

Section 1: The Faithful

Surah al-Mu'minun , Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ

1. *“Successful indeed are the believers, ”*

2. *“Who are humble in their prayers, ”*

In The Holy Qur'an, there are eleven cases in which the Arabic word /falah/ (salvation) is used along with the word /la' alla/, (perhaps), and in only three cases the word /falah/ is mentioned without /la'alla/ in a sense implying certainty.

One of them is in this Sura, the other is in Sura Ash-Shams, No, 91, verse 9,

“He is indeed successful who purifies it”

and the third case is found in Sura Al-'A'la', No. 87, verse 14, where it says:

“Indeed, he will prosper who purifies himself.”

By comparing these three cases, it becomes clear that faith and purification are one in essence.

The ultimate and supreme aim of every program in Islam is success and salvation. Many verses of the holy Qur’an that mention piety and religious decrees also aim to achieve piety:

“...so that you may guard yourselves (against evil).”¹

whereas the categorical aim of piety is:

“...and be in awe of Allah; that you may be prosperous.”

It is interesting that the most important and the ultimate definitive objective of the religion of Islam has manifestly been mentioned in its first testimony:

“Say there is no god but Allah, (so that) you will be successful.”

As we said earlier, the choice of the title, “Al-Mu’minun” for this Sura is because of the beginning verses of the Sura that enumerate the attributes of the believers in some short, lively, significant and comprehensive phrases.

In addition, it is interesting that this Sura first mentions the delightful and glorious destiny of the believers before talking about their attributes in order to kindle the flames of love and enthusiasm in them for reaching this goal and great honour in their souls.

The Qur’an implies, having gained their final goal in all dimensions, the believers are prosperous.

It says:

“Successful indeed are the believers”

The Arabic term /aflaha/ is derived from the word /falaha/ and /falah/. It originally means ‘cutting and splitting’ and is then applied to every kind of victory and achievement that results in man’s happiness and success.

In fact, the successful, prosperous and triumphant persons manage to overcome obstacles that lie in their way to reach the goal.

Of course, true success and salvation have such extended meanings that include both material and spiritual victories and both of them have also been considered with respect to the qualified believers.

Victory and success in the present world mean that man would live freely, independently, prosperously, and honorably and these good conditions are only achieved under the shadow of faith. Success in the Hereafter means to abide respectfully and prosperously under the mercy of Allah, showered by eternal

blessings and having the company of purified and amenable friends.

Twenty times every day and night we say /hayya ‘alal-falah/ (Come to success!) in the call to prayer and in the prologue to the daily ritual prayers, clearly declaring this final aim so that we do not lose our path.

Islam says:

“Those who have faith and purify their souls are indeed successful”.

But Pharaoh uttered the blasphemy:

“...whoever is uppermost this day will be indeed successful”.²

The Arabic word /falah/ means to prosper. Maybe the reason that the farmer in Arabic is called a /fallah/ is because he makes the conditions ready for plants to grow and prosper. When a seed is placed in the soil, it rescues itself by 3 actions and reaches open space:

- 1) It plants its roots in the depths of the ground.
- 2) It absorbs the nutrients of the soil.
- 3) It moves the soil away from its path in its growth upward.

Like a seed, the human being must accomplish these three actions in order to free himself and reach the open space of monotheism delivering himself from false gods and the dark world of materialism:

- 1) He must fortify the roots of his beliefs through reasoning.
- 2) He must gain Allah-given potentialities as much as possible for spiritual development and perfection.
- 3) He ought to discard enemies and obstacles and pushes aside any deity other than Allah with the phrase ‘La ‘ilaha ‘ilia Llah’ (“There is no god save Allah”) in order to reach the open space of monotheism.

Who Are the Successful?

1– Worshippers:

“...and worship your Lord, and do good, that haply you may prosper.”³

2– Those whose deeds are valuable and heavy:

“...Then whoever’s scales be heavy, those are they who shall be prosperous.”⁴

3– Those who avoid jealousy:

“...And whoso is saved from his own avarice such are who are successful.”⁵

4– Allah’s party:

“...Beware! Verily the party of Allah are the successful ones.”⁶

5– Those who remember Allah much:

“...and remember Allah much, that you may be prosperous.”⁷

6– The God-fearing:

“...So be in awe of Allah, O’ possessors of intellects, that you may be prosperous.”⁸

7– Warriors for faith:

“...and strive hard in His way, that you may be prosperous.”⁹

8– Penitents:

“...And turn unto Allah all together, O believers, in order that you may succeed.”¹⁰

Some Traditions On Success and Salvation

1) Imam Ali (as) said:

“Anyone whose passions are overcome by (his reason and) his wisdom would be successful.”¹¹

2) He also said:

“Follow knowledge and disobey ignorance so that you may prosper.”¹²

3) The Prophet (S) said:

“Successful is he who renders his soul sincere for faith, makes his heart clean and sound, makes his tongue veracious, makes his psyche calm, makes his morals fair, makes his ears heedful and makes his eyes watchful”¹³.

4) Imam Ali (as) said:

“O’ People! Steer clear through the waves of mischief by boats of deliverance, turn away from the path of dissention and put off the crowns of pride. Prosperous is he who rises with wings, or he surrenders and finds peace.”¹⁴

5) Qummi narrates a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

“When Allah, the Mighty, created Paradise, He told it to speak. It said:

“Successful indeed are the believers.”¹⁵

The next verse looks at the attributes of the believers, and in this context, at first and foremost, singles out the importance of the ritual prayer. It says:

“Who are humble in their prayers”.

The Qur’anic term /xaši’un/ (who are humble) is from the word /xušu’/, meaning the state of spiritual and physical modesty, which is adopted outwardly by the body in man when in the presence of a great person or an important truth.

Here, the Holy Qur’an does not count merely performing the ritual prayer itself as a sign of the believers, but it considers ‘humility’ in the ritual prayer as one of their attributes. This refers to the fact that their prayers are not meaningless and some soulless words and movements.

When they perform the ritual prayer, they give their complete attention to Allah, detaching themselves from all other than Allah and thus achieving a meeting with Him.

They are so absorbed in contemplating and supplicating to the Divine presence that every particle of their beings is influenced by it. They see themselves as a mere atom in the presence of an Unlimited Being and as a drop in a Vast Ocean.

For the believer, every moment of this prayer is a lesson of self-development and training in being truly human and a means for refining the heart and soul.

An Islamic tradition indicates that the Prophet (S) once saw a man playing with his beard while praying. The Prophet (S) said:

*“If he was humble in his heart, limbs of his body would also be humble.”*¹⁶

This statement refers to the fact that humility is an inward state that affects one’s exterior. The great spiritual leaders of Islam were so humble in their prayers that when they were in a state of prayer they became estranged from all other than Allah.

There is a tradition that says when the Prophet (S) was standing to perform the prayers, he would occasionally look up to the heavens, but when this verse was revealed, he began looking downwards from that time onwards and never raised his head while at prayer.

Some Points

1– The Prophet (S) said:

“One who is not humble in his ritual prayer, never receives its virtue.”¹⁷

2– Allah, The Almighty, said to Christ:

“Shed tears for Me from your eyes and be humble (and modest) in your heart.”¹⁸

3– Imam Ali (as) said:

“There is no goodness in a heart that is not humble, and in an eye that does not shed tears (out of fear of Allah) and in a deed that has no benefit.”¹⁹

4– Amir ul Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

“Whoever is humble (and modest) before the grandeur of Allah (Glory be to Him), the disobedient will bow down before him and whoever takes Allah as a supporter his difficulties will be solved.”²⁰

5– The Prophet (S) was asked about humility. He said:

“It is humbleness (and modesty) at the time of the ritual prayer and that the servant (of Allah) focuses his whole heart upon Allah, the Almighty and Glorious.”²¹

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verses 3–4

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ

3. “And those who keep aloof from (what is) vain, ”

4. “And those who are active in giving the poor due (zakat), ”

Vanity in Deed and Speech

‘Al Laghw’ is an action or a speech that is vain.

Avoiding vanity and frivolousness is not only limited to Muslims, for, concerning the good people among the People of the Book, the holy Qur'an also says:

“And when they hear vanity they withdraw from it...”²²

In the abovementioned noble verse, this second attribute of the believers is mentioned after the attribute

of humility.

It says:

“And those who keep aloof from (what is) vain, ”

In fact, all of their movements and policies of life have a useful and constructive purpose, because uselessness means futility and ineffectiveness in action.

As a matter of fact, as great interpreters of the Qur'an have said, every action and speech that does not carry a significant benefit, is vain. Some of other interpreters have rendered vanity as nullity, and others have interpreted it as sins on the whole.

Some have interpreted it as cursing or using bad language, others as profane singing, frivolity and play, while yet others have interpreted it as polytheism. All of these mentioned interpretations are extensions of this general and comprehensive concept.

Of course, vanity does not only mean idle talk and deeds, but it also means idle, futile and baseless thoughts that result in neglecting Allah (s.w.t). It also prevents us from pondering upon good and constructive things. All of these characteristics mentioned above are summed up in the concept of one word, /laqw/ (vanity).

In actual fact, the believers are so trained that not only do they not get involved in frivolous and baseless thoughts and actions but, as the Holy Qur'an says, they also avoid them. In other words, a vain action is a deed that has no benefit. Vain actions, however, can be relative, for sometimes an action would be vain concerning one situation while worthwhile and useful in another.

However Allah, Glory be to Him, does not characterize the believers as those who abandon vain deeds absolutely, for man is a being that is on the verge of committing sins and making mistakes, He rather describes them as those who abstain from them, not its absolute abandonment.

Abstinence necessitates the existence of something that invites man to occupy himself with an action but heedlessly and not giving any value to it, he turns his back upon it and busies himself with something else. Someone who abstains from an action sees involving himself with that action as below his dignity and would rather pursue higher aims and more noble tasks.

Real faith calls on all of mankind to cultivate this attitude, too, for faith belongs to the realm of greatness and majesty, and is the source of glory, nobility and splendor. One who is faithful endeavors only to live for final prosperity and eternal success.

He pursues activities that are considered great by Allah and he does not value the actions and conduct of the ignorant and ignoble. If the ignorant address the believers, they (the believers) answer them with kindness and when the believers see vain activity they deal with it with nobility and magnanimity.

This state of the believers makes it clear that, describing them with the quality of avoiding from 'what is vain', is a metaphorical meaning pointing to the high determination, dignity and nobility of their personality.

Some Tradition On Vanity

1) The Prophet (S) said:

*"The most honorable of people are those who abandon what is useless."*²³

2) The Prophet (S) also said:

*"Peace of self is achieved by abandoning vain affairs."*²⁴

3) Imam Baqir (as) said:

*"You should act with justice and do not heel with the difficulties you face with (in this way), and abstain from what is vain."*²⁵

4) Imam Sadiq (as) said;

*"Do refrain from doing what is vain, for you will become abject and despised."*²⁶

5) Imam Sadiq (as) said in a prayer:

*"Oh Allah! Have mercy on me (to be able) to abandon sins totally while I am alive, and be merciful to me, so that I do not get into troubles because of what is vain."*²⁷

6) Imam Ali (as) in a latter wrote to Abdullah ibn Abbas:

*"Then, follow what is beneficent and leave what is vain, for abandoning vain affairs causes you to gain useful actions."*²⁸

7) The Prophet (S) said:

*"Do not bring the flames of the fire upon your faces by involving yourselves in vain activities."*²⁹

8) Imam Ali (as) said:

*"Many a vain word speech and conduct that bring an evil."*³⁰

9) Imam Ali (as) said:

*"Every speech in which there is no remembrance of Allah is vain."*³¹

10) The Prophet (S) said:

*“A good sign of a person’s Islam, is the abandoning of what is vain.”*³²

The Alms–Tax (Zakat)

The Arabic word /zakat/ in philology means purification, cleanliness, growth and development. In Islamic law and for the Muslims, it means a specific part of one’s possessions that must be deducted, with particular conditions, and then spent upon the poor, the indigent, and for other good activities.

In other words, /zakat/ is subtracting a part of property from one’s possessions and giving it to the needy so that those possessions which remain with the owner would grow by Divine grace and increase the owner’s spiritual rank.

In addition, alms–tax (zakat) wipes away that which is unlawful from one’s possessions and takes blameworthiness and bad attributes away from its owner. So we can say that since paying the alms–tax wipes away the qualities of mammonism, selfishness, stinginess, meanness, hardheartedness, and avarice from the human soul, it is called ‘zakat’.

The alms–tax (zakat) is a very important religious duty and service. It is an Islamic obligation which is the third item of the fundamental principles of the religion, and, in other words, it has been counted as the second pillar of the religion.

In The Holy Qur’an and in the narrations attributed to the Infallible Imams, the alms–tax has a very high and important status. By carefully studying the verses of the Holy Qur’an, we find that the alms–tax and its importance are mentioned right after many verses concerning ritual prayers.

In a narration by the Prophet (S) and Imam Sadiq (as) we read that one who does not pay the smallest amount of alms–tax on his possessions, is counted not a believer or a Muslim.

In another tradition by the Prophet (S), we read that one day he (S) evicted five persons who did not pay their alms–tax and said to them:

“You who do not pay the alms–tax get out of our mosque and do not perform the ritual prayer in our mosque.”

It has been mentioned in another narration that we should pay our alms–tax, so that our ritual prayers would be accepted.

Other narrations warn people that if they do not pay the alms–tax on their wealth, the ground would take away their blessings by Divine Commandment and they will be in the grip of destitution and famine.

We will read about more interesting explanations on this subject stated by the Infallible Imams in the following pages.

However, this verse refers to the third attribute of the true believers, which has a social and economic aspect.

The Holy Qur'an says:

“And those who are active in giving the poor due (zakat), ”

This Sura was revealed in Mecca, and at that time the law requiring the payment of the ordinary alms-tax had not been revealed. Thus, there are different interpretations stated upon this verse by commentators.

What seems more correct is that ‘zakat’ does not exclusively mean ‘the obligatory legal alms-tax’, because Islam has quite a number of ‘recommended alms donations’. The alms tax, as an obligatory act, was revealed in Medina, but the payment of alms as a recommended good deed had also been achieved before that.

Some interpreters comment that ‘zakat’ in Mecca had probably been in the form of a religious obligation but without any limits and exact prescription, which means that Muslims had been under an obligation to give some amount of their wealth to the needy.

It was only after the establishment of the Islamic state and a public treasury that a well defined system of zakat payments was organized fixing the minimum value of property upon which the alms-tax was payable and dispatching zakat collectors were sent around the community on the command of the Prophet (S).

Some interpreters of the Holy Qur'an, such as Fakhr-i-Razi, Alusi in Ruh-ul-Ma'ani and, Raqib in Mufradat, have said, however, that ‘zakat’ here means any kind of good act or purification of the soul and heart.

This is very improbable, for wherever the Glorious Qur'an mentions the ritual prayer along with the alms-tax, the alms-tax means to combat financial prodigality, and inferring other meanings would need a supporting context that does not exist here.

In the end, it is necessary to study some of the narrations and one verse on the alms-tax.

Sura Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 12 says:

“...and Allah said: ‘Verily! I am with you. If you keep up prayer and pay the poor due, and believe in My messengers and support them, and lend unto Allah a kindly loan, I shall certainly remit your sins, and I shall certainly cause you to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow...”

Some Narrations Upon Alms-Tax (Zakat)

1) Amir ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

*"I recommend you to pay the alms-tax, for I heard your Prophet, (Peace be on him and his household) saying: 'The alms-tax is the bridge of Islam; then he who pays it will pass over the bridge and he who does not will fall off, and the payment of the alms-tax soothes Allah's wrath'."*³³

2) One narrator says that he heard Imam Ali (as) saying:

*"The pillars of Islam are three that none of them is useful without accompanying the other two; they are the ritual prayer, the alms-tax, and guardianship (wilayat)."*³⁴

3) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*"If people pay the alms-tax out of their possessions, there will be no poor and needy Muslim left."*³⁵

4) The Prophet (S) said,

*"No people had prevented the payment of the alms-tax without Allah taking away His rain (of mercy) from them."*³⁶

5) Rufatah says that he heard Imam Sadiq (as) saying:

*"Allah enjoins this people nothing more difficult than paying the alms-tax and when they refrain from paying it, many of them will perish."*³⁷

6) The Prophet (S) said:

*"I am ordered to struggle with the people until they testify that there is no god but Allah and that I am Allah's Messenger, and (that) they perform the ritual prayer and pay the alms-tax."*³⁸

7) The Prophet (S) said:

*"Treat your sick ones by paying alms, and protect your possessions by paying the alms-tax."*³⁹

8) Imam Musa-ibn-Ja'far (as) said:

*"The alms-tax has been established to be the food of the poor and the cause of the increase of their wealth."*⁴⁰

9) Hadrat Fatimat-uz-Zahra (as) in her sermon said:

"Allah established the Faith ('Iman) as the means to purify you from polytheism, the ritual prayer as the means for you to be distant from pride, and made the alms-tax obligatory for purifying the soul and heart

and increasing provisions.”⁴¹

10) The Prophet (S) said:

“One who pays the alms–tax, for every dirham would be given him blessings in Paradise as great as the weight of Mount ‘Uhud.”⁴²

11) At the time of his departure from this world, Amir ul–Mu’mineen Ali (as) said:

“My son! I bequeath that you perform the ritual prayer at its very time, and give the alms–tax to those who are entitled to have it and where it is entitled to be spent.”⁴³

12) Narrating from his dignified ancestors, Imam Sadiq (as) said that the Prophet (S) had said:

“The most generous one of the people is he who pays the alms–tax out of his possessions, and the most stingy one of the people is he who is tight fisted with what Allah has enjoined upon him.”⁴⁴

13) Amir ul–Mu’mineen Ali (as) said:

“Save your faith by giving alms, insure your possessions by paying the alms–tax and ward off the waves of misfortune and troubles by supplication.”⁴⁵

14) Imam Baqir (as) said:

“The alms–tax increases provisions.”⁴⁶

15) Imam Ali (as) said:

“The meaning of lma‘unl (in the Holy Qur’an) is the obligatory alms–tax. He who abstains from paying it is like a usurer, and he who does not pay the alms–tax out of his possessions is not a Muslim.”⁴⁷

16) The Prophet (S) said:

“When the payment of alms–tax is prevented, the earth restrains its blessings.”⁴⁸

17) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“Thieves are of three kinds: Those who do not pay the alms–tax, those who count the dower (of the wives) as lawful and do not pay it, and one who borrows but does not intend to pay it back.”⁴⁹

18) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“The Prophet (S) levied the alms–tax upon nine objects: wheat, barley, date, raisins, gold, silver, camels, cattle and sheep. And he excused everything else from it save for these (mentioned objects).”⁵⁰

19) Suma‘ah said that he asked Imam Sadiq (as) who was entitled to receive the alms. He said:

“I swear by Allah that the alms belongs to those who are mentioned in His Book (the Holy Qur’an): the poor, the needy, and the officials (appointed) over them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled (toward Islam by receiving it), and to free the captives, and the debtors, and for the cause of Allah, and for the wayfarer. (This is) a duty (ordained) by Allah.”⁵¹

20) The Prophet (S) said:

“The alms-tax is not lawful to be given to the rich, nor to the one who is wise and healthy, nor to the one who has a job.” I asked: “What does this mean?” He said: “It is not lawful for one to receive the alms-tax when he is able not to use it.”⁵²

Surah al-Mu’minun – Verses 5-7

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأُفْرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ

إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ

فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ

5. “And those who guard their private parts, ”

6. “Save from their wives or the (slaves) that their right hands possess, for then verily they are not blameworthy, ”

7. “But whoso craves beyond that, such are transgressors, ”

Since the sexual instinct can be the one most likely to be misused, self-preservation against this needs piety, austerity and strong faith. In this verse emphasis is put on this subject.

The verse says:

“And those who guard their private parts, ”

The verse implies that the fourth attribute of the believers is chastity, which is self-control and abstinence from every kind of sexual impropriety. It means that they guard themselves from lewdness and only have intercourse with their wives and slave women, in which there is no blame.

It says:

“Save from their wives of the (slaves) that their right hands possess, for then verily they are not blameworthy, ”

In the seventh verse The Holy Qur'an continues saying:

“But whoso craves beyond that, such are transgressors.”

Using the phrase, 'guarding private parts' in this verse refers to the fact that if there is no constant and unflinching control over the tendencies towards sexual misconduct, there will be the danger that its deviations and excesses can overwhelm the individual and even the society.

The word 'wives' in the verse includes both permanent and temporary wives, although some Sunni interpreters have made a mistake here, while the concerning jurisprudents and the interpreters of the Qur'an have identified this mistake in their books of commentary and in the book on the legal issues of An-Nikah.

Using the Qur'anic phrase /qayra malumin/ (they are not blameworthy), most likely, refers to the wrong idea among the deviated Christians that consider every kind of sexual intercourse against human dignity and that its absolute abundance is a virtue.

They see any form of marriage to be inimical to reaching full spiritual realization to the extent that Catholic priests, monks and nuns remain celibate all their lives. They think marriage is something against this spiritual rank. (Though it is mostly in apparent and secret a group of them behave differently.)

At any rate, it is impossible to accept that Allah would create such a powerful instinct in man as part of the wisdom of creation and men prohibit it totally or count it as against the dignity of man. Indeed, the unnaturalness of this attitude has resulted in many members of these very Christian orders resorting to multifarious surreptitious ways to satisfy their sexual instincts.⁵³

One does not need to be reminded that the legality of having sexual relations with a wife is circumscribed under some certain conditions such as menstruation and the like.

Furthermore, the legality of such relationships with slave-girls has numerous conditions that are mentioned in the books of jurisprudence. It is not the case that every slave-girl is lawful for her owner and the same conditions that apply to wives can also apply to them in some cases.

Finally, we would like to draw your attention to some narrations regarding this issue:

1) Abdullah Sinan has narrated that Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“Indeed woman is a collar you put around your neck and bind yourself by it. Thus, you should look at her closely and think carefully about who is going to take control of you and finally where she is going to lead

you. Be aware that a bad woman cannot be compared with a good one for a good woman is more priceless than gold, silver or any precious gem, and a bad woman has no value at all, she is not even equal to the soil, for the soil is indeed better than her.”⁵⁴

2) Ibrahim Karkhy said,

“I told Imam Sadiq (as) that my wife, who was in agreement with me about the affairs of life, had died and that now I want to marry another woman. The Imam told me: ‘Think well and see where you put your heart and soul and who will be your partner in your possessions and will be aware of your beliefs and secrets. If you intend to get married, select a maiden who is characterized by honour and good morals and who is from a family that you know is good, chaste, and honest.”

3) Ali-ibn-Salim narrated that Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“Certainly one whose punishment on the Day of Resurrection is more severe than others is a man who puts his seed in the womb of a woman who is unlawful for him.”⁵⁵

4) Zurarah has narrated that Imam Baqir (as) said:

“Allah is not worshipped by any prayer higher than protecting the stomach and private parts from what is unlawful.”⁵⁶

5) The Prophet (S) said:

“The cause that would send my people to Hell is mostly the two hollow limbs, one of which is the stomach and the other is the pudendum (meaning fornication and the lack of chastity).”⁵⁷

Surah al-Mu’minun – Verse 8

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ

8. “And those who are keepers of their trusts and their covenant, ”

Another outstanding attribute of the believers here is safeguarding their trusts, with the vast meaning of the word. This includes keeping their promises and pledges both towards the Creator and towards mankind.

The broad concept of ‘trust’ covers the trusts of Allah and the prophets as well as that of people in general. Each one of Allah’s various blessings is one of His trusts.

The religion of the Truth, the Heavenly Books, the teachings and practical instructions of the leaders of

the Path of Truth, ones' possessions, offspring, the responsibilities to which one has been assigned and the social positions we have been given are all His trusts which the believers endeavor to fulfil and give their due.

The believers guard these trusts while they are alive, and when they are close to departing this world, they entrust them to the future generations they have trained to maintain them. All material, spiritual, and political blessings are Divine trusts.⁵⁸

The concept of 'trust' is general, here, and its evidence is the vastness and absoluteness of the word trust, in addition to the existence of numerous narrations that interpret the meaning of trust. Trust is sometimes interpreted as 'the Imamate of the Infallible Imams', which every Imam entrusts to the next Imam, and sometimes it is interpreted as their absolute guardianship and government.⁵⁹

It is interesting that Zurarah, who was one of the greatest disciples of Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as), says that the purpose of the sentence:

'...that you restore deposits to their owners...'⁶⁰

is to restore guardianship and government to its due people, i.e. those entitled to it.⁶¹

This shows that government is an important deposit that must be restored to its true owners.

The verse says:

"And those who are keepers of their trusts and their covenant, "

General meanings for the concepts of covenant and promise can also be found in other verses of the Holy Qur'an, for example, one verse says:

"Fulfil you the covenant of Allah when you make covenant."⁶²

Interestingly, in some verses of the Holy Qur'an we find that the phrases 'restoration of deposits' and 'respecting trusts' include both safeguarding them and restoring them to their owners.

Therefore, if the failure to protect something that is held in trust results in damaging it or placing it in danger, the trustee should make an effort to correct it. (So, there are three tasks to be done: restoration, protection, and correction.)

At any rate, being faithful to one's covenants, protecting them and restoring deposits to their owners are important foundations of the social system of human beings. Without them disorder would occur in the society.

This is why even individuals and nations that have no Divine and religious beliefs, bind themselves to fulfilling these obligations, at least, in society in order to protect it against the disorder that would result

from breaches of trusts and covenants.

The Importance of Trust in Narrations

1) During the last moments of his life in this world, the holy Prophet (S) told Imam Ali (as):

*“Restore the deposit to its depositor (its owner), whether he is righteous or a wrongdoer, and whether it is valuable or worthless, even if it is a thread, a cloth or a sewn garment.”*⁶³

2) Imam Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) said:

*“The supreme faith is trustworthiness, and the most indecent of morals is treachery.”*⁶⁴

3) Imam Ali (as) said:

*“Do not betray someone who has entrusted something to you, even though he has betrayed you. And do not make known his secrets, although he has revealed yours.”*⁶⁵

4) The Prophet (S) said:

*“If someone commits a breach of trust in the world and does not restore the deposit to the depositor and then he dies, he has died as one disbelieves in my religion, and he will find Allah angry with him.”*⁶⁶

5) The Prophet (S) said:

*“One who is negligent with his trusts and consequently damages the deposit is not one of us.”*⁶⁷

6) Imam Ali (as) said:

*“One who commits a breach of trust is not faithful.”*⁶⁸

7) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*“Allah has appointed no prophet unless he is veracious and restores deposits to the good and the bad.”*⁶⁹

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verse 9

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَوَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ

9. “And those who take care of their prayers, ”

The most prominent characteristic and demeanour of the believers is the first thing mentioned in the

Sura, their attitude to the ritual prayer, when it says that the believers are they:

“Who are humble in their prayer.”

This attribute is again mentioned when it says:

“And those who take care of their prayers.”

Thus the Sura emphasizes both the role and effect of the ritual prayer, which is as a sign for its importance, and the verse, as the last specialty of the believers, here, says:

“And those who take care of their prayers, ”

It is interesting that the primary attribute of the believers is ‘humility in ritual prayer’ and their final attribute has been counted ‘paying attention to their prayers’. Their attributes start with the ritual prayer and end with the ritual prayer, because the ritual prayer is the most important relation between the Creator and mankind.

The ritual prayer is the supreme school of training the self. It is the means towards awareness of the soul and heart and insures man against sin. In short, if ritual prayer is one with all its rites, it will be a certain ground for all goodness and righteous deeds.

It is also necessary to mention that the first holy verse concerning the believers’ qualities and this very verse are different from each other from the point of the matter. That is why in the first verse ‘Salat’ (prayer) is used in the singular form and in this verse it is used in the plural form.

The first one refers to humility and a special inward attitude which is the spirit of ritual prayer and affects the whole entity. The recent verse focuses upon the discipline and the conditions for the performance of the prayers, which include the time, place, and the number of the ritual prayers.

Here, the true believers are recommended to observe all the disciplines and conditions necessary for all the ritual prayers.

The Extraordinary Importance of the Ritual Prayers

Numerous narrations have been narrated from the Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) recorded about these holy verses containing some expressive meanings that unveil the extraordinary importance of the ritual prayer in the religion of Islam.

Abu ‘Uthman said:

“I was sitting with Salman Farsi under a tree, when he grasped a dry branch and shook it so that all the leaves on it fell off. Then he told me: “You did not ask me why I did that.” I asked him to tell me what his intention was for doing so. He said: “This was the same action the Prophet (S) performed when I was

sitting beside him under a tree. There, the Prophet (S) asked me: 'Wouldn't you ask me why I did this, Salman?' I asked him to tell me why. He said: 'When a Muslim does his ritual ablutions and then performs the five ritual prayers, all his sins will fall away as the leaves of this branch'."70

In another tradition, Abu 'Umamah said:

"Once we were sitting with the Prophet (S) in a mosque, when a man came and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, I have committed a sin, for which a fixed punishment is prescribed upon me. Please execute it on me.' The Prophet (S) said: 'Did you perform the ritual prayer with us?'. The man said: 'Yes, O Messenger of Allah'. The Prophet said: 'So Allah has forgiven your sin and removed your prescribed punishment'."71

Also it is narrated that Imam Ali (as) said:

"We were waiting with the Prophet (S) for the ritual prayer, when a man stood up and said: 'O Messenger of Allah! I have committed a sin.' The Prophet (S) turned his face away from him, and when the ritual prayer was finished, the same man stood up and repeated what he had said before. The Prophet (S) said: 'Did not you perform this ritual prayer along with us? Did you not perform its ritual ablution well?' He said: 'Yes.' The Prophet (S) said: 'This is the penance for your sin'."72

Again it has been narrated that Imam Ali (as) quoted from the Prophet (S) who said:

"The five ritual prayers for my Ummah are like a stream of flowing water placed in front of the door of each of your house. Suppose one of you has dirt on his body and takes a bath in it five times a day, would any dirt remain on his body? Of course not! The five ritual prayers are such for my Ummah (people)."73

There is no doubt, however, that when the ritual prayer is performed and its conditions are observed, it immerses man in a world of spirituality and devotion, which make his links with Allah so strong that all the impurities and effects of sins are washed away from the heart and the soul.

The ritual prayer insures man against sin and it removes the rust of sin from the mirror of the heart.

The ritual prayer causes the seeds of man's noble habits to germinate in the depths of his soul. The ritual prayer, indeed, strengthens the will, purifies the heart, and cleanses the soul. Thus, if the ritual prayer is not like a body without a soul, then it can be the supreme school of training the self.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 10-11

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ

الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

10. “These, they are the heirs, ”

11. “Those who will inherit the Paradise: Therein they will abide.”

The Arabic word ‘Firdaus’, meaning garden, is the best place in Paradise.⁷⁴

After mentioning the most distinguished attributes of the believers, the Qur’an implies that their destiny is that they will be the heirs who will inherit Paradise and abide there eternally.

The verse says:

“These, they are the heirs, ”

However, ‘Firdaus’, as some philologists say, is a Roman word, while some others say it is Arabic, and some say that it is originally a Persian word meaning a garden. In this case, it is a special garden in which all the Divine blessings and favours are gathered. Hence it can be called ‘the Lofty Paradise’, which is the best and the most elevated gardens of Heaven.

Using the word ‘inherit’ may indicate that the believers gain it without difficulty, like how one gets an inheritance, in so far as man achieves this favour without any trouble or exertion.

Of course attaining the high stations of Paradise needs self-edification, purification and struggle, but the great recompense in comparison, makes these efforts look as if they were nothing, that the believer had achieved it without facing any pain.

It is necessary to note that the Prophet (S) has been quoted to have said:

“Every one of you, without exception, has two abodes, one in the Hell and other in Paradise. If a person dies and goes to Hell, his abode in Paradise will be inherited by the people of Paradise.”

This tradition might explain the context in which the word ‘inheritance’ in the verse under discussion might apply.

Some interpreters are also of the opinion that it is not improbable that the use of the word ‘inheritance’ refers to the destiny of the believers, like heritage which finally accrues to the heir.

The literal meaning of the text indicates that this exalted station of Paradise is exclusive for the believers who possess the attributes enumerated above. Thus, the other people of Paradise dwell in lower stations.

Some Narrations on Paradise

1) The holy Prophet (S) says:

*"Whoever longs for Paradise must endeavour to do good deeds."*⁷⁵

2) Imam Sajjad, Zayn-ul-'abidin, (as) said:

*"Be aware that whoever is eager for Paradise hastens to do good and shuns sensual desires. And whoever fears the Fire repents of his sins before Allah's presence and shuns what is unlawful."*⁷⁶

3) Imam Ali (as) said:

*"Paradise is the best of goals."*⁷⁷

4) Imam Ali (as) said:

*"Paradise is the destiny of those who are successful."*⁷⁸

5) Imam Ali (as) said:

*"Paradise is the abode of peace (and comfort)."*⁷⁹

6) Imam Ali (as) said:

*"Paradise is the recompense for those who obey (Allah's commandments)."*⁸⁰

7) The Prophet (S) said:

*"If you promise to fulfil six virtuous acts I promise you will have Paradise: perform the ritual prayer, pay the alms-tax, restore deposits to their owners, uphold the privacy parts, and be careful about your language and your stomach."*⁸¹

8) The Prophet (S) said:

*"One who dies while he believes that Allah is True will enter Paradise."*⁸²

9) The Prophet (S) said:

*"Never enters Paradise but the one who is Muslim."*⁸³

10) The Prophet (S) said:

*"In Paradise there are things (blessings), that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and which have never occurred to the mind."*⁸⁴

11) Imam Ali (as) said:

*“Only Paradise is your price and value, so sell yourself for nothing less than that .”*⁸⁵

12) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*“One who recites ‘La-’Ilaha Illa-Lah’ sincerely will enter Paradise. And his sincerity means that this noble sentence dissuades one from committing the prohibited things of Allah.”*⁸⁶

13) Imam Kazim (as) said:

*“Three persons are barred from Paradise: the gossip, the alcoholic, and the libertine, and he is a mischievous man.”*⁸⁷

14) The Prophet (S) said:

“A deceiver and a betrayer will not enter Paradise.”

And he also said:

*“A cursed child and a drunkard will not enter Paradise.”*⁸⁸

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verses 12-13

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ طِينٍ

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَكِينٍ

12. “And certainly We created man from an extract of clay, ”

13. “Then We placed him (as a drop of) sperm in a safe lodging;”

The Arabic word /sulalah/ means an extract of something. The Qur’anic word /alaqah/ means clotted thick blood. The word /mudqah/ means a piece of boneless meat.

After mentioning the characteristics of real believers and the vast and unique rewards in store for them through former verses, the faithful reader is motivated to join their ranks, but how is this possible?

These revelations and a part of the following holy verses illustrate one of the main ways of achieving faith and gnosis. First man is encouraged to discover and contemplate the wonders of the human body

and its genesis.

Through some verses, which will be recited later, the Qur'an attracts the man's attention to outside secrets of the wonderful beings of the world of existence, the exterior world of the macrocosm. He must try to see the wonders of creation in the microcosm of his being, too. It says:

“And certainly We created man from an extract of clay, ”

Thus, the first step is to meditate upon how man, the best and chosen of all creatures with all his greatness, talents and excellent characteristics had been created from the humble earth. The existence of man himself is a testimony to Allah's awesome power for He created such a complex and amazing creature from such a simple substance.

The next verse, adds:

“Then We placed him (as a drop of) sperm in a safe lodging;”

In fact, verse 12 speaks about the origin of all mankind as the offspring of Adam. Everyone has been created from wet earth and everyone returns to it in the end. This verse, however, speaks about the continuation of the human species through the process of insemination, which is the combination of the male and female seeds, and fetal development in the womb.

This subject is mentioned in other parts of the Qur'an, for example, in verses 7 and 8 of Sura As-Sajdah the Qur'an says:

“...He began the creation of man with clay, then made his progeny from a draught of despised fluid.”

The verse under discussion describes the womb as /qararin makin/ (meaning a safe and a secure residence) and refers to the particular position of the womb in the human body. Indeed, the womb is located in one of the most secure places of the body.

It is fully protected on all sides with the spine and ribcage at the back and the pelvic bone embracing the front and two sides. In addition to this, layers of abdominal muscles, and hands as well, provide additional protection. Thus the womb provides a safe and nurturing place for the conception and development of a child.

However, mother has different kinds of movements, but her womb is a secure place for the child, yet all the stages of creation, of course, are under His control.

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verse 14

ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظَامًا فَكَسَوْنَا
الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا ءَاخِرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

14. “Then We created of the sperm a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh; thereafter We produced it as another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators!”

This verse points out to the wonderful process of embryo gestation in the mother’s womb and different states of creation which appear one after another in that secure place that up until very recently remained hidden from our eyes and beyond the reach of human interference.

It says:

“Then We created of the sperm a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh...”

The stage of being a sperm and these four subsequent stages comprise five stages of development of the human embryo. Each stage itself is so wonderful that in the field of embryology it has been the subject of a great deal of research and opinion and many good books have been written about it.

What is even more amazing than the actual stages of the development of the fetus in the womb is the fact that the Holy Qur’an had mentioned these different stages and marvels of embryonic development when the science of embryology did not yet exist and intimate knowledge of the human body was primitive to say the least.

The verse mentions the last and the most important stage of human creation with a meaningful phrase:

“...thereafter We produced it as another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators!”

Blessed be that Unique Power that draws such an unprecedented and marvelous picture with a drop of liquid in the dark room of the womb.

Blessed be that Knowledge and Wisdom that creates all those talents, capabilities and potentials in such an apparently insignificant creature. Glorified be Him (s.w.t.) for His unique creation.

Also we must be aware that the Arabic word /xaliq/ is derived from the word /xalq/, which originally means measuring. When a piece of leather is measured for cutting, an Arab speaker would use the word /xalq/. Since in creation the issue of measurement is more important than anything else, the word /xalq/ has been used to refer to it.

The usage of the phrase ‘the Best of the creators’ raises the question: Is there another creator other than Allah?

Some of interpreters have offered different justifications for this verse, but these explanations are not necessary. The word /xalq/, meaning measurement and creation, is true for beings other than Allah, but Allah's creating is different from the creation accomplished by others in many respects.

Allah creates the substance and the form of things, while if man intends to create something, he can only give a new form to it using the existing materials of this world as its substance. For example, he can build a house with brick and wood and produce a car with iron and steel.

Another difference is that Allah's creations are unlimited in number;

"He is the Creator of all things..."⁸⁹,

but man's creations are very limited. Man, as a creator, often exhibits his deficiencies and weaknesses in the things that he creates which must be corrected and completed during the course of their creation and action. Allah's creations, on the other hand, have no faults and deficiencies within their own parameters.

When man is able to create something, this ability is by Allah's permission and command, for without His permission no leaf can stir on a tree.

We read about Jesus (as) in Sura Al- Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 110:

"...and when you did make of clay (a thing) like the shape of a bird by My permission..."

The Following Points Should Be Noted:

1- The Arabic word /xalq/ is used to describe creation during the five stages of the embryonic development of man in the above mentioned verse. When the process has reached its last stage, however, and a complete and independent being which the verse terms 'another creation' is formed, the Qur'anic word /ansha'a/ is used.

This word, as philologists have said, means 'to create something along with providing its education and training.' This word shows that the last stage is completely different from the previous stages. This is a consequential stage that the Holy Qur'an mentions generally and not in detail.

It says only:

"...thereafter We produced it as another creation..."

and immediately following it the Qur'an says:

"...So blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators".

This final stage is the most important one. This is the stage when the embryo becomes a fully formed

human being and which becomes conscious and can move and feel. In Islamic narrations, this phase is called the phase of 'emoulment', that is the breathing of the soul into the body.

Imam Baqir (as) said:

*"The purpose of Ixalqan 'axarl is the breathing of the soul into the body."*⁹⁰

In this stage, man leaves vegetative life far behind and with a great movement steps into the world of animals and more importantly into the world of humanity. This stage is so far away from the previous one that using the Qur'anic phrase 'thumma khalaqna' would have been inadequate to comment on it, so the phrase 'humma ansha'na' was used.

It is in this stage that man is graced with a special structure that distinguishes him from the rest of creation in the world. It gives him the competence to be the vicegerent of Allah in the earth, a responsibility that the mountains and skies could not bear. Indeed Allah truly deserves the praise,

"...So blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators."

All of the realities of the macrocosm with all its wonders become reflected in the form and content of this 'small body' on its physical completion. In this context, Imam Ali (as) said:

*"Do you suppose that you are only a small body, while the macrocosm is placed within you?"*⁹¹

In other words, you are an exemplar of the world of existence.

2- The writer of the commentary 'fi Zilal' makes an interesting statement in interpreting this verse, he says:

"When the embryo passes the stages where it appears as a blood-clot and as a lump, many of its cells change into bony ones, then gradually they are covered by flesh and muscles. Therefore, the sentence:

"then clothed the bones with flesh"

is a scientific miracle of which no one in the age when the Qur'an was sent down was aware. The Holy Qur'an does not say: We changed the lump into bones and flesh, but it says:

"Then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh."

This indicates that the lump is at first changed into bones and then it is covered by flesh. Therefore, man was ugly, exactly like a skeleton, and thus it became beautiful.

Furthermore, just as garments protect the body, muscles protect the bones.

If there were no muscles, blows landed on the body would constantly hurt the bones or they would easily

break. Moreover, just like a garment protects the human body against heat and cold, the flesh protects the bones, the real pillars of body. These all show how precisely the Holy Qur'an chooses its sentences and phrases."

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verses 15–16

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لَمَيِّتُونَ

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تُبْعَثُونَ

15. "Then verily after that you shall die."

16. "Then verily on the Day of Resurrection you will be raised, (again)."

In these verses Allah shows us that death is certain and definite. Here it will be appropriate to mention a part of one of the sermons of Imam Ali (as) on this subject:

"If there was anyone who could secure a ladder to everlasting life or a way to avoid death it was Sulayman ibn Dawud (as) who was given control over the jinn and men along with prophethood and a great position (before Allah).

*But when he finished what was his due in sustenance (in this world) and exhausted his time, the bow of destruction shot him with the arrow of death."*⁹²

The previous holy verse had mentioned the stages of the development of man for which Allah admired Himself. These two verses talk about the final stages of perfection after death. After touching on the subject of monotheism and the origin of man, the issue of resurrection is mentioned in a very delicate and beautiful way.

The verse implies that man, with all his marvels and wonders, cannot live eternally in this world and a time must come when this marvelous structure will fall apart. So, the verse says:

"Then verily after that you shall die."

Some Narrations On Death

1) The Prophet (S) said:

*"Death is like a bunch of fragrant flowers for the believer."*⁹³

2) The Prophet (S) said:

*"How beneficial is death for those who have made faith and piety the practice of their hearts."*⁹⁴

3) Imam Ali (as) said:

*"Death is the cause of tranquility for the prosperous."*⁹⁵

4) Imam Hadi (as) said;

*"Remember when you will be lying on the bed of death before your household and neither can any physician prevent your death nor can any friend help you."*⁹⁶

5) The Prophet (S) said:

*"Unexpected death is a relief for the believers and a wrath for the unbelievers."*⁹⁷

The next verse means that death is not destruction but a stage of perfection. Therefore, in order to neutralize the idea that when a person dies, (and therefore, everything ends which would make the magnificence of his creation pointless,) Allah immediately says afterwards:

"Then verily on the Day of Resurrection you will be raised (again)."

It is interesting that in the above-mentioned verses, the same reason that is used to prove the veracity of the Resurrection as has been applied at the beginning of Holy Sura Al-Hajj No. 22, 98 is also used to prove the existence of Allah, His power and His grandeur.

They all begin with citing the various stages of human creation in the world of the embryo and after that they progress to the subject of the Resurrection.

Allah's grandeur can be acknowledged in the mystery of man's creation, his transformation in the hidden sanctuary of the womb, where he is given a form and shape as if a group of skilful painters, craftsmen and skilled geniuses sat around this drop of mingled sperm and egg water and worked day and night to ever so delicately, lead this tiny, insignificant particle through the various stages and passages of life in a very short time.

If we could film the entire process of an embryo's development, we might be able to understand what wonders and marvels are hidden in this phenomenon.

The extraordinary advancement of embryology in our age and the ever-increasing research of scientists upon this matter, plus their experiences in laboratories, have revealed many things. When man sees the result of these researches, he would involuntarily whisper the Qur'anic words which says:

"So blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators."⁹⁹

The successive creations, on the other hand, that come into existence and find new forms every day, and the creation of man from a small mingled drop of water all basically express Allah's power over the matter and support the fact of His power to resurrect man and bring him back to a new life.

Thus, by expressing one reason, two aims are achieved, proof for the divine power of Allah and proof for the existence of the Resurrection.

Some Traditions Concerning the Day of Resurrection

1) Once Imam Ali (as) went to the market of Basrah and saw that people were so engaged in transactions that it seemed that they had forgotten themselves and had ignored human goals. When he saw this, he was so deeply affected that he wept heavily.

Then, addressing those people said:

*“O’ slaves of the world and agents of the people of the world! you who are busy with business and swearing during the day and sleep at nights on your beds ignorantly and forgetting the Day of Resurrection and Reckoning! when will you make yourselves prepared for the journey that is in the near future? Have you taken provisions for it? When do you ponder over the Day of Resurrection and think about the Hereafter?”*¹⁰⁰

2) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“Verily the first things that a servant will be asked about before Allah (Glory be to His Majesty) on the Day of Resurrection are as follows:

1– The obligatory ritual prayers

2– The obligatory alms–tax on possessions

3– The obligatory fasts

4– The obligatory Hajj pilgrimage

5– The friendship and guardianship of us, Ahl-ul-Bayt (the Prophet's family)

*If the servant acknowledges our guardianship at the time of his departure and dies while believing in our guardianship, his ritual prayer, alms–tax, fasting and pilgrimage will be accepted (of course, if they were done correctly). ”*¹⁰¹

3) Somebody asked Imam Ali (as) that how Allah reckons the deeds of people while they are so many?

He said:

*“Just as He provides for them their sustenance in their numbers.”*¹⁰²

4) The Prophet (S) said:

*“Be aware that you are living in a day that is the day of deeds and not the Day of Reckoning. Wait for the day that is the Day of Reckoning and on that Day there will be no deed (that you can do).”*¹⁰³

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verse 17

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعَ طَرَائِقَ وَمَا كُنَّا عَنِ الْخَلْقِ غَافِلِينَ

17. “And We have created above you seven paths, and We are never unmindful of (Our) creation.”

Perhaps the objective of the Arabic word /tara'iq/ here is the paths of the angels or the paths and orbits of the planets. Maybe its purpose is the seven heavens that are linked to each other.

The previous verses brought up the creation of man while this verse is about the creation of the skies. After mentioning the signs in the microcosm, which are the signs of Allah's grandeur in the entities of our beings, the Holy Qur'an now proceeds to touch upon the signs in the macrocosm and reflects upon the grandeur of creation in the heavens and the earth.

First, it says:

“And We have created above you seven paths, ..”

The Arabic word /tara'iq/ is the plural form of the word /tariqah/, which means a path or a level. If we take the first meaning into consideration, the content of the verse would mean that Allah has created above us seven paths.

Perhaps these paths are for the coming and going of the angels, or they are the orbits of the planets. If we take the second meaning into consideration, the holy verse would mean that Allah has created above us seven levels i.e., seven heavens.

We have already spoken at length on this topic. What is important to note here is that if we take the number seven as symbolic of numerousness, thus the noble verse will mean that there are countless universes, planets and stars above us.

We must not confuse the meaning of the word /tariqah/ as an orbit with the Ptolemaic system of the universe in which the planetary spheres lie above each other like the layers of an onion.

We must not imagine that the Holy Qur'an is based upon this wrong theory. Paths and levels indicate other worlds located within different distances away from our world, and in proportion to us, each one is located above the other, some are near and others far.

If we interpret the number seven literally, it would mean that with the exception of this universe (this realm of planets, stars and galaxies) that we can observe, there are six universes above it to which human knowledge has yet to attain.

When we look carefully at the map of the solar system and the location of the planets, we can find another interpretation for this verse.

Two of the nine planets orbiting the sun, that is, the orbits of the two planets, Mercury and Venus, are below the orbit of the earth, i.e., they are closer to the sun, while the orbits of the other six planets are above that of the earth and as such, they are like levels placed one above the other.

When we add the orbit of the moon around the earth to that number, the seven orbits or levels become complete.

The expanse and grandeur number of the heavenly bodies and their paths may give the illusion that Allah could never be aware of all of them, so immediately at the end of the verse the Qur'an says:

“...and We are never unmindful of (Our) creation.”

The emphasis on the word ‘creation’ here indicates that creation is in itself an expression of Allah’s knowledge and mindfulness. Can the Creator be possibly unmindful of His creation?

There is another probable interpretation of this verse and that is that He created many paths for the angels above us, He is not ignorant of us, and His angels also observe and watch our deeds.

Allah is both the Creator and the Observer. The universe is Allah’s presence.

Surah al-Mu’minun – Verse 18

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَسْكَنَّاهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ ذَهَابٍ بِهِ لَقَادِرُونَ

18. “And We sent down water from the sky in measure, and We lodged it in the earth, and verily We are able to take it away”

Allah is equally able to grant and remove His blessings. Like each item of His creation, every drop of rain has been determined and it is not an aimless natural phenomenon without a plan.

(“...in measure...”)

Rain is counted as one of the Divine blessings bestowed from sky upon the earth and is mentioned in this noble verse as another manifestation of Allah’s power. The verse says:

“And We sent down water from the sky in measure, ..”

The water of rain usually is not so abundant that it would cause floods, nor is it so scanty that it would not be able to adequately satisfy plants and animals.

After the heavens from which life giving water descends, the earth is the next source of life upon which all living creatures depend and is one of the most important blessings of Allah. Then, the verse refers to a more important issue in this connection which is the storage of water in the ground.

The verse continues saying:

“...and We lodged it in the earth, and verily We are able to take it away”

We know that the outward crust of the earth consists of two layers: the permeable and the impermeable. If all of the earth's crust were permeable, water from rains, even from the long continued rains, would immediately seep into the depths of the earth and everywhere would remain dry.

If the entire crust were impermeable like mud or clay, all the water would remain on the surface of the earth and could become contaminated and malodorous, becoming a source of death and sickness instead of being a source of life.

However, the great and beneficent Allah has made the upper layer permeable and the lower layer impermeable, so that the water can go into the earth and be contained by the impermeable layer. Later the water, unpolluted and pure, would become available as springs, wells and subterranean canals.

The refreshing and wholesome water we obtain from deep wells and consume is possibly the result of rains that had fallen many years ago and had been saved underground without pollution for today's use.

However, He Who has created man to live on this earth and has simply made water the most important element for his survival, has also created many important means to collect and safeguard it even before the appearance of man.

Some of these reserves of water are on high mountains in the form of snow and ice. They melt every year and flow down as streams and rivers, and sometimes they remain for hundreds or thousands years on mountaintops until the commandment for them to descend is issued thus irrigating the dry lands.

However, the word 'fi' (within) in the Qur'anic phrase /fil'ard / (within the ground), points to the possibility that the verse indicates underground sources of water, not sources that are above the ground.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 19

فَأَنشَأْنَا لَكُمْ بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ لَّكُمْ فِيهَا فَوَاقٍ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ

19. “Then We produced for you therewith gardens of date palms and grapes, wherein is much fruit for you and whereof you eat;”

Plants and trees are created for human use. Among the fruits, some of them, like the date and the grape are special. The Wise Allah, of course, by providing us with fruits from the soil, has supplied man with his material needs.

Therefore, after mentioning rain, this abundant blessing, the Qur'an continues by enumerating the results of rainfall in this noble verse:

“Then We produced for you therewith gardens of date palms and grapes, wherein is much fruit for you and whereof you eat;”

Dates and grapes are not the only products of cultivation for there are many other fruits and plants cultivated in gardens, but they are among the most valuable of them.

The Qur'anic sentence /wa minha ta'kulun/,

(“...and whereof you eat;”),

probably indicates that the products of these gardens include fruits that are both edible, as a part of it, and other things that are inedible.

Plants (including palm gardens) have often manifold uses for human life; their leaves are used to make carpets and sometimes garments, or used for forage, their wood is used to build houses and for fuel, and the leaves, fruits and the roots of some of trees are used to make medicines.

Fakhr-i-Razi has said in his commentary that the probable purpose of the sentence ‘minha ta'kulun’ is that our lives and provisions are determined by these gardens, just as we say that such and such person lives by doing such and such a job.

It is also worth mentioning that in the verses above, the origin of man's life is the sperm drop and the origin of plant life is rain. In fact, these two distinguished examples of life are both originated from water. Allah's law is one and covers all things.

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verse 20

وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ طُورِ سَيْنَاءَ تَنْبُتُ بِالذُّهْنِ صَبِغٍ لِلْأَكْلِينَ

20. “And a tree springing out of Mount Sinai, which produces oil and seasoning for those who eat.”

Every climatic and geographical area is suitable for a special type of vegetation,

“...a tree springing out of Mount Sinai...”

Some places are spiritually and materially blessed. Mount Sinai, for example, is the place where Divine revelation had descended and where the olive tree grows, the oil of which is a Divine blessing.

The verse refers to a blessed tree, the olive that grows because of this very rain. It implies that in addition to gardens of date palm, grapevines and other fruits, Allah has created a tree that grows on Mount Sinai.

The verse says:

“And a tree springing out of Mount Sinai, which produces oil and seasoning for those who eat.”

The interpreters of the Qur'an suggest two probabilities why Mount Sinai is mentioned:

1) It refers to Mount Sinai itself in the desert of Sinai. The Holy Qur'an has described the olive tree as a tree that grows on Mount Sinai because when the Arabs of Hijaz traveled through the dry deserts of this area going towards the north, the first area where they saw the olive tree laden with fruit was on Mount Sinai, which is in the south of the Sinai desert. Studying a map makes this matter quite obvious.

2) Mount Sinai (Tur) is a descriptive word meaning a 'blessed, wooded or scenic mountain' (for 'Tur' means mountain and 'Sina' means blessed, scenic and full of tree)

The Arabic word /sibq/ originally means colour, but since when man eats his bread with a sauce he usually makes it colourful, all kinds of loaves of bread eaten with sauce have been called /sibq/.

Anyway, the word /sibq/ may refer to the very olive oil that is eaten with bread and to all kinds of bread whose sauce is made from other plants.

The question that comes up here is why among all the various kinds of fruit the emphasis is especially placed on these three fruits: date, grape and olive?

When we look at the research done by nutritionists, we see that there are few fruits as beneficial and effective for the human body as these three fruits are.

Olive oil is very valuable for the metabolism of the body. It is high in calories and beneficial for the liver. It removes illnesses of the kidneys, is good for gallstones, and renal colic. It strengthens the nerves and is the elixir of health.

There are so many beneficial effects of the date that we can only mention some of them briefly here. Nutritionists say that the date is abundant in sugar, which is one of the healthiest sugars available. Eating dates can prevent cancer and scientists have discovered thirteen vital materials and five vitamins in it,

which make it a very valuable source of nutrition.

In the opinion of some scientists the grape is a natural pharmacy. It has properties like those of milk, it produces twice as much heat in the body as meat. It refines the blood. It removes poisons from the body and its various vitamins give power and strength to the body.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 21-22

وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً نُسْقِيكُمْ مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهَا وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ

وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ

21. “And verily there is a lesson for you in the cattle. We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies, and you have many benefits in them, and of them you eat.”

22. “And on them, and on the ships, advantages you are carried.”

Quadrupeds are created for the use of man. They provide us with milk, meat, and transport. These benefits, which are a part of their effects, also encourage the development of dairy, leather, meat, weaving industries and also providing job opportunities for millions of people.

Thus, after mentioning the blessing of plants that grow because of the beneficial rain, Allah turns our attention to the animals that thrive because they feed on these plants as an important part of His blessings and favours to man, where it says:

“And verily there is a lesson for you in the cattle...”

Then the Holy Qur'an explains this sentence, where it says:

“... We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies...”

Yes, refreshing milk! This perfect and strengthening food is produced from the body of an animal from its blood and the like. It is truly amazing how Allah could produce such a pleasant and wholesome drink from such a thing.

But the lesson and blessings of animals are not solely confined to milk, they have other benefits for human beings as well:

“...and you have many benefits in them, and of them you eat.”

In addition to meat, which, as a source of protein, is a major source of nutrition necessary for the body when used in moderation, animals also produce leather, which is used for making different kinds of garments and durable materials.

Various types of clothing, carpets and covers are made from wool. Some of the limbs of animals are sometimes used to make medicines. Even their feces are used to make fertilizers for trees and are important in farming.

In the next verse, animals are introduced as easy-paced vehicles of man for traveling on land just as ships are used for traveling on the sea. The verse says:

“And on them, and on the ships, advantages you are carried.”

These are all the benefits and advantages of animals that accrue to man which are indeed a lesson for him to take heed. They make us become familiar with the Creator of all these blessings and encourage within us the sense of gratitude towards Him.

However, why did Allah put animals and ships on the same level? If we study this matter carefully its answer is clear: Man needs vehicles to travel everywhere on the earth. Beside those vehicles for land, Allah also mentions marine vehicles or ships. In actual fact, this sentence is like what was said about the blessings of the children of Adam in verse seven of Sura 'Isra':

“...We carried them on the land and the sea...”

Therefore, we must not trifle with the role of ships in transportation.

“...and on the ships you are carried”.

Some Traditions Upon Milk

1. The holy Prophet (S) said:

*“Verily Allah did not appoint any sickness but he appointed a healing for it. Then behold of the milk of cow which is better than any tree.”*¹⁰⁴

2. The holy Prophet (S) said:

*“Behold of the milk of cow which is better than any tree, and it is the healing of every sickness.”*¹⁰⁵

3. The holy Prophet said:

*“Behold of the milk of cow since verily it is a medicine and its oil is a healing, and avoid of its meat since it is sickness.”*¹⁰⁶

4. Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

*"The pap of milk (made of ground rice, milk and sugar) is a healing for every sickness save death."*¹⁰⁷

5. 'Isma'il-ibn-Muslim narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

*"The Messenger of Allah (S) prohibited mixing water with milk when selling it."*¹⁰⁸

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1. Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 183
 2. Sura Ta Ha, No. 20, verse 64
 3. Sura Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 77
 4. Sura Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 8
 5. Sura Al-Hashr, No. 59, verse 9
 6. Sura Al-Mujadala, No. 58, verse 22
 7. Sura Al-Anfal, No. 8, verse 45
 8. Sura Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 100
 9. Sura Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 35
 10. Sura An-Nur, No. 24, verse 31
 11. Qurar-ul-Hikam, 8357, 2309
 12. Ibid
 13. Al-Durr-ul-Manthur, Vol. 2, p. 724
 14. Nahj ul-Balaqah, sermon 5
 15. Safi, The Commentary, Vol. 3, p.393
 16. Safi and majma'-ul-Bayan, The Commentary
 17. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol. 7, p. 526
 18. Tuhaf-ul-'Uqul, p. 600
 19. Muntakhab-ul-Qurar, p. 466
 20. Qurar-ul-Hikam, Vol. 2, p. 695
 21. Mustadrak-ul-Wasa'il, Vol. 1, p. 10
 22. Sura Al-Qassas, No. 28, verses 52-55
 23. Saduq's Amali, 28, 4
 24. Al-Bihar, 74, 167, 32
 25. Al-'Ikhtisas, 230
 26. Al-Bihar, 78, 204, 042
 27. Al-Bihar, 92, 294, 6
 28. Tuhaf ul-'Uqul, 218
 29. Tanbih-ul-Khawatir, 116, 2
 30. Qurar-ul-Hikam, 5290, 1982
 31. Al-Bihar, 78, 92, 101
 32. Saduq's 'Amaly, 4, 28
 33. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 77, p. 407
 34. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 68, p. 386
 35. Kitab-ul-Imam-us-Sadiq, Asad Heydar, Vol. 44, p. 361
 36. Al-Mustatraf, Vol. 1, p.9
 37. Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 6, p. 15
 38. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 6, p. 527, No. 16837

39. Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 6, p. 6
40. Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 6, p. 40
41. 'Ihtijaj, 99
42. Rawzat ul-Wa'izin, 418
43. Bihar, Vol. 93, p. 14
44. Bihar, Vol. 93, p. 11
45. Bihar, Vol. 96, p. 22
46. Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 183
47. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 93, p. 14
48. Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 6, p. 14
49. Mizan ul-Hikmah, Vol. 4, p. 221
50. Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 6, p. 36
51. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 96, p. 56
52. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 96, p. 66
53. Refer to the famous history by Will Durant
54. Kafi, Ma'ani ul- Akhbar
55. Kafi, and Al-Mahasin
56. Kafi, Vol. 3
57. Kafi, Vol. 3
58. Imam Khomeyni, may his spirit be sanctified, has said that the Islamic Republic is a Divine trust
59. Burhan; the Commentary, Vol. 1, p. 380
60. Sura An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 58
61. Burhan, the Commenyary, Vol. 1, p. 380
62. Sura An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 91
63. Bihar, Vol. 77, p. 273
64. Qurar ul-Hikam, 2905-2906
65. Al-Bihar, 77, 208, 1
66. 'Amali us-Saduq 350 / 1
67. Al-Bihar, 75, 172, 13
68. Qurar ul-Hikam, 7932, 1582, 4053, 2083
69. Kafi, Vol. 3
70. Majma' ul-Bayan, Vol. 124, p. 141
71. Ibid
72. Ibid
73. Kanzul-'Ummal, Vol. 7, tradition No. 18931, and Majma' ul-Bayan, following verse 14 of Sura Hud, No. 11
74. Durr ul Manthur, The Commentary
75. Mizan ul-Hikmah, Vol. 2, No. 2520
76. Yuhaf ul-'Uqul, 281, No. 2521
77. Qurar ul-Hikam, No. 2522
78. Ibid, No. 2523
79. Ibid, No. 2524
80. Ibid, No. 2525
81. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 14, p. 893
82. Tawhid Saduq, p. 29
83. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 1, p. 79
84. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 14, p. 455
85. Tawhid Saduq, p. 29
86. Tawhid Saduq, p. 27

87. Thwab ul'A'mal, Vol. 3, p. 262
88. Kanz ul-'Ummal, 43776-43777
89. Sura Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 16
90. Nur uth-Thaqalayn, The Commentary
91. Diwan, by Qutb-ud-Din Abul-Hassan Muhammad Beyhaqy Neyshabury Keydary, a scholar in the 6th century A.H His Diwan is translated by Dr. Abul-Qasim Imamy. P.236
92. Nahj ul Balaghah, Sermon 182
93. Kanz ul-'Ummal, tradition No. 42355
94. Ibid
95. Qurar ul-Hikam, p. 6502
96. Al-Bihar, 78/370/4
97. Kanz ul-'Ummal, tradition No. 42775
98. vs. 5-7
99. The current Sura, verse 14
100. Safinat ul-Bihar, Vol. 1, part: 'The Market'
101. Bihar, Vol. 83, p. 10
102. Bihar, Vol. 7, p. 271
103. Bihar, Vol. 77, p. 127
104. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 10, p. 30
105. Ibid
106. Ibid
107. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 3, p. 63
108. Man la yahduruhul-Faqih, Vol. 3, p. 372

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