

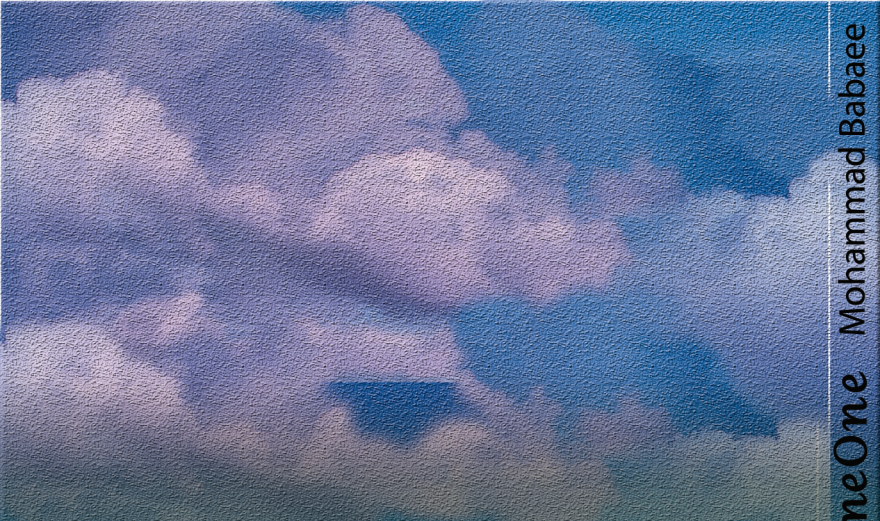
The Semantics of Key Words in the Quran

Volume One

# The Reality of the Quran







This work may be the first scientific book on Qurānic lexicology that demonstrates the beauty and greatness of the Quran about ۱۴ centuries after it was presented to the world. By presenting literal translations and etymologies of keywords in the Quran and names of God, I have endeavored to show the Quran as a miracle of God. If the reality of the Quran and the religion were spread globally, you would undoubtedly see large groups of intelligent people accepting Islam. The majority of scientists, thinkers, and learned people are opposed to religion and Islam because Islam, the Qurān, and religion have not been introduced correctly. In fact, most of these people oppose what is propagated in the name of religion, not the reality of religion.

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# Introduction

By glancing through the lost truth of religions hidden among the dust-ridden books of history, we can find a concealed darkness that holds the destruction of religion. The enemies of religion consist of two groups. The first overtly involves itself in the fight against religion and religiousness, while the second group considers an open battle futile and dangerous. Hence, by masquerading as religious individuals, they engage in the deception of three groups of people, and make use of them to destroy religion. These three groups include the following.

1. Naive and foolish persons (As you may know, naivety and foolishness result from inadequate mental and cerebral development, which means that even a highly educated person can fall into this category.)
2. Profiteers and opportunists: Their knowledge does not restrain their wrong behavior. For them, the only things of importance are money, power, fame, and animal instincts.
3. Mentally deficient individuals: Some examples include people suffering from psychosis, schizophrenia, and hysteria. Due to undeveloped medical knowledge in the past, these diseases were not considered as such, and people

attributed their delusions and fantasies to the supernatural.

In Persian, there is a proverb that says, “O Lord, do not allow beggars to become reputable, otherwise they will stop remembering God.” This is exactly what profiteers have done in Islamic sects. That is, by empowering and supporting the ignorant, they have spread false and sometimes delusional interpretations of the Quran, and by doing so, they have not only destroyed the religion, but have also engaged in the exploitation of pious and naive individuals. Foolish and ignorant characters unable to gain social prestige on their own found themselves in a position where everyone obeyed them and curried favor with them. Instead of objecting to their untrue and irrational statements, everyone praised and flattered them. Thus, they became so caught up in delusions of grandeur, considering themselves as God's representatives upon the earth, that they did not allow anyone to inquire about or challenge their logic and reasoning. This gave rise to the expression of their views on and interpretations of the religion.

In this book, by providing a lexical translation of the Quran beside an etymological examination of key Quranic terms and names of God, I have attempted to demonstrate that the Quran is a miracle of God and that if the truth of the Quran and the religion were spread in



the world, you would undoubtedly see wise people converting to Islam in large numbers. The fact that most scholars and thinkers are opposed to religion in general and Islam in particular is due to the absence of a correct presentation of Islam, the Quran, and religion. In fact, most opponents are against what is promoted in the name of religion, not the actuality of religion itself.

# Dīn

## Lexical Meaning

“The term *daena* frequently occurs in Sanskrit and the *Gathas*<sup>1</sup> as well as other parts of the *Avesta*.<sup>2</sup> The term *dīn* in Arabic is derived from another root in the Semitic languages, and the Arabs borrowed the term indirectly from the Akkadian language. The terms *d<sup>h</sup>enu* and *d<sup>h</sup>inu*, in Akkadian, mean law and the right to judge, while *d<sup>h</sup>anu* means to judge and *dayyanu* means judge. The terms *dīn* and *dayyān* have entered Arabic from Aramaic.” (Translated from *Ḥāshiyah-yi Burhān*, ed. Muḥammad Mu‘īn, as cited from *Yasht-hā*, vol. 2, pp. 159-166, *Rūz Shumārī*, pp. 55-57, and *Da‘irat al-Ma‘ārif Islāmī*)

The term *dīn* and its derivatives occur 92 times in the Quran. Though the Quran has used this word in various cases, in a way, all instances refer to law. Such as “يَمَالِكِ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ” The king and owner of a period of time in creation when rules and regulations were formulated.”

Similarly, debt is called *dayn* because laws and conditions are set between the lender and the loaner.

## A Selection of Relevant Verses

مَلَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ (Q. Baqarah, 2:256): There is no reluctance in the laws of God, because the path of rectitude and the path of ruin are evident according to the laws formulated by God.

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ... (Q. Āl ‘Imrān, 3:19): Indeed, the law of God is to enter into health...

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<sup>1</sup> This book consists of parts of the Zoroastrian scripture.

<sup>2</sup> The Zoroastrian scripture

وَلَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَ لَهُ الدِّينُ وَاصِباً أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَتَّقُونَ (Q. Naḥl, 16:52): And to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth, and to Him belong the laws and entropies, so beware of other than God.<sup>3</sup>

Based on the literal and etymological meaning of the term *dīn*, there is no creature that lacks *dīn*. In fact, by using this term, the Quran asserts that *dīn* is an inherent and inseparable part of all beings, both living and inanimate, and every creature has its own unique *dīn* as ordained by God.

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<sup>3</sup> In *Mufradat*, Ragheb has written, “The term *waṣab* refers to a chronic and incurable disease.” (*Al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qur’ān*, p. 872). A disease is a kind of disorder, and we humans call a thing a disorder when it deviates from a specific state of order. In this verse, God emphasizes that it is He who has created the law and subjected all creatures to it. He is stressing that nothing can deviate from the law and what we humans call disease, disorder, or entropy are not deviations from the laws of God. Rather, they exist within the bounds of the same laws that He has imposed over creation.



# Islām

The term *islām* is a verbal noun (*maṣḍar*) of the *if'āl* verb form (*bāb*)<sup>4</sup> derived from the root *s-l-m* (س ل م). In literal terms, *islām* means to make healthy, and since it is a verbal noun, it also involves a subject and an object. In other words, *islām* conveys the sense that an object obtains health from a subject. In *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī writes that *aslama* means “he entered into health,” and just as *aqḥaṭa al-qawm* means “[The people] entered into famine” and *arba'ū* means “They entered into Rabī’,” *aslamū* means “They entered into health.” Similarly, in *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn 'Umar Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī writes that in its literal sense, *islām* means “to enter into health,” and *aslama* means “he entered into health,” and *al-salam* literally means health.

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<sup>4</sup> For the purpose of explanation and description, Arabic grammar uses certain rules that demonstrate the type and manner in which an event occurs. According to one of these rules, Arabic verbs are divided into two categories, namely transitive (*muta'addī*) and intransitive (*lāzim*) verbs. In order to make intransitive verbs transitive, certain rules called *bāb* are used. The *if'āl* (افعال) and *taf'īl* (تفعيل) verb forms are used to make a verb transitive.

## Relevant Verses

One way of interpreting ancient texts, other than lexicography, is to use the text itself as reference, especially when the text is the word of God. This is called interpretation of the Quran using the Quran itself. The Holy Quran describes Islam as follows:

- Allah summons to the abode of health, and He guides whomever He wishes to a straight path (Q. Yūnus, 10:25).<sup>5</sup>

- O you who have faith, enter into peace and do not follow in the footsteps of Satan for he is your manifest enemy (Q. Baqarah, 2:208).<sup>6</sup>

- The day when neither wealth nor children will avail, except one who comes to God with a sound heart (Q. Shu‘arā’, 26:88-89).<sup>7</sup>

- Enter it in health and safety (Q. Hijr, 15:46).<sup>8</sup>

In *Mawāhib al-Raḥmān fī Tafsīr al-Qur‘ān*, Mūsawī Sabzawārī wrote “*Islām* is derived from the root *s-l-m* and means to be free of all outward and inward defects and unhealthy conditions. Further, heaven has been named *Dār al-Salām* because it is a place of health far from all defects

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<sup>5</sup> إِيَّاكَ يَدْعُوا إِلَىٰ دَارِ السَّلَامِ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.

<sup>6</sup> يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السَّلَامِ كَافَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ.

<sup>7</sup> يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ.

<sup>8</sup> ادْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ آمِنِينَ.

and unhealthy conditions. One of the names of God Almighty is *al-Salām* because He is far from the defects, unhealthy conditions, and incidents that befall His creation.”

In *al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, Shaykh Ṭūsī has written, “The term *islām* is derived from the root *s-l-m* meaning health, and *aslama* means to enter into health, similar to *aqḥaṭa*, meaning to enter into a famine, and *arba’a*, meaning to enter into Rabī’.

The word *taslīm*, a verbal noun in the *taf’īl* verb form, is also derived from the root *s-l-m*. In the literal sense, *taslīm* means “to surrender one’s will in order to obtain health, stay away from harm, and keep healthy.” If we take the word *dīn* in the phrase “*dīn islām*” as the subject, the phrase literally means “the method of avoiding harm and obtaining health.”

In war, the reason why the term has been interpreted as meaning captivity, slavery, and absolute obedience is that the conquering person or army would ask the loser to obey the laws formulated for them in order to avoid harm and destruction, or in other words, in order to take the path of health. Because most of the laws laid down by victors of wars were very unjust, over time, the word *taslīm* was employed by people to refer to captivity, slavery, subjugation, and unjust compliance with the laws of the enemy. On the battlefield, when someone is told to *taslīm*,



it certainly does not mean, “Come out of the trench to be killed more easily!” Rather, it means, “Surrender if you want to remain healthy.”

Thus, “*dīn islām*” is literally translated as “the way to obtain health and avoid harm.”

# Allāh

This term was originally *al-ilāh*. It has been repeated 2,697 times in the Quran and has occurred 5 times in the form of *allāhumma*. Three possible derivations have been enumerated for the term *allāh* as follows:

A) One is *ilāh* (إله) in the sense of “a being that is worshiped,”<sup>9</sup> a being upon whom the survival of all creatures depend, such as the dependence of the image of a person in a mirror on the person such that when the person is not present, their image will not be in the mirror either.

B) Another is *ilāh* (إله) as derived from the term *walah* or *lah*, meaning “to be astonished, bewildered, or fascinated.” The letter hamza in *ilah* is a substitute for the letter waw. In this case, *ilāh* means “one in the understanding of whom intellects are bewildered.”

C) Third, it is derived from the term *ilāh* (إله) meaning reliance and refuge. Thus, it means “one who is the refuge of everyone.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Mufradāt*, p. 82; *Lisān al-‘Arab*, vol. 1, p. 188, entry *ilāh*; *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān*, volume 1, p. 782.

<sup>10</sup> *Lisān al-‘Arab*, vol. 1, pp. 189-190, entry *ilāh*; *Kashf al-Asrār*, volume 1, p. 432.

D) One for whom everyone is lovesick and restless due to separation.<sup>11</sup>

*Allāh* is the most predominant name used by Muslims to refer to the Almighty. The Quran uses the term *allāh* to indicate that the only level of understanding humans can attain regarding the essence of God is bewilderment. That is, *allāh* refers to the being that all creatures depend on for their existence and the utmost understanding of any creature toward this Creator is nothing but bewilderment, bewilderment, and more bewilderment.

How can a being bound by the five senses conceptualize an existence not bound by any constraint? Is not the God described by human beings actually an attribution of human qualities to God? Do humans not describe God according to their own understanding of themselves? In fact, the God discussed by humans is a characterization of a perfect human, not the essence of the Divine.

Imagine, if we humans did not innately possess hearing and sight, would we be able to understand God's "hearing" and "sight?" In that case, how would we describe God? Maybe instead of the phrase, "O Lord! Look upon my helplessness and allow me to see you," we would say, "O

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<sup>11</sup> *Lisān al-‘Arab*, vol. 1, p. 190; *Mufradāt*, p. 83; *al-Taḥqīq*, vol. 1, p. 106, entry *ilāh*.



Lord, smell us and allow us to taste you!!!” This is because, in such a case, we would be limited to three senses and would not be able to conceptualize God's hearing and vision.

- Do we not describe God based on our own senses?
- Are the names and attributes of God not, in fact, the attribution of human senses to God?

The truth is that we humans are confined to our own senses and do not perceive anything beyond them, so we describe everything using these five senses.

In the first sermon of the *Nahj al-Balaghah*, Amir al-Mu'minin (a) has said: “The perfect state of sincerity toward God is to refute any attribute in Him, because an attribute is proof that the attribute differs from the thing being described, and a thing that is described is proof that the thing being described differs from the attribute. Thus, whoever describes God the Immaculate with an attribute other than His essence has associated Him with something else, and whoever associates Him with something else has considered Him as two [distinct beings], and whoever considers Him as two, has divided Him into components, and whoever has divided Him into components has misunderstood Him, and whoever misunderstands Him has pointed to Him, and whoever points to Him has considered

Him limited, and whoever considers Him limited has numbered Him, and whoever asks, 'In what is He?' has considered God to exist in something, and whoever asks, 'On what is He?' has considered God as not being in other places."<sup>12</sup>

By using the term *allāh* to describe God, the Quran is indicating the fact that no creature has the ability to understand or describe God, and that bewilderment about the severity of this inability is humanity's only share in understanding God.

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<sup>12</sup> « كَمَالُ الْإِخْلَاصِ لَهُ نَفْيُ الصِّفَاتِ عَنْهُ لِشَهَادَةِ كُلِّ صِغَةٍ أَنَّهَا غَيْرُ الْمُوصُوفِ وَ شَهَادَةِ كُلِّ مُوصُوفٍ أَنَّهُ غَيْرُ الصِّغَةِ فَمَنْ وَصَفَ اللَّهَ سُبْحَانَهُ فَقَدْ قَرَنَهُ وَ مَنْ قَرَنَهُ فَقَدْ تَنَاهَهُ وَ مَنْ تَنَاهَهُ فَقَدْ جَزَّأَهُ وَ مَنْ جَزَّأَهُ فَقَدْ جَهَلَهُ وَ مَنْ جَهَلَهُ فَقَدْ أَشَارَ إِلَيْهِ وَ مَنْ أَشَارَ إِلَيْهِ فَقَدْ حَدَّهُ وَ مَنْ حَدَّهُ فَقَدْ عَدَّهُ وَ مَنْ قَالَ فِيهِمْ فَقَدْ ضَمَّنْتَهُ وَ مَنْ قَالَ عَلَامَ فَقَدْ أَخْلَى.»

# Aḥad

The original form of *aḥad* was *waḥad*, where the waw was converted to a hamza for the sake of *takhfif* (ease) (*Rāghib*, vol. 1, p. 33). The term *aḥad* is used either as a noun, such as in *aḥada 'ashar* (eleven), or an adjective.

In the role of adjective, *aḥad* also refers to being uncountable, and in this case, it does not mean "one." When we say there is one of something, it means that there can be two, three, etc. of that thing. In fact, the word "one" is used for someone or something that is countable. The adjective *aḥad*, however, is used for someone or something that cannot be plural or numbered.

Number is the expression of temporal or spatial difference between two things. A thing is countable if it has dimensions and is restricted to space, because if two objects are in the same place at the same time, they will overlap, but in this case, there will be no duality [and there will be only one object]. Even the number one indicates the spatial difference between the object and the base in which it is located (i.e., space). In effect, we can only count something that can be detached from its base, meaning that the object is

limited to a section of space and can be considered to have boundaries.

Numbers are conventions that humans use to express the constraints resulting from existing within time and space. Thus, anything that can be counted with a number, even the number one, definitely requires space as a base for its existence. For example, consider two distinct but completely similar objects. What differentiates these two objects is their spatial difference. The distance between the two objects (i.e., their spatial difference) distinguishes them from each other. Similarly, suppose we place one of these objects in a specific location. Then we remove it and place the other object in exactly the same location. What distinguishes the two objects from each other, in this case, is their temporal difference [as opposed to their spatial difference].

Time and place have a beginning, because if they were eternal, according to the law of entropy,<sup>13</sup> the world would

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<sup>13</sup> Entropy refers to the degree of disorder [in a system]. According to this theory, the world is moving towards a state of disorder. If the world had no beginning and was eternal, an eternity would have passed by now, in which case the following would be true: A. The world would have reached the maximum level of disorder by now, because it would have had infinite time to achieve this goal, and as a rule, during this infinite time, the world should have collapsed and all life destroyed. B. The galaxies would be so far apart that no stars or

have collapsed by now. God is the creator of time and space, so He was present before their beginning and creation, and He will be present after their end. This presence is something incomprehensible to humans. [Since God exists beyond time and space,] He is His own base, and this means that even recognizing God as “one” is a great error.

Belief in the plurality of gods is a result of human ignorance. Hence, God is called *aḥad*. *Aḥad* refers to the unmatched existence that cannot be pointed at or counted. Interestingly, from the ancient times until now, all Iranian stories begin with the concept of “هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ” (Q. Tawḥīd, 112:1), of course, using the phrase, “*Yikī būd, yikī nabūd*,” which means, “There was one that was not one (i.e., not able to be counted).” The first “one” refers to “being” while the second “one” refers to the number [or lack thereof].

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galaxies would be visible in our sky, because they would have had an infinite amount of time to withdraw from each other.



# Ākhirah

*Ākhirah* is the feminine form of *ākhir*. *Ākhir* means end or terminus. The femininity of the term *ākhirah* is a sign of its receptivity. In other words, it is an end that draws every creature to itself, like gravity.

Every being has an end that summons it, drawing it toward its end. In our world, this can be exemplified as decay and entropy which demand the collapse of all structures. According to the Quran, such a pull exists. For example, creatures are similar to balls that are thrown up into the air, but the gravity of the earth summons them, pulling them back towards itself. As stated by the Quran, creatures have started their dreamlike journey from God and will return to Him: “إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ” (Q. Baqarah, 2:156). The Quran considers the world as a passage in which all creatures are merely travelers. They are passing travelers, travelers whose *ākhirah* draws them toward itself and provides them with the means of passage.

In fact, what we understand and perceive as time and its passage is the pull of a force which draws us toward itself. It is similar to charged particles in an atomic accelerator. When the accelerator moves the particles, one might think that they are moving on their own towards their destination, but the truth is it is their destination that is



pulling them and it is this pull that causes motion. Similarly, when the vacuum cleaner draws in dust particles, the particles “feel” that they are moving on their own, but in reality, their destination is sucking them in. *Ākhirah* means “the destination that attracts.”

“وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ” (Q. Baqarah, 2:4). And those who became safe due to what has been sent down to you and what has been sent down before you, and who believe based on knowledge in the end that draws them toward itself.

# Mu'min

*Mu'min* is one of the most prominent attributes that the Qur'an uses to describe a true Muslim, such that being a *mu'min* is the ultimate dream of every Muslim.

*Mu'min* is an active participle (*ism fā'il*) from the root 'm-n (*Qāmūs Qur'an*, vol. 1, p. 123). The term means provider or creator of security, peace, and tranquility. *Mu'min* is one of the most notable qualities employed by the Qur'an to characterize its true followers. Considering the literal meaning of the term Islam, which means to enter into health, we can understand the significance and special status that the sense of security, peace, and tranquility has in Islam. The following verses exemplify this significance.

## Verses Related to the Meaning of *Mu'min*

1. إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّابِئِينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ (Q. Baqarah, 2:62): Indeed, those who have found and provide others with peace and security, even those who are Jews, Christians, and star-worshippers [in name] — if their inner peace and security is due to belief in God and the Hereafter and they spread peace and reconciliation among the



their peace. A *mu'min* is a tranquil person from whom others also obtain the sense of security and peace.

Although, according to the Qur'an, all those who have joy and peace within are considered *mu'min*, the Qur'an considers only a person as a complete *mu'min* whose sense of peace and security is based on their belief in God, because this is the only reason that does not disappear as a result of various incidents, and also, with His absolute power, He is a person's greatest support and window of hope. Sometimes money, power, fame, etc., also create a sense of peace and security, but all these can be lost. Therefore, the peace based on these factors has less stability. On this account, anyone who possesses sorrow, fear, or worry, or is not happy and calm is not considered a *mu'min*, and is even the exact opposite of a *mu'min*. Furthermore, those whose harm others fear and who ruin the happiness and peace of others through their malicious behavior are not *mu'min*.

# Şālih

Şālih is also among the terms the Qur'an uses to describe a true Muslim. Who is şālih? And what are şālih deeds? Is every action a şālih act?

Şālih is derived from the root *ş-l-ḥ* meaning peace and reconciliation. Rāghib has defined it as eliminating division and hatred among the people (ibid, vol. 4, p. 141). In the Qur'an, the term şālih is derived from the root *ş-l-ḥ* meaning reconciliation, eliminating enmity between two people, eliminating division and discord, and preventing every type of war or conflict. Therefore, every good deed is not a şālih deed, but only deeds are considered by God as şālih that have certain characteristics:

1. eliminate enmity,
2. eliminate tension or conflict,
3. create peace and friendship,
4. turn discord into unity,
5. or turn a dispute into a reconciliation.

Any act or behavior that involves one of these cases, whether within the person or in relation to others, is considered a şālih act.

Considering that the literal meaning of *dīn islām* is “the way to enter into health,” it is clear that the best deeds in the sight of God are *ṣāliḥ* deeds, that is, creating peace and reconciliation, not war and strife.

### A Selection of Relevant Verses

“مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً وَ” (Q. Nahī, 16:97):

Whoever performs an action that causes friendship and unity, whether male or female, while others are safe from him and he has obtained inner peace, We shall give them a good life and reward him better than what he used to do.

“فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا كُفْرَانَ لِسَعْيِهِ وَإِنَّا لَهُ كَاتِبُونَ”

(Q. Anbiyā’ 21:94): Then whoever performs an action that causes friendship and unity while others are safe from him and he has obtained inner peace, his effort shall not be without reward and We are the recorders of his effort.

“مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا يُجْزَىٰ إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَ” (Q. Ghāfir, 40:40):

Whoever performs an action that causes sadness shall not be recompensed except with its like. And whoever performs an action that causes friendship and unity, whether male or female, while others are safe

from him and he has obtained inner peace — surely, they will enter Paradise and receive sustenance without reckoning.



# Kufr, Kāfir

*Kāfir*, meaning a thing that covers, is the active participle form derived from *kufr*. It is written in *Mufradāt*, “The term *kafara* means to cover an object.” (ibid, 1412 AH, p. 714).

When one object is covered by another, the object that covers is called *kāfir*. This covering includes the appearance of an object and even actions. Covering a car, placing a cover over something, and closing the eyes or covering the ears to block perceptions are all forms of *kufr*. This term is used when, without being able to affect the essence of the object or action itself, something covers the object or action, removing it from the reach of its own perception or that of others. The original essence of the object is not affected, and even the function of the object does not halt or change. Rather, the visibility of the action or the object’s outward appearance is hidden.

## Kaffārah, Kufrān

The terms *kufrān* and *kaffārah* are also derived from the root *k-f-r*:

“فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا كُفْرَانَ لِسَعْيِهِ وَإِنَّا لَهُ كَاتِبُونَ”  
(Q. Anbiyā’ 21:94).

“مَذَلِكْ كَفَّارَةٌ أَيْمَانِكُمْ إِذَا حَلَفْتُمْ” (Q. Mā'idah, 5:89).

*Kufrān* is an intensification of the term *kufr*. This word is often used to describe those who cover or hide the good and the blessings they have from themselves and others with indifference, showing them as the opposite of what they are (i.e., evil and misery). Thus, in word or thought, the person disregards the blessings of God, disguising them as worthless or bad. Instead of using them properly and appropriately, they use God's blessings in a wrong and inappropriate way.

The word *kaffārah* is often used to describe something that covers the effects of wickedness with goodness. In other words, when one inflicts damage or harm on oneself or someone else in a way that cannot be rectified or repaired, what the person does to compensate or make amends is called *kaffārah*, because by replacing it with something good, the person covers the effect or memory of the wrongdoing.

The terms *kāfir*, *kufr*, *kaffārah*, *kufrān*, etc., all include the sense of something covering something else. In Surah Ma'idah, verses 45, 89, and 95,<sup>14</sup> God describes

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<sup>14</sup> وَكَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا أَنَّ النَّفْسَ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ وَالْأَنْفَ بِالْأَنْفِ وَالْأُذُنَ بِالْأُذُنِ “ وَالسِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ وَالْجُرُوحَ قِصَاصٌ فَمَنْ تَصَدَّقَ بِهِ فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَهُ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ” (Q. Mā'idah, 5:45): And We wrote upon them

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in it: a life for a life and an eye for an eye and a nose for a nose and an ear for an ear and a tooth for a tooth, and there shall be retaliation for wounds. Yet whoever forgives, that forgiveness is *kaffārah* for the person, and those who do not judge by what God has sent down, they are the wrongdoers.

لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا عَقَّدْتُمُ الْأَيْمَانَ فَكَفَّارَتُهُ إِطْعَامُ عَشْرَةِ مَسَاكِينَ مِنْ أَوْسَطِ مَا تُطْعَمُونَ أَوْ هَلِيئُكُمْ أَوْ كِسْوَتُهُمْ أَوْ تَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ ذَلِكَ كَفَّارَةُ أَيْمَانِكُمْ إِذَا حَلَفْتُمْ وَاحْفَظُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ (Q. Mā'idah, 5:89):

God does not hold you accountable for vain oaths, but He will hold you accountable for the oaths you have made and broken, and its *kaffārah* is to feed ten poor individuals with the average food, or to provide them with clothing, or to release a captive. And those who cannot carry out these *kaffārahs* shall fast for three days. This is the *kaffārah* for the oaths that you make. Keep your oaths. God thus clearly expresses His signs for you so that you may give thanks.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ وَمَنْ قَتَلَهُ مِنْكُمْ مُتَعَمَّدًا فَجَزَاءٌ مِّثْلُ مَا قَتَلَ مِنَ النَّعْمِ بِحُكْمِ رَبِّهِ ذُو عَدْلٍ مِّنْكُمْ هَدْيًا بَلِغَ الْكَعْبَةِ أَوْ كَفَّارَةٌ طَعَامُ مَسَاكِينَ أَوْ عَدْلٌ ذَلِكُمْ صِيَامًا لَّيْدُوقَ وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَمَّا سَلَفَ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَيَنْتَقِمِ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ (Q. Mā'idah, 5:95): O you who believe, do not kill game while in the state of *ihrām*. And whoever of you intentionally kills it must give a *kaffārah* equivalent to the cattle, an atonement that two righteous people from among you acknowledge as equivalent, to be brought to the Ka'bah as a sacrifice or (instead of sacrifice) to be fed to the poor, or to fast the equivalent of it that he may taste the retribution of his deed. God has forgiven what has happened in the past, but whoever recommences, God will take

*kaffārah* as an act or object that eliminates the harm of a sin or a transgression against another person.

### The Physiology of *Kufr*

According to our belief, humans are the addressees of the Qur'an. Therefore, all Qur'anic words are interpreted and translated based on the human anatomy. All human actions, senses, and thoughts appear in their physiology, and humans are not able to act beyond their physiology. Therefore, *kufr*, in the sense of covering, is definitely a physiological event.

Contrary to the conception most people have of their senses, our sensory perceptions, such as seeing, hearing, remembering, etc., are not entirely identical to reality. Rather, through the brain's filtering, humans only perceive selectively. That is, of the hundreds and thousands of stimuli one receives, one only perceives things that have passed through the brain's filters. For example, when you are in a noisy place, you are able to selectively focus on only one sound. These filters are a kind of *kufr*.

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vengeance upon him, and God is mighty and capable of retribution.

Sensory filtering, or *kufr* in Qur'anic parlance, is the cause of many misunderstandings as well as incorrect construals, judgments, conclusions, and thoughts. Filtering is not necessarily bad. In many situations, we need to filter out unnecessary stimuli for better focus, but these filters may, in other situations, lead to incorrect understandings or judgments. As understood from the Qur'an, the reason why many people do not understand or accept the true religion is incorrect filtering.

Prejudices, incorrect definitions, uncontrolled emotions, mental illnesses, disorders, etc., can all lead to incorrect filtering or *kufr*.



## Hadiths

The hadith was one of the most common cases of *kufur* after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ). The hadiths and manners of the Prophet, the Imams, and the close companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) have constituted the main sources and references of Muslims from the past to the present. Sometimes, we can even see that hadiths are considered equal to verses of the Qur'an and compulsory to obey, and believing in and practicing them is considered as one of the requirements for being a Muslim. How can true and authentic hadiths be distinguished from false quotations? Can an excerpt from the sayings of a great personage be considered stringently applicable to all human beings, regardless of the culture, customs, and circumstances prevailing at the time, let alone the matter of memory error?

There are very simple and practicable experiments each of you can perform that show that when receiving information from the environment, humans can make serious errors. In a very popular experiment that is commonly carried out in schools all over the world, a student says a sentence to the student sitting next to them who repeats it to the next student and this is repeated by all students in the class one by one. The sentence that the last person articulates is very different

from the sentence that the first person said. The more individuals who participate and quote, the more considerable the difference. Even so, each individual testifies that they conveyed exactly what they had heard from their predecessor. Let us now take a look at the hadith reference books that are known as authentic sources. Since most of these books were written generations after the death of the Prophet and great personages of the religion, a gap of over 200 to 300 years, and the reports have been passed down by tradition from generation to generation such that at least four generations have passed, we can say that, even in the most faithful of cases, what is quoted from these personages is not exactly what they have originally said.

*Uṣūl al-Kāfī:*

Author: Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī

Date of Authorship: 300 years after the Prophet (ﷺ) passed away

Description: The work is a collection of quotations passed down among people by tradition. It contains the highest number of hadiths without a chain of narration (*sanad*).



### *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim:*

Author: Muslim ibn Ḥajjāj Nīshābūrī

Date of Authorship: 200 years after the death of the Prophet

Description: This book is one of the six main books of the Sunnis, and it is known as the most trusted reference of the Sunnis after the Qur'an and *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*. The book mainly concerns jurisprudential issues and religious rules, and the author has endeavored to reproduce only the narrations that he considered valid according to his own point of view. Muslim Nīshābūrī selected the hadiths in this book from among the three hundred thousand hadiths he had memorized.

### *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī:*

Author: Muḥammad Ismā'īl Bukhārī

Date of Authorship: Third century AH, 230 years after the death of the Prophet

Description: This book is one of the six main reference books of the Sunnis, and it is known as the most authoritative reference after the Qur'an among the Sunnis. The book mainly concerns jurisprudential issues and religious rules, and the author has endeavored to

reproduce only the narrations that he considered valid according to his own point of view. The author notes in his book that before adding a hadith to *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, he would first perform a *ghuṣl* and two *rak'ats* of prayer followed by an *istikhārah*, and after making sure that the hadith was authentic (*ṣiḥḥah*), he would then record it in *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*. In fact, the author considered *istikhārah* as a means to corroborate the authenticity of his hadiths.

*Bihār al-Anwār:*

Author: 'Allāmah Majlisī

Date of Authorship: 1103 to 1070 AH

Description: This book has been written in 26 volumes. The author's main aim, which was to create a collection of all Shia hadiths, does not mean that all the hadiths in it are approved by the author, because in many cases, the 'Allāmah himself points out that the *sanad* of a certain hadith he has cited is weak. The writing of this book took about 23 years, and many of his students helped 'Allāmah Majlisī by collecting hadiths and narrations from different Islamic territories. 'Allāmah Majlisī did not have the opportunity to rewrite and correct the second part of Volume 15 until the end of the series. His students carried out this task in his stead. For this reason, there is a significant difference in the quality

of the two parts. The ‘Allāmah focused on Shia books that had received less attention from scholars until his time, were rarely cited, and were mostly out of the spotlight. Therefore, few hadiths from famous Shia sources can be found in *Biḥār*. Ayatullah ‘Allāmah Sha‘rānī — may God sanctify his soul — has said, “If ‘Allāmah Majlisī’s goal was to narrate only authentic and reliable narrations, he would have done so. However, he decided not to do this for several reasons, such as not having enough time, allowing others to conduct research and formulate their own views, putting a stop to the false idea that traditionists (*muḥaddith*) do not quote the narrations they do not agree with and that they combine narrations with their own mental judgments — just as some non-Shia traditionists did not quote the narration of Ghadīr because it was incongruent with their views. For this reason, ‘Allāmah Majlisī reproduced everything he found and left their examination to the future generation.”

### Human Memory: How Reliable Is It?

Many people believe that memory works like a recorder or camera. The mind records something and plays it all back when needed with a single gesture. However, psychologists believe that the memory works more like a reconstructive device than a recorder. In fact, memory is

like a puzzle that we have pieces of, and the original event does not constitute the basis upon which we put these pieces together. We put the pieces of the puzzle together based on our own mental patterns and the inner definitions that we have formed, since childhood, over the course of many years; patterns and definitions that we consider as immutable principles. We make decisions and judgments based on these “immutable principles,” and we force others to follow the fabrications of our own minds. Experiments performed by Loftus have demonstrated that human memory is able to recall events that have not happened at all.<sup>15</sup> By placing a completely fabricated scenario among their real memories, it was observed that a high percentage of people considered the fabricated scenario as an indisputable memory.

We think of our memories as words engraved upon a mountain and that every time we recall them, we go to the top of the mountain and read them, but this is not the case. Memories are actually like words we have written on the snow on top of the mountain, and this snow melts over time with the introduction of new

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<sup>15</sup> Loftus, E.F. (2005). "Planting misinformation in the human mind: A 30-year investigation of the malleability of memory". *Learning & Memory*. **12**(4): 361–366. doi:10.1101/lm.94705. PMID 16027179

events, running down into a lake at the bottom of the mountain. New and old memories belonging to each neural network (i.e., each collection of similar memories) come together in a lake and are reviewed side by side. Our memory circuits start to change from the first moment they come into existence, and we can never recover the previous data as they originally were. Even so, we always consider our memories with certainty, we trust them, we base our actions on them, and we defend them with prejudice.

Another very simple experiment is to record your conversation with someone, for example. After a month, try to repeat and record whatever you remember without listening to the recorded conversation. By comparing these two tapes, you will see that there is a gross difference between them. Now back to our main question.

How authoritative are reports of the sayings and manners of the great religious personages?

In recording hadiths and quotations, the first error occurs at the very first moment, when the listener attempts to perfectly perceive and receive the words of the religious personage. That is, the first narrator, i.e., the original recipient and transmitter of the hadith, has

understood and transmitted the words of the personage based on their own inner patterns and definitions, not the exact words themselves. The second error occurs in filtering large amounts of information when recalling and quoting from person to person. The third error happens when a saying is passed down through time and from generation to generation. And these errors only apply to true hadiths and honest narrators who have not distorted or fabricated the hadiths, while books of hadith are full of false sayings and hadiths.

Perhaps the best way to be free of these errors and distortions is to learn from a famous hadith by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ):

“Whenever a hadith comes to you from me, present it to the Book of God and assess it with your intellect. If it is in accordance, accept it, otherwise smash it across the wall.”<sup>16</sup>

Unfortunately, books of hadith are full of quotations that are neither compatible with reason nor with the Qur’an.

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<sup>16</sup> This is not a literal translation. See Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī Abū al-Futūḥ Rāzī, *Rawḍ al-Jinān wa Rūḥ al-Janān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur’ān*, eds. Muḥammad Ja‘far Yāḥyaqqī and Muḥammad Mahdī Nāṣiḥ (Mashhad: Āstān Quds Raḍavī, Bunyād Pazhūhish-hāyi Islāmī, 1408 AH), vol. 5, p. 170.

# Mushrik

*Mushrik* is derived from the root *sh-r-k* and means one who partners with another in an activity or shares something with another. (Rāghib, vol. 4, p. 20). In general parlance, the term is used to refer to a person who believes that there is more than one god.

As stated by the Qur'an, humans are inherently monotheistic and only believe in polytheism when they are ill.<sup>17</sup> Penguins and beavers, for example, are creatures that, according to the laws of creation, choose only one mate during their lifetime and remain incredibly faithful to each other. However, lions and cows are not like this. In my view, the Qur'an considers the monotheistic tendency as a genetic, innate, or natural tendency, such that it appears even among unbelievers in the form of the tendency to seek the origin of creation,<sup>18</sup> and no creature can behave beyond the structure of its genetics.<sup>19</sup> This being said, if a creature

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<sup>17</sup> فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَوِيمُ (Q. Rūm, 30:30): Therefore, raise your whole being towards the moderate or median religion. God created people based on it, and God's laws are immutable. These are the laws revealed by God, but most people do not know.

<sup>18</sup> According to the Qur'an, even the function of genetics occurs within the bounds of the laws of God.

<sup>19</sup> See Babaei, *Ruyā-yi Havās* (2009), p. 89.

that is supposed to be genetically monogamous attempts to obtain more mates, it is considered sick.

In the view of the Qur'an, the tendency to be monotheistic is also a genetic and structural trait that appears even in unbelievers in the form of an inquisitive sense seeking the origin of creation. The fact that science seeks a fundamental particle even at the quantum level is based on this sense. Even if healthy people do not accept God on the surface, they believe in Him from within. The reason for their outward and verbal opposition is because of the common definition that is unfortunately wrongly attributed to God. In fact, what they are against is the widespread description of God. According to the Qur'an, if a person believes in a multiplicity of creators, it is a sign of illness. The Qur'an attributes this disease to a "sharing."

### Viruses

We humans have been exposed to attacks by various viruses and germs for centuries, some of which have had a profound effect on human genetics.

Viruses are repositories of genetic information that can attach themselves to DNA strands. So far, about 100,000 viral elements have been discovered within the



human genome, forming up to 8% of the human genome.<sup>20</sup> This figure is large compared to the 1% of the genome that provides instructions for making proteins in the body. These viral elements are called endogenous retroviruses. They have the ability to affect neighboring human genes and alter the gene structure. Among these viruses, the bornavirus causes changes in human behavior and mental illnesses (e.g., schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, dementia and general mood disorders).<sup>21</sup> So far, four copies of the virus have been found in the human genome, two of which have mutated and are not capable of protein synthesis. However, the other two copies are completely intact and functional and can synthesize protein.<sup>22</sup>

According to my understanding of the Qur'an, the thought or sense that multiple creators and origins of

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<sup>20</sup> Carl Zimmer, "Ancient Viruses Are Buried in Your DNA," *New York Times*, October 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/04/science/ancient-viruses-dna-genome.html>; Odile Heidmann et al., "HEMO, an Ancestral Endogenous Retroviral Envelope Protein Shed in the Blood of Pregnant Women and Expressed in Pluripotent Stem Cells and Tumors," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 114 (July 24, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1702204114>.

<sup>21</sup> Mazaheri-Tehrani, Elham, et al. "Borna disease virus (BDV) infection in psychiatric patients and healthy controls in Iran." *Virology journal* 11.1 (2014): 1-9.

<sup>22</sup> Feschotte, Cédric. "Virology: Bornavirus enters the genome." *Nature* vol. 463,7277 (2010): 39-40. doi:10.1038/463039a

creation exist is due to the sharing of human and viral genomes. For this reason, this type of disease is called *shirk*, that is, a thought or behavior that results from partnership or sharing.

On this basis, it seems that a *mushrik* is someone who, like a person with multiple personalities, has a multifold thought and belief due to being infected with viruses or having more active endogenous retroviruses.

## *Munāfiq*

*Munāfiq* signifies a thing that causes repulsion and separation, something that disperses.

A *munāfiq* is someone who causes separation, dispersal, repulsion, or hostility between two or more people.

Sometimes, a thought, belief, inappropriate word, or action can cause conflict. The Qur'an calls individuals whose actions, behavior, ideas, and words destroy the unity, rapport, intimacy, and wholesome solidarity among the people *munāfiq*. It is understood from the Qur'an that duplicity and the desire to destroy unity and intimacy is a kind of disease and abnormality.

## Najis

*Najis* means “dirty and unclean,”<sup>23</sup> or any unsanitary thing. It also refers to illnesses that last for a long time. The aging and debilitation of the body are also termed *najis*.

The term *najis* has a single occurrence in the Qur’an. However, it is used frequently in the hadiths and teachings of the Prophet and saints of God. The only case in the Qur’an appears in verse twenty-eight of Surah Tawbah, where it describes polytheists as *najis*.<sup>24</sup>

“يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْمُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ فَلَا يَقْرَبُوا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ بَعْدَ  
عَامِهِمْ هَذَا وَ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ عَيْلَةً فَسَوْفَ يُغْنِيكُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنْ شَاءَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ  
حَكِيمٌ:”

“O you who have attained peace (and all are safe from any wickedness from you)! The polytheists are indeed unclean, and after this year, they must not approach the Sacred Mosque. If you fear poverty, God will soon enrich you with His grace, if He wills, for God is All-Knowing and All-Wise.”

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<sup>23</sup> Qāmūs Qur’ān, vol. 7, p. 15.

<sup>24</sup> See *Ma’nī Lughat Mushrik (Meaning of the Term Mushrik)*, p. 34.

It can be understood from this verse that polytheism may be contagious and transmittable among humans. Perhaps the reason for the Qur'an's order to prevent polytheists from entering the Sacred Mosque is risk of contagion, which can affect the health, peace, and security of Muslims through various means, including thought, speech, hypocrisy, pretense, etc.

*Najis*, in the sense of a long-lasting illness or the aging and decline of the body, has many examples. The influence of a bad companion — or in the language of the Qur'an, companionship with disbelievers, polytheists, criminals, etc. — is one such example as having bad companions leads to lasting mental diseases, and as a result, premature aging.

A category of stimuli of great importance for primates, humans in particular, is that formed by actions done by other individuals. If we want to survive, we must understand the actions of others. Furthermore, without action understanding, social organization is impossible. In the case of humans, there is another faculty that depends on the observation of others' actions: imitation learning. Unlike most species, we are able to learn by imitation, and this faculty is at the basis of human culture. The mirror neurons mechanism appears to play a fundamental role in both action understanding and imitation. Mirror neurons are a particular class of visuomotor neurons, originally discovered in area F5 of the monkey premotor cortex, that discharge both when the monkey does a particular action and when it observes another individual doing a similar action. There is a rich amount of data proving, indirectly, that a mirror - neuron system does exist in humans. Neurophysiological experiments demonstrate that

when individuals observe an action done by another individual their motor cortex becomes active, in the absence of any overt motor activity.<sup>25</sup>

According to the Qur'an, believers and Muslims should keep away from disbelievers [*kāfir*], polytheists [*mushrik*], and unclean [*najis*] people, all of whom are ill. The reason for this distancing may be that their illness can be transmitted through their behaviors and words. Scientific studies suggest that you should keep away from people with a scathing tongue, as well as despairing, pessimistic, depressed, stressful, and rude individuals. Similarly, the Qur'an instructs us to avoid such individuals in addition to *kāfirs* and *mushriks*.

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<sup>25</sup> Title: The Mirror- Neuron System

Authors: Giacomo Rizzolatti and Laila Craighero

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# *Marad*

*Marad* means injury, sickness, and unhealthiness.

The term *marad* in the Qur'an is often used with the word *qalb* (heart). As understood from the Qur'an, the most significant cause of human ignorance and misery is an unsound heart.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> The term *qalb* has a special status in Islam. Most Muslims consider the heart as the site of connection with God, of revelation and inspiration, and in general, of contact with the metaphysical. In dictionaries, *qalb* is defined as inverting or reversing. Rāghib writes, “*Qalb* is the transformation of an object from one form into another, such as reversing an article of clothing” (*Qāmūs Qur'ān*, vol. 6, p. 23).

Throughout their lives, we humans are trapped in the cage of our five senses. These senses prevent us from perceiving the truth of creation. In other words, during our worldly lives, we perceive the illusion or fantasy our senses create for us instead of seeing the truth. It is like dreaming. The world we witness is “*qalbed*” (transformed and inverted) by a part of our being. Thus, it can be inferred that the heart (*qalb*) is the part of our being that transforms the input from the senses into what we call the world. If this transformation is not accomplished in accordance with the purpose of creation, our perceptions and performances in the world will be incorrect and divert us from the original path of creation. The Qur'an suggests an unsound or dysfunctional heart leads to an unwholesome understanding of the

As the Qur'an indicates, the health and illness of every creature in existence has been created for a specific purpose, and its body and other aspects of its existence have obtained a unique structure based on that purpose. Therefore, the soundness or unsoundness of a creature depends on how its body and structure function. If its structure acts in line with the purpose for which it was created, it is healthy and sound, but if it runs counter to the purpose of its creation, this state is called *marad*. A *marad* (disease) can have physical, mental, behavioral, etc., manifestations.

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world and its events, and this is a prelude to every sin and transgression.



## *Fāsiq*

The term *fāsiq*, derived from the root *f-s-q*, means departure or emergence. Most philologists have provided the example, “*fasaqati al-raṭbatu ‘an qishrihā,*” meaning “The date emerged from its skin.” According to Raghīb, the religious term *fisq* is derived from the same root as the same term in the above example. In *al-Miṣbāḥ*<sup>27</sup> and *Aqrab*,<sup>28</sup> it is explained that, according to one view, *fisq* refers to the withdrawal of an object from another object due to corruption.<sup>29</sup>

When an object exits its covering (e.g., sheath, husk, or protector), which previously safeguarded its health and well-being, and is thus exposed to decay and ruin, the term *fisq* is used. *Fāsiq* is an active participle (using the form *fā’il*), referring to a person who has exposed themselves to ruin and also brings about the ruin of others. Given the meaning of the term *Islām*, the term *fāsiq* can cover many actions. Failure to observe modest Islamic dress [*hijāb*] (whether by

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<sup>27</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr fī Gharīb al-Sharḥ al-Kabīr*

<sup>28</sup> *Aqrab al-Mawārid fī Fuṣḥ al-‘Arabīyah wa al-Shawārid*

<sup>29</sup> *Qāmūs Qur’ān*, vol. 5, p. 176.

a woman or man),<sup>30</sup> hypocrisy,<sup>31</sup> negative thoughts and words,<sup>32</sup> excessive fear, deception, whining, etc., are examples of *fisq*.

The Qur'an identifies *fāsiq* individuals as untrustworthy and advises the utmost precaution when dealing with them:

“ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنِ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصِبْحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ:”

“O you who have faith! If a *fāsiq* individual brings you some news, verify it, lest you should attack some people out of ignorance, and then, when you realize, become regretful for what you have done.” (Surah Hujurāt, 49:6)

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<sup>30</sup> According to the Qur'an, *hijāb* is not only for women, but for both genders. In the Qur'an, *hijāb* is the observance of modesty in matters that can cause sexual arousal in the opposite sex, including dress, words, and behavior. Unfortunately, most people consider *hijāb* in terms of the visibility, or lack thereof, of a woman's hair, but this presumption is completely wrong. Failure to observe *hijāb* destroys the stability and security of society and families, because it causes abnormal outbursts of animal instincts and hence crime.

<sup>31</sup> Duplicity destroys trust and prevents people from correctly recognizing danger.

<sup>32</sup> Negative thoughts and words can include recalling bad memories and retelling them to others as well as despairing, upsetting, sad, frightening, misleading, and depressing talk.

## *Fāsid*

According to Rāghib, *fāsid* (literally corrupt or unsound) refers to the divergence, whether small or large, of an object from the state of moderation (ibid, p. 175). In other words, a thing that deviates from a state of moderation and health toward a state of destruction has experienced *fasād* (literally corruption or unsoundness). There are many examples of *fasād*. For instance, fear in moderation guarantees survival, but too much or too little fear is detrimental to survival.

*Fāsid* is the active participle of *fasada*. It refers to a person who has not only deviated from moderation but also causes others to deviate.

*Ifsād* means corruption. “سَعَى فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا” (Q. Baqarah, 2:205): He struggles in the land to cause corruption in it.

*Mufsid* means corruptor, and it is the opposite of *muṣliḥ* (reformer): “وَ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِ” (Q. Baqarah, 2:220, trans. Ali Quli Qarai): Allah knows the one who causes corruption from the one who brings about reform.

“وَ اذْكُرُوا اِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَادٍ وَ بَوَّأَكُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْ سُهولِهَا قُصُوراً وَ تَنْحِتُونَ الْجِبَالَ بُيُوتاً فَادْكُرُوا آلاءَ اللّهِ وَ لا تَعْتُوا فِي الْاَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ: (Q. A'rāf, 7:74)”

Remember when God made you successors after the people of 'Ād, and settled you in this land so you may build palaces in its plains and carve houses out of the mountains. Remember Allah's bounties, and do not deviate from moderation in this land.

“وَيَا قَوْمِ اؤْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَ الْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَ لا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ اَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَ لا تَعْتُوا فِي الْاَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ: (Q. Hūd, 11:85)”

O people! Observe justice in weighing and measuring goods, and do not cheat people of their goods, and do not deviate from moderation (do not act in excess or neglect) on the earth.

# Ṭāghūt

*Ṭāghūt* means to exceed limits and boundaries. When something goes beyond its natural and healthy boundaries in a harmful direction, it is called *ṭughyān* (literally eruption or rebellion). *Ṭughyān* involves a continual escalation that harms others as well.

*Ṭāghūt* is a verbal noun. Its original form was *ṭaghayūt*, similar to *raghabūt*, *rahabūt*, and *raḥamūt*. The letter *y* was moved before *gh* and converted into *ā*. Since the term can be used in either singular or plural sense, it is a verbal noun (see Ṭurayḥī, *Majma' al-Baḥrayn*). Although it is originally a verbal noun, it is substituted for the active participle, i.e., *ṭāghī*. *Ṭāghūt* refers to a person who indulges in something harmful, causing harm to oneself and others. *Ṭāghūt* can involve excess or indulgence in any area.

Most people use the word *ṭāghūt* to refer to oppressive and tyrannical kings and politicians. In the literal sense, however, the term *ṭāghūt* covers all humans who exceed the proper bounds and whose excesses cause harm and loss, regardless of whether these excesses are directed at goodness and mercy or wickedness and wrath. This is because excess in goodness and mercy can sometimes cause harm and corruption.

## *Mulḥidīn*

The term *mulḥid* is derived from the root *l-ḥ-d*, meaning deviation from perseverance (ibid: p. 182). *Mulḥidīn* is the plural form of *mulḥid*, which refers to someone who, due to lack of perseverance, deviates from the right or from a condition for health and soundness and also causes the deviation of others with low perseverance.

Weakness, incapability, or low perseverance can have psychological<sup>33</sup> and physiological origins.<sup>34</sup> In either case,

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<sup>33</sup> Our human brains experience the world in patterns acquired from childhood through education and experience. After birth, the brain begins to filter part of the information obtained from the environment and looks for patterns in this information. In order to survive, our brains learn to find patterns even where there are none. In other words, we cannot experience the world without patterns.

Weakness and inability are sometimes the result of incorrect patterns in the mind. These patterns can be incorrect beliefs, ideas, or interpretations. A 2008 study at the the University of Texas at Austin found that people who felt more lacking in control had a greater tendency to see patterns that did not exist. Furthermore, those who had more superstitious beliefs about the supernatural were more likely to perceive illusory patterns. (Blackmore, S., & Moore, R. (1994). Seeing things: Visual recognition and belief in the paranormal. *European Journal of Parapsychology*, 10, 91-103; Whitson, J. A., & Galinsky, A. D. (2008). Lacking control increases illusory pattern perception. *science*, 322(5898), 115-117).

Incorrect patterns may be the greatest cause of deviations in belief, thought, and even everyday life, and weakness can be a significant factor in these patterns.

<sup>34</sup> Many physiological factors can be named for physical or mental weakness. Some examples are as follows.

- Anxiety and stress: This can be due to hormonal factors, amygdala dysfunction, etc.
- Metabolic and endocrine disorders: hypothyroidism, overactivity of the parathyroid gland, hypopituitarism, hypoglycemia, diabetes, uremia, potassium deficiency, sodium deficiency, and acute and chronic kidney failure.

however, the result is illness of the body and mind. This disorder causes people to deviate due to even the slightest pressure in life. In the Qur'an, deviation means to withdraw from health, happiness, and the goal of creation.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, in the Qur'an, a *mulhid* is a person who, despite being aware of truth, righteousness, and health, tends toward unrighteousness and error due to weakness, fear, inability, and lack of perseverance. In other words, *ilhād* is any deviation from the right due to weakness, inability, or lack of perseverance.

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- Liver diseases: acute hepatitis, chronic hepatitis, and liver cirrhosis (development of scar tissue in the liver and eventual liver failure).

<sup>35</sup> See entries *Islam* and *'Adhāb*.



## *Ẓulm, Ẓālim*

*Ẓālim* is the active participle of the root *ẓ-l-m*. Ibn Fāris has noted that *ẓulm* has two basic senses: (1) darkness and blackness, and (2) oppressively moving a thing from its proper position (Qarīb, 1987: vol. 1, p. 713). A person who is oppressing someone cannot perceive the truth, just like a person in darkness cannot see their surroundings. In general, it can be said that *ẓulm* means oppression and leaving something out of its proper place (Rāmpūrī, 1984: vol. 1, p. 569). For example, *ẓalamtu al-siqā'* means "I milked the animal in an untimely manner." Similarly, *ẓalamtu al-arḍ* means "I dug a well in an inappropriate location." Such land is called *mazlūmah* and the soil taken from it is called *ẓalīm*.

The darkness in our human world is not a true existence. Instead, the concept emerges as a result of the limitations of our senses. In the vernacular, anything we cannot see or perceive is considered to be in *ẓulumāt* (darkness). *Ẓulumāt* leads to error because the truth cannot be seen in it. Perhaps, it is for this reason that we cannot situate anything in the right place in *ẓulumāt*.

What we identify as the world is a part of creation that our structure has enabled us to perceive. Thus, we say a

being is in *ẓulumāt* or darkness relative to us in the following cases.

1. Our existence is not designed to perceive it, such as our inability to hear and see different sound frequencies and electromagnetic wavelengths.
2. When, due to injury, our constitution or structure has lost at least part of its natural ability to perceive.

Hence, it seems that in the Qur'an, a *ẓālim* is a person who, due to their inner imperfection and darkness, causes a thing or person to be placed in a location that is inappropriate for said person or thing, producing harm to themselves and others as a result. This damage can be either physical and material, or psychological. Even obstruction of a God-given talent or ability can be an instance of *ẓulm*.

Per this understanding of *ẓālim* in the Qur'an, in human societies, a person is considered as a *ẓālim* when they are in an inappropriate position, whether in terms of status or expertise. The term *ẓālim* is applied to some politicians and officials because they do not possess sufficient knowledge, eligibility, competence, and skill for their respective positions and are inappropriately placed in their roles. The effect on society is damage to each member of society and the structure of society as a whole. Examples

of *ẓulm* or oppression include illiteracy, smoking, austerity, distortion of doctrinal books leading to catastrophes and preventing the actualization of human abilities, giving individuals unsuitable positions, and accepting inappropriate posts.

“الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ”

(Q. Ghāfir, 40:17): Today, every person will be requited for what they have done. Today, no one shall be placed in a wrong or inappropriate position for God is swift in reckoning.

# *Mujrim*

The term *mujrim* is derived from the root *j-r-m*. *Mujrim* refers to a person or thing that eliminates the ability to produce or bear fruit. The term *jurm* is used when the essence of a being is to bear fruit or be productive, and for whatever reason, it loses its ability to do so, such as a fruit tree that no longer bears fruit or a bee that does not produce honey (Rāghib, vol. 2, p. 28).

In the Qur'an, a sound and healthy human is a being that naturally produces good deeds. That is, doing good to others is one of the innate characteristics of humans, except in case of illness or disorder wherein the person does not do good to themselves and others, and the person is unproductive. Thus, it seems that according to the Qur'an, a *mujrim* is not a criminal but a person who deprives the fruits of their goodness from themselves and others. Therefore, the Qur'an does not consider just any action or behavior as a *jurm*. One may say to oneself, "I am not a sinner before God, because I do not harm or bother anyone." Yet, the Qur'an even considers it a sin to be unproductive and ineffective. Consequently, *mujrim* refers to the following:

- one who does not do good to others,

- one who is not useful to oneself and others,
- one who is unproductive.

Hence, based on the Qur'an, not doing good to others and being useless to those around you are sins. The Qur'an states that such people will suffer in this world and the hereafter.

### Relevant Verses

- “قَالُوا إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِينَ” (Q. Hijr, 15:58): They said, “We have been sent toward an unproductive people who do no good.”
- “إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَأْتِ رَبَّهُ مُّجْرِمًا فَإِنَّ لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَىٰ” (Q. Tāhā, 20:74): Whoever comes to their Lord without fruits, indeed for them shall be hell where they are neither dead nor alive.
- “قَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمٌ مُّجْرِمُونَ” (Q. Dukhan, 44:22): (Moses) called to his Lord, “These are indeed an unproductive and goodless people.”

## *Dhanb*

Any thought or behavior that results in future destruction or harm is called *dhanb*. The term *dhanb* means tail or extension and originally referred to catching an animal's tail (ibid, vol. 3, p. 24). In general, *dhanb* is any action that is followed by harm or loss of benefit.

The Qur'an refers to any defect or insufficiency involving a person in the present but caused by an event in the past as a *dhanb*. Sometimes, the effects of actions we have done in the past last for years, even for the rest of our lives. The Qur'an calls these effects *dhanb*. *Dhanb* consists of a deed's consequences. This deed may not be a sin in itself, or it may seem acceptable, but it leads to a series of events that eventually end in harm or defects in the individual and leave destructive effects on us and our lives. For example, not exercising, overeating, not eating properly, indifference to a good opportunity in life — which at the time, one does not consider as a sin — and practices such as smoking all lead to defects in a person's life and being. These defects are the person's *dhanbs*.

It must be noted that these acts are not considered sins because, until today, false preachers of Islam have distorted Islamic teachings. As we know, the literal meaning

of the term Islam is to enter health, and anything that endangers human health, whether physical, mental, or social, is considered a sin from the point of view of true Islam. Sometimes, even an inappropriate word or a wrong decision leads to a *dhanb*. Our *dhanbs* are the cause of many of the aberrations (i.e., problems and diseases) in our lives. Thus, when we ask God “*ighfir lanā dhunūbanā*” (cover our *dhanbs* for us or absolve us of our *dhanbs*), we are asking God to mend faults that originated in our past deeds, which may not have seemed sinful when we committed them.





# Sayyi'āt

The term *sayyi'āt* (singular *sayyi'ah*) is derived from *sū'*, meaning anything sad and sorrowful (ibid, vol. 3, p. 347). The Qur'an denounces sorrow and grief and considers any factors that cause such feelings as sins.

Islam is a religion of health and soundness, and the physical, social, and psychological harm of grief and sorrow has been thoroughly proven in psychology and medicine. Therefore, from the Qur'anic point of view, true believers [*mu'min*] avoid sorrow. If they are unintentionally affected by grief, they fight against it and make every effort to restore themselves to happiness and health.

## Relevant Verses

- “ فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا عَمِلُوا...” (Q. Nahl, 16:34): So the sorrow and grief of what they had earned visited them...
- “ وَبَدَأَ لَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا...” (Q. Zumar, 39:48): And the sorrows and griefs of what they had earned appeared to them...

The Qur'an does not call all wicked deeds as *sayyi'ah*. In the Qur'an's view, *sayyi'ah* consists of any action, thought, or belief that leads to grief. The Qur'an considers it a sin to remain affected by sorrow and repeatedly

introduces *mu'mins* as individuals who are free of fear and sorrow.

- “ فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ” (Q. Baqarah, 2:38): Those who follow My guidance shall neither have fear nor shall they grieve.
- “ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّابِئِينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ” (Ibid, 2:62): Indeed, those who have found and provide others with peace and security, even those who are Jews, Christians, and star-worshippers [in name] — if their inner peace and security is due to belief in God and the Hereafter and they spread peace and reconciliation among the people [thereby following true Islam], then they will have a reward beside their Lord, and they shall have no fear or sorrow.
- “ بَلَى مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ” (Ibid, 2:112): Certainly whoever makes themselves healthy and sound for the sake of Allah and is virtuous, they shall have their reward near their Lord, and they shall neither have fear nor shall they grieve.

- “أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ” (Q. Yunus, 10:62): Know that the saints of God are those who have no fear or sorrow.

This negative view toward fear and sorrow in the Qur’an, which is also included in the term *sayyi’ah*, corresponds precisely with the literal meaning of the word Islam (which means entering health) because fear and sorrow are obstacles to health and harmful to the mind.

Unfortunately, the spread of grief in religious communities is only due to ignorance about the reality of God’s religion.



## *Ithm*

The term *ithm* refers to actions that prevent the attainment of rewards (ibid, vol. 1, p. 149). Some meanings of the term include slowness and delay (Ibn Fāris, vol. 1: 60-61; Fīrūzābādī, vol. 4: 73-72). Ibn Fāris (d. 1005/395 CE/AH) was the first to mention slowness and delay as the basic meanings of the term. Rāghib has also cited these senses. Because *ithm* and *ithām* are used for actions that prevent or impede the attainment of rewards, the terms include the concept of delay and obstruction of good deeds, or in fact, negligence and failure in doing good deeds. *Ithm* has been mentioned 48 times in the Qur'an, 11 times in Meccan surahs and 37 times in Medinan surahs.

*Ithm* is another severe sin in Islam. The Qur'an does not refer to any sin as *ithm*. Instead, it calls actions *ithm* wherein one loses something good or deprives oneself of the opportunity to obtain good. The Qur'an considers procrastination in the pursuit of good as a sin that God's servants must account for on the Day of Resurrection. Interestingly, the terms *ghafr* and *istighfār* are not used in the Qur'an for forgiveness and removing the effects of *ithm*, which itself expresses the significance of the sin of *ithm*.

The Qur'an considers the sin of people who deprive themselves of goodness through inaction and laziness to be so great that one cannot eliminate its adverse effects only through *istighfār*.

People who cause the loss of great good, whether in work, knowledge, health, or anything else, out of laziness or inaction commit the greatest of sins. Leaving today's work for tomorrow and not appreciating each moment is devaluing life and the blessing of being alive, which is a great sin from the Qur'an's point of view.

## ‘Adhāb

The term ‘adhāb is derived from the root term ‘-dh-b, meaning salubrity. Salubrity refers to a type of pleasure that brings about health.

Rāghib has mentioned several possibilities about its original meaning. For example, he has noted that it is derived from ‘adhaba. ‘Adhdhābtahū means “I eliminated his salubrity in life,” similar to the term *marraḍtahū*, which means “I eliminated his disease.” *Mā’ adhb* is said to be polluted and turbid water. On this basis, ‘adhdhābtahū means I made his pleasure turbid and polluted (Rāghib, vol. 4, p. 309).

Contrary to popular belief, the word ‘adhāb does not mean torture and pain but a lack or reduction in salubrity, which is a kind of health-giving pleasure. Not only is there much stimulation in this sort of delight, but an increase in awareness and health also accompanies it. According to the Qur’an, some actions and behaviors cause disorders in the body and mind, and even lead to events in a person’s life that destroy the pleasure and salubrity of life. “إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوْا” الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (Āl ‘Imrān, 3:177): Indeed, those who sold their *īmān* (faith accompanied by security) in exchange for *kufṛ* (obscurement of truth) did not

harm God at all. Instead, for them there is a painful unpleasantness. (In other words, they will lose their salubrity and suffer from its absence).

Indeed, one who removes the sense of peace and security from one's life in any way will lose the pleasing salubrity of life and health.

The Qur'an primarily uses the word *'adhāb* in conjunction with the terms *alīm*, *'aẓīm*, and *nār*. *Alīm* means painful while *'aẓīm* means great. As for *'adhāb al-nār*, it refers to the state where pleasure, comfort, and health are so far removed from a person that they experience suffering similar to burning in fire. *Counter to what many people believe, God Almighty has not threatened human beings with torture and punishment. Instead, He has said that whoever sins will lose the sweetness of life and experience this lack of sweetness in an unpleasant manner.*



## Ḍāllīn

*Ḍāllīn*, derived from the root *ḍ-l-l*, refers to those who are lost and misguided. Misguidance only makes sense when it relates to something that has a very clear purpose or end. The end of all creatures, according to the Qur'an, is "toward God": *Innā li-Allāh wa innā ilayhi rāji'ūn* (Q. Baqarah, 2:156).

In contrast to how humans perceive themselves, humans have not been created free. This lack of freedom is entirely evident if we put aside what humans were, where they were, and how they experienced creation before their worldly experience and only focus on their present experience of creation, i.e., the world. The restriction of experiencing the world in three dimensions, the limits and defects of the five senses,<sup>36</sup> the limitations and errors of the memory and brain, and the influence of instincts<sup>37</sup> all

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<sup>36</sup> See Mohammad Babaei, *Rawyā-yi Havās*, 2009.

<sup>37</sup> Humanity's self-conception is that they follow their own reason and logic, but this idea is completely wrong. In fact, the difference between humans and animals is that the latter only follow their instincts while humans also use their intellects to satisfy their instincts. Basically, reason, logic, and even human knowledge are tools in the hands of instincts. Humans have no knowledge of the nature and origin of these instincts. These instincts are what give a being, especially humans, a purpose. By creating feelings and instincts, God Almighty leads humans toward a specific but

indicate the purposiveness of human beings. Humans are like a missile fired at a specific target that must travel a particular path. If this missile has intelligence, it can react according to the situation and choose the easiest and safest route to the target. If the missile has senses and is alive, it will feel this targeted and purposive movement in the form of internal or instinctive tendencies and inclinations. Whenever it is on the shortest correct path, it will feel pleasure and sweetness. However, when it deviates from its course, this feeling will be reduced until it eventually feels something akin to pain and suffering. Humans are like a missile fired at a target. Whenever they deviate from the target, or in the words of the Qur'an "lose the way," they feel it in the form of a lack of or reduction in salubrity and pleasantness.<sup>38</sup> In contrast, whenever they are on the right path, they experience a healthy feeling of pleasure and sweetness.

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unknown (to humans) goal. According to the Qur'an, if a person is healthy, their instincts will lead them to the sacred goal of creation by a path that God calls *an'amta 'alayhim* (Q. 1:7). If these instincts and tendencies become ill or abnormal, they induce behaviors, feelings, and thoughts that, according to the Qur'an, draw humans away from the purpose of His creation. For this reason, such people are called lost or misguided.

<sup>38</sup> *'Adhāb* means the loss of sweetness or pleasantness.

# Maghḍūb

It is the passive participle of *gh-ḍ-b* of the form *maf'ūl*. *Ghaḍbah* refers to a hard, sharp rock. Wrath is called *ghaḍab* because people in an angry state are inflexible and harden like a rock. Furthermore, like the sharpness of rocks, they become abrasive and harmful. *Maghḍūb* people, in the Qur'anic view, are those who knowingly or unknowingly throw themselves into hardship, suffering, affliction, and pain. According to the Qur'an, these people can be either sinners or religious people.

The ultimate goal of all human beings, both sinners and the pious, is toward God.<sup>39</sup> The only difference is in the manner the path is traveled. From the point of view of the Qur'an, some people traverse this path with a feeling of pleasure and sweetness<sup>40</sup> that is constant both in this world and in the hereafter. Others, however, travel the path with hardship and suffering, like crossing a rocky path where the rocks are solid, sharp, and rough. These people who have fallen upon hardship are not always sinners. They also include those who, out of ignorance and in the name of religion and self-purification, subject themselves to

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<sup>39</sup> “إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَإِلَيْنَا الْمَصِيرُ” (Q. Qāf, 50:43): Most certainly, it is we who give life and bring death, and toward Us is your return.

<sup>40</sup> “صراط الذين انعمت عليهم” (Q. Fātiḥah, 1:7): The path of those You have blessed.

incorrect and baseless austerities and hardships. Instead of controlling their “selves,” they destroy them.<sup>41</sup> Such people are also considered *maghdūb*.<sup>42</sup> Islam is a religion of health, so it opposes unhealthy sleep deprivation and food deprivation. The lack of a proper healthy diet and prolonged sleep deprivation may cause disease and delusion, which are sometimes confused with true intuitions or divine visions. Many misguided people voluntarily make themselves ill through prolonged hunger and sleep deprivation, leading to delusions that they call divine visions.

Unfortunately, throughout history, some people have been caught in the trap of extremism due to ignorance and failure in following the prophets. Thus, they engage in some form of self-harm and harming others in the name of God. This religious self-harm is not specific to Islam; most

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<sup>41</sup> *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'* is a book that is full of delusional, misguided people such as this.

<sup>42</sup> “قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فِي ” (Q. A'rāf, 7:32): Say, “Who has forbidden the divine adornments He has created for His servants and the pure provisions?”

“يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَ اشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ” (Q. Baqarah, 2:172): O you who believe, eat the lawful and pure sustenance which We have given you and give thanks to God if you worship Him alone.

religions and sects suffer from it. Jainism<sup>43</sup> and some Islamic and Christian sects are several among hundreds of schools

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<sup>43</sup> Jainism was founded in the mid-sixth century BCE by a man born to a royal family. His parents were followers of a sect that considered the clothing of mendicants to be a source of pride and *sallekhana* (voluntarily fasting to death) as a privilege, blessing, and honor. When he reached the age of thirty, his parents ended their lives through deliberate starvation. This incident affected him. He abandoned all worldly possessions, discarded his clothes, and lived an ascetic life in West Bengal. He engaged in various acts and studies to cultivate his soul and obtain self-knowledge. He lived in this way for thirteen years. He gathered a following who later named him Mahavira (the great hero) and, in accordance with their distinguished and distinct beliefs, named themselves Jains. Among his followers, Mahavira chose a group of single men as the clergy of the religion and also gathered a following of women who had abandoned the world. When he died at the age of 72, he had about fourteen thousand followers. This school gradually became a collection of the strangest religions in history. Nudity is an aspect of Jain austerity and a way to reach absolute truth and the end of all suffering. The followers of this religion are required not to wear clothes and only cover their private parts minimally. Some followers obey this religious teaching while others do not. The naked and the clothed form two groups, and there is conflict among them. Jainism is divided into a total of 84 sects. Their austerity is rooted in the basic teachings of Jainism. The basic Jain teachings regarding austerity included nudity and absolute starvation, such that if one perishes, one attains a great status. Suicide (*sallekhana*) was also part of this austerity. This

that have unfortunately met such a fate. Similar thoughts with less intensity can be seen among many sects that have branched out from the divine religions. These thoughts are neither approved by the saints of God nor by reason and science.

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could be carried out through strict mortifications. Vegetarianism is also part of the ascetic life of Jainism. They believe that such self-denial can eradicate the evil root of materiality from the human essence, so that the person becomes enlightened and does not suffer the affliction of reincarnation.

## *Jabbār*

What ordinary people think of when they hear this word is an angry, powerful, and ruthless person. By referring to dictionaries, we find that *jabbār* is a hyperbolic form (*ṣiḡhat al-mubālaghah*) from the root *j-b-r*. *Jabr* refers to the correction or rectification of an object using force. It can also mean reducing something from a fractured state (i.e., the opposite of fracture). Rāghib writes that *jabr* originally signifies the restoration of a thing through force. “*Jabr*: to make a person wealthy or to mend a person’s fractured bone.” (*Qāmūs Qur’an*, vol. 2, p. 2)

Contrary to popular belief, *jabbār* describes the motherly characteristic and extreme kindness of a powerful person who, out of severe mercy and kindness, perseveres in using their power to make someone healthy. *Yā jabbār kull kasīr wa yā musahhil kull ‘asīr* means “O mender of every fractured thing and O facilitator of every difficult thing.” (Ibid, p. 3).

In reference to God, *jabbār* can be described as follows: O Mighty and Merciful Being, O Mighty Healer, and O Healer and Restorer of our ruined beings. The name *jabbār* is the manifestation of God’s healing and restorative mercy on creatures. *Jabbār* is an attribute of mercy for God,

while it is a blameworthy and reproachable attribute for humans. This is because the Qur'an disapproves of the imposition of one's will over another even if the purpose is to correct the other. This disapproval indicates the high significance of voluntary action in Islam. The Qur'an invites human beings to voluntarily act based on reason, knowledge, and piety. About the conversion of people to the religion, it even states, "لا اكره فى الدين" (Q. Baqarah, 2:256): There is no compulsion to convert to the religion. Elsewhere, the Qur'an states, "يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا" (Q. Nisā', 4:59): O you whose beings are immersed in the feeling of security and others are safe from harm from you, readily obey God, His messenger, and those vested with authority. It is as if a secret is hidden within voluntary action that is destroyed by force. It is fascinating to know that even exercise is harmful to the body if it is not performed willingly and with pleasure. This is because corticosterone, a stress hormone released much more in forced exercise than voluntary exercise, reduces brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) in the brain. BDNF plays a role in the growth of nerve cells or neurons.<sup>44</sup> When a

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<sup>44</sup> Ke Z, Yip SP, Li L, Zheng X-X, Tong K-Y (2011) The Effects of Voluntary, Involuntary, and Forced Exercises on Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor and Motor Function Recovery: A Rat Brain Ischemia Model. PLoS ONE 6(2): e16643. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0016643



person is exposed to coercion through the imposition of another person's will, their body's stress hormone level increases. Corticosterone is not only harmful to the body but also causes dysfunction in many bodily organs.

Therefore, when the word *jabbār* is used to describe human beings, it does not only refer to *kāfirs* but to any person who wants to impose their will on another. Whether this imposition is for good or for evil, a *jabbār* is blameworthy. Of course, this does not mean that one must allow people to oppress others. When a *mu'min* sees that someone is unjustly harming another, they must stop it in any way possible, even by force if necessary. The term *jabbār* does not cover the maintenance of security, provided that such maintenance is of a divine and healing nature. Common laws in societies can be considered one of these cases, on the condition that such laws are written on the basis of maintaining and ensuring health in all human aspects.



# Nūr

According to the popular conception, *nūr* refers to visible light. To justify some verses of the Qur'an, commentators and translators have also described *nūr* and *ẓulumāt* as good and evil or pleasure and suffering. Science explains light as photons or electromagnetic waves. Considering all these interpretations, what is the meaning of "Allah is the *nūr* of the heavens and the earth" (Q. Nūr, 24:35)?

Semantically, *nūr* means light, revealer, manifester, a truth that causes something to be manifested or revealed. Photons and electromagnetic waves are considered *nūr* because they show a part of the universe to us. However, in my view, they are not *nūr* in the absolute sense because photons and electromagnetic waves are themselves things that have been manifested by something else. Pure *nūr* is a truth by which every revealer is revealed.

When we use the concept of being revealed, we definitely mean being revealed to living beings. If there is no living being, the idea of revealing becomes meaningless. For whom are these acts of revealing taking place?

For creatures. All created beings are manifestations or revealed things that God has created and revealed. When God states, *yukhrijuhum min al-ẓulumāt ilā al-nūr* (Q. Baqarah, 2:257), He means He reveals to them what was hidden, and thus they can perceive more than they previously perceived. Their level of awareness is increased, and they understand the truth and creation more wholly. Where He says, *yukhrijuhunahum min al-nūr ilā al-ẓulumāt* (ibid), it means, they (the *ṭāghūt*) hide from certain people what was evident. Thus, the scope and level of their awareness decrease, and because of this, they do not fully perceive truths.

Thus, the meaning of “Allah is the *nūr* of the heavens and the earth” (Q. Nūr, 24:35) is “God is the revealer of all that is in the heavens and the earth.”

By translating the term *nūr* correctly, we no longer compare God with the light of a lamp, the sun, or energy. We also do not attribute to God a perceptible and tangible existence. Furthermore, the meaning of the following hadith by the Messenger of God is better understood considering this interpretation. “Knowledge is not the abundance of education, but the light (*nūr*) that God shines in the heart of whomever He wills.” That is, knowledge is not acquired through education. Rather, knowledge is a truth that God reveals to whomever He wills. It is understood from this hadith that the Prophet (ﷺ) considered knowledge to be of two types, specifically what the ordinary people call knowledge, which is the transmission of experiences through words, and the knowledge by which aspects of existence and creation are revealed to human beings. The latter cannot be transmitted through words or education.

We can never teach knowledge to a bird, even to the extent a child possesses. However, if a bird’s consciousness suddenly changes and elevates, even without undergoing education, it will understand things about creation that no other bird can understand. Perhaps the Messenger of God is referring to an understanding where the awareness and consciousness are elevated. Thus, *nūr* means revealer, and *nūr al-nūr* means revealer of all revealers.

# Makr

Commonly, *makr* refers to deception and trickery. In the Qur'an, the term *makr* is repeatedly attributed to God. Various verses of the Qur'an have been translated in manners similar to the following. “ وَ مَكْرُوا وَ مَكَرَ ” (Q. Āl 'Imrān, 3:54): “And they deceived, and God also deceived, and God is the best of deceivers.” “ وَ مَكْرُوا مَكْرًا وَ مَكَرْنَا ” (Q. Naml, 27:50): “They deceived, and we also devised while they were unaware.”

What does *makr* mean? Is God a deceiver? Does He plot like us humans or in a more sophisticated manner, perhaps? Why would God, the Creator of every being, need to deceive?

In Arabic, *makr* does not mean trickery, deceit, or conspiracy. Instead, *makr* means to make plans about a person who is unaware of the plans. It means secret planning (*Qāmūs*, vol. 6, p. 265). God's *makr* refers to God's plans for His creatures — plans that are hidden from them.

Because they are created beings, all creatures are limited by various constraints, such as the senses, so their understanding only covers an insignificant scope about God, existence, and its events. Because of these limitations, almost all of God's plans, which are implemented within creation and as events in the universe, are beyond the reach of human knowledge and human senses. This inaccessibility differs from actively hiding matters or tricking others. In fact, with the power and authority that God has over His creatures, there is no need for deceit. Tricks and deception belong to creatures. They try to trick others because of their inadequacy and inability and their ignorance and limitations. They do it to compensate for their weaknesses and their

inability to achieve their desires. Considering the correct meaning of the word *makr*, the translation of the previous verses are as follows:

- “وَمَكْرُؤًا وَّمَكْرَ اللَّهِ وَ اللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ” (Q. Āl ‘Imrān, 3:54):  
They planned secretly, and God also planned, while His plan was hidden from them. Know, however, that God’s hidden plans are always directed toward the best good.
- “وَمَكْرُؤًا مَّكْرًا وَمَكْرَنَا مَكْرًا وَ هُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ” (Q. Naml, 27:50):  
They planned secretly (and from their own point of view, their plans were great and complicated), and We planned a great plan that was hidden from them. Truly, they can not fully and accurately understand.

# Rizq

In various books, *rizq* is defined as a gift and a thing from which one benefits (*Qāmūs*, vol. 3, p. 82). All creatures that we know of need various factors to survive, including other beings. Without these factors, no creature can survive or even exist. Food and water are among these factors. We humans need many things to survive, such as gravity, air pressure, the earth's magnetic field, the sun, the moon, oxygen, sound (because we develop abnormalities or disorders in absolute silence), energy, and so on. In fact, our needs as human beings are more numerous than we can imagine.

In my opinion, the term *rizq* is a general word that includes all the physical, spiritual, and psychological needs of human beings. Still, most people think of *rizq* as money and food. The term *rizq* refers to a larger concept and includes all the needs of every being — even space-time, energy, and the forces in creation. *Rizq* is any factor needed for the survival, rectification, or actualization of a being. Even happiness, sorrow, pleasure, suffering, knowledge, security, insecurity, longevity, etc., are part of the *rizq* of various beings.

Therefore, the Qur'an sees *rizq* in a much more profound manner than merely food. When describing a true Muslim, the Qur'an says: "and [who] spend out of what We have provided for them" (Q. Baqarah, 2:3, trans. Qarā'i). This not only refers to food and money but can include anything needed for survival or growth. According to the Qur'an, a Muslim is a person who gives to others from the surplus of their *rizq*. They obey the command of God by gifting health, happiness, peace, security, science, knowledge, food, and clothing to others.

Sometimes a smile, a positive thought, a comforting word, or a kind look can be an act of gifting *rizq*.

# Jannah

*Jannah* is derived from the root *j-n-n*, meaning hidden. *Jannah* is sometimes used to describe a garden where the floor cannot be seen through the dense trees. In any case, the primary meaning of *jannah* is hidden (Qāmūs Qurʾān, vol. 2, p. 61).

In the Qurʾan, the word has been used to describe both the hidden aspect of God (*wa udkhulī jannatī*: and enter into my hidden aspect [Q. Fajr, 89:30]) and very dense gardens.

Their five senses restrict human beings in the world. This restriction has hidden an unimaginably vast part of creation from humans. According to the Qurʾan, only after death can human beings perceive other aspects of existence and escape some of these restrictions. The term *jannah* describing the worlds after death means that these worlds are hidden from our mundane senses. Thus, all the descriptions about them are just descriptions and indescribably different from the reality of these worlds. It is like describing color to a person who is congenitally blind or describing sound to a person who is congenitally deaf. They simulate your descriptions using their other senses. Similarly, we simulate heaven and the unseen worlds using our present senses and give it a worldly aspect.



## *Qalb* (قلب)

*Qalb* means to reverse or invert.

Raghib writes, “*Qalb* is the transformation of an object from one form into another, such as reversing an article of clothing” (*Qāmūs Qur’ān*, vol. 6, p. 23).

In most translations and *tafsirs* (exegeses), the term *qalb* refers to the somatic organ responsible for pumping the blood [through the body]. In addition, *qalb* has been defined variously as the consciousness, the ability to understand, or an incorporeal point within the chest among other definitions.

Humans are bound, throughout their lives, by their five senses and never experience the truth of creation. They are so immersed in their internal fantasy that they believe their fanciful experiences are the undeniable truth. The world outside our minds is colorless, but we see it as colorful. Objects are not solid, but we see them as such. There are many other examples of this (see Bābā’ī, *Rawyā-yi Havās*, 1388). In other words, the world we observe is “transformed” (*qalb*) alongside a part of our being. Thus, the *qalb* is the part of our being that transforms the input from our senses into a dream or fantasy called the world.<sup>45</sup> If this transformation does not occur in accordance with the purpose of creation, our perception and performance in the world will deviate, causing us to diverge from the original path of creation. The Quran refers to this as “a diseased heart.” Consequently, the term *qalb* does not refer to the muscular heart in the chest, otherwise people with artificial hearts would suffer from a lack of identity. If we are to determine a locus for it

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<sup>45</sup> It seems that the brain carries out this function, or at the least, the brain is the medium by which this function is fulfilled.

in the body, the only possibility is the brain, which functions to transform the quantum world into the world we experience.

The Quran holds that a part of our being, which is imperceptible to us, transforms the truth of creation, causing us to experience a fantasy or mirage called the world. Accordingly, there are many statements in the Quran and narrations attributed to the Prophet (s) emphasizing that the world is a mirage or fantasy.

# Muslim

The word *muslim* refers explicitly to the followers of Islam.

Among humans, every group or school of thought is known by its most prominent quality or characteristic. For example, the term *ḥawāriyūn* (plural of *ḥawārī*) means select companions and refers to the Apostles. The word apostle is derived from the Greek *apostolos*, which means messenger. The name was given to these companions of Jesus because they accepted the responsibility of preaching Jesus's gospel to the people of Israel. Because they were the select companions of Jesus and had the responsibility of communicating, they were called apostles.

The word *muslim* is derived from the root *s-l-m*, meaning health. *Muslim* is an active participle meaning one who gives health or makes healthy. According to the Qur'an, the most prominent and apparent attributes of Muslims are health and the quality of providing health. Their health is observably greater than that of other peoples. From different perspectives, health has various meanings. Still, according to the definition of the Qur'an, the salient features of healthy people include the following:

1. *Ṣāliḥ*: They are clearly advocates of peace and reconciliation and seek to eliminate division among people. To be *ṣāliḥ*, one must have a healthy mind, which makes a person peace-loving and non-belligerent — though not out of fear.

2. *Mu'min*: Not only are they obviously at peace, but other people also feel safe and secure through their existence. In other words, everyone is safe from their evil, and everyone obtains a feeling of safety from them. This security is also a result of a healthy mind.
3. Not *mujrim*: They clearly do good to others and consider being unproductive as a sin. People know them as individuals who do good deeds. Their words are good and valuable, their glances are pure and full of affection, and their actions are good and full of blessings.
4. *Shākir*: They are appreciative, and they only remember the goodness of others. In fact, they do not forget the good someone does for them, and they certainly compensate that person with several times more goodness.
5. They do not engage in *sayyi'ah* (i.e., any action, thought, or belief that leads to sorrow and grief). Due to their monotheistic view of creation and its events,

they are never sad. If grief comes to them, they quickly control themselves and say, “*Innā li-Allāh wa innā ilayhi rāji‘ūn.*”<sup>46</sup>

6. They avoid *ithm*, meaning they do not lose the chance to do or obtain good due to laziness.
7. They are knowledgeable people and do not blindly imitate others.
8. They are *‘āqil*. That is, they make their knowledge control their feelings and possess control over themselves.

There are additional attributes that the Qur’an introduces as signs of a healthy human being. Indeed, healthy nutrition and exercise are integral components of health. Lack of proper and healthy nutrition, over-fasting alongside poor nutrition (which causes a severe decrease in the substances and vitamins needed by the body), and lack of regular exercise cause all kinds of diseases, hallucinations, brain aging, etc.

In addition to the descriptions that God provides in the Qur’an about healthy people (which one can understand by reading the meanings of Qur’anic words in this book), physical, mental, intellectual, and behavioral health are also inherent in the concept of *muslim*. According

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<sup>46</sup> Those who, when an affliction visits them, say, “Indeed we belong to Allah, and to Him do we indeed return.” (Q. Baqarah, 2:156, tr. Qarai)

to the Qur'an, for a Muslim, exercise, proper nutrition, rest, and anything that ensures the health of a part of the body are religious obligations.

# Salām

One of the obligatory everyday rituals among Muslims is saying *salām*. When Muslims meet each other, the first word they say is *salām*. *Salām* is derived from the root *s-l-m*, meaning health. *Salāmun ‘alaykum* means health be upon you, may you be free of illness, be healthy.

By naming His religion *Islām* (meaning to enter into health), God Almighty has introduced health as the most prominent feature of His religion. To highlight this important point so it is not forgotten, He has ordered Muslims to say *salām* to each other first whenever they meet. Thus, they wish each other well and remember that God has commanded them to be healthy.

## Relevant Verses

- “وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوءًا بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ: (Q. An‘ām, 6:54)”

- When those who grant security with Our verses come to you, say, “Health be upon you.” God has made mercy obligatory upon Himself, so that if any of you commits an ugly deed out of ignorance and then repents and makes their deeds *sālih* (eliminate enmity and create friendship), God is forgiving and merciful.

- “سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ” (Q. Ra’d, 13:24): Health be upon you for the patience you have endured. How good is the outcome of that abode!
- “وَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ وُلِدَ وَ يَوْمَ يَمُوتُ وَ يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ حَيًّا” (Q. Maryam, 19:15): And health be upon him, on the day he was born, on the day he dies, and on the day he is resurrected.



# Ṭā'ah

Its root is *ṭaw'*, meaning desire and inclination. *Ṭā'ah* refers to willing obedience. “وَلَهُ أَسْلَمَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَكَرْهًا” (Q. Āl ‘Imrān, 3:83): Whatever is in the heavens and the earth willingly or unwillingly surrenders to God for healing (*Qāmūs Qur’ān*, vol. 4, p. 248).

“يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولَى الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا” (Q. Nisa, 4:59)

O you who believe, willingly obey God, the Messenger, and those vested with authority among you.

According to Rāghib, *ṭaṭawwu'* is to obey willingly or to obey with desire (*Qāmūs Qur’ān*, vol. 4, p. 248). “فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ” (Q. Baqarah, 2:184): Whoever willingly does good, it is better for them.

In obedience of the *ṭā'ah* kind, there is no reluctance or compulsion involved. Actions are carried out voluntarily and with pleasure. Therefore, wherever the Qur’an uses the word *ṭā'ah*, it is not commanding blind obedience. Instead, it is saying that you should follow God, the Messenger, and those vested with authority with knowledge and desire. If there is no willingness in such obedience, it will not be beneficial.

From this meaning, one can infer that forcing one to obey through intimidation and compulsion is a sin and is criticized by the Qur’an.

*Istiṭā'ah* refers to the power to obey and the pursuit of obedience. It means to seek the inclination, ability, and enthusiasm to obey.

# Muttaqī

The term *muttaqī* is derived from the root *waqaya*, meaning self-control. The root *taqī* means “to prevent.” *Taqiyah* is another word from the same family, which means to prevent harm and to defend. For example, political *taqiyah* means to take a defensive and passive political position so that one is not harmed. *Taqwā* means prevention, and *muttaqī* persons are those who prevent or obstruct their base urges. The most modern terms synonymous with this concept are self-restraint and self-control. Thus, *muttaqī* means one with self-control, self-discipline, and self-restraint — one who is in control of their “self.”

Being *muttaqī* or self-controlled, according to the Qur’an, does not mean to be austere or to kill one’s instincts. According to the Qur’an, there is no futility in God’s creation.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, in the Qur’anic point of view, self-control means to manage the feelings and instincts, not to kill them. One must be able to control the time and extent that feelings and instincts are manifested.

Austerity is condemned in Islam<sup>48</sup> because austerity associated with excessive lack of food or sleep, prolonged seclusion, and sensory deprivation leads to delusions and severe brain damage.<sup>49</sup> They lead to

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<sup>47</sup> “الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَاوُتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ” Q. Mulk, 67:3.

<sup>48</sup> “يريد الله بكم اليسر و لا يريد بكم العسر” : God wants ease for you, not hardship (Q. Baqarah, 2:185).

<sup>49</sup> Excessive lack of food leads to a lack of essential factors in the body, such as vitamins, minerals, and water. When accompanied

visual and auditory hallucinations. Thus, the person mistakenly considers these hallucinations as intuitive and spiritual experiences.

Sufism did not develop in Arabia while the Holy Prophet was alive. Rather, after the Prophet's death, when Islam entered countries like Iran, general and philosophical concepts in Islam were interpreted based on these peoples' preconceptions. Due to the inclination of Arabs towards materiality and upper-class life, they focused on the Qur'anic verses and narrations about material life, forming an aristocratic Islam. The deprived Arab, Iranian and Roman masses, who were attracted by the slogan of Islamic justice to escape authoritarian regimes, were subjected to a hereditary authoritarian monarchy, racial aristocracy, pillage, massacre, and so on. Furthermore, Arab Islamic schools (e.g., Ḥanafī, Shāfi'ī, Mālikī, Ḥanbalī) had tedious and harsh jurisprudential laws that did not match the Iranian spirit. Eventually, the Mu'tazilah sect scattered seeds of doubt in the Islamic society through rationalism resulting from their study of Greek philosophy. In this manner, they moved many people to seek answers and discover the truths of the religion. Under these circumstances, the Shu'ūbiyah movement came to the attention of non-Arab Muslims, especially Iranians. In short, in the time of the Messenger of God and even for years afterward, austerity and spiritual wayfaring did not exist in the sense of withdrawing from daily life and extinguishing the self.

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by extended sleep deprivation, these deficiencies cause visual or auditory hallucinations. Unfortunately, because of their religious reputation, many people suffering from such illnesses considered those hallucinations to be spiritual experiences (see: Mohammad Babaee, *Rawyā-yi Ḥavās*, 2009, chap. Khāb Rawhānī)

Initially, *'Irfān* and Sufism were a reaction against the corruption and austere policies of the Umayyads and Abbasids as well as an attempt to purify and cultivate the inner self. However, after a while, it took on a political tone. The fact that most mystics are Iranians —mainly from Khorasan, the center of uprisings against the caliphate — is proof of this. At the same time, another type of Sufism also emerged that is more well-known today. Constant hostilities, religious conflicts, and the appearance of Greek, Indian, Roman, Christian, etc., philosophies were the actual origins of this type of *'Irfān* or mysticism.

According to the Qur'an, a *muttaqī* person is one who has a simple, healthy, and cheerful daily life and controls all their feelings and instincts with a steely determination so that these feelings and instincts do not appear at an inappropriate place or in an extreme manner.

# Yūqīnūn

This term is derived from the root *y-q-n*, meaning to be convinced through knowledge, to arrive at a belief through knowledge and rationality, an informed belief, a belief without doubt.<sup>50</sup>

The Qur'an plainly states its opposition to blind acceptance without knowledge and thought. It considers thought as a distinctive feature of a healthy human — in other words, a *Muslim*. From the point of view of the Qur'an, whenever a person arrives at a certain and unquestionable truth through knowledge, and that truth leads to *īmān* (faith accompanied by security), it is considered as *yaqīn* or informed and certain belief.

## Relevant Verses

“وَفِي خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا يَبُثُّ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ آيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ” (Q. Jāthiyah, 45:4): And in your creation and the dispersal of moving creatures, there are lessons for those who are convinced through knowledge and thought.

“هَذَا بَصَائِرُ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ” (Q. Jāthiyah, 45:20): This Qur'an is a source of insight for the people, and it is a guidance and mercy for those who are convinced through knowledge and thought.

Following knowledge and avoiding blind imitation are among the greatest commandments of the Holy Prophet and the religion of Islam.

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<sup>50</sup> “وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ” : And those who attained safety and security because of what was revealed to you and what was revealed before you and informedly believe in the end that draws them toward itself (Q. Baqarah, 2:4).

# ‘Aql

The root ‘*q-l* has been used 49 times in verb form in the Holy Qur’an, specifically *ta‘qilūn* 24 times, *ya‘qilūn* 22 times, *ya‘qiluhā* once, *na‘qilu* once, and *‘aqaḷūhu* once. The primary meaning of the word ‘*aql* is to restrain, bind, or tether. This meaning is evident in many uses of the word. For example, a rope used to secure a camel’s leg is called ‘*iqāl*, and a fortress or refuge is called a *ma‘qil*. Almost all lexicographers agree on the origin, root, and meanings of the derivatives of this word. The author of *Maqāyīs al-Lughah* writes that ‘*aql* has a single basic meaning: restraint (Ibn Fāris, p. 69). Rāghib has a similar opinion in *Mufradāt*. He notes that the primary definition of ‘*aql* is refrainment and seeking refrainment (Rāghib, 1412 AH, p. 578). In his exegesis of verse 242 of Surah Baqarah, ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī has written that the primary meanings of ‘*aql* are ‘*aqd* (tightening or tying) and *imsāk* (refraining) (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, vol. 2, p. 247). Therefore, the primary meaning of the root ‘*q-l* is to keep, prevent, preserve, or bind. Other meanings of the term are metaphorical. Some lexicographers have interpreted ‘*aql* as a deterrent — knowledge that keeps the person away from ugliness and vice. Accordingly, whoever has a more potent deterrent has greater ‘*aql* (‘*Asgarī*, p. 366).

All known material beings have an instinctive system of feelings and emotions that controls their reactions and behaviors towards themselves and the environment. In animals, this system is mainly controlled by the environment. However, due to their cerebral cortex, this system in humans is primarily controlled by their knowledge and experience. Therefore, from the Qur’an’s point of view, persons with ‘*aql* are those who submit to their knowledge and whose instincts are under the control of their knowledge.

## Relevant Verses

“كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ” (Q. Baqarah, 2:242): God expresses His signs to you in this manner so that you may submit to knowledge.

“وَ هُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَ يُمِيتُ وَ لَهُ اخْتِلافُ اللَّيْلِ وَ النَّهَارِ أ فَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ” (Q. Mu’minūn, 23:80): And your God is He Who gives life and death, and for Him is the alternation of night and day. Do you not then follow knowledge?



# ‘Ālamīn

‘Ālamīn is a plural of ‘ālam. The term ‘ālam uses the *fā‘al* word form. When a thing is expressed using the *fā‘al* word form, it implies that the thing is an instrument. For example, the word *khātām* refers to a tool that is used to finish something. On this basis, in the past, the rings of kings used to end letters instead of a seal were called *khātām*. Thus, the literal meaning of ‘ālamīn is “means or instruments of acquiring knowledge.”

The word *‘ilm* has been defined as a sign, indication, or perception of an object’s essence. Rāghib has said that *‘ilm* is an indication or sign by which an object becomes known (Rāghib, vol. 5, p. 34). Ṭabrisī has written that *‘ālam* is from the same root as *‘alāmah* and created beings are called *‘ālam* because they are signs of the existence of the Almighty Creator (Rāghib, vol. 5, p. 35).

Therefore:

- *‘ilm* means sign or indication.
- *‘Ālam* (with the word form *fā‘al*) refers to an instrument for acquiring knowledge or for understanding and recognizing signs and indications.
- *‘Ālim* refers to a person who uses these instruments to understand signs to discover the realities indicated by them. Therefore, scholars and scientists are called *‘ālim*.

A sign indicating a thing differs from the reality of that thing. For example, a footprint is a sign of a creature’s passage, but it is not the

creature itself. It does not even resemble the creature. Another example is tire marks on a road indicating an accident. They are a sign that a car has braked hard there. Nevertheless, these tire marks are very, very different from the reality of the car itself. The world and all of creation are signs of God, but they are not God. The Qur'an considers all of creation as an instrument and sign for knowing God and achieving union with Him. For this reason, the Qur'an calls creatures *'ālamīn*, that is, means of knowing and achieving union. The Qur'an is stating that everything we humans perceive of the world, whether by the senses or by other means, is merely a sign and very different from reality.

From a scientific perspective, the world we experience is formed within us, like a dream, and what we see is an inner world. When creation is transformed by our senses and appears within us as the world, it differs so much from its reality that it can only be considered a collection of signs and symbols. The sky, trees, mountains, people, objects, and birds you see are just signs of the creation that exists outside of you. The senses perceive them inside you in this way, and these perceptions are not like their reality at all.<sup>51</sup>

“الحمد لله رب العالمين” (Q. Fātiḥah, 1:2): All praise belongs to the God who determines how instruments of acquiring knowledge are manifested and how they change.

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<sup>51</sup> Mohammad Babae, *Rawyā-yi Havās*, 2009.

# Şābirīn

In a literal sense, the Arabic term *şabr* means to be confined, limited, or restricted (*Qāmūs*, 1412 [AH], p. 273). Some have defined it as refraining from expressing impatience and restlessness (i.e., patience). *Şābir* means one who endures or one who is able to stand against problems, adversities, and factors that try to destroy one physically, spiritually, and mentally.

There are two views about the term *şabr*, namely the popular view and the semantic and Qur'anic view.

## The Popular View About *Şabr*

According to the popular interpretation, *şabr* refers to a surface-level tolerance of problems. In this sort of *şabr*, most problems and much suffering remain within the person in the form of feelings and thoughts even though the person seems and acts happy. In this sense, *şabr* mostly means not allowing sadness, stress, frustration, anger, and discomfort to show without them being eliminated within.

This type of *şabr*, which is actually very common, can negatively affect a person's health.<sup>52</sup> In the long run, it can cause various physical and mental illnesses.

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<sup>52</sup> One of the negative effects of this type of *şabr* or patience is the production of the cortisol hormone, also called the stress hormone. In such circumstances, cortisol is produced in large quantities, causing the immune system to weaken. This is a prelude to many types of illnesses and traumas. During chronic stress, the adrenal glands release vitamin C in the body to reduce the effects of stress on the heart and circulatory system. Vitamin C reduces oxidizing substances, preventing them from affecting

Considering the literal meaning of Islam, due to the significant harm it causes to the mind and body of the person, such patience or *ṣabr* is not a virtue but a great sin instead.

### True *Ṣabr*

From the Qur'an's point of view, true patience is to maintain inner peace,<sup>53</sup> happiness,<sup>54</sup> and hope in the face of all adversities and stressful factors. A genuinely patient person endeavors the greatest against problems and hardships without becoming agitated. Such a person makes decisions and acts while inwardly remaining calm, happy, confident, hopeful, and determined.<sup>55</sup> The only things that they are concerned with are acting correctly and conscientiously. They know that the conclusion of every action depends on God's will or *mashiyah*. There is no power nor might except in God (*lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi-Allāh*). In this world, humans are only responsible for endeavoring<sup>56</sup> even

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the DNA. However, long-term vitamin C deficiency increases damage and mutation of mitochondrial DNA. Eventually, this damage leads to mutation and conversion of normal cells to cancer cells. It is completely certain that when negative emotions are kept inside, they can cause irreparable harm to the person's health. This is only a small part of the negative effects of keeping negative emotions inside.

<sup>53</sup> Refer to the meaning of *mu'min*.

<sup>54</sup> Refer to the meaning of *sayyi'ah*.

<sup>55</sup> “فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ”: “When you have finished a job, engage in another important job.” (Q. Sharḥ, 94:7)

<sup>56</sup> “وَأَنْ لَيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى”: “And nothing belongs to a person other than what they obtain through endeavor and action.” (Q. Najm, 53:39)

if their actions have unintended results. Concerning good acts they carry out, they should be satisfied with the will of God, not just in words, but in a complete and true sense. One sign of true satisfaction is inner peace and happiness.

Such a person's inner peace and happiness do not prevent them from making the correct decisions. When appropriate, they forgive, have mercy, and smile. When necessary, they are angered, stand firm, act severely, and behave unyieldingly. However, they continue to be calm and happy within and satisfied with God's will during all their actions. Problems do not crush them, take away their inner happiness, or give them stress.<sup>57</sup>

## Muflihīn

The term refers to people freed of their constraints, people saved from restrictions, or people who have overcome obstructions. The root *f-l-h*

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قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِكَ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ ۗ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ  
“Say, ‘O Allah, Master of sovereignty! You give sovereignty to whoever You wish, and strip of sovereignty whoever You wish. You give might to whomever You wish, and abasement to whomever You wish. All good is in Your hand. Indeed, You have power over all things.’” (Q. Āl ‘Imrān, 3:26)

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالشَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِيرٍ ۗ “We will surely test you with a measure of fear and hunger and loss of property, lives, and fruits of your endeavors. And give good news to those who endure and have inner peace — those who, when afflicted with calamity, say (to themselves), ‘We are from God and shall return toward Him.’” (Q. Baqarah, 2:155-156). In this way, they establish peace, hope, and determination within themselves.

also denotes the growth of a seed and its emergence from the soil as well as persons who cause this growth (i.e., farmers). In a sense, *falāḥah* (from the same root) denotes liberation from any restraint that prevents the emergence of a being's luminous and sublime aspects.<sup>58</sup>

What the Qur'an means by applying the attribute of *falāḥah* to truly religious people and what restrictions are implied by *falāḥah* are matters that require a lengthy discussion. In summary, however, God's description of the world and what humans perceive as the world is that humans are restricted by their senses due to their sensory and physical limitations<sup>59</sup> and thus cannot perceive the reality of creation.<sup>60</sup>

The restrictions limiting humans from attaining *falāḥah* can be divided into several categories. However, it must be noted that this division of reality is not strictly correct, and all human aspects act in an integrated and monolithic manner. These categories include the following:

1. Physical and material
2. Mental and theoretical

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<sup>58</sup> “يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا” : “God guides toward *rushd*, so they gained peace and security through it and avoided ascribing partners with God” (Q. Jinn, 72:2). *Rushd* means growth toward a being's state of perfection.

<sup>59</sup> See Mohammad Babaee, *Rawyā-yi Havās*, 2009.

<sup>60</sup> “وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَ لَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ” : “And the life of the world is an illusion that differs from reality. However, the hereafter is good for the *muttaqī*, so why do you not control yourselves through knowledge?” (Q. An'ām, 6:32)

“يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ هُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَافِلُونَ” : “They only have knowledge of an outward part of the life of the world and are unaware of the hereafter.” (Q. Rūm, 30:7)

### 3. Spiritual and related to consciousness

From the Qur'an's point of view, the only way to remove these restrictions is to strive to achieve health.<sup>61</sup> Contrary to misconceptions that have led to monasticism in some Islamic sects, verse 92 of Surah Āl 'Imrān<sup>62</sup> and verse 6 of Surah Inshiqāq<sup>63</sup>, among others, actually refer to how a healthy person deals with divine destiny.

In the Qur'an, God says that He has not created anything in vain.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, a true *mu'min* and healthy person is neither attached to the

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بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ “Indeed, those who make their appearances healthy for the sake of God while being virtuous shall have their reward near their Lord, and they shall have neither fear nor shall they grieve.” (Q. Baqarah, 2:112)

“إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ “When his Lord said to him, ‘Be healthy,’ he said, ‘To become healthy, I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds.’” (Q. Baqarah, 2:131)

“لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّىٰ تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ “You will never obtain virtue until you spend out of what you love, and what you spend of anything, God is aware of it.” (Q. Āl 'Imrān, 3:92)

“يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ “O human! You must strive hard toward your Lord until you meet Him.” (Q. Inshiqāq, 84:6)

“أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ “Did you suppose that We created you in vain, and that you would not be returned to Us?” (Q. Mu'minūn, 23:115)

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَوتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ “[Blessed is] He who created seven heavens one above the other. You do not see any inconsistency or fault in the creation of the All-beneficent. Look again. Do you see any faults or impairments?” (Q. Mulk, 67:3)

world and its pleasures nor disgusted by the world and its pleasures. Such a person neither has the wish to die nor to stay in the world. This is because they do not believe that being in the world is futile to be disgusted by such futility. They seek *falāḥah* in being *mu'min* and *ṣāliḥ* and not being *mujrim*. They know that attachment to the world and worldly life is a restriction and that hating the world and wishing for death is also a restriction — restrictions that prevent them from being actualized. They do not see the world as futile and do not disparage it. They see both attachment to and escape from pleasures as restrictions. In order to attain *falāḥah*, they keep their bodies healthy through exercise, proper nutrition, sufficient rest, etc. They promote the health of their minds and thoughts through the light of knowledge, cognition, and correct thinking. Through their unceasing endeavors and trust in God, they ensure the health of their souls and consciousnesses using their monotheistic feeling to reach *falāḥah* and salvation.

In my view, humans are their own prisoners and jailers. *Falāḥah* means to obtain freedom from the prison we have created for ourselves — a prison of thoughts, beliefs, traditions, patterns, etc.



# Mukhliṣīn

*Khulūṣ* means to be pure (*ṣāf*) and unadulterated. Rāghib writes that *khāliṣ* is the same as *ṣāf* with the difference that *khāliṣ* is something that has been purified while *ṣāf* can sometimes refer to something that never had any contaminants in the first place. *Khāliṣ* is something that has been purified of anything that is not part of its structure (ibid, vol. 2, p. 280). *Mukhliṣīn* thus means those who have been purified.

There are many interpretations about what it means to become *khāliṣ*. What the Qur'an means by becoming *khāliṣ* involves a lengthy discussion beyond this book's scope. However, what is certain is that according to the Qur'an, human beings are exposed to contaminations that cause them mental and physical illnesses.<sup>65</sup> Though not considered as illnesses

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<sup>65</sup> Scientists have long found viral genes in the human genome, but since these genes were in non-coding DNA, they did not notice their importance and impact until they found that non-coding DNA sequences have a role in regulating other genes. These viral elements are located in part of the DNA that can activate or deactivate parts of human genes. It is as if they control the body! Most viral sequences found in the human genome are retroviruses, which attach their genomes to the human genome. Surprisingly, scientists have found the bornavirus in the human genome as well. The bornavirus may cause changes in human behavior as well as mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, dementia, and general mood disorders. These findings indicate that, since prehistoric times, we all have been contaminated with a virus that causes changes in behavior and mental illnesses.

Every thought is the product of a physiological event. Every physiological event in humans indicate an event on the DNA level. Every thought is the product of the production, secretion, and

by people, they can alter one's beliefs and even consciousness. *Mushrik*, *mujrim*, *munāfiq*, foolishness, and superstition are numbered among these diseases. The Qur'an also utilizes the term *khālīs* to differentiate actions that seem similar but are carried out with different intentions and feelings.

قُلْ أَتُحَاجُّونَنَا فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ وَ لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَ نَحْنُ لَهُ  
مُخْلِصُونَ: "Say, 'Will you argue with us concerning God, while He is our Lord and your Lord? And our deeds are ours, and your deeds yours, and [in deeds], we are *khālīs* for Him.'"<sup>66</sup>

Per the Qur'an, actions may have different effects depending on the intentions and feelings that accompany them. The same act may be either sinful or righteous. That is, if carried out with dark intentions and

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increase or decrease of neurotransmitters in nerve cells. It is as if neurotransmitters are playing the piano. What is called human speaking, behavior, and thinking is actually the external manifestation of events in our body. In other words, the manner in which chemical events occur in our bodies is related to our genome. The existence of viral DNA in our genome raises the question whether or not all our thoughts are our own. Are destructive thoughts such as racism, superstition, ignorance, and foolishness related to our viral genes? Are the characteristics considered bad by the religion essentially human characteristics or ones that have been added to humans? It was previously thought that obsessive-compulsive disorder was not a disease because it is a way of thinking. However, nowadays it is treatable. Is it caused by a virus? What happens at the DNA level that leads to obsessive-compulsive disorder? Is obsessive-compulsive disorder a human feeling or is it an illness?

<sup>66</sup> Q. Baqarah, 2:139.

feelings,<sup>67</sup> it is sinful and destructive, and if done with luminous intentions and feelings,<sup>68</sup> it is right and good. In the Qur'anic view, actions must be carried out with pure and luminous feelings. For this reason, God considers health as necessary for purity and purity for health. Thus, He has named the final religion "the religion of health." For example, a person who helps a needy person intending to gain fame but says they are doing it for God does not have pure intentions.

Thus, *mukhlis* both refers to a person who has been purified of contaminants and a person whose actions and behaviors are carried out with pure and luminous intentions and feelings.

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<sup>67</sup> This includes anything that is considered sinful or disapproved (*makrūh*) from the Qur'an's point of view or condemned by humanity.

<sup>68</sup> This includes anything that is considered right, good, and virtuous by God.

# Khāshi'īn

*Khushū'* signifies modesty in one's voice and eyes. The root meaning of the term is softness and ease. Rāghib has explained that the definition of *khaḍa'*, *khuḍū'*, and *khushū'* is the same. Jawharī has written the same in *al-Ṣihāḥ*. (ibid, p. 249).

*Khāshi'* is an active participle of the form *fā'il*. It refers to a person whose feelings — and very being — have become soft, gentle, and accepting due to their deep understanding of God's greatness and power. They are like a person sitting before a very tremendous and kindly power. Such a person becomes especially accepting as a result of the infinite disparity in power. They cannot even think of resisting the great power's decisions, actions, and will. Therefore, the person is very cautious about how they speak and act to show their acceptance through a soft voice and gentle actions. By using *khāshi'*, the Qur'an is stating that a *mu'min* is *khāshi'* in their feelings and behavior towards God and the destiny He has determined. In the state of *khushū'*, there is no sign of opposition, whether outward or inward, whether in word or thought. Thus, a *khāshi'* person is utterly satisfied and content with God's will. Such persons do not only endeavor with all their might but also with gentleness and humility. They do this because they know they have been commanded to endeavor in all areas, including achieving health, scientific and educational success, material success and welfare, and spiritual success. Moreover, even if contrary to expectations, the results of their actions do not upset or worry them because they are *khāshi'* individuals, and this characteristic is quite evident in their words, feelings, behavior, thoughts, and beliefs. Contrary to those who shout out "O Lord, I am content with Your will!" but do not make any efforts in life, expecting God to give them everything they want because of their sense of contentment, the *khāshi'* are people of great effort and are content with His will without expecting their requests to be granted.

# Shākirīn

*Shukr* means to give praise due to blessings received. In *Majma' al-Bayān*, it is written that *shukr* is an acknowledgment and recognition of blessings accompanied by a kind of veneration. Rummānī has explained that *shukr* is the acknowledgment of blessings. Rāghib writes that *shukr* is to remember and acknowledge one's blessings. The opposite of *shukr* is *kufr*, meaning to forget and cover up blessings (ibid, vol. 4, p. 62).

As I understand from Qur'anic verses, verbally thanking God, such as saying *dhikrs* like *shukran li-Allāh* and *al-ḥamdu li-Allāh*, are also considered *shukr*. Still, on their own, they do not involve rewards for the speaker. True *shukr* is when the person pays attention to God's blessings with all their being and completely feels these blessings, such that they say *shukran li-Allāh* from the intensity of this feeling. For this reason, forgetfulness and remissness are considered opposites of *shukr*. Most of us humans are remiss because of our incorrect definition of what a blessing is. We either are blind to, forget about, or even ignore nearly 99% of God's blessings. For example, you can rarely find someone who feels their own life, is bewildered by it, and considers it as a blessing. People seldom deeply feel, become amazed by, or view as a blessing their consciousness and intellect, which differentiate humans from animals. In many cases, instead of thanking God, our ignorance causes us to act as if God owes us.<sup>69</sup> We feel that He owes us for the things we did not try hard enough to achieve and things we did try hard enough to

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<sup>69</sup> إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُودٌ “Indeed, humans are ungrateful to their Lord.” (Q. ‘Ādiyāt, 100:6)

achieve but were not given to us (by God) because they were not in our best interests.<sup>70</sup>

*Shukr* is, in fact, the feeling of cheerfulness and excitement we feel when we perceive blessings, just like when someone gives you a gift. In these circumstances, your excitement is your *shukr*. In contrast, imagine you receive a gift like a block of ice without a trace of excitement or cheerfulness and then put the gift aside while verbally thanking the person who gave it to you.

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<sup>70</sup> مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا وَكَفَىٰ  
بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا: “Every good that comes to you is from God, and every  
evil that comes to you is from yourself. We sent you as a messenger  
to the people, and God is sufficient as a witness.” (Q. Nisā’, 4:79)

# Muḥsinīn

*Muḥsinīn* is the plural active participle of *ḥusn*. Rāghib writes that *ḥusn* is anything that brings delight and pleasure (*bahjah*) (ibid, vol. 2, p. 135).

*Muḥsinīn* refers to those who are full of delight and also bring delight to others. *Bahjah* is not any delight. Instead, it is delight accompanied by luminous feelings as well as feelings of security, health, and mercy. It is like the delight of a child or that of someone who has been saved from certain death. Their delight coincides with all good feelings, including hope, forgiveness, mercy, determination, and gratitude. *Bahjah* is an innocent delight, a delight due to health and accompanied by all good feelings.

Therefore, *muḥsinīn* are those whose innocent delight is so enduring and palpable that they are identified by this characteristic, and most importantly, they transmit this innocent delight to others as well. Furthermore, they have not achieved this delight through haram and harmful means. Unfortunately, the more we get acquainted with the true meanings of the Qur'an, the fewer Muslims we see around us. It is as if these characteristics belong in myths and have nothing to do with the world we are experiencing.

“إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ.”: “Certainly, God is with those who practice piety and those who have and give delight.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Q. Naḥl, 16:128.

“أَخْذِينَ مَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُحْسِنِينَ”  
“...while they are content with what their Lord has given them. Certainly, they were already delighted and givers of delight.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Q. Dhāriyāt, 51:16.



# Ṣalāh

## The Root of Ṣalāh, and Its Derivatives in the Qur'an

Lexicologists have mentioned several meanings for *ṣalāh* and its derivatives, some of which are as follows:

A. Prayer: Many lexicologists hold that the literal meaning of *ṣalāh* is supplication and praise. Some of them state that ritual prayer is called *ṣalāh* because it includes supplications. This root has been used in this sense in the Holy Qur'an with the *taf'īl* form, such as in “ وَصَلَّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ ”  
مُ صَلَاتِكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ ”: “And pray for them. Surely, your prayer is a comfort to them.”<sup>73</sup>

B. Fire, heating, entering fire, throwing something in fire and burning it: According to some scholars, *ṣalāh* is derived from *al-ṣilā'* (meaning fire). Therefore, *ṣallā al-rajul* means “The man repelled fire from himself through worship.” “ خَذُوهُ فَغُلُّوهُ ثُمَّ الْجَحِيمَ صَلُّوهُ ”: “Seize him, and chain him! Then cast him into the fire of Hell.”<sup>74</sup> *Ṣalā* (simple three-lettered formation) means “He entered the fire.” For example, *alladhī yaṣlā al-nār al-kubrā* means “who enters the great fire.”<sup>75</sup> *Ṣilī* (simple three-lettered infinitive) means to burn in fire, and in the *ifti'āl* form, it means to warm as in following: “ أَوْ آتِيكُمْ بِسِهَابٍ قَبَسٍ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ ”: Or I will bring you some fire to warm yourselves.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Q. Tawbah, 9:103.

<sup>74</sup> Q. Hāqah, 69:30-31.

<sup>75</sup> Q. A'lā, 87:12.

<sup>76</sup> Q. Naml, 27:7.

C. Some scholars believe *ṣalāh* has a Syriac or Aramaic origin. The term *ṣalūtā*, or *ṣalūthā*,<sup>77</sup> meaning special worship, entered into Arabic from these languages. *Ṣalūtā* and its derivatives are found in Arab poems from the Jāhili Age. Ancient Arab poets from the pre-Islamic period were quite familiar with this term, and *ṣalūt* has also been used in stone inscriptions found in South Arabia with the meaning of prayer and supplication (Ja'farī, p. 293). The word was well known to the Arabs at the time of the Qur'an's revelation. Therefore, in Surah Muzzammil and Surah Muddaththir, which include some of the earliest verses of the Qur'an, Muslims have been ordered to perform *ṣalāt* without any explanation about the nature of *ṣalāt*. The important thing is that the term *ṣalāt* was used during the age of revelation in the sense of supplication or a special kind of worship. Even the Arab polytheists performed a special form of worship before the Kaaba called *ṣalāh*, which, of course, greatly differed from its modern meaning and application in Islam. “ وَمَا كَانَ صَلَاتُهُمْ عِنْدَ ”

“الْبَيْتِ إِلَّا مَكَاءً وَتَصْدِيَةً فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ”<sup>78</sup> “And their prayer at the House (Kaaba) was nothing but whistling and clapping. So taste the punishment because of your *kufur*.”<sup>78</sup> Ibn Abbas was asked, “Do you see (mention of) the five prayers in the Qur'an?” He said, “Yes,” and then he recited verses 17 and 18 of Surah Rūm, “So glorify Allah when you enter evening and when you rise at dawn. To Him belongs all praise in the heavens and the earth, at nightfall and when you enter noontime.”<sup>79</sup> In explanation, in this verse, *ḥīna tumsūn* refers to the Maghrib and Isha' prayers, *ḥīna tuṣbiḥūn* to the morning prayer, *'ashīyan* refers to 'Aṣr prayer, and *ḥīna tuḏhirūn* refers to the noon prayer (al-Ṭabarī, vol. 21, p. 36). Speaking about Prophet Yūnus, the Holy Qur'an says, “ فَلَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ ”

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<sup>77</sup> Ṭabāṭabā'ī, vol. 14, p. 385.

<sup>78</sup> Q. Anfāl, 8:35.

<sup>79</sup> Qara'ī's translation

مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ”: “Had he not been among the glorifiers...”<sup>80</sup> In *Majma‘ al-Bayān*, it is cited from Qatādah that prayer is meant by glorification (Ṭabrisī, vol. 8, p. 459). Some Qur’an scholars state that the use of *tasbīḥ* for *ṣalāh* is metonymic.<sup>81</sup> Experts also hold that in verse 41 of Surah Āl ‘Imrān, “*wa sabbihū...*” is also a command to perform ritual prayer. They explain that when Arabs ended their prayer, they would say that they ended their *subḥah*.<sup>82</sup> Ibn ‘Abbās and Ibn Mas‘ūd have cited that the Qur’anic phrase, *wa naḥnu nusabbihū biḥamdika wa nuqaddisu laka* means “While we pray to You.”<sup>83</sup>

In any case, all these meanings refer to a single forgotten truth. This truth has been slowly forgotten by people throughout history, leaving only a dry and soulless shell. Prayer and supplication are ways of speaking with God while the one praying has complete confidence in His existence and is sure that God hears their voice and watches over them. It is impossible for anyone to supplicate properly to a being in whose existence they are not certain. A necessary condition of *ṣalāh* is to believe in a God who hears and sees. Thus, in all senses of the term, *ṣalāh* involves speaking with God. Speaking is very different from reciting. Almost all Muslims recite their prayers and do not speak them. In reciting, it is essential to pay attention only to the words. However, in speaking, it is more important to pay attention to the addressee while also understanding the meaning of the words that are said. In reciting, one can read a text without comprehending it. It is only important that the text be read correctly (something that most Muslims do). Yet when speaking, we cannot use words that we do not understand. For example, when talking to your manager, you do not look around or direct your

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<sup>80</sup> Q. Sāffāt, 37:143.

<sup>81</sup> See Zarkashī, vol. 2, p. 270.

<sup>82</sup> See Ṭabrisī, vol. 1, p. 439.

<sup>83</sup> Q. Baqarah, 2:30.

attention elsewhere. You do not speak using memorized text — even if you have memorized it.

In the holy Qur'an, God states, “فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُصَلِّينَ الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَن صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ”: “So woe to those who pray, those who are heedless and negligent during prayer.”<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Q. Mā'ūn, 107:4-5.

# Jihād

*Jihād* is derived from the root *jahd* and *juhd*. It means considerable hardship and sheer exertion and effort. In addition, a solid land where plants do not grow is called *jahād* (pl. *juhud*) because it is impenetrable. In *Qāmūs* and *Mufradāt*, it is explained that in most cases, *jihād* refers to endeavor accompanied by hardship. *Ṣiḥāḥ* defines it as *ṭāqah* (hardship). In *Majma' al-Bayān*, under the explanation of verse 79 of surah Tawbah, it is written that *juhd* and *jahd* both have the same meaning, which is to force hardship on oneself. According to Sha'bī, *jahd* is used for actions while *juhd* is used for food and nutrition. Qutaybī has explained that *jahd* denotes hardship while *juhd* means obedience. Considering the explanations above, to carry out *jihād* means to utilize one's ability, undergo hardship, or endeavor with hardship. In short, *jahd* and *jihād* mean to endeavor with hardship (Rāghib, vol. 2, p. 77).

Just any sort of endeavor is not called *jihād*. Only a complete endeavor accompanied by hardship can be called *jihād*. Most people believe that *jihād* refers to battling against the *kuffār*. However, in the Qur'an, *jihād* is used with numerous meanings, one of which is to defend against attacks by the *kuffār*. In fact, God describes any endeavor accompanied by hardship and adversity and in line with the goal of creation and obedience to God as *jihād*. For this reason, *jihād* against the (carnal) self is considered to be greater than fighting on the battlefield.

- “ وَ جَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ مِلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَ فِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيداً عَلَيْكُمْ وَ تَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَ آتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ”: “And endeavor hard for the sake of God, an endeavor that

is worthy of Him. He has chosen you and has not placed hardship for you in the religion, the faith of your father, Abraham. God named you *those who have obtained health* before, and the Prophet is a witness to you, and you must be witnesses to the people. So rise to perform prayer, give *zakāt*, and hold fast to God. He is your master, an excellent master and an excellent helper.”<sup>85</sup> In this verse, God places so much importance on exceptional endeavors for controlling (not destroying) feelings and instincts that He has asked humans to do so for His sake.

- “إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ يَرْجُونََ “: “Certainly, those who have obtained inner peace while others are safe from them, have migrated, and have endeavored hard for the sake of God — they should anticipate the mercy of God for He is forgiving and extremely merciful.”<sup>86</sup>
- “أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُتْرَكُوا وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ...“: “Do you suppose you will be left without reckoning, without God determining those who endeavored hard?”<sup>87</sup>
- “وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ“: “And those who endeavor hard for Our sake, We shall guide

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<sup>85</sup> Q. Hajj, 22:78.

<sup>86</sup> Q. Baqarah, 2:218.

<sup>87</sup> Q. Tawbah, 9:16.

them in our special ways. Certainly, God always supports those who have and give delight.”<sup>88</sup>

According to the Qur’an and sunnah, Islam does not believe in fighting against and violating the territory of other countries and people, even the *kuffār*. Instead, all relevant Qur’anic verses and traditions from the Prophet of God speak of defense. In other words, in cases where the Qur’an mentions *jihād* in the sense of fighting and killing, it is referring to the manner of defending one’s rights, not violating the rights of others.

- “ أَنْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ ”: “Go forth lightly or heavily geared and wage *jihād* (strong defense) with your lives and properties. If you are a people with thought and knowledge, this is better for you.”<sup>89</sup>

Islam is the religion of health. It introduces its core as giving peace and security to others, and it strongly advocates peace, conciliation, and friendliness. Therefore, aggression, attack, and violation have no place in Islam. However, Islam explains that the defense of rights is essential and even obligatory. Even so, after the Prophet’s death, like other religious acts, *jihād* also lost its original meaning and was interpreted as attacking others. There is no Qur’anic justification for the attack launched by the Arabs against neighboring countries. Similarly, there is no Qur’anic justification for any killings in the modern era. If *jihād* meant transgression and assault, albeit only against the *kuffār*, the Prophet would have certainly done so during his lifetime. After the Prophet’s

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<sup>88</sup> Q. ‘Ankabūt, 29:69.

<sup>89</sup> Q. Tawbah, 9:41.

death, under the banner of Islam, the Arabs assaulted neighboring countries, plundering and killing, to satisfy their violent tendencies.



# Şadaqah

In the general public's view, *şadaqah* is an amount of wealth given to people in need for the sake of obtaining divine rewards and proximity to God. The effects and blessings that are enumerated for *şadaqah* constitute the primary motivations for giving *şadaqah*. Some of these include averting calamities and bad deaths, prolonging one's lifespan, making God satisfied, and increasing one's *rizq* (provisions). However, most people give an insignificant amount as *şadaqah* compared with their entire wealth.

The term *şadaqah*, from the root *şidq*, means truth and honesty, the opposite of untruth or lie. The Arabic word *şadaqah* originated from the Hebrew word צדקה (*tzedakah*), meaning righteousness, honesty, justice, truth, and helping the poor. *Şadaqah* is a kind of sincerity and righteousness with which one proves oneself to God through action.<sup>90</sup> As a result, giving away wealth, sacrificing one's life, and tolerance of worldly difficulties can be considered *şadaqah*. In fact, *şadaqah* can be anything, even a smile.

In Islam, the acceptance of *şadaqah* is a significant factor in having one's prayers answered, the elimination of calamities and harm, and the descent of God's mercy. The Qur'an indicates that the actions of humans can have different intentions, and the realities of these origins are

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<sup>90</sup> God does not need proof of our honesty and righteousness. He is more aware of our reality and inner self than we are. Proving our sincerity to God is just an expression. Actually, by carrying out *şadaqah* we are obeying God's command to be honest and righteous.

revealed only through the filter of worldly life.<sup>91</sup> Two people may carry out two identical actions, though one with dark intentions (such as cheating) while the other with luminous intentions (such as mercy). According to the Qur'an, the effects of *ṣadaqah* are only applicable to acts that are carried out with luminous feelings, and the sincerity of these acts is tested through the vicissitudes of life.<sup>92</sup> Thus, *ṣadaqah* is an act that has been tested to be sincere and righteous and to have luminous origins through the ups and downs of life. In other words, only an act that has gone through the filter of worldly life and has proven its righteousness is *ṣadaqah*.

What gives an act the title of *ṣadaqah* is the demonstration of the truth and rightness of the beliefs and convictions of the monotheist<sup>93</sup> and proof of the health and soundness (in the sense described by the Qur'an) of their actions, thoughts, and beliefs.

The Qur'an does not consider just anything as *ṣadaqah*. Rather, it considers *ṣadaqah* as a means of proving one's sincerity — though not

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<sup>91</sup> “أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَوْا أَنْ يَقُولُوا ءَآمَنَّا وَ هُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ” “Do the people suppose that they will be let off just because they say, ‘We have faith,’ and will not be tested?” (Q. ‘Ankabūt, 29:2)

<sup>92</sup> “وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَ نَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَ الْأَنْفُسِ وَ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَ بَشِيرٍ” “We will surely test you with a measure of fear, hunger, and loss of property, lives, and fruits of your endeavors. And give good news to those who endure and have inner peace — those who, when afflicted with calamity, say (to themselves), ‘We are from God and shall return toward Him.’” (Q. Baqarah, 2:155-156)

<sup>93</sup> A monotheist (*muwahhid*) is a person who has realized the reality of creation through great knowledge, cognition, and awareness and who knows with certainty that “There is no power nor might except in God” (*lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi-Allāh*) and that God is the source of all goodness.

at the cost of losing one's physical, spiritual, mental, social, etc., health. In essence, *ṣadaqah* is a demonstration of non-attachment, without the person being harmed or placing themselves in a predicament.<sup>94</sup>.

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<sup>94</sup> “وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا” : “Those who, when spending (in *infāq*), are neither wasteful nor tightfisted, and moderation lies between these [extremes].” (Q. Furqān, 25:67)

# Yawm

In Arabic, *yawm* refers to a measure of time during which an event visibly continues. In Arabic, a day is also called *yawm* because the sun is continuously visible throughout the period. Similarly, the reign of a king from start to end is also called *yawm*.

The closest English term to *yawm* is period. *Yawm al-Dīn*: the period of legislation. *Yawm al-Qiyāmah*: the period in which reality will appear and all things will be completed.

“.....خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ....”: “He created the heavens and the earth in six periods.”<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Q. Yūnus, 10:3.

# Mustaqīm

The term is derived from the root *qawama* or *qama*. Considering *mustaqīm* is an active participle of the form *mustaf'il*,<sup>96</sup> it means to seek or desire *qiyām* (rise).

When a potential is realized, it is said that the potential has “*qiyāmed*” (risen). The reason why rising and standing are called *qiyām* is that the person’s whole body is more apparent when standing. When it is said the people carried out a *qiyām* (uprising), this term is used because the people display and actualize the abilities and thoughts that were previously hidden inside them. Therefore, *mustaqīm* refers to a person who seeks to actualize and manifest all the abilities hidden as potentials within themselves. Thus, *mustaqīm* does not mean straight. The use of the term straight as an equivalent for *mustaqīm* is very, very irrelevant and incorrect.

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<sup>96</sup> *Mustaf'il* means one who seeks to be the object of an action.



## Şirāṭ

This term is derived from the root *s-r-ṭ* (سَرَطَ), with the sense “to swallow.” In some cases, the Arabs refer to wide and bright paths or thoroughfares as *şirāṭ*, because they swallow and shroud those who enter them. Over time, the term *al-sirāṭ* changed to *al-şirāṭ*. The *al-* (ال) that is affixed to it is a definite article. When something is swallowed, it is drawn into the devourer and becomes part of it, such as a drop of water that is swallowed by the sea and dissolved within.

In the Quran, the term *şirāṭ* is often accompanied by the term *mustaqīm*, which refers to a request or demand to rise, to take action, or to actualize an ability. Considering the meaning of the word *mustaqīm* and the relevant Quranic verses, the term *şirāṭ* does not refer to a path. Rather, considering its root sense, which is to be dissolved, *şirāṭ* refers to the union (*wişāl*) of the creature with the Creator. Further, the term *mustaqīm* alongside *şirāṭ* signifies a call to action to meet (*liqā'*) God.

In the Quran, God states, “إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ: Indeed we belong to Allah, and to Him do we indeed return,”<sup>97</sup> “اللَّهُ

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<sup>97</sup> The Qur'an, trans. Ali Quli Qara'i (London: ICAS Press, 2004), Surah Baqarah, 2:156

يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ: Allah originates the creation, then He will bring it back,”<sup>98</sup> and “يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ” O man! You are labouring toward your Lord laboriously, and you will encounter Him.”<sup>99</sup> From these verses, it can be inferred that the Quran considers the ultimate destination of humans as returning to God and joining Him. The Quran states, “بِوَالِيهِ الْمَصِيرُ” and toward Him is the return.”<sup>100</sup> Thus, *ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* is a call for union, one wherein the entirety of the human reality will be realized. Accordingly, “إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ” means “Lord, accompany us until the moment of our union with You, a union in which we may flourish with all our being.”

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid, Surah Yūnus, 10:34

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, Surah Inshiqāq, 84:6

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, Surah Mā'idah, 5:18.



## *Tazkiyah*

The term *tazkiyah* and its derivatives have been used 25 times in the Holy Qur'an. According to *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, the word *tazkiyah* is derived from the root *zakawa*, and it means growth and purity. *Maqāyīs* states, "*Zakawa* denotes growth and increase. For example, '*al-ṭahārah zakāh al-māl*' means 'Purity increases money.'" (Ibn Fāris, 1410, vol. 3, pp. 17-18). Rāghib Isfahānī has stated that *zakāh* (or *zakāt*) means growth and development resulting from divine blessings in both worldly and otherworldly affairs. Rāghib then quoted the holy verse, "*wa aqīmū al-ṣalātu wa ātu al-zakāh.*" He explained that by *tazkiyah* and purification of the soul/self, a person becomes virtuous and obtains praiseworthy characteristics in this world and also attains rewards in the hereafter (Rāghib Isfahani, 1412, p. 381).

The two concepts of growth and purity have a significant relationship in Qur'anic terminology. Questions that arise are as follows. Pure of what? Why does growth lead to purity and purity to growth?

Throughout history, all the prophets have asked people to take control of their desires and instincts. After taking complete control of themselves, they must

completely prevent the emergence of specific traits and feelings in themselves. Perhaps the Qur'an sees humans as contaminated beings,<sup>101</sup> a contamination at a very fundamental and genetic level that has manifested itself in humans in the form of certain feelings and traits. For example, a 70 kg (155 lbs) male is estimated to have about 30 trillion human cells and 39 trillion bacterial cells.<sup>102</sup> The role of viruses in the human body is diverse. Viruses make up a large part of the body's microorganisms. About 380 trillion viruses live in the human body, and approximately 8% of the human genome is viral. It has been shown that translation of this part of the genome causes immune responses, resulting in autoimmune diseases and cancerous cell growth.

Other viruses, called bacteriophages, live inside intestinal, oral, and cutaneous (skin) bacteria. These viruses can be released from bacteria under certain conditions and can play a role in either health or disease. They can regulate the number and type of bacteria in the body and thus affect the human host. Another type consists of pathogenic viruses.<sup>103</sup>

Depression is one of the most common debilitating illnesses in the world. A recent study has shown that there is a link between mood disorders and gut microbiota. In this

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<sup>101</sup> Perhaps the story of Adam and Eve eating from the forbidden tree is an expression of this contamination.

<sup>102</sup> Revised Estimates for the Number of Human and Bacteria Cells in the Body, Ron Sender et al., 2016.

<sup>103</sup> Infections in Endocrinology: Viruses, Noel P. Somasundaram et al., 2021.

study, the gut microbiota of depressed mice were transferred to the intestines of healthy mice. Later, the healthy mice showed signs of depression.<sup>104</sup> Another study investigated the pathologies and mechanisms by which gut microbiota can cause mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety. The study suggested that gut bacteria exacerbate the effects of stress and inflammation in depression and anxiety. Still, further studies are needed to determine the mechanism.<sup>105</sup>

It must be noted that every attribute or feeling in a person is a sign of a structure in the body in the form of genes, proteins, nerve tissue, or neurotransmitters. Therefore, the first condition for *tazkiyah* is health. The Qur'an invites humans to be cleansed of impurities that manifest themselves as undesirable behavioral traits. It seems that, from the Qur'anic point of view, *tazkiyah* means to obtain complete control over the attributes and feelings that result from our impurities and destroying these characteristics. The Qur'an states that this purification causes the growth and elevation of the true luminous

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<sup>104</sup> Effect of gut microbiota on depressive-like behaviors in mice is mediated by the endocannabinoid system

Grégoire Chevalier et al 2020

<sup>105</sup> The role of inflammation and the gut microbiome in depression and anxiety

Jason M Peirce 1 2, Karina Alviña 2019

aspects of humans, leading to human felicity. “ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ ”  
”نَزَّكَّى”: Whoever purifies themselves will undoubtedly grow  
and obtain felicity.

The story of Adam and Eve eating from the forbidden tree in heaven is perhaps evidence of this contamination. By the symbolic mention of Adam and Eve eating from the forbidden tree, the Qur’an indicates the contamination of humans. These contaminations cause dark and predatory traits to appear in humans.

Do you not find it strange that God says in the Qur’an that Adam and Eve saw each other after eating from the tree and thus started covering themselves with the leaves of Paradise? What did their bodies look like before eating from the tree? In what form did they see each other? Why did they not need to cover themselves before eating from the forbidden tree? If they had not eaten that forbidden fruit before they descended to the earth, what sort of bodies would we have, and how would we see each other?

“ وَ قُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَ زَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَ كَلَا مِنْهَا رَعْدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَ ”  
”لَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ”: And We said, “O Adam, dwell  
with your spouse in Paradise, and eat freely of it from

wherever you wish, but do not go near this tree, or you will be among the wrongdoers.”<sup>106</sup>

“فَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ إِنَّ هَذَا عَدُوٌّ لَكَ وَ لِرِزْوَجِكَ فَلا يُخْرِجَنَّكَ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ فَتَشْقَى:”

We said, “O Adam, this is an enemy of you and your spouse. Be careful you do not let him throw you out of Paradise as you will become miserable.”<sup>107</sup>

“فَوَسْوَسَ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطَانُ قَالَ يَا آدَمُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكَ عَلَى شَجَرَةِ الْخُلْدِ وَ مَلِكٍ لا

يَبْلَى: Satan tempted him and said, “O Adam, shall I lead you to the tree of immortality and a kingdom that shall not perish?”<sup>108</sup>

فَأَكَلَا مِنْهَا فَبَدَتَ لهُمَا سَوَاتُهُمَا وَ طَفِفا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ”

“وَ عَصَى آدَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَى: Eventually, both [Adam and Eve] ate from the tree, and their private parts appeared to them, so they started attaching the leaves of Paradise to themselves. Adam disobeyed his Lord, and he went amiss.”<sup>109</sup>

“قال اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَ مَتاعٌ إِلَى حِينٍ”

He (God) said, Get down (from Paradise), for some of you

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<sup>106</sup> Q. Baqarah, 2:35.

<sup>107</sup> Q. Tāhā, 20:117.

<sup>108</sup> Q. Tāhā, 20:120.

<sup>109</sup> Q. Tāhā, 20:121.

will be enemies of some others, and the earth will be your abode for a while.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Q. A'rāf, 7:24.

## *Nazala, Nuzūl, Anzil*

*Nazala* means to descend (Rāghib Isfahānī, vol. 7, p. 44). The word can denote either downward spatial descent or decline in rank and essence.

In the sense of spatial descent, the fall from an elevated height to a lower height is called *nuzūl*.

In the sense of descent in nature, the downgrade or fall from a higher state or level to a lower state is called *nuzūl*. Some examples include a king becoming a beggar, the disgrace of a reputable person, and a beautiful person becoming ugly.

In the essential sense, a description is an example of *nuzūl*. This is because a description is an understanding of a thing using something other than that thing. This is true whether the description is verbal or something one can only feel not explain. For example, if we try to describe a taste, color, or sound, the description is a *nuzūl* (downgrade or decline). In other words, it is incomplete and far from the reality of the original thing. Likewise, suppose we want to describe a taste using words and language. You cannot even explain the taste of a fruit you are eating to yourself, because words, and language in general, are very insufficient. Therefore, any explanation about a taste is a

demotion of the reality of that taste. We humans use descriptions when the reality of an object is not understandable. Thus, what is described or compared is very, very far from its reality.

Because of their worldly limitations, humans are unable to comprehend the truth of creation. What they comprehend, whether by the senses or through language, is merely an interpretation of reality, such as the perception of objects as being solid,<sup>111</sup> the shadow of a tree as a declined [*nuzūl*] version of the tree, the image of a person in a mirror, and the footprints or traces remaining from a creature.

Another elementary example of *nuzūl* is the description of a taste using words. You cannot even explain the taste of fruit to yourself because words, and language as a whole, are extremely imperfect.<sup>112</sup> Therefore, any

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<sup>111</sup> In the human world, the perception of objects as solid is a result of limitations in the senses of touch and sight. There is no solid object in the universe. If we could see the reality of objects, we would see them as collections of tiny spinning particles, which fluctuate with incredible speeds (See Mohammad Babae, *Dunyā yā Rawyā-yi Havās*, 2009).

<sup>112</sup> For example, it is not possible to explain the taste of a mango to someone who has neither seen nor eaten one. Thus, if we explain the taste of a mango, we are downgrading the reality of its taste.



explanation you give about taste will be a *nuzūl* or degeneration of the reality of that taste.

God uses the word *nuzūl* to indicate that everything revealed to us in the form of revelation and verses of the Qur'an has been brought down and is thus far from reality. In truth, the Qur'an is a book sent down to describe realities beyond humanity in the form of words. Even though the descriptions of the Qur'an are the most complete in the human world, they are still far from reality.

Where God states, "Indeed, We sent it down [*anzalnāhu*] on the Night of *Qadr*,"<sup>113</sup> it emphasizes the diminishment and withdrawal of words from the reality they represent. It is as if God is saying, "We revealed a limited and imperfect version of it on the Night of *Qadr* to the Prophet." Otherwise, God would have said, "Indeed, We sent it [*arsalnāhu*] on the Night of *Qadr*," or "Indeed, We gave it [*aṭaynāhu*] on the Night of *Qadr*." Since there is an emphasis on the imperfection of words and human perception in describing and sensing true reality, God uses the term *nuzūl*. In order to underscore and explain this, in the next verse, God indicates that what is said about the Night of *Qadr* "وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ": and even what is apprehended about it through intuition [*ishrāq*] and

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<sup>113</sup> Q. Qadr, 97:1.

mystical enlightenment [*shuhūd*] is far from the reality of the Night of *Qadr*, and that as long as we humans remain in this world, we cannot understand its reality.

In a sense, *nazala* means to become diminished and distanced from a thing's true essence.

## *Khaṭā*

The original meaning of the term *khaṭā* in Semitic languages was to make a mistake and to lose. Its Hebrew form has the same meaning and is used about shooting and aiming. It means not finding or attaining in Abyssinian. Considering its written usage in South Arabian inscriptions, it can be concluded that it means the same there as well (Ja'farī, p. 195). It seems that in its original sense, it contains the meaning of making a mistake. For this reason, *khaṭā* is forgivable (Muṣṭafawī, vol. 3, p. 80).

In essence, *khaṭā* denotes a mistake that was performed without the slightest intention. This mistake may have been due to a shortage of knowledge or a limitation in human senses.<sup>114</sup> According to the Qur'an, humans have been subjected to limitations by entering the world. These limitations prevent them from perceiving and experiencing reality as it is,<sup>115</sup> just like entering darkness. Therefore, *khaṭā* or mistakes are an inseparable part of worldly life. Given these limitations, God considers *khaṭā* as something that can be forgiven.

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<sup>114</sup> See Mohammad Babae, *Dunyā yā Rawyā-yi Ḥavās*, 2009.

<sup>115</sup> “ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ” See Q. Ṭīn, 95:5.

Hence, *khaṭā* is a sin that stems from unintentional mistakes by humans and differs in essence from other sins. The reason the Qur'an has categorized *khaṭā* as a sin despite its unintentional nature is due to its effect. Intentional or not, our actions have consequences, and *khaṭā* are actions that have negative consequences. The Qur'an indicates that *khaṭā* has destructive effects that will manifest themselves in the world. However, since *khaṭā* is not intentional, it will be forgiven by God in the hereafter. Even so, encountering the harm caused by *khaṭā* in the world is inevitable.

# *Mudabbir*

*Mudabbir* is derived from the root *dabara*, referring to the back or conclusion of a thing. Therefore, linguists have defined *tadabbur* (from the same root) as considering the end or outcome of matters.<sup>116</sup> This sense is not related to the sense of “back.”

Therefore, *tadabbur* means to predict or know the final outcome of an event. *Mudabbir* refers to a person or thing that determines the outcome of a matter, such as the controller of a missile that determines the end or destination of a launched missile. When we say, “*yā mudabbir al-umūr*” it means “O being who determines the end and final outcome of all actions.” Accordingly, only God is the absolute and true *mudabbir*, and the directorship of humans is mostly figurative and illusory.

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<sup>116</sup> See Ibn Manẓūr, vol. 4, p. 273; Ibn Fāris, vol. 2, p. 324; Rāghib Iṣfahānī, p. 171.

# *Mutakabbir*

*Mutakabbir* is derived from the root *kibr* meaning to be great or superior (Rāghib Iṣfahānī, vol. 6, p. 73). This greatness can relate to anything, including power and ability, status, physique, and knowledge. In general, it refers to anything that can be compared with other things. Considering this definition, it is apparent that no creature is comparable with God in any way, and nothing is superior to Him. Therefore, *mutakabbir* can only be an attribute of the Creator in relation to His creatures. However, when a creature imagines itself to be greater or superior to another creature and takes this illusion very seriously, it is idiomatically said that the person has become *mutakabbir*. *Takabbur*, in this sense, is blameworthy because, according to the Qur'an, a creature's sense of superiority over another is an illusion and a result of inner illness.

Every creature in this world has a mission, and this mission was important enough for the Lord to give it existence. Every existence is indicative of a significant task. In other words, the creature was important and valuable enough that God created it. Therefore, no being is superior to another because no being has determined its own creation.

In a popular account, God said to Moses one day, “O Moses, go bring My most base creature.” Moses went off in thought. He searched extensively, but he found nothing. As he was returning, he saw a dirty dog and briefly considered taking it but ultimately decided against it. Upon his arrival, God asked him, “O Moses, what creature did you bring?” Moses responded, “O Lord, I found nothing.” God stated, “By My honor and majesty, if you had brought that dog, I would have excluded you from the group of prophets.”

In the view of the Qur’an, every creature has a hidden reality, and if some sort of superiority is seen in some creatures, it is superficial and metaphorical. Therefore, the sense of superiority is a sign of illness and darkness, and it is a sin. When *mutakabbir* is attributed to the Creator, it is the truth and a form of praise, but when attributed to a creature, it is a blameworthy sin.

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