

## Section 5: The Polytheism of the Jews and the Christians

### Surah At-Tawbah – Verse 30

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللَّهِ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُمْ  
بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ يُضَاهِئُونَ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

**30. “And the Jews say: ‘Ezra is the son of God’; and the Christians say: ‘The Messiah is the son of God’. That is the utterance of their mouths, conforming with the saying of those who disbelieved before. May Allah destroy them; how they are turned away!”**

The term /uzayr/, mentioned in the verse, is the Arabic form of /uzr/، in the same manner that /is/ is the Arabic form of /yas/، and /yahy/ is the Arabicized form of /y/hanna/.

One of the great scholars of the Jews was called ‘Uzayr. He later was entitled ‘the Jew’, the Deliverer. It happened that after the occurrence of people’s general massacre by Nebuchadnezzar, and destruction of temples, burnt of the Turah, captivity of women and conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, ‘Uzayr went to Cyrus and asked him to equip the Jews with home and means of life.

This verse is a sort of explanation upon the previous verse, which implies that the ‘People of the Book’ do not believe in Allah and the Last Day.

The similarity of ‘the People of the Book’ to the idolaters was that idolaters considered idols as the partners of God. This verse points to that similarity:

**“...conforming...”.**

The Jews of the present day, of course, do not believe in 'Uzayr as the son of Allah, but at the time of the Prophet of Islam (S), they had such a notion. They could offer no answer to the Prophet's question when he asked them why they did not believe in Moses as God's son, the rank of whom was higher. The verse says:

***“And the Jews say: ‘Ezra is the son of God’; and the Christians say: ‘the Messiah is the son of God’. That is the utterance of their mouths...”***

The creeds of the Jews and the Christians are mixed with superstitions, the root of which is found in the creeds of the ancient pagans. The verse says:

***“...conforming with the saying of those who disbelieved before...”***

Then, the verse continues saying:

***“...May Allah destroy them; how they are turned away!”***

## **Surah At-Tawbah – Verse 31**

اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

***31. “They have taken their rabbis and their monks and Messiah, son of Mary, as (their) lords apart from Allah, while they were commanded to worship but One God; there is no god but He; Pure is He and Exalted is He from what they associate (with Him).”***

The Qur'anic term /'ahbʔr/ is the plural form of /hibr/ which means 'scholar, learned'; and the Arabic term /ruhban/ is the plural form of /rʔhib/ with the meaning of 'monk'. These people, with all their saintliness, are servants and worshippers of God, not objects of worship.

Unconditioned obedience from Jewish rabbis and Christian monks is a kind of worship done by the Jews and the Christians. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

***“Whoever obeys a person in sinning Allah; he has worshipped him.”***<sup>1</sup>

The verse says:

***“They have taken their rabbis and their monks and Messiah, son of Mary, as (their) lords apart from Allah, while they were commanded to worship but One God; there is no god but He...”***

Thus, obeying other than Allah unconditionally is a sort of serving other than Allah.

To worship the prophets, exaggerating about them, and considering them as son(s) of God is attributing partners to God. The verse continues saying:

*“...Pure is He and Exalted is He from what they associate (with Him).”*

## Surah At-Tawbah – Verse 32

يُرِيدُونَ أَن يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا أَن يُتِمَّ نُورَهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ

**32** *“They intend that they extinguish the Light of Allah with their mouths and Allah refuses but to perfect His Light, though the infidels detest it.”*

For the vain and useless efforts of the Jews and the Christians, or all the opponents of Islam, among whom are polytheists, there has come an interesting resemblance in this verse. It says:

*“They intend that they extinguish the Light of Allah with their mouths and Allah refuses but to perfect His Light...”*

In spite of their wish, Allah intends to spread this Divine Light and to complete it more and more, so that it covers throughout the world and in a manner that all the people of the world enjoy it, although the disbelievers do not like it. The verse continues saying:

*“...though the infidels detest it.”*

There is no meaning seemed more expressive than this to illustrate the degradation and contempt of their attempts. In fact, there will be no result for the efforts of a feeble creature before the endless Will and infinite Power of Allah other than this.

For extinguishing a small light, people used to usually blow with their mouths, while a puff of mouth has no effect in extinguishing strong lights. In order to state the weakness of their ability and to break their personality, the Qur<sup>ʿān</sup> has applied *“...with their mouths...”* which is of no avail for the strong lights to be extinguished.

The purpose is that these miserable people intend to extinguish the light of Allah with the blow of their mouth, like a person who tries to extinguish the sun with a puff.

## Surah At-Tawbah – Verse 33

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ

## المُشْرِكُونَ

**33. “He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of Truth, that He may prevail it over all religions, though the polytheists may detest it.”**

At last, by the means of this verse, the Muslims have been given the glad tidings of the spread of Islam through the world. In this way, the Qur’ān has completed the content of the previous verse indicating that the efforts of the opponents of Islam result nothing for them. It explicitly says:

**“He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of Truth, that He may prevail it over all religions, though the polytheists may detest it.”**

The purpose of **‘guidance’**, mentioned in the verse, is the clear reasoning and manifest evidences which exist in the religion of Islam; and the purpose of the phrase **‘religion of Truth’** is the same religion of Islam whose both principles and positive laws are right and, in general, its history, evidences, proofs, consequences and concepts are totally right, too.

Thus, no doubt, the religion whose both contents and documents, reasoning, and history are clear, should finally overcome all former creeds.

With the past of time and development of knowledge, together with the facility of communications, the facts will reveal their true features from behind the curtains of poisonous propaganda and they will remove the hinders that the opponents of the Truth create in its path.

It is in this way that the religion of Truth and the government of Truth will dominate everywhere, though the enemies of the Truth detest it, because their effort is something opposite to the nature of history and against the statutes of creation.

### **The Qur’ān and the reappearance of Mahdi (as)**

The words of the abovementioned verse have exactly been repeated in Surah As-Saff, No. 61, verse 9, and, with a little difference, have occurred in Surah Al-Fath, No. 48, verse 28. The verse informs of a significant happening, the importance of which has caused its repetition. It predicts that Islam will become a worldly religion and it will be practiced everywhere all over the world.

The concept of this verse is the complete triumph of Islam over all the religions in the world. This phrase means that Islam will finally cover the whole earth and will prevail throughout the world.

Upon the commentary of this verse, it has been narrated from Imam S̄̄diq (as) who said:

*“By Allah, the content meaning of this verse has not happened yet and it will not happen until when the ‘Gh̄̄’im’ (as) reappears. When he reappears there will remain no one to deny Allah, the Great,*

(throughout the world).”<sup>2</sup>

It is also narrated from Imam Baqir (as) who said:

*“Verily whatever (promise) there lies in this verse will happen at the time of the reappearance of Mahdi (as) when there will be no one (on the earth) but confesses the rightfulness of Muhammad (S).”*

However, the question of Mahdi (as) and his worldly reappearance has been mentioned in a lot of traditions recorded in the books of both great sects of Islam, so that it is considered as one example among the presuppositions of conviction.

It is narrated from Ali-ibn-i-’Abi Talib (as) that, at the time of reappearance of Mahdi (as), there will be no house and no town but Islam will arrive into it, whether they like or dislike, and the sound of ‘prayer call’ will be heard in any town.<sup>3</sup>

## Surah At-Tawbah – Verse 34

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْأَحْبَارِ وَالرُّهْبَانِ لَيَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ  
وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يَنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ  
اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

**34. “O’ you who have Faith! Verily many of the rabbis and monks consume the properties of the people in vanity and bar (them) from Allah’s way. And those who treasure up gold and silver, and do not spend them in the way of Allah; inform them of a painful chastisement.”**

The contents of the former verses were mostly upon the heathenish deeds of the Jews and Christians who believed in a kind of diety for their religious scholars.

This verse implies that not only they have not the rank of diety, but also they have not the eligibility of leading people. The best evidence for this idea is their committing different offenses. The Qur’an addresses the Muslims and says:

**“O’ you who have Faith! Verily many of the rabbis and monks consume the properties of the people in vanity and bar (them) from Allah’s way.**

These rabbis and monks used to devour the people’s properties falsely in different forms and without having a lawful permission, as follows:

One of those forms was that they used to conceal some of the facts of the religion of Messiah (as) and Moses (as) in order that people would not convert to the new religion (Islam), which put their interests in

danger and caused their presents to be ceased.

Another thing was that, by bribery from people, they invalidated the right and confirmed falsehood in place of right, and thus they judged falsely in benefit of the cruel and the strong.

One of other ways of gaining their unlawful incomes was that, under the name of 'selling Paradise' or 'forgiving sins', they took a great deal of money from people.

They used to bar people from Allah's way by perverting the Divine revelations or concealing them in order to preserve their unlawful gains.

Fitting to the discussion of mammonism of the leaders of both the Jews and the Christians, the Qur'an mentions a general law due to those who treasure up wealth. It states:

***"...And those who treasure up gold and silver, and do not spend them in the way of Allah; inform them of a painful chastisement."***

The abovementioned holy verse has clearly prohibited treasuring up wealth, and commands Muslims to utilize their properties actively in the way of Allah and in a profitable path for Allah's servants. They should severely avoid treasuring and storing them in a corner so that their wealth would not be applied in the current bargains; otherwise, they must wait for a painful punishment.

This painful punishment is not only the violent retribution of the Resurrection Day, but also it encompasses the hard chastisements of this world which comes forth as a result of disturbing the economical harmony of the society and causing a larger gap between the rich and the poor.

## **How much of Wealth Is Counted Treasure?**

According to many traditions, that which is obligatory to be paid is yearly alms tax, not other than that. Thus, if a person obtains some considerable wealth and regularly pays its Islamic tax, i.e. alms and also its one fifth levy, (khoms), the one will not be included of the meaning of the verse under discussion.

A tradition narrated from the Prophet (S) indicates that when this verse was revealed the circumstance became difficult for the Muslims. They said that by this command none of them could keep anything for the future of their children. Finally, they asked the matter from the Prophet (S), and he said:

***"Allah has not enjoined alms-tax save for that the rest of your properties becomes pure for you. So, the law of heritage has been legislated upon the properties which remain after you."***

This statement means that if treasuring up wealth were absolutely prohibited, the law of heritage would be meaningless.

Considering the totality of the concerning traditions upon this subject and together with the holy verse

itself, it is understood that in ordinary conditions, viz. at periods that society is not in an unpleasant or dangerous circumstance and people enjoy an ordinary life, paying alms tax is usually sufficient for the poor and the remaining wealth of such people is not counted 'treasure'.

But at the time of extraordinary conditions, and when it requires that the interests of the Islamic society to be protected, the Islamic government can assign some limitations for treasuring up wealth, or may demand all the stored properties of people to protect the existence of the Islamic society.

## **Traditions upon Alms**

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*"Allah has given you these extra properties in order that you spend them alongside His pleasure, not to hoard up and treasure it up."*<sup>4</sup>

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

*"Allah has enjoined Alms in the wealth of the rich Muslims as much as to sufficient the poor. Verily Allah will severely reckon and punish them if they do not fulfil their duty."*<sup>5</sup>

According to some traditions, when the Expected Mahdi (May Allah hasten his glad advent) reappears, he will control treasures in order to use them all for the miserable people and his religious strives.<sup>6</sup>

## **Abu Dharr and This Verse**

To make a protest against the manner of Mu'awiyah, 'Uthman, and the authorities of the government in gathering and treasuring up gold and silver, Abu Dharr, who was one of the close companions of the Prophet (S), repeatedly recited this verse aloud before Mu'awiyah and then in front of 'Uthman every morning and evening.

He said that this verse was not allocated only to those who hinder Alms tax, but it encompasses everyone who treasures up wealth.

One of the excellencies of Abu Dharr in his life was that when confronting the governors of his time he used to enjoin right and forbid wrong concerning their vain expenses. His conflict with 'Uthman was not due to his wealth and position, but it was a protest to a social indecency 'Uthman was committing.

Abu Dharr was frequently exiled because he opposed the wrong style of the government of his time and shouted against the financial method of 'Uthman, Mu'awiyah's treasuring up unlawful properties, and justifications of Ka'b-ul-'Akhbar.

The details of this meaning are found in the history books of both great sects of Muslims, including: Al-Qadir, vol. 8, p. 335; Al-Minor, the commentary, vol. 10; Tafsir-i-Nor, vol. 5, p. 46, and so on.

## Explanations

1. Not all the scholars and clergies are wicked. The holy verse says:

***“O’ you who have Faith! Verily many of the rabbis and monks consume the properties of the people in vanity...”***

It should be noted that this matter refers to many of them, not all of them. This statement means that there are also some ones among them who do not commit these indecencies. This very idea, that the Qur’ān announces, is a very good evidence that the judgements of the Qur’ān are just. That is why in Surah Al-Mā’idah, No. 5, verse 82, the Qur’ān has admired a group of them.

2. To misuse opportunities and ranks is religiously unlawful, and the greatest danger for clergymen is a financial mischief.

***“...Consume the properties of the people in vanity and bar (them) from Allah’s way...”***

3. The mammonism of the scholars and the treasuring up wealth done by the rich causes the wrath of Allah. The verse says:

***“...And those who treasure up gold and silver, and do not spend them in the way of Allah; inform them of a painful chastisement.”***

4. Treasuring up gold, silver and money, and restraining from spending them in charity is a capital sin, because it has been promised punishment for.

5. In Islam, there is no limitation for having a considerable capital, but in gaining it, there are some conditions which should be observed. To spend wealth in a bad way is also unlawful in Islam.

6. Treasuring up wealth is a social calamity, and worse than that is greed, while worse than this is concealing and storing wealth, since it produces a lot of difficulties for the society.

## Surah At-Tawbah – Verse 35

يَوْمَ يُحْمَىٰ عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَىٰ بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَظُهُورُهُمْ هَذَا مَا كَنَزْتُمْ لِأَنفُسِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْنِزُونَ

**35. “On the Day (of Judgment) they (the coins) shall be heated in the Fire of Hell, and therewith their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded, (the angels will tell them): ‘This is what you have treasured up for yourselves, therefore taste you now what you were**

*treasuring!”*

## **The Retribution of Amassers of Wealth**

This holy verse points to one of the chastisements of such people in the next world, where it says:

***“On the Day (of Judgment) they (the coins) shall be heated in the Fire of Hell, and therewith their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded...”***

It is in that situation that the angels of punishment will tell them that is the same thing that they amassed for themselves in the form of treasures and did not spend it for the deprived in the way of Allah. The verse says:

***“...(the angels will tell them): ‘This is what you have treasured up for yourselves...’***

As a result of their deed, they should taste what they used to treasure and find the evil consequence of it. The verse continues saying:

***“...therefore taste you now what you were treasuring!”***

Once more this verse emphasizes on this fact that the deeds of human beings will not vanish. The deeds of persons will remain for the next world where they will incarnate in front of every one and cause his happiness or his toil.

## **Surah At-Tawbah – Verse 36**

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ  
وَالْأَرْضَ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرْمٌ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ فَلَا تَظْلَمُوا فِيهِنَّ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَقَاتِلُوا  
الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَأَنَّهُمْ كَافَّةٌ كَمَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ كَافَّةٌ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

**36. “Verily the number of months with Allah is twelve months in the Book of Allah, (since) the day He created the heavens and the earth, four of them are sacred. That is the established religion. So be you not unjust unto your selves during them. And fight polytheists totally even as they fight you totally, and know that Allah is with the pious ones.”**

In view of the fact that in this Surah there have occurred several discussions about fighting against pagans, the Qur’an refers to one of the rules of an Islamic fight and the Holy Struggle through this verse and the verse after it. It is to hold the Sacred Months in respect. It says:

***“Verily the number of months with Allah is twelve months in the Book of Allah, (since) the day He***

***created the heavens and the earth...***”

Since the day the solar system was formed in the present shape, there have existed year and month. A year is a complete course of the rotation of the earth around the sun; and a month is a complete course of the rotation of the moon around the earth which happens twelve times in a year.

Then the Qur’ān adds that four months out of these twelve months are sacred, in which any fight and battle are religiously unlawful. It says:

***“...four of them are sacred...”***

Next to this statement, in order to emphasize on the matter, it says that this religion is fixed and unchangeable. It is not like the wrong customs which Arabs had and, whenever they wished, they would change the place of them. The verse continues saying:

***“...That is the established religion...”***

It is understood from some Islamic literature that the prohibition of war during these four months were enjoined not only in the divine creed of Abraham (as), but also in the godly religions of the Jews and Christ, as well as the other heavenly religions.

Then the verse implies that during these four months you should not be unjust to your selves and incur the retributions of this world and the punishments of the Hereafter. It says:

***“...So be you not unjust unto your selves during them...”***

But, since the prohibition of Holy Struggle during these four months might be misused by the enemies of Islam and it would make them bold in attacking the Muslims, through the next phrase, it adds:

***“...And fight polytheists totally even as they fight you totally...”***

That is, they are infidels, and infidelity and idolatry is the origin of dispersion, yet they fight against you in one single line. It is more eligible for you, the monotheists, to be united against the enemies of Islam and stand firm in a line, like an iron wall, in front of them.

At last, the verse implies that Muslims should know that if they keep from evil and exactly execute the teachings of Islam, Allah vouches their victory, because Allah is with the pious ones. The verse says:

***“...and know that Allah is with the pious ones.”***

## **Surah At-Tawbah – Verse 37**

أَمَّا النَّسِيءُ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ يُضِلُّ بِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُحِلُّونَهُ عَامًا وَيُحَرِّمُونَهُ عَامًا  
لِيُؤْطِقُوا عِدَّةَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ فَيَحِلُّوا مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ زَيْنَ لَهُمْ سُوءَ أَعْمَالِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ  
لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

**37. “Verily postponing (of the sacred month) is only an addition unto infidelity whereby the infidels go astray; they allow it (fight) one year and forbid it another year, that they may adjust the number of months Allah has forbidden, thus they allow what Allah has forbidden. The evil of their deeds has been made fair seeming to them. And Allah does not guide the unbelieving people.”**

In this verse, the Qur’ān points to a wrong custom which was usually accomplished at the Age of Ignorance. It was customary among them to change the place of sacred months, about which this verse says:

**“Verily postponing (of the sacred month) is only an addition unto infidelity...” 7**

The reason of this meaning is that, besides their disbelief and ‘creedal infidelity’, by ignoring this commandment, they also committed ‘practical infidelity’, and by means of this action, the faithless persons might incur a greater aberration. The verse continues saying:

**“...whereby the infidels go astray...”**

Then, in the continuation of the verse, the Qur’ān implies that they considered one month in a year lawful and in another year they forbade the same month. They did so in order that, as they imagined, they adapted it with the months Allah had assigned. The verse says:

**“...they allow it (fight) one year and forbid it another year, that they may adjust the number of months Allah has forbidden...”**

That is, when they omitted one month of the Sacred Months, they substituted another month in its place, so that the figure ‘four’ became full.

But, by this ridiculous and hideous action of theirs, they utterly wasted the philosophy of the prohibition of Sacred Months and toyed with the ordinance of Allah for their low desires. Strange! They were very happy and pleased with their own action, because:

**“...The evil of their deeds has been made fair seeming to them...”**

They used to say that the long peaceful time between two wars, decreased the war skillfulness, therefore, they should light the fire of war.

Allah also leaves to themselves those people who are not worthy to be guided, and does not guide them. The verse says:

***“...And Allah does not guide the unbelieving people.”***

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1. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, the commentary
  2. ‘Ikml-ud-Din, by Sadq
  3. Tafsir-us-Sfi.
  4. Tafsir-us-Sfi
  5. Tafsir-us-Sfi
  6. Muntakhab-ul-‘ithr, Usul-I-Kfi, vol. 4, p. 61; and many other traditions which are recorded in the books of both great sects of Muslims, such as: Musnad Ahmad Hanbal, Sahih Bukhri, the books entitled: Manl Yahzuruhul-Faghih, Was’il-ush-Shi’ah, and ‘Amli by Shaykh-i-Tsi
  7. Lexicologists has rendered the Arabic term /nasi’/ into the sense of ‘changing the place’, or ‘postponing’. As they say, this word is used for postponing the menstruation of women from its time, or postponing the death of a person, and postponing the months wherein fight is unlawful. (Lisn-ul-Arab, vol. 1, p. 166; and Majma’-ul-Bayn, vol. 5, p. 44)

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