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## Section 2: Allah, the Almighty Creator of the Universe

### Surah Ar-Ra'd – Verse 8

اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ أُنْثَىٰ وَمَا تَغِيضُ الْأَرْحَامُ وَمَا تَزْدَادُ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ  
بِمِقْدَارٍ

**8. “Allah knows what every female carries (in her womb) and what the wombs absorb and (that) in which they increase, and there is a measure with Him of everything.”**

At first, the verse deals with Allah’s knowledge as to the carrying by female of whatever it is pregnant with, whether it has got any womb like human beings or animals, or it has got no wombs like in animate objects or plants. Later, allusion is made to the beings which have got wombs.

The Arabic term /qayd/ means handling (of the sperm) into oneself or infiltration. That is, Allah is aware of that ‘water’ which is absorbed by the womb and which undergoes alterations and growth.

At any rate, one finds that the holy verse deals with the comprehensive knowledge of Allah namely, His knowledge of the system of creation and of His subjects’ behavior and, finally, of everything.

At first, the Qur’an implies that Allah is aware of what every female carries in her womb. Not only does He know of the gender and sexuality of the foetus, but He also is aware of all the characteristics, potentialities, interests, and his inherent potential powers as well.

And He also knows all the shortcomings of the wombs which they may throw away before the time is ripe.

The verse says:

***“Allah knows what every female carries (in her womb) and what the wombs absorb and (that) in which they increase...”***

And everything has got its measures with Allah, so that one may not think that all these extremes, whether less or more, are for no reason, as is the case with the parts of the foetus and womb’s blood which are accountable by all means.

The verse continues saying:

***“...and there is a measure with Him of everything.”***

## **Surah Ar-Ra’d – Verse 9**

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْكَبِيرِ الْمُتَعَالِ

**9. “He knows the unseen and the seen, He is the Great, the Most High.”**

The seen and the unseen is an issue involved only in the finite man whose five senses are even more limited than those of many animals. However, such a matter does not sound meaningful for Allah Who is the Creator of the world of unseen and that of the seen.

The verse says:

***“He knows the unseen and the seen, He is the Great, the Most High.”***

Imam Sadiq (as) has declared on the first phrase of the above verse that:

The unseen signifies what has not existed and /šah adat/ (seen) signifies what has existed already. 1

In the meantime, Allah (s.w.t.) is superior in every aspect of perfection and is cleared of whatever default and defect there might be.

## **Surah Ar-Ra’d – Verse 10**

سَوَاءٌ مِنْكُمْ مَنْ أَسْرَ الْقَوْلَ وَمَنْ جَهَرَ بِهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ مُسْتَخْفٍ بِاللَّيْلِ وَسَارِبٌ بِالنَّهَارِ

**10. “It is alike (for Him) whether any of you conceals his speech or speaks openly, and whether**

***he hides himself by night or he who exposes himself during day-time.***

This noble verse, which is apparently an explanation of and complementary to the previous verse, is one of the many verses of the Qur'an which refers to Allah's knowledge as to the small and big, open and hidden acts of man and even man's thought and intentions.

If men believe in such knowledge by Allah, it can be the best factor in one's modesty and virtue and the greatest means for one's education for it can encourage the righteous and warn the evildoers.

It is interesting that, in this verse Allah has mentioned the fact of His knowledge unto the secret speech and hidden acts done at night before referring to open words and the manifest activities in the day.

The verse says:

***"It is alike (for Him) whether any of you conceals his speech or speaks openly, and whether he hides himself by night or he who exposes himself during day-time."***

The Arabic term /s arib/ is derived from /sarib/ which originally means 'running water' though it also refers to the one who goes on with a job during the day.

At any rate, Allah's knowledge is identical with respect to all things, unlike our knowledge and our awareness is relative with respect to the things, in some cases it is deeper while in other cases, it is less deep or at zero point in some cases.

## **Surah Ar-Ra'd – Verse 11**

لَهُ مُعَقَّبَاتٌ مِّنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا  
بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ  
دُونِهِ مِنْ وَّالٍ

***11. "There are (angels) in succession, before him and behind him, who protect him by Allah's command. Verily, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition. And if Allah intends evil upon a people, there is no turning it back; and they have, apart from Him, no protector."***

The Qur'anic term /mu'aqqibat/ is the Arabic plural form of /mu'aqqibah/ and the ending letter 't', included in it, does not allude to its grammatical gender as feminine, rather, it implies exaggeration like the Arabic word /'allahamah/.

Therefore, the subject of the term /yahfazunahu/ is masculine. Certainly, the purpose in the Qur'anic

term /mu‘aqqib at/ is not to be considered as chasing and hunting man so as to be regarded as incompatible with the phrase /bayna yadayh/ (before him and behind him). On the contrary, it refers to succession and consecutive arrival of the angels during, day and night.

The Qur’anic phrase /‘amrullah/, mentioned in this verse, does not imply the penalty and punishment of Allah, for it does not make any sense to say that the angels protect man from Divine punishment, but it implies that they protect man from dangers and natural accidents; since the nature has been created by Allah and whatever goes on in it, is done in accordance with His will.

Many verses of the Qur’an and Islamic traditions indicate that there are angels that guard and protect human beings from dangers and calamities and record their deeds. They protect them from those dangers which are not seriously ordained under the Will of Allah.

Based upon the Islamic narrations in conformity with the Will of Allah, on various occasions, the protecting angels are allowed to abandon their role and allow some harm to come to man in accordance with Divine wisdom.

Certainly, according to the inferences from quotations, as soon as the decisive Will of Allah arrives, the protecting angels abandon their protection mission and leave man to his doom and death which is certain to happen.

Thus there are two sides to Allah’s commandments: those that are certain to happen and those that are not certain. The angels only save man from those accidents which are not certain to occur. It goes without saying that such a protection in fact does not relieve man of his duties and freedom of choice. The destinies of individuals and nations are always in their own hands.

The protection of angels is not confined to that of the lives of men but it also involves their acts as well as their faith and thought against deviations and satanic temptations as the Qur’anic term /yahfaz<sup>ق</sup>nah<sup>ق</sup>/ includes both the soul and the body.

Imam Sajjad (as), alluding to this verse, said:

*“The sins which alter blessings consist of: oppressing the people, ingratitude of Allah, abandoning of the good deeds which one is used to do.”<sup>2</sup>*

This holy verse deals with human societies and not with individuals one by one. That is, a decent righteous society is covered by Allah’s blessings, and a deviant one will get entangled with the Divine punishment.

However, this formula does not adapt to the case of a righteous individual and an indecent one, for one may be righteous though he may, for divine trial or experimental purposes, get involved with difficulties; or one may be viscous though he may be momentarily left to himself for the respite given to him by Allah.

Any way, we read in the foregoing verse that because of the fact that ‘He knows the Unseen and the Seen’, Allah is aware of the visible as well as the invisible nature of men and is Omnipresent and Omnipotent.

The Qur’an adds in this verse that in addition to this, Allah is also the Protector and Guardian of His servants. There are agents commissioned for men to oversee things around man consecutively and to protect him from evil events.

The verse says:

***“There are (angels) in succession, before him and behind him, who protect him by Allah’s command...”***

However, to enable one not to mix every thing that such a protection and guardianship is unconditional and one can throw oneself down the pit and get involved in random acts or commit every kind of sin which merits Divine penalties, still expecting Allah’s angels to protect him, the Qur’an adds:

***“... Verily, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition...”***

To avoid any misunderstandings as to the meaningfulness of Divine punishments despite the existence of Divine agents whose mission is to protect man, the Qur’an adds at the end of the verse that once Allah determines to inflict penalties on a nation or a population there is no reversal or defense for that nation, which will have no protector except Allah.

The verse continues saying:

***“...And if Allah intends evil upon a people, there is no turning it back; and they have, apart from Him, no protector.”***

It is for this reason that once Allah’s decree is issued as to the punishment or annihilation of a nation, the guardians and the protectors distance themselves, submitting man to his doom.

## **The Alterations Must Have Their Onset in Ourselves**

The Qur’anic sentence:

***“... Verily, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change any alterations in the mood of any their own condition...”***

which has been mentioned throughout the Qur’an on two occasions with a slight difference, reflects a general and universal law.

This Qur’anic principle, which explains one of the most important social programs of Islam, informs us

that whatever external changes which occur rest on the internal changes of nations and tribes, and whatever victory or defeat is inflicted upon a nation usually has its origin in this principle.

Therefore, those who seek external factors for their self-acquittal are indeed mistaken, for if such infernal powers have not got any basis within a society, they are left crippled.

This Qur'anic principle implies that in order to put an end to all misfortunes and miseries, one must turn to a revolution from within, a revolution in thinking and in culture, a revolution in faith and in ethics.

In cases of miseries and deadlocks, one must immediately turn to the discovery of weak points in oneself and clear one's soul and self from them by reconstructing himself with repentance and returning to Allah in order to wash his soul and self and to have a rebirth and a renaissance and convert one's defeats and frustrations into success.

Thereby, we all know that Allah's Will stands as superior to all wills, and His protection extends as far as man does not spoil His blessings. Otherwise, one would be deprived of the Divine favour and would be left to him.

## Surah Ar-Ra'd – Verse 12

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَيُنشِئُ السَّحَابَ الثِّقَالَ

**12. "It is He Who shows you the lightning for fear and hope and produces heavy clouds."**

The blissful Qur'an once again here deals with the monotheistic verses and the signs of Allah's magnitude and glory as well as the secrets of creation.

At first, it alludes to the lightning which emerges from within the pieces of clouds, and implies that it is Allah Who offers you the lightning which is a source of fear as well as of greed. The verse says:

**"It is He Who shows you the lightning for fear and hope..."**

On the one hand, its shining rays astound one's eyes and generate and incite terror in him.

On the other hand, as it is usually accompanied by raining which offers the thirsty desert pure water, and waters the trees and fields, it creates hope and incites greed in man, between which, he passes sensitive moments.

Then the Qur'an declares that it is He Who creates heavy clouds which are fully-loaded and which are capable of watering thirsty lands.

The verse continues saying:

***“...and produces heavy clouds.”***

The main thing to remember is that although natural causes pave the way for the emergence of thunder and lightning, nevertheless, the true source and origin of all these factors is Allah. The discovery of the laws of physics and chemistry of the nature must not diminish in any way our faith in Allah, for the nature and its laws are themselves created by Allah.

## **Surah Ar-Ra'd – Verse 13**

وَيُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ خِيفَتِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ الصَّوَاعِقَ فَيُصِيبُ بِهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُمْ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ شَدِيدُ الْمِحَالِ

***13. “And The thunder glorifies Him with His praise, and the angels, too, in awe of Him; and He sends the thunderbolts so as to smite with them whomever He pleases, while they dispute about Allah, and He is mighty in wrath.”***

This noble verse deals with the thunderbolt which is never separable from lightning.

The verse says:

***“And The thunder glorifies Him with His praise...”***

Certainly, this vibrating echoing sound of the world of nature, which is coupled with the lightning phenomenon, both act towards one goal which is the glorification of Allah. In other words, the thunder is a vocal expression of lightning, which reveals the nature of the system of creation and the magnitude of the Creator.

Not only the sound of the thunder and other particles of the material world glorify and thank Him, but all the angels are also busy thanking praising Him because of their awe and fear.

The verse continues saying:

***“...and the angels, too, in awe of Him...”***

The divine angels are frightened that they might have had shortcomings and failures as to the execution of their duties and responsibilities assigned to them by Allah in the system of existence, thus facing Divine punishment.

We know well that the duties and responsibilities have always been awe-inspiring and frightening for

those who feel responsible, that kind of constructive fear which derives and directs them to action.

In order to give a further explanation concerning thunder and lightning, the Qur'an alludes to thunderbolts, where it declares:

***"...and He sends the thunderbolts so as to smite with them whomever He pleases..."***

Despite all these and in spite of observing all signs of Allah's magnitude, comparing them to the inferiority of man with respect to catastrophes, even in the case of a celestial spark, there are some ignorant groups who go on disputing about Allah.

The verse says:

***"...while they dispute about Allah..."***

They dispute while Allah's powers know no limits and His punishment would be painful and He punishes severely.

The verse concludes:

***"...and He is mighty in wrath."***

## **Explanations**

In the Qur'anic literature, the totality of existence is ever engaged in praising the glory of Allah; that kind of praising which is based on knowledge and cognition and free will.

What is interesting in this respect is that the Qur'an explains this subject in such a way that it attracts the attention of all, and obliterates all matters which give rise to disbelief and loss of faith, among which one may point to the following:

The application of such noble words as /sabbaha/ or /yusabbihu/ which explicitly express the meaning of praise and glorification.

The repetition of this subject in the various Suras of the Qur'an.

The raising of the issue of the glorification of Allah by all beings at the beginning of the Surah, and immediately after the holy phrase /bismill ah/.

The use of such words as the humility of the entire domain of existence:

***"...all are obedient to him"<sup>3</sup>.***

The prostration of the stars and the plants:

***“And the herbs and the trees do adore (Him).”***<sup>4</sup>

The obedience of the skies and the earth:

***“...they both said: ‘We come willingly.’”***<sup>5</sup>

The awareness that all beings are in a state of prayer and gratitude:

***“...He knows the prayer of each and its glorification...”***<sup>6</sup>

Addressing of man as to his lack of understanding of the expression of gratitude of other beings:

***“...but you do not understand their glorification...”***<sup>7</sup>

The Arabic term /mih al/ is derived from /hilah/ which means every kind of hidden and covert way of seeking a remedy, and since this process is interconnected with and interdependent on knowledge and power, therefore, commentators have interpreted the Qur’anic holy phrase /šadidulmihal/ as ‘mighty in power and punishment’.

In some Qur’anic verses, the acts of gratitude to Allah and glorifying Him have been mentioned with together:

***“The thunder glorifies Him with His praise...”***<sup>8</sup>

***“and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise...”***<sup>9</sup>

It is just like the bowing and prostration within which we say:

***“Glorified is my Lord, the Exalted, and with His praise”***

***“Glorified is my Lord, the greatest, and with His praise”.***

It has been recorded in various Sunni traditions that the sublime Prophet (S) used to interrupt his speech and start praying as soon as he heard the sound of thunderbolts and he would encourage others to do the same.<sup>10</sup>

Thunderbolts and being thunder-stricken is not an accidental matter. On the contrary, it is in accordance with Allah’s will and the laws of the Divine nature.

Thunderbolts are the Divine punishment which are inflicted on the sinful nations like the people of Thamūd:

***“...So there seized them the thunderbolt of a disgracing chastisement for what they used to earn.”***

## Surah Ar-Ra'd – Verse 14

لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا كَبَاسِطٍ كَفَّيْهِ  
إِلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُغَ فَاهُ وَمَا هُوَ بِبَالِغِهِ وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ

**14. “To Him (alone) is the call of Truth; and those to whom they call, besides Him, will answer them nothing, but like one who stretches his two hands towards the water so that it may reach his mouth, while it does not reach it. And the prayer of disbelievers is only in error”**

This holy verse refers to two points. The first is that: Allah’s call belongs to Him alone. That is, He will accept us whenever we call Him. He is both well aware of the prayers of His servants and He also has the authority to fulfill their wishes.

The verse says:

**“To Him (alone) is the call of Truth...”**

Another point raised here is that calling the idols and requesting them is absurd and erroneous, for those whom the pagans call, other than Allah, and seek refuge in them for fulfilling their wishes, their call and their prayers will be left unanswered.

The verse continues saying:

**“...and those to whom they call, besides Him, will answer them nothing...”**

Then, as it is the case with the Qur’anic method, in order to visualize this rational subject, including the feeling of beauty and explicitness, the Qur’an brings a sensible and expressive similitude by declaring that:

Those who call on other than Allah are like the ones who stretch their hand-palms towards water so as to fetch water and take it to their mouth, but such a thing will never happen.

The verse says:

**“...but like one who stretches his two hands towards the water so that it may reach his mouth, while it does not reach it...”**

Can one sit next to a well and stretch his hands and send it to his mouth instantly and just by pointing to it? Can one expect such a thing to happen by any other one than he who is foolish or lunatic?

To stress the issue further, the Qur’an at the end of the verse indicates that: the prayers of the pagans

from their idols is nothing more than taking steps in the dark, and being misled.

The verse says:

***“...And the prayer of disbelievers is only in error”***

What a course of being misled can be worse than that man does his utmost to go astray which may lead him nowhere!

## **Explanations**

Calling on people to worship the sole Allah and alienating oneself from the attention of others, and regarding Him as the only effective factor has been frequently referred to in the Qur'an, among which one may name the followings:

***“I answer the prayer of every supplicant when he calls on Me...”***<sup>12</sup>

However, if he goes to others and calls on them for the fulfillment of his needs, he must beware that they do not hear and if they hear, they will not accept.

The Qur'an says:

***“If you call on them they will not listen to your call, and even if they were to listen, they cannot answer you...”***<sup>13</sup>

The confined man naturally requires a safe haven in the adventurous life of the world.

The divine prophets introduce Allah as the safe haven:

***“To Him (alone) is the call of Truth...”***

However, other people's help, such as the despots, are either for fooling him or for his exploitation or propagation and for their own protection of positions, etc. What is not worth consideration to them, is the 'man' himself.

Man is inherently truth seeking and thirsty for the Truth but he often loses his way to obtain it. Except for his faith in Allah and love of Him and that his prayers be directed to Him, nothing else will quench the thirst of man who infinitely aspires.

***“...so that it may reach his mouth, while it does not reach it...”***

For, anything inferior to Allah is a mirage and calling on others is of no avail.

Therefore, he who sincerely calls Allah will return not empty-handed. Returning empty-handed is because of focusing towards other than Him.

## Surah Ar-Ra'd – Verse 15

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعاً وَكَرْهاً وَظِلالُهُمْ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْأَصَالِ

**15. “And whoever is in the skies and on the earth prostrates for Allah willingly or unwillingly, and (so do) their shadows in the mornings and the evenings.”**

In order to explain how the idol-worshippers have become separated from the mainstream of the world of existence and have been led stray one by one, this verse proclaims that all those who are in the heavens and on the earth willingly or reluctantly obey and submit themselves and prostrate before Allah every morning and evening.

The verse says:

**“And whoever is in the skies and on the earth prostrates for Allah willingly or unwillingly, and (so do) their shadows in the mornings and the evenings.”**

What is the objective of prostration by the beings? In such cases, prostration signifies utmost modesty, humbleness, and submission. Nevertheless, the humility and prostration of some groups of creatures is done in the genetic form.

That is, they are only submissive in face of the laws of the world of existence and creation. However, some others do have religious prostration in addition to the genetic prostration, which means that they prostrate before Allah willingly and with their own free will.

The Arabic expression: /tau'an wa karhan/ (willingly and unwillingly) might point out to the fact that the believers willingly prostrate before Allah and exhibit their modesty, while the unbelievers, who are not ready to perform such a ritual, all the particles of their entity are submissive to Allah's commandments in accordance with the laws of creation, whether they want it or not.

### Explanations

Perhaps the objective in mind as regards the prostration of the shadows is their manner in which they are being cast on the floor, which implies that the entire universe is obedient to and prostrates before Allah, and that this mode of existential prostration of all beings is a continuous process.

The Arabic term /'asal/ is the plural form of /'usul/, which itself is the plural of /'asil/, and is derived from /'asl/ which means 'the end of the day'.

## Surah Ar-Ra'd – Verse 16

قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلِ اللَّهُ قُلْ أَتَّخَذْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ  
لَأَنْفُسِهِمْ نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ أَمْ هَلْ تَسْتَوِي الظُّلُمَاتُ  
وَالنُّورُ أَمْ جَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ خَلَقُوا كَخَلْقِهِ فَتَشَابَهَ الْخَلْقُ عَلَيْهِمْ قُلِ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ  
شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

**16. “Say: ‘Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?’ Say: ‘Allah’. (Then) say: ‘Why is it that you have taken guardians other than Him who own no profit and loss for themselves?’ Say: ‘Are the blind and the eyed equal? Or are the darknesses and light identical? Or have they set up partners for Allah who have created (something) like His creation, so that creation is all alike to them?’ Say: ‘Allah is the Creator of everything, and He is the One, the All-Dominant’.”**

As there were numerous discussions as to the cognition of Allah’s Existence in the previous holy verses, the Qur’an has devoted the discussion in this verse to the mistakes of the pagans and the worshippers of the idols. It follows this discussion on several fronts.

At first, the Qur’an addresses the Prophet (S) and tells him to ask them about the creator and administrator of the heavens and the earth.

It declares:

**“Say: ‘Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?’...”**

Then, before that the Prophet (S) waits for any answer from them, it immediately issues the decree to him (S) that he provides the best answer to this query, proclaiming that:

**“...Say: ‘Allah’...”**

Then blaming them and reproaching them with this sentence the Qur’an issues another query for the Prophet (S) to ask them, saying whether they have designated any one other than Allah as their worshipping center and their supporting person, without considering the fact that these idols can be of no profit or loss even for themselves.

The verse says:

**“...(Then) say: ‘Why is it that you have taken guardians other than Him who own no profit and loss for themselves?’...”**

Then, by providing two explicit and clear examples, the Qur'an differentiates between the position of the individuals who are 'monotheist' and that of 'pagans', stating:

***"...Say: 'Are the blind and the eyed equal?..."***

As the blind and the eyed people are not similar, therefore, the pagan and the faithful are not alike either, and one cannot designate the position of the idols alongside Allah.

The other point the verse remarks is that:

***"...Or are the darknesses and light identical?..."***

How would it be possible to align the idols, which are utter darkness, alongside Allah (s.w.t.) Who is the absolute light of existence?

Then, the Qur'an stresses further the rejection of the ideas of the pagans, asking whether they have aligned counterparts for Allah for the sake that they are engaged in the process of creation like Allah, and hence, such a creation has brought about for them a state of confusion.

The verse says:

***"...Or have they set up partners for Allah who have created (something) like His creation, so that creation is all alike to them?..."***

However, even the idol worshippers are not of the same opinion about idols. They, too, regard Allah as the Creator of everything and consider the world of creation as a whole package in His Authority.

Therefore, the verse instantly adds:

***"...Say: 'Allah is the Creator of everything, and He is the One, the All-Dominant'..."***

One can infer from the above verse that the process of creation is a continuous matter and Allah (s.w.t.) is continuously shedding rays of existence, in which case, every being is benefiting existence from His Pure Essence from moment to moment.

Therefore, the process of creation and administration of the world of existence are both in His Own Power, just like the onset of creation.

## **Explanations**

Discussing issues in the form of 'question-and-answer' is one of the methods of propagation, and dissemination of information, and is an educational means, which has been notably used by the Qur'an.

***"Say: 'Who is the Lord of heavens and the earth?..."***

Some pagans only accepted the creative nature of Allah and considered others as administrators.

Therefore, in Surah ‘Ankabūt, No. 29, verse 61, the Qur’an proclaims:

***“And if you ask them (these pagans) who created the heavens and the earth and made the sun and the moon subservient, they will certainly say ‘Allah’...”***

Then how is it that they hasten to paganism, ‘Deism’, and ignorance after making such a confession?

Paganism in all its forms, according to some Islamic quotations, is more hidden and covert than the movement of an ant over a dark stone by night. An example of this is that one might say that this task was done under Allah’s blessings and with the help of such a person.

## **Surah Ar-Ra’d – Verse 17**

أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌ بِقَدَرِهَا فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَابِيًا وَمِمَّا يُوقِدُونَ عَلَيْهِ فِي النَّارِ ابْتِغَاءَ حُلْيَةٍ أَوْ مَتَاعٍ زَبَدٌ مِثْلُهُ كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ فَأَمَّا الزَّبَدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَاءً وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ

***17. “He sent down water from the sky, then rivers flew according to their capacity and the floodwater carried along a swelling foam, and from metals, which they melt with fire so as to make an ornament or goods, arises a foam similar to it. Thus does Allah illustrate the Truth and falsehood; then as for the foam passes away as a worthless thing, and what is beneficial for people remains on the earth. Thus Allah sets forth the parables.”***

As the method of the Qur’an relies heavily on objective issues as an educational book, in order to explain the complicated concepts, it points to the tangible examples which are interesting and beautiful in everyday life of the people.

It explains an explicit example for visualization of the facts referred to in the previous verses regarding monotheism, paganism, faith and blasphemy, the truth and the untruth.

At first the Qur’an says:

***“He sent down water from the sky...”***

It is the kind of water which is life-giving and creating, and it is also the source of development and movement. There are floodwaters which flow from every valley and every river, measured according to

their capacity.

The holy verse continues saying:

***“...then rivers flew according to their capacity...”***

Small streams join one another, stream–lining into canals that join together to form huge torrents which flow down the mountains. Waters piling up carry whatever stand in their way, which strike over them. At this moment, foams emerge from between the layers of the waves.

As the Qur’an says:

***“...and the floodwater carried along a swelling foam...”***

The emergence of the foams is not confined to the coming of rain. There arises a foam out of what is being melted in the furnaces for obtaining jewelry or home appliances, upon which they light fire to melt, so there are also foams appearing which are like the ones on water surface.

The Qur’an says:

***“...and from metals, which they melt with fire so as to make an ornament or goods, arises a foam similar to it...”***

After giving this example, the Holy Qur’an concludes by pointing out that Allah provides you with an example in this manner for the truth and the untruth.

The verse says:

***“...Thus does Allah illustrate the Truth and falsehood...”***

Afterwards, discussing it in detail, it declares, however, the seeming high foams, which are void in the process of flow of water, go away and the water, which is useful for people, stays on the earth.

The verse says:

***“...then as for the foam passes away as a worthless thing, and what is beneficial for people remains on the earth...”***

The truth is also always useful, just like pure water which is the source of life. However, the wrong and the untruth is useless and absurd, while the truth must always be flourishing and alive so as to expel the ‘untruth’.

At the end of the verse, to stress further the point and to call all to study in depth and in a more exact way over this example, as well as other examples of the Qur’an, it says:

***“... Thus Allah sets forth the parables.”***

Examples usually universalize cases. There are many scientific discussions which are only understandable for a selected few persons and the masses of people do not benefit from them very much. However, once they are accompanied with examples, they tend to become better understandable for the people of all echelons and all levels of knowledge.

Therefore, examples are best as a means of generalization of knowledge and culture, and they have some undeniable and numerous applications.

There are two examples introducing the falsehood in this verse. One is the foam which appears on the surface of water. The second is the foam which covers metals once they are in the melting pot.

The falsehood is like the foam for:

It is transient.

It appears as the shadow of the truth and under it.

It covers up the truth.

It has got looks but is worthless. It does neither quench the thirst of anyone, nor does any plant grow as a result of it.

It disappears once the conditions are normal.

It places itself on top though it is void and without any substance.

## **Illustration**

Illustration makes rational problems tangible and paves the way for arriving at the objectives. It universalizes all subjects and tends to silence the obstinate. Therefore, the Qur'an has utilized this method extensively. Allah has provided three examples in this verse.

First, He has exemplified the revelation of the Qur'an to the water which is descended from the sky. He has also compared the hearts of the people to the oases which attract the water to themselves according to their own capacity.

Those who make their utmost effort to understand the Qur'an will reap great rewards, like rivers and oases which are big; and those who are content with the Qur'an and make less effort in understanding its facts will reap less and take less advantages just like smaller oases and streams which obtain less shares.

Later, Allah compares the satanically whims and temptations to foam which appears on water surface. It

goes without saying that the main cause of the foam is not water itself, but it is the land which does not have good soil.

Also, skepticisms and doubts as well as selfish whims do not have their origin in the truth, but they have their source in the people's selves. Allah, the Almighty, proclaims that as foam does not last long and what remains of it is pure and soft water, satanical whims will ultimately disappear and vanish while the real face of the truth reveals itself and remains forever.

The third example is that He (s.w.t.) has compared paganism to those nasty materials which are dark in colour and exemplified as such which melt while they are placed on metals and the simile goes on in the case of faith which is exemplified to a melted piece of metal which is pure.

And thus end the proverbs of the Qur'an here which are so instructive.

## Surah Ar-Ra'd – Verse 18

لِّلَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمُ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُ لَوْ أَنَّ لَهُم مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ  
جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لَافْتَدَوْا بِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ الْحِسَابِ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَيُسَّ  
الْمِهَادُ

**18. “For those (people) who accepted their Lord, it is the best (reward). But those who did not accept Him, even if they were to have all that is on the earth and the like of it, they would certainly offer it as ransom. It is they for whom the reckoning will be terrible and their abode will be Hell and what an awful place it is!”**

One can infer from the Holy Qur'an that there are several accounts kept for people on the Day of Judgment.

Some have an easy account.

**“...by an easy reckoning”<sup>14</sup>**

Some have their account inspected audited and settled in a hard and an exact way.

**“...a severe account...”<sup>15</sup>**

Some go to hell and there is no need for any settlement by court or trials.

**“...and on the Day of Resurrection We assign no weight for them.”<sup>16</sup>**

Some go to the Paradise without having to settle any accounts.

***“...only the patient will be paid back their reward in full without measure.”***<sup>17</sup>

According to the Islamic quotations and traditions, those who are forgiving and merciful towards people and treat them with favor, will have an easy time as far as their account is concerned; and those who are hard on others, their account will be hard to settle.

The unbelievers will go to Hell with no account, and those believers who are patient will go to Paradise without any worries for their settlement of account.

As the Qur'an confirms, acceptance is mutual. That is, if the people expect Allah to accept their call, they must also accept Allah's call.

***“...Answer Allah and the Messenger when he invites you to that which gives you life...”***<sup>18</sup>

## **A Discussion About the Call**

The issue of the invitation can be dealt with from different dimensions:

### **Those Who Invite to the Truth**

#### **A: Prophets:**

***“Say: ‘... I call to Allah...”***<sup>19</sup>

Allah commands the Prophet (S) to tell the people that his way of life and that of his followers is this which leads and directs people towards Allah with insight.

***“Remember when you were climbing (the hillside) and you paid no heed to any one, while the Messenger was calling you from your rear...”***<sup>20</sup>

***“And as one inviting to Allah by His leave, and as a light-giving torch.”***<sup>21</sup>

Meaning that you call on people directing them towards Allah with His permission, thus becoming the burning torch of the world.

#### **B: The Believers:**

***“And there should be a party among you who invite (others) to good...”***<sup>22</sup>

This means that from among you Muslims, those who are more knowledgeable and more virtuous must lead the people towards the good and righteousness.

#### **C: Jinn:**

***“O’ our people accept the caller of Allah (just as we did)... ”23***

### **The Callers to Falsehood**

#### **Pioneers of paganism:**

***“And We made them the pioneers (who) call to the Fire...”24***

#### **The Satan:**

***“...the Satan calls them to the chastisement...”25***

That is: would they still follow the Satan’s lead to hell regardless of the fact that he has called their fathers to Hell?

and:

***“I did not have any authority over you, except that I called you and you responded me...”26***

#### **The Unbelievers:**

***“...those invite to the Fire...”27***

That is the pagans call you to hell fire by way of ignorance and darkness.

### **The Subject of Invitation**

#### **Life:**

***“...he invites you to that which gives you life...”28***

This verse means that Allah and your prophet call you to accept the faith so as to enable you to reach an eternal life.

#### **The Straight path:**

***“And certainly you invite them to a straight path.”29***

#### **Forgiveness:**

***“...Allah invites to Paradise and forgiveness...”30***

#### **The Paradise:**

***“And Allah does call mankind to the Abode of Peace...”31***

#### **Salvation:**

***"I call you to the salvation..."***<sup>32</sup>

## **Confronting the Dissidents**

### **Accusations**

#### **Sorcerer:**

***"... Verily this indeed is a knowing sorcerer."***<sup>33</sup>

#### **A poet:**

***"...nay! he is a poet..."***<sup>34</sup>

#### **Soothsayer:**

***"...for by the grace of your Lord, you are not a soothsayer..."***<sup>35</sup>

In this verse the Prophet (S) is commanded to mention unto people that he speaks while he is blessed by revelation and prophecy from his Lord and there is no question of lunacy existing in him.

#### **Crazy:**

***"...And they say: "Verily he is crazy."***<sup>36</sup>

#### **Liar:**

***"...verily we do think you to be of the liars."***<sup>37</sup>

We guess you are from among the liars.

#### **Oppressor:**

***"...who desires that he may have superiority over you..."***<sup>38</sup>

This verse is about the people of Noah who, answering him, said to others that this person wants to achieve supremacy over you.

#### **Threat:**

***"...we would certainly stone you..."***<sup>39</sup>

#### **Slaying:**

***"...And (remember) when those who disbelieved plotted against you to take you captive, or to kill you..."***<sup>40</sup>

### **Humiliation:**

*"...Is this he who speaks of your gods?..."*<sup>41</sup>

### **Skepticism:**

Leaders and chieftains of the people of Salih, ridiculing the poor who became believers, said:

*"Do you believe that Salih is sent by his Lord?..."*<sup>42</sup>

### **Conspiracy and war:**

*"And (remember) when those who disbelieved plotted against you to take you captive, or to kill you, or to expel you..."*<sup>43</sup>

### **The Motives and Factors for Lack of Acceptance**

Imitation

Fanaticism

Arrogance

Sensual desire:

*"But if they do not answer you, then know that they only follow their low desires..."*<sup>44</sup>

### **The Reward for Acceptance**

Reward:

*"Then, as for those who believe and do righteous deeds, He will pay them their rewards fully and will bestow them out of His Grace..."*<sup>45</sup>

Life:

*"O' you who have Faith! Answer Allah and the Messenger when he invites you to that which gives you life..."*<sup>46</sup>

Happiness:

*"For those who respond to their Lord is the best (reward)..."*<sup>47</sup>

Any way, after depicting the profile of the 'truth' and the 'untruth' through an expressive example mentioned in the previous verse, here the Qur'an alludes to the fate of those who have accepted Allah's call and at the same time, it refers to the destiny of the ones who rejected the truth and turned to vices.

At first, it says:

***“For those people who accepted their Lord, it is the best (reward)...”***

Then the Qur’an further adds that as for those who do not accept this call of Allah (s.w.t.), their destiny is so wicked and relentless that even if they were in full possession of all of what is found on the earth or the like of it, they would be ready to dispense with them all so as to attain salvation.

However, all this would not be accepted from them.

The verse says:

***“...But those who did not accept Him, even if they were to have all that is on the earth and the like of it, they would certainly offer it as ransom...”***

To portray the grievousness of their punishment, there would be no interpretation more explicit than the one which assumes that supposedly one owns all of what is on the earth, rather doubling that amount, and dispenses all just to be relieved and receive salvation, yet it is of no avail.

This sentence refers, in fact, to one’s ultimate desire that he wants to be the proprietor of all that exists on the earth. However, the intensity of the punishment of the oppressors and dissidents of the Allah’s call is so much so that they are ready to sacrifice this ultimate worldly desire, and beyond it, and become relieved.

Following this catastrophe, abstention from accepting all that is on the earth for one’s salvation, is an allusion made to their other misfortune which implies that they have got a hard and an awful account to settle, and ultimately, they will be located in the fire of the inferno.

The verse says:

***“...It is they for whom the reckoning will be terrible and their abode will be Hell and what an awful place it is!”***

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1. Tafsir-i-Burhan.
  2. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
  3. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 116
  4. Ar-Rahman, No. 55, verse 6
  5. Fussilat, No. 41, verse 11
  6. An-Nūr, No. 24, verse 41
  7. Surah 'Isrā', No. 17, verse 44
  8. The verse under discussion
  9. Surah 'Isrā', No. 17, verse 44
  10. Durr-ul-Manthūr
  11. Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 71

12. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 186
13. Surah Fatir, No. 35, verse 14
14. Surah Al-'Inshiqaq, No. 84, verse 8
15. Surah At-Tal'aaq, No. 65, verse 8
16. Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 105
17. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 16
18. Surah Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 24
19. Surah Y'suf, No. 12, verse 108
20. Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 153
21. Surah Al-Ahzab, No. 33, verse 46
22. 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 104
23. Surah Al-'Ahqaf, No. 46, verse 31
24. Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 41
25. Surah Luqman, No. 31, verse 21
26. Surah 'Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 22
27. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 221
28. Surah Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 24
29. Surah Al-Mu'min'een, No. 23, verse 73
30. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 221
31. Surah Y'yunus, No. 10, verse 25
32. Surah Al-Ghafir, No. 40, verse 41
33. Surah 'A'raf, No. 7, verse 109
34. Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 5
35. Surah At-T'ur, No. 52, verse 29
36. Surah Al-Qalam, No. 68, verse 51
37. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 66
38. Surah Al-Mu'min'een, No. 23, verse 24
39. Surah H'id, No. 11, verse 21
40. Surah Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 30
41. Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 36
42. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 75
43. Surah Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 30
44. Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 50
45. Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 173
46. Surah Al-Anfal, No. 8, verse 24
47. Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 18

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