and being aware of His Presence at all times and in all places; attending to Divine Justice and the Record of deeds in which each and every act, small and significant, is recorded.

It is in this vein that the Prophets and the friends of Allah fore and foremost attended to the two principles of Origin and Resurrection and their significance in purifying the individual and the society.

It is worthy of note that the Holy Qur'an is explicitly saying that forgetting God Almighty leads to forgetting one's own self. The reason lying behind such oblivion is that forgetting God Almighty leads man to drown in concupiscent desires and pleasures of the flesh and forget the goal of his creation and thereby neglect to make the required saving for the Day of Resurrection.

On the other hand, forgetting God Almighty entails consigning His Pure Attributes, e.g. Absolute Existence, Omniscience, and boundless needlessness, into oblivion, although all beings besides God Almighty are dependent upon and in need of His Pure Essence. Such oblivion leads man to regard himself as independent and needless and thereby forget the reality and identity of his human existence.

One of the worst afflictions of man is basically his forgetting his own self, since in this manner he forgets his God given inherent faculties which distinguish him from other creatures. Such oblivion is on a par with forgetting one's own humanity and such person degrades himself to the degree of a savage beast and may never think about anything but the pleasures of the flesh.

They all constitute the main cause of disobedience to God Almighty and such oblivion is the worst instance disobedience to God.

It is in the same vein that the blessed Verse closes with the clause

"They [such forgetful people] are the disobedient."

It is also worthy of note that the blessed Verse is encouraging people not to be like those who forgot God Almighty and He made them entangled with oblivion rather than asking people not to forget Him.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 20

لَا يَسْتَوِي أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ وَأَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ

20. Not equal are the dwellers of the Fire and the dwellers of the Paradise. It is the dwellers of Paradise that will be the saved and the victorious.

The blessed Verse makes a comparison between the two groups, namely that of God fearing believers attending to the Origin and the Day of Resurrection and that of the forgetful oblivious of God Almighty and their own selves, saying:

"Not equal are the dwellers of the Fire and the dwellers of the Paradise,"

neither in this world, nor in their beliefs, manner of thought, individual and collective manner of life, and their goals, nor in terms of the Hereafter, the Day of Resurrection, revival of sublime human values, and amassing savings for the everlasting life. The latter group is drowned in the pleasures of the flesh, worldly possessions, and oblivion. Thus, man is in a dilemma, namely he must either join the former or the latter, since there is no other path to tread.

The blessed Verse closes with a decisive conclusion saying that the dwellers are Paradise are solely the saved and the victorious not only in this world, but in the Hereafter, when serenity and deliverance will fall into their share.

However, total defeat in both worlds is in store for the oblivious. It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that the dwellers of Paradise are those who obey Allah's Messenger (S) and acknowledge the Divine Guardianship of ‘Ali (as). The dwellers of the Fire are those who disfavored Imam ‘Ali's (as) Divine Guardianship and disobeyed him and waged war against him.[19]

It is worthy of note, however, that it is one of the explicit applications of the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse and affects in no way the general application of the blessed Verse.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 21

لَوْ أَنزَلْنَا هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَىٰ جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

21. Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, you would surely have seen it humbling itself and rend asunder by the fear of Allah. Such are the parables which We put forward to mankind that they may reflect.

The preceding blessed Verses made use of different ways to penetrate into the hearts of mankind and most explicitly expressed the most significant issues. The blessed Verse in question, reflecting all Qur'anic Verses, reveals that the Holy Qur'an is so penetrating that had it been sent down on mountains, they would have trembled; however, it is a source of surprise that man is so stone-hearted that he hears it but he is not affected by it.

The blessed Verse is saying that

"Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, you would surely have seen it humbling itself and rend asunder by the fear of Allah. Such are the parables which We put forward to mankind that they may reflect."

Many a Qur'an exegete have taken the blessed Verse as a simile maintaining that despite all their firmness, had mountains had intellect and perception, they would have trembled and rent asunder upon hearing Qur'anic Verses, but some hard-hearted people hear them without being affected in the least.

In this vein, the exegetes maintain that

"Such are the parables which We put forward to mankind"

substantiates the interpretation.

Some other exegetes, however, taking into account the outward meaning of the blessed Verse, say that all the creatures in this world, e.g. mountains, possess some sort of perception and had these blessed Verses been sent unto them, they would have verily rent asunder.

In this vein, they maintain that the interpretation is substantiated by the blessed Verse[20]

"Then, your hearts were hardened and turned into stones out of which rivers gush forth and verily there are of them which split asunder so that water flows from them and verily there are of them which fall down for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unaware of what you do."

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse is saying that mountains would have been humbled before the Holy Qur'an, then it proceeds to say that they would have been rent asunder, alluding that the Holy Qur'an would have penetrated into them in time whose tokens would have been reflected in them such that they would have lost their firmness like restless enamored people and then would have been rent asunder.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 22

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ ۖ هُوَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ الرَّحِيمُ

22. He is Allah, beside Whom none has the right to be worshipped but He, the Omniscient of the unseen and the seen. He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The recitation of the closing blessed Verses of the Chapter in question have been strongly recommended in traditions and different Blessings have been enumerated for the same instances of which include being absolved of sins and attaining to the elevated state of martyrs.[21]

It is through the recitation of these blessed Verses that man may attend to the Divine Attributes mentioned herein and find the Greatest Name of God, since fifteen, and according to some exegetes eighteen, Divine Attributes have been mentioned in these blessed Verses each of which reflect His Boundless and Absolute Perfect Attributes.

The true object of worship is the Being Whose Omniscience, Graciousness, Sanctity, Glory, and Grandeur is Perfect and such Attributes solely belong to God Almighty. Therefore, there is no object of worship but Him. Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that He is the Lord besides Whom there is no other object of worship.

He is Omniscient of the seen and the unseen. He is the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful. The blessed Verse, above all, lays emphasis on monotheism as the basis of all His Positive and Negative Attributes as well as knowing God Almighty. Then, the blessed Verse proceeds to lay further emphasis on Divine Omniscience regarding the seen and the unseen.

In his Mufradat, Raghib says that presence (hudhur) is accompanied by observation, through the outward or inward eye. Thus, where human perception and observation penetrate, it is the world of presence and what lies beyond the realm of perception and observation is the world of the unseen or intuition.

It is worthy of note, however, that they are all equal before Divine Omniscience, since His Infinite Presence is Omnipresent.

Thus, nothing lies beyond Divine Omniscience and Omnipresence, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[22]:

"And with Him are the keys of the unseen, none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls, but He knows it. There is not a grain in the shadows of neither the earth nor anything fresh or dry, but it is written in a Clear Record."

Attending to this Divine Attributes makes man aware of the fact that He is Omnipresent and Omniscient. Thus, man fear God Almighty and is aware that His Graciousness embraces all creatures particularly the believers.

Emphasis is laid on Divine Graciousness such that man sets his hope on treading the long path of perfection leading toward God Almighty being aware that he may not pass beyond the shadows and error without Divine Graciousness. Thus, besides, Divine Oneness, three other Divine Attributes are mentioned in the blessed Verse each of which leads to inspiration in some way or another.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 23

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

23. He is Allah beside Whom none has the right to be worshipped but He, the Sovereign, the Holy, the One Free from all defects, the Giver of

security, the Dominant over all things, the Invincible All-Mighty, the Compeller, the Supreme. Glory be to Allah! [High is He] above all that they associate as partners with Him.

Besides emphasizing Divine Unity, eight more Divine Attributes are enumerated in the blessed Verse: there is no object of worship besides Him; He is the Sovereign and the Absolute Owner of all things; He is free from all defects; He wrongs no one; He bestows security upon all.

"Allah calls to the Home of Peace and guides who He wills to the Straight Path"[23]***.***

"Wherewith Allah guides all those who seek His Good Pleasure to ways of peace"[24]***.***

The believers'

"abode of peace is with their Lord."

The people of Paradise will be greeted by

"but only the saying of greetings with peace"[25]***.***

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that He bestows security and faith upon His friends, namely the believers. He is the Protector and Watcher of all things. He is so Mighty that He is Invincible. He improves everything through His Invincible Will.

The Arabic word jabbar is employed in ten instances in the senses of "compeller, dominant" and "improver" nine instances of which refer to wrong-doers, the disobedient, and the corrupt, but solely one instance, in the blessed Verse in question, refers to God Almighty.

The blessed Verse also says that He is Worthy of Grandeur and there is no being more exalted and sublime than Him. The Arabic word mutakkabir is applied in two different senses, one is praised applying to God Almighty denoting having grandeur, good deeds and attributes and the other is blameworthy used for beings besides God Almighty.

The latter sense connotes that insignificant people claim grandeur and ascribe attributes to themselves of which they are free. Since God Almighty is the only Being worthy of Grandeur and Magnificence, the word in its ameliorative sense is applied to Him. The word in its pejorative sense is applied to beings besides God Almighty.

The blessed Verse closes by laying emphasis on Divine Unity, mentioned in the beginning of the blessed Verse, saying:

"Glory be to Allah! [High is He] above all that they associate as partners with Him."

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 24

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

24. He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor of all things, the Bestower of forms. To Him belong the Best Names and Attributes. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him. And He is the Unrivalled All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

The Arabic word bari' denotes one who invents something unprecedentedly. God Almighty is the Creator Who in creating His

creatures bestowed forms on things without resorting to already existent patterns and forms.

The blessed Verse, the last Verse of the Chapter in question, proceeds to enumerate six more Divine Attributes, saying that He is the Creator (al-khlaliq) Who invented creatures in the best forms without resorting to already existent forms (al-bari'); the Creator who bestowed a specific form to each being (al-musawwir).

Since Divine Attributes are not restricted to these attributes, but They are Infinite like His Infinite Essence, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that The Most Beautiful Attributes belong to Him; consequently, He is free from any defect and all beings in the heavens and the earth glorify Him.

Finally, to lay further emphasis on the system of creation and the order prevailing over it, mention is made of two more Attributes of His: He is the Unrivalled All-Mighty, the All-Wise. The former reflects His Omnipotence over all things and the latter alludes to His Omniscience regarding the system of creation and the precise order prevailing over creation.

Therefore, besides treating of Divine Unity twice, the last three Verses enumerate seventeen Divine Attributes:

1. the Omniscient of the seen and the unseen (al-'alim al-ghayb wa al-shahada)
2. All-Gracious (al-rahman)
3. All-Merciful (al-rahim)
4. The Sovereign (al-malik)
5. The Holy (Quddus)
6. The Peace (al-salam)
7. The Bestower of Security (al-mu'min)
8. The Protector (al-muhaymin)
9. The All-Mighty (al-'aziz)
10. The Most Powerful (al-jabbar)
11. The Magnificent (al-mutakkabir)
12. The Creator (al-khaliq)
13. The Inventor (al-bari')
14. The Bestower of forms (al-musawwir)
15. The All-Wise (al-hakim)
16. Possessing the Most Beautiful Attributes
17. The One Glorified by all the creatures of the world.

Taking into account Divine Unity, eighteen Divine Attributes have been enumerated herein. It is to be noted that Divine Unity and All-Mighty have been mentioned twice. The enumeration of the Attributes follows a specific order in the three blessed Verses.

The first blessed Verse treats of the most general Attribute of Divine Essence, the Omniscient and the most general Attributes of Action, All-Gracious from which all Divine Acts spring. The second Verse treats of His Sovereignty and the aspects of His Absolute Sovereignty, e.g. the Holy, the Peace, the Bestower of Security, the All-Mighty, the Magnificent. The last Verse treats of creation and its aspects, e.g. order, bestowing of forms, Omnipotence, and Wisdom.

Thus, the blessed Verses in question guide those treading the path of knowing Allah at different stages, beginning with His Pure Essence, proceeding toward the world of creation, and guiding them from creatures to the Creator and thereby purifying the heart as the abode of Divine Attributes and the center of Divine forms.

Thus, they are fostered in the light of such teachings and their souls blossom with the fear of God Almighty and thereby deserve nearness unto Him. Thus, unanimous with all the constituent elements of the world, they glorify His Holiness.

Great significance has thereby been accorded to these blessed Verses in Islamic traditions.

It is noteworthy that the blessed Chapter in question opens and closes by the glorification of God Almighty and two Divine Most Beautiful Attributes, the All-Mighty and the All-Wise, since the final goal of the recitation of the Chapter is to know God Almighty, glorifying him, and knowing His Holy Attributes. It is also worthy of note that a detailed discussion is to found above under 7:18.

May God Almighty, by His Most Beautiful Attributes, humble our hearts before the Holy Qur'an and protect us, out of His Mercy, from satanic temptations.

Notes

1. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan, the opening of the blessed Chapter in question, vol. 9, p. 20; Qurtubi's exegetic work, the opening of the blessed Chapter in question.
2. 17:44
3. Ithbat al-Huda, vol. 7, p. 124.
4. Raghib's Mufradat.
5. Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 16.
6. Such interpretation is maintained by Shi‘i exegetes and many Sunni exegetes, amongst whom mention may be made of the following: Fakhr Razi in Tafsir Kabir; Isma‘il ibn Mustafa Haqqi in Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan; Sayyid Qutb in Fi Halal al-Qur'an; Maraghi in his exegetic work; Àlusi in Ruh al-Ma‘ani.
7. Majma‘ al-Bayan; Wasa'il al-Shi‘a, vol. 6, p. 368.
8. Wasa'il al-Shi‘a, vol. 6, p. 356
9. 30:38
10. vol. 2, p. 185
11. Kitab Fadak, p. 49.
12. Ibn Abi al-Hadid's Sharh Nahj al-Balagha, vol. 16, p. 209.
13. Sahih Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1380, Kitab al-Jihad, tradition 52.
14. Raghib's Mufradat.
15. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 291, tradition 64.
16. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
17. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p. 307.
18. 3:139
19. Tafsir Safi; Tafsir Burhan; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
20. 2:74

21. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan; Manhaj al-Sadiqin; Tafsir Safi; Tafsir Nur; Tafsir Burhan; Suyuti's Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, under the blessed Chapter in question.
22. 6:59
23. 10:25
24. 5:16
25. 56:26

Surah al-Mumtahana, Chapter 60

(The Woman to be Examined)

Section (juz') 28

Number of Verses: 13

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has thirteen Verses and owes its designation to the tenth Verse treating of the examination of Emigrant women. The blessed Chapter treats of love for God Almighty and forbidding believers from befriending His enemies. Muslims are also enjoined to regard Prophet Abraham (as) as a model.

Nine blessed Qur'anic Chapters, namely 9, 33, 47, 60, 63, 70, 98, 109, and 111, from amongst one hundred and fourteen Chapters, open with the recognition of enemies. Such Qur'anic Verses exceed those of revealed prescripts (ayat al-ahkam).

The Qur'anic instances of the words
dhull ("error"),
kufr ("disbelief"),
nifaq ("hypocrite"),
and
sadd ("aversion")
are attested 191, 521, 37, and 45 times respectively.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

According to a Prophetic tradition, whoever recites Surah al-Mumtahana, all believing men and women will intercede on his behalf on the Day of Resurrection.[1]

Other traditions have been narrated on the merits of the recitation of the Chapter; however, such merits fall into the share of those who attend to the blessed Verses of the Chapter in question for the sake of liking, disliking, and waging jihad and application of their contextual meaning in Allah's Cause rather than being content with the passive recitation of the same.

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُم مِّنَ الْحَقِّ يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَن تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِي سَبِيلِي وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي تُسِرُّونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنتُمْ وَمَن يَفْعَلْهُ مِنكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ

1. O you who believe! Take not My enemies and your enemies as friends. You befriend them while they have disbelieved in what has come

to you of the Truth. Besides they have driven out the Messenger and yourselves [from Mecca] since you believe in Allah, your Lord! If you have come forth to strive in My Cause and to seek My Good Pleasure [, do not befriend them]. You show friendship to them in secret while I am All-Aware of what you conceal and what you reveal. And whoever of you does that, then verily he has gone astray from the Straight Path.

Occasion of Revelation. The majority of Qur'anic exegetes have explicitly mentioned that the blessed Verse concerns Hatib ibn Abi Bulta'a. In his Majma' al-Bayan, Tabarsi narrates that a certain woman by the name of Sara, from a Meccan tribe, departing from Mecca for Median, came unto Allah's Messenger (S).

The Noble Prophet (S) asked her whether she had converted to the Islamic faith and had come there. She provided a negative reply.

Upon being asked by the Noble Prophet as to the reason lying behind her departure, she replied:

"We were descended from you. Now that all my guardians have departed, I have been severely rendered in need. I have come here so that you may provide me with clothes and a mount."

The Noble Prophet (S) asked inquired:

"What happened to the Meccan youth?"

The question alluded to her profession as a vocalist performing for the youth."

She replied that following the battle of Badr, no one had asked her to perform on the vocals. The response reflects the severity of the polytheists' defeat at the battle of Badr. Thus, the Noble Prophet (S) ordered the children of 'Abd al-Muttalib to provide her with clothes, a mount, and some money for her travel.

The Noble Prophet (S) was preparing himself for the conquest of Mecca at the time when Hatib ibn Abi Bulta'a, a Muslim of fame who had participated at the battle of Badr and the Ridhwan Pledge (Bay'a) came unto Sara. He wrote a letter and asked her to hand it to the people of Mecca. He also provided her with ten dinars and some brocade.

In his letter, Hatib had informed the people of Mecca that Allah's Messenger intended to confront them and had asked them to prepare themselves for defending themselves. Sara took the letter and headed for Mecca.

Upon being apprised of the story by Gabriel, the Noble Prophet (S) ordered Hadhrat 'Ali (as), 'Ammar Numayr, Zubayr, Talha, Miqdad, and Abu Marthad to mount and head for Mecca. He told them that they would meet with a woman en route who would carry a letter from Hatib to Meccan polytheists. They were ordered to seize the letter.

Upon meeting with her, she denied carrying such letter and swore to the same. They searched her luggage, but they failed to find it.

Therefore, they made up their mind to return, but Hadhrat 'Ali drew his sword saying:

"Neither the Messenger (S) nor we forge lies. Produce the letter, or else I will behead you."

Appreciating the seriousness of the issue, she took out the letter from her hair.

The letter was taken to the Noble Prophet (S).

Having summoned Hatib, the Noble Prophet (S) asked him:

"Do you recognize the letter?"

He replied:

"Yes."

He inquired:

"Why did you send the letter?"

He answered:

"O Allah's Messenger (S)! Since the day on which I converted to the Islamic faith, I have neither disbelieved for a single moment, nor have I betrayed you, nor have I accepted the polytheist's invitation from whom I have separated, but the point is that all Emigrants know people in Mecca who support their families against the polytheists and I am a stranger here and my family are their captives. I intended to curry their favor to ward off harm to my family.

However, I was aware that God Almighty would cause their defeat and my letter would do them no good."

The Noble Prophet (S) accepted his excuse, but 'Umar rose up asking Allah's Messenger to allow him to behead the hypocrite. The Noble Prophet (S) said that he was one of the warriors fighting at the Battle of Badr and God Almighty favored them. Then the blessed Verses in question were revealed and provided Muslims with significant lessons regarding refraining befriending the polytheists and Allah's enemies.[2]

The society of believers should not befriend Allah's enemies. It was mentioned in the occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verses in question that a Muslim without intending espionage expressed his favor for the enemies of the Islamic faith as a consequence of which the blessed Verses was revealed to warn Muslims not to embark upon such measures.

The blessed Verse opens by addressing the believers saying that Allah's and your enemies are not to be befriended, since they are Allah's and your own enemies. The blessed Verse proceeds to say that you express your affection for them whereas they disbelieve what has been revealed unto you of Truth, namely the Islamic faith and the Holy Qur'an.

They drive you and Allah's Messenger (S) out of your homelands. They are against your beliefs and confront you regarding your greatest glory, i.e. belief in God Almighty as your gravest sin and crime as a consequence of which you have been driven out of your homeland by them. Thus, it would not be befitting had you expressed your affection toward them. It is incumbent upon you to strive beside the mighty army of Muslim warriors to liberate them from Divine Retribution.

The blessed Verse further expounds that if you have emigrated from your homeland to wage jihad in Divine Cause and Satisfaction, you are not supposed to establish friendly ties with them.

If you truly claim to be Allah's friends, having emigrated from your homeland in His Cause, seeking to wage jihad in His Cause and for His Good Pleasure, God Almighty is All-Aware of your overt and covert

intentions and it would be useless to keep secrets from the Omniscient Lord Who is All-Aware of the seen and the unseen.

The blessed Verse closes with a decisive warning to the effect that whoever from amongst you befriends Allah's and your enemies, he has indeed gone astray in that he has deviated from the Straight Path imagining that he may keep something secret from God Almighty and he has also gone astray from the path of faith, devotion, and fear of God Almighty.

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 2

إِن يَثْقَفُوكُمْ يَكُونُوا لَكُمْ أَعْدَاءً وَيَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَأَلْسِنَتَهُم بِالسُّوءِ وَوَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ

2. Should they gain the upper hand over you, they would be your bitter enemies and mistreat you with their hands and their tongues with evil and they desire that you should desist from believing in your faith and disbelieve.

The Arabic root th-q-f denotes "to find, to confront," connoting that your enemies will not be satisfied unless you disbelieve. The blessed Verse is saying that how could believers befriend their enemies if wherever they find them, they will reveal their enmity through mistreating, slandering, and slaying them. Disbelievers intend that believers desist from believing and turn into disbelievers like them.

In epistle 53 addressed to Malik Ashtar mentioned in Nahj al-Balagha, Hadhrat ‘Ali (as) says:

"Beware of the enemies' stratagems even after concluding the truce, since at times, the enemy approaches you to catch you by surprise."

In Ghurar al-Hikam, he also says:

"Do not feel secure from the enemy's harm even if he lauds you…"

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 3

لَن تَنفَعَكُمْ أَرْحَامُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

3. Neither your relatives nor your children will benefit you on the Day of Resurrection. He separates you on that Day and Allah is the All-Seer of what you do.

The blessed Verse provides a response to people like Hatib ibn Abi Bulta‘a who replying to the Noble Prophet's (S) inquiry regarding the reason behind divulging the secrets of the Muslims to the polytheists said that they have relatives in hands of Meccan disbelievers and by divulging the intelligence they intended to preserve them.

In this vein, the blessed Verse is saying that your relatives including your descendants will be of no avail to you since disbelieving relatives are neither regarded as fame, nor substance in this world nor a means of deliverance in the Hereafter. Why must believers embark upon certain measures which entail Divine Wrath and severance from His friends.

The blessed Verse further says that God Almighty will separate you and them on the Day of Resurrection. The believers and the disbelievers will tread the paths toward Hell and Paradise respectively substantiating the

statement as per which relation ties shall be totally severed on the Day of Resurrection and they shall be of no avail to them.

The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse resembles certain other Qur'anic Verses[3]:

"That Day shall a man flee from his brother, and from his mother and his father, and from his wife and his children."

The blessed Verse closes with reiterates the warning that God Almighty is All-Aware of what you do, your intentions, and your secret intentions.

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 4

قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قَالُوا لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَآءُ مِنكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّىٰ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ إِلَّا قَوْلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ لَأَسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ وَمَا أَمْلِكُ لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِن شَيْءٍ رَّبَّنَا عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ أَنَبْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

4. Verily, there has been an excellent example for you in Abraham and those with him when they said unto their people: "Indeed we dislike you and whatever you worship besides Allah, we have rejected you and there will be between us and you enmity and hatred for ever until you believe in Allah Alone" except the saying of Abraham to his father: "Indeed, I will ask forgiveness [from Allah] for you but I have no power to do anything for you before Allah." "Our Lord! In you we put our trust in You and to You we turn in repentance and to You is our final return.

The Arabic word

uswa ("model")

is cognate with ta'assi ("following, emulation"). Imam Husayn (as) is narrated as saying that he is the model in struggling against the enemies of the Islamic faith.[4]

Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his arrival) is quoted as saying:

"The Messenger of Allah's (S) daughter, Hadhrat Zahra' is my perfect model."[5]

Since the Glorious Qur'an presents significant examples of the world of humanity to complement Divine Teachings, the blessed Verse, following the strong forbidding against befriending Allah's enemies, makes mention of Prophet Abraham (as) as the great leader respected by all nations, particularly the Arabs, saying that Prophet Abraham (as) and his adherents serve as a good example for your life, as the Arch-Prophet's (as) life is thoroughly a model of worshipping God Almighty, waging jihad in His Cause and loving His Pure Essence.

The Muslim community takes pride in their designation of the nation of Abraham (as) may set him as a perfect example in this respect.

The expression

"those with him"

designates the believers, limited in number, who followed him in worshipping God Almighty. Some maintain that the expression connotes the Prophets following his example or those Prophets who were his contemporaries is seemingly far-fetched.

To further expound the meaning, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that on that day when they said unto their polytheist and disbelieving peoples that they dislike them and what they worship besides God Almighty. They neither recognize you as believers nor your beliefs as true beliefs. They dislike both them and their worthless beliefs. To lay further emphasis on their assertions, they said that they disbelieved in them.

According to some traditions, such disbelief is one of the five types of disbelief. They said that they would persist in their denial until they believe in the One God and thereby expressed their dislike of Allah's enemies with utmost decisiveness and assertiveness declaring that such separation was irrevocable for good, unless they changed their course and convert to monotheism.

However, since there were exceptions in Abraham's life aiming at guiding some polytheists, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that they severed all their ties with the disbelieving people and refrained from expressing and affectionate words with them, except for Abraham's (as) promise to his father, or paternal uncle, Àzar, to the effect that the Prophet (as) would ask forgiveness for him from God Almighty, though God Almighty is the Oft-Forgiving and he failed to do anything but invoking Him for forgiveness.

Such exception is truly indicative of Prophet Abraham's (as) and his followers' severance of any ties with idolaters aiming at certain specific circumstances as well as expedience, since the evidence reflects that Abraham (as) had seemingly noticed the preparedness of his paternal uncle, Àzar, to convert to monotheism, but the latter was concerned that if he converted to monotheism, what would happen to his span of life spent in idolatry.

Prophet Abraham (as) assured him that he would invoke God Almighty for forgiving him and stood on his word, though Àzar failed to believe. When Prophet Abraham (as) wa certain about Àzar's enmity against God Almighty, he desisted from invoking God Almighty for his forgiveness and severed all his ties with him.

It is worthy of note that that Prophet Abraham's (as) promise to Àzar for invoking God Almighty to forgive him aimed at inviting him to believe in God Almighty rather than for mundane goals.

Thus, the blessed Verse closes by saying that they said:

"O Lord! We put our trust in You, We turned to You in repentance, and all shall finally return unto You."

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 5

رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

5. "Our Lord! Make us not a means of error for the disbelievers but forgive us, Our Lord! Indeed, You are the Omnipotent, the All-Wise.

The blessed Verse reflects the words of Prophet Abraham (as), Allah's friend, saying:

"O Lord! Do not make us the trial for those who disbelieved such that they have the upper hand over us and cause torments and troubles for us or make us turn away from the true faith. Forgive our sins and error, O

Lord! You are True in your Acts. You are Predominant over all beings. Assist us to rid ourselves of the evils caused by the polytheists and disbelievers."

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 6

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيهِمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ ۚ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

6. Certainly, there has been in them [Prophet Abraham (as) and his followers] an excellent example for one who sets his hopes in Allah and the Last Day. And whoever turns away, indeed Allah is Needless, Worthy of all Praise.

It is certainly incumbent upon the believers to follow Abraham (as) and his righteous deeds, if they set their hopes on Divine Mercy and attaining to elevated states in the Hereafter.

The reiteration of

"excellent example"

reflects following Prophet Abraham (as) whose meritorious deeds and virtues were mentioned in the preceding blessed Verses including his dislike of Allah's enemies and expressing needfulness of the Absolute Needless, reliance and setting one's hopes on Him, and invoking Him for forgiveness.

The blessed Verses closes by saying that whoever disobeys God Almighty and befriends His enemies, has certainly incurred loss and God Almighty is Needless of Him.

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 7

عَسَى اللَّهُ أَن يَجْعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ عَادَيْتُم مِّنْهُم مَّوَدَّةً ۚ وَاللَّهُ قَدِيرٌ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

7. It is hoped that Allah will make friendship between you and those whom you hold as enemies [through their conversion to the Islamic faith upon the conquest of Mecca]. And Allah is Omnipotent, Oft-Forgiving, and Most Merciful.

The blessed Verse treats of love for God Almighty and severance of ties with polytheists. Since such severance of ties created some emotional vacuum for some Muslims, though the true believers following the Noble Prophet of Allah (S) were steadfast in this vein, to provide them with Recompense and fill such vacuum, God Almighty bears them the glad tidings asking them to entertain no sorrow as the circumstances would change for the better.

The blessed Verse is saying that it is hoped that God Almighty will establish friendly ties between you and your foes through their conversion to the Islamic faith. Such promise was realized in the eighth year after the Noble Prophet's (S) migration to Medina when Muslims conquered Mecca and the people of Mecca embraced the Islamic faith in groups and the leaden clouds of enmity dispersed and faith shone with the warmth of love and friendship.

The point is that when Muslims notice that the beloved of theirs separate from their ideological line, they should not lose their hopes of their return,

since the Omnipotent Allah may alter the hearts and He is the One Who forgives the sins and faults of His Servants.

Thus, the blessed Verse closes by saying that

"And Allah is Omnipotent, Oft-Forgiving, and Most Merciful."

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verses 8-9

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

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

8. Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion nor drove you out of your homes. Indeed, Allah loves those who deal with equity.

9. It is only as regards those who fought against you on account of religion and have driven you out of your homes and helped to drive you out that Allah forbids you to befriend them. And whoever will befriend them, then such are the wrong-doers.

The blessed Verses provide further exposition on forbidding befriending polytheists. The blessed Verse 8 is saying that God Almighty does not forbid you to do good to and deal justly with those who did not struggle against you owing to your conversion to the Islamic faith nor did they drive you out of your homeland, since God Almighty loves those who deal with equity.

The blessed Verse 9 is saying that God Almighty solely forbids you to refrain from befriending those who fought against you on account of your faith and drove you out of your homeland or contributed to your being driven out. God Almighty strictly forbids you from establishing friendly ties with them and whoever befriends them is regarded as a wrong-doer disobeying Allah's Command.

Thus, non-Muslims fall into two groups. There were those who confronted Muslims by drawing their swords against them and driving them from their homeland and demonstrated their enmity against Islam and Muslims through their words and deeds. It is incumbent upon Muslims to sever all their ties with them and refrain from befriending them.

The group is explicitly represented by Meccan polytheists, particularly their chiefs, some of whom perpetrated such misdeeds and some others rendered them support. There were also disbelievers who neither entertained enmity against Muslims nor did they fought them nor contributed to driving them out of their homeland.

There were still non-Muslims who had made treaties of non-intervention with Muslims and befriending them entailed no loss. It was also incumbent upon Muslims to keep their treaties with them and strive toward the administration of justice.

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 10

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا جَاءَكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ مُهَاجِرَاتٍ فَامْتَحِنُوهُنَّ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِهِنَّ فَإِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوهُنَّ مُؤْمِنَاتٍ فَلَا تَرْجِعُوهُنَّ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ لَا هُنَّ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحِلُّونَ لَهُنَّ وَآتُوهُم مَّا أَنفَقُوا وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَن تَنكِحُوهُنَّ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوا بِعِصَمِ الْكَوَافِرِ وَاسْأَلُوا مَا أَنفَقْتُمْ وَلْيَسْأَلُوا مَا أَنفَقُوا ذَٰلِكُمْ حُكْمُ اللَّهِ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

10. O you who believe! When believing women [separated from disbelieving husbands] come unto you as emigrants, examine them [in terms of faith]. Allah knows best as to their faith. Then, if you ascertain that they are true believers, send them not back to the disbelievers. They are not lawful for the disbelievers nor are the disbelievers lawful for them. But give them that [amount of money] which they have spent on them. And keep not the disbelieving women as wives and ask for [the return of] that which you have spent [as mahr or bridal gift] and let them [the disbelievers] ask back for that which they have spent [had the women converted to the Islamic faith and had joined you]. That is the Decree of Allah by Which He judges between you and Allah is Omniscient, All-wise.

Occasion of Revelation

Some Qur'an exegetes narrate that Allah's Messenger (S) concluded a treaty with Meccan polytheists at Hudaybiyya as per which any Meccan who joins Muslims should be returned to Mecca, but if any of the Muslims forego his faith and returns to Mecca, he may not be returned.

A certain woman by the name of Subay'a converted to the Islamic faith at the time and joined the Muslims at Hudaybiyya. Her husband went to the Noble Prophet (S) and asked for her return to him as per the newly concluded treaty. The blessed Verse in question was revealed commanding the Muslims to examine the emigrant women in terms of their faith.

Ibn 'Abbas is quoted as saying that they were examined by being asked to take an oath to the effect that their emigration had not been owing to hatred against their husbands nor liking for the new land nor for any other mundane goal but they had emigrated solely for the sake of the Islamic faith. The woman in question took the oath.

Thus, Allah's Messenger (S) reimbursed the mahr paid by her husband and the other expenses borne by him saying that the treaty solely includes men rather than women. Such occasion of Revelation is mentioned in the majority of Sunni and Shi'i exegetic sources.

The blessed Verse depicts a clear picture of the Islamic faith as the one fostering justice. Firstly, the emigrated woman is not left on her own. Secondly, the right of the disbelieving husband is not ignored but the mahr and other expenses borne by him are reimbursed from the Muslim public treasury (bayt al-mal).

Thirdly, the female instinctual and emotional needs and also her financial needs are being met by the two commands

"marry them"

and

"pay them their mahr."

It is worthy of note that emigration may stem from fleeing from one's husband, liking for living a new life, espionage, gaining possessions, or reunion with relatives. Thus, the incentives are supposed to be clarified.

The blessed Verse in question treats of emigrant women and it includes seven decrees which mainly concerns emigrant women and some of them pertain to disbelieving women as follows:

The first decree regards emigrant women.

Addressing the believers the blessed Verse is saying:

"O you who believe! When believing women emigrate unto you, do not send them away but examine them."

Examination of believing women is owing to the point that some of them said the formula of faith, namely

"There is no god but Allah and Muhammad (S) is Allah's Messenger (S)"

and thus they joined the believers but their belief was supposed to be ascertained by having them take an oath to the effect that their emigration had been for conversion to the Islamic faith rather than out of enmity against their husbands or love for other men or Medina and the like.

The twelfth blessed Verse of the Chapter in question may provide further exposition on the manner of the examination of emigrant women according to which they were supposed to pledge allegiance to the Noble Prophet (S) to the effect that they refrain from treading the path of polytheism, theft, immoral acts, slaying children and the like but they totally submit to the commands of Allah's Messenger (S).

According to the next decree, when their faith was ascertained and thereby there were recognized as true believers, they are not supposed to be returned to disbelievers. According to the imposed treaty of Hudaybiyya, Muslims emigrating from Mecca to Medina were supposed to be returned to Mecca, but it did not include women. Thus, the Noble Prophet (S) never returned them to disbelievers since women were extremely weak in that society and returning them unto believers was quite perilous.

The third decree which in fact substantiates the preceding one proceeds to say that neither these believing women are lawful for those disbelieving men nor disbelieving men are lawful for these believing women, since belief and disbelief are mutually exclusive and the sacred bonds of marriage may not be established between believers and disbelievers as they tread opposite paths.

The point is that wedlock is supposed to establish some sort of harmony between the two parties and belief and disbelief may never stand in harmony with each other.

It was the common practice amongst Arabs that bridal gift (mahr) was paid in advance. Therefore, the fourth decree is saying that the expenses borne by disbelieving husbands for their marriage should be reimbursed to them.

Even though the husbands are disbelievers, but since the separation is motioned by the woman, Islamic justice necessitates that the husband should be compensated for the losses incurred. The significant point is that the Islamic government and the Muslim public treasury are seemingly supposed

to undertake the obligations for which no party has been specified. The plural form of address bears further evidence to the same effect.

The next decree says that there is no sin on your part if you marry such women when you pay their bridal gift. Even though such women have already received their bridal gifts from their former husbands and the money has been reimbursed to them, but the new husbands are supposed to pay the bridal gift to respect the believing women.

It is of worthy of note that the believing woman separates from her disbelieving husband without divorce, but she is supposed to keep the waiting term (‘idda) before remarriage whose detailed discussions are to be found in Jurisprudential sources, e.g. Kitab Jawahir, vol. 30, p. 54.

In case the husband converts to the Islamic faith but the wife remains in her disbelief, the marital bond is annulled, as the blessed Verse in question is saying that disbelieving wives are not supposed to be kept. The Arabic word ‘asam is the plural form of ‘isma denoting hindrance and hereby connoting hindrance to matrimony. The Arabic word kawafir is the plural form of kafira denoting disbelieving woman.

The last decree treats of those women who turn away from the Islamic faith to join disbelievers saying whoever of the women turning away from the Islamic faith is supposed to pay the bridal gift in the same manner as those women who turn to the Islamic faith and whose bridal gift is supposed to be paid to their former husbands.

It reflects justice and mutual respect in Islam. The blessed Verse in question closes by laying emphasis on the foregoing decrees saying that these are Divine Decrees through which God Almighty judges between you and He is the Omniscient, the All-Wise.

Such Decrees spring from Divine Omniscience reflecting His Wisdom. The rights of all people are stipulated in such Decrees and They all stand in harmony with Islamic justice and equity. Taking into account the fact that they have been all decreed by God Almighty is the best security for their implementation.

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 11

وَإِن فَاتَكُمْ شَيْءٌ مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ فَعَاقَبْتُمْ فَآتُوا الَّذِينَ ذَهَبَتْ أَزْوَاجُهُم مِّثْلَ مَا أَنفَقُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنتُم بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ

11. And if some of your wives have gone from you to the disbelievers, then you went out for an expedition [against them and] gained booty. Then pay from that booty to those whose wives have gone, the equivalent of what they had spent. And fear Allah in Whom you believe.

The losses incurred by Muslims owing to their conversion to the Islamic faith should be compensated by the Islamic state. It is in this vein that the blessed Verse is saying that in case some of your wives turn away from the Islamic faith and join disbelievers and you conquer disbelievers and gained booties, those who have lost their wives are to be compensated for their bridal gifts.

The preceding blessed Verse is saying that the bridal gifts of such women are supposed to be borne by disbelievers as it is considered the disbelievers'

right to receive compensation for the bridal gifts which they had paid to their former wives who had converted to the Islamic faith and thereby had emigrated to Medina. Nonetheless, according to some traditions, despite the fact that Muslims acted upon such just decree, Meccan polytheists failed to do the same.

Thus, is was decreed that to compensate the losses incurred by men whose wives had turned away from the Islamic faith and had joined Meccan polytheists, they were supposed to receive booties equivalent to the losses incurred by them and thereafter the remainder of the booties gained from the enemy could be distributed amongst Muslims.

According to Qur'an exegetes, the Arabic verbal form

fa-'aqabtum ("then you became triumphant")

connotes the victory of the Muslims over disbelievers and the retribution of the latter and gaining booties.

The blessed Verse closes by calling all Muslims to fear God Almighty saying:

"Fear Allah in Whom you believe and refrain from disobeying Him."

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 12

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَىٰ أَن لَّا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِينَكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعْهُنَّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

12. O Prophet! When believing women come unto you to give you the pledge that they will not associate anything in worship with Allah, that they will not steal, that they will not commit illegal sexual intercourse, that they will not kill their children, that they will not utter slander, intentionally forging falsehood, and that they will not disobey you in the religious ordains, then accept their pledge and ask Allah to forgive them. Indeed, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Compassionate.

The preceding blessed Verses treated of the Decrees concerning emigrant women and the blessed Verse in question expounds the women's pledge with the Noble Prophet (S). Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the blessed Verse was revealed on the day of the conquest of Mecca, when the Noble Prophet (S) was on the Mount of Safa taking men's pledge.

Then, the Meccan women who had converted to the Islamic faith came unto the Noble Prophet (S) to give pledge and the blessed Verse was revealed on that occasion expounding the manner of giving pledge.

Addressing the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse is saying:

O Prophet (S)! When the believing women come unto you and give pledge on the conditions that they associate no object of worship besides God Almighty, refrain from theft, illegal sexual intercourse, slaying their children, uttering slander, and disobey you, accept their pledge and ask for their forgiveness since God Almighty is Oft-Forgiving and Most-Compassionate.

Thus the Noble Prophet (S) took their pledge of allegiance regarding whose manner some sources indicate that the Noble Prophet (S) had some

vessel filled with water brought to him. He put his hand into water and women put their hands into the other side of the vessel.

According to some sources, he accepted their pledge while a thick piece of fabric or clothes covered his hand. It is also reported that the Noble Prophet (S) held a piece of fabric and the other side was held by women and thereby he accepted their pledge of allegiance. The author of the exegetic work titled Manhaj al-Sadiqin reports that the Noble Prophet (S) asked Ummaya, Khadija's sister, to accept the women's pledge of allegiance.

It is worthy of note that six conditions are stipulated in the preceding blessed Verse all of which are to be accepted by them.

The blessed Verse also reflects that the leader of the Islamic society, irrespective of the sexes of the believers, is available to all and women are regarded as independent, willful, and selective individuals possessing independent real and legal entities such that women talked to the Noble Prophet (S) without any intermediaries and provided him with their feedback.

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 13

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ قَدْ يَئِسُوا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ كَمَا يَئِسَ الْكُفَّارُ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْقُبُورِ

13. O you who believe! Befriend not the people who incurred the Wrath of Allah. Surely, they have despaired of the Hereafter, just as the disbelievers buried in graves are hopeless.

The friend of God Almighty does not befriend those who have incurred His Wrath. It is reported that the blessed Verse was revealed on the occasion that some Muslims from amongst the poor befriended the Jews and divulged the intelligence of the Muslims unto them such that they may receive some remuneration in the form of food, fruit, and money from them.

Addressing the believers, the blessed Verse forbids them to befriend those who have incurred the Wrath of God Almighty alluding to the point that the believers are supposed to set their hopes onto Divine Graciousness but it is incumbent upon them to desist from befriending those who have incurred Divine Wrath and divulge Muslims' secrets unto them.

The blessed Verse proceeds to present details substantiating such Decree by saying that the disbelievers have totally lost their hope of the Hereafter in the same manner as the disbelievers interred in graves have lost their hope of deliverance on the Day of Resurrection, since the latter are entangled with the consequences of their evil deeds in Purgatory but they have no way out.

Thus they are totally hopeless. Such living disbelievers are so immersed in the mire of sins that they may never hope for deliverance in the same manner that the dead disbelievers are hopeless of revival. Such people are assuredly dangerous and untrustworthy.

Their words, pretence to sincerity, and intimacy are not to be trusted since they have lost their hope of Divine Mercy and are thereby desperate for any crime. How could they be trusted and befriended by Muslims? The

opening and the closing blessed Verses of the blessed Chapter in question treat of keeping distance from the enemies of Allah and Muslims.

O Lord! Preserve us from Your Wrath. Embrace us in Your Mercy and Graciousness.

Notes

1. Majma‘ al-Bayan.
2. The report has been narrated in sources, e.g. Ma‘ma‘ al-Bayan, Bukhari's Sahih, Ruh al-Bayan, Fi Halal al-Qur’an and the exegetic works by Qurtubi and Maraghi.
3. 80:34-36
4. Ibn Mikhnaf's Maqtal.
5. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 53, p. 18.

Surah al-Saff, Chapter 61

(The Rank)

Section 28(juz')

Number of Verses: 14

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Medina, has fourteen Verses. The designation of the Chapter derives from the Arabic word saff attested in the fourth Verse. The blessed Chapter mainly treats of the superiority of the Islamic faith over other Divine religions and the obligation of jihad in Allah's Cause and supporting Allah's Messengers.

Besides the blessed Chapter in question, Chapters 57 (Surah al-Hadid) and 59 (Surah al-Hashr) opens with

sabbaha ("glorifies"),

Chapters 62 (Surah al-Jum'a) 64 (Surah al-Taghabun) with

yusabbihu ("glorifies"),

Chapter 17 (Surah al-Isra') with

subhana ("glorified"),

and Chapter 87 with the imperative

sabbih ism-i rabbika ("Glorify the Name of your Lord").

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

According to a tradition narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S), whoever recites the Chapter of Jesus, namely the Chapter of the Rank, Prophet Jesus will salute him and as long as he is alive in this world, Jesus will invoke God Almighty to absolve the reciter of his sins and he will be his friend of the Day of Resurrection.

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that whoever recites the Chapter of the Rank in his obligatory and supererogatory prayers and pursues the recitation of the Chapter, God Almighty will rank him with the angels and His Messengers. It is worthy of note, however, that such ranks will be in store for those who act upon Qur'anic Injunctions.

Surah al-Saff - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

1. Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorifies Allah. And He is the Omnipotent, the All-Wise.

According to the Islamic worldview, all the world of existence enjoys perception and glorifies God Almighty.

It is noteworthy that the One Who is the Omnipotent and the All-Wise is deserves to be glorifies

("And He is the Omnipotent, the All-Wise").

It is mentioned above that the blessed Chapter deals with faith, Divine Unity, and knowing God Almighty. According attention to the physical and spiritual glorification of all beings and the wondrous system predominating over them which serves as the best proof for the Existence of the Omnipotent and the All-Wise Creator strengthens the pillars of faith in believers and paves the path for obeying the Injunction as to the jihad in Alla's Cause.

Surah al-Saff - Verse 2

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

2. O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not act upon it?

Rebuking those who do not stand on their own words, the blessed Verse is asking them:

"O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not act upon it?"

Although the blessed Verses were revealed concerning the jihad and desertion from the Battle of Uhud, but the Occasions of Revelation never restrict the broad contextual meanings of the blessed Verses. Consequently, any vain word deserves censure and rebuke, be it in terms of steadfastness in battlefield or any other positive and constructive act.

According to Imam Sadiq (as), the blessed Verse, among other issues, alludes to failure to keep one's word, saying that a believer's promise is like a vow, though expiation is not required for it.[1]

Surah al-Saff - Verse 3

كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِندَ اللَّهِ أَن تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

3. Most detestable it is with Allah that you say what you do not act upon it.

The Arabic word maqt denotes abomination and odiousness. Faith is to be accompanied by action and sincerity, otherwise it will deserve censure and rebuke. Some people utter empty words in friendly get-togethers but they fail to act upon their words when it is necessary to take action.

One of the significant tokens of true believers is that their words and deeds are totally in harmony and the more one distances from such principle, the more he distances from faith.

It is in this vein that in his epistle to Malik Ashtar, Imam 'Ali (as) said unto him:

"Refrain from making promises and failure to keep you word, since such failure will lead to severe wrath by God Almighty and the people as it is said in the Holy Qur'an:

"Most detestable it is with Allah that you say what you do not act upon it."[2]

Surah al-Saff - Verse 4

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا كَأَنَّهُم بُنْيَانٌ مَّرْصُوصٌ

4. Indeed, Allah loves those who fight in His Cause in ranks as if they were an iron structure.

The Arabic word bunyan denotes construction. The word marsus is cognate with rasas denoting lead. The phrase bunyan marsus connotes a construction resembling lead in terms of solidity. The criticism mentioned in the preceding Verse may be addressed to those who were engaged in sloganeering but failed to act upon such slogans. Thus, God Almighty is saying that Divine Wrath is in store for those who did not act upon their words but those who act upon their words and loved by Him.

Therefore, the blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty loves those who wage war in His Cause like a construction of iron and a stronghold of steel.

Thus, the form of battle is of no significance, but what is important is that such war should be in Allah's Cause through perfect unity and solidity the similitude of which is a construction built of lead or iron. It is mentioned in 'Ali ibn Ibrahim exegetic work that the blessed Verse is saying that warrior waging war in Allah's Cause form ranks like a construction which is never subject to ruin.[3]

Surah al-Saff - Verse 5

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ لِمَ تُؤْذُونَنِي وَقَد تَّعْلَمُونَ أَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ ۖ فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا أَزَاغَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

5. Remember when Moses (as)said unto his people: "O my people! Why do you annoy me while you know certainly that I am the Messenger of Allah to you? Therefore when they turned away from the path of Truth, Allah turned their hearts away [from the path]. And Allah guides not the people who are disobedient to Him.

The Arabic verbal form

zagha ("deviated")

is cognate with zigh connoting deviation from the path of Truth.

Man is spiritually inclined toward treading the Straight Path, but it is his concupiscence that deters him from doing so.

Making a reference to Prophet Moses' (as) people, the blessed Verse is saying that despite having observed so many miracles and proofs regarding his Prophetic Call, they failed to obey him, but they annoyed him to such an extent that they regarded his miracles as magic and ascribed forging lies by him despite the fact that they were certain of his Prophetic Call.

Thus, complaining from his own people, Prophet Moses (as) is saying:

"O people! Why do you annoy me so much when you know that I am Allah's Messenger sent unto you for your guidance? You are supposed to obey me if you follow your reason so that you may be saved."

Nonetheless, the people of Moses (as) failed to persevere in the Straight Path of Divine Unity and deviated from it such that owing to their evil deeds, God Almighty made their hearts turn away from the Path of Truth, since God Almighty never guides those who disobey His Messengers. Thus, it is reflected the blessed Verse that there is no affliction worse that being deprived of Divine Justice and one's heart be turned away from the Path of Truth.

Surah al-Saff - Verses 6-7

وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُم مُّصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَاةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِن بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا هَٰذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُوَ يُدْعَىٰ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

6. Remember when Jesus (as), son of Mary, said: "O Children of Israel! Verily, I am the Messenger of Allah unto you, acknowledging the Torah which came before me and giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad. But when he came to them with clear proofs, they said: "This is plain magic."

7. And who does more wrong than the one who forges a lie against Allah while he is being invited to embrace the Islamic faith? And Allah guides not the people who are wrong-doers.

The blessed Verse 6 is saying:

"O Muhammad (S)! Remember when Jesus (as), son of Mary, said: 'O Children of Israel [namely the Jews following Moses (as)]! I am Allah's Messenger sent unto you. I believe in Moses (as) acknowledging his Prophetic Call and bearing glad tidings to you that a Prophet (S) will come after me with a perfect religion and his token is that his name is Ahmad, namely praised in words and deeds or the Messenger (S) who will praise God Almighty."

The name Ahmad may reflect that he was Divinely appointed to praise God Almighty by the recitation of His Ninety-Nine Names such that people may known Him through His Most Beauteous Attributes, since it is not known whether other Prophets did not make Him known unto people through the same number of Names each of which reflect one of the Divine Attributes.

Narrating on the authority of his father, Muhammad ibn Mat'am says that the Noble Prophet (S) said that he had names such as Ahmad, Muhammad, Mahi, through whom God Almighty effaces disbelief, Hashir, namely under whose banner people would be resurrected, and 'Àqib, i.e. the last of the Prophets not to be followed by any other Prophet.[4]

According to a tradition narrated concerning the Noble Prophet's (S) Ascension (mi'raj), God Almighty addressed the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) several times by the name Ahmad which may possibly given rise to the saying that his name is Ahmad in the heavens and Muhammad (S) on the earth.

It is narrated from Imam 'Ali (as) that the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) has ten names five of which, namely Muhammad, Ahmad, 'Abd Allah, Yasin, and Nun, are attested in the Holy Qur'an.[5] The foregoing brief discussion reflects that one of the most well-known names of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) is Ahmad.[6]

The blessed Verse closes with

"But when he came to them with clear proofs, they said: "This is plain magic."

The antecedent of the pronoun

"them" (hum)

is possibly the Seal of the Prophets (S) who had many proofs and miracles and Prophet Jesus (as) had formerly make known his name and tokens, but the Prophet Muhammad's (S) miracles were regarded as magic by his people saying that it was plain magic.

The antecedent of the pronoun may be Prophet Jesus (as) who performed miracles like raising the dead, curing the blind, and making pigeons out of mud and giving life to it, but the Jews regarded his miracles as magic. People are habitually inclined through concupiscent desires to turn away from the Truth and turn toward Falsehood, as a consequence of which they failed to obey the Prophets and their chiefs knew that people's obeying the Prophets would entail damages to their chieftainship.

In order to waive their obligations, they denied the prophets and regarded their miracles as magic.

Thus, God Almighty censures such people and asks them in the blessed Verse:

"And who does more wrong than the one who forges a lie against Allah while he is being invited to embrace the Islamic faith? And Allah guides not the people who are wrong-doers."

The point is that the Prophets call people unto Islam, namely Guidance, in which the people's physical and spiritual health lies.

Those who deny the Prophets are the worst of people since they not only wrong themselves and deprive themselves of happiness, and have contented themselves to stay with disbelieving and irreligious people and their bestiality without taking any step toward happiness, but also when man fails to seek Guidance and wrongs himself, God Almighty will not guide him.

Such wrongdoers wrong people as well since they impede them from being guided. God Almighty will never guide such people since wrong-doers are not subject to being guided.

Surah al-Saff - Verses 8-9

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ

8. They intend to extinguish the Light of Allah with their mouths [namely their empty words and slanders]. But Allah will bring His Light to perfection even though the disbelievers dislike it.

9. He it is Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth to make it triumphant over all religions even though the polytheists dislike it.

The enemy is pre-occupied at all times with extinguishing the Divine Light of Guidance. Allah's Religion is Light, namely it leads to knowledge, growth, treading the path toward Allah and Happiness. The stratagems and devices of the enemies aiming at confrontation with the Truth is fruitless and of no avail.

Thus, in order to reflect that the enemies of the Truth may not efface Divine Religion, the blessed Verse 8 presents a similitude saying that they intend to put out the Divine Light with their mouths, but God Almighty perfects His Light despite the disbelievers dislike it.

Disbelievers in their attempts are resembled to those who intend to extinguish the shining sun by blowing with their mouths. They are like bats imagining that if they close their eyes and seek refuge in the shadows may confront with the Spring of Light. The history of Islam is a clear proof as to the veracity of such Great Qur'anic Prediction, since from its emergence onward, numerous plots and stratagems have been demised by the enemies.

Such stratagems include mockery, harming, and hurting through economic and social sanctions, waging wars in the battlefields, e.g. those of Uhud, Ahzab, and Badr; domestic plots by hypocrites; casting discord amongst the ranks of the Muslims; occupation of Jerusalem as the first place toward which Muslims stood in their prayers; division of vast Muslim lands into more than forty countries; making Muslims change their course; making the youth sever their ties from their ancient culture; dissemination of evil deeds and moral corruption; deviation from the pure Islamic doctrines by the youth, military, political, and political colonialism.

As God Almighty wills, the Divine Light has daily broadened its scope and the dissemination of the Islamic faith has been ever on the increase. Statistics suggest that despite the common endeavors made by Zionists, Crusaders, and materialists of the East, the Muslim population is on the increase the world over.

The Qur'anic Verse is saying that they intend at all times to put out the Divine Light, but Divine Will is otherwise. It is the eternal miracle of the Holy Qur'an.

It is worthy of note that such theme is to found twice in the Holy Qur'an, though the clause

"they intend to extinguish"

is reflected in two forms in the Arabic original: yuriduna an yutfi'u[7] and yuriduna li-yutfi'u[8].

In his Mufradat, Raghib Isfahani says that the former and the latter connote extinguishing without or with preparation respectively; namely, whether or not they make preparations, they fail to put out the Divine Light.

Therefore, the blessed Verse 9 lays further emphasis by saying that He is the One who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth in order to make the Islamic religion predominate all other religions, even though the polytheists disfavor it.

The expression

"He sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth"

symbolizes the triumph of the Islamic faith, since such triumph is essentially based on Guidance and the Religion of Truth. The Islamic faith and the Holy Qur'an are the Divine Light and Light manifests itself everywhere and at all times and results in triumph; nonetheless, the polytheists' and the disbelievers' dislike may not impede the path in the least.

It would be of interest to know that the blessed Verse 9 is reiterated thrice with minor alterations in the Holy Qur'an[9], but it should be borne in mind that such reiteration and emphasis belongs to when the Islamic faith had not totally prevail the Arabian Peninsula let alone the other regions of the world.

The Holy Qur'an laid great emphasis on the question at the time and made such great prediction. Finally, the Islamic faith prevailed in terms of logic and practical advancement in contrast to other religions, made the enemies retreat from vast regions in the world substituted them and it is still spreading in the world.

It is noteworthy that the final stage of such spread to us will be realized upon the arrival of Imam Mahdi (May our souls be sacrifices to him) since these Verse indicate that great arrival. Further discussions on the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse 9, superiority in terms of logic or might, and it relation to Imam Mahdi's (as) arrival were mentioned above under 7:23.

It is narrated in consecutively transmitted traditions that the triumph of the Islamic faith over other Divine religions will realize upon Imam Mahdi's (as) arrival.[10]

It is narrated on the authority of 'Ali ibn Ibrahim Qumi that the religion of Muhammad (S) will be complete upon the arrival of the Riser from the Prophet's (S) descendants such that God Almighty alone shall be worshipped. In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that as the earth will have been brimming over with injustice, justice will be administered the world over upon his arrival.

Surah al-Saff - Verses 10-13

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنجِيكُم مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

وَأُخْرَىٰ تُحِبُّونَهَا نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

10. O you who believe! Shall I guide you to a trade that will save you from the excruciating torment on the Day of Resurrection?

11. Believe in Allah and His Messenger and fight in the Cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives. That will be better for you, if you but know!

12. Thus, He will forgive you your sins and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow and pleasant dwellings in the everlasting Paradise. That is verily a great deliverance.

13. And also another bounty which you love, help from Allah and a near victory. And O Prophet (S) give glad tidings to the believers.

The triumph of the Islamic faith over other religions was promised in the preceding blessed Verse but there are three prerequisites in this respect:

1. The Perfect and Universal Law is the Holy Qur'an, a Light perfected by God Almighty, and no one is able to put out such Light.

2. The existence of the Infallible Leader who is Imam Mahdi (as), the Remainder of Allah and the Divine Treasure.

3. Preparedness on the part of the people which is reflected in these blessed Verses.

Therefore, one of the significant goals of the blessed Chapter is to call people unto the Islamic faith and jihad in Allah's Cause and the blessed Verses in question lay emphasis on these two principles through the expression of a delicate similitude that encourages man to make such Divine moves and such incentive is the prerequisite for the triumph of the Islamic faith over all religions as discussed in the preceding blessed Verses.

The blessed Verse 10 is asking:

"O you who believe! Shall I guide you to a trade that will save you from the excruciating torment on the Day of Resurrection?"

Even though faith and jihad are among absolute obligations, but the question is posed as a commercial offer rather than an injunction and the offer is intermingled with expressions reflecting the Infinite Graciousness of God Almighty. The blessed Verse 10 asks the question but without expecting any answer, when the audience is according attention to the question elaborates on the lucrative transaction.

The blessed Verse 11 is saying:

"Believe in Allah and His Messenger and fight in the Cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives. That will be better for you, if you but know!"

God Almighty is indubitably in no need of such lucrative trade, but all the interests will belong to the believers.

Thus, the blessed Verse closes by saying that

"It is the best for you if you know."

It is worthy of note that addressed to the believers, the blessed Verse calls upon them to have faith and wage jihad in Allah's Cause.

The expression may reflect that nominal and superficial faith is insufficient, but what is significant is profound and sincere faith as the fountainhead of sacrifice and jihad. Making mention of believing in God Almighty and His Messenger may further elaborate the faith briefly mentioned in the opening of the preceding Verse.

It is noteworthy that belief in the Prophet (S) is not different from that in God Almighty in the same manner that waging jihad in Allah's Cause with one's life may not be different from that with one's property, since waging any war requires financial means.

Some believers are able to wage jihad in two respects and some may be able to support jihad by their property and provide the logistics. Some are only able to wage jihad in Allah's Cause by their lives and they are prepared to sacrifice them.

However, the point is that triumph rests on the accompaniment of these two types of jihad. The precedence of jihad by one's possessions in the blessed Verse does not suggest that jihad by one's life bears further significance, but it suggests that such type of jihad is the prelude, since the path to jihad is paved through the provision of the required funding.

The blessed Verses 12 and 13 are saying that if you do so, God Almighty will forgive your sins and you will be admitted to the Gardens of Paradise beneath whose trees rivers flow where you will reside in pleasant dwellings in everlasting Paradise. This is a great success.

The blessed Verses treat of the forgiving of the sins by God Almighty in terms of the Rewards in the hereafter, since man is above all preoccupied with his sins and when he finds certainty as to the forgiving of his sins, he will be free from preoccupation. The expression suggests that the first Divine Reward granted to the martyrs fallen in His Cause is that all their sins will be forgiven.

Now a question arises that forgiving of one's sins includes what is due to God (haqq Allah) Almighty or it also includes what is due to people (haqq al-nas). The absolute contextual meaning of the blessed Verse suggests generality, though granted that God Almighty vested people with waiving their own rights, some scholars have entertained doubts as to the generality of the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question.

Therefore, the blessed Verses in question treat of two types of faith, believing in God Almighty and His Messenger (S), two types of jihad, through life and possessions, and two types Rewards in the Hereafter, forgiving of sins and being admitted to the everlasting Paradise.

The blessed Verse 13 deals with two types of Divine Bounties in this world:

"And also another bounty which you love, help from Allah and a near victory."

Such trade is quite lucrative since it constitutes triumph over the enemies and Divine Bounties and Graciousness. That is why the Holy Qur'an terms it as the great triumph.

It is in this vein that the believers receive the glad tidings:

"And O Prophet (S) give glad tidings to the believers."

It is narrated that when the Noble prophet secretly met with some Medinans on the Night of 'Aqabih and they pledged him their allegiance, 'Abd Allah ibn Rawaha said unto him that the Noble Prophet (S) may ask for any condition for God Almighty and himself to which the Noble Prophet (S) replied that the condition for his Lord was that they may never associate any partners to Him, but for himself, he asked them to defend him in the same manner that they defend themselves and their possessions.

'Abd Allah inquired about the remuneration for such obligations to which the Noble Prophet replied that their remuneration would be Paradise. 'Abd Allah said that the transaction was quite lucrative and it would be totally irrevocable.[11] It is worthy of note, however, that the triumph promised in these blessed Verses repeatedly fell into the share of the Muslims in logical terms as well as in battlefields.

Qur'an exegetes present different exegeses as to the contextual meaning of the "near triumph." Many exegetes maintain that the conquest of Mecca is hereby intended. Some maintain that it alludes to the conquest of Persian and Rome. Some also hold that it indicates all Muslim conquests which happened briefly between conversion to the Islamic faith and the battles waged by the Muslims.

Since all the believers down the centuries, rather than solely the Noble Prophet's (S) Companions are addressed herein, the clause

"help from Allah and a near victory"

is quite broad in its application serving as glad tiding to them all, though it clearly designated the conquest of Mecca upon the Revelation of the blessed Verses in question.

It is mentioned in the closing sections of Nahj al-Balagha that meeting with someone who pretended to be a strict Muslim and repeatedly spoke ill of worldly possessions, Imam ‘Ali (as) said:

“You've erred, since the world is a great capital for those who are awake and aware.”

Then, the Imam (as) elaborated on his statement saying that the world is the trading house of Allah’s friends.[12] The world is likened elsewhere to the farm of the hereafter. It is in the trading house of the world that man sells the merchandise being granted to him by God Almighty to Him at the highest price and thereby receives the greatest Bounties in exchange for some insignificant merchandise.

In this vein, thus it is narrated from Imam ‘Ali (as):

“Your price is Paradise, do not sell yourselves cheaply.”[13]

According to another tradition narrated from Imam ‘Ali (as), he said that he was the same lucrative trade leading to deliverance from excruciating torment as mentioned in the Holy Qur’an:

“Shall I guide you to a trade that will save you from the excruciating torment on the Day of Resurrection?”

Surah al-Saff - Verse 14

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا أَنصَارَ اللَّهِ كَمَا قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ لِلْحَوَارِيِّينَ مَنْ أَنصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنصَارُ اللَّهِ فَآمَنَت طَّائِفَةٌ مِّن بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَكَفَرَت طَّائِفَةٌ فَأَيَّدْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَىٰ عَدُوِّهِمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا ظَاهِرِينَ

14. O you who believe! Be you helpers in the Cause of Allah as said Jesus, son Mary to the disciples: “Who are my helpers in the Cause of Allah? The disciples said: “We are Allah’s helpers. Then a group of the Children of Israel believed and a group disbelieved. Therefore, We provided those who believed Assistance against their enemies and they became triumphant.

The disciples of Prophet Jesus (as) were twelve in number whose names are mentioned in available Gospels.

The Arabic word

hawari (“disciple”)

derives from the root h-w-r which denotes to wash, to whiten. The designation is owing to their white clothes and pure hearts or that they were inwardly pure and called upon others to be the same.

Imam Sadiq (as) is narrated as saying:

“Our followers are our disciples. The disciples of Jesus (as) failed to bear him assistance against the enemies and the Jews, but our followers render us help. They are tortured, sent into exile, or they fall martyrs in our cause and God Almighty will grant them good Rewards in exchange for so many afflictions that they tolerate for our sake.”[14]

The closing Verse of the blessed Chapter lays further emphasis on jihad that serves as the focal point of the Chapter.

However, the question is treated differently which bears more significance than the Rewards of Paradise and its Bounties as the blessed Verse is saying:

"O you who believe! Be you helpers in the Cause of Allah."

They help in the Cause of Allah Who is the Origin of all the powers and to Whom all return. He is the Lord whose Power is Infinite and Invincible.

It is surprising that God Almighty calls upon His servants to render help in His Cause which is an unequalled glory; though the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse suggests rendering assistance to the Noble Prophet (S) and the Islamic faith, but the blessed Verse embraces wondrous Graciousness and Mercy.

To suggest that treading such path is not unprecedented, a historical illustration is mentioned herein by saying that in the same manner that Jesus (S), son of Mary, asked his disciples:

"Who are my helpers in the Cause of Allah?"

The disciples most proudly replied:

"We are Allah's helpers."

Thus, they rose up to confront the enemies of Truth. Some of the Children of Israel believed and joined the disciples and some disbelieved. Thus God Almighty provided those who believed Assistance against their enemies and they finally triumphed over them.

You are the disciples of Prophet Muhammad (S) and take pride in that you are Allah's helpers. In the same manner that the disciples of Jesus (as) triumphed over the enemies, you will become triumphant and the glory of this world and the world to come will be in store for you.

Notes

1. Kafi, vol. 2, p. 363.
2. Nahj al-Balagha, Epistle 53.
3. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
4. Tafsir Manhaj al-Sadiqin.
5. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, Tafsir Durr al-Manthur.
6. Tafsir Furqan; Ahmad-i Maw'ud-i Injil.
7. 9:32
8. 61:8
9. 9:33; 48:38; 61:9
10. Tafsir Burhan; Tafsir Safi, Majma' al-Bayan, Nur al-Thiqalayn and other sources.
11. Tafsir Fi Hilal al-Qur'an, vol. 8, p. 87.
12. Nahj al-Balagha, Aphorism 131.
13. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p. 132.
14. Tafsir Kaz al-Daqa'iq.

Surah al-Jum‘a, Chapter 62

(Friday)

Section (juz’) 28

Number of Verses: 11

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Chapter, revealed in Medina, has eleven Verses. One of the fundamental goals of the Chapter is to encourage the Muslims to congregate for the weekly establishment of the Friday prayer.

The Chapter opens with the glorification of Allah and the Prophetic Call and proceeds to suggests that the Muslims are not supposed to be like the Jews to whom the Torah was granted but they failed to act upon it.

The Muslims are suggested to leave everything aside upon hearing the call to the prayers and hasten toward the remembrance of Allah, otherwise they deserve to be censured. It is enjoined that the blessed Chapter be recited in the first prayer unit on Friday night.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

Numerous traditions have been narrated concerning the recitation of the Chapter independently or as a part of daily prayers.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that whoever recites the Chapter, God Almighty will bestow ten good qualities upon him throughout the Muslim lands as many as the number of those who establish or fail to establish the Friday congregational prayer.[1]

It is also narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that it is incumbent upon each and every believer following the Imams to recite Surah al-Jum‘a and

“Glorify the Name of your Most Exalted Lord” (sabbih ism rabbika al-a‘la)

on Friday night and Surah al-Jum‘a and Surah al-Munafiqin at Friday noon. Thus, he has followed Allah's Messenger (S) in his actions and God Almighty will reward him with Paradise provided that he also acts upon Qur’anic Injunctions.[2] Such Rewards are in store for him.

Surah al-Jum’a - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ

1. Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorifies Allah, the Sovereign, the Holy, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

The preceding Chapter opened with

“glorify” (sabbih)

and the blessed Chapter in question opens with

“glorifies” (yusabbih)

to reflect that glorification was, is, and will be for God Almighty. Glorification of God Almighty is the basis of all true Islamic beliefs and doctrines. The blessed Chapter, opening with the glorification of God Almighty, makes a reference to some of the Divine Attributes of His Beauty and Glory as well as His Most Beauteous Names.

Such reference is the prelude of the prospective discussions. The blessed Verse is saying that whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorify God Almighty at all times and thereby physically and spiritually glorify Him of all defects and shortcomings.

He is the Lord Who is the Owner, the Sovereign, and free from all defects. He is the Sovereign, the Holy.

Thus, emphasis is laid on His Ownership, Sovereignty, and being from any wrong-doing or defect, since the Arabic word

malik ("sovereign")

connotes the innumerable wrong-doings of the sovereigns which are unholy, but such adverse connotations are all purified by the employment of the word

quddus ("holy").

On the one hand, emphasis is laid on might and knowledge as the pillars of the state. As it will be mentioned below, such attributes are closely connected with the prospective discussions hereunder reflecting that the selection of the Divine Attributes in different Qur'anic Verses follow a certain order and a particular interrelation.

It is worthy of note that elaborate discussions are to be found above under 17:44 and 24:41.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that whenever a servant utters

"Glorified is Allah" (subhan Allah)

whatever is beneath the Divine Throne will accompany him in his glorification and tenfold Rewards will be granted to the servant uttering such glorification; whenever he utters

"Praise be to Allah" (al-hamdu li-'llah),

God Almighty will grant him all the Bounties in this world until he meets with God Almighty when the Bounties in the Hereafter will be granted to him.[3]

Glorification of God Almighty is a kind of showing gratitude unto Him.

The Holy Qur'an is saying that whenever triumph falls into your share, glorify God Almighty

("Whenever the Help of Allah and the conquest comes unto you. And you see that the people convert to Allah's religion in multitudes. So glorify the praises of your Lord and invoke Him for Forgiveness. Indeed, He is the One Who accepts the repentance and the One Who forgives."[4]).

Glorification of Allah is the atonement for the words uttered or heard at gatherings.

It is narrated from Allah's Messenger (S) that upon his return from gatherings, he uttered the formula

"Glorified are You, their Lord, and in Your praise" (subhanaka Allahumma wa bi-hamdika)

saying that it was the atonement for the gathering (innahu kaffara al-majlis).

Glorification of Allah is a means of salvation.

Concerning the Prophet Jonah (Yunus; AS), the Holy Qur'an says:

"Had he not been from amongst them who glorify Allah. He would have verily remained inside its belly [the fish] until the Day of Resurrection"[5].

It is narrated that when man utters

"Glorified is Allah,"

all the angels salute him (sallu 'alayhi kullu malakin).[6]

According to another tradition, while prostrating himself in his prayers and at other times, Imam Sadiq (as) repeated the formula

"Glorified is Allah"

and at times he repeated it five hundred times.[7]

According to the religious worldview, man is not the only being that praises and worships God Almighty, but all creatures worship Him at all times. Asked by a certain man to work a miracle, the Noble Prophet (S) took a handful of sand from the ground and the sound of the praises by the sand was heard upon the Noble Prophet's (S) request and Allah's Permission.[8]

The Noble Prophet (S) once said:

"There are many a mount better than their riders, since they praise God Almighty more than their riders."

Allah's Messenger (S) forbade beating animals since they glorify God Almighty.[9]

Several points deserve attention is terms of the glorification by the creatures in the world of existence:

1. The Holy Qur'an regards the glorification by the Creatures to be out of knowledge and understanding;

("Each one knows verily their prayer and glorification,"[10]).

2. Everyone may not understand the glorification by other creatures;

("Though you understand not their glorification,"[11]).

3. The glorifications by creatures are different.

Imam Sajjad (as) narrates from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), that he said:

"Birds glorify God Almighty each morning invoking Him to provide them with their daily sustenance."[12]

It is worthy of note that according to the religious worldview, the world of creation glorifies God Almighty

("Whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth glorify Allah").

It is noteworthy, however, that in terms of existential glorification, there exists no difference amongst the creatures of the heavens and the earth, including inanimate beings, plants, animals, birds, and man. The other point is that glorification is supposed to be based on certain criteria and reasons.

Glorification solely belongs to the One who possesses Sovereignty, Holiness, Might, and Wisdom;

("Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorifies Allah, the Sovereign, the Holy, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.").

Surah al-Jum’a - Verse 2

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

2. He it is Who sent amongst the unlettered ones a Messenger from amongst themselves to recite unto them His Verses, to foster them and absolve them of polytheism and discord, and teach them the Heavenly Book and Wisdom. And indeed, they had been formerly in manifest error.

This blessed and significant Verse treats of Divine Unity and Attributes as well as the Prophetic Call of the Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) interrelated with Divine Might, Wisdom, and Holiness, saying that He is the One Who appointed a Messenger from amongst the unlettered to recite His Verses unto them and purify them in the light of the recitation of these Verses from any kind of polytheism, error, and corruption and also teach them the Book and Wisdom, though they were formerly in manifest error.

It is worthy of note that the Prophetic Call, whose characteristics may not be interpreted but through inimitability reflect Divine Glory and Existence, saying that God Almighty is the One Who appointed the Messenger (S) and created such masterpiece in the process of Creation.

The Arabic plural noun umiyyin whose singular form is ummi (“unlettered,” attributed adjective from the nominal form umm “mother), denoting that the noble Prophet (S) did not receive any schooling but what he learned from his mother.

Some scholars maintain that the word ummi connotes “from Mecca,” since Mecca was called “the mother of dwelling places” (umm al-qura). According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as), the people of Mecca had neither Scriptures nor a Divinely appointed leader, hence the designation ummi was Divinely attributed to them.[13]

It is noteworthy that the blessed Verse is saying that the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) is from the same unlettered people such that the significance and greatness of his Prophetic Call be reflected and it may also demonstrate the veracity of his Call, since the Holy Qur’an, a Book with such profound and great contents and an exalted culture like the Islamic culture may not be the fruit of human thought, let alone an unlettered person who had not received any formal education.

The Light shines from the shadows. It is a verdant and luxurious orchard in the heart of the desert. It is a plain miracle and a manifest proof reflecting the veracity of his Call.

The blessed Verse in question summarizes the goal of the Prophetic Call in three sections: one is of the preliminary aspect, namely the recitation of Divine Verses; the two other sections, i.e. purification of the soul and teaching the Book and Wisdom constitute two great final goals.

The Noble Messenger of Allah (S) was appointed to foster and educate people in terms of knowledge, ethics, and practice such that by means of the two wings, they may soar into the sky of happiness and proceed on the path toward Allah and attain to proximity with Him. It is also worthy of note that three out of four Qur’anic Verses give the precedence to self purification

and one Verse gives the precedence to teaching over fostering good qualities.

The point reflects that the two affect each other. Ethics is gendered by knowledge in the same manner that knowledge is gendered by ethics. The point refers to the originality of fostering good qualities. It is noteworthy, however, that rue sciences are hereby intended rather than those in the attire of sciences.[14]

The difference between the Book and Wisdom may be in that the former implies the Holy Qur'an and the latter alludes to the sayings and teachings of the Noble Prophet (S) termed as sunna ("tradition"). The word Book may also connote Islamic Injunctions and Wisdom may make a reference to its philosophy and secrets.

The phrase

"manifest error"

tersely alludes to the Arabs in pre-Islamic times and the error that had cast its shadow on their societies. They were in plain error since they fashioned idols out of stone and wood and resorted to such inanimate objects in time of need. They interred their daughters alive and even took pride in such villainy saying that thus they did not let aliens lay their hands on them.

Their worshipping rituals included clapping and whistling around the House of Ka'ba which was even circumambulated by stark naked women. All kinds of superstitions prevailed over their thought.

They took pride in waging war and shedding blood and plunder and regarded women as worthless merchandise on whom they gambled. Women were deprived of the most basic human rights. Hatred and enmity passed from fathers to their children as a consequence of which shedding blood and slaughter were quite common.

The Noble Prophet (S) came unto them and delivered them out of the shadows of error through the Book and Wisdom. Educating such people and saving them from error and leading them unto the Straight Path is one of the glories of the Islamic faith and one of the manifest miracles of our eminent Prophet (S).

Surah al-Jum'a - Verses 3-4

وَآخَرِينَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

ذَٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

3. And a Messenger unto another group who have not yet joined them. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

4. That is Allah's Grace which He bestows on whom He wills and regards worthy of it. And Allah is the Owner of Mighty Grace.

The Prophetic Call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) is not only addressed to his contemporaries but it embraces all men from different races and regions and no one is able to impede the dissemination of the Islamic faith in future.

The blessed Verse is saying that he is appointed to proclaim his Prophetic mission unto other believers who have not joined former converts yet. Later

generations were fostered through the teachings of the Noble Prophet (S) and used the pure springhead of the Holy Qur'an and Muhammadan traditions (sunna) as they were also embraced by the great Prophetic Call.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question includes all the peoples from Arabs and non-Arabs who came into being following the Noble Prophet's (S) Companions.

It is narrated that upon the recitation of the blessed Verse, the Noble Prophet (S) was asked regarding the identity of such people.

The Noble Prophet (S) put his hand on Salman's shoulder, saying:

"If faith happens to be on the star of Thuraya, proverbial for being farthest from the earth, men from this group, namely Persian, will attain to it.[15]

Since such things all spring from Divine Might and Wisdom, the blessed Verse 3 closes by saying that He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

The blessed Verse 4 makes a reference to such great Divine Grace, namely the Noble Prophet's (S) Prophetic Call and his teachings, saying:

"That is Allah's Grace which He bestows on whom He wills and regards worthy of it. And Allah is the Owner of Mighty Grace."

It is worthy of note, however, that the expression

"on whom He wills"

does not imply that God Almighty bestows His Grace and Mercy upon everyone without measure, but His Will is accompanied by His Wisdom, as it is reflected in the first Verse of the blessed Chapter in question by the Divine Attributes All-Mighty and All-Wise.

Elaborating on such Divine Great Grace, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) in his Nahj al-Balagha says:

"Look at the Divine Graces bestowed upon this community when His Messenger (S) was appointed to proclaim his Prophetic Call unto them and thereby unified them. Behold that such Great Bounty was bestowed upon all of them and the rivers of His Graces flow onto them and the true religion with its Blessings embraced them. They are embraced by such Bounties and live happily thereby."[16]

Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 5

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

5. The similitude of those who were entrusted with the Torah, but who subsequently failed in it, is as that of a donkey which carries huge burden of books [though they fail to understand them]. How bad is the example of the people who deny Allah's Àyat ("Verses, Signs"). And Allah guides not the people who are wrong-doers.

The preceding Verses treated of the Prophetic Call, but the blessed Verse in question deals with the Jews who could recognize the Noble Prophet (S) on the basis on their Scripture, the Torah, but they were too obstinate to acknowledge his Prophetic Call. The Arabic word asfar is the plural form of sifr connoting a book that reveals the truth.[17]

The Torah consists of different books each of which, termed sifr, resembles a Qur'anic Chapter. The blessed Verse criticizes the Jews but it also alludes to the Muslims warning them against hearing the Qur'anic Verses but failing to act upon them.

According to some traditions, the Jews said that Muhammad's Prophetic Call was not addressed to them. Thus, the blessed Verse 4 is warning them that had you had read your Scripture carefully and have acted upon it, you would not have said such words, since the Torah bears the glad tidings of the Prophetic Call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S).

The blessed Verses 5 and 6 are saying that those upon whom the Torah was sent and they were entrusted with it but failed to understand and act upon it resemble a donkey carrying the burden of books, but it may merely feel the burden. It is not different for it to carry rocks and wood or books containing the most precise secrets of Creation and the most fruitful lessons for a better life.

Such obstinate people contented themselves contented themselves with the recitation of the Torah without reflecting upon its contents and acting upon them, the similitude of such people is the animal proverbial for ignorance. It is the most telling similitude for those who claim to know something but fail to act upon their pretended knowledge, since they carry the burden of knowledge without being blessed by its blessings.

Those who deal with the words of the Holy Qur'an without being aware of it contents and fruitful lessons are like those mentioned herein. It is a warning to the Muslims to be aware such that they do not end up like the Jews.

Such Great Divine Bounty is not for merely keeping at home without reading it and reflecting upon it or pass beneath it before traveling or send it with a mirror to a new home. Thus, they degrade their Scripture to such extent. Their utmost efforts may be to recite it beautifully and commit it to heart without any reflection in their individual and social live through reflecting upon its Verses and acting upon its Injunctions.

The similitude proceeds to say that the people who denied Divine Verses and Signs will have a dire fate. Such people are likened to donkeys since they denied Divine Verses and Signs by their words and deeds.

It is in a similar vein that we read elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[18] concerning the Jews:

"Is it that whenever there came unto you a Messenger against your concupiscent desires, you turned arrogant? Some [of the Messengers] you denied and some you slew."

The blessed Verse 5 closes with a terse sentence:

"And Allah guides not the people who are wrong-doers."

It is true that Guidance is Divine Work, but it requires a certain background, which is the spirit of seeking the Truth that should be engendered by man and wrong-doers are far from it.

Finally, it would be of interest to read some traditions concerning the Jewish schlars and others who failed to act upon their knowledge:

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that the preaching and admonitions of the scholars who fail to act upon their knowledge are effaced from the hearts in the same manner that rain drops fail to stay on rocks.

It is narrated from Imam Sajjad (as) that it was mentioned in the Bible that a scholar who failed to act upon his knowledge would not accrue anything but disbelief and being far from God Almighty.

In Mizan al-Hikma it is narrated from the Imam that a scholar who fails to act is likened to a candle from whose light other benefit but he perishes himself.[19]

Surah al-Jum'a - Verses 6-8

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ هَادُوا إِن زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ لِلَّهِ مِن دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوُا الْمَوْتَ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

وَلَا يَتَمَنَّوْنَهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ

قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

6. Say: "O you Jews! If you pretend that you are friends of Allah, to the exclusion of other people, then long for death if you are truthful [so that you may receive the Rewards apportioned by Allah for His Friends].

7. But they will never long for it, because of what they have done before [e.g. distortion of the Scripture and concealment of the Noble Prophet's (S) virtues]. And Allah is All-Aware of the wrong-doers.

8. Say: [O Prophet (S)!] "Indeed, the death from which you flee will surely meet you, then you will be sent back to [Him], the Omniscient of the unseen and the seen, and He will inform you of what you have done."

The Jews regarded themselves as the chosen nation and expected preferential treatment.

They even claimed to be the sons of God and at times considered themselves as His intimate friends, as it is reflected the Holy Qur'an[20]:

"And the Jews and the Christians says: "We are the children of Allah and His loved ones [even if they intended a figurative sense of the word]."

Treating of such unfounded ambitions entertained by those to whom the Scripture had been sent though they failed to act upon it, the Holy Qur'an is asking the Noble Prophet (S) to say unto them that if they imagined to be God's friends and different from other people and they were true in their claims, then they could yearn for death, since friends yearn for meeting their friends.

We know that the spiritual meeting with God Almighty will happen on the Day of Resurrection when the mundane veils will be cast and the dust of concupiscent desires subside.

Then, man may see the beauteous countenance of the beloved and set foot in His proximity and find his way into the Friend's Confines. If they are true in their claims to be His intimate friend, why are they immersed in the mundane life and are fearful of death. Entertaining such fear reflects that their claims are unfounded.

The blessed Verse 7 makes a reference to the main cause of their fear of death, saying that because of what they have already done, they never yearn for death. However, God Almighty is All-Aware of the wrong-doers. The point is that man fears death because of two reasons.

Firstly, he does not believe in the Hereafter and regards death as a monster of non-existence and the shadows of perdition. In such case, it would be natural to fear death and flee from non-existence. Secondly, one may believe in the Hereafter, but he is fearful to attend the Great Tribunal on the Day of Resurrection because of the evil deeds committed in this world. Since the Jews believed in the Day of Resurrection and the hereafter, they were afraid of death owing to their evil deeds.

The Arabic plural noun

thalimin ("wrong-doers")

covers a broad semantic range encompassing all the evil deeds committed by the Jews ranging from slaying the eminent Prophets sent by God Almighty for their guidance to their accusations, transgression of bounds and rights, plundering people's possessions, and all ethical corruptions.

The blessed Verse 8 is saying that entertaining such anxiety and fear may not solve any problems, since death is in store for all human beings.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an says:

"Say: [O Prophet (S)!] "Indeed, the death from which you flee will surely meet you, then you will be sent back to [Him], the Omniscient of the unseen and the seen, and He will inform you of what you have done."

The law of death is one of the most general and all-encompassing laws of this world.

The eminent Prophets and the Archangels all die and nothing shall remain but the Pure Divine Essence, as it is reflected in the Holy Qur'an[21]:

"Whatever is on the earth will perish and the Countenance of your Lord full of Majesty and Glory shall remain forever."

Death, attending the Divine Just Tribunal and taking care of the records of the past deeds are of the certain laws of this world and God Almighty is All-Aware of all His servants' intentions and deeds. Thus, the only way to put an end to such fear is to purify ones heart from sinful impurities and refraining from committing evil deeds. One whose record is clean will not fear of the audition of his records.

Thus, Imam 'Ali (as) says:

"By Allah! The son of Abu Talib [i.e. 'Ali (as)] loves death more than his mother's breast[22]"

and when the most wretched Ibn Muljam struck him a blow on his head and thereby split it, he cried:

"By the Lord of the Ka'ba, I was saved."

He elsewhere says that death is sweeter than honey [particularly for the friends of God Almighty who are virtuous and are close unto Him].

Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 9

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِن يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

9. O you who believe! When the call is proclaimed for the Friday prayer, hasten toward the remembrance of Allah and leave off business. That is better for you if you did but know!

Friday is accorded particular attention in the Islamic faith and many a tradition reflect such significance. It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that Friday is the lord of the days of the week and possesses the most elevated rank before God Almighty.[23] Friday is the day of helping the deprived and the poor and it is narrated that Muslim are supposed to expend alms on Friday.[24] The Lord of the Age, the Twelfth Imam (as) will end his Occultation and will arrive on Friday.[25]

The Noble Prophet (S) says:

"God Almighty renders good deeds many folds and effaces evil deeds on Friday and promotes the ranks of the believers, wards off afflictions, and answers the prayers of the believers on Friday.26 Whoever visits the tomb of his parents or either of them, his sins shall be forgiven and his name will be recorded with the righteous.27 Other traditions have also been narrated in tradition sources regarding the merits of Friday."

It is worthy of note that the preceding blessed Verses treated of concise discussions on Divine Unity, Prophetic Call, the Hereafter, and criticism of the Mammonist Jews and the blessed Verse in question deal with one of the most significance obligations of the Muslims that is of great significance and constitutes one of the main goals behind the Revelation of the blessed Chapter in question and it is the Friday prayer and some of its laws.

The blessed Verse above all addresses all Muslims saying:

"O you who believe! When the call is proclaimed for the Friday prayer, hasten toward the remembrance of Allah and leave off business. That is better for you [than trade] if you did but know!"

The passive verbal form nudiya ("is called") connotes prayer call, since there is no call in the Islamic faith but that to establishing prayers. Thus, upon hearing the prayer call, it is incumbent upon Muslims to leave off trade and hasten toward the remembrance of God Almighty.

The clause

"That is better for you" (dhalikum khayrun lakum)

connotes that the establishment of Friday prayer and leaving off business at that time entails significant benefits for the Muslims if they truly reflect upon it, since God Almighty is Needless of others and is Most Gracious toward all people. It also alludes to the philosophy and the benefits of the Friday prayer.

It is noteworthy, however, that leaving off trade encompasses any activity interfering with the remembrance of God Almighty. Another point worthy of note is that the Arabic word jum'a originally denotes congregation which ad hoc connotes the congregation of people for the establishment of the Friday prayer; though the connotation of the word is not restricted to what is mentioned.

It goes without saying that spreading on the earth and seeking daily sustenance are not obligatory acts but they are regarded as the permission to do the same. However, some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the expression that procurement of daily sustenance after the establishment of the Friday prayer entails Divine Satisfaction and Blessings. It is narrated that the Noble Prophet (S) visited the marketplace after the establishment of the Friday prayer.

The imperative sentence

"Hasten toward the remembrance of Allah" (wa 'dhkuru 'llah kathiran)

denotes that man is supposed to remember God Almighty against the abundant Blessings bestowed upon him.

Some Qur'anic exegets maintain that the word

"remembrance" (dhikr)

herein connotes "thought, reflection" (fikr) as it is narrated that one hour of thinking is better than one year of worshipping.[28]

There are some exegetes who hold that the Injunction reflects keeping God Almighty in mind while trading and refraining from transgressing the principles of truth and justice. Nonetheless, it is crystal clear that the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse is quite broad in the semantic range and encompasses all these interpretations.

It is also certain that the spirit of "remembrance" is "thought" without which it is devoid of meaning and what leads to salvation is the remembrance intertwined with thought at all times. Remembering God Almighty at all times basically makes it penetrate into the depth of soul and eradicates the roots of ignorance and negligence as the main causes of all sins, and set man on the path of salvation and deliverance.

Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 10

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِن فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

10. Then when the prayer is ended, you are free to disperse through the land and seek Allah's Bounty and remember Allah much that you may be saved.

Worldly possessions are Divine Bounties in Qur'anic terms. Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that after the establishment of the Friday prayer, return to your trade and procuring revenue.

The Noble Prophet (S) is narrated as saying that whoever devotedly remembers God Almighty in the marketplace and place of trade while people neglect their obligations and merely attend to their business. Such person devotedly attending to the remembrance of God Almighty will receive the Rewards one thousand virtuous good acts and will be granted with Divine Forgiveness.[29]

The blessed Verse is saying that when the prayer comes to an end, you are free to disperse in the land, invoke God Almighty for bestowing His Bounties upon them, and remember Allah at all times so that you may attain to salvation.

The injunctive

"Seek Allah's Bounty"

and similar Qur'anic expressions oftentimes connote seeking daily sustenance and engagement in trade and business, but it is clear that the semantic range of such expressions are broad and trade and business are included in it. Therefore, some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that such expressions connote visiting the ailing and the believer and gaining knowledge.

Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 11

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَهْوًا انفَضُّوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا قُلْ مَا عِندَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهْوِ وَمِنَ التِّجَارَةِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

11. And when they see some merchandise or some amusement, they disperse headlong to it and leave you standing [while reciting your sermon]. Say: "That which Allah has [of Bounties and Blessings] is better than any amusement or merchandise! And Allah is the Best of providers."

According to the exegetic sources, once the Noble Prophet (S) was reciting the sermons of the Friday prayer when a caravan of tradesmen entered Medina while beating their drums. Most of the Muslims left the Noble Prophet (S) leaving his sermon unfinished. It was on that occasion that the blessed Verse was revealed to censure their unworthy act.

The blessed Verse merely criticizes the Muslims for leaving the Noble Prophet rather than leaving the sermon and the prayer incomplete. Showing disrespect to the Divinely appointed leader is worse than leaving the sermon and the prayer incomplete. The blessed Verse, addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), is saying that what is with God Almighty is better than amusement and trade and God Almighty is the Best Provider.

The Blessings and Rewards that will fall into the shares of the Muslims for their attending the Friday prayer, listening to the Noble Prophet's (S) sermons and admonitions, and the spiritual education derived from them are not to be compared with anything else and if they fear that their daily sustenance be severed, they are wrong since God Almighty is the Best Provider.

The adverb of manner

qa'iman ("standing")

reflects that the Noble Prophet (S) recited the sermons of the Friday prayer while he was standing. In this vein, it is narrated on the authority of Jabir ibn Samura that he never saw the Noble Prophet to recite the sermons while sitting and whoever says that he seated while reciting the sermons, reject his claim.[30]

The Significance of the Friday Prayer

Fore and foremost, the blessed Verse in question reflects the significance of the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer as a religious obligation.

The Muslims are hereby commanded to hasten toward the remembrance of God Almighty upon hearing the Friday prayer call and leave any trade or interfering activity such that when people are entangled with food shortage

and a caravan enters for the purpose of trade from which they may meet their demands, they are not allowed to turn toward it but it is incumbent upon them to continue the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer.

Such injunction receives recurrent emphasis in Islamic traditions, including a sermon narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) by the proponents and opponents of its transmission according to which the Noble Prophet (S) says:

"The establishment of the Friday congregation prayer is a Divine Obligation and whoever degrades or denies it in my lifetime or after my demise, God Almighty will lead him to misfortune and will never grant His Blessing upon him. Behold that his prayers, alms giving, pilgrimage to Mecca and his virtuous good deeds will not be accepted by God Almighty unless he repents such evil deed."[31]

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that the establishment of the Friday prayer is an obligation and standing behind the Infallible Imam (as) for the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer is an obligation and if a man fails to establish the Friday congregation prayers for three weeks without any excuse, he has neglected an obligation and no one neglects three obligations without any excuse unless he is a hypocrite.[32]

It is narrated from Allah's Messenger (S) that one who joins the Friday congregation prayer out of faith and for Allah, his sins will be forgiven and he will proceed with a new life.[33] According to a Prophetic tradition, in his Ascension the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) noticed that angels invoked God Almighty to forgive the sins committed by those Muslims who perform the Friday major ablution (ghusl) and establish the Friday congregation prayer.[34]

Numerous traditions have been narrated in this vein, but for the sake of brevity, merely another tradition will be narrated herein.

Once the Noble Prophet (S) was inquired:

"O Allah's Messenger! I have repeatedly prepared myself to go on pilgrimage to Mecca but I have failed to do so."

The Noble Prophet replied:

"It is incumbent upon you to establish the Friday prayer, since it is the pilgrimage to Mecca for the needy."

The tradition reflects that many Blessings of the pilgrimage to Mecca may be received through the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer.[35]

It is worthy of note, however, that failing to establish the Friday congregation prayer has been severely censured and those failing to establish it are regarded as hypocrites when it is an individual obligation (wajib 'ayni), namely at the time of the Infallible Imam (as) assuming the leadership of the Muslim community.

However, at the time of Occultation of the Twelfth Imam (as), it is an optionally incumbent duty (wajib takhyiri; opting between the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer or the noon congregation prayer) in which case failing to establish it is not reprehensible in case its establishment be neither degraded nor denied.

It is noteworthy that the majesty of the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer and its great significance are still the same. Jurisprudential sources may be consulted for further treatment of the subject.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that the blessed Chapter opens with the Prophetic Call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and it closes with the abandonment of the Noble Prophet (S) serving as a warning to the believers.

Notes

1. Majma‘ al-Bayan; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
2. Majma‘ al-Bayan; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
3. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 10, p. 30.
4. 110:1-3
5. 37:143-144
6. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 4, p. 177.
7. Wafi, vol. 2, p. 157.
8. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 13, p. 96. The tradition is to found in some other sources.
9. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
10. 24:41
11. 17:44
12. Tafsir al-Mizan; Tafsir Burhan. The tradition is to be found in other exegetical and tradition sources.
13. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
14. Tafsir Nur al-Qur’an, vol. 7; Tafsir Makhzan al-‘Irfan; Tafsir Nimunih under the blessed Verse in question.
15. Tabarsi's Majma‘ al-Bayan; ‘Allama Tabataba’i's al-Mizan; Suyuti's Durr al-Manthur; Zamakhshari's Kashshaf; Qurtubi's and Maraghi's exegetic works; Sayyid Qutb's Fi Halal al-Qur’an; Bukhari's Sahih.
16. Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 192 (Khutba Qasi‘a).
17. Raghib's Mufradat.
18. 2:87
19. For other traditions narrated in this respect, please refer to tradition sources.
20. 5:18
21. 55:26-27
22. Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 5.
23. Wasa’il al-Shi‘a, vol. 5, p. 17.
24. Ibid, p. 67.
25. Kamal al-Din, p. 164.
26. Wasa’il al-Shi‘a, vol. 5, p. 63.
27. Ibid, Friday Prayer (salat al-jum‘a), p. 245.
28. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 289.
29. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan.
30. Majma‘ al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
31. Wasa’il al-Shi‘a, vol. 5, p. 7, the Chapter on the Necessity of the Friday Prayer (Bab Wujub Salat al-Jum‘a), tradition 28.
32. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 4.
33. Ibid.
34. Mustadrak al-Wasa’il, vol. 6, p. 91.
35. Ibid, p. 5, tradition 17.

Surah al-Munafiqun, Chapter 63

(The Hypocrites)

Section (juz') 28

Number of Verses: 11

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Like the preceding Chapter, the blessed Chapter in question, revealed in Medina, has eleven Verses. The hypocrites' characteristics are not only treated in this Chapter, but some Qur'anic Chapters, particularly those revealed in Medina, make references to their psychological and behavioral qualities. Such characteristics are most comprehensively treated in Chapter nine (Surah al-Tawba) in which approximately one hundred Verses are devoted to such traits.

The recitation of the Chapter in the Friday prayer is enjoined. Such emphasis may be owing to the point that the Muslim community (umma) should at all times beware of the plots hatched by hypocrites.

According to jurisprudential sources, e.g. Jawahir al-Kalam, that if the leader of the Friday congregation prayer comes halfway to recite another Chapter following the recitation of the first Chapter (Surah al-Hamd), he may begin to recite Chapter 63 unless he began the recitation of Chapters 62 or 112.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

According to a tradition narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S), one who recites Surah al-Munafiqin will be absolved of any hypocrisy.[1] It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that it is incumbent upon all the believers following the Shi'i Imams to recite Chapter 62 (Surah al-Jum'a) and

"Glorified is the Name of thy Most Sublime Lord"

on Friday night and Chapters 62 and 63 in the Friday noon prayer.

Then, he went further to say that when such believer acts upon the same, it is as if he has done the Noble Prophet's (S) deeds and Divine Rewards will be in store for him.[2] It is worthy of note, however, that such Rewards will fall into the shares of those who act upon Qur'anic Injunctions, since the mere utterance devoid of reflection and action will be of no avail.

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

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

1. When the hypocrites come unto you, they say: "We bear witness that you are verily Allah's Messenger." Allah knows that you are His Messenger and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are liars.

The Arabic word nifaq, derived from the root n-f-q, connotes the underground tunnels used for camouflage or flight. Some animals, like field mice and lizards dig nests with two holes. In like manner, hypocrites leave clandestine ways through which they may flee at the time of urgency. People may fall into four categories.

The first group consists of those who are devout believers and act upon their obligations. These are true believers. Those in the second group sincerely believe, but they fail to act. Such people are disobedient. The third group consists of those who do not believe in their hearts but pretend belief. These are hypocrites. The people in the fourth group neither sincerely believe nor act upon their obligations. They are disbelievers.

Imam 'Ali (as) is quoted as saying that hypocrisy stems from inward inferiority.[3] Hypocrites in the early days of Islam had found their way into decision making for society and even the Noble Prophet (S) was exposed to their conspiracies.

The exegesis of the blessed Verse in question requires a prelude regarding the point that the earliest instances of hypocrisy trace back to the Noble Prophet's (S) migration to Medina when the strong pillars of the Islamic faith and its triumph were reflected. There were almost no hypocrites in Mecca, since powerful opponents could utter and do whatever they liked against the Islamic faith without entertaining fear in their hearts. Thus, there was no need to act hypocritically.

The widespread of the Islamic faith in Medina weakened its enemies, since it was hard and at times impossible to explicitly deny the Islamic faith.

Consequently, the defeated enemies made attempts at destructive stratagems in a new guise and thereby pretended to join the Muslims, but they pursued their clandestine measures. It is natural that any revolution, following its manifest triumph, confronts the lines of hypocrites and the bitter enemies of yesterday appear in the guise of the infiltrators of today.

Therefore, the reason behind the revelation of numerous Qur'anic Verses in Medina rather than Mecca regarding the hypocrites is clarified.

It is, however, noteworthy that the question of hypocrisy and hypocrites is not particular to the time of the Noble Prophet (S) since any society, particularly the revolutionary society, confronts it.

Therefore, the Qur'anic analytical treatment of the subject, not only as a historical question but also as some current affair, requires precise scrutiny so that such treatment may inspire confrontation with the spirit of hypocrisy and hypocritical lines in the Islamic societies in modern times. The hypocrites tokens, extensively reflected in the Holy Qur'an, are to be accurately comprehended so that such tokens may lead Muslims to reveal their lines and stratagems.

Another point of significance is that the challenge posed to any society by hypocrites is worse than any enmity since it is not facile at all times to recognize them on the one hand and they are domestic enemies on the other

such that they infiltrate within the innermost of the society such that it is quite hard to screen them.

Furthermore, their interrelations with the other members of the society pose a harder challenge in confronting them. Consequently, the Islamic society has received the worst blows by the hypocrites and it is for the same reason that the Holy Qur'an poses the harshest challenges to them and attacks them worse than any other foe. The Holy Qur'an herein opens with the hypocrites' pretense to belief constituting the pivot of their hypocrisy.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that

"When the hypocrites come unto you, they say: 'We bear witness that you are verily Allah's Messenger.' Allah knows that you are His Messenger and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are liars."

Thus, the first token of hypocrisy is revealed which is the difference between inward intentions and outward conduct. Hypocrites emphatically claim to be believers but their hearts entertains no belief. Fabricating such lies falls into the two categories of true and untrue claims and doctrinal truth and untruth.

In other words, the criterion for the former is to assay whether or not the claims conform to truth. The latter, dealing with conformity or non-conformity to beliefs, reflects that if one reports something which conforms to truth but it is against his beliefs, it is termed as doctrinal untruth. Nonetheless, if it conforms to his beliefs, it is truth.

Thus, the hypocrites' testimony to the Prophetic Call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) did not embody untruth, but it constituted the truth, but since they disbelieved in it, their testimony was regarded as untruth. It is in this vein that the Holy Qur'an is saying that he is Allah's Messenger (S), though they forge lies.

The Noble Prophet said:

"I fear neither believers nor disbelievers, though I fear hypocrites."[4]

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verses 2-3

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

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا فَطُبِعَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ

2. They have made their oaths a shield and thereby hinder people from the Path of Allah. Indeed, evil is what they do.

3. Such hypocrisy is because they believed and then disbelieved. Therefore, their hearts are sealed by the seal of misfortune as a consequence of which they understand not.

The word junna denotes "shield" which protects the body from arrows. The Holy Qur'an, many a time, treats of the false oaths taken by hypocrites saying that they pledge to satisfy you. Thus, the blessed Verse treats of the second token of the hypocrites saying that they use their oaths as a shield so that they may impede people from treading the Path of God Almighty.

They commit very evil deeds

("Indeed, evil is what they do"),

since they pretend belief but inwardly, they disbelieve and make impediments on the path of Guidance. What is worse and more evil than taking oaths swearing by the Sacred Name of God Almighty in order to disguise one's real intentions and attract people's sentiments and deceive them by hindering them from Allah's Path.

It is worthy of note, however, that such expression reflects that they are at war with believers at all times and believers are supposed to be deceived by their hypocritical conduct and sweet words, since shields are opted in battlefields.

The blessed Verse 3 treats of the main cause behind such unworthy deeds, saying that

"Such hypocrisy is because they believed and then disbelieved."

The blessed Verse may reflect that they hypocrites seemingly converted to the Islamic faith by uttering the formula

"There is no god but Allah and Muhammad (S) is Allah's Messenger (S)"

out of hypocrisy, fear, greed, or other mal intentions. Nonetheless, they reflected their disbelief later on as it was the case with 'Abd Allah ibn Ubayy who converted to the Islamic faith but later expressed his disbelief.

The blessed Verse may also allude to the point that some of the hypocrites are likewise, since faith has not penetrated their hearts.

Upon hearing the inimitable Qur'anic Verses from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S), they expressed their belief, though upon meeting with their chiefs, they said unto them that they were in their line. God Almighty exposes their hypocrisy. Taking into account the contextual meaning and the occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verse, the former interpretation is more manifest.

"Therefore, their hearts are sealed by the seal of misfortune as a consequence of which they understand not."

Human heart is originally of two dimensions, one turns toward the heavenly and angelic realm and the other turns toward the natural and satanic world. When the former dimension is strengthened and human heart entertains the remembrance of God Almighty, it may accommodate the Throne of the Most Gracious Allah and Divine Inspirations where angels may frequent. Au contraire, when the former dimension takes the upper hand, devils tempt him and lead man to corruption.

In this vein, it is narrated in traditions that human heart has two ears: one hears the angels and makes man commit righteous good deeds; the other ear hears the devils and thereby inclines toward committing evil. It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that had the devils not encompassed the hearts of the children of Adam (as), he would have looked at the heavenly realm as well as the earth.[5]

Therefore, man may use his own heart to understand that at times he is inclined toward committing good righteous deeds as prescribed by God Almighty and thereby perceive that such committing such meritorious deeds is inspired by angels. Au contraire, he may understand that satanic temptations provoke him to commit evils deeds against Divine Injunctions.

It goes without saying that human acts are not predestined, since they pave the path for their own acts.

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 4

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ وَإِن يَقُولُوا تَسْمَعْ لِقَوْلِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ خُشُبٌ مُّسَنَّدَةٌ
يَحْسَبُونَ كُلَّ صَيْحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ فَاحْذَرْهُمْ قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَنَّىٰ يُؤْفَكُونَ

4. And when you look at them, they have such looks that they make you wonder and when they speak, their speech is so beauteous and attractive that you listen to their words. They are as blocks of wood, dry, brainless, futile, relying on one another. They think that every cry is against them. They are the enemies; therefore, beware of them. May Allah slay them! How are they deviating from the True Path?

In Chapter 9 (Surah al-Tawba), God Almighty addresses the Noble Prophet (S) saying unto him that the worldly possessions and the children of the hypocrites are not supposed to make you wonder.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that their looks and speech should not make you wonder. Although the blessed Verse is addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), but all Muslims are asked to beware of being impressed by the appearance and the speech of the hypocrites.

The Noble Prophet (S) in narrated as saying that believers are flexible like ears of corn; they bend against the wind, but they stand upright again. However, disbelievers are likened to black poplars, of hard wood, such that they are so inflexible that the harsh wind may eradicate them.[6]

The blessed Verse in question treats of further tokens of the hypocrites, saying that when one sees them, they wonder at their comely appearance and sweet words, and whenever they talk, you listen to them. Thus, even the Noble Prophet (S) may be impressed by their sweet words, let alone others.

Besides treating of their appearances, their inward states are also dealt with in the blessed Verse, saying that inwardly,

"they are like blocks of wood relying on the wall,"

reflecting that they lack in spirit as their bodies are hollow and dependent. They lack sincerity, light, will, resolution, and faith, hence the similitude of blocks of wood relying on the wall.

In this vein, it is narrated by some Qur'an exegetes that 'Abd Allah ibn Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites, was a robust, good looking, and eloquent man. Upon entering the meetings of the Noble Prophet (S) and his Companions, the Companions wondered at the appearances of 'Abd Allah ibn Ubayy and his followers and listened to their words.

However, owing to their arrogance, they went to the wall and relied on it, impressing the Companions by their appearances and words, hence the Revelation of the blessed Verse.[7] The blessed Verse proceeds to say that they are so superficial. They neither trust God Almighty nor are they self-confident, such that they regard any cry to be against them.

Their hearts are encompassed by fear and their souls are enwrapped by suspicion and pessimism. As the saying goes "The traitor is fearful," they are even afraid of their own shadows. Thus, this is another token of the hypocrites.

The blessed Verse closes by warning the Noble Prophet (S) that they are your real enemies and he is asked to beware of them. The blessed Verse further says: May God Almighty slays them. How they deviate from the True Path.

It is clear that the sentence is not in the indicative mood, but it is a curse on them which reflects censure and degradation for the hypocrites, as similar expressions are used in daily speech. The point is that God Almighty uses the speech employed by people.

Thus, other tokens of the hypocrites are enumerated including their attractive appearances, their hollowness, fear, suspicion of everything and any event.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that believers have four kinds of enemies:

1. The Muslims envious of them
2. The hypocrites who hate them.
3. Satan who leads them astray.
4. The disbelievers who wage war against them.[8]

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verses 5-6

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا يَسْتَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ لَوَّوْا رُءُوسَهُمْ وَرَأَيْتَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ وَهُم مُّسْتَكْبِرُونَ

سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَسْتَغْفَرْتَ لَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ لَن يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

5. And whenever it is said unto them: "Come, so that Allah's Messenger may invoke Allah to forgive you," they twist their heads out of disbelief, arrogance, and derision and you would see them impeding out of arrogance the people from turning towards the Truth.

6. It is equal to them whether you ask forgiveness or ask not forgiveness for them. Indeed, Allah guides not the people who are disobedient.

The Prophetic Calls lead to growth and attaining to an exalted state. The invocations of Allah's friends will be answered. The Prophet's (S) prayers for one who denies the True Call may not be answered. Arrogance leads to deprivation from the Divine Boundless Graciousness.

The blessed Verse 5 treats of further tokens of the hypocrites and their misdeeds, saying when they are asked to come so that Allah's Messenger (S) may invoke God Almighty to forgive them, they twist their heads out of derision and arrogance and they turn away from the Prophet's (S) words in arrogance. The point is that their arrogance impedes them from taking the opportunity to repent from committing sins and being absolved of them.

An instance of such arrogant denial, according to Qur'an exegetes, was 'Abd Allah ibn Ubayy who talked evil of the Noble Prophet (S) and emigrant believers saying that upon their return to Medina, the mighty would drive out the humbled out of the city.

It was on that occasion that the blessed Qur'anic Verses were revealed and thereby he was severely censured. It was suggested that he went to the Noble Prophet (S) so that he may invoke God Almighty to forgive him.

However, he uttered further unworthy words, saying:

"I was asked to convert to the Islamic faith and I did. I was asked to pay alms-tax and I did. Then, you will ask me to prostrate before Muhammad (S)."

It is clear that the spirit of the Islamic faith is submission to the Truth and arrogance impedes such submission.

Therefore, one of the tokens of the hypocrites which is one of the motives lying behind hypocrisy is arrogance, self-conceit, and megalomania.

The Arabic word

lawwu ("they twist"),

deriving from l-w-', l-y-y, or l-w-y, originally denotes twisting ropes but it also connotes turning around or away one's head.

The Arabic verbal form yasudduna, as mentioned above, is used in two senses: "they impede" and "they turn away," though the contextual meanings of the blessed Verses 2 and 5 reflect the former and the latter senses respectively.

To disambiguate the intended meaning, the blessed Verse 6 adds that put the case that they come unto you and you ask for their forgiveness, they are not prepared for such forgiveness. Thus, it would make no difference to them whether you ask or not ask for forgiveness, since God Almighty will never forgive them, as God Almighty will not guide the disobedient.

It is also clear that by disobedient, any sinner is not intended, since the Noble Prophet (S) was Divinely appointed to save the sinners, but those who persist in committing sins and are obstinate and arrogant against the Truth may not be absolved of their sins.

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 7

هُمُ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ لَا تُنفِقُوا عَلَىٰ مَنْ عِندَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ حَتَّىٰ يَنفَضُّوا ۗ وَلِلَّهِ خَزَائِنُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَٰكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ

7. They are the ones who say: "Spend not on those who are with Allah's Messenger so that they desert him." And to Allah belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites comprehend not.

The Arabic word khaza'in is the plural form of khazina ("treasure"). One of the stratagems devised by enemies is to boycott the believers and lead them to dire straits. The blessed Verse is saying that the hypocrites asked each other not to render aid to the Noble Prophet (S) so that his followers may abandon him.

It was in this vein that Mu'awiya issued a decree as per which the followers of Imam 'Ali (as) were deprived of the public Muslim treasury (bayt al-mal)[9] and the adherents of Imam Husayn (as) were denied of water at Karbala'. In modern times, superpowers employ economic sanctions and pressures to make the nations submit to their will.

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 8

يَقُولُونَ لَئِن رَّجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْأَذَلَّ ۚ وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَٰكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

8. They say: "If we return to Medina from this military expedition, the more honorable will expel therefrom the meaner." But honor, and power belong to Allah and to His Messenger and to the believers, but the hypocrites know not.

The hypocrites intend to overthrow the Islamic state. They regard themselves to be honorable and the Noble Prophet (S) and the believers to be lowly, whereas the honor and glory solely belong to God Almighty, the Noble Prophet (S), and the believers.

The blessed Verse makes reference to other detestable words uttered by them, saying that they say if we return to Median, the honorable will drive out the humbled from the city. Such words were uttered by 'Abd Allah ibn Ubayy intending to say that they, as the inhabitants of Medina, will expel Allah's (S) Messenger and the emigrant believers from the city.

By

"return,"

return from the military campaign of Bani Mustalaq is meant. It is true that one person uttered such words, but since the hypocrites had the same policy, the Holy Qur'an intends a collective sense out of the same. Thus, a harsh reply is provided for them by the Holy Qur'an to the effect that glory exclusively belongs to God Almighty, His Messenger (S), and the believers, though the hypocrites are not aware of it.

It is worthy of note, however, that such words against the emigrant believers were not solely uttered by the Medinan hypocrites, but such words were formerly uttered by the chiefs of Quraysh in Mecca, saying that if they pressured the poor Muslims who were few in number by economic sanctions or if they expel them from Mecca, everything would go smoothly.

The colonial powers in modern times imagine that the treasures of the heaven and the earth are available to them and they try to impose economic sanctions on the nations who fail to submit to their will. Such blind disobedient people have been unaware of the point that their possessions and riches will be scattered to the wind by the Divine Will and their baseless might will perish.

Such attitude, regarding oneself honorable and others humbled is hypocritical and stems from arrogance and self-conceit on the one hand and imaginary independence before God Almighty on the other. Had they been acquainted with the truth of total submission to God Almighty and His Absolute Ownership, they would have never erred in this respect.

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 9

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

9. O you who believe! Let neither your properties nor your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And whoever does that is the loser.

Since worldly possessions and children constitute one of the most significant factors lying behind loving this worldly life, the blessed Verse warns the believers against such excessive affection, saying:

"O you who believe! Let neither your properties nor your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And whoever does that is the loser."

It is true that worldly possessions and children are Divine Bounties to the extent that one makes use of them in Allah's Cause and attaining to happiness. However, they are regarded as the worst afflictions when excessive affection for them impedes man from treading the Path to the Truth. It is mentioned above that the same affection led the hypocrites astray.

The same motif is most explicitly depicted in a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) according to which two wolves on either sides of a cattle may not inflict so many harms that mammonism and greed may adversely affect the believers' faith.[10]

Qur'an exegetes discuss different possibilities regarding the remembrance of God Almighty in this blessed Verse. Some maintain that the five daily prayers are hereby intended.

Some hold that it alludes to showing gratitude for Divine Bounties, patience at the time of affliction, contentment with Divine Decrees, pilgrimage to Mecca, paying alms tax (zakat), recitation of the Holy Qur'an, and all religious obligations. However, it is clear that remembrance of God Almighty is broad in its semantic range encompassing all the above. Thus, such interpretation makes a reference to the explicit instances of such remembrance.

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 10

وَأَنفِقُوا مِن مَّا رَزَقْنَاكُم مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ فَيَقُولَ رَبِّ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنِي إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ فَأَصَّدَّقَ وَأَكُن مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

10. And expend of that with which We have provided you before death comes to any of you when he says: "My Lord! If only You would give me respite for a little while, then I should give alms and be amongst the righteous.

Man expends alms in Allah's Cause and acts upon his religious obligations if he believes the he will die and there will be Resurrection in the Hereafter.

It is in this vein that the blessed Verse in question enjoins the believers to expend alms in Allah's Cause, saying:

"expend of that with which We have provided you before death comes to any of you when he says: 'My Lord! If only You would give me respite for a little while, then I should give alms and be amongst the righteous.'"

Enjoining the believers to expend alms in Allah's Cause herein is interpreted by some Qur'an exegetes in the sense of the immediate

requirement of expending the alms tax and other religious obligations, though the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse reflects that any kind of obligatory and supererogatory expending alms is hereby intended which may serve as a means of man's salvation in the Hereafter.

It would be of interest to note that the blessed Verse says:

"I should give alms and be amongst the righteous."

Such expression demonstrates the profound impression made by expending in Allah's Cause on righteousness. However, some Qur'an exegetes hold that righteousness herein connotes performing the rituals for pilgrimage to Mecca and there are traditions explicitly substantiating such interpretation, though it may be regarded as one of the explicit instances of the same.

The clause

"before death comes to any of you"

makes a reference to man's encounter with death and the reflection of its tokens, since one may not utter such words posthumously.

The clause

"of that with which We have provided you"

is not restricted to worldly possessions but connotes all Bounties reflecting that man has been granted such Bounties by God Almighty for a few days. Thus, niggardliness would be meaningless. Upon taking a glimpse at the purgatory in the last moments, many people find out that they are at the threshold of the Resurrection Day.

The veils of ignorance are cast asunder and they notice that they have to leave behind all their worldly possessions and regret that they have not made any provisions for such a long journey. Thus, they ask to return to this world even for a short while to compensate for their losses, but they are denied of such return, since Divine Decree makes it impossible to return.

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 11

وَلَن يُؤَخِّرَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِذَا جَاءَ أَجَلُهَا ۚ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

11. And Allah grants respite to none when his appointed time comes. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.

The last blessed Verse most decisively adds that God Almighty grants respite to none when his appointed time of death comes, not even for one single moment.

The same motif is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[11]:

"When their term comes, neither can they delay it nor can they advance it for a moment."

Finally, the blessed Verse closes with

"And Allah is All-Aware of what you do,"

reflecting that there are records available for Reward and Chastisement and everyone shall receive Divine Retribution before others.

May God Almighty encompass us with His Graciousness and makes us the dwellers of Paradise. Amen.

Notes

1. Majma‘ al-Bayan.
2. Thawab al-A‘mal; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
3. Ghurar al-Hikam.
4. ‘Awali al-La’ali, vol. 4, p. 39.
5. Tafsir Makhzan al-‘Irfan.
6. Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 6, p. 53f3.
7. Tafsir Kashshaf, vol. 4, p. 540.
8. Nahj al-Fasaha, p. 481.
9. Ibn Hadid's commentary on the Nahj al-Balagha, vol. 11, p. 44.
10. Usul Kafi, vol. 2, the chapter on the love for this world, tradition 3.
11. 7:34

Surah al-Taghabun, Chapter 64

(Mutual Loss and Gain)

Section (juz') 28

Number of Verses: 18

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Medina, has eighteen Verses and the designation of the Chapter derives from making mention of the Day of Resurrection in the ninth Verse as the Day of Mutual Loss and Gain (taghabun).

The Arabic word taghabun denotes mutual defraud and gaining personal benefits. The point is that on the Day of Resurrection, everyone aims to save oneself and put the blame on others. The blessed Verses of the Chapter in question bear stylistic resemblance to Chapter 57 (Surah al-Hadid) and they seemingly constitute a summary of the latter.

The blessed Chapter opens with Divine Unity and proceeds with warning people against watching their deeds and according attention to the Day of Resurrection and closes with urging people to expend in Allah's Cause and turn away from mundane attachments.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that whoever recites Surah al-Taghabun in as a part of his religious obligations or on other occasions, he will be amongst the people of Paradise on the Day of Resurrection[1] provided that he acted upon Qur'anic and Islamic Injunctions.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ ۖ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

1. Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorifies Allah. His is the Dominion and to Him belong all the praises and He is Omnipotent to do all things.

Aiming at gaining and maintaining power, the rulers in this world commit vices, but God Almighty is the Sovereign glorified by all the world of existence and He never wrongs anyone. It is worthy of note that praise belongs to the One Who is Free from any defect or shortcoming.

Thus, the blessed Verse opens with the glorification of God Almighty and it proceeds to treat of His glorification in genuflexion and prostration before Him. Furthermore, it is common knowledge that all creatures in the world of existence possess some sort of perception and accordingly glorify Allah. However, it is unfortunate that some men, failing to worship and glorify God Almighty and committing sins, act inharmoniously.

As mentioned earlier, the blessed Verse opens with the glorification of God Almighty, the Sovereign Lord Whose Omnipotence sways the entire world of existence, saying that whatever exists in the heavens and on the earth glorify God Almighty.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that to Him belong Ownership and Sovereignty thereby all praises belong to His Pure Essence and He is the Omnipotence Lord.

Since the glorification of all the creatures of the world and different interpretations have been mentioned above, there is no need to reiterate them. Such glorification and praise reflect His Omnipotence and Ownership of all things, since Divine Majestic and Beauteous Attributes lie in the same.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 2

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَمِنكُم مُّؤْمِنٌ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

2. He it is Who created you and granted you freedom such that some of you are disbelievers and some of you are believers. And Allah is the All-Seer of what you do.

The antecedent of the pronoun

"He" (huwa)

is the word Allah in the preceding Verse. Besides being a Divine Attribute, the pronoun reflects that you are created by the Lord Who is the Absolute Owner and Sovereign, though some of you amongst human beings have shown ingratitude to the Lord following your creation and disbelieved Divinity and failed to glorify and praise the All-Glorious and All-Majestic God Almighty.

Nonetheless, some of you submitted to Divine Command and believed in and followed the Path of Truth. You are supposed to know that God Almighty is All-Aware of what you have concealed in your hearts.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the blessed Verse indicates that man is free in committing his deeds, since he ascribes the Creation of mankind to himself. God Almighty is the One Who created you, but following the Creation, some of you disbelieved and some of you believed. In other words, men enjoyed the free choice to either believe or disbelieve.

The blessed Verse refutes the claims of the Ash'aris and the determinists who maintain that belief and disbelief stem from Divine Will, since God Almighty may accept or refuse to accept the belief or disbelief.

Furthermore, the deterministic claims are against Divine Justice and entail certain restrictions in tormenting the disbelievers, amongst which mention may be made of the nullification of sending Messengers and Revelation of Scriptures and Guidance as well as Divine Promises and Warnings.

In other words, determinists are supposed to abandon mankind like beasts, since God Almighty wills that some people believe in Divine Unity and others refuse to do so. Such unfounded claim stands against common sense and the beliefs held by all the wise the world over who maintain that man is capable of learning.

Furthermore, man is capable of making free choices rather than being predestined to act in any way. Man's deeds reflect his beliefs as a

consequence of which the blessed Verse says that God Almighty is All-Aware of your deeds rather than saying God Almighty is All-Aware of your disbelief and belief.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 3

خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

3. He created the heavens and the earth with truth and He fashioned you in your mothers' wombs and made good your shapes. And to Him is the return.

The blessed Verse in question proceeds with further elaboration on creation and the goals behind it, saying that God Almighty created the heavens and the earth out of Truth and there is a precise and true systematicity as well as Wise and True goals behind the creation of the world.

The blessed Verse further treats of the creation of man and urges us to proceed from the realm of the horizons and enter that of the souls, saying that He fashioned you with a comely and pleasing shape granting man a pleasant appearance and an embellished heart enlightened by reason and wisdom. God Almighty created specimens from the entire world of existence in man such that as put by Imam 'Ali (as), macrocosm is epitomized in microcosm.

However, the blessed Verse closes by saying that the final return of all things is toward God Almighty. Man is a constituent element of the organic world of existence. In terms of creation, the entire world in harmoniously proceeding toward a single goal, proceeding from the lowest degrees toward the proximity of the Boundless Being, the Infinite Existence of God Almighty.

The expression

"He fashioned you in your mothers' wombs and made good your shapes"

includes the outward appearance and the inward form in terms of the body and the soul. A brief glimpse at the creation of man's body and soul reflects that he is the most beauteous of the beings in the world of existence and God Almighty created this being in the best form and His Omnipotence is manifest therein.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 4

يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُسِرُّونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

4. He knows what is in the heavens and on earth and He knows what you conceal and what you reveal. And Allah is the Omniscient of what is in the breasts.

The best means to abstain from committing sins and maintaining the Fear of God Almighty is that He is Omniscient and All-Aware of our deeds. His Omniscience is not restricted to temporal and spatial spheres, but He is All-Aware of what is manifest and what is concealed as He is Omniscient of all things in the heavens and on the earth.

Since man is created for a great goal, he is supposed to be under Divine Supervision at all times. The Lord is Fully Aware of his outward appearance

and his inward feelings and intentions. Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty is All-Aware of what is in the heavens and what is on the earth and He is All-Aware of what you manifestly do or conceal the same. He is All-Aware of the intentions and the beliefs in the breasts.

The blessed Verse depicts Divine Omniscience in three stages: firstly, His Omniscience of all the creatures in the heavens and on the earth; secondly, His Omniscience of all the deeds of mankind irrespective of what they conceal or what they manifest; thirdly, particular emphasis is laid on inward intentions and beliefs and what predominates over human heart and soul.

Being aware of Divine Omniscience may greatly affect man's growth such that it may serve as a warning to man according to which no matter how far he may proceed and to whatever goals he may attain and whatever intentions he may foster in his heart and whatever moral traits he may have, they are all manifest before Divine Omniscience.

Attending to such truth indubitably may greatly contribute to human growth. Such teachings pave the way for man to attain to the goals of creation and tread the path of development and spiritual growth. In short, man is not abandoned on its own but he is under Divine Supervision.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 5

أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن قَبْلُ فَذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

5. Has not the news reached you of those who disbelieved aforetime? They tasted the evil consequences of their deeds in this world and an excruciating torment will be in store for them in the Hereafter.

The Arabic word wabal attested four times in the Holy Qur'an designates anything leading to loss and all the Qur'anic instances of the word connote mundane hardships and entanglements.

Divine torment is not restricted to those in store for people on the Day of Resurrection, but it may befall people in this world as well instances of which include the drowning of Noah's people, Hud's people being afflicted with gale, Salih's people being tormented by the awe inspiring cries from the heaven, Lot's people being stoned, and the people of the Elephant who tasted their dire fate by the burning rocks falling upon them.

One of the most effective means of fostering and warning is to make mention of the fates of ancient peoples.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question briefly mentions the fates of some of the disobedient peoples addressing people

"Has not the news reached you of those who disbelieved aforetime? They tasted the evil consequences of their deeds in this world and an excruciating torment will be in store for them in the Hereafter?"

The blessed Verse is saying that you pass by the ruined cities on your way to Sham and other places witnessing the dire consequences of their wrong-doing and disobedience and read about them in historical works. Those people tasted torments and trod the path of perdition by tempests, torrents, lightning, earthquakes, and gales in this world and excruciating torments are in store for them in the Hereafter.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 6

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُ كَانَت تَّأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالُوا أَبَشَرٌ يَهْدُونَنَا فَكَفَرُوا وَتَوَلَّوا وَّاسْتَغْنَى اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

6. That was because there came unto them their Messengers with clear proofs but they said arrogantly: "Shall mere men guide us?" Thus, they disbelieved and turned away. But Allah was not in need of belief and obedience. And Allah is Needless and Worthy of all praise.

The demonstrative pronoun

"that" (dhalika)

alludes to the preceding blessed Verse, namely you are not supposed to imagine that God Almighty never wrongs anyone by afflicting him with excruciating torments in this world and the Hereafter, but the point is that He apprised mankind of the ultimatum by sending Messengers and revealing Scriptures and miracles such that the wise may entertain no doubts as to the veracity of the Prophetic Calls.

Nonetheless, some people disbelieved out of arrogance and failed to believe on the pretext that Messengers were human beings like them and how they may obey their likes unaware of the truth that they Messengers resemble people in form but they are attached to the metaphysical, higher realm from which they have obtained Divine Emanations and impart the same unto people.

God Almighty is Needless of people's belief and disbelief. He is absolutely Needless of all existent beings.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 7

زَعَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَن لَّن يُبْعَثُوا قُلْ بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّي لَتُبْعَثُنَّ ثُمَّ لَتُنَبَّؤُنَّ بِمَا عَمِلْتُمْ وَذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

7. The disbelievers pretend that they will never be resurrected. Say: "Yes! By my Lord, you will certainly be resurrected, then you shall certainly be apprised of what you did and that is easy for Allah.

The Arabic word za'm denotes unfounded claim and allegation and all the Qur'anic attestations of the world connote criticism. Imam Sadiq (as) is reported as saying that all the Qur'anic attestations of the word za'm connote falsity.[2]

Thus, the blessed Qur'anic Verse enjoins the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) to say that by my Lord! You shall be all resurrected and you shall be certainly apprised of your past deeds and it is easy to do for God Almighty. The blessed Verse opens with a decisive response to the unfounded claims of those who deny Resurrection with a tone in which emphasis and swearing are intertwined, reflecting the firm belief of the warner, namely the Noble Prophet (S).

The blessed Verse in question proceeds by saying that such thing is easy for God Almighty to do. We know that those who denied Resurrection cast doubts on the possibility of resurrecting the rotten bones turned into dust.

Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that the Omnipotent Lord shall have not difficulty in resurrecting them, since He created the world of existence

ex nihilo and resurrecting the dead is more convenient that creating the creatures.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the oath

"By my Lord!"

serves as a delicate allusion to Resurrection, since Divine Lordship requires that the path to man's development and growth within the limits of the mundane and worthless life be not ineffectual. In other words, so long as we do not acknowledge Resurrection, Divine Sovereignty and His fostering mankind on the path of growth would be meaningless.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 8

فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالنُّورِ الَّذِي أَنزَلْنَا ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

8. Therefore, believe in Allah and His Messenger and in the Light which We have sent down. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.

The word Light (nur) in this blessed Verse connotes the Holy Qur'an as it is reflected in the opening of Chapter 14 (Surah Ibrahim):

"We have sent down a Book unto you such that you may lead mankind out of the shadows of polytheism, ignorance, and discord into the Light of monotheism, knowledge, and unity."

The preceding blessed Verses treated of disbelief in God Almighty, His Messengers, and Resurrection leading peoples of the aforetime to torments, though the blessed verse in question is warning people against treading the path of the ancient people who tasted dire fates, but they are urged to believe in God Almighty and His Messengers.

Traditions reflect that the Light mentioned herein connotes the Infallible Imams (as), since they are the embodiments of the Holy Qur'an. Imam Baqir (as) is reported as saying that they are those who shed light on the believers' hearts.[3] Belief is valuable when it encompasses belief in God Almighty, His Messengers, and the Scripture and it is accompanied by action.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verses 9-10

يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمُ التَّغَابُنِ ۗ وَمَن يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۖ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

9. Remember the Day when Allah will gather you on the Day of Gathering, that will be the Day of mutual loss and gain. And whoever believes in Allah and performs righteous good deeds, He will absolve him of his sins and will admit him to Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever. That will be the great salvation.

10. But those who disbelieved and denied our Àyat [proofs, Verses, Signs], they will be the dwellers of the Hell to dwell therein forever. And worst is that destination.

The Arabic word taghabun connotes that on the Day of Resurrection the envies and regrets shall be manifest when disbelievers regret for having failed to believe, the disobedient regret for having failed to do righteous

good deeds, and believers regret to having failed to do further righteous good deeds.

Tokens of such regretful people are mentioned in traditions including:

1. One whose two days be the same.[4]

2. Arrogance and vanity in this world entails poverty in this world and regret and loss in the Hereafter.[5]

3. One who deprives himself of night prayers.[6]

4. One who turns away from struggling in Allah's Cause.[7]

Two groups stand in lines against each other on the Day of Resurrection: the losers and the saved. Glad tidings and warnings are supposed to accompany each other in education. The blessed Verse 9 bears the glad tidings of the everlasting Paradise and the blessed Verse 10 warns against the everlasting Hell for disbelievers. The way out of regret and loss is belief and righteous good deeds.

It is worthy of note, however, that that the blessed Verses in question depict the Day of Resurrection saying that you shall be gathered on the Day of Resurrection, Reckoning, and Recompense.

The Day of Gathering is one of the names of the Day of Resurrection recurrent references to which are attested in the Holy Qur'an, including 56:49-50:

"Say those of olden and those of later times shall be all gathered together for appointed Meeting of a Known Day."

It clearly reflects that the Resurrection of all mankind shall be on one single Day. The blessed Verse 9 is saying that that Day shall be the Day of Mutual Loss and Gain when losers and winners shall be recognized. It shall be on such Day that those who have incurred loss in this world shall be known to others.

Treating of the states of the believers on that Day, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that those who believe in God Almighty and does righteous good deeds shall be absolved of his sins by God Almighty and he shall be admitted to Gardens of Paradise beneath whose trees rivers flow to dwell therein forever and it shall be a great success.

The blessed Verse 10 is saying that those who disbelieved and denied Our Signs are the people of the Hell to dwell therein for good and they shall have a dire fate. Disbelief and denial of Divine Signs are herein mentioned as the Causes leading to misfortune as they stand against belief and righteous good deeds. Thus, mention is made herein of the everlasting Paradise and the great salvation and also of the everlasting Hell and the dire fate.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 11

مَا أَصَابَ مِن مُّصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَن يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

11. No calamity befalls but by the Leave of Allah and whoever believes in Allah, He guides his heart. And Allah is the Omniscient.

The blessed Verse makes a reference to the afflictions and the painful torments in this world perhaps to the effect that such afflictions have always served as pretexts for disbelievers to deny Justice in this world. Such reference may also reflect that there are impediments on the path to true

belief and doing righteous good deeds without confronting them the believer may not succeed. Thus, the link between the blessed Verse in question and the preceding Verses becomes manifest.

The blessed Verse opens by saying that no affliction befalls on mankind without Allah's Leave.

All the happenings in this world indubitably depend upon Divine Leave, since the Unity of Divine Acts requires that nothing may realize in the world of existence without Divine Will, but since befalling of afflictions has always raise questions, emphasis is laid upon it. It is worthy of note, however, that Divine Will reflects Divine Existential Will rather than His Legislative Will.

The significant question raised here is this: Do many of these afflictions befall on mankind consequent to the wrong doings of the oppressors and the will of the tyrants or man is entangled with them owing to his ignorance, negligence, and committing vices or they all befall on mankind owing to Allah's Leave?

To provide a response to this question one may say that all the Qur'anic Verses dealing with afflictions reflect that they are of two kinds: those essential to the nature of human life absolutely unaffected by human will, e.g. death and some of the natural excruciating disasters and those which are somehow affected by human will.

Regarding the first category, the Holy Qur'an says that they are all dependent upon Divine Leave. Concerning the second category, the Glorious Qur'an says that they are the consequences of human acts.

Therefore, one may not use such pretexts and regard all afflictions befalling on mankind by Allah and thereby remain inactive against wrong doers and refrain from confronting them. One may not even refrain from addressing and encountering ailments, blights, poverty, and ignorance. It is worthy of note, however, that the afflictions stemming from human acts befall man upon Divine Leave and any cause is rendered ineffectual upon His Will.

The blessed Verse proceeds with bearing glad tidings to the believers saying that God Almighty guides the believers' hearts such that they never abandon hope in the face of afflictions nor be turned restless. Man is granted Divine Guidance when he is grateful for Divine Bounties, patient in the face of afflictions, and submits to Divine Decree.

The Guidance of the heart embraces a broad semantic range from patience, gratitude, being content with Divine Satisfaction, submission to Divine Will to uttering the formula

"To Allah we belong and to Whom we return."

Some Qur'an exegetes have treated with one of these attributes, though the blessed Verse covers all of them.

The blessed Verse closes with

"and Allah is the Omniscient"

which may briefly reflect the causes behind the afflictions in store for fostering His servants out of His Infinite Knowledge aiming at giving warnings against arrogance and vanity such that His servants may not

consign into oblivion their obligations and refrain from disobedience to Him.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verses 12-13

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَىٰ رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

12. Obey Allah [in terms of the injunctions prescribed in Divine Law] and obey the Messenger [with respect to his commands and traditions], but if you turn away, then the obligation of Our Messenger is merely to convey the Message clearly.

13. Allah! There is no god but He. Therefore, in Allah let the believers put their trust.

Since the knowledge of the origin and Resurrection, mentioned in the previous blessed Verses, certainly affects obedience to God Almighty and the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse in question is saying that it is incumbent upon the believers to obey God Almighty and His Messenger (S).

It goes without saying that obedience to the Noble Prophet (S) reflects obedience to God Almighty, since he does not say anything of his own. The imperative verbal form obey (ati‘u) reflects herein that obedience to the Noble Prophet (S) stems from obedience to God Almighty.

Furthermore, obedience to God Almighty rests in obeying Divine Laws but obeying in His Messenger concerns to the interpretations of Divine Laws and execution of the same. Thus, one is fundamental and the other is ancillary.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that if you turn away and fail to obey the Noble Prophet (S), he is not obliged to make you obey, since His Messenger (S) is only obliged to clearly convey the message. It is incumbent upon him to impart the Truth, but if you fail to obey Divine Command, you have to pay for the consequences of your disobedience. It entails an implied warning.

The blessed Verse 13 makes a reference to the question of Divine Unity in worshipping God Almighty serving as an argument for the requirement of obedience to Divine Command, saying that Allah is the One besides Whom there is no object of worship, hence the believers are supposed to solely put their trust in Him.

No one else is worthy of being worshipped, since Ownership, Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Needlessness solely belong to Him and all beings besides Him are in need of Him. Consequently, they are not supposed to bow down to and obey none but Him. Thus, the believers are to put their trust in Him and invoke solely Him in their prayers.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 14

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَّكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ وَإِن تَعْفُوا

وَتَصْفَحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

14. O you who believe! Indeed, amongst your wives and your children are your enemies [since they make you turn away from treading the

Divine Path]. Therefore, beware of them! But if you pardon, overlook, and forgive their faults, then know that Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Gracious.

The Arabic words
'afw ("pardon "),
safh ("forgiveness"),
and
maghfira ("remission")
constitute the three steps to be taken against the faults of others including spouses and children. Regarding the Occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verse in question, Imam Baqir (as) is reported as saying that when some men intended to migrate from Mecca to Medina, their wives and children beseeched them to swear that they did not leave them since they would be abandoned without them.

Some men yielded to their persistence and intended to stay. Then, the blessed Verse was revealed warning them against yielding to their wives' and children's requests. There were some men who said unto their families that if they refrained from accompanying them in their migration and joined them later in Medina, they would not be welcome by no means. They were ordered to consign to oblivion the past and welcome the reunion and the Qur'anic Verse addresses such issue.[8]

The preceding blessed Verses treated of the unconditional obedience to God Almighty and His Messenger (S), though since excessive affection for possessions and families constitute one of the impediments in treading the Path of Truth, the blessed Verse in question warns Muslims in this respect saying:

"O you who believe! Some of your wives and children are your enemies. Beware of them."

Whenever you intend to act upon Divine Ordinance, e.g. migration in Allah's Cause, they beseech you to refrain from obedience to God Almighty and His Messenger (S) and thereby impede you from being granted such great Bounty.

At times, they wish that you were dead so as to possess your possessions. It is needless to say that all wives and children are not like that and the partitive proposition min ("from") designates the same connotation. The point is that some of them are like that and the believers are supposed to beware of them.

It is worthy of note, however, that such enmity is at times disguised as affection and good intention, though enmity and mal intention rest behind such affection aiming at procurement of personal benefits.

The significant point is that man may at times be perplexed at dilemmas when one way leads to God Almighty and the other toward one's family. Believers are not supposed to entertain any doubts since Divine Satisfaction precedes all things and salvation in this world and the Hereafter lies in the same.

Since family members may use the injunction as a pretext for violence, vengeance, and going to the extreme, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that

if you overlook and forgive their faults, God Almighty will forgive you, since He is Oft-Forgiving and Most Gracious.

Thus, if they repent and apologize for their faults and join you following your migration, do not turn away from them, but forgive them as you invoke God Almighty for forgiveness.

The blessed Verse is saying that the believers, besides being decisive in maintaining their beliefs and refraining from yielding to the entreaties of their families as to deviate from the straight path, are supposed to endeavor to forgive the faults of others in the same manner that they invoke God Almighty for forgiveness since it is through such affection and forgiveness that they may invite them to obey God Almighty.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verses 15-16

إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عِندَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَاسْمَعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَأَنفِقُوا خَيْرًا لِّأَنفُسِكُمْ ۗ وَمَن يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ

فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

15. Your riches and your offspring are only a trial and Allah with Him is the great reward grants rewards to those who stand the trial.

16. Therefore, fear Allah as much as you can. Listen to and obey His Words and expend in His Cause. That is better for you. And whoever is delivered from his own covetousness, then, they are the saved.

The Arabic word fitna connotes the pains, afflictions, hardships, and entanglements which serve as trials. It also connotes the conspiracies and corruptions by enemies.

The Holy Qur'an[9] enjoins the believers to struggle against them such that there remains no corruption. It would be of interest to note that possessions and families are both means of trial and the embellishments in this world[10]. In this vein, Imam 'Ali (as) is reported as saying that the believers are supposed to seek refuge in God Almighty in the face of trials quoting the blessed Verse in question.[11]

If we believe that possessions serve as means of trial, we will not be perturbed by their scarcity since standing such trials will be easier in this way. Possessions are supposed to be accrued through legitimate means and they should be expended in legitimate causes. The believers are obliged to pay the alms tax and thereby show their gratitude.

Children are also means of trial, since parents should accord due attention with respect to selecting worthy spouses for them, pay the religiously lawful mahr, i.e. the bridal money to the spouse, the children's healthy feeding, having affection for them, fostering and educating them in terms of matrimony, and pay utmost attention to their proper upbringing.

All these steps are hard trials and in case the parents be able to fulfill their obligations and thereby stand the trial, they will have their shares in all the righteous good deeds committed by their children.

Some of the spouses and children entertain enmity but all of them serve as means of trial. Thus, foregoing the affection for possessions and children constitute a great Divine Obligation for which God Almighty grants great Rewards. The blessed Verse in question reflects that possessions and

children serve as means of trial for the believers and if they stand the trial, they will be granted great Divine Rewards and Bounties.

God Almighty tries man at all times in order to make him tread the path of growth. Man is tried by different things and possessions and children serve as some of the most significant means of trial, since man's affection for possessions on the one hand and his affection for his children on the other serve as hard trials and man may not stand them and thereby fail to achieve Divine Satisfaction.

The Arabic adverbial form

innama ("nothing but")

is employed herein to reflect restriction connoting that above all, affection for possessions and children serve as means of trial.

In this respect, Imam 'Ali (as) is narrated as saying:

"No one is supposed to say

'O Lord! I seek refuge in You from the trials,'

since there are trials for each and everyone through possessions, however meager, and children and the life of this world serves as the crucible in which man is tried.

If anyone intends to seek refuge in God Almighty, he is to seek refuge in Him from errors, since God Almighty says:

'Beware that possessions and children are means of trial.'"[12]

In this vein, many a Qur'anic exegete and traditionist narrate that once the Messenger of Allah (S) was delivering a sermon on the pulpit when Hasan and Husayn (as) who were small children at the time entered and as they toddled. The Noble Prophet (S) noticed them.

He descended from the pulpit and embraced them saying:

"God Almighty is True in saying that your possessions and children are means of your trial. When I noticed that they toddled, I could not exercise patience. I cut my words short and came to embrace them."[13]

It is worthy of note, however, that such conduct served as a warning to all the Muslims so that they may recognize the exalted ranks of Imam 'Ali's (as) and Hadhrat Fatima's children.

A tradition is transmitted on the authority of Bura' ibn 'Àzib, the well-known Prophet's Companion, in Sunni sources as per which he saw Hasan ibn 'Ali (as) on the Noble Prophet's (as) shoulders saying that he loved him and invoked God Almighty to love him as well.[14]

According to some other traditions, when the Noble Prophet (S) was prostrating in his prayers and Husayn (as), while still a small child, sat on the Noble Prophet's (S) shoulders, he did not impede him from doing so and such conduct reflects the exalted ranks of these two Imams (as).[15]

The blessed Verse 16 draws a conclusion by saying:

"Fear God Almighty as much as it is within your capacity and listen to and obey His Injunctions and expend in His Cause since it would be better for you."

The blessed Verse opens with an Injunction, as per which the believers are supposed to refrain from committing sins, since fear of God Almighty mostly reflects refraining from committing sins. Then, the blessed Verse

proceeds to say that believers are supposed to listen to Divine Injunctions as the preliminary of obeying God Almighty.

Particular emphasis is laid on expending in Allah's Cause as one of the most significant Divine Trials making mention of the point that such things will be all to their benefit (khayr), though the word encompasses a wide semantic range. The emphatic expression reflects that those who save themselves from avarice and covetousness will be saved.

The Arabic word shuhh denotes both niggardliness and avarice and we know that these two vices are amongst the worst impediments to man's deliverance, since they impede man from expending in Allah's Cause and doing righteous good deeds.

Man may save himself from these two vices and achieve happiness through seeking Divine Grace from the bottom of his heart and striving toward the purification of one's self. It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that whoever pays the alms tax guarantees his happiness.[16]

It is worthy of note, however, that it solely includes one of the instances of refraining from niggardliness and avariciousness rather than encompassing all its semantic scope. It is also narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that he circumambulated the Ka'ba from night to morning invoking God Almighty at all times to keep him from his niggardliness and avariciousness.

One of the Imam's companions asked him:

"May my soul be your ransom! I just hear this invocation of yours tonight. Why do you not make another invocation?"

The Imam (as) replied:

"What is worse than niggardliness and avariciousness since God Almighty says:

'And whoever is delivered from his own covetousness, then, they are the saved.'"[17]

Surah al-Taghabun - Verses 17-18

إِن تُقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُضَاعِفْهُ لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

17. If you lend Allah a goodly loan, He will double it for you and will forgive you. And Allah is Most Prepared to appreciate and the Most Forbearing.

18. He is the All-Knower of the unseen and seen, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

To encourage believers to expend in Allah's Cause and refraining from niggardliness and covetousness, the blessed Verse 17 is saying that if you lend Allah a goodly loan, He will make it two folds for you and He will forgive you.

He is Most Prepared to appreciate and reward and He is Most Forbearing. Such wondrous expression is recurrently attested in the Holy Qur'an with respect to expending in Allah's Cause. God Almighty who is the Creator of the world of existence and He bestows all Bounties and owns

all things asks us to lend Him a goodly loan and receive a twofold compensation in return.

He forgives us and appreciates our lending Him a goodly loan. Better rewards, affection, and compensation are unimaginable. It is impossible to transcend such Majesty and Graciousness. Our possessions all belong to Him but we will receive such great Rewards in return for lending such goodly loan. Such Reward reflects the significance of expending in Allah's Cause on the one hand and the Infinite Bounties bestowed upon His servants on the other.

The Arabic word qardh originally denotes "sever, cut," though when it is accompanied by the word hasan "good" it connotes separation from one's possessions and expending the same in a good cause. The Arabic verbal form yudha'if deriving from the root dh-'-f, denotes making twofold or manifold, though in terms of expending in Allah's Cause, according to the Holy Qur'an, it may reach seven hundred fold and may even exceed the same[18].

The clause

"He will forgive you"

reflects that expending in Allah's Cause leads to the forgiveness of one's sins.

The adjective

shakur ("Most Ready to appreciate")

is a Divine Attribute indicating that God Almighty is Most Ready to appreciate the righteous good deeds of His servants by granting great Rewards. His Patience (hilm) reflects His forgiving of sins and lack of haste in chastising the servants.

The blessed Verse is also saying that God Almighty is All-Aware of the seen and the unseen and He is the Omnipotence, the All-Wise. God Almighty is All-Aware of what His servants do in private and in public.

He is Omniscient of what they expend in His Cause. If He asks them to lend Him a goodly loan, it does not reflect His need and lack powerlessness, rather such request indicates His Infinite Affection and Grace. Such great Rewards in return for expending in His Cause reflect His Wisdom.

Therefore, the five Divine Attributes mentioned in the blessed Verse in question and the preceding One are all related to the encouragement to expend in His Cause, though according attention to such Attributes makes man more steadfast in his obedience to God Almighty and refraining from committing sins and grants him the spirit of fear of God Almighty, will power, and encouragement.

Finally, it would be of interest to make reference to a Prophetic tradition according to which no infant is born unless five Verses from Surah al-Taghabun are written on its skull[19] by which the last five blessed Verses concerning worldly possessions and children may be intended.

The inscription of these five blessed Verses on the skull reflected the certainty of the contents of these Verses applicable to all human beings without any exception. It clearly indicates that such dispositions are to be found in mankind.

O Lord! Render us aid in such great trial regarding affection for possessions and families.

O Lord! Assist us in warding off niggardliness, avariciousness, and covetousness since turning away from such vices leads to deliverance and salvation.

Notes

1. Majma‘ al-Bayan.
2. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
3. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn under the blessed Verse in question.
4. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 71, p. 173.
5. Ibid, vol. 72, p. 173.
6. Ibid, vol. 83, p. 127.
7. Ibid, vol. 7, p. 262.
8. The exegetic work by ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim, Tafsir Nur, Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, and other exegetic works.
9. 2:193
10. Chapter 17
11. Nahj al-Balagha, aphorism 93.
12. Nahj al-Balagha, aphorism 93.
13. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question; Tafsir Qurtubi; Tafsir Ruh al-Ma‘ani; Tafsir Fi Hilal al-Qur’an; Tafsir al-Mizan.
14. Muslim’s Sahih, vol. 4, p. 1883, the Chapter on the Merits of Hasan and Husayn (as), tradition 58.
15. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 43, p. 296, tradition 57.
16. Majma‘ al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 301.
17. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 346.
18. 2:261
19. Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 24.

Surah al-Talaq, Chapter 65

(The Divorce)

Section (juz') 28

Number of Verses: 12

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter 65, revealed in Medina, has twelve Verses. The first seven Verses treat of divorce and the related rulings, hence the designation of the Chapter. The second section deals with the fate of those who disobeyed Divine Command and thereby suffered the consequence of their disobedient as well as that of those who obeyed the Prophets and did righteous good deeds and were thereby reward by Divine Bounties.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that whoever recites Surah al-Talaq and acts upon its injunctions will pass away while following the Prophetic traditions.[1]

Surah al-Talaq - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ لِعِدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ ۖ لَا تُخْرِجُوهُنَّ مِن بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا يَخْرُجْنَ إِلَّا أَن يَأْتِينَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ ۚ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ۚ وَمَن يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ ۚ لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ أَمْرًا

1. O Prophet! When you divorce women, divorce them at their prescribed periods [i.e. while not menstruating and not having sexual intercourse with their husbands] and count their periods. And fear Allah, your Lord. And turn them not out of your homes nor shall they leave, except in case they are guilty of some open illegal act. And those are the set limits of Allah and whosoever transgresses the limits set by Allah, he has wronged himself. You know not; it may be that Allah will afterward bring some new thing to pass.

Divorce is subject to certain conditions and specific rules and ethical principles. Likewise, there are certain requirements for confrontation with enemies and Muslims are not supposed to poison the drinking water, destroy the trees, and wrong children, women, and senior citizens. Significant factors leading to divorce include the partners' mistreatment of each other.

It is narrated from Imam 'Ali (as) that bad temper hurts one's family.[2] The blessed Chapter mainly treats of divorce with which it opens by addressing the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) as the great leader of the Islamic community and states the general ruling by a plural verbal form, saying:

"O Messenger! Whenever you intend to divorce your wives, do so at the time of their prescribed periods."

It is the first Injunction from amongst the five Injunctions mentioned in this blessed Verse. The Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the blessed Verse makes a reference to the ruling as per which the divorce formula should be uttered when the woman is neither menstruating nor had sexual intercourse with her husband.

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[3] that the prescribed time is specified as the passage of three menstrual periods (thalatha quru'). The blessed Verse in question emphasizes that giving divorce should follow the period of not having menstruation.

In other words, giving divorce is solely possible at the time of the woman's not having the menstrual period, since in case divorce is given at the time of menstruation, the beginning of the waiting period ('idda) will be separated from the beginning of the divorce and the beginning of the waiting period follows the period of not menstruating.

Likewise, in case the woman is not menstruating while having sexual intercourse with her husband, such not menstruating may not indicate that semen has not been ejaculated into the uterus. At any rate, it is the first requirement for giving divorce.

According to numerous Prophetic traditions, in case a man divorces his wife while she is menstruating, the divorce will be invalidated until the consummation of her waiting period.[4] Traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt recurrently bear testimony to the same and even it is mentioned as the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question.[5]

The blessed Verse proceeds to treat of the second ruling concerning counting the waiting period, saying:

"Count the waiting period."

The blessed Verse urges Muslims to carefully attend to waiting period consisting of the passage of three menstrual periods ending in the beginning of the third period. Failure to attend to the point in question may result in going to the extreme in counting the required number of days and the woman may thereby incur some loss, since she may be deterred from remarriage.

Counting less than the required days may adversely affect the bounds of wedlock through failure to attend to the congelation of semen in the womb.

The imperative verbal form

ahsu ("count"),

deriving from the root h-s-y, is cognate with hasa ("pebble"), since it was common among ancient illiterate peoples to keep records of different things by counting with pebbles.

It is worthy of note, however, that men are herein addressed as those responsible for counting the waiting period, since they are responsible for providing women with alimony and accommodation expenses. The right to the revocation of divorce and remarriage is also vested with men, though women are also obliged to keep a precise record of their waiting periods.

The blessed Verse proceeds to call all people to the fear of God Almighty, the Lord and Fosterer of all the world of existence whose

Injunctions guarantees happiness. Thus, it is incumbent upon mankind to act upon His Injunctions and refrain from disobedience to His Commands. In this respect, particular attention is to be accorded to giving divorce and counting the days of the waiting period.

The third and the fourth Injunctions concern the husbands and the wives respectively, saying:

"Do not drive them out of their homes and they, i.e., the women, are not supposed to leave their homes during the waiting period."

It is worthy of note, however, that many ignorant people do not act upon such Injunction and upon uttering the divorce formula such ignorant men drive the women out of their homes and women imagine that they are free to return to their relatives' homes. Nonetheless, such Islamic ruling embodies a very significant point since besides paying respect to women, the ruling paves the way for the husband to revoke the divorce and strengthen the bonds of matrimony.

Failure to accord attention to such Islamic ruling which is attested in the Holy Qur'an leads many a matrimony to lead in permanent break up, though if the ruling were acted upon, it would entail settlement.

However, under certain circumstances women may not at times stay at their homes, as a consequence of which, the fifth Injunction, serving as an exception to the rule, is mentioned as per which women are obliged to refrain from committing open evil acts, e.g. mistreatment and slandering their husbands and their in-laws leading to further problems at home.

In this vein, numerous traditions have been narrated from the Imams.[6] ***It is noteworthy that any insignificant issue is not herein intended, since the Arabic word fahisha denotes a significant vice and it is described by the adjective mubayyina ("open, evident").***

The word fahisha may also connote transgression of bounds, substantiated by a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as), designating driving out for being chastised and then returning home. Both interpretations are possible.

The blessed Verse emphasizes according attention to Divine limits, saying that whoever transgresses the limits set by God Almighty has wrong himself, since these Injunctions guarantee the interests of the obliged and failure to act upon them by either men or women adversely affects their happiness.

The blessed Verse closes by a delicate allusion to the reasons lying behind the observance of the waiting period and the obligation of the women to stay at their homes, saying that you do not know, though God Almighty may bring some new things to pass thereby leading to some means of settlement.

The point is that the explosive fits of rage leading to taking hasty decisions concerning separation subsides in time and the presence of women at home during their waiting period reminds them of the evil consequence of divorce, particularly when they have children, and when one of them expresses their affection for the other, it may pave the path for their settlement and thereby the leaden clouds of hatred may be scattered.

It would be of interest to make mention of a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) as per which the divorced woman at the time of the waiting period may wear make-up, perfume, and beautiful clothes, since God Almighty says that He may make new things pass such that women may win the affections of their husbands and the latter may consent to remarry them.[7]

As mentioned above, making decisions as to separation and divorce are consequent to fleeting excitements which may alter with the passage of time and the association of the partners during a relatively long period of time, i.e. the waiting period, and thus the stage may be set for settlement, provided that the aforesaid Islamic rulings concerning the woman's permanent stay at the ex-husband's home be strictly observed. God willingly mention will be mentioned below of the pint that such issues all concern the revocable divorce (talaq rij'i).

Now we turn to the reasons lying behind the observance of the waiting period as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and Islamic traditions. Firstly, mention is to be made of the significance of such observance with regards to survival and pregnancy.

The second issue at hand concerns the revocation of the divorce and removing the obstacles leading to separation to which a delicate allusion is made in the blessed Verse in question.

Islam lays emphasis on the point that during the waiting period, the divorced woman is supposed to stay at the ex-husband's home as a consequence of which they associate for a period of several months that provides them with the opportunity to think about their separation free from fleeting excitements.

Another point is that the ex-husband may revoke the divorce without facing any impediment and any word or deed on the part man suggesting his inclination toward the revocation of the divorce may urge him to remarry his ex-wife.

However, in case they fail to reach any settlement as to resuming their matrimony, they had better separate and make a move in their lives. In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that it would be far befitting before God Almighty when a husband stays with his wife than seeking seclusion at a mosque.[8]

One of the significant factors leading to divorce is the partners' mistreatment of each other. It is narrated from Imam 'Ali (as) that whoever is a bad tempered man hurts his family.[9]

Islam enjoins that when differences emerge between a husband and a wife, sympathetic people are supposed to be selected to serve as arbiters so that they may attend to the differences and make attempts at their removal. Thus, the partners may reach some settlement and there would be no need for referring to the court of justice and applying for divorce.

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[10] that

"If you fear a breach between the man and the woman, appoint two arbiters, one from his family and the other from hers."

According to the Islamic law, two just witnesses are supposed to attend the session in which decisions are taken for separation and bear witness to the same. Attending such witnesses may serve as an impediment to divorce,

since people, owing the hideousness of divorce in the society, refrain from bearing witness for such instances leading to breaking up of families. Secondly, those urged to serve as witnesses to divorce endeavor to make the partners reach some settlement.

Mention will be made hereunder of some traditions on the hideousness of divorce.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that no act is more hideous before God Almighty than the destruction of the pillars of a home through separation, namely divorce.[11]

It is also narrated from the Noble Prophet (S):

"Marry and do not divorce, since divorce makes the Divine Throne tremble.[12]

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that before God Almighty, no lawful issue is more hideous than divorce.[13]

Imam Sadiq (as) is narrated as saying:

"It would be unbecoming of women to neglect their appearance and good looks which sweeten matrimonial life.[14]

Hasan ibn Jahm narrates that he was surprised to see Imam Kathim (as) having dyed his hair.

Noticing his surprise, the Noble Imam (as) said:

"The husband's comely appearance urges women to be chaster and some women turn away from chastity owing to their husbands' neglect in having a good appearance. Likewise, men do not favor to see their wives without adornment.[15]

Imam Baqir (as) is narrated as saying:

"A divorced woman staying at her ex-husband's home is supposed to wear make-up, perfume, and the beautiful clothes so that they may make decisions with further insight and the husband may thereby revoke the divorce and they may resume their married life.[16]

Islam enjoins men and women to abstain from looking at those outside the circle of close kinship (namahram) aiming at taking pleasure. Women are also urged to cover themselves from being looked at by those outside the circle of close kinship and refrain from attracting the attention of strangers.

Imam Sadiq (as) is narrated as saying that a brief glance, many a time, may entail regret.[17] The Noble Imam (as) is also narrated as saying that it is incumbent upon men to be chaste with regard to women so that your women's chastity may be preserved.[18]

It is also narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that some women deviate from the path of chastity owing to their husbands' neglect of their appearance.[19] Numerous traditions have been narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Ahl al-Bayt (as) with regard to marriage, divorce, and matrimonial life for which reference may be made to tradition sources.

Surah al-Talaq - Verses 2-3

فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ فَارِقُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَأَشْهِدُوا ذَوَيْ عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ لِلَّهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَن كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَن يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّهُ مَخْرَجًا

وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَن يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا

2. Then, when they approach the end of the waiting period, either take them back in a good manner or part with them in a good manner [by paying their bridal money and other due expenses]. And take as witness two just persons from amongst you [at the time of divorce]. And establish the testimony for Allah's Satisfaction. That will be an admonition given to anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day. And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out from all hardships.

3. And He will provide him from sources unimaginable to him. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him. Verily, Allah will accomplish his purpose. Indeed Allah has set a measure for all things.

The manners of matrimonial life and divorce are supposed to be approved by the religious law and reason. Resuming the discussion concerning divorce mentioned in the preceding Verse, the blessed Verse 2 makes a reference to some other rulings.

The blessed Verse 2 opens with saying that when the waiting period comes to an end, divorced women are supposed to be kept back by remarrying them or the ex-husbands are supposed to part with them in a becoming fashion.

"Approach the end of the waiting period"

is meant by

"the attainment of the appointed term" (bulugh ajall),

since revoking the divorce following the end of the waiting period is not permissible, unless divorced women be taken back through uttering the marriage formula once more. Nonetheless, such contextual meaning hardly sounds possible.

At any rate, the blessed Verse 3 includes one of the most significant and the most well-measured Injunctions concerning matrimonial life, saying that partners to matrimony are obliged to either live together in a befitting fashion or part with each other in a becoming manner. Likewise, matrimonial life should be based on accurate and humane principles and separation should be free from controversies, quarrels, slander, and transgression of rights.

It is quite significant that in the same manner that bonds are supposed to be established peacefully, separation should be accompanied by mutual understanding, since the ex-partners may consider remarriage, but mistreatments at the time of separation clouds their reflection such that they impede them from consideration of remarriage; even if they wish to remarry, they lose their intellectual and emotional background.

On the other hand, both of them are Muslims and belong to the Islamic community and break-ups accompanied by quarrels and unbefitting conducts adversely affect them and their in-laws and ruins their opportunities for future cooperation.

The above discussions clearly reflect that doing good righteous good deeds encompasses a broad semantic scope embracing the performance of

all obligatory and supererogatory and ethical deeds imparting a series of Islamic and ethical principles and manners. The blessed Verse proceeds to make a reference to the second Injunction, saying that upon separation and divorce, appoint two just witnesses from amongst Muslims so that in case and difference breaks out, none of the parties may be able to deny the facts.

The third Injunction makes mention of the obligations entrusted with the witnesses, as per which they are required to bear testimony for the sake of God Almighty free from inclinations towards either of the partners entailing bearing untrue testimony. Their sole incentive should be to obtain Divine Satisfaction.

The witnesses are required to be just, since justice may not necessarily ward of committing sins. Thus, they are warned against deliberate or inadvertent deviation from the true path.

It is worthy of note that the term

"just" (dhawi 'l-'adl)

indicates that the witnesses are required to be Muslims, just, and male. The blessed Verse closes with an emphasis on all the preceding Injunctions, saying that only those who believe in God Almighty shall reap the fruits of this admonition.

The pronominal phrase

"this for you" (dhalikum)

reflects the particular emphasis laid on these Injunctions, such that if they are not observed and lessons are to taken from such Injunctions, it is as if one does not believe in God Almighty and the Day of Resurrection.

However, since certain issues concerning means of living, prospective life, and other domestic problems at times impede the partners or witnesses to deviate from the path of truth and justice at the time of divorce or remarriage, the blessed Verse closes by saying that whoever fears God Almighty and abstains from committing sins, God Almighty will deliver them from entanglements and will solve their problems.

The blessed Verse 3 is saying that God Almighty will provide him from sources that he could have never imagined and whosoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him, since God Almighty will accomplish his purpose and He has set a measure for all things.

Thus, male and female witnesses are warned against entertaining fear of problems resulting from treading the path of truth, but they are enjoined to administer justice and invoke God Almighty for removing the impediments, since He guarantees that whoever puts his trust in Him, he will be delivered from entanglements. God Almighty is Omnipotent to fulfill such guarantee.

It is noteworthy that these Verses have been revealed concerning divorce and its Injunctions, but their contextual meaning embraces a wide semantic range that encompasses other affairs as well. These blessed Verses bear glad tidings by God Almighty to all those who fear Him and put their trust in Him as they will be granted Divine Grace and their impediments will be removed and they will be led to the shining horizon of happiness.

The Noble Prophet (S) was told by Muslims that they God Almighty guaranteed their sustenance they were engaged in worshipping Him. The Noble Prophet said unto them that whoever acted upon Divine Injunctions,

his invocations would be answered and it was incumbent upon Muslims to strive to act upon Divine Commands.[20]

The blessed Verse makes mention of putting one's trust in God Almighty by which it is intended that industrious Muslims are supposed to rely on Him and invoke Him for being delivered from entanglements. God is All-Aware of man's needs and is Most Gracious and Most Compassionate toward him. God Almighty is Omnipotent to remove all impediments.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that he asked Gabriel, the Messenger of Allah regarding putting one's trust in God Almighty. He was told that the truth behind such trust is that man creatures are neither able to inflict damage nor to grant benefits. In other words, they are incapable of granting favors and impeding others from gaining favors.

Man is supposed to turn away from expectations from creatures and turn toward the Creator. Thus, human acts aim at Divine Satisfaction. Thus, man never sets his hopes on anything besides Him. He may not entertain fear of anything besides Him. He does not attach heart to anything besides Him. This is the spirit of trust.[21]

The blessed Verse is saying that trust designates that industrious Muslims put their trust in God Almighty and invoke Him to remove the obstacles. God Almighty is All-Aware of man's needs. He is Most Gracious and Most Compassionate. He is Omnipotent to remove all impediments.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that Gabriel imparted to him that the truth lying behind trust in God Almighty is that it is incumbent upon man to be aware of the truth that creatures may not harm or benefit him. Man is supposed to abstain from expectations from creatures and turn toward the Creator. Thus, the spirit of putting one's trust in God Almighty lies in that man solely acts to obtain Divine Satisfaction. He never sets his hopes on anyone besides Him.

He fears no one besides Him. He does not attach his heart to anyone besides Him.[22] Trust with such profound meaning gives man a new character and affects all his deeds. In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that on the Night of Ascension, he inquired God Almighty about the best deed to which Allah replied that nothing was more cherished by Him more than putting one's trust in Him and being satisfied with His Decrees.[23]

It is worthy of note, however, that such trust designates making efforts at all times rather than indolence and dodging obligations.

Surah al-Talaq - Verses 4-5

وَاللَّائِي يَئِسْنَ مِنَ الْمَحِيضِ مِن نِّسَائِكُمْ إِنِ ارْتَبْتُمْ فَعِدَّتُهُنَّ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْهُرٍ وَاللَّائِي لَمْ يَحِضْنَ وَأُولَاتُ الْأَحْمَالِ

أَجَلُهُنَّ أَن يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ وَمَن يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا

ذَٰلِكَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ أَنزَلَهُ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَن يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهُ أَجْرًا

4. and those of your women who are hopeless of having monthly courses, for them the prescribed period, if you have doubt about their periods, is three months; and for those who have no courses their

prescribed period is three months likewise, except in case of death. And for those who are pregnant, their prescribed period is until they lay down their burden; and whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make his matter easy for him.

5. That is the Command of Allah, which He has sent down to you; and whosoever fears Allah and deeps his duty to Him, He will expiate from him his sins, and will enlarge his reward.

Proceeding with the divorce Injunctions, the blessed Verse 4 is saying that those women who do not menstruate owing to advancement in years or certain ailments are supposed to wait for a period of three months in full and pregnant women are supposed to wait until they give birth to their child or children. Then, they may remarry.

There are different Qur'anic expressions for those who fear God Almighty:

"O you who believe! Fear Allah and believe in His Messenger, He will give you a double portion of His Mercy, and He will give you a light by which you shall walk straight. And He will forgive you. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Compassionate,"[24];

"O you who believe! If you obey and fear Allah, He will grant you a criterion to judge between right and wrong (furqan) and will expiate for you your sins, and forgive you; and Allah is the Owner of the Great Bounty"[25];

"And whoever fear Allah and keeps his obligation to Him, He will make a way for him to get out from difficulties"[26].

Seemingly reference is herein made of a natural development, since the God fearing will be granted Divine Light thanks to with he is able to distinguish truth from falsehood and thereby find the way out of the entanglements. Thus, he is delivered from many a difficulty.

It is evident that Divine Injunctions are different as per different circumstances. Thus, there are different Injunctions for pregnant and menopausal women. The blessed Verse is saying that the women who do not menstruate any longer, their waiting period is three months, if you have doubts about their pregnancy.

Likewise, the women who do not have menstrual periods are supposed to keep a waiting period of three full months. It is incumbent upon the third group, the pregnant women, to lay down their burden, namely give birth to their children.

Thus, the first two groups are supposed to keep a waiting period of three months and the third group, the pregnant women, are supposed to give birth to their children and the period may take one hour or for instance eight months following the divorce.

Three possibilities have been suggested for the contextual meaning of

"if you have doubt" (in artabtum):

1. The doubt concerns the possibility of pregnancy, namely if the possibility exists regarding pregnancy after the age of menopause, fifty in ordinary women and sixty in Qurayshi ones, the woman is supposed to keep a waiting period. Although it is less probable but there are instances of its occurrence. It is worthy of note, however, that the term "doubt"

(rayba) in the sense of having doubts as to pregnancy is widely attested in traditions and jurisprudential sources.[27]

2. Those women are herein intended who are not known whether they have reached the age of menopause.

3. The blessed Verse suggests entertaining doubt as to the Injunction. In this vein, the blessed Verse is saying that if you do not know Allah's Injunction, His Injunction is to the effect that such women are supposed to keep a waiting period. The first exegesis sounds more befitting, since

"and those of women who have passed the age of monthly courses"

indicates that such women are menopausal. It is noteworthy, however, that those women whose menstruation stops owing to ailments and other factors are subject to the same Injunction. Such Injunction is reflected in the principle of priority or the semantic referent of the blessed Verse in question. Further details regarding the question are to be found in jurisprudential sources.

The clause

"and those of your women who have not had monthly periods" (wa 'l-llati ya'isna min al-mahidh)

may suggest that those women who have attained the age of puberty, but they do not have monthly periods, in which case, it is indubitably incumbent upon them to keep a three month waiting period. It has been also suggested that the blessed Verse makes a reference to all women who have not had monthly periods whether or not they have attained the age of puberty.

However, the majority of Shi'i jurisprudents maintain that females prior to the age of puberty are not supposed to keep a waiting period following divorce. Some scholars disagree and substantiate their arguments with certain traditions and the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question is seemingly on their side.[28]

The above mentioned exegesis is substantiated by the occasion of Revelation. Ubayy ibn Ka'b said unto the Noble Prophet (S) that the waiting periods of some women was not mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. In this vein, mention was made of the wives yet to attain the age of puberty and menopause and pregnant women. Thus, the blessed Verse was revealed and stated the Injunctions as per their instances.[29]

It goes without saying that keeping the waiting period is required when there is possibility of pregnancy, since the blessed Verse makes a reference to menopausal women as well suggesting that the Injunction is the same for both.[30]

The blessed Verse closes by laying further emphasis on the question of fearing God Almighty, saying that whoever fears God Almighty, his difficulties will be removed by Him. Such difficulties may include those in this world and the Hereafter, including separation and divorce.

The blessed Verse 5 lays further emphasis on the Injunctions regarding divorce and the waiting period mentioned in the preceding Verses, saying that this is Allah's Command sent down unto you. Whoever fears God Almighty and refrains from disobeying His Command, He will absolve him of his sins and he will be granted Great Divine Rewards.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the term

"sins" (sayyi'at)

designates minor sins and fearing God Almighty refers to abstention from committing grave sins.

Thus, abstaining from committing grave sins leads to the forgiving of minor sins.[31] It is true that the word sayyi'at denotes minor sins at times, but the word in most of the Qur'anic Verses is employed in the sense of grave and mirnor sins[32]. It is needless to say, however, that faith and submission to Divine Will together with doing righteous good deeds lead to the forgiving of formerly committed sins.

Surah al-Talaq - Verses 6-7

أَسْكِنُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ سَكَنتُم مِّن وُجْدِكُمْ وَلَا تُضَارُّوهُنَّ لِتُضَيِّقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ وَإِن كُنَّ
أُولَاتِ حَمْلٍ فَأَنفِقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ فَإِنْ أَرْضَعْنَ لَكُمْ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ وَأْتَمِرُوا
بَيْنَكُم بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَإِن تَعَاسَرْتُمْ فَسَتُرْضِعُ لَهُ أُخْرَىٰ
لِيُنفِقْ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّن سَعَتِهِ وَمَن قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنفِقْ مِمَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا
إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا

6. Lodge them where you dwell to the end of the waiting period according to your means, and do not harm them so as to make them straitened with respect to lodging and sustenance lest they have to leave their homes. And if they are pregnant, spend on them till they lay down their burden. Then consult each other and reach to some settlement regarding your infants and if you fail to reach some settlement, ask another woman to suckle the infants.

7. Let the rich man pay the alimony according to his means; and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. Allah will soon grant ease after hardship.

The blessed Verse 6 presents further details as to the rights of women after divorce in terms of lodging, sustenance, and other things. The blessed Verse opens with the Injunctions regarding the lodging of the divorced women as per which they are supposed to reside where their ex-husbands live.

The ex-husbands are required to provide them with their lodging and sustenance according to their means. It is natural that when it is incumbent upon the ex-husbands to provide with lodging, other expenses fall into their share as well. What is mentioned regarding the rights of the pregnant women following divorce substantiates the statement.

The blessed Verse proceeds with another Injunction as per which it is forbidden to harm them or make their life straitened for them thereby forcing them to abandon their lodging and the sustenance provided by their ex-husbands lest hatred and animosity make them turn away from the path of truth and justice. Muslim men in such cases are not supposed to make their ex-wives deprived of lodging and sustenance since such straitened circumstances forces them to abandon everything.

The third injunction is saying that if the divorced women happen to be pregnant, their expenses until the time of delivery is incumbent upon their

ex-husbands, since, as long as they have not given birth to their children, they are keeping their waiting period and ex-husbands are responsible for providing them with lodging and sustenance.

The forth Injunction is saying that if the ex-wives happen to be willing to suckle their infants, they are supposed to receive their remuneration as per the time of suckling according to the common practice.

Since in many instances the infants and children cause difference between ex-spouses, the fifth Injunction enjoins Muslims to consult each other concerning the future of their children and make befitting decisions lest such differences adversely affect their children physically and emotionally. Parents are supposed to remember God Almighty in such instances without jeopardizing the future of their innocent children.

The imperative verbal form wa'tamiru baynakum bi-ma'ruf is used here in the sense of accepting a command or consulting someone.

The second sense sounds to be more fitting and the expression

"in a just way"

includes any consultation aiming at the good. Since the ex-spouses fail to reach the required settlement as per the good of their children including suckling, the sixth Injunction is saying that in case either of the twain parties make difficulties and if they fail to reach some settlement, another woman may be hired to suckle the child such that the differences may come to a halt.

The clause

"but if you make difficulties for one another"

reflects that if the differences continued, let another woman give suck to the child. It is the right of the mother to suckle the child, but taking into account such difficulties, the rights of the child may not be consigned to oblivion and suckling is supposed to be vested with a wet nurse.

The blessed Verse 7 includes the seventh and the last Injunction in this regard, saying that those who are opulent are supposed to expend their means in Allah's Cause and God Almighty never obliges anyone beyond his capacity.

The questions arising herein are: Is this Injunction, namely expending within one's capacity concerns the women who assume the responsibility of suckling the children or is it concerning the waiting period concisely referred to in the preceding Verses, or is it concerning both? The last meaning sounds more befitting, though some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that it aims at the suckling women.

The point is that the word

"remuneration" (ajr)

rather than

"sustenance money"

or expending (nafaqa, infaq) is used in the preceding Verses. At any rate, those who possess sufficient means are not supposed to be strict in this respect and those who do not possess the same are not supposed to expend within their capacity and women may not find faults with the latter.

Since suffering from straitened circumstances may lead to deviating from the path of truth and justice and as none of the twain parties are supposed to

complain from the other, the blessed Verse closes by saying that God Almighty will soon provide them with ease and convenience following their hardships. In other words, they are not supposed to entertain sorrow and be restless since circumstances undergo alteration. Such awareness is significant unless fleeting entanglements may adversely affect patience. Such Injunction is applicable to all times, particularly under quite straitened circumstances experienced by Muslims. It bears glad tidings of a promising future for the patient. God Almighty will soon grant the patient with His Infinite Blessings and Bounties.

Surah al-Talaq - Verses 8-9

وَكَأَيِّن مِّن قَرْيَةٍ عَتَتْ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهَا وَرُسُلِهِ فَحَاسَبْنَاهَا حِسَابًا شَدِيدًا وَعَذَّبْنَاهَا عَذَابًا نُّكْرًا

فَذَاقَتْ وَبَالَ أَمْرِهَا وَكَانَ عَاقِبَةُ أَمْرِهَا خُسْرًا

8. And many a town revolted against the Command of their Lord and His Messengers. We called it to a severe account and We chastised them with an unknown torment.

9. Thus, they tasted the evil consequences of their deeds and the consequences of their deeds was loss.

The Arabic word qarya denotes a place of gathering for habitation be it a town or a village.

The past verbal form

'atat ("revolted against")

derives from '-t-w ("to be insolent, to be furious, revolt"). The Arabic nominal form wabal denotes severity and intensity herein connoting severe torment.

The preceding blessed Verses include Injunctions concerning the obligations against spouses and children even at the time of separation. The blessed Verses in question urge believers to seriously attend to the Injunctions since disobedience to God Almighty and His Messengers entails severe chastisements whose numerous instances are to be found in the history of nations down the centuries.

At any rate, God Almighty severely chastises those who disobey Him and His Messengers. Thus, the blessed Verse 9 is saying that those who disobeyed Divine Commands and Injunctions, tasted the dire consequences of their evil acts leading to loss. Severe torments and chastisement are in store for such people.

Surah al-Talaq - Verse 10

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَدْ أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكُمْ ذِكْرًا

10. Allah has prepared for them a severe torment. Thus, fear Allah, O men of understanding who have believed! Allah has indeed sent down to you a Reminder.

The blessed Verse makes a reference to the torments in the Hereafter in store for sinners, saying that God Almighty has prepared excruciating, horrible, disgracing, and everlasting torments for them in Hell.

Thus, refrain from disobeying Divine Command, O Men of understanding who have believed! Thought and reason on the one hand and faith and Divine Signs and Verses on the other warn you against being afflicted with the dire fates of disobeying and revolting peoples and take lessons lest they may join their ranks as God Almighty entangles the disobedient with excruciating, horrible, and unprecedented torments in this world and the Hereafter.

Addressing thoughtful believers, the blessed Verse 10 further adds that God Almighty has sent down upon you the Reminder by which the Holy Qur'an is hereby intended, since the Holy Qur'an embraces a comprehensive collection of all the Injunctions and Laws as well as the accurate forms of devotions and transactions and whatever is required by man in the affairs of this world and the Hereafter.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) is hereby intended and some hold that a reference is made to Gabriel.

Surah al-Talaq - Verse 11

رَّسُولًا يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ لِّيُخْرِجَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَمَن يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا قَدْ أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ لَهُ رِزْقًا

11. [The Reminder is] the Messenger reciting to you the elucidating Verses of Allah so that He may deliver those who believe and do righteous good deeds from the shadows to the light. Whoever believes in Allah and performs righteous good deeds, he will be admitted into Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever. Allah has indeed granted them an excellent provision.

God Almighty has sent a Messenger (S) unto you so that he recites the Divine Elucidating Verses and thereby led those who have believed and have done righteous good deeds from the shadows to the light.

In other words, the final goal behind sending the Messenger and the Revelation of the Heavenly Book is to deliver mankind from the shadows of disbelief, ignorance, sin, and corruption through reciting the blessed Verses of the Holy Qur'an and lead them unto the light of faith, monotheism, and fear of God Almighty.

In fact, all the goals behind the Prophetic Call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an are summarized in one single clause: to deliver them from the shadows and lead them unto Light.

It is worthy of note, however, that the Arabic nominal form thulumat appears in the plural and the Arabic nominal form nur is employed in the singular, since polytheism, disbelief, and corruption lead to disintegration and dispersion whereas faith, monotheism, and fear of God Almighty lead to unity.

The blessed Verse closes with a treatment of the Rewards bestowed upon those who have believed and have done righteous good deeds, saying that one who believes in God Almighty and does righteous good deeds and stands steadfast on the path of truth will be rewarded by being admitted into the Gardens of Paradise and God Almighty has prepared an excellent provision for him.

The present verbal forms

yu'min and ya'mal ("believes" and "does" respectively)

make a reference to the point that having faith and doing righteous good deeds are not restricted to some specific time, but they are ongoing.

The Arabic plural present participial form

khalidin ("dwelling everlastingly")

indicates the everlastingness of Paradise, thus the following adverb of manner

Abadan ("everlastingly, forever")

is employed for the sake of emphasis.

The Arabic indefinite nominal form rizqan makes a reference to the greatness and significance of the excellent provision with which the people of Paradise are provided by God Almighty.

Such provision embraces a broad semantic domain encompassing Divine Bounties in the Hereafter and even in this world, since the fruits of faith and fear of God Almighty are not solely to be harvested in the Hereafter and believing and God fearing people lead more serene, enjoyable and purer lives in this world.

Surah al-Talaq - Verse 12

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

12. It is Allah Who has created the seven heavens and the earth and from the later the like thereof. His Command descends between them at all times that you may know that Allah is Omnipotent over all things and His Omniscience encompasses surrounds all things.

The blessed Verse in question treats of the Creation of the heavens and the earth and the organization of their affairs so that man may be apprised of Divine Omnipotence and Omniscience as well as the spiritual growth as a consequence of monotheism.

In other words, the last blessed Verse of the Chapter makes a quite significant and crystal clear reference to Divine Majesty and Omnipotence in the Creation of the heavens and the earth as well as the final goal behind such Creation. Thus, the blessed Verse completes the discussion raised in the preceding blessed Verses concerning the Great Rewards promised to God fearing believers and also those leading to the removal of their difficulties.

It goes without saying that God Almighty Who is Omnipotent to have created the world of existence is also Omnipotent to fulfill the promises given to the God fearing Believers concerning the Rewards in store for them in this world and the Hereafter.

The blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty is the One Who created the seven heavens and from the earth the like thereof, namely the earths, like the heavens, are seven in number. The reference to the seven earths is solely attested in this blessed Verse. Now let us turn to the seven heavens and the earths resembling them in terms of number.

Briefly speaking, the number seven may indicate multiplicity, as it is said in common parlance

"Even if you produce the seven seas that will be sufficient."

Thus, the seven heavens and the seven earths make a reference to the innumerable celestial spheres and heavenly bodies resembling the earth.

However, in case we take the number seven as connoting numbers, it may reflect the eight heavens.

It is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[33]

"Verily We have adorned the nearest heaven with the stars"

reflecting that what we perceive constituting human knowledge all pertains to the first heaven and beyond these celestial bodies, there are six other spheres lying beyond our perception and thus inaccessible to our domain of knowledge.

Now, regarding the seven earths, it may be said that they may make a reference to the different layers of the earth, since it is proven today that the earth constitutes different layers. Reference may be made to the seven climes on the earth as well, since the earth has been divided into seven regions, though such classification is different in former and modern times.

Today, the earth is divided into the Arctic, Antarctic, two tropics, one equatorial, and two temperate zones.

Nonetheless, the seven climes were classified differently in former times, though the number seven in this blessed Qur'anic Verse together with the expression

mithlahunna ("the like of them")

may refer to the different earths in the world of existence. Some astronomers maintain that celestial bodies like the earth revolve around suns in the vast cosmos whose number exceeds three hundred million.[34] It is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), as saying that the like the earth, there are cities in the stars in the sky.[35]

At any rate, taking into account our meager knowledge concerning the cosmos beyond the solar system, it would be hard to produce numbers, though astronomers lay emphasis on the fact that the galaxy which includes the solar system embraces millions of millions of celestial bodies whose conditions resemble those of the earth such that they are centers of forms of life.

However, scientific advancements in the future may provide us with further details concerning the exegesis of such blessed Verses.

The blessed Verse in question further treats of the organization of such vast world by Divine Command, saying that His Commands are sent down at all times.

It is needless to say that by the Arabic nominal form amr, the Divine Existential Command regarding the organization of such vast world and the

seven heavens and the seven earths is hereby intended, since He guides them with His Particular Command in a regular and precise course.

The blessed Verse resembles another Qur'anic Verse[36]

"He manages and regulates every affair from the heavens to the earth. Then, it will go up to him, in one Day, the space whereof is a thousand years of your reckoning."

God Almighty manages the affairs of the entire world from the heavens to the earth. Had His management abandoned the world of existence for one single moment, the organization of them all would have been perished and they would have been led to non-existence.

The blessed Verse closes with the goal behind such great creation saying that the purpose of the creation of the world is that man may know that God is Omnipotent and Omniscient. The expression is of interest since the goal behind such great creation is mentioned as man's awareness of Divine Attributes including His Omniscience and Omnipotence.

Being aware of these two Divine Attributes suffices for human spiritual growth. Man is supposed to know that God Almighty is All-Aware of the secrets of his being and all his deeds and Divine Promises as to the triumph of the believers and those concerning the Resurrection and Retribution are all true.

Now, the Divine Injunctions concerning human life such as the Injunctions regarding divorce and obligations against women are all precise and well-calculated by the Omnipotent and Omniscient God Who manages all the affairs of the world of existence.

A detailed discussion on the goals behind Creation was mentioned above under 51:56. It is worthy of note, however, that different Qur'anic Verses make references to the goals behind the Creation of man or other creatures in the world of existence which may sound different at the first glance, though further reflection reflects one single truth.

The blessed Qur'anic Verse 51:56 mentions that the goal behind the Creation of mankind and jinn is worshipping God Almighty:

"And I created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me Alone."

The goal behind the Great Creation of the heavens and the earth is mentioned to be the trial of mankind[37]:

"And He it is Who has created the heavens and the earth in six days and His Throne was on the surface of the water that He might try you as to which of you is the best in deeds. But if you were to say to unto them: 'You will indeed be raised up after death,' those who disbelieve would be sure to say: 'This is nothing but obvious magic.'"

The goal is regarded to be Divine Graciousness[38]:

"Except him on whom your Lord has bestowed His Graciousness and for that He created them. And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled: 'Surely, I will fill Hell with jinn and men all together.'"

The goal is considered in the blessed Verse in question to be aware of Divine Attributes:

"It is Allah Who has created the seven heavens and the earth and from the later the like thereof. His Command descends between them at all

times that you may know that Allah is Omnipotent over all things and His Omniscience encompasses surrounds all things."

Reflection upon the blessed Qur'anic Verses reflects that some of them serve as preludes to others. In like manner, awareness and knowledge serve as preludes to worshipping God Almighty which in turn is a prelude to the trial and spiritual growth of mankind which in turn serve as a prelude to being granted Divine Graciousness.

O Lord! Now that you made us aware of the goal behind Your Great Creation, bear us Assistance so that we may attain to such Great Goal.

O Lord! You revealed the Holy Qur'an and sent the Messenger (S) to deliver the believing from the shadows to the light. Deliver us from the shadows of sins and concupiscent desires and lighten our hearts by the light of faith and fearing You. Amen! O Lord of the Worlds!

Notes

1. Majma' al-Bayan and other exegetic works.
2. Mizan al-Hikma, tradition 5103.
3. 2:228
4. Muslim's Sahih, vol. 2, p. 1903, the chapter on divorce.
5. Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 15, p. 348, the chapter on the manner of giving divorce following the waiting period.
6. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, pp. 350-351.
7. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 352, tradition 24.
8. Mizan al-Hikma, tradition 7884.
9. Ibid, tradition 5103.
10. 4:35
11. Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 15, p. 266, tradition 1.
12. Ibid, p. 268.
13. Ibid, vol. 15.
14. Majmu'a Warram, vol. 2, p. 121.
15. Usul Kafi, vol. 5, p. 567.
16. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 352.
17. Usul Kafi, vol. 5, p. 559.
18. Shaykh Saduq's Amali, p. 238.
19. Makarim al-Akhlaq, pp. 91, 107.
20. Kafi; Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 354.
21. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 69, p. 373, tradition 19.
22. Ibid.
23. Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 683, s.v. w-k-l.
24. 57:28
25. 8:29
26. 65:2
27. Jawahir, vol. 32, p. 249; Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 15, chapter 4, tradition 7.
28. Further details are to be found in jurisprudential sources, e.g. Jawahir al-Kalam, vol. 32, p. 232.
29. Kanz al-'Irfan, vol. 2, p. 26.
30. Tabarsi, Majma' al-Bayan.
31. Tafsir al-Mizan.
32. e.g.5:71

33. 37:6
34. Tafsir Maraghi, vol. 28, p. 151.
35. Tafsir Burhan, vol. 4, p. 15.
36. 32:5
37. 11:7
38. 11:119

Surah al-Tahrim, Chapter 66

(The Proscription)

Section (juz') 28

Number of Verses: 12

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Medina, has twelve Verses and its designation derives from the first blessed Verse in which God Almighty censures the proscription of what is religiously lawful, even though such proscription, owing to different individual and social reasons, deprives man of certain lawful pleasures.

The opening Verses treat of the Noble Prophet's mistreatment by some of his wives and the following Verses, addressed to the believers, enjoin them to take precaution as to treating and fostering their families so that Hellfire may not be in store for them.

The blessed Chapter proceeds to make references to women's merits and demerits and thereby depicts the women possessing such traits. The wives of Noah and Lot are presented as possessing demerits and that of the Pharaoh and Mary (as) are suggested as those possessing merits.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

According to a Prophetic tradition, one who recites the Chapter will be granted the Divine Reward of sincere repentance.[1]

Surah al-Tahrim - Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ ۖ تَبْتَغِي مَرْضَاتَ أَزْوَاجِكَ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

قَدْ فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ تَحِلَّةَ أَيْمَانِكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۖ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

1. O Prophet! Why do you forbid that which Allah has made lawful to you, seeking to please your wives? And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Gracious.

2. Allah has already ordained for you the absolution from your oaths. And Allah is your Guardian and He is the Omniscient, the All-Wise.

Different occasions of Revelation have been mentioned for the first blessed Verse, though it is certain that the Noble Prophet (S) had different wives and at times he was entangled with their envious conducts and waived his lawful rights in order to please all of them.

Although such proscriptions were personal matters, but as the Noble Prophet has been the role model of the society, the possibility exists that others may feel that it is a religious decree and they have to act upon it. Thus, God Almighty warns His Prophet (S) against it and in fact makes

people understand that such conducts were the Noble Prophet's (S) personal affairs they are not supposed to be regarded as standards for others.

It is incumbent upon us to bear in mind to prioritize our affairs. Acting upon one's oaths bears significance, but acting upon religious decrees bears further significance. An eminent figure like the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) does not solely belong to himself, but he belongs to the Muslim society in its entirety and to the world of humanity.

Therefore, even though certain plots, however insignificant, be hatched against him, are not to be neglected as his prestige is not supposed to be taken lightly and such plots should be dealt with seriously and decisively. The opening Verses of the blessed Chapter in question reflect the Divine Decisiveness against such incidents threatening His Messenger's (S) prestige.

Addressed to His Messenger (S), God Almighty is asking him why he deprives himself of something made lawful by Him for the sake of his wives' satisfaction. It goes without saying that such proscription was not a religiously ordained one, but as it is reflected in the following blessed Verses, it was an oath taken by the Noble Prophet (S).

It is common knowledge that taking oaths as to refraining from certain acts does not entail any sin. Thus, the clause "why do you forbid" does not reflect censure, but it indicates compassion.

For instance, in common parlance, addressed to one who works hard to earn a living, his is asked:

"Why do you not deservedly benefit from your numerous troubles?"

The blessed Verse closes with saying that God Almighty is Oft-Forgiving and Most Compassionate. Such Forgiving and Compassion are addressed to the wives who paved the path for the occurrence of the incident saying that if they sincerely repent from their sins, they will be forgiven.

It may also reflect that the Noble Prophet (S) should not have taken such oath which may serve as a pretext for some of his wives to take liberties.

The second blessed Verse further adds:

"Allah has already ordained for you the absolution from your oaths"

in such circumstances through making atonements. It is worthy of note, however, that in case the oath has been taken as to preferable refraining from committing certain acts, the oath should be acted upon and breaking it entails committing sins for which atonements are to be made.

But, in case the oath concerns committing acts from which refraining is preferable, as reflected in the blessed Verse in question, it is permissible to break it, though in order to respect the oath taken, it would be better to make atonements.

The blessed Verse 2 proceeds to say

"Allah is your Guardian and He is the Omniscient, the All-Wise"

and has thereby solved your problem. According to traditions, following the Revelation of the blessed Verse, the Noble Prophet made lawful to himself what he had already rendered unlawful though the manumission of a slave.

Surah al-Tahrim - Verses 3-4

وَإِذْ أَسَرَّ النَّبِيُّ إِلَى بَعْضِ أَزْوَاجِهِ حَدِيثًا فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَتْ بِهِ وَأَظْهَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَرَّفَ بَعْضَهُ
وَأَعْرَضَ عَن بَعْضٍ فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَهَا بِهِ قَالَتْ مَنْ أَنبَأَكَ هَٰذَا قَالَ نَبَّأَنِيَ الْعَلِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ
إِن تَتُوبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا وَإِن تَظَاهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ مَوْلَاهُ وَجِبْرِيلُ
وَصَالِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ ظَهِيرٌ

3. Remember when the Prophet disclosed a secret of to one of his wives, then she divulged it and Allah made it known to him. He informed him of a part thereof and left the other part. When the Prophet told let his wife know of it, she asked: "Who told you this secret?" He replied: "The Omniscient, the All-Aware Allah apprised me of it."

4. If you two turn in repentance to Allah, it will be better for you, since your hearts have turned away from the truth, but if you conspire against him, you may not achieve anything. Then, verily Allah is his Protector and Gabriel and the righteous believers,2 and furthermore, the angels are his helpers.

The blessed Verses provide further details as to the narrative saying:

"Remember when the Prophet (S) disclosed a secret of his to some of his wives, but she failed to keep the secret and divulged it. God Almighty apprised His Messenger (S) of such disclosure and he apprised his wife of some of the intelligence and refrained from informing her of the rest."

Now, what was the secret of which some of his wives were apprised? As mentioned above regarding the occasion of the Revelation, the secret consisted of two points, firstly eating honey before his wife Zaynab, the daughter of Jahsh and secondly prohibiting himself from eating honey in future. The wife who divulged the secret was Hafsa who upon being informed of the secret, she divulged the secret to 'À'isha.

Upon being apprised of the disclosure of the secret through Divine Revelation, he informed Hafsa of some of it but refrained from informing her of it all to prevent her from being ashamed. The first part might have consisted of eating honey and the second part might have consisted of the prohibition as per which he refrained from eating honey in future.

At any rate, upon informing Hafsa of the disclosure of the secret, she inquired about the source of intelligence. He replied that God Almighty, the All-Wise, had informed him of the disclosure.

The blessed Verse n question reflect that some of the wives of the Noble Prophet (S) disturbed him by their words; further, they lacked the merit of keeping secrets which is one of the qualifications of a loyal wife.

Au contraire, the Noble Prophet's (S) conduct was so magnanimous that he even did not apprised her of the whole intelligence, but merely alluded to some part of it.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), as saying:

"Magnanimous people never to the extreme in obtaining their own rights, since God Almighty says that the Noble Prophet (S) apprised her of some of the intelligence and refrained from informing her of its entirety.[3]

Addressed to the two wives who had conspired in the above mentioned plot, the blessed Verse 4 is saying:

"If you repent and refrain from hurting the Noble Prophet (S), it will be better for you, since by doing such act, you hearts have turned away from truth and have become impure by committing sins."

All Shi'i and Sunni exegetes are unanimous in maintaining that Hafsa and 'À'isha, the daughters of 'Umar and Abu Bakr respectively, are hereby intended.

The Arabic verbal form

saghat ("inclined"),

deriving from the root s-gh-w/s-gh-y ("incline, bend"), designates inclination and tending toward something. In Arabic, it is said: "saghat al-nujum" meaning: "the stars inclined toward the west."

The verbal noun isgha' denotes eaves dropping and listening to other people's words furtively. The clause saghat qulubukum connotes that their hearts turned away from the truth and inclined toward committing sins.

The blessed Verse further adds that if you two conspire against him, i.e. the Noble Prophet (S), you may not achieve anything, since God Almighty is his Protector and Aid and also Gabriel, the righteous believers, and angels are also his helpers.

The blessed Verse reflects that the incident adversely affected the Noble Prophet's (S) pure heart and his magnanimous soul such that God Almighty defended him and although Allah is Omnipotent, but it is proclaimed that Gabriel, the righteous believers, and angels were his helpers.

It is worthy of note that as recorded in Sahih Bukhari, it is narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas that the latter asked 'Umar concerning the identity of the Noble Prophet's (S) wives who had conspired against him.

'Umar replied:

"By God Almighty we did not accord any attention toward women till God Almighty revealed some Verses regarding them and set out some rights for them and thereby they take liberties."[4]

The same theme is to be found in Tafsir Durr al-Manthur in a detailed tradition narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas as per which 'Umar said that he had been informed of the incident that the Noble Prophet (S) had turned away from all his wives and he was residing in a place named Mashraba Umm Ibrahim.

I went to him and inquired:

"O Allah's Messenger! Have you divorced your wives?"

He replied:

"No."

I further inquired:

"God is the Greatest! We, the Qurayshis, have been always dominating our wives, but when we came to Medina, we noticed that the Medinan women have the upper hand and our wives learned it from them. Once my wife quarreled with me and I regarded her act surprising and obnoxious."

She asked:

"Why are you surprised? By Allah the Noble Prophet's (S) wives treat him likewise and at times they fail to be on speaking terms with him."

'Umar said:

"I enjoined my daughter, Hafsa, to refrain from doing so and further added that if your neighbor, namely 'À'isha, acts similarly, you should not do so as her conditions are different from yours."[5]

Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 5

عَسَىٰ رَبُّهُ إِن طَلَّقَكُنَّ أَن يُبْدِلَهُ أَزْوَاجًا خَيْرًا مِّنكُنَّ مُسْلِمَاتٍ مُّؤْمِنَاتٍ قَانِتَاتٍ تَائِبَاتٍ عَابِدَاتٍ سَائِحَاتٍ ثَيِّبَاتٍ وَأَبْكَارًا

5. It may be that if he divorced you, his Lord will give him instead of you, wives better than you, Muslims, believers, humble, repentant, worshipping Allah sincerely, inclined toward emigration, previously married and virgin.

The blessed Verse enumerates six good qualities for good wives which may serve as models for all the Muslims while they intend to ask the hands of women in marriage. Such qualities as enumerated in the blessed Verse deserve attention.

Addressed to all the Noble Prophet's (S) wives, the blessed Verse in question is saying in a tone tinged with warning that if he divorces you, God Almighty will provide him with better wives who will be Muslim, believing, humble, repentant, worshipping God Almighty, obedient to Allah from amongst virgins and those previously married.

Thus, they are warned that they should not take it for granted that the Noble Prophet (S) would never divorce them and that if he divorces them, better wives will not replace them. They are enjoined to desist from conspiring against him, quarreling with him, and hurting him, or else they shall be deprived of the glory of being married to the Noble Prophet (S) and better and further meritorious women shall replace them.

Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 6

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَّا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

6. O you who believe! Ward off yourselves and your families against a Fire whose fuel is men and stones, over which are appointed guarding angels, stern and severe, who disobey not from executing the Commands they receive from Allah, but do that which they are commanded.

Following the censures and warnings to some of the Noble Prophet's (S) wives reflected in the preceding Verses, the blessed Verse in question proceeds to address all the believers enjoining them to strive toward fostering and educating their families saying:

"O you who believe! Preserve yourselves against the Fire whose fuel is mankind and stones."

Such preservation connotes refraining from committing sins and resistance against concupiscent desires. Preservation of one's family indicates fostering and educating them, enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, preparing a pure family environment.

Such plan is supposed to begin from making preparations for marriage and be pursued upon the birth of the first child. Such plan is to be acted upon through all the stages by precise and accurate planning. In other

words, giving what is due to one's wife and children is not restricted to providing them with accommodation and sustenance, but helping them with gaining spiritual growth through accurate education bears further significance.

It is worthy of note that the Arabic imperative form

qu ("preserve, keep")

reflects that if you leave them on their own, they will proceed toward the Fire and it is incumbent upon you to preserve them from ending upon in Hell. The Arabic nominal form waqud denotes fuel or something flammable like firewood.

Thus, Hellfire is not like the fire in this world, since its flames rise up from the inward of human beings and stones. Some exegetes maintain that by stones, sulfuric stones are hereby intended, though the word hijara reflects a general denotation designating of all kinds of stone.

Today, we know that each piece of stone is comprised of billions of atoms and if the force preserved in them happen to be liberated, they make such huge fire that man will be surprised at it. some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the word "stones" herein connotes the stone idols worshipped by polytheists.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that strict and severe angels are appointed to tend the Fire and they never disobey Allah's Command but they act upon the Commands of God Almighty unquestioningly. There shall be no way out of the Fire nor shall crying and beseeching be of any effect.

It goes without saying that whoever is appointed to some task is required to possess the suitable qualifications. Thus, the angels appointed to inflicting torments are to be naturally severe and rough, since Hell is not a place where one may expect compassion. It is the crucible of Divine Wrath. Nonetheless, such angels shall never transgress the bounds of justice but they merely act upon Divine Command without making any alterations in it.

It is narrated in a tradition that upon the Revelation of the blessed Verse in question, a certain Companion of the Noble Prophet (S) inquired:

"How may I preserve my family from Hellfire?"

the Noble Prophet (S) replied:

"Through enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. If they acknowledge your suggestions and act accordingly, you will preserve them from Hellfire. However, if they fail to act likewise, you have acted upon your obligations."[6]

According to another comprehensive and interesting tradition, the Noble Prophet (S) is reported as saying:

"Know that you are all guardians responsible for those whom you are appointed to guard. The leader of the Islamic community is the guardian of the people and is responsible for all of them. Men are the guardians of their families for whom they are responsible. Women are also the guardians of their husbands and children for whom they stand answerable. Know that you are all guardians responsible for all those under your guardianship."[7]

It is also narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"Divine Mercy shall be upon those who enjoin their families to attend to the establishment of ritual prayers, fasting, paying the religious tax, and care for the poor, the orphans, and the neighbors, distancing from committing sins."[8]

It is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an[9] that the Noble Prophet (S) enjoined his family to establish ritual prayers. According to a tradition, upon hearing the blessed Verse in question, a young man lost consciousness and passed away.

The Noble Prophet (S) promised him that he will be admitted to Paradise quoting the Qur'anic Verse[10]:

"And verily, We shall make you dwell in the land after him. This is for him who fears standing before Me [on the Day of Resurrection and fears My Chastisement] and also fears My Warning."

He also recited another Qur'anic Verse[11]:

"And enjoin your family to establish ritual prayers and be patient in offering them. We ask not of you a provision: We provide for you. And the good end is in store for the God fearing."

The discussion may be crowned by quoting a tradition narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), as per which:

"The blessed Verse [in question] is enjoining the believing to teach their families to do righteous good deeds."[12]

It is worthy of note, however, that if someone committed a mistake, he may at any time torn to God Almighty in repentance and Divine Graciousness shall be bestowed upon him.

Turning to God Almighty in repentance is one of the quite significant principles of education in Islam. All sinners are enjoined to repent from their sins so that they may compensate for their wrong deeds and attain to spiritual growth.

In this vein, Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn in the supplications of the repentant says:

"My Lord! You have opened the door of forgiveness to your servants and called it repentance enjoining them to turn toward you in repentance sincerely rather than simply verbally. What is the pretext of those who neglect from entry following the opening of the door?"[13]

Numerous traditions have been narrated and many Qur'anic Verses have been revealed in this respect which are to be found in the Holy Qur'an and tradition sources.

Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 7

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا الْيَوْمَ إِنَّمَا تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

7. [It will be said unto disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection:] O you who disbelieve! Make no excuses on this Day, since you are being requited only for your deeds.

The blessed Verse includes the only instance in which disbelievers are being addressed and the blessed concerns the Day of Resurrection. Disbelief is not pardonable on the Day of Resurrection and the disbelievers' repentance shall be of no avail on that Day.

Obstinacy and prejudice against logic, preaching, and miracles are not excusable as a consequence of which the disbelievers are herein addressed saying:

"O you who disbelieve! Make no excuses on this Day, since you are being requited only for your deeds."

The blessed Verse in question follows the one in which believers were addressed which reflects that if you fail to be attentive toward your families you may be addressed thus on the Day of Resurrection. Thus, emphasis is laid on the point that sinners shall be requited for their deeds on the Day of Resurrection.

The point mentioned in the preceding blessed Verse as per which flames of Hellfire shall rise from the inward of men further substantiates it. It is also worthy of note that not accepting their excuses on the Day of Resurrection is owing to the fact that making excuses is a kind of repentance which is only possible in this world rather than the Hereafter when they will be admitted to Hell. At any rate, human deeds shall be requited on the Day of Resurrection.

Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 8

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يُكَفِّرَ عَنكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِي اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ ۖ نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَىٰ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَتْمِمْ لَنَا نُورَنَا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ۖ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

8. O you who believe! Turn to Allah with sincere repentance! It may be that your Lord will expiate from you your sins and admit you into Gardens beneath which rivers flow - the Day that Allah will not disgrace the Prophet and those who believe in him. Their Light will run forward before them and in their right hands. They will say: "Our Lord! Keep perfect our Light for us and grant us forgiveness. Verily, Your are Able to do all things.

The preceding Verses treated of Hellfire, though the blessed Verse in questions deals with light. The preceding Verses treated of taking precautions, but the blessed Verse in question deals with cure, saying that now that you failed to refrain from committing sins, you may turn toward God Almighty in repentance lest you may despair.

The blessed Verse actually shows the true path toward deliverance from Hellfire, saying:

"O you who believe! Turn toward God Almighty in repentance sincerely."

The first step to be taken toward deliverance is to repent from committing sins and such repentance is to be sincere from all aspects. The motive behind such repentance should be obedience to Divine Command and fear of committing sins rather than mere fear of the social and worldly consequence of committing vices. Such repentance separates man from committing sins at all times those who sincerely repent will never turn away from the true path.

It is well-known that repentance is to regret having committed sins and one is required to make up his mind not to commit further sins in future.

Such person is supposed to compensate for the losses stemming from committing sins.

Thus the pillars of repentance may be summarized in five things: refraining from committing sins, regret, deciding to refrain from committing further sins in future, compensation for the losses within one's capacity, and uttering the formula of repentance (istighfar).

The Arabic nominal form nasuh, deriving from the root n-s-h, literally denotes sincere benevolence and since true benevolence should be accompanied by steadfastness, the word nush is at times employed in this sense.

Different interpretations have been suggested concerning the meaning of the word nasuh such that the number of such interpretations is mentioned to be twenty three.[14] However, all these interpretations almost share one single core and the peripheral issues surrounding it.

For instance, it is said that sincere repentance (tawba nasuh) has four qualifications: sincere regret, verbal repentance, refraining from committing sins, and deciding to refrain from committing sins in future.

Some maintain that sincere repentance is obtained when the repentant person bears his sins in his mind at all times and repents from having committed them.

Some others hold that sincere repentance implies the compensation of the losses incurred to others owing to having committed sins and asking forgiveness from the victims of the sins and the repentant person is supposed to be steadfast in his obedience to God Almighty.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that Mu'adh ibn Jabal inquired about sincere repentance and the Noble Prophet replied:

"Sincere repentance implies that the repentant person may never turn toward committing sins any longer, such that milk never returns to the breast."[15]

Such delicate expression reflects that sincere repentance engenders such drastic change in man that the way of returning to the past is totally blocked for him in such manner that milk may never return to the breast. Such theme, attested in other traditions, reflects the exalted state of sincere repentance, since return is possible in lower degrees of repentance. Steadfastness in repentance finally leads to permanent refraining from committing sins.

The blessed Verse proceeds to make reference to the tokens of such sincere repentance, saying:

"It may be that your Lord will expiate from you your sins and admit you into Gardens beneath which rivers flow - the Day that Allah will not disgrace the Prophet and those who believe in him."

The point is that the light of their faith and righteous good deeds runs forward as well as on their right thus shedding light on the Plain of Judgment and opens their way onto Paradise.

Then, they will turn toward God Almighty, saying:

"Make our light perfect and forgive us as you are the Omnipotent Lord."

Such sincere repentance entails five great consequences: forgiving of the sins, being admitted to the Bountiful Paradise, disgracing of the evil doing liars since on that Day the Noble Prophet (S) and the believers shall be honorable as what they used to say shall be realized, the light of their faith and righteous good deeds will run forward as well as on their right side thus leading them onto brilliant Paradise, and they will be further attentive toward God Almighty as a consequence of which they turn toward Divine Threshold invoking Him to make their light perfect and forgive all their sins.

Finally, repentance is the door leading to Divine Graciousness. It happens many a time that many, particularly when beginning his spiritual growth and treading the Path leading to God Almighty, commits mistakes.

However, if the return toward the Truth is blocked, he will despair and fails to further tread the path. Thus, the path toward Divine Graciousness and repentance is always open to him.

It is worthy of note, however, that repentance does not solely imply verbal repentance and uttering its formula, but there are certain requirements of which mention was made in the exegesis of the sincere repentance in the preceding blessed Verses. Acting upon such requirements leads to the purification of the soul from sins.

In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that whoever repents from committing sins is like one who has not committed any sin and one who continues to commit sins while he is uttering the formula of repentance is like one who derides repentance.[16]

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) on the authority of Imam Ridha (as) that

"A believer is like an archangel and before God Almighty, the believer is truly higher than angels in rank. Nothing is more lovable before God Almighty than the repentance of the believing men and women."[17]

In this vein, it is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as), as saying:

"No support is better than repentance."[18]

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"Nothing is more lovable before God Almighty than the believing men and women who regret from having committed sins and repent of them."[19]

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) on the authority of Abu Basir that when a man commits a sin, a black spot appears in his heart. If he repents, the spot will be removed, but if he commits further sins, the black spot grows such that it clouds all his heart and he may never attain salvation.[20] Numerous traditions have been reported on repentance for which tradition sources may be consulted.

Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 9

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَاغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

9. O Prophet! Struggle hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites and be severe against them. Their abode will be Hell and worst is that abode.

The Islamic faith is comprehensive and reflects compassion and severity in their proper places. The point is that disbelief and hypocrisy lead man to a state in which the compassionate Prophet (S) and censures him.

Since hypocrites were indubitable gladdened by the disclosure of his domestic secrets and the quarrels amongst his wives as mentioned above in the preceding Verses and even fanned the flames of the rumors, the blessed Verse in question includes severe Injunctions against their vices, saying:

"O Prophet! Struggle hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites and be severe against them. Their abode will be Hell and worst is that abode."

Such jihad against the disbelievers may emerge in the forms of armed and unarmed struggles, though the struggle against hypocrites is indubitably unarmed, since it is quite unprecedented in the histories of the Islam.

Thus, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"Allah's Messenger never waged war against hypocrites, but he strove at all times to soften their hearts."[21]

Therefore, struggling against them implies censure, warning, threatening, disgracing and at times softening their hearts, since jihad encompasses a broad semantic scope embracing any kind of struggling and striving toward the fulfillment of goals.

The imperative form wa 'ghluth 'alayhim literally denoting

"be severe against them"

reflects severity in words, disclosure of their secrets, warning them against their hypocrisy, and the like. Such particular stance against the hypocrites who posed the most perilous threat against the Islamic faith was owing to the fact that they claimed to be Muslims and associated with the Muslims as a consequence of which they could not be treated like disbelievers.[22]

Such policy was taken as long as they do not take arms against Muslims as if they embarked upon armed struggle against Muslims, they were treated likewise since they were termed as 'belligerent' (muharib).

Although the hypocrites did not take up arms in the Noble Prophet's (S) lifetime, but after his sad demise, particularly under the caliphate of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), they took up arms against Muslims and the Noble Imam embarked upon waging war against them.

Some have said that jihad against the hypocrites attested in the blessed Verse in question connotes their being chastised according to the religious law, since those who were chastised were hypocrites.

Nonetheless, the majority of Qur'an exegetes have opted for the former exegesis. It is worthy of note, however, that the blessed Verse is exactly reiterated elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[23].

Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 10

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَتَ نُوحٍ وَامْرَأَتَ لُوطٍ ۖ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا صَالِحَيْنِ فَخَانَتَاهُمَا فَلَمْ يُغْنِيَا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَقِيلَ ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّاخِلِينَ

10. Allah has set forth a example for those who disbelieve: the wife of Noah and that of Lot. They were under two of our righteous servants, but

they both betrayed them. So their relationships with the two Prophets availed them not against Allah's torment and it was said unto them: "Enter the Fire along with those who enter!"

Women may serve as role models of righteousness or corruption in history. Thus, the blessed Verse once more addresses the story of the Noble Prophet's (S) wives and in order to provide them with practical lessons, mention is made of the dire fates of the two women who lived with the two eminent Messengers of Allah (as). Reference is also herein made of the fate of two believing and sacrificing women one of whom lived with one of the most tyrannical figures in history.

The blessed Verse opens with saying that God Almighty has set forth a example for the disbelieving, namely the wives of Prophets Noah (as) and Lot (as) who lived with two righteous servants of God Almighty, but they betrayed them. The point is that their relationships with the two eminent Prophets (as) were of no avail against Divine torments.

It was said unto them:

"Enter Hell along with those who enter it."

Thus, the two wives of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) who had conspired against him disclosing his secrets and hurting the Noble Prophet (S) are warned against their evil acts so that they may not imagine that their relationship with the Noble Prophet (S) may be of any avail against their chastisement, the same manner that the relationships of the wives of Prophets Noah (as) and Lot (as) were not of any avail against Divine torments inflicted upon them owing to their betrayal and their severance of ties with the household of Prophethood and Revelation.

The blessed Verse also serves as a warning to all the believers from different walk of life against the severance of their ties with the Friends of Allah owing to committing sins and disobedience to Allah since such ties may not impede befalling of Divine torments.

It is worthy of note, however, that some Qur'an exegetes have mentioned the names of Prophet Noah's (as) wife[24] and that of Prophet Lot (as)[25] as Walihata and Wali'ata respectively.

At any rate, the two women betrayed the two eminent Prophets (as), though their betrayal did not imply deviation from the path of chastity, since none of the wives of the Prophets (as) were ever unchaste. In the same vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that none of the wives of the Prophets (as) were unchaste.[26]

The betrayal of Prophet Lot's (as) wife was that she conspired with the enemies of her husband and disclosed his domestic secrets unto them. Prophet Noah's (as) wife acted likewise. In his Mufradat, Raghib says that betrayal (khiyana) and hypocrisy (nifaq) constitute one reality except for the fact that the former is employed against covenant and trust whereas the latter is used in religious affairs.

The conformity of the story to the disclosure of the Noble Prophet's (S) domestic secrets reflects that betrayal is connotes the same sense. At any rate, the blessed Verse ruins the unfounded expectations of those who imagine that their relationship with an eminent figure like the Noble Prophet (S) may lead to their salvation, despite their impurities and vices.

Thus, no one may imagine that he is immune from Divine Retribution.

The blessed Verse closes with saying unto them:

"Enter Hell along with the people of the Hell";

namely, their relationship with the Noble Prophet (S) may not be counted as a privilege for them.

Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 11

وَ ۔َ ۔َبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ ِ عِندَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي مِن فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

11. And Allah has set forth an example for those who believe: the wife of Pharaoh, when she said: "My Lord! Build for me a home with You in Paradise and save me from Pharaoh and his deeds and save me from the wrong doing people.

Two examples of evil women, namely the wives of Prophets Noah (as) and Lot (as), were presented in the preceding blessed Verses and two examples of good women, namely Pharaoh's wife and Mary (as), are introduced in the blessed Verses 11 and 12.

It is reported that the name of Pharaoh's wife was Àsiya and the name of her father was Muzahim. It is said that upon witnessing Prophet Moses' (as) miracle wrought before the sorcerers, the depth of her heart was lightened by the light of faith and immediately believed in Moses (as) but she concealed her faith.

However, belief in and love for God Almighty may not be concealed forever. Upon being apprised of her belief in Allah, Pharaoh warned her against it many a time and insisted that she should desist from believing in God Almighty, but the woman persevered in her faith and did not yield to his will.

Finally, Pharaoh ordered that her limbs be tied with nails and leave her under the scorching sun and lay a huge stone on her breast.

In her last moments, she invoked to God Almighty

"My Lord! Build for me a home with You in Paradise and save me from Pharaoh and his deeds and save me from the wrong doing people."

God Almighty answered the supplications of the sincerely sacrificing believing woman and made her the companion of the best women of the world like Mary (as).

It would be of interest to know that by her words, Pharaoh's wife belittled the great palace of her husband and regarded it as nothing against the home located in the proximity of Allah's Graciousness and answers to the insistent entreaties of those who provided her with admonitions saying that all those marvelous privileges were available to her as the queen of Egypt and warned her against losing them consequent to her belief in a Shepherd like Moses (as).

Thus, she utters her disgust at Pharaoh and his crimes and wrong doings.

By saying:

"My Lord! Build for me a home with You in Paradise and save me from Pharaoh and his deeds and save me from the wrong doing people,"

she reveals her disgust at the impure environment and her alienation from their crimes.

The last three sentences uttered by this cognizant and sacrificing woman are so well-measured that they may serve as inspirations for all the believing men and women in the world. Such utterances impede all those who find pretexts like the pressures of the environment and spouse from turning away from obedience to God Almighty and fearing Him.

The glory and splendor of the Pharaonic court were unsurpassed at the time and the pressures and tortures inflicted upon the victims at the behest of the criminal Pharaoh were unrivaled.

Nonetheless, such glory, splendor, pressures, and tortures could not make the believing woman yield to disbelief but she persevered on treading the path leading to Divine Satisfaction and sacrificed her life in the Cause of the true Beloved.

It is worthy of note that she invoked God Almighty to build a home for her in Paradise close to Him. Being in Paradise reflects the physical dimension and being with God Almighty is indicative of the spiritual dimension and she expressed both in one brief utterance.

Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 12

وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتُبِهِ وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْقَانِتِينَ

12. And God Almighty has also set out the example of Mary, the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity against sins. Then, We breathed into her through Our Spirit and Jesus was born to her and testified to the truth of the Words of her Lord and the Scriptures and she was of the obedient to Allah.

The Arabic verbal form

ahsanat ("guarded her"),

deriving from h-s-n, is cognate with hisn which denotes "stronghold, castle" and used concerning women connotes "chastity." The blessed Verse in question enumerates four perfect qualities for Mary (as): chastity, blowing of Divine Spirit into her, testifying to the veracity of Scriptures, and absolute obedience to God Almighty.

According to Shi'i and Sunni exegetic sources, there were four perfect women: Àsiya, Pharaoh's wife; Mary (as), the daughter of 'Imran; Khadija, the daughter of Khwaylid; and Fatima (as), the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (S). The only woman whose name is attested in the Holy Qur'an is Mary (as) whose name is attested thirty four times in twelve Chapters and her name appears as the designation of a Qur'anic Chapter.

At any rate, the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to a noble woman who serves as a model for the believers, saying that God Almighty has set forth another example by making mention of Mary (as), the daughter of 'Imran, who preserved her chastity and God Almighty breathed His Spirit into her and upon the Divine Command a son was born to her without having been married and her son was the Arch-Prophet Jesus (as).

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that she testified to the veracity of Divine Word and His Scriptures and believed in all of them and she was one of the obedient to Divine Command. She has an exalted rank in terms of faith and she believed in all Heavenly Books. She was obedient to Divine Command at all times in terms of deeds. She was a sacrificing servant and was attentive to Divine Commands.

The difference between Words (kalimat) and Books (kutub) may lie in the point that the latter makes a reference to all Scriptures revealed unto the Prophets (as) and the former alludes to the Revelations not recorded in Divine Books. Mary (as) believed in these Words and Books such that she is referred to as

"very truthful woman" (siddiqa)

in another Qur'anic Verse[27]:

"Jesus, son of Mary, was no more than a Messenger; many were the Messengers that passed away before him. His mother was a very truthful woman [believing in the Words of Allah and His Books]. They both used to eat food. Behold how We make the Àyat ("Verses, proofs, Signs") clear to them; yet behold how they are deluded away."

At any rate, such Qur'anic expressions explicitly reflect Mary's (as) chastity against the false claims of some of the corrupt and criminal Jews concerning her who put to question her character and even her chastity and thereby inflicts and severe blow upon them.

As mentioned above, the expression

"We breathed into her through Our Spirit" (fa-nafakhna fihi min ruhina)

is indicative of the Most Majestic and the Most Sublime Spirit.

According to another interpretation, the genitive inflection of the word

"Spirit" (ruhi)

is an instance of exalting genitive (idhafa tashrifiyya) connoting glory and exaltedness, in the same manner that the word

"House"

is intertwined with

"God"

in the genitive case in the compound form

"House of God" (baytu Allahi),

though God Almighty has neither a Spirit nor a House.

Finally, it is narrated from the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying:

"The most exalted women in Paradise are: Khadija, the daughter of Khwaylid; Fatima (as), the daughter of Muhammad (S); Mary (as), the daughter of 'Imran; and Àsiya, the daughter of Muzahim and the wife of Pharaoh."[28]

It is narrated on the authority of 'Imran ibn Hasin that the Noble Prophet (S) asked Fatima (as):

"Are you not happy to be the most exalted of the women of the world?"

She replied:

"What about the rank of Mary (as), the daughter of 'Imran?"

He answered:

"O my beloved daughter! She was the most exalted of women in her times, but you are the most exalted of women in the world from the first to the last of them. By Allah Who appointed me as His Messenger, I gave you in marriage to one who is the lord of this world and the Hereafter. He is loved solely by the believing and he is disliked only by the hypocrites."[29]

Hasan ibn Ziyad, the perfume vendor, narrates from Imam Sadiq (as) that the Noble Prophet (S) was inquired whether Fatima was the most exalted of women in her times.

He said:

"Mary (as) was the most exalted of women in her times and Fatima is the most exalted of the women of Paradise from past and present.[30]

Notes

1. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 311.
2. According to numerous traditions, by the righteous believer, Imam 'Ali (as) is hereby intended, see Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan and Ihqaq al-Haqq (p. 311).
3. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 19, p. 392.
4. Sahih Bukhari, vol. 6, p. 196.
5. Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 243.
6. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 372.
7. Majmu'a Warram, vol. 1, p. 6.
8. Tafsir Maraghi.
9. 19:55
10. 14:14
11. 20:132
12. Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 244.
13. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 94, p. 142.
14. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 10, p. 6766.
15. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 318.
16. Usul Kafi, vol. 2, the Chapter on Repentance, tradition 10.
17. Mahajja al-Baydha', vol. 17, p. 24.
18. Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 6, p. 265; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 6, p. 19.
19. Safina al-Bihar, the Chapter on Repentance.
20. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p. 327.
21. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 319.
22. Next to the global disbelief, the heaviest blows were inflicted upon the Islamic Republic of Iran by the hypocrites.
23. 9:73
24. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 10, p. 668.
25. Ruh al-Ma'ani, vol 28.
26. Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 245.
27. 5:75
28. Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 246.
29. Bisharat al-Mustafa, p. 69.
30. Saduq's Amali; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 43, p. 21.

Surah al-Mulk, Chapter 67

(Sovereignty)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 30

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter opens the twenty ninth part (juz') of the Holy Qur'an. The Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has thirty Verses. Another designation of the Chapter is Tabarak ("the Bountiful").

Both designations are derived from the first Verse and denote "Sovereignty" and "Bountiful" respectively.

The blessed Chapter generally treats of the following:

1. Topics regarding the Origin of existence, Divine Attributes, the marvelous system of the Creation of the world of existence and man, and man's means of gaining knowledge;

2. Topics concerning the Hereafter, torments of the Hell, and the conversations of the people of the Hell on the Day of Resurrection;

3. Warning the disbelievers and wrong doers against being afflicted with torments in this world and the Hereafter.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

The blessed Chapter is one of the most meritorious Qur'anic Chapters regarding which many a tradition have been narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) regarding the recitation of the blessed Chapter.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"One who recites Surah al-Tabarak is like one who wakes up praying in the Night of Ordainment.[1]

According to another Prophetic tradition:

"I wish Surah al-Tabarak were recorded in the believers' heart.[2]

Other traditions in this respect are to found in tradition sources.

Surah al-Mulk - Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ

1. Bountiful is He in Whose Hand is the Sovereignty and He is All-Able to do all things.

2. The Lord who created death and life so that He may test you that which of you is better in deed. And He is the Omnipotent, the Oft-Forgiving.

The blessed Chapter 25 (Surah al-Furqan) also opens with the word

"Bountiful" (tabarak).

The Arabic word tabarak, deriving from b-r-t, is cognate with the infinitive baraka ("permanent good") and barka ("pond, where water gathers").

All powers and states are subject to decline except for Divine Sovereignty which is everlasting.

The blessed Chapter opens with the significant issue of Divine Ownership, Sovereignty, and His Everlasting Pure Essence which serves as the key to all the discussions raised in the Chapter wherein it is said that He is Bountiful and Everlasting. He is the One in Whose Hand is the Sovereignty of the world of existence and He is Omnipotent.

The blessed Verse 1 is indicative of the Bountifulness of Divine Pure Essence, namely His Ownership and Sovereignty in the world of existence and His Omnipotence as the Everlasting and Bountiful Existent Being.

In other words, His Omnipotence, Majesty, and Infinite Might leave no room for any hopelessness, defect, and limit in the Omnipotence of the Absolute Mighty and Eternal Existent Being. His All-Mightiness in Infinite, His Knowledge encompasses all beings, His Omnipotence is Boundless, and the Emanation of His Existence embraces all creatures.

All intellectually possible existent beings, souls, essences of matter, and natural phenomena take their fill of the Infinite Ocean of Divine Emanation and are thereby existent and are dominated by His Existential Command. They all conspire to constitute such luxurious palace of the universe. It is through His Will that man comes into existence.

The second blessed Verse makes a reference to the goal of creation and man's death and life which are indicative of Divine Ownership and Sovereignty, saying:

"He is the Lord who created death and life so that He may test you that which of you is better in deed."

Death employed in the sense of non-existence is not created, since Creation concerns existential matters, though we know that death is truly transference from one world to another and in this sense, it is an existential matter which may be created. The precedence of death over life herein is owing to the profound impression made by according attention to death in performing good deeds. Besides, death temporally precedes life.

The blessed Verse also treats of the Divine Trial that as mentioned above is a kind of fostering such that it makes man enter the arena of action and thereby makes them experienced and pure deserving Divine Proximity.

Further treatment of the topic is to be found under 2:155. It is worthy of note that the goal behind trial is mentioned as performing good deeds rather than the quantity of such deeds. Deeds are supposed to be performed sincerely for the sake of God Almighty even if they happen to be few in terms of quantity.

It is mentioned in some Prophetic traditions that

"good deeds"

connotes perfect intellect, fear of God Almighty, and being fully aware of Divine Commands even if the good deeds happen to be few in terms of number.

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying that the blessed Verse is indicative of proper acts which are accompanied by worshipping God Almighty and having pure intentions. He further says that preservation of deeds from impurities is harder than performing deeds and sincerely performed righteous good deeds are those whose agent does not expect praise from anyone besides God Almighty. [3]

Thus, the world is the arena of a great trial for all mankind. Death and life are the means of the trial and the goal behind it is to achieve performing good righteous deeds which are indicative of the development of inward knowledge, sincerity of intentions, and performing any kind of good righteous deeds.

In this vein, some Qur'an exegetes maintain that

"good deeds"

herein connote remembrance of death or preparation for death and the like. In fact they refer to different implications of the general sense of the word. Since man commits numerous mistakes in such great arena of trial, he should not despair of having committed such mistakes and thereby refrain from striving toward his spiritual growth.

The blessed Verse closes with the Divine Promise of Support and Forgiving of sins, saying that God Almighty is Invincible and Oft-Forgiving. He is the Omnipotent Lord Who forgives all repenting believers and His Might and Majesty is accompanied by Mercy and Compassion.

Surah al-Mulk - Verses 3-4

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ۖ مَّا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ مِن تَفَاوُتٍ ۖ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن فُطُورٍ

ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ

3. Who has created the seven heavens one above another and you can see no flaw in the Creation of the Most Gracious. Then, behold again: "Can you see any rifts?"

4. Then, behold time and again. Your sight will return to you in a state of humbleness and exhaustion.

The system of Creation is based on Divine Mercy. It is the best system of Creation into which neither defect nor flaw may find its way. Knowing God Almighty should be based on observation and exactitude so that many may strengthen his belief in Divine Omnipotence and the Majesty of the world of existence.

Thus, the blessed Verses in question treat of the universal system of Creation encouraging man to study the organic system of the world of existence so that he may prepare himself for the great trial, saying that the Lord created the seven heavens one above another. The seven heavens were briefly treated above under 65:12:

"It is Allah Who has created the seven heavens and the earth and from the later the like thereof. His Command descends between them at all times that you may know that Allah is Omnipotent over all things and His Omniscience encompasses surrounds all things."

The Arabic nominal form tibaqan ("in layers, one on top of the other") reflects that the seven heavens are above on another and the cognate verbal noun mutabiqa literally denotes being placed on top of another.

Now, if we take the seven heavens a reference to the seven planets of the solar system, visible to the naked eye, having their fixed distance from the sun and one is above another. If we regard all the stars and planets visible to the unarmed eye as belonging to the first heaven, it may be said that other worlds exist in higher heavens that one is above another.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that man may find neither contradiction nor defect nor flaw in the Creation of the Most Gracious Lord. Despite all its greatness, the world of creation is based on systematicity, consistency, well-measured constituents, and precise laws such that had any disorder found its way into the world of creation, it would have caused its destruction.

The marvelous systematicity prevailing amongst atoms and their constituent elements, i.e. protons, neutrons, and electrons, and in the entirety of the solar system and other systems and galaxies reflect precise laws that make them proceed on specific courses. At any rate, laws, system, and well-measured plans are to found everywhere.

The blessed Verse closes with further emphasis, urging man to behold once more and observe the world further attentively to find out that there is neither flaw, nor defect, nor inconsistency in the system of the world of creation.

The Arabic nominal form futur literally means splitting lengthwise, though it also connotes breaking the fast, inconsistency, and corruption and the last sense is intended herein. The blessed Verse is saying that no matter how attentively man studies the world of Creation, he may not find the least defect or disharmony in it.

To lay further emphasis on the same point, the blessed Verse 4 says:

"Then, behold time and again. Your sight will return to you in a state of humbleness and exhaustion."

The Arabic dual nominal form

karratayn ("once more, again")

derives from the root k-r-r denoting attend and return to something. The nominal form karra denotes repetition whose dual form is karratayn. However, some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the dual form herein does not designate duality, but it connotes repetitive and consecutive attentiveness.

Thus, the blessed Qur'anic Verses urges people to observe the world of creation thrice and thereby study the secrets of creation. In other words, they are encouraged to be attentive time and again so that they see for themselves that there is not a single flaw in such marvelous system of creation and thereby gain further acquaintance with the Omnipotence and Omniscience of the Creator of such system and the world of existence.

The Arabic adverb of manner khasi'an, employed concerning the eye, denotes "with exhaustion." When it is used about dogs, it denotes "drive away." The Arabic adjective hasir derives from the root h-s-r ("undress") since when man is exhausted it is as if he is "nude" of all his faculties, hence the meaning of "exhaustion.

At any rate, two significant conclusions may be drawn out of these blessed Verses:

1. The Holy Qur'an emphatically enjoins all those treading the path of truth to summon their utmost attentiveness as to the secrets of the world existence and the marvels of the world of creation without being content with insufficient observation, since many a secret may not be revealed at the first and second attempts but sharp eyes and insight are required in this regard.

2. The more man exercises attentiveness and precision, the more he may perceive the systematicity and total flawlessness. Many a phenomena, e.g. earthquakes, floods, ailments, and other afflictions, appear as blights and blemishes at the first glance, but further studies reveal that there are significant and precise causes behind them.

Further details may be found in the book titled The Creator of the World (Àfaridigar-i Jahan). The blessed Verses in question explicitly indicate that systematicity and organicism reflect the knowledge and might behind them.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 5

وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِّلشَّيَاطِينِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيرِ

5. And indeed We have adorned the heaven of the world with lamps and We have made such lamps as means of driving away the devils and have prepared for them the blazing torment.

The Arabic nominal form misbah denotes something like a lamp that sheds light at night and makes it as brilliant as the day.

Three expressions are to be found in the blessed Verse concerning the stars:

1. Lamp;
2. Adornment;
3. Driving away the devils.

Treating of the sky, the blessed Verse makes mention of brilliant and beauteous stars, saying that God Almighty has adorned the nearest heaven with brilliant lamps and has placed arrows in them to drive away the devils and has prepared for them the torment of Hellfire.

A glance at the dark but starry night and being attentive toward the remote dream-like worlds and reflection upon the systematicity and organicism prevailing in them and meditation on the beauty, delicacy, majesty, and the mysterious and awe-inspiring silence casting its shadow on them admits man to a world brimming with the knowledge and light of Truth and thereby lead him to reflect upon the profundity of the worlds created by God Almighty whose depiction is beyond the reach of expression.

The blessed Verse lays further emphasis on the point that all the stars visible to us constitute elements of the nearest heaven from amongst the seven heavens.

The Arabic nominal phrase

al-sama' al-dunya ("the lowest or nearest heaven")

is indicative of the same.

The Arabic plural noun

rujum ("arrows")

connotes meteors cast like arrows from one of side of the heaven to the other.

The Arabic plural noun shuhub alludes to the remnants of shattered stars. Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty has made stars like arrows driving away the devils. The manner of shooting such arrows, namely the shooting stars, which are wandering in the heavens is treated in details above under 15:18 and 37:20.

Finally, it is worthy of note that although the Holy Qur'an was revealed in the backward milieu of pre-Islamic age of ignorance in the Arabian Peninsula, but emphasis is oftentimes laid on the point that Muslims are supposed to reflect upon the secrets of the majestic world of existence, something inconceivable to the Arabs living in the pre-Islamic age of ignorance which explicitly reflects that the Holy Qur'an was revealed from a Divine Source and the more scientific advancements are made, further greatness and majesty are reflected by Qur'anic emphases in this respect.

It is common knowledge that the earth, despite its colossal size is too small compared to the sun as the focal point of the solar system such that the size of the sun is equal to one million and two hundred planets the size of the earth. On the other hand, our solar system is merely one constituent element of an immense galaxy referred to as the Milky Way.[4]

Furthermore, the galaxies in the cosmos are innumerable and as soon as astronomical telescopes get further sophisticated, further galaxies are being discovered. How Exalted is the Lord Who has created such colossal and well-measured plan. Greatness belongs to Allah, the One, the All-Mighty.

Surah al-Mulk - Verses 6-8

وَلِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيهَا سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهِيقًا وَهِيَ تَفُورُ

تَكَادُ تَمَيَّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ كُلَّمَا أُلْقِيَ فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَذِيرٌ

6. And for those who disbelieve in their Lord is the torment of Hell and worst indeed is that abode.

7. When they are cast therein, they hear a horrible sound out of it while they are perpetually boiled in it.

8. It almost bursts up with fury. Every time a group is cast therein, the keepers of the Hell will ask them: "Did no warner come unto you?"

Since the preceding Verses treated of the Signs of Divine Majesty and Omnipotence and their reflections in the world of Creation, the blessed Verses in question deal with those who neglect such Signs and tread the path of disbelief and polytheism and like the devils deserve Divine torment. The blessed Verse 6 is saying that torment in the Hell is in store for those who disbelieved in their Lord and Hell is the worst abode for them.

The blessed Verse 7 briefly treats of such horrible torment saying that upon being cast in the Hell, they hear a fearsome sound while it is perpetually boiling. When they are cast into it with utmost humility and

disgrace, they hear a horrible and long cry from the Hell enwrapping them in horror.

The Arabic word shahiq literally denotes an unpleasant sound like braying of a donkey. Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the word is cognate with shahuq denoting "length," hence the designation of a high mount as jabal shahiq.

Thus, the Arabic word shahiq connotes long wail. Some also hold that zafir denotes a moan reverberating in the through and shahiq is applied to a moan reverberating in the breast. At any rate, reference is herein made to frightening and upsetting sounds.

The blessed Verse 8 depicts the intensity of the rage of the Hell, saying that it is almost cleft asunder, like a huge vessel laid on an extraordinarily blazing fire boiling such that it may shatter into pieces at any time or like a person raging and shouting in such manner that he appears to be on the verge of explosion.

Thus is the depiction of the Hell, the focal point of Divine Wrath.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that when a group of disbelievers are cast into it, the keepers of the Hell ask them surprisingly:

"Did you not have a leader or a guide? Did not a warner come unto you? Why have you ended up with such dire fate?"

They may not believe that those who had access to Divine Guidance deliberately end up with such dire fate and opt for such evil abode.

Surah al-Mulk - Verses 9-11

قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَاءَنَا نَذِيرٌ فَكَذَّبْنَا وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ مِن شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ كَبِيرٍ

وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ

فَاعْتَرَفُوا بِذَنبِهِمْ فَسُحْقًا لِّأَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ

9. They will say: "Yes, indeed a warner came unto us, but we belied him and said: 'Allah never sent down anything, you are only in great error."

10. And they will say: "Had we but listened or used our intellect, we would not have been amongst the dwellers of the blazing Fire!"

11. Then they will confess to their sins. So, damned are the dwellers of the Fire!

These blessed Verses make references to three confessions made by disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection:

1. They confess that the Prophets came unto them, though they belied them;

2. They confess that they failed to use their intellect and listen to the word of truth;

3. They confess to having committed sins.

True intellection lies in listening to the truth and acknowledging and following it such that one may deliver oneself from Divine Wrath.

Nonetheless, as reflected in the blessed Verse 9, the disbelievers replied unto the keepers of the Hell that warners had come unto them, but they had belied them saying that God Almighty had never sent Revelation onto anyone so that they had been able to pursue their concupiscent desires.

They had even said unto them that they had been in dire error. They had not acknowledged their words nor had they listen to their life giving messages; rather, they stood against them and termed such spiritual physics as those who had been misled and belied them.

The blessed Verse 10 reflects the origin of their misfortune and error, saying that had they listened to the Messengers and made use of their intellect, they would have never been amongst the people of the Hell. It is in the blessed Verse 11 that they confess to having committed sins saying that the people of the Hell are deprived of Divine Mercy.

These Qur'anic Verses treat of the dire fate of the people of the Hell as well as the main cause of their misfortune saying that God Almighty had provided them with hearing, intelligence, and intellect on the one hand and His Messengers with clear proofs on the other thus they had the opportunity to tread on the path to happiness.

However, when man who has the hearing, vision, and intellect, but fails to perceive and think, may not be affected by all the Messengers and Divine Scriptures.

The Arabic word suhq literally denotes 'pounding, pulverizing,' and it is also applied to worn out clothes, but it ad hoc connotes being remote from Divine Mercy. Thus, the Arabic clause fa-suhqan li-ashab al-sa'ir reflects that the people of the Hell are deprived from Divine Mercy and since the curse is accompanied by its realization, the clause means that this group is totally remote from Divine Mercy.

It is worthy of note, however, that it is not the only instance where the Holy Qur'an makes a reference to the extraordinary value of intellect and the main cause of the misfortune of the people of the Hell as their neglect of such Divine faculty, but whoever acquainted with the Holy Qur'an knows that the significance of the issue is reflected on different occasions against the forgeries of those who regard religion as the opium of the mind and neglect of intellection.

The Holy Qur'an at all times addresses thinkers and scholars and those possessing reason.

Numerous traditions have been transmitted in this respect. It is noteworthy that the well-known work titled Kafi opens with a book titled 'The Book of Intellect and Ignorance' reflecting upon the same will be indicative of the profundity of Islamic perspective in this respect.

For the sake of brevity, only three traditions will be mentioned in this regard:

1. It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"Whoever possesses intellect has faith and whoever has faith shall enter Paradise."

Thus, Paradise is the abode of the wise.[5]

2. According to a Prophetic tradition, man's character depends on his intellect and whoever lacks intellect, lacks faith.[6]

3. It is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as):

"Intellect is man's guide and ignorance entails error."

Surah al-Mulk - Verses 12-14

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ
وَأَسِرُّوا قَوْلَكُمْ أَوِ اجْهَرُوا بِهِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ
أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

12. Verily, those who fear their Lord inwardly, theirs shall be forgiveness and a great Reward.

13. Whether you keep your talk secret or disclose it, Verily, He is the Omniscient of what is in the breasts.

14. Is not He Who has created All-Aware of the states of His creatures whereas He is the Most Precise, the All-Aware?

The blessed Verse 12, resuming the discussions raised in the preceding Verses regarding the disbelievers and their fate on the Day of Resurrection, is saying that those who fear their Lord inwardly, their sins shall be forgiven and they shall receive a great Reward.

The Arabic word

ghayb ("unseen, invisible")

may connote gaining knowledge as to the Unseen God, Resurrection, or both.

Some exegetes also maintain that the blessed verse makes a reference to fearing God Almighty in committing unseen sins, since if man does not conceal his sins, he will not make them apparent in the best possible way. Thus, reference is made of the significance of pure intentions in refraining from committing sins and disobeying Divine Commands, since keeping something secret is more remote than hypocrisy. All theses exegeses are in harmony.

The definite form of

maghfiratun ("forgiving")

and the phrase

ajrun kabirun ("great reward")

reflect the significance. In other words, such forgiving and Reward is so great that they may not be perceived by anyone. The blessed Verse 13 lays further emphasis in this regard, saying that whether you conceal or disclose your intentions, God Almighty is All-Aware of whatever is in the hearts.

Some Qur'an exegetes have narrated an occasion of Revelation for the blessed Verse in question on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas to the effect that some of the disbelievers or hypocrites talked evil of the Noble Prophet (S) and Gabriel informed the Noble Prophet (S) of their slanders. Some of them said unto each other to conceal their words so that Muhammad's (S) God may not hear them.

Thus, the blessed Verse was revealed, saying:

"Whether you conceal or disclose your words, God Almighty is All-Aware of them."

The blessed Verse 14 serves as a proof for the preceding blessed Verse, asking:

"Is not the One Who has created the Creatures All-Aware of them, whereas He is Fully Aware of their innermost secrets as well as about everything in the world?"

Numerous possibilities have been mentioned regarding the clause ala ya‘lamu man khalaqa

(“Is not He Who has created All-Aware of the states of His creatures?”),

the best of which is that God Almighty Who has created the entire world of existence is All-Aware of all the secrets of the world. Are man’s secrets concealed from God Almighty Who has created him?

The adjective latif, cognate with the nominal form lutf, connotes any delicate point and any rapid movement and delicate body.

Thus, the Divine Attribute Latif reflects Divine Omniscience as to the delicacies and secrets of the world of Creation and the Creation of delicate and minute beings. The Attribute implies that God Almighty is All-Aware of innermost secrets concealed in the hearts, the words exchanged at secret sessions, and the sins committed in secret places.

It is narrated in Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn from Imam Ridha (as) as saying that the word latif does not imply delicacy and minuteness but the fact that Divine Omniscience penetrates all things, though others may not perceive it.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 15

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِن رِّزْقِهِ ۖ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ

15. He it is the One Who has made the earth subservient to you. So proceed on the path thereof and eat of His provision and know that toward Him will be the Resurrection.

The Arabic word mankab denotes “shoulder” which is the best organ for carrying burdens.

The

“shoulder of the earth”

connotes places where Provision may be found. The earth is subservient to man and despite a number of motions, it is tranquil.

It would not be subservient to man if it were subject to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions permanently or its distance from the sun were nearer or remoter or the existing measures did not predominate the earth. God Almighty has made the earth subservient to man so that he may make efforts on it. On the other hand, Provisions are granted by God Almighty, though efforts are required for obtaining them.

The Arabic adjective dhalul employed in the sense of subservient is the most comprehensive expression which may be used regarding the earth, since such subservient mount, despite its numerous and rapid movements sounds so tranquil that it seems to be absolutely still.

Some scholars maintain that the earth has fourteen different kinds of movements, three of which pertain to its rotation around itself and the sun. Furthermore, such movement is accompanied by that of the solar system in the heart of the galaxy. Such rapid movements are so gentle that before producing decisive arguments as to the movement of the earth, no one believed in such movements.

On the other hand, the crust of the earth is neither too coarse nor rough to impede habitation on it, nor too soft and smooth to impede its tranquility.

Thus, it is fully subservient to human life. Its agitation would be reflected if its surface were covered by mires swallowing everything, by fine sand in which men sank in it to their knees, and by sharp stones and rocks wounding men when they trod on them.

The earth's distance from the sun is not so less to scorch everything on its surface nor is it so remote from it so that everything be frozen. The atmospheric pressure of the earth is so moderate that it makes life possible without being at the extremes to asphyxiate or shatter human life. The same thing is true with gravity: it is not in the extremes to shatter the bones or cause beings to easily levitate in the air.

At any rate, the earth is subservient to man in all respects. It would be of interest to accord attention to the following theme, i.e. walking on the shoulders of the earth. The Arabic word manakib is the plural form of mankab.

The expression reflects that it is as if man sets his feet on the shoulder of the earth and it is so serene that man may easily keep his balance on it. At the same time, it implies that as long as one makes no efforts, he may not benefit from the provisions of the earth.

The Arabic word rizq ("provision, sustenance") is also a semantically comprehensive term encompassing all forms of mineral, vegetative, and animal nutritive material. However, man is supposed to bear in mind that these do not constitute his final goal of creation, but they serve as means to be used in treading the path leading to "growth", Resurrection, and eternal life.

Surah al-Mulk - Verses 16-18

أَأَمِنتُم مَّن فِي السَّمَاءِ أَن يَخْسِفَ بِكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ

أَمْ أَمِنتُم مَّن فِي السَّمَاءِ أَن يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرِ

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ

16. Do you feel secure about the torments inflicted by Him, Who is over the heaven, will not cause the earth to sink with you and then it should quake?

17. Or do you feel secure about the torments inflicted by Him, Who is over the heaven, will not send against you a violent whirlwind abounding with gravel? Then you shall know how has My Warning been.

18. And indeed those before them belied Divine Signs, but behold how terrible was My Chastisement.

Resuming the foregoing discussions on the fates of disbelievers, the people of the Hell and the believers, the people of Paradise, the blessed Verses in question urge believers to join the lines of the people of Paradise and refrain from the practices of the people of the Hell. Following a treatment of Divine Bounties mentioned in the preceding Verses, the blessed Verses in question make a reference to some of His torments.

The blessed Verse 16 asks:

"Do you feel secure about the torments of the One Who is the Absolute Sovereign in the heavens? Are you aware that He may command that the earth be torn asunder and swallow you and permanently quake? If He

commands, the tranquil earth revolts and turns into a stubborn beast. Then, the earth will quake and clefts appear in the earth swallowing you and your houses and cities. The earth will still quake."

The Arabic clause

fa-idha hiya tamuru ("it will permanently quake and is agitated")

may indicate that God Almighty may command so that the earth swallows you and tosses you from one point to another.

Thus, your graves may not be tranquil and the earth may lose its tranquility forever predominated by permanent quakes. The inhabitants of the quake stricken regions perceive it with further facility since they inhabit regions that may quake for days depriving the inhabitants of their normal course of life. Au contraire, those accustomed to the tranquility of the earth may require further reflection upon the point to grasp the expression.

The phrase

man fi 'l-sama' ("One [Who is] in the heaven")

alludes to the Divine Pure Essence Whose Sovereignty predominates the heavens and the earth in their entirety. However, some Qur'an exegetes also maintain that a reference is hereby made of the angels in the heaven assigned to execute Divine Commands.

The blessed Verse 17 is saying that there is no need to experience earth quakes, since He may command whirlwinds abounding in gravel to bury you beneath heaps of them. You shall notice before long how Divine Warnings shall be realized. The point may be easily grasped by those who have experienced the sand and hasib winds, namely those moving the heaps of sand. They know that such winds may bury the dwellings and caravans in a few moments under heaps of sand and gravel.

Thus, the blessed Verses reflect that their torments are not restricted to those befalling them in the Hereafter, but God Almighty may put an end to their lives by earth quakes or gales. To further depict such torments, reference is made to similar disasters which befell the ancient peoples.

Therefore, the blessed Verse 18 says that those who were before them belied Divine Signs and Messengers, but behold the Divine Chastisements befallen them. Some were chastised by destructive quakes, some by lightning, and some by tempests and gales, leaving behind their ruined cities so that prospective generations may take lessons and obey Divine Commands.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 19

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ صَافَّاتٍ وَيَقْبِضْنَ ۚ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا الرَّحْمَٰنُ ۚ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ بَصِيرٌ

19. Do they not see the birds above them, spreading out their wings and folding them in? None upholds them in the sky except the Most Gracious Lord. Verily, He is the All-Seer of everything.

Birds, by their migrations and soaring in the sky for reaching remote places in the four seasons without any restrictions as to their permanent flight without falling down and collision serve as the Signs of Divine Omnipotence and Glory.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question asks:

"Have they not beheld the birds flying above them, spreading out their wings and folding them in?"

They soar in the sky resisting the law of gravity and easily fly in the sky for hours, and at times weeks and months in rows and find no restriction as to their gentle and speedy flight. Some of them oftentimes spread their wings (safat), as if a secret force puts them to flight.

Some of them flutter permanently and the Arabic verbal form yaqbidhna may imply the same sense. Some birds flutter and then spread their wings. The fourth group, like sparrows, flutter for some time, but when they reach the required speed, they fold in their wings and dive in the air. At any rate, they follow different patterns.

Who has created them such that they may easily soar in the sky? Who has provided them with the power to fly and has trained them to fly, particularly when they fly in flocks that at times it takes months of soaring above numerous lands, forests, mountains, valleys, and seas to reach their destinations?

Thus, the blessed Verse closes by saying that none but the Most Gracious Allah keeps them in the sky, since He is the All-Seer of everything and is All-Aware of the needs of His creatures and accordingly provides them with befitting means and different faculties. It is worthy of note, however, that a detailed discussion regarding the wonders of the world of the birds and their flight is to be found above under 16:79.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 20

أَمَّنْ هَٰذَا الَّذِي هُوَ جُندٌ لَّكُمْ يَنصُرُكُم مِّن دُونِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ ۚ إِنِ الْكَافِرُونَ إِلَّا فِي غُرُورٍ

20. Who is he besides the Most Gracious that may serve as your host against God Almighty? The disbelievers are preoccupied with nothing but vanity.

The blessed Verse in question makes a reference to the point that the disbelievers may not find any support against God Almighty, asking:

"Who may render you assistance against God Almighty? They are not only unable to render you support at the time of afflictions, but if God Almighty wills, He assigns them to cause affliction for you."

Water, wind, dust, and fire are subservient to you and constitute the pillars on which your life rests. Nonetheless, God Almighty assigned them to cause the perdition of the disobedient peoples. Numerous instances of such disobedience and the consequent torments befalling on the disobedient are to be found in the history of mankind.

The closest associates of the kings, Pharaohs, and the rebellious cause their perdition. Contemporary history also attests to numerous instances of the rebellions staged by the closest and the most loyal forces of the tyrannical regimes against them and causing their perdition. However, the disbelievers are solely preoccupied with their vanity and delusion.

The veils of vanity and ignorance have been cast on their intellect impeding them from taking lessons from historical instances.

The Arabic word jund originally denotes uneven and rough surface of the earth where stones and gravel abound, hence the connotation of hosts and

armies. Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the term is herein applied to idols unable in the least to render assistance to the polytheists. However, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question is broad in its semantic scope and reference to idols merely constitutes one of the semantic elements of the same.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 21

أَمَّنْ هَٰذَا الَّذِي يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ أَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهُ ۚ بَل لَّجُّوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ

21. Who may provide for you if He should withhold His provision? However, they continue to be obdurate in their disobedience and evading the truth.

The preceding blessed Verse and the one in question allude to the causes of human misfortunes. In this respect, vanity, obduracy, disobedience, and evading the truth (‘utu) imply arrogance and transgressing the bounds set by the Truth. The Arabic word nufur connotes expression of disgust and evading the truth which pave the path for rebellion and disobedience which in turn pave the ground for hatred of and distancing from the truth.

It is worthy of note, however, that God Almighty is the only Provider Who provides in this world

(“He created you, then He provided for you,”[7])

the purgatory

(“Nay, they are alive with their Lord and they have provision,”[8]),

and the Hereafter

(“They shall enter Paradise where they shall be provided therein without limit,”[9]).

Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that if God Almighty withholds His Provision, no one may meet your requirements and provide for you. If he commands the heaven to desist from sending down rain, plants may not grow on the earth, and numerous blights may destroy the cultivated lands and no one may provide you with your daily sustenance.

If the spiritual provisions and Divine Revelation be withheld, no one will be able to guide you. These are evident truths, but your obduracy and disobedience serve as veils impeding you from perceiving the truth. Thus, the blessed Verse closes by saying that they continue their obduracy and evading the truth.

It is worthy of note, however, that despite all the advancements in different spheres of human life, particularly those made in the domain of nutrition industries, if it does not rain for one single year, a disaster shall befall throughout the world and if the hosts of locusts and other blights spread every corner, a great disaster shall be inflicted upon the world.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 22

أَفَمَن يَمْشِي مُكِبًّا عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَىٰ أَمَّن يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

22. Is he who walks prone on his face, more rightly guided or he who walks upright on the Straight Path?

Following the discussion raised in the foregoing blessed Verses regarding the disbelievers and the believers, the blessed Verse in question

depicts the states of the two groups of the disbelievers and the believers by an illustration of interest, asking:

"Is he who walks prone on his face, more rightly guided or he who walks upright on the Straight Path?"

The disbelievers, they tyrants, and the arrogant obdurate people are likened to one who crawls on an uneven and meandering road; as a consequence of which he neither sees the road clearly, nor is able to control himself, nor is aware of the impediments and obstacles, nor moves with desirable speed, but he walks for a short while and despairs.

Au contraire, the disbelievers are resembled to those who walk upright and traverse an even and straight path with utmost speed, might, awareness, and facility. Such precise and interesting similitude is clearly reflected in the lives of these two groups.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the twain allude to the Noble Prophet (S) and his uncle, Abu Jahl; though such interpretation reflects few instances without restricting the general contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question.

Different interpretations have been provided for mukibban 'ala wajhihi, though the abovementioned meaning is more consistent with its contextual meaning, namely walking or crawling prone. At any rate, these are the sates of the disbelievers and the believers in the Hereafter or in both worlds and there is no reason as to the semantic restriction of the blessed Verse reflecting that they are so in this world and the Hereafter.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 23

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

23. Say it is He Who has created you and endowed you with hearing and seeing and hearts, though little thanks you give.

Addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty is the One Who created you and endowed you with hearing, seeing, and hearts, though you offer insufficient thanks.

In other words, God Almighty provided you with the means of observation and experience (vision), that of gaining awareness as to the products of other people's thought (hearing), and that of reflection on intellectual sciences (heart). Thus, you have been endowed with all the required means of obtaining intellectual and narrational knowledge, though there are few who offer their gratitude for such great Bounties.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 24

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

24. Say: "It is He Who has created you on the earth and to Him you shall return.

The blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty Who created you on the earth and from the earth is All-Able to resurrect you. God Almighty disseminates mankind all over the world and He shall resurrect and gather them on the Day of Resurrection.

Addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse is saying:

"Say that He is the One Who created you on the earth and you shall return to Him and shall be gathered before Him."

The blessed Verse actually determines the course and the goal, namely man is enjoined to tread on the Straight Path of the Islamic faith, make use of all the means of obtaining knowledge and recognition, and proceed toward the everlasting life.

It is worthy of note that the preceding blessed Verse contains the verbal form ansha'akum and the blessed One in question includes dhara'akum. The former may allude to creating man ex nihilo, namely you were non-existent and God Almighty created you and the latter makes a reference to the Creation of man from the earth.

Surah al-Mulk - Verses 25-27

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَٰذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِندَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ زُلْفَةً سِيئَتْ وُجُوهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقِيلَ هَٰذَا الَّذِي كُنتُم بِهِ تَدَّعُونَ

25. They say: "When will this promise come to pass if you are telling the truth?"

26. Say: "The knowledge is with Allah only and I am merely a plain warner.

27. But when they see it approaching, the faces of those who disbelieve will turn ugly and black and it will be said unto them: "This is what you were calling for!"

The clause

mata hadha al-wa'd ("when this promise [will come to pass]?")

is attested six times in the Holy Qur'an as uttered by the disbelievers to who the Noble Prophet (S) would reply:

"The Knowledge as to the Resurrection is solely with God Almighty."

The knowledge of the unseen falls into two categories: one granted His chosen believers

("This is of the news of the unseen which We reveal unto you,"[10])

and one which is solely with God Almighty and even His Messengers are unaware of it, instances of which include the specified time of Resurrection as mentioned in the preceding blessed Verse[11] and the supplication including

"By the Knowledge which is solely with you."

The blessed Verse proceeds to treat of the words uttered by those who belie Resurrection, saying that they utter such derisive words but if they are true in their claim they may specify the exact time of Resurrection. Now that they may not act accordingly, why do they not state that they are unable to do so?

Two interpretations have been suggested for

"this promise":

firstly, the promise of Resurrection and the other the numerous chastisements inflicted in this world, e.g. earth quakes and lightning, though the twain are not inharmonious.

The blessed Verse 26 is thus replying unto them:

"Say unto them 'The knowledge of it is only with God Almighty and I am merely a plain warner."

The expression is reiterated elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, including:

"They ask you about the Hour [Day of Resurrection]: 'When will be its appointed time?' Say: 'The knowledge thereof is with my Lord alone. None may reveal its time but He. Heavy is its burden through the heavens and the earth. It shall not come upon you except all of a sudden.' They ask you as if you have a good knowledge of it. Say: 'The knowledge of it is with Allah only, though most of mankind are unaware of it"[12].

The knowledge rests solely with God Almighty since if the appointed time of Resurrection were known and it happened to be far ahead, people would sink into the dire of neglect and if it happened to be close, the people would be too anxious for the fulfillment of the goals of human growth.

The blessed Verse 27 is saying that when they experience the Divine Promises and torments, the faces of the disbelievers turn ugly and black, such that they reflect their sorrows. It will be said unto them that it is what you called for. The verbal form tadda'un, deriving from the root d-'-a, implies that they called for Resurrection at all times and now there is no way to evade the reckoning of deeds at the time.

It is noteworthy that Hakim Abu al-Qasim Haskani in this respect says that when the disbelievers noticed the exalted rank of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), before God Almighty, their faces turned black out of rage.[13]

In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) as saying that the blessed Verse in question was revealed regarding the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) and his followers.[14] At any rate, the exegesis transmitted by the Shi'i and Sunni authorities is regarded as comparison and the blessed Verse teats of Resurrection and traditions are imbued with such comparisons.

Surah al-Mulk - Verses 28-29

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكَنِيَ اللَّهُ وَمَن مَّعِيَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا فَمَن يُجِيرُ الْكَافِرِينَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ آمَنَّا بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

28. Say: "If Allah destroys me and those with me or He bestows His Mercy on us, who can save the disbelievers from an excruciating torment?"

29. Say: "He is the Most Gracious, in Him we believe and in Him we put our trust. So you will come to know who it is that is in manifest error."

The blessed Verse which is one of the last Verses of the Chapter opening with

"Say"

addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) resumes the discussions raised in the preceding Verses against the disbelievers and reflects the aspects reflected above.

The blessed Verse addresses those who awaited oftentimes the death of the Noble Prophet (S) and his followers and the disappearance of his religion, saying:

"If Allah destroys me and those with me or He bestows His Mercy on us, who can save the disbelievers from an excruciating torment?"

According to some traditions, Meccan disbelievers cursed the Noble Prophet (S) and the Muslims and called for his death under the false impression that had he passed away, his Prophetic Call would disappear, but the blessed Verse was revealed to provide them with a reply.

Some other Qur'an exegetes suggest another exegesis for the blessed Verse saying that addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse is asking him to say:

"Say: 'We believe in God Almighty but we are in a state between hope and awe, let alone you who disbelieve in Him."

However, the former exegesis sounds to be more accurate.

In this light, the blessed Verse 29 is saying:

"Say unto them that God Almighty is the Most Gracious. We believe in Him and put our trust in Him and you will notice before long who is in manifest error."

In other words, We believe in God Almighty and have chosen Him as our Guardian. The reason is crystal clear. He is the Most Gracious Lord. His Graciousness enwraps all things everywhere and friends and foes benefit from the Emanation of His Bounties.

A brief glance at the world of existence bears testimony to the argument, but what have your objects of worship done for you? Your error is plain herein, but it will be more obvious to you on the Day of Resurrection or even in this world when the Islamic faith, supported by Divine Aids, conquers the hosts of the disbelievers by a miraculous triumph and the truth will be more evident to you.

The blessed Verse is actually a kind of consolation to the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and the believers in order to assure them of the all encompassing triumph of the truth and the total defeat of falsehood whose followers are all alone, but the Most Gracious Lord provides the believers with Support and Assistance.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 30

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَن يَأْتِيكُم بِمَاءٍ مَّعِينٍ

30. Say: "Say unto me! If the water of you land were to sink away, who then can supply you with flowing water?"

Flowing water is mentioned herein as an instance of Divine Graciousness.

The preceding blessed Verse said:

"We put our trust in Him,"

but the blessed Verse in question is saying that the believers put their trust in God Almighty since if the water sank away into the earth, no one can supply you with flowing water but God Almighty.

Thus, the closing Verse of the Chapter in question suggests an instance of Divine Graciousness enwrapping all the world of existence, though many people accord no attention to it:

"Say unto me! If the water of you land were to sink away, who then can supply you with flowing water?"

It is common knowledge that the earth consists of two different layers: the penetrable and the impenetrable layers. The former absorbs the water and the latter preserves it.

All fountains, wells, and subterranean aqueducts have come into being owing to the twain layers, since had all the earth been penetrable to a great depth, the water would have sunk into the earth so such depth that it would have been inaccessible. Now, had all the layers been impenetrable, the water would have stagnated and turned into mires or immediately found its way into the sea and thus all subterranean water reservoirs would have been lost.

It is merely one instance of the Divine Graciousness encompassing the world to which human life and death is closely associated. The Arabic word ma'in, cognate with ma'n ("water flow") and according to some with 'ayn whose /m/ is redundant, is taken by some Qur'an exegetes as connoting the water which is visible even though stagnant, though the majority of the exegetes maintain that it herein implies "flowing water."

It is noteworthy that drinking water is not restricted to flowing water, but they represent the best types of water, appearing in different forms, e.g. rivers, subterranean aqueducts, and artesian wells.

It is reported by some Qur'an exegetes that upon hearing the blessed Verse:

"Had your sources of water sunk into the earth, who would have provided you with flowing water?"

said:

"The robust men using pickaxes will draw water out of the depth of the earth,"

but while asleep at night he dreamt that black water encompassed his eyes and heard some voice saying:

"Bring those robust men and sharp axes to draw such black water out of your eyes."

Today, it is known that had the impenetrable layer of the earth disappeared, neither robust men nor sharp axes may extract water out of the earth.[15]

Finally, the traditions narrated from the Noble Shi'i Imams (as) reflect that the last blessed Verse alludes to the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (AS, may God Almighty hasten his noble reappearance) and his world wide justice administration.

In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) on the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question as saying:

"The blessed Verse is revealed concerning the Imam (as) [namely Imam Mahdi, the Twelfth Shi'i Imam] who will rise to imbue the world with Divine Justice, saying that if your Imam entered Occultation and you were unaware of his whereabouts, Who will send you an Imam to expound to you the news of the heavens and the earth and the lawful and the unlawful of Divine Laws?'

Then he said:

'Its exegesis shall finally come to pass."[16]

Numerous traditions have been narrated in this respect, but it is noteworthy that they all serve to provide comparisons. In other words, the

literal sense of the blessed Verse concerns flowing water as the source of life for animate beings, though the esoteric meaning of it is on the existence of the Imam and his all encompassing knowledge and justice which in turn are the sources of the life of society.

It has been mentioned many a time above that the Holy Qur'an possesses numerous exoteric and esoteric meanings, but we lay emphasis on the point that the esoteric meanings of the Qur'an are exclusively known to the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) and it is not permissible to suggest anything of one's own regarding the esoteric meanings of the Qur'anic Verses.

Likewise, what we say concerns the exoteric meanings of the Verses and the esoteric meanings of them are to be solely transmitted on the authority of the Infallibles (as).

Surah al-Mulk opens with Divine Sovereignty and Ownership and closes with His Graciousness which branches off from His Sovereignty and Ownership and thus, the opening and the closing of the blessed Chapter are consistent and harmonious.

O Lord! Grant us Your Graciousness bestowed upon every being and your particular servants. Allow us to drink the elixir of the Divine Guardianship of Your Friends! O Lord! Hasten the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (as), the fountain of the water of life and let those thirsty for his beauty be satisfied by his reappearance.

Notes

1. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan and other exegetic works.
2. Ibid.
3. Tafsir Safi, under the blessed Verse in question.
4. Galaxies consist of series of stars which are also well-known as “the cities of the stars.” Despite their proximity, the distance amongst them at times approximates millions of light years.
5. Usul Kafi; Nur al-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 382.
6. Jami‘ Ahadith al-Shi‘a, vol. 13, p. 2840.
7. 30:2
8. 3:169
9. 40:40
10. 11:49
11. 67:26
12. 7:187
13. Majma‘ al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 33.
14. Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 385.
15. Tafsir Abu al-Futuh Razi, vol. 11, p. 219.
16. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 387.

Surah al-Qalam, Chapter 68

(The Pen)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 52

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has 52 Verses. Some Qur'an exegetes have entertained doubts about the Revelation of all the blessed Verses of the Chapter in Mecca, though the Chapter stands in total harmony with Meccan Chapters in terms of tone and content, since above all, it treats of the Noble Prophet's (S) Prophetic call and confrontation with the foes who regarded him as insane, call to patience and steadfastness, and warning the opponents against Divine torments.

All in all, the topics discussed in the Chapter may be epitomized as follows:

1. The blessed Chapter opens with some of the excellences peculiar to the Messenger of Allah (S), particularly his nobilities, and proceeds to lay emphasis on them.
2. The blessed Chapter proceeds with an enumeration of his foes' vices.
3. Making mention of the people of Paradise actually serves as a warning against the evil polytheists.
4. Mention is also made of miscellaneous material regarding the Day of Resurrection and the disbelievers' torments.
5. The Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) is enjoined to persevere and exercise patience against obdurate foes.
6. Warnings against polytheists.
7. Finally, the blessed Chapter in question closes with the glory of the Holy Qur'an and different conspiracies of enemies against the Noble Prophet (S).

The designation of the Chapter, mentioned by some as Nun, derives from the opening Verse. Though some of the traditions narrated on the merits of the blessed Chapter reflect that the title is Nun wa 'l-Qalam.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that one who recites the Chapter Nun wa 'l-Qalam shall be granted the Divine Rewards in store for those who possess moral nobilities.[1]

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that one who recites the Chapter Nun wa 'l-Qalam in his obligatory or supererogatory ritual prayers shall be safeguarded by God Almighty against indigence for good and shall be secure against the pressures of the grave upon his demise and shall be granted Divine Graciousness.[2] It is worthy of note, however, that being granted such Rewards is subject to honoring religious obligations rather than paying lip service to the same.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 1-4

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ

مَا أَنتَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ بِمَجْنُونٍ

وَإِنَّ لَكَ لَأَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُونٍ

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

1. By Nun, pen and by what they write.

2. You, by the Grace of your Lord, are not insane.

3. And for you shall be a Great and Everlasting Reward.

4. And you possess an exalted character.

The Chapter in question is the only One opening with the detached letter nun. Mention has been made above as to the detached letter, particularly under the opening blessed Verses of Chapters 2, 3, and 7.

What is worthy of note herein is that some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the detached letter is a hypochoristicon of and an allusion to the Arabic Divine Attribute rahman ("the Most Gracious"), though some have considered it as a metalypsis alluding to a river in Paradise.

The blessed Verse 1 contains oaths taken as to two most significant issues in human life, saying:

"By the pen and by what they write."

The oath is quite astonishing, since the object of the oath is seemingly an insignificant point, a piece of reed or something resembling the same and a little black material.

Nonetheless, it is the fountainhead of all human civilizations, advancements, and development of sciences, awakening of thought, formation of religions and schools of thought, and the springhead of human guidance and awareness such that human life thereby falls into pre-historic and historic eras.

Human history begins by the discovery of writing through which man was able to record the story of his life and left behind

"what they write."

The majestic nature of the oath is rendered further evident by according attention to the point that such blessed Verses were revealed when there were no writers in that milieu and the number of the illiterate inhabitants of Mecca, the focal point of devotions, politics, and economy of Hijaz, did not exceed twenty.

Thus, swearing by the pen in such milieu is of a particular majesty.

It would be of interest to make mention of the point that the earliest Verses revealed onto the noble and pure heart of the Noble Prophet (S) on the "Mountain of Light" (Jabal al-Nur) and at the "Cave of Hira" reveal the exalted significance of the pen:

"Recite! In the Name of your Lord Who has created [the world of existence]. He has created man from a clot [a piece of thick coagulated

blood]. Recite! And our Lord is the Greatest Who has taught man by the pen. He has taught him that which he knew not"[3].

The most interesting point is that an illiterate person recited such Words bearing testimony to the truth that the Holy Qur'an is but Divine Revelation.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the Arabic word qalam ("pen, calamus") herein connotes the pen by which archangels record Divine Revelation or the records of human deeds, though the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question is broader in scope and such interpretation may be considered as one of its senses.

Likewise

"what they write"

is also broad in its semantic implications encompassing whatever is recorded of treading the path of guidance and the intellectual, moral, and practical developments of mankind without being restricted to recording Divine Revelation or human deeds.

The blessed Verse 2 treats of the object of the oath, saying that owing to Divine Graciousness, you are not insane, namely those who unfoundedly allege that your are insane are blind in their hearts failing to behold all these Divine Blessings and Bounties conferred upon you, e.g. the Bounties of great intellect and insight, trustworthiness, sincerity, knowledge, Prophetic Call, and infallibility.

They are insane who falsely allege that the possessor of intellect par excellence is insane and thereby distance from the guide and leader of mankind through posing such unfounded allegations.

The blessed Verse 3 is saying that Great and Everlasting Divine Rewards are in store for you, since you persevere on the Straight Path against such unfounded claims and even set your hopes on their deliverance and salvation without experiencing exhaustion consequent to your endeavors made on the path. The Arabic adjectival form mamnun derives from m-n-n ("sever") connoting endless and everlasting Rewards.

The blessed Verse 4 presents another depiction of the Noble Prophet (S), saying that he possesses great and marvelous nobilities of character, unrivalled purity and sincerity, and indescribable patience, perseverance, steadfastness, and forbearance.

He calls people unto obedience to God Almighty, worships Him more than anyone else, forbid people of committing vices, exercises forbearance, providing those harming and hurting him with admonition.

He invokes God Almighty to forgive the sins of those who slander him. He prays to God Almighty to bestow His Guidance upon those who hit him with rocks and cast hot ashes on his head. He is the focal point of love and the springhead of mercy. The Arabic word khuluq, cognate with khilqat ("creation") connotes the inherent purity of heart which becomes the second nature of man.[4]

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 5-7

فَسَتُبْصِرُ وَيُبْصِرُونَ

بِأَييِّكُمُ الْمَفْتُونُ

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن ضَلَّ عَن سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

5. You shall see before long and they shall see as well,

6. Which of you is afflicted with insanity.

7. Your Lord is the Best Knower of him who has gone astray from His Path and He is the Best Knower of those who are guided.

the blessed Verses 5 and 6 serve as Divine Consolations to His Messenger (S) against his foes, saying that you and they shall see soon which of you is insane. The Arabic past participial form maftun, cognate with fitna ("affliction") herein connotes

"afflicted with insanity."

They ascribed such unfounded accusations unto him so that Allah's servants may distance themselves from you, but people are capable of intellection and they will acquaint themselves with your teachings in time.

Then, it will be manifest that such noble teachings have been revealed unto your pure and brilliant heart by God Almighty and it will be known that He bestowed you a great capacity for intellection as well as great knowledge.

Furthermore, you measures and stances and the rapid spread of the Islamic faith in future will reflect that you are the great source of intellect and insight and insane are those bats standing against sun shine and most assuredly such truths shall be further clarified on the Day of Resurrection.

The blessed Verse 7 lays further emphasis on supporting the Noble Prophet (S), saying:

"Your Lord is the Best Knower of him who has gone astray from His Path and He is the Best Knower of those who are guided."

The point is that God Almighty is Omniscient of His Path and thereby the Noble Prophet (S) is assured that he is on the Path of Guidance and his foes are in error.

It is narrated through a sound transmission chain that when the Quraysh noticed that the Noble Prophet (S) accorded precedence to 'Ali (as) over others, they talked evil of the latter saying that Muhammad was afflicted with insanity because of him. Thus, the Chapter in question was revealed in which God Almighty took an oath that the Noble Prophet (S) was not insane.

Further,

"those who have gone astray from His Path"

alludes to the Qurayshi foes of the Noble Prophet (S) who uttered such unfounded claims.

The clause

"He is the Best Knower of those who are guided"

alludes to 'Ali (as).[5]

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 8-11

فَلَا تُطِعِ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ

وَدُّوا لَوْ تُدْهِنُ فَيُدْهِنُونَ

وَلَا تُطِعْ كُلَّ حَلَّافٍ مَّهِينٍ

هَمَّازٍ مَّشَّاءٍ بِنَمِيمٍ

8. So obey you not the deniers.

9. They wish that you compromised with them, so that they would compromise with you [a compromise adulterated by deviation from the Straight Path].

10. And obey not everyone who swears much and is a liar or is worthless.

11. One very inquisitive of other people's faults, a slanderer,

Making mention of the Noble Prophet's (S) nobilities of character in the preceding blessed Verses, his foes' vices are being treated herein such that a comparison of the two may shed further light on the question, enjoining him not to follow those who deny God Almighty, His Messenger (S), the Day of Resurrection, and the Islamic faith, since they are alluring and erring people transgressing all the Bounds set by the Truth as following such erring people entails but error and misfortune.

The blessed Verse 9 makes mention of their efforts to make the Noble Prophet compromise with them, saying that they wish that you made compromise with them so that they act likewise. Making compromise herein connotes neglecting some of Divine Commands for their sake.

Qur'an exegetes maintain that the blessed Verse was revealed when the chiefs of Mecca called the Noble Prophet (S) to follow the beliefs of their ancestors, namely polytheism and idolatry, but God Almighty forbade him to obey them.[6]

It is also reported that Walid ibn Mughayra, one of the prominent chieftains of Quraysh, offered many possessions to the Noble Prophet (S) and swore that if he forwent his Prophetic Call, the possessions would be his.[7]

The tone of the blessed Verses in question as well as the material incorporated in historical sources clearly reflect that when the blind hearted polytheists noticed the rapid dissemination of the Islamic faith, they made attempts to make compromise with the Noble Prophet (S) and urge him to act likewise, as the followers of falsehood acted accordingly down the centuries, offering great possessions, worldly exalted positions, and beautiful women at times and thereby compared the Noble Prophet (S)'s exalted spirit with their limited and worthless ambitions.

The Noble Prophet (S) is enjoined many a time in the Holy Qur'an to accord no attention to their deviations and empty promises. The blessed Verse 10 enumerates the vices committing each of which leads to disobedience to God Almighty, warning him against following anyone who takes many an oath and is worthless.

The Arabic intensive adjectival form hallaf is applied to one who takes many oaths for any significant or insignificant matter and it such people are usually insincere in taking oaths.

The Arabic adjectival form

mahin ("worthless, lowly"),

cognate with mahana ("worthlessness, lowliness"), is taken by some Qur'an exegetes to imply thoughtless, lying, or evil people.

The blessed Verse 11 provides further depiction of such people saying that they are very inquisitive and slandering. The Arabic intensified adjectival form hammaz, deriving from h-m-z ("backbite, slander") is applied to one who indulges in slandering others. The Arabic phrase mashsha' bi-namim is applied to one who goes about slandering and backbiting people and thereby causes discord and enmity. The intensive forms indicate going to extremes in committing such vices.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 12-14

مَّنَّاعٍ لِّلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ أَثِيمٍ

عُتُلٍّ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ زَنِيمٍ

أَن كَانَ ذَا مَالٍ وَبَنِينَ

12. One going to extremes in hindering the good, wrong doing, sinfulness,

13. Moreover vengeful, avaricious, coarse in manners, and notorious.

14. May it never come that you follow him owing to his affluence and offspring.

It is incumbent upon believers to disclose all the aspects of the foes so that such disclosure may lead to the people's salvation. Approximately ten characteristics are enumerated in these blessed Verses such that if someone has one of these vices, it is incumbent upon believers to distance from them, let alone those possessing all of these vile traits.

Thus, the blessed Verse 12 enjoins people to distance from one who makes many an effort to hinder the good and he is wrong doing and sinful. Such person not only does no righteous good deed, but also impedes other from doing good deeds. Furthermore, he transgresses Divine Bounds and rights bestowed upon people by God Almighty and his soul is adulterated by all sins such that committing sins is his second nature.

The blessed Verse 13 is saying that such person is gluttonous and notorious. He intends to avail himself of everything but impedes others from the same. Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the Arabic adjectival form 'utull is applied to one who is bad tempered, vengeful, coarse in manners, and shameless.

The Arabic intensive adjective zanim is applied to someone whose descent is unbeknownst connoting "born out of wedlock."

The Arabic phrase

ba'd dhalik ("moreover, besides, furthermore")

indicates that these two vices are more abominable that the preceding ones, as suggested by some of the Qur'an exegetes. It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying that 'utull indicates grave disbelief and zanim is applied to one who is avaricious in his disbelief.[8]

At any rate, God Almighty makes such depiction of the liars and their vices, seemingly unparalleled elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, reflecting the vile characteristics of the opponents of the Islamic faith, the Holy Qur'an, and the Noble Prophet (S). Such people were liars, worthless, inquisitive, slanderous, disobedient, sinners, and of unbeknownst descent. They may not be expected to be otherwise.

The blessed Verse 14 is a warning saying:

"May it never come that you follow him owing to his affluence and offspring."

The Noble Prophet (S) indubitably never followed them, but theses blessed Verses lay emphasis on the point that so long as his doctrines and practices are not revealed to everyone, friends and foes are not expected to do accordingly.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 15-16

إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

سَنَسِمُهُ عَلَى الْخُرْطُومِ

15. When Our Verses are recited unto him, he says: "Tales of the ancients."

16. We shall brand him on the snout!

The former blessed Verse reflects the reaction of such people with such worthless traits against Divine Signs, saying:

"When Our Verses are recited unto him, he says: 'Tales of the ancients.'"

It is under such vile pretext that they distance from Divine Signs and thereby consigns them to oblivion and seduces others to deviate from the Straight Path; as a consequence of which it is incumbent upon the believers to refrain from following such people. It further completes forbidding the believers to follow them.

The latter blessed Verse unveils one of the torments to be inflicted on this group, saying that you shall behold before long that We shall brand them on the snout! Such eloquent expression reflects their utmost humility, since the Arabic word khurtum implies a reference to pigs and elephants.

It is worthy of note, however, that the word nose connotes magnanimity in the Arabic tongue. There is an idiom in the Persian language saying: "rub one's nose against the ground" connoting humiliating someone.

Furthermore, animals are branded but their snouts are not branded even. Such eloquent blessed Verses indicate that God Almighty humiliates such vain, disobedient, and wrong doing people and disgraces them before everyone such that others may take a lesson out of their dire fate.

The history of the Islamic faith bears witness to the same such that such obdurate opponents confronting the dissemination of the Islamic faith were so humiliated and disgraced that their humiliation and disgrace were unparalleled. Furthermore, further disgrace and humility are in store for such people on the Day of Resurrection.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"Do you want me to inform you of your most vicious people amongst you? Those who go to extremes in slandering and backbiting, cause discord amongst friends, and find faults with innocent people."[9]

According to another Prophetic tradition, the Noble Prophet (S) enjoined his companions to refrain from quoting him when the quote causes suspicion in any of his companions, since he would like to meet them with a pure heart.[10]

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 17-20

إِنَّا بَلَوْنَاهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ إِذْ أَقْسَمُوا لَيَصْرِمُنَّهَا مُصْبِحِينَ

وَلَا يَسْتَثْنُونَ

فَطَافَ عَلَيْهَا طَائِفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ

فَأَصْبَحَتْ كَالصَّرِيمِ

17. Indeed, We have tried them as We tried the people of the garden when they swore to pluck the fruits of the garden in the morning [without the poor being aware of it],

18. Without leaving anything aside.

19. Then, a [nightly] torment was afflicted on all of their garden while they were asleep.

20. So, the garden became black by the morning like a pitch dark night.

In vein with the discussion raised in the preceding blessed Verses concerning the vain affluent who owing to their affluence and children turn away from everything, the blessed Verses in question serve as an allusion to some affluent people who had a verdant garden, but they trod the path of perdition due to their obduracy. The story was seemingly well-known at the time, hence the allusion to the story.

The blessed Verse 17 is saying that we tried them as we did the owners of the garden. Qur'an exegetes are not unanimous regarding the location of the garden, whether it was in the Yemen close to the populous city of San'a, or in Ethiopia, amongst the Children of Israel, or in Syria or in Ta'if, though the majority of the exegetes maintain that it was in the Yemen.

According to the story, the garden belonged to a believing old man who made use of its revenues to meet his needs and gave away the rest in charity. Nonetheless, after his demise, his children said that they were further entitled to the revenues since they had numerous children failing to follow their father's practice of expending the surplus on charitable means.

Thus, they intended to deprive the needy of the produce and their dire fate is reflected in these blessed Verses, saying that we tried them when they swore to pick the fruits early in the morning unbeknownst to the needy.

The blessed Verse 18 is saying that they did not leave anything for the needy. Such decision reflects that they did not act according owing to their need, but they thereby reflected their niggardliness and weak belief, since inasmuch as one happens to be in need, he may allocate a portion of the produce of a lucrative orchard to the needy.

The blessed Verse 19 proceeds to say that when they were asleep at night, they were afflicted by an encompassing Divine torment, such that a deadly lightning and a burning fire consumed the verdant orchard and darkened it like pitch black nights leaving behind but some ashes.

The Arabic word ta'if, cognate with tawaf ("circumambulation") denotes one who circumambulate something and at times connotes some affliction inflicted on someone at night. The Arabic word sarim denotes "separating" but herein connotes "pitch black night; fruitless tree; black ashes."

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 21-25

فَتَنَادَوْا مُصْبِحِينَ

أَنِ اغْدُوا عَلَىٰ حَرْثِكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ صَارِمِينَ

فَانطَلَقُوا وَهُمْ يَتَخَافَتُونَ

أَن لَّا يَدْخُلَنَّهَا الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكُم مِّسْكِينٌ

وَغَدَوْا عَلَىٰ حَرْدٍ قَادِرِينَ

21. Then, they called out one to another as soon as the morning broke.

22. [Saying:] "Go to your tilth in the morning, if you would pluck the fruits."

23. So they departed, conversing in secret low tones [saying]:

24. "No poor man shall enter upon you into it today."

25. And they went in the morning with a strong intention, thinking that they have power [to prevent the poor taking anything of the fruits therefrom].

The blessed Verse 21 is saying that at any rate the owners of the garden, imagining that the fruits of their orchard are ripe to be picked, called onto one another. The blessed Verse 22 says that they asked each other to proceed if they intend to pick their fruits. The Arabic word aghdu, cognate with ghadwa, implies the break of the day and the word breakfast is applied to the food eaten in the morning.

The blessed Verse 23 is saying that they proceeded toward their orchard whispering onto one another.

The blessed Verse 24 says that they said onto one another:

"Be careful lest a man in need approaches you!"

They whispered onto each other lest the needy might hear them and ask them for some meager amount of fruit to quench their hunger. The needy seemingly expected some fruit every year owing to the charity of their father. Nonetheless, such niggardly and unworthy children moved so furtively that no one learns that it was time to pick up fruits.

The blessed Verse 25 is saying that that proceeded toward their orchard at day break with all their might to turn away from the needy. The Arabic word hard connotes impeding wrathfully. Thus, they raged at the expectations of the needy and made up their minds to exercise all their might to ward off their requests. The Arabic word is also applied to the years when there is no precipitation.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 26-30

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهَا قَالُوا إِنَّا لَضَالُّونَ

بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُومُونَ

قَالَ أَوْسَطُهُمْ أَلَمْ أَقُل لَّكُمْ لَوْلَا تُسَبِّحُونَ

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ

فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ يَتَلَاوَمُونَ

26. But when they entered the garden and beheld it, they said: "Indeed, we have gone astray."

27. [Then they said:] "Nay! We are totally deprived of everything!"

28. The wisest among them said: "Did I not tell you: why do you not glorify Allah.

29. They said: "Glorified is Our Lord! Verily, we were wrong-doers."

30. Then, they turned to each other, blaming one another.

These blessed Verses proceed with the story of the owners of the orchard as mentioned in the preceding blessed Verses. Aspiring to pick up their fruits unbeknownst to the needy, they intended to impede them from availing themselves of Divine Bounties.

They departed at daybreak, unaware of the lightning that had turned the orchard into ashes when they were asleep at night time. The blessed Verses reflect that when they beheld their orchard, they found it in such a mess that they thought it were not their orchard and they had lost their way.

The Arabic plural adjectival form

dhallun ("the astray")

may connote that they had seemingly lost their way to the orchard or to the Truth, as suggested by some Qur'an exegetes, though the former sense seeming further befitting herein.

The blessed Verse 27 reflects that they regarded themselves as the true needy who aspired to deprive those in need from the produce. Their attempt at such impediment led to their deprivation from the material gains as well as the spiritual blessings accrued through expending in Cause of Allah and helping those in need.

The blessed Verse 28 is saying that the wisest of them at the time said:

"Did I not ask you to glorify Allah and remember His Majesty and refrain from disobeying Him and give thanks by helping the needy by expending your possessions. However, you failed to hearken to my words and met such dire fate.

The blessed Verse reflects that one of them believed in God Almighty and warned them against niggardliness and avarice, but others failed to listen to him. However, following the incident he reproached them with further convincing logical arguments.

According to the blessed Verse 29, they experienced a rude awakening and confessed to their sins, saying that God Almighty is glorified and they were indubitably wrong doers and wronged themselves as well as others. The Arabic word awsat in the preceding blessed Verse connotes one who is moderate in terms of reason and sensibility.

The interrogative clause

"Why do you not glorify God Almighty"

alludes to the point that all righteous good deeds stem from belief in God Almighty, knowing and glorifying Him. However, some exegetes maintain that the Arabic verbal noun tasbih herein connotes giving thanks for the Bounties.

The blessed Verse 30 reflects that the brothers addressed each other and censured one another. Apparently, while confessing to his flaws, each of them tried to hold others accountable and severely rebuked others regarding

others as the main cause of the calamity as he was not that unaware of God Almighty and justice.

That is the fate of all the wrong doers who get entangled with Divine torment, confessing to their sins but holding others responsible for their own afflictions. Nonetheless, it is goes without saying that they are all accountable for the misdeeds and vices.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 31-33

قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا طَاغِينَ

عَسَىٰ رَبُّنَا أَن يُبْدِلَنَا خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا رَاغِبُونَ

كَذَٰلِكَ الْعَذَابُ وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

31. They said: "Woe to us! We were disobedient.

32. We hope that our Lord will [forgive us and] give us in exchange something better. Truly, we turn to our Lord.

33. Such is Divine chastisement, but truly that of the Hereafter is greater if they but knew.

The blessed Verse 31 is saying that when they noticed the depth of their dire fate, they cried:

"Woe unto us!"

They had previously confessed to their wrong doing, since wrong doers may acknowledge the principle, though he may do wrong owing to being overwhelmed by his concupiscent desires. Au contraire, the disobedient never follow the rules nor does he acknowledge it. Wrong doing may herein connote doing wrong to oneself and disobedience may imply transgressing the rights of others.

It is worthy of note, however, that when arabs face a grave affliction, they say

wayla ("woe").

According to the blessed Verse 32, upon such rude awakening and confessing to their sins, they turned toward God Almighty saying that may their Lord forgive their sins and provide them with a better orchard, since they have turned towards Him, set their hopes on His Pure Essence, and invoke Him to render them Assistance in their hardships. It is narrated in some traditions that they sincerely repented and God Almighty pardoned them and provided them with a better orchard.

The blessed Verse 33 draws a general conclusion saying that thus is Divine torment and that in the hereafter is more severe than that if but they knew. Furthermore, the story reflects that there is an intimate relationship between committing sins and being deprived of Divine Sustenance and Provision.

In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) as saying:

"Man at times commits a sin and is thereby deprived of his Divine Provision."

Then, the noble Imam (as) recited the blessed Verse in question.[11] It is narrated from Ibn 'Abbas as saying that the relationship between committing sins and being deprived of Divine Provision is crystal clear such that God Almighty makes mention of the same in the Chapter in question.[12]

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 34-38

إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

أَفَنَجْعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ كَالْمُجْرِمِينَ

مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ

أَمْ لَكُمْ كِتَابٌ فِيهِ تَدْرُسُونَ

إِنَّ لَكُمْ فِيهِ لَمَا تَخَيَّرُونَ

34. For the God fearing are gardens abounding in Bounties with their Lord.

35. Shall We then treat the believers like the disbelievers?

36. What is the matter with you? How do you judge?

37. Or do you have a book wherein you learn,

38. What you choose belongs to you.

The accounts of the good and the evil are juxtaposed in the Holy Qur'an such that such comparisons may help people with a better understanding of their fates. Such method is quite impressive in terms of education.

Likewise, following an account of the dire fate of the owners of the orchard in the preceding blessed Verses, mention is made of the exalted position of the God fearing and the Bounties in store for them.

The blessed Verse 34 is saying:

"For the God fearing are gardens abounding in Bounties with their Lord."

Such gardens abound in whatever imaginable Bounty.

However, some polytheists and the vain affluent claiming that they are quite at comfort in this world and will enjoy the same state in the Hereafter are addressed in the blessed Verse 35 saying:

"Shall We then treat the believers [obedient to Allah] like the disbelievers?"

The following blessed Verse says:

"What is the matter with you? How do you judge?"

Anyone sound in mind readily acknowledges that the fates the just and the wrong doer, the obedient and the sinners, the sacrificing and the vain are not on a par before God Almighty Whose Acts are Wise and Well-Measured. Such vain people imagine that the world and the Hereafter belong to them.

The blessed Verse 37 further adds that if your reason failed to lead you to such understanding, could you produce any argument to substantiate your claim. Do you have a book to learn something from it?

The blessed Verse 38 says:

"Does your choice belong to you?"

Do you expect wrong doers like you to be on a par with the believing Muslims? Your false claim is neither reasonable nor is it mentioned in any authoritative book.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 39-41

أَمْ لَكُمْ أَيْمَانٌ عَلَيْنَا بَالِغَةٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ۙ إِنَّ لَكُمْ لَمَا تَحْكُمُونَ

سَلْهُمْ أَيُّهُم بِذَٰلِكَ زَعِيمٌ

أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ فَلْيَأْتُوا بِشُرَكَائِهِمْ إِن كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ

39. Or have you oaths from Us, reaching to the Day of Resurrection that yours will be what you choose?

40. Ask them which of them will guarantee such thing?

41. Or have they partners whom they associate in partnership with Allah who intercede with Allah on their behalf? Then, let them bring their partners if they are truthful!

The blessed Verse 39 is saying that you may not produce logical and narrational arguments as to the veracity of your claims. Have we made a covenant with you which is valid to the Day of Resurrection that justifies what entails your benefits?

Who may claim to have made a covenant with God Almighty that He obeys to his inclinations and He unconditionally provides him with privileges such that sinners be ranked with believers?

The blessed Verse 40 proceeds with posing such questions to them and thereby leaves no room for such unfounded justifications, saying:

"Ask them which of them will guarantee that God Almighty will provide them with whatever they wish?"

It is in the last stage of such strange investigation that the blessed Verse 41 inquires whether they have objects of worship who intercede with God Almighty on their behalf and render them support. If they are true in their claims, they may present them.

Could they produce any argument to substantiate that such worthless and inanimate objects are associated with God Almighty in partnership?

Thus, the blessed Verses in question lead us to the conclusion that to substantiate their claim as to being a on a par with or even superior to believers, they have to make recourse to one of the four means: to provide arguments based on reason, heavenly Scriptures, Divine Covenant, or intercession and testimony of intercessors and witnesses. Their claims are unfounded since they may not provide affirmative answers to such questions.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 42-43

يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَن سَاقٍ وَيُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ

خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ۖ وَقَدْ كَانُوا يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ وَهُمْ سَالِمُونَ

42. Remember the Day when the shin shall be laid bare out of fear and they shall be called to prostrate themselves, but they shall not be able to do likewise.

43. Then, their eyes will be cast down and ignominy will cover them. They used to be called to prostrate themselves, while they were healthy and good; however, they lack such power any longer.

The idiomatic expression

"the shin shall be laid bare" (yukshafu 'an saq-in)

connotes desperation. It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that the mouths shall be sealed on that Day; one shall be totally enwrapped in fear; eyes shall stare; and souls shall reach the throats.[13]

The blessed Verse 42 is saying:

"Remember the Day when the shin shall be laid bare out of fear and they shall be called to prostrate themselves, but they shall not be able to do likewise."

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the expression implies fear and gravity of the matter, since it was common practice amongst the Arabs to lay their shins bare against hard tasks and make their utmost effort to remove the impediments.

Everyone shall be called to prostrate themselves and show humbleness before God Almighty on the Day of Resurrection. Believers shall prostrate themselves, but sinners shall be unable to do likewise, since the vices deeply rooted in them in this world shall reveal themselves impeding them to prostrate themselves before Divine Pure Essence. In this vein, it is narrated from Imam 'Ali (as) that Divine Light shall be unveiled on the Day of Resurrection.

Impressed by its Majesty and Glory, believers shall prostrate themselves, though hypocrites shall be unable to do likewise.[14]

The blessed Verse 43 is saying that then, their eyes will be cast down out of shame and regret and ignominy and disgrace will totally enwrap them. Having been tried at the Divine Tribunal, their eyes will be cast down and humility enwraps them.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that they used to be called to prostrate themselves, while they were healthy and good; however, they lack such power any longer and thus reflect their arrogance and disobedience on the Day of Resurrection.

How may they prostrate themselves on that Day? It is needless to say that people are called in this world to prostrate themselves through listening to ritual including congregation prayer calls. The Qur'anic Verses as well as the traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) bear witness to such call addressed to all mankind.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 44-45

فَذَرْنِي وَمَن يُكَذِّبُ بِهَٰذَا الْحَدِيثِ ۖ سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُم مِّنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

وَأُمْلِي لَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ كَيْدِي مَتِينٌ

44. Then, leave Me Alone with those who belie this. We shall lead them to torment in time from directions they know not.

45. And I will grant them a respite, since My Plans are well-measured and precise.

Addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse 44 says:

"Then, leave Me Alone with those who belie this Word, namely the Holy Qur'an, so that I chastise them."

In such strong Warning, the All-Invincible Allah is asking His Messenger (as) to leave Him Alone with such obdurate and disobedient deniers so that He afflicts them by the torments which they deserve.

We must bear in mind that such Words are uttered by the Omnipotent Lord. It is also worthy of note that such Warning entails consolation and support for the Noble Prophet (S) and the believers against the conspiracies of the enemies of the Islamic faith. The blessed Verse further adds that God Almighty shall lead them to torments before long while they shall be caught unaware.

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying that committing sins and leading comfortable lives serve as tokens of Divine torments to be inflicted in time.[15] Belying the Holy Qur'an entails grave torments, since God Almighty asks His Messenger to leave them to Him.

In the blessed Verse 47, God Almighty says that He will grant them a respite and He will not hastily inflict them with torments, since His Plans are well-measured and His torments are excruciating.

The expression

"I will grant them a respite" (umli lahum)

implies that God Almighty never hastily inflict wrong doers with torments, since one who makes haste is afraid of losing opportunities.

However, the Omnipotent Lord never loses opportunities to fulfill His Will. At any rate, it is a warning to all wrong doers and the disobedient against vanity caused by security and leading comfortable lives, but they have to expect Divine grave torments to be inflicted upon them at any time.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 46-47

أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُم مِّن مَّغْرَمٍ مُّثْقَلُونَ

أَمْ عِندَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ

46. Or is it that you ask them a wage so that they are heavily burdened with debt?

47. Or that they are aware of the unseen so that they can write it down and pass it onto others?

Resuming the investigations on the wrong doings of the polytheists and sinners, the blessed Verses in question pose two more questions:

"Or is it that you ask them a wage so that they are heavily burdened with debt? Or that they are aware of the unseen so that they can write it down and pass it onto others?"

In other words, if they refrain from listening to you under the pretext that acting likewise entails bearing heavy costs and they cannot afford them, they are lying since you, like other Prophets, expect no remuneration for imparting your Prophetic Call.

The Arabic word maghram, cognate with gharama, implies the losses incurred without having committed any wrong doing. The Arabic word mathqal, derived from th-q-l, implies heaviness and gravity. Thus, beliers are denied of further pretexts.

The blessed Verse 47 proceeds with the discussion by asking: "Or that they are aware of the unseen so that they can write it down and pass it onto others?" They claim that such secrets reveal that they are on a par with the believers.

It is a remote possibility to which disbelievers may take recourse. It is in this vein that the Holy Qur'an rejects their unfounded claims as per which they say that they have access to the invisible world through soothsayers and the like of them and they are thereby aware of the secrets of the unseen and they may write them down and pass them onto others.

Thus, they falsely claim that they are on a par with the believers or even superior to them. They apparently produced no such claims and the question is rather rhetorical. Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that it is an allusion to the Preserved Tablet (lawh mahfuth) and predestination is herein intended by "writing," though such possibility is too remote, since they never claim to have predestination and the Preserved Tablet under their sway.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 48-50

فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُن كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوتِ إِذْ نَادَىٰ وَهُوَ مَكْظُومٌ

لَّوْلَا أَن تَدَارَكَهُ نِعْمَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ لَنُبِذَ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ مَذْمُومٌ

فَاجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَجَعَلَهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

48. Thus, wait patiently for the Command of your Lord and be not like the Companion of the Fish [Jonah], when he made haste in invoking us to inflict his people with chastisement and was entangled with the chastisement of abandonment of priorities (tark ula) when he cried out unto Lord while he was in deep sorrow.

49. Had not a Grace from his Lord reached him, he would indeed have been cast out [of the stomach of the fish] while he was to be blamed.

50. But, his Lord chose him and made him one of the righteous.

The obduracy and insensibility of the polytheists and the enemies of the Islamic faith imbued the Noble Prophet's (S) heart at times such that he was on the verge of cursing them. God Almighty consoles His Messenger and bids him to be patient and wait for Divine Command to pave the path for his and his companions' victory and the total defeat of his enemies.

He is asked to make no haste and be aware that the respites accorded to them are a kind of chastisement in time. Thus, the Muslims' victory is intended by Divine Command (hukm rabbika). Some Qur'an exegetes, however, maintain that the blessed Verse is bidding the Noble Prophet (S) to be patient and remain steadfast in imparting the Divine Message.

The blessed Verse forbids the Noble Prophet (S) to be like Jonah (as) who made haste in invoking God Almighty to inflict his disobedient people with torment and was thereby entangled with the chastisement for abandoning priorities calling onto God Almighty while he was in the stomach of the fish and his heart was imbued with sorrow.

The same invocation is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[16]:

"But he cried through the darkness, saying: 'there is no god, but You Alone."

Thus, Jonah (Dhu 'l-Nun) called unto his Lord from the shadows saying:

"Glorified are You! Truly, I have been of the wrong doers,"

thereby confessing to having abandoned the priorities and invoking God Almighty for forgiveness.

It is worthy of note that the Arabic past participial for makthum, derived from k-th-m, denotes throat and the Arabic kathm siqa' is used in the sense of tying the mouth of the leather bottle after its being filled.

The Arabic present participial form kathim is applied to those who suppress their intense anger and sorrow. The word kathm may also connote confinement, thus makthum may herein imply being imbued with anger and sorrow or being confined in the stomach of the fish, though the former sense seems to better fit the context.

The blessed Verse 49 is saying that had Divine Bounty and Grace not reached him, he would have been cast out of the stomach of the fish while he was worthy of being blamed. It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[17] that finally Jonah was cast on a desert, termed as 'ara', while his repentance had been accepted by God Almighty and he was granted Divine Grace and he was never blameworthy.

Thus, the blessed Verse 50 is saying that his Lord chose him and made him one of the righteous and vested him once more with the obligation of guiding his people. He returned to his people and they all believed in him and were granted Divine Bounties for quite some time.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 51-52

وَإِن يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَيُزْلِقُونَكَ بِأَبْصَارِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَيَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُ لَمَجْنُونٌ

وَمَا هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

51. Those who disbelieve would almost cause your death with their eyes when they hear this Qur'an and they say: "He is insane!"

52. But this Qur'an is but a Reminder to all the worlds.

The closing Verses of the Chapter resumes the point mentioned in the opening of the Chapter regarding the false ascription of insanity to the Noble Prophet (S) by his enemies, saying the disbelievers would almost cause his death with their eyes upon hearing the Qur'anic Verses and falsely claim that he is insane.

The Arabic verbal form la-yuzliqunaka, derived from z-l-q ("tumble down, fall down") denotes that they would make you slip, namely cause your death. There are some Qur'an exegetes maintaining that upon hearing the Majestic Qur'anic Verses, the Noble Prophet's (S) enemies get into such rage and look daggers at him as if they would intend to make him slip and destroy him.

Some hold that the blessed Verse makes a reference to the evil eye in which some people believe and say that some eyes have certain secret powers through which they may cause ailment and death. Some also maintain that the expression connotes wrathful looks, though such light headed people are unaware of the truth and accord contradictory ascriptions to him.

The last blessed Verse of the Chapter is saying that this Qur'an is but an awakening and a reminder to the worlds whose teachings and warnings are enlightening, its illustrations are meaningful, its encouragements and glad tidings are promising to the spirit and all in all it awakens the neglectful and reminds them of their obligations.

How one may falsely claim that the Messenger of Allah is insane? The Arabic word dhikr denotes reminder as the Holy Qur'an serves as a Reminder to all. However, some Qur'an exegetes take it in the sense of sharaf ("eminence, dignity, glory, honor") holding that the Holy Qur'an is a source of eminence to all the world, though the former sense seems to better fit into the context.

O Lord! Protect us from the evil of evil doers and the enemies' deceits!

O Lord! Grant us steadfastness and forbearance in whose light we may obtain Your Satisfaction!

O Lord! Bestow upon us the capacity of making use of Your Bounties prior to their being substituted by deprivation consequent to ingratitude!

Amen! O Lord of the worlds!

Notes

1. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 387.
2. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 330.
3. 96:1-5
4. Numerous traditions and narratives may be found in exegetic and historical sources concerning the moral nobilities of the Prophet (S), e.g. his forgiving, love, kindness, sacrifice, and fear of God Almighty treating which lies beyond our exegetic discussions.

However, mention may be made of a tradition narrated from Husayn ibn 'Ali (as) as saying that his father, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), had provided him with details on the Noble Prophet's (S) nobilities of character. Some of these nobilities will be mentioned hereunder. The Noble Prophet (S) was of good tempered and of a good disposition.

He always smiled. He was never rough, cruel, aggressive, and vile of speech. He was not a flatterer nor did he found faults with others. He never left anyone in despair but whoever came unto him returned with satisfaction. He neither entered into disputes nor was he prolix in speech nor did he reproach anyone. He was neither inquisitive nor did he uttered any words unless he had set his hopes on Divine Rewards.

His speech was so impressive that others were silent and they never uttered a word unless he became silent. People never entered into disputes before him. If a stranger who did not know him talked coarsely asking for something, he exercised patience and toleration and said unto his companions to meet the demands of the needy.

He never interrupted anyone unless he stopped talking.

(Ma'ani al-Akhbar, p. 83)

Without such moral nobilities and excellences, those backward pre-Islamic Arabs with their coarseness and inflexibility would never embrace the Islamic faith, but they would abandon him. It would be befitting to revive such Islamic moral nobilities and all Muslims be a beam of light reflecting the Noble Prophet's (S) moral excellences.

Numerous Islamic traditions have been narrated in this respect as to the Noble Prophet (S) and the obligations incumbent upon all Muslims, though for the sake of brevity, we content ourselves with making mention of a few traditions.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S), saying:

"It is my Prophetic Call to perfect moral excellences".

(Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 333)

Thus, one of the goals behind the Prophetic Call is to perfect moral nobilities.

According to a prophetic tradition, it is through moral excellences and the believers attain to such degree that they worship God Almighty at night and fasts during the day.

(Majma' al-Bayan, ibid.)

According to another Prophetic tradition, nothing shall be rewarded on the Day of Resurrection like good temper (ibid.).

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that the most beloved of you before God Almighty are those who are of good temper and disposition, those who are humble, associate with others and people are also willing to associate with them and the most detested of you before God Almighty are the slanderers who separate the brethren and are inquisitive to find faults with the sinless (ibid.).

It is also narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that above all, fear of God Almighty and having a good disposition leads people to Paradise.

(Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 1, p. 410)

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that the best of the believers are those who excel in faith through possessing noble excellences.

(Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 8, p. 50)

It is narrated from Imam 'Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha (as) as saying that the Noble Prophet said:

"it is incumbent upon you to improve your nobilities, since they lead you to Paradise and refrain from possessing an evil tempter, since it leads to the Fire."

(Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 108)

The traditions narrated in this respect clearly reflect that possessing a good temper is the key to Paradise, leading to Divine Satisfaction, serving as a token of the power of faith, and on a par with daily and nightly prayers and devotions. Traditions narrated in this respect abound in Islamic sources.

The author of Tafsir al-Mizan devotes approximately 27 pages (vol. 6, p. 183) to the Noble Prophet's (S) moral virtues, excellences, and nobilities as reflected in his biographical accounts. Further traditions and details in this respect are to be found in tradition sources.

5. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 334, where Tabarsi narrates the tradition on the authority of a transmission chain attested in the Sunni sources.
6. Fakhr Razi's exegetic work, vol. 30, p. 85; Maraghi's exegetic work, vol. 29, p. 31.
7. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 10, p. 671.
8. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
9. Usul Kafi, vol. 2, Bab al-Hamir ("Chapter on Conscience"), tradition 1.
10. Abu Da'ud's Sunan; Tirmidhi's Sahih; Tafsir fi Hilal al-Qur'an.
11. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalay, vol. 5, p. 395, tradition 44.
12. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 20, p. 37.
13. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
14. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 397.
15. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
16. 21:87
17. 37:49

Surah al-Haqqa, Chapter 69

(The Inevitable)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 52

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has 52 Verses. The designation of the Chapter derives from the opening Verse denoting the inevitable. The blessed Chapter mainly treats of Resurrection, its attributes, and three designations of it, the Inevitable (al-haqqa), the Striking Hour (al-qari'a), and the Event (al-waqi'a), and those of the Hell, the Paradise, and the people of the Hell.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying that one who recites Surah al-Haqqa, the burden of his sins shall be lessened.[1]

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that it is incumbent upon Muslims to recite Surah al-Haqqa many a time, since its recitation in ritual obligatory and supererogatory prayers serves as a token of believing in God Almighty and His Messenger (S) and whoever recites it, his faith shall be intact until he meets his Lord's Countenance,[2] provided that he acts upon his religious obligations.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

الْحَاقَّةُ

مَا الْحَاقَّةُ

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحَاقَّةُ

1. The Inevitable [Day]!

2. What an Inevitable Day it is.

3. And what will make you know what the Inevitable is?

The Arabic word al-haqqa, cognate with haqq ("truth"), implies something which is inevitable. The word is a designation of the Day of Resurrection, since it is something truly Inevitable. The majority of Qur'an exegetes maintain that the word implies the Day of Resurrection, since it is indubitable inevitable.

The similar designation, the Event is also attested in Chapter 56 and the blessed Verse 16 of the Chapter in question. They all reflect the inevitability of that Great Day. The expression "the Inevitable" implies the Greatness of that Day. Likewise, it is used in common usage when it is said that so and so is such a man, namely the description of his humanity is indescribable.

The expression

"what an Inevitable Day it is"

lays further emphasis on the Greatness of the Events to happen on that Great Day, such that the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) is addressed by saying that he is unaware of the qualities of that Day. It is true, since the prisoners in this world like us are incapable of understanding the Events to occur on the Day of Resurrection in the same manner that understanding the affairs of this world in incomprehensible to the fetus in the mother's womb.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the word al-haqqa implies the torments with which obdurate sinners and the vain disobedient are inflicted of a sudden. It is worthy of note, however, that the contextual meaning of following Verses stand in further harmony with the excruciating and destructive torments inflicted upon the peoples of 'Àd, Thamud, Lot, and Pharaoh.

In his exegetic work, 'Ali ibn Ibrahim also says that the word serves as a warning against sending down Divine torments like the one mentioned regarding the people of Pharaoh elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[3]:

"So Allah saved him from the evils that they plotted against him, while an evil torment (haqq) encompassed Pharaoh's people."[4]

Surah al-Haqqa - Verse 4

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ وَعَادٌ بِالْقَارِعَةِ

4. Thamud and 'Àd peoples denied Divine destructive torment!

The blessed Verse in question treats of the dire fates of the people who denied the Day of Resurrection and sending down Divine torment, saying that the peoples of Thamud and 'Àd belied Divine destructive torments.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verse 5

فَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَأُهْلِكُوا بِالطَّاغِيَةِ

5. As for Thamud, they were destroyed by an incontrollable torment!

the people of Thamud inhabited a mountainous region between Hijaz and Syria. Prophet Salih was Divinely appointed to call them onto obedience to God Almighty, though they never believed and rose against him and even asked him to send down the promised torment if he was true in his Prophetic Call.

Then, a destructive lightning was sent down on them. Their firmly built palaces and mansions trembled in a few moments and destroyed them all and their dead bodies were cast on the ground. It is worthy of note that the Holy Qur'an mentions an incontrollable torment as the cause behind their destruction.

Such incontrollable torment (al-taghiya) is also mentioned as

"earthquake" (rajfa)

in 7:78,

"lightning" (sa'iqa)

in 41:13, and

"loud cry" (sayha)

in 11:67 which all imply the same meaning, since lightning is accompanied by loud noises and makes the stricken place tremble and it is an uncontrollable torment.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verse 6

وَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَأُهْلِكُوا بِرِيحٍ صَرْصَرٍ عَاتِيَةٍ

6. And as for 'Àd, they were destroyed by a furious violent gale!

The blessed Verse proceeds with the dire fate of the people of 'Àd who inhabited the land of Ahqaf in the Yemen in the Arabian Peninsula. They were tall of stature and robust and had verdant lands and fertile gardens. Their Prophet was Hud (as).

They were so disobedient that God Almighty sent them an excruciating torment, as mentioned in these blessed Verses, and caused their perdition.

The blessed Verse is saying:

"And as for 'Àd, they were destroyed by a furious, violent, and venomous gale."

The Arabic word sarsar is applied to cold, harsh, and venomous gales. The three meanings are mentioned by Qur'an exegetes and the word may imply their entirety. The Arabic feminine adjectival form 'atiya, deriving from '-t-w ("to be raging"), denotes raging (of storms and gales) and uncontrollable, disobedient to the norms of regular winds and breezes rather than disobedient to God Almighty.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 7-8

سَخَّرَهَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ وَثَمَانِيَةَ أَيَّامٍ حُسُومًا فَتَرَى الْقَوْمَ فِيهَا صَرْعَىٰ كَأَنَّهُمْ أَعْجَازُ نَخْلٍ خَاوِيَةٍ

فَهَلْ تَرَىٰ لَهُم مِّن بَاقِيَةٍ

7. Which Allah imposed the [raging gale] on them for seven nights and eight days in succession and had you been there you would have seen those men lying overthrown and dead, as if they were hollow trunks of date palms!

8. Do you see anyone of them remaining?

These blessed Verses make another depiction of the destructive gale, saying that God Almighty made it predominant over such people for seven nights and eight days consecutively. The Arabic adverb of manner husuman denotes destroying the remnants of something and at times it connotes cauterizing the wound.

The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse 7 reflects that the raging gale shattered eradicated the prosperous habitation of such great people in seven nights and eight days consecutively in the manner of a rotten and hollow trunk of a palm tree.

The similitude is of interest since it implies their high stature as well as their being eradicated and the hollowness and vulnerability against Divine torments, such that the harsh gales could easily move them. The Arabic adjectival form khawiya originally denotes empty and it is employed in the sense of hungry people, the stars devoid of rain (according to pre-Islamic Arabs), and empty walnuts.

The blessed Verse 8 poses a question:

"Do you see anyone of them remaining?"

There is no trace of the people of 'Àd and the ruins of their prosperous habitations, majestic edifices, and fertile farms.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 9-10

وَجَاءَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَن قَبْلَهُ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَاتُ بِالْخَاطِئَةِ

فَعَصَوْا رَسُولَ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَهُمْ أَخْذَةً رَّابِيَةً

9. And Pharaoh and those before him and the inhabitants of the shattered cities [of the people of Lot] who had committed grave sins.

10. And they disobeyed their Lord's Messenger, so He inflicted them with a strong chastisement.

Following a reference made to the dire fate of the peoples of 'Àd and Thamud, the blessed Verses in question make mention of other peoples like those of Pharaoh, Lot so that the awakened may take lessons of them, saying that Pharaoh and those before them and the inhabitants of the shattered habitations (the people of Lot) had committed grave sins.

The Arabic word khati'a denotes mistake and error and it herein connotes different sins like polytheism, disbelief, wrong doing, and corruption. The plural nominal form mu'tafikat (sg. mu'tafika) implies revolution and undergoing drastic changes and it herein alludes to the habitations of the people of Lot which were shattered owing to a severe earthquake.

The phrase

"before him" (min qablihi)

alludes to the peoples antedating Pharaoh, like that of Shu'ayb and tyrants like Nimrod (Namrud).

The blessed Verse 10 is saying that they rose against their Lord's Messenger (as) as a consequence of which God Almighty inflicted them with a severe torment. The people of Pharaoh rose against Prophet Moses (as) and Aaron.

The inhabitants of Sodom rose against Prophet Lot (as). Likewise, other peoples disobeyed their Prophets (as) and each of them were inflicted with a different kind of severe torment: the people of Pharaoh were drowned in the Nile which was the source of life, blessing, and prosperity in their land; the people of Lot with a strong earthquake followed by a downpour of rocks leading to their perdition.

The Arabic word rabiya, cognate with riba' ("usury money, interest"), denotes increase and surplus and it herein connotes a very strong and severe torment.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 11-12

إِنَّا لَمَّا طَغَى الْمَاءُ حَمَلْنَاكُمْ فِي الْجَارِيَةِ

لِنَجْعَلَهَا لَكُمْ تَذْكِرَةً وَتَعِيَهَا أُذُنٌ وَاعِيَةٌ

11. When the water rose beyond its limits, We carried you on the floating Ark.

12. That We might make it an admonition for you and that it might be retained by the retaining ears.

The blessed Verses allude to the fate of the people of Noah (as) and their excruciating torment, saying:

"When the water overflew its banks, we embarked you on the Ark."

The water burst such that leaden clouds enwrapped the sky and heavy showers of rain were sent such that torrents were seemingly pouring down from the sky. Fountains appeared on the earth as well. Thus, everything was drowned, the gardens, farms, palaces, and the mansions of the disobedient people. The believers were only saved by embarking upon the Ark with Prophet Noah (as).

The verbal form

hamalnakum ("we carried you")

alludes to our ancestors, since had they not been saved, we would not have come into being.

The blessed Verse 12 makes a reference to the main goal behind such chastisements, saying:

"That We might make it an admonition for you and that it might be retained by the retaining ears."

In other words, God Almighty never willed to take vengeance, but the goal behind their being inflicted with torments is to lead people on the path of spiritual growth such that they tread the path of development and perfection and attainment to union with the desired object.

The Arabic verbal form

ta'iyaha ("retain it")

derives from w-'-a originally denoting preserving something in the heart, but owing to semantic generalization, any vessel was termed as wa'a, since it contains something. The verbal form is herein used in the sense of the ears listening to the truths and preserving them. In other words, one may at times hears something undesirable by one ear and the undesirable utterance instantly goes out of the other.

The idiomatic expression "it goes into one ear and out the other" implies the same sense in colloquial expressions. However, one may at times reflect upon something and preserve it in his heart and make use of it as the lamp shedding light on his life. The latter sense is intended herein.

Finally, it is narrated in many authoritative tradition and exegetic sources from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying that he invoked God Almighty to make 'Ali's (as) ears listen to the truths and preserve them.

Imam 'Ali (as) is reported as saying:

"Thereafter I never consigned to oblivion whatever I heard from Allah's Messenger (S), but I remembered his words at all times."[5]

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 13-15

فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ نَفْخَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ

وَحُمِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ فَدُكَّتَا دَكَّةً وَاحِدَةً

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ

13. Then, as soon as the Trumpet shall be blown with one blowing.

14. And the earth and the mountains shall be removed and crushed with a single crushing.

15. Then, on that Day shall the Event befall.

Resuming the opening blessed Verses treating of the Day of Resurrection, the blessed Verses in question discuss the evens of such great Resurrection by moving and awakening expressions familiarizing man with the greatness of the events to befall in future.

The blessed Verse 13 is saying that

"as soon as the Trumpet shall be blown with one blowing."

As mentioned above, it is reflected in the Holy Qur'an that the end of this world and the beginning of the world to come shall be of a sudden accompanied by a very loud sound which is intended by

nafkha sur ("blowing of Trumpet"),

deriving from blowing in the trumpet to marshal the army in alertness and dispatching them to their resting place by two different sounds: one for their rest and sleep and the other to be marshaled whereby they move in lines toward their garrisons and elsewhere.

The blessed Verse reflects that the end of this world and the beginning of the one to come against Divine Omnipotence is as easy as blowing in a trumpet and all the inhabitants of the heaven and the earth die of a sudden through one single Command and they will be raised and prepared to receive the Rewards and Chastisements of based on Record of deeds through another Command.

The qualities of the Trumpet, the manner of blowing in it, the times of blowing, and the interval between them were copiously treated above under 39:68, but it would solely suffice herein to make mention that the Trumpet shall be blown into twice: one for death and the other for being raised.

Qur'an exegetes are not unanimous concerning the reference herein to the former or the latter, since the some of the following blessed Verses stand in further conformity with the former and some with the latter. Generally speaking, these blessed Verses stand in further conformity with the former, i.e. blowing into the Trumpet to put an end to this world.

The blessed Verse 14 is saying that

"when the earth and the mountains shall be removed and crushed with a single crushing."

The Arabic word dakk denotes smooth land, but since leveling it requires crushing, it connotes severe crushing. Nonetheless, according to some lexicographical sources, the Arabic word literally denotes crushing and demolishing and since they entail leveling, the word connotes such sense.

At any rate, the word herein implies severe crushing of the mountains and uneven pieces of land such that they are demolished and leveled instantly.

The blessed Verse 15 is saying that

"on that Day, a great event shall befall in the world and Resurrection shall be actualized.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 16-17

وَانشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَهِيَ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاهِيَةٌ

وَالْمَلَكُ عَلَىٰ أَرْجَائِهَا ۚ وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَانِيَةٌ

16. And the heavens shall be rent asunder, for that Day it shall be frail and shall collapse.

17. And the angels shall be on the sides of the heaven [and shall be prepared for assignments], and eight angels shall, on that Day, bear the Throne of your Lord above them.

The blessed Verse 16 is saying that not only the mountains and the earth shall be shattered, but the heavens shall be rent asunder and be frail. Such awe inspiring even shall affect celestial spheres and bodies, since they shall be shattered, scattered, and rent asunder in spite of their previous firmness.

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[6]:

"Then, when the heaven shall be rent asunder and it shall be rosy like molten oil."

In other words, the earth and the heaven shall be destroyed and instead another world, far better, exalted, and perfect, shall be established on the ruins.

The blessed Verse 17 says:

"And the angels shall be on the sides of the heaven."

The Arabic nominal form arja' is the plural form of raja' denoting "side." The singular nominal form malak ("angel") connotes plurality, as if on that Day, the angels shall be prepared like agents surrounding a field to receive orders to fulfill some assignment. They seemingly stand in lines surrounding the heavens expecting the Commands of the Truth.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that

"eight angels shall, on that Day, bear the Throne of your Lord above them."

Such bearers of the Divine Throne are not explicitly specified to be angels or otherwise, but the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse reflects that they are angels, though it is not specified whether they are eight angels or eight small or large groups of them.

According to Islamic traditions, the bearers of the Divine Throne are four angels or four groups of them, but the number shall be twofold on the Day of Resurrection. In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that now they are four in number, though they shall be reinforced by a twofold increase thus making eight of them.[7]

What is the Divine Throne and who are these angels?

The Arabic word

'arsh ("throne")

does not herein denote a royal and hence material throne, but as it was mentioned above on the explanation of the word, it connotes the constituents of the world of existence as the Throne of Divine Sovereignty whose affairs are being fulfilled by the angels.

It would be of interest to make mention of a tradition as per which the eight bearers of Divine Throne on the Day of Resurrection will be four angels from the first ones and four from the last ones. The first four consist of Prophets Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (as) and the last ones are Muhammad (S), 'Ali, Hasan, and Husayn (as).[8]

The expression may reflect their exalted rank of intercession with God Almighty for the first and the last time, though interceding with God Almighty shall be on the behalf of those deserving the same; however, such interpretation reflects the semantically broad scope of the word

"Throne."

Now, if the eight bearers of the Divine Throne be eight groups, it may be the case that groups of angels and those of the Prophets and Friends of God Almighty be vested to fulfill the task. Thus, the affairs of the Day of Resurrection shall be vested with the angels and the Prophets, though they shall all rest on Divine Command.

It is needless to say, however, that the events to befall on the Day of Resurrection may not be precisely known to us let alone the affairs of the bearers of the Divine Throne on that Day to us, the inhabitants of this limited and shadowy world. It would suffice to say that we merely behold the reflections from afar in the light of Divine Signs and Verses, though the Truth about such affairs shall be perceived on that Day.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 18-24

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُونَ لَا تَخْفَىٰ مِنكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَيَقُولُ هَاؤُمُ اقْرَءُوا كِتَابِيَهْ

إِنِّي ظَنَنتُ أَنِّي مُلَاقٍ حِسَابِيَهْ

فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ

فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ

قُطُوفُهَا دَانِيَةٌ

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا أَسْلَفْتُمْ فِي الْأَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ

18. That Day shall everyone be brought to Divine Threshold, not a secret of you shall be veiled.

19. Then, as for him who shall carry his Record in his right hand shall say [happily and proudly]: "Here! Read my Record!

20. Certainly, I did believe that there shall be the Resurrection Day and I shall meet my Record of Deeds!"

21. So he shall be in a life, well-pleasing.

22. In a lofty Paradise,

23. The fruits in bunches whereof shall near at hand.

24. Eat and drink at ease for the deeds you did in days past!

It was mentioned above under the preceding blessed Verses that

"blowing into the Trumpet"

shall occur twice.

Upon the first blowing, all animate entities shall die and the world of existence shall perish; though it shall be upon the second that a new world shall be created and mankind and angels shall be revived.

As mentioned above, the opening of the blessed Verses reflect the first blowing where as the close thereof is indicative of the second. Proceeding with the same issue, the blessed Verses in question open by saying that on

that Day, you shall be all brought before God Almighty and none of our deeds shall be concealed.

The passive verbal form

tu'radhun ("you shall be presented")

derives from '-r-dh denoting present or show something in commercial transactions or otherwise.

It is worthy of note that men and other creatures are permanently before Divine Threshold, though it shall be reflected with further clarity on the Day of Resurrection. For instance, Divine Sovereignty over the world of existence is everlasting, though such Sovereignty shall be in utmost clarity on that Day.

The clause

"not a secret of you shall be veiled"

may reflect that the secrets shall be revealed on that Day, as it is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[9]:

"The Day when all the secrets shall be revealed,"

thus disclosing all secret deeds, characters, and intentions.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that such event shall be even far greater than the shattering of the mountains and rending asunder of celestial spheres and bodies, since it shall be the Day of utter disgrace for the evil doers and unrivaled honor and glory for the believers, when men shall appear with disclosed secrets and intentions and nothing shall be concealed from anyone on that Day. It may so make a reference to Divine Omniscience on that Day. God Almighty knows best.

Thus, the blessed Verse 19 says:

"Then, as for him who shall carry his Record in his right hand shall say [happily and proudly]: "Here! Read my Record!"

He is seemingly quite happy that he is granted innumerable Bounties and Guidance.

He is totally grateful and utters

"Praise be to Allah."

Summarizing his greatest glory, in the blessed Verse 20 he says:

"Certainly, I did believe that there shall be the Resurrection Day and I shall meet my Record of Deeds!"

The Arabic past verbal form

thanantu ("I did certainly believe")

reflects that such person is saying that he has been rewarded Divine Bounties for his certitude regarding the Day of Resurrection.

It is true that belief in reckoning of the deeds on the Day of Resurrection imbues man with the spirit of fearing God Almighty and feeling the responsibility vested with him. It is the most significant factor in man's spiritual growth.

Some of these Divine Rewards are enumerated in the following blessed Verse 21:

"So he shall be in a life, well-pleasing."

Everything is included in the blessed Verse, though further clarification is to be found in the blessed Verse 22:

"In a lofty Paradise…"

so exalted that it is unimaginable, unseen, and unheard.

The blessed Verse 23 says:

"The fruits in bunches whereof shall near at hand,"

by which it is intended to say that there shall be no toil in picking the fruits, nor shall be any impediment to approaching the fruitful trees. All Divine Bounties shall be accessible to the people of Paradise. The Arabic word qutuf denotes picked fruit.

The blessed Verse 24 includes an affectionate address to the people of Paradise by God Almighty, saying:

"Eat and drink at ease for the deeds you did in days past!"

The point is that all these great Divine Bounties are well-measured bestowed upon people for their deeds done in this world and sent in advance. It is noteworthy of such insignificant deeds entail such Rewards in the light of Divine Graciousness and Mercy.

It is reflected in numerous traditions that the blessed Verse 19 concerns Imam 'Ali or him and his followers, though it is one of the obvious implications of the blessed Verse whose contextual meaning may not be restricted in semantic scope.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 25-29

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ فَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُوتَ كِتَابِيَهْ

وَلَمْ أَدْرِ مَا حِسَابِيَهْ

يَا لَيْتَهَا كَانَتِ الْقَاضِيَةَ

مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنِّي مَالِيَهْ

هَلَكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيَهْ

25. But as for him who shall be given his Record in his left hand, he shall say: "I wish that I had not been given my Record!

26. And that I had never known how my Account is!

27. "Would that it had been my end!

28. "My wealth has not availed me;

29. "My power has gone from me!"

The preceding blessed Verses treated of the people of the right hand (ashab yamin) whose record of deeds shall be given to their right hands proudly calling the people on the Day of Resurrection, requesting them to read their records, and finding their abode in the everlasting Paradise. Nonetheless, the blessed Verses in question treat of their opposites, i.e. the people of the left hand. A comparison between the two groups may shed further light on their situations.

The blessed Verse 25 is saying that one whose record of deeds will be given in his left hand will say:

"I wish I had never been given my record of deeds!"

According to the following blessed Verse, he will say:

"I wish I had never been aware of my reckoning."

It is in the blessed Verse 27 that he says:

"Would that it had been my end!"

He intends to say that thus he could put an end to his dire fate. Such person, upon witnessing that all his past vices are disclosed, cries regretfully on that Day of Disclosure (yawm al-buruz), the Day of Uncovering (yawm al-thuhur) and wishes that he could totally sever his ties with his vicious past. He wishes that God Almighty would put an end to his miserable life and thereby deliver him from such ignominious fate.

The same theme is also reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[10]:

"We have warned you against an imminent torment; the Day when man shall see that [the record of his deeds] which his hands have sent forth and the disbeliever shall say: "Woe unto me! Would that I were dust [and never a man]!"

According to the blessed Verses 28 and 29, he will say:

"[Not only] has my wealth not availed me, but also my power has gone from me!"

In short, neither wealth nor high positions shall be of any avail on that Day, since such miserable creatures shall stand with utmost ignominy and disgrace before Divine Just Tribunal. There shall be no source of aspiration, nor any means of deliverance from such dire fate.

The Arabic noun sultan used in the blessed Verse 29 is taken by some Qur'an exegetes in the sense of an argument leading to victory, namely the people of the left hand shall not be able to produce an argument to justify their past deeds before Divine Threshold.

Some exegetes also maintain that sovereignty and rule are not intended by sultan herein, since all the people who set foot in Hell were not rulers and sultans, but the word is indicative of checking one's self and having control over one's life. At any rate, the blessed Verses in question serve as lessons for those relying on wealth and positions despite having been entangled with vanity, neglect, and sins.

O Lord, do not chastise us for our deeds!

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 30-37

خُذُوهُ فَغُلُّوهُ

ثُمَّ الْجَحِيمَ صَلُّوهُ

ثُمَّ فِي سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوهُ

إِنَّهُ كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ

وَلَا يَحُضُّ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ

فَلَيْسَ لَهُ الْيَوْمَ هَاهُنَا حَمِيمٌ

وَلَا طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ غِسْلِينٍ

لَّا يَأْكُلُهُ إِلَّا الْخَاطِئُونَ

30. [It shall be said:] "Seize him and fetter him;

31. Then, throw him into Hell.

32. "Then, fasten him with a chain whereof the length is seventy cubits!"

33. He used not to believe in Allah, the Most Great,

34. And urged not people to feed the poor.

35. So no intimate friend has he here on this Day to protect him,

36. Nor any food except pus and blood.

37. None shall eat the food except the sinners.

Resuming the treatment of the state of the people of left hand who receive their record of deeds in their left hand and moan and wish they had been dead, the blessed Verses in question make a reference to some of their torments on the Day of Resurrection. According to the blessed Verse 30, the angels of torment are commanded to seize and fetter him.

The Arabic verbal form

ghuluhu ("fetter him")

derives from gh-l-l ("fetter, shackle"). The angels are ordered in the following blessed Verse to throw him into hellfire.

The blessed Verse 32 says:

"Then, fasten him with a chain whereof the length is seventy cubits!"

The Arabic nominal for silsila denoting chain is cognate with tasalsul denotes trembling and shivering, since chains tremble and move.

The expression

"seventy cubits"

may connote multiplicity and multitude, since the number seventy oftentimes implies large quantity and massive amount. It may have been used in its literal sense. At any rate, on that Day, sinners shall be shackled by such long chains thereby enwrapping them.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that such long chains are not for individual sinners but each group will be fettered by one chain. Such chastisement following a reference to shackles and fetters stands in further conformity with the preceding blessed Verses.

The Arabic word dhira' denotes the length of finger tips to the elbow which equals approximately half a meter. Such natural unite of measurement was used by Arabs.

Nonetheless, some exegetes hold that such dhira' is different from commonly used units, such that the former is applied to far lengthier units and all the people of the Hell shall be fettered by the same. It is worthy of note, once again, that the affairs of the Day of Resurrection may not be fully depicted by us, the inhabitants of this world, though they are dimly depicted by Qur'anic Verses and traditions.

The Arabic adverbial form thumma herein reflects that following being thrown into Hell, the sinners shall be entangled with a chain measuring seventy cubits as another chastisement for them whose causes are enumerated in the following two blessed Verses, namely 33 and 34, saying:

"He used not to believe in Allah, the Most Great, and urged not people to feed the poor."

Despite being called by Messengers to believe in Allah, they belied them and thereby had severed their ties with their Maker.

The blessed Verse 34 is saying that they did not urge people to feed the needy and thus they had severed their ties with creatures. Thus, the main cause of their misery lies in the severance of ties with the Creator and the Creation.

The expression explicitly reflects that the majority of religious obligations, devotions, and injunctions may be summarized in the twain, thereby indicating the extraordinary significance of feeding the poor and the dependence of such great and humane act upon faith. In this vein, it is said that disbelief in the worst of beliefs and niggardliness is the worst of vices.

It is worthy of note that it is said:

"he did not urge others to feed"

rather than he did not feed, reflecting that firstly, feeding one in need may never solve the problems of the needy, but others are supposed to be urged to act likewise such that it turns into a customary practice to feed the poor and those in need; secondly, one may not afford to feed the needy but he may be capable of urging others to act accordingly; thirdly, the niggardly are not only unwilling to offer others some of their possessions, but they are uninterested in other people's liberality and generosity.

The blessed Verses 35 and 36 say:

"So no intimate friend has he here on this Day to protect him, nor any food except pus and blood."

It is noteworthy that their deeds and chastisements stand in total conformity. It is owing to severing their ties with their Maker that they may not find any intimate friends there. Likewise, they are fed but pus and blood, since they refrained from feeding the needy in this world but they ate the most delicious food themselves.

In his Mufradat, Raghib says that the Arabic word ghislin denotes the water by which the disbelievers wash their bodies in Hell, but it is commonly accepted that the word is applied to the pus and blood oozing from the bodies of the people of Hell and Raghib might have intended the same.

The word

ta'am ("food")

stands in conformity with the same sense.

The blessed Verse 37 says:

"None shall eat the food except the sinners."

Some exegetes maintain that the Arabic word khati' is applied to one who intentionally commits vices, but mukhatti' is one who intentionally or inadvertently commits evil deeds. Thus, such food served in Hell is for those who intentionally disobey God Almighty and tread the path of polytheism, disbelief and niggardliness.

In this vein, Sa'sa'a ibn Suhan, a companion of Imam 'Ali (as), is reported as saying:

"An Arab came unto 'Ali (as) inquiring about the meaning of the blessed Verse

"None shall eat the food except the sinners,"

though instead of

khati'un ("sinners"),

he said khatun ("walker, wayfarer").

Thus, he inquired:

"All people walk, but shall they be served the same food by Allah?"

The Noble Imam (as) replied smilingly:

"O Arab! The accurate form is khati'un ("sinners").

The Arab asked:

"You are true. O Commander of the Faithful! Allah never chastises those who have not sinned."

The Noble Imam turned toward Abu al-Aswad who was a man of letters and said:

"Non-Arabs have converted to the Islamic faith. Take measures so that they may improve their knowledge of Arabic. Thus, Abu al-Aswad introduced nominative, accusative, and genitive markers (raf', nasb, jarr).[11]

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 38-43

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصِرُونَ

وَمَا لَا تُبْصِرُونَ

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ

وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَاعِرٍ قَلِيلًا مَا تُؤْمِنُونَ

وَلَا بِقَوْلِ كَاهِنٍ قَلِيلًا مَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

38. So, I swear by whatever you see,

39. And by whatever you see not,

40. That this Qur'an is the word of a noble Messenger.

41. It is not the word of a poet. Little is that you believe!

42. Nor is it the word of a soothsayer. Little is that you remember!

43. But this is the word sent down by the Lord of the worlds.

Resuming the discussions mentioned in the preceding blessed Verses regarding Resurrection and the fates of the believers and disbelievers, the blessed Verses in question clearly treat of the Holy Qur'an and Prophetic Call, so that the discussions on Prophetic Call and Resurrection complement each other.

The blessed Verses 38 and 39 say:

"I swear by whatever you see and by whatever you see not."

It is commonly held that the Arabic particle la in such instances are non-lexical and emphatic. Instances of swearing by Allah's Name and otherwise abound in the Holy Qur'an.

The clauses

"what you see and what you see not"

are of a broad semantic scope embracing whatever is seen or not seen by mankind. In other words, it encompasses all the world of "intuitive perception" and the "unseen."

Qur'an exegetes have suggested other possibilities regarding the exegesis of the twain blessed Verses, e.g.

"what you see"

and

"what you see not"

make references to the world of creation and the Creator, outward and inward Bounties, mankind and angels, bodies and spirits, or this world and the Hereafter. However, as it was mentioned above, the broad semantic range of the twain impedes the restriction of its contextual meaning.

Therefore, the visible and the invisible are embraced by the oath, though its reference to God Almighty is rather a remote possibility, since juxtaposition of the Creator and the creation would rather be unbefitting, particularly owing to the fact that the Arabic particle ma is applied to insensible beings.

It is worthy of note, however, that the expression clearly reflects that many a thing may not be seen by the outward eyes. Modern science supports the argument as per which intelligible constitute a limited number of entities and what lies beyond the horizon of perception, e.g. colors, sounds, tastes, and waves, exceed further in terms of number.

Astronomers maintain that approximately five thousand celestial bodies are visible, though the invisible bodies exceed billions in number. The sound waves audible to man are limited, but there are thousands of sound waves inaudible to mankind. The colors perceptible to us are seven in number, though it is a proven fact that innumerable color spectra of ultraviolet and infrared imperceptible to human eyes.

Likewise, the world is imbued with innumerable microscopic organisms thousands of which are contained in a drop of water. It would be quite unfortunate to be confined in the perceptible world unaware of or belying what lies beyond perception. The world of spirits, proven by rational and even experiential proofs, constitutes an expanse far greater than our physical world. Thus, how may one confine himself within the perceptible world?

The blessed Verse 40 treats of the apodosis of such great and unique oath, saying that this Qur'an is the word of a noble Messenger (S). The Arabic word rasul herein indubitably connotes the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) rather than Gabriel, since the following blessed Verse in clearly indicative of such implication.

We know that the Holy Qur'an is the Word of God Almighty, but the Noble Prophet (S) is the one who imparted it, hence the emphasis laid on his Prophetic Call. Thus, the Divine Message is conveyed by the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S).

The blessed Verse 41 is saying that this Qur'an is not the word of a poet, though little is that you believe.

The next blessed Verse says:

"Nor is it the word of a soothsayer. Little is that you remember!"

These two blessed Verses refute the unfounded ascriptions to the Noble Prophet (S) by the polytheists and opponents in alleging that he is a poet and the Qur'anic Verses are poetry. They also claimed at times that he was a soothsayer intending to say that he was in contact with jinn and devils to whom they revealed the secrets of the unseen by words embellished by rhythm and rhyme.

By such unfounded claims they meant that the Qur'an contained intelligence regarding the unseen and it was adorned with rhythmical sentences. They were unaware of the fact that the words of the Noble

Prophet (S) and those of soothsayers and poets were essentially different in nature.

It is also noteworthy that the clauses

"Little is that you believe!"

and

"Little is that you remember!"

herein ensure those who witness Divine Revelation through its clear tokens but call it poetry and poetry and fail to believe in it.

The blessed Verse 43 lays particular emphasis on the same by saying that this Qur'an is revealed by the Lord of the worlds, hence it is neither poetry, nor soothsaying, nor the product of the Noble Prophet's (S) thought, nor the word of Gabriel, but it is Divine Revelation sent down unto the pure heart of the Noble Prophet (S).

There are eleven Qur'anic attestations of the same theme with slight variations. It is also worthy of note that the Holy Qur'an was revealed in time, since the Arabic word tanzil implies the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an in time in its entirety within a period of twenty three years following its Revelation in its entirety unto the Noble Prophet's (S) heart on the night of Ordainment (qadr) wherewith Divine Injunctions were imparted to the people through the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S).

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 44-47

وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقَاوِيلِ

لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ

ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ

فَمَا مِنكُم مِّنْ أَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حَاجِزِينَ

44. And if he had forged a false saying concerning Us,

45. We would have certainly seized him,

46. And We would have certainly cut off his artery,

47. And none of you could have withheld Us from [chastising] him nor could he render him support.

The Arabic verbal form

taqawwala ("he had forged a saying")

connotes false ascription of words. Watin the life artery and if it is severed, man will die instantly.

"Seizing by the right hand"

connotes power, since the right hand is stronger than the left hand. The point raised herein is that when God Almighty mentions such Words about His Messenger, others are supposed to take lessons and stand in awe as to their words and deeds.

At any rate, resuming the discussions on the Holy Qur'an, the four blessed Verses in question (44-47) produce original evidence as to the originality of the Holy Qur'an as Divine Revelation, saying that had the Noble Prophet (S) had forged false sayings concerning God Almighty, He would have certainly seized him forcefully severing his life artery and no

human being would have been able to impede the same nor could have anyone render him aid.

The Arabic nominal form hajizin is the plural for of hajiz ("impediment, obstacle").

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 48-52

وَإِنَّهُ لَتَذْكِرَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

وَإِنَّا لَنَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مِنكُم مُّكَذِّبِينَ

وَإِنَّهُ لَحَسْرَةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

وَإِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ الْيَقِينِ

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

48. And this is a Reminder for the God fearing.

49. And We know that there are some amongst you that belie it,

50. And it shall entail regret for the disbelievers.

51. And it is an absolute truth with certitude.

52. Thus, glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most Great.

The blessed Verse 48 further emphasizes that the Holy Qur'an is certainly some admonition to the God fearing, since they are prepared to be absolved of their sins and tread the path of Truth, since they seek the Truth. However, those who have not attained to such degree of fearing God Almighty may never avail themselves of Qur'anic teachings. The profound and extraordinary impression engendered by the Holy Qur'an serves as further evidence of its veracity.

The blessed Verse 49 is saying that God Almighty is All-Aware that some people belie Divine Revelation, though such obdurate denial may never affect its veracity, since the God fearing and seekers of Truth are reminded by it and notice the reflection of Divine Signs in it and thereby tread steadfastly on the Path of Allah.

Thus, in the same manner that availing oneself of some brilliant light requires opening one's eyes, one is supposed to open up his heart in order to avail oneself of the Light of the Holy Qur'an.

The blessed Verse 50 is saying that the Holy Qur'an shall lead to the disbelievers' regret. They belie it today, but tomorrow, on the Day of Emergence or Day of Disclosure, which is the Day of Regret, they shall comprehend that they have lost such great Bounty owing to their obduracy and have thereby caused so many excruciating torments for themselves. They shall compare the exalted positions of the believers and their disgrace and shall regret, biting their own hands in a rage.

The same motive is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[12]:

"And remember the Day when the wrong doer shall bite at his hands, saying: 'Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger.'"

Impeding others from falsely imagining that entertaining doubts or belying of the opponents have a touch of certainty on their side, the blessed Verse 51 says:

"And it is an absolute truth with certitude."

The Arabic term

haqq al-yaqin (“absolute truth”)

is regarded by some Qur’an exegetes as a genitive construction denoting reference to oneself, since the Truth is the essence of certitude (‘ayn al-yaqin) and vice versa; as it is said masjid al-jami‘ (“mosque of congregation”) and yawm al-khamis (“the fifth day, i.e. Thursday”) which are instances of appositive genitive (idhafa bayaniyya).

However, it would be further befitting the contextual meaning to say that it is an instance of the relation between the qualified and the qualifier. In other words, the Holy Qur’an is Absolute Certitude. Certitude consists of different degrees, at times engendered by rational arguments, an instance of which is some smoke observed from afar engendering the certitude as to the existence of fire, despite not having seen the fire per se.

This is termed knowledge by certitude (‘ilm al-yaqin). We may at times approach the fire and perceive its flames through our visual sense and thereby reinforce our certitude, which is termed the essence of certitude (‘ayn al-yaqin).

We may even approach further and touch the flames and thereby attain to a higher degree of certitude, termed haqq al-yaqin (“absolute truth”). Now, the blessed Verse in question is saying that the Holy Qur’an is of the last type of certitude, i.e. absolute truth, though it is denied by those blind in their hearts.

The blessed Verse 52 which is the closing Verse of the Chapter is saying that thus, glorify your Lord the Greatest and glorify him of any defect or flaw. It is worthy of note that the Holy Qur’an is depicted by four Attributes: it is sent down by the Lord of the Words; it is a Reminder for the God fearing; it leads disbelievers to regret their lost opportunities; and it is the absolute Truth. They address everybody, the God fearing, the disbelievers, and those close to God Almighty respectively.

Now, let us turn toward a few traditions concerning the greatness and significance of glorification.

According to a Prophetic tradition:

“One of the most loved words before God Almighty is to say: 'Praise be to my Lord Who is Glorified.”[13]

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

“One who glorifies God Almighty thirty times a times, He will remove seventy kinds of afflictions from him the least of which is poverty.[14]

In this vein, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as) is reported as saying:

“Saying 'Glorified is Allah' fills half of the scale of deeds, saying 'Praise be to Allah' brims the scale of deeds, and saying 'Allah is the Greatest' fills the distance between the heaven and the earth.”[15]

It is narrated from Allah’s Messenger (S) as saying:

“One who utters 'Glorified is the Great Allah and Praised is He' makes a palm tree grow for him in Paradise.”[16]

It is also narrated from Allah’s Messenger (S) on the authority of ‘À’isha that Allah’s Messenger (S), before his demise, repeatedly uttered:

“O Lord! Glorified are You! I praise You and ask You for forgiveness.”[17]

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Notes

1. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan, under the blessed Chapter in question.
2. Ibid.
3. 40:45
4. ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim’s exegetic work, vol. 2, p. 383.
5. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 10, p. 6743; Abu al-Futuh Razi’s exegetic work as well as others, e.g. Majma‘ al-Bayan, Ruh al-Bayan, Ruh al-Ma‘ani, and al-Mizan, under the blessed Verses in question. The tradition is quoted by Ibn Maghazili Shafi‘i.

(Islamiyya edition, p. 265)

In this vein, 16 traditions are to be found in Ghayat al-Maram on the authority of Sunni and Shi‘i transmitters. In his Tafsir al-Burhan, Muhaddith Bahrani, on the authority of Muhammad ibn ‘Abbas, reports that 30 traditions have been narrated in this vein through Sunni and Shi‘i transmission sources.

It is the great merit of the great leader of the Islamic faith, Imam ‘Ali (as), that he was the treasury of the Noble Prophet’s (S) secrets and the inheritor of his knowledge in its entirety.

Consequently, following the sad demise of Allah’s Messenger (S), his proponents and opponents found in him a safe haven upon encountering scholarly issues in the Muslim community and asked him to provide them with solutions whose accounts are reported in details in historical sources.

6. 55:37
7. ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim’s exegetic work, vol. 2, p. 384.
8. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 346.
9. 86:9
10. 78:40
11. Jalal al-Din Suyuti, Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 263.
12. 25:27
13. Kanz al-‘Ummal, vol. 1, p. 466.
14. Saduq’s Amali, p. 55.
15. Makarim al-Akhlaq, p. 309.
16. Kanz al-‘Ummal, vol. 1, p. 459.
17. Muslim’s Sahih, vol. 1, p. 351.

Surah al-Ma‘arij, Chapter 70

(The Places of Ascent)

Section (juz’) 29

Number of Verses: 44

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter has forty-four Verses and is regarded as one of those revealed in Mecca, though some of the Verses were revealed in Medina. The designation of the Chapter, connoting the angels’ places of ascent, derives from the third Verse. Similar to other Meccan Chapters, it mainly treats of Resurrection and warning to the polytheists and opponents.

It also deals with the states of the disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection and the characteristics of the peoples of Paradise and Hell. The opening Verses of the Chapter concerns sending down torments in this world whereby one of the deniers of Imam ‘Ali’s (as) guardianship (wilaya) was afflicted and lost his life whose detailed account will be mentioned under the first Verse.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that whoever recites the Sura Sa’ala Sa’il [namely, the chapter in question], God Almighty will grant him the Rewards of those who keep their covenants as well as those who are attentive toward the establishment of their ritual prayers.[1]

In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that whoever recites the Chapter constantly, he shall not be investigated on the Day of Resurrection regarding his sins, but he shall abide in Paradise beside Muhammad (S).[2] The bestowal of such Rewards is dependent on fulfilling one’s religious obligations.

Surah al-Ma’arij - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

سَأَلَ سَائِلٌ بِعَذَابٍ وَاقِعٍ

لِّلْكَافِرِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَافِعٌ

مِّنَ اللَّهِ ذِي الْمَعَارِجِ

1. A questioner asked for befalling a torment which befell.

2. They are in store for disbelievers and none may avert them

3. They are from Allah, the Lord whose angels ascent to the heavens.

The late ‘Allama Amini (rh), in his invaluable work titled al-Ghadir, enumerates thirty eminent Qur’an exegetes and traditionists flourishing in the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries who maintain that the occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verse 1 concerns a man who addressed the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"You ordered us to fulfill our obligations regarding pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj), fasting (sawm), and paying the alms tax (zakat) on the day of Ghadir to which we consented, but you are not content yet as you appointed your cousin to rule over us."

Then, he added:

"O Lord! If such appointment is true, send down rocks from the heaven [such that we be destroyed and do not witness such day].

A rock was sent down and he killed him.

Then the blessed Verse

'A questioner asked for befalling a torment which befell'

was revealed."[3]

It would be of significance to make mention of some individual and seemingly insignificant events so that others may take lessons. Likewise, it was an individual disobedience which led to Divine Wrath and his affliction and perdition.

The Qur'anic Verse makes a reference to the incident so that mankind may take lessons and be aware that partial, obdurate, and inappropriate requests may entail afflictions. It would be of interest to mention that the inquirer in question is maintained by some Qur'an exegetes to be Nu'man ibn Harith or Nadhr ibn Harith.

The blessed Verse 2 is saying that such torment is in store for the disbelievers and non one may impede it. The blessed Verse 3 makes a reference to the Source of such torment, saying that the torment was inflicted by Allah, the Lord of the heavens where angels ascend.

The Arabic word ma'arij is the plural form of ma'arij denoting place of ascent which herein connotes the heavens where the angels ascend or descend proceeding toward nearness to God Almighty following a certain hierarchy.

Such angels who are vested with afflicting the disbelievers and sinners with torments were the same angels who descended upon Abraham (as) informing him of their appointment to cause the perdition of the people of Lot (as).

They destroyed the cities of those people who had plunged into sins and disgrace. They are also vested with inflicting torments upon other sinners as well. It is to be noted, however, that some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the word ma'arij implies Divine Bounties and some others hold that it connotes angels, though the former further befits the lexical meaning of the word.

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verse 4

تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ

4. The angels and the spirit (an archangel) ascend toward Him on a Day the measure whereof is fifty thousand years.

Following the narrative of the person who had asked for Divine torment, the blessed Verse in question treats of Resurrection and the torments in store for sinners on that Day, saying that the angels and the spirit ascend toward God Almighty on a Day whose measure is fifty thousand years.

The ascension of the angels indubitably implies spiritual ascent rather than the physical one.

In other words, they hasten toward nearness unto God Almighty and on that Day, namely the Day of Resurrection, they are prepared to receive Divine Commands and implement them, as it was mentioned above under 69:17 that

"and the angels will be on its sides"

implies that they will surround the heaven and will be prepared on that Day to act upon Divine Commands.

The spirit (ruh) herein implies the archangel, namely the trusted spirit (ruh al-amin) or Gabriel, to whom there is a reference elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[4]:

"Therein descend the angels and the spirit by Allah's Permission with all Ordainments."

The angels and the 'spirit' descend by Divine Permission on the night of Ordainment (laylat al-qadr) to implement Divine Ordainments and Decrees. It is worthy of note, however, that the word ruh implies different senses according to the contextual meaning, e.g. man's spirit, the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Spirit (ruh al-qudus), the archangel of Revelation, as attested in different Qur'anic Verses.

The expression

"fifty thousand years"

reflects that the Day of Resurrection shall last fifty thousand years, taking into account the passage of time in this world which does not stand in disharmony with the

"one thousand years"

mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[5], since according to traditions, there shall be fifty stations on the Day of Resurrection each of which shall last one thousand years.[6]

Some Qur'an exegetes have also suggested that the number

"fifty thousand"

herein implies multiplicity rather than quantity, namely that Day shall last long.

At any rate, it concerns the sinners, wrong doers, and disbelievers. In this vein, it is narrated on the authority of Abu Sa'id Khudri that following the Revelation of the blessed Verse in question, someone asked:

"O Allah's Messenger (S)! How long shall be that Day?"

He replied:

"By the One in Whose Hands lie Muhammad's life, that Day shall be convenient for the disbelievers, more convenient than one obligatory ritual prayer established in this world."[7]

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 5-7

فَاصْبِرْ صَبْرًا جَمِيلًا

إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا

وَنَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا

5. So be patient with a good patience.

6. They behold that Day from afar.

7. And We see it near.

Addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse 5 asks him to be patient with a good patience against their denial and harassment. The Arabic phrase sabran jamilan literally denotes becoming patience which calls for according attention to the same. Such patience entails steadfastness and constant forbearance unadulterated by despair, desolation, restlessness, and remonstrance.

The blessed Verse 6 is saying that they regard that Day as far remote, though, according to the following blessed Verse, God Almighty regards it to be close by. They actually do not believe in the existence of such Day wherein the records of deeds of all people as well as the least of their words and deeds shall be accounted.

That Day shall last fifty thousand years according to this worldly time measurement. However, they do not believe in God Almighty and they entertain doubts as to His Omnipotence, saying that it will be impossible for rotten bones and scattered dust to assemble once again in bodily form. Such unfounded doubts are to be met elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an.

They also raise questions about the duration of fifty thousand years for one single day. It would be of interest to note that according to modern science, time measurements are different on different celestial bodies, since they follow the time of their rotations on their axes.

Thus, one day on the moon equals two weeks on the earth. It is even suggested that through the passage time, the earth may reduce the velocity of its rotation on its axis, as a consequence of which one day may turn into one month, one year, or hundreds of years.

It is said that the Day of Resurrection will be at that time, but it is said that one day which equals fifty thousand years is not incredible as per our worldly measurements and analogies. At any rate, the present order of the earth and the heaven shall undergo alterations prior to the Day of Resurrection. The disbelievers regarded Resurrection as a remote possibility that may not stand to reason, though it is certain and close by according to the blessed Qur'anic Verse.

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 8-9

يَوْمَ تَكُونُ السَّمَاءُ كَالْمُهْلِ

وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ

8. The Day that the heaven shall be like molten metal.

9. And the mountains shall be like dyed wool.

The blessed Verses in question further treat of Resurrection, saying that on that Day, the heaven shall be like molten metal and the mountains shall be like flakes of dyed wool. The Arabic word muhl herein denotes molten metal and at times it is applied to the sediment of olive oil. The former sense befits the contextual meaning, though, taking into account the use as a simile, the latter is not that different.

The Arabic word 'ihan denotes dyed wool. The heavens shall be torn asunder and they shall melt. Mountains shall be shattered and scattered through the wind like flakes of wool. Mountains are herein likened to dyed

wool owing to their different colors. Such destruction shall antedate the creation of a new world wherein mankind shall be revived.

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 10-14

وَلَا يَسْأَلُ حَمِيمٌ حَمِيمًا

يُبَصَّرُونَهُمْ يَوَدُّ الْمُجْرِمُ لَوْ يَفْتَدِي مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِئِذٍ بِبَنِيهِ

وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَأَخِيهِ

وَفَصِيلَتِهِ الَّتِي تُؤْوِيهِ

وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يُنْجِيهِ

10. And no intimate friend shall ask a friend about his condition,

11. They shall be made to meet one another [but they are preoccupied with their own affairs], such that he sinner would desire to ransom himself from the chastisement of that Day by his children,

12. And his wife and his brother,

13. And his tribe who protected him at all times,

14. And all the people on the earth, so that he may find deliverance.

On Resurrection day in the new world, mankind shall be so preoccupied with the records of their past deeds that they never think about others, even their intimate friends, but they think about their own deliverance from torments.

The same theme is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[8]:

"Everyone on that Day shall have enough to make him careless of others."

The blessed Verse 11 is saying that people shall recognize their intimate friends, since they shall be made to meet their friends, but they are careless of them owing to being preoccupied with their own affairs and they shall stand in such awe that they shall never think about others.

Proceeding with further depiction of that awe inspiring scene, the blessed Verse further adds that the sinners would desire to victimize their children so that they may find deliverance from the torments in store for them on that Day.

The blessed Verses 12-14 say:

"And his wife and his brother, his tribe who protected him at all times, and all the people on the earth, so that he may find deliverance."

The torments to be inflicted upon them on that Day shall be so awe inspiring that man shall desire to ransom himself by victimizing his beloved ones, his children, wives, brothers, and kith and kin who used to protect him at all times. He shall even desire to victimize all the people so that he may find deliverance from the torments on the Day of Resurrection.

The Arabic verbal form

yawaddu ("he would desire")

derives from w-d-d denoting "desire."

The Arabic verbal form

yaftadi ("ransom oneself from")

derives from f-d-' implying protecting oneself from afflictions against some payment.

The Arabic nominal form fasila is used in the sense of the tribe and family from whom one descends (literally: is cut off), though it connotes offering shelter and safe haven. At any rate, filial ties as well as those with one's spouse, brothers, and kith and kin shall all fall victims to deliverance from torments, though they shall be of no avail.

It is noteworthy that we are supposed to turn into the people of Hell for the sake of the welfare of our spouse and children and obtaining the satisfaction of our friends and relatives, since they shall be of no avail to us on the Day of Resurrection.

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 15-18

كَلَّا إِنَّهَا لَظَىٰ
نَزَّاعَةً لِّلشَّوَىٰ
تَدْعُو مَنْ أَدْبَرَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ
وَجَمَعَ فَأَوْعَىٰ

15. By no means! It shall be flames of fire.
16. Taking away hands, feet, and head skin!
17. Calling those who turned their backs to Divine Command
18. And those who amassed wealth and concealed it.

Addressing all such desires, the blessed Verse 15 says:

"By no means! No ransom shall be accepted. There shall be burning flames of fire constantly ablaze consuming whatever lies beside it.

The blessed Verse 16 says that the flames take away hands, fee, and skin head. The Arabic word latha implies "flame" and it is also one of the names of Hell, both senses are possible in the blessed Verses in question. The Arabic word naza'a is applied to something which is consecutive.

Shawa is used in the sense of "hands and feet and the sides of the body," though it also connotes broiling; the former sense is herein intended, since when burning flames touch something, they first burn its sides and extremities and take them away.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the word is here in used in the sense of skin (of the body), though some others hold that it is applied to head skin and calf (foot). All these senses are applicable to the context, taking into account the aforesaid broad semantic domain. It would be surmising to note that despite all these afflictions, the victims shall not die.

The blessed Verse 17 makes a reference to those who fall prey to such fire, saying that theses burning flames call unto themselves those who turned away from Divine Commands and disobeyed him.

The blessed Verse 18 says that they amassed wealth and concealed it without expending it in Allah's Cause. Thus, the burning fire constantly calls unto itself the sinners by the God given verbal or non-verbal language.

The victims shall be those who turned away from faith disobeying God Almighty and His Messenger (S) on the one hand, and were preoccupied with amassing lawful and unlawful wealth and concealing it without according attention to the rights of the needy or even comprehending the reason behind the bestowal of Divine Bounties upon them.

Surah al-Ma’arij - Verses 19-23

إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا

إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا

وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا

إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ

الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ

19. Man was created impatient and avaricious,
20. Irritable when evil touches him,
21. And impeding others when good touches him.
22. Except those who establish their ritual prayers.
23. Those who remain steadfast in establishing their ritual prayers.

Having recounted some of the torments in store for sinners on the Day of Resurrection, the blessed Verses in question treat of the character traits of the disbelieving and the truly believing, stating the reasons behind the torments and the deliverance in store for them.

The blessed Verses 19-21 reflect that man is created avaricious and impatient, irritable when evil touches him impeding others when good touches him. Some Qur’an exegetes and lexicographers maintain that the Arabic word hulu‘ denotes “avaricious,” though some others hold that it implies “impatient.”

The blessed Verses 20 and 21 provide further explanation as to the meaning of the Arabic word in question. The former meaning makes a reference to three moral vices of such people, namely avarice, restlessness, and niggardliness. The latter refers to restlessness and niggardliness. Both senses may be implied by the word hulu‘, since the two are dependent on each other. In other words, avaricious people are oftentimes niggardly and impatient against incidents and vice versa.

The blessed Verses 22 and 23 treats of further character traits of the believing preceded by the conjunction “except” (illa), saying that those who establish their ritual prayers are exceptions, those who are steadfast in the establishment of their ritual prayers.

Such characteristic of theirs establishes and maintains their constant ties with Divine Threshold. Such nexus is created and maintained by the establishment of ritual prayers that impede man from committing vices, fostering his heart and spirit, makes him remember God Almighty at all times, and thereby impedes him from plunging into vanity, arrogance, concupiscent desires, and bondage in satanic shackles and fetters.

It is needless to say that steadfastness in establishing prayers does not entail their establishment at all times, but it indicates that they establish their ritual prayers at certain times. Generally speaking, steadfastness in doing any good deed positively affects man’s heart.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

“The most beloved of acts before God Almighty is what is done constantly, even if it happens to be seemingly insignificant.”[9]

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that what is intended herein is that whenever man regards one of the supererogatory things as an obligation and constantly does the deed.[10] Another tradition narrated from the Noble Imam (as) reflects that the blessed Verse in question concerns the establishment of obligatory ritual prayers.[11]

The difference may lie in the fact that "protection" befits the establishment of obligatory prayers which must be performed at certain times, though "constancy and steadfastness" befit supererogatory prayers, since man may perform them and fail to do likewise at other times.

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 24-28

وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَعْلُومٌ

لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ

وَالَّذِينَ يُصَدِّقُونَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ مُشْفِقُونَ

إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّهِمْ غَيْرُ مَأْمُونٍ

24. And those in whose wealth there is a recognized right

25. For the mendicant and the deprived,

26. And those who stand in awe against Divine Recompense,

27. And those who find no deliverance from the torment of their Lord.

28. The torment of their Lord is that before which none can feel secure.

Following a treatment of the establishment of ritual prayers as the best deed and the best state of the believing, the blessed Verses 24 and 25 dealt with those in whose possessions there is some recognized right for the mendicant and the deprived. Thus, they maintain their ties with both the Creator and the created.

In this respect, some Qur'an exegetes maintain that

"recognized right"

herein implies alms tax (zakat) whose measure is apportioned and it should be paid to the mendicant and the deprived. It is known that the Chapter in question is Meccan and the Divine Decree as to the payment of tax alms had not been revealed in Mecca, or even if it had been revealed, the measure had not been apportioned.

Thus, some other exegetes hold that

"recognized right"

herein implies something other than alms tax which one feels obliged to pay to the needy. In this respect, a tradition is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that upon being asked as to the exegesis of the blessed Verse, he said that it was something other than the alms tax and the blessed Verse concerned those upon whom God Almighty bestowed wealth and they paid one to three thousand of which to help their next of kin and help with the removal of adversity from amongst their people.[12]

Regarding the difference between the mendicant and the deprived, it may be said that the former express their needs and ask for assistance, whereas the latter may not act likewise owing to shame and dignity. It is narrated

from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying that the deprived are those who take troubles to earn a living, though they are involved with financial straits.[13]

The blessed Verses 26-28 make a reference to the third and the fourth characteristics of theirs, saying that those who believe in the Day of Recompense and stand in awe against Divine torment, since they find no deliverance from Divine Chastisement. They believe in the Day of Recompense.

In this respect, it may be mentioned that the Arabic present verbal form yusaddiqun reflects progression, implying that they are attentive at all times that the records of past deeds shall be taken into account on that Day. Some Qur'an exegetes hold that the verbal form is indicative of the confirmation of certain acts, namely acting upon obligations and abstaining from committing unlawful acts.

However, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse implies theoretical and practical confirmation.

Since some people may believe in the Day of Recompense but imagine that they shall not be chastised, the blessed Verse is saying that the believers find not deliverance from Divine torments, namely they feel obliged at all times to act upon Divine Commands and regard their righteous good deeds as insignificant and their sins as grave.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) that providing his child with admonitions, he said:

"O my child! Stand in awe before God Almighty such that even if you happen to have done all the righteous deeds in this world, He may not accept them and set your hopes on Him, such that even if you have had committed all the sins in this world, He may forgive your sins."[14]

Even the Noble Prophet said:

"No one shall be admitted to Paradise for his deeds.

Upon being asked:

"Even you?"

He replied:

"Yes, even me, unless I will be granted Divine Graciousness."

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 29-31

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ

إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ

فَمَنِ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ

29. And those who guard their chastity.

30. And do not engage in sexual intercourse, except with their wives and female slaves [who are like their wives], but they are not blameworthy for having been engaged in sexual intercourse with them.

31. But whoever seeks beyond that shall be a trespasser [of Divine Bounds].

The preceding blessed Verses treated of four characteristics of the true believers and those who will be the people of Paradise and the blessed Verses in question deal with further characteristics.

The blessed Verses 29 and 30 say:

"They are the people who protect themselves from unchastity and do not engage in sexual intercourse, except with their wives and female slaves and they will not be blamed for such engagement."

The sexual drive is one of the easily unchecked human drives and the source of many a sin, such that some hold that its trace may be found in all serious criminal cases. Thus, checking the drive serves as a significant token of fear of God Almighty.

It is worthy of note that checking the drive follows acts like establishment of ritual prayers, helping the needy, believing in the Day of Resurrection, and fearing Divine torments.

The exception following the check reflects that the drive is not to be totally removed and people are to move against the laws of creation like monks, nuns, and some priests; it is logically impossible, since many a monk and nun have failed to remove the drive from their lives and even if they do not officially marry, but many of them privately engage in sexual activities.

Such instances of disgrace and ignominy abound in the world and Christian historians, e.g. Will Durant, have unveiled instances of such unchastity and indecency.

The Arabic plural nominal form azwaj comprises permanent and temporary wives. Some have imagined that the blessed Verse negates temporary marriage, since they do not notice that it is also a kind of marriage.

Laying further emphasis on the issue, the blessed Verse 31 says:

"But whoever seeks beyond that shall be a trespasser [of Divine Bounds]."

Thus, the Islamic faith plans a society in which innate natural drives may find vents without entailing unchastity and indecency. It is noteworthy that female slaves used to possess many a legal right of wives, but dealing with such issue is presently out of the question.

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 32-35

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ هُم بِشَهَادَاتِهِمْ قَائِمُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ

أُولَٰئِكَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ مُّكْرَمُونَ

32. And those who keep their trusts and covenants.

33. And those who stand firm in their true testimonies.

34. And those who guard their ritual prayers.

35. Such shall be honored in the Gardens.

Reference is made to another characteristics of their in the blessed Verse 32, saying

"Those who keep their trusts and covenants."

It is noteworthy that the Arabic word

amana ("trust")

encompasses a broad range of meanings implying not only different earthly trusts of people but also Divine ones and also those of the Prophets and Infallible Imams (as). Each of the Divine Bounties is one of His trusts. Likewise, social positions, particularly leadership, are amongst the most important trusts.

Thus, it is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as) concerning the exegesis of the blessed Verse

"Verily Allah commands you to restore the trusted things to their owners"

that people are commanded to restore rulership and guardianship to their worthy guardians.[15]

It is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[16]

"Verily We did offer the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and were afraid of it; but man bore it. He was unjust and ignorant."

Above all, it is incumbent upon Muslims to preserve Divine religion and His Book, as His Greatest of trusts.

The Arabic term

'ahd ("covenant")

implies a wide semantic range, including both people's and Divine covenants, since the term is applied to any kind of obligation vested with someone. Therefore, one who believes in God Almighty and His Messenger (S) has indubitably accepted great obligations. Great emphasis is laid by the Islamic faith on keeping one's trusts and covenants as one of the most significant tokens of true faith.

The blessed Verse 33 adds that it is the characteristic of the believers and those who rise bear true testimony, since bearing just witness and refraining from concealing the same are most significant pillars of administering justice in human society.

They inquire as to the reasons behind bearing testimony against people entailing in their animosity and thereby creating problems for themselves. Such people are indifferent toward human rights, devoid of social spirit, and irresponsible toward administration of justice.

It is in this vein that the Holy Qur'an recurrently calls Muslims unto bearing true witness and regards its concealment as a sin[17]. The issue is of particular significance in Islamic law serving as the pillar of proving many an individual and social law governed by particular laws and rulings.

The last characteristic of the good is mentioned in the blessed Verse 34, which once again refers to the establishment of ritual prayers, mentioned above in the opening blessed Verses, saying:

"those who guard their ritual prayers."

Reference was made above of the point as per which obligatory ritual prayers are herein intended by salat. Reference was already made of supererogatory ritual prayers.

The first characteristic alludes to steadfastness in establishing such prayers, though the one in question make mention of acting upon the rules, pillars, and the characteristics of the same through which such prayers are

preserved from corruption and the spirit of salat, the presence of mind while performing it, is reinforced.

Thus, the moral impediments to its acknowledgement are removed and it is regarded by no means as a repetition. Such beginning and end reflect that above all, according attention to the establishment of ritual prayers is the most significant characteristic of the believers, since it is the most exalted school of spiritual growth and the most significant means of the purification of the soul and society.

Finally, the blessed Verse indicates the final goal of those who possess such characteristics.

In the same manner that the preceding Verses were indicative of the final goal of the sinners, the blessed Verse 35 reflects tersely that those who possess such characteristics shall dwell in the Gardens of Paradise and shall be cherished from all respects, as they are Allah's guests for whom all means of comfort and hospitality will have been available by the Most-Compassionate and the Omnipotent Allah.

The twain expressions,

jannat ("gardens")

and

mukramun ("honored")

allude to the material and spiritual Bounties bestowed upon such people.

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 36-39

فَمَالِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قِبَلَكَ مُهْطِعِينَ

عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ عِزِينَ

أَيَطْمَعُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ أَن يُدْخَلَ جَنَّةَ نَعِيمٍ

كَلَّا ۖ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُم مِّمَّا يَعْلَمُونَ

36. What is the matter with the disbelievers who hasten to come to you,

37. In groups on the right and on the left expecting to be admitted to Paradise?

38. Does everyone of them aspire to enter the Paradise abounding in Divine Bounties?

39. No, that is not like that! We have created them out of that which they know!

The preceding Verses treated of the characteristics of the believers and the disbelievers and their fates. The blessed Verses in question deal with the disbelievers and their derision of sacred matters.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that these blessed Verses were revealed concerning some polytheists who upon hearing the Noble Prophet (S) reciting some Resurrection Verses to the Muslims in Mecca, gathered to utter that if there be Resurrection, they will enjoy a far better state in the Hereafter than those believing him, since they enjoy a further comfortable life compared to those believing in him.

The blessed Verses 36-38 respond to their claims saying:

"What is the matter with the disbelievers who hasten to come to you, in groups on the right and on the left expecting to be admitted to Paradise?

Does every one of them aspire to enter the Paradise abounding in Divine Bounties?"

How do they expect to be admitted to Paradise with their unworthy deeds? The Arabic plural nominal form muhti'in is the accusative plural form of muhti' denoting one walking hastily with his neck raised up in quest of something and at times walks with his neck raised up searching for intelligence.

The Arabic nominal form 'izin is applied to scattered groups and at times to being related to others, since groups getting together are somehow related or they pursue one single goal, hence the application of the word 'iza to a group.

At any rate, the vain polytheists produced numerous, similar, unfounded claims and regarded their comfortable life, consequent to their unlawful acts like plunder as their exalted rank before Divine Threshold resorting to baseless analogies as to their elevated ranks in the Hereafter.

It is true that they did not believe in Resurrection as reflected in the Holy Qur'an, but at times they treated of it as a possibility, saying that had there been Resurrection, they would have such and such exalted positions in the Hereafter. They might have aimed at deriding such beliefs.

The blessed Verse 39 responds to their false claims, saying:

"No, that is not like that! We have created them out of that which they know!"

Such response aims to shatter their vanity, since it is said that they know from what they were created: a worthless drop of semen. So, what is the reason behind their vanity?

Furthermore, the blessed Verse responds to those who deride the belief in Resurrection by saying that if they entertain doubts as to the veracity of Resurrection, they may accord attention to the fact that God Almighty creates perfect beings out of a worthless drop of semen that undergoes developments in womb each and every day and it is created anew each time.

The other point is that such people whose record of deeds abounds with sins may not expect to be admitted to Paradise, since a being created out of a worthless drop of semen is materially ignoble and nobilities are consequent to having faith and doing righteous good deeds which they lack. So, how do they expect to set foot in the Gardens of Paradise?

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 40-41

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِرَبِّ الْمَشَارِقِ وَالْمَغَارِبِ إِنَّا لَقَادِرُونَ

عَلَىٰ أَن نُّبَدِّلَ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ

40. Therefore, I swear by the Lord of all the points of sunrise and sunset in the east and the west that surely We are All-Able

41. To replace them by others better than them and We are Invincible.

Instances of the singular form of "east and west" are also attested in the Holy Qur'an, as in:

"And to Allah belong the east and the west"[18].

The expression at times appears in the dual form, as in:

"The Lord of the two easts and the Lord of the two wests"[19].

The plural form also appears, as in the blessed Verse in question. Some narrow-minded people have considered these expressions to be contradictory, whereas they harmoniously point to one point: the sun rises from a new point and sets in another new point each and every day, hence there are as many sunrises and sunsets as the number of the days of the year.

Furthermore, two easts and two wests are distinguished amongst so many easts and wests: the summer and winter solstices when the sun reaches its zenith in the tropic of Cancer and the tropic of Capricorn. Besides these two distinct solstices, there are two spring and autumn equinoxes when the day and the night are equal.

Some maintain that

"the Lord of the easts and the Lord of the wests"

alludes to the same phenomenon, a point which is noteworthy.

However, the singular attestations solely lay emphasis on the east and the west without according any attention to individual instances. Therefore, the aforesaid expressions convey certain points urging man to heed the alterations in the sunrise and the sunset and the regular alterations of the solar orbits.

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 42-44

فَذَرْهُمْ يَخُوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ

يَوْمَ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ سِرَاعًا كَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ نُصُبٍ يُوفِضُونَ

خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ

42. Therefore, leave them to plunge in vain talk and play about, until they meet their Promised Day.

43. The Day when they shall come out of the graves instantly as racing toward their idols,

44. With their eyes lowered in fear, enwrapped by humility and ignominy. [It shall be said unto them:] That is the Day which was promised unto you.

These closing Verses of the blessed Chapter warn the obdurate disbelievers mocking Resurrection and belief in the Islamic faith, saying:

"Therefore, leave them to plunge in vain talk and play about, until they meet their Promised Day. The Day when they shall come out of the graves instantly as racing toward their idols, with their eyes lowered in fear, enwrapped by humility and ignominy. [It shall be said unto them:] That is the Day which was promised unto you."

Such decisive arguments are sufficient, since they are neither sensible nor prepared to wake up. They are abandoned to plunged into their false beliefs and engage themselves in child play until the Promised Day, namely the Day of Resurrection happens.

The blessed Verse 43 depicts that Day and its awe inspiring tokens, saying that they shall leave their graves instantly on that Day as if they hasten toward their idols in celebrations or mourning. Such dramatic juxtaposition aims at deriding their false beliefs in this world.

The Arabic word ajdath is the plural form of jadath. Sira'an is an adverb of manner used in the sense of "instantly."

The Arabic nominal form nusub is the plural form of nasb denoting something installed somewhere, though it herein connotes the stone idols installed at certain places to be worshipped by idolaters by shedding the blood of sacrificial animals on them. The difference between nasb and sanam is that the latter had a particular form, but the former was a formless rock worshipped by idolaters.

The Arabic verbal form

yufidhun ("race, hasten"),

cognate with ifadha, implies rapid movement like that of water running from its fountainhead. Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that nusub implies the banners installed amongst armies or caravans at certain places toward which everybody hastens.

The blessed Verse 44 further treats of other tokens, saying that on that Day, their eyes shall be lowered owing to the intensity of horror looking at their surroundings with humility while they shall be enwrapped by ignominy and humility.

The blessed Verse closes by saying that that is the Day promised to them, though they used to deride it, saying that granted that such Day exists, they shall be far better in terms of convenience and comfort compared with the believers. Nonetheless, they dare not raise their heads owing to horror and disgrace. They shall be covered with the dust of humility. They shall plunge into sorrows, but their regrets shall be of no avail.

O Lord! Protect us by Your Compassion on that awe inspiring Day.

O Lord! Rank us amongst the believers who have kept their promise to You and have obeyed Your Commands.

Notes

1. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, the opening Verses of the Chapter.
2. Ibid., vol. 10, p. 350.
3. al-Ghadir, vol. 1, pp. 239-246.
4. 97:4
5. 32:5
6. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 413; Shaykh Saduq's Amali.
7. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 353; Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 10, p. 6761.
8. 80:37
9. al-Mu'jam al-Mufahris li-Alfa al-Hadith, vol. 2, p. 160.
10. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 416.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 417.
13. Ibid.
14. Jami' al-Akhbar, p. 113.
15. Tafsir Burhan, vol. 1, p. 380.
16. 33:72
17. 2:140,283; 5:106; 65:2
18. 2:115
19. 55:17

Surah Nuh, Chapter 71

(Noah)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 28

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has 28 Verses and depicts the ongoing struggle of the Truth against Falsehood and treats of the stratagems to be employed by the followers of Truth.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic Faith (S) as saying:

"One who recites Surah Nuh shall be ranked amongst the believers enwrapped by the light of Prophet Noah's Call."[1]

Summary of the Account of Noah (as). The detailed account of Prophet Noah (as) is attested in Chapters 7, 11, 23, 26, 54, and 71, though it is most elaborated in Chapter 11, Verses 25-49.

His people claimed that he was in error;

("The leaders of his people said: 'Indeed, we see you in plain error"[2]***);***

they mocked him at all times;

("And when those who disbelieved see you, they take you not except for mockery"[3]***);***

they called him light-headed and insane;

("insane and scatterbrained"[4]***).***

However, the Prophet (as) still provided them with guidance. Like other Prophets (as), he acted upon his Prophetic call by calling people unto monotheism, obedience to the Divinely appointed leader, and fear of God Almighty.

He began by warning his people against disobedience to God Almighty and imparted his Prophetic call to all people, though confronted with their obduracy, he cursed them;

("And Noah said: 'My Lord! Leave not one of the disbelievers on the earth!"[5]***).***

Noah (as) is the only Prophet whose term of Prophetic call (950 years) is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. He is the only Prophet (as) whose family and people disobeyed him. He also lived the longest lifespan.

Ordered by God Almighty, he built the Ark to rescue all animals and serve as a means of human deliverance from the tempest, hence the designation the second father of mankind (Àdam Abu al-Bashar al-Thani).

He was also the first Messenger of Allah upon whom the Book was revealed and he was appointed to impart his Prophetic call to the world (ulu al-'azm).[6] God Almighty had the earth drowned owing to his curse. He was the only Prophet (as) whose followers did not exceed ten in number after the passage of 950 years.

Surah Nuh - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ أَنْ أَنذِرْ قَوْمَكَ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَطِيعُونِ

1. We sent Noah to his people and We said: "Warn your people before there comes to them an excruciating torment."

2. He said: "O my people! I am a plain warner unto you,

3. "That you should worship Allah, refrain from disobeying Him, and obey me."

As mentioned above, the blessed Chapter in question treats of Noah's (as) Prophetic call thereby providing those who tread the Path of God Almighty with points of interest concerning calling people unto the Truth, particularly while confronting obdurate peoples.

Opening with Prophethood, the blessed Verse 1 says:

"We sent Noah to his people and We said: 'Warn your people before there comes to them an excruciating torment.'"

Such excruciating torment may be this worldly or otherworldly. Both kinds of torment are further befitting, though the torments in this world better fit the context herein. The Prophets (as) were both warners and bearers of glad tidings, but the emphasis laid on warning is owing to the fact that it oftentimes entails stronger effects, in the same way that emphasis is laid on warning and chastisement the world over in order to guarantee law enforcement.

According to the second blessed Verse, Prophet Noah (as) was the first Prophet upon whom Divine Scriptures had been revealed and his Prophetic call addressed the world. Upon receiving Divine Command, he went to his people and said that he was a plain warner to them.

The blessed Verse 3 is saying that the goal of his Prophetic call was to urge people to worship God Almighty alone, fear Him, and obey his commands which were Divine Commands.

Prophet Noah (as) thus summarized his Prophetic call: worship the One God, Fear Him, Obey His Commands and Injunctions imparted which consisted of doctrines, moral principles, and Divine Law. At any rate, following the Prophets (as) is consequent to believing in monotheism, fear of God Almighty, obeying the Prophet (as), and believing in Resurrection.

Surah Nuh - Verse 4

يَغْفِرْ لَكُم مِّن ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُؤَخِّرْكُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ ۖ لَوْ كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

4. "He will forgive you of your sins and respite you to an appointed term. But, when the term of Allah comes, it cannot be delayed, if you but knew."

Believing in God Almighty and doing righteous deeds entail absolution of sins, longevity, and warding off afflictions.

There are two appointed times for man, one which may be postponed through worshipping and fearing God Almighty and it may be precipitated by committing vices and sins and the other is the irrevocable appointed time (ajal mussama).

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that longevity and death are due to beneficence and committing sins respectively and there are few people who live a natural life or die a natural death.[7] People are encouraged in this blessed Verse to answer to the Divine Call and be absolved of their sins.

It is worthy of note that the noble dictum "Islam covers and obliterates what precedes it" is not exclusive to the Islamic faith but is prevalent in all Divine and monotheistic religions. The blessed Verse proceeds to say that God Almighty will respite you to an appointed time and will prolong your lifetime and will ward off the torment from you.

The point is that when the Divine, inevitable, and irrevocable appointed time comes, it may not be postponed, though some people are unaware of it. The topic in question may be further clarified by an illustration.

Man is physically incapable of enjoying an everlasting life and even if all bodily organs function properly, they, particularly the heart, will stop functioning through exhaustion. Nonetheless, following sanitary rules and taking timely precautions may prolong human lifetime, though failing to act upon such rules may seriously shorten it.

The blessed Verse in question clearly reflects that committing sins entails shortening of lifetime, since it is said that if you believe and fear God, He will prolong your life and postpone your death. Taking the severe blows inflicted upon human body and soul by committing sins, the point in question becomes further facile to comprehend.

The point is accorded particular emphasis in Islamic traditions. A detailed discussion regarding conditional and irrevocable appointed terms may be found above under 6:2. Now, let us turn toward three traditions narrated concerning the consequences of committing sins and worshipping God Almighty.

1. It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) saying:

"If you intend to prolong your lifetime, maintain your blood ties [namely take good care of your relatives, and if you wish that God maintains your health, pay alms in abundance."[8]

2. It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) as saying:

"Maintaining blood ties entails five advantages: acceptance of deeds [before God Almighty], affluence, warding off afflictions, convenience in the reckoning of one's deeds [on the Day of Resurrection], and longevity."[9]

3. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The deeds of those who tell the truth are accepted. One who entertains good intentions will receive increase in his Provision. He who does good to his family will be granted longevity."[10]

Surah Nuh - Verses 5-9

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِي لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا

فَلَمْ يَزِدْهُمْ دُعَائِي إِلَّا فِرَارًا

وَإِنِّي كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ جَعَلُوا أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَاسْتَغْشَوْا ثِيَابَهُمْ وَأَصَرُّوا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا اسْتِكْبَارًا

ثُمَّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُهُمْ جِهَارًا

ثُمَّ إِنِّي أَعْلَنتُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرْتُ لَهُمْ إِسْرَارًا

5. He said: "O my Lord! I have called my people unto you night and day,

6. "But all my calling added nothing but to their flight from truth.

7. And every time I called unto them to believe in You that You might forgive them, they thrust their fingers into their ears, covered themselves up with their garments, persisted in their denial, and magnified themselves in arrogance.

8. "Then, I called to them openly to believe in and serve You.

9. And I proclaimed to them in public and I have appealed to them in private.

Proceeding with the account of Prophet Noah's (as) Prophetic Call unto his people, he is quoted in the blessed Verses in question as complaining to his Lord. His words are quite instructive and may be great advantages to all propagators of religious doctrines.

The Prophet (as) is quoted as saying that he called his people unto God Almighty and he spared no efforts in providing them with guidance, though his call was of no avail and added nothing but to their flight from truth.

It is a source of surprise that calling toward something may entail flight from it. Nonetheless, taking into account the fact that obdurate enemies of truth, upon hearing the calls of the men of God, deny the truth and such denial makes them further distance from God Almighty and reinforces their disbelief and hypocrisy.

The same theme is treated elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[11]:

"And We send down of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe and it increases the wrong doers nothing but loss."

According to the Glorious Qur'an, the Divine Revelation is a guide to the God fearing[12], since human heart must entertain at least a flicker of fear of God Almighty so that it may pave the path for the acknowledgement of the truth. It is the stage of the spirit of seeking the truth and preparedness for acknowledging Divine Truth.

The blessed Verse 7 quotes Prophet Noah (as) as saying that whenever he called unto them to believe in God Almighty so that He might forgive their sins, they thrust their fingers in their ears, covered themselves with their garments, persisted in their denial and disbelief, and their vanity waxed.

They thrust their fingers in their ears in order not to hear the truth and covering themselves with their garments implies that they made further attempts not to listen to the true call and thereby kept themselves from looking at the Noble Prophet Noah (as).

They made attempts to impede themselves from hearing his words and looking at him. It is quite surprising that such people had reached such extent of animosity against the truth such that they deprived themselves from seeing, hearing, and thinking.

The blessed Verse reflects that Prophet Noah (as) untiringly strove in his long life to call his people unto embracing faith.

It is also indicative of one of the most significant factors behind their misfortune, namely their arrogance and vanity, since they regarded it far below their league to obey a man, be he Allah's Messenger, whose hear was imbued with knowledge and fear of God Almighty. Such vanity and arrogance have at all times served as impediments to treading the path of Truth and the adverse consequence thereof are reflected throughout history in the lives of the disbelievers.

In the blessed Verses 8 and 9, Prophet Noah (as) proceeds with his invocations before Divine Threshold, saying that he called his people to monotheism and worshipping God and called them in public with a loud voice to believe in Allah.

He was not content with his public calls, but he expressed the truth of monotheism and belief in God Almighty in private as well. It lies in human nature that when he treads the path of falsehood such that corruption is rooted in his heart and turns into his second nature, he will be indifferent toward the calls of the men of God and clear Divine Calls.

Not only the people of Prophet Noah (as) thrust their fingers in their ears and wrapped themselves with their garments to deprive themselves of Truth, but also there were people at the time of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that upon hearing his sweet voice when reciting Qur'anic Verses made such clamor and havoc that they impeded others from hearing him.

According to a Qur'anic blessed Verse[13]:

"And those who disbelieve say: 'Listen not to this Qur'an and make noise in the midst of its recitation so that you may overcome.'"

In this vein, it is narrated in the account of the bloody battle at Karbala' that when the lord of the martyrs, Imam Husayn (as), intended to provide the foes with guidance and thereby wake them up, they created such havoc that people could barely hear him.[14]

Similar form of confrontation are to be witnessed today when we notice that the followers of falsehood have created such atmosphere with harmful recreations, devastating kinds of music, narcotics, and the like that people, particularly the youth, may not be able to hear the sweet voice of the men of God and the blessed Qur'anic Verses.

Surah Nuh - Verses 10-14

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا

يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُم مِّدْرَارًا

وَيُمْدِدْكُم بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ أَنْهَارًا

مَّا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا

وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا

10. "I said [unto them]: 'Ask forgiveness from your Lord since He is Oft-Forgiving.

11. 'So that he sends Bountiful rain unto you in abundance,

12. 'And give you increase in affluence and offspring and bestow upon you verdant gardens and rivers."

13. What is the matter with you that you do not believe in Divine Glory.

14. While He has created you in stages.

In these blessed Verses, Prophet Noah (as) proceeds with his impressive guidance addressing his obdurate and disobedient people by encouraging them and bearing glad tidings to them and promising them that if they desist from committing sins and disbelief, God Almighty will grant them His Bounties and Graciousness.

Addressing his Lord, he is saying that he asked them to ask their Oft-Forgiving Lord for forgiveness of their sins. The blessed following Verse reflects that He not only absolves them of their sins, but upon turning toward him they will be granted Bountiful rain from the heaven in abundance and thus they will be granted abundant material and spiritual Bounties.

The Arabic adverbial form

midraran ("showering abundant rain")

derives from d-r-r denoting to flow plentifully.

It is noteworthy that the blessed Verse s saying that abundant rain will be sent to you from the heaven, but as it will be the rain of Divine Mercy, it will entail neither devastation nor harm, but it will lead to verdure and abundance everywhere.

The blessed Verse 12 is saying that He will increase your affluence and offspring and will bestow verdant gardens and rivers upon you. Thus, five great material Bounties, timely, plentiful, and fruitful rain and rivers, and one great spiritual Bounty, absolution from the impurities of disbelief and disobedience, are promised to them. Believe in and fearing God Almighty, as reflected in the Holy Qur'an, entail prosperity in this world and the Hereafter.

According to a number of traditions, upon turning away from Prophet Noah's (as) call, such obdurate people were entangled with famine; a large number of their offspring were destroyed; most of their women became sterile. Prophet Noah (as) said unto them that if they believed their afflictions would be removed, but they paid him no heed and persisted in their obduracy and disobedience such that the final torment was sent to them and cause their total perdition.

Surah Nuh - Verses 15-16

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا

وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ سِرَاجًا

15. Know you not how Allah has created the seven heavens one above another?

16. And has made the moon a light therein, and made the sun a brilliant lamp?

Against the obdurate polytheists, Prophet Noah (as) produced his logical and meaningful arguments in the preceding blessed Verses to make them acquainted with the depth of their being so that they may experience the material realm. He called them to behold and examine the Divine Signs in the great world of creation and intended to familiarize them with the spiritual realm.

Beginning with the heaven, he asks:

"Know you not how Allah has created the seven heavens one above another?"

The Arabic verbal noun tibaq denotes comparison and contrast at times implies being laid on top of something and also harmony and accord between two things; both latter senses are herein intended. The former reflects that the seven heavens are created one above another as mentioned above in the exegesis regarding the seven heavens.

An exegesis worthy of note is that whatever is observed by armed and unarmed eyes concerning the celestial bodies constitutes the first heaven on which six other heavens are created one above the other, defying modern science, though man may be able to discover those surprising and vast realms one after the other in future.

The seven heavens were treated in details above under 2:29.

The blessed Verse 16 says that God Almighty has made the moon a light therein, and made the sun a brilliant lamp. It is true that billions of brilliant celestial bodies, far more brilliant than the suns and moon in our solar system exist in the seven heavens, but the latter two are of significance in our life since they give light in the day and at night respectively.

The Arabic word

siraj ("lamp")

implying the sun and the word

nur ("light")

reflect that the light of the sun are engendered from within in the manner of a lamp, but that of the moon is from without, since it is a reflection of the former.

Thus, the word nur, which is broader in its semantic domain, is applied herein. Such different expressions are reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an. Further details in this respect were mentioned under 10:5.

Surah Nuh - Verses 17-20

وَاللَّهُ أَنبَتَكُم مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ نَبَاتًا

ثُمَّ يُعِيدُكُمْ فِيهَا وَيُخْرِجُكُمْ إِخْرَاجًا

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ بِسَاطًا

لِّتَسْلُكُوا مِنْهَا سُبُلًا فِجَاجًا

17. And Allah has brought you forth from the earth.

18. Then He will return you into it, and bring you forth.

19. And Allah has made for you the earth a wide expanse,

20. That you may go about therein in broad roads and its valleys and reach your desired destination.

The blessed Verse 17 turns, once again, toward the creation of man, saying:

"Allah has brought you forth from the earth."

The employment of inbat denoting "to germinate, cause to sprout, make grow, cultivate" applied to man reflects that man was created from dust and all his nourishment by which he grows comes from the earth, directly, like vegetables, seeds, and fruit, or indirectly, like meat; furthermore, there exist many a similarity between man and plants and many a laws as to nourishment, growth, and reproduction also apply to mankind. Such expression is quite meaningful reflecting that in terms of Guidance, the Lord is not only an Instructor, but also He is like a Gardener who places the seeds of plants in the required environment so that their potentialities may come into view.

The blessed Verse 18 treats of Resurrection, a complicated issue to the polytheists and disbelievers, saying that He will return you to the earth from which you grew and he brings you forth once again. In other words, man is from dust and will return to it.

The One who was All-Able to create you from dust is Omnipotent to revive you after having been turned into dust. Such transfer from Divine Unity to Resurrection is quite interestingly reflected in the blessed Verses in question bearing witness to the intimate interrelation between the twain.

Thus, Prophet Noah (as) produces arguments as to Divine Unity and Resurrection to convince the disbelievers to pay heed to the system of creation.

The blessed Verse 19 further treats of the Sings of Divine Unity in this vast world, saying:

"Allah has made for you the earth a wide expanse."

It is not that rough and uneven to impede rest and travel, not that soft to impede movement, not that hot to cause inconvenience, not that cold to impede a comfortable life. Besides, all the requirements of life are available on its expanse.

The blessed Verse 20 is saying that man may travel through the valleys. The vast expanse of the earth allows man to pass through vast paths and valleys and reach his desired destinations. The Arabic word fijaj is applied to a valley located between two mounts and also to vast roads.

Thus, Prophet Noah (as) herein alludes to Divine diverse Bounties on the earth as well as human body and life serving as arguments proving Divine Unity and Resurrection. However, such warnings, tidings, and logical arguments may not impress such obdurate people, as they persisted in their denial and disbelief whose consequences are to follow in the following blessed Verses.

Surah Nuh - Verses 21-22

قَالَ نُوحٌ رَّبِّ إِنَّهُمْ عَصَوْنِي وَاتَّبَعُوا مَن لَّمْ يَزِدْهُ مَالُهُ وَوَلَدُهُ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

وَمَكَرُوا مَكْرًا كُبَّارًا

21. [Having despaired of guiding them] Noah said: "My Lord! They have disobeyed me and followed those whose wealth and children availed them of no increase but loss.

22. "And they have plotted a mighty plot.

Having made his utmost efforts for hundreds of years, he noticed that his people, except for a few, persisted in polytheism, idolatry, error, and corruption. Thus, he despaired of providing them with guidance and turned toward Divine Threshold invoking God Almighty to chastise them.

As reflected in the blessed Verses in question, Prophet Noah (as) said:

"O Lord! They disobeyed me and followed one whose affluence and offspring availed him of no increase but loss."

Reference is here made of the leaders of his people whose only privileges consisted of affluence and offspring, though they rendered no service to the community, failed to be humble against their Creator, and employed their means to further plunge into corruption, error, vanity, and disobedience.

Taking a glance at the history of mankind, we witness that many a leader of different peoples were like them whose sole privileges rested in amassing unlawful possessions and fathering unworthy offspring and left no stone unturned to disobey God Almighty and His Messengers (as) and to impose their false beliefs upon the deprived who led their lives in bondage.

The blessed Verse 22 is saying that such leaders who were in error and led others astray employed vile stratagems. The Arabic intensified adjectival form kubbar, cognate with kibr ("arrogance, vanity"), is here in employed indefinitely and implies that they had planned satanic stratagems and ploys to lead people astray and impede them from acknowledging Noah's (as) Prophetic call.

The nature of such stratagems and ploys is unknown, but they seemingly concerned idolatry, since as per certain traditions, idolatry was unprecedented before Noah (as) and his people were its progenitors.

It is reported that between the times of Adam (as) and Noah (as), there were righteous people in whom people were interested. Satan and his followers took advantage of such interest and urged them to fashion sculptures of those righteous men.

The prospective generations consigned to oblivion the historical context of sculpturing such figures and imagined that such righteous figures were supposed to serve as objects of worship. Thus, they preoccupied themselves with worshipping them and the wrong doing arrogant thereby led them to servitude and bondage and aforesaid vile ploys worked.

Surah Nuh - Verses 23-25

وَقَالُوا لَا تَذَرُنَّ آلِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا وَلَا سُوَاعًا وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا

وَقَدْ أَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَلَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا ضَلَالًا

مِّمَّا خَطِيئَاتِهِمْ أُغْرِقُوا فَأُدْخِلُوا نَارًا فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا لَهُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنصَارًا

23. "And they said: 'You shall not leave your gods: you shall leave neither Wadd, nor Suwa', nor Yaghuth, nor Ya'uq, nor Nasr.

24. "And indeed they led many astray. And [O Allah]: Grant no increase to the wrong doers save error."

25. [At last] because of their sins they were all drowned and were made to enter Hellfire and they found none to help them save Allah.

As reflected in the blessed Verse 23 their chiefs asked them to neither abandon their gods and idols nor to acknowledge Noah's (as) Prophetic call to monotheism, worshipping an imperceptible god. They laid particular emphasis on five idols: Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq, and Nasr and bade them not to desist from worshipping them.

In the blessed Verse 24, Noah (as) says:

"O Lord! These vain and astray leaders led many people astray. O Lord! Grant the wrong doers no increase but error."

It is noteworthy that increasing error for the wrong doers and tyrants implies their deprivation from Divine Grace which leads them to misery. It may also connote some chastisement as a consequence of their wrong doing thereby God Almighty deprives them of the light of faith substituting it with disbelief.

It is noteworthy that error and disbelief are consequences of their misdeeds, though their entanglement with error and disbelief is attributed to God Almighty, since all the acts of His creatures are within His Command and it is not in contradiction with Divine Wisdom concerning belief, disbelief, guidance, and error, as such instances do not impede free will.

Finally, the blessed Verse 25 is indicative of the final Words of God as per which they were drowned consequent to having committed sins and they were made to enter the Fire.

They found none but Him to render them assistance against Divine Wrath. The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question reflects that having been drowned they immediately were made to enter the Fire. It is a source of surprise that they were made to immediately leave water and enter the Fire which is that of purgatory, since a number of Qur'anic Verses reflect that some people will be chastised in purgatory posthumously.

According to some traditions, "grave" may be either a Garden in Paradise or a pit in Hell. It may also be indicative of the Fire on the Day of Resurrection, but since Resurrection shall indubitably come before long, the Arabic passive verbal form

udkhilu ("they were made to enter")

appears in the past tense.[15]

Some Qur'an exegetes have also suggested that reference is herein made to the Fire in this world, such that God Almighty willed that a Fire appeared in the midst of the tempest and devoured them.[16]

Surah Nuh - Verses 26-27

وَقَالَ نُوحٌ رَّبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ دَيَّارًا

إِنَّكَ إِن تَذَرْهُمْ يُضِلُّوا عِبَادَكَ وَلَا يَلِدُوا إِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا

26. And Noah said: "O Lord! Leave not one single disbeliever on the earth!

27. "Since if You leave them, they will mislead Your servants, and they will beget none but the wicked and the disbelieving.

Resuming his complaints to God Almighty from his people, Noah curses them, saying:

"O Lord! Leave not one single disbeliever on the earth!"

He uttered these words when he had totally been despaired of guiding them. He had made his last attempts to call them to monotheism, though only a few believed in him. The Arabic prepositional phrase

'ala 'l-ardh ("on the earth")

reflects that Prophet Noah's (as) call as well as the following tempest and the torment were worldwide. The Arabic word dayyar, cognate with dar ("house, abode") implies one who dwells in a house. The word is also employed to imply general negation, as in "There is no soul in the house."

In the blessed Verse 27, Prophet Noah (as) produces arguments to substantiate his curse, saying

"Since if You leave them, they will mislead Your servants,"

reflecting that the curses of the Prophets (as), like that of Noah (as), did not spring from wrath, hatred, and vengeance, but he cursed his people after the passage of nine hundred and fifty years of imparting his Prophetic Call and forbearance and it was consequent to his total despair that he uttered the curse.

How did Prophet Noah (as) notice that they were not prone to believe in God Almighty, but they led God's servants astray and their offspring will be corrupt and they will lead others to error and corruption?

Some have suggested that God Almighty had granted him the knowledge of the unseen, though some have suggested that it had been thus revealed unto Noah (as), as reflected in the Holy Qur'an[17]:

"And it was revealed to Noah (as): 'None of your people will believe except those who have already believed. Therefore, be not sorrowful owing to what they used to do.'"

The same theme is to be found in numerous traditions.[18] It has been also suggested that Noah (as) had thus inductively concluded by taking into account the natural courses of the event, since his people had been called by his impressive expressions, though they failed to believed and he could not set his hopes on guiding them; furthermore, no suggestions could stand against Qur'anic Verses and traditions.

The Arabic word fajir is applied to one who commits vile deeds. The Arabic intensive present participial form kaffar denotes going to extremes in disbelief. The difference between the twain rests in practical and doctrinal aspects respectively, as it is reflected in the blessed Verses in question that Divine torments are based on Wisdom.

The prospective generations of a corrupt people who lead others to error and corruption will be jeopardized by their vile deeds. Such people are not entitled to live according to Divine Wisdom and they will be entangled with afflictions such as tempest, lightning, and earthquake, hence their effacement from the face of the earth, as the tempest obliterated Noah's (as) vile and wrong doing people from the face of the earth.

Granted that such Divine Law is not particular to any specific time and place, we are supposed to bear in mind that Divine torments are in store for the corrupt people who lead others astray and whose offspring are

disobedient and disbelievers, since there is no exception to the Law and it is a Divine Tradition that such vile people meet their dire fate.

The Arabic clause

yudhdhilu ‘ibadaka (“they mislead Your servants”)

may suggest the scarcity of those who believed in Prophet Noah’s (as) Prophetic call in such long time, though it may also imply that the deprived are forced by their wrong doing leaders to follow their beliefs.

Surah Nuh - Verse 28

رَّبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِمَن دَخَلَ بَيْتِيَ مُؤْمِنًا وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَلَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا تَبَارًا

28. “O Lord! Forgive me and my parents and all those who enter my home as believers and all the believing men and women. And to the wrong doers grant no increase but perdition!”

In the closing blessed Verse, Prophet Noah (as) thus invoked God Almighty:

“O Lord! Forgive me and my parents and all those who enter my home as believers and all the believing men and women. And to the wrong doers grant no increase but perdition!”

Invoking God Almighty for forgiveness reflects that he is saying that he spent hundreds of years in incessantly imparting his Prophetic call and forbore all the hardships in the Cause of Allah, though he had to invoke God Almighty to forgive him since he might had had neglected some priority (tark ula).

The invocation reflects that Noah (as) did not regard himself as totally free from blame. Such friends of God Almighty, after making some many efforts in Allah’s Cause still think that they might have made mistakes, but, unlike people who within their small capacities magnify themselves to the extent that they regard God Almighty obliged to grant them His Grace, Allah’s friends are never entangled with vanity and egotism.

Prophet Noah (as) actually invoked God Almighty to forgive some people: himself, lest he had neglected some priority, his parents as a token of his gratitude for their troubles, for all those few who believed in his Prophetic call and embarked the Ark which was his home, and finally for all believing men and women in the world down the centuries, thus establishing his ties with all the believers worldwide and at all times. Nonetheless, he accords particular emphasis to the destruction of the wrong doers, implying that they deserved such torment.

It is worthy of note that Qur’an exegetes are not unanimous concerning the precise sense of the Arabic nominal form bayt in this context, but different exegetes have suggested four senses: private home, mosque, Noah’s Ark, his religion.

It is narrated in this vein from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying that the word bayt herein implies

“guardianship” (wilaya),

namely whoever enters it he enters the Prophets’ homes.[19] It is narrated from Imam Ridha (as) that the mosque at Kufa was Noah’s abode and those

who entered his home are in fact those who enter the mosque at Kufa.[20] According to a tradition, Imam Husayn (as) did not slay some of the foes at Karbala', saying that he would not slay the foes whose offspring would include the believers.[21]

Finally, the story of Prophet Noah (as) possesses copious reflection in Arabic and Persian literature and particular emphasis has been accorded to the tempest and his Ark as a means of deliverance for the believers.[22] It is also worthy of note that his name designates that he invoked God Almighty and lamented for many years so that his people might be impressed and believe in God Almighty.

O Lord! When the tempest of Your Wrath comes, deliver us by the Ark of Your Mercy and that of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and his Ahl al-Bayt (as).

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"My Ahl al-Bayt are like Noah's Ark, whoever embarks it will find salvation and whoever denies it will be destroyed."[23]

Notes

1. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 359.
2. 7:60
3. 21:36
4. 54:9
5. 71:26
6. Kanz al-'Ummal, tradition 32391.
7. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 5, p. 140.
8. Safinat al-Bihar, p. 599.
9. Usul Kafi, tradition no. 3.
10. al-Khisal, p. 42.
11. 17:82
12. 2:2
13. 41:26
14. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 45, p. 8.
15. Fakhr Razi's Tafsir, vol. 30, p. 145.
16. Abu al-Futuh Razi's Tafsir, vol. 11, p. 280.
17. 11:36
18. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 428.
19. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 429.
20. Tafsir Nur, under the blessed Verse in question.
21. Mawsu'a Kalimat al-Imam Husayn, p. 505.
22. For further details, see the relevant references, e.g. A'lam Qur'an; Farhang-i Qisas-i Qur'an; Dihkhuda's Lughatnama, s.v. Nuh; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 11.
23. Wasa'il al-Shi'a; al-Gadir; Kanz al-'Ummal; Ihqaq al-Haqq; 'Abaqat al-Anwar; and other tradition sources.

Surah al-Jinn, Chapter 72

(The Jinn)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 28

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has 28 Verses. The designation of the Chapter reflects that it mainly treats of invisible creatures, the jinn, their belief in the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S), the Holy Qur'an, and Resurrection, and the groups of believers and disbelievers amongst them. The closing Verses concern the knowledge of the unseen unknown to all beings besides God Almighty.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"One who recites Surah al-Jinn many a time will never suffer from the evil eye, magic, and ploys of the Jinn and magicians but will accompany Muhammad (S). O Lord! I believe in none besides him and I will never turn toward anyone but him.[1]

Reciting the blessed Chapter would be a prelude to the awareness of its contextual meaning and applying it to one's life.

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا عَجَبًا

يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ ۖ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا

1. Say: "It has been revealed unto me that a group [of jinn] listened to me. Then, they said: 'We have heard a wondrous Qur'an,

2. 'That guides to the Straight Path. Thus, we have believed in it and we shall never associate anything with our Lord [in worship].

Occasion of Revelation

It is reported that the Noble Prophet (S) departed Mecca for the bazaar of 'Ukkath in Ta'if, aiming to call unto people to convert to the Islamic faith, though it was of no avail. On his way back to Mecca, he stayed for the night at a vale called Jinn where he recited Qur'anic Verses.

A group of the jinn heard him and converted to Islam and returned to other jinn to propagate the faith.[2] Another occasion of Revelation is reported on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas as per which the Noble Prophet (S) was reciting Qur'anic Verses while performing his morning canonical prayers.

Upon hearing the Qur'anic Verses, a group of the jinn, engaged in investigating the reasons lying behind the disconnection of heavenly

messages, said that the same was the reason. They returned unto other jinn and called them to convert to Islam.[3]

Having said the above, now let us turn to the exegesis of the Qur'anic Verses.

The first blessed Verse says:

"Say: 'It has been revealed unto me that a group [of jinn] listened to me. Then, they said: 'We have heard a wondrous Qur'an."

The clause

"It has been revealed"

reflects that the Noble Prophet (S) had not seen the jinn in person, but his awareness of their listening to the Qur'anic Verses had derived from Divine Revelation. It is noteworthy that the blessed Verse in question clearly indicates that the jinn possess reason, understanding, perception, and linguistic knowledge, and they feel the responsibility.

They attend to the differences between "wondrous" Words and ordinary speech. Addressed by the Qur'anic Verses, they feel the obligation to propagate the Word of Truth. The aforesaid points reveal some of the characteristics of these invisible living creatures, though further characteristics of theirs will be mentioned below in the same discussion.

The jinn had a reason to regard the Holy Qur'an as

"wondrous Words,"

since the Holy Qur'an is wondrous in terms of tone, impressiveness, and significance.

The Noble Prophet (S) who was Divinely appointed to impart the Message was an illiterate person from amongst the illiterate people. Such Words, in terms of their outward and inward aspects, are wondrous and different from any other speech. Thus, the jinn confessed to the Inimitability of the Holy Qur'an.

The blessed second Verse is saying that the jinn proceeded to discuss further points, as reflected the following blessed Verses in twelve clauses opening with the Arabic emphatic conjunction an.

The blessed Verse is saying that the jinn said that the Holy Qur'an leads everyone to the Straight Path; thereby we believe in it and associate nothing with our Lord in worship. It is worthy of note that the Arabic nominal form rushd encompasses a comprehensive and broad semantic scope including any privilege. The word denotes a straight, even, and clear path leading t happiness and perfection.

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 3-5

وَأَنَّهُ تَعَالَىٰ جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ يَقُولُ سَفِيهُنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ شَطَطًا

وَأَنَّا ظَنَنَّا أَن لَّن تَقُولَ الْإِنسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا

3. 'And that He, exalted is the Majesty of our Lord, has taken neither a wife nor a child.

4. 'And that the foolish amongst us uttered against Allah unworthy words.

5. 'And we thought that men and jinn would not utter a lie against Allah.

Following making mention of their belief in God and negating any kind of polytheism, the jinn thus proceeded with Divine Attributes, saying:

"Exalted is the Majesty of our Lord and Glorified is He of any similitude to the creatures and any defect and He has never adopted any wife or child."

The Arabic nominal form jadd is a polysemous word whose numerous senses include: majesty; intensity; seriousness; share, lot; and becoming new. In terms of etymology, according to Raghib in his Mufradat, the root denotes "sever, cut off."

The connotations

"majesty"

is owing to the fact that any majestic being is separated from others. Likewise, other denotations and connotations of the word may be taken into account; for instance, the word denotes "grandfather" owing to his exalted rank or his advanced years.

At any rate, the connotation of

"majesty"

is consistent with lexicographical sources and its applications.

It is also worthy of note that the jinn herein lay particular emphasis on the point that God Almighty has adopted neither a wife nor a child, which seemingly implies the negation of the superstitious beliefs held by the Arabs in that they maintained that angels were fathered by god and born of his wife adopted from amongst the jinn.

The same theme is reflected in the exegesis of another Qur'anic Verse[4]:

"And they have invented a kinship between Him and the jinn."

The blessed Verse 4 says:

"[They said that they confessed] that the foolish amongst us uttered unworthy words against Allah."

The Arabic word safih may connote a collective sense in that some of the foolish amongst the jinn maintained that god had married and had fathered children. They had deviated from the Path of Truth by uttering such unworthy words and associating partners with God in worship.

Many a Qur'anic exegete maintain that the word herein alludes to Iblis who following disobedience to Divine Commands attributed false ascriptions to God Almighty and even objected the Divine Command as to Adam's (as) prostration before Him and regarded it insensible and deemed himself superior to Adam (as).

Since Iblis had been a jinni, all the believing jinn express their hatred for him and consider his words to be unfounded. He was seemingly a scholar and an ascetic, but scholars who fail to act upon their knowledge and the ascetics who are vain and deviant clearly represent the foolish.

The Arabic word shatat implies going to extremes, hence its application to untrue words. Thus, a high bank of rivers relatively far from water is called shatt.

The blessed Verse 5 says:

"We thought that men and jinn would not utter a lie against Allah."

The blessed Verse may be a reference to this group's blind imitation of others in associating partners, wives, and children to God Almighty, saying that they blindly acknowledged such beliefs owing to their optimism as they never imagined that mankind and the jinn dare to utter such lies against God Almighty; however, consequent to their investigations and comprehension of the truth and having believed in it, they are now aware of such unworthy imitation and hence they confess to their mistakes and the deviation of the polytheists from amongst the jinn.

Surah al-Jinn - Verse 6

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقًا

6. 'And there were men amongst mankind who took shelter with the males amongst the jinn, but they increased them in their error and disobedience.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that some men sought refuge in the male jinn and their error and disobedience to God were thereby increased. The Arabic root z-h-q etymologically denotes "to cover by using force" and since error, sins, disobedience, and fear overwhelm human heart and soul and thereby cover them, hence the connotation of the word.

The clause

"but they increased them in their error and disobedience"

reflect that superstitions engender decadence in thought, fear, and error.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse indicates that male and female jinn exist, since the blessed Verse says:

"there were men amongst mankind who sought refuge in the males amongst the jinn."

However, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse is broad in its semantic scope such that it includes all instances of men seeking refuge in the jinn and the aforesaid superstition bear testimony to the same. There existed numerous soothsayers amongst the Arabs who claimed that they were able to solve many a problem by taking recourse to the jinn and predict the future.

In this vein, it is narrated from Allah's Messenger (S) that whoever goes to a sorcerer, a soothsayer, or a liar and acknowledges their words certainly disbelieves in all Divine Scriptures.[5]

It is also narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that who acknowledges the words of a soothsayer or an astrologer disbelieves what is revealed to Allah's Messenger (S).[6]

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 7-8

وَأَنَّهُمْ ظَنُّوا كَمَا ظَنَنتُمْ أَن لَّن يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ أَحَدًا

وَأَنَّا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مُلِئَتْ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهُبًا

7. 'And they thought as you thought that Allah would not send any Messenger.

8. 'And we have sought to reach the heaven, but found it filled with stern guards and blazing arrows.

Proceeding with relating the words of the believing jinn who other jinn to convert to the Islamic faith in different ways, the blessed Verse says:

"And some men, like you, imagined that God Almighty would not appoint anyone to the Prophetic call [after Moses (as) and Jesus (as)] and thereby belied the Holy Qur'an and the Prophetic call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S). However, it was through listening to the blessed Verses of this Divine Scripture that we clearly noticed its veracity. Beware of disbelieving in God Almighty, like the polytheist men, and meet their dire fate."

The blessed Verse warns the polytheists that the jinn employ such line of argument and reach such conclusion and it is expected that men also awaken and believe in the Noble Prophet (S) and the Holy Qur'an.

The blessed Verse 8 makes a reference to the believing jinn who make mention of one of the proofs of the veracity of their words, comprehensible to all the jinn in the natural world, saying:

"We have sought to reach the heaven, but found it filled with stern guards and blazing arrows."

The Arabic word lams herein connotes search and quest and the nominal form haras is the plural form of haris ("guard").

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 9-10

وَأَنَّا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ فَمَنْ يَسْتَمِعِ الْآنَ يَجِدْ لَهُ شِهَابًا رَصَدًا

وَأَنَّا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرٌّ أُرِيدَ بِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا

9. 'And we used to sit there in stations to eavesdrop, but any who intends to eavesdrop now will find a shooting star watching him in ambush.

10. '[Having said that] we know not whether evil is intended for the inhabitants of the earth or whether their Lord wills to Guide them.

Revelation of the Holy Qur'an had its impressions in the heavens. Before the Revelation, the jinn used to eavesdrop the heavenly messages, but they were thereafter impeded from doing likewise; as a consequence of which they say that formerly they would sit in the heaven to eavesdrop and receive heavenly messages and imparted them to their friends, though whoever intends to act likewise will find meteors targeting him in ambush.

What crosses one's mind is that drastic alterations were made in the world following the Prophetic call of Allah's Messenger (S) and the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an, since they were formerly able to eavesdrop, but no one is able to do likewise now.

The blessed Verses in question reflect that the dark age of ploys, soothsaying, and deception is over and the night has ended and the sun of Divine Revelation and the Prophetic call has risen. The Arabic word shihab lexically denotes flame, though it connotes the blazing flames emerging in straight lines in the heaven, namely shooting stars and meteors.

According to scientific research, meteors are small pieces of stone moving without the atmosphere of the earth. Upon approaching the earth, they gravitate toward it rapidly.

When they enter the atmosphere, namely the condensed gaseous later surrounding the earth, they turn into fireballs owing to the intensity of friction against it and the resulting incandescence turns into ashes scattering on the face of the earth.

It is recurrently reflected in the Holy Qur'an that meteors are arrows shot at devils aiming at eavesdropping in the heavens. Detailed discussions are to be found above under 15:18 and 37:10, though they are not reflected herein for the sake of brevity.

At any rate, the Arabic nominal form rasad implies preparedness for some occurrence and lying in ambush. The word is at times a present participial form employed in the sense of one waiting in ambush.

According to the blessed Verse 10, they further say that having taken into account the circumstances, they do not know whether such eavesdropping reflects that some bad intention is in store for the people on the earth or God Almighty is thereby willing to lead them to the Path of Guidance.

In other words, they have no idea whether it preludes afflictions to be inflicted by God Almighty or their Guidance. Nonetheless, the believing jinn are supposed to have comprehended that forbidding eavesdropping, simultaneous with the Noble Prophet's (S) prophetic call, preludes guiding people and consigning to oblivion soothsaying and like superstitious beliefs.

It is but the proclamation of the end of a dark period and the outset of a luminous one. However, the jinn were attached to eavesdropping and still failed to believe that such impediment entail Blessings and Bounties, but it is crystal clear that relying on eavesdropping, soothsayers in pre-Islamic times had a great impact in leading the people astray.

It is worthy of note, however, that Guidance is herein ascribed to God Almighty, but evil, used in passive voice, is not attributed to Him, reflecting that the good and Guidance comes from God Almighty and evil and corruption come from people themselves consequent to their misuse of Divine Bounties and the Blessings of Creation.

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 11-12

وَأَنَّا مِنَّا الصَّالِحُونَ وَمِنَّا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ ۖ كُنَّا طَرَائِقَ قِدَدًا

وَأَنَّا ظَنَنَّا أَن لَّن نُّعْجِزَ اللَّهَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَن نُّعْجِزَهُ هَرَبًا

11. 'And there are amongst us some that are righteous and some impious; we are groups having different ways.

12. 'And we are certain that we cannot overcome Allah's Will on the earth nor can we flee His Omnipotence.

The blessed Verses in question reflect that the believing jinn, having acknowledged Divine Revelation, perceive their weakness, free choice, and Divine Majesty and Omnipotence.

The blessed Verse 11, resuming the believing jinn's speech on the occasion of calling those in error amongst them, is thus quoting them:

"And there are amongst us some that are righteous and some impious; we are groups having different ways."

The blessed Verse may allude that the existence of Iblis amongst the jinn may create in some the false impression that evil, corruption, and mischief

are in their nature, impeding them to avail themselves of the Light of Guidance.

The believing amongst the jinn thereby reflect that they are also free to choose, since there are righteous and impious ones amongst them. Therefore, they are prepared by nature to find Guidance. Respecting others may lead to further receptivity of propagation though which the group may be paved for guidance and perfection.

The blessed Verse rectifies our assumptions concerning the jinn, since the word jinn connotes mischief, corruption, deviation, and error for some people; though the fact is that there exist different groups of the jinn, righteous and impious. The Arabic word qidad denotes "severed, separate" connoting different, separate groups.

The blessed Verse 12 reflects that the believing jinn proceed to warn others by saying:

"And we are certain that we cannot overcome Allah's Will on the earth nor can we flee His Omnipotence."

In other words, it would be quite unfounded to claim that one may flee Divine chastisement by escaping to some point on the earth or in the heavens. Thus, the former clause makes a reference to escaping Divine Omnipotence by resorting to some place on the earth, though the latter implies escaping from the earth and the heaven.

Another possibility is also suggested as per which the former implies that it would be impossible to overcome the Lord and the latter reflects that it would be impossible to flee from Divine Justice. Thus, when there is no way to overcome God Almighty nor to flee from Him, there remains no other choice but to submit to His Just Command.

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 13-15

وَأَنَّا لَمَّا سَمِعْنَا الْهُدَىٰ آمَنَّا بِهِ ۖ فَمَن يُؤْمِن بِرَبِّهِ فَلَا يَخَافُ بَخْسًا وَلَا رَهَقًا

وَأَنَّا مِنَّا الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَمِنَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ ۖ فَمَنْ أَسْلَمَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا

وَأَمَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ فَكَانُوا لِجَهَنَّمَ حَطَبًا

13. 'And when we heard the Guidance of the Holy Qur'an, we believed therein and whoever believes in his Lord shall have no fear, either of a decrease or injustice.

14. 'And that some amongst us are Muslims and some are disobedient.' And whoever embraces Islam has opted for the Straight Path.

15. And as for the disobedient, they shall be firewood for Hell.

The believing jinn proceed to say:

"When we heard the Guidance of the Holy Qur'an, we believed in it,"

intending to say that if they call others unto the Guidance of the Holy Qur'an, they have already acted upon the same; thus, they do not call others to something which they have already neglected.

The consequence of believing in God Almighty is expressed in a terse clause, saying:

"Whosoever believes in his Lord shall fear neither decrease nor injustice."

The Arabic word bakhs implies decrease stemming from injustice and the word rahaqa connotes to cover by force.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the distinction lying between the twain is that the former implies that nothing shall be decreased from their righteous good deeds and the latter reflects that nothing shall be added to their sins and vices.

Some also hold that the former implies decrease in righteous good deeds and the latter is used in the sense of hard task. At any rate, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question reflects that no matter whether the deeds are significant or otherwise, the believing shall be granted the Rewards without any increase or decrease. It is true that Divine Justice is not restricted to the believing, but since disbelievers do no righteous good deeds, they are not mentioned herein.

The blessed Verse 14 provides further explanation as to the believers' and the disbelievers' fates:

"And that some amongst us are Muslims and some are disobedient."

The present participial form

qasit ("just distributor"),

derived from the root q-s-t ("distribute or divide justly"), made from the fourth form of the root, if'al, implying transitivity, connotes administration of justice, though used in its trilateral form, as appearing herein, implies disobedience and digression from the Path of Truth.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say:

"And whoever embraces Islam has opted for the Straight Path,"

proceeding toward Divine Guidance and Rewards.

The blessed Verse 15 adds:

"But as to the disobedient, they shall be firewood in Hell."

It is worthy of note that the verbal form

aslama ("believed"),

in preceding blessed Verse, stands in contrast with qasit (herein: "disobedient") in the blessed Verse in question, implying that faith impedes man from plunging into disobedience, as the disbelieving are certainly adulterated with disobedience and wrong doing.

It also implies that the true believers may never be adulterated with disobedience.

In this respect, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"A true believer is one from whose part people are assured of the security of their life and property."[7]

According to another Prophetic tradition,

"Muslim is one from whose hands and tongue other are rest assured.[8]

The Arabic clause

"They have sought the Straight Path" (taharru rashadan),

appearing at the close of the previous Verse, implies that the believing proceed toward Guidance attentively and intentionally rather than blindly, and their most cherished Reward lies in attaining to the Truth thanks to which, they may avail themselves of all Divine Bounties; whereas the worst misfortune of the disobedient is that they shall be firewood in Hell, inwardly set ablaze.

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 16-17

وَأَن لَّوِ اسْتَقَامُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ لَأَسْقَيْنَاهُم مَّاءً غَدَقًا

لِّنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ وَمَن يُعْرِضْ عَن ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِ يَسْلُكْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا

16. If they [the jinn and mankind] persevere on the path [of faith], We shall surely bestow upon them water in abundance.

17. It is intended that We try them thereby. And whoever turns away from the Reminder of his Lord, He will afflict him with an increasing and severe torment.

The blessed Verses in question seemingly proceed with the believing jinn talking with their people. Nonetheless, some Qur'an exegetes maintain that they are Divine Words inserted in between the words of the jinn, though the parenthetical statement bears particular similarity to the tone of the preceding blessed Verses, reflecting the words of the believing jinn and taking into account the contextual meaning, being not the words of the jinn sounds a remote possibility.

At any rate, the preceding blessed Verses treat of their Rewards granted in this world, saying:

"If they [the jinn and mankind] persevere on the path [of faith], We shall surely bestow upon them water in abundance";

in other words, God Almighty sends down His rain of Mercy upon them and makes the life giving springs available to them. Where there exists water in abundance, everything may be found copiously and thereby they are granted different kinds of Bounties.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"If people be steadfast with regard to our guardianship, they shall be granted knowledge in abundance."[9]

The Arabic nominal form ghadaq implies abundant water. Emphasis is laid many a time in the Holy Qur'an on the point that faith and fear of God Almighty are not only sources of spiritual blessings, but they also entail abundance of material provision, flourishing, and prosperity.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Qur'anic Verse reflects that steadfastness in faith, rather than the faith per se, entails abundant Bounties, since fleeting faith may not lead to such Bounties. In other words, steadfastness in faith and fear of God are of significance in which many people are weak.

Making a reference to the truth lying herein, the blessed Verse 17 proceeds to say that God Almighty tries them with abundance of Bounties to see whether the increase in the Bounties leads to their vanity and neglect or it entails awakening, gratitude, and according further attention to God Almighty.

Thus, it is clear that such abundance serves as a means of Divine Trial and it is noteworthy that such Trial is far harder and more complicated than that of torments, since the former naturally causes weakness, indolence, neglect, and indulgence in the pleasures of the flesh through which man turns away from God Almighty and paves the ground for satanic temptations.

Thos who remember God Almighty at all times may merely preserve themselves from the undesirable consequences of increase and abundance of Bounties, since such people preserve their hears from satanic temptations through remembering God Almighty at all times.

Thus, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that whoever turns away from the remembrance of God Almighty shall suffer severe and ever increasing torments.

The Arabic root s-'-d denotes "climb, ascend" and it also connotes "mountain pass." Since, climbing such passes entails hardships, the Arabic cognate word sa'd implies vicissitudes and hardships.

Thus, many a Qur'anic exegete have provided the exegesis as to which the Arabic word in question implies severe torment, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[10]:

"I shall oblige him to face a severe torment."

The expression may also connote the increase of such torment, in that the blessed Verses in question reflect the nexus between faith and fear of God and increase in Bounties on the one hand and the link between such increase and Divine Trials on the other.

The blessed Verses also treat of the relationship between turning away from remembering God Almighty at all times and the severe and ever increasing torments.

The same themes are attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, instances of which include:

"But whoever turns away from remembering Me, for him is a life of hardship and WE shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection"[11];

"When he [Solomon (as)] saw it placed before him, he said: "This is by the Grace of my Lord to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful"[12];

"Know that your possessions and your offspring are but a trial and that surely with Allahis a great Reward"[13].

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 18-19

وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا

وَأَنَّهُ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يَدْعُوهُ كَادُوا يَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَدًا

18. The mosques are for Allah [Alone]. Therefore, invoke not anyone along with Allah.

19. And when the servant of Allah [i.e. Muhammad (S)] stood up invoking Him in prayer, a group made round him a dense crowd.

The Arabic nominal form masajid is the plural form of masjid, literally denoting "place of prostration."

In this respect, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) say saying:

"Since the Jews and the Christians associated partners with God Almighty in their places of worship, God Almighty decreed that Muslims are not supposed to associate anyone with God Almighty in worship in Muslims' places of prostration [namely the mosques] and God Almighty curses the one who shows disrespect at the mosques."[14]

Quoting the believing jinn in calling others unto monotheism, the blessed Verse 18 says:

"The mosques are for Allah [Alone]. Therefore, invoke not anyone along with Allah."

The Arabic plural nominal form masajid indicate places where believers prostrate themselves before God Almighty whose most perfect instance is Masjid al-Haram [literally: the Sacred or Holy Mosque]. Other instances include other mosques, though in its broader semantic domain, it is applied to all the places where the believers establish their prayers and prostrate themselves before God Almighty.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet as saying:

"The earth in its entirety serves as my place of prostration and purification [namely tayammum: "ritual purification with sand, soil, or dust, allowed when water is unavailable"]."[15]

Thus, the blessed Verse in question provides a response to the Arab polytheists and the like of them who had turned Ka'ba to an idol temple. It also reflects the erring Christians who had resorted to trinity worshipping three gods in their churches. The Holy Qur'an is saying that all the places of worship belong to God Almighty and any other object of worship may not be worshipped.

Reference is also made herein to interceding with the Noble Prophet and Divine Guides. Such intercession stands in no contradiction to the truth of monotheism nor to Qur'anic Verses, but it lays emphasis on monotheism and the truth that all things come from God Almighty.

Intercession and invoking the Noble Prophet (S) to intercede with the believers for Divine Mercy is recurrently attested in the Qur'anic Verses, though some people who have been remote from Islamic teachings and the Qur'anic Verses unfoundedly deny any kind of intercession, referring to a number of the Qur'anic Verses, including the blessed Verse 18:

"The mosques are for Allah [Alone]. Therefore, invoke not anyone along with Allah."

They falsely claim that the blessed Verse in question implies that the believers are not supposed to intercede with anyone for Divine Forgiving of the sins.

The point is that the blessed Verse is in no way related to their unfounded claim, but it makes a reference to refuting polytheism in sense that some people err in associating objects of worship with God Almighty and invoking them for granting them bounties. In other words, invoking objects of worship besides God Almighty and regarding them as independent and willful entails polytheism.

The preposition

ma'a ("with")

in the negative imperative sentence

"Invoke not anyone along with Allah,"

implies that nothing is supposed to be associated with God Almighty in worship nor should anything besides Him be regarded as an independent source of willful acts.

However, invoking Divinely appointed Prophets to intercede with God Almighty on people's behalf for Forgiveness or bestowal of Bounties is not only allowed herein, but Some Qur'anic Verses call the Noble Prophet (S)

to act likewise and others are at times called to intercede with the Noble Prophet for Divine Forgiveness.

In this respect, mention may be made of two Qur'anic Verses:

"Take alms from their possessions in order to purify them and sanctify them with it and invoke Allah for them, since your invocations are a source of security for them"[16];

"O our father! Ask Forgiveness [from Allah] for our sins, as we were sinners. He [Ya'qub] said: 'I will ask my Lord for forgiveness for you"[17].

Thus, interceding with God Almighty on behalf of the believers is explicitly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. Discussions on intercession are to be found above under 2:48 and 5:35.

Making reference to the great effects created by reciting the Qur'anic Verses by the Noble Prophet (S) in his worships, the blessed Verse 19 is saying that when Allah's servant, Muhammad (S) stood up invoking Him in prayer, a group made round him a dense crowd.

The Arabic nominal form libadh denotes something whose constituent elements are condensed, though it herein implies the strange assembly of the believing jinn to listen to the Qur'anic blessed Verses in their first encounter with the Holy Qur'an as well as the extraordinary impression of the Noble Prophet's (S) prayers upon them.

Two further exegeses have also been suggested for the blessed Verse in question. Firstly, the believing jinn reflect the Noble Prophet's (S) companions, though limited in number in Mecca, who got together in crowds to listen to him. Thus, the jinn are instructed to proceed immediately toward the Islamic faith.

According to the other suggestion, the Arab polytheists surrounded the Noble Prophet (S) when he was engaged in establishing his prayers and reciting the Qur'anic Verses in order to deride and harm him. However, the latter exegesis does not befit the intention of those from amongst the jinn who intended to call others unto faith, but it befits one of the two preceding meanings.

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 20-22

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَدْعُو رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ أَحَدًا

قُلْ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا رَشَدًا

قُلْ إِنِّي لَن يُجِيرَنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ أَحَدٌ وَلَنْ أَجِدَ مِن دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا

20. Say: "I invoke only my Lord and I associate none as partners along with Him."

21. Say: "It is not in my power to cause you harm nor to bring you to the Straight Path."

22. Say: "None can protect me from Allah's chastisement [if I disobey Him], nor can I find refuge except in Him.

To further solidify the pillars of monotheism and reject any kind of polytheism, as reflected in the preceding blessed Verses, the blessed Verses in question order the Noble Prophet to say:

"I invoke only my Lord and I associate none as partners along with Him. It does not lie within my capacity to inflict any harm upon you nor

may I lead you to the Straight Path. None may protect me from Allah's chastisement [if I disobey Him], nor can I find refuge except in Him."

Thus, the blessed Verses reflect total obedience before Divine Threshold. On the other hand, they reject any kind of extremist beliefs as to the Noble Prophet (S), as despite his quite exalted rank before God Almighty, he may not seek any refuge from His torment except in Him, let alone the useless idols.

Furthermore, these blessed Verses put an end to the irrelevant pretexts and expectations of obdurate people from the Noble Prophet (S) who requested him to work Divine Acts. These Qur'anic Verses clearly prove that intercession is dependent upon Divine Will.

The Arabic nominal form multahad, deriving from l-h-d, literally denotes a lateral hole or niche, though it herein connotes a safe haven and place of refuge. It is also suggested that the word is applied to a box wherein precious things are placed and locked.

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 23-24

إِلَّا بَلَاغًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِسَالَاتِهِ وَمَن يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ أَضْعَفُ نَاصِرًا وَأَقَلُّ عَدَدًا

23. [Mine is] but imparting Allah's Messages and whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, Hellfire shall be in store for him where he shall dwell forever.

24. The disbelievers' disobedience will continue until they see that which they are promised. Then they shall know whose helpers shall be more feeble and of less in terms of number.

As reflected in the blessed Verse 23, the Noble Prophet (S) is saying that it is his obligation to impart the Divine Message.

The theme is recurrently attested in the Qur'anic Verses, an instance of which is:

"It is Our Messenger's obligation to convey [the Message] clearly"[18].

Concerning the distinction between balagh ("imparting") and risala ("mission"), it is suggested that the former is applied to imparting the fundamentals of religion (usul), whereas the latter connotes conveying the secondary principles of religion (furu').

However, it is also suggested that the former reflects imparting Divine Commands and the latter implies execution of the Commands, though they seemingly imply the same meaning and lay emphasis on each other, as reflected in numerous Qur'anic Verses wherein both terms have been employed in the same sense, e.g.

"I convey unto you the Messages of my Lord" (uballighukum risalat-i rabbi;[19]).

It is noteworthy that the blessed Verse 23 closes by warning people that whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger (S), Hellfire shall be in store for him wherein he shall dwell forever. The blessed Verse clearly indicates that only the polytheists and the disbelievers, rather than all sinners, shall enter Hellfire.

The blessed Verse 24 proceeds to say:

"The disbelievers' disobedience will continue until they see that which they are promised. Then they shall know whose helpers shall be more feeble and of less in terms of number."

Different exegeses have been suggested concerning the clause

"which they are promised,"

in that the torment in this world or both worlds is intended herein, though it seems befitting that reference is herein made to the general sense of the words, in that the increase and the decrease in the number of the helpers and the weakness and strength thereof further befits this world.

Thus, some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the blessed Verse implies the explicit increase in the power of the Muslims in the battle of Badr. Numerous traditions reflect that the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (AS; may our souls be his ransom).

Therefore, the tone of the blessed Verse clearly indicates that the enemies of the Islamic faith recurrently bragged about their power and their large number regarding the Muslims as weak and feeble. Thus, the Holy Qur'an consoles the believers and bears them glad tidings that they shall be finally victorious and defeat shall be in store for the enemies.

The history of the Prophets (as), particularly the biographical accounts of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) reflect the manner in which large numbers of the disbelievers, despite their power against the few believers, despaired and were defeated. The same theme is clearly reflected in the Qur'anic Verses concerning the Children of Israel and the Pharaoh, Goliath (Jalut) and Saul (Talut), and those regarding the battles of Badr and Ahzab.

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 25-28

قُلْ إِنْ أَدْرِي أَقَرِيبٌ مَّا تُوعَدُونَ أَمْ يَجْعَلُ لَهُ رَبِّي أَمَدًا

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا

إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِن رَّسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِن بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا

لِّيَعْلَمَ أَن قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا

25. Say: "I know not whether what is promised to you is near or whether my Lord will appoint for it a term.

26. "He is the Omniscient of the unseen and He reveals to none His unseen secrets."

27. Except to a Messenger whom He has chosen and then He makes a band of watching guards to march before him and behind him.

28. [Allah] protects them till He sees that they have imparted the Messages of their Lord. And He surrounds all that which is with them and He keeps a record of all things.

The Qur'anic attestations of the Arabic imperative verbal form

qull ("Say!")

exceed three hundred in number, followed by responses, potential questions, and taking stances against the unbefitting expectations and illusions.

Since it is reflected in the preceding blessed Verses that the derision and disobedience of such people continues until Divine torment, as promised to them, sill be sent down, the question as to the term of the promise is raised.

As suggested by the Qur'an exegetes regarding the occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verses in question, some of the polytheists, e.g. Nadhr ibn Harith, raised the same question following the Revelation of the preceding blessed Verses, the Holy Qur'anic Verses in question provide a response, saying:

"Say: 'I know not whether what is promised to you is near or whether my Lord will appoint for it a term.'"

The knowledge of the appointed term solely belongs to the Pure Essence of God Almighty and He thus willed it to be unknown to His servants, such that it may serve as a means of Trial for the people, since had they been aware of its closeness or remoteness, the Trial would have been of less effect.

The Arabic nominal form amad denotes time, though according to Raghib's Mufradat, the Arabic word zaman connotes the beginning and the end, but amad is solely applied to the end of something in terms of temporality. It is also suggested that abad and amad are semantically similar, though their distinction lies in that the former is applied to infinite time, but the latter implies a limited span of time, however long it may be.

At any rate, the same theme is attested many a time in the Qur'anic Verses, as per which whenever the Noble Prophet (S) was asked regarding the time of the Resurrection, he would say that solely God Almighty is Omniscient of the unseen.

According to a Prophetic tradition, once Gabriel, disguised as a Bedouin, appeared before the Noble Prophet (S) and raised a number of questions including the time of the Resurrection. The Noble Prophet (S) replied that the one whom he was asking was no more knowledgeable than the questioner.

The Arab repeated his question even louder to which the Noble Prophet (S) replied:

"Woe unto you! The Day of Resurrection shall arrive. What have you done for that Day?"[20]

The blessed Verse 27 proceeds the discussion by suggesting a general rule concerning the knowledge of the unseen, saying that God Almighty is the Omnipotent of the Unseen, but He does not grant the Knowledge of the Secrets to anyone, unless, according the following blessed Verse, He appoints a Messenger and be content with him.

Thus, He grants him the knowledge of the unseen through Revelation.

A precise study of different Qur'anic Verses clearly reflect that there are two categories of Qur'anic Verses treating of the knowledge of the unseen: those in which such knowledge is particular to God Almighty negating the same of others besides Him, e.g.

"And with Him are the keys of the unseen, none knows them but He"[21]***;***

"Say: 'None in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen except Allah, nor may they perceive when they shall be resurrected"[22]***;***

"If I had the knowledge of the unseen, I should have secured for myself an abundance of wealth and no evil should have touched me"[23];

"Say: 'The unseen belongs to Allah Alone"[24].

The second category of the Qur'anic Verses clearly indicate that the Friends of God Almighty are to some extent aware of the unseen, e.g.

"Nor will Allah disclose to you the secrets of the unseen, but Allah chooses of His Messengers whom He wills"[25].

Regarding the miracles wrought be the Noble Prophet Jesus (as), the Holy Qur'anic Verse[26] reads:

"I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses."

Taking into account the exception reflected in the following blessed Verse, it is clear that God Almighty grants His Chosen Messengers (as) partial knowledge of the unseen.

Further, numerous Qur'anic Verses concern the knowledge of the unseen, e.g.

"The Romans have been defeated in the nearest land and they after their defeat will be, before long [in a few years], triumphant"[27];

"He Who has given you the Qur'an will certainly bring you back to the place of return [i.e. Mecca]"[28];

"You shall enter Masjid al-Haram, if Allah wills in utmost security"[29].

The Divine Revelation sent down onto Allah's Messengers (as) is actually a kind of the knowledge of the unseen left at their disposal.

Then, how could one say that they are unaware of the unseen when Divine Revelation is sent onto them? Furthermore, numerous traditions indicate that the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) were to some extent aware of the unseen and imparted the same at times.

For instance, it is reported in the account of the conquest of Mecca that Hatib ibn Abi Balti'a wrote a letter to the people of Mecca and asked a certain woman by the name of Sara to hand it to the Meccan polytheists and thereby informed them of the imminent attack of the Muslim army. She concealed the letter in her hair and departed for Mecca.

The Noble Prophet dispatched Imam 'Ali (as) and some other Muslims to encounter her at a station called the garden of Khakh and seize Hatib's letter addressed to the Meccan polytheists. Upon facing them, she totally denied the claim, but finally confessed and handed them the letter. The details of the account and its transmission chains are to be found above in Chapter 60 (Surah al-Mumtahana).

Another instance of such knowledge of the unseen is reported in the account of the battle of Mu'ta and the martyrdom of Ja'far and some other Muslim military commanders as simultaneously imparted to the Muslims by the Noble Prophet (S) in Medina. There are many similar instances in the Noble Prophet's (S) biographical accounts.[30]

Predictions of many an event are to be found in the Nahj al-Balagha, reflecting that Imam 'Ali (as) was aware of such secrets of the unseen, an instance of which is to be found in the thirteenth sermon treating of the Basrans' vices, saying:

"It is as if I see that Allah's torments have come down upon you from the heaven and the earth and you have all drowned. The apex of your mosque is obvious like the breast of the ship in water."

Numerous such predictions by the Noble Imam (as) are to be found in other narrations recorded in the Sunni and the Shi'i sources an instance of which include: he informed Hujr ibn Qays that he would be forced to curse him following his demise;[31] concerning Marwan, he said that advanced in years, he would carry the banner of error;[32] Kumayl ibn Ziyad said unto Hajjaj that the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) had informed him that Hajjaj would slay the Noble Imam (as);[33] concerning the Kharijis of Nahrawan, he said that more than ten people from the Noble Imam's (as) adherents would not fall and more than ten people from the Kharijis would not be saved;[34] while passing by the land of Karbala', he informed Isbagh ibn Nubata of the burial place of Imam Husayn (as);[35] numerous narrations have been transmitted in Fadha'il al-Khamsa from the Sunni sources regarding the extraordinary scope of Imam 'Ali's (as) knowledge, making mention of them all will entail prolixity.[36]

Numerous traditions have been narrated from the Ahl al-Bayt (as) concerning the Infallible Imams' (as) knowledge of the unseen, amongst which mention may be made of the following: Kafi, vol. 1, different chapters, in which such knowledge is explicitly mentioned or implied.

Twenty two traditions are to be found in volume 26 of Majlisi's Bihar al-Anwar. Generally speaking, the traditions concerning the Noble Prophet's (S) and the Infallible Imams' (as) knowledge of the unseen are transmitted on a recurrent basis.

Now, it remains to establish some harmony between the Qur'anic Verses and the traditions proving or negating the knowledge of the unseen granted to others. There exist different ways to achieve such goal.

One of the most well-known ways to reconcile the twain is to suggest that the knowledge of unseen attributed to God Almighty is essential and independent. Consequently, others have not independent knowledge of the unseen and their partial knowledge is granted them by God Almighty through His Grace.

In other words, the knowledge of the unseen bestowed upon others is merely secondary. The blessed Verse in question serves as evidence to the same argument, as per which God Almighty informs no one of the secrets of the unseen except for the Messengers (as) with whom God Almighty is satisfied.

Such implication is suggested in the Nahj al-Balagha, as per which while informing others of the events to happen in future, predicting the Mongol invasion of the Islamic lands, one of his companions inquired:

"O Command of the Faithful! Do you possess knowledge of the unseen?"

The Noble Imam replied smilingly:

"It is not the knowledge of the unseen, but I have learned it from a knowledgeable source [namely the Noble Prophet (S)]."[37]

Many a scholars have approved of such method of coincidence of the seemingly different sources.

The secrets of the unseen fall into two categories: those particular to God Almighty unknown by others, e.g. the time of Resurrection; and those imparted by God Almighty to His Messengers (as) and Friends, as reflected in the Nahj al-Balagha under the above mentioned sermon:

"The knowledge of the unseen solely rests in the knowledge of [the time of] Resurrection and what is mentioned in the Qur'anic Verse[38]: 'Allah, with Him is the knowledge of the Hour, He sends down the rain and knows that which is in the wombs. No one knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die.'"

To further expound the meaning of the blessed Qur'anic Verse, the Noble Imam (as) added:

"God Almighty is All-Aware of what is in the wombs, whether it is a male or a female, homely or comely, generous or niggardly, fortunate or unfortunate, a dweller of the Hell or a dweller of Paradise… These constitute the knowledge of the unseen, unknown to anyone, but God Almighty. Such knowledge is different from what God Almighty taught His Messenger (S) and he imparted the same unto me."[39]

Some people may obtain some knowledge concerning sending down the rain and the like, but the precise and detailed Knowledge solely rests with His Divine Pure Essence. Likewise, we are unaware of the details of Resurrection, but our knowledge as to the same is quite partial. Such partial knowledge is reflected in certain traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) concerning the birth or the end of life of certain people.

Another way to reconcile the twain is to suggest that the secrets of the unseen are recorded in two places, the Preserved Tablet (luh mahfuth), the Treasury of Knowledge possessed only by God Almighty Alone which is not subject to any alteration nor is it shared by anyone else besides Him; and the Tablet of Effacement and Affirmation (mahw wa ithbat) which is the knowledge as to the requirements of the time rather than the complete cause ('illat tamma), hence its changeability. What others besides God Almighty are unaware concerns the latter.

In this respect, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"God Almighty possesses some Knowledge not shared by anyone, and He possesses some Knowledge imparted to His Angels and Messengers (as), such [the latter] knowledge is imparted to us."[40]

It is narrated from Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (as) as saying:

"Had there been no Qur'anic Verses, I would have been aware of the past and the events to happen to the Day of Resurrection."

Someone inquired:

"Which Verse do you mean?"

He replied:

"God Almighty says that Allah effaces whatever He wills and He established on its basis what He wills and with Him is the Mother of the Book [the Preserved Tablet]."[41]

It is noteworthy that the classification of sciences in the aforesaid method of reconciliation is based on its inevitability or lack of the same, though the quantity of knowledge is intended in the preceding method.

The next method suggests that God Almighty is in actuality All-Aware of all the secrets of the unseen, but such knowledge is not shared by His Messengers (as) and friends, unless He imparts them to them and such imparting solely rests on His Permission and Satisfaction.

Therefore, the blessed Verses and the traditions reflecting that they are unaware of such secrets allude to the lack of knowledge in actuality and those claiming to know the same allude to its potentiality.

Likewise, one may ask another to carry a letter and give it to someone else. He carrier is unaware of the contents of the letter, though he may open it and obtain knowledge of the same.

In such cases, the writer of the letter may give him the permission to read it or he may not grant such permission. Such method is substantiated by the traditions recorded in the Kafi in a chapter entitled "The Imams are taught what they intend to know (Inna al-a'imma idha sha'u an ya'lamu 'ulimu)."

In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"When the Imam intends to know something, God Almighty teaches him."[42]

Such method of reconciliation solves many a problem with regard to the knowledge possessed by the Noble Prophet (S) and the Noble Imams (as).

For instance concerning the reason lying behind their consumption of some poisoned food or water, whereas it is not allowed that one jeopardizes one's life when he is aware of the danger, it may be suggested that in such cases the Noble Prophet (S) or the Imams (as) were not allowed to acquire knowledge as to the secrets of the unseen.

Likewise, it may be an expediency that they be unaware of something or it may be some trial through which they attain to perfection.

In this respect, it is reported in the account of the "night of the stay" (laylat al-mabit) that Imam 'Ali (as) slept in the Noble Prophet's (as) bed in lieu of him, though, as reported by the Noble Imam (as), he was unaware that the Qurayshi polytheists had intended to attack the Noble Prophet at dawn in which case he could have been martyred or saved his life.

It is in such case that the Imam (as) is not allowed to be aware of the secret so that the Divine Trial be actualized. Had the Imam been aware of jeopardizing his life while sleeping in the Noble Prophet's (S) bed in lieu of him and he could not be so proud of embarking upon such valiant act and the Qur'anic Verses and the traditions concerning such sacrifice would not have been that justified. Therefore, willful knowledge serves as a solution to all such problems.

Another method of reconciliation may be suggested for the knowledge of the unseen, though it is applicable to some of these traditions, in that these traditions addressed an audience with different backgrounds.

Those who were prepared to acknowledge the Infallible Imams' (as) knowledge of the unseen were introduced to the truth, but those who opposed the question or were feeble of faith and of quite limited capacity were introduced to what was not too strong for their early stomachs.

For instance, it is reported in a narration that Abu Basir and some of the eminent companions of Imam Sadiq (as) had attended at a session when the Noble Imam (as) entered in rage and took his seat saying that it was surprising that some people entertained the false impression that the Imams (as) possessed the knowledge of the unseen, but the fact is otherwise; only God Almighty is Omnipotent of the unseen.

He had intended to punish his maid servant, but she fled and he did not know in which of the rooms she was hiding.[43]

The transmitter of the tradition says that when the Noble Imam departed the session, he and some other companions of his went to his house and said unto him:

"May we be your ransom! You said thus regarding your maid servant, but we know that you are well-versed in many a science; however, we make no mention of the knowledge of the unseen."

Then, the Noble Imam (as) enlightened them in that respect reflecting his knowledge of the secrets of the unseen.

It is crystal clear that some of the people attending the session were not intellectually prepared to perceive the exalted rank of the Imam (as). Further, it is worthy of note that these five methods do not stand in contradiction, but all of them are true and applicable.

There are, however, other methods by which the partial knowledge of the unseen as possessed by the Imams (as) and the leaders of the Muslim community may be proven.

Firstly, it is known that the scope of their mission was not limited to any specific place and time, but it was universal and everlasting. Now, how such an individual could be appointed to fulfill a universal mission through merely his own limited time and place? How could one appointed as the ruler of a vast region be unaware of it and succeed in the fulfillment of his mission?

In other words, the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) were vested with imparting and implementing Divine Laws such that they may meet the demands of all mankind in any place and at any time, and the successful fulfillment of such mission requires at least some partial knowledge of the secrets of the unseen.

Secondly, if we take into account three Qur'anic Verses, we will notice that they shed light on the question of the Noble Prophet's (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) knowledge of the secrets of the unseen:

1. Regarding Àsif ibn Barkhiya who brought the queen of Sheba's throne to Solomon (as) in the twinkling of an eye, the Holy Qur'an[44] says:

"One with whom was the knowledge of the Book said: 'I will bring it to you within the twinkling of an eye.' Then, when Solomon (as) noticed that it was placed before him, he said: 'This is by the Grace of my Lord."

According to another Qur'anic Verse[45]:

"Say: 'Sufficient as a witness between me and you is Allah and those too who have knowledge of the Book."

It is narrated in numerous traditions, recorded in the Sunni and the Shi'i sources, on the authority of Abu Sa'id Khudri that he asked Allah's Messenger (S) concerning the meaning of

"one who has knowledge from the Book (alladi 'indahu 'ilm-un min al-kitab),"

to which he replied:

"He was the trustee of my brother, Solomon, son of David."

I inquired about

"and one with him is the knowledge of the Book (wa man 'indahu 'ilm al-kitab),"

to which he replied:

"He is my brother, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib."[46]

It is worthy of note that

"knowledge from the Book"

concerns Àsif which is partial knowledge and

"knowledge of the Book"

concerns 'Ali (as) which is general knowledge; thus the difference between Àsif and 'Ali (as) in terms of their ranks is clarified.

Further, the blessed Qur'anic Verse[47]:

"We have sent down unto you the Book as an exposition of everything"

clearly reflects that one who possesses knowledge as to the secrets of such Book is supposed to know the secrets of the unseen.

It serves as evidence as to the possibility of the knowledge of the secrets of the unseen by Allah's friends through Divine Command. Further discussions on the knowledge of the unseen are to be found above under 6:50, 59; 7:188.

The last blessed Verse of the Chapter, Verse 28, makes mention of the reason lying behind the presence of such guardians:

"[Allah] protects them till He sees that they have imparted the Messages of their Lord. And He surrounds all that which is with them and He keeps a record of all things."

Actual Knowledge is herein intended by the Arabic word

'ilm ("knowledge").

In other words, the blessed Verse is not saying that God Almighty did not know something about His Messengers (as) but He gained the Knowledge thereafter, since Divine Omniscience is Infinite, Pre-Eternal, and Everlasting.

The blessed Verse is saying that such Divine Knowledge may be actualized in the world of existence in some objective form, namely His Messengers (as) actually convey their Prophetic Calls and provide mankind with the Final Argument.

O Lord! Bestow upon us the Blessings of inward knowledge and obedience to You!

Notes

1. Tafsir Burhan, vol. 4, p. 390; other traditions have been narrated in this respect.
2. ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim’s Tafsir; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 19.
3. Bukhari’s Sahih; Muslim’s Sahih; Ahmad ibn Hanbal’s Musnad; Fi Hilal al-Qur’an, under the blessed Verse in question. For the sake of brevity, other reported occasions are Revelation is not mentioned here.
4. 37:158
5. Ibn Mahbub’s Mashyakha and Sara’ir.
6. Muhaqqiq Hilli, al-Mu‘tabar; Allama Hilli, Tadhkirat al-Fuqaha’; Shahid al-Awwal and Shahid al-Thani, Sharh Lum‘a.
7. Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 195.
8. Usul Kafi, vol. 2, the chapter on the believer (mu’min).
9. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan; Tafsir Safi; Tafsir Burhan, under the blessed Verse in question.
10. 74:37
11. 20:124
12. 27:40
13. 8:28
14. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 355.
15. Wasa’il al-Shi‘a, vol. 2, p. 970.
16. 9:103
17. 12:97-98
18. 5:92
19. 7:62
20. Tafsir al-Maraghi, vol. 29, p. 105.
21. 6:59
22. 27:65
23. 7:188
24. 10:20
25. 3:179
26. 3:49
27. 30:2-3
28. 28:85
29. 48:27
30. Ibn Athir, al-Kamil, vol. 2, p. 237.
31. Mustadrak al-Sahihayn, vol. 2, p. 358.
32. Ibn Sa‘d, Tabaqat, vol. 5, p. 30.
33. Ibn Hajar, al-Isaba, vol. 5, pt. 3, p. 325.
34. Haythami, Majma‘, vol. 6, p. 241.
35. Riyadh al-Nasar, vol. 2, p. 222.
36. Fadha’il al-Khamsa, vol. 2, pp. 231-253.
37. Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 128.
38. 31:34
39. ibid.
40. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 26, p. 160. Numerous similar traditions have been recorded in the same source.
41. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 2, p. 512.
42. Kafi, the aforesaid chapter, tradition no. 3. Similar traditions are to be found in the same chapter.
43. Usul Kafi, vol. 1, the chapter on Rarities as to the Unseen (Bab Nadir-un fihi Dhikr al-Ghayb), tradition no. 3.
44. 27:40
45. 13:43
46. Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 3, pp. 280-281; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 2, p. 523.
47. 16:89

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Surah al-Muzzammil, Chapter 73

(The One Wrapped in Garment)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 20

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has twenty Verses. The tone of the Chapter clearly reflects its similarities to other Meccan Chapters. The majority of the blessed Verses of the Chapter in question indicate that when the Noble Prophet (S) had declared his Prophetic call, his opponents rose to confront and belie him. Thus, the Noble Prophet (S) was Divinely commanded to show tolerance to them.

The occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Chapter is reflected in some of the traditions according to which upon receiving the earliest of the Revelations, he was stood in awe. He came to Khadija, complained from physical discomfort and rested for a while.

He bade his wife to wrap him in a garment when Gabriel revealed the blessed Verse

"O you wrapped in garment!"

unto him.[1]

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

According to a Prophetic tradition:

"Whoever recites Surah al-Muzzammil, he will not face hardships in this world and the Hereafter."[2]

Other traditions have been narrated concerning the recitation of the blessed Chapter, though for the sake of brevity, mention is not herein made of them. It is worthy of note, however, that such merits and blessings are dependent upon acting upon religious obligations.

Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُزَّمِّلُ

قُمِ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

نِّصْفَهُ أَوِ انقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا

أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا

1. O you wrapped in garment!
2. Stand [in prayer] all night, except a little.
3. Half of it or a little less than that,
4. Or a little more. And recite the Qur'an slowly and meditatively.

5. Since, We shall send down unto you a weighty Word.

The tone of the opening Verses of the blessed Chapter reflects that the Noble Prophet (S) is Divinely called unto steadfastness and preparedness for an immense obligation acting upon which requires spiritual growth.

The blessed Verses say:

"O you wrapped in garment! Stand in prayer all night, except a little. Half of it or a little less than that or a little more and recite the Qur'an meditatively with utmost clarity and eloquence."

It would be of interest to note that the Noble Prophet is herein addressed as:

"O you wrapped in garment!"

rather than

"O Messenger!"

or

"O Prophet!"

reflecting that it would be befitting to rise up, grow spiritually, and prepare oneself for embarking upon such great mission, rather than leading the life of a recluse. He is urged to rise at night, since his foes are asleep at the time and people desist from following their daily routines, hence further preparedness for meditation and spiritual growth.

Likewise, he is urged to recite the Holy Qur'anic Verses, since they include all the required lessons in this respect. Recitation of the blessed Verses is the best means of strengthening one's faith, steadfastness, fear of God Almighty, and spiritual growth.

The Arabic word tartil denotes "regularity, articulation, and being well-ordered," though it herein implies articulate, eloquent, and meditative recitation of the Qur'anic Verses, reflecting upon their meanings and impacts on one's life.

It goes without saying that such recitation of the Qur'anic Verses may easily lead man toward spiritual growth, moral nobilities, and fear of God Almighty. Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that establishing canonical prayers is herein intended, since a major part of such prayers lies in reciting Qur'anic Verses.

The clause

"stand at night" (qum al-layl)

is contrasted with "sleeping," though it does not solely denote standing up.

The point is that the different expressions denoting the spans of time spent in nightly vigilance actually implies "choice"; thus, the Noble Prophet (S) is free to choose to stay awake half of the night or sometime more or less, devoting his nightly vigilance to the recitation of the Qur'anic Verses.

Firstly, mention is made of all night, except for a little, then the time span is reduced to half of the night and then to less than half.

Some exegetes hold that choosing amongst two thirds, half, and a third of the night is herein intended, as the closing Verse

"Your Lord knows that you stand [to pray at night] a little less than two thirds of the night, or half the night, or a third of the night"

reiterates the same statement.

It is worthy of note that the last Verse clearly reflects that the Noble Prophet (S) was not alone in

"standing at night",

but a group of the believers accompanied him in such spiritual growth and had recognized him as their model in this respect.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that

"Stand [in prayer] all night, except a little"

bids the Noble Prophet to stand in prayer all nights except for some of them. According to this view, there is no exception in terms of the nightly spans of time, rather some nights is hereby intended.

Nonetheless, such interpretation is not seemingly accurate taking into account the single nominal form

"night" (layl)

and the clause

"half or less than that."

Different exegetes suggest different interpretations for

"weighty Word"

as they address different aspects of the question. However, the weight of the Word seemingly implies that the Holy Qur'an, from different aspects, is herein intended. The Holy Qur'anic Verses are weighty in terms of contents, meaning, and their impacts on the believers' hearts.

The same theme is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[3]:

"Had We sent down this Qur'an on mountains, you would have seen them humbling themselves and rent asunder."

Such

"weight"

connotes the warnings, promises, obligations, hardships resulting from the propagation of the Prophetic call.

The

"weight"

alludes to the weight in the scales of deeds and their accounts on the Day of Resurrection and finally the burden of complete implementation of such plans.

Inasmuch as the recitation of the Holy Qur'anic Verses is convenient and delightful, though acting upon their contents is hard, particularly on the threshold of the Prophetic call, when his milieu was imbued with the dark clouds of ignorance, idolatry, and superstitions.

It was at that time that his obdurate and merciless foes were hand in hand against him and his companions, though they sought assistance from Qur'anic teachings, establishment of nightly prayers, and seeking closeness to the Pure Essence of the Lord and thereby succeeded in overcoming all hardships and carrying such heavy burden.

According to the exegetic work, Atyab al-Bayan, the

"weighty word"

implies the proclamation of the Noble Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib's (as) caliphate and imamate, obliging him to confront so many obdurate foes.

Accordingly, the Holy Qur'an is not herein intended, since it is said

"Recite the Qur'an so that you may receive the weighty word in future. Thus, the Holy Qur'an precedes the weighty word."[4]

Some traditions have been narrated from the Infallible Imams (as) concerning of the word tartil, each of which addresses one of the aspects of the question.

It is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) that tartil herein reflects articulate recitation, unlike the hasty recitation of poetry and scattering the same like sand.

One is supposed to recites the Verses in a manner that he may strike the hardened hearts and awaken them, without necessarily aiming at reaching the end of the Chapter [namely, it is significant to comprehend the meaning of the Verses].[5]

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) as saying

"The Holy Qur'an is not supposed to recite the Qur'anic Verses hastily, but they should be recited articulately. Whenever you come to a Verse treating of Hell, stop your recitation and invoke God Almighty for forgiveness. But, when you come to a Verse treating of Paradise, stop your recitation and invoke God Almighty to grant you Paradise [and prepare yourself for the same]."[6]

It is also reported that the Noble Prophet recited the blessed Verses discretely and articulately with a sweet voice.[7]

Further Qur'anic Verses and traditions[8] treat of the same significance reflecting that the blessed Qur'anic Verses are not supposed to be recited as if they are devoid of meaning, but in reciting them, particular attention is to be accorded to all the issues deepening their impacts on the reciters and the listeners.

It should be borne in mind at all times that Qur'anic Verses are Divine Messages and it is incumbent upon the believers to act upon their contents.

It is unfortunate that many a Muslim have consigned such truth to oblivion and have contented themselves with reciting the mere words and completing the Chapters and the Holy Qur'an in its entirety, without according the least attention to the goals behind their Revelation and the Divine Messages imparted by them.

It is true that Qur'anic Words deserve attention and reciting them entails Divine Blessings, but it should be borne in mind that reciting the words is a prelude to the comprehension of their contents.

It is noteworthy that the blessed Verses in question reflect that significance of nightly vigilance, establishing nightly prayers, and the recitation of the Qur'anic Verses when the neglectful are asleep.

As mentioned above, praying at night and particularly at dawn immensely impacts the purity of the soul leading to spiritual growth, purity and awakening of the heart, strengthening the faith and will power, and solidifying the pillars of the fear of God Almighty in human heart and soul, such that man clearly witnesses them upon his first trial.

Thus, praying at night is accorded particular attention in the Qur'anic Verses and the traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams.

In this respect, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"Three things include Divine particular blessings: nightly prayers, feeding those who take fast at the time of breaking it, and visiting Muslim brethren."[9]

According to another tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) concerning the blessed Qur'anic Verse

"Righteous deeds efface the impressions of evil deeds,"

he said:

"Nightly prayers efface the sins committed in the day."[10]

A detailed discussion treating of the same topic is to be found above, under 17:79, where ten traditions of interest were also quoted.

Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 6-7

إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ ـ َ أَشَدُّ وَطْئًا وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا

إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيلًا

6. Your nightly prayers are certainly stronger and more steadfastly.

7. And you make prolonged and steadfast efforts by day.

The blessed Verses in question further treat of the nightly prayers and the spiritual growth engendered by the nightly recitation of the blessed Qur'anic Verses.

They actually further support the preceding blessed Verses by saying that such Divine Command as to the nightly prayers and the recitation of the Verses entails stronger and more steadfast prayers and spiritual growth.

The Arabic nominal form nashi'a denotes "occurrence," though three connotations are suggested for its contextual meaning herein: the night hours occurring consecutively or particularly the late hours of the night and the break of the day; the nightly standing in prayers and the recitation of the Qur'anic Verses, in which respect it is narrated from the Imam Baqir (as) and the Imam Sadiq (as) that standing late at night to perform nightly prayers is herein intended,[11] and according to another tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) concerning the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question, rising from the bed with no intention but to pray to God Almighty is herein intended;[12] the word implies a spiritual state of sublime exaltation engendered in the heart at such hours at night whose impressions on human soul is of further profundity and lasting.

It is worthy of note, however, that the last two connotations are correlative and the twain are implied herein.

The Arabic adverbial form wata'an implies setting foot and also agreement. The Arabic adverbial clause ashaddu wata'an connotes the hardship and the trouble in standing at night for nightly vigilance and prayers.

It may also imply the strong and lasting impressions made in human soul in the light of such prayers. At any rate, the latter sounds further befitting. It may also suggest further harmony experienced on such occasions amongst human heart, vision, and hearing actualized at the time of prayers.

The Arabic comparative adjectival form aqwama, cognate with qiyam ("rising") denotes "firmer; more straight." The Arabic passive present

verbal form qila herein implies remembrance of God Almighty and recitation of the Holy Qur'an.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question is amongst those Verses that express most eloquently the merits of praying at night and at daybreak when the mind is not so preoccupied with worldly affairs and it may thereby purify and foster human soul. It is herein reflected that human soul is particularly prepared to worship God Almighty and be engaged in reflection and remembering Him.

The blessed Verse 7 reflects that it is owing to the fact that you persevere in your abundant efforts during the day, since you are occupied at all times with guiding people, imparting your Divine Message, and finding solutions to the lives of the individuals and the society; therefore, you do not find adequate opportunities to devote yourself to worshipping God Almighty and you may spend the night in prayer.

Another suggested exegesis, which is of more interest and stands in further harmony with the preceding and the following blessed Verses, is that since you have to carry the heavy burdens of you obligations, you may strengthen your soul by your nightly prayers and obtain the required preparedness for embarking upon such great endeavors.

The Arabic nominal form sabh denotes movement and it is also applied to swimming, since the latter entails frequent movements. The human society is seemingly likened to a boundless ocean in which many people are drowning.

The waves move toward different directions in the agitated ocean and wondering barks seek a safe haven. The Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) is the only rescue guard and the Holy Qur'an is the only rescue boat in the ocean. Such great swimmer is supposed to prepare himself for such enormous mission that lies in imparting the Divine Call during the day.

Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 8-10

وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا

رَّبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا

وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيلًا

8. And remember the Name of your Lord and solely attach your heart to Him,

9. The Lord of the east and the west. There is not god but He. Therefore, take Him Alone as your Guardian and the Disposer of your affairs.

10. And be patient with what they say and keep away from them befittingly.

Following the Divine Command as to rise at night in prayer and brief reference made to the profound impressions of prayers, mention is made of five complementary Commands, saying:

"Remember the Name of your Lord."

It goes without saying that the mere remembrance of His Name is not herein intended, rather reference is made to according attention to the point that verbal remembrance serves as a prelude to the remembrance of the heart

purifying the soul and fostering the tree of intuitive knowledge and fear of God Almighty in the heart.

The Arabic nominal form rabb herein indicates that whenever one utters His Sacred Name, one is supposed to pay heed to the boundless Bounties and ongoing fostering of human soul.

Different stages of remembering God Almighty are mentioned by one of the exegetes: the first state is remembering His Name, as reflected in the blessed Verse in question; the second stage is to remember His Pure Essence in one's heart, as reflected in 7:203:

"And remember your Lord within yourself, humbly and with fear; the third stage transcends that of Divine Lordship to the Divine Attributes of His Beauty and Glory signified by Allah,"

as indicated in 33:41:

"O you who believe! Remember Allah with much remembrance."

Thus, such ongoing remembrance undergoes different stages of development and the one who remembers Him is transported to the zenith of perfection.[13]

The second Command is saying:

"Attach your heart unto God Almighty, sever all the aspirations from anything besides Him, and sincerely rise to pray to Him."

The Arabic imperative verbal form tabattal denotes

"sever the ties!"

Mary (as) is called Baul since she did not marry. Fatima (as) is also called Batul since she was different from and superior to other women at the time in terms of deeds, conduct, and knowledge such that she had reached the stage of severance from all things besides Allah.

The verbal for herein implies the state in which man whole heartedly turns toward God Almighty, severing his ties from whatever exists besides Allah. Thus, such man is absorbed in devotion to God Almighty and performs all his deeds solely for Him Alone.

In this respect, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) that the verbal form herein implies the state of humbleness at the time of praying to God Almighty.[14]

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) as saying:

"There is neither asceticism nor separation in Islam."

The tradition implies that turning away from the world as practiced by the Christian monks does not exist in the Islamic faith, since they do not marry and abandon all social activities, but a true Muslim devotes himself wholeheartedly to God Almighty while living at the heart of the society. It is narrated from the Infallible Imams (as) that the verbal form in question implies stretching one's hands while establishing canonical prayers.

However, it is crystal clear that it reflects one of the manifestations of devotion and severing one's ties from all besides God Almighty.[15] It is noteworthy that such remembrance of God Almighty and devotion to Him are the great sources used by the men of God in fulfilling their enormous obligations aiming at guiding the people.

The blessed Verse 9 treats of the third Command:

"The Lord of the east and the west besides Whom there is no other God. Take Him Alone as your Guardian and the Disposer of your affairs."

It is worthy of note that following the stages of remembering God Almighty and devotion, the third stage is to put one's trust totally in God Almighty, the Lord of the east and the west. In other words, the world of existence in its entirety is subservient to His Sovereignty and Lordship. He is the only God to be worshipped.

The blessed Verse supports putting one's trust totally in God Almighty, since in the wide expanse of the world of existence, man may solely rely on Him as the Disposer of all the affairs, since He is the only Sovereign, Fosterer, and Bountiful Lord Worthy of being worshipped.

Mention is made of the fourth and the fifth Commands in the blessed Verse 10:

"Be patient with what they say and keep away from them befittingly."

Thus, reference is made of the states of patience and separation, since the path of calling people unto the Truth abounds in the foes' slander and harassment. The gardener is supposed to bear the stings of the thorns in order to pick up flowers.

Thus, one is supposed to be indifferent to the foes and keep away from them at times in order to ward off their evil actions and give them lessons. It is worthy of note, however, that such separation does not entail leaving incomplete education, propagation, and calling people unto God Almighty.

The blessed Verses in question provide the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and all those people following in his footsteps a series of comprehensive and perfect rules, urging them to derive their inspiration from praying to God Almighty at night and at day break and foster the tree by remembering God Almighty at all times, devotion, total reliance on Him, patience, and at times keeping away from the foes. What an interesting and comprehensive set of rules!

The expression

"the Lord of the east and the west"

makes a reference to His Sovereignty and Lordship over all the world of existence. The same expression is used in common parlance when we say so and so rules over the east and the west, namely he rules over the whole globe rather than the points of the east and the west.

"Befitting separation" (hijr jamil),

as mentioned above, connotes keeping away out of empathy and calling people unto the Truth.

It is an educational method employed at certain times which stands in no disharmony against the question of jihad at other times, since each of them have their own proper places. In other words, such separation does not entail indifference, as it is a kind of paying attention. Some have mistakenly regarded the blessed Verse in question as abrogating those of jihad.

The late eminent scholar, Tabarsi, in his Majma' al-Bayan (under the blessed Verse in question) states that the blessed Verse reflects that the propagators of the Islamic faith and the callers to the Holy Qur'an are supposed to be patient in the face of hardships and associate with people

with toleration and a good disposition, such that the hearts of the audiences sooner welcome their words.

Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 11-14

وَذَرْنِي وَالْمُكَذِّبِينَ أُولِي النَّعْمَةِ وَمَهِّلْهُمْ قَلِيلًا

إِنَّ لَدَيْنَا أَنكَالًا وَجَحِيمًا

وَطَعَامًا ذَا غُصَّةٍ وَعَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَكَانَتِ الْجِبَالُ كَثِيبًا مَّهِيلًا

11. And leave Me Alone to deal with the beliers, those who are in possession of good things of life. And grant them respite for a little while.

12. With Us are fetters and the [Hell] Fire.

13. And a food that chokes and an excruciating torment.

14. On the Day when the earth and the mountains will be in violent shake and the mountains will be a heap of sand.

The blessed Verse 11 is addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) urging him to leave the records of the deeds of such arrogant sinners with Him. The preceding blessed Verse made a brief reference to the harassments of the enemies of the Islamic faith.

The blessed Verses in question harshly attacks them by severe warnings against the torments awaiting them in this world and the Hereafter. Thus, they are urged to revise their evil deeds.

The early Muslims contemporaneous with the Noble Prophet (S) are also consoled against the harsh attacks by the enemies urging them to persevere and remain steadfast by saying:

"Leave the affluent beliers unto Me and grant them respite for a short while."

In other words, God Almighty is saying that the Noble Prophet is not supposed to confront them, but to leave them to Him, such that they avail themselves of a brief respite so that they may heed the ultimatum and reveal their nature and carry the burdens of further sins. Divine excruciating torments await them.

It is recorded in the history of Islam that the Muslims gained power before long and inflicted severe blows upon their enemies at the battles of Badr, Hunayn, and Ahzab. The arrogant enemies died before long and met their dire fate of Divine torments in the purgatory and those of the Hereafter are not too remote from them.

The Arabic phrase

ul-i 'l-ni'ma ("possessors of bounties")

herein implies the arrogance and neglect stemming from affluence leading the affluent oftentimes to entanglements. The history of the Prophets (as) and the Qur'anic Verses reflect that the affluent are the foremost enemies of the faith, though they are supposed to precede others in welcoming the call of the Truth as a token of their gratitude for the Divine Bounties granted them.

The blessed Verse 12 proceeds with further explicit warnings saying:

"With Us are fetters and the [Hell] Fire."

The Arabic plural nominal form ankal denotes heavy chains. The word lexically denotes feebleness and weakness, since the shackles and fetters binding the feet, the hands, and the neck impede movement and entail weakness, the word is employed in the sense of chains, fetters, and shackles. The point is that such affluent but disobedient people availed themselves of unrestrained indulgence in worldly pleasures, but bondage and Hellfire awaits them in the Hereafter.

The blessed Verse 13 adds that such disobedient people shall be given

"a food that chokes and an excruciating torment."

They had palatable food in this world and indulged in the pleasures of the flesh, whereas a food that will choke and painful torments will be in store for them in the world to come. The severity of such torments is known to no one but God Almighty. In this respect, it is narrated that a Muslim was reciting the blessed Verse in question once while the Noble Prophet (S) listened to him.

The reciter of the Verse cried out of a sudden and lost consciousness.[16] It is also reported that the Noble Prophet (S) was reciting the blessed Verse and had the same experience.[17] Such people will choke on the food in Hell.

The same theme is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[18]:

"No food will there be for them but a poisonous thorny plant."

It is also mentioned in the blessed Verses 43 and 44 that the sinners shall feed on the tree of Zaqqum, the same bitter and poisonous plant of a foul smell.

The blessed Verse 14 concerns the day when such torments shall be inflicted on the sinners, saying:

"On the Day when the earth and the mountains will be in violent shake and the mountains will be a heap of sand."

The Arabic nominal form kathib denotes "dune, sand hill." The Arabic nominal form mahil implies pouring something soft like sand and flour on something else, though it herein connotes something which is never fixed and permanent.

The blessed Verse reflects that the mountains shall disintegrate on the Day of Resurrection such that they turn into soft sand in which feet sink. Concerning the mountains on the threshold of the Resurrection, there are different Qur'anic expressions all of which reflect that they disintegrate and change into soft soil and sand. Further details may be found above under 20:105.

Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 15-16

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولًا شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُولًا

فَعَ ١ فِرْعَوْنُ الرَّسُولَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُ أَخْذًا وَبِيلًا

15. We have sent unto you a Messenger to be a witness over you as We did send a Messenger to Pharaoh.

16. But Pharaoh disobeyed the Messenger and We chastised him severely.

The Noble Prophet (S) witnesses the deeds in this world and bears witness to the same on the Day of Resurrection.

The blessed Verse 15 compares the Noble Prophet's (S) call and the animosity of the Arab chiefs against him and the rise of the Prophet Moses (as) against the people of the Pharaoh, saying:

"We have sent unto you a Messenger (S) to be a witness over you [whose obligation is to guide you and watch over your deeds] as We did send a Messenger (as) to Pharaoh [to guide him and his people and watch over their deeds]."

Thus, the Qur'anic Verses and the traditions reflect that the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) witness all our deeds. Fulfillment of the call entails supervision and the Noble Prophet (S) supervises all the deeds of his community and bears witness to the same.

The blessed Verse 16 is saying that Pharaoh rose against the Messenger of Allah (as) and God Almighty inflicted severe torments on him. Neither his enormous army, nor his vast realm, nor his power, nor the possessions of his people could impede Divine torments and they were all drowned in the raging waves of the Nile in which they took pride. Now, you are far inferior to them in terms of means and number. How could you be deceived by your meager means and number?

The Arabic nominal form wabil originally denotes heavy shower, but it connotes any heavy and severe thing, particularly torments. The blessed Verse in question implies the severity of the torment that it showers upon the sinners like a heavy downpour of rain. Disobedience to the commands of Allah's Messenger entails torments and entanglements.

Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 17-19

فَكَيْفَ تَتَّقُونَ إِن كَفَرْتُمْ يَوْمًا يَجْعَلُ الْوِلْدَانَ شِيبًا

السَّمَاءُ مُنفَطِرٌ بِهِ كَانَ وَعْدُهُ مَفْعُولًا

إِنَّ هَٰذِهِ تَذْكِرَةٌ فَمَن شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا

17. Then, how can you avoid the chastisement, if you disbelieve a Day that will make the children grey-headed?

18. On such Day the heaven will be cleft asunder and His Promise shall certainly be accomplished.

19. This is a warning and whoever wills, he may take a Path toward his Lord.

The Arabic plural nominal form wildan, whose singular form is walid, is applied to newly born infants. The Arabic plural nominal form shiyb, whose singular form is ashyab, denotes the grey-headed and the old. Two meanings may be suggested for the blessed Verse 17:

1. The severity of the Day of Resurrection shall be such that the newly born infants grow old.

2. That Day shall be so long that the children grow old.

At any rate, the blessed Verse is addressed to the disbelievers contemporaneous with the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S), warning them that if you disbelieve, how will you be untouched by the Divine severe torments that make the children grow old?

The torments which shall be inflicted upon the sinners on that Day shall be so severe, harsh, and horrible that "they shall make the children grow old."

It is reported that some of the horrible afflictions in this world may instantly make people grey-headed. The blessed Verse is saying that even if you happen not to be entangled with the torments in this world, like Pharaoh and his people, what will you do with the torments which shall be inflicted upon the disobedient on the Day of Resurrection?

The blessed Verse 18 further depicts that horrible Day, saying:

"On such Day the heaven will be cleft asunder and His Promise shall certainly be accomplished."

Many a Qur'anic Verses treat of the incidents that shall happen on the last day in this world and the Hereafter including horrible explosions and severe earthquakes and spontaneous alterations.

The blessed Verse in question briefly deals with the same saying that the heaven and the celestial bodies with their enormous greatness shall not stand the colossal incidents to occur on that Day; how the weak and vulnerable man shall be able to impede such incidents? The Arabic nominal form infitar denotes cleaving asunder.

The blessed Verse 19 makes a reference to the foregoing warnings, saying:

"This is a warning and whoever wills, he may take a Path toward his Lord."

Whoever intends to find guidance and attain to everlasting happiness may opt for the path leading to his Lord. Treading such path nonchalantly is not regarded as a merit, since the merit lies in that man chooses the path willfully. At any rate, God Almighty has provided man with the path, vision, and the shining sun so that man be able to choose the straight path and obey Divine Commands willfully.

Different exegeses have been suggested by Qur'an exegetes concerning the clause

"This is a warning."

Some suggest that reference is made to the admonitions in the preceding blessed Verses. Some maintain that mention is made of the Chapter or the Holy Qur'an in their entirety.

Some also hold that reference may be made to the Divine Command as to establishing nightly canonical prayers, as reflected in the opening Verses of the blessed Chapter, addressed to the Noble Prophet, though the clause in question is generalizing it to the entire Muslim community. Thus, the word path (sabil) mentioned in the following clause as well implies nightly canonical prayers as a significant path leading to the Lord.

Finally, the blessed Verses in question warn the arrogant beliers intoxicated by affluence and bounties against four excruciating torments: shackles and fetters, burning Fire, rough, choking, and deadly food, and different kinds of torments contrasted with the bounties in this world, availing oneself of boundless freedom, comfortable life, palatable food, and comfort in different forms. Since they availed themselves of all these

bounties at the price of wrong doing, arrogance, neglect, and disobedience to God Almighty, they shall have such dire fate on the Day of Resurrection.

Surah al-Muzzammil - Verse 20

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ تَقُومُ أَدْنَىٰ مِنْ ثُلُثَيِ اللَّيْلِ وَنِصْفَهُ وَثُلُثَهُ وَطَائِفَةٌ مِنَ الَّذِينَ مَعَكَ ۚ وَاللَّهُ يُقَدِّرُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ۚ عَلِمَ أَنْ لَنْ تُحْصُوهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ فَاقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ ۚ عَلِمَ أَنْ سَيَكُونُ مِنْكُمْ مَرْضَىٰ ۙ وَآخَرُونَ يَضْرِبُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَبْتَغُونَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ ۙ وَآخَرُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۖ فَاقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنْهُ ۚ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا ۚ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا وَأَعْظَمَ أَجْرًا ۚ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

20. Your Lord knows that you and also a group of those with you stand [in prayer] at night a little less than two thirds of the night, or half the night, or a third of the night. And Allah measures the night and the day. He knows that you are unable to [precisely] measure it, so He granted you Mercy. Therefore, recite the Qur'an as much as may be convenient to you.

He knows that there will be some amongst you who fall sick, others travel [for earning a living], yet others fight in Allah's Cause. Therefore, recite as much of the Qur'an as may be convenient to you, and perform canonical prayers and give alms, and lend Allah a goodly loan [expend in His Cause]. And [know that] whatever good deeds you send before you for yourselves, you shall find it with Allah, better and greater in Reward. And seek Forgiveness of Allah as Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Gracious.

The blessed Verse in question warns Muslims against being arrogant by doing good deeds like establishing nightly prayers, recitation of the Qur'anic Verses, and helping the poor, since they still need to invoke God Almighty to forgive their sins.

The blessed Verse herein reflects that shedding tears at night in prayer, doing jihad in the day, helping the poor, recitation of the Qur'anic Verses, going on business trips, and doing good righteous deeds are to be accompanied by seeking Divine Forgiving of one's sins. The preceding Verses urged Muslims to stand in prayer third, half, or two thirds of the night.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that calculating such measurements is hard lying beyond your abilities; as a consequence of which God Almighty forgives you, but you may stand in prayer, establish canonical prayers, and recite the Qur'anic Verses as much as they are convenient to you, particularly when you are sick or you are on some journey.

It is narrated from the Noble Imam Ridha (as) as saying:

"Recite the Qur'an to the extent of your humbleness and purity heart."[19]

Traveling for commerce and that aiming at jihad are juxtaposed in the blessed Verse, though the former is this worldly and the latter is otherworldly. It is narrated that if a merchant remembers God Almighty at all times and refrains from fraud, hoarding, selling less than the due

measure, and selling at an unlawful higher price, is like a warrior setting foot in the battle field to kill the enemy and safeguard security.[20]

Recitation of the Qur'anic Verses is not a religious obligation, but it is highly recommended herein such that the Divine Command as to the same is reiterated twice and is thus accorded particular attention. It is worthy of note that Divine Commands are harmonious with human capacities and they never entail hardships.

It is in this vein that the sick are supposed to perform ritual ablution with soil or sand (tayammum) in lieu of water and they may establish their canonical prayers in the manner convenient to them. The sick are not supposed to take fast, but they should help the poor by paying a certain amount of money or give them a specified amount of goods as a token of atonement (kaffara).

The blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty is All-Aware that you may not make precise calculations; as a consequence of which He forgives your mistakes. The point is that Divine Obligations are convenient to man and they never entail hardships.

The Arabic clause taba 'alaykum (literally: "He has turned unto you"), according to the majority of Qur'an exegetes, suggests lightening the obligation rather than repenting of one's sins. It may also be suggested that upon the removal of the obligation, no sin may be committed and it equal Divine Forgiving.

Mention is made of four other Commands at the close of the blessed Verse thereby completing the plan as to self purification, saying:

"Establish canonical prayers; pay alms, lend Allah a goodly loan through expending in His Cause and know that whatever good deeds you send forth for yourselves shall be Rewarded by Allah most befittingly; invoke God Almighty for Forgiveness as He is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Gracious."

These four Obligations, namely establishing canonical prayers, paying alms and expending in Allah's Cause, invoking God Almighty for Forgiveness, and Recitation of the Qur'anic Verses and reflecting upon them, as mentioned above, constitute a perfect plan aiming at self purification and spiritual growth bearing indubitable impressions on believers at any time, particularly on the threshold of the Islamic faith.

Establishing prayers herein implies the obligatory canonical prayers performed five times a day. By alms, paying the obligatory canonical alms is herein intended. Further, lending God Almighty a goodly loan (qardh al-hasana) connotes the supererogatory expending in Allah's Cause.

The expression

"lending Allah a goodly loan"

is the most noble expression imaginable in this respect, since God Almighty is the Owner of all the Possessions and He is not expected by no means to request others to lend Him a loan, but He hereby urges the believers to expend and make sacrifices in His Cause and obtain merits by doing such noble deeds and tread the path of spiritual growth and attain perfection.

It is noteworthy that making mention of invoking God Almighty for Forgiveness, as mention at the close of such Divine Commands may reflect that by acting upon such Commands, man may not feel that he is perfect and God Almighty owes them something, but he is supposed to regard himself neglectful at all times and turn toward Him, since no one is able to praise Him most befittingly.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that laying emphasis on these Command reflects that the believers may not imagine that lightening the Obligations as to praying to God Almighty and reciting the Qur'anic Verses at night does not apply to other religious obligations, since the latter stand the way they are, namely other religious obligations are not subject to any decrease or lightening.[21]

O Lord! Grant us all the Blessing of standing in prayers at night, the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, and treading the path of spiritual growth in the light of the Heavenly Light!

Notes

1. Ruh al-Ma'ani, vol. 28, p. 101; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 6, p. 276.
2. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 375.
3. 59:21
4. Tafsir Atyab al-Bayan, vol. 13, p. 249.
5. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question; Usul Kafi, the chapter on the articulate recitation of the Qur'an (bab tartil al-Qur'an).
6. Majma' al-Bayan, ibid.; Usul Kafi, ibid.; Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
7. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
8. For instance, Usul Kafi; Nur al-Thiqalayn; Durr al-Manthur; and other tradition and exegetic sources.
9. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p. 143.
10. Ibid.
11. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 378.
12. Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 448, tradition 16.
13. Fakhr Razi's exegetic work, vol. 30, p. 177.
14. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
15. Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 450, tradition 27, narrating from the Noble Imam Baqir (as).
16. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
17. Ruh al-Ma'ani, vol. 29, p. 107.
18. 88:6
19. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
20. Tafsir Durr al-Manthur.
21. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 20, p. 156.

Surah al-Mudaththir, Chapter 74

(The One Reposing in Bed)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 56

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

This Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has 56 Verses. It was indubitably revealed in Mecca, though there exists no unanimity as to being the earliest of the Chapters revealed to the Noble Prophet (S), or it followed Chapter 96 (Surah al-'Alaq) in the sequence of Revelation.

However, according attention to the contents of these two Chapters (74, 96) reflects that the latter was revealed on the threshold of the Prophetic call, but the former concerns the time when the Noble Prophet (S) was Divinely appointed to call the general public, when the clandestine call had come to its end.

Therefore, some of the Qur'an exegetes maintain that Chapter 97 was the earliest of the Chapters revealed on the threshold of the Prophet Revelation of the Noble Prophet (S), but Chapter 74 was the earliest of the Chapters revealed following his call to the general public.

At any rate, the nature of the Meccan Chapters, mainly calling people to turn toward the origin and the return, confrontation with polytheism, and warning the beliers against Divine torment, is explicitly reflected in the blessed Chapter in question.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from the Noble Imam Baqir (as) that whoever recites Surah al-Mudaththir in their obligatory canonical prayers, God Almighty shall make them accompany the Noble Prophet (S) and shall grant them his elevated degree, and they shall not be entangled with misfortune and pain in this worldly life. Further traditions have been narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as), though for the sake of brevity, mention is not herein made of them.

It goes without saying that the mere recitation of the words of the blessed Chapter may not result in such great consequences, but one is supposed to accord attention to the contents and most precisely act upon them.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ

قُمْ فَأَنذِرْ

1. O you reposing in bed!
2. Arise and warn [the world]!

Different occasions of Revelation have been reported in Qur'an exegetic sources for the blessed Chapter in question, though for the sake of brevity, mention is not herein mentioned of them. However, the Noble Prophet (S) is undoubtedly addressed in these Verses, though no explicit reference has been made to him therein, but it is reflected in the contents.

The opening two blessed Verses say:

"O you reposing enveloped in bed covers! Arise and warn the world [against Divine torment, since the time of rest and repose has passed and the time of rising and propagation of the Islamic faith have arrived]!"

The particular emphasis laid on the Noble Prophet (S) as both a bearer of glad tidings (bashir) and a warner (nadhir) is owing to the truth that warning the people, particularly on the threshold of the Prophetic call, made significant contributions to awakening the neglectful souls.

Concerning the reason lying behind urging him to embark upon his Prophetic call while he reposed in bed, some Qur'an exegetes hold that the Arab polytheists assembled on the threshold of pilgrimage to Mecca and some of them, e.g. Abu Jahl, Abu Sufyan, Walid ibn Mughayra, and Nadhr ibn Harith, consulted as to the manner of providing replies to the questions raised by non-Meccan pilgrims who had heard scattered material regarding the Prophetic call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S).

Following holding many a conference, they came to the conclusion that they had better call him a magician (sahir), since the consequences of magic include causing separation between couples and fathers and sons, and the Noble Prophet (S) had acted accordingly through his Prophetic call.

Having heard such words, the Noble Prophet (S) was deeply saddened and returned home morbidly and reposed in his bed. Then, the blessed Verses in question were revealed calling him to arise and struggle against them. Other suggested interpretations make mention of the same call to rising and guiding the society.

It would be of interest to know that the Arabic imperative clause fandhir ***("Warn!")***

makes no reference to the object of such warning, since it reflects the generality of the act. In other words, he is urged herein to warn the people against idolatry, polytheism, disbelief, wrong doing, corruption, Divine torment, the reckoning on the Day of Resurrection, and the like.

In this respect, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) that the blessed Verse means

"shorten your clothes!" (thiyabaka faqsir).[1]

Some Qur'an exegetes also maintain that reference is herein made to wives, since it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[2]:

"They are garments for you and they are your garments."

In other words, you maintain the dignity of each other and you are the adornments of one another. All these interpretations may be intended by the blessed Verse, reflecting the truth that Divinely appointed leaders may be charismatic when they are unadulterated and people be certain as to their fear of God Almighty. It is in the same vein, that the Command as to chastity follows that of rising and warning.

In the course of the third Injunction, the blessed Verse 5 says:

"Keep away from impurities and what entails Divine torment."

The generalization of the meaning of the Arabic word

rujz ("impurity")

has led to different interpretations for the same: idols, any kind of sin, vice, mammonism as the sources of any wrong and sin, Divine torment as the consequence of polytheism and committing sins, and anxiety and apprehension.[3]

The term is also applied to any kind of sin and polytheism, idolatry, satanic temptations, vices, and Divine torment leading to apprehension and deviation from the Straight Path. The comprehensive meaning of the blessed Verse includes any deviation and vice leading to Divine Wrath in this world and the Hereafter.

The Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S), as reflected in his biographical accounts acknowledged by friends and foes, is indicative of his keeping away from vices, though the point is accorded emphasis herein.

The fourth Injunction is intended by the blessed Verse 6, saying:

"Give not a thing in order to have more nor consider your deeds of obedience to Allah as a favor to him."

The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse includes any kind of expecting obligation from God Almighty and the people because of good deeds. One is not supposed to expected indebtedness from God Almighty for struggling in His Cause, since He did favors to individuals by granting them such exalted degrees.

Likewise, God's servants are not supposed to think highly one one's good deeds, but they should at all times bear in mind their neglect and the truth that worshipping God Almighty is a great Divine Blessings.

In other words, your rising, warning, propagation of monotheism, making mention of Divine Glory and Majesty, purity of garments, and abstaining from sins are not sources of regarding God Almighty indebted to you nor should you think highly of them, but you are supposed to keep in mind that they are Divine Blessings for which you should be grateful and be absorbed in His Love such that you underestimate such great deeds.

In technical terms, omission of objects of a relation is indicative of generality which in this case includes the torments in this world and the Hereafter as well as the evil consequences of vices.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 3-7

وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ

وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ

وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ

وَلَا تَمْنُ تَسْتَكْثِرُ

وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ

3. And magnify your Lord!

4. And purify your garments!

5. And keep away from impurities.

6. And give not a thing in order to have more.

7. And be patient for the sake of your Lord!

Five significant Injunctions are revealed unto the Noble Prophet (S) following his call to rise and warn. These injunctions serve as models for the people.

The first injunction concerns monotheism:

"Only magnify your Lord, your possessor and fosterer. Whatever you possess is granted by Him.

Laying emphasis on the word

rabb ("Lord")

which precedes the imperative verbal form kabbir ("magnify") indicates exclusivity and reflects the question of monotheism substantiated by an argument in such brief clause. It is so interesting and meaningful that the Qur'anic clause is so terse and concise.

The mere utterance of

"Allah is the Greatest"

is not intended, though such utterance is an implication reflected in the traditions as well, but the utterance is intended to say that the believers are supposed to magnify their Lord in terms of belief, words, and practice. God Almighty is supposed to be regarded as possessing the Attributes of Beauty and glorified of any defect.

He is too Glorious to be describable. It is narrated from the Ahl al-Bayt that

"Allah is the Greatest"

intends to say that God Almighty is far Superior to be described and comprehended by mankind. Therefore, uttering such clause is far comprehensive than glorification which merely includes being glorified of any kind of defect.

Proceeding with the question of monotheism, the blessed Verse 4 includes the second Injunctions as to purity from impurities, saying:

"Purify your clothes."

The word

"clothes"

may herein serve as a metaphor for human deeds, since the deeds are likened to clothes as the outward appearance reflects the inward beliefs and feelings. Some also maintain that the word "clothes" herein indicates heart and soul, namely purify you heart from impurities. Where the clothes are supposed to be cleansed, the one who wears them is accorded precedence.

Some have also held that the word denotes the outward clothes, since their purity constitutes the most significant token of character, education, and culture. Pre-Islamic Arabs hardly accorded attention to keeping away from impurities and their clothes were generally unclean. It was quite common, as in the case of those entangled in the age of ignorance, to wear quite long garments, such that their garments were soiled out of being dragged while they walked.

The blessed Verse 7 makes a reference to the last Injunction, saying:

"Be patient for the sake of your Lord!"

Once more, we are faced with a comprehensive meaning of patience and steadfastness against the ignorant polytheists' and the enemies' abuses.

The blessed Verse is urging the believers to be steadfast in obedience to Allah's Commands and be patience in struggling against concupiscent desires and the enemies of the faith. Patience is indubitably the basis and the safeguard of all the aforesaid plans. It is principally the best means of propagating the faith and guiding people.

Thus, patience is accorded attention is many a Qur'anic Verse.

As reflected in the Nahj al-Balagha, it is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) as saying:

"Patience and steadfastness in the cause of the faith is like the head against the body."

Therefore, patience and steadfastness serve as the most significant of the plans of the Prophets (as) and the men of God. The more they faced hardships, the more they grew patient.

Regarding the Rewards of the patient, the Noble Prophet (S) is reported as saying:

"Allah says that whenever I inflict some afflictions upon my servants' bodies, property, or children, they face them patiently and I cannot measure their deeds nor may I open up their record of deeds."[4]

Having been inquired regarding faith, Allah's Messenger (S) replied:

"Half of faith lies in patience."[5]

In this respect, it is narrated from Imam 'Ali (as) as saying:

"Ward off sorrows through good certitude and patience."[6]

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 8-10

فَإِذَا نُقِرَ فِي النَّاقُورِ

فَذَٰلِكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَوْمٌ عَسِيرٌ

عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ غَيْرُ يَسِيرٍ

8. When it shall be blown into the Trumpet.

9. That Day shall be a Hard Day,

10. Far from convenient for the disbelievers.

Proceeding with the Injunction as to the rise and warning reflected in the preceding blessed Verses, those in question open with a particular and eloquent emphasis, saying:

"When it shall be blown into the Trumpet that Day shall be a Hard Day, far from convenient for the disbelievers."

It is noteworthy that the Arabic nominal form naqur, derived from n-q-r, denotes strike so as to pierce something. The cognate form minqar is the birds' beak thereby they may pierce objects. Consequently, the Trumpet whose sound is so loud as if it pierces the ears and penetrates into the brain is termed naqur.

It is explicitly reflected in the Qur'anic Verses that the Trumpet shall be blown into twice in the last moment of this world and the beginning of the Resurrection Day, the first of such extraordinarily awe inspiring and shocking sounds is that of death and the latter is that of awakening and life encompassing the world over.

These two sounds are also terms the first and the second sounds of the Trumpet. The blessed Verse in question treats of the second sound whereby the Resurrection shall be established and the hardship of such Day for the disbelievers.

A detailed discussion on the Trumpet and its sound is to be found above under 39:68. At any rate, the blessed Verses in question reflect the truth that many a hardship shall await the disbelievers upon blowing into the Trumpet. That Day shall be so excruciating and agonizing that the strongest men shall be brought to their knees.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 11-15

ذَرْنِي وَمَنْ خَلَقْتُ وَحِيدًا

وَجَعَلْتُ لَهُ مَالًا مَّمْدُودًا

وَبَنِينَ شُهُودًا

وَمَهَّدتُّ لَهُ تَمْهِيدًا

ثُمَّ يَطْمَعُ أَنْ أَزِيدَ

11. Leave Me Alone with the one whom I created alone.
12. I granted him abundant possessions.
13. And children to be by his side [serving him].
14. And prepared all the means of life for him.
15. He still desires further increase.

As reflected above, the disbelievers were collectively warned, though the blessed Verses in question particularly make reference to the most influential amongst them by eloquently and decisively warning them, saying:

"Leave me Alone with the one whom I created alone."

The blessed Verses in question allude to Walid ibn Mughayra Makhzumi, one of the most notorious chiefs of Quraysh. An occasion of Revelation is mentioned in many an exegetic sources, e.g. Majma' al-Bayan, Fi Hilal al-Qur'an, al-Mizan, and those by Qurtubi and Maraghi.

It is also mentioned that whatever service rendered to the people, irrespective of spiritual ones, e.g. propagation of the Islamic faith and guiding them or expending in Allah's Cause, are not supposed to be compensated by reminding people of them or desiring further increase in possessions granted by God Almighty, since such undesirable acts render the good deeds ineffective.

In this respect, it is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[7]:

"O you who believe! Do not render in vain your expending in Allah's Cause by reminders of your generosity or by abuse."

The Arabic negative imperative verbal form la tamnun deriving from m-n-n herein implies any word reflecting the significance of something granted someone else. T

hus, its relation with the question of

"desiring further increase" (istikthar)

is clarified. Man is supposed to regard his services meager without expecting any remuneration, rather than desire increase which will lead to

rendering in vain the righteous good acts. In this vein, the theme of the blessed Verse is reflected in some of the traditions that one is not supposed to grant anyone anything if he desires further increase in return.[8]

Regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"Do not overestimate the good deed done in Allah's Cause."

The tradition reflects one of the implications of the universal meaning of the blessed Verse.[9]

The Arabic adverb of manner wahidan may either modify the Creator or the created.

The former possibility allows two suggestions:

"Leave Me Alone with him so that I severely chastise him,"

or:

"I created him alone and granted him all these Bounties, but he showed ingratitude."

The latter possibility may also entail two interpretations either alluding to the point that in his mother's womb and upon his birth, he was alone, without any possessions or children, but such Bounties were granted him later on; or it may make a reference to the point that he regarded himself and his father unique and unrivaled amongst the Arabs.[10] However, the first of these four interpretations sound further befitting.

The blessed Verse 12 says:

"I granted him abundant possessions."

The Arabic past participial form mamdud originally denotes "stretched, expanded," though it herein implies the abundant possessions or expansion in temporal and spatial terms. It is also suggested that he possessed numerous gardens and farms and plenty of money and gold. The word implies all these senses, but they were of not avail to him owing to his showing ingratitude and confronting Allah and His Messenger (S).

The blessed Verse 13 alludes to the large number of people at his disposal, saying:

"And children to be by his side [serving him]."

They were with their father at all times, since they were neither pressed for means of life nor had they to leave their father behind and depart for a remote place. It is reported in a number of traditions that he had ten children.

The blessed Verse 14 makes a reference to other Bounties bestowed upon him, saying:

"And prepared all the means of life for him."

The Bounties bestowed upon him included healthy body, possessions, healthy children, and social prestige. The Arabic word tamhid, derived from m-h-d, originally denotes preparing a place, like a cradle, for the child, though it connotes all means and opportunities of life in terms of convenience, promotion, prestige, and generally speaking all the Bounties of life and the means of achievement and success.

The blessed Verse 15 is saying that in lieu of prostrating himself before God Almighty for all these Bounties, he showed ingratitude and desired further Bounties:

"He still desires further increase."

Reference is not only made to Walid ibn Mughayra, since all mamonists are alike in that their thirst may never be quenched and even if the entire world happens to fall into their share, they expect to possess more. The point is that worldly possessions all fall into the shares of men and the distribution depends on Divine Will rather than human knowledge and skills.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 16-17

كَلَّا إِنَّهُ كَانَ لِآيَاتِنَا عَنِيدًا

سَأُرْهِقُهُ صَعُودًا

16. It shall never be thus, since he opposes Our Àyat [Verses, Signs, proofs].

17. I shall soon oblige him to climb the summit of life [then, I shall thrust him downwards.

The disbelieving stranger is harshly rejected in the blessed Verse 16:

"I shall never be thus, since he opposes Our Àyat."

The disbeliever was fully aware that the Holy Qur'an is neither the word of the jinn nor that of mankind, but it possesses strong roots, fruitful branches, and unparalleled appeal. However, he regarded it as magic and its bearer a magician.

The Arabic adverb of manner

'anidan ("obdurately")

implies willful opposition and animosity, when one comprehends the truthfulness of something, but he rises against it. Walid was the personification of such obdurate animosity. The Arabic past verbal form kana implies progressiveness, in that he bore animosity against the truth at all times, rather than temporarily.

The blessed Verse 17 makes a terse reference to his dire fate:

"I shall soon oblige him to climb the hard to pass summit of life and then I shall thrust him downwards.

The Arabic verbal form sa-urhiquhu, derived from r-h-q ("to cover fiercely") connotes overburdening and afflicting one with different torments. The Arabic nominal form sa'ud denotes a place climbed by someone and the Arabic verbal noun su'ud is employed in the sense of climbing. Since climbing summits is hard, it implies any kind of hard task. Consequently, some exegetes maintain that it herein connotes Divine torment.

The blessed Verse may allude to the torments inflicted upon Walid in this world, since it is reported in historical sources that having reached the summit of achievements in his personal and social life, he fell down such that he recurrently lost his possessions and offspring.[11]

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 18-25

إِنَّهُ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ

فَقُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ

ثُمَّ قُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ

ثُمَّ نَظَرَ

ثُمَّ عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ

ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ

فَقَالَ إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْثَرُ

إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ

18. He thought and plotted [against the Qur'an].

19. So let him be cursed: how he plotted [against the Truth]!

20. And once more let him be cursed: how he plotted [to employ his satanic stratagem]!

21. Then he cast a glance.

22. Then, he frowned and hastened;

23. Then he turned away [from the Truth] and was arrogant.

24. Then, he said: "This is nothing but appealing magic like that of the ancients,

25. "This is nothing but the word of a human being!

The blessed Verses in question provide further details regarding Walid ibn Mughayra Makhzumi whom God Almighty had bestowed abundant possessions and offspring, but he rose against the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S), striving to belie the Noble Prophet (S) and the Holy Qur'an by resorting to ploys.

It goes without saying that thinking is basically good, provided that it be in line with the Truth. One hour spent on intellection entails the merits of worshipping God Almighty for one year or more, since that one hour may totally alter the course of human fate. Nonetheless, if it be employed in the cause of disbelief, corruption, and vices, it will be reprehensible. Walid's thoughts fall into the second category.

The Arabic verbal form qaddara herein implies that he devised his vicious ploys.

The blessed Verses 19 and 20 say:

"So let him be cursed: how he plotted [against the Truth]! And once more let him be cursed: how he plotted [to employ his satanic stratagem]!"

Concerning the occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verse in question, Qur'an exegetes maintain that Walid intended to unify the polytheists urging them to disseminate false accusations against the Noble Prophet (S).

When it was suggested to call the Noble Prophet (S)

"the poet,"

he refused. He further rejected his being called a soothsayer or a lunatic.

Finally, the polytheists suggested that the Noble Prophet be called a magician and he accepted such false attribution, since he falsely imagined that magicians were in the habit of severing the bonds of friendship and establishing friendly ties between former opponents. He thought that such

things had appeared upon the emergence of the Islamic faith and the Holy Qur'an.

Thus, he embarked upon investigation and reflection, as reflected by the terse Qur'anic expression:

"He thought and devised his ploys."

Other polytheists made suggestions, but it was Walid who reflected upon the idea and made the choice. Such expression, particularly its reiteration, reflects that he was an expert in devising such evil plots, such that his ideas were a source of surprise.

The blessed Verses 21-25 say:

"Then he cast a glance [to make sure that everything was in order. Then, he frowned and hastened; then he turned away [from the Truth] and was arrogant. Then, he said: 'This is nothing but appealing magic like that of the ancients, this is nothing but the word of a human being [rather than Divine Revelation]!"

Thus, following persistent investigations and devising satanic ploys against the Holy Qur'an, he uttered his final words and notwithstanding all the stratagems employed by such mastermind of the age of ignorance and polytheism, he inadvertently extolled the Qur'an, reflecting that it was so unprecedentedly appealing that all hearts might be impressed by it.

He held that the Holy Qur'an engenders magical impressions bewitching the hearts. Since the Holy Qur'an bears no resemblance to the sorcerers' art, but its logical, rhythmical, and well-measured words clearly indicate that it is Divine Revelation whose source is Divine Omniscience encompassing all beauties consistently and coherently.

The Arabic past verbal form 'abasa denotes that he frowned. The past verbal form basara both implies hastened and frowned or grimaced. The second sense of basara would be in line with 'abasa, though intending the former meaning would imply making hasty decisions for choosing a false "label" for the Holy Qur'an.

The verbal form yu'tharu is used in the sense of relating a tale from the ancients as their vestige. However, some hold that it is cognate with ithar denoting choosing and deeming as precedent.

According to the former sense, Walid is saying that this magic is like what is reported from the ancients, but as per the latter sense, he is saying that magic is something that impresses the hearts owing to its sweetness and appeal, hence its precedence over any other thing by the people.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse includes an implied confession as to the Inimitability of the Holy Qur'an, since it bears no likeness to the extraordinary tasks performed by sorcerers.

The language of the Holy Qur'an is imbued with dignity, spirituality, and unparalleled appeal, such that if Walid had been true in his claim as to it being the words of mankind, others would have been able to produce the like of it.

It is well-known that the Holy Qur'an many a time calls other to try to produce the like of it, though none of the obdurate enemies well-versed in the Arabic tongue have failed to produce the like or even something inferior to it. The miracle of the Holy Qur'an lies in its inimitability.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 26-30

سَأُصْلِيهِ سَقَرَ
وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سَقَرُ
لَا تُبْقِي وَلَا تَذَرُ
لَوَّاحَةٌ لِّلْبَشَرِ
عَلَيْهَا تِسْعَةَ عَشَرَ

26. I will cast him soon into Hell.
27. And you are unaware of the Hell.
28. Hellfire neither spares nor leaves anything [unconsumed].
29. It totally alters the skin!
30. Over it are appointed nineteen angels of torment.

The preceding blessed Verses treated of the denial of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophetic call of Muhammad (S) by one of the chiefs of the polytheists. The blessed Verses in question make a reference to his horrible chastisement on the Day of Resurrection, saying that God Almighty will cast him soon into Hell burning him in the Fire.

The Arabic nominal form saqar denotes alteration and melting down under the scorching heat of the sun. It is one of the attributes of the Hell, frequently mentioned in the Qur'anic Verses. The attribute alludes to the frightening torments awaiting the people of Hell. It is also suggested that it is the name of one of the horrible and lower stages of Hell.

Treating of the severity of the torments in store for the people of Hell, the blessed Verse 27 poses a question:

"What do you know about saqar?"

The question indicates that the torments in it will be so severe that they are imaginable in the same manner that the significance and the greatness of the Bounties in Paradise are unimaginable.

The blessed Verse 28

"Hellfire neither spares nor leaves anything [unconsumed]"

may reflect that unlike the worldly fire that affects one part of the body leaving other parts unscathed, for instance it affects the body leaving intact the soul, Hellfire consumes man in its entirety leaving nothing behind.

It is also suggested that Hellfire neither takes the life of the people of Hell nor does it keep them alive, but they are entangled at all times in a state between life and death, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"There he will neither die nor live"[12];

"We shall burn them in Fire such that their skins shall be roasted through, We shall make other skins grow that they may taste the chastisement"[13].

The blessed Verse 29 provides another depiction of such burning Fire of Divine Wrath:

"It totally alters the skin"

such that it shall be visible from afar. The Arabic clause lawwahatun li-'l-bashar indicates that the Fire blackens the complexion blacker than the dark of the night.

The Arabic nominal form bashar herein implies complexion or it may serve as an instance of synecdoche alluding to mankind. The Arabic feminine present participial form lawwaha, cognate with lawh ("tablet") implies becoming clear and apparent, though it also connotes altering and making changes.

The blessed Verse 30,

"Over it are appointed nineteen angels of torment"

reflects that they are not appointed to be compassionate, but they are supposed to severely chastise them.

Although the blessed Verse solely makes mention of the number

"nineteen"

without any explicit reference to the angels appointed to inflict chastisement, but the following Verse clearly reflects that the angels in charge of inflicting chastisement is intended herein.

It is worthy of note that we human beings are bounded by the restrictions of the mundane world, are not fully aware of the precise nature of Resurrection, Paradise, and Hell, but what our knowledge consists of generalities. Thus, it is reported in traditions that each of these nineteen angels is so powerful that it may easily cast a large tribe into Hell.

The frailty of the thoughts of people like Abu Jahl is reflected herein that upon hearing the blessed Verse in question, he said derisively unto the Quraysh tribe:

"May your mothers mourn your death! Do you not hear what the man is saying?"

Pointing at the Noble Prophet (S), he said:

"He is saying that nineteen guardians guard the Hell, though each of the guardians may not be overcome by ten brave men of your large tribe."[14]

These light headed enemies of the Islamic faith intended to impede the Light of Truth and rescue themselves from imminent perdition through such derisive remarks.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verse 31

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ إِلَّا مَلَائِكَةً وَمَا جَعَلْنَا عِدَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
لِيَسْتَيْقِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَيَزْدَادَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِيمَانًا وَلَا يَرْتَابَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَلِيَقُولَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَٰذَا مَثَلًا كَذَٰلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ
مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَمَا ۚ إِلَّا ذِكْرَىٰ لِلْبَشَرِ

31. And We have set none but angels as guardians of the Fire. And We have fixed their number only as a trial for the disbelievers, in order that the people of the Book may arrive at a certainty [that the Holy Qur'an is the Divine Book, since the same number is attested in the Bible] and that the believers may increase their faith, and that no doubt may be left for the people of the Book and the believers; further [the number nineteen made] those in whose hearts is a disease and the disbelievers may say: "What Allah intends by this example?" Thus, Allah leads astray whom He

wills and guides whom He wills. And none may know the hosts of your Lord but He. And this is nothing else than a reminder to mankind.

As reflected in the preceding blessed Verses, God Almighty appointed nineteen angels (or nineteen groups) as the guardians of Hell and it led to controversy amongst the polytheists and the disbelievers. Some of them derided such words and few of them imagined that they could easily overcome them.

The blessed Verse in question, the longest one in the Chapter, responds to them and sheds further light on the point:

"We have set none but angels as guardians of the Fire."

Such angels are so powerful and in the Qur'anic terms ghalath and shidad, i.e. stern and strict, that all sinners shall be feeble and week before them.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say

"We have fixed their number only as a trial for the disbelievers."

The trial aimed at two things: firstly, they derived the number nineteen, whereas any other number could engender the same question.

Secondly, they regarded the number nineteen to be few and said derisively that they could appoint ten people against each of them and thereby overcome them. They were unaware of the truth that the angels are so powerful that according to the Holy Qur'an, a number of them sufficed to send the people of Lot (as) to perdition by totally destroying their prosperous cities.

Further, the preceding blessed Verses treated of the points lying behind the number of the guardians of Hell; however, the blessed Verse in question adds:

"So that the people of the Book may arrive at a certainty."

In this respect, it is narrated that the Noble Prophet (S) was asked by his companions regarding the number of the guardians of Hell.

He replied:

"Allah and His Messenger (S) know better."

Gabriel was sent down and revealed unto him that they were nineteen angels appointed as the guardians of Hell.[15]

The people of the Book did not protest against the number which reflects that they had found the number in line with their Scriptures. Thus, they arrived at further certitude as to the Prophetic Call of Allah's Messenger (S). Besides, the believers' faith was further firmly established.

Thus, the blessed Verse proceeds to say:

"[the aim was] that the believers may increase their faith."

Further emphasis is laid on the three goals: the faith of the people of the Book, that of the believers in the Islamic faith, and the trial of the polytheists and disbelievers:

"that no doubt may be left for the people of the Book and the believers; further [the number nineteen made] those in whose hearts is a disease and the disbelievers may say: 'What Allah intends by this example?"

Regarding

"those in whose hearts is a disease,"

some Qur'an exegetes hold that the hypocrites are hereby intended, since the Qur'anic expression alludes to them, an instance of which is

"In their hearts is a disease and Allah has increased their disease"[16]**.**

Nonetheless, further investigation of the Qur'anic instances of the expression reflects that it does not solely include the hypocrites, but it encompasses all the disbelievers who take a belligerent stance against the Qur'anic Verses.

The blessed Verse further says:

"Thus, Allah leads astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills. And none may know the hosts of your Lord but He."

The aforesaid remarks clearly reflect that Divine Will as to guiding some people and leading some others astray is well-measured. Those who are in error deserve no better than that and those obedient to Allah deserve such Guidance.

In other words, God Almighty does not intend to harm some people by leading them astray, but error is the disbelievers' chastisement. Put the case that a thief breaks into your home and you lock the doors. Confining him does not entail leading him astray, but it aims at chastising him.

What should be borne in mind regarding God Almighty leading some people astray, as reflected in a number of the Qur'anic Verses, that the Arabic word idhlal denotes abandoning someone, implying that God Almighty abandons those who do not deserve to be guided; the similitude of which is a farmer who abandons the rotten seeds but keeps the good ones and paves the ground for their growth.

The closing clauses of the blessed Verse read:

"And none may know the hosts of your Lord but He. And this is nothing else than a reminder to mankind."

The nineteen guardians of Hell does not reflect the total number of the hosts of the Lord, but the number of the latter are so large that according to some of the traditions, the earth and the heaven are filled with them, such that there is no spot in the entire world of existence unless there is an angel glorifying God Almighty there.

For further details in this respect, one may refer to elevated words of Imam 'Ali as recorded in the first sermon of the Nahj al-Balagha.

Different suggestions have been made by Qur'an exegetes concerning the antecedent of the pronoun

hiya ("this, it")

in

wa ma hiya illa dhikra li-'l-bashar ("And this is nothing else than a reminder to mankind.")

Some maintain that the hosts of the Lord some of whom are the guardians of Hell are the antecedent.

Some hold that

saqar ("Hell")

is the antecedent.

There are some exegetes who believe that reference is made to the Holy Qur'an. Although they all lead to awakening, reminder, and awareness, but the first suggestion is more in line with the tone of the Verse, since the aim

is to state the truth that if God Almighty has selected hosts, it does not reflect that He cannot chastise all the enemies and sinners Himself, but they all serve as a reminder, awakening, and according attention to the seriousness of Divine torment.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 32-34

كَلَّا وَالْقَمَرِ
وَاللَّيْلِ إِذْ أَدْبَرَ
وَالصُّبْحِ إِذَا أَسْفَرَ

32. It is not what they imagine! By the moon!
33. And the night when it withdraws,
34. And by the dawn when it brightens.

Different oaths have been taken in the blessing Verses in question in order to lay emphasis on raising the dead on the Day of Resurrection, Hell, and the torments awaiting the disbelievers there, saying:

"It is not as they imagine. By the moon!"

The Arabic negative emphatic adverb kalla is employed to reject the words uttered by the other party.

It is also used at times to negate the following words. It herein negates the disbelievers' unfounded belying of Hell and its torments as well as their derision of the number of the angels guarding Hell, as mentioned in the preceding blessed Verses.

An oath is taken to the moon, since as one of the greatest of Divine Signs, it is of significance in terms of creation, regular rotation, brightness, beauty, and the lunar phases used as the standard for preparing calendars.

The blessed Verses 33 and 34 say:

"By the night when it withdraws! And by the dawn when it brightens!"

These three oaths are related and complementary, since it is common knowledge that the moon shines at night and its light is overshadowed by sunshine such that it is hardly visible during the day. Night is serene and peaceful, when the lovers of the Truth may invoke their beloved and share their secrets.

However, the dark night would be of interest when it withdraws and the bright dawn approaches. The day break offers a beacon of the end of the dark night. It is the most delightful and the most beautiful ecstatic experience when the heart brims with light and purity. It is noteworthy that the three oaths stand in harmony with the Light of Guidance (the Holy Qur'an), withdrawal of the shadows of polytheism and idolatry, and the daybreak of monotheism.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 35-37

إِنَّهَا لَإِحْدَى الْكُبَرِ
نَذِيرًا لِّلْبَشَرِ
لِمَن شَاءَ مِنكُمْ أَن يَتَقَدَّمَ أَوْ يَتَأَخَّرَ

35. It [the frightful incidents on the Day of Resurrection] is but one of the greatest issues.

36. A warning to all mankind,

37. To any of you that chooses to go forward or to lag behind [namely proceed or not to proceed toward Guidance].

The blessed Verses in question treat of the objects of the oaths and frightening incidents on the Day of Resurrection, Hell, and the angels of torment indubitably constitute significant issues. The Arabic adjectival form kubar denotes "great, significant."

The antecedent of the pronoun in innaha is either

saqar ("Hell")

or

junud ("Lord's Host"),

or all the incidents to occur on the Day of Resurrection; the greatness of each and every of them is crystal clear.

The blessed Verse 36 proceeds to say that the goal behind the creation of Hell is not seeking revenge, but it serves as a warning to mankind against the frightening torment in store for the disbelievers, the sinners, and the enemies of Truth.

The blessed Verse 37 lay further emphasis on the point, saying that the warning is not particular to a specific group but it addresses all mankind, to anyone who opts for taking precedence by proceeding toward doing good righteous deeds and obedience to Allah, and to those who intend to lag behind. Good for those who takes precedence and woe unto those who intend to lag behind.

Some Qur'an exegetes also maintain that precedence and lagging behind herein reflects proceeding or not proceeding toward Hellfire. Some also hold that taking precedence indicates human self and its development and growth or its decadence and lagging behind.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 38-45

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ

إِلَّا أَصْحَابَ الْيَمِينِ

فِي جَنَّاتٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ

عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرَ

قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ

وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمُ الْمِسْكِينَ

وَكُنَّا نَخُوضُ مَعَ الْخَائِضِينَ

38. Every person is a pledge for what he has earned,

39. Except those on the Right [whose records of deeds are given to their right hand as a token of their faith and fear of God Almighty].

40. In Gardens they will ask,

41. the sinners [inquiring]:

42. "What has caused you to enter Hell?"

43. They will say: "We were not of those who used to offer the prayers,

44. "Nor we used to feed the poor;

45. "And we used to talk falsehood with vain talkers.

Proceeding with the discussion raised in the preceding blessed Verses concerning Hell and the dwellers of Hell, the blessed Verse 38 says:

"Every person is a pledge for what he has earned."

The Arabic nominal form rahina, derived from r-h-n ("pledge") denotes the pledge provided as a guarantee against the loan. It sounds as if all human existence is a pledge against the fulfillment of his obligations, such that when he fulfils them, he will be set free, otherwise, he will remain in bondage.

Thus, the blessed Verse 39 adds:

"Except those on the Right [whose records of deeds are given to their right hand as a token of their faith and fear of God Almighty],"

who are free from such bondage since they have broken the shackles and fetters of bondage through faith and doing good righteous deeds as a consequence of which they freely enter Paradise.

Qur'an exegetes disagree on the meaning of

"the people on the right."

Some maintain that it makes a reference to those whose records of deeds are given to their right hand. Some hold that they are the believers who have committed no sins at all. Some others believe that a reference is made to the angels.

However, the Qur'anic evidence reflects the first suggestion - those who have faith and have done good righteous deeds and their few sins are overshadowed by their good righteous deeds, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[17]:

"The good deeds remove the evil deeds."

Their good deeds efface their evil deeds, or they freely enter Paradise, or the reckoning of their deeds shall be quite easy, as reflected elsewhere in the Glorious Qur'an[18]:

"Then as for him who will be given his record in his right hand, he shall receive an easy reckoning."

Qurtubi, the Sunni Qur'an exegete of repute narrates from Imam Baqir (as) as saying:

"We and our adherents are

"the people of the right hand"

and whoever regards our Ahl al-Bayt as enemies, he shall be in the bondage of his deeds."[19]

The blessed Verses 40-42 say:

"In Gardens they will ask, the sinners [inquiring]: "What has caused you to enter Hell?"

The blessed Verses clearly reflect that the ties between the people of Paradise and those of the Hell shall not be totally severed, as the former may witness the dire fate of the latter and converse with them.

In the blessed Verses 43-45, the sinners respond to the question posed by the people of the right hand by confessing to their four grave sins:

"They will say: "We were not of those who used to offer the prayers, nor we used to feed the poor; and we used to talk falsehood with vain talkers."

Had they offered their prayers, they would have remembered God Almighty forbidding them from committing evil deeds and calling them unto the Divine Straight Path. They confess that they did not feed the poor, seemingly implying that they refrained from attending to the urgent necessities and requirements of the needy, with respect to clothes and accommodation.

Qur'an exegetes maintain that reference is herein made to the obligatory alms, since failing to pay the supererogatory alms may not entail ending up in Hell, emphasizing that some of the Qur'anic Verses revealed in Mecca addressed the issue of paying alms, though the details and specifications of the same, particularly its concentration in the Muslim treasury (bayt al-mal) were specified in Medinan Verses.

They also confess that they used to associate with the followers of falsehood and whenever they heard some words against the Truth or upon being notified of some session aiming at the dissemination of falsehood, they joined them acknowledging their denial of Truth and derived please from deriding the words of Truth.

The verbal form

nakhudhu ("we entered"),

derived from kh-w-dh, originally denotes entering water and moving in it, though it is also applied to getting adulterated by impurities. The word is used in the Holy Qur'an in the sense of engaging oneself in unfounded and false affairs.

Mention is herein made of attending meetings held for deriding Divine Verses, anti-Islamic propaganda, dissemination of heresy, obscene jokes, and taking pride and deriving pleasure from the sins committed, slander and sportive vain talks. The blessed Verse in question mainly refers to attending the meetings held for destabilizing faith in God Almighty, sacrilege, and dissemination of disbelief.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 46-48

وَكُنَّا نُكَذِّبُ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ

حَتَّىٰ أَتَانَا الْيَقِينُ

فَمَا تَنفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةُ الشَّافِعِينَ

46. "And we used to belie the Day of Recompense at all times,

47. "Until there came to us the death."

48. Therefore, no intercession of intercessors will be of any avail to them.

The blessed Verses 46-47, the sinners confess that their sins included the denial of the Day of Reckoning at all times, until their death came unto them. It goes without saying that denial of the Day of Resurrection which is the Day of Reckoning destabilizes all Divine and ethical values, particularly when it continues to the end of life.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verses in question clearly reflect that the disbelievers are obliged to observe the primary and the secondary principles of religion, and the four injunctions, namely establishing ritual prayers, paying religious obligatory alms, refraining from attending the meetings held by the followers of falsehood, and believing in the Day of Resurrection significantly contribute to human guidance and spiritual growth.

Thus, those who truly establish obligatory ritual prayers, pay alms, believe in the Day of Resurrection, and refrain from following falsehood shall not be cast into Hell. It goes without saying that establishing prayers entails worshipping God Almighty and it solely rests on faith. Thus, making a reference to it reflects believing in God Almighty and obedience to His Command.

It may be said that these four pillars begin with monotheism and end in Resurrection, encompassing the relations amongst the Creator, the created, and one's self. The majority of Qur'an exegetes maintain that death is herein intended by "certitude," since the believers and the disbelievers believe in its certainty.

Man may doubt anything, but death, as it is reflected elsewhere[20] in the Holy Qur'an:

"And worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty (of death)."

However, some hold that certainty herein indicates the awareness obtained posthumously as to purgatory and Resurrection. Such exegesis is somehow in line with the former.

The blessed Verse 48 makes a reference to the dire fate of this group saying:

"Therefore, no intercession of intercessors will be of any avail to them."

Neither the intercession of Allah's Messengers (as) and Imams (as), nor that of angels, nor the true believers, nor the martyrs, nor the righteous shall be of any avail to them, since intercession requires the right ground, and the disbelievers have totally destroyed such ground. It is like pure water by which a feeble sapling is irrigated. Now, when the sapling happens to be dead, such pure water may not give a new life to it.

It was mentioned above in the discussion devoted to intercession[21] that the Arabic word shafa'a derives from the root sh-f-', originally denoting "attach something to something else," connoting that the person for whom it is interceded is supposed to have traversed some part of the way, though he has faced hardships, vicissitudes, and impediments. Thus, he is interceded with to bear him assistance to traverse the remaining distance.

It is noteworthy that the blessed Verse in question once again emphasizes the question of intercession and the diversity of the intercessors interceding with the believers at Divine Threshold. It also serves as a harsh response to those belying the principle of intercession.

It lays further emphasis on the point that intercession is not unconditional; in other words, it is not a green light to committing sins, but may lead to spiritual growth such that he prepares the required ground for

being interceded with him. The ties of such person are not supposed to be totally severed from God Almighty and His friends.

It is also worthy of note, however, that the blessed Verse in question is not saying that intercessors intercede with such people, but it reflects that they cease to intercede with them as intercession shall be of no avail to them and Allah's friends may never perform vain deeds.

The blessed Verses in question and some other Qur'anic Verses indicate that there shall be different kinds of intercessors interceding with God Almighty on the behalf of the true believers. The numerous traditions transmitted in the Shi'i and Sunni sources reflect that such intercessors shall intercede on behalf of those sinners who have prepared the required ground for intercession.

Reference may be made here to such different intercessors:

1. The Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith, as reflected in the Prophetic tradition:

"I shall be the first intercessor in Paradise."[22]

2. All the Prophets (as) shall be intercessors on the Day of Resurrection, as per another Prophetic tradition:

"The Prophets shall intercede on behalf of all those who sincerely testify to Divine Unity and take them out of Hell."[23]

3. Angels shall be amongst the intercessors on the Day of Resurrection, as reported in the Prophetic tradition:

"The Angels, Allah's friends, and the martyrs shall be permitted on that Day to intercede."[24]

4-5. The Infallible Imams (as) and their followers shall also intercede on behalf of true believers.

In this respect, Imam 'Ali (as) is narrated as saying:

"We and our friends shall intercede [on behalf of true believers]."[25]

6-7. The religious scholars and the martyrs shall be among the interceders, as it is reflected in the Prophetic tradition:

"On the Day of Resurrection, the Prophets (as), then the scholars, then the martyrs shall be intercessors."[26]

According to another Prophetic tradition:

"The martyr's intercession on behalf of seventy people from amongst his family shall be accepted."[27]

As per another tradition recorded in 'Allama Majlisi's Bihar al-Anwar[28], their intercession on behalf of seventy people shall be accepted.

8. According to Imam 'Ali (as), the Holy Qur'an shall be an intercessor on the Day of Resurrection.[29]

9. The intercession of those believers who are advanced in years shall be accepted.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"When man reaches the age of ninety [having proceeded on the path of faith], God Almighty shall forgive his past and future sins and his intercession on behalf of his family shall be accepted."[30]

10. Prayers and devotions shall be intercessors as well, as it is narrated from Allah's Messenger (S) as saying:

"Fasting and the Qur'an shall intercede on behalf of the servants [of Allah] on the Day of Resurrection."[31]

11. Some traditions reflect that God Almighty shall intercede on behalf of the sinners, as it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"The Prophets, the angels, and the believers shall intercede on the Day of Resurrection and God Almighty shall say:

'I am to intercede as well."[32]

12. It is reflected in a number of traditions that the good righteous deeds, like something for whose preservation man has made attempts, shall intercede on behalf of man on the Day of Resurrection.[33]

Numerous traditions have been transmitted concerning intercession, a few of which were mentioned above. It would fruitful to reiterate that there are certain conditions for intercession without which it may not be accepted by God Almighty.

In this vein, the blessed Verses in question clearly indicate that the intercessions of all intercessors shall be of no avail to some of the disobedient. It is of significance to pave the required ground for the acceptance of intercession, since intercession on behalf of some people may not be of any avail.[34]

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 49-51

فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذْكِرَةِ مُعْرِضِينَ

كَأَنَّهُمْ حُمُرٌ مُّسْتَنفِرَةٌ

فَرَّتْ مِن قَسْوَرَةٍ

49. Then, why do they turn away from the reminder?

50. As if they were frightened wild asses,

51. Fleeting from lions.

The blessed Verses in question proceeds with the dire fate of the sinners and the people of Hell clearly reflecting that such obdurate disbelievers' are afraid of hearing the word of Truth and any reminder and admonition.

The blessed Verse 49 asks:

"Then, why do they turn away from the reminder?"

Is it not surprising that they reject the cure of the Holy Qur'an?

The blessed Verses 50 and 51 say:

"As if they are frightened wild asses fleeting from lions [or hunters]."

The Arabic nominal form humur the plural of himar, denoting "ass," though it herein connotes "wild ass," taking the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse into account which includes "lions" or "hunters." In other words, the nominal form encompasses a broad semantic scope including the domestic and wild kinds of asses.

The Arabic nominal form qaswara, derived from the root q-s-r ("vanquish, overcome") is an attribute of lion, though it is also taken to imply "archer" and "hunter" as well. However, the former sense is more befitting herein.

It is said that the wild ass is strikingly afraid of the lion, such that upon hearing the lion's roar, it fleets away madly, particularly upon noticing a

lion's approach, they scatter away surprisingly. The animal is afraid of anything owing to its wildness, let alone its ferocious enemy, the lion.

At any rate, the blessed Verses in question reflect a very eloquent expression of the polytheists' fear of the life giving Qur'anic Verses. These polytheists are herein likened to wild asses, devoid of understanding that owing to their wildness, they are afraid of anything, whereas they hear nothing but the reminder aiming at their awakening.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 52-55

بَلْ يُرِيدُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يُؤْتَىٰ صُحُفًا مُنَشَّرَةً

كَلَّا بَلْ لَا يَخَافُونَ الْآخِرَةَ

كَلَّا إِنَّهُ تَذْكِرَةٌ

فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرَهُ

52. Nay, everyone of them desires that he should receive separate letters [from God Almighty].

53. Nay! But it [The Qur'an] is but a reminder [to them].

54. But whoever desires may find admonitions in it,

55. So whoever desires may receive admonitions!

The blessed Verses in question say that notwithstanding their dire ignorance, they are so arrogant that they expect to receive separate letters from God Almighty. The Arabic nominal form suhuf is the plural of sahifa implying a page which is turned over.

The same theme is to be found elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"And even then we will put no faith in your ascension until you bring down for us an epistle that we would read"[35];

"We shall not believe until we receive the like of that which the Messengers of Allah had received"[36].

Therefore, each of them expected to be an Arch-prophet and some Book be revealed unto them by God Almighty from the heaven. The point is that even if such Book had been revealed unto them, they would not have surely believed.

According to some traditions, Abu Jahl and some other people from Quraysh said:

"O Muhammad! We will not believe in you unless you bring us some Book from the heaven opening with: 'From God, the Lord of the worlds to so and so son of so and so' clearly specifying that we believe in you."[37]

Thus, the following blessed Verse further says that it is not like what they say, since the Heavenly Book being revealed unto them and the like of which are nothing but pretexts. They truly do not fear the Hereafter.

Had they been afraid of the torments in the Hereafter, they would not have resorted to such pretexts, denial of the Prophetic Call of Allah's Messenger (S), and derision of Divine Verses and the number of the angels of torment in the Hereafter.

The consequences of belief in the Hereafter and their effects in refraining from committing sins and purification from different kinds of grave sins are clearly reflected herein. The truth is that belief in the Day of Resurrection

and the recompense of deeds lead to spiritual growth such that the arrogant, the irresponsible, and the wrong doing may turn into committed, God fearing, humble, and just people.

The blessed Verses 54 and 55 once again emphasize that what they imagine concerning the Holy Qur'an is untrue. The Holy Qur'an is a Reminder and whoever desires may find admonitions in it. The Qur'an is the Guide unto the Straight Path and provides man with insight and sun light, such that man may find his path unto Truth.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verse 56

وَمَا يَذْكُرُونَ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ هُوَ أَهْلُ التَّقْوَىٰ وَأَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ

56. And no one may receive admonition unless Allah wills. And He is the One, deserving that mankind should stand in awe of Him, and He is the One Who forgives [sins].

The closing blessed Verse of the Chapter says that receiving admonitions from the Qur'an is totally dependent upon Divine Will and Blessing. In other words, the disobedient may not receive admonitions unless God Almighty wills.

Besides the aforementioned exegesis, namely man may not proceed on the Path of Guidance unless he puts his trust in Divine Blessing and invokes Him to bestow His Blessings on him, other exegeses may be suggested for the blessed Verse. Unless there be not any attraction on behalf of the beloved, the unfortunate lover's efforts shall be of no avail (two lines of poetry).

It is worthy of note that Divine Aid is bestowed upon those who have prepared the required ground for such bestowal of Blessings.

Further, the blessed Verse 55,

"So whoever desires may receive admonitions!"

may create the wrong impression in some people that everything is totally dependent upon human will.

The blessed Verse 56 removes such wrong interpretation by saying that notwithstanding man's free choice, his will is dependent upon Divine Will, prevailing in the world of existence and creation. In other words, human free choice is dependent upon Divine Will and God Almighty may deprive him of his free choice at any time.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that they never believe unless God Almighty wills to make them believe and we know that God Almighty never makes anyone believe or disbelieve. Thus, the first two exegeses sound more befitting herein.

The blessed Verse closes by saying that

"He deserves that mankind should stand in awe of Him, and He is the One Who forgives sins."

It is befitting that Allah's servants fear His torments, associate any partners in worshipping Him, and set their hopes on His Forgiveness. The blessed Verse alludes to the states of fear, hope, Divine torment, and Divine Forgiveness, providing further support for the preceding blessed Verse.

Concerning the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"Allah says that He is Worthy of being feared such that My servant does not associate any partner with Me in worship and if My servant refrains from associating any partner with me in worship, I shall make him enter Paradise."[38]

Within the knowledge of the present author, all Qur'an exegetes hold that the nominal form taqwa;

("fear [of God Almighty]")

is herein employed in the accusative case, saying that God Almighty deserves that His servants refrain from polytheism.

However, it may be taken in the nominative case, implying that He neither does wrong nor act unwisely. The most exalted of the degrees of taqwa belongs to God Almighty and that of servants is nothing but a feeble flame of His Infinite taqwa, though the word in nominative case rarely refers to God Almighty.

The blessed Chapter opened with an Injunction as to warning and obligation and it closes with calling the believers to fear of God Almighty and the Promise of Forgiveness.

Thus, we invoke at His Threshold with utmost humbleness:

"O Lord! Make us of those who fear You and bestow Your Forgiveness upon us! O Lord! We may not succeed unless You grant us Your Favors and Blessings. Bestow Your Blessings upon us!"

Notes

1. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
2. 2:187
3. Raghib's Mufradat.
4. Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani, vol. 29, p. 120.
5. Ibn Hadid's Commentary on the Nahj al-Balagha.
6. Kanz al-Fawa'id, vol. 1, p. 140.
7. 2:264
8. Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 454; Tafsir Burhan, vol. 4, p. 400.
9. Ibid.
10. Fakhr Razi's, Maraghi's, Qurtubi's, and Zamakhshari's exegetic works under the blessed Verse in question.
11. Tafsir Maraghi, vol. 29, p. 131.
12. 87:12
13. 4:13
14. Majma' al-Bayan and other exegetic sources, under the blessed Verse in question.
15. Tafsir Maraghi, vol. 29, p. 134.
16. 2:10
17. 11:114
18. 84:7-8
19. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 10, p. 6878.
20. 15:99
21. 2:48
22. Muslim, Sahih, vol. 2, p. 130.
23. Ahhmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 3, p. 12.
24. Ibid., 5, p. 43.

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25. Saduq, Khisal, p. 624.
26. Ibn Maja, Sunan, vol. 2, p. 1443.
27. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 15.
28. vol. 100, p. 14
29. Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 176.
30. Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 2, p. 89.
31. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 174.
32. Bukhari, Sahih, vol. 9, p. 149.
33. Ibn Shahrashub, Manaqib, vol. 2, p. 14.
34. For further details, see above under 2:48.
35. 17:93
36. 6:124
37. The exegetic sources, e.g. those by Qurtubi and Maraghi.
38. Tafsir Burhan, vol. 4, p. 405.

Surah al-Qiyama, Chapter 75

(The Resurrection)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 40

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has forty Verses. The designation of the Chapter, denoting Resurrection, derives from the opening Verse. The Chapter, as reflected in its title, mainly treats of the Day of Resurrection.

It opens with an enumeration of the harsh and frightening incidents to occur at the end of the world and proceeds to make mention of the happy and sad appearances of the good and evil doers.

Further, the blessed Chapter deals with the states of mankind in the throes of death, the creation of man from a drop of semen as a token of Divine Omnipotence in recreating him. It is noteworthy that four Verses in the middle of the Chapter treat of the manner of Revelation and recitation of the Holy Qur'an.

According to the traditions, one who perseveres in the recitation of the blessed Chapter and acts upon it shall be able to happily and smilingly cross the Bridge Spanning Hellfire (sirat).

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 1-4

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنسَانُ أَلَّن نَّجْمَعَ عِظَامَهُ

بَلَىٰ قَادِرِينَ عَلَىٰ أَن نُّسَوِّيَ بَنَانَهُ

1. I swear by the Day of Resurrection.

2. And I swear by the self-reproaching self [the awakened conscience reproaching committing sins].

3. Does man think that We shall not assemble his bones.

4. Yes, We are Able to put together in perfect order the tips of his fingers.

The blessed Chapter opens with two meaningful oaths:

"I swear by the Day of Resurrection. And I swear by the self-reproaching self."

Qur'an exegetes disagree on the connotation of la; some maintain that it is an emphatic particle and thereby lays further emphasis on the oath rather than negating it; some hold that it is a negative particle implying that the

question is of such significance that an oath is not taken thereto, as it is said in common usage that someone's life is far dearer to be sworn on it.

The majority of the exegetes opt for the former, though some prefer the latter, maintaining that a clause may not be opened by the redundant la, but the emphatic particle occurs in the middle of the clause.

However, the former interpretation sounds to be further befitting, since the Qur'an swears by things more significant that the Day of Resurrection, e.g. the Pure Essence of God Almighty. Thus, it would be quite natural to swear by the Day of Resurrection herein.

Furthermore, the occurrence of the redundant la is common in Arabic. In this respect, certain opening lines by the pre-Islamic poet Imra' al-Qays have been quoted which are indicative of the usage of the redundant la in the Arabic tongue.

We maintain that discussing the redundancy or the negation of the la is not that significant, since the usage entails the same result, namely the significance of the object of the oath.

The point is that the existence of conscience in the heart reflects the inevitable Resurrection, as human soul is brimmed with happiness upon doing good righteous deeds and it is thereby rewarded. Au contraire, the soul is severely tormented and chastised upon committing evil deeds, such that man may commit suicide in order to deliver himself from pangs of conscience; thus, the verdict as to the severest punishment is issued by conscience and man executes the verdict.

The reflection of the self-reproaching self in human soul is so wide ranging that it may be studied and investigated from any aspect.

Taking into account the truth that there is a small means of trial in the microcosm, i.e. human existence, how may one imagine that the macrocosm with all its majesty be deprived of a great just tribunal? Thus, we learn about the inevitability of the Day of Resurrection through the conscience in human heart. The interesting link between the twain oaths are thereby manifested. In other words, the latter oath serves as an argument substantiating the former.

Qur'an exegetes suggest different interpretations for the nature of the self-reproaching self. A well-known interpretation was already mentioned according to which human conscience reproaches man upon his committing evil deeds and makes him to revise and compensate his past evil deeds.

Another interpretation is that it implies censuring all mankind on the Day of Resurrection, such that the believers reproach themselves for not having done more good righteous deeds and the disbelievers reproach themselves for having trodden the path of disbelief, polytheism, and sin.

Some exegetes hold that the self-reproaching self reflects that of the disbeliever that reproaches him for having done evil deeds. However, the first interpretation is in line with the preceding and the following blessed Verses.

The tribunal of the conscience is so majestic and cherished that God Almighty swears by it and regards it as something significant. It is truly majestic, since it is one of the most significant of human means of salvation provided that the conscience happens to be awakened rather than enfeebled

by the burden of sins. It is also worthy of note that the object of the oath (muqassamun lahu) is omitted as the contextual meaning of the following blessed Verses reflect the same.

Thus, the blessed Verses in question say:

"By the Day of Resurrection and the self-reproaching slef that you shall be all raised on the Day of Resurrection and shall be recompensed for your deeds."

It is interesting that the blessed Verse swears by the Day of Resurrection that there shall be Resurrection, reflecting that it is regarded as a certainty by which one may swear against those who belie it.

Finally, different selves have been enumerated in the Qur'anic Verses, the traditions, and the prayers.

1. The soul that bids to evil (nafs ammara bi-'l-su') and may lead to decadence and corruption if it is unchecked by reason and faith.

Thus, it is reflected in the Qur'an:

"Verily [there is] the soul that bids to evil unless My Lord bestows Mercy [upon me]."

Such self bids man to commit evil deeds, unless God Almighty grants mercy. It persists in bidding man to evil so that he may be entangled with the evil consequences of his evil deeds. In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Imam 'Ali (as) that the soul bidding man to evil may be likened to a hypocrite who flatters a man and pretends to be his friend so that it may overcome him and lead him to the following stages.[1]

It is reflected in the Holy Qur'an that having cast Joseph (as) into a well, his brothers returned to their father with his shirt smeared with blood, saying that a wolf had devoured Joseph (as).

The Prophet Jacob (as) replied:

"Nay, but your own selves have made up a tale,"[2]

namely your selves adorned such evil deeds in our eyes and provoked you to commit such evil deed.

According to a tradition, the believers are required to invoke God Almighty by saying:

"O Lord! Do not leave me with my self for a twinkling of an eye."[3]

In his prayers of the complainants (munajat shakkin) the Noble Imam Zayn al-'Àbidin (as) thus invokes God Almighty:

"I complain to You of the self bidding man to evil, hastening toward misdeeds and sins. Afflicted by any evil, it cries out. It is niggardly when some good is supposed to be done to others by it. It is quite prone to sports and indulgence. It is imbued with neglect and negligence. It leads me to hasten toward committing sins and impedes me from repentance."

2. The reproaching self (nafs lawwama) which is mentioned in the blessed Chapter in question and may imply conscience. It is in man's nature to reproach himself owing to committing misdeeds or decrease in the good ones in this world and the Hereafter. Such reproach is equal to repentance that may serve as a prelude to repenting from committing sins or it may lead to despair and self-alienation.

3. The peaceful self (nafs mutma'inna) that results from establishing ritual prayers and remembrance of God Almighty though which man attains to security and peace of mind.

Mention is made of the peaceful self in the Qur'anic Verses, e.g.

"Establish prayers for My Remembrance"[4];

"Behold! In the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest"[5];

"O the peaceful self! Return to your Lord well-pleased and well-pleasing! Enter among My servants. And enter My Paradise!"[6].

A man endowed with security and peace of mind does not entertain fear of death, but he is eager to fall a martyr in Allah's Cause. He is indifferent to mammon but is always satisfied with Divine Preordainments.

The blessed Verses 3 and 4 include a rhetorical question:

"Does man think that We shall not assemble his bones? Yes, We are able to put together in perfect order the tips of his fingers."

In this vein, it is narrated that a polytheist by the name of Ibn Rabi'a who was the Noble Prophet's (S) neighbor came to him and inquired about the nature and the time of the Day of Resurrection and said to the Noble Prophet (S) that even if he saw that Day, he would not believe in him as it would be incredible to God might assemble the bones.

Then the blessed Verses in question were revealed and replied to his question. Thus, the Noble Prophet (S) invoked God Almighty to rid him of such evil neighbor.[7]

Qur'anic Verses with the same theme are to be found, an instance of which is

"And he puts forth for Us a parable and forgets his own creation. He says: "Who will give life to these bones after they are rotten and have become dust?"[8].

One of the disbelievers held a piece of rotten bone in his hand and aiming at belying Resurrection he asked the Noble Prophet:

"Who will give life to these rotten bones?"

It is noteworthy that the verbal form yahsabu ("think, imagine"), derived from the root h-s-b, implies that these disbelievers did not truly believe in their own words but they solely relied on unfounded claims and illusions.

Particular emphasis is herein laid on bones, since compared to other bodily organs, bones last longer such that when it turns into dust and be scattered, shallow people set less hopes in their assembly.

Furthermore, bones constitute the pillars of the body by which all human movements and activities may be possible. The diversity of the sizes and the forms of the bones is one of the wonders of Creation and the mere dysfunction of a tiny vertebra in the backbone may entail the paralysis of the whole body.

The Arabic plural nominal form banan denotes fingers and fingertips, both of which imply that not only God Almighty shall assemble the bones, but He shall put the smallest and the most delicate of the bones, namely the fingertips, in their original form.

The expression may be a delicate allusion to the fingerprints which are different in men. In other words, these fingerprints reflect human character.

Thus, fingerprinting has turned into a discipline employed in criminology, such that if a burglar touches a door handle, window, lock, or box, a sample of his fingerprint may be taken to compare with the existing records of the thieves and criminals and lead to his arrest.

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 5-6

بَلْ يُرِيدُ الْإِنسَانُ لِيَفْجُرَ أَمَامَهُ

يَسْأَلُ أَيَّانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ

5. Nay! Man [entertains no doubts as to Resurrection, but he] desires to be free to continue committing sins all his life.

6. He asks: "When will be this Day of Resurrection?"

The blessed Verse makes a reference to one of the true reasons lying behind belying Resurrection, saying that man does not entertain doubts concerning Divine Omnipotence to assemble the bones and raising the dead, but by his belying he aims at continuing to commit sins all his life. He desires to have absolute freedom to engage himself in concupiscent desires, sins, and wrong doing.

Thus, he aims to falsely satisfy his conscience and fail to regard himself answerable to Divine Creation, since believing in Resurrection, raising the dead, and Divine Tribunal of Justice serve as a great impediment to any form of disobedience and sin. He intends to enjoy absolute freedom to destroy such barrier and freely commit any sin.

It is not restricted to the people living in the past, but denial of Resurrection serves as a pretext for enjoying absolute freedom to commit sins, evading obligations and trespassing Divine Bounds, but the true reasons lying behind Origin and Resurrection are quite evident.

Regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question, it is mentioned in 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's Qur'an exegesis that reference is herein made to one who accords precedence to committing sins and procrastinates when he is supposed to repent from his sins.

Some Qur'an exegetes also maintain that the nominal plural form fujur herein implies belying, such that the blessed Verse is saying that man desires to belie the inevitable Day of Resurrection. Nonetheless, the former exegesis sounds to be further befitting.

The following Verse adds that he belier inquires about the time of the Day of Resurrection. By his rhetorical question, he intends to evade his obligations and pave the ground for committing further sins. It is worthy of note, however, that inquiring about the time of Resurrection does not imply that they believed in the Day of Resurrection and they inquired about the time of its arrival, but the truth is that such rhetorical question served as the prelude to their denial of the Day of Resurrection.

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 7-12

فَإِذَا بَرِقَ الْبَصَرُ

وَخَسَفَ الْقَمَرُ

وَجُمِعَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ

يَقُولُ الْإِنسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَيْنَ الْمَفَرُّ
كَلَّا لَا وَزَرَ
إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمُسْتَقَرُّ

7. When the sight shall be dazed out of fear.
8. And the moon shall be eclipsed.
9. And the sun and moon shall be joined.
10. On that Day man shall inquire: "Where is the escape?"
11. No! There is neither refuge nor an escape!
12. Unto your Lord [Alone] shall be the final place of rest.

The preceding blessed Verses closed with a rhetorical question as to the time of its arrival posed by those belying Resurrection. Theses Verses provide replies to the question.

Making a reference to the occurrences to happen prior to Resurrection, namely the great developments to happen in the world and destroy its order, the blessed Verses 7-9 say:

"When the sight shall be dazed out of fear. And the moon shall be eclipsed. And the sun and moon shall be joined."

Qur'an exegetes have provided different exegeses as to the joining of the sun and the moon. Some hold that both of them rise in the east and set in the west and there are some who maintain that they share the characteristic of being eclipsed.

The moon may also approach the sun under the influence of the latter's gravity and finally join it, hence their being eclipsed.

It is noteworthy that mention is herein made of two of the most significant phenomena at the end of the world, namely the eclipse of the moon and the joining of the sun and the moon.

Similar references to the twain phenomena are more or less reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, an instance of which is:

"When the sun is darkened"[9].

It is common knowledge that the moon reflects the light of the sun and when the sun is plunged into darkness, the moon is also darkened and the earth plunged into frightening shadows. Thus, the world shall come to an end with an immense development and it shall begin by another great development, namely the second blowing into the Trumpet as the breeze of life blown into the world.

Then, mankind shall be raised from the dead. In the blessed Verse 10, man shall ask:

"Where is the escape?"

Yes, the disbelievers and the sinners who had formerly belied the Day of Resurrection shall search for a safe haven out of shame and look for some escape from carrying the burden of sins and fear of torments; in the same manner that upon facing a perilous incident, they looked for an escape in this world. They falsely imagine that they can find some way out of the torments in the Hereafter.

As reflected in the blessed Verses 11 and 12, it shall be said unto them:

"There is neither refuge nor an escape! Unto your Lord [Alone] shall be the final place of rest."

Other exegeses have been suggested, instances of which are as follows: the Final Judgment shall be in God's Hands on that Day; the final abode in Paradise or Hell shall be decreed by God Almighty; mankind shall stand at His Threshold for Reckoning of their deeds and their Recompense. However, taking into account the following blessed Verse, what we have chose as the exegesis of the blessed Verse sounds further befitting.

Some Qur'an exegetes hold that the blessed Verse in question is one of the Qur'anic Verses treating of the everlasting path of human spiritual growth, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, e.g.

"To Him is the Final Return"[10];

"O man! You shall toil to return unto your Lord and you shall meet Him"[11];

"And all shall return unto your Lord"[12].

In other words, man is like a traveler having departed from the bounds of non-existence for the realm of existence and is proceeding toward the Absolute and Boundless Existence of God Almighty to proceed on this path of spiritual growth everlastingly, entering different stages of closeness unto God Almighty, unless they deviate from their course, fall down, and finally perish.

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 13-15

يُنَبَّأُ الْإِنسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ

بَلِ الْإِنسَانُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ

وَلَوْ أَلْقَىٰ مَعَاذِيرَهُ

13. On that Day man shall be informed of what he sent forward and what he left behind.

14. Nay! Man shall be a witness against himself,

15. Even though he may [outwardly] put forth his excuses.

The blessed Verse 13 says that man shall be informed of all the deeds he sent forwarded or delayed in doing them. Different exegeses have been suggested for these two expressions.

Some say that a reference is herein made to the deeds one has sent forward in his life time or the posthumous vestiges of his good and bad deeds left behind amongst the people who act upon them and he shall be recompensed by the good and evil consequences of their deeds. Such vestiges entailing good and evil consequences include the books, buildings, and offspring.

There are some exegetes who hold that a reference is herein made to the earliest and the last deeds done in lifetime. In other words, man shall be notified of all his deeds, the possessions he sent forward, and the possessions he left for his heirs.

It is also suggested that the blessed Verse makes alludes to the sins one put forward and the obedience delayed by him or vice versa. The first exegesis sounds further befitting, particularly when we taken into account a

tradition narrated from the Noble Imam Baqir (as) regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question.

The Noble Imam (as) is narrated as saying:

"On that Day man shall be informed of whatever good and evil deeds he sent forward or left behind, of his vestiges as traditions upon which the prospective generations will act. If such traditions happen to be evil, his recompense shall be equal to those who act upon them, without anything being decreased of their sins. Au contraire, if the traditions he left behind happen to be good, his rewards shall equal to theirs without anything being decreased of their Rewards."[13]

The blessed Verse 14 says:

"Nay! Man shall be a witness against himself."

The point is that God Almighty and the angels shall inform him of man's deeds, though there shall be no need to do so, since man shall be a witness against himself on that Day and he and his bodily organs shall testify then.

The blessed Verse 15 says:

"Even though he may [outwardly] put forth his excuses."

The same theme is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, e.g.

"Their hearing and their eyes and their skins shall testify against them as to what they used to do"[14]***;***

"This Day We shall seal up their mouths, and their hands shall speak unto Us, and their legs shall bear witness to what they used to do"[15]***.***

Therefore, the best witnesses testifying against one's deeds at the Great Tribunal on the Day of Resurrection shall be man himself, since he knows best about his own deeds, though God Almighty has assigned numerous other witnesses to provide him with further testimonies.

The Arabic infinitive or participial form basira denotes "insight, knowledge" and "knowledgeable" respectively. Thus, some exegetes suggest that the word implies enlightening argument and reason. The Arabic nominal form ma'adhir is the plural form of ma'dhara originally denoting what effaces the vestiges of sin which may imply true excuse and at times outward excuse.

It is also suggested that ma'adhir is the plural form of mi'dhar denoting veil and covering. Based on the later suggestion, the blessed Verse would suggest that man is aware of himself, even though he may cast a veil on his deeds. However, the first exegesis sounds further befitting.

God Almighty shall reckon the deeds on that Great Day and He is All-Aware of the inward and outward secrets and He shall leave man to reckon his own deeds, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"Read your book. You yourself are sufficient as a one who reckons against himself this Day"[16]***.***

The blessed Verses in question all treat of Resurrection, though reference is also made to this world.

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 16-19

لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ

فَإِذَا قَرَأْنَاهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ

ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ

16. Move not your tongue hastily in reciting it [i.e. the Holy Qur'an].

17. Its collection and recitation is upon Us.

18. And when We have recited it unto you, then follow its recitation.

19. Then, it is for Us to make it clear.

The same theme is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"Be not in haste with the recitation of the Qur'an before its Revelation is completed to you"[17]***.***

The Holy Qur'an in its entirety was revealed unto the Noble Prophet (S) on Night of Decree (laylat al-qadr) then its Verses were revealed in time within a period of twenty three years of his Prophetic call.

Thus, the blessed Verse

"Be not in haste with the recitation of the Qur'an"

reflects that the Noble Prophet (S) had been already aware of the Revelation of the blessed Verses.

Thus, in the blessed Verse 18, God Almighty says unto him:

"And when We have recited it unto you, then follow its recitation."

Some of the Qur'anic Verses concern the manner of the Revelation unto the Noble Prophet (S) and its Recitation by the people. In such Verses, God Almighty says unto His Messenger (S) to refrain from recitation upon the Revelation prior to its completion and be no in haste with His Word.

There is no room for concern as to consigning them to oblivion, since their preservation is upon Him. Thus, he is asked to let the Revelation be completed; then, he may recite the blessed Verses. Therefore, it is for God Almighty to clarify the Revelation to the Noble Prophet (S).

It is worthy of note that these Verses reflect the originality of the Holy Qur'an and its preservation from any distortion, since God Almighty has promised to collect, recite, and clarify it. It is narrated that when Gabriel was sent down to the Noble Prophet (S) to reveal the Verses unto him, he kept utter silence and upon the departure of Gabriel, he commenced the recitation of the blessed Verses.[18]

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 20-21

كَلَّا بَلْ تُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ

وَتَذَرُونَ الْآخِرَةَ

20. It is not as you imagine [that you regard as concealed the reasons lying behind Resurrection], but you love the fleeting life [of this world and absolute indulgence in the pleasures of the flesh],

21. And neglect the Hereafter.

The blessed Verses in question continues the discussions as to Resurrection and enumerates further characteristics of Resurrection and the unfounded arguments suggested to belie it, saying that it is not the case that the reasons lying behind Resurrection be concealed as a consequence of which you fail to comprehend its veracity, but the truth is that you love this fleeting worldly life for which you neglect the Hereafter.

The main reason suggested for the denial of Resurrection does not lie in entertaining doubts as to Divine Omnipotence in assembling the scattered dust of the rotten bones but your intense love for mammon and unchecked concupiscent desires lead you to remove all impediments. Now, since acknowledging Resurrection and acting upon Divine Injunctions entail numerous obstacles, you rise to belie to question in principle and totally neglect the Hereafter.

As mentioned above, one of the most significant factors leading to materialism and denial of Origin and Resurrection is enjoy absolute freedom in indulging in committing sin and the pleasures of the flesh. Compared to the past, it is further clearly reflected in our modern world.

The twain blessed Verses in question actually lay emphasis on the preceding Verses:

"Nay! Man [entertains no doubts as to Resurrection, but he] desires to be free to continue committing sins all his life. He asks: "When will be this Day of Resurrection?"

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 22-23

وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاضِرَةٌ

إِلَى رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ

22. Some faces that Day shall be happy,

23. Looking at their Lord.

The blessed Verses treat of the states of the good doing believers and the evil doing disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection, saying:

"Some faces that Day shall be happy, looking at their Lord."

The Arabic participial form nadhira, cognate with nadhra, connotes a particular kind of happiness which is consequent to affluence and welfare and is accompanied by felicity, beauty, and splendor. In other words, their appearance reflects their great happiness consequent to being endowed with Divine Bounties.

The same theme is to found elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"You shall recognise in their faces [those of the people of Paradise] the splendor of delight"[19].

The blessed Verses 22 and 23 reflect the material and spiritual Bounties respectively. The blessed Verse 23 says that they only look at the Pure Essence of their Lord with their eye of heart and through inward intuition.

Such glance makes them absorbed in the Unique Essence and the Absolute Perfection and Beauty, such that one single moment of their exalted state is far superior to what exists in this world. In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Ridha (as) that they await their Lord's Rewards.[20]

It is noteworthy that the precedence of

"at their Lord"

over

"happy"

restricts the meaning, namely they solely look at Him not at anyone else.

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 24-25

وَوُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَاسِرَةٌ

تَظُنُّ أَن يُفْعَلَ بِهَا فَاقِرَةٌ

24. And some faces, that Day, will be gloomy.

25. Aware that some excruciating torment is in store for them.

Attachment to mammon and neglecting the Hereafter shall entail gloominess of appearance on the Day of Resurrection. The disbelievers with their gloomy appearance shall stand before the believers with happy faces.

The Arabic participial form basira denotes "unripe, undue" and the nominal form busr is applied to unripe fruit and to gloominess of appearance, as a consequence of reaction against the angst against the torments in store for the disbelievers. Therefore, when they notice the tokens of torments and the records of their deeds imbued with sins and devoid of good righteous deeds, they entertain intense sorrow and frown at their unfavorable state.

The blessed Verse 25 says that they are aware that some excruciating torment is in store for them. The Arabic nominal form faqira denotes vertebrae or backbone, though it connotes any harsh incident that crushes the backbone.

The cognate form faqir ("poor, indigent") is applied to one who is burdened to the extent that his back has been crushed. The expression reflects the harsh torments awaiting the disbelievers in Hell.

They await painful torments, whereas the aforesaid group await Divine Graciousness and meeting with the Beloved. One group awaits the most painful torments and the other look forward to receiving the best material and spiritual Bounties.

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 26-30

كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَاقِيَ

وَقِيلَ مَنْ رَاقٍ

وَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ

وَالْتَفَّتِ السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ

إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ

26. Nay, he will not believe till his soul reaches the collar bone,

27. And it will be said: "Who can cure him?"

28. And he becomes certain of parting from the world;

29. And one leg will twist around the other [in the throes of death].

30. The path shall be, on that Day, toward your Lord ['s Tribunal].

The blessed Verses treat of the throes of death opening a window to the other world, saying that he shall never believe till his soul reaches his throat. It will be on that Day that his purgatory eyes will open, the veils will be cast asunder, and he shall see the tokens of torment and chastisement. He will be aware of his deeds and will intend to believe, though it will be of no avail to him.

The Arabic word taraqi is the plural form of tarquwa ("collar bone"). The expression "the soul reaches the collar bone or throat" connote the throes of death, the last breath, and the last moments of life, since when the soul leaves the body, the organs further remote from the heart, e.g. hands and feet, fail to function earlier than other organs, as if the soul gradually leaves the body till it reaches the throat.

The blessed Verse 27 says that then the people around the person in the throes of death will hastily look for some way out, saying:

"Who can cure him?"

They utter the words desperately, though they know that it is all over and physicians may not cure him. The Arabic word raq, derived from r-q-y, denotes climbing and ascending and the cognate word ruqya implies the prayers and invocations leading to cure. The cognate raqi is used in the sense of physician, since he delivers man from diseases.

Therefore, the blessed Verse says that those surrounding the patient and at times the patient himself cry out of severe angst and inquire whether there is one to say a prayer and cure the patient.

It is also suggested that the blessed Verse inquires:

"Which of the angels take his soul to the heaven, those in charge of torment or those of mercy?"

However, the former exegesis sounds to be further befitting and accurate.

The blessed Verse 28 makes a reference to the total despair of the person in the throes of death, saying:

"He totally loses his hope and becomes certain of parting from the world."

The blessed Verse 29 says:

"And one leg will twist around the other [in the throes of death]."

Such twisting is owing to the intensity of the angst cause by the soul leaving the body or it may reflect that the limbs are rendered dysfunctional as the soul is leaving them.

Further exegeses have been suggested for the blessed Verse, an instance of which includes a tradition narrated from the Noble Imam Baqir (as):

"The world twists around the Hereafter."

The tradition is to be found in 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's exegetic work.[21]

The blessed Verse 30 says:

"The path shall be, on that Day, toward your Lord ['s Tribunal]."

Everyone shall return unto Him to attend His Tribunal of Justice. All paths will lead unto Him. The blessed Verse lays further emphasis on Resurrection and raising all His servants from the dead. It may also reflect the orientation of the spiritual growth of the servants toward the Pure and Boundless Divine Essence.

Some traditions have been narrated in this respect, three instances of which include:

It is narrated from the Noble Imam Zayn al-'Àbidin (as) that in reply to a question concerning death he said:

"Death to the believer is like taking off a filthy garment infected with insects, unfettering heavy shackles and turning them into the best attires, the most sweet smelling perfume, the most convenient of the mounts, and

the most comfortable homes; the similitude of death to the disbeliever includes taking off a majestic attire, and departing from comfortable homes and turning them into the filthiest and the coarsest of garments, the most horrible homes, and the most excruciating torments."[22]

It is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) that he was inquired regarding a depiction of death.

The Imam (as) replied:

"It is like a sweet scent to the believer by which he falls into a state of sleep in which he is totally untouched by pain and torment, but to the disbeliever, it is like the bites of serpents and scorpions or even more painful than them."[23]

It is worthy of note that death is like a door to the world of survival. In this respect, it is narrated from the Noble Imam 'Ali (as) as saying:

"Every house has a door and that of the Hereafter is death."[24]

It is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"Remembrance of death effaces the concupiscent desires and eradicates negligence from the heart. It inspires hopes and softens human disposition, withers the tokens of following the desires of the flesh, quenches the fire of avarice, and belittles the world in the eyes."

This is what the Noble Prophet (S) intended by saying that one hour spent on reflection is worth one year spent on worshipping.[25] The Prophetic tradition applies to one of the clear instances of reflection rather than the exclusive reference to the topic.

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 31-33

فَلَا صَدَّقَ وَلَا صَلَّىٰ

وَلَٰكِن كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ

ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ يَتَمَطَّىٰ

31. So he neither believed nor established ritual prayer.

32. But on the contrary, he belied and turned away.

33. Then he walked in conceit to his family.

Proceeding with the discussion on death as the first step taken on the path toward the Hereafter, the blessed Verses in question say that the disbelievers lack the provisions required for the journey.

The first two blessed Verses say that one who belied Resurrection might neither believe, nor acknowledge Divine Revelation, nor establish ritual prayers for Him, but he followed the path of denial and turned away from Divine Command.

The Arabic clause fa-la saddaqa implies that he did not acknowledge Resurrection, reckoning of deeds, Divine Revelation, monotheism, and the Prophetic Call of Allah's Messenger (S).

Some exegetes suggests that a reference is herein made to the disbelievers ceasing from expending in Allah's Cause, as it is accompanied by the establishment of ritual prayers. However, the second Verse clearly indicates that denial is the opposite of such acknowledgement. Therefore, the first exegesis sounds more accurate.

The blessed Verse 33 says that he walked arrogantly to his family. Having imagined that he attained to a great triumph though indifference and belying the Noble Prophet (S) and Divine Revelation, he walked in conceit to his family to recount, as usual, his glorious deeds and in doing so, the manner of his gait was indicative of such arrogance and self-conceit.

The Arabic verbal form yatammata, derived from the root m-t-w, originally denotes "he stretched his body," though it herein implies that he walked proudly, strutted, or swaggered. The word may also connote walking listlessly and lethargically, though the former sense fits the context herein.

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 34-36

أَوْلَىٰ لَكَ فَأَوْلَىٰ

ثُمَّ أَوْلَىٰ لَكَ فَأَوْلَىٰ

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنسَانُ أَن يُتْرَكَ سُدًى

34. Divine torment is further befitting you, further befitting!

35. Then, Divine torment is further befitting you, further befitting!

36. Does man think that he will be left in vain?

Addressing such disbelievers, the first two blessed Verses in question recurrently warn them:

"Divine torment is further befitting you, further befitting."

Different suggestions have been provided for the clause

thumma awla la-ka fa-awla ("Divine torment is further befitting you, further befitting"),

including: it is a warning to them against Divine torment; you deserve such entanglement, you deserve it; it would be more befitting to reproach you, it would be further befitting; woe unto you, woe unto you; may the worldly rewards be far from you, may the rewards in the Hereafter be far from you; may you be entangled with torments and afflictions, may you suffer the torments and afflictions; it is more befitting for you to suffer the torments which you notice in the battlefield of Badr, and the torments in the grave and on the Day of Resurrection are more befitting for you.

However, it is needless to say that the majority of such interpretations imply one comprehensive meaning, namely warning against the torments and the evil consequences of misdeeds awaiting the sinners in this world, in the purgatory, and on the Day of Resurrection.

It is reported in a number of traditions that the Noble Prophet (S) met Abu Jahl and gave him pieces of advice. Abu Jahl said:

"You warn me, but neither you nor your Lord may harm me. I am the most powerful of the inhabitants of this land."

It was on that occasion that these Qur'anic Verses were sent down to the Noble Prophet (S).[26]

The blessed Verse 36 treats of two appealing arguments concerning Resurrection, one of which is indicative of the goal behind human creation and also Divine Wisdom, and the other reflects His Omnipotence through making reference to the development of semen in the different embryonic stages.

The blessed Verse says:

"Does man think that he will be left in vain?"

The Arabic adverb of manner suddan denotes "in vain, aimlessly." The Arabic phrase ibl-u sudda is applied to a camel left unattended that may graze wherever it likes. The Arabic nominal form insan connotes that man who belies Resurrection.

The blessed Verse implies such questions: How may he believe that God Almighty creates the vast world with such majesty and so many wonders for man without any goal? Each any every organ is created for some particular goal or goals, e.g. eyes for seeing, ears for hearing, heart for pumping food, oxygen, and water to all the cells of the body, even there is a reason lying behind the creation of fingerprints.

How may one believe that there is no goal behind the creation of man and his is created in vain, without any plans, any obligations, e.g. as to enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. If a man manufactures something aimlessly, he will be criticized and he will not be regarded as having a sound mind.

How may have God Almighty, the All-Wise, created the world in vain? If it be said that the goal lies in the fleeting life of man, aiming at recurrent feeding, rest, and entanglement with innumerable pains, such great creation may not be logically justified. Consequently, we may draw the conclusion that man is created for a greater purpose, namely the everlasting life in proximity to the Mercy of the Truth and incessant and endless spiritual growth.[27]

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 37-40

أَلَمْ يَكُ نُطْفَةً مِّن مَّنِيٍّ يُمْنَىٰ

ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ

فَجَعَلَ مِنْهُ الزَّوْجَيْنِ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ

أَلَيْسَ ذَٰلِكَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَن يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَىٰ

37. Was he not a discharge of semen emitted into the womb?

38. Then he became a clot. Then, [Allah] shaped and fashioned [him] in due proportion.

39. And made of him two sexes, male and female.

40. Is He not Able to give life to the dead?

Creation is the first token of Omnipotence. The blessed Chapter opened with swearing by Resurrection and it closes with Divine Omnipotence to raise the dead on Day of Resurrection.

Alluding to the second argument mentioned in the preceding Verse, the blessed Verse 37 asks:

"Was he not a discharge of semen emitted into the womb?"

The following two Verses respond:

"Then he became a clot. Then, [Allah] shaped and fashioned [him] in due proportion. And made of him two sexes, male and female."

It is in the last Verse (40) that the rhetorical question is posed:

"Is He not able to give life to the dead?"

Is He, who creates the little and worthless drop of semen anew each and every day in the dark womb and gives a new life and a novel form to it until it finally changes into a male or female human being and is born, not Able to give life to the dead?

It is actually a response to those who oftentimes belie the question of material Resurrection and refute being raised from the dead. In order to substantiate the veracity of Resurrection, the Holy Qur'an makes references to the threshold of human existence and the wondrous embryonic stages of development and thereby reflects Divine Omnipotence.

In other words, the best argument to substantiate the contingency of some object is its actualization. It is worthy of note that God Almighty has also demonstrated other instances of His Omnipotence through the recreations at the hands of His Messengers in this world. Prophet Jesus (as) breathed into two birds which he had made of clay and gave them life.

Prophet Abraham (as) called the birds which he had smashed and minced and thereby gave them a new life. Prophet Moses' (as) seventy companions who had accompanied him to the Mount Sinai (Tur) and had died following Divine Manifestation there, were given new lives by God Almighty.

Those who belie Resurrection have not truly gained some knowledge concerning God Almighty, since if human deeds be effaced upon his death, doubt will be cast upon Divine Wisdom, as it is reflected in the blessed Verses:

"Does man think that he will be left in vain?"[28];

"Did you think that We had created you in vain and that you would not be brought back unto Us?"[29].

The blessed Verses firstly treat of Divine Wisdom in raising the dead on the Day of Resurrection and secondly to Divine Omnipotence in the Creation of man, reflecting the contingence of his recreation.

The Arabic nominal form nutfa originally denotes trickle of water or pure water, though it is applied to semen discharge in the process of reproduction. The embryonic stages of development of semen constitute some of the most surprising phenomena in the world of existence, studied in the discipline of embryology, many of whose secrets have been unveiled in recent centuries.

The interesting point is that the Holy Qur'anic Verses had recurrently made references to such questions and had laid emphasis on them as tokens of Divine Omnipotence when such discoveries were not made yet.

They are the tokens of the Majesty and Glory of the Great Heavenly Book. It is noteworthy that the blessed Verses in question make mention of some of the embryonic stages, though further stages are to be found elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an in the opening Verses of Chapters 22 and 23, the exegetic details of which may be found above.

It is worthy of note that the Arabic pronoun

dhalika ("that")

implies pointing at some object lying afar. The pronoun herein implies Divine Majesty and Greatness, connoting that His Divine Pure Essence is so Exalted that it lies beyond human reflection.

It is narrated that the Noble Prophet was reciting

"Glorious art Thou! O Lord! Thou possess such Omnipotence!"
when the blessed Verse 40,
"Is He not Able to give life to the dead?"
was revealed unto him.

In this respects, some traditions have been narrated from Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as).[30]

O Lord! We testify that You are Omnipotent to raise all the dead and grant them new lives in one single moment. There exists no impediment to Your Omnipotence.

O Lord! On that day when the souls reach the collarbones and we lose our hopes of all things besides you, we set our hopes on Your Pure Essence. Forgive us and grant us Your Mercy and Grace.

Amen! O Lord of the worlds!

Notes

1. Ghurar al-Hikam.
2. 12:18
3. Usul Kafi, vol. 3, p. 346.
4. 20:14
5. 13:28
6. 89:27-30
7. Tafsir Maraghi; Ruh al-Ma'ani; Tafsir Safi.
8. 36:78
9. 81:1
10. 64:3
11. 84:6
12. 53:42
13. Tafsir Burhan, vol. 4, p. 406; Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 1, p. 1891.
14. 41:20
15. 36:65
16. 17:14
17. 20:114
18. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
19. 83:24
20. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
21. Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 465.
22. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 6, p. 155.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid's Commentary on the Nahj al-Balagha, vol. 20, p. 345.
25. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 6, p. 133.
26. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 401.
27. For further details, see above under 23:115.
28. 75:36
29. 23:115
30. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.

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