

men whom We inspired with revelation. So, ask the people (having the knowledge) of the Message, if you do not know. [43] (We sent them) with clear signs and scriptures. And We sent down the Message (The Qur'ān) so that you explain to the people what has been revealed for them and so that they may ponder. [44]

Commentary

According to Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī, it was after the revelation of the first verse cited above that the Mushrikīn of Makkah sent their emissaries to the Jews of Madinah to find out if it was true that all earlier prophets had always been from the genus of men.

Though, included under the Qur'ānic expression: أَهْلُ الذِّكْرِ (Ahludh-Dhikr) were the people of the Book and believers all together, but it was obvious that the Mushrikīn (disbelievers) were to be satisfied only by the statement of non-Muslims - because they themselves were not satisfied with what the Holy Prophet ﷺ was telling them. So, how could they accept the statement of other Muslims?

The word: ذِكْرٌ (*dhikr*) in the combination of: أَهْلُ الذِّكْرِ [Ahludh-Dhikr : translated here as 'the people (having the knowledge) of the Message'] is used to carry more than one meaning. One of these is 'Ilm or knowledge. It is in this sense that the Holy Qur'ān has identified the Torah too as Dhikr: وَكَلَّمْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ : 'And verily We have written in the Zabūr (Scripture, Psalms), after the Dhikr (the Message, Torah)' - 21:105. Similar to this is the statement which follows next: أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ [And We sent down the Message (The Qur'ān) to you - 21:106]. Here, the word: الذِّكْرُ (*Adh-Dhikr*) means the Qur'ān. Therefore, 'ahludh-dhikr' literally means 'the people of knowledge' (as refined in the cited translation). And who are those referred to as Ahlul-'Ilm or 'the people of knowledge' at this place? As apparent in this case, they refer to the scholars among the people of the Book, the Jews and Christians. This is the view of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, Ḥasan and As-Suddiyy and others. Then, there are scholars who have taken 'Adh-Dhikr' at this place as well in the sense of Al-Qur'ān, and thus explained 'Ahludh-Dhikr' in the sense of Ahlul-Qur'ān. However, the clearest position taken in this matter is that of Rummānī, Zajjāj and Azharī. They say:

المراد باهل الذكر علماء اخبار الامم السالفة كاتنا من كان فالذكر بمعنى الحفظ

كَانَهُ قِيلَ اسْأَلُوا الْمُطَّلَعِينَ عَلَىٰ أَخْبَارِ الْأُمَمِ يَعْلَمُوكُمْ بِذَلِكَ

'Ahludh-Dhikr' means authentic historians of past peoples based on this investigative position, this definition includes therein the people of the Book, the Jews and Christians, and the people of the Qur'ān, the Muslims as well.

The word: *الْبَيِّنَاتُ* (*al-bayyināt*) in verse 44 means clear signs and miracles, the later being more aptly applicable here. The word: *زُبُرٌ* (*zubar*) is the plural form of: *زُبْرَةٌ* (*zubarah*) which means large pieces of iron as in: *أَتُرِي زُبْرَ الْحَدِيدِ* (give me pieces of the iron - 18:96). Because of the relevance of putting pieces together, writing is called: *زَبْرٌ* (*zabar*), and a written book is known as: *الزَّبْرُ* (*az-zibr*) with its plural as: *الزَّبُورُ* (*az-zabūr*). In short, at this point, it means the Book of Allah which includes Torah, Injil, Zabūr and Qur'ān.

Non-Mujtahids must follow Mujtahid Imāms:

The Essence of Taqlīd

Though, the sentence: *فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ* [So, ask the people (having the knowledge) of the Message, if you do not know - 43] has appeared at this place in relation with a particular subject, but its words are general and are inclusive of all other matters of concern. Therefore, given the way Qur'ān has with words, this is really an important rule of procedure based on reason and revelation both, that is, those who do not know injunctions revealed for them ask those who do, and act accordingly. It is as simple as that. So, it is the duty of those who do not know that they should act in accordance with what they are told by those who do. This is what Taqlīd (to follow in trust) is. Not only that it is an explicit command of the Qur'ān, there is just no other way the mass practice of religion can be achieved, even if it was to be argued rationally. This rule has been in practice throughout the Muslim community right from the age of the noble Ṣaḥābah to this day without any division or difference. Even those who disavow Taqlīd do not reject the kind of Taqlīd under which those who are not 'Ālim (knowledgable in religion) should take Fatwā from the 'Ulamā' and act accordingly. And it is obvious that, even if the 'Ulamā' were to give proof of their view from the Qur'ān and Sunnah to masses of people who are unaware, they would still accept these arguments and proofs on the authority of, and trust and confidence in the same 'Ulamā'. They themselves do not have the ability to under-

stand and assess arguments and proofs presented. And Taqlīd is nothing but that one who does not know places his trust and confidence in someone who knows and accepts the injunction in question as the injunction of the Sharī'ah, and acts accordingly. This is one Taqlīd the justification of which - in fact, the necessity of which, leaves no room for any difference.

However, as for 'Ulamā' who themselves have the ability to understand Qur'ān and Ḥadīth and know the places where consensus (Ijmā') exists, they are free to act, in the case of such injunctions as have been clearly and explicitly mentioned in Qur'ān and Ḥadīth - and in which there exists no difference among the learned Ṣaḥābah and Tabi'īn as well - in these they can act directly according to Qur'ān, Ḥadīth and Ijma'. In these matters, 'Ulamā' need not follow (Taqlīd) any Mujtahid. But, there are particular injunctions and rulings which have not been explicitly spelt out in Qur'ān and Sunnah, or wherein there appears to be some contradiction in the 'āyāt (verses) of the Qur'ān and the *riwāyāt* (narrations) of Ḥadīth, or in which there has come up some difference among the Ṣaḥābah and Tabi'īn in determining the meaning of Qur'ān and Sunnah - such rulings and injunctions are the object of Ijtihād. In the terminology of Islamic Fiqh (jurisprudence), these are called issues and problems in which Ijtihād is possible. The rule which governs this is that an 'Ālim who does not possess the class and rank of Ijtihād, he too must follow one of the Mujtahid Imāms in these issues. Just relying on personal opinion, preferring one verse or narration and going by it while dismissing another verse or narration as less weightier is something not permissible for him.

Similarly, there are particular injunctions not mentioned explicitly in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. To deduce these out employing the principles provided by the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and to arrive at and determine their precise Islamic legal operative order (*al-ḥukm ash-shar'ī*), is the functional prerogative of only those Mujtahids of the Muslim Ummah who occupy the highest station of expertise in the Arabic language, its lexicography, idioms and modalities (*ṭuruq*) of usage, and who possess an additional mastery over all fields of knowledge related to Qur'ān and Sunnah, and above all, who are credited with a conduct of life marked by exemplary piety and godfearingness. Such people are no less than the

great Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Shāfi‘ī, Mālik, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, or Awzā‘ī, jurist Abū Al-Laith and others like them. These were people Allah Ta‘ālā had specially blessed. They lived closer to the age of prophethood, and that of the Ṣaḥābah and the Tabi‘in. Under the canopy of this *barakah*, Allah Ta‘ālā had bestowed upon them a very special taste of understanding the principles and objectives of the Shari‘ah and an equally special expertise of extracting textually non-prescribed (*ghayr manṣūṣ*) laws from the laws already prescribed in the sacred texts (*manṣūṣ*) by using the methodology of analogical deduction (*qiyās*). Now, in such issues and problem where Ijtihād efforts have been exhausted at the highest conceivable level, it is necessary even for the ‘Ulamā’ at large that they must follow one of the Mujtahid Imāms. Going by any new opinion contrary to that of the Mujtahid Imāms is error.

This is why great men of learning, ‘Ulamā’, Muḥaddithīn and Fuqahā’ like Imām al-Ghazālī, Rāzī, Tirmidhī, Ṭaḥāwī, Ma’zini, Ibn Humām, Ibn Qudāmah and hundreds and thousands of early and later men of learning of the same standard, despite their high expertise in fields of Arabicism and Islamic Religious Law, have always remained voluntarily restricted to following Mujtahid Imāms invariably. They never considered it permissible to give a Fatwā following their own opinion, contrary to all Mujtahid Imāms.

Nonetheless, these blessed souls did have that standard ranking in learning and piety that they assessed the sayings of the Mujtahid Imāms on the anvil of proofs from the Qur‘ān and Sunnah, after which they would go by the saying of the Imām which they found, out of the sayings of the Mujtahid Imāms, closest to the Qur‘ān and Sunnah. But, they never thought it to be permissible either to depart from the approach taken by Mujtahid Imāms or to hold some opinion contrary to all of them. The essential reality of Taqlīd is no more than what has been stated here.

After that, came a gradual decline in the standards of knowledge and what was originally based on Taqwā and godliness came to be contaminated with personal interests and preferences. Under such conditions, given the kind of liberty that people could go by the saying of any one Imām in a religious problem of their choice and opt for the saying of some other Imām in some other problem they choose, the inevitable out-

come would be that people would start following their worldly desires in the name of following the Shari'ah by opting for the saying of an Imām which is more conducive to the fulfillment of their worldly desire. This is, as obvious, no following of a religion or Shari'ah. In fact, this would be the following of one's own interests and desires - which is Ḥarām by the consensus of the entire Muslim Ummah. In Muwāfaqāt, Allāmah Shaṭībī has dealt with this subject in great details. And Ibn Taymiyyah too, despite his opposition to Taqlīd at large, has rated this type of following in his Fatawa as being Ḥarām by the consensus of the Muslim Ummah.

Therefore, later day jurists of Islam considered it necessary that all those who act according to the precepts of the Shari'ah should be made to follow only one of the Mujtahid Imāms. From here began what was to be known as 'personal following' (*Taqlīd Shakhṣī*) which, in reality, is a functional operative order to keep the system of religion in tact so that people do not succumb to following their own desires under the cover of religion. This is precisely what Sayyidnā 'Uthmān al-Ghanī ؓ did with the total agreement of the noble Ṣaḥābah when he restricted the seven versions (سبعة أحرف) of the Qur'ān to only one version - though all seven versions were reading of the Qur'ān and were revealed through angel Jibrā'il as wished by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. But, when the Holy Qur'ān spread all over non-Arab countries, the danger that it might be altered or interpolated because of its seven readings became acute. So, it was by a total agreement of the Ṣaḥābah that Muslims were instructed to write and recite the Qur'ān in one version only. Sayyidnā 'Uthmān al-Ghanī ؓ arranged to have all copies of the Qur'ān written according to this one version which he despatched to various parts of the world. The entire Muslim Ummah follows this Qur'ān even to this day. This never means that other versions were not true or authentic. The fact is that this one version was taken to in the interest of a better management of religious affairs and so that the Qur'ān stays protected against any possible alterations or interpolations.¹ Similarly, all Mujtahid Imāms are true. When one of them is chosen to be followed, it never means that other Imāms are not worthy of being followed. Far from it, it is only a

1. All this discussion is based on the theory of Allāmah Ibn Jarīr رحمه الله about the "Seven Versions" (سبعة أحرف). For a detailed treatment of the subject, please see my introduction at the beginning of volume I. (Muḥammad Taqī Usmānī)

functional arrangement. One decides for himself in terms of his convenience he has in following a particular Imām. But, while doing so, he also considers other Imāms as worthy of the same respect.

This is totally similar to a situation where it is considered necessary that only one of the many physicians present in town be chosen and assigned particularly for the treatment of a sick person. The reason is that it is not advisable for the patient that he goes about following his personal opinion in using the prescription of one physician at some time and that of another physician at some other time. Such a method of seeking solutions to one's medical problem is patently fatal. It should be understood that the choice of a specific physician made by the patient for his treatment never means that other physicians are no experts, or lack the capability of proper treatment.

The reality of the different juristic schools Ḥanafī, Shāfi'ī, Mālikī and Ḥanbalī that emerged in the Muslim Ummah was no more than what has been stated. As for giving it the touch of sectarianism and factionalism or increasing the heat of mutual confrontation and dissention is concerned, it is no valid mission of the revealed religion, nor have the discerning and far-sighted 'Ulamā' ever considered it good. That which happened was that scholarly debate and research by some 'Ulamā' became coloured with polemics which later reached the level of blames and satirical remarks. Then came ignorance-based confrontation which brought people to the outer limit where this state of affairs became the very indicator of being religious!

فالى الله المشتكى ولا حول ولا قوة الا بالله العلي العظيم

So, before Allah is the complaint and there is no strength and there is no power except with Allah, the High, the Great.

Note of Caution

What has been written here on the religious question of Taqlīd and Ijtihād is only a very brief summary of the subject, which is sufficient for Muslims at large. As for scholarly research and details of the subject, they are present in books of Uṣūl al-Fiqh. Worth mentioning are: (1) Kitāb al-Muwāfaqāt by Allāmah Shāṭibī, v. IV, Bāb Al-Ijtihād; (2) Kitāb Iḥkām al-Aḥkām by Allāmah Saifuddīn al-'Āmidī, v. III, al-Qā'idah ath-thālitha fī al-mujtahidīn; (3) Ḥujjatullahil-Bālighah and 'Iqd al-Jīd

by Ḥaḍrat Shāh Waliyyullah Ad-Dihlawī; and (4) Kitāb al-Iqtiṣād fī at-Taqlīd wa al-Ijtihād by Ḥaḍrat Maulanā Ashraf Alī Thānavī. Interested scholars may wish to refer back to them.

Ḥadīth is Necessary to Understand Qur'an : The Rejection of Ḥadīth is Really the Rejection of the Qur'an

The word: الذِّكْرُ (*adh-dhikr*) in verse 44: وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ : "And We sent down the Message (*adh-dhikr*: The Qur'an) so that you explain to the people," means, by consensus, the Holy Qur'an - and, in this verse, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been given the assignment of explaining the meaning of verses revealed to him before people. Herein lies an open proof that the correct understanding of the realities, insights and injunctions of the Holy Qur'an depends on the statement of the Prophet of Islām, Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā ﷺ. If everyone, by simply acquiring the knowledge of Arabic language and literature, were to become capable of understanding the injunctions of the Qur'an as Divinely intended, then, the mission of explaining assigned to the Holy Prophet ﷺ would have been rendered meaningless.

In Al-Muwāfāqāt, Allāmah Shātibī has provided detailed proof that the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the whole of it, is the explanation of the Book of Allah because the Qur'an has said about the Holy Prophet ﷺ: وَأَنْتَ لَعَلَى خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ (And surely you are at the height of a sublime nature - 68:4) and which was explained by Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها by saying: كَانَ خُلُقُهُ الْقُرْآنَ (The Qur'an was his sublime nature). Thus, the outcome is that every word and deed which provenly issued forth from the Holy Prophet ﷺ is nothing but what was said by the Qur'an. Some of these are the explanation of a verse of the Holy Qur'an in express and obvious terms, while in some cases there appears no express mention about them in the Holy Qur'an, but they are nonetheless based on some kind of revelation, though it was not made part of the Holy Qur'an. Thus, that too, in a certain way, comes under the operative purview of the Qur'an itself. This is because according to the clarification of the Qur'an nothing that he says is prompted by his personal desire, instead of which, it is a Wahy (revelation) from Allah Ta'ālā: وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ (and nor does he talk from desire. It is nothing but a revelation revealed - 53:3-4). This tells us that all acts of worship, dealings with people, personal morals and habits of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were, all of

them, through Divine revelation and have the same authority as that of the Qur'ān. Then, there are occasions when he has done something as based on his Ijtihād in which case it is ultimately - either through Divine revelation or through an absence of any restraining order - corrected and supported. Therefore, that too stands empowered with the authority of Wahy (revelation).

To sum up, it can be said that this verse has declared that the purpose for which the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sent is the explaining of the Qur'ān. This purpose of his mission in this world has also been mentioned in several verses of Sūrah Al-Jumu'ah, and elsewhere too, where it has been referred to as the Ta'lim of Al-Kitāb or Teaching of the Book. Now turn your attention to the great treasure of Ḥadīth which one of the most talented and intellectually peerless people of our community, right from the Ṣaḥābah and Tabi'īn all the way to the Muḥaddithīn of the later period, have guarded more than their lives and delivered it to the Muslim Ummah as *fait accompli*. These were people who spent their whole lives sifting through this treasure and went on to establish the categories of Ḥadīth narrations. As for narrations which they did not find matching enough in authority for the purpose of basing Islamic legal injunctions on them, these they have separated from the treasure of Ḥadīth. Instead, they have simply written standard books based exclusively on these narrations, which have proved correct and reliable after life-long criticisms and researches.

If today a person calls this treasure of Ḥadīth unreliable under one or the other pretext or artifice, it plainly means that the Holy Prophet ﷺ acted against this Qur'ānic injunction when he did not explain what the Qur'ān had said; or, that he had explained it but his explanation did not remain preserved for posterity. Under either of the two conditions, it is being suggested that the Qur'ān has not remained protected as to its meaning - the responsibility of protecting which has been undertaken by Allah Ta'ālā Himself: **وَأَنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ** [We, Ourselves, have sent down the Dhikr (the Qur'ān) and We are there to protect it - 15:9]. This claim or inference of such a person is contrary to this textual authority (*nass*) of the Qur'ān. From here it stands proved that a person who refuses to accept the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as a binding authority of Islam is, in reality, a denier of the Qur'ān itself. Na'ūdhubillāh: May Allah protect

us from it.

Verses 45 - 47

أَفَأَمِنَ الَّذِينَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ اللَّهُ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ
الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ فِي تَقَلُّبِهِمْ فَمَا هُمْ
بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ عَلَى تَخَوُّفٍ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ
رَحِيمٌ ﴿٤٧﴾

Do they who contrive evil plots feel immune from that Allah makes the earth cave in with them, or from that the punishment comes to them from where they would not perceive, [45] or that He seizes them while roaming about - while they are not to frustrate Him - [46] or that He seizes them while they are in apprehension? So, indeed your Lord is Very Kind, Very Merciful. [47]

Commentary

In verses appearing previously: *ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُخْزِيهِمْ* (Then, on the day of Judgment, He will put them to disgrace - 27), disbelievers were warned against the punishment of the Hereafter. In the present verses, they have been further warned that it is also possible that they are caught in the punishment from Allah right here in this world much before the punishment of the Hereafter, may be you are sunk into the earth you are sitting on, or you are seized by the punishment of Allah coming from a direction totally inconceivable for you. This is how it happened during the Battle of Badr when they received a punishment at the hands of some ragtag Muslims arrayed against their thousand strong armed youngmen, something they would have never perceived as possible. Or, it was also probable that they be seized by some Divine punishment while roaming about freely, such as, they be hit by a fatal disease, or that they run into an accident by falling down from some height, or simply die by colliding against some hard object. Also possible is yet another form of punishment when punishment may not come all of a sudden, but a general decrease sets in causing wealth, health, fitness, means of sustenance and comfort and peace go on shrinking so much so that the day comes when the people so punished disappear from the face of the earth for

good.

The word: تَخَوُّفٌ (*takhawwuf*) appearing in verse 47 is obviously a derivation from: خَوْفٍ (*khawf*: fear, apprehension). Some commentators have explained this verse in terms of this very sense by saying that one group of people be seized in punishment so that the second group gets apprehensive. Similarly, the second group is seized in punishment which makes the third group become apprehensive. Finally, struck with dread sequentially, comes the end for all of them.

But, the early exegete of the Qurʾān, Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه and Mujāhid and other Imāms of Tafsīr have taken the word: تَخَوُّفٌ (*takhawwuf*) in the sense of: تَنْقِصٌ (*tanaqquṣ*). So, it is in accordance with this Tafsīr that it has also been translated in the later sense of 'reducing or decreasing gradually.'

The noble *tābiʿī* Saʿid ibn al-Musaiyyāb says: When Sayyidnā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه also faced some hesitation about the sense of this word, he addressed the Ṣaḥābah from the Minbar and asked them as to what they understood to be the meaning of '*takhawwuf*'? The audience at large remained silent. But, a person from the tribe of Hudhayl submitted: O Commander of the Faithful, this is a particular idiom of our tribe. We use this word in the sense of *tanaqquṣ*, that is, to decrease gradually. Sayyidnā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه asked: Do the Arabs use this word in the sense of *tanaqquṣ* in their poetry? He said that they do, and cited a couplet by Abū Kabir al-Hudhali, a poet from his tribe, in which this word was used in the sense of decreasing gradually. Thereupon, Sayyidnā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه said: O people, learn about the poetry of Jāhiliyyah because there lies the key to the explanation of your Book and the sense of your speech.

For the Understanding of Qurʾān, a Passing Knowledge of Arabic is Not Sufficient

The first thing the report referred to above proves is that the ability to speak and write the Arabic language is not enough for the understanding of Qurʾān. Rather, necessary for this purpose is a level of efficiency and awareness which could help one understand the classical work done during the early period of the Arabs of Jāhiliyyah - because the Qurʾān has been revealed in that language and idiom. Learning Arabic literature on that level is incumbent on Muslims.

Reading Poets from Jāhiliyyah is Permissible, Even if Full of Pagan Absurdities

This also tells us that, in order to understand the Qur'ān and to understand the Arabic language and its usage during the period of Jāhiliyyah, it is permissible to read and teach the poetry of that period. Though, it is obvious that such poetry will be full of pagan themes and customs highlighting pagan sayings and doings counter to Islam. But, such was the need to understand the Qur'ān that reading and teaching it was declared to be permissible.

Even the Punishment of the World is Mercy in Disguise

In the verses cited above, after having mentioned various punishments which could seize disbelievers within this world, it was said in the end: فَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ (So, indeed your Lord is Very Kind, Very Merciful). First of all, by using the word: رَبٌّ (Rabb: Lord) here, the hint given is that all these punishments which overtake human beings in this world are there to warn them as part of the dictates of Divine mercy. After that, by introducing the word: رَءُوفٌ (Ra'ūf: Kind) headed by the intensifying particle lam (لـ) that is, the lam of ta'kid, and thus by placing stress on the fact that Allah Ta'ālā was Very Kind and Very Merciful, the hint given was that warnings sent during the life of the world were, in reality, called for by His intrinsic Kindness and Mercy so that heedless men and women would learn from the warning and correct their deeds (before comes 'the last spasm of mass extinction' they themselves are talking about at the closing of the twentieth century, but are still not ready to learn, believe and correct).

Verses 48 - 57

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ يَتَّبِعُونَهُ ظُلْمًا، عَنِ الْيَمِينِ
وَالشَّمَائِلِ سُجَّدًا لِلَّهِ وَهُمْ ذَخِرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَا فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ
﴿٤٩﴾ يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَقَالَ اللَّهُ
لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْهَيْئِ النَّبِينَ إِنْهَاءً إِنَّهَا هِيَ إِلَهُ الْوَاحِدَةِ فَإِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَكَهْ

مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَهُ الدِّينُ وَأَصْبَحَ أَفْغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾
 وَمَا بِكُمْ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فَإِلَيْهِ تَجْرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾
 ثُمَّ إِذَا كُشِفَ الضُّرُّ عَنْكُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِنْكُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾
 لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ فَتَمْتَعُوا ۖ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَيَجْعَلُونَ
 لِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ نَصِيبًا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ ۖ تَاللَّهِ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنتُمْ تَفْتَرُونَ
 ﴿٥٦﴾ وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ الْبَنَاتِ سُبْحَانَهُ، وَلَهُمْ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

Have they not observed things Allah has created, their shadows inclining from the right and the left prostrating before Allah, while they are humble? [48] And to Allah prostrates whatever creature there is in the heavens and in the earth, and the angels, and they show no arrogance. [49] They fear their Lord above them and do as they are commanded. [50]

And Allah has said, "Do not take to yourselves two gods. He is but One God. So, Me alone you fear." [51] And to Him belongs what is in the heavens and the earth and it is only He who deserves obedience as due. Would you, then, fear someone other than Allah? [52] And whatever blessing you have is from Allah. Then, once you are touched by distress, to Him alone you cry for help. [53] Then, as soon as He removes the distress from you, a group from among you starts ascribing partners to their Lord. [54] Thus, they reject what We have given to them. So, enjoy yourself and soon you will come to know. [55]

They allocate a share from what We have given to them for those (the idols) they know nothing about. By Allah, you shall definitely be questioned about what you have been fabricating. [56] And they ascribe daughters to Allah - Pure is He - and for themselves, what they desire! [57]

Verses 58 - 60

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهَهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾
 يَتَوَارَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ سُوءِ مَا بُشِّرَبِهِ ۖ أَيَسْكُهُ، عَلَىٰ هُونٍ أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ،

فِي التُّرَابِ ط الْأَسَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ
مَثَلُ السُّوءِ ءِ وَاللَّهُ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَى ط وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦٠﴾

And when one of them is given the good news of a female child, his face becomes gloomy and he is choked with grief. [58] He hides from people because of the (self-presumed) evil of the good news given to him (wondering): Shall he keep it despite the disgrace or put it away into the dust? Beware, evil is what they decide. [59] Those who do not believe in the Hereafter have evil attributes, and to Allah belong the most exalted attributes. And He is the Mighty, the Wise. [60]

Commentary

In these verses, two peculiar traits of the disbelievers of Arabia have been censured. To begin with, they would take the birth of a baby girl to be so bad that they would go about hiding from people to avoid being disgraced before them. This predicament would then throw them into a fix as to what they should do about it. Should they swallow their pride, embrace the disgrace of becoming the father of a baby girl and resign to the disaster with patience, or just ditch it alive into the dust and get rid of it? Then, on top of it, they had turned so irrational that the child they did not like to have as their own, that they would be audacious enough to attribute to Allah Almighty by declaring that the angels were His daughters!

The sense of the sentence: الْأَسَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ (Beware evil is what they decide) appearing at the end of the second verse (59) actually incorporates these very two traits, as it has been pointed out in Tafsīr Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ with reference to Ibn 'Aṭīyah. It means: (1) That their decision to take girls to be a punishment and a disgrace is by itself an evil decision; and (2) that the thing they would consider a matter of disgrace for their own selves, they would be too ready to attribute to Allah Ta'ālā.

Also at the end of the third verse (60), in: وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (And He is the Mighty, the Wise), there is a hint that taking the birth of a baby girl to be nuisance and disgrace, and hiding from people because of it, amount to challenging Divine wisdom - as the creation of male and female among the created is the very requisite of wisdom. (Rūḥ al-Bayān)

Ruling:

Clear indications are visible in these verses that taking the birth of a girl in the family to be a disaster or disgrace is not permissible under Islam. This is done by disbelievers. Quoting Shir'ah (شرعه) Tafsīr Rūḥ al-Bayān also says that a Muslim should be happier at the birth of a girl in the family so that it becomes a refutation of the act of the people of Jahiliyyah. Says a Ḥadīth: Blessed is the woman who gives birth to a girl in her first pregnancy. That the Arabic word: إناث (*ināth*: females) has been made to precede the word for 'males' in the verse of the Qur'an: إِنَّا نَاتُوا وَنَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ الذَّكَوْرَ (He bestows on whomsoever He wills females and bestows on whomsoever He wills males - 42:49) indicates the birth of a girl from the first pregnancy is better.

In another Ḥadīth, it is said: Whoever finds any of such girls entrusted to his care, and he treats them fairly and favourably, then, these girls will stand as a curtain between him and Hell. (Rūḥ al-Bayān)

To sum up, it can be said that taking the birth of a girl to be bad is a detestable custom of the pagan period. Muslims must abstain from it. In fact, they should be pleased and satisfied with the promise of Allah against it. Allah knows best.

Verses 61 -65

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَ لَكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۖ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ مَا يَكْرَهُونَ وَ تَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُهُمُ الْكَذِبَ أَنَّ لَهُمُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۗ لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّ لَهُمُ النَّارَ وَأَنَّهُمْ مُّفْرَطُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ ۖ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَاللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ

لَايَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّسْمَعُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

And if Allah were to seize the people for their transgression, He would have spared no creature on earth, but He lets them go on upto an appointed time. So, when their time will come, they will not be late for a moment, nor will they be early. [61]

And they assign to Allah what they themselves dislike and their tongues make the false statement that all good is for them. No, it is inevitable that the Fire is for them and that they will be moved fast (towards it). [62] By Allah, We sent (messengers) to communities before you but the Satan made their deeds look good to them. So, he is their patron today and for them there is a painful punishment. [63] And We did not send down the Book to you but in order that you may explain to them what they differed about, and (that it be) guidance and mercy for a people who believe. [64]

And Allah sent down water from the heavens and revived the land with it after it was dead. Surely, in that there is a sign for a people who listen. [65]

Verse 66

وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً ۗ نُسْفِيكُمْ مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهِ مِنْ بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ
وَدَمٍ لَبْنَا خَالِصًا سَائِغًا لِلشَّرِيبِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

And surely for you, there is a lesson in cattle. We provide you, out of what there is in their bellies, from between feces and blood, the drink of milk, pure and pleasant for those who drink. [66]

Commentary

The pronoun in: *بُطُونِهِ* (*buṭūnihi*: their bellies) reverts back to: *الأنعام* (*al-anām*: cattle). Since the word *al-anām* is plural in the feminine gender, it required that the word used for it should have been: *بُطُونِهَا* (*buṭūniha*), as it appears in Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn: *نُسْفِيكُمْ مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهَا* (We provide you, out of what there is in their bellies - 23:21).

Al-Qurṭubī explains this by saying that consideration has been made of the meaning of the plural in Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn where the pronoun

has been used in the feminine gender. And, in Sūrah Al-Naḥl, the pronoun has been used in the masculine gender in consideration of the plural word as such. Examples of this usage abound in Arabic where a singular pronoun is made to revert to a plural word.

As for bringing out pure milk from between feces and blood, Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه said: When the fodder eaten by an animal settles in its stomach, the stomach heats it up as a result of which the waste by-product from the fodder settles down leaving milk above with blood being on top of it. Then, nature has entrusted the next job with the liver. It separates the three and directs them to where they belong. Blood goes to veins. Milk goes to the udder of the animal. Now, left in the stomach is waste which is excreted as feces or dung.

Rulings

1. From this verse we learn that eating good food is not against Zuhd (the way of life marked by not inclining towards worldly enjoyments for the sake of maintaining an ideal state of spiritual purity) specially when it has been acquired with Ḥalāl (lawful) means and provided that no extravagance has been made in it. This is as stated by Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. (Al-Qurṭubī)

2. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said: When you eat something, say:

اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِيهِ وَأَطْعِمْنَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُ

Yā Allah, bless it for us and have us eat better than it.

And he said: When you drink milk, say:

اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِيهِ وَزِدْنَا مِنْهُ

Yā Allah, bless it for us and give us more of it.

In the second prayer, he did not ask for something 'better than it' (as in the first prayer) for, in human cuisine, there is no nutrient better than milk. Therefore, nature has made milk the very first food given to every man and animal through breast-feeding by mothers. (Al-Qurṭubī)

Verse 67

وَمِنْ ثَمَرَاتِ النَّخِيلِ وَالْأَعْنَابِ تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْهُ سَكَرًا وَرِزْقًا حَسَنًا ۗ إِنَّ

فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

And from the fruits of date-palms and grape-vines, you obtain intoxicants, and good provision. Surely, in that there is a sign for a people who understand. [67]

Commentary

Described in the previous verses were blessings of Allah Ta'ālā which manifest the stunning marvel of Divine power and creativity. Of these, the first to be mentioned was milk which nature has gifted human beings with after having made it go through its own processing in the bellies of animals separating it from feces and blood and delivering it as a finished product, pure and pleasant, food and drink in one. No subsequent human effort or artifice is needed here. Therefore, the word used in the text is: نُسْقِيكُمْ (*nusqikum*: We provided you with milk to drink). The stress is self-explanatory.

After that it was said that human beings do make things from some fruits of the date-palms and grape-vines as well, which serve them as food, and other benefits. The hint ingrained here is that there is some intervening role played by human ingenuity, innovation and artifice in making the fruits from date-palms and grape-vines yield what they eat or benefit from in other ways. As a result of the factor of intervention, two kinds of things were made. The first is what intoxicates, the common form of which is liquor. The second is: Rizq Ḥasan, that is, good provision, like dates and grapes which everyone is welcome to use as fresh food, or dry it and store it for later use. The purpose is that Allah Ta'ālā, in His perfect power, has given to human beings fruits like dates and grapes, and alongwith it, He also gave human beings the choice to make things they eat and drink out of them. Now the option is theirs. Let them make what they would: Make what intoxicates and knocks their reason out, or make food out of them and get strength and energy!

According to this *tafsīr*, this verse cannot be used to prove the lawfulness of that which intoxicates, that is, liquor. This is because the purpose here is to state the nature of Divine blessings and the different forms they could take when used. It goes without saying that these remain the Divine blessings they are under all conditions. Take the example of foods, drinks and many things of benefit. People use them.

Some also use them in ways which are not permissible. But, the incidence of someone using things wrongfully would not stop a blessing from remaining the blessing it is. Therefore, this is no place to go into details as to which of the uses is lawful and which is otherwise and unlawful. Nevertheless, not to be missed here is the delicate hint given by setting up "*rizq ḥasan*" (good provision) in contrast with "*sakar*" (intoxicant) which tells us that "*sakar*" is not a good provision. According to the majority* of commentators, "*sakar*" means what intoxicates. (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī, Qurṭubī, Jaṣṣāṣ)

These verses are Makki by consensus. As for the unlawfulness of liquor, it came after that in Madīnah. Though liquor was lawful at the time of the revelation of this verse and Muslims used to drink openly, yet, even at that time, a hint was given in this verse towards the fact that drinking of liquor was not good. After that, came the specific injunctions of the Qur'ān which made liquor *ḥarām* (unlawful) clearly, emphatically and categorically. (Condensed from Al-Jaṣṣāṣ and Al-Qurṭubī)

Verses 68 -69

وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنْ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ
وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ ثُمَّ كُلِي مِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ
ذُلًّا يُخْرَجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ
إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

And your Lord revealed to the honey bee: "Make homes in the mountains, in the trees and in the structures they raise. [68] Then, eat from all the fruits and go along the pathways of your Lord made easy for you." From their bellies comes out a drink of various colours in which there is cure for people. Surely, in that there is a sign for a people who ponder. [69]

Commentary

The first word: *أَوْحَىٰ* (*awḥā*) in the first sentence of verse 68 has not

* Some 'Ulamā have also taken it to mean vinegar, or non-intoxicating wine (*nabīdh*) [Jaṣṣāṣ & Qurṭubī] but it is not necessary to report details about this element of difference.

been used here in its technical sense of Waḥy or Revelation. Instead, it appears here in its literal sense which happens when the speaker communicates to the addressee something particular, secretly, in a way that the other person remains unable to understand that which has been communicated. Hence, its translation as 'revealed' is also in a literal sense.

As for the next word: النحل (an-naḥl), it is well-established that the honey bee is a distinct entity among non-human life forms particularly in terms of its intelligence and management. Therefore, the way it has been addressed by Allah Ta'ālā shows a distinct elegance of its own. For the rest of the creation, particularly for life forms in the animal and insect kingdom, it was said: أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَلْفَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى (He gave everything its form, then provided it with guidance - Taḥā, 20:50), something stated as a universal law for all of them. But, for this tiny creature, it was specially said: أَوْحَى رَبُّكَ (And your Lord revealed) which has been designed to indicate that it has a prominent status among other life forms by virtue of its intelligence, sense and functional insight.

The intelligence of the honey bees can be gauged fairly well by their system of governance. The system of this tiny flier's life operates on the principles of human politics and government. All management rests with one big bee which is the ruling head of all bees. It is her managerial skill and efficient distribution of work which helps run the whole system soundly and safely. Certainly so unique is her system and so established are its rules and regulations that human mind has but to marvel at the phenomena of the bee. This 'queen' itself lays six to twelve thousand eggs in a period of three weeks. By its size, physique and demeanor, it is distinguishable from other bees. This 'queen', following the principle of division of labour, appoints its subjects to handle different matters. Some of them serve on guard duty and do not allow some unknown outsider to enter into the hive. Some stand to protect eggs. Some nurture and train baby bees. Some serve as architects and engineers. The compartments of most roofs made by them range between twenty to thirty thousand. Some bees collect and deliver wax to architects which build homes. They procure this wax material from a whitish powder settled upon vegetation. This material is commonly visible on sugarcane. Some of them sit on different kinds of fruits and flowers and suck their juices which turns into honey while in their bellies. This honey is their

food and the food of their children. And the same is, for all of us too, the essence of taste and nutrition, and the prescription of medicine and remedy.

These different parties discharge their assigned duties very enthusiastically and obey the command of their 'queen' most obediently. If one of them happens to perch on filth, the guards of the hive stop the unwary worker on the outside gate and the 'queen' kills it. One can only wonder about this system and the performance of its managers and workers. (Al-Jawāhir)

The first instruction given through: *أَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ* (your Lord revealed) appears in the next sentence: *أَنْ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا* (Make homes in the mountains) which mentions the making of homes. At this point, it is worth noting that every animal makes some sort of a sheltered arrangement to live anyway, then, why is it that bees have been particularly commanded to build 'homes' and that too with such considered attention? Furthermore, the word used here is that of: *بُيُوتٌ* (*buyūt*) which is generally used for the places where human beings live, their homes. By doing this two hints have been given. The first hint is towards the fact: Since bees have to prepare honey, therefore, they should first make a safe home. The second hint is toward another fact: The homes they make will not be like the homes of common animals, instead, their design and construction will be extraordinary. As such, their homes are highly distinct, far different from those of other animals, virtually mind-boggling. Their homes are hexagonal in shape. Measuring them with a pair of compasses and rulers will hardly spell out a difference. Other than the hexagonal shape, they never choose any shape such as that of a square, pentagon or any others as some of their corners turn out to be functionally useless.

Allah Ta'ālā did not simply order the bees to make homes, He also told them as to where they should be located, that is, it should be at some altitude because such places help provide fresh, clean and almost-filtered air flow for the production of honey. Thus, honey stays protected from polluted air as well as from incidences of breakage or damage to the hives. So, it was said: *مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ* (Make homes in the mountains, in the trees and in the structures they raise) so that honey could be prepared in a hygienically safe way. This was the first instruction.

The second instruction appears in: *ثُمَّ كُلِيْ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ* (Then, eat from all the fruits) where the bee is being commanded to suck juices from fruits and flowers as it desires and likes. No doubt, what is said here is: *مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ* (from all the fruits). But, obviously, the word: *كُلِّ* (*kull*) used here does not mean the fruits and flowers of the whole world. Instead of that, it means those within easy reach, and which serve the desired purpose. This word: *كُلِّ* (*kull*) has also appeared in relation to the event concerning the queen of Saba' where it was said: *وَأُوْبَيْتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ* (she has got everything - An-Naml, 27:23). It is obvious that 'all' or 'every' in this sense do not denote totality without exception to the limit that the queen of Saba' be required to have a personal aeroplane, Rolls Royce and palace train! What is meant here is what she needed to have as complement to her function as the ruler of the time. So, here too, the expression: *مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ* (from all the fruits) means nothing but this. As for the bee sucking juices from fruits and flowers, it can be said that the molecular composition of juices she sucks is extremely refined and precious, the extraction of which in identical measure through mechanical means even in our advanced scientific age cannot be accomplished as efficiently.

Then comes the third instruction: *فَاسْلُكِيْ سَبِيْلَ رَبِّكِ ذَلٰلًا* (and go along the pathways of your Lord made easy for you). When the bee goes to suck juices from fruits and flowers to places far away from home, then, obviously enough, its return to home base should have been difficult. But, Allah Ta'ālā has made flight routes easy for it. Thus, it goes miles away and returns home without straying or getting lost. Allah Ta'ālā has made for it flying routes in the air because in going by the circuitous pathways on land, there is the likelihood of going astray. So, it can be said that Allah Ta'ālā has subjugated the air space for this humble bee so that it can go home without any let or hinderance.

After that, the real outcome of this revealed command was stated in the following words: *يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا بَطُوْنَهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ اَلْوَانُهُ فِيْهِ شِفَاۗءٌ لِّلنَّاسِ* (From their bellies comes out a drink of various colours in which there is cure for people - 69). The difference in colour is caused by the difference of climate and by what they suck from. This is the reason why a particular area with abundance of particular kinds of fruits and flowers does leave its effect and taste on the honey produced in that area. Since honey comes in the form of a liquid substance, therefore, it was called '*sharāb*' (drink). Even in this sentence, present there is a decisive proof of the Oneness

and Power of Allah Ta'ālā. Is it not that this tasty and blissful drink comes out from the belly of a tiny animal which, in itself, is armed with poison? The emergence of antidote from poison is really a unique exhibit of the most perfect power of Allah Ta'ālā. Then, such is the staggering working of nature that milk from milch animals does not turn red or yellow under the effect of different climates and foods while honey from the bee does take different colours.

As for the oft-quoted statement: *فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ* (in which there is cure for people), it can be said that honey is, on the one hand, an energy-giving food as well as a delicacy in terms of taste and flavor, while on the other hand, it serves as a remedial prescription for diseases too. And why not? This delicate mobile machine which goes about extracting pure and powerful essences from all kinds of fruits and flowers after which it returns home to store them in its safe compartments specially designed, constructed and guarded for a purpose. Now, if natural herbs and plants contain ingredients which have medicinal and curative properties, why would everything disappear from their essences? Honey is used as medicine directly in phlegmatic diseases while in other diseases it is recommended in combination with other ingredients. Expert physicians in the Greco-Arab medical tradition include it specially as a binder in their medicinal electuaries. Another property of honey is that it does not get spoiled itself and, on top of it, it helps preserve other things as well for a long time. This is the reason why eastern physicians have been using it as an alternate of alcohol for thousands of years. Honey is laxative and proves efficient in expelling unhealthy substances from the stomach.

A Ṣaḥābī mentioned the sickness of his brother before the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He advised him to give his brother a drink of honey. He returned the next day and reported that his brother was still sick. He repeated his advice. On the third day, when he again said that there was no change in his condition, he said: *صَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَكَذَبَ بَطْنُ أَحِيكَ* (The word of Allah is true. The stomach of your brother is a liar). The sense was that there is nothing wrong with the suggested remedy. It was the particular temperamental condition which had caused delay in the actual effect of the remedy. When the treatment with honey was repeated after that, the patient got well.

At this place in the Holy Qur'ān, the word: *شِفَاءٌ* (*shifā'*: remedy, cure, bliss) appears as common noun (*nakirah*) in the context of an affirmative sentence. That it is *shifā'* for every disease is not apparent on this basis.

But, the nunnation (*tanwin*) of '*shifā'*' which carries the sense of greatness does necessarily prove that the *shifā'* in honey is of a great and distinct nature. Then there are those spiritually valiant servants of Allah who just have no doubt about honey being a cure for any disease whatsoever. So firmly convinced they are with their staunch belief in the very outward meaning of this statement of their Rabb that they would treat an abscess or an eye with honey, not to mention other diseases of the body. According to reports about Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه, even if an abscess showed up on his body, he would treat it by applying honey on it. When some of the people asked him as to why would he do that, he said in reply: Is it not that Allah Ta'ālā has said about it in the Holy Qur'an: فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِّلنَّاسِ (In it, there is cure for people). (Al-Qurṭubī)

Allah Ta'ālā deals with His servants in harmony with the belief they have about their Rabb. It was said in Ḥadīth Qudsi*:

أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي

I am with the belief of My servant in Me.

In the last sentence of verse 69: إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ (Surely, in that there is a sign for a people who ponder), Allah Ta'ālā has, after having given examples of His perfect power mentioned above, invited human beings once again to look into them and think about them. Allah Ta'ālā, by causing rains to come down, gives new life to dead lands. Winding through the impurities of feces and blood, He makes pipelines of pure and pleasant milk flow for you. On date-palms and grape-vines, He grows sweet fruits from which you make all sorts of syrups and preserves. Through a tiny little living creature with a poisonous bite, He provides for you what is an excellent combination of food, drink, taste, flavor, and cure.

Would you still keep calling gods and goddesses of your making? Would your worship and fidelity still remain detached from your real Creator and Master and attached to lifeless idols of stone and wood? Would your reason still keep looking for escape from truth by suggesting that this whole phenomena is some charismatic working of blind, deaf and inert matter? Face truth, think, realize. These countless master-

* Al-Ḥadīth Al-Qudsi: The Sanctified Ḥadīth: A technical term for what has been communicated to the Holy Prophet ﷺ by his Rabb. Its meanings are from Allah which He reveals for His Rasūl, through inspiration or dream, while its words are from the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ.

pieces of Divine creativity, marvels of wisdom and design, and the finest of decisions based on absolute intelligence are the loudest of heralds announcing that our Creator is One, unique and wise, sole object of worship, obedience and fidelity. He alone is the remover par excellence of all difficulties and He alone deserves gratitude and glorification as due.

Special Notes

1. The verse tells us that, beside human beings, there is consciousness and intelligence in other living creatures too: **وَأَنَّ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ** (There is nothing which does not recite His praises - Al-Isrā', 17:44). However, the degrees of intelligence are different. The intelligence of human beings is more perfect than those of any other living creatures. This is the reason why they have been obligated with the precepts and injunctions of the Sharī'ah. Again, this is the reason why a man or woman who does not remain rational due to insanity, does not remain so obligated very much like other creatures.

2. Another distinction of the honey bee is that the Ḥadīth mentions its superiority. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

الذِّبَّانُ كُلُّهَا فِي النَّارِ يَجْعَلُهَا عَذَابًا لِأَهْلِ النَّارِ إِلَّا النَّحْلَ

All bees will go to Hell (like other hurting creatures). They will be made a punishment for the people of Hell, except the honey bee (which will not go to Hell) - (Nawadir al-Uṣūl with reference to Al-Qurṭubī)

According to another Ḥadīth, he has prohibited its killing - Abū Dāwūd.

3. Traditional physicians doubt that honey is the excretion or saliva of the bee. Aristotle had placed bees in a hive made of glass and had closed it. He wished to find out their working system. But, these bees first mounted a curtain made with wax and mud on the inner side of the glass cage and did not start their work until such time that they became certain of having become totally veiled from sight.

Giving an example of the lowness of worldly life, Sayyidnā 'Alī ؑ said:

أَشْرَفُ لِبَاسِ بَنِي آدَمَ فِيهِ لَعَابُ دُودَةٍ وَأَشْرَفُ شَرَابِهِ رَجِيعُ نَحْلَةٍ

The finest dress of the progeny of Adam is saliva from a tiny insect and the finest of his drinks is the excrement of a bee.

4. From the statement: فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ (in which, there is cure for people) we also find out that treating diseases with medicine is permissible because Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned it as a reward and blessing.

Elsewhere it has been said: وَنَزَّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ (And We send down from the Qur'an what is cure and mercy for believers - Al-Isrā', 17:82). Ḥadīth induces people to go for treatment of diseases and use medicines. Some Companions asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ: Should we use medicine? He said: Why not? Do take advantage of treatment because for every disease Allah has created, He has also created a matching medicine. But, there is no cure for one disease. They asked: Which disease is that? He said: Extreme old age. (Abū Dāwūd & Tirmidhī from Al-Qurtubī)

There is yet another narration from Sayyidnā Khuzaymah ؓ. He says: Once I asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ that the practice of blowing on the sick and seeking to cast off diseases which we are used to, or treat ourselves with medicines are the kind of arrangements we make to stay safe against diseases. Can these change the destiny determined by Allah Ta'ālā? He said: These too are nothing but the very forms of Divinely-appointed destiny.

To sum up, there is consensus of all 'Ulamā' on the justification of seeking treatment and using medicine. Many Aḥādīth and reports from the Ṣaḥābah are available in support. If one of the children of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar ؓ was stung by a scorpion, he would give him an antidote and seek to help the child to get well through the benediction of supplicatory recitations. He treated a person suffering from partial paralysis by branding. (Al-Qurtubī)

It has been reported about some Muslim mystics (Sūfiyā') that they did not like being medically treated. This is also evident from the reported behaviour of some of the Ṣaḥābah as well. For instance, according to a report, Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ fell sick. Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ came to visit him and asked him: What is it that ails you? He replied: I am worried about my sins. Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ said: Then, do you wish to have something? He said: I wish to have the mercy of my Rabb. Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ said: If you like I can call a physician? The answer he gave was: Believe me, it is the 'Physician' Himself who has put

me down (on the sick bed).

But, occurrences of this nature do not go to prove that these blessed souls took medical treatment to be reprehensible (*makrūh*). May be, at that time, it was not upto their personal taste and inclination. Therefore, it was because of their inability to accept it temperamentally that they did not favour to go by it. This is a transitory phase of psyche when one comes under the overwhelming logic and effect of the state one is in, and which cannot be used as an argument to prove that medical treatment is either impermissible or reprehensible. The very request made to Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه by Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه that he be allowed to bring a physician for him is, in itself, a proof of the fact that treatment is permissible - rather, there are situations when doing so becomes mandatory as well.

Verse 70

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ أَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لَكُمْ
لَا يَعْلَمُ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٧٠﴾

And Allah created you, then He takes you back. And there are some among you who are carried back to the worst part of the age, that he knows nothing after having knowledge. Surely, wherein Allah is All-Knowing, All-Powerful. [70]

Commentary

Mentioned previously were various states of water, vegetation, cattle and honey bee through which Allah Ta'ālā had reminded human beings of His perfect power of creation and of His blessings for the created. Now, through the words of the present verse, they have been invited to ponder over the very state they are in. Human beings were nothing. Allah Ta'ālā blessed them with existence. Then, by sending death when He willed, He terminated that blessing. As for some others, they are, much before their death, carried to such an stage of extreme old age that their senses do not work, they lose the strength of their hands and feet. They understand nothing, nor can they remember what they do. This change in their world-view and self-view proves that knowledge and

power reside in the exclusive domain of the One who is the Creator and Master.

The expression *مِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرَدُّ إِلَى أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ* (and there are some among you who are carried back to the worst part of the age) gives a hint that man has seen a time of weakness earlier too. This was the early stage of childhood marked by its lack of understanding and physical strength, and dependence on others in eating, drinking, getting up and sitting down. Then came youth, the time to prosper and move ahead. Then, gradually, man is carried to a stage of the same age of helplessness as it was in early childhood.

The expression: *أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ* (translated as 'the worst part of the age') means the extreme old age when all physical and mental faculties become weak and confused. The Holy Prophet ﷺ always prayed:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ سُوءِ الْعُمُرِ مِمَّنْ أَنْ أُرَدَّ إِلَى أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ

'O Allah, I seek refuge with You from the evil of age' -

and according to another narration:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ أَنْ أُرَدَّ إِلَى أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ

'O Allah, I seek refuge with you from that I be carried to the worst part of the age.'

The definition of: *أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ* (the worst part of the age) remains undetermined. However, the definition appearing above seems to be weightier, something to which the Qur'an too has alluded by saying: *لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا* (that he knows nothing after having knowledge) that is, the age in which he is in, senses do not remain active as a result of which a person forgets everything he knows.

This 'worst part of the age' (*أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ*) has been defined variously. Some say it is the age of eighty years while some others say it is ninety. Also reported from Sayyidnā 'Alī عليه السلام, there is a statement which puts it at seventy five. (Ṣaḥīḥayn as quoted by Mazḥarī)

After that appears the tersely-phrased sentence also mentioned above: *لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا* (that he knows nothing after having knowledge). This is about the phenomena of old age (which, in our time, has given birth to the study of grontology). When one is made to reach its extreme stage, one is left with no functional strength, neither physical nor rational. What he knows now, he may not know moments later. All information he has, he may forget and become like a child born

yesterday who has no knowledge or awareness or understanding or intelligence. Ḥaḍrat 'Ikrimah رَحِمَهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى says: 'This state will not prevail upon the reciter of the Qur'ān.'

In the last sentence of the verse, it was said: إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ (Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Powerful). It means that from knowledge He knows everyone's age, and from power He does what He wills. If He wills, He can have a strong youngman be overtaken by the signs of the worst part of old age, and should He so will, even a hundred-year old aged man could remain a strong youngman. All this lies within the power of that sole Being in whose divinity there is no partner or associate.

Verse 71

وَاللَّهُ فَضَّلَ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الرِّزْقِ ۗ فَمَا الَّذِينَ فُضِّلُوا
بِرَادَى رِزْقِهِمْ عَلَى مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِيهِ سَوَاءٌ أَفَبِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ
يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

And Allah has given some of you preference over others in provision. So, those given preference are not to pass on their provision to their slaves so that they become equal in it: Do they, then, reject the blessing of Allah?

[71]

Commentary

In the previous verses, by referring to major manifestations of His knowledge and power and blessings which descend on human beings, Allah Ta'ālā has the natural proof of His Oneness (Tauḥīd). By looking at it, even a person of ordinary commonsense would not accept that any created being can hold a share with Allah Ta'ālā in His attributes of knowledge and power, or in any of the others. In the present verse, this very subject of Tauḥīd has been brought into focus by citing the example of a case in mutual dealing.

It is being said here that Allah Ta'ālā has not, in His infinite wisdom, and in view of His consideration for human good, made all human beings equals in terms of *rizq* or provision. Instead, He has given some of them preference over some others establishing different degrees therein. Someone was made so rich that he owns a lot of things, keeps a staff of

all sorts of servers, spends as he wishes, and his servers too benefit through him. Then, someone was made to work for others who, far from spending on others, was cut out to receive his own expenditure from others. Then, someone was made to be somewhere in the middle, neither so rich as to spend on others, nor so poor and needy as to be dependent upon others even in the necessities of life.

Everyone is aware of the outcome of this natural distribution that he who was given preference in provision and made rich and need-free would never accept to distribute his wealth among his slaves and servants in a way that they too become his equals in wealth.

Understand the drive of this argument by applying this example on polytheists. They too accept that the idols and other created things they worship are, after all, created and owned by Allah Ta'ālā. If so, how can they suggest that the created and the owned become equals to their Creator and Master? Do such people see all these signs and hear all these words, yet go on to ascribe partners and equals to Allah, the necessary result of which is that they reject the blessings given by Allah? Because, if they had admitted that all these blessings have been given by Allah Ta'ālā without the intervention of any self-carved idol, icon, human being and Jinn, then, how could they have equated these things with Allah Ta'ālā?

The same subject has been taken up in the following verse of Sūrah Ar-Rūm:

ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ مَثَلًا مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ هَلْ لَكُمْ مِّنْ مَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَاءَ فِيْ مَا
رَزَقْنَاكُمْ فَأَنْتُمْ فِيْهِ سَوَاءٌ

We have given for you an example from your own people. Have those who are your subjects become sharers with you in the provision given to you by Us whereby you are equal in it? (30:28)

The outcome of this too is: When you do not like to let your servants and your slaves whom you own become equal to yourself, how can you like for Allah that He, and things created and owned by Him, become equal to Him?

The Difference in Degrees of Economic Status is Mercy for Mankind

This verse makes it clear that the presence of different degrees of eco-

conomic status among human beings - that someone is poor, another rich and yet another somewhere in the middle - is not accidental. It is as dictated by the wisdom of Allah Ta'ālā, as required by considerations for human good, and is mercy for mankind. If this state (of human society) were not to prevail and if all human beings were to become equal in wealth and possessions, it would have caused a breach of function in world order. Therefore, since the time the world became populated, all human beings have never been equal in terms of wealth and property, in any period, or age, nor can they be. Should such an equality were to be created compulsarily, it will take only a few days when disruption and disorder become openly visible through the entire spectrum of human dealings. Allah Ta'ālā has created human beings with varying degrees of temperaments as conditioned by intelligence, strength and functional ability. They have been further classified as low, high and average, a fact which cannot be rejected by any reasonable person. Similarly, it is also inevitable that there be different degrees in wealth and property as well so that every single person is rewarded in terms of individual capability. If the capable and the incapable were made equal, it will discourage the capable. When the capable person has to stay at par with the incapable in economic pursuits, what other motivation would compel him to go on striving and achieving excellence? The necessary outcome of such an approach will be no other but the demise of excellence acquired through functional capability.

Qur'ānic Injunctions Against Concentration of Wealth

Whereas the Creator of the universe gave preference to some over others in physical and rational faculties, and established variance in provision, wealth and property, subject to it, He has also established a strong system of economic equilibrium which aims that no particular group or party or a few individuals take over the treasures of wealth and centers of economic activity. This system also guards against the consequences of such a takeover which dries up the very field where capable people could thrive by utilizing their physical, intellectual and technical capabilities and advance economically. For this purpose, it was said in the Holy Qur'an: كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً لِّلْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ. It means: (We made the law of distribution of wealth,) so that wealth does not come to be revolving among the rich from among you - Al-Hashr, 59:7.

The wide-spread turbulence being experienced in the economic systems of the modern world is directly the result of bypassing this wise law given to us by Divine wisdom. On the one hand, there is the capitalist system in which some individuals or groups virtually take over the nerve centers of wealth through the medium of interest and gambling and go on to enslave the entire creation of Allah economically. They are rendered so helpless that they have no escape route left but to serve like slaves and work like dogs in order to get what they can to eke out a living, no matter how miserable. In a situation so sordid, it is a far cry that they would ever be able to step into the field of industry or trade despite having the best of capabilities for this purpose.

As a reaction to this tyranny of capitalists, there rises a counter system in the name of socialism or communism. Their slogan is the removal of disparity between the rich and poor and the creation of equality between all. Masses of people already harassed by the injustices of the capitalist system go after the slogan. But, very soon, they discover that the slogan was nothing but deception. The dream of economic equality never came true. The poor person, despite poverty and hunger, had a certain human dignity, a certain right to do what he wished, but even that human dignity was snatched away by the system. In the communist system, the worth of a human person is no more than a part of its machines. Private ownership of property is simply out of question there. The factory worker owns nothing, not even the spouse and children. Everyone is a part of the state machine. When the machine starts, they have no choice but to start working on their jobs. Other than the so-called objectives of the state, the worker has no conscience or voice. The slightest grievance against the tyranny of the state and that unbearable labour on the job is counted as rebellion against the state the punishment for which is death. In short, hostility towards God and religion and adherence to bland materialism is the basic principle of communism.

These are facts no communist can deny. The writings and doings of their commissars are proofs of this assertion for compiling relevant references to these amounts to making a regular book out of them.

The Holy Qurān has provided a system in between the two extremes of tyrannical capitalism and Quixotic communism keeping it free from ex-

cess and deficiency so that no individual or group could, despite there being a naturally placed dissimilarity in provision and wealth, go on to make the creation of Allah at large their slaves only to condemn them to ever rising prices of commodities and virtual famines. By declaring interest and gambling to be unlawful, it has demolished the foundations of illegitimate capitalism. Then, by making a categorical statement that the poor and needy have a right in the wealth of every Muslim, they were admitted as sharers, which is not supposed to be some favour done to them. In fact, it is the fulfillment of a duty. The verse: *فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ* (in their wealth, there is a known right for the asking and the deprived - Al-Mā'ārij, 70:24) proves it. After that, by distributing the entire property of a deceased person over individual inheritors of the family, it has eliminated the concentration of wealth. Natural streams, high seas and the self-growing produce of mountain forests were declared to be the common capital of the entire creation of Allah. No individual or group can take possession over them as something owned by them. This is not permissible. Contrary to this, in a capitalist system, these blessings are handled as something owned by capitalists only (under one or the other pretext).

Since diversity and difference in intellectual and practical capabilities is a natural phenomena, and the pursuit of economic gains through them also depends on these very capabilities, therefore, diversity or dissimilarity in the ownership of wealth and property is also a dictate of wisdom. Whoever has the least sense of how things work in this world would find it hard to deny this truth. Even the champions of the slogan of equality could not go far enough with it. They had to abandon their claim of flat equality and were left with no choice but to introduce dissimilarity and incentive-oriented policy in national economy. On May 5, 1960, speaking before the Supreme Soviet, Nikita Khurshev said:

'We are against the movement to eliminate difference in wages. We are openly against the efforts to establish equality in emoluments and to bring them at par. This is the teaching of Lenin. He taught that material motivations will be given full consideration in a socialist society.' (Soviet World, p.346)

That the dream of economic equality had translated itself into its absence since the very early stages, but it did not take much time to witness that this absence of equality and the disparity between the rich and

the poor in the communist state of Russia had gone much beyond the general run of capitalist countries. Lyon Sidov writes:

'Perhaps, there is no developed capitalist country where the disparity in the wages of workers is as high as in Soviet Russia.'

These few examples from the contemporary scene show how deniers were themselves compelled to confirm the truth of the verse: وَاللَّهُ فَضَّلَ وَاللَّهُ فَضَّلَ (And Allah has given some of you preference over others in provision - 71) and that (Allah does what He wills). As for comments under this verse, the purpose was limited to pointing out that the dissimilarity in provision and wealth is very natural and very much in accordance with considerations for human good. That which remains is the discussion of the Islamic Principles of Distribution of Wealth and how they distinctly differ from capitalism and communism both. Inshallah, this will appear under comments on: نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ (We have distributed among them their livelihood - Al-Zukhruf, 43:32) appearing in Ma'arif-ul-Qur'an, Volume VII. An independent treatise on this subject entitled: 'Islam Ka Nizam-e-Taqsim-e-Daulat' written by this humble writer should also be sufficient for this purpose. [This is also available in its English translation made by Professor Ḥasan Askarī under the title: DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH IN ISLAM from the publishers, Maktaba-e-Darul-Uloom, Korangi, Karachi, Pakistan]

Verses 72 - 76

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِعِمَّتِ اللَّهُ هُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ رِزْقًا مِنَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾ فَلَا تَضْرِبُوا لِلَّهِ الْأَمْثَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا مَمْلُوكًا لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَمَنْ رَزَقْنَاهُ مِنَّْا رِزْقًا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ يُنْفِقُ مِنْهُ سِرًّا وَجَهْرًا هَلْ يَسْتَوُونَ ط الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ط بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ أَحَدُهُمَا أَبْكَمُ لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ كَلٌّ

عَلَى مَوْلَاهُ لَا آيِنَمَا يُوجِّهُهُ لَا يَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي هُوَ وَمَنْ يَأْمُرُ
بِالْعَدْلِ وَهُوَ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٧٦﴾

And Allah has created spouses from among you and created for you from your spouses sons and grandsons, and gave you provision from good things. Is it, then, the falsehood that they believe and the blessing of Allah that they reject? [72]

And they worship besides Allah things which have no power to give them anything from the heavens and the earth, nor can they have (such power). [73]

So, do not coin similarities for Allah. Surely, Allah knows and you do not know. [74]

Allah gives an example: There is a slave owned (by someone), who has no power over anything, and there is a person whom We have given good provision from Us. And he spends out of it secretly and openly. Are they equal? Praise be to Allah. But, most of them do not know. [75]

And Allah gives an example: There are two men. One of them is dumb who is unable to do anything, and he is a burden on his master. Wherever he directs him to, he brings no good. Does he equal the one who enjoins justice and is on the straight path? [76]

Commentary

In verse 72: جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا (Allah has created spouses from among you), a special blessing has been mentioned in that Allah Ta'ālā has created spouses from the same genus so that they remain mutually familiar and their distinction and nobility inherent in the human species also remains stable through generations.

Given here, there may be another hint towards the fact that spouses belong to each other's genus and, as such, their needs and feelings are common to both, therefore, mutual consideration is but necessary for them.

The next sentence of the verse: وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً has been translated as: 'and created for you from your spouses sons and grandsons.'

Though children are born to father and mother both, yet in this verse, their birth has been identified with mothers only. The indication given here is suggestive of the fact that the role of the mother in the birth and the creational formation of the child is more pronounced than that of the father. The father contributes only a lifeless drop. The locale where this drop goes through different kinds of stages from the transformation into human form and shape to becoming alive, and where all these inimitable achievements of nature take place, is a place no other than the womb of the mother. Therefore, in the Ḥadīth, the right of the mother has been made to precede the right of the father.

There is yet another hint visible in this sentence which mentions grandsons alongwith sons, that is, the real purpose behind creating spouses is the procreation and survival of human race so that they have children, then, their children have their children. What else would this be, if not the survival of human species?

After that, by saying: *وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ* (and gave you provision from good things), mention was made of things which guarantee personal survival. In other words, once a human child is born, food is needed for its personal survival. That too was provided by Allah Ta'ālā. The real meaning of the word: *حَفَدَةٌ* (*hafadah*) in this verse is that of one who helps and serves. That this word has been used for children suggests that children should always be at the service of their father and mother. (Qurtubī)

The statement: *فَلَا تَضْرِبُوا لِلَّهِ الْأَمْثَالَ* (So, do not coin similarities for Allah -74) clarifies an important aspect of the reality of things as they relate to Allah. If ignored, it becomes the breeding ground of all sorts of rejectionist doubts and scruples. The problem is that people would generally take Allah Ta'ālā on the analogy of their own humankind and go on to declare the highest placed among them, a king and ruler, as similar to Allah Ta'ālā. Then, relying on this wrong assumption, they start seeing the Divine system on the analogy of the system of human monarchs. This leads them to take a cue from the fact that since no king can, all by himself, run the administration of the whole kingdom, the system is run by delegating powers to subordinate ministers and officials who do that on his behalf. Similarly, they believe and propose that there have to be some other objects of worship under the authority of Allah Ta'ālā who would help Him out in carrying out His tasks. This is the general theory of all

idol-worshippers and polytheists. This sentence of the Qur'ān has cut off the very root of these doubts by stating that suggesting examples of what has been created and applying them on Allah Ta'ālā, the Creator, is something unreasonable by itself. He is far above similarities and analogies and conjectures and guesses.

In the first of the two examples given in the last two verses, the description is that of a master and a slave, that is, the owner and the owned. By giving this example, it is being said: When these two, despite being from the same genus and the same kind, cannot be equal to each other, how then could you equate someone or something created by Allah with Him?

In the second example, there is a man who bids justice and teaches what is good. This is a model of his intellectual perfection. Then he himself takes the path of moderation and right guidance. This is the model of his practical perfection. Set against the power of this intellectually and practically perfect man, there is the other man who cannot do anything for himself nor can he do anything right for others. These two men of two different kinds, despite being from one genus, one species and one brotherhood, cannot be equal to each other. So, how can some created being or thing become equal to the Creator and Master of the universe who is Absolute in Wisdom, Absolute in Power, and All-Knowing and All-Aware?

Verses 77 - 83

وَاللَّهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَمَا أَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ إِلَّا كَلَمَحٍ الْبَصِيرِ
 أَوْ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِّنْ
 بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَاتَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا ۖ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ
 وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۗ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ فِي
 جَوِّ السَّمَاءِ ۗ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ
 ﴿٧٩﴾ وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ سَكَنًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ جُلُودِ
 الْأَنْعَامِ بُيُوتًا تَسْتَخِفُّونَهَا يَوْمَ ظَعْنِكُمْ وَيَوْمَ إِقَامَتِكُمْ ۗ وَمِنْ أَصْوَابِهَا

وَأَوْبَارِهَا وَأَشْعَارِهَا أَتَانَا وَمَتَاعًا إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِمَّا
 خَلَقَ ظِلَالًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ أَكْنَانًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ سَرَابِيلَ
 تَقِيكُمْ الْحَرَّ وَسَرَابِيلَ تَقِيكُمْ بَأْسَكُمْ ۗ كَذَلِكَ يُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلْغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٨٢﴾
 يَعْرِفُونَ نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنْكِرُونَهَا وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

And to Allah belongs the Unseen of the heavens and the earth. And the Hour is nothing but like the twinkling of the eye, or even quicker. Of course, Allah is powerful over everything. [77]

And Allah has brought you forth from your mothers' wombs when you knew nothing, and He made for you ears, eyes and hearts, so that you may be grateful. [78]

Did they not look at the birds, subdued, in the atmosphere of the sky? No one holds them but Allah. Surely, in that there are signs for a people who believe. [79]

And Allah has made for you of your houses a place for comfort, and made for you houses from the hides of cattle which you find light the day you travel and the day you camp, and out of their wool and their fur and their hair (He created) household goods and things of enjoyment for a time. [80]

And Allah has made for you shades from what He has created, and made for you shelters in the mountains and made for you shirts which protect you from heat and shirts which protect you in your battles. [81] This is how He perfects His favour upon you, so that you may submit. If they still turn away, then, your responsibility is only to convey the message clearly. [82]

They are aware of Allah's favour, yet they deny it. And most of them are ungrateful. [83]

Commentary

The Divine statement: لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا (when you knew nothing - 78) indicates that knowledge is not an ingrained personal excellence of man. When born, man has no knowledge or skill. Then, in proportion to growing human needs, man is made to absorb some knowledge, bit by bit, di-

rectly from Allah Ta'ālā in which no role is played by the parents or teachers. First of all, man was taught to cry. This one qualification alone provides all he needs at that time. Hungry or thirsty, he cries. Feels hot or cold, he cries. If some other discomfort bothers him, he would still cry. Nature has poured a special kind of love in the hearts of the father and the mother for the needs of the infant, because of which, when they hear the sounds made by the child, they become all too eager to find out what is bothering the baby, and all too willing to remove the problem. If the child was not inducted into this act of crying as part of his or her early education from a side no less than that of Allah Himself, who else could have trained the child to employ this skill and start crying like that as and when there be some need. Alongwith it, Allah Ta'ālā also taught the child, inspiration-wise, that he or she should use gums and lips to suck milk, the child's energy food, from the breast of the mother. If this education and training was not natural and direct, no teacher anywhere could dare make this new-born learn to pout and move the mouth right and suck nipples on the breast. Thus, with the increase in the needs of the child, nature took care of teaching its charge directly without the intermediary link of the father and mother, in a manner almost spontaneous and self-regulating. After the passage of some time, the child starts learning a little by hearing parents and others around say what they do, or pick up a few tips by seeing a few things around. This, then, creates in the child the ability to understand sounds heard and things seen.

Therefore, after: لَاتَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا (when you knew nothing) in the verse under comment, it was said: وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ (and He made for you ears, eyes and hearts). It means: Though, human beings knew nothing about anything at the early stage of their birth, but nature had installed in their very frame of existence novel instruments to fulfill their need to learn. Out of these instruments, the first to be mentioned was 'sam', that is, the faculty of hearing which precedes perhaps for the reason that the very first knowledge, and the most of it, comes through nothing but ears. In the beginning, eyes are closed, but ears hear. Furthermore, if we were to think about it, we shall not fail to realize that the amount of information one acquires in a whole life time is mostly what has been heard with ears. Information collected visually is much less than that.

After these two, comes information which one deduces by deliberating into things heard and seen. According to the statements of the Qur'an, this is a function of the human heart. Therefore, stated at number three is: *أَفِيدَة* (*afidah*) which is the plural of: *فُؤَادٌ* *fu'ād* which means the heart. Scientists identify the human brain as the center of understanding and reason. But, the statement of the Qur'an tells us that though the brain plays a role in this process of reasoning, yet the real center of knowledge and reason is the heart.

On this occasion, Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned the faculties of hearing, seeing and understanding. Speech was not mentioned because speech plays no role in the acquisition of knowledge. It is, rather, a source of the expression of knowledge. In addition to that, according to Imām Al-Qurṭubī, the word: *سَمْعٌ* '*sam*' (hearing) is inclusive of *نُطْقٌ* *nuṭq* (speech) as a corollary, as experience bears out that a person who hears speaks as well. A person deprived of the power of speech remains deaf in the ears as well. Perhaps, the reason why a dumb person cannot speak lies in the person's very inability to hear any sounds which could make learning to speak through hearing possible. *والله اعلم* *Wallāhu a'lam*: 'And Allah knows best' is a standard appendage to conclusions where definite knowledge about a subject in flux is not available or accessible or reliable. For a believer, this serves as a safety device against the possibility of having made any false statements, which may be a sin.

In the statement: *وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ سَكَنًا* (And Allah has made for you of your houses a place of comfort - 80), the word: *بُيُوتٌ* (*buyūt*) is the plural of *بَيْتٌ* (*bayt*) which means a house where night could be spent. Imām Al-Qurṭubī says in his Tafsīr:

كُلُّ مَا عَلَاكَ فَاطَّلَكَ فَهُوَ سَقْفٌ وَسَّمَاءٌ، وَكُلُّ مَا أَقْلَكَ فَهُوَ أَرْضٌ وَكُلُّ مَا سَتَرَكَ مِنْ جِهَاتِكَ الْأَرْبَعِ فَهُوَ جِدَارٌ فَإِذَا انْتَضَمَتْ وَأَتَصَلَّتْ فَهُوَ بَيْتٌ

'Whatever is above your head and provides shade for you is roof or sky, and whatever holds you atop is earth, and whatever screens you out from all four sides are walls, and when (all these components are) put together properly, that is a house.

The real purpose of making a house is to have peace for body and heart

Here, by calling the human house a place of comfort and peace Allah Ta'ālā has made the logic and wisdom of making houses fully evident,

that is, its real purpose is to have comfort of the body and peace of the heart. Customarily, the avenues of human work lie outside houses. Human work owes its existence to human movement and struggle. The real purpose of one's house is to go there, when tired after moving around and doing things, and rest and enjoy peace - even though, there are times when one keeps moving around and doing things in one's own house, but such instances are usually on the lower side.

This help us realize that peace is really the peace of mind and heart, something one finds in one's home only. This also tells us that the highest qualification of human home is that it provides peace. The world of today is at the height of its building craze. Limitless expenditure is incurred on their superficial finishing. But, there are very few homes among them which would provide peace of mind and heart. In fact, the artificially imposed additions in them become the very agents which destroy comfort and peace, and even in the absence of such material extravagance, the kind of people one confronts in the house is a misfortune which sucks that peace away. When such elegant houses are compared with a modest hut, the dweller of the hut who is blessed with comfort and peace for his body and heart is certainly living in a better place.

The Qur'ān manifests the 'elan vital, the essence and the root of everything. Hence, peace was declared to be the real purpose of human home, and the greatest need indeed. Similarly, the real purpose of marital life was also determined to be peace as in: *يَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا* (so that you may enjoy peace with her - 30:21). A married life which fails to achieve this purpose remains deprived of the real benefit destined for it. Life in our day is infested with so many customs and formalities reaching the limits of absurdity in showing what you have through all sorts of artificial veneers. To compound the problem further, the outpourings of Western cultural and social norms and products have provided everything one needs to embellish personl surroundings with artificial decor - but, it has certainly made human beings become all deprived of what would be real comfort for their bodies and peace for their hearts.

The statement: *مِنْ جُلُودِ الْأَنْعَامِ* (from the hides of the cattle - 80) and the statement: *مِنْ أَصْوَابِهَا وَأَوْبَارِهَا* (out of their wool and their fur and their hair - 80) prove that it is Ḥalāl to use everything out of the hide, wool and hair of animals. Here, even the restriction that the animal be properly

slaughtered or be a dead animal does not exist, nor is there any restriction as to their meat being Ḥalāl or Ḥarām. It is perfectly Ḥalāl to use the hides of the animals of this kind by tanning them, and as for hair and wool, the death of the animal leaves just no effect on them. That remains Ḥalāl and permissible without any specific technical treatment. This is the Madhab (creed) of the great Imām, Abū Ḥanīfah. However, the hide of swine and all parts thereof are unclean and unfit for use under all conditions.

Finally, a note about the statement: سَرَائِلَ تَقِيكُمْ الْحَرَّ (shirts which protect you from heat - 81). Here, protection from heat has been identified as the purpose of a shirt - though, a shirt protects one from heat and cold both. This has been answered by Imām Al-Qurṭubī and other commentators by saying that the Holy Qurʾān has been revealed in the Arabic language, its first addressees are Arabs, therefore, it speaks by taking Arab habits and needs into account. Arabia is a hot country where the very thought of snow and winter chill is far-fetched, therefore, the statement was left with the mention of protection from heat as being sufficient. Yet another explanation for this has been given by Maulānā Ashraf Alī Thanavī in Bayān al-Qurʾān by saying that in the beginning of this Sūrah, the Qurʾān had already said: لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ (and for you, there is provision against cold in them - 16:5). Thus, it was in view of this earlier mention of beating cold and having warmth that only protection from heat has been mentioned here.

Verses 84 - 89

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا ثُمَّ لَا يُؤْذَنُ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَلَا هُمْ
يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الْعَذَابَ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ
وَلَاهُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَى الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا شُرَكَاءَ هُمْ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا
هَؤُلَاءِ شُرَكَاءُ نَا الَّذِينَ كُنَّا نَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِكَ ۗ فَالْقَوْلُ إِلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ
إِنَّكُمْ لَكَذِبُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَالْقَوْلَا إِلَى اللَّهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ السَّلَامَ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا
كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدَّوْا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ زِدْنَهُمْ
عَذَابًا فَوْقَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا يُفْسِدُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ

أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَجِئْنَاكَ شَهِيدًا عَلَىٰ هَؤُلَاءِ ۗ
 وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيَانًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ
 لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

And (remember) the Day We shall raise up a witness from every people, then the disbelievers will not be allowed (to make excuses) nor shall they be asked to repent. [84]

And when the unjust will see the punishment, it will not be lightened for them, nor will they be given respite. [85]

And when the Mushriks will see those whom they made partners with Allah, they will say: Our Lord, these are the partners we made whom we called in worship besides you. Then, they (the partners) will turn to them saying: You are indeed liars. [86]

And on that day they will tender submission to Allah and lost to them shall be all that they used to fabricate. [87]

Those who disbelieve, and put obstructions in the way of Allah, for them We shall add up punishment after punishment for the mischief they used to make. [88]

And (think of) the day We shall send to every people a witness from among them (to testify) against them, and We shall bring you (O prophet) as witness against these. And We have revealed to you the Book, an exposition of everything, and guidance, and mercy, and glad tidings for the Muslims. [89]

Commentary

In verse 89, by saying: *وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيَانًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ*, the Qur'ān has been credited as the exposition of everything. It means everything about the religion because the objective of Divine revelation and Prophetic mission concerns with these very things. Therefore, the very effort to cull out answers to problems pertaining to economic sciences from the Qur'ān is an exercise in error. However, the appearance of some implied hint somewhere there shall not be deemed contrary to this. Now remains the question that the Qur'ān does not carry answers to all problems of the religion itself, how then, would it be correct to say that it is 'an exposition of

everything'?

The answer is that the Qur'ān, does carry the basic principles concerning all problems, and it is in their light that the Aḥādīth of the Rasūl of Allah clarify these problems. Then, there are some details which are delegated to the principles of Ijmā' (consensus) and Al-Qiyās (analogical deduction following the norms set by the Sharī'ah of Islam). This tells us that the religious rulings deduced from the Aḥādīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and from Ijmā' and Qiyās are also, in a way, as stated by the Qur'ān itself.

Verse 90

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ
الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ ۗ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾

Allah commands to do justice and be good, and to give relatives (their due), and forbids from shameless acts, evil deeds and transgression. He exhorts you so that you may be receptive to advice. [90]

Commentary

This is the most comprehensive verse of the Holy Qur'ān where the essence of the entire range of Islamic teachings has been condensed into a few words. Therefore, from the blessed period of the most righteous elders upto this day, the practice has continued that this verse is recited at the end of the special Khuṭbah (address) of Jumu'ah and the two 'Eids ('Eid al-Fiṭr and 'Eid al-Aḍḥā). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ؓ says that the most comprehensive verse of the Holy Qur'ān appears in Sūrah An-Naḥl and it is: إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ (16:90 cited above) [Ibn Kathīr]

Then, there is the case of another Ṣaḥābi, Sayyidnā Aktham ibn al-Ṣaifi. He actually embraced Islam on the basis of this very verse. Imām Ibn Kathīr, quoting Ma'rifatuṣ-Ṣaḥābah, a book by Abū Ya'fā, who was known as a Ḥafīz of Ḥadīth (virtually a living data bank of Ḥadīth in contemporary terms), has reported with sound authority that Aktham ibn al-Saifi was the chief of his people. When he learnt about the Holy Prophet ﷺ, his claim to prophethood and his propagation of Islam, he decided to visit the Holy Prophet ﷺ personally. But, his people suggested

to him that he was their chief, the highest ranking person among them, therefore, his going there personally was not appropriate. Then, Aktham proposed the alternative that they should select two persons from the tribe who should go there, survey the situation and report back to him. These two people presented themselves before the Holy Prophet ﷺ and submitted that they had come from Aktham ibn al-Ṣaifi to find out two things. Aktham has two questions for you:

مَنْ أَنْتَ وَمَا أَنْتَ

'Who are you and what are you?'

He said: 'The answer to the first question is that I am Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allah, and the answer to the second question is that I am a servant of Allah and His Rasūl (messenger)'. After that, he recited this verse of Sūrah An-Naḥl which begins with: إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ (90). The two emissaries requested him to recite those sentences to them once again. He kept reciting the verse before them until the verse was committed to their memory.

The emissaries returned to Aktham and reported that by asking the first question their intention was to find out his lineage. But, he did not give much attention to this. He simply considered it sufficient to give the name of his father. Yet, when they checked on his lineage with others, they found out that he was very high in lineage and nobility. Then, they told Aktham that the Holy Prophet ﷺ also recited some words before them which they would narrate to him.

When the emissaries recited the verse under reference to Aktham ibn al-Ṣaifi, he promptly said: 'This tells us that he bids morals which are high and forbids morals which are low. Let all of you embrace his religion as soon as possible so that you stay ahead of other people, and not lag behind as camp followers.' [Ibn Kathīr]

Similarly, Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn ؓ says: 'At the initial stage, I had embraced Islam because people around said so. But, Islam had not taken roots in my heart. Then, there came a day when I was present in the blessed company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. All of a sudden, signs associated with the descent of revelation on him became apparent, and after some strange things had transpired, he said: "The emissary of

Allah Ta'ālā came to me and this verse was revealed upon me". Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ibn Maẓ'ūn ؓ says that once he saw this event and heard this verse, his faith became all firm and fortified in his heart and the love for Rasūlullāh ﷺ came to be settled there for good'. [After reporting this event, Ibn Kathīr has said that it is supported by strong and authentic chain of transmitting authorities]

Likewise, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited this verse before Walīd ibn Muḡhīrah, he went to report his impression before his people, the Quraish of Makkah, in the following words:

والله انّ له لحلاوة وانّ عليه لطاوة وانّ اصله لمورق وأعلاة لمثمر وما هو بقول
بشر

By God, in it, there is a special sweetness and, above it there is a unique hallow of light, and leaves are going to sprout out from its roots and fruits are going to show up on its branches - and this can never be the speech of any human being.

The Command To Do Three Things And Not To Do Three

Allah Ta'ālā bids three things in this verse. These are: (1) To do justice, (2) to be good, (3) to give relatives (their due). Then, He forbids three things. These are: (1) Shameful acts, (2) evil deeds, (3) transgression. The Islamic legal sense of these six words, and their limits, are being explained as follows:

Al-'Adl : العَدْل : The real and literal meaning of this word is to make equal. Pertinent to this, the equitable judgement of officials in the disputed cases of people is called Al-'Adl or justice. The statement: *أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا* (and that when you judge between people, judge with fairness - 4:58) in the Holy Qur'ān carries this very sense and, in view of this, the word Al-'Adl (justice) also refers to moderation (*al-i'tidāl*) between the two extremes of excess (*al-ifrāt*) and deficiency (*at-tafrīt*). Then, very much in congruity with this sense, some Tafsīr authorities have explained Al-'Adl at this place as the equality of the outward and the inward state of a person, that is, what one says or does through the obvious organs of his body should also be compatible with what he believes in and lives by. However, the truth of the matter is that the word Al-'Adl here has been used in its general sense which is inclusive of all these forms and shades reported from different Tafsīr authorities. There is no contradiction or di-

vergeance in them.

And according to Ibn al-'Arabi, the intrinsic meaning of Al-'Adl is to make equal, then, different congruities go to make its sense different. For instance, one sense of Al-'Adl or justice is that man should do justice between his Nafs (self) and his Rabb (Lord-God). If so, it would mean that he should give preference to the right of Allah Ta'ālā over the pleasure of his self and make the seeking of His pleasure far more urgent and prior than the pursuit of his own desires and obey His commands and totally abstain from what He has forbidden.

Then, there is the second kind of justice which requires that one enter into a deal of justice with his own self, that is, protect his self from all such challenges which bring physical or spiritual destruction upon him, refuse to fulfill such desires of his self which are harmful for him in the end, be content and satisfied observing patience, and avoid putting unnecessary burden on his self without valid excuse.

The third kind of justice prevails between one's own self and the rest of Allah's creation. In this case, the essential sense is that one should deal with the whole creation in a cooperative spirit wishing well, doing good and having sympathy, never betray anyone with the slightest breach of trust in any transaction whether minor or major, demand from his self justice for everyone, and see to it that no human being is hurt by anything said or done by him whether apparent or concealed.

Similarly, there is the justice done when two parties bring one of their cases for adjudication before a person, then, it is the duty of that person that he must decide the case without any tilt towards anyone and in accordance with what is the truth. Then, it is also a form of justice when one leaves out the extreme options of excess and deficiency in all matters and takes to the path of moderation. This is the sense Abū 'Abdullāh al-Rāzī prefers when he says that the word Al-'Adl (justice) is inclusive of moderation in belief, moderation in deed, moderation in morals, everything. [Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ]

Finally, Imām Al-Qurṭubī who gives all these details to determine the sense of Al-'Adl also considers it good for the purpose. This also tells us that the one single word, Al-'Adl, in this verse encompasses in itself the adherence to all good morals and deeds and the avoidance of all bad

morals and deeds.

Al-Iḥsān : الأِحْسَانُ : The real and literal meaning of Al-Iḥsān is to make something good. It has two kinds: (1) that one makes deeds or morals and habits become good and perfect in one's own person; (2) that one deals with the other person nicely, decently and favourably. To cover this second sense, Arabic usage takes: الى (*ilā*) as the preposition after it, as it appears in a verse of the Qur'ān: اللهُ إِلَيْكَ (be good as Allah has been good to you - 28:77).

Imām Al-Qurṭubī has said that this word has been used in its general sense in the cited verse, therefore, it is inclusive of both kinds of Iḥsān. Then, the first kind of Iḥsān, that is, doing something well in its own right, is also general - for instance, to come out with acts of worship in their best possible form, to make efforts to improve upon personal deeds and morals and to seek betterment in dealings with others.

The meaning of Iḥsān given by the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself in the famous Ḥadīth of Jibra'īl relates to the quality of Iḥsān in acts of 'Ibādah or worship. The gist of his blessed statement is: Worship Allah as if you are seeing Allah. And if you cannot imagine Divine presence at this level, then, each person must have at least this much certitude that Allah Almighty is, after all, seeing what he or she is doing. The reason is that it is a cardinal part of Islamic faith that not the minutest molecule of this universe can remain outside the reach of the knowledge and perception of Allah Ta'ālā.

To sum up, it can be said that the second command given in this verse is that of Iḥsān. Included here is the Iḥsān of 'Ibadah (the betterment of acts of worship) as explained by the Ḥadīth. Also included here is the Iḥsān or betterment of all deeds, morals and habits, that is, seeing that they come out right, good and authentic in the form and spirit desired. And also included here is to be good to the whole creation of Allah, whether believer or infidel, human or animal.

Imām Al-Qurṭubī has said: The person in whose house his cat is not fed and taken care of and the birds in whose cage are not attended to as due, then, no matter how devoted to acts of worship he may be, he would still not be counted among the Muḥsinīn, those who are good to others.

In conclusion, the first command given in this verse is that of Al-'Adl or justice, then, that of Al-Iḥsān or being good. Some Tafsīr authorities have said that justice means that one should give the right of the other person in full and take what comes to him, neither less nor more; then, should someone hurt you, you hurt him only as much as he did, no more. And Iḥsān or being good means that you give the other person more than his real due and, as for your own right, ignore it to the limit that you willingly accept even if it turns out to be less than due. Similarly, when someone hurts you physically or verbally, then, rather than inflict an equal retaliation against that person, you better forgive him, in fact, return the evil done by him with what is good for him. Thus, the command to do justice comes in the form of what is Farḍ and Wājib (obligatory and necessary as duty) while the command to be good appears in the status of an act which is voluntary (Nafl) and is motivated by a well-meaning desire to contribute more in the way of what is good.

Give relatives (their due) : **إِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ** : The third command given in this verse is to give relatives (their due). The word: **إِيتَاءِ** ('itā') used in the text means to give something - with the added sense of giving as gift or presentation in good grace. The word: **الْقُرْبَىٰ** (*al-qurbā*) means relationship or kinship; and: **ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ** (*dhil-qurbā*) means relatives or kin. Thus, the command: **إِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ** ('itā' *dhil-qurbā*) comes to mean to give something to relatives. That which has to be given has not been spelled out here. But, there is another verse in the Qur'ān where the object does find mention: **فَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ** (give the relative his due - 17:26). As obvious, the same object applies here too, that is, relatives be given their due. Included under this 'due' is serving them financially, as well as serving them physically, and visiting them when sick, and taking care of them when in need, and the giving of verbal comfort and the expression of concern and sympathy too. Though, giving relatives their due was included under the spectrum of the word: Al-Iḥsān, yet it has been mentioned separately in order to place stress on its added importance.

Given upto this point were three commands asserted positively. The other three asserted negatively, denoting prohibition and unlawfulness, are as follows:

"And forbids from shameless acts, evil deeds and transgression": **وَيَنْهَىٰ**
عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ : The first word: **الْفَحْشَاءِ** (*al-fahsha'*) translated as

'shameful acts', refers to such evil word or deed the evil of which is all too open and clear and which everyone considers bad. Then, *المُنْكَر* (*al-munkar*) translated as 'evil deeds', denotes the word or deed the unlawfulness or impermissibility of which is agreed upon by the well-recognized authentic exponents of the Shari'ah of Islam. Therefore, no side can be regarded as '*munkar*' in their Ijtihād-based differences and, as for the word: '*Al-Munkar*', it includes all sins whether outward or inward, done practically or committed morally. The real meaning of the third word: *الْبَغْي* (*al-baghy*) translated as 'transgression' is to cross the limit. The sense is that of injustice and excess. At this place, though the sense of the word: *Al-Munkar* (evil deeds) is inclusive of both *Al-Faḥshā'* (shameful acts) and *Al-Baghy* (transgression), but *Al-Faḥshā'* has been picked out as a separate entry, and made to appear first as well, because of its extreme evil and abomination. And the word: *Al-Baghy* has been taken up separately because its fallout is contagious. It affects others. Sometimes this transgression reaches the outer limits of mutual hostility, even armed confrontation, or it could go still further and cause international disorder.

According to a saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, there is no sin, except injustice, the retaliation against which and the punishment for which comes so quickly. From this we learn that the ultimate severe punishment for injustice due in the Hereafter has to come anyway, however, much before that happens, Allah Ta'ālā punishes the perpetrator of injustice in this mortal world as well - even though, he may fail to realize that the punishment he received was for a particular injustice committed by him and that Allah Ta'ālā has promised to help the victim of injustice.

The six commands, imperative and prohibitive, given in this verse are - if pondered upon - an elixir for the perfect prosperity of man's individual and collective life. May Allah bless us all with the ability of following them.

Verses 91 - 96

وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدْتُمْ وَلَا تَنْفُضُوا الْأَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِهَا وَقَدْ
 جَعَلْتُمُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُوا

كَأَلَّتِي نَفَضَتْ غَزَلَهَا مِنْ أَعْدٍ قُوَّةٍ أَنْكَأَتْ تَتَّخِذُونَ أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا
 بَيْنَكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ أُمَّةٌ هِيَ أَرْبَى مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِنَّمَا يُلْوِكُمُ اللَّهُ بِهِ ط وَلِيَبَيِّنَ
 لَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ مَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ
 أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ط وَلِتَسْأَلَنَّ عَمَّا
 كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا بَيْنَكُمْ فَتَرَلَّ قَدَمٌ
 بَعْدَ ثُبُوتِهَا وَتَذُوقُوا السُّوءَ بِمَا صَدَدْتُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ط وَلكُمْ
 عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ط إِنَّمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
 هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
 بَاقٍ ط وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

And fulfill the Covenant of Allah when you pledge, and do not break oaths after you swear them solemnly, while you have made Allah a witness over you. Surely, Allah knows all that you do. [91]

And do not be like the woman, who has broken her yarn into pieces after spinning it firmly, by taking your oaths as means of mischief between yourselves, merely because a group is higher (in number and wealth) than the other. In fact, Allah puts you to a test thereby and, of course, He will make clear to you on the Day of Resurrection all that you disputed about. [92]

And if Allah so willed, He would have made you all a single community, but He lets whom He wills go astray and takes whom He wills to the right path. And you will be questioned about what you used to do. [93]

And do not make your oaths a means of mischief among yourselves, lest a foot should slip after it is firmly placed, and you taste evil for your having prevented (others) from the path of Allah, and for you there be a great punishment. [94]

And do not take a paltry price against the pledge of Allah. Indeed, what is with Allah is much better for you, if but you knew. [95] What is with you shall end and what is with Allah shall last. And certainly, We shall give

those who observed patience their reward for the good
they used to do. [96]

Commentary

Breaking Pledges is Forbidden

The word: عَهْدٌ (*ahd*) is inclusive of all transactions, pacts and pledges the responsibility of which has been assumed verbally, whether one does or does not swear by it, and whether it relates to doing something or not doing it.

In fact, these verses are the explanation and conclusion of previous verses. The previous verses carried the command to do justice and to be good. The sense of justice there includes the fulfillment of pledges as well. [Qurṭubī]

After having given a pledge or made a contract with someone, breaking it is a major sin. But, in the event it is broken, there is no Kaffārah (expiation) fixed for this purpose. Instead, it brings the punishment of the Hereafter on the offender. According to Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that a flag shall be planted on the back of the pledge-breaker on the Day of Resurrection which will become the cause of his or her disgrace there.

Similarly, acting contrary to what one has sworn by is also a major sin. In the Hereafter, it is full of unimagineably evil consequences while in the present world too there are its particular situations in which Kaffārah (expiation) becomes necessary. [Qurṭubī]

In verse 92: أَنْ تَكُونَ أُمَّةً هِيَ أَرْبَىٰ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ (merely because a group is higher [in number and wealth] than the other), Muslims have been ordered that they should not break the pact they enter into with a group simply for the sake of worldly interests and gains. For example, they may come to think that the group or party with which they have entered into a pact is weak and few in numbers, or lacks financial backing, while the other group or party abounds in numbers and strength, or is wealthy. Now, if they are tempted to join the party having power and wealth in the hope of better gains from them, this breaking of the pledge given to the first party is not permissible. Rather than do something like that, one should stay by the pledge given and let all gains and losses rest with Allah Ta'ālā. However, if the group or party with which one has entered into a

pact commits or commissions acts contrary to the dictates of Islamic religious law, then, it is necessary to break that pledge - subject to the condition that they be clearly forewarned that Muslims will not be bound by that pact anymore - as stated in the verse: فَانْبِذْ إِلَيْهِمْ عَلَى سَوَاءٍ (then, throw [the treaty] towards them being right forward - 8:58).

At the conclusion of the verse, the given situation has been identified as a device to test Muslims whereby Allah Ta'ālā tries them to determine if they would obey the desires of their self and break the solemn pledge, or go on to sacrifice their selfish motives in obedience to the command of Allah Ta'ālā.

An oath sworn to deceive someone may cause forfeiture of Faith ('Īmān)

Verse 94 which begins with the words: وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا (do not take your oaths as a means of mischief) gives yet another instruction to stay away from getting involved in what is a great sin laden with evil consequences. It means that anyone who at the very time of taking an oath harbours other ideas and intentions, is all set to act counter to the oath taken while going through the exercise of oath-taking merely to deceive the other party, then, this would be an act far more dangerous than that of breaking a common oath. As a result, the danger is that this person may end up being all deprived of the very asset of 'Īmān (faith). The sentence which follows immediately, that is: فَتَرَلْ قَدَمًا بَعْدَ يُبَوِّئُهَا (lest a foot should slip after it is firmly placed - 94), means exactly this. [Qurṭubī]

Accepting Bribe is Sternly Forbidden as It Breaks the Covenant of Allah

Verse 95 which begins with the words: وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا (And do not take a paltry price against the pledge of Allah) that is, 'do not break the Covenant of Allah for a paltry price.' Here, 'a paltry price' refers to worldly life and its gains. No matter how major they may be yet, as compared with the gains of the Hereafter, even the entire world and its entire wealth is nothing but paltry. Whoever opts for the gains of the mortal world at the cost of the far superior returns in the Hereafter has struck a deal which will bring nothing but utter loss - because, selling off a blessing which is supreme and a wealth which is everlasting in ex-

change for something fast perishing and intrinsically low is what no sensible person would ever elect to do.

Ibn 'Aṭīyyāh said: If doing something is obligatory on a person, then, it is a Covenant of Allah due against him. He is responsible for it. And in the process of fulfilling this duty, the act of charging wages or something in return, and not doing what duty calls for without being first paid off in cash or kind, is what amounts to breaking the Covenant of Allah. Similarly, if not doing something is obligatory on a person, then, should that person do it against returns received from someone, that too will constitute the breaking of the Covenant of Allah.

This tells us that all prevailing kinds of bribery are unlawful. For example, a government servant who receives a salary for what he does has virtually given a pledge to Allah that he would perform the job assigned to him against the salary he receives. Now, if he goes about asking for some sort of return from someone in order to do that job, and keeps hedging and postponing the required action until he has that return, then, this official is breaking the Covenant of Allah. Similarly, doing something for which the department has not empowered him, even doing it by accepting bribe, is also a breach of pledge. [Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ]

A Comprehensive Definition of Bribe

The statement of Ibn 'Aṭīyyāh quoted above also accomodates a fairly inclusive definition of bribe (Rishwat) which, in the words of Tafsīr Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, is as follows:

اخذ الاموال على فعل ما يجب على الأخذ فعله او فعل ما يجب عليه تركه

Taking a return for not doing a job the doing of which is obligatory on a person, or taking a return for doing a job not doing which is obligatory on a person, is what bribe is. [Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, p. 533, v. 5]

That the combined blessings of the whole world are paltry has been stated in the next verse (96) through the words: وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ that is, 'what is with you (meaning worldly gains) is to end; and what is with Allah Ta'ālā (meaning the reward and punishment of the Hereafter) is to last for ever'.

All Wordly Gains and States will Perish - Only their Outcome with Allah shall Remain

A casual look at the expression: مَا عِنْدَكُمْ (mā 'indakum: 'what is with you' meaning world gains) leads one to think of wealth and possessions only. My revered teacher, Maulānā Sayyid Aṣḡhar Ḥusain of Deoband, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said that the word: مَا : mā (what) is general lexically and there is nothing prohibiting us from taking it in a general sense, therefore, included under it are wealth and possessions of the present world as well as all states and matters that one experiences therein. These could be happiness and sorrow, pain and comfort, sickness and health, gain and loss or someone's friendship or enmity. These form part of it for all these are transitory and must perish. However, the after-effects of all these states and matters which are to bring reward or punishment on the Day of Judgement are destined to remain. So, any reckless pursuit of states and matters that must perish and to stake one's life and its energies on this altar by becoming negligent of the eternal reward and punishment is something no sane person should elect to do.

Verse 97

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

Whoever, male or female, has done righteous deed, while a believer, We shall certainly make him live a good life and shall give such people their reward for the good they used to do. [97]

Commentary

What is 'good life'?

According to the majority of commentators, the expression 'good life' used here means a pure and pleasing life in the present world while some Tafsīr authorities have taken it to mean life in the Hereafter. And a closer look at the explanation given by the majority would also show that it does not mean that such a person will never encounter poverty or sickness. Instead, it means that a believer - even if he ever faces poverty or pain - has two things with him which shield him from becoming dis-

turbed. First comes his habit of remaining content with the available (*qanā'ah*), the hallmark of a simple life. This thing works in straitened circumstances as well. Secondly, there is this belief of his, the belief that he is going to receive the great and eternal blessings of the Hereafter in return for whatever poverty or pain he has suffered from. Poised counter to this is the condition of a disbeliever and sinner. If such a person faces poverty and pain, he has nothing to hold him together and give him solace and comfort. In this state, he is likely to lose his sanity, even think of committing suicide. And in case he was affluent, his greed would not let him sit peacefully. When the drive for more wealth makes him a millionaire, the dreams of becoming a billionaire would keep spoiling his peace.

As for righteous believers, says Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Allah Ta'ālā blesses them with a life full of pleasure, contentment and gracefulness right here in this world as well, something that never changes whatever the condition. That their life will be graceful while they enjoy health and extended means is all too obvious, particularly so on the ground that they just do not have the greed to keep their wealth increasing unnecessarily, an urge that keeps harassing one under all circumstances. And even if they have to face lean days or sickness of some sort, they always have a strong support to fall back on. They are perfect believers in the promises made by Allah. They have strong hopes of seeing ease after hardship and comfort after pain. These strengths never let their life become graceless. It is like the work of a farmer who has made his farm ready for crops. No matter how much pain he takes in working to see his crops grow, yet he welcomes all that for the sake of the comfort he is going to have. In a short time, he is certain, he is going to have the best of return for what he has done. A businessman or a wage earner would do the same. They would face all sorts of hardship in their job, even a little disgrace once in a while. But, they brave through everything and remain happy and hopeful. They believe that their business will bring profit and their job, a salary. The believer too believes that he is getting a return for every hardship and when comes the life of the Hereafter, his return for every hardship will come to him in the form of blessings that are great and everlasting. As for the life of the present world, it is not such a big deal as compared to that of the Hereafter. Therefore, a believer finds it easy to remain patient against worldly variations in living conditions.

Thus, these conditions never make a believer suffer from anxiety, apprehension and boredom. This is the 'good life' a believer is blessed with in cash, on the spot, right here in this world.

Verses 98 - 100

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿٩٨﴾ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ
لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُهُ
عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَكَّلُونَهُ، وَالَّذِينَ هُم بِمُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

So, when you recite the Qur'an, seek the protection of Allah against Satan, the accursed. [98] He is such that he has no power over those who believe and place trust in their Lord. [99] His power is only over those who befriend him and those who associate partners with Him. [100]

Sequence of Verses

Emphasis was laid in previous verses over the fulfillment of the covenant with Allah following which stated there was the importance and desirability of acting righteously in one's life. That one neglects to follow these commandments happens because of Satanic instigations. Therefore, this verse teaches us to seek protection against Satan, the accursed - something needed in every good deed. But, it will be noticed that it has been mentioned particularly with the recitation of the Qur'an. One reason for this particularization could also be that the recitation of the Qur'an is an act so unique that the Satan himself runs away from it. As said poetically:

دیو بگریزد از آل قوم که قرآن خوانند

Satan bolts from people who recite the Qur'an!

Then, there are specified Verses and Chapters which have been tested and they produce the desired result in removing the traces of Satanic inputs particularly. That they are effective and beneficial stands proved from definite textual authorities (*nuṣuṣ*) - Bayān al-Qur'an. Despite this factor, when came the command to seek protection from the Satan in conjunction with the recitation of the Qur'an, it becomes all the more necessary with other deeds.

In addition to that, there is always the danger of Satanic instigations intruding into the recitation of the Qurʾān itself. For instance, one may fall short in observing the etiquette due during the recitation or that it remains devoid of the essential spirit of deliberation, thinking, submission and humbleness. So, for this too, it was deemed necessary that protection from Satanic instigations should be sought (Ibn Kathīr, Mazharī and others).

Commentary

In the preface of his Tafsīr, Ibn Kathīr has said: Human beings have two kinds of enemies. The first ones come from their own kind, like the general run of disbelievers. The other kind is that of the Jinn who are diabolic and disobedient. Islam commands defence against the first kind of enemy through Jihād involving fighting and killing. But, for the other kind, the command is limited to the seeking of protection from Allah only. The reason is that the first kind of enemy happens to be homogeneous. Its attack comes openly, visibly. Therefore, fighting and killing in Jihād against such an enemy was made obligatory. As for the enemy of the Satanic kind, it is not visible. Its attack on humankind does not take place frontally. Therefore, as a measure of defence against such an enemy, the seeking of the protection of such a Being has been made obligatory that no one is able to see, neither the humankind, nor the Satan. Then, there is that subtle expediency in entrusting the defence against Satan with Allah. Is it not that one who stands subdued by the Satan is actually rejected and deserving of punishment in the sight of Allah? Quite contrary to this is the case of the humanoid enemy of human beings, that is, the disbelievers. If someone is subdued or killed while confronting them, he becomes a martyr (*shahīd*), and deserving of reward from Allah (*thawāb*)! Therefore, when one confronts an enemy of human beings with all his strength, it turns out to be nothing but beneficial, no matter what the circumstances - either he would prevail over the enemy and put an end to his power, or would himself embrace *shahādah* (martyrdom in the way of Allah) and deserve the best of returns with Him.

Related Rulings (*masā'il*)

1. The reciting of: *أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ* (*a'ūdhu bil-lāhi minash-shaiṭānir-rajīm*): I seek protection with Allah from Shaiṭān, the accursed) before initiating the recitation of the Qurʾān stands proved from the Holy Prophet ﷺ in order that the command given in this verse is carried out.