



DRAFT NOTES BY SAAD JAMIL ON

# FIRM GROUND

FOUNDATIONS FOR CLARIFYING TEXTUAL MISINTERPRETATION

TAUGHT BY  
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Single Weekend DEGREE Seminar

## DISCLAIMER

as-Salamu 'alaykum wa rahmatuLahi wa barakatuHu,

Thank you for taking the time to view this document. I attended the “Firm Ground” seminar in Toronto and it was one of the best seminars I had ever attended. I had, along with many others I have known, struggled greatly with many issues discussed below in my past and it almost made me leave Islam. By the grace of Allah I was guided back to Islam but these questions remained entirely unanswered. In fact, I was often rebuked for inquiring about such sensitive matters and when an answer was given it was not rooted in knowledge but rather cultural practice justified through some novel and inventive interpretation of the text. I attended this seminar in hopes of bolstering and strengthening my *imaan* and that is exactly what I got. Every last concern of mine was answered in great academic detail. This was exactly what I had anticipated which is why I had already sought to prepare incredibly extensive notes with regards to all the content covered in the seminar.

This is my humble attempt to convey all the knowledge I have gained to those who were not given the opportunity to attend the seminar. This document is a draft and a work in progress. I am trying to get it approved by the Shaykh himself and it might go through several revisions. Any comments and advice will be highly appreciated and you can contact me at [limajdaas@gmail.com](mailto:limajdaas@gmail.com). I want to thank everyone who had provided me with assistance in compiling these notes. Everything good contained herein is from Allah and all that is wrong is from myself. I pray that Allah rewards me for the good in this and forgives me for the bad, *ameen*. I pray that this leads both of us closer to having *taqwa* of Allah and that we meet in *jannah*, *ameen*.

*JazakumAllahu khayrann,*

Saad Jamil  
Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> 2015

## DISCLAIMER FROM THE *SHAYKH*

The topics we are about to discuss are extremely sensitive in their nature. Furthermore, they are bound to challenge your preconceived notion and “established” conclusions. The amount of conclusions that we will reach that may shatter your illusions may make you question yourself, But these issues are not what we believe in. It is not part of the pillars of Islam, six articles of path, or one of the three questions you will be asked in the grave. These aren't the demarcating lines within our community. So why talk about these things? It is because of the culture these issues create and establish in our community. Assume that there's an interpretation that women cannot become leaders then we make that part of our culture, part of who we are. We would allow that for us to downgrade women. Furthermore, these issues and texts are an opportunity, an excuse, to highlight the importance of critical thinking. Don't just accept one view, think critically. Religion is deep and is not a superficial study.

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# PART I

# CRISIS OF FAITH

Muslims as a community acknowledge that *iman*, faith and belief, is the most important aspect of our life both in this world and the next. No one would dare deny this reality and we always readily accept it as truth. However, we've come to a time where this *iman* has become weak and hollow, being grounded in little knowledge. We're unwilling to admit it, speak about it, and much less deal with it. This has led to an extreme lack of confidence in our faith. We're now easily shook by some statements and questions. This is a sign that something needs to be done.

It's high time we deal with this crisis of faith. We've been avoiding it for so long and the damage has been done. It won't be fixed in a day, or a week, or a month, but it still has to be addressed.

## STATISTICS ABOUT CRISIS OF FAITH AND APOSTASY IN THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

The University of Michigan in Ann Arbor conducted a study titled, "Conversion Out of Islam: A Study of Conversion Narratives of Former Muslims." This study interviewed three apostates individually and sampled self-reported apostasy databases amounting to roughly 600 apostates. The first thing noted was that people were extremely unwilling to speak at all about this issue unless guaranteed anonymity repeatedly.

Based on all the data that there were two basic thematic categories triggering apostasy. In order of prevalence the categories are as follows:

### *Intellectual/Ideological Motivations*

1. The status of women in Islam.
2. The contradiction between Shari'a and human rights.
3. The problematic nature of the Qur'an.
4. The character of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and other Muslim leaders.
5. Islam is illogical and unscientific.
6. The eternal damnation of good non-Muslims.
7. The unnecessary, strict rules and expectations of Islam.
8. Islam is not universal but rather Arab-centric.
9. The dubious historicity of the Qur'an and *ahadith*.

### *Social/Experiential Motivations*

1. Encounters with bad, cruel Muslims.
2. Muslims as oppressive.
3. Muslims as backwards.
4. Muslim ill-treatment of women.

5. Muslim ill-treatment of non-Muslims.
6. Muslims in a state of illusion regarding their own religion.

Table 1 highlights the demographic data of these apostates. It demonstrates that a large majority of apostates are men as compared to women. This is particularly interesting considering how the status of women in Islam was the biggest intellectual issue amongst apostates. Geographically speaking, the conversions always occur in “frontier zones” where Muslims are likely to contact other cultures and missionaries. Another relevant finding, although not quite a motivation *per se* was that a lot of apostates felt that they had been “brainwashed” into Islamic morality and values. They remarked on their incredible good fortune to have found Western values and morality.

**Table 1. Origins and Gender of Converts**

		<b>Answering Islam</b>	<b>Apostates of Islam</b>	<b>Leaving Islam</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	79% (101)	68% (54)	72% (18)
	Female	21% (27)	32% (25)	28% (7)
<b>Origins</b>	Arab World	34% (43)	21% (17)	4% (1)
	Iran	10% (13)	5% (4)	12% (3)
	Turkey	9% (12)	1% (1)	4% (1)
	Africa (non-Arab)	4% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)
	S Asia	16% (20)	35% (28)	44% (11)
	SE Asia	14% (18)	10% (8)	4% (1)
	West	5% (6)	20% (16)	28% (7)
	Other/Unspecified	9% (11)	8% (6)	4% (1)

**Table 2. Conversion Destinations**

	<b>Answering Islam</b>	<b>Apostates of Islam</b>	<b>Leaving Islam</b>
Atheist	0% (0)	41% (33)	32–64% (8–16) <sup>40</sup>
Agnostic	0% (0)	16% (13)	12–44% (3–11)
Christian	100% (128)	15% (12)	0% (0)
Other/Unspecified	0% (0)	28% (22)	24% (6)



Table 2 highlights the three major destinations of the apostates: Christianity, agnosticism, and atheism. Interestingly enough Middle Eastern apostates were far more likely to turn to Christianity whilst South Asian apostates were more likely to turn to agnosticism or atheism. A large majority of apostates hid their apostasy due to fear or being involved in an intimate relationship with a Muslim. The conversions to Christianity are often underpinned by social motivations as evidenced by this quote of Christian writer S. V. Bhajjan, “I have not so far come across any Muslim convert who confessed that he accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour because some Christians were able to explain to him the Sonship of Christ, the Atonement, and the Christian doctrine of Trinity. It is always through a small deed of brotherly love done by a Christian that the heart of a Muslim is moved.”

The process through which these individuals apostatized is also important to consider. Many of them were dealing with personal tragedies which led them to a crisis of faith. They sought a spiritual explanation for what exactly they were going through and they wanted sound and intellectual answers. They were often ostracized and demonized by other Muslims for “questioning” their faith until they came across a missionary or a person of different ideology who responded to their queries positively. This gave birth to a need to reciprocate that kindness within these individuals and manifested in them forming some sort of ideological commitment with these people. The resulting fallout was inevitably their banishment from their families and communities and the burning of all bridges forever condemning them to a life of apostasy, leaving no chance for them to come back to Islam.

# WHY PEOPLE LEAVE ISLAM

1. Family Issues
2. Lack of Community
3. Emotional Distress
4. Political Persecution
5. Cultural Baggage
  - This is an issue that becomes a major highlight for a lot of people. Funnily enough, dealing with marriage issues culturally has led to many a people leaving Islam. Obviously, wanting to marry a non-Muslim has proven to be problematic to many Muslims especially when such a sensitive issue was dealt with culturally instead of intelligently. What is even more shocking is that sometimes Muslims want to marry other Muslims but due to the fact that they don't share cultures their desires for marriages are shunned to such extremes that these people end up leaving Islam! This is incredibly shocking. Lastly, marriage to a “religious, practicing, and abusing” Muslim individual. These people appear outwardly religious and seem devout yet their homes reek of domestic abuse. Their spouses often end up leaving Islam.

# WHY PEOPLE DOUBT ISLAM

To grossly simply and put things in a nutshell, there are five basic reasons why Muslims doubt Islam:

1. **Lack of Knowledge:** A Muslim may listen to a YouTube lecture about the “problematic” compilation of the Qur'an, or a video defaming the character of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), or any such issue and start doubting his religion. These doubts wouldn't have been able to form if indeed the individual had clear knowledge and understanding about those parts of their religion from before.
2. **Oversimplification of Religious Concepts:** A lot of concepts in Islam are deep and Islam itself is holistic in nature. Therefore, taking a concept “in a nutshell” and ignoring all context or specificity with regards to the matter leads to a lot of doubt.
3. **Biased or Dogmatic Approach to Texts:** This is approaching the religion and viewing it through the lens of deep seated bias or dogma. Where the text isn't allowed to speak for itself but forcibly processed through a biased filter. This would obviously cause doubts and confusion.
4. **Lack of Clarity:** Certain issues are unclear to begin with and when the individual comes across more material that pokes holes in their already shoddy understanding of these issues then plenty of room for doubt and hesitation is made.
5. **Unable to Ask Questions or Receive Satisfactory Answers:** Often times in our society people are wrongly shunned for asking questions regarding their religion as if Islam itself is dogmatic, forcing people to believe without reasoning. Furthermore, when a question is answered the answer itself is absolutely unsatisfactory and not tailored for the individual's level of understanding.

We must understand that we are deeply impacted and affected by our surroundings. The impact is received physically, mentally, psychologically, and most importantly spiritually. If that is our case then would 1350 years of Islamic scholarship not be influenced by its surroundings? If a scholar of 8<sup>th</sup> century *hijri* had a particular position on an issue would they not be affected by the world that they live in?

The Qur'an is the infallible, perfect, and flawless word of God. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was divinely guided, prophetically manifested, human perfection, and free from error and fault. His words, actions, and example is flawless. From that point on any human being's interpretation or conclusion of an issue is just that, a human endeavor. If we act like they cannot possibly be wrong then this is problematic. Do we believe in Allah and His Messenger (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) more or some higher authority?

The Islamic tradition itself is build upon the practice that every subsequent generation of scholars are meant to go back and review and re-author the work that was done by the previous generation. If you look at any particular science in Islam, for 1200 years, they have been authoring new works. Students who studied a text on a particular subject from a teacher would revise and write his own work on that particular subject. If we are going to resign from doing any new work then we are not

following this practice of the Islamic tradition. How is it that every single generation had written their own *tafsir*? If we do not write texts to uniquely address the dynamics of our environment then there necessarily will be a disconnect between the Book of Allah and the people. But all this, at the end of the day, is also a human product and endeavor.

## GUIDING FOUNDATIONS

أَقْرَأُ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾ أَقْرَأُ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾	Recite in the name of your Lord who created <sup>1</sup> . Created man from a clinging substance <sup>2</sup> . Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous <sup>3</sup> – Who taught by the pen <sup>4</sup> – Taught man that which he knew not <sup>4</sup> . [ <i>al-'Alaq</i> , 96:1-5]
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The very first revelation is extremely significant. Humanity was plunged into the depths of darkness and depravity for over six centuries after the death of 'Esa ('alayh as-Salam). No commands or guidance from God was sent for so long. Look at how depraved our own civilization has become and we have the Qur'an and the *sunnah* preserved with us. So imagine those 600 years without any book or prophet to guide humanity. Just imagine the moral and social decay. The first light to bring us out from the darkness of ignorance were the first five *ayaat* of *Surah al-'Alaq*. Imagine the significance of this revelation. Now imagine how such an immense light in the dark would even being? “*Iqra*” is how it began.

In the translation above the word *iqra'* is translated as “recite.” However, it is so much more than that. The word *tilawah* means verbalization without comprehension. To merely recite without reflection or comprehension is termed *tilawah*. *Iqra'* on the other hand is to verbalize but also comprehend. This is how Islam began. This was the beginning of our guidance. We are meant to read, learn, and comprehend. Understand and then educate. This is the focus of these *ayaat*.

الرَّحْمَنُ ﴿١﴾ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ﴿٢﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ﴿٣﴾ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ﴿٤﴾	The Most Merciful <sup>1</sup> ; Taught the Qur'an <sup>2</sup> , Created man <sup>3</sup> , (And) taught him eloquence <sup>4</sup> . [ <i>al-Rahman</i> , 55:1-4]
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The Qur'an, the light of guidance in our darkness, was taught by *ar-Rahmaan*. That is the first

thing mentioned. It is one of the greatest acts of mercy from God to us. Furthermore, God has taught us *al-bayaan*. The ability to express ourselves in all our intellect is *bayaan*. This is God's mercy at work. Teaching occurs twice in these *ayaat*. God taught us both the Qur'an and *al-bayaan*. This continues Islam's essential focus on guidance through teaching, comprehension, and education.

لَا تُحْرِكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ ١٦ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ ١٧ فَإِذَا قَرَأْنَاهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ ١٨ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ ١٩	Move not your tongue with it, (O Muhammad), to hasten with recitation of the Qur'an <sup>16</sup> . Indeed, upon Us is its collection (in your heart) and (to make possible) its recitation <sup>17</sup> . So when We have recited it (through Jibril), then follow its recitation <sup>18</sup> . Then upon Us is its clarification (to you) <sup>19</sup> . [ <i>al-Qiyamah</i> , 75:16-19]
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In these *ayaat* of *Surah al-Qiyamah* we have Allah taking the *bayan* or the distinctive explanation and clarification of the Qur'an upon himself. Allah is preserving not just the Qur'an but also the meanings therein. He is literally taking this responsibility upon himself.

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ ۗ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ٤٤	(We sent them) with clear proofs and written ordinances. And We revealed to you the message that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they might give thought. [ <i>al-Nahl</i> , 16:44]
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This *ayah* highlights that a large part of the Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) responsibility was to answer questions and provide clarification for the people so that they might engage in deep thought. This was the legacy of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). He did not shun people who asked questions. He answered them over and over, providing as much clarification as he could, and when they still would not understand he would employ different methods to make them understand.

وعن أبي موسى رضي الله عنه قال: قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: "مثل ما بعثني الله به من الهدى والعلم كمثل غيث أصاب أرضًا، فكانت منها طائفة طيبة قبلت الماء فأنبتت الكلأ، والعشب الكثير وكان منها أجادب أمسكت الماء، فنفع الله بها الناس، فشربوا منها وسقوا وزرعوا، وأصاب طائفة منها أخرى إنما هي قيعان لا تمسك ماء ولا تنبت كلأ فذلك مثل من فقه في دين الله ونفعه ما بعثني الله به وعلم، ومثل من لم يرفع بذلك رأسًا ولم يقبل هدى الله الذي أرسلت به" ((متفق عليه))

Abu Musa (*radyAllahu 'anhu*) reported:

The Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "The guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me are like abundant rain which fell on a land. A fertile part of it absorbed the water and brought forth profuse herbage and pasture; and solid ground patches which retained the water by which Allah has benefited people, who drank from it, irrigated their crops and sowed their seeds; and another sandy plane which could neither retain the water nor produce herbage. Such is the similitude of the person who becomes well-versed in the religion of Allah and receives benefit from the Message entrusted to me by Allah, so he himself has learned and taught it to others; such is also the similitude of the person who has stubbornly and ignorantly rejected Allah's Guidance with which I have been sent." [Bukhari and Muslim]

In the *hadith* above the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) presents us with a metaphor. That guidance and knowledge pour down like abundant rain on everyone. However, its acceptance or rejection is what makes it take effect. The Qur'an and *sunnah* are not restricted sources. They are available to everyone. However, to truly benefit from it one has to try their best to become well-versed in Islam and once they have accomplished that it is up to them to educate others and teach them everything that they have understood. This is how to benefit from knowledge and guidance, by understanding and educating.

حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ حَاتِمٍ، حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ مَهْدِيٍّ، حَدَّثَنَا سَلِيمٌ، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ مَيْمَانَ، عَنْ جَابِرٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " مَثَلِي وَمَثَلِكُمْ كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ أَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَجَعَلَ الْجَنَادِبُ وَالْفَرَاشُ يَقَعْنَ فِيهَا وَهُوَ يَدْبُهُنَّ عَنْهَا وَأَنَا آخِذٌ بِجُجَزِكُمْ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَقْلُتُونَ مِنْ يَدِي . "

Jabir b. 'Abdullah reported Allah's Messenger (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) as saying, "My example and your example is that of a person who lit the fire and insects and moths began to fall in it and he would be making efforts to take them out, and I am going to hold you back from fire, but you are slipping from my hand." [Muslim]

In the above similitude we have the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) showing his extreme love and compassion for humanity. He never dismissed or wrote anyone off. He kept the doors open for them till the very end. This was our Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) approach and this is supposed to be our approach.

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا

Fighting has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you. But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah Knows,

وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢١٦﴾

while you know not. [*al-Baqarah*, 2:216]

It is important to note that not everything that is good for us is pleasurable and enjoyable for us. Much harm lies in things that we love and much good lies in things that we abhor. It is only Allah that knows the truth of these things and we can only surmise with regards to their benefits and harm. Allah ordains from His mercy towards us and we should strive to keep that this principle in mind.

## ON ASKING TOO MANY QUESTIONS

“But aren't we not supposed to ask too many questions? What about dogma? What about *Bani Isra'il* who kept asking questions about the cow?” No. There is no dogma in Islam. There is no *hadith* where a nation was destroyed because they asked too many questions. When we read the Qur'an we come across *yas'alunak*, meaning “they come and ask you,” and this is followed by an answer from Allah. The Quraysh and the *Bani Isra'il* repeatedly asked the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) questions and Allah repeatedly answered them every single time. Allah knows what's in people's hearts and why they are asking questions. Whether it is meant to undermine the religion or to satisfy a curiosity or to clear up a confusion, Allah knows. However, we don't. The guidelines for sincerely asking questions are for ourselves, not for others. Only Allah is All-Knowing of the secrets of the heart. We are *not*. We should evaluate our own sincerity instead of condemning, shaming, and guilt-tripping people for asking questions. That is absolutely not our job. We're not the judge, the jury, and definitely not the executioner. Thus, we have to be careful when interacting with people.



## FIRST EXAMPLE OF TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ  
عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۚ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ  
قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ ۚ وَاللَّاتِي  
تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَأَهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي  
الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاصْرَبُوهُنَّ ۚ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا  
عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلاً ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيماً كَبِيراً ﴿٣٤﴾

Men are in charge of women by (right of) what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend (for maintenance) from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. But those (wives) from whom you fear arrogance - (first) advise them; (then if they persist), forsake them in bed; and (finally), strike them. But if they obey you (once more), seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand. [al-Nisa, 4:34]

This *ayah* is the nightmare of *da'ees*. They would be standing at *dawah* booths during Islamic awareness week and just praying that 4:34 is not brought up. There is so much fear and confusion that persists amongst Muslims regarding this *ayah* that is a tragedy. This is why this is the first *ayah* that we are going to be seeking a deeper understanding of.

Right off the bat, it should be noted that the word “*qawwamuna*” is being interpreted in the above translation as “in charge.” This is absolutely incorrect as this is the more modern meaning of the term “*qawwam*” and not the meaning it has in classical Arabic. Rather, in classical Arabic it means to be in the provider of nourishment, sustenance, and livelihood. Hence, colloquially the term would denote “the breadwinner.”

Then we come to the Arabic word “*nushuz*” which interpreted above as “arrogance.” This too, unfortunately, is not an accurate translation. “*Nushuz*” means self-destructive behavior. In the context above if it is solely and exclusively the woman who is demonstrating self-destructive by threatening to ruin her own marriage then a three-step approach is to be implemented. Again, realize that for this three-step process to be implemented the “*nushuz*” has to be coming *solely* from the wife. She has to be the person responsible for destroying the marriage.

The first step in this process is “*fa'izu hunna*” or to “advise them” as it is translated above. However, advice is one-sided. If someone gives advice it is only a one way conversation. Also, advice comes from a place of knowledge and some semblance of authority. Two people on equal footing in all regards are less likely to give advice. The Arabic term for advice would be “*naseeha*.” “*Fa'izu*” is something that is more interactive, conversational, down to earth, and humble. It is much more two-sided and reminiscent of mutual dialogue instead of one-sided advice. So the first step is to engage in mutually beneficial conversation that would help ease the tensions between the two of you. Interpreting this word in the modern context would lead to a translation like “counseling.”

So if attempts to engage in counseling fail then the next step is “*wahjuru hunna fi al-madaji*,” meaning to “then separate from them in the bed.” This does *not* mean leaving the house. This only means to separate the beds, to create a healthy distance, and to give breathing room. When being in close proximity only creates problems this is the next step. Again, this *ayah* is *not* talking about separation in marriage as we understand the bed. This is talking about sleeping in the same house in different places. So the couple is still passing each other in the hallway and the kitchen but they are not sleeping in the same bed. This is to give them some time and distance to clear their minds and think the problem through. To try to conceive how to remedy the matter.

Finally, if counseling didn't work and keeping a healthy distance didn't work then the next step is “*wadribuhunna*,” interpreted above as “and strike them.” The word “strike” was used by people to replace the word “beat” because the latter was somehow more offensive. I don't exactly comprehend how this works since in either case you're talking about a physical collision between two objects. This is where the problem occurs. This is where we start to wonder, “Does Islam condone domestic violence?” If you say no it doesn't then you have to deal with 4:34. That's when people start to wonder, “Am I sure that I want to be part of this?”

We are now going to engage in what is termed “textual analysis.” The very first thing you do with any language is take the word and exhaust it linguistically. This linguistic analysis is based on how the word was used, when it was used, and its meaning at the time revelation. We do *not* care for how the word is used in the modern Arabic language since words can drastically change their meanings or at the very least lose their variant meanings.

In the Qur'an the word “*daraba*” is used in three different meanings:

1. Hitting/Striking: In *Surah al-Anfal* Allah commands the angels to strike the enemy in the Battle of Badr. The word *daraba* is used here.
2. Giving an Example: The word “*daraba*” is used to mean this in *Surah Rum* and *Tahrim*. We see the words “*daraba mathalan*” or “presenting/giving an example.”
3. Traveling: Curiously, the word “*daraba*” is used twice in *Surah al-Nisa* to mean travel. “*Daraba fe sabeelillah*” and “*daraba fi al-ard*” respectively mean “you go forth in the path of Allah” and “you travel.”

So how are we to differentiate between these three meanings? The context is our clue. For example, in the *ayah* regarding the shortening of the prayer in *Surah al-Nisa* the word “*daraba*” means traveling. Such a word is called “*mushtaraq lafzi*.” This is a word that classically has multiple possible meanings. Deriving a ruling from such a word can only be done if there is strong evidence that it has only one meaning. So the reason why we can't just say that Islam allows for wife-beating is because the word has multiple meanings. We cannot say it is permissible until we have supporting arguments and evidences.

# LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

## QUR'ANIC CORROBORATION

Our first study is of other *ayaat* in the Qur'an. This is because “*al-qur'an yufassiru ba'dahu ba'dan*,” meaning “parts of the Qur'an explain others parts.” The Qur'an is a holistic and complete entity. No one verse speaks in isolation from the rest. That would actually be a textual flaw. Hence, we will look at what the Qur'an says in other places about marital disputes and fighting in between spouses.

وَإِنْ امْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُورًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا ۗ وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ ۗ وَأُحْضِرَتِ الْأَنْفُسُ الشُّحَّ ۗ وَإِنْ تُحْسِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٢٨﴾

And if a woman fears from her husband contempt or evasion, there is no sin upon them if they make terms of settlement between them - and settlement is best. And present in (human) souls is stinginess. But if you do good and fear Allah - then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted. [*al-Nisa*, 4:128]

This is the *ayah* that parallels the original *ayah* in question, 4:34. The use of the word *nushuz* here again, translated as “contempt or evasion,” is not a coincidence. The Qur'an here too talks about reconciliation and warns about being swayed by greed, stinginess, and ego. The primary thing we take away from this *ayah*, in relation to 4:34, is that the Qur'an emphasizes reconciliation.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا ۗ وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيِّنَةٍ ۗ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿١٩﴾

O you who have believed, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion. And do not make difficulties for them in order to take (back) part of what you gave them unless they commit a clear immorality. And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them - perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein much good. [*al-Nisa*, 4:19]

There are several benefits and important takeaways from this *ayah* with regards to our topic. Firstly, we cannot “inherit women by compulsion.” To put it in layman's terms we need to stop objectifying women as exchangeable commodities giving them to whomever we please as if they are

not their own person. Secondly, during divorce proceedings the man should not wrestle back the gifts he has given her out of spite. Thirdly, even if it is entirely the woman's fault and she is completely to blame for the ruin of the marriage then “*wa 'ashiru hunna bi al-ma'roofi*” emphasizing kind treatment even when they are in the wrong.

قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا  
وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٠١﴾ الَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ  
نِّسَائِهِمْ مِمَّا هُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِهِمْ ۖ إِنَّ أُمَّهَاتِهِمْ إِلَّا اللَّائِي  
وَلَدْنَهُمْ ۗ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَقُولُونَ مُنْكَرًا مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ وَزُورًا ۗ  
وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُوفٌ غَفُورٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْ  
نِّسَائِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مِّنْ  
قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسَا ۗ ذَلِكُمْ تُوَعِّظُونَ بِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا  
تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾ فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ  
مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسَا ۗ فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ  
فَإِطْعَامُ سِتِّينَ مِسْكِينًا ۗ ذَلِكُمْ لِيُتُومِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ  
ۗ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ۗ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ  
﴿١٠٤﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُجَادُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ كَمَا  
كُتِبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۗ وَوَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ ۗ  
وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾ يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ  
جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا ۗ أَحْصَاهُ اللَّهُ وَنَسُوهُ ۗ  
وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ  
مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ

Certainly has Allah heard the speech of the one who argues with you, (O Muhammad), concerning her husband and directs her complaint to Allah . And Allah hears your dialogue; indeed, Allah is Hearing and Seeing<sup>1</sup>. Those who pronounce *zihar* among you (to separate) from their wives - they are not (consequently) their mothers. Their mothers are none but those who gave birth to them. And indeed, they are saying an objectionable statement and a falsehood. But indeed, Allah is Pardoning and Forgiving<sup>2</sup>.

And those who pronounce *zihar* from their wives and then (wish to) go back on what they said - then (there must be) the freeing of a slave before they touch one another. That is what you are admonished thereby; and Allah is Acquainted with what you do<sup>3</sup>. And he who does not find (a slave) - then a fast for two months consecutively before they touch one another; and he who is unable - then the feeding of sixty poor persons.

That is for you to believe (completely) in Allah and His Messenger; and those are the limits (set by) Allah . And for the disbelievers is a painful punishment<sup>4</sup>. Indeed, those who oppose Allah and His Messenger are abased as those before them were abased. And We have certainly sent down verses of clear evidence. And for the disbelievers is a humiliating punishment<sup>5</sup>.

On the Day when Allah will resurrect them all and inform them of what they did. Allah had enumerated it, while they forgot it; and Allah is, over all things, Witness<sup>6</sup>. Have you not considered that Allah knows what is in the heavens and what is on the earth? There is in no private conversation three but that He is the fourth of them, nor are there five but that He is

تَجَوَى ثَلَاثَةَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةَ إِلَّا هُوَ  
 سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا أَذْنَىٰ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرَ إِلَّا هُوَ  
 مَعَهُمْ أَيُّنَ مَا كَانُوا ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا عَمِلُوا يَوْمَ  
 الْقِيَامَةِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾

the sixth of them - and no less than that and no more except that He is with them [in knowledge] wherever they are. Then He will inform them of what they did, on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed Allah is, of all things, Knowing<sup>7</sup>. [al-Mujadilah, 58:1-7]

The *ayaat* above are Allah's decree regarding a husband who pronounced *zihar* upon his wife. *Zihar* was an oath the Arabs took in which they declared, "You are like my mother now." This translates oddly because this is a figurative language. What it actually means is, "I don't love you anymore, I don't have any attraction to you in any way, I just don't see you that way, I don't want to be intimate any longer. However, this arrangement we have is very convenient for me. Having you as a wife works for me socially, economically, in terms of children, and you're even my maid. So I am going to take an oath that I am never ever going to sleep with you again. But you're still my wife and I am your husband for all other purposes. Also, you cannot divorce me."

As we can see *zihar* was very oppressive and abusive psychologically and emotionally. What was the Qur'an's reaction to such abuse from a husband to a wife? Either immediately divorce her, free a slave, fast for sixty continuous days, or feed sixty poor people for a day's meal. This is clearly a harsh "no, no" to emotional and physical abuse of women. Now considering that this is what is said with regards to mere emotional abuse how then can we assume that Allah would tolerate physical abuse?

Hence, we realize that we cannot extrapolate *yadribu hunna* to mean "beat them." All of the *ayaat* that we investigated showed us that the Qur'an encourages reconciliation and kindness towards women who have wronged you whilst condemning emotional and psychological abuse of women. None of this is supportive of the fact that *yadribu hunna* can in any way imply beating. It just doesn't fit the context of marital dispute in the Qur'an.

## HADITH CORROBORATION

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ، حَدَّثَنَا يَزِيدُ بْنُ زُرَيْعٍ، حَدَّثَنَا مَعْمَرٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ،  
عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا، قَالَتْ مَا ضَرَبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ  
وَسَلَّمَ خَادِمًا وَلَا امْرَأَةً قَطُّ. حكم: صحيح (الألباني)

'A'ishah (*radyallohu 'anha*) said,  
"The apostle of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) never struck  
a servant or a woman." [Abu Dawud]

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا وَكِيعٌ، عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ،  
عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ مَا ضَرَبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - خَادِمًا لَهٗ  
وَلَا امْرَأَةً وَلَا ضَرَبَ بِيَدِهِ شَيْئًا. حكم: صحيح

It was narrated that 'A'ishah (*radyallohu 'anha*) said, "The  
Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) never beat  
any of his servants, or wives, and his hands never hit anything."  
[Ibn Majah]

The two *ahadith* above demonstrate clearly the *sunnah* of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) with regards to hitting women which is never to engage in it. 'A'ishah (*radyallohu 'anha*) narrated it in the "*Sunan*" of Abu Dawud (*rahimahullah*) in clear detail. The word "*qatt*" at the end of that narration means "never, ever, ever." However, to make sure that there is no confusion in the matter at all she narrated it again as found in the "*Sunan*" of Ibn Majah (*rahimahullah*) with even more of an explicit rejection of that act. She made it simpler to understand for the audience by adding "his hands never hit anything."

Interestingly enough, Imam Abu Dawud (*rahimahullah*), 4<sup>th</sup> century *hijri* scholar and student of Imams Ahmad bin Hanbal and Bukhari (*rahimahumullah*), had a chapter of *ahadith* titled "*babu tahrimi darbu mar'ah*" or "Chapter on the Impermissibility of Hitting Women."

أَخْبَرَنِي أَحْمَدُ بْنُ يُونُسَ الْمُهَلَّبِيُّ التَّيْسَابُورِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا عُمَرُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ  
رَزِينٍ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ بْنُ حُسَيْنٍ، عَنْ دَاوُدَ الْوَرَّاقِ، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ حَكِيمٍ،  
عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ جَدِّهِ، مُعَاوِيَةَ الْقُشَيْرِيِّ قَالَ أَتَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ  
وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ فَقُلْتُ مَا تَقُولُ فِي نِسَائِنَا قَالَ " أَطْعِمُوهُنَّ مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ

وَإِكْسُوهُنَّ مِمَّا تَكْتَسُونَ وَلَا تَضْرِبُوهُنَّ وَلَا تَقْبَحُوهُنَّ . "

Narrated Mu'awiyah al-Qushayri,  
 "I went to the Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and asked him, 'What do you say (command) about our wives?'  
 He replied, 'Give them food what you have for yourself, and clothe them by which you clothe yourself, and do not beat them, and do not revile them.'" [Abu Dawud]

This is a narration that occurs in the last year before the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) passed away. This was known as the "Year of Delegations" or "*'aam al-wufood*" wherein various tribes came to the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) to accept Islam and form treaties. Also, they sought religious knowledge from the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) which they would take back to their peoples. These rulings were some of the latest rulings and are not considered to be abrogated in anyway. They are the final word on these matters. This is the context of this narration.

The first part of the narration follows in sync with what we've learnt of good treatment towards wives from our Qur'anic corroboration. That we must feed them and clothe them in the save fashion we feed and clothe ourselves. However, the last part is translated as "do not beat them." The Arabic for this is "*la yadribu hunna*." The same exact root word of *daraba* is used to explicitly say that beating is impermissible. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was not used the word *daraba* by accident. It is entirely likely that he was referencing the verse in question when he made this statement. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) cannot contradict the Qur'an and his words tell us that we cannot beat women. Therefore, *daraba* in the verse above cannot mean "to beat" or "to strike."

وعن فاطمة بنت قيس رضي الله عنها قالت: أتيت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، فقلت: إن أبا الجهم ومعاوية خطباني؟ فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "أما معاوية، فصعلوك لا مال له، وأما أبو الجهم، فلا يضع العصا عن عاتقه" ((متفق عليه)).

وفي رواية لمسلم: "وأما أبو الجهم فضراب للنساء" وهو تفسير لرواية: "لا يضع العصا عن عاتقه" وقيل: معناه: كثير الأسفار.

Fatimah bint Qais (*radyalAllahu 'anha*) said:  
 I came to the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and said to him, "Mu'awiyah and Abul-Jahm sent me a proposal of marriage." The Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said,  
 "Mu'awiyah is destitute and he has no property, and Abul-Jahm is very hard on women."  
 [Bukhari and Muslim].

At the moment we have only defined what *daraba* does not mean. We still need evidence to

define what it does mean. In this *hadith* a *sahaba* is asking the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) for marriage advice with regards to two suitors. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said regarding the first one that he is much too poor and cannot give you the lifestyle you are used to. It is important to note the *sahaba's* background. In her previous marriage her *mahr* alone was a giant garden and that's the lifestyle she was used to. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) gave his advice with great personal insight. With regards to the second suitor it was said, “*darrabun nisa*” or “*fa la yad' al-'saa 'an 'aatiqah*” which the translator wrote as “very hard on women.” This is a wholly inaccurate translation. The translator has taken *daraba* here to mean beat but the form of the word makes it an extreme kind of beating. The literal translation is that the person never puts their bat down from their shoulder, they are constantly waiting to beat women senseless. That is what the literal translation is. However, when the *hadith* was explained, as it is written in the Arabic text, it was said that it means “*katheerat al-asfaar*” meaning “excessively in traveling.” Surely enough, when we read the biography of Abul-Jahm we find that he used to travel a lot. So we realize that *daraba* is used to mean “travel” in a marriage context in an authentic *hadith*!

مصنف ابن ابي شيبة – (٨/٣٦٨)

٢٥٩٦٧ – حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُهُ ، عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ سَعِيدٍ ، عَنِ الْقَاسِمِ ، أَنَّ رِجَالاً  
نَهَوْا عَنْ ضَرْبِ النِّسَاءِ ، وَقِيلَ : لَنْ يَضْرِبَ خِيَارَكُمْ ، قَالَ الْقَاسِمُ : وَكَانَ  
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَيْرَهُمْ كَانَ لَا يَضْرِبُ .

Narrated Qasim, “Some men were forbidden from hitting women and it was said, 'The best of you will not hit [them].’” Qasim said “And the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was the best of you and he didn't used to hit [women].’”  
[Abi Shaybah]

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِأَزْوَاجِكَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُرِيدْنَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا  
وَزِينَتَهَا فَتَعَالَيْنَ أُمَتِّعْكُنَّ وَأُسَرِّحْكُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا  
(٢٨) وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُرِيدْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالذَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ فَإِنَّ  
اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْمُحْسِنَاتِ مِنْكُنَّ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (٢٩)

O Prophet, say to your wives, "If you should desire the worldly life and its adornment, then come, I will provide for you and give you a gracious release<sup>28</sup>. But if you should desire Allah and His Messenger and the home of the Hereafter - then indeed, Allah has prepared for the doers of good among you a great reward<sup>29</sup>." [*al-Ahzab*, 33:28-29]

Finally, we have the famous marital dispute between the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and his wives. This dispute occurred whilst the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was married to all of his wives. We have to understand that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) never lived a luxurious life. However, wealth began to come in to the *ummah* after the Battle of Badr and especially at the Battle of Khaybar where the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was gifted the Plantations of



Fadak. This plantation was the sole source of the Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) income to sustain his livelihood. In the “*Musnad*” of Imam Ahmad (*rahimahullah*) there is a *hadith* where the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was given a choice by Allah between being “*malakun nabi*” or an “*'abdunn rasul*” respectively meaning “a king who is a prophet” or a “slave who is a messenger.” The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), upon Jibril's (*alayh as-Salam*) recommendation, chose the latter since a *rasul* is of a higher status than a *nabi*.

Sometime after this incident the wives of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) were led in a joint effort by Hafsa and 'A'isha (*radiAllahu 'ahuma*) in attempting to pressure him into providing a better lifestyle for them. There is an extremely lengthy *hadith* found in *Sahih Muslim* in the “Book of Divorce” which is narrated by 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (*radyallohu 'anhu*) to ibn Abbas (*radyallohu 'anhu*) which details this incident. Eventually, the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) took an oath to remain away from his wives for a month and went to a private room in the masjid. Things were so tense that all of Medina thought that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) had divorced his wives. Eventually, 'Umar (*radyallohu 'anhu*) relaxed the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and he returned to his wives on the 29<sup>th</sup> day and recited to them two verses from *Surah al-Ahzab* regarding this incident.

What do we learn from this incident? That the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) himself never hit his wives when he was experiencing marital troubles. Although we don't know the first two phases but we clearly see the third phase where he separated from his wives for an entire month. Hence, the meaning of “*daraba*” being traveling or going away, a trial by separation, is evidenced by this very incident.

An important sidenote is that there are many narrations, most of which claim to be from ibn Abbas (*radyallohu 'anhu*), which interpret “*daraba*” to mean a lit hit with a *miswaak*. Almost all of these narrations are extremely weak to the point that absolutely no rulings or benefits can be derived from them. Hence, such *ahadith* are not worthy of this discussion. We are only using *ahadith* that are vastly accepted by *muhaddithoon* to be legitimate and authentic.

Finally, when we look back at the *ayah* and contextually interpret the three-step process we get, “But those [wives] from whom you fear self-destructive behavior from – [first] engage in mutual dialogue; [then if it persists] leave them [alone] in their beds; and [finally] separate from them.” This is the interpretation we arrive at when we corroborate with the Qur'an and *sunnah*. Clearly, Islam has no room at all for domestic violence. If psychological and emotional abuse are shunned then obviously physical abuse would be too.

## REVELATION IS A GUIDING LIGHT

A modern day Muslim can eventually feel like their entire religion is a group of controversial issues bunched together. “Can I beat my wife? Do we kill apostates? Slavery?” This is confusing and distressing. Instead, we should look at the bigger picture. We have to gain perspective on the true purpose of the Qur'an. That the Qur'an is *not* a bunch of controversies waiting to explode in our faces but rather a guiding revelation. A light that helps us come out of the depths of ignorance.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بُرْهَانٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَأَنْزَلْنَا  
إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٧٤﴾

O mankind, there has come to you a conclusive proof from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a clear light. [*al-Nisa*, 4:174]

رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ آمِنُوا  
بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا ۗ رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا  
سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَقَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ ﴿١٩٣﴾

Our Lord, indeed we have heard a caller calling to faith, [saying], “Believe in your Lord,” and we have believed. Our Lord, so forgive us our sins and remove from us our misdeeds and cause us to die with the righteous.  
[*Ale-Imraan*, 3:193]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ  
الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِن  
قَبْلُ ۗ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ  
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١٣٦﴾

O you who have believed, believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Book that He sent down upon His Messenger and the Scripture which He sent down before. And whoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day has certainly gone far astray.  
[*al-Nisa*, 4:136]

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُّصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن  
بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾

No disaster strikes except by permission of Allah. And whoever believes in Allah - He will guide his heart. And Allah is Knowing of all things. [*al-Taghabun*, 64:11]

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the

فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ مِّمَّ الْمِصْبَاحِ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ مِّمَّ الزُّجَاجَةِ  
 كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ  
 لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ  
 تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ ۚ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ ۗ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ  
 يَشَاءُ ۗ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ  
 شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٥﴾ فِي بُيُوتٍ أَدَانَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تُرْفَعَ  
 وَيُذَكَّرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ  
 ﴿٣٦﴾ رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ  
 وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ ۗ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ  
 فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ ﴿٣٧﴾ لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ  
 مَا عَمَلُوا وَيَزِيدَهُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ  
 يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَاهُمْ  
 كَسْرَابٌ بِقِيَعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمَانُ مَاءً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُ  
 لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا وَوَجَدَ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ فَوَفَّاهُ حِسَابَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ  
 سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٣٩﴾ أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرِ لُجِّيٍّ  
 يَعْشَاهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ۗ  
 ظُلُمَاتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ إِذَا أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ لَمْ  
 يَكِدْ يَرَاهَا ۗ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ  
 نُورٍ ﴿٤٠﴾

glass as if it were a pearly (white) star lit from (the oil of) a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things<sup>35</sup>.

[Such niches are] in mosques which Allah has ordered to be raised and that His name be mentioned therein; exalting Him within them in the morning and the evenings<sup>36</sup>.

[Are] men whom neither commerce nor sale distracts from the remembrance of Allah and performance of prayer and giving of zakah. They fear a Day in which the hearts and eyes will [fearfully] turn about<sup>37</sup> -

That Allah may reward them [according to] the best of what they did and increase them from His bounty. And Allah gives provision to whom He wills without account<sup>38</sup>.

But those who disbelieved - their deeds are like a mirage in a lowland which a thirsty one thinks is water until, when he comes to it, he finds it is nothing but finds Allah before Him, and He will pay him in full his due; and Allah is swift in account<sup>39</sup>.

Or [they are] like darknesses within an unfathomable sea which is covered by waves, upon which are waves, over which are clouds - darknesses, some of them upon others. When one puts out his hand [therein], he can hardly see it. And he to whom Allah has not granted light - for him there is no light<sup>40</sup>. [*al-Nur*, 25:35-40]

## CONFIDENT FAITH

١٩٠- وعن أنس رضي الله عنه أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لقي رجلاً يقال له حارثة في بعض سكك المدينة فقال: "كيف أصبحت يا حارثة؟" قال: أصبحت مؤمناً حقاً، قال: "إن لكل إيمان حقيقة فما حقيقة إيمانك؟" قال: عزفت نفسي عن الدنيا فأظلمات نهاري وأسهرت ليلي وكأني بعرش ربي بارزاً وكأني بأهل الجنة في الجنة يتنعمون فيها وكأني بأهل النار في النار يعذبون. فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: "أصبحت فالزم مؤمن نور الله قلبه". رواه البزار وفيه يوسف بن عطية لا يحنج به.

Anas (*radyallohu 'anhu*) said that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) came across a man called Haritah (*radyallohu 'anhu*) in some street of Medina and said, "How are you doing, o Hairtah?" He replied, "I have become a true believer!" he, (the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*)) replied, "Every claim has some proof so what is the proof for your claim?" He said, "I have abstained myself from the world so I fast by day and pray by night. (It's) as if I stand before the Throne my Lord! (It's) as if I am with the people are Paradise as they are rejoicing in Paradise! (It's) as if I am with the People of the Fire as they are being punished in the Fire!" So the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), replied, "You've found it! So hold on to it! (O Lord,) this is a believer so illuminate his heart!"

[Al-Bazzar]

(حديث مرفوع) حَدَّثَنَا هَلْفُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ ، قَالَ . حِ صَالِحُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ ، قَالَ . حِ إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ التَّرْجَمَانِيُّ ، قَالَ . حِ يُونُسُ بْنُ عَطِيَّةِ الصَّفَّارِ ، قَالَ . حِ ثَابِتُ الْبُنَائِي ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ ، قَالَ : بَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَمْشِي إِذِ اسْتَقْبَلَهُ شَابٌّ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ ، فَقَالَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : " كَيْفَ أَصْبَحْتَ يَا حَارِثَةُ ؟ " فَقَالَ أَصْبَحْتُ مُؤْمِنًا بِاللَّهِ تَعَالَى حَقًّا ، قَالَ : " أَنْظِرْ إِلَى مَا تَقُولُ فَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ قَوْلٍ حَقِيقَةً " ، فَقَالَ : يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، عَزَفْتُ نَفْسِي عَنِ الدُّنْيَا ، فَاسْهَرْتُ لَيْلِي ، وَأَظْمَأْتُ نَهَارِي ، فَكَأَنِّي بَعْرَشِ رَبِّي بَارِزًا ، وَكَأَنِّي أَنْظُرُ إِلَى أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ يَتَزَاوَرُونَ فِيهَا ، وَكَأَنِّي أَنْظُرُ إِلَى أَهْلِ النَّارِ يَتَتَعَاوَنُونَ فِيهَا ، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : " أَبْصَرْتَ فَالْزِمْ وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ أَصْبَحْتُ فَالْزِمْ ، عَبْدُ تَوَرَّ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى الْإِيمَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ " ، فَقَالَ : يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، اذْعُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى لِي بِالشَّهَادَةِ ، فَدَعَا لَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، فَتَوَدَّيَ يَوْمًا فِي الْخَيْلِ : يَا خَيْلَ اللَّهِ ارْكَبِي ، فَكَانَ أَوَّلَ فَارِسٍ رَكِبَ ، وَأَوَّلَ فَارِسٍ اسْتَشْهَدَ ، فَتَبَعَهُ أُمَّهُ ، فَجَاءَتْ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، فَقَالَتْ : أَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ ابْنِي ، فَإِنَّ يَكُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ فَلَنْ أَبْكِي ، وَلَنْ أَجْزَعَ ، وَإِنْ يَكُنْ عَيْرٌ ذَلِكَ بَكَيْتُ مَا عِشْتُ فِي الدُّنْيَا ، قَالَ : " أُمَّ حَارِثَةَ ، إِنَّهَا لَيْسَتْ بِجَنَّةٍ ، وَلَكِنَّهَا جَنَّةٌ فِي جَنَانٍ ، وَالْحَارِثَةُ فِي الْفِرْدَوْسِ الْأَعْلَى " ، فَرَجَعَتْ ، وَهِيَ تَضْحَكُ ،

وَتَقُولُ : بَخٍ بَخٍ لَكَ يَا حَارِثَةُ "

Anas bin Malik (*radyallohu 'anhu*) narrated that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was walking when he came across a person from the Ansar and so he said, "How are you doing, o Haritha?" So he, (Haritha), replied, "I have become a true believe in Allah, may He be exalted!" He, the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), replied, "Look to what you're saying. Most definitely, every statement needs proof."

He said, "O Messenger of Allah, I have abstained myself from the world. So I fast by day and pray by night. So (it's) as if I stand before the Throne my Lord! (It's) as if I see the people are Paradise are rejoicing in it! (It's) as if I see the People of the Fire being punished in it!" So the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), replied, "You've seen it! So hold on to it!" And in another narration, "You've found it! So hold on to it!" (and the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) made *du'a*.) "(This is) a slave! Allah, may He be exalted, illuminate the faith in his heart." So he, (Haritha), said, "O Messenger of Allah, make *du'a* to Allah for my martyrdom." And so the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) made *du'a*.

So the knights were gathered one day and ordered to mount their horses and attack. The first rider, (Haritha), was the first to ride into battle and the first to be martyred! When the news of his martyrdom reached his mother, she went to the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and cried, "Tell me about my son o Messenger of Allah!" She continued to say, "If he is in Paradise then I will neither cry nor be worried. But if it was anything other than that I will cry as long as I live in this world." The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) replied, "O mother of Haritha! Indeed, it is not a [mere] Paradise but a Paradise within many a Paradise." He continued, "And Haritha is in the the highest *firdous*!" So she went back lunging and said, "I am impressed o Haritha!"

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٢٤﴾ تُؤْتِي أُكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا ۗ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ ۗ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ ﴿٢٧﴾

Have you not considered how Allah presents an example, [making] a good word like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed and its branches [high] in the sky<sup>24</sup>? It produces its fruit all the time, by permission of its Lord. And Allah presents examples for the people that perhaps they will be reminded<sup>25</sup>.

And the example of a bad word is like a bad tree, uprooted from the surface of the earth, not having any stability<sup>26</sup>.

Allah keeps firm those who believe, with the firm word, in worldly life and in the Hereafter. And Allah sends astray the wrongdoers. And Allah does what He wills<sup>27</sup>. [*Ibrahim*, 14:24-27]

# PART II

# PRINCIPLES OF TEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

The Qur'an, as stated by Imam al-Suyuti (*rahimahullah*) in his seminal work “*al-Itqan fi 'Ulum'l-Qur'an*,” is defined as “The book containing the speech of God revealed to the Prophet Muahmmad (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) in Arabic and is *mutawatir* (continuously transmitted to us through various chains making it indubitable).”

The *mufassirin* (exegetes) have listed fifteen fields that must be mastered before one can authoritatively interpret the Qur'an.

## THE FIFTEEN FIELDS OF MASTERY FOR PROPER QUR'ANIC INTERPRETATION

1. *al-Lughat* (Classical Arabic): Once learns the meaning of each word. Muhajir (*radyAllahu 'anhu*) said, “It is not permissible for one who holds faith in Allah and the Day of Judgement to speak on the Qur'an without learning classical Arabic.” In this respect, it should be known that classical Arabic must be mastered in its entirety because one word may have various meanings a person may only know two or three of them where as the meaning of that word in the Qur'an may be altogether different.
2. *as-Nahw* (Arabic Philology): It is important to know because any change in the diacritical marks affects the meaning, and understanding the diacritical marks depends on the science of Arabic philology.
3. *as-Sarf* (Arabic Morphology): It is significant because changes in the configuration of verb and noun forms changes the meaning. Ibn Faris said, “A person who misses out on Arabic morphology has missed out on a lot.”
4. *al-Ishtiqaq* (Trilateral Root Study): It should be learned because sometimes one word derives from two root words, the meaning of each root word being different. This is the science of etymology, which explains the reciprocal relation and radical composition between the root and the derived word. For example, *masih* (messiah) refers to two different people, namely 'Isa (*'alayhi as-Salam*) and al-Dajjal (Antichrist). This is because the word *masih* derives from the root word *masah*, which means “to feel something and to touch something with a wet hand,” but also derives from the root word *masahat*, which means “to measure.” When referring to 'Isa (*'alayhi as-Salam*) it is used in the former usage as he used to heal by using his touch by the permission of Allah. When referring to ad-Dajjal it is taken in the latter meaning since he will cover vast distances and travel abundantly.

5. *'Ilm'l-Ma'ani* (Semantics): The science by which one figures the syntax through the meaning of a sentence.
6. *'Ilm'l Bayan*: The science by which one learns the similes, metaphors, metonymies, *zuhur* (evident meanings) and the *khafa* (hidden meanings) of the Arabic language.
7. *'Ilm'l-Badi'*: The science by which one learns to interpret sentences which reveal the beauty and the eloquence of the spoken and written word. The above-mentioned three sciences are categorized as *'ilm'l-balagha* (science of rhetoric). It is one of the most important sciences to a *mufassir* because he is able to reveal the miraculous nature of the Qur'an through these three sciences.
8. *'Ilm'l-Qura'at*: Dialecticisms of the different readings of the Qur'an are important because one *qira'ah* (reading) of the Qur'an may differ in meaning from another based on the difference in meanings.
9. *'Ilm'l-'Aqa'id*: It is important because we cannot attribute the liter meaning of some *ayah* to Allah. In this case, one will be required to interpret the *ayah* as in “the hand of Allah is over their hand.”
10. *Usul'l-Fiqh*: The principles of Islamic jurisprudence. It is important to master this field so one understands the methodology of legal derivation and interpretation.
11. *Asbab'l-Nuzul*: Through this field one learns the circumstances in which an *ayah* is revealed. It is important because the meaning of the *ayah* is more clearly understood once the circumstances in which it was revealed are known. Sometimes, the meaning of an *ayah* is wholly dependent on its historical background. There are two extremes, each breeding the other. One claiming that the Qur'an is only applicable in its historical context whilst the other claiming that the Qur'an is spawned from a historical vacuum. Both are forms of distortion. For example, the *ayaat* of *qitaal*, if taken out of their historical context, have no structure and can be applied anywhere. We have to study the historical context in order to derive certain general guidelines and principles.
12. *'Ilm'l-Naskh*: This is knowledge of the abrogated *ayah*. This field is more important because abrogated rulings must be separated from the applied rulings. Amusingly enough the word “abrogation” is not used by anyone other than Muslims in the English language. We should just stick to calling it by its name, *naskh*.
13. *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence): This field is important because one cannot gain an overview of any issue until one has understood its particulars. One has to familiarize themselves with court rulings that have already been established. For example, there is a long standing tradition, attested to by Imams Abu Ya'la and Sarakshi (*rahimahumullah*) amongst many others, that if a wife came to the court and complained that her husband had beaten her then he would be reprimanded and sometimes even ordered to be beaten himself. In some situations he is separated from the wife and ordered to grant a divorce. Such cases have been documented in all four *madhabs*.



Therefore, deriving *daraba* to mean beat is a clear contradiction.

14. *Ilm'l-Hadith*: This is knowledge of the *ahadith* that explain *mujmal* (general) *ayat*.
15. *Ilm Laddani*: Last but not least is the endowed knowledge which Allah grants to His closest servants. They are the servants indicated in the *hadith*: “Allah will grant one who acts upon whatever he knows from a knowledge he never knew.” Sometimes spiritual maturity leads to a better, more mature, and nuanced understanding of the text.

## TYPES OF *TAFSIR*

Today, we have a phenomenon where more and more books are being authored and translated regarding Islam than ever before. It's not all bad but it's not all good either. For traditional Islamic knowledge Arabic has always been a prerequisite. However, as more and more books are being translated it leads to a good general understanding but also a significant void in what the reader can grasp. The reader doesn't grasp what the Qur'an said directly. They don't understand what the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said originally. They merely understand a translation of it.

Who is the author? What is their background? What is their qualification? What is their expertise? We're not judging but we need this information. If someone is a linguistic scholar and interprets linguistic texts then that's great. But what if such a person starts translating works of *fiqh*? A *fiqh* scholar may have excellent legal extrapolations from the Qur'an but his commentary on social issues in the Qur'an might be tragic.

We have to understand when we read what we're reading. What is the objective of this particular *tafsir*? What is it trying to accomplish? *Tafsir* comes from the word *fassara* meaning “to open up” or “to disclose” something. Hence, *tafasir* are meant to help us uncover deeper secrets within the Qur'an.

1. *Tafsir bi'l-riwayah* (*Tafsir* by Transmission), also known as *tafsir bi'l-ma'thur*, is *tafsir* that solely employs other Qur'anic *ayaat*, *ahadith* of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), and statements of the *sahaba* to comment and explain the verses of the Qur'an. This genre of *tafsir* is by and far the most authoritative. Prominent examples of such *tafasir* are Imam Ibn Kathir's (*rahimahullah*) “*Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Adheem*,” and Imam al-Tabari's (*rahimahullah*) “*Jami' al-Bayan 'an ta'wil ay al-Qur'an*.”

These look at the contexts of verses. What does the *ayah* before and after it say? Where does it occur? Where else is this issue addressed in the Qur'an? What did the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) do with regards to this in his life? How did the *sahaba* understand and implement the *ayah*? Such questions are important to gain a deeper understanding of a single *ayah*. These *tafasir* are, as stated above, extremely authoritative, thorough, and elaborate. It's just about the most objective analysis we can have regarding the Qur'an.

2. *Tafsir bi'l-ra'y* (*Tafsir* by Sound Opinion), also known as *tafsir bi'l-dirayah*, this is literally “*tafsir* by opinion.” This may sound reckless but it is not mere opinion that is being presented but rather research into intricate Arabic linguistic matters and historical sources to do *tafsir*. Hence, the name has been interpreted as “sound” opinion because the opinions are often backed by the conventions of the Arabic language. Such *tafasir* cannot contradict the boundaries drawn by *tafsir bi'l-riwayah*. The religion cannot contradict itself. That would lead to doubt, confusion, and chaos.
3. *Tafsir bi'l-isharah* (*Tafsir* by Indication/Signs) is the least authoritative *tafsir*. In fact, this *tafsir* is wholly personal and subjective and thus is entirely irrelevant to matters of legislation. It

would read much like a journal or a diary. Certain people may relate to the contents in it and others may not depending on the reader's sympathies. These are still useful as the readers that relate to the content may find them extremely beneficial.

Some *tafsir* in this genre are also noted to be extremely unsound. Certain popular *tafaseer* from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> century *ayat al-dayn* to mean that women are half as intelligent as men. Their “evidence” was their experience that they found women in their community to be irrational and intelligent. Obviously, this is not based on any *ayaat* or *ahadith* and thus is completely subjective. This is nothing but somebody's own fancy. Another particular early *tafsir* interpreted the “two bodies of water” in the above below to mean Ali (*radyAllahu 'anhu*) and Fatima (*radyAllahu 'anha*) and the “barrier they cannot pass” to mean Hasan (*radyAllahu 'anhu*) and Hussein (*radyallahu 'anhu*). Such interpretations are entirely baseless and often nonsensical.

مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ ﴿١٩﴾  
بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ ﴿٢٠﴾

He has merged two bodies of water, meeting together.  
Between them is a barrier they cannot pass.  
[*al-Rahmaan*, 55:19-20]

## PRINCIPLES OF UNDERSTANDING THE *HADITH*

1. The *sanad* (chain of narration) is the first and foremost aspect of the understanding a *hadith*. *Ahadith* are reports of either an action or a statement of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). Each *hadith* has been transmitted from the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) to the *muhaddith* (*hadith* scholar). The *hadith* contains a chronological list of narrators who have transmitted the *hadith* from the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) to the *muhaddith* and this is known as the *isnad*. *Sanad*, literally “support,” is so named because the *muhaddith* would rely on it in order to assess the *hadith*'s validity. The study of the narrators is called *'ilm ar-rijaal* (knowledge of the men).
2. The *matn* (text of a *hadith*) is the next thing to consider when understand a *hadith*. The *matn* contains the actual quote or description of the action of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and is what the original narrator said. The *matn* cannot directly contradict other *ahadith* and the Qur'an. If they do they must be checked for a proper *isnad* and then attempted to be reconciled.
3. Literary appreciation of the Arabic language is the next requirement in understanding *ahadith*. Once we realize that the *hadith* has a sound *isnad* and *matn* then we need to have a solid grasp on Classical Arabic in order to fully comprehend the *hadith*. Using our knowledge of Classical Arabic we can reject *ahadith* which contain obvious grammatical errors because the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was eloquent and did not speak incoherently. Furthermore, we can employ our knowledge of *balagha* to understand more nuanced elements of the Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) speech.
4. Interpretation in the light of the Qur'an is also an incredibly important principle of understanding *ahadith*. Islam is a holistic religion in which one cannot single out a *hadith* without any regard for the Qur'an's say on the matter and derive rulings from it. There is a hierarchy in place and as elevated as the *ahadith* in their importance they still are to be viewed in light of the Qur'an. Not following this principle can lead to a lot of unnecessary contradictions in our religious understanding where verses of the Qur'an will conflict with our interpretations of *ahadith*. If we find something in Bukhari and Muslim that seemingly contradicts the *ayaat* of the Qur'an we cannot discard those *ahadith*. This is because the same process of verification used for the Qur'an is used for those works. Hence, we have to check our understanding of the *ahadith* instead of discarding them.
5. Understanding the occasion of a *hadith* is crucial. Each *hadith* is a snippet from a conversation and things can easily be taken out of context. We all speak contextually and much of our speech is a reaction to the speech of others. This is in stark contrast to the Qur'an which is God's monologue, containing no back and forth. However, the Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) speech was not a monologue. He was a responsive and empathetic individual who reacted to the queries of others and adjusted his speech appropriately to convey his message. This factor must be kept in mind and all *ahadith* should be viewed in their context so that we can understand the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said or did what he did.

6. Studying all variant texts of a *hadith* is the final principle. One cannot simply take one particular narration and disregard its variants and related narrations. One particular *sahaba* (companion) might remember one part of the conversation and pass it on whilst another remembers a different part of the narration. Thus, one would need to collect and piece together all the variant narrations, much like putting together a puzzle, in order to fully understand the *hadith*. Furthermore, a conversation might occur on a topic with the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and a supplementary or complementary conversation may occur later on the same topic. If you only limit yourself to one set of *ahadith* on a topic instead of all the *ahadith* then you run the grave risk of misunderstanding the Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) gorgeous and truthful speech.

## ***USUL 'L-FIQH***

*Much of this material was covered briefly in class. I have supplanted the class notes with related material found in Prof. Muhammad Hashim Kamali's "Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence."*

### **RULES OF INTERPRETATION: *AL-DALALAT*(TEXTUAL IMPLICATIONS)**

In order to derive legal rulings from the Qur'an and *sunnah* one must have a clear understanding of what each of the sources actually mean. However, due to the different shades of meaning in each of the texts we face certain difficulties. Any scholar interpreting the texts has the responsibility of uncovering every possible meaning within the texts. Jurists such as Imam Dabbusi and Bazdawī suggested four types of textual implications.

The first is called *'ibarat'l-nass* (the explicit meaning) and it is the meaning derived from the explicit meaning of the words and sentences used in the text. This is the immediate and most obvious meaning of the text. It is considered the dominant and most authoritative meaning. The effect of *'ibarat'l-nass* is that it seemingly conveys a *hukm qat'ii* (definitive ruling) on its own. An example is the following *ayah* from *Surah al-Nisa*:

And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of (other) women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then (marry only) one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable that you may not incline (to injustice).  
[*al-Nisa*, 4:3]

The explicit meaning here leads us to conclude: a) the legality of marriage; b) limiting of polygamy to four wives; c) remaining monogamous if polygamy is feared to lead to injustice; d) requirement that orphaned girls must be treated fairly.

*Isharat'l-Nass* (The Alluded Meaning) is the indicated meaning which is alluded within the text and rationally associated with it. It can be detected via further investigation of detectable signs therein. An example is the following *ayah* from *Surah al-Baqarah*:

There is no blame upon you if you divorce women you have not touched nor specified for them a dower. But give them (a gift of) compensation - the wealthy according to his capability and the poor according to his capability - a provision according to what is acceptable, a duty upon the doers of good.  
[*al-Baqarah*, 2:236]

The alluded meaning here is the legality of concluding a marriage contract without the

specification of a dower. This is derived by rationally proving that one cannot divorce a woman without having specified a dower without having specified it in the first place during the marriage contract.

*Dalalat'l-nass* (The Inferred Meaning) is the meaning derived from the spirit and rationale of a legal text, regardless of the meaning not being explicitly stated. Meaning, the spirit of the law demands that this meaning be kept into account. This methodology can also be considered *qiyas*, or analogical deduction. A good example is the following *ayah* from *Surah al-Isra*:

And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age (while) with you, say not to them, "uff," and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word.  
[*al-Isra*, 17:23]

Explicitly speaking, the law only forbids saying “uff” to parents. However, it is the spirit of the law and its rationale that demand us to realize that all forms of verbal, physical, emotional, and psychological abuse against parents are not allowed.

*Iqtida'l-nass* (The Required Meaning) is the meaning which the text itself does not state however it is logically necessary in order to for the text to fulfill its purpose. We can consider this a textual “fill in the blanks” where a word is omitted but the meaning is still present and we are expected to grasp it. A good example is the following *ayah* from *Surah Nisa*:

Prohibited to you are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your father's sisters, your mother's sisters, your brother's daughters, your sister's daughters, your [milk] mothers who nursed you, your sisters through nursing, your wives' mothers, and your step-daughters under your guardianship [born] of your wives unto whom you have gone in...  
[*al-Nisa*, 4:23]

It is obvious that if the meaning is taken at face value then all these relations are *haram* for us. However, this makes no sense logically and the text requires us to “fill in the blanks” and complete the meaning. Thus, the words “for marriage” must be inserted into our understanding in order to complete its meaning. Hence, the *ayah* would read as, “Prohibited to you [in marriage] are you mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your father's sisters, your mother's sisters...”

## CLEAR WORDS

*Zahir* (manifest) is the least clear of the “clear words.” It is a word which has a clear meaning which does not fit within its general context and thus is subject to interpretation. If the *zahir* is general it may be specified and if it is specified it may be made general. Also, the literal meaning of the *zahir*

may be abandoned in favor of a metaphorical meaning. Lastly, the *zahir* was suspect to being abrogated during the life of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*).

<p>And (also prohibited to you are all) married women except those your right hands possess. (This is) the decree of Allah upon you. <b>And lawful to you are (all others) beyond these,</b> (provided) that you seek them (in marriage) with (gifts from) your property, desiring chastity, not unlawful sexual intercourse. [<i>al-Nisa</i>, 4:24]</p>	<p>And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then <b>marry those that please you of (other) women, two or three or four.</b> But if you fear that you will not be just, then (marry only) one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable that you may not incline (to injustice). [<i>al-Nisa</i>, 4:3]</p>
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For example, *Surah al-Nisa* 4:24, following certain prohibitions for marriage, states that, “And lawful to you are (all others) beyond these.” The *zahir* meaning of the text indicates that limitless polygamy is allowed with the exception of the noted women. However, *Surah al-Nisa* 4:3 limits this by stating, “then marry those that please you of (other) women, two or three or four.”

*Nass* (explicit) is a word which has a clear meaning which fits in within the general context. However, it is still open to interpretation to a degree. If there is a conflict between a *zahir* and a *nass* then the *nass* always takes precedence on account of it being the clearer word. These too are subject to being abrogated during the life of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*).

<p><b>There is no blame upon those who believe and do righteousness concerning what they eat</b> if they fear Allah and believe and do righteous deeds, and then fear Allah and believe, and then fear Allah and do good; and Allah loves the doers of good. [<i>al-Ma'idah</i>, 5:93]</p>	<p>O you who have believed, indeed, <b>intoxicants, gambling, idols, and divining arrows are but an abomination from the work of Satan, so avoid it</b> that you may be successful. [<i>al-Ma'idah</i>, 5:93]</p>
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An example of such a conflict between the *nass* and the *zahir* is shown in the *ayaat*. *al-Ma'idah* 5:93 states, “There is no blame upon those who believe and do righteousness concerning what they eat,” and the *zahir* would mean that all food and drink is permissible. However, *Surah al-Ma'idah* 5:90 states, “O ye who believe! Strong drink and games of chance and idols and divining arrows are only an infamy of Satan's handiwork. So avoid it that you may be successful.” The *nass* of 5:90 is the prohibition of drinking which is in conflict with the *zahir* of 5:93 of all food and drink being permissible. Hence, the *nass* of 5:90 takes precedence over the *zahir* of 5:93.

*Mufassar* (unequivocal) is a word whose meaning is clear, it fits contextually, and it is *not* open for interpretation. It is *fard* (obligatory) to follow the *mufassar* and not to interpret it in any way other than the obvious unless it has been abrogated during the life of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). *Mufassar* can also refer to things that are explained in other texts.

<p>And they were not commanded except to worship</p>	<p>Indeed, We sent the Qur'an down during <i>laylat</i></p>
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Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth, **and to establish salah and to give zakah**. And that is the correct religion. [al-Bayyinah, 98:5]

*al-Qadr*. And what can make you know what is *laylat al-Qadr*? *Laylat al-Qadr* is better than a thousand months. The angels and *ar-Ruh* descend in it by permission of their Lord for every matter. [al-Qadr, 97:1-4]

For example, the Qur'an specifies "*iqamat as-salah*", meaning "establish the prayer", however, no definitive rulings on how to pray are found in the Qur'an. Rather, these rulings are derived from the *ahadith* and thus those *ayat* are *mufassar*. Another example would be the words "*laylat al-Qadr*" which become less and less ambiguous over the course of *al-Qadr* 97:1-4. Notice that in both of the examples the meaning is self-evident or is made evident through other *ayaat* or *sunnah*.

*Muhkam* (perspicuous) is a word whose meaning is clear, sound in its context, and not open to abrogation during the life of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). Basically, the *mukham* is the same as the *mufassar* except that it cannot be abrogated.

To Him [belongs] the kingdom of the heavens and earth. He gives life and causes death, and He is Able to do all things. [al-Hadid, 57:2]

...and he is Knowing of that which is the innermost [thoughts] within the breasts. [al-Hadid 57:6]

The two examples above are examples of *muhkam*. The meaning is self-evident, contextually sound, but also can never be abrogated. Furthermore, there is no interpretation involved in these as the meaning is wholly self evident

### UNCLEAR WORDS (AL-ALFAZ GHAYR AL-WAZIHAH)

*Khafi* (obscure) is a word whose basic meaning may be clear but in certain occurrences the word may be partially ambiguous. To remove the ambiguity the word needs clarification via extraneous evidence and *ijtihad* (independent legal reasoning).

For example, the word "*saariq*" has a basic meaning of a thief. However, does this include a *nabbash*, someone who steals used funeral shrouds? It could be argued that that is property that is not being guarded and thus does the *hadd* (penal code) apply? In such a case *'ulema* have used *ijtihad* and the majority have ruled that *ta'zir* (discretionary punishment) will apply while Imam Shafi'i and Abu Yusuf ruled that the *hadd* would apply.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (*radhyAllahu 'anhu*) that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "The killer does not inherit." [Ibn Majah]

Another example is the above stated *hadith*. Since the *hadith* forbids the killer from inheriting would someone whose father died in a car accident whilst they were driving inherit? *Ijtihad* has to be

applied in this scenario and a difference would be made between premeditated, intentional murder and involuntary manslaughter.

*Mushkil* (difficult) denotes words which don't have a basic meaning and are ambiguous. These require research and *ijtihad* to come to any sort of conclusion regarding their meaning. Even when a conclusion is reaching it is understood to be wholly speculative in nature due to the inherent ambiguity of the text itself. Regardless, the *mujtahid* (independent legal scholar) is bound to fully exert themselves in seeking out the most correct interpretation.

And divorced women wait by themselves [with regard to marriage] for a period of three *qur'*. [*al-Baqarah*, 2:228]

The word “*qur'*” has neither a basic meaning nor is its intended meaning obvious. It can mean either menstruation or the clean period between menstruation. The legal ruling would differ with regards to which meaning is adopted. Imam Shafi'i and other have adopted the latter meaning whereas the Hanafis have adopted the former.

*Mushkil* also denote texts which cause ambiguity due to their conflicting meanings. The texts might be entirely explicit in their meaning when taken by themselves but when attempting reconciliation an issue of ambiguity occurs.

What comes to you of good is from Allah but what comes to you of evil is from yourself...  
[*al-Nisa*, 4:79]

... Say, "Indeed, the matter belongs completely to Allah ..."  
[*Ale 'Imran*, 3:154]

These two passages are entirely clear in their meaning when read by themselves. However, when read holistically they prove to be *mushkil*. Thus, *ijtihad* and research is required in order to conclusively reconcile their meanings. However, even such a conclusion is wholly speculative.

*Mujmal* (ambivalent) is a word which is inherently unclear and gives no indication with regards to its actual meaning. The word might be a homonym or is being used in a context entirely different than its literal meaning. Words such as “*salah*,” “*zakah*,” “*hajj*,” “*sawm*,” are examples of *mujmal*. If the Lawmaker has given us details with regards to its meanings elsewhere then the word becomes *mufassar*. However, if no details are found in the Qur'an and *sunnah* then the text becomes *mushkil* and is open to *ijtihad*.

***Al-Qari'ah!*** What is *al-Qari'ah*? And what will make you comprehend *al-Qari'ah*? It is the Day when people will be like moths, dispersed. And the mountains will be like wool, fluffed up.  
[*al-Qari'ah*, 101:1-5]

Indeed, We sent the Qur'an down during *laylat al-Qadr*. And what can make you comprehend *laylat al-Qadr*? *Laylat al-Qadr* is better than a thousand months. The angels and *ar-Ruh* descend in it by permission of their Lord for every matter.  
[*al-Qadr*, 97:1-4]

In the above two examples the words, “*al-Qari'ah*,” and “*laylat al-Qadr*,” are *mujmal* initially because they are not being used vaguely. However, the *ayaat* that follow clarify this ambiguity and the words become *mufassar*.

*Mutashabih* (intricate) are words whose meanings are a complete and utter mystery. The *huruf muqatt'at* (disjointed letters) are prime examples of this. Further examples of this are passages which draw resemblance between God and man.

<p>كهي عص [<i>Maryam</i>, 19:1]</p>	<p>Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you, (O Muhammad) - they are actually pledging allegiance to Allah . The hand of Allah is over their hands... [<i>al-Fath</i>, 48:10]</p>	<p>And construct the ship under Our eyes and Our inspiration and do not address Me concerning those who have wronged; Indeed, they are [to be] drowned. [<i>Hud</i>, 11:37]</p>
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The Mut'azila attempted to give these passages an appropriate metaphorical interpretation. However, to say that the “hand” of Allah means power whilst the “eyes of Allah” mean his supervision is entirely conjecture. Similar is all conjecture regarding the *muqatt'at*. The evidence for the presence of the *mutashaih* is present within the Qur'an itself:

It is He who has sent down to you, (O Muhammad), the Book; in it are verses (that are) *mukhamaat* - they are the foundation of the Book - and others *mutashabihaat*. As for those in whose hearts is deviation, they will follow that of it which is *tashabha*, seeking discord and seeking an interpretation. And no one knows its interpretation except Allah . But those firm in knowledge say, "We believe in it. All (of it) is from our Lord." And no one will be reminded except those of understanding.  
[*Ale 'Imran*, 3:7]

### **'AAM(GENERAL) AND KHAAS(SPECIFIC)**

'*Aam* (general) is a word which has a single meaning which applies to many things, not limited in number, and includes everything to which it is applicable. In general, all words are '*aam* unless they are qualified or specified to be otherwise. Based upon *ijmaa'* (consensus) of the *sahaba* and the norms of the Arabic language words in the Qur'an and *sunnah* are used in their '*aam* meaning unless there is evidence to warrant an alternative meaning.

(I swear) by the declining day, (that) indeed *al-insaan* (the human being) in in loss. [*al-'Asr*, 103:1-2]

In the above *ayaat* the word “*al insaan*,” is '*aam* because it applied to all human beings without

limitation. This is because of the presence of the definite article “*al*,” meaning “the,” or “all,” preceding the noun *insaan*.

***Kullu nafsinn*** (every self) shall taste death...  
[*Ale-Imran*, 2:1-185]

The *ayah* above is yet another example of '*aam*. There is only one particular meaning which not limited to any number and is applied to every “*nafs*,” or “self.” The device used to make this '*aam* was the word “*kullu*,” meaning “every,” thus removing any limits or qualifies. Thus, every single self, without exception, shall taste death.

Conversely, when a word has a particular meaning but is limited in its application to a specified number or qualifier then it is called *khaas*. There are various way something '*aam* may be made *khaas* such as by introducing a condition, an exception, a quality, or an extent of the original statement.

O you who believe, when you intend to offer *salah*, wash your  
faces and your hands up to the elbows...  
[*al-Ma'idah*, 5:6]

The latter part stating, “up to the elbows,” denotes an extent of the former part, stating “wash your hands.”

Something '*aam* can only be made *khaas* by something of an equal or greater authority. For example, an '*aam mutawatir* (continuous; meaning confirmed through mustiple valid *sanad*) narration cannot be made *khaas* by a weak narration. There is, however, debate regarding whether an authentic lesser authority can make an '*aam* text from a greater authority *khaas*.

حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ الْمُثَنَّى، أَنَّ عَمْرَو بْنَ عَاصِمٍ، حَدَّثَهُمْ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا هَمَّامٌ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ،  
عَنْ مُوَرِّقٍ، عَنْ أَبِي الْأَحْوَصِ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ  
وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " صَلَاةُ الْمَرْأَةِ فِي بَيْتِهَا أَفْضَلُ مِنْ صَلَاتِهَا فِي حُجْرَتِهَا وَصَلَاتِهَا  
فِي مَخْدَعِهَا أَفْضَلُ مِنْ صَلَاتِهَا فِي بَيْتِهَا "

‘Abd Allah (bin Mas’ud) (*radyalAllahu 'anhu*) reported the  
Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) as saying, “It is more  
excellent for a woman to pray in her house than in her courtyard,  
and more excellent for her to pray in her private chamber than in  
her house.” [Abu Dawud]

The above narration is always understood to be '*aam* in its meaning and not *khaas*. However, we must evaluate the validity of this claim before coming to any conclusions. Oftentimes, people have

interpreted this *hadith* to mean that women get a lesser reward for praying at the mosque as opposed to praying at home. Consequently, this has led to measly mosque spaces for women with deplorable conditions and incredibly poor Islamic services for women in general.

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ مُوسَى، حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ مَنْصُورٍ، حَدَّثَنَا فُلَيْحٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ الْقَاسِمِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يُصَلِّي الصُّبْحَ بَعْلَسَ بَعْلَسٍ فَيَنْصَرِفْنَ نِسَاءَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، لَا يُعْرِفْنَ مِنَ الْعَلَسِ، أَوْ لَا يَعْرِفُ بَعْضُهُنَّ بَعْضًا.

Narrated 'A'ishah (*radyalAllahu 'anha*),  
 “Allah's Messenger (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) used to offer the Fajr prayer when it was still dark and the believing women used to return (after finishing their prayer) and nobody could recognize them owing to darkness, or they could not recognize one another.” [Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Nasa'i, Ibn Majah]

In the above narration, however, we find that 'A'isha (*radyalAllahu 'anha*) as well as the other members of the Muslim community would regularly pray Fajr at the mosque. In another narration (need citation) 'A'isha (*radyalAllahu 'anha*) narrates that upon returning from 'Isha it was so dark that they had to make sure they did not trip over each other.

The *sunnah* for women comes from the wives of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). It is unfathomable and nonsensical to believe that the wives of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) would disobey a direct suggestion or order of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). How would it be possible for 'A'isha (*radyalAllahu 'anha*) to still pray at the mosque knowing that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said that the prayer of women is better at home? Clearly, there is a contradiction and something is amiss. Either the Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) *hadith* regarding womens' prayer at home was *khaas* or his wives, daughters, and female followers disobeyed him, *ma'athAllah*.

وعن جابر رضي الله عنه قال: خلت البقاع حول المسجد فأراد بنو سلمة أن ينتقلوا قرب المسجد، فبلغ ذلك النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال لهم: "بلغني أنكم تريدون أن تنتقلوا قرب المسجد؟ قالوا: نعم يا رسول الله قد أردنا ذلك، فقال: " بني سلمة دياركم تكتب آثاركم، دياركم تكتب آثاركم" فقالوا: ما يسرنا أنا كنا تحولنا" ((رواه مسلم، وروى البخاري معناه من رواية أنس)).

Jabir (*radyalAllahu 'anhu*) reported,

“There were some plots of land lying vacant around the mosque. The people of Banu Salamah decided to move to this land and come nearer to the mosque. The Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) heard about it and said to them, 'I have heard that you intend to move near the mosque.' They said: 'Yes, O Messenger of Allah! We have decided to do that.' Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, 'O Banu Salamah! Stay in your houses, because your footprints (when you come to the mosque) will be recorded.' He said this twice. They said, 'We would not have liked it, had we moved near the mosque.'” [Muslim]

We find that the Banu Salamah, a tribe who lived on the outskirts of Medina, were experiencing significant difficulties in coming to the mosque during Fajr and Isha and thus had decided to purchase a land closer to the mosque of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). However, the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) forbade them to move closer. The *hadith* regarding the prayer at home being better was directed towards the women of the Banu Salamah in order to console them for their inability to pray at the mosque. Thus, the ruling for women praying at home becomes *khaas* and not *'aam* as some have derived it to be so.

Furthermore, we notice that prayer at home is harder than prayer at the mosque. In the mosque a pious and righteous environment is experienced which makes a person more eager and willing to pray. However, at home there is no such environment and one must exert themselves fully in order to pray properly. It is harder than praying at the mosque so why should that hardship not be rewarded?

### ***MUTLAQ*(ABSOLUTE) AND *MUQAYYAD*(QUALIFIED)**

*Mutlaq* denotes a word which is neither qualified nor limited in its application. When we say, “a bird,” or “a man,” then it is a generic noun which applies to all birds and men without restriction. This may sound very similar to *'aam* however there is a primary difference. The *mutlaq* is a particular from a multitude whereas the *'aam* applies to all. It is a subtle, yet important difference.

When a *mutlaq* becomes specified or qualified by another word then it becomes *muqayyad*. For example, “a book” is considered *mutlaq* but when it is qualified as “a green book” it becomes *muqayyad*. Again, this may be confused with *khaas* but there is a distinguishing feature. The *muqayyad* is an unspecified object with a specified attribute whilst a *khaas* is a specified object.

When the Qur'an declares, “*Ya ayyuhan-naas*” or “O people,” then it is *mutlaq*. However, when the Qur'an declares “*Ya ayyuhal mu'minoon*” or “O believers,” then it is *muqayyad*.

### ***HAQIQI*(LITERAL) AND *MAJAZI*(METAPHORICAL)**

*Haqiqi* is the literal, primary, and original meaning of a word and *majazi* is a metaphorical and secondary meaning. Words are interpreted as *haqiqi* by default unless there is a *qarinah*, or an indication, to interpret it as *majazi*.

He created *al-insaan* (all mankind).  
[*Maryam*, 19:4]

The above is an example of an *ayah* whose *haqiqi* meaning is the correct meaning. A *majazi* interpretation would be incorrect such as, “it was not God who literally created mankind but He created the universe which created mankind.”

He said, "My Lord, indeed my bones have weakened, and **my head has flared with white**, and never have I been in my supplication to You, my Lord, unhappy."  
[*Maryam*, 19:4]

In the *ayah* above Zakariyyah (*'alayh as-Salam*) says that his head is burning with white. This obviously cannot be taken in its *haqiqi* meaning. Its *majazi* meaning, however, makes a lot of sense and the *ayah* would be reinterpreted at “my hair has grayed so fast, it is like a wildfire.”

Ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullah*) is often quoted as saying, “There is no *majazi* in the Qur'an.” as evidence against metaphorical interpretation. However, this Ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullah*) actually meant was that there is no *majaz* with regards to *'aqeedah* (theology) in the Qur'an. Hence, “*ar-Rahmaan*” does not mean that “life is good” but rather is taken in its literal meaning that God is “The Exceedingly Merciful.”

Misguided literalists in the past have interpreted *majaz* as *haqiqi* which led them to erroneous conclusions.

Those are the ones who have purchased error (in exchange) for guidance, so their transaction has brought no profit, nor were they guided. [*Baqarah*, 2:16]

These literalists interpreted the above *ayah* to mean that early Muslim converts in Makkah were successfully bribed by the Quraysh and apostatized from Islam. This interpretation, however, has no historical basis. Rather, if we ignore the *haqiqi* meaning and focus on the *majazi* then it would mean that these people “chose error (in exchange) for guidance.”

### ***MUSHTARAK*(HOMONYM)**

*Mushtarak* is a word which has numerous meanings. Whenever *mushtarak* occur in a command or a prohibition in the Qur'an and *sunnah* it can only have one meaning. This is because God only

intended one meaning for a word at any given time. This is the view of all *'ulema* except Imam Shafi'i. Context and circumstances regarding a text help define the precise maning of the *mushtarak*. When a *mushtarak* has a general meaning and a judicial meaning then the judicial meaning will prevail.



## HERMENEUTICS

Hermeneutics is the theory of textual interpretation and is the science of how to study the intended meaning of the author. It is founded on a set of principles which were neither developed by religious scholars nor used exclusively for religious studies. Hermeneutics is extremely common in legal system, anthropology, psychology, and recently, Biblical and Qur'anic studies. Some of the common topics dealt with in hermeneutics are as follows:

What is the “formal” interpretation of this text? In other words does the author himself clarify what he meant in the text or in another text? With relation to Islamic hermeneutics this means the principle of “*al-qur'an yufassiru ba'dahu ba'dan*,” meaning “parts of the Qur'an explain others parts.” Furthermore, any interpretation by the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) is entirely binding as he was divinely guided.

What is the “official” interpretation of this text? Did any authority explain what the author meant? This, Islamically, would include interpretations by the *sahaba* as they are considered the third highest authorities in Islam after the Qur'an and *sunnah*. However, if a statement by such an authority contradicts the formal interpretation then it is rejected.

How do people interpret the text who are experts on the history, politics, culture, life, times, customs, etc., of the writer? This means creating a sort of context around the author. Studying the Battle of Badr without any context will create doubts and confusions. One would ask, “why are Muslims raiding an innocent caravan?”

The context here would provide the missing piece of the puzzle. When we learn that after 13 years of severe political, physical, and emotional persecution, an exiles, and one year in a sort of “concentration camp” the Makkan Muslims were living as refugees in Yathrib (Medina). However, the Quraysh, not content with their malice, repeatedly kept sending spies and military scouts. The refugees' families and property were being held hostage and the caravans were going back and forth to al-Sham (Syria) to double their investments for the war efforts against the Muslims. One such caravan was ordered to be raided in order to have some sort of collateral against the Quraysh as they were holding their families and property hostage.

When we interpret the texts regarding Badr in the above context we realize that the actions were entirely justified. This is why studying the *sirah* is so important. We should take a book on the *sirah* and read it through. Once we're done with that we should take another book on the *sirah* and read it thoroughly. Finally, we should take a third book on the *sirah* and read it through. This is how essential the *sirah* is. Muhammad ibn Saad ibn Abee Waqqas said, “Our father would teach us the battles of RasulAllah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and tell us these are the traditions of your fathers so study them.” Ali bin Hussain ibn Ali ibn Talib said, “We were taught the *sirah* of the Prophet like we were taught Qur'an.” This is how important the *sirah* was to the *sahaba* and the *tabi'een*. They used to teach it to their children just like they taught them the Qur'an.

What did the author intend to say? What message did the author intend to convey?

Is this use of a particular word, grammatical construction, verb tense, etc., significant to this instance? In terms of the Qur'an the answer to this is yes, yes, and yes. Allah (*subhana wa ta'ala*) was extremely precise in every single aspect of the Qur'an. From the word choice to the syntax to the verb tense. All of them are specific. In fact, while we imagine *Surah al-Fatiha* to be a mere seven verses prominent *'ulema* have written entire treatises on its eloquence. Imam Baidawi (*rahimahullah*) wrote 260 pages just on the relevance of the language of *Surah al-Fatiha*.

Who were the author's readers or listeners, culturally, etc.? How did the author's contemporaries react to the text? In the context of Islam it is extremely important to note what the reactions of the Quraysh, the Ansar, the Ahl al-Kitab and the *sahaba* were. These were the original audiences of the Qur'an. Much of the Qur'an speaks directly to these very groups.

# FAITH-RELATED ISSUES

## QADA'

*Shaykh Abdul Nasir Jangda was pressed on time and unable to cover this issue.*

## EVOLUTION

*Shaykh Abdul Nasir Jangda was pressed on time and unable to cover this issue. He did not issue any recommendations for researching this topic. The following is taken from Dr. Sayyed Hosein Nasr's "Darwinian Evolution" upon the editor's personal discretion.*

We are going to be discussing one of the most crucial and important subjects in the relationship between religion and science and that is Theory of Evolution. Between the Newtonian Revolution of 17th century which culminated with Isaac Newton until the Age of Enlightenment in the 19th century which had formed new physics and a mechanical view of the world, the history of science was one of the application of Newtonian views to different fields. Fields of chemistry and geology are some such examples. As far as natural history was concerned the purely rational approach to nature came in the form of an incredibly intense interest in classification. Plants, animals, minerals, and everything else found in nature were thoroughly classified. In fact, the 18th century was the age of the great natural historians of European history such as Buffon, Cuvier, and Louis Agassiz. They were not Newtonian in the sense of trying to create a mechanical view of the natural world but in how they applied the use of reason and rationality to classification, beginning with Linnaeus who classified most of the natural world and ending with Louis Agassiz.

However, something else was gradually simmering. It was the question of trying to reduce the origin of life and life itself to accord with that mechanical view of the world that is the primacy of quantity. Darwinism came upon the weight of this transformation that was taking place in 19th century Europe. Charles Darwin neither began in a vacuum nor was the only person who spoke about the evolution of life forms, others such as Wallace spoke about the topic prior to Darwin but did not receive as much credit. Darwin, specifically, had a more philosophical way upon which he wrote. For that very reason of all the theories that arose out of modern science the only theory that is turned into pseudo-religion is Darwinism. Darwinism is an ideology, not a science. As we will realize, there is no proof for macro-evolution whatsoever. Darwinism is in fact a worldview. It is the ideology of the modern world such that if the modern world was a tent then Darwinism would be its main peg, take it out and everything falls apart. This is the very reason nobody wishes to discuss it purely scientifically.

Darwinism is not like Quantum Mechanics, Quantum Cosmology, Quantum Astronomy, the Theory of Relativity, the Theory of Chemical Bonding, or any other theory in any field of science. If you oppose the Theory of Evolution then you will not be promoted to Associate Professorship, your articles will not be published in leading journals, and you will most likely be kicked out of your field.

There is no other field of science that operates in such a manner. Take, for example, the interpretation of Quantum Mechanics which is the foundation of all modern science. Einstein was considered the great "god" of modern Physics but there are people who openly oppose the Einsteinian view of Quantum Mechanics but are allowed function academically and socially. In fact, they are treated as scientists as long as they provide a scientific opinion.

In contrast, when Douglas Dewar, Professor of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University who had works published in leading American academic journals, wrote his book "The Transformist Illusion," he had to have his book published not in Massachusetts, where Harvard is located, but rather in Tennessee. This is because the book showed that from a purely zoological point of view macro-evolution is an impossibility. He was unable to find a publisher willing undertake criticism of Darwinism. This is a very telling fact of 20th century history.

Furthermore, such incidents are not isolated. If we look at any program on the world of nature in the media we realize that it is not just a program on nature but it is a sort of "Gospel Hour." It is the "Gospel of Darwinism" which preaches a specific view about our world about the world of nature. For example, for 55 minutes out of 60, Discovery Channel's films on natural world show us animals eating other animals. Isn't there something else in nature to attend to? Why don't the animals just finish each other off? The idea that they are trying to impress upon us subliminally is that there is a constant strife around us, an evolutionary need to eliminate each other. But why then has the platypus then been around for 50 million years if all it is bound to do is get eaten or eat something else? No other field of science features such a "Gospel Hour." This theory has crept out of biology and has not only influenced other sciences but has also influenced social sciences as well as religion.

We're not going to be discussing the life of Charles Darwin, "The Voyage of the Beagle," or "The Origin of Species." This is not the point of our discussion. To summarize, after going upon the voyage of the Beagle in the 1850s to a set of islands in South America featuring immense diversity in flora and fauna Darwin wrote "The Origin of Species." It was a book whose ideas had already been expressed by Wallace but Darwin gets the credit regardless. In the book he denied the immutability of species in nature as well as the involvement of any divine force in the origin of species. He wrote that the only reason we have different species is because of the principle of "the survival of the fittest" that exists in the struggle for life. He wrote that certain forms of life adapt themselves to their environment which then makes forces them to change and become new species. At the tail-end of this process is man who had evolved from the monkey. These are the "givens" of the theory, the assumptions.

Although, there does indeed exist a diversity of species, all religions consider the origin of life to be divine. If we give this serious philosophical thought then what this implies is as follows. Darwin was afraid to speak very much about what the first origin of life was as he was very materialist. But regardless, whether he was an agnostic about the initial origin or not, he believed that after that initial origin all the creative powers which religions ascribe to divine forces such as God and His angels in actuality belonged solely to the material forces with which we deal on Earth. That is the most important transformation that took place. That as if Newtonian mechanics, that as if "*Principia*" of Newton, had cut off the hand of God from the world of nature by reducing him to the mere clock-maker. God's only involvement, if any, was the initial spark of life, after that point the forces of nature were in command of the creation of species. Darwinism did that for the abode of life. Darwinism tried to derive all the

various species from other lifeforms which were not that species because it refused any divine intervention.

Now there does exist a Theistic Evolution. Certain Jewish and Christian theologians claim that, "We accept Darwinism except that the change from one species to another occurs through divine intervention." However, that is neither Darwinism nor is it traditional theology. The ultimate question is does the horse have a reality or is it just our imagination taking a slice from the cosmic flow of time and claiming that this in fact is a horse? That a million years ago the horse was not a horse and a million years from now it will not be a horse. Hence, what we call the horse is nothing but a moment in the flow of this river of time. Is that the case? If there is nothing to know and no actual reality then does God not know anything either? There is no object to God's knowledge in Darwinism.

Wherever the British went in the world they taught Darwinism whereas the French, Dutch, and other colonizers were not as interested in it. Darwin was an English hero and that has a lot to do with this. But in India and Pakistan this was pushed into the minds of the people because of British education. This was not so in North Africa. There are a dozen or more books defending the theory of evolution written by Muslims in Pakistan and India but not a single one by a North African Muslim. Such is the power of British education.

In the Islamic world many philosophers and sufis have spoken in a language which some people consider to be reminiscent of Darwinism. Abu Rahyan al-Biruni who about the transformation of the seas into lands and lands into the sea and speaks about older geological ages in which the species were different. There is a misconstrued verse by Jalaladin ar-Rumi which is "I died from a mineral and became a plant. I died from a plant and became an animal. I died from an animal and became a man. A day will come when I will die from manhood and reach a stage which no angel can even achieve. Then let me die. When have I ever been less through dying." This has nothing to do with evolution what so ever. This is vertical evolution not Darwinian evolution.

Traditions speak that nothing can become what it is not potentially. The pair is an actualization of what the seed is potentially. The whole process of nature is based on the actualization of possibilities. It is this way of thinking that Darwinism opposed completely. A traditional philosopher would say that if there was an original cosmic soup out of which everything was formed then somehow 'Esa (*'alayh as-Salam*) must have been in that soup. There is nothing outside of the universe that will come into it thus everything that develops later on must have already been there. A piece of music composed later on could be found somehow in this original soup. However, this makes no sense intellectually. Such ideas would make it impossible to talk about anything rationally. This is the intellectual challenge evolution poses. Evolution has not only tried to cut off the hands of God from all creative processes but has also tried to alter all philosophical and metaphysical thoughts about development, movement, and transformation in the world of nature.

To be more specific, because evolution as a theory began in a Protestant and Anglican Great Britain and the first responses for it were from Anglicanism, Catholicism was initially opposed to it. 19th century Anglican Britain interpreted the Book of Genesis to mean that God was the creator of the species. All traditional Judaism also holds that the two fundamental functions of God are the creation of species and its preservation. Curiously enough, marriage and death have always been considered

religious acts in all cultures. In Judaism, marriage has always been God's way of preserving the species. So all religions when they made that statement have actually been supported by nature. This may seem strange to you as you have been taught in school that this is the "traditionalist" and "orthodox" point of view but nature is in fact the preserver of species. Nature resists even small changes.

Biologists have tried to bring about evolutionary changes by bringing about changes in thousands upon thousands of insects in the hopes of getting a new species. But no such evolutionary change occurred. What was accomplished was micro-evolution, small changes occurring within the same species. This shows that nature resists changes in species. Worse than that, in the view of evolution, is that paleontology is the exact enemy of the Darwinian evolution that we have been taught in school. When we analyze the Paleontological Records, there are no intermediate forms between Species A and Species B, but rather only sudden appearances of species. How often have we read about "missing links?" I studied one full year of Paleontology at Harvard and my teachers could never explain why there were these sudden jumps. We have all seen the images in our school textbooks which show the horse slowly evolving in the horse. In reality, that is utter nonsense. There are no such fossil records of any of these intermediary forms.

Dinosaurs appear suddenly in the Paleontological Record and the Biologists have the greatest difficulty in showing their gradual evolution because there are no gradual changes. The funniest example is with ourselves. We've always seen these pictures in these Museums of Natural History, the Churches for this pseudo-religion, that there is a monkey who gradually gets up more and more and its forehead gets bigger and bigger until it reaches the very human we have today. Craniums and skulls vary vastly in sizes across different peoples and viewing it to be evolution is just the imagination itself. All of these "missing links" have remained unproven. The human, paleontologically speaking, appears suddenly on Earth. That is why certain modern geologists, such as Gould at Harvard, came up with the theory of "spurts of evolution" in which evolution takes place in quick bursts and then the species lasts for a long time without evolving. This is merely an attempt to preserve Darwinism and evolution but it is not actually either. What is the force of behind such bursts?

So we have the fact that nature is very obstinate and it wants to preserve species. You can mate a donkey and a horse to make a mule but it will not procreate. Look at our bodies and how they fight to remain what they are. Our bodies do not evolve as we think they do. We might get used to the heat and cold but that is as far as evolution goes. Hence, we have these major problems which have wounded the Theory of Evolution scientifically. This is much more so in the last 40-50 years than ever before.

Today, we have two currents that are opposing each other. The Theory of Evolution is the only theory to come out of modern science which has become universalized in modern culture. We always talk about the evolution of technology, dress, soldiers, etc. This is a phenomenon seen all over the world. Everything is filtered through this point of view. Finally, it has also penetrated into the domain of religion.

On the other hand, we have scientific opposition to the Theory of Evolution. Dissatisfaction with the Theory of Evolution amongst biologists began in the 1930s at a time when evolution had not become the dogmatic belief it is today. The Anglo-Saxon world in general, America and England, needed much less this type of criticism for purely cultural reasons. Hence, the main thrust of writings

against Darwinian evolutionary theory came from continental Europe. Today, for example, we have very prominent biologists from France, Italy, and Germany who have brought up a new idea, still entirely devoid of theology and God, who claim that what occurs in nature is not evolution but is "*la Revolution Organiciste*," or "Organicistic Revolution." They claim that if we remain faithful to the palentological, geological, and botanical record whilst putting aside any dogmatic bias then what we see before us is an organic revolution of life. Life spurts forth and new species come into existence. This theory is obviously very strongly opposed by Simpson, Meyer, and other modern proponents of classical evolution.

Furthermore, there are many books that criticize even the possibility Darwinian evolution from the point of Comparative Anatomy like the books of Denton and Dewar. There are also books that criticize evolution from the point of view of Molecular Biology and this field in particular has been devastating to evolutionists. Formerly, everybody thought that Molecular Biology would be the link between Physics, Chemistry, and Biology and would show that bioforms are nothing more than complicated chemical molecules which are atoms to be discussed in Physics. This was the "missing link" in science. However, the exact opposite happened. A book has come out which has caused a firestorm in the scientific community by Michael Behe, a Professor of Molecular Biology at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania who is one of the leading figures of his field. He has come out with a book titled "Darwin's Black Box" which is absolutely devastating. It is not just romantic and polemical writing but is a very scientific and complicated work. One of the key points of the Darwinian theory is that evolution goes from the simple to the complex. From a simple cell our incredibly complex brain is formed. The greatest heresy in evolutionism, its cardinal sin, is to talk about design and purpose in nature. Everything is an accident from simplicity to complexity. But then how do we explain how willing our right hand actually moves it in real life? We claim that our brain is a computer but we are reducing ourselves to our own creation. Even the computer was designed. It didn't evolve out of the gum of a tree, someone intelligent sat down and designed it. Evolutionists would say that is not so and that given enough time a simple cell would transform into a brain. These are the fundamental theses of evolution, the denial of design and evolution from simplicity to complexity.

Behe has shown that the simplest single unit of life, the cell, has a complexity beyond imagination. In fact, life does not at all go from the simple to the complex. Rather, life starts with incredible complexity. This is a deathblow to the whole enterprise of Darwinism. Even within Mathematics we have the Information Theory. According to this theory you can never get more information out of a unit than you can put into it. This is the foundation of the Information Theory of computers and many related fields. Note that information does not mean raw data in modern science but it means structures. This too is very damning to the view which claims that through some kind of temporal change there is more information coming out of it than there is going in. That's why the most important criticism of the evolutionary theory, before Behe that is, was done by the Mathematicians. Mathematicians who claimed that evolution is against all the principles of mathematics.

The idea of evolution was married to the idea of progress as well. Anyone criticizing evolution in our world is relegated to being a moron and a simpleton. People have the image that all intelligent people believe in evolution and everyone who doesn't is just stupid and ignorant. This is a propaganda of modern society and this is not at all the case. We have to understand the issue of evolution in the cultural context. For example, the mass media would never dare say anything against the Theory of

Evolution because it would then be identified with the Christian far-right and “the Fundamentalists.” It would be categorized in such a way that it would be dismissed by everyone immediately. But in reality the debate isn't between Bible Belt fundamentalists and Harvard biologists. It's much much more profound and serious than that. The Theory of Evolution, for the first time since Darwin, is really a lame duck but nobody is willing to discuss it openly in America or England because of the cultural factors that are involved in it. This poor Professor Behe has gotten into a lot of trouble since publishing his critique of evolution. Lehigh University cannot kick him out since he is a tenured professor but he wrote an article in its alumni journal in which he said that he has received the cold shoulder from many professional colleagues for having "betrayed the profession." It's as if science is not a quest for truth but a dogma to defend.

Now we come to the other side of the coin which is the crisis in religion caused by the Theory of Evolution and the responses of western religions to it. The crisis of religion in England did not begin with Charles Darwin but with Thomas Huxley who was the propagandist of the Darwinian view. He wrote openly denying all that Christianity had taught about man. That we are created in the image of God, that we have an immortal soul, and that there are moral responsibilities. He wrote that 'Esa (*'alayh as-Salam*) taught something totally opposed to the idea of the "survival of the fittest" because he did not preach to the fittest and nor did he ask us to be the fittest, or the strongest. 'Esa (*'alayh as-Salam*) only supported the weak, humble, and the meek. This anti-Christian preaching of Huxley was really in fact a new religion. This led to an intellectual schism and very bitter debates ensued which lasted for a century until people got tired of it and put it aside.

But of all the theories of science that have been propagated, none have caused a tearing away from religion as much as evolution, not a single one even comes close. There are today in England some very vocal biologists who are out and out atheists of whom the most famous is Richard Dawkins. Dawkins is an open preacher for atheism. He goes university to university preaching atheism as a biologist and claiming that all religion has been debunked and is utter nonsense. However, even Stephen Hawking, the notable physicist known to not have theological inclinations, said, "We cannot conceive of the Universe without having the hypothesis of God present." It is a long journey from Dawkins to Hawking. Dawkins is a virulent atheist who aggressively promotes his views. He is the result of the bitter debates in 19th century England. Of all of the Western countries, none has been as deeply concerned with or as wounded by the Theory of Evolution as Britain, the very home of Charles Darwin.

So after the bitter debates of the late 19th century, theologians tried to juxtapose their position. Those who were called "fundamentalists" were Protestants who clung to the theory of creation called "Creationism." This goes back to the very attacks made by evolutionists upon the Bible. There occurred in America a movement that said that the very word of the Bible is the very word of God and we will not accept any evolutionist interpretation of it and they called themselves "fundamentalists." However, this term became demonized in the late 1970s by the press and is now a pejorative term. But Christian fundamentalism was truly an attempt to defend the Bible.

The other group that rejected evolutionism were traditional Catholics who were in the vast majority of its rejecters until 1964 when the 2nd Vatican Council took place. It was after 1964 that evolutionary Catholic theology came to the forefront. So you have one position taken by the churches



that simply rejected Darwin. But those who belonged to the more liberal wing of the Protestant movement tried to accommodate their teachings to the Theory of Evolution. They claimed that although evolution did exist it was truly the Hand of God that was in control. But philosophically speaking, it boils down to this: What does God's Hand mean other than that it is He who creates the species? Then, if He is merely going along with the flow of His own creation, what is His Hand doing? Dr. Ramakumar Swami, a major figure of Indian Catholicism, wrote on theistic evolution and dealt the *coup de grace* to this view. Protestants came up with a workaround which said that when it came to man the survival of the fittest didn't apply and Christian ethics would not be given up and the weak would not be trampled.

However, other anti-religious European movements took on evolutionism as a prop for colonialism. When the British spoke of the "White Man's Burden" they believed they were helping out with evolution. Herbert Spencer, the great British evolutionary philosopher of the 19th century, said so himself. Such ideas were also adopted in the form of the "superior race" in Nazi Germany. But Christianity rejected that the law of the jungle should be substituted with the law of Christ. Animal law is different and human law is different. This position was obviously severely criticized and many debates ensued which ended up wounding Christian ethics to a large extent. The Amazon, before modern man, was the world's biggest jungle and had survived for a long time with incredible harmony. None of the species destroyed the other species completely. It was the Catholic Portuguese who came in and destroyed the jungle.

Other religions were not as affected by the Theory of Evolution. The just didn't bother. Islamic and Buddhist thought remain unaffected by Darwinism. It was a particular strand within Hinduism that was severely impacted by evolution. Part of it was British education. Part of it was Hindu cosmology. The only famous Hindu religious thinker who tried to combine evolutionary theory with Hinduism was Sri Aurobindo. He lived at the end of the 19th century and died during the World War I. He wrote a three volume major work titled "The Life Divine" in which he talks about the Divine from the point of view of Life. That the Divine is something that changes with time and that the Divine penetrates through the cosmos and that the cosmos is in the process of evolution and change. It is not orthodox or traditional Hinduism. It is rather a mixture of Hinduism and evolutionary thought. The idea of the "*ubermensch*" has formed from this very thought. Nietzsche had spoken about the "*ubermensch*" as someone who is above morality and this was connected by Sri Aurobindo to the sages and mystics of the past. This created a pseudo-synthesis between evolutionary theory and religion.

We all believe that because we live in the 21st century we're better than those who lived in the 20th century. How many times have you heard "that is so medieval, I can't believe that people do this!" when talking about war and its atrocities? However, the 20th century alone has killed more people than all other centuries combined but that is besides the point. We have this idea that man evolves into a higher place. However, reality has it otherwise.

## ABROGATION

*Shaykh Abdul Nasir Jangda was pressed on time and unable to cover this issue.*

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ ۗ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ  
مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

(We sent them) with clear proofs and written ordinances. And We revealed to you the message that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they might give thought. [*al-Nahl*, 16:44]

## CONCEPT OF EVIL

*Shaykh Abdul Nasir Jangda was pressed on time and unable to cover this issue.*

## CONCEPT OF PUNISHMENT AND HELL (ALL-GOOD, ALL-POWERFUL)

Before we can even begin discussing this topic we must ask the question that why is punishment talked about so much? Why should there even be any punishment? See, justice is basically an expression of balance and balance necessitates that wherever there is reward there must be some sort of a punishment. That is how a balance is maintained and thus we get the concept of punishment.

However, the question then arises as to why the punishment is being talked about as abundantly? Why is it talked about in such vivid graphic detail? What's the deal with that? In actuality, as much as Allah talks about punishment in the Qur'an the talk of rewards and Paradise are more frequent and lengthier. If we are unable to realize or fathom this concept then it is high time we pick up the Qur'an and read it some more to realize this.

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ، حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَجَلَانَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ  
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " إِنَّ اللَّهَ حِينَ خَلَقَ الْخَلْقَ كَتَبَ  
بِيَدِهِ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ إِنَّ رَحْمَتِي تَغْلِبُ عَذَابِي "

Abu Hurayrah (*radyallohu 'anh*) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said,  
"Certainly, Allah when He created the creation He wrote with His Hand concerning Himself, 'Indeed, My mercy prevails over My wrath.'"  
[Tirmidhi with variants in Bukhari, Muslim, and ibn Majah]

Furthermore, the purpose of talking about the punishment is to read the *ayaat*, let them shake you to your core, be in utter awe of God's wrath and then read the *hadith qudsi* above and realize that Allah Himself decreed that His mercy will always prevail over his wrath. You could barely bring yourself to comprehend the incredible intensity of His wrath now try to imagine the infinitely greater intensity of His mercy.

Oftentimes the issue comes up, when talking about divine justice, that if someone sins then sure they might be temporarily in the fire of Hell for a while but will they be in it forever!? How on earth is that justice? They have made a huge mistake and an incredible error. Their indiscretion was for a limited amount of time but they are paying for it with all eternity? Someone might claim, “I fail to see how this makes divine justice just in any way!” Hence, we arrive at the famous issue in *'aqeedah* called “*'abadiyat al-naar*.”

<p>فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ شَقُوا فِي النَّارِ لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَشَهِيقٌ          ﴿١٠٦﴾ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ          إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَّالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيدُ          ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ سَعِدُوا فِي الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا          مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ ۗ          عَطَاءٌ غَيْرَ مَجْدُودٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾</p>	<p>As for those who were (destined to be) wretched, they will be in the Fire. For them therein is (violent) exhaling and inhaling<sup>106</sup>. (They will be) abiding therein as long as the heavens and the earth endure, except what your Lord should will. Indeed, your Lord is an effector of what He intends<sup>107</sup>.</p> <p>And as for those who were (destined to be) prosperous, they will be in Paradise, abiding therein as long as the heavens and the earth endure, except what your Lord should will - a bestowal uninterrupted<sup>108</sup>. [<i>Hud</i>, 11:106-108]</p>
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In the *ayaat* above the words “*khalideena fe ha*” are often translated to mean forever or eternity. This, however, is wrong as “*khulud*” means something with an end. That is why Allah is never referred to as *al-Khalid* or *al-Khulood* but rather as *al-Awwal* and *al-Aakhir* (The First and The Last). Clearly, these words do not refer to eternity. With regards to the other frequent word that is translated as eternity, “*abada*” that also doesn't mean eternity.

Hence, we must turn to ancient lexicons and see how they translated such words. According to them, the word “*khulud*” refers to something whose end is unknown or not in sight, something that is out of the reach or perception of the person. As for “*abada*” is is there to prove an emphasis to that concept. Thus, “*khaalideena fe ha abada*” is more accurately translated as a incredibly and unfathomably lengthy period of time.

In contrast, when the *ayaat* begin to talk about the people of Paradise they end with “*'ata'ann ghayra majthuthinn*,” meaning “a blessing that will never end.” The *ayah* specifies this about Paradise but such a specification is found to be completely unmentioned in the earlier *ayaat* about the Hell-Fire.

<p>إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا ﴿٢١﴾ لِلطَّاغِينَ مَابًا          ﴿٢٢﴾ لَا يَبْتَئِنَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا ﴿٢٣﴾</p>	<p>Indeed, Hell has been lying in wait<sup>21</sup>. For the transgressors, a place of return<sup>22</sup>, In which they will remain for ages (unending)<sup>23</sup>. [<i>al-Naba</i>, 78:21-23]</p>
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In the *ayaat* above which talk about the Hell-Fire the word “*ahqaab*” is used to denote the length of time that they will stay there. Notice, in the translation the word “*ahqaab*” is translated as “ages” but then is followed up by the parenthetical explanation of the translator, “(unending).” It must be put into such parenthesis because the word does not at all imply unending and is thus an addition by the translator themselves. In actuality, the word “*ahqaab*” is the plural of the word “*haqab*” which means an incredibly lengthy period of time. According to ‘Ali (*radyallohu ‘anhu*) a “*haqab*” is eighty years every day of which is 1,000 years. According to some other scholars a “*haqab*” is a period of 500 years so “*ahqaab*” would be multiple sets of 500 years. In either understanding the word “*ahqaab*” is finite and not infinite as evidenced by the text itself.

The opinion that the Hell-Fire is not forever was also present amongst many of the *sahaba*. The following are the most prominent and well-known amongst them: Abu Sa‘eed al-Khudri, Abu Hurayra, ‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar, ‘Abdullah ibn Abbas, ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ud (*radyallohu ‘anhum*). All of these *sahaba* and several other not mentioned here for the sake of brevity believe that when Hell ceases to exist such people will cease to exist.

There is obviously the more often quoted opinion that the Hell-Fire does indeed last forever and adherents of that view also state the same *ayaat* and nuances as proof. This study does not focus on this opinion because it is much more popular and available in comparison to the other opinion. Both opinions are found amongst the *sahaba* and the *tabi‘een* and hence we cannot say that one of them is entirely wrong and ill-informed. The difference of opinion is legitimate and rooted in lexical analysis.

## SLAVERY

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأُزْوَاجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾  
 إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَرْوَاحِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ  
 غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾  
 فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

And they who guard their private parts<sup>5</sup>, Except from their wives or those their right hands possess, for indeed, they will not be blamed<sup>6</sup> - But whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors<sup>7</sup>.  
 [*al-Mu‘minun*, 23:5-7]

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأُزْوَاجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾  
 إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَرْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ  
 غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

And they who guard their private parts<sup>29</sup>, Except from their wives or those their right hands possess, for indeed, they will not be blamed<sup>30</sup> - But whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors<sup>31</sup>.  
 [*al-Ma‘arij*, 70:29-31]

فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ  
 ﴿٣١﴾

Often times we have to not only understand the context of *ahadith* and *ayaat* but also our own context. As residents of the modern world our most recent memory of slavery was the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Whenever we hear the word “slavery” that is our immediate frame of reference. The word itself has become permanently tainted for history. We hear “slavery” and immediately we begin to imagine scenes from “12 Years a Slave.” If we ever read the records of slavery, how they were treated, how they lives, we feel nauseous to our core. It's one of the worst horrors that humanity has ever experienced. It was one of the darkest moments of human history where the human conscience just died and we were okay with how horribly we were treating other human beings. In the very least it is as bad as war itself. At least in war there's psychological trauma that explains why certain people commit certain atrocities. But with slavery there was no such explanation. People were okay with treating other human being worse than we treat animals. This is what we imagine when we hear the world “slavery.” This is a problem and we have to understand that. Whilst the word “slavery” may work as a general concept we cannot think of Islamic slavery as anything remotely like that form of slavery.

Narrated Ma'rur:

“I saw Abu Dhar wearing a *burd* (garment) and his slave too was wearing a *burd*, so I said (to Abu Dhar), "If you take this (*burda* of your slave) and wear it (along with yours), you will have a nice suit and you may give him another garment."

Abu Dhar said, "There was a quarrel between me and another man whose mother was a non-Arab and I called her bad names. The man mentioned (complained about) me to the Prophet.

The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "Did you abuse so-and-so?" I said, "Yes" He said, "Did you call his mother bad names?" I said, "Yes." He said, "You still have the traits of (pre-Islamic) ignorance." I said. "(Do I still have ignorance) even now in my old age?"

He said, "**Yes, they (slaves) are your brothers, and Allah has put them under your command. So the one under whose hand Allah has put his brother, should feed him of what he eats, and give him dresses of what he wears, and should not ask him to do a thing beyond his capacity. And if at all he asks him to do a hard task, he should help him therein.**"

[Bukhari]

Abu Hurayra (*radyallohu 'anhu*) reported Allah's Messenger (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) as saying,

“When the slave of anyone amongst you prepares food for him and he serves him after having sat close to (and undergoing the hardship of) heat and smoke, he should make him (the slave) sit along

with him and make him eat (along with him), and if the food seems to run short, then he should spare some portion for him (from his own share).”

[Muslim, variations in Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah]

In Islam having slaves was less ownership and more custody over an individual. It was not about the rights you hand upon the person but rather about the responsibilities and rights you owed to them. There are accounts of *sahaba* refusing to take slaves on numerous occasions because they were expected to provide them with better food and clothing than they themselves ate and wore. There are reports that the slaves ate bread and meat whilst the *sahaba* made do with dates. This is clearly about custody and *not* about ownership.

Hilal ibn Yasaf said, "We used to sell linen in the house of Suwayd ibn Muqarrin. A slave girl came out and said something to one of the men and that man slapped her. Suwayd ibn Muqarrin asked him, 'Did you slap her face? **We were seven and we only had a single servant. Then one of us slapped her and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) ordered him to set her free.**"

[Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*]

Abu Mas'ud al-Ansari reported, "When I was beating my servant, I heard a voice behind me (saying), 'Abu Mas'ud, bear in mind Allah has more dominance over you than you have upon him.' I turned and (found him) to be Allah's Messenger (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). I said, "Allah's Messenger, I set him free for the sake of Allah." Thereupon he said, "Had you not done that, (the gates of) Hell would have opened for you, or the fire would have burnt you."

[Muslim]

Abu Mas'ud al-Badri reported, "**I was beating my slave with a whip** when I heard a voice behind me, 'Understand, Abu Masud!,' but I did not recognize the voice due to intense anger." He (Abu Mas'ud) reported, "As he came near me (I found) that he was the Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and he was saying, 'Bear in mind, Abu Mas'ud; bear in mind. Abu Mas'ud.' He (Abu Mas'ud) said: "**He threw the whip from my hand. Thereupon he (the Holy Prophet) said, 'Bear in mind, Abu Mas'ud, indeed Allah has more dominance upon you than you have upon your slave.'** I (then) said, 'I would never beat my servant in future.'"

[Muslim]

Furthermore, physical abuse of slaves was entirely impermissible. The above *ahadith* clearly indicate the impossibility of physically abusing the slave and that doing so entails severe punishment in the hereafter. There are numerous variants of the *ahadith* above as well as other *ahadith* on the subject but for the sake of brevity we only mention these two.

And never is it for a believer to kill a believer except by mistake. And whoever kills a believer by mistake - **then the freeing of a believing slave** and a compensation payment presented to the deceased's family (is required) unless they give (up their right as) charity. But if the deceased was

from a people at war with you and he was a believer - then (only) **the freeing of a believing slave**; and if he was from a people with whom you have a treaty - then a compensation payment presented to his family and **the freeing of a believing slave**. And whoever does not find (one or cannot afford to buy one) - then (instead), a fast for two months consecutively, (seeking) acceptance of repentance from Allah . And Allah is ever Knowing and Wise.

[*al-Nisa*; 4:92]

Allah will not impose blame upon you for what is meaningless in your oaths, but He will impose blame upon you for (breaking) what you intended of oaths. So its expiation is the feeding of ten needy people from the average of that which you feed your (own) families or clothing them or **the freeing of a slave**. But whoever cannot find (or afford it) - then a fast of three days (is required). That is the expiation for oaths when you have sworn. But guard your oaths. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you may be grateful.

[*al-Ma'idah*; 5:89]

And those who pronounce *thihar* from their wives and then (wish to) go back on what they said - then (there must be) **the freeing of a slave** before they touch one another. That is what you are admonished thereby; and Allah is Acquainted with what you do.

[*al-Mujadila*; 58:3]

The *kaffara*, or expiation, of so many sins is freeing a slave. If a Muslim unintentionally kills another Muslim then the expiation is a slave. If there is a solar eclipse, free slaves. If you break oaths, free a slave. If you pronounce *thihar* and wish to go back on that, free a slave. Even disregarding expiation and paying *kaffara* there are numerous verses and *ahadith* that praise the act of freeing a slave as being one of great significant in virtue. For the sake of brevity we will not be quoting them here.

And those who seek a contract (for eventual emancipation) from among whom your right hands possess - then make a contract with them if you know there is within them goodness and give them from the wealth of Allah which He has given you.

[*al-Nur*; 24:33]

Slaves in Islam were entitled to earn their freedom. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) "*fa katibtuhum*," meaning "give them a contract," where the slaves could request a contract by which they can slowly free themselves. Then when they purchase their freedom they are given the very ransom they paid for it back in order to start their new life as a freeman. In stark contrast to this, in the United States people voluntarily stayed in slavery for another 100 years so that they wouldn't starve to death. The Emancipation Proclamation set the slaves in the South free but having no income or education they could not start their life. Left to fend for themselves many of them died on the streets.

As a result the freed slaves would return to their masters requesting to be taken back as unofficial slaves. Conversely, the Qur'an did not just give an idealistic proclamation which led to so many people starving and dying but rather it made a process. The slave would be earning and holding down a job for a while and when he or she is finally free they would have some savings to start their new life. This is the Islamic concept of slavery.

The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was known to have a soft spot for slaves. This is because Umm Ayman (*radyallohu 'anha*) raised him and he even called her “*ya umma*” meaning “mommy,” not just “mom.” He said, “She's the only family I have left.” This sort of intimate knowledge and interaction with slaves led the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) to be very kind, soft, and empathetic towards slaves.

An important question now arises, is it permissible to have sexual relations with a slave? The first rule is that if the slave is married the man cannot have *any* contact with her. She is someone's wife and Islam is far from shameless. If this matter inconveniences the man with regards to *hijab* issues then he would have to set her free. Furthermore, if the slave must be a Muslim or from the *Ahl al-Kitab* in order for the man to be allowed sexual relations with her. If she is of any other religion then such relations are out of the question.

If all of the above preconditions are met then, and only then, are sexual relations permitted with her. Islam is not a perverse way to live out sexual fantasies. Sexual slavery is *not* allowed in Islam. If you cannot hit a slave then how on earth can you rape slaves in Islam? This is entirely impermissible. In the time of the *sahaba* and the slaves were informed of their rights and the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) told them, "Come to me if your rights are abused." Oftentimes the abused slaves were set free on the spot by the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and the owner was ordered to pay repatriation to the slave.

If a child is conceived through consensual sexual relations with a slave then the slave is called an *umm al-walad*. The child is *not* a bastard child or anything ridiculous like that. Rather, they are entirely legitimate and fully entitled to inheritance and all else that applies to the person's other children.

Such is the institution of “slavery” in Islam. As we have demonstrated above, it is vastly different and superior morally and spiritually to the atrocious, obscene, and vile Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Slaves in Islam had personal and religious freedoms. They were not considered objects of cheap labor for people to exploit. They were not considered sexual play things. They were treated like human beings and were given ample opportunity to lead a free lifestyle.



## GENDER INEQUALITY

### 'AQL AND MORE WOMEN ARE IN HELL THAN MEN

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ زُمْحٍ بْنِ الْمُهَاجِرِ الْمَصْرِيِّ، أَخْبَرَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنِ ابْنِ الْهَادِ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ دِينَارٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ " يَا مَعْشَرَ النِّسَاءِ تَصَدَّقْنَ وَأَكْثِرْنَ الْإِسْتِغْفَارَ فَإِنِّي رَأَيْتُكُنَّ أَكْثَرَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ ". فَقَالَتْ امْرَأَةٌ مِنْهُنَّ جَزَلَةٌ وَمَا لَنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَكْثَرَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ . قَالَ " تُكْثِرْنَ اللَّعْنَ وَتَكْفُرْنَ الْعَشِيرَ وَمَا رَأَيْتُ مِنْ نَاقِصَاتِ عَقْلٍ وَدِينٍ أَغْلَبَ لِي لَبِّ مِنْكُنَّ " . قَالَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا نُقْصَانُ الْعَقْلِ وَالَّذِينَ قَالَ " أَمَّا نُقْصَانُ الْعَقْلِ فَشَهَادَةُ امْرَأَتَيْنِ تَعْدِلُ شَهَادَةَ رَجُلٍ فَهَذَا نُقْصَانُ الْعَقْلِ وَتَمَكُّتُ اللَّيَالِي مَا تُصَلِّي وَتُفْطِرُ فِي رَمَضَانَ فَهَذَا نُقْصَانُ الدِّينِ " .

Ibn 'Umar (*radyallohu 'anhu*) said:

The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "O women folk! You should give charity and be diligent in seeking Allah's forgiveness because I have seen (i.e. on the Night of the Ascension to the highest heavens) that dwellers of the Hell are women." A woman amongst them said: "Why is it that the majority of the dwellers of Hell are women?" The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) replied, "You curse frequently and are ungrateful to your husbands. In spite of your lacking in wisdom and failing in religion, you are depriving the wisest of men of their intelligence." Upon this the woman asked: "What is the deficiency in our wisdom and in our religion?" He (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) replied, "Your lack of wisdom can be well judged from the fact that the evidence of two women is equal to that one man. You do not offer *salah* (prayer) for some days and you do not fast (the whole of) *Ramadan* sometimes, it is a deficiency in religion." [Muslim]

This *hadith* is used, often much too casually and in a derogatory manner, in the Muslim world to show that women are inherently deficient in both their religion as well as their intellect. Furthermore, it is used to prove that majority of Hell's inhabitants will be women. However, we must evaluate this interpretation.

First, and foremost, Imam Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (*rahimahullah*) states in his magnum opus, "*Fath al-Bari fi Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*," that by corroborating all variations of this narration we find that this statement of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was said in a woman's only gathering. One could argue, "But then why is Ibn 'Umar (*radyallohu 'anhu*) narrating it?" The answer to that is simple, he heard it from one of the women. If several *muhaddith* are corroborating the *hadith* with multiple variants with a correct *sanad* then it is true. What this refutes is the assumption that this narration was somehow meant to denigrate the women in a mixed company. Nay, rather it was used privately with women in order to advise them with regards to some matters.

Also, we must note that in pre-Islamic Arabic the phrase "*naqisati 'aqlinn wa deeninn*," meaning "deficient intellectually and religiously," was a derogatory and misogynistic term used in

order to insult women. It was a recognized insult that was used for women long before the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) used it his above statement. This preexistence is evidenced by the use of this insult in *jahiliyya* (pre-Islamic) poetry. Even Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (*rahimahullah*) confirmed the veracity of this. The true significance of this will come to light later in our discussion

Lastly, we must note that this conversation occurred not only in Medina, but in the latter period of Medina. What this evidences is that the audience which was being addressed by the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) were not fresh reverts but were rather older and veteran female *sahabas*.

In order to truly grasp the narration beyond the understanding of a shallow translation we must pick apart and interpret the Arabic of it:

- “*ya ma'shar an-Nisa:*” “Oh, community of women!”
  - The word *ma'shar* is used to denote a specific audience that is present before you. It is not meant to be interpreted as *'aam* but rather as *khaas*.
- “*ta saddaqa wa aktharna min al-istighfar:*” “Give charity and abundantly for forgiveness”
- “*fa inni ra'aitu kunna:*” “Because most definitely I have 'seen' you;”
  - “*Ra'i:*”
    - In the Arabic language frequently this is used to mean “see” but not literally but rather figuratively. For example, in the start of *Surah al-Feel* we have “*alam tara kayfa fa'ala rabbuka bi ashaab'l-feel?*” This is stating, “Didn't you **see** how your Lord dealt with the People of the Elephant?” Most of the people who had seen Abraha march into Makkah with his army had long since passed away. A lot of narrations even state that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was born later on in that year (*aam al-feel*). So clearly, the audience of the above *ayah* is being told “Do you not understand? Can you not comprehend how your Lord dealt...”
    - Hence, the above statement would translate better as, “Because most definitely I think that you...,” or “Because most definitely I fear that you...”
  - “*Kunna:*” This is in second-person meaning, “all **you** women.” The “you” highlighting that this was not a general address to women across all time but rather the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was speaking specifically to the women present before him.
- “*akthara ahl an-naar:*” This is oftentimes translated as, “the majority of people in Hell (are you women).” However, the word “majority,” here translating the Arabic word “*akthara*,” is not an correct translation. The word “*akthara*” does not mean majority but rather means many. So if there are a multitude you would say “a lot” even if they are not a majority in their group. Hence, the translation should be “many (of you) are people of Hell.”
- “*Fa qalat imratun min ha:*” “So a woman from amongst them said,”
- “*Wa ma lana ya rasulAllahi akthara ahlinnaar?*” “And what's wrong with us that we be abundantly the inhabitants of hell, o Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*).”
- “*Qaala tukthirna al-la'na:*” “He said, 'You curse frequently.’” This was a problem that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) saw amongst the Medinan women. Cursing was much more common amongst Medinans than Makkans since the Medinans were a small town and such language tends to develop there whilst the Makkans were dignified maintainers of the Kaaba so they did not resort to such language. Basically, the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was stating that, “You guys curse way too much!”

- “*Wa takfurna al-'asheer:*” This is translated above as “and you are ungrateful to your husbands.” However, yet again, this translation is entirely off the mark. The word “*al-'asheer*” is being translated as “husbands” but we must check the veracity of that claim.

Say, "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, your '*asheer*.." [al-Taubah, 9:24]

And warn your closest '*asheer*. [al-Shu'ara, 26:214]

- Clearly, in the two *ayah* above the word “*'asheer*” is being used in a way that cannot, in any possible way, denote or imply the meaning of “husband.” In the first *ayah* it would be redundant because it immediately follows the word “spouse” and the Qur'an is far from redundant. Whilst in the second *ayah* it would imply polyandry which is not allowed in the Qur'an or *sunnah*. Hence, the above phrase would be translated as, “and you are ungrateful to your families.
- This was being said because many Muslims had none of their family with them. *Sahaba* such as Bilal (*radyallohu 'anhu*) and Salman al-Farsi (*radyallohu 'anhu*) were all alone in Medina as Muslims. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was telling them to be more grateful for the fact that their families were present with them.
- “*Wa maa ra'itu min naqisati 'aqlinn wa dininn:*” “I don't understand how somebody could be so deficient in intellect and religion.” We return to the fact that this was a *jahili* insult that was hurled at women. So why is the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) quoting it here? That is order to refute it and flip the term on its head and redefine it. This was Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's (*rahimahullah*) opinion. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) had the best of character and the best of speech. It is unfathomable that he would hurl *jahili* insults at women.
- “*Aghlab bi thi lubbin:*” “And outsmart the most intelligent man.” This is the refutation. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) states that “I don't understand how you can be deficient in intellect and religion but still manage to outsmart the most intelligent man of mine.” He is refuting this insult! It's a rhetorical statement, “If the men say you're so stupid then how come you can outsmart them?”
- “*Qalat ya rasulAllahi wa maa nuqsaanu al-'aqli wa ad-deeni:*” She said, “O Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) so what is the deficiency, if any, in our intellect and religion?” One may ask, “so why is the woman asking this if the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) just refuted it?” The answer is that when an environment has been marginalizing one and calling one stupid and lacking in religion then naturally that person would develop an inferiority complex. So even after the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) has refuted the insult she is still wondering if there is indeed any deficiency at all.
- “*'Ammu nuqsaanu al-'aqli fa shadatu mra'atayni ta'dilu shadata rijaalu fa hatha nuqsaanu al-'aqli:*” “As for the deficiency in intellect, then two witnesses of a female is equal to the witness of a male.” So the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) is stating that there is no actual deficiency it is merely a rule. If you want to call it a “deficiency” you can but in reality it is a *hukm* from Allah. If someone acknowledges it and follows it then it is worship, not a sign of stupidity. That's why the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) used this example. To show that there is no actual lack of intellect.
- “*Wa tamkus al-laylia maa tusalli wa nuqtiru fi ramadaani fa hatha nuqsaanu ad-deeni:*” “And you do not offer *salah* for some days and don't fast in Ramadan sometimes, so this is the deficiency in religion.” This too is a *hukm* from Allah. Who are the menstrual cycles given from

except Allah? The “deficiency” in religion is God given and therefore cannot be considered a deficiency. The entire statement is a negation of the insult and that's why these very specific examples have been presented.

As we can see, a closer analysis of the diction of the *hadith* reveals that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was refuting a long held misogynistic tradition by redefining, refuting, and negating an insult. There is no deficiency in intellect and religion. The *ahkam* for the two genders are merely different, that is all. Now we understand why 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (*radyallohu 'anhu*) narrated this *hadith*. It is because it eradicates gender biases.

And Allah presents an example of those who believed: the wife of Pharaoh, when she said, "My Lord, build for me near You a house in Paradise and save me from Pharaoh and his deeds and save me from the wrongdoing people."  
[*al-Tahrim*, 66:11]

And (the example of) Mary, the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity, so We blew into (her garment) through Our angel, and she believed in the words of her Lord and His scriptures and was of the devoutly obedient.  
[*al-Tahrim*, 66:12]

Furthermore, if we are to take the biased approach and declare women to be inferior in their religion then that fact cannot contradict the Qur'an and history. In the Qur'an Allah gives us numerous examples of women whom we are *supposed* to look up to in terms of our religion. They are female role-models, in *religion*, for women as well as *men*. If we take the interpretation that women are deficient in religion then we would have to consider whether, *ma'athAllah*, the Qur'an was wrong in using women as religious role-models for humanity. Some *muhaddith* estimate that about 2/3rds of the *ahadith* we have were passed on by women. Then if they are deficient in our intellect then what of that giant portion of our tradition?

To paraphrase the profound words of Imam Ibn Qayyim (*rahimahullah*), “This *hadith* does not apply to all women. Rather, it is exclusive to the women that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was addressing that time. There are no practical ruling that can be established or derived with this narration. Lastly, this *hadith* should *not* be used to belittle and marginalize women because it could push them out of the fold of Islam.”

### RATIO OF 2:1 (WOMEN: MEN) AS WITNESSES

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَيْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ ۚ وَلْيَكْتُب بَيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ ۚ وَلَا يَأْب كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ ۚ فَلْيَكْتُبْ وَلْيَمْلِكِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ

O you who have believed, when you contract a debt for a specified term, write it down. And let a scribe write (it) between you in justice. Let no scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him. So let him write and let the one who has the obligation dictate. And let him fear Allah, his Lord, and not leave anything out of it. But if the one who has the obligation is of limited

وَلَا يَبْخَسُ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا ۚ فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ  
 سَفِيهًا أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يُمِِّلَ هُوَ  
 فَلْيُمِِّلْ وَلِيُّهُ بِالْعَدْلِ ۚ وَاسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِنْ  
 رِجَالِكُمْ ۖ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ مِمَّنْ  
 تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ  
 إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى ۚ وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا ۚ  
 وَلَا تَسْأَمُوا أَنْ تَكْتُبُوهُ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلِهِ ۚ  
 ذَٰلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا  
 تَرْتَابُوا ۗ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا  
 بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا ۗ  
 وَأَشْهِدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ ۚ وَلَا يُضَارَّ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ  
 ۚ وَإِنْ تَفَعَّلُوا فَإِنَّهُ فَسُوقٌ بِكُمْ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۗ  
 وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٢﴾

understanding or weak or unable to dictate himself, then let his guardian dictate in justice.

**And bring to witness two witnesses from among your men. And if there are not two men (available), then a man and two women from those whom you accept as witnesses - so that if one of the women errs, then the other can remind her. And let not the witnesses refuse when they are called upon.**

And do not be (too) weary to write it, whether it is small or large, for its (specified) term. That is more just in the sight of Allah and stronger as evidence and more likely to prevent doubt between you, except when it is an immediate transaction which you conduct among yourselves. For (then) there is no blame upon you if you do not write it.

And take witnesses when you conclude a contract. Let no scribe be harmed or any witness. For if you do so, indeed, it is (grave) disobedience in you. And fear Allah. And Allah teaches you. And Allah is Knowing of all things.  
 [al-Baqarah, 2:282]

This *ayah* is the longest *ayah* in the Qur'an and is known as “*ayah al-dayn*” or “the *ayah* of business transactions.” It is interesting to note that although the intricacies of *salah* and *zakah* aren't expounded upon in the Qur'an we find the entire issue of business transactions in great detail in the Qur'an. One of the possible wisdom behind is the fact that humans this issue tends to wedge quite a few people apart. One minor misunderstanding or mistake and a schism occurs between a once loving people.

Imam Muhammad al-Shaybani (*rahimahullah*) was once asked by his student, “Shaykh, you've written on so many subjects but why have you not written on the topic of *tazkiyah* (spiritual purification)?” The Imam replied, “I already have!” The student protested and proclaimed, “No, you actually haven't...” Then the Imam clarified the matter and said, “It is the *fiqh* of business transactions.”

To summarize, the general understanding of this *ayah* is as follows: “bring two witnesses from amongst your men.” However, if two male witnesses cannot be found or agreed upon then one male and two female witnesses must be presented. This way if one of the women is inaccurate then the other

can remind her.

Immediately we must note that the command is not 'aam it is *khaas*. It speaks about a business transaction between *men*. This is evidenced by the arabic word "*min rijali-kum*" which roughly translate to "from your men." In case these two parties of men cannot agree upon two male witnesses then two female witnesses and one male witness will be brought forth.

Some *'ulema* have conjectured that this *ayah* is presenting a social dynamic. Since the transaction is between two *male* parties having being the sole female in the group might be awkward or intimidating so having two females is legislated. Another matter of interest is the fact that the *ayah* states "*an tadilla ihdahuma fa tuthakkir ihdahuma l-ukhra,*" meaning "so that if one of them errs then the other may **remind** her." We can infer from this that only one of them is the actual witness and the other is indeed there for support.

An opinion amongst the *fuqaha* (legal scholars) is that if the transaction is between two female parties then having merely two female witnesses would suffice. This is based off of "*min rijali-kum,*" meaning "men from amongst yourselves." Thus, if no men are to be found amongst the parties the commandment does not apply.

Certain classical scholars have done *qiyas* (analogical deduction) and concluded that all female testimonies are equal to half that of a male testimony. This is, however, **not** the majority opinion and is extremely weak legally speaking. If only a single woman is required to sight the moon of a new month then how can two be required to give testimony? Only a single woman is required to narrate a *hadith* with correct *sanad* for it to be accepted by the *muhaddithoon*. Only a single woman is needed to memorize the Qur'an for her to be called a *hafidha*. Thus, we see the *qiyas* falling apart and proving to be improper.

To conclude, at the end of the day this is a moot point to grieve over. The biggest misunderstanding, that all female testimonies are half that of male testimonies, has proven to be extremely weak. Furthermore, we found out that this ruling is *khaas*. It applies only when the two male parties are concluding a business transaction and are unable to find two witnesses they can agree upon. Only then does this rule apply.

Lastly, this is the word of Allah and we believe in it wholeheartedly. If you did not find the sociological explanation of the *ayah* convincing then blame not yourself for I too find this to be a weak argument. But the *ayah* is supposed to provide clarification and ease in business, **not** fuel for sexism. It was never meant to degrade women nor should it be used as such.

## WIVES MUST OBEY HUSBANDS

وعن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: " لو كنت امرأة أحدًا أن يسجد لأحد لأمرت المرأة أن تسجد لزوجها" ((رواه

الترمذي وقال : حديث حسن صحيح)).

Abu Hurayrah (*radyAllahu anhu*) reported:  
The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "If I were to order anyone to prostrate himself before another, I would have ordered a woman to prostrate herself before her husband".  
[Tirmidhi]

This *hadith* is often quoted in an extremely degrading manner by certain members of our community who use it as a justification that a woman should be docile and subservient to every whim of her husband. Why? "Because, *sajda* woman! Don't you know that that means you have to obey me?" However, yet again, we must focus on the Arabic in the *hadith* to get to the meaning itself. Unlike the previous *hadith* we will not be doing word-by-word translation but rather focusing on particular words of importance.

The *hadith* begins with the word "*law*," meaning "if." Immediately this renders the entire discussion a moot point. This is clearly talking about a hypothetical and no rulings can be derived from it. In our *shari'a* we cannot make *sajda* of *ibadah* to anyone but Allah. A variant of the *hadith* above narrated in the *Sunan* of Imam Ibn Majah (*rahimahullah*) and in the *Musnad* of Imam Ahmed (*rahimahullah*) by 'Abdullah ibn Abi Awfa (*radyAllahu 'anhu*) explicitly mention this prohibition. Furthermore, even the *sajda* of respect is forbidden in our *shari'ah* by the variants of the above *hadith*. Imam al-Sarakhsi (*rahimahullah*) said, "Prostration to other than Allah by way of reverence is *kufir* (disbelief)."

With regards to the differentiation between the two *sajdas* in the texts of the Qur'an and *sunnah* we find that the verb *sajadalyasjudu* it is preceded by one of two different prepositions. When preceded by the preposition *أَمَامَ* (*amama*) the *sajda* it necessarily denotes a *sajda* of *ibadah* or worship. In contrast, when preceded by the preposition *لِ* the *sajda* automatically denotes a *sajda* of respect.

As Joseph said to his father, "O my father, indeed I have seen (in a dream) eleven stars and the sun and the moon; I saw them prostrating to me."  
[*Yusuf*, 12:4]

And he raised his parents upon the throne, and they bowed to him in prostration. And he said, "O my father, this is the explanation of my vision of before. My Lord has made it reality.  
[*Yusuf*, 12:100]

Despite the prohibition of the *sajda* of respect in our *shari'a* it was not prohibited in earlier nations' *shari'a*. In particular we find in the *shari'a* followed by *Yusuf* (*'alayhi as-Salam*). In his prophetic dream he saw that eleven stars, the sun, and the moon were making *sajda* to him. The reality of his vision came years later when his family made *sajda* to him. Now in most families it is not the son that is obeyed by the father but rather the father that is obeyed by the son and thus, the *sajda* in the *ayaat* above clearly does not imply obedience of any sort. A detractor may however argue, "But see, *Yusuf* (*'alayhi as-Salam*) was a prophet and prophets have to be obeyed!" But the argument against that is that *Ya'qub* (*'alayhi as-Salam*), his father, was also a prophet. Hence, we discover that the *sajda* that

is not of worship is actually of love, respect, and admiration. The concept of obedience associated with the *sajda* of respect is entirely without grounds in the Islamic texts.

Thus, if we were to more accurately paraphrase the *hadith* it would be, “If *sajda* was still allowed in our *shari'a* it would make a lot of sense for a woman to do *sajda* before her husband out of love and adoration.”

The Qur'an is eloquent and expressive whilst at the same time succinct and concise. As it tells us stories from the past it leaves out all unnecessary details, giving us only what is considered essential. But then we find curious specifics such as Yusuf's (*'alayhi as-Salam*) brothers discussing the methods of disposing of him before deciding on throwing him in the well. This is because everything mentioned has great relevance to us. It seems that the story of Yusuf (*'alayhi as-Salam*) was taken into account by the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) when he said these words.

## TRAVELING ALONE

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ، عَنْ نَافِعٍ، عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ -  
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا - عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " لَا تُسَافِرِ الْمَرْأَةُ  
ثَلَاثًا إِلَّا مَعَ ذِي مَحْرَمٍ "

Narrated Ibn 'Umar (*radyallohu anhu*) that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "A woman should not travel for more than three days except with a *mahram* (i.e. a male with whom she cannot marry at all, i.e. her brother, father, grandfather, etc., or her own husband)." [Bukhari]

This *hadith*, along with its variants narrated by Abu Hurayrah (*radyallohu 'anhu*) and Abu Sa'id (*radyallohu 'anhu*) which respectively limit the number of days to one and two, is commonly assumed to mean that no travel is allowed for a woman within any reasonable distance without the accompaniment of a *mahram*.

Regarding the word “*tusafir*” it means the actual act of traveling and being in transit. “*Tusafir*” comes from the word *safar* meaning the act of traveling. If you're going somewhere and you stop and stay is called a “*manzil*,” like the the Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) du'a for traveling, “*rabbi anzilnee munzalan mubarakan waanta khayru al-munzileen*.” Hence, the *hadith* actually says you cannot travel for three days straight without a *manzil* in the middle in the absence of a *mahram*.

In the modern world unless you're sailing across the ocean this doesn't quite apply. The only context in which it could apply are cross-country road trips. However, this is entirely understandable as even in this day and age such trips are extremely dangerous in most countries for men let alone women.



Narrated 'Adi bin Hatim (*radyAllahu 'anhu*), "... The Prophet said, 'Adi! Have you been to al-Hira?' I said, 'I haven't been to it, but I was informed about it.' He said, '**If you should live for a long time, you will certainly see that a lady in a howdah traveling from al-Hira will (safely reach Mecca and) perform the tawaf of the Ka'ba, fearing none but Allah.**'"

'Adi added, "(Later on) I saw a lady in a Howdah traveling from al-Hira till she performed the Tawaf of the Ka'ba, fearing none but Allah."

[Bukhari]

Let's assume a travel of this sort does occur. Would the *hadith* be interpreted as a prohibition or advice? In the *hadith* above the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) mentions about the spread of Islam in the future and how it will be so safe one day that a woman from al-Hira could journey to Makkah, a journey that takes several weeks, and be safe. This is not merely a prophecy but also an implicit statement of permissibility. Furthermore, when we put this in context of the "prohibition" *hadith* from earlier we realize that the "prohibition" was limited to times of danger. Hence, the varying responses in variations of that *hadith* as well as the fact that this *hadith* states that she will be "fearing none but Allah." This was also the opinion held by Imam al-Nawawi (*rahimahullah*). Also, some books mention this *hadith* in the "Chapter of Permissibility of a Woman Traveling by Herself."

Imam Nawawi (*rahimahullah*) also said that during the *khilafa* of 'Umar (*radyAllahu 'anhu*) the wives of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) wished to do Hajj but unfortunately most of their *mahrams* had either passed away or were unavailable. Thus, 'Umar (*radyAllahu 'anhu*) consulted with 'A'isha (*radyAllahu 'anha*) and it was concluded that the wives could travel together in a group to hajj and that would be appropriate. Hermeneutically speaking, this would be the formal and official interpretation and is considered highly authoritative.

## FEMALE GOVERNANCE

حَدَّثَنَا عُثْمَانُ بْنُ الْهَيْثَمِ، حَدَّثَنَا عَوْفٌ، عَنِ الْحَسَنِ، عَنِ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ، قَالَ لَقَدْ نَفَعَنِي اللَّهُ بِكَلِمَةٍ أَيَّامَ الْجَمَلِ لَمَّا بَلَغَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّ فَارِسًا مَلَكَوا ابْنَةَ كِسْرَى قَالَ " لَنْ يُفْلِحَ قَوْمٌ وَلَوْ أَمَرَهُمْ امْرَأَةٌ ."

Narrated Abu Bakra (*radyAllahu 'anhu*), "During the Battle of al-Jamal, Allah benefited me with a Word (I heard from the Prophet). When the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) heard the news that the people of the Persia had made the daughter of Kisra their Queen (ruler), he said, 'Never will succeed such a nation as makes a woman their ruler.'"

[Bukhari]

This *hadith* is often quoted with regards to Muslim women in leadership positions of any capacity being “bad Muslims” by having earned that position. We shall analyze the veracity of such a claim.

Abu Bakra (*radyallohu 'anhu*) is found narrating in variant narrations that 'A'isha (*radyallohu 'anha*) was in a position of leadership at the Battle of al-Jamal. If we take this narration to mean that women aren't allowed to be leaders of any sort then we would interpret Abu Bakra (*radyallohu 'anhu*) as sowing sedition, *ma'athAllah*, and that is not possible.

Another trait about Abu Bakra (*radyallohu 'anhu*) is that although he is a *sahaba* there are ranks within the *sahaba*. There are certain *sahaba* whose *hadith* you derive *ahkam*, or rulings, from. On the other hand, there are *sahaba* such as Abu Bakra (*radyallohu 'anhu*) whose *hadith* we consider to be valid but not to the degree that we may derive *ahkam* from them.

Imam al-Bukhari (*rahimahullah*) placed this *hadith* in his "كتاب المغازی," or “Book of Prophetic Military Expeditions,” within "باب كتاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إلى كِسْرَى وَفَيْصَرَ," or “Chapter [on] the Letter of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) to Khosrau and Caesar.” The Imam did not put this *hadith* in any book or chapter regarding government or rulers but rather in a historical book in a specific chapter. This shows that Imam al-Bukhari (*rahimahullah*) himself did not consider this to be an *'aam* comment, much less a ruling, but rather something *khaas* that was limited to the time and place that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said this.

Imam ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (*rahimahullah*) in his well known commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Fath ul-Bari fi Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, corroborated multiple variants of this narration in order to complete the entire context and scenario of the narration above. So, when the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) wrote to the Khosrau (Emperor) of Persia the Khosrau tore the letter up due to his arrogance. When the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was informed of this he supplicated, “May Allah tear his kingdom apart.” Soon, the Khosrau's zealous brother murdered him and all of his children except for one or two children in an attempt to usurp the throne. Loyalists of the murdered Khosrau who in a position of power sought to make the best of the opportunity and deposed and executed the zealous brother. Seeing the throne empty they put the surviving daughter of the Khosrau, a little girl aged 10-12, on the throne. She was a mere puppet and these loyalists were in actuality running the empire. It was when the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was informed of this young puppet as a ruler that he said the above *hadith*. Hence, it was clearly a specified response to a very specific situation.

An issue that arises out of the above explanation is that the words “قَوْمٌ” and “امْرَأَةٌ,” respectively meaning “a nation” and “a woman,” are both *nakira* (indefinite) meaning they translate as “a nation” and “a woman” as opposed to “the nation” and “the woman.” This is where we require knowledge of *balagha* (rhetoric and eloquence). The famous grammarian Ibn Malik (*rahimahullah*) in his magnum opus *al-Khulasa al-Alfiyya* wrote extensively about numerous aspects of *balagha*. Regarding the use of *nakira* in Arabic he wrote, “There are different benefits of *nakira*. Sometimes you

use it to make something general. Sometimes you use it to express disapproval.” There are numerous examples of the latter in the Qur'an with regards to hypocrites. They are not always referred to as “*al-munafiqoon*” (the hypocrites) but rather “*al-naas*” (the people). This is called *iltifat* in Arabic *balagha* and it includes switches from *ma'rifa* (definite) to *nakira* (indefinite) as well as from first-person to second-person pronouns. We even find this in the English language that when you're angry with someone you might say “he said” or “she said” in order to diminish the person as opposed to mentioning them. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) rarely took names of idols in order to diminish their significance. Thus, in this *hadith* we have to determine whether the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) meant a general statement or was engaging in *iltifat*. The context is our clue and it blatantly and explicitly shows that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was responding to a very specific piece of information regarding the Khosrau's daughter. Thus, to generalize it we would be doing the very thing we often abhor critics of Islam for doing: taking things out of context.

Imam ibn Hajar's (*rahimahullah*) own conclusion with regards to this *hadith* is that it is not *'aam* but rather it is *khaas*. He firmly held that this *hadith* cannot be generalized to specific occasions. If it were up to myself to translate this *hadith* I would paraphrase it as, “When the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was informed that the Khosrau's daughter had been put in charge, he said, 'Those people will not be successful as long as that girl is running their kingdom because she is not a leader but rather a mere puppet.’”

Some people, despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, may still insist that the narration is *'aam* and not *khaas*. But even so, one has to be honest with the text. The girl was not put in charge of a district, a city, a state, or even a province. Her post was that of an emperor. That is why the word “*wilaya*” was used because it is synonymous with the word “*khalifa*.” So even if one was to force the narration to be interpreted as *'aam* the furthest extent that ruling can be stretched to is the post of the *khalifa* and nothing lower. So even in this interpretation a woman hold any post anywhere but that of the *khalifa*.

Another important point to discuss is that this *hadith* is not speaking about ritual worship but rather about political governance. Ritual worship is entirely structured and we cannot do *qiyas* with them and say that, “Well if they can lead anything then they can lead the prayer.” This is just as improper as saying, “If she can't even lead the prayer how will she lead the nation.” There is a balance in all matters. The rulings for *salah* do not imply the inferiority or superiority of either gender. They are just the way they are and doing *qiyas* with them as such means that you have no *fiqh*, you have no understanding.

Lastly, this *hadith* is not speaking about an MSA, a masjid board, a corporate structure, or anything of that sort. When someone throws around this *hadith* in such scenarios they are doing nothing different than the anti-Muslim polemicist who throws around the *ayaat* and *ahadith* of *qital* without any context. This is blatant abuse of the *deen* and is the worst type of tragedy. We should avoid engaging in such behavior ourselves and stop others from doing so too with knowledge and wisdom.

## **ANGELS CURSING WOMAN WHO REFUSES HER HUSBAND AND *SALAH* NOT BEING ACCEPTED IF HUSBAND IS ANGRY WITH WIFE**

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم :  
 "إذا دعا الرجل امرأته إلى فراشه فأبت، فبات غضبان عليها، لعنتها  
 الملائكة حتى تصبح" ((متفق عليه)).

Abu Hurayrah (*radyallohu 'anhu*) said that  
 The Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "If a  
 man calls his wife to his bed and she refuses, and thus he spends  
 the night angry with her, the angels continue cursing her till the  
 morning." [Bukhari and Muslim]

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عُمَرَ بْنِ هَيْبٍ، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ الْأَزْهَبِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا عُبَيْدَةُ بْنُ الْأَسْوَدِ، عَنِ الْقَاسِمِ بْنِ  
 الْوَلِيدِ، عَنِ الْمُهَالِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ جُبَيْرٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَ "   
 ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا تَرْتَفِعُ صَلَاتُهُمْ فَوْقَ رُءُوسِهِمْ شَبْرًا رَجُلٌ أُمَّ قَوْمًا وَهُمْ لَهُ كَارِهُونَ وَامْرَأَةٌ بَاتَتْ وَرَوْجَهَا عَلَيْهَا سَاخِطٌ وَأَخْوَانِ  
 مُتَصَارِمَانِ . "

It was narrated from Ibn 'Abbas (*radyallohu 'anhu*) that the Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said,  
 "There are three whose prayer do not rise more than a hand span above their heads: A man who leads  
 people (in prayer) when they do not like him; a woman who has spent the night with her husband  
 angry with her; and two brothers who have severed contact with one another." [Ibn Majah]

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو كُرَيْبٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدَةُ بْنُ سُلَيْمَانَ، وَجَعْفَرُ بْنُ عَوْنٍ، عَنِ الْإِفْرِيقِيِّ، عَنْ عِمْرَانَ بْنِ عَبْدِ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ  
 عَمْرٍو، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - " ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا تُقْبَلُ لَهُمْ صَلَاةُ الرَّجُلِ يَوْمَ الْقَوْمِ وَهُمْ لَهُ كَارِهُونَ  
 وَالرَّجُلُ لَا يَأْتِي الصَّلَاةَ إِلَّا دِبَارًا - يَعْنِي بَعْدَ مَا يَفُوتُهُ الْوَقْتُ - وَمَنْ اعْتَبَدَ مُحَرَّرًا . "

It was narrated that 'Abdullah bin 'Amr (*radyallohu 'anhu*) said that the Messenger of Allah  
 (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "There are three whose prayer are not accepted: A man who  
 leads people while they do not like him; a man who does not come to prayer until its end – meaning  
 after its time has expired – and one who enslaves a freed person." [Ibn Majah]

Building context with regards to the study of any text, especially sacred texts, is extremely important. In fact, taking things out of context is considered extremely offensive. The context we're building is not based on sociology or psychology but rather *ahadith*. The text is what it dictates. The text is "boss." That is where we derive the rules and that is where we get the instructions.

Putting together the two *ahadith* from the *Sunan* of Imam ibn Majah (*rahimahullah*) we get five

people in five scenarios:

1. A person who leads the people while they disapprove of him in his leadership.
2. A person who comes to the communal prayer later trying to avoid the *jama'at* intentionally. The word *jama'a* here could be taken to mean both congregational prayer as well as the community he lives in. In context it appears to mean the latter.
3. A person who enslaves free people and oppresses them.
4. Two brothers who have excommunicated each other and are refusing to reconcile.
5. A woman who went to sleep when her husband was mad with her without agreeing to reconciliation.

So where do we get the notion of “sex” being meant by the fifth scenario? The word “*firaash*” which is translated as “bed” in the first *hadith*. In order to fully appreciate what the word means we have to understand the physical structures in a community. Firstly, we have a *daar*, or a compound, with an open courtyard surrounded by various *hujura*, or single bedroom apartments. Apartments that were slightly bigger were called *bayt* inside of which there would be a curtained-off section the size of a bed called *firaash*. Hence, the term *firaash* not only refers to a bed but also to privacy since the *fraash* was a private enclosure within a *bayt*.

The first *hadith*, we realize, is actually talking about a breakdown in relationships. This *hadith* is about a husband and a wife's conflict and reconciliation. When the couple have a conflict the husband calls the wife into the *firaash*, the private area, to be sincere and reconcile (*not* have sex). However, she rejects his offer and goes off to sleep away from him and thus making him upset. *That* is when her prayer is not accepted and the angels would curse her.

A critic may argue, “then why use the gender roles as they are used to demonstrate the point in the *hadith*?” This is because the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was demonstrating that it is the male's responsibility to reconcile the relationship should such a situation arise. If he wants to wear the pants in the relationship so badly then he should man up and resolve his domestic affairs. That is true leadership. We find that in the same communities that interpret these *ahadith* erroneously to be the least mature in dealing with marital issues. When 'Umar (*radyAllahu 'anhu*) was haughty towards the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) after the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah we find that it was the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) himself that initiated the reconciliation. The *sunnah* is that the leader in all dynamics is responsible for reconciliation.

We have two extremes in our society. One that claims that a woman has to do what she has to do in order to please the man and the other in which women proclaim, “why should I ever have to do anything for anyone else?” The thing to understand is that extremes breed one another. One cannot simply have one extreme exist. One forms as an equal and opposite reaction to the other extreme. The latter extreme demonstrates that the person is not part of a team and should not be married whilst the former extremes shows that the person is unloving, uncaring, and callous.

There is a *hadith* in which a female *sahaba*'s needs were not being fulfilled and she brought this issue to the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) then addressed her husband and upon finding out that he simply could not satisfy the woman's needs he separated them and ordered them to be divorced.

The important question now arises, “is marital rape a recognized position in Islam?” A better and more fitting question is does Islam allow the husband to abuse his wife? We found that emotional and psychological abuse were declared illegal in the first few *ayaat* of *Surah al-Mujadila*. In our earlier investigation into the *ahadith* regarding striking women and the word “*daraba*” we also discovered that physical abuse is also not permitted in Islam. Rape falls explicitly into the category of physical, psychological, and emotional abuse all at once and is entirely impermissible and *haram*. A person should be held accountable for it.

The thing to understand is that the husband has his set of divinely given rights one of which is the right to have his physical desires satisfied. But if your rights are wronged then you *do not* force the issue. Rather, the *sunnah* proves that one should seek clarification and reconciliation on the issue and if one find that they cannot be satisfied then seek a divorce in order to rectify the situation. The curse of Allah is upon those who oppress! There is a *hadith qudsi* found in Muslim, Tirmidhi, and ibn Majah, “O My servants, I have forbidden *zulm* (oppression) for Myself and have made it forbidden amongst you, so do not do *zulm* (oppression) to one another.” If your rights are being violated that does not give you the right to violate the rights of others. Two wrongs do not make a right. *Zulm* is forbidden and absolutely unjustifiable!

## ***HUDUD*(PENAL CODE)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

*Hudud* is the plural of the word *hadd*, meaning “boundary” or “limit.” Although people usually understand them as “Islamic punishments” this is a false notion and instead should be termed, as we will discuss why in a bit, “The Islamic Penal Code.” Firstly, we have to understand what this system actually is and what is Islam's overall view of it. The *hudud* are a holistic system and framework whose objective is to build positivity in society by means of preventative measures to help people live and maximize their potential. This definition alone counters 90% of the misunderstandings associated with *hudud*. As long as we think about them as “punishments” it takes away entirely from the prerequisites and the prioritization that is present in the *hudud* equation. Instead it becomes basic black and white, “they did this so this happens, etc.” No, this is *not* how *hudud* works. Rather, the *hudud* system has a higher and nobler objective than that.

*Hudud* operates on the basic premise that justice and security are important and necessary for human society and life. While these two are necessary objective of Islam they never *ever* come at the expense of the welfare and health of the people they were meant to provide justice and security for. If in implementing *hudud* you sacrifice the health and well-being of a people then you're doing *hudud* wrong. The objective of this holistic system is to benefit people in society as a whole. It is *never* implemented with the intent of punishing anyone or creating hardship upon the people.

### **PREREQUISITES**

Before we can even begin discussing the prerequisites of individual *hadd* such as that for theft, fornication, adultery, etc, there are a few general and collective prerequisites that must be met before the *hudud* can even be implemented upon any level. It is *not* permissible for a government to explore the implementation or even engage in conversation regarding implementing *hudud* unless and until certain prerequisites have been established.

What are these prerequisites and more importantly, where are they derived from? Firstly, we look at the sequence of revelation. Secondly, we have to prioritize what the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) prioritized.

1. Establishing a basic education for each and every single person to the extent that they can comprehend right from wrong. They should comprehend how to implement and even avoid the penalties that come about from violating rules. If this is not there then implementing *hudud* is considered *zulm* (oppression). It can just be called “punishments” because it is not at all just.
2. After a basic education has been established for each and every member of society to the point that they learn and understand right from wrong then the second thing is to create a system and foster a society that helps an individual develop a spirituality that is secure enough to help them implement Islamic law in their personal lives. If the society lacks this and cannot provide the

- means to strengthen and develop one's spirituality then it is impermissible to establish *hudud*.
3. Once the education and spiritual support system are in place there is yet another issue to tackle. The government has to establish a system that provides mental and emotional healthcare for the members of the community. The *shari'a* does not punish people for committing crimes whilst being mentally or emotionally disturbed. You are *not* supposed to punish that person but rather supposed to provide care and support for that person.

When we look at the Qur'an, it educated, spiritually developed, and even provided a sense of community that would care for each and every person. This happened *before* the *hudud* were implemented or even revealed. This is the process in which *hudud* were implemented in the life of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). Until this process is there and these prerequisites are met then that government or nation has absolutely no business in implementing *hudud*.

Detractors may say, "Well, why do you have a problem with the *shari'a* brother? Are you a sellout? Are you watering down the religion?" No. Let me clear up why it is problematic when someone goes on international media and proclaim, "We're establishing *hudud*!" What level of education have they provided their community about Islam? How have they sought to fulfill the community's spiritual needs? Is there even mental and emotional support in the community?

The objective of the *shari'a* is **NOT** to establish the *hudud*. If that is someone's view then it is sad and they should go and work at prison where people are bad and they punish people who are bad. Rather, the objective of the *shari'a* is to save people from the fire of hell and lead them into paradise. The objective of the *shari'a* is to live life and be blessed by Allah.

So although some people may argue for the implementation of *hudud* their Islamically uneducated, spiritually void, and emotionally disturbed existence is the very reason that the *hudud* shouldn't be implemented. They are reason we cannot have *shari'a*.

## THEFT

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جِزَاءً بِمَا  
كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٣٨﴾

(As for) the thief, the male and the female, amputate their hands in recompense for what they committed as a deterrent (punishment) from Allah. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.  
[*al-Ma'idah*, 5:38]

Assuming that the three preconditions for implementing the *hudud* have been successfully implemented then the *hadd* for the theft can be applied. However, it too has its preconditions.

أَخْبَرَنَا سُوَيْدُ بْنُ نَصْرٍ، قَالَ أَنْبَأَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ، عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ،  
عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ لَمْ تُقَطَّعْ يَدُ سَارِقٍ فِي أَدْنَى مِنْ حَبَقَةٍ أَوْ تُرْسٍ وَكُلِّ



وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا ذُو ثَمَنِ .

It was narrated that 'Aishah (*radyallohu 'anhu*) said, "The hand of the thief should not be cut off for anything less than a *hajafah* or a *turs* (two kinds of shields)," each of which was worth a (decent) price. [Nasa'i]

أَخْبَرَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ مُوسَى الْبَلْخِيُّ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ نُمَيْرٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِسْحَاقَ، عَنْ أَيُّوبَ بْنِ مُوسَى، عَنْ عَطَاءٍ، عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، مِثْلَهُ كَانَ ثَمَنُ الْمِجْرَنِ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقَوْمُ عَشْرَةَ دَرَاهِمٍ .

Narrated ibn 'Abbas (*radyallohu 'anhu*), "The price of a shield at the time of the Messenger of Allah was estimated to be ten *dirhams*." [Nasa'i]

*Dirhams* were silver coins and ten of which would be equivalent to roughly \$500 dollars. This is the minimum one has to steal in order to be eligible for this particular *hadd*. There is absolutely not cutting of the hand for anyone who is stealing any amount less than this. There is a *hadith* that states, "There is no cutting of the hand for anything that has been stolen which is less than the value of 10 *dirhams*." However, there is a difference of opinion due to the verbiage "*laysa fe maa*" which could be interpreted to mean that one single item must exceed ten *dirhams* or the aggregate amount of goods stolen must exceed ten *dirhams*.

Thus, we realize, there is no cutting of the hand for shoplifting, pick pocketing, or for petty theft. No such person usually steals large amounts. This *hadd* is meant to make an example out of professional thefts who commit armed robberies and threaten people's lives. You make an example out of such people. You do *not* make an example out of someone who has stolen a candy bar.

## PUBLIC INTOXICATION

حَدَّثَنَا نَصْرُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ الْجَهْضِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا يَزِيدُ بْنُ زُرَيْعٍ، حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدٌ، ح وَحَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا وَكَيْعٌ، عَنْ هِشَامِ الدَّسْتَوَائِيِّ، جَمِيعًا عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، قَالَ كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَضْرِبُ فِي الْخَمْرِ بِالتَّعَالِ وَالْجَرِيدِ .

It was narrated that Anas bin Malik (*radyallohu 'anhu*) said that, "The Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) used to beat (offenders) for drinking wine with sandals and date-palm

stalks.” [Ibn Majah]

On the surface this *hadith* may sound rather harsh but that is because we are not looking at it holistically. Everything in the Qur'an and *sunnah* is meant to be taken and applied together. It is a framework not a buffet menu where you take somethings and leave others. Hence, we have to determine whether it was just for drinking or specifically public drinking.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ  
بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَحَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم  
بَعْضًا ؕ أَيُّحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا  
فَكَرَهُتُمُوهُ ؕ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ؕ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾

O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. **And do not spy** or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful.  
[*al-Nur*, 34:4]

As-Sadiy said: “One night 'Umar (*radyAllahu 'anhu*) went out with Abdullah bin Mas'ood (*radyAllahu 'anhu*). He saw a light of fire. They followed the light until he entered the house. There was a lamp inside the house. He came in and left Abdullah bin Mass'ood in the courtyard.

There was an old man drinking wine and there was a songstress singing for him. Suddenly 'Umar attacked the old man and said, “I have never seen a scene uglier than a scene of an old man waiting for his end!” The old man raised his head and said: “In fact, your doing is uglier than what you have seen from me; you have spied whereas Allah has prohibited spying and you have entered the house with no permission.” 'Umar said: “You are right!” Then he went out biting his garment, crying and saying, “May 'Umar's mother lose him!”

The old man avoided to attend the meetings of 'Umar for some time. One day while 'Umar was sitting in his meeting, the old man came hiding himself not to be seen by 'Umar and he sat at the end of the meeting. 'Umar saw him and asked some of his companions to bring him. The old man thought that Umar would scold him. Umar said to him, “Come near to me!” 'Umar still asked him to be nearer until he seated him beside him. 'Umar said to the man, “Bring your ear near to me!” He said to him, “I swear by Him, Who has sent Muhammad (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) with the truth, that I have not told any one of people about what I have seen from you even ibn Mas'ood, who was with me...” [Hayat al-Sahaba]

From the narration and the *ayah* above we realize that regardless of the severity of the sin spying and busting people for them is absolutely not allowed. There is no “policing” in the *shari'a*. Some detractors might proclaim, “But why don't you want to prevent evil you heathen?” That is because this is the *sunnah*! This is the *hukm* of the Qur'an! This is the interpretation of the *sahaba*! You do not grab people in the streets and declare, “*Hadd* Time!” Rather they have to be shameless enough to be doing the sin publicly.

Therefore, with regards to drinking the *hadd* only applies for public acts of it. If someone drinks in the privacy of their own home then that is between them and Allah. The *hudud* look for the welfare and well-being of the people and that is why public intoxication is not allowed. How many instances of domestic violence, drunk driving, and violent beatings and brawls have occurred due to substance abuse? One of the largest causes of death in the United States is drunk driving. Such policies would help curb them immensely and avoid harm to the people at large.

## FORNICATION

<p>الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَيْشَهِدَ عَدَابَهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾</p>	<p>The (unmarried) woman or (unmarried) man found guilty of sexual intercourse - lash each one of them with a hundred lashes, and do not be taken by pity for them in the religion of Allah, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a group of the believers witness their punishment. [<i>al-Nur</i>, 34:2]</p>
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The definition of fornication is a little confusing if we go by the Arabic alone since “*zina*” denotes both adultery and fornication. For the purpose of clarification we define fornication as premarital sexual relations whilst adultery is extramarital. The *ayah* above states that the punishment for premarital sex is 100 lashes but as we've come to expect now, there are further requirements.

There are numerous *ayaat* (4:15, 24:4, 24:6, 24:13) that explicitly state that four witnesses are required in order to establish either type of *zina*. The only case in which four witnesses are not required is when the individual testifies against themselves. In Islam the witnesses don't need to have “a lack of reasonable doubt” but rather they need to have seen, very explicitly, the actual intercourse occur. They cannot have seen the couple alone together in a room or anything even more explicit than that. All four of them need to see nothing short of the actual act of insertion for the *hadd* to be applicable.

It is even fathomable that such a quantity of people see such someone engaging in such a thing? Usually such sins are done in the depths of privacy where one cannot be caught, not out in public. We also have to take into account that we cannot spy on people. So clearly, this *hadd* is meant to prevent public sexual acts where a large majority of people may view you. This is extremely lewd in and of itself and the *hadd* is designed to prevent spreading such acts of lewdness beyond someone's personal life.

We find many cases of this *hadd* originating from Iran, Iraq, West Africa, and Afghanistan. However, none of these cases are legitimate. All of them are impermissible as they do not meet the prerequisites of even implementing *hudud* let alone the specific conditions regarding this particular *hadd*. These are more cases of a savage blood-lust as opposed to any legitimate aim to fulfill the *hudud*.

## SLANDER

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ  
شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ  
شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا ۗ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٤﴾

And those who accuse chaste women and then do not produce four witnesses - lash them with eighty lashes and do not accept from them testimony ever after. And those are the defiantly disobedient. [al-Nur, 24:4]

Slander is when somebody accuses another individual of society and are unable to bring forth four witnesses. The *hadd* for that is for them to be lashed 80 times. Once an individual accuses another individual(s) of fornication or adultery then they are ordered to produce four witnesses immediately. If all four are presented then they are warned by the judge about the severity of what they about to engage in and the punishment of Allah upon any liars. If even one of them backs down at this point then all of them receive 80 lashes. Say the person is unable to bring forth four witnesses and just manages to produce three then they will still all be lashed 80 times. There's a difference of opinion regarding whether the accuser in question can or cannot be a witness.

Why have such a law? Because Islam does not condone or allow any room for witch hunts. We nip this disease in the bud. We are not interested in creating a draconian society. We are not interested in creating 1984 meets *shari'a* where people are brought forth and punished repeatedly just because of somebody's claims and assumption. The punishment for both forms of *zina* is serious and grave. To allow room for slander would undoubtedly cause a large amount of pain, fear, and defamation in society. Islam looks out for people's well-being and in the interest of society has curbed slander significantly.

## ADULTERY

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْيَمَانِ، أَخْبَرَنَا شُعَيْبٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي أَبُو سَلَمَةَ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، وَسَعِيدُ بْنُ الْمُسَيَّبِ، أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ أَتَى رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَسْلَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ فَنَادَاهُ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ الْأَخْرَجَ قَدْ زَنَى - يَعْنِي نَفْسَهُ - فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ فَتَنَحَّى لِشِقِّي وَجْهِهِ الَّذِي أَعْرَضَ قَبْلَهُ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ الْأَخْرَجَ قَدْ زَنَى فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ فَتَنَحَّى لِشِقِّي وَجْهِهِ الَّذِي أَعْرَضَ قَبْلَهُ فَقَالَ لَهُ ذَلِكَ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ فَتَنَحَّى لَهُ الرَّابِعَةَ، فَلَمَّا شَهِدَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ أَرْبَعَ شَهَادَاتٍ دَعَاهُ فَقَالَ " هَلْ بِكَ جُنُونٌ " . قَالَ لَا . فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " اذْهَبُوا بِهِ فَارْجُمُوهُ " . وَكَانَ قَدْ أَحْصَنَ .

وَعَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي مَنْ، سَمِعَ جَابِرَ بْنَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ، قَالَ كُنْتُ فِي مَن رَجَمَهُ فَرَجَمْنَاهُ بِالْمَصَلِيِّ بِالْمَدِينَةِ،

فَلَمَّا أَذْلَقْتُهُ الْجِجَارَةَ جَمَرَ حَتَّى أَدْرَكْتَاهُ بِالْحَرَّةِ، فَرَجَمْتَاهُ حَتَّى مَاتَ.

Narrated Abu Hurayra (*radyallohu 'anhu*), “A man from Bani Aslam came to Allah's Messenger (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) while he was in the mosque and called saying, 'O Allah's Messenger (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*)! I have committed illegal sexual intercourse.' On that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) turned his face from him to the other side.

Thereupon the man moved to the side towards which the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) had turned his face, and said, 'O Allah's Messenger (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*)! I have committed illegal sexual intercourse.' The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) turned his face (from him) to the other side.

Thereupon the man moved to the side towards which the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) had turned his face, and repeated his statement. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) turned his face (from him) to the other side again. The man moved again (and repeated his statement) for the fourth time.

So when the man had given witness four times against himself, the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) called him and said, "Are you insane?" He replied, "No." The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) then said (to his companions), 'Go and stone him to death.' The man was a married one.”

Jabir bin `Abdullah Al-Ansari said, “I was one of those who stoned him. We stoned him at the *musalla* ( `Id praying place) in Medina. When the stones hit him with their sharp edges, he fled, but we caught him at al-Harra and stoned him till he died.” [Bukhari]

The way *rajm*, or stoning, occurs is very similar to an execution. The head is repeatedly aimed for in order to take the person out as soon as possible. It is absolutely not meant to be a prolonged grisly affair. In the *hadith* above the person testified against himself four times even though the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) ignored him. However, after a certain point he could no longer be ignored since he had given four testimonies against himself and this meant that it was incumbent upon the ruler, the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), to carry out the *hadd*. We also notice that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) did *not* ask about the other person involved in the act of *zina*. This is for a specific reason which is that the objective of *hudud* is *not* to punish or go on a witch-hunt. It is to be done sparingly and in a fashion that creates a deterrent.

The way *rajm* occurs is exactly like an execution. You aim for the head repeatedly and take the person out. It is not meant to be a prolonged execution. Notice that this man came to the Prophet (pbuh) and repeatedly testified against himself even though the Prophet (pbuh) ignored him four times. Then the person saw if the person was of sound mind and then asked for the *hadd* to be carried out. The person who he committed *zina* with is not mentioned and the Prophet (pbuh) didn't even ask about it on purpose. He didn't go on a witchhunt. The objective is NOT to apply the punishment. You do it sparingly and rarely and this is enough to create a deterrent.

In *Jami' al-Tirmidhi* there is an authentic narration where a man came and said, “O RasulAllah

(*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) I have committed adultery.” The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) remained quiet until it was time for the *athan* and he ordered Bilal (*radiallahu 'anhu*) to give the *athan*. Then he went and did *wudu'* and showed him how to make *wudu'* for the man did not know how to make *wudu'* and then they prayed together. At this point the man said again, “O RasulAllah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) I have committed adultery.” So the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, “Didn't you make *wudu'* with us? Didn't you pray with us?” “Yes, I did.” “So go because God forgave you.” How do we make sense of this authentic *hadith*? The reconciliation is with the principle of “*dar al-hudud*.” That whenever there is the slightest consideration or doubt with regards to any of the prerequisites of the *hudud* or the *hadd* itself then it does not apply.

## HOMOSEXUALITY

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الصَّبَّاحِ، وَأَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ خَلَّادٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ أَبِي عَمْرٍو، عَنْ عِكْرِمَةَ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " مَنْ وَجَدْتُمُوهُ يَعْمَلُ عَمَلِ قَوْمِ لُوطٍ فَاقْتُلُوا الْفَاعِلَ وَالْمَفْعُولَ بِهِ " .

It was narrated from Ibn` Abbas (*radiallahu 'anhu*) that the Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, “Whoever you find doing the action of the people of Lut, kill the one who does it, and the one to whom it is done.” [Ibn Majah]

There are an incredibly large amount of weak narrations regarding the punishment of homosexuality. Things such as dropping a wall upon them, throwing them off a cliff, and all other variations are extremely weak to the point that we cannot base or derive any *ahkam* from them. This is the opinion of Imam al-Nawawi (*rahimahullah*) in his “*al-Minhaj bi Sharh Sahih Muslim*.” Furthermore, this is also discussed in great detail by Imam ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullah*) in his “*Majmu al-Fatwa al-Kubra*.” Hence, this *hadith* is one of the few *ahadith* available on this *hadd*.

This lack of evidence has led to two positions within the *'ulema*. The majority position is that of Imams Shafi'i, Ahmed, and Malik (*rahimahumullah*) who do *qiyas*, or analogy, and base the ruling of the *hadd* of homosexuality off of the *hadd* of adultery. In their reasoning the punishment is the same and the requirement will be the same. Hence, four witnesses are required and the *hadd* for slander applies if there are insufficient witnesses or any of them back off after being warned by the judge.

The minority position is that of Imam Abu Hanifa (*rahimahullah*) and he was the only Imam to differ on the matter. He did not feel comfortable analogizing homosexuality with adultery since he viewed one as more natural than the other. Thus, in his opinion, such a *qiyas* would be improper. Hence, the Imam said, “If there is a possible doubt then drop the *hadd* because we don't have enough evidence from the *sunnah* to accurately know the procedure or conditions that apply and we only know of the punishment. Perhaps they can be imprisoned or something of the sort but there will be no *hadd*”

for them.”

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مَعْمَرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْوَارِثِ، حَدَّثَنَا جَعْدُ أَبُو عُثْمَانَ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو رَجَاءٍ الْغَطَارِدِيُّ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا - عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِيمَا يَرُوي عَنْ رَبِّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قَالَ قَالَ " إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَتَبَ الْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ، ثُمَّ بَيَّنَّ ذَلِكَ فَمَنْ هَمَّ بِحَسَنَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا كَتَبَهَا اللَّهُ لَهُ عِنْدَهُ حَسَنَةً كَامِلَةً، فَإِنْ هُوَ هَمَّ بِهَا فَعَمِلَهَا كَتَبَهَا اللَّهُ لَهُ عِنْدَهُ عَشْرَ حَسَنَاتٍ إِلَى سَبْعِمِائَةٍ ضِعْفٍ إِلَى أَضْعَافٍ كَثِيرَةٍ، وَمَنْ هَمَّ بِسَيِّئَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا كَتَبَهَا اللَّهُ لَهُ عِنْدَهُ حَسَنَةً كَامِلَةً، فَإِنْ هُوَ هَمَّ بِهَا فَعَمِلَهَا كَتَبَهَا اللَّهُ لَهُ سَيِّئَةً وَاحِدَةً " .

Narrated Ibn 'Abbas (*radyallohu 'anhu*) that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was narrating about his Lord and said, "Allah ordered (the appointed angels over you) that the good and the bad deeds be written, and He then showed how (to tally them). If somebody intends to do a good deed and he does not do it, then Allah will write for him a full good deed (in his account with Him). And if he intends to do a good deed and actually did it, then Allah will write for him (in his account) with Him (its reward equal) from ten to seven hundred times to many more times. And if somebody intended to do a bad deed and he does not do it, then Allah will write a full good deed (in his account) with Him, and if he intended to do it (a bad deed) and actually did it, then Allah will write one bad deed (in his account)." [Bukhari]

All of us should be very familiar with the difference between the desire for homosexuality versus the crime of homosexuality. The above *hadith* from *Isra' wa al-Mi'raaj* shows that if somebody has urges but they refuse to act upon them then they are actually earning good deeds. If somebody spent their entire life with the trial and test of homosexuality and stayed on the path throughout then they would be considered one of the most pious people that one has ever met. Reward is always consistent with the amount of sacrifice that goes into a deed.

It is absolutely not befitting of a Muslim to make fun of homosexuals. The person praying or reciting the Qur'an next to you might be actively resisting that urge! What if fun was made of drug addicts was made unknowingly in front of them and they had been resisting the urge so hard for all these years and upon hearing that insult it breaks his or her soul. Imagine the pain and trauma that is caused. Such words can break a person's soul. Just imagine it! This is arrogance! This is conceit! This is insensitivity! The community is supposed to be helpful and supportive. They are not supposed to put down and trample over people who have inclinations. Can you imagine what they have to put up with? Can you imagine their sacrifice? Can you imagine the pressure they go through? Can you imagine being asked over and over in that state, "Why don't you get married? Why don't you get married? When will you get married?"

Would the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) poke fun of homosexuals? Absolutely not. When Ikrimah (*radyallohu 'anhu*), the son of Abu Jahl, was coming to the gathering of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) warned his companions not to refer to his father as Abu Jahl but rather with his original title of Abu'l Hakm. If that was not to their liking then they could just refer to him by his original name, Abu'l Hisham. This was so that Ikrimah

(*radyAllahu 'anhu*) would not be offended and might be more open to converting.

Similarly, Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, a leader of the Quraysh, was fighting in the Battle of Badr. Also fighting in the battlefield was his son, Abu Hudayfah ibn Utbah (*radyAllahu 'anhu*). When the son came across the dead body of his father in the battlefield then the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) stood and gave company to Abu Hudayfah (*radyAllahu 'anhu*) in order to console him. The *shahabi* said, "I remember there was good in my father and I had always hoped that his good would somehow bring him to Islam. But seeing him lying dead on the battlefield today I realize that that didn't happen." The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) consoled him and made *du'a* for him by asking, "May Allah give you strength."

This is supposed to be the attitude of our community towards those dealing with homosexuality. We do not look down on them and we especially do not declare them to be outside the fold of Islam! Imam al-Tahawi (*rahimahullah*) in his seminal work "*Aqeedah al-Tahawiyyah*" mentions that, "We do not declare someone who has committed multiple major sins to be outside the fold of Islam." Such things have led to a lot of bloodshed, violence, and chaos in the *ummah*. The first time this happened a bunch of lunatics marched into Medina and did *takfir* of 'Uthman ibn Affan (*radyAllahu 'anhu*) on the assumption that he had lied and proceeded to assassinate him. Such are the fruits of *takfir*. Just because somebody is a sinner we do not negate their *iman*.

## DANGER TO PUBIC SAFETY

إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي  
الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقَتَّلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ  
وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِّنْ خِلَافٍ أَوْ يُنْفَوْا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ لَهُمْ  
خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا ۖ وَهُمْ فِي الآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

(٣٣)

Indeed, the penalty for those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive upon earth (to cause) corruption is none but that they be killed or crucified or that their hands and feet be cut off from opposite sides or that they be exiled from the land. That is for them a disgrace in this world; and for them in the Hereafter is a great punishment.  
[*al-Ma'idah*, 5:33]

This *hadd* is by and far the most severe. Most of the verses of *hudud* end with either no mention of punishment in the next world or even forgiveness for their crimes. This *hadd* is by far the greatest exception as the punishment implemented here is to disgrace them in this world and there is yet another punishment awaiting them in the next world. This *hadd* is not about cleansing or purifying from sin but rather to humiliate.

The *hadd* is that the people who go about wreaking havoc and causing chaos should be either killed, or hung, or have their limbs chopped from opposite sites, or be exiled from the land. This *hadd* is very severe! This *hadd* is for people who have become a danger to public safety and stability. In our



modern understanding this is the *hadd* for terrorism. This is something we need to be aware of and highlight to people.

## APOSTASY

وَعَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - { مَنْ بَدَّلَ دِينَهُ فَاقْتُلُوهُ } رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ

Ibn 'Abbas (*radyallohu 'anhu*) narrated that the Messenger of Allah said, "He who changes his religion (i.e. apostates) kill him." [Bukhari in "*Bulugh al-Maram*"]

عَنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ "لَا يَجِلُّ دَمُ امْرِئٍ مُسْلِمٍ [ يَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَأَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ] إِلَّا بِأَخْدَى ثَلَاثٍ: الثَّيْبُ الزَّانِي، وَالتَّنْفُسُ بِالتَّنْفِيسِ، وَالتَّارِكُ لِدِينِهِ الْمُفَارِقُ لِلْجَمَاعَةِ."

Narrated 'Abdullah (*radyallohu 'anhu*) that Allah's Messenger (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "The blood of a Muslim who testifies that none has the right to be worshiped but Allah and that I am His Messenger cannot be shed except in three cases: in *qisas* for murder, a married person who commits adultery, and the one who apostates opposes *al-jama'a*." [Bukhari and Muslim]

The narrations regarding apostasy must be taken in context with their variants and other narrations that deal with such an issue. If we solely judge the issue of apostasy based on the first *hadith* mentioned above we will come to the conclusion that the reason the *hadd* is being prescribed is apostasy, end of story. However, if we look at the second *hadith* regarding apostasy we realize that it has the phrase "*wa al-taariku li deenihi al-mufariqu li al-jama'ahi*." Normally, there should be a "*wa*" in between "*al-taariku li deenihi*" and "*al-mufariqu li al-jama'ahi*." The "*jama'a*" or the "community" in Islamic legal terminology means the state. If there was a "*wa*" in between the two it would read as, "the one who left his religion and opposes the state." However, there is no such separation here. Hence, the phrase would be interpreted as "the one who left his religion *to* oppose the state."

What is the significance of this? We have to realize that this is prior to the separation of Church and State. Islam was the state and allegiance to the state meant allegiance to Islam and vice versa. Hence, the once being punished in this *hadd* is the one who became an enemy of the state. In modern terminology this is termed "treason." As our textual analysis revealed, treason is the actual cause behind the *hadd* and not the religion being changed in and of itself. A private crisis of faith is absolutely

not investigated. No one is going to stop you in the middle of the road and conduct an “*aqeedah* test” to make sure you're still a legitimate Muslim. This *hadd* is meant to deter sedition and treason.

Today, we have the “ex-Muslim” phenomenon where they have Facebook pages, sub-Reddits, and numerous other gatherings for “ex-Muslims.” The phrase “crisis of faith” should be used to denote individuals going through such issues, *not* apostasy. This is because apostasy in Islam is tantamount to treason and has severe legal ramifications. What *jama'a* are they even opposing? If the *sahaba* were amongst us they would find out community to be an utter joke! The phenomenon is *not* one of apostasy. Apostasy means that these individuals deserve the death penalty. I have yet to come across an ex-Muslim whose crisis of faith was solely intellectual. There has always been personal issues and trauma related to their becoming an ex-Muslim.

I was made to speak to a sister who was apparently rather academic. She had authored several books and so I thought this conversation would be a lot more cerebral and intellectual. Absolutely not. Fifteen minutes into the conversation and she told me the story where her father assaulted her till she was unconscious solely because she came home without her *hijab* in junior high. At that very moment I realized that I would never come across an ex-Muslim who didn't leave for emotional reasons.

This ex-Muslim phenomenon always needs to be dealt with in an extremely sensitive and empathetic manner. For starters, thank Allah that you haven't been tested that way. Then, make *du'a* for these ex-Muslims instead of condemning them to Hell. Thank Allah that your parents and spouses have sound *iman*. We don't and can't know what it is like to have a partner or parents that treat us like punching bags. We don't know what it is like to lose a family member. We don't know what these crises are like! I choose to believe that Allah understands what these people are going through. The father that beat his daughter unconscious is in a world of trouble for what he did to his daughter!

Apostates are put in “prison” for three days where they are given access to the most brilliant *'aalims* from across the *ummah* in order to deliberate on all the issues and questions he has with them. If in those three days he changes his mind and decides to revert from treason then that person is safe. This is the Islamic approach. You give them a hug and you help them. You don't argue with them, you show them empathy. You have no idea what they have been through.

The entire issue of apostasy originates from a lack of basic Islamic education, a lack of spiritual health, and a lack of emotional and mental health. Resolving these three disturbances for the public are the prerequisites for the *hudud*. *Hudud* is not supposed to be present if these three aren't there and if these three are there then the cases of apostasy would be minimized immensely.

## VIOLENCE IN ISLAM

Many of the *ayaat* and *hadith* below seem to imply that Islam permits uninhibited, unbridled, and full-on violence. We have to put aside all conspiracy theories, for the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa salla*) said “I only deal with the *zahir* (obvious),” and realize that many Muslims groups today advocate fighting everyone and everything until they are Muslim using these very *ayaat* and *ahadith*. We're *not* engaging in any apologetics. We're going by the text and getting to the bottom of the matter. That is what *tadabbur* means. We're not going to be engaging in intellectual cowardice and making excuses for the text. So how do we know whether we are or aren't engaging in apologetics? As long as the conclusions we're engaging the text itself directly we're not engaging in apologetics. If the text leads to some conclusions that are not very popular then we stick to our guns, figuratively of course.

Firstly, we get rid of rough shot translations. We're only going to be engaging in proper and legitimate linguistic analysis. “قَتَلَ” means “to kill” whilst “قَاتَلَ” and “إِفْتِتَالَ” both means “a retaliatory or mutual fight which is *not* a one-sided action.” Please note that mutual fighting does not mean to kill, it means “to respond to force with force”. “جِهَادٌ” does not mean “to fight” but it means “to struggle.” “قِتَالَ” means “fight” and may not be translated as “struggle.”

فَإِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرْمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَحْصُرُوهُمْ وَأَقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصِدٍ ۚ فَإِن تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٥﴾

And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they should repent, establish prayer, and give *zakah*, let them (go) on their way. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. [*al-Tauab*, 9:5]

قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَن يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

Fight those who do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture - (fight) until they give the *jizyah* willingly while they are humbled. [*al-Taubah*, 9:29]

The Qur'anic context of these *ayaat* is also extremely important. The two *ayaat* from *al-Taubah* above are referring specifically to the Conquest of Makkah. To understand that event we have to go back and recount the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah which as an extremely uneven an lopsided 10-year

agreement which favored the Quraysh considerably over the Muslims. This was agreed to by the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) in the interest of peace. The Muslims were allied with Banu Khuza'a and the Quraysh with Banu Bakr and this agreement, like all other agreements, dictated that its terms applied to both parties' allies just as equally. Hence, the all parties were at war even if their allies attacked each other. Usually, such laws were implied but in the case of the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah this was explicitly stated and known.

However, Banu Bakr, fueled by ancient tribal rivalries and supplied with weapons by the Quraysh, attacked the Banu Khuza'a in the dark of the night with blatant disregard for peace. Some of the Banu Khuza'a, in their desperation, sought sanctuary in the sanctified area around the Ka'bah where no blood was traditionally allowed to be shed. However, the people of Banu Bakr slaughtered the people of Banu Khuza'a in the sanctuary of the Ka'bah, defying all tradition.

A delegation was dispatched from Banu Khuza'a reached Medina and informed the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) of the tragedy. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), citing the cause that "an attack on an ally of the party, will be considered an attack on the party itself" offered an ultimatum to the Quraysh. The ultimatum stated that the Quraysh sever ties with the Banu Bakr and pay the blood money for the dead of the Khuza'a. The Quraysh flat-out refused this dead and instead sent Abu Sufyan (*radyallohu 'anh*), a pagan at the time, to reaffirm the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah but he was refused negotiations by all members of the community because of the Quraysh's treachery and involvement with the massacre of the Banu Khuza'a. A few weeks after this the Muslims marched on Makkah and it was conquered with no resistance. This is the context of these *ayaat*. It was entirely retaliatory due to the Quraysh's treachery with the Banu Khuza'a.

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ  
لِلَّهِ ۚ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

And fight them until there is no *fitnah* and (until) the religion, all of it, is for Allah . And if they cease - then indeed, Allah is Seeing of what they do. [*al-Anfal*, 8:39]

وَأَعِدُوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّن قُوَّةٍ وَمِن رِّبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ  
تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَآخَرِينَ مِن دُونِهِمْ لَا  
تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِن شَيْءٍ فِي  
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know (but) whom Allah knows. And whatever you spend in the cause of Allah will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged. [*al-Anfal*, 8:60]

The *ayaat* of *al-Anfal* above deal with the Battle of Badr. Here too, we have to understand the historical context and realize that this was not just a random showdown. Badr was the result of 15 years of oppression. The Muslims had suffered torture and many even were brutally murdered at the hands of the Quraysh. They had migrated twice seeking protection from their tyranny. They had been put in a

concentration camp of sorts outside of Makkah for a time. This was all before Badr. Finally, the Muslims left their families and property behind in Makkah and arrived in Medina, barely with their lives, seeking to lead a peaceful life.

However, the Makkans kept sending spies and plotting. Eventually, the Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) contact in Makkah, his uncle 'Abbas (*radhyAllahu 'anhu*), gave him the news that the Makkans were building an army and preparing for war. They had been investing their war funds in al-Shaam (Syria) in order to double their capital and reinvest that into their army. They were very strategically preparing for war. Thus, in an attempt to gain collateral for negotiation the Muslims raided one such caravan carrying war investments of the Makkans. Using this the Muslims hoped to negotiate release of Muslim captives in Makkah as well as return Muslim property that had to be left in Makkah. However, upon finding out about the raid the Makkans immediately deployed an army of 1000 soldiers. Soldiers and armies take time to prepare themselves for war. This shows us that the Makkans were already ready for war.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ ۖ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ ۖ وَصَدُّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِندَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ ۗ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَن دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَاعُوا ۗ وَمَن يَرْتَدِدْ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢١٧﴾

They ask you about the sacred month - about fighting therein. Say, "Fighting therein is great (sin), but averting (people) from the way of Allah and disbelief in Him and (preventing access to) al-Masjid al-Haram and the expulsion of its people therefrom are greater (evil) in the sight of Allah. **And fitnah is greater than killing.**" And they will continue to fight you until they turn you back from your religion if they are able. And whoever of you reverts from his religion [to disbelief] and dies while he is a disbeliever - for those, their deeds have become worthless in this world and the Hereafter, and those are the companions of the Fire, they will abide therein eternally. [*al-Baqarah*, 2:217]

In *al-Anfal* 39 the Qur'an says, "And fight them until there is no *fitnah*." What exactly does *fitnah* mean here? It means persecution. What had happened was that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) had sent scouts to spy on the caravan to be raided and one of the scouts realized that one of the Makkans in the caravan was someone who used to torture him personally. In a fit of rage the *sahabi* murdered the Makkan. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) reprimanded the *sahabi* and sent blood money to the person's family. The Makkans used this opportunity to preach polemic against the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). As this incident occurred in the sacred months the *ayaat* say, "they ask you about the sacred months, say it is forbidden to fight within them." Then, Allah says "*fitnah*," referring specifically to persecution, "is worse than *qatl*," or an isolated case of murder. This is the very meaning of "*fitnah*" in *al-Anfal* 39. The *only* reason we're allowed military action is to *end* persecution, *not* to instigate or incite it.

*Al-Anfal* 60 is not at all an *ayah* ordering us to create some sort of a military industrial complex. But rather it relates to the aftermath of Badr and foreshadows the coming events. In this foreshadowing Allah states that these people will come back so be ready! Sure enough, we see that not too long after Badr we had the Battle of Uhud.

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلِمُوا ۗ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ  
نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ  
حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ  
بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ  
وَأَسَاجِدُ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ۗ وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ  
مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ الَّذِينَ إِنْ  
مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ  
وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ  
الْأُمُورِ ﴿٤١﴾

Permission (to fight) has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged. And indeed, Allah is competent to give them victory<sup>39</sup>.

(They are) those who have been evicted from their homes without right - only because they say, "Our Lord is Allah ." And were it not that Allah checks the people, some by means of others, there would have been demolished monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of Allah is much mentioned. And Allah will surely support those who support Him. Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might<sup>40</sup>.

(And they are) those who, if We give them authority in the land, establish *salah* and give *zakah* and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. And to Allah belongs the outcome of (all) matters<sup>41</sup>. [*al-Hajj*, 22:39-41]

After fully analyzing the linguistic subtleties and contextualizing the *ayaat* we have to determine the sequence of revelation. We can read and connect personally to the Qur'an all day long but whenever there are *ayaat al-ahkam* (legislative verses) it is *mandatory* to know the sequence of revelation. This is an *asl* (principle) that was stated by Imam ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullah*) in his seminal work, "*Muqaddimah fi Usul al-Tafsir*." In it he states, "It is necessary, when it comes to legal verses, to know their sequence of revelation." He uses these very *ayaat* of *qitaal* to prove his point.

The verses above of *al-Hajj* are the very first verses allowing for *qitaal*. You absolutely cannot have any conversation regarding *qitaal* without these *ayaat* being brought up. In fact, these *ayaat* are even termed *ayaat al-qitaal*. Ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullah*) states, "If you do not read these *ayaat* before reading other *ayaat* of *qitaal* your understanding will be wrong."

*Ayah* 39 begins by stating that permission is given specifically to those people who have been wronged. *Ayah* 40 details this by specifying that these people are those who were persecuted and attacked, and expelled from their homes only because of their religion. It adds that if Allah did not give these people the right to fight back then freedom of religion would not exist in the religion. People would simply persecute each other into oblivion. 'Uthman ibn Affan (*radyAllahu 'anhu*) said regarding

what follows, “Allah is praising the people who will fight to defend His religion before they even did it” It's similar to saying to a group of students, “You are going to graduate and change the world” even if they haven't accomplished anything in reality but this is the expectation from them. Hence, we understand that this is what Allah expects from us, to defend our religious freedom. Then, in *ayah* 41 Allah details what he expects these people to follow up their defense of religious freedom with, which is *salah*, *zakah*, and enjoining proper morals mutually. Ali (*radyallohu 'anhu*) said that, “*Zakah* is miracle from Allah. If every living Muslim gave *zakah* then there would be no more poverty. We ourselves experienced this! We have more people eligible for *zakah* than people giving. However, eventually we ran out of people to give *zakah* to!”

Now we realize why the sequence of revelation is so crucial. We have to read these *ayaat* before reading any other *ayaat* of *qitaal*. It commands us to defend our freedom of religion and then once we've earned that freedom we focus on *salah*, *zakah*, commanding good, and forbidding evil. The point is *not* to start keep conquering and fighting. The point was to attain that religious freedom. All the *ayaat* of *qitaal* have to be put through this filter. Once we do that then no *ayah* regarding *qitaal* will be confusing.

وعن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما، أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "أمرت أن أقاتل الناس حتى يشهدوا أن لا إله إلا الله، وأن محمداً رسول الله، ويقيموا الصلاة، ويؤتوا الزكاة، فإذا فعلوا ذلك عصموا مني دماءهم وأموالهم إلا بحق الإسلام، وحسابهم على الله تعالى" ((متفق عليه)).

'Abdullah bin 'Umar (*radyallohu anhu*) reported that the Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "I have been commanded (by Allah) to fight people until they testify that there is no true god except Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and perform *salah* and pay *zakah*. If they do so, they will have protection of their blood and property from me except when justified by Islam, and then account is left to Allah".  
[Bukhari and Muslim]

The Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) words, “*umritu*,” “*uqaatilu*,” and “*minnee*,” are all in first person. They are all saying that, “*I* was commanded to fight people” and “they will be protected from *me*.” The *muhaddithoon* have determined that due to the incredible repetition of the first person in this *hadith* it means that this statement was entirely *khaas* and not *'aam*. Everything mentioned in the *hadith* is exclusive to the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). Whenever the Qur'an talks about things specific to the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) it uses specific language and we do not share any such privileges. We do not have Jibreel (*alayh as-Salam*) on our right and Mikaeel (*'alayh as-Salam*) on our left. We are not receiving *wahy* (revelation) from Allah. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) **could not** abuse this license. That's why **he** had that license and we do not. This is not my personal opinion. This is Imam al-Bukhari and Muslim's opinion (*rahimahumullah*). This is the opinion of Imam al-Nawawi and ibn Hajr's opinion (*rahimahumullah*). Lastly, it is worth noting that “*uqaatil*” does not mean “to fight” as has been translated above but rather it means “to retaliate against violence.”

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۗ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۗ  
 فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ  
 اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ  
 سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥٦﴾

There shall be no compulsion in (acceptance of) the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in *taghut* (false gods, idols, devils) and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing. [*al-Baqarah*, 2:256]

Furthermore, we have to reconcile the *hadith* with the *ayah* above which says that “there is no compulsion in religion.” The *ayah* is absolutely abrogated. Thus, this must be an extremely specific scenario. Picking and choosing out *ahadith* can make our religion seem distorted and nonsensical. This was the crime of the nations before us. They are never criticized for being too analytical, cautious, informed, or investigative. Rather, Allah criticizes them for distorting their religion. Don't say “this is *exactly* what it means” or any such thing for if one does so they are claiming to speak on behalf of Allah. This is exactly what distorting the religion is. If you are unsatisfied with an explanation keep researching but don't just insist on one opinion unless you want to bet your afterlife on it.

The *hadith* ends with “and then their account is left to Allah.” This highlights what our approach should be. It is not our job to make sure someone is actually a Muslim or a *munafiq* (hypocrite) or anything of the sort. Leave them be! You don't know what is in their heart! Leave the matter to Allah! This is *tawakkul* (reliance) upon Allah. We have to be honest, trustworthy, and erring on the side of caution. “What if the enemy is horrible and unsympathetic? Don't we have to fight fire with fire?” No! Absolutely not! Fight fire with *iman*. Fight immorality with morality and ethics, not more immorality. If our enemies are horrible then that is nor a license for us to to be horrible. We do not make our own rules. It is only Allah that makes them.

This introductory analysis of these *ayaat* and *hadith* show us that the attacks done by ISIS, al-Qa'eda, and the Talibaan are clearly wrong and unjustified. Even the attacks on Charlie Hebdo fall under this category. ISIS isn't even Muslim violence against non-Muslims but rather Muslim on Muslim violence which isn't justifiable in any in the *shari'a*. There is a prioritization of knowledge. One must educate, inspire, motivate, and develop. After one has done all that *then* you govern. You can't just jump straight to governance. There's a clear process in the *sirah* that has been laid out by the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and that is what we have to follow.



## NON-MUSLIM RELATIONS

We should always be convinced without a shred of doubt that the Qur'an is divine and miraculous. That it is the greatest blessing that humanity has ever interacted with. That the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was divinely guided and a mercy to all of mankind. We should know and firmly believe in this truth. So how does this blessing of a religion tell us to interact with non-Muslims and coexist?

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ  
أَوْلِيَاءَ ۚ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ  
مِّنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾

O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are (in fact) allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you - then indeed, he is (one) of them. Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people. [*al-Ma'idah*, 5:51]

لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِن دُونِ  
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي  
شَيْءٍ ۗ إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ تُقَاةً ۗ وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ  
وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٢٨﴾

Let not believers take disbelievers as allies rather than believers. And whoever (of you) does that has nothing with Allah, except when taking precaution against them in prudence. And Allah warns you of Himself, and to Allah is the (final) destination.

[*Ale-Imraan*, 3:28]

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ، - يَعْني الدَّرَاوَرْدِيُّ - عَن  
سُهَيْلٍ، عَن أَبِيهِ، عَن أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ "   
لَا تَبْدَءُوا الْيَهُودَ وَلَا النَّصَارَىٰ بِالسَّلَامِ فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمْ أَحَدَهُمْ فِي طَرِيقٍ فَاضْطَرُّوهُ  
إِلَىٰ أَضْيَقِهِ " .

Abu Hurayra (*radyallohu 'anh*) reported Allah's Messenger (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) as saying, "Do not greet the Jews and the Christians before they greet you and when you meet any one of them on the roads force him to go to the narrowest part of it." [Muslim]

Reading these *ayaat* and the *hadith* without any context tells us that we cannot have any amicable relations of any sort with the Jews and Christians. That we must always side with Muslims over them, anything otherwise is tantamount to sin. Furthermore, we do not greet them if we see them and we push them physically to the edge of the road.

Now, let us put these *ayaat* in context and see how it changes out interpretation. These *ayaat* are related directly to the Battle of *Khandaq* (Trench) in which there was a conflict with the Jewish tribes. Basically, when the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) came to Medina he had established a contract with the Jews that said, “we will not attack each other, we will defend Medina together, etc.” However, this was violated by the Jewish tribes when the Quraysh came and attacked in the Battle of *Khandaq*. While the Muslims were battling the Quraysh on the front lines the Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayzah went behind the Muslims' backs and attempted to slaughter their families and children. Furthermore, they even tried to assassinate the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). Hence, **in order to maintain peace**, the Qur'an told the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) to take arms against them. This context is even evident from the language as “*awliya*” implies a war-time ally. It is in such a scenario that we are not allowed to have alliances with them because it would explicitly be a conflict of interest.

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْيَمَانِ، قَالَ: أَخْبَرَنَا شُعَيْبٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ قَالَ: أَخْبَرَنِي عُرْوَةُ بْنُ الزُّبَيْرِ، أَنَّ أُسَامَةَ بْنَ زَيْدٍ أَخْبَرَهُ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ رَكِبَ عَلَى حِمَارٍ عَلَيْهِ إِكَّافٌ عَلَى قَطِيفَةٍ فَذَكِيَّةٌ، وَأَرْدَفَ أُسَامَةَ بْنَ زَيْدٍ وَرَاءَهُ، يُعُودُ سَعْدَ بْنَ عُبَادَةَ، حَتَّى مَرَّ بِمَجْلِسٍ فِيهِ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي بِنْتِ سَلُولٍ، وَذَلِكَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُسَلِّمَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ، فَإِذَا فِي الْمَجْلِسِ أَخْلَاطٌ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَعَبْدَةَ الْأَوْثَانَ، فَسَلَّمَ عَلَيْهِمْ.

Usama ibn Zayd (*radyallohu 'anhu*) related that one day the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was riding on a donkey on a straw saddle covered by a blanket from Fadak. Usama ibn Zayd was riding behind him. He was on his way to visit Sa'd ibn 'Ubada. He passed by a meeting which included 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul (before the enemy of Allah had become Muslim). The gathering contained a mixture of Muslims, *mushrikeen*, and idolaters. He greeted them.

[Bukhari in “*al-Adab al-Mufrad*”]

The above *hadith* of 'Usaba ibn Zayd (*radyallohu 'anhu*), also found with much longer variations in “*Sahih al-Bukhari*,” clearly demonstrates the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) greeting known hypocrites, Jews, idolaters, and *mushrikeen*. This is obviously peacetime and is clearly a contrast to the above narration which has to do with wartime. Despite the disrespect the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) greeted them. These narrations have be viewed together and contextually. We do not have a set demeanor about how to deal with non-Muslims in all dynamics. It would rather be solely based off of the specific dynamic of your situation. If you are living in a place where you are coexisting then you have to conduct yourself appropriately.

Also, in the *hadith* above that relates “push them to the narrowest part of the road” we are forbidden from greeting the Ahl al-Kitab *because* the Muslims of Medina were at war them at the time. You do not go around exchanging pleasantries with the enemy in or behind the front lines. You people

are at war with each other and this *hadith* reflected that. Furthermore, pushing them to the narrowest part of the road is not to be taken literally. You do not push random strangers in the West off the street. What that is, instead, is a phrase that means “walking on the street with great presence and vigor.” This was to be done in order to intimidate enemy sympathizers. It makes complete sense in its context and when torn out of the appropriate context it sounds extremely bigoted for obvious reasons.

وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا ۗ  
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا ﴿٨٦﴾

And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet (in return) with one better than it or (at least) return it (in a like manner). Indeed, Allah is ever, over all things, an Accountant.

[*al-Nisa*, 4:86]

With regards to the *fiqhi* discussion of responding to a formal “*as-Salamu 'alaykum*” by a non-Muslim. We know the common response that “you should only say '*wa 'alaykum*,' however the Qur'an gives us instructions which are a lot more definitive as seen in the *ayah* above. The Qur'an does not say “this is exclusively for Muslims.” This is found neither in the *ayah* nor in its Qur'anic context. You have to say the same greeting or a better greeting. Furthermore, it uses the *majhool* (passive) form to take attention away from the person who is greeting. Thus, the focus is not on the greeter it is on the greeting?

So where do we get that other opinion from? It was influenced a lot from colonial experiences. All that angst, which was entirely valid, was reflected in the Islamic discourse. We can't make these people superhuman and say that they are above being influenced by their times. They were colonized and they hated their colonizers justifiably. However, this is so obvious in their writings. Such is the modern Muslim intellectual baggage.

When we show hatred and disgust for people whilst doing *da'wah* then it taints all our efforts. Instead, we should call with kindness and affection so that it will beautify out *da'wah*.

## SIRAH RELATED ISSUES

### MARRIAGE TO 'A'ISHAH (RADYALLAHU 'ANHA)

Historically and classically speaking this has never been an issue of contention. However, in our modern times this has become of the keys issues within the Muslim community and outside it. Towards the end of the first year of the Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) first year of residence in Medina he moved in with his wife 'A'isha (*radyallohu 'anha*), this is called *al-bina'u bi ha* (he moved in with her).

Almost three and a half years prior to this the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) had suffered the loss of Khadija (*radyallohu 'anha*), his wife of twenty-five years. About a year and a half to two years the passing of Khadija (*radyallohu 'anha*), just shortly before his migration to Medina, the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was approached by Khawla (*radyallohu 'anha*), the wife of 'Uthman bin Maz'oon, who advised him to marry. Keep in mind that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) has been a single father for this time. His eldest daughter Zaynab (*radyallohu 'anha*) is married along with his second daughter Umm al-Kulthoom (*radyallohu 'anha*), who is the wife of 'Uthman bin Affan (*radyallohu 'anhu*) and they are living in Habasha. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) has two daughters still living with him, Ruqayyah (*radyallohu 'anha*) and Fatima (*radyallohu 'anha*), the latter of whom is in her teens, and he is running the home all by himself in addition to being a leader and a prophet. So when he was advised to marry by Kawla (*radyallohu 'anha*) he asks her, “Do you have any particular suggestions?” to which she suggests two women, Sawda bint Zam'a (*radyallohu 'anha*) and 'A'isha bint Abi Bakr (*radyallohu 'anha*). So the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) asks her to present a proposal to them.

So Khawla goes to the house of Abu Bakr and Umm Ruman (*radyallohu 'anhum*), the parents of 'A'isha (*radyallohu 'anha*). However, only Umm Ruman (*radyallohu 'anha*) was there and she said that she has to wait for Abu Bakr (*radyallohu 'anhu*). Upon his return they share their excitement about the offer but Abu Bakr (*radyallohu 'anhu*) says that, “I'm like a brother to the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) so wouldn't it be wrong to marry a niece?” and in fact the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) often says to him, “*anta akhi.*” However, the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) clarified that “*anta akhi fi al-Islam, anta akhi fi al-iman,*” “You are my brother in Islam and faith.” Once the proposal was agreed to a *nikah*, the marriage contract, was conducted. However, for three years after the *nikah* 'A'isha (*radyallohu 'anha*) remains with her family until they decide that it's time for her to move in and begin living with the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). 'A'isha (*radyallohu 'anha*) talks about this incident saying that basically the time came, the arrangements were made, the home was prepared, and she moved in with the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*).

وَحَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ يَحْيَى، أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ، عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ، ح وَحَدَّثَنَا  
ابْنُ نُمَيْرٍ، - وَاللَّفْظُ لَهُ - حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدَةُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ سُلَيْمَانَ - عَنْ هِشَامٍ، عَنْ  
أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ تَزَوَّجَنِي النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَنَا بِنْتُ

سِتِّ سِنِينَ وَبَنِي بِي وَأَنَا بِنْتُ تِسْعِ سِنِينَ .

'A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) reported, "Allah's Apostle (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) married me when I was six years old, and I was admitted to his house when I was nine years old."

[Muslim]

At the expense of oversimplification that was was that and then the two started their life together. However, due to a lot of discussions that are particular to our time we know that this wasn't that simple. The discussion arises regarding the age of 'A'isha (*radyallohu 'anha*) at the time of both her *nikah* as well as her moving in with the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). The authentic and universally sound narration of Muslim, narrated by 'A'isha herself, says that she was six at the time of the *nikah* and nine at the time she moved in. This was the only school of thought in Islam for 1100-1200 years of Islamic scholarship. However, a recent position, which is a minority position, was stated in the last 150-200 years by some scholars and historians and claims that she was closer to the age of 12 at the age of the *nikah* and 15-16 at the age of her moving in. Some take this claim even further and say that she was 15 during the *nikah* and 18 at the time of the moving in. The latter opinion is pure conjecture whilst the former is in clear contradiction with the *hadith* of 'A'isha (*radyallohu 'anhu*) in Muslim.

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ بُكَيْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ عُقَيْلٍ، قَالَ ابْنُ شِهَابٍ فَأَخْبَرَنِي  
عُرْوَةُ بْنُ الزُّبَيْرِ، أَنَّ عَائِشَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا - زَوَّجَ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ  
وَسَلَّمَ قَالَتْ لَمْ أُعْقِلْ أَبَوَيَّ قَطُّ إِلَّا وَهُمَا يَدِينَانِ الدِّينَ، وَلَمْ يَمُرَّ عَلَيْنَا يَوْمَ إِلَّا  
يَأْتِينَا فِيهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ طَرَفِي النَّهَارِ بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيَّةً، فَلَمَّا  
ابْتَلَى الْمُسْلِمُونَ خَرَجَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ مُهَاجِرًا نَحْوَ أَرْضِ الْحَبَشَةِ،

Narrated 'A'isha (*radyallohu 'anha*), "I never remembered my parents believing in any religion other than the true religion or a single day passing without our being visited by Allah's Messenger (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) in the morning and in the evening. When the Muslims were put to test (i.e. troubled by the pagans), Abu Bakr set out migrating to the land of Ethiopia..." [Bukhari]

They base this argument off of the above *hadith* in Bukhari. At the latest, the migration to Abyssinia happened in the early part of the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Prophethood and the *hijra*, the Migration to Medina, happens in the 13<sup>th</sup> year. The difference between these two events being eight years. The assumption and conjecture here is that if she remembers these events then she must have been at least 4-5 years old so adding 8 years to that until the *hijra* we get her age being 12-13 years old, which they say is the age of the *nikah*, and then three years later she is 15-16, which is the age when she moved in.

Regarding the earlier narration, they attempt to dismiss it by saying that back then the Arabs were not so keen on keeping track of age and hence that is mere conjecture on 'A'isha's (*radyaAllahu 'anha*) own part. However, as we can see this argument is weak and in clear contradiction with an authentic narration. This is why the majority opinion still remains that she was six at the time of the *nikah* and nine at the age of moving in. The other opinion has gained traction as Muslims struggle to justify this and explain it.

The question is asked, “How can you justify this? How can you validate marrying someone that young?” First, and foremost, we will discuss this from an Islamic *fiqhi* and biological perspective. Marriage is considered legal in the *shari'a* as soon as the age of adulthood, puberty, and maturity is reached. This is in stark contrast to modern countries where an arbitrary number of 15, 16, 18, or 19 is set up with no biological reality. Classically speaking, the majority of the civilized nations and people's had an understanding that there are two stages, childhood and adulthood. This is in contrast to our understanding where we have childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. This idea of “adolescence” is a very modern phenomenon in human civilization. Basic biology and anthropology shows us that with varying personal, environmental, and societal circumstances the onset of puberty varies. At the time of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) the common onset of puberty was 9-10 years of age. This is not just from Islamic sources but is also documented by non-Muslim sources. Hence, 'A'isha (*radyaAllahu 'anha*) was at the age of physical maturity and adulthood.

Secondly, we will cover the cultural understanding of marriage to an individual of that time. Americans have this understanding where marriage to someone that young is extremely abnormal and problematic. However, we have to get out of the habit of projecting our culture upon other cultures across various times. Basic practices in anthropology dictate that when you inspect another culture you have to be able to separate yourself from your own biases and culture and that you do not impose upon your society the culture of their society, one has to be academic in their approach. Just viewing a historical and cultural practice and saying, “But that's just not right!” is not an academically viable statement. One can say, “this isn't okay in my culture” and that would be a better statement. Say, if in a 100-150 years it becomes extremely abnormal for anyone to be married before the age of 40 they will look back at us getting married in our 20's and comment upon us, “Those barbarians! Getting married at 20!? So backwards and animalistic!” This scenario isn't even that far-fetched as we live in a society where people aged 25 play video games all day instead of working. So how would we defend ourselves in that conversation? We would state, “you can impose that mentality upon yourselves but it is unfair project it upon us in our times!”

One could state that, “I don't trust you, you're just defending your own religion” and they wouldn't be wrong as that is exactly what I am doing. However, if you don't take my word for it then go and talk to a professor of anthropology in any university and ask them about this. I did the very same thing when I went and spoke to a sister who has a PhD in anthropology. You can say that this is an objectionable practice today but you can't project our culture 1400 years ago and say that it was wrong back then. They view many a things we do as being highly objectionable.

So, how was this understood historically? Khawla (*radyaAllahu 'anha*) was the one who has proposed the marriage and being a woman herself she did not find it to be objectionable. 'A'isha's own parents Abu Bakr and Umm Ruman (*radyaAllahu 'anhum*) do not find the marriage to be problematic.

Let's play devil's advocate and make the argument, "Well they were all brainwashed followers of that prophet their opinion holds no relevance!" Then we have to see that the *nikah* takes place in Makkah where the Muslims are an oppressed minority and there are history books filled with authentic narrations where the pagans of Makkah would criticize every minute detail regarding the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). Every action of his was scrutinized for criticism. From our modern perspective, if there was anything that could finally discredit this man that we've been trying to discredit for 13-14 years then this must be it! "We've got him! We've cornered him!" But we don't see this from the non-Muslims. Not a single one criticized him for this. Fast forward 1200 years and we see orientalist, non-Muslims who study Islam, criticize the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) for this. Not a single orientalist work mentions this criticism. This criticism is not even brought forth by any academic *even today*. This is a completely un-academic criticism that we find on the internet and in cheap evangelical publications. There is not a single sociologist, anthropologist, or historian who has criticized the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) for this. Why? Because the academic principles they have been taught regarding historical practices such as this teach them not to project their culture upon others. They know that this is not a valid criticism.

Thirdly, there is the "if you point the finger to me, I'll point it back at you" argument. This is only being mentioned here for the sake of mentioning it as this is primarily an academic argument. Regardless, this is a historical argument that is based of a lot of historical research from Oxford and Cambridge and is even backed up by Jewish and Christian scholars. The research states that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was 13 years old when she gave birth. Furthermore, Joseph, Mary's husband in the nativity narrative, is 30 years old. The age of consent, up to 30-40 years ago, was 12-14. It was very commonplace in the American south for a man aged 30 to be marrying a woman aged 14. Fast-forward to our society we find this strange and that is *okay!* In the *shari'a* we have a right to our culture. There might be criticisms that this is not a very productive practice to be marrying so late then that has its place. However, no one can just say that the practice of marrying late is illegitimate. Similarly, if the culture shifted back to people marrying and 12-13 then that is legitimate too. There would be criticisms of productivity but the practice is not legitimate.

This last point should take a lot of paranoia away with regards to this discussion. The age of marriage is not something our religion mandates. Historically speaking, anything that occurred in the time of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) is "*sunnah*." However, from a *fiqh* perspective a "*sunnah*" is a "recommended practice." So just because it happened in the Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) time doesn't mean he recommended us to practice it. So if we marry at the age of 20-25 then that is what it is. Oftentimes, cultural practices are based off of physical, emotional, psychological, and financial realities of a people. It might even be extremely problematic to marry young in our society. This is not something we have to try to revive. That is not our mandate. We have to maintain what is culturally normal in our society and age. If that means that we marry at the age of 18-20 then that is okay. It would even be the Islamic recommendation. If I give that advice it would be based off of my own cultural understanding. I know my people and I know how they are developed emotionally, psychologically, physically, and financially at that age and that is why I would recommend whatever number I would recommend. Yes, this is a historical precedent which was valid at its time. But no, we are not Muslims with the mandate to revive that tradition in our current times. That is not our mandate and we are not obligated to do it.

حَدَّثَنَا خَلْفُ بْنُ هِشَامٍ، وَأَبُو الرَّبِيعِ، جَمِيعًا عَنْ حَمَّادِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ، - وَاللَّفْظُ لِأَبِي  
الرَّبِيعِ - حَدَّثَنَا حَمَّادٌ، حَدَّثَنَا هِشَامٌ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ قَالَ  
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " أُرَيْتُكَ فِي الْمَنَامِ ثَلَاثَ لَيَالٍ جَاءَنِي بِكِ  
الْمَلَكُ فِي سَرَقَةٍ مِنْ حَرِيرٍ فَيَقُولُ هَذِهِ امْرَأَتُكَ . فَكَشَفْتُ عَنْ وَجْهِكِ فَأَدَا  
أَنْتِ هِيَ فَأَقُولُ إِنْ يَكُ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ يُمِضْهُ " .

'A'isha reported Allah's Messenger (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa  
sallam*) having said,

“I saw you in a dream for three nights when an angel brought  
you to me in a silk cloth and he said: Here is your wife, and  
when I removed (the cloth) from your face, lo, it was yourself,  
so I said, 'If this is from Allah, let Him carry it out.'”

[Muslim with variants in Bukhari]

Lastly, and this point is primarily for Muslims, we have to understand the wisdom of this. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was shown a dream for three nights in a row in which Jibril (*'alayh as-Salam*) came with a cloth inside of which was the picture of 'A'isha (*radyAllahu 'anha*) and he was told to marry her. This was something that was divinely arranged and divinely ordained. So what is the *hikma*, the wisdom, behind this? Most of the Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) wives were much older. Although she is 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> on the list of top narrations, if we only count the unique narrations and traditions, omitting repetitions, then 'A'isha (*radyAllahu 'anha*) has narrated the most traditions. Great *muhaddithoon* such as 'Abdullah ibn Mubarak (*rahimahullah*) have commented and said, “We have narrated a third of the religion from 'A'isha (*radyAllahu 'anha*).” She was a *huffaz*, she had written the Qur'an by her own hand, and she had memorized thousands of incidents and sayings of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). She was an extremely gifted poet and had memorized *all* of the existing pre-Islamic and post-Islamic poetry and she even used to write poetry herself. She and her father (*radyAllahu 'anhum*) were *nassaba*, genealogists, and knew how everyone in society was connected. We realize that she had practically photographic memory and was extremely intelligent. Her rationale, intellect, and thinking are extremely well documented. She even engaged the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) in critical intellectual thought. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) would even comment on how supremely intelligent she was. We now see the wisdom behind the marriage. She taught not only the *sahaba* but the majority of the *tabi'een*. Later on, she would criticize public policy and they would amend based on her suggestions.

A final point is that both the *nikah* and the *waleema*, the moving in, happened in the month of *shawwal*. However, pre-Islamically the month of *shawwal* was considered cursed and this marriage shattered those superstitions. 'A'isha (*radyAllahu 'anha*) would even brag about how her marriage was in *shawwal* and turned out amazingly.

## BANU QURAYZAH



وَحَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْعَلَاءِ الْهَمْدَانِيُّ، كِلَاهُمَا عَنِ ابْنِ نُمَيْرٍ، قَالَ ابْنُ الْعَلَاءِ حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ نُمَيْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا هِشَامٌ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ أُصِيبَ سَعْدٌ يَوْمَ الْخَنْدَقِ رَمَاهُ رَجُلٌ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ يُقَالُ لَهُ ابْنُ الْعَرَقَةِ . رَمَاهُ فِي الْأَكْحَلِ فَضَرَبَ عَلَيْهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَيْمَةً فِي الْمَسْجِدِ يُعُودُهُ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ فَلَمَّا رَجَعَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنَ الْخَنْدَقِ وَضَعَ السِّلَاحَ فَاعْتَسَلَ فَأَتَاهُ جِبْرِيلُ وَهُوَ يَنْفُضُ رَأْسَهُ مِنَ الْعُبَارِ فَقَالَ وَضَعْتَ السِّلَاحَ وَاللَّهِ مَا وَضَعْنَاهُ أَخْرَجَ إِلَيْهِمْ . فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " فَأَيْنَ " . فَأَشَارَ إِلَى بَنِي قُرَيْظَةَ فَقَاتَلَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَزَلُّوا عَلَى حُكْمِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَزَدَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْحُكْمَ فِيهِمْ إِلَى سَعْدٍ قَالَ فَإِنِّي أَحْكُمُ فِيهِمْ أَنْ تُقْتَلَ الْمُقَاتِلَةُ وَأَنْ تُسَبَى الدُّرَيْيَةُ وَالنِّسَاءُ وَتُقَسَمَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ .

It has been narrated on the authority of A'isha (*radyallohu 'anhu*) who said, "Sa'd was wounded on the day of the Battle of the Ditch. A man from the Quraish called Ibn al-Ariqah shot at him an arrow which pierced the artery in the middle of his forearm. The Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) pitched a tent for him in the mosque and would inquire after him being in close proximity. When he returned from the Ditch and laid down his arms and took a bath, the angel Gabriel appeared to him and he was removing dust from his hair (as if he had just returned from the battle). The latter said, 'You have laid down arms. By God, we haven't (yet) laid them down. So march against them.' The Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) asked, "Where?" He pointed to Banu Qurayzah. So the Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) fought against them. They surrendered at the command of the Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), but he referred the decision about them to Sa'd who said, 'I decide about them that those of them who can fight be killed, their women and children taken prisoners and their properties distributed (among the Muslims).'" [Muslim]

The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) had a treaty with the Banu Qurayzah which called for five years of mutual defense of Medina. A few minor breaches had occurred but nothing was truly jeopardized. However, when the Battle of *Khandaq*, the Trench, occurred and the Quraysh sought to wipe the Medinans out the Banu Qurayzah did not come to the aid of the Muslims and thus broke the terms of the treaty. As if that wasn't bad enough the Banu Qurayzah actually went behind the Muslims' backs and attempted to slaughter the women and children of Medina who were left unprotected. Although they were unsuccessful in their attempt to massacre their allies their treachery was still evident.

So after the battle when the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) returns to Medina the above *hadith* takes place. When the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) reached the Banu Qurayzah, which was roughly two hours away, he found them cursing and repeating vile things about Banu Qurayzah. He set up camp with the *sahaba* in front of their fortress and asked them to surrender. Upon their refusal to do so, a siege was set up which lasted for about 20-25 days. Their leader, K'ab, proposed that they accept one of three choices. "Either we accept his religion for we know that he is the one predicted in our books and if we do so then our lives and property will be safe" but the Banu Qurayzah said in

their arrogance that, “we will never give up our religion.” The second option, a grisly one, was “let us kill our own families and then charge outside and fight to our death.” This too was shot down by the time. The last option was to launch a surprise attack on the Jewish Sabbath because the Muslims wouldn't be expecting us to break our own holy day. However, this last option was refused as well by the time.

Ka'b tried negotiating with the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) but nothing short of an unconditional surrender was to be accepted. Eventually 'Ali (*radyallohu 'anhu*) broke through their fort and the men of the Banu Qurayzah were detained. The tribe of al-'Aws, old allies of the Banu Qurayzah, begged intercession on behalf of the Banu Qurayzah even though at this point their fate was unclear. S'ad bin Mu'adh (*radyallohu 'anhu*) was chosen for his lenient nature in judging against the Banu Qurayzah. He took an oath from everyone, including the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), that his directive regarding the Banu Qurayzah was to be not be argued against and instead to be obeyed. As soon as everyone agreed S'ad (*radyallohu 'anhu*) declared that their men are to be executed, their property distributed, and their men to be taken captive. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) revealed that this was the original *hukm* of Allah that had been deferred in lieu of a gentler approach in order to appease the 'Aws.

Thus, some of the men of the Banu Qurayzah were executed, only one woman was executed, and not a single child was harmed. The single woman who was executed was executed because she had murdered a *sahabi* during the siege by casting a large stone over the fortress walls. Several other prisoners are released with their families and wealth on account of past merits such virtuous deeds and dealings they had with Muslims. There is only one *hadith* which mentions that *all* of the men of the Banu Qurayzah were to be executed but that *hadith* is considered weak by Imam ibn Kathir (*rahimahullah*).

The controversy arises from people interpreting this incident as anti-Semitic and as proof of Islam's hostility towards non-Muslims. However, this is academically unsound. The Banu Qurayzah were executed because they were war criminals. They had sought to slaughter an entire city of *only* women and children whilst their men were at war. Critics who levy this incident as an argument against Islam decontextualize the entire incident and the *Ahzab* nor *Khandaq* are mentioned. *Only* the war criminals were executed. The rest of them moved on and lived peaceful lives. Muhammad ibn Ka'b al-Qurazi, one of the Banu Qurayzah, went on to convert to Islam and became a great early *mufassir*.

Some Muslims also twist this narrative to say that Islam justifies violence against non-Muslims but these too are not correct. The origin of this narrative was in the last 300-400 years where hate in the Muslim colonies against the oppressors reached a point that people started using religion to “stick it to the white man.”

### **ZAYNAB BINT JAHSH (RADYALLAHU 'ANHA)**

*Taken from Yasir Qadhi's "Seerah of the Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) 68 – Marriage to Zaynab"*

This topic is one of the most difficult topics in the *seerah* because of how it is framed in our modern times. I would rather not have to discuss this topic and the allegations and stories associated with it but because we live in a climate where the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) is attacked from numerous angles and sources who bring forth all sorts of calumnies and issues to taint his character. Thus, I would rather you hear it from me in academically, analytically, and in detail. This story is delicate to address because it is considered by non-Muslims consider to be a “love story,” a story of *'ishq* and *muhabbah*. Hence, this becomes a very awkward story to discuss. In fact many of the later scholars have turned away entirely and don't even mention it in their books thus limiting our discussion to very early sources. If we had been living in a different time and place or in a more Islamic environment there would be no need to dive into deep detail regarding this issue but that is not a luxury we enjoy. It is better for us to talk about it in an academic setting before it is thrust upon you by islamophobes or bigots. It is better for you to be armed with the knowledge of the correct versions or semi-plausible interpretations.

Who is Zaynab bint Jahsh (*radyAllahu 'anha*)? When did she marry the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*)? Why is their marriage so controversial? Zaynab, originally named Barra, was born into the tribe of the Banu Khuzaymah making her still Qurayshi but not Banu Hashim. Her mother, 'Umayma bint 'Abdul Muttalib, was the sister of the Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) father, 'Abdullah. She was a first-cousin to the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), almost a decade and a half younger than him, and married him at the age of roughly 35. She had been previously married in Makkah but after her divorce she migrated with her brother to Medina. Upon her arrival in Medina the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) sent a proposal to her on behalf of his adopted son, Zayd ibn Haritah (*radyAllahu 'anhu*). Up until this point, however, Zayd was known as Zayd ibn Muhammad.

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ  
أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ  
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا ﴿٣٦﴾

It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly strayed into clear error. [*al-Ahzab*, 33:36]

However, upon receiving the proposal Zaynab was not pleased with the proposal thinking of him not to be to her caliber. However, upon the Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) insistence, and some interpretations mention *al-Ahzab* 33 as being related to this matter, Zaynab became content with Zayd.

'A'isha (*radyAllahu 'anha*), the wife of Allah's Apostle (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said,  
“...Zaynab bint Jahsh, the wife of Allah's Apostle (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and she was one who was somewhat equal in rank with me in the eyes of Allah's Messenger (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and I have never seen a woman more advanced in religious piety than Zaynab, more God-conscious,

more truthful, more alive to the ties of blood, more generous and having more sense of self-sacrifice in practical life and having more charitable disposition and thus more close to God, the Exalted, than her. She, however, lost temper very soon but was soon calm.” [Muslim]

'A'isha (*radīAllahu 'anha*) the Mother of the Faithful, reported that Allah's Messenger (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, “One who has the longest hands (is most generous) amongst you would meet me most immediately.” She further said, “They (the wives of Allah's Apostle) used to measure the hands as to whose hand was the longest (most charitable) and it was the hand of Zainab that was the longest (most charitable) amongst them, as she used to work with her hand and spend (that income) on charity.” [Muslim]

It is also well known that after her marriage to the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) she was the only real competition to 'A'isha (*radīAllahu 'anha*) in terms of the Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) *muhabba*, or love. In fact, the wives were divided into two camps, that of Zaynab and that of 'A'isha.

وَإِذْ تَقُولُ لِلَّذِي أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ  
أَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَاتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَتُخْفِي فِي نَفْسِكَ  
مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ وَتَخْشَى النَّاسَ وَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَاهُ  
فَلَمَّا قَضَى زَيْدٌ مِنْهَا وَطَرًا زَوَّجْنَاكَهَا لِكَيْ لَا  
يَكُونَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرَجٌ فِي أَزْوَاجِ أَدْعِيَائِهِمْ إِذَا  
قَضَوْا مِنْهُنَّ وَطَرًا ۗ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا ﴿٣٧﴾

And [remember, O Muhammad], when you said to the one on whom Allah bestowed favor and you bestowed favor, "Keep your wife and fear Allah," while you concealed within yourself that which Allah is to disclose. And you feared the people, while Allah has more right that you fear Him. So when Zayd had no longer any need for her, We married her to you in order that there not be upon the believers any discomfort concerning the wives of their adopted sons when they no longer have need of them. And ever is the command of Allah accomplished.

[*al-Ahzab*, 33:37]

This is one of the most central *ayahs* to our study. It begins by mentioning that Allah has favored Zayd with Islam and the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) has favored Zayd by freeing him and adopting him as his son. Then it moved on and talks about how the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) advised Zayd to not divorce his wife despite of Zayd's wishes. However, Allah states that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) had something in his heart which he did not reveal out of fear of the people but Allah was going to reveal it because He deserves to be feared more. The *ayah* then states that as soon as Zayd had divorced Zaynab, Allah Himself married her to you. Allah did so

Himself in order to for the believers to realize that marrying the divorced wives of their adopted sons is okay. It ends with stating that Allah's commands will be accomplished.

مَا كَانَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ مِنْ حَرَجٍ فِيمَا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَهُ ۖ  
سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ  
قَدَرًا مَّقْدُورًا ﴿٣٨﴾ الَّذِينَ يُبَلِّغُونَ رِسَالَاتِ اللَّهِ  
وَيَخْشَوْنَهُ وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ أَحَدًا إِلَّا اللَّهَ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ  
حَسِيبًا ﴿٣٩﴾ مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ  
وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ  
شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٤٠﴾

There is not to be upon the Prophet any discomfort concerning that which Allah has imposed upon him. (This is) the established way of Allah with those (prophets) who have passed on before. And ever is the command of Allah a destiny decreed<sup>38</sup>.

(Allah praises) those who convey the messages of Allah and fear Him and do not fear anyone but Allah. And sufficient is Allah as Accountant<sup>39</sup>.

Muhammad is not the father of (any) one of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah and last of the prophets. And ever is Allah, of all things, Knowing<sup>40</sup>. [*al-Ahzab*, 33:38-40]

The mention of Zayd and Zaynab in *al-Ahzab* must also be taken into context. The *ayahs* from 36-40 of *al-Ahzab* mention the incredible rank and authority of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and that the decisions Allah makes for him are meant for his ease. The context tells us that the Qur'an itself views the marriage of Zaynab to be a blessed affair and one meant to create ease. This should help us also realize the point of view that we should be adopting towards the marriage.

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحِيمِ، حَدَّثَنَا مُعَلَّى بْنُ مَنْصُورٍ، عَنْ حَمَّادِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ،  
حَدَّثَنَا ثَابِتٌ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - أَنَّ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ {وَوُخِّفِي  
فِي نَفْسِكَ مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ} نَزَلَتْ فِي شَأْنِ زَيْنَبِ ابْنَةِ جَحْشٍ وَزَيْدِ بْنِ حَارِثَةَ.

Narrated Anas bin Malik (*radyallohu 'anhu*),  
The *ayah*, 'But you did hide in your mind that which Allah was  
about to make manifest.' (33:37) was revealed concerning  
Zaynab bint Jahsh and Zayd bin Haritha. [Bukhari]

This is the *hadith* found in Bukhari regarding the entire incident. It is obviously bereft of much detail but is one of the most authentic narration concerning this matter.

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَبَانَ، حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ أَبِي عَدِيٍّ، عَنْ دَاوُدَ بْنِ أَبِي هِنْدٍ، عَنْ

الشَّعْبِيِّ، عَنْ مَسْرُوقٍ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ لَوْ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَاتِمًا شَيْئًا مِنَ الْوَحْيِ لَكَتَمَ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ ۖ : ( إِذْ تَقُولُ لِلَّذِي أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ ) الْآيَةَ . قَالَ هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ .

Narrated 'Aishah (*radyallohu 'anha*),  
"If the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was to have hidden anything from the Revelation, then he would have hidden this *ayah*, 'When you said to him on whom Allah has bestowed grace and you have done a favor (33:37).'" [Tirmidhi]

This *sahih hadith* from Tirmidhi, which also has a similar narration by Anas bin Malik (*radyallohu 'anhu*) in Bukhari, shows us that this *ayah* is painful for the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) as he is being criticized like never before. This is an extremely awkward *ayah* for the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) to recite but he must relate this to the people because he is the messenger of Allah.

There is a more detailed *hadith* from the “*Musnad*” of Imam Ahmed (*rahimahullah*) in which he narrates from Mu'ammal ibn Isma'il, from Thabit from Anas that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) came to the house of Zayd ibn Haritha and saw Zaynab “and something entered his heart.” Now, Mu'ammal states that “I do not know whether Anas said the 'and something entered his heart' or my own teacher Hammad.” Later, when Zayd came to complain to the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) about Zaynab that he said, “Keep your wife and fear Allah” and upon this statement the *ayaat* of *al-Ahzab* were revealed. The authenticity of this *hadith* is contended

أَخْبَرَنَا سُوَيْدُ بْنُ نَصْرٍ، قَالَ أُنْبَأْنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ الْمُغِيرَةِ، عَنْ ثَابِتٍ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ، قَالَ لَمَّا انْقَضَتْ عِدَّةُ زَيْنَبَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَزَيْنِدٍ " اذْكُرْهَا عَلَيَّ " . قَالَ زَيْنِدٌ فَانْطَلَقْتُ فَقُلْتُ يَا زَيْنِبُ أَبَشِّرِي أَرْسَلَنِي إِلَيْكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَذُكُرُكَ . فَقَالَتْ مَا أَنَا بِصَانِعَةٍ شَيْئًا حَتَّى أَسْتَأْمَرَ رَبِّي فَقَامَتْ إِلَى مَسْجِدِهَا وَنَزَلَ الْقُرْآنُ وَجَاءَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَدَخَلَ بِغَيْرِ أَمْرٍ .

It was narrated that Anas (*radyallohu 'anhu*) said,  
"When the 'iddah of Zaynab was over, the Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said to Zayd, 'Propose marriage to her on my behalf.' Zayd went and said, 'O Zaynab, rejoice, for the Messenger of Allah has sent me to you to propose marriage on his behalf.' She said, 'I will not do anything until I consult my Lord.' She went to her prayer place and Qur'an was revealed,

then the Messenger of Allah came and entered upon her without any formalities." [Nasa'i]

This is a *sahih hadith* which gives us details of what occurred after the divorce between Zaynab and Zayd.

The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) went to visit Zayd but he was not home, but Zaynab answered his knock. So she came wearing her regular dress and said, "He is not here o Messenger of Allah but come on in." But he turned away and he muttered and the only thing that she could hear was, "*SubhanAllahi al-Adheem, subhana musarrif al-quloob* (Exalted is Allah the Almighty, Exalted is the Changer of Hearts)."

Zayd comes back and Zaynab informs him that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) had visited. Zayd asked, "Why didn't you invite him in?" to which Zaynab replies "I did" to which Zayd responds, "What did he say?" Zaynab said, "I don't know but all I could hear was "*SubhaanAllahi al-Adheem, subhana musarrif al-quloob.*" So Zayd understood that perhaps the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was inclined towards her. Thus, he went to the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and offered to divorce Zaynab. However, the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "Keep your wife and fear Allah."

But after this incident everything remaining in Zayd's heart left. So he kept insisting to the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) that he wanted to divorce Zaynab. He told him that she had a sharp tongue, that she kept putting him down, etc. etc. Eventually, Zayd divorced Zaynab of his own accord. Thus, the revelation came down upon the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) when he was with 'A'isha (*radyAllahu 'anha*) and he was married to Zaynab. [Muhammad ibn Sa'd in "*Kitaab al-Tabaqaat al-Kabeer*"]

Now we begin to analyze the books of *seerah* and we turn firstly to ibn Ishaq. A major criticism of ibn Ishaq is that he largely ignored the wives of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and their stories. Hence, ibn Ishaq narrates nothing at all regarding the marriage to Zaynab. The next major source is ibn Sa'd (d. 230 *hijra*) who gives us a very detailed version which we will term "Version A," this is considered to be the problematic version due to the emotions that are very prominent throughout this narration.

Ibn Sa'd version of Nasa'i's above narration is as follows. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said to Zayd, "I don't trust anyone more than you so go to Zaynab so go to her on my behalf." Thus, Zayd openly visited Zaynab as the *ayaat* of *hijab* were revealed on the night of the Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) marriage to Zaynab. So Zayd walked in on Zaynab grinding some barley but felt shy for the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was interested in her and thus turned around so he wouldn't see her and informed her that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was interested in her. Zaynab responded that she would not reply until she prays *istikhara* and at that very moment the *ayah* of *al-Ahzab* were revealed whilst the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was with 'A'isha (*radyAllahu 'anha*). Thus, the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) sent a messenger with the *ayaat* to

Zaynab. 'A'isha commented that she had been struck with jealousy from every possible angle because of what she knew of her beauty and the manner in which the marriage took place.

The third source we are going to cover with regards to this topic are the opinions of the *mufasssirun*. They are the commentators of the Qur'an and each one had something to say regarding these *ayaat* of *al-Ahzaab*. The earliest *tafsir* in print is that of Muqatil ibn Sulayman (d. 150 *hijra*). He is not a scholar but rather a *qassaas*, a storyteller, and thus is not considered to be academically reliable. We are turning to his *tafsir* not for authentic information but to glean what people were saying around 150 *hijri* regarding these *ayaat*. Muqatil also mentions “Version A” of events. *The next tafsir* to mention “Version A” is the *tafsir* of Imam al-Tabari (d. 310). In his *tafsir* he mentions “Version A” as the only existing version. He mentions reports from Qatada, ibn Zayd, and numerous other authorities that explicitly mention and affirm “Version A.” His reports go back to Qatada (d. 103 *hijrah*), the main *mufasssir* of the *tabi'un* and a student of ibn 'Abbas (*radiAllahu 'anhu*). Qatada, in these reports, mentions that what the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) hid in his heart was the desire that Zayd divorce Zaynab. This is al-Tabari's view and al-Tabari is considered the greatest *mufasssir* of the early centuries of Islam. *The Persian Hanafi mufasssir* Abu'l-Layth Samarqandi (d. 375 *hijra*) related “Version A” in his *tafsir*, “*al-Bahr al-'Uloom*.” al-Tha'labi (d. 427 *hijra*), al-Zamakshari (d. 538 *hijra*), and al-Razi (d. 610 *hijra*) have all related “Version A” in their *tafasir*. All of these *mufasssirun* have repeatedly mentioned “Version A” as if it is the standard version.

'Ali ibn Husayn Zayn al-'Abidin asks one of his peer, “What does Hasan al-Basri say about the *ayah* 'While you concealed within yourself what Allah was to disclose (33:47).?'” The peer informed him of what Hasan al-Basri said (Version A, that is).

'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin said, “No, rather Allah had informed the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) that Zaynab would become his wife. [al-Bayhaqi in “*Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*”]

“Version B” is not a specific incident but rather an interpretation of the *ayaat* and is not a story like “Version A.” The first book that mentions this is Imam al-Bayhaqi's (d. 458 *hijrah*) “*Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*.” In “Version A” the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was hiding in his heart his inclination for Zaynab and the desire that Zayd divorce her and he kept this desire hidden out of fear of the people. “Version B” says that Allah had already informed the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) that he was going to marry Zaynab so when Zayd came to him asking to divorce Zaynab he replied, “Keep your wife and fear Allah” because he was afraid of the pre-Islamic stigma of marrying the ex-wife of one's adopted son. Hence, the primary differences between the two versions are the interpretations of what the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was concealing within himself and what he was actually afraid of.

Although it appears that “Version A” is earlier than “Version B” the latter is still mentioned alongside the former in some very early *tafasir*. Ibn 'Atiyyah (d. ~540 *hijrah*) mentions all of “Version A” in his *tafsir* and then follows it up with “Version B” and leaves it at that. Al-Baghawi (d. 510 *hijrah*) mentions in his *tafsir* all of “Version A” in great detail but then bring up “Version B” and states that the



latter is more befitting for the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), his reason was not a weakness in *isnad* of any reports but simply that one seemed more proper than the other. He does, however, add that “Even if the opinion that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) hid a love for Zaynab in his heart then that is not something that tarnishes the character of a prophet because a servant is not criticized for a desire that comes to the heart as long as he does not intend any evil. This is because love and inclination is not something that is in the control of humans.” Hence, al-Baghawi is the first scholar to find “Version A” to be problematic but says that even if “Version A” is true it is not the end of the world. With al-Baghawi begins a shift in the interpretation of events and more and more scholars after this begin to favor “Version B” until “Version A” is ignored, set aside, castigated, and criticized.

Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597 *hijrah*) mentions says, “There are four opinions about what the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) hid. 1) His love for Zaynab as narrated by ibn 'Abbas. 2) A promise from Allah that he would marry Zaynab as narrated by 'Ali Zayn al-'Abideen. 3) A wish that Zayd would divorce her as narrated by Qatada, ibn Jurayj, and Muqatil. 4) The intention that if Zayd would divorce her then he would marry her as reported by ibn Zayd.” Opinions 1, 3, and 4 are all “Version A” whilst opinion 2 is “Version B.” al-Jawzi adds, “Some scholars have said that it is not possible that the Prophet (*sallallahu alayhi wa sallam*) was inclined towards her and wanted Zayd to divorce her. Even though this is what is commonly found in the books of *tafsir* this story has been found to be problematic. Rather, these scholars say that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was criticized in this incident for concealing the fact that eventually she would become his wife. It is also said that he felt out of a concern for Zaynab that if Zayd was to divorce her he would marry her to fulfill the ties of kinship since she was her cousin.” Hence, ibn Jawzi takes the emotional factor entirely out of the equation and paints the marriage to be more of a charitable act. However, this is merely his opinion and he does not quote an authority to back him up. This can be considered a modified “Version B.”

al-Qurtubi (d. 671 *hijrah*) mentions “Version A” in explicit detail and then follows it up with “Version B” and then says, “Our scholars have said that this [Version B] is the better interpretation of the verse and it is this interpretation that the critical researchers have approved.”

Thus, we come to notice that in the first three centuries it is “Version A” that is predominant and “Version B” is found here and there. In the fourth and fifth centuries both versions are cited but eventually some people begin to prefer “Version B” and criticize “Version A.” Then, in the sixth to eighth centuries “Version A” is never mentioned again. The best example of “Version A” being omitted entirely is the seminal *tafsir* of ibn Kathir (d. 774 *hijrah*) and the works of ibn Hajar (d. 852 *hijrah*). Both of them, with regards to this verse, state that “some of the earlier books have reports that we would rather not mention.” Eventually, scholarship that followed this began to claim that “Version A” was a fabrication. In fact, certain popular writers of the modern era who were not scholars claimed that “Version A” was an “evil fabrication by the orientalist that have corrupted our books and introduced it to bring doubt upon the character of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*).” However, we must keep away from such conspiracy theories and stick to facts.

Interestingly, ibn al-Qayyim in his book “*al-Da'u al-Dawa*,” meaning “The Disease and the Cure,” which was a response to a letter by a youth requesting help with the problem of *'ishq*, or love. At the end of the book he talks about the permissibility of certain types of *'ishq* and one of his examples of *halal 'ishq* is a sanitized “Version A.”

“Version A” in terms of what the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was concealing makes more sense, that what was hidden was not a sin but something embarrassing. Hence, the reports from Anas, 'A'isha, and Hasan al-Basri stating that “if the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) were to have concealed an *ayah* it would have been this” seems to make more sense in “Version A.” This version even seems to be the standard interpretation of early Islam. Yes, there are weaknesses in the *isnaad* but the sheer quantity of narrations shows that at the very least the gist of the story could be deemed to be authentic. Secondly, these same *isnaad* that are used by al-Tabari for this story are used by al-Tabari in his whole *tafsir*. Hence, if we were going to be that picky then we have to reject 80% or more of al-Tabari. “Version B” claims that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was hiding the fact that he would eventually marry Zaynab. However, if this was told by revelation and it is Allah's then why would he delay it? It is not as if it could be prevented. Hence, this doesn't make any logical sense. In “Version A” it is merely a human emotion that is being denied but in “Version B” it is as if it is *qadr*, or destiny, that is being denied. However, the real problem with “Version A” is that it creates a stigma with regards to the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and his inclinations.

“Version B” is backed up by the fact that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) had seen Zaynab since his childhood as they were first-cousins. If the attraction of “Version A” was there then it would have been there from before as such attraction is not developed at the drop of a hat at some random point in two people's lives. In fact, he proposed to her on behalf of Zayd and had he himself been interested he would have proposed to her immediately instead. Al-Baghawi even said, “Allah said 'you concealed in yourself that which Allah would make open.' What is it that is mentioned openly in the Qur'an? 'We married you to her.'” This is a subtle point which can be appreciated by realizing that whatever the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was hiding was what Allah would make public and it was not the desire for Zaynab that was made public but the marriage to Zaynab. Hence, “Version B” is what the text of the Qur'an directly supports.

Allah alone knows best which version is truly the correct one but I personally agree with al-Baghawi's final analysis that even if “Version A” is correct it doesn't mean that any sin was committed as a person is not accountable for what is within their heart. Both versions are alright but they go back to how we view the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). Do we view the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) as being human and having human desires? 'A'isha herself said in the *sahih hadith* regarding Juwayriyyah bint al-Harithah's beauty that, “I knew the Prophet would see in her what I saw in her.” This is proof that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) had human emotions. In fact, a prophet that is human is actually a prophet that I can relate to and look up to. What is the problem with a prophet that has normal inclinations but can control them? That is perfection because despite having the same inclinations as us he resisted them. Whereas if we make the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) into a semi-mystical figure who is above humanity then it becomes problematic in looking up to him and attempting to model ourselves after him because he is more than human. If he was an angel with no inclinations then what is the role model left for us to follow?

It just so happened that the Zayd and Zaynab never liked each other in the first place and the situation worked itself out. It just so happened that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) became attracted. It just so happened that Zayd even without the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) advising him to do so divorced Zaynab. So when her *'iddah* was done Zayd himself goes on his behalf

to take the proposal. Allah Himself marries the two. 'A'isha, Anas, and Hasan al-Basri all report that this *ayah* was embarrassing for the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). It is awkward but is not *haram* or sinful.

The bottom-line is that both versions are there and it is okay to follow either of them. Some scholars have tried to merge the two versions and that too is okay. The fact of the matter is that when you have an evil heart you can take the most innocent of stories and make them into twisted stories. Conversely, when you have a more innocent heart such stories will remain innocent and you won't be inclined to twist them. The people who want to disparage the character of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) don't need Zaynab's story, they can do so with anything of their choosing. We believe in the Prophet (*sallallahu alayhi wa sallam*) and are fine with either version of events. As for people who disparage his character and don't believe in him, they have bigger problems to worry about than choosing between "Version A" or "Version B."

## SATANIC VERSES

*Taken from Yasir Qadhi's "Seerah of the Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) 16 – The Incident of the Satanic Verses"*

After roughly 15 Muslims had migrated to Abyssinia in *Rajab* they came back just after three months in *Shawwal*. Why had they undertaken such a arduous emigration and returned so shortly thereafter? The incident that caused this is termed "the Satanic Verses." They had heard a rumor that the people of Makkah had accepted Islam. However, upon their return they found out that the Makkans had not in fact accepted Islam and this was an exaggerated rumor. There are many versions of these events but we shall discuss the three predominant versions.

حَدَّثَنَا فَتْنَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ، - يَعْنِي الرَّأُوْدِيَّ - عَنْ  
 سُهَيْلٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لِي اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ "   
 لَا تَبَدُّوْا الْيَهُودَ وَلَا النَّصَارَى بِالسَّلَامِ فَإِذَا لَقَيْتُمْ أَحَدَهُمْ فِي طَرِيقٍ فَاصْطَرُّوْهُ  
 إِلَىٰ أَصْبِيغِهِ "

Narrated Ibn `Abbas (*radyallohu`anhu*) that, "The Prophet (ﷺ) performed a prostration when he finished reciting *Surat'l-Najm*, and all the Muslims and pagans and *jinn* and human beings prostrated along with him. [Bukhari]

The most authentic version of events is the one found in the *hadith* of Bukhari. In the month of *Ramadan*, five years before the *hijra*, the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) recited *Surah al-Najm*, an extremely powerful *surah* which climaxes with the verse "So prostrate to Allah and worship (Him)." When this *ayah* was recited all the Muslims fell into *sajda*, prostration, and overwhelmed by this act of submission and the *ayaat* all the non-Muslims fell into *sajda* as well with the exception of Waleed ibn

Mugheera. This is the most authentic version of events.

The second and the third versions revolve around *riwayaat*, traditions, that are not found in authentic books of *hadith* or in famous books of the *seerah*. Rather, they are found in more obscure and encyclopedic works such as “*Tafsir al-Tabari*” by Imam ibn Jarir al-Tabari (*rahimahullah*). Such works were never meant to be an authentic recollection of events for mass consumption. Tabari's work specifically was made for scholars to sift through and determine what to take and what not to take. Such sources are in stark contrast to more critical sources such as Bukhari and Muslim who had extremely watertight methods of verifying narrations. It is in such tertiary sources that we find *riwayat* that mention *shaytaan*, Satan, being involved in this story. This involvement led early orientalist Sir William Muir to coin the term “satanic verses” for this story. In the Islamic sources this event is termed “*qissat al-gharaniq*,” “Story of the Pelican”

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَىٰ ﴿٢٠﴾  
 أَلَكُمُ الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَىٰ ﴿٢١﴾ تِلْكَ إِذًا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَىٰ  
 ﴿٢٢﴾

So have you considered al-Lat and al-'Uzza? And Manat, the third - the other one? Is the male for you and for Him the female? That, then, is an unjust division.  
 [*al-Najm*, 53:19-22]

The second version is reported in “*Tafsir al-Tabari*” and it is related by 'Urwa ibn Zubair, the famous *tabi'i* who was not a *sahabi*. This is known as a missing link in narration since the *tabi'i* is narrating about a person whom he never saw. In 'Urwa ibn Zubair's narration after *ayaat* 19-20 of *al-Najm shaytaan* cried out and added two *ayaat* that were not in the Qur'an that were heard only by the polytheists and not the Muslims. The fabricated *ayaat* allegedly added were, “*tilka gharaniq al-'ula, wa inna sha'ata hunna la turtaja*,” “these idols are the high and mighty pelicans, and their requests will be granted.” This is the first time that the idols are being praised and it is being said that their intercession will be accepted. The polytheists heard this and thought the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) has compromised. “Finally, he's come to a middle ground and he's come to accept our gods.” So when the recitation of the *surah* was completed the polytheists too prostrated since they thought that being Muslim was no different than idolatry now.

We have to be academically honest and realize that the story of the “satanic verses” was not some concoction by non-Muslims but rather a story narrated by some Muslim sources themselves. Some non-Muslims interpret the event as being a proof that the Qur'an was tampered with. They claim, *a'oothubillah*, that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) had tried to change his tactics and changed from *tauheed* to *shirk* but upon facing a backlash from the Muslims he reverted his position and claimed that *shaytaan* had said those verses instead. This is the perspective of non-Muslims who view the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) someone who changed his theology to suit his needs as any politician would.

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَتَّى  
 أَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِي أُمْنِيَّتِهِ فَيَنْسَخُ اللَّهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ  
 ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٥٢﴾

And We did not send before you any messenger or prophet except that when he spoke (or recited), Satan threw into it (some misunderstanding). But Allah abolishes that which Satan throws in; then Allah makes precise His verses. And Allah is Knowing and Wise. [*al-Hajj*, 22:52]

The third version is even worse than the second one and is mentioned in Imam al-Wahidi's (*rahimahullah*) “*Asbab al-Nuzul*.” In this version of events the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) hears *shaytaan*'s recitation and thinks it is Jibril (*'alayh as-Salam*) reciting to him and thus he himself, being unable to tell the difference, recites the fabricated verses. Then Jibril (*'alayh as-Salam*) came back and inquired as to what the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) had recited. Upon hearing the fabricated *ayaat* he clarified that, “I did not come with those two *ayaat*” and then the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) became extremely depressed and distressed. It was upon this time, according to this version, that the *ayah* above from *al-Hajj* was revealed which clarified the matter by stating that although *shaytaan* may throw some stuff into the revelation Allah clarifies the matter and the fabricated verses will be but a *fitna* for those of weak hearts. This is also the introduction to Salman Rushdie's fictional work, “The Satanic Verses.” This version is also found in some early Muslim sources and is not just some modern fabrication against Islam. So in this third version *shaytaan* actually succeeds in deceiving the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and a clarification from Allah is required.

According to the version two and three, Bukhari's version doesn't blatantly contradict their account but it leaves out details. Unfortunately, the scholars don't have a consensus regarding these *ayaat*. A large group of scholars such as Imam ibn Kathir, Qadi Iyad, Fakhruddin ar-Razi, and al-Albani (*rahimahumullah*) stick to the first story and discredit the second and third. In fact, al-Albani (*rahimahullah*) even wrote a booklet in which he scrutinizes every single narration used to support those claims and proves that they are weak. Imam ibn Khuzaymah (*rahimahullah*) was asked about this story and he said the other versions were fabrications by the enemies of Islam to try to destroy Islam. In 1966 there was a major Islamic conference in Cairo, Egypt to solely discuss this incidents. Its findings were that the narrations supporting the second and third versions were absolutely not true. Hence, the bulk of modern scholarship dismisses all versions except the first version of events. Every book of *seerah* from “*The Sealed Nectar*” to any other book will either not mention the story at all or mention it as a fabrication.

Unfortunately, quite renowned scholars support the second version such as Imam ibn Hajr al-Asqalani (*rahimahullah*). In his view it is true that all five or six versions of the story are inauthentic but he claims that each weak chain, when combined, makes the narration more and more authentic. This is supported by a principle in the sciences of *hadith*. Al-Albani, in his criticism said that not all weak reports can be put together to make a stronger report but there are further qualifiers to when this principle can be applied. He goes into quite academic detail to prove why the rule cannot be applied in this case.

The last version of the story is accepted by ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullah*) unfortunately. He wrote about it in a number of his works and *tafsir* and says that, “Not only do all of the reports add up and make the narration authentic but the verse of *surah al-Hajj* is crystal clear in its reference to the event. Proponents of versions one and two claim that the word “*tamanna*” in the *ayah* does not mean “to recite” but “to wish.” Hence, the *ayah* of *al-Hajj* would mean that, “and We did not send before you any messenger or prophet except that when he desired, Satan threw into it (some temptations). But Allah abolishes that which Satan throws in; then Allah makes precise His verses.” Ibn Taymiyyah, in response to this, says “Then how do you interpret *al-Hajj* 55 which says, 'But those who disbelieve will not cease to be in doubt of it until the Hour comes upon them unexpectedly or there comes to them the punishment of a barren Day.'”

However, now comes the aspect of *'aqeedah* or theology. Some scholars say that no matter what the *riwayaat* say this cannot be accepted as *'aqeedah*. This is because of the claim that *shaytaan* could successfully pretend to be Jibril (*'alayh as-Salam*) and the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) couldn't tell the difference. This is a direct compromise on the integrity of the *wahy* or revelation. This was the view of many modern scholars and even classical scholars such as Qadi Iyad (*rahimahullah*). They say that the prophets are *ma'sum*, or infallible, we cannot accept that this incident occurs. Ibn Hajr (*rahimahullah*) says that version two doesn't compromise the Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) *'isma*, or infallibility. Ibn Taymiyyah's (*rahimahullah*) definition of *'isma* was just different. In his opinion, “The prophets cannot commit major sins, *fawahish* (lewd sins), or lie. However, they can make judgmental errors. They can also commit minor sins but they do not persist in the sin and they repent immediately.” In ibn Taymiyyah's conception of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) he is the best human but they are still human. It is merely their humanity that is as perfect as possible.

In my own opinion, which obviously cannot compete with the opinion of the giants listed above, we have to stick with the first version and we discard the second and third versions for the following seven reasons:

1. Claiming that *shaytaan* can inspire the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), despite ibn Taymiyyah's explaining away of it, is severely detrimental to the sanctity of the *wahy*. Allah has guaranteed the purity of the process of *wahy* in various *ayaat*.
2. There is absolutely no authentic narration of the incident from “*Tafsir al-Tabari*” to “*Asbab al-Nuzul*.” Each one only goes back to a *tabi'i* and not to the *sahaba* or even the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). This is a major weakness that has been admitted to by even ibn Hajr and ibn Taymiyyah.
3. Even disregarding the *isnad* analysis if we look at the story itself there are innumerable variations of it. A version narrates that the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was sleepy and that is why he made an error. Another narrated that he was in *salah* at the Ka'bah when he was reciting. And in yet another, he was sitting in a gather and reciting.
4. Not a single authentic book mentions this incident. Even the books of ibn Hisham and ibn Ishaq (*rahimahumullah*) don't narrate this incident. They are only found in tertiary sources with dubious authenticity.
5. The biggest argument in my opinion is the contextual analysis of the *ayaat*. *Ayaat* 19-20 show that what will follow will be criticism because of the *istifham qaari* (derogatory questioning). Even in English, you do not speak like this when speaking of something to be honored. Then comes the verse after (“unjust division”). If the satanic verses are inserted, the story makes no

sense. From criticism to praise to criticism, it doesn't work linguistically or contextually! It would be a disjointed and nonsensical text.

6. Muhammad Abdu, mufti of Egypt d. 1905 CE, said that even linguistically it makes no sense because the word “*gharaniq*” has never been used in pre-Islamic poetry to refer to the idols. This would be the only time it is found - in this story. If *shaytaan* really wanted to fool the pagans he would have chosen a word that they recognized, not an obscure and unknown reference to idols.
7. We have the authentic narration in Bukhari with the good enough explanation that the power of the Qur'an moved them. It answers all our questions so why would we resort to “the Satanic Verses?” We don't need to go beyond an authentic source which clarifies all doubt and reach out to weak, dubious, and inconsistent explanations of the event.

## ALLEGED QUR'ANIC CONTRADICTIONS, INCONSISTENCIES, OR ERRORS

### NUMERICAL CONTRADICTIONS

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي  
 سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ  
 النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ  
 مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ ۗ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ  
 رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾

Indeed, your Lord is Allah, **who created the heavens and earth in six days** and then established Himself above the Throne. He covers the night with the day, (another night) chasing it rapidly; and (He created) the sun, the moon, and the stars, subjected by His command. Unquestionably, His is the creation and the command; blessed is Allah, Lord of the worlds. [al-A'raaf, 7:54]

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي  
 سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۗ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ ۗ مَا  
 مِنْ شَفِيعٍ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ إِذْنِهِ ۗ ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ  
 فَاعْبُدُوهُ ۗ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣﴾

Indeed, your Lord is Allah, **who created the heavens and the earth in six days** and then established Himself above the Throne, arranging the matter (of His creation). There is no intercessor except after His permission. That is Allah, your Lord, so worship Him. Then will you not remember? [Yunus, 10:3]

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ  
 وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُوكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ  
 عَمَلًا ۗ وَلَئِن قُلْتُمْ إِنَّكُمْ مَرْبُوعُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْمَوْتِ  
 لَيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٧﴾

**And it is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days** - and His Throne had been upon water - that He might test you as to which of you is best in deed. But if you say, "Indeed, you are resurrected after death," those who disbelieve will surely say, "This is not but obvious magic." [Hud, 11:7]

The creation account occurs numerous times in the Qur'an and is stated as "the heavens and the earth" being created in "six days." Although it occurs multiple times the above examples should suffice to demonstrate that "six days" is the established time frame in which creation occurs.



<p>قُلْ أَنتُمْ لَتَكْفُرُونَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ فِي  يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَجْعَلُونَ لَهُ أُنْدَادًا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِي  ﴿٩﴾ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِي مِّنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا  وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سَوَاءً لِّلسَّائِلِينَ  ﴿١٠﴾ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا  وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ  ﴿١١﴾ فَفَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَىٰ فِي  كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا ۗ وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ  وَحِفْظًا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿١٢﴾</p>	<p>Say, "Do you indeed disbelieve in He who created the earth in <b>two days</b> and attribute to Him equals? That is the Lord of the worlds<sup>9</sup>." And He placed on the earth firmly set mountains over its surface, and He blessed it and determined therein its (creatures') sustenance in <b>four days without distinction</b> - for (the information) of those who ask<sup>10</sup>. Then He directed Himself to the heaven while it was smoke and said to it and to the earth, "Come (into being), willingly or by compulsion." They said, "We have come willingly<sup>11</sup>." And He completed them as seven heavens within <b>two days</b> and inspired in each heaven its command. And We adorned the nearest heaven with lamps and as protection. That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing<sup>12</sup>.  [Fussilat, 41:9-12]</p>
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Several anti-Muslim polemicists argue, however, that there is a numerical contradiction within the Qur'an with regards to the creation story. They claim that although "six days" is the norm, in *Fussilat* 9-12 we see a departure from that account and two days are for the creation of the earth, four days for its sustenance, and two more days for the heavens adding up to a grand total of eight days instead of six. This, to them, is a clear-cut contradiction in the Qur'an.

However, this statement is grossly incorrect. The Arabic word "*sawa'ann*" occurs immediately after the mention of "four days." This is translated as "without distinction" in English but such a translation fails to convey the original Arabic meaning of "including the previous." Hence, what is actually said is that there were two days were for creation and four days, including the previous two, for sustenance and lastly, two more days for the heavens. This is not an apologetic explanation the answer lies right in the Arabic word "*sawa'ann*."

Hence, the Qur'anic creation account is consistently six days and is merely detailed in these *ayaat* of *Fussilat*. A shallow, hasty, biased, and nonacademic interpretation of these *ayaat* is what leads one to believe that they depict creation over eight days instead of six. Basic Arabic informs us that such a conclusion is false.

## A RESTING PLACE FOR THE SUN

<p>وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَّهَا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ</p>	<p>And the sun runs (on course) toward its stopping point. That is the determination of the Exalted in</p>
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الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَرْنَا مَنَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ عَادَ  
كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ ﴿٣٩﴾ لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ  
تُذْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ ۚ وَكُلٌّ فِي  
فَلَكَ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

Might, the Knowing<sup>38</sup>. And the moon - We have determined for it phases, until it returns [appearing] like the old date stalk<sup>39</sup>. It is not allowable for the sun to reach the moon, nor does the night overtake the day, but each, in an orbit, is swimming<sup>40</sup>. [Ya-Siin, 36:38-40]

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو نُعَيْمٍ، حَدَّثَنَا الْأَعْمَشُ، عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ التَّمِيمِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ  
- رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ كُنْتُ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ  
عِنْدَ غُرُوبِ الشَّمْسِ فَقَالَ " يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ أَتَدْرِي أَيْنَ تَغْرُبُ الشَّمْسُ ". قُلْتُ  
اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ " فَإِنَّهَا تَذْهَبُ حَتَّى تَسْجُدَ تَحْتَ الْعَرْشِ، فَذَلِكَ  
قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى {وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ}

Narrated Abu Dharr (*radyallohu 'anhu*) that, "Once I was with the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) in the mosque at the time of sunset. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, 'O Abu Dharr! Do you know where the sun sets?' I replied, 'Allah and His Apostle know best.' He said, 'It goes and prostrates underneath (Allah's) Throne; and that is Allah's Statement, 'And the sun runs on its fixed course for a term (decreed). And that is the decree of All-Mighty, the All-Knowing....'" [Bukhari]

## GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN THE QUR'AN

Only *al-Hajj 19* was covered in class by Shaykh Abdul Nasir Jangda. The rest were researched by the author and compiled from Prof. Abdel Haleem's "Grammatical Shift For The Rhetorical Purposes: *Iltifāt And Related Features In The Qur'ān*" and Muhammad Ghoneim's refutations of P. Newton's works.

لَيْسَ الْبِرُّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ  
وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ

Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but (true) righteousness is (in) one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it,

<p>وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا ۗ وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾</p>	<p>to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask (for help), and for freeing slaves; (and who) establishes prayer and gives <i>zakah</i>; (those who) fulfill their promise when they promise; and (those who) are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous. [al-Baqarah, 2:177]</p>
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In their criticism of this *ayah* certain Orientalists have noted that the word *al-Mufuna* and *al-Sabirina* are paralleling each other and thus should both have the same declension (*i'raab*). However, *al-Mufuna* is nominative (*raf'*) and *al-Sabirina* is accusative (*nasb*) instead of nominative (*raf'*). According to them the world should actually be *al-Sabiruna*. So how is this explained?

According to the reports of Zarkashī, it is *iltifāt*, or a grammatical shift for rhetorical puposes. Departure from what is normally expected is done only for a special purpose. Here it can be seen to emphasize the importance of *al-sābirīn*. The need to emphasize the importance of this particular class of people is borne out by the fact that *al-sābirīn* are mentioned four times in the same *sūra*, being associated particularly with misfortune, hardship, and the battlefield (2:153, 155, 177, 249). The verse following our example of *iltifāt* here speaks of retaliation in homicide, and fighting comes in the *sūra* soon after.

While emphasizing the importance of *al-sābirīn*, the shift in the case marker does not cause any confusion about the role of the word involved and its relationship to other parts of the sentence. The case marker is only one of many (stronger) indications of that relationship, including the order within a series of conjunctions, the adjectival form in the masculine plural.

<p>هُذَانِ خَصْمَانِ اخْتَصَمُوا فِي رَبِّهِمْ ۗ فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قُطِّعَتْ لَهُمْ ثِيَابٌ مِّن نَّارٍ يُصَبُّ مِن فَوْقِ رُءُوسِهِمُ الْحَمِيمُ ﴿١٩﴾</p>	<p>These are two adversaries who have disputed over their Lord. But those who disbelieved will have cut out for them garments of fire. Poured upon their heads will be scalding water. [al-Hajj, 22:19]</p>
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The alleged grammatical error in this *ayah* is the fact that the “*ikhtasamu*” is a plural past tense verb but it should accord with the noun preceding it, “*khasmaani*,” which is dual. In Arabic a verb following a noun must reflect that noun. Hence, if the noun is dual then the verb must be dual but here

we have a dual noun and a plural verb. So doesn't this break the rules of grammar? There are two explanations in the mind of the skeptic, "Either God made a basic grammar mistake or this book isn't divine." However, the problem is that the skeptic doesn't know what he is talking about.

In pre-Islamic classical poetry we notice multiple incidents of taking a dual noun and pluralizing the verb that follows it. They would break this rule intentionally and deliberately, often doing so to demonstrate scenarios referring to conflict. *Balagha*, or eloquence, is about giving word the ability to express themselves. The reason why the dual is made plural is to demonstrate that their fight was so severe that it led to further divisions and schisms. That's what is being said here. That the two conflicting parties became multiple splinter groups. This very principle reoccurs in *al-Hujurat* 9.

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا  
وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ  
﴿١٩﴾

Then He directed Himself to the heaven while it was smoke and said to it and to the earth, "Come [into being], willingly or by compulsion." They said, "We have come willingly."  
[*Fussilat*, 41:11]

The grammatical criticism levied against this *ayah* is the fact that *al-samaa'* (the heaven) and *al-ard* (the earth) are both considered to be feminine nouns and hence the verb for "they said" is "*qaalata*" which is both dual in number and feminine in gender. According to the norms of Arabic the adjective "willingly" should be dual feminine and appear as "*ta'e'atain*." However, we notice that the adjective for "willingly," "*ta'e'een*" is plural and masculine. They claim that this discrepancy between the gender and the number of the verb "*qaalata*" and the adjective "*ta'e'een*" is a grammatical error.

However, this is yet again the skeptic's incredible unfamiliarity with Classical Arabic. The feminine in Classical Arabic is divided into two types, "*mu'annath haqiqi*" (real feminine) and "*mu'annath majazai*" (metaphorical feminine). The former is anything that gives birth or lays an egg and the latter is everything else that is feminine. Now although in Modern Standard Arabic the verb we cannot use anything masculine for the "*mannath majzi*" but in Classical Arabic this is allowed. For example, we can say "the sun has risen" as "*ashrqat al-shamsu*" or "*ashraqat al-shamsu*" and both would be grammatically sound. In the former the verb "risen" is masculine and in the latter it is feminine. Both are sound because the word "*al-shams*" is "*mu'annath majazi*" and not "*mu'annath haqiqi*." Thus, because "*al-samaa'*" (the heaven) and "*al-ard*" (the earth) are both "*mu'annath majazi*" it is allowed to use a masculine adjective for them.

The skeptic might argue again and claim that the extraordinary use of the masculine in this situation can only be applied to nouns that are *al-'aaqil*, or intelligent and sentient. This would be a correct observation but if we see the context the heaven and earth are both sentient and are replying to God and thus are considered *'aaqil*.

Hence, we realize again that the skeptic's argument is only sound if we analyze it with the rules of the wrong language. This is often the case and we hope that it is the skeptic's limited understanding of

Classical Arabic that is making them cause such errors and not an insidious intention to beguile masses illiterate in Classical Arabic.

<p>وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا ۚ إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾</p>	<p>And cause not corruption upon the earth after its reformation. And invoke Him in fear and aspiration. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good. [al-A'raaf, 7:56]</p>
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The alleged error in this *ayah* occurs in the words “*rahmata*” and “*qareebun*.” In Arabic in the *jumla ismiyyah* (nominal clause) the *mubtada'* (predicate) must match the *khabr* (subject). The *mubtada'* of the *jumla ismiyyah* above “*qaribun*,” meaning “near,” is masculine whilst the *khabr* “*rahmata*” is feminine. They claim that if this was grammatically sound the *mubtada'* would be feminine, not masculine, and be written as “*qaribah*.”

This, again, boils down to the skeptic's utter unfamiliarity with Classical Arabic. The word “*rahmat*” is “*mu'annath majazi*” and thus it is permissible to treat it as a masculine. Al-Nadr ibn Shomayl puts forward a supplanting argument that a *masdar* (infinitive) must agree with the masculine unless it ends in a *ta marbootah* (round *ta*) in which case the *masdar* can agree with both masculine and feminine. Hence, because “*rahmat*” is a *masdar* that ends with a *ta marbootah* it can agree with both masculine and feminine.

Furthermore, there is Classical Arabic poetry that can be quoted where we see such language as being acceptable. By the poet Jareer, “*Atanfa'uk al-hayaatu wa Ummu 'amrin qariibu la tazuru wa laa tozaaru?*” “*Ummu 'amrin*” is a lady here and the poet qualifies her with the masculine adjective “*qariib*.” Hence, we see that such usage was acceptable classically.

Furthermore, there twelve reasons compiled by Ibn Hishaam regarding this specific nuance of this *ayah*. The most basic and simplest to comprehend have been presented here but the reader is free to look up others and evaluate them for themselves.

## CONCLUSION

### HADITH JIBRIL ( 'ALAYH AL-SALAM)

عَنْ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَيْضًا قَالَ: " بَيْنَمَا نَحْنُ جُلُوسٌ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ، إِذْ طَلَعَ عَلَيْنَا رَجُلٌ شَدِيدُ بَيَاضِ الثِّيَابِ، شَدِيدُ سَوَادِ الشَّعْرِ، لَا يَرَى عَلَيْهِ أَثَرَ السَّفَرِ، وَلَا يَعْرِفُهُ مِنَّا أَحَدٌ. حَتَّى جَلَسَ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. فَأَسْتَدَّ رُكْبَتَيْهِ إِلَى رُكْبَتَيْهِ، وَوَضَعَ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَى فَخْذَيْهِ،

وَقَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ أَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ.

فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْإِسْلَامُ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَتُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةَ، وَتُؤْتِيَ الزَّكَاةَ، وَتَصُومَ رَمَضَانَ، وَتَحُجَّ الْبَيْتَ إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا. قَالَ: صَدَقْتَ. فَعَجَبْنَا لَهُ يَسْأَلُهُ وَيُصَدِّقُهُ!

قَالَ: فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِيمَانِ.

قَالَ: أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ، وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدْرِ خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ.

قَالَ: صَدَقْتَ. قَالَ: فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِحْسَانِ.

قَالَ: أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ.

قَالَ: فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ السَّاعَةِ. قَالَ: مَا الْمَسْئُولُ عَنْهَا بِأَعْلَمَ مِنَ السَّائِلِ.

قَالَ: فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنْ أَمَارَاتِهَا؟ قَالَ: أَنْ تَلِدَ الْأُمَّةُ رَبِّهَا، وَأَنْ تَرَى الْحَفَاةَ الْعُرَاةَ الْعَالَةَ رِعَاءَ الشَّاءِ يَتَطَاوَلُونَ فِي الْبُنْيَانِ. ثُمَّ انْطَلَقَ، فَلَبِثْنَا مَلِيًّا،

ثُمَّ قَالَ: يَا عُمَرُ أَتَدْرِي مَنْ السَّائِلُ؟

قُلْتُ: اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ.

قَالَ: فَإِنَّهُ جِبْرِيلُ أَتَاكُمْ يُعَلِّمُكُمْ دِينَكُمْ ". [رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ]

On the authority of 'Umar (*radyAllahu 'anhu*) who said,

“While we were one day sitting with the Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) there appeared before us a man dressed in extremely white clothes and with very black hair. No traces of journeying were visible on him, and none of us knew him. He sat down close by the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) rested his knee against his thighs, and said,

'O Muhammad! Inform me about Islam.'

The Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) replied, 'Islam is that you should testify that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger, that you should perform *salah*, pay the *zakah*, fast during *Ramadan*, and perform *Hajj* to the House (the Ka'bah), if you can find a way to it (or find the means for making the journey to it).'

He said, 'You have spoken truly.' We were astonished at his thus questioning him and then telling him that he was right, but he went on to say, 'Inform me about *imaan*.'

He (the Prophet) answered, 'It is that you believe in Allah and His angels and His Books and His Messengers and in the Last Day, and in fate, both in its good and in its evil aspects.'

He said, 'You have spoken truly.' Then he (the man) said, 'Inform me about *ihsan*.'

He (the Prophet) answered, 'It is that you should serve Allah as though you could see Him, for though you cannot see Him yet He sees you.'

He said, 'Inform me about the Hour.' He (the Prophet) said, 'About that the one questioned knows no more than the questioner.'

So he said, 'Well, inform me about its signs.' He said, 'They are that the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress and that you will see the barefooted ones, the naked, the destitute, the herdsmen of the sheep (competing with each other) in raising lofty buildings.'

Thereupon the man went off. I waited a while, and then he (the Prophet) said, 'O 'Umar, do you know who that questioner was?' I replied, 'Allah and His Messenger know better.' He said, 'That was Jibril. He came to teach you your religion.'" [Muslim]

Collectively, we have become convinced of the fact that what we believe in are differences of opinion about these issues. However, this is not so. The reason we even began to discuss these issues is so that we may talk about the bigger picture!

The famous *hadith* above is called the “*Hadith of Jibril ('alayh al-Salam)*.” However, it is also known as “*Umm al-Sunnah*” analogizing the role of this *hadith* with the role of *Surah al-Fatiha* which is “*Umm al-Kitab*.” The *hadith* begins with Jibril (*'alayh al-Salam*) walking up to the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), sitting knee to knee with him, placing his hands on the other's thighs. Although this is considered awkward in our modern culture in the Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) time it was considered to mean that you were giving your full attention and you were demanding the other person's complete and undivided attention and you were giving the same attention in return.

The *hadith* talks about *Islam*, *imaan*, and *ihsaan*, and the Hour. *Islam* is described to be the

breadth of the religion, religion on a wide scale would be termed *Islam*. Then, it talks about *imaan* which is the height of the religion. So now that we've laid the foundations with *Islam* of the building we can begin to raise the structure with *imaan*. We cultivate and build up from what we started. After that comes the depth and the beautification of the structure. Imagine how well we would do everything if we consciously thought that Allah was watching us. That's the core, that is *ihsaan*. Lastly, we have to be aware of the time limit. We come to know that although there is one we don't know about it. Thus, we have got to be right now. We have got to make the most of our time here. We must make the most of every single opportunity and moment.

We're given three signs of the Hour. The first sign of slaves giving birth to their masters refers to families falling apart due to the reversal of the family structure. Entire societies will erode and fall apart due to the role reversal in families. The second literally refers to ignorant, indecent, and wealthy people rising up to the top of society and spending lavishly and extravagantly on utterly wasteful monolithic structures. We see such signs around us and although we don't know when the Hour is we know that it could be right around the corner. This should be an immense motivation for us to strengthen our faith and believe as we ought to believe. Thus, we should make the most of every opportunity Allah grants us in every day of our lives.

## **FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

Firstly, as we have realized in our studies above learning Arabic is extremely important. This has nothing to do with the Arabs but it has to do with the fact that the Qur'an and *sunnah* are all in Classical Arabic. It doesn't matter how long it takes but we should start working on it. Often times people have a scenario that, "Oh I'll just finish high school, then university, and when I have landed a job and then gotten married and settled down I will put aside two years for studying Arabic." That is not a proper or sensible approach. It is more prudent to not delay it at all but to start with little and keep that little amount up consistently. We need to stop making excuses for ourselves and start learning Arabic today in any capacity that we can.

Secondly, it is extremely important to read a complete translation of the Qur'an so that you may have a familiarity with it. Each translation lacks something or another but Prof. Muhammad Abdel-Haleem's "Qur'an: A New Translation" is an excellent place to start. Finishing the Qur'an will do wonders for your *imaan*.

For example, a close family friend came up to me and told me that her daughter wanted to leave Islam. So I met the daughter and found out that she was a straight-A student studying micro-biology in her 3<sup>rd</sup> year at university. Since high school she had been studying science for roughly seven years in great detail but when I asked her if she had studied the Qur'an cover to cover she said that she hadn't. So I tasked her with reading the Qur'an and gave her three months. She was not to contact me in the middle and was to save all questions till the end. Six weeks later I received a call and I reminded her that she had to read the whole Qur'an before asking questions but she instead informed me that all her problems had been solved and she no longer had a crisis of faith!



Another example is a young brother who came up to me and told me that he wanted to convert to Christianity. I asked him why he wanted to do so to which he informed me that he had gone to a Bible study group and really enjoyed it. I asked him to go back to the Bible study group and ask them how many of them had read the Bible cover to cover. He came back and informed me that roughly 15 out of the 20 students there had read the entire Bible cover to cover. I asked him to make an educated decision before converting and read the Qur'an cover to cover. A few months later the brother came back to me and it turned out that he no longer had a crisis of faith!

Last, but not least, is the *seerah* of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). It is extremely important to study the *seerah* because the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was a living example of the Qur'an. The book contains the theory and the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was the practice and the real-life implementation of the theory. We shouldn't have some blind reverence for the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) but rather we should strive to discover who he really was so that we can truly follow in his example. The best books to start studying the *seerah* are “The Sealed Nectar” by Saifur Rahman Mubarakpuri and “Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources” by Martin Lings. A more tech savvy approach to learning about the *seerah* would be to follow Dr. Yasir Qadhi's YouTube series “*Seerah* of the Prophet Muhammad (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*)” as well as Qalam Institute's “*Seerah* Podcast.”