

What we now know is that the purpose of human beings on this earth is to keep in sight the beginning and the end of this universe, to assess what it entails as a result, to determine what is collectively beneficial or harmful, then use the insight so gained to acquire the beneficial and abstain from the harmful, and also invite others towards the beneficial and take measures to shield them from the harmful - so that the dream of a life of lasting peace and tranquility can be fulfilled. Now that it is settled that the purpose of human life is to acquire this standard benefit issuing forth from human perfection individually and collectively, enriching one's own self and at the same time enriching others. This realization helps us see the similitude of the Holy Qur'an we have been talking about in the form of a reality - that alive is one who puts his or her faith in Allah Ta'ālā and in His *Rasūl* صلى الله عليه وسلم, and in between his or her view of the beginning and end of life, recognizes his collective gain and loss in the light of Divine Revelation, because human reason alone has never triumphed over this field, nor it can. And when we know that, in terms of the fulfillment of the purpose of life, the person alive is the person who follows the Divine Revelation and is a believer, then we also come to the definite conclusion that whoever does not do that deserves to be called dead. Maulanā Rūmī has put it so delightfully:

زندگی از بهر طاعت بندگی است بے عبادت زندگی شرمندگی ست
 آدمیت لحم و شحم و پوست نیست آدمیت جز رضائے دوست نیست

Life is to obey and serve

Life without devotion is a shame

Man's reality is not flesh, fat and skin

Man's reality is but the pleasure of the Friend!

This was the first similitude of the Qur'an, that of a believer and a disbeliever, where believers have been likened to the living and the disbelievers to the dead. The second similitude is that of 'Imān (faith) and *Kufr* (disbelief) which have been placed in juxtaposition to light and darkness.

Faith is Light and Disbelief, Darkness

In this verse, 'Imān (faith) has been called *Nūr* (light) and *Kufr* (disbelief) has been equated with *Zulmah* (darkness). A little thought

will show that this similitude is not imaginary. It is a statement of fact. As we looked for the real purpose of things earlier, we can do the same here by finding out the justification for the existence of light and darkness. The purpose of light is to be able to see things far and near with its help, as a result of which, one has the advantage of staying away from the harmful and the opportunity of acquiring what is beneficial.

Let us now look at ‘*Īmān*. This is a light which surrounds everything in the heavens and the earth. It is this light alone which can show the end of the universal system as well as the correct consequences of everything done. Whoever has this light by his side, he can not only save himself from the consequences of everything harmful and injurious, but can also help others to stay safe from them. But, one who does not have access to this light remains in the dark. He has no panoramic view. He cannot see life as a whole, neither beginning, nor end. He cannot distinguish between what is beneficial and what is not. At best what he can do is to grope around and use his sense of touch to figure out what they are, at least to some extent. The life of this world as we know it is just about the environment most of us usually live in and around. The disbeliever thus does find out the life around him and the benefit and loss it has to offer within that limited framework. But, he has no idea or awareness of what lies ahead in the eternal life to come later, nor can he comprehend how beneficial or harmful it can be for him. This subject has been further explained by the Qur‘ān in Sūrah Ar-Rūm:

يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غٰفِلُونَ

They know the obvious from the present life of the world while, about the life-to-come (*‘Ākhirah*), they are (totally) heedless - 30:7).

In a verse of Sūrah Al-‘Ankabūt, after the description of past communities given to denial and disbelief, the Qur‘ān says: *وَكَانُوا مُسْتَبْصِرِينَ* (though they were men of sight - 29:38). It means that these people who had dismissed this matter of *‘Ākhirah* demonstrating rank heedlessness and seeming lack of foresight were really not that dense when it came to their matters in worldly life. In fact, they were “*mustabshirīn*” - keen-sighted, enlightened people. But, this enlightenment of theirs

was outwardly-oriented, of the surface, of the mundane, which could only serve them well to enrich what revolved round their transitory life in this world. However, for the eternal life of 'Ākhirah, the life-to-come, this was not to work.

After hearing these details, please recite the present verse of the Qur‘ān once again: *أَوْمَرُكُمْ كَانَ مَيْتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَنْ مَثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِنْهَا* It means that one who was dead earlier, that is, was a disbeliever, then, Allah raised him back to life, that is, gave him the *taufīq* to become a Muslim - and then, He gave him a light, that is, 'Īmān or faith, with which he moves about among people. Now can this person be equal to one who is surrounded by all sorts of darkness, out of which, he cannot get out, that is, is groping in the darkness of disbelief, does not himself know what is good or bad for him, and there is no way he can ward off his destruction. If so, how can he bring any benefit to others?

The Light of Faith Brings Benefits for Others Too

In this verse, by saying: *نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ* (light with which he walks among men), the instruction given was that the light of faith is not restricted to a mosque (*masjid*), spiritual seminary (*khanqāh*) or a modest roomette secluded for reflection and remembrance (*hujrah*). Whoever is blessed with this light by Allah Ta‘ālā, he carries it with him everywhere he goes through the lives of people on the streets and in the homes. Everywhere he is, he himself benefits from the light and lets others too benefit by it. Light is light and cannot be suppressed by any darkness. Even a tiny flickering lamp does not easily give up under the weight of surrounding darkness, though the light it emits does not go very far. When light is strong, it spreads over a larger area. When light is dim, it lightens a smaller area. But light is light. It subdues darkness after all - darkness does not subdue light. Light is not light if it surrenders to darkness. Similarly, an 'Īmān which surrenders to *Kufr*, or is scared by it, is no 'Īmān. This light of 'Īmān, this light of faith is there with its bearer in all walks of life, under all conditions and in every age.

In this similitude, there is yet another hint that light is after all universally beneficial. Every human being and every animal benefits by it, intentionally, or without intention, more or less. Let us suppose

that a person who has the light but does not wish to let the other person benefit from it, nor the other person has come out to seek the benefit of his light, but the very fact that someone is walking with light by his side is bound to spread out its benefit to others naturally, rather compulsively. This is what happens with the *’Imān* of a true Muslim. It does make its benefit shower on others too, in some degree, whether or not the receivers realize it. At the end of the verse, it was said: كَذَلِكَ رُزِقَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (This is how their deeds appear beautified to the disbelievers). It means that the disbelievers and deniers of truth who do not accept proofs which are open and clear do so because everyone has a craze of his own which keeps him pleased with himself. There is the ever-present Sahyṭān, and no less is the retinue of one’s desires, whims and fancies which present before the eyes of such people a mosaic of their evil deeds which they start seeing as nice and beautiful. Calling it a deception is an understatement. May Allah keep all of us protected from it.

Verses 123 - 125

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ أَكْبَرًا مُجْرِمِيهَا لِيَمْكُرُوا فِيهَا
 وَمَا يَمْكُرُونَ إِلَّا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَإِذَا
 جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ حَتَّى نُؤْتَىٰ مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ رُسُلُ
 اللَّهِ ۗ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ ۗ سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا
 صَغَارٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ۗ بِمَا كَانُوا يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾
 فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ
 يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَأَمَّا يَصْعَدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ ۗ
 كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

And in a similar way, We have made in every town its chief sinners so that they commit mischief in it. And they do not commit mischief but against themselves, and they do not realize. [123]

And when a sign comes to them, they say, “We shall never come to believe unless we are given the like of what was given to the messengers of Allah. Allah

knows best where to place His message. Those who committed sin shall soon suffer from disgrace before Allah and face severe punishment for the mischief they have been making. [124]

So, whom Allah wills to give guidance, He opens his heart for Islam, and whom He wills to go astray, He makes his heart narrow, much too narrow, as though he climbs up to the sky. In this way, Allah brings ignominy over those who do not believe. [125]

Commentary

Mentioned in the previous verse was that this world is a place of trial. Good deeds here are tied with some effort. This is a way laid out with hurdles. The same is true about evil deeds. They come with a web of deception laced with unending desires and their short-lived gratifications, a way of living which makes these evil deeds look good in the sight of human beings who are unaware of their reality and heedless to their ultimate end. Such is their pull that the smartest of the smart in this world would not hesitate to jump into the bandwagon.

In the first (123) of the present verses, it is said that this trial can be seen as an ongoing spectacle of life since the beginning of the universe of our existence. Usually, it is the big people of a community, the rich, the influential, the holders of clout and access who, when they get used to the taste of money, power and recognition, start committing crimes in one or the other form, never bothering to reflect on the ultimate end of what they were doing. As for the common people, they become accustomed to following the example set by these big people. They copy them with the conviction that it is good for them and that they are on the obvious road to success. In contrast, there are the blessed prophets and their deputies charged with learning, teaching and preaching. They try to stop people from their evil deeds and warn them of the consequences of what they were doing. Then, these big people open a front of hostility and conspiracy against them, which is obviously to harass or harm these pious souls, but in the ultimate analysis, the curse of what they do against them recoils back on them alone. And this can happen to them even within their life in the present world.

In this statement of guidance, Muslims have been warned against

aspiring to be like the big, the rich, the wealthy of the world. They should leave the habit of looking at them as role-models and stop following them mob-like. For them, the ideal is that they should make a habit of seeing everything in perspective making sure that they are aware of the final end of their deeds, and that they should themselves learn to figure out as to what is good or bad for them.

In addition to that, the purpose here is to comfort the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم when he has been asked not to grieve about the hostility of the chiefs of Quraysh, for it was nothing new. Prophets in the past had also faced such people. But, in the end, they were disgraced and the word of Allah reigned supreme.

In the second verse (124), mentioned there is a conversation relating to the same chiefs of the Quraysh. What they said was a combination of verbal belligerence, sarcasm and mockery. It was answered.

Imām al-Baghawī reports from Sayyidnā Qatādah that Abū Jahl, the big chief of the tribe of Quraysh once said: We have confronted Banū ‘Abd Munāf (that is, the family of the Holy Prophet ﷺ) on every front and we have never been behind them. But, now they say: ‘you cannot match us in nobility and spiritual greatness because we have a prophet in our family who receives revelation from Allah Ta‘ālā.’ Then he said: I swear by Allah that we will never follow them unless we too start receiving the kind of revelation he receives. The statement: *وَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ حَتَّى نُؤْتَىٰ مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ رُسُلُ اللَّهِ* (And when a sign comes to them, they say, “We shall never come to believe unless we are given the like of what was given to the messengers of Allah) at the end of the verse means exactly this.

Prophets and Messengers are appointed by Allah:

This Office cannot be acquired or appropriated:

After having reported the statement quoted above, the Qur‘ān answers it by saying: *اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ* (Allah knows best where to place his message). It means that the person making this remark thinks in His ignorance that the station of a prophet and messenger can be acquired on the basis of family nobility, tribal authority and wealth while prophethood is the office of the Vice Regency (*Khilāfah*) of Allah the acquisition of which is in no one’s control. No matter how many excellences and perfections one has acquired for himself, still no one can

- through his discretion or control or power of achievement - succeed in acquiring the office and station of prophethood and messengership. That is purely a blessing of Allah *Jalla Sha'nuhu*. He bestows it on whomsoever He wills.

This proves that prophethood and messengership are not controlled by human beings. They are not what can be acquired by intellectual perfection or pragmatic excellence or utmost striving or consuming devotion. Even a *waliyy* or saint, no matter how high he may soar in his spiritual station, cannot acquire it. That is nothing but Divine grace as it is given only to particular servants of Allah as dictated by Divine knowledge and wisdom. However, it is necessary that whoever is chosen to occupy this station and office, in the ultimate knowledge of Allah Ta'ālā, is identified right from the beginning when he is created with appropriate inherent ability and then he is specially groomed in his morals and deeds.

Towards the end of the verse, it was said: سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا صَغَارٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا يَمْكُرُونَ (Those who committed sin shall soon suffer from disgrace before Allah and face severe punishment for the mischief they have been making). Here, the word: صَغَارٌ (*ṣaghār*) is a verbal noun which means disgrace. The sentence means that these antagonists of truth who are known to be the big chiefs of their people will see their pride and prestige rolling in dust. Disgrace is coming; so is punishment - and both are grim. That can be within the life of the present world, and in the 'Ākhirah as well - as has been the fate of the oppressors of the prophets in the past who were put to disgrace in the present world as well. The topmost antagonists of our own Prophet, may the blessing of Allah and peace be upon him, who boasted about their prestige, either entered the fold of Islam or, as was the case with those who did not, were destroyed in disgrace. What happened to the legendary chiefs of Quraysh, Abū Jahl and Abū Lahb, became a lesson when the Conquest of Makkah broke their backs.

Signs of 'Sharḥ al-Ṣadr' in Dīn

Some signs of the Divinely-guided, and the firm on error, have been given in the third verse (125). Said there was: فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ (So, whom Allah wills to give guidance, He opens his heart for Islam).

Hākim in al-Mustadrak and Baihaqī in Shu‘ab al-Īmān report from Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضى الله عنه: When this verse was revealed, the Companions of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم requested him to explain the meaning of *Sharḥ al-Ṣadr*, the opening of the heart for Islam. He said: ‘Allah Ta‘ālā puts a light in the heart of a believer through which his heart opens up for the perception, understanding and acceptance of truth. The *Ṣaḥābah* submitted: ‘Is there a sign which will help recognize the person who has such *Sharḥ al-Ṣadr*? He said: ‘Yes. The sign is that *‘Ākhirah* and its blessings become the object of all his desires. He avoids uncalled-for desires and fleeting enjoyments and starts getting ready for death before it comes.’

After that, he said: “ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصَّعْدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ ” (and whom He wills to let go astray, He makes his heart narrow, much too narrow [wherefore, for him to accept the truth and to act in accordance with it becomes as difficult], as though he climbs up to the sky).

Kalabi has said: ‘the narrowing of his heart means that no passage for the entry of truth and good remains open there.’ A similar explanation has also been reported from Sayyidnā Fārūq al-Ā‘zam رضى الله عنه and Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās رضى الله عنه has said: ‘When he hears the *Dhikr* of Allah, he feels being harassed and when he listens to what is *Kufr* and *Shirk*, his heart relishes it.’

The Noble *Ṣaḥābah*: Ever-Eager Receivers of Truth

This was the reason why the noble *Ṣaḥābah*, may Allah be pleased with all of them, who were chosen by Allah Ta‘ālā to be His Prophet’s companions in faith, and to be the learners and carriers of his teachings as his direct disciples. They were so convinced as his adherents that their doubts about Islamic injunctions, if any, remained negligibly low. During their whole lifetime, the number of questions presented before the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم by them are but a counted few. The reason was that by the grace of the company of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم their hearts were almost engraved with love and reverence for Allah Ta‘ālā and because of which they were blessed with the high station of *Sharḥ al-Ṣadr*, a heart open to the acceptance of truth. In fact, their hearts had become in themselves the very standard of truth and falsehood. They would accept truth promptly and falsehood could not find entry into their hearts. After that, as the distance from

the blessed period of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم increased, doubts and scruples started finding room for infiltration and that was the beginning of dogmatic differences.

To Remove Doubts : Open Hearts, Narrow Debates

In our day, the world is a stage infested with doubts. People seek solutions through debates, arguments and counter-arguments and end up with confusion worse confounded. This is not a sound way to handle doubts as pointed out by the unique Indian poet, Akbar Ilāhābādī:

فلسفی کو بحث کے اندر خدا ملتا نہیں ڈور کو سلجھا رہا ہے پر سرا ملتا نہیں

The philosopher deep in debate cannot find God
He is untangling the string but cannot find where to begin!

There is only one way out, that which was taken by the blessed Companions and by the early righteous elders: Think of the perfect power of Allah Ta‘ālā and imagine His blessings and feel the presence of His love and reverence, the doubts evaporate automatically. This is the reason why the Qur‘ān has itself prompted the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to make the following *Du‘ā* (prayer):

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي
Rabbishrah li sadri

O my Rabb, open my heart.

At the end of the verse it was said: كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرَّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ which means that this is how Allah brings damnation and disgrace upon those who do not believe. For truth, their hearts are not open while to every evil they dash.

Verses 126 - 128

وَهَذَا صِرَاطُ رَبِّكَ مُسْتَقِيمًا ۗ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ
﴿١٢٦﴾ لَهُمْ دَارُ السَّلَامِ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ۗ يَمْعُشَرُ الْجِنَّ قَدِ
اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ مِّنَ الْإِنْسِ ۗ وَقَالَ أَوْلِيَّتُهُم مِّنَ الْإِنْسِ رَبَّنَا اسْتَمْتَعَ
بَعْضُنَا بِبَعْضٍ وَوَلَّغْنَا أَلْبَابَنَا الَّذِي أَجَلَّتْ لَنَا ۗ قَالَ النَّارُ

مَثُوكُمْ خُلْدَيْنَ فِيهَا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ

﴿١٢٨﴾

And this is the path of your Lord, a straight path. We have made the verses elaborate for people who accept the advice. [126] For them there is the Abode of Peace with their Lord, and He is their Guardian by virtue of what they used to do. [127]

And the day He gathers all of them together: “O Jinn-kind, you have done too much against mankind.” And their friends from among the human beings will say, “Our Lord, some of us have benefitted from some others, and we have reached our term You had appointed for us.” He will say, “The Fire is your Abode where you will remain for ever, except what Allah wills. Surely, your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing.” [128]

Commentary

In the first (126) of the three verses appearing here, the address is to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and it has been said: وَهَذَا صِرَاطُ رَبِّكَ مُسْتَقِيمًا (And this is the path of your Lord, a straight path). Here, as said by Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضى الله عنه, the word: هذا (*hādha*:this) refers to the Qur‘ān, and as said by Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās رضى الله عنه, it means Islam (Ruh al-Ma‘ānī). The sense of the sentence is: This Way is the Way of your Lord, that is, this is a Way which has been proposed by your Lord in His infinite Wisdom, and with Him it finds favour. Here, by attributing the Way to the Lord of all, it has been indicated that the working system of Qur‘ān and Islam given to him was not for the benefit of Allah Ta‘ālā, rather, it was for the benefit of those who would act in accordance with it. This is as required by His being the *Rabb*, the Supreme Nurturer. Through this Way, the purpose is to nurture, train and groom human beings in a manner which would guarantee their eternal well-being.

Then, by bringing in the word: رب (*Rabb*:Lord) in a state of attribution to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, that is: ربك (*Rabbik*:your Lord), the impression of a special kindness towards him has been released - that: ‘your’ Lord has proposed this Way. The delicacy of this attribu-

tion can be readily felt by people of taste. Think of a servant of Allah. If he ever happens to find his person placed in even the minor-most frame of reference to his *Rabb* and *Ma‘būd*, his Lord and the object of his worship and devotion, that would be, for him, the highest possible achievement. And now, if the Lord of lords, the One worship-worthy entity in this whole universe, were to attribute His pristine Person to him and say, “I am yours,” what remains there for him to say anything anymore about his wonderful ‘kismet!’

After that, the ‘existing identity’ of this Qur’ānic Way has been explained through the word: *مُسْتَقِيمٌ* (*mustaqīm*), that is, this path is the straight path. Here too, rather than have ‘*mustaqīm*’ (straight) as the adjective of ‘*ṣirāt*’ (path), it has been placed as an adverb which indicates that the Way has been proposed by the Lord of the universe, and in this, any probability, other than its being straight, just cannot exist. (Ruḥ al-Ma‘ānī and Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ)

The text then says: *كَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ* (We have made the verses elaborate for people who accept the advice).

The word: *فَصَّلْنَا* (*Faṣṣalnā*: We have made elaborate) is from: *تَفْصِيلٌ* (*tafṣīl*) which basically means to describe a subject by analysing it unit by unit. This way comprehending the subject becomes easy. Therefore, the outcome of *tafṣīl* is to explain explicitly. So, the sense comes to be: ‘We have stated matters of principle explicitly and in details in which there remains no brevity or ambiguity.’ After that, by saying: *لِقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ* (for people who accept the advice), it was pointed out that, though these statements of the Qur’ān are clear, but benefit from them has been derived only by those who ponder over the Qur’ān to seek good counsel honestly, that is, doggedness, inherent resistance, opinionatedness, a priori hostility or the barriers of blind adherence to or following of ancestral customs do not come in between as walls.

In the second verse (127), it was said: *لَهُمْ دَارُ السَّلَامِ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ* (For them there is the Abode of Peace with their Lord). It means that the people who have been mentioned above, people who see and hear the Qur’ānic words of advice with an open mind and who, as an inevitable result, accept the advice and guidance, then, it is for them that there is that reward of *Dārus-Salām*, present and preserved, waiting. Here, the

word: دَارٌ (*dār*) means home or abode and: سَلَامٌ (*salām*) means peace and security from all calamities, catastrophies and hardships. Therefore, *Dārus-Salām* can be the description of a home where none of these, or sorrow or pain of any kind, can find entry. And that, as obvious, could only be Paradise.

And Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās رضى الله عنه said: *Salām* is the name of Allah *Jalla Sha’nuhu*. And the *Dār* of *As-Salām* means the ‘*Dār*’ (home, house or abode) of Allah. It is evident that the abode of Allah is a place of peace. Therefore, the meaning essentially remains the same, that is, a home where total and all-inclusive peace reigns. By calling *Jannah* (Paradise) *Dārus-Salām*, the indication given is that *Jannah* alone is the place where one sheds off all pain, anxiety and distaste, and enjoys total bliss, something never acquired by the highest of the high in this mortal world, nor even by the greatest of the great prophets or messengers - because this state of life in the mortal world is not the proper locale of perfect and eternal peace and pleasure.

It has been stated in this verse that, for those who have the good fortune of accepting the advice, there is ‘*Dārus-Salām*’ with their Lord. Now, the expression - ‘with their Lord’ - could also mean that this ‘*Dārus-Salām*’ cannot be cashed instantly here in the mortal world, rather, they will get it when they go to their Lord on the Day of *Qiyāmah*. And it could also mean that the promise of ‘*Dārus-Salām*’ cannot be false. The most gracious *Rabb* is its guarantor. It lies safe with Him. Then, right here, there is yet another indication towards the fact that no one can ever imagine the blessings of this ‘*Dārus-Salām*’ within the limitations of this frame of existence. Only the *Rabb*, with whom lies this treasure, knows it.

Moreover, in the light of the second meaning given above, the actual getting of this ‘*Dārus-Salām*’ does not seem to hinge upon the coming of *Qiyāmah* (The Last Day) and ‘*Ākhirah*’ (Hereafter). In fact, it is also possible that the most gracious *Rabb* would make anyone He wills its fortunate recipient within the life of this world - whether by making them totally immune to and protected against all calamities and hardships, as has been the case in some examples of past prophets and men of Allah, or, by making the blessings of the ‘*Ākhirah*’ appear before

their eyes with a touch of the real, their very eyes were attuned to the real thing in a manner that it helped them perceive the pains of the transitory world as something insignificant and not worthy of much notice. For such people, even stockpiles of suffering are reduced to a blade of grass.

That the forthcoming rewards to be received as against the hardships of the mortal world would make them welcome these hardships as something delectable is not a proposition too far out. Think of the eternal blessings of the 'Ākhirah. They are certainly great as they can be. Then, think of the fleeting comforts of this mortal world. Their very thought thrills. Man slaves for them, yet takes his slavery with a smile and a sigh of relief. Man sacrifices the bliss of his freedom and exchanges it with worldly comforts through recommendations and bribes, goes for the hard labour of job or work which cuts through his sleep and rest, even does it with zest and enthusiasm, and then, is happy and grateful about it - because he sees before his eyes the passage of thirty one days of the month which will bring to him the taste and pleasure of the salary he has earned. That pleasure makes every bitterness of this slavery in work tasteful and pleasing. According to one of the possible explanations (Tafsīr) of the Qur'ānic verse: *وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٌ*, those who fear Allah Ta'ālā shall have two Paradises, the one in the 'Ākhirah and the other in the mortal world. To begin with, Paradise in the world means that one finds the help of Allah with him in everything he does. What he does seems to be becoming easy for him - and, even if he has to face a passing phase of difficulty, extra-effort, or even failure, that appears welcome to him in anticipation of the lasting blessings of the 'Ākhirah, something which turns even this painful experience into a state of comfort.

To sum up, it can be said that the reference in this verse, of 'Dārus-Salām' for good people being with their *Rabb*, is a promise which is certain and determined for the *Akhirah*, and it is also possible that they may be given a taste of the 'Dārus-Salām' in this world as well.

At the conclusion of the verse (127), it was said: *وَهُوَ وَرَبُّهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ* (and He is their Guardian by virtue of what they used to do). It means that, because of their good deeds, Allah Ta'ālā becomes their guardian, care-taker and helper. Everything hard they face becomes easy on

them.

Mentioned in the third verse (128) is a dialogue before a gathering of Jinns and human beings on the plains of the Resurrection (*Al-Hashr*). Allah Ta‘ālā will address the satans among Jinns telling them about their excessive role in misleading human beings. What would they say in reply has not been mentioned by the Qur‘ān. As obvious, there was not much they could do but to confess the truth before the All-Knowing and the All-Aware. But, in not mentioning their confession, the hint given is that they will be so confounded with the question that they would not know how to make an answer. (Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī)

After that, the text turns to the satans among human beings, that is, those who followed the instigations of satans during their life of the world, went astray themselves, and kept becoming the cause of others going astray. It is from them that an answer submitted in the court of the Judge of all judges has been mentioned - though, the initial question was not asked of the satans of human beings, but in an implied manner, they too were the addressees, because they too had done the same job of making people go astray as was the job of the satans of the Jinn. Thus, their reply was based on their being the implied addressees. But, it seems obvious that the human-like satans too are liable to be questioned which, though, is not mentioned here explicitly. However, it does find mention in a verse of Sūrah Yā Sīn, which is: **لَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ** **يَسِّرَ أَدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ** that is, ‘had I not taken a pledge from you, O children of Ādam (through messengers), that you shall not obey the Shaytan? - 36:60).

From this we know that human satans too will be subjected to the question on this occasion and they would, in reply, confess that, surely, they committed that crime and that they listened to the satans, and they would also confess that, surely, the two of them benefitted from each other through their friendship and cooperation. The human satans learned from them the ways of securing gratification from worldly enjoyments and, on occasions, called on them for help in one or the other way, as is the practice in idol-worshipping Hindus and, for that matter, even among ignorant Muslims, who would practice methods through which the help of satans and jinns can be harnessed in some tasks. As for the satans among Jinns, their gain was that they found a

pliable people to listen to them because of which they succeeded in making human beings follow their dictates, so much so that they forgot all about death and the Hereafter. That was when they confessed that they had forsaken the thought of death and the Hereafter because of the instigation of satans, and now they see it in front of them. Thereupon, Allah Ta‘ālā will say: النَّارُ مَثْوَاكُمْ خُلِدِينَ فِيهَا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ (“The Fire is your abode where you shall remain for ever, except what Allah wills [that is, wills to take someone out of it]. Surely, your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing”). But, as in the definitive statements of the Qur‘ān (*Nuṣūṣ*), it stands proved that even Allah Ta‘ālā would not so will, therefore, it is for ever that they shall have to be in it.

Verses 129 - 132

وَكَذَلِكَ نُؤَلِّئُ بَعْضَ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعْضًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾
يَمْعَشِرَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُونَ
عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا قَالُوا شَهِدْنَا
عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِنَا وَغَرَّبْنَاهُمُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَشَهِدُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ
أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كٰفِرِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ ذَلِكَ أَن لَّمْ يَكُنْ رَبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرَى
بِظُلْمٍ وَأَهْلُهَا غٰفِلُونَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَةٍ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوا وَمَا
رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

And thus We set some wrongdoers on some others because of what they used to commit. [129]

“O Jinnkind and mankind, have there not come to you the messengers from among you who used to narrate My verses to you, and used to warn you of your meeting this day?” They will say, “We testify against ourselves.” And the worldly life had deceived them, and they testified against themselves that they were disbelievers. [130]

And this is because your Lord is not to destroy any towns for any injustice while their people are unaware.

And for all there are ranks according to what they did,
and your Lord is not unaware of what they do. [132]

Commentary

Lexically, the word: *نُوَلِّي* (*nuwallī*) appearing in the first (129) of the three verses cited above can be translated either in the sense of joining up and bringing closer, or in the sense of setting on or imposing on. Narrations reported from leading authorities in *Tafsīr* among the Ṣaḥābah and Tābi‘īn also carry the explanation of this word as based on these two meanings.

The Basis of Human Groupings after Resurrection

Early authorities Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr and Qatādah and others have taken the first sense and, according to them, the verse means that, on the day of *Qiyāmah* before Allah Ta‘ālā, the collective formations - that is, groupings and party alignments of people - will not be on racial or national or colour and language basis, instead of which, these groupings shall be on the basis of deeds and morals. A Muslim obedient to Allah Ta‘ālā, wherever he may be, shall be together with Muslims; and the disobedient disbeliever, wherever he may be, shall be together with disbelievers - whether their race, heredity, country, language, colour and social living may be way different.

Then, even among Muslims, those good in deeds shall be with the righteous while the evil doers will be grouped up with evil doers and sinners. This is the sense of what has been said in Sūrah At-Takwīr: *وَأَنزَلْنَا* *التُّفُوسَ رُجَجًا* that is, when people shall be grouped (like with like) the sense of which is that the people gathered before Allah Ta‘ālā on the plains of Resurrection shall split in different groupings in terms of their deeds and morals.

In his *Tafsīr* of this verse, Sayyidnā Fārūq al-Ā‘zam has said: ‘The doers of one kind of deeds, good or bad, shall be grouped together. The good will go with the good to *Jannah* and the evil will be led with the evil to *Jahannam*.’ To authenticate his explanation, Sayyidnā Fārūq al-Ā‘zam cited proof from the verse: *أَخْتَرُوا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَأَزْوَاجَهُمْ* of the Holy Qur‘ān (37:22) which deals with the same subject by saying that, on the day of *Qiyāmah*, the command will go forth: ‘Gather those who have been unjust, and their cohorts, (and take them to *Jahannam*).

The gist of the explanation of this verse is that Allah Ta‘ālā will, by merging some of the unjust with some others, will make them one group, irrespective of how far apart they may be from each other in terms of their race and homeland.

In addition to what has been stated above, it has also been clarified in another verse that, on the fateful day of Resurrection, the temporal grouping based on race, country, colour, language and other unifiers will break up root and branch: *وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُورَثُهُ بُنْيَانُهُ وَيَتَفَرَّقُ قَوْمٌ*. It means: When the Hour (of *Qiyāmah*) is established, those united shall stand separated - 30:14).

Deeds and Morals affect Collective Matters even in this World

As for the severance of existing relations and affiliations, that is something which will come before everyone fully and clearly after all, but a minor sampling of this can be found everywhere in this mortal world as well. It goes without saying that a good person is temperamentally tuned to virtues and virtuous people. He is attached to them individually or collectively. This becomes his passport to ever-new avenues of good deeds which go on to make his determination firm. The same holds for doers of evil deeds. They too relate to their kind; to them they are attached and with them they keep company. And this negative company keeps contributing to their evil deeds and evil morals, as a result of which, avenues of good and prospects of better conduct keep closing on him before his own eyes. This is his cash punishment for his evil deeds which he gets right here in this world.

So, in a nutshell, we can say that there is a reward or punishment of good or bad deeds which will come in the ‘*Ākhirah* and there is a reward or punishment which comes within the life of this world in a way that a good person is blessed with colleagues who are equally good and honest and whose contribution to whatever is undertaken makes them rise and prosper together. In contrast, there is the person with evil deeds and evil intention who gets what he deserves. The colleagues he gets and the help and assistance he employs are no different than him. What is left of his misfortune, the evil group around him takes care of that when it pushes him into a far deeper abyss.

As mentioned earlier, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: When Allah Ta‘ālā is pleased with a ruler, He gives him good ministers and

good staff who make his government well-managed and progress-prone - and when Allah Ta‘ālā is displeased with someone, he gets colleagues who are bad and so are the officials he must deal with. As a result, even if he wishes to do something good, he cannot get it done.

An oppressor is punished at the hands of another oppressor

The sense of the verse given above is in terms of its translation according to the first meaning mentioned earlier. As for the second meaning mentioned alongside, reported from Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās رضى الله عنه, Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn Zubayr رضى الله عنه, Sayyidnā ibn Zayd رضى الله عنه, Mālik ibn Dinār and others is a *Tafsīr* according to which, ‘Allah Ta‘ālā sets some unjust people (*Zālim*) over other unjust people and thus has one *Zālim* (oppressor) punished at the hands of another *Zālim*.’

This approach to meaning is also correct and sound in its place, and is in accord with other statements of the Qur‘ān and *Hadīth*. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is reported to have said in a *Hadīth*: كَمَا تَكُونُونَ كَذَلِكَ يُؤْتَرُ عَلَيْكُمْ that is, as you shall be, so shall be the rulers set on you. If you are unjust and evil, your rulers will also be unjust and evil. And if you are good in your deeds and characters, Allah Ta‘ālā will make good, kind and just people your rulers.

Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās رضى الله عنه says: When Allah Ta‘ālā wishes well for a people, He appoints the best rulers and officials for them - and when He wishes otherwise for a people, He sets the worst rulers and officials over them. (*Tafsīr Al-Baḥr Al-Muḥīṭ*)

According to Ruḥ al-Ma‘ānī, it is on the authority of this verse that Muslim jurists prove that: When people of a country, turn away from Allah Ta‘ālā and become involved in deeds of injustice and oppression, Allah Ta‘ālā sets oppressive rulers and officials over them and lets them be punished at their hands.

Based on a narration by Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضى الله عنه, Ibn Kathīr has reported a decisive statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ: مَنْ سَلَطَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ that is, whoever helps a *Zālim* (oppressor) in his *Zulm*, (injustice) then Allah Ta‘ālā sets that very *Zālim* on him to torment him, and it is at his hands that he gets his punishment.

Mentioned in the second verse (130), is a question which will be asked of the Jinn and human beings on the plains of Resurrection.

They will be asked to show the reason why they chose to disbelieve and disobey Allah Ta‘ālā. They were told that they could not deny that Divinely ordained messengers from among them did reach them, messengers who recited to them the verses of Allah and warned them of that day of reckoning. In the reply to this question, mentioned there is their confession that the messengers did come, they did tell them the truth, and that they were involved with disbelief and disobedience. But, no reason for this wrongdoing was given from their side. Instead, Allah Ta‘ālā has Himself given its reason by saying: وَعَوَّرْنَاهُمُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا (And the worldly life had deceived them). It means that the charms of their transitory life had put them on the wrong track. They thought that it was everything, which was really nothing, and that made them heedless to their end.

There is something noteworthy here. There are other verses in the Qur‘ān which say that the disbelievers will deny their *Kufr* and *Shirk* when asked to explain it on the day of Resurrection and before their Lord, they would lie by saying: وَاللَّهِ رَبِّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ that is, ‘we swear by Allah, our Lord, we were no *mushriks* (of those who ascribe partners to Him).’ Now, this verse tells us that they would be ashamed of their *Kufr* and *Shirk* and will confess their error. On the outside, this seems to be contradictory. But, there are further explanations in other verses of the Qur‘ān that they would initially deny when asked, but, when Allah Ta‘ālā - in His perfect power - would make them speechless, witnesses will come from different parts of their own body. Then, Allah will give them their speech back and they will tell everything about their misdeed openly and clearly. Then, the Jinn and human beings will find out that all parts of their body were really the private eyes of the created system which finally produced the true evidence on everything about them. Then, left with no choice to deny, they will confess.

Are there messengers of Allah among the Jinn too?

Something else to be considered here is that, in this verse, Allah Ta‘ālā has addressed both Jinnkind and mankind and asked them about messengers (*rasūl*) coming to them, messengers of Allah who were from among them. This shows that messengers have been sent to the Jinnkind from among their own kind - as is the case with human-kind among whom the messengers were sent from among them, that

is, they were human beings.

On this question, the ‘*Ulamā’* of *Tafsīr* and *Ḥadīth* differ. Some say that *Rasūl* (messenger) and *Nabiyy* (prophet) have always been human. There has been no *Rasūl* appointed directly from among the Jinn-kind. Instead, what has happened is that there have been Jinns charged with the mission of getting reports of the message of truth conveyed by human prophets and messengers and take it to their kind. They were really, in that way, couriers and message-bearers of a *Rasūl*. Therefore, they too are called *rasūl* or carrier of a message, within the literal sense of the word in Arabic. The proof of the position taken by these respected scholars comes from the verses of the Qur‘ān where sayings of the Jinn that they conveyed the Qur‘ān or the saying of the prophet to their kind have been mentioned, for example: *وَلَوْ إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ مُنْذِرِينَ* (... and they returned to their people to warn them - 46:29), and in the verse of Sūrah Al-Jinn: *فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا عَجَبًا . يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ* (... they said: Indeed, we have heard a wonderful Qur‘ān that leads to rectitude, so in it we believe - 72:1).

But, there is a group of ‘*Ulamā’* who, given the outward meaning of this verse, also believe that, before the appearance of the Last among Prophets *صلى الله عليه وسلم*, each of the two species had their messengers from among them. To human beings came messengers who were human beings, and to the different classes of the Jinn, messengers were sent from among their kind only. It is the distinction of the Last among Prophets *صلى الله عليه وسلم* that he was sent as the only *Rasūl* for all human beings and the Jinn of the whole world - and that too was not limited for one given time - in fact, all human beings and the Jinn born right up to the Last Day of *Qiyāmah* shall be his community and he alone shall be the *Rasūl* and *Nabiyy* for them.

Related Notes on Hindu Autars

Leading scholars of *Tafsīr*, Kalābi and Mujāhid hold that the *Autars* of Hindus are generally from the Jinns. Qaḍī Thanā‘ullah of Pānīpat, in his *Tafsīr* *Mazharī*, has followed this view. According to him, it proves that, before Sayyidnā Ādam *عليه السلام*, the messengers of the Jinn used to be from their kind only. Then, it is proved that the Jinn inhabited the earth thousands of years before human beings - and since they too are obligated to observe the precepts of the injunctions of the Sha-

rī'ah like human beings, it is necessary on the basis of reason and revelation that they too should have prophets and messengers among them in order to convey the commandments of Allah Ta'ālā.

Qaḍī Thanā'ullah Pānīpatī has said that the Hindus of India claim the history of their Vedas as thousands of years old. According to them their religious deities they called Autār date back to the same early time. It is not far out to say that they may be these very prophets and messengers of the Jinnkind, and may be the instructions brought by them were put together in the form of some book. The images and idols of Autars of Hindus placed in temples have particular patterns. Some are represented with several faces, others with many hands and feet, while still others would have other features such as a trunk like that of an elephant. They are very different from common human shapes. That the Jinn could transform themselves into such shapes is not beyond the range of probability. Therefore, saying that their Autar might be the prophets, messengers or their deputies who came to serve the Jinnkind - and their book itself be the collection of their instructions - is not so far out either. Then, gradually, as there were alterations in other books, alterations were made here too and what was left of it was idolatory and *Shirk*.

However, even if that original book and the authentic instructions left by those messengers were present, they would have stood abrogated after the appearance of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and the universal application of his prophethood. And that it would have become impossible to act in accordance with it after its having been deformed and altered is something evident by itself.

The third verse (131) tells us that sending prophets and messengers among human beings and the Jinn is based on the dictate of justice and mercy of Allah Ta'ālā for He does not send punishment over a people unless they have been awakened through His blessed messengers and provided with the light of guidance.

The sense of the fourth verse (132) is fairly clear. It says that with Allah there are ranks for classes of people among human beings and the Jinn. These ranks have been assigned in terms of their deeds. When rewarded or punished, the measure used shall be that of their deeds.

Verses 133 - 136

وَرَبُّكَ الْغَنِيُّ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ ۗ إِنْ يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفْ مِنْ
 بَعْدِكُمْ مَا يَشَاءُ ۖ كَمَا أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنْ ذُرِّيَةِ قَوْمٍ آخَرِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ إِنْ
 مَاتُوا وَعَدُونَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا مَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ قُلْ يَقَوْمِ اعْمَلُوا
 عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِكُمْ ۖ إِنَّي عَامِلٌ ۖ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۖ مَنْ تَكُونُ لَهُ
 عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ
 مِنَ الْحَرْثِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ نَصِيبًا فَقَالُوا هَذَا لِلَّهِ بِزَعْمِهِمْ ۖ وَهَذَا
 لِشُرَكَائِنَا ۖ فَمَا كَانَ لِشُرَكَائِهِمْ فَلَا يَصِلُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ۖ وَمَا كَانَ
 لِلَّهِ فَهُوَ يَصِلُ إِلَىٰ شُرَكَائِهِمْ ۗ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

And your Lord is the All-Independent, the Master of Mercy. If He wills, He shall take you away and shall bring after you whom He wills just as He has raised you from the progeny of other people. [133]

Surely what you are promised is bound to come, and you cannot frustrate (it). [134]

Say, "O my people, do at your place (whatever you do) I am to do (in my way). So, you will know for whom is the ultimate abode. Surely, the unjust shall not be successful. [135]

And they have assigned a portion for Allah from what He has created from the tillage and the cattle, and they said, "This is for Allah" so they claimed - "and this is for our associate-gods." Then, what was for their associate-gods never reaches Allah, and what was for Allah does reach their associate-gods. Evil is what they judge. [136]

Commentary

Stated in previous verses was that Allah Ta‘ālā has always been sending His messengers and the rules of conduct required by Him to every set of people among the Jinn and the human beings and, unless they were fully warned through their messengers, punishment was never given to them for their disbelief and disobedience.

In the first (133) of the four verses cited above, it has been pointed out that the practice of sending messengers and scriptures was not there because the Lord of the universe needed our obedience and worship, or some task of His depended on our obedience. No, this was never so. He is absolutely All-Independent, and need-free. But, alongwith His perfect freedom from dependence and need, there is that attribute of mercy in Him. See how He brings the entire universe into existence, then He maintains it and keeps fulfilling all outward and inward, present and future needs of everyone and everything. The cause is this very attribute of mercy. Otherwise, human beings, being what they are, would have hardly been able to produce what they needed, not to say much about their lack of etiquette in how to ask for what they need. This is particularly true about the very blessing of existence. That it has been bestowed without asking is all too clear. No human being anywhere has prayed to be born - nor can praying before coming into existence be imagined. Similarly, there are the limbs of the human body which go in the creation of a living body - the eyes, ears, hands, feet, the heart and the brain. Were they asked for by any human being? Or, did one of them had the consciousness and etiquette to ask for them? Nothing of the sort is true. The truth is: we were not there, we did not ask - it was His mercy hearing the unsaid!

Allah is All-Independent and His Creation is only a Mirror of His Mercy

In this verse, the words: رَبُّكَ الْغَنِيُّ describe how absolutely free from and independent of need the Lord of all lords is. But, by adding the words: ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ soon after, it was pointed out that, though He needs none, depends on none, is independent of everyone and everything in the universe, and the universe itself, yet, alongwith all that, He is also the one who has mercy and dispenses it at will.

Allah, in His Wisdom, Made no Human Being Need-Free - If So, Man Turns To Tyranny

It is certainly a great blessing of Allah, otherwise human beings have their own ways of neglect. When they become free from needs and independent of circumstantial compulsions, they stop caring for the benefit or loss and the sorrow or comfort of others. In fact, what usually happens under such situations is that one becomes all the

more adamant on inflicting injustice and oppression against others. Says a verse of the Holy Qur'an: *إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُفٍ* (96:6), that is, when human beings find themselves need-free and independent, they are ready to rebel and transgress. Therefore, Allah Almighty has made man so tied up with needs which cannot be fulfilled without the help of others. A king needs his retinue of liveries, the wealthy man needs his help, the industrialist depends on his labour. The driver of a passenger vehicle comes out on the streets to earn his living of the day while one who can afford to pay for the ride has to hail for one. Nature has chained them together. Each needs the other and no one is doing any favour. Without this arrangement, no rich man will pay a dime to anyone and no handyman or porter would care to carry someone else's burden. So, all this is a manifestation of the most perfect attribute of Allah Ta'ālā who is All-Independent, yet the Master of Mercy. The text could have used a single word form such as *Ar-Rahman* (All-Merciful) or *Ar-Rahīm* (Very-Merciful) and that would have served the purpose of describing the mercy of Allah. But, the choice of a compound form: *ذُرَّ الرَّحْمَةِ* (*Dhur-Rahmah*: The Master of Mercy) has been preferred because it shows the correlation between the two attributes of Allah Ta'ālā described in the verse. He is All-Independent, yet He is the master-dispenser of mercy - an attribute which is the real cause of sending messengers and books for the good of human beings.

After that, it was also made clear that the way His mercy is universal and perfect, in the same way His power holds control over everything. If He wills, He could undo everyone in a moment - and even this undoing of the entire creation would not cause the slightest difference to the working of His power. Then, if He wills to undo the present system of the entire universe and replace it with another set of creation in the same manner and at the same time - He can certainly do that. An evidence of this possible happening always remains before human beings of all ages. Think of the millions of human beings who inhabit the near and far corners of the earth and run the business of their lives, then think of the time a hundred years earlier. You shall realize that the earth was inhabited as it is now, and things were going on as usual, but none of the present inhabitants of the earth, the movers and shakers of things, were there. What was there was a different set of people - and that different set of people lies buried under

the earth with no traces to be found today. The people on the earth today are the descendants of the earlier generation of people. Says the Qur‘ān: *إِنْ يَشَاءُ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفْ مِنْ بَعْدِكُمْ مَا يَشَاءُ كَمَا أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنْ ذُرِّيَةِ قَوْمٍ آخَرِينَ* (If He wills, He shall take you away and shall bring after you whom He wills just as He has raised you from the progeny of other people -133). The sense of “*يُذْهِبْكُمْ*”: *yudhhibkum*, translated as ‘take you away,’ is to undo or make absent with no traces left behind. This is why there is no reference to destroying, killing or exterminating. The statement in the text restricts itself to ‘taking’ which denotes a state of unmaking, unbeing, loss of name, identity and trace.

After having established in the first verse that Allah is All-Independent (*Ghaniyy*), Master of Mercy (*Dhur-Raḥmah*) and All-Powerful too, the text carries a warning given to disobedient people: *إِنَّ مَا تُوْعَدُونَ لَأْتِي وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ*: ‘Surely what you are promised [that is, the Divine punishment] is bound to come, and you cannot frustrate [it].’

Another method to awaken them from their heedlessness was adopted in the third verse (135) where it was said: *قُلْ يَعْزِمُ اعْمَلُوا عَلَيَّ مَكَانَتِي كَمَا أَمَرْتُ أَنْتُمْ بِمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ* (Say, “O my people, do at your place (whatever you do) I am to do (in my way). So, you will know for whom is the ultimate abode. Surely, the unjust shall not be successful). This is addressed to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. He is being asked to tell those people of his in Makkah that the choice of not accepting what he is saying is theirs. Let them not accept it, stay as they are and keep on doing what their belief and hostility tell them to do - and he too will keep on doing what his belief tells him to do. In that, there was no loss for him. But, very soon, they will be the ones to find out who will be blessed with the ultimate salvation and success of the Hereafter. And, in this, let them not forget that the *Zalim*, the unjust, the usurpers of rights, never succeed.

Commenting on this verse, *Tafsīr* authority, Ibn Kathīr pointed out that the exact words of the text here are: *مَنْ تَكُونُ لَهُ عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ* (for whom is the ultimate abode) and not: *عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ الْآخِرَةِ* (the ultimate abode of *Akhirah*), that is, the suffix of *‘Ākhirah* or Hereafter is not there. This tells us that, much earlier than the abode of *Akhirah*, the ultimate success falls to the lot of the righteous servants of Allah alone even within the present abode of the world. This stands proved from the life and times

of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his blessed Companions. Not much time passed when all wielders of power and authority found themselves disgraced before them. Their countries were conquered at their hands. Within the period of prophethood, the whole Arabia came under his authority which soon extended to Yaman, Bahrain and the borders of Syria. Then, it was at the hands of his *Khulafā'* and the *Saḥābah* that a major part of the known world of the time came under their aegis. Fullfilled stood the promise of Allah Ta‘ālā: كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَأَعْلَيْنَا أَنَا وَرُسُلِي (Allah has written: I shall overcome, I, and My Messengers - 58:21). And again, it was said in another verse: إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ that is, 'We shall help Our Messengers, and those who have believed, in the present world, and on the Day of *Qiyāmah*, when witnesses will stand to record their testimony on the reckoning of deeds - 40:51.'

In the fourth verse (136), the disbelievers of Arabia have been admonished for a particular error in their behaviour. The custom was that they would take out from the produce of their lands and from the income of their businesses a portion for Allah and a portion for their idols. The portion taken out for Allah they would spend on the poor and the needy while the portion taken out in the name of their idols they would spend on the priests and keepers of the temple of idols.

To begin with, enough was their injustice in that everything was created by Allah Ta‘ālā, and the produce which came from them was bestowed by Him, yet they went ahead and made idols to share in what was given by Him. On top of this, they would add insult to injury when, should there be a drop in produce, they would apply this shortfall against the portion they meant for Allah saying that Allah was Independent and did not need their things. Thus, they would exact the portion of their idols in full, as well as that of their own. On some occasion, if it so happened that something from the portion taken out for the idols, or from that of their own, went into the portion reserved for Allah, they would pick it up and take it out of there to keep their accounting straight! And if came the occasion when things were the reverse of it, that is, if anything belonging to the portion of Allah was thrown in their own portion, or in the portion of their idols, it was left where it was saying that Allah is need-free, therefore, any

shortage in His share will not make any difference! The Holy Qur‘ān, taking notice of this crooked conduct of theirs, has said: **سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ** (Evil is what they judge -136). It means that their judgement is evil and crude because they are not realizing that it is Allah who created them and created everything that appears to belong to them, yet they go about equating others with Him, and to top it all, they find excuses to shift elsewhere what, according to their own intention, was supposed to belong to Allah.

The Admonition for Disbelievers - A Lesson for Muslims

This is an admonition directed against the waywardness of the disbelievers of Arabia. However, by implication, it holds a sharp lesson for Muslims as well - Muslims who devote their full potential, their life given by Allah, their body and mind, into different sections. They would reserve part of their years and time in life for Allah and His worship - though the right of Allah demanded that all time frames of their living years should have been reserved to obey and worship Him alone. May be, they could have taken out some time for themselves too to take care of human compulsions - and even then, the truth is that the right of Allah that we be grateful to Him would have still remained unfulfilled! But, here we are, in our time and in our places, doing unbelievable things. If, in the twenty four hours of a day and night of our lives, we do get around to fix some time to be devoted to remember Allah and engage ourselves in what we know as His essential *‘Ibādah*, then strange things start happening. There comes an urgent need, a call or an appointment or something like that, and we become pragmatic all of a sudden. The function, the business, the need comes first. No postponement is made in what is pragmatic or personal. The urgency of work stays. The inevitability of rest time stays. The axe falls on nothing but the time which had been fixed for devotion to Allah through prayers and recitation of the Qur‘ān. This happens most of the time - emergency, urgency, sickness or any other call - what is the first casualty in this rush is nothing but the time that we had earmarked for our *Dhikr* and *‘Ibādah*. We just cannot say how wrong, how ungrateful and how right-compromising this attitude is. May Allah Ta‘ālā keep us and all Muslims protected from it.

Verses 137 - 140

وَكَذَلِكَ زَيْنَ لِكَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَتَلَ أَوْلَادِهِمْ شُرَكَاءُهُمْ
لِيُزِدُوهُمْ وَلِيَلْبِسُوا عَلَيْهِمْ دِينَهُمْ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا فَعَلُوهُ
فَذَرَهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَقَالُوا هَذِهِ أَنْعَامٌ وَحَرَّتْ جِبْرَةٌ
لَا يَطْعَمُهَا إِلَّا مَنْ نَّشَأَ بِزَعْمِهِمْ وَأَنْعَامٌ حُرِّمَتْ طَهُورُهَا
وَأَنْعَامٌ لَا يَذْكُرُونَ اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا افْتِرَاءً عَلَيْهِ سَيَجْزِيهِمْ بِمَا
كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ وَقَالُوا مَا فِي بُطُونِ هَذِهِ الْأَنْعَامِ
خَالِصَةٌ لَّذُكُورِنَا وَمُحَرَّمٌ عَلَيَّ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مَيْتَةً فَهُمْ
فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ سَيَجْزِيهِمْ وَصَفَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّهُ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٣٩﴾ قَدْ
خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ قَتَلُوا أَوْلَادَهُمْ سَفَهًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَحَرَّمُوا مَا رَزَقَهُمُ
اللَّهُ افْتِرَاءً عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ قَدْ ضَلُّوا وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾

And thus their associate-gods have made the killing of their children alluring to many associators (idolators), so that they may lead them to disaster and may confuse their faith for them. And had Allah willed, they would not have done it. So, leave them with what they fabricate. [137]

And they say, "These are prohibited cattle and produce; none can eat them except those whom we wish" - so they claimed - "and there are cattle whose backs are prohibited (for riding or loading)." And there are cattle over which they do not pronounce the name of Allah, a fabrication against Him. He shall recompense them for what they have been fabricating. [138]

And they say, "Whatever is in the wombs of these cattle is purely for our males, and forbidden to our wives." And if it be dead, then in it they all are sharers. Soon, He shall recompense them for what they attribute. Surely, He is All-Wise, All-Knowing. [139]

Losers are those who kill their children foolishly, without knowledge, and have taken as prohibited what Al-

lah has provided them - a fabrication against Allah. They have gone astray, and they are not on the right path. [140]

Linkage of Verses

Described in the previous verses were false beliefs of the *mushriks* of Arabia while the present verses recount their practical errors and ignorant customs. The customs of *Jāhiliyyah* mentioned in these verses are: (1) They took out a portion in the name of Allah from grains and fruits, and some in the name of idols and Jinns. Then, if by chance, some part of what belonged to the portion of Allah got mixed up with the portion reserved for idols, they would let it stay mixed as it was. When the position was the reverse of it, they would take it out and make the portion set for idols even. The excuse was that Allah is need-free. A cut in His share does not harm Him while the partners need it - so, their share should not be decreased. This evil custom was mentioned earlier in verse 136.

(2) The second custom was that they would release animals they called *Baḥīrah* and *Sā‘ibah* in the name of idols and said that they were doing it for the pleasure of Allah. Here too, the portion allotted to idols was that the act of worship was intended for them - and the portion allotted to Allah was that they aimed to please Allah.

(3) The third custom was that of killing their female children.

(4) The fourth custom was that they would endow some tillage in the name of idols saying that only men could use its produce. Giving or not giving a share from it to women depended on their will. Women had no right to demand.

(5) They would do the same thing with cattle when they would restrict their use for men only.

(6) They considered the quadruped animals they released in the name of idols as unlawful for purposes of riding or carrying loads.

(7) There were quadruped animals they would specify. Using them at any time, they would not pronounce the name of Allah, neither when milking, nor when riding and nor when slaughtering.

(8) The eighth custom was that they would release animals in the name of idols, naming them as *Baḥīrah* or *Sā‘ibah*. When, at the time

of slaughter, the calf came out alive, they would slaughter it as well - but, would take it as lawful for men only; for women, they took it to be unlawful - and if the calf was born still, it was supposed to be lawful for everyone.

(9) Even milk from some animals was considered lawful for men and unlawful for women.

(10) They took reverence for four kinds of animals: *Bahīrah*, *Sā'ibah*, *Wasīlah* and *Hāmī*, as an act of worship.

[All these narrations appear in Ad-Durr Al-Manthūr and Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Ibn Zayd and As-Suddiy with exegetic deductions of Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Hātim, Ibn Abī Ash-Shaybah and Ibn Ḥumayd] [As in Bayān al-Qur'ān of Maulānā Thānavī]

Verses 141 - 142

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَ جَنَّاتٍ مَّعْرُوشَاتٍ وَغَيْرِ مَّعْرُوشَاتٍ وَالنَّخْلَ
وَالزَّرْعَ مُخْتَلِفًا أَكْلُهُ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرَّمَانَ مَتَشَابِهًا وَغَيْرِ
مَتَشَابِهٍ ط كُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَآتُوا حَقَّهُ يَوْمَ حَصَادِهِ وَلَا
تُسْرِفُوا ط إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾ وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ حَمُولَةٌ
وَفَرَشَاتٌ ط كُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ط
إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٤٢﴾

And He is the One who has created gardens trellised and untrellised, and date-palms and crops with a variety of edibles, and the olive and the pomegranate, similar and not similar to each other. Eat of its fruit when it bears fruit, and pay its due on the day of harvest, and do not be extravagant. Surely, Allah does not like the extravagant. [141]

And among cattle (He has created) those fit for loading and those fit for laying. Eat of what Allah has provided you, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Surely, he is an open enemy to you. [142]

Commentary

Mentioned in the previous verses was how astray the disbelievers

of Makkah had gone when they had taken their self-carved, lifeless, insensate idols as partners in the Divinity of Allah as they made them share in animals created by Him and in many other blessings which were bestowed on them. Their transgression went to the limits when they would take out charities from these blessings as an act of worship, setting aside a portion for Allah and another for their idols. Then, they would employ different excuses to take out what belonged to the portion set aside for Allah and put it in the portion reserved for the idols. Similarly, there were many other ignorance-based arbitrary customs which they had given legal status.

In the first (141) of the two verses quoted above, Allah Ta‘ālā mentions the wonders wrought by His perfect power in the form of what grows on the earth bringing forth the fruits of His creation. Similarly, in the second verse (142), pointed to was the creation of the different kinds of animals and cattle. Then, with this in view, comes the admonition - how could a people become so sightless as to undermine their Powerful, Knowing and Aware Creator in favour of things that weak, inert and unaware, and start taking the later as His associates and partners.

After that, they were guided towards the straight path, the most sound approach to life. They were told to understand that there was no partner or associate with Allah when He created and bestowed on them things which benefit them - how then, can they take them as sharers in the worship of Allah, something which has to be exclusively for Him? This was rank ingratitude for His blessings, and certainly an injustice. They should realize that it was Allah who bestowed these things on them. It was He who made them work for them so that they could use them as they wished and then, He made these things lawful for them. So, keeping these factors in view, it was their duty to remember the right of Allah, and be grateful to Him whenever they benefit from His blessings, and to stop making satanic thoughts and ignorance-based customs a part of their faith.

Some Words and Their Meanings

The word: **أَنْشَأَ** (*ansha‘a*) in the first verse means ‘created.’ The second word: **مَعْرُوشَاتٍ** (*ma‘rūshāt*) is from: **عَرَشَ** (*‘arsh*) which means to raise, to make go high. ‘*Ma‘rūshāt*’ refers to vines of plants which are mounted

on supports called trellis, such as, the grape, and some vegetables. In contrast, is: غَيْرَ مَعْرُوضَاتٍ (*ghayra ma‘rūshāt*: untrellised) which includes all plants the vines of which are not raised high - whether trees with trunk and without vines, or they may be with vines which spread on the ground and are not raised, such as, the melon.

The word: النَّخْل (*an-nakhl*) means the date tree; الزَّرْع (*az-zar‘*) is crops of all kinds. The word: الزَّيْتُون (*az-zaytūn*) is the name of the olive tree, and of its fruit as well; and: الرُّمَّان (*ar-rummān*) is pomegranate.

In these verses, two kinds of farm or garden plants have been mentioned: (1) Those the vines of which are raised high, and (2) those the vines of which are not raised. The hint given is that Allah’s creation is full of wisdom and mystery. Here is the same soil, the same water, air, atmosphere, yet the plants that grow are different. Then, a variety was introduced through the processing, colouring and ripening of fruits, and by the employment of countless and complex properties embedded in them, some plants were designed to bear fruit only when their vines were raised up - and even if it does show up, it would not grow and survive, such as, the grape. Then, some plants were taught a grammar of growth so that their vines would not go up even if anyone tried to do that - and should it, by chance, climb up, the fruit will grow weak and wither away, as is the case with melons of all kinds. Certainly unusual is the phenomena when some trees were made to stand on strong trunks and taken as high as it would not be possible for human ingenuity to accomplish in common practice. This talisman of trees is not simply accidental. It has wisdom, intention and mastery of execution behind it. Trees have properties and fruits have tempers. Some fruits grow and ripen in the soil and on the ground. A touch of soil would spoil others. Some of them find it necessary to hang by high branches, encounter fresh air, soak sunrays and starlights and get their colour. To each, nature has given a suitable system to perform by.

فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

So blessed be Allah, the best of creators -23:14

After that, dates and crops were mentioned specially. The date fruit is usually eaten for pleasure. If one is hungry, it will serve as

regular food. Crops from farms provide food grains for human beings and fodder for animals. After having mentioned these two, it was said: **مُخْتَلِفًا أَكْلُهُ** (with a variety of edibles). Here, the pronoun in: **أَكْلُهُ** (*ukuluhū*) may be taken as referring back to: **زُرْع** (*zar‘*: crops), or to: **نَخْل** (*nakhl* : date-palms) as well. However, the sense includes both. Thus, the meaning is that there are different kinds of dates, and each kind has a different taste. As for crops, the kinds go to hundreds - and each kind has its own distinct taste, property and use. Their climate and land are the same yet there is a great difference in fruits produced. Then, each kind has a different set of properties and benefits, yet they are so unique in diversity. This is a phenomenon which compels even a man of ordinary insight to realize and accept that the Power and Being that created them is a Being beyond the parameters of comprehension, the measure of whose knowledge and wisdom cannot even be imagined by human beings.

After that, two more things were mentioned: olive and pomegranate. Olive is fruit and vegetable both. The oil from olive is clean, transparent and delicate. It is better than most oils. Its properties, uses and benefits are numerous. In fact, it cures many ailments. Similarly, there are many properties and benefits of pomegranate which most people know. After mentioning these two fruits, it was said: **مُتَشَابِهًا وَعَيْرٍ مُتَشَابِهٍ** (similar and not similar). It means that some trees from among them bear fruits which, in terms of colour and taste, are similar to each other. Then, there are some others which have different colour and taste. That some pomegranate fruits are similar in colour, taste and size and some others are different holds true for olives too.

Having mentioned kinds of trees and fruits, given there in this verse are two injunctions to be followed. The first one is a natural satisfier of human desires. It was said: **كُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ** (eat of its fruit when it bears fruit). The hint given is that the purpose of the Creator in creating this diverse array of fruits is not to fulfill any of His need. These have been created for their benefit. Therefore, they were welcome to eat and enjoy them. By adding: **إِذَا أَثْمَرَ** (*idhā athmara* : when it bears fruit), it was pointed out that making the fruits come out of the branches of the tree was a job beyond them. However, when those

fruits form and grow full with the permission of Allah, they become entitled to eat them at that time, whether not ripe yet.

The 'Ushr of Land

The second injunction given in this verse is: **وَأْتُوا حَقَّهُ يَوْمَ حَصَادِهِ** (and pay its due on the day of its harvest). The word: **اتوا** (*atu*) means 'bring' or 'pay'; and: **حَصَاد** (*hasād*) refers to the 'harvesting of crops' or 'picking of fruits.' And the pronoun in: **حَقَّهُ** (*haqqahū* : its due) applies to everything edible mentioned above. The sense of the verse is : Eat, drink and use these things, but remember to pay its due at the time of harvesting the crops or picking the fruit. 'Haqq' or 'due' denotes giving it as *sadaqah* or charity to the poor and needy - as it appears in another verse in the form of a general rule:

وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ

And in the properties of righteous people, there is a due right of the poor and needy - the asking and the non-asking - 70:24.

Is this *sadaqah* referred to here means common charities known as *Sadaqah* and *Khayrāt*, or the particular *sadaqah* known as 'the *Zakāh* of the land' or 'Ushr'? There are two sayings of authorities among *Ṣaḥābah* and *Tābi‘in* in this matter. Some among them have favoured the first possibility. The reason given by them is that this verse is *Makkī* and the obligation of *Zakāh* came into force two years after the Hijrah to *Madīna al-Ṭayyibah*. Therefore, 'haqq' at this place cannot apply to the 'haqq' of the *Zakāh* of land. Some others among them have counted this verse as one of the *Madanī* verses and, according to them, 'haqqahū' refers to the *Zakāh* of the land which is 'Ushr.

Tafsīr authority, *Ibn Kathīr*, in his *Tafsīr* and *Ibn al-‘Arabī* in *Aḥ-kām al-Qur‘ān* have resolved this by saying that, whether the verse is *Makkī* or *Madanī*, in both events, the verse could mean the *Zakāh* of land, that is, 'Ushr - because, according to them, the initial injunction making *Zakāh* obligatory had already been revealed in *Makkah*. The verse of *Sūrah Al-Muzzammil* which contains the injunction of *Zakāh* is *Makkī* by consensus. However, the rate and threshold (*niṣāb*) of *Zakāh* was determined after the Hijrah. The present verse only tells us that Allah has made a due payable on the produce of the land. Its quantity has not been determined here. Therefore, as far as the

quantity is concerned, this verse is brief. The conditions in Makkah al-Mu'azzamah were different. The determination of this quantity was not needed there because Muslims did not have the assurance of acquiring the produce of their lands and fruit farms conveniently and in peace. So, during those days, the practice was no different that it used to be among people of charitable background who would give out part of their produce to the poor and needy who would gather around at the time of harvesting crops or picking fruits. No quantity was fixed for that purpose. That there was, even before Islam, the custom of such charitable giving from the land produce among other communities as well is mentioned in a verse of the Qur'an: *إِنَّا بَلَوْنَهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ* (Verily We have tried them as We tried the People Of the Garden, when they resolved to gather the fruits of the [garden] in the morning - 68:17 - AYA). It was two year after the Hijrah, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ explained the details of the quantities and thresholds of wealth, property and *Zakāh* under the guidance of Divine revelation, he also explained the *Zakāh* of the land. This has been reported in all *Hadīth* books on the authority of narrations from Sayyidnā Mu'adh ibn Jabal, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar and Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh (رضى الله عنهم اجمعين): *مَا سَقَتِ السَّمَاءُ فِيهِ الْعُشْرُ*: (وما سقى بالسَّائِبَةِ نِصْفُ الْعُشْرِ) It means 'in the lands watered by rains where not much effort is needed for irrigation, it is *wajib* to take out one-tenth of the produce as *Zakāh* - and against lands which are irrigated with water from wells taking out one-twentieth of the produce is *wājib* (obligatory).

In its Law of *Zakāh*, the Shari'ah of Islam has used a basic principle in determining *Zakāh* of all kinds. According to this principle, the quantity of *Zakāh* on a produce involving less labour and expenditure increases while, with the increase in the labour and expenditure on a produce, the quantity of *Zakāh* decreases in that proportion. Let us understand it with the help of an example. If someone finds an ancient treasure, or hits on a gold or silver mine while prospecting, then, one-fifth of it will be due on him as *Zakāh* - because the labour and expenditure factor is less while the produce is more. After that comes rain-dependent land which has the lowest ratio of labour and expenditure. The *Zakāh* for it was cut into half, that is, from one-fifth to one-tenth. After that there is the land irrigated with water from wells, or from irrigation canals against payment. This causes an increase in labour

and expenditure, so *Zakāh* against it was reduced by another half, that is, one-twentieth. Then, there is common cash, gold or silver, and trading goods. Procuring and multiplying these cost a good deal and need added labour. Therefore, the *Zakāh* for it was reduced by yet another half, that is, it was fixed at one-fortieth part.

In the present verse of the Qur‘ān, and in the *Hadīth* quoted above, no *Niṣāb* (threshold) for the produce of the land has been determined. Therefore, the juristic creed (*Madhab*) of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal is: On the produce of the land, whether less or more, taking out its *Zakāh* is compulsory. There is a verse in Sūrah al-Baqarah which mentions the *Zakāh* of land. But, there too, no *Niṣāb* (threshold) has been mentioned. Quoted below is the text of that verse:

﴿ أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ﴾

O those who believe, spend of the good things you have earned and of what We have brought forth for you from the earth - 2:267.

[Comments on ‘Ushr lands also appear under the verse quoted immediately above in Ma‘ariful-Qur‘ān, English, Volume I, page 659]

As for trading goods and cattle, the *Nisab* (threshold) was given by the Holy Prophet ﷺ whereby there is no *Zakāh* under 52 1/2 tola of silver (1 tola = 0.41 ounces = 11.6363 g) or under forty goats or five camels. But, no *Niṣāb* has been determined concerning the produce of land in the *Hadīth* cited above, therefore, it is *Wājib* to take out *Zakāh* of the land whether the produce is more or less, big or small.

At the end of the verse (141) it was said: وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ That is, do not spend beyond limits because Allah Ta‘ālā does not like wasteful spenders. A question arises here. In case a person spends everything he has in the way of Allah, his wealth, even his life, this cannot be called ‘*Israf*’ (extravagance). In fact, it would be difficult to say that, even by having done all that, one can be sure that he or she has done what was really the due of Allah! Then, what does this prohibition of ‘*Israf*’ or extravagance at this place really mean? The answer is that extravagance in one department of life usually causes shortfall, shortcoming or deficiency in other departments. One who spends extravagantly to fulfill his desires generally ends up failing in his duty to fulfill the due rights of others. Prohibited here is this kind of

shortcoming. It means that should a person give away whatever he has in the way of Allah and return with empty hands, how is he going to fulfill the rights of his children, family and relatives, even those of his own self? Therefore, the rule of guidance given is that one should observe moderation even when spending in the way of Allah so that all due rights can be taken care of.

Verses 143 - 144

ثَمِينَةَ أَوْجَاعٍ مِّنَ الضَّأْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْمَعْزِ اثْنَيْنِ قُلْ ءَأَنذَرْتُكُمْ
الذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمَّا اشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُ
الْأُنثَيَيْنِ نَبِّئُونِي بِعِلْمٍ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ وَمِنَ الْإِبِلِ
اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ اثْنَيْنِ قُلْ ءَأَنذَرْتُكُمْ حَرَّمَ أَمِ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمَّا
اشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ ءَأَنذَرْتُكُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ وَضَعَكُمُ
اللَّهُ بِهَذَا فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا لِّيُضِلَّ
النَّاسَ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ءَأَنذَرْتُكُمْ لِيُضِلَّ الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

(He has created) eight pairs: two of sheep and two of goats. Say, “Is it the two males that He has prohibited or the two females? Or, what the wombs of the two females contain? Tell me with knowledge if you are true” [143] and two of camels and two of cows. Say, “Is it the two males He has prohibited or the two females? Or, were you present when Allah has advised you of this?” So, who is more unjust than the one who fabricates a lie against Allah in order to misguide people without knowledge. Surely, Allah gives no guidance to an unjust people. [144]

Verses 145 - 147

قُلْ لَّا أَجِدُ فِي مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ مُحَرَّمًا عَلَى طَاعِمٍ يَطْعَمُهُ إِلَّا أَن يَكُونَ مَيْتَةً أَوْ دَمًا مَّسْفُوحًا أَوْ لَحْمَ خِنزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رِجْسٌ أَوْ فِسْقًا
أَهْلًا لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ غَفُورٌ

رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا كُلَّ ذِي ظُفْرٍ وَمِنَ
الْبَقَرِ وَالْغَنَمِ حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ شُحُومَهُمَا إِلَّا مَا حَمَلَتْ ظُهُورُهُمَا
أَوِ الْحَوَايَا أَوْ مَا اخْتَلَطَ بِعَظْمٍ ذَلِكَ جَزَيْنَاهُمْ بِبَغْيِهِمْ وَإِنَّا
لَصَدِيقُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ فَإِن كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ رَبِّكُمْ ذُو رَحْمَةٍ وَاسِعَةٍ
وَلَا يُرَدُّ بَأْسُهُ عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

Say, "I do not find, in what has been revealed to me, anything prohibited for anyone who eats it, unless it be carrion or blood that has flowed out, or flesh of swine - because it is impure - or there be a sin by invoking on it the name of someone other than Allah. However, if anyone is compelled by necessity - neither desiring nor transgressing then, your Lord is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [145]

And for those who are Jews We prohibited all that which has claws. And of cows and goats, We prohibited for them their fat, except what their backs contain, or the entrails, or what is attached to a bone. Thus We recompensed them for their transgression. And We are surely true. [146]

Then, if they belie you, say, "Your Lord is the Lord of all-embracing mercy, and His penalty cannot be averted from the sinning people." [147]

Verses 148 - 150

سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا
حَرَّمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ حَتَّى
ذَاقُوا بَأْسَنَا قُلْ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا إِن
تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ قُلْ فَلِلَّهِ
الْحُجَّةُ الْبَالِغَةُ فَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَاكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ قُلْ هَلُمَّ
شُهَدَاءَكُمْ الَّذِينَ يَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ هَذَا فَإِنْ شَهِدُوا فَلَا

تَشْهَدُ مَعَهُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَالَّذِينَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

Those who associate partners with Allah will say, “Had Allah willed, we would have not associated (partners with Him), nor our fathers, nor would we have made anything prohibited.” In the same way belied those before them until they tasted Our penalty. Say, “Have you any knowledge that you may bring forth for us? You follow nothing but whims, and do nothing but make conjectures.” [148]

Say, “Then, it is Allah who has the perfect proof. So, had He willed, He would have brought you all on the right path.” [149]

Say, “Bring your witnesses who testify that Allah has prohibited this.” Then, if they testify, do not testify with them, and do not follow the desires of those who have belied Our signs and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, and with their Lord, they equate others. [150]

Verses 151 - 153

قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَن تَشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا
وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِّنْ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ
نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ
وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّيْتُكُمْ بِهِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ
أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ
لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا
قُرْبَىٰ وَعِصِمُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا

السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّكُم بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

Say, "Come, I recite what your Lord has prohibited for you: "Do not associate anything with Him (as partners); and be good to parents, and do not kill your children because of poverty - We will give provision to you, and to them as well - and do not go near shameful acts, whether they are open or secret; and do not kill a person whom Allah has given sanctity, except by right." This is what He has emphasized for you, so that you may understand. [151]

And do not approach the property of the orphan, except with the best possible conduct, until he reaches maturity. And give the measure and the weight to the full in all fairness - We do not obligate anyone beyond his capacity - and when you speak, be just, even if there be a relative; and fulfill the covenant of Allah." This is what He has emphasized for you, so that you may observe the advice. [152]

And: "This is My path, straight. So, follow it, and do not follow the (other) ways, lest it should take you away from His way." This is what He has emphasized for you, so that you may be God-fearing. [153]

Commentary

Prior to the verses appearing above, for about two to three sections, the recurring theme has been how heedless and ignorant human beings had bypassed the law revealed by the Law Giver and the Creator of whatever there is in the heavens and the earth and, in its place, had taken ancestral and innovated customs as their religion. There were things Allah had made unlawful. They took them as lawful and started using them. Then, there were things Allah had made lawful. They made these unlawful for themselves. Again, they made some things lawful for men and unlawful for women, while some others they declared to be lawful for women but unlawful for men.

There are three verses here (143, 144 and 145) which describe those particular things which have been declared unlawful by Allah Ta‘ālā.

There are nine things mentioned in the detailed statement (151-152). After that, comes the tenth commandment in the words: هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ That is, this path of Mine is straight. So, follow it - 153. This statement points out to the religion and code (*Dīn* and *Sharī‘ah*) brought and taught by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and entrusts the whole field of Ḥalāl (lawful) and Ḥarām (unlawful), *Jā‘iz* (permissible) and *Nā-Jā‘iz* (impermissible), *Makrūh* (reprehensible) and *Mustaḥabb* (recommended) to the standard that everyone should follow the Muḥammadī Sharī‘ah, take what it says is Ḥalāl as Ḥalāl, and take what it says is Ḥaram as Ḥaram, and let no one go about deciding what is Ḥalāl and what is Ḥaram on one’s own.

Then, there appears a detailed statement of ten things in these verses where the real objective is to describe things which are Ḥaram - which required that all these be described in the negative case. But, the Holy Qur‘ān, in the wisdom of its approach, has described some of them positively in the imperative form - which means that acting against it is Ḥaram (Kashshāf). Its wisdom will become evident a little later. However, the ten things the unlawfulness of which appears in these verses are: (1) To associate anyone with Allah Ta‘ālā in belief, deed, worship or obedience; (2) not be good to parents; (3) to kill children because of poverty; (4) to indulge in shameful doings; (5) to kill someone unjustly; (6) to eat up the orphan’s property by false means; (7) to weigh or measure short; (8) to be unjust in witness, judgement or speech; (9) to betray the covenant of Allah; and (10) to avoid the straight path of Allah and follow other ways right and left.

Some Virtues of the Verses

Ka‘b al-Aḥbār, an accomplished scholar of the Torah, was a Jew before he became a Muslim. He says that these verses of the Holy Qur‘ān which describe ten unlawful things are with what the Torah, the Book of Allah, begins after *Bismillah*. It has also been said that these are the ten commandments revealed to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام.

Commentator of the Qur‘ān, Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās رضى الله عنه says that these are the ‘Verses of Established Meaning’ (*Muḥkam Āyat*) mentioned in Sūrah ‘Āl-‘Imrān (3:7). On these, all religious systems brought by prophets عليهم السلام - from Sayyidnā Ādam عليه السلام to the Last among Prophets صلى الله عليه وسلم - have been in agreement and none

of these was abrogated in any religion, community or Shari‘ah. (Tafsīr Al-Bahr Al-Muḥīt)

These Verses are the Will and Testament of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

According to a narration of Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضى الله عنه reported in Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, he said that a person who wishes to see a special will of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم with his seal on it, he should recite these verses. Therein lies the will and testament bequeathed under the command of his Lord by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to his *Ummah*.

Based on a narration of Sayyidnā ‘Ubādah ibn Ṣāmit رضى الله عنه, it has been reported by Ḥākīm that, addressing his *Ṣaḥābah*, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: ‘Who will take a pledge of allegiance at my hands (بيعت : *bay‘ah*) on three verses?’ After that, he recited these three verses and said: ‘A person who fulfills this *Bay‘ah* (pledge of allegiance), his reward stands due with Allah.’

DETAILS OF TEN PROHIBITIONS AND EXPLANATION OF THE THREE VERSES

These verses (151-153) open with the words: **فَلْتَعَاوَنُوا أَلْتُمْ مَخْرَمَ رَبِّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ** (Say, “Come, I recite what your Lord has prohibited for you”). The word: **تَعَاوَنُوا** (*ta‘ālaw*) here (translated as ‘come,’ does carry the essential meaning, but misses the refinement of what it implies in the text - a difficulty technically impossible to surmount in a task of this delicate nature when exact parallels just do not exist - tr.) is an expression used at a time when the caller stands on high ground and calls those beneath to come close to him. The hint thus released is towards the prospect of their rising high and gaining prestige by accepting this invitation. The sense of the sentence where the address is to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is that he should ask these people to come along so that he may recite to them things which Allah Ta‘ālā has made Ḥaram for them. What he was going to give them was a message directly from Allah Ta‘ālā and, as such, there was no intrusion of someone’s opinion, estimation or conjecture in it. This was in their interest so that they could get ready to stay safe against them rather than go about branding as Ḥaram what Allah has made Ḥalāl.

Though, the address in this verse directly refers to the disbelievers

of Makkah, but the subject of the address is general in its nature. It includes the entire humankind, whether believers or disbelievers, Arabs or non-Arabs, or those living now or generations to come in the future. (Al-Baḥr Al-Muḥīṭ)

The First Grave Sin Forbidden is *Shirk*

After having addressed with this concern and elegance, the first thing to be identified of all that has been prohibited was: **لَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا**: That you shall not associate anyone or anything with Allah. This was the first task. And do not make idols into God like the polytheists of Arabia, nor call prophets God or son of God like Jews and Christians, nor take angels to be daughters of God like others, nor equate prophets and saints with Allah Ta‘ālā in His attributes of knowledge and power like the ignorant masses.

Shirk : Definition and Kinds

According to Tafsīr Maẓharī, the word: **شَيْئًا** (*shai'an*:anything), at this place, could also mean that one should not be involved in any kind of *Shirk*, whether manifest (*jaliyy*) or concealed (*khafiyy*). Everyone knows manifest *Shirk* which is the ascribing of equals or partners to Allah either by associating someone with Allah in worship and obedience or in His exclusive attributes. And concealed *Shirk* is that one, in his or her vocation in life, in material and religious objectives and in profit and loss, though holds the belief that Allah is the Maker and Mover of things yet, in practice, takes others as such, and pins all efforts and hopes on them, or is a hypocrite in acts of worship, offering prayers correctly to show off before others, or spends in charity to earn a good name for himself, or actually, in practice, takes someone other than Allah to be the controlling authority in profit and loss. The sage, Shaykh Sa‘di رحمه الله عليه has put the idea in a nutshell when he said:

دریں نوعے از شرک پوشیده است کہ زیدم بہ بخشید و عمرم بہخت

Concealed here too is a kind of *Shirk* -

That A made me gain and B made me lose.

The reality is no more but that, whatever the gain or loss, it is from that Absolute Master. The supposed names A and B are drapes from behind which comes the manifestation of gain or loss. Otherwise, the truth of the matter, as it appears in Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth, is: ‘If all Jinns and

human beings join up to bring to you a benefit which Allah Ta‘ālā has not destined for you, they can never dare do that - in the same way, if all Jinns and human beings join up to bring a loss on you which Allah Ta‘ālā has not willed, this too is not possible for anyone to do.

In brief, one should abstain strictly from both kinds of Shirk, manifest and concealed. The way worshipping idols is included under Shirk, also included thereunder is equating prophets and saints with Allah Ta‘ālā in His attributes of knowledge and power. If, God forbid, this happens to be the very belief of someone, then, it will be classed as manifest Shirk; and if, such a belief is not there, but this happens to be done in actual practice, then, it will be called concealed Shirk. At this place, the very first instruction given is to stay away from Shirk. The reason is that Shirk is a crime about which the Qur‘ān has given the decision that, for it, there is no forgiveness. The forgiveness of sins - other than Shirk - is possible depending on different causes. Therefore, as narrated by Sayyidnā ‘Ubādah ibn Ṣāmit رضى الله عنه and Sayyidnā Abū Ad-Dardā’ رضى الله عنه, it appears in Ḥadīth that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

Do not ascribe anyone as partner with Allah - even if you are dismembered, or hanged, or burnt alive.

The Second Sin : Mistreating Parents

Mentioned after that was: **وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا** (and be good to parents). The purpose at this place is to tell not to be disobedient to parents and not to cause pain to them. But, it is in a way of wisdom that the prohibition has been sublimated as ‘be good to parents.’ The aim is to point out that, in the matter of parents, it is not enough that one does not disobey parents or does not cause any pain to them, but it is one’s duty to keep them pleased with decent, generous and obliging treatment. This has been made more explicit in another verse of the Qur‘ān where it appears as: **وَإِخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ** which means: For them, lower your shoulders in humility - 17:24 - (an eloquently figurative mode of describing the attitude of love, reverence, readiness and availability to help out and care for, in all sincerity, and in tenderness at its sublimest, something the Qur‘ān has itself put in one word, ‘mercy’, suffixed after the words of the verse quoted above).

It will be noticed that, in this verse, causing pain to parents or ex-

posing them to physical or emotion inconveniences has been placed as the second crime after Shirk. This is similar to the instruction given in another verse of the Holy Qur‘ān where Allah Ta‘ālā has combined the duty of being obedient to them, and being responsible to see that they are comfortable, with the obligation to worship Him alone. It was said:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا

And your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship anyone other than Him and that you shall be good to parents - 17:23.

Then, in Sūrah Luqman, it was said:

أَنْ أَشْكُرَ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ ط إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ

Be grateful to Me, and to your parents, and to Me is the return (meaning: If you do otherwise, you will be punished) - 31:14.

It has been reported from Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضى الله عنه in the Ṣaḥīḥayn (the two collections of Ṣaḥīḥ *Aḥādīth* by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim) that he asked the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم: ‘Which deed is the best?’ He said: ‘Offering *Ṣalāh* at its due time (*Mustaḥabb* : recommended time).’ Then, he asked again: ‘After that, which deed is the best?’ To that, he said: ‘Being good to parents.’ Once again, he asked: ‘Which deed comes after that?’ He said: ‘*Jihād* in the way of Allah.’

According to a narration by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضى الله عنه reported in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, once the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said the words: رَغِمَ أَنْفُهُ رَغِمَ أَنْفُهُ رَغِمَ أَنْفُهُ three times, that is, ‘disgraced is he, disgraced is he, disgraced is he.’ The noble Companions submitted: ‘*Yā Rasūl* Allah, who is disgraced?’ He said: ‘The person who found his father and mother, or one of them, in old age and still he did not enter the *Jan-nah*.’

It means that serving parents during their old age makes it certain that the server will be admitted to Paradise. And certainly deprived and disgraced is he who has allowed such an easy bargain of Paradise slip out of his hands. This bargain is easy because parents are naturally affectionate to their children on their own. A little consideration here and there would make them all too happy. So, pleasing parents does not depend on or require a major act of grace. The restriction of old age placed here is because parents, when healthy and strong, take

care of their needs by themselves - rather, would not hesitate to come to their assistance when needed, financially, physically or morally. At that time, neither do they need being served, nor would that service carry any distinct weight of its own. Serving parents can only be worthwhile and praiseworthy at a time when they need it because of their old age.

The Third Prohibition : Killing Children

The third thing made Ḥaram in these verses is the killing of children. It is relevant in the context because the right of parents due on children was taken up before it - and here, it is the right of children which is due on parents. The worst limit of evil treatment of children was what was practiced in the days of *Jāhiliyyah* when they were killed or buried alive. This verse stops them from doing that. It was said: وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ إِمْلَاقٍ ط نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ (and do not kill your children because of poverty - We will give provision to you, and to them as well).

During the pre-Islam days of Arab *Jāhiliyyah*, there was a cruel custom. When a girl was born in a household, they would bury her alive fearing the shame of having to take someone as a son-in-law - and there were occasions when, fearing that they would have difficulties in feeding and providing for children, these cruel people would kill them with their own hands. The Qur‘ān erased this custom. Then, by saying what was said above, it gave them the treatment they needed against this mental sickness of theirs - because of which, that is, because of their worry as to how they were going to feed them, they committed such a heinous crime. Allah Ta‘ālā has told them in this verse that they were not the ones really responsible for feeding and providing for them. This was the direct responsibility of Allah Ta‘ālā. They too, in their food and provisions, were dependent on Him. He gives that to them. Then, they give it to children too. If He does not provide them with it, they could not even think of producing one grain of wheat or rice on their own. Miracles do not work like that. Bringing out a tiny seed by tearing its way through tons of earth on the fields in the form of a tender bud or shoot and then giving it the shape of a tree and then making them sprout with flowers and fruits is a question they should answer. Whose work is that? Can a father and mother do that? Far from it, these are all wonders wrought by the power and

wisdom of the Absolute Master. The role human beings play in this phenomena is limited. They can do no more than make the land clean and soft, water the plants when they come out and look after them. But, they have no role in making flowers and fruits come out. This tells us that the idea of parents that they provide for children is wrong. In fact, it is from the unseen treasures of Allah Ta'ālā Himself that parents too get their provision, and their children as well. Therefore, by bringing in the mention of parents earlier in the sentence, it was said: 'We will provide for you, and for them as well.' In making the reference to parents precede, the hint given may be that: The provisions are given to you so that you pass it on to children - as it appears in a *Hadīth* of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم where he is reported to have said:

إِنَّمَا تَنْصُرُونَ وَتُرْزُقُونَ بِضَعْفَاءِ كُمْ

It is only for the sake of the weak among you that Allah Ta'ālā helps and provides for you too.

The same subject appears in Sūrah al-Isrā' of the Holy Qur'an where, in the matter of *Rizq*, children have been mentioned before parents by saying: نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ that is, 'We shall provide for them, and for you as well - 17:21.' Here too, the hint given is that 'deserving of being provided for first, in Our sight, are weak children who cannot do that on their own - it is for their sake that *rizq* is given to you.'

A Modern Form of Killing Children

It is obvious that the crime of killing children and that it is a grave sin as pointed out in this verse applies to formal killing as such. But, a little thought would prove that the failure to give proper education and training to children as a result of which they remain uninformed or heedless to Allah, His *Rasūl* and the concern for 'Ākhirah and, God forbid, fall into immoral and shameless life patterns alien to Islam, then, this attitude too, shall be no less than killing of children. The Qur'an calls a person who does not know Allah and does not obey Him a dead person. This is what has been explained earlier in this very Sūrah in the verse: أَوْ مَن كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ (Could it be that the one who was dead and We gave him life ... - 6:122). People who do not attend to the grooming of the deeds and morals of their children, leave them open and free (to be hunted by aggressive influences around them, influences which

have an ‘open season’ in our time), or let them go through a system of education as a result of which Islamic morals are ruined, then, they too, in a way, are liable to be charged with the crime of killing their children - for formal killing only ruins what is one’s transitory life in the mortal world, but this type of killing ruins what is one’s eternal life in the ‘Ākhirah, a terrible loss indeed.

The Fourth Prohibition : Shameful Acts

The fourth thing declared Ḥaram in these verses is the doing of what is shameful. About it, says the Qur‘ān: وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ (and do not go near shameful acts, whether they are open or secret-151).

The word: فَوَاحِشٌ (*al-fawāḥish*) is the plural form of: فَاحِشَةٌ (*fāḥishah*) and the words: فَحِشٌ (*fahsh*), فَحِشَاءٌ (*fahshā’*) and فَاحِشَةٌ (*fāḥisha*) are all verbal nouns and are usually translated in English as immodest, indecent or shameful acts. In the terminology of the Qur‘ān and Ḥadīth, these words are used to denote every evil act the vicious and disorderly effects of which reach far and wide. This is the meaning given by Imām Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī in *Mufradāt al-Qur‘ān* and Ibn Kathīr in *An-Nihāyah*. The prohibition of *Fuḥsh* and *Fahshā’* (obscenity, indecency, adultery, fornication, whoredom or abomination or monstrosity of any description) appears time and again in the Holy Qur‘ān, for example, in Sūrah An-Naḥl, it is said: يَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ (He forbids you from the indecent and the evil -16:90) and, in Sūrah Al-A‘rāf, it is said: حَرَّمَ رَبِّي الْفَوَاحِشَ (my Lord has forbidden indecent deeds - 7:33).

So, in this general sense of the word used by the Qur‘ān, included there are all grave sins, whether related to words or deeds, whether committed openly or secretly, in fact, all doings which are counter to good and right and all acts which are counter to modesty and shame. That is why this word is generally used in the sense of shameful deeds. In this verse of the Qur‘ān, it has been stressed that one should not go even near to what are shameful acts. If this is taken in a broad and general sense, it will become inclusive of all evil traits and sins, whether of speech, or those of hands and feet and the heart. And if it is taken in the commonly and widely understood sense, that is, in the sense of immodesty, then, it would be referring to shameful acts, their prelimineries and their means and motives.

Then, within this verse, there is the explanation of the word ‘*al-*

fawāḥish’ when it is said: *مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ* (whether they are open or secret). Thus, according to the first Tafsīr, all outward indecencies would mean all sins committed through speech or through the use of hands and feet etc., and inward indecencies would be referring to sins which issue forth from the heart, such as, envy, malice, greed, ungratefulness, impatience and others of this nature.

According to the other Tafsīr, outward indecencies would mean acts of immodesty indulged in openly while those inward would be the ones done secretly. The open practice of evil includes all its preliminaries and accessories. Looking at some woman with evil intentions, touching her with hands etc., talking to her in that way are all included under it. As for inward indecency, it includes all secret plans made to actualize thoughts and intentions which are put into practice to achieve the evil and indecent end.

Some respectable commentators say that outward indecencies refer to shameful acts the evil of which is common knowledge and everyone knows what it means. As for inward indecencies, they refer to acts which are immodest in the sight of Allah, though people generally do not take them as bad, or common people are not aware that they are Hāram, for example, after having divorced a wife thrice, to keep living with her as a wife (which she is not anymore), or marrying a woman marriage with whom is not lawful in Shari‘ah.

In short, this verse, in terms of the real sense of ‘*al-fawāḥish*’, encompasses all outward and inward sins - and, in terms of the commonly held view, it is inclusive of all open and secret methods of immodesty, indecency and act of shame. Then, the command given in this matter is that one should not go even near things like that. The insistence on ‘not going even near them’ means that one should even abstain from going to a place when there is an apprehension that such a visit would cause the visitor to be smeared with sin, and that one should also abstain from deeds which lead on to ways of sin. In a Hadīth, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has been reported to have said:

مَنْ حَامَ حَوْلَ حِمَى أَوْشَكَ أَنْ يَبْقَعَ فِيهِ

It is not unlikely that one who keeps roaming around a prohibited place might enter it as well.

Therefore, precaution demands that one should not even go near what is prohibited.

The Fifth Prohibition : Killing Unjustly

Of the prohibitions, the fifth is killing unjustly. About it, it was said: وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ (and do not kill a person whom Allah has given sanctity). The details of this right to kill have been given by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in a *Hadīth* narrated by Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضى الله عنه appearing in Al-Bukhārī and Muslim. He said: ‘Killing a Muslim is not lawful except for three reasons: (1) That he commits adultery despite being married; (2) that he has killed someone unjustly, and is killed in even retaliation (*Qīṣāṣ*) for it; and (3) that, by leaving his true faith, he has become an apostate (*Murtadd*).’

When Sayyidnā ‘Uthmān al-Ghanī, the third Rightly-Guided Khalīfah was besieged by rebels who wanted to kill him, he recited this *Hadīth* before them and said: ‘With the grace of Allah, I have been free of these things all my life. Not only during my days in Islam, I never indulged in adultery even during the days of *Jāhiliyyah*, nor did I ever kill anyone, nor did the thought that I should leave my faith in Islam ever crossed my mind. Then, on what basis do you want to kill me?’

And the way killing a Muslim is unlawful without valid reason, so it is with the killing of a non-Muslim who lives in an Islamic country as its law-abiding citizen, or is one of those with whom Muslims have a bilateral pact. According to a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضى الله عنه reported in Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is reported to have said: ‘Whoever has killed a *Dhimmi* (protected non-Muslim citizen of a Muslim country) has broken his covenant with Allah - and a person who has broken the covenant of Allah will never smell even the scent of *Jannah*, though the scent of *Jan-nah* reaches as far as a travel distance of seventy years.’

In this one verse - after having described five of the ten prohibitions - it was said: ذَلِكُمْ وَضَعْنَا بِهِ لَكُمْ تَفْوِيلًا (This is what He has emphasized for you so that you may understand).

The Sixth Prohibition : Eating up the Property of the Orphan by False Means

About the unlawfulness of devouring the property of the orphan by false means - the sixth command given in the second verse (152) - it was said: وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ (And do not approach the property of the orphan except with the best possible conduct, until he reaches maturity). The address here is to the guardians of orphaned children who are minors. The guardians have been told that they should treat the property of orphans as if it was fire. They should not go near it to take from it or eat of it unlawfully. What is said here appears in another verse of the Qur‘ān in the same words: وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ (17:34) and also in Sūrah Al-Nisā’ (4:10): ‘Surely, those who eat up the property of the orphans, unjustly, they only eat fire into their bellies, and they shall soon enter a blazing hell.)

However, protecting the property of the orphan and investing it in a permissible business where the danger of loss does not customarily exist is fair enough, even necessary. Guardians of the orphaned children should do so.

After that, specified was the limit until when the property of the orphan was to be guarded: حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ (until he reaches maturity), that is, when the orphan reaches maturity, the responsibility of the guardian ends and his property should be entrusted to him.

The word: اَشُدُّ (*ashudd*) really means strength. According to the majority of ‘*Ulamā*, it begins with puberty. When signs of puberty appear in a child, or when he reaches the age of full fifteen years, that will be the time, he will be considered legally mature.

Still, after his having attained physical maturity, it will be seen whether or not he has acquired the ability to protect his property and spend out of it correctly and satisfactorily. If this ability is found in him, his property should be entrusted to him. If he does not seem to have that ability in him at that time, it is the responsibility of the guardian to keep protecting his property until the age of twenty five years. At any time during this period, whenever he picks up the ability to protect his property and manage his living through business or vocation, his property can be handed over to him. And if - even upto the

age of twenty five years, such ability does not show up in him - then, according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, his property should, after all, be given to him, but this would be subject to the condition that this lack of ability on his part should have not reached the limits of insanity. And, according to some Imāms, his property should not be entrusted in his hands even then, instead of which, the Qaḍī or Judge of an Islamic Court should entrust the responsibility of protecting his property to a trustworthy and responsible person.

Once again, what has been said here is based on a statement of the Holy Qur‘ān appearing in another verse where it was said: **فَإِنْ أُنْتَبِهُتُمْ مِنْهُمْ** (... if you perceive in them proper understanding, hand over to them their property - 4:6). It means: When the orphaned children become mature and you see in them the ability to protect their property by themselves and invest it gainfully, entrust the property to them. This verse has told us that becoming mature is not sufficient as justification for entrusting the property of the orphan to him, instead, it is conditioned by the ability to protect property and to invest it gainfully.

The Seventh Prohibition : Weighing and Measuring Short

The seventh command in this verse is to give full weight and full measure in all fairness. The word: **بِالْقِسْطِ** (*bi al-qist*), translated as ‘in all fairness,’ applies to a transaction in which the giver does not decrease anything from what is due to be received by the other party - and the receiver does not take anything more than what is due to come to him from the giver (Ruh al-Ma‘ani).

Weighing and measuring short in common give and take of things has been sternly forbidden by the Qur‘ān. Severe warning to those who do that appears in Sūrah Al-Muṭaffifīn (83).

Commentator of the Qur‘ān, Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās **رضى الله عنه** reports that, addressing those who weigh and measure in business, the Holy Prophet **صلى الله عليه وسلم** said: Weighing and measuring is a line of duty being unfair in which has caused many communities before you to be destroyed by Divine punishment (so, be fully cautious in this matter). (Tafsīr ibn Kathīr)

Officials and Workers who fall short in Set Duties come under this Qur’anic Ruling

It should be borne in mind that weighing and measuring short called “*Taṭfīf*” in the Qur’ān is not simply restricted to weighing short and measuring less. In fact, falling short in giving the other person his right is also included under ‘*Taṭfīf*’ as illustrated by a report from Sayyidnā ‘Umar رضى الله عنه appearing in the Mu’aṭṭa’ of Imām Mālik. When Sayyidnā ‘Umar noticed someone making the required movements of his Ṣalāh short, he said: ‘You made ‘*Taṭfīf*,’ meaning thereby that he did not fulfill the right of Ṣalāh as it was due and obligatory. After having reported this incident, Imām Mālik says: لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَفَاؤُهُ وَتَطْوِينُهُ that is, giving the full measure due, and giving short of it, applies to everything, and not in weights and measures only.

This tells us that an employee who does not discharge his duties as required, steals time or delays work; and a wage earner who falls short in delivering the service agreed to; and for that matter anyone - a minister of government or his peon, an assistant in an office, or a scholar or religious worker - shall all be included under the Qur’anic term, “*Al-Muṭaffifīn*,” if they fall short in fulfilling the right of others due against them.

After that, it was said: لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا (We do not obligate anyone beyond his capacity). In some narrations of *Ḥadīth*, it has been explained as a hint of exception, that is, a person who does everything possible within his control to give full consideration to the need of giving full weight and measure as due and, in case, some insignificant increase or decrease takes place inadvertently, then, that would stand excused because that is beyond his power and control.

According to Tafsīr Mazharī, the addition of this sentence in between indicates that it is better to give a little more while fulfilling what is due so that there remains no doubt of being short in giving - as it was when the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, on a similar occasion, ordered a person weighing: زِنْ وَارْجِحْ (*zin wa arjih*) that is, ‘weigh and be liberal’ (literally, weigh and tilt the balance in favour of the receiver). (Ahmad, Abū Dāwūd, and Tirmidhī following a narration of Sayyidnā Suwayd ibn Qaiys)

And this was the usual practice of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم himself. Whenever he had a right of someone due against him, and when came the time for him to pay it back, he liked to pay more than what the right of the other person was. Then, there is a Ḥadīth in Al-Bukhārī based on a narration by Sayyidnā Jābir رضى الله عنه in which the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is reported to have said:

‘May the mercy of Allah Ta‘ālā be on the person who is lenient when selling by giving more than the due; and is also lenient by not taking more than the due - instead, accepts in good grace, even if it happens to be somewhat short of it.’

But, this is an ethical rule - that one gives more when giving and, accepts less when taking, avoids a quarrel. There is nothing legal involved here which would compel one to do so. It is to point out to this very aspect that it was said in the Qur‘ān that “We do not obligate anyone beyond his capacity.” In other words, giving the other person more than it was his due; and to be satisfied with any decrease in what was one’s own due, was not a mandatory command because it is not easy for common people to do so.

The Eighth Commandment :

BE JUST - Doing Otherwise is Ḥarām

The verse says: وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَى (and when you speak, be just, even if there be a relative). It will be noticed that nothing particular has been mentioned at this place. Therefore, the majority of commentators hold the view that the statement includes everything said - whether it is a witness given in some case, or a judgement from a judge, or an order from a ruling official, or whatever different kinds of things said to each other. About all such things, the command of the Qur‘ān is that one should abide by the criterion of truth and justice when saying what one has to say - everywhere, on all occasions and under all conditions. As for the sense of abiding by truth and justice when appearing as a witness in some case, it is fairly obvious - that is, the witness should tell what he knows for certain - frankly and clearly - without adding or subtracting one word on his own, or injecting his guess or conjecture in it, or worrying about whom it would benefit and whom it would hurt. Similar is the situation of a judge who has to decide a case. He will examine witnesses according to the Islamic legal

norms, take what they offer and look at them in conjunction with what stands proved through other kinds of approaches and, then, give his decision. Be it a witness, or be it a judgement, nothing should stop one from saying what is right, true and just - not friendship and love, not enmity and hostility, nothing. For this reason, added here was the sentence: *وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ* (even if there be a relative). It means: Even if the person, in whose case you are appearing as a witness, or a judge, be a relative of yours - even then, you should not let truth and justice slip out of your hands, neither in witness, nor in the judgement.

The purpose in this verse is to stop false witness and unjust judgement. About false witness, Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Mājah have reported the following saying of the Holy Prophet *صلى الله عليه وسلم*:

‘False witness is equal to Shirk’. He said it three times and, then, recited this verse:

فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ حَقًّا لِلَّهِ غَيْرَ مُسْرِكِينَ بِهِ

So, avoid the filth of idols, and avoid saying the false, being upright for Allah, without being associators (of partners) with Him - 22:30.

Similarly, about deciding against truth and justice, there is a saying of the Holy Prophet *صلى الله عليه وسلم* which has been reported by Abū Dāwūd on the authority of a narration by Sayyidnā Buraydah ibn Huṣayb *رضى الله عنه*. It says:

‘There are three kinds of Qaḍīs (judges): One of them would go to *Jannah* while the other two, to *Jahannam*. The one who arrived at the truth by investigating into the case according to the Sharī‘ah, then gave his decision in the light of the truth, he belongs in *Jannah* - and he who investigated and did find out the truth, but knowingly gave his judgement against it, his place is in Hell. And similarly, a Qaḍī who did not know, or fell short on investigation and deliberation, and gave a decision in that state of ignorance, he too will go to *Jahannam*.’

The same subject has appeared in other verses of the Holy Qur‘ān more explicitly and emphatically, enjoining that there should be no trace or effect of friendship, kinship or any other relation based on mutual interest - or enmity and hostility - in witness, or judgement. For