
The Quran and Sufism

Abdullah Amir

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(2:97-98) Jibreel

Say: Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel-for he brings down the (revelation) to thy heart by Allah's will, a confirmation of what went before, and guidance and glad tidings for those who believe,- Whoever is an enemy to Allah and His angels and messengers, to Gabriel and Michael,- Lo! Allah is an enemy to those who reject Faith.

Gabriel and the Divine Revelation: Qur'an 2:97-98

Qur'an 2:97-98 declares that whoever opposes Gabriel should understand that he conveyed the revelation to the Prophet's heart by Allah's permission. This revelation confirms the scriptures that preceded it and serves as guidance and good news for believers. The verses further state that hostility toward Allah, His angels, His messengers, Gabriel, or Michael constitutes rejection of faith, and Allah opposes those who persist in disbelief.

According to *Exegesis of the Holy Qur'an: Commentary and Reflections*, angels are understood as part of the systems through which Allah carries out His will in both the physical and spiritual realms. They function as messengers and agents of the Almighty rather than as ghosts or independent spirits. They may also symbolize divine laws and forces whose complete nature remains beyond human knowledge. Within the physical world, angels serve as links in the chain of laws governing creation. Michael is described as occupying the highest rank in matters associated with the elements and physical bodies, whereas Gabriel holds the highest position in the spiritual realm.

The source further explains that Gabriel may be associated with the inspiration that encourages individuals to perform righteous deeds and avoid wrongdoing. From this perspective, belief in angels involves responding positively to virtuous thoughts by transforming them into action. Ignoring such moral impulses may cause a person to lose opportunities to do good, while repeatedly

disregarding them may gradually lead the individual away from righteousness. Consequently, belief in angels is presented as an essential component of Islamic faith. Hostility toward Gabriel therefore refers to the rejection of divine revelation and those who convey it (*Exegesis of the Holy Qur'an: Commentary and Reflections*, p. 367).

References:

Reference : [1]Sahih al-Bukhari 4480 In-book reference : Book 65, Hadith 7

USC-MSA web (English) reference : Vol. 6, Book 60, Hadith 7 (deprecated numbering scheme)

NOORUDDÎN ,ALLÂMAH. (2015). *Exegesis of The Holy Qur'ân Commentary and Reflections*.

(2:99) The Manifest Signs

We have sent down to thee Manifest Signs (ayat); and none reject them but those who are perverse.

The clear signs are signs of Muhammad's prophethood, his personal qualities and the knowledge he possessed, which the commentators say should have been apparent to any believing Jew (IK, T).

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). Study Quran.

102:6 Severe Heat and and Cold is due to the Hell

Ye shall certainly see Hell

Fire! Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "The (Hell) Fire complained to its Lord saying, 'O my Lord! My different parts eat up each other.' So, He allowed it to take two breaths, one in the winter and the other in summer, and this is the reason for the severe heat and the bitter cold you find (in weather).

Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Messenger (S) said, "Your (ordinary) fire is one of 70 parts of the (Hell) Fire." Someone asked, "O Allah's Messenger (S) This (ordinary) fire would have been sufficient (to torture the unbelievers)," Allah's Apostle said, "The (Hell) Fire has 69 parts more than the ordinary (worldly) fire, each part is as hot as this (worldly) fire."

References:

Reference : [1]Sahih al-Bukhari 3265 In-book reference : Book 59, Hadith 75

USC-MSA web (English) reference : Vol. 4, Book 54, Hadith 487 (deprecated numbering scheme)

Reference : [2]Sahih al-Bukhari 3260 In-book reference : Book 59, Hadith 70

USC-MSA web (English) reference : Vol. 4, Book 54, Hadith 482 (deprecated numbering scheme)

10:24 The likeness of this life to a nation

The likeness of the life of the present is as the rain which We send down from the skies: by its mingling arises the produce of the earth- which provides food for men and animals: (It grows) till the earth is clad with its golden ornaments and is decked out (in beauty): the people to whom it belongs think they have all powers of disposal over it: There reaches it Our command by night or by day, and We make it like a harvest clean-mown, as if it had not flourished only the day before! thus do We explain the Signs in detail for those who reflect.

The verse alludes to the rise and fall of nations. Economic and spiritual advance gives way to the decline of both prosperity and morality. Reference is also made to verse 10:14 of this chapter. Muslims are not excluded from this rule as their history shows us.

References:

NOORUDDÎN ,ALLÂMAH. (2015). Exegesis of The Holy Qur'ân Commentary and Reflections.

13:39 The Preserved Tablet

Allah doth blot out or confirm what He pleaseth: with Him is the Mother of the Book.

Al-Rāzī explains that God effaces what He will and establishes means that, in accordance with what the Divine Will has decreed, “He brings things into existence at one moment and makes them nonexistent at another; gives life at one moment and causes death at another; bestows riches at one moment and causes poverty at another.” The Mother of the Book (Umm al-kitāb; cf. 3:7; 43:4) refers, according to some, to the fundamental source of Divine Revelation from which the Quran and other Divinely revealed books are transcribed (T); others identify it with the Preserved Tablet mentioned in 85:22 (see 85:22c; Bg, Kl, R, Z), and still others say it refers to God’s Knowledge (R).

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). Study Quran.

13:41 The Will of Allah ultimately prevails

See they not that We gradually reduce the land (in their control) from its outlying borders? (Where) Allah commands, there is none to put back His Command: and He is swift in calling to account.

Or: “curtailing it from [all] its sides” (min atrafiha) -depending on whether one understands by atraf the “sides” or “extremities” or “outlying parts” (of a concrete body or land) or, alternatively, the “outstanding men” – i.e., the great leaders, scholars and thinkers (Taj al-’aras) – and “the best of the [earth’s] inhabitants and fruits” (ibid.). Many commentators, taking the primary meaning of atraf, are of the opinion that the above sentence relates to the struggle between the early Muslim community at Medina and the pagans of Mecca, and interpret it thus: “Do they [i.e., the pagans of Mecca] not see that we are visiting [with Our punishment] the land [held by them], gradually curtailing it from [all] its sides?” – which would imply a prophecy of the gradual conquest of all Arabia by the Muslims. Other commentators, however, prefer the secondary meaning of atraf and – without denying its relevance to the early history of Islam – interpret this passage in a more general sense, similar to the rendering adopted by me. Thus, for instance, Razi: “Have they [i.e., the deniers of the truth] never yet seen the turns of fortune (ikhtilaf) that take place in this world-destruction after prosperity, death after life, humiliation after glory, deficiency after perfection?... Hence, what makes those deniers of the truth so sure that God will not render them abject after they had been mighty, and subjected [by others] after they had been rulers?” Thus, in its widest sense, the phrase “gradually depriving it of all that is best in it” may be taken to relate not merely to physical and social catastrophes but also to the loss of all ethical values – and,

thus, to the loss of all worldly power – which “those who are bent on denying the truth” are bound to suffer in the end.

References:

Asad, Muhammad (1980). *The Message of the Quran*.

17:51 Raising up the Dead on Resurrection Day

“Or created matter which, in your minds, is hardest (to be raised up),- (Yet shall ye be raised up)!” then will they say: “Who will cause us to return?” Say: “He who created you first!” Then will they wag their heads towards thee, and say, “When will that be?” Say, “May be it will be quite soon!”

They do not realise that Allah Who created them once out of nothing can create them again, with memories of their past, in order to render to Him an account of how they used or misused the talents and opportunities which they were given.

If it is to be a new Creation, what then?

Bones and dust or ashes may yet retain something of the personality which was enshrined in them. But even if they were reduced to stones or iron or anything which their minds can conceive of as being most unlike them, yet there is nothing impossible to Allah! He has clearly sent a Message that we shall have to render an account of ourselves, and His Message is necessarily true. (R).

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 17 verse 51)

16:102 The Holy Spirit

Say, the Holy Spirit has brought the revelation from thy Lord in Truth, in order to strengthen those who believe, and as a Guide and Glad Tidings to Muslims.

According to most commentators, the Holy Spirit here refers to the Archangel Gabriel, the angel of revelation (R); see also 2:87c; 2:253; 5:110. According to al-Rāzī, the abrogation of verses or rulings, mentioned in the previous verse, was a test for the believers; if they continued to accept the revelation as coming from God and trusted in His Wisdom, this would make firm those who believe, in that they would show themselves to be firm in their faith and the path of their religion.

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). Study Quran.

19:64 The Angels descend by the command of Allah

(The angels say:) “We descend not but by command of thy Lord: to Him belongeth what is before us and what is behind us, and what is between: and thy Lord never doth forget,-

Narrated Ibn ‘Abbas:

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) asked Gabriel, “Why don’t you visit us more often than you do?” Then the following Holy Verse was revealed (in this respect):– “And we (angels) descend not but by the order of your Lord. To Him belong what is before us and what is behind us, and what is between those two and your Lord was never forgetful.” (19.64)

References:

Reference : [1]Sahih al-Bukhari 3218 In-book reference : Book 59, Hadith 29

USC-MSA web (English) reference : Vol. 4, Book 54, Hadith 441 (deprecated numbering scheme)

20:50 “Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature, and further, gave (it) guidance.”

He said: “Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature, and further, gave (it) guidance.”

In Qur'an 20:50, Moses responds to Pharaoh by declaring, “Our Lord is He Who gave to each created thing its form and nature, and further, gave it guidance.” This concise statement presents Allah as both the Creator of all existence and the One who directs every created being toward its proper purpose.

Allah has granted each created thing a distinctive form, structure, capacity, and set of characteristics suited to its role within the universe. For example, human hands and feet possess structures appropriate to the functions they perform. Similarly, human beings, animals, plants, minerals, air, water, and light have each been created in forms that enable them to function within the natural order.

The verse further indicates that Allah not only creates but also guides every part of creation toward the fulfillment of its intended purpose. He has enabled the ear to hear, the eye to see, the fish to swim, and the bird to fly. Likewise, He has directed the earth to produce vegetation and trees to blossom and bear fruit. Allah is therefore presented not merely as the Creator of all things, but also as their Guide and Teacher.

Through this concise yet profound statement, Moses conveyed an important theological argument to Pharaoh and his people. He explained not only who his Lord was, but also why Allah alone deserved recognition as Lord. Pharaoh, like all other human beings, depended upon Allah for his physical form and for the continuous functioning of every part of his body. Because Pharaoh could not exist independently of Allah's creation and guidance, his claim to lordship was irrational.

Likewise, his people's acceptance of his claim demonstrated a failure to recognize their complete dependence upon God.

Moses' response also implied the necessity of prophethood, which Pharaoh rejected. Just as Allah provides instinctive guidance to animals and birds, He provides moral and spiritual guidance to rational human beings. This guidance is communicated through divinely appointed messengers who appeal to human reason, present evidence, and direct people toward the proper purpose of their existence (Qur'an 20:50).

References:

Maududi, Abul Ala (2010). Tafhim ul Quran.

21:69 The Miracle of the Fire We said, “O Fire! be thou cool, and (a means of) safety for Abraham!”

The account of Abraham’s deliverance from the fire contains three significant lessons. First, fire, like every other element of the natural world, functions according to God’s command. Although burning is one of its ordinary properties, the fire did not harm Abraham because God commanded it not to do so. This event demonstrates that natural causes possess no independent power and remain subject to the will of their Creator.

Second, the divine command for the fire to become both cool and peaceful suggests that excessive cold can also cause injury. According to one Qur’anic interpretation, had God commanded the fire merely to become cool without also commanding it to become peaceful, its extreme cold might have harmed Abraham. The commentary therefore presents fire as capable of producing harm through either intense heat or severe cold. It further refers to a form of “white heat” that absorbs surrounding heat rather than radiating it, thereby causing nearby substances to freeze. Within this interpretation, Hell may contain various forms and degrees of punishment, including both extreme heat and intense cold.

Third, the verse points to both spiritual and physical means of protection. Spiritually, faith and submission to God function as armor that protects believers from the punishment of Hell. Just as Abraham’s body and clothing were protected from the fire, the passage suggests that physical substances may also be discovered and used to protect people from fire. Human beings are therefore encouraged to study the materials found in the earth, identify their beneficial properties, and develop protective substances from them.

The passage addresses the followers of Abraham by encouraging them to imitate his faith and submission to God.

By clothing the spirit with sincere belief and Islam, a person acquires spiritual protection against the fire of the Hereafter. Similarly, through scientific investigation, humanity may discover materials that provide protection from fire in the present world. Although the development of fire-resistant substances represents an important human achievement, the highest and most enduring protection is the spiritual garment formed through purity of faith and complete submission to God. Unlike physical clothing, this spiritual protection is described as lasting eternally (*The Words*, “The Twentieth Word”).

References:

Unal, Ali (2006). The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English. (surah 21 verse 69)

21:16 Not for (idle) sport did We create the heavens and the earth and all that is between!

Not for (idle) sport did We create the heavens and the earth and all that is between!

Cf. 44:38. Similar language is employed where the Quran says that God did not create the world frivolously (23:115) or in vain (3:191; 38:27). It means that, unlike the tyrants and prodigal of the earth, whose glories and riches are for play and diversion, God creates the splendor of the heavens and the earth for a purpose (R).

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). Study Quran.

25:25

The Day the heaven shall be rent asunder with clouds, and angels shall be sent down, descending (in ranks),-

This verse is interpreted to mean that after the first blast of the horn, signaling the end, and after the second blast of the horn, signaling the start of Judgment Day, on the plain of judgment, the clouds will part due to the descent of some cloud-like object in which God's power will be made manifest. It will be borne by the angels. (Ma'ariful Qur'an)

Emerick, Yahiya. The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an in Today's English (p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

2:248 The Heart

And (further) their Prophet said to them: “A Sign of his authority is that there shall come to you the Ark of the covenant, with (an assurance) therein of security from your Lord, and the relics left by the family of Moses and the family of Aaron, carried by angels. In this is a symbol for you if ye indeed have faith.”

Qur'an 2:248 states that the prophet of the Israelites announced a sign confirming Saul's authority: the *tabūt* would come to them containing tranquility from their Lord and a lasting remnant of the spiritual heritage left by the families of Moses and Aaron, borne by angels. This sign would serve as evidence for those who possessed genuine faith.

Asad interprets *tabūt* as “heart” rather than as the Ark of the Covenant. Although the term has traditionally been understood as referring to the ornate chest described in the Old Testament, Asad argues that many classical explanations of the Ark are inconsistent and appear to rely heavily on later Talmudic traditions. He notes that several respected linguistic and exegetical authorities also recognized *tabūt* as meaning “bosom” or “heart,” including al-Bayḍāwī, al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn al-Athīr, al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, and the authors of *Tāj al-ʿArūs*.

When understood as “heart,” the verse may refer to a transformation in the spiritual and moral condition of the Israelites. This interpretation is supported by the verse's reference to *sakīnah*, or inner peace, being present within the *tabūt*. Asad therefore considers “heart” more suitable in this context than the conventional translation “ark.”

The “remnant” left by the families of Moses and Aaron refers to the enduring spiritual legacy of these prophets. The

statement that this heritage was “borne by angels” signifies its divinely inspired character rather than necessarily describing the physical transportation of an object. Thus, the verse may be understood as referring to the restoration of inner peace and the revival of the lasting spiritual guidance inherited from Moses and Aaron (Asad, n.d., commentary on Qur’an 2:248).

References:

Asad, Muhammad (1980). *The Message of the Quran*.

2:255 Ayat ul Kursi

Allah! There is no god but He,-the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal. No slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there can intercede in His presence except as He permitteth? He knoweth what (appeareth to His creatures as) before or after or behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of His knowledge except as He willeth. His Throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them for He is the Most High, the Supreme (in glory).

Narrated Muhammad bin Sirin:

Abu Huraira said, “Allah’s Messenger (S) put me in charge of the Zakat of Ramadan (i.e. Zakat-ul-Fitr). Someone came to me and started scooping some of the foodstuff of (Zakat) with both hands. I caught him and told him that I would take him to Allah’s Messenger “. (S) Then Abu Huraira told the whole narration and added “He (i.e. the thief) said, ‘Whenever you go to your bed, recite the Verse of “Al-Kursi” (2.255) for then a guardian from Allah will be guarding you, and Satan will not approach you till dawn.’ ” On that the Prophet (S) said, “He told you the truth, though he is a liar, and he (the thief) himself was the Satan.”

References:

Reference : [3]Sahih al-Bukhari 3275 In-book reference : Book 59, Hadith 84

USC-MSA web (English) reference : Vol. 4, Book 54, Hadith 495 (deprecated numbering scheme)

30:26 To Him belongs every being that is in the heavens and on earth: all are devoutly obedient to Him

To Him belongs every being that is in the heavens and on earth: all are devoutly obedient to Him.

That all of creation is devoutly obedient (qānit) indicates an existential and spiritual obedience that carries with it a sense of constancy and in the human order also serenity (cf. 2:116, 238; 3:17, 43; 4:34; 16:120; 33:31, 35; 39:9; 66:12). In this sense, everything is also said to prostrate unto God, as in 16:49: And unto God prostrates whatever crawling creatures or angels are in the heavens or on the earth, and they do not wax arrogant (cf. 13:15; 22:18; 55:6), and in the repeated assertion that whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth glorify God (59:1; 61:1; 62:1; 64:1; also see 17:44; 24:41; 57:1; 59:24).

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). Study Quran.

30:8 Allah created not the heavens and the earth, and that which is between them, save with truth and for a destined end

Have they not pondered upon themselves? Allah created not the heavens and the earth, and that which is between them, save with truth and for a destined end. But truly many of mankind are disbelievers in the meeting with their Lord.

Here the argument is about the ebb and flow of worldly power, and the next clause is appropriately added, “and for a term appointed”. Let not any one who is granted worldly power or advantage run away with the notion that it is permanent. It is definitely limited in the high Purpose of Allah, which is just and true. And an account will have to be given of it afterwards on basis of strict personal responsibility.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 30 verse 8).

36:38 The Sun will rise in the West in the end days

And the sun runs his course for a period determined for him: that is the decree of (Him), the Exalted in Might, the All-Knowing.

The following excerpt is taken from “The Quran: Its Undeniable Miracles” under the category:

Qur’an 36:38 states that the sun travels according to an appointed course established by Allah, the Almighty and All-Knowing. The verse has been interpreted in relation to both the eventual end of the sun and the eschatological sign that the sun will rise from the west.

According to *The Qur’an: Its Undeniable Miracles*, the Qur’an describes the eventual extinction and disruption of celestial bodies. Verses such as Qur’an 77:8, which refers to the stars being extinguished, and Qur’an 82:2, which describes the planets being scattered, are presented as indications that the present cosmic order will not continue forever. The source distinguishes between the Arabic terms *najm*, meaning a star, and *kawkab*, meaning a planet. Because planets depend upon stars within their systems, the destruction or transformation of a central star would affect the stability and motion of the planets surrounding it.

Qur’an 81:1 further describes the sun as being “rolled up.” The Arabic term *takwīr* refers to wrapping, winding, or rolling something into a rounded form. The source interprets this imagery as a description of the termination of the sun’s present condition. From a scientific perspective, the sun produces energy through nuclear fusion, in which hydrogen is converted into helium. Because the sun’s available fuel is finite, it will not remain in its current state indefinitely. The commentary connects this scientific understanding with the Qur’anic

teaching that the sun and the wider universe will eventually come to an end.

The source further argues that earlier civilizations often regarded the sun or the universe as eternal. The sun was worshipped by some societies, while other religious and philosophical traditions accepted an endless cycle of reincarnation or cosmic existence. Scientific recognition that the earth, the sun, and the universe are not physically eternal is therefore presented as consistent with the Qur'anic doctrine of resurrection and the Hereafter. Qur'an 22:7 affirms that the Hour will certainly come and that Allah will resurrect the dead.

The Qur'an's descriptions of the end of the sun, stars, planets, and earth are understood within this commentary as signs of divine power. Early Muslims accepted these teachings through faith in Allah as the Creator, rather than through astronomical knowledge. The source maintains that later scientific discoveries concerning the finite existence of stars have provided support for the general Qur'anic teaching that the present universe will eventually end (Ali Project, n.d.).

Prophetic traditions also connect Qur'an 36:38 with the sun's obedience to Allah and the future rising of the sun from the west. In a narration attributed to Abū Dharr, the Prophet Muhammad explained that the sun proceeds according to the course assigned to it by Allah and symbolically prostrates beneath the Divine Throne. At an appointed time, it will not be permitted to continue in its customary direction and will instead be commanded to return, resulting in its rising from the west. This event is regarded in Islamic eschatology as one of the major signs preceding the Day of Judgment.

Another narration attributed to Abū Dharr explains that the sun's course is beneath Allah's Throne. The prostration of the sun, moon, stars, trees, and other created things should not necessarily be understood as resembling human physical

prostration. Rather, it signifies their complete submission to Allah and their fulfillment of the purposes for which they were created. Similarly, a narration attributed to Abū Hurayrah states that the sun and the moon will be folded up and deprived of their light on the Day of Resurrection.

Taken together, these Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions present the sun as a created and dependent object that follows Allah's command. Its regular movement, eventual transformation, loss of light, and extraordinary rising from the west are all understood as manifestations of divine authority and reminders that the present cosmic order is temporary.

References:

Ali, Project. THE QURAN: Its Undeniable Miracles .

Unknown. Kindle Edition. Narrated Abu Dhar:

References:

Reference : [2]Sahih al-Bukhari 4803

In-book reference : Book 65, Hadith 325

USC-MSA web (English) reference : Vol. 6, Book 60, Hadith 327 (deprecated numbering scheme)

Reference : [3]Sahih al-Bukhari 3200 In-book reference : Book 59, Hadith 11

USC-MSA web (English) reference : Vol. 4, Book 54, Hadith 422 (deprecated numbering scheme)

Reference : [4]Sahih al-Bukhari 3199 In-book reference : Book 59, Hadith 10

USC-MSA web (English) reference : Vol. 4, Book

54, Hadith 421 (deprecated numbering scheme)

37:1 Why has the statement been sworn by the angels?

By those who range themselves in ranks,

Surah al-Şāffāt begins by affirming *tawḥīd*, the absolute oneness of Allah. The principal message of its opening verses is expressed in the declaration that “your God is truly One” (Qur’an 37:4). Before presenting this affirmation, however, the Qur’an introduces three oaths: by those who arrange themselves in rows, those who firmly restrain, and those who recite the divine remembrance.

The Qur’anic text does not explicitly identify those described in these oaths. Consequently, commentators have proposed several interpretations. Some scholars maintain that the verses refer to believers who form organized ranks while struggling in the cause of Allah. According to this interpretation, they resist the forces of falsehood while remaining engaged in the remembrance and glorification of Allah and the recitation of the Qur’an.

Other commentators interpret the verses as referring to worshippers who stand in orderly rows during congregational prayer. Their sincere concentration on divine remembrance and Qur’anic recitation prevents distracting or satanic thoughts from entering their minds (al-Qurṭubī; al-Rāzī).

The interpretation accepted by the majority of Qur’anic commentators, however, is that these verses refer to angels and describe three of their characteristics. The first description, “those who arrange themselves in rows,” is derived from the Arabic term *şaff*, which refers to placing a group in a straight and orderly line. This understanding is supported by Qur’an 37:165, in which the angels declare that they are those who stand arranged in rows (al-Qurṭubī).

Regarding the circumstances in which angels form these rows, Ibn ‘Abbās, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and Qatādah reportedly held

that the angels continuously remain in ordered ranks, awaiting the command of their Lord and immediately carrying it out when it is received (al-Maẓharī). Other commentators associate these rows particularly with angelic worship, maintaining that the angels stand in formation while engaging in worship, remembrance, and the glorification of Allah (al-Rāzī).

The angels are specifically invoked in these opening oaths because the central purpose of the surah is to refute the polytheistic belief held by some people of Makkah that the angels were the daughters of Allah. By describing the angels as disciplined beings who stand in ranks, carry out divine commands, and engage in the remembrance of Allah, the verses emphasize their complete obedience and servitude.

These qualities demonstrate that the angels do not share a familial relationship with Allah. Rather, their relationship with Him is that of obedient servants to their sovereign Lord and Master. The oaths therefore serve as evidence against attributing partners or offspring to Allah while reinforcing the fundamental Islamic doctrine of His absolute oneness.

References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .7 surah 37 verses 1).

37:10 Except such as snatch away something by stealth, and they are pursued by a flaming fire, of piercing brightness.

Except such as snatch away something by stealth, and they are pursued by a flaming fire, of piercing brightness.

We can form a mental picture of the Court of the Most High, in the highest heaven, conforming to the highest idea we can form of goodness, beauty, purity, and grandeur. The Exalted Assembly of angels is given some knowledge of the Plan and Will of Allah. Evil is altogether foreign to such an atmosphere, but is actuated by feelings of jealousy and curiosity. It tries to approach by stealth and overhear something from the august Assembly. It is repulsed and pursued by a flaming fire, of which we can form some idea in our physical world by the piercing trail of a shooting star

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 37 verse 10).

37:11 Them have We created out of a sticky clay!

Just ask their opinion: are they the more difficult to create, or the (other) beings We have created? Them have We created out of a sticky clay!

Qur'an 37:11 instructs the Prophet Muhammad to ask those who deny resurrection whether recreating them after death would be more difficult than creating the other beings and structures within the universe. The verse reminds them that human beings were originally created from a sticky or viscous form of clay.

The phrase "those whom We have created" has been interpreted in several ways. It may refer to the angels, the jinn, and everything existing in the heavens and on the earth. Alternatively, it may refer to earlier generations of human beings. The verse may also be connected with Qur'an 37:5 and therefore understood as a reference to the entirety of creation. A similar argument appears in Qur'an 40:57, which states that the creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of humanity, although most people do not recognize this truth.

The Qur'an describes human creation from earthly substances in several different ways. Adam is described as being created from dust in Qur'an 3:59, from dried clay formed out of molded mud in Qur'an 15:26, from sounding clay resembling earthen vessels in Qur'an 55:14, and from sticky or viscous clay in Qur'an 37:11. These descriptions may be understood as representing different stages in the process of human creation rather than as contradictory accounts.

When considered together, the verses may describe a sequence beginning with dust, followed by sticky clay, molded mud, and finally dried or sounding clay resembling pottery. The expression "sounding clay" refers to hardened clay that

produces a sound when struck. After reaching this prepared physical state, the human form became ready for the divine spirit to be breathed into it, as discussed in Qur'an 32:9 and 38:72.

Thus, the verse uses humanity's original creation from a simple earthly substance as evidence for the possibility of resurrection. The One who created human beings from clay in the first instance is fully capable of restoring them to life after death (*The Study Quran*, 2015, commentary on Qur'an 37:11 and 55:14).

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). *Study Quran*.

3:83 Earth, wind, water and fire are all the servants of God. To you and I they appear lifeless, but God knows that they too have a life

Do they seek for other than the Religion of Allah?-while all creatures in the heavens and on earth have, willing or unwilling, bowed to His Will (Accepted Islam), and to Him shall they all be brought back.

Yahiya Emerick writes,

This refers to the idea that all things, living and non-living, are submitted to the laws of God, and thus all things are ‘Muslims’, or submitted, in that sense. The natural laws of physics, biology, chemistry and the like were instituted by God, and even biological bodies operate according to the codes embedded in their DNA. Thus, inanimate objects obey the laws set for them. Only humans (and to a similar extent, jinns) have the conscious ability to submit to God or not. The thirteenth-century poet, Jalaluddin Rumi, once wrote:

Earth, wind, water and fire are all the servants of God. To you and I they appear lifeless, but God knows that they too have a life.” (Mathnawi)

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an in Today’s English (p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

The heavens are almost rent asunder from above them (by Him Glory): and the angels celebrate the Praises of their Lord, and pray for forgiveness for (all) beings on earth: Behold! Verily Allah is He, the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

‘It is related by Abu Zarr Ghifari (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: “I see the things of the invisible world you do not see and hear the sounds [of the invisible world] you do not hear. The sky is shaking and it is appropriate that it shakes. By the Glorious One in whose power is my life! There is not even a space of four fingers in the heavens where an angel is not prostrating himself before the Almighty, with his forehead touching the ground. If you knew the things that are known to me, you would laugh little and weep much, and could not enjoy the bed with your spouses, and would go out into forests and deserts groaning and crying out to the Lord”. [After relating it] Abu Zarr said to us: “I wish I were a tree that was cut down”. (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi and ibn i Majah)

4:75-76 Legitimate reason to fight

And why should ye not fight in the cause of Allah and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated (and oppressed)?- Men, women, and children, whose cry is: “Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from thee one who will protect; and raise for us from thee one who will help!” Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who reject Faith Fight in the cause of Evil: So fight ye against the friends of Satan: feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan.

According to *The Study Quran*, Qur'an 4:75 establishes the defense and liberation of oppressed people as a legitimate justification for religiously sanctioned warfare. The verse presents armed struggle not as an instrument of aggression, but as a means of protecting those who are unable to defend themselves from persecution and injustice.

Maududi explains that the verse originally referred to Muslim men, women, and children in Makkah and other parts of Arabia who were subjected to severe oppression after accepting Islam. These individuals lacked both the ability to migrate and the strength to protect themselves. As a result, they endured various forms of persecution and prayed to Allah for rescue from their oppressors. The verse therefore calls upon capable believers to assist vulnerable people and work toward their deliverance from injustice.

Ibn ‘Ajībāh also offers a spiritual interpretation of the verse. He understands the oppressed individuals as symbolizing the spiritual insights and divine qualities within the human soul. These inner qualities may be weakened and confined by uncontrolled desires, selfish impulses, and spiritual negligence. From this perspective, the struggle to liberate the oppressed

also represents the individual's inner struggle against the lower passions of the self. Just as the oppressed Muslims of Makkah required assistance to escape persecution, the spiritual faculties of the human being must be freed from the control of base desires and heedlessness through disciplined spiritual striving (*The Study Quran*, 2015; Maududi).

References:

Maududi, Abul Ala (2010). *Tafhim ul Quran*.

Nasr, Hossein (2015). *Study Quran*.

53:10 So did (Allah) convey the inspiration to His Servant-(conveyed) what He (meant) to convey.

So did (Allah) convey the inspiration to His Servant-(conveyed) what He (meant) to convey. Narrated Abu 'Is-haq-Ash-Shaibani: I asked Zir bin Hubaish regarding the Statement of Allah: “And was at a distance Of but two bowlengths Or (even) nearer; So did (Allah) convey The Inspiration to His slave (Gabriel) and then he (Gabriel) Conveyed (that to Muhammad). (53.9-10) On that, Zir said, “Ibn Mas‘ud informed us that the Prophet (ﷺ) had seen Gabriel having 600 wings.”

References:

Reference : [1]Sahih al-Bukhari 3232 In-book reference : Book 59, Hadith 43

USC-MSA web (English) reference : Vol. 4, Book

54, Hadith 455 (deprecated numbering scheme)

53:27 Angels have no gender

Those who believe not in the Hereafter, name the angels with female names.

How can they assign gender to the angels at all! Their belief that angels were God's daughters was without basis. Islam holds that the angels have no gender.

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an in Today's English (p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

53:7 Jibreel's Appearance

While he was in the highest part of the horizon:

Gabriel appeared in stately form, perhaps towering above the Mountains of Light (see C. 31). Istawa in verse 6 translated “appeared”, means literally “mounted” or “ascended”, or “set himself to execute a design”

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 53 verse 7

56:14 All Mankind's Spiritual experience

And a few from those of later times.

Of great Prophets and Teachers there were many before the time of the holy Prophet Muhammad. As he was the last of the Prophets, he and the great Teachers under his Dispensation will be comparatively fewer in number, but their teaching is the sum and flower of all mankind's spiritual experience.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 56 verse 14.

62:2 The Unlettered nation

It is He Who has sent amongst the Unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom,- although they had been, before, in manifest error;-

Literally, this designation of unschooled means a nation that wasn't literate or possessing a scripture. The overwhelming majority of Arabs could neither read nor write, and the only people who ever learned those skills were a handful of urban dwellers. (A rudimentary Arabic script was only introduced to Mecca and the surrounding region in the generation just before Muhammad's birth.) There were no schools or centers of learning in the Arabian Peninsula, nor were there books or libraries. It was, by and large, an oral society.

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an in Today's English (p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

67:30 The fountain of spirituality

Say: “See ye?- If your stream be some morning lost (in the underground earth), who then can supply you with clear-flowing water?”

. The Surah is closed with a parable, taken from a vital fact of our physical life, and leading up to the understanding of our spiritual life. In our daily life, what would happen if we woke up some fine morning to find that the sources and springs of our water-supply had disappeared and gone down into the hollows of the earth? Nothing could save our life. Without water we cannot live, and water cannot rise above its level, but always seeks a lower level. So in spiritual life. Its sources and springs are in the divine wisdom that flows from on high. Allah is the real source of that life, as He is of all forms of life. We must seek His Grace and Mercy. We cannot find grace or mercy or blessing from anything lower. His Wisdom and Mercy are like, fresh clear-flowing springwater, not like the muddy murky wisdom and goodness of this lower world which is only relative, and which often hampers life rather than advances it

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 67 verse 30)

68:1 Nun. By the Pen and the (Record) which (men) write,-

Nun. By the Pen and the (Record) which (men) write,-

The Pen and the Record are the symbolical foundations of the Revelation to man. The adjuration by the Pen disposes of the flippant charge that Allah's Messenger was mad or possessed. For he spoke words of power, not incoherent, but full of meaning, and through the Record of the Pen, that meaning unfolds itself, in innumerable aspects to countless generations. Muhammad was the living Grace and Mercy of Allah, and his very nature exalted him above abuse and persecution.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 68 verse 1)

68:42 The Shin

The Day that the shin shall be laid bare, and they shall be summoned to bow in adoration, but they shall not be able,-

This is the literal translation of the Qur'anic phrase used here. The exegetes have explained it in two different ways. Some of them are of the view that, according to the Arabic usage, 'exposure of the shin' is an idiomatic expression for a severe state of distress. When a person is confronted with such a distress, he normally lays his shins bare. Therefore, exposure of the shin has been taken as indicative of such a state. Given this interpretation, the verse means that on the day when the disbelievers will face the severe distress, they will be called upon to prostrate themselves, but they will not be able to do so, because their backs will be made flat, with no elasticity to bow down. Some other commentators, however, take the phrase in its literal sense. They say that the 'Shin' referred to here is the Shin of Allah Ta'ala, which is one of His attributes, the exact nature of which is neither known to anybody, nor discoverable in this world. (But obviously, it is not like the shins of human beings). According to this interpretation, the verse means that, at some stage on the Day of Judgment, Allah Ta'ala will expose this attribute of His which is called 'Shin', and they will be called upon to prostrate before it. This interpretation is supported by an authentic hadith reported by Bukhari and Muslim.

References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .8 surah 68 verse 42).

6:70 By the Nafs and its perfection

Leave alone those who take their religion to be mere play and amusement, and are deceived by the life of this world. But proclaim (to them) this (truth): that every soul delivers itself to ruin by its own acts: it will find for itself no protector or intercessor except Allah: if it offered every ransom, (or reparation), none will be accepted: such is (the end of) those who deliver themselves to ruin by their own acts: they will have for drink (only) boiling water, and for punishment, one most grievous: for they persisted in rejecting Allah.

“By the Nafs and its perfection. He endowed it with the possibilities of both integration and disintegration. Truly he succeeds who nourishes it and he fails who stunteth it”

The human nafs is progressive and to undergo evolution is in its nature. The Holy Quran explains the human actions and their recording on Nafs by calling it ‘a Bird’. You keep control over a bird as long as it is in your grip. Once the grip is loosened, it is out of your control.

Every cause has got its effect and every human action, however slight, must leave its imprint on the screen of Nafs. It is not in one’s control to check it. Man is thus composed of two distinct entities, physical body and Nafs and both lie in close proximity of each other:

(17:13-14)

“Every man’s ‘bird’ We have pasted on his own neck and We shall bring forth for him on the day of Judgment a book which he shall find wide open. (It will be said to him:) Read your own

record. Your Nafs is sufficient this day to make an account for yourself' As stated above, the making and breaking up processes of Nafs or human personality are affected only by those actions which are performed wilfully and after making a choice. It is the 'Ruh' or 'Divine Energy' which confers on man the capacity to choose between right and wrong and thus provides man the unique distinction to act freely as he chooses. The freedom of choice and Will, thus, become the directive force in human evolution which in fact is the evolution of 'Nafs' or 'Human personality'.

72:1 The Jinns hear the Quran

Say: It has been revealed to me that a company of Jinns listened (to the Qur'an). They said, 'We have really heard a wonderful Recital!

The Jinns had evidently heard of previous revelations, that of Moses (46:30), and the error of Trinitarian Christianity (72:3). The community from which they come have all sorts of good and bad persons but they are determined to preach the good Message of Unity which they have heard and believed in

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 72 verse 1)

72:8 The Fiery Flame

'And we pried into the secrets of heaven; but we found it filled with stern guards and flaming fires.

The speakers here have repented of sin and evil; but they recognize that there are evil ones among them, who have stealth and prying, but their dark plots will be defeated by vigilant guardians of the Right, whose repulse of the attacks of evil is figured by the shafts of meteoric light in the heavens

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 72 verse 8)

72:9

'We used, indeed, to sit there in (hidden) stations, to (steal) a hearing; but any who listen now will find a flaming fire watching him in ambush.

What is the force of “now”?

It refers to the early Makkan period of Revelation. It means that whatever excuse there may have been before, for people to try to seek out the hidden truths of the Unseen World through Jinns, there was none now, as the perspicuous Quran had restored the Message of Unity and cleared religion of all the cobwebs, mysteries, and falsehoods with which priestcraft and pious fraud had overlaid it.

The result is that such seekers after false hidden knowledge will find themselves confronted now by the flaming fire, which, like the shafts of meteoric light (see last note), will lie in wait for and nip such priestcraft and black magic in the bud.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 72 verse 9)

74:2 Stand up and warn

Arise and deliver thy warning!

Narrated Jabir bin ‘Abdullah:

that he heard the Prophet (S) saying, “The Divine Inspiration was delayed for a short period but suddenly, as I was walking. I heard a voice in the sky, and when I looked up towards the sky, to my surprise, I saw the angel who had come to me in the Hira Cave, and he was sitting on a chair in between the sky and the earth. I was so frightened by him that I fell on the ground and came to my family and said (to them), ‘Cover me! (with a blanket), cover me!’

Then Allah sent the Revelation: “O, You wrapped up (In a blanket)! (Arise and warn! And your Lord magnify And keep pure your garments, And desert the idols.” (74.1-5)

References:

Reference : [1]Sahih al-Bukhari 3238 In-book reference : Book 59, Hadith 49

USC-MSA web (English) reference : Vol. 4, Book 54, Hadith 461 (deprecated numbering scheme)

74:35 The Signs

This is but one of the mighty (portents),

There are numerous Signs of Allah, of which Judgment is one, and one of the mightiest portents. Or the reference may be to the waning of the Moon, the decline of the night, and the glorious sunrise, as tokens or symbols of the world renewed when the present transitory world passes away.

According to some commentators “This” here refers to Hell. (R).

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 74 verse 35)

75:2 The Nafs

And I do call to witness the self-reproaching spirit: (Eschew Evil).

Our doctors postulate three states or stages of the development of the human soul: Ammara (12:53), which is prone to evil, and, if not checked and controlled, will lead to perdition; Lawwama, as here, which feels conscious of evil, and resists it, asks for Allah's grace and pardon after repentance and tries to amend; it hopes to reach salvation; Mutmainna (89:27), the highest stage of all, when it achieves full rest and satisfaction. Our second stage may be compared to Conscience, except that in English usage Conscience is a faculty and not a stage in spiritual development.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 75 verse 2)

79:1 By the (angels) who tear out (the souls of the wicked) with violence

By the (angels) who tear out (the souls of the wicked) with violence;

'There is much difference of opinion among the Commentators as to the five things or beings mentioned in these verses. I follow the general opinion in my interpretation, which is that angels are referred to as the agency which in their dealings with mankind show clearly Allah's Justice, Power, and Mercy, which again point to the Judgment to come, as a certainty which none can evade. The first point, referred to in this verse, is that the souls of the wicked are loath to part with their material body at death, but their will will not count: their souls will be wrenched out into another world. Who will then deny Resurrection and Judgment?

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 79 verse 1)

79:2 By those who gently draw out (the souls of the blessed)

By those who gently draw out (the souls of the blessed);

The second point is that in contrast with the wicked, the souls of the blessed will be drawn out gently to their new life. They will be ready for it. In fact death for them will be a release from the grosser incidents of bodily sense. To them the approach of Judgment will be welcome.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 79 verse 2)

79:3 And by those who glide along (on errands of mercy)

And by those who glide along (on errands of mercy),

At all times there are errands of mercy and blessing and errands of justice, which the angels are prompt to execute by order of Allah. There are three features of this, thus giving the third, fourth, and fifth points. Their movement is compared to that of gliding or swimming (sabhan). In 21:33 this verb is applied to the motion of the celestial bodies: they all “swim along, each in its rounded course”. Cf. Shakespeare, Merchant of Venice: “There’s not an orb which thou beholdist, But in his motion like an angel sings, Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims-. In hurrying on their errands the angels press forth as in a race. And thus they promptly execute the orders of their Lord

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 79 verse 3)

81:7 When the souls are sorted out, (being joined, like with like)

When the souls are sorted out, (being joined, like with like);
Cf. 56:7, where the sorting out into three classes is mentioned,
viz:

Those Nearest to Allah, the Companions of the Right Hand,
and the Companions of the Left Hand. That was a sort of broad
general division. The meaning in this passage is wider,

1. Whereas in this world of probation, good is mixed with evil,
knowledge with ignorance, power with arrogance, and so on, in
the new world of Reality, all true values will be re- stored, and
like will consort with like, for it will be a world of perfect
Peace, Harmony, and Justice.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the
Quran. (surah 81 verse 7)

98:5 The Three Injunctions

And they have been commanded no more than this: To worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion, being true (in faith); to establish regular prayer; and to practise regular charity; and that is the Religion Right and Straight.

The three eternal principles of Religion are:

1. sincere devotion to Allah;
2. Prayer and Praise as drawing man nearer to Allah; and
3. the service of Allah's creatures by deeds
of practical charity

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 96 verse 10)

All things sing the Praise of God

The following excerpt is taken from “Islamic Theory of Evolution” by T.O. Shanavas pg. 181- 182:

God endowed all creatures with minds. Animate and even inanimate creatures, such as fire, winds, and mountains have selves and a subjective faculty with which they can experience and respond to the Divine Will. The Quran attests to the existence of subjectivity with faculties endowing experience and response within the inanimate world, even though human beings do not comprehend it:

Quran 17:44:

The seven skies, the earth, and all that lies within them, sing hallelujahs to Him. And there is nothing that does not chant His praise. But you [human] do not understand their hymns of praise. Truly He is very clement and forgiving.

We also read:

Quran 41:11:

Then he turned to the heavens, and it was smoke. So he said to the earth and the heavens: “Come with willingness and obedience and they replied: We come Willingly. The latter verse can be interpreted scientifically. According to contemporary cosmology, the entire universe was filled with radiation and plenum of matter (originally hydrogen and helium) formed from elementary particles (quarks) in a dense, primeval fireball of creation called the Big Bang.

The smoke described in the above verse is most likely a reference to quarks and atoms before they condensed into galaxies. The Quranic verses here describe a universe that was

responsive to God since its inception after the Big Bang. The heavens and the earth in its early gaseous embryonic state (“smoke”) responded to God by saying, “We come willingly.” According to Towards Understanding the Quran, the “smoke” means: “by smoke is implied the initial and primary stage of matter, in which it lay diffused in space in a shapeless, dust like condition before the formation of the universe”

The following excerpt is taken from “The Holy Quran: Text, Translation, and Commentary pg. 706 note 2229:

“All Creation, animate and inanimate, sing’s God’s praises and celebrates his glory, animate, with consciousness, and inanimate, in the evidence which it furnishes of the unity and glory of God. The mystics believe that there is a soul in inanimate things also, which declares forth the glory of God. For all Nature bears witness to His power, wisdom, and goodness.”

References:

Shanavas, T.O. (2005). Islamic Theory of Evolution: The Missing Link between Darwin and the Origin of Species. (p. 181-182).

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (Surah 17 verse 44). .[1]Quran

Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

All who are in the Heaven and Earth Prostrate to Allah

Quran 22:18:

Have you not seen that all those who are in the heavens and all those who are in the earth prostrate themselves before Allah; and so do the sun and the moon, and the stars and the mountains, and the trees, and the beasts, and so do many human beings, and even many of those who are condemned to chastisement? And he whom Allah humiliates, none can give him honour. Allah does whatever He wills.

Qur'an 22:18 describes the universal submission of creation to Allah. The verse states that all beings in the heavens and on the earth prostrate before Him, including the sun, moon, stars, mountains, trees, animals, and many human beings. It also distinguishes between those who submit willingly and those whose rejection of divine guidance makes them deserving of punishment. The verse concludes by affirming that no one can restore honor to a person whom Allah has humbled and that Allah acts according to His will.

According to *Tafhim al-Qur'an*, the prostration of created things may be understood through their complete submission to the laws established by Allah. The movement of shadows, for example, demonstrates this submission: they extend westward in the morning and eastward in the evening according to an ordered natural system. Their movement therefore symbolizes their obedience to the divine laws governing creation.

The beings that prostrate include angels, stars, planets, and all other forms of creation throughout the universe. This encompasses rational beings who possess some degree of choice, as well as animals, plants, solid matter, air, light, and other created phenomena. Everything remains subject to

Allah's authority and cannot exist or function independently of His established order.

The verse also distinguishes between voluntary and involuntary submission. Many people willingly bow before Allah through faith and obedience. Others remain subject to His physical and universal laws but refuse to obey His moral commands in those areas where they have been granted freedom of choice.

Although they cannot escape Allah's authority over creation, they become deserving of punishment because they consciously reject His guidance. *Tafhim al-Qur'an* also notes that Qur'an 22:18 contains a verse of prostration, and Muslim jurists agree that a ritual prostration should be performed upon its recitation (*Tafhim al-Qur'an*, n.d., commentary on Qur'an 22:18).

A similar concept appears in Qur'an 16:48–50, which describes the shadows of created things inclining to the right and left in humble prostration before Allah. The verses further state that every creature in the heavens and on the earth, as well as the angels, submits to Allah without arrogance. The angels fear their Lord and carry out whatever they are commanded to do.

Asad explains that the prostration mentioned in these verses is symbolic of the inherent subjection of all created beings and objects to the will of God. The term *dābbah* refers to sentient, bodily creatures capable of independent movement, whereas angels are described as nonmaterial spiritual beings. Thus, the passage encompasses both the lowest and highest forms of created existence (Asad, n.d., p. 508).

Angels and animals necessarily follow the impulses and natural capacities placed within them by Allah. Because they act according to their created nature, they are not morally accountable in the same manner as human beings. Humans, by contrast, possess moral freedom and can choose between

obedience and disobedience. This capacity makes moral wrongdoing possible.

Nevertheless, even when human beings choose to sin, they remain subject to the universal laws of cause and effect established by Allah, commonly described in the Qur'an as *sunnat Allāh*, or the way of God. Consequently, all created beings submit to Allah at the level of their existence, whether willingly through conscious faith or unwillingly through their unavoidable dependence upon His laws. The Qur'anic concept of universal prostration therefore signifies that nothing in creation exists outside Allah's power, authority, and governing order (Asad, n.d., p. 508).

References:

Asad, Muhammad (1980). The Message of the Quran.

Moududi, Abu Ala. Tafhim ul Quran.

An in-depth commentary of the “Prostration” of inanimate and animate creation to Allah (God)

{Have they not observed what Allah has created? Their shadows revolve from the right and the left, bowing to Allah as they shrink away. To Allah bows down everything in the heavens and everything on earth—every living creature, and the angels, and without being proud. They fear their Lord above them, and they do what they are commanded. } [Quran Ch16 – V48-50]

According to Yuksel, the Arabic term *sajdah* does not always refer exclusively to the physical act of placing one’s face on the ground. It can also signify obedience, humility, and submission to the laws established by Allah. Consequently, the Qur’anic statement that all creation prostrates before Allah does not necessarily imply that every created thing possesses a human-like mind or consciousness. Rather, the natural behavior of creation can itself be understood as a physical expression of submission to divine law.

All observable natural processes demonstrate this submission. Atoms behave according to consistent laws when interacting with one another. Water expands when it freezes and evaporates when heated to a particular temperature. Similarly, hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, and oxygen combine in precise arrangements to form the chemical bases adenine, cytosine, guanine, and thymine. These bases then form DNA, through which new biological qualities and living organisms emerge. Every cell, organ, and biological system within the human body likewise functions according to laws established by Allah. Yuksel (n.d.) interprets these natural processes as physical manifestations of *sajdah*.

This understanding is supported by Qur'an 3:83 and 13:15, both of which describe the universal submission of creation to Allah. Qur'an 3:83 uses the verb *aslama*, meaning "to submit," whereas Qur'an 13:15 uses *yasjudu*, meaning "to prostrate." Yuksel argues that this linguistic relationship indicates that submission and prostration belong to the same semantic field. Submission to Allah is therefore not limited to an internal belief or mental attitude; it may also be expressed through physical conduct, including worship, charitable actions, diligent work, and conveying the divine message.

The precise meaning of *sajdah* may vary according to its Qur'anic context. In certain passages, it may primarily describe inward or voluntary submission, whereas in others it may refer to a bodily act. For example, the prostration described in Qur'an 27:20–24 appears to involve an outward act of worship, while Qur'an 77:48 may emphasize an unwillingness to submit internally. Qur'an 22:18 can be understood as encompassing both physical and spiritual submission because it refers to conscious beings as well as natural phenomena.

The fact that different creatures do not prostrate in an identical manner does not invalidate the concept of universal prostration. Every created being glorifies Allah according to its own nature and purpose. The Qur'an declares that everything in the heavens and on earth glorifies Allah, although human beings may not comprehend the manner of that glorification (Qur'an 17:44). Birds, planets, angels, human beings, and other forms of creation therefore worship Allah in ways appropriate to their respective forms and capacities. Human beings are instructed to glorify Allah through distinctly human means, including remembrance, speech, obedience, prayer, and righteous action.

Qur'an 24:41 similarly states that everything in the heavens and on earth glorifies Allah and that each creature knows its own prayer and manner of glorification. Qur'an 3:83 further

asks whether people seek a system other than Allah's when everything in the heavens and on earth has already submitted to Him, willingly or unwillingly. These passages reinforce the idea that creation's conformity to divine order constitutes a form of worship and submission.

Yuksel also responds to the argument that, because natural objects do not visibly bow or place themselves on the ground, human beings should not physically prostrate. Such reasoning incorrectly assumes that all created beings must express submission in the same manner. Just as birds, planets, and human beings glorify Allah differently, their forms of prostration may also differ. The universal submission of creation does not eliminate the specific bodily and moral responsibilities commanded of human beings.

The same principle applies to salvation and religious accountability. Qur'an 2:62 identifies believers, Jews, Christians, and other religious communities as capable of attaining divine reward when they sincerely believe in Allah and the Hereafter and perform righteous deeds. This does not necessarily mean that every community received exactly the same outward practices. Allah holds individuals and communities responsible according to the revelation, knowledge, and circumstances available to them. Every nation received a messenger and appropriate religious guidance (Qur'an 10:47; 22:34).

The command to prostrate before Adam should also be understood according to its particular context. The nature and form of the prostration required of angels or other nonhuman beings need not be identical to the form commanded of human beings. Different beings possess different natures and therefore may express obedience in different ways. Consequently, the meaning of prostration in one passage should not automatically

be imposed upon every other passage without considering its context.

Nevertheless, the Qur'an also provides evidence that human prostration may include a formal bodily component. David's repentance is described as involving bowing down and turning to Allah (Qur'an 38:24). Likewise, the righteous are described as falling in prostration and weeping when the revelations of the Most Merciful are recited to them (Qur'an 19:58). These passages indicate that Qur'anic prostration can involve both inward humility and outward bodily action. Therefore, although *sajdah* broadly signifies submission to Allah, its precise expression may be spiritual, physical, or a combination of both, depending on the beings involved and the context of the passage (Yuksel, p. 198).

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Belief in the Divine Decree (Al Qadar)

Belief in the Divine Decree (*Al-Qadar*)

According to IslamQA (n.d.), *al-qadar* refers to Allah's determination of everything that occurs throughout creation in accordance with His eternal knowledge and perfect wisdom. Correct belief in divine decree consists of four fundamental principles: Allah's complete knowledge, His recording of all decrees, His universal will, and His creation of all things.

The first principle is the belief that Allah possesses complete and eternal knowledge. He knows everything universally and specifically, including His own actions and the actions of created beings. His knowledge encompasses the past, present, and future, and nothing is hidden from Him. Qur'an 22:70 affirms that Allah knows everything in the heavens and on earth and that all matters are recorded in a preserved record.

The second principle is the belief that Allah recorded everything in *al-Lawh al-Mahfuz*, commonly translated as the Preserved Tablet or the Book of Decrees. This record contains everything that will occur until the Day of Judgment. A narration attributed to 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As states that Allah recorded the decrees of creation 50,000 years before creating the heavens and the earth (Muslim, Hadith 2653). Another narration explains that Allah commanded the Pen to record the decrees of everything that would occur until the establishment of the Hour (Abu Dawud, Hadith 4700).

The third principle is the belief that everything occurs according to Allah's will. This principle applies both to Allah's actions and to the actions of created beings. The Qur'an teaches that Allah creates and chooses whatever He wills (Qur'an 28:68), accomplishes whatever He wills (Qur'an 14:27), and shapes human beings in the womb according to His will (Qur'an 3:6). The Qur'an also indicates that the actions of

created beings remain subject to divine permission and determination. For example, Allah could have empowered certain people to fight the believers had He willed (Qur'an 4:90), and the opponents of the prophets would not have acted as they did unless Allah had permitted it within His decree (Qur'an 6:112). Therefore, whatever Allah wills necessarily occurs, while whatever He does not will cannot occur.

The fourth principle is the belief that Allah is the Creator of everything, including the essence, characteristics, and movements of created beings. Qur'an 39:62 identifies Allah as the Creator and Disposer of all things, while Qur'an 25:2 states that He created everything and determined it according to a precise measure. Abraham similarly reminded his people that Allah created them as well as what they produced or fashioned (Qur'an 37:96). A person who accepts these four principles possesses a correct understanding of divine decree (IslamQA, n.d.).

Belief in *al-qadar* does not eliminate human choice or moral responsibility. Human beings possess a limited will and ability through which they choose among actions that lie within their capacity. They may decide whether to perform acts of worship, engage in righteous conduct, or commit sinful acts. Both Islamic revelation and ordinary human experience demonstrate the existence of this capacity.

From the perspective of Islamic law, the Qur'an recognizes that human beings make meaningful choices. Qur'an 78:39 states that whoever wills may seek a path leading to the Lord. Qur'an 2:223 also refers to people acting according to their will within the boundaries established by Allah. At the same time, human responsibility is proportionate to individual ability. Believers are commanded to remain conscious of Allah to the extent of their capacity (Qur'an 64:16), and Allah does not burden a person beyond what that person can bear. Each individual

benefits from the good that he or she earns and bears responsibility for the wrongdoing that he or she commits (Qur'an 2:286).

Human experience also confirms the distinction between voluntary and involuntary actions. Individuals recognize that actions such as walking ordinarily occur through deliberate intention. In contrast, involuntary experiences such as shivering may occur without conscious choice. This distinction demonstrates that people possess a genuine, although limited, ability to intend and perform certain actions.

Nevertheless, human will remains subordinate to the will of Allah. Qur'an 81:28–29 addresses those who wish to follow the straight path but clarifies that they cannot exercise their will independently of Allah, the Lord of all creation. Human beings therefore make authentic choices and remain responsible for those choices, yet their ability to act exists only because Allah has granted it and permitted it to operate within His universal decree.

Accordingly, Islamic belief maintains both divine sovereignty and human accountability. Everything in the universe occurs within Allah's knowledge, will, and creative authority, while human beings remain responsible for the voluntary choices they make within the abilities Allah has granted them. Nothing can occur within Allah's dominion without His knowledge and permission (IslamQA, n.d.).

Commentary on the Light Verse

Qur'an 24:35 describes Allah as the Light of the heavens and the earth and compares His light to a lamp placed within a niche. The lamp is enclosed in glass that shines like a radiant star and is fueled by the oil of a blessed olive tree that belongs exclusively to neither the east nor the west. Its oil appears capable of producing light even without being touched by fire. The verse concludes with the expression "light upon light," affirming that Allah guides whom He wills to His light and presents such comparisons for human understanding.

Literal and Metaphorical Understandings of Divine Light

The Light Verse has occupied an important place in Sufi Qur'anic interpretation, particularly because of al-Ghazali's influential commentary in *Mishkat al-Anwar*. Its interpretation raises broader theological questions concerning figurative language, divine attributes, and the limits of human speech about Allah. Classical commentators disagreed over whether the statement that Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth should be understood literally, metaphorically, or through a combination of both approaches (Sands, 2006, pp. 110–136).

Most classical non-Sufi commentators treated the description of Allah as light metaphorically in order to avoid identifying Him with physical light. Al-Tabari preferred the interpretation attributed to Ibn 'Abbas, according to which Allah is the Guide of the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth. This interpretation also connects the Light Verse with the preceding verse, which describes the Qur'an as a source of clarification and instruction. Other transmitted interpretations describe Allah as the One who governs, arranges, beautifies, or illuminates the heavens and the earth. Under these interpretations, Allah is not identified with created light but is understood as its Creator and source (Sands, 2006).

Al-Zamakhshari also rejected a physical or strictly literal interpretation. His theological concern was to maintain Allah's absolute unity and incomparability. According to his reasoning, divine attributes cannot be understood as independent eternal realities existing alongside Allah. The statement that Allah is light therefore means that He possesses, creates, and controls the light of the heavens and the earth. Light may also symbolize truth because it makes matters visible and distinguishable, just as divine guidance separates truth from falsehood. This interpretation resembles Qur'an 2:257, in which Allah brings believers from darkness into light (Sands, 2006).

Although al-Razi belonged to a different theological tradition from al-Zamakhshari, his explanation of this verse was similar in significant respects. Al-Razi argued that physical definitions of light could not be applied to Allah. Qur'an 42:11 declares that nothing resembles Him, while Qur'an 6:1 identifies light as something created by Allah. Because physical lights resemble one another and are created, Allah cannot be understood as physical light. Al-Razi therefore interpreted the verse as declaring that Allah is the Guide, Creator, Possessor, and Giver of light. He considered guidance toward knowledge and righteous action to be the principal meaning of divine light in this context (Sands, 2006).

Al-Ghazali's Hierarchy of Light

Al-Ghazali developed a more explicitly mystical understanding of the verse. Rather than treating "light" as a word with only one physical meaning, he proposed that it refers to different realities arranged in a hierarchy. Physical light makes visible objects perceptible to the eye. The eye itself may also be called a light because it is the faculty through which visual perception occurs. Higher than physical sight is the light of the intellect,

which recognizes meanings and truths that cannot be seen by the physical eye (Sands, 2006).

Al-Ghazali identified Allah as the highest and most perfect light. From this perspective, Allah alone is light in the fullest and most authentic sense, while every created light is dependent, borrowed, and metaphorical in relation to Him. Physical sight is limited because it cannot see what is too distant, too close, hidden, internal, or beyond its range. Intellectual perception surpasses physical sight, but it also remains dependent on Allah. Divine light is therefore the ultimate source of physical perception, intellectual understanding, spiritual knowledge, and existence itself (Sands, 2006).

This position may initially appear inconsistent with al-Razi's argument that Allah cannot be called light. However, al-Razi did not consider al-Ghazali's interpretation incompatible with the traditional understanding of Allah as Guide. Al-Ghazali was not equating Allah with a created physical phenomenon. Instead, he was reversing the ordinary linguistic relationship: Allah's light is real and independent, whereas created lights possess only dependent and limited illumination. Both interpretations therefore reject the notion that Allah resembles created physical light (Sands, 2006).

Al-Ghazali also warned that mystical explanations could be misunderstood. The claim that Allah is present with creation does not mean that He occupies a physical location or exists within created objects. Allah is above, prior to, and independent of creation, even though everything is manifested, sustained, and known through Him. Al-Ghazali consequently distinguished between spiritual realization and beliefs that would compromise divine transcendence (Sands, 2006).

Ibn Taymiyya's Interpretation

Ibn Taymiyya opposed the claim that the opening statement of the Light Verse had to be interpreted away from its apparent wording. He maintained that “light” has different meanings depending on context and that not every use of the term refers to a physical quality existing within a body. Created light may refer to a substance, such as fire, or to an attribute, such as reflected illumination. In a similar way, divine names may refer to Allah’s essence or to His attributes without implying resemblance to creation (Sands, 2006).

According to Ibn Taymiyya, Allah may properly be described as Light and as possessing light. He therefore rejected the argument that the verse means only that Allah owns or creates light. Nevertheless, he also accepted explanations such as “Allah is the Guide” and “Allah is the Illuminator,” provided that they were understood as explaining particular dimensions of the verse rather than replacing or denying its wording. In his view, the early Muslim generations often used different expressions to explain complementary aspects of a Qur’anic statement (Sands, 2006).

Ibn Taymiyya further maintained that spiritual or metaphorical interpretations could be acceptable when supported by the Qur’an, authentic prophetic traditions, and explanations attributed to the Companions and early generations. He objected primarily to interpretations that he believed distorted the text or introduced meanings without a reliable scriptural basis. Thus, although he accepted certain Sufi reflections as moral or spiritual analogies, he insisted that such allusions could not invalidate the verse’s established meanings (Sands, 2006).

The Niche, Lamp, Glass, Tree, and Oil

Unlike the disagreement surrounding the declaration that Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth, commentators generally understood the niche and its elements as a symbolic

comparison. However, they differed over what the symbols represented. Interpretations commonly connected the image with Allah's guidance, the Qur'an, Prophet Muhammad, or the believing heart (Sands, 2006).

Some commentators understood the niche as an illustration of the purity and perfection of divine guidance. Others associated the lamp with the Qur'an or with Prophet Muhammad, who is described elsewhere as a luminous lamp. Certain transmitted interpretations connected the niche, glass, lamp, and tree with Muhammad's ancestry, his prophetic mission, and the faith placed within his heart. Other commentators understood the entire image as a description of the believer whose heart has been opened to Islam and illuminated by knowledge of Allah (Sands, 2006).

Al-Qurtubi accepted metaphor as a necessary feature of Qur'anic language because human beings understand transcendent realities through comparisons drawn from the created world. However, he warned against interpretations that assign unrestricted symbolic meanings to every detail of a comparison. For al-Qurtubi, valid metaphorical interpretation had to remain consistent with Arabic usage and the broader teachings of revelation. Otherwise, the openness of metaphor could lead to endless and unsupported explanations (Sands, 2006).

The Human Faculties in Al-Ghazali's Interpretation

Al-Ghazali interpreted the elements of the niche as symbols of different human perceptual and spiritual faculties. The niche represents the sensory spirit, whose perceptions emerge through the openings of the body, such as the eyes, ears, and nostrils. The glass represents the imaginative spirit, which preserves and organizes sensory images. Like glass, imagination can either obstruct light or become purified enough to transmit it clearly (Sands, 2006).

The lamp symbolizes the rational spirit, which understands meanings beyond immediate sensory and imaginative experience. The tree represents the reflective spirit, through which previously acquired knowledge branches into new conclusions. The oil symbolizes the sanctified prophetic spirit, which possesses such an intense receptivity to divine knowledge that it appears capable of shining even before being touched by an external flame. When revelation and spiritual preparedness come together, they form “light upon light” (Sands, 2006).

Al-Ghazali used this structure to classify different levels of human understanding. Some people remain limited to sensory perceptions and therefore imagine Allah as a material object. Others move beyond sensory experience but remain confined by imagination, conceiving of Allah in bodily or spatial terms. Still others use reason but incorrectly compare divine attributes with human attributes. Those who progress further recognize Allah’s incomparability and understand that all created powers, causes, and movements remain dependent upon His command (Sands, 2006).

For al-Ghazali, the highest realization occurs when a person recognizes the limitations of all created descriptions. The spiritual seeker no longer treats created causes, intellectual concepts, or celestial powers as independent realities. Instead, the seeker recognizes Allah as the ultimate originator and sustainer of everything. This realization does not mean that the believer literally becomes united with Allah. Rather, awareness of the independent self becomes overwhelmed by consciousness of dependence upon Him. Al-Ghazali distinguished this spiritual state from any doctrine that would erase the difference between the Creator and creation (Sands, 2006).

Other Sufi Interpretations

Early Sufi interpretations expanded the symbolism of light to describe various spiritual conditions. Ja'far al-Sadiq was credited with identifying numerous lights, including the lights of faith, fear, hope, remembrance, knowledge, modesty, sincerity, understanding, tranquility, humility, nearness, divine unity, and spiritual permanence. Each believer may receive one or more of these lights according to his or her spiritual state, while Prophet Muhammad is presented as possessing them in their most complete form (Sands, 2006).

Other early interpretations describe the believer as illuminated in speech, conduct, private life, public life, and final destiny. Such a believer remains grateful during prosperity, patient during hardship, fair in judgment, and truthful in speech. "Light upon light" thus represents the combination of inward faith and outward righteousness. Spiritual light is not merely an abstract idea but is manifested through ethical character and obedience (Sands, 2006).

Al-Tustari connected the Light Verse with the primordial creation of Muhammad and humanity. His interpretation presents Muhammad's light as having a special role in the spiritual origin of human beings. Al-Hallaj similarly described Islam, faith, knowledge, intelligence, insight, worship, and virtuous character as forms of light. He compared the heart to a lamp whose illumination depends upon certainty, patience, sincerity, trust in Allah, and contentment. The believer's closeness to Allah increases according to the degree of spiritual light manifested through these qualities (Sands, 2006).

Ibn 'Ata' compared the order of the heavens with the order of the believer's inner life. Just as the heavens are adorned with celestial signs, the heart is adorned with such qualities as intelligence, knowledge, certainty, understanding, hope, and reverential fear. Al-Wasiti similarly taught that Allah

illuminates human spirits through His attributes and enables them to receive spiritual knowledge through the light of His holiness (Sands, 2006).

Al-Kashani interpreted the verse as describing the integration of the human body, soul, heart, and spirit. The niche represents the body, which is dark without spiritual illumination. The lamp represents the spirit, while the glass represents the heart, which both receives light and transmits it to other faculties. The blessed tree symbolizes the sanctified soul, whose branches produce moral conduct, spiritual actions, knowledge, and inner states. The oil represents the soul's preparedness to receive illumination, and the fire represents the active source that brings this capacity into realization (Sands, 2006).

Al-Nisaburi offered both cosmic and human interpretations. On the cosmic level, the niche represents the physical universe, the glass the Throne, the lamp the Footstool, the tree the spiritual kingdom, and the oil the world of spirits. On the human level, the niche represents the body, the glass the heart, the lamp the innermost spiritual consciousness, the tree the spiritual faculty, and the oil the human spirit. Divine self-disclosure and guidance ignite these faculties, producing "light upon light" when revelation, intellect, and spiritual receptivity operate together (Sands, 2006).

Balance Between Fear and Hope

Some Sufi commentators understood the description of the olive tree as "neither of the east nor of the west" as an indication of spiritual balance. Ja'far al-Sadiq associated this phrase with the believer's position between fear and hope. Excessive fear may result in despair, while excessive hope may lead to complacency. The believer should therefore maintain hope in Allah's mercy while remaining conscious of accountability (Sands, 2006).

Al-Qushayri expanded this interpretation by describing several complementary spiritual states. Fear must remain balanced by hope, awe by intimacy, spiritual contraction by expansion, awareness by self-effacement, and adherence to the religious law by recognition of deeper spiritual realities. These apparently opposing states work together in the believer's development rather than cancelling one another (Sands, 2006).

For al-Qushayri, spiritual light is also active and transformative. It disturbs complacency, encourages self-examination, and motivates the believer to overcome laziness, attachment to status, and inclination toward wrongdoing. The seeker progresses through repentance, vigilance, awareness of Allah, unveiling, witnessing, and increasingly profound recognition of divine unity. "Light upon light" therefore describes an ongoing process in which spiritual effort is met by divine assistance (Sands, 2006).

Al-Maybudi likewise described several levels of inner illumination. Submission is accompanied by sincerity, faith by truthfulness, and excellence by certainty. More advanced spiritual seekers may experience the lights of insight, uprightness, witnessing, divine unity, nearness, majesty, beauty, and awe. These levels are presented as stages through which the believer develops under divine guidance (Sands, 2006).

Al-Maybudi also emphasized Prophet Muhammad as the most complete manifestation of created spiritual light. His character, knowledge, worship, humility, generosity, prophetic mission, and submission to Allah are all described through the symbolism of illumination. Believers possess portions of these qualities, while the Prophet embodies them in their fullest created form (Sands, 2006).

Light as Guidance and Spiritual Reality

The Sufi commentators examined by Sands did not generally reject the traditional interpretation of light as guidance. Instead, they expanded it. Divine light may refer simultaneously to guidance, revelation, knowledge, faith, spiritual perception, virtuous conduct, and mystical experience. The difference between Sufi and non-Sufi interpretations lies less in a rejection of conventional meaning than in the Sufis' willingness to treat spiritual light as an experienced reality rather than merely a literary comparison (Sands, 2006).

From the perspective of mystical experience, physical light may itself be considered a limited symbol of a higher spiritual light. What appears metaphorical to an outside observer may be regarded by the mystic as more real than ordinary sensory illumination. The validity of such interpretations consequently depends partly upon whether one accepts personal mystical experience as a legitimate source of spiritual knowledge (Sands, 2006).

Principles and Limits of Sufi Interpretation

Sands (2006) concludes that Sufi commentaries differ greatly in style but share several interpretive assumptions. First, the Qur'an is understood as a multilayered text containing meanings that cannot be exhausted by a single interpretation. This depth is frequently compared to an ocean containing unlimited treasures. Second, deeper Qur'anic knowledge may be acquired not only through transmitted reports and rational analysis but also through worship, moral discipline, spiritual purification, and divine illumination. Third, the interpreter is understood as spiritually dynamic, moving through different states and levels of awareness that may disclose different dimensions of the text.

Nevertheless, Sufi commentators did not generally regard the Qur'an's openness as permission to assign it any imaginable meaning. Interpretation could become spiritually dangerous

when it was based entirely on personal opinion, contradicted revelation, compromised divine transcendence, or encouraged beliefs inconsistent with Islamic teachings. Several Sufi scholars warned that deeper interpretations should be communicated carefully because they could be misunderstood by those unfamiliar with their terminology and spiritual context (Sands, 2006).

Sufi interpreters also attempted to establish continuity between their methods and the teachings of the Prophet, the Companions, and the early Muslim generations. Reports attributed to Ibn Mas‘ud, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, Ubayy ibn Ka‘b, Ja‘far al-Sadiq, and other early authorities were used to support the belief that the Qur’an contains inward as well as outward dimensions. The Sufi approach therefore presented itself not as a rejection of traditional commentary but as an expansion of meanings already implicit within the Qur’an and the early interpretive tradition (Sands, 2006).

In summary, the classical interpretations of Qur’an 24:35 demonstrate several complementary approaches to the concept of divine light. Some commentators understood light primarily as guidance, truth, governance, or illumination. Others affirmed light as a divine attribute while denying any resemblance between Allah and physical creation. Sufi commentators extended the symbolism to the Qur’an, Prophet Muhammad, the believing heart, human perception, moral development, spiritual knowledge, and mystical experience. Despite their differences, these interpretations agree that all genuine guidance and illumination originate from Allah, who guides whom He wills to His light.

Criticism of the Modern Muslim Ummah by the Prophet: The Glory of Faith

Quran 22:47:

And they urge you to hasten the punishment. But Allah will never fail in His promise. And indeed, a day with your Lord is like a thousand years of those which you count. The following excerpt is taken from “Exegesis of The Holy Qur’ân Commentary and Reflections” by Allamah Noorudin pg. 744-745:

“One day with your Lord is (sometimes) equal to one thousand years by your counting.” The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said that the first three centuries of Islam would be its best period, after which falsehood would spread and a period of darkness would set in that will extend to over a thousand years (Tirmidhî).

This saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) explains the verse under discussion. Those spoken of here are the opponents of truth who were to come later and who have been allowed to oppose the advancement of Islam for a thousand years.

“Haroon Ar-Rasheed (may Allah have mercy upon him) once stood looking at the sky when he saw a cloud passing by. He addressed it saying, “Rain wherever you wish, for your fruit will certainly come to me anyway.” This means that the cloud would have rained either on an Islamic land or on a non Islamic one. In the first case, Muslims would have benefitted from this rainwater in agriculture and drinking; in the second case, Muslims would have also benefitted from this rainwater in the form of Jizyah (a tax) that would be paid to them by non Muslims. This example shows the state of glory, which the Muslims reached in the past when they applied their religion and worked for it. Nowadays, Muslims are certainly required to pursue the means of glory.” (unknown source)

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Definition of *Malaika* as Forces of Nature

Pervez explains that the Arabic term *malaika* is commonly translated into English as “angels,” although he argues that the conventional religious understanding of angels differs from the broader meaning conveyed by the Qur’an. Scholars have proposed different linguistic roots for the term. Some derive it from *alkun*, which refers to communicating or conveying a message. According to this interpretation, *malaika* are messengers. The related term *alaka* may also refer to chewing something, as recorded in classical Arabic lexicons such as *Taj al-‘Arus*, *Al-Muhit*, and the writings of Ibn Faris (Pervez, pp. 1172–1173).

Other scholars connect *malaika* with the root *markun*, which signifies power, authority, or force. Al-Raghib describes *malaika* as forces entrusted with carrying out specific responsibilities. Similarly, human beings who possess authority and responsibility may be described using terms derived from the same root. Pervez considers this derivation more consistent with the wider Qur’anic presentation of *malaika* (Pervez, n.d.).

Muhammad ‘Abduh, the Egyptian scholar and coauthor of *Tafsir al-Manar*, maintained that everything in the universe possesses an underlying power or energy through which it exists, survives, and maintains equilibrium. Those who do not accept divine revelation may refer to these powers as the forces of nature, whereas the Qur’an describes them as *malaika*. From this perspective, the terminology is less important than acknowledging the existence of forces that regulate the universe according to an established order (Pervez, n.d.).

The Qur’an occasionally presents *malaika* as messengers, as indicated in Qur’an 22:75. However, delivering messages represents only one aspect of their responsibilities. They are also described as directing affairs and administering matters according to divine command (Qur’an 51:4; 79:5). Pervez

therefore argues that the derivation of *malaika* from *malkun*, meaning force or power, provides a more comprehensive explanation of their Qur'anic functions.

These forces do not possess independent authority, freedom of choice, or the ability to act according to personal preference. Rather, they perform the responsibilities assigned to them by Allah. Their actions remain entirely subject to divine command and the laws established for the operation of the universe. In this sense, *malaika* represent forces that consistently fulfill their appointed functions without deviating from Allah's instructions (Pervez, n.d.).

Pervez further interprets Qur'an 2:31 as indicating that human beings were granted knowledge of how these natural forces operate. Through knowledge and understanding, humanity possesses the capacity to control and employ these forces for constructive purposes. Within this interpretive framework, the command for the *malaika* to bow before Adam in Qur'an 2:34 symbolizes the subjection of natural forces to human beings through the knowledge and abilities granted to them by Allah.

The term *malaika* may also refer to internal or psychological forces rather than only external forces operating in the physical universe. Pervez (n.d.) interprets the descent of the *malaika*, or *nuzul al-malaika*, as the emergence of psychological influences that remove fear and uncertainty and replace them with confidence, courage, and steadfastness. Negative psychological tendencies, including despair, fear, depression, and discouragement, are associated with the influence of Iblis, whereas positive and strengthening influences are associated with the *malaika*.

Qur'an 8:12 and 9:26 are interpreted as referring to forces that strengthened the hearts of the Muslim fighters during the Battles of Badr and Hunayn. These forces provided reassurance, firmness, and emotional strength during periods of

conflict and uncertainty. Consequently, the assistance of the *malaika* may be understood as divine support operating through psychological as well as external means (Pervez).

The *malaika* are also described as forces that record human actions and bring about their appropriate consequences. This function is referenced in passages such as Qur'an 10:21 and 43:80. Elsewhere, the recording and determination of consequences are attributed directly to Allah, as in Qur'an 19:79. Pervez explains that these descriptions are not contradictory because the *malaika* operate only as agents or forces through which Allah's commands and established laws are carried out.

In summary, Pervez defines *malaika* as divinely appointed forces that operate throughout the universe and within human psychological experience. These forces perform specific duties, regulate natural processes, convey divine messages, strengthen believers, record human conduct, and bring about the consequences ordained by Allah. They possess no independent will or authority but function entirely according to the responsibilities assigned to them. Human beings, by contrast, are distinguished by their capacity for knowledge, choice, and moral responsibility.

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God, Chance Events, and the Theory of Evolution

Chance and apparently random events are central components of evolutionary theory. In general, chance refers to an event that occurs unpredictably, without an observable intention, direction, pattern, causal relationship, or natural necessity. However, unpredictability may arise in more than one way. First, an event may appear random because observers lack sufficiently detailed knowledge of the microscopic factors that establish its initial conditions. In such cases, chance reflects the inability to identify or calculate every small variable that contributes to a larger observable event. Second, an unpredictable event may result from the intersection of two or more independent chains of causation when the observer lacks precise knowledge of their origins, development, or eventual point of interaction.

Some Muslims regard the inclusion of chance in explanations of the universe and biological evolution as inconsistent with Allah's sovereignty. This position often depicts the universe as a perfectly constructed clock and Allah as the clockmaker who initiated its movement toward the Day of Judgment. In such a model, the universe operates through a fixed sequence in which every future event is already determined and, theoretically, predictable.

The author argues that a completely mechanical understanding of the universe creates serious theological difficulties. If every future event were fully determined by earlier physical conditions, human beings would possess no meaningful ability to actualize possibilities, alter circumstances, or make morally significant choices. Furthermore, presenting Allah merely as the initiator of a closed mechanical system could incorrectly imply that He passively observes a sequence that cannot be changed. Such a model would inadequately represent Allah's continuous authority over creation.

A universe entirely without chance or alternative possibilities would also undermine human freedom and moral responsibility. Human beings would not genuinely choose whether to help or harm others, accept or reject faith, or act morally or immorally. Instead, all decisions would be unavoidable consequences of predetermined conditions. Under this fatalistic model, individuals who commit wrongdoing could claim that they had no alternative because their actions had already been decreed in a manner that deprived them of genuine choice.

The author illustrates this problem through historical examples involving individuals who committed serious acts of violence. If their actions were completely predetermined, they could not meaningfully be held responsible for them. Similarly, extremists whose actions negatively influence public perceptions of Muslims would bear no genuine responsibility if they were merely performing actions that they had been compelled to perform. This approach would effectively portray Allah as directly controlling human beings like puppets and would make Him responsible for their wrongdoing. The author rejects this conclusion as inconsistent with divine justice and human accountability.

The Qur'an presents earthly life as a moral test in which human conduct has meaningful consequences. Allah created life and death to test which people are best in conduct (Qur'an 67:2). The Qur'an also teaches that believers should not expect to enter Paradise without experiencing trials similar to those faced by earlier communities (Qur'an 2:214). Moreover, Allah does not burden a person beyond his or her capacity, and each person receives the consequences of the good or evil that he or she has earned (Qur'an 2:286).

These passages indicate that human beings possess moral agency and are accountable for their voluntary conduct. Earthly

actions matter because Allah evaluates them with perfect justice on the Day of Judgment. If every human thought and action were predetermined in a manner that excluded genuine choice, then worldly testing and final judgment would lose their moral significance. It would be unjust to reward or punish people for actions over which they possessed no control.

The author therefore maintains that meaningful divine judgment requires authentic human freedom. Human beings must possess the capacity to choose between morally contrasting possibilities. Without such freedom, the Day of Judgment would resemble a trial in which individuals were evaluated for conduct they had been programmed to perform. Such a conception would be incompatible with Allah's attributes of generosity, mercy, compassion, and justice.

Historically, some Muslim scholars also rejected interpretations of divine decree that eliminated human responsibility. Al-Hasan al-Basri reportedly addressed this issue in correspondence with the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan. He argued that Allah would not openly prohibit people from committing certain actions while secretly compelling them to perform those same actions. He referred to Qur'anic passages stating that people may act as they choose and that whoever wills may believe or disbelieve (Qur'an 18:29; 41:40). Such language, according to this interpretation, would be meaningless if human beings possessed no genuine capacity to choose .

The Qur'an and the authentic teachings of the Prophet Muhammad provide moral guidance concerning the choices available to human beings. Revelation distinguishes conduct that is permitted, prohibited, recommended, or morally neutral. However, the existence of divine guidance does not necessarily imply that Allah compels every individual decision. Human

beings encounter multiple possibilities and exercise their will by choosing which possibility to actualize through conduct.

Allah holds individuals accountable when their freely chosen actions violate the moral guidance conveyed through His prophets. As the All-Knowing, Allah knows every possible choice and every actual outcome. Nevertheless, divine knowledge does not necessarily eliminate human freedom. The author argues that authentic freedom can operate only when multiple possible courses of action are available. An open future containing uncertainty and chance therefore provides the conditions in which human beings may exercise meaningful moral agency.

Human beings are not portrayed as programmed machines. They may accept or reject faith and may choose righteousness or wrongdoing. Allah is therefore not a puppeteer who forces His creatures to act and then holds them accountable for those actions. Rather, He is compassionate, merciful, and just, presenting human beings with possibilities and allowing them to distinguish between right and wrong. Within such a universe, random and chance events may occur without undermining Allah's authority.

The author further argues that Muslims who oppose evolution nevertheless accept that unpredictability has played a role in human history. The circumstances surrounding the revelation of some Qur'anic passages arose in response to particular human decisions and events. One example is the opening section of Surah 'Abasa. According to the traditional account, Prophet Muhammad was speaking with influential leaders of Makkah in the hope that they would accept the Islamic message. During this conversation, a blind man approached the Prophet seeking religious instruction. The Prophet momentarily gave greater attention to the influential leaders and turned away

from the man. The opening verses of the chapter were then revealed as a correction of this response (Qur'an 80:1–10).

This incident demonstrates that human decisions and unplanned encounters contributed to the historical circumstances in which particular revelations were received. The Qur'an responded to events involving human intention, choice, and interaction. The author consequently argues that it would be inconsistent to accept unpredictability in human and religious history while categorically rejecting its possible role in biological history.

Chance, in this account, should not be understood as a power independent of Allah. Rather, it describes events whose exact outcomes are not mechanically fixed or fully predictable from a human perspective. The existence of such events permits variation, alternative possibilities, and meaningful human freedom while remaining within the universe created and sustained by Allah.

Accordingly, chance and divine sovereignty need not be considered mutually exclusive. Random variation may function as part of the processes through which life develops, just as unpredictability operates within human history and moral decision-making. The author concludes that chance is an unavoidable component of an evolving universe in which creatures possess genuine agency and in which life serves as a meaningful test of moral character

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Hidden Treasure: Allah's Relationship with His Creation

According to Ibn Kathir,

“Al Alamin is plural for Alam, which encompasses everything in existence except Allah. The word ‘Alam is itself a plural word, having no singular form.”

Why is the creation called 'Alam?

Alam is derived from Alamah, that is because it is a sign testifying to the existence of its Creator and to His Oneness.”
(Tafsir ibn Kathir pg. 43-44)

“Muslims believe that God is the only true reality and sole source of all creation. Everything including its creatures are just a derivative reality created out of love and mercy by God's command,”...”Be,” and it is.” and that the purpose of existence is to worship or to know God. It is believed that God created everything for a divine purpose; the universe governed by fixed laws that ensure the harmonious working of all things. Everything within the universe, including inanimate objects, praises God, and is in this sense understood as a muslim. An exception are humans, who are endowed with free-will and must live voluntarily in accordance with these laws to live to find peace and reproduce God's benevolence in their own society to live in accordance with the nature of all things, known as surrender to God in the Islamic sense.”

Hadith Qudsi:

I was a hidden treasure; I loved to be known. Hence I created the world so that I would be known The following excerpt is taken from:

The Concept of God, the Origin of the World, and the Image of the Human in the World Religions (pg. 109) “According to Ibn Arabi's school of wahdat al-wujud (Unity of Being), the world is a unity that appears as a multiplicity, and it is this facade that

is both deceptive and brings about forgetfulness. He who has the eyes and the will should transcend the manifestations (tajalliyat) and see the Oneness that lies at the heart of all the creatures.” “Semnani’s school of the wahdat al shuhud (Unity of Witnessing) also advocates the Oneness of God and the underlying unity, though not by transcending the world of multiplicity but by seeing the unity within it. As the Quran says, “Whosoever sees, there is the face of God”.”

“The image of man, according to Sufis, is that of a crescent, which symbolically represents receptivity and passivity. The moon is dark, and had it not been for the sun, it would not have been illuminated. And so God is the sun, from whom all light and love emanates, and man is the moon, within which divine light is reflected.”

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Ibn Arabi (1165-1240), the Father of Evolution

Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ‘Arabī (1165–1240) was a prominent Qur’anic interpreter, poet, writer, and Sufī thinker born in Muslim Spain. By approximately 25 years of age, he had developed a reputation as an accomplished scholar and spiritual teacher. Between 1193 and 1198, he composed *‘Uqlat al-Mustawfiz (The Controller of the Wanderer)*. Following intense criticism of his teachings in the Islamic West, Ibn ‘Arabī departed Spain around 1200 and travelled to Mecca. He subsequently journeyed throughout the Muslim world before permanently settling in Damascus.

Some interpretations of Ibn ‘Arabī’s writings suggest that he described creation as developing through a gradual hierarchy of natural forms. According to this understanding, minerals were followed by plants, plants by animals, and animals by human beings. Ibn ‘Arabī reportedly identified transitional boundaries between these categories: the truffle represented the final stage of mineral existence and the beginning of plant life; the date palm connected vegetation with animal life; and the ape represented the boundary between animals and humanity (Ibn ‘Arabī)

Within this framework, the culmination of creation was not merely the biological human being but the “Perfect Man.” Ibn ‘Arabī associated the Perfect Man with humanity’s capacity to serve as God’s vicegerent or representative within the universe. Human beings were considered capable of this position because they embodied the realities of creation and reflected the divine names. Nevertheless, Ibn ‘Arabī did not regard every person as having attained this level of spiritual and moral perfection. Rather, vicegerency was associated with the full realization of human potential (Ibn ‘Arabī)

Ibn ‘Arabī distinguished the Perfect Man from what he described as the “animal man.” The animal man possessed an

outwardly human appearance but remained governed by characteristics associated with animal existence. He compared the relationship between the animal man and the Perfect Man to the relationship between the ape and the ordinary human being. From this perspective, humanity existed along different degrees of realization: individuals who attained spiritual perfection fulfilled the intended human form, whereas those who failed to do so expressed humanity only in proportion to their level of development (Ibn ‘Arabī)

Adam was presented as the first human being created in the complete or perfect human form. His creation demonstrated the highest potential of the human species. Therefore, Ibn ‘Arabī’s account may be understood primarily as a description of ontological, moral, and spiritual development rather than as a biological theory identical to modern evolutionary science. The movement from “animal man” to Perfect Man represented humanity’s progression toward the qualities required for divine vicegerency.

Some modern writers have interpreted Ibn ‘Arabī’s references to apes, animal men, and different levels of human development as evidence that medieval Muslim scholars recognized the possible existence of intermediate hominoid forms. According to this interpretation, Ibn ‘Arabī’s “animal man” may be compared with extinct hominin groups later classified as *Australopithecus*, *Homo erectus*, *Homo ergaster*, Neanderthals, and Cro-Magnons. These comparisons, however, constitute a modern retrospective interpretation of Ibn ‘Arabī’s metaphysical terminology rather than a direct scientific classification made by Ibn ‘Arabī himself.

This interpretation has also been connected with Stephen Jay Gould’s questions regarding the existence of numerous hominin species and the increasingly humanlike appearance of certain later species, particularly *Homo erectus*.

Supporters of this reading argue that Ibn ‘Arabī raised comparable questions centuries before Darwin and modern palaeoanthropology. They further maintain that artistic reconstructions of human evolutionary development resemble Ibn ‘Arabī’s proposed progression from animal existence to fully developed humanity.

It has also been suggested that Muslim scholars may have reached some conclusions about earlier human populations through observation rather than speculation alone. Al-Bīrūnī, for example, reportedly examined unusually large bones discovered in mountain caves in the region of Media. He described them as belonging to ancient races of people and stated that some were as large as, or larger than, camel bones (Al-Bīrūnī). Although such reports demonstrate an early interest in ancient remains, they cannot, without additional evidence, be treated as equivalent to modern palaeontological or archaeological analysis.

Overall, Ibn ‘Arabī’s writings present creation as an ordered progression culminating in the Perfect Man, who possesses the spiritual capacity to act as God’s vicegerent. Although certain authors interpret this framework as an anticipation of biological evolution and the discovery of extinct hominins, Ibn ‘Arabī’s original discussion appears to combine cosmology, metaphysics, spirituality, and moral anthropology. Accordingly, comparisons between his thought and modern evolutionary theory should be presented as interpretive parallels rather than as evidence that he formulated a scientific theory of human evolution in the modern sense.

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Knowledge

96:3

Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful,-

96:4 He Who taught (the use of) the pen (2021-11-21 02:02)

He Who taught (the use of) the pen,-

The symbol of a permanent
revelation is the mystic Pen and
the mystic Record.

See n. 5593 to 68:1.

The Arabic words for “teach” and
“knowledge” are from the same root. It
is impossible to produce in a
Translation the complete orchestral
harmony of the words for “read”,
“teach”, “pen” (which implies reading,
writing, books, study, research),
“knowledge” (including science, self
knowledge, spiritual understanding),
and “proclaim”, an alternative meaning
of the word for “to read”.

This proclaiming or reading implies not

only the duty of blazoning forth Allah's message, as going, with the prophetic office, but also the duty of promulgation and wide dissemination of the Truth by all who read and understand it.

The comprehensive meaning of qara' refers not only to a particular person and occasion but also gives a universal direction. And this kind of comprehensive meaning, as we have seen, runs throughout the Quran -for those, who will understand.

The following excerpt is taken from "Islamic Theory of Evolution" by T.O. Shanavas pg. 62:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

"Seek knowledge; for its acquisition is fear of God, its pursuit is worship, its discussion is prayer, search for it is holy war, its propagation is charity, its teaching is fraternity. For it is the index of right and wrong; it is the lighthouse of the road to Paradise. It provides consolation in loneliness, friendship in estrangement, fidelity through thick and thin, a protective arm against enemies, rapprochement towards foreigners, decor among friends [and] through knowledge, God is obeyed and worshipped. In knowledge the good is revealed, loved and

implemented, for it is the prius of action, the first principle of every good deed”²

1. Al-Faruqi, I.R. The Cultural Atlas of Islam, p. 313.

The following excerpt is taken from “Maariful Hadith” under “Ilm/ Knowledge” pg. 202-203:

(311 859) Sayyidina Abu ad-Darda reported that he heard Allah’s Messenger (saw) say, “If anyone will walk on a path to learn (religion) then Allah will let him walk on one of the roads of Paradise in return for that.” (And he also said,) “The angels of Allah lower their wings in expression of pleasure (respect and honour) for the seekers of knowledge. And for the scholar of religion, all the creatures of the heaven and earth and even the fish in the depth of water seek forgiveness of Allah. And, the excellence of the scholar over the worshippers is like the excellence of the full moon over all the stars in the heaven. The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets and the Prophets did not leave behind dinars and dirhams, but they left behind only knowledge. So, he who acquired it has indeed acquired a great success, a great good fortune.”

(Musnad Ahmad, Jami’ Tirmizi, Sunan Abu Dawood, Sunan Ibn Majah, Musnad Darami)

Commentary: In fact, the Prophet (saw) have brought only that knowledge which serves as a guidance to Allah’s creatures, and that alone is their legacy. They have brought that from Allah and that, as we have stated earlier is the most valuable asset of this universe. Tabarani has related in Mu’jam Awsat that Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) once passed through a market where people were occupied in their business. He asked them, “What is wrong with you? You are occupied here while the Prophet’s legacy is being distributed in the mosque. They

rushed towards the mosque, but came back to say, “Nothing is being given out there. Some people are occupied in salah, some other in reciting the Qur’an and yet others describe the lawful and unlawful – that is, injunctions of Shari’ah.” Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah said, “Exactly this is the Prophet’s legacy and what he has left behind.”(Jama’al Fawa’id vl p37)

(511 861) Sayyidina Abu Umamah (RA) reported that Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “Allah showers His Mercy on, and the angels and the dwellers of the heavens and the earth including ants in their nests and fish (in water) pray for, the creature who teaches men that which is good and religion.” (Jami’Tirmizi) (Ibid, pg. 203) 18:109:

Sea upon Sea of Knowledge (2020-10-09 20:03)

Say: “If the ocean were ink (wherewith to write out) the words of my Lord, sooner would the ocean be exhausted than would the words of my Lord, even if we added another ocean like it, for its aid.”

Quran 18:109:

The following excerpt is taken from “The Message of the Quran” by Muhammad Asad pg. 582:

SAY: “If all the sea were ink for my Sustainer’s words, the sea would indeed be exhausted ere my Sustainer’s words are exhausted! And [thus it would be] if we were to add to it sea upon sea.” 105

Note 105:

Lit., “if We were to produce the like of it (i.e., of the sea] in addition”. It is to be noted that, as pointed out by Zamakhshari, the term al-bahr (“the sea”) is used here in a generic sense, comprising all the seas that exist: hence, the expression “the like of it” has been rendered by me as “sea upon sea”.

The following excerpt is taken from “Exegesis of The Holy Qur’ân Commentary and Reflections” by Allamah Noorudin pg. 107-109:

“The seven heavens, the earth and all those inhabiting them (the heavens and the earth), extol His Glory. In fact, there is not even a single thing but glorifies Him with his true and perfect praise, but you do not understand their glorification.” (17:44)

The glorification by the “seven heavens, the earth and all those inhabiting them” (17:44) is in the words that are derived from Allâh’s sea of words, from the words of the Most High, and they are inexhaustible. The objects of the universe, including the non-living ones, exchange among themselves the secrets of the cosmos in words that have their own letters and sounds that have no limits and no boundaries.

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4.

Shanavas, T.O. (2005). Islamic Theory of Evolution: The
Missing Link between Darwin and

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5. Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the
Quran. (surah 96 verse 1)

[1]QuranArabic with English Translation & Commentary
(Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali,

Free Download(quran4u.com)

Life as Evidence of God's Unity and Creative Power

The Qur'an presents the origin, continuation, and renewal of creation as evidence of Allah's exclusive divine authority. Qur'an 27:64 asks people to consider who initiates creation, reproduces it, and provides sustenance from the heavens and the earth. The verse challenges those who associate other deities with Allah to present convincing evidence for their claims.

In his commentary on this verse, Ünal describes life as one of the clearest signs of God's unity. Life is presented as a source of divine generosity, an expression of divine compassion, and an extraordinarily subtle manifestation of God's creative artistry (Ünal, pp. 748–749). The complexity, diversity, and organization visible in living organisms therefore point toward a unified and purposeful creative power.

Morrison similarly uses a series of metaphors to illustrate the remarkable nature of life. He compares life to a sculptor because it forms and shapes living creatures, and to an artist because it produces the colors, designs, and patterns visible in plants, fruits, flowers, and birds. The appearance of every leaf, the coloration of fruit, and the plumage of birds demonstrate the extraordinary variety and beauty found throughout the living world (Morrison, pp. 31–36).

Life may also be compared to a musician because living creatures communicate through organized sounds. Birds sing distinctive calls, while insects use numerous sounds to communicate with members of their species. Human beings possess an even greater capacity to organize sound into language, music, and other complex forms of expression. According to Morrison, this ability distinguishes humanity and demonstrates the advanced organization associated with conscious life (Morrison, pp. 31–36).

Morrison also characterizes life as an engineer. Living organisms possess highly coordinated anatomical systems, including muscles, joints, limbs, nerves, hearts, and circulatory structures. The legs of insects, the continuous operation of the heart, and the coordination of nervous and muscular systems demonstrate a level of functional integration comparable to sophisticated engineering. Each component performs a particular role while contributing to the survival and activity of the entire organism (Morrison, pp. 31–36).

Life also resembles a chemist because biological organisms produce tastes, fragrances, pigments, nutrients, and other substances through complex chemical processes. Plants transform water and carbon dioxide into sugars and structural materials by using energy from sunlight. During this process, oxygen is released into the atmosphere, supporting animal life. Biological chemistry therefore establishes an interdependent relationship between plants and animals and contributes to the continuation of ecosystems (Morrison, pp. 31–36).

Furthermore, life may be understood as a historian because evidence of earlier living organisms is preserved in geological formations and fossil records. These remains provide a chronological account of biological history, although their meaning depends upon careful scientific investigation and interpretation. The natural world therefore contains a record of life's development across extensive periods of time (Morrison, pp. 31–36).

Living organisms also demonstrate remarkable systems of protection, nourishment, and reproduction. Eggs frequently contain sufficient nutrients to sustain developing organisms, while many animals provide care and food for their offspring. Mammals produce milk that is specifically suited to the immediate nutritional requirements of their young. These biological arrangements appear to anticipate the needs of new

life and prepare offspring for survival after birth (Morrison, pp. 31–36).

Morrison distinguishes living organisms from nonliving matter by emphasizing that matter ordinarily acts according to physical and chemical laws. Atoms and molecules respond to forces such as gravity, temperature, electricity, and chemical attraction. Matter does not appear to possess intention or initiative. Life, however, produces highly organized structures, adaptive processes, consciousness, and reproduction. From Morrison's perspective, the distinctive activities of life cannot be adequately described merely as the passive behaviour of matter (Morrison, pp. 31–36).

Although scientific investigation has greatly expanded human knowledge of cells, atoms, energy, and biological systems, the fundamental nature of life remains difficult to define completely. Life does not possess weight or dimensions in the same manner as physical objects, yet it enables matter to become organized, conscious, and capable of understanding. Morrison argues that life is the foundation of consciousness and the means through which human beings acquire knowledge of themselves, the natural world, and the signs of God within creation (Morrison, pp. 31–36).

Taken together, these reflections present life as powerful evidence of divine unity, wisdom, compassion, and creativity. The organization of living systems, the interdependence of organisms, the preservation of biological history, and the emergence of consciousness all demonstrate the extraordinary character of life. Within this theological interpretation, life is not viewed as an independent creative force but as one of the greatest manifestations of Allah's power and purposeful design.

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The Term and Concept of Jinn

Muhammad Asad explains that the Qur'anic meaning of *jinn* should be distinguished from the concept found in Arabian folklore, where the term commonly became associated with demons and supernatural creatures. According to Asad, this popular understanding obscures the original linguistic meaning of the word. The term is derived from the Arabic root *janna*, which means to conceal, cover, or envelop in darkness. For example, Qur'an 6:76 uses this root when describing the night covering Abraham in darkness. Classical Arabic scholars therefore understood *al-jinn* as referring broadly to that which is hidden from human perception, including beings, forces, or realities that cannot ordinarily be detected through the physical senses but may nevertheless possess an objective existence (Asad, pp. 1252–1253).

Within the Qur'an, the term *jinn* may carry several related meanings. Its most common usage refers to spiritual beings or forces that are imperceptible because they do not possess a material form accessible to ordinary human senses. In Asad's interpretation, this broad category may include satanic beings and influences, as well as angels and angelic forces, because both are concealed from direct sensory perception. Qur'anic descriptions of the jinn as being created from fire, scorching wind, or a mingled flame should therefore be understood as figurative expressions emphasizing their non-corporeal nature rather than as literal descriptions of physical composition (Asad, pp. 1252–1253).

Asad also connects these descriptions with a prophetic tradition stating that angels were created from light. Since light and fire are closely related forms of energy, he interprets these expressions as symbolic indications of a mode of existence fundamentally different from ordinary material life. In this sense, Qur'anic references to fire and light communicate the

subtle, invisible, and nonphysical nature of such beings (Asad, pp. 1252–1253).

The term *jinn* may also refer to sentient organisms whose structure and biological composition differ so greatly from those of human beings that they normally remain beyond human perception. Asad argues that human knowledge of the possible forms of life is extremely limited. The inability to observe a particular being or phenomenon does not, by itself, prove that it does not exist. The Qur’anic concept of *al-ghayb*, or the realm beyond human perception, leaves open the possibility of realities and forms of life that are inaccessible to ordinary observation (Asad, pp. 1252–1253).

This interpretation is further connected with the Qur’anic description of God as the Lord and Sustainer of all worlds. According to Asad, the plural form suggests the existence of multiple realms or orders of creation in addition to the world directly observable by human beings. These worlds may contain forms of life different from humanity and from one another. They may also interact with or permeate the visible world in ways that human beings cannot fully understand (Asad, pp. 1252–1253).

Asad proposes that beings with entirely different biological or existential characteristics might come into contact with the human world only under rare and exceptional circumstances. Such encounters could produce unusual or unexplained experiences. Over time, human imagination and folklore may have interpreted these phenomena as ghosts, demons, spirits, or other supernatural apparitions. These folkloric explanations, however, should not necessarily be identified with the Qur’an’s more complex use of the term *jinn* (Asad, pp. 1252–1253).

In some Qur’anic passages, *jinn* may refer to hidden forces operating within nature or human nature. These forces are not directly observable in themselves but can be recognized

through their consequences and effects. Asad suggests that this meaning may apply to passages such as Qur'an 37:158 and possibly 6:100 and 114:6. In these cases, the term may represent unseen powers or influences rather than a distinct category of embodied beings (Asad, pp. 1252–1253).

In other passages, references to rational or morally responsible jinn may function as symbolic personifications of humanity's relationship with satanic influences. Such language can illustrate how individuals or communities respond to temptation, corruption, and destructive spiritual forces. Alternatively, the term may serve as a metonym for human involvement with supposed occult powers and associated practices, including magic, necromancy, astrology, divination, and soothsaying. The Qur'an consistently condemns such practices because they encourage deception, superstition, and dependence upon powers other than God (Asad, pp. 1252–1253).

Asad further suggests that certain references to jinn, particularly in Qur'an 46:29–32 and 72:1–15, may describe beings or groups that were not inherently invisible but were previously unknown or unseen by the people encountering them. In this interpretation, the word may indicate unfamiliar beings rather than supernatural entities in the conventional folkloric sense (Asad, pp. 1252–1253).

Finally, some Qur'anic accounts involving jinn may refer to legends already familiar to the original audience of the Qur'an. In such cases, Asad argues that the purpose of the passage is not to affirm every element of the legend as literal history. Rather, the Qur'an employs familiar narratives to communicate moral, spiritual, or theological lessons. The central importance of these passages therefore lies in the truths they illustrate rather than in the legendary details through which those truths are expressed (Asad, pp. 1252–1253).

Overall, Asad interprets *jinn* as a flexible Qur'anic term referring to various realities hidden from ordinary human perception. Depending on the context, it may describe spiritual beings, unseen organisms, forces of nature, satanic influences, occult practices, unfamiliar peoples, or symbolic figures within moral narratives. His interpretation emphasizes that the Qur'anic concept is broader and more nuanced than the simplified image of demons found in popular folklore

References:

Asad, Muhammad (1980). The Message of the Quran.

Quran 18:109:

The following excerpt is taken from “The Message of the Quran” by Muhammad Asad pg. 582:

SAY: “If all the sea were ink for my Sustainer’s words, the sea would indeed be exhausted ere my Sustainer’s words are exhausted!

And [thus it would be] if we were to add to it sea upon sea.”
105

Note 105:

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The glorification by the “seven heavens, the earth and all those inhabiting them” (17:44) is in the words that are derived from Allâh’s sea of words, from the words of the Most High, and they are inexhaustible. The objects of the universe, including the non-living ones, exchange among themselves the secrets of the cosmos in words that have their own letters and sounds that have no limits and no boundaries.

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Quranic Initials – Muqatta’at

Qur’anic Initials: The *Muqatta’at*

Approximately one-quarter of the Qur’an’s chapters begin with individual Arabic letters or combinations of letters known as the *muqatta’at*, meaning “disjointed letters.” They are also sometimes called *fawātiḥ*, or “openings,” because they appear at the beginning of particular surahs. Fourteen of the 28 letters in the Arabic alphabet occur in these openings, either individually or in combinations of two, three, four, or five letters. These letters are recited by their individual names rather than pronounced as complete words, as in *Alif Lām Mīm* and *Ḥā Mīm* (Asad, pp. 1250–1252).

The meaning and purpose of the *muqatta’at* have remained uncertain since the earliest period of Qur’anic interpretation. No authenticated report indicates that the Prophet Muhammad explained these letters, and there is no record of his Companions asking him about their meaning. Nevertheless, the Companions regarded them as integral parts of the surahs in which they occur and recited them accordingly. Their consistent inclusion challenges the suggestion made by some Western scholars that the letters represented the initials of scribes or Companions involved in recording and compiling the Qur’an (Asad, pp. 1250–1252).

Some early Muslims and later Qur’anic commentators proposed that the letters were abbreviations for particular words, phrases, or divine attributes. Scholars attempted to reconstruct possible meanings from the letters, but the large number of potential combinations made such interpretations highly speculative. Since numerous words and expressions could be formed from the same letters, these explanations could not be established with certainty (Asad, pp. 1250–1252).

Other interpreters connected the *muqattaʿāt* with the numerical values traditionally assigned to Arabic letters. Through such calculations, they attempted to identify hidden meanings, predictions, or esoteric messages. Asad considers these numerological interpretations unreliable because they depend upon subjective methods and can generate numerous contradictory conclusions (Asad, pp. 1250–1252).

A more widely discussed interpretation is based on the structure of Arabic words and the themes that appear at the beginning of surahs containing these letters. Arabic words are generally formed from combinations of one to five letters, and the *muqattaʿāt* appear in the same numerical patterns. Furthermore, the surahs beginning with these letter-symbols introduce the subject of divine revelation either explicitly or indirectly (Asad, pp. 1250–1252).

Surahs 29, 30, and 68 may initially appear to be exceptions to this pattern, but Asad argues that they also contain references to revelation in their opening passages. Surah 29, *Al-ʿAnkabūt*, begins by referring to the declaration of faith, which necessarily involves belief in God and His revealed messages. Surah 30, *Al-Rūm*, opens with a prophecy concerning the future Byzantine victory, thereby demonstrating revealed knowledge. Surah 68, *Al-Qalam*, begins with a reference to the pen, which symbolizes writing and the communication of revelation (Asad, pp. 1250–1252).

On the basis of these observations, scholars such as al-Mubarrad, Ibn Ḥazm, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī, al-Bayḍāwī, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Ibn Kathīr suggested that the *muqattaʿāt* draw attention to the miraculous character of the Qurʾān. Although the Qurʾān originates from a reality beyond ordinary human perception, it is communicated through the same Arabic letters and sounds used in everyday speech. The letters may therefore emphasize that the Qurʾān is composed of familiar

linguistic materials while remaining beyond human ability to imitate in its total form, meaning, and expression (Asad, pp. 1250–1252).

This explanation, however, does not completely resolve the issue. Many surahs begin with explicit discussions of revelation without being preceded by disjointed letters. More importantly, no authoritative evidence directly confirms that the letters were intended to demonstrate the Qur'an's linguistic inimitability. Although the interpretation is meaningful and consistent with certain features of the Qur'anic text, it ultimately remains conjectural (Asad, [Year], pp. 1250–1252).

Asad therefore concludes that the precise meaning of the *muqatta'āt* remains unknown. This cautious position appears consistent with the attitude attributed to the four Rightly Guided Caliphs. A statement traditionally associated with Abū Bakr expresses the idea that every divine scripture contains an element of mystery and that the mystery of the Qur'an is represented by the openings of certain surahs. Accordingly, the *muqatta'āt* may be recognized as an intentional and meaningful part of the Qur'an, even though their complete significance remains beyond human knowledge (Asad, pp. 1250–1252).

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Self-Subjectivity of the Natural World: The Great Trust

According to T.O. Shanavas,

“Moreover, the Quran substantiates that natural events such as thunder, fire, and wind have self and subjectivity: “And the thunder extols His praise, and the angels are in awe of Him...”

(13:13). The subjectivity of fire is well documented in other verses also. When Abraham was cast into fire, Allah said “...O fire, be you a coolness and a safety for Abraham.” (21:69). A verse relating to Solomon reads: “So We subjected the wind to him [Solomon]; it ran softly at his command to wherever he pleased.” (38:36) These verses guided Jalaluddin Rumi to write: “Air, and earth and water and fire are (His) slaves. With you and me they are dead, but with thy God they are alive.”

(Islamic Theory of Evolution, pg. 182)

The Divine Trust

Qur'an 33:72 states that Allah offered the *amānah*, or Trust, to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains. These immense creations declined to assume it because they feared being unable to fulfill its obligations. Humanity, however, accepted the responsibility, despite its tendency toward injustice and ignorance.

The broader context of the surah emphasizes respect for the Messenger of Allah, obedience to his teachings, and adherence to the commands of Allah and His Messenger. In the concluding section of the surah, this responsibility of obedience is described through the term *amānah*. The use of this term indicates that religious obligations are not merely commands but a sacred trust placed upon human beings.

The Meaning of *Amānah*

Early Qur'anic commentators among the Companions, their successors, and later scholars offered several explanations of the term *amānah*. Some interpreted it as referring to specific responsibilities, such as observing Islamic legal obligations, protecting chastity, safeguarding property entrusted to one's care, maintaining ritual purity, performing prayer, paying *zakāh*, fasting, and completing the pilgrimage. The majority of commentators, however, concluded that the term encompasses the whole of religious responsibility and conduct.

Al-Qurṭubī maintained that all aspects of religious life are included within the Trust. Similarly, *Tafsīr Maṣḥarī* defines *amānah* as the complete body of obligations and prohibitions established by the Sharī'ah. Abū Ḥayyān, writing in *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*, explains that the term includes everything with which a person has been entrusted by divine law, including duties, prohibitions, and responsibilities relating to both worldly life and the Hereafter. According to this interpretation, the entire Sharī'ah constitutes the Divine Trust.

The *amānah* may therefore be understood as humanity's responsibility to accept and obey the injunctions of the Sharī'ah. Those who fulfill these obligations to the best of their ability are promised the eternal blessings of Paradise, whereas those who deliberately violate or neglect them may become subject to punishment.

Some early commentators understood the Trust more specifically as the human capacity to accept moral and religious accountability. This capacity depends upon reason, consciousness, and freedom of choice. It enables human beings to progress spiritually and become worthy of serving as Allah's vicegerents on earth. Other created beings, regardless of their greatness, do not possess the same opportunity to move beyond the stations assigned to them. The Qur'an expresses this

principle by stating that every created being has an appointed position (Qur'an 37:164).

Under this interpretation, the various explanations of *amānah* are complementary rather than contradictory. The Trust includes divine obligations themselves, as well as the intellectual, spiritual, and moral capacity required to fulfill them.

The Trust Within the Human Heart

A narration reported in the collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim and in the *Musnad* of Aḥmad describes the Trust as something placed within the hearts of believers. According to Ḥudhayfah, the Prophet Muhammad explained that the *amānah* was first established in the hearts of faithful people. The Qur'an was then revealed, after which believers learned their responsibilities from the Qur'an and their practical implementation from the Sunnah.

The same narration warns that a time would come when the Trust would gradually be removed from people's hearts. A person might awaken and discover that only a faint trace of trustworthiness remained. The Prophet compared this condition to the mark left by a burning ember that rolls across a person's skin: the ember disappears, but a swollen mark remains. Eventually, people would continue entering contracts and conducting transactions, but few would fulfill their responsibilities. Trustworthy individuals would become so rare that people would speak admiringly of the existence of even one reliable person within an entire community.

This narration indicates that *amānah* is closely connected with the spiritual condition of the heart. It is the inward quality that enables individuals to fulfill the religious, ethical, and social responsibilities imposed upon them.

A narration attributed to ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Amr similarly reports that the Prophet identified four qualities whose possession prevents a person from being a true loser, even when deprived of worldly wealth. These qualities are safeguarding trusts, speaking truthfully, maintaining good character, and earning lawful sustenance. Trustworthiness is thus presented as one of the central qualities of a faithful and morally upright person.

How the Trust Was Offered

Qur’an 33:72 describes Allah as offering the Trust to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains. This raises the question of how apparently inanimate creations could understand an offer or respond to it.

Some early commentators interpreted the passage figuratively. They compared it with *Qur’an* 59:21, which states that if the *Qur’an* had been sent down upon a mountain, the mountain would have humbled itself and split apart out of fear of Allah. According to this interpretation, the offer of the Trust illustrates the enormous weight of religious accountability rather than describing a literal conversation with the heavens, earth, and mountains.

Most Muslim scholars, however, understood the event as an actual occurrence. They noted that *Qur’an* 59:21 explicitly introduces a hypothetical situation through the word “if,” whereas *Qur’an* 33:72 presents the offering of the Trust as a completed event. In the absence of clear evidence requiring a metaphorical interpretation, they maintained that the passage should be understood according to its apparent meaning.

The objection that inanimate beings lack awareness is also answered through other *Qur’anic* passages. *Qur’an* 17:44 states that everything in creation glorifies and praises Allah, although human beings may not understand the manner of that glorification. Recognizing Allah as Creator and praising Him

imply a form of consciousness appropriate to each created being. Therefore, Allah could address the heavens, the earth, and the mountains and enable them to respond in whatever manner He willed.

According to the majority position, the Trust was genuinely offered, and these creations genuinely expressed their inability or unwillingness to bear its responsibility. Their response may have occurred through speech or through another form of communication made possible by Allah.

The Offer Was Voluntary

The refusal of the heavens, earth, and mountains did not constitute disobedience because the Trust was offered as a choice rather than imposed as a mandatory command. This situation differs from Qur'an 41:11, in which Allah commanded the heavens and the earth to submit willingly or unwillingly, and they responded that they came willingly. In that instance, compliance was obligatory. In the case of the Trust, however, the created beings were permitted to accept or decline the responsibility.

Reports attributed to Ibn 'Abbās, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Mujāhid, and other early authorities explain that Allah offered the Trust first to the heavens, then to the earth, and afterward to the mountains. They were informed that successful fulfillment of the Trust would bring a magnificent reward and nearness to Allah, while failure would result in punishment. These creations acknowledged that they were already obedient to Allah but considered themselves unable to bear a responsibility involving the possibility of failure and punishment. They therefore declined it out of humility and fear rather than rebellion.

A report cited by al-Qurṭubī through al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī states that Allah subsequently presented the Trust to Adam.

Adam asked about the consequences attached to it and was informed that fulfilling it would result in divine pleasure, nearness to Allah, and eternal Paradise, whereas neglecting it would result in punishment. Desiring nearness to Allah, Adam accepted the responsibility. Shortly afterward, however, Satan caused him to commit the well-known error that resulted in his departure from Paradise.

The Time of the Offering

The narration attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās suggests that the Trust was offered to the heavens, earth, and mountains before Adam’s creation. After Adam was created, Allah informed him that these great creations had declined the responsibility because of its weight.

The offering of the Trust also appears to have preceded the primordial covenant referred to as the Covenant of *Alast*, in which Allah asked humanity, “Am I not your Lord?” The covenant may be understood as one stage in humanity’s acceptance of the Trust because it represents a solemn acknowledgment of Allah’s lordship and a commitment to fulfill the responsibilities resulting from that acknowledgment.

The Trust and Human Vicegerency

Allah had decreed that Adam would serve as His vicegerent on earth. This vicegerency required the ability to accept and implement divine commands. The purpose of human vicegerency is to establish Allah’s guidance on earth and encourage creation to live according to divine injunctions. Consequently, the capacity to carry the Trust was an essential requirement for Adam’s earthly role.

Adam therefore accepted the Trust despite knowing that the heavens, earth, and mountains had considered its burden too great. His acceptance was connected with the divine purpose

for which humanity was created and with the possibility of attaining spiritual advancement and nearness to Allah.

Humanity as Unjust and Ignorant

The conclusion of Qur'an 33:72 describes the human being as *ẓalūm* and *jahūl*. The term *ẓalūm* may refer to one who commits injustice against oneself, while *jahūl* may describe one who fails to recognize the consequences of one's actions. At first glance, the verse might appear to condemn Adam or humanity generally for accepting a responsibility beyond human ability. However, other Qur'anic teachings indicate that such an absolute interpretation would be inappropriate.

Adam was a prophet protected and guided by Allah. He ultimately fulfilled the responsibility entrusted to him, was appointed as Allah's vicegerent on earth, and was honored when the angels were commanded to prostrate before him. His final rank was not inferior to that of the angels. Therefore, the description cannot reasonably be understood as an unconditional condemnation of Adam.

Likewise, the description cannot apply without qualification to all humanity. Human history includes prophets, righteous believers, and devoted servants of Allah who fulfilled the requirements of the Trust. Their spiritual excellence was so great that even angels admired their conduct. Because of such individuals, the Qur'an declares that Allah has honored the children of Adam (Qur'an 17:70).

The terms *ẓalūm* and *jahūl* therefore describe those members of humanity who failed to fulfill the Trust. Since a large proportion of human beings neglected or violated their responsibilities, the characteristics were attributed to humanity collectively. This form of general attribution does not imply that every individual is equally guilty.

According to interpretations attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās, Ibn Jubayr, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and other authorities, these terms refer particularly to disbelievers, hypocrites, transgressors, evildoers, and sinful Muslims who fail to obey the commands of the Sharī‘ah. Their injustice consists of harming themselves through disobedience, while their ignorance lies in disregarding the ultimate consequences of their actions.

Some Sufi scholars offered another interpretation, suggesting that the terms may convey an affectionate description of humanity’s spiritual naïveté. Overwhelmed by love for the Creator and the desire to attain nearness to Him, the human being accepted the Trust without fully considering its dangers. According to this interpretation, humanity’s acceptance resulted not simply from pride or recklessness but from an intense longing for divine proximity.

The Consequences of Accepting the Trust

Qur’an 33:73 explains the eventual consequences of humanity’s acceptance of the Trust. The Arabic letter *lām* appearing at the beginning of the verse indicates an outcome rather than an intended purpose. In Arabic grammar, this is known as the *lām al-‘āqibah*, which identifies the eventual result of an action. It does not mean that Allah offered the Trust for the purpose of punishing people. Rather, punishment and mercy emerged as consequences of the different ways in which human beings responded to their responsibility.

Humanity consequently became divided into two principal groups. The first consists of disbelievers, hypocrites, and others who rebel against Allah’s commands and betray the Trust. Their failure to uphold their responsibility makes them deserving of punishment.

The second group consists of believing men and women who fulfill the Trust through obedience to divine guidance.

Although they may commit mistakes, they remain receptive to repentance and divine forgiveness. Allah therefore accepts their repentance and treats them with mercy.

This division further supports the conclusion that the descriptions *ẓalūm* and *jahūl* do not apply equally to every human being. They refer primarily to those who betray the Divine Trust, whereas sincere believers who attempt to fulfill it are promised mercy, forgiveness, and reward.

In summary, the *amānah* offered in Qur'an 33:72 represents the comprehensive responsibility of moral choice, religious accountability, and obedience to divine revelation. Humanity's acceptance of this responsibility created the possibility of attaining vicegerency, spiritual perfection, and closeness to Allah. At the same time, it introduced the danger of disobedience, self-injustice, and punishment. The Trust therefore reflects both the exceptional dignity granted to humanity and the seriousness of the responsibilities accompanying that dignity.

Sins are forgiven by Taubah (Repentance) alone

Quran 4:31:

If you avoid the major sins which you are forbidden, We will remove from you your lesser sins and admit you to a noble entrance [into Paradise].

The following excerpt is taken from “Maariful Quran” Volume 2 pg. 405-406:

Major Sins are forgiven by Taubah alone

From the verse, we find that the expiation of sins through righteous deeds such as wudu, salah, and the rest, which appear in ahadith, concerns minor sins. As for major sins, they are not forgiven without Taubah (Repentance); and for minor sins, the condition is that one should have made the effort to stay away and remain safe from major sins. This leaves us with a note of warning – if someone, while staying involved in major sins, goes on performing his wudu and salah, then this wudu and salah and other righteous deeds will not at all expiate for even his minor sins, let alone the major ones. It is a warning that when a person appears on the fateful Day of Resurrection, carrying the heavy burden of his major and minor sins, he will find no helping hand to make his burden any lighter. It will be recalled that some major sins were mentioned in the previous verses along with the warning of severe punishment for those who commit them. It is a peculiar style of the Holy Quran that when it warns of punishment against a sin, it is generally followed by some aspect of persuasion towards obedience. In the present verse too, a particular Divine reward has been mentioned and people have been persuaded to acquire it by staying away from major sins, in which case, Allah Almighty will forgive their minor sins on His own. Thus, cleansed of all sins, major and minor, one could look forward to entering the home of honour and peace, the garden of Paradise. The

following excerpt is taken from “The Quran with Annotated Interpretation pg. 213 under note 11:

“It is said that no sin for which one has sincerely repented and asked for God’s forgiveness is great, and no sin that has been committed continuously and without repentance is considered to be minor.”

The following excerpt is taken from “The Study Quran” under the commentary of the above verse:

“Al-Rāzī suggests that grave sins may indicate varieties of kufr (disbelief), that is, disbelief in God, the prophets, the Last Day, or the Sacred Law. This would be consistent with v. 48, which states that God forgives all sins except shirk (idolatry; R).”

Moreover, “Although Sufi commentators agree that the truly great sin is shirk (idolatry), they consider shirk to also mean an excessive attachment to worldly things, and even the assertion of the independent existence of one’s own soul in a way that would obscure pure devotion to and utter reliance upon God. Hence the Sufi saying, sometimes attributed to Rābi‘ah al

‘Adawiyyah (d. 183/801): “Your existence is a sin to which no other sin can be compared!” (K, Qu).”

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The Angels of the Right and the Left

Qur'an 50:16 emphasizes Allah's complete knowledge of the human being. Allah created humanity and knows even the thoughts and impulses concealed within the inner self. The verse expresses this intimacy of divine knowledge by stating that Allah is closer to a person than the jugular vein. The following verses describe two opposing forces positioned on the right and the left, while an ever-present observer remains aware of every word a person utters.

The Arabic expression *yatalaqqā al-mutalaqqiyān* in Qur'an 50:17 may be interpreted in more than one way. It can mean that "the two receivers receive," or that "the two that seek to encounter one another meet." Classical Qur'anic commentators generally adopted the first interpretation. According to this reading, the passage refers to two angels who sit on a person's right and left and record that individual's words and actions (Asad, pp. 1019–1022).

Muhammad Asad proposes an alternative interpretation. He argues that the second linguistic possibility, referring to two forces that confront one another, corresponds more closely with the preceding verse's reference to the whispering of the human *nafs*, or inner self. In his understanding, the passage describes two fundamental motivational forces operating within the human personality rather than two externally positioned recording angels (Asad, pp. 1019–1022).

The first of these forces consists of a person's instinctive urges, appetites, and desires. These include both sensual and nonsensual impulses and may broadly correspond to what modern psychology describes as the libido. The second force consists of human reason, including intuitive understanding, reflective thought, moral judgment, and the capacity for self-restraint. Asad therefore interprets the description of the two forces sitting on the right and left as a metaphor for their

continual conflict within the human personality (Asad, pp. 1019–1022).

The Arabic word *qā'id*, which ordinarily means “sitting,” is consequently rendered by Asad in the sense of “contending.” The image illustrates the opposing influences that struggle for dominance within each person. Instinctive desire may drive a person toward immediate satisfaction, while reason and conscience attempt to evaluate conduct according to moral principles and anticipated consequences.

Asad connects this interpretation with Qur'an 50:21, which describes every human being appearing on the Day of Judgment accompanied by “that which drives” and “that which bears witness.” The expression “that which drives,” translated from *sā'iq*, may refer to the instinctive urges that direct a person toward uncontrolled self-indulgence and wrongdoing. By contrast, “that which bears witness,” translated from *shāhid*, represents the conscious and morally perceptive dimension of the human mind (Asad, pp. 1019–1022).

Qur'an 50:18 further states that no person utters a word without an ever-present watcher. Asad links this statement with the preceding reference to the hidden whispering of the human psyche. The “watcher” may therefore be understood as conscience, which observes, preserves, and evaluates what emerges from a person's inward motives and outward speech (Asad, pp. 1019–1022).

Death and the Removal of the Veil

Qur'an 50:19 describes the onset of death as bringing the full truth from which human beings previously attempted to turn away. Asad interprets this truth as the individual's complete insight into the condition of the self. Death removes distractions, excuses, and forms of self-deception, leaving the

individual confronted by the moral reality of the life already lived (Asad, pp. 1019–1022).

The blowing of the trumpet in Qur'an 50:20 announces the Day of Resurrection and the fulfillment of the warning previously delivered to humanity. Every person then comes forward with both the inner force that drove the person and the conscious faculty capable of witnessing the truth. At that point, the person is informed that the veil of heedlessness has been removed and that perception has become exceptionally clear.

This removal of the veil represents the awakening of the deepest levels of moral consciousness. During earthly life, individuals may suppress their awareness of wrongdoing, rationalize their behaviour, or avoid reflecting on its consequences. On the Day of Judgment, however, those psychological defenses will no longer remain effective. The individual will perceive the true moral significance of past actions and will be compelled to testify against the self (Asad, pp. 1019–1022).

The Qur'an presents similar themes elsewhere by describing individuals as reading their own records or having their bodily faculties testify concerning their actions. These passages indicate that moral accountability is not based upon unknown evidence. Instead, individuals will recognize the truth of their own intentions, choices, and conduct.

The Intimate Companion

Qur'an 50:23 states that a person's *qarīn*, or intimate companion, will declare that the complete record is present. The Arabic term *qarīn* refers to something closely connected, joined, or intimately associated with another. Asad argues that the expression in this context refers to a dimension of the person's own psyche rather than necessarily to an independent external being (Asad, pp. 1019–1022).

In verse 23, the *qarīn* may represent awakened moral consciousness. This part of the self recognizes the individual's conduct and presents its testimony. The person's reason may claim that it had remained at least partially aware of the destructive urges and appetites that led to wrongdoing. However, this awareness does not necessarily reduce moral responsibility.

On the contrary, belated recognition may intensify accountability because it demonstrates that the individual possessed some knowledge of the wrongness of the behaviour but failed to exercise sufficient control. Reason may have criticized the impulses internally, yet it did not prevent them from directing the person's actions. Moral understanding without corresponding conduct therefore becomes evidence against the individual rather than a complete defense (Asad, pp. 1019–1022).

The Command to Enter Hell

Qur'an 50:24–26 commands that every stubborn opponent of truth be cast into Hell. The passage describes such a person as one who withholds goodness, commits sinful aggression, creates distrust among people, and assigns divine authority to something other than Allah. The command “cast” appears in the Arabic dual form, *alqiyā*.

Classical philologists and commentators have commonly explained that the dual form may function as an emphatic repetition. In this case, the meaning would be equivalent to “cast, cast,” intensifying the command rather than necessarily addressing two separate beings (Asad, pp. 1019–1022).

Asad offers another possible interpretation. The dual form may address the two psychological forces previously mentioned: the driving impulses and the conscious faculty that witnessed them. Through their interaction, both became involved in the

person's moral downfall. The uncontrolled appetite urged the person toward wrongdoing, while reason failed to restrain it or allowed itself to depart from moral truth (Asad, pp. 1019–1022).

The passage's condemnation of associating another deity with Allah is not restricted to the formal worship of imagined or physical gods. It may also include devotion to false values, immoral ideologies, worldly ambitions, or corrupt social principles. Such values can be treated with an intensity resembling religious devotion when individuals allow them to determine their ultimate loyalties and conduct (Asad, pp. 1019–1022).

The Dispute Between Impulse and Reason

In Qur'an 50:27, the person's other *qarīn* denies having independently forced the conscious mind into evil. In this verse, Asad interprets the intimate companion as the counterpart of moral reason: the collection of instinctive desires, excessive appetites, and uncontrolled impulses represented by the term *sā'iq* (Asad, pp. 1019–1022).

These impulses are sometimes symbolized in Qur'anic discourse as satanic forces. However, according to Asad's interpretation, their existence does not remove personal responsibility. Destructive impulses cannot completely dominate a person unless the conscious and controlling faculty abandons moral truth or fails to exercise its capacity for restraint.

The instinctive self therefore argues that it did not independently compel the person to become evil. Rather, the conscious mind had already permitted itself to go seriously astray. Human wrongdoing results from the failure of reason and conscience to guide, regulate, and discipline the appetites. The person remains accountable because the moral faculty

participated through negligence, rationalization, or deliberate surrender (Asad, pp. 1019–1022).

Allah's response in Qur'an 50:28–29 ends this dispute. The sinners are told not to argue in the divine presence because they had already received warnings concerning the Day of Judgment. Allah's judgment will not be altered, yet no injustice will be committed against any created being. The punishment therefore reflects the moral choices individuals made despite possessing reason, conscience, and access to divine guidance.

The Ever-Watchful Forces in Qur'an 82

Qur'an 82:10–12 similarly states that noble, watchful, and recording forces remain over human beings and are aware of everything they do. Classical commentators generally understand these verses as references to guardian angels who record human actions. Their record becomes part of the evidence presented on the Day of Judgment (Asad, p. 1195).

Asad again presents a psychological interpretation consistent with his explanation of Qur'an 50:16–23. He suggests that the watchful force, or *ḥāfiẓ*, placed over every person may represent the individual's conscience. Conscience preserves knowledge of motives, decisions, and actions within the subconscious mind, even when the conscious personality attempts to forget, deny, or conceal them (Asad, p. 1195).

The recording function is therefore not necessarily understood as physical writing. It may refer to the enduring impression that every intention and action leaves upon the human personality. Experiences and moral choices become incorporated into the subconscious, forming an internal record that will eventually become fully accessible.

Qur'an 82:11 describes these recording forces as noble. In Asad's interpretation, conscience is noble because it is among the most valuable elements of the human psyche. It enables

self-awareness, moral judgment, repentance, and personal reform. It also preserves the distinction between what a person desires and what the person recognizes as morally right (Asad, p. 1195).

The following verses distinguish the ultimate conditions of the virtuous and the wicked. Those who respond to conscience and divine guidance will experience bliss in the life to come, whereas those who persistently suppress moral awareness and engage in wrongdoing will face punishment. The internal record of their intentions and actions will make evasion impossible.

Classical and Psychological Interpretations

The classical interpretation understands the angels on the right and left as real spiritual beings appointed by Allah to record human words and deeds. This view has been widely accepted within the Islamic exegetical tradition. According to this understanding, the passages affirm that no action escapes divine knowledge and that a complete record is maintained for the final judgment.

Asad's interpretation does not focus primarily on externally located recording angels. Instead, he reads the passages as descriptions of the conflict between instinctive desire and conscious reason. The watcher is identified with conscience, the driver with uncontrolled appetite, and the witness with the morally aware mind. The record of conduct is preserved in the deepest levels of human consciousness (Asad, pp. 1019–1022, 1195).

Accordingly, Asad's explanation should be presented as an interpretive alternative rather than as the only established meaning of the verses. His reading emphasizes the psychological dimensions of moral accountability, while the classical explanation emphasizes the role of angels as divinely

appointed recorders. Both interpretations underscore the same central principle: human thoughts, words, motives, and actions carry moral consequences and cannot ultimately be concealed from Allah.

The Breath of the Compassionate

Quran 1:3:

the Compassionate, the Merciful

The following excerpt is taken from the “Study Quran” under the commentary of the above verse:

This verse repeats the two Divine Names, the Compassionate (al-Raḥmān) and the Merciful (al-Raḥīm), that are recited in the basmalah at the opening of each sūrah, except for Sūrah 9, “Repentance” (al-Tawbah). Both Names are intensifications of the word raḥmah, meaning “Mercy” or “Loving Mercy.” Al-Raḥmān, which is also the title of Sūrah 55, is considered to be more emphatic, embracing, and encompassing than al-Raḥīm (IK, Qu, Ṭ). It is one of the Divine Names that cannot be applied to anything other than God, either literally or figuratively, since it connotes the Loving-Mercy by which God brings forth existence. Al-Raḥīm indicates the blessing of nourishment (rizq) by which God sustains each particular existent thing. Thus it may apply figuratively to creatures, and the adjective raḥīm is in fact used to describe the Prophet in 9:128. As al-Raḥmān is more encompassing, it is closer to the highest Name of God, Allāh; 17:110 enjoins the Prophet to say, Call upon God, or call upon the Compassionate. Whichever you call upon, to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names. The relationship between them is thus presented as that of different levels or degrees of light: al-Raḥmān is like the light of the sun that illuminates the whole sky, and al-Raḥīm is like the particular ray of sunlight that touches a creature. In Islamic metaphysics and cosmology it is stated that it was by God breathing “the Breath of the Compassionate” (Nafas al-Raḥmān) upon the immutable essences (al-a‘yān al-thābitah), which are the archetypes of all things in Divine Knowledge, that the world was brought into being. From this perspective, the very existence of the world is in essence nothing but the

breath of Divine Compassion. Together these two Names refer to two aspects of the Divine Mercy (raḥmah): one essential and universal, the other attributive and particular. The first is that by which creation is brought forth, while the second is that by which God shows Mercy to those whom He will, as in 33:43: And He is Merciful (raḥīm) unto the believers. The essential and universal Mercy is that of the Compassionate, which God bestows upon all things through their very existence and is the Divine aspect referred to in 20:5: The Compassionate mounted the Throne; and 25:59: Then mounted the Throne, the Compassionate [is He]. The particular Mercy is that of the Merciful, through which each creature that exists is sustained and which varies in mode according to the manner in which this Divine Name or Attribute has become manifest. It is evident that Divine Names of beauty, such as “the Kind” (al-Laṭīf), “the Clement” (al-Ḥalīm), and “the Beautiful” (al-Jamīl), are manifestations of Mercy. But in Divine Names of rigor, such as “the Powerful” (al-Qādir), “the Avenger” (al-Muntaqim), and “the Abaser” (al-Mudhill), the manifestation of Divine Mercy is veiled by the inseparability of God’s Kindness from His Majesty and determinative power (qadar). God is thus said to be Compassionate toward all of creation and Merciful toward the believers (Ṭb). Positioned between v. 2, which alludes to God being the Sovereign over all dimensions of space, both seen and unseen, and v. 4, which alludes to God being the Master of all time, since all things end on the Day of Judgment, this verse indicates that God’s Mercy encompasses and interpenetrates all time and all space, as in 7:156: My Mercy encompasses all things.

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). Study Quran.

The Divine Decrees

{You do not get into any situation, nor do you recite any Quran, nor do you do anything, but we are watching over you as you undertake it. Not even the weight of an atom, on earth or in the sky, escapes your Lord, nor is there anything smaller or larger, but is in a clear record. } [Quran Ch10 – V61]

The Divine Decrees

Qur'an 10:61 affirms that no human activity escapes Allah's knowledge. Whether a person is occupied with a particular matter, recites from the Qur'an, or performs any action, Allah remains fully aware of it. Nothing in the heavens or on earth, even something smaller than the weight of an atom, is concealed from Him. Everything, whether small or great, is contained within a clear record.

A prophetic tradition narrated by 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr states that Allah determined the destinies of all created beings 50,000 years before creating the heavens and the earth. At that time, His Throne was over water (Nadwi, [Year], pp. 162–164). This tradition raises several theological questions concerning the meaning of the divine writing of destiny.

The Meaning of Divine “Writing”

The statement that Allah “wrote” the destinies of creation should not be understood as implying that Allah writes in the same physical manner as human beings. Human writing ordinarily involves a hand, a pen, and a physical surface. Applying such limitations to Allah would contradict the divine transcendence, majesty, and uniqueness described in Islamic theology.

Human beings cannot fully comprehend the essential reality of Allah's attributes and actions. Because human language was developed to describe created experiences, the same words

must sometimes be used when discussing divine activity. Nevertheless, the reality of Allah's actions is fundamentally different from the actions of created beings. The distinction between divine and human attributes is as great as the distinction between Allah's transcendent being and created human existence (Nadwi, [Year], pp. 162–164).

Accordingly, only Allah knows the precise reality of the “writing” mentioned in the tradition. The expression should be accepted without imagining that the divine act resembles ordinary human writing.

Writing as Determination

In Arabic, the verb translated as “to write” may also mean to prescribe, determine, decree, or make something obligatory. The Qur'an uses this linguistic construction when describing religious obligations. For example, fasting is described as having been prescribed for believers in Qur'an 2:183. Similarly, the law of just retaliation is described as having been prescribed in Qur'an 2:178.

The writing of destiny may therefore mean that Allah determined and decreed the destinies of all creatures before the creation of the heavens and the earth. Under this interpretation, every event that would occur within creation was already known and established within the divine decree (Nadwi, pp. 162–164).

This explanation is supported by other versions of the same tradition in which the Arabic term *qaddara*, meaning “determined” or “decreed,” is used instead of *kataba*, meaning “wrote.” The two expressions consequently communicate the same fundamental idea: Allah established the measure, circumstances, and destiny of every created being before the physical universe came into existence.

References to the Pen and Tablet

The commentary cautions against forming physical or anthropomorphic images of the divine decree. It argues that certain reports describing the writing of destiny in terms of a pen and tablet may have been influenced by earlier scriptural traditions and should not automatically be treated as authentic prophetic narrations (Nadwi, [Year], pp. 162–164).

The central theological teaching does not depend upon imagining a physical writing process. Rather, it concerns Allah's timeless knowledge and determination of everything that would take place. The language of writing expresses the completeness, permanence, and certainty of the divine decree.

The Meaning of Fifty Thousand Years

The reference to 50,000 years may indicate a specific period known to Allah. However, the number may also function as an Arabic expression denoting an extremely long duration. Such expressions were commonly used to communicate vast periods beyond ordinary human measurement.

According to this interpretation, the tradition teaches that Allah determined the destinies of creation an unimaginably long time before the heavens and the earth were created. Its principal purpose is to establish that divine knowledge and decree preceded the physical universe rather than to provide a humanly measurable chronology of pre-creation events (Nadwi, pp. 162–164).

The tradition concludes by stating that Allah's Throne was over water at that time. This indicates that the Throne and water had already been created before the formation of the heavens and the earth. However, the precise nature of the Throne, water, and their relationship belongs to the unseen realm and cannot be fully understood through ordinary physical categories.

Shah Walī Allāh's Explanation

Shah Walī Allāh offered an analogy to explain how the actions and circumstances of creation could be preserved within the divine order. Human memory can retain thousands of faces, events, and details without storing them in a visible physical form. In a somewhat comparable but incomparably higher manner, he proposed that Allah caused the actions, conduct, conditions, and circumstances of all created beings to be inscribed within a special faculty associated with the highest heaven (as cited in Nadwi, pp. 162–164).

According to this explanation, everything that would occur in the universe was already preserved within this higher order of creation. The analogy of human memory is not intended to equate divine knowledge with human cognition. Rather, it provides a limited conceptual illustration of how an immense amount of information may be preserved without requiring conventional physical writing.

For Shah Walī Allāh, the writing of destiny signifies the prior preservation of all events, actions, behaviours, and circumstances that would unfold throughout creation. Just as numerous images and details can remain present within human memory, the complete history of creation exists within the divine arrangement established by Allah.

Divine Knowledge and Human Action

The doctrine of divine decree establishes that Allah's knowledge encompasses every event before it occurs. Nothing arises unexpectedly or independently of His awareness. Qur'an 10:61 reinforces this principle by declaring that every human action, word, and circumstance remains under divine observation and is included within a clear record.

Divine foreknowledge, however, should not necessarily be understood as eliminating human moral responsibility. Allah's

prior knowledge of human choices does not mean that individuals are compelled to make those choices against their will. Rather, Allah knows perfectly how each person will use the capacities, opportunities, and freedom granted to them.

The divine decree therefore expresses Allah's complete knowledge, authority, and sovereignty, while Qur'anic teachings concerning accountability affirm that human beings remain responsible for their intentions and voluntary actions. The exact relationship between divine determination and human choice ultimately belongs to the deeper realities of faith that cannot be completely encompassed by human reason.

In summary, the writing of destiny refers to Allah's eternal determination and complete knowledge of everything that would occur within creation. It should not be imagined as a physical process resembling human writing. The language of writing communicates the certainty and comprehensiveness of the divine decree, while the reference to 50,000 years emphasizes that Allah's determination preceded the creation of the heavens and the earth by an immeasurably vast period.

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The meaning of “that which I Created with my Own Hands”

Quran 38:75:

[Allah] said, “O Iblees, what prevented you from prostrating to that which I created with My hands? Were you arrogant [then], or were you [already] among the haughty?”

The following excerpt is taken from “The Message of the Quran” by Muhammad Asad pg. 894 Note 58:

Cf. the metaphorical phrase “the things which Our hands have wrought” in 36:71, explained in the corresponding note 42. In the present instance, the stress lies on the God-willed superiority of man’s intellect – which, like everything else in the universe, is God’s “handiwork”

Quran 36:71:

Do they not see that We have created for them from what Our hands have made, grazing livestock, and [then] they are their owners?

The following excerpt is taken from “The Message of the Quran” by Muhammad Asad pg. 864 note #864:

I.e., “which We alone have or could have created” (Zamakhshari and Razi). The above metaphorical expression is based on the concept of “handiwork” in its widest sense, abstract as well as concrete

References:

Asad, Muhammad (1980). The Message of the Quran.

The Prophet's Knowledge of the Qur'an

Al Rifai argues that the teachings attributed to the Prophet Muhammad indicate that creation contains multiple forms of knowledge that must be examined and discovered before they can be fully understood. In the contemporary world, scientific investigation performs an important role in studying natural phenomena and uncovering knowledge that may initially remain hidden from human observation (Al Rifai, Chapter 1).

According to a tradition cited by Al Rifai, the Prophet stated that one branch of knowledge resembles something hidden and can be understood only by those who possess knowledge of Allah. This statement is interpreted as suggesting that certain dimensions of reality are not immediately apparent and require intellectual, spiritual, or empirical investigation before they can be comprehended (Al Rifai, Chapter 1).

The Qur'an addresses numerous aspects of creation, although Al Rifai maintains that some of these references may have exceeded the scientific understanding available to people living in seventh-century Arabia. In this regard, the Qur'an explains that God presents examples and comparisons to humanity, but that their deeper implications are understood by people who possess knowledge (Qur'an 29:43). Al Rifai interprets this verse as indicating that certain Qur'anic illustrations may disclose meanings gradually as human knowledge develops.

A tradition attributed to the Prophet describes the Qur'an as possessing both outward and inward meanings, as well as broader dimensions and precise points of interpretation. From this perspective, the Qur'anic text can communicate an immediate and accessible meaning while also containing deeper implications that require extensive knowledge and reflection. Al Rifai therefore presents Qur'anic interpretation as a process involving different levels of understanding rather

than a single, exclusively literal reading (Al Rifai, [Year], Chapter 1).

This concept is also connected with a statement attributed to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, who reportedly pointed toward his chest and declared that it contained abundant knowledge, although he wished that suitable individuals could be found to comprehend and transmit it. Al Rifai interprets this statement as evidence that certain forms of knowledge were entrusted only to those considered intellectually and spiritually prepared to understand them (Al Rifai, Chapter 1).

According to another reported teaching, the prophets were instructed to communicate with people according to their level of understanding. This principle suggests that instruction should be adapted to the intellectual capacity, knowledge, and circumstances of the intended audience. Complex ideas may become confusing or harmful when presented without sufficient explanation or when listeners lack the conceptual framework necessary to evaluate them.

Al Rifai further cites a warning attributed to the Prophet that presenting people with teachings beyond their comprehension may become a source of confusion or spiritual trial. He therefore argues that the Prophet communicated deeper meanings selectively, particularly when those meanings could not be demonstrated through the knowledge or observational methods available at the time (Al Rifai, Chapter 1).

As an example, Al Rifai refers to Qur’an 65:12, which states that Allah created seven heavens and a corresponding number of earths and that the divine command descends among them. He interprets the “earths” as possibly referring to other planets and the descending command as representing the physical laws that govern the universe. This explanation should be understood as Al Rifai’s scientific interpretation of the verse

rather than as an uncontested meaning established by the Qur'anic text itself (Al Rifai, Chapter 1).

A statement attributed to Ibn 'Abbās is cited in connection with this verse. He reportedly suggested that, were he to disclose its complete interpretation, some listeners might accuse him of disbelief or respond violently. Al Rifai presents this report as an example of the concern that advanced or unfamiliar interpretations could be rejected by audiences lacking the necessary knowledge to understand them (Al Rifai, Chapter 1).

A similar idea is associated with Abū Hurayrah, who reportedly stated that he had received two categories of knowledge from the Prophet. He publicly transmitted one category but indicated that revealing the other could expose him to serious harm. Al Rifai understands this statement as evidence that some knowledge was withheld because of the social and intellectual conditions of the period (Al Rifai, Chapter 1).

Al Rifai also cites a statement claiming that Abū Bakr's distinction did not arise merely from extensive fasting and prayer but from a secret established within his heart. He interprets this "secret" as a depth of understanding regarding the Prophet's teachings, the universe, and the signs of Allah. In this reading, Abū Bakr's excellence was connected not only with devotional practice but also with inner knowledge and spiritual insight (Al Rifai, Chapter 1).

The Qur'an reinforces the importance of knowledge by asking whether those who possess knowledge can be considered equal to those who do not. It then states that only people of understanding will take proper heed (Qur'an 39:9). Al Rifai uses this verse to emphasize the intellectual value of studying revelation and creation and to argue that deeper understanding requires both knowledge and reflective judgment.

Overall, Al Rifai presents the Prophet Muhammad as recognizing that the Qur'an contains multiple levels of meaning and that some aspects of its teachings would become more accessible as human knowledge developed. According to this interpretation, the Prophet communicated knowledge according to the capacities of his audience and entrusted more complex teachings to individuals who were prepared to understand them. However, claims that particular Qur'anic passages contain modern scientific theories should be identified as interpretive arguments and evaluated through careful examination of the Qur'anic language, classical commentary, authentic prophetic traditions, and contemporary scientific evidence.

References:

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The Quantum Universe as a Master Design

Shanavas challenges the materialist position that the universe lacks intelligent purpose. He proposes that the structure of the cosmos may instead be understood as a deliberate design through which God accomplishes His purposes while allowing created beings to exercise meaningful freedom. According to this argument, an adequate understanding of creation requires examining the fundamental physical structure of the universe, particularly the implications of quantum mechanics (Shanavas, p. 175).

Classical Determinism and the Quantum Revolution

Classical materialism commonly portrays the universe as a completely deterministic system. According to this model, every future event is fixed by preceding physical causes and could theoretically be predicted if sufficient information about the past were available. Because physical and chemical laws operate consistently, events that do not follow an expected sequence are often classified as coincidences or random occurrences.

Some materialist scientists have consequently argued that all aspects of biological life will eventually be explained through mechanical processes and historical evidence obtained from fields such as geology, paleobiology, genetics, and comparative anatomy. Shanavas ([Year]), however, argues that such confidence overlooks the transformation in scientific thought brought about by Max Planck's quantum theory and its subsequent development by Niels Bohr.

Quantum theory challenged the classical conception of matter as solid and entirely predictable. Modern physics demonstrated that matter can be described in terms of energy and that events at the atomic and subatomic levels do not always follow precisely predictable trajectories. Relativity theory and

quantum mechanics therefore weakened the traditional concept of a fully predetermined universe and introduced a probabilistic account of physical reality (Shanavas, p. 175).

Quantum Indeterminacy

At the quantum level, the precise behaviour of matter cannot always be predicted. A subatomic particle, such as an electron, cannot necessarily be described as moving along a clearly defined path from one location to another. Instead, quantum mechanics provides probabilities concerning where the particle may be found and how it may behave.

This limitation is expressed through the uncertainty principle. The more precisely a particle's momentum is measured, the less precisely its position can be determined. Conversely, greater knowledge of its location reduces the precision with which its momentum can be calculated. Scientific measurement can therefore provide only a probability that a particle will be detected within a particular region rather than an absolutely certain description of its position and motion (Shanavas, p. 175).

Probability also characterizes interactions between atoms and photons. When a photon encounters an atom, physicists cannot always predict with certainty whether the atom will absorb the photon's energy. They can calculate only the likelihood of absorption under particular conditions.

Radioactive decay presents another example. Although scientists can determine the probability that atoms within a radioactive sample will decay over a given period, they cannot predict exactly when a particular atom will decay. For example, an individual uranium-238 atom may decay into thorium-234 through the emission of an alpha particle, but the exact atom and moment involved cannot be identified in advance. Two apparently identical atoms may behave

differently even though they are subject to the same observable conditions (Shanavas, p. 175).

Shanavas ([Year]) uses these examples to argue that physical science cannot provide absolute predictions concerning every event in the material universe. If the behaviour of matter itself is described probabilistically, he reasons that the complete future of living organisms and human beings cannot be calculated with certainty.

Einstein famously resisted a strongly indeterministic interpretation of quantum mechanics, expressing his objection through the statement that God does not play dice. Shanavas presents this disagreement as evidence of the profound conceptual difficulties created by quantum theory, even among leading physicists.

Quantum Mechanics and Chemical Bonding

Quantum theory also contributed to the development of modern chemistry by explaining how atoms bond to form molecules. When atoms participate in chemical reactions, electrons in their outer shells may be shared. This sharing of electrons creates covalent bonds, which form molecules such as water and methane and contribute to the formation of large biological macromolecules.

Deoxyribonucleic acid, or DNA, is one such macromolecule. It consists of nucleotides, each of which includes a phosphate group, a sugar molecule, and one of four nitrogenous bases: adenine, thymine, cytosine, or guanine. The structure and stability of DNA depend upon chemical bonds and interactions that are ultimately governed by quantum-mechanical principles.

Shanavas argues that the formation and maintenance of biological molecules therefore depend upon physical processes whose individual outcomes may be expressed probabilistically.

Since the thoughts, movements, and physiological functions of living organisms depend upon electrical and chemical activity, life remains connected at its most fundamental level to quantum processes.

From this perspective, living organisms cannot be regarded as perfectly predictable machines. Biological systems consist of atoms and molecules, and science can generally calculate the statistical probabilities of large numbers of quantum events rather than the exact outcome of every individual event. Shanavas concludes that strict causal determinism becomes more difficult to maintain when examined at the quantum level.

Creation, Purpose, and Human Freedom

Shanavas contrasts materialist interpretations of an impersonal universe with the teachings of major religious traditions, which generally hold that the universe was created intentionally and for a purpose. He cites a statement traditionally attributed to God declaring that He was a hidden treasure who desired to be known and therefore created the world. This report should be treated cautiously because its classification as an authentic prophetic tradition has been disputed.

According to Shanavas's theological model, God created a universe in which large-scale physical processes operate according to stable and understandable laws. The regularity of these laws enables human beings to study the universe, recognize patterns, and develop scientific knowledge. At the macroscopic level, physical and chemical processes generally function consistently enough to make ordinary prediction possible.

Shanavas argues, however, that God did not establish the atomic and subatomic world as an entirely predictable mechanical system. If every event were rigidly determined and the future could be calculated perfectly from past causes,

meaningful human freedom would be difficult to defend. God's action within the universe might also appear possible only through visible violations of natural law.

Quantum indeterminacy, in Shanavas's account, provides an open physical framework within which human beings can make morally significant decisions. The universe displays regularity at the level of everyday experience while retaining indeterminacy at its most fundamental physical level. This combination allegedly preserves both scientific intelligibility and an open future (Shanavas, p. 175).

Quantum Events, Genetics, and Mutation

All physical components of living organisms, including genes, are composed of atoms arranged in particular molecular structures. Genes consist of DNA, and DNA is formed from sequences of nucleotides held together through chemical bonds and molecular interactions.

A genetic mutation may alter the sequence or structure of DNA and can sometimes affect the observable characteristics of an organism. Such changes may involve molecular events, including the breaking, formation, or rearrangement of chemical bonds. Shanavas cites physicist and theologian Robert J. Russell to support the argument that some mutations ultimately involve quantum processes at the atomic level.

Shanavas interprets quantum fluctuations affecting genetic molecules as potential points of divine action. Under this model, an event that scientists describe as a random mutation might be understood theologically as an event influenced by God through processes that remain consistent with quantum mechanics. A small change at the atomic level could subsequently be amplified through chemistry and biology, producing significant effects within an organism or population.

This interpretation does not constitute an experimentally demonstrated scientific explanation of mutation. Rather, it is a theological proposal concerning how divine action might operate through natural processes without producing a detectable suspension of physical law. Science may describe the mechanism and probability of a mutation, while theology may assign the event a divine purpose that cannot be established through scientific testing alone.

Divine Action Without Violating Natural Law

Shanavas presents the relationship between predictable chemistry and probabilistic quantum physics as evidence of intelligent design. Stable physical laws make the universe understandable, while quantum indeterminacy allows its future to remain partially open.

Within this framework, God could act through small quantum events without visibly interrupting the ordinary operation of classical physics or chemistry. Shanavas proposes that divine responses to prayer, the formation of new living structures, or changes within creation could occur through events at the atomic level whose specific outcomes are not predetermined by currently observable physical conditions.

The author therefore argues that divine action need not appear as a dramatic violation of natural law. God could influence events through the range of possibilities permitted by quantum mechanics while leaving the large-scale regularity of the physical universe intact.

Shanavas further proposes that this model allows both divine sovereignty and limited creaturely freedom. However, his statement that God “voluntarily limits” divine omniscience or omnipotence represents a particular theological position and is not accepted by all Muslim theologians. Classical Islamic theology generally maintains that Allah’s knowledge is

complete and unlimited, even though human beings remain morally accountable for their voluntary choices.

Conclusion

Shanavas interprets quantum mechanics as a challenge to the materialist claim that the universe is entirely deterministic and purposeless. The probabilistic behaviour of subatomic particles, radioactive decay, molecular bonding, and certain genetic processes demonstrates that science cannot predict every physical event with absolute certainty.

He argues that the universe combines stable macroscopic laws with quantum-level indeterminacy. This arrangement makes nature sufficiently regular for scientific investigation while allegedly allowing human freedom and subtle divine action. In his theological interpretation, apparently random quantum events may function as points through which God directs creation without suspending the observable laws of classical physics and chemistry.

Although this model offers a possible philosophical relationship between quantum mechanics, divine action, evolution, and free will, its theological conclusions do not follow necessarily from quantum physics itself. Quantum theory scientifically describes probabilities and measurement outcomes; whether those probabilities represent divine intervention, genuine randomness, hidden causes, or another underlying reality remains a matter of philosophical and theological interpretation.

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Thou Shalt Never See Me

Quran 7:143:

And when Moses arrived at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, “My Lord, show me [Yourself] that I may look at You.” [Allah] said, “You will not see Me, but look at the mountain; if it should remain in place, then you will see Me.” But when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He rendered it level, and Moses fell unconscious. And when he awoke, he said, “Exalted are You! I have repented to You, and I am the first of the believers.”

Qur'an 7:143 describes Moses' request to behold God after arriving at the divinely appointed place and receiving direct communication from Him. Moses prayed, “My Lord, show me [Yourself] that I may look at You.” God replied that Moses would not be able to see Him and directed his attention toward the mountain. If the mountain remained firm when God manifested His presence to it, Moses would then be able to see Him. However, the manifestation caused the mountain to collapse, and Moses fell unconscious. Upon recovering, Moses glorified God, repented, and declared himself among the foremost believers.

According to *The Study Quran*, this verse addresses the theological question of whether human beings are capable of seeing God. The verse appears to indicate that God cannot be perceived through ordinary physical sight, at least during earthly life. This interpretation corresponds with Qur'an 6:103, which states that human vision cannot encompass God, although God encompasses all vision (Nasr et al., 2015).

Moses' request arose from the extraordinary spiritual intimacy he experienced when God spoke to him directly on the mountain without an intermediary. Some traditional accounts describe this closeness by stating that Moses could hear the

sound of the pen writing upon the tablets. Overwhelmed by the sweetness of divine communication and a state of spiritual ecstasy, Moses desired an even greater degree of nearness and therefore asked to behold God directly (Nasr et al., 2015).

Commentators have offered several explanations for Moses' request. Some maintain that Moses already understood that God transcends physical form and cannot be perceived as a material object. From this perspective, he made the request on behalf of the Israelites, who had previously demanded that they be allowed to see God openly, as recorded in Qur'an 2:55. Other interpreters suggest that Moses was not seeking a physical vision but rather a complete form of spiritual knowledge, or *ma'rifah*, through which knowledge of God would become as certain and immediate as direct sight. The phrase "show me" may therefore be understood as a request for God to grant Moses the spiritual capacity necessary for such a vision (Nasr et al., 2015).

God's statement, "You will not see Me," has also generated differing theological interpretations. Some commentators understand it to mean that God cannot be seen in the present world but may be seen by the righteous in the Hereafter. This view is sometimes connected with Qur'an 75:22–23, which describes radiant faces looking toward their Lord. Certain Sufi scholars similarly distinguish physical sight from an inward vision experienced through the spiritual "eye of the heart." Other commentators interpret God's response as an emphatic and permanent denial, arguing that God cannot be visually perceived either in this world or in the next (Nasr et al., 2015).

The Qur'anic narrative may be compared with the Biblical account in Exodus 33:20, where Moses is told that no human being can see God's face and continue living. Some Muslim commentators likewise suggest that Moses would have died had he directly experienced the divine manifestation rather than

observing its effect upon the mountain. A traditional report even attributes to Moses the declaration that he would prefer to behold God and die rather than live without such a vision. In Sufi interpretation, this idea is understood symbolically: the vision of God becomes possible only after the “death of the ego,” meaning the complete overcoming of selfish passions and worldly desires (Nasr et al., 2015).

The destruction of the mountain demonstrates the overwhelming and annihilating power of divine Self-Manifestation. The mountain, despite its strength and size, could not endure even a limited manifestation of God’s glory. Its collapse therefore illustrates why the physical human eye cannot bear the direct vision of God. The description may also be translated as God leveling the mountain to the ground. Similar Qur’anic passages portray mountains as responding with fear and awe before divine power, such as Qur’an 33:72 and 19:90–91 (Nasr et al., 2015).

Moses subsequently fell into a state of unconsciousness because of the overwhelming awe produced by the event. The Arabic term *ṣa‘iqā* may signify fainting, being thunderstruck, or being overcome by a thunderbolt. Some commentators understood this event as Moses’ temporary death followed by his restoration to life. Others argued that the verb describing his recovery more naturally refers to awakening from unconsciousness rather than resurrection from death (Nasr et al., 2015).

After regaining consciousness, Moses glorified God and repented for having asked to see Him. His declaration that he was the first of the believers has been interpreted in several ways. It may mean that he was the first believer among the Israelites of his time, the first to affirm that God cannot be physically seen, or the foremost believer of his generation. His repentance represents a renewed recognition of the limitations

of human perception before the transcendent nature of God (Nasr et al., 2015).

Sufi teachings further interpret this verse through the concepts of witnessing and inward vision. Although spiritual seekers may experience a form of divine witnessing, this experience should not be understood as the physical perception of God. Al-Sulamī taught that only the hearts of the spiritual gnostics, which God has illuminated with divine light and knowledge, can withstand such witnessing. Nevertheless, even this spiritual perception ultimately belongs to God alone, because the Divine Reality can be fully witnessed only by itself (Nasr et al., 2015).

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). Study Quran.

To Mankind Prostrate All the Forces of Nature

{Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth, and sends down water from the sky, and with it produces fruits for your sustenance. And He committed the ships to your service, sailing through the sea by His command, and He committed the rivers to your service. And He committed the sun and the moon to your service, both continuously pursuing their courses, and He committed the night and the day to your service. } [Quran Ch14 – V32-33]

Qur'an 14:32–33 describes God as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the One who sends rain from the sky and thereby produces fruits for human sustenance. The passage further states that God has made ships, rivers, the sun, the moon, the night, and the day available for human benefit. Each of these created realities operates according to the divine command and follows an established course.

Pervez explains that the Qur'anic term *malā'ikah*, commonly translated as “angels,” may also refer to the forces or agencies through which divine commands are carried out. Although Qur'an 22:75 identifies the *malā'ikah* as messengers, this represents only one aspect of their function. Other passages describe them as directing affairs and administering events according to God's command, as indicated in Qur'an 79:5 and 51:4. From this perspective, the term may be associated with the concept of power or force rather than being limited exclusively to personal angelic beings (Pervez, pp. 1172–1173).

These forces possess neither independent authority nor freedom of choice. They cannot act according to their own desires but fulfill the responsibilities assigned to them by God. Natural phenomena therefore operate according to divinely

established laws and remain entirely subject to the divine will. Human beings, however, have been given the intellectual capacity to discover how these forces function and to employ them for constructive purposes (Pervez).

Pervez connects this understanding with Qur'an 2:31, which states that Adam was taught the names of all things. He interprets this knowledge as humanity's ability to understand the qualities, functions, and laws governing the natural world. Through knowledge, observation, and intellectual development, human beings become capable of controlling, directing, and benefiting from the forces of nature.

Within this interpretive framework, the command that the angels prostrate before Adam in Qur'an 2:34 symbolizes the subordination of natural forces to humanity. The Qur'anic expression is understood not merely as a physical act of prostration before one individual but as an acknowledgment of the position granted to humankind. The term "Adam" in Qur'an 2:30–34 may consequently be interpreted as representing humanity collectively rather than referring only to the historical person of Adam.

The wording *sajadu li-Ādam* is interpreted as indicating that the angels, or the powers associated with the forces of nature, were made to serve humanity. This interpretation emphasizes that human superiority is not based solely on physical strength but on the capacity to acquire and apply knowledge. Through this God-given intellectual ability, humanity can study natural laws and harness such elements as water, rivers, transportation, solar and lunar cycles, and the alternation of night and day for human development and well-being.

According to this interpretation, the Qur'anic account does not suggest that humanity possesses unrestricted or independent control over creation. Rather, human beings are permitted to benefit from natural forces because God has established those

forces in an ordered and comprehensible manner. Their subservience to humanity remains part of the divine system, and their proper use should therefore be guided by responsibility, gratitude, and obedience to God.

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Wahy (Revelation)

Quran 20:38:

When We inspired to your mother what

We inspired, Quran 20:39:

[Saying], 'Cast him into the chest and cast it into the river, and the river will throw it onto the bank; there will take him an enemy to Me and an enemy to him.' And I bestowed upon you love from Me that you would be brought up under My eye.

Revelation, Divine Inspiration, and the Islamic Metaphysics of the Future

Revelation to Individuals Who Are Not Prophets

Qur'an 20:38–39 recounts God's communication with the mother of Moses. She was instructed to place her infant son in a chest and cast it into the river, where he would eventually be taken in by an enemy of both God and Moses. The passage also states that God placed divine love upon Moses and arranged for him to be raised under divine care.

This account raises the theological question of whether divine revelation may be communicated to someone who is not a prophet. According to *Ma'arif al-Qur'an*, the Arabic term *wahy* literally refers to a concealed or subtle communication understood primarily by the person to whom it is directed. In its broad linguistic sense, *wahy* is not restricted to prophets. The Qur'an applies the term to non-prophetic human beings and even to animals. For example, Qur'an 16:68 states that God inspired the bee concerning the construction of its dwelling places. Consequently, the use of *wahy* in relation to the mother of Moses does not necessarily indicate that she possessed prophetic status.

The communication received by the mother of Moses may instead be understood as divine inspiration, or *ilhām*. In this form of communication, God places an idea within a person's heart and grants that individual confidence that the inspiration comes from Him. The commentary maintains that saints, righteous individuals, and other spiritually devoted people may receive this kind of personal guidance (*Ma'arif al-Qur'an*).

Mary is presented as another example of a non-prophetic person who received divine communication. Although she received messages concerning the birth of Jesus, many Muslim scholars did not classify her as a prophet. Some commentators, including Abū Ḥayyān, maintained that non-prophetic inspiration may occasionally be delivered through an angel. This occurred when the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary in human form and communicated God's will to her.

Nevertheless, personal inspiration differs fundamentally from prophetic revelation. Non-prophetic inspiration is directed toward the individual who receives it. It does not establish religious law, create an obligation for the wider community, or authorize the recipient to proclaim a new religious message. Such inspiration is therefore private rather than legislative or universally binding (*Ma'arif al-Qur'an*).

Prophetic revelation, by contrast, appoints an individual to guide and reform society. A prophet is commanded to communicate divine truth publicly, invite others toward faith, and establish the authority of the revelation entrusted to him. Acceptance of an authentic prophet and his revelation therefore becomes a matter of religious obligation.

This distinction is sometimes described through the categories of legislative and nonlegislative revelation. Legislative revelation communicates religious law and is associated with prophethood, whereas nonlegislative inspiration may continue as personal spiritual guidance. According to the commentary,

prophetic and legislative revelation concluded with the Prophet Muhammad, while personal inspiration may continue among righteous individuals. The commentary also rejects the use of this distinction to support subsequent claims to prophethood, arguing that writings attributed to Ibn ‘Arabī do not affirm the continuation of prophetic authority after Muhammad (*Ma‘ariful Qur’an*).

Divine Will and the Meaning of *In Shā’ Allāh*

Shanavas (n.d.) approaches divine communication from a broader philosophical perspective through his discussion of the expression *in shā’ Allāh*, meaning “if God wills.” He argues that this phrase expresses an Islamic understanding of the future, creation, divine providence, and human freedom.

Muslims commonly use *in shā’ Allāh* when speaking about future plans because the fulfilment of any intention ultimately depends upon divine will. This practice is grounded in Qur’an 18:23–24, which instructs believers not to declare that they will certainly perform an action in the future without acknowledging God’s will. From this perspective, the future is not understood as something that exists independently of God. Rather, each future moment comes into existence through divine creative activity (Shanavas).

Shanavas contrasts this position with materialistic interpretations of the universe. In his account, scientific materialism often portrays biological evolution and cosmic development as purposeless processes governed exclusively by impersonal physical laws, genetic mechanisms, natural selection, and chance. Such interpretations assume that sufficient knowledge of past causes would permit the prediction of future events.

According to this causal model, identical causes should consistently produce identical effects. Gravity causes objects to

fall, seasonal warmth melts snow, and drought damages crops. The same physical and chemical laws operate throughout living and nonliving creation. Materialists may therefore describe events that depart from expected causal outcomes as accidents or coincidences.

Shanavas argues, however, that scientific conclusions remain based on observations of past and present phenomena. Disciplines such as paleontology, genetics, embryology, anatomy, and biogeography organize observable evidence, but they cannot necessarily determine every future possibility. Drawing upon John F. Haught, Shanavas describes the materialistic reliance on previous causes as a “metaphysics of the past.”

The Future as a Field of Possibilities

In contrast, Shanavas proposes an “Islamic metaphysics of the future.” Within this framework, neither the past nor the present independently creates the future. God remains the ultimate Creator of all things, as expressed in Qur’an 13:16. Even human achievements emerge through capacities, materials, knowledge, and possibilities that ultimately originate from God.

Qur’an 37:96 states that God created human beings and what they make. Shanavas interprets this verse to mean that human inventions, including vehicles, computers, machines, and technologies, remain part of divine creation. Human beings construct these objects, but the materials, intellectual capacities, natural laws, and possibilities required for their production originate within the created order.

The future, in this model, may be understood as a continuous arrival of possibilities. The past has already occurred and cannot be recovered, while the present is momentary and constantly passing. Future events do not yet possess material

existence. They first approach as possibilities or information that may subsequently be actualized through the decisions and actions of created beings (Shanavas).

God is described as the ultimate source of knowledge and information. This understanding is associated with the prayer in Qur'an 20:114: "My Lord, increase me in knowledge." Each future moment introduces circumstances, opportunities, challenges, and alternatives that were previously unrealized. Human expectations may or may not correspond with the possibilities that God allows to emerge.

Accordingly, *in shā' Allāh* expresses more than uncertainty concerning human plans. It recognizes that a contemplated event can occur only if God permits the necessary future conditions to come into existence. Human beings may plan to meet, travel, work, or complete a project, but the actualization of these plans depends upon circumstances beyond their complete control.

Human Participation in Ongoing Creation

Shanavas (n.d.) further argues that created beings participate in transforming future possibilities into material events. In this limited sense, humans are participants in the unfolding of creation. They do not create independently of God but select from possibilities made available within the created order.

The present serves as the point at which future possibilities become actual events. Human beings encounter moral, immoral, beneficial, harmful, and neutral alternatives. These possibilities do not become human actions until an individual selects and performs them. People are therefore held accountable for their intentions, decisions, and actions rather than for possibilities that they did not choose.

Revelation provides moral guidance for this process of selection. God communicated divine teachings through

prophets and scriptures so that human beings and jinn could distinguish between righteousness and wrongdoing. Qur'anic accounts of earlier peoples also provide moral instruction by showing the consequences of earlier choices.

Human freedom is nevertheless limited. Individuals cannot actualize possibilities that are entirely unavailable to them. Their freedom operates within the circumstances, capacities, and alternatives present in each moment. Thus, God creates the field of possibilities, while human beings exercise limited freedom by selecting among the alternatives they encounter (Shanavas).

The Conveyor-Belt Analogy

Shanavas uses the analogy of a factory to illustrate the relationship between divine creation and human action. The universe resembles a manufacturing facility owned and sustained by God, while created beings resemble workers operating within it. The continuous arrival of future moments resembles a conveyor belt carrying components to the workers.

Workers may select from the components available to them, but they cannot manufacture anything without materials, instructions, tools, and possibilities supplied through the factory. Similarly, human beings cannot act without the capacities and opportunities provided within creation. They may choose among available possibilities, but they do not independently create the underlying reality that makes action possible.

Information also plays a central role in this analogy. Scientific research provides knowledge that may later be transformed into technologies, institutions, transportation systems, or other human accomplishments. Without the relevant information, materials, and capacities, such achievements could not occur.

Shanavas therefore interprets knowledge as one of the means through which divine possibilities become material realities.

Belief and disbelief are also described as possibilities encountered by human beings. Individuals may accept or reject divine guidance. When people deliberately reject faith, they may become increasingly unreceptive to spiritual instruction. Their ultimate reward or punishment is consequently related to the choices they willingly actualize during earthly life.

Divine Knowledge and Human Freedom

To explain the relationship between providence and freedom, Shanavas portrays the history of the universe as a maze containing numerous possible paths. God has established the range of possible futures, while created beings select particular paths through their moment-to-moment decisions.

In this model, divine creation does not compel human beings to choose one specific moral path. Qur'an 10:99 states that, had God willed, all people on Earth could have believed and that human beings should not be coerced into faith. Shanavas interprets this verse as evidence that God allows creatures to exercise meaningful freedom.

Shanavas proposes that God voluntarily refrains from compelling the choices of His creatures. He presents this as a self-imposed limitation associated with divine mercy rather than as an inherent deficiency in divine power. According to his argument, meaningful freedom could not exist if creatures were forcibly directed toward only one possible decision.

He extends this argument by suggesting that God knows all possible futures but voluntarily permits human choices to become actual without coercion. In Shanavas's formulation, the relativity of time provides a way of reconciling divine knowledge with human freedom. Human beings experience the

past, present, and future successively, whereas all moments may be present within the divine perspective.

Shanavas supports this interpretation by referring to Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's description of the divine realm as transcending ordinary temporal distinctions. From the human perspective, past and future appear separate. Within the divine reality, however, these temporal categories do not operate in the same manner.

Guidance, Misguidance, and Moral Responsibility

The opening chapter of the Qur'an contains the prayer that God guide believers to the straight path and protect them from the paths of those who have gone astray. Shanavas interprets divine guidance and misguidance in relation to the possibilities that accompany future moments.

God provides both the capacity for moral choice and the guidance necessary to distinguish right from wrong. However, He does not compel individuals to choose either obedience or disobedience. Statements concerning divine guidance or misguidance may therefore be understood as referring to the moral possibilities and consequences established within the divine order.

The Qur'an repeatedly portrays wrongdoers as blaming human leaders, social authorities, or demonic influences for leading them astray. Qur'an 33:67, for example, describes people confessing that they obeyed their leaders and were consequently diverted from the right path. Similarly, Qur'an 41:29 presents disbelievers asking to see the human and jinn influences that misled them.

Shanavas reasons that these passages reinforce personal responsibility. If God directly compelled individuals to commit wrongdoing, they could claim divine coercion as a defence against punishment. Instead, Qur'an 10:44 states that God does

not wrong people; rather, people wrong themselves. Moral accountability is therefore based upon the choices individuals freely make within the possibilities available to them.

Chance, Contingency, and Divine Providence

Within the Islamic metaphysics of the future, events that human beings describe as accidental or random may be understood as previously unrealized possibilities entering material existence. Such events appear unpredictable because human knowledge is limited, not necessarily because they exist outside divine providence (Shanavas).

Shanavas uses the historical example of Hind bint ‘Utbah to illustrate this principle. She encountered different moral possibilities, including reconciliation with the Prophet Muhammad’s community or continued hostility toward it. According to Shanavas, God did not compel her decision. The alternatives were available, but she became responsible for the path she chose to actualize.

This model allows divine creation and limited human freedom to coexist. God creates the universe, the capacities of creatures, and the possibilities available within each moment. Created beings nevertheless remain responsible for selecting and implementing particular possibilities.

Shanavas compares this relationship to a theatrical or musical performance in which a choreographer presents possible scenarios while performers exercise limited freedom in carrying out their roles. Chance and unpredictability naturally arise because multiple agents make choices within a complex created environment. Pain, injustice, and suffering frequently result from the selfish or harmful choices of created beings rather than from divine injustice.

Conclusion

The distinction between prophetic revelation and personal inspiration clarifies how divine communication may reach individuals who are not prophets. The mother of Moses and Mary may have received divine inspiration without being entrusted with a universal prophetic mission. Such inspiration remains personal and nonlegislative, whereas prophetic revelation establishes religious authority and public responsibility.

Shanavas's Islamic metaphysics of the future expands the discussion by presenting future moments as carriers of divinely created possibilities. Human beings do not create independently of God, but they participate in actualizing the possibilities made available within creation. Their moral responsibility arises from the intentions and choices through which those possibilities become concrete actions.

In this framework, the expression *in shā' Allāh* acknowledges that no future event can be guaranteed solely through human intention. God remains the ultimate source of existence, possibility, knowledge, and created power. Human freedom operates within this divine order, and reward or punishment follows from the moral choices individuals make. Qur'an 4:85 summarizes this principle by teaching that those who participate in a good cause share in its reward, whereas those who participate in an evil cause bear responsibility for its consequences.

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