

Section 2: The Weak in Faith

Surah Al-Hajj – Verses 11 – 13

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ حَرْفٍ فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرٌ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ انْقَلَبَ عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ

يَدْعُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُ وَمَا لَا نَفْعَ لَهُ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلَالُ الْبَعِيدُ

يَدْعُوا لِمَن ضَرُّهُ أَقْرَبُ مِّن نَّفْعِهِ لِبِئْسَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَلِبِئْسَ الْعَشِيرُ

11. “And among people there is such a one who worships Allah only by tongue, so that if good befalls him he is satisfied therewith, and if a trial afflicts him he turns back his face; he losses this world and (also) the Hereafter; that is indeed the manifest loss.”

12. “He calls, besides Allah, upon that which does not harm him and that which does not profit him: that is indeed the far straying.”

13. “He calls upon him whose harm is nearer than his profit; an evil protector indeed, he, an evil associate.”

The faith of some people is seasonal and superficial so that the pleasant or bitter events can change it.

The situation of belief and the action based on logic is different from the situation of the material changes. We ought not seek for religion because of reaching to bread.

In previous verses, two groups were discussed about: the group of followers of aberration and the leaders of those who mislead others. In these verses, a third group is spoken about; they are those who are weak in faith.

In the explanation of this group, the Qur'an says that such people believe in Allah merely by expression, while their heartily belief is very weak and superficial.

The verse says:

“And among people there is such a one who worships Allah only by tongue...”

The Qur'anic phrase /'ala harfin/ may refer to this fact that their faith is rather on their tongue and there has not glowed in their hearts but a very weak light of faith.

It may refer to this fact that they are not settled in the center of faith and Islam, but they are in the edge of it.

One of the meanings of the Arabic term /harf/ is the verge of mountain and the side of things, and we know that those who are standing in the verge of something, are not fixed and steadfast and, with a slight shake, they may go out of the way. Such is the state of those whose Faith is weak, that with usually a tiny thing their faith vanishes.

Then, the Qur'an points the instability of their faith, where it implies that if the world turns to them and something good befalls them, they feel secure and satisfaction, and they take it as a proof for the legitimacy of Islam. But if they are tried by miseries, pests, and lack of some blessings, they alter inwardly and turn toward infidelity.

The verse says:

“...so that if good befalls him he is satisfied there with, and if a trial afflicts him he turns back his face;...”

As if they had accepted the religion and Faith as a means to reach to the material things, so that if this objection is gained, they consider the religion as rightful, otherwise they call it foundless. 1

Upon the occasion of the revelation of this verse, Ibn-'Abbas and a group of the ancient commentators have said that: sometimes a group of Bedouins used to come to the Prophet (S) and then if they became bodily well, their horse brought a good colt, their wives delivered sons, and their properties and cattle increased, they would become happy and would believe in Islam and Messenger of Allah (S).

But if they became sick, their wives delivered daughters, and their wealth decreased, some satanic temptations would seize their heart and told them that all those miseries were for the sake of the religion they accepted, and, therefore they often turned away.2

It is noteworthy that, for turning the world with prosperity to them, the Qur'an has rendered it as 'good', and for turning back of the world, it has rendered it as 'a trial', not as 'an evil'. It indicates that these unwholesome events are not vice and evil, but they are some means for trial.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds implying that, thus, they have lost both the world and the Hereafter.

The holy verse says:

"...he losses this world and (also) the Hereafter;..."

And this is the most manifest loss when a person loses both his religion and his world.

The verse continues:

"...that is indeed the manifest loss."

Such people, in fact, behold the religion only through the window of their own material benefits, and for them, as they imagine, criterion of its rightfulness is the good lack of the world.

These people, whose number is not so small in our time and who are found in every society, have a faith polluted with polytheism and idolatry, but their idol is their wife, offspring, possession, wealth, and cattle. It is evident that such a faith and belief is certainly weaker than the spider's web.

Some commentators, of course, have considered this verse as about hypocrites.

Then, if the purpose is a hypocrite, who has never a faith in his heart, this is contrary to the apparent meaning of the verse, because the Qur'anic phrase:

"such a one who worships Allah",

"he is satisfied therewith"

and

"he turns back his face"

show that he had a weak faith before. And if the purpose is the hypocrites who have a very small share of faith, it does not contrast with what was said in the above and it is acceptable.

The next verse points to the polytheistic belief of this group particularly after deviation from monotheism and belief in Allah.

It says:

"He calls, besides Allah, upon that which does not harm him and that which does not profit

him:...”

If he is truly interested in the material profits and avoids loss, and for the same reason considers the good and misery of the world as the legitimacy of religion, then why does he go to the idols which have neither any hope of profit nor any fear of loss in them.

They are some useless things which have no effect in the men’s fate. Yes, this is a deep aberration, which is far from any prosperity.

The verse says:

“...that is indeed the manifest loss.”

Its distance with the Straight Path is so far that there is little hope for their return to the Truth.

Again, the Qur’an goes further than this, when it says:

“He calls upon him whose harm is nearer than his profit;...”

It is for the reason that, in the world, these artificial objects of worship may turn their thought toward lowliness, meanness, superstitions, and in the Hereafter, they bring forth the Hell Fire for them; but, as Surah Al-’Anbiya, No 21, verse 98 indicates, these idols are themselves the fuel of Hell.

At the end of the verse, concerning those idols, the Holy Qur’an adds:

“...an evil protector indeed, he, an evil associate.”

There arises this question here that: in the previous verse any profit and loss were negated from the side of the idols, while here, in this verse, it says that the harm of an idol is nearer than his profit. Do these two concepts agree with each other?

In answer to this clear question it must be said that in conversations it is usual that sometimes in one occasion something is counted useless, while after that, the same thing is introduced as the source of loss.

It is just like when we say: do not associate with so and so, since he is beneficial neither for your religion nor for your world; then we go further and say that he is also the cause of your wretchedness and disagree.

Moreover, the harm which has been negated is a harm to their enemies, because they are not able to cause a harm to the opponents; but the harm which has been proved positively is an automatic loss that reaches the devotees of them.

This commentary has been accepted by a group of great commentators, such as: Shaykh Tusi in

‘Tibyan’, and Tabarsi in ‘Majma‘-ul-Bayan’.

It is in the case that some other commentators, like Fakhr-i-Razi, have also added this probability in the commentary of the verse that either of these two verses refers to a separate group of idols.

The first verse refers to the wooden and stone idols which are inanimate, and the second verse points to false deities and idol-like men. The first group, have neither a profit nor a harm, and they are completely useless.

But the members of the second group, i.e. the leaders of misguidance, are harmful and there is no good in them. And supposing that there is a little good in them, their harm is certainly more than that good.

The Qur’anic sentence:

“...an evil protector, he, and an evil associate”

has also been taken as evidence over this meaning, and, thus, there remains no contradiction.

Surah Al-Hajj – Verse 14

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ

14. “Verily Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds into gardens beneath which rivers flow; verily Allah does what He intends.”

Faith and hope in the promises of Allah is the greatest factor for leaving anything except Him (s.w.t.). Also, the Faith accompanied with action is the key to salvation; and neither of them alone is effective.

And, in view of the fact that the style of the Qur’an is that it states the good and evil things in comparison with each other in order that drawing a conclusion from it becomes more complete and clear, in this verse it says:

“Verily Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds into gardens beneath which rivers flow;...”

Their career is clear, their line of thought and action is recognized, their master is Allah (s.w.t.), and their companions in heaven will be prophets, martyrs, the righteous and the Divine angles.

Yes, whatever Allah intends, He does.

The verse continues saying:

“...verily Allah does what He intends.”

These great rewards are easy for Him to give to the believers, and on the other side, punishing the obstinate polytheists and their misleading leaders is untroubled for Him, too.

In this comparison, in fact, those who have faith only by their tongue are in the edge of the religion and they may go astray by a little amount of temptation. Such people have not any righteous deeds either.

But the righteous believers are settled in the center of Island, and the most intensive storms of events cannot move them. The tree of their Faith has got strong roots and the fruits of their righteous deeds are manifest on its branches. This is from one side.

On the other side, the objects of worship of the first group not only are useless, but also their harm is more than their benefit. But, the master, and the guardian of the second group, is powerful over everything and He has provided the most superior blessings for them.

Surah Al-Hajj – Verses 15 – 16

مَنْ كَانَ يَظُنُّ أَنْ لَنْ يَنْصُرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ بِسَبَبٍ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ لِيَقْطَعْ فَلْيَنْظُرْ هَلْ يُذْهِبَنَّ كَيْدَهُ مَا يَغِيظُ

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يُرِيدُ

15. “Whoever thinks that never will Allah help him (His Apostle) in this world and the Hereafter, let him stretch up a rope to heaven (to hang himself), then let him cut it off, then see if his device takes away that at which he is enraged.”

16. “And thus have We sent it (The Qur’an) down, (as) clear signs, and that verily Allah guides whomsoever He intends.”

The Occasion of Revelation

Upon the occasion of revelation of the first verse in the above, some of the commentators have said as follows:

A number of people from the tribes of Bani Asad and Bani Qatfan, who had already covenanted with the Prophet of Islam (S) said that they were afraid that at last Allah would not assist Mohammad (S) and

consequently their relation with their Jewish confederates might be ceased and they would not give them foodstuff any longer.

The abovementioned holy verse was revealed and warned them while it reproached them seriously.

Some other Islamic commentators have said that, a group of Muslims, as a result of their intensive anger against the disbelievers, were anxious and restless to follow the Prophet (S) and said why the promise of Allah in that ground did not occur. The verse was sent down and reproached them for their impatience.³

Since the words in the previous verses were about those whose faith is weak, in this verse too, another feature from them has been demonstrated, where it says:

“Whoever thinks that never will Allah help him (His Apostle) in this world and the Hereafter, let him stretch up a rope to heaven (to hang himself), then let him cut it off, then see if his device takes away that at which he is enraged.”

A great many of the commentators have accepted this interpretation, or they have at least mentioned it as a notable probability.⁴

According to this interpretation, the pronoun mentioned in the phrase

“never will Allah help him”

returned to the Prophet (S).

The Arabic term /sama’/, in this verse, means ‘the ceiling of the house’, (since this term is applied for anything which is located in the upside). And, the holy phrase /li yaqta’/ means ‘suffocation’, ceasing of the breath, and going forth as far as being nigh to death.

There have been said some other probabilities upon the commentary of this verse, among which two commentaries are notable:

1. The objective of /sama’/ is this very sky. In this case the verse means:

“Such people who thinks that Allah will not help His Apostle, let them go to the sky and stretch a rope to it and hang themselves between the earth and the heaven until when their breaths will be ceased (or they cut off the rope by which they have hanged themselves so that they fall down), then see whether their wrath will quench.”

2. The abovementioned pronoun returns to these persons themselves, not to the Prophet (S). In this case, the verse means:

“Those who think that never will Allah help them, and their sustenance will be ceased as a result of embracing the Faith, may do whatever thing they can. They may go to the sky and hang themselves by

a rope, and then they may cut off this rope to fall down. Do these things quench their wrath?"

It is notable that all these interpretations refer to one psychological point in relation to those impatient and wrathful persons whose Faith is weak. Often when they apparently are helpless and cannot do anything, they immediately get excited in their job and they may make madly decision.

Sometimes they bruise against the walls vainly; sometimes they want to cleave the land and hide themselves inside of it, and finally, in order to quench the fire of their anger, they decide to commit suicide, while neither of these madly actions does solve their problem.

If they become a little cold, use patience and toleration, and try to struggle against the difficulties by means of the power of belief in Allah (s.w.t.), self-confidence, and steadfastness, the removal of their difficulties will certainly be possible.

For, the only means of peace is belief and trust in Allah, and any other device and program, without Allah's will, is in vain.

The next holy verse points to a general conclusion upon the former verses, where it says:

"Thus have We sent it (The Qur'an) down, (as) clear signs..."

There were mentioned some reasonings for the legitimacy of Resurrection, such as verifying the course of embryo of man, the growth of plants, the dead lands being quickened which make all acquaintance with the subject of Resurrection, and some reasonings like uselessness of idols, and mentioning the end of those who make use of religion as a means for obtaining material interests.

Yet, all these mere clear reasonings are not enough, but the fitness of the acceptance of the truth is necessary, too.

For this very reason, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"...and that verily Allah guides whomsoever He intends."

We have repeatedly said that the Will of Allah is not undue. He is Wise and all His deeds are done wisely. Whoever tries to struggle in His cause and heartily desires to be guided, Allah will guide him by means of His clear signs.

The Qur'an is a means of guidance, but guidance itself is the job of Allah and is done through His Grace.

Surah Al-Hajj – Verse 17

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِّينَ وَالنَّصَارِيَّ وَالْمَجُوسَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

17. “Verily those who believe (the Muslims) and those who are Jews and the Sabeans and the Christians and the Magians and those who associate (others with Allah), verily, Allah will decide between them on the Day of Resurrection; verily Allah is witness over everything.”

The right invitation to Islam and having good dispute is necessary, but do not expect that they discord between religions to be ended in this world. You should lead a peaceful life in this world and Allah will settle your affair by arbitration on the Hereafter Day.

So in the verse under discussion, the Qur’an has referred to six groups of the followers of different religions, one of whom is Muslim believers and the rest five groups are none-Muslims.

It says:

“Verily those who believe (the Muslims) and those who are Jews and the Sabeans and the Christians and the Magians and those who associate (others with Allah), verily, Allah will decide between them on the Day of Resurrection;...”

On that Day, He will separate right from wrong. One of the names of Hereafter is ‘the Day of Separating’ or ‘**the Day of Decision**’. Another name of it is /yaum-ul-buruz/ (the day of manifestation of the hidden things).

That Day is the time when all discords will finish. Yes, Allah will put an end to all of the disputes, because He is aware of all things.

The holy verse continues saying:

“...verily Allah is witness over everything.”

Some Points

1– The connection between this verse and the former verses is in this fact that: in the previous verse the words were about the Divine guidance into the fitting hearts; but since all hearts are rarely receptive and usually bigotries, obstinacies and blindly imitations are some strong barriers against the acceptance of guidance, therefore the Qur’an implies that these differences and disputations among a part of people in various groups of religions will rather continue and remain until the advent of Hereafter, and it is on that Day when all the concealed things will be made manifest and discords will wholly disappear.

Moreover, in the former verses the discussion was about three groups, some of whom dispute unreasonably upon Allah and the Resurrection; some others try to tempt people, while the members of the third group are weak in faith and every time they are thrown from one side to another. The verse

under discussion points out some examples from these groups who stand against the believers.

Besides them all, the discussion about Resurrection in the former verses propounded this question that: what is the goal of Resurrection? In the verse under discussion one of its goals, which is putting an end to the discords, has been stated.

2- Who Magians Are: The word /majus/ (Magians) is mentioned in the Qur'an only once, and it is in this very verse. Regarding the fact that they are mentioned opposite to polytheists and in the row of those having Heavenly religions, it is understood such that they had had a Divine Faith, Book and Prophet.

No doubt that today the followers of Zoroaster in Arabic are called /majus/, or at least, the followers of Zoroaster form an important part of them, while the history of Zoroaster himself is not clear at all.

It is so ambiguous that some have recorded his advent in the eleventh century B.C. and some others have said that it happened in sixth or seventh century B.C. This marvelous difference, viz. five centuries, indicates how dark and ambiguous the history of Zoroaster is.

It is known that he had a book by the name of, Awesta which was destroyed in the invasion of Alexander to Iran, and later it was written at the time of one of the Kings of Sasanian Dynasty.⁶

There have not been available so much matters from their belief, but what is more famous than all today is their belief in two origins of good and evil, or light and darkness. They consider the god of goodness and light as Ahura Mazda, and the god of evil and darkness as Ahriman.

They respect the four elements, and the fire in particular, so much so that they are called 'Fire Worshippers' and wherever they live there is also a fire-temple, large or small.

Some philologists believe that the term /majus/ (Magians) is derived from /mug/ which was used as a title for the leaders and clergymen of this religion, and the word /mu'bad/ which is now used for calling their clergymen had originally been derived from /mu'wad/.

Some Islamic narrations indicate that they had been the followers of one of the Divine prophets but later they deviated from the path of Monotheism and turned to some blasphemous beliefs.

We read in some Islamic narrations that the polytheists of Mecca asked the Prophet (S) to take capitulation from them and let them to worship idols. The holy Prophet (S) answered them he would not take capitulation from anyone except the people of the Book. The polytheists wrote in answer to him (S).

"How do you speak like that while you have taken capitulation from the Magians inhabited the region of Hijr?"

The Prophet (S) said:

"Verily Magians had a prophet, who was killed, and a Book which was burnt."⁷

Another tradition from ‘Asbaq–ibn–Nabatah denotes that once Imam Ali (as) went upon a pulpit and said:

“Ask me before you are in lack of me.”

Then ‘Ash‘ath–ibn–Qays, a famous hypocrite, stood up and said: O’ the commander of the believers? How is it that capitulation is being taken from Magians while there has not been sent down any Divine Book for them and they had not had any prophet?

Hadrat Ali (as) said:

*“Yes, O’ ‘Ash‘ath! Allah has sent down a Book unto them, and has appointed a prophet for them.”*⁸

Imam Sajjad, Ali–ibn–il–Husayn (as) in a tradition said that the holy Prophet (S) said:

*“Treat with them in the same manner that you treat with the People of the Book, and the purpose of the Messenger of Islam was Magians.”*⁹

By the way, it must be noted that the Qur’anic term /majus/ is a plural form and its singular form in Arabic is /majusi/.¹⁰

3– Who The Sabeans Are: It is understood compendiously from the above mentioned verse that they have also been the followers of some heavenly religion, in particular that their name has been located here between the names of the Jews and the Christians.

Some commentators consider them as the followers of Yahy–ibn–i–Zakarriya whom Christians call ‘John the Baptist.’ Some others believe that Sabeans had taken a part of the belief of the Jews and a part of that of the Christians and mixed them, thus they think that their religion is something between those two religions.

Sabeans consider a great importance for water in their belief and, therefore, many of them live by the great streams. It is said that they also respect a few stars, and that is why they have been accused as star worshippers, though the apparent of the verse indicates that they are not in the row of polytheists.

4– Those Deviated from Monotheism: In these verses, five groups of the deviated religions have been referred to whose arrangement here may be according to the amount of their practical deviation from the principle of Monotheism. The Jews have the least deviation in action from Monotheism comparing others, and the Sabeans, who are a moderate group between the Jews and the Christians, are in the second degree.

Then there come the Christians, who, with the acceptance of trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, have a further deviation and throughout the world of existence are located in the Fourth degree. Thus, the polytheists and the idolaters, who are involved with the utmost deviation, have been mentioned at the end.

Surah Al-Hajj – Verse 18

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَسْجُدُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ
وَالنُّجُومُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَالشَّجَرُ وَالدَّوَابُّ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَكَثِيرٌ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ الْعَذَابُ
وَمَنْ يُهِنِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ مُكْرِمٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ

18. “Have you not seen that to Allah prostrates whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth, and the sun and the moon, and the stars and the mountains and the trees and animals, and many of the people?”

But a great number are (also) such as unto whom the chastisement is justly due;

“...and whomsoever Allah abases, there is none for him to honor; verily Allah does whatever He pleases.”

1. There are certainly some conscious beings in the heaven, because the word ‘whosoever’, mentioned in this verse, is usually applied to those who possess consciousness.
2. The totality of the world of existence prostrates and shows humility for Allah, and consciousness is not located to human beings.

“...whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth...”

(If we do know that all of the beings in the world of existence are submitted to Allah, we never differ from them either. Polytheism and arrogance do not adapt with the system of existence.)

In view of the fact that, the speech in the former verses was about the subject of origin and the end, the verse under discussion completes this subject, by propounding the question of Monotheism and Theology.

The holy verse, addressing the Prophet (S), says:

“Have you not seen that to Allah prostrates whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth, and the sun and the moon, and the stars and the mountains and the trees and animals, and many of the people? But a great number are (also) such as unto whom the chastisement is justly due;...”

Then the Qur’an adds implying that these are abased with Allah, and whomever He abases none can make him honorable and cause him to be prosperous and gain rewards.

The verse continues saying:

“...and whomsoever Allah abases, there is none for him to honor;...”

Yes, whatever Allah (s.w.t.) pleases, and it is expedient, He does: He honors the believers and abases the rejecters.

The verse says:

“...verily Allah does whatever He pleases.”

Some Points

In different verses of the holy Qur'an, there are statements about the general 'prostration' of the beings of the world, as well as 'glorification', 'praise', and 'prayer' (salat), and there has been emphasized that these four manifest adorations are not particular only to human beings, but also even all the apparently lifeless beings participate therein.

In the commentary upon Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse 44 the general praise and glorification of the beings of the world have been vastly discussed, and also in Surah Ar-Ra'd No. 13, verse 15 the general prostration of the beings of the world has been spoken about, yet it is necessary here that this significant subject to be referred to again.

The verse under discussion indicates that the beings of the world have two kinds of prostration: the genetic prostration, and the religious prostration.

Their unconditional veneration and submission before Allah's Will, the laws of creation, and the system governing over this world are the same genetic prostration of theirs which envelops all the particles of the whole beings, even the cells of the brains of some persons such as Pharaoh, Nimrud, as well as the obstinate rejecters whose whole atoms of their selves are inside the circle of this genetic prostration.

As some groups of modern researchers in science say, all particles of the world have a kind of apprehension and intelligence, and according to it, in their own status, they praise and glorify Allah while they have prostration and prayer, too.

But, the act of religious prostration is the utmost veneration which is actualized by the possessors of wisdom, intellect, comprehension and knowledge before Allah, the Lord.

Here, there arises this question that: if the act of general prostration of all beings involves all human beings, too, why has it been specialized to a group of people in the above noble verse?

Regarding to the fact that the word 'prostration' has been used through an inclusive concept mentioned between its religious and genetic form the answer of this question becomes clear, because the objective of prostration in respect to sun, moon, stars, mountains, trees, and animals is the sort of genetic

prostration, which in respect of human beings it is ‘religious’.

Many people accomplish this prostration, but some groups of them disobey it, and these are the examples of

“unto whom the chastisement is justly due.”

And we know that the usage of a word in an inclusive and general concept, with protecting its different examples, does not matter, even with those who does not permit that a word to be used for more than one meaning, much less for us who let permissible that a common word be used in different meanings, (be careful).

No doubt that the angels are inside the meaning of the Qur’anic phrase:

“To Allah prostrates whosoever is in the heavens”,

but is their prostration of the kind of ‘genetic’ or that of religious?

Regarding to the fact that they have a kind of wisdom, intellect, knowledge and will, their prostration is of the sort of religious. That is, their adoration and veneration is of the kind which is done willingly and arbitrarily.

With respect to the angels, the Qur’an says:

“...they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them and they do as they are commanded.”¹¹

Surah Al-Hajj – Verse 19

هَذَانِ خَصْمَانِ اخْتَصَمُوا فِي رَبِّهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قُطِّعَتْ لَهُمْ ثِيَابٌ مِنْ نَارٍ
يُصَبُّ مِنْ فَوْقِ رُءُوسِهِمُ الْحَمِيمُ

19. “These are, two adversaries who dispute about their Lord. But as for those who disbelieved, garments of Fire have been cut out, and there shall be poured over their heads boiling water.”

The Occasion of Revelation

A group of Islamic commentators, Sunnites and Shi’ites, have recorded an occasion of Revelation for the above holy verse in their books, the abridgement of it is as follows:

On the day of the Battle of Badr, three men (consisting of Ali (as), Hamzah, and ‘Ubaydat-ibn-Harith-ibn-‘Abdul-Mutalib), from the Muslim troop came into the battlefield and, in the proper order they killed

Walid-ibn-'Atabah, 'Atabat-ibn-Rabi', and Shaybat-ibn-Rabi'ah. The abovementioned verse was revealed and stated the fate of these strugglers.

It has also been cited that Abuthar used to swear that this verse was revealed about the above men, but, it has repeatedly said, the existence of a particular occasion of revelation never hinders the generality of the concept of that verse. 12

In previous verses, the whole believers and some different groups of disbelievers were already pointed out, and they were explained in six categories. Here, the Qur'an implies that these two opposite parties, believers and non-believers, disputed about their Lord.

The verse says:

“These are, two adversaries who dispute about their Lord...”

Those who disputed were the groups of disbelievers, who were divided in five classes, from one side, and the true believers, from another side. And, if we take care properly we see that the basis of the differences of all religions returns to their difference upon the Essence and attributes of Allah and its consequence may stretch to the question of prophecy and Resurrection.

Therefore, it is not necessary to suppose the word 'religion' unexpressed in the phrase and say that their adversary is about the 'religion' of their Lord, but, in fact, the main root of their adversaries return to Monotheism; and, principally, all deviated and false religions are involved in a kind of polytheism the effects of which appear in their beliefs.

Then the verse states a few sorts of chastisement of the disbelievers who knowingly and intelligently deny the truth.

At first, it begins from their garments, and says:

“...But as for those who disbelieved, garments of Fire have been cut out...”

This sentence may refer to the matter that there will really be cut out and sewed some pieces of Fire for them in the form of garments. Or it may be an allusion to the fact that the Hell Fire encompasses them from every side like garments.

Another sort of Divine chastisement for them is the blazing boiling water which will be poured from above over their head.

The verse says:

“...and there shall be poured over their heads boiling water.”

Surah Al-Hajj – Verses 20 - 21

يُصْهِرُ بِهِ مَا فِي بُطُونِهِمْ وَالْجُلُودُ

وَلَهُمْ مَقَامِعٌ مِنْ حَدِيدٍ

20. “With it shall be melted what is in their bellies, and (their) skins (as well).”

21. “And for them are maces of iron.”

The blazing boiling water of Hell which will be poured over the head of these disbelievers will penetrate into their bodies so deeply that it melts both their interiors and exteriors.

The verse says:

“With it shall be melted what is in their bellies, and (their) skins (as well).”

“And for them are maces of iron.”

Some lashes or maces of blazing iron are prepared for them to be beaten on their heads so intensively that they go down to the bottom of the Hell, and the flames of Fire throw them up to the edge of the Hell, then again they will be beaten perpendicularly on their head and go down the Hell.

They will ceaselessly be going up and down from the surface of the Hell into its bottom. The narrations and traditions concerning the chastisements in Hell are in abundance.

Some Traditions

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

*“Be in awe of the Fire whose heat is intensive, whose depths is much, whose ornament is iron, and whose drink is a festering fluid (blood mixed with pus).”*¹³

2. It is narrated from Imam Sadiq, the sixth Imam (as), who said:

*“Verily there are gates for Hell Fire. From one gate there enter into it our enemies, those who fight against us, and those who disgrace us. This gate is surly the greatest one and is the most blazing gate.”*¹⁴

3. In Tafsir-i-'Ibrahim-ibn-Furat, documenting from Ali-ibn-Hussayn (as), there has been recorded a tradition as to where he says:

“When the Day of Hereafter occurs, Allah commands the guardians of Hell to deliver the keys of Hell to Ali (as), so that he lets enter it whomever he intends, cause to save whomever he intends.”

Surah Al-Hajj – Verse 22

كُلَّمَا أَرَادُوا أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ غَمٍّ أُعِيدُوا فِيهَا وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ

22. “Whenever they will intend to get away there from, from anguish, they shall be turned back into it, and (it will be said to them) ‘Taste you the chastisement of burning’.”

So, whenever the people of Hell intend to come out from the Hell and its grief, they will be sent back into it while they will be told that they should taste the punishment of blazing Fire.

The verse says:

“Whenever they will intend to get away there from, from anguish, they shall be turned back into it, and (it will be said to them) ‘Taste you the chastisement of burning’.”

Some verses of the Qur’an introduce this chastisement as /‘aḥabin ‘azim/ (a grievous chastisement),¹⁵ some others as /muḥin/ (humiliating),¹⁶ and, here this verse qualifies it as /hariq/ (burning), because it is both painful, and very great, and humiliating and burning. We seek refuge in Allah from the Fire and from His wrath the Almighty.

It is for this reason, the people of the Hell struggle to rescue themselves from it, but their effect will be useless. Thus, more painful than the Hell Fire is the grieves and spiritual punishment therein.

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1. The phrase /inḡalaba ‘ala wajhihi/ (he turns back his face) may point to this fact that he wholly turns his back to the Faith and does not even look back as if he had ever been foreigner with Faith.
 2. The commentary of Fakhr–Razi, vol. 23, P. 13; and Tafsir–i–Qartabi, vol. 6, P. 4409
 3. Abul–Futuh Razi and also Fakhr–i–Razi, following the verse under discussion.
 4. See the commentaries of Majma‘–ul–Bayan, Tibyan, Al–Mizan, Fakhr–i–Razi, Abul–Futuh, Tafsir–us–Safi, and Qurtabi following the verse.
 5. ‘A‘lam–ul–Qur’an, p. 550
 6. Al–Mizan, vol. 14, p. 392
 7. Wasa‘il–ush–Shi‘ah, vol. 11, chapter 49, p. 96
 8. Ibid
 9. Wasa‘il–ush–Shi‘ah, vol. 11, chapter 49, p. 96
 10. Al–Monjid
 11. Surah At–Tahrim, No. 66, verse 6
 12. This occasion of revelation has been cited by: Tabarsi in Majma‘–ul–Bayan, Fakhr–i–Razi in Tafsir–ul–Kabir, ‘Alusi in Ruh–ul–Bayan, Suyuti in ‘Asbab–un–Nuzul, and also Qartabi in his commentary.

13. Bihar, vol. 8, P. 206 taken from Nahjul-Balaqah.
14. Ibid, p. 285
15. Surah At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 101
16. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 90

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