

Section 2: Everything in the Universe Takes Place by Allah's Command

Surah Al-Hijr – Verse 16

وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا لِلنَّاظِرِينَ

16. “And indeed, We have established constellations in the sky and We have decorated them for the beholders,”

The Arabic term /buruj/ originally signifies ‘emergence’, and a woman who shows off his ornaments in Arabic is said: /taburrajat-il-mar’ah/. The Arabic term /burj/ also refers to a palace, and those high-raised buildings which present special splendours. In this verse the celestial globes, or their locations, are likened to constellations.

As the earth rotates around the sun, an imaginary circle is formed which is called ‘the Zodiac’. This circle is divided into twelve equal zones within either of which certain stars are located, according to the shape of that collection of stars, it has been named to it.

In Persian, they are called as Farvardin, Ordibehesht, khordad, ... and in Arabic, they are called Hamal, Sour, Jowza, Sarat an, Asad, Sunbulah, Mizan, Aqrab, Qous, Judi, Dalw and Hīt. All of these phenomena represent the power and splendour of Allah.

Surah Al-Hijr – Verses 17 – 18

وَحَفِظْنَاهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِيمٍ

إِلَّا مَنْ اسْتَرَقَ السَّمْعَ فَاتَّبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ مُبِينٌ

17. “And We have guarded them against every accursed Satan.”

18. “Save him who steals the hearing, so there pursues him a clear flame.”

The Arabic word /'istir aq/ is derived from /sirqat/, and thus the Arabic phrase means: ‘the stealing of words’.

The commentators have raised some issues with regard to this verse; among them one may name Fakhr-i-Razi and 'Alisi who have said in their commentaries that the objective meaning, in talking about the sky, is this same apparent sky, and the objective in mind in talking about the meteor is this same celestial stone-like objects, which are thrown down and are set in flame.

However, some other commentators have suggested that here the objective in mind, when referring to the sky, is the ‘invisible world’, and the world of Truth, into which Satans have no way and permission to enter.

Here are the verses:

“And We have guarded them against every accursed Satan.”

“Save him who steals the hearing, so there pursues him a clear flame.”

And, regarding its meaning, perhaps one can say: We have located identification figures and leaders in the spaces of spirituality, thus protecting the truth from the temptations of Satan.

And whenever a person who has the qualities of Satan, is acting temptation, We will launch an attack on him, expelling and perishing all sorts of innovation, and eclecticism, as well as other temptations, by sound reasoning and sound logic of the true believers.

Thus, one can find the relationship between the birth of Hadrat-i-Massiah (as) and further-more, the birth of Hadrat-i-Muhammad (S) and the casting off of such Satans from the skies.

Explanations

The Satan is not only Iblis, but there are Satans.

Eavesdropping and spying are both jobs of the Satan.

A spy must be dealt with quickly and in a revolutionary manner.

“...so there pursues him a clear flame.”

Wherever a Satan-like individual was to be found, the enlightening people must chase and strike him with the torch of knowledge.

The response to the Satanic acts must be provided with utmost explicitness, openness, quickness and with the maximum straight forwardness.

Surah Al-Hijr – Verses 19 – 21

وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَوْزُونٍ

وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعَايِشَ وَمَنْ لَسْتُمْ لَهُ بِرَازِقِينَ

وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنزِّلُهُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَعْلُومٍ

19. “And We have spread the earth, and We have cast therein firm mountains, and We have grown in it of every thing in due balance.”

20. “And We have provided means of subsistence therein for you and for him whom you are not responsible for his sustenance.”

21. “And there is not a thing but with Us are its treasures, and We do not send it down save in appointed measure.”

To complement the previous discussion, the Qur’an brings here some Divine verses about the whole creation, and the symbols of Allah’s splendour on the earth.

It begins with the earth at first, saying:

“And We have spread the earth...”

The Arabic term /madd/ originally means ‘expansion and spreading’, and most probably, it points to those parts of the land which emerged from under the water. For, as we know, the entire surface of the earth was covered hidden with water because of flood-like rains in the beginning.

Many years passed before those flood-like rains settled down in pitfalls of the earth, and parts of dry lands emerged gradually. This is the same thing which is referred to in Islamic literature as /dahw-ul-’ard/ (expansion of the earth).

And since the creation of mountains, with all the various advantages which carried with them, is considered as one of the signs of monotheism, the Qur'an refers to them, by adding:

"...and We have cast therein firm mountains..."

The Arabic term /'ilqa'/ means 'throwing or casting'. However, we know that mountains are the same ups and downs of the earth which have emerged because of the gradual freezing of the crust of the earth or owing to the eruption of the volcanoes.

It is possible that the term /'ilqa'/ has been applied to mean as to bring into existence in this context. In our daily life, we also say that we have, for instance, developed plans for such a land and have planned several rooms in it, in which case it means that we have built those rooms.

Anyway, in addition to the fact that such mountains are inter-connected with one another from the foundations and are protecting the earth against the pressures from within which cause earthquakes, and in addition to their function of obstructing the power of the storms and breaking them, thus controlling the blowing of winds and breezes in a very exact manner, they also constitute a good place for reservoirs of water, whether be it in the form of snow or of springs.

The emphasis has especially been laid on the Qur'anic word /rawasi/, the plural of /rasiyah/ which means: 'constant, and stationary or sustaining', which is a delicate reference to what we discussed above, indicating that not only they are all constant themselves but also they serve as a pillar for the constancy of the crust of the earth and human life.

Then, alluding to the most important factor in human life, as well as all living creatures, that is, the plants, the holy verse continues saying:

"...and We have grown in it of every thing in due balance."

What a beautiful and yet explicit interpretation it is to the Arabic term /mauzn/ which is principally derived from the word /wazn/ (weight) which refers to the recognition of the quantity of everything.

It is cited in Mufrad at Raqib:

"Weight is the knowledge as to the quantity of the thing."

This Qur'anic word refers to the exact keeping of the wonderful accounts and the measurements which are appropriate to all parts of plants, each of which has its own particles as of stems, branches, leaves, layers, seeds, and fruits.

There are perhaps hundreds of thousands of plants with various qualifications and varieties of effects the knowledge of which provides us with an outlook into the cognition of Allah, and the foliage of each leaf opens up a new chapter and presents a new volume upon the knowledge unto the Creator.

This possibility has also been forwarded that the objective of mentioning growth in this phrase is in case of various mines in mountains, because Arabs also refer to mines as /'inbat/.

In some quotations, there are also allusions made to this very meaning. A tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) denotes:

“Someone asked him about the commentary of this verse, and he answered:

*‘The objective is that Allah has created the mines of gold, silver, jewels and other metals in mountains.’*¹

This possibility also exists that the objective of /'inb at/ (to grow) is its meaning in its comprehensive form which encompasses all of those creatures which Allah has created on the earth.

In Surah Noah, from the tongue of that great prophet the Qur'an says that he told the people:

“And Allah made you grow like a plant from the earth.”²

Anyway, there is no incompatibility found in case that this verse has a vast and comprehensive meaning which includes plants, human beings and mines or the like.

As the means of life and sustenance of human beings is not confined to the plants and mines, the Qur'an refers to all such blessings in the next verse, and implies that Allah has located all means of sustenance for you within the earth.

They are available not only for you but they are there also for all living creatures as well as those which you do not procure anything for their sustenance and which are beyond your reach. Of course, Allah has been providing for all of them their requirements.

The verse says:

“And there is not a thing but with Us are its treasures, and We do not send it down save in appointed measure.”

The Arabic term /ma'ayiṣh/ is the plural form of /ma'iṣhah/ which signifies one's means of sustenance after which one sometimes seeks and, at other times, they are made accessible to him.

Some commentators have interpreted the word /ma' ayiṣh/ into 'agriculture, plants, foods or drinks,' it seems, however, that the meaning of this word is quite comprehensive and it encompasses all means of life.

The commentators have presented two versions for the sentence 'for him whom you are not responsible for his sustenance' The first version suggests that, as we said in the above, Allah wants to explain all of His blessings with regard to the human beings as well as with regard to those animals and living beings

which man cannot feed.

The other version suggests that Allah wants to make man aware of the fact that He does both, providing the means of sustenance for man, on the earth, and making available some living animals for him (like four-footed animals), which man can not feed.

It is He Who nourishes them though this job of nourishing is accomplished by him. However, we are of the opinion that the first version is more correct.

We can also base our confirmation as to the interpretation of this in a tradition adapted from the commentary book by Ali-Ibn-i-'Ibrahim, where concerning the meaning of the above mentioned sentence: he says:

"It means: 'We predetermined something for each of the animals'." 3

In the last verse under discussion, the Qur'an deals with the answer to the query which is raised by many people. That is, why is it that Allah does not provide adequate means of sustenance with all the people so as to free them from all kinds of struggling?

Allah answers:

"And there is not a thing but with Us are its treasures, and We do not send it down save in appointed measure."

Therefore, such is not the case that Allah's power is limited and He should be terrified by the case of running short of supplies. However, the stores and reservoirs as well as stocks of this world have got its proper book-keepings, and the means of sustenance are descended from His side in carefully measured and calculated proportions.

Elsewhere in the Qur'an we read:

"And if Allah should amplify the provision for His servants, they would certainly revolt in the earth; but He sends it down according to a measure as He pleases..." 4

It is quite clear that struggling for survival not only distances man from laziness, slowness, and despondency, but it also provides for him with the means for engagement in sound ways of thinking and bodily activities. Were it not so, and were there everything placed at man's disposal without any calculations, it could not be predicted how the world would look like in that situation.

A dozen jobless men, in welfare and with no controls imposed on them, would create a terrible atmosphere. For we know that the people of this world are not of the sort of those in Paradise who are devoid of all passions, egoisms, arrogance, and deviations.

They are rather of the mixed type with good and evil attributes who must be placed in the melting pot of

this world so as to be experienced and differentiated.

Therefore, as need and poverty often leads man towards deviation and misfortune, too much affluence also can be a cause of corruption and destruction.

Explanations

1 – What Are Allah’s Treasures?

There are many verses in the Qur’an which denote that Allah has got treasures, the heavenly treasures and the earthly ones are all His. Or the Qur’an indicates that the treasures of everything are with Him.

The Arabic term /xaz a’in/ is the plural form of /xaz anah/ which signifies a place where one stores his wealth to be protected. It is originally derived from /xazan/ which means protecting and preserving something.

Obviously, one seeks to store and preserve something who has got limited power and when one is unable to procure whatever he wants in any time. Therefore, once he is able he stores in his treasury whatever he feels it is necessary for him in the future.

However, can one apply such concepts in case of Allah? Certainly not. That is why some commentators, like Tabarsi in Majma‘-ul-Bayan, Fakhr-i-Razi in Tafsir-i-Kabir and Raqib in Mufrad at, have interpreted the phrase /xaz a’inullah/ (the treasures of Allah) as ‘the possibilities of Allah’.

That is, everything is assembled in Allah’s treasury of power, and He can bring forth whatever of it is deemed necessary in His Wisdom.

However, some other great commentators have claimed that the application of ‘Allah’s treasures’ refers to the entire affairs which exist in the world of existence and the material world, including the elements and the means for creating them.

In this collection, everything exists to an unlimited extent, but every single one of the products and particular beings of this world is created to a limited extent, without considering that the existence is exclusive to it. 5

Such interpretation, though principally is an acceptable proposition, is less acceptable than the first one which interprets it ‘with Us’.

Anyway, the application of such a sense like /xaz a’inullah/ which apparently does not hold true with its usual significance due to Allah, but it is such because Allah wants to speak to people through their own language. Once you are supposed to deal with a child, you will have to apply the language of children.

In conclusion, one finds it evident that the comments of some commentators who have considered the

word /xaza'in/ as reservoirs of 'water and rain', and its confinement within this specified example, not only, is unsubstantiated but also it is not commensurate with the vast concept of the verse.

2 – Kinds of Descent

As it was stated earlier, descent does not always mean coming down from a high place. It also means descending in one's rank as well as in one's position. Thus, if some favour from a superior is bestowed on inferiors, it is meant as descent.

It is for this reason that this term has been applied also to Allah's blessings in the Glorious Qur'an: Whether they may be descended from the skies like rain, or they might be grown up on the earth, like animals, as verse 6 in Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39 says:

"...and He sent down for you eight head of cattle in pairs..."

We also read concerning iron, in Surah Al-Hadid, No. 57, verse 25 that it says:

"...and We sent down iron...",

and the like.

Briefly speaking the Arabic words /nuzūl/ and /'inz al/ here signify 'existence, creation and origination'. Nonetheless, as it is achieved from the side of Allah towards His servants, such an interpretation has been ascribed to it.

Surah Al-Hijr – Verse 22

وَأَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيَّاحَ لَوَاقِحَ فَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَاسْقَيْنَاكُمُوهُ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ لَهُ بِخَازِنِينَ

22. "And We send winds fertilizing, and We send down water from the sky, so We give it to you to drink of, while you are not its treasurers."

The Arabic term /law aqih/ is derived from /liq ah/ which means: fertilizing of the clouds by joining together of the positive and negative pieces of cloud,⁶ or it also refers to the fertilization of plants through the act of transferring of plant pollination.

Following the discussion about some of the secrets of creation and other kinds of the blessings of Allah in previous verses, the holy Qur'an alludes to the blow of the winds and their effective role in raining, when it implies that Allah sends down the winds while they are fertilizing. They join pieces of clouds together and fertilize them.

The verse says:

“And We send winds fertilizing...”

Then it continues following that Allah sends down rain, and by that He quenches the thirst of all of men, while they are unable to protect and preserve it.

The verse says:

“...and We send down water from the sky, so We give it to you to drink of, while you are not its treasurers.”

That is, you are unable to collect and preserve rain in great quantities after raining. It is Allah Who by freezing it in the form of snow and ice, or through sending that to the depth of the earth, makes them come out and flow in the form of springs and wells. It is He Who collects and stores them.

Explanations

1- Man is often unable to preserve his most necessary requirements.

2- Man cannot store water within clouds for a long time. Nor can he store it on the surface of the earth. This cannot be done on the earth since it penetrates the earth, and it can not be done on stone and rocky valleys either as it evaporates.

Surah Al-Hijr – Verses 23 – 25

وَأِنَّا لَنَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَنَحْنُ الْوَارِثُونَ

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَقْدِمِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَأْخِرِينَ

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ إِنَّهُ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ

23. “And certainly We make alive and We cause to die and We are the (only) Heirs.”

24. “And indeed We know those of you who have gone before and We are certainly aware of the succeeding ones.”

25. “And verily, it is your Lord Who will gather them together, verily He is All-Wise, All-Knowing.”

The matters of death and life are solely in His authority. All are transient; therefore, it is appropriate for us to leave a good heritage for the Authentic Inheritor.

The verse says:

“And certainly We make alive and We cause to die and We are the (only) Heirs.”

Thus, time also will leave no impact on the knowledge of Allah. His knowledge is identical as to the past, the present, and the future.

The verse says:

“And indeed We know those of you who have gone before and We are certainly aware of the succeeding ones.”

The commentators have mentioned some examples for the Qur’anic terms: /mustaqdimin/ and /musta’xirin/, among which are the followings:

- 1- The predecessors and the survivors.
- 2- Those who overtake and lovers of the Holy War, etc.
- 3- Those who present themselves for prayers in the front line of congregation prayer, and those who queue up in the last line.

According to this meaning, some went as far as to queue up in the last line of congregation prayer so as to be able to look at women, who presented themselves for congregation prayer, with evil intentions as Allah says:

“We know ”.

Some believers would go as far as to sell their houses to exchange it for buying a house close to the mosque so as to be able to arrive there for standing in the front line of the prayers. These are those whom the verse refers to and implies that Allah knows such people, too.

Anyway, the uprising of the Resurrection Day, and the provision of both punishment and reward are all the affairs concerned to the Ranks of the Sovereignty of Allah.

The verse says:

“And verily, it is your Lord Who will gather them together, verily He is All-Wise, All-Knowing.”

Notes

Those preceding and those succeeding will be mustered altogether in the Resurrection Day:

“...who will gather them together...”

And Allah is well aware of the performances of all as well as of the intentions and impacts of any individual.

The rationale behind the resurrection is His Wisdom. If all of the particles of dust become food, and all foods become sperms and all sperms transform into human beings and they turn into dust again with their death, while there might not be any record and accounts for them, this is not a wise job done.

1. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 6

2. Surah Noah, No. 71, verse 17

3. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 9

4. Surah Ash-Shaur a, No. 42, verse 27

5. Al-Mizan, vol. 12, p. 148

6. Surah Az-Zariyat, No. 51, verse 41 implies that the wind is at times of no use and causes no fertilization, while at other times, it is also serving as sources of blessings. Again Surah An-Nūr, No. 24, verse 43 says:

“Do you not see that Allah directs the scattered clouds then He gathers them together and amasses them once again, and then you see the rain coming forth from their midst?...”

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