

they have not yet been married or were married earlier and have become divorcee or widow /widower. The guardians of such men and women are directed in this verse to arrange their marriage.

Scholars and jurists are unanimous on the point that according to the manner of address of this verse the preferable and *masnūn* way of marriage is that men and women have it arranged through their guardians, rather than arranging it directly. There are many a worldly and religious benefits in this tradition, especially in the case of girls it is a sort of indecency that they arrange their own marriages. Also, there is a risk that this system may open the doors for obscenity. Therefore, in some narrations of *ḥadīth* women are prohibited to contract their own marriages without the mediation of guardians. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالى and some other Imāms have ruled that this instruction describes a *sunnah* and the preferred way for the contract of marriage. But if an adult girl marries someone within her own *kuf'* without her guardian's permission, it is a proper marriage, although she would be reprehensible for this act, because it is against the *sunnah*, unless she has done so under unavoidable circumstances.

Imām Shafi' رحمه الله تعالى and some other Imāms have ruled that her marriage will be null and void if carried out without her guardian's mediation. It is not the intention to describe and argue here the details of approach and arguments put forward by the two jurists on their different points of view, but this much is obvious from the verse under discussion that it is preferable to have guardian's mediation in the matter of marriage. But the Qur'ānic verse itself is silent on the issue of status of marriage, if solemnized without the consent of guardians. The other reason is that in the word *Ayāmā* (أَيَامِي) both male and female adults are included, and there is consensus that the marriage of adult boys is perfectly valid if solemnized without the mediation of guardians. No one considers that marriage to be null and void. But this is true that in either case it is against the *sunnah*, for which both should be reproached.

The status of marriage in Shari'ah

Jurists are almost all unanimous that whoever has a strong apprehension that in case he does not marry, he would not be able to maintain the prescribed limits of Shari'ah and will get involved in sins, and he has the means to get married, it is obligatory on him to get

married. As long as he does not get married, he will remain a sinner. But in case he does not have the means to get married, or a suitable woman is not available, or he does not possess the needed prompt dower etc. for all such situations the injunction is given in the next verse that he should keep striving to obtain what is required and until such time that the needful is arranged, he should keep his emotions under control and wait with patience. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has advised such persons in this situation to fast continuously, for fasting calms down the sexual desire.

It is reported in Masnād of Aḥmad that the Holy Prophet ﷺ enquired from Sayyidnā 'Akkāf ؓ whether he had a wife, to which he replied in the negative. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ enquired whether he had a lawful slave girl. He again replied in the negative. Then he ﷺ asked 'Do you have the means?'. To this he replied in the affirmative. The purpose of this enquiry was to find out whether he possessed the means to arrange his marriage, to which he answered in the positive. After that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said 'In that case you are a brother of Satan, for our *sunnah* is to get married. The worst persons among you are those who are unmarried, and the most mean among your men are those who die without marrying'. (Maḏharī).

Majority of the jurists have attributed this narration as well to that condition when there is a predominant risk of sinning by abstaining from marriage. The Holy Prophet ﷺ must have known the situation of 'Akkāf that he would not be able to resist. Similarly, it is reported in Masnād of Aḥmad on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Anas ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had instructed him to get married, and warned against remaining bachelor. (Maḏharī). There are some other similar narrations of the *ḥadīth* as well, and majority of the jurists have held them to be applicable only in those situations where there is a strong apprehension of being involved in a sin if one avoids marriage. Similarly, jurists are almost all unanimous that if someone has strong notion that he would indulge in sin by marrying a woman, for instance he is not capable of meeting conjugal rights of the wife or will get involved for sure in some other sin, in such a situation marriage is prohibited or unbecoming for him.

Now the case of that person has to be looked at who is in an even position. For him neither the risk of sin is very strong by abstaining from marriage, nor there is a strong risk of sin if the marriage is performed. For

this situation there are different views of the jurists, that is, which act is better; to get married or abstaining from marriage and get involved in extra prayers. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالى has ruled that getting married is better than offering extra prayers, while Imām Shafi' رحمه الله تعالى has recommended that getting involved in prayers is preferable. The reason for the different views is that by itself the marriage is a lawful act, just like eating, drinking sleeping etc. or as any other necessity of life is lawful, and the element of worship is included in marriage for the simple reason that one can save himself from sin by this act, and when the righteous children are born, it will add up to his reward. When one performs any lawful act with the intent of pleasing Allah Ta'ālā, it becomes an indirect worship for him. Eating, drinking, sleeping etc. all become indirect worship when carried out with this intention. Since occupation in prayers is a direct worship in itself, hence, Imām Shafi' رحمه الله تعالى regards prayers to be preferable to marriage. But in the opinion of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالى the element of worship is greater in marriage than other lawful acts. In many Ṣaḥīḥ *aḥadīth* it is emphasized repeatedly to follow this tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In the light of all these *aḥadīth* it becomes evident that marriage is not just lawful like other lawful acts, but is a *sunnah* (practice) of the messengers, and has also been emphasized repeatedly in *ḥadīth*. It is a worship not only from the viewpoint of intention but also being a tradition of the messengers. If someone suggests that by the same token eating, drinking and sleeping should also be regarded as *sunnah*, because all messengers used to perform them. The answer to this is very clear that despite these acts being performed by all messengers, no one has said or narrated in any *ḥadīth* that eating, drinking and sleeping are *sunnah* of the messengers. Instead these acts are regarded as common human habits, which were observed by messengers as well. As against this, marriage is clearly declared as *sunnah* of the messengers and the *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself.

Tafsīr Maḥzarī has given a moderate view on the subject that, if someone is on an even position, that is neither he is helpless or overcome by prevalence of lust, nor feels the risk of indulging in sin by abstaining from marriage, and thinks that if he gets married, his involvement in household would not be a hindrance in his worships and remembrance of

Allah Ta'ālā, then it is preferable for him to get married. This was exactly the case of the messengers of Allah and the righteous people of the Ummah. But if he has a hunch that his marriage and involvement in household will not let him promote his religious status and will hinder Allah's remembrance, then for him abstaining from marriage for performing worship would be preferable, provided he is in an even position, described above. Many a Qur'ānic verses are in support of this position, one of them being: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ (O believers, let not your possessions nor your children divert you from Allah's remembrance - 63:9). This verse advises that the wealth and children should not come in the way of remembering Allah Ta'ālā.

وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ

And the capable from among your bond-men and bond-girls -
24:32.

This sentence is addressed to the masters of the slaves. Here the word *ṣāliḥīn* is used in its literal meaning, that is whoever among them has the means and capacity of marrying; arrangement of his/her marriage is made incumbent upon their owners and masters. Here the word capacity is purported to have the means to fulfill the conjugal rights of wife and ability to make payment of maintenance and prompt dower. If the word *ṣāliḥīn* is taken in its common sense, that is good and pious people, then their exclusiveness from the rest will be on the basis that marriage is basically the means to keep away from the sins, a trait which only the good persons possess.

So, it is made incumbent upon the masters of the slaves and slave girls that those among them who have the ability to get married, their marriage should be arranged. It is purported to mean here that if they show their need and desire to get married, then according to some jurists it is binding on the owners to marry them off. But the majority of jurists have ruled that in such a situation it is incumbent upon the masters not to place any hindrance in their marriage and allow them to get married, because the marriage of slaves and slave girls cannot be performed without the permission of their owners. Thus, this injunction is similar in nature with another verse of the Holy Qur'an *فَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ أَنْ يَنْكَحْنَ أَرْوَاجَهُنَّ* that is ' It is incumbent upon the guardians of women not to stop the

women under their charge from marriage'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has also said on the subject that 'If someone of that kind comes to you with the proposal and you like his morals, then surely marry him off. If you do not do it then great mischief will be created on earth'. (Tirmidhī) The gist of this all is that the owners are instructed here not to make any delay in granting permission of marriage to their subjects, notwithstanding that arrangement of their marriage may not be their responsibility. (Allah knows best)

إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ

If they are poor, Allah will enrich them out of His grace - 24:32.

There is a good news in this verse for such poor Muslims who want to marry for the security of their religious obligation, but they have no means. If they marry with the good intention for the security of their religion and to follow the *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Allah Ta'ālā will grant them sufficient means. There is also an advice in the verse to those who might reject the proposal of marriage from poor people on the basis of their current condition. Wealth is something which does not always stay. The important thing is merit of a person. If they possess merit then their proposal for marriage should not be turned down.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has said that Allah Ta'ālā has persuaded all Muslims for marriage in this verse, for which He has included every one, either free or slave, and has promised to enrich them if they marry. (Ibn Kathīr). And Ibn Abī Ḥātim has reported that Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ while addressing the Muslims said that 'You follow the injunction of Allah Ta'ālā for marriage, and He will fulfill His promise for granting the riches'. Then he recited this verse *إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ* (32) Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ has said 'If you want to be rich, then get married, because Allah Ta'ālā has said *إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ* (Ibn Kathīr)

Warning

It is commented in Tafsīr Mazharī that it should, however, be noted that Allah Ta'ālā's promise to grant riches to the one who will marry is only on the condition that his intention is to safeguard his chastity and to follow the *sunnah*. After that he should have trust and faith in Allah Ta'ālā, for which the confirmation is available in the next verse, which reads: *وَلَيْسَتَعْنِفِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا حَتَّى يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ* (And those who cannot

afford marriage should keep chaste until Allah enriches them out of His grace - 24:33). 'It means that the people who do not have the material wealth for the marriage, and in case they marry, there is the risk of not fulfilling the rights of wife and their becoming sinners, they should wait with patience until Allah grants them riches from His bounty. A method has been stated in the *ḥadīth* for achieving the required patience, which is keeping fasts abundantly. If they will follow the advice, Allah Ta'ālā will grant them so much material resources that they will be able to afford the expenses of marriage.

... Verse 33

وَالَّذِينَ يَبْتَغُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا ۗ وَأَتُوهُمْ مِّنْ مَّالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكُمْ ۗ وَلَا تَكْرِهُوا فَتِيَّتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَاءِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا لِّتَبْتَغُوا عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَمَنْ يُكْرِهِنَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِكْرَاهِهِنَّ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

... And those of your slaves who seek the contract of Kitābah (emancipation by paying money), contract Kitābah with them, if you know of some good in them. And give them out of the wealth of Allah that He has given to you. And do not compel your maids to prostitution - if they wish to observe chastity - in order that you may seek the temporary benefit of the worldly life. And if one compels them, then after their being compelled, Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.

[33]

Commentary

Owners of the slaves and slave girls were advised in the previous verse that they should allow their subjects to marry if they so desire. They should not delay their marriage to curb their natural urge for their own expediency. The essence of this advice is to save the subjects from trouble and that they be treated graciously. In the same context another direction is given in this verse to the owners of slaves and slave girls that if their subjects wish to enter into a deal with them for making payment against their freedom, then it is desirable for the owners to concede to this wish,

which will bring them good reward. This instruction is commonly taken by the jurists, like the author of *Hidāyah*, as a recommendatory instruction in that it is not compulsory for the owners to concede for freedom of their subjects against payment, yet it is preferable to do so. The procedure for entering into a deal of freedom is that the subject asks his owner to set up an amount with mutual consent for the freedom, which he should earn with his labour and pay to the owner. Alternatively, the owner can also initiate the deal and with mutual consent on payment of a certain amount whereby the slaves can earn their freedom. When such a deal is struck with mutual consent between the owner and the slave, then it becomes mandatory under Islamic law, and the owner has no authority to call it off. As soon as the slave makes the payment of the agreed amount, he gets free automatically.

The amount of money so agreed for the freedom of slave is called *badal-al-kitābah* for which Islamic law has fixed no limit. It may be the same as the cost of slave, or more or less. The amount on which the parties mutually agree will be regarded as *badal-al-kitābah*. The essence behind the advice given in this verse is to open up the doors of freedom for the slaves. This is but one such instruction which points out toward the underlying objective of Islamic law of allowing freedom for slaves. In all types of expiations, a common injunction is freedom of slaves. Even otherwise, there is a promise of generous blessings for freeing the slaves. Arrangement of the treaty for freedom in exchange of money is one such route. This is why there is so much persuasion and emphasis on this. However, a condition has also been placed with this treaty *إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا* (33). The treaty will only be in order when you notice signs of goodness in them. Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه and many other scholars have explained that here the word 'Khair' (good) is purported to mean the strength to earn. Hence, it means that someone who has the strength to earn and can make payment should be allowed to enter the deal, otherwise his labour will be wasted on one hand and the owner will also suffer loss. Some other scholars have given another explanation that goodness and betterment mean here that there should be no risk of any harm to the Muslims because of his freedom. For instance, the slave may be an infidel and he might have been helping his infidel brethren. As a matter of fact the word 'Khair' (good) stands here for both the meanings,

that is the slave should have the strength to earn, and there should be no risk of any harm to the Muslims as a result of his freedom. (Maḏharī)

وَأَتُوهُمْ مِنْ مَالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكُمْ

Give them out of the wealth of Allah that He has given to you -
24:33.

This address is directed towards Muslims in general, and to the owners of the slaves in particular. When the freedom of a slave is dependent on a fixed amount to be given to his owner, then it is incumbent upon Muslims to help him collect that money. For this they can pay from the *zakāh* money as well. And the owners are induced to contribute on their own or reduce the amount of the treaty. It was the practice of the Companions to reduce the amount of treaty by one third or one fourth, depending upon their capacity. (Maḏharī)

An important economic issue and the Qur̄ānic verdict on it

The present day world is totally materialistic. Everyone seems to have forgotten about the life hereafter and has completely entangled himself in money making. All types of researches, contemplation and developments, revolve round economic uplift only. Detailed discussions and researches on finer economic points have raised its status many fold, and now it has assumed the position of greatest art. The world thinkers have propounded two well-known theories, which, paradoxically, are in conflict with each other. Because of the inherent conflict between them, the world at large is divided in two groups, who are unfortunately at daggers drawn with each other, resulting in the loss of peace and tranquility of the world.

One theory has given birth to capitalist system, commonly known as capitalism. The other one is the socialist system which is called as socialism or communism. It is an every day common experience, which neither of the two systems can deny, that whatever the man earns or produces in this world through his hard work, its basic source of production is the natural resources, like water, the produce from earth or any other natural produce. The man produces millions of things of his need and use from natural resources through his skill, hard work, ingenuity and composing or decomposing their certain elements. It is but natural to think that there is someone who creates the natural resources. They have not come into being of their own. It also goes without saying

that the One who has created the natural resources is the real owner and master of them all. The natural resources have been passed on to man for a limited period (his life span) for his benefit and use. It does not mean that the man has become the master of natural resources for all times, because his own life is so short. Moreover, man does not, and cannot, exercise total control and authority on all natural resources for all the time. For instance, man can irrigate the fields with water, but he cannot create water if there is a drought. Therefore, it is clear that man is not free to use or control them, and hence should follow the instructions given to him by their Creator and Master. But in the frenzy of materialism everyone has forgotten even the concept of real Master and Creator. The only controversy between them is that whether the one who possesses the factors of production becomes their owner, or all these resources are common to all and everyone has a right to benefit from them.

The first theory is that of the capitalist system which grants freedom of ownership to man in that he can acquire anything by any means, and is also free to use and spend it any way he likes. There is absolutely no restriction on him. The infidels and disbelievers of the olden times professed the same belief, who objected before Sayyidnā Shu'aib رضي الله عنه as to why should he place any restriction on their wealth, which belonged to them and they were its owners. They claimed that the prophet had no right to tell them as to where the spending was permitted and where it was not? The meaning of Qur'ānic verse *أَوْ أَنْ تَفْعَلَ فِي أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشَاءُ* (or that we do with our wealth what we wish - 11:87) is the same. The other theory is that of socialism, which does not allow ownership to anyone of any thing, and professes common ownership of everyone and equal right to all. This is the original theory of communism, but when they felt that this is not practicable, they exempted some objects from the common ownership.

As against these two extremes the Holy Qur'ān has given a system in which the most fundamental concept is that every thing belongs to Allah Ta'ālā, who has given the charge of some things to man temporarily by His grace and bounty. For such things where man has been given the charge and possession, others have been debarred to make any claim on their use, without the permission of the owner. But despite the possession and ownership being given to man, he is not granted freedom to earn or spend them in any manner he likes. Both for earning and spending there

are wise and equitable rules and regulations which are clearly defined, and which clearly identify the permissible and impermissible ways of earning and spending. In addition to this, it has also been made incumbent upon him to pass on certain part of his possession to others, which is made the right of recipients on those things.

Although the verse under reference deals with a different subject yet it contains some important principles relating to this economic issue. So, look at the wordings of the verse rather intently **وَأْتُوهُمْ مِّن مَّالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكُمْ** 'Give them out of the wealth of Allah that He has given to you - 33'. Three things come out of this statement. One, that Allah is the real owner of every thing. Two, that He has given the possession of certain things to man by His grace. Three, that there are certain restrictions on things which He has given to man. Spending of certain things has been prohibited, and spending of other things is made obligatory, while spending of some others is made preferable.

The other injunction given in this verse is for the eradication of an uncouth custom, and for curbing adultery and obscenity **وَلَا تُكْرَهُوا فَتَيَاكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَاءِ** 'Do not compel your maid to prostitution - 33'. During the pre-Islamic period many people used to have this business done by their slave girls. When Islam placed strict punishments on adultery, both on free and slave individuals, then it was necessary to enjoin special strict orders to stop and eradicate this uncivilized custom.

إِنْ أَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا (If they wish to observe chastity - 24:33). It means that when those slave girls express their wish to avoid adultery and remain pure, then pressurizing them on your part is extremely imprudent and shameless. Although the wording of the injunction is conditional, yet there is consensus of Ummah that the intention here is not to press the slave girls for adultery, irrespective of the situation whether they express their wish to avoid it or not. In other words, it is not meant here that in case they do not wish to avoid adultery, then it is permitted to force them into it. What is intended here is to tell that in the pre-Islamic days obscenity was common, so the slave girls did not mind adultery. Although after the advent of Islam they repented and wished not to be involved in this practice, yet their owners still forced them for the crime, which they resented. On this situation this injunction was revealed, in which their owners are warned and reproached that while they (the slave girls) want

to avoid a shameful act, you are trying to force it on them.

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِكْرَاهِهِمْ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Then after their being compelled, Allah is Most-Forgiving,
Very-Merciful - 33.

The gist of this sentence is that it is prohibited to force the slave girls to adultery. If someone does that and the slave girl gets involved in adultery because of the compulsion exercised by her owner, then Allah Ta'ālā will pardon her sin and that sin will be passed on to the one who had forced her. (Maḏharī).

Verses 34 - 40

وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ آيَاتٍ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَثَلًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلِكُمْ
وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ
كَمِشْكُوتٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ ۗ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ ۗ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا
كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِن شَجَرَةٍ مُّبْرَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَّا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ ۗ
يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ ۗ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ ۗ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ
لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٥﴾ فِي بُيُوتٍ أُذِنَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ تَرْفَعَ وَيُذَكِّرَ فِيهَا أَسْمُهُ ۗ يُسَبِّحُ
لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ ﴿٣٦﴾ رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَن
ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ ۗ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ
الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ ﴿٣٧﴾ لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَيَزِيدَهُم
مِّن فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ ۖ بِقِيَعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمَانُ مَاءً ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا
جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا وَوَجَدَ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ ۗ فَوَقَّعَهُ حِسَابَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ
الْحِسَابِ ﴿٣٩﴾ أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لُّجِّيٍّ يَّغْشَاهُ مَوْجٌ مِّن فَوْقِهِ

مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ۗ طُظِّلِمْتُ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ ۗ إِذَا أَخْرَجَ
يَدَهُ، لَمْ يَكْذِبْ يَدَهَا ۗ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ نُورٍ

﴿٤٠﴾

And indeed We have sent down to you enlightening verses and an exemplary description of those who passed away before you and a good counsel for the God-fearing. [34]

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is that of a niche in which there is a lamp; the lamp is in a glass - the glass looks like a brilliant star - it is lit by (the oil of) a blessed tree, the olive, which is neither eastern, nor western. Its oil is about to emit light even if fire has not touched it - (it is) light upon light. Allah guides to His light whomsoever He wills. And Allah describes examples for the people, and Allah knows everything well. [35]

(The guided people worship Allah) in the houses that Allah has permitted to be raised and where His name is recounted and His purity is pronounced, in the morning and in the evening, [36] by men whom no trade or sale makes neglectful of the remembrance of Allah, nor from establishing Ṣalāh and paying Zakāh; they are fearful of a day in which the hearts and the eyes will be overturned. [37] The fate (of such people) is that Allah will reward them for the best deeds they did and will give them more out of His grace. And Allah gives whom He wills without counting. [38]

As for those who disbelieve, their deeds are like a mirage in a desert plane which a thirsty person deems to be water, until when he comes to it, he finds it nothing, and finds (the decree of) Allah with him, so He pays him his account in full. And Allah is swift at reckoning. [39] Or (their deeds) are like layers of darkness in a vast deep sea overwhelmed by a wave, above which there is another wave, above which there are clouds - layers of darkness, one above the other. When one puts forth his hand, he can hardly see it. And

the one to whom Allah does not give light can have no light at all. [40]

Commentary

The scholars call this verse as the 'Verse of Radiance', because it describes in great detail the radiance of faith and the darkness of disbelief.

The definition of Nūr (Light)

Imām Ghazzālī رحمه الله تعالى has given the definition of Nūr (light) as الظاهر بنفسه والمظهر لغيره that is something which is bright and manifest on its own, and makes other things bright and evident. Tafsir Maḥzarī has explained that Nūr is in fact that condition which is initially perceived by man's sense of sight, and then through that perception he comprehends all those things which can be seen by eye, such as in the case of rays of sun and the moon, which on falling on a solid mass brightens it up, and then through the reflection from solid mass brightens other things. Hence, it is evident that the word Nūr cannot be used for Allah Ta'ālā in its literal or common meaning, because He is free from body and materiality. Therefore, there is consensus among the scholars that the use of word Nūr for Allah Ta'ālā in the verse under reference is purported for *Munawwir*, meaning the one who brightens, or may be the master of brightening is referred here as Nūr, in the same way as the possessor of grace is sometimes called Grace, or the possessor of justice is called the Justice. So, meaning of the verse is that Allah bestows Nūr to earth and the heaven, and to everything living there, and the Nūr is purported to be the Nūr of righteousness. Ibn Kathīr has reported the explanation put forward by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that : الله هادي اهل السموات والارض (that is, Allah is the Guide of all living in the heavens and the earth).

Nūr of the believer

مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكُوتٍ (The example of His light is that of a niche in which there is a lamp - 24:35). This is a nice example of Allah Ta'ālā's Nūr of guidance, which penetrates into the heart of the believer. Ibn Jarīr has reported its explanation put forward by Sayyidnā Ubayy b. Ka'b ؓ.

هو المؤمن الذي جعل الله الايمان والقران في صدره، فضرب الله مثله فقال: الله نور السموات والارض، فبدأ بنور نفسه ثم ذكر نور المؤمن، فقال: مثل نور من امن به، فكان ابي بن كعب يقرأها مثل نور من امن به. (ابن كثير)

It means that this is the example of the believer in whose heart Allah Ta'ālā has laid down the Nūr of faith and of the Qur'an. In this verse Allah Ta'ālā has first mentioned His own Nūr **اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ**, and then the Nūr of the believer's heart and the following example is for the one who believes in Him. Sayyidnā Ubayy Ibn Ka'b رضي الله عنه used to recite this verse as **مثل نور من آمن به** instead of **مثل نوره** (to explain this). Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه has also reported the same meaning and recitation of the verse from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه. Ibn Kathīr has narrated all these explanations and then remarked that there are two view points among the jurists about the pronoun of **مِثْلُ نُورِهِ** (the example of *his* light). One, that this pronoun has reference toward Allah Ta'ālā, and thus the meaning of the verse is 'Allah's Nūr placed in the heart of believers naturally', and the example of that is **كَمِشْكُورَةٍ** (like a niche). This explanation is put forward by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه. The other explanation is that the personal pronoun refers to the believers, who are presumed to have been referred to by the context. So, the example given in the verse can be explained as follows: The chest of a believer is like a niche, while the heart of the believer placed in the chest is like a lamp (placed in the niche). Then the transparent oil of olive is the example of the natural *nūr* (light) of guidance which is deposited in the nature of a believer and which has the inherent capability to accept the truth (which is indicated in the verse by the words 'Its oil is about to emit light even if fire has not touched it). Then as the olive oil produces brightness when caused to burn with the flame of fire, the same way natural Nūr of guidance which is placed in the heart of the believer, when joins the message and knowledge of Allah Ta'ālā, then it gets brightened and also brightens the world. When the companions and their pupils confined this example to the heart of a believer alone, they have most probably done so because it is only the believer who draws benefit from this Nūr. Otherwise the natural Nūr of guidance which is placed in the hearts of humans at the time of their creation, is not confined to believers, but is part of the nature and instinct of every human being. It is for this reason that one can see all around the world that there are people in every nook and corner, in all societies and religions, who believe in the existence of God and His Omnipotence, and do turn towards Him. No matter one may make all types of errors in the perception and understanding of God, yet every individual does believe by nature in His existence, with the exception of a few atheists, who have

lost their natural instinct.

A Ṣaḥīḥ *ḥadīth* endorses this view, which says, *كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ* that is 'Every child is born with natural instinct'. Later, his parents put him on the wrong path. This natural instinct is the guidance of faith. The guidance of faith and its Nūr is bestowed to every individual at the time of his birth, and because of this Nūr of guidance, one possesses the ability to accept the truth. When they come to know about the revelations of Allah through His messengers and their deputies, they readily accept them, except those unfortunate people who have erased the Divine Nūr from their heart with their wrong doings. Perhaps this is the reason that in the beginning of the verse the bestowal of Nūr is said to be common to all, which includes every one on the earth and the heavens, without any difference between believers or disbelievers, but towards the end of the verse it is said *يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ*, that is 'Allah Ta'ālā guides to His light whomsoever He wills - 35'. Here the will of Allah is not pointing toward that Divine Nūr which is bestowed to all humans, but toward the Qur'ānic Nūr, which is not availed by every one, except those fortunate ones, to whom Divine help is granted. Otherwise even one's endeavor goes waste without Divine help, and sometimes becomes detrimental :

اذ لم يكن عون من الله للفتى فأول ما يجنى عليه اجتهاده

'If there is no help to man from Allah, then his striving puts him to trouble instead'.

The Nūr of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

Imām Baghawī رحمه الله تعالى has narrated that Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ once enquired from Ka'b al-Aḥbār as to how would he explain this verse *مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ*. Ka'b al-Aḥbār, who was a great Muslim scholar of Torah and Injīl, said that this example was meant for the heart of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Mishkāṭ (the niche) stands for his chest, Zujājah (glass) for his heart and Miṣbāḥ (lamp) for his prophethood. What was unique about this Nūr of prophethood was that even before the declaration of prophethood it had the illumination of light for the people. When the revelation from Allah was coupled with the Nūr of prophethood, then it turns into such radiance that the whole world is brightened.

Before the declaration of prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and even before his birth, some strange and amazing events had taken place

in the world, which were in fact advance notice of the incoming prophet, and are called *Irḥaṣāt* in the vocabulary of the scholars of *ḥadīth*. The difference between this word and miracle is that the latter is used for such unusual events which are bestowed by Allah Ta'ālā to his messengers for the endorsement of their prophethood, while *Irḥaṣāt* are those unusual events which happen before the declaration of prophethood. There are a number of unusual incidents which are recorded by several authentic narrations, and have been compiled by Shaikh Jalaluddīn Sayuṭī رحمه الله تعالى in his book (Khaṣāiṣ Kūbrā - خصائص كبرى) - and by Abū Nu'aim in his *Dalāil-un-Nubuwwah* - دلائل النبوة. Other scholars have also collected many such incidents in their books. Tafsīr Maḥzarī has reproduced a good number of these events.

Benefits of olive oil

شَجَرَةٌ مُبْرَكَةٌ زَيْتُونَةٌ (A blessed tree, the olive - 35.). This is an endorsement that olive and its tree is blessed by Allah and is beneficial and useful. Scholars have commented that Allah Ta'ālā has instilled many a benefits in it. Olive oil is used in the burning of lamps. Its light is the brightest and clearest as against any other oil. It is eaten as a fruit and its oil is used in cooking. The interesting part is that there is no need of any machine for the extraction of its oil. When the fruit is ripe, the oil comes out automatically. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has asked to eat and massage the body with olive oil. (Baghawī - Maḥzarī)

فِي بُيُوتِ الَّذِينَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ، لَا يَسْبَحُ لَهُ، فِيهَا بِالْعُدُودِ وَالْأَصَالِ

(The guided people worship Allah) in the houses that Allah has permitted to be raised and where His name recounted and His purity is pronounced, in the morning and in the evening, - 36.

In the previous verse Allah Ta'ālā had given a unique example of placing His Nūr of guidance in the heart of believers. Toward the end of the verse it was clarified that only those draw benefit from this Nūr, whom Allah loves and grants Divine help. In the above verse those places and buildings are referred to where such believers spend most of their time, especially the five times of prayers. These are the buildings for which Allah Ta'ālā has instructed to keep them high in esteem, and where His name be remembered. The splendor of such buildings is that Allah's name is remembered there in the morning and evening. That is He is worshipped there all the time by the people, who's attributes will

follow soon.

The above explanation is based on the assumption that *فِي بُيُوتٍ* (in the houses) has an association with the sentence *يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ* (Allah guides to this light whomsoever He wills). (Ibn Kathīr etc.) Some others are of the opinion that it has a link with the word *يُسَبِّحُ* (His purity is pronounced), which is used later in the verse. But the first version appears more appropriate in the context of the subject. In that case the meaning of the verse would be that the Nūr of guidance referred to in the example of the previous verse can be found in the buildings and houses where He is remembered all the time. There is consensus among commentators that here the word 'houses' is purported for mosques.

Mosques are houses of Allah and their respect is obligatory

Qurṭubī has preferred the view that the word 'raised' used in the verse means to respect the mosques and has quoted the following *ḥadīth* of Sayyidnā 'Anas رضي الله عنه in support of his contention.

من أحب الله عز وجل فليحبنى، ومن احبني فليحب اصحابي، ومن احب اصحابي فليحب القرآن، ومن احب القرآن فليحب المساجد، فانها افنية الله اذن الله في رفعها وبارك فيها ميمونة ميمون اهلها محفوظة محفوظ اهلها هم في صلاتهم والله عز وجل في حوائجهم هم في المساجد والله من ورائهم. (قرطبي)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said "Whoever wishes to love Allah should love me, and whoever wishes to love me should love my companions, and whoever wishes to love my companions should love the Qur'ān, and whoever wishes to love Qur'ān should love the mosques, because they are Allah's houses. Allah has enjoined to 'raise' them, and has made them blessed. They are blessed and those who live there are also blessed. They are in the protection of Allah, and those who live there are also in the protection of Allah. Those who are busy there in their prayers, Allah get their works done and fulfill their needs. While they are in the mosques Allah protects their household during their absence". (Qurṭubī)

Meaning of raising of mosques

إِذَنْ تَرْفَعُ (That Allah has permitted to be raised - 36). The word *إِذَنْ* ('*adhina*) is derived from *إِذْنٌ* ('*idhn*), which means to allow or give permission, and the word *تَرْفَعُ* (*turfa'a*) is derived from *رَفَعَ* (*raf'*), which means to raise, uplift or exalt. So, the meaning of this verse is that Allah

has allowed the raising of the mosques. Here 'allowed' means 'enjoined', and 'raising' means 'to venerate'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has explained that Allah Ta'ālā has prohibited Muslims from talking or doing anything absurd in the mosques. (Ibn Kathīr).

'Ikrimah and Mujāhid رَحِمَهُمُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى, the two Imāms of Tafsīr, are of the opinion that raising of the mosques carries here the sense of building the mosques in the same way as Qur'ān says about the building of Ka'bah وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ (And when Ibrahim was raising up the foundations of the House - 2:127). Here the raising of foundation is purported for building (construction) of foundation. Ḥasan Baṣrī رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى has given a different view that the word 'raised' is used here for respect and veneration of mosques, and to keep them clean from filthy and impure things, as narrated in a *ḥadīth* that, when an impure (*najis*) thing is brought in the mosque, it contracts itself in a similar manner as the human skin contracts from the fire. Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd Khudrī ؓ has reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that whoever takes out dirty, impure and vexatious things from the mosque, Allah Ta'ālā will make a house for him in paradise. (Ibn Mājah). Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا has narrated that 'the Holy Prophet ﷺ instructed us to make mosques (special places for offering prayers) in our houses (as well), and keep them clean and pure'. (Qurṭubī).

As a matter of fact, the word تَرْفَعُ (to be raised) encompasses both the meanings of building and veneration of the mosques. It also signifies to keep them clean, which means to make them free of all types of filth and dirt. It is also part of cleanliness to keep them free of any foul smell. It is for this reason that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has prohibited to go in the mosques without cleaning the mouth after eating onions or garlic, which is reported in many books of *ḥadīth*. Cigarettes, cigars and all other preparations of tobacco also fall under the same instruction. Burning any oil which emits foul odor is also not permitted in the mosque.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim has recorded a narration from Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ that he said 'I had seen that in case the Holy Prophet ﷺ noticed foul smell from someone's mouth, he used to turn him out from the mosque and send to Baqī', and would say that if someone has to eat onion and garlic, he should cook it properly, so that its odor is eliminated'. Scholars have drawn the conclusion from this *ḥadīth* that if someone is suffering

from such a disease that people feel discomfort standing next to him in prayers, then he too can be removed from the mosque. In such an eventuality he should himself restrain from going to mosque and offer his prayers at home until such time that he is recovered from that disease.

Exaltation of Mosques

The majority of companions and *tābi'īn* (the generation next to them) are of the opinion that exaltation of mosques means that mosques be built and be kept free of every thing evil. Some people have also included in it the outward appearance and grandeur of the buildings of the mosques, and have argued that Sayyidnā 'Uthmān Ghani رضي الله عنه had used hard wood in the building of the Prophet's mosque to give it an impressive look. Later, Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn 'Abdul Azīz رحمه الله تعالى had the Prophet's mosque improved further both materially and by decoration. This was done during the lifetime of companions and their pupils, and no one objected to this. Later on, many a kings spent very lavishly on building of mosques. Walīd Ibn 'Abdul Mālīk had spent during his caliphate three times the annual income from the entire Syria on the construction and decoration of the Grand Mosque of Damascus, which is still there even now. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالى has ruled that if there is no element of ostentation and egotism, and the intent is to please Allah and veneration of His house, then there is no objection in the construction and decoration of majestic and grandiose mosques, rather one should expect a good reward for that act.

Some merits of Mosques

Abū Dāwūd has reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū 'Umamah رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said that whoever gets out of his house after ablution with the intent of offering obligatory prayer in the mosque, his reward is like the one who has got off from his house wearing *iḥrām* for performing Ḥajj, and whoever gets out of his house after ablution for the prayer of *Ishrāq* in the mosque, his reward is like the one of performing 'Umrah. A prayer after another prayer, provided one does not talk or do any work in between, is written in *'illiyyīn*. Further, it is reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Buraidah رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that those who go to mosques in darkness, give them the good tiding of complete Nūr (light) on the Dooms Day. (Muslim)

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim has reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū

Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said that a man's offering of prayer in congregation is more than twenty times better than offering in the house or in the shop. It is because if someone sets out for the mosque after ablution with the intention of offering prayers and for no other purpose, then on every single step his status will improve by one degree and one sin will be forgiven until he reaches the mosque. Then as long as he will sit in the mosque waiting for the congregation to start, he will keep getting the reward of the prayers, and the angels will keep praying for him 'Ya Allah, Bestow Your grace on him, and forgive him, until he harms someone or his ablution is wasted'. Sayyidnā Ḥakam Ibn 'Umair رضي الله عنه has narrated that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم once said 'Live in this world like a guest and make mosques your abode, and make your hearts tender (be kind hearted) and ponder (over Allah's bounties) frequently, and weep (out of His fear) very often. Let not the mundane desires overcome you to make you change from this position, and you get involved in building houses unnecessarily, where you do not ever live, and get anxious to accumulate wealth more than your need, and desire for such things for the future which you cannot get'. Sayyidnā Abū Dardah رضي الله عنه advised his son "Mosque should be your abode, because I have heard from the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that 'Mosques are the abodes of Muttaqui (the God fearing) people. Whoever makes the mosque his abode (through remembering Allah abundantly) Allah Ta'ālā becomes guarantor for his comfort and tranquility, and to make him pass through the bridge of Širāt with ease". Abū Šādiq 'Azdī wrote to Shu'aib b. Ḥabḥāb in a letter 'Get hold of mosques as a necessity, because I have learnt a tradition saying that mosques were the meeting places of messengers'.

In a *ḥadīth* it is reported that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said 'Towards the end there will be people who will sit in the mosques in circles, and will discuss worldly affairs and their love for mundane benefits. You do not sit with those people who come to the mosques for this, because Allah does not need such people to come to the mosques. 'Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Musayyab رضي الله عنه said that the one who sits in the mosque is like he sits in the company of his Lord, so it is incumbent upon him not to say anything but good words (Qurṭubī).

Fifteen etiquettes of the mosques

Scholars have named fifteen items as etiquettes of the mosques. They

are:

On entering the mosque one should greet the people already sitting there, with *salām* and if there is no one then say *السلام علينا وعلى عباد الله* (But this is required when those present in the mosque are not offering their extra prayer or reciting Qur'ān. If they are busy in any of these acts, then he should not greet them.)

After getting in the mosque one should offer two Rak'ats as *tahiyyah tul-Masjid*. (This is required at a time when offering prayers is not prohibited, that is the time of sun rise, sun set or when sun is directly overhead)

Should not carry out any transactions of sale or purchase in the mosque.

Should not carry any weapons in the mosque.

Should not make an announcement for the search of any of his lost items.

Should not raise his voice in the mosque.

Should not discuss worldly affairs in the mosque.

Should not quarrel with any one in the mosque.

Should not try to force his way into a row where there is no room.

Should not cross over in front of someone offering prayer.

Should avoid spitting or blowing of nose in the mosque.

Should not crackle fingers in the mosque.

Should not play with any part of the body.

Should keep clean of any filth, and should not take a baby or an insane along in the mosque.

Should keep busy in remembrance of Allah abundantly.

After listing these fifteen etiquettes Qurtūbī has remarked that whoever has fulfilled these requirements has done justice with the mosque, and it has become a place of charm and security for him.

I have written a booklet on etiquettes and formalities of mosques

under the title "آداب المساجد" (in Urdu). Anyone interested in the subject can consult it.

Houses meant exclusively for remembrance of Allah and for learning Qur'an or religious education also have the status of mosques

Abū Ḥayān has explained in Tafsīr Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ that the word *فِي بُيُوتٍ* "in the houses" used in Qur'ān has a general connotation. It includes not only the mosques but also those houses which are exclusive for teaching Qur'ān and related religious teachings, such as Madāris (religious schools) or Maktabs. They also fall under the same category, and their respect and veneration is also obligatory.

Special wisdom for using the word 'allowed' in the verse

Scholars are all unanimous that the word *أَذِنَ* 'adhina (allowed) is used here for command or order. But then the question is, what is the reason for using this word (instead of 'ordered' or 'enjoined')? Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī has described a subtle consideration in that the underlying objective is to train and induce the believers and the righteous to be ever ready to perform anything which is meant for pleasing Allah Ta'ālā, so much so that they need not be ordered to perform something for the pleasure of Allah, rather they should be waiting for the permission to perform it, and the moment they receive the go-ahead signal, they should hurry to carry it out.

يَذْكُرُ فِيهَا اسْمَهُ

Where His name is recounted - 36.

Here, the expression is 'recounting the name of Allah' encompasses all types of His remembrance, which include extra prayers, recitation of Qur'ān, learning of Islamic teachings, sermons, lectures on Shari'ah, etc.

رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ

By men whom no trade or sale makes neglectful of the remembrance of Allah - 37.

This verse describes special attributes of those believers who are the distinguished recipients of the Nūr of guidance and remain in the mosques. By the use of word *Rijāl* رِجَال (men) there is a hint that only men's presence is required in the mosques. For women it is better that

they offer their prayers at homes.

Musnad of Aḥmad and Baihaqī have related a *ḥadīth* of Sayyidah Umm Salmah رضى الله عنها that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said خير مساجد النساء . 'The best mosques for women are the secluded corners of their homes'.

This verse describes that the involvement in trade and sales does not stop the righteous believers from the remembrance of Allah. Since 'sale' is included in the word 'trade', some commentators have preferred to assume trade for purchase only for the sake of comparison, while others have taken the trade in its common sense, that is transactions of sale and purchase, and have explained the wisdom of using the word 'sale' separately for the reason that trade transactions have a wide scope where profits and benefits are received after a long time. On the other hand by selling something one receives the money with profit immediately in cash. Hence, it is mentioned separately to stress that they do not bring into consideration even the most lucrative mundane benefit as against the prayers and remembrance of Allah Ta'ālā.

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنه has said that this verse was revealed in connection with the market people, and his son, Sayyidnā Sālim, has related that one day his father was passing through the market and the time for prayers had come. Then he noticed that people started closing their shops and set out to go towards the mosque. On that Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنه said that it is for these persons that the Qur'an has said رَجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ.

There were two companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ during his time, one was a general trader and the other a blacksmith who used to produce swords and sell them. It was the habit of the trader that when he would hear the call of the prayer while weighing something, he would leave every thing there and get up to go to the mosque for prayers. The other one who was the blacksmith, when he was busy hammering the hot iron and would hear the call of the prayer, he would stop his hand wherever it was and throw the hammer out of his hand to rush to the mosque for prayers, without even bothering to strike the raised hammer. This verse was revealed in their praise. (Qurtubī)

Most of the companions were traders

This verse also points out that most of the companions were either traders or manufacturers, that is in the professions involved with the market, because the quality mentioned in the verse can be attributed only to those who are in the profession of trade and sales and do not let their profession interfere in the remembrance of Allah Ta'ālā. Otherwise it is irrelevant. (Rūḥ)

يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ

They are fearful of a day in which the hearts and the eyes will be overturned - 37.

The last quality of those believers who are mentioned in the above verse is that despite being busy in Allah's obedience, remembrance and worshipping all the time, they do not become careless or free themselves from Allah's fear. Instead the fear of reckoning on the Day of Judgment is constantly in their mind, which is the fruit of Nūr of guidance granted to them by Allah Ta'ālā, mentioned in the earlier verse يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ . Toward the end of the verse their reward is described that they shall be graced with the best reward for their actions by Allah Ta'ālā, and then the verse says: وَيَزِيدُهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ (and will give them more out of His grace - 38). It means that their reward will not end with the recompense against the good actions, but some extra reward will also be given on His own اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (and Allah gives whom He wills without counting - 38), that is neither Allah is bound by any rule nor does His treasure gets depleted. He grants unlimited sustenance to whomever He likes.

So far the righteous believers were described whose chests are the niches for the Nūr of guidance and who readily accept the Nūr of guidance. In verses 39 and 40 those disbelievers are being described who were given in their nature the Nūr of guidance by Allah Ta'ālā, but when Allah's revelation reached them to lit them up, they turned away to reject it and lost the Nūr to stay in the darkness. Since the disbelievers and atheists are of two types, therefore, two examples are related here. One category is that of those disbelievers who believe in the Dooms Day and Hereafter, and have faith that some of their good acts, according to their own reckoning, will be rewarded in the Hereafter. The second category is that of atheists, who do not believe in the Hereafter and the Dooms Day.

The example of the deeds of the first category is that of a mirage, which is nothing but illusion of sight. In a level plain the shining sand creates the illusion of water from a distance, and as a thirsty person approaches near it, the illusion (mirage) disappears, leaving the thirsty completely exhausted, who ultimately dies of thirst. Similarly, a disbeliever's deeds are like a mirage which he considers of value and benefit, but in actual fact they are no better than an illusion, like mirage, and as a thirsty person discovers the illusion when it is too late, in the same way the disbelievers will find out their blunder in the Hereafter, when it will be of no avail.

The second category of deeds is that of atheists or infidels, for which the example of a deep ocean is given, which is completely dark. In the first place it is dark because of its depth, then it is covered by a big wave which is also enshrouded by another wave, and over that there is a mass of dark cloud. In short there is darkness over darkness, so much so that if someone takes out his hand, he cannot have even a glimpse of it. The inference to be drawn from this example is that those infidels who deny the coming of the Dooms Day, the Reckoning and the Hereafter are devoid of even the illusive Nūr, which the first category of disbelievers had. Although they too did not possess the useful Nūr of guidance, but at least they were under the illusion that they had done some good deeds which will help them in the Hereafter, but the latter category did not deem it necessary to work for the Hereafter, since they had no belief in it. Hence, they will have nothing but darkness and complete darkness with them on the Dooms Day.

After describing the two examples the next sentence says: وَمَنْ لَمْ يَجْعَلْ (And the one to whom Allah does not give light can have no light at all - 40).

This sentence about the disbelievers is like the one that appeared earlier for the believers: يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ (Allah guides to His light whomsoever He wills - 35). It describes the deprivation of disbelievers from the Nūr of guidance, which they lost by denying the injunctions of Allah, and when they have lost Allah's Nūr of guidance how can they get any other Nūr.

This verse also explains that no one can become a perspicacious

scholar merely by having resource of insight and knowledge, rather it is bestowed by the grace of Allah only. It is for this reason that those who are regarded naïve in mundane matters prove themselves very knowledgeable and scholarly in the cognizance of the Hereafter. And, vice versa, many who are regarded very intelligent and knowledgeable in worldly matters, prove themselves completely ignorant and foolish in the perception and comprehension of the Hereafter. (Maḡharī)

Verses 41 - 45

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَسْبِغُ لَهٗ، مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالطَّيْرِ صَفَّتِ ط
 كُلُّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهٗ، وَتَسْبِيحَهٗ، وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ، بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٤١﴾
 وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٤٢﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ
 اللَّهُ يُزْجِي سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ، ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ رُكَامًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ
 يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهٖ ۚ وَيُنزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنْ، بَرَدٍ
 فَيُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُ، عَنِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرْقِهٖ
 يَذْهَبُ بِالْأَبْصَارِ ﴿٤٣﴾ يُقَلِّبُ اللَّهُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً
 لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَابَّةٍ مِّن مَّاءٍ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّن
 يَمْشِي عَلَىٰ بَطْنِهٖ ۗ وَ مِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَىٰ رِجْلَيْنِ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن
 يَمْشِي عَلَىٰ أَرْبَعٍ ۗ يَخْلُقُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
 قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤٥﴾

Did you not realize that purity of Allah is proclaimed by all those in the heavens and the earth, and by the birds with their wings spread out? Everyone knows one's own (way of) praying (to Allah) and one's own (way of) proclaiming Allah's purity. And Allah knows well what they do. [41] And to Allah belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and towards Allah is the final return. [42]

Do you not realize that Allah drives the clouds, then

joins them together, then turns them into a heap? Then you see the rain coming out from their midst. And He sends down from the sky mountains (of clouds) having hail in them, then He afflicts with it whomsoever He wills and turns it away from whomsoever He wills. The flash of its lightning seems to snatch away the eyes. [43] Allah alternates the night and the day. Surely, in that there is a lesson for those who have eyes to see. [44]

And Allah has created every moving creature from water. So, some of them move on their bellies; and some of them move on two legs and some of them move on four. Allah creates what He wills. Surely, Allah is powerful over everything. [45]

Commentary

كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُ، وَتَسْبِيحَهُ (Everyone knows one's own (way of) praying - 41). In the beginning of the verse it is said that every creature on earth and heavens and in between them is busy in the glorification and sanctification of Allah Ta'ālā. The meaning of Tasbīḥ is explained by Sufyān رحمه الله تعالى that Allah Ta'ālā has created every thing in this universe like earth, heavens, sun, moon, stars, water, fire, air or sand with purpose, and they are all performing all the time the task they are assigned. They cannot refuse to perform their assigned job. This obedience and submission to carry out the assigned job is referred here as Tasbīḥ. Hence, their Tasbīḥ is by action and not by words. By their actions they are confirming that they are performing this worship because they believe Allah Ta'ālā to be Pure and Almighty.

Zamakhsharī and some other commentators have, on the other hand, elaborated that it is not improbable that Allah Ta'ālā has placed so much sense and understanding in everything that they do recognize their Creator and Master. And it is also not improbable that He has taught them some sort of speech, and some special Tasbīḥ and worship in which they keep themselves busy. There is an allusion towards this point in the last sentence كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُ (Every one knows one's own {way of} praying and proclaiming Allah's purity - 41). It indicates that all creatures are busy in Tasbīḥ and worship of Allah Ta'ālā, but the manner of worship of each creature is different. Angels worship in a different manner, humans worship differently, trees and vegetation also worship differently, and

the rocks and minerals yet in another manner. Another verse of the Holy Qur'an also confirms this view when it says *أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ، ثُمَّ هَدَى* (He who gave everything its shape, then guidance - 20:50) that is 'Allah Ta'ālā created everything and then given guidance to them'. The guidance is that everything is obeying Allah and performing its assigned duty diligently. Apart from this, everything has been guided how to fulfill the need of its existence with such perfection that even the best of minds get boggled. How creative and complicated nests and holes they make for their living, and how they strive and work hard to find and collect their food is in itself a great wonder.

مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيهَا

From the sky mountains (of clouds) having hail in them - 43.

Here the word *سَمَاء* is purported for clouds, and *Jibāl* (mountains) for big masses of clouds, while hails are called *Barad*.

Verses 46 - 54

لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ مُبِينَاتٍ ۖ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَيَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالرَّسُولِ وَأَطَعْنَا ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّى فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مِّنْ أَعْيُنٍ مُّكَذِّبَاتٍ يَصُدَّوْنَ عَنِ الْوَجْهِ يُسِرُّونَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَإِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَبِينُ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ يَأْتُوا إِلَيْهِ مُذْعِنِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ أَفَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ أَمْ ارْتَابُوا أَمْ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَحِيفَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَرَسُولَهُ ۗ بَلْ أَوْلَيْتَهُمْ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَخْشِ اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقْهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَعِنَ أَمْرَتَهُمْ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ قُلُوبَهُمْ لَاقِنًا تَقْسِمُوا طَاعَةً مَّعْرُوفَةً ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ قُلْ

أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ ۚ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْهِ مَا حُمِّلَ
وَعَلَيْكُمْ مَا حُمِّلْتُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوهُ تَهْتَدُوا ۗ وَمَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا
الْبَلْغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٥٤﴾

We have surely sent down enlightening verses. And Allah guides whom He wills to the straight path. [46]

And they say, 'We have believed in Allah and in the messenger and have taken to obedience', then a group from them goes back after all this. And those are no believers. [47] And when they are summoned to Allah and His messenger that he (the messenger) may judge between them, in no time a group of them turns averse. [48] And if the right is theirs, they would come to him as (if they are) submissive ones. [49] Is there a malady in their hearts or do they have doubt or do they fear that Allah and His messenger will do injustice to them? Rather they themselves are the unjust. [50] The only reply of the (true) believers, when they are summoned to Allah and His messenger that he (the messenger) may judge between them, is that they say, 'We listen and obey.' And such people are the successful. [51] And whoever obeys Allah and His messenger and has awe of Him and observes Taqwā of Him, then such people are the victorious. [52]

And they (the hypocrites) swear by Allah on eloquent oaths that if you (O prophet) order them, they will certainly leave (their homes for Jihād). Say, 'do not swear, (the reality of your) obedience is known. Indeed Allah is fully aware of what you do.' [53]

Say, 'Obey Allah and obey the messenger. But if you turn away, then on him (the messenger) lies (the responsibility of) what he is burdened with and on you lies (the responsibility of) what you are burdened with. And if you obey him, you will get the right path. And the messenger is responsible for nothing more than to convey the message clearly.' [54]

Commentary

These verses were revealed on a special occasion. Ṭabari and others

have related the incident saying that there was a hypocrite by the name Bishr, who had some dispute and enmity with a Jew over a piece of land. The Jew suggested to him to take their dispute before the Holy Prophet ﷺ for the judgement, but Bishr, the hypocrite knew well that he was on the wrong and if the dispute was taken to the Holy Prophet ﷺ he will definitely decide the case on merit, and he will lose the case. So, he did not agree with the suggestion and instead asked the Jew to take it to Ka'b Ibn Ashraf, another Jew. On this point these verses were revealed. In verse *أَفَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ* (Is there any malady in their hearts - 50) the disease of firm infidelity or the doubt on prophethood have been negated to point out that this doubt and infidelity were not the real cause of evasion to take the dispute in the court of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Although the infidelity and doubt on prophethood among the hypocrites is obvious and proven, but the underlying cause was that he (Bishr) knew well that if the case was placed before the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he would definitely lose it, because he would decide the case on merit.

Four conditions for success and victory

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ، وَيَخْشَ اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ

And whoever obeys Allah and His messenger and has awe of Him and observes Taqwā of Him, then such people are the victorious. [52]

In this verse it is declared that those who bind themselves to follow these four things are the ones who are successful and victorious in this world and the Hereafter.

An astonishing incident

An incident of Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ is reported in Tafsīr Qurtubī, which explains the difference between these four things and puts them in right perspective. It so happened that one day Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ was standing in the Prophet's ﷺ mosque, when suddenly a Roman villager appeared and stood beside him, and said *انا اشهد ان لا اله الا الله واشهد ان محمدا رسول الله*. Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ inquired 'What is the matter?' He replied 'I have accepted Islam for Allah's sake'. Then Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ asked if there was any reason for that, to which he replied in the affirmative, and elaborated that he had read Torah, Injīl, Zabūr and a number of other books brought by past messengers. But lately he had heard a verse of the Holy Qur'ān recited by a Muslim prisoner and realized that in that small

verse all the older books have been condensed. So, he was convinced that it was Allah's revelation. Then Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه enquired from him about the verse he was referring to, and he recited this very verse. That Roman villager also gave a very astonishing commentary of the verse, which goes like this:

مَنْ يُطِيعَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ، وَيَخْشَى اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقَهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ

And whoever obeys Allah and His messenger and has awe of Him and observes Taqwā of Him, then such people are the victorious. [52]

This مَنْ يُطِيعَ اللَّهَ relates to the obligations toward Allah, and وَرَسُولَهُ refers to Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم traditions, and وَيَخْشَى اللَّهَ alludes toward past life and وَيَتَّقَهُ is purported for the remaining life. When someone acts upon these four things he is given the good tiding of فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ (that such people are the victorious). And Fa'iz is that person who gets deliverance from Jahannam and earns a place in the Paradise. After hearing this explanation Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه said the endorsement of this is available in the utterance of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, who had said جوامع الكلم that is 'Allah has graced me with such comprehensive expressions in which words are few but the meanings are vast'. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 55 - 57

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۖ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ
الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا ۗ يَعْبُدُونَنِي
لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا ۗ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾
وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاطِيعُوا الرُّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ
وَمَا أُولَئِكَ إِلَّا فِي سَعِيرٍ مُنْتَهِي ۗ ﴿٥٧﴾

Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good deeds that He will certainly make them (His)

vicegerents in the land, like He made those before them, and will certainly establish for them their religion that He has chosen for them and will certainly give them peace in exchange, after their state of fear; (provided that) they worship Me, ascribing no partner to Me. And whoever turns infidel after that, then such people are the transgressors. [55]

And establish Ṣalāh and pay Zakāh and obey the messenger so that you may be favored with mercy. [56] Never think that the disbelievers are (able) to frustrate (Allah's plan) on the earth. And their abode is the Fire. And indeed it is an evil terminus. [57]

Commentary

Background of Revelation

Qurtubī has reported on authority of Abul 'Āliyah that the Holy Prophet ﷺ stayed in Makkah for ten years after commencement of revelation and declaration of prophethood, during which time there was a constant fear of the infidels and disbelievers. Then after the Hijrah to Madina also there was a ceaseless danger of attacks from the disbelievers. So, someone asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ "Would a time come to us when we will be able to live in peace without wearing our weaponry?" The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied 'Yes, the time is coming very soon'. On that occasion these verses were revealed. (Qurtubī and Baḥr). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has said that these verses relate the promise of Allah Ta'ālā, which He had made with the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ before their creation in the Torah and the Injīl. (Baḥr Muḥīṭ)

Allah Ta'ālā had made three promises to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, that his Ummah will be made His vicegerent on earth and will rule over it, and His favourite religion Islam will be made victorious, and Muslims will be given so much power and grandeur that they will have no fear of any one. Allah Ta'ālā fulfilled His promise by conferring conquest over Makkah, Khaibar, Baḥrain, and the whole of Yemen and the entire peninsula of Arabia even during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Also he received *jizyah*, (capitation tax) from the Zoroastrians of Hajar and some Syrian territories. The kings and rulers of Rome, Egypt, Iskandria, Oman and Ethiopia sent gifts to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and gave him honour and respect. Then during his caliphate Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ

crushed all the menacing uprisings. He also sent out Islamic armies to Persia, Syria and Egypt. Buṣṣā and Damascus also fell to Islamic State during this time.

When the time of death of Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ approached nearer, Allah Ta'ālā put an inspiration in his heart to nominate Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ﷺ as his successor. When Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ﷺ took charge of the caliphate, it was so wonderful that the heavens had not witnessed such grand governance after the governance of the messengers. During his caliphate the entire land of Syria and Egypt and major part of Persia were overpowered. It was during his time that the grandeur of Caesar and Chosroes were vanished. After that period, during the caliphate of Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ the Islamic victories extended from the East to the West. In the west up to Cyprus and Andalucia, and in the east up to China. Besides, 'Irāq, Khorasan and Ahwaz all fell to Islamic State during the time of third Caliph. What the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said according to a Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth that he was shown the entire east and west of the earth by bringing them together, and that the rule of his Ummah will extend up to all those places which have been shown to him; this promise was fulfilled by Allah Ta'ālā even during the time of caliphate Sayyidna 'Uthmān . (Ibn Kathīr)

According to another *ḥadīth* the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that caliphate will last for thirty years after him. Here, the word caliphate means the Rightly Guided Caliphate (Al-Khilāfah-ar-Rāshidah), which was run exactly on the footsteps of the Holy Prophet ﷺ . It lasted up to the time of Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ, because this period of thirty years was finished after him.

At this point Ibn Kathīr has also reported a *ḥadīth* from Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, that Sayyidnā Jabir Ibn Samurah ﷺ has said that he had heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying that his Ummah will continue ruling until the twelve caliphs last. After narrating this Ibn Kathīr has commented that this *ḥadīth* is pointing that there will be twelve upright caliphs in the Muslim Ummah, which is bound to happen. However, it is not necessary that all twelve come one after the other and there is no gap in between, rather it is more likely that they turn up with an interval of time. Out of this lot, four Rightly Guided Khulafā' had appeared one after the other immediately after the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The next was Sayyidnā

‘Umar Ibn ‘Abdul ‘Azīz ؓ who came after a gap of some time. A few others also appeared in different times after him and will continue to come until the last caliph Sayyidnā Mahdiyy comes. There is no mention in the *ḥadīth* of those twelve caliphs which the Shiites have determined. Rather some of them are those who have no connection with the caliphate at all. It is also not necessary that all of them would be of the same status, and during their time there would be complete peace and tranquility. This promise is related to rectitude and firmness of faith, the righteous deeds and total obedience, and any difference in their degree will naturally make difference in the power and control of authority. Islamic history spread over a period of 1400 years is a witness that in different times and different countries whenever and wherever there was a just and righteous ruler, he has received his share from this promise of Allah based on the extent of righteous deeds he has performed. At another place, the Qur’ān says *إِنَّ جُزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْعَالِيُونَ* that is ‘The people of Allah are the ones to prevail.’

This verse is a proof of approval and esteem in the sight of Allah of the four rightly guided Khulafā’

This verse is also a proof of the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, because the forecast he had made came true exactly in the manner he had predicted. The same way it is also a proof of acceptance and approval of the caliphate of Al-Khulafā’ ar-Rāshidīn in the sight of Allah. It is for the simple reason that the promise Allah Ta‘ālā had made with His Messenger ﷺ and his Ummah was completely fulfilled during the lifetime of the four Ṣaḥābah. If the caliphate of the earlier caliphs is not regarded legitimate and true, as claimed by some Rawāfiq, then the Qur’ānic promise has not been fulfilled as yet. Then the argument put forward by Rawāfiq that the Qur’ānic promise will be fulfilled during the life of Sayyidnā Mahdiyy is but ridiculous, as it will amount to saying that for full 1400 years the ‘Ummah will live in disgrace and misery, and nearing the Dooms Day when he will get the rule, only that period is referred by this promise. The fact of the matter is that the conditions of faith and righteous deeds, on which this promise was made by Allah Ta‘ālā, were present in these Ṣaḥābah to the perfection and in totality. In reality Allah’s promise was fulfilled in totality in their lifetime only. After that neither the degree of faith and deeds was maintained at that level, nor

the dignity of caliphate and governance could be retained.

وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

And whoever turns infidel after that, then such people are the transgressors - 24:55.

The literal meaning of the word Kufr is thanklessness and in conventional sense it is the antonym of faith. In this verse there is room for taking either of the two meanings. Thus the meaning of the verse is that when Allah Ta‘ālā fulfills His promise and bestows power, authority, peace and satisfaction to the Muslims, and stability to Islam, and after that someone turns apostate or avoids obeying the rules of the Islamic State, then such a person is a transgressor. In the first place he has lost the faith, and secondly, stopped obeying the rules and regulations of the Islamic State. Kufr and ingratitude are great sins in any situation, but after the establishment of Islamic rule, authority and grandeur the intensity of these sins is doubled. That is why it is emphasized by the words بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ (after that). Imām Baghawī has said that the scholars of Tafsīr have explained that this Qur’ānic sentence came true for the first time on those who assassinated the ruling caliph Sayyidnā ‘Uthmān ؓ. When they committed this great sin, the referred graces of Allah Ta‘ālā were reduced, and they were afflicted with fear and fright because of mutual killings and massacre. Despite the fact that they were like brothers to each other, they got involved in mutual killing. Baghawī has related on his own authority an address by Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Salām ؓ, which he delivered at the time of commotion against Sayyidnā ‘Uthmān ؓ. The wordings of the address are as follows:

“The angels of Allah had cordoned your city for security ever since the Holy Prophet ﷺ had come to Madīnah, and this measure was continuing until today. By God, if you assassinate ‘Uthmān ؓ, these angels will go back, and will never return again. By god, whoever from you will kill him will present himself before Allah with his hands cut. He will be without his hands. And know that Allah’s sword was in its sheath so far. By God, if this sword comes out of its sheath, it shall never go back in sheath again, because whenever a messenger is assassinated, seventy thousand people are killed in return and when a caliph is assassinated, then thirty five thousand persons are killed” (Maẓhari).

Hence, the sequence of mutual killing which had commenced with the Shahadah (martyrdom) of Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ has continued in the Ummah throughout. Similarly, the way assassins of 'Uthmān ؓ acted against the blessings of Allah Ta'ālā and solidarity of Islam and were ungrateful to Him, the Rawāfiḍ and Khawārij did the same after that by grouping against the Guided Khulafā'. The incident of great sacrifice of Sayyidnā Husain Ibn Ali ؓ also happened under the same sequence. نسأل الله الهداية وشكر نعمته

Verses 58 - 60

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِيَسْتَأْذِنُكُمُ الَّذِينَ مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ
يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلُمَ مِنْكُمْ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ ۖ مِنْ قَبْلِ صَلَاةِ الْفَجْرِ وَحِينَ
تَضَعُونَ ثِيَابَكُمْ مِنَ الظَّهِيرَةِ وَمِنْ بَعْدِ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ ۚ ثَلَاثُ
عَوْرَاتٍ لَكُمْ ۚ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌ ۖ بَعْدَ هُنَّ ۚ طُوفُونَ
عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ ۚ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ
عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَإِذَا بَلَغَ الْأَطْفَالُ مِنْكُمْ الْحُلُمَ فَلْيَسْتَأْذِنُوا كَمَا
اسْتَأْذَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
حَكِيمٌ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ الَّتِي لَا يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحًا فَلَيْسَ
عَلَيْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجَاتٍ ۚ بِزِينَةٍ ۚ وَأَنْ
يَسْتَعْفِفْنَ خَيْرٌ لَهُنَّ ۚ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾

O those who believe, the slaves owned by you and those of you who have not reached puberty must seek your permission (to see you) at three times: before the prayer of Fajr, when you take off your clothes at noon and after the prayer of 'Ishā'. These are three times of privacy for you. There is no harm, neither to you nor to them after these (three times). They are your frequent visitors as some of you are (frequent visitors) of the others. This is how Allah explains the verses to you. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. [58]

And when the children from among you reach puberty, they must seek permission as the permission is sought by those before them. This is how Allah explains His verses to you. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. [59]

And those old women who have no hope for marriage, there is no sin on them if they take off their (extra) clothes while they do not display their adornment. And that they refrain (even from this) is better for them. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. [60]

Commentary

It has been described in the beginning of this Sūrah that the injunctions of Sūrah Nūr mostly relate to prevention of obscenity and vulgarity. Under the same sequence some injunctions regarding social etiquette and mutual meetings are also enjoined. After that the injunctions about Hijāb for women are prescribed.

The injunction for relatives and *maḥrams* for seeking permission at specific timings

Earlier in this Sūrah the social etiquette and manners for mutual meetings were described in verses 27, 28 and 29 under the heading 'injunctions on seeking permission', where it was enjoined that if you go to visit someone, do not enter the house without taking permission. Irrespective of the situation whether it is a female section of the house or the male section, and whether the visitor is a man or a woman, it has been made obligatory on every one to seek permission before entering the house. However, these injunctions relate to those who come in the house as visitors. But in the present verses a different type of *isti'dhān* is enjoined. Here those persons are instructed to seek permission who live together in the same house and keep roaming in the rooms freely. In this category those men are also included with whom the *ḥijāb* of women is not required (the *maḥrams*). They, too, are advised to make some sort of sound, either by cleaning the throat or by thumping of steps, in order to make their presence felt. This type of *isti'dhān* is preferable and not obligatory, but to give it up is *Makrūh Tanzīhī*. Tafsīr Maḥzarī has remarked:

فمن اراد الدخول فى بيت نفسه وفيه محرّماته يكره له الدخول فيه من غير استيذان تنزيها لاحتمال رؤية واحدة منهن عريانة وهو احتمال ضعيف ومقتضاه التره. (مظهرى)

The one who intends to enter his own house, while it is occupied by his maḥram ladies, it is not desirable (*makrūh tanziḥī*) for him to enter it without seeking permission, because of the possibility that one of those ladies is without clothes. However, since this possibility is a remote one, it requires precaution only (and not Prohibition).

This injunction relates to the time before entering the house, but once men-folk have entered the house, all the inmates live together and being members of the same family keep meeting each other within the house. For the family members living together there is another injunction of seeking permission at three specific times, which are the times of privacy. These three times are before the Fajr prayers, the resting time in the afternoon and in the night after 'Ishā' prayers. At these times all the *maḥrams* and relatives, even the young children and slave girls having sense, are prohibited to enter the private places without taking permission. It is to ensure that none should go in the private rooms without first seeking the permission. At these times one wants to be on one's own and sometimes takes off the extra clothes, while at times one is in a compromising position with his wife. During any of these situations one would feel very embarrassed and upset if seen by even a very young but sensible child or a woman of the household. In the least it will cause him disturbance in his rest. Hence, there is a need to take permission at these three specific times before entering the private chambers. After this injunction it is said *لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌ بَعْدَ هُنَّ* (58) that is besides these times there is no harm if you go to each other without any permission, because during all other times people are busy doing their normal duties and are properly attired in their usual clothing. These are also not the normal times for intimacy with the wife.

Here the question arises that enforcement of injunction on adult man and woman is normal, but why the young children are also commanded to comply with this injunction, which is not the normal practice.


The answer to this confusion is that in actual fact it is the adult men and women who are charged with this duty to explain to the young children not to go to private chambers at these times without taking permission. It is in the same manner as a *ḥadīth* instructs to teach the prayers to children when they attain the age of seven years and persuade them to offer it. And when they attain the age of ten years they be bound

down to offer prayers regularly, and if they default then they should be beaten to be regular in their prayers. Similarly, the injunction of *isti'dhān* in the above verse is actually for the adult men and women. In the sentence under discussion the word *Junāḥ* is used to say that apart from these three times there is no harm if the inmates go in the private chambers without permission. Generally the word *Junāḥ* is used for sin, but sometimes it is also used for harm or obstacle. Here in this verse it is used for the latter meaning, hence, any doubt of sinning on the part of children is also removed. (Bayān ul-Qur'ān)

Ruling

The phrase *الَّذِينَ مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ* (the slaves owned by you) used in verse (58) covers the meaning of both the slaves and the slave girls. Among them the adult slaves fall under the category of non-Maḥrams under the Islamic law. As has been explained earlier, the mistress owner woman of an adult slave is obligated to be in ḥijāb before him. Therefore, the phrase is purported to mean here the slave girls and minor slaves who roam about in the house freely.

Ruling

The scholars and jurists have different viewpoints on the question whether this type of *isti'dhān* is obligatory or merely commendable and whether this injunction is still valid or is abrogated. Majority of jurists have ruled that this verse is firm and thus not abrogated, and the injunction is obligatory both for men and women (Qurṭubī). But it is obvious that the reason and ground for the injunction to be obligatory is that which is given above, that is, one wants to be on his own at these three times and likes privacy, and sometimes gets busy with his wife. However, if people could get into the habit of keeping their concealable parts covered even at these three times, and be careful to copulate with wife only at times when there is no possibility of any one coming in, as is the norm these days, then it is not obligatory to restrain the relatives and children from entering without *isti'dhān*. In this situation it is no more obligatory for the relatives to follow it. But there is no doubt that it is a desirable and commendable act, though it seems that people have given it up for a long time. According to one narration Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās  has used very strong words for ignoring it, and according to another narration he has put forward excuses for those who do not follow it.

The first narration is reported by Ibn Kathīr on authority of Ibn Abī Ḥātim that Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ has said that there are three verses which people have stopped following. One of them is this very verse of *istidhān* يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِيَسْتَأْذِنَكُمْ الَّذِينَ مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ (58) in which relatives and young children are instructed to seek permission. The second verse is وَإِذَا حَضَرَ الْقِسْمَةَ أُولُو الْقُرْبَىٰ (4:8) in which people are advised to hand over a part of the inheritance to those relatives also who are present at the time of division of patrimony but have no claim on it, in order to console them. The third verse is إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ in which it is declared that the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most god-fearing of you. But these days such persons are regarded honorable and respectable who possess plenty of wealth and palatial houses. According to some other narration Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ has also said that in respect of these three verses the Satan has overpowered the people. Then he said “I have restrained even my slave girl not to come to me without permission at these three times”.

The second narration is also reported on authority of Ibn Abī Ḥātim by Sayyidnā ‘Ikrimah ؓ that two persons enquired from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ about *isti’dhān* enjoined (by this verse) upon near relatives and commented that people have stopped acting on this. Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ replied إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَتِيرٌ يَحِبُّ السِّرَّ that Allah keeps cover on many things, and He likes the same for others. The fact of the matter is that at the time of revelation of this verse the society was very simple. People did not use curtains at the door nor did they have large beds with curtains. There used to be occasions when a child or servant would come in unannounced at a time the person was in a compromising position with his wife. It was to prevent such happenings that Allah Ta‘ālā sent down this injunction to take permission at these three times. But now people use curtains at the door and large beds having curtains, which is considered enough for the purpose. Now there is no need for *isti’dhān*. (Having reproduced this narration Ibn Kathīr has said – هذا اسناد صحيح الى ابن عباس (that is, the chain of its narrators is ‘Ṣaḥīḥ’ i.e. authentic). In the light of this narration ascribed to Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ one thing is quite clear that when there is no apprehension of any one seeing the other in an uncovered position or involved with his wife, in that case some concession is allowed.

But Qur’an teaches for a pure society so that no one interferes in

anyone's freedom and everybody lives in peace and comfort. Those who do not make their family members follow the practice of seeking permission they themselves face inconvenience and curb their natural instincts and desires.

Emphasis on *ḥijāb* for women and an exemption

The injunction on *ḥijāb* for women has already appeared earlier in detail in two verses, and two exemptions were also mentioned there. One exemption relates to the one who is seeing, and the other to that who is seen. According to the first exemption, young children and the slave girls are exempt. As for the second exemption, the outward adornment is exempt from *ḥijāb*, which includes outer clothing like veil or covering sheet. There is agreement of all on this, but according to some, women's face and palms are also included in this exemption

In the next verse the third exemption is granted on the basis of a woman's personal situation. If a woman has grown so old that no one would have any (sexual) desire towards her, nor is she marriageable, for such a woman concession in *ḥijāb* is allowed in that even strangers (non-Maḥrams) are treated like *maḥrams* for her. She is not required to cover those parts of her body before non-Maḥrams which are not required to be covered before *maḥrams*. Hence, it is said وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ الَّتِي (And those old women who have no hope for marriage - 60). The explanation of this verse is already given above. Although very old women are allowed to uncover those parts of their body before non-Maḥrams which are not required to be covered before mahrams, yet this exemption is allowed with the condition that they do so without applying any makeup or adornment. The other thing said in the last is وَأَنْ يَسْتَغْفِنَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُنَّ (60) that is, it is better for them if they avoid going before non-Maḥrams altogether.

Verse 61

لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ
حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَنْ تَأْكُلُوا مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ آبَائِكُمْ
أَوْ بُيُوتِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ إِخْوَانِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخَوَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ
أَعْمَامِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ عَمَّتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخْوَالِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ خَالَاتِكُمْ

أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتُمْ مَفَاتِحَهُ أَوْ صَدِيقِكُمْ ۗ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَأْكُلُوا
 جَمِيعًا أَوْ أَشْتَاتًا ۗ فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمْ بُيُوتًا فَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ تَحِيَّةً
 مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُبْرَكَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ ۗ كَذَلِكَ يَبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
 تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

There is no blame on a blind person, nor is there any blame on any lame one, nor is there any blame on a patient, nor on yourselves in that you eat (something) from your own homes or from the homes of your fathers or the homes of your mothers or the homes of your brothers or the homes of your sisters or the homes of your paternal aunts or the homes of your maternal uncles or the homes of your maternal aunts or from the places the keys of which you have under your control or from (the home of) your friend. There is no sin on you if you eat together or separately. So when you enter homes, greet your own selves with Salām, a greeting prescribed by Allah which is blessed, pleasant. This is how Allah explains the verses to you so that you may understand. [61]

Commentary

Some injunctions and social etiquettes after the entry in the house

In the previous verses it was enjoined to seek permission before entering into anyone's house. In the above verse those injunctions and etiquettes are pronounced which are obligatory or preferable to follow after the permission to enter the house is granted. Before understanding the injunction contained in this verse and its purport it would be advisable to know the background in which this verse was revealed.

Every Muslim knows very well how much emphasis is laid by the Holy Qur'an and the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ for respecting and preserving the rights of the people (Ḥuqūq ul-'Ibād). Very strong warnings are sounded against using anything owned by someone else without his permission. On the other hand Allah Ta'ālā had chosen such fortunate persons for the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that they were all ears for any command from Allah or His Messenger. They were always

ready to put in their best on every single command. By following Qur'ānic teachings diligently and having the exalted company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ they were turned by Allah Ta'ālā into a group of whom even the angels were proud. Not to think ever to spend even slightly from other's wealth, to avoid putting in anyone into the slightest of trouble and to remain steadfast on the highest standard of Taqwā (constant awareness of Allah) were only some of the attributes of the companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Some related incidents had taken place during the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, in which connection the injunctions contained in the present verse were revealed. All commentators have made reference of these incidents with the difference that different incidents are quoted as the cause of revelation by different commentators. The actual position is that there is no contradiction in their assertions, and all these incidents put together are the cause of revelation of this verse. The incidents are as follows:

Imām Baghawī رحمه الله ﷺ has related on authority of Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رحمه الله تعالى and some other commentators that it is a common habit among people to feel disgust in eating together with lame, cripple, blind and sick, and avoid it. Among the companions who had any of these disability thought that if they were to eat with others they might cause botheration and trouble to them. Therefore, they started avoiding to eat with normal persons. The blind people thought that they might eat more than others, as they cannot see, causing injustice for the rest. Justice requires that all who eat together should eat equally. Likewise, the lame thought that they would create problem for others as they could not sit properly and occupy more space, which will result in taking up the share of space of others. In this background, the above verse was revealed in which the disabled were asked to join other normal persons for eating. They were advised not to take upon themselves such painstaking precautionary measures which could lead them into trouble.

Imam Baghawī has narrated another incident related by Ibn Jarīr on authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه which presents the other side of the picture. The story goes like this; when the verse لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ (Do not eat up each other's property by false means - 2:188) was revealed, people were hesitant to eat with the blind, lame and the sick. Their consideration was that the sick eats less because of his indisposition, so he

would suffer if he eats with others. The blind cannot differentiate between the good and ordinary food, and the lame is slow to eat because of his posture. So, people thought there is a possibility that the disabled are deprived of their due share, whereas the justice demands that all should eat equally while eating together. So, it was in this background that this verse was revealed, and people were taken out of this predicament. The spirit behind this injunction is that people should eat together and if there is a little disparity in the quantity of food taken by each one of them, it should not be a cause of botheration.

Sa'īd Ibn al-Musayyab رحمه الله تعالى has given yet another version that while going on *jihād* or battles, the Muslims used to hand over the keys of their houses to the disabled with the instructions that they can eat whatever is there in the house. On the other hand, the disabled would not eat anything, lest they spend something against the wishes of the owners. Hence, to counter this position, the above verse was revealed. Musnad al-Bazzār has also reported this version on the authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to go on a battle, it was the desire of every companion to go along with him to participate in the battle. They used to hand over the keys of their houses to the poor and disabled persons with the permission that they could eat anything available in the house during their absence. But the disabled would abstain from taking anything from the house fearing that the permission given to them to eat freely from the house might not have been given with full willingness. Baghawī has also narrated on authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that the word صَدِيقُكُمْ (your friend) used in the verse, which means that there is no harm in eating from your friend's house, was a reference toward the incident of Ḥārith b. 'Amr ؓ. The incident was that Ḥārith b. 'Amr ؓ went for *jihād* along with the Holy Prophet ﷺ, leaving the care and custody of his house to his friend, Mālīk Ibn Zaid ؓ. When Ḥārith ؓ returned, he noticed that Mālīk Ibn Zaid ؓ had become very weak. When he enquired the reason of the weakness, Mālīk ؓ replied that he did not feel it right to eat anything from his house. (All these narrations are taken from Tafsīr Maḥzarī). Indeed all these incidents had a bearing on the revelation of this verse.

Ruling

As mentioned above, a general permission was granted in this verse to

eat in certain houses without asking special consent. This permission was granted on the basis of a tradition among 'Arabs to eat freely in the houses of close relatives. There was absolutely no formality among them, and no one would ever mind this habit, rather they used to encourage it and would feel happy about it. Not only that, sometimes the relatives used to bring poor, sick or needy persons and feed them at houses of others, on which the hosts would feel happy. According to custom they would not seek special permission for this, as there was a general consent among them to follow the tradition. It therefore becomes obvious that wherever and whenever this tradition is not in vogue, or the owner's consent is doubtful, then eating without permission is forbidden. In the present time no one would like that even a close relative would eat in his house without seeking permission. Therefore, the permission granted in this verse would not apply, unless some one is absolutely sure that his eating in a relative's house would not cause any problem or displeasure, rather he would enjoy it. Only in this situation eating at such a house would be permissible under the dictate of this verse.

Ruling

It is now clear from the above statement that it is not right to say that this injunction was meant for the early days of Islam, and was abrogated later. The injunction is in force right from the beginning up to the date and shall always remain effective. The real condition of the application of this injunction is the certainty of permission of the owner of the house, and if that is not present, then the very basis of injunction is not available. (Maḏharī).

Ruling

It has also now become clear that this injunction is not restricted only to the relatives specified in the verse, but the concession is applicable to other persons also, with the sole condition that it is certain that the owner of the house will be pleased and will not be offended if someone eats and also makes others eat without seeking prior permission. (Maḏharī) These injunctions relate to the acts permitted or preferable on entering in someone's house after taking permission. The act of eating and drinking has been mentioned first due to its importance. The second act (mentioned in verse 64) relates to the etiquettes of entry.

The etiquette demands that as one enters the house with permission,

he should greet all the Muslims present there with salām. This is the purport of the words "greet your own selves", (verse 61). It is because all Muslims are a single united group. In many Ṣaḥīḥ Ahadis great emphasis is laid on Muslims for greeting each other as an act of virtue.

Verses 62 - 64

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِذَا كَانُوا مَعَهُ عَلَى أَمْرٍ
جَامِعٍ لَّمْ يَذْهَبُوا حَتَّى يَسْتَأْذِنُوهُ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ أُولَٰئِكَ
الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۚ فَإِذَا اسْتَأْذَنُوكَ لِبَعْضِ شَأْنِهِمْ فَأَذَنْ
لِمَنْ شِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ لَا
تَجْعَلُوا دُعَاءَ الرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَاءِ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا ۗ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ
الَّذِينَ يَتَسَلَّلُونَ مِنْكُمْ لِوَاذًا ۗ فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ
تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾ إِلَّا إِنْ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ ۗ وَيَوْمَ يُرْجَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ
فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٤﴾

The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His messenger and who, when they are with him for a collective matter, do not leave unless they seek his permission. Surely, those who seek your permission are the ones who believe in Allah and His messenger. So, if they seek permission from you for some business of theirs, give permission to whom you wish from among them, and pray to Allah for their forgiveness. Surely, Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [62]

Do not take the call of the messenger among you as a call of one of you to another. Allah definitely knows those of you who sneak out, covering one another. So, those who violate his (messenger's) order must beware, lest they are visited by a trial or they are visited by a painful punishment. [63]

Remember! To Allah belongs all that is there in the

heavens and the earth. He knows the condition you are in; and the Day on which they will be returned to Him, He will tell them what they did. And Allah is fully aware of everything. [64]

Commentary

Some etiquettes and injunctions in regard to meetings with the Holy Prophet ﷺ in particular, and in the society in general

The above verses contain two injunctions. The first injunction is that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ call people for the meeting in connection with *jihād* or any other religious matter, the demand of the faith is that all should attend and must not leave the meeting without his permission. If there is an emergency, permission may be sought from the Holy Prophet ﷺ, who was advised that unless there is special need and requirement, permission may be granted on such requests. In the same connection those hypocrites are condemned who would come to attend the meeting only to fulfill the obligation of faith, but would quietly sneak out under the cover of some other person.

This verse was revealed at the time of the battle of Aḥzāb, when the Arab disbelievers and other groups joined together and suddenly attacked Madīnah. After consultations with the companions, the Holy Prophet ﷺ consented to dig up a trench to defend against the attack. For this reason this battle is also known as 'the battle of trench (Khandaq)'. This battle was fought in Shawwāl 5th Hijra. (Qurṭubī)

Baihaqī and Ibn Ishāq have reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself had taken part in the digging of the trench. But the hypocrites used to come late in the first place, and after doing a little bit of work just to show their presence, would sneak away quietly. As against this all the believers were putting in their best, and in case of any need or emergency would take permission from the Holy Prophet ﷺ before leaving the work. At that point this verse was revealed. (Maḏhari)

A question and its answer

It appears from this verse that it is forbidden to get up and leave from the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ without seeking his permission. But there are several incidents when companions used to leave his meeting when they wished and would not deem it necessary to take his permission. The answer to this point is that the injunction mentioned in

the present verse is not an injunction for ordinary meetings, but it is meant for specific gatherings, which the Holy Prophet ﷺ might have called for some need, as was the case at the time of battle of the trench. The phrase **عَلَىٰ أَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ** (for a collective matter - 62) is itself pointing toward this exclusivity.

What does **امرٍ جامعٍ** (collective matter) mean?

There are different views on this point. The most evident explanation is that this phrase is used for such acts for which the Holy Prophet ﷺ felt necessary to collect the people, as he regarded it important to collect the people for digging the trench on the occasion of battle of Aḥzāb. (Qurtubī - Maḏhari)

Is this injunction exclusive to meetings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ or is general?

Since this injunction is issued for a religious and Islamic need, all the jurists agree that it is not exclusive to meetings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The same injunction would apply to any Imām or ruler of the Muslims who is in control of the government, if he called up a meeting. It is obligatory to attend the meetings called up by the rulers and it is not lawful to leave it without permission. (Qurtubī - Maḏhari - Bayān ul-Qurān) This is but obvious that this injunction has greater stress and emphasis for meetings called up by the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and its opposition is open callousness. As for the common meetings and gatherings (not convened by a ruler), acting upon this injunction is surely preferable and commendable from the point of view of Islamic social etiquette. When Muslims are gathered in a meeting for deliberation or action on a collective issue, one should leave the meeting only after taking permission from the presiding person.

The second injunction

The second injunction is given in the last verse:

لَا تَجْعَلُوا دُعَاءَ الرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ

Do not take the call of the messenger among you as a call of one of you to another - 24:63.

One explanation of this verse is that "call of the messenger" means calling of the people by the Holy Prophet ﷺ (which implies that "call" is the act of the messenger). Thus the meaning of the verse is, when the

Holy Prophet ﷺ call people, it should not be taken as a common call of an ordinary person, in which one has the choice to go or not to go. In the case of a call by the Holy Prophet ﷺ it becomes obligatory to go to him and leaving the meeting without his permission is unlawful. In the context of the verse the above explanation appears more appropriate. That is why Maḏharī and Bayān ul-Qur'ān have adopted this explanation. The other explanation of "call of the messenger" is related by Ibn Kathīr and Qurṭubī on authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ؓ. According to this explanation it means calling of the Holy Prophet ﷺ by the people for some need which implies that 'the messenger' is the object of the 'call'.

On the basis of this explanation the meaning of the verse would be that when you Call the Holy Prophet ﷺ for some need, do not call him by his name saying 'Yā Muḥammad يا محمد', as you call others. This is disrespect to him. Therefore, call him by an honorific form of address such as 'Yā Rasūl Allāh يا رسول الله' or 'Yā Nabīy Allāh يا نبي الله'. In the final analysis it is obligatory on all Muslims to have respect and veneration for the Holy Prophet ﷺ and to avoid all such things which are in conflict with respect and etiquette, or which may cause inconvenience to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This injunction is similar in nature to many of those enjoined in Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt, for instance *لَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ* (49:2) It means that when you talk to the Holy Prophet ﷺ keep in mind his respect, and do not talk in a loud voice, as people do while talking to each other. A similar example is *إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُنَادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ* (49:4) which means that when he ﷺ is inside the house, one must not call him out, rather wait for him outside until he comes out on his own.

A Warning

It has also been inferred from the second explanation that as a common etiquette it is incumbent upon Muslims to pay respect to the elders, and to call them by their names is disrespect. Elders should always be called with titles of respect.

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Nūr
Ends here.

Sūrah Al-Furqān

Sūrah Al-Furqān was revealed in Makkah and it contains 77 Verses and 6 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the Most-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

تَبْرَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا ﴿١﴾
 الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ
 شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا ﴿٢﴾ وَاتَّخَذُوا
 مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَهًا لَّا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ
 ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ مَوْتًا وَلَا حَيَاةً وَلَا نُشُورًا ﴿٣﴾

Glorious is the One who has revealed the Criterion to His servant, so that he may be a warner to the worlds, [1] the One to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and who did neither have a son, nor is there any partner to him in the kingdom, and who has created everything and designed it in a perfect measure.

[2]

And they have coined gods, other than Him, who do not create any thing, rather they themselves are created, and they possess no power to cause harm or benefit even to themselves, nor do they have any power over death or life or resurrection. [3]

Special features of the Sūrah

There is consensus among the commentators that this Sūrah was revealed in Makkah. However, Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه and Qatādah رضي الله عنه

contend that three of its verses are Madanī and rest of the Sūrah is Makkan. Yet Qurṭubī and a few others maintain that the Sūrah itself is Madanī and only a few verses are Makkan.

The gist of the subject matter of the Sūrah is to describe and define the greatness of the Holy Qur'ān and the truth of the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, to which there were doubts expressed by the unbelievers. The Sūrah contains answers to their objections.

Commentary

تَبَارَكَ (25:1) is derived from بَرَكَةٌ , meaning abundance of a good thing. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has explained that the meaning of the first verse is that all blessings are from Allah alone. فُرْقَان (Furqān, translated above as 'criterion') is a title of the Qur'ān and its meaning is to distinguish. The Holy Qur'ān by its very nature distinguishes between right and wrong, and differentiates, through miracles between the right people and the wrong ones, hence it is called as Furqān.

لِلْعَالَمِينَ (warner to the worlds - 25:1). This proves that the Holy Prophet's ﷺ prophethood was for the entire universe and not just for a certain community or time, as was the case with other prophets. In a Ḥadīth recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has pointed out six special features about his prophethood. One of the special features is the universality of his prophethood i.e. it is for all ages and all people.

Special Wisdom in every creation

فَقَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا (And designed it in a perfect measure - 25:2): Here تَقْدِيرٌ - (designing in a perfect measure) is mentioned after تَخْلِيقٌ (Creation). تَخْلِيقٌ means to create something from nothing that is to bring in something without any pre-existing substance whatsoever. And تَقْدِيرٌ (designed in a perfect measure) means that, whatever has been created, its components, appearance, properties and signs are made to suit the purpose of its creation. The form of the sky, its constituents and its shape are in conformity to that purpose for which Allah Ta'ālā has created it. Similarly, the stars and planets possess those qualities for which they are created. Whatever we see on the earth is absolutely perfect in its form, shape and construction to suit the purpose and requirement of its creation. For instance, earth is not made in such a liquid form, that anything put on it is drowned, nor is it made too hard like steel or

concrete to be dug. It is made in the solid form and given a hardness that it could be dug to take out underground water or to place foundations for the buildings. Water is given the liquid form which again is full of Divine Wisdom and helps meet the multifarious needs of the creatures spread all over the earth. Water does not reach on its own at all the places where it is needed. Man has to put in some skill and labour to take it to places where it is required. On the other hand air is a compulsory gift which reaches every place without any labour or an active role from human beings. Even if someone wants to avoid it, he has to exert extra labour. It is not the place to describe Divine creations and their characteristics as it needs volumes for the purpose. Each and every creation of Allah Subḥānahū is perfect in its purpose and has its own peculiar properties and traits. Imām Ghazzālī has written a book on the subject by the name *الحكمة فى مخلوقات الله تعالى*.

These verses define the sacred and exalted position of the Holy Qur'ān and by addressing the person on whom the book is revealed as عبده (His slave) in the very beginning of the Sūrah, his honoured position is highlighted. There cannot be a greater honour for any one than to be called by Allah Ta'ālā as 'His own'.

Verses 4 - 9

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا إِفْكٌ ۖ افْتَرَاهُ وَأَعَانَهُ عَلَيْهِ قَوْمٌ
 آخَرُونَ ۖ فَقَدْ جَاءُوا ظُلْمًا وَزُورًا ﴿٤﴾ وَقَالُوا آسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ۚ اكْتَتَبَهَا
 فِيهَا تُمْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٥﴾ قُلْ أَنْزَلَهُ الَّذِي يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ فِي
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٦﴾ وَقَالُوا مَا لِيَ هَذَا
 الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ ۗ لَوْلَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ
 فَيَكُونُ مَعَهُ نَذِيرًا ﴿٧﴾ أَوْ يُنْفِثُ إِلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ ۖ أَوْ تَكُونُ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ يَأْكُلُ
 مِنْهَا ۗ وَقَالَ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا ﴿٨﴾ أَنْظِرْ
 كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩﴾

And said those who disbelieve, "This is nothing but a lie

he (the messenger) has fabricated and some other people have helped him in it." Thus they came up with transgression and falsehood. [4] And they said, "(These are) the tales of the ancients he (the messenger) has caused to be written, and they are read out to him at morn and eve." [5] Say, "It is sent down by the One who knows the secret in the heavens and the earth. Indeed He is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [6]

And they said, "What sort of messenger is this who eats food and walks in the markets? Why is it that an angel has not been sent down to him who would have been a warner alongwith him, [7] or that a treasure is not thrown down to him, or that he has no garden to eat from it?" And the transgressors said, "You are following none but a bewitched man." [8] See how they coined similes for you, so they have gone astray and cannot find a way. [9]

Commentary

From this point onward the objections raised by infidels and polytheists against the Holy Qur'ān and the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are related together with the answers to those objections.

The first objection was that the Qur'ān was not a revealed book from Allah Ta'ālā, but has been compiled from the old stories and narrations by the Jews and Christians which have been reduced into writing by the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, since he himself was illiterate and could not write. And because he could not read or write, he would get them read out to him day and night, so that he could remember them by heart, then he would repeat them before people and claim that he had received that revelation from Allah Ta'ālā.

The answer to this objection was given by the Holy Qur'ān قُلْ أَنْزَلَهُ الَّذِي يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ , that is (Say, "It is sent down by the One who knows the secret in the heavens and the earth - 25:6).

The essence of this answer is that the Qur'ān itself is an evidence to the fact that it is the Divine message from Him who is Omniscient and who knows fully well all the secrets of the Heavens and the earth. This is why Qur'ān is a miraculous Message, and the whole world is challenged to bring out a Sūrah or even a verse to match it, if its divine origin is

refused. This was a challenge to a people - the Arabs - who were well known for their literary proficiency and art of expression, and for whom composition of a piece of literature was not a problem. But they too did not dare to attempt to compose something similar to Qur'ān. Although they were willing to sacrifice all their material wealth for opposing the Holy Prophet ﷺ in his mission, so much so that they were willing to sacrifice even their children and their own lives to counter the Holy Prophet's ﷺ mission and message, but they dared not attempt to compose a passage similar to a Sūrah of the Qur'ān.

This is a clear proof of the fact that it is not a work of a human being. Otherwise other people could also have composed passages similar to Qur'ān. Therefore, it is definitely the revelation from Allah Ta'ālā. Apart from the beauty of expression and language, the Book also excels in its meanings. The multifarious subjects it covers can only be dealt by One who knows everything whether hidden or exposed. This subject has been dealt with in detail in the first volume of Ma'āriful Qur'ān.

The Second Objection was that if the Holy Prophet ﷺ was a prophet, he should not have been eating and drinking like common people; instead he should have been free from eating and drinking like angels. And if this was not so, he should have at least enough wealth and gardens to take care of his day to day needs, so that he may not need to care for his living. Furthermore, how could he be accepted as a prophet when he is neither an angel nor does an angel accompany him to endorse what he preaches, therefore it appears that he has been charmed by someone which has turned his head and that is why he talks like this. A general answer to this objection is given in the verse *أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا* that is (See how they coined similes for you, so they have gone astray and cannot find a way. - 25:9). The detailed answer to the objection is given in the next few verses.

Verses 10 - 20

تَبْرَكَ الَّذِيْ اِنْ شَاءَ جَعَلَ لَكَ خَيْرًا مِّنْ ذَلِكَ جَنَّتِ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْاَنْهَارُ وَيَجْعَلُ لَكَ قُصُوْرًا ﴿١٠﴾ بَلْ كَذَّبُوْا بِالسَّاعَةِ فَوَعَدْنَا

لِمَنْ كَذَّبَ بِالسَّاعَةِ سَعِيرًا ﴿١١﴾ إِذَا رَأَتْهُمْ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ سَمِعُوا
لَهَا تَغِيْظًا وَزَفِيرًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَإِذَا أَلْفُوا مِنْهَا مَكَانًا ضَيِّقًا مُقَرَّبِينَ دَعَوْا
هُنَالِكَ ثُبُورًا ﴿١٣﴾ لَا تَدْعُوا الْيَوْمَ ثُبُورًا وَاحِدًا وَادْعُوا ثُبُورًا كَثِيرًا
﴿١٤﴾ قُلْ أَدْلِكْ خَيْرٌ أَمْ جَنَّةُ الْخُلْدِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ ۗ كَانَتْ
لَهُمْ جَرَآءٌ وَوَصِيْرًا ﴿١٥﴾ لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُونَ خَالِدِينَ ۗ كَانَ عَلَى
رَبِّكَ وَعْدًا مُسْتَوْلًا ﴿١٦﴾ وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ
اللَّهِ فَيَقُولُ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَضَلَلْتُمْ عِبَادِي هَؤُلَاءِ أَمْ هُمْ ضَلُّوا السَّبِيلَ ﴿١٧﴾
قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ مَا كَانَ يَنْبَغِي لَنَا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَ مِنْ دُونِكَ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ
وَلَكِنْ مَتَّعْتَهُمْ وَأَبَاءَهُمْ حَتَّى نَسُوا الذِّكْرَ وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا بُورًا
﴿١٨﴾ فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ بِمَا تَقُولُونَ ۗ فَمَا تَسْتَطِيعُونَ صَرْفًا وَلَا نَصْرًا
وَمَنْ يَظْلِمْ مِنْكُمْ نُدْقَهُ عَذَابًا كَبِيرًا ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنَ
الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ لِيَأْكُلُوا الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشُوا فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ ۗ
وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً ۗ أَتَصْبِرُونَ ۗ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ بَصِيرًا ﴿٢٠﴾

Glorious is the One who, if He so wills, would give you better than that - gardens beneath which rivers flow, and would give you palaces. [10] But they have disbelieved the Hour (the Day of Judgment) and We have prepared, for those who disbelieve the Hour, a flaming fire. [11] When it will see them from a distant place, they will hear (the sounds of) its raging and breathing, [12] and when they will be thrown into a narrow place therein, while they will be chained together, they will call for death. [13] Do not call for one death today, but call for many a death. [14]

Say, "Is that better or the eternal paradise the God-fearing are promised?" It will be a reward for them and a final abode. [15] For them there will be whatever they wish, while they will be living for ever. This is a promise undertaken by your Lord, (the fulfillment of)

which will be prayed for. [16]

And (remember) the Day when He will gather them and what they used to worship beside Allah and will say (to the latter ones), "Did you mislead these My servants or did they themselves lost the way?" [17] They will say, "Pure are you. It was not for us to take to other guardians than You. Instead, You gave them and their fathers (worldly) benefits till they forgot the advice and became a ruined people." [18] Thus they will refute you in what you say and you will not be able to repulse (the punishment) or to receive help. And whoever commits injustice from among you, We will make him taste a painful punishment. [19]

And We did not send any messengers before you, but all of them used to eat food and walk in the markets. And We have made some of you a test for some others. Would you observe patience? And your Lord is Ever-seeing. [20]

Commentary

In the forgoing verses a general answer was given to the doubts raised by the infidels and polytheists in regard to prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Here in the above verses a detailed reply is given to the objections. The gist of the reply is that because of your ignorance and mental block you have raised the issue that if he ﷺ were really a prophet, then he should have possessed a great deal of material wealth and gardens etc. so that he should have been free from making efforts for his sustenance. The simple reply to this objection is that there is no problem for Us to provide material wealth to Our messengers; rather if We so wish we can make them kings of the mammoth empires, as we had done in the case of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام and Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام, who were made rulers of the gigantic empires and were endowed with enormous wealth, which is a clear sign of Our omnipotence. But in the interest of common people and other numerous considerations, it is required that prophets should be kept away from the material wealth of the world. Especially in the case of the Holy Prophet ﷺ it was preferred by Allah Ta'ālā to keep him in line with the ordinary Muslims by way of worldly possessions, and he also preferred for himself to be like that. It is reported in the Musnad of Aḥmad and in Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidnā

Abū 'Umāmah رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that Allah Ta'ālā offered to him to turn the entire valley and hills of Makkah into gold for him. On that he requested to Him "No my Lord, I would prefer that I get sustenance one day (to offer my thanks to You) and go without food the next (to be patient). Also, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها has reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said "If I wanted, mountains of gold would have been around me." (Maḏharī)

The sum and substance of all this is that it is Allah's wisdom to keep the prophets poor which is also in the best interest of the people at large. Also, the prophets are not forced to lead a poor life. On the contrary they have a choice either to opt for an ordinary simple life or else Allah Ta'ālā can make them wealthy with a lot of property. But Allah Ta'ālā has made them such that they do not desire any material wealth and instead prefer a simple and poor life for themselves.

The second objection infidels had raised was that if he ﷺ was really a prophet, he would not have been eating and drinking like ordinary people nor would he walk in the markets to earn his livelihood. This objection was based on the assumption of many infidels that Allah's messengers could only be angels and not humans. The answer to this false notion is given in the Holy Qur'ān at several places. The answer given here is that the prophets whom you admit to be prophets were also humans and not angels. They used to eat, drink and work like ordinary human beings. Hence you should have deduced from this that eating and drinking is not something repugnant to prophethood. The last verse وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا إِنَّهُمْ لِيَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ (And We did not send any messengers before you, but all of them used to eat food - 25:20) has put forward the same argument.

There is great wisdom in economic difference between people

وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً (And We have made some of you test for some others - 25:20). There is an allusion in the verse that Allah Ta'ālā had complete power to make all humans wealthy, prosperous, healthy and of high status. But this way nobody would have been poor, weak or sick - a position which would have created innumerable social problems resulting in chaos and confusion. Therefore, Allah Ta'ālā has made some rich and some poor, some healthy and some sick, some strong and some weak, and some with high status and some others unknown. This way every single individual is at test because of his or her peculiar placing in society and