

تَفْسِيرُ سُورَةِ الْكَافَّةِ

Tafseer Soorah al-Kahf

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Transliteration System	3
Foreword	4
Introduction	5
Merits of Soorah al-Kahf	6

VERSES	PAGE		VERSES	PAGE		VERSES	PAGE
1	8		37	116		77-78	189
2	12		38	118		79	191
3	14		39	119		Note on Evil	192
4 & 5	18		40-41	121		80-81	193
6	21		42-44	122		82	194
7	23		Lessons	124		Lessons	196
8	28		45	124		83	200
9	29		46	127		84	201
10	30		47	129		85-86	202
11 & 12	36		48	131		87	203
13	39		49	134		88	204
14	42		50	138		89-90	205
15	46		51	157		91	206
16	48		52	159		92-93	207
17	52		53	160		94	207
18	55		54	162		95	209
Qadar & Prayer	59		55	165		Lessons on Rulers	210
19-20			56	167		96 & 97	211
Lessons	64		57	168		98	212
21	65		58	172		99	213
22	73		59	175		Major Signs	213
23-24	76		60	176		100 & 101	221
25-26	79		Lessons	177		102	222
27	89		61	178		103	223
28	99		62	179		104	224
Patience in Worshipping Allah	100		63	180		105	225
29	105		64-65	182		106	228
30	107		66-70	184		107	229
31	109		Lessons	185		108	230
32-34	110		71-73	186		109	231
35-36	114		74-76	188		110	235

Hadith Index	240
Bibliography	243

TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

ا	'		ط	t
ب	b		ظ	<u>z</u>
ت	t		ع	'
ث	th		غ	gh
ج	j		ف	f
ح	<u>h</u>		ق	q
خ	kh		ك	k
د	d		ل	l
ذ	<u>th</u>		م	m
ر	r		ن	n
ز	z		ه	h
س	s		ة	h/t
ش	sh		و	w
ص	<u>s</u>		ي	y
ض	<u>d</u>			

اَ	a		اَ	aa
اِ	i		اِي	ee
اُ	u		اُو	oo

اَي	ay			
اَو	aw			

FOREWORD

All praise belongs to Allah, as such we should thank Him and seek His help. Let us seek refuge in Allah from the wickedness within our souls and the evil consequences of our deeds. For, whosoever Allah guides none can misguide, and whosoever He allows to go astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship besides Allah, who is without partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger.

The commentary on Soorah al-Kahf, the 18th chapter of the Qur'aan, began as a series of lessons which I taught my family in our Friday study circles during the latter part of the year 1999. Those lessons were tape recorded and later transcribed by my daughter-in-law's sister, Yasmeen Koya.

I later used the notes to present the *Tafseer* of Soorah al-Kahf on my weekly *Tafseer* program, Understanding the Qur'aan, on Sharjah Television in the year 2000. Subsequently, I made the intention to publish this commentary along with commentaries on some other popular chapters of the Qur'aan like Yaaseen, al-Waaqi'ah, and al-Mulk. Unfortunately, none of these commentaries were ever published.

The idea to publish this commentary resurfaced as a result of deciding to present the *Tafseer* of Soorah al-Kahf once again. This time it was presented in my Friday *Tafseer* class at the Qatar Guest Center, Doha, Qatar, which lasted from November 2004 until September 2005. However, this commentary is greatly expanded version of the original one done four years earlier and which was based mainly on *Tafseer Ibn Katheer*. This *Tafseer* contains a far greater depth of understanding due to my drawing on a number of other classical and contemporary commentaries like al-Qurtubee's *al-Jaami' li Ahkaam al-Qur'aan*, Ibn al-Qayyim's *Compilations*, ash-Shawkaanee's *Fat'h al-Qadeer*, ash-Shanqeetee's *Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, as-Sa'dee's *Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan*, and Al 'Uthaymeen's *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem*. It also contains further reflection on the verses based on my personal experience and exposure to knowledge during the intervening five years.

I would like to thank my students from Qatar Guest Center and others for taking the time to edit the manuscript prior to publication as well as all others who have contributed in other ways to this work's publication. May Allah accept our efforts as sincere righteous deeds done for His pleasure, and put our collective efforts on our scales of good deeds on the Day when neither wealth nor family will benefit.

Dr. Bilal Philips
Qatar, November, 2004

INTRODUCTION

Name of the Soorah

The word *kahf* means “cave” and it occurs in verse 9 in the phrase أَصْحَابُ الْكَهْفِ *as’haab al-kahf* (lit. companions/people of the cave). However, it should be noted that although this chapter is most commonly known by this name, most of the names of the Qur’aanic chapters were not mentioned by the Prophet (ﷺ) himself. As a result, in some recent printings of the Qur’aan the ninth chapter is entitled *at-Tawbah* while, in others it is entitled *al-Baraa’ah*. In fact, statements of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions regarding this chapter indicate that in earlier times it was more commonly titled *Soorah As’haab al-Kahf*. This variation in the names does not in any way represent contradictions or changes within the Qur’aan because the majority of chapter titles were chosen by the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) and scholars of later generations for identification purposes.

There are, however, a few chapters which the Prophet (ﷺ) referred to by titles. For example, the first chapter commonly known as *Soorah al-Faatihah* was referred to by the Prophet (ﷺ) as “*Faatihatul-Kitaab*,” “*Ummul-Kitaab*,” “*Sooratul-Hamd*” as well as a variety of other names. These names or titles were used to identify the chapters or to bring out one or more of its important themes. They were not revealed with the Qur’aan and as such cannot be considered part of the Qur’aan. Thus, variations in their names in no way affect the purity and authenticity of the Qur’aan’s text.

It was not until the third century after the *hijrah* (ninth century C.E.) that people began the practice of writing chapter names in the Qur’aan, numbering the verses and adding symbols in the margin indicating the divisions of the Qur’aan.¹ There were also symbols indicating the ends of the verses and places for recitational pauses (such as ط and لا). Most scholars of that time were initially opposed to these additions fearing that their widespread acceptance might lead to these symbols being considered a part of the Qur’aan in later times.

Al-Halleemee, one of the major Qur’aanic scholars of that time said,

“Writing in the tenths and fifths², names of the chapters and the numbers of the verses are all despised, based on Ibn Mas’ood’s statement, ‘Free the Qur’aan from any additions.’ However, vowel marks,³ are allowed because they do not have form similar to that of the text of the Qur’aan. They are only necessary indications of correct pronunciation and their presence does no harm.”⁴

In time, however, the opposition of the early scholars was overwhelmed by the will of the masses and such additions became common place.

Place of Revelation

There are no authentic *hadeeths* to indicate when this chapter was revealed. However, most scholars of *Tafseer* (Qur’aanic exegesis) have concluded from its subject-matter and style that it

¹ E.g. the thirtieth part called *Juz*, or a section called *Rukoo’* indicated by an ‘Ayn (ع).

² I.e. a tenth portion of the Qur’aan and a fifth portion of the Qur’aan.

³ The grammarian, Abul-Aswad ad-Du’alee (d. 638 CE) was reported to have suggested to the fourth Caliph, ‘Alee, that signs indicating vowelings be included in order to avoid mispronunciation of the Qur’aan which could easily lead to the distortion of its meanings. The marks which he developed are not the same as those used today. The *Fat-hah* (vowel “a”) was indicated by a dot above the beginning of the letter; *Kasrah* (vowel “e” or “i”) was indicated by a dot below the beginning of the letter and *Dammah* (vowel “u”) was indicated by a dot at the end of the letter. (*Mabaahith fee ‘Uloom al-Qur’aan*, pp. 150-151)

⁴ *Mabaahith fee ‘Uloom al-Qur’aan*, pp. 150-153.

was among the early chapters revealed in Makkah.⁵ Other scholars of *Tafseer* considered the chapter to be Makkan with the exception of verses 1-8, 28 and 107-110 which they considered to be Madeenan.⁶

Ibn Katheer quoted a narration collected by at-Tabaree in his *tafseer*⁷ from Ibn ‘Abbaas in which he said, “The Quraysh tribe sent an-Nadr ibn al-Haarith and ‘Uqbah ibn Abee Mu‘ayt to the Jewish rabbis in Madeenah and instructed both of them to ask the rabbis about Muḥammad by describing him and what he was saying, since they had a revealed book and knowledge about the prophets which the Quraysh did not have. They left Makkah and went to Madeenah and asked the rabbis about Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ). The rabbis told them to ask him about three things. If he was able to inform them about them he was a prophet and if not was an imposter. They told them to ask about the strange case of some youths who disappeared in earlier times, about a traveler who reached the furthestmost points of the East and West, and about the origin and composition of the soul. The rabbis told them that if he informed them about these things, he was a prophet and they should follow him. If he was unable, they could do whatever they desired to him. When an-Nadr and ‘Uqbah returned to the Quraysh and informed them, they went and asked Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) who replied, ‘I will inform you tomorrow about them,’ without saying “If Allah wills” and they left. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) waited for fifteen days in which Allah did not reveal anything nor did Jibreel come to him. The Makkans made fun of him saying, ‘Muhammad promised us tomorrow and it is now fifteen days and he has not informed us about any of the things we asked him about.’ The delay of revelation saddened the Messenger (ﷺ) and what the Makkans were saying was difficult to bear. Then Jibreel brought *Soorah As-haab al-Kahf* from Allah in which the Prophet (ﷺ) was admonished for his sorrow about them, and the information about the youths and the traveler along with the verse **“They ask you about the soul. Inform them that the soul is by your Lord’s command and that the knowledge which you all have been given is only a little.”** (*Soorah al-Israa* 17:85)”⁸ This narration is quoted in almost all the classical commentaries as the reason for the revelation of the chapter as well as a number of its verses. However, the narration is not authentic.

The Merits of the Soorah

This chapter is popular among Muslims due to the many special merits associated with reading it according to various statements attributed to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). However, some of these merits are accurate while others have been falsely attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ). The following *hadeeths* are the authentic narrations regarding *Soorah al-Kahf*.

1. The Descent of Tranquility

When the Qur’aan is recited tranquility descends on those reciting it. Al-Baraa was quoted as saying that a man⁹ recited *al-Kahf* when an animal was in his house and it became agitated. When he looked around, he found a cloud hovering over him. When he informed Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), he said,

⁵ *Tafseer al-Qurtubee*, vol. 6, p. 3963 quoted in *Fat’h al-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 372.

⁶ Makkan revelations are defined as all verses and chapters of the Qur’aan which were revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) before his emigration to Madeenah (*Hijrah* 622 CE). This category also includes verses which were revealed in Taa’if, as well as those revealed in other areas outside of Makkah. Madeenan revelations are all those verses and chapters of the Qur’aan which were revealed after the *Hijrah*. This includes verses which were revealed during the battles, as well as those revealed in Makkah and Minaa during and after the Farewell Pilgrimage. (*Al-Itqaan*, vol. 1, p. 23)

The opinion regarding these verses is based on narrations from Ibn ‘Abbaas, Qataadah and Muqaatil. (*Zaad al-Maseer*, vol. 5, p. 102)

⁷ *Tafseer at-Tabaree*, vol. 8, pp. 174-5. However, its chain of narration is not authentic because the identity of Ibn Is’haaq’s teacher’s was unknown.

⁸ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, pp. 112-4.

⁹ His name was Usayd ibn al-Hudayr according to the *hadeeth* on the merits of *Soorah al-Baqarah*.

((اَقْرَأْ فُلَانُ فَإِنَّهَا السَّكِينَةُ نَزَلَتْ لِلْقُرْآنِ أَوْ تَنَزَّلَتْ لِلْقُرْآنِ))

“O so and so, continue to recite, for it was tranquility (sakeenah) which descends when the Qur’aan is read or because the Qur’aan is read.”¹⁰

This calmness would only be experienced by those who read the Qur’aan properly. The recitation must be done with reflection on the meanings of God’s words, as Allah reminds:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

“Will they not reflect on the Qur’aan, or are their hearts locked up?”

(Soorah Muhammad, 47: 24)¹¹

It should also be read with sincerity for it to have any impact on the heart and mind.

2. Protection from Dajjaal

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) warned his followers about the Anti-Christ who would come at the end of this world. He informed them that it would be the greatest trial that his nation would face. He further advised that the memorization and recitation of the first and the last ten verses of Soorah al-Kahf would protect the reciter from the Anti-Christ. Abud-Dardaa related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

((مَنْ حَفِظَ عَشْرَ آيَاتٍ مِنْ أَوَّلِ سُورَةِ الْكَهْفِ عُصِمَ مِنَ الدَّجَالِ))

“Anyone who memorizes the first ten verses of Soorah al-Kahf will be protected from Dajjaal.”¹²

On another occasion Abud-Dardaa quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

((مَنْ قَرَأَ عَشْرَ آيَاتٍ مِنْ آخِرِ الْكَهْفِ عُصِمَ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الدَّجَالِ))

“Anyone who recites the last ten verses of al-Kahf will be protected from trials of Dajjaal.”¹³

3. A Source of Light

On another occasion Abud-Dardaa quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

((مَنْ قَرَأَ سُورَةَ الْكَهْفِ فِي يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ، أَضَاءَ لَهُ مِنَ النُّورِ مَا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ جُمُعَتَيْنِ))

“Whoever recites Soorah al-Kahf on Friday will be illuminated by its light from one Friday to the next.”¹⁴

On yet another occasion Abud-Dardaa quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

((مَنْ قَرَأَ سُورَةَ الْكَهْفِ كَمَا أُنْزِلَتْ كَانَتْ لَهُ نُورًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ))

“Whoever recites Soorah al-Kahf as it was revealed will have it as light for himself on the Day of Resurrection.”¹⁵

4. Forgiveness

Ibn ‘Umar is reported to have quoted Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying, “Whoever recites Soorah al-Kahf on Friday, light will shine from beneath his feet to the heavens, it will be a light for

¹⁰ Sahih Muslim, vol. 1, p. 382, no. 1740 and Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 4, pp. 520-1, no. 811.

¹¹ See also 4:82.

¹² Sahih Muslim, vol. 2, pp. 386-7, no. 1766. Also collected by at-Tirmithi, Aboo Daawood, and an-Nasaa’ee. However in at-Tirmithi’s authentic narration the text read, “Whoever memorizes three verses from the beginning of al-Kahf...”

¹³ Sahih Muslim, vol. 2, p. 387, no. 1767. Also collected by an-Nasaa’ee.

¹⁴ Mustadrak al-Haakim, vol. 2, no. 368 and Sunan al-Bayhaquee, vol. 3, no. 249 and authenticated in Saheeh al-Jaami’ as-Sagheer, no. 6470.

¹⁵ Mustadrak al-Haakim, vol. 1, no. 564, Shu’ab al-Eemaan, no. 2446 and an-Nasaa’ee in al-Kubraa, no. 10788 and authenticated in Saheeh at-Targheeb, no. 735 and Irwaa al-Ghaleel, no. 626.

him on the Day of Judgement, and he would be forgiven for his sins between the two Fridays.” However, Ibn Katheer mentioned that its attribution to the Prophet is doubtful and it would more accurately be considered a statement of Ibn ‘Umar.¹⁶

Soorah al-Kahf (The Cave) 18

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا

1. Praise be to Allah, Who revealed to His Servant the Scripture in which He did not allow any deviation.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ

Almighty Allah begins this chapter by praising Himself saying: “**Praise be to Allah,**” since He is the source of all goodness and blessings. Self-praise is despised among humans because they have many more defects and deficiencies than praiseworthy characteristics. Allah prohibited self-praise for his creatures saying:

فَلَا تُزَكُّوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ

“Do not praise yourselves.” (Soorah an-Najm, 53: 32)

Anas ibn Maalik reported that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) described humans as being in constant error saying:

((كُلُّ بَنِي آدَمَ خَطَّاءٌ وَخَيْرُ الْخَطَّائِينَ التَّوَّابُونَ))

“All of Adam’s descendents constantly make error, and the best of those who constantly make error are those who constantly repent.”¹⁷

Furthermore, whatever good qualities or valuable properties human beings possess are gifts from God and not of their own making. However, because Allah is perfect and all good comes from Him, self-praise with regard to Himself is not a vice but a virtue and a right. In the same way that humility would be deficiency relative to Allah but a virtue relative to His creatures. Likewise other names like *al-Mutakabbir* (The Proud) and attributes like *makarAllah* (Allah plots) which in a human context are vices, in relation to Allah they are virtues. For example, in Allah’s statement:

وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ

“They plot and Allah plots, and Allah is the best of plotters.” (Soorah al-Anfaal, 8: 30)

إِنَّهُمْ يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا وَأَكِيدُ كَيْدًا

“Indeed they scheme and I scheme.” (Soorah at-Taariq, 86: 15-6)

إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ

“Surely the hypocrites [try to] deceive Allah, but it is He who deceives them.”

¹⁶ Collected by at-Tirmithi (Mishkat al Masabih, vol. 1, p. 456) and it is authenticated in *Saheeh Sunan at-Tirmithi*, vol. 3, p. 6, no. 2316.

¹⁷ *Sunan Ibn-i-Majah*, vol. , p. , no. , at-Tirmidhee, Ahmad and ad-Daarimee and authenticated in *Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah*, vol. 2, p. 418, no. 3428.

(Soorah an-Nisaa, 4: 142)

These attributes represent perfection when it is in reciprocation for something similar because it indicates that the doer is not weak and powerless to do the same to his enemy. It indicates deficiency and imperfection in other situations besides this. Thus it is affirmed for Allah in the first case and negated in the latter. If it is asked, for example: “Can Allah be described as plotting?” Do not say yes or no. Instead say that He plots against those who deserve it, and Allah knows best.¹⁸

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ

“Praise be to Allah,” means that all thanks belong to Allah alone and not any of the objects nor creatures worshipped besides Him. Thanks are due for Allah’s innumerable favors and bounties whose amount is only known to Him. Allah’s bounties include creating the means by which the creation worship Him, the bodies with which they fulfill His commands, the sustenance He provides them in this life, and the comfortable life He granted them, without anyone or anything forcing Him to do so. Allah also alerted His creation about the means to earn eternal life in the abode of everlasting happiness. All thanks and praise is due to Allah for these favors from their beginning to their end.¹⁹

“Allah praised Himself indicating to His creatures that they too should praise Him. It is as if Allah said: ‘Say: All thanks and praise is due to Allah.’ It is also said that “praise be to Allah” involves praising Him by mentioning His Most Beautiful Names and His Most Honorable Attributes.”²⁰

Meaning of Hamd

Al-hamd (praise/thanks) may be defined as “describing the one praised with perfection as an expression of love and glorification. The term *mad’h* (commendation) does not necessarily imply love and admiration/glorification as a person may praise a worthless person hoping for some benefit or seeking to repel some of the person’s harm.”²¹

Difference between Hamd and Shukr

Ibn Katheer noted that the difference between *hamd* (praise/thanks) and *shukr* (thanks) is that *hamd* is more general in that it is a statement of praise for one’s own characteristics, or thanks for what one has done. On the other hand, *shukr* is thanks only for what one has done and not for characteristics.²²

Lillaah: Allah is the proper name of God, used only for Him and not for anyone or anything besides Him. It is a name applicable to His Holy essence (*thaat*).²³ Objections to calling Him “God” are baseless, regardless of the fact that the term can be made plural (Gods), feminine (goddess) and compound (godfather), because *al-Ilaah* is one of His attributes and it means simply “God” and can be made plural, feminine, and so on. Arabic scholars have differed as to its origin. Some concluded that it was a fixed term and not a derivative of any other term, while others held that it was a contraction from *al-Ilaah*.

The Virtues of al-Hamd lillaah

1. The Best Supplication

The phrase *al-hamdulillaah* is actually a supplication containing praise and thanks directed to Allah. The Muslim daily prayers are all begun with this supplication in the form of the first chapter, *al-*

¹⁸

¹⁹ *Tafseer at-Tabaree*, vol. 1, p. 135.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 137.

²¹ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 7.

²² *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 1, p. 70.

²³ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 8.

Faatihah. If the prayer is done without its recitation, it becomes null and void. Furthermore, the Prophet (ﷺ) elevated the *al-hamdulillaah* prayer to the status of being the best supplication. Jaabir ibn ‘Abdillaah quoted Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying:

((أَفْضَلُ الذِّكْرِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَفْضَلُ الدُّعَاءِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ))

“The best way to remember Allah is Laa ilaaha illallah and the best supplication is al-hamdu lillaah.”²⁴

2. Giving Thanks for Blessings

Allah explained that giving thanks for blessings is itself a cause for increased blessings. He said:

لَنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَا أَزِيدَنَّكُمْ

“If you give thanks, I will increase your [blessings.]” (Soorah Ibraaheem, 14: 7)

Anas ibn Maalik also narrated from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that he said:

((مَا أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى عَبْدٍ نِعْمَةً فَقَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ إِلَّا كَانَ الَّذِي أَعْطَاهُ أَفْضَلَ مِمَّا أَحَدَ))

“Any servant who is blessed by Allah and says: Al-Hamdulillaah, will be given better than what he just received.”²⁵

The Occasions for al-Hamd lillaah

Due to the great virtues connected with praising Allah by this supplication, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to frequently mention it within his various daily supplications.²⁶

²⁴ Sunan Ibn-i-Majah, vol. , p. , no. , at-Tirmidhee, Ahmad and al-Muwatta and authenticated in Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah, vol. 2, p. 418, no. 3428.

²⁵ Sunan Ibn-i-Majah, vol. , p. , no. , and authenticated in Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah, vol. 2, p. 418, no. 3428.

²⁶ The following are only a few examples:

1. On Awakening from Sleep

عَنْ حُذَيْفَةَ بْنِ الْيَمَانِ قَالَ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا أَوَى إِلَى فِرَاشِهِ قَالَ ((بِسْمِكَ أَمُوتُ وَأَحْيَا)) وَإِذَا قَامَ قَالَ ((الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَحْيَانَا بَعْدَ مَا أَمَاتَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ))

Huthayfah ibn al-Yamaan said that whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) went to bed, he would say: “Bismika amootu wa ahya [In Your Name I die and come alive.]” And when he awoke, he would say: “Al-Hamdulillaah allathe ahyaanaa ba’da maa amaataana wa ilayhin-nushoor [All praise is due to Allah who brought us to life after causing us to die and to him belongs the resurrection.]” (Sahih Al Bukhari, Kitaab: ad da’awaat B: maa yaqoolu ithaa naam)

2. On Completion of Meals

عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ إِذَا رَفَعَ مَائِدَتَهُ قَالَ ((الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ غَيْرَ مَكْفِيٍّ وَلَا مُوَدَّعٍ وَلَا مُسْتَعْنَى عَنْهُ رَبَّنَا))

Abou Umaamah reported that whenever the Prophet’s meal ended, he would say: “Al-Hamdulillaahi katheeran tayyiban mubaarakan feehi ghayra makfiyyin wa laa muwadda’in wa laa mustaghannan ‘anhu rabbanaa [Allah be praised with an abundant beautiful blessed praise; a never-ending praise; a praise which we will never bid farewell to and an indispensable praise. Our Lord.]” (Sahih Al Bukhari, Kitaab: At’imah b: ma yaqoolu ithaa faragha min ta’aamih)

3. After Sneezing

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ ((إِذَا عَطَسَ أَحَدُكُمْ فَلْيَقُلْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلْيَقُلْ لَهُ أَخُوهُ أَوْ صَاحِبُهُ يَرْحَمُكَ اللَّهُ فَإِذَا قَالَ لَهُ يَرْحَمُكَ اللَّهُ فَلْيَقُلْ يَهْدِيكُمْ اللَّهُ وَيُصْلِحْ بَالَكُمْ))

Abou Hurayrah stated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “If one of you sneezes, say: Al-Hamdulillaah. His brother or friend should say: Yarhamuk Allah. And if he says: May Allah have mercy on you, let him say: Yahdeekumullaahu wa yuslihu baalakum [May Allah guide you and rectify your contidion.]” (Sahih Al Bukhari, Kitaab: Adab, B: Ithaa ‘atsa kayf yashmut)

4. On Seeing Suffering

الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ

“Who revealed to His Servant.” The Almighty describes the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as “His servant (‘abdihee)”, though all creatures are His servants, because he was the greatest servant of Allah amongst human beings. Allah has described him using this term in three contexts:

1. When describing the revelation of the Qur’aan to him, as in this verse.
2. When speaking in his defense, as when Allah said:
3. On the occasion of his ascension, as Allah said:

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ
مِنَ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

“Glorified be the One who took His servant by night from the Makkan Mosque to the Aqsaa Mosque, whose surroundings I blessed, in order to show him some of My signs. Indeed He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.” (Soorah al-Israa, 17: 1)

That is, in the most honorable positions of the Prophet (ﷺ) Allah described him as a servant. The most blessed description for a human being is that of a “servant of Allah.”²⁷

الْكِتَابِ

“The Scripture,” refers primarily to the Qur’aan here, though scripture generally refers to all the revealed books. Thus, Allah praises Himself for the revelation of His Mighty Book to His Noble Messenger (ﷺ) because it is the greatest blessing which He has granted the people of the earth. Through the Qur’aan, He takes them out of darkness into light.”²⁸

وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا

“He did not allow any deviation.”

Allah then described the Book with two characteristics containing perfection from all perspectives: They are, negating from it any deviation and affirming its uprightness. The negation of deviation necessitates that its information is free from lies, and its commands or prohibitions free from oppression or frivolity. Affirmation of uprightness necessitates that it only informs about and commands the most important issues; the information which fills the hearts with understanding, faith and reason, for example, information about Allah’s names, attributes and actions, and information about the past and the future. His commands and prohibitions purify, elevate and perfect the souls because they contain perfect justice, fairness and sincerity, and servitude to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, without any partner. It is befitting of a scripture described as perfect that Allah praise Himself for its revelation and His creatures praise Him for it.”²⁹

عَنْ عُمَرَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ ((مَنْ رَأَى صَاحِبَ بَلَاءٍ فَقَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي عَافَانِي مِمَّا ابْتَلَاكَ بِهِ
وَفَضَّلَنِي عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ تَفْضِيلًا إِلَّا غُوفِي مِنْ ذَلِكَ الْبَلَاءِ كَانَتْ مَا كَانَ مَا عَاشَ)).

‘Umar related that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Whoever sees someone afflicted with a trial and says: Al-Hamdulillaahi allathee ‘aafaanee mimma bihee wa faddalanee ‘alaa katheerin mimman khalaqa tafdeelan [All praise is due to Allah who protected me from what you have been tested with and favored me over many that He created], will be saved from that trial, whatever it may be, as long as he lives.” (Saheeh Sunan at-Tirmitheh, Kitaab: ad da’awaat B: maa yaqoolu ithaa ra’aa muhtalee)

²⁷Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 8.

²⁸Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. 111.

²⁹Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 645.

Az-Zujaaaj said the verse meant that He did not put in it any contradictions just as He said:

وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

“If it were from other than Allah they would have found in it many contradictions.”

(Soorah an-Nisaa, 4: 82)³⁰

There is no deviation in its meanings which would lead people astray as can be found, for example, in the Bible’s Old Testament. In the books of the Torah and other books attributed to the prophets, the messengers of God are described in the most corrupt terms. Prophet Abraham is described as a drunkard, Prophet Lot as committing incest with his daughters, Prophet David as committing adultery, and Prophet Solomon as worshipping idols in his old age, to mention a few. Some Christian and Jewish scholars try to explain it away by claiming that it only shows the Prophets were human being and these things will happen in human beings lives. However, these texts do not contain guidance, but misguidance and they ultimately serve as a defense for corruption. When the famous televangelist, Jimmy Swaggart, was photographed in the eighties coming from a brothel with a prostitute on his arm, he quoted Old Testament texts on the “sins” of the prophets as his defense.

In Hindu scriptures the stories about the activities of incarnations of God (*avatars*) reach their absurd extreme. In the *Govindpuran*, Krishna, an incarnation of god, is portrayed as cavorting with women and playing tricks on them by hiding their clothing when he found them swimming naked in a lake. In the *Ramayana*, the wife of Rama, another incarnation of god, was kidnapped by Rawan, a demon god, and taken to Sri Lanka. It took 12 years for Rama to get her back. He was helped by Hanuman, the monkey god of power, to build a mythical bridge from India to Sri Lanka. In the *Shivpuran*, Lord Shiva, god of destruction, inadvertently chopped off the head of his son, Ganesh, and then lost it. He later replaced his son’s head with that of a young elephant and in that way the elephant-head god of good luck, Ganesh, came into being.

Thus, the Qur’aan contains neither corruption nor any encouragement to corruption, instead, the descriptions of the prophets elevate them to the pinnacles of faith and uprightness that they reached. Thus, recapturing their status as guides and examples to humankind whom Allah chose to receive His revelation.

قَيِّمًا لِّيُنْذِرَ بَأْسًا شَدِيدًا مِّنْ لَّدُنْهُ وَيُبَشِّرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ
الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا

2. [He made it] straight to warn of a terrible punishment coming from Him, and to give glad tidings of a good reward to the believers who do righteous deeds.

قَيِّمًا

Ash-Shawkaanee explained that “[He made it] straight,” could refer to the straightforwardness of the Book whereby it contains no deviation, or to it being valuable for the creatures’ welfare in both this life and the next, or to it being a custodian and guardian for the previous divine revealed scriptures. According to the first meaning it would be emphasis for the negation of deviation for

³⁰ *Fat’h al-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 374.

something apparently straight may not be completely free from any crookedness.³¹ He negated any faults first, then He affirmed its perfection.³²

Aal ‘Uthaymeen explained that **“to warn [the disbelievers] of a terrible punishment coming from Him,”** could mean either that “the servant would warn” or that “the scripture would warn.”³³

As-Sa‘dee explained that **“a terrible punishment coming from Him,”** meant that He measured it (*qadar*) and determined it (*qadaa*) for whoever opposed His commands. This punishment includes both this life and the next. And this is also among His blessings that He scares His servants and warn them about what will harm and destroy them. Just as when the Almighty mentioned the description of the Hellfire in the Qur’aan, He said:

ذَٰلِكَ يُخَوِّفُ ٱللَّهُ بِهٖ عِبَادَهُۥ يَٰٓعِبَادِ فَٱتَّقُوْنَ

“That is for Allah to scare His servants with it. Oh My servants, fear Me.”

(Soorah az-Zumar, 39: 16)

It is from His mercy for His servants that He limited the severe punishments to those who oppose His commands and that He clarify that for them as well as the causes which lead to punishments.”³⁴

As-Sa‘dee explained: **“and to give glad tidings of a good reward to the believers who do righteous deeds,”** “That is, Allah revealed to His servant the scripture so he would give glad tidings to the believers whose faith was perfected about it, and about the messengers and the books. And He made ordained the doing of righteous deeds, whether obligatory or recommended, which combine sincerity and obedience.”³⁵

Aal ‘Uthaymeen mentioned that **“the believers who do righteous deeds,”** indicates that there must be good deeds accompanying belief. Belief alone is not sufficient. Because of that so many of the scholars of the *Salaf* when asked, “Isn’t the key to Paradise *laa ilaaha ilAllah?*” Meaning that whoever brings it will have it opened for him. He replied, “Yes. But will a key without teeth open anything?”³⁶

No act can be righteous unless it contains two principles:

1. Sincerity to Allah: That the person not intend by his deed anything other than the pleasure of Allah and the Hereafter.
2. Obedience to Allah’s Sharee‘ah: That the deed not be outside Allah’s Sharee‘ah.³⁷

As-Sa‘dee explained: **“A good reward,”** the reward which Allah set for faith and righteous deeds; the greatest and most glorious of which is the pleasure of Allah and entrance to paradise, containing what no eye has ever seen, nor ear ever heard, nor has it crossed the mind of any human being. Furthermore, by describing it as “good” it implies that there is neither griminess nor disturbance of any kind whatsoever. For, if it any of that were present its goodness would be incomplete.”³⁸

³¹ *Fat’h al-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 374.

³² Aal ‘Uthaymeen noted here that the recitation must end on “*‘iwajan* deviation” though “*qayyiman* straightforwardness” is related to what preceded it, because reading them together would mean “He did not put in it any valuable deviation.”

³³ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 9.

³⁴ *Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan*, p. 645.

³⁵ *Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan*, p. 645.

³⁶ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 10.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³⁸ *Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan*, p. 645.

3. They will remain there forever.

Aal ‘Uthaymeen explained that this meant, “They will abide therein eternally without any end, free from illness, death, hunger, thirst, heat or cold. Everything there will be perfect from all perspectives.

The creed of *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamaa‘ah* regarding both Paradise and Hell is that they exists now and that they are both eternal. It is mentioned in the Qur’aan. There are many verses referring to the eternal nature of Paradise for the people of the Right-hand, and there are three verses concerning the eternal nature of Hell for the People of the Left-hand.

1. In *Soorah an-Nisaa*, 4:168-9

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَظَلَمُوا لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ طَرِيقًا * إِلَّا طَرِيقَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا

“Indeed, Allah will not forgive those who disbelieve and did wrong nor will He guide them to any way, besides the way to Hell, in which they will remain forever, and that is easy for Allah.”

2. In *Soorah al-Ahzaab*, 33: 64-5

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَنَ الْكَافِرِينَ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ سَعِيرًا * خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا لَا يَجِدُونَ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا

“Indeed, Allah has cursed the disbelievers, and has prepared for them a flaming fire in which they will remain forever, and they will find neither a protector nor a helper.”

3. In *Soorah al-Jinn*, 72: 23

وَمَنْ يَعَصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا أَبَدًا

“For whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger there is the fire of Hell in which to remain forever.”

If three verses from Allah’s scripture are clear in stating the eternal nature of Hell, there should not be any difference of opinion regarding it. As was said:

لَيْسَ كُلُّ خِلَافٍ جَاءَ مُعْتَبَرًا * إِلَّا خِلَافًا لَهُ حَظٌّ مِنَ النَّظَرِ

“Not every difference is worth consideration * except for difference supported by evidence.”

What is mentioned about the difference of opinion about the eternal nature of Hell has no real evidence. How could the All-Knowing Creator say: “**Eternally remaining in it,**” then it be said that it is not eternal? That is very strange.”³⁹

Proof that Heaven is already created can be found in the Qur’aanic text referring to it as being:

أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

“...prepared for the God fearing.” (*Soorah Aal ‘Imraan*, 3: 133)

Proof can also be found in the Prophet’s statement after praying the Eclipse Prayer (*Salaatul-Kusoof*): “Indeed I saw paradise and I had a bunch of fruit from it. If I had brought it, you would

³⁹ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 12-3.

have eaten [from it] as long as the world existed. And I saw the Hell fire. I have never seen a more fearful sight until today.”⁴⁰

Aboo Hurayrah reported that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “When Allah created Paradise, He said to Gabriel: Go and look at it. He went and looked at it, then came and said: O my Lord! By Your Might, no one who hears of it will fail to enter it. Allah then surrounded it with disagreeable things, and said: Go and look at it, O Gabriel. He went and looked at it, then came and said: O my Lord! By Your Might, I am afraid that no one will enter it. When Allah created Hell, He said: O Gabriel, go and look at it. He went and looked at it, then came and said: O my Lord! By Your Might, no one who hears of it will enter it. He then surrounded it with desirable things and said: O Gabriel, go and look at it. He went, looked at it and then came and said: O my Lord! By Your Might, I am afraid that no one will remain who does not enter it.”⁴¹

Location of Paradise

Paradise is in the highest level of ‘*Illiyoon*’ based on the verse:

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَبْرَارِ لَفِي عَلِيَيْنَ

“No. Indeed the record of the righteous is ‘*Illiyoon*.’” (Soorah al-Mutaffifeen, 83: 18)

In the well-known *hadeeth* of al-Barraa ibn ‘Aazib on the trials of the grave, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

((فَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: اُكْتُبُوا كِتَابَ عَبْدِي فِي عَلِيَيْنَ وَأَعِيدُوهُ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ))

“Allah Most Great and Glorious will say: Write the book of my servant in ‘*Illiyeeen* and return him to the earth.”⁴²

Hell is in the lowest of the lows based on the verse:

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَّارِ لَفِي سِجِّينَ

“No. Indeed the book of the corrupt is in *Sijjeen*.” (Soorah al-Mutaffifeen, 83: 7)

Also in al-Barraa’s *hadeeth*:

((فَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: اُكْتُبُوا كِتَابَ عَبْدِي فِي سِجِّينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ السُّفْلَى))

“Allah Most High will say: Write the book of my servant in *Sijjeen* in the lowest earth.”⁴³

Harun Yahya, the pen name of a modern popular writer from Turkey by the name of Adnan Oktar, denied the separate existence of heaven and hell. In a number of his books, among them, *Allah is Known Through Reason* and *The Truth of The Life of This World*, the author stated the following in an appendix entitled “A Very Different Approach to Matter”:

“As said before, the questions of death, paradise, hell, the hereafter, changing dimensions, and questions such as “Where is Allah?” “What was before Allah?” “Who created Allah?” “How long will life in the grave last?” “Where are heaven and hell?” and “Where do heaven and hell currently exist?” are easily answered. It will be understood with what kind of order Allah created the entire universe from out of nothing, so much so that, with this secret, **the questions of “when?” and “where?” become meaningless** because there are no time and no space left. When spacelessness is grasped, it will be understood that hell, heaven, and earth are all actually the same place. If timelessness is grasped, it will be understood that everything takes place at **a single moment**: nothing is waited for and time does not go by, because everything has already happened and finished. With this secret, **the world becomes like heaven for a believer**.”⁴⁴

⁴⁰ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 2, pp. 91-2, no. 161 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 2, p. 431-2, no. 1982.

⁴¹ *Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 3, p. 1327, no. 4726 and authenticated in *Saheeh Sunan Abee Daawood*, no. 3970.

⁴² *Musnad Ahmad*, vol. 4, *Musnad of Koofii's* and authenticated in *Saheeh al-Jaami*, no. 1676.

⁴³ *Musnad Ahmad*, vol. 4, *Musnad of Koofii's* and authenticated in *Saheeh al-Jaami*, no. 1676.

⁴⁴ *Allah is known Through Reason*, pp. 202-3.

As proof for the eternal nature of Hell Ibn Qudaamah⁴⁵ mentioned verses from Soorah az-Zukhruf,

﴿ إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي عَذَابٍ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ * لَا يُفْتَرُ عَنْهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ ﴾

“Verily the criminals will be in the torment of Hell forever. [The torment] will not be lightened for them, and they will be confused and regretful in it.” (43: 74-5)

and the following *hadeeth* of the ram:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: ((يُؤْتَى بِالْمَوْتِ كَهَيْئَةِ كَبْشٍ أَمْلَحَ فَيُنَادِي مُنَادٍ يَا أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ فَيَشْرَبُونَ وَيَنْظُرُونَ فَيَقُولُ هَلْ تَعْرِفُونَ هَذَا فَيَقُولُونَ نَعَمْ هَذَا الْمَوْتُ وَكُلُّهُمْ قَدْ رَأَاهُ ثُمَّ يُنَادِي يَا أَهْلَ النَّارِ فَيَشْرَبُونَ وَيَنْظُرُونَ فَيَقُولُ هَلْ تَعْرِفُونَ هَذَا فَيَقُولُونَ نَعَمْ هَذَا الْمَوْتُ وَكُلُّهُمْ قَدْ رَأَاهُ فَيَذْبَحُ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ يَا أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ خُلُودٌ فَلَا مَوْتَ وَيَا أَهْلَ النَّارِ خُلُودٌ فَلَا مَوْتَ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ وَأَنْذَرَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْحُسْرَةِ إِذْ قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ وَهَؤُلَاءِ فِي غَفْلَةٍ أَهْلُ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ)).

Aboo Sa‘eed al-Khudree quoted Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying: “Death will be brought forth in the form of a black and white ram. Then an announcer will announce: O people of paradise! Then they will stretch their necks and look carefully. The announcer will say: Do you know this? They will say: Yes, this is death. By then all of them will have seen it. Then it will be announced again: O people of Hell! They will stretch their necks and look carefully. The announcer will say: Do you know this? They will say: Yes, this is death. And then all of them will have seen it. Then it will be slaughtered and the announcer will announce: O people of Paradise! Eternity for you and no death. O people of Hell! Eternity for you and no death. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) recited: ‘**And warn them of the Day of Distress when the case has been decided, while now they are in a state of carelessness and they do not believe.**’^{46 47}

Those who say that Hell is not eternal

‘Umar al-Ashqar divided those who disagree with *Ahlus-Sunnah* on the eternal nature of Hell into the following four groups:

1. Jahmites⁴⁸ who hold that both Paradise and Hell will come to an end.

⁴⁵ See *The Radiance of Faith*, p. .

⁴⁶ Soorah Maryam, 19: 39.

⁴⁷ Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol. 6, pp. 226-7, no. 254 and Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1484, no. 6827.

⁴⁸ Jahm ibn Safwan (d. 745), to whom this theological school is attributed, was born in Khurasan, lived his early years in Tirmidh, entered into a debate with some Buddhists which lead him to complete skepticism. After forty days he regained faith in God but, towing the line of Ja’d ibn Dirham, denied all of Allah’s attributes except that He was omnipotent and the Creator. He also claimed that as long as one believed, bad deeds would not affect him nor would he be punished for them. He further affirmed an extreme form of predestination, denied freewill and asserted that Paradise and Hell were not eternal. Jahm ibn Safwaan was executed by Saalim ibn Ahwaz along with al-Haarith ibn Surayj who led a revolt against the Umayyads. His followers, called the *jahmiyyah* (Eng. Jahmites), survived down to the 11th century around the city of Tirmidhi, but by then they had adopted the doctrines of the most popular school of that time, that of the Ash‘arites. They are not actually a group or sect, but the label, jahmite, was traditionally given to all who subscribed to Jahm’s views. (*Sharh Lum ‘atul-I’tiqaad*, p. 162, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islaam*, p. 83 and *Taareekh al-Umam wal-Mulook*, vol. 7, pp. 220-221, 236-237.)

2. The Imaam of the pantheists, Ibn ‘Arabee at-Taa’ee,⁴⁹ who claimed that the people of Hell will be punished for a while, then their nature will become fiery, so that they will enjoy the Fire and it will be suited to their nature.
3. Aboo Haazil al-‘Allaaf, one of the leading Mu‘tazilite scholars claimed that the life of the people of Hell will come to an end, and they will become solid, unable to move or feel pain. He said this because he thought that it was impossible for any created being not to come to an end.
4. Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim who claimed that Allah will remove from Hell whom He wishes, as reported in the *hadeeths*, then He will leave Hell for a while before destroying it, because He has given it a specified amount of time at the end of which it will end.

Evidence that Hell is not eternal

Some of the *hadeeth* evidence used by Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim to prove that Hell will end is not authentic. That which is authentic is not clear and could be interpreted differently. For example, it was narrated from ‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas that he said: “There will come a time when a wind will blow through the gates of Hell, and there will be nobody in it.” Although it is attributed to ‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Amr, this could not have been his own idea, consequently scholars considered it as *marfoo’* (from the Prophet [ﷺ]). “Nobody” here could mean “nobody among the monotheists”. Likewise, narrations which state that Hell will pass away, could mean that the part of Hell in which the Muslim sinners were being punished will ultimately cease to exist. As-San‘anee discussed this in his treatise, *Raf‘ al-Astaar li Ibtaal ‘adillah al-Qaa’ileen bi fanaa an-Naar*⁵⁰ and so did al-Qurtubee in his book *at-Tathkirah fee ahwaal al-Mawtaa wa Umoor al-Aakhirah* (p. 437) The following Qur’aanic verse was also used as evidence:

﴿وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ سُعِدُوا فِي الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ غَيْرَ مَجْدُودٍ﴾

“And those who are blessed, they will be in Paradise, abiding there for as long as the heavens and earth endure, except as your Lord wills, a gift without end.” (Soorah Hood, 11: 108)

Ibn Abil-‘Izz in his commentary on *al-‘Aqeedah at-Tahaawiiyyah* said: “The *Salaf* differed with regard to this exception. Some said it meant “except for the length of their stay in Hell” and this refers to those who will enter Hell and then be removed, and not all of them. Others suggested it meant “the length of time that they will wait before the Judgment,” or “the length of time they will spend in the grave waiting for the Judgment”. Yet others suggested that it meant “that it is an exception for Allah, but He will not necessarily act on it...”⁵¹

It is not permissible to malign or condemn these two scholars because of this error of *ijtihaad*. The claim that whoever has a different opinion in such matters is a disbeliever will lead to declaring many of the prominent scholars of the *ummah*, whose knowledge and authority cannot be questioned, to be disbelievers also. ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab was of the opinion that if a traveller could not find water, he was under no obligation to make *tayammum* or to pray, and both he and Aboo Bakr forbade *Hajj Tamattu’*, whereas the *ummah* agreed on the opposite. Imaam Maalik thought that the *basmalah* was not a part of the Qur’aan, whereas the *ummah* agreed that whatever

⁴⁹ Muhammad ibn ‘Alee ibn ‘Arabee was born in Spain in the year 1165 CE and died in Damascus in the year 1240 CE. He claimed to possess inner light and knowledge of Allah’s greatest name and referred to himself as the seal of the sainthood which he implied was a status higher than prophethood. In the centuries following his death, his followers elevated him to the status of saint, and gave him the title of *ash-Shaykh al-Akbar* (The Greatest Master), but the majority of Muslim legal scholars considered him a heretic. His principle works are *al-Futooha al-Makkeeyah* and *Fuṣooṣ al-Hikim*, (*Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, pp.146-7).

⁵⁰ Al-Maktab al-Islaamee, Beirut.

⁵¹ *The Final Day: Paradise and Hell*, pp. 60-7.

is between the covers of the Qur'aanic text is a part of it. Imaam Aboo Haneefah and his students believed that *eemaan* neither increased nor decreased, despite the fact that the Qur'aan and *Sunnah* clearly state otherwise and the majority of scholars hold that it can do both.⁵²

It should also be pointed out that in his compendium of juristic rulings, *Majmoo' al-Fataawaa*, Ibn Taymiyyah said in response to a question: "The *Salaf* and *imaams* of this nation and *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah* agreed that there exist created entities that will never come to an end at all, like Paradise, Hell, the Throne and so on. No one suggests that every created thing will perish apart from a few philosophers and innovators, like Jahm ibn Safwaan and the Mu'tazilites, and those who agreed with them. This is a flawed opinion that contradicts the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger, the consensus of the *salaf* and the *imaams* of this nation."⁵³ This indicates that Ibn Taymiyyah had two opinions. Consequently, unless it is established that the first opinion mentioned was his final verdict, it is incorrect to assert that he held that Hell would end without qualifying it.

وَيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا

4. And warn those who say that, Allah has given birth to a son.

Aal 'Uthaymeen suggested that this verse acted as an explanation for what was left unspecified in the previous verse. It contains a warning to Christians who said that the Messiah was the son of Allah and a warning to the Jews who said that al-'Uzayr was the son of Allah...⁵⁴ Allah stated in the Qur'aan:

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللَّهِ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ يُضَاهِئُونَ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

"The Jews call 'Uzayr a son of Allah, and the Christians call Christ the son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouths; they are only imitating what the disbelievers of old used to say. Allah's curse is upon them: how deluded are they!" (Soorah Tawbah, 9: 30)

Jochen Katz claimed in his attack on the Noble Qur'aan that since there is no evidence in the Bible that Uzayr was called the "son of God", therefore the Noble Qur'aan is in error regarding this issue. However, the *Encyclopedia Judaica Jerusalem* states that Uzayr, called the Father of Judaism by the Jews, was considered the "son of God" by the Jews of Yemen.⁵⁵

The historian, Ibn Is'haaq, held that this verse actually refers to the pagan Arabs who used to call the angels "daughters of Allah" and worship them accordingly.⁵⁶

مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا لِآبَائِهِمْ كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ إِنَّ يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا
كَذِبًا

⁵² *The Final Day: Paradise and Hell*, pp. 60-7.

⁵³ *Majmoo' al-Fataawaa*, 18: 307.

⁵⁴ *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem*, p. 13.

⁵⁵ *Encyclopedia Judaica Jerusalem*, vol. 6, page 1108.

⁵⁶ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p. .

5. They have no knowledge about it, nor do their fathers. The word coming out of their mouths is very grave. What they are saying is nothing but a lie.

Allah rejects the claim that He gave birth to a son in a variety of different ways throughout the Qur'aan. Here He simply points out that the claim has no basis in knowledge; either it was invented by those who claim it or it was fabricated by their ancestors. Most Christians today and in the past are unaware of the origins of their beliefs. They have simply inherited them from their ancestors. From the history of Christianity it is clear that the belief that Jesus was the son of God did not become the dominant belief until the fourth century after the time of Christ.⁵⁷ Furthermore, a critical look at the existing texts of the Bible does not support this claim. Although, the title "Son of God" is used to describe Jesus in the texts of the Gospels, there are numerous places in the Old Testament where this title has been given to others. For example, God called Israel (Prophet Jacob) His "son" when He instructed Prophet Moses to go to Pharaoh in Exodus 4:22-23, "**22 And you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, 'Israel is my first-born son,'²³ and I say to you, 'Let my son go that he may serve me.'**"⁵⁸ In 2nd Samuel 8:13-14, God calls Prophet Solomon His son, "**13 He [Solomon] shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. ¹⁴I will be his father, and he shall be my son.**" God promises to make Prophet David His son in Psalms 89:26-27, "**26 He shall cry unto me, 'Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation,' ²⁷Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.**"⁵⁹ Angels are referred to as "sons of God" in The Book of Job 1:6, "**Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.**"⁶⁰

Even in the New Testament, there are many references to "sons of God" other than Jesus. For example, when the author of the Gospel according to Luke listed Jesus' ancestors back to Adam, he wrote: "***The son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.***"⁶¹

Some claim that what is unique in the case of Jesus is that he is the only begotten⁶² Son of God, while the others are merely "sons of God". However, God is recorded as saying to Prophet David, in Psalms 2:7, "***I will tell the decree of the Lord: He said to me, 'You are my son, today I have begotten you.***" It should also be noted that nowhere in the Gospels does Jesus actually call himself "Son of God".⁶³ Instead, he is recorded to have repeatedly called himself "Son of man" (e.g.

⁵⁷ In the late third and early fourth centuries, Arius (b. c. 250, Libya - d. 336 CE), a presbyter of Alexandria, Egypt, taught the finite nature of Christ and the absolute oneness of God, which attracted a large following, until he was declared a heretic by the council of Nicaea in May 325 CE. During the council, he refused to sign the formula of faith stating that Christ was of the same divine nature as God [which came to be known as the Nicene Creed]. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 1, pp. 556-7.)

⁵⁸ See also, Hosea 1:10, of the *King James Version*.

⁵⁹ In the *Revised Standard Version*, it states: "***And I will make him the first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth.***" See also Jeremiah 31:9, "***...for I am a father to Israel and Ephraim is my first-born.***"

⁶⁰ See also, Job 2:1 and 38:4-7. Other references to sons of God can also be found in Genesis 6:2, Deuteronomy 14:1 and Hosea 1:10.

⁶¹ Luke 3:38.

⁶² The term "begotten" in Old English meant 'to be fathered by' and it was used to distinguish between Jesus, who was supposed to be the literal son of God, from the figurative use of the term 'son' for God's "created sons". Reference to the "only begotten Son" can be found in the Gospel of John, 3: 16.

⁶³ In the New Testament Book of Acts, there are several outlines of speeches of the early disciples of Jesus, speeches which date from the year 33 CE, almost forty years before the Four Gospels were written. In one of these discourses, Jesus is referred to specifically as *andra apo tou theou*: "a man from God." (Acts 2:22). Not once do these early confessions of faith use the expression *wios tou theou*: "Son of God", but they do speak several times of Jesus as God's servant and prophet (Acts 3:13, 22, 23, 26). The significance of these speeches is that they accurately reflect the original belief and terminology of the disciples, before the belief and terminology were evolved under the influence of Roman

Luke 9:22). And in Luke 4:41, he actually rejected being called “Son of God”: “*And demons also came out of many, crying, ‘You are the Son of God!’ But he rebuked them, and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.*”

Since the Hebrews believed that God is One, and that He had neither wife nor children in any literal sense, it is obvious that the expression “son of God” merely meant to them “Servant of God”; one who, because of his faithful service, was close and dear to God, as a son is to a father. Christians who came from a Greek or Roman background, later misused this term. In their heritage, “son of God” signified an incarnation of a god or someone born of a physical union between male and female gods.⁶⁴ When the Church cast aside its Hebrew foundations, it adopted the pagan concept of “son of God”, which was entirely different from the Hebrew usage.⁶⁵ Consequently, the use of the term “son of God” should only be understood from the Semitic symbolic sense of a “servant of God”, and not in the pagan sense of a literal offspring of God. In the four Gospels, Jesus is recorded as saying: “*Blessed are the peace-makers; they will be called sons of God.*”⁶⁶

Elsewhere in the Qur’aan Allah refutes the claim that He had a son by:

1. Mentioning the fact that He did not have a wife.

وَأَنَّهُ تَعَالَى جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا

“And He, exalted is the Majesty of our Lord, has taken neither a wife nor a child.”

(Soorah al-Jinn, 72: 3)

2. Regarding it as inappropriate for the Creator of the world to have offspring.

وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا (٩٢) إِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتَى الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا

“It is not suitable for the Most Gracious to have a son. All in the heavens and earth come to the Most Gracious as a servant.” (Soorah Maryam, 19: 92-3).

3. Stating that if He had wished to have a son, He would have taken a part of His creation which was greater than a humanbeing.

لَوْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا لَأَصْطَفَىٰ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ سُبْحَنَهُ ، هُوَ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

“Had Allah wished to take an offspring, He could have chosen whom He willed out of those whom He created.” (Soorah az-Zumar, 39: 4)

religion and Greek philosophy. They reflect a tradition which is older than that used by the Four Gospels, in which Jesus is not invested with godship or divine sonship. (*Bible Studies From a Muslim Perspective*, p. 12).

⁶⁴ See Acts 14:11-13. In the city of Lystra (Turkey), Paul and Barnabas preached, and the pagan peoples claimed that they were gods incarnate. They called Barnabas the Roman god Zeus, and Paul the Roman god Hermes.

⁶⁵ *Bible Studies from a Muslim Perspective*, p. 15.

⁶⁶ Matthew 5:9. Likewise, Jesus’ use of the term *abba*, “dear father”, should be understood similarly. There is a dispute among New Testament scholars as to precisely what *abba* meant in Jesus’ time and also as to how widely it was in use by other Jewish sects of that era. James Barr has recently argued forcefully that it did not have the especially intimate sense that has so often been attributed to it, but that it simply meant “father”. (*Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. 39 and *Theology*, vol. 91, no. 741) To think of God as “our heavenly Father” was by no means new, for in the Lord’s Prayer he is reported to have taught his disciples to address God in this same familiar way. (*The True Message of Jesus Christ*, pp. 51-3)

Concerning the phrase, “**The word coming out of their mouths is very grave,**” Allah the Almighty said:

تَكَادُ السَّمَوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًّا * أَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدًا

“**The heavens are almost torn apart, the earth split in two and the mountain crumble, that they claim the Most Gracious had a son.**” (Soorah Maryam, 19: 90-1)

As-Sa‘dee explained, “It is “grave” in the sense that it is such a great abomination and its punishment is so serious. What could be more hideous than describing Allah as having a son which implies that He is deficient and that others share in His Lordship, His Dominion and His Divinity? Not to mention lying about Him, about which He said:

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ

“**Who is more evil than one who tells a lie about Allah?**” (Soorah al-An‘aam, 6: 21)

As a result, He said here, “**What they are saying is nothing but a lie,**” that is, it is pure falsehood containing no element of truth at all. Consider how He invalidated this claim gradually. He first pointed out that “**They have no knowledge about it, nor do their fathers,**” and there is no doubt that speaking about Allah without knowledge is prohibited and false. Secondly, He declared that it is a hideous and repulsive statement, “**The word coming out of their mouths is very grave,**” Then, thirdly, he mentioned its level of repulsiveness; that it is a lie in contradiction to the truth.”⁶⁷

Aal ‘Uthaymeen suggested that the phrase “coming out of their mouths” implies that what they are saying with their tongues is not in their hearts and that they are actually unsure that Allah has a son. Because an intelligent person cannot say that Allah has a son. How could Allah have a human son, appearing like us, eating, drinking and wearing clothes, afflicted by hunger, thirst, heat and cold? How could that be a son of Almighty Allah? Because of that He said, “**What they are saying is nothing but a lie,**” whether they are aware of it or not, whether it is deliberate or unintentional, it is falsehood.”⁶⁸

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسَكَ عَلَى آثَارِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا

6. Perhaps you will destroy yourself in grief following after them because they did not believe in this speech.

As-Sa‘dee commented on this verses as follows: “Since the Prophet (ﷺ) was keen that the creation be guided and expended his greatest efforts to achieve that, he would be very happy when people were guided and sad when the disbelievers were not, as an expression of his compassion, deep sympathy and pity for them. Thus, Allah advised him to not worry himself with grief and sadness for those who disbelieved in the Qur’aan as He did elsewhere in the Qur’aan:

لَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسَكَ إِلَّا يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

“**Perhaps you are going to kill yourself with grief that they do not become believers.**”
(Soorah ash-Shu‘araa, 26: 3)

⁶⁷ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 646.

⁶⁸ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, pp. 14-5.

فَلَا تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَاتٍ

“Do not destroy yourself in sorrow for them.” (Soorah Faatir, 35: 8)

Here Allah said, **“Perhaps you will destroy yourself,”** in sorrow and grief over them. Your reward is already an obligation for Allah, and if Allah knew there was good in them, He would have guided them. However, He knows that they are only suitable for the Hellfire, consequently He abandoned them and did not guide them. Thus, busying yourself with grief and sorrow over them is of no benefit. This verse and others like it contain a lesson. The one commanded to invite the creation to Allah is required to convey the message and to utilize all means which could lead to their guidance, and to block all paths of misguidance and deviation possible, along with putting full trust in Allah regarding it. If they are guided that is well and good, if not, he should not be sad nor grieve, for that will weaken the soul, destroy one’s vigor and drive, and there is ultimately no benefit in it. Instead, he should continue doing what he was made responsible to do and focus on it, what is beyond that is beyond his ability. So if Allah said to the Prophet (ﷺ):

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

“You cannot guide whom you love. Instead, Allah Guides whom He wishes.”

(Soorah al-Qasas, 28: 56)

And Prophet Moses – peace be upon him – said:

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ إِلَّا نَفْسِي وَأَخِي فَافْرِقْ بَيْنَنَا وَقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

“My Lord! Indeed I only control myself and my brother.” (Soorah al-Maa'idah, 5: 25)

Those below them are all the more required to follow suit as the Almighty said:

فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ * لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ

“Remind them, for you are only a reminder. You are not in control over them.”

(Soorah al-Ghaashiyah, 88: 21-22)⁶⁹

Ibn Katheer explained that this verse meant: “Do not feel sorry for them, just convey the message from Allah to them. Whoever goes the right way benefits himself and whoever goes astray only harms himself. So do not destroy yourself in sorrow over them.”⁷⁰

Aal ‘Uthaymeen said, “Allah, Most Great and Glorious, comforts the Prophet (ﷺ) and clarifies that he is not in any way responsible for their lack of response to the message. He is only responsible to convey the message, which he did...”

As the Almighty said:

وَإِنْ مَا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاغُ وَعَلَيْنَا الْحِسَابُ

“You are only required to convey [the message] and the accounting is for Me.”

(Soorah ar-Ra'd, 13:40)

Likewise his inheritors, the scholars, their job is to convey the message. As for guidance, it is in Allah’s Hand. It is known that a believing person will be sad if people do not respond to the truth. However, the person who is sad when people do not accept the truth is of two types:

1. One type who is sad because he is not accepted.
2. And One type who is sad because the truth is not accepted.

⁶⁹ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 646.

⁷⁰ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. 115.

The second type is praiseworthy, because the first type calls to himself when he makes *Da'wah* while the second type calls to Allah, Most Great and Glorious. As a result, the Almighty said:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَدِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching, and debate with them using a better way...” (Soorah an-Nahl, 16: 125)

If a person said that he is sad due to the rejection of his statements because they are the truth, and if his statements proved to be untrue, he would follow the truth, his sadness would then be praiseworthy, but he would not be like the person whose sole aim is the acceptance of the truth, whether it came from himself or from others.”⁷¹

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

7. Indeed I have made what is on the earth its beautification to test which of them does the best deeds.

Ibn Katheer commented, “Allah tells us that He made this world a temporary home adorned with transient beauty, and He made it a place of trial and not a place of permanent settlement.”⁷²

Aboo Sa'eed al-Khudree has narrated from Prophet (ﷺ) that he said,

((إِنَّ الدُّنْيَا حُلْوَةٌ خَضِرَةٌ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مُسْتَحْلِفُكُمْ فِيهَا فَيَنْظُرُ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ فَاتَّقُوا الدُّنْيَا وَاتَّقُوا النِّسَاءَ فَإِنَّ أَوَّلَ فِتْنَةٍ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَانَتْ فِي النِّسَاءِ)).

“Indeed this life is sweet and green”⁷³ and Allah has put you in-charge of it in succeeding generations and He observes what you are doing. So fear this world and fear women because the beginning of the trials of the Israelites was with women.”⁷⁴

Aal ‘Uthaymeen noted, “If one reflects on the Qur’aan, he will find that it most often gives precedence to the Law over the creation and what is related to it. Allah said:

الرَّحْمَنُ * عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ * خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ

“The Most Gracious taught the Qur’aan and created humankind.”

(Soorah ar-Rahmaan, 55: 1-3)

He does so because the creation was subjugated [to humans in order] to facilitate obedience to Allah, Most Great and Glorious. The Almighty said:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“I only created the Jinn and humans to worship Me.”

(Soorah ath-Thaariyaat, 51: 56)

And He said:

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا

“It is He who created all on the earth for you.”

⁷¹ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, pp. 16-7.

⁷² Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. 116.

⁷³ Like plants that soon die and disappear.

⁷⁴ Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. . Kitaab: Thikr wa Du’aa; Baab: Akthar Ahlul Jannat al Fuqaraa

(Soorah al-Baqarah, 2: 29)

Thus, what is most important is obedience to Allah, Most Great and Glorious, which is only fulfilled by executing Allah's Law (*Sharee'ah*)...

Allah made whatever is on the earth as its adornment in order to test whether people would become attached to the adornment or to the Creator. Thus, people are divided into two groups: Those attached to the adornment of this world, and those attached to the Creator... Allah made the adornment a trial for His creatures, whether it was created by Allah or made by humans. No doubt great beautiful palaces are adornment, but they are made by humans, and the earth with its mountains, rivers, plants, flowers and fruit are adornment from Allah.

Note that the Almighty said, '**The best deeds**,' and not the 'most deeds', because the crucial factor is their quality of 'goodness' and not their 'quantity'. Consequently, if a person made four units of prayer with weak faith or while not following the Law, and someone else made two units with strong faith while adhering to the Law, which one would be better? No doubt the second is better and preferable, because the point of consideration regarding the quality of goodness and perfection of a deed is its degree of sincerity and adherence to the Law.

In some acts of worship brevity is more preferable, like the two recommended (*sunnah*) units of Fajr prayer. If one person said: 'In these two units I love to extend my recitation of the Qur'aan, my bowing, prostration and standing,' and another said, 'I like to make them brief,' the second is better. Thus, when we see the common people extending two units at Fajr, we should ask them if they are praying the two recommended units of Fajr or *Tahiyatul-Masjid*. If it is *Tahiyatul-Masjid* they may extend them as they wish, but if it is the two recommended units of Fajr, we should inform them that keeping them short is better. Likewise in fasting, the Prophet (ﷺ) permitted his followers to continue their fast until *suhoor* (the predawn meal)⁷⁵ and recommended that they break the fast at sunset... The second practice is better. Even though the first is not forbidden and it is permissible, it is not according to the *Sharee'ah*. So take note of that. Thus, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to do what deeds were best. He would encourage following funeral processions and pass by a procession and not follow it. He would encourage fasting every other day but not do so himself. Instead he would extend his fast until people thought he never broke his fast, and vice versa, until people thought he did not fast. All of that was according to what was most pleasing to Allah and beneficial for his heart."⁷⁶

Allah also identified wealth and children as being a part of the adornment of this life saying:

الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَةُ الصَّالِحَةُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا

"Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world."

(Soorah al-Kahf, 18: 46)

Consequently, as Ibn Taymiyyah noted, Allah warned against the danger of wealth, wives and children saying:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

"O you who believe! Let not your riches or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. If any act thus, the loss is their own." (Soorah al-Munaafiqoon, 63: 9)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ وَإِنْ تَعَفَّوْا وَتَصَفَّحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

⁷⁵ The twenty-four hour fast is known as *wisaaal*.

⁷⁶ *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem*, pp. 17-20.

“O you who believe! Truly, among your wives and your children are (some that are) enemies to yourselves: so beware of them!” (Soorah at-Taghaabun, 64: 14)

Ibn Taymiyyah explained that the enmity referred to in these verses is not that which results from hatred and conflict, but that which results from love and care that might prevent parents from religious duties such as *hijrah*, *jihaad*, seeking knowledge and giving *sadaqah*. He then narrated from Ibn ‘Abbaas that when a man asked him (Ibn ‘Abbaas) about the verse quoted above (64: 14), he told him that it refers to some Makkans who embraced Islaam. When they decided to migrate to join the Prophet (ﷺ) in Madeenah, their wives and children prevented them from doing so. Later on, when they eventually joined the Prophet (ﷺ) and saw that others had already learned a great deal about Islaam, they wanted to punish their wives and children. So Allah revealed the verse: **‘O you who believe! Truly, among your wives and your children are (some that are) enemies to yourselves: so beware of them!’**^{77,78}

Ibn al-Qayyim noted, “The Most Glorious informed that He beautified the earth with wealth and other things on it as a trial and test as He also informed that He created death and life and the heavens and earth for the same purpose.⁷⁹ These are the three places in the Qur’aan in which the Most Glorious informed that He created the upper and lower worlds and what is between them as a test. He made the most sublime world and its most exalted inhabitants, and their means of living, whether gold, silver, homes, clothing, vehicles, farms, fruit, animals, women, children and others a beautification of the earth. All of that was created as a test and trial to find who is most obedient and seeking to please Allah, who is the best in conduct. That is the reality behind His creation of the heavens, earth and what is between them. The consequence of the test is either reward or punishment. Ignoring it or negating it is futile and absurd. Furthermore, Allah declared Himself above and beyond meaningless actions and He affirmed that His dominion is real and that divinity is His alone.

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ

“Do you think that I created you without purpose and that you would not be returned to Me? Allah is exalted, the True King, there is nothing worthy of worship besides Him, He is the Lord of the Noble Throne.”(Soorah al-Mu’minoan, 23: 115-6)

He declared Himself above that as He declared Himself above having a partner, a child or a wife, and all the other flaws, deficiencies and shortcomings like sleepiness, sleep, fatigue, need, concern to guard the heavens and earth, intercessors without His permission, as His pagan enemies believe who exclude some elements of the world from Allah’s knowledge. Just as His Holy Perfection and the perfection of His Names and Attributes reject and forbid that, it also invalidates His creation of His servants without purpose and His abandoning them without giving them direction; without commanding them to do good and forbidding them from evil, or returning them to Himself in order to reward the good among them for their goodness and punish the sinful for their sins. It informs those who deny this that they are liars and bears witness that the Messengers and their followers had more right to the truth. So, whoever denies this, denies Allah’s divinity and lordship and His true dominion which is true disbelief in God, Most Glorious, as the believer said to his neighbor:

قَالَ لَهُ ، صَاحِبُهُ ، وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ : أَكْفَرْتِ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّكَ رَجُلًا

“Do you disbelieve in the One who created you from dust, then from a drop, then fashioned you into a man?” (18: 37)

He explained that denial of the Day of Resurrection is itself denial of the Lord’s existence.”⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Sunan at-Tirmitheeh,

⁷⁸ Patience and Gratitude, pp. 32-8.

⁷⁹ Soorah al-Mulk, 67: 2 and Soorah Hood, 11: 7.

⁸⁰ Ad-Daw al-Muneer, vol. 4, pp. 148-9.

Ash-Shawkaanee explained that the intent behind the term “test” is that Allah is treating them in such a way that if it were done by other than Himself it would be a form of test and assessment.⁸¹ Ash-Shawkaanee made that qualification, because a test is normally only done by someone in order to find out something he does not know. If he already knew the results, he would not run the test as that would be useless and redundant. Whereas in Allah’s case tests of conduct are not to inform God about humankind, for He already knew everything about them before He created them. Instead, the tests serve to confirm Allah’s Justice and Mercy on the Day of Judgment; that those going to hell deserve it and those going to paradise only got there by God’s grace. With regard to human beings in this life, the test of conduct serves two basic purposes: one, human spiritual growth, and the other, punishment or reward.

Spiritual Growth

The tests of this world are primarily for the spiritual growth of human beings. Just as an intense fire separates pure gold from the rough ore to which it is bound in nature, tests purify the moral character of the believers. They force the believers to choose their higher spiritual qualities over their lower desires. Although not every test is passed, even in failure the believer grows by learning spiritual lessons to help him or her in future tests.

For example, in all human societies the qualities of generosity is considered among the noblest characteristics. However, this trait cannot develop if everyone has the same amount of wealth. Generosity can only be acquired when the human soul - aware that sharing with the needy is good - struggles against its desire to hoard its possessions. The Creator wisely sets the stage for this spiritual struggle by unequally distributing wealth in this world. In the final revelation, Allah says:

وَاللَّهُ فَضَّلَ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الرِّزْقِ

“Allah has favored some of you over others in sustenance.”

(Soorah an-Nahl, 16: 71)

Greed and stinginess are corrupt forms of the natural human desire to possess. The believers are informed by revelation that wealth is a trust given to humankind by God. Possessions exist in the world before humans are born and remain there after they die. If wealth is used according to divine instructions, it benefits those who have it in both worlds. But if it is used selfishly, it becomes a curse in this life and a cause for punishment in the next.

Purification

Tests of this life also come in the form of ‘misfortune’ and calamities which contribute to the spiritual growth of the true believers, and purify them of sin, if they are patient with the trials. Consider the case of the female companion of the Prophet (ﷺ) who came to him and confessed that she had committed adultery asking him to purify her with the punishment of stoning to death. When the Prophet (ﷺ) sought to dissuade her, she insisted, so he told her to come back after she had delivered. In doing so he gave her the opportunity to flee and not return for punishment. However, after nine months she returned with the newborn child and requested her punishment. The Prophet (ﷺ) then told her to come back after she had weaned the child, two years from then. When she returned two years later with the child, the Prophet (ﷺ) was forced to have her stoned to death. During the stoning some blood splattered on the clothing of one of the Companions and he cursed it. The Prophet (ﷺ) forbade him from doing so saying:

Reminders

Life’s tests of misfortune also serve as reminders to errant believers to return to the correct path. When people deviate, they seldom listen to the advice of those around them. However, when

⁸¹ *Fat’hul-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 375.

a calamity strikes them or those near and dear to them, it jolts those who still have some faith into recognizing their error.

وَلَنُذِيقَهُمْ مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنَىٰ دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

“I⁸² will make them taste a lesser punishment before the greater punishment that perhaps they may return [to the right path].” (Soorah as-Sajdah, 32: 21)

The test of calamities which remind humankind of their deviation may come in the form of man’s inhumanity to his fellow man, as in the case of the unspeakable atrocities unleashed by the Serbs against the Bosnian Muslims who had strayed far away from Islaam, or Saddam’s brutal invasion of Kuwait and America’s subsequent indiscriminate bombing of civilian targets in Iraq. Allah points out that whatever humans suffer at the hands of other humans, they brought upon themselves. However, the suffering is a reminder to return to the path of righteousness.

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ (٤١)

“Corruption has appeared on the land and in the sea because of what man’s hands have earned in order that [Allah] may make them taste a part of what they have done, and in order that they may return [to the right path].” (Soorah ar-Room, 30: 41)

Hypocrisy

Calamities also expose those who falsely claim faith, as well as show those who disbelieve that they choose hell by their own free will. There have been many cases of people converting to Islaam for the wrong reasons, and after finding more difficulties in their lives than prior to their conversion they revert to their former beliefs. God states in chapter *al-Ankaboot* of the final revelation:

أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا ءَامَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ

“Do people imagine that they will be left alone and not tested with affliction because they say, ‘We believe’.” (Soorah al-Ankaboot, 29: 2)

Punishment

Those who transgress the limits set by God expose themselves to punishment in this life and the next. Throughout the Qur’aan, Allah describes numerous past nations who rejected divine guidance and were subsequently destroyed. These stories serve as warnings to humankind of the consequences of rebellion against the commandments of God. In chapter *an-Noor*, Allah gives a general warning as follows:

لَا تَجْعَلُوا دُعَاءَ الرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَاءِ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ يَتَسَلَّلُونَ مِنْكُمْ لِوَاذًا فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

“Let those who contradict his command beware a trial or a severe punishment.”

(Soorah an-Noor, 24: 63)

The punishment may come in a variety of different ways. Perhaps the most obvious punishment afflicting humankind in all countries today is the disease AIDS⁸³ which appeared for the first time in medical history in the beginning of the 80’s.⁸⁴ The vast majority of those who are affected by it

⁸² “We” in the original Arabic is the majestic ‘we’ referring to God.

⁸³ Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (Aids) is a condition transmitted by a virus which attacks the body’s system of defense against disease, leaving the sufferer extremely vulnerable to disease and likely to die eventually from any one that he or she catches (*Chambers Pocket Dictionary*, p. 19).

⁸⁴ It was first identified in 1981. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 10, p. 676).

around the globe are the promiscuous. Initially homosexuals were the main victims, then bisexuals, followed by promiscuous heterosexuals and intravenous drug users. All of these groups were in open rebellion against the divine laws which restrict sexual relations to males and females within the bounds of marriage and those laws that prohibit the use of intoxicants. Some may point out that AIDS was also spread to chaste individuals through blood transfusions and to children by their parents. However, medical statistics show that such cases are relatively few in comparison to the other categories. In any case, Allah has warned in the final revelation that when His punishment comes it is not limited to only the evil people, but affects the society as a whole.

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

“Beware of a trial which will not afflict only the sinful among you, and know that Allah is severe in punishment.” (Soorah al-Anfaal, 8:25)

One thousand four hundred years ago Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) prophesied the coming of such a trial. Ibn ‘Umar quoted him as saying, *“Whenever promiscuity is openly practiced among a people, a plague and anguish will spread among them which was unknown to their predecessors.”*⁸⁵ However, AIDS is only one in a series of diseases. Before AIDS, a warning came in the form of another disease called herpes which became widespread among the sexually promiscuous beginning in the 1960s and 70s. It was declared an epidemic in America in the mid-seventies, and there is no known cure for it until today. Today, one in every four Americans is afflicted with Herpes and one in every five Britishers is afflicted. However, people’s attention switched from it by the end of the 70s because it was not fatal,⁸⁶ while AIDS was.⁸⁷

وَإِنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيدًا جُرُزًا

8. Indeed I will make all that is on it like dry bare soil.

As-Sa‘dee remarked, “The Almighty informs that He made all that is on the face of the earth; tasty food and drink, comfortable homes, trees, rivers, cultivation, fruit, beautiful scenery, exquisite gardens, melodious voices, gold and silver, horses and camels, and so on; He made all of it decoration for this home as a trial and a test. **‘To test which of them is best in deeds,’** that is [whose deeds are] most sincere and correct. But in spite of that, Allah will make all of these things fade away and the earth will return to a bare dry state with all its sweetness gone. Its rivers will stop flowing and all traces of them will disappear, and the world’s pleasures will all vanish. This is the reality of this world which Allah makes vividly clear for us here, as if we can see it with our own eyes. He does so in order to warn us from being fooled and tricked by it, and to encourage us to desire the home whose pleasures are eternal, and whose inhabitants are always happy. And He did that as a mercy for us.

One who looks only at the exterior of this world will be fooled by its adornments and its beauty. They run behind this world like a herd of animals. They take pleasure from it like livestock, not reflecting on the rights of their Lord, nor concerned about knowing Him. They fulfill their desires in any way available and in any convenient state. And when death approaches one of these

⁸⁵ Collected by Ibn Maajah and authenticated in *Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah*, vol. 2, p. 370, no. 3246.

⁸⁶ When symptoms occur, fever and malaise are followed by burning pain in the genital area and enlargement of the lymph nodes in the groin. Blisters and small ulcers are usually found in the area of infection, and there is severe pain and burning upon urination. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 21, p. 536).

⁸⁷ *The Purpose of Creation*, pp. 68-93.

people, he becomes upset about the destruction of his body and the loss of his pleasures, not about his negligence and the evil he has done.

As for one who looks at the interior of this world, he becomes aware of its purpose and his purpose. Consequently, he only takes from the world what will aid him to fulfill the purpose of his creation, and he takes full advantage of the opportunities to do righteousness in his noble life. He takes this world as a place of crossing and not a place of delight, a place for travel and not one of residence. So he expends his utmost effort to know his Lord, to obey His commands, and to perfect his deeds. Such a person is in the best position in the sight of Allah, and he deserves every honor and pleasure, happiness and comfort which Allah has in store for him. For he looked at the inside of the world while the one deceived looked only at its outside, he worked for his hereafter while the aimless one worked only for his worldly existence. So there is a great difference between them.”⁸⁸

أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا

9. And do you think that the Companions of the Cave and the inscriptions⁸⁹ were wonders among My signs?”

This verse begins the story of the People of the Cave⁹⁰ after which the chapter was named. In verses 9-12 Allah first gives a summary of the story before going into more of its details in verses 13-26.

Ibn Katheer explained that this verse meant: “O Muhammad, the case of the People of the Cave and the inscriptions were not something really astonishing relative to My power and ability. The creation of the heavens and earth, the alternation of night and day and the subjugation of the sun, moon and heavenly bodies, and other mighty signs all indicate something of the incredible power of Allah and show that He is able to do whatever He wills. He is capable of doing far more amazing things than the incident of the people of the Cave. Mujaahid was reported as saying about this verse “Among Our signs are things that are more amazing than this.”⁹¹

There is a reminder in this verse for humankind that human beings and the incidents of their lives are quite insignificant in relationship to the remainder of creation. Humans need to be put in their place because an abundance of wealth and technological discoveries often leads them to arrogance and pride. Elsewhere in the Qur’aan, Allah clearly reiterates this fact saying:

لَخَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِ النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“The creation of the heavens and earth is indeed greater than the creation of humankind; but most people do not realize it.” (Soorah Ghaafir, 40: 57)

هَأَنتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ السَّمَاءُ بَنَاهَا

“Are you more difficult to create than the sky which He built?” (Soorah an-Naazi’aat, 79: 27)⁹²

⁸⁸ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, pp. 646-7.

⁸⁹ Ar-Raqeem has been interpreted in a variety of ways. Ka’b and as-Suddee said it was the town from which the youths fled; Sa’eed ibn Jubayr and Mujaahid said it was a stone or lead plaque on which their names were written and placed over the mouth of the cave. This was also the opinion of al-Farraa’ and Ibn ‘Abbaas. Others said it was the name of their dog, the valley they were in, or the name of the mountain in which the cave was located. (Fat’h al-Qadeer, vol. 3, p. 377)

⁹⁰ The People of the Cave are sometimes referred to in translation as “Companions of the Cave”, because the term As’haab (pl. Saahib) in Arabic literally means “companions”. However, it also has a secondary meaning of “people connected to” or “owners of”, as in the phrase Saahib ash-Sharikah which means “owner of the company.”

⁹¹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. 117.

⁹² Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 15.

The story is linked to a narration which is recorded in the Biography of the Prophet (ﷺ) compiled by Ibn Is'haq but there is weakness in its chain of narration. However, it is generally quoted as the reason for the explanations contained in this chapter. The narration states that a delegation from the Makkan pagans went to Madeenah and asked the Jews: "What can we do to expose Muhammad as a fake?" The Jews replied: "Ask him three questions, if he answers these questions then he's a true prophet and you should follow him." The first question they told the pagans to ask was about the People of the Cave.⁹³

There was a story about the People of the Cave in circulation among Christians of this time; it was the legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus⁹⁴. According to the story, during the persecution of Christians in the year 250 CE under the Roman emperor Decius, seven (eight in some versions) Christian soldiers were concealed near their native city of Ephesus in a cave to which the entry was later sealed. There, having protected themselves from being forced to do pagan sacrifices, they fell into a miraculous sleep. During the reign of the Eastern Roman Emperor Theodosius II (408 - 450), the cave was reopened and the sleepers awoke. The Emperor was moved by their miraculous presence and by their witness to the Christian doctrine of the body's resurrection. Having explained the profound meaning of their existence, the Seven sleepers died. Whereupon Theodosius II ordered their remains to be richly enshrined and he absolved all bishops who had been persecuted for believing in the Resurrection. The legend is extant in several versions including Greek, Syriac, Coptic and Georgian.⁹⁵

This incident is supposed to have taken place in the fifth century of the Christian Era, whereas Islaam appeared more than one hundred years later, so obviously it is not something directly attributable to Islaamic sources. Islaam confirms it in the Qur'aan, but the details of the story has some differences. It is recorded in Muslim sources that in the 9th century, during the reign of the Abbaaside Caliph Al-Waathiql, he sent an expedition to search and identify the locality of the Sleepers and to find Thul-Qarnayn's wall in Central Asia.⁹⁶

إِذْ أَوَى الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا

10. When the young men fled for refuge to the cave, they said: "Our Lord! Grant us your mercy and arrange our affairs for us in the right way!"

Imaam al-Qurtubee noted that this verse is explicit concerning fleeing for the sake of one's religion and the abandonment (*hijrah*) of family, children, relatives, friends, land and wealth out of fear of trials and what persecution a person may experience. The Prophet (ﷺ) left Makkah fleeing for his religion and so did his Companions, and he hid in a cave as was previously mentioned in *Soorah an-Nahl* and Allah addressed it in *Soorah Baraa'ah* also mentioned previously. They abandoned their city and left their lands, homes, family, children, relatives and their close friends, hoping to

⁹³ *Tafseer at-Tabaree*, vol. 8, pp. 174-5. See footnote 7.

⁹⁴ Ephesus is a city on the west coast of Asia minor, which is in, what is now Turkey.

⁹⁵ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 10, p. 666. Western tradition calls the Seven Sleepers Maximian, Malchus, Marcian, John, Denis, Serapion, and Constantine; Easter tradition names them Maximilian, Jamblichus, Martin, John, Dionysius, Antonius, and Constantine. Their feast day is July 27 in the Roman Catholic Church and August 2/4 and October 22/23 in the Greek Orthodox Church.

⁹⁶ *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-'Azeem*, vol. 4, p. 251.

preserve their religion and to escape from the persecution of the pagans. So living in the mountains, dwelling in caves, and isolating oneself from people in order to seclude oneself with the Creator, and the permissibility of fleeing from tyrants is the *Sunnah* (way) of the prophets and the saintly. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) preferred seclusion and so did a number of scholars, especially during times of persecution and corruption.”⁹⁷

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ((الْمُؤْمِنُ الَّذِي يُخَالِطُ النَّاسَ وَيَصْبِرُ عَلَى أَذَاهُمْ أَعْظَمُ أَجْرًا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الَّذِي لَا يُخَالِطُ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَصْبِرُ عَلَى أَذَاهُمْ)).

Ibn ‘Umar quoted the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as saying: “The believer who mixes with people and is patient with their harm has a greater reward than the believer who doesn’t mix with people and bear their harm.”⁹⁸

Al-Qurtubee mentioned that some scholars said that seclusion should be isolation from evil and its people in one’s heart and deeds when one is among them. And Ibn al-Mubaarak explained seclusion (‘uzlah) as being among people, and when they engage in the remembrance of Allah you join in with them, and when they engage in other than that, be silent.⁹⁹

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَهُ يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ ((يَأْتِي عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ خَيْرُ مَالِ الرَّجُلِ الْمُسْلِمِ الْعَنَمُ يَتَّبِعُ بِهَا شَعَفَ الْجِبَالِ وَمَوَاقِعَ الْقَطْرِ يَفِرُّ بِدِينِهِ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ)).

Aboo Sa‘eed al-Khudree related that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say, “A time will come to people in which the best wealth of a Muslim will be sheep which he herds on the mountain tops and places where it rains, fleeing from persecution for the sake of his religion.”¹⁰⁰

Al-Qurtubee said: People’s situations regarding this are different. One person may have the strength to live in caves in the mountains, which is the highest of levels because it was the one chosen by Allah for His Prophet (ﷺ) in the beginning, and he mentioned it regarding the youths saying: “**When you seclude yourself from them and what they worship besides Allah, then seek refuge in the Cave...**” (18: 16). Perhaps for another person, seclusion in his house is easier. Some Companions who had taken part in the Battle of Badr secluded themselves in their homes after the assassination of Caliph ‘Uthmaan and did not leave except to their graves. Perhaps another’s state is between them and he has the strength to be patient while mixing with people and bearing their harm. So, he is with them outwardly while against them inwardly.

عَنْ عُقْبَةَ بْنِ عَامِرٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ ((يَعْجَبُ رَبُّكَ مِنْ رَاعِي غَنَمٍ فِي رَأْسِ شَظِيَّةِ الْجَبَلِ يُؤَذِّنُ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَيُصَلِّي فَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ انظُرُوا إِلَى عَبْدِي هَذَا يُؤَذِّنُ وَيُقِيمُ الصَّلَاةَ يَخَافُ مِنِّي قَدْ غَفَرْتُ لِعَبْدِي وَأَدْخَلْتُهُ الْجَنَّةَ)).

‘Uqbah ibn ‘Aamir narrated the Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “Your Lord is amazed at a goatherd herding goats on cliff at the top of a mountain who makes the athaan for prayer and says his prayers. Allah, Most Great and Glorious, says: ‘Look at this servant of Mine, making the call to

⁹⁷ Al-Jaami‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 9-10, p. 298.

⁹⁸ Sunan at-Tirmithi, and Sunan Ibn-i-Majah, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Fitan Baab: Sabr ala al balaa and authenticated in Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah, vol. , p. , no. .

⁹⁹ Al-Jaami‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 9-10, p. 299.

¹⁰⁰ Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab Riqaaq; Baab: al ‘uzlah raahah

prayer and establishing the prayer out of his fear for Me. I have forgiven My servant and I have put him in Paradise.”¹⁰¹

The second point is in the Almighty’s statement “**They said, ‘Our Lord! Grant us your mercy [forgiveness and provision] and arrange our affairs for us in the right way** [according to Ibn ‘Abbaas: an exit from the cave and safety]!” When they fled to the cave from those chasing them they busied themselves with supplications and sought refuge with Allah. According to this concept, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to hasten to prayers whenever any matter disturbed him.^{102,103}

As-Sa‘dee mentioned, “They combined effort and flight from persecution to a place in which they could hide with humble supplication to Allah to facilitate their affairs and avoiding depending on themselves or the creation.”¹⁰⁴

The youths sought refuge in the cave, but there was no guarantee that the cave would protect them. So, after doing what they could, they turned to Allah trusting Him to look after their affairs. This represents a very basic principle in Islaam; after doing the best one can for himself, he should put his trust in Allah. This is known in Arabic as *tawakkul*. Trusting in Allah without making any effort is called *tawaakul*. This principle is enshrined in the well-known narration in which a man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked him if he should tie his camel or leave him to Allah’s trust. The Prophet (ﷺ) advised him to do both.¹⁰⁵

الْمُغِيرَةُ بْنُ أَبِي قُرَّةَ السَّدُوسِيِّ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَنَسَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ يَقُولُ قَالَ رَجُلٌ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَعْقِلُهَا
وَأَتَوَكَّلُ أَوْ أَطْلُقُهَا وَأَتَوَكَّلُ قَالَ اعْقِلُهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ

It is worth noting that in this story Allah is speaking about *fityah* (youths). This is significant in the case of Prophet (ﷺ) that none of his immediate family older than him accepted Islaam in Makkah. Those who accepted Islaam from outside his family were all relative youths. The older people, the chiefs and the heads of the clans, did not accept Islaam. The vast majority of them fought constantly against the Prophet (ﷺ) and most of them died in the battles as unbelievers.¹⁰⁶ This points out to the phenomena that young people tend to be the ones most receptive to Islaam. The average age people who accept Islaam in America are in their mid-20’s. Of the 3,000 American soldiers who accepted Islaam after the First Gulf War, the vast majority were in their early twenties. To a large degree youth are more open to new ideas because they are as attached to customs and traditions as older people. It is common within all societies that the youth challenge the status quo. They are known for their rebellious nature. They are willing to go against what everybody else believes if they find something contrary to common custom to be correct. Whereas older people tend to be afraid of the consequences of going against the norm and they willingly ignore their personal feelings. The Prophet’s uncle, Aboo Taaib, is a classical example of this principle. So these young people rebelled against idolatry which was being forced on them during their time. They stood by their belief and turned to Allah for help and Allah protected them.

¹⁰¹ Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab Salaah Baab: Athaan fee Safar Sunan an-Nasai, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab : Athaan Baab: athaan liman yusalli wahdahu *Saheeh Sunan an-Nasaa’ee*, vol. , p. , no. .

¹⁰² Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Salaah; Baab: Waqt qiyaam al layl a similar meaning can be found in *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no , Kitaab: Thikr wa Du’aa; Baab: Du’aa al Karb. The text in *Sunan Abee Daawood* is as follows:

عَنْ حُذَيْفَةَ قَالَ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا حَزَبَهُ أَمْرٌ صَلَّى

Huthayfah said the whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) used to be disturbed by a matter he would make formal prayers.

¹⁰³ *Al-Jaami ‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan*, vol. 9-10, pp. 299-301.

¹⁰⁴ *Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan*, p. 647.

¹⁰⁵ *Saheeh Sunan at-Tirmithi*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Sifatul Qiyaamah wa ar Raqaa’iq.

¹⁰⁶ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p. 120.

Another lesson that might be derived from this story is Allah uses the youths as an example of commitment to faith in the Qur'aan in order to emphasize the importance of faith in youth. Allah puts firmness of faith during the period of youth on a special level. Those youths who are raised believing in Allah and maintain that belief then on the Day of Judgment when there will be no shade, and the sun will be brought close to people standing up for Judgment, some up to their knees in sweat, others up to their necks and some will be drowning in the sweat, and on that day seven groups of people will be shaded by the throne of Allah, one of them being youths who grew up believing in Allah.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ سَبْعَةٌ يُظِلُّهُمْ اللَّهُ فِي ظِلِّهِ يَوْمَ لَا ظِلَّ إِلَّا ظِلُّهُ
الإِمَامُ الْعَادِلُ وَشَابُّ نَشَأَ فِي عِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ وَرَجُلٌ قَلْبُهُ مُعَلَّقٌ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ وَرَجُلَانِ تَحَابَّا فِي اللَّهِ
اجْتَمَعَا عَلَيْهِ وَتَفَرَّقَا عَلَيْهِ وَرَجُلٌ طَلَبَتْهُ امْرَأَةٌ ذَاتُ مَنْصِبٍ وَجَمَالٍ فَقَالَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ وَرَجُلٌ
تَصَدَّقَ أَخْفَى حَتَّى لَا تَعْلَمَ شِمَالُهُ مَا تُنْفِقُ يَمِينُهُ وَرَجُلٌ ذَكَرَ اللَّهَ خَالِيًا فَفَاضَتْ عَيْنَاهُ

Aboo Hurayrah related from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said, “Seven will be shaded by Allah, Almighty, on a day when there will be no other shade besides His shade: A just ruler; a youth who grows up worshipping Allah; a man whose heart is attached to the mosques; two men who love each other for the sake of Allah, they meet on the basis of it and separate on the basis of it; a man who is invited by a woman of high position and beauty and he replies: Indeed I fear Allah; a man gives charity and hides it so much so that his left hand is unaware of what his right hand gave; and a man who remembers Allah in private and his eyes become filled with tears.”¹⁰⁷

The second category of those shaded is that of the young person who grows up worshipping Allah. This category is related to the first in the sense that if there is a just *imaam* and he establishes Allah's laws throughout the society, then most children will grow up fearing Allah. They will be conscious of Allah because it will be infused in their educational system, in their social system, and throughout the various elements of society. So, it will be relatively easy for a young person to be raised up worshipping Allah. The fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) gave special status to young people who are raised worshipping Allah implies that most societies in most times will not have just rulers.

With the state of society as it is today, a young person who grows up worshipping Allah is a rarity. This is what makes him or her very special, because in growing up - from the “terrible twos” onward - there is rebellion, which tends to peak in the teens as children desire to express themselves and to set their own rules. So, the idea of them worshipping Allah in these times is going to be very difficult. However, it is achievable; otherwise the Prophet (ﷺ) would not have spoken about it. This point has a special reference to parents. It indicates that they have a great responsibility to raise their children worshipping Allah. It is also a basic right of children that they be raised righteously. To do so requires that each male and female follow the plan left behind by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in order to raise righteous children. That plan consists of a variety of steps, the most basic of which are the following:

Step One: Choose a Righteous Spouse. If one plans to raise righteous children, one must begin by choosing a righteous spouse at the time of marriage. One cannot reasonably expect to raise righteous children with an unrighteous spouse. This point was emphasized by the Prophet (ﷺ) when said that women and men are married for 4 reasons: for beauty, for wealth, for status and for piety. He then instructed the believers to marry those who are pious in order to guarantee a successful

¹⁰⁷ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Athaan; Baab: Man jalasa fil Masjid yantaziru as salaah

marriage.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the decision to raise righteous children should begin implementation from the time of marriage.

Step Two: Make Supplications: One should also make the prescribed supplications at the time of marriage, whenever they have sexual relations and at the time of the child's birth.

عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ شُعَيْبٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: ((إِذَا تَزَوَّجَ أَحَدُكُمْ امْرَأَةً أَوْ اشْتَرَى خَادِمًا فَلْيَقُلْ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَهَا وَخَيْرَ مَا جَبَلْتَهَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهَا وَمِنْ شَرِّ مَا جَبَلْتَهَا عَلَيْهِ)).

‘Amr ibn Shu‘ayb narrated from his father from his grandfather that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “If any of you marries a woman or purchases a servant he should say: Allahumma innnee as’aluka khayrahaa wa khayra maa jabaltahaa alayhi wa a’oothu bika min sharrihaa wa min sharri maa jabaltahaa alayhi [O Allah. Surely I ask You for the best of her and the best of what You made a part of her nature. And I seek refuge in You from her evil and the evil You have made a part of her nature.]”¹⁰⁹

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ يَبْلُغُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ إِذَا أَتَى أَهْلَهُ قَالَ بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ اللَّهُمَّ جَنِّبْنَا الشَّيْطَانَ وَجَنِّبِ الشَّيْطَانَ مَا رَزَقْتَنَا فَقَضَى بَيْنَهُمَا وَلَدٌ لَمْ يَضُرَّهُ

Ibn ‘Abbaas conveyed that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “If anyone among you goes to his wife and says: Bismillaah, Allahumma jannibnaash-shaytaana wa jannibish-shaytaana maa razaqtanaa [In the Name of Allah. O Allah. Divert Satan from us and from what You have provided us,] and a child was destined for them, Satan will not be able to harm him.”¹¹⁰

Step Three: Observe the ‘aqeeqah. On the seventh day after the child's birth, circumcise the male, shave the hair of both the male and female child and give the silver value of its weight in charity, and sacrifice one or two animals in thanksgiving. These are the rights of the child and of Allah on the parents, according to their ability. It has become a neglected *Sunnah* in recent times. Wives are often unwilling to shave the hair of the child, especially in the case of girls, and husbands are reluctant to spend their wealth to make the sacrifice for their children.

عَنْ سَلْمَانَ بْنِ عَامِرٍ الضَّبِّيِّ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ مَعَ الْغُلَامِ عَقِيقَةً فَأَهْرِيقُوا عَنْهُ دَمًا وَأَمِيطُوا عَنْهُ الْأَذَى

Salmaan ibn ‘Aamir ad-Dabbiyy quoted the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as saying, “Every child has a sacrifice [‘aqeeqah] owing, so spill some blood for it and remove harm from him.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. Kitaab: Nikaah; Baab: Akiffaa fid deen, and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Ridaa‘; Baab: Istihbaab nikaah thaata ad-deen.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ تُنْكَحُ الْمَرْأَةُ لِأَرْبَعٍ لِمَالِهَا وَلِحَسَبِهَا وَجَمَالِهَا وَلِدِينِهَا فَاظْفَرْ بِذَاتِ الدِّينِ تَرِبَتْ يَدَاكَ

Aboo Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “A woman is married for four reasons: for her wealth, her family status, her beauty and her religion. Choose the pious one and you will be successful.”

¹⁰⁹ *Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. , p. , no. Kitaab: Nikaah Baab: Jaami an-Nikaah and authenticated in *Saheeh Sunan Abee Daawood*, vol. , p. , no. .

¹¹⁰ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , no. Kitaab: al Wudoo, Baab: Tasmiyyah ‘ala kull haal and *Sunan Abu Dawud*, (English Trans.), vol. 2, p. 579, no. 2155.

¹¹¹ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: ‘Aqeeqah; Baab: Removal of harm from the child

Step Four: Create an Islaamic Environment. In raising children within the home, one should ensure that the environment of the home is one pleasing to Allah. Children should not be left in front of the television for much of their waking hours. In many homes today, from the time the child can sit up, the television becomes the second mother for the child. For example, whenever the mother is busy and she wants to do things, she keeps the children from disturbing her by mega doses of television. Although, many may argue that the child is too small to be affected by scenes of violence in cartoons, recent studies have proven otherwise. Instead, the home should be where the child first learns about Allah and his or her religious obligations. It should be one in which names and attributes of God are frequently mentioned and the wonders of the hereafter often talked about.

Step Five: Teach the Religion Early. Once the child reaches the age of two or three at which it starts to speak, its parents should begin to teach it about Allah, about paradise and hell, and about right and wrong. Whenever they punish the child, they should emphasize Allah's displeasure with the child's wrongdoing along with their own displeasure. People often claim that this is too complicated for a two-year-old or a three-year-old. However, child psychologists have established that between two and seven, the child's personality for his or her life is developed. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) instructed his followers that children should learn how to make formal prayers by the time they are seven years old.

عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ شُعَيْبٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مُرُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَهُمْ أَبْنَاءُ سِنِينَ وَاضْرِبُوهُمْ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ أَبْنَاءُ عَشْرِ وَفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَهُمْ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ

‘Amr ibn Shu‘ayb narrated from his father from his grandfather that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “Command your children to pray at the age of seven and spank them for it at the age of ten, and separate them in their beds.”¹¹²

Learning formal prayer includes the concept of *tahaarah* (ritual purification) and *satr* (covering private parts) and the basic obligatory components of the prayer and not merely aping the movements of prayer.

Step Six: Teach by Example. Children tend to imitate whatever they see their parents doing. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that parents give their children the best example of how they want them to act. The actions of parents should not contradict their instructions. For example, when the phone rings and the three year old child picks it up, the parent tells them to ask who is calling. If it is someone whom the parent does not wish to speak to, the child is then told to inform the caller that the parent is not at home. That parent just taught the child that lying is permissible. When the child grows up a compulsive liar, the parent is at a loss to determine how, when and why the child developed this bad characteristic. This is one of the reasons why the Prophet (ﷺ) taught that it is better to pray at home in front of family members and children than in the mosque, except in the case of the obligatory prayers.

عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ ثَابِتٍ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ أَفْضَلُ صَلَاتِكُمْ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ إِلَّا الْمَكْتُوبَةَ

Zayd ibn Thaabit related from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said, “Your best formal prayers are those done in your homes except the compulsory ones.”¹¹³

Step Seven: Marry them to righteous spouses. In order to ensure one's children's continued spiritual growth and to raise righteous grandchildren, one must aid his children in finding righteous spouses as one sought for himself in the beginning. This principle is in keeping with the following prophetic warning regarding the marriage of children:

¹¹² Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Kitaab as Salaat; Baab: Mataa yu'mar al ghulaam bis salaah.

¹¹³ Collected by at-Tirmidhi (Saheeh Jaami' as-Sagheer, no. 1134). And Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 1, pp. 391-2, no. 698 and Sahih Muslim, vol. 1, p. 377, no. 1708.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا خَاطَبَ إِلَيْكُمْ مَنْ تَرْضَوْنَ دِينَهُ وَخُلُقَهُ
فَزَوِّجُوهُ إِلَّا تَفْعَلُوا تَكُنْ فِتْنَةٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ عَرِضٌ

Aboo Hurayrah quoted Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying, "If someone proposes marriage for your daughter and you are pleased with his religious practice and his character, marry him to her. If you don't do so, there will be great corruption and trials in the land."¹¹⁴

So, if one wants to raise righteous children, he or she has to go about it systematically. When one wants to start a business, he does not jump into the market on the basis that "anything goes" or "whatever happens happens." People do not do that. Instead, they do feasibility studies; they investigate the market, the costs, and so on and so forth. After a person has understood all he possibly can about the venture, then he sets up his business. However, when people embark on the career of raising children, they do not give it much thought and planning. Muslims have to treat raising their children with much more care than they give to setting up their businesses. Thus, if the believers want their children to be raised worshiping Allah, then they have to work hard for it.

فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَى آذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا

11. Then I drew a veil over their ears for a number of years.

Ash-Shawkaanee said: It means "I shut their ears with sleep which prevented them from hearing sounds. Drawing a veil over the ears is a metaphor for deep sleep which prevents sounds from reaching the ears."¹¹⁵ According to al-Qurtubee, the ears were used in the metaphor because it is through them that the corruption of oversleeping takes place and it is through them that sleep is halted. The Prophet (ﷺ) also used the ear metaphor to describe a sleeping state saying:¹¹⁶

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ حَدَّثَنَا سُرَيْجُ بْنُ النُّعْمَانِ حَدَّثَنَا هُشَيْمٌ عَنْ أَبِي بَشِيرٍ عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ جُبَيْرٍ عَنْ
ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَيْسَ الْخَبْرُ كَالْمُعَايَنَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَخْبَرَ
مُوسَى بِمَا صَنَعَ قَوْمُهُ فِي الْعِجْلِ فَلَمْ يُلْقِ الْأَلْوَاخَ فَلَمَّا عَايَنَ مَا صَنَعُوا أَلْقَى الْأَلْوَاخَ فَانْكَسَرَتْ
عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ رَجُلٌ فَقِيلَ مَا زَالَ نَائِمًا حَتَّى أَصْبَحَ مَا قَامَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَقَالَ: ((بَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ فِي
أُذُنِهِ))

'Abdullaah related that when the case of a person who slept until after sunrise without getting up to pray was mentioned to the Prophet (ﷺ), he replied, "Satan urinated in this ear."¹¹⁷

The length of time they remained in the cave is only mentioned as "a number of years" in this verse, however, the actual number was specifically mentioned in verse 25 in both lunar and solar calendar calculations, "So they stayed in the cave for three hundred years and nine more."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Sunan at-Tirmithe, Kitaab: Nikaah; Baab: Maa jaa'a ithaa jaa'a ahadaku man tardawna CD 1004

¹¹⁵ Fat'h al-Qadeer, vol. 5, p. 378.

¹¹⁶ Al-Jaami' li Ahkaam al-Qur'aan, vol. 10-11.

¹¹⁷ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol., no. p., Kitaab: al-Jumu'ah and Baab: Ithaa naama wa lam yusalli

¹¹⁸ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 18.

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِنَعْلَمَ أَيُّ الْحِزْبَيْنِ أَحْصَى لِمَا لَبِثُوا أَمَدًا

12. Then I roused them in order to test which of the two parties was best in calculating the length of time that they passed.

Aal ‘Uthaymeen said: “Then I resurrected them...” by waking them up from their sleep. Allah referred to awakening from sleep as resurrection because sleep is a form of death. The Almighty said:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُم بِاللَّيْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُم بِالنَّهَارِ ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُكُمْ فِيهِ لِيُقْضَىٰ أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (٦٠)

“It is He who takes your souls by night and has knowledge of all that you have done by day, then He raises you up again that a term appointed be fulfilled, then unto Him will be your return. Then He will inform you of that which you used to do.” (Soorah al-An‘aam, 6: 60)

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا فَيُمْسِكُ الَّتِي قَضَىٰ- عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ (٤٢)

“It is Allah who takes away the souls at the time of their death, and those that die not in their sleep. He keeps those for which He has ordained death and sends the rest for a term appointed. Verily, in this are signs for a people who think deeply.” (Soorah az-Zumar, 39: 42)

Aal ‘Uthaymeen said: There could be a problem in the Almighty’s statement, “Then We resurrected them in order to know...” It is whether Allah, Most Great and Glorious, did not know before that or not. The answer is that He did. This phrase has two meanings:

1. The knowledge of sight, appearance and witnessing. That is, it meant “in order to see”. It is well known that knowledge of what will be is not the same as knowledge of what was. Allah’s knowledge of something before its occurrence is knowledge that it will occur, but after its occurrence, it is knowledge that it occurred.
2. The knowledge on the basis of which there is a reward is what was intended. That is, it meant, “in order to know for the sake of reward,” as in the Almighty’s statement:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّىٰ نَعْلَمَ الْمُجْهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَتَبْلُوْا أَخْبَارَكُمْ (٣١)

“And I will test you until I know those who strive (*mujaahideen*) among you and those who are patient.” (Soorah Muḥammad, 47: 31)

Before He tests us, He already knows who will be obedient and who will be disobedient. However, neither recompense nor reward is based on that knowledge.

As to certainty about the occurrence of what is known relative to Allah, there is no difference between what He knows will occur and what He knows has occurred; both are the same. Relative to us, it is true that we know some things which will occur mentioned in the information from the Most Truthful, Allah, but our knowledge of that is not like our knowledge of it when we witness it with our own eyes. Consequently, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, in an authentic narration:

((لَيْسَ الْخَبْرُ كَالْمُعَايَنَةِ))

*“Information is not like witnessing.”*¹¹⁹

Allah’s statement, **“which of the two parties was best in calculating the length of time that they passed,”** they differed concerning the time they had spent. Some said, **“we stayed for a day or part of a day,”** (18: 19) while others said, **“Your Lord knows best how long you spent.”** (18: 19). Then people after their time further differed about how long they spent.”¹²⁰

Al-Qurtubee said concerning, **“Then I resurrected them in order to know...”** that it was a way of expressing something coming into existence and its being witnessed, according to Arabic idiom. That is “in order to know that as existing”, otherwise Allah knew already which of the two groups would be more accurate in calculating the time passed.¹²¹

Ash-Shanqeetee said, “The Most Great and Transcendent mentioned in this verse that among the reasons for His resurrection of the People of the Cave after that long sleep was to clarify for people which of the two groups about the length of time they spent was more correct. But He did not explain anything about the two groups. Most *Tafseer* scholars hold that one of the groups was the People of the Cave and the other the people of the city in which the youths were resuscitated, as they were aware of the date of the incident of the youths. Others held that the two groups were both from the previously mentioned city, as there were among them believers and disbelievers. Yet others held other opinions. Ibn ‘Abbaas said that the kings who ruled the city was one group and the People of the Cave constituted the other group. What the Qur’aan indicates is that both groups were from among the People of the Cave, and the Qur’aan best explains itself. That is in the Almighty’s statement, **“And in that way, I raised them up again, so that they would question each other. One of them asked: ‘How long have you spent here?’ The others answered: ‘We have spent a day or part of a day.’ Then they declared: ‘Your Lord knows best how long you have spent.’ ”** (18: 19) It is as though those who said, **“Your Lord Knows best how long you have spent,”** were the ones who realized that they had spent a long time...

I have explained in this Blessed Book that among the different types of explanations contained in it is that Allah, Most Glorious and Transcendent, mentions the wisdom behind something in one place, and there be for that thing other points of wisdom mentioned in other places. Having understood that, you should realize that the Almighty has explained in this verse that the reason for rousing them was to expose to the people which of the two groups most accurately calculated their time spent. And He explained elsewhere another reasons: **“And in that way, I raised them up again, so that they would question each other,”** and among them it was to inform people that resurrection was real, and the final hour was true due to the implication of the story of the People of the Cave, **“In this way I caused them to be found, so that they would know that Allah’s promise is true and the hour of resurrection is coming without a doubt.”** (18: 21).

You should know that the statement of the Most Glorious and Transcendent in this noble verse, **“Then We resurrected them in order to know...”** does not indicate that He did not know that before their resuscitation and that He only knew that after their resuscitation, as claimed by some disbelievers and atheists. Instead, He – Most Glorious and Transcendent – knows what will be

¹¹⁹ *Musnad Ahmad*, no. 2447 and authenticated by al-Albaanee in *at-Tahaawiyyah*, p. 401. The complete text of one of the narrations is as follows:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَيْسَ الْخَبْرُ كَالْمُعَايَنَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَخْبَرَ مُوسَى بِمَا صَنَعَ قَوْمُهُ فِي الْعِجْلِ فَلَمْ يُلْقِ الْأَلْوَاَحَ فَلَمَّا عَايَنَ مَا صَنَعُوا أَلْقَى الْأَلْوَاَحَ فَانْكَسَرَتْ

Ibn ‘Abbaas quoted the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as saying, “Information is not like witnessing. Indeed Allah, Most Great and Glorious, informed Moses about what his people did with the calf, but he didn’t throw the tablets down. But when he saw what they did, he threw the tablets down and they broke.”

¹²⁰ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, pp. 23-25.

¹²¹ *Al-Jaami ‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan*, pp. 301-2.

before it is, and nothing of that is hidden from him.¹²² The verses which indicate that are innumerable. Among the most clearly worded verses which show that He does not gain new knowledge from tests and trials – may He be greatly exalted from that – is His statement:

وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَلِيُمَحِّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ (١٥٤)

“But that Allah might test what is in your chests; and to purify that which was in your hearts, and Allah is the All-Knower of what is in your chests.” (Soorah Aal ‘Imraan, 3: 154) His statement **“and Allah is the All-Knower of what is in your chests,”** after His statement **“But that Allah might test...”** is obvious proof of that. If that is clear, then the meaning of **“Then We resurrected them in order to know...”** is “to know knowledge which would expose the reality to people,” and that does not contradict His knowing it before its occurrence while none of His creatures did...

If it is asked what is the important benefit of the people knowing which of the two groups was most accurate in calculating the time spent so that it would be the reason for the Almighty’s statement, **“Then We resurrected them in order to know...”** And what is the important benefit from their asking each other so as to be the reason for His statement, **“And in that way, I raised them up again, so that they would question each other,”** the answer is – and I have not seen anyone who has dealt with this – that which appears to me – and Allah Almighty knows best – is that what was mentioned of informing people about the most accurate group in calculating the period spent and their asking each other about it necessitated the exposure for people the reality of those youths and that Allah had put them to sleep for 309 years then He resuscitated them alive and with their bodies fresh and unchanged. And this is among the amazing acts of the Most Glorious and Transcendent indicating the perfection of His ability to resurrect people after their death. And due to this necessity He made what I mentioned a reason and purpose – and Allah knows best.”¹²³

Summary: Allah protected the youths and revived them back as a test for people and a test for the youths themselves, because they were unaware of how long they had slept. The message of the verses being that, Allah answered their prayers by keeping people away from them while they slept in the cave and causing them to miraculously survive all those years. Allah is the one who can do the unexpected. We have to believe that even though situations may seem hopeless, Allah can always solve the problem. It is a reminder to us of crises in our own lives which seemed to be hopeless, but with Allah’s help we are able to come through. This story in its own way expresses that same concept. If we put our trust in Allah and He will find a way for us as He said:

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا (٢) وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ

“Whoever fears Allah, He will make for him a way out and provide for him from where he did not expect it. And whoever trusts in Allah, He will be sufficient for him.” (Soorah at-Talaaq, 65: 2-3)

¹²² This is the essence of the statement of Muhammad Iqbal in his work *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. “The future certainly pre-exists in the organic whole of God’s creative life, but it pre-exists as an open possibility not as a fixed order of events with definite outlines... No doubt the emergence of egos endowed with the power of spontaneous and hence unforeseeable action is, in a sense, a limitation on the freedom of the all-inclusive Ego (i.e. Allah). But this limitation is not externally imposed. It is born out of His own creative freedom whereby He has chosen finite egos to be participator of His life power and freedom.” (p. 79) Shabbir Ali expresses that Allah knows the broad future as a series of possibilities, but does not know the individual events until they actually occur. He knows the consequences of each of your choices, but does not know which choice you will make until you make it.

¹²³ *Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, pp. 18-23.

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ نَبَأَهُم بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ آمَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنَاَهُمْ هُدًى

13. I will relate their true story to you. They were youths who believed in their Lord and I increased their level of guidance.”

From verse 13 onwards, Allah goes into the details of this story.

“**We** will relate their true story to you,” Aal ‘Uthaymeen said concerning the use of “We” in relation to Allah that [He is] one without a doubt, but there is also no doubt that He is the Greatest of all who are great and according to Arabic idiom, whenever a single person refers to himself using a plural form, it indicates that he is great. It is known that nothing is greater than Allah... Thus, the intent of every plural pronoun referring to Almighty Allah is praise.¹²⁴ It is also used in English by rulers like the Queen of England, and in legal documents, and is known as the “royal” we or “majestic” we.

Al-Qurtubee said that the Almighty’s statement: “**I will relate their true story to you,**” was due to the implications of disagreements around the length of their stay in the cave found in His previous statement: “**Then I roused them in order to test which of the two parties was best in calculating.**” So, He followed it with information that He, Most Great and Glorious, knows the truth of what took place regarding them.¹²⁵

Christian and Western historians in general refer to the story as a legend indicating their doubt about its authenticity, though Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches officially believe in it as a miracle. However, according to the existing historical record, the story had been circulating around for many years before it was actually written down. It was a popular story circulating by word of mouth and was consequently vague as to dates and much of its details. Somewhere around the 6th century, a Syriac historian reduced it to writing. He wrote that the youths were seven in number and that they went to sleep in the rein of the Emperor Decius. Thus, Allah points out that the story that He is relating is the truth of what actually took place.

“**They were youths who believed in their Lord and I increased their level of guidance.**”

This statement implies that if they were in fact Christians, they would have been from among the true followers of Jesus, from the Unitarian tradition of James, former head of the Jerusalem Church, and not from the Greek and Roman Trinitarian tradition.

Ash-Shanqeetee said concerning this verse, “What is understood from this noble verse is that whoever believes in his Lord and obeys Him, His Lord will increase his state of guidance, because obedience is a cause for the increase of guidance and faith. This understanding from this noble verse appears clearly in other places [in the Qur’aan]. For example, in the Almighty’s statement:

وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَءَاتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ

“As for those who accept guidance, He increases their guidance and bestows on them their piety.” (Soorah Muḥammad, 47: 17)

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فَزَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَهُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ

“As for those who believe, it increased their faith and they rejoice.” (Soorah at-Tawbah, 9: 124)¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 26.

¹²⁵ Al-Jaami ‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 9-10, p. 302.

¹²⁶ See also Soorah al-Fat’h, : 4.

These verses mentioned are clear unambiguous texts proving that faith increases – and understood from them is that it also decreases, as Imaam al-Bukhaaree used them to prove that. Thus, there is no place for disagreement with their existence as you can clearly see.”¹²⁷

In the second century after the Hijrah a debate raged among Muslim scholars as to whether faith increases or decreases. This verse was used as evidence of its increase by the majority who held the position that it increases and decreases. Others held that you either believe or disbelieve, once you believe there’s no increase or decrease; there’s no more belief or less belief, it is simply a state of belief. Good deeds may increase or decrease, but belief is a static state. According to them, once you enter into it that is it. Those who held this position were labeled as Murji’ites (*Murji’ah*).

There were basically three types of Murji’ism:

- i) Jahmite¹²⁸ Murji’ism: Those who claimed that *eemaan* is merely knowledge alone. Some of the leading scholars of the *Salaf* declared this group to be disbelievers. “This form is attributed to Jahm ibn Safwaan and is corrupt as it implies that Pharaoh and his people were believers, since they knew that Moses and Aaron (عليه السلام) were true prophets even though they denied them. The People of the Book knew that Muhammad (ﷺ) was a prophet as they knew their own sons, but they were not believers in him; in fact, they were his deniers and opponents. Actually, even Iblees, would also be a perfect believer according to al-Jahm’s view. He did not plead ignorance of Allah as he knew Him well.”¹²⁹
- ii) The Karraamites: Those who restricted *eemaan* to the profession on the tongue without including the [affirmation of the] heart. “[Therefore,] according to their view, the hypocrites are perfect believers. Nevertheless, they believe that the hypocrites will suffer the punishment that Allah has promised them. Thus they contradict themselves.”¹³⁰
- iii) Murji’ite Legists: Those who state that *eemaan* is belief in the heart and profession on the tongue and they remove deeds from the definition of *eemaan*. “Among the Murji’ites, who said that *eemaan* was affirmation (*tasdeeq*) in the heart and an utterance on the tongue but does not include works, was a group of Koofan jurists. Their claims were not like those of Jahm, for they recognized that one is not a believer if he does not express his belief verbally, though he is able to do so. They also acknowledged that Iblees, Pharaoh, and others were unbelievers despite the fact that they believed the truth in their hearts. However, if they did not include the works of the heart in their definition of belief, they would have been obliged to adopt the view of Jahm...The Murji’ites, especially the theologians and jurists from among them [like Imaam Aboo Haneefah], regarded works as part of *eemaan* in a figurative way, for a work is the fruit and requirement of *eemaan*.”¹³¹

The Murji’ite claim that once someone has believed, nothing can affect his or her faith is common among Christians today. They claim that once a person has accepted Jesus Christ as his personal savior, he is guaranteed paradise, no matter what sins he may commit afterwards. This false belief is also widespread among Muslims. Many believe that simply being born in a Muslim family and having a Muslim name guarantees them paradise. Some quote the Prophet’s statement narrated by Aboo Hurayrah:

((كُلُّ أُمَّتِي يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ))

((All of my nation will enter Paradise.))

However, that statement is incomplete. The whole *hadeeth* of the Prophet (ﷺ) is as follows.

¹²⁷ *Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 23.

¹²⁸ See footnote 48.

¹²⁹ *Commentary on the Creed of at-Tahawi*, pp. 282-3.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 282.

¹³¹ *Kitab Al-Iman*, pp. 203-4.

((كُلُّ أُمَّتِي يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَبِي قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَأْبَى قَالَ مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَقَدْ أَبَى)).

“All of my nation will enter Paradise, except those who refuse.” They asked, “Who would refuse, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied, “Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me has refused.”¹³²

Others quote the Prophet’s statements:

((مَنْ شَهِدَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ النَّارَ)).

“The hellfire is forbidden for whoever bears witness that there is no god worthy of worship besides Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”¹³³

((مَنْ قَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ)).

“Whoever says: ‘There is no god worthy of worship besides Allah,’ will enter Paradise.”¹³⁴

However, when Imaam az-Zuhree was asked about the above mentioned *hadeeth* he replied that it was that way at the beginning of Islaam before the revelation of the obligatory pillars of Islaam and the commandments and prohibitions.¹³⁵ Furthermore, in many other statements of the Prophet (ﷺ) he added clarifying clauses which confirmed that the declaration of faith had to be based on knowledge, certainty, sincerity and truth. For example he also said:

((مَنْ مَاتَ وَهُوَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ)).

“Whoever dies knowing that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah will enter Paradise.”¹³⁶

فَقَالَ يَا أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ وَأَعْطَانِي نَعْلَيْهِ قَالَ أَذْهَبُ بِنَعْلَيْ هَاتَيْنِ فَمَنْ لَقِيتَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ هَذَا الْحَائِطِ يَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُسْتَيَقِّنًا بِهَا قَلْبُهُ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِالْجَنَّةِ

“Whoever bears witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah, and meets Allah having no doubt in this, then Allah will put him in Paradise.”¹³⁷

“The person who will be most pleased with my intercession is the one who says ‘none has the right to be worshipped but Allah’ sincerely from his heart.”¹³⁸ He also said, “Indeed Allah has made the Hellfire prohibited for whoever says laa ilaaha illAllah desiring only the pleasure of Allah.”¹³⁹

“Whoever bears witness, truthfully from his heart, that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger, without fail, Allah will make the Hellfire forbidden for him.”¹⁴⁰

Allah tests people according to their belief once they handle the trial their faith increases. Patience helps us to get through calamities and increases our belief, and patience ultimately comes

¹³² Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. , no. , p. , Kitaab: I’tisaam bil-kitaab was sunnah, Baab: Iqtidaa bi sunan ar Rasool.

¹³³ Sahih Muslim, vol. 1, p. , no. . Kitaab: Imaan, Baab: Daleel alaa anna man maat alaa Tawheed

¹³⁴ Ibid. Sunan at-Tirmithe, vol. no. p. , Kitaab: Imaan , Baab: Man maat wa huwa yashhad an laa ilaaha ...

¹³⁵ Ibid.

, vol. 1, p. 19, no. 39. Sahih Muslim¹³⁶

¹³⁷ Sahih Muslim, vol. 1, p. 20, no. 41.

¹³⁸ Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol. 1, p. 79, no. 98.

¹³⁹ Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol. 1, p. 250, no. 417; and Sahih Muslim, vol. 1, p. 319, no. 1384.

¹⁴⁰ Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol. 1, p. 96, no. 130.

from trust in Allah, Trusting in Allah in the sense that Allah says that with every difficulty comes an ease and we believe in it, if we don't act rationally during calamities and don't have patience, then we don't believe in what Allah said and we don't trust his words.

Furthermore, the fact that Allah informs that He can increase our faith is also telling us that we should not become complacent and think that we are good believers. Rather, we should be striving for better levels because Satan is very busy, and this is one of the ways that he trips some of the believers into falling into sins. We should look at better believers and try to be like them. Everything is constantly fluctuating so if we are not getting better we are getting worse. We need to be conscious that we need to increase our faith by doing more and more good deeds and we should also take account of ourselves as 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab used to say: "Take account of yourselves before your account is taken."

وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَنْ نَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَهًا لَقَدْ قُلْنَا إِذَا شَطَطًا

14. And I strengthened their hearts when they stood up¹⁴¹ and said, "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. We will never call on any god besides Him; if we did, we would indeed have uttered an enormous deviance."

Al-'Uthaymeen commented that "I strengthened their hearts," meant that Allah made their hearts steady, strengthened them and bound them because their people opposed them. For, contradicting one's people requires steadfastness, especially considering that they were youths. A youth's father may affect him and instruct him to disbelieve. However, Allah bound their hearts and steadied them. O Allah! Steady us, O Lord.¹⁴²

Ash-Shanqeetee said this verse meant that Allah "steadied their hearts and strengthened their patience so that they would not panic and become fearful to openly declare the truth. It was also in order that they be patient about leaving their families and the worldly comforts, to flee with their religion to an unfamiliar cave in a mountain without water or food.

What is understood from this noble verse is that whoever is obedient to his Lord, may He be Glorious and Transcendent, Allah will strengthen his heart and make him steady to handle difficult times patiently.

¹⁴¹ In Ibn Katheer's commentary as well as many others, a story is given as to how the youths individually rejected idolatry and came together. Ibn Katheer said: "Several of the earlier and later Tafseer scholars have mentioned that they were sons of the kings and leaders of Byzantium, and that they went out one day to one of the festivals of their people. They used to gather once a year outside the city, and they would worship idols and offer sacrifices to them. They had an arrogant, tyrannical king who was called Decianus, who commanded and encouraged the people to do that. When the people went out to attend this gathering, these young men went out with their fathers and their people, and when they saw their people's actions with clear insight, they realized that the prostrations and sacrifices the people were offering to their idols should only be dedicated to Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth. Each of them started to withdraw from his people and keep aloof from them. The first one of them to move away on his own went and sat in the shade of a tree, then another came and sat with him, then another came and sat with them, then four more followed suit one by one. None of them knew the others, but they were brought together by the One Who instilled faith in their hearts." (Tafsir Ibn Kathir, p.) However, no authentic references are given for this tale.

¹⁴² Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem, p. 26.

The Almighty pointed to other incidents containing the same meaning in a number of places in the Qur'aan. For example, concerning those who took part in the Battle of Badr, He addressed His Prophet and his companions saying:

إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ النُّعَاسَ أَمَنَةً مِّنْهُ وَيُنْزِلُ عَلَيْكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُم بِهِ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُم رَجَزَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ

“(Remember) when He covered you with a slumber as a security from Him, and He caused rain to descend on you from the sky in order to clean you and to remove from you the whispering of Satan, and to strengthen your hearts, and make your feet firm.”

إِذْ يُوحِي رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ فَثَبِّتُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

“(Remember) when your Lord revealed to the angels, ‘Indeed, I am with you, so keep firm those who have believed.’ ” (Soorah al-Anfaal, 8: 11-12)

Concerning Moses’ Mother, He said:

وَأَصْبَحَ فُؤَادُ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ فَارِعًا إِنْ كَادَتْ لَتُبْدِيَ بِهِ لَوْ أَنَّ رَبَّنَا عَلَىٰ قَلْبِهَا لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (١٠)

“And when the heart of Moses’ mother became empty, she was about to disclose his case, had I not strengthened her heart, so that she might remain one of the believers.”

(Soorah al-Qasas, 28: 10)¹⁴³

Al-‘Uthaymeen commented that “**they stood up**,” meant that they stood up among their people and announced their belief in monotheism and declared their innocence of what their people were doing. “**They said: Our Lord is the Lord of the Heavens and Earth**,” not the lord of so and so, but the Lord of the Heavens and earth. He, Most Glorious, is the Owner, Creator and Maintainer of the heavens and earth, because the Lord, which is one of Allah’s names, means the Creator, the Owner, and the Maintainer. They did not care about what anyone thought or what they might do. In this respect, they were like Pharaoh’s magicians. Allah said:

قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْثِرَكَ عَلَىٰ مَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالَّذِي فَطَرْنَا فَاقْضِ مَا أَنْتَ قَاضٍ إِنَّمَا تَقْضِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا (٧٢)

“They said: ‘We will never give preference to you over the clear truths that have come to us or over the One who created us. So decree whatever you desire, for you can only make decrees regarding the life of this world.’ ” (Soorah Taa Haa, 20: 72)

And everything in this world is passing and coming to an end, whether it takes a long time for you or a short time. Every human being must experience one of two situations: either growing old or an early death. And the end of old age is also death, which is why the poet said:

لَا طِيبَ لِلْعَيْشِ مَا دَامَتْ مُنْعَصَةً * لَدَائِهِ بِادِّكَارِ الْمَوْتِ وَالْهَرَمِ

*There is no goodness in life as long as its delights
Are spoiled by remembrance of death and old age*

Whenever a human being remembers that he will die, whether his life is long or short, life will not be pleasant for him. It is among Allah’s blessings that people forget this issue. But among those forgetful ones are those who forget it by being busy obeying Allah. While others forget it by being busy with this worldly life.

¹⁴³ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 23.

“The heavens and earth,” refers to the seven heavens and the seven earths as mentioned in authentic texts. There was no need in mentioning them since they are well-known. All praise is due to Allah.

“We will never call on any god besides Him,” We will never call on others besides Him requesting anything or in worship of other gods besides Him. They affirmed Allah’s Unity of Dominion (*Tawheed ar-Ruboobiyyah*) in the phrase “Our Lord”, and His Unity of Worship (*Tawheed al-Uloohiyyah*) in the phrase “we will never call on any god besides Him.”

“If we did, we would indeed have uttered an enormous deviance,” This sentence is emphasized by three elements; with two particles of emphasis, *laam* and *qad*, and the oath implied in the *laam*.¹⁴⁴

Ash-Shanqeetee noted that this noble verse clearly indicated that whoever attributes another god as partner to the Creator of the heavens and earth has come with something far deviated from the truth; something involving the ultimate in falsehood beyond acceptable bounds. Because the one who deserves worship is the One who brought creation into existence from non-existence, because one unable to create others besides itself is itself created and in need of a creator to create it, nourish it, and run its affairs. And the meaning indicated by this noble verse is clearly expressed in many other verses. For example His statement:

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (٢٢)

“Who has made the earth a resting place for you, and the sky a canopy. And sent down rain from the sky from which He produced fruits as a provision for you. So, do not knowingly set up rivals with Allah.” (*Soorah al-Baqarah*, 2: 22)

(أَفَمَنْ يَخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَا يَخْلُقُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ (١٧))

“Is He Who creates like one who does not? Will you not then reflect?”

(*Soorah an-Nahl*, 16: 17)

أَمْ جَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ خَلَقُوا كَخَلْقِهِ فَتَشَبَّهُ الْخَلْقُ عَلَيْهِمْ قُلِ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ (١٦)

“Or do they assign to Allah partners who created something like His creation, so that the creation seemed identical to them. Say: ‘Allah is the Creator of all things; He is the One, the Irresistible.’ ” (*Soorah ar-Ra’d*, 13: 16)

أَيُّشْرِكُونَ مَا لَا يَخْلُقُ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ (١٩١)

“Do they attribute to Allah partners who created nothing but are themselves created?”

(*Soorah al-A’raaf*, 7: 191)

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ ءَالِهَةً لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ مَوْتًا وَلَا حَيَوةً وَلَا نُشُورًا (٣)

“Yet they have taken besides Him other gods who created nothing but are themselves created, who are unable to either hurt or benefit for themselves, and who do not possess the power to cause death, to give life, nor to raise the dead.” (*Soorah al-Furqaan*, 25: 3)¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, pp. 26-7.

The youths boldly challenged the false beliefs of their people. The Prophet (ﷺ) was reported by Aboo Sa'eed al-Khudree to have said:

((أَفْضَلُ الْجِهَادِ كَلِمَةُ عَدْلٍ عِنْدَ سُلْطَانٍ جَائِرٍ أَوْ أَمِيرٍ جَائِرٍ))

“The greatest Jihaad is speaking the truth in front of a tyrant.”¹⁴⁶

This is consistent with what the Prophet (ﷺ) had said regarding the different levels on which Muslims are obliged to oppose evil. If Muslims are unable to directly prevent evil in society, they are enjoined to speak out against it. However, if the consequences to the society are greater than the good they are opposing, they should hate it in their hearts. Allah describes the believers as the best of nations because they command righteousness, prohibit corruption and because of their correct belief in Allah.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ ءَامَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِّنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ (١١٠)

“You are the best of peoples ever raised up for humankind; you enjoin the good, forbid evil, and believe in Allah.” (Soorah Aal ‘Imraan, 3: 110)

It is essential that Muslims realize this very important aspect of Islamic politics, especially in these times when the enemies of Islaam are openly attacking Muslims using a variety of guises to hide their real intentions and some Muslims are responding using illegitimate methods. On one hand, Muslims must oppose the evil forces trying to eradicate the Sharee‘ah and replace it with secularism, democratic or otherwise, and at the same time they must oppose excessive unislamic methods of resistance used by some of those claiming to defend the *Ummah* (the Muslim Nation).

It is worth noting that although young people tend to be rebellious and unflinching in their stand for what they think is right, at the same time, they tend to be easily influenced by their peer group and their opinions may change radically in order to conform to their companions. *Huthayfah* reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) had said:

((لَا تَكُونُوا إِمْعَةً تَقُولُونَ إِنْ أَحْسَنَ النَّاسُ أَحْسَنًا وَإِنْ ظَلَمُوا ظَلَمْنَا وَلَكِنْ وَطِنُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنْ أَحْسَنَ النَّاسُ أَنْ تُحْسِنُوا وَإِنْ أَسَاءُوا فَلَا تَظْلِمُوا))

“Do not be impressionable, saying: ‘If people are righteous, we will also be righteous and if they are bad we will also be bad.’ Instead, accustom yourself to be righteous if people are righteous and to not be bad if they are evil.”¹⁴⁷

The believer should stand out clearly in his or her practices from the lifestyle of the disbelievers. This principle can be clearly seen in the many instructions which the Prophet (ﷺ) gave to distinguish Muslims from non-Muslims; whether it is in growing the beard and trimming the moustache or fasting a day before or a day after the fast of ‘Aashooraa, and so on.

¹⁴⁵ *Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, pp. 24-5.

¹⁴⁶ *Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Malaahim, Baab: al Amr wan Nahy

¹⁴⁷ *Sunan at-Tirmitheeh*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: al Birr was Silah; Baab: Maa jaa’a fil Ihsaan wal ‘afw.

هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمُنَا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً لَوْلَا يَأْتُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ
بَيِّنٍ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا

15. “These people of ours have adopted other gods besides Him. Why do they not bring authority for what they have done? And who does a greater wrong than the one who invents a lie against Allah.”

Al-‘Uthaymeen mentioned that the statement of the youths, “These people of ours have adopted other gods besides Him,” was to explain their reason for their isolating themselves from their people.¹⁴⁸

Ash-Shanqeetee noted that the request in their statement, “Why do they not bring authority for what they have done,” was a challenge to do the impossible, because it is well known that no one can produce clear proof and authority permitting the worship of other than Almighty Allah. The challenge which Allah mentioned in these noble verses to the disbelievers to produce evidence for their idolatry and disbelief is clarified in many verses. For example,

قُلْ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ
(١٤٨)

“Say: ‘Have you any knowledge that you can produce before us? Indeed, you only follow guesswork and you are only liars.’” (Soorah al-An‘aam, 6: 148)

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ أَتُتُونِي بِكِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا أَوْ أَثَرَةٍ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (٤)

“Say: ‘Do you know what you call on besides Allah? Show me what they have created on earth. Or do they have a share in the creation of the heavens? Bring me a Scripture revealed before this one, or some trace of knowledge (in support of your claims), if you are truthful!’ ” (Soorah al-Ahqaaf, 46: 4)¹⁴⁹

There are many such verses indicating that the pagans have no basis for their idolatry beyond the blind following of their misguided forefathers.

“And who does a greater wrong than he who invents a lie against Allah,” this meaning that inventing lies against Allah by giving Him partners is the greatest sin has been mentioned clearly in many verses. For example, Allah’s statement:

﴿ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَذَبَ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْصِّدْقِ إِذْ جَاءَهُ ۚ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ
مَنْوًى لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴾ (٣٢)

¹⁴⁸ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 27.

¹⁴⁹ See also Zukhruf: 21; Room: 35; Faatir: 40; Mu’minoona: 117.

“Then, who does more wrong than one who lies against Allah, and denies the truth when it comes to him? Is there not in Hell an abode for the disbelievers?” (Soorah az-Zumar, 39: 32)

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أُولَٰئِكَ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَقُولُ
الْأَشْهَادُ هَٰؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ ۖ أَلَّا لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ (١٨)

“And who does more wrong than he who invents a lie against Allah? Such will be brought before their Lord, and witnesses will say, ‘These are the ones who lied against their Lord!’ No doubt! The curse of Allah is on the wrong-doers.” (Soorah Hood, 11: 18)¹⁵⁰

Al-Uthaymeen discussed how this verse could be reconciled with the following verse from Soorah al-Baqarah:

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن مَّنَعَ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذَكَّرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ ، وَسَعَىٰ فِي خَرَابِهَا أُولَٰئِكَ مَا
كَانَ لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا خَائِفِينَ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ
(١١٤)

“And who are more wrong than those who forbid that Allah’s Name be glorified and mentioned much in Allah’s Mosques and strive for their ruin? It was not fitting that such should themselves enter them except in fear. For them there is disgrace in this world, and they will have a great torment in the Hereafter.” (2: 114)

He said, “This verse addresses the worst wrong in the category of prevention of remembrance of Allah’s name, while the previous verse refers to the worst wrong in lying. There is none more wrong than one who lies about Allah by attributing a partner to Him in any way, whether in His attributes or in worshipping Him. If one lied about someone it would be wrong, and if one lied about someone of greater stature it would be a greater wrong. Thus, a lie about Allah becomes the greatest possible lie.”¹⁵¹

Those worshipping and calling on others besides Allah do not really have evidence for doing so, even in their distorted scriptures. For example, the Hindu practice of idol worship is rejected by their early scriptures. Likewise, Buddhist practice of worshipping Buddha as god has no basis in the early writings attributed to Buddha. And Christian worship of Jesus goes against Jesus’ own teachings and practice. According to the Gospels, he told his followers to worship God saying: “Our Father who art in Heaven ...”, and he was recorded to have worshipped God on a number of occasions, clearly indicating that he was not God.

One of the biggest lies of the 19th century against Allah is Darwin’s theory of evolution, which implies that Allah does not exist by claiming that life in this world was not specially created, instead it evolved. Once you remove God from human society, you remove the basis for morality and a clear definition of right and wrong. On the other hand, human definitions tend to be relative and thus constantly changing. Thus, the only stable basis for determining right and wrong is ultimately from Allah.

¹⁵⁰ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, pp. 25-6.

¹⁵¹ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 29.

وَإِذْ أَعَزَّلْتُمُوهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَأَوُوا إِلَى الْكَهْفِ يَنْشُرْ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيَهَيِّئْ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مَرْفَقًا

16. “And when you turn away from them and the things that they worship besides Allah, take yourselves to the cave. Your Lord will shower His mercies on you and dispose of your affairs in comfort and ease.”

Al-Uthaymeen said that this verse was a statement of the youths among themselves meaning: “Since you’ve isolated yourselves from the people, go to the cave.” The cave could either refer to a cave known to them which they had previously visited or sought refuge in, or to a cave which would properly protect them from their enemies. **“Your Lord will shower His mercies on you and dispose of your affairs with comfort and ease”¹⁵²**, meaning, if you do that, Allah will make your situation easier, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

((مَنْ تَرَكَ شَيْئًا لِلَّهِ عَوَّضَهُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا مِنْهُ)).

“Whoever gives up something for the sake of Allah, He will replace it with something better.”¹⁵³
Allah noted regarding those who emigrate for His sake:

وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَآغِمًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً

“He who emigrates in the Cause of Allah, will find on earth many dwelling places and plenty to live by.” (Soorah an-Nisaa, 4: 100)

Ash-Shanqeetee noted, “This verse indicates that the abandonment of the believers of their disbelieving people and their idols is one of the causes of Allah’s gentleness and mercy for them. This meaning is also indicated in the Almighty’s statement regarding Prophet Abraham, may Allah’s peace and blessings be on him and on our Prophet:

وَأَعَزَّلْتُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَأَدْعُوا رَبِّي عَسَىٰ أَلَّا أَكُونَ بِدُعَاءِ رَبِّي شَقِيًّا (٤٨) فَلَمَّا أَعَزَّلْتَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا نَبِيًّا (٤٩) وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِنَا وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ عَلِيًّا (٥٠)

¹⁵² Naafi‘ and Ibn ‘Aamir recited the last word of this verse as *marfiqan* while the remainder of seven reciters did so as *mirfaqan*. They are two dialects for “what is benefited from” as well as the portion of the human limb called the elbow. (*Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 26)

¹⁵³ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, pp. 30-1. The following *hadeeth* conveys the same meaning:

عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ أَنَسٍ الْجُهَنِيِّ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: ((مَنْ تَرَكَ اللَّيَاسَ تَوَاضَعًا لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ يَقْدِرُ عَلَيْهِ دَعَاَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَى رُءُوسِ الْخَلَائِقِ حَتَّى يُخَيَّرَهُ مِنْ أَيِّ خُلَى الْإِيمَانِ شَاءَ يَلْبَسُهَا)).

Mu’aath ibn Anas al-Juhane reported that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Whoever gives up the wearing of expensive fancy clothes out of humility to Allah while he is able to acquire it, will be called by Allah on the Day of Resurrection in front of the creation and be allowed to choose whichever jewels of the people of faith he wishes to wear.” (*Sunan at-Tirmitheh*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Sifat al Qiyaamah war Riqaaq)

“I will turn away from you and those whom you call on besides Allah. And I will call on my Lord and I hope that I will not be unblessed in my invocation to my Lord.” So when he turned away from them and those whom they worshipped besides Allah, I gave him Isaac and Jacob, and I made each one of them a prophet. And I bestowed on them My Mercy and granted them honor on the tongues of all the nations.” (Soorah Maryam, 19: 48-50)

The concept of the youths abandoning an idolatrous and oppressive society and hiding in order to practice the true religion is known in Islaam as *Hijrah* (migration/emigration). The most basic evidence for the obligation of emigration or migration from oppression can be found in the Qur’aan. The Almighty said:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْنَاهُمُ الظَّالِمِينَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَأَسِعَتْ فَتُهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا فَأُولَئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا (٩٧)

“Indeed! The angels will ask those who they cause to die while they are oppressing themselves: ‘In what state were you?’ When they reply: ‘We were weak and oppressed in the land,’ the [angels] will respond: ‘Wasn’t Allah’s earth spacious enough for you to emigrate?’ Such people will find their abode in Hell - What an evil destination!” (Soorah an-Nisaa, 4: 97)

The Prophet (ﷺ) also confirmed this principle and made emigrant’s intention the deciding factor with respect to reward. He was reported by ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab to have said:

((الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّةِ وَلِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ لِدُنْيَا يُصِيبُهَا أَوْ امْرَأَةٍ يَتَزَوَّجُهَا فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى مَا هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِ))

“[Surely] actions are judged [solely] by their intentions and everyone will be rewarded according to his intention. Thus, whose migration was for Allah and His Messenger, his migration was for Allah and His messenger, and whose migration was to achieve some worldly benefit or to take a woman in marriage, his migration was for whatever he migrated.”¹⁵⁴

Hijrah to the city of Madeenah during the Prophet’s lifetime was also made obligatory. Consequently, once Makkah was liberated from idolatry, migration to Madeenah was no longer obligatory. It was in this context that the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported by Ibn ‘Abbaas to have said:

((لَا هِجْرَةَ بَعْدَ الْفَتْحِ وَلَكِنْ جِهَادٌ وَنِيَّةٌ وَإِذَا اسْتُنْفِرْتُمْ فَانْفِرُوا)) .

“There is no Hijrah after the Conquest of Makkah. Instead, there remains Jihaad and intention. If you are called to arms, respond.”¹⁵⁵

However, he also confirmed that the general principle of emigration from corruption was not limited to his era, but remains in force until the Last Day.

¹⁵⁴ Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol. 1, p. 1, no. 1 and Sahih Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1056, no. 4692.

¹⁵⁵ Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Jihaad wa siyar, Baab: Fadl al Jihaad wa siyar; Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Imaarah; Baab: Mubaaya’ah ba’d Fat’h Makkah.

عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: ((لَا تَنْقَطِعُ
الْهِجْرَةُ حَتَّى تَنْقَطِعَ التَّوْبَةُ وَلَا تَنْقَطِعَ التَّوْبَةُ حَتَّى تَطْلُعَ الشَّمْسُ مِنْ مَغْرِبِهَا)) .

Mu'aawiyah reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: "Hijrah will not end until repentance ends, and repentance will not end until the sun rises in the west."¹⁵⁶

Thus, Muslims are obliged to emigrate from environments dominated by the disbelievers. Furthermore, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) prohibited living among non-Muslims and socializing with them:

عَنْ جَرِيرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَعَثَ سَرِيَّةً إِلَى خَثْعَمٍ
فَاعْتَصَمَ نَاسٌ بِالسُّجُودِ فَأَسْرَعَ فِيهِمُ الْقَتْلَ فَبَلَغَ ذَلِكَ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
فَأَمَرَ لَهُمْ بِنِصْفِ الْعَقْلِ وَقَالَ أَنَا بَرِيءٌ مِنْ كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ يُقِيمُ بَيْنَ أَظْهَرِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ
قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلِمَ قَالَ لَا تَرَايَا نَارَاهُمَا

Jareer ibn 'Abdillaah related that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) sent a military detachment to the Khath'am Tribe and some among them prostrated [to show they were Muslims] but people were hasty and killed them [along with the others]. When the news of that reached the Prophet (ﷺ), he instructed that half the value of the standard compensation be given for them and he said, "I am innocent of every Muslim who lives among the idolaters." They asked, "O Messenger of Allah! Why?" He replied, "They should not see each others fires."¹⁵⁷

وَرَوَى سَمُرَةُ بْنُ جُنْدَبٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: ((لَا تُسَاكِنُوا
الْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَا تُجَامِعُوهُمْ فَمَنْ سَاكَنَهُمْ أَوْ جَامَعَهُمْ فَهُوَ مِثْلُهُمْ)).

Samurah ibn Jundub narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said, "Do not live among the idolaters and do not fraternize with them. Whoever lives among them or fraternizes with them is similar to them."¹⁵⁸

عَنْ سَمُرَةَ بْنِ جُنْدَبٍ أَمَّا بَعْدُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ((مَنْ جَامَعَ
الْمُشْرِكَ وَسَكَنَ مَعَهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِثْلُهُ)).

Samurah ibn Jundub related that Allah's Messenger said, "Whoever socializes with a pagan and lives with him is indeed like him."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Sunan at-Tirmithi, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Siyar; Baab: Maa jaa'a fee kiraahiyat al maqaam bayna azhar al mushrikeen.

¹⁵⁷ Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Jihaad; Baab: Nahy 'an qatl man I'tasama bis sujud, and Sunan at-Tirmithi, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Siyar; Baab: Maa jaa'a fee kiraahiyat al maqaam bayna azhar al mushrikeen.

¹⁵⁸ Sunan at-Tirmithi, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Siyar; Baab: Maa jaa'a fee kiraahiyat al maqaam bayna azhar al mushrikeen.

¹⁵⁹ Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Jihaad ; Baab: Iqaamah bi Ard al-Mushrik

However, the essence of *Hijrah* is the abandonment of evil in all its forms. As a result, even if one lives in the midst of Muslims, the principle of *Hijrah* is still applicable.

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: ((
الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ وَالْمُهَاجِرُ مَنْ هَجَرَ مَا نَهَى اللَّهُ عَنْهُ
)).((

‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Amr related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “*The Muslim is one from whose tongue and hand Muslims are safe, and the true emigrant (muhaajir) is one who abandons what Allah has forbidden.*”¹⁶⁰

In the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), Muslims first immigrated to Abyssinia and then to Madeenah to escape religious persecution from the Makkan pagans. The event of the second *Hijrah* also represents the turning point in prophethood. Because of its great significance the second Caliph, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab, chose it as the beginning point for the Muslim calendar instead of the Prophet’s birthday. It remains an integral part of the prophetic blueprint for Islaamic revival which has been neglected in most parts of the Muslim world today. Instead of emigration from regions controlled by disbelievers, most Muslims have become immigrants to the lands of the disbelievers. And after becoming citizens of these lands, they choose to live scattered amongst the disbelievers instead of congregating in religious communities as other immigrants do based on ethnic considerations.

Regarding the youth’s seclusion, Ibn Katheer said, “This is what is prescribed in the Sharee‘ah during times of trial and persecution -- a person who fears for his religion should flee from his persecutors, as was reported in the following *hadeeth*:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَهُ يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ ((
يَأْتِي عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ خَيْرُ مَالِ الرَّجُلِ الْمُسْلِمِ الْغَنَمُ يَتَّبِعُ بِهَا شَعَفَ الْجِبَالِ وَمَوَاقِعَ
الْقَطْرِ يَفْرُ بِدِينِهِ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ)).((

Aboo Sa‘eed al-Khudree related that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say, “*A time will soon come to people in which the best wealth of a Muslim will be sheep which he herds on the mountain tops and places where it rains, fleeing from persecution for the sake of his religion.*”¹⁶¹

In such cases, it is allowed to seclude oneself from people, but this is not prescribed in any other case, because by such seclusion one loses the benefits of daily congregational prayers and Friday congregational prayers. These young men were determined to flee from their people, and Allah decreed that for them, as He says about them,

“And when you withdraw from them, and that which they worship, except Allah,” meaning, when you depart from them and follow a different religion, opposing their worship of others besides Allah, then separate from them in a physical sense too,

“Then seek refuge in the cave; your Lord will open a way for you from His mercy,” meaning, He will bestow His mercy upon you, by which He will conceal you from your people.

¹⁶⁰ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Imaan, Baab: al Muslim man salima , and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. .
Kitaab: , Baad: .

¹⁶¹ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab Riqaaq; Baab: al ‘uzlah raahah

“And will make easy for you your affair,” means, He will give you what you need.

So they left and fled to the cave where they sought refuge. Then their people noticed they were missing, and the king looked for them, and it was said when he could not find them that Allah concealed them from him, so that he could not find any trace of them or any information about them. In the same way that Allah concealed Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companion [Aboo Bakr] as-Siddeeq, when they sought refuge in the Cave of Thawr. Quraysh idolators came after them in pursuit, but they did not find them even though they passed right by them. When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) noticed that as-Siddeeq was anxious and said, “O Messenger of Allah! If one of them looks down at the place of his feet, he will see us,” he told him: “O Aboo Bakr! What do you think of two who have Allah as their third?” And Allah said:

إِلَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِيَ اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ
إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِ
جُنُودٍ لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَى وَاللَّهُ هِيَ الْعَلِیَّةُ
وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ (٤٠)

“If you do not help him, indeed Allah helped him when the disbelievers drove him out. He was the second of the two. When they were in the cave, he said to his companion: ‘Do not grieve! Indeed, Allah is with us.’ Then Allah sent down His tranquility upon him, and strengthened him with forces which you did not see. He lowered the word of those who disbelieved, while the Word of Allah was elevated; and Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.” (Soorah at-Tawbah, 9: 40)

Actually, the story of this cave (Thawr) is far greater and more wondrous than that of the people of the Cave.¹⁶²

وَتَرَى الشَّمْسَ إِذَا طَلَعَتْ تَزَاوَرُ عَنْ كَهْفِهِمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَإِذَا
غَرَبَتْ تَقْرِضُهُمْ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَهُمْ فِي فَجْوَةٍ مِنْهُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ
مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُرْشِدًا

17. You could see the sun declining to the right of their cave when it rose and touching their left sides when it set, while they lay in the middle of the cave. That was among Allah’s signs. Whoever Allah guides is rightly guided and whoever He sends astray will not find any guiding friend to lead him to the right path.

Ibn Katheer commented on this verse saying: The description in this verse indicates that the entrance to the cave faced north, because Allah tells us that sunlight entered the cave while the sun was rising. “The sun declining to the right of their cave when it rose,” meant that the shade

¹⁶² Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 5, p. , no. .

decreased towards the right, as Ibn ‘Abbaas, Sa‘eed bin Jubayr and Qataadah said: (**declining**) meant “leaning.” Whenever the sun rises above the horizon, its rays decline until there is nothing left when it reaches its zenith. So Allah said, **“and touching their left sides when it set,”** meaning, its rays entered their cave from the left side of its entrance, which means it entered from the west. This is evidence for our position, for it is clear to anyone who reflects on the matter and has some knowledge of astronomy and the movements of the sun, moon and stars. If the entrance of the cave faced east, no sunlight would have entered it when the sun set, and if it faced the direction of the *Qiblah* (in this case, south), no sunlight would have entered it at the time of sunrise or sunset, and the shadows would have leaned neither to the right nor the left. If it had faced the west, no sunlight would have entered it at the time of sunrise, until after the sun had passed its zenith, and it would have stayed until sunset. The description in the verse supports what we have stated, and the praise belongs to Allah. Ibn ‘Abbaas, Mujaahid and Qataadah all said that **“catching their left sides”** meant that its rays would shine on them and then leave them.

Allah has told us this, because He wants us to understand it and ponder over its meaning. However, He did not inform us about the location of the cave, because there is no benefit for us in knowing that, and no legislative objective behind it. If there was any spiritual or religious interest that could be served by our knowing that, Allah and His Messenger would have taught us about it, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said: *“I have not left anything that will bring you closer to Paradise and keep you further away from Hell but I have certainly taught you about it.”*¹⁶³

Al-‘Uthaymeen explained that **“when it set”** to the left of their cave, it would **“leave them”** or **“catch them”**.¹⁶⁴ The second meaning being [closer to the intended meaning or] more likely the intended meaning. The benefit of this touching [by the sun] is that it prevented their bodies from change because the sun is healthy for human bodies.¹⁶⁵ [Too much being harmful] **“While they lay in the middle of the cave,”** meant that they were not at the mouth of the cave, but inside, which was more protective for them.¹⁶⁶

Maalik narrated from Zayd bin Aslam that [the phrase] **“Declining to the right of their cave when it rose and inclining to their left when it set, while they lay in the middle of the cave,”** meant that the sun entered the cave without touching them, because if it had touched them, it would have burnt their bodies and clothes. This was the view of Ibn ‘Abbaas.¹⁶⁷

Al-‘Uthaymeen concluded from the description of the sun’s rising and setting here and in other texts of the Qur’aan and Sunnah that it is the sun which revolves around the earth and not vice versa. He said, **“when it rose and ... when it set”** is evidence that it is the sun that moves and it is by its movement that there is a sunrise and sunset. In contrast to what people today say about it being the earth that revolves and the sun being stable. We have with us Allah’s statement [as evidence]. It is obligatory that we take it according to its obvious meaning and not deviate from the apparent meaning unless there is clear evidence to the contrary. So, if it becomes established for us by certain evidence that the changing of the night and day is a result of the earth’s revolution, it then becomes obligatory on us to interpret the verses according to the meaning which agrees with reality. We would then say: If the sun rises “according to what the eye sees”... However, we will never accept that the sun is fixed before it becomes clear with incontrovertible evidence that the sun is fixed and the earth revolves and that it is by its revolution that there is night and day. It is obligatory on us to say that the sun revolves and its revolution causes the day and night because Allah has associated the rising and setting to it. Furthermore, [on one occasion] when the sun set the Prophet

¹⁶³ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, pp. . The Prophet (ﷺ) said, *“I have left nothing that would bring you closer to Allah without telling you to do it.”* (Collected by at-Tabaraanee from Aboo Tharr in *al-Mu’jam al-Kabeer* (1648) and authenticated in *Silsilah al-Ahaadeeth as-Saheehah*, vol. 4, pp. 416-7, no. 1803).

¹⁶⁴ The two possible meanings of the word *taqridhum*.

¹⁶⁵ A lack of sunlight, the main source of vitamin D, can cause

¹⁶⁶ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 32.

¹⁶⁷ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, pp. .

(ﷺ) asked Aboo Tharr, “Do you know where it is going?”¹⁶⁸ He attributed “going” to it, and we know with certainty that Almighty Allah knows His creation better. So, we do not accept in its place conjecture or guesswork.”¹⁶⁹

For others, Saudi Prince Salmaan’s trip on the space shuttle and his observations were sufficient observable evidence that the sun does not rotate around the earth. In Europe the great transition to modern science occurred in the battle over Copernicus’s theory — the Copernican revolution. Galileo was the hero of this great battle. He claimed that the observations of the heavens that he had made with his new telescope vindicated Copernicus’s theory. Contrary to what people had thought for centuries, the sun was fixed and the earth orbited around it and rotated on an axis. This novel idea was annoying to the followers of Aristotle who conspired against him to get the Church to silence him and ultimately convict him as a heretic.¹⁷⁰ In so doing, the Church forever discredited its doctrines in the minds of many thinking people. It sacrificed its claim that it had a monopoly on the truth.

Galileo was punished and his books officially banned. But his ideas triumphed, and with them came the end of Aristotelian science.

Ibn Katheer explained that “**That was among Allah’s signs,**” referred to how He guided the youths to the cave where He kept them alive, and how the sun and wind entered the cave preserving their bodies.”¹⁷¹ Al-‘Uthaymeen noted that this phrase refers to the youths; (1) their leaving their people, (2) their seeking refuge in this particular cave, and (3) Allah’s making it easy for them to find a suitable cave. All of this, no doubt, is from the signs of Allah indicating His wisdom and mercy.¹⁷²

Ibn Katheer clarified that “**Whoever Allah guides is rightly guided,**” meant that Allah is the One Who guided these young men to true guidance among their people, for the one whom Allah guides is truly guided, and the one whom Allah leaves astray will find no one to guide him.¹⁷³

Al-‘Uthaymeen noted: “In this information from Allah is a note to us that we should not ask for guidance from anyone besides Allah and that we should not be worried or grieve when we see someone astray because misguidance is in Allah’s hand. We believe in *Qadar* and should not be upset with misguidance coming from Allah, but we must show the way to those astray. There is here Law (*Shar‘*) and Destiny (*Qadar*). You must be pleased with Destiny under all circumstances, but in the case of what was destined there is some distinction. Legally, you must be pleased with what is legislated under all circumstances. So, we are pleased that Allah has divided people into two groups; guided and astray. But it is obligatory on us, in spite of that, to strive to guide people.”¹⁷⁴

“**Whoever He sends astray will not find any guiding friend to lead him to the right path,**” has similar implications to Allah’s sealing hearts in the following verse:

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَرِهِمْ غَشَوْهُمْ وَعَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ
(٧)

“**Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes there is a covering. Theirs will be a great torment.**” (*Soorah al-Baqarah*, 2: 7)¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁸ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. , Baab: Bad’ ul-Khaq; Baab: Sifatush-Shams wal Qamar.

¹⁶⁹ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, pp. 32-3.

¹⁷⁰ *The Truth in the Light*, pp. 45-46.

¹⁷¹ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, pp. .

¹⁷² *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 33.

¹⁷³ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, pp. .

¹⁷⁴ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 34.

¹⁷⁵ See also: 17: 98; 7: 178; 28: 56; 5: 41; 16: 37; 6: 125 (*Adwaa al-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 32)

As-Sa‘dee said that this meant that Allah has sealed their hearts and ears with a seal which prevents faith to enter or act upon them, so they will not care for what benefits them nor listen to what will profit them. The covering prevents the eyes from seeing what could assist them. These paths of knowledge and goodness are blocked, so there is no hope for them, no good to be anticipated from them. They were prevented from that and the doors of faith blocked before them because of their disbelief, their denial of the truth and their obstinacy after the truth was made clear to them, as the Almighty said:

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ ۖ يَقَوْمِ لِمَ تُوذُونَنِي وَقَدْ تَعْلَمُونَ أَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ ۖ فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا أَزَاغَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ (٥)

“So when they turned away, Allah turned their hearts away. And Allah guides not rebellious disobedient people.” (Soorah as-Saff, 61: 5)¹⁷⁶

Perhaps a better translation of the phrase “whoever Allah sends astray none can guide,” would be: “whoever Allah allows to go astray none can guide,” because the idea that Allah misguides people is essentially incorrect. For, what would be the point of the judgment if someone who sincerely desired guidance was denied it by Allah, while someone else who does not want guidance is guided by Allah? There would be no meaning to good and evil, righteousness and sin. If Allah caused a person to be misguided, it would be unfair for Him to punish the person for being misguided. Instead, Allah describes himself as the best of Judges who loves justice. Actually, whoever seeks guidance are guided and whoever seeks evil and rejects every opportunity for guidance is misguided. Ultimately, if Allah wished to force them to be guided then he could have.

أَفَلَمْ يَأْتِ الْذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَن لَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَهْدَى النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا

“Have those who believe not yet known that had Allah willed, He could have guided all humankind?” (Soorah ar-Ra‘d, 13: 31)

Allah’s power is manifest in their guidance and their going astray. Consequently, Allah chose the phrase: “Whoever He sends astray none can guide.” It is really the person sending himself astray, however, he cannot choose to be evil unless Allah allows him to be evil. Furthermore, the evil choice cannot be implemented unless Allah allows it to take place. Thus, there is an element of truth in the false argument of the disbelievers:

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا عَبَدْنَا مِن دُونِهِ ۚ مِن شَيْءٍ نَّحْنُ وَلَا ءَابَاؤُنَا

“Those who joined others in worship with Allah said: ‘If Allah had so willed neither we nor our fathers would have worshipped anything besides Him...’ ” (Soorah an-Nahl, 16: 35)

The argument is false because revelation came to them instructing them otherwise and they chose to continue in their false worship.

A person may intend to do something evil but is unable to do it because the circumstances are not suitable. Humans do not have control over their circumstances. Thus, the only way in which a person can put an evil choice into action is if Allah allows the circumstances necessary for the act to take place.

¹⁷⁶ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 31-2.

قُلْ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ ۖ فَمَن أِهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۚ فَمَن ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهِ ۖ لَوْ مَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُم بِوَكِيلٍ (١٠٨)

Say: “O humankind! Now truth has come to you from your Lord. So whosoever receives guidance, he does so for the good of his own self, and whosoever goes astray, he does so to his own loss.” (Soorah Yunus, 10: 108)¹⁷⁷

Shaykh ash-Shanqeetee noted that this verse and others like it are proofs of the falsity of the Qadarite School which claims that humans are independent in their good and evil actions and that their actions are not according to Allah’s wish but according to human wish. May Allah be exalted that something could take place in His dominion against His wishes.¹⁷⁸

وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ أَيْقَاظًا وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ وَنُقَلِّبُهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ
وَكَلْبُهُمْ بَاسِطٌ ذِرَاعَيْهِ بِالْوَصِيدِ لَوِ اطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا
وَلَمُلِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُعبًا

18. And you would have thought them awake while they were asleep and I turned them on their right sides and on their left sides and their dog lay with its front legs stretched out at the entrance of the cave. Had you seen them you would have turned and fled filled with fear of them.”

Verse 18 completes the description of their state during their stay in the cave. According to Shaykh Al ‘Uthaymeen, “And you would have thought them awake...” meant that they did not exhibit the normal signs of relaxation usually associated with sleep. Instead they appeared to be awake.¹⁷⁹ Some scholars suggested that the reason they appeared awake was because they slept with their eyes open. Others said it was because of their frequent turning from side to side.¹⁸⁰ The second opinion is supported by the phrase following it, “I turned them on their right sides and on their left sides.”

It is worth noting that Allah did not mention in the phrase, “I turned them on their right sides and on their left sides...,” turning them on their backs or their stomachs because sleep on the right side and the left of the body is more perfect.¹⁸¹ In fact, sleeping on the stomach is harmful which is why the Prophet (ﷺ) strongly discouraged it.

¹⁷⁷ See also, 17: 15 and 27: 92.

¹⁷⁸ *Adwaa al-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 32.

¹⁷⁹ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 34.

¹⁸⁰ *Adwaa al-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 33. Ash-Shanqeetee went on to say: “Statements of the *Tafseer* scholars regarding the number of times they turned from side to side (Aboo Hurayrah said twice per year, others said once per year, once every seven years according to Mujaahid, etc. *al-Jaami’ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan*, vol. 9-10, p. 306), frequently or rarely, have no supportive evidence. As a result, I have avoided mentioning them.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ رَأَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ رَجُلًا مُضْطَجِعًا عَلَى بَطْنِهِ فَقَالَ: ((إِنَّ هَذِهِ ضِجَّةٌ لَا يُحِبُّهَا اللَّهُ)) .

Aboo Hurayrah related that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saw a man lying on his stomach and said, "Indeed, this is a way of lying not pleasing to Allah."¹⁸²

عَنْ يَعِيشَ بْنِ طَخْفَةَ بْنِ قَيْسٍ الْغِفَارِيِّ قَالَ كَانَ أَبِي مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الصُّفَّةِ فَقَالَ فَبَيْنَمَا أَنَا مُضْطَجِعٌ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ مِنَ السَّحَرِ عَلَى بَطْنِي إِذَا رَجُلٌ يُحَرِّكُنِي بِرِجْلِهِ فَقَالَ: ((إِنَّ هَذِهِ ضِجَّةٌ يُبْغِضُهَا اللَّهُ)) . قَالَ فَانْظَرْتُ فَإِذَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ .

Ya'eesh ibn Tikhafah al-Ghifaaree related that his father said, "While I was lying on my stomach in the mosque in the early morning, a man began to nudge me with his foot and then said, 'This is a method of lying which God hates.' I looked up and saw that he was Allah's messenger (ﷺ)."¹⁸³

عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ قَالَ قَالَ مَرَّ بِي النَّبِيُّ ﷺ وَأَنَا مُضْطَجِعٌ عَلَى بَطْنِي فَرَكَّضَنِي بِرِجْلِهِ وَقَالَ: ((يَا جُنَيْدُ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ ضِجَّةٌ أَهْلُ النَّارِ)) .

Aboo Tharr also reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) came upon him when he was lying on his stomach, poked him with his foot and said, "Jundub (i.e. Aboo Tharr), the inhabitants of hell lie this way."¹⁸⁴

Reasons for this prohibition, other than those given in the *hadeeth*, have been proposed over the centuries, however, none of them were very convincing. For example, the suggestion that sleeping in this position induces wet dreams remains to be proven, and even if it were accepted, besides being limited to men, it is a natural process not unlawful in any way. At any rate, after extensive research into spinal ailments and their causes in the latter part of the twentieth century, medical researchers and surgeons in the USA made the following recommendations,

"Poor sleep posture is a sure invitation to backaches. Use a firm mattress. Lie on the side with a bend to the knees. **Avoid lying on the belly**, a position that increases the spine's lumbar curve, causing that familiar sagging called swayback."¹⁸⁵

Hence, not only is the prohibition of sleeping on the stomach beneficial, but also the Prophet's sleeping posture wherein he used to lie on his right side with knees bent and his choice of a firm bed of palm fronds with only a leather sheet over it. Furthermore, in the late eighties, after extensive research into the factors linked to SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) or Cot Death, medical researchers in the UK found that putting babies and young children to sleep on their stomachs was a common factor. Consequently, warnings were given in the news papers and hospitals in the West. Further surveys conducted ten years later found that cases of Cot Death had dropped drastically.

The phrase "**I turned them...**" contains evidence that the actions of a sleeping person are not attributable to himself. Instead, they are more properly attributed to Allah. Thus, if a man said

¹⁸² *Sunan at-Tirmithi*, vol. , p. , no. . Kitaab: Adab; Baab: Rajul yanbatih alaa batnihee.

¹⁸³ Collected by Abu Daawood (*Sunan Abu Dawud* (English Trans.), vol.3, pp.1400-1, no.502) and Ibn Maajah, and authenticated in *Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah*, vol.2, p.305, no.3000).

¹⁸⁴ Collected by Ibn Maajah and authenticated in *Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah*, vol. 2, p. 305, no. 3001.

¹⁸⁵ *Time Magazine*, (European Edition: July 14, 1980), p. 34, third paragraph.

during sleep, “I divorce my wife,” or “I owe so-and-so 1,000 Riyals,” it is not binding because it occurred without his wish.¹⁸⁶ This is why the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported by ‘Alee to have said,

((رُفِعَ الْقَلَمُ عَنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ عَنْ النَّائِمِ حَتَّى يَسْتَيْقِظَ وَعَنْ الصَّبِيِّ حَتَّى يَحْتَلِمَ وَعَنْ الْمَجْنُونِ حَتَّى يَعْقِلَ)) .

“The pen is lifted from the book of three people; from the sleeper until he awakes, the child until puberty and from the insane until he regains his sanity.”¹⁸⁷

Allah caused their bodies to turn from one side to the other. During sleep humans commonly turn their bodies from side to side without knowing it. However, if the body of a person in a coma is laid out, it will not move. Nurses or family members are required to turn the person’s body from one side to the other in order to prevent the body from developing bed sores and rotting due to the reduced blood circulation at the points where the body is in contact with the bed. Al-Qurtubee quoted Ibn ‘Abbaas as saying that their turning was so that the earth would not eat their flesh.¹⁸⁸ As-Sa’di also explained in his commentary that their turning was to protect their bodies, because it is the nature of the earth to consume bodies which it comes in contact with.¹⁸⁹ The development of sores and the rotting of flesh would have appeared to people of the past as a consequence of the earth eating the flesh.

According to Al ‘Uthaymeen, what some scholars say about the wisdom of Allah turning their bodies from side to side being to avoid the earth eating the side in contact with it is not correct. He said, “What is correct is that this is not the wisdom. Instead, it is in order to maintain the balance of blood flow in the body. Blood circulates throughout the body. So, if blood only flows on one side of the body (i.e., the lower side), the higher side will be deprived of blood to a large degree. However, Allah in His wisdom made them turn from side to side.”¹⁹⁰

“**Their dog lay with its front legs stretched out...**” means, and Allah knows best, that it did not sleep.¹⁹¹ All mammals seem to sleep on their sides. For the dog to have its paws outstretched in the pose of the sphinx would indicate that it was watchfully awake. Al ‘Uthaymeen noted that this description contained permission for keeping dogs in order to guard people. Permission for using dogs to guard or herd animals and to protect farmland can be found in the narrations of the Sunnah. For example,

عَنْ أَبِي الْحَكَمِ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ ابْنَ عُمَرَ يُحَدِّثُ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: ((مَنْ أَخَذَ كَلْبًا إِلَّا كَلْبَ زَرْعٍ أَوْ غَنَمٍ أَوْ صَيْدٍ يَنْقُصُ مِنْ أَجْرِهِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ قِيرَاطٌ)) .

Abul-Hakam related that he heard Ibn ‘Umar quote the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying, “Whoever keeps a dog for other than farming, sheep herding or hunting, will have two qiraats decreased from his good deeds daily.”¹⁹²

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁸⁷ Sunan Abu Dawud (English Trans.), vol. 3, p. 1226, no. 4384, at-Tirmithe and Ibn Maajah, and authenticated in Saheeh Sunan at-Tirmithe, vol. 2, p. 64, no. 1150.

¹⁸⁸ Al-Jaami ‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vols. 9-10, p. 306.

¹⁸⁹ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 472.

¹⁹⁰ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 35.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. , p. , no. .Kitaab: Muzaara’ah; Baab: Iqtinaa kalb lil harth Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. .Kitaab: al musaaqaat; Baab: Amr bi qatl al kilaab.

Guarding human beings is more obviously permissible, because, if it is permissible to keep a dog to protect animals, cultivation and for hunting which are secondary human needs, to protect one's home and one's person with a dog is even more reasonable.¹⁹³

Ash-Shanqeetee mentioned that some scholars held that what was meant by "dog" in this verse was one of the youths and not an actual dog. They used as evidence some of the unusual recitations like: *wa kaalibuhum* and *wa kaali'uhum* (their guard). However, the Almighty's statement: **"with its front legs stretched out..."** is evidence of the falsity of this statement because stretching out of the front legs is among the actual characteristics of a real dog. As for the second recitation, it does not contradict it referring to a dog because dogs guard and watch families.

He went on to say: "It should be noted that the Almighty's mentioning of this dog in His Scripture, and its forelegs outstretched at the mouth of the cave indicates that accompaniment of the righteous has great benefit. Ibn Kathir said, "The blessing they enjoyed extended to their dog, so the sleep that overtook them overtook him too. This is the benefit of accompanying good people, and so this dog attained fame and stature."¹⁹⁴ This is also indicated by the Prophet's statement to one who said, "Indeed I love Allah and His Messenger," he said, "*You will be with those whom you love.*"¹⁹⁵

What is also understood from that is that accompaniment of evil people has great harm, as Allah the Most High explained:

قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ إِنِّي كَانَ لِي قَرِينٌ (٥١) يَقُولُ أَأَنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُصَدِّقِينَ (٥٢) أَإِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظْمًا أَأَنَّا لَمَدِينُونَ (٥٣) قَالَ هَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُّطَّلِعُونَ (٥٤) فَاطَّلَعَ فَرَآهُ فِي سَوَاءٍ الْجَحِيمِ (٥٥) قَالَ تَاللَّهِ إِن كِدْتَ لَتُرْدِينَ (٥٦) وَلَوْلَا نِعْمَةُ رَبِّي لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِينَ (٥٧)

"A speaker among them will say: 'Indeed, I had a companion who used to say: Are you among those who believe that when we die and become dust and bones, we will be held accountable? It will be said: "Have you looked below?" When he looked down he saw him in the middle of the Fire. He will exclaim: 'By Allah! You nearly ruined me! Had it not been for the Grace of my Lord, I would certainly have been among those brought forth (to Hell).'" (Soorah *as-Saffat*, 37: 51-7)¹⁹⁶

Qadar and Prayer

These verses describe the state of those who were in the cave, and how Allah answered their prayers for protection. Islaam teaches that prayer can change situations. It might seem difficult to comprehend how prayer can change anything, since Islaam also teaches that everything which will happen has already been written. That is, if all things are already written, then what is the point in prayer? This is a question which boggles the mind of many. However, the reality is simply that what is written is what one does. It is not that one does it because it is written. It is written, because that is what we are going to do. For many, these two concepts are one and the same. If what one

¹⁹³ *Tafseer al-Quraan al-Kareem*, pp. 35-6.

¹⁹⁴ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. , p.

¹⁹⁵ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. ,Kitaab;; Baab: *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. .Kitaab;; Baab:.

¹⁹⁶ *Adwaa al-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 34. Ash-Shanqeetee went on to say: "What *Tafseer* scholars mentioned regarding the name of the dog was not worth mentioning since it had no benefit. In the Magnificent Qur'aan there are many things which Allah did not explain for us or for His Prophet, and nothing authentic of its explanation exists, and research about it gains nothing and provides no benefit. Yet many *Tafseer* scholars go to great lengths to mention all the opinions concerning it without knowledge or benefit. I always avoid that. Like the color of the People of the Cave's dog, its name; the name of the youth who al-Khadiir killed, the type of wood used for Noah's Arc, the length of the Ark, how many floors it had, and so on and so forth from what has no benefit in knowing and no evidence to prove."

does is what was written, then he is forced to do it because it is written. However, the reality is that once one accepts that Allah knows all things, that He is omniscient, then that writing is only an expression of His knowledge of all things, not that He forces things to take place in one's life. There are, however, some situations in which Allah intervenes directly which have nothing directly to do with a person's choices. When a person turns to Allah in prayer, He will respond as He said:

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

“Your Lord said: ‘Call on Me, and I will respond you.’” (Soorah Ghaafir, 40: 60)

If the fact that all is already written down means that prayer can do nothing, then this statement of Allah becomes nonsensical – which is inconceivable. Aboo Hurayrah Prophet (ﷺ) emphatically stated this point as follows:

((ادْعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَنْتُمْ مُوقِنُونَ بِالْإِجَابَةِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُ دُعَاءَ مَنْ قَلْبٍ غَافِلٍ لَهُ)).

*“Call on Allah in prayer confident that it will be answered. But know that Allah does not answer the prayer of an unmindful, inattentive heart.”*¹⁹⁷

But if a person called on Allah ritualistically, his prayers will not be answered anymore than the prayers of the disbelievers, because real belief was absent. The prayers which are answered and which Allah rewards a person for are the prayers in which he called on Allah really believing that He will answer his prayers.

When something happens and a person says: ‘Whatever Allah wishes, happens,’ he means that, in spite of our efforts nothing takes place except by Allah's permission. Such a statement does not mean that one's efforts have no connection with what Allah permits, but that ultimately whatever takes place is only by Allah's permission. When something bad happens to a person, instead of regretting and crying over it, he should just say: ‘This is Allah's wish.’ By saying this he accepts Allah's decisions in his life and removes the chances for remorse. The Prophet (ﷺ) had said:

((وَإِنْ أَصَابَكَ شَيْءٌ فَلَا تَقُلْ لَوْ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ كَذَا وَكَذَا وَلَكِنْ قُلْ قَدَرُ اللَّهِ وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ فَإِنَّ لَوْ تَفْتَحُ عَمَلَ الشَّيْطَانِ)).

*“If a calamity befalls you, do not say, ‘If I had done such and such, it would have been such and such. Instead, say, ‘It is Allah's destiny and He does what He wishes.’ For, indeed, “if” opens the door for Satan's work.”*¹⁹⁸

When a person is in that state of psychological weakness due to failure, Satan plays on their weaknesses and increases their state of depression and remorse through these types of suggestions. If one is not careful, such satanic whisperings could ultimately lead a person into disbelief.

¹⁹⁷ Collected by at-Tirmidhee and authenticated (*Hasan*) by al-Albaanee in *Saheeh Sunan at-Tirmidhee*, vol.3, p.164, no.2766.

¹⁹⁸ *Sahih Muslim*, vol., p., no., Kitaab: Qadar; Baab: fil amr bil quwwah wa tark al ‘ajz

وَكَذَلِكَ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِيَتَسَاءَلُوا بَيْنَهُمْ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالُوا رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثْتُمْ فَابْعَثُوا أَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرِقِكُمْ هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَيُّهَا أَزْكَى طَعَامًا فَلْيَأْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِنْهُ وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ وَلَا يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ أَحَدًا ﴿٢٠﴾ إِنَّهُمْ إِنْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ يَرْجُمُوكُمْ أَوْ يُعِيدُوكُمْ فِي مِلَّتِهِمْ وَلَنْ تُفْلِحُوا إِذَا أَبَدًا

19-20. And in that way, I raised them up again, so they questioned each other. One of them asked: “How long have you spent here?” The others answered: “We have spent a day or part of a day.” Then they declared: “Your Lord knows best how long you have spent. So send one of you with this silver money to the city to look for a place with the best food, so that he may bring something to eat. He should however be cautious and not let anyone become aware of you. 20 For if they succeed in overpowering you then surely they would stone you to death or force you back to their belief and in that case you would never be successful ever.”

Allah begins to describe the next phase of their story in which He miraculously awakens them. The way in which He awakens them is as miraculous as the way He put them to sleep. Bodies may be preserved over centuries for a variety of reasons, as in the case of mummified Egyptians and others preserved due to natural processes like being frozen in glaciers, dried on the desert, or kept in the same form as they were buried due to the chemical composition of the soil. However, coming back to life after centuries of sleep is only by the extraordinary power of Allah. Consequently, Allah said, “And in that way I raised them up again...” referring to the miraculous way He put them to sleep.¹⁹⁹

“So they questioned each other...” It is the nature of people that when they awaken from sleep they ask each other or those around them about the length of time that they had been asleep.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. , p. , and Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 36.

²⁰⁰ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 36. Al ‘Uthaymeen commented that the meaning of *liyatasaa’aloo* here is not that they were awoken “in order to” ask each other (as implied by the *laam*), but that they were awoken “and” they asked each other. The *laam* is to indicate a consequence and not a reason as in the Almighty’s statement:

فَالْتَقَطَهُ ءَالُ فِرْعَوْنَ لِيَكُونَ لَهُمْ عَدُوًّا وَحَزَنًا إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَمَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا كَانُوا خَاطِئِينَ (٨)

“Then the household of Pharaoh picked him up, and he became for them an enemy and a cause of grief.” (Soorah al-Qasas, : 8)

He went on to explain that the *laam* could not possibly have been for “reason” because Pharaoh did not pick him up in order for him to be his enemy and to be a cause of sorrow for himself, instead he picked him up “and” he became his

When the youths discussed among themselves about the period of time that they had slept, none of them was able to determine the exact length of time of their sleep. Only someone who had not been asleep with them could inform them accurately. Thus, some among them felt that it may have been for **“a day or part of a day.”** Some of the scholars of *Tafseer* like al-Qurtubee suggested that the youths who had come to the conclusion that they had slept for only a part of a day had done so because they had entered the cave in the morning and were awoken at the end of the day.²⁰¹ About the others, Allah said: **“They declared: ‘Your Lord knows best how long you have spent,’** as if those who said it realized that their sleep was long but were unable to estimate it. At any rate, their inability to gauge their sleep indicated the depth of their sleep.²⁰²

This text generally addresses the issue of the passage of time. It mentions the common phenomenon that when a person falls asleep, time passes without his or her being aware of its passing. Time often seems long because people live most of it in a state of awakening. When Allah describes those people who die and are raised up, He mentions that they too will think that they were on earth for only a day or part of a day. The Almighty said:

قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ عَدَدَ سِنِينَ (١١٢) قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ فَسَلِ الْعَادِثِينَ (١١٣)

“He will say: ‘What number of years did you stay on earth?’ They will reply: ‘We stayed for a day or part of a day. Ask those who keep account.’ ” (Soorah al-Mu'minoon, 23: 112-3)

That is the case, because when a person reflects back on the many years of his life which have passed, they seem to have passed quickly, whereas the present and the future seem to take much longer. Allah mentioned this phenomenon in various places in the Qur'aan as a reminder to human beings that, ultimately time in this world is very short and so they have to make the best of their time. The Prophet (ﷺ) was reported by Ibn 'Abbaas to have reiterated that saying:

((نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُوءٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ الصِّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ))

*“There are two things about which many people are fooled; health and spare time.”*²⁰³

Muslims therefore, should not waste their time falsely thinking that they will always have enough time to remember Allah and do other righteous deeds. Nor should they imagine that their health will always be good, so whatever acts of worship they should do, they believe they will always be able to do. In another narration from Ibn 'Abbaas, the Prophet (ﷺ) advised a man saying:

((اِغْتَنِمْ خَمْسًا قَبْلَ خَمْسٍ , شَبَابَكَ قَبْلَ هَرَمِكَ , وَصِحَّتَكَ قَبْلَ سَقَمِكَ , وَغِنَاكَ قَبْلَ فَقْرِكَ , وَفَرَاغَكَ قَبْلَ شُغْلِكَ , وَحَيَاتَكَ قَبْلَ مَوْتِكَ))

*“Take advantage of five before five: your youth before your old age, your health before your illness, your wealth before your poverty, your spare time before you become busy, and your life before your death.”*²⁰⁴

enemy and a source of sorrow. (p. 37). This was the position of al-Qurtubee who used the same example of Pharaoh in his *Tafseer (al-Jaami' li Ahkaam al-Qur'aan, vols. 9-10, p. 310)*. However, ash-Shanqeetee interpreted this phrase according to its obvious meaning saying, “In order that they ask each other about the length of their stay in the cave during their sleep.” (*Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 35*)

²⁰¹ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. , Al-Jaami' li Ahkaam al-Qur'aan, vols. 9-10, p. 310 and Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem, p. 37.*

²⁰² *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem, p. 37.*

²⁰³ *Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Riqaq; Baab: Laa 'eesha illaa 'eeshat al aakhirah*

²⁰⁴ *Al-Haakim, mentioned in Fat'h al-Baaree and authenticated.*

‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab used to say:

((إِذَا أُمْسِيَتْ فَلَا تَنْتَظِرُ الصَّبَاحَ وَإِذَا أَصْبَحْتَ فَلَا تَنْتَظِرُ الْمَسَاءَ وَخُذْ مِنْ صِحَّتِكَ لِمَرَضِكَ وَمِنْ حَيَاتِكَ لِمَوْتِكَ)).

“If the evening catches you, do not wait until the morning, and if the morning catches you, do not await the evening. Instead, take from your health for [the time of] your sickness and from your life for your death.” This *hadeeth* and Ibn ‘Umar’s statement stress the importance of spending one’s time properly and not taking it for granted. The phrase “time to kill” and its derivatives should not be in the Muslim’s vocabulary. It should be more like “time is money”; spiritual capital. “Time is golden,” “Seize the moment,” should be the Muslim motto. Or in Qur’aanic terms:

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ (٧) وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ (٨)

“So when you have finished, devote yourself to worship. And turn your desires and hopes to your Lord alone.” (Soorah ash-Sharh, 94: 7-8)

The text also indicates why waiting in the state of the grave is not really a perplexing issue. Those who died tens of thousands of years ago in the past and those who die tens of thousands of years in the future will awaken on the Day of Judgment alike. As al-Qurtubee said in his book, *al-Mufhim*, “Sleep and death share the break in the connection of the soul with the body.”²⁰⁵ Thus, sleep is traditionally referred to as the brother of death. In both cases, humans are unaware of the passage of time, so those who die in the distant past will not be oppressed by having to wait in the state of the grave until all humans die.

After Allah brought the sleepers back from their miraculous sleep, they were experiencing hunger²⁰⁶ so their discussion changed from the length of their sleep to finding suitable food. Those who doubted that their sleep was for only a day or so said: “So send one of you with this silver money to the city to look for a place with the best food.” Scholars have derived a number of issues from this phrase.

Firstly, it contains the permissibility of engaging others as agents in purchasing and selling.²⁰⁷ Evidence from the *Sunnah* can be found in *hadeeths* like the following:

عَنْ عُرْوَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَعْطَاهُ دِينَارًا يَشْتَرِي لَهُ بِهِ شَاةً فَاشْتَرَى لَهُ بِهِ شَاتَيْنِ فَبَاعَ إِحْدَاهُمَا بِدِينَارٍ وَجَاءَهُ بِدِينَارٍ وَشَاةٍ فَدَعَا لَهُ بِالْبَرْكََةِ فِي بَيْعِهِ وَكَانَ لَوْ اشْتَرَى التُّرَابَ لَرَبِحَ فِيهِ

‘Urwah ibn Abee al-Ja’d al-Baariqee related that the Prophet (ﷺ) gave him a *deenaar* to buy a sheep for him and he purchased with it two sheep, sold one of them for a *deenaar* and returned with the *deenaar* and the sheep. The Prophet (ﷺ) prayed for him that he be blessed in his sale. Since then, even if he bought dirt he would profit from it.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ *Fat’h ul-Baaree*, Bismika llaahumma amootu wa ahyaa, 5837 Hadeeth CD.

²⁰⁶ *Al-Jaami’ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan*, vols. 9-10, p. 310.

²⁰⁷ *Al-Jaami’ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan*, vols. 9-10, p. 311, *Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 36 and *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 38. Ash-Shanqeetee mentioned that some scholars like Aboo Haneefah and Sahnoun among Maalikites held that the verse did not indicate general permissibility for *tawkeel* but only its permissibility in cases of danger, because if all them had left to purchase their needs, their enemies would have known about them. (p. 36)

²⁰⁸ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab : manaaqib, Baab: the pagans ask that the Prophet be shown to them. Al ‘Uthaymeen mentioned that scholars deduced from this *hadeeth* the permissibility of *tasarruf al-fudool* () : that it is

Secondly, it contains proof that there is no harm in a person seeking the nicest food.²⁰⁹

Thirdly, it also contains evidence for the weakness of the scholars' opinion that describing something for sale as "the nicest" is impermissible. For example, they held that, to say: "I'm selling you the best possible barley," is not allowed since everything good has something better. The correct position in this regard is that it should be judged according to the local custom. The Prophet (ﷺ) affirmed the action of the companion who sold low quality dates for good dates in order to feed the Prophet (ﷺ).²¹⁰

"Look for a place with the best food," according to Ibn Katheer meant the purest food, as Allah says elsewhere:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوتَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ خُطُوتَ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ ۖ مَا زَكَّىٰ مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ (٢١)﴾

"Had it not been for the Grace of Allah and His Mercy on you, not one of you would ever have been pure from sins. But Allah purifies whom He wills, and Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower." (Soorah an-Noor, 24: 21)

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن زَكَّاهَا (٩)

"Indeed, whosoever purifies himself will achieve success," (Soorah ash-Shams, 91: 9)

The word *zakaah* is derived from the same root. It refers to that which makes one's wealth good and purifies it.²¹¹

This phrase addresses the importance of choosing the right food; making sure that what is eaten is beneficial for human bodies and *halaal* according to the teachings of Islaam. For instance, if we are invited to eat at a person's house whose earning comes from a *haraam* source (interest or usury) then it is *haraam* for us to eat that food, unless you are visiting them to advise them about their earning. *Haraam* food can cause our sincerest supplications to be rejected. Consider the following example given by the Prophet (ﷺ):

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ((أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ طَيِّبٌ لَا يَقْبَلُ إِلَّا طَيِّبًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَمَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِمَا أَمَرَ بِهِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ فَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ وَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ ذَكَرَ الرَّجُلَ يُطِيلُ السَّفَرَ أَشْعَثَ أَغْبَرَ يَمُدُّ

allowed for a person to use the wealth of others if he knows that they will be pleased with it. (*Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem*, p. 38.)

²⁰⁹ *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem*, p. 38.

²¹⁰ See *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: wakaalah; Bab: Ithnaa baa' al wakeel shayan faasidan and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: musaaqaat; Baab: Bay' ta'aam. *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem*, p. 38.

²¹¹ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p. .

يَدِيهِ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ يَا رَبِّ يَا رَبِّ وَمَطْعَمُهُ حَرَامٌ وَمَشْرَبُهُ حَرَامٌ وَمَلْبَسُهُ حَرَامٌ وَغُذِي
بِالْحَرَامِ فَأَنَّى يُسْتَجَابُ لِذَلِكَ)).

Aboo Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “O People! Allah is Pure and He only accepts what is pure! For indeed Allah commanded the believers what He commanded the Messengers. He said: ‘O Messengers! Eat from the pure foods and do right. Indeed I know well what you do.’²¹² And He said: ‘O Believers! Eat from the pure and good foods I have given you.’²¹³” Then he mentioned a traveler on a long journey, whose hair was disheveled and dusty, and who stretched his hand out towards the sky saying: ‘My Lord! My Lord!’ But his food was unlawful, his drink was unlawful, his clothing was unlawful, and he was nourished unlawfully. So, how could his prayers be answered?”²¹⁴

In this example, the man combined many of the factors which normally assure that prayers are answered. Firstly, he was a traveler on a long journey. Secondly, his rough appearance indicates he was in difficulty. Thirdly, his hands were outstretched to Allah, who is shy to let his servant lower his hands empty. Fourthly, he used one of Allah’s most powerful and comprehensive names, *ar-Rabb*, as a means of *tawassul* (intercession). And fifthly, he repeated his prayer so that it had more chances of being accepted. Yet, despite all of these factors and regardless of his following the necessary etiquette, his supplication was rejected and the Prophet (ﷺ) ridiculed his efforts. Thus, it is essential that one who wishes his prayers to be accepted ensure that he eats from pure money earned from permissible sources, and he eats pure food, permissible to eat.²¹⁵

“He should however be cautious and not let anyone be aware of us.” When the youths sent one amongst them to get the food, they instructed him to enter the city and purchase the food carefully. They went out trying to avoid being discovered, for fear that if they were discovered they would be forced back into a state of disbelief or they would be murdered due to their unwavering adherence to their beliefs. Little did they know that their clothes and money from three centuries earlier would surely give them away.

They went on to say that if they went back to that state they would surely not succeed as they would forfeit their religion, their worldly life, as well as their Afterlife.

According to Islaamic teachings, if a person’s life is threatened he may make false statements of disbelief or apostasy in order to preserve his life.

Some scholars deduced from the verse: **“For if they succeed in overpowering you then surely they would stone you to death or force you back to their belief and in that case you would never be successful ever,”** that the teaching that those forced into sin were excused was unique to the Prophet’s nation. The statement **“In that case you would never be successful ever,”** indicates that being forced was not an excuse. That understanding is supported by the implied meaning of the Prophet’s statement:

((إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَجَاوَزَ عَنْ أُمَّتِي الْخَطَأَ وَالنِّسْيَانَ وَمَا اسْتَكْرِهُوا عَلَيْهِ)).

“Indeed, Allah has excused my followers from genuine mistakes, forgetfulness and what they have been forced to do.”²¹⁶

²¹² Soorah al-Mu’minooh, 51: 23.

²¹³ Soorah al-Baqarah, 2: 172.

²¹⁴ Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Zakaah; Baab: Qabool sadaqah.

²¹⁵ Sharh al-Arba’een, p. 275. Quoted in Du’a: The Weapon of the Believer, pp. 156-7.

²¹⁶ Narrated by Aboo Tharr, collected in Sunan Ibn-i-Majah, vol. , p. , no. . Kitaab: Talaah; Baab: Talaah al Mukrah and authenticated in Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah, vol.1, p.347, no.1662.

It is understood from “*Indeed, Allah has excused my followers,*” that other nations were not excused from that. As for this nation, Allah has openly declared that those forced are excused in His statement:

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيْمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيْمَانِ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ (١٠٦)

“Allah’s wrath and a great torment is on whoever disbelieved in Allah after believing, whose hearts are open to disbelief, except the one who is forced while his heart is at rest with faith.” (Soorah an-Nahl, 16: 106)²¹⁷

Lessons from Verses 19 & 20

Shaykh as-Sa‘dee stated that these two verses contain the following lessons:²¹⁸

1. The importance of knowledge and an encouragement to seek it. This is derived from the fact that Allah woke them from sleep for this reason (“**in order that they may ask one another**”).
2. The etiquette required of one who is confused or unsure about some issue of knowledge is that he take it back to the one who has the knowledge and that he stay within his own knowledge limitations. (“**Your Lord knows best how long you have spent**”)
3. The permissibility to eat good and tasty foods, as long as one does not reach the point of impermissible excessiveness. This is based on Allah’s statement, “**Let him look for the purest / best food and bring you some of its provision to eat.**” This is especially the case for those who are only accustomed to such foods. And perhaps this is the basis used by many of the tafseer scholars who say that these youths were the children of kings. This may be deduced from the fact that they asked for the best foods, which rich people are accustomed to eating.
4. An encouragement to implement caution and concealment, and to stay away from situations that may be a source of *fitnah* (trial) for one’s religion. And that one should be secretive concerning himself and his brothers in the religion in this regard.
5. The example of great religious desire and commitment that these youths possessed for the religion, and their abandonment of all things which could be sources of trial in their religion, and their *Hijrah* from their lands for the sake of Allah.
6. The verses mention the harm and corruption contained in evil, which should encourage one to detest and completely abandon it. And that this is the way of the believers of past and present, as the youths said, “**or else you will never be successful.**”

وَكَذَلِكَ أَغْتَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا إِذْ يَتَنَازَعُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ فَقَالُوا ابْنُوا عَلَيْهِم بُنْيَانًا رَبُّهُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ غَلَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِم مَّسْجِدًا

²¹⁷ *Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, pp. 58-9.

²¹⁸ *Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan*, p. 550.

21. In this way I caused them to be found, so that they would know that Allah's promise is true and the hour of resurrection is coming, without a doubt. When they were disputing among themselves about their case, some of them said: "Construct a building over them; their Lord knows best about them." Those who prevailed in their case said: "Indeed we will build a place of worship over them."

"In this way I caused them to be found," meaning, 'just as I caused them to sleep then woke them up physically intact, I made their story known to the people of that time.'²¹⁹

The commentators explained that when the youths went to the city to buy the food and paid for it in money which was 309 years old, the people of the town probably initially suspected that the youths had found some kind of buried treasure. However, the way in which they were dressed and their dialect must have aroused even greater suspicion amongst the town's people. Allah brought them into the city in this manner to prove the truth about resurrection of the dead and demonstrate His miraculous powers.

"So they would know that Allah's promise is true," that he would save the believers from the disbelievers, because the seven youths escaped from a great nation which sought to prevent them from worshipping Allah alone.²²⁰

"And the hour of resurrection is coming, without a doubt," refers to the fact that many people of this period doubted about the resurrection of the body since the earth consumed it. They held that only the soul would be resurrected. In order to prove that bodies can be resurrected, Allah revived the youths in their era.²²¹

"When they were disputing among themselves about their case," Allah caused their story to become widely known, and their importance to be great until those who discovered them became so awed by them that "some of them said: "Construct a building over them; their Lord knows best about them." This statement meant that they should seal the mouth of the cave, and leave them as they are.²²²

"Those who prevailed in their case said: "Indeed we will build a place of worship over them." Instead of building a structure to cover them and hide them so there would be no trace of them, the authorities decided on building a mosque over them for prayer.²²³ They built it over them in order to worship Allah in it while remembering their situation and what happened to them.²²⁴ Allah did not clarify in the verse whether those whose opinion prevailed were believers or disbelievers. However, it seems more likely that they were believers because building places of worship is among the characteristics of the believers. However, one could logically argue that putting mosques over graves is an act of the cursed and not that of the believers.²²⁵

Mention of the building of a mosque over their grave here does not indicate its permissibility. For the context is the story of the Youths of the Cave and their situation. In fact, the act of building houses of worship over graves is among the paths leading to *shirk*, which the

²¹⁹ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p. .

²²⁰ *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem*, p. 40.

²²¹ This was the opinion of 'Ikrimah (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. , p. , p.). Believe in only the resurrection of the spirit became the common belief of Christians.

²²² *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p. .

²²³ *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem*, p. 40.

²²⁴ *Tafseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan*, p. 637.

²²⁵ *Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 59.

Sharee'ah firmly opposes to such a degree that its prohibition was among the last things which the Prophet (ﷺ) said on his deathbed.²²⁶

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ فِي مَرَضِهِ الَّذِي مَاتَ فِيهِ: ((لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسْجِدًا)) قَالَتْ وَلَوْلَا ذَلِكَ لَأَبْرَزُوا قَبْرَهُ غَيْرَ أَنِّي أَخْشَى أَنْ يُتَّخَذَ مَسْجِدًا

The Prophet's wife 'Aa'ishah, reported that when death was descending upon Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), he drew his striped cloak over his face saying, "May Allah's curse be on the Jews and Christians for taking the graves of their prophets as places of worship." She added, "Were it not for that, they would have made his grave prominent, except that I feared that it would be taken as a place of worship."²²⁷

The fact that grave-worship was among the last things which the Prophet (ﷺ) warned against before leaving the world indicates that this practice would become a serious test for his own nation. In the formative years of Islaam, the Prophet (ﷺ) had forbidden his followers from even visiting graves, and it was not until *tawheed* was firmly established among them that the ban was lifted. The Prophet (ﷺ) was reported by Buraydah to have said,

((نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْ زِيَارَةِ الْقُبُورِ فَزُورُوهَا فَإِنَّ فِي زِيَارَتِهَا تَذْكَرَةً))

"I forbade you from visiting graves, but now you should visit them, for surely they are reminders of the next life."²²⁸

However, in spite of this allowance, the Prophet (ﷺ) placed certain severe restrictions on the visiting of graves in order to avoid its deterioration into grave worship in later generations:

1. As a means of setting up a barrier against grave worship, prayer was totally forbidden in graveyards regardless of the intention. Aboo Sa'eed al-Khudree reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said:

((كُلُّ الْأَرْضِ مَسْجِدٌ وَطَهُورٌ إِلَّا الْمَقْبَرَةَ وَالْحَمَّامَ))

"All the earth is a masjid (place of worship), except graveyards and toilets."²²⁹

Ibn 'Umar also reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

((صَلُّوا فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوهَا قُبُورًا))

"Pray in your houses; do not make them graveyards."²³⁰

Voluntary prayer is recommended in the home as an example for the family. If no prayer takes place there, it then resembles a graveyard in which no prayer is allowed. Although praying to Allah in a graveyard is not in itself *shirk*, the ignorant, under Satan's influence, may assume that prayers in graveyards are to the dead and not for them. Consequently, this avenue to idolatry was decisively blocked. On one occasions, the second Caliph, 'Umar ibn

²²⁶ Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem, p. 40.

²²⁷ Sahih Al-Bukhari (Arabic-English), vol. 1, p. 255, no. 427, Sahih Muslim, (English Trans.), vol. 1, p. 269 no. 1082, and Sunan Abu Dawud, (English Trans.), vol. 2, p. 917, no. 3221.

²²⁸ Sahih Muslim, (English Trans.), vol. 2, pp. 463-4 no. 2131 and Sunan Abu Dawud, (English Trans.) vol. 2, p. 919, no. 3229). The wording is that of Sunan Abu Dawud.

²²⁹ Sunan Abu Dawud, (English Trans.), vol.1, p.125, no.492, and Sunan Ibn-i-Majah, vol. , p. , no. .

²³⁰ Sahih Al-Bukhari, (Arabic-English), vol.2, p.156, no.280 and Sahih Muslim, vol.1, p.376, no.1704.

al-Khattaab, noticed another of the Prophet's companions, Anas ibn Maalik, praying near a grave and called out to him, "The grave! The grave!"²³¹

2. A second barrier was placed by the Prophet's (ﷺ) prohibition of purposely praying in the direction of graves because such an act may be later understood by the ignorant as prayer directed to the dead themselves. Aboo Marthad al-Ghanawee reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

((لَا تُصَلُّوا إِلَى الْقُبُورِ وَلَا تَجْلِسُوا عَلَيْهَا))

"Do not pray towards graves nor sit on them."²³²

3. The recitation of Qur'aan in graveyards is not allowed, as neither the Prophet (ﷺ) nor his companions were known to do so. When the Prophet's wife, 'Aa'ishah, asked him what to say when visiting graveyards, he told her to give *salaams* (greetings of peace) and a supplication for those buried but did not tell her to recite *Soorah al-Faatihah* or any other chapter from the Qur'aan.²³³ Aboo Hurayrah further reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) had said,

((لَا تَجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ مَقَابِرَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْفِرُ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ الَّذِي تُقْرَأُ فِيهِ سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ))

"Do not make your houses graveyards, for verily Satan flees from the house in which *Soorah al-Baqarah* is read."²³⁴

This narration and others like it imply that the Qur'aan is not to be read in graveyards. Qur'aanic recitation is encouraged in one's house, and making it like a graveyard, in which no recitation should take place, is forbidden.²³⁵

²³¹ *Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Arabic-English), vol. 1, p. 251, no. 48). These *Hadeeths* also confirm that the Prophet's prohibition of prayer in graveyards was not due to the area being considered ritually impure (*Najis*). The graves of the prophets are pure, because, according to the Prophet (ﷺ), Allah has not allowed the earth to eat their bodies. Hence, the Prophet's curse on the Jews and Christians for taking the graves of their prophets as places of worship was due to the *Shirk* involved and not the impurity of the area. (*Tayseer al-'Azeed al-Hameed*, p. 328).

²³² *Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.), vol. 2, p. 460, no. 2122, *Sunan Abu Dawud*, (English Trans.), vol.2, p.917, no.3223, an-Naasaa'ee and *Sunan Ibn-i-Majah*, vol. , p. , no. . This includes even *Du'aa* (informal prayer) in their direction, because the Prophet (ﷺ) had said that *Du'aa* is worship (Collected by al-Bukhaaree in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*), *Sunan Abu Dawud*, (English Trans.), vol. 1, p. 387, no. 1474, and *Sunan Ibn-i-Majah*, vol. , p. , no. . *Du'aa* should be made in the same direction as *Salaah* (Formal prayer, towards the *Qiblah* (Makkah)).

Note: It should also be noted that in Islam the funeral service is **not** held in the graveyard, but in a prayer area set aside for large congregational prayers or in a masjid. Furthermore, because the body is placed at the front of the congregation, directly in front of the *Imaam* (prayer leader), the funeral prayer (*Salaatul-Janaazah*) does not have any bowing (*Rukoo'*) or prostration (*Sujood*), so as not to give anyone the impression that the prayer is to the dead and not merely for the dead as the wordings of the prayer clearly indicate.

²³³ *Ahkaam al-Janaa'iz*, p.191. The text of the *Du'aa* is as follows:

((السَّلَامُ عَلَى أَهْلِ الدِّيَارِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ وَيَرْحَمُ اللَّهُ الْمُسْتَقْدِمِينَ مِنَّا وَالْمُسْتَأْخِرِينَ وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ لَلْآحِقُونَ))

"As-Salaamu 'alaa Ahlid-Diyaari minal-Mu'mineen wal-Muslimeen Yarhamullaahu al-Mustaqdimeena minnaa wal-Mustakhireen wa Innaa in Shaa Allahu bikum Laahiqoon. Peace be upon the Believers and Muslims among the inhabitants of these dwellings. May Allah have mercy on those who have gone ahead of us, and those following us. And we shall-Allah willing-be joining you." (*Sahih Muslim*, (English Trans.), vol.2, pp.461-2, no.2127).

²³⁴ *Sahih Muslim*, (English Trans.), vol.1, p.377, no.1707.

²³⁵ As for the recitation of *Soorah Yaseen*, there is no narration concerning graveyards and the narration about its recitation over the dying is inauthentic (*Da'eef*). See *Ahkaam al-Janaa'iz* p.11 and p.192 fn. 2.

4. The Prophet (ﷺ) forbade the white-washing of graves, the building of structures over them,²³⁶ writing on them,²³⁷ or raising them above ground level.²³⁸ He also taught that any such structures should be torn down and the graves made level with the ground. ‘Alee ibn Abee Taalib reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered him to demolish all idols he came across, and to level all graves more than a palm’s width high to the height of the surrounding earth.²³⁹
5. The building of masjids over graves was specifically forbidden by the Prophet (ﷺ). The Prophet’s wife ‘Aa’eshah, reported that both Umm Habeebah and Umm Salamah mentioned to the Prophet (ﷺ) about a church which they saw in Ethiopia which had in it pictures and he said:

((إِنَّ أَوْلَيْكَ إِذَا كَانَ فِيهِمُ الرَّجُلُ الصَّالِحُ فَمَاتَ بَنَوْا عَلَى قَبْرِهِ مَسْجِدًا وَصَوَّرُوا فِيهِ تِيكَ الصُّورَ أَوْلَيْكَ شِرَارُ الْخَلْقِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ)).

“Indeed! If there is a righteous man among them and he dies, they build on his grave a mosque and make in it those pictures. They are the worst of creation in the sight of Allah on the Day of Resurrection.”²⁴⁰

6. In order to prevent grave worship, the Prophet (ﷺ) also forbade annual or seasonal gatherings even around his own grave. Aboo Hurayrah reported that he said,

((لَا تَجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ قُبُورًا وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا قَبْرِي عِيدًا وَصَلُّوا عَلَيَّ فَإِنَّ صَلَاتَكُمْ تَبْلُغُنِي حَيْثُ كُنْتُمْ)).

“Do not make your houses graveyards nor make my grave a (place of) festivities. Instead, ask (Allah’s) blessings for me wherever you may be, for they will reach me.”²⁴¹

²³⁶ Reported by Jaabir in *Sahih Muslim*, (English Trans.), vol.2, p.459, no.2116 and *Sunan Abu Dawud*, (English Trans.), vol.2, pp.216-7, nos.3219-20.

²³⁷ Reported by Jaabir in *Sunan Abu Dawud* (English Trans.), vol.2, p.216, no.3219.

²³⁸ Reported by Jaabir in *Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.), vol.2, pp.459-60, no.2116 and *Sunan Abu Dawud* (English Trans.), vol.2, p.216 no.3219.

²³⁹ *Sahih Muslim*, (English Trans.), vol.2, p.459, no.2115, *Sunan Abu Dawud*, (English Trans.), vol.2, pp.914-15, no.3212. The text of the *hadeeth* is reported by Abul-Hayyaaj al-Asadee wherein he said that ‘Alee ibn Abee Taalib said to him, *Shall I send you as the messenger of Allah sent me? To deface every statue or picture in houses and level all elevated graves.*”

Note: These *hadeeths* have been forgotten in many Muslim lands where graveyards have become filled with a variety of structures built over graves in imitation of other nations. In some lands like Egypt, graveyards resemble towns with well defined streets. Tombs to house the dead resemble houses, so much so that in some places poor families have broken into them and set up permanent residence in them in places like the City of the Dead in Cairo. Based on this *hadeeth* and others like it, not only should such tombs be demolished, but also mausoleums like the Taj Mahal in India, the one erected over the grave of the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, in Karachi, Pakistan, the tomb of the claimed Mahdi in Sudan that of Sayyid al-Badawee in Egypt, etc. Such a step would also cancel the role of the *Sadanah* (custodians) of the shrines who live off the generous donations of visitors who believe that generosity to the custodians can facilitate prayers to saints and guarantee results.

²⁴⁰ *Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Arabic-English), vol.1, p.255, no.427, Kitaab: Salaah; Baab: Hal tanbash quboor mushrikee al jaahiliyyah, *Sahih Muslim*, (English Trans.), vol.1, p.269 no.1082 Kitaab: Masaajid wa mawaadi as salaah; Baab: nahy ‘an binaa masaajid ‘alaa quboor .

²⁴¹ *Sunan Abu Dawud*, (English Trans.), vol.2, p.542-3, no.2037. If annual gatherings around the Prophet’s (r) grave are forbidden, then the huge gatherings and celebrations held on different occasions, like birthdays, at the shrines built over the graves of so-called saints, are completely outside the teachings of Islaam. Not only should the shrines be demolished, as indicated by the Prophet’s command narrated by the fourth Righteous Caliph, ‘Alee, but these religious festivals should also be stopped.

7. Setting out on journeys to visit graves was also forbidden by the Prophet (ﷺ). This practice forms the basis of idolatrous pilgrimages in other religions. Aboo Hurayrah and Aboo Sa'eed al-Khudree both reported that Allah's Messenger said,

((لَا تُشَدُّ الرِّحَالُ إِلَّا إِلَى ثَلَاثَةِ مَسَاجِدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَمَسْجِدِ الرَّسُولِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى)).

*"Do not travel except to three masjids, Masjid Haraam (the Ka'bah in Makkah), the Messenger's Masjid, and the Aqsa Masjid."*²⁴² While returning from a trip Aboo Bashrah al-Ghifaaree met Aboo Hurayrah and the latter asked him where he was coming from. Aboo Bashra replied that he was coming back from at-Toor where he had made prayer. Aboo Hurayrah said, *"If only I had caught you before you left, for I heard Allah's messenger say, 'Do not travel to other than three masjids..'"*²⁴³

"Taking Graves as Places of Worship":

Ibn Mas'oud reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

((إِنَّ مِنْ شَرِّ النَّاسِ مَنْ تُدْرِكُهُ السَّاعَةُ وَهُمْ أَحْيَاءُ وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذُ الْقُبُورَ مَسَاجِدَ)).

*"The most evil of mankind are those who will be alive when the Last Day arrives and those who take graves as places of worship."*²⁴⁴ Jundub ibn 'Abdillaah reported that five days before the Prophet's death he heard him say,

((أَلَا وَإِنْ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ كَانُوا يَتَّخِذُونَ قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ وَصَالِحِيهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ أَلَا فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْقُبُورَ مَسَاجِدَ إِنِّي أَنَهَاكُمْ عَنْ ذَلِكَ)).

*"Those before you took the graves of their prophets as places of worship. Do not take graves as places of worship for verily I forbid you to do so."*²⁴⁵

After understanding clearly from the previous *Hadeeths* that taking graves as places of worship is forbidden by the Prophet (ﷺ), it is necessary to define exactly what is meant by the phrase *"Taking graves as places of worship."* There are three possible meanings which can be deduced from the phrase in Arabic:

1. *Making Prayer or Sujood (prostration) on or Towards a Grave.* Praying on the grave is forbidden explicitly in Ibn 'Abbaas' *hadeeth* in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said, *"Do not pray towards graves nor on them"*²⁴⁶ as well as the *Hadeeth* narrated by Aboo Marthad mentioned earlier.
2. *Building a Masjid over a Grave or Putting a Grave in a Masjid.* Building masjids over graves is forbidden by Umm Salamah's *hadeeth* in which the Prophet (ﷺ) explained that those who build places of worship over graves are the most evil of creation in Allah's sight. Placing a grave in a *masjid* was also forbidden according to 'Aa'ishah interpretation of the Prophet's final statement, *"May Allah curse a people who take their Prophets' (ﷺ) graves as*

²⁴² *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, (Arabic-English), vol.2, p.157, no.281 and *Sahih Muslim*, (English Trans.), vol.2, p.699, no.3218.

²⁴³ Collected by Ahmad and at-Tayaalasee and rated *Saheeh* (authentic) by al-Albaanee in *Ahkaam al-Jaanaa'iz*, p. 226.

²⁴⁴ Collected by Ahmad.

²⁴⁵ *Sahih Muslim*, (English Trans.), vol.1, p.269, no.1083.

²⁴⁶ Collected by at-Tabaraanee.

masjids.”²⁴⁷ When the suggestion was made to bury the Prophet (ﷺ) in his *masjid*, she opposed it based on the Prophet’s (ﷺ) last words.

3. *Praying in a masjid containing a grave*, Praying in a *masjid* built over a grave is forbidden, because it is a natural consequence of the prohibition placed on building *masjids* over graves. The prohibition of a path necessarily prohibits what is at the end of the path. For example, the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade wind and stringed musical instruments (*ma‘aazif*). Aboo Maalik al-Ash‘aree reported that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say,

((لَيَكُونَنَّ مِنْ أُمَّتِي أَقْوَامٌ يَسْتَحِلُّونَ الْحَرَ وَالْحَرِيرَ وَالْخَمْرَ وَالْمَعَازِفَ)).

“Certainly, there will be among my followers those who make allowable (*halaal*) fornication and adultery, the wearing of silk (for men), taking intoxicants, and musical instruments (*ma‘aazif*).”²⁴⁸ Both the playing of these instruments and listening to music are automatically prohibited as they are the purposes for which musical instruments are made. Similarly, neither the prohibition on building *masjids* over graves nor the order to build them elsewhere is aimed at the act of construction, for building is in itself permissible. It is, in fact, aimed at the performance of *salaah* in them, which is the purpose for which they are built. Thus, the prohibition of building *masjids* on graves automatically implies the prohibition on *salaah* in such *masjids*.

Masjids with Graves

Such *masjids* are of two types with regard to their origin:

a.	<i>masjid</i> built over a grave, and
b.	<i>masjid</i> in which a grave has been put, some time after its construction.

Naturally, there is no difference between the two as far as *salaah* is concerned. In both cases, *salaah* in them is despised if no regard is paid to the grave, and *haraam* if *salaah* to the grave is intended. However, the method of correcting such *masjids* varies according to their origin:

1. A *masjid* built over a grave should be demolished and the grave leveled if it has a structure over it. Because such a *masjid* was originally a grave, it should be returned to its original state.
2. A *masjid* in which a grave has been placed should be left intact, but the grave should be removed. In this case, the *masjid* was originally a *masjid* and not a grave; thus, it should be returned to its original states.

The Prophet’s Grave

The presence of the Prophet’s grave in his *masjid* in Madeenah can neither be used to justify the placing of bodies in other *masjids* nor the building of *masjids* over graves. The Prophet (ﷺ) did not order that he be buried in his *masjid*, nor did his companions put his grave into the *masjid*. The companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) wisely avoided burying the Prophet (ﷺ) in the local graveyard for fear that later generations would become overly attached to his grave. ‘Umar, the freed slave of Ghafrah, related that when the *sahaabah* (companions of the Prophet (ﷺ)) gathered to decide on the Prophet’s (ﷺ) burial, one said: “Let us bury him in the place where he used to pray.” Aboo Bakr replied, “May Allah protect us from making him an idol to be worshipped.” Others said, “Let us bury him in al-Baqee’ (a graveyard in Madeenah) where his brothers among the Muhaajireen (migrants from Makkah) are buried.” Aboo Bakr replied: “Verily burying the Prophet in al-Baqee’

²⁴⁷ *Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Arabic-English), vol.1, p.255, no.427 and vol.2, p.232, no.414, and *Sahih Muslim* (English Trans., vol. 1, p. 269, no. 1082.

²⁴⁸ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, (Arabic-English), vol.7, p.345, no.484 [B].

is detestable because some people may try to seek refuge in him which is a right belonging only to Allah. So, if we take him out (to the graveyard), we will ruin Allah's right, even if we carefully guard the Messenger's grave." They then asked, "What is your opinion, O Aboo Bakr?" He replied, "I heard Allah's Messenger say: *'Allah has not taken the life of any of his prophets except that were buried where they died.'*" Some of them said, "By Allah, what you have said is pleasing and convincing." Then they made a line around the Prophet's bed (in 'Aa'ishah's house) and dug the grave where his bed was. 'Alee, al-'Abbaas, al-Fadl, and the Prophet's family took his body and prepared it for burial.²⁴⁹

'Aa'ishah's house was separated from the *masjid* by a wall and it had a door through which the Prophet (ﷺ) used to enter the *masjid* to lead *salaah*. The companions sealed off this doorway in order to complete the separation of the Prophet's grave from his *masjid*. Consequently, the only way that his grave could be visited at that time was from outside the *masjid*.

Expansions of the *masjid* took place in the time of the second Caliph 'Umar and the third Caliph 'Uthmaan. But both of them cautiously avoided the inclusion of either 'Aa'ishah's house or that of any of the other wives of the Prophet (ﷺ). Expansion in the direction of the houses of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) would have automatically included the Prophet's grave in the *masjid*. However, after the death of all the *sahaabah* who were in Madeenah,²⁵⁰ Caliph al-Waleed ibn 'Abdil-Malik (reign 705-715 C.E.) was the first to extend the *masjid* in an easterly direction. He included 'Aa'ishah's house inside the *masjid*, but demolished the houses of the other wives of the Prophet (ﷺ). The expansion was reported to have been carried out by al-Waleed's governor 'Umar ibn 'Abdil-'Azeez.

When 'Aa'ishah's house was included inside the *masjid*, a high circular wall was built around it so that it would not be visible at all from inside the *masjid*. Two additional walls were later built at an angle from the two northern corners of the house in such a way that they met each other forming a triangle. This was done to prevent anyone from facing the grave directly.²⁵¹

Many years later, the familiar dome was added to the roof of the *masjid* and was placed directly above the Prophet's (ﷺ) grave.²⁵² The grave was later surrounded by a brass cage with doors and windows, and the walls of the grave itself were draped in green cloth. In spite of the barriers which have been placed around the Prophet's grave, the error still remains to be corrected. Walls should once again be placed to separate it from the *masjid* so that no one could pray in its direction nor visit it inside the *masjid*.

Salaah in the Prophet's Masjid

The prohibition of *salaah* in *masjids* with graves in them is applicable to all *masjids* except that of the Prophet (ﷺ). This is due to the many special virtues attributed to prayer in it, not found in any other *masjid* containing a grave.²⁵³ The Prophet (ﷺ) himself pointed out this special feature saying, "*Do not journey except to three masjids: al-Masjid al-Haraam, al-masjid al-Aqsaa, and this Masjid of mine.*"²⁵⁴ Aboo Hurayrah also reported that he said:

²⁴⁹ Collected by Ibn Zanjooah and quoted by al-Albaanee in *Tahdheer as-Saajid*, (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaamee, 2nd. ed., 1972), pp.13-4.

²⁵⁰ The last *Sahaabee* to die in Madeenah was Jaabir ibn 'Abdillaah. He died there in 699 CE during the reign of Caliph 'Abdul-Malik (reign 685-705 CE).

²⁵¹ Narrated by al-Qurtubee and quoted in *Tayseer al-'Azeez al-Hameed*, p. 324.

²⁵² Sultan Kalawoon as-Salaahie built the first dome over the chamber in 1282 CE and it was first painted green by order of Sultan Abdul-Hameed in 1837 (*Chapters from the History of Madinah*, pp.78-9).

²⁵³ There is no truth to the story that Prophet Ismaa'eel and his mother or any of the other prophets are buried in the open portion of the Ka'bah Commonly called "Hujr Ismaa'eel."

²⁵⁴ Reported by Abu Hurayrah in *Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Arabic-English), vol.2, p.157, no.281, *Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.), vol. 2, p. 699, no. 3218 and *Sunan Abu Dawud* (English Trans.), vol.2, p.699, no.3218.

((صَلَاةٌ فِي مَسْجِدِي هَذَا خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ صَلَاةٍ فِيَمَا سِوَاهُ إِلَّا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ)).

“A single salaah in this masjid of mine, is better than 1,000 salaahs elsewhere, except al-Masjid al-Haraam.”²⁵⁵

He even assigned special significance to a part of his masjid saying:

((مَا بَيْنَ بَيْتِي وَمَنْبَرِي رَوْضَةٌ مِنْ رِيَاضِ الْجَنَّةِ))

“The area between my house and my pulpit is a garden from the gardens of paradise.”²⁵⁶

If salaah in the Prophet’s masjid was considered *makrooh* (disliked), the virtues of his masjid would be negated and it would be made equal with all other masjids. Just as salaah in general has been forbidden at certain times, yet allowed if it has a defined purpose (e.g., *janaazah*) other than optional prayer, salaah in the Prophet’s masjid is likewise desirable due to its exceptional nature.²⁵⁷ And, Allah forbid, if a grave were to be put in either al-Masjid al-Haraam or al-Masjid al-Aqsaa, salaah would still be desirable in them due to their special virtues and place of honor in the sight of God.²⁵⁸

Ibn Katheer reported that when the Commander of the faithful, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab, found the grave of (Prophet) Daniel in Iraq, during his period of rule, he gave orders that news of the grave be withheld from the people, and that artifacts covered in inscriptions mentioning his battles that they found there should also be buried.²⁵⁹

As-Sa‘dee noted that this story contains evidence that whoever flees for the sake of his religion from corruption and temptation will be made safe by Allah, and whoever seeks refuge in Him will be given refuge and be made a source of guidance for others, and whoever patiently bears humiliation in His path and for His sake will, in the end, be elevated and honored in unimaginable ways.

سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةً رَابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةً سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ
رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةً وَثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعَدَّتِهِمْ
مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ فَلَا تُمَارِ فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِرَاءً ظَاهِرًا وَلَا تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِمْ
مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا

22. Some people will say that they were three, the dog being the fourth; others will say they were five, the dog being the sixth. These are mere irrelevant guesses; there are still others who say they were seven, their dog being the eighth. Say: “My lord knows their number and only a few others besides Him know.” So do not

²⁵⁵ *Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Arabic-English), vol.2, p.157, no.282) and *Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.), vol.2, p.697, no.3209.

²⁵⁶ Narrated by ‘Abdullaah ibn Zayd al-Maazinee in *Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Arabic-English), vol.3, pp.61-2, no.112 and *Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.), vol.2, p.696, no.3204.

²⁵⁷ *Tahdheer as-Saajid*, pp.196-200.

²⁵⁸ *Fundamentals of Tawheed*, pp. 192-202.

²⁵⁹ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p. .

argue about them, except with the clear proof. Nor ask anyone about them.

Sometime after the discovery of the sleepers people became unsure as to their exact number. Some said they were three, others said five and yet others seven. Or they were in doubt, sometimes saying three, sometimes five, and sometimes seven.²⁶⁰ Allah confirms that their number was seven because after saying that they were three and five He goes on to say that these are mere guesses, but after mentioning the number seven He did not say that it was false which implies that this was the actual number.²⁶¹

“Say: ‘My Lord knows best their number and only a few others besides Him know,’ ” indicates that the best thing to do in matters like this is to refer them back to Allah, because there is no value in discussing such matters without knowledge. If we are given knowledge of a matter, then we may talk about it, otherwise we should refrain.²⁶² ‘Ikrimah and as-Sammaak narrated from Ibn ‘Abbaas, that he said after quoting this verse: “I am among the few who know the right number and they were seven.”²⁶³ Or **“only a few others besides Him know,”** meant that only a few knew their number before Allah announced that they were seven, the dog being the eighth.²⁶⁴

At the end of the verse, Allah says, **“So do not argue about them, except with the clear proof,”** meaning that we should only discuss about the People of the Cave using what has been revealed, which is to leave knowledge about their number with Allah.²⁶⁵ It also means we should avoid discussion about them because it is useless to talk about and argue over a subject that is of no benefit and also because that knowledge is only with Allah.²⁶⁶ Ibn Katheer interpreted this phrase as meaning that discussion with the People of the Book should be gentle and polite, for there is not a great deal to be gained from knowing about that.²⁶⁷ Al ‘Uthaymeen suggested that it meant that arguments should only be superficial and deep and heart reaching. For, if the argument reaches the heart of the one arguing, he will become more argumentative, angry, his ego inflated, and he will be affected. However, since there is very little benefit in arguing with them, Allah said this. What may be deduced from this portion of the verse is the principle that whatever has no benefit in arguing about should be treated lightly and not be delved into deeply. Extensive discussion on trivial issues occurred a lot in later generations, especially in scholastic theology (*‘Ilmul-kalaam*). The scholars of *Kalaam*, who delved into *Tawheed* and *Aqeedah*, came up with many useless concepts. For example, their claim that there could exist ‘an infinite chain of incidents into the past and future,’ and other useless and unnecessary *Kalaam* rules and statements resembling it. And they have written volumes affirming or negating this issue even though there is ultimately no benefit in it.²⁶⁸

“Nor ask anyone about them,” meaning the state of the sleepers should not be asked about from the People of the Book, because the basis of their discussion is guesswork and speculation. This portion of the verse contains evidence for the prohibition of seeking rulings from one not qualified to give rulings; either due to his lack of knowledge regarding the issue about which he is asked, or because he does not care about what he says and he has no shame to refrain himself from rulings of convenience. If He prohibited asking them, then His prohibition against their answers is even greater.

This verse also contains evidence that it may be prohibited to seek rulings from a person about some things and not others. He may be asked about what he is qualified to rule on, because

²⁶⁰ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, pp. 41-2.

²⁶¹ *Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan*, p. 637 and *Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 59.

²⁶² *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p. .

²⁶³ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p. .

²⁶⁴ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, pp. 43.

²⁶⁵ *Al-Jaami ‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan*, vols. 9-10, p. 319.

²⁶⁶ *Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan*, pp. 637-8.

²⁶⁷ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p. .

²⁶⁸ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, pp. 43.

Allah did not prohibit asking Christian and Jews generally, but only regarding the story of the People of the Cave and other similar things.²⁶⁹

Some people have claimed that it is not permissible to use evidences from the books of the Christians and Jews in giving *da'wah*.²⁷⁰ They use as evidence verses similar to this as well as the following well known incident which occurred during the lifetime of the Prophet (ﷺ):

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ ثَابِتٍ قَالَ جَاءَ عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي مَرَرْتُ بِأَخٍ لِي مِنْ بَنِي قُرَيْظَةَ فَكَتَبَ لِي جَوَامِعَ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ أَلَا أُعْرِضُهَا عَلَيْكَ قَالَ فَتَغَيَّرَ وَجْهُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ فَقُلْتُ لَهُ أَلَا تَرَى مَا بَوَّجَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ عُمَرُ رَضِينَا بِاللَّهِ رَبًّا وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ رَسُولًا قَالَ فَسُرِّيَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ثُمَّ قَالَ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَوْ أَصْبَحَ فِيكُمْ مُوسَى ثُمَّ اتَّبَعْتُمُوهُ وَتَرَكْتُمُونِي لَضَلَلْتُمْ إِنَّكُمْ حَظِي مِنَ الْأُمَمِ وَأَنَا حَظُّكُمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ

‘Abdullaah ibn Thaabit said that ‘Umar came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, “O Messenger of Allah! I passed by a brother of mine from the Qurayzah Clan and he wrote some sayings from the Torah for me. Shall I read them to you?” The color of the Allah’s Messenger’s face changed (ﷺ), so I said to ‘Umar, “Can’t you see Allah’s Messenger’s face?” ‘Umar then said, “We are pleased with Allah as our Lord, with Islaam as our religion and with Muhammad (ﷺ) as our Messenger.” The Prophet (ﷺ) was visibly pleased and he said, “By the One in whose Hand my soul lies! If Moses were to appear among you and you followed him and abandoned me, you would have gone astray. You are my portion of the nations and I am your portion of the prophets.”²⁷¹

However, there are incidences which took place in the Prophet’s time in which he permitted reading from the Torah in his presence to establish legal precedence. For example, in the following case of adulterers:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ الْيَهُودَ جَاءُوا إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِرَجُلٍ مِنْهُمْ وَامْرَأَةٍ قَدْ زَنِيَا فَقَالَ لَهُمْ كَيْفَ تَفْعَلُونَ بِمَنْ زَنَى مِنْكُمْ قَالُوا نُحْمِمُهُمَا وَنَضْرِبُهُمَا فَقَالَ لَا تَجِدُونَ فِي التَّوْرَةِ الرَّجْمَ فَقَالُوا لَا نَجِدُ فِيهَا شَيْئًا فَقَالَ لَهُمْ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ سَلَامٍ كَذَبْتُمْ فَأْتُوا بِالتَّوْرَةِ فَاتْلُوهَا إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ فَوَضَعَ

²⁶⁹ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, pp. 637-8.

²⁷⁰ See, for example *Da'wah According to the Qur'an and the Sunnah*, pp. 108-109.

²⁷¹ *Musnad Ahmad*, Kitaab: Musnad al-Makee'ee; Baab: Hadeeth Abdullah ibn Thaabit, no. 15303 CD

مِدْرَاسُهَا الَّذِي يُدَرِّسُهَا مِنْهُمْ كَفَّهُ عَلَى آيَةِ الرَّجْمِ فَطَفِقَ يَقْرَأُ مَا دُونَ يَدِهِ وَمَا وَرَاءَهَا وَلَا يَقْرَأُ آيَةَ الرَّجْمِ فَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ عَنْ آيَةِ الرَّجْمِ فَقَالَ مَا هَذِهِ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا ذَلِكَ قَالُوا هِيَ آيَةُ الرَّجْمِ فَأَمَرَ بِهِمَا فَرَجَمَا قَرِيبًا مِنْ حَيْثُ مَوْضِعُ الْجَنَائِزِ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ فَرَأَيْتُ صَاحِبَهَا يَخْنِي عَلَيْهَا يَقِيهَا الْحِجَارَةَ

‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Umar said, “Some Jews came to the Prophet (ﷺ) with a man and a woman from among them who had committed adultery. So he asked them, “What do you do with those who commit adultery?” They replied, “We tie them up and lash them.” He asked, “Stoning is no found in the Torah?” They replied, “We don’t find anything about that.” ‘Abullaah ibn Salaam said, “You have lied. Bring the Torah and recite it, if you are truthful.” The teacher who taught it placed his hand over the verses on stoning and began reading what was before and after his hand without reading the verse on stoning. So ‘Abdullaah removed his hand from the verse of stoning and asked, “What is this?” When they saw it, they said, “It is the verse on stoning.” The Prophet (ﷺ) gave instructions and both of them were stoned to death beside the masjid near the the place used for funeral prayers. I saw the man bend over her to protect her from the stones.”²⁷²

Furthermore, there are verses in the Qur’aan which mention evidences confirming Muhammad’s prophethood found in the Jewish and Christian scriptures.

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ

“Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write whom they find written with them in the Torah²⁷³ and the Gospel²⁷⁴.” (Soorah al-A ‘raaf, 7: 157)

وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَبْنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ

“And remember when Jesus, son of Mary, said: ‘O Children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah unto you, confirming the Torah which came before me, and giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmed.” (Soorah as-Saff, 61: 6)

Also, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) himself made clear statements permitting narration of material from Jewish and Christian sources. The following *hadeeth* is one example:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ بَلِّغُوا عَنِّي وَلَوْ آيَةً وَحَدِّثُوا عَنْ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ وَلَا حَرَجَ وَمَنْ كَذَبَ عَلَيَّ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَلْيَتَّبِعُوا مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ

²⁷² Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Tafseer; Baab: Fa’too bit tawraah fatloohaa

²⁷³ Deuteronomy, 18: 15.

²⁷⁴ John, 14: 16.

‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Amr related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Convey whatever you have learned from me, even if it is only a single verse. And you may speak about the People of Israel without any fear of sin.”²⁷⁵

Regarding the apparent contradiction between prohibiting and permitting texts Ibn Hajar said the following:

His statement, “You may speak about the People of Israel without fear of sin,” means that there are no constraints in speaking about them. This was said because the Prophet (ﷺ) had previously discouraged taking anything from them or looking in their books. Then allowance was made concerning it. It is as though the prohibition occurred prior to the stabilization of Islaamic laws and religious principles, for fear of confusion. Then, when what was feared disappeared, permission was given due to the lessons which could be gained from listening to their stories in that era. Ash-Shaafi‘ee said: “It is known that the Prophet (ﷺ) did not permit speaking lies. So, the meaning of “Speak about the People of Israel without fear of sin,” is that you may speak about them concerning what you do not know to be lies. Regarding their stories that you think may be correct, there is no sin in speaking about them also. It is, therefore, similar to the Prophet’s statement, “If the People of the Book relay stories to you do not believe them nor declare them to be lies.” Neither permission nor prohibition was transmitted to speak about what is without a doubt truth.”²⁷⁶

The author of the most famous commentary on *Sunan at-Tirmithi* said,

“Sayyid Jamaalud-Deen said that the way to reconciliation between the prohibition of busying oneself with what comes from them and the permission understood from this *hadeeth* is that the intended meaning of “speaking” here is speaking about stories concerning the amazing signs, like the narratives of ‘Awj ibn ‘Unuq, the Israelites killing themselves in repentance for worshipping the calf. Some details of these stories are in the Qur’aan. Speaking about them from Jewish sources is permissible because of the lessons and advice in them for the believers. The conflict may also be resolved by understanding that the intention of the prohibition here was the prohibition against taking laws from their scriptures, because all legal systems and religions were abrogated by our Prophet’s legal system.”²⁷⁷

وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لشيءٍ إِنِّي فَاعِلٌ ذَلِكَ غَدًا ❀ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَادْكُرْ رَبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ وَقُلْ عَسَى أَنْ يَهْدِيَنِي رَبِّي لِأَقْرَبَ مِنْ هَذَا رَشَدًا

23-4. And do not say, “I will do something tomorrow,” without (saying) “If Allah wills!” But remember your Lord when you forget and say, “Perhaps my Lord will guide me to a way nearer to the truth than this.”

In this verse, Allah, may He be glorified, taught His Messenger (ﷺ) the correct etiquette to be followed when expressing one’s determination to do something in the future. He explained that

²⁷⁵ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Ahaadeeth al anbiyaa; Baab: Maa thukira ‘an banee Israa’eel

²⁷⁶ *Fat’hul-Baaree*.

²⁷⁷ *Tuhfatul-Ahwathee*.

such expressions should always be referred back to the will of Allah, the Knower of the Unseen, Who knows what was and what is yet to be and what is not to be, and how it will be if it is to be. In this regard, it was recorded that Aboo Hurayrah quoted the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as saying:

((قَالَ سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ دَاوُدَ لَأَطُوفَنَّ اللَّيْلَةَ عَلَى سَبْعِينَ امْرَأَةً تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ امْرَأَةٍ فَارِسًا يُجَاهِدُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَقَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ إِنَّ شَاءَ اللَّهُ فَلَمْ يَقُلْ وَلَمْ تَحْمِلْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا وَاحِدًا سَاقِطًا أَحَدُ شِقَّتَيْهِ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَوْ قَالَهَا لَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ)).

“Solomon, the son of David (peace be upon them both), said: ‘Tonight I will visit seventy [of my] women²⁷⁸ and each one of them will give birth to a son who will fight for the sake of Allah.’ It was said to him,²⁷⁹ ‘Say: ‘If Allah wills,’ ” but he did not say it. He went to the women but none of them gave birth except for one who gave birth to a half-formed child.” The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) then said, “Had he said it, they would have fought in the way of Allah.”²⁸⁰

“And do not say, “I will do something tomorrow,” without (saying) “If Allah wills!” By adding “Allah’s Will” to what is said, a person gains two great benefits: One of them is that Allah will make the affair easy as long as he turns it over to Allah, Most Great and Glorious. The second is that if he fails to do it, he does not break an oath.

If a person says, “I will do this,” as a means of informing and not as a certainty about its occurrence, the addition of Allah’s wish is not required. For example, if your friend asked you: “Will you pass by my place tomorrow?” and you replied, “Yes,” without saying “Allah willing”, there is no harm, because it is information about your intention, and what is in your heart has been permitted by Allah; it has already occurred so there is no need to make it dependent on Allah’s wish. However, if you intended that it would take place, it is something which has not occurred as yet, so you must say: “Allah willing,” as you do not know whether it will happen or not.

“But remember your Lord when you forget,” means to remember your Lord’s command by saying: ‘Allah willing,’ if you forget to say it, because people could forget and if they do so, Almighty Allah taught the believers to supplicate saying:

رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا

“Our Lord! Do not hold us accountable if we forget or fall into error.”

(Soorah al-Baqarah, 2: 286)

And Anas reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

((مَنْ نَسِيَ صَلَاةً أَوْ نَامَ عَنْهَا فَكَفَّارَتُهَا أَنْ يُصَلِّيَهَا إِذَا ذَكَرَهَا)).

“The atonement for one who forgets a prayer or oversleeps it is to pray it whenever he remembers.”²⁸¹

²⁷⁸ According to some reports, it was ninety or one hundred women.

²⁷⁹ According to one report, the angel said to him.

²⁸⁰ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Ahaadeeth al anbiyaa; Baab: Qawlihi wa wahabnaa li daawood wa sulaymaan ni’am; Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. . Kitaab: Imaan; Baab: Istithnaa. (Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p.)

²⁸¹ Sahih Al-Bukhari (Arabic-English), vol.2, p.157, no.282) Kitaab: Mawaaqeeet salaah; Baab: man nasiya salaah and Sahih Muslim (English Trans.), vol.2, p.697, no.3209. Kitaab: Masaajid wa mawaadi’ salaah; Baab: Qadaa Salaah faa’itah.

There are two issues concerning the mention of Allah's will which need to be clarified.

1. The first is, will the late mention of Allah's will benefit the one who says it, if an oath was broken? Some scholars held that mentioning Allah's wish after forgetting will benefit a person, whenever he remembers, whether after two days or two years, because Allah was general in His statement, **"Mention your Lord if you forget."** The majority of scholars held that it would only benefit if he remembers soon enough after to build the exception of Allah's will on what it was excepted from. For example, if a person said, "By Allah, I will do this," and he forgot to say, "If Allah wills," then he remembered after ten days and said, "If Allah wills," and he did not do it. Based on the belief that whoever says, "If Allah wills," does not break his oath, some scholars hold that it is of benefit because Almighty Allah said, **"Mention your Lord,"** while others hold that it is of no benefit because each part of the statement is not built on the other. They say that the benefit from Allah's command to mention Him if we forget is the removal of sin, because Allah commanded, **"Do not say about anything..."** So, if a person forgot, he should say it when he remembers.

2. The second is, will the person be exempt from expiation if he mentioned Allah's wish late? That is, does it benefit the person and his oath remains intact or does it remove the sin but not the ruling regarding the broken oath? What is obvious is the second opinion, that it removes sin but the oath is broken if he does not fulfill it, because the exception is only valid if it is connected. Those who held this position also differed with regards to what constitutes "connection". Some said that "connection" means that all parts of the speech be continual while others said that it is connected as long as it is in the same sitting and if someone gets up from the sitting it is broken because the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported by Hakeem ibn Hizaam to have said:

((الْبَيْعَانِ بِالْخِيَارِ مَا لَمْ يَتَفَرَّقَا أَوْ قَالَ حَتَّى يَتَفَرَّقَا فَإِنْ صَدَقَا وَبَيَّنَّا بُورِكَ لَهُمَا فِي بَيْعِهِمَا وَإِنْ كَتَمَا وَكَذَبَا مُحِقَّتْ بَرَكَةُ بَيْعِهِمَا)).

*"The buyer and seller have a choice as long as they don't separate or until they separate. And if they are both truthful, their sale will be blessed. But if they hide [faults] or lie, their sale will be devoid of blessings."*²⁸²

He made separation [of the merchant and his customer] the distinction. Some others say that the principle governing it is the connection of the parts of speech with each other. What is apparent, and Allah knows best, is that as long as they are in the same sitting and nothing is said to break the conversation, the exception benefits and the oath is not broken.²⁸³

Mujaahid related that Ibn 'Abbaas used to say, concerning a man who swears an oath, "He may say: 'If Allah wills,' even if it is a year later." Ibn 'Abbaas used to interpret the verse: **"And remember your Lord when you forget,"** in this way.²⁸⁴ However, the meaning of Ibn 'Abbaas' view, that a person may say "If Allah wills", even if it is a year later, is that if he forgets to say it when he makes the oath or when he speaks, and he remembers it later, even a year later, the Sunnah is that he should say it, so that he will still be following the Sunnah of saying "If Allah wills", even if that is after breaking his oath. This was also the view of Ibn Jareer, but he stated that this does not make up for breaking the oath or mean that one is no longer obliged to offer expiation. What Ibn Jareer said is correct, and it is more appropriate to understand the words of Ibn 'Abbaas in this way. And Allah knows best.²⁸⁵

²⁸² *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Buyoo; Baab: Kam yajooz al khiyaar; *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. . Kitaab: Buyoo; Baab: Sidq fil bay'.

²⁸³ *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem*, pp. 47-8.

²⁸⁴ *Mustadrak al-Haakim*, authenticated see at-Tafseer as-Saheeh

²⁸⁵ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p. .

“And say: Perhaps my Lord will guide me to a way nearer to the truth than this,” means that if you (O Prophet) are asked about something you know nothing about, ask Allah about it, and turn to Him so that He may guide you to what is right. And Allah knows best.²⁸⁶

Al ‘Uthaymeen explained that the phrase ‘*asaa* “perhaps,” indicates hope, if expressed by the creatures. However, when expressed by the Creator it indicates the sure occurrence. Allah, Most Blessed and Transcendent, said:

إِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعِفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا (٩٨) فَأُولَئِكَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَعْفُو عَنْهُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَفُورًا غَفُورًا (٩٩)

“Except the weak ones among men, women and children who cannot devise a plan, nor are they able to direct their way. Perhaps these are they whom Allah may forgive, and Allah is ever Oft-Pardoning, Oft-Forgiving.” (Soorah an-Nisaa, 4: 98-9)²⁸⁷

Some scholars of *Tafseer* held that the phrase “And remember your Lord when you forget,” is not related to the previous part of the verse. Instead, it meant that if you forget anything, you should mention Allah because forgetfulness is from Satan, as the Almighty related on the tongue of Moses’ servant:

قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوَيْنَا إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَإِنِّي نَسِيتُ الْحُوتَ وَمَا أَنسَنِيهِ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ أَذْكُرَهُ وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا (٦٣)

“He replied, ‘Do you remember when we took shelter at the rock? Most certainly, that is where I forgot the fish. It was only Satan who caused me to forget, and it took an amazing path into the sea!’” (Soorah al-Kahf, 18: 63)

The Almighty also said:

أَسْتَحْذِرُ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانَ فَأَنسَاهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ

“Satan has overtaken them and he made them forget the remembrance of Allah.” (Soorah al-Mujaadilah, 58: 19)

And elsewhere He said:

وَإِمَّا يُنَسِيَنَّكَ الشَّيْطَانُ فَلَا تَقْعُدْ بَعْدَ الذِّكْرِى مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

“And if Satan causes you to forget, then, after remembering, do not sit in the company of those people who are wrong-doers.” (Soorah al-An‘aam, 6: 68)

The remembrance of Allah drives away Satan as indicated by the Almighty’s statement:

وَمَنْ يَعَشْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ نُقِضْ لَهُ شَيْطَانًا فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ (٣٦)

“I will appoint a devil for whosoever turns away blindly from the remembrance of the Most Gracious, and he will be his constant companion.” (Soorah az-Zukhruf, 43: 36)²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. .

²⁸⁷ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 48.

²⁸⁸ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol.4, p. 62.

وَلَبِثُوا فِي كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلَاثَ مِائَةٍ سِنِينَ وَازْدَادُوا تِسْعًا ﴿٢٥﴾ قُلِ اللَّهُ
 أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُوا لَهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَبْصِرْ بِهِ وَأَسْمِعْ مَا
 لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا يُشْرِكُ فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا

25-6. So they stayed in the cave for three hundred years and nine more. Say: “Allah knows best how long they stayed and with him is the knowledge of the secrets of the heavens and the earth.” How clearly he sees, how finely he hears everything. They have no protector other than Him nor does He share His decision with anyone whatsoever.”

Here Allah tells His Messenger (ﷺ) the actual length of time the youths spent in their cave, from the time when He caused them to fall asleep until the time when He resurrected them and caused the people of that era to find them. The length of time was three hundred plus nine years in lunar years, which is three hundred years in solar years. The difference between one hundred lunar years and one hundred solar years is three years, which is why after mentioning three hundred, Allah says, **“and nine more.”**²⁸⁹

According to Al ‘Uthaymeen, the reason why Allah did not directly say three hundred and nine years [instead of three hundred years and nine more] is that the two are actually the same, but the Magnificent Qur’aan is the most eloquent book, so for the sake of uniformity of the endings of the verses. Al ‘Uthaymeen said, **“Three hundred and nine more,”** is not as some say, that the years were three hundred according to the solar [calendar] and they added nine for the lunar calendar. It is not possible for me to testify that Allah intended this. Even though three hundred solar years are equivalent to three hundred and nine lunar years, I cannot bear witness that Allah intended that because there is only one means of accounting with Allah, depending on the phases of the moon. Consequently, I hold that the claim three hundred is solar years and three hundred and nine is the lunar equivalent is weak. The Almighty said:

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهِلَّةِ ۚ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ﴾

“They ask you about the new moons. Say: These are signs to mark fixed periods of time for mankind and for the pilgrimage.” (Soorah al-Baqarah, 2: 189)²⁹⁰

Regarding the second verse, **“Say: “Allah knows best how long they stayed and with him is the knowledge of the secrets of the heavens and the earth,”** some commentators like Qataadah and Mutarrif ibn ‘Abdillaah point out that the period of 309 years is what the people of that time were saying and not the actual period and Allah alone knows best the actual period of time that they spent in the cave. According to information found in various Christian records the time spent varies between 200 years and 372 years.²⁹¹ However, Allah says that he knows best about the actual period of time. Those who argue that 309 years was not Allah’s statement explain that the next verse

²⁸⁹ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p. . See also *al-Jaami‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan*, vols. 9-10, pp. 321-2 where al-Qurtubee attributes this opinion to an-Naqqaash and al-Ghaznawee. See also *Fat’h al-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 387 where ash-Shawqaanee attributes this opinion to az-Zujjaaj.

²⁹⁰ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 49.

²⁹¹ *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*,

becomes nonsensical if the actual period was 309 years. The other way of understanding the verse is that 309 years is the actual period of time because if Allah said 309 years that means that it is actually so, because Allah knows best.

Some scholars like Mujaahid said that **“Say: ‘Allah knows best how long they stayed,’** referred to the time after their death until the revelation of the Qur’aan regarding them. Ad-Dahhaak held that it referred to how long they remained until they died.²⁹²

Al ‘Uthaymeen said regarding this verse, “According to those who held that verse 25 is a statement of those who discussed the length of stay of the Companions of the Cave in their cave, **“they stayed”** would be the object of a deleted subject which may be approximated as, **“And they said,** ‘They stayed in their cave for three hundred years and they added nine more.’ Then Allah said, ‘[O Muhammad:] Allah knows best how long they spent...’ However, this position, even though it was held by some leading commentators, is incorrect. The statement, **“they stayed”** is one of Allah’s statements, and **“Allah knows best how long they stayed,”** is used for emphasis. Since Allah best knows how long they stayed. No one’s statement has any value after it.

Allah, Most Great and Glorious’ statement: **“And with him is the knowledge of the secrets of the heavens and the earth,”** could mean that the unseen contents and events of the seven heavens and the seven earths belong to Him, of that knowledge of the unseen of the seven heavens and seven earths are His. Both meanings are correct. Only Allah has knowledge of the unseen. Consequently, anyone who claims to have knowledge of the unseen is a disbeliever. What is meant by the unseen is the future. As for the unseen affairs of the present and the past, whoever claims knowledge of these affairs is not a disbeliever because it has already occurred and some humans may know about it while others do not. On the other hand, unseen future events are known only to Allah. Thus, whoever claims that knowledge or even goes to one who claims it and believes what he is told about the future becomes a disbeliever in Allah, Most Great and Glorious. Because they both deny the Almighty’s statement:

قُلْ لَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ

“Say: ‘None in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen except Allah, nor can they perceive when they shall be resurrected.’ ” (Soorah an-Naml, 27: 65)²⁹³

And both Aboo Hurayrah and al-Hasan reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

((مَنْ أَتَى كَاهِنًا أَوْ عَرَّافًا فَصَدَّقَهُ بِمَا يَقُولُ فَقَدْ كَفَرَ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ)) .

“Whosoever approaches a fortuneteller and believes what he says, has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad.”²⁹⁴

In the phrase, **“How clearly he sees, how finely he hears everything,”** Allah uses the greatest Arabic superlative form to describe His attributes of seeing and hearing.²⁹⁵ Allah, Most Blessed and Transcendent, sees absolutely everything. He sees the footprints of a black ant crawling on a black rock in the middle of moonless night and He sees even more hidden and minute things that human eyes cannot see. Similarly in hearing, He hears everything and knows the secrets and what is even more hidden. He said:

وَإِنْ تَجَهَّرَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَإِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ وَأَخْفَى

²⁹² Al-Jaami ‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vols. 9-10, p. 322.

²⁹³ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 51.

²⁹⁴ Collected by Ahmad, Sunan Abu Dawud (English), vol. 3, p. 1095, no. 3895) and al-Bayhaquee.

²⁹⁵ Allah describes Himself with these two attributes in a number of other locations in the Qur’aan, eg., 42: 11; 22: 75; 58: 1, etc.

“And if you speak aloud, then indeed, He knows the secret and what is even more hidden.”

(Soorah Taahaa, 20: 7).

In the incident concerning the female contestant (*al-mujaadilah*)²⁹⁶ whose husband²⁹⁷ separated from her [by saying: “You are like my mother’s back to me.”], she came to complain to the Messenger (ﷺ), while ‘Aa’ishah was in her back room. The Messenger (ﷺ) discussed with the woman and ‘Aa’ishah heard some of what was said, but some of it was hidden from her. And Allah said:

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

“Indeed, Allah has heard the statement of the one that disputes with you concerning her husband, and complains to Allah. And Allah hears the argument between you both. Surely, Allah is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.” (Soorah al-Mujaadilah, 58: 1)

‘Aa’ishah said, “All praise is due to Allah whose hearing encompasses all sounds. I am in my room and some of the conversation was hidden from me.”²⁹⁸ Allah is above everything, but in spite of that He heard her and her discussion with the Messenger (ﷺ).

Belief that Almighty Allah possesses complete sight from which nothing escapes and that He possesses perfect hearing from which no sound is hidden necessitates that the believer strive his or her utmost to avoid doing any acts which his Lord dislikes or making any statements which He despises. This should make a person fear Allah, Most Great and Glorious, but our faith is weak so one finds that when a person wants to say or do something, it does not cross his mind that Allah hears him or sees him, except if he is made aware. Absent-mindedness is common and widespread, so it is compulsory on all of us to be aware of this grave situation.²⁹⁹

“They” in the phrase, **“They have no protector other than Him,”** could refer to the youths in the cave³⁰⁰ or it could refer to whoever is in the heavens and earth. It means that no one has a guardian besides Allah. Even the disbelievers only have Allah, Most Great and Glorious, as their guardian. Almighty Allah said:

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفَرِّطُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ ثُمَّ رُدُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَهُمْ
الْحَقُّ

“Until when death approaches one of you, Our Messengers take his soul, and they never neglect their duty. Then they are returned to Allah, their True Guardian and Master.” (Soorah al-An‘aam, 6: 61-2)

Allah’s guardianship over all His creatures is known in the field of ‘Aqeedah as “general guardianship” (*al-wilaayah al-‘aammah*)³⁰¹. According to this principle, Allah bestows provision on the believers and disbelievers alike, and causes their bodies to develop and grow. Likewise, He made subservient to humankind the contents of the heavens and earth; the sun, moon, and stars, the seas, rivers and rain and the land, mountains, plants and animals. These are all among the elements

²⁹⁶ Her name was Khawlah bint Tha‘labah.

²⁹⁷ His name was Aws ibn as-Saamit.

²⁹⁸ *Sunan Ibn-i-Majah*, vol. , p. , no. 188, Kitaab: al Muqaddamah; Baab: Feemaa ankarat al-Jahmiyyah.

²⁹⁹ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, pp. 52-3.

³⁰⁰ Ash-Shanqeetee held that the pronoun “they” in this verse referred to the youths in the cave. (*Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 64)

³⁰¹ Also referred to as *Wilaayat Mulk wa Qahr* (Guardianship of Dominion and Power). See *Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 64.

of “general guardianship.” On the other hand, Allah’s “special guardianship” (*al-wilaayah al-khaassah*) is only for the believers. The Almighty said:

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَآؤُهُمُ
الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ

“Allah is the Guardian of those who believe. He takes them out of darkness into the light. While the false gods are the supporters of those who disbelieve, they take them from light into darkness.” (Soorah al-Baqarah, 2: 257)

He also said:

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَأَنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ لَا مَوْلَى لَهُمْ

“That is because Allah is the guardian of those who believe, and the disbelievers have no guardian.” (Soorah Muhammad, 47: 11)

“Special guardianship” necessitates particular care, whereby Allah corrects His servant’s affairs by opening the doors to beneficial knowledge and righteous deeds. Because of that, He said: **“He takes them from darkness into the light.”** He removes them from darkness by way of knowledge. He first teaches them, and then He removes them by letting them do the deeds necessitated by the knowledge.³⁰² This guardianship is one of reward, support, success, victory.

In this life people seek the protection of other human beings when they are faced with problems, but in reality these people can only help them if Allah allows them to do so. If they have disobeyed Allah, then no one can protect them from his punishment except by His will.

“Nor does He share His decision with anyone whatsoever,” means that they should not share the things that He has commanded with others. For example, if someone is asked to do something against Allah’s command or a person desires to do something against Allah’s instructions and he goes a head and does it, then he is actually committing *Shirk* against the command of Allah. Such an act is an error, a sin. In fact, Allah describes rebellion against His commands as disbelief in other parts of the Qur’aan. Allah reminds the believers that if they believe in Him, then it should be reflected in their acceptance of His commands. This does not mean that everyone are disbelievers because all human beings disobey Allah in one way or the other from time to time, these are in fact pieces of disbelief, if they become many then true disbelief takes place.

“Nor does He share His decision with anyone whatsoever,” is similar to the Almighty’s statements:

إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ

“The decision is only with Allah.” (Soorah al-An’aam, 6: 57)

and

وَمَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَحُكْمُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ

“And in whatever you differ, its decision is with Allah.”

(Soorah ash-Shooraa, 42: 10)

The “decision” (*hukm*) could be either creational or legal. Bringing the world into existence and maintaining it is a “creational decision” (*hukm kawnee*), and ruling people by way of commands and prohibitions are “legal decisions” (*hukm shar’ee*). His statement, **“Nor does He**

³⁰² Ibid., p. 54.

share His decision,” includes both forms. No one shares with Allah in His decisions whether creational or legal.

This portion of the verse contains proof that it is obligatory to rely on Allah’s legal ruling and that humans do not have the right to legislate anything in Allah’s religion which is not a part of it, neither in acts of worship nor in social transactions. The claim that we can legislate in social transactions whatever is suitable for the time is false. Based on that statement, one may legalize interest, gambling, and all other illegal forms of earning, which is obviously incorrect. Divine Legislation (*Sharee’ah*) is suitable for all people in every time and place. As Imaam Maalik said,

(وَلَنْ يُصْلِحَ آخِرَ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ إِلَّا مَا أَصْلَحَ أَوَّلُهَا).

“The end of this nation will only be reformed by what reformed its beginning.”³⁰³

No one shares with Allah in the creational decision and no rational person claims that. Is anyone able to cause rain to fall at will? Can anyone prevent the heavens and earth from disappearing? However, it is in the realm of legal decisions that different human opinions vie with those of Allah. And even among Muslims there are some who claim the right to legislate for humans whatever they consider suitable.³⁰⁴

This portion of the verse “**Nor does He share (yushrik) His decision with anyone,**” indicates that those who follow the laws of others are idolaters, committing *shirk* with Allah. This understanding is elaborated on in other Qur’aanic verses, for example, Allah’s statement regarding anyone who follows the laws of Satan in making carcasses permissible for consumption by claiming that it is Allah’s slaughter:

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَفِسْقٌ وَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِيُؤْخُونَ إِلَىٰ
أَوْلِيَآئِهِمْ لِيُجَدِّلُوكُمْ وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ

“Do not eat from what Allah’s Name has not been pronounced, for indeed it is sin. Certainly, the devils inspire their friends to dispute with you, and if you obey them, then you would indeed be polytheists.” (Soorah al-An’aam, 6: 121)

Allah openly declares them to be idolaters due to their obedience, known as *al-Ishraak fit-Taa’ah* (Shirk of Obedience). This is also what is intended by Qur’aanic references to worship of Satan. For example, Allah’s statement:

﴿ أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَبْنَىٰءَ آدَمَ أَن لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ وَإِن
أَعْبَدُونِي هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴾

“Did I not prohibit you, O Children of Adam, from worshipping Satan, who is indeed, a plain enemy to you, and command that you should worship Me? That is a Straight Path.” (Soorah Yaa Seen, 36: 60-1)

And Allah’s quotation of Prophet Abraham:

يَآبَتِ لَا تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ عَصِيًّا

“O my father! Do not worship Satan. Indeed! Satan is a rebel against the Most Gracious.”

(Soorah Maryam, 19: 44)

Also, when ‘Adee ibn Haatim asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about the verse:

³⁰³ See *Ash-Shifaa* by al-Qaadee ‘Iyaad, vol. 2, pp. 87-8.

³⁰⁴ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, pp. 54-5.

أَتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهَبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحَنَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

“They took their rabbis and their monks as lords besides Allah,” (Soorah at-Tawbah, 9: 31)

he explained to him that by following their rabbis and monks who made *halaal* what Allah had forbidden and made *haraam* what Allah had permitted, Jews and Christians made them lords along with God.³⁰⁵

Among the most direct and clear evidences in this regard is that Allah, Most Great and Transcendent, expressed amazement at those who claim to be believers while desiring rulings from other than the *Sharee'ah* of Allah. And that is only because their claim to faith along with their desire for the rulings of false gods was an incredible lie.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ ءَامَنُوا بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ يُرِيدُونَ أَن يَتَحَاكَمُوا إِلَى الطَّاغُوتِ وَقَدْ أُمِرُوا أَن يَكْفُرُوا بِهِ وَيُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَن يُضِلَّهُمْ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

“Have you not seen those who claim that they believe in what was revealed to you, and what was revealed before you, yet they desire the judgment of false judges, even though they have been ordered to reject them. Satan wishes to lead them far astray.” (Soorah an-Nisaa, 4: 60)

Shaykh ash-Shinqeetee said the following regarding these verses, “It is abundantly clear from the divinely revealed texts mentioned above that only those whom Allah veiled their sight and blinded them from the light of revelation and others like them would be in doubt about the disbelief (*kufr*) and idolatry (*shirk*) of those who follow laws legislated by Satan on the tongues of his friends and supporters, which contradict Allah’s *Sharee'ah* conveyed on the tongue of His Messenger (ﷺ).

Note: However, a distinction must be made between human legal systems which necessitate the rule of disbelief in the Creator of the heavens and earth, and systems which do not. There are primarily two types of systems: administrative and legal. There is nothing wrong with an administrative system which aims at organizing and implementing affairs in a way which does not contradict the *Sharee'ah*. The companions and those after them did not object to such systems. ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab implemented many administrative laws which were non-existent in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ). For example, he had the names of the army recorded in a register in order to know who was absent and who was present, and he bought the home of Safwaan ibn Umayyah and turned it into a prison in Makkah, though neither the Prophet (ﷺ) nor Aboo Bakr established prisons. Such administrative practices which organize and regularize the affairs of the community are fine as long as they do not conflict with the *Sharee'ah*, as they serve the general welfare of the society.

As for legal systems which contradict the *Sharee'ah* of the Creator of the heavens and earth, their implementation is an act of disbelief in the Creator. For example, the claim that favoring males over females in inheritance is unjust and unfair and that they should be treated equally, or that polygamy is oppressive, or that stoning to death and the cutting of hands are savage and inhumane punishments which should be discontinued. The institution of such economic, social, and political systems among the members of society is equivalent to disbelief in the Creator and rebellion against

³⁰⁵ *Saheeh Sunan at-Tirmitheeh*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Tafseer al Quraan; Baab: Min Soorah Tawbah.

the divinely revealed system legislated for all creation by the One who best knows the welfare of His creatures.

أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ شَرَعُوا لَهُمْ مِّنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَنْ بِهِ اللَّهُ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةُ الْفَصْلِ
لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

“Or do they have partners with Allah who have instituted for them a religion which Allah has not ordained?” (Soorah ash-Shooraa, 42: 21)

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ مِّن رِّزْقٍ فَجَعَلْتُمْ مِّنْهُ حَرَامًا وَحَلَالًا قُلْ ءَاَللَّهُ أَذِنَ لَكُمْ أَمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَفْتَرُونَ

“Say: ‘Have you seen what provision Allah has sent down to you, some of which you have made lawful and unlawful?’ Say: ‘Has Allah permitted you to do so, or are you fabricating lies about Allah?’ ” (Soorah Yunus, 10: 59)

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَا تَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ هَذَا حَلَالٌ وَهَذَا حَرَامٌ لِتَفْتَرُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ
الْكَذِبَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُونَ

“And do not say concerning the falsehood your tongues express: ‘This is lawful and this is forbidden,’ so as to invent lies against Allah. Indeed, those who invent lies against Allah will never prosper.” (Soorah an-Nahl, 16: 116)³⁰⁶

This is the foundation for the current “clash of civilizations” of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The efforts to globalize the secular democratic foundations of Western Civilization are in direct conflict with Islamic Civilization’s foundation of Divine Rule (*Sharee’ah*). Secularism rejects all forms of religious faith and worship and holds that public education and other matters of civil policy should be conducted without the introduction of a religious element.³⁰⁷ On the other hand, *Sharee’ah* requires the inclusion of religious laws and principles at all levels of government policy and social organization.

In order to legislate from a secular basis, the system of democracy was chosen in the West. Both the name and concept of democracy originated in ancient Greece. It meant “rule of the people”. In the Greek city-states, particularly Athens, slaves and women were excluded from the vote so only a minority of the inhabitants (20-30%) were active citizens.³⁰⁸ The realities of Western democracies today are not much different. In fact, the minority that rules has become even smaller. In The United States of America, which goes through the motions of elections, in order to give the population the illusion that it participates actively in governing itself, the absence of free education from kindergarten to Ph.D. ensures that the mass of society cannot participate in government. In contrast, poor countries like Sudan have managed to provide free education in spite of their economic difficulties.

Democracy, as perceived by Western thinkers, is not merely a political tool, but a social principle and philosophy. They boldly state: “Western democracy reaches beyond the confines of government and affects all phases of human relations.”³⁰⁹

³⁰⁶ *Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, pp. 65-7.

³⁰⁷ *The Living Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language*, p. 869.

³⁰⁸ *Colliers Encyclopedia*, vol. 8, p. 76 and 80.

³⁰⁹ It holds that reason is applicable not only to the understanding and mastery of nature, but also to the understanding and conduct of social problems.

Democracy, as a way of life, is based on three main principles. The first principle is that of “equality”. From the rationalist/humanist viewpoint, all humans have, (over and above differences of class, race, sex, nationality and religion), one common trait; the ability to reason.³¹⁰ This principle is not in opposition to Islaamic teachings. However, the emphasis on equality in Islaam lies in the belief in God and one’s responsibility before God. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was quoted as saying, “Every child is born with a natural belief in God (i.e., *fitrah*).”³¹¹

The second principle of “rational empiricism” fundamentally implies full confidence in human reason and experience. It is supposed that the human mind has the ability to deduce from historical and personal experience what is in fact best for human society. However, this is not really the case. For example, the American Constitution, written by the best and most trusted minds of the eighteenth century, contains an article that is so fundamentally unjust and incorrect, that it defies comprehension by the modern enlightened mind. Article 1, Section 2, entitled *The Three-Fifth Compromise* states that black men (slaves at the time) were to be counted as three-fifths of a white man.³¹² Its authors all were slave owners who did not consider their slaves to be their equal. Consequently, when writing that document, they merely expressed the ideas and beliefs of the ruling class of their times. Human reason and experience failed to arrive at what was, in fact, just. Any review of the legal systems of Europe, Asia or Africa all indicate that human lawmakers make laws according to their own sectarian or class interests. They have great difficulty in being truly objective. Consequently, Islaamic civilization holds that only God, who created human beings, knows their needs and who has no vested interests in any class, can legislate absolutely fair laws. Human input is restricted to the implementation of the divine laws and the deduction of secondary laws.

The third principle is referred to as “discussion and consent”. It is the mechanism by which democratic decisions are made. Discussion is based on the democratic view that no one possesses absolute truth; therefore, all sides to an argument must be given free expression. No truth is so certain that it may not be challenged.”³¹³ After hearing everyone’s view, decisions are made by majority vote. Consequently, truth, falsehood, good, and evil all become relative. As is often said, “One man’s meat is another man’s poison”. Furthermore, what is good today can become evil tomorrow and vice versa. The social consequence of this principle is the removal of any foundation for stable morals in society. For example, the book *Catcher in the Rye*, declared pornographic and banned in the fifties, is currently required reading in Canadian high schools. Since 1976, every issue of a mainstream British newspaper, *The Sun*, contains nude and semi-nude photographs of females on page 3. Similar pictures in *Playboy* magazine caused it to be labeled pornographic in the sixties.

Another classic case in point is that of the homosexual onslaught in the latter part of the 20th century. If the average Westerner were asked about his or her view on homosexuality in the 50’s and 60’s, they would immediately respond that it was sick, degenerate, perverse, etc. If they were religious they might even quote the Bible in which it is referred as “an abomination unto the Lord”. Psychiatrists of that period included it in their main reference works as a mental illness with suggested treatments ranging from shock therapy to drug therapy. However, if the same question were asked in the 70’s and early 80’s, the response would have been that homosexuality is a personal choice, an alternative lifestyle, ‘different strokes for different folks’, etc. Consequently, homosexuality has been stricken from the psychiatrist’s bible, only to be replaced by another illness

³¹⁰ *Colliers Encyclopedia*, vol. 8, p. 77.

³¹¹ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol.8, book 77, no.597.

³¹² The Constitution of the United States of America 1787, Article 1, Section 2 states: “[Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons.]” Source: U.S. Government Printing Office 1988 – 203 – 017 / 80002.

³¹³ *Colliers Encyclopedia*, vol. 8, p. 77.

called *homophobia*. Those who despise homosexuality and those who practice it are now labeled 'homophobic' and are sent to the psychiatrist's couch for treatment. Western civilization swung from one extreme end of the moral spectrum to the opposite end based on its democratic principles.

During the fifties and sixties, a sexual revolution began in the West culminating in the removal of fornication and adultery from the law books as punishable crimes. During that period lawmakers deduced a new principle to determine the legality of sexual relations between people. Since rape was unanimously considered unacceptable, they concluded that the principle of consent must be present for such relations to be legally acceptable. They also all agreed that sexual relations between adults and children were wrong (e.g., pedophilia) because children could easily be taken advantage of by adults due to their immaturity. Consequently, they added the second principle of adulthood for legal sexual relations. The phrase 'consenting adults'³¹⁴ became the battle cry of the sexual revolution resulting in an upsurge of wife swapping parties, group sex, sadomasochism, topless bars, etc., among many elements of the society. Homosexuals also waved the sexual revolution's banner of 'consenting adults' and openly challenged the mores of society. At first, the lawmakers balked. Homosexuality was a no-no. American society, from its inception, abhorred such practices. However, homosexual intellectuals reminded the lawmakers that their objection to homosexuality was religious based, and religion was not supposed to interfere in people's private or public lives in a secular democracy. Eventually, the legislators had to submit to the legal principle that they had themselves invented and the rights of homosexuals became enshrined in law.

Unfortunately, that was only the beginning. In Sweden, the principle of consenting adults was used a number of years back to decriminalize incest. Consequently, it is legally permissible there for a man to have sexual relations with his mother, sister or daughter as long as they are consenting adults.

Islaamic civilization, on the other hand, regards the laws revealed by God as absolute and unchangeable. What God defined as morally evil one-thousand four-hundred years ago cannot ever become morally good because the fundamental nature of human beings and their societies has not and will never change. Without a solid moral foundation human society will become corrupt. And leaving it up to humans to develop that foundation is inherently flawed. Allah states in the Qur'aan:

وَلَوْ أَتَّبَعَ الْخَلْقُ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ بَلْ أَتَيْنَهُمْ
بَذِكْرِهِمْ فَهُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِهِمْ مُعْرِضُونَ

"If the truth were according to their desires, the heavens and earth and all within them would be corrupted." (Soorah al-Mu'minoon, 23: 71)

No matter what scientific evidence is brought to prove that homosexuality is genetically or biologically based, it will still be considered a crime in the same way that adultery and fornication are considered crimes in spite of human inclination to it. Islaam holds that sane adult human beings are still responsible for their choices. They are not robots, incapable of going beyond their programming. Some scientists are currently claiming that even crimes like robbery and murder have genetic origins. The question remains: If scientists also prove that pedophilia and rape are genetically based, will Western society also decriminalize them and do away with their rational principle of consenting adults?

³¹⁴ "In recent years, in Europe and the United States, a number of highly respected legal, medical, and religious organizations have deliberated on the whole issue of the legal control of human sexuality. They have been unanimous in the conclusion that, while the laws protecting person and public sensibilities should be retained, *the purely moral laws should be dropped. Specifying what consenting adults do sexually in private, it is argued, should not be subject to legal control.*" (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. 27, p. 247)

Islaamic law does not deny the role of society in formulating some of its laws. However, these laws are secondary or tertiary laws and not primary laws. There is a limited role for democracy in the Islaamic principle of consultation stated in the Qur'aan:

وَأْمُرْهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ

“Their affairs should be by mutual consultation.” (Soorah ash-Shoorah, 42: 38)

For example, people in a community can decide by majority opinion to erect a traffic signal at a busy intersection where a number of traffic accidents have occurred. And later they may decide to remove it and make an underpass based on the same principle.

Western civilization's total commitment to *secularism* even at the expense of *democracy* explains why the West strongly supports military dictatorships in Turkey and Algeria. Women in Turkey are prohibited from wearing scarves in any government institution, whether educational or political. When Merve Sefa Kavakci, a Member of Parliament recently challenged this law by showing up in the assembly wearing a scarf to take her parliamentary oath, she was forcibly removed and her Turkish citizenship was subsequently revoked. The right to wear a scarf publicly is defended in most Western countries under the “freedom of religion” democratic policy, yet the West tolerates Turkish repression primarily because of Turkey's commitment to secularism. On the other hand, the West turned a blind eye when the Algerian military cancelled the results of free elections in order to stop the F.I.S. (the Islamic Party) from setting up an Islaamic government through democratic elections they were poised to win. Though the West stresses the importance of democracy, secularism is more important.

Both Chinese and Indian civilizations have succumbed to the globalization of Western civilization. When China embraced communism under the guidance of Chairman Mao Tse Tung, they embraced secular democracy. Also, communist countries were even more anti-religious than their capitalist counterparts. Atheism became the new state religion in communist countries and other religions were systematically eliminated.

India, on the other hand, with a Muslim minority of over 100 million, chose secular democracy in order to avoid internal turmoil. At any rate, Hinduism is a conflicting mixture of cults and religions that has no socio-economic system to offer. Hindu nationalism, as currently embodied in the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party), is merely an assertion of Hinduism as a cultural identity.

Consequently, only Islaam has a viable alternative to Western civilization and culture. However, although the foundations of Islaamic civilization are clearly in direct conflict with those of Western civilization, it does not mean that there are no common grounds and that military conflict is a necessary constant. There remain many areas of good achieved by the West that Islaamic civilization can benefit from, as Western civilization benefited from the achievements of Muslims in the past.³¹⁵

وَاتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْ
دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا

³¹⁵ The Clash of Civilizations: An Islamic View, pp. .

27. And recite what has been revealed to you of your Lord's scripture. None can change His words, and you will not find any refuge in other than Him.

In general, Allah's statement: "And recite what has been revealed to you of your Lord's scripture," is the consequence of His previous statement:

وَلَا يُشْرِكُ فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا

"Nor does He share His decision with anyone."

Meaning that since none can share in His decision, recite what has been revealed to you.³¹⁶

More specifically, some scholars³¹⁷ held that this verse represented the completion of the story concerning the People of the Cave. Thus, according to them, it meant that the Qur'aan should be followed regarding the story of the People of the Cave as Allah's words cannot be changed and there is nothing further to be known after Allah's explanation.

Ath-Tha'labee and others recorded that when Mu'aawiyah fought the Battle of *al-Madeeq* near Byzantium, Ibn 'Abbaas was with him. After the battle they reached the area where the [structure covering the] cave of the People of the Cave was located, Mu'aawiyah wanted to [remove the structure and] expose the cave in order to see them, but Ibn 'Abbaas told him that Allah had prevented one better than him from that, and he quoted the verse:

لَوْ أَطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا وَلَمُلِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُغْبًا

"If you saw them, you would have turned and fled." (18: 18)

However, Mu'aawiyah insisted on continuing in order to know more about them. So he sent some of his troops ahead to [remove the structure and] investigate the cave. However, when they entered the cave, Allah sent a strong wind which blew them out of the cave.³¹⁸

The Almighty's instruction: "Recite," includes both "oral recitation" and "applied recitation". As for "oral recitation", it refers to the reading of the words of the Qur'aanic text. Applied recitation refers to applying the Qur'aanic teachings which are read. In the Arabic context, if a person acted on the rulings of the Qur'aan, they have recited it, meaning that they followed it. As a result, it is said that the Almighty's statement:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً

"Indeed, those who recite the Book of Allah, establish regular prayers, and spend out of what I have provided for them." (Soorah *Faatir*, 35: 29)

includes both the "oral recitation" and the "ruling of the recitation".³¹⁹ There are also many verses which directly instruct that the commandments contained in revelation should be followed. For example:

اتَّبِعْ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

"Follow what has been revealed to you from your Lord, none has the right to be worshipped but He, and turn away from idol worshippers." (Soorah *al-An'aam*, 6: 106)³²⁰

³¹⁶ *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem*, p. 55.

³¹⁷ According to al-Qurtubee, al-Qushayree and Aboo Nasr 'Abdur-Raheem both held this position.

³¹⁸ *Al-Jaami' li Ahkaam al-Qur'aan*, vols. 9-10, p. 323.

³¹⁹ *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem*, p. 57.

³²⁰ *Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 67.

The person addressed in the command: “**Recite,**” is Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). However, it should be noted that statements addressed to the Messenger (ﷺ) are of three types:

1. Those containing evidence indicating that they are specific to him. For example:

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ

“Have I not opened your chest for you?” (Soorah ash-Sharh, 94: 1)

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ

“Did He not find you an orphan and gave you a refuge?” (Soorah ad-Duhaa, 93: 6)

There is no doubt that these two verses are referring specifically to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

2. Those containing evidence indicating that it is general. For example,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ لِعَدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ

“O Prophet! When you (all) divorce women, divorce them at their prescribed periods, and calculate their periods. (Soorah at-Talaaq, 65: 1)

“When you (all) divorce,” is plural and refers to the community, but Allah addressed their leader and Messenger because they are his followers. Therefore, the address includes the Prophet (ﷺ) and the whole community.

3. Those containing what could possibly refer to him alone or to him and his community.

Some scholars conclude that the address is general while others say that it is specific, but the community should follow it, not because of the implications of the address, but due to the implication of him being their example. For example,

وَاتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ

“And recite what has been revealed to you of your Lord’s scripture,”

Some may say that this verse contains a context indicating that it is special for him, as will be mentioned later, Allah willing. However, there are many examples of the third type. The correct understanding in this case is that the address, “recite”, is for the community, but it was directed to its leader and example, because addresses are best directed to leaders and exemplary personalities.

The Almighty’s statement: “What has been revealed to you of your Lord’s Scripture,” refers to the Qur’aan. By referring to Allah as “your Lord” instead of “the Lord”, there is evidence that what Allah revealed to His Messenger (ﷺ) is a part of His perfect care for him.³²¹

لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ

In the phrase, “None can change His words,” Almighty Allah explains that His words cannot be changed because the information they contain is true and laws in them are just. No one can change their truth to falsehood or their justice to injustice. What is mentioned here is elaborated on elsewhere. For example:

وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

“And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice. None can change His Words. And He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.” (Soorah al-An’aam, 6: 115)

Elsewhere in the Qur’aan the Almighty explained that He can change or replace whatever of His verses He wishes:

³²¹ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, pp. 55-6.

وَإِذَا بَدَّلْنَا آيَةً مَّكَانَ آيَةٍ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُنَزِّلُ

“And when I replace a verse with another - and Allah knows best what He reveals.”

(Soorah an-Nahl, 16: 101)³²²

“None can change His words,” also means that no one can change either His “creational words” or His “legal words”. Regarding His “creational words”, it is obvious that no one can change them. For, if Allah said, “Be!” regarding something, no one can change it. As for His “legal words”, the negation of change is not in regards to the existence of change, but in regard to its legal possibility. It is not legally possible for anyone to change Allah’s “legal words.” It is obligatory on all to submit to Allah and surrender their will to Him. If someone claimed that they found people who changed Allah’s words, where Allah has referred to it regarding the Bedouins:

يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُبَدِّلُوا كَلِمَ اللَّهِ

“They want to change Allah’s Words.” (Soorah al-Fat’h, 48: 15)

That refers to “legal change”. This type of change could occur at human hands leading to their distorting Allah’s words and removing them from their contexts, and interpreting them in a way different from what Allah intended. Included among them are all those who misinterpret Allah’s names and attributes, whether partially or completely.³²³

The Four Main Rules Governing Allah’s Names and Attributes

Prior to beginning his commentary on the book, *Lum’atul-I’tiqaad*, Sh Al-‘Uthaymeen outlined four important rules related to Allah’s names and attributes.

Rule Number One

What is obligatory regarding the texts of the Qur’aan and Sunnah in relationship to Allah’s names and attributes.

It is obligatory to keep the implications of names and attributes according to their obvious meanings without any change because Allah revealed the Qur’aan in clear Arabic and the Prophet (ﷺ) spoke the Arabic language. Consequently, it is obligatory to keep implications of the statements of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) according to their linguistic meanings because changing them from their obvious meaning would be speaking about Allah without knowledge which is forbidden as Allah stated:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

“Say: Indeed my Lord has forbidden external and hidden corruption, sin, aggression, giving Allah partners for which no authority was revealed, and that you speak about Allah what you have no knowledge.” (Soorah al-A’raaf, 7: 33)

An example of that can be found in the verse:

بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ

“Instead, His two hands are spread out and He provides as He wishes”

(Soorah al-Maa’idah, 5: 64)

The obvious meaning of the verse is that Allah has two real hands. Therefore, they must be confirmed. If someone said that the intended meaning for them is “power”, it would be said to him

³²² *Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 68.

³²³ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 57.

that what he has done is diverting words from their obvious meaning, which is not permissible, because it is a form of speaking about Allah without knowledge.

Rule Number Two

There are four sub-categories concerning Allah's Names

1. All of Allah's Names are Beautiful

Since all of them are contain the perfect attributes of Allah, free from any deficiency in any respect.

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا

“All the Beautiful names belong to Allah, so call on Him with them.”

(Soorah al-A'raaf, (7): 180)

For example, *ar-Rahmaan* among Allah's beautiful names indicates the great attribute of extensive mercy. On the basis of this principle it is known that *ad-Dahr* (Time) is not one of Allah's names because it does not contain a meaning of infinite beauty. As for the Prophet's statement,

((لَا تَسُبُّوا الدَّهْرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الدَّهْرُ))

“Do not curse time, for indeed Allah is time.”³²⁴

It means that He is the owner of time who can do whatever He wishes in it and with it as is proven by another narration from Allah related by the Prophet (ﷺ) in which He states:

((بِيَدِي الْأَمْرُ أُقَلِّبُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ))

“The affair is in My hand, I flip the night and the day.”³²⁵

2. Allah's Beautiful Names are not limited to any specific number.

This is indicated by the well-known following supplication of the Prophet (ﷺ):

((أَسْأَلُكَ اللَّهُمَّ بِكُلِّ اسْمٍ هُوَ لَكَ سَمِيَتْ بِهِ نَفْسِكَ أَوْ أَنْزَلْتَهُ فِي كِتَابِكَ أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ أَوْ اسْتَأْثَرْتَ بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ))

“O Allah, I ask you by every name belonging to You with which You named Yourself, or You revealed in Your scripture, or You taught one of Your creatures, or You kept with Yourself exclusively in the hidden knowledge.”³²⁶

What Allah has kept exclusively to Himself in the knowledge of the unseen cannot be limited or known.

As regards the other well-known prophetic statement wherein a limit was apparently set, the total number of Allah's names:

((إِنَّ لِلَّهِ تِسْعَةً وَتِسْعِينَ اسْمًا مِنْ أَحْصَاهَا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ))

“Indeed Allah has ninety-nine names. Whoever counts them will enter paradise.”³²⁷

³²⁴ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1217, no. 5580 narrated by Aboo Hurayrah. There is another authentic narration from Aboo Hurayrah in *Musnad Ahmad* in which he stated, “Do not curse time, for indeed Allah said: I am time, the days and nights belong to me, I renew them and let them go old, I bring rulers after rulers.” Ibn al-Qayyim stated in this regard: “One who curses time is between two states, one of which he must hold: Either his curse of Allah or committing *shirk* with Him. For if he believes that Allah alone did that and he curses the one who did it, he has cursed Allah.” (*Zaad al-Ma'ad*, vol. 3, p. 355)

³²⁵ Narrated by Aboo Hurayrah in *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 9, p. 433, no. 583. and *Sahih Muslim* vol. 4, p. 1257, no. 5823.

³²⁶ *Musnad Ahmad*, vol. 1, p. 394, 452 and authenticated in *Silsilah al-Ahaadeeth as-Saheehah*, vol. 1, no. 199.

The apparent contradiction between the two statements may be resolved by explaining the above-mentioned *hadeeth* as referring to one who memorizes any ninety-nine of Allah's names will enter paradise. This is similar to saying: I have 100 dirhams which I have prepared for charity. This statement does contradict the fact that I have more dirhams prepared for something else.

3. Allah's names are not to be decided upon by reason but by revelation.

They are fixed (*tawqeefee*) by what has come in the *sharee'ah* and should neither be added to nor reduced because the human mind is not able to grasp what names are due to Allah. Consequently, limiting the names to what has been revealed is obligatory. Because naming Him by what He has not named himself or denying what He named Himself is a sin regarding Allah's right. Thus it is obligatory that proper etiquette be followed in this regard.

4. Every one of Allah's names refers to Allah's essence, to the attribute it contains and to the effect resulting from it if it is transitive.

Faith in Allah's names is not complete without affirming all of that. For example, regarding the intransitive name "the Great" (*al-'Azeem*), faith in it is incomplete unless belief in it as one of Allah's names referring to His essence and the attribute of "greatness" (*al-'Azamah*) it contains. Regarding the transitive name "the Most Merciful" (*ar-Rahmaan*), complete faith in it depends on affirming it as one of Allah's names, its containing the attribute of "mercy" (*ar-Rahmah*) and its effect which is that Allah shows mercy to whomever He wishes.

Rule Number Three

There are four sub-categories concerning Allah's Attributes.

1. All of Allah's attributes are transcendent, attributes of perfection and praise, without any deficiency in any respect.

For example, life, knowledge, ability, hearing, sight, wisdom, mercy, transcendence, etc. Based on the Almighty's statement:

وَلِلَّهِ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَىٰ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

"And to Allah belongs the supreme example and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

(*Soorah an-Nahl*, 16: 60)

If an attribute represents deficiency without any element of perfection, it is absolutely inapplicable to Allah. For example, death, ignorance, inability, deafness, blindness, etc. Because the Almighty punishes those who attribute deficiency and imperfection to Himself and He exalted Himself far above the deficiencies they attributed to Him due to the contradiction of deficiency to Lordship and sovereignty (*ruboobiyyah*).

If the attribute represents perfection from one aspect and imperfection from another its attribution will not be affirmed or rejected absolutely. Instead, there must be elaboration; it will be affirmed to Allah when it represents perfection and rejected when it represents imperfection. For example, plotting, deception, etc. These attributes represent perfection when it is in reciprocation for something similar because it indicates that the doer is not weak and powerless to do the same to his enemy. It indicates deficiency and imperfection in other situations besides this. Thus it is affirmed for Allah in the first case and negated in the latter. As in Allah's statement:

وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينَ

"The plot and Allah plots, and Allah is the best of plotters." (*Soorah al-Anfaal*, 8: 30)

³²⁷ Narrated by Aboo Hurayrah in *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 9, p. 363, no. 489. and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1409, no. 6475.

إِنَّهُمْ يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا * وَأَكِيدُ كَيْدًا

“Indeed they scheme and I scheme.” (Soorah at-Taariq, 86: 15-6)

إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ

“Surely the hypocrites [try to] deceive Allah, but it is He who deceives them.”

(Soorah an-Nisaa, 4: 142)

If it is asked, for example: “Can Allah be described using the term ‘plotting’?” Do not say yes or no. Instead say that He plots against those who deserve it, and Allah knows best.

2. Allah’s attributes may be divided into two categories: affirmative/positive and negative.

The affirmative attributes are those that Allah affirmed for Himself, like, life, knowledge, and ability. They must be affirmed for Allah in the way appropriate for Him, because Allah affirmed them for Himself and He knows best His attributes.

The negative attributes are those that Allah negated from Himself, like, oppression. They must be negated from Allah because He negated them from Himself, but one must believe that their opposites are attributes of Allah from the most perfect perspective, because negation is not complete unless it contains an affirmation.

وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا

“And your Lord does not oppress anyone.” (Soorah al-Kahf, 18: 49)

It is obligatory to deny the attribution of oppression to Allah along with the belief in Allah’s attribute of perfect justice.

3. The affirmative attributes may be divided into two categories: Personal (*thaatiyyah*) and consequential (*fi’liyyah*).

Personal attributes are those which were, are and will be attributed to Him, like “hearing” and “seeing”. Consequential attributes are those related to His will; if He wishes He does them and if He does not wish, He does not do them, like His settling above the throne, or His coming. It is also possible for an attribute to be both personal and consequential from two different perspectives. For example the attribute of speech, relative to its origin it is a personal attribute because Allah was and is speaking. While from the perspective of some [of His] speech, it is a consequential attribute because it is related to His will. He speaks what He wishes when He wishes.

4. Three questions may be asked about each and every one of Allah’s attributes:

- i) **Is the attribute to be understood literally and why?** The answer is yes, because the basic principle for understanding speech is according to its literal meaning. The literal meaning should not be avoided [by considering the attribute metaphorical] except if there exists authentic evidence preventing that. [For example, Allah states:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ ۖ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ
حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

“Indeed, I have created humankind and I know what his soul whispers. And I am closer to him than his jugular vein.” (Soorah Qaaf, 50: 16).

This verse implies that Allah is within human beings since the jugular vein is inside the necks of humans. However, such a meaning would imply that humans may worship other humans and themselves, both of which are forbidden. Furthermore, Allah states elsewhere in the Qur’aan that:

يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُمْ مِمَّنْ فَوْقَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

“They fear their Lord who is above them and they do what they are commanded.” (Soorah an-Nahl, 16: 50)

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) also declared a woman a true believer on the basis of her answer to his question, “Where is Allah?” that He is above the heavens.^{328]}

- ii) **Is it possible to describe how it is and why?** The answer is no, it is not permissible to describe how [Allah’s attributes] are due to the Almighty’s statement:

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِ عِلْمًا

“He knows what is in front of them and what is behind them and no knowledge can encompass Him.” (Soorah Taahaa, 20: 110)

The human mind cannot comprehend how Allah’s attributes operate. [For example, human beings can hardly understand how they see; how the upside-down image that strikes the retina at the back of the eye is transformed into signals which are read by the brain. To understand how Allah sees without eye apparatus, etc. is impossible.]

- iii) **Does it resemble human characteristics and why?** The answer is no, the divine attributes do not resemble the attributes of created beings as the Almighty said:

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

“Nothing is similar to Him and He is the All-Seeing, the All-Hearing.”

(Soorah Shooraa, 42: 11)

Allah deserves absolute perfection, thus it is not possible for Him to resemble the creation because it is imperfect.

The difference between resemblance (*tamtheel*) and how (*takyeef*) is that resemblance describes how an attribute is in relationship to something similar to it, while “how” describes how an attribute is without limiting it to something similar. For example, to say that Allah’s hand is like a human hand is “resemblance”, while to imagine a description of Allah’s hand different from any of the hands of the creatures is “how”. This imaginary description is forbidden [because it is not based on knowledge, and whatever the human mind imagines is based on what it observed with its senses from the creation. Consequently, the imagined hand would be a composite of created characteristics, meaning that Allah’s hand would be made similar to the characteristics of His creatures.]

Rule Number Four

Regarding what is used to refute those who deny Allah’s names and attributes (al-Mu’attilah).

The *Mu’attilites* are those who deny any of Allah’s names and attributes by twisting the meanings of texts and diverting them from their obvious meanings. They are also referred to as the “Interpreters” (*al-Mu’awwilah*). The general rule for refuting their claims is to point out that:

1. **They contradict the obvious meanings of the texts.** [For example, in the case of the term *istiwa* (settling above) found in the Qur’aan:

الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى

“The Most Merciful has settled above the throne.” (Soorah Taahaa, 20: 5)

This term is interpreted to mean *isteela* (taking possession of something) by *Mu’tizilites*³²⁹ and *Ash’arites*³³⁰ in order to avoid the concept of Allah settling above His throne which they perceive as making Him resemble humans who sit on thrones.]

³²⁸ Sahih Muslim (English Trans.), vol. 1, pp. 271-2, no. 1094.

2. **They contradict the methodology of the *Salaf*.** [For example, when Imaam Maalik was asked about how the settling above the throne took place, he informed the questioner that “settling above” is known in Arabic language, how it took place is unknown and asking about it is *bid‘ah* (innovation).]
3. **They do not have any authentic evidence to support their claims.** [For example, the interpretation of *isteelaa* (taking possession) for *istiwa* (settling above) implies that Allah’s throne was in the possession of someone else and He took possession of it, which is a concept much worse than what they sought to avoid in their interpretation.]
4. **In the case of some attributes there may be a fourth principle or more principles for refutation.** [For example, the principle that “whatever is said concerning Allah’s person may be said concerning His characteristics”. Meaning that they accept that Allah is living and so are humans, however, Allah’s life is not like human life. Divine life is without beginning or end and it does not depend on anyone or anything for its existence. Whereas human life has a beginning and an end, and it depends on Allah for its existence. Similarly, it may be said that Allah’s settling above His throne is not like a human being sitting on a throne.]

This path of interpretation led them along with the Khaarijites³³¹ to even deny the reality of Allah’s throne. They claimed that it referred to “authority” or “dominion.” However, that led to further problems in the interpretation of that verse:

³²⁹ The Mu‘tazilites are followers of Waasil ibn ‘Aṭaa who excluded himself from the circle of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣree and affirmed that sinners are in limbo between belief and disbelief and that they will remain forever in the hellfire. ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd followed him in this belief. They denied the divine attributes like the Jahmites, and denied Allah’s Qadar relative to human actions like the Qadarites, and claimed that one who does major sins will be eternally in hell like the Mu‘tazilites. (*Sharḥ Lum‘atul-I‘tiqaad*, p. 163)

³³⁰ Ash‘arites who were followers of Abul-Ḥasan ‘Alee ibn Ismaa‘eel al-Ash‘aree (873-935). He was born and raised in Basra, where he espoused Mu‘tazilite thought as a student of al-Jubbaa‘ee, until he reached the age of forty and he publically announced his repentance from it and explained its falsehood. Then he adhered firmly to the way of the People of the Sunnah. As for those who name themselves after him, they continue following a particular sect, which only recognizes seven divine attributes that, according to them, the human intellect indicates. They interpret the remaining attributes as manifestations of the seven mentioned in the following line of poetry.

حَيِّ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ وَالْكَلَامُ لَهُ * إِرَادَةٌ وَكَذَلِكَ السَّمْعُ وَالْبَصَرُ

Living, knowing, able and speech He has * will and likewise hearing and sight

They also have many other innovative statements regarding the meaning of speech, ability, etc. (*Sharḥ Lum‘atul-I‘tiqaad*, p. 163)

Also the Maatureedites named after Aboo Maṣṣoor Muḥammad (d. 944), a scholastic theologian born in Samarkand, who, together with the Ash‘arites and others were the founders of scholastic theology (*‘Ilm al-Kalaam*). Little is known about the man himself as his school became established as the result of the writings of his disciples, in particular an-Naṣafee. The doctrinal differences between the Maatureedite and Ash‘arite schools are traditionally listed as 13, of which seven are semantic. The most important difference is that al-Maatureedee held that the just are saved on account of their justice, whereas the Ash‘arites held that Allah’s will is unfathomable; He may send the just to Hell. (*The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 262)

³³¹ The Khaarijites (Ar. *Kawaarij*) meaning “seceders” were the first sect to appear among Muslims. The Khaarijite division occurred during the Battle of Siffeen (657CE), when Mu‘aawiyah presented a proposal to ‘Alee for the settlement of their differences concerning the punishment of the murderers of Caliph ‘Uthmaan, which had provoked civil war. Mu‘aawiyah suggested that the problem be referred to two arbitrators who would pronounce judgement according to the Qur’aan. The majority of ‘Alee’s army readily adopted this proposal. However, one group, mainly from the tribe of Tameem, vigorously protested against the setting up of a human tribunal above divine judgment on the battlefield. They split off from ‘Alee’s army, while loudly protesting that “judgement belongs to Allah alone (*laa ḥukma illaa lillaah*)” and withdrew to a village not far from Kufah called Harooraa. There they elected as their chief an obscure soldier called ‘Abdullaah ibn Wahb ar-Raasibee and took the name Haaroorites or Muhakkimites. Their numbers increased due to successive defections. When the arbitration ended unfavourably, a large group of ‘Alee’s partisans defected and left Koofah to join Ibn Wahb’s encampment along the Nahrawaan canal. And it is in reference to this defection that the name *Khawaarij* or Khaarijites was given.

The fanaticism of the Khaarijites immediately manifested itself in a series of extremist proclamations and terrorist actions. They proclaimed the annulment of ‘Alee’s caliphate, condemned Caliph ‘Uthmaan’s conduct and

وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَنِيَّةٌ

“On that day, eight [angels] will carry the throne of your Lord.” (Soorah al-Haaqqah, 69: 17)
Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was quoted by Aboo Hurayrah as saying,

((فَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ فَاسْأَلُوهُ الْفِرْدَوْسَ فَإِنَّهُ أَوْسَطُ الْجَنَّةِ وَأَعْلَى الْجَنَّةِ أَرَاهُ فَوْقَهُ عَرْشُ الرَّحْمَنِ))

“If you ask Allah, ask Him for Firdaws. It is the middle and highest point in paradise. From it the rivers of paradise spring forth and above it is the throne of the Most Merciful.”³³²

Missionaries and others have argued that since Allah mentions here that no one can change His words, His divinely revealed scriptures, the previous scriptures (Old Testament and the Gospel etc.) must be true because they are all the words of Allah. However, the actual meaning of the phrase “**none can change His Words**” is the words of the Qur’aan would not be changed, because Allah said before this “**what has been revealed to you (Prophet ﷺ)**” which means the Qur’aan. So the reference here is to the Qur’aan and not to any of the previous scriptures. As for the previous scriptures they were changed after the time of the prophets as Allah said:

مِّنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ

“Among those Jews are some who displace words from their right places.”

(Soorah an-Nisaa, 4: 46)³³³

فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِهِ ثَمَنًا
قَلِيلًا فَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِّمَّا كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِّمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ

“Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say, ‘This is from Allah,’ to purchase something cheap! Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn with it.” (Soorah al-Baqarah, 2: 79)

وَلَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا

The last part of the verse: “**And you will not find any refuge in other than Him,**” informs the Prophet (ﷺ) that besides Allah, Most Great and Glorious, he will not be able to find anyone to

branded ‘Alee and Mu’aawiyah disbelievers along with anyone who did not accept their point of view. They committed many vicious acts of murder that included women and children. As their numbers grew their corruption spread. Eventually Caliph ‘Alee was forced to neutralize their threat by attacking their camp. Ibn Wahb and most of his followers were killed in the Battle of Nahrawaan, July 658. Caliph ‘Alee himself was assassinated in 661 by the Khaarijite, ‘Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Muljam, whose wife had lost most of her family members at Nahrawaan.

Beliefs: The Khaarijites held that major sins make the sinner an apostate. Their extreme wing, the Azraqites held that anyone who became a disbeliever in this way could never re-enter the faith and should be killed for his apostasy along with his wives and children. All non-Kaarijite Muslims were regarded as apostates. On the basis of this they developed the principle of *isti’raad* (religious murder), which was applied from the beginning of the movement’s appearance, even before it had been formulated in theory. This ferocious principle formed a strange contrast with the spirit of tolerance shown by the Khaarijites to non-Muslims. They further held that it was a religious duty to revolt against an Imaam that has sinned. (Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, p. 246-8, The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam, pp. 222-3, Maqaalaat al-Islaameeyeen, vol. 1, pp. 167-8, al-Milal wan-Nihal, p. 106-110, and Wasitiyyah Ahlis-Sunnah bayna al-Firaq, pp. 291-2)

³³² Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol.4 , pp. 39-40, no. 48.

³³³ See also al-Maa’idah, 5: 13 & 41.

turn to. Therefore, whenever a person is afflicted by something harmful or fears something, he can only turn to Allah. This verse is similar to the Almighty's statement:

قُلْ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا رَشَدًا ﴿٦٦﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي لَنْ يُجِيرَنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ أَحَدٌ وَلَنْ أَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا

“Say: It is not in my power to cause you harm, or to bring you to the Right Path. Say: None can protect me from Allah’s punishment, nor will I find refuge except in Him.” (Soorah al-Jinn, 72: 21-2)³³⁴

This verse contains an instruction to the Prophet (ﷺ) to carry out Allah’s commandments which have been given to him. Not because he might not do so, but to emphasize that this was his duty and if he did not do so he would be held in account for it.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ﴾

“O Messenger! Convey what has been revealed to you from your Lord. And if you do not, then you have not conveyed His Message.” (Soorah al-Maa’idah, 5: 67)

There are similar verses in the Qur’aan which instruct the Prophet (ﷺ) about his responsibilities and this is the reason why on the day of the farewell pilgrimage, after giving the general instructions to the pilgrims in Minaa, he said:

((اللَّهُمَّ هَلْ بَلَّغْتُ قَالُوا نَعَمْ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ قَالَ اللَّهُمَّ اشْهَدْ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ)).

“O Allah! Have I not conveyed?” They replied yes three times. He then said: **“O Allah! Bear witness,”** three times.³³⁵

These verses and prophetic statements also contradict those people (e.g., Shi’ites or Soofees) who claim that there were parts of the message which were hidden and they were only said to some special people, but in fact the whole message was very clear.

عَنِ الْعِرْبَاضِ بْنِ سَارِيَةَ يَقُولُ وَعَظَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَوْعِظَةً ذَرَفَتْ مِنْهَا الْعُيُونُ وَوَجَلَتْ مِنْهَا الْقُلُوبُ فَقُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ هَذِهِ لَمَوْعِظَةٌ مُودِعٍ فَمَاذَا تَعْهَدُ إِلَيْنَا قَالَ: ((قَدْ تَرَكْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْبَيْضَاءِ لَيْلُهَا كَنَهَارِهَا لَا يَزِيغُ عَنْهَا بَعْدِي إِلَّا هَالِكٌ مَنْ يَعِشْ مِنْكُمْ فَسِيرَى اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا عَرَفْتُمْ مِنْ سُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ عَصُوا عَلَيْهَا بِالنَّوَاجِدِ)).

Al-‘Irbaad ibn Saariyah said: Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) gave us a sermon which caused our eyes to become filled with tears and our hearts to tremble. So we asked: “O Messenger of Allah! This sermon is like a farewell sermon. So what do you advise us?” He replied: *“Indeed, I have left you on a clear white plain whose day is like its night. Whoever deviates from it after me will be destroyed. Whoever among you that lives after me will see much conflict. So adhere to what you*

³³⁴ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 57.

³³⁵ This text is from Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. p. , no. . Kitaab: Buyoo; Baab: fee wad’ir Ribaa. But it is also collected in Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. Kitaab: Hajj; Baab: Khutbah Minaa and Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab:

know of my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Righteous Rightly-guided Caliphs. Bite on firmly to it with your molars.”³³⁶

However, there is an authentic narration from Aboo Hurayrah in which he mentioned conveying some knowledge and hiding some:

((حَفِظْتُ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَعَاءَيْنِ فَأَمَّا أَحَدُهُمَا فَبَشَّتُهُ وَأَمَّا الْآخَرُ فَلَوْ بَشَّتُهُ قُطِعَ هَذَا الْبَلْعُومُ)).

“I memorized from Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) two containers³³⁷. As for one of them, I spread it. As for the other, if I were to spread it this head [of mine] would be severed.”³³⁸

Scholars explained that the hidden part contained the names of the evil rulers, their states and their eras. Aboo Hurayrah used to indirectly identify some of them, without openly naming them for fear of losing his life. For example, he used to say: “I seek refuge from the beginning of 60 and the rule of children,” alluding to caliphate of Yazeed, the son of Caliph Mu’aawiyah, which was in the 60th year after the Hijrah. Allah answered the prayer of Aboo Hurayrah and he died one year before the year 60 AH. Ibn al-Muneer said: “The Baatinites use this hadeeth to justify their falsehood whereby they believe that the *Sharee’ah* has an outer and inner aspect, and that the essence of the inner aspect is the abandonment of the rules of the religion. However, what Aboo Hurayrah intended by “be severed” was that evil people would sever it if they heard his dispraise of their activities and his labeling their path deviant.”³³⁹

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ
وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ
أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرْطًا

28. Keep yourself content with those who call on their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His face. And do not let your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of this world. And do not obey him whose heart I have made heedless of My remembrance; one who follows his own lust and whose deeds have been lost.

In the first part of this verse,

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ

³³⁶ *Sunan Ibn-i-Majah*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Al Muqaddimah, Baab: Ittibaa as sunnah

³³⁷ This is a common Arabic linguistic euphemism in which the term “container” is used, but the knowledge contained in it was intended. In some narrations “three containers” are mentioned; two were spread and one was kept hidden. That is, if all that Aboo Hurayrah memorized were written it would have filled two or three large containers.

³³⁸ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 1, p. 89, no. 121.

³³⁹ *Fat’hul-Baaree*, vol. 1, p. 27, no. 120.

“Keep yourself patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and afternoon, seeking His Face,” Allah instructs the Prophet (ﷺ) and the believers to sit with those who remember Him; those who say “*La ilaaha illAllah*,” who praise Him, glorify Him, declare His greatness and call on Him in worship and for their needs, morning and evening; all the servants of Allah, whether rich or poor, strong or weak.³⁴⁰

This instruction is one of patience in righteousness. Patience is normally associated with trials and calamities, however it has a variety of forms and circumstances. Ibn al-Qayyim noted that patience is required basically in three areas of life:

1. In worshipping Allah and following His commands.
2. In abstaining from wrong actions.
3. In accepting Allah’s decree and ruling (*Qadaa wa Qadr*).

These three areas can be found mentioned in the advice given by Luqmaan to his son:

يَبْنَىٰ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزَمِ الْأُمُورِ

“O my son! Establish regular prayer, enjoin what is just and forbid what is wrong; and bear with patient constancy whatever befalls you; for this is firmness (of purpose) in (the conduct of) affairs.” (Soorah Luqmaan, 31: 17)

Enjoining what is just includes doing good deeds, and forbidding what is wrong includes abstaining from wrong actions.

Patience in worshipping Allah

Patience in worshipping Allah and carrying out His instructions means that you perform the prescribed acts of worship regularly, sincerely and with knowledge. Worship not performed regularly is of no value. On the other hand, there are two dangers in worship performed regularly [i.e. repeatedly]: Firstly, we risk losing our sincerity, if the motive for performing prayers is not to please Allah and draw closer to Him. Consequently, to protect the value of our worship we must make sure that we are sincere. Secondly, we must be sure never to deviate from the way of the Prophet (ﷺ), by only worshipping Allah according to the Sunnah.³⁴¹

We human beings have a natural aversion to carrying out acts of worship, like formal prayer, because of our inherent laziness. If a man is hardhearted and commits many wrong actions, thinking too much of physical pleasure and mixing with people who do not remember Allah, then he can hardly perform his prayers. Even if he does manage to pray, he will do so absent-mindedly and hurriedly. [This includes recommended acts of worship like voluntary prayers, reading Qur’aan, attending circles of learning, and so forth.]

Every step of the way, humans need patience in carrying out an act of worship. Before one starts to do an act of worship, he must make sure that his intentions are correct. He should check his sincerity, and seek to avoid showing off in performing any act of worship. While he is performing any act of worship, he must try to perfect it, to keep his intention pure and his mind focused on the purpose of performing that act of worship, namely, to please Allah. After completing an act of worship, he must also abstain from doing anything that could corrupt his worship. Allah has told us:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَبْطُلُوا صَدَقَتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَىٰ

“O you who believe! Do not cancel your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury.” (Soorah al-Baqarah, 2: 264).

³⁴⁰ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. ,

³⁴¹ Patience and Gratitude, pp. 16-8.

He should exercise patience in refraining from admiring and feeling proud of his performance, as this is more damaging than committing many other, more visible, wrong actions. Similarly, he should always be discreet and refrain from telling others about his acts of worship.³⁴²

Scholars of *Tafseer* commonly comment that “**Keep yourself patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and afternoon, seeking His Face,**” was revealed regarding the poor among the immigrants like ‘Ammar, Suhayb, Bilaal, and Ibn Mas‘ood, when the pagan aristocrats requested that the Prophet (ﷺ) expel them and sit with them without their presence.³⁴³ There is, however, an authentic narration of this nature regarding a similar verse.

عَنْ سَعْدٍ قَالَ كُنَّا مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ سِتَّةَ نَفَرٍ فَقَالَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اطْرُدْ هَؤُلَاءِ لَا يَجْتَرِئُونَ عَلَيْنَا قَالَ وَكُنْتُ أَنَا وَابْنُ مَسْعُودٍ وَرَجُلٌ مِنْ هَذِلٍ وَبِلَالٌ وَرَجُلَانِ لَسْتُ أُسَمِّيهِمَا فَوَقَعَ فِي نَفْسِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَقَعَ فَحَدَّثَ نَفْسَهُ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ

Sa’d ibn Abee Waqqaas said: “Six of us were with the Prophet (ﷺ). The idolators said, ‘Tell these people to leave so they will not offend us.’ There was myself, Ibn Mas‘ood, a man from Huthayl, Bilaal and two other men whose names I have forgotten. Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) thought to himself about what Allah willed [in such a situation]. Then Allah revealed:

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ

“**Do not turn away from those who invoke their Lord, morning and afternoon, desiring His Face.**” (Soorah al-An‘aam, 6: 52)³⁴⁴

The nobles of Prophet Nooh’s time also degraded Prophet Nooh and his message due to the fact that many of his followers were poor and uncultured.

فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا نَرَاكَ إِلَّا بَشَرًا مِثْلَنَا وَمَا نَرَاكَ اتَّبَعَكَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَرَادُوا بِادْيِ الرَّأْيِ وَمَا نَرَى لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍ بَلْ نَظُنُّكُمْ كَاذِبِينَ

“The chiefs who disbelieved among his people said: We see you as only a man like ourselves, and we only see the lowliest among us following you, and they too followed you without thinking.” (Soorah Hood, 11: 27)³⁴⁵

Nooh also rejected their arguments saying:

وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُلْتَقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَلَكِنِّي أَرَأَيْتُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُونَ (٢٩) وَيَقُولُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ طَرَدْتُهُمْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

³⁴² Patience and Gratitude, pp.32-38.

³⁴³ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 69. However, there is no authentic narration to support this claim.

³⁴⁴ Sahih Muslim, vol., p., no., Kitaab: Fadaa’il as sahaabah, Baab: Fadaa’il Sa’d ibn Abee Waqqaas.

³⁴⁵ See also Soorah ash-Shu’araa, 42: 111.

“I will not drive away the believers. Indeed, they will meet their Lord, but I see that you are an ignorant people. ‘O my people! Who will help me against Allah, if I drove them away? Will you not reflect?’” (Soorah Hood, 11: 29-30)³⁴⁶

This verse contains general instructions to accompany the righteous and to struggle with one’s desires in order to keep their company and to mix with them, even if they are poor and of lowly status. For, in accompanying them there are uncountable benefits.³⁴⁷

The importance of keeping good company was stressed in a number of the Prophet’s statements. For example, in choosing friends:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ: ((الرَّجُلُ عَلَى دِينِ خَلِيلِهِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَحَدُكُمْ مَنْ يُخَالِلُ)).

Aboo Hurayrah quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying, “A man follows the religion of his close friend, so, each of you should be aware of whom he befriends.”³⁴⁸

In choosing whom we sit with,

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ((مَثَلُ الْجَلِيسِ الصَّالِحِ كَمَثَلِ صَاحِبِ الْمِسْكِ إِنْ لَمْ يُصْبِكَ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ أَصَابَكَ مِنْ رِيحِهِ وَمَثَلُ جَلِيسِ الشُّوءِ كَمَثَلِ صَاحِبِ الْكَبِيرِ إِنْ لَمْ يُصْبِكَ مِنْ سَوَادِهِ أَصَابَكَ مِنْ دُخَانِهِ)).

Anas ibn Maalik related that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “The example of the righteous companion is that of the perfume merchant. If he doesn’t give you any, its fragrance will touch you. The example of the evil companion is that of the blacksmith. If his sparks do not catch you, his smoke will.”³⁴⁹

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ((لَأَنْ أَقْعُدَ مَعَ قَوْمٍ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى مِنْ صَلَاةِ الْغَدَاةِ حَتَّى تَطْلُعَ الشَّمْسُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ أَنْ أَعْتِقَ أَرْبَعَةً مِنْ وَلَدِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَلَأَنْ أَقْعُدَ مَعَ قَوْمٍ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ مِنْ صَلَاةِ الْعَصْرِ إِلَى أَنْ تَغْرُبَ الشَّمْسُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ أَنْ أَعْتِقَ أَرْبَعَةً)).

Anas ibn Maalik quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying: “For me to sit with people who remember Allah, Most High, from the morning prayers until sunrise is more beloved to me than freeing four of Ishmael’s children. And for me to sit with people who remember Allah from the afternoon prayer until sunset, is more beloved to me than freeing four people.”³⁵⁰

³⁴⁶ See also Soorah ash-Shu‘araa, 42: 114-5.

³⁴⁷ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahaam, p.

³⁴⁸ Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Adaab; Baab: Man yu‘man an yujaalas.

³⁴⁹ Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Adab; Baab: Man yu‘man an yujaalas.

³⁵⁰ Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Ilm; Baab: fee al qasas

The phrase: **يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ** “seeking His Face,” means that they seek Allah’s pleasure in their prayers and supplications.³⁵¹ It is in reference to sincerity which is needed for one to benefit from his or her deeds.³⁵² Without sincerity, righteous deeds become lifeless rituals incapable of benefiting those who do them. Consequently, although Allah has informed that formal prayer prevents evil speech and evil deeds:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ

“Indeed formal prayer prevents corruption and sin.” (Soorah al-‘Ankaboot, 29: 45)

Many of those who pray regularly are unable to restrain themselves from lying, cursing, backbiting or other major sins of the limbs.

وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

“And do not let your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of this world.” In this portion of the verse, Allah prohibits His Prophet (ﷺ) from turning his view from the weak and poor among the believers out of a desire to win over the rich and noble because of their worldly possessions and their power. However, it also contains a general prohibition from eyeing the glitter and glamour of this worldly life, which is repeated in other locations in the Qur’aan. For example,

وَلَا تَمُدَّنْ عَيْنَكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ

“Do not strain your eyes to see the splendor of this worldly life which I have given for enjoyment to various groups among them, in order to try them. And the provision of your Lord is better and more lasting.” (Soorah Taahaa, 20: 131)³⁵³

The Prophet (ﷺ) also encouraged his followers to avoid staring at the wealthy and noble because of the danger to the heart.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ انْظُرُوا إِلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا تَنْظُرُوا إِلَىٰ مَنْ هُوَ فَوْقَكُمْ فَهُوَ أَجْدَرُ أَنْ لَا تَزْدَرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ

Aboo Hurayrah quoted Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying, “Look to those below you and not to those above you for it is better in order that you don’t belittle Allah’s blessings on you.”

And since humans cannot help looking at those more fortunate than themselves, the Prophet (ﷺ) advised those who do so to also look at those less fortunate than themselves.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ ((إِذَا نَظَرَ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَىٰ مَنْ فَضِّلَ عَلَيْهِ فِي الْمَالِ وَالْخَلْقِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ إِلَىٰ مَنْ هُوَ أَسْفَلَ مِنْهُ)).

Aboo Hurayrah also quoted the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as saying: “If one of you looks at someone who has been favored over himself in wealth and form, let him look at someone below himself.”³⁵⁴

³⁵¹ Fat’h al-Qadeer, vol. 3, p. 389.

³⁵² Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 61.

³⁵³ See also Soorah al-Hijr, 15: 88.

It is worth asking oneself, “How many poor people do I know? How many do I visit and invite to my home?” Even the best intentioned Muslims tend to befriend and associate with people from their own status.

عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ كُنْتُ أَمْشِي مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي حَرَّةِ الْمَدِينَةِ فَقَالَ إِنَّ الْأَكْثَرِينَ هُمْ الْأَقْلُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَّا مَنْ قَالَ هَكَذَا وَهَكَذَا وَهَكَذَا عَنْ يَمِينِهِ وَعَنْ شِمَالِهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ وَقَلِيلٌ مَا هُمْ

Aboo Tharr said: I was with the Prophet (ﷺ) then he said, “Indeed the rich are the poor on the Day of Resurrection except those who spend their wealth like this, and like this, and like this, to their right, left and back, but such people are few in number.”³⁵⁵

عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ السَّاعِدِيِّ أَنَّهُ قَالَ مَرَّ رَجُلٌ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ لِرَجُلٍ عِنْدَهُ جَالِسٍ مَا رَأَيْكَ فِي هَذَا فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَشْرَافِ النَّاسِ هَذَا وَاللَّهِ حَرِيٌّ إِنْ خُطِبَ أَنْ يُنْكَحَ وَإِنْ شَفَعَ أَنْ يُشَفَعَ قَالَ فَسَكَتَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ثُمَّ مَرَّ رَجُلٌ آخَرُ فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا رَأَيْكَ فِي هَذَا فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَذَا رَجُلٌ مِنْ فُقَرَاءِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ هَذَا حَرِيٌّ إِنْ خُطِبَ أَنْ لَا يُنْكَحَ وَإِنْ شَفَعَ أَنْ لَا يُشَفَعَ وَإِنْ قَالَ أَنْ لَا يُسْمَعَ لِقَوْلِهِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ هَذَا خَيْرٌ مِنْ مِلءِ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَ هَذَا

Sahl ibn Sa'd as-Saa'idee said: A man passed by Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and the Prophet (ﷺ) asked a man sitting beside him, “What is your opinion about this passer-by?” He replied, “This is from the noble class of people. By Allah, if he were to seek a lady's hand in marriage, he should be given her in marriage and if he intercedes for somebody, his intercession will be accepted.” Allah's Messenger kept quiet, and when another man passed by he asked the same man again, “What is your opinion about this one?” He replied, “O Messenger of Allah! This person is one of the poor Muslims. If he were to seek a lady's hand in marriage, no one will accept him, and if he intercedes for somebody, no one will accept his intercession, and if he talks, no one will listen to him.” Allah's Messenger then said, “This poor man is better than a number large enough to fill the earth of the first type.”³⁵⁶

وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا

“And do not obey him whose heart I have made heedless of My remembrance; one who follows his own desires and whose deeds have been lost.”

³⁵⁴ Sahih Al-Bukhari (Arabic-English), vol. 8, p. 328, no. 497, and Sahih Muslim (English Trans.), vol. 4, p. 1530, no. 7070.

³⁵⁵ Sahih Al-Bukhari (Arabic-English), vol. 8, p. 302-3, no. 451,

³⁵⁶ SB 8/304-5/454.

In the end of the verse, Allah prohibits the Prophet (ﷺ) from obeying or responding to the requests of those whose hearts He made negligent of God's remembrance, like those who asked him to drive away the poor from their gathering. They requested the removal of those who sincerely called on their Lord, while they were heedless of His remembrance. Furthermore, they follow their own desires and prefer them over the truth; they chose idolatry over *Tawheed*.³⁵⁷

Though the Prophet (ﷺ) intended good by inviting these people, because their conversion to Islaam would have made Muslims powerful in *Makkah*, Allah told him not to do it. Similarly, if those in the course of trying to implement what is right, are encouraged to do what is displeasing to Allah, they should not accept their suggestions because they are ultimately displeasing to Allah so the goals sought would not be pleasing to Allah either.

وَلَا تُطِيعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ

“And do not obey him whose heart I have made heedless of My remembrance; one who follows his own desires.”

Ibn al-Qayyim noted that this portion of the verse contains a rebuttal of both sects of the Qadarites. Allah, Most Glorious, made the creature's heart heedless of His remembrance, so he was heedless. The act of making heedless is Allah's act, while the heedlessness is the creature's act. Allah then informed about his following his desires, which is the creatures act in actuality.³⁵⁸

وَقُلْ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ إِنَّا
أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا وَإِنْ يَسْتَغِيثُوا يُغَاثُوا بِمَاءٍ
كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي الْوُجُوهَ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ وَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا

29. Say: “The truth is from your Lord.” Then whoever wills, let him believe; and whoever wills, let him disbelieve. Verily, I have prepared for the wrongdoers, a Fire whose walls will surround them. And if they ask for help, they will be granted water like molten lead that will scald their faces. What a terrible drink, and an evil abode.”

وَقُلْ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ

The address in the command “Say,” is to the Messenger (ﷺ) instructing him to announce that “**Truth (in general) is from your Lord,**” and not from anyone besides Him. Thus, truth should not be sought along any path besides the path set by Allah.³⁵⁹ The verse instructs the Prophet (ﷺ) to remind people that all truth comes from Allah because people commonly assume that truth is that which people generally agree upon. However, the reality about truth is that it is from Allah and whatever people think or do that goes against divinely revealed truth is falsehood.

“**The truth**” could also refer to the Qur’aan. Thus, the verse would mean: “The truth which I have brought to you in this Magnificent Qur’aan, containing the religion of Islaam, comes from

³⁵⁷ *Fat’h al-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 390.

³⁵⁸ *Ad-Daw’ al-Muneer ‘alaa at-Tafseer*, vol. 4, p. 156.

³⁵⁹ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 62.

your Lord, Most Glorious and Transcendent. It is not Satanic, nor the uttering of an oracle, nor ancient fables, nor anything else. It is from your Creator who must be obeyed and worshipped alone. Nothing comes from Him besides information containing truth and just laws, and there is no truth besides what comes from Him.” This fact is mentioned in other locations in the Qur’aan, for example:

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ

“(This is) the truth from your Lord. So be you not one of those who doubt.” (Soorah al-Baqarah, 2: 147)³⁶⁰

This statement also means, “Say to the people, ‘What I have brought to you from your Lord is the truth, in which there is no confusion or doubt.’”³⁶¹ Guidance has become clear from misguidance, the characteristics of the people of happiness and the characteristics of the wretched have been clearly explained by Allah on the tongue of His Messenger.³⁶²

فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ

In the next statement: “Then whoever wills, let him believe; and whoever wills, let him disbelieve,” the command “let him disbelieve,” is a challenge and a warning and not statement of permissibility. That is indicated by the statement following it:

إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا

“Verily, I have prepared for the wrongdoers, a Fire whose walls will surround them.” This means that whoever disbelieves will face a fire prepared for them.³⁶³ Thus, with truth clear from falsehood, there remain only two paths to follow in this life, according to whether Allah has blessed a person or not. Furthermore, Allah has given humans free will with which to choose faith or disbelief, good or evil. Whoever chooses belief has been blessed to find the truth and whoever disbelieves has no excuse for his bad choice, because evidence was presented to him and he was not forced to believe, as the Almighty said:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ

“There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong.” (Soorah al-Baqarah, 2: 256)³⁶⁴

The term “wrongdoers,” in the statement “Verily, I have prepared for the wrongdoers, a Fire...” refers to the “disbelievers” as Allah said:

وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

“And it is the disbelievers who are the wrongdoers.” (Soorah al-Baqarah, 2: 254)

There is none more wrongdoing than one who disbelieves in Allah or ascribes partners to Him when it is He who created him, provided for him and prepared him for life in this world.

نَارًا أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا

“A Fire whose walls will surround them,” means that they will be unable to escape from the fire.³⁶⁵ Aboo Sa‘eed al-Khudree reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

³⁶⁰ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 72.

³⁶¹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. .

³⁶² Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 552.

³⁶³ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, pp. 62-3.

³⁶⁴ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, pp. 552-3.

((لِسُرَادِقِ النَّارِ أَرْبَعَةٌ جُدُرٌ كَثِفٌ كُلٌّ جِدَارٌ مِثْلُ مَسِيرَةِ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً))

“The walls of the Hellfire have four sides. The width of each side is like the distance covered in a journey of forty years.”³⁶⁶

وَإِنْ يَسْتَغِيثُوا يُغَاثُوا بِمَاءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي الْوُجُوهَ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ وَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا

“And if they ask for help, they will be granted water like molten lead³⁶⁷ that will scald their faces. What a terrible drink, and an evil abode.”

This means that when the people of Hell become extremely thirsty due to eating from the tree of *az-Zaqqoom* and other [horrible foods of Hell] and they request water, they will be given liquid molten brass to drink, or evil looking like olive oil sediment which is revolting to look at, as the Almighty said:

وَيُسْقَىٰ مِنْ مَّاءٍ صَدِيدٍ * يَتَجَرَّعُهُ وَلَا يَكَادُ يُسِيغُهُ ، وَيَأْتِيهِ الْمَوْتُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمَيِّتٍ وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِ عَذَابٌ غَلِيظٌ

“And he will be made to drink boiling, festering water. He will sip it unwillingly, and he will find a great difficulty to swallow it down his throat.” (Soorah Ibraaheem, 14: 16-7)

When the water comes close to their faces, it will scald them and the skin of their faces will fall off their skulls due to its intense heat and when it reaches their intestines it will rip them apart, as the Almighty said:

وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيمًا فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَاءَهُمْ

“And they will be given to drink boiling water to rip apart their bowels.” (Soorah Muhammad, 47: 15)

How painful will it be for one whose intestines are torn apart inside him. But in spite of that, the skin will be replaced:

كُلَّمَا نَضِجَتْ جُلُودُهُمْ بَدَّلْنَاهُمْ جُلُودًا غَيْرَهَا لِيَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ

“As often as their skins are roasted through, I shall change them for other skins that they may taste the punishment.” (Soorah an-Nisaa, 4: 56)³⁶⁸

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ كَالْمُهْلِ كَعَكْرِ الزَّيْتِ فَإِذَا قُرِبَ إِلَيْهِ سَقَطَتْ فَرْوَةٌ وَجْهَهُ فِيهِ

Aboo Sa‘eed ibn al-Khudree reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said, “Muhl is like the sediment of oil. When he brings it close to himself, the skin of his face falls into it.”³⁶⁹

³⁶⁵ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 63.

³⁶⁶ Sunan at-Tirmithi, Kitaab: Sifat Jahannam; Baab: Maa jaa fee sifat sharaab ahl an naar.

³⁶⁷ Al-muhl in as-Sihaah is molten brass. According to Ibnal-A‘raabee it is molten lead and to others it is vomit and puss. (al-Jaami‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 10, p. 328)

³⁶⁸ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 63.

³⁶⁹ Sunan at-Tirmithi, Kitaab: Sifat Jahannam; Baab: Maa jaa fee sifat sharaab ahl an naar. Da‘eef Sunan at-Tirmithi, no. 478.

These are only a few of the many descriptions of punishments in the Hellfire mentioned in the Qur'aan. Allah describes them in terms which no human being would relish. Their reality is beyond these descriptions.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا

30. As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, I will not allow the reward of those who perfect their deeds to be lost.”

This is an example of the Qur'aanic style that whenever Allah mentions the people of the Hellfire, He also mentions the People of Paradise. And that is a part of the meaning of:

اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَانِي

“Allah has sent down the Best Statement, a Book whose parts resemble each other and are oft-repeated.” (Soorah az-Zumar, 39: 23)

That is, its meanings, states and descriptions are duplicated in order for human beings to combine fear and hope in their path to their Lord.³⁷⁰

In fact, it has been noted that the number of times that the Hellfire is mentioned in the Qur'aan is exactly the same as the number of times that Paradise is mentioned.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

“As for those who believe and do righteous deeds,”

Those who combine belief in Allah, His angels, His Books, His messengers, the Last Day, and the good and evil of Destiny with righteous deeds from the obligatory and recommended deeds.³⁷¹

إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا

“I will not allow the reward of those who perfect their deeds to be lost.”

Allah did not say, “I will not allow their reward to be lost,” in order to explain the reason for their reward, which is their perfection of their deeds. As the Almighty said:

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَنِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَنُ

“Is there any reward for goodness other than goodness?” (Soorah ar-Rahmaan, 55: 60)³⁷²

This concept has been explained in many other verses, for example:

يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“They rejoice in a Grace and a Bounty from Allah, and that Allah will not waste the reward of the believers.” (Soorah Aal 'Imraan, 3: 171)

إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا

“I will not allow the reward of those who perfect their deeds to be lost,” refers to those among the believers. As for the disbelievers who perfect deeds, the reward for their deeds will be lost in the next life.³⁷³

³⁷⁰ Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem, p. 64.

³⁷¹ Tafseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 553.

³⁷² Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem, pp. 64-5.

وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ ، وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَسِرِينَ

“And whosoever disbelieves in Faith then his deeds become fruitless; and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers.” (Soorah al-Maa'idah, 5: 5)

In the general sense, the perfection of deeds requires two principles:

1. Sincerity to Allah, Most Great and Glorious.
2. Following the way of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

This noble verse obviously encourages the perfection of deeds.³⁷⁴ Furthermore, it contains reassurance to the believers that no matter how small a righteous deed may appear it will be rewarded. Therefore, they should hasten to do good deeds regardless.

It should be noted that Allah says that ‘He will not cause to be lost the reward of the one who makes his deeds good’ and not that of one who does a lot of good deeds. This means that what is important is not the quantity of good deeds but the quality of the deeds. The Prophet (ﷺ) illustrated this fact by mentioning that the first three groups of people who would be thrown in the Hellfire would be people who did great deeds (martyrs, scholars and charitable people) due to their lack of sincerity.³⁷⁵

أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَيَلْبَسُونَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُتَّكِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا

31. “For these people, there will be everlasting gardens with rivers flowing underneath them. In it, they will be adorned with bracelets of gold, and they will wear green garments of fine silk and thick brocade, and they will recline on raised thrones. What an excellent reward, and a superb resting place.”

³⁷³ Al-Jaami ‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 10, p. 328.

³⁷⁴ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, pp. 64-5.

³⁷⁵ Aboo Hurayrah quoted the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as saying, “Indeed, Allah the Most Exalted will descend to His slaves on the Day of Judgment, and judge between them. All the nations will humble to their knees (kneeling). The first people to be called to account on the Day of Judgment will be [a scholar,] a reciter of the Qur’aan, and a martyr who was slain in the cause of Allah, and a rich person (who used to constantly give his wealth). Allah will ask the [scholar and the] reciter of the Qur’aan: ‘Have I not taught you what was revealed to my Messenger?’ And he will answer, ‘Yes.’ So Allah will ask him, ‘What did you do with that which I taught you?’ He will respond, ‘I used to recite it day in and day out [and I used to seek knowledge and teach it to the people].’ Then Allah will answer him, ‘No, you have lied!’ and the angels will say, ‘No, you have lied!’ Allah will then say, ‘You only wished for people to say about you: He is a [scholar and] reciter of the Qur’aan, and so it was said!’ And the person with great wealth will be brought forth, and Allah will say, ‘Did I not bless you so that you did not need to depend on others?’ He will respond, ‘Yes!’ Allah will ask, ‘Then what did you do with what I had given you?’ He will say, ‘I fulfilled my family obligations, and spent my money in charity.’ Then, Allah will say, ‘No, you have lied!’ and the angels will say, ‘No, you have lied!’ Allah will then say, ‘You only spent, so that people would call you generous, and so it was said!’ And the person who died in the way of Allah will be asked, ‘How did you die?’ He will answer, ‘O my Lord! I was ordered to make Jihaad in your way, so I fought until I was killed!’ Allah will say, ‘No, you have lied!’ and the angels will say, ‘No, you have lied!’ Allah will then say, ‘You only fought so that it would be said of you: He has great valor, and so it was said!’ ” Then, the Prophet (ﷺ) tapped my knee, and said: “O Aboo Hurayrah! These are the first three people amongst the creation of Allah, that the fire of Hell will consume on the Day of Judgment!” (Authenticated in *Saheeh at-Targheeb wat-Tarheeb*, no. 20. The parts between the square brackets [] are from other authentic narrations. This narration is also found in *Saheeh Sunan at-Tirmitheh* vol. 2, pp. 281-2, no.1942.)

This verse describes the rewards of the righteous mentioned in the previous verse; those who believe and do good deeds. There are a number of other similar verses in the Qur'aan wherein more details are given. For example, the Almighty's statement in *Soorah al-Insaan* which begins with:

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِنْ كَأْنٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُورًا

“Indeed, the righteous, will drink a cup (of wine) mixed with water from the spring of Camphor in Paradise.” (76: 5) and continues up to verse 22.³⁷⁶

أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ

The people mentioned in: **“For these people, there will be everlasting gardens,”** are those who believe and do righteous deeds and the gardens are in the abode prepared by Allah for them, containing what no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard nor any heart has ever thought of. Among the factors which make the pleasures of this garden perfect is that no one in it will see anyone else as having more pleasure than him. Likewise, among the factors which complete the punishment of the people of the Hellfire is that no one will see anyone else as having a more severe punishment than him. The reason why the people of paradise will not see anyone as having more pleasure than them is that their pleasure would be disturbed by seeing it as less than that of others.

The term *Jannaatu 'adn* (The Gardens of Eden) is also said to refer to the garden at the center of paradise, surrounded by the other gardens. The plural form is used due to its vastness, whereby every plot in it could be a garden in itself.³⁷⁷

تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ

“With rivers flowing underneath them,” refers to the following four types of rivers mentioned by Allah:

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِنْ مَّاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ لَبَنٍ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرَ طَعْمُهُ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ خَمْرٍ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ عَسَلٍ مُصَفًّى

“The description of Paradise which the pious have been promised (is that) in it are rivers of water - the taste and smell of which are not changed, rivers of milk of which the taste never changes, rivers of wine delicious to those who drink, and rivers of clarified honey...” (*Soorah Muhammad*, 47: 15)

In other verses, “beneath it”³⁷⁸ is used to describe the location of the flowing rivers instead of “beneath them,” however, there is no contradiction here, the meaning is still the same³⁷⁹ because if the rivers flow beneath its trees and castles, they must also flow under the occupants of the castles and those under the shade of the trees and those who eat from the trees.

يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ

“In it, they will be adorned with bracelets of gold,” contains descriptions of the adornments and their constitution. It should also be noted that in *Soorah al-Hajj* and *Faatir*, the bracelets are from pearls and in *Soorah al-Insaan* they are from silver. There is no contradiction between these

³⁷⁶ See also *Soorah al-Waaqi'ah*, 56: 10-38. (*Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, pp. 77-8)

³⁷⁷ *Al-Jaami' li Ahkaam al-Qur'aan*, vol. 10, p. 328.

³⁷⁸ 2: 25, 266; 3: 15, 136, 195, 198; 4: 13, 57, 122; etc.

³⁷⁹ *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem*, p. 65

descriptions.³⁸⁰ The bracelets will be of gold, silver, and pearls, and anything else that the people of paradise may desire.

Regarding where they will be worn, Aboo Hurayrah said: I heard my dear friend, the Prophet (ﷺ), say:

((تَبْلُغُ الْحَلِيَّةُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ حَيْثُ يَبْلُغُ الْوُضُوءُ)).

“The bracelets of the believer will reach up to the places of wudoo.”³⁸¹

However, they should not be considered to be like the adornments of this world. Instead, they are completely and utterly different, as Allah, Most Blessed and Transcendent, said in the following Holy Hadeeth:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ اللَّهُ أَعَدَدْتُ لِعِبَادِي الصَّالِحِينَ مَا لَا عَيْنٌ رَأَتْ وَلَا أُذُنٌ سَمِعَتْ وَلَا خَطَرَ عَلَى قَلْبٍ بَشَرٍ فَاقْرَأُوا إِنَّ شِئْتُمْ فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ

Aboo Hurayrah quoted the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as saying: Allah said. “I have prepared for My righteous servants what no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, nor any mind has ever imagined.” Read, if you wish: “No soul knows what I have hidden for them from what is pleasing to the eyes. (Soorah as-Sajdah, 32: 17)”³⁸² Were the gold like the gold of this world, eyes would have seen it.

وَيَلْبَسُونَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ

“And they will wear green garments of fine silk and thick brocade.”³⁸³ The color green was specified because it is beautiful and the most relaxing to the eye.

مُتَّكِنِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ

“They will recline on raised thrones.” Their description as reclining indicates their state of rest and peace. They will also eat the fruits of paradise in the reclining position, which in this life was disliked by the Prophet (ﷺ). Aboo Huthayfah quoted Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying:

((لَا أَكُلُ مُتَّكِئًا)).

“I don’t eat reclining.”³⁸⁴

نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا

³⁸⁰ In an attempt to find contradictions in the Qur’aan, Christian missionaries have questioned whether the bracelets of paradise will be gold, silver or pearls.

³⁸¹ Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Tahaarah; Baab: Tablugh al-hilyah

³⁸² Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Bad al Khalq; Kitaab: Maa jaa’a fee sifatil jannah and Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Jannah wa sifat na’eemuhaa wa ahluhaa

³⁸³ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 66.

³⁸⁴ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol.. , p. , no. . Kitaab: Al At’imah; Baab: Akl Muttaki’an. The reason for this statement can be found in the narration of ‘Abdullaah ibn Busr in which he said, “I gave a (roasted sheep) to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he sat on his knees and ate. A Bedouin asked him, ‘What kind of way of sitting is this?’ He replied, ‘Indeed! Allah made me a noble slave and not a defiant tyrant.’ (Sunan Ibn-i-Majah, vol. , p. , no. .)

“What an excellent reward, and a superb resting place.” Contains praise for paradise and the pleasures it contains.³⁸⁵

Some Christians raise objections to the descriptions of Paradise in the *Qur'an* as being very materialistic because of the mention of gold and silk, whereas for them paradise is a place where you turn into spirits and become one with God. Allah mentions the bracelets of Gold because of the fact that some people are not able to wear gold in this life and they desire it, so Allah fulfills their desires and the gold of this life would not last for ever because after we die that gold is of no use to us anymore and this life is very short whereas the life of the hereafter is everlasting and so is the gold.

The other point is that men are not allowed to wear gold in this life because gold is a symbol of wealth, power and authority, which when worn becomes a proud display whereas Islaam prefers humility and equality. However, Muslim women are allowed to wear gold because they do not expose it in society due to their *hijab* and they mostly stay in their homes. Though they can show off their ornaments in front of other women, it is not the same because they are not leaders and it would not affect the society as a whole. The same is the case of silk, because it is also a sign of wealth and is commonly worn by rulers and the rich. Consequently, Islaam does not allow men to wear it. If they desire to wear it, they are told in verses like this to be patient and do righteous deeds and they will get it in their after life. There will also be thrones for them because all these are the luxurious things that people desire and Allah has it in store for the righteous.

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَحَفَفْنَاهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ
وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زَرْعًا ﴿٣٢﴾ كِلْتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ آتَتْ أُكُلَهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلِمْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا وَفَجَّرْنَا
خِلَالَهُمَا نَهْرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ فَقَالَ لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا
وَأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا

32-4. Give them the parable of two men; to one of whom I gave two gardens of grapes, each surrounded by date palms and separated by cultivated fields. Each of the two gardens bore fruit without any loss and I caused a river to gush forth between them. He had much property so he mentioned to his companion, while conversing with him: “I have much more wealth than you and more people.”

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ

The Almighty's statement, “Give them the parable of two men,” is a parable for those disbelievers who feel proud about worldly things and arrogantly dislike sitting with the believers.³⁸⁶ It is a continuation from verse 28 wherein Allah told the Prophet (ﷺ) to sit with those who remember Him saying:

³⁸⁵ *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem*, p. 67.

³⁸⁶ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p. 151.

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ

“Keep yourself patiently with those who call on their Lord in the morning and afternoon, seeking His Face.”³⁸⁷

The scholars of *Tafseer* differed as to whether the two were hypothetical³⁸⁸ or actual people. Those who held that they were actual people further differed with regards to who they referred to. Some said they were two brothers from among the Israelites, and others said they were two brothers from the Makhzoom clan of Makkah, one of whom was a believer, Aboo Salamah ‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Abdil-Asad (the husband of Umm Salamah) and the other a disbeliever, Al-Aswad ibn ‘Abdil-Asad, who are the brothers mentioned in *Soorah as-Saffaat*.

قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ إِنِّي كَانَ لِي قَرِينٌ

“Someone among them will say: ‘Indeed, I had a companion (in the world),’” (37: 51)

Allah explained their state in this life in this chapter, and in ten verses of *as-Saffaat* (51-61) He described their state in the next life. Both brothers inherited four thousand dinars. Aboo Salamah donated his wealth for the sake of Allah; and when he requested something from his disbelieving brother, the brother boasted arrogantly to him in order to humiliate him.³⁸⁹

جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ

“To one of whom I gave two gardens of grapes,” refers to the disbeliever to whom Allah granted the symbols of wealth in this life.

وَحَفَفْنَاهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زَرْعًا ﴿٥٢﴾ كِلْتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ آتَتْ أُكُلَهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلِمْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا وَفَجَّرْنَا خِلَالَهُمَا نَهْرًا

“Each surrounded by date palms and separated by cultivated fields. Each of the two gardens bore fruit without any loss and I caused a river to gush forth between them.”

The ideal garden containing a vineyard, cultivation; fenced by date palm trees and naturally irrigated by a river flowing through it is doubled. Furthermore, the entire grape vines, the cultivation and date palms bear fruit without exception; a complete harvest, the dream of every farmer.

وَكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ فَقَالَ لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا

“He had much property, so he mentioned to his companion, while conversing with him: ‘I have much more wealth than you and more people.’” His abundant property or fruit combined with a lack of faith led him to boast to his companion that he had more wealth and followers, servants, and children. Qataadah said: “This is the base desire of the corrupt; to have a lot of wealth and a large entourage.”³⁹⁰

Because this world is the focus of the disbelievers, the accumulation of its pleasures becomes their main past time. Consequently, most of their conversations are about the trappings of this world. Furthermore, their conversations usually take the form of boasting, either openly or

³⁸⁷ Al-Jaami ‘li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 10, p. 330.

³⁸⁸ As in the case of *Soorah an-Nahl*, 16: 76 and *az-Zumar*, 39: 29.

³⁸⁹ Al-Jaami ‘li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 10, pp. 331-2.

³⁹⁰ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p. 152 quoting from *at-Tabaree*, vol. 18, p. 22.

subtly. They are unaware of the purpose of wealth and consider it the goal of life; the more one can accumulate, the more fulfilling life should be. The Almighty said:

أَلْهَكُمُ التَّكَاثُرُ (١) حَتَّى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ

“The mutual rivalry of accumulating diverts you, until you visit the graves.” (Soorah at-Takaathur, 102: 1-2)

If wealth was the key to happiness, the world’s richest should be the most happy. Instead, depression and suicide is highest among the prosperous industrial societies, and the tragic lives of the rich and famous fill the columns of their daily tabloids.

This rivalry takes on such great proportions in their lives that they become deaf and blind to the message of truth. When it comes to them, they look at the worldly status of the messenger and reject his message on that basis. The Almighty said:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّن نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ * وَقَالُوا نَحْنُ أَكْثَرُ أَمْوَالًا وَأَوْلَدًا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ

“Whenever I sent a warner to a town, the wealthy among them said: ‘We don’t believe in what you have been sent with.’ And they also say: ‘We have more wealth and children than you, and we are not going to be punished.’ ” (Soorah Saba, 34: 34-5)

However, true wealth cannot be found in the material possessions of this passing world. It can only be found in the spiritual world of faith, as the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported by Aboo Hurayrah to have said:

((لَيْسَ الْغِنَى عَنْ كَثْرَةِ الْعَرَضِ وَلَكِنَّ الْغِنَى غِنَى النَّفْسِ))

“Wealth is not [measured] in property, but in contentment.”³⁹¹

وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ أَنْ تَبِيدَ هَذِهِ أَبَدًا ❖ وَمَا أَظُنُّ
السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِنْ رُدِّدْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا

35-6. And he entered his garden, while being unjust to himself, saying: I don’t think that this will ever perish and I don’t think the Hour will ever come. And, if indeed I am brought back to my Lord, I will surely find better than this when I return.”

The Almighty mentioned in this noble verse about the disbeliever in the parable representing the leaders of the Makkan pagans, proud of their wealth and status over the poor and weak Muslim converts, that

وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ

“He entered his garden while being unjust to himself.”³⁹² The expression “self oppression”, “doing wrong to self” is used by the Almighty to describe those who disobey the divine commands

³⁹¹ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 8, p. 304, no. 453.

in different places in the Qur'aan. For example, Allah divided people into three groups relative to their response to the Qur'aan saying:

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ يُؤْذِنُ اللَّهُ

“Then I caused those whom I chose from among My servants to inherit the Book. Some of them wrong themselves, some follow a middle course, and some are foremost in good deeds, by Allah’s Leave.” (Soorah Faatir, 35: 32)

The Almighty instructed men to let their wives go fairly and properly if divorce becomes necessary, then He said:

وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِّتَعْتَدُوا وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ

“But do not take them back to hurt them, for whoever does that, has wronged himself.” (Soorah al-Baqarah, 2: 231)

Allah forbade the expulsion of wives from their homes during the waiting periods of their divorce (‘Iddah) and said:

وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ

“And whoever transgresses the limits set by Allah, has indeed wronged himself.” (Soorah at-Talaaq, 65: 1)

The reason for referring to disobedience of Allah as “oppression of the self” is that the greatest harm which results from such disobedience is to the disobedient person himself in either this life or the next or both. Therefore, one who does sin ultimately harms himself more than others. His harm to others is a test which may purify their sins, or reminder to them for having strayed from the true path.

عَنْ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ زَوْجِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: ((الَّذِي يَشْرَبُ فِي إِنَاءِ الْفِضَّةِ إِنَّمَا يُجْرَجُ فِي بَطْنِهِ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ)).

Umm Salamah reported that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “Fire from Hell gurgles in the stomach of whoever drinks from a silver vessel.”³⁹³

The phrase “his garden” is used instead of “his two gardens,” because it was not possible for him to enter both gardens simultaneously.³⁹⁴

قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ أَنْ تَبِيدَ هَذِهِ أَبَدًا

His “saying: I don’t think that this will ever perish,” indicates that he had become so self-confident and arrogant that he could not imagine ever losing his property. His wealth and entourage were so amazing to him that he forgot that nothing in this world lasts.³⁹⁵ He allowed himself to be deceived by the beauty of the plants, fruits, trees and rivers flowing through the different parts of his gardens. Furthermore, he began to imagine that it could never come be destroyed because of his

³⁹² Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 78.

³⁹³ SB, Kitaab: Ashriba; Baab: Aaniyat fiddah; SM, Kitaab: Libaas wa Zeenah; Baab: Tahreem isti’maal awaaneet thahab

³⁹⁴ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 79. Al-‘Uthaymeen explained that “garden” was generic or it was in reference to the bigger of the two. (Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 69)

³⁹⁵ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, pp. 69-70.

lack of understanding of the nature of this world, the weakness of his faith in Allah, his fascination with this world and its adornments, and his disbelief in the Hereafter.³⁹⁶
 Aboo Hurayrah reported Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying,

((يَقُولُ الْعَبْدُ مَا لِي مَالِي إِنَّمَا لَهُ مِنْ مَالِهِ ثَلَاثٌ مَا أَكَلَ فَأَقْنَى أَوْ لَبَسَ فَأَبْلَى أَوْ
 أَعْطَى فَأَقْتَنَى وَمَا سِوَى ذَلِكَ فَهُوَ ذَاهِبٌ وَتَارِكُهُ لِلنَّاسِ)) .

*"A man says, 'My property, my wealth,' whereas the part of his property which is his consists of three things: what he eats and uses up, what he wears and makes threadbare, or what he gives away (in charity) and so acquires (for himself an eternal reward). Everything else is left to others when he departs."*³⁹⁷

وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً

In verse 26, his arrogance reaches its peak as he says: **"And I don't think the Hour will ever come."** Here he openly denies the resurrection after implicitly denying it by claiming that his gardens would never perish.

وَلَئِنْ رُدِدْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا

"And, if indeed I am brought back to my Lord, I will surely find better than this when I return." Although he does not believe in the resurrection, he goes on to say that even if he were brought back, his great wealth and status in this life would guarantee him an even better place in the next. This was the belief of the Pharaohs of Egypt, who slaughtered their slaves and buried them along with themselves to serve them in the next life. It is as if he said that since Allah blessed me in this life, He must bless me in the next life also. This is a false analogy. It is a reflection of the ignorance of the disbelievers and the degree to which the material world has deceived them. This false logic of the disbelievers is repeated in a number of other places in the Qur'aan. For example, the Almighty said:

وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْتُهُ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَاءٍ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ هَذَا لِي وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً
 وَلَئِنْ رُجِعْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّ لِي عِنْدَهُ لَلْحُسْنَىٰ

"If I give him a taste of My mercy, after some adversity has afflicted him, he is sure to say: 'This is mine (due to my merit); I don't think that the Hour will take place. And even if I am brought back to my Lord, surely, I will have the best with Him.'" (Soorah Fussilat, 41: 50)³⁹⁸

This man was blessed with all these wonderful things of life, and instead of being thankful, he became proud and arrogant. Pride is strongly opposed by Islaam because it led to disbelief in the case of Iblees and continues to lead to disbelief, as in the case of the man in this parable. 'Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said:

³⁹⁶ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p.

³⁹⁷ Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1529, no. 7063.

³⁹⁸ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, pp. 78-9.

((لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ كِبَرٍ)) قَالَ رَجُلٌ: إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ يُحِبُّ أَنْ يَكُونَ ثَوْبُهُ حَسَنًا وَنَعْلُهُ حَسَنَةً قَالَ: ((إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَمِيلٌ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ الْكِبَرُ بَطَرُ الْحَقِّ وَغَمَطُ النَّاسِ)).

“A person who has an atom’s weight of pride in his heart will not enter Paradise.” A person asked: “But one does like to wear good clothes and shoes!” The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: “Indeed, Allah is Beautiful and loves beauty! Pride means to reject the truth and to look down on others!”³⁹⁹

Pride is an attribute of Allah, as no one deserves to be proud but Him. This attribute is uniquely His because of the fact that people cannot be legitimately proud about something that does not belong to them, whereas only Allah, the creator and owner of everything, can be legitimately proud. Consequently, Aboo Hurayrah quoted Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying:

((قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: الْكِبْرِيَاءُ رِدَائِي وَالْعِظَمَةُ إِزَارِي فَمَنْ نَازَعَنِي وَاحِدًا مِنْهُمَا قَذَفْتُهُ فِي النَّارِ)).

“Allah - Most Great and Glorious - said: ‘Pride is My cloak, and greatness My Robe, so I shall cast into Hell whoever competes with Me, with respect to either of them.’ ”⁴⁰⁰

قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ رَجُلًا

37. His companion asked him, during his discussion: “Do you disbelieve in Him who created you out of dust, then out of an oily drop, then fashioned you into a man?”

In this verse, Allah tells us how the rich man’s believing companion responded to his boasts by reminding him first about Allah’s *ruboobiyyah* (dominion).

قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ

“His companion asked him during his discussion, ‘Do you disbelieve in Him who created you...?’” Although the disbeliever began with boasts about his great wealth and entourage, his companion did not respond to them first because they were secondary in comparison to his claim that his garden was eternal. Furthermore, his denial of the hereafter was even more serious than his belief concerning his garden. So, his poor companion started with the rich man’s most deviant

³⁹⁹ Sahih Muslim, vol. 1, p. 53, no. 164 and Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. 3, p. 1142, no. 4080. The wordings are that of Sahih Muslim.

⁴⁰⁰ Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1381, no. 6349 and Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. 3, pp. 1141-2, no. 4079.

claim; his rejection of the Day of Resurrection. He begins with the logical Qur'aanic argument that, on a human scale, everyone recognizes that recreation is easier than creation.⁴⁰¹

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ ۖ وَهُوَ أَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَىٰ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

“And He it is Who originates the creation, then will repeat it; and this is easier for Him. The supreme comparison in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.” (Soorah Room, 30: 27)

He rebuked his rich companion, pointing out the seriousness of his rejection of his Lord Who created him, as Allah says:

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ۖ

“How can you disbelieve in Allah when you were dead and He gave you life?” (Soorah al-Baqarah, 2: 28) Meaning, how can you reject your Lord and His clear signs to you, which every one recognizes in himself, for there is no one among His creatures who does not know that he was nothing, then he came to be, and his existence is not due to himself or any other creature. He knows that his existence is due to his Creator, besides Whom there is no other Creator of all things.⁴⁰²

The fact that he said, “Do you disbelieve,” is evidence that doubt in the resurrection is equivalent to disbelief in Allah Almighty as clearly stated elsewhere:

وَإِنْ تَعْجَبْ فَعَجَبٌ قَوْلُهُمْ أَإِذَا كُنَّا تُرَابًا أَءِنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ الْأَغْلَالُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

“And if you wonder, then wondrous is their saying: ‘When we are dust, will we indeed then be raised in a new creation?’ They are those who disbelieve in their Lord!” (Soorah ar-Ra’d, 13: 5)⁴⁰³

بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ

The Almighty’s statement: “Who created you out of dust,” means that He made the origin of your creation from the dust from which your father Adam was created. That is your origin and the origin of all human beings.⁴⁰⁴

ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ

“Then out of an oily drop,” means that after the creation of Adam from dust, and the creation of Eve from Adam’s rib and making her his wife, the way of creating humans was by sexual reproduction (procreation). The stage of dust is followed by the stage of the oily drop (*nutfah*), the clinging leach stage (*‘alaqah*), and so on through the various stages (Soorah al-Mu’minoon, 23: 12-4).⁴⁰⁵

ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ رَجُلًا

⁴⁰¹ Al-Jaami ‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 10, p. 334.

⁴⁰² Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. 154.

⁴⁰³ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 81.

⁴⁰⁴ Fat’hul-Qadeer, vol. 3, p. 396.

⁴⁰⁵ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 80.

“Then fashioned you into a man,” means that He made you stand upright, your limbs proportionate, and in the best form possible. It is similar to the Almighty’s statement:

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ

“Can a human not see that I created him from an oily drop, yet behold he is an open opponent.” (Soorah Yaa Seen, 36: 77)

In spite of his lowly origins he openly and arrogantly challenges his Creator.

لَكِنَّا هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا

38. “But to me, He is Allah, my Lord, and I will not associate anyone as partner with my Lord.”

When the believing companion saw his brother’s insistence to remain in a state of disbelief and rebellion, he expressed his own feelings as an expression of gratitude to his Lord and he proclaimed his religion in the face of arguments of disbelief saying,

لَكِنَّا هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبِّي

“But to me, He is Allah, my Lord.” Here he affirms Allah’s *ruboobiyyah* (dominion).⁴⁰⁶ All that his disbelieving companion had boasted about belongs ultimately to Allah. It was granted to him by Allah, nurtured by Allah, and it all bore fruit by Allah’s permission.

He further declares that dominion belongs solely to Allah,⁴⁰⁷ and announces his adherence to obedience and worship of the Lord.⁴⁰⁸ Since all of creation is in need of someone to create and sustain them, only their Creator and Sustainer deserve their worship.

وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا

His statement “I will not associate anyone as partner with my Lord,” negates *shirk* from himself while implying that his companion had committed *shirk*.⁴⁰⁹ His companion’s denial of the resurrection attributes inability to Allah and equates Him with His creation, which is a form of *shirk*.⁴¹⁰

وَلَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ تَرْبِي أَنَا أَقَلَّ مِنْكَ
مَالًا وَوَلَدًا

39. “It was better for you to say, when you entered your garden: ‘This is as Allah has willed. There is no power except by Allah’s

⁴⁰⁶ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 656.

⁴⁰⁷ The uniqueness of Allah’s dominion is implied by the addition of *huwa*. He could have said instead, “LaakinAllahu rabbee.”

⁴⁰⁸ Implied in the usage of “my” instead of saying “the Lord”.

⁴⁰⁹ Fat’hul-Qadeer, vol. 3, p. 397.

⁴¹⁰ Al-Jaami’ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 10, p 335.

permission,' even though you see me having less wealth and children than you."

He then informed the disbeliever that the blessing of faith and Islaam which Allah gave him, even with little wealth and children, is the real blessing, and everything besides it can perish and or be punishable.⁴¹¹

وَلَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

"This is as Allah has willed. There is no power except by Allah's permission," means that this garden did not come into being by his companion's power nor by his will, but by the will and power of God.

Whenever some form of wealth delights a person, he or she should say, "*Maa shaa Allaha laa hawla wa laa quwwata illaa billaah* (This is as Allah has willed. There is no power except by Allah's permission)," in order to turn one's affairs over to Allah and not to one's own efforts and power. There are some inauthentic narrations to the effect that if someone says this, he or she will not see ill come to pass in that property which pleased them⁴¹² or that the person will not be affected by the evil eye.⁴¹³

The Prophet (ﷺ) recommended the frequent use of the *Hawqalah* and referred to it as one of the treasures of Paradise:

عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى الْأَشْعَرِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ((أَلَا أَدُلُّكَ عَلَى كَلِمَةٍ مِنْ كُنُوزِ الْجَنَّةِ أَوْ قَالَ عَلَى كَنْزٍ مِنْ كُنُوزِ الْجَنَّةِ؟)) فَقُلْتُ: بَلَى فَقَالَ: ((لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ))

Aboo Moosaa al-Ash'aree said: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) told me, "*Shall I show you a word or a treasure from the treasures of Paradise?*" He replied, "Yes!" He said, "*Laa hawla wa laa quwwata illaa billaah* (There is no movement nor power except by Allah's permission)."⁴¹⁴

He further recommended its use throughout the day. For example:

Awakening from sleep

عَنْ عُبَادَةَ بْنِ الصَّامِتِ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ تَعَارَّ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَقَالَ حِينَ يَسْتَيْقِظُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ ثُمَّ دَعَا رَبَّ اغْفِرْ لِي غُفَرَ لَهُ قَالَ الْوَلِيدُ أَوْ قَالَ دَعَا اسْتَجِيبَ لَهُ فَإِنْ قَامَ فَتَوَضَّأَ ثُمَّ صَلَّى فَبِلَتْ صَلَاتُهُ

'Ubaadah ibn as-Saamit quoted Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying that whoever says upon awakening from sleep, "*None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, alone without associate, to Him belongs the sovereignty and praise and He is able to do all things. How perfect Allah is, and*

⁴¹¹ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 656.

⁴¹² Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem, 72. The narration is collected in Musnad Abee Ya'laa, no. 5376, Shu'ab al-Eemaan, no. 4060 and al-Mu'jam as-Sagheer, no. 577.

⁴¹³ Collected by Ibn as-Sunnee in 'Amal al-Yawm wal-laylah, no. 207 from Anas ibn Maalik. It contains in its chain Aboo Bakr al-Hathalee labeled *matrook al-hadeeth*.

⁴¹⁴ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. , p. , no. Kitaab: Da'awaat; Baab: Qawl laa hawla wa laa quwwat... Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. Kitaab: Thikr, Du'aa, tawbah was istighfaar; Baab: Istihbaab khafd as sawt bith-thikr.

all praise is for Allah, and none has the right to be worshiped except Allah, Allah is the greatest and there is no movement nor power except by Allah's permission, the Most High and Supreme." And then supplicates, "Rabbigh-firlee," [O my Lord forgive me,] will be forgiven. Al-Waleed said, "Or he said, "and then asks he will be answered. If he then performs ablution and prays, his prayers will be accepted."⁴¹⁵

When putting on one's clothes

عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ مُعَاذِ بْنِ أَنَسٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَنْ أَكَلَ طَعَامًا ثُمَّ قَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَنِي هَذَا الطَّعَامَ وَرَزَقَنِيهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِنِّي وَلَا قُوَّةَ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ قَالَ ((وَمَنْ لَبَسَ ثَوْبًا فَقَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي كَسَانِي هَذَا الثَّوْبَ وَرَزَقَنِيهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِنِّي وَلَا قُوَّةَ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ)).

Sahl ibn Mu'aath narrated from his father that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Whoever wears a garment and says: al-hamdullaah allathee kasaanee haathaa ath-thawba wa razaqaneehi min ghayri hawlin minnee wa laa quwwah (Praise be to Allah who clothed me with this garment and provided it for me without any effort or power on my part), his coming and previous sins will be forgiven."⁴¹⁶

When one has finished eating

عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ أَنَسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ أَكَلَ طَعَامًا فَقَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَنِي هَذَا وَرَزَقَنِيهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِنِّي وَلَا قُوَّةَ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

Mu'aath ibn Anas quoted Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying: "Whoever eats food and says: al-hamdulillaah allathee at'amanee haathaa wa razakaneehi min ghayri hawlin minee wa laa quwwah (Praise be to Allah who fed me this and provided it for me without any effort or power on my part), his previous sins will be forgiven."⁴¹⁷

And when leaving the home

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: ((إِذَا خَرَجَ الرَّجُلُ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ فَقَالَ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ قَالَ يُقَالُ حِينَئِذٍ هُدِيَ وَكُفِيََتْ وَوُقِيَتْ فَتَنَنْحَى لَهُ الشَّيَاطِينُ فَيَقُولُ لَهُ شَيْطَانُ آخَرُ كَيْفَ لَكَ بِرَجُلٍ قَدْ هُدِيَ وَكُفِيَ وَوُقِيَ؟))

Anas ibn Maalik narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "If a person leaves his home and says: Bismillaah, tawakkaltu 'alAllahi laa hawla wa laa quwwata illaa billaah (In the name of Allah, I have trusted in Allah. There is no movement or power except by Allah's permission), it will then be said: You have been guided, sufficed and protected.' The devils will avoid him and they will say to other devils: 'How can you affect a man when he has been guided, sufficed and protected?'"⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁵ Sunan Ibn-i-Majah, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Du'aa; Baab: Maa yad'oo bihi ithaa intabaha min al layl, and authenticated in *Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah*, vol. 2, no. 335.

⁴¹⁶ Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. , p. , no. Kitaab: libaas; and authenticated in *Irwa' al-Ghaleel*, no. 1989.

⁴¹⁷ Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. , p. , no. Kitaab: libaas; and authenticated in *Saheeh Sunan at-Tirmitheh*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Da'awaat; Baab: Maa yuqaal ithaa faragha min at ta'aam.

⁴¹⁸ Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. , p. , no. (4/325) Kitaab: Adab; Baab: Maa yuqaal ithaa kharaja... and authenticated in *Saheeh Sunan at-Tirmitheh*, vol. 3, no. 151.

إِنْ تُرْنِي أَنَا أَقَلَّ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا

The poor believer went on to say that, “even though you see me having less wealth and children than you,” what is with Allah is better and more lasting. And what is hoped for of His goodness is superior to all that people compete for in this world.⁴¹⁹ What is considered the major symbols of wealth in this life are fleeting gifts possessed only for a few moments then quickly lost. Real wealth is everlasting, of benefit in both this life and the next, and that is, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ones good deeds. He alluded to that reality in the following narration about death:

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ يَقُولُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَتَّبِعُ الْمَيِّتَ ثَلَاثَةٌ فَيَرْجِعُ اثْنَانِ وَيَبْقَى مَعَهُ وَاحِدٌ يَتَّبِعُهُ أَهْلُهُ وَمَالُهُ وَعَمَلُهُ فَيَرْجِعُ أَهْلُهُ وَمَالُهُ وَيَبْقَى عَمَلُهُ

Anas ibn Maalik narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, “The dead are followed by three; two return and one stays behind. His family, his wealth and his deeds follow him. His family and wealth return, and his deeds remain.”⁴²⁰

فَعَسَى رَبِّي أَنْ يُؤْتِيَنِي خَيْرًا مِنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيدًا زَلَقًا ❖ أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَأْوُهَا غَوْرًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُ طَلَبًا

40-1. “Perhaps my Lord will give me something better than your garden. And He may cause destruction to descend on your garden from the sky, and turn it into smooth featureless land. Or the water may sink so deep into the earth that you would never be able to reach it.”

فَعَسَى رَبِّي أَنْ يُؤْتِيَنِي خَيْرًا مِنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيدًا زَلَقًا

“Perhaps my Lord will give me something better than your garden. And He may cause destruction to descend on your garden from the sky, and turn it into smooth featureless land.”

This concluding statement of the poor believer has two possible meanings:

The First: That it represents a supplication of hope and wish; a prayer that Allah grant him something better than his companion’s garden and that destruction fall upon him from the sky, because he scorned him and belittled him, so he prayed against him equivalent to the wrong he did not him. It is not sinful for a person to pray for punishment to befall one who oppresses him. It is also possible that he supplicated so that the boastful one would know his Lord and abandon his delight with his wealth, which is in his best interest. So, it is as though he prayed that Allah grant him what he was boasting about and to destroy his garden in order that he knows that his gardens and entourage belong to Allah. He prayed for what would harm him for a greater benefit. It is better

⁴¹⁹ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 656.

⁴²⁰ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Riqaaq, Baab: Sakaraat al mawt, and Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Zuhd wa Riqaaq.

that a person knows himself and turn back to his Lord than for him to be proud of his wealth and power.

The Second: That it represents expectation. It is expected that Allah will take away what he belittled and scorned his believing companion about.⁴²¹

أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَأْوَهَا غَوْرًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُ طَلَبًا

“Or the water may sink so deep into the earth that you would never be able to reach it.” His prayer was for the garden to disappear either by flooding until the earth became featureless and slippery or for the crops to all die due to lack of water.⁴²²

وَأُحِيطَ بِثَمَرِهِ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَى مَا أَنْفَقَ فِيهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ
عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا وَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا ❀ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ
لَهُ فِتْنَةٌ يَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنتَصِرًا ❀ هُنَالِكَ
الْوَلَايَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا

42-4. So the fruit of his labor became surrounded by ruin. And he began rubbing his hands in regret over the effort he had spent on it, while it was all destroyed on its trellises. He could only say: “O, if only I had not associated any partners with my Lord!” And he had no group of men to help him against Allah, nor could he save himself. In such circumstances the only support comes from Allah, the true God. His reward is best and the best ending.

وَأُحِيطَ بِثَمَرِهِ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَى مَا أَنْفَقَ فِيهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا

“So the fruit of his labor became surrounded by ruin. And he began rubbing his hands in regret over the effort he had spent on it, while it was all destroyed on its trellises.” Allah accepted the poor believer’s prayer and a storm struck his boastful companion’s gardens destroying all of his crops and leaving nothing behind. The owner of the gardens became extremely regretful over all the time, effort and wealth he had spent on his gardens as it all came to nothing. He also regretted committing *shirk* and oppression and wished things were otherwise.⁴²³

وَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا

⁴²¹ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, pp. 73-4.

⁴²² Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, pp. 74-5.

⁴²³ Tafseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, pp. 656-7.

“He could only say: “O, if only I had not associated any partners with my Lord!” However, regret after the time for repentance is of no benefit at the time with regards to the punishment. Instead, those who hear the story will benefit from his sorrow.⁴²⁴

Here the disbelieving companion referred to his statements of disbelief as *shirk*, while his believing companion previously referred to them as *kufr*.

قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ

“His companion asked him during his discussion, ‘Do you disbelieve in Him who created you from dust?’ As a result, some scholars like Shaykh Naasirud-deen al-Albaanee held that *shirk* and *kufr* are synonymous, all forms of *shirk* are *kufr* and all forms of *kufr* are *shirk*. However, most scholars held that all forms of *shirk* are *kufr* but not all forms of *kufr* are *shirk*. That is, *shirk* is a subcategory of *kufr*.

وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ فِئَةٌ يَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنتَصِرًا

“And he had no group of men to help him against Allah, nor could he save himself.” When the punishment rained down on his gardens all of his entourage left him, incapable of averting the disaster. They could not help him against Allah’s destiny, which, once decided cannot be resisted.⁴²⁵ He was unable to help himself because he had disbelieved and argued in defense of his disbelief and, as such, deserved this humiliating punishment.⁴²⁶

It is not far-fetched that Allah’s mercy and kindness that the owner of the gardens improved his state, and repented and returned to the right path and abandoned his rebellion, based on his open regret about associating partners with Allah, as Allah took away what caused his misguidance, and punished him in this life. If Allah wishes good for His servant, He hastens his punishment in this life. Allah’s grace cannot be comprehended by human minds and imagination and only an oppressive fool denies it.⁴²⁷

هَٰذَاكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ

“In such circumstances the only support comes from Allah, the true God.” On the Day of Judgment there will be no support or authority with anyone besides Allah. If that is the case, all besides Allah will be unable to benefit him in any way.

There are two possible recitations for *al-walaayah* (support) and *wilaayah* (dominion, authority). Some read it as *walaayah*, which gives the meaning that all allegiance will be to Allah as in the Almighty’s statement:

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يُهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ وَلِيَّتِهِم مِّن شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ يُهَاجِرُوا

“As to those who believed but did not emigrate, you owe no duty of protection to them until they emigrate.” (Soorah al-Anfaal, 8: 72)⁴²⁸

That is, on that Day when the punishment comes to pass everyone, believer or disbeliever, will return to Allah, to give Him their allegiance and submission. This is like the verse:

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ ، وَكَفَرْنَا بِمَا كُنَّا بِهِ مُشْرِكِينَ

“So when they saw My punishment, they said: ‘We believe in Allah alone and reject what we used to associate with Him as partners.’ ” (Soorah Ghaafir, 40: 84)

⁴²⁴ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 75.

⁴²⁵ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 657.

⁴²⁶ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 75.

⁴²⁷ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 657.

⁴²⁸ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 76.

Others read it as *wilaayah*, meaning that on that Day the rule will belong to Allah, the True God. Some read *al-haqq* as *haqqu* (true) referring to *wilaayah*, that is, “true sovereignty”, as in the verse:

الْمَلِكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَكَانَ يَوْمًا عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ عَسِيرًا

“The true sovereignty on that Day will belong to the Most Gracious, and it will be a hard Day for the disbelievers.” (Soorah al-Furqaan, 25: 26).

Others it read *haqqi* referring to Allah, may He be glorified, as in the verse:

ثُمَّ رُدُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَهُمُ الْحَقُّ

“Then they are returned to Allah, their True Protector.” (Soorah al-An‘aam, 6: 62)⁴²⁹

هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا

“His reward is best and the best ending,” means that if He gives a reward for a deed, His reward is best because, when others besides Allah give rewards for deeds, they are usually equivalent to the deeds or a little more. Whereas, Allah rewards a deed with at least ten times its value or up to seven hundred or more times its value.

وَخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا

“...the best ending,” means that whoever’s affairs end with Allah’s support is no doubt better than any other support besides it. All human endings at the hand of other human beings will fade away, but the ending with Allah will always remain.⁴³⁰

Lessons

This divine parable contains the following lessons:

1. Concerning one who Allah has granted worldly blessings which have diverted him from his after life and made him evil and he disobeys Allah regarding them.
2. That the end of worldly blessings is that they fade away and disappear and that even if he does take pleasure in them for a little while, he will be denied them for a long time.
3. That if a creature is delighted with some of his possessions or children, he should attribute the blessing to its master and say: “It is as Allah wills. There is no power except with Allah,” in order to be grateful and for it be a cause for the blessing to last.
4. Guidance to find solace in what good Allah has in store instead of the pleasures of this world.
5. That wealth and children are of no benefit if they do not help to one to obey Allah, as in the verse:

وَمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ بِالَّتِي تُقَرِّبُكُمْ عِندَنَا زُلْفَىٰ إِلَّا مَنْ ءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا

“And it is not your wealth, nor your children that bring you nearer to Me, but only one who believes, and does righteous deeds.” (Soorah Saba, 34: 37)

6. That it is permissible to pray for the destruction of wealth of one whose wealth causes him to be oppressive, a disbeliever, his loss, especially if he considers himself superior to the believers and scorns them.
7. That Allah’s support and His lack of support, its consequence will become clear when the dust settles and rewards and punishments are meted out.⁴³¹

⁴²⁹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p.

⁴³⁰ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 76.

⁴³¹ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 657.

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيَّاحُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُقْتَدِرًا

45. And present to them a parable about the life of this world; it is like rain which I caused to fall from the sky and mix with the vegetation of the earth. Then the vegetation became dry, crumbled into pieces and was scattered by the winds. For Allah is able to do everything.

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

“And present to them a parable about the life of this world,”

Allah says: O Muhammad! Mention to the people a story to illustrate the spiritual truth about the reality of this worldly life, its transient nature and how it will eventually cease and come to an end.

كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ

“It is like rain which I caused to fall from the sky and mix with the vegetation of the earth.”

Allah describes the pleasures and blessings of this life as being like rain which mingles with the seeds in the earth causing gardens to have a mixture of plants growing a variety of types of leaves and bearing flowers as in the Spring or like a botanical garden containing every species of plant.

فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيَّاحُ

“Then the vegetation became dry, crumbled into pieces and was scattered by the winds.”

After some time the plants become withered up and disintegrate. Then the wind comes along and blows the particles about in all directions.

Allah describes the realities of this life as a world that flourishes and is prosperous for humans for a while until they suddenly die or the prosperity is lost. Either one situation or the other must take place, people either die and lose their prosperity or lose their prosperity and die. The simile in this verse matches real life perfectly and Allah uses it in many places in the Qur’aan, with some variations, in order that the believers are not deceived by the world and become addicted to it.⁴³² For example, in *Soorah Yunus* the Almighty said:

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ حَتَّى إِذَا أَخَذَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ أَهْلُهَا أَنَّهُمْ قَدِرُونَ

⁴³² Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 77.

عَلَيْهَا أَتَاهَا أَمْرُنَا لَيْلًا أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَهَا حَصِيدًا كَأَن لَّمْ تَغْنَ بِالْأَمْسِ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ
الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“The parable of this worldly life is like rain which I caused to fall from the sky and mix with the vegetation of the earth from which humans and cattle eat. Until, when the earth has taken on its adornment and is beautified, and its people think that they have control over it, My command strikes it by night or by day and I flatten it like a harvest which had not flourished yesterday. In that way I explain in detail the signs for people who reflect.” (10: 24)

And in Soorah Az-Zumar:

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنْبِيعٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا
مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ حُطَامًا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرًا لِأُولِي
الْأَلْبَابِ

“Have you not seen that Allah sends down rain from the sky, causes it to penetrate the earth and then He produces from it crops of varying colors? Then the crops wither and you see them turn yellow; then He makes them debris. Indeed, there is a reminder in that for those people of understanding.” (39: 21)

And in Soorah al-Hadeed:

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُمْ زِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ
كَثَلٍ غَيْثٍ أُعْجِبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ
عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ

“Know that the life of this world is only play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children. (It is) like the parable of vegetation after rain, whose growth is pleasing to the planters; then it shrivels up and you see it turn yellow; then it becomes debris. And in the Hereafter is severe punishment and forgiveness from Allah and approval. And what is the worldly life but the enjoyment of delusion.” (57: 20)

And in the *Saheeh Hadeeth*⁴³³ Aboo Sa‘eed al-Khudree quoted Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying,

((إِنَّ الدُّنْيَا خَضِرَةٌ حُلُوةٌ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مُسْتَخْلِفُكُمْ فِيهَا فَنَظِرٌ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ أَلَا
فَاتَّقُوا الدُّنْيَا وَاتَّقُوا النِّسَاءَ)).

“The world is beautiful and green, and Allah - be He exalted - has made you governors over it to see how you will act. So beware of the world and beware of women.”⁴³⁴

⁴³³ Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1432, no. 6606.

⁴³⁴ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. .

Al-Qurtubee quoted the sages (*hukamaa*) as saying that the Almighty compared the world to water because of reasons related to the very nature of water:

1. Water does not settle in any location, similarly this world does not remain with one.
2. Water does not remain in a single state, similarly this world.
3. Water does not last, it disappears after some time, similarly this world disappears sooner or later.
4. No one can enter water without getting wet; similarly anyone who enters this world will not be safe from its trials and tribulations.
5. In certain limited amounts water is beneficial and causes plants to grow. But if it surpasses the beneficial amount it becomes harmful and destructive. Similarly, taking what is sufficient is beneficial, while taking excess is harmful.⁴³⁵

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
((قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَرُزِقَ كَفَافًا وَقَنِعَهُ اللَّهُ بِمَا آتَاهُ)).

‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas related that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Whoever accepts Islaam, is provided with what is sufficient and Allah has made him satisfied with what He gave him will be successful.”⁴³⁶

It is amazing that humans are fooled by it in spite of the fact that its turbulence, trouble, distress and worries are more than its tranquillity and relaxation, comfort and ease. Even those blessed are not at peace.

وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُقْتَدِرًا

“For Allah is able to do everything,” means that whatever exists Allah is able to cause not to exist and what is non-existent He is able to cause to exist. There is nothing between existence and non-existence except the Divine Word “Be.” The Almighty said:

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ وَكُنْ فَيَكُونُ

“Indeed, whenever He intends something, His command is only that He says to it, ‘Be!’ - and it is!” (Soorah Yaa Seen, 36: 82)⁴³⁷

However, it should be noted that Allah being able to do anything and everything refers to Godly things and not un-Godly things. Those acts which make God no longer God or less than God are not included in “everything”, acts like God becoming a man, having a son, being born and dying, and so on and so forth. Such acts are referred to as absurdities and cannot be used to challenge God’s existence as done by European atheist philosophers in their debates with Christian theologians during the Renaissance when they asked them, “If God is all powerful and able to do all things, can he create a stone too heavy for himself to lift?”

⁴³⁵ Al-Jaami ‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 10, P. 341.

⁴³⁶ Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Zakaat; Baab: fee al kafaaf wal qanaa’ah.

⁴³⁷ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 78.

الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا

46. Wealth and sons are the adornment of this world, but the lasting acts of righteousness are a better source of reward from your Lord and a better basis for hope.

This verse is a continuation of the divine rebukes to pagan leaders who boast about their wealth and entourage, like the owner of the two gardens, and the Qurayshite leaders who requested that the Prophet (ﷺ) remove from around himself his poor low cast companions before they would sit with him.⁴³⁸ Allah expounds further on the reality of the pleasures of this world saying:

الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

“Wealth and sons are the adornment of this world,” because wealth provides things of beauty and benefit and sons provide strength and protection.⁴³⁹ Human beings, past and present, find that having lots of sons around them is beautiful, whether they function as helpers to serve their guests or as comrades in battle.⁴⁴⁰

The Almighty mentioned sons and not daughters because it was the custom of that time that the Arabs only boasted about their sons. Daughters were considered a disgrace in the Time of Ignorance (*al-Jaahiliyyah*) as Allah noted in *Soorah an-Nahl*, (16: 58-9):

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ

“And when the news of a female child’s birth is brought to any of them, his face becomes dark, and he is filled with inward grief!”

يَتَوَارَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِن سُوءِ مَا بُشِّرَ بِهِ

“He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that whereof he has been informed.”

Then he weighs within himself his options

أَيُّمَسِكَ ۖ عَلَىٰ هُونٍ أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ فِي التُّرَابِ ۗ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ

“Shall he keep her with dishonor or bury her in the earth? Certainly, evil is their decision.”

The third option of keeping her in honor was an impossibility.⁴⁴¹

This tradition is still alive among non-Muslims and Muslims of the Indian Sub-continent where daughters are considered a calamity due to the expensive dowries required to get them married. Mid-wives are often paid to eliminate girls at birth and for the wealthy, ultra-sound tests allow them to abort girls prior to birth.

وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ

However, “the lasting acts of righteousness,” like righteous words and deeds like charity, fasting, enjoining righteousness and prohibiting evil, and so forth are “lasting acts of righteousness” are

⁴³⁸ *Fat’h ul-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 401.

⁴³⁹ *Al-Jaami’ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan*, vol. 10, p. 342.

⁴⁴⁰ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 79.

⁴⁴¹ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, pp. 78-9.

more valuable.⁴⁴² Ibn ‘Abbaas was reported to have said, “This is the celebration of the remembrance of Allah, saying: *Laa ilaaha illAllahu, Allahu Akbar, Subhaan Allah, Al-Hamdu Lillaah, Tabaarak Allah, Laa hawla wa laa quwwata illaa billaah, AstaghfirAllah, SallAllahu ‘ala Rasoolillaah*, and fasting, prayer, Hajj, charity, freeing slaves, Jihaad, maintaining ties of kinship, and all other good deeds. These are the righteous good deeds that last. They will remain in Paradise for those who do them for as long as heaven and earth remain.”⁴⁴³

‘Uthmaan ibn ‘Affaan was quoted as saying that the Lasting Righteous Acts are: *Laa ilaaha illAllahu, SubhaanAllah, al-hamdulillaah, Allahu akbar, laa hawla wa laa quwwata illaa billaah*.⁴⁴⁴

عَنْ عُمَارَةَ بْنِ صَيَّادٍ عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ الْمُسَيَّبِ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَهُ يَقُولُ فِي الْبَاقِيَّاتِ
الصَّالِحَاتِ إِنَّهَا قَوْلُ الْعَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَا
حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

Imaam Maalik also narrated from the famous *taabi’ee* Sa‘eed ibn al-Musayyab that the Lasting Righteous Acts (*al-baaqiyaat as-saalihaat*) were a servant saying: *Allahu Akbar, SubhaanAllah, al-Hamdulillaah, laa ilaaha illAllahu, and laa hawla wa laa quwwata illaa billaah*.⁴⁴⁵

Ash-Shanqeetee said that the opinions of the scholars regarding the Lasting Righteous Acts all go back to one source; deeds pleasing to Allah, whether we say that they are the five daily prayers as narrated from a group of the *salaf*, among them Ibn ‘Abbaas or the five *thikrs* mentioned previously, which is the opinion of the majority of scholars and which have narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ) related by Aboo Sa‘eed al-Khudree, Abud-Dardaa, Aboo Hurayrah, an-Nu‘maan ibn Basheer, and others.⁴⁴⁶

خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا

Such acts “are a better source of reward from your Lord and a better basis for hope,” because they are lasting. They are better than the passing worldly adornments.⁴⁴⁷ Allah has promised great rewards for righteous deeds in the next life, so they form the basis of hope for the believers. The pleasures of this life, on the other hand, will not be of any benefit in the next unless they were used to accumulate righteous deeds.

Shaykh ash-Shanqeetee pointed out that the intent of this verse is to bring the great importance of righteous deeds to the attention of humans in order that they do not become so busy with the beauty of this world that they neglect and forget the lasting good deeds which will benefit them in the next life. This concept is mentioned in detail in a number of other verses throughout the Qur’aan. For example, the Almighty’s statements:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ
ذَٰلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

“O Believers! Do not let your wealth or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And whoever does that are truly losers.” (Soorah al-Munaafiqoon, 63: 9)

⁴⁴² *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 79.

⁴⁴³ Quoted by Ibn Katheer in his *Tafseer*, vol. 6, p. .

⁴⁴⁴ *Musnad Ahmad*, vol. 1, p. 382, no. 513 and authenticated in *at-Tafseer as-Saheeh*, vol. 3, p. 308.

⁴⁴⁵ *Muwatta Malik*, p. , Kitaab: nidaa lis salaah; Baab: maa jaa’a fee thikrillaah

⁴⁴⁶ *Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, pp. 85-6.

⁴⁴⁷ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, pp. 79-80.

وَمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ بِالَّتِي تُقَرِّبُكُمْ عِندَنَا زُلْفَىٰ إِلَّا مَنْ ءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا

“And it is not your wealth, nor your children that bring you nearer to Me, but only he who believes and does righteous deeds.” (Soorah Saba, 34: 37)⁴⁴⁸

وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَاهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا

47. Remember the day when I will cause the mountains to pass away and you will see the earth a leveled plain. [On that day] I will gather them all together without leaving any of them behind.

Allah begins to describe in vivid detail the terrors of the Day of Resurrection, and the awesome things that will come to pass. He starts with the most outstanding feature on the face of the earth, the mountains, and he says:

وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ

“Remember the day when I will cause the mountains to pass away,” meaning, they will move from their places and vanish. As Allah says elsewhere:

وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ

“And you will see the mountains and think them solid, but they shall pass away like clouds.” (Soorah an-Naml, 27: 88)

They will lose their solidity and become soft like teased wool, as the Almighty said:

وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ

“And the mountains will be like fluffed wool.” (Soorah al-Qaari‘ah, 101: 5)

Then they will crumble into dust and disappear, as the Almighty said:

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْجِبَالِ فَقُلْ يَنْسِفُهَا رَبِّي نَسْفًا * فَيَذَرُهَا قَاعًا صَفْصَفًا * لَا تَرَى فِيهَا عِوَجًا وَلَا أَمْتًا

“And they ask you about the mountains, say: ‘My Lord will pulverize them scattering [their dust] and leave them as a barren plain. You will not see in it crookedness or curve.’” (Soorah Taa Haa, 20: 105-107)⁴⁴⁹

وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً

Then Allah describes how the earth itself will look saying: “You will see the earth a levelled plain.” When He causes the mountains to vanish the earth will be left as a smooth plain, a level surface with nothing crooked or curved therein, no valleys or mountains. It will have no features

⁴⁴⁸ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 85.

⁴⁴⁹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p.. and Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, pp. 86-7.

that anyone can recognize and nothing for anyone to even think about hiding behind. All creatures will be exposed in the open standing before their Lord.⁴⁵⁰

عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُحْشَرُ النَّاسُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَى أَرْضٍ بَيْضَاءَ عَفْرَاءَ كَقُرْصَةِ النَّعِيِّ لَيْسَ فِيهَا عِلْمٌ لِأَحَدٍ

Sahl ibn Sa'd reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "People will be assembled on the Day of Resurrection on a white plain with a reddish tinge, like a loaf of white bread without markings for anyone."⁴⁵¹

وَحَشَرْنَاهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا

At the same time that the earth changes its form, Allah mentions that all creatures will be gathered saying: "I will gather them all together without leaving any of them behind."

قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ * لَمَجْمُوعُونَ إِلَى مِيقَاتٍ يَوْمٍ مَعْلُومٍ

Say: "[Yes] indeed, those of old, and those of later times will all be gathered together for an appointed meeting of a known Day." (Soorah al-Waaqi'ah, 56: 49,50)

Aboo Hurayrah quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying: "On the Day of Resurrection, people will be gathered and He will order them to follow what they used to worship. So some of them will follow the sun, some will follow the moon, and some will follow other false gods; and only this nation will be left with its hypocrites."⁴⁵²

Actual mention of the gathering of other creatures besides humans can be found elsewhere in the Qur'aan. For example, Allah, Most Great and Glorious, said:

وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ

"And when the wild beasts are gathered together." (Soorah at-Takweer, 81: 5)

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَمٌ أَمْثَلُكُمْ مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ

"There is not a crawling creature on earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you. I have neglected nothing in the Book. Then unto their Lord they all will be gathered." (Soorah al-An'aam, 6: 38)

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَتَوْدَنَّ الْحُقُوقَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حَتَّىٰ يُقَادَ لِلشَّاةِ الْجُلْحَاءِ مِنَ الشَّاةِ الْقَرْنَاءِ

Aboo Hurayrah related that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "You all will return rights to their owners on the Day of Resurrection, until retaliation will be given to the hornless ram from the horned ram."⁴⁵³

⁴⁵⁰ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p..

⁴⁵¹ Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1463, no. 6708.

⁴⁵² Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol. 1, pp. 427-30, no. 770.

⁴⁵³ Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1366, no. 6252.

وَعَرِّضُوا عَلَى رَبِّكَ صَفًّا لَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَلَّنْ نَجْعَلَ لَكُمْ مَوْعِدًا

48. And they will be presented before your Lord in rows, [and He will say]: “Indeed, you have come to Me in the same way that I first created you. But you claimed that I had not set a time for us to meet.”

After being gathered along with the other creatures on the new Earth, humans will be presented before their Lord.

وَعَرِّضُوا عَلَى رَبِّكَ صَفًّا

“And they will be presented before your Lord in rows,” means that people will be lined up for judgment by Allah, Most Great and Glorious. However, the believer will be alone with his Lord and will admit to his many sins when asked about them until he will think that he will be destroyed. Then the Noble Lord will then tell him or her:

((سَتَرْتُهَا عَلَيْكَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَأَنَا أَعْفِرُهَا لَكَ الْيَوْمَ))

“I have hidden them for you in the world and today I forgive you for them.”⁴⁵⁴

Allah will forgive him and not punish him for them after hiding them from people in this life. The number of hidden sins committed by even the best of people are innumerable, whether actions of the limbs or the heart. For example, evils of the heart like distrust, jealousy, and wishing evil for others exist in most people but they are hidden by Allah. Likewise, many evil acts of the limbs occur, but Allah has hidden them for His servant. The true believer hopes that his or her sins which are hidden in this life will be forgiven in the next.⁴⁵⁵

The criminals among them, who denied the messengers, rebelled against their Lord and were haughty in the land, will be brought forth in chains.

⁴⁵⁴ Narrated by Ibn ‘Umar in *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 3, p. 372, no. 621 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1444, no. 6669 The complete *hadeeth* is as follows:

عَنْ صَفْوَانَ بْنِ مُحْرِزٍ الْمَازِنِيِّ قَالَ بَيْنَمَا أَنَا أَمْشِي مَعَ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا آخِذٌ بِيَدِهِ إِذْ عَرَضَ رَجُلٌ فَقَالَ كَيْفَ سَمِعْتَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ فِي النَّجْوَى فَقَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْنِي الْمُؤْمِنَ فَيَضَعُ عَلَيْهِ كَنَفَهُ وَيَسْتُرُهُ فَيَقُولُ أَتَعْرِفُ ذَنْبَ كَذَا أَتَعْرِفُ ذَنْبَ كَذَا فَيَقُولُ نَعَمْ أَيْ رَبِّ حَتَّى إِذَا قَرَّرَهُ بِذُنُوبِهِ وَرَأَى فِي نَفْسِهِ أَنَّهُ هَلَكَ قَالَ سَتَرْتُهَا عَلَيْكَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَأَنَا أَعْفِرُهَا لَكَ الْيَوْمَ فَيُعْطَى كِتَابَ حَسَنَاتِهِ وَأَمَّا الْكَافِرُ وَالْمُنَافِقُونَ فَيَقُولُ الْأَشْهَادُ هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا عَلَى رَبِّهِمْ أَلَا لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ

Safwaan ibn Muhriz al-Maazinee said that while he was walking with Ibn ‘Umar and holding his hand a man came up and asked: “How did you hear the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) describe the Private Conversation (*an-Najwaa*)?” He replied that he heard Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) say: “”

⁴⁵⁵ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, pp. 82-3.

وَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّقْرَّنِينَ فِي الْأَصْفَادِ ﴿٥٤﴾ سَرَائِلُهُمْ مِّنْ قَطِرَانٍ وَتَغْشَىٰ وُجُوهَهُمُ النَّارُ

“And you will see the criminals on that day bound in chains, their garments of pitch and their faces covered by fire.” (Soorah Ibraaheem, 14: 49-50)

The Almighty explained elsewhere concerning the presentation of creatures before their Lord and what will be said to them:

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أُولَٰئِكَ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَقُولُ الْأَشْهَدُ هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ أَلَا لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ

“And who does more wrong than he who invents a lie against Allah. Such will be brought before their Lord, and witnesses will say, ‘These are the ones who lied against their Lord!’ No doubt! The curse of Allah is on the wrong-doers who hinder others from the Path of Allah and seek in it crookedness, while disbelieving in the Hereafter.” (Soorah Hood, 11: 18-9)

Due to the severity of the terror the nations will fall to their knees when people are called forth to give account.

وَتَرَىٰ كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ جَاثِيَةً كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ تُدْعَىٰ إِلَىٰ كِتَابِهَا الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

“And you will see each nation humbled to their knees; each nation will be called to its record. This day you will be rewarded for what you used to do.” (Soorah al-Jaathiyah, 45: 28)

لَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ

Allah will rebuke those who denied the Hereafter and reprimand them before all creation saying: “Indeed, you have come⁴⁵⁶ to Me in the same way that I first created you,” meaning that human beings will return to Him without any wealth, clothes or anything else. Not only that, but whatever body parts they lost will also be returned to them.

The Prophet’s wife ‘Aa’ishah quoted the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as saying,

((تُحْشَرُونَ حُفَاةَ عُرَاةٍ غُرْلًا)) قَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ الرَّجَالُ وَالنِّسَاءُ يَنْظُرُ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ؟ فَقَالَ: ((الْأَمْرُ أَشَدُّ مِنْ أَنْ يُهَمَّهُمْ ذَاكَ)).

“Mankind will be gathered barefooted, naked and uncircumcised,” She asked, “O Messenger of Allah, will men and women stare at each other?” “O ‘Aa’ishah!” he replied, “The situation will be much too scary for that to be of any importance to them.”⁴⁵⁷

The First to be Clothed

Ibn ‘Abbaas said: While Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) stood up to deliver a sermon, he said: “O people! Allah will assemble you barefooted, naked and uncircumcised, [then he repeated the words

⁴⁵⁶ The use of the past tense verb while intending the future is common in the Qur’aan (See al-Kahf: 99; az-Zumar: 71). It is a construction which affirms the future event as it is treated as if it has already occurred. (Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 90)

⁴⁵⁷ Sahih al-Bukhari (Arabic-English), vol. 8, p. 350, no. 534 and Sahih Muslim (English Trans.), vol. 4, p. 1486, no. 6844.

of the Qur'aan] **"As I created you the first time, I will repeat it. A promise binding on Myself."** And the first person who will be clothed on the Day of Resurrection will be Abraham."⁴⁵⁸

Scholars were of different opinions as to why Prophet Abraham is to be clothed before everyone else on the Day of Judgment. Some suggested that it was because he feared Allah more than anyone, so his clothing was hastened to put his heart at rest. It is possible as it is narrated that he was the first to wear pants under his clothing while praying in order to exaggerate the covering his private parts and to ensure that his privates would not touch his place of prayer, so he was rewarded by being the first to be covered on the Day of Resurrection. It is also possible that those who threw him in the fire stripped him of his clothing in front of the people as was done to those to be killed. So he was rewarded with being the first to be clothed on the Day of Resurrection before all the witnesses. This was the best [explanation]."⁴⁵⁹

Some authentic texts state that people will be resurrected in the clothing in which they die. For example, Aboo Sa'eed al-Khudree on his death bed called for new clothes and put them on then said: I heard the Messenger of Allah's say:

((إِنَّ الْمَيِّتَ يُبْعَثُ فِي ثِيَابِهِ الَّتِي يَمُوتُ فِيهَا))

"Indeed the dead will be resurrected in the clothes in which they die."⁴⁶⁰

Imaam al-Bayhaquee resolved the apparent conflict from three perspectives:

1. That the clothes will disintegrate after they stand up from their graves so they will be naked at the place of assembly, then they will be clothed in the clothes of paradise.
2. When the prophets, the truthful righteous, then those after them according to their ranks are clothed, each person will wear clothes like those in which they died. Then when they enter paradise they will wear the clothes of paradise.
3. The meaning of "clothes" here refers to their deeds. That is, they will be resurrected in the good or evil deeds they were doing when they died. Almighty Allah said:

وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ

"And the clothing of piety is better." (Soorah al-A'raaf, 7: 26)

Jaabir related that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

((يُبْعَثُ كُلُّ عَبْدٍ عَلَىٰ مَا مَاتَ عَلَيْهِ))

"Every slave will be resurrected doing whatever deeds he died doing."⁴⁶¹

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ قَالَ بَيْنَمَا رَجُلٌ وَقِفٌ بِعَرَفَةَ إِذْ وَقَعَ عَنْ رَاحِلَتِهِ فَوَقَصَتْهُ أَوْ قَالَ فَأَوْقَصَتْهُ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اغْسِلُوهُ بِمَاءٍ وَسِدْرٍ وَكَفِّنُوهُ فِي ثَوْبَيْنِ وَلَا تُخَنِّطُوهُ وَلَا تُخَمِّرُوا رَأْسَهُ فَإِنَّهُ يُبْعَثُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مُلَبَّيًّا

⁴⁵⁸ Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1487, no. 6847.

⁴⁵⁹ At-Tathkirah, p. 209.

⁴⁶⁰ (Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. 2, p. 887, no. 3108 and authenticated in Silsilah al-Ahaadeeth as-Saheehah, 4: 234, no. 1671)

⁴⁶¹ Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1492, no. 6878.

Ibn ‘Abbaas said: While a man was standing at ‘Arafah, he fell from his horse and it trampled him. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “*Bathe him with water and lotus leaf [soap], shroud him in his two garments and do not put perfume on him nor cover his head, for he will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection reciting the Talbiyyah.*”⁴⁶²

It should not be understood that the slave will be resurrected in the clothing in which he was shrouded or in which he died. He is resurrected in the state of his faith or disbelief, his certainty or doubt, in which he died and doing the deeds he was doing at the time of his death. This is indicated by the following narration from ‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Amr in which he related that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

((إِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ عَذَابًا أَصَابَ الْعَذَابُ مَنْ كَانَ فِيهِمْ ثُمَّ بُعِثُوا عَلَىٰ أَعْمَالِهِمْ))

“If Allah wishes to punish a people, whoever is among them will also be afflicted by the punishment. Then they will be resurrected according to their deeds.”⁴⁶³

Miqdaad ibn al-Aswad related: I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: “On the Day of Resurrection, the sun will come so close to people that there will be the distance of a mile left. They will be submerged in sweat according to their deeds, some up to their knees, some up to their waists and some will have a bridle of sweat,” and while saying this, he pointed his hand towards his mouth.⁴⁶⁴

بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّنِي نَجَعَلْ لَكُمْ مَوْعِدًا

Then the disbelievers will be further humiliated by being told: “**But you claimed that I had not set a time for us to meet.**” You denied that deeds would be judged and Allah promised and warned that they would. Now you have seen it and know that your claim was false.⁴⁶⁵

وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ
يَا وَيْلَتَنَا مَا لِذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا
وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا

49. Then the Book will be placed [in their hands], and you will see the criminals fearful of what is in it. They will say: “Woe to us! What kind of Book is this in which everything small and big is counted?” They will find all they did presented before them, and your Lord is not unjust to anyone.

In this verse Allah continues to describe some of the events of the Day of Judgment after people have been resurrected and lined up in rows before Him for judgment.

⁴⁶² Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol. 2, pp. 199-200, no. 355 and Sahih Muslim, vol. 2, p. 597, no. 2751.

⁴⁶³ Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1492, no. 6880 [Yawm al-Aakhir, pp. 59-61. See also Fat’h al-Baaree,

⁴⁶⁴ Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, pp. 1487-8, no. 6852.

⁴⁶⁵ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 557.

وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ

“Then the Book⁴⁶⁶ will be placed [in their hands],” meaning that the books of deeds will be distributed among the people, some receiving it in their right hands and others in their left hands.⁴⁶⁷

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ ﴿٧﴾ فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسِبُ حَسَابًا يَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾ وَيَنْقَلِبُ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا ﴿٩﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ ﴿١٠﴾ فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُوا ثُبُورًا ﴿١١﴾ وَيَصْلَىٰ سَعِيرًا ﴿١٢﴾

“Then as for him who will be given his Record in his right hand, He surely, will receive an easy reckoning, and will return to his family in joy! But whoever is given his Record behind his back, He will invoke (for his) destruction, And he shall enter a blazing Fire, and made to taste its burning.” (Soorah al-Inshiqaaq, (84): 7-12)

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ ﴿١٣﴾ فَيَقُولُ يَلَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُوتِ كِتَابِيهِ ﴿١٤﴾ وَلَمْ أَدرِ مَا حِسَابِيهِ ﴿١٥﴾

“But as for him who will be given his Record in his left hand, will say: ‘I wish that I had not been given my Record! And that I had never known, how my Account is?’” (Soorah al-Haaqqah, 69: 25-6)

Every creature will see all of their good and evil deeds until they are able to judge themselves without any excuses.

وَكُلَّ إِنسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَلْعَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ ﴿١٦﴾ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنشُورًا ﴿١٧﴾

“I have fastened every person’s deeds to his neck. On the Day of Resurrection I will bring out a book for him which he will find wide open. [He will be told]: Read your book! You are a sufficient reckoner against yourself today.” (Soorah al-Israa, 17: 13)

فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ

“And you will see the criminals fearful of what is in it,” means that people will see the disbelievers afraid about the exposure of the evil recorded in their books, because they know what they have done.⁴⁶⁸

وَيَقُولُونَ يَا وَيْلَتَنَا مَا لِ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا ﴿١٨﴾

“They will say: ‘Woe to us! What kind of Book is this in which everything small and big is counted?’”

The “small and big” refer to sins, minor and major. Scholars differed regarding the definition of the major sin (*kabeerah*). The Almighty mentioned that Allah will forgive minor sins of those who avoid the major sins:

إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنُدْخِلَكُمْ مُدْخَلَ كَرِيمًا ﴿١٩﴾

“If you avoid the major sins which you are forbidden to do, I will absolve you from your (small) sins, and admit you to a Noble Entrance.” (Soorah an-Nisaa, 4: 31)

⁴⁶⁶ The Book represents the class containing all records of the deeds of creatures.

⁴⁶⁷ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 84.

⁴⁶⁸ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 84.

The mention of minor sins before major sins implies that special care has to be taken regarding them as the Prophet (ﷺ) advised:

((إِيَّاكُمْ وَمُحَقَّرَاتِ الذُّنُوبِ كَقَوْمٍ نَزَلُوا فِي بَطْنٍ وَّادٍ فَجَاءَ ذَا بُعُودٍ وَجَاءَ ذَا بُعُودٍ حَتَّى أَنْضَجُوا خُبْزَتَهُمْ وَإِنَّ مُحَقَّرَاتِ الذُّنُوبِ مَتَى يُؤْخَذُ بِهَا صَاحِبُهَا تَهْلِكُهُ))

“Beware of scorned sins that are like a people who camp in the middle of a valley; each one brings a twig until their bread was well cooked. Whenever a doer of scorned sins is taken by them, they destroy him.”⁴⁶⁹

Note: This verse indicates that the disbelievers are required to follow secondary issues of the *Sharee’ah* because they will find in their books of deeds minor sins counted against them. If they were not required to follow the law, they would not have been recorded in their books of deeds.⁴⁷⁰

وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا

“They will find all they did presented before them,” meaning that they will find the consequence of their deeds completely preserved and counted against them.

وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا

“And your Lord is not unjust to anyone,” is an expression of the completeness of Allah’s justice.⁴⁷¹ He will not increase the number of evil deeds of the sinner even by one nor will he decrease the good deeds of the righteous by one. As he said:

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا يَخَافُ ظُلْمًا وَلَا هَضْمًا

“And whoever does righteous deeds, while he is a believer then he will have no fear of injustice, or of any curtailment (of his reward).” (Soorah *Taa Haa*, 20: 112)

This verse contains an attribute negated from Allah, while most divine attributes are affirmed attributes like life, knowledge and ability. Negated attributes in the Qur’aan and Sunnah are very few, and belief in them is incomplete unless two conditions are met:

1. The negated attribute must be negated.
2. The perfect opposite must be affirmed.

Negation which does not contain perfection cannot be among the attributes of Allah. Thus, every characteristic which Allah negates from Himself must contain the affirmation of perfection in its opposite. If a negation does not contain perfection, it could be due to the absence of the ability to have the attribute. For example, it can be said that the wall is not unjust. However, that does not contain an attribute of perfection for the wall, because the wall cannot be described as just or unjust. Consequently, negating injustice does not contain perfection. If a negation does not contain perfection, it could be because of a deficiency due to weakness. For example, if someone is described as not being unjust since he does not reciprocate evil for evil due to his inability to defend himself, which is not considered praise for him.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَمْ يَعْى بِخَلْقِهِنَّ بِقَدِيرٍ عَلَى أَنْ يُجِى الْمَوْتَى بَلَى إِنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

⁴⁶⁹ Musnad Ahmad, no. 21742 (Hadeeth CD).

⁴⁷⁰ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 92.

⁴⁷¹ The same expression can be found in numerous other places in the Qur’aan, Yunus: 44; an-Nisaa: 40; al-Anbiyaa: 47; Fussilat: 46; an-Nahl: 33, 118.

“Do they not see that Allah, who created the heavens and the earth, and was not wearied by their creation, is able to give life to the dead? Yes, He surely is able to do all things.” (Soorah al-Ahqaaf, 46: 33)

Based on the previously mentioned rule, negating the deficiency of weariness from Allah must include affirmation of the perfection of its opposite which is ability. Therefore, one must believe that Allah, Most Great and Glorious, has unrestricted ability free from any weakness.

Allah is not unjust to anyone due to the perfection of His justice and not, as the Jahmites⁴⁷² claim, due the impossibility of injustice relative to Himself. They claim that it is not due to Him being able to oppress but He does not do so. According to them, all of the creation was created by Him and belongs to Him. If they belong to Him and He punishes a righteous individual, He punished His property which cannot be oppression/injustice because He can do whatever He wishes with His creation. However, this is a false statement. If Allah, Most Great and Glorious, promised to reward the righteous and punish the sinners and then He punished a righteous person and rewarded a sinner, the least that could be said regarding Him is that broke His promise, and that, without a shadow of a doubt contradicts justice and truth. Furthermore, Allah, Most Great and Glorious stated the following in a Holy Hadeeth (*Hadeeth Qudsee*):

((يَا عِبَادِي إِنِّي حَرَّمْتُ الظُّلْمَ عَلَى نَفْسِي وَجَعَلْتُهُ بَيْنَكُمْ مُحَرَّمًا فَلَا تَظَالُمُوا))

*“O My servants! Indeed I have forbidden Myself from injustice and made it forbidden among you, so do not oppress each other.”*⁴⁷³

This is evidence that He is able to be unjust, however, He made it forbidden for Himself due to the completeness of His justice. Thus, one should say that Allah does not oppress anyone due to the completeness of His justice and not because oppression is impossible relative to Him, as the Jahmites claim.⁴⁷⁴

This is the Day of Judgment about which Allah warns us throughout the Qur’aan. On this day, all our deeds will be placed in front of us. Allah reminds us of that time because it is easy for us to forget and that is why it is mentioned so frequently in the Qur’aan.

Allah closes this verse saying that He will not be unjust to anyone as a reminder that tragedies and calamities that happen to people are deserved or they are Allah’s punishment on a whole group of people even though there are some good people among them. The evil people deserve it but for the good people it is a trial. Allah tests their patience and if they are patient then Allah will reward them for it.

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ
فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِي وَهُمْ لَكُمْ
عَدُوٌّ بِئْسَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ بَدَلًا

50. When I told the angels: “Prostrate to Adam,” they all prostrated except Iblees. He was one of the jinns and he disobeyed the command of his Lord. Will you then take him and

⁴⁷² See footnote 48, p. 16.

⁴⁷³ *Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.), vol., p., no. Kitaab: Birr wa Silah wa Aadaab. Baab: Tahreem Zulm.

⁴⁷⁴ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, pp. 85-7.

his offspring as allies rather than Me, though they are your enemies. What an evil exchange for those wrongdoers.

In the next two verses Allah switches from descriptions of the Day of Judgment to a primordial evil; the first recorded sin and its sinister perpetrator, Satan. He takes the reader back to a time shortly after the creation of Adam, the first human being:

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ

The Almighty tells Prophet Muhammad: Mention to the people “**when I told the angels: ‘Prostrate to Adam,’**” for them to learn a critical lesson about the forces at play in this world and for the excellence of the human race to become evident.

ANGELS

The “**angels**”⁴⁷⁵ are a part of the unseen world created by Allah from light according to an authentic report related by ‘Aa’ishah from the Prophet (ﷺ) in which he said:

((خُلِقَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ نُورٍ وَخُلِقَ الْجَانُّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ وَخُلِقَ آدَمُ مِمَّا وُصِفَ لَكُمْ))

“The angels were created from light, the jinn from fire and Aadam from what has been already described to you.”⁴⁷⁶

Although angels are normally invisible to human beings,⁴⁷⁷ some are made visible by Allah, as in the case of Angel Gabriel, whom the Prophet (ﷺ) saw on two occasions in his natural state.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁵ Arabic *malak* (pl. *malaa’ikah*).

⁴⁷⁶ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1540, no. 7134.

⁴⁷⁷ However, angels are visible to some animals. Aboo Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

((إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ صِيَاحَ الدِّيَكَةِ فَاسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ فَإِنَّهَا رَأَتْ مَلَكًا))

“If you hear a rooster crow, ask Allah for His grace, for it has seen an angel.” (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 3, p.1415, no. 5083, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 332, no. 521 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1428, no. 6581.)

⁴⁷⁸ In their normal state, angels are not human-like creatures with a pair of birdlike wings, as portrayed in Greco-Roman legends and Christian influenced works of art. Instead, they are normally huge in size and their wings may number anywhere from two to several hundred.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُولِي أَجْنِحَةٍ مَثْنَى وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبْعَ يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ

“...making the angels messengers, with wings two and three and four; He increases in the creation as He wills...” Qur’aan, 35:1

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ : رَأَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ﷺ) جَبْرِيلَ فِي صُورَتِهِ وَلَهُ سِتُّ مِائَةِ جَنَاحٍ كُلُّ جَنَاحٍ مِنْهَا قَدَّ سَدُّ الْأَفْقِ يَسْقُطُ مِنْ جَنَاحِهِ مِنَ التَّهَاقُوتِ وَالْدَّرِّ وَالْيَاقُوتِ مَا اللَّهُ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ .

The companion, ‘Abdullaah ibn Mas’ood, reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) saw Angel Gabriel (Jibreel) in his natural state in which he had six hundred wings, each of which filled the horizon. And there were multicolored drops like pearls and coral falling from the wings. (Collected by Ahmad. Ibn Katheer rated its chain of narrators as *jayyid* (good). See *al-Bidaayah wa an-Nihaayah*, vol. 1, p. 47. The description of Jibreel having six hundred wings is mentioned in *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 301, no. 455.)

In another narration the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have said the following about Angel Gabriel:

((رَأَيْتُهُ مُنْهَبِطًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ سَادًّا عِظَمَ خَلْقِهِ مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ))

Angel Gabriel used to bring revelations to the Prophet (ﷺ) while he was in the company of his companions and none of them would see Gabriel. ‘Aa’ishah was quoted as saying,

((يَا عَائِشَةُ هَذَا جِبْرِيلُ يَقْرَأُ عَلَيْكَ السَّلَامَ)) . فَقَالَتْ: وَعَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ
وَبَرَكَاتُهُ تَرَى مَا لَا أَرَى

“Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) [once] said to me, ‘O ‘Aa’ishah, here is Gabriel greeting you with peace.’ I said, ‘And may Allah’s peace and mercy be upon him. For he sees what I cannot.’”⁴⁷⁹

Angels may also take human form. An example from the Qur’aan may be found in the case of Mary, when Angel Gabriel came to inform her of her impending pregnancy:

وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَرْيَمَ إِذِ انْتَبَذَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا * فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ حِجَابًا فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا

“And mention in the scripture [the story of] Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place facing east. She placed a screen between herself and them. Then I sent to her My angel, who appeared before her in the form of a man in all respects.” (Soorah Maryam, 19: 16-17)

Occasionally Gabriel came to the Prophet (ﷺ) in the form of a human being who was also visible to others. Sometimes the Prophet’s companions witnessed him visiting Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in the likeness of a handsome companion by the name of Dihyah ibn Khaleefah al-Kalbee,⁴⁸⁰ and at other times in the likeness of an unknown Bedouin.⁴⁸¹

However, in spite of the angels taking male human forms, they are not considered to be male or female,⁴⁸² nor is there any evidence in Islamic texts to indicate that they reproduce. In the Qur’aan the pagan Arabs are rebuked for referring to the angels as daughters of Allah or even female⁴⁸³.

Although many names have been attributed to angels in Muslim folklore,⁴⁸⁴ only a very few of their names have been verified according to authentic Islamic sources. Jibreel (Gabriel) is the angel of revelation, Mikaa’eel (or Meekaal, Eng. Michael)⁴⁸⁵ is responsible for rain⁴⁸⁶,

“I saw him descending from the heavens and his great size filled the space between the earth and the sky.” (Reported by ‘Aa’ishah in *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, pp. 111-112, no. 337.)

⁴⁷⁹ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 5, p. 75, no. 112 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1302, no. 5997.

⁴⁸⁰ On another occasion, ‘Aa’ishah, the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ), reported that she saw him place his hand on the mane of Dihyah al-Kalbee’s horse while talking to him. When she asked him about it, he replied that it was Gabriel and that he had sent his greetings to her. (*Musnad Ahmad*, vol. 6, p. 146 and authenticated in *Silsilah al-Ahaadeeth as-Saheehah*, vol. 3, p. 105, no. 1111.)

⁴⁸¹ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 1, p. 17, no.7 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, pp. 9-10, no. 18.

⁴⁸² The stories of Haaroot and Maaroot yielding to sexual temptation, like those collected by Ibn Abee Shaybah, ‘Abd ibn Humayd, Ibn Abee ad-Dunyaa (in *Kitaab al-Uqoobaat*), Ibn Jareer, Ibn al-Munthir, Ibn Abee Haatim and al-Bayhaqee (in *Shu’ab al-Eemaan*), from the Jewish convert, Ka’b al-Ahbaar (see as-Suyootee’s *ad-Durr al-Manthoor fee at-Tafseer al-Ma’thoor*, vol. 1, pp. 239-240), have led some Muslim theologians to conclude that angels have sex, but do not use it to propagate their kind. (See *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 319.) However, all of these narrations are inauthentic. The elements of these stories are found in a Jewish *midrash* as well as in the New Testament. (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 135.)

⁴⁸³ Soorah as-Saffaat, (37):149-50 and az-Zukhruf, (43):19.

⁴⁸⁴ *Dictionary of Islam*, pp. 15-16.

⁴⁸⁵ See Qur’aan, 2:97-98.

⁴⁸⁶ *Sharh al-Aqeedah at-Tahaawiyah*, p. 336.

Israafeel⁴⁸⁷ is the angel who will blow a horn (soor) signaling the end of the world⁴⁸⁸, Maalik is the name of the main guardian angel of Hell⁴⁸⁹, Munkar and Nakeer⁴⁹⁰ are two angels who will question each person following their death, Haaroot⁴⁹¹ and Maaroot⁴⁹² were two angels sent to the people of Babylon as a test of their faith.⁴⁹³

The angels are in charge of the heavens and the earth. Thus, every movement which takes place in the world is a result of the [activities of the] angels.⁴⁹⁴ Some angels are able to read human minds. The recording angels are aware of human intent and record the deeds that are intended but may or may not have been fulfilled. The Prophet (ﷺ) was quoted by his companion, Aboo Hurayrah, as saying,

((قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ رَبِّ ذَاكَ عَبْدُكَ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَعْمَلَ سَيِّئَةً وَهُوَ أَبْصَرُ بِهِ فَقَالَ ارْكَبُوهُ فَإِنْ عَمِلَهَا فَارْكَبُوهُ لَهَا بِمِثْلِهَا وَإِنْ تَرَكَهَا فَارْكَبُوهُ لَهَا حَسَنَةً إِنَّمَا تَرَكَهَا مِنْ جَرَّائِي))

*“The angels say [to Allah], ‘That man intends to do evil.’ Although He is more vigilant than them, He replies, ‘Watch him. If he commits evil, record it in kind; but if he abandons it, record for him one good deed. For surely he gave it up for My sake.’”*⁴⁹⁵

Angels are, by nature, obedient servants of Allah and do not have the ability to disobey Allah⁴⁹⁶ and they are in constant contact with man. They play a variety of roles at all stages of human existence - from birth to death, and even beyond the grave.

They are assigned to the womb from the beginning of each human’s conception until his birth, implementing Allah’s commands with respect to each individual. The Prophet’s companion, Anas ibn Maalik, reported that he said,

((إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَكَّلَ بِالرَّحِمِ مَلَكًا يَقُولُ يَا رَبِّ نُطْفَةٌ يَا رَبِّ عَلَقَةٌ يَا رَبِّ مُضْغَةٌ فَإِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَفْضِيَ خَلَقَهُ قَالَ أَذْكَرٌ أَمْ أُنْثَى شَقِيٌّ أَمْ سَعِيدٌ فَمَا الرَّزْقُ وَالْأَجَلُ فَيُكْتَبُ فِي بَطْنِ أُمِّهِ))

“Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, has appointed an angel as the caretaker of the womb that says, ‘My Lord, it is like an oily drop; my Lord, it is now like a leech; my Lord, it has become like a

⁴⁸⁷ A loan-word with another dialectical variant “Israafeen” (*Mukhtaar as-Sihaah*, p. 296), probably from the Hebrew word “Serafim” (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 184). It should be noted that descriptions of this angel, such as those found in the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 184, have no basis in authentic Islamic texts and are the product of legend and myths.

⁴⁸⁸ *Al-Bidaayah wa an-Nihaayah*, vol. 1, p. 45.

⁴⁸⁹ Soorah az-Zukhruf, (43):77.

⁴⁹⁰ Both names come from the Arabic root *nakira*, which means “to become bad, evil, abominable or foul.” The word *munkar* literally means “any action deemed or declared foul, hateful or hideous” and *nakeer* means “disapproval, or the like, and manifestation thereof.” (*Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, pp. 2849-2851.)

⁴⁹¹ Generally held to be a foreign name. (*Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, p. 2890.)

⁴⁹² According to Arabic lexicophers, this word is either of foreign origin or it is derived from *murootah*, which refers to the condition of a land which is desert without water or herbage. (*Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, p. 2703.)

⁴⁹³ Soorah al-Baqarah, (2):102.

⁴⁹⁴ *Sharh al-‘Aqeedah at-Tahaawiyah*, p. 335. See Soorah an-Naazi‘aat, (79):5 and *ath-Thaariyaat*, (51):4.

⁴⁹⁵ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 75, no. 235.

⁴⁹⁶ Soorah an-Nahl, (16):49-50.

chewed clump.’ Then, if Allah wishes to complete its creation, the angel will ask, ‘My Lord, will it be a male or a female?...’⁴⁹⁷

‘Abdullaah ibn Mas‘ood quoted the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as saying,

((إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ يُجْمَعُ خَلْقُهُ فِي بَطْنِ أُمِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ يَوْمًا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ عِلْقَةً مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ ثُمَّ يَكُونُ مُضْغَةً مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ مَلَكًا فَيُؤَمِّرُ بِأَرْبَعِ كَلِمَاتٍ وَيُقَالُ لَهُ اكْتُبْ عَمَلَهُ وَرِزْقَهُ وَأَجَلَهُ وَشَقِيًّا أَوْ سَعِيدًا ثُمَّ يُنْفَخُ فِيهِ الرُّوحُ)).

“Each one of you is collected in his mother’s womb for forty days, then becomes like a leech for a similar period. Then Allah sends an angel and orders him to record four things: his livelihood, his life span, his deeds, and whether he will be wretched or happy. The angel then breathes the soul into him...”⁴⁹⁸ From his birth until his death, each person has been assigned an angel, inspiring him to do good and guarding him from evil. ‘Abdullaah ibn Mas‘ood related that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “Everyone of you has been assigned a companion from among the *jinn* and one from the angels...”⁴⁹⁹ These angels are entrusted with the responsibility of guiding and advising each individual, by Allah’s will, to righteousness.⁵⁰⁰ The Qur’aan also speaks about the guardian angels as follows: “**For each [person] there are [angels] in succession⁵⁰¹ before and behind him. They guard him by Allah’s command...**”⁵⁰² However, the guardian angels leave the humans to whom they are assigned on certain occasions. For example, Aboo Talhah reported that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said,

((لَا تَدْخُلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ بَيْتًا فِيهِ كَلْبٌ وَلَا صُورَةٌ تَمَائِيلٌ)).

“The angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog or pictures, or statues of living creatures.”⁵⁰³ Two angels are also assigned to every human being with the duty of recording their deeds. The Qur’aan refers to them in the following verses: “**But verily, watching over you [are appointed angels], kind and honorable, writing down [your deeds].**”⁵⁰⁴ Aboo Umaamah reported that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) described them as follows, “Surely, the [angel on the] left raises the pen [from the record] of a Muslim who commits an error for six hours. If he repents and asks Allah’s forgiveness, the deed is cast aside; otherwise it is written down as one [evil deed].”⁵⁰⁵

According to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), there are also angels that pray to Allah on behalf of humans on specific occasions. For example, he was reported to have said,

⁴⁹⁷ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 8, no. 594, p. 388 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1391, no. 6397.

⁴⁹⁸ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 8, no. 593 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1391, no. 6390.

⁴⁹⁹ Collected by Ahmad in *al-Musnad* and Muslim (referred to by number only in *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1472, no. 6758). See *Sahih Muslim*, *Sharh an-Nawawee*, vol. 17, p. 158 for the full Arabic text, the English of which has been deleted in the aforementioned translation.

⁵⁰⁰ See *al-Bidaayah wa an-Nihaayah*, vol. 1, p. 52.

⁵⁰¹ The Arabic term used in the verse is *mu‘aqqibaat*, which Ibn ‘Abbaas interpreted to mean angels who would protect each person until something destined by Allah is afflicted upon him. See *al-Bidaayah wa an-Nihaayah*, vol. 1, p. 50.

⁵⁰² Soorah ar-Ra’d, (13):11.

⁵⁰³ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 4, pp. 297-298, no. 448.

⁵⁰⁴ Soorah al-Infitaar, (82):10-11. See also Qaaf, (50):17-8.

⁵⁰⁵ Collected by at-Tabaraanee in *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabeer* and authenticated (*hasan*) by al-Albaanee in *Saheeh al-Jaami‘ as-Sagheer*, vol. 2, p. 422, no. 2097.

((أَحَدُكُمْ مَا قَعَدَ يَنْتَظِرُ الصَّلَاةَ فِي صَلَاةٍ مَا لَمْ يُحْدِثْ تَدْعُو لَهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لَهُ اللَّهُمَّ ارْحَمْهُ)).

“As long as any one of you is waiting for prayer, he is in prayer, and the angels [continue to] say, ‘O Allah, be merciful to him and forgive him,’ as long as he does not leave his place of prayer or pass wind.”⁵⁰⁶

Some angels have been assigned the job of extracting human souls from their bodies at the time of their death. Reference is made to these angels in the Qur’aan as follows: **“He is the Irresistible, far above His servants. He sets guardians over you until death comes to one of you, then His angels take your soul without fail.”**⁵⁰⁷ Yet others have been given the duty of taking the extracted soul on a spiritual journey out of this world and back into it. Al-Baraa’ ibn ‘Aazib stated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “When a believer is leaving this world and entering the next, angels with faces shining brightly like the sun descend from the heavens carrying a shroud and embalming fragrance from Paradise, and [then they] sit down within sight-range. The Angel of Death then approaches, sits by his head and says, ‘O good soul, come out to Allah’s forgiveness and pleasure.’ It will then come out like a flowing drop of water from a water-skin, and he will catch it. But, within the blinking of an eye after he catches it, they will take it and put it in the shroud and fragrance. There will then come from the soul a fragrance like that of the sweetest musk found on the face of the earth. They then ascend with it and every group of angels they pass ask, ‘Who is this good soul?’ to which they reply, ‘So-and-so, the son of So-and-so,’ using his best names by which people called him on earth. They then bring him to the lowest heaven and ask that the gate should be opened for him. This is done, and from every heaven its archangels escort him to the next heaven until he is brought to the seventh heaven, and Allah, Most Great and Glorious, says, ‘Record the book of My servant in the ‘illiyyoon’ [register of the righteous]⁵⁰⁸ and take him back to earth, for I created mankind from it, and I shall return them to it, and from it I shall bring them forth again.’⁵⁰⁹ His soul is then restored to his body...”⁵¹⁰

Another two angels, Munkar and Nakir, are charged with questioning the soul in the grave. In a continuation of the previous *hadeeth*, the Prophet (ﷺ) went on to say, “Two angels come to him, make him sit up and ask him, ‘Who is your Lord?’ He [the believing soul] will reply, ‘My Lord is Allah.’ They will then ask, ‘What is your religion?’ and he will reply, ‘My religion is Islaam.’ They will ask, ‘Who is this man who was sent among you?’ and he will say, ‘He is the Messenger of Allah.’ They will then ask, ‘What was the [sources of] your knowledge?’ and he will reply, ‘I have read Allah’s Book, believed in it and declared it to be true.’”⁵¹¹⁵¹²

Belief in this world is the second of the six pillars of faith articulated by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in the well-known *hadeeth* of Jibreel.⁵¹³

⁵⁰⁶ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 299, no. 452 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: al masaajid wa mawaadi’ as salaah; Baab: Fadl Salaatul Jamaa’ah wa intizaar as salaah . The wording is that of *Sahih Muslim*..

⁵⁰⁷ Soorah as-Sajdah, (32):11 and al-An ‘aam, (6):61.

⁵⁰⁸ “But, verily the record of the righteous is [preserved] in ‘illiyyoon. And what will explain to you what ‘illiyyoon is? It is a book of records.” Qur’aan, 83, 18:20.

⁵⁰⁹ This statement coincides with the following Qur’aanic verse: “From it We created you, into it We will return you, and from it We will bring you forth again.” Qur’aan, 20:55.

⁵¹⁰ Collected by Ahmad (*Mishkaah al-Masaabeeh*, vol. 1, pp. 340-342) and Aboo Daawood (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 3, p. 1330, no. 4735) and authenticated by al-Albaanee in *Saheeh al-Jaami’ as-Sagheer*, vol. 1, pp. 344-346, no. 1676.

⁵¹¹ See also *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 2, pp. 257-258, no. 456.

⁵¹² *A Clash of Civilizations: An Islamic View*, pp. 105-114.

⁵¹³ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 1, p. 17, no. 7, and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, pp. 9-10, no. 18.

Angels are different from the Jinn as is clear from this verse; they have greater abilities and are purer than them. Angels are able to enter the heavens and carry human souls up to Allah,⁵¹⁴ while the Jinn who attempt to enter the heavens are driven away by meteors and comets.⁵¹⁵

Muslims are required to have an unwavering firm belief in the unseen world of the angels⁵¹⁶ as a means of heightening their consciousness of Allah's knowledge and record of all their actions. That consciousness should cause them to be cautious and deliberate in whatever they plan to do as opposed to being hasty and unconcerned about the consequences of their acts.

PROSTRATION

Allah's instruction to the Angels: "**Prostrate to Adam,**" was explained by some scholars as a prostration of greeting and not prostration on the forehead in order to avoid the worship related implications of full prostration which is only allowable to Allah. However, statements should be taken according to their obvious meanings; prostration being on the forehead. If prostration is in obedience to Allah's command it is not *shirk*, in the same way that killing a person is a major sin but if it happens in response to Allah's command it is a righteous deed. Prophet Abraham was commanded to slaughter his son and he adhered to the command and began to implement it, in spite of the fact that killing his son is itself a major act of cutting family ties. But since it was following Allah's instruction it became an act of obedience fulfilling Allah's intent to test him, so Allah cancelled the command and removed the difficulty.⁵¹⁷

It is generally held that Allah's command to the angels to prostrate was not the prostration of worship, but one of honor. Ibn Katheer referred to this prostration as *sujood tashreef*, *takreem*, and *ta'azeem*, (prostration of honor, respect and exaltation). This instruction was a divine command to the angels, but human beings are forbidden from prostrating to anyone or anything besides Allah as practiced by many Muslims in Northern Nigeria and Malaysia, and Hindus in India and Sri Lanka. This point needs further clarification because there are some ignorant Muslims who misinterpret this verse. A popular saint among Sufis, al-Hallaaj (858-992 CE), was executed as an apostate for refusing to publicly retract his statement. "I am the Truth (*Ana al-Haqq*)" wherein he claimed that he was one with Allah.⁵¹⁸ Al-Hallaaj's statement can be found in his book, *Kitaab al-Tawaaseen*.

"If you do not recognize God, at least recognize His sign, I am the creative truth (*Ana al-Haqq*), because through the truth, I am eternal truth. My friends and teachers are Iblees and Pharaoh. Iblees was threatened with Hell-fire, yet, he did not recant. Pharaoh was drowned in the sea, yet he did not recant, for he would not acknowledge anything between him and God.⁵¹⁹ Though I am killed and crucified and though my hands and feet are cut off; I do not recant."⁵²⁰

This deranged individual made such pronouncements due to his belief in *Fanaa*, which is very similar to the Hindu/Buddhist belief in the state of "*Moksha/Nirvana*." In this state, according to Hindu/Buddhist beliefs, the ego disappears and the human soul, after going through a series of reincarnations is finally re-united with the world soul, Brahman.

⁵¹⁴ *Musnad Ahmad* (See *Mishkaah al-Masaabeeh*, vol. 1, pp. 340-342) and *Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 3, p. 1330, no. 4735 and authenticated in *Saheeh al-Jaami' as-Sagheer*, vol. 1, pp. 344-346, no. 1676.

⁵¹⁵ See *Soorah al-Hijr*, 15: 17-8

وَحَفِظْنَاهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِيمٍ إِلَّا مَنْ اسْتَرَقَ السَّمْعَ فَاتَّبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ مُبِينٌ

"And I have guarded it [i.e., the heavens] from every cursed devil, except the one who is able to snatch a hearing. And he is pursued by a brightly burning flame."

⁵¹⁶ *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem*, pp. 87-8.

⁵¹⁷ *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem*, pp. 88-9.

⁵¹⁸ Allah said in the Qur'aan, "**I am the Truth (*al-Haqq*)**" *Soorah al-Hajj*, (22):6 and 62. Also see (24):25 and (31):30.

⁵¹⁹ That is, Hallaaj felt that Iblee's refusal to prostrate to Aadam and Pharaoh's statement, "**I am you Lord, most high,**" were both correct. A.J. Arberry, *Muslim Saints and Mystics*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976) pp. 266-71.

⁵²⁰ Nicholson, *Idea of Personality*, p.32.

Al-Hallaaj claimed that he had become Allah by performing acts of worship which elevated him spiritually. By saying that Pharaoh was his teacher, Hallaaj recognized that there was no God but he. Similarly Iblees was his teacher, because when Allah tested Iblees by telling him to prostrate to Adam he refused to do so since humanbeings are not allowed to prostrate to anyone other than Allah. Al-Hallaaj claimed that Iblees' refusal to prostrate was to maintain his belief in one God, but obviously al-Hallaaj was mistaken in thinking so, because Allah cursed Iblees for not prostrating to Adam. This verse should not be misinterpreted because the prostration was not one of worship but one of honor.

ADAM

Adam is the father of the human race who Allah created from clay with His own two hands, as He stated:

قَالَ يٰٓإِبْلِيسُ مَا مَنَعَكَ اَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِیَدَیَّ

“He said: ‘O Iblees! What prevents you from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with both My Hands?’ ” (Soorah Saad, 38: 75)

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) also related that on the Day of Judgment Moses will address Aadam saying:

((اَنْتَ آدَمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ اللهُ بِیَدِهِ ...))

*“You are Adam whom Allah created with His own hand...”*⁵²¹

Scholars have said that Allah did not create anything besides Adam and Paradise of Eden with His hands. He also wrote the Torah with His hand.⁵²² These are three things done by Allah with His hand. Other than Adam were created with His Word “Be!” He was a prophet and not a messenger as the first messenger sent to humankind was Noah after they differed among themselves. In the narration on intercession, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

((فَيَأْتُونَ نُوحًا فَيَقُولُونَ: يَا نُوحُ أَوَّلُ الرُّسُلِ إِلَى أَهْلِ الْأَرْضِ ...))

*“People will then go to Noah and say: ‘O Noah, first of the Messengers to the people of Earth!...”*⁵²³

Adam was also among the prophets to whom Allah spoke directly, as stated by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in the following narration related by Aboo Tharr:

قُلْتُ فَأَيُّ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ كَانَ أَوَّلَ قَالَ آدَمُ قُلْتُ أَوَّلُ نَبِيِّ كَانَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ نَبِيُّ مُكَلَّمٍ
قُلْتُ فَكَمْ الْمُرْسَلُونَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ ثَلَاثُ مِائَةٍ وَخَمْسَةَ عَشَرَ جَمًّا غَفِيرًا

I asked: Who was the first of the prophets? He replied, “Adam.” I asked: Was he a prophet, O Messenger of Allah? He replied, “He was a prophet to whom Allah spoke.” I asked: How many messengers was there, O Messenger of Allah? He replied: “Three hundred and fifteen, a large group.”⁵²⁴

⁵²¹ Sahih Muslim, vol., p., no. Kitaab: al Qadar; Baab: Hijaaj Adam wa Moosaa.

⁵²² Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) also related that on the Day of Judgment Moses will address Aadam saying:

((اَنْتَ مُوسَى اصْطَفَاكَ اللهُ بِكَلَامِهِ، وَكَتَبَ لَكَ التَّوْرَةَ بِیَدِهِ ...))

“You are Moses whom Allah chose to speak to and for whom He wrote the Torah with His own hand...” (Sahih Muslim, vol., p., no. Kitaab: al Qadar; Baab: Hijaaj Adam wa Moosaa)

⁵²³ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. , p. , no. Kitaab: Ahaadeeth al anbiyaa; Baab: Qawl Allah: Laqad arsalnaa noohan ilaa qawmihi and Sahih Muslim, vol., p., no. Kitaab: al Eemaan; Baab: Adnaa ahl al jannah manzilatatan minhaa.

⁵²⁴ Musnad Ahmad, 5/178, Musnad Abee Daawood at-Tayaalasee, 1/65 and Saheeh Ibn Hibbaan, no. 361 and authenticated by al-Albaanee in Mishkaat al-Masaabeeh.

He was a prophet and not a messenger because there was no need for a divine message (*risaalah*) as people in his time were one nation and had not spread over the earth. The human race consisted of only a few people, trials were few and they used to follow the way of their father and do as he did. When their numbers became many and they differed among themselves, Allah began to send messengers.⁵²⁵

فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ

Allah's statement: **"They all prostrated except Iblees. He was one of the jinns and he disobeyed the command of his Lord,"** means that they prostrated in obedience to Allah's command with the exception of Iblees⁵²⁶ who refused to prostrate.

IBLEES

Iblees is Satan⁵²⁷ and Allah explained why he refused to prostrate saying, **"He was one of the Jinns..."** In fact, he is their father. He rebelled against Allah and disobeyed His command.⁵²⁸ When matters are crucial, every vessel leaks its contents and is betrayed by its true nature. Iblis used to do what the angels did and resembled them in their devotion and worship, so he was included when they were addressed, but he disobeyed and went against what he was told to do. So Allah points out here that his rebellion was due to the fact that he was a Jinn.⁵²⁹

It is clearly apparent from the authentic *hadeeths* that Satan was a *jinn* and not an angel. However, some verses of the Qur'aan, when taken by themselves, imply that he might have been an angel.

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

"Indeed I created you, shaped you and told the angels, 'Prostrate yourselves to Adam', and they prostrated themselves, except Iblees, he refused to be of those who prostrated themselves." (Soorah al-A'raaf, 7: 11)

The above verse indicates that Iblees was among the angels. It also seemed to imply that he was an angel, otherwise the command to prostrate would not have applied to him and he would not have been wrong in disobeying it.⁵³⁰ There are some who support the view that Satan is an angel. Al-Qurtubee said:

⁵²⁵ Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem, pp. 89-90.

⁵²⁶ Iblees is derived from *ablasa*, which means "he despaired or gave up hope of the mercy of Allah." However, some Arab philologists consider it a foreign word (Arabic-English Lexicon, vol. 1, p. 248) and orientalists consider it a corruption of the Greek *diabolos* (slanderer or accuser) (Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, p. 145 and The New Encyclopedia Britannica, vol. 6, p. 216).

⁵²⁷ The word "Shaytaan" (pl. *shayaateen*) is of the measure *fay'aal*, from the root verb *shatana*, signifying "he was or became distant or remote from the truth and the mercy of Allah." This term is equivalent in meaning to the words "devil" or "demon" when used indefinitely or in the plural, but with the definite article "al," it specifically refers to the Devil, i.e., Satan. (Arabic-English Lexicon, vol. 2, p. 1552.)

⁵²⁸ Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem, pp. 90-91.

⁵²⁹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p.

⁵³⁰ This opinion has been attributed to Ibn 'Abbaas, Ibn Mas'ood and other companions of the Prophet (r) in a number of narrations describing Iblees' life among the angels prior to his disobedience to Allah. For example, they are quoted as saying, "When Allah finished creating what He wished and rose above the throne, He appointed Iblees over the angels of the lowest heaven. He was from a tribe of angels called 'Jinn', because they were the guardians of Jannah (Paradise)." (Al-Bidaayah wa an-Nihaayah, vol. 1, p. 55 and Ahkaam al-Jaann, pp. 201-202.)

It is the opinion of the majority of scholars, like Ibn ‘Abbaas (d. 688 CE) and Ibn Mas‘ood (d. 654 CE) [from among the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ)]; Ibn Jurayj,⁵³¹ Sa‘eed ibn al-Musayyib,⁵³² Qataadah⁵³³ and others. It was the choice of Aboo al-Hasan al-Ash‘aree,⁵³⁴ Ibn Qudaamah⁵³⁵ and the leading scholars of the Maalikee school. At-Tabaree⁵³⁶ favored it [over the opposing view], and al-Baghawee⁵³⁷ said that it was the position of most exegetes. It is also the obvious meaning of the verse:

فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ اسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

“So the angels prostrated all together, except Iblees, who was haughty and became one of the disbelievers.”(Soorah *Saad*, 38: 73-74)⁵³⁸

However, when Iblees was asked why he did not prostrate, he replied that he was better than Adam:

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ إِلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ

“[Allah] said, ‘What prevented you from bowing down when I commanded you?’ He replied, ‘I am better than he. You created me from fire and created him from clay.’ ” (Soorah *al-A‘raaf*, 7: 12)

⁵³¹ ‘Abdul-Maalik ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azeez ibn Jurayj (699-767 CE), a Makkan jurist, was the leading scholar of the Hijaaz in his time and the first to write Islamic works in Makkah. Although born in Makkah, he was a freed slave of Byzantine origin. (*Al-A‘laam*, vol. 4, p. 160.)

⁵³² Sa‘eed ibn al-Musayyab (634-713 CE), the leading *taabi‘ee*, was among the seven leading jurists of Madeenah. He was a scholar in *hadeeth* and jurisprudence and was a noted ascetic. He was also the leading narrator of Caliph ‘Umar’s rulings. (*Al-A‘laam*, vol. 3, p. 102.)

⁵³³ Qataadah ibn Di‘aamah (680-736 CE), blind from birth, was the leading *hadeeth* scholar of his time in Bagrah. He was also a highly respected Qur’anic exegete and Arab philologist. He died in Waasit of the plague. (*Al-A‘laam*, vol. 5, p. 189.)

⁵³⁴ Aboo al-Hasan ‘Alee ibn Ismaa‘eel al-Ash‘aree (874-935 CE) was a famous theologian, born in Bagrah. Until his 40th year, he was a zealous pupil of the Mu‘tazilee theologian, al-Jubbaa‘ee; however, his study of *hadeeth* elucidated for him the error of that school of thought. He henceforth championed the orthodox views against the Mu‘tazilees and composed a large number of works refuting their views. The number of his books amounted to around 300. The most significant of his published works are *al-Ibaanah fee Usool ad-Diyaanah* and *Maqaalaat al-Islaamiyyeen*, a catalogue of heretical movements, the first work of its kind in Islamic literature. (*Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, pp. 46-47.)

⁵³⁵ ‘Abdullaah ibn Muhammad ibn Qudaamah (1146-1223 CE), born in Palestine, became one of the leading jurists among the scholars of the Hanbalee school of jurisprudence. His most noted works are *al-Mughnee* in jurisprudence, *Rawdah an-Naathir* in the science of jurisprudence. (*Al-A‘laam*, vol. 4, p. 66.)

⁵³⁶ Aboo Ja‘far Muhammad ibn Jareer at-Tabaree (839-923 CE), the Arab historian and exegete, was born in Amul in the province of Tabaristan. He traveled extensively to Baghdaad, Bagrah, Koofah, Syria and Egypt in search of knowledge in his early years; later he spent his time mainly teaching and writing. His great commentary on the Qur’aan, *Jaami‘ al-Bayaan fee Tafseer al-Qur’aan*, is the earliest extant work of its kind. It became a standard work upon which later commentaries drew. His other major work was the 12 volume history of the world, *Taareekh al-Umam wa al-Mulook*. (*Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, pp. 556-557.)

⁵³⁷ Al-Husayn ibn Mas‘ood al-Farraa’ al-Baghawee (1044-1117 CE), from a town in Khuraasaan between Heraat and Marw called Baghaa, became a leading scholar in jurisprudence, *hadeeth* science and *tafseer*. His best known published works are *Sharh as-Sunnah*, a 14 volume collection of the Sunnah, and *Anwaar at-Tanzeel wa Asraar at-Ta‘weel*, a 4 volume exegesis of the Qur’aan. (*Al-A‘laam*, vol. 2, p. 259.)

⁵³⁸ *Al-Jaami‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan*, vol. 1, p. 294.

The reason which he gave for his superiority was that he was created from fire. Since the angels were created from light, as was previously narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ), and the *jinn* from fire, this justification of superiority on the part of Satan implies that he was a *jinn* and not an angel. Ibn Katheer said, “When Almighty Allah commanded the angels to prostrate to Aadam, Iblees was included in the address, even though he was not from the same origin as them, because he resembled them and had become characterized by their deeds. Consequently, he was included in the address to them and cursed for disobeying the command.”⁵³⁹ Az-Zamakhsharee⁵⁴⁰ said, “The command included him, even though it was specifically for the angels, because Iblees was in their company and he used to worship Allah, Almighty, the way they worshipped Him. So when they were commanded to prostrate to Aadam and humble themselves in his honor, it was even more appropriate that the *jinn* [i.e., Iblees], who was with them, humble himself.”⁵⁴¹

Furthermore, Qur’anic texts quoted in the preceding section have shown that the angels do not have free will but do what ever Allah commands them. There is another verse from the Qur’aan which addresses the issue in no uncertain terms: **“And when We told the angels, ‘Prostrate to Aadam,’ they prostrated, except Iblees. He was one of the *jinn*, so he broke his Lord’s command. Will you then take him and his children as protectors besides Me? And they are enemies to you!...”** (18: 50)

Ash-Shanqeetee⁵⁴² said that the apparent [meaning of this verse] shows that the reason for his disobedience to his Lord’s command was his being a *jinn*; for it is an established principle in the basic rules of Qur’anic exegesis with regard to the treatment of a clear text, implications of a text and recommendations of a text, that *fa* [then, therefore, for, because, so that], is among the conjunctions which indicate ‘cause’...For example, in Almighty Allah’s statement:

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا

‘The thief male or female, [fa] cut off his or her hand.’ [Qur’aan, 5:38] That is, their hands are to be cut off because of their act of theft.⁵⁴³ His disobedience was because of his being a *jinn*: **‘He was one of the *jinn*, so [fa] he broke his Lord’s command.’** It is this characteristic which distinguishes him from the angels. They all obeyed the command, and he did not.⁵⁴⁴

In Ibn Hajar al-Haythamee’s⁵⁴⁵ opinion it was obvious that the evidence [for Iblees being a *jinn*] found in the phrase, **‘He was one of the *jinn*,’** is stronger than the evidence for him being an

⁵³⁹ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-‘Atheem*, vol. 1, p. 117.

⁵⁴⁰ Mahmood ibn ‘Umar ibn Muhammad az-Zamakhsharee (1075-1144 CE), one of the greatest scholars of the Arabic language and a major proponent of Mu’tazilee doctrine, was born in Khwaarizm in Central Asia. He later traveled to Khurasaan, Baghdaad and Makkah, where he lived for some time. His book *al-Mufasssal*, on Arabic grammar, generated numerous commentaries. He is most famous for his controversial *tafseer* of the Qur’aan, *al-Kashshaaf*, which generated numerous rebuttals of his Mu’tazilee positions. (*Siyar A ‘laam an-Nubalaa’*, vol. 20, pp. 151-6)

⁵⁴¹ *Al-Kashshaaf ‘an Haqaa’iq at-Tanzeel*, vol. 2, p. 555.

⁵⁴² Muhammad al-Ameen ibn Muhammad al-Jakanee ash-Shanqeetee (d.1974 CE), a famous Arabic scholar and Maalikee jurist in his homeland, Mauritania, taught *tafseer* in the Prophet’s Mosque in Madeenah and the science of jurisprudence in Riyaadh and Madeenah. His books are used in the colleges of *sharee’ah*. The most notable of his writings is *Adwaa’ al-Bayaan li Tafseer al-Qur’aan bi al-Qur’aan*, an exegesis of the Qur’aan. (*Adwaa’ al-Bayaan*, vol. 10, appendix, pp. 18-55.)

⁵⁴³ *Adwaa’ al-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 119.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁵ Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Hajar al-Haythamee (1504-1567 CE) was a leading jurist from Egypt who studied at al-Azhar University and died in Makkah. He wrote a number of books in a variety of fields, among them are *as-Sawaa’iq al-Muhriqah* and *al-Fataawaa al-Hadeethiyyah*. (*Al-A ‘laam*, vol. 1, p. 234.)

angel found in the exception [they (i.e., the angels) prostrated except Iblees], because exceptions [in Arabic] often come in the broken [*munqati*'] form,⁵⁴⁶ as in the Almighty's statement:

قَالَ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ * أَتُمْ وَعِبَادُكُمْ الْأَقْدَمُونَ * فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِّي إِلَّا رَبَّ
الْعَالَمِينَ * الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ

'He [i.e., Abraham] said, "Can you see whom you have been worshipping, you and your forefathers? For they are [all] enemies to me, except the Lord of all the worlds, who created me and guides me.'" (Soorah ash-Shu'araa, 26:75-78)

'The Lord of the worlds' is not from the preceding [group from which He is excepted].⁵⁴⁷

It has also been pointed out by some commentators that the verse given previously (18: 50) refers to Satan's "children," yet the angels, being without sex, do not procreate.⁵⁴⁸

Concerning the widespread opinion among exegetes that Iblees was an angel, ash-Shanqeetee said, "What has been attributed by the exegetes to many of the early scholars, like Ibn 'Abbaas and others, to the effect that he [i.e., Iblees] was from the most noble group of angels who were guardians of Paradise, that he was in charge of the lowest heaven, and that his name was *Azaazeel*,⁵⁴⁹ are all from Jewish sources [*israa'eeliyyaat*], which are unreliable."⁵⁵⁰ Thus, the more correct opinion is that Iblees was present among the angels, but not one of them. How he got to be among them has been explained in a number of questionable narrations attributed to the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) and their students.⁵⁵¹

Whether or not Satan was the forefather of all of the *jinn*, as Aadam was the forefather of man, has also been a subject of debate among some Muslim scholars. Some held that he was just one among the *jinn* and not their forefather. Furthermore, similar to Cain being the first wretched human, they considered him the first wretched *jinnee* due to his disobedience of Allah's command to bow to Aadam.⁵⁵² The following verse has been cited as evidence to support this view:

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ

"And when I told the angels, 'Prostrate to Aadam,' they prostrated, except Iblees.

He was one of the *jinn*..." (18: 50)

The apparent meaning of this verse implies that Satan was just one among them and not the first among them.⁵⁵³

The other view was expressed by al-Hasan al-Basree in his interpretation of the phrase from the above mentioned verse, "He was one of the *jinn*." He stated, "Iblees was not one of the angels for even the blinking of an eye. He was the origin of the *jinn* as Aadam was the origin of mankind."⁵⁵⁴ This was also the view favored by Ibn Taymeeyah.⁵⁵⁵ However, regarding the issue of

⁵⁴⁶ A type of exception in which the thing excepted is disunited in kind from that from which the exception is made. (Arabic-English Lexicon, vol. 2, p. 2990.) See also W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, vol. 2, p. 336.

⁵⁴⁷ *Al-Fataawaa al-Hadeethiyyah*, p. 125. See also *Rooḥ al-Ma'aanee*, vol. 1, p.210.

⁵⁴⁸ *Aḥkaam al-Jaann*, pp. 199-202.

⁵⁴⁹ See also *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, pp. 143-144.

⁵⁵⁰ *Adwaa' al-Bayaan*, vol. 4, pp. 120-121.

⁵⁵¹ *Al-Bidaayah wa an-Nihaayah*, vol. 1, p. 56.

⁵⁵² *Al-Eemaan bi al-Malaa'ikah*, p. 109.

⁵⁵³ *'Aalam al-Jinn wa ash-Shayaateen*, p. 18.

⁵⁵⁴ *Jaami' al-Bayaan*, vol. 1, p. 226.

⁵⁵⁵ See *Majmoo' al-Fataawaa*, vol. 4, p. 235.

whether or not Satan was indeed the forefather of the *jinn*, there is not any conclusive evidence from either the Qur'aan or the Sunnah to favor one opinion over the other.⁵⁵⁶

JINN

Although modern Muslims tend to brush off information about the world of the Jinn due to the implausibility of popular myths and superstitions regarding them, Allah spoke about them in the seventy-second chapter of the Qur'aan known as *Soorah al-Jinn*, as well as in a number of other chapters.

The term *jinn* comes from the verb جَنَّ *janna* which means “to cover, hide or conceal”. They represent another creation of Allah which co-exists with humans on the earth. Allah created the *jinn* before He created the human race from a different set of elements than those used to create the first human. Allah said,

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِنْ حَمَإٍ مَسْنُونٍ * وَالْجَانَّ خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ مِنْ نَارِ السَّمُومِ

“Verily, I created man from dried clay, from black putrid mud. And I created the *jinn* before that from a fiery wind.” *Soorah al-Hijr*, (15):26-7.

They were named *Jinn* because they are hidden from the eyes of mankind.

The *Jinn* may first be divided into three broad categories in relation to their modes of existence. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

((الْجِنَّ ثَلَاثَةٌ أَصْنَافٍ : صِنْفٌ لَهُمْ أَجْنَحَةٌ يَطِيرُونَ فِي الْهَوَاءِ وَ صِنْفٌ حَيَاتٌ وَ كِلَابٌ وَ صِنْفٌ يَحُلُّونَ وَ يَظْعُنُونَ .))

“There are three types of Jinn: One type which flies in the air all the time, another type which exists as snakes and dogs, and an earthbound type which resides in one place or wanders about.”⁵⁵⁷

The *Jinn* may be further divided into two categories in relationship to their faith: Muslims (believers) and *Kaafirs* (disbelievers).⁵⁵⁸ The disbelievers among the *Jinn* are referred to by various names in both Arabic and English: ‘*Ifreet*, *Shaytaan*, *Qareen*, demons, devils, spirits, ghosts, etc. They try to misguide man in various ways. Whoever listens to them and becomes a worker for them is referred to as a human devil. Allah said: “Likewise, we have made for every Prophet an enemy, devils from among mankind and the *Jinn*.”⁵⁵⁹

Every human has an individual *Jinn* accompanying him referred to as a *Qareen* (i.e. companion). This is a part of man’s test in this life. The *Jinn* encourage his lower desires and constantly try to divert him from righteousness. The Prophet (ﷺ) referred to this relationship as follows,

((مَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا وَقَدْ وَكَّلَ بِهِ قَرِينُهُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ .)) قَالُوا : وَإِيَّاكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ؟ قَالَ ((وَإِيَّايَ إِلَّا أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَانَنِي عَلَيْهِ ، فَأَسْلَمَ ، فَلَا يَأْمُرُنِي إِلَّا بِخَيْرٍ .))

⁵⁵⁶ *The Exorcist Tradition in Islaam*, pp. 54-9.

⁵⁵⁷ Collected by at-Tabaree and al-Haakim and authenticated by al-Albaanee in his edition of *Mishkaah al-Masaabeeh*, vol. 2, p. 1206, no. 4148.

⁵⁵⁸ *Soorah al-Jinn*, 72:1-4 and 14-5.

⁵⁵⁹ *Soorah al-An’aam*, 6:112.

“Everyone of you has been assigned a companion from the Jinn.” The companions asked, “Even you, O Messenger of Allah?” And the Prophet replied, “Even me, except that Allah has helped me against him and he has submitted. Now he only tells me to do good.”⁵⁶⁰

Prophet Sulaymaan (Solomon) was given miraculous control over the Jinn, as a sign of his prophethood.⁵⁶¹ But this power was not given to anyone else. No one else is allowed to control the Jinn and no one can. Aboo Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

((إِنَّ عِفْرِيَّتًا مِنَ الْجِنِّ تَفَلَّتْ عَلَيَّ الْبَارِحَةَ أَوْ كَلِمَةً نَحْوَهَا لَيَقْطَعَنَّ عَلَيَّ الصَّلَاةَ فَأَمْكَنِي اللَّهُ مِنْهُ فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أُرْبِطَهُ إِلَى سَارِيَةٍ مِنْ سَوَارِي الْمَسْجِدِ حَتَّى تُصْبِحُوا وَتَنْظُرُوا إِلَيْهِ كُلُّكُمْ فَذَكَرْتُ قَوْلَ أَخِي سُلَيْمَانَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مُلْكًا لَا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ بَعْدِي))

“Verily an ‘Ifreet⁵⁶² from among the Jinn spat on me last night trying to break my Salaah. However Allah let me overpower him and I wanted to tie him to one of the columns in the masjid so that you all could see him in the morning. Then, I remembered my brother Sulaymaan’s prayer: ‘Oh my Lord, forgive me and bestow on me a kingdom not allowed to anyone after me.’^{563,564}

Fortunetelling

Human beings cannot gain control over the Jinn as this was a special miracle given only to Prophet Sulaymaan. In fact, contact with the Jinn in circumstances other than possession, or accident is most often made by the performance of sacrilegious acts despised and forbidden in the religion.⁵⁶⁵ The evil Jinn summoned in this fashion may aid their partners in sin and disbelief in God. Their goal is to draw as many others as they can into the gravest of sins, the worship of others besides or along with God. Once contact and contract with the Jinn are made by fortunetellers, the Jinn may inform them of certain events in the future. The Prophet (ﷺ) described how the Jinn gather information about the future. He related that the Jinn were able to travel to the lower reaches of the heavens and listen in on some of the information about the future, which the angels pass among themselves. They would then return to the earth and feed the information to their contacts.⁵⁶⁶ This used to happen a lot prior to the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ) and fortune-tellers were very accurate in their information. They were able to gain positions in the royal courts and enjoyed much popularity and were even worshipped in some religions of the world.

After the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) began his mission the situation changed. Allah had the angels guard the lower reaches of the heavens carefully, and most of the Jinn were chased away with meteors and shooting stars.⁵⁶⁷ The Prophet’s companion, Ibn ‘Abbaas, said, “When the Prophet (ﷺ) and a group of his companions set out for the UkaadH market, the devils were blocked from hearing information in the heavens. Meteors were let loose on them, so they returned to their people. When their people asked what happened, they told them. Some suggested that something

⁵⁶⁰ Sahih Muslim, vol.4, p.1472, no.6757.

⁵⁶¹ Soorah an-Naml, 27:17.

⁵⁶² A strong or powerful evil Jinn (E.W.Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, (Cambridge, England: Islamic Texts Society, 1984), vol.2, p.2089.

⁵⁶³ Soorah Saad 38:35.

⁵⁶⁴ Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol.1, p.268, no.75 and Sahih Muslim, vol.1, p.273, no.1104.

⁵⁶⁵ Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, Ibn Taymeeyah’s Essay on the Jinn, (Riyadh: Tawheed Publications, 1989), p.21.

⁵⁶⁶ Sahih Muslim, vol.4, p.1210, no.5538.

⁵⁶⁷ Soorahs al-Jinn 72:8-9 and al-Hijr 15:17-18.

must have happened, so they spread out over the earth seeking the cause. Some of them came across the Prophet and his companions while they were in prayer and they heard the Qur'aan. They said to themselves that this must have been what blocked them from listening. When they returned to their people they told them,

فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْءَانًا عَجَبًا ﴿٥٦٨﴾ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ ۖ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا

‘Verily we have heard a marvellous Qur’aan. It guides unto righteousness so we believed in it. And we will never make partners with our Lord.’ Soorah al-Jinn, 72:1-2⁵⁶⁸ Thus, the Jinn could no longer gather information about the future as easily as they could before the Prophet’s (ﷺ) mission. Because of that, they now mix their information with many lies. The Prophet (ﷺ) was quoted by Aboo Hurayrah as saying:

((فَيَسْمَعُ الْكَلِمَةَ فَيُلْقِيهَا إِلَى مَنْ تَحْتَهُ ثُمَّ يُلْقِيهَا الْآخَرُ إِلَى مَنْ تَحْتَهُ حَتَّى يُلْقِيَهَا عَلَى لِسَانِ السَّاحِرِ أَوْ الْكَاهِنِ فَرُبَّمَا أَدْرَكَ الشَّهَابُ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُلْقِيَهَا وَرُبَّمَا أَلْقَاهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يُدْرِكَهُ فَيَكْذِبُ مَعَهَا مِائَةً كَذِبَةٍ فَيُقَالُ أَلَيْسَ قَدْ قَالَ لَنَا يَوْمَ كَذَا وَكَذَا كَذَا وَكَذَا فَيُصَدَّقُ بِتِلْكَ الْكَلِمَةِ الَّتِي سَمِعَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ))

“They (the Jinn) overhear a word and pass it on to those below and those below to those below until it reaches the lips of a magician or fortuneteller. Sometimes a meteor will strike them before they can pass it on. If they pass it on before being struck, they add to it a hundred lies. Then it will be said: He told us one day such and such! And will be believed because of the one word which he heard from the heavens.”⁵⁶⁹

The Jinns are also able to inform their human contact of the relative future. For example, when someone comes to a fortuneteller, the fortuneteller’s Jinn gets information from the man’s Qareen⁵⁷⁰ of what plans he had made prior to his coming. So the fortuneteller is able to tell him that he will do this or that, or go here or there. By this method, the real fortuneteller is also able to learn about a stranger’s past in vivid detail. He is able to tell a total stranger of his parents’ names, where he was born, the acts of his childhood, etc. The ability to vividly describe the past is one of the marks of a true fortuneteller who has made contact with the Jinn. Because the Jinn are able to traverse huge distances instantaneously, they are also able to gather huge stores of information about hidden things, lost articles and unobserved events. Proof of this ability can be found in the Qur’aan, in the story about Prophet Sulaymaan and Bilqees, the Queen of Sheba. When Queen Bilqees came to see him, he asked the Jinn to bring her throne from her land.

قَالَ عِفْرِيتٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِنْ مَّقَامِكَ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ

“An ‘Ifreet from among the Jinns said, I will bring it for you before you can get up from your place. Verily, I am strong and trustworthy for the assignment.” Soorah an-Naml 27:39

Because of the sacrilege and heresy involved in fortunetelling, Islaam has taken a very strong stance towards it. Islaam opposes any form of association with those who practice fortunetelling, except to advise them to give up their forbidden practices. The Prophet (ﷺ) laid

⁵⁶⁸ Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol.6, pp.415-16, no.443, Sahih Muslim, vol.1, pp.243-44, no.908, at-Tirmidhee and Ahmad.

⁵⁶⁹ Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol.8, p.150, no.2320 and at-Tirmidhee.

⁵⁷⁰ The Jinn assigned to every human being.

down principles which clearly forbade any form of visitation of fortunetellers. Safeeyah reported from Hafṣah (wife of the Prophet ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

((مَنْ أَتَى عَرَّافًا فَسَأَلَهُ عَنْ شَيْءٍ لَمْ تُقْبَلْ لَهُ صَلَاةٌ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً))

“The *Salaah* of whoever approaches a fortuneteller and asks him about anything will not be accepted for 40 days and nights.”⁵⁷¹ The punishment in this tradition is for simply approaching a fortuneteller and asking him questions out of curiosity. This prohibition is further supported by Mu’aawiyah ibn al-Hakam as-Salamee’s report in which he said,

((إِنَّ مِنَّا رَجُلًا يَأْتُونَ الْكُفَّانَ قَالَ فَلَا تَأْتِهِمْ))

“O Messenger of Allah, verily there are some people among us who visit oracles.” The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, “Do not go to them.”⁵⁷²

Such a severe punishment has been assigned for only visitation because it is the first step to belief in fortunetelling. If one went there doubtful about its reality, and some of the fortuneteller’s predictions come true, one will surely become a true devotee of the fortuneteller and an ardent believer in fortunetelling.

The individual who approaches a fortuneteller is still obliged to make his compulsory prayers throughout the 40 day period, even though he gets no reward from his prayers. If he abandons the prayer all together, he has committed an even greater sin. Whenever obligatory prayer is performed, it produces two results under normal circumstances: (1) It removes the obligation of that prayer from the individual, and (2) It earns him a reward. Consequently, though the reward is lost for 40 days, the obligation still remains.

The Islamic ruling with regard to anyone who visits a fortuneteller believing that he knows the unseen and the future is that of *Kufr* (disbelief). The Prophet’s companions, Aboo Hurayrah and al-Hasan both reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said,

((مَنْ أَتَى كَاهِنًا أَوْ عَرَّافًا فَصَدَّقَهُ بِمَا يَقُولُ فَقَدْ كَفَرَ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ))

“Whosoever approaches a fortuneteller and believes what he says, has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad.”⁵⁷³

Belief in fortunetellers assigns to creation some of Allah’s attributes with regard to knowledge of the unseen and the future. Consequently, it destroys faith in the Unique Oneness of Allah (*tawḥeed*) and represents a form of *Shirk* (idolatry). The ruling of *Kufr* includes, by analogy (*Qiyaas*), those who read the books and writings of fortunetellers, listen to them on the radio, watch them on the T.V., or find them in computer programs, as these are the most common means used by 20th century fortunetellers to spread their predictions. Therefore, all the various methods used around the world by oracles, fortune-tellers, and the likes, are forbidden to Muslims. Palm-reading, I-Ching, fortune cookies, tea leaves as well as Zodiacal signs and Bio-rhythm computer programs, all claim to inform those who believe in them about their future. However, Allah has stated in no uncertain terms that He alone knows the future:

⁵⁷¹ *Sahih Muslim*, vol.4, p.1211, no.5540.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, p.1209, no.5532.

⁵⁷³ Collected by Ahmad. Abu Daawood (*Sunan Abu Dawud* (English Trans.), vol.3, p.1095, no.3895) and al-Bayhaquee.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ ۥ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ وَمَا تَدْرِي
نَفْسٌ مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ
خَبِيرٌ

“Verily the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah alone. It is He who sends down the rain and knows the contents of the wombs. No one knows what he will earn tomorrow nor in which land he will die, but Allah is all-knowing and aware.”

Soorah Luqmaan, 31:34

Therefore, Muslims must take utmost care in dealing with books, magazines, newspapers as well as individuals who, in one way or another, claim knowledge of the future or the unseen. For example, when a Muslim weather-man predicts rain, snow, or other climatic conditions for tomorrow he should add the phrase, “*In shaa Allah* (If Allah to wishes).” Likewise, when the Muslim doctor informs her patient that she will deliver a child in 9 months or on such and such a day, she should take care to add the phrase *In shaa Allah*, as such statements are only estimations based on statistical information.

Magic

The other major area in which the *jinn* interfere with the human world is the realm of magic. Although it has become popular in modern times to deny that magic has any reality to it all, magical shows continue to intrigue and entertain large audiences in the West. Popular Eastern stories about the effects of ‘black’ magic are explained away as the result of psychological disorders like hysteria, etc., and it is often pointed out that magic only affects those who believe in it.⁵⁷⁴ Magical feats are all described as hoaxes based on a series of illusions and tricks.

In spite of the fact that Islaam rejects the effects of charms and amulets with regards to the prevention of misfortune and the attraction of good fortune, it does recognize that some aspects of magic are real. It is true that much of the magic around today is a product of trickery involving gadgets cleverly designed to deceive audiences. But, just as in the case of fortunetelling, there exist around the world some people who practice real magic resulting from their contact with the *Jinns*. Allah, in the Qur’aan explains the fundamental Islamic view of magic in the following verse:

وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُوا الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَىٰ مُلْكٍ سُلَيْمَٰنَ ۖ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمَٰنُ وَلَٰكِنَّ
الشَّيَاطِينَ كَفَرُوا يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ

“They (Jews) follow what the devils related concerning Solomon’s kingdom, but it was not Solomon who disbelieved, it was the devils who disbelieved by teaching the people magic.” Soorah al-Baqarah, 2:102

The Jews used to justify their practice of magic within an esoteric mystical system called the *Cabala* by claiming that they had learned it from Prophet Sulaymaan himself. The Jews who learned these arts knew well that they were cursed because it was forbidden in their own scriptures. The following verses can still be found in the Torah:

“When you come into the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an auger, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For

⁵⁷⁴ The *Ash‘arite* scholar, Fakhrud-Deen ar-Raazee (d.1210CE) proposed this idea in his commentary on verse 102 of Soorah al-Baqarah and the noted historian, Ibn Khaldoon further developed it.

whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord; and because of these abominable practices the Lord your God is driving them out before you.”⁵⁷⁵

There are also authentic traditions which mentions that on one occasion the Prophet (ﷺ) himself suffered from the effects of magic. The Prophet’s companion, Zayd ibn Arqaam reported that a Jew by the name of Labeed ibn A’sam, cast a magical spell on the Prophet (ﷺ) and when he began to suffer from it. Jibreel came to him and revealed the *Mu’awwathataan* (Soorahs al-Falaq and an-Naas) then said to him, “Surely it was a Jew who cast this spell on you and the magical charm is in a certain well.” The Prophet (ﷺ) sent ‘Alee ibn Abee Taalib to go and fetch the charm. When he returned with it, the Prophet (ﷺ) told him to unite the knots in it, one by one, and recite a verse from the *Soorahs* with each. When he did so, the Prophet (ﷺ) got up as if he had been released from being tied up.⁵⁷⁶

Every nation on Earth has records of people who have practiced some form of magic. Although some of it may have been false, it is highly unlikely that the whole of mankind could have agreed to make up similar stories about magical and supernatural events. Anyone who seriously contemplates the widespread presence of recorded instances of supernatural phenomena will conclude that there must be some common thread of reality to them. “Haunted” houses, seances, ouija boards, voodoo, demonic-possession speaking in tongues, levitation, etc., all represent puzzles to those unfamiliar with the world of the *Jinn*. All of these occurrences have their own manifestations in various parts of the world. Even the Muslim world is plagued with it, especially, among the shaikhs (masters) of various extremist *Sufi* (mystical) orders. Many of them appear to levitate, travel huge distance in split instants of time, produce food or money from no where, etc. Their ignorant followers believe these feats of magic to be divine miracles and thus, willingly give their wealth and lives in service to their shaikhs. But behind all of these phenomena lie the hidden and sinister world of the *Jinn*.

Although the *Jinn* are essentially invisible except for those in the snake and dog form, some of them are able to take any form they wish including human form. For example, Aboo Hurayrah said, “Allah’s messenger made me responsible to protect the *Zakaah* (charity) of *Ramadaan*. While I was doing so, someone came and began to dig around in the food so I caught a hold of him. I said, ‘By Allah I am going to take you to Allah’s messenger!’ The man implored, ‘Verily I am poor and I have dependents. I am in great need.’ So I let him go. The next morning, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘Oh Abu Hurayrah, what did your captive do last night?’ I said, ‘He complained of being in great need and of having a family so I let him go.’ The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, ‘Surely he lied to you and he will return.’ Since I knew that he was going to return, I laid in wait for him. When he returned and began to dig in the food, I grabbed him and said, ‘I’m definitely going to take you to Allah’s messenger.’ He pleaded, ‘Let me go! Verily I’m poor and I do have a family. I won’t return.’ So I had mercy on him and let him go. The next morning Allah’s messenger said, ‘Oh Abu Hurayrah, what did your captive do last night?’ I said that he complained of being in great need and of having a family, so I let him go. The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, ‘Surely he lied to you and he will return.’ So I waited for him and grabbed him when he began to scatter the food around. I said, ‘By Allah, I will take you to Allah’s messenger. This is the third time, and you promised you would not return. Yet you came back anyway!’ He said, ‘Let me give you some words by which Allah will benefit you.’ I said, “What are they?” He replied, ‘Whenever you go to bed recite *Aayatul-Kurse*⁵⁷⁷ from beginning to end. If you do so, a guardian from Allah will always be with you and Satan will not come near you until the morning.’ Then I let him go. The next morning Allah’s messenger said, ‘What did your captive do last night?’ I said that he claimed that he would teach me some words by

⁵⁷⁵ Deuteronomy 18:9-12.

⁵⁷⁶ Collected by ‘Abd ibn Humayd and al-Bayhaqee and much of it can also be found in *Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Arabic-English), vol. 7, pp. 443-4, no. 660 and *Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.), vol.3, pp.1192-3, no.5428.

⁵⁷⁷ Verse number 255 of Soorah al-Baqarah (2).

which Allah would benefit me so I let him go. When the Prophet (ﷺ) asked what they were, I told him that they were saying *Aayatul-Kurse* before going to bed. I also told him that he said that a guardian from Allah would remain with me and Satan would not come near me until I awoke in the morning. The prophet (ﷺ) said, 'Surely he has told the truth although he is a compulsive liar. Oh, Abu Hurayrah! Do you know who you have been speaking to these past three nights?' I replied, 'No'. And he said, 'That was a devil.'"⁵⁷⁸

Since both the practice and learning of magic is classified in Islaam as *Kufr* (disbelief), the *Sharee'ah* (law) has set aside a very stiff sentence for anyone caught practising it. The penalty for anyone caught practising it, who does not repent and give it up, is death. This law is based on the following *hadeeth* reported by Jundub ibn Ka'b: The companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

((حَدُّ السَّاحِرِ ضَرْبَةٌ بِالسَّيْفِ))

"The prescribed punishment for the magician is that he be executed by the sword."⁵⁷⁹ This law was applied vigorously by the Righteous caliphs who led the Muslim nation after the Prophet's (ﷺ) death. Bajaalah ibn 'Abdah reported that Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab sent a letter to the Muslim forces waging a campaign against Rome and Persia which commanded them to inform all the Zoroastrians married to their mothers, daughters and sisters to dissolve such marriages. They were also told to eat the food of Zoroastrians in order to include them in the category of "*Ahl-ul-Kitaab*."⁵⁸⁰ Finally, they were ordered to kill every fortuneteller and magician whom they found. Bajaalah said that on the basis of the order he personally executed three magicians.⁵⁸¹ This punishment is also recorded in the Torah to this day, clearly showing the Jews and Christians that magic is forbidden: "A man or a woman who is a medium or a wizard shall be put to death; they shall be stoned with stones, their blood shall be put upon them."⁵⁸²

The severity of the ruling on magicians is primarily to protect the weaker elements of society from falling into idolatry (*shirk*) by attributing to magicians divine qualities belonging only to Allah. In addition to the sacrilege committed by those who practise witchcraft in earnest, magicians often claim for themselves supernatural powers and divine attributes, in order to attract a following and earn undue fame.

Demonic Possession

Jinns are also able to travel over vast distances instantaneously and enter objects as well as human bodies prepared for their entry. Allah has seen fit to give them these extraordinary abilities, as He has given other creatures abilities beyond those of man. Yet, He has chosen man to be above all of creation. If these basic facts about the *Jinn*'s abilities are kept in mind, all of the supernatural and magical incidents which are not hoaxes can be easily explained. For example, in the cases of "haunted" houses, where lights go on and off, pictures fall from the walls, objects fly through the air, floors creak, etc., the *Jinns* are acting on material objects while remaining in their invisible form. This is also true in the case of seances where the spirits of dead people seemingly communicate with the living. People, who know the voices of their dead relatives, hear them speak to them of incidents from their lives. This feat is accomplished by the medium summoning the *Jinn* which was assigned to the dead person. It is this *Jinn* which imitates the dead person's voice and

⁵⁷⁸ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, (Arabic-English), vol. 9, pp. 491-2, no. 530.

⁵⁷⁹ Collected by at-Tirmidhee. This *Hadeeth*, though *Da'eef* (weak) in its chain of narration has been upgraded to the level of *Hasan*, (relatively authentic) due to supporting evidence. Three of the leading four legists (Ahmad, Abu Haneefah and Maalik) ruled according to it. While the fourth, ash-Shaafi'ee ruled that the magician should only be killed if his magic feats reached the level of *Kufr* (see *Tayseer al-'Azeed al-Hameed*, pp.390-91).

⁵⁸⁰ Those who follow a revealed scripture like the Jews and Christians. This portion of the narration was collected by al-Bukhaaree, at Tirmidhee and an Nasas'ee.

⁵⁸¹ Collected by Ahmad, Abu Daawood and al-Bayhaquee.

⁵⁸² Leviticus 20:27.

relates incidents from the person's past. Similarly in the case of the ouija board which appears to answer questions. The invisible prodding of the *Jinn* can easily cause amazing results if the proper atmosphere is set. In the case of those who appear to be able to levitate or raise objects without touching them, they are simply lifted up into the air by the invisible hand of the *Jinn*. Those able to travel vast distances and be in two places at almost the same time are transported by their invisible companions or the *Jinn* may even become visible in their form. Likewise, those like Sai Baba who are able to produce food or money from the air are aided by the invisible and fast moving *Jinn*.⁵⁸³ Even the most amazing cases of apparent reincarnation like that of a seven year old girl in India by the name of Shanti Devi who related instances from her previous life in vivid and accurate detail. She described her former home in the town of Muttra which was in a province far away from where she lived. When people went there to check, the local people confirmed that such a house had once stood where she described. They also confirmed some of the details of her former life.⁵⁸⁴ This information was put into her subconscious mind by the *Jinn*. The Prophet (ﷺ) confirmed this phenomenon when he said,

((الرُّؤْيَا ثَلَاثٌ : فَالرُّؤْيَا الصَّالِحَةُ بُشْرَى مِنَ اللَّهِ وَالرُّؤْيَا تَحْزِينٌ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَرُّؤْيَا مِمَّا يُحَدِّثُ بِهِ الْمَرْءُ نَفْسَهُ .))

“Verily the dreams which a man sees in his sleep are of three types: A dream from ar-Rahmaan (Allah), a sad dream from Satan and subconscious dreams.”⁵⁸⁵

The *Jinn* can also enter the human body as it enters the mind. Cases of possession are too numerous to count. It may be temporary as in the case of many Christian and pagan sects where people work themselves into a physical and spiritual frenzy, fall into a state of unconsciousness and begin to speak in foreign tongues. In that weakened state the *Jinn* may easily enter their bodies and cackle on their lips. This phenomenon has also been recorded by some *Sufi*⁵⁸⁶ orders during their *Thikr*⁵⁸⁷ sessions. Or, it may be a long term phenomenon wherein major personality changes take place. The possessed often act irrationally; exhibit superhuman strength or the *Jinn* may actually talk through them on a regular basis.

Exorcism⁵⁸⁸ became a widespread practice in Europe during the middle ages. The Christian practice of exorcism is based on numerous accounts of Jesus exorcising possessed people related in the Gospels. In one account Jesus and his companions came to Gerasenes and met a man possessed. When Jesus commanded the demons to leave him, they left him and entered a herd of swine which was feeding on a nearby hillside. The herd then rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.⁵⁸⁹ It has also become the topic of a number of films produced in the late seventies and eighties (e.g. “The Exorcist”, “Rosemary’s Baby”, etc.). The general attitude of the materialist West is the rejection of everything supernatural. Thus, to Westerners, exorcism has no rational basis and is looked at as a result of superstition. This attitude is a reaction to the wide scale witch hunts and burnings which took place in Europe during the Dark and Middle ages. However, in Islaam the practice of exorcism is recognized as a valid means of treating genuine cases of possession and other ailments resulting from it, if the method conforms to the Qur’aan and the *Sunnah*.

There are essentially three methods of removing the *Jinn* from a possessed person:

⁵⁸³ See *Ibn Taymeeyah’s Essay on the Jinn*, pp.47-59, for numerous accounts of such incidences.

⁵⁸⁴ Colin Wilson, *The Occult*, (New York: Random House, 1971), pp.514-15.

⁵⁸⁵ Reported by Aboo Hurayrah and collected in *Sunan Abu Dawud*, (English Trans.), vol.3, p.1395, no.5001.

⁵⁸⁶ Mysticism which developed among Muslim peoples.

⁵⁸⁷ God’s names are repeated continuously and often musically while swaying the body or even dancing.

⁵⁸⁸ The expulsion of evil spirits or demons from possessed people or places.

⁵⁸⁹ See Matthew 8:28-34, Mark 5:1-20 and Luke 8:26-39.

1. The possessing *Jinn* may be removed by summoning another more powerful *Jinn*. This method is forbidden in Islaam because calling the *Jinn* often involves acts of sacrilege. The tenets of Islaam are likely to be desecrated for the *Jinn* to be beckoned. This is the case where a magician or witch breaks a spell cast by another.

2. The *Jinn* may be removed by confirming the symbols of idolatry in its presence. When the *Jinn* is satisfied by the idolatrous acts of the exorcist it may also leave. In doing so, he assures the exorcist that his method and beliefs are correct. This is the case of Christian priests who exorcise the *Jinn* by calling on Jesus and by using the cross, as well as that of pagan high priests who exorcise in the name of their false deities.

3. The *Jinn* may also be expelled by using Qur'anic recitation and prayers seeking refuge in Allah. These divine words and formulas help to change the atmosphere around the possessed. However, these practises by themselves are useless unless the one doing them has firm *Eemaan* (faith) and a good contact with Allah based on righteous deeds.

Although some Muslims today under Western secular influence openly deny possession and others even go so far as to deny the existence of the *Jinn*, both the Qur'aan and the *Sunnah* say otherwise. There are a number of authentic traditions in which the Prophet (ﷺ) is recorded as having exorcised people. There are, as well, traditions of his companions doing the same with his approval. Ya'laa ibn Marrah said,

((لَقَدْ خَرَجْتُ مَعَهُ فِي سَفَرٍ حَتَّى إِذَا كُنَّا بِبَعْضِ الطَّرِيقِ مَرَرْنَا بِامْرَأَةٍ جَالِسَةٍ مَعَهَا صَبِيٌّ لَهَا فَقَالَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَذَا صَبِيٌّ أَصَابَهُ بَلَاءٌ وَأَصَابَنَا مِنْهُ بَلَاءٌ يُؤْخَذُ فِي الْيَوْمِ مَا أَدْرِي كَمْ مَرَّةً قَالَ نَاوِلِينِيهِ فَرَفَعْتُهُ إِلَيْهِ فَجَعَلْتُهُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ وَاسِطَةِ الرَّحْلِ ثُمَّ فَعَرَفَاهُ فَنفَثَ فِيهِ ثَلَاثًا وَقَالَ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ أَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ أَحْسَأُ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ نَاوَلَهَا إِيَّاهُ فَقَالَ الْقَيْنَا فِي الرَّجْعَةِ فِي هَذَا الْمَكَانِ فَأَخْبَرِينَا مَا فَعَلَ قَالَ فَذَهَبْنَا وَرَجَعْنَا فَوَجَدْنَاهَا فِي ذَلِكَ الْمَكَانِ مَعَهَا شِيَاءٌ ثَلَاثٌ فَقَالَ مَا فَعَلَ صَبِيُّكَ فَقَالَتْ وَالَّذِي بَعَثَكَ بِالْحَقِّ مَا حَسَسْنَا مِنْهُ شَيْئًا حَتَّى السَّاعَةِ فَاجْتَرَرُ هَذِهِ الْعَنَمَ قَالَ انْزِلْ فَخُذْ مِنْهَا وَاحِدَةً وَرُدَّ الْبَقِيَّةَ))

“Once I went travelling with the Prophet (ﷺ) and we came across a woman sitting with her child in the road. She said, ‘Oh messenger of Allah, this boy has been afflicted and has caused us man trials. I don’t know how many times per day he is seized by spells!’ The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘Give him to me.’ So she raised him up to him and the Prophet (ﷺ) put the boy in front of him in the middle of his saddle. Then he opened the boy’s mouth, blew⁵⁹⁰ in it thrice and said, ‘Bismillaah (in the name of Allah)! I am a slave of Allah, so get away, oh enemy of Allah!’ Then he returned the boy to the woman, and said, ‘Meet us here on our return and tell us what happened.’ Then we went and on our return we found her at the place. She had with her three sheep so the Prophet (ﷺ)

⁵⁹⁰ The Arabic word used here is نفث (Nafatha) which means to put the tip of the tongue between the lips and blow. It is thus a cross between blowing (Nafakha) and spitting lightly (Tafala).

asked, 'How is your boy?' She replied, 'By the One who has sent you with the truth, we haven't noticed anything wrong with him since then, so I've brought you these sheep.' The Prophet (ﷺ) said to me, 'Dismount and take one. Then return the rest to her.'⁵⁹¹

عَنْ خَارِجَةَ بْنِ الصَّلْتِ عَنْ عَمِّهِ أَنَّهُ مَرَّ بِقَوْمٍ فَأَتَوْهُ فَقَالُوا إِنَّكَ جِئْتَ مِنْ عِنْدِ هَذَا الرَّجُلِ بِخَيْرٍ فَارِقِ لَنَا هَذَا الرَّجُلَ فَأَتَوْهُ بِرَجُلٍ مَعْتُوهُ فِي الْقَيْدِ فَرَقَاهُ بِأَمْرِ الْقُرْآنِ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ غَدَوَةً وَعَشِيَّةً وَكُلَّمَا خَتَمَهَا جَمَعَ بُزَاقَهُ ثُمَّ تَفَلَ فَكَأَنَّمَا أُنْشِطَ مِنْ عِقَالٍ فَأَعْطَوْهُ شَيْئًا فَأَتَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَذَكَرَهُ لَهُ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كُلْ فَلَعَمْرِي لِمَنْ أَكَلَ بِرُقِيَّةٍ بَاطِلٍ لَقَدْ أَكَلْتَ بِرُقِيَّةٍ حَقٍّ

Khaarijah ibn as-Salt reported that his uncle said, "Once, when we left Allah's messenger's company, we came across a bedouin tribe. Some of them said, 'We have been told that you have come with some good things from that man (i.e. Prophet Muhammad). Do you have any medicine or incantation for a man possessed?' We answered yes, so they brought a madman bound in a spell. I recited the Faatihah over him every morning and evening for three days. Every time I completed the recitation, I would gather my saliva and spit. Finally he got up as if he broke free from being tied in bonds. The Bedouins then brought me a gift as payment, so I said to them, 'I can't accept in until I ask Allah's messenger.' When I asked the Prophet (ﷺ), he said, 'Take it. For, by my life, whoever eats by way of false incantations will bear the burden of his sin. But you have earned that wage with an incantation of truth.'"⁵⁹²

أَفْتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِي وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ

"Will you then take him and his offspring as allies rather than Me, though they are your enemies."

The address is to those who take Satan and his offspring as close friends besides Allah and worship Satan and abandon the worship of the Most Merciful, as the Almighty stated:

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَبْنَىءَ آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ * وَأَنْ أَعْبُدُونِي هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ

"Did I not command you, O Children of Adam, that you should not worship Satan. Indeed, he is a plain enemy to you. And that you should worship Me? That is a Straight Path." (Soorah Yaa Seen, 36: 60-1)

The obvious meaning of **"his offspring,"** is those born from him. As to whether Satan has or had a wife, it is not provable. Belief in his offspring is obligatory as it is stated in the Qur'aan. As to whether they were born from a wife or without a wife, it is unknown and does not need to be known. Allah created Eve from Adam. He could just as easily have created Satan's offspring from him directly also.

⁵⁹¹ Collected by Ahmad.

⁵⁹² Sunan Abu Dawud (English Trans.), vol.3, p.1092, no.3887.

The phrase: “**though they are your enemies,**” is the basis for Allah’s rebuke. How can they take them as close friends and allies when they are their enemy? It is foolish, unintelligent, and bad policy for a person to take his enemy as an ally.⁵⁹³

بئسَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ بَدَلًا

“What an evil exchange for those wrongdoers.”

The Almighty has explained elsewhere in the Qur’aan that those who take the devils as their allies instead of Allah think that they are correct in their choice. For example:

إِنَّهُمْ اتَّخَذُوا الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

“Indeed they took the devils as protectors and helpers instead of Allah, while thinking that they were guided.” (Soorah al-A’raaf, 7: 30)

The good exchange would have been for them to take Allah as their ally and not Satan. The “wrongdoers” refers to both the disbelievers who worship Satan instead of Allah as well as those whose wrong doing has not reached the level of clear disbelief. Their alliance with Satan corresponds to the degree that they turn away from the alliance with the Most Merciful.⁵⁹⁴

مَا أَشْهَدْتُهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَا خَلْقَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلِّينَ عَضُدًا

51. I did not make them witness the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor [even] their own creation. Nor would I take those who lead people astray as helpers.

مَا أَشْهَدْتُهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

The Almighty’s statement: “**I did not make them witness the creation of the heavens and the earth,**” means that Iblees, his offspring and his troops who people took as protectors and helpers besides Allah had no hand in the creation and running of this world. Allah did not consult them nor did He even allow them to witness the creation of the heavens and earth because they were created before them.⁵⁹⁵

This logical argument that only the creator deserves worship has been repeated in various places in the Qur’aan. For example:

أَفَمَنْ يَخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَا يَخْلُقُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

“Is He Who creates as one who does not create? Will you not then reflect?”

(Soorah an-Nahl, 16: 17)

أَمْ جَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ خَلَقُوا كَخَلْقِهِ فَتَشَبَّهُ الْخَلْقُ عَلَيْهِمْ قُلِ اللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

⁵⁹³ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 92.

⁵⁹⁴ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 93.

⁵⁹⁵ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 93.

“Or do they assign to Allah partners who created like His creation, so that the creation seemed alike to them.’ Say: ‘Allah is the Creator of all things; He is the One, the Irresistible.’”
(Soorah ar-Ra’d, 13: 16)⁵⁹⁶

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ضَرْبَ مَثَلٍ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَنْ يَخْلُقُوا
ذُبَابًا وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ

“O people! A metaphor has been made, so listen to it (carefully): Indeed, those whom you call on besides Allah, cannot create (even) a fly, even if they gathered together for that purpose.”
(Soorah al-Hajj, 22: 73)

وَلَا خَلْقَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ

“Nor [even] their own creation,” meaning that Allah did not let some of them witness the creation of others. Therefore, how can they be taken as helpers when they did not participate in creation, nor did they create anything, nor did they even witness the creation? This sentence contains evidence that whoever speaks anything about the universe without revealed or observable evidence should not be believed. Thus, if someone said that the galaxies are composed of particular compounds and the planets of some other compounds, or that the earth and other planets of our solar system were formed from the sun billions of years ago, and similar statements which have no incontrovertible evidence as proof, it should be rejected. Allah did not let them witness the creation of the universe.⁵⁹⁷

These first two phrases could mean that if the devils were partners of Allah in the creation of the heavens and earth and in their own creation, they would have been witnesses to the creation and participants in it. However, they did not witness it nor did Allah allow them to witness it. Therefore, they could not possibly be partners to Allah.⁵⁹⁸ This is similar to Allah’s statement:

قُلْ أَدْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِيهِمَا مِنْ شِرْكٍَ وَمَا لَهُ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ ظَهِيرٍ

“Say: ‘Call on those you claim [as partners] besides Allah, they do not own even an atom’s weight, in the heavens or the earth, nor do they have any share in either, nor does He have any supporter from among them.’” (Soorah Saba, 34: 22)

وَمَا كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلِّينَ عَضُدًا

“Nor would I take those who lead people astray as helpers,” means that Allah would not take them as supporters and helpers for His religion because those astray would only lead others astray. Therefore, it is even more unacceptable for humans to take deviants as allies, as there is no benefit in them, only harm. This portion of the verse contains a prohibition against the corrupt entourage, the evil circle of friends, as well as the accompaniment of dishonest people, and a warning against sinful assemblies.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁶ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 97.

⁵⁹⁷ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, pp. 93-4.

⁵⁹⁸ Fat’h al-Qadeer, vol. 3, p. 405.

⁵⁹⁹ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 94.

وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ نَادُوا شُرَكَائِيَ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ
وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَوْبِقًا

52. One day He will say, “Call on those whom you claimed were My partners.” They will call on them, but they will not respond to them; and I will make a gulf between them.

The scene of the verses again shifts to the future, after talking about the distant past, the origins of evil, the devil and his followers in order for human beings to be aware of their sworn enemies and to protect ourselves from them. The discussion returns to the future in which Allah reminds His creatures about how He will rebuke and scold the idol worshippers on the Day of Resurrection before all of creation.⁶⁰⁰

وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ نَادُوا شُرَكَائِيَ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ

One day He will say, “Call on those whom you claimed were My partners.” They will call on them, but they will not respond to them.”

They will be made to call on their idols in order to humiliate them as their idols will not respond to them. Instead, they will deny their worship and oppose them.

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ءَالِهَةً لَّيَكُونُوا لَهُمْ عِزًّا (٨١) كَلَّا سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ
وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضِدًّا

“And they have taken gods besides Allah, that they might give them honor, power and glory. But, but they will deny their worship of them, and become opponents to them.” (Soorah Maryam, 19: 81-2)

Furthermore, both the idol worshippers and their idols will be thrown into the Hell Fire together:

إِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ حَصْبُ جَهَنَّمَ أَنتُمْ لَهَا وَارِدُونَ

“Certainly! You and what you are worshipping besides Allah, will be fuel for Hell! Surely, you will enter it.” (Soorah al-Anbiyaa, 21: 98)

وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَوْبِقًا

“I will make a gulf between them.”

The idolators will have no way of reaching their false gods, for Allah will put a gulf of destruction⁶⁰¹ between them.⁶⁰²

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا مَكَانَكُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَشُرَكَائِكُمْ فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَقَالَ
شُرَكَائُهُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ إِيَّانَا تَعْبُدُونَ

⁶⁰⁰ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. 173.

⁶⁰¹ Ibn ‘Abbaas and Qataadah were of the opinion that *mawbiq* meant “destruction.” (Tafseer at-Tabaree, vol. 18, p. 46)

⁶⁰² Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. 174.

“On a Day when I will gather them all together, then I shall say to those who did set partners in worship with Me: ‘Stop at your place! You and your partners.’ Then I shall separate them, and their partners will say: ‘It was not us that you used to worship.’ ” (Soorah Yoonus, 10: 28)

Some scholars of *tafseer* have interpreted the the gap between them as the gap between the believers and the disbelievers. The Almighty has referred to it in many verses throughout the Qur’aan. For example, the disbelievers will be told:

وَأَمْتَرُوا الْيَوْمَ أَيُّهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ

“O you criminals! Get apart this Day (from the believers).” (Soorah Yaa Seen, 36: 59)

وَرَأَى الْمُجْرِمُونَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مُوَاقِعُوهَا وَلَمْ يَجِدُوا عَنْهَا مَصْرِفًا

53. And the criminals will see the Fire and realize that they have to fall in it. And they will not find any way to avoid it.

Allah continues relaying descriptions of what will befall the disbelievers on the Day of Judgement. In this verse, He describes the mental anguish and sense of helplessness that the idol worshippers will feel after their objects of worship in this life are put out of their reach and their accounts taken. People will be separated into groups according to their beliefs and deeds, the sentence of punishment for the sinners will be passed and the real consequence of their disbelief will be shown to them in its horrifying entirety.⁶⁰³

وَرَأَى الْمُجْرِمُونَ النَّارَ

“And the criminals will⁶⁰⁴ see the Fire.”

The Hell Fire in its full horror will become visible to those who committed the ultimate crime of disbelief. *Jahannam* is a frightful creature created by Allah in the beginning of creation along with Paradise. Aboo Hurayrah reported that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “When Allah created Paradise, He said to Gabriel: Go and look at it. He went and looked at it, then came and said: O my Lord! By Your Might, no one who hears of it will fail to enter it. Allah then surrounded it with disagreeable things, and said: Go and look at it, O Gabriel. He went and looked at it, then came and said: O my Lord! By Your Might, I am afraid that no one will enter it. When Allah created Hell, He said: O Gabriel, go and look at it. He went and looked at it, then came and said: O my Lord! By Your Might, no one who hears of it will enter it. He then surrounded it with desirable things and said: O Gabriel, go and look at it. He went, looked at it and then came and said: O my Lord! By Your Might, I am afraid that no one will remain who does not enter it.”⁶⁰⁵

Thus, the Hell Fire is not a symbolic term for God’s displeasure, or the absence of His pleasure, as some deviant sects of the past and present have claimed. Among popular modern exponents of this claim is Harun Yahya, the pen name of a modern Turkish cult figure by the name of Adnan Oktar. Though officially a Sunni Muslim, Oktar openly denies the separate existence of heaven and hell. In a number of his books, among them, *Allah is Known Through Reason* and *The*

⁶⁰³ *Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan*, p. 558.

⁶⁰⁴ The past tense Arabic verb *ra’aa* literally means “saw” and it is an eloquent expression of the future using a past tense verb due to the absolute certainty of its occurrence. (*Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 101)

⁶⁰⁵ *Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 3, p. 1327, no. 4726 and authenticated in *Saheeh Sunan Abee Daawood*, no. 3970.

Truth of The Life of This World, the author stated the following in an appendix entitled “A Very Different Approach to Matter”:

“As said before, the questions of death, paradise, hell, the hereafter, changing dimensions, and questions such as “Where is Allah?” “What was before Allah?” “Who created Allah?” “How long will life in the grave last?” “Where are heaven and hell?” and “Where do heaven and hell currently exist?” are easily answered. It will be understood with what kind of order Allah created the entire universe from out of nothing, so much so that, with this secret, **the questions of “when?” and “where?” become meaningless** because there are no time and no space left. When spacelessness is grasped, it will be understood that hell, heaven, and earth are all actually the same place.”⁶⁰⁶

Allah mentioned in this verse that the sinners will see the Fire, while elsewhere He also mentioned that the Hell Fire will see them and roar.

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالسَّاعَةِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِمَنْ كَذَّبَ بِالسَّاعَةِ سَعِيرًا (١١) إِذَا رَأَتْهُمْ مِّن مَّكَانٍ
بَعِيدٍ سَمِعُوا لَهَا تَغِيْظًا وَزَفِيرًا

“Indeed, they deny the Hour, and for those who deny the Hour, I have prepared a flaming Fire. When it sees them from a distance, they will hear its raging and its roaring.” (Soorah al-Furqaan, 25: 11-2)⁶⁰⁷

And in other verses Allah describes the Hell Fire as inhaling when the disbelievers fall in:

إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيْهَا سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهِيقًا وَهِيَ تَفُورُ

“When they are thrown inside, they will hear the (terrible) drawing in of its breath as it blazes forth.” (Soorah al-Mulk, 67: 7)

Thus, the Hell Fire is a terrible creature, raging and roaring, so wild and furious that Allah has assigned four billion nine hundred thousand angels to hold its reins.

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُؤْتَى بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَهَا
سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ زِمَامٍ مَعَ كُلِّ زِمَامٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ يُجْرُونَهَا

‘Abdullaah ibn Mas‘ood quoted Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying, “Hell will be brought on that day having seventy thousand reins with seventy thousand angels drawing each rein.”⁶⁰⁸

And, when Allah speaks to it on the Day of Judgment, it will hungrily respond:

يَوْمَ نَقُولُ لِجَهَنَّمَ هَلِ امْتَلَأَتْ وَتَقُولُ هَلْ مِنْ مَّزِيدٍ “One day I will ask Hell, ‘Are you full?’ and it will answer, ‘Is there any more?’” (Soorah Qaaf, 50: 30)

عَنْ أَنَسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ يُلْقَى فِي النَّارِ وَتَقُولُ
هَلْ مِنْ مَّزِيدٍ حَتَّى يَضَعَ قَدَمَهُ فَتَقُولُ قَطْ قَطْ

Anas ibn Maalik reported that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “People will be thrown into the Fire and it will continue to say, ‘Is there any more?’ until Allah steps on it. It will then say, ‘Enough! Enough!’”⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁶ Allah is Known Through Reason, pp. 202-3.

⁶⁰⁷ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 99.

⁶⁰⁸ Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1482, no. 6810.

⁶⁰⁹ Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol. 6, p. 353, no. 371.

فَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مُوَاقِعُوهَا

“And they realize that they have to fall into it.”

The disbelievers will realize that they cannot escape being thrown into Fire, and that will only intensify their anxiety and distress, because the anticipation and fear of punishment is in itself a very real punishment.⁶¹⁰ This fact is affirmed by prisoners on death row for decades as their lawyers file appeals who end up requesting that all appeals be stopped and that they be allowed to be executed.

وَلَمْ يَجِدُوا عَنْهَا مَصْرِفًا

“And they will not find any way to avoid it.”

They will not be able to escape from the Fire once they have seen it and it has seen them, because they will be without helpers or protectors and there will not be any emergency exits or places of refuge to resort to. The Hell Fire will inevitably devour them.

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا

54. Indeed I have presented for people, in this Qur’aan, every kind of parable. But humans like to argue more than anything else.

This verse is a divine conclusion to the previous verses containing a variety of parables, similes and metaphors. Allah notes that he has explained the straight path for humankind using all kinds of examples to make them aware of what is right and what is wrong.

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ

“Indeed I have presented for people, in this Qur’aan, every kind of parable.”

The style of the Qur’aan, especially regarding stories found in previous scriptures, is lesson oriented. The presence in the Qur’aan of stories found in the Bible has led some detractors to claim that the Qur’aan was plagiarized from the Bible by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). The differences in presentation were attributed to Prophet Muhammad’s faulty memory. However, if one looks closely at the differences, it becomes clear that it is a case of the deliberate deletion of unnecessary details and the focusing of the readers’ attention on the essential message. Furthermore, the same story may be repeated numerous times throughout the Qur’aan giving the casual reader a sense of repetition. However, a careful look at the repeated portions indicates that each time a different aspect of the story is focused on in order to highlight a different lesson.

وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا

“But humans like to argue more than anything else.”

However, many people do not benefit from the examples and, instead, they oppose the truth using falsehood or they make excuses and avoid the best advice.

⁶¹⁰ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. 175.

عَنْ عَلِيٍّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ طَرَقَهُ وَفَاطِمَةَ بِنْتَ النَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامَ لَيْلَةً فَقَالَ أَلَا تُصَلِّيَانِ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَنْفُسَنَا بِيَدِ اللَّهِ فَإِذَا شَاءَ أَنْ يَبْعَثَنَا بَعَثْنَا فَانصَرَفَ حِينَ قُلْنَا ذَلِكَ وَلَمْ يَرْجِعْ إِلَيَّ شَيْئًا ثُمَّ سَمِعْتُهُ وَهُوَ مُوَلِّ يَضْرِبُ فَخِذَهُ وَهُوَ يَقُولُ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا

‘Alee narrated that on one occasion the Prophet (ﷺ) had come and knocked at his and Faatimah’s door at night and asked them, “Why aren’t you two praying?” ‘Alee replied, “O Messenger of Allah! Our souls are in Allah’s hands [during sleep], if He wishes to send them back then He would do so.” So the Prophet (ﷺ) immediately turned and left and did not return. While leaving he slapped his thigh and recited the verse:

وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا

“But humans like to argue more than anything else.”⁶¹¹

The Prophet (ﷺ) had suggested to them that they should be praying *Tahajjud* (the voluntary night prayer) and what ‘Alee had said was true, but it would have been better for him if he had just accepted the advice of the Prophet (ﷺ) rather than trying to defended their position. However, what ‘Alee did was what people commonly do.

Relative to issues of faith, the believer should not be argumentative. Instead, they should be completely submissive to the truth without resistance, as the Almighty said:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَىٰ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ

“It is not befitting for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision.” (Soorah al-Ahzaab, 33: 36)

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِي مَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

“But no, by your Lord, they have no faith, until they make you judge in all disputes between them, without finding in themselves any resistance to your decisions, but accepting them completely.” (Soorah an-Nisaa, 4: 65)

As a result, ‘Abdullaah ibn Mas‘ood was reported to have said:

⁶¹¹ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Jumu’ah; Baab: Tahreed of the Prophet to Alee and Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Salaatul Musaafireen wa qasruhaa; Baab: Maa ruwiya feeman naamal layl

عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا ضَلَّ قَوْمٌ بَعْدَ هُدًى كَانُوا عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا أُوْتُوا الْجِدَالَ ثُمَّ تَلَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ مَا ضَرَبُوهُ لَكَ إِلَّا جَدَلًا بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِمُونَ

Aboo Umaamah quoted Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying, "Every people who went astray after guidance were granted argumentation." Then he recited this verse:

وَقَالُوا ءَآلِهَتُنَا خَيْرٌ أَمْ هُوَ مَا ضَرَبُوهُ لَكَ إِلَّا جَدَلًا بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِمُونَ

And say: "Are our âliha (gods) better or is he ('Isâ (Jesus))" They quoted not the above example except for argument. Nay! But they are a quarrelsome people. (Soorah az-Zukhruf, 43: 58)

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

"And fear the Fitnah (affliction and trial) which affects not in particular (only) those of you who do wrong (but it may afflict all the good and the bad people), and know that Allâh is Severe in punishment." (Soorah al-Anfaal, 8:25)⁶¹²

If one reflects on the state of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, one finds them at the pinnacle of submission to whatever came in the *Sharee'ah*. They did not argue or ask "why?" regarding divine commandments. For example, when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

((تَوَضَّئُوا مِنْ لَحْمِ الْإِبِلِ وَلَا تَتَوَضَّئُوا مِنْ لَحْمِ الْغَنَمِ))

"Make wudoo from camel's meat but don't make it from mutton,"⁶¹³ the Companions did not ask why. Instead they heard and obeyed. And that was the case in the remainder of the commandments.⁶¹⁴ However, they did question for rulings and further information, as in the case of prayer in sheep and camel pens in the following narration:

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ سَمُرَةَ أَنَّ رَجُلًا سَأَلَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَتَوَضَّأُ مِنْ لَحْمِ الْغَنَمِ قَالَ إِنْ شِئْتَ فَتَوَضَّأْ وَإِنْ شِئْتَ فَلَا تَوَضَّأْ قَالَ أَتَوَضَّأُ مِنْ لَحْمِ الْإِبِلِ قَالَ

⁶¹² Sunan Ibn-i-Majah, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Muqaddimah; Baab: Ijtinaab bid'ah wa jadal. Sunan at-Tirmitheh, vol. p. no. , Kitaab: Tafseer al Qur'aan ; Baab: min Soorah az-zukhruf.

⁶¹³ Sunan Ibn-i-Majah, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Tahaarah wa sunanuhaa; Baab: maa jaa'sa fee al wudoo min luhood al ibil. The complete text of the *hadeeth* is as follows:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ تَوَضَّئُوا مِنْ لَحْمِ الْإِبِلِ وَلَا تَتَوَضَّئُوا مِنْ لَحْمِ الْغَنَمِ وَتَوَضَّئُوا مِنْ أَلْبَانِ الْإِبِلِ وَلَا تَوَضَّئُوا مِنْ أَلْبَانِ الْغَنَمِ وَصَلُّوا فِي مَرَاغِ الْغَنَمِ وَلَا تُصَلُّوا فِي مَعَاظِنِ الْإِبِلِ

'Abdullaah ibn 'Umar quoted Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying: "Make wudoo from camel's meat but don't make it from mutton. Make wudoo from camel's milk but don't do so from goat's milk. Make formal prayers in sheep pens but don't do so in camel pens."

⁶¹⁴ Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem, pp. 96-7.

نَعَمْ فَتَوَضَّأَ مِنْ حُومِ الْإِبِلِ قَالَ أَصَلِّي فِي مَرَابِضِ الْغَنَمِ قَالَ نَعَمْ قَالَ أَصَلِّي فِي مَبَارِكِ الْإِبِلِ قَالَ لَا.

Jaabir ibn Samurah related that a man asked Allah's Messenger (ﷺ): Should I make *wudoo* from mutton? He replied: *If you wish to do so, you may, and if you don't you may not.* He then asked: Should I make *wudoo* from camel's meat? He replied: *Yes. Make wudoo from camel's meat.* The man then asked: Shall I pray in a sheep pen? He replied: *Yes.* He further asked: Shall I pray in a camels' pen? The Messenger (ﷺ) replied: *No.*⁶¹⁵

Thus, once a ruling was given, they generally did not question why. However, on some occasions some of the Companions did question, as in the case of the black dog breaking formal prayer in the following narration:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الصَّامِتِ عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا قَامَ أَحَدُكُمْ يُصَلِّي فَإِنَّهُ يَسْتُرُهُ إِذَا كَانَ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِثْلُ آخِرَةِ الرَّحْلِ فَإِذَا لَمْ يَكُنْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِثْلُ آخِرَةِ الرَّحْلِ فَإِنَّهُ يَقْطَعُ صَلَاتَهُ الْحِمَارُ وَالْمَرْأَةُ وَالْكَلْبُ الْأَسْوَدُ قُلْتُ يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ مَا بَالُ الْكَلْبِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْكَلْبِ الْأَحْمَرِ مِنَ الْكَلْبِ الْأَصْفَرِ قَالَ يَا ابْنَ أَخِي سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَمَا سَأَلْتَنِي فَقَالَ الْكَلْبُ الْأَسْوَدُ شَيْطَانٌ

'Abdullaah ibn as-Saamit related that Aboo Tharr quoted Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying, "If any of you gets up for formal prayer, it will be shielded if he has immediately in front of him something the height of a saddle. If doesn't have something like a saddle, his prayer will be broken by the passing of a donkey, a woman, and a black dog." 'Abdullaah asked: O Aboo Tharr! What's the difference between a black dog and a red or yellow one? He replied: O my nephew! I asked Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) just as you asked me and he said, "The black dog is a devil."⁶¹⁶

There is a place for questions and Western civilization prides itself regarding the spirit of inquiry in their educational systems. Enquiry in learning is important, as blind acceptance discourages progress and invention. However, with the rise of secularism in the West, everything became subject to questions, even the most fundamental moral principles. Nothing remained sacred and above question.⁶¹⁷ As a result, adultery, fornication and homosexuality became legitimized under the umbrella of consenting adults and the moral foundation of Western civilization was destroyed. On the other hand, Muslim education stagnated in rote learning and memorization without question. However, the moral foundation of Muslim civilization remains intact due to general Muslim acceptance of basic divine commandments as immutable. Thus, recent developments like Dr Amina Wadud's leading of a mixed Friday congregational prayer in a New

⁶¹⁵ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Hayd, Baab: Wudoo min luhood al Ibil.

⁶¹⁶ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Salaah; Baab: Qadar maa yasturu al musalli.

⁶¹⁷ However, it was accepted in the sciences that there were axiomatic truths which could not be questioned and had to be accepted for the science to be utilized. For example, one cannot question why $2+2=4$ and $2 \times 2=4$, while $3+3=6$ and $3 \times 3=9$.

York City church, or the establishment of homosexual mosques in the USA and Canada will not find widespread acceptance as took place in Christian nations.

This verse contains a general encouragement to its readers and listeners to practice whatever they read or hear in the Qur'aan. They are further advised to accept Qur'anic advice wholeheartedly and act on it rather than trying to wriggle their way out of it.

وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَّا
أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةُ الْأَوَّلِينَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ قُبُلًا

55. Yet, when guidance comes to people, nothing prevents them from believing and asking forgiveness of their Lord, except that they await the arrival of the punishment of their predecessors, or that the torment be brought to them face to face.

In this verse, the Almighty gives the most common reason for people rejecting the divine guidance found in the variety of parables and Qur'aanic teachings. What stops them from believing in the message is not that they do not find it truthful, but, their stubbornness and obstinacy based on the same arguments used by the people of old, they want to experience the consequence of disbelief for themselves to be sure.

وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ

“Yet, when guidance comes to people, nothing prevents them from believing and asking forgiveness of their Lord,” for people to be held responsible, they have to be free to choose to believe or not believe and to repent or not. Thus, Allah stresses here that there is nothing preventing them in this regard, meaning that they have no excuse for rejecting the truth. Furthermore, the message was clearly delivered free from any obscurity regarding its essential message. Thus, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was reported by al-'Irbaad ibn Saariyah to have said:

قَدْ تَرَكْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْبَيْضَاءِ لَيْلُهَا كَنَهَارُهَا لَا يَزِيغُ عَنْهَا بَعْدِي إِلَّا هَالِكٌ

“I have left you on a white plain whose night is like its day, whoever deviates from it after me will be destroyed.”⁶¹⁸

Their refusal to believe is purely a result of obstinacy.⁶¹⁹ That is, nothing stopped them from following the truth except their demand to witness with their own eyes the punishment which they were being warned about. As some of them said to Prophet Shu'ayb:

⁶¹⁸ Sunan Ibn-i-Majah, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Muqaddimah; Baab: Ittiba' sunnat khulafaa raashideen.

سَمِعَ الْعُرْبَاضَ بْنَ سَارِيَةَ قَالَ وَعَظَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَوْعِظَةً ذَرَفَتْ مِنْهَا الْعُيُونُ وَوَجَلَتْ مِنْهَا الْقُلُوبُ قُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ هَذِهِ لَمَوْعِظَةٌ مُودَّعٌ فَمَاذَا نَعْهَدُ إِلَيْنَا قَالَ قَدْ تَرَكْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْبَيْضَاءِ لَيْلُهَا كَنَهَارُهَا لَا يَزِيغُ عَنْهَا بَعْدِي إِلَّا هَالِكٌ وَمَنْ يَعِشْ مِنْكُمْ فَسَيَرَى اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا عَرَفْتُمْ مِنْ سُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ وَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالطَّاعَةِ وَإِنْ عَبْدًا حَبَشِيًّا عَصُوا عَنْهَا بِالتَّوَاجِدِ فَإِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُ كَالْجَمَلِ الْأَيْفِ حَيْثُمَا انْقَادَ

⁶¹⁹ Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem, p. 98.

فَأَسْقِطْ عَلَيْنَا كِسْفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

“So cause a piece of the heaven to fall on us, if you are of the truthful!” (Soorah ash-Shu‘araa, 26: 187], Others said to Prophet Hood:

أَتْنِنَا بِعَذَابِ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

“Bring Allah's torment upon us if you are one of the truthful.” (Soorah al-‘Ankaboot, 29: 29)

The disbelievers of this nation, the Quraysh, told the Prophet (ﷺ):

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ❁ وَلَوْ جَاءَتْهُمْ كُلُّ آيَةٍ حَتَّى يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ

“O Allah! If this is indeed the truth from You, then rain down stones on us from the sky or bring upon us a painful torment.” (Soorah al-Anfaal, 8: 32)⁶²⁰

وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ

“And asking forgiveness of their Lord,” refers to repentance which should be frequent among the believers as the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“O people! Turn to Allah in repentance and seek His forgiveness for surely I do so one hundred times daily.”⁶²¹

Also, if a disbeliever accepts Islaam he must ask Allah’s forgiveness for his previous sins and if he does so, his previous sins will be erased. The Almighty said:

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِن يَتَّخِذُوا يُغْفَرْ لَهُمْ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ

“Say to those who disbelieved, if they stop disbelieving their past will be forgiven.” (Soorah al-Anfaal, 8: 38)⁶²²

إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

“except that they await the arrival of the punishment of their predecessors,”

Sunnat al-Awwaleen or the punishment of the earlier nations was a general punishment which caught everyone as in the case of the peoples of Prophet Lot, Hood, Shu‘ayb and so on. However, in the case of this nation, Allah has not and will not send a widespread comprehensive punishment because Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) prayed to Allah not to do so and his prayers were answered.⁶²³

أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ قُبُلًا

“Or that the torment be brought to them face to face⁶²⁴,” Meaning “until they see it with their own eyes.”⁶²⁵

This verse also means the nothing prevented the people from belief and repentance when the messengers brought them clear evidences, except Allah’s knowledge that they would not believe. Allah already knew that they would continue in their disbelief until punishment of earlier nations

⁶²⁰ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. .

⁶²¹ Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1418, no. 6523.

⁶²² Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, pp. 98-9.

⁶²³ Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: al fitan wa Ashraat as saa’ah; Baab: Halaak hathihil Ummah.

⁶²⁴ According to scholars of Tafseer qubulan also meant “all types,” or “a variety each one following the other.” It was also recited by four of the seven reciters as qibalan meaning “eye to eye.” (al-Jaami’ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 11, p. 7 and Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 106.)

⁶²⁵ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 99.

came to them and or the punishment on the Day of Judgment came to them. This meaning has been repeatedly stated throughout Qur'aan. For example:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ❀ وَلَوْ جَاءَتْهُمْ كُلُّ آيَةٍ حَتَّى يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ

“Truly! Those, against whom the wrath of your Lord has been justified will not believe, even if every sign came to them, until they see the painful torment.” (Soorah Yoonus, 10: 96-7)⁶²⁶

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنْذِرِينَ وَيُجَادِلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَمَا أُنْذِرُوا هُزُوًا

56. I only sent messengers to bring good news and to warn. But those who disbelieve falsely dispute in order to refute the truth. And they mock My verses and warnings.

In this verse Allah clarifies the role of the Prophets. Their role was not to bring evidence of the forthcoming punishment to the people, nor was it to show to them the next life in this life as the disbelievers demanded. If that were the case, faith would not be the deciding issue, because faith involves believing in the unseen and trusting the information that has been brought even though you cannot see it. Nor was their duty to force people to believe in their message. The main duty of the messengers was to convey the good news of paradise for those who obey them and warn people of the punishment of Hell for those who disobey him. After that it is up to the people to accept the message or reject it.

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنْذِرِينَ

“I only sent messengers to bring good news and to warn,” means that they were not sent without purpose, nor were they sent to be taken as lords besides Allah.⁶²⁷ Belief in the messengers was elevated to the fourth pillar of faith because disbelief in those chosen to convey the message is disbelief in the message itself. This is the reason why belief in the messenger became the second element of the declaration of faith. The Jews who believed in Prophet Jesus validated their faith, while those who rejected him invalidated their faith. Similarly, the Jews and Christians who believed in Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) validated their faith, while those who reject him invalidate their faith. As the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever among the Christians and Jews hears of me but does not affirm his belief in what I brought and dies in this state will be among the inhabitants of Hell.”⁶²⁸

The Deist claim that God did not reveal anything to human beings, that He merely created this world and left it to run on its own, is a slight to God exposing their ignorance of the nature of God. The Almighty addressed this point as follows:

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِذْ قَالُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَى بَشَرٍ مِّن شَيْءٍ

⁶²⁶ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 105.

⁶²⁷ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 660-1.

⁶²⁸ Sahih Muslim, vol. 1, p. 91, no. 284.

“They did not give Allah His true value when they said: “Allah did not reveal anything to any human being.” (Soorah al-An‘aam, 6: 91)

Common sense tells them that no company in which the employees did not know their job descriptions could possibly succeed. The owner of such a company would be considered irrational and unwise, and doomed to failure. Yet they claim that the world was left to run on its own. Such a claim is a blasphemous insult to God on the order of claiming that God got tired on the seventh day of creation and needed to rest.

وَيُجَادِلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ

“But those who disbelieve falsely dispute, in order to refute the truth.” All those who argue using falsehood to oppose the truth are addressed in this verse. They have within themselves an element of disbelief since it is the disbelievers who use lies to oppose and overcome the truth.⁶²⁹ In the past, those who opposed the Prophet (ﷺ) called him a magician, a poet and a fortuneteller, and the Qur’aan ancient fables. Today, Christian evangelists like Jerry Fallwell and others have labeled him a terrorist and a pedophile. However, a distinction needs to be made between legitimate misunderstandings and doubts, and intentional efforts to subvert the truth, as the Almighty said:

يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يُتِمَّ نُورَهُ ۚ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ

“They want to extinguish Allah’s light with their mouths, but Allah will cause His light to be perfected even though the disbelievers hate it.” (Soorah at-Tawbah, 9: 32)

No matter how hard the disbelievers try to hide the truth and to malign it, they will not succeed. In fact, the consequences of their actions will be the opposite of what they desire.

وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَمَا أُنذِرُوا هُزُوًا

“And they mock My verses and warnings,” refer to the Qur’aan and the warnings of punishment for those who disobey and disbelieve in Allah.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُوا إِلَّا إِذَا أَبَدًا

57. And who is more unjust than one who turns away when reminded of the signs of his Lord, forgetting [the evil] he has done. Truly I have put veils over their hearts and deafness in their ears so they would not understand this (Qur’aan). And even if you call them to guidance, they will never ever be guided.

⁶²⁹ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 100.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ

In the phrase: **“And who is more unjust,”** means “who is more unjust to himself,”⁶³⁰ as human injustice cannot harm the Almighty. Whatever evil humans commit, whether against other humans or in disobedience to Allah, ultimately harms themselves the most. In the case of human beings, they will be punished for every act of injustice committed against others, and in the case of Allah, they will be punished for every act of disobedience to Allah’s commands. Consequently, the Almighty said:

وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ ۚ

“Whosoever transgresses the limits of Allah, has indeed wronged himself.” (Soorah at-Talaaq, 65: 1)

مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ

“than one reminded,” means one who has received admonition. They have heard the message from the Messenger (ﷺ) or his representatives. One of the names by which Allah refers to the Qur’aan is “the reminder”.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

“Indeed, it is I who revealed the Qur’aan (ath-thikr) and indeed, I will guard it.” (Soorah al-Hijr, 15: 9)

بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ

“the signs of his Lord,” refers to those reminded about both Allah’s signs in creation as well as His legal signs. Creational signs include solar and lunar eclipses by which Allah puts fear in the hearts of His creatures. Humans turn away by claiming that eclipses are natural occurrences and not divine warnings. When the rotating moon comes between the earth and the sun, the sun’s light is blocked so we have a solar eclipse and when the earth comes between the sun and the moon, the sun’s reflected light on the moon is blocked so we have a lunar eclipse. It has no meaning.⁶³¹ Turning away from legal signs include rejection of the verses of the Qur’aan and the instructions of the Sunnah.

As regards the Almighty’s earlier statement:

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا

“And who is more unjust than he who invents a lie against Allah?” (18: 15)

there is no contradiction. This verse refers to those reminded about something who ignore the reminder while the earlier verse refers to those who tell lies. The worst of those who ignore reminders is one who is reminded of Allah’s signs, and the worst liar is one who tells lies about Allah.⁶³²

فَاعْرِضْ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ

⁶³⁰ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 109.

⁶³¹ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 103.

⁶³² Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 102.

“...forgetting [the evil] he has done⁶³³,” among his acts of disobedience and disbelief which Allah will not forget. Instead He has recorded every act, big and small, as mentioned previously. The Almighty said:

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

“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 a witness for all things.” (Soorah al-Mujaadalah, 58: 6)

Some scholars, like al-Qurtubee, explained that this phrase referred to obligatory deeds which were deliberately abandoned and for which people did not repent.⁶³⁴

The Consequences of Turning Away

As a consequence for their turning away from Allah’s reminders, the Almighty placed seals on their hearts so they would not understand the truth or be guided ever. He said:

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا

“Truly I have put veils over their hearts and deafness in their ears so they would not understand this (Qur’aan).”

This portion of the verse contains encouragement to understand the Qur’aan and that people should read the Qur’aan and learn its meaning as the Companions did. They would not go past ten verses until they learned the knowledge and righteous deeds contained in them.⁶³⁵

Among the consequences is that Allah will take revenge, as He said:

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذَكَرَ بَآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ ثُمَّ أَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا إِنَّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُنتَقِمُونَ

“And who is more unjust than he who is reminded of the signs of his Lord, then he turns away from them. Indeed I will exact retribution from the criminals.” (Soorah as-Sajdah, 32: 22)

Among the consequences is that those who turn away become like frightened wild donkeys:

كَانَهُمْ حُمْزٌ مُسْتَنْفِرَةٌ ﴿٦٤﴾ فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذْكِرَةِ مُعْرِضِينَ

“Then what is wrong with them that they turn away from the reminder? As if they were frightened wild donkeys.” (Soorah al-Muddaththir, 74: 49-50)

Among the consequences is a warning of destruction by thunderclap like what destroyed earlier nations.

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَقُلْ أَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صَاعِقَةً مِثْلَ صَاعِقَةِ عَادٍ وَثَمُودَ

“But if they turn away, then say, ‘I have warned you about a thunderbolt like that which overtook the peoples of ‘Aad and Thamood.’” (Soorah Fussilat, 41: 13)

Among the evil consequences is a wretched existence in this life and resurrection in a state of utter blindness. The Almighty said:

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

“But whosoever turns away from My Reminder. Indeed, life will be difficult for him, and I will raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection.” (Soorah Taa Haa, 20: 124)

⁶³³ The term hands (yadaahu) is used in this phrase due to them being the most commonly used limb in doing deeds. It is an Arabic metaphor even though deeds may be done with the tongue and heart like disbelief, and adultery, and so on with other body parts. (Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, pp. 110-111)

⁶³⁴ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 110.

⁶³⁵ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 104.

Among the evil consequences is that a devil will be assigned to the one who turns away after seeing the truth. The Almighty said:

وَمَنْ يَعْشُ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ نُقَيِّضْ لَهُ شَيْطَانًا فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ

“And whosoever turns away from the remembrance of the Most Gracious, I will appoint for him a devil to be his constant companion.” (Soorah az-Zukhruf, 43: 36)

The Almighty has instructed the believers elsewhere in the Qur’aan to avoid those who turn away from His remembrance whose sight is limited to this worldly life.

فَاعْرِضْ عَنْ مَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا * ذَٰلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ

“Therefore withdraw from one who turns away from My Reminder and desires nothing but the life of this world. That is the extent of their...” (Soorah an-Najm, 53: 29-30)

Allah also forbade the believers from obeying those who turn away from the remembrance of Allah earlier in this chapter, saying:

وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا

“Do not obey him whose heart I have made heedless of My Remembrance, and who follows his own desires, and whose affair (deeds) has been lost.” (18: 28)⁶³⁶

The seals placed on the hearts and ears are a consequence of their choosing misguidance and not deliberate misguidance due to arbitrary destiny. Allah noted elsewhere:

فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا أَزَاغَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ

“So when they turned away, Allah turned their hearts away.” (Soorah as-Saff, 61: 5)

It is in this light that all verses and prophetic statements in which there is mention of “those whom Allah misguides” should be understood.

Al Uthymeen noted that it should be known that among the most severe punishments for sins is sickness of the heart. If a person is punished by the death of a beloved friend, or loss of wealth which he loved, they are punishments, without a doubt. However, the worse type of punishment is alienation of the heart. As Ibn al-Qayyim said in a couplet:

By Allah, my fear is not of sins for indeed they are on a path of pardon and forgiveness

Instead, what I fear is detachment of the heart from making revelation and Qur’aan the judge.

This is what an intelligent person should fear, as for other calamities; they are atonement and expiation for sins which may even increase a person’s faith.⁶³⁷

وَإِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا

“And even if you call them to guidance, they will never ever be guided.”

As long as their hearts are sealed and their ears plugged, they will never find guidance. How can guidance come if ears cannot hear the truth and the hearts will not submit? Does this mean discouragement for the Prophet (ﷺ)? No. It is assurance for him that if they do not accept the truth that he should not worry about them because **“they will never ever be guided.”**⁶³⁸

If it is said that they are unable to hear, see and understand because Allah placed seals on their hearts preventing them from understanding and ear-plugs preventing them from hearing, they are forced without choice to do sin. How then can they be punished for something they are unable to avoid? The response is that Allah explained in many verses of His Magnificent Scripture that these blocks which He places on the hearts, hearing and sight, like seals, stamps, veils, and plugs,

⁶³⁶ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 110.

⁶³⁷ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 103.

⁶³⁸ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 105.

and so on, He placed them as a consequence of their choice of disbelief, rejection of the prophets, so Allah caused their hearts to swerve as punishment for their disbelief.

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا فَطُبِعَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ

“That is because they believed, then disbelieved, therefore their hearts are sealed, so they understand not.” (Soorah al-Munaafiqoon, 63: 3)

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ

“In their hearts is a disease (of doubt and hypocrisy) and Allah has increased their disease. A painful torment is theirs because they used to tell lies.” (Soorah al-Baqarah, 2: 10)

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِم مَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

“No! Instead, the stain of what did is on their hearts.” (Soorah al-Mutaffifeen, 83: 14) ⁶³⁹

وَرَبُّكَ الْغَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَعَجَلَ لَهُمْ
الْعَذَابَ بَلْ لَهُمْ مَوْعِدٌ لَّنْ يَجِدُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ مَوْئِلًا

58. And your Lord is most forgiving, full of mercy. Were He to hold them accountable for what they have done, He would certainly have hastened their punishment. Instead they have their appointed time from which they will find no escape.

وَرَبُّكَ الْغَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ

The Almighty mentioned in the phrase “And your Lord is most forgiving, full of mercy,” that He is oft forgiving. His forgiveness is so great that it encompasses all sins, as He said:

قُلْ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا

“Say: ‘O My servants who have Indeed, Allah forgives all sins transgressed against themselves! Do not despair of Allah’s Mercy:. Truly He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Soorah az-Zumar, 39: 53)

And He is merciful to His believing servants on the Day of Resurrection and to everyone and everything in this life.

وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَسَاكُنْهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ
بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

⁶³⁹ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, pp. 111-112.

“My Mercy embraces all things and I will ordain it especially for those who are pious, give the obligatory charity and those who believe in My signs.” (Soorah al-A‘raaf, 7: 156)

In fact, those who enter paradise will do so because of His mercy.

Aboo Hurayrah and ‘Aa’eshah both related that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

((لَنْ يُدْخَلَ أَحَدًا عَمَلُهُ الْجَنَّةَ قَالُوا وَلَا أَنْتَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ لَا وَلَا أَنَا إِلَّا أَنْ يَتَغَمَّدَنِي اللَّهُ بِفَضْلٍ وَرَحْمَةٍ فَسَدِّدُوا وَقَارِبُوا وَلَا يَتَمَنَّيَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ الْمَوْتَ إِمَّا مُحْسِنًا فَلَعَلَّهُ أَنْ يَزْدَادَ خَيْرًا وَإِمَّا مُسِيئًا فَلَعَلَّهُ أَنْ يَسْتَعْتَبَ)).

*“Do good deeds properly, sincerely and moderately, and rejoice, for no one’s deeds will put him in paradise.” They asked, “Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied, “Not even me unless Allah bestows His pardon and mercy on me.”*⁶⁴⁰

However, elsewhere He explained that His forgiveness encompasses all sins except *shirk*, as in the statement:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ

“Indeed, Allah will not forgive the worship of others beside Him, but He forgives besides that for whom He wills.” (Soorah an-Nisaa, 4: 48)

إِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ

“Indeed, whosoever worships others besides Allah, then Allah has forbidden Paradise to him, and the Fire will be his abode.” (Soorah al-Maa’idah, 5: 72)

Furthermore, He explained elsewhere that although His mercy and forgiveness is vast, His punishment is severe. For example, He said:

﴿ تَبَيَّنَ عِبَادِي أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴾ وَأَنَّ عَذَابِي هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الْأَلِيمُ

“Declare to My servants, that truly, I am the Oft-Forgiving, the Most-Merciful. And that My punishment is indeed most painful.” (Soorah al-Hijr, 15: 49-50)⁶⁴¹

The phrase **“And your Lord is most forgiving, full of mercy,”** also contains reassurance for the Messenger (ﷺ) from another perspective than the previous statement **“they will never ever be guided.”** The Prophet (ﷺ) could have asked why the punishment of those who reject guidance is delayed and how it was that those who deny him are not penalized. So, Allah explained that He is forgiving; He hides peoples’ sins and forgives them. He is also merciful in His dealings with sinners, which is why He said:

لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَعَجَّلَ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابَ

“Were He to hold them accountable for what they have done, He would certainly have hastened their punishment.” The Almighty clarified the punishment in another verse, saying:

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِمَا كَسَبُوا مَا تَرَكَ عَلَى ظَهْرهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ

⁶⁴⁰ Sahih al-Bukhari (Arabic-English), vol. 8, p. 315, no. 474- see also p. 313, no. 470.

⁶⁴¹ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, pp. 115-6.

“If Allah were to punish people for that which they earned, He would not leave a living creature on the face of the earth.” (Soorah Faatir, 35: 45)⁶⁴² That is, due to the atrociousness of sins human commit, their punishment should be hastened and it would require that all life on earth be extinguished. However, due to Allah’s gentleness with His creatures, their punishment is not sped up. Instead, He overlooks and delays their punishments.⁶⁴³ He is patient, He conceals faults and forgives sins. He guides some of them from wrongdoing to true guidance and whoever continues in their evil ways will meet a Day when the hair of infants will turn grey and every pregnant female will abort her child. He said:⁶⁴⁴

بَلْ لَهُمْ مَوْعِدٌ لَّنْ يَجِدُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ مَوْئِلًا

“Instead, they have their appointed time from which they will find no escape,” meaning that although their punishment is not hastened now, He is neither unaware of them nor will He cancel their punishment. Instead, the Almighty has set an appointment for their punishment which will neither be delayed nor advanced, as He said:

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۖ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَحْزِرُونَ سَاعَةً ۖ وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ

“And if Allah were to seize people for their wrong-doing, He would not leave on the earth a single living creature, but, instead He postpones them for an appointed term and when their term comes, they can neither delay it an hour nor can they advance it.” (Soorah an-Nahl, 16: 61)

And there are many verses in the Qur’aan in which Allah mentions that He does not delay anything beyond its appointed time nor does He do anything before its time.⁶⁴⁵

بَلْ لَهُمْ مَوْعِدٌ لَّنْ يَجِدُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ مَوْئِلًا

“Instead, they have their appointed time from which they will find no escape,” also means that they will be either punished at the hands of the Believers or by their destruction in this life, as Allah mentioned:

قَاتِلُوهُمْ يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَيُخْزِهِمْ وَيَنْصُرْكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيَشْفِ صُدُورَ قَوْمٍ مُّؤْمِنِينَ وَيُذْهِبْ غَيْظَ قُلُوبِهِمُ ❁

“Fight against them so that Allah punish them by your hands, disgrace them, give you victory over them, mend the mind of some believers and remove anger from their hearts.” (Soorah Tawbah, 9: 14-5). Or what they will face on the Day of Resurrection, from which there is no escape.⁶⁴⁶

وَتِلْكَ الْقُرَىٰ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَهْلِكِهِمْ مَوْعِدًا

⁶⁴² Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 105. See also Soorah an-Nahl, 16: 61.

⁶⁴³ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 116.

⁶⁴⁴ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. 180.

⁶⁴⁵ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 116.

⁶⁴⁶ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, pp. 105-6.

59. I destroyed these towns when they did wrong. And I appointed a fixed time for their destruction.

وَتِلْكَ الْقُرَىٰ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا

“I destroyed these towns when they did wrong,” refers to the people of towns of the past who were destroyed when they disbelieved.⁶⁴⁷ The “wrongdoing” mentioned in this verse refers to *shirk* as in Luqmaan’s statement to his son:

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ ۖ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

“And remember when Luqmaan advised his son: ‘O my son! Don’t worship others besides Allah. Indeed, worshipping others besides Allah is a great wrongdoing.’” (Soorah Luqmaan, 31: 13)

وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَهْلِكِهِمْ مَوْعِدًا

“And I appointed a fixed time for their destruction.” Allah does as He wishes; if He wishes He hastens the punishment and if He wishes He delays it. However, if the appointed time comes, there will be no delay. In this context, Prophet Noah told his people:

إِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

“Indeed, when the term of Allah comes, it cannot be delayed, if you only knew.” (Soorah Nooh, 71: 4) It is a specific time known to Allah determined by His wisdom.⁶⁴⁸

The generalization in this verse relative to the specific towns, the reasons for their destruction, and the types of destruction which befell them, is explained in detail in many other verses. For example, the stories of Noah’s people, Hood’s people, Saalih’s people, Shu‘ayb’s people, Moses’ people, and others.

These towns are referred to because those to whom the Qur’aan was first revealed used to pass by them in their travels, as stated in the Almighty’s statement:

وَأَنْتُمْ لَتَمُوتُنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ مُّصْبِحِينَ ﴿٦٤٩﴾ وَبِاللَّيْلِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

“Indeed, you pass by them in the morning and at night; will you not then reflect?” (Soorah as-Saaffaat, 37: 137-8)⁶⁴⁹

The West became obsessed with past civilizations for a variety of reasons. Primarily it was pride in ancestry and a desire to prove historically that Western, meaning European, Civilization was always superior. As a result, in the early days of archaeological research, even Egyptian civilization was presented as European. Archaeologists eventually discovered ancient civilizations in all corners of the globe, many of them predating Greece and Rome. They unearthed and continue to unearth ancient ruined towns, one after another. The exquisite artifacts are exhibited in beautiful “national” museums around the world. In some cases, the reasons for the towns’ destruction are clear and obvious, and in others they can only surmise as to the causes. Many of them were destroyed by “natural” disasters, like Pompei. However, people tend to think that the people of the disaster were not at fault but they suffered. When people see ancient ruins they should reflect upon them and remember that Allah can destroy them at anytime and anywhere. Allah is the giver of life and death, and he is strong in giving punishment.

⁶⁴⁷ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, pp. 106-7.

⁶⁴⁸ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 107.

⁶⁴⁹ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 117.

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِفَتَاهُ لَا أَبْرَحُ حَتَّى أَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِيَ
حُقُبًا

60. Remember when Moses said to his boy-servant, “I will not give up travelling until I reach the junction of the two seas or until I have spent a long time travelling.”

The next 23 verses contain the story of Prophet Moses and his teacher, al-Khadir, commonly known as Khidr.

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِفَتَاهُ

The conversation between Prophet Moses and his servant mentioned in this verse, “Remember when Moses said to his boy-servant,” was preceded by an incident in the time of Moses which was left up to the Prophet (ﷺ) to explain to his followers,⁶⁵⁰ as the Almighty said:

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“I have revealed to you the reminder that you may explain clearly to people what is sent down to them, and that they may reflect.” (Soorah an-Nahl, 16: 44)

On one occasion a *taabi’ee* by the name of Sa’eed ibn Jubayr informed Ibn ‘Abbaas that Nawf al-Bikaalee⁶⁵¹ claimed the Moses mentioned in the Qur’aan as the companion of al-Khadir⁶⁵² was not Moses the Israelite Prophet, but some other Moses. Ibn ‘Abbaas first confirmed whether Sa’eed had actually heard this statement from Nawf,⁶⁵³ and when Sa’eed affirmed it, he reacted angrily saying, “Allah’s enemy has told a lie.”⁶⁵⁴ Then Ibn ‘Abbaas went on to relate to him what he had heard Ubayy ibn Ka’b quote from Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) concerning him. In another narration Ibn ‘Abbaas got into an argument with al-Hurr ibn Qays ibn Hisn al-Fazaaree about whom Moses accompanied. While they were arguing, Ubayy ibn Ka’b passed by them so Ibn ‘Abbaas asked him, “My companion and I were arguing about the one who Moses sought to meet. Have you heard anything from Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) about him?” Ubayy replied, “Yes. I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) mention the following about him:⁶⁵⁵ Once Allah’s Messenger, Moses, preached to the Israelites

⁶⁵⁰ This incident is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible.

⁶⁵¹ Nawf was the grandson of Ka’b al-Ahbaar. He was knowledgeable, wise and a judge as well as an Imaam for the people of Damascus. (*Sharh Saheeh Muslim*,)

⁶⁵² Aboo Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Al-Khadir was given that name because had sat on a barren white stretch of earth and it turned green with plantation after he sat on it.” (*Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 406, no. 614) In *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, pp. 1518-9, no. 7017, it is reported that the youth who declares that the Dajjaal was who he is, Dajjaal kills him and brings him back to life but he insists that he is Dajjaal, and Dajjaal tries to kill him again, but he is unable. The narrator of *Sahih Muslim* from Imaam Muslim, Aboo Is’haaq (Ibraaheem ibn Sufyaan) reported that it was said that he was *al-Khadir*. Imaam an-Nawawee stated in his commentary on this narration that this was a clear statement regarding *al-Khadir*’s continuing life, and ruled it correct.

⁶⁵³ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, pp. 1267-9, no. 5865.

⁶⁵⁴ The scholars explain that Ibn ‘Abbaas did not literally mean that Nawf was an enemy of Allah, but said this as a strong rebuke to those who would contradict the statements of the Prophet (ﷺ). [*Sharh Saheeh Muslim*,]

⁶⁵⁵ The following narration which forms the basic explanation of the verses is taken from numerous narrations found in the two most authentic collections: *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 1, pp. 63-4, no. 74; vol. 4, pp. 401-2, no. 612 and pp. 402-6,

until their eyes were filled with tears and their hearts became tender. When he finished his sermon, someone asked him, “Is there anyone on earth who is more learned than you?” Moses replied, “No.”⁶⁵⁶ So Allah admonished him for not ascribing all knowledge to Himself⁶⁵⁷ and He revealed to him: “At the junction of the two seas there is a servant of Mine, Khadir,⁶⁵⁸ who is more learned than you.”⁶⁵⁹ Moses asked, “O my Lord! Where is he?” Allah said, “At the junction of the two seas⁶⁶⁰.” Moses asked, “O my Lord! Tell me a sign by which I will be able to recognize the place.” Allah said, “Put a dead fish in a large basket and the place will be where it comes alive and you lose it.”⁶⁶¹

So Moses put a dead fish in a basket, [gave it to his boy-servant] and told him, “I don’t want to trouble you except to inform me as soon as you lose this fish.” He replied, “You have not demanded too much.”⁶⁶² So Moses set out with his boy-servant, Yoosha‘ ibn Noon (Joshua)⁶⁶³ and told him:

لَا أَبْرَحُ حَتَّى أَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِيَ حُقْبًا

“I will not give up travelling until I reach the junction of the two seas or until I have spent a long time travelling.”

Lessons

1. Al-Qurtubee mentioned that in this incident exemplifies the wisdom of scholarly travels in order to increase one’s knowledge. It also includes the principle of taking help from a servant or companion is such a pursuit instead of going on one’s own. The verse also points to the importance of taking advantage of opportunities to meet noble souls and eminent scholars even if their places of abode are far away. This became a common practice among the earlier generations of righteous scholars. Al-Bukhaaree mentioned that the companion Jaabir ibn ‘Abdillaah traveled a month’s journey to obtain a single *hadeeth* from another companion, ‘Abdullaah ibn Unays.

2. Allah’s reference to Moses’ servant as “his youth,” contains a good example of proper etiquette in the treatment of servants which the Sharee‘ah further affirmed in the Prophet’s statement narrated by Aboo Hurayrah⁶⁶⁴:

no. 613; vol. 6, pp. 211-214, no. 249, (18:61) pp. 215-219, no. 250, (18: 63) pp. 220-224, no. 251. *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, pp. 1267-9, no. 5864, pp. 1269-1270, no. 5865, pp. 1270-1, no. 5867.

⁶⁵⁶ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, pp. 215-219, no. 250.

⁶⁵⁷ That is, he should have said that Allah knows best.

⁶⁵⁸ He is mentioned by name in *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 401, no. 612. That narration began with Ibn ‘Abbaas stating that he had differed with al-Hoor ibn Qays al-Fazaaree about the companion of Moses. Ibn ‘Abbaas insisted that he was al-Khadir, and while they were arguing, Ubayy ibn Ka‘b passed by. So Ibn ‘Abbaas called out to him saying, “My friend and I have differed regarding Moses’ companion whom he asked the way to meet. Have you heard Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) mention anything about him?” Then Ubayy narrated the incident.

⁶⁵⁹ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 211, no. 249.

⁶⁶⁰ The most probable geographical location is where the two arms of the Red Sea join together, viz., the Gulf of ‘Aqaba and the Gulf of Suez. They enclose the Sinai Peninsula, in which Moses and the Israelites spent many years in their wanderings. It has also been suggested (*Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1268, fn. 2672) that the most probable location is where the two branches of the Nile meet at Khartoum. Al Uthaymeen mentioned that some also said it was where the Mediterranean Sea met the Red Sea (*Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 108). Ash-Shanqeetee mentioned that specifying the meeting of the two seas comes under the category of interpretations which have not proof from the Qur’aan or Sunnah, nor any benefit from knowing. Thus, research in this area is burdensome and unresolvable. (*Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 121)

⁶⁶¹ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 216, no. 250.

⁶⁶² *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 216, no. 250.

⁶⁶³ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 211, no. 249.

⁶⁶⁴ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 3, p. 436, no. 728.

((لَا يَقُلْ أَحَدُكُمْ أَطْعِمَ رَبَّكَ وَضَيَّ رَبَّكَ اسْقِ رَبَّكَ وَلْيَقُلْ سَيِّدِي مَوْلَايَ وَلَا يَقُلْ أَحَدُكُمْ عَبْدِي أُمِّي وَلْيَقُلْ فَتَايَ وَفَتَاتِي وَغُلَامِي)).

“None of you should say: Serve your lord (rabbak), help your lord make wudoo, or give water to your lord! Instead, say: My master (sayyidee) or my guardian (mawlaaya) My slave-boy or my slave-girl. Instead say: My young man, my young woman or my youth.”⁶⁶⁵

Aboo Moosaa al-Ash‘aree related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

((أَيُّمَا رَجُلٍ كَانَتْ لَهُ جَارِيَةٌ فَأَدَّبَهَا فَأَحْسَنَ تَأْدِيبَهَا وَأَعْتَقَهَا وَتَزَوَّجَهَا فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ وَأَيُّمَا عَبْدٍ أَدَّى حَقَّ اللَّهِ وَحَقَّ مَوْلَاهُ فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ)).

“Any man who has a slave-girl and teaches her good manners, frees her and marries her, will get double the reward. And any slave who observes Allah’s right and his master’s right will get double the reward.”⁶⁶⁶

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنَهُمَا نَسِيَا حُوتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا

61. But when they reached the junction of the two seas, they forgot their fish and it tunneled its way through the sea.

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنَهُمَا

The Almighty went on to say: “**But when they reached the junction of the two seas,**” and the Prophet (ﷺ) went on to explain: “When they reached a large boulder beside the sea, they looked around but found no one. So Moses proceeded and left his servant there.”⁶⁶⁷ At the base of the rock, there was a spring called the Spring of Life. It was given that name because anything dead which came in contact with its waters came back to life.⁶⁶⁸ Prophet Moses returned and went to sleep on the rock while his servant stood guard in the shade at the base of the rock where the ground was wet. Thus, when the servant set down the basket with the fish, the wind blew some water from the spring unto the dead fish and it shivered with life.

نَسِيَا حُوتَهُمَا

Allah said that they both forgot the fish, “**They forgot their fish,**” though it was only the servant who actually forgot. This construction is due to the subject’s closeness (*suhbah*) to another subject

⁶⁶⁵ Al-Jaami ‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 11, p. 11.

⁶⁶⁶ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 3, pp. 435, no. 723.

⁶⁶⁷ Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1269, no. 5865.

⁶⁶⁸ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 6, p. 221, no. 251.

it is also called ‘generalization of a group while intending only a part.’⁶⁶⁹ It is a fairly common grammatical construction found in a number of places in the Qur’aan, as in the verse:

يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ

“Out of them both come out pearl and coral.” (Soorah ar-Rahmaan, 55: 22) Although it is known that pearls and coral only come from the salty seas and not the fresh water seas.

Likewise in the verse in which the Almighty said:

يَمْعَشَرُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْكُمْ

“O you assembly of jinn and humankind! Did there not come to you messengers from among yourselves?” (Soorah al-An’aam, 6: 130)

although it is known that only human messengers were sent and not from the Jinn.⁶⁷⁰

فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا

The fish’s escape was described in the Qur’aan as follows: “It tunneled its way through the sea.” The Prophet (ﷺ) explained that the fish flipped out of the basket and wriggled its way down the shore to the water’s edge. As soon as it reached the water, it swam off in a tunnel of water which Allah caused to separate like an arch around the fish.⁶⁷¹ [The Prophet (ﷺ) curved his hands in the shape of an arch]⁶⁷² The young man watched in amazement and said to himself: I will not awaken him.⁶⁷³ I should meet Allah’s Messenger and inform him [when he awakens].⁶⁷⁴ He then lay down on the rock and slept and forgot to inform Prophet Moses when they awoke.

فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا قَالَ لِفَتَاهُ آتِنَا غَدَاءَنَا لَقَدْ لَقِينَا مِنْ سَفَرِنَا هَذَا نَصَبًا

62. So when they had gone beyond that place, Moses said to his boy-servant, “Bring us our lunch. Indeed, we have suffered much fatigue in this journey of ours.”

فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا

The Almighty said, “So when they had gone beyond that place,” and the Prophet (ﷺ) went on to explain: “They continued traveling for the rest of the night.”⁶⁷⁵

قَالَ لِفَتَاهُ آتِنَا غَدَاءَنَا لَقَدْ لَقِينَا مِنْ سَفَرِنَا هَذَا نَصَبًا

⁶⁶⁹ Al-Qurtubee explained this by saying that *nisyaan* (forgetfulness) meant *ta’kheer* (leaving behind; delayal) as in the supplication: *ansa’Allahu fee ajalika* (May Allah delay your appointed time). When they set out from the rock, they both left the fish behind, and neither of them carried it. (Al-Jaami’ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 11, p. 12.)

⁶⁷⁰ Al-Jaami’ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 11, p. 12.

⁶⁷¹ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 6, p. 216, no. 250 and p. 221, no. 251.

⁶⁷² Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 4, p. 403, no. 613.

⁶⁷³ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 6, p. 216, no. 250.

⁶⁷⁴ Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1269, no. 5865.

⁶⁷⁵ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 4, p. 403, no. 613.

“Moses said to his boy-servant, “Bring us our lunch. Indeed, we have suffered much fatigue in this journey of ours.” The Prophet (ﷺ) explained, “The next day Moses said to his servant, ‘Bring our food, for indeed, this journey of ours has been very tiring for us.’”⁶⁷⁶ The journey which Moses referred to was the distance after their stop for rest at the rock. Allah made them feel tired soon after that, so that they would not go too far past the place they were to meet his teacher.⁶⁷⁷ The Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have said, “However, Moses did not feel fatigued till he had passed the place which Allah had ordered him to seek.”⁶⁷⁸

Regarding Prophet Moses’ statement, “Bring us our lunch,” it is commonly thought that the lunch which Moses was referring to was the fish. However, scholars have pointed out that the fish was a guide for the location of al-Khadiir as stated in the *hadeeths*, for example in one narration the Prophet (ﷺ) quoted Allah as telling Moses: “Take a fish and put it in a large basket and you will find him at the place where you lose the fish.”⁶⁷⁹ Thus, the scholars concluded that their provision for the journey was something besides the fish.⁶⁸⁰

Al-Qurtubee identified an issue which may be deduced from this verse: carrying provisions when going on a journey. The mention here refutes ignorant mystics (Sufis) embark on major journeys without provisions, claiming that that is true trusting in Allah. However, here is Moses, Prophet of Allah, to whom Allah spoke directly among the people of the earth, taking provisions with him in spite of his knowledge of Allah and his trust in Him.

Some people from Yemen used to make Hajj without taking provisions with them saying: “We are those who truly trust in God.” And when they arrived they would beg people, so Allah revealed the verse:

الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَاتٌ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ وَتَزَوَّدُوا

“The Hajj is in the well-known months. So whosoever intends to perform Hajj therein, then he should not have sexual relations, nor commit sin, nor dispute unjustly during the Hajj. And whatever good you do, Allah knows it. And take provisions for the journey!” (Soorah al-Baqarah, 2: 197)⁶⁸¹

لَقَدْ لَقِينَا مِنْ سَفَرِنَا هَذَا نَصَبًا

The Almighty’s statement: “Indeed, we have suffered much fatigue in this journey of ours,” also contains evidence that informing others about one’s suffering or illness is permissible and that it does not contradict *ridaa* (being pleased with one’s destiny), as long as it is not expressed out of anger and distress.⁶⁸²

⁶⁷⁶ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 4, p. 403, no. 613.

⁶⁷⁷ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 110.

⁶⁷⁸ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 4, p. 403, no. 613.

⁶⁷⁹ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 4, p. 402, no. 613.

⁶⁸⁰ Al-Jaami’ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 11, p. 13

⁶⁸¹ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol., p., no.. (Al-Jaami’ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 11, p. 13)

⁶⁸² Ibid.

قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوَيْنَا إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَإِنِّي نَسِيتُ الْخُوتَ وَمَا أَنْسَانِيهِ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ أَذْكُرَهُ وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا

63. He replied, “Do you remember when we took shelter at the rock? Most certainly, I forgot the fish there. It was only Satan who caused me forget to mention it, and it took an amazing path into the sea.”

قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوَيْنَا إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَإِنِّي نَسِيتُ الْخُوتَ

“He replied, “Do you remember when we took shelter at the rock? Most certainly, I forgot the fish there.” The Prophet (ﷺ) went on to say: “His servant, Yooshaa‘ ibn Noon, said to him, ‘Do you know that when we were sitting near that rock, I forgot the fish,’⁶⁸³ His servant had seen the fish going off into the water and was completely amazed that a dead fish was now swimming off leaving an amazing trail behind it in the sea. He decided not to awaken Prophet Moses, and instead went to sleep with the intention of informing him about it when he awoke. However, when he woke up, he forgot to mention the incident to Moses and did not remember about it until Moses asked him to serve the food the following day.

وَمَا أَنْسَانِيهِ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ أَذْكُرَهُ وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا

The servant went on to say, “It was only Satan who caused me forget to mention it, and it took an amazing path into the sea.” He attributed his forgetting to Satan because forgetfulness is one of the main tools used by Satan to misguide Allah’s creatures.

The way of life known as Islam is a system designed to keep the believer in regular remembrance of God and the believers are encouraged to remember Allah as much as possible. So much so, that although, moderation in all spheres of life, whether material or spiritual, is generally encouraged in divine law, an exception is made regarding the remembrance of Allah. It is virtually impossible to remember God too much. Consequently, in the final revelation, chapter *al-Ahzaab*, Allah encourages the believers to remember God as often as possible saying:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا

“O believers! Remember Allah often.” (Soorah *al-Ahzaab*, 33:41)

Remembrance of God is stressed because sin is generally committed when God is forgotten. The forces of evil operate most effectively when consciousness of God is lost. Consequently, the satanic forces seek to occupy people’s minds with irrelevant thoughts and desires to make them forget God. Once God is forgotten, people willingly join their ranks. The final revelation, addresses this phenomenon as follows:

أَسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَأَنسَهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ حِزْبُ الشَّيْطَانِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ الشَّيْطَانِ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

⁶⁸³ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 222-3, no. 251.

“Satan has got the better of them and caused them to forget Allah. Those are the party of Satan. Truly the party of Satan are the real losers.” (Soorah al-Mujaadilah, 58:19)

God, through Divine law, has prohibited intoxicants and gambling primarily because they cause human beings to forget God. The human body easily becomes addicted to drugs and the mind to games of chance. Once addicted, the desire to continually be stimulated by them leads people into all forms of corruption and violence among themselves. God says:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقَعَ بَيْنَكُمْ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيُضِلَّكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ

“Satan’s plan is to incite enmity and hatred among you with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and regular prayer. Will you not then abstain?” (Soorah al-Maa’idah, 5: 91)

Consequently, human beings need to remember God for their own salvation and growth. All humans have times of weakness in which they commit sins. If they have no means of remembering God, they sink deeper and deeper into corruption with every sin. However, those who follow the divine laws will be constantly reminded of Allah, which will give them a chance to repent and correct themselves. The final revelation accurately describes this process:

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ

“Those who, having done something shameful or having wronged their own souls, remember Allah and immediately ask forgiveness for their sins ...” (Soorah Aal ‘Imraan, 3: 135)

قَالَ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْغِ فَارْتَدَّا عَلَى آثَارِهِمَا قَصَصًا ﴿٦٤﴾ فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا آتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا

64 - 65. (Moses) exclaimed, “That’s what we’ve been seeking!” So they returned by retracing their footsteps. 65 Then they found one of My servants, on whom I had conferred divine mercy, and whom I had taught divine knowledge.

قَالَ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْغِ فَارْتَدَّا عَلَى آثَارِهِمَا قَصَصًا

“(Moses) exclaimed, ‘That’s what we’ve been seeking!’ So they returned by retracing their footsteps.” The Prophet (ﷺ) went on to explain that after the servant told Moses about what happened to the fish, “Moses exclaimed, ‘That’s what we’ve been seeking!’ So, both of them retraced their footsteps till they found the path of the fish in the sea which looked like a tunnel and they returned to the rock by the sea.”⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁸⁴ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 6, p. 222, no. 251.

فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا

The Almighty said, “**Then they found one of My servants,**” and the Prophet (ﷺ) explained, “When they returned [to the rock by the sea] they found al-Khadir on a green carpet in the middle of the sea.⁶⁸⁵ Al-Khadir was covered with a garment, one end of which was under his feet and the other end under his head.⁶⁸⁶ When Moses greeted him [saying: *As-salaam wa ‘alaykum!*],⁶⁸⁷ he uncovered his face and said astonishingly, [*Wa ‘alaykum salaam!*]⁶⁸⁸ Is there such a greeting in my land? Who are you?’ Moses replied, ‘I am Moses.’ Al-Khadir asked, ‘Are you the Moses of the Israelites (Banee Israaeel)?’ Moses replied, ‘Yes.’⁶⁸⁹

آتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا

Allah described al-Khadir as one “**on whom I had conferred divine mercy, and whom I had taught divine knowledge.**”

Divine knowledge here refers to knowledge of the unseen, a special form of knowledge which people cannot attain by themselves.⁶⁹⁰

The nature of this divine mercy and knowledge granted by Allah is not explained. Whether they refer to the mercy of prophethood and its knowledge or to the mercy of *wilaayah* (sainthood) and its knowledge is unclear. Consequently, the scholars differed regarding whether al-Khadir was a messenger, a prophet or a saint. Some even suggested that he was an angel. However, it can be understood from some verses that the mercy mentioned was the mercy of prophethood and the divine knowledge was revelation.

Firstly, the term “mercy” is repeatedly used in the Qur’aan to refer to prophethood and granted knowledge used for revelation. An example of mercy can be found in the Almighty’s statement:

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ * أَهُم يَّقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ

“They ask, ‘Why wasn’t this Qur’aan revealed to a great man from one of the two towns⁶⁹¹?’ Is it they who would portion out the Mercy of your Lord?” (Soorah az-Zukhruf, 43:31-2)

That is, would they determine where prophethood should be and to whom the Qur’aan should be revealed among the towns of Makkah and Taif?

An example of knowledge can be found in the Almighty’s following statement:

وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُن تَعْلَمُ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا

“Allah has revealed to you the Book, and wisdom and taught you that which you knew not. And Allah’s Grace on you is Great.” (Soorah an-Nisaa, 4: 113)

Among the clearest evidences that divine mercy and knowledge granted to al-Khadir were by way of prophethood and revelation is his statement quoted by Allah:

⁶⁸⁵ The narrator ‘Uthmaan ibn Abee Sulaymaan related this addition in *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 217, no. 250.

⁶⁸⁶ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 217, no. 250.

⁶⁸⁷ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1269, no. 5865.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁹ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 217, no. 250 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1268, no. 5864.

⁶⁹⁰ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 112.

⁶⁹¹ Makkah and Taif.

وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُ ، عَنِ أَمْرِی

“I didn’t do any of it on my own.” (18: 82)

That is, “I did it based on Allah’s command,” and Allah’s commands are only given through revelation, as there is no other way of knowing Allah’s commands and prohibitions except by revelation from Allah, Most Great and Glorious. Especially killing apparently innocent souls and destroying people’s boats, because aggression against peoples lives and property is not permissible except by way of revelation. The Almighty limited warnings to revelation saying:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أُنْذِرُكُمْ بِالْوَحْيِ

“I warn you only by the revelation.” (Soorah al-Anbiyaa, 21: 45)

The suggestion that he was instructed by *ilhaam* (inspiration) is unacceptable because of the fundamental principle that saintly inspiration cannot be used as evidence for anything because it is not infallible and because there is no proof to support its use. Instead there is evidence for the impermissibility of its use for evidence.

As for the claims of some Sufis that it is permissible for one inspired to act on his inspiration but not for others, or the claim of some fatalists (*jabriyyah*) that it may be acted on by both, it elevates inspiration to the level of revelation. They use the obvious meaning of the verse:

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ ، يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ ، لِلْإِسْلَامِ

“Whomever Allah wills to guide, He opens his heart to Islaam.” (Soorah al-An’aam, 6: 125)

And the *hadeeth*

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اتَّقُوا فِرَاسَةَ الْمُؤْمِنِ فَإِنَّهُ يَنْظُرُ بِنُورِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِلْمُتَوَسِّمِينَ

Aboo Sa’eed al-Khudree quoted Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying, “Beware of the clairvoyance of the believer, for indeed he sees with Allah’s light.” Then he recited, “Surely, in this are signs for those who see.”^{692,693}

These evidences are false and unsupported by proofs of their interpretation. There cannot be trust in the inspirations or thoughts of someone uninfalible because they could be the product of satanic sources. Guidance is guaranteed in following the Sharee’ah, which is not the case of reflections and inspirations.

Whoever claims that he has no need for the messengers in arriving at what is pleasing to his Lord, nor for what they brought, even in a single issue is no doubt a disbeliever. The verses and traditions proving this are countless. The Almighty said:

وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّى نَبْعَثَ رَسُولاً

“And I never punish until I have sent a Messenger (to give warning).” (Soorah al-Israa, 17: 15)

He did not say, “until I put inspiration in the hearts.”

With that, the disbelief of many ignorant people who call themselves Sufis becomes clear. Their claim that they and their teachers have an inner way (*tareeqah*) which agrees with the divine truth from Allah even if externally it contradicts the obvious meaning of the Sharee’ah, in the same way that al-Khadiir’s acts contradicted the obvious meaning of the knowledge with Moses, is

⁶⁹² Soorah al-Hijr, 15: 75.

⁶⁹³ Sunan at-Tirmithi, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: tafseer; Baab: Soorah al Hijr

disbelief and a means to slip out of the religion of Islaam based on the claim that the truth lies in esoteric issues which contradict the external practices.⁶⁹⁴

قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِي مِمَّا عُلِّمْتَ رُشْدًا ﴿٦٦﴾
قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٦٧﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَى مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ
بِهِ خُبْرًا ﴿٦٨﴾ قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا
﴿٦٩﴾ قَالَ فَإِنْ اتَّبَعْتَنِي فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى أُحْدِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ
ذِكْرًا

66-70. Moses asked him, “May I accompany you so that you can teach me some of what guidance you have been taught?” 67 He replied, “Certainly, you won’t be able to have patience with me. 68 For how can you have patience with something you don’t understand?” 69 Moses said, “You will find me patient - if Allah wills, and I won’t disobey any of your instructions.” 70 He said, “In that case, if you accompany me, don’t ask me about anything until I mention it to you myself.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) explained that after Moses confirmed that he was the Moses of the Israelites, al-Khadir asked, “What do you want?” Moses replied, “I came to you so that you could teach me some of the truth which you were taught.” Al-Khadir said, “O Moses! Isn’t it sufficient for you that the Torah is in your hands and Divine inspiration comes to you?”⁶⁹⁵ Al-Khadir went on to say, “O Moses! You have some of Allah’s knowledge which Allah has taught you which I don’t know; and I have some of Allah’s knowledge which He has taught me which you don’t know.”⁶⁹⁶

قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِي مِمَّا عُلِّمْتَ رُشْدًا

“Moses asked him, “May I accompany you so that you can teach me some guidance from what you have been taught?” The Prophet explained, “Moses then asked him, ‘May I follow you so that you can teach me some guidance from what you have been taught?’⁶⁹⁷ This request of Moses was very humble. Moses’ manner is worth reflecting on. For, even though he was nobler than al-Khadir and among the special prophets of Allah, he was humble with him as he was to gain

⁶⁹⁴ *Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, pp. 121-3.

⁶⁹⁵ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 217, no. 250.

⁶⁹⁶ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 222, no. 251; vol. 4, p. 403, no. 613 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1268, no. 5864. In another narration (no. 250) al-Khadir says at this point: “I have some knowledge which you should not learn and you have some knowledge which I should not learn.”

⁶⁹⁷ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1268, no. 5864.

knowledge unknown to himself. This contains evidence that one seeking knowledge should be humble, respectful and kind to his teacher.

Moses then clarified that he did not seek to follow him to share in his food or drink, but to learn guidance from him. No doubt, al-Khadr would have been happy with someone who wanted to take knowledge from him, because knowledge taken from a person during his lifetime will benefit him after his death,⁶⁹⁸ as the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported by Aboo Hurayrah to have said,

((إِذَا مَاتَ الْإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ)).

“When a man dies, his acts come to an end, except in three cases: an on-going charity, knowledge from which people continue to benefit, and a righteous child who prays for him.”⁶⁹⁹

This verse is evidence that the student should follow the teacher even if he is equal or superior to him in some or most respects.⁷⁰⁰

Lessons

(1) This verse contains the lesson that beneficial knowledge is knowledge which leads to good. Every type of knowledge which contains guidance to righteousness and warning against the evil path or that which leads to it is beneficial knowledge. All knowledge besides this is either harmful or useless.

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) used to seek refuge from useless knowledge saying:

((اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ وَمِنْ قَلْبٍ لَا يَخْشَعُ وَمِنْ نَفْسٍ لَا تَشْبَعُ وَمِنْ دَعْوَةٍ لَا يُسْتَجَابُ لَهَا)).

“O Allah! I seek refuge in You from knowledge of no benefit, from a heart without fear, from an unstable soul, and from unanswered supplications.”⁷⁰¹

قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ❁ وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَى مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا

“He replied, ‘Certainly, you won’t be able to have patience with me. For how can you have patience with something you don’t understand?’ ” The Prophet (ﷺ) went on to explain: Al-Khadr said, “You will have to bear with me. But how can you have patience about something of which you have no comprehensive knowledge? You will not have patience when you see me doing things I’ve been ordered to do.”⁷⁰² How could he be patient about what is obviously corrupt without knowing the hidden factors behind it. Although Moses had the Sharee’ah, he could not be silent or express approval in the face of apparent evil.

In this narration, Al-Khadr informs Moses ahead of time that there are things which he will do which he was ordered to do, but Moses will not be able to handle them.

(2) The main factor in achieving patience is for a person to have comprehensive knowledge and experience of the issue for which patience is required. Otherwise, one who does not know something or its purpose or its outcome or its benefit will not have the causes for patience.⁷⁰³

⁶⁹⁸ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 113.

⁶⁹⁹ Sahih Muslim, vol. 3, p. 867, no. 4005 and Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. 2, p. 812, no. 2874.

⁷⁰⁰ Fat’h al-Qadeer, vol. 3, p. 413.

⁷⁰¹ Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Dhikr wa du’aa; Baab: ta’awwuth min sharri maa ‘amila

⁷⁰² Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1270, no. 5865.

⁷⁰³ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 666.

قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا

69. “Moses said, “You will find me patient - if Allah wills, and I won’t disobey any of your instructions.” Moses said this based on what he believed about himself and his ability to be patient at that moment. However, he made his statement conditional to Allah’s wish, in order that it not contain pride in himself and haughtiness.⁷⁰⁴

قَالَ فَإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِي فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى أُحْدِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا

70. “He said, “In that case, if you accompany me, don’t ask me about anything until I mention it to you myself.”

حَتَّى أُحْدِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا

Al-Khadr’s statement “until I mention it to you myself,” contains the guidance of a teacher to his student to not be impatient and to not be hasty in refuting his teacher. Instead he should wait until the issues become completely clear.⁷⁰⁵

(3) Al-Khadr’s instructions indicate that whoever does not have the steadfastness necessary to patiently accompany a scholar in his quest for knowledge, will lose many opportunities for gaining additional knowledge. The more impatient he is the greater the loss.⁷⁰⁶

فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَا رَكِبَا فِي السَّفِينَةِ خَرَقَهَا قَالَ أَخَرَقْتَهَا لِتُغْرِقَ أَهْلَهَا قَالَ أَخَرَقْتُهَا لِتُغْرِقَ أَهْلَهَا لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا إِمْرًا ❀ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ❀ قَالَ لَا تُؤَاخِذْنِي بِمَا نَسِيتُ وَلَا تُرْهِقْنِي مِنْ أَمْرِي عُسْرًا

71-3. So they set out together until they rode a boat and [Khidr] made a hole in it. Moses exclaimed, “Did you make a hole in it to drown its passengers? Surely, you have done something dreadful!” 72 [Khidr] replied, “Didn’t I tell you that you wouldn’t be able to have patience with me?” 73 [Moses] pleaded, “[Please] don’t hold me accountable for my forget-fulness, and please don’t be hard on me in this matter.”

فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَا رَكِبَا فِي السَّفِينَةِ

“So they set out together until they rode a boat,” The Prophet (ﷺ) went on to explain: “After that both of them⁷⁰⁷ proceeded along the sea coast⁷⁰⁸ until they saw a small boat which carried

⁷⁰⁴ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 114.

⁷⁰⁵ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 115.

⁷⁰⁶ Tafseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 666.

people from one shore to the other.⁷⁰⁹ [When it passed by, they requested the crew to allow them to go on board.]⁷¹⁰ The crew recognized al-Khadir and [one of them said] said, ‘He is a righteous servant of Allah, so let us carry him free of charge.’⁷¹¹ When they got on board, [a sparrow came and perched on the edge of the boat. When it dipped its beak into the sea, al-Khadir told Moses, ‘My knowledge, your knowledge and the knowledge of all creatures compared to Allah’s knowledge is not more than the water taken by this sparrow’s beak.’]”⁷¹²

خَرَقَهَا قَالَ أَخَرَقْتُهَا لِتُغْرَقَ أَهْلُهَا قَالَ أَخَرَقْتُهَا لِتُغْرَقَ أَهْلُهَا لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا إِمْرًا

“[Khidr] made a hole in it. Moses exclaimed, “Did you make a hole in it to drown its passengers? Surely, you have done something dreadful!” The Prophet (ﷺ) continued, “Moses then noticed that al-Khadir had pulled out one of the planks of the boat with an adze⁷¹³. [Then he plugged the hole with a piece of wood.]⁷¹⁴ So he exclaimed, “These people gave us a free ride, yet you have scuttled their boat in order to drown its owners? Truly, you have done a dreadful thing.”⁷¹⁵

Although al-Khadir had warned Moses that he would do certain acts on Allah’s command which Moses would have difficulty accepting, Moses did not expect this obviously treacherous act to be among the things Allah would command al-Khadir to do. Consequently, he reacted to evil as any righteous servant of Allah should react under normal circumstances; he rebuked al-Khadir and pointed out the harmful consequences of his act.

قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ❁ قَالَ لَا تَأْخِذْنِي بِمَا نَسِيتُ وَلَا تُرْهِقْنِي مِنْ أَمْرِي عُسْرًا

72. [Khidr] replied, “Didn’t I tell you that you wouldn’t be able to have patience with me?”

Al-Khadir reminded Moses of the condition which he set for learning from him; a condition which he knew Moses would be unable to keep. Al-Khadir could have kept silent about this knowledge and the events would have been the same. However, he chose to inform Moses in order to emphasize his helplessness and the limits of his knowledge. It also served to further humble Prophet Moses.

قَالَ لَا تَأْخِذْنِي بِمَا نَسِيتُ وَلَا تُرْهِقْنِي مِنْ أَمْرِي عُسْرًا

73. [Moses] pleaded, “[Please] don’t hold me accountable for my forgetfulness, and please don’t be hard on me in this matter.”

When reminded, Moses immediately realized his error, made an excuse for which Allah does not hold his creatures accountable, as Aboo Tharr al-Ghifaree quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

((إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَجَاوَزَ عَنْ أُمَّتِي الْخَطَا وَالنِّسْيَانَ وَمَا اسْتَكْرِهُوا عَلَيْهِ)).

⁷⁰⁷ This is in reference to Moses and al-Khadir. No mention is made of servant from here on although he was probably present. Scholars explained that this was because the story’s focus shifted to its main characters, Moses and al-Khadir, and the servant was now a minor character of no particular significance. (*Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 115)

⁷⁰⁸ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 213, no. 249.

⁷⁰⁹ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 217, no. 250.

⁷¹⁰ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol.4, p. 404, no. 613 and vol. 6, p. 213, no. 249.

⁷¹¹ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 217, no. 250 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1268, no. 5864.

⁷¹² *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 222, no. 251. In another narration, al-Khadir is reported to have said at this point, “O Moses! My knowledge and your knowledge have not decreased Allah’s knowledge any more than this sparrow has decreased the water of the sea with its beak.” (*Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 404, no. 613)

⁷¹³ A tool similar to an axe, with an arched blade.

⁷¹⁴ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 217-8, no. 250.

⁷¹⁵ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 213, no. 249 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1268, no. 5864.

“Indeed, Allah has excused my followers from genuine mistakes, forgetfulness and what they have been forced to do.”⁷¹⁶

Then he humbly begged al-Khadir to excuse him and allow him to continue to travel with him.

فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَا لَقِيَا غُلَامًا فَقَتَلَهُ قَالَ أَقْتَلْتَنِي بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا نُكْرًا ﴿٧٤﴾ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٥﴾ قَالَ إِنْ سَأَلْتَكَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلَا تُصَاحِبْنِي قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِنْ لَدُنِّي عُذْرًا

74-76. Then they both proceeded until they met a boy and [Khidr] killed him. [Moses] exclaimed, “Have you killed an innocent person who killed no one? You have done something really prohibited!” 75 [Khidr] replied: “Didn’t I tell you that you wouldn’t be able to have patience with me?” 76 [Moses] replied, “If I ask you about anything after this, don’t keep me in your company for you have heard enough excuses from me.”

فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَا لَقِيَا غُلَامًا فَقَتَلَهُ

“Then they both proceeded until they met a boy and [Khidr] killed him.” The Prophet (ﷺ) went on to explain, “When they had left the sea, they passed by a [handsome disbelieving]⁷¹⁷ boy playing with other boys. Al-Khadir [grabbed the boy and pinned him down on the ground then]⁷¹⁸ took hold of the boy’s head, [severed it with a knife]⁷¹⁹ and plucked it with his hand like this. (Sufyaan, the sub-narrator, motioned with his fingertips as if he was plucking some fruit.⁷²⁰)”⁷²¹

قَالَ أَقْتَلْتَنِي بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ

[Moses] exclaimed, “Have you killed an innocent person who has killed no one?” The Prophet (ﷺ) went on to say, “Moses [was shocked.] He exclaimed, ‘Have you killed an innocent person who has not killed anyone?’”⁷²² In the final *Sharee’ah*, even if the boy had killed someone, he would not have been executed because a child prior to puberty is not held responsible. The other

⁷¹⁶ Collected by Ibn Maajah and authenticated by al-Albaanee in *Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah*, vol. 1, p. 347, no. 1662.

⁷¹⁷ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 218, no. 250. In *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1399, no. 6434, Ubayy ibn Ka’b reported that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “The young man whom al-Khadir killed was a non-believer by his very nature and had he survived he would have driven his parents to rebellion and disbelief.”

⁷¹⁸ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 218, no. 250.

⁷¹⁹ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 223 no. 251.

⁷²⁰ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 405, no. 613; vol. 6, p. 213, no. 249 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1268, no. 5864. In other narrations, the way in which the boy was killed was described in other ways. For example, in one narration it was stated that, “Al-Khadir grabbed the boy, laid him down and killed him with a knife.” (*Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 218, no. 250) and in yet another, “Al-Khadir grabbed his head and cut it off,” (*Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 223 no. 251). These narrations may be reconciled by combining the descriptions to create the following grizzly scenario: al-Khadir grabbed the boy, pinned him down on the ground and plucked off his head like a fruit by severing it from his body with a knife.

⁷²¹ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 405, no. 613 and vol. 6, p. 213, no. 249.

⁷²² *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 405, no. 613 and vol. 6, p. 213, no. 249.

possibility is that the child was near puberty, as the term *ghulaam* (boy; young man) used in the verse would seem to indicate. Consequently, Moses mentioned the issue of his innocence due to the fact that he had not killed anyone.⁷²³

لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا نُّكَرًا

“You have done something really prohibited!” This statement contains a stronger rebuke than Moses’ earlier admonishment for scuttling the boat in verse 71.

لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا إِمْرًا

“Surely, you have done something dreadful!”

The difference being that and scuttling the boat is that people might have drowned or they might not have drowned. Moses rebuked him for possible consequences. However, in this case, murdering the boy was an evil which had actually taken place.⁷²⁴

قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا

[Khidr] said: **“Didn’t I tell you that you wouldn’t be able to have patience with me?”**

Al-Khadir reminded Moses again saying, ‘Didn’t tell you that you could not remain patient with me?’⁷²⁵ Moses replied, ‘But this act was more grievous than the first one.’⁷²⁶ The Prophet (ﷺ) added here, “May Allah have mercy upon us and upon Moses! Had he shown patience, he would have seen wonderful things, but fear of blame due what his companion did seized him.”⁷²⁷

قَالَ إِنْ سَأَلْتِكَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلَا تُصَاحِبْنِي قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِنْ لَدُنِّي عُذْرًا

[Moses] replied, **“If I ask you about anything after this, don’t keep me in your company for you have heard enough excuses from me.”**

The Prophet (ﷺ) quoted Moses’ response as mentioned in the Qur’aan, “Don’t accompany me if I ask you about anything after this as I have given you sufficient excuse [to abandon me].”⁷²⁸

فَلَا تُصَاحِبْنِي

Moses’ statement, **“don’t keep me in your company,”** indicates that he considered al-Khadir on a higher level than himself, otherwise he would have said, “If I ask you about anything after this, I will not accompany you further.”⁷²⁹

فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَيَا أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَطْعَمَا أَهْلَهَا فَأَبَوْا أَنْ يُضَيِّفُوهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَارًا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَنْقُضَ فَأَقَامَهُ قَالَ لَوْ شِئْتَ

⁷²³ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 118.

⁷²⁴ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 118.

⁷²⁵ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 4, p. 405, no. 613 and vol. 6, p. 213, no. 249. The sub-narrator said, “The second blame was stronger than the first one.” (Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 6, p. 213, no. 249.)

⁷²⁶ Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1268, no. 5864.

⁷²⁷ Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1270, no. 5865.

⁷²⁸ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 4, p. 405, no. 613 and vol. 6, p. 213, no. 249 and Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, pp. 1268-9, no. 5864.

⁷²⁹ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 119.

لَا تَخَذَتْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا ۖ قَالَ هَذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنِكَ سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ
مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا

77-78. Then the two went on, until they came across some inhabitants of a town. When they asked them for food, they refused to offer them any hospitality. Then they found a wall in the town that was about to collapse and [Khidr] rebuilt it. [Moses] suggested, “If you wished, you could surely have taken some payment for it!” 78 [Khidr] replied, “This is where our ways must part. Now I will let you know the meaning of those things that you were unable to patiently bear.”

فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَا أَتَيَا أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَطْعَمَا أَهْلَهَا فَأَبَوْا أَنْ يُضَيِّفُوهُمَا

“Then the two went on, until, when they came across some inhabitants of a town, they asked them for food, but they refused to offer them any hospitality.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) went on to explain, “Then both of them went on till they came to a village. They [went to the place where the villagers congregated and] ⁷³⁰ asked them for food but they refused to entertain them as guests.” ⁷³¹

Those who use this part of the verse to justify begging are in error, for there are sufficient authentic narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ) prohibiting it, except in cases of dire necessity. ⁷³² For example, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “O Qubayṣah, begging under other than these three conditions is *haraam* and the devouring of *haraam*.” ⁷³³ Ibn ‘Umar reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) warned,

((مَا يَزَالُ الرَّجُلُ يَسْأَلُ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لَيْسَ فِي وَجْهِهِ مُزْعَةٌ لَحْمٍ))

“A man will continue to beg people for their money until he comes (before Allah) on the Day of Judgement without a single piece of flesh remaining on his face.” ⁷³⁴

فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَارًا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَنْقُضَ فَأَقَامَهُ قَالَ لَوْ شِئْتَ لَاتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا

“Then they found a wall in the town that was about to collapse and [Khidr] rebuilt it. [Moses] suggested, “If you wished, you could surely have taken some payment for it!”

⁷³⁰ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1270, no. 5865.

⁷³¹ No doubt that this behavior was unhospitable and evidence of a weakness in faith, as the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported by Aboo Sa‘eed al-Khudree to have said,

((مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ))

“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should be kind to his guest.” (*Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. Kitaab al Adab, Baab: man kaana yu‘minu billaah wal yawmil Aakhir and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. . Kitaab: al Eemaan, Baab: al hath alaa ikraam al jaar) [*Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 119.]

⁷³² *Fat’h al-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 418.

⁷³³ *Sahih Muslim* vol.2, p.498, no.2271, *Sunan Abu Dawud* vol.2, p.430, no.1636 and Ibn Khuzaymah (*Mishkat Al-Masabih*, (English Trans.), vol.1, p.389).

⁷³⁴ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, (Arabic-English Trans.), vol.2, p.321, no.553, and *Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.), vol.2, p.479, no.2265. See also *Mishkat Al-Masabih*, (English Trans.), vol.1, p.387).

The Prophet (ﷺ) went on to say, “Then they saw in the town a wall which was just going to collapse⁷³⁵ and al-Khadr repaired it by merely wiping it with his hands.⁷³⁶ Moses said, ‘These are people whom we called on, but they neither gave us food, nor entertained us as guests, yet you have repaired their wall. Had you wished, you could have taken for it wages [that we might have eaten with.’⁷³⁷”⁷³⁸ Moses did not rebuke al-Khadr for repairing the wall nor did he question why he did it, in spite of their lack of hospitality. He merely suggested that they take some compensation for repairing the wall in order to obtain some food and drink and a place to rest.⁷³⁹ The Prophet (ﷺ) added, “Moses’ first excuse was that he had forgotten,⁷⁴⁰ his second excuse caused him to be bound by a stipulation, and the third was done intentionally.”⁷⁴¹

قَالَ هَذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا

[Khidr] replied, “This is where our ways must part. Now I will let you know the meaning of those things that you were unable to patiently bear.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) quoted Al-Khadr’s response as mentioned in the Qur’aan, “Now we must part from each other, and I will tell you the explanation of those things which you could not remain patient for.” The Prophet (ﷺ) added, “I wished that Moses could have remained patient so that Allah could have told us more about their story.”⁷⁴²

أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسَاكِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا
وَكَانَ وَرَاءَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْبًا

79. “As for the boat, it belonged to some poor people working at sea. I wanted to damage it, as there was a king coming behind them who was seizing every ship by force.”

أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسَاكِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ فِي الْبَحْرِ

“As for the boat, it belonged to some poor people working at sea.” Imaam ash-Shaafi‘ee used this verse as proof that the term *faqeer* (poor) referred to one whose condition was worse than that

⁷³⁵ The term used in the Qur’aan is *araada* (it wanted) to fall. This is usually given as evidence of metaphorical usage in the Qur’aan, however, Al ‘Uthaymeen argued that it is not evidence because a wall could have desire which is not strange as the Prophet (ﷺ) said concerning Mount Uhud, “It loves us and we love it.” (*Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. Kitaab az Zakaat, Baab: estimating dates and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. . Kitaab: al Hajj Baab: Uhud jabal yuhubbunaa). And love is a characteristic additional to desire. (*Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 120)

⁷³⁶ Sufyaan, the sub-narrator, pointed with his hands, illustrating how al-Khadr wiped his hands on the wall from the bottom to the top. (*Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 405, no. 613)

⁷³⁷ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 218, no. 250.

⁷³⁸ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 405, no. 613 and vol. 6, p. 214, no. 249.

⁷³⁹ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 120.

⁷⁴⁰ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 404, no. 613 and vol. 6, p. 217, no. 250.

⁷⁴¹ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 217, no. 250.

⁷⁴² *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 405, no. 613 and vol. 6, p. 214, no. 249. Sufyaan, the sub-narrator, said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “May Allah bestow His Mercy on Moses! If he had remained patient, we would have been told more about their case.” (*Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 4, pp. 405-6, no. 613 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1268, no. 5864.)

of *miskeen* (poor).⁷⁴³ Since Allah described these poor people as having a boat and working. Other scholars concluded that the term “poor” here meant “unfortunate” in the same way that a rich man struck by a calamity may be referred to as “the poor man suffered a terrible misfortune.”

فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَاءَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَضْبًا

“I wanted to damage it, as there was a king coming behind them who was seizing every ship by force.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) quoted al-Khadir as saying, “I wished that if the boat passed by the king he would leave it because of its defect and after they had passed by they could repair it and continue to benefit from it.”⁷⁴⁴ He further explained, “When the king came to take the boat, he found it damaged, so he spared it and later on it was repaired with wood.”⁷⁴⁵

What may be deduced from the incident and its explanation is the need for patience in times of difficulty as there was great benefit in what was an apparent misfortune. This is the meaning of the Almighty’s statement:

وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ

“It may be that you dislike something which is good for you.” (Soorah al-Baqarah, 2: 216)⁷⁴⁶

This same principle is expressed in the Western saying, “Every cloud has a silver lining.” It also serves as the foundation for explaining the purpose of evil in a world created by a Good God. The Almighty did not create evil or permit evil to take place for the evil itself, for if He did, He would be an Evil God and not a Good God. Instead, He created evil for the good He knew it would produce. Nothing Allah creates is completely evil. Every evil incident has a good side, for which it was created or allowed to happen.

It is knowledge of this reality about this world which gives the believers confidence to be patient in the most trying times. And in this way, they approach life from a win/win perspective, as the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported by Suhayb ibn Sinaan as saying:

((عَجَبًا لِأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَلَيْسَ ذَاكَ لِأَحَدٍ إِلَّا لِلْمُؤْمِنِ إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ سَرَّاءٌ شَكَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَاءٌ صَبَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ))

“The affair of the believer is amazing! The whole of his life is beneficial, and that is only in the case of the believer. When good times come to him, he is thankful and it is good for him, and when bad times befall him, he is patient and it is also good for him.”⁷⁴⁷

Al-Khadir’s act of damaging the ship comes under the legal maxim known as “Repelling the greater of two evils with the lesser of them.” From this maxim a further major benefit may be

⁷⁴³ *Fat’h al-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 419. This has particular significance when interpreting the verse on the distribution of *zakaah* wherein the Almighty said:

﴿ إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَمِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَرَمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴾

“Indeed *zakaah* is only for the destitute (*fuqaraa*), and poor (*masaakeen*) and those employed to collect (the funds), and to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined towards Islaam; and to free the captives, and for those in debt, and for Allah’s Cause, and for the wayfarer; a duty imposed by Allah. And Allah is the All-Knower, the All-Wise.” (Soorah at-Tawbah, 9: 60)

⁷⁴⁴ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 219, no. 250.

⁷⁴⁵ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1270, no. 5865.

⁷⁴⁶ *Al-Jaami’ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan*, vol. 11, p. 32.

⁷⁴⁷ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1541, no. 7138.

deduced; that of damaging part of something in order to repair the remainder. Medical doctors utilize this principle when they remove skin from someone's thigh to correct a defect in his face or head. Legists also deduced from it that if *waqf* (Islamic trust) property falls into disrepair, some of it may be sold and used to repair the remainder.⁷⁴⁸

As a general principle, it would appear here that the evil Machiavellian principle of “the ends justify the means” is being applied here. However, in this case evil has either taken place or is about to take place and one repels that evil by a lesser evil. Whereas, in the other case, no evil has taken place nor is it about to take place, one simply wants to achieve a good, and uses evil means to achieve it.

Note on Evil: Al-Khadir attributes the act of damaging the boat and the desire to do so to himself saying:

فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا

“I wanted to damage it,”

This is in order to avoid attributing evil directly to God. It is commonly used in the Qur'aan, as in the verses:

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ﴿١﴾ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ

“Say: ‘I seek refuge with the Lord of the Dawn, from the evil of what He has created.’ ”
(Soorah al-Falaq, 113: 1-2)

The Prophet (ﷺ) followed the same principle of etiquette in his statements about Allah. For example, he taught that when one wears a new garment he should say:

((لِلّٰهِمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ أَنْتَ كَسَوْتَنِيْهِ، أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِهِ وَخَيْرِ مَا صُنِعَ لَهُ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهِ وَشَرِّ مَا صُنِعَ لَهُ)).

“O Allah, thanks is due to You, for it is You who has clothed me. I ask You for its benefit and the benefit for which it was made, and seek refuge in You from its evil and the evil for which it was made.”⁷⁴⁹

According to ‘Alee ibn Abee Taalib, he also used to supplicate at the beginning of his prayers saying:

((لَبَّيْكَ وَسَعْدَيْكَ وَالْخَيْرُ كُلُّهُ فِي يَدَيْكَ وَالشَّرُّ لَيْسَ إِلَيْكَ))

“Here I am, I hear your call happy to serve You. All good is in Your Hands, and evil does not stem from You.”⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁴⁸ Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem, pp. 121-2.

⁷⁴⁹ Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. 3, p. 1125, no. 4009 and authenticated in *Saheeh Sunan Abee Daawood*, vol. 2, p. 760, no. 3393.

⁷⁵⁰ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Salaat al musaafireen wa qasruhaa; Baab: du'aa fee salaat al layl wa qiyaamih.

وَأَمَّا الْغُلَامُ فَكَانَ أَبَوَاهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ فَخَشِينَا أَنْ يُرْهَقَهُمَا طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا
فَأَرَدْنَا أَنْ يُبْدِلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُ زَكَاةً وَأَقْرَبَ رُحْمًا ﴿٨٠﴾

80-81. “And as for the boy, his parents were believers, and we feared that he would cause them grief by his rebellion and disbelief. 81 So we wanted their Lord to replace him with a more righteous and merciful [child].”

وَأَمَّا الْغُلَامُ فَكَانَ أَبَوَاهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ

“And as for the boy, his parents were believers,” implies that their son was a disbeliever. Ibn ‘Abbaas said, “As for the boy, he was a disbeliever.”⁷⁵¹

فَخَشِينَا أَنْ يُرْهَقَهُمَا طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا

“And we feared that he would cause them grief by his rebellion and disbelief.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) quoted al-Khadir as saying, “So far as the boy is concerned, he was by his very nature an unbeliever, whereas his parents loved him very much. Had he grown up he would have involved them in wrongdoing and unbelief.”⁷⁵² Daawood ibn ‘Aasim said that their next child was a girl.⁷⁵³

While mentioning the boy, al-Khadir said, ‘We feared...’ which means that he is attributing this knowledge to Allah.

فَأَرَدْنَا أَنْ يُبْدِلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُ زَكَاةً وَأَقْرَبَ رُحْمًا

“So we wanted their Lord to replace him with a more righteous and merciful [child].”

The Prophet (ﷺ) had said: “Allah does not destine for a believer a portion of destiny, except that there is good in it for him.”⁷⁵⁴

Qataadah commented on this incident saying: “Indeed, what Allah destines for the believer which is distasteful for him, is better for him than that which he likes. When the boy had been born to his parents, they were happy and they were sad when the boy had been killed, but if the boy had stayed with them then he would have caused their destruction. So, a human being should be pleased with what Allah has destined for him.”⁷⁵⁵

A believer never suffers a trial except that it is good for him, because if he’s patient with it, then Allah rewards him for it or he gets something better in exchange for it.

The principle of patience in times of difficulty is also applicable in this instance as the Almighty stated:

وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ

“It may be that you dislike something which is good for you.” (Soorah al-Baqarah, 2: 216)

However, this circumstance is different from the previous example. In the previous case concerning the damaged boat, the benefit from apparent evil appeared immediately, as all humans experience at different points in their lives. However, in this case, the benefit would not have appeared to the

⁷⁵¹ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 6, p. 224, no. 251.

⁷⁵² Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1270, no. 5865.

⁷⁵³ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 6, p. 219, no. 250.

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⁷⁵⁵ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p....

parents of the boy in this life. They would have raised their second child, a girl, happily, but the loss of their first child would have remained a sad memory. The benefit would not appear to them until the Day of Judgment when all things become clear, and the divine wisdom in their child's murder would be manifest. This example covers the cases where the benefit from calamity and evil remains unknown to humans. Like the loss of more than 300,000 mostly Muslim lives in the recent Tsunami in Indonesia. Atheists often refer to such natural calamities as evidence that God does not exist, for, as they ask, if He does exist and He is good and all-powerful, why did He not prevent them from occurring.

وَأَمَّا الْجِدَارُ فَكَانَ لِغُلَامَيْنِ يَتِيمَيْنِ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ وَكَانَ تَحْتَهُ كَنْزٌ لَهُمَا وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَالِحًا فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُ عَنْ أَمْرِي ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا

82. “As for the wall, it belonged to two orphans living in the town. There was a treasure under the wall belonging to them and their father was a righteous man. Your Lord wanted them to reach maturity and extract their treasure by your Lord’s grace. And I didn’t do any of it on my own. That is the real meaning of those [things] which you were unable to patiently bear.”

وَأَمَّا الْجِدَارُ فَكَانَ لِغُلَامَيْنِ يَتِيمَيْنِ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ وَكَانَ تَحْتَهُ كَنْزٌ لَهُمَا

Allah quotes al-Khadir’s explanation for repairing the wall saying: “As for the wall, it belonged to two orphans living in the town. There was a treasure under the wall belonging to them.” Some narrated statements of the companions and their students indicate that the treasure was gold, but there is an authentic narration from Aboo Dharr, in which he quotes the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying: “This treasure was in fact a tablet of gold which had enscribed on it some words of divine revelation which said: In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. I am amazed by one who believes in destiny, but becomes sad. And I am amazed at one who is certain about death but is excessively happy. And I am amazed at one who knows this world and its ups and downs, but feels safe in it. There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his Messenger.”⁷⁵⁶

Allah is expressing in the message that was written on the gold tablet under the wall, that if humans truly believe in Allah’s destiny they should not be overcome by sadness. Some amount of sadness is natural and thus permissible, as long as a person does not do or say anything which displeases Allah as a result of his sadness and his feelings of sadness are within acceptable bounds. The tablet also stated that if human beings truly believed in death, they could not be overcome with happiness. Being happy, like being sad, is natural and thus, at certain levels permissible. However,

being so overjoyed that one forgets God is not allowed because such a level of happiness leads to sin and corruption. The third issue addressed by the tablet inscription is that people see the instability of life around them, but they create a measure of security for themselves by assuring themselves that the calamities which happen to others will not happen to them. Consequently, they continue to live lives of disobedience while seeing others around them being punished. In this context, the Almighty said:

أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللَّهِ فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

“Did they then feel secure against the plan of Allah? None feels secure from the plan of Allah except people who are losers.” (Soorah al-A‘raaf, 7: 99)

This statement does not refer to the peace and security that comes from the establishment of Islamic law. It refers to their unfounded belief that their possessions will last forever and they will never experience any calamity.

As to the final statement on the tablet, it confirms that Allah revealed knowledge of the final messenger to the earlier people. Allah stated that in the Qur’aan itself saying:

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ

“Those who follow the Messenger, the illiterate Prophet, whom they find mentioned in writing in the Torah and the Gospel.” (Soorah al-A‘raaf, 7: 157)

This and similar statements in the Qur’aan led scholars of comparative religion to find references in both the Torah (*Deuteronomy*, 18: 15) and Gospels (*John*, 14: 16) confirming it.

وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَالِحًا

Al-Khadir gave the reason for intervening on behalf of the orphans: **“And their father was a righteous man.”** Sa‘eed ibn Jubayr narrated from Ibn ‘Abbaas: “They were taken care of because their father was a righteous man, although it is not stated that they were themselves righteous.”⁷⁵⁷ It was from Allah’s reward for this righteous father that He be kind to his children. This is among the blessings of righteous parents that Allah will protect their children.

فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِنْ رَبِّكَ

“Your Lord wanted them to reach maturity and extract their treasure by your Lord’s grace.”

Here “will” is attributed to Allah, the Exalted, because no one else is able to bring them to the age of full strength and puberty except Allah. In contrast, He said about the boy: **“So we wanted their Lord to replace him with a more righteous and merciful [child].”** and concerning the ship: **“I wanted to damage it.”** And Allah knows best.⁷⁵⁸

If the wall had fallen before the children had reached maturity, the town’s people would have stolen the treasure.

وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُ عَنْ أَمْرِي ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا

“And I didn’t do any of it on my own. That is the real meaning of those [things] which you were unable to patiently bear.”

Al-Khadir clearly states here that he did not do any of the acts from his own reasoning and intelligence, but from revealed knowledge and divine inspiration, because, what took place is beyond human intelligence. Consequently, when Najdah al-Harooree asked Ibn ‘Abbaas about

⁷⁵⁷ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p....

⁷⁵⁸ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p....

killing children, he replied, “If you know about them what al-Khadr knew about the boy, kill them. Otherwise, do not kill them.”⁷⁵⁹

Also, when ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab sought permission from the Prophet (ﷺ) to kill Ibn Sayyaad, while he was a youth, because he thought he was the Dajjaal, the Prophet replied, “If it is him, you will not be given power over him. And if it is not him, there would be no good in killing him.”⁷⁶⁰

LESSONS⁷⁶¹

- 1. Difficulty in acquiring knowledge.** The story contains encouragement to expect the possibility of difficulty in seeking knowledge because what brings happiness could possibly involve difficulty and because Moses was not prevented by his leadership status from reaching the highest levels of seeking knowledge, traveling on land and sea for its sake, meeting the scholars, bearing difficulties and depending on humble following.
- 2. Discussion and arguments regarding knowledge.** The reason for the narrations of Moses and Khadr’s story indicate the permissibility for discussion of knowledge without arrogance and pride and dependence on those who are knowledgeable when there is disagreement. Ibn ‘Abbaas and al-Hurr ibn Qays had disagreed about the person to whom Moses had traveled, was it Khadr or someone else. Ubayy ibn Ka’b narrated this *hadeeth* to them to show the correctness of Ibn ‘Abbaas’ opinion.(SB and SM)
- 3. Conveyance of knowledge.** The story teaches that it is a requirement for scholars to convey what they have learned, especially if it clarifies issues about which people differ. Ubayy narrated this *hadeeth* at Ibn ‘Abbaas’ request and Ibn ‘Abbaas narrated it to refute Nawf al-Bikaalee. Also al-Khadr taught Moses at his request.
- 4. Prioritizing knowledge based activities.** From the narration of the context of the Qur’aanic story, it is clear that Moses gave seeking additional knowledge priority over simply continuing to teach what he knew to his people.
- 5. Mentioning one’s intention.** Moses’ statement that he would not stop his journey until he reached the junction of the two seas indicates the permissibility of expressing one’s intention regarding seeking knowledge to others where there is benefit in it and if it is better than concealing it. For example, in mentioning it, one is able to prepare properly and the nobility of the act is highlighted.
- 6. Khadr’s knowledge of the unseen.** The story clearly demonstrates that al-Khadr knew of the unseen only what Allah had taught him. Consequently, he did not know who Moses was until he asked him, nor did he know the purpose of Moses’ visit until he informed him.
- 7. Two types of knowledge.** The Qur’aanic story indicates that the knowledge Allah teaches His servants is of two types: 1) Knowledge that is acquired through human effort. 2) Knowledge that Allah teaches from Himself. Allah describes al-Khadr as, “One whom I taught knowledge from Myself.”
- 8. Beneficial knowledge.** Knowledge that leads to good was particularly sought by Moses as he said, “May I accompany you so that you can teach me some of what guidance you have been taught?” So knowledge which guides to the good path and warns of the evil path is beneficial knowledge and all besides it is either harmful or it has no benefit.
- 9. Allah’s attribute *al-Muhyee* (the life-giver).** Allah’s ability to give life to the dead is demonstrated in the dead salted fish coming alive and swimming away miraculously in the sea.

⁷⁵⁹ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. .

⁷⁶⁰ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. . and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. .

⁷⁶¹ *Min Qisas al-Maadeen* by Mashoor Hasan, pp. 29-33, *Saheeh Qisas an-Nabawee* by ‘Umar al-Ashqar, pp. 87-90 and *Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan* by as-Sa‘dee, pp.

10. **Keeping servants.** The story indicates the permissibility of serving those who are knowledgeable and of hiring or adopting a servant when residing and when traveling to help fulfill needs and for comfort.
11. **Treatment of servants.** In the story gentleness to servants is demonstrated in Moses not blaming Youshaa' ibn Noon for forgetting to inform him about the disappearance of the fish as he had requested him.
12. **Eating with servants.** It may also be deduced from the story that it is recommended to feed one's servant from one's own food and to eat with them. Moses instructed his servant, "Bring us our lunch," referring to the meal as belonging to them both and that it be brought for them both to eat together.
13. **Obedience to divine law.** Al-Khadir's scuttling of the boat and killing the child was by Allah's command, thus it is not permissible for anyone who does not receive divine revelation to kill or destroy claiming that there is hidden wisdom behind it. This is similar to Prophet Abraham's attempt to slaughter his son, Ishmael. Al-Khadir was not a follower of Moses nor Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). If he were the follower of either of them, he would not have been allowed to go beyond divine law revealed to them.
14. **Information from a single reliable narrator.** The context of the *hadeeth* narrations prove the validity of acting on information conveyed by a single reliable person (*khabar al-waahid*) in issues of 'aqeedah. Ibn 'Abbaas accepted Ubayy's individual narration and the students of Ibn 'Abbaas accepted his individual narration.
15. **Overseas travel.** Moses' journey in this story contains a recommendation for travel overseas in search of knowledge or additional knowledge. Although the commonly quoted *hadeeth* "Seek knowledge even unto China," is fabricated, meaning that it is sinful to attribute it to the Prophet (ﷺ), the concept of traveling to the ends of the earth for useful knowledge is sound.
16. **Provisions for journeys.** Carrying provisions during journeys is a *sharee'ah* requirement. It is not preferable or permissible to set out on journeys and deliberately leave provisions behind based on the claim that one is trusting in Allah.
17. **Humility in the quest for knowledge.** Moses was keen on meeting al-Khadir because of his humility, and he sought to learn from him in order to teach his people to learn from his manners and as a reminder to whoever praises himself to be humble.
18. **Humility to one's teacher.** The way in which Moses spoke to his teacher in the story indicates the necessity of humility from those who are senior to whomever they learn from. This is demonstrated by having good manners with one's teacher and talking to him in the best manner as Moses did with al-Khadir. Moses said, "May I follow you ..."
19. **Senior scholars can learn from those below them.** The story shows that although Moses was senior to al-Khadir, he eagerly tried to learn from him. Thus, eminent scholars can learn from junior scholars in fields outside their expertise as well as in their own fields.
20. **Attribution of knowledge to Allah.** When Moses requested al-Khadir to teach him "something of that knowledge which you were taught," he recognized that al-Khadir's knowledge was from Allah.
21. **Patience in seeking knowledge.** It is from the etiquette of a student to be patient with his teacher and to obey his instructions as shown by Moses and his teacher al-Khadir in the story. One who does not have patience and persistence will lose much knowledge as indicated by al-Khadir's explanation of why Moses would not be able to learn from him.
22. **Knowledge is the foundation of patience.** Al-Khadir indicated that the main reason why Moses would not be able to be patient was because of his lack of knowledge. He said, "How can you have patience with something you don't understand?" Consequently, having full knowledge and awareness of what one is patient for is among the main means of achieving

patience. Knowledge that whatever Allah destines is for good gives the believers strength to be patient during times of calamity and trial.

23. **Disallowance of questions.** The story indicates that it is permissible for a teacher to prohibit questions until after his explanations are complete. The teacher must consider the level of his students and their circumstances in order to determine whether to take questions during a class, after the class or both.
24. **The Wisdom of Allah's acts.** The acts which al-Khadir did are purely from Allah's destiny. Allah made them take place on al-Khadir's hands so that the believers could use them as evidence of the subtle benefits in what Allah has destined and that some things he might detest strongly but it is beneficial for his religion as in the case of the boy, or beneficial for his worldly life as in the case of the boat. So He made them examples of His gentleness and kindness so they would know and be completely pleased with the detestible elements of destiny.
25. **Human reason and Allah's will.** The hidden benefits of al-Khadir's acts also indicate that Allah does whatever He wishes in His dominion and decides for His creation as He wishes with regard to what will benefit or harm. Thus, there is no place for human reason with respect to His acts, and no valid opposition can be raised against His laws, instead it is obligatory for the creation to be pleased and accepting of His choice.
26. **The paradoxes of life.** There are paradoxes in life where apparent loss is in fact a gain and what appears to be cruelty is in fact mercy and what appears to be returning good for evil is in fact justice and not generosity.
27. **Hired help.** The legality of hiring help is affirmed in Moses' suggestion to al-Khadir to collect wages for fixing the wall.
28. **The fulfillment of conditions.** The story contains evidence that one may act according to conditions set. Al-Khadir ended his journey with Moses after his last promise not to question was broken.
29. **The attribution of evil to Allah.** From the statements of al-Khadir regarding his acts, it may be deduced that the proper etiquette regarding Allah and evil is to not attribute it directly to Him.
30. **The attribution of evil to Satan.** When Yousha' forgot to inform Moses and was questioned, he attributed his forgetting to Satan, though everything which takes place is according to Allah's decision (*Qadar*). Evil is attributed to Satan from the perspective of his beautifying it and his plotting it.
31. **The accountability of one who is forgetful.** The principle that one who forgets is not held to account for what he forgot can be deduced from Moses' statement, "[Please] don't hold me accountable for my forget-fulness." This is true whether what is forgotten is from Allah's rights or the rights of his servants.
32. **Repelling a greater evil with a lesser evil.** The permissibility of committing the lesser of two evils to repel the greater can be deduced from al-Khadir's scuttling of the boat to avoid its capture and his killing the boy to protect his parents from being driven into disbelief.
33. **The destruction of a portion of property in order to save the majority.** This legal maxim is found in al-Khadir's damaging a part of the boat to save the whole craft.
34. **Requesting food and lodging.** That it is allowable to request food in a foreign country or town if there is no place for the sale of food as indicated in the story of the stingy village and the falling wall.
35. **Is Khadir eternal?** The claim that al-Khadir is alive until today is false and without any authentic narrations to support it. If he had remained alive until the Prophet's time, he would have come to him and followed him⁷⁶² because he was sent to the world. Leading scholars

⁷⁶² The Prophet (ﷺ) said this regarding Moses when he saw 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab reading from the Torah. (*Irwa' al-Ghaleel*, no. 159.)

- like, Ibn al-Qayyim,⁷⁶³ Ibn Katheer⁷⁶⁴, and Ibn al-Jawzee⁷⁶⁵ have pointed out that the traditions indicating al-Khadir's continual life are all inauthentic.
36. **The refutation of scholars.** There is a lesson in the story that one should refrain from refuting leading scholars and instead seek to find out from them their positions regarding in which issues one feels them to be wrong. The story showed that although Moses viewed al-Khadir's acts as wrong, they were, in fact, correct.
 37. **Judging by the apparent.** Matters are normally judged by what is apparent regarding rulings concerning things of this life. Consequently, Moses condemned al-Khadir for scuttling the ship and killing the boy due to their apparent evil. However, Moses' situation was unique and he should have been patient until the apparent evil was explained to him by his teacher.
 38. **The wealth of a poor person.** The Qur'aan's reference to the owners of the boat as poor indicates that a person may be considered poor while having wealth that does not fulfill his needs.
 39. **Admonition of companions.** It may be deduced from the story that one should not abandon his companion without admonishing him and ensuring that he does not have an excuse or justification for his actions.
 40. **Allah's protection of the righteous.** The story contains references to aid being given to the righteous and their offspring reiterating a general principle mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'aan as: "If you help/support Allah's religion, Allah will help/support you." (*Soorah Muhammad*, 47: 7)
 41. **Service of the righteous.** The reason given for fixing the wall was that the father of the boys was righteous indicating that service of the righteous or those connected to them is better than service to others.
 42. **Belief in the destiny.** It was written on the golden tablets that Allah was amazed by the sadness of those who claim to believe in destiny. This indicates that belief in destiny is not just an intellectual exercise but an internalized acceptance of Allah's decisions in our lives. True belief in destiny prevents a person from becoming extremely sad, which is one of the reasons why Islaam disallows mourning for the dead for more than three days.
 43. **The remembrance of death.** The Prophet (ﷺ) encouraged the regular remembrance of death and called it the pleasure destroyer.⁷⁶⁶

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ ذِي الْقَرْنَيْنِ قُلْ سَأَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا

83. They will ask you about Thul-Qarnayn. Tell them, "I will recite something of his story to you."

⁷⁶³ *Al-Manaar al-Muneef*, p. 67.

⁷⁶⁴ *Al-Bidaayah wan-Nihaayah*, vol. 1, p. 334.

⁷⁶⁵ *Al-Mawdoo'aat*, vol. 1, p. 197.

⁷⁶⁶ The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Remember the destroyer of pleasures often." (Sunan at-Tirmidhee, no. 2307 and authenticated in *Saheeh al-Jaami' as-Sagheer*, no. 1210) He also said: "I used to forbid you from visiting graves, but now you should visit them, for it softens the heart, fills the eyes with tears and reminds one of the Hereafter. But don't say anything false." (al-Mustadrak, 1: 376 and authenticated in *Saheeh al-Jaami' as-Sagheer*, no. 4584 and *Saheeh Sunan an-Nasaa'ee*, vol. 2, p. 436, no. 1922. See also *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 2, p. 463, no. 2131 and *Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 2, p. 919, no. 3229)

From verse 83 to verse 99 Allah reveals the story of Thul-Qarnayn

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنْ ذِي الْقَرْنَيْنِ

“They ask you about Thul-Qarnayn.”

The narration that the story of the people of the cave and Thul-Qarnayn were revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) because the Makkans had questioned him at the instigation of Jews from Madeenah is incorrect as mentioned earlier. However, the format of the verse indicates that the Prophet (ﷺ) was questioned about Thul-Qarnayn.

Fakhrud-Deen ar-Raazee⁷⁶⁷ held that Thul-Qarnayn was Alexander the Great (356-323BC) without a doubt because the books of history confirm that he alone had conquered from the east to the west⁷⁶⁸, but the description of Thul-Qarnayn in the Qur’aan indicates that he was a righteous follower of the message of the prophets. He confirmed Allah’s oneness and enforced Allah’s laws, whereas Alexander was a Greek idol worshipper, according to Greek historical records. Although he was very powerful and had a large kingdom, which spread from the east to the west, and there are some other similarities, there is no conclusive evidence to determine exactly who Thul-Qarnayn was historically.

‘Alee ibn Abee Taalib was asked about Thul-Qarnayn and he explained that he was a righteous servant of Allah who called people to the oneness of Allah and in the course of doing so he was struck on the top of his head⁷⁶⁹ and he died. However, Allah brought him back to life and he continued to spread Allah’s word until he was struck on his head again and died. As a result he was called Thul-Qarnayn.⁷⁷⁰

It is also said that he was called Thul-Qarnayn because he reached the east and west from which the top (*qarn*) of the sun rises and sets.⁷⁷¹ Others said it metaphorically referred to a vast dominion spreading from the east to the west as the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported by Ibn ‘Umar to have stated concerning the rising sun:

((إِذَا طَلَعَ حَاجِبُ الشَّمْسِ فَادْعُوا الصَّلَاةَ حَتَّى تَبْرُزَ وَإِذَا غَابَ حَاجِبُ الشَّمْسِ فَادْعُوا الصَّلَاةَ حَتَّى تَغِيبَ وَلَا تَحْيَيْنُوا بِصَلَاتِكُمْ طُلُوعَ الشَّمْسِ وَلَا غُرُوبَهَا فَإِنَّهَا تَطْلُعُ بَيْنَ قَرْنَيْ شَيْطَانٍ))

“If the upper edge of the sun appears, leave formal prayer until it rises completely. If the lower edge of the sun disappears (below the horizon), leave formal prayer until it sets completely. Do not make your prayers while the sun is rising nor while it is setting because it rises between the horns of Satan.”⁷⁷²

⁷⁶⁷ Fakhrud-Deen ibn ‘Alee ar-Raazee (1150-1210CE) was a Shaafi’ee scholar who excelled in the grammatical sciences as well as philosophy. His commentary, *Mafaateeh al-Ghayb*, was like an encyclopedia of natural sciences in which he evaluates the opinions of the astronomers, scientists and philosophers using their own terminology. (*Usool at-Tafseer*, p. 59)

⁷⁶⁸ Ar-Raazee mentioned that there was a problem in that Alexander’s teacher was Aristotle and he followed his school of thought. Thus, Allah’s honoring him would require the judgment that Aristotle’s school of thought was correct which is impossible. (*Fat’hul-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 423) Muhammad Yusuf Ali included in his translation of the Qur’aan a long appendix of evidences to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt, in his opinion, that Thul-Qarnayn was Alexander the Great.

⁷⁶⁹ The term *qarn* was used in the narration means “the top of the head”.

⁷⁷⁰ Collected by at-Tabaree in his *tafseer* (vol. 8, p. 271) in two chains of narration, the first of which has a chain of reliable narrators and the second’s chain is authentic. (*Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-‘Azeem*, vol. 4, p. 242)

⁷⁷¹ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p. .

⁷⁷² *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. , and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. ,

There are other explanations given for his title but they are just suppositions and if we are to look at the statement of ‘Alee ibn Abee Taalib it is the strongest because he was a companion of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his narration is authentic.

قُلْ سَأَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا

“Tell them, “I will recite something of his story to you.”

Allah told the Prophet (ﷺ) to tell say that he would narrate to them about him what they could reflect on and benefit from as a lesson. As to other details of his life, he would not narrate them.⁷⁷³

إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَآتَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا

84. Indeed I established him in the land and gave him a way to do everything.

إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ

“Indeed I established him in the land,” means that Allah gave him great power and all the might that kings could have. So he gained dominion over the east and the west, all countries and their kings submitted to him, and all the nations; Arab and non-Arab, served him.⁷⁷⁴

وَآتَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا

“And I gave him a way to do everything.” *Sabab* (way) has been interpreted and translated in different ways by different translators, but Ibn ‘Abbaas who is considered the leading interpreter of the Qur’aan, translated *sabab* as “knowledge”, so the meaning here is “vast knowledge”.

Concerning Queen Bilqees, Allah quoted the Hudhud⁷⁷⁵ bird as saying:

إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ أَمْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

“I found a woman ruling over them who was given all things.” (Soorah an-Naml, 27: 23) meaning that she was given all things that monarchs like herself may acquire. Similarly, Allah gave Thul-Qarnayn the means to do all things, meaning the means and power to conquer all areas, regions and countries, to defeat enemies, suppress the kings of the earth and humiliate the idolaters.

He was given all that a man like him would need. And Allah knows best.⁷⁷⁶

Habeeb ibn Hamzah related that he was with ‘Alee ibn Abee Taalib when someone asked him about how Thul-Qarnayn reached the east and the west. He replied, “Glory be to Allah! He submitted the clouds to him, destined for him what he needed and opened His hand for him.”⁷⁷⁷

⁷⁷³ Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan, p. 564.

⁷⁷⁴ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. , p. .

⁷⁷⁵ The hoopoe (Ar. Hudhud) is a salmon-pink bird with a long downcurved bill, a large crest, and black-and-white wings and tail. (Pocket Oxford English Dictionary, p. 435)

⁷⁷⁶ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. , p

⁷⁷⁷ Narrated by Ad-Diyaa al-Maqdasee in al-Mukhtaar (p. 409) and authenticated by its editor.(Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Azeem, p. 243)

فَأَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا * حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ
حَمِئَةٍ وَوَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا قَوْمًا قُلْنَا يَاذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِنَّمَا أَنْ تُعَذِّبَ وَإِمَّا أَنْ
تَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ حُسْنًا

85-86. Then he followed one such way 86 until he reached the sunset, he found the sun setting in a spring of muddy water. And he found some people nearby. I instructed, “Thul-Qarnayn, either you punish them or treat them with kindness.”

فَأَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا

After describing the basic situation of Thul-Qarnayn, Allah began to describe one of his journeys: “So he followed one such way,” meaning that he benefited from the means that Allah gave him and traveled through the land. Unlike some people who are given means but do not benefit from them.⁷⁷⁸

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ

“Until he reached the sunset,” meaning that he followed a route until he reached the furthest point that could be reached in the direction of the sun’s setting, which is the west of the earth. As for the idea of his reaching the place in the sky where the sun sets, this is something impossible.⁷⁷⁹ The Spanish commentator of the thirteenth century, al-Qurtubee (d. 1273CE), said, “It is not intended that he reached and touched the actual sun in the west and in the east because it spins with the sky around the earth without touching it. And it is too big to enter any earthly spring; in fact it is many times bigger than the earth. The intended meaning here is that he reached the farthest point of civilization to the west and to the east.”⁷⁸⁰

Interpreters of the past and present explain that this meant that Thul-Qarnayn reached the end of the earth to the west after which lies the Atlantic Ocean because he did not have the means to travel further.⁷⁸¹ However, there is no solid evidence to limit his journey here, as researchers of the twentieth century have established the possibility of ocean-going reed boats from Egypt reaching America in pharaonic times.⁷⁸² Thus, the furthest point west could have been the Americas and the ocean beyond it the Pacific Ocean.

وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ

“He found the sun setting in a spring of muddy water,” meaning that the sun appeared to him to be setting in the ocean. This is something which everyone who goes to the coast can see: it looks as if the sun is setting in the sea, but in fact it never leaves its fixed orbit. Hami’ah is, according to one view, derived from the word hama’ah, which means mud, as in the verse:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَكَةِ إِنِّي خَلَقُ بَشَرًا مِّنْ صَلْصَلٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ

⁷⁷⁸ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 126.

⁷⁷⁹ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p.

⁷⁸⁰ *Al-Jaami’ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan*, vol. 11, p. 43.

⁷⁸¹ *Fat’hul-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 425, *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 127, *Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 138

⁷⁸² Thor Vidal...

“Remember when your Lord said to the angels: ‘I am going to create a man from dried clay of smooth mud (*hama*).” (Soorah al-Hijr, 15: 28)

Ibn ‘Abbaas and Mujaahid were also of the opinion that *hami’ah* meant “black mud”.⁷⁸³ In this case the verse would mean that the sun appeared to set in a spring of black mud.

Ibn ‘Aamir, ‘Aasim, Hamzah, and al-Kisaa’ee recite *hami’ah* as *haamiyah* (hot)⁷⁸⁴ in which case the verse would mean that it appeared to set in a hot spring.

All of these meanings are acceptable as descriptions of the ocean. From the shore it looks black and in some places due to silt deposits it can look muddy, or due to turbulence, and at the equator the water can be hot at midday.

وَوَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا قَوْمًا

“And he found some people nearby,” meaning a nation.⁷⁸⁵ No details are given about which nation they were as the focus of the story is on the character of Thul-Qarnayn himself.

قُلْنَا يَاذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِمَّا أَنْ تُعَذِّبَ وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ حُسْنًا

The Almighty’s statement: **“I instructed, ‘Thul-Qarnayn, either you punish them or treat them with kindness,”** means that after Allah gave him victory and power over them, He gave him the choice as to how he would treat the defeated nation; if he wanted to, he could kill the men and take the women and children captive, or if he wanted to, he could set them free, with or without a ransom.⁷⁸⁶

وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ حُسْنًا

According to Imaam ash-Shawqaanee the phrase **“or treat them with kindness,”** meant calling them to the truth and teaching them the revealed law.⁷⁸⁷

In either case, the choice that Allah gave him was actually a test for him to see if he would exploit his position as conquerors usually do or he would be just according to divine law which he was supposed to be following. Queen Bilqees alluded to this common practice among rulers saying:

قَالَتْ إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا وَجَعَلُوا أَعِزَّةَ أَهْلِهَا أَذِلَّةً وَكَذَلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ

“She said: ‘Indeed, when kings enter a town they despoil it, making the most honorable among its people the lowest. And that is what they do.” (Soorah an-Naml, 27: 34)

His justice and faith became apparent in the ruling he pronounced.⁷⁸⁸

قَالَ أَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهُ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا نُكَرًا

⁷⁸³ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. and authenticated in Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-‘Azeem, vol. 4, p. 245, ftn. 167.

⁷⁸⁴ Fat’hul-Qadeer, vol. 3, p. 425.

⁷⁸⁵ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p.

⁷⁸⁶ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. . This was similar to the choice that Prophet Muhammad () faced regarding prisoners after the Battle of Badr. On that occasion, the Prophet (ﷺ) chose the latter, and Allah rebuked him for not choosing the former.

⁷⁸⁷ Fat’hul-Qadeer, vol. 3, p. 425.

⁷⁸⁸ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p.

87. He replied, “I will punish whoever does wrong. Then he will be returned to his Lord Who will give him a terrible punishment.”

قَالَ أَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهُ

Thul-Qarnayn replied, “I will punish whoever does wrong.” meaning that he would execute, according to Qataadah, those who persisted in *kufr* (disbelief) and in associating others in worship with their Lord⁷⁸⁹ “*Zulm* wrong” in Qur’aanic terminology could refer to *shirk* as well as any other acts of wrong doing, however, in this context *shirk* appears more obvious,⁷⁹⁰ as the sage, Luqmaan, told his son:

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَنُ لِبْنِهِ ۖ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ ۚ يَبْنَىٰ لَا تَشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

“And remember when Luqmaan said to his son while advising him: ‘O my son! Do not worship others along with Allah. Indeed, *shirk* is a great wrong.’” (Soorah Luqmaan, 31: 13)

ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا نُكْرًا

“Then he will be returned to his Lord Who will give him a terrible punishment,” meaning a severe, far-reaching and painful punishment in the next life. This implies a confirmation of the Hereafter and its rewards and punishments.⁷⁹¹

وَأَمَّا مَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُ جَزَاءٌ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَسَنَقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا

88. “But whoever believes and does righteous deeds will receive the best reward and I will speak to him gently.”

وَأَمَّا مَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا

Thul-Qarnayn went on to explain how he would treat those who responded to his call to Allah. He said, “But whoever believes and does righteous deeds,” meaning that whoever believed and followed Thul-Qarnayn in his call to worship Allah alone without any partner or associate,⁷⁹² and did the deeds required by that belief.

فَلَهُ جَزَاءٌ الْحُسْنَىٰ

One who believes and does righteous deeds “will receive the best reward,” meaning that they are guaranteed the greatest reward which is the garden of paradise in the Hereafter with Allah.⁷⁹³
The Almighty said:

⁷⁸⁹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p.

⁷⁹⁰ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 127.

⁷⁹¹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p.

⁷⁹² Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p.

⁷⁹³ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p.

لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ

“For those who have done good is the best reward and something additional.” (Soorah Yunus, 10: 26) The Prophet (ﷺ) explained that “the best reward” was paradise and “something additional” was permission to see Allah’s countenance.⁷⁹⁴

There are two points which should be noted here: The first is that Thul-Qarnayn followed the divinely revealed formula of linking belief with righteous deeds. Nowhere in the Qur’aan is belief mentioned by itself. It is always followed by some righteous deed. The reason for this is that belief without righteous deeds may easily be knowledge of belief and not real belief. On the other hand, righteous deeds without belief are usually for ulterior motives like, showing off to gain the admiration of others, or to gain influence over others.

The second point is that the reward for good in the next life is the true reward which the believer should strive for. In this life good may appear to be rewarded by evil, and evil may appear to be rewarded with good. Those who seek their reward in this life will be disappointed, because the basis of this life’s test is belief in the unseen and submission to the commandments of the unseen God.

وَسَنَقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا

“And I will speak to him gently.” Mujaahid said that this meant gentle words.⁷⁹⁵ Words free from any harshness or difficulty. The Prophet (ﷺ) described the teachings of Islaam in the same terms saying:

It is also interesting to note that Thul-Qarnayn warned the disbelievers about two issues; that he would punish them and that they would return to their Lord and be punished even more severely. He also made two promises to the believers; one of paradise in the next life and the other of kind treatment in this world. In the case of the disbelievers, he began with his own punishment for them in this life, then added to it Allah’s punishment. While, in the case of the believer, he began with Allah’s reward first then added to it his good treatment in this life. The difference between the two is obvious in that the goal of the Believer is paradise which is more beloved than gentle words. On the other hand, punishment in this life is lighter and will precede punishment in the next. Furthermore, the disbeliever fears the worldly punishment more than punishment in the Hereafter because he does not believe in the latter.⁷⁹⁶

ثُمَّ أَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا ۖ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَطْلُعُ عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ لَّمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهَا سِتْرًا

89-90. Then he followed another way 90 until he reached the sunrise, where he found [the sun] rising on a people for whom I had not provided any shield against it.

ثُمَّ أَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا ۖ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ الشَّمْسِ

⁷⁹⁴ Sahih Muslim, vol., p., no., Kitaab: Eemaan, Baab: Ithbaat ru'yatul mu'mineen fil aakhirah rabbahum

⁷⁹⁵ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p.

⁷⁹⁶ Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem, pp. 128-9.

“Then he followed another way until he reached the sunrise,” Allah tells us that Thul-Qarnayn then traveled from the farthest point west on the earth towards the farthest point east. The east and west are mentioned and not north and south because most civilizations of the earth are concentrated between the east and the west. As a result, when the Prophet (ﷺ) spoke of the whole earth, he used the same expression:

عَنْ ثَوْبَانَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ زَوَى لِي الْأَرْضَ فَرَأَيْتُ مَشَارِقَهَا وَمَغَارِبَهَا وَإِنَّ أُمَّتِي سَيَبْلُغُ مُلْكُهَا مَا زُوِيَ لِي مِنْهَا

Thawbaan quoted Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying: “Indeed, Allah has rolled up the earth for me and I saw its easts and its wests. Indeed, the dominion of my nation will reach as far as what was rolled up for me.”⁷⁹⁷

North and south were not mentioned as the farthest point north and south is completely covered in snow and ice and virtually no one lives there.⁷⁹⁸ Whenever he came across a nation, he conquered them and invited them to worship God alone as he did on his way west. If they obeyed him, he treated them honorably and gave them status; otherwise he would humiliate them and take their wealth and possessions. From every defeated nation he would take what his armies needed to fight the next nation.⁷⁹⁹ When he reached the place where the sun rises, as Allah says,

وَجَدَهَا تَطْلُعُ عَلَى قَوْمٍ لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهَا سِتْرًا

“He found it rising on a people for whom I had not provided any shield against it.” They had neither houses nor clothing; they were barefooted and naked.⁸⁰⁰ Qataadah said that they had no caves or homes to protect them from the sun because buildings would not remain standing in their land, so they lived in underground caverns.⁸⁰¹ Some of the early commentators stated that this referred to the Zenj, people of East Africa (now known as Zanzibar), some of who used to walk around virtually naked.⁸⁰²

كَذَلِكَ وَقَدْ أَحَطْنَا بِمَا لَدَيْهِ خُبْرًا

91. [He left them] as they were. And I completely knew everything about him.

كَذَلِكَ

There is no detail as to what Thul-Qarnayn did with these people. The phrase “*kathaalika* (like that, or in that way) could mean “[He left them] as they were,” or it could mean “The sun rose on a people similar to those on whom it set and Thul-Qarnayn treated them as he treated those in the far west with respect to punishing the disbelieving wrongdoers and rewarding the righteous believers.”

⁷⁹⁷ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Al Fitan wa ashraat as-Saa’ah; Baab: Halaak hathihi ‘l-ummah

⁷⁹⁸ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 129.

⁷⁹⁹ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p.

⁸⁰⁰ *Fat’hul-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 426.

⁸⁰¹ *Al-Jaami’ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan*, vol. 11, p. 460.

⁸⁰² *Tafseer ‘Abdur-Razzaaq*, vol. 2, p. 412.

وَقَدْ أَحْطْنَا بِمَا لَدَيْهِ خُبْرًا

“And I completely knew everything about him.” Mujaahid and As-Suddee said, “This means that Allah knew everything about Thul-Qarnayn and his army, and nothing was hidden from Him, even though they came from so many different nations and lands. For,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ

“Truly, nothing is hidden from Allah, in the earth or in the heaven.” (Soorah Aal ‘Imraan, 3: 5)⁸⁰³

ثُمَّ أَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا ﴿٩٢﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمَا قَوْمًا
لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلًا

92-93. Then he followed yet another way 93 until he reached a path between two great mountains, at the foot of which he found a people who scarcely understood a word.

ثُمَّ أَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا

“Then he followed yet another way,” opposite to both the east and the west, meaning, he traveled in the direction of the north.⁸⁰⁴

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ

“Until he reached a path between two great mountains,” meaning that he followed a third path north until he reached a valley between two enormous mountains.

وَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمَا قَوْمًا لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلًا

The Almighty explained that “at the foot of the mountains he found a (nation of) people who scarcely understood a word.” Some scholars held that the location of this nation was behind the two mountains while others were of the opinion that it was in front of the mountains.⁸⁰⁵ The word *yafqahoona* (understand) can also be recited *yufqihoona* (make others understand) according to Hamzah and al-Kasaa’ee. Together, the two recitations indicate that they could neither understand what others said nor could others understand what they said.⁸⁰⁶ Thul-Qarnayn and his people had great difficulty in understanding their speech, because their language was strange and this nation had probably been isolated from other people for a long period of time.⁸⁰⁷

⁸⁰³ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p.

⁸⁰⁴ *Fat’hul-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 429.

⁸⁰⁵ The term *doonihimaa* could imply either of the interpretations. *Fat’hul-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 429.

⁸⁰⁶ *Al-Jaami‘ li Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 11, p. 47 and *Fat’hul-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 429.

⁸⁰⁷ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p.

قَالُوا يَا ذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِنَّ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَهَلْ
نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجًا عَلَى أَنْ تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ سَدًّا

94. They said, “Thul-Qarnayn! Truly, the Gog and the Magog people are corrupting the land. Can we pay you tribute to erect a barrier between them and us?”

قَالُوا يَا ذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ

“They said, ‘Thul-Qarnayn,’” Scholars of *tafseer* surmised that Thul-Qarnayn’s ability to understand their speech was among the means bestowed on him by Allah. Others said that this was said to their translators.⁸⁰⁸

إِنَّ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

“Truly, the Gog and the Magog people are corrupting the land.”

The Gog and the Magog (Ar. Ya’jooj and Ma’jooj) are nations of human beings from among the progeny of Adam, peace be upon him, as stated by the Prophet (ﷺ) in the following narration from Aboo Sa’eed al-Khudree:

يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى يَا آدَمُ فَيقُولُ لَبَّيْكَ وَسَعْدَيْكَ وَالْخَيْرُ فِي يَدَيْكَ فَيقُولُ أَخْرِجْ
بَعَثَ النَّارِ قَالَ وَمَا بَعَثَ النَّارِ قَالَ مِنْ كُلِّ أَلْفٍ تِسْعَ مِائَةٍ وَتِسْعَةً وَتِسْعِينَ فَعِنْدَهُ
يَشِيبُ الصَّغِيرُ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمَلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَارَى وَمَا هُمْ
بِسُكَارَى وَلَكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَأَيْنَا ذَلِكَ الْوَاحِدُ قَالَ أَبَشَرُوا
فَإِنَّ مِنْكُمْ رَجُلًا وَمِنْ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ أَلْفًا ثُمَّ قَالَ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ إِنِّي أَرْجُو
أَنْ تَكُونُوا رُبْعَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ فَكَبَّرْنَا

“Allah will say, ‘O Adam.’ Adam will respond, ‘Here I am happily at Your service and all good is in Your Hands.’ Allah will say, ‘Send forth the group of the Hellfire.’ Adam will ask, ‘What is the group of Hellfire?’ Allah will reply, ‘Nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand.’ At that time the hair of young children will turn grey, every pregnant woman will drop her load and people will appear drunk but they won’t be drunk because Allah’s punishment is severe.’ The companions asked, “Which one of us will be the one?” He replied, “Good news for all of you! It will be one person from among you and one thousand from Gog and the Magog.” Then he said, “By the One in whose Hand my soul lies, I am hoping that you will be one quarter of the people of paradise.” We exclaimed, “Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest)”⁸⁰⁹

⁸⁰⁸ *Fat’hul-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 429.

⁸⁰⁹ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , no. , p. Kitaab: Ahaadeeth al Anbiyaa; Baab: Qissah Ya’jooj and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Eemaan ; Baab: Yaqoolu ‘Ilaahu li Aadam akhrij ba’t an-Naar.

The Prophet (ﷺ) gave a vivid description of the physical appearance of Gog and the Magog in the following narration:

عَنِ ابْنِ حَرْمَلَةَ عَنْ خَالَتِهِ قَالَتْ خُطِبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ عَاصِبٌ إِصْبَعُهُ مِنْ لَدَغَةِ عَقْرَبٍ فَقَالَ إِنَّكُمْ تَقُولُونَ لَا عَدُوَّ وَإِنَّكُمْ لَا تَزَالُونَ تُقَاتِلُونَ عَدُوًّا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ يَأْجُوجُ وَمَأْجُوجُ عِرَاضُ الْوُجُوهِ صِغَارُ الْعُيُونِ شُهْبُ الشِّعَافِ مِنْ كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَنْسِلُونَ كَأَنَّ وُجُوهُهُمْ الْمَجَانُّ الْمُطْرَقَةُ

Harmalah narrated from his maternal aunt that while Allah's Messenger's (ﷺ) finger was bandaged from a scorpion sting he gave a sermon in which he said, "Indeed, you say that there are no more enemies. However, you will surely continue fighting enemies until the Gog and the Magog come, with broad faces, small eyes, white hair on the tops of their heads, swarming from every direction, as if their faces were shields covered with skin."⁸¹⁰

The Prophet (ﷺ) also described the Turks in a similar way in the following narration:⁸¹¹

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى تُقَاتِلُوا التُّرْكَ صِغَارَ الْأَعْيُنِ حُمْرُ الْوُجُوهِ ذُلْفَ الْأُنُوفِ كَأَنَّ وُجُوهُهُمْ الْمَجَانُّ الْمُطْرَقَةُ وَلَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى تُقَاتِلُوا قَوْمًا نِعَاهُمْ الشَّعْرُ

Aboo Hurayrah quoted Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying, "The last hour will not come before you fight with the Turks who have small eyes, white faces, short noses, whose faces look as if they were shields covered with skin and before you fight a people whose sandals are made from hair."⁸¹²

Because of the similarity in description, some Qur'aanic commentators felt that they must have been the Mongols who are related to the Turks. During the time of Genghis Khan (1162-1227) they came out of Mongolia like a devastating tidal wave, annihilating everything in their way and massacring people until streets and rivers were flowing with the blood of their victims. They spread havoc from their homeland in Mongolia all the way down to Baghdad. Consequently, some of the commentators concluded that these savage hordes must have been the Gog and the Magog. However, there are other a number of other detailed accounts of major incidents that Prophet (ﷺ) gave concerning the Gog and the Magog which have not taken place as yet. Thus, it is safe to assume that the Mongols could not possibly have been the Gog and the Magog.

Descriptions of the Gog and Magog in Jewish and Christian literature are often contradictory. Consequently, there is no clear picture of exactly who they are. "Gog, in the Bible, is a hostile power ruled by Satan that will manifest itself immediately before the end of the world (Rev. 20). In the biblical passage in Revelation and in other Christian and Jewish apocalyptic literature, Gog is joined by a second hostile force, Magog; but elsewhere (Ezek. 38; Gen. 10:2)

⁸¹⁰ Musnad Ahmad, no. 21299 (CD). There are other descriptions found in books of *tafseer* in which described as being extremely small and short, or large and tall, some claimed they had claws like those of wild animals, all without authentic evidence. (*Fat'hul-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 430)

⁸¹¹ *Al-Jaami' li Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 11, p. 50.

⁸¹² Bukhaaree Kitaab: al manaqib; Baab: Alaamaat an nubuwwah fil Islam; and Muslim Kitaab: al Fitn wa ashraat as-saa'ah; Baab: Laa taqoom as-saa'ah hatta yamurru ar-rajul bi qabri ar-rajul, Mishkat, vol. 2, p. 1129.

Magog is apparently the place of Gog's origin."⁸¹³ The Bible also refers to "Magog" as the second son of Japheth between Gomer (the Cimmerians) and Madai (the Medes). But in the list of nations in Genesis 10, the term connotes the barbarian peoples dwelling to the extreme north and north-east of the earth and in Ezekial 39: 6, the Magog is referred to as a northern people, the leader of whom is Gog. According to the *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, article "Gog and Magog," Josephus identifies them as the Scythians, a name referring to a number of unknown ferocious tribes. According to Jerome, Magog was situated beyond the Caucasus near the Caspian Sea.⁸¹⁴

إِنَّ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

The people complained to Thul-Qarnayn about the Gog and the Magog saying, **"Indeed, the Gog and the Magog people are corrupting the land."** Scholars differed as to the nature of their corruption. Some said that they ate human beings; others said it referred to oppression, murder and other forms of corruption, and yet others said they completely consumed the crops of neighbouring nations.⁸¹⁵ All these descriptions, except for the first, can be found in the prophecy about their destructive acts during their period of world domination.

فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجًا عَلَى أَنْ تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ سَدًّا

After explaining their situation, the people respectfully requested Thul-Qarnayn's help saying, **"Can we pay you tribute to erect a barrier between them and us?"** They requested that he build a wall to separate them and protect them from the evil acts of the Gog and the Magog. They offered in return some of their wealth in order to ensure his help, not because they thought that a ruler who had already conquered the east and the west needed it.⁸¹⁶

Lesson

This verse contains evidence for the establishment of prisons, and the incarceration of the corrupt and preventing them from acting as they wish, and not leaving them to do whatever they are doing. Instead they should be beaten and imprisoned or fined and freed as 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab did.⁸¹⁷ There were no prisons during the era of prophethood or the first caliphate, so their establishment was a matter of *ijtihad* on the part of the second Caliph.

قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّي فِيهِ رَبِّي خَيْرٌ فَأَعِينُونِي بِقُوَّةٍ أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا

95. He replied, "The way in which my Lord has established me is far better. Assist me with manpower and I will erect a strong barrier between you and them."

Thul-Qarnayn, being a righteous individual and knowing that Allah had a better reward for him if he helped them, refused to be paid. The Almighty quoted him:

⁸¹³ *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 5, p. 330.

⁸¹⁴ *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 5, p. 330.

⁸¹⁵ *Fat'hul-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 430.

⁸¹⁶ *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem*, p. 133.

⁸¹⁷ *Al-Jaami' li Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 11, p. 51.

قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّي فِيهِ رَبِّي خَيْرٌ

“He replied, ‘The way in which my Lord has established me is far better,’ ” meaning that the power and authority that Allah has given me is better for me than what you have collected. This statement is similar to that of Prophet Solomon, peace be upon him, when presents were brought to him from Queen Bilquees of Sheba. He said:

أَتُمِدُّونَنِي بِمَالٍ فَمَا آتَانِيَ اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا آتَاكُمْ

“Will you help me in wealth? What Allâh has given me is better than that which He has given you!” (Soorah an-Naml, 27: 36)

فَاعِينُونِي بِقُوَّةٍ أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا

Instead Thul-Qarnayn just asked for some men to help him build a wall even bigger than what they requested⁸¹⁸ saying: “Assist me with manpower and I will erect a strong barrier between you and them.”⁸¹⁹

LESSONS ON RULERS

This verse contains proof that it is obligatory on rulers to protect their subjects’ lives, repair damage to their property, and guard their rights and their wealth, even if his wealth is consumed in fulfilling their rights and providing aid to them. However, his subjects should replace his losses from their wealth where needed. He should also give them the benefit of the doubt in his dealings with them. Aid should be given according to three conditions:

1. Firstly, he should not favor some of his subjects over others.
2. Secondly, he should begin by aiding the neediest first, then the needy.
3. Thirdly, he should spend on them equally or equitably according to their situations.

When Thul-Qarnayn was offered money to prevent the attacks of the Gog and Magog which they feared, he informed the people that the wealth he had was sufficient and what he needed instead was their manpower. He could see that their wealth was barely sufficient for their own needs. So, if he took wages it would reduce what he needed from them and the reward would go to them. Thus, he concluded that voluntary manpower was more appropriate. The main guideline to be followed in these matters is that no one’s wealth can be legitimately consumed unless a real necessity exists. If it does exist, then such wealth should be taken openly and not secretly, and spent fairly and not preferentially, and it should be done according to the opinion of the community and not unilaterally.⁸²⁰

آتُونِي زُبَرَ الْحَدِيدِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا سَاوَىٰ بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ قَالَ انْفُخُوا حَتَّىٰ
إِذَا جَعَلَهُ نَارًا قَالَ آتُونِي أُفْرِغْ عَلَيْهِ قِطْرًا

96. “So bring me blocks of iron.” When he had leveled off the gap between the two mountain faces, he instructed, “Blow on it,”

⁸¹⁸ They requested *saddan* (wall) and Thul-Qarnayn promised them *radman* (strong wall). See *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 134.

⁸¹⁹ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p.

⁸²⁰ *Al-Jaami ‘ li Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 11, p. 52.

until he made it fire [red]. Then he said, “Bring me molten copper to pour over it.”

آتُونِي زُبَرَ الْحَدِيدِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا سَاوَىٰ بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ

“So bring me blocks of iron.” When he had leveled off the gap between the two mountain faces,” Thul-Qarnayn had them pile blocks of iron on top of each other until he created a wall stretching from one side of the valley to the other linking the faces of the two mountains.

قَالَ انْفُخُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَعَلَهُ نَارًا

“He instructed them, “Blow on it,” until he made it fire [red].”

Once the wall was complete, fires were lit beside the wall, and bellows were used to blow air from the fire unto the wall until it became red, then white hot.

قَالَ آتُونِي أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْهِ قِطْرًا

“Then he said, “Bring me molten copper to pour over it.”

He then instructed them to pour molten copper over the superheated wall, coating and blending with it, and turning it into a solid single structure.⁸²¹

Ibn Jareer narrated from Qataadah that a man informed Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) that he had seen the wall of Gog and the Magog, and he asked him, “Describe it for me.” The man replied, “It is like an inkcolored cloak, with black and red stripes.” The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “You have seen it.”⁸²²

Muslim historical records mention that in the 9th century, during the reign of the Abbaaside Caliph Al-Waathiq, an expedition was dispatched to search and identify the locality of the Thul-Qarnayn’s wall in Central Asia. They traveled from country to country and from kingdom to kingdom until they found it and saw its structure made from iron and copper. They mentioned that they saw in the wall a huge door with massive locks. They also saw some leftover building blocks in a tower from the original building. Al-Waathiq’s emissaries also saw sentries guarding the wall from a neighbouring kingdom. The wall was impregnable and incredibly tall. They returned home after a period of more than two years.⁸²³

فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا أَنْ يَظْهَرُوهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا لَهُ نَقْبًا

97. So they were unable to climb over it or tunnel through it.

فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا أَنْ يَظْهَرُوهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا لَهُ نَقْبًا

“So they were unable to climb over it or tunnel through it.” The Gog and the Magog were unable to scale it because it was too high and too smooth, nor were they able to bore through it because it was too solid.⁸²⁴ In the first case the verb form *istāa’oo* and in the second case *istatāa’oo* was used. They are synonyms, the first being only a contracted form of the second. The additional

⁸²¹ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 134.

⁸²² Tafseer at-Tabaree, vol. 8, p. 275. It is a *mursal* narration and thus classified as inauthentic.

⁸²³ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-‘Azeem, vol. 4, p. 251.

⁸²⁴ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 135.

letters in the second form indicate greater difficulty than in the first which is the case in fact. Digging or drilling a hole through the wall was far more difficult than scaling the mountains or the wall.

عَنْ زَيْنَبَ بِنْتِ جَحْشٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا فَرَعَا يَقُولُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَيُلِّ لِلْعَرَبِ مِنْ شَرِّ قَدْ اقْتَرَبَ فُتِحَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ رَدْمِ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مِثْلُ هَذِهِ وَحَلَّقَ بِإِصْبَعِهِ الْإِبْهَامَ وَالَّتِي تَلِيهَا قَالَتْ زَيْنَبُ بِنْتُ جَحْشٍ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَتَهْلِكُ وَفِينَا الصَّالِحُونَ قَالَ نَعَمْ إِذَا كَثُرَ الْخَبَثُ

Zaynab bint Jahsh related that the Prophet (ﷺ) came to her in a distressed state saying, “There is no god worthy of worship but Allah! Woe to the Arabs from the great evil that has approached them. Today a hole has been opened in the dam of the Gog and the Magog like this (he made a circle with his thumb and forefinger). Zaynab asked him: “O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)! Shall we be destroyed even though there will be righteous people among us?” He replied: “Yes, if wickedness becomes prevalent.”⁸²⁵

The Almighty warns the believers of His calamities striking both the wicked and the righteous saying,

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

“And fear the affliction which does not affect only those of you who do wrong, and know that Allah is severe in punishment.” (Soorah al-Anfaal, 8: 25)

Consequently, the believers are told to choose their companions carefully and to avoid places of corruption.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ الْمَرْءُ عَلَى دِينِ خَلِيلِهِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَحَدُكُمْ مَنْ يُخَالِلُ

Aboo Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Man follows the religion of his friends. So each of you should be careful about whom he takes for a friend.”⁸²⁶

قَالَ هَذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّي فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي حَقًّا

⁸²⁵ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. , no. , p. , Kitaab: Ahaadeeth al Anbiyaa, Baab: Qissat Ya'jooj wa Ma'jooj

⁸²⁶ Musnad Ahmad, no. 8065 (CD).

98. He exclaimed, “This is a mercy from my Lord! But when my Lord’s promise comes to pass, He will level it. And my Lord’s promise is always true.”

قَالَ هَذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّي

On the completion of the wall, Thul-Qarnayn “exclaimed, ‘This is a mercy from my Lord!’ ” He attributed the execution of this enormous project to Allah and His grace, instead of to himself, which is the way of the righteous servants of God.⁸²⁷

فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ

Thul-Qarnayn then went on to prophesy about the future of the wall saying, “**But when my Lord’s promise comes to pass He will level it.**” The “Lord’s promise” refers either to the time of the Gog and the Magog’s emergence or to the time of the Last Day.⁸²⁸ When the appointed time arrives, in spite of the wall’s enormous size and strength, it will crumble by the will of Allah.

The Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said, “*The Gog and the Magog dig holes in the dam every day until they are almost able to see sunlight, when their leader tells them, ‘Go back! You will complete it tomorrow.’ However, Allah causes it to be rebuilt stronger than it was before. However, when they reach their appointed time in which Allah ordains to let them loose upon people, they will dig until they see sunlight. Then their leader will instruct them, ‘Go back! You will complete it tomorrow, Allah willing.’ They will respond, ‘Allah willing.’ When they return, they will find it as they left it [the day] before. Then they will complete the hole and emerge upon humankind...*”⁸²⁹

وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي حَقًّا

Thul-Qarnayn concluded his prophesy saying, “**And my Lord’s promise is always true,**” meaning that Allah’s promise concerning the emergence of the Gog and the Magog must be fulfilled. If it did not take place, it would mean either that Allah was unable to make it happen or that He lied about it, both of which could not possibly be attributed to Allah.

وَتَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَمُوجُ فِي بَعْضٍ وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ
فَجَمَعْنَاهُمْ جَمْعًا

99. On that Day, I will let them surge in waves over each other. Then the Trumpet will be blown and I will collect all of them together.

وَتَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَمُوجُ فِي بَعْضٍ

Almighty Allah then briefly describes what will happen when the wall falls saying, “**On that Day, I will let them surge in waves over each other.**” In another chapter Allah adds further

⁸²⁷ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 135.

⁸²⁸ Al-Jaami ‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 11, p. 55 and Fat’hul-Qadeer, vol. 3, p. 431.

⁸²⁹ Sunan Ibn-i-Maajah, vol. 5, p. 389, no. 4080 and authenticated in Saheeh Sunan Ibn-i-Maajah, no. 3298 & Saheeh al-Jaami ‘ as-Sagheer, no. 2276.

detail to this event saying:

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُتِحَتْ يَأْجُوجُ وَمَأْجُوجُ وَهُمْ مِّن كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَنْسِلُونَ

“Until, when Gog and the Magog are let loose (from their barrier), and they swiftly swarm down every slope.” (Soorah al-Anbiyaa, 21: 96)

Major Signs of the Last Hour

The release of Gog and the Magog is one of the major Signs of the Last Day. Huthayfah ibn Usayd reported that on one occasion the Prophet (ﷺ) came to them while they were busy in discussion and asked, “What are you discussing about?” They replied, “We were discussing about the Last Hour.” He then said, “It will not come until you see ten signs: the Smoke⁸³⁰; Dajjaal; the Beast⁸³¹; the Rising of the Sun in the West; the Descent of Jesus; the Gog and the Magog; and the Sinking of land in three locations, in the East, the West and in Arabia, followed by a huge fire which would begin in Yemen and drive people to their place of assembly.”⁸³²

In the authentically narrated explanations of the Prophet (ﷺ) regarding Gog and the Magog, the picture which emerges is that their release will occur at the end of the era of the Anti-Christ, al-Maseeh ad-Dajjaal. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) prophesied that the Anti-Christ will establish himself and rule over the entire earth for some forty years. The first day of his reign will be like a year, the second like a month, the third like a week and the rest of the days will be like our normal days.⁸³³ The Prophet’s companions asked him how they would determine the prayer times during the first three days and he told them to estimate the times. The fact that their only question regarding the era of Dajjaal was about their prayer and not about their safety demonstrates how sincere the companions were about practising their religion. The Prophet’s answer also provided a basis for calculating prayer times in regions of the earth which experience six months of daylight and six months of night, or in the international space station above the earth or even on Mars. At the end of Dajjaal’s rule, Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) will return to lead the believers in the war against Dajjaal. He and the believers will defeat the armies of Dajjaal and Prophet Jesus will kill him.

An-Nawwaas ibn as-Sam’aan related that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “A group of people who, by Allah’s help, survived the Dajjaal War, will come to Jesus. He will anoint their faces and tell them of their grades in Paradise. Shortly afterwards, while this is happening, Allah will say to Jesus, ‘I have raised a people of My creation that no one can defeat.’⁸³⁴ Therefore, gather My slaves to Mount Toor.’ Then Allah will let loose the Gog and the Magog and they will swiftly swarm from every mound...”⁸³⁵

Their Domination

Aboo Sa’eed al-Khudree narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said, “Gog and Magog will be released upon humankind just as Allah said, “**And they will swiftly swarm from every mound.**”⁸³⁶ They will overwhelm the people and Muslims will have to seek refuge in their cities and fortresses along with their cattle. Gog and Magog will consume the earth’s waters. Some of them will pass by a river and consume all of its water until it becomes dry. Whoever is following them will pass by the river [bed] and remark, ‘There was water here once!’ Everyone will seek refuge in fortresses or cities. One among [the Gog and Magog] will exclaim, ‘We are finished with those

⁸³⁰ Soorah ad-Dukhaan, 44: 10.

⁸³¹ Soorah an-Naml, 27: 82.

⁸³² Sahih Muslim (English Trans.), vol.4, pp. 1503-1504, no.6931, Aboo Daawood and at-Tirmidhee.

⁸³³ Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. .

⁸³⁴ **Note:** The wisdom behind Allah giving Jesus power over Dajjaal but not over the Gog and the Magog is to emphasize Jesus’ fallibility and affirm that only Allah is invincible. This was to prevent the people from reverting to worshipping him again. Furthermore, his ultimate death on earth underscores his humanity.

⁸³⁵ Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1516-8, no. 7015.

⁸³⁶ Soorah al-Anbiyaa, 21: 96.

inhabitants of the earth, only the inhabitants of the sky remain!’ Then one of them will heft his spear and heave it into the sky and it will fall back with blood on it as a test and trial [for humans].”⁸³⁷

Their End

An-Nawwaas ibn as-Sam‘aan quoted Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying, “Jesus, Allah’s Prophet, will be cornered along with his companions and [blockaded] until the head of a bull will be more precious to them than a hundred deenaars to you today. Jesus, Prophet of Allah, and his companions will turn to Allah in prayers. Then Allah will send worms which will attach themselves unto the necks [of the Gog and the Magog]...”⁸³⁸

Aboo Sa‘eed al-Khudree quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying, “... Allah will send creatures like locust larvae which will bore into their necks until they die like locusts piled upon one another. In the morning the Muslims [barricaded with Prophet Jesus] will not hear a sound from them. The Muslims will then ask, ‘Will someone sacrifice himself by going out and seeing what has happened to them?’ A man from among them will go out certain that they will kill him only to find them dead, piled on top of each other. He will then proclaim to Muslims, ‘Good news! Your enemy has been destroyed by Allah!’ Then the people will come out [of their fortresses] and release their cattle. There will be nothing for the cattle to graze on besides the corpses [of Gog and the Magog]. The cattle will become fatter from them than they ever did from eating grass.”⁸³⁹

The New World Order

An-Nawwaas ibn as-Sam‘aan related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “... Afterwards, Jesus the Prophet of Allah will come down [from Mount Toor] with his companions to the low ground. They will not find as much as a palm’s width of space free from the fat and rotting corpses [of Gog and Magog]. Jesus the Prophet of Allah and his companions will then turn to Allah in prayer and Allah will send birds as large as the necks of camels which will pick the [corpses] up and carry them and drop them wherever Allah wills. Then Allah will send rain which will destroy all houses made from mud, bricks or animal hair and clean the earth the way a mirror is cleaned. The earth will then be commanded to produce its fruit and retrieve its blessings.”⁸⁴⁰

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) was also quoted as saying, “For seven years Muslims will build fires with the bows and arrows of Gog and the Magog.”⁸⁴¹

Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) will remain on earth for forty years during which peace will reign and the earth will flourish. For seven years after his death, people will remain at peace until Allah sends a wind which will take the soul of every believer.⁸⁴² But, just before the coming of this wind, the sun will rise from the West; a beast will be raised from the earth which will speak directly to humans⁸⁴³; the Qur’aan will be erased from books and from people’s hearts; the Law of Islaam [Sharee‘ah] will be totally abandoned and smoke will engulf the earth. The last of these signs is a fire which originates in lower Aden, in Yemen. This fire will herd people from the East and the West to their gathering grounds in Syria, constantly remaining with them until they reach their final destination.⁸⁴⁴ The Prophet (ﷺ) described those remaining after the wind as the worst of humankind and that they would copulate in public like donkeys, and it is on them that the Last Hour would come.⁸⁴⁵

⁸³⁷ *Sunan Ibn-i-Majah*, vol. 5, pp. 387-8, no. 4079 and authenticated in *Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah*, no. 3297.

⁸³⁸ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1516-18, no. 7015.

⁸³⁹ Collected by Ahmad under the chapter *Musnad Aboo Sa‘eed al-Khudree*, vol. 3, al-Albaani declared it as *Hasan* in *Saheeh al-Jaami‘*, no. 2973. Haakim has declared it *Saheeh* according to the standards of Muslim, see *Mustadrak ‘Ala Saheehain*, vol. 4, ch. 50, no. 8504/212.

⁸⁴⁰ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1516-18, no. 7015.

⁸⁴¹ *Sunan Ibn-i-Majah*, vol. 5, p. 378, no. 4076 and authenticated in *Saheeh Sunan ibn Maajah*, no. 3295.

⁸⁴² *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. .

⁸⁴³ *Soorah an-Naml*, 27: 82.

⁸⁴⁴ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. .

⁸⁴⁵ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. , *Kitaab: al fitan wa ashraat as saa’ah*

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَجَمَعْنَاهُمْ جَمْعًا

The Almighty then identified the final events of this world saying, “Then the Trumpet will be blown.” The horn blower is Israafeel⁸⁴⁶, one of the noble angels. The Prophet (ﷺ) used to begin his night prayers with the following supplication:

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ جِبْرَائِيلَ وَمِيكَائِيلَ وَإِسْرَافِيلَ فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عَالِمَ الْغَيْبِ
وَالشَّهَادَةِ أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ اهْدِنِي لِمَا اخْتُلِفَ فِيهِ مِنْ
الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِكَ إِنَّكَ تَهْدِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

“Allahumma rabba jibraa’eela wa meekaa’eela wa israafeela faatiras-samaawaati wal-ardi ‘aalimal-ghaybi wash-shahaadati anta tahkumu bayna ‘ibaadika feemaa kaanoo feehi yakhtalifoona ihdinee lima ikhtulifa feehi minal-haqqi bi ithnika innaka tahdee man tashaa’u ilaa siraatin mustaqeem. [O Allah! Lord of Gabriel, Michael and Israafeel, Creator of the heavens and earth, Knower of the seen and the unseen, You alone judge between your servants in what they differ. So, guide me in what of the truth is disputed, by Your permission. Indeed, You guide whomever You wish to the straight path.]”⁸⁴⁷

These are three noble angels, each given responsibility for life. Gabriel is responsible for what provides life for the hearts, Michael is responsible for rain containing life for the plants and Israafeel is responsible for people’s life at the time of resurrection.⁸⁴⁸

The Prophet (ﷺ) was quoted by Aboo Sa’eed as saying:

((كَيْفَ أَنْعَمَ وَقَدْ أَلْتَمَ صَاحِبُ الْقَرْنِ الْقَرْنَ وَحَنَى جَبْهَتَهُ وَأَصْغَى سَمْعَهُ يَنْتَظِرُ
أَنْ يُؤْمَرَ أَنْ يَنْفُخَ فَيَنْفُخَ))

“How can I enjoy when the horn blower has put the horn to his mouth, inclined his forehead backward and turned his ear listening for the command to blow.”⁸⁴⁹

Blowing of the Trumpet

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ
نُفِخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَىٰ فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنْظُرُونَ

“And the horn will be blown and all in the heavens and all on earth will faint, except whom Allah wills. Then it will be blown a second time, and behold they will all be standing and staring.” (Soorah az-Zumar, 39: 68)

The Horn is Blown Twice:

1) The blowing of shock and terror in which people are stunned and those whom Allah wills will go unconscious.

2) The blowing of resurrection in which people rise from their graves.⁸⁵⁰

⁸⁴⁶ A loan-word with another dialectical variant “Israafeen” (Mukhtaar as-Sihaah, p. 296). Israafeel is identified as the horn-blower in al-Bidaayah wan-Nihaayah, vol. 1, p. 45.

⁸⁴⁷ Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Salaatul Musaafireen; Baab: Du’aa fee salaatil layl.

⁸⁴⁸ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 138.

⁸⁴⁹ Collected by at-Tirmithi [al-Hadis, vol. 4, p. 92, no. 21] and authenticated in Silsilah as-Ahaadeeth as-Saheehah, vol. 3, pp. 66-8.

In a long *hadeeth* narrated by ‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Amr, the Prophet (ﷺ) was quoted as saying:

((ثُمَّ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا يَسْمَعُهُ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا أَصْغَى لَيْتًا وَرَفَعَ لَيْتًا قَالَ وَأَوَّلُ مَنْ يَسْمَعُهُ رَجُلٌ يَلُوطُ حَوْضَ إِبِلِهِ قَالَ فَيَصْعَقُ وَيَصْعَقُ النَّاسُ ثُمَّ يُرْسِلُ اللَّهُ أَوْ قَالَ يُنْزِلُ اللَّهُ مَطَرًا كَأَنَّهُ الطَّلُّ أَوْ الظِّلُّ نَعْمَانُ الشَّاكُّ فَتَنْبُتُ مِنْهُ أَجْسَادُ النَّاسِ ثُمَّ يُنْفَخُ فِيهِ أُخْرَى فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنْظُرُونَ)).

“Then the horn will be blown and no one would hear that but he would bend his neck to one side and raise it from the other side and the first one to hear the horn will be a person busy setting right a tank meant to provide water for camels. He would swoon and the other people would also swoon, then Allah will send rain which would be like dew and peoples’ bodies would grow from it. Then the horn will be blown and they would stand up staring.”⁸⁵¹

Aboo Hurayrah related that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “Between the two blowings of the trumpet, there would be [an interval of] forty.” They asked [me]: “Aboo Hurayrah, do you mean forty days?” [I] replied: “I cannot say.” They then asked [me]: Do you mean forty months? [I] replied: “I cannot say.” They further asked [me]: Do you mean forty years? [I] replied: “I cannot say anything.”⁸⁵²

وَنُفَخَ فِي الصُّورِ

“Then the Trumpet will be blown.” This verse refers to the second blowing, as the verse following it “Then I will collect all of them together,” has the *faa* prefix which means “and shortly thereafter”. The first blowing was not mentioned because the intent here is the mention of the circumstances of the Day of Resurrection.⁸⁵³

Those Who Do not Fall Unconscious

In the verse of *Soorah az-Zumar* above, an exception is made for those who will not faint: “And the horn will be blown and all in the heavens and all on earth will faint, except whom Allah wills.”

Scholars have differed as to exactly whom the exception will be for:

- (1) Ibn Hazm was of the opinion that all the angels were excepted because angels were spiritual beings without souls who do not die according to his opinion.⁸⁵⁴ His claim that angels do not die is questionable as they are among Allah’s creation that can be brought to life or caused to die. Furthermore, it is authentically reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) by a number of Companions that he said: “Indeed, when Allah speaks revelation the angels are overcome by something like fainting,” and in another narration, “When the angels hear His words they go unconscious.” (al-Bayhaquee) This hadeeth indicates that they go unconscious due to fainting and if that is possible, it is also possible that they go unconscious from death.⁸⁵⁵

⁸⁵⁰ See also *Soorah Yaseen*, 36: 51.

⁸⁵¹ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1520, no. 7023.

⁸⁵² *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, pp. 1527-8, no. 7055.

⁸⁵³ *Fat’hul-Qadeer*, vol.3, p. 434.

⁸⁵⁴ *Fat’h al-Baaree*, 6: 371.

⁸⁵⁵ *Majmoo’ al-Fataawaa*, vol. 4, p. 260.

- (2) Muqaatil and others held that the exception will be made for Gabriel, Michael, Israafeel, and the angel of death. Some included the throne bearers. However, the *hadeeths* used to support this opinion are not rated authentic by the scholars of *hadeeth*.⁸⁵⁶
- (3) Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal was of the opinion that those intended were the damsels and youths of paradise.⁸⁵⁷ Ibn Taymiyyah said: “As for those for whom an exception will be made, it includes the damsels of paradise because paradise has no death in it.”⁸⁵⁸
- (4) Abul-‘Abbaas al-Qurtubee, author of *al-Mufhim ilaa Sharh Muslim*, favored the opinion that those intended are all the dead since they have no feelings and therefore they would not faint.⁸⁵⁹ This is correct if the fainting is interpreted as death, for human beings will die only once as Allah said:

لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ الْأُولَىٰ

“They will only taste in it the first death.” (Soorah ad-Dukhaan, 44: 56)

Ibn al-Qayyim mentioned that scholars had differed regarding the death of the souls at the time of the blowing of the horn. He favored the opinion that the death of the soul is its separation from the body, and refuted the opinion of those who held that the souls disappear because the texts indicate that the souls remain in the state of the Barzakh in punishment or pleasure.⁸⁶⁰

If the falling unconscious is interpreted as fainting, souls will go unconscious and will not be among those for whom an exception will be made. For human beings can faint as a result of what they see or hear, as in the case of Moses when he saw the mountain crumble into dust. “**And Moses fell down unconscious.**” (Soorah al-A‘raaf, 7: 143) That the dead will experience fainting is clearly stated in the following narration in which Aboo Hurayrah quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying:

لَا تُخَيِّرُونِي عَلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ فَإِنَّ النَّاسَ يَصْعَقُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَأَصْعَقُ مَعَهُمْ فَأَكُونُ أَوَّلَ مَنْ يُفِيقُ فَإِذَا مُوسَىٰ بَاطِشٌ جَانِبَ الْعَرْشِ فَلَا أَذْرِي أَكَانَ فِيمَنْ صَعِقَ فَأَفَاقَ قَبْلِي أَوْ كَانَ مِمَّنْ اسْتَتْنَى اللَّهَ

“Do not favor me over Moses, for people will faint and I will be the first to regain consciousness, only to find Moses holding on to a side of the throne. I don’t know whether he was among those who fell unconscious and regained consciousness before me, or whether he was among those whom Allah made an exception for.”⁸⁶¹

Al-Qurtubee, author of *at-Tathkirah*, said: “Our Shaykh, Abul-‘Abbaas said: What is correct is that no authentic narration has come identifying those for whom the exception will be made, thus all opinions are possible.”⁸⁶² Ibn Taymiyyah said in *Majmoo‘ al-Fataawaa*⁸⁶³: “If the Prophet (ﷺ) did not inform about all for whom an exception will be made, it is not possible for us to be certain about it. This then becomes like knowledge about the time of the Last Hour, all the individual prophets, etc. which Allah has not informed about and this knowledge can only be obtained by revelation, and Allah knows best.”⁸⁶⁴

⁸⁵⁶ *Fat’h al-Baaree*, 6: 371.

⁸⁵⁷ *Fat’h al-Baaree*, 6: 371.

⁸⁵⁸ *Majmoo‘ al-Fataawaa*, vol. 4, p. 261.

⁸⁵⁹ *Fat’h al-Baaree*, 6: 370.

⁸⁶⁰ *Ar-Rooh*, p. 49.

⁸⁶¹ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 410, no. 620 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1265, no. 5853.

⁸⁶² *at-Tathkirah*, p. 167.

⁸⁶³ *Majmoo‘ al-Fataawaa*, 4: 261.

⁸⁶⁴ *al-Yawm al-Aakhir*, pp. 43-9.

Sign of the Times

Anas related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “If the [signs of] the beginning of the Day of Resurrection appear and one of you has a seedling in his hand, he should plant it if he is able to do so before the resurrection begins.”⁸⁶⁵

فَجَمَعْنَاهُمْ جَمْعًا

The Almighty’s statement, “**Then I will collect all of them together,**” refers to the gathering of the resurrected dead for the judgment after the second blowing of the horn. This gathering is called in Arabic the *hashr*. The earth will be flattened into a single plain devoid of any mountains or lowlands and people will be assembled in groups according to what they worshipped in this life.

عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُحْشَرُ النَّاسُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَى أَرْضٍ بَيْضَاءَ عَفْرَاءَ كَقُرْصَةِ النَّعِيِّ لَيْسَ فِيهَا عِلْمٌ لِأَحَدٍ

Sahl ibn Sa’d reported that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “People will be assembled on the Day of Resurrection on a white plain with a reddish tinge, like a flat loaf of white bread without markings for anyone.”⁸⁶⁶

وَعَرَضْنَا جَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَرَضًا

100. On that day, I will display Hell before disbelievers, in plain view.

In this chapter, Allah gives only one description of what the disbelievers will experience at the time of the gathering after resurrection. He describes their exposure to the Hellfire as a severe warning.

وَعَرَضْنَا جَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَرَضًا

“On that day, I will display Hell before disbelievers, in plain view,” means that Allah will shock those just resurrected with a full display of the ferocity of Hell, a creature so terrible and wild that Allah has assigned billions of angels to restrain it.

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُؤْتَى بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَهَا سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ زِمَامٍ مَعَ كُلِّ زِمَامٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ يُجْرُّونَهَا

‘Abdullaah ibn Mas’ood quoted Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying, “Hell will be brought on that day having seventy thousand reins with seventy thousand angels⁸⁶⁷ drawing each rein.”⁸⁶⁸

The disbelievers will also be displayed before the Hellfire as the Almighty said:

وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَى النَّارِ

“On the Day when those who disbelieve will be exposed to the Fire.”

⁸⁶⁵ Collected by Ahmad in *al-Musnad*, vol.3, pp.183, 184 and 191 and al-Bukhaaree in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, no. 479, and authenticated by al-Albaanee in *Silsilah al-Ahaadeeth as-Saheehah*, vol.1, p.11, no.9.

⁸⁶⁶ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1463, no. 6708. Details of the gathering was mentioned earlier in the commentary on verses 47-48.

⁸⁶⁷ Four billion nine hundred thousand in total.

⁸⁶⁸ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1482, no. 6810.

This is part of the punishment that the disbelievers will face before the actual judgment. It is a form of psychological punishment in which they are terrified just by the view of Hell. Part of the wisdom of Allah informing humans about this incident, is that it should motivate the believer to correct his relationship with his Lord, he should fear this day and prepare for it by visualizing Hell as if it were under his feet. He should realize that all that remains before meeting this day is for his soul to leave his body.⁸⁷⁰

الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِي غِطَاءٍ عَنْ ذِكْرِي وَكَانُوا لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ
سَمْعًا

101. Those whose eyes were veiled from My reminder and who were unable to hear it.

الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِي غِطَاءٍ عَنْ ذِكْرِي

Allah describes some of the characteristics of the disbelievers who would be exposed to the Hellfire prior to the judgment. He said that they were “those whose eyes were veiled from My reminder.” They were blind to Allah’s signs in this world which are witnessed by those who reflect. When they contemplate the divine signs, it leads them to bear witness to the uniqueness of the Creator and to praise Him. Or they are blind to the Noble Qur’aan and are unable to ponder over its meanings and benefit from its lessons and wisdom. After describing their blindness relative to the creational evidences and the revealed proofs, Allah shifted to their deafness to the truth saying:

وَكَانُوا لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَمْعًا

“And those who were unable to hear it.” Their deafness is emphasized by referring to it as an inability to hear the truth in Allah’s words and that of His Messenger (ﷺ). Had Allah referred to them as deaf, it would have been less emphatic because a deaf person may hear a very loud sound close to his or her ear. On the other hand, these disbelievers are described as completely unable to hear anything.⁸⁷¹

This portion of the verse could also be translated as “And those who cannot bear to hear it,” meaning that they do not wish to hear it.⁸⁷²

أَفَحَسِبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا عِبَادِي مِنْ دُونِي أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنَّا
أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نُزُلًا

⁸⁶⁹ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 144.

⁸⁷⁰ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 140.

⁸⁷¹ Fat’hul-Qadeer, vol. 3, p. 434.

⁸⁷² Al-Jaami’ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, vol. 11, p. 56 and Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 140.

102. Do the Unbelievers think that they can take My servants as protectors besides Me? Indeed, I have prepared Hell as hospitality for the unbelievers.

The Almighty addresses the disbelievers who are blind and deaf to His signs and who will be exposed to the Hellfire in the next in order for them to reflect. Allah asks the following rhetorical question:

أَفَحَسِبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا عِبَادِي مِنْ دُونِي أَوْلِيَاءَ

“Do the Unbelievers think that they can take My servants as protectors besides Me [without being severely punished]⁸⁷³?” That is, do they imagine that they will be able to benefit from what they falsely worshipped while turning away from reflection on Allah’s signs and rebelling against acceptance of the truth?⁸⁷⁴

Everything in existence is a slave to Allah, as the Almighty said:

إِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا

“All in the heavens and the earth come to the Most Gracious as a slave.” (Soorah Maryam, 19: 93) Therefore, there is nothing in creation which can benefit human beings instead of Allah. To seek help and benefit in this way is itself an act of worship, as opposed to requesting help in life circumstances where benefit can be obtained. Thus, those taken as protectors (*awliya*) are those who are worshipped and called upon for help besides Allah among the angels⁸⁷⁵, messengers⁸⁷⁶, cows and other animals⁸⁷⁷, the sun and moon, trees, rivers and stones.

Allah rhetorically asks if those who call on others and worship them instead of Him or along with Him really think that they will get protection from His punishment in order to emphasize that they will not be helped.⁸⁷⁸

As part of the mental torment on the Day of Resurrection, those who worshipped others besides Allah will be instructed to call on their gods for help.

وَقِيلَ ادْعُوا شُرَكَاءَكُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ وَرَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَهْتَدُونَ

“It will be said (to them): ‘Call upon your partners (of Allah)’, and they will call upon them, but they will give no answer to them. Instead, they will see the torment and wish if only they had been guided!” (Soorah al-Qasas, 28: 64)

إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نُزُلًا

“Indeed, I have prepared Hell as hospitality for the unbelievers,” means that Allah has prepared Hell as their abode on that Day.⁸⁷⁹

⁸⁷³ Some scholars suggested that this phrase was deleted (elided?) based on the remainder of the verse. (*Adwaa ul-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 145)

⁸⁷⁴ *Fat’hul-Qadeer*, vol. 3, p. 434.

⁸⁷⁵ For example, Angel Michael who is worshipped by Catholics on September 29 (Michaelmas Day).

⁸⁷⁶ For example, Prophet Jesus son of Mary who is worshipped by Christians as God.

⁸⁷⁷ For example, the monkey god, Hanuman, and the elephant god, Ghanesh of Hindus.

⁸⁷⁸ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 141.

⁸⁷⁹ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 6, p. .

قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا

103. Say: “Shall I inform you about the greatest losers regarding their deeds?”

قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا

The Almighty instructs His Messenger, Muhammad, (ﷺ) to “Say: ‘Shall I inform you about the greatest losers regarding their deeds?’ ” This implies that Allah wants to inform about those who will lose the most deeds in order for people to avoid their characteristics and be successful. In *Soorah al-‘Asr* (ﷻ) Allah explained that all human beings will be in a state of loss except those who possess four characteristics: 1. Correct Faith, 2. Righteous deeds, 3. Truthfulness, and 4. Patience.⁸⁸⁰

When Sa’d ibn Abee Waqqaas was asked about whether this verse referred to a particular group called the *Harooriyyah* who eventually became the Khaarijites⁸⁸¹, he replied: “No they are the Jews and the Christians. As for the Jews, they denied Muhammad (ﷺ) and as for the Christians, they denied paradise by saying that it contains neither food nor drink. The Haruriyyah are those who break Allah’s covenant after ratifying it.”⁸⁸² On the other hand, ‘Alee ibn Abee Taalib and ad-Dahhaak both said that they were the *Harooriyyah*.⁸⁸³ Ibn Katheer explained that this does not mean that the verse was revealed concerning any of these groups in particular; it is more general than that, because the verse was revealed in Makkah, before the Qur’aan addressed the Jews and Christians, and before the Khaarijites existed. So the verse is general and refers to everyone who worships Allah in a way that is not acceptable, thinking that he is right in doing so and that his deeds will be accepted, but he is mistaken and his deeds will be rejected.⁸⁸⁴

الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ
صُنْعًا

104. Those whose efforts were wasted in this life while thinking that they were doing well.

In this verse Allah begins giving answers to the question which He raised in the previous verse. He first explains their general characteristic with respect to their deeds. The Almighty states that the real losers are:

الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

⁸⁸⁰ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 142.

⁸⁸¹ A group that broke off from ‘Alee’s followers, who were known for their righteousness in terms of their deeds but at the same time they ended up massacring Muslims. They declared ‘Alee and other Muslim leaders who were among the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) to be disbelievers.

⁸⁸² *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Tafseer al Qur’aan; Baab: Hal unabbi’ukum

⁸⁸³ *Tafseer at-Tabaree*, vol. 8, p. 294 and authenticated in Dar al-Fatah’s edition of *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-‘Azeem*, vol. , p. 256.

⁸⁸⁴ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. , p. , no. .

“Those whose efforts were wasted in this life,” meaning, they did deeds that do not count; deeds that were not in accordance with the prescribed way acceptable to Allah.⁸⁸⁵ In other words, the second condition of righteous deeds is missing. They went astray from the correct path and, as a result, their deeds were either wrong in their essence or wrong in their context.

وَهُمْ يَحْسِبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا

And the worst part is that they wasted their efforts “while thinking that they were doing well.” This the case of most people, like the Jews, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists and Communists who all believe that what they are following is correct. Thus, they continue to follow their beliefs regardless of what evidence to the contrary is presented to them. There are also some among them who know their beliefs are incorrect, but continue with them out of pride⁸⁸⁶ or for material benefits. Aboo Taalib is an example of the first group and many Arab Christians for whom Christianity became their culture. The majority of Anglican bishops who do not believe that Jesus was actually God is an example of the second group.⁸⁸⁷ Most famous among the Church of England bishops, who doubted Jesus’ divinity, is the outspoken Reverend Professor David Jenkins, former Bishop of Durham, UK, who openly and repeatedly stated that Jesus was not God during his tenure as bishop.⁸⁸⁸

The Prophet (ﷺ) gave an example of this situation among Muslims in the following narration:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ أَتَدْرُونَ مَا الْمُفْلِسُ قَالُوا
الْمُفْلِسُ فِينَا مَنْ لَا دِرْهَمَ لَهُ وَلَا مَتَاعَ فَقَالَ إِنَّ الْمُفْلِسَ مِنْ أُمَّتِي يَأْتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
بِصَلَاةٍ وَصِيَامٍ وَزَكَاةٍ وَيَأْتِي قَدْ شَتَمَ هَذَا وَقَذَفَ هَذَا وَأَكَلَ مَالَ هَذَا وَسَفَكَ دَمَ
هَذَا وَضَرَبَ هَذَا فَيُعْطَى هَذَا مِنْ حَسَنَاتِهِ وَهَذَا مِنْ حَسَنَاتِهِ فَإِنْ فَنِيَتْ حَسَنَاتُهُ
قَبْلَ أَنْ يُقْضَى مَا عَلَيْهِ أَخَذَ مِنْ خَطَايَاهُمْ فَطُرِحَتْ عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ طُرِحَ فِي النَّارِ

Aboo Hurayrah related that the Prophet (ﷺ) asked his companions: “Do you know who is truly bankrupt?” The companions replied: “The bankrupt among us is one who has no money or property.” The Prophet (ﷺ) explained: “The bankrupt in my nation is one who comes on the Day of Judgment with prayers, fasting, and charity, but he cursed this one and slandered that one, he consumed this one’s wealth and spilled the blood of that. Those people will be given retribution from his scale of good deeds and when his good deeds finish then some of their evil deeds will be added to his scale and he will be thrown in the Hellfire.”⁸⁸⁹

Those who lose the value of their deeds are missing the second condition of Soorah al-‘Asr, righteous deeds. Their deeds are unrighteous, but they consider them righteous. Like those in Philippines and elsewhere who each year around Easter have themselves nailed to crosses in commemoration of the false story about Jesus’ crucifixion and as penance for their sins.

⁸⁸⁵ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. , p. , no. .

⁸⁸⁶ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 142.

⁸⁸⁷ Daily News, 25/6/84.

⁸⁸⁸ The Economist, 1/4/89, vol. 311, no. 7596, p. 19.

⁸⁸⁹ Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Birr wa Silah wa Aadaab; Baab: Tahreem Zulm

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَائِهِ فَحَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَزَنًا

105. They are those who denied the signs of their Lord and denied having to meet Him. Their deeds will be in vain and will I not give them any weight on the Day of Judgment.

The Almighty goes on to describe other more specific characteristics of the losers and the consequence of their denial.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ

“They are those who denied the signs of their Lord.” The apparent meaning here is that they deny both Allah’s creational and legal signs. However, those who denied the Prophet () denied Allah’s legal signs while believing in His creational signs. Proof of this is in Allah’s statement:

وَلَبِن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لِيَقُولَنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

“If you were to ask them: ‘Who has created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon?’ They will surely reply: “Allah.” How then are they deviating?” (Soorah al-Ankaboot, 29: 61)

And none of the pagan Makkans claimed that there was another creator besides Allah. Instead, they denied Allah’s legal signs which the Messenger of Allah () brought.⁸⁹⁰

وَلِقَائِهِ

“And denied having to meet Him,” meaning that they denied the Day of Judgment and argued against it in a variety of ways. The Almighty quoted them as questioning:

وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ ۖ قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَمَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ

“And he puts forth a parable for Me, and forgets his own creation. He says: ‘Who will give life to these bones after they are rotted and have become dust?’ ” (Soorah Yaa Seen, 36: 78)

And He refuted their feeble arguments saying:

قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۚ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ

“Say: ‘The One who created them in the beginning will give them life! And He is completely aware of every creation!’ ” (36: 79)

Logically speaking, re-creation is easier than creation for the first time. The Almighty said:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ ۚ وَهُوَ أَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ

“It is He who originates the creation, then later repeats it; and it is easier for Him.” (Soorah ar-Room, 30: 27)

⁸⁹⁰ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, p. 143.

This argument becomes among the proofs for the possibility of resurrection and giving life to bones and dust.⁸⁹¹

Thus, those who lose the value of their deeds are also missing the first and third conditions of *Soorah al-‘Asr*, correct belief and truthfulness. Their denial of Allah’s signs and the resurrection and judgment constitutes false belief and is, in fact, untruthful because Allah has shown them His clear signs.

Then Allah goes on to explain that the terrible consequence of their disbelief in His signs and resurrection. He states that:

فَحَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ

“**Their deeds will be in vain,**” meaning that they will be of no benefit to them in the next life. Elsewhere in the Qur’aan Allah compared the value of their deeds to dust and to a mirage saying:

وَقَدِمْنَا إِلَىٰ مَا عَمِلُوا مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ هَبَاءً مَّنْثُورًا

“**And I will turn to whatever deeds they did, and make them like scattered floating particles of dust.**” (*Soorah Furqaan*, 25: 23)

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمْآنُ مَاءً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُ ۖ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا

“**As for those who disbelieve, their deeds are like a mirage in a desert. One who is thirsty thinks it is water, until he comes up to it and finds it to be nothing.**” (*Soorah an-Noor*, 24: 39)

Regardless of what good deeds a disbeliever does, it will have no value in the next life. If Allah wishes to reward him, He will give it to him in this life. One who becomes a disbeliever after being a believer will lose the reward of his deeds in both this life and the next, as the Almighty said:

وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ ۖ فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

“**And whoever among you leaves his religion and dies a disbeliever, will lose the value of his good deeds in both this life and Hereafter.**” (*Soorah al-Baqarah*, 2: 217)

If, by Allah’s mercy, he returns to Islaam after apostating, the value of his righteous deeds prior to his apostasy will return to him.⁸⁹²

After giving His ruling on the deeds of those who are the greatest losers, Allah informs what His judgment of them will be:

فَلَا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَزْنًا

“**And will I not give them any weight on the Day of Judgment,**” means that they will not have any value to Allah on that Day. Some said that it meant that their deeds will not be weighed, because the scale is used to determine whether good deeds out weigh bad deeds or vice versa, and the disbeliever will not have any good deeds to weigh.⁸⁹³ However, the correct opinion is that all deeds will be weighed.⁸⁹⁴ Ibn Katheer felt that it meant, “We will not make their balance heavy

⁸⁹¹ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 143.

⁸⁹² *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, pp. 145-6.

⁸⁹³ This was the opinion of al-Qurtubee, vol. 11, p. 57.

⁸⁹⁴ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 146.

because it is empty of any goodness.” Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim recorded that Aboo Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

((إِنَّهُ لَيَأْتِي الرَّجُلُ الْعَظِيمُ السَّمِينُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا يَزِنُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ جَنَاحَ بُعُوضَةٍ وَقَالَ اقْرَءُوا فَلَا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَزَنًا)).

“A huge fat man will come forward on the Day of Resurrection and he will weigh no more than the wing of a gnat to Allah. Recite, if you wish: ‘**And on the Day of Resurrection, I will assign no weight for them.**’”⁸⁹⁵

Imaam al-Qurtubee noted that this *hadeeth* text contains evidence for the weighing of people in the scales,⁸⁹⁶ and not just deeds. He also noted that it contains a condemnation of obesity because it is generally a result of being distracted by restaurants from virtues and he added that it further indicates the prohibition of overeating. Then he quoted the following *hadeeth*:

عَنْ عِمْرَانَ بْنِ حُصَيْنٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَيْرُكُمْ قَرْنِي ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يُلَوِّهُمُ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يُلَوِّهُمُ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ بَعْدَكُمْ قَوْمًا يَخُونُونَ وَلَا يُؤْتَمِنُونَ وَيَشْهَدُونَ وَلَا يُسْتَشْهَدُونَ وَيَنْذِرُونَ وَلَا يَنْفُونَ وَيُظْهَرُ فِيهِمُ السِّمْنُ

‘Imraan ibn Husayn quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying: “The best of you are my generation, then those who follow them, then those who follow them. Indeed, after you a treacherous people will come who cannot be trusted, who will give false witness without being asked to witness, and who will make oaths and not fulfil them. And there will appear among them [many] obese people.”⁸⁹⁷

The final statement of this narration is obviously in dispraise of obesity. Imaam al-Qurtubee said that the reason for it is because obesity is usually a result of overeating, excessive sleep, and letting the desires have free reign. Such a person is a slave worshipper of himself and not his Lord. Anyone in this state will inescapably fall into *haraam* and every piece of flesh grown from what displeases Allah belongs to the Hellfire. The Almighty condemned the disbelievers for excessive eating saying:

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَتَمَتَّعُونَ وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَهُمْ

“Those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as cattle eat; and the Fire will be their abode.” (Soorah Muhammad, 47: 12)

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) also warned against overeating in a number of narrations. For example, Ibn ‘Umar, Jaabir, Aboo Hurayrah and Aboo Moosaa all quoted Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying,

((الْمُؤْمِنُ يَأْكُلُ فِي مَعَى وَاحِدٍ وَالْكَافِرُ يَأْكُلُ فِي سَبْعَةِ أَمْعَاءٍ))

⁸⁹⁵ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Tafseer , Baab: Ulaa’ikal latheena kafaroo, and Sahih Muslim, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Sifatul Qiyaamah, wal jannah wan naar,

⁸⁹⁶ Adwaa ul-Bayaan, vol. 4, p. 149.

⁸⁹⁷ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol., p. , no. , Kitaab: Shahaadaat; Baab: Laa yash’hadu ‘alaa shahaadat jawr

“The believer eats in one stomach⁸⁹⁸ and the disbeliever eats [as if] in seven.”⁸⁹⁹ Ibn ‘Umar also related that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade anyone from taking two dates at a time without the consent of his eating companions.⁹⁰⁰

عَنِ الْمِقْدَامِ بْنِ مَعْدِيكَرِبَ يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ
مَا مَلَأَ آدَمِيٌّ وَعَاءً شَرًّا مِنْ بَطْنٍ حَسْبُ الْآدَمِيِّ لُقَيْمَاتٌ يُقْمَنُ صَلْبُهُ فَإِنْ غَلَبَتْ
الْآدَمِيَّ نَفْسُهُ فَثُلُثٌ لِلطَّعَامِ وَثُلُثٌ لِلشَّرَابِ وَثُلُثٌ لِلنَّفْسِ

Al-Miqdaam ibn Ma‘dekarib stated that he heard Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) say, “The worst container a human can fill is his stomach. A few small pieces of food to keep a person’s back straight are sufficient. However, if his desire overcomes him, then let him use a third for food, a third for drink and leave a third for breathing.”⁹⁰¹

Imaam al-Qurtubee said in this regard, “If the believer imitates the disbelievers, taking pleasure from whatever they take pleasure, everywhere and any time, where is the reality of Faith (eemaan) and where is the implementation of Islaamic teachings? The more a person eats or drinks, the greater his appetite, his desire and his concern for food becomes, the lazier he becomes and the heavier his sleep at night⁹⁰² becomes.”⁹⁰³

ذَلِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ بِمَا كَفَرُوا وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَرُسُلِي هُزُؤًا

106. That is Hell, their reward; because they disbelieved and made fun of My signs and My messengers.

The Almighty now explains the ultimate consequence and the end of the road for being among the greatest losers with regards to one’s deeds:

ذَلِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ بِمَا كَفَرُوا

“That is Hell, their reward; because they disbelieved,” means, ‘I will punish them in Hell because of their disbelief.’⁹⁰⁴ The absence of success-principle number one, correct belief, relegates a person to Hell automatically. However, some excuses may give disbelievers another chance, like the people of the interval. But those who add to their disbelief mockery of Allah’s signs are in a worse state, as Allah said:

⁸⁹⁸ The Arabic term used is *mi‘an* which literally means “intestine”.

⁸⁹⁹ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1137, no. 5113. In the narration from Ibn ‘Umar, his servant, Naafi‘, reported that Ibn ‘Umar would not eat unless a poor person was brought to share his meal. On one occasion Naafi‘ brought a man to eat with Ibn ‘Umar and he ate a lot. So, Ibn ‘Umar told him not to bring the man to him again because he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say the above mentioned *hadeeth*. (*Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. . Kitaab: At’imah; Baab: al Mu’mīn ya’kul min ma’in waahid)

⁹⁰⁰ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1128, no. 5077.

⁹⁰¹ *Sunan Ibn-i-Majah*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: al At’imah; Baab: Iqtisaad fee Akl, and *Sunan at-Tirmitheh*.

⁹⁰² Although deep sleep at night may be desirable for those who have difficulty sleeping, this was considered a calamity for those who want to get up for *tahajjud* (midnight prayers).

⁹⁰³ *Al-Jaami‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan*, vol. 11, pp. 56-7.

⁹⁰⁴ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol., p. .

وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَرُسُلِي هُزُؤًا

“And made fun of My signs and My messengers.” Those who ridicule Allah’s signs and scorn His messengers seal their fate and book their places in Hell. It is common for those who reject God to make fun of the true faith and its followers, though deep inside themselves they know it is the truth, as the Almighty said:

وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنْفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا

“They deny them wrongfully and arrogantly, though their souls are convinced.” (Soorah an-Naml, 27: 14)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا

107. Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds will have the Gardens of Firdaws for hospitality.

In contrast to the disbelievers who will find the fires of *jahannam* as hospitality, the believers will find the gardens of paradise as hospitality. However, they must fulfill two conditions: belief and righteous deeds.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

“Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds.” These are the same two conditions which were mentioned first among the four conditions of *Soorah al-‘Asr* to escape failure and loss.

The location of belief is the heart and the location of righteous deeds is the limbs. It is also possible for the term “righteous deeds” to refer to the deeds of the heart like trust, fear, remorse, love, and other similar emotions.

Righteous deeds are primarily those done sincerely for God’s sake and in accordance with God’s divinely revealed law. A deed cannot be considered truly righteous without fulfilling both these conditions. Thus, the deeds of one who commits *shirk* are not righteous. The deeds of one who innovates in religion are not righteous. Instead, they will be thrown in his face. The evidence for that can be found in the following *Hadeeth Qudsee* (Holy Narration):

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى أَنَا أَغْنَى الشُّرَكَاءِ عَنِ الشِّرْكِ مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا أَشْرَكَ فِيهِ مَعِيَ غَيْرِي تَرَكْتُهُ وَشِرْكُهُ

Aboo Hurayrah quoted Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying: “Allah, Most Blessed and Transcendent, said: *I am the least in need of partners among those who are partners. Whoever does a deed and shares any portion of it with others besides Me will be left on his own with his partner.*”⁹⁰⁵

The Prophet (ﷺ) was also reported by ‘Aa’ishah to have said:

((مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُنَا فَهُوَ رَدٌّ))

“Whoever does a deed not approved by me will have it rejected.”⁹⁰⁶

⁹⁰⁵ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Zuhd wa Riqaaq; Baab: Man ashraaka fee amalihee.

⁹⁰⁶ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Aqdiyah; Baab: Naqḍ al Ahkaam al Baatilah

The second condition of being in accordance with Allah's divinely revealed laws is more comprehensive than being in accordance with Prophet Muhammad's *Sunnah* as it includes the believers following the earlier prophets also.

كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا

“They will have the Gardens of Firdaws for hospitality.” The actual Arabic phrase expressing what will be given to the believers who do righteous deeds is:

كَانَتْ لَهُمْ

“They had,” in which the past tense of the phrase “to have”⁹⁰⁷ is used. It expresses both the fact that the gardens of paradise were already given to them in Allah's knowledge before they came into existence, as well as the certainty of their receiving them.⁹⁰⁸

جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ

“The Gardens of Firdaws,” refers to the best part of paradise about which the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported by Aboo Hurayrah to have said:

((مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَبِرَسُولِهِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَصَامَ رَمَضَانَ كَانَ حَقًّا عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يُدْخِلَهُ الْجَنَّةَ جَاهِدَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ جَلَسَ فِي أَرْضِهِ الَّتِي وُلِدَ فِيهَا فَقَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا نُبَشِّرُ النَّاسَ قَالَ إِنَّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ مِائَةَ دَرَجَةٍ أَعَدَّهَا اللَّهُ لِلْمُجَاهِدِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَا بَيْنَ الدَّرَجَتَيْنِ كَمَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ فَاسْأَلُوهُ الْفِرْدَوْسَ فَإِنَّهُ أَوْسَطُ الْجَنَّةِ وَأَعْلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَفَوْقَهُ عَرْشُ الرَّحْمَنِ وَمِنْهُ تَفْجَرُ أَنْهَارُ الْجَنَّةِ))

“Whoever believes in Allah and His Messenger, establishes formal prayer, and fasts Ramadaan, will have as his right on Allah that He put him in paradise, whether he fights in the way of Allah or stays in the land in which he was born.” They asked: “O Messenger of Allah! Shall we not give this good news to the people?” He replied, “Indeed, Allah prepared in paradise one hundred levels for those who fight in His way. The distance between each level is like the distance between the heaven and earth. So, if you [are going to] ask Allah [for anything], ask Him for Firdaws, for it is the middle of paradise and the highest part of paradise, above it is the throne of the Most Merciful, and from it spring the rivers of paradise.”⁹⁰⁹

Qataadah said, “Firdaws is a hill in Paradise [located] at its center and [it is] the best part of it,” and he narrated from Anas ibn Maalik from the Prophet (ﷺ) the statement:

((الْفِرْدَوْسُ رُبُوعُ الْجَنَّةِ أَوْسَطُهَا وَأَحْسَنُهَا))

⁹⁰⁷ In Arabic the verb “to have” is expressed by using the verb “kaana to be” along with the preposition “li for”.

⁹⁰⁸ *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Kareem*, pp. 147-8.

⁹⁰⁹ *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: Jihaad wa Siyar; Baab: The levels for the Mujaahideen. Imaam Ibn Hajar explained in his commentary on *Saheeh al-Bukhaaree*, that the reason that *Zakaah* and *Hajj* were not mentioned was not because they were not ordained at that time as claimed by Ibn Battaal, but due to them being dropped by some narrators. Also, the other explanation is that the statement was not in a context of explaining the pillars of Islaam, so brevity was appropriate. Furthermore, *Zakaah* is only obligatory on those with surplus wealth and *Hajj* only on those able and only once in a lifetime. (*Fat'hul-Baaree*, vol. , p. , no..)

“Firdaws is the hill in Paradise at its center and it is the best part of it.”⁹¹⁰

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يَبْغُونَ عَنْهَا حِوَلًا

108. Dwelling in it forever with no desire for any change.

The Almighty described the believers who attained *Firdaws* as:

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا

“Dwelling in it forever.” This is understood as eternal residence according to the scholars of Ahlus-Sunnah. Those who opposed this understanding were mainly Jahm ibn Safwaan (d. 745CE)⁹¹¹ and the Mu‘tazilites who claimed logically that everything Allah created must come to an end. The number of verses in the Qur’aan which affirm the eternal nature of paradise is enormous and the number of prophetic narrations is also large.

لَا يَبْغُونَ عَنْهَا حِوَلًا

“With no desire for any change,” means that they will not request the replacement of anything because each inhabitant will be pleased with the pleasures he is given. In this world, a person who has a beautiful palace and sees someone else with a more beautiful palace will not get complete pleasure from his palace. However, although there will be levels in paradise, each person will feel that no one has more than him. In contrast, the people of hell will think that no one has a more severe punishment than he.⁹¹²

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنفَدَ
كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا

109. Say: “If the ocean were ink [to record] my Lord’s words, the ocean would be exhausted before my Lord’s words would be exhausted, even if we added to it another ocean like it.”

This verse addresses the power and the might of Allah’s words and the uniqueness with which the Qur’aan was written. Allah begins by instructing Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to give people a word-parable in order to clearly demonstrate His majesty. He told him:

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي

“Say: ‘If the ocean were ink [to record] my Lord’s words,’” meaning that if the ocean was turned into ink in order to write out Allah’s words,

⁹¹⁰ Collected by at-Tabaree, (8/298) and authenticated in *Saheeh Sunan at-Tirmitheeh*, no. 2537, and *as-Silsilah as-Saheehah*, nos. 1811 and 2003.

⁹¹¹ *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 83.

⁹¹² *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p. 149.

لَنفَدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنْفَدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي

“The ocean would be exhausted before my Lord’s words would be exhausted,” because there is no end to Allah’s words, as He stated elsewhere:

وَلَوْ أَنَّ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَمٌ وَالْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهُ ۖ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ۖ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ مَّا
نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ

“If all the trees on the earth were pens and the sea [ink] supplied by seven seas behind it, Allah’s words would not be exhausted.” (Soorah Luqmaan, 31: 27)

وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا

“Even if we added to it another ocean like it,” or seven more, as stated before, the seas would empty and the pens would all be broken and Allah’s words would not all be written.

This verse represents clear textual evidence for the attribution of speech to Allah, Most Great and Glorious.⁹¹³ The twelfth century Palestinian scholar Ibn Qudaamah said, “Among the attributes of Allah, Most High, is that He speaks from the infinite past (*qadeem*),⁹¹⁴ allowing whoever He wishes of His creatures to hear it. Moses – May peace be upon him – heard it without any intermediary,⁹¹⁵ Jibreel – May peace be on him – heard it,⁹¹⁶ and so did whoever among His angels and messengers that He permitted.⁹¹⁷ [It is also among His attributes] that He, Most Glorified, will speak to the believers on the Last Day and they will speak to Him.⁹¹⁸

⁹¹³ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem*, p.

⁹¹⁴ Meaning that the attribute of speech is eternal, but the action of speaking exists within time. This is the position of *Ahlus-Sunnah*, though Ibn Qudaamah’s statement implies that even the action of speaking is also eternal. Ibn Abil-‘Izz identified the view of the leading scholars of *hadeeth* and *Sunnah* as being that “Allah has been speaking from eternity, when and as He wills to speak. He has been speaking in words which have sounds that can be heard. As a whole, His speech is eternal, even though a particular sound is not itself eternal.” (*Commentary on the Creed of at-Tahawi*, p. 97)

⁹¹⁵ Proof that Allah spoke to Moses without an intermediary can be found in the following verse:

﴿وَأَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوحَىٰ﴾

“And I have chosen you so listen to what is revealed.” (Soorah Taa Haa, 20: 13)

⁹¹⁶ Evidence that Gabriel heard Allah’s speech may be deduced from the following verse:

﴿قُلْ نَزَّلَهُ رُوحُ الْقُدُسِ مِنْ رَبِّكَ﴾

“Say: The Spirit of the Holy revealed it from your Lord.” (Soorah an-Nahl, 16: 102)

⁹¹⁷ Proof that the angels heard Allah’s speech can be found in the following *hadeeth*:

عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ أَنَّهُمْ بَيْنَمَا هُمْ جُلُوسٌ لَيْلَةً مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ رُمِيَ بِنَجْمٍ فَاسْتَنَارَ فَقَالَ هُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَاذَا كُنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ إِذَا رُمِيَ بِمِثْلِ هَذَا قَالُوا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ كُنَّا نَقُولُ وَلَدَ اللَّيْلَةِ رَجُلٌ عَظِيمٌ وَمَاتَ رَجُلٌ عَظِيمٌ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَإِنَّهَا لَا يُرْمَى بِهَا لِمَوْتِ أَحَدٍ وَلَا لِحَيَاتِهِ وَلَكِنْ رُئِنَا تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى اسْمُهُ إِذَا قَضَى أَمْرًا سَبَّحَ حَمَلَةُ الْعَرْشِ ثُمَّ سَبَّحَ أَهْلُ السَّمَاءِ الَّذِينَ يَلُوحُّهُمْ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ التَّسْبِيحُ أَهْلَ هَذِهِ السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَلُوحُّونَ حَمَلَةُ الْعَرْشِ لِحَمَلَةِ الْعَرْشِ مَاذَا قَالَ قَالَ قَالَ فَيَسْتَحْبِرُ

Allah, Most High, said:

﴿وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا﴾

“And Allah actually spoke to Moses.” (Soorah an-Nisaa, 4: 164);

﴿يَا مُوسَى إِنِّي اصْطَفَيْتَكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ بِرِسَالَاتِي وَبِكَلَامِي﴾

“O Moses. Indeed I have chosen you among people to [receive] My messages and speech.”
(Soorah al-A'raaf, 7: 144);

﴿مِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ﴾

“Among them are those to whom Allah spoke.” (Soorah al-Baqarah, 2: 263);

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ
بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلَى حَكِيمٍ

بَعْضُ أَهْلِ السَّمَاوَاتِ بَعْضًا حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْخَبْرُ هَذِهِ السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا فَتَخْطِفُ الْجِنُّ السَّمْعَ فَيَقْذِفُونَ إِلَى أَوْلِيَائِهِمْ
وَيُرْمُونَ بِهِ فَمَا جَاءُوا بِهِ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ فَهُوَ حَقٌّ وَلَكِنَّهُمْ يَقْرِفُونَ فِيهِ وَيَزِيدُونَ

‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Abbaas reported: A person from the Ansaar who was among the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) reported to me: As we were sitting during the night with Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), a star fell giving off a dazzling light. Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) asked: “What did you used to say in pre-Islamic days when a star fell?” They replied: Allah and His Messenger know best, but we used to say it was a night in which a great man was born or a great man died. The Prophet (ﷺ) then said: “These stars do not fall for the death or birth of anyone. When Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, decides to do something and issues a command, the angels bearing the throne sing His glory, then the inhabitants of heaven nearest them sing God’s glory, and so on until it reaches those in the heaven of this world. Then those nearest the throne bearers ask them: What did your Lord say? And they inform them what He said. Then the inhabitants of heaven seek information from them until this information reaches the heaven of this world. During this process, the Jinn snatch whatever they manage to overhear and toss it to their friends and meteors are thrown at them. Whatever they bring according to how they heard it is truth, but they alloy it with lies and additions.” (Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1210, no. 5538)

As for evidence that Allah spoke to other messengers besides Moses, it is authentically confirmed that Allah spoke to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) during the ascension. See *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 9, pp. 449-54, no. 608 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, pp. 103-4, no. 313.

⁹¹⁸ Proof that Allah will speak to the inhabitants of Paradise and they will speak to Him can be found in the following authentic narration:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى يَقُولُ لِأَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ يَا
أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ فَيَقُولُونَ لَبَّيْكَ رَبَّنَا وَسَعْدَيْكَ فَيَقُولُ هَلْ رَضِيتُمْ فَيَقُولُونَ وَمَا لَنَا لَا نَرْضَى وَقَدْ أُعْطِينَا مَا لَمْ تُعْطِ
أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ فَيَقُولُ أَنَا أُعْطِيكُمْ أَفْضَلَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ قَالُوا يَا رَبِّ وَأَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَيَقُولُ أُحِلُّ
عَلَيْكُمْ رِضْوَانِي فَلَا أَسْخَطُ عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْدَهُ أَبَدًا

Abou Sa‘eed al-Khudree quoted Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying: “Allah will address the people of paradise saying: O People of Paradise! They will respond saying: We hear Your call and happily respond. He will then say: Are you pleased? They will reply: Why shouldn’t we be pleased when You have given us what You haven’t given to any of Your creation? Allah will then say: I will give you something better than that. They will ask: And what could be better than this? Allah will say: I will grant you My pleasure and contentment so I will never ever be angry with you again.” (Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 8, pp. 363-4, no. 557)

“It is not befitting for Allah to speak to a human except in the form of revelation or from behind a veil.” (Soorah ash-Shooraa, 42: 51);

فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا نُودِيَ يَامُوسَى إِنِّي أَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طَوًى

“When he came there [a voice] called out to him [saying]: O Moses, indeed I am your Lord.” (Soorah Taahaa, 20: 11-12);

﴿ إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي ﴾

and “Indeed it is I, Allah, there is no God worthy of worship besides Me. So worship Me.” (Soorah Taahaa, 20: 14)

It is not permissible to say that [the one speaking in these verses] is anyone other than Allah.

‘Abdullaah ibn Mas’ood – May Allah be pleased with him – said,

إِذَا تَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ بِالْوَحْيِ سَمِعَ صَوْتُهُ أَهْلُ السَّمَاءِ

“When Allah speaks revelation, His voice is heard by the inhabitants of the heavens,” and he narrated that from the Prophet (ﷺ).⁹¹⁹

‘Abdullaah ibn Unays quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

((يَحْشُرُ اللَّهُ الْخَلَائِقَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عُرَاةَ خُفَاةَ غُرْلًا بُهْمًا فَيَنَادِيهِمْ بِصَوْتٍ يَسْمَعُهُ مَنْ بَعْدَ كَمَا يَسْمَعُهُ مَنْ قَرُبَ أَنَا الْمَلِكُ أَنَا الدَّيَّانُ))

“On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will gather the creatures naked, barefooted, uncircumcised and lacking. He will then call out to them in a voice which will be heard in the same way by those far away as by those near saying: I am the King, I am the Judge.” [Some of] the leading scholars narrated it⁹²⁰ and al-Bukhaaree used it as evidence.⁹²¹

⁹¹⁹ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 9, p. 426, Chapter 32. The full text in Saheeh al-Bukhaaree is as follows:

إِذَا تَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ بِالْوَحْيِ سَمِعَ أَهْلُ السَّمَوَاتِ شَيْئًا فَإِذَا فُزِعَ عَنْ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَسَكَنَ الصَّوْتُ عَرَفُوا أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ وَنَادَوْا مَاذَا قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا الْحَقُّ

“When Allah speaks revelation, the inhabitants of the heavens hear something [and become scared]. When the fear leaves their hearts and the voice becomes quiet, they come to know that it is the truth, and they call out: What did your Lord say? They reply: The Truth.”

⁹²⁰ Imaam Ahmad collected it in his Musnad, in Musnad al-Makkiyyeen, no. 15464

يُحْشَرُ النَّاسُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَوْ قَالَ الْعِبَادُ عُرَاةَ غُرْلًا بُهْمًا قَالَ قُلْنَا وَمَا بُهْمًا قَالَ لَيْسَ مَعَهُمْ شَيْءٌ ثُمَّ يُنَادِيهِمْ بِصَوْتٍ يَسْمَعُهُ مَنْ قُرْبَ أَنَا الْمَلِكُ أَنَا الدَّيَّانُ وَلَا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِنَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ النَّارَ وَلَهُ عِنْدَ أَحَدٍ مِنَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ حَقٌّ حَتَّى أَقْصَهُ مِنْهُ وَلَا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِنَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا أَحَدٌ مِنَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ عِنْدَهُ حَقٌّ حَتَّى أَقْصَهُ مِنْهُ حَتَّى اللَّطْمَةُ قَالَ قُلْنَا كَيْفَ وَإِنَّا إِيمَاءُ نَأْتِي اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عُرَاةَ غُرْلًا بُهْمًا قَالَ بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ

“People will be gathered on the Day of Judgment naked, uncircumcised and lacking.” We asked: What is ‘lacking’? He replied, “They would have nothing with them. Then will be called in a voice that they will hear near to them: I am the King. I am the Judge. No one from the people of Hell will be allowed to enter Hell while owing a right to anyone of the people of paradise until I take it from him. And no one from the people of Paradise will enter Paradise while owing

The main two groups who opposed this understanding were the Jahmites/Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites. The Jahmites/Mu'tazilites claimed that "speech" was not one of Allah's attributes. Instead it was one of Allah's creations which He created in the air or places from which it is heard. Thus, attributing it to Allah was a form of attribution of the creation to the Creator or ennoblement, as in the case of "Allah's Camel" and "Allah's House". This argument is rejected due to its contradicting the consensus of the Salaf. Furthermore, it is illogical, because speech is an attribute of the speaker, and not something existing independent of him. Also, Moses heard Allah say:

﴿إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي﴾

"Indeed I am Allah, besides whom there is no God, so worship Me." (Soorah Taa Haa, 20: 14) And it is impossible for anyone besides Allah, Most Glorified and Supreme, to say that.

They further argued that "speech" is a thing which is included under the general heading of "everything" mentioned in the verse:

﴿اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ﴾

"Allah is the creator of everything." (Soorah az-Zumar, 39: 62)

There exists only Creator and created; Allah is the Creator and everything besides Him is created. Therefore His speech must be created. However, speech is one of Allah's attributes and the attributes of the Creator are uncreated. Furthermore, the phrase "everything" is general possibly intending something specific as in Allah's statement describing the Queen of Sheba as:

﴿وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ﴾

"She was granted some of everything." (Soorah an-Naml, 27: 23)

The term "everything" was used, although many things were not in her dominion. For example, the dominion of Prophet Sulaymaan was unique to himself.⁹²² The correct interpretation is that she was given some of everything 'that kings need'. This qualification can be understood from the context. What the hoopoe⁹²³ bird wanted to say is that she had everything to rule her kingdom with and was in need of nothing.⁹²⁴

Ibn Abil-'Izz elaborated on the position of Ahlus-Sunnah regarding the Divine attribute of speech as follows: "When we say that Allah speaks, we are affirming one of His attributes of perfection. Its denial is to attribute to Him a defect. This is clearly demonstrated by Allah's statement, **"In his absence, Moses' people made out of their ornaments a calf which seemed to low. Did they not realize that it could neither speak to them nor guide them?"** (7: 148). The

anyone of the people of Hell a right until I take it from him; even for a slap." We asked: How will that be when we will come to Allah naked, uncircumcised and without possessions? He replied: "By good deeds and evil deeds."

⁹²¹ Imaam al-Bukhaaree used it as supportive evidence for his belief that Allah's speech is not created.

The text in Saheeh al-Bukhaaree is as follows:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَنَسٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ يَحْشُرُ اللَّهُ الْعِبَادَ فَيَنَادِيهِمْ بِصَوْتٍ يَسْمَعُهُ مَنْ بَعْدَ كَمَا يَسْمَعُهُ مَنْ قَرَّبَ أَنَا الْمَلِكُ أَنَا الدَّيَّانُ

'Abdullaah ibn Unays quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying: "Allah will gather the people and call them in a voice which will be heard by those far away and those near saying: I am the King, I am the Judge." (Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 9, p. 427, Chapter 32.) Imaam al-Bukhaaree included this hadeeth in the suspended (mu'allaq) format, i.e., without a full chain of narrators. However, he did collect it in his book, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, no. 970, so did Ahmad in his *Musnad*, vol. 3, no. 495 and al-Bayhaquee in *al-Asmaa was-Sifaat*, p. 78-9. It was authenticated by Sh. Al-Albaanee in his edit of *Sharh as-Sunnah*, no. 514.

⁹²² *Sharh Lum'ah*, pp. 72-3 and *Sharh al-'Aqeedah al-Waasitiyyah*, p. 366.

⁹²³ See footnote 781.

⁹²⁴ *Commentary on the Creed of at-Tahawi*, p. 102.

worshippers of the calf, their infidelity notwithstanding, knew their Lord better than the Mu'tazilites, since they did not tell Moses that his Lord could not speak. Regarding the calf, Allah also said: **"Could they not see that it neither answered them, nor that it had no power to harm or benefit them?"** (20: 89). From this remark it is clear that the inability to answer or speak is an argument which Allah used to deny the divinity of the calf.

The strongest objection that the Mu'tazilites have risen against Allah's speech is that it would mean comparing Allah to humans and attributing to Him a body. However, this objection is not valid. When we say that Allah's speaks, we add the qualification, 'in a way befitting His majesty'. Allah has said, **"That Day I will set a seal on their mouths, but their hands will speak to Me, and their feet will bear witness to all that they did."** (36:65). We believe that hands and feet will speak, but we do not know how they will speak. Similarly, Allah says: **"They will say to their skins, 'Why do you give testify against us?' They will reply: 'Allah has given us ability to speak, He who gives the ability to speak to everything.'"** (41:21). We believe that pebbles and food glorified Allah, and that stones gave salutation, and the sounds of articulated words came from them even though they did not have a mouth. [SB, SM]⁹²⁵

The Ash'arites, on the other hand, claimed that Allah's speech is a meaning existing within Him not linked to His wish. Furthermore, these letters and audible sounds are created [in the air] to express the meaning existing within Allah. [Aboo Mansoor al-Maatureedee held that Allah's speech is an idea subsisting in Himself, which He later created in someone else.⁹²⁶] This claim is also rejected due to its contradiction to the consensus of the *Salaf*; its being at variance with the proofs which indicate that Allah's speech is heard, and only sounds are heard, not meanings exiting from within. It also is opposed to the customary understanding, because "speech" according to custom is what the speaker expresses and not what he hides within himself.⁹²⁷

Commenting on the position of the Ash'arites, Ibn Abil-'Izz wrote: "Many later Hanafites believed that the speech of Allah is one and that multiplicity concerns its expressions in words, not in itself. Words are created; they are called the word of Allah because they express His speech and communicate it. When communicated in Arabic, it became the Qur'aan, and when it was communicated in Hebrew it became the Torah. Hence, it is the language that varies, not the speech. When we say that the words are the speech of Allah, we say so in a metaphorical sense. This view is wrong. It would mean that the words, **"Do not come near adultery,"** (17:32), have the same meaning as **"Be steadfast in prayer,"** (2:143)". Similarly, the Verse of the Footstool (2:255) would mean the same as the verses concerning transactions involving debt (2:282-3), and the meaning of *Soorah al-Ikhlaas* (112) would be the same as *Soorah al-Lahab* (111). Very little reflection is needed to be convinced that this view is wrong and conflicts with the belief of the *Salaf*."⁹²⁸

Allah's words are both creational and legal. His legal words are what He revealed to His messengers and His creational words are those with which He decides His decrees, as in the verse:

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ ۖ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

"Indeed, when He intends something, His command is only that He says to it, 'Be!' and it is!" (*Soorah Yaa Seen*, 36: 82)

⁹²⁵ *Commentary on the Creed of at-Tahawi*, p. 98.

⁹²⁶ *Commentary on the Creed*, p. 97.

⁹²⁷ *Sharh Lum'ah*, pp. 72-3.

⁹²⁸ *Commentary on the Creed*, pp. 107-8.

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَمَنْ كَانَ
يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

110. Say: “Indeed, I am only a human like yourselves, (except that) it has been revealed to me, that your God is One God. So, whoever hopes to meet his Lord should do righteousness and should not associate anyone in the worship of his Lord.”

Allah closes the chapter by reaffirming Prophet Muhammad’s humanity and His own unique monotheistic unity. He instructs His Messenger (ﷺ):

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ

“Proclaim: ‘Indeed, I am only a human like yourselves,’” and not an angel or a demi-god. The phrase “like yourselves” was added to further emphasize the Prophet’s humanity. The Prophet (ﷺ) insisted on using the title “slave of Allah” in reference to himself in order to avoid excessive praise of himself. He was reported by ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab to have said:

((لَا تُطْرُونِي كَمَا أَطَرَتِ النَّصَارَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ فَإِنَّمَا أَنَا عَبْدُهُ فَقُولُوا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولُهُ))
((.((

*“Don’t praise me excessively as the Christians did to Jesus the son of Mary. Indeed, I am only His slave, so call me the slave of Allah and His Messenger.”*⁹²⁹

For this reason Allah corrected some of the Prophet’s mistakes in the Qur’aan itself, to remain a symbol of his humanity. And from his *Sunnah* there are recorded examples and warnings which he gave. Among the examples of his humanity from his life is the case of the Date Palms of Madeenah. Aboo Moosaa ibn Talhah said: Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) and I happened to pass by some people near palm grove. He asked, “What are these people doing?” They replied, “Grafting.” The Prophet (ﷺ) commented, “I don’t see any use in it.” When the people were informed of his comment, they abandoned the practice. Later on, Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) was informed that the yield had dwindled. He responded saying, “If there is any use in it, then they should do it. For, it was just a personal opinion of mine. So, don’t follow blindly my personal opinions, but, if I tell you anything on behalf of Allah, then accept it, for I don’t attribute any falsehood to Allah, the Exalted and Glorious.”⁹³⁰

However, in spite of this clarity, sects and cults have arisen among Muslims claiming that the Prophet (ﷺ) was not entirely human.

The Bareilawis

The Bareilawi sect, which became the majority among Muslims in Pakistan, consider the Prophet to be alive in his grave and able to communicate our prayers to Allah. Furthermore, they and others believe that the Prophet (ﷺ) was semi-divine. They claim, using as evidence fabricated hadeeths, that the Prophet (ﷺ) was created from Allah’s light and the rest of creation was made from his light. Even a book has been published in Pakistan called *The Shadowless Prophet* to that effect.

⁹²⁹ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. 8, p. 537, no. 817.

⁹³⁰ Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1259 no. 5830.

Ahmad Rida Bareilawi (1865-1921) founder of the Bareilawi sect composed a treatise which he named, *Salaatus-Safaa fee Noor al-Mustafaa*. In its introduction he said,

“O Allah, praise be to you O Light, O Light of Light, O Light before every light, O light after every light... grant blessing and peace to Your radiant light which You created from Your Light, and created all creatures from his light, bless the rays of his light, his family, companions and moons, bless all of them.”⁹³¹

He included in his treatise the following fabricated tradition which he falsely attributed to the *Musannaf* of ‘Abdur-Razzaaq:

“The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said to Jaabir, ‘O Jaabir. Allah created the light of your Prophet from His light before He created all things. He then made that light circulate, by His power, wherever He pleased. At that time there was not Preserved Tablet, Pen, paradise, hell, angels, heaven, sun, moon, jinn or man. When Allah intended to create the creation, He divided the light into four parts. From the first part He created the Pen, from the second the Tablet, from the third the Throne, and then He divided the fourth part into four sections. From the first He created the bearers of the Throne, from the second the Footstool (*kursee*), from the third the rest of the angels. He then divided the fourth section into four segments. From the first He created the heavens, from the second the earths, and from the third paradise and hell. Then He divided the fourth into four pieces...’”⁹³²

One of the leading Bareilawi scholars, Didar Ali (1853-1935), said,

“Muhammad (peace be upon him) is neither Allah nor other than Allah. He is the manifestation of the attributes of Allah. He gives life to the souls. The Jinn and mankind were created from him and the Throne and Seat came into being from him. Adam and Eve came into existence from him.”⁹³³

In another treatise entitled, *Nafy al-Fai’ amman Anaara bi Noorihi Kulla Shai*, (Negating shadow from the one whose light illuminated everything), the founder of the Bareilawi sect said,

“His shade did not fall on earth, as he was light. When he walked in the sunlight or moonlight, his shadow was not seen.”⁹³⁴

The Bareilawis also believe that the Prophet (ﷺ) is present everywhere and sees everything (*Haazir Naazir*). Ahmad Rida himself wrote: “Weep, O Wahhabis, for the Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him) is omnipresent and omniscient. Nothing happened in the world and nothing will happen in it but he sees it and observes it. He is present everywhere and sees everything.”⁹³⁵

The founder said, “The saints and prophets do not die. They are buried while they are living. Their life in the grave is like their life in this world, indeed, far better than it.” Concerning the prophets, he further said, “The life of prophets [after death] is real, sensuous and like it was in this world. Death befalls them for a moment so that Allah’s word is fulfilled. After a second, life returns to them and they become living as they were before. To this life apply the rules of this worldly life. For this reason their inheritance is not divided, their wives are not married, nor do they pass a waiting period. They eat, drink and pray in their graves.”⁹³⁶

When confronted with this verse, Bareilawis reply that since Allah told the Prophet (ﷺ) to “say: Indeed I am a human like you,” no other human being is allowed to say that he is a human like other humans. Furthermore, he is only “like” humans but not exactly the same.

The Shi’ites

⁹³¹ Al-Bareilawi, *Salaatus-Safaa*, included in *Majmoo’ Rasaa’il*, vol. 1, p. 33.

⁹³² Ibid.

⁹³³ *Diwan Didar Ali*, p. 41.

⁹³⁴ Al-Bareilawi, *Nafy al-fai’ amman anaara bi noorihi kulla shai*, included in *Majmoo’ ar-Rasaa’il*, vol. 1, p. 202.

⁹³⁵ Al-Bareilawi, *Khaalis al-I’tiqaad*, p. 46.

⁹³⁶ *Malfuzat*, vol. III, p. 276. Quoted in *Bareilawis*, p. 115.

In Shi'ite tradition, the Prophet's daughter Faatimah, and the Imaams consisting of his cousin 'Alee, his grandchildren, Hasan and Husayn, and nine great grandchildren, share the quality of special creation with the Prophet (ﷺ). Shi'ites believe that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his daughter Faatimah and the Imaams in their mystical dimension as being are a light that God created before the creation of the material world. This light then became the cause and instrument for the rest of creation. The following Shi'ite tradition is attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ):

*"Allah created 'Alee and me from one light before the creation of Aadam then He split (the light) into two halves. He then created (all) things from my light and 'Alee's light."*⁹³⁷

The First Imaam, 'Alee, is reported to have said:

*"Allah is one. He was alone in His oneness so He spoke one word and it became a light. He created from the light Muhammad, my descendants (i.e. the other Imaams) and me. Then He spoke another word and it became a spirit that He caused to settle upon the light. And He caused it to settle upon our bodies. And so we are the Spirit of Allah and His Word ... and this was before He created the Creation."*⁹³⁸

And the Sixth Imaam, Ja'far as-Saadiq, is reported to have said:

*"Our light separates from our Lord like the rays of the sun from the sun."*⁹³⁹

According to Shi'ite theology, this light created by God as the inner essence of the Imaams, descended upon Aadam and then upon each of the prophets and imaams until it became embodied in Muhammad, Faatimah and the twelve Imaams.

Other narrations claim that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), Faatimah and the Imaams were created out of the substance of 'Illiyoon (see Qur'an 83:19).⁹⁴⁰ There is some difference of opinion among Qur'aanic commentators as to what exactly is meant by 'Illiyoon, but Shi'ites generally consider it to be a synonym for an elevated station, the Seventh Heaven, or the Farthest Tree (*Sidrat al-Muntahaa*).⁹⁴¹

The following are some of the many narrations collected by al-Kulaynee regarding the origin, from which the Imaams were created,

عَنْ أَبِي يَحْيَى الْوَاسِطِيِّ عَنْ بَعْضِ أَصْحَابِنَا عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (عليه السلام) قَالَ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَنَا مِنْ عَلِيِّينَ وَخَلَقَ أَرْوَاحَنَا مِنْ فَوْقِ ذَلِكَ وَخَلَقَ أَرْوَاحَ شِيعَتِنَا مِنْ عَلِيِّينَ وَخَلَقَ أَجْسَادَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ ...

Yahyaa al-Waasitee quoted Aboo 'Abdullaah (عليه السلام) as saying, "Indeed Allah created us from 'Illeeyeen and our souls from above it. He created the souls of our followers from 'Illeeyeen and their bodies from below it."⁹⁴²

⁹³⁷ al-Bursee, *Mashaariq al-Anwaar*, quoted in *Bihaar al-Anwaar*, vol.25, p.24, no.42. See also *Bihaar al-Anwaar*, vol.26, p.3.

⁹³⁸ Hasan ibn Sulaymaan al-Hillee, *Muntakhab al-Basaa'ir*, quoted in *Bihaar al-Anwaar*, vol. 53, p. 46, no. 20 and al-Bursee, *Mashaariq al-Anwaar*, quoted in *Bihaar al-Anwaar*, vol. 25, p. 23, no. 39.

⁹³⁹ *Bihaar al-Anwaar*, vol.25, p.10.

⁹⁴⁰ as-Saffaar, *Basaa'ir ad-Darajaat*, quoted in *Bihaar al-Anwaar*, vol. 25, pp. 10-13, nos. 14,16,23-6.

⁹⁴¹ *Bihaar al-Anwaar*, vol. 25, p. 10.

⁹⁴² *Al-Kaafee*, vol.1, Kitaab al-Hujjah, p. 389, no. 1.

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مَرْوَانَ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (عليه السلام) قَالَ سَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ : إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَنَا مِنْ نُورٍ عَظَمَتِهِ، ثُمَّ صَوَّرَ خَلْقَنَا مِنْ طِينَةٍ مَخْزُونَةٍ مَكْنُونَةٍ مِنْ تَحْتِ الْعَرْشِ، فَأَسْكَنَ ذَلِكَ النُّورَ فِيهِ، فَكُنَّا نَحْنُ خَلْقًا وَبَشَرًا نُورَانِيَيْنِ لَمْ يَجْعَلْ لِأَحَدٍ فِي مِثْلِ الَّذِي خَلَقَنَا مِنْهُ نَصِيبًا وَخَلَقَ أَرْوَاحَ شَيْعَتِنَا مِنْ طِينَتِنَا وَأَبْدَانَهُمْ مِنْ طِينَةٍ مَخْزُونَةٍ مَكْنُونَةٍ أَسْفَلَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ الطِّينَةِ لَمْ يَجْعَلْ لِأَحَدٍ فِي مِثْلِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُمْ مِنْهُ نَصِيبًا إِلَّا الْأَنْبِيَاءَ ...

Muhammad ibn Marwaan related that he heard Aboo ‘Abdullaah (عليه السلام) say, “Indeed Allah created us from the light of His greatness, then He formed our creation from stored hidden clay from beneath the throne and placed the light in it. Thus, we are creation and human light beings. No one has been given a share of what we were created from. He created the souls of our followers from our clay and their bodies from stored hidden clay below that clay. And no one has been given a share of what they were created from except the prophets.”⁹⁴³

Those who elevate the Prophet (ﷺ) do so believing that he will be able to benefit them in this life by granting them good and protecting them from evil. However, Allah had the Prophet (ﷺ) clearly deny this possibility in the Qur’aan itself:

قُلْ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا رَشَدًا

“Say: ‘It is not in my power to cause you harm, or to bring you to the Right Path.’” (Soorah al-Jinn, 72: 21)

Shaykh Al-‘Uthaymeen commented on this phenomenon saying, “It is amazing that some people still exist who are more attached to the Messenger (ﷺ) than they are to Allah, Most Great and Glorious. If anything about the Messenger (ﷺ) is mentioned, they tremble and shiver, and if Allah is mentioned it is as if He was not mentioned. Some reach the level that they will swear by the Messenger (wan-nabee) instead of swearing by Allah. Others consider visiting the Prophet’s grave superior to visiting the Ka’bah. I have witnessed people crying because they were prevented from visiting Madeenah during the days of Hajj due to its closeness to the rites of pilgrimage and the possibility that they might miss the Hajj. When they are asked why they came, they reply, “I came to witness the lights.” It is as if they only came to visit Madeenah and they forgot that they came to fulfill the rites of Hajj. This is a result of ignorance and the failure of scholars to clarify the truth to the common masses. For, the masses have wild emotions, easily aroused. If the truth is explained to them, they would readily return to it.”⁹⁴⁴

Allah then goes on to identify the most unique characteristic distinguishing the Prophet (ﷺ) from the average human being:

يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ

“(Except that) it has been revealed to me,” meaning that revelation came to him and not to others, besides the brotherhood of prophets and messengers, may Allah’s peace be upon them all. Any who would claim revelation in his time or after his time are the worst of creation, as the Almighty said,

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ قَالَ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ وَلَمْ يُوحَ إِلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ

⁹⁴³ Usool min al-Kaafee, vol. 1, p. 389, no. 2.

⁹⁴⁴ Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, pp. 151-2.

“And who can be more unjust than he who invents a lie against Allah, or says: ‘Revelation has come to me,’ while nothing has been revealed to him?” (Soorah al-An‘aam, 6: 93)

Allah then goes on to identify the essence of what was revealed to Prophet Muhammad () saying,

أَنَّ إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ

“That your God is only One God,” the message of *Tawhīd*, affirming that Allah is a unique unity in His dominion, His attributes and how He should be worshipped. No one shares His dominion over creation, no other being possesses His divine attributes, and nothing is worthy of worship besides Him. That being the case, Allah has the Prophet () advise those who believe in God and the resurrection and judgment,

فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ

“So, whoever hopes to meet his Lord,” and desires a good result from the meeting, they must fulfill certain basic criteria regarding their deeds. Belief alone is not enough because it can easily be confused with mere knowledge of belief. And limited knowledge can lead to false hopes. As in the case of those who have memorized only the first part of the following prophetic statement:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ كُلُّ أُمَّتِي يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ

Aboo Hurayrah related that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “All of my nation (ummah) will enter paradise.” And they neglect the remainder:

إِلَّا مَنْ أَبِي قَالَوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَأْبَى قَالَ مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَقَدْ أَبَى

“Except for those who refuse.” They asked, “Who would refuse, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied, “Whoever obeys me will enter paradise and whoever disobeys me has refused.”⁹⁴⁵

Actions are the fruit of correct belief. Therefore, Allah made the Prophet (ﷺ) inform the believers that if they wish to meet Allah with genuine hope:

فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

“Let him do righteousness and not associate anyone in the worship of his Lord.”

In the last of the verse Allah instructs the believers to do good works only for His sake and not to join any partner in worship with Him. There are a number of prophetic statements which speak against *Riyaa* (doing thing to show off) one of them is:

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ لَبِيدٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: ((إِنِّ أَخَوْفَ مَا أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمُ الشِّرْكَ الْأَصْغَرَ قَالُوا وَمَا الشِّرْكَ الْأَصْغَرُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ الرِّيَاءُ))

Mahmood ibn Labeed reported that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “The thing that I fear the most for you is the minor Shirk : *riyaa*”⁹⁴⁶

⁹⁴⁵ Sahih Al Bukhari, vol. , p. , no. , Kitaab: I’tisaam bil kitaab was Sunnah; Baab: Iqtidaa bi sunan rasoolillaah.

⁹⁴⁶ Reported by Ahmad in his Musnad (vol.5, pp. 428-9), and al-Baghawee in Sharh as-Sunnah (no. 4135), and Saleem al-Hilaalee said it has a sound chain of narrators. The narrators are [Is’haaq ibn ‘Eesaa], Imaam al-Bukhaaree said that he is well known for his hadeeth i.e. authentic in his narration.[‘Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Abee az-Zannaad], Imaam at-

In another hadeeth, the Prophet (ﷺ) showed that he feared *riyaa*’ harming his followers even more than the dangers of Dajjaal (the Anti-Christ):

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ قَالَ خَرَجَ عَلَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَنَحْنُ نَتَذَكَّرُ الْمَسِيحَ الدَّجَالَ فَقَالَ: ((أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِمَا هُوَ أَخَوْفُ عَلَيْكُمْ عِنْدِي مِنَ الْمَسِيحِ الدَّجَالِ قَالَ قُلْنَا بَلَى فَقَالَ الشِّرْكُ الْخَفِيُّ أَنْ يَقُومَ الرَّجُلُ يُصَلِّيَ فَيُزَيِّنُ صَلَاتَهُ لِمَا يَرَى مِنْ نَظَرِ رَجُلٍ)).

Aboo Sa‘eed reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came to us while we were discussing about Dajjaal and said, “*Should I not inform you of that which I fear for you even more than the dangers of Dajjaal? It is the hidden Shirk: A person stands to pray, and he beautifies his prayer because he sees the people looking at him.*”⁹⁴⁷

When this *hadeeth* is put into perspective, one can appreciate the real danger of *riyaa*’. The calamity of Dajjaal is the greatest affliction that mankind will ever experience, from the time of the creation of Adam until the Day of Judgment, and there has not been a single prophet after the time of Prophet Noah, who did not warn his people of this great tribulation. The Prophet (ﷺ) advised those that would be alive at the time of Dajjaal to run away from him, and he (ﷺ) would always seek refuge in Allah from the dangers of Dajjaal after every obligatory prayer. Yet, the Prophet (ﷺ) said that he feared the harm of *riyaa*’ even more than the dangers of Dajjaal!

Therefore, the verse closes off with a reminder for the believers to ensure that their worship is for Allah alone for it is only such worship which is accepted by Allah and the rest are all wasted. May Allah protect us all from falling into the category of people whose deeds are wasted.

Tirmidhee said that he is an authentic narrator. [‘Amr ibn Abee ‘Amr] is also declared an authentic narrator and ‘Aasim ibn ‘Umar ibn Qataadah too declared authentic narrator by Imaam Ibn Hajar.

⁹⁴⁷ *Sahih Sunan ibn Maajah*, vol.2, p.410, no.3389.

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