

## Surah al-Jinn, Chapter 72

(The Jinn)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 28

### General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

#### *In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has 28 Verses. The designation of the Chapter reflects that it mainly treats of invisible creatures, the jinn, their belief in the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S), the Holy Qur'an, and Resurrection, and the groups of believers and disbelievers amongst them. The closing Verses concern the knowledge of the unseen unknown to all beings besides God Almighty.

### The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

*"One who recites Surah al-Jinn many a time will never suffer from the evil eye, magic, and ploys of the Jinn and magicians but will accompany Muhammad (S). O Lord! I believe in none besides him and I will never turn toward anyone but him. 1*

Reciting the blessed Chapter would be a prelude to the awareness of its contextual meaning and applying it to one's life.

## Surah al-Jinn – Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا عَجَبًا

يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ ۗ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا

1. Say: "It has been revealed unto me that a group [of jinn] listened to me. Then, they said: 'We have heard a wondrous Qur'an,
2. 'That guides to the Straight Path. Thus, we have believed in it and we shall never associate anything with our Lord [in worship].

### Occasion of Revelation

It is reported that the Noble Prophet (S) departed Mecca for the bazaar of 'Ukkath in Ta'if, aiming to call unto people to convert to the Islamic faith, though it was of no avail. On his way back to Mecca, he stayed for the night at a vale called Jinn where he recited Qur'anic Verses.

A group of the jinn heard him and converted to Islam and returned to other jinn to propagate the faith.<sup>2</sup> Another occasion of Revelation is reported on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas as per which the Noble Prophet (S) was reciting Qur'anic Verses while performing his morning canonical prayers.

Upon hearing the Qur'anic Verses, a group of the jinn, engaged in investigating the reasons lying behind the disconnection of heavenly messages, said that the same was the reason. They returned unto other jinn and called them to convert to Islam.<sup>3</sup>

Having said the above, now let us turn to the exegesis of the Qur'anic Verses.

The first blessed Verse says:

**"Say: 'It has been revealed unto me that a group [of jinn] listened to me. Then, they said: 'We have heard a wondrous Qur'an."**

The clause

***"It has been revealed"***

reflects that the Noble Prophet (S) had not seen the jinn in person, but his awareness of their listening to the Qur'anic Verses had derived from Divine Revelation. It is noteworthy that the blessed Verse in question clearly indicates that the jinn possess reason, understanding, perception, and linguistic knowledge, and they feel the responsibility.

They attend to the differences between "wondrous" Words and ordinary speech. Addressed by the Qur'anic Verses, they feel the obligation to propagate the Word of Truth. The aforesaid points reveal some of the characteristics of these invisible living creatures, though further characteristics of theirs will be mentioned below in the same discussion.

The jinn had a reason to regard the Holy Qur'an as

***"wondrous Words,"***

since the Holy Qur'an is wondrous in terms of tone, impressiveness, and significance.

The Noble Prophet (S) who was Divinely appointed to impart the Message was an illiterate person from amongst the illiterate people. Such Words, in terms of their outward and inward aspects, are wondrous and different from any other speech. Thus, the jinn confessed to the Inimitability of the Holy Qur'an.

The blessed second Verse is saying that the jinn proceeded to discuss further points, as reflected the following blessed Verses in twelve clauses opening with the Arabic emphatic conjunction an.

The blessed Verse is saying that the jinn said that the Holy Qur'an leads everyone to the Straight Path; thereby we believe in it and associate nothing with our Lord in worship. It is worthy of note that the Arabic nominal form *ruhd* encompasses a comprehensive and broad semantic scope including any privilege. The word denotes a straight, even, and clear path leading to happiness and perfection.

## **Surah al-Jinn – Verses 3-5**

وَأَنَّهُ تَعَالَىٰ جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ يَقُولُ سَفِيهُنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ شَطَطًا

## وَأَنَا ظَنَنَّا أَنَّ لَنْ تَقُولَ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا

3. ***'And that He, exalted is the Majesty of our Lord, has taken neither a wife nor a child.***

4. ***'And that the foolish amongst us uttered against Allah unworthy words.***

5. ***'And we thought that men and jinn would not utter a lie against Allah.***

Following making mention of their belief in God and negating any kind of polytheism, the jinn thus proceeded with Divine Attributes, saying:

*"Exalted is the Majesty of our Lord and Glorified is He of any similitude to the creatures and any defect and He has never adopted any wife or child."*

The Arabic nominal form jadd is a polysemous word whose numerous senses include: majesty; intensity; seriousness; share, lot; and becoming new. In terms of etymology, according to Raghīb in his Mufradat, the root denotes "sever, cut off."

The connotations

***"majesty"***

is owing to the fact that any majestic being is separated from others. Likewise, other denotations and connotations of the word may be taken into account; for instance, the word denotes "grandfather" owing to his exalted rank or his advanced years.

At any rate, the connotation of

***"majesty"***

is consistent with lexicographical sources and its applications.

It is also worthy of note that the jinn herein lay particular emphasis on the point that God Almighty has adopted neither a wife nor a child, which seemingly implies the negation of the superstitious beliefs held by the Arabs in that they maintained that angels were fathered by god and born of his wife adopted from amongst the jinn.

The same theme is reflected in the exegesis of another Qur'anic Verse4:

***"And they have invented a kinship between Him and the jinn."***

The blessed Verse 4 says:

***"[They said that they confessed] that the foolish amongst us uttered unworthy words against Allah."***

The Arabic word safih may connote a collective sense in that some of the foolish amongst the jinn maintained that god had married and had fathered children. They had deviated from the Path of Truth by uttering such unworthy words and associating partners with God in worship.

Many a Qur'anic exegete maintain that the word herein alludes to Iblis who following disobedience to Divine Commands attributed false ascriptions to God Almighty and even objected the Divine Command as to Adam's (as) prostration before Him and regarded it insensible and deemed himself superior to Adam (as).

Since Iblis had been a jinni, all the believing jinn express their hatred for him and consider his words to be unfounded. He was seemingly a scholar and an ascetic, but scholars who fail to act upon their knowledge and the ascetics who are vain and deviant clearly represent the foolish.

The Arabic word shatat implies going to extremes, hence its application to untrue words. Thus, a high bank of rivers relatively far from water is called shatt.

The blessed Verse 5 says:

***"We thought that men and jinn would not utter a lie against Allah."***

The blessed Verse may be a reference to this group's blind imitation of others in associating partners, wives, and children to God Almighty, saying that they blindly acknowledged such beliefs owing to their optimism as they never imagined that mankind and the jinn dare to utter such lies against God Almighty; however, consequent to their investigations and comprehension of the truth and having believed in it, they are now aware of such unworthy imitation and hence they confess to their mistakes and the deviation of the polytheists from amongst the jinn.

## **Surah al-Jinn – Verse 6**

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقًا

***6. 'And there were men amongst mankind who took shelter with the males amongst the jinn, but they increased them in their error and disobedience.***

The blessed Verse in question is saying that some men sought refuge in the male jinn and their error and disobedience to God were thereby increased. The Arabic root z-h-q etymologically denotes "to cover by using force" and since error, sins, disobedience, and fear overwhelm human heart and soul and thereby cover them, hence the connotation of the word.

The clause

***"but they increased them in their error and disobedience"***

reflect that superstitions engender decadence in thought, fear, and error.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse indicates that male and female jinn exist, since the blessed Verse says:

***"there were men amongst mankind who sought refuge in the males amongst the jinn."***

However, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse is broad in its semantic scope such that it includes all instances of men seeking refuge in the jinn and the aforesaid superstition bear testimony to the same. There existed numerous soothsayers amongst the Arabs who claimed that they were able to solve many a problem by taking recourse to the jinn and predict the future.

In this vein, it is narrated from Allah's Messenger (S) that whoever goes to a sorcerer, a soothsayer, or a liar and acknowledges their words certainly disbelieves in all Divine Scriptures.<sup>5</sup>

It is also narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that who acknowledges the words of a soothsayer or an astrologer disbelieves what is revealed to Allah's Messenger (S).<sup>6</sup>

## **Surah al-Jinn – Verses 7-8**

وَأَنَّهُمْ ظَنُّوا كَمَا ظَنَنْتُمْ أَن لَّن يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ أَحَدًا

وَأَنَّا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مَلِيئَةً حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهَبًا

**7. 'And they thought as you thought that Allah would not send any Messenger.**

**8. 'And we have sought to reach the heaven, but found it filled with stern guards and blazing arrows.**

Proceeding with relating the words of the believing jinn who other jinn to convert to the Islamic faith in different ways, the blessed Verse says:

*"And some men, like you, imagined that God Almighty would not appoint anyone to the Prophetic call [after Moses (as) and Jesus (as)] and thereby belied the Holy Qur'an and the Prophetic call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S). However, it was through listening to the blessed Verses of this Divine Scripture that we clearly noticed its veracity. Beware of disbelieving in God Almighty, like the polytheist men, and meet their dire fate."*

The blessed Verse warns the polytheists that the jinn employ such line of argument and reach such conclusion and it is expected that men also awaken and believe in the Noble Prophet (S) and the Holy Qur'an.

The blessed Verse 8 makes a reference to the believing jinn who make mention of one of the proofs of the veracity of their words, comprehensible to all the jinn in the natural world, saying:

***"We have sought to reach the heaven, but found it filled with stern guards and blazing arrows."***

The Arabic word *lams* herein connotes search and quest and the nominal form *haras* is the plural form of *haris* ("guard").

## **Surah al-Jinn – Verses 9-10**

وَأَنَا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ ۚ فَمَنْ يَسْتَمِعِ الْآنَ يَجِدْ لَهُ شِهَابًا رَصَدًا

وَأَنَا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرٌّ أُرِيدُ بِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا

**9. *'And we used to sit there in stations to eavesdrop, but any who intends to eavesdrop now will find a shooting star watching him in ambush.***

**10. *[Having said that] we know not whether evil is intended for the inhabitants of the earth or whether their Lord wills to Guide them.***

Revelation of the Holy Qur'an had its impressions in the heavens. Before the Revelation, the jinn used to eavesdrop the heavenly messages, but they were thereafter impeded from doing likewise; as a consequence of which they say that formerly they would sit in the heaven to eavesdrop and receive heavenly messages and imparted them to their friends, though whoever intends to act likewise will find meteors targeting him in ambush.

What crosses one's mind is that drastic alterations were made in the world following the Prophetic call of Allah's Messenger (S) and the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an, since they were formerly able to eavesdrop, but no one is able to do likewise now.

The blessed Verses in question reflect that the dark age of ploys, soothsaying, and deception is over and the night has ended and the sun of Divine Revelation and the Prophetic call has risen. The Arabic word *shihab* lexically denotes flame, though it connotes the blazing flames emerging in straight lines in the heaven, namely shooting stars and meteors.

According to scientific research, meteors are small pieces of stone moving without the atmosphere of the earth. Upon approaching the earth, they gravitate toward it rapidly.

When they enter the atmosphere, namely the condensed gaseous later surrounding the earth, they turn into fireballs owing to the intensity of friction against it and the resulting incandescence turns into ashes scattering on the face of the earth.

It is recurrently reflected in the Holy Qur'an that meteors are arrows shot at devils aiming at eavesdropping in the heavens. Detailed discussions are to be found above under 15: 18 and 37: 10, though they are not reflected herein for the sake of brevity.

At any rate, the Arabic nominal form rasad implies preparedness for some occurrence and lying in ambush. The word is at times a present participial form employed in the sense of one waiting in ambush.

According to the blessed Verse 10, they further say that having taken into account the circumstances, they do not know whether such eavesdropping reflects that some bad intention is in store for the people on the earth or God Almighty is thereby willing to lead them to the Path of Guidance.

In other words, they have no idea whether it preludes afflictions to be inflicted by God Almighty or their Guidance. Nonetheless, the believing jinn are supposed to have comprehended that forbidding eavesdropping, simultaneous with the Noble Prophet's (S) prophetic call, preludes guiding people and consigning to oblivion soothsaying and like superstitious beliefs.

It is but the proclamation of the end of a dark period and the outset of a luminous one. However, the jinn were attached to eavesdropping and still failed to believe that such impediment entail Blessings and Bounties, but it is crystal clear that relying on eavesdropping, soothsayers in pre-Islamic times had a great impact in leading the people astray.

It is worthy of note, however, that Guidance is herein ascribed to God Almighty, but evil, used in passive voice, is not attributed to Him, reflecting that the good and Guidance comes from God Almighty and evil and corruption come from people themselves consequent to their misuse of Divine Bounties and the Blessings of Creation.

## Surah al-Jinn – Verses 11-12

وَأَنَا مِنَّا الصَّالِحُونَ وَمِنَّا دُونَ ذَلِكَ ۚ كُنَّا طَرَائِقَ قَدَدًا

وَأَنَا ظَنَنَّا أَنْ لَنْ نُعْجِزَ اللَّهَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَنْ نُعْجِزَهُ هَرَبًا

**11. 'And there are amongst us some that are righteous and some impious; we are groups having different ways.**

**12. 'And we are certain that we cannot overcome Allah's Will on the earth nor can we flee His Omnipotence.**

The blessed Verses in question reflect that the believing jinn, having acknowledged Divine Revelation, perceive their weakness, free choice, and Divine Majesty and Omnipotence.

The blessed Verse 11, resuming the believing jinn's speech on the occasion of calling those in error amongst them, is thus quoting them:

**"And there are amongst us some that are righteous and some impious; we are groups having different ways."**

The blessed Verse may allude that the existence of Iblis amongst the jinn may create in some the false impression that evil, corruption, and mischief are in their nature, impeding them to avail themselves of the Light of Guidance.

The believing amongst the jinn thereby reflect that they are also free to choose, since there are righteous and impious ones amongst them. Therefore, they are prepared by nature to find Guidance. Respecting others may lead to further receptivity of propagation through which the group may be paved for guidance and perfection.

The blessed Verse rectifies our assumptions concerning the jinn, since the word jinn connotes mischief, corruption, deviation, and error for some people; though the fact is that there exist different groups of the jinn, righteous and impious. The Arabic word qidad denotes "severed, separate" connoting different, separate groups.

The blessed Verse 12 reflects that the believing jinn proceed to warn others by saying:

**"And we are certain that we cannot overcome Allah's Will on the earth nor can we flee His Omnipotence."**

In other words, it would be quite unfounded to claim that one may flee Divine chastisement by escaping to some point on the earth or in the heavens. Thus, the former clause makes a reference to escaping Divine Omnipotence by resorting to some place on the earth, though the latter implies escaping from the earth and the heaven.

Another possibility is also suggested as per which the former implies that it would be impossible to overcome the Lord and the latter reflects that it would be impossible to flee from Divine Justice. Thus, when there is no way to overcome God Almighty nor to flee from Him, there remains no other choice but to submit to His Just Command.

## Surah al-Jinn – Verses 13-15

وَأَنَا لَمَّا سَمِعْنَا الْهُدَىٰ آمَنَّا بِهِ ۚ فَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِرَبِّهِ فَلَا يَخَافُ بَخْسًا وَلَا رَهَقًا

وَأَنَا مِنَّا الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَمِنَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ ۚ فَمَنْ أَسْلَمَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا

وَأَمَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ فَكَانُوا لِجَهَنَّمَ حَطَبًا

**13. 'And when we heard the Guidance of the Holy Qur'an, we believed therein and whoever believes in his Lord shall have no fear, either of a decrease or injustice.**

**14. 'And that some amongst us are Muslims and some are disobedient.' And whoever embraces Islam has opted for the Straight Path.**

**15. And as for the disobedient, they shall be firewood for Hell.**

The believing jinn proceed to say:

**"When we heard the Guidance of the Holy Qur'an, we believed in it,"**

intending to say that if they call others unto the Guidance of the Holy Qur'an, they have already acted upon the same; thus, they do not call others to something which they have already neglected.

The consequence of believing in God Almighty is expressed in a terse clause, saying:

**"Whosoever believes in his Lord shall fear neither decrease nor injustice."**

The Arabic word bakhs implies decrease stemming from injustice and the word rahaqa connotes to cover by force.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the distinction lying between the twain is that the former implies that nothing shall be decreased from their righteous good deeds and the latter reflects that nothing shall be added to their sins and vices.

Some also hold that the former implies decrease in righteous good deeds and the latter is used in the sense of hard task. At any rate, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question reflects that no matter whether the deeds are significant or otherwise, the believing shall be granted the Rewards without any increase or decrease. It is true that Divine Justice is not restricted to the believing, but since

disbelievers do no righteous good deeds, they are not mentioned herein.

The blessed Verse 14 provides further explanation as to the believers' and the disbelievers' fates:

***"And that some amongst us are Muslims and some are disobedient."***

The present participial form

***qasit ("just distributor"),***

derived from the root q-s-t ("distribute or divide justly"), made from the fourth form of the root, if'al, implying transitivity, connotes administration of justice, though used in its trilateral form, as appearing herein, implies disobedience and digression from the Path of Truth.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say:

***"And whoever embraces Islam has opted for the Straight Path,"***

proceeding toward Divine Guidance and Rewards.

The blessed Verse 15 adds:

***"But as to the disobedient, they shall be firewood in Hell."***

It is worthy of note that the verbal form

***aslama ("believed"),***

in preceding blessed Verse, stands in contrast with qasit (herein: "disobedient") in the blessed Verse in question, implying that faith impedes man from plunging into disobedience, as the disbelieving are certainly adulterated with disobedience and wrong doing.

It also implies that the true believers may never be adulterated with disobedience.

In this respect, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

*"A true believer is one from whose part people are assured of the security of their life and property."*<sup>7</sup>

According to another Prophetic tradition,

*"Muslim is one from whose hands and tongue other are rest assured."*<sup>8</sup>

The Arabic clause

***"They have sought the Straight Path" (taharru rashadan),***

appearing at the close of the previous Verse, implies that the believing proceed toward Guidance attentively and intentionally rather than blindly, and their most cherished Reward lies in attaining to the Truth thanks to which, they may avail themselves of all Divine Bounties; whereas the worst misfortune of the disobedient is that they shall be firewood in Hell, inwardly set ablaze.

## Surah al-Jinn – Verses 16-17

وَأَنْ لَّوِ اسْتَقَامُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ لَأَسْقِينَهُمْ مَاءً غَدَقًا

لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ ۚ وَمَنْ يُعْرِضْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِ يَسْلُكْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا

**16. If they [the jinn and mankind] persevere on the path [of faith], We shall surely bestow upon them water in abundance.**

**17. It is intended that We try them thereby. And whoever turns away from the Reminder of his Lord, He will afflict him with an increasing and severe torment.**

The blessed Verses in question seemingly proceed with the believing jinn talking with their people. Nonetheless, some Qur'an exegetes maintain that they are Divine Words inserted in between the words of the jinn, though the parenthetical statement bears particular similarity to the tone of the preceding blessed Verses, reflecting the words of the believing jinn and taking into account the contextual meaning, being not the words of the jinn sounds a remote possibility.

At any rate, the preceding blessed Verses treat of their Rewards granted in this world, saying:

**"If they [the jinn and mankind] persevere on the path [of faith], We shall surely bestow upon them water in abundance";**

in other words, God Almighty sends down His rain of Mercy upon them and makes the life giving springs available to them. Where there exists water in abundance, everything may be found copiously and thereby they are granted different kinds of Bounties.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

*"If people be steadfast with regard to our guardianship, they shall be granted knowledge in abundance."*<sup>9</sup>

The Arabic nominal form ghadaq implies abundant water. Emphasis is laid many a time in the Holy Qur'an on the point that faith and fear of God Almighty are not only sources of spiritual blessings, but they also entail abundance of material provision, flourishing, and prosperity.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Qur'anic Verse reflects that steadfastness in faith, rather than the faith per se, entails abundant Bounties, since fleeting faith may not lead to such Bounties. In other words, steadfastness in faith and fear of God are of significance in which many people are weak.

Making a reference to the truth lying herein, the blessed Verse 17 proceeds to say that God Almighty tries them with abundance of Bounties to see whether the increase in the Bounties leads to their vanity and neglect or it entails awakening, gratitude, and according further attention to God Almighty.

Thus, it is clear that such abundance serves as a means of Divine Trial and it is noteworthy that such Trial is far harder and more complicated than that of torments, since the former naturally causes weakness, indolence, neglect, and indulgence in the pleasures of the flesh through which man turns away from God Almighty and paves the ground for satanic temptations.

Those who remember God Almighty at all times may merely preserve themselves from the undesirable consequences of increase and abundance of Bounties, since such people preserve their hearts from satanic temptations through remembering God Almighty at all times.

Thus, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that whoever turns away from the remembrance of God Almighty shall suffer severe and ever increasing torments.

The Arabic root s-‘-d denotes "climb, ascend" and it also connotes "mountain pass." Since, climbing such passes entails hardships, the Arabic cognate word sa‘d implies vicissitudes and hardships.

Thus, many a Qur'anic exegete have provided the exegesis as to which the Arabic word in question implies severe torment, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an<sup>10</sup>:

***"I shall oblige him to face a severe torment."***

The expression may also connote the increase of such torment, in that the blessed Verses in question reflect the nexus between faith and fear of God and increase in Bounties on the one hand and the link between such increase and Divine Trials on the other.

The blessed Verses also treat of the relationship between turning away from remembering God Almighty at all times and the severe and ever increasing torments.

The same themes are attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, instances of which include:

***"But whoever turns away from remembering Me, for him is a life of hardship and WE shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection"***<sup>11</sup>;

***"When he [Solomon (as)] saw it placed before him, he said: "This is by the Grace of my Lord to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful"***<sup>12</sup>;

***"Know that your possessions and your offspring are but a trial and that surely with Allah is a great Reward"***<sup>13</sup>.

## Surah al-Jinn – Verses 18-19

وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا

وَأَنَّهُ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يَدْعُوهُ كَادُوا يَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَدًا

**18. The mosques are for Allah [Alone]. Therefore, invoke not anyone along with Allah.**

**19. And when the servant of Allah [i.e. Muhammad (S)] stood up invoking Him in prayer, a group made round him a dense crowd.**

The Arabic nominal form masajid is the plural form of masjid, literally denoting "place of prostration."

In this respect, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) say saying:

*"Since the Jews and the Christians associated partners with God Almighty in their places of worship, God Almighty decreed that Muslims are not supposed to associate anyone with God Almighty in worship in Muslims' places of prostration [namely the mosques] and God Almighty curses the one who shows disrespect at the mosques."*<sup>14</sup>

Quoting the believing jinn in calling others unto monotheism, the blessed Verse 18 says:

**"The mosques are for Allah [Alone]. Therefore, invoke not anyone along with Allah."**

The Arabic plural nominal form masajid indicate places where believers prostrate themselves before God Almighty whose most perfect instance is Masjid al-Haram [literally: the Sacred or Holy Mosque]. Other instances include other mosques, though in its broader semantic domain, it is applied to all the places where the believers establish their prayers and prostrate themselves before God Almighty.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet as saying:

*"The earth in its entirety serves as my place of prostration and purification [namely tayammum: "ritual purification with sand, soil, or dust, allowed when water is unavailable"]."*<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the blessed Verse in question provides a response to the Arab polytheists and the like of them who had turned Ka'ba to an idol temple. It also reflects the erring Christians who had resorted to trinity worshipping three gods in their churches. The Holy Qur'an is saying that all the places of worship belong to God Almighty and any other object of worship may not be worshipped.

Reference is also made herein to interceding with the Noble Prophet and Divine Guides. Such intercession stands in no contradiction to the truth of monotheism nor to Qur'anic Verses, but it lays emphasis on monotheism and the truth that all things come from God Almighty.

Intercession and invoking the Noble Prophet (S) to intercede with the believers for Divine Mercy is recurrently attested in the Qur'anic Verses, though some people who have been remote from Islamic teachings and the Qur'anic Verses unfoundedly deny any kind of intercession, referring to a number of the Qur'anic Verses, including the blessed Verse 18:

***"The mosques are for Allah [Alone]. Therefore, invoke not anyone along with Allah."***

They falsely claim that the blessed Verse in question implies that the believers are not supposed to intercede with anyone for Divine Forgiving of the sins.

The point is that the blessed Verse is in no way related to their unfounded claim, but it makes a reference to refuting polytheism in sense that some people err in associating objects of worship with God Almighty and invoking them for granting them bounties. In other words, invoking objects of worship besides God Almighty and regarding them as independent and willful entails polytheism.

The preposition

***ma'a ("with")***

in the negative imperative sentence

***"Invoke not anyone along with Allah,"***

implies that nothing is supposed to be associated with God Almighty in worship nor should anything besides Him be regarded as an independent source of willful acts.

However, invoking Divinely appointed Prophets to intercede with God Almighty on people's behalf for Forgiveness or bestowal of Bounties is not only allowed herein, but Some Qur'anic Verses call the Noble Prophet (S) to act likewise and others are at times called to intercede with the Noble Prophet for Divine Forgiveness.

In this respect, mention may be made of two Qur'anic Verses:

***"Take alms from their possessions in order to purify them and sanctify them with it and invoke Allah for them, since your invocations are a source of security for them"***<sup>16</sup>;

***"O our father! Ask Forgiveness [from Allah] for our sins, as we were sinners. He [Ya'qub] said: 'I will ask my Lord for forgiveness for you'"***<sup>17</sup>.

Thus, interceding with God Almighty on behalf of the believers is explicitly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. Discussions on intercession are to be found above under 2:48 and 5:35.

Making reference to the great effects created by reciting the Qur'anic Verses by the Noble Prophet (S) in his worships, the blessed Verse 19 is saying that when Allah's servant, Muhammad (S) stood up invoking Him in prayer, a group made round him a dense crowd.

The Arabic nominal form libadh denotes something whose constituent elements are condensed, though it herein implies the strange assembly of the believing jinn to listen to the Qur'anic blessed Verses in their first encounter with the Holy Qur'an as well as the extraordinary impression of the Noble Prophet's (S) prayers upon them.

Two further exegesises have also been suggested for the blessed Verse in question. Firstly, the believing jinn reflect the Noble Prophet's (S) companions, though limited in number in Mecca, who got together in crowds to listen to him. Thus, the jinn are instructed to proceed immediately toward the Islamic faith.

According to the other suggestion, the Arab polytheists surrounded the Noble Prophet (S) when he was engaged in establishing his prayers and reciting the Qur'anic Verses in order to deride and harm him. However, the latter exegesis does not befit the intention of those from amongst the jinn who intended to call others unto faith, but it befits one of the two preceding meanings.

## Surah al-Jinn – Verses 20-22

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَدْعُو رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ أَحَدًا

قُلْ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا رَشَدًا

قُلْ إِنِّي لَنْ يُجِيرَنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ أَحَدٌ وَلَنْ أَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا

**20. Say: "I invoke only my Lord and I associate none as partners along with Him."**

**21. Say: "It is not in my power to cause you harm nor to bring you to the Straight Path."**

**22. Say: "None can protect me from Allah's chastisement [if I disobey Him], nor can I find refuge except in Him."**

To further solidify the pillars of monotheism and reject any kind of polytheism, as reflected in the preceding blessed Verses, the blessed Verses in question order the Noble Prophet to say:

*"I invoke only my Lord and I associate none as partners along with Him. It does not lie within my capacity*

*to inflict any harm upon you nor may I lead you to the Straight Path. None may protect me from Allah's chastisement [if I disobey Him], nor can I find refuge except in Him."*

Thus, the blessed Verses reflect total obedience before Divine Threshold. On the other hand, they reject any kind of extremist beliefs as to the Noble Prophet (S), as despite his quite exalted rank before God Almighty, he may not seek any refuge from His torment except in Him, let alone the useless idols.

Furthermore, these blessed Verses put an end to the irrelevant pretexts and expectations of obdurate people from the Noble Prophet (S) who requested him to work Divine Acts. These Qur'anic Verses clearly prove that intercession is dependent upon Divine Will.

The Arabic nominal form multahad, deriving from l-h-d, literally denotes a lateral hole or niche, though it herein connotes a safe haven and place of refuge. It is also suggested that the word is applied to a box wherein precious things are placed and locked.

## **Surah al-Jinn – Verses 23-24**

إِلَّا بَلَاغًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِسَالَاتِهِ ۗ وَمَن يَعِصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا أَبَدًا

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ أَضْعَفُ نَاصِرًا وَأَقَلُّ عَدَدًا

**23. [Mine is] but imparting Allah's Messages and whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, Hellfire shall be in store for him where he shall dwell forever.**

**24. The disbelievers' disobedience will continue until they see that which they are promised. Then they shall know whose helpers shall be more feeble and of less in terms of number.**

As reflected in the blessed Verse 23, the Noble Prophet (S) is saying that it is his obligation to impart the Divine Message.

The theme is recurrently attested in the Qur'anic Verses, an instance of which is:

**"It is Our Messenger's obligation to convey [the Message] clearly"<sup>18</sup>.**

Concerning the distinction between balagh ("imparting") and risala ("mission"), it is suggested that the former is applied to imparting the fundamentals of religion (usul), whereas the latter connotes conveying the secondary principles of religion (furu').

However, it is also suggested that the former reflects imparting Divine Commands and the latter implies execution of the Commands, though they seemingly imply the same meaning and lay emphasis on each other, as reflected in numerous Qur'anic Verses wherein both terms have been employed in the same sense, e.g.

***"I convey unto you the Messages of my Lord" (uballighukum risalat-i rabbi;19).***

It is noteworthy that the blessed Verse 23 closes by warning people that whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger (S), Hellfire shall be in store for him wherein he shall dwell forever. The blessed Verse clearly indicates that only the polytheists and the disbelievers, rather than all sinners, shall enter Hellfire.

The blessed Verse 24 proceeds to say:

***"The disbelievers' disobedience will continue until they see that which they are promised. Then they shall know whose helpers shall be more feeble and of less in terms of number."***

Different exegeses have been suggested concerning the clause

***"which they are promised,"***

in that the torment in this world or both worlds is intended herein, though it seems befitting that reference is herein made to the general sense of the words, in that the increase and the decrease in the number of the helpers and the weakness and strength thereof further befits this world.

Thus, some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the blessed Verse implies the explicit increase in the power of the Muslims in the battle of Badr. Numerous traditions reflect that the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (AS; may our souls be his ransom).

Therefore, the tone of the blessed Verse clearly indicates that the enemies of the Islamic faith recurrently bragged about their power and their large number regarding the Muslims as weak and feeble. Thus, the Holy Qur'an consoles the believers and bears them glad tidings that they shall be finally victorious and defeat shall be in store for the enemies.

The history of the Prophets (as), particularly the biographical accounts of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) reflect the manner in which large numbers of the disbelievers, despite their power against the few believers, despaired and were defeated. The same theme is clearly reflected in the Qur'anic Verses concerning the Children of Israel and the Pharaoh, Goliath (Jalut) and Saul (Talut), and those regarding the battles of Badr and Ahzab.

## **Surah al-Jinn – Verses 25–28**

قُلْ إِن أَدْرِي أَقْرِبُ مَا تُوْعَدُونَ أَمْ يَجْعَلُ لَهُ رَبِّي أَمَدًا

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا

إِلَّا مَنْ ارْتَضَى مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْأَلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا

لِيَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رَسُولَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا

**25. Say: "I know not whether what is promised to you is near or whether my Lord will appoint for it a term.**

**26. "He is the Omniscient of the unseen and He reveals to none His unseen secrets."**

**27. Except to a Messenger whom He has chosen and then He makes a band of watching guards to march before him and behind him.**

**28. [Allah] protects them till He sees that they have imparted the Messages of their Lord. And He surrounds all that which is with them and He keeps a record of all things.**

The Qur'anic attestations of the Arabic imperative verbal form

**qull ("Say!")**

exceed three hundred in number, followed by responses, potential questions, and taking stances against the unbecoming expectations and illusions.

Since it is reflected in the preceding blessed Verses that the derision and disobedience of such people continues until Divine torment, as promised to them, will be sent down, the question as to the term of the promise is raised.

As suggested by the Qur'an exegetes regarding the occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verses in question, some of the polytheists, e.g. Nadhr ibn Harith, raised the same question following the Revelation of the preceding blessed Verses, the Holy Qur'anic Verses in question provide a response, saying:

**"Say: 'I know not whether what is promised to you is near or whether my Lord will appoint for it a term.'"**

The knowledge of the appointed term solely belongs to the Pure Essence of God Almighty and He thus willed it to be unknown to His servants, such that it may serve as a means of Trial for the people, since had they been aware of its closeness or remoteness, the Trial would have been of less effect.

The Arabic nominal form *amad* denotes time, though according to Raghīb's *Mufradat*, the Arabic word *zaman* connotes the beginning and the end, but *amad* is solely applied to the end of something in terms of temporality. It is also suggested that *abad* and *amad* are semantically similar, though their distinction lies in that the former is applied to infinite time, but the latter implies a limited span of time, however long it may be.

At any rate, the same theme is attested many a time in the Qur'anic Verses, as per which whenever the Noble Prophet (S) was asked regarding the time of the Resurrection, he would say that solely God Almighty is Omniscient of the unseen.

According to a Prophetic tradition, once Gabriel, disguised as a Bedouin, appeared before the Noble Prophet (S) and raised a number of questions including the time of the Resurrection. The Noble Prophet (S) replied that the one whom he was asking was no more knowledgeable than the questioner.

The Arab repeated his question even louder to which the Noble Prophet (S) replied:

*"Woe unto you! The Day of Resurrection shall arrive. What have you done for that Day?"*<sup>20</sup>

The blessed Verse 27 proceeds the discussion by suggesting a general rule concerning the knowledge of the unseen, saying that God Almighty is the Omnipotent of the Unseen, but He does not grant the Knowledge of the Secrets to anyone, unless, according the following blessed Verse, He appoints a Messenger and be content with him.

Thus, He grants him the knowledge of the unseen through Revelation.

A precise study of different Qur'anic Verses clearly reflect that there are two categories of Qur'anic Verses treating of the knowledge of the unseen: those in which such knowledge is particular to God Almighty negating the same of others besides Him, e.g.

***"And with Him are the keys of the unseen, none knows them but He"***<sup>21</sup>;

***"Say: 'None in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen except Allah, nor may they perceive when they shall be resurrected'"***<sup>22</sup>;

***"If I had the knowledge of the unseen, I should have secured for myself an abundance of wealth and no evil should have touched me"***<sup>23</sup>;

***"Say: 'The unseen belongs to Allah Alone'"***<sup>24</sup>.

The second category of the Qur'anic Verses clearly indicate that the Friends of God Almighty are to some extent aware of the unseen, e.g.

***"Nor will Allah disclose to you the secrets of the unseen, but Allah chooses of His Messengers whom He wills"***<sup>25</sup>.

Regarding the miracles wrought by the Noble Prophet Jesus (as), the Holy Qur'anic Verse<sup>26</sup> reads:

***"I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses."***

Taking into account the exception reflected in the following blessed Verse, it is clear that God Almighty grants His Chosen Messengers (as) partial knowledge of the unseen.

Further, numerous Qur'anic Verses concern the knowledge of the unseen, e.g.

***"The Romans have been defeated in the nearest land and they after their defeat will be, before long [in a few years], triumphant"***<sup>27</sup>;

***"He Who has given you the Qur'an will certainly bring you back to the place of return [i.e. Mecca]"***<sup>28</sup>;

***"You shall enter Masjid al-Haram, if Allah wills in utmost security"***<sup>29</sup>.

The Divine Revelation sent down onto Allah's Messengers (as) is actually a kind of the knowledge of the unseen left at their disposal.

Then, how could one say that they are unaware of the unseen when Divine Revelation is sent onto them? Furthermore, numerous traditions indicate that the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) were to some extent aware of the unseen and imparted the same at times.

For instance, it is reported in the account of the conquest of Mecca that Hatib ibn Abi Balti'a wrote a letter to the people of Mecca and asked a certain woman by the name of Sara to hand it to the Meccan polytheists and thereby informed them of the imminent attack of the Muslim army. She concealed the letter in her hair and departed for Mecca.

The Noble Prophet dispatched Imam 'Ali (as) and some other Muslims to encounter her at a station called the garden of Khakh and seize Hatib's letter addressed to the Meccan polytheists. Upon facing them, she totally denied the claim, but finally confessed and handed them the letter. The details of the account and its transmission chains are to be found above in Chapter 60 (Surah al-Mumtahana).

Another instance of such knowledge of the unseen is reported in the account of the battle of Mu'ta and the martyrdom of Ja'far and some other Muslim military commanders as simultaneously imparted to the Muslims by the Noble Prophet (S) in Medina. There are many similar instances in the Noble Prophet's (S) biographical accounts.<sup>30</sup>

Predictions of many an event are to be found in the Nahj al-Balagha, reflecting that Imam 'Ali (as) was aware of such secrets of the unseen, an instance of which is to be found in the thirteenth sermon treating of the Basrans' vices, saying:

*"It is as if I see that Allah's torments have come down upon you from the heaven and the earth and you have all drowned. The apex of your mosque is obvious like the breast of the ship in water."*

Numerous such predictions by the Noble Imam (as) are to be found in other narrations recorded in the Sunni and the Shi'i sources an instance of which include: he informed Hujr ibn Qays that he would be forced to curse him following his demise;<sup>31</sup> concerning Marwan, he said that advanced in years, he would carry the banner of error;<sup>32</sup> Kumayl ibn Ziyad said unto Hajjaj that the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) had informed him that Hajjaj would slay the Noble Imam (as);<sup>33</sup> concerning the Kharijis of Nahrawan, he said that more than ten people from the Noble Imam's (as) adherents would not fall and more than ten people from the Kharijis would not be saved;<sup>34</sup> while passing by the land of Karbala', he informed Isbagh ibn Nubata of the burial place of Imam Husayn (as);<sup>35</sup> numerous narrations have been transmitted in Fadha'il al-Khamsa from the Sunni sources regarding the extraordinary scope of Imam 'Ali's (as) knowledge, making mention of them all will entail prolixity.<sup>36</sup>

Numerous traditions have been narrated from the Ahl al-Bayt (as) concerning the Infallible Imams' (as) knowledge of the unseen, amongst which mention may be made of the following: Kafi, vol. 1, different chapters, in which such knowledge is explicitly mentioned or implied.

Twenty two traditions are to be found in volume 26 of Majlisi's Bihar al-Anwar. Generally speaking, the traditions concerning the Noble Prophet's (S) and the Infallible Imams' (as) knowledge of the unseen are transmitted on a recurrent basis.

Now, it remains to establish some harmony between the Qur'anic Verses and the traditions proving or negating the knowledge of the unseen granted to others. There exist different ways to achieve such goal.

One of the most well-known ways to reconcile the twain is to suggest that the knowledge of unseen attributed to God Almighty is essential and independent. Consequently, others have not independent knowledge of the unseen and their partial knowledge is granted them by God Almighty through His Grace.

In other words, the knowledge of the unseen bestowed upon others is merely secondary. The blessed Verse in question serves as evidence to the same argument, as per which God Almighty informs no one of the secrets of the unseen except for the Messengers (as) with whom God Almighty is satisfied.

Such implication is suggested in the Nahj al-Balagha, as per which while informing others of the events to happen in future, predicting the Mongol invasion of the Islamic lands, one of his companions inquired:

*"O Command of the Faithful! Do you possess knowledge of the unseen?"*

The Noble Imam replied smilingly:

*"It is not the knowledge of the unseen, but I have learned it from a knowledgeable source [namely the*

*Noble Prophet (S)].*<sup>37</sup>

Many a scholars have approved of such method of coincidence of the seemingly different sources.

The secrets of the unseen fall into two categories: those particular to God Almighty unknown by others, e.g. the time of Resurrection; and those imparted by God Almighty to His Messengers (as) and Friends, as reflected in the Nahj al-Balagha under the above mentioned sermon:

***"The knowledge of the unseen solely rests in the knowledge of [the time of] Resurrection and what is mentioned in the Qur'anic Verse<sup>38</sup>: 'Allah, with Him is the knowledge of the Hour, He sends down the rain and knows that which is in the wombs. No one knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die.'"***

To further expound the meaning of the blessed Qur'anic Verse, the Noble Imam (as) added:

*"God Almighty is All-Aware of what is in the wombs, whether it is a male or a female, homely or comely, generous or niggardly, fortunate or unfortunate, a dweller of the Hell or a dweller of Paradise... These constitute the knowledge of the unseen, unknown to anyone, but God Almighty. Such knowledge is different from what God Almighty taught His Messenger (S) and he imparted the same unto me."*<sup>39</sup>

Some people may obtain some knowledge concerning sending down the rain and the like, but the precise and detailed Knowledge solely rests with His Divine Pure Essence. Likewise, we are unaware of the details of Resurrection, but our knowledge as to the same is quite partial. Such partial knowledge is reflected in certain traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) concerning the birth or the end of life of certain people.

Another way to reconcile the twain is to suggest that the secrets of the unseen are recorded in two places, the Preserved Tablet (luh mahfuth), the Treasury of Knowledge possessed only by God Almighty Alone which is not subject to any alteration nor is it shared by anyone else besides Him; and the Tablet of Effacement and Affirmation (mahw wa ithbat) which is the knowledge as to the requirements of the time rather than the complete cause ('illat tamma), hence its changeability. What others besides God Almighty are unaware concerns the latter.

In this respect, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

*"God Almighty possesses some Knowledge not shared by anyone, and He possesses some Knowledge imparted to His Angels and Messengers (as), such [the latter] knowledge is imparted to us."*<sup>40</sup>

It is narrated from Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (as) as saying:

*"Had there been no Qur'anic Verses, I would have been aware of the past and the events to happen to the Day of Resurrection."*

Someone inquired:

*"Which Verse do you mean?"*

He replied:

*"God Almighty says that Allah effaces whatever He wills and He established on its basis what He wills and with Him is the Mother of the Book [the Preserved Tablet]."*<sup>41</sup>

It is noteworthy that the classification of sciences in the aforesaid method of reconciliation is based on its inevitability or lack of the same, though the quantity of knowledge is intended in the preceding method.

The next method suggests that God Almighty is in actuality All-Aware of all the secrets of the unseen, but such knowledge is not shared by His Messengers (as) and friends, unless He imparts them to them and such imparting solely rests on His Permission and Satisfaction.

Therefore, the blessed Verses and the traditions reflecting that they are unaware of such secrets allude to the lack of knowledge in actuality and those claiming to know the same allude to its potentiality.

Likewise, one may ask another to carry a letter and give it to someone else. He carrier is unaware of the contents of the letter, though he may open it and obtain knowledge of the same.

In such cases, the writer of the letter may give him the permission to read it or he may not grant such permission. Such method is substantiated by the traditions recorded in the Kafi in a chapter entitled "The Imams are taught what they intend to know (Inna al-a'imma idha sha'u an ya'lamu 'ulimu)."

In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

*"When the Imam intends to know something, God Almighty teaches him."*<sup>42</sup>

Such method of reconciliation solves many a problem with regard to the knowledge possessed by the Noble Prophet (S) and the Noble Imams (as).

For instance concerning the reason lying behind their consumption of some poisoned food or water, whereas it is not allowed that one jeopardizes one's life when he is aware of the danger, it may be suggested that in such cases the Noble Prophet (S) or the Imams (as) were not allowed to acquire knowledge as to the secrets of the unseen.

Likewise, it may be an expediency that they be unaware of something or it may be some trial through which they attain to perfection.

In this respect, it is reported in the account of the "night of the stay" (laylat al-mabit) that Imam 'Ali (as) slept in the Noble Prophet's (as) bed in lieu of him, though, as reported by the Noble Imam (as), he was unaware that the Qurayshi polytheists had intended to attack the Noble Prophet at dawn in which case

he could have been martyred or saved his life.

It is in such case that the Imam (as) is not allowed to be aware of the secret so that the Divine Trial be actualized. Had the Imam been aware of jeopardizing his life while sleeping in the Noble Prophet's (S) bed in lieu of him and he could not be so proud of embarking upon such valiant act and the Qur'anic Verses and the traditions concerning such sacrifice would not have been that justified. Therefore, willful knowledge serves as a solution to all such problems.

Another method of reconciliation may be suggested for the knowledge of the unseen, though it is applicable to some of these traditions, in that these traditions addressed an audience with different backgrounds.

Those who were prepared to acknowledge the Infallible Imams' (as) knowledge of the unseen were introduced to the truth, but those who opposed the question or were feeble of faith and of quite limited capacity were introduced to what was not too strong for their early stomachs.

For instance, it is reported in a narration that Abu Basir and some of the eminent companions of Imam Sadiq (as) had attended at a session when the Noble Imam (as) entered in rage and took his seat saying that it was surprising that some people entertained the false impression that the Imams (as) possessed the knowledge of the unseen, but the fact is otherwise; only God Almighty is Omnipotent of the unseen.

He had intended to punish his maid servant, but she fled and he did not know in which of the rooms she was hiding.<sup>43</sup>

The transmitter of the tradition says that when the Noble Imam departed the session, he and some other companions of his went to his house and said unto him:

*"May we be your ransom! You said thus regarding your maid servant, but we know that you are well-versed in many a science; however, we make no mention of the knowledge of the unseen."*

Then, the Noble Imam (as) enlightened them in that respect reflecting his knowledge of the secrets of the unseen.

It is crystal clear that some of the people attending the session were not intellectually prepared to perceive the exalted rank of the Imam (as). Further, it is worthy of note that these five methods do not stand in contradiction, but all of them are true and applicable.

There are, however, other methods by which the partial knowledge of the unseen as possessed by the Imams (as) and the leaders of the Muslim community may be proven.

Firstly, it is known that the scope of their mission was not limited to any specific place and time, but it was universal and everlasting. Now, how such an individual could be appointed to fulfill a universal

mission through merely his own limited time and place? How could one appointed as the ruler of a vast region be unaware of it and succeed in the fulfillment of his mission?

In other words, the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) were vested with imparting and implementing Divine Laws such that they may meet the demands of all mankind in any place and at any time, and the successful fulfillment of such mission requires at least some partial knowledge of the secrets of the unseen.

Secondly, if we take into account three Qur'anic Verses, we will notice that they shed light on the question of the Noble Prophet's (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) knowledge of the secrets of the unseen:

1. Regarding Àsif ibn Barkhiya who brought the queen of Sheba's throne to Solomon (as) in the twinkling of an eye, the Holy Qur'an<sup>44</sup> says:

***"One with whom was the knowledge of the Book said: 'I will bring it to you within the twinkling of an eye.' Then, when Solomon (as) noticed that it was placed before him, he said: 'This is by the Grace of my Lord.'"***

According to another Qur'anic Verse<sup>45</sup>:

***"Say: 'Sufficient as a witness between me and you is Allah and those too who have knowledge of the Book.'"***

It is narrated in numerous traditions, recorded in the Sunni and the Shi'i sources, on the authority of Abu Sa'ïd Khudri that he asked Allah's Messenger (S) concerning the meaning of

***"one who has knowledge from the Book (alladi 'indahu 'ilm-un min al-kitab),"***

to which he replied:

***"He was the trustee of my brother, Solomon, son of David."***

I inquired about

***"and one with him is the knowledge of the Book (wa man 'indahu 'ilm al-kitab),"***

to which he replied:

***"He is my brother, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib."<sup>46</sup>***

It is worthy of note that

***"knowledge from the Book"***

concerns Àsif which is partial knowledge and

***"knowledge of the Book"***

concerns ‘Ali (as) which is general knowledge; thus the difference between Àsif and ‘Ali (as) in terms of their ranks is clarified.

Further, the blessed Qur’anic Verse<sup>47</sup>:

***"We have sent down unto you the Book as an exposition of everything"***

clearly reflects that one who possesses knowledge as to the secrets of such Book is supposed to know the secrets of the unseen.

It serves as evidence as to the possibility of the knowledge of the secrets of the unseen by Allah’s friends through Divine Command. Further discussions on the knowledge of the unseen are to be found above under 6:50, 59; 7:188.

The last blessed Verse of the Chapter, Verse 28, makes mention of the reason lying behind the presence of such guardians:

***"[Allah] protects them till He sees that they have imparted the Messages of their Lord. And He surrounds all that which is with them and He keeps a record of all things."***

Actual Knowledge is herein intended by the Arabic word

***‘ilm ("knowledge")***.

In other words, the blessed Verse is not saying that God Almighty did not know something about His Messengers (as) but He gained the Knowledge thereafter, since Divine Omniscience is Infinite, Pre-Eternal, and Everlasting.

The blessed Verse is saying that such Divine Knowledge may be actualized in the world of existence in some objective form, namely His Messengers (as) actually convey their Prophetic Calls and provide mankind with the Final Argument.

*O Lord! Bestow upon us the Blessings of inward knowledge and obedience to You!*

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1. Tafsir Burhan, vol. 4, p. 390; other traditions have been narrated in this respect.

2. ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim’s Tafsir; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 19.

3. Bukhari’s Sahih; Muslim’s Sahih; Ahmad ibn Hanbal’s Musnad; Fi Hilal al-Qur’an, under the blessed Verse in question. For the sake of brevity, other reported occasions are Revelation is not mentioned here.

4. 37:158

5. Ibn Mahbub’s Mashyakha and Sara’ir.

6. Muhaqqiq Hilli, al-Mu'tabar; Allama Hilli, Tadhkirat al-Fuqaha'; Shahid al-Awwal and Shahid al-Thani, Sharh Lum'a.
7. Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 195.
8. Usul Kafi, vol. 2, the chapter on the believer (mu'min).
9. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan; Tafsir Safi; Tafsir Burhan, under the blessed Verse in question.
10. 74:37
11. 20:124
12. 27:40
13. 8:28
14. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 355.
15. Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 2, p. 970.
16. 9:103
17. 12:97-98
18. 5:92
19. 7:62
20. Tafsir al-Maraghi, vol. 29, p. 105.
21. 6:59
22. 27:65
23. 7:188
24. 10:20
25. 3:179
26. 3:49
27. 30:2-3
28. 28:85
29. 48:27
30. Ibn Athir, al-Kamil, vol. 2, p. 237.
31. Mustadrak al-Sahihayn, vol. 2, p. 358.
32. Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqat, vol. 5, p. 30.
33. Ibn Hajar, al-Isaba, vol. 5, pt. 3, p. 325.
34. Haythami, Majma', vol. 6, p. 241.
35. Riyadh al-Nasar, vol. 2, p. 222.
36. Fadha'il al-Khamsa, vol. 2, pp. 231-253.
37. Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 128.
38. 31:34
39. ibid.
40. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 26, p. 160. Numerous similar traditions have been recorded in the same source.
41. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 2, p. 512.
42. Kafi, the aforesaid chapter, tradition no. 3. Similar traditions are to be found in the same chapter.
43. Usul Kafi, vol. 1, the chapter on Rarities as to the Unseen (Bab Nadir-un fihi Dhikr al-Ghayb), tradition no. 3.
44. 27:40
45. 13:43
46. Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 3, pp. 280-281; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 2, p. 523.
47. 16:89