

Surah 31
Luqman

Makkan¹



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] Alif. Lam. Mim.

الم ﴿١﴾

[2] These are verses of the Wise Book.

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿٢﴾

[3] A guidance and a mercy for those who excel (in good deeds).²

هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٣﴾

[4] Those who offer the Prayers (correctly and spiritedly), give the Zakah and, they – in the Hereafter – they have sure faith.

الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾

[5] They are on a guidance from their Lord;³ and they, they indeed, are the prosperers.

أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥﴾

[6] And, of the people is one⁴ who purchases idle discourse⁵ to lead astray from the path of Allah⁶ – without knowledge⁷ – and to treat it in mockery. They, for them is a humiliating chastisement.⁸

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿٦﴾

1. Qatadah has said that except for two verses 27 and 28, the rest of the *Surah* is Makkan. Ibn `Abbas however said that three of its verses are not Makkan (Qurtubi).

2. The “*muhsinin*” of the text has been explained in the verse itself with words that follow: “those who offer the Prayers (assiduously), give the *Zakah*” (Zamakhshari).

3. That is, on a path that is plain, clear, unambiguous and entirely satisfying to the mind, heart and soul (Au.).

4. It is reported by most classical commentators that the allusion is to Nadr b. al-Harith who, in the words of Majid, “brought from abroad the romance of Persian heroes, allured to them the crowds of the Quraish

and persuaded them to think that his stories were preferable to the word of God.” But, Asad warns, the allusion is not to a specific person but rather “describes a type of mentality and has, therefore, a general import.”

5. The textual “*shira`*” (purchase) is not in its literal sense but rather its preference over the truth; as for example, Allah (*swt*) said about those who preferred error over guidance, as those who purchased error. He said (2: 16),

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالََةَ بِالْهَدَىٰ (البقرة - ١٦)

“They are the ones who purchased error in exchange of guidance” (Qurtubi).

“Idle discourse” is not a very accurate rendition of the textual phrase “*lahwatu l hadith*.” It has been widely reported of Ibn Mas`ud that he emphatically explained it as alluding to songs and music. Ibn `Abbas and his students agreed with Ibn Mas`ud’s interpretation but added that all such instruments are included that cause distraction to the soul (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Hasan al-Busri specifically mentioned music as covered in the disapproval (Ibn Kathir). A narrative in this connection however, of `Abdullah ibn `Umar does not reach trustworthy status. It reports Nafi` as

saying, “I was with `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud when he passed by someone playing on a flute. He cut across the path, pressed his fingers against his ears and kept asking me, ‘Nafi`. Do you still hear?’ When I said no, he removed his fingers and said, ‘This is how I saw the Prophet do.’” Abu Da`ud and `Iraqi have both distrusted the report (Shawkani: S.Ibrahīm).

There is another report however which comes down on the authority of `Abdul Rahman ibn `Awf. It is of Hasan status. (It is in Tirmidhi: S. Ibrahīm) the Prophet (*saws*) said,

”كُفِّتُ عَنْ صَوْتَيْنِ أَمَقَّيْنِ فَاجْرَيْنِ: صَوْتِ عِنْدِ مُصِيبَةٍ حَمَشٍ وَجُوهٍ وَشَقِّ جُيُوبٍ وَرَنَةِ شَيْطَانٍ“
(الترمذي)

“I have forbidden the voice of two idiotic perverts: A senseless voice accompanied by music, and the mourning-voice at a misfortune accompanied by scratching of the face, tearing of the clothes and devilish screams” (Shawkani).

A shorter version of this *hadith* has been declared by Haythami in his Zawa'id as having a reliable chain (Au.).

In general, all that diverts one’s attention from the useful to the useless such as: nightly-gossips, flying anec-

dotes, talks centered around imaginary incidents or fictitious legends, jokes, songs and music, is covered in the term “*lahwatu l hadith*” (Zamakhshari); unless, of course, they remain within tolerable limits of occasional indulgence (Au.).

In this connection there is a report coming through Abu Umamah al-Bahili. The Prophet said,

لَا تَبِيعُوا الْقَيْنَاتِ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوهُنَّ وَلَا تَعْلَمُوهُنَّ وَلَا خَيْرَ
فِي تِجَارَةٍ فِيهِنَّ وَمَنْهُنَّ حَرَامٌ فِي مِثْلِ هَذَا أَنْزَلْتُ هَذِهِ
الْآيَةَ وَمَنْ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْتَرِي هُوَ الْحَدِيثُ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِلَى آخِرِ الْآيَةِ

“Do not buy or sell (female) singers nor teach them (music), there is no good in trading them, and the profit thereof is unlawful. It is about them that Allah revealed, “Of the people is one who purchases idle tales to lead astray from the path of Allah” (Ibn Jarir).

The report as in Tirmidhi, was declared weak by him (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Bukhari, Nasa'i, Daraqutni and Abu Zur'ah have distrusted one of its narrators (*Tuhfah*) – Au.

Qurtubi lists down opinions of the past scholars about such songs as which included light music (in con-

trast to the kind of music in today's songs, which can be described as heavy music, which are totally unacceptable: Au.). Ibn Mas'ud swore three times that the allusion in this verse is to songs (that include such music: Au.). So thought Ibn 'Umar, 'Ikrimah, Maymun b. Mahran, Mak-hul, Mujahid, Hasan, Qasim b. Muhammad, Malik, and others. But according to Imām Abu Hanifah, Imām Shafe'i, Imām Malik, Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Ibrahīm (Nakha'i), Sha'bi, Hammad, Thawri, and many others it is *Makruh*. Ibn Hanbal was asked about a singer slave-girl left to a boy in inheritance, whether she could be sold off to meet the child's expenses. He replied that she could be sold, but not as a singer, even if that fetched a higher price. Qaffal has said that the testimony of a person given to songs and music may not be accepted. That applies to singers and musicians. Imām Malik in fact had learnt to play music in his younger days. But when he grew up his mother admonished him against it and so he gave up and took to studying Islamic disciplines. In sum, writes Qurtubi, the kind of song that motivates to what has been declared unlawful in Islam, is unlawful by consensus. However, that which does not, is lawful in small measures,

on occasions, to effect a change in mood or remove boredom. We have examples of simple songs to the accompaniment of a drum sung before the Prophet: (a) when he allowed `A'isha to watch a group of dancers perform in the yard of his mosque, (b) when some girls sang on the occasion of `Eid, [when Abu Bakr reproached them, the Prophet interrupted to say, "Let them alone, Abu Bakr. This is our `Eid"], (c) when the Companions sang at the time of the mosque construction, or (d) when the Trench was being dug. So also, simple kind of musical instruments such as a *tablah* or drum are allowable if played once in a while. It is engrossment in these pastimes that is disapproved of. Also disallowed to males are songs sung by *ghayr mahram* women. This was the opinion of Imām Shafe`i.

Mufti Shafi` adds a *hadith* which comes from Abu Da'ud, Ibn Majah (whose commentators declared it weak), as well as from Ibn Hibban's *Sahih* (which makes it trustworthy). The Prophet said,

عَنْ أَبِي مَالِكٍ الْأَشْعَرِيِّ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "لَيَشْرَبَنَّ نَاسٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي الْخَمْرَ. يُسَمُّوتُهَا بِغَيْرِ اسْمِهَا. يَعْرِفُ عَلَى رُءُوسِهِمْ بِالْمَعَازِفِ وَالْمُعَنِّيَاتِ، يَحْسِفُ اللَّهُ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضَ. وَيَجْعَلُ مِنْهُمْ الْقِرَدَةَ وَالْخَنَازِيرَ" — (ابن ماجه)

"Surely some of my followers will give wine a different name and drink it; and female singers will sing for them to the tunes of music. Allah will sink them into the earth and transform some of them into monkeys and pigs."

6. According to Ibn `Abbas, recitation of the Qur`ān and similar other devotional activities constitute the path of Allah.

7. That is, in his extreme ignorance he does not realize that his indulgence in songs, music, and other such activities divert him off Allah's path (Ibn Jarir).

8. "Humiliating chastisement," because he did not treat Allah's revelations with the care and respect that was due to them (Ibn Kathir).

[7] When Our verses are recited to such a one, he turns away in arrogance, as though he did not hear them: as though there is heaviness in his ears. So, give him the glad tiding of a painful chastisement.⁹

وَإِذَا تُنْذِرَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا وَلَّى مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَأَن لَّمْ يَسْمَعْهَا كَأَن فِي أُذُنِهِ وَقْرًا فَبَسَّرَهُ بَعْدَآبِ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٧﴾

[8] Surely, those who believed and did righteous works, for them are gardens of bliss.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٨﴾

[9] Abiding therein forever. Allah's promise is true; and He is the Al-mighty, the All-wise.¹⁰

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ حَقًّا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٩﴾

[10] He created the heavens without any pillars that you can see;¹¹ and cast into the earth pegs¹² lest it should quake with you.¹³ And He scattered therein all kinds of animals. And We¹⁴ sent down out of sky water and made grow therein every noble species.¹⁵

خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا وَأَلْقَى فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] This is the creation of Allah. So, show me what those other than Him have created. Nay, but the transgressors are in manifest error.

هَذَا خَلْقُ اللَّهِ فَأَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ بَلِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿١١﴾

9. "Painful punishment," because he used to be pained at hearing the revelations of Allah (Ibn Kathir).

10. Asad paraphrases Imām Razi's comments: "Commenting on the above three verses, Razi points out, firstly, that the deliberate contrast between the plural in the promise of 'gardens (*jannat*) of bliss' and the singular in that of 'suffering' (*'adhab*) is meant to show that God's grace surpasses His wrath .. and, secondly, that the use of the expression

'to abide therein' in connection with the mention of paradise only, and not with that of otherworldly suffering (or hell), is an indication that whereas the enjoyment of the former will be unlimited in duration, suffering in what is described as 'hell' will be limited."

11. That is, there are pillars but you cannot see them: Ibn 'Abbas, 'Ikrimah, Mujahid, Qatadah and others (Ibn Jarir). See *Surah al-Ra'd*, note 4 for further explanation.

[12] Indeed We gave Luqman¹⁶ wisdom:¹⁷
 'Give thanks to Allah. Whosoever gives thanks,
 gives thanks only to his own self, while he who
 is ungrateful, (may know that) verily Allah is
 free of wants, the Praiseworthy.'¹⁸

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِلَّهِ
 وَمَنْ يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ
 فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿١٢﴾

12. That is, mountains that have been rooted into the earth, just like pegs - a geological fact unknown until some fifty years ago (Au.).

13. They help avoid convulsions in the outer crust (what is known as the Lithosphere) surrounding the inner layers of the earth (Au.).

14. The change from singular to plural is striking. Asad comments: "This is another of the Qur'ānic instances where the personal pronoun relating to God is suddenly changed – in this instance from 'He' to 'We' – in order to indicate that God, being infinite, cannot be circumscribed by any pronoun applicable to created, finite beings, and that the use of such pronouns with reference to Him is no more than a concession to the limited nature of every human language."

15. Yusuf Ali thinks that the words could be referring to the sex life in plants.

16. Majid comments: "Luqman, who may or may not be identified with Aesop of the Greeks was a sage

very 'well known to the Arabs.' 'Lukman was already known in the pagan period as a sage. His wisdom is celebrated in pre-Muslim poets ... Lukman's wisdom forms the transition from *Jahiliyyah* to the Qur'ān (EI)."

Luqman and his Wisdom:

Yusuf Ali rules out the possibility of identifying Luqman with the Greek Aesop.

Mawdudi adds: "Luqman was well known as a wise and learned man in Arabia. He has been mentioned in the poetry of the pre-Islamic poets like Imra'ul Qays, Lab id, A'shi, Tarafah and others. According to traditions, some three years before the Prophet's migration to Madinah, Suwayd b. Samit visited Makkah for pilgrimage. When the Prophet heard of him, he met him and invited him to Islam. Suwayd told him, 'Perhaps I have something similar to what you have.' The Prophet asked him what it was and he replied, 'Luqman's rolls.' Then he read out a few pieces to him. The Prophet said, 'It sounds good. But what I have is better.' When he

read out the Qur'ān to him, Suwayd admitted that it was indeed better.”

A few lines down, Mawdudi presents us another example of honest Western scholarship. He writes: “The Arabic manuscript from the Library of Paris, which the Orientalist Derenboourg has published under the title *Amthal Luqman (al-)Hakim (Fable De Loqman Le Sage)* is a fabrication which has nothing to do with the Roll of Luqman. These fables were compiled by someone in the 13th century C.E. Its Arabic is poor, and perusal shows that it is in fact translation into Arabic from another language. The Orientalists conduct such research with special objective in view. It is in order to prove that the narrations of the Qur'ān are no more than legends and therefore unreliable. Anyone who reads B. Heller's article on Luqman in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* will not fail to understand the real motives of these people.”

Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, Sa'id b. al-Musayyib and many others thought that Luqman was an Israeli, a carpenter or a shepherd, large-footed, thick-lipped, flat-nosed, black man from the Egyptian part of Sudan (Ibn Jarir).

Although we do not know how authentic, but a few stories are attributed to Luqman's wisdom. One of them, mentioned by Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir, reports that his master instructed him to cut a goat and bring him two of its best parts. He brought him the tongue and the heart. Another time his master told him to slaughter a goat and bring back two of its worst parts. Luqman again took to him the tongue and the heart. When asked he explained that the tongue and the heart can be the best parts of a body, or its worst, depending upon how they are used.

It is said that Sa'id b. al-Musayyib told a black man: “Do not be rueful because of your dark color. Three of the best men ever were black: Bilal, Mahja' ('Umar's freed slave) and Luqman” (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi and others).

Perhaps he had non-Prophets in his mind for, Musa (*asws*) was also dark (Au.).

17. That is, ‘We gave him a good intellect, understanding and the ability to hold right opinions - all but Prophethood’ (Mujahid: Ibn Jarir).

18. “Hamid” is defined as One who is worthy of praise by Himself, whether He is praised or not (Ibn Jarir).

[13] And when Luqman said to his son, admonishing him, 'O my dear son!¹⁹ Associate not (aught) with Allah. Indeed, association (with Him) is a great wrong.'²⁰

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] And We have charged man²¹ concerning his parents²² - his mother bore him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years²³ - that, 'Be thankful to Me and to your parents.²⁴ Unto Me is your (final) destination.

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَى وَهْنٍ وَفِصَالُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٤﴾

19. The textual "*bunayyah*" is diminutive form (*tasghir*) of "ibni", which the Arabs do to express love and affection (Au.).

20. Majid quotes: "This hatred of idolatry has been found even among the most uncivilized followers of the Prophet. The gorgeous rituals, the gaudy pictures, and the pious fraud which played so large a part in the conversion of the Solavonian nations to Christianity, seems only to have alienated these semi-barbarians. Mahmud the Ghaznavid ... was offered a sum of ten million sterlings if only he would spare the famous idol in the pagoda of Somnat. Avarice is said to have been his besetting fault, but he replied in the memorable words, 'Never shall Mahmud be a merchant of idols,' and broke it into pieces" (Bosworth Smith, op. cit., p. 265).

21. There is a break here between Luqman's admonitions to his son.

Allah's own words have been introduced in between. Yusuf Ali explains why: "Verses 14-15 are not the direct speech of Luqman but flow by way of commentary on his teachings. He was speaking as a father to his son, and he could not very well urge respect for himself and draw the son's attention to the limitations of filial obedience. These verses may be supposed to be general directions flowing from Luqman's teaching to men, and not dictated to his son; though in either case, as Luqman received wisdom from Allah, it is divine principles that are enunciated

22. "The coupling of parents with Himself in so far as the rendering of service is concerned, indicates the extreme importance that filial duty has in Islam" (Majid).

Compare this with the American culture where children as young as four are given call numbers at schools, and instructed to contact the police

[15] But if they strive with you that you should associate with Me what you have no knowledge of,²⁵ then obey them not. However, you bear their company in this world in a goodly way; and follow the way of him who turns to Me.²⁶ Then, unto Me is your return, and I shall declare unto you (all) that you were doing.'

وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ
لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبُهُمَا
فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ
إِلَيَّ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنتُمْ
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

if the parents act tough with them (Au.).

23. That is, a mother's services to, and sacrifices for her child does not end with birth. She suckles him (and rears him) during the weakest phase of its life (Au.).

This present *ayah* and another of the Qur'an are the basis of the opinion that the minimum period of birth of a child after pregnancy is six months. The other *ayah* is of (*Al-Ahqaf* 46: 15),

حَمْلُهُ وَفِصَالُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا (الأحقاف - ١٥)

"And, his carrying and weaning are thirty months" (Ibn Kathir).

The verse is also the basis of the opinion that suckling period, and what it entails of marriage taboos, is two years. That is, a woman giving suck to a child above two years old does not entail foster relationship. Also, according to Abu Hanifah, if the weaning has been earlier than

two years, say a year and a half, and the child is on external food, then too, further suckling does not entail foster relationship (Zamakhshari).

24. Parents hold rights that cross religious considerations. Non-Muslim parents of a Muslim deserve the same care. It is reported of Asma' bint Abi Bakr that she asked the Prophet, "My non-Muslim aunt, (it is thought she was [not an aunt] but a foster mother) is visiting me and seeks to be served. Should I be dutiful to her?" He replied, "Yes." After reporting this, Qurtubi adds the information for our benefit that Asma's mother was not Umm Ruman, the mother of 'A'isha and 'Abdul Rahman.

25. That is, "something which is contrary to thy knowledge that divine qualities are God's alone" (Asad).

26. That is, serve your parents, but when it comes to religious affairs, follow not their ways if they are off

[16] 'O my dear son! If it should be but the weight of a mustard seed, and should be (hidden) in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth.²⁷ Verily, Allah is All-subtle, All-aware.

يَا بُنَيَّ إِن تَكُ مِثْقَالُ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ حَرْدَلٍ
فَتَكُنْ فِي صَحْرَةٍ أَوْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ أَوْ
فِي الْأَرْضِ بِأْتِ بِهَا اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ
خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] O my dear son! Establish the Prayer, enjoin the good, forbid the wrong, and bear in patience whatever befalls you. This indeed is the firmness in the affairs.

يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ
ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] And, turn not your cheek away from the people,²⁸ and walk not through the earth exultantly. Surely, Allah does not approve of any proud boaster.

وَلَا تُصَوِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي
الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ
فَخُورٍ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] Be modest in your walk,²⁹ and lower your voice. Surely, the most unpleasant of voices is the voice of the donkeys.³⁰

وَأَقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاعْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ
إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ
﴿١٩﴾

the track, but rather of those who are devoted to Allah (Au.).

27. Some people have difficulty in understanding how Allah (swt) could know the universe and its contents in every detail. They imagine, like the Greek philosophers, that He has the knowledge of important elements, while minor things take care of themselves. What they fail to realize is that if Allah does not know the minor, He cannot know the major, because the major is composed of the minor. If He does not know an atom, he cannot know a molecule. And if He does not know the molecule, He cannot know the rock. To

know the rock, He has to know the electrons, protons and neutrons, of which it is constituted in the ultimate sense (Au.).

28. That is, do not turn away from the people in arrogance while they are speaking to you. Ibrahim (Nakha'i) however thought the reference is to boastfulness, or being braggart (Ibn Jarir).

29. The allusion is not to a slow-paced walk, but rather, to modesty in gait. It is reported of `Umar that when he walked, he walked fast. The Prophet's own pace has been described as fast, as if he was surging forward or going

down a hill. In contrast, any style of walking that smacks of artificiality is disapproved. `Umar (*ra*) saw someone walking feebly – in the manner of the pseudo pietists. He raised his whip against him and ordered him to walk straight like any normal person (Au.).

`A'isha saw a man walking feebly. She inquired what was wrong with him. She was told that he was one of the reciters of the Qur'ān (so he was trying to appear humble and ascetic). She remarked, "Let him walk properly. `Umar was better at recitation. But when he walked, he walked fast, when he spoke, he spoke aloud, and when he struck (with his whip), he struck hard."

Mawdudi adds: "What is actually meant by this is to reform the state of the self under which a person walks haughtily. Haughtiness and arrogance of a person inevitably manifest themselves in his gait and style of walking, which shows the state of his mind and also the cause of his pride and haughtiness. Wealth, authority, beauty, knowledge, power and such other things cause a man to become proud and vain, and each of these gives him a special style of gait. Contrary to this, manifestation of humility is also the result of one

or the other mental morbid states. Sometimes the hidden conceit of the self of a man takes on the form of ostensible humility, piety and godliness and this is shown by his gait..."

30. In this context Nasa'i has a *hadith* which says,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ صِيَاحَ الدَّيَكَةِ فَاسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ فَإِنَّهَا رَأَتْ مَلَكًا، وَإِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ نَحْيَقَ الْحِمَارِ فَتَعَوَّدُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ فَإِنَّهُ رَأَى شَيْطَانًا". (قال أبو عيسى: هذا حديث حسن صحيح).

"When you hear the cry of a rooster, seek Allah's bounty. But when you hear a donkey braying, seek Allah's protection, for it has seen *Shaytan*."

Others also report this *hadith* (such as Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi: H. Ibrahīm), some of which add the words, "at night" (Ibn Kathir). That is, when such sighting is at night (Au.).

With reference to a few good qualities enjoined by Luqman, Ibn Kathir devoted a few pages to expand upon them, relying primarily on one of the treatise of Ibn Abi al-Dunya. But for a few, the authenticity of the reports could not be traced. We present those that echo quite often in the Islamic literature.

Humbleness

Mu'adh ibn Jabal reported the Prophet as having said,

عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ؛ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: أَلَا أُخْبِرُكَ عَنْ مُلُوكِ الْجَنَّةِ؟ قُلْتُ: بَلَى. قَالَ: رَجُلٌ ضَعِيفٌ، مُسْتَضْعَفٌ، ذُو طَمَرَيْنِ، لَا يُؤْبَهُ لَهُ؛ لَوْ أَقْسَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ لَا بُرَّهُ

“Shall I not inform you about the kings of Paradise?” I said, “Do, Messenger of Allah.” He said, “A weak man in an extremely poor state, in two torn cloaks, whom no one pays any attention, but who (is of such class that), if he swore by Allah, Allah would do as he swore.”

(Ibn Kathir quotes a slightly different version of Anas b. Malik which we could neither trace in Ahmad, nor find out its status. This particular one is from Ibn Majah, and Hasan of status, but available in various forms in several works: Au.).

On Abu Hurayrah's authority,

إِنْ مِنْ مُلُوكِ الْجَنَّةِ مَنْ هُوَ أَشْعَثُ أَغْبَرِ ذُو طَمَرَيْنِ لَا يُؤْبَهُ لَهُ، الَّذِينَ إِذَا اسْتَأْذَنُوا عَلَى الْأَمْرَاءِ لَمْ يُؤْذَنَ لَهُمْ إِذَا خَطَبُوا النِّسَاءَ لَمْ يَنْكَحُوا، وَإِذَا قَالُوا لَمْ يَنْصِتْ لَهُمْ، حَوَائِجُ أَحَدِهِمْ تَتَجَلَّجَلُ فِي صَدْرِهِ، لَوْ قَسَمَ نَوْرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ لَوْسَعَهُمْ (إِبْنُ أَبِي الدُّنْيَا)

“Of the kings of Paradise is one who is of disheveled hair, soiled clothes, who is paid no attention.

If they seek entry into (the company of) the rich, they are denied. If they ask for a girl's hand, they are not given. When they speak, people do not listen to them. The needs of one of them reverberate within their breasts. But, if his Nur is divided between the people on the Day of Judgment, it would suffice them all.”

Popularity

Anas says the Prophet said,

عَنْ أَنَسٍ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أَنَّهُ قَالَ بِحَسَبِ أَمْرٍ مِنَ الشَّرِّ أَنْ يَشَارَ إِلَيْهِ بِالْأَصَابِعِ فِي دِينِهِ أَوْ دُنْيَاهُ إِلَّا مِنْ عَصَمَةِ اللَّهِ. إِنْ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ، وَلَكِنْ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ. (إِبْنُ أَبِي الدُّنْيَا)

“It is enough of an evil for a man – except for he whom Allah saved – that he should be pointed at with the fingers either on account of his worldliness, or on account of his religion. Surely, Allah does not look at your faces, but at your hearts and deeds.”

The above seems to be a combination of two reports (Au.).

Hasan (al-Busri) also narrated a similar narration. When someone told Hasan that people pointed fingers at him also (for his piety), he replied, “The allusion is to innovators and quacks in religion.”

Whenever Ibn Mas`ud found people following him reverentially, he would remark, "By Allah. If you knew what we do behind these closed doors, not two men would follow me." It is said that Ayyub would wear long shirts. When asked the reason he replied, "There was a time when wearing long shirts was a mark of pride. Today it is in wearing short shirts. So I wear long ones."

Thawri has said that the *Salaf* did not approve of such expensive attires which give a man eminence, nor so poor of quality that signal his deep religiousness.

Good Manners

`A'isha reports,

إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ يَدْرِكُ بِحَسَنِ خَلْقِهِ دَرَجَاتٍ قَائِمَ اللَّيْلِ
صَائِمَ النَّهَارِ. (أحمد)

"A believer attains the status of someone who stands long hours in Prayers, and fasts continually, through his good manners alone."

On Abu Hurayra's authority we have a *Sahih* report:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: سُئِلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ أَكْثَرِ مَا يُدْخِلُ النَّاسَ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ: تَقْوَى اللَّهِ
وَحُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ وَسُئِلَ عَنْ أَكْثَرِ مَا يُدْخِلُ النَّاسَ النَّارَ،
قَالَ: الْقَمَمُ وَالْقَرْجُ. (هذا حديثٌ صحيحٌ غريبٌ:
الترمذي).

The Prophet was asked about what would help the people enter Paradise most. He answered, "Allah's fear and good manners." And he was asked about what would push into the Fire most. He answered, "The mouth and the private parts."

Usama b. Shurayk says he was with the Prophet when a number of Bedouins flocked around him covering him from every side. They asked,

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، مَا خَيْرٌ مَّا أُعْطِيَ الْإِنْسَانُ ؟ قَالَ :
خُلُقٌ حَسَنٌ

"Apostle of Allah. What is the best thing that a man can be given?" He replied, "Good conduct."

The *hadith* is in Hakim's Mustadrak, declared trustworthy by Dhahabi (Au.).

Abu Furat reports the Prophet (*saws*) as having said,

مَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ خَلْقَ رَجُلٍ وَلَا خَلْقَهُ فَتَطْعَمَهُ النَّارُ.
(كنز: ابن عساكر)

"Allah will never beautify a man's character and person to ultimately shove him into the Fire."

Haythamiyy did not trust the authenticity of the *hadith* fully (Au.).

Pride

Ibn Mas'ud reported the Prophet (saws),

عن عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَزْدَلٍ مِنْ كِبَرٍ، وَلَا يَدْخُلُ النَّارَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ إِيْمَانٍ" (الترمذي)

"A man with pride equal in weight to a mustard seed will not enter Paradise, nor will anyone enter the Fire who has a mustard-seed worth of faith in his heart."

One of `Ali's sons is reported to have said that never did any amount of pride enter into a heart but an equal amount of intellect and good sense was removed from it.

Anas said that when Abu Bakr admonished us and talked about our origins, one of us would begin to feel filthy about himself. He would say, "He (man) came out twice through the passage of urine."

Abu Hurayrah reported the Prophet (saws),

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَا يَنْظُرُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَى مَنْ جَرَّ إِزَارَهُ بَطْرًا، وَبَيْنَمَا رَجُلٌ يَتَبَخَّرُ فِي حُلَّةٍ تَعْجِبُهُ نَفْسُهُ خَسَفَ اللَّهُ بِهِ الْأَرْضَ فَهُوَ يَتَجَلَجَلُ فِيهَا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ."

"Allah will not look at a man who dragged his clothes (in pride). There was a man strutting boastfully in his two cloaks, mighty pleased with himself, when Allah sank him in the earth, so that he will remain sinking until the Day of Standing."

This also seems to be a combination of two reports, both in Bukhari (Au.).

It is said that Ta'us poked into `Umar b. `Abdul `Aziz's stomach for walking in a proud manner. That was at the time when he was not yet a Caliph. `Umar begged excuse saying, "Uncle! I was beaten on every of my joint until I learnt how to walk in this manner." Ibn Abi Dunya also reported that Banu Umayyah used to beat their children until they learnt how to walk in that gait.

In some of the Arab countries, some organizations (governmental as well as private) design such a stiff collar for their employees, that he or she has to walk with the head raised high up, and women are trained to walk in such a manner as if she is floating on the ground (Au.).

[20] Have you not seen that Allah has subjected to you whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth; and has completed His blessings on you: (both) outwardly and inwardly?³¹ Yet among the people there is such a one who disputes about Allah without knowledge, or guidance, or an illuminating Book.

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهُ ظَاهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُّنِيرٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] When they are told, 'Follow that which Allah has sent down,' they say, 'But rather we shall follow that upon which we found our forefathers.' What! Even though Shaytan was inviting them to the torment of the (flaming) Fire?

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أَوَّلُو كَانِ الشَّيْطَانُ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٢١﴾

[22] And, whoever submits his face to Allah, and he excels, grasped the most trustworthy handhold.³² And with Allah (rests) the outcome of all affairs.

وَمَن يُسْلِمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ ﴿٢٢﴾

31. Commentators quote several statements in explanation of what the outward and inward blessings constitute. Many of them are of common nature, and echo around the opinions of Ibn `Abbas and Mujahid who thought that the allusion by the inward blessing is to belief in one God (planted in every soul) – Ibn Jarir.

Yusuf Ali comments: "Allah's grace and bounties work for us at all times. Sometimes we see them, and some-

times we do not. In things which we can apprehend with our senses, we can see Allah's grace, but even in them, sometimes it works beyond the sphere of our knowledge. In the inner or spiritual world, sometimes, when our vision is clear, we can see it working, and often we are not conscious of it. But it works all the same."

32. For explanation see *Surah al-Baqarah*, note 554 (under *ayah* 256) of this work.

[23] Therefore, whoever disbelieves, then, let not his disbelief grieve you; unto Us is their return, then We shall inform them about what they did. Verily, Allah knows well that which is within the breasts.

وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَلَا يَحْزُنكَ كُفْرُهُ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ
فَتُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ
الصُّدُورِ ﴿٢٣﴾

[24] We grant them a little pleasure, then We shall force them on to a massive chastisement.

نُتَبِّعُهُمْ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ نَضْطَرُّهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ
غَلِيظٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

[25] If you are to ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' they will surely reply, 'Allah.' Say, 'Praise be to Allah;' but most of them know not.³³

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ
أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] To Allah belongs what is in the heavens and the earth. Verily Allah - He is free of all wants, the Praiseworthy.³⁴

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] And, even if all the trees in the earth were pens, and the sea, extended after it with seven (other)³⁵ seas (as ink), Allah's words would not be exhausted.³⁶ Surely, Allah is All-mighty, All-wise.

وَلَوْ أَنَّمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَامٌ
وَالْبَحْرُ مِمْدُهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ مَّا
نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ
﴿٢٧﴾

33. That is, most of them do not know what it implies to admit that Allah (*swt*) created the heavens and the earth. Asad writes: "I.e., they give the above answer unthinkingly, following a vague habit of thought, without realizing that a cognition of God as the Ultimate Cause of all existence logically postulates one's full surrender to Him, and to Him alone."

34. That is, for Allah is the praise, whether someone praised Him or

not. He is above all wants and desires to be seeking to be praised (Au.).

35. This is how Zamakhshari, Alusi, Shawkani, Thanwi and others understand the word "*yamudduhu*," i.e., the sea replenished with seven other seas.

36. When Hasan was asked how he understood this *ayah*, he replied that if the trees of the world were used to make pens and the eight seas turned into ink, the seas would dry up and the pens break down but Allah's

Words, Might, and Wisdom will not exhaust (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

We have passed over a similar verse in *Surah Al-Kahf*, no. 109. It says,

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفَذَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنْفَدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا
(الكهف - ١٠٩)

"Say, 'If the sea were ink for the Words of my Lord, surely, the sea would be exhausted before the Words of my Lord are exhausted, even if We brought the like of it, in supplement.'"

The number seven however is not in the literal sense referring to the seven Oceans: an idea taken by some from the Jewish sources, but rather, to indicate a large amount of water (Ibn Kathir).

And the cause of revelation is explained as follows. A group of Jewish scholars went up to the Prophet and asked him, "Muhammad! To whose knowledge did you allude when you said, 'And you have not been given of knowledge but little?' Ours or your people's?" He answered, "Both." They said, "Have you not been reciting out of what has been revealed to you that the *Torah* has the explanation of all things?" He replied, "Although the knowledge it has is enough for you, but, compared with Allah's knowledge, it is but little."

And Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Yusuf Ali suggests that the textual word "*al-bahr*" could be understood in the sense of "all the waters on the earth." He writes, "Words of Allah: His wonderful Signs and Commandments are infinite and cannot be expressed if all the trees were made into pens, and all the wide Oceans, multiplied seven times, were made into ink. Any Book of His Revelation would deal with matters which man can understand and use in his life: there are things that man can never fathom. Nor would any praise that we could write with infinite resources be adequate to describe His power, glory, and wisdom."

Significantly, among the scientists a common adage is that the more you know, the more you realize how much more there is to know. Of spiders there are thought to be 80,000 species. Doctorate degrees have been obtained on ants, while thousands of its species are still to be studied. The basic unit of any living organism is the cell. It has thousands of organelles working within its boundaries. One of its structures at its exterior, that, in a scientist's words, "looks like a hair and beats like a whip," helps in cell movement. This apparatus has

[28] Neither your creation, nor your resurrection are, but like (that of) a single soul.³⁷ Surely, Allah is All-hearing, All-seeing.

مَا خَلَقُكُمْ وَلَا بَعَثُكُمْ إِلَّا كَنَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

been the subject of study because of its important function. How much is there to state about this part of the cell? Let us have it from a molecular biologist who wrote in 1998:

“A quick electronic search of the professional literature shows more than a thousand papers in the past several years that have cilia or a similar word in the title. Papers have appeared on related topics in almost all the major biochemistry journals, including Science, Nature, Proceedings of the National Academy of Science, Bio-chemistry, Journal of Biological Chemistry, Journal of Molecular Biology, Cell, and numerous others. In the past decades, probably ten thousand papers have been published concerning cilia.” (*Darwin’s Black Box*, Michael Behe, Touchstone Books, 1998, p.67).”

So, that is about one-millionth part of a cell. And the study is not complete despite 10,000 scientific pa-

pers, since many questions remain unanswered. What about the rest of the cell? What about the whole human body? What about this universe? Indeed, far from details, the trees and the seven seas will not be enough to make an inventory of stars found in the universe (Au.).

“Here the object is,” writes Mawdu-di, “to make man realize that no creature can become a deity and associate in the works of Allah, who has brought into being such a vast universe, who is administering its affairs, and whose powers and resources are limitless. Not to speak of becoming an associate in the administration of this vast kingdom, it is not within the power of any creation to obtain a mere nodding acquaintance with the minutest portion of it. How can then anyone imagine that one or

37. That is, both are equally easy for Him.

[29] Do you not see that Allah causes the night to enter the day and the day into the night,³⁸ and He has subjected the sun and the moon? Each is running to a specified term; and that Allah is well aware of what you do?

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُوَلِّجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُوَلِّجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] That, because Allah – He is the Truth, and that, what they invoke apart from Him is the untruth, and that Allah – He is the All-high, the All-great.

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ الْبَاطِلُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٣٠﴾

[31] Have you not seen how the ships run upon the sea by the grace of Allah – that He may show you of His signs? Surely, in that are signs for every constantly persevering, greatly thankful (person).

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ الْفُلُكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِنِعْمَتِ اللَّهِ لِيُرِيَكُمْ مِّنْ آيَاتِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ﴿٣١﴾

[32] And when the canopy-like waves cover them, they call upon Allah, making religion purely for Him. But when He has delivered them to the land, then of them is one who is steadfast (in belief).³⁹ And none denies Our signs but every ungrateful traitor.

وَإِذَا غَشِيَهُمْ مَّوْجٌ كَالظُّلَلِ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ فَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الْأَكْثَرُ خَتَّارٌ كَفُورٌ ﴿٣٢﴾

38. That is, in one season a part of the night enters into the day, shortening it, while in another a part of the day enters into the night, shortening it (Ibn Jarir in effect, from the *Salaf*).

39. There are several possible meanings: First, among those who are delivered, there are a few who remain steadfast – on the path of Islam, while the rest return to their disbelief. Second, the term “*muqtasid*” stands for him who remains waver-

ing between belief and unbelief despite deliverance. A third meaning advanced by Ibn Kathir is that when a man is delivered by Allah from a dangerous circumstance, he ought to be, thereonward, wholly devoted to Allah, abandoning all worldly concerns. But, instead, he remains just a moderate Muslim. A fourth opinion is that of Mujahid who said, as in Ibn Kathir, that the allusion by “*muqtasid*” is to the unbeliever. That is, he remains disbelieving despite the deliverance.

[33] O people! Fear your Lord, and dread a day when a father will not avail his son aught, nor will a son avail his father aught. Surely, Allah's promise is true. Therefore, let not delude you the life of the world, nor delude you concerning Allah the Deluder.⁴⁰

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ وَاحْشَوْا يَوْمًا
لَا يَجْزِي وَالِدٌ عَنْ وَلَدِهِ وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ هُوَ
جَازٍ عَنِ وَالِدِهِ شَيْئًا إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ
فَلَا تُغْوِئَكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا يَغُرَّتْكُمْ
بِاللَّهِ الْعُرُورُ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] Surely, with Allah alone is the knowledge of the Hour. He sends down the rain, and knows what is in the wombs.⁴¹ And no soul knows what it shall earn tomorrow, and no soul knows in what land it shall die.⁴² Verily, Allah is the All-knowing, the All-aware.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ
وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ
مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ
أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

To be sure, there is a line missing after *muqtasid*. If that is brought in, one could paraphrase the verse in the following manner: “And when the waves cover them – like canopies – they call upon Allah, declaring religion purely for Him. But when He has delivered them to the land, then of them is one who is steadfast (in belief), while the rest turn back to denying. And none denies Our signs but every ungrateful traitor” (Au.).

40. Generally speaking, *gharur* is anything that deludes and leads to errors. (It can be men, false ideas, delusions, etc.: Au.) But, here it alludes to *Shaytan*, as said by Sa'id b. Jubayr, Dahhak, and Qatadah (Ibn Jarir). Sa'id b. Jubayr explained it as meaning, ‘he leads on in sins assuring (the unsure) forgiveness from Allah’ (Zamakhshari).

41. That is, whether the child in the womb is male or female, fair or dark, etc. It is reported that a man from the deserts went up to the Prophet and asked, “My wife is pregnant, so tell me what will she deliver? And, our area is dry. So, tell us when will it rain? And, I have known when I was it that I took birth. Tell me when will I die?” In response, Allah revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir).

As time moves forward, ignorance seems to increase, and reasoning power seems to decline, even when the issue is material. Common people have restricted the meaning of the words, “and He knows what is in the wombs” to the sex of the fetus. With this restricted meaning, they are led to confusion when they hear that with the development in the medical sciences, it has become

possible to conduct tests that can determine the sex of the fetus. Their ignorance consists in not knowing that the Qur'ānic statement is in its general and comprehensive sense, and involves all that there is to know of a person from birth to death and even thereafter. It means to say that no one knows whether the future baby will be male, female, fair, dark, tall, short, of good conduct or ill, defective by birth or whole, pessimistic or optimistic, a believer or non-believer, and everything else about him. No one shares with Allah this comprehensive knowledge concerning what is in the womb.

Even if the allusion is restricted to the sex of the fetus, then, why is it that determination with the help of modern equipments is considered as challenging Allah's knowledge, when a *hadīth* tells us that after a few weeks, an angel asks what has to be done with the fetus, and is told by Allah to make it a male or female. Once that is determined for the fetus, there should be no problem discovering what is there in the womb.

Further, mankind has not awaited modern methods to determine sex of the fetus. Medical men have always been able to conduct urine and other tests to determine the sex of the fetus

after some time had elapsed. Modern medicine has only advanced the time when sex can be determined: to – at least in theory – that is, a week or ten days after conception. But, can anyone determine the sex earlier than that? No. How can anyone determine the sex without the sex gonad development in the zygote? And sex gonads begin to develop only after one week of the zygote slipping into the womb. Before that, no one knows what's happening within the fertilized egg, which is no more than the size of a dot or smaller. Far from knowing anything about what the fertilized egg holds, no one knows until a week after fertilization anything about the existence of the fertilized egg itself. Now, this is of course in theory. In practice no one knows a woman is pregnant for quite a few weeks after conception. It is only when the normal menstrual cycle does not begin - which could happen only after a few weeks - that the concerned woman suspects she could be pregnant, and undergoes tests to determine what's going on in the womb. Thus, despite the "possibility" of determination of sex within about 10 days of pregnancy, in practice, it takes a couple of weeks to determine whether a woman is pregnant at all, and then, if she is,

undergo further tests to determine the sex. In the meanwhile, it is Allah alone who “knows what is in the wombs” (Au.).

42. Ibn `Umar reports the Prophet as having said,

مَفَاتِيحُ الْغَيْبِ خَمْسٌ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَآذَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

“Five are keys to the Unseen that no one has the knowledge of except Allah..” Then he recited this verse: “Surely, with Allah alone is the knowledge of the Hour. He sends down the rain and knows what is in the wombs. And no soul knows what it shall earn tomorrow, and no soul knows in what land it will die” (Ibn Jarir).

There is a similar report in the *Sahihayn* (Ibn Kathir). It says,

عَنْ رَجُلٍ مِنْ بَنِي عَامِرٍ أَنَّهُ اسْتَأْذَنَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ أَلَيْحَ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِحَادِمِهِ احْرُجِي إِلَيْهِ فَإِنَّهُ لَا يُحْسِنُ الْإِسْتِئْذَانَ فَقُولِي لَهُ قُلْتُلْتُ السَّلَامَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَدْخُلْ قَالَ فَسَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ ذَلِكَ فَقُلْتُ السَّلَامَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَدْخُلْ قَالَ فَأَذِنَ أَوْ قَالَ فَدَخَلْتُ فَقُلْتُ بِمِ آتَيْتُنَا بِهِ قَالَ لَمْ آتِكُمْ إِلَّا بِخَيْرٍ أَتَيْتُكُمْ أَنْ تَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ قَالَ شُعْبَةُ وَأَحْسِبُهُ قَالَ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَنْ تَدْعُوا اللَّهَ وَالْعَزَى وَأَنْ تُصَلُّوا بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ خَمْسَ صَلَوَاتٍ وَأَنْ تَصُومُوا مِنَ السَّنَةِ شَهْرًا وَأَنْ تَحْجُوا الْبَيْتَ وَأَنْ تَأْخُذُوا مِنْ مَالٍ أَعْيَانِكُمْ فَتَرُدُّوهَا عَلَى فَقَرَائِكُمْ قَالَ فَقَالَ

هَلْ بَقِيَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ شَيْءٌ لَا تَعْلَمُهُ قَالَ قَدْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ خَيْرًا وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَا يَعْلَمُهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَآذَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ (أحمد)

A man of Banu ` Amir reports that he went to the Prophet's door and said, “Do I enter?” He told his maid, “Go out, for he does not know the manners of entry. Tell him to say, ‘*Al-Salamu Alaykum!* Can I come in?’” He says, “I heard his words and said, ‘*Al-Salamu Alaykum!* Can I come in?’ He allowed me in and I asked him, ‘What have you brought us?’ He answered, ‘I have not brought to you but good. I have brought to you (the message) that you should worship Allah, the one God who has no partners; that you should abandon Lat and ‘Uzza; that you should pray five times during the day and night; that you should fast a month in a year; that you should perform pilgrimage of the House; and that you should take out *Zakah* from your wealth and distribute it among your poor.’” At that the man asked him, “Is there any knowledge left that you do not know?” He replied, “Allah has taught me the good. But, of the

knowledge that no one has except Allah, they are five: "Surely, with Allah alone is the knowledge of the Hour. He sends down the rain and knows what is in the wombs. And no soul knows what it shall earn tomorrow, and no soul knows in what land it will die."

The report is in Ahmad and comes through a reliable chain (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

With specific reference to where one will die, Ahmad has several reports. One of them comes through Abu 'Uzzah. The Prophet said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى إِذَا أَرَادَ قَبْضَ رُوحِ عَبْدٍ بِأَرْضٍ
جَعَلَ لَهُ فِيهَا أَوْ قَالَ يَمًا - حَاجَةً. (أحمد)

"When Allah wishes to take back the soul of one of his slaves in a particular land, He creates a need for him there" (Qurtubi).

Another report of similar nature is in Ibn abi Hatim whose words are:

إِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ قَبْضَ رُوحِ عَبْدٍ بِأَرْضٍ جَعَلَ لَهُ إِلَيْهَا
حَاجَةً فَلَمْ يَنْتِهِ حَتَّى يَقْدُمَهَا

"When Allah wishes to take back the soul of one of his slaves in a particular land, He places his need there so that he will not give up but go there" (Ibn Kathir).

The report is in Hakim who declared it as following the criterion of the Sheikhayn; and Dhahabi agreed to it.

Zamakhshari adds: It is said that Mansur was overtaken by thoughts of death. He would wonder about how much was left for him, until he saw in his dream that an image raised its hand from the sea and showed the figure five with five fingers. He asked scholars to interpret it. Some said he would live for five more years, others that he would live for five months. But when Abu Hanifah was asked, he said that it meant it was one of those five things that nobody had any knowledge of.

It is also narrated that the angel of death visited Sulayman b. Da'ud at his court. He began to stare hard at one of the men there. The man asked who he was. Sulayman told him it was the angel of death. The man said, "Perhaps he wants to seize me." He asked Sulayman to command the winds to drop him in India, which was accomplished. The angel of death said to Sulayman, "I was wondering how come the man was sitting next to you here in this court, while I was asked to draw his soul in India!?"

In the above list, points out Shafi`, it is mentioned that only Allah knows where will a man die, but not when. The reason is obvious. If we do not know where a man will die, we cannot say when he will die.

As this writer tries to hasten into the next chapter, several incidents of this context come to mind: There used to be a famous Jewish heart surgeon in the USA who would boast of the success of his operations, "Bring me a man within five minutes of his death from heart attack, and I'll revive him." Once, as he was entering the operation theatre, he suffered a stroke, and fell dead at the door. His colleagues removed the patient from the stretcher, placed him there, and did everything but failed to revive him.

In another case, another heart specialist rose up his chair to present his paper during a seminar on cardiac arrests. He suffered a stroke and died then and there.

During communal riots in India, a bullet from the police went through the stomach of a Muslim into the stomach of another Muslim behind him. The first man survived but the one behind him died.

In a busy street in India, a passing car's wheel came out loose. It rolled

out at good speed, went through the crowd of pedestrians on the sidewalk, hit a cobbler bent over his work and killed him.

In Saudi Arabia, a wheel that freed itself and ran loose out of a truck, somehow jumped several feet high and struck the wind screen of a tall bus coming from the opposite direction across the island. The tire broke through the glass and killed the driver.

In Bangalore, an eagle was carrying a snake as it flew. Below the eagle, a scooter was speeding with two men on it. The snake slipped out of the bird's talons and fell straight on the pillion rider of the speeding scooter. As it struck, it bit the man in the neck and killed him.

In Thailand, a hotel worker was chopping the heads of snakes to make a gourd out of its flesh. The chopping over, the man began to pick up the chopped heads lying on the floor. One of the heads bit him and he died.

In Kuwait a man fell off a building under construction (perhaps off a scaffolding). His colleagues rushed down but found no trace of him. He appeared sometime later to tell the amazing story of how he fell straight into a truck carrying sand. As the

colleagues were congratulating him, he said he would rather celebrate his new life by buying everyone a cool drink. As he was crossing the road, a vehicle ran over him and killed him.

In the United States, a man arriving late for his flight argued his best to get into the aircraft, but to no avail. Disappointed, he went back with a sullen face. At home he went to sleep. His mother received the news

that the aircraft had crashed and no one had survived. She thanked God for his son's lucky escape and went to his son to give him the news. He was dead in his bed.

In the Arabic tradition there is a story that a visiting doctor told his patient that he would die within next twenty-four hours. The patient recovered, but the doctor died (Au.). ﻗﺘﻞ



