

Section 9: Times of Prayer and the Midnight Prayer

Surah Isra' – Verse 78

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْءَانَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ الْقُرْءَانَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا

78. “Perform the prayer (rituals) from the declension of the sun till the darkness of the night, and the recitation (of prayer) at the morn, verily the recitation (of prayer) at the morn is witnessed (by the angels).”

Pursuing the previous verses which concentrated on the issues of monotheism and paganism and, later, discussed the conspiracies, plots and temptations of the pagans, in this verse the Qur'an deals with such issues as prayers and the focusing of one's attention on the Lord, which serves as an effective means for campaigning against paganism, as well as a means for expelling the satanical temptations from one's heart and soul.

Undoubtedly, it is the prayer which makes man remember the Lord, wiping away the dust of sin from him all over and expelling the satanical temptations from him.

The verse, at first, says:

“Perform the prayer (rituals) from the declension of the sun till the darkness of the night, and the recitation (of prayer) at the morn, verily the recitation (of prayer) at the morn is witnessed (by the angels).”

The declining time of the sun signifies the declining or fading away of the sunshine from the meridian

circle which is the noon-time on.

The Arabic term /dulḡk/ is derived originally from the term /dalaka/, meaning 'rubbing', for, at that time, and in sunny lands in particular, man usually tends to rub his eyes because of the strength of the sunshine.

Or, it might be derived from the Arabic term /dalk/, meaning becoming inclined, for the sun, at this time, becomes inclined from the meridian circle towards the west. It might also signify the fact that man tends to guard off against the sunshine by keeping his hand between his eyes and the sunshine as if he removes its lights from his eyes, thus reclining it.

Anyway, according to the quotations received from the sources of Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), the Qur'anic term /dulḡk/, mentioned in this verse, has been commented upon as signifying the 'declining of the sun'.

A quotation from Imam Sadiq (as) indicates that 'Ubayd-Ibn-i-Zararah questioned the Imam (as) as to the comments of this holy verse, who answered:

"The Almighty has enjoined Muslims to establish four prayers, the beginning of which starts at the declining of the sun, 'at moon', and which ends at 'midnight'." 1

In another quotation, we have it from Imam Baqir (as) in the commentary upon this very verse when asked by Zararah, the great Shi'ite traditionist, he (as) answered:

*"The declining of the sun signifies its fading away (from the meridian circle), and the Arabic phrase /qasaq-ul-layl/ denotes 'midnight'. These are the four set of prayers which the Prophet (S) designated for people, confirming the time, and the Qur'anic phrase /Qur'an-ul-fajr/ refers to the morning prayer."*2

Certainly, some commentators have offered other probable hypotheses with regard to the meaning of /dulḡk/ which cannot be considered as remarkable.

As for the meaning of the Arabic phrase /qusaq-ul-layl/, one might claim that as the term /qasaq/ signifies the intensive darkness of the night, and such a darkness reaches its peak at midnight, and is utmost in its density, this phrase altogether signifies 'midnight'.

The Arabic term 'Qur'an' refers to that which is 'read' and the phrase /Qur'an-ul-fajr/, altogether refers to the 'prayer at dawn'.

It is for this reason that the above verse is among the ones which briefly refer to the five-time daily prayers and, alongside with the other verses regarding the prayer times, as well as the numerous quotations received in this connection, the five times for daily prayers are exactly distinguished.

Certainly, one must keep in mind the fact that some of the verses of the Qur'an refer to one prayer only, like:

“Guard your prayers, and (especially) the middle prayer...”³

in which case, the ‘middle prayer’, according to the authentic commentaries, is that same ‘***midday prayer***’.

Occasionally, those verses allude to the three times for prayers out of the five-time daily prayers, like:

“And establish the prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night...”⁴

in which case, /tarafay-in-nah ar/ makes allusions to the morning and evening (Maqrib) prayers, and the phrase /zulafan min-al-layl/ alludes to the night prayer (‘Isha’ prayer).

At times, all of the five-time prayers are briefly referred to, as in the verse in question. (We have already explained in minute details in this connection in commentary, upon verse 114 of Surah Hūd, No. 11)

At any rate, undoubtedly the details as for the five-times daily prayers have not been explained in full in these verses; on the contrary, as is the case with other Islamic commandments, the explanations are confined to the general rules, and their fuller explanations are left to the practice of the Prophet (S) and the true Imams.

Another point which remains outstanding in here is that the above verse says that the ‘morning prayer is being witnessed’. Now this question arises as by whom is it being witnessed?

According to the Islamic quotations received through the commentaries upon this verse suggest that ‘*They are witnessed by both the angels of night and day*’, for, ‘*night angels*’, who are on guard by night, are replaced by day angels at dawn and as morning prayer is performed at dawn, both groups of angels observe and bear testimony to that.

These quotations are quoted by both the Shi’ah and Sunni scholars, among whom, (according to Tafsir-Rūh-ul-Ma’ani), Ahmad and Nisa’i, Ibn Majid, Tarmuzi, and Hakim have quoted the Prophet (S) who stated in his commentary upon this sentence:

“Both the day and the night angels watch him.”⁵

The famous scholars of Hadith of the Sunnis, Bukhari and Muslim have also quoted this meaning in their ‘Sahih’.

For further information regarding the traditions of the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) upon this meaning refer to Tafsir-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, under the verse in question.

The transparency provided in this commentary explains that the best time for performing the morning prayer rituals is the moments coinciding with the onset of the dawn.

Surah Isra' – Verse 79

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ عَسَىٰ أَن يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا

79. “And some part of the night keep vigil for it as an additional prayer for you; maybe that your Lord will raise you up to a praised position.”

Pursuing the foregoing theme of the five-time compulsory daily prayers, the Qur'an adds as follows:

“And some part of the night keep vigil for it...”

The well-known Islamic commentators regard these holy words as allusions made to ‘the supererogation of the night’ when quotations are innumerable as to their virtues, though the holy verse does not explicitly refer to it as such. Nevertheless, considering all the circumstantial evidences which are usually available, this interpretation seems transparent.

Then the Qur'an implies that this is an additional program. In addition to the compulsory daily prayers this schedule has also been designated for you.

The verse says:

“...as an additional prayer for you...”

There are many who believe that this sentence provides evidence as to the fact that ‘night prayers’ were required for the Prophet (S) for the Arabic term /Nafilah/ meaning, ‘intensive’, alludes to the fact that this additional obligation is required of the Prophet (S).

Others claim that ‘night prayers’ were required to be performed by the Prophet (S) long before this occasion, in reference to the verses of Surah Al-Muzzamil. Later on, the above verse has discarded that obligation, thus making it into a ‘recommended’ act instead of an ‘obligatory’ one.

At any rate, the Qur'an concludes this spiritual and heart-transforming Divine program as: Maybe in the light of this act, the Lord elevates you in rank to the position of the ‘eligible’ and ‘well-praised’ one.

The verse continues saying:

“...maybe that your Lord will raise you up to a praised position.”

There is no doubt that such a position is an outstanding one which is praiseworthy, because this Qur'anic term is expressed in absolute case. Probably, this is a reference made to the fact that you are being praised universally from the time immemorial to the end.

Islamic quotations, whether those of the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) as well as those quoted by the Sunni scholars have regarded the 'eligible' or 'praiseworthy' rank as a position for 'the Great Intercession', since the Prophet (S) is the greatest of the intercessors in the Hereafter. Those who merit this intercession will be covered by such an act of the Great Intercession.

Surah Isra' – Verse 80

وَقُلْ رَبِّ اَدْخِلْنِيْ مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَّاَخْرِجْنِيْ مُخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ وَاَجْعَلْ لِّيْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ
سُلْطٰنًا نَّصِيْرًا

80. "And say: 'My Lord! cause me to enter a goodly entrance and cause me to go out (of) a goodly exit, and grant me from Your part a (powerful) authority to assist (me)'."

This verse alludes to one of the fundamental commandments of Islam which has its roots in the spirit of faith and monotheism. One should ask the Lord to enable him to initiate every job in an honest way.

The verse says:

"And say: 'My Lord! cause me to enter a goodly entrance..."

Let us not initiate any individual or social act without honesty and sincerity, and, at the same time, let us not end any program except in a truthful manner. Honesty and sincerity as well as righteousness and keeping of others belongings must be our principal line to follow in all works and we begin and end everything with them.

The verse continues saying:

"...and cause me to go out (of) a goodly exit..."

Some of the commentators have occasionally attempted to confine the broad meaning of this verse to certain limited cases and examples, such as the entrance and arrival at Medina and the departure from it for destination to Mecca; or one's entrance to the grave and one's exit from it on the Resurrection Day, or so forth, but it is quite obvious that the above comprehensive interpretation is not in any way confined to limited cases; rather, it is concerned with the initiation of all kinds of decent activities in an honest manner and its eventual termination in everything, every job and every schedule.

In fact, the main reason for one's success lies in this very point and the Divinely-selected prophets and men of Allah have also followed this very same course of action that their thoughts, words, and deeds have been clean of all frauds, defaults and tricks and distanced from whatever is contrary to the truth and honesty.

In principle, most of the misfortunes, which we witness with our own eyes nowadays, and which entangle individuals and groups as well as nations, have their roots in deviation from this very point.

Their very job is occasionally based on falsehood, fraud and malevolence, and, at times, when they initiate their acts with honesty, they often do not keep to their principle to the end which causes their failure.

The second principle which, from one point of view, is the outcome of monotheism, and from another point of view, is the fruit of the honest initiation and ending of every job. This is that very thing which is referred to at the end of the verse.

It says:

“...and grant me from Your part a (powerful) authority to assist (me)’.”

For, I am lonely and one cannot do any job by himself! I shall not succeed, in any way, in my difficulties just by reliance on my own power! Assist me, and designate some assisting individuals for me.

Provide me with a powerful reasoning; unequivocal, challenging proofs against my foes, devoted friends, a strong will, an illuminated mind, a sound reason all of which will serve me and come to my aid and, certainly, no one else but You are to provide me with these.

Surah Isra’ – Verse 81

وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا

81. “And say: ‘The truth has come and the ‘falsehood’ has vanished away; verily, the ‘falsehood’ is (something) vanishing’.”

The ‘Truth’ is one of the names of the Lord which is in the sense of ‘constant and everlasting’. Therefore, the Lord and whatever emanates from Him is identical with the truth.

The Arabic term /zah^q/, mentioned here, signifies ‘going away’. The phrase /zahaqa nafsah^q/ means that ‘the soul went out of his body’.

The verse says:

“And say: ‘The truth has come and the ‘falsehood’ has vanished away; verily, the ‘falsehood’ is (something) vanishing’.”

There are many extensions cited for this verse, such as: the emergence of Islam, arrival at Medina, the

conquest of Mecca, and the breaking of the idols, in all of the cases of which, the 'untruth' has met with its own destruction. However, the verse has got a broader meaning which provides us with a sense of the destruction of the 'untruth' as well as the survival of the truth.

As in pursuance of 'honesty' and 'trust' which have been referred to in the previous verse, hoping for a decisive victory is another cause for success. The Lord tells His Prophet in the last verse in question to say that the truth has come and the untruth will vanish away.

In principle, it is within the inherent nature of the untruth to be perishable. So, as it was said, the Arabic term /zahaqa/ is derived from /zah^hq/, rhyming in weight with the Arabic term /qab^hl/ and also equal in syllables, means extermination and, because of its form of exaggeration, it expresses the utmost condition, signifying something which is perishable in its entirety.

The 'untruth' has got a certain period of maneuvering, though that period will not last long, and, eventually, the victory will be forth coming for the advocates and followers of the truth.

Explanations

1. 'Night prayers' are great spiritual worshipping acts. The tumult of daily life may attract the attention of every one, taking his imagination to the extremes of various points in such a way that one's mind is rarely at ease, and his thoughts collected with his heart are not fully placed in order.

However, in the midst of night and before dawn, when the fuss of material life is pretty well-settled, and one's a little amount of asleep has put one's soul and body in order, man feels a unique sense of being refreshed all over.

Certainly, in this calm sort of situation, away from all kinds of hypocrisy, bigotry, egoism, and coupled with one's heartily attention, one is certain to focus in such a way his attention which is extremely reinforcing for his heart and tends to bring forth stages in the process of perfection.

It is for this reason that the 'friends of Allah' have always strengthened themselves, through their end-of-the night prayers, with the purging of their souls, reinforcement of their heart and of their will, and complementing of their sincerity.

At the dawn of Islam, the Prophet (S), too, sought to develop the spiritual programming of the Muslims, elevating their personality so much that as if they were no more their own former 'selves'.

That is, he created 'new men' out of their former selves: decisive, brave, faithful, clean and sincere, and, perhaps, 'the praised position', which is alluded to in the former verses, might be so owing to this reason.

A survey of the quotations in the Islamic sources regarding the virtues of the 'night prayers', makes the issue more transparent. The following quotations are as some examples:

1. The Prophet (S) says:

*“The best among you are the ones who are polite in their speech; who feed the hungry; and who perform prayers deep into the night, when all people are asleep.”*⁶

2. Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) says:

*“Getting up at night for prayers will enhance one’s health of body, will please Allah, Almighty and Glorious, and will attract His favour, and, finally, will (enable one to) follow in the ethical course of the prophets.”*⁷

3. Imam Sadiq (as) told one of his disciples:

“Never stop getting up at night for prayers; he who is deprived of the getting up at night for prayers and for worship, is the one who is aggrieved.”

4. The Messenger of Allah (S) says:

“He who performs ‘the night prayers’, his face (as well as his soul) will turn good on the following day.”

Even, we have it in some quotations that such acts of worship are so important that no one else, except the ‘pure’ and the ‘righteous’ can achieve it with success.

5. A man, calling on Amir-ul-Mo'mineen Ali (as), said:

“I was deprived from performing the night prayers.”

Ali (as) answered:

*“You are the one whose sins have held him captive.”*⁸

6. In another quotation from Imam Sadiq (as), we read:

*“Man sometimes tells lies and this causes him to be deprived of the night prayers. Once, he is deprived in such a manner, he would also be deprived from sustenance, (the material and spiritual blessing which will ensue).”*⁹

7. Notwithstanding we know that such a person like Ali (as) never gave up the night prayers, the core of the importance of the matter is such that the Prophet (S) recommended to him in his testament as:

“I am recommending you to perform certain acts; keep them well in mind.”

Then he said:

“O’ Lord: Assist him in performing these duties.”

Then he went as far as saying:

“Never keep away or forget about the night prayers! Never keep away or forget about the night prayers!”

10

8. The Prophet of Islam (S) told Gabriel:

“Give me some pieces of advice”

Gabriel said:

“O’ Muhammad! Go on living as long as you may, but beware that you will eventually die; love whatever you wish to, but let it be known to you that you will finally separate from it (your object of love)!

Perform every kind of act which pleases you, but do know that you will get the end–result of your action. And, finally, beware that a believer is honored by having his night prayers performed, while, his glory rests with abstinence from damaging the reputation of other people.”¹¹

Such heavenly pieces of advice of Gabriel, which are all well–calculated, exhibit the fact that the prayers performed in the depth of the night alter and shape one’s personality, education, spirituality and faith to such an extent that it would serve as one’s source of prestige and honor as would be the case with abstinence from causing harms to other people, which by itself, will be one’s source of pride.

9. Imam Sadiq (as) states:

“There are three points which serve as (a source of) pride for the believers and would be as an ornamental gift in this world and the next: Prayers in the depth of the night, being heedless of what is in the hands of other people, and, ‘the Wilayat’, (love and leadership) of the Imam from among the progeny of the Prophet (S).¹²

10. That ‘Imam’ has also been quoted as saying:

“Whatever of good acts performed by a believer has been mentioned with its reward explicitly in the Qur’an, except that of the night prayers which Allah has not mentioned in a transparent way because of the extraordinary importance of it. He has only stated that:

‘They forsake their beds of sleep, the while they call on their Lord in fear and hope. And they spend (in charity) out of the sustenance which We have bestowed on them.’¹³

Nonetheless, no one knows as to what kind of reward Allah has in mind for their remuneration for their acts which causes their eyes to be enlightened.”¹⁴

11. The highly–esteemed Prophet of Islam (S) has said:

“The best of the prayers, next to the compulsory prayers, are the ones (which one performs) deep into the night.” 15

12. The blissful Prophet (S) said:

“The two–unit–prayer which the child of Adam performs in the midst of late night is better for him than the world and what is in it. Were it not causing difficulties for my herd ‘people’, certainly I would have made it compulsory for them (to perform).”16

13. Imam Rida (as) has said:

“Beware of the late–night prayers! There is no servant, who gets up late of night and does perform prayers in eight units, and Shaf’ prayer into two units, and the ‘Watr’ prayer in one unit, seeking forgiveness of Allah seventy times in his ‘Qunūt’, save that Allah will spare him the chastisement of the grave and that of the Fire, prolong his lifetime for him, and will provide a wider range of means in his sustenance.”

Afterwards, the Imam (as) said:

“Verily the houses in which such night prayers are performed their light will illuminate for the residents of heaven in the same manner that the stars shine and shed light for the inhabitants of the earth.”17

14. The blissful Prophet said:

“The late–night prayers will serve as a pleasant source for the Lord, the friendship of the angels, the practice of the prophets, the light of the gnosis (of Allah), the roots of faith, a cause for providing calmness of the body, provoking the disgust of the Satan, spearheading against the foes, a means of acceptance for one’s invocation, acceptance of one’s deeds, and blessings for one’s means of sustenance.

The late–night prayers also serve as an intercessor between the performer of the prayers and the Angel of Death, as a light for his grave, as a carpet under him, as a respondent for the ‘Nakir and Munkar’, an associate and a visitor for man deep in his grave till the Day of Resurrection.”18

15. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“When a man commits sin, he will be deprived of performing his late–night prayers. Truly, an evil act, ‘a sin’, serves as a sharper means on the person involved than a knife cutting meat.”19

16. The blissful Prophet (S) said:

“When a person gets up from his pleasure–providing bed while he has got his eyes full of sleep, in order to please his Lord, Glory be to His Mighty, by his late–night prayers, the Lord takes pride by it to the angels: saying:

‘Do you not watch this My servant, who has got up from his pleasant bed to perform the prayers which I have not compelled him to do? Do bear witness that, verily, I have pardoned him’.”²⁰

17. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*“There is no good that a servant does but there has been stated a reward for it in the Qur’an, except for late-night prayers which Allah has not defined its reward because of its importance with Him.”*²¹

18. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*“He has told a lie who thinks he will starve in spite of having performed late-night prayers, for verily the late-night prayers guarantee the means of sustenance of the day.”*²²

Certainly, such prayers have got their own many manners. We shall but present their simplest form in here so that the admirers of such a spiritual act can benefit further from it. The late-night prayers have got 11 units which are divided into three sections as follows:

- a) Four set of prayers each divided into two units, which total 8 units, called: ‘Nafilah’ (supererogation) of the night.
- b) One set of prayers, consisting of two units which is called ‘Nafilah Shaf’. (even supererogation).
- c) One set of prayers, consisting of one unit which is called ‘Nafilah Watr’. The rituals of which are just the same as the morning prayers though there are no ‘prayer call’ and Iqamah. (The declaration of prayer). When the Watr prayer is being performed, the longer the Qunūt the better.

What is a Praised Position?

As it is obvious from its apparent form, the position of the ‘highly praised one’ has got an extensive meaning which includes every type of high position and rank which is worthy and eligible for appraisal, though, certainly here, it refers to the outstanding and extraordinary place which has been attained by the Prophet (S), as a result of his nightly vigilance for worshipping and praying.

As was said earlier, this rank, the Praised Position, according to the commentators, is widely known to be the position of ‘the Great Intercession’ of the Prophet (S).

This comment has been introduced in numerous quotations as well. In ‘Ayyashi’s commentaries, we have it quoted from Imam Baqir (as) or Imam Sadiq (as) who, commenting on the last sentence of verse 79 from the current Surah said:

“It is intercession.”

Some commentators have sought to infer this fact from the very meaning of the verse. They are of the opinion that the Qur’anic sentence: *‘Inas a yab‘aaka’* provides justification as to the fact that such a

position 'will be accorded to you by Allah in the future'.

This is a rank which will be the object of universal appreciation, for it will be of benefit to the whole people, (for the Qur'anic term /mahmūd/ 'highly praised', mentioned in the above sentence, refers to the absolute sense of the word and is not subject to any kind of conditions).

Moreover, praise and glory takes place in the case of a voluntary action, and that which embraces all of these worthy attributes, can be nothing else but the 'universal intercession' of the Prophet (S).²³

This is also probable that the 'highly praised position' is the utmost proximity towards the Lord, one of the consequences of which embraces the 'Great Intercession'.

The addressee in this holy verse is apparently the Prophet (S), yet, from one point of view, one may generalize the verdict to include all those believing individuals who perform the Divine spiritual program of reciting the late-night prayers, saying they, too, will have a share of the 'praised position', and will find their way for proximity towards the Lord's sanctuary as a result of and just to their depth of faith and their practices.

They will be able, then, to intercede and assist the wretched people with the same scale, for we know that every believer will enjoy this rank of intercession, by the leave of Allah, according to the amount of his faith, though the brilliant and utmost complete example of this verse is the very Prophet (S) himself.

3: Three Factors underlying Success: It is usual with respect to the campaign of the truth against 'the untruth', that the latter excels the former in number and in power, while, the former, despite its lack of resources, and number, enjoys eye-catching victories.

The examples of such cases are witnessed over and again in the Islamic Wars of Badr and 'Ahzab as well as in Hunayn and the like. In our contemporary world, we also notice the conquest by oppressed nations over the oppressor powers. This is because the advocates of the truth enjoy specific spiritual powers which sometimes turn one 'man' into one 'nation'.

We have noted allusions made to the three factors leading to victory in the above-mentioned verses; the factors from which the contemporary Muslims have distanced themselves and therefore, they witness successive defeats at the hands of their opponents.

These three factors consist of: honest and sincere initiation in the course of actions as well as the pursuit of such a course through to the end.

Reliance upon the power of the Lord, self-reliance, and renouncement from every sort of reliance on others are other factors.

Thus, no policies can prove more efficient than honesty and sincerity in the course of action, and no point of reference and support can be worthier than that of independence, negation of interdependence,

and trust in Allah.

How can on earth the Muslims drive their present enemies out of their occupied and usurped lands, who are looting and plundering their resources, while they are heavily dependent on them militarily, economically and politically?

Can we ever overcome our enemies by using those same weapons which we have bought from them? What a stupid idea!

4: The Truth will Prevail and the 'Untruth' will Die out. We encounter one more general and fundamental principle as well as one everlasting Allah's way of treatment in the previous verses, which provide us with a source of hope for all the truth-seeking individuals which pinpoints to the ultimate victory of the truth and the right over 'the wrong' and which drives out the 'wrong' in its entirety.

The 'wrong' has got a certain period of prosperity and strength; it initiates blasting temporarily; it shows itself off though its life cycle is short and limited, and its eventual destiny is annihilation. Or, according to the Qur'an, like foam on water, it winks, making a fuss, and dies out, and water, which provides life, will prevail.²⁴

The reason for such a case is hidden in the word 'untruth' itself, for it is that kind of thing which is inconsistent with the world of creation and has got no share in actual reality and the truth.

'Untruth' is fabricated and artificial; it is fake, rootless, void from within, and, thus, those things which are normally in possession of such attributes cannot last long.

The truth-seeking individuals rely on the force of their faith, logic and keeping their words, the authenticity of their character, self-denials, and preparedness for sacrificing their lives as far as the point of martyrdom.

They are those who are enlightened in their hearts and fear no one but 'Allah', relying on no one else except Him, hence, this provides the clue to their victory.

5: This Verse, and the Uprising of Mahdi (as): In some quotations, the Qur'anic sentence:

"The truth has come and the falsehood has vanished away"

refers to the uprising of Hadrat Mahdi (as) as commented upon. Imam Baqir (as) said:

*"The meaning of these Divine words is that: 'Once the living Imam (as) rises up, the fake administration will be up-rooted'."*²⁵

Certainly, the meaning of these traditions do not confine the significance of the extensive meaning of the verse to this example only, but the uprising of Mahdi (as) is the most notable example of it, the eventuality of which consists of the ultimate victory of the truth over the untruth throughout the entire

world.

We have it in the biography of the blissful Prophet (S) that on the day of the conquest of Mecca, he entered the ‘Sacred Mosque’, overthrowing 360 idols which were placed round the Ka‘bah by the Arab tribes, and breaking them one after another by his stick, he was reciting this noble verse continuously.

Briefly speaking, this very Divine universal law, and this unequivocal law of creation, have got examples in every epoch.

The uprising of the Prophet (S) and his conquest over the army of paganism and idol-worshippers, as well as the uprising of Mahdi (as) (May our souls be sacrificed for him) against the tyrants and oppressors of the world are cases of the evident examples of depicting this universal law.

It is that same Divine law which provides the truth-seeking people with incentives as against the difficulties, making them more hopeful and strong in resistance, and they reinforce and refresh us in our Islamic efforts.

In the end of the verse, the Qur’an implies that Allah pounds the truth over the ‘untruth’, hence uprooting it, in which case, the untruth will perish. Thus, the truth must invade the untruth powerfully, pounding it.

It is in the Divine law and His way of treatment that the truth must survive and the wrong must perish and be wiped out, and this process must take place in actual fact and not in an incidental way or in imagination, though the quantitative number of the followers of the truth might be small and the number of the followers of the wrong might be great, for the truth, like water, will be prevalent and the wrong will be wiped out like the foam over the water.

Surah Isra’ – Verse 82

وَنُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

82. “And We send down (stage by stage), of the Qur’an, that which is healing and mercy to the believers, and it adds not to the unjust except in loss.”

The Qur’an, The Curing Prescription

As the previous noble verses, dealt with the issues of monotheism and the right of organizing campaigns against paganism and the wrong, this verse, takes up the issue of the extraordinary role of the Qur’an and its constructive impact with respect to this, saying:

“And We send down (stage by stage), of the Qur’an, that which is healing and mercy to the

believers...”

The blissful Qur'an is a curing prescription for setting all in order and the betterment of the individuals and the society from all kinds of ethical and social diseases. The holy verse continues saying:

“...and it adds not to the unjust except in loss.”

Incidentally, the Arabic word /min/ does not imply in here 'some' which might substantiate the belief in the fact that 'some parts of the Qur'an are healing'. Contrarily, it suggests that whatever is descended from the Qur'an is healing in itself.

Thus, the term /min/ is an explanatory statement; and, although the Qur'an is a guide for all; only those are provided with the light of its guidance who open the window of their soul to receive its revelations, alienating themselves from obstinacy and enmity and are ready to receive it with a sound mind.

Thus, the obstinate people, who have ill intentions, can gain nothing except additional disadvantage. It is like the rain, which, when falling on a swamp, makes stinking smell, though it is pure and clean in nature. Anyway, the reasoning of the Qur'an heals mental stagnation.

The admonition of the Qur'an treats well the callousness. The history of the Qur'an makes one disillusioned. Its beauty of harmony and its eloquence attracts the fleeing soul. Its ordinances and commands uproot superstitious beliefs, and its recitation and contemplation in it cure negligence. Recourse to it, cures bodily diseases, and its guidelines illuminate all kinds of darkness.

The Qur'anic healings make a difference when compared with material remedies. They do not have any side-effects and are not outdated. The Qur'anic remedies do not have any expiry date. He, who is cured by the Qur'an, will serve as a cause for curing others.

There are no errors or blunders in the prescription cure of the Qur'an. It is always readily available for all. The physician of this medicine not only knows us well but also loves us and, His prescription is for all ages. His prescription and drugs are not generic medicines to have duplicates.

Imam Ali (as) remarks:

*“Verily the Qur'an consists a cure for the greatest ailments, namely unbelief, hypocrisy, revolt, and seductions.”*²⁶

The Qur'an is Allah's words and the Lord's Book. It is the Divine shining light, and the site of manifestation of Allah. It exhibits Allah's way; it is the Divine firmly fitted bond, the Divine laws, the curing prescription and a sign of Allah's favour to human beings.

It is a sign of the magnitude of Allah and His eternal miracle. It is the saving flag, a didactic book and an instructive one, and an explicit statement. It is a book of glad tidings, warnings, monotheism, preaching,

consciousness and ethics.

The Qur'an is a light without darkness, a guide without aberration, and an endless treasure. It is a book of knowledge, ordinances, history as well as historical analysis. It is a book of politics and administration, consciousness, reflection, and contemplation.

It is a book of peace and holy war, a book of the origin and the end. It is a book of faith and belief. The Qur'an is a company to man in the darkness of ignorance and a guiding leader for him in the labyrinths of life. The Qur'an is a book of measurement, justice, fairness, the truth, certainty, the right path, and the straight way.

It recounts the state of the past generations for the admonition of the future ones.

The Qur'an promises the righteous believers who practice it, salvation and victory, as well as glory and high esteem. It is a book of invitation, development, virtue, expediency, life and eternity. It is a book of the world of appearances and the innate world; a book of the worldly affairs and that of the Hereafter.

It is the book of nature as well as that of metaphysics; the book of the visible as well as that of the invisible; it is the book of Allah and of the people. It provides the examples of good deeds, decent acts, and persuading the people to perform what is good and of dissuading them from what is bad. It is instructive and, it provides credit.

The Qur'an shows the way of Paradise and dissuades one from taking the road to the Hell. It is the firmest path which Allah calls the people to. It is the book of religion and Allah's permanent ways of treatment. It is the Book of ethics, Gnosticism, Islamic jurisprudence and laws.

The Qur'an is the Book of eloquence, fluency, wisdom, and administration. The Qur'an is the Book of education for 'Man'. It shows the route to the world of spiritual realities. It is the companion to man in his loneliness and keeps him company when in a state of terror.

Certainly, tens of other topics only exhibit parts of the glory and depth of the instructions and the concepts of this Holy Book, which is an ever-lasting miracle of the Messenger of Allah (S).

Briefly speaking, this Divine Book and the Qur'anic verses of it provide reasoning and statements for the public, while, serving as a guide and admonition for the virtuous Muslims.

The Qur'an says:

"This is an explanation for mankind, and a guidance and an admonition for the pious ones."²⁷

Hoping to receive the Divine success so that by reciting, reading, instructing, acquiring cognition of it, its understanding, and practice of this heavenly Book, we may follow the track and the course leading to our happiness and virtue.

The Differences Between Healing and Mercy

We are aware of the fact that ‘healing’ is usually employed as against diseases, defects and deficiencies. Therefore, the first effect that the Qur’an can affect the souls of men is the cleansing of them from all kinds of mental and ethical illnesses of both the individuals and the society.

It is, therefore, from this point onward that the phase of ‘favour’ arrives which is characterized by the inculcation of Divine morality and the flourishing of human virtues which are embedded in those people who have received the Qur’anic education.

In other words, the Qur’anic term ‘healing’ is an allusion made to the ‘purification’, while ‘favour’ refers to ‘reconstruction’. Or in philosophical and mystical terms, the former refers to the process of ‘catharsis’²⁸, and the latter alludes to the process of ‘beautification’²⁹.

Therefore, whatever emanates from the source of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful, is a favour for the believers; and the Lord has required doing favors from His part³⁰, and He has appointed His Prophet to the world as a favour³¹, while the Muslims proceed with doing favour to one another³² and His Book also equals favour³³.

As the Qur’an comes from Allah’s side, Who is the Creator of man and his nature, its laws are also corresponding to his nature, and are salvaging, and are the means of happiness and grace.

Why Is It that The Oppressors Get Negative Results?

Not only in this verse but also in other verses of the Qur’an we read that the enemies of the truth, instead of being enlightened whole–heartedly by the illumination of the verses, removing these dark spots, they usually add up to their ignorance and wretchedness.

This is due to the fact that the very essence of their existence has transformed into another form because of their paganism and their dissidence. Thus, wherever they behold the light of the truth they stand up against it. This opposition against the truth adds to their ‘nasty’ state, thus reinforcing their spirit of rebellion.

In other words, as the disbelievers actually do not observe and practice the ‘commandments’ and ‘Prohibitions’ of the Qur’an, the revelation of each decree adds up to their crime and offence, and, adds up to their disadvantages.

The verses of the Qur’an are like the proverb saying that they are like the raindrops, enlivening, which make tulips grow in gardens and make thorns grow in the wilderness.

The verse says:

“...and it adds not to the unjust except in loss.”

Anyway, the Qur'an equals cure and mercy for those who are suffering from the love of the world, dependence on material things, and unconditional surrender in face of the passions.

And again the Qur'an provides prescription for cure and mercy for the world in every corner of which the flames of war are burning, bowing under the burden of arms race, and which is throwing all its important capital and human resources at the feet of the monster of war and arms.

And, eventually, the Qur'an is a curing prescription for those whose path for Allah's proximity has been obstructed because of their dark curtains of passions.

Traditions Concerning the Magnitude of the Qur'an

1. The blissful Prophet (S) has remarked:

*"I have left two (important) things among you so as not to get astray when grabbing the two. One is the Qur'an, the other one is my family household."*³⁴

2. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

*"The Qur'an's excellence over other words and speeches is like the Lord's superiority over all creatures."*³⁵

3. The Prophet of Allah (S) has said:

*"The Qur'an is the best and excels every thing but the Lord. He who respects the Qur'an, has respected the Lord and he who does not honour the Qur'an, has committed acts of insolence towards the Lord."*³⁶

4. Hadrat-Imam Rida (as) has quoted Imam-Muḥṣa Kazim (as) who said:

"Someone asked Imam Sadiq (as):

'How is it that the more the Qur'an has been read and publicized, the more its refreshing aspect is being added to?'

Imam Sadiq (as) answered:

*'It is because the Lord has not appointed it for a particular time and a certain people. Thus, it is ever fresh and new for every nation in every new epoch until the day of resurrection.'*³⁷

5. The great Prophet of Islam (S) said:

*"Keep always yourselves reminiscent of the Qur'an, for the Qur'an is a 'useful cure', a 'blissful remedy', and guards off him who appeals to it; and it salvages him who follows it."*³⁸

6. The blissful Prophet (S) said:

“Those involved in the Qur’an’s matters excel the highest human position next to the prophets and the Divine envoys. Thus, do not overlook and downplay (them and) their rights, for they are valued greatly before Allah.” 39

7. The dear Prophet (S) said:

“The best ones among you are those who learn and teach the Qur’an.” 40

8. Imam Sadiq (as): has remarked:

“The believer who reads the Qur’an and practices it in his youth, the Qur’an is mixed with his flesh and bones (and blood), and the Lord places him alongside the great envoys (the prophets and the Imams) and the benevolent people, and, the Qur’an acts as his advocating defendant in the doomsday.” 41

9. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“It is appropriate for a believer not to die before learning the Qur’an or being engaged in learning it.” 42

10. The blissful Prophet (S) said:

“Read the Qur’an and practice accordingly. Do not distance yourselves from it; do not exaggerate over it, do not earn a living by it; and, do not seek superiority through it.” 43

It is necessary to conclude this statement also that this prescription is only effective once one acts according to its content; otherwise, one must not expect any results. Therefore, the blissful Prophet (S) has said:

“He who reads the Qur’an and does not act accordingly, the Almighty will muster him blind and tormented on the day of resurrection.” 44

Surah Isra’ – Verses 83 – 84

وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَأَىٰ بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ كَانَ يَئُوسًا

قُلْ كُلُّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَيَّ شَاكِلَتِهِ فَرِيكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَىٰ سَبِيلًا

83. “And when We bestow favour on man, he turns away and (proudly) withdraws aside; and when any evil afflicts him, he is in despair.”

84. “Say: ‘Every one acts according to his own mould, but your Lord knows best as who is best guided to the way.’”

When We bestow Our blessings on man, he turns a blind eye to them as if it were not him who has prayed and appealed to Us, distancing himself from performing what is his due in face of Our blessings and is not grateful to Us , and he also turns away from the bounty of the Qur’an. Muj ahid says that it means: he alienates himself from Us, hence, he gets involved in arrogance and egotism.

The verse says:

“And when We bestow favour on man, he turns away and (proudly) withdraws aside...”

But, as soon as he is caught in the midst of poverty and sorrow, he loses his patience and becomes desperate, while, a believer is not so, for he is always in a state of hope and activity. Hence, the verse refers to those who are not believers though it appears to be general.

The reason as to why such diseases and calamities are called ‘evil’ is that these are regarded as evil from the viewpoint of a pagan, for a pagan does not expect any reward in exchange for them.

Moreover, the human nature detests them. Otherwise, such diseases and catastrophes are, in fact, expediencies, and appropriate in their own context. Thus, the Qur’an declares in the next verse that: O! Muhammad: Tell them: A believer and a pagan both act according to their own disposition and manner.

The believers who seek cures from the Qur’anic verses and attain blessings are on the opposite side of those oppressors who do not obtain anything from it except losses.

There are also some incapacious ones who are arrogant once they are affluent, but become desperate when they are in difficulties. They all act according to their own characteristics which have been formed in them as a result of their education and habitual training, thus directing man’s activities.

The verse says:

“...and when any evil afflicts him, he is in despair.”

“Say: ‘Every one acts according to his own mould...’”

In the midst of all this, the Lord is observant of the state of everyone. Certainly, your Lord knows best those whose paths are better and from the point of guidance are more fruitful.

The verse says:

“...but your Lord knows best as who is best guided to the way.”

Let us turn to two concluding points:

The Qur'anic phrase /na' abij anibihi/ signifies following one's own egotistic desires who is self-centered and turns his shoulder round.

The Arabic term /šakilihi/ means shaping and forming of one's spiritual state which comes about as a result of one's heredity, education and social culture.

-
1. Wasa'il, vol. 3, p. 115
 2. According to the consensus of the scholars of two great sects of Islam mentioned in their books, the Qur'anic phrase /Qur'an -ul-fajr/ signifies: 'Morning Prayer', some of their books are: Tafsir Rauh-ul-Ma'ani, by 'Al'isi Baqdadi, vol. 15, p. 136; Tafsir-ul-Kashif, vol. 5, p. 75; Tafsir-ul-Bahr-ul-Muhit, vol. 6, p. 68; Tafsir-Ibn-i-Kathir, vol. 3, p. 54; Tafsir-Jami'-Ahkam-ul-Qur'an, by Qirtabi, vol. 5, p. 309; Tafsir Rih-ul-Bayan, vol. 5, p. 191; Tafsir Majma'-ul-Bayan, under the verse in question; etc. (Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 115)
 3. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 238
 4. Surah Hūd, No. 11, verse 114
 5. Tafsir-Ruh-ul-Ma'ani, vol. 15, p. 126
 6. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 87, pp. 142-148
 7. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 87, p. 144
 8. Bihar, vol. 87, p. 142
 9. Bihar, vol. 87
 10. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 5, p. 268
 11. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 5, p. 269
 12. Bihar, vol. 87, p. 140
 13. Surah As-Sajdah, No. 32, verse 16
 14. Bihar, vol. 87, p. 140
 15. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, 21397.7
 16. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, 21405.7
 17. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 87, p. 161
 18. Bihar, vol. 87, p. 161
 19. Mizan-ul-Hikmah, vol. 5, p. 10467
 20. Bihar, vol. 87, p. 156
 21. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 5, p. 281
 22. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 87, p. 159
 23. Al-Mizan, vol. 1, p. 178
 24. Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 18
 25. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, pp. 212-213
 26. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 176
 27. Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 138
 28. Catharsis signifies purification of one's soul from the viscous attributes and hidden evils.
 29. Replenishing of one's inside with decent and spiritual attributes.
 30. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 12
 31. Surah Al-'Anbya, No. 21, verse 107
 32. Surah Al-Fath, No. 48, verse 29
 33. The verse under discussion
 34. Jami'-ul-'Akhbar Wal-'Athar, Kitab-ul-Qur'an, vol. 1, p. 94
 35. Jami'-ul-'Akhbar Wal-'Athar, Kitab-ul-Qur'an, vol. 1, p. 182
 36. Jami'-ul-'Akhbar

37. Jami'ul-'Akhbar Wal-'Athar, Kitab-ul-Qur'an, vol. 1, p. 169

38. Jami'ul-'Akhbar, vol. 1, p. 432

39. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 1, p. 180

40. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 2, p. 286

41. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 92, p. 187

42. Bihar, vol. 92, p. 189

43. Nahj-ul-Fisahah, p. 80

44. Jami'ul-'Akhbar, vol. 1, p. 409

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-8/section-9-times-prayer-and-midnight-prayer>