

## Surah al-Zumar, Verses 30 – 55

### Surah al-Zumar – Verses 30 – 31

إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ

**30. Verily you will die and indeed they will die [too].**

**31. Then, on the Day of Resurrection, you will be disputing before your Lord.**

Prophets are like ordinary people in their daily life. Being a Favorite [of God] may not hinder the execution of Divine Ordainments like death:

**(“Verily you will die”).**

Proceeding with the foregoing discussion on monotheism and polytheism, the blessed Verse in question treats of the consequences of monotheism and polytheism on the Day of Resurrection.

The Verse begins with the question of death, the gate to Resurrection, and treats of the general applicability of the law to all humanity, saying:

**“you will die and they will die too.”**

Death is one of the questions as to which all men are alike. That is the way of all the flesh. There is neither any exception nor any difference in death.

**“You will die and they will die”**

apparently indicates the death of everyone in the present tense, but is in the real present tense that is at times used in the senses of past and present. Some exegetes maintain that the Noble Prophet's (S) foes awaited his death and were happy that he would die some day.

The Holy Qur'an raises a question to them,

***“Put the case that he dies, will you be stay alive?”***

Verse 31 treats of the Last Judgment depicting servants' disputations on the Day of Resurrection, saying:

***“Then on the Day of Resurrection, you will be disputing before your Lord.”***

The verbal form:

***takhtasimun (“they dispute”)***

is taken from ikhtisam denoting “disputation” between two individuals or two groups, each of whom makes attempts at the nullification of the words of the other; in which case, either or both of them may err, an instance of which is the disputations of the people in error.

Exegetes differ as to the generality of the issue, some of whom maintain that the disputation in question concerns Muslims and disbelievers, but some also hold that the disputation may be between Muslims and the people of their tribes.

In this vein, a tradition is narrated on the authority of Abu Sa'id Khudri to the effect that Muslims contemporaneous with the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) could never imagine that disputations might occur between Muslims holding that they share the same Creator and religion.

It was on the Day of Siffin that two apparently Muslim parties waged war against each other that Abu Sa'id learned that the Verse concerns them as well.<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, the following Verses demonstrate that the disputation occurred between the Noble Prophet (S) and believers on the one hand and the polytheists and liars on the other.

It is well known in the history of Islam that following the sad demise of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), 'Umar denied his death saying that the Prophet (S) might not die but he had gone to his Lord in the same manner that Moses had been in occultation away from his people for forty days but had returned to them.

Likewise, the Messenger of God (S) would return and the hands and feet of those believing in his death was to be severed! Upon hearing the news, Abu Bakr went to him and recited a number of the Qur'anic Verses concerning the demise of the Prophet (S) as a consequence of which 'Umar became silent and said that it was the first time that he heard them.<sup>2</sup>

## Surah al-Zumar - Verse 32

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ  
مَثْوًى لِّلْكَافِرِينَ

**32. Then, who does more wrong than one who utters a lie against Allah, and denies the truth when it [i.e., the truth] comes to him? Is there not in Hell an abode for disbelievers?**

The word

**“truth” (sidq)**

in the blessed Verse indicates Divine Word Revealed to the Prophet (S) as the Holy Qur’an.

The preceding Verses treated of people on the Day of Judgment and disputations occurring then.

The Verse in question resumes the same discussion dividing people into

**“the lying”**

and

**“the trustworthy.”**

The former have two characteristics as reflected in the Qur’anic Verse in question:

**“Then, who does more wrong than one who utters a lie against Allah, and denies the truth when it [i.e., the truth] comes to him?”**

Polytheists and disbelievers uttered many a lie concerning God; for instance, some regarded angels His daughters, some others regarded Jesus (as) his son, some considered idols as intercessors interceding on their behalf, and some others forged false injunctions as to lawfulness and unlawfulness.

Nonetheless, when the Truth, i.e., the Holy Qur’an Revealed to the Prophet (S), came unto them, they denied It.

The Verse closes with a brief clause demonstrating the retribution of these people:

**“Is there not in Hell an abode for disbelievers?”**

It is worthy of note that the word **mathwa** is taken from thawa’ which indicates “residence, residing, abiding,” hence the former ad hoc designates permanent abode or residence.

Hell embodies all its excruciating torments.

## Surah al-Zumar – Verses 33 – 35

وَالَّذِي جَاءَ بِالصِّدْقِ وَصَدَّقَ بِهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ

لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ذَلِكَ جِزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

لِيُكَفِّرَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

**33. And he who brought the Truth and believed therein, those are the God fearing.**

**34. They shall have all that they will desire with their Lord. That is the reward of good doers.**

**35. So that Allah [thanks to their faith and sincerity] may expiate from them the evil of what they did and give them the reward, according to the best of what they used to do.**

One of Divine Favors is that He expiates from sinners the evil of what they did and gives them rewards in the best manner.

Two characteristics are also mentioned for believers:

**“And he who brought the Truth and believed therein, those are the God fearing.”**

The clause

**“And he who brought the Truth”**

is interpreted in a number of traditions narrated from Shi’i Imams as a reference to Imam ‘Ali (as).<sup>3</sup>

However, it is worthy of note that the blessed Verse presents clear pieces of evidence, since the clause:

**“They are the God fearing”**

indicates the general applicability of the Verse. It bears testimony to the fact that the interpretation of the Verse in question to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), as the bearer of Divine Revelation and believer in It is an instance of the applicability (bayan misdaq) of the contextual meaning of the Verse rather than the meaning thereof in Its entirety.

Consequently, some exegetes interpret the clause:

***“he who brought the Truth”***

to be applicable to all prophets and hold that:

***“believed in it”***

designates the true believers of them who are all the God fearing of the world.

Another interpretation of the Verse in question which is the most comprehensive, though more or less neglected by exegetes despite the fact that it is more consistent with the outward meaning of the Verses, is that:

***“he who brought the Truth”***

does not solely refer to the bearers of Divine Revelation, i.e., the prophets, rather it is addressed to all those who disseminated their teachings as the Words of Truth.

Therefore, both clauses may refer to the same group, as reflected by the outward interpretation of the Verse, since:

***“And he who”***

is mentioned solely once.

Thus, the Verse treats both the bearers of Truth and those acting upon the same. It is concerned with the disseminators of Divine Revelation and True Word and they, i.e., prophets, the Infallible Imams and promulgators of their teachings, believe in and act upon the same.

It is noteworthy that

***“Truth”***

designates “Revelation,” making a reference to the fact that the only word which is not subject to inconsistency and contradiction is Divine Word Revealed to prophets.

Furthermore, fearing God Almighty may flourish in hearts through believing in prophetic teachings and acting upon them. The next Verse enumerates three great rewards for such believers.

Firstly, it says:

***“They shall have all that they will desire with their Lord. That is the reward of good doers.”***

The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse is so comprehensive that it includes all this worldly and

otherworldly Bounties some of which may be unimaginable.

It is worthy of note to keep in mind that the Rewards of the Hereafter and Divine Bounties shall be bestowed upon servants as per the merits they accrue in this world.

The expression:

***“with their Lord”***

expresses Divine Boundless Favors granted to them as if they are His guests for good and may request whatever they require.

In

***“That is the reward of good doers”***

the present participial form:

***muhsinin (“good doers”)***

is employed in lieu of demonstrative pronoun to make a reference to the fact that the main reason behind the bestowal of such Rewards is their good doing.

Verse 35 treats of the second and the third characteristics granted to good doers:

***“So that Allah [thanks to their faith and sincerity] may expiate from them the evil of what they did and give them the reward, according to the best of what they used to do.”***

The expression is worthy of note. On the one hand, they expect that the worst of their deeds be expiated thanks to Divine Mercy such that they may be absolved of them and on the other hand they pray to God Almighty to regard their best of deeds as the standard of according Rewards to them and accept all their deeds accordingly!

It is evident in the Verse that God Almighty accepts their request, namely, He forgives the worst and regards the best as the standard of granting Rewards. It is to be noted that when worse faults are to be forgiven by Divine Mercy, other faults will be reckoned accordingly.

The point in question is that man is more concerned by worse faults as a consequence of which believers are more preoccupied with it.

Now a question arises: Who was the first believer? Many a Shi'i and Sunni exegetes have reported a tradition concerning the interpretation of:

***“he who brought the Truth and believed therein”***

according to which:

***“he who brought the Truth”***

indicates the Noble Prophet (S) and

***“[he who believed therein]”***

refers to ‘Ali (as).

Eminent exegets, Tabarsi in Majma’ al-Bayan and Abu al-Futuh Razi in Rawh al-Janah have narrated the tradition from the Prophet’s Household (Ahl al-Bayt).

However, a number of Sunni scholars and exegets, e.g. ‘Allama Ibn Maghazili in Manaqib, ‘Allama Ganji in Kifayat al-Matalib, Qurtubi in his Tafsir [“Exegesis”], ‘Allama Suyuti in Durr al-Manthur, and Alusi in Ruh al-Ma’ani,<sup>4</sup> narrate the Prophetic tradition from Abu Hurayra and or other transmitters.

As mentioned above, such interpretations are included for referring to the most evident instances and indubitably, ‘Ali (as) is the first person to believe in the Noble Prophet of Islam (S). He is the first believer.

It is to be noted that all Muslim scholars unanimously believe that from amongst men, ‘Ali (as) was the first who converted to the Islamic faith and he is many a time mentioned by the Noble Prophet (S) as the

***“first believer”***

or “the first one who converted to the Islamic faith,” the references of which were mentioned above under 9:10.

## **Surah al-Zumar – Verses 36 – 37**

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ وَيُخَوِّفُونَكَ بِالَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ

وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ مُضِلٍّ أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِعَزِيزٍ ذِي انْتِقَامٍ

***36. Is not Allah Sufficient for His servant? Yet they try to frighten you with those besides Him!***

***And whom Allah sends astray, for him there will be no guide.***

***37. And whomsoever Allah guides, for him there will be no misleader. Is not Allah the Omnipotent, the Lord of Retribution?***

God's servants are secure from evils since God is their guardian, as Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (as) were protected from drowning, fire, Pharaoh, and crucifixion.

Many an exegete hold that Meccan idolaters warned the Prophet (S) against their idols lest that he may be harmed or possessed by them! The occasion of the Revelation of the Verse is the reply to their warnings.<sup>5</sup>

Resuming the discussion of the Divine Threats against polytheists as well as the Promises to His Prophet (S) mentioned the preceding Verses, the Verses in question treat of disbelievers' threats saying:

***“Is not Allah Sufficient for His servant? Yet they try to frighten you with those besides Him!”***

God is the Omnipotent, All-Aware of His servants' needs and difficulties, and is All-Merciful toward them. How could He abandon his faithful servants in the face of vicissitudes and enmities?

When He supports His servants,

***“even if the swords of the world happen to be wielding, no one shall be harmed against His Will.”***

Likewise, when He Wills to assist someone,

***“even if a thousand enemies intend to destroy me, I shall not entertain fear when You are my Friend,”***

let alone idols which are devoid of any power whatsoever.

According to the aforementioned tradition, the occasion for the Revelation of the Verse in question is the Meccan disbelievers warning to the Prophet (S) against the wrath of the idols; however, the contextual meaning of the Verse is so inclusive that It includes any kind of threat against those besides God.

It is to be noted that the Verse in question is a good tiding to all those treading the Path of Truth particularly sincere believers residing in places where they are considered as minorities and are subject to perils from all sides.

The Verse is a source of consolation, encouragement, and perseverance to them invigorating their souls, and refreshing them with determination. It neutralizes the harmful mental impressions and the menaces of their foes. Through Divine Support, we are not frightened by any one besides Him. When we distance ourselves from Him, everything inspires awe in our hearts.

Verses 36 and 37 treat of the questions of Guidance and error, division of people into the two groups of astray and guided, and the fact that these are within His Omnipotence.

He Wills that the entire world comprehend that all His servants need His Threshold. Nothing occurs in this world without His Will, saying:



***“And whom Allah sends astray, for him there will be no guide.”***

***“And whomsoever Allah guides, for him there will be no misleader.”***

It is evident that neither the error nor the Guidance is groundless, rather either of the twain is the fruit of human will and endeavor.

God Almighty misleads one who is in error, leaves no stone unturned to extinguish the Light of Truth, makes any attempt to deceive others, and is deep in sinfulness and rebellion.

God Almighty causes his defeat, renders his understanding and distinction useless, seals his heart, and casts a veil on his eyes, as the Retribution of his evil deeds.

Those sincere devout believers aiming to tread the Path toward Allah who have made the necessary preparations for the same and have taken the first steps in that direction, the Light of Divine Guidance renders them assistance, angels of Truth come to their succor absolving their hearts of satanic temptations, strengthen their will, and make them firmer in taking steps on the true path, and Divine Mercy protects them in precipices.

These questions are treated in many a Qur’anic Verses. Those failing to perceive the interrelation existing between such Verses with others are so ignorant that they consider them as arguments substantiating the school of predestination, as if they are unaware of the fact that Qur’anic Verses interpret each other.

An evident piece of evidence is to be found in the Verse in question:

***“Is not Allah the Omnipotent, the Lord of Retribution?”***

It is well known that Divine Retribution aims at chastisement of wrong doing, indicating that misleading the wrong doer is the chastisement for human deeds and His Guidance is the Reward of the sincere deeds and struggles on the Path toward Allah.<sup>6</sup>

Guidance is divided into beaconing the path and attaining to the object of desire, in other words, legislative (tashri’i) and existential (takwini) Guidance.

It is noteworthy that at times one may show the seeker the way with total precision and wholehearted benevolence, but it will be incumbent upon the seeker to proceed on the path and attain to his goal.

However, at times one may take the hand of the seeker and accompany him on the path till he attains to his goal.

In other words, the guide in the former case merely suffices to inform the seeker of the laws, the conditions of proceeding on the path, and the manner of attainment to the goal, but in the latter case prepares the required means for the journey, removes the obstacles, unravels the intricacies to be met

en route, and renders the wayfarers accompaniment and support until they attain to their destination.

It is to be noted that the most precise and the best interpretation consistent with all the Qur'anic Verses concerning Guidance and error is that legislative Guidance in the sense of beaconing the Right Path is unconditional and of general applicability, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

***“Verily, We showed him the way whether he be grateful or ungrateful” (76:3), “Verily, You guide them to the Straight Path”<sup>7</sup>.***

It is needless to say that the Noble Prophet's (S) Call represents Divine Call since he is Divinely appointed to prophethood.

According to another Qur'anic Verse:

***“Wherewith Allah guides all those who seek His Good Pleasure to ways of peace and He brings them out of darkness by His Will unto light and guides them to the Straight Path”<sup>8</sup>.***

In this blessed Verse, obedience to Divine Command and seeking His Satisfaction paves the path for Divine Guidance.

Regarding some polytheists and those in error another Qur'anic Verse<sup>9</sup> says:

***“There has surely come to them the Guidance from their Lord [but they failed to believe]!”***

It is said elsewhere<sup>10</sup>,

***“Allah guides not the wrong doing people.”***

In the last Verse, emphasis is laid on wrong doing leading to error.

The Holy Qur'an elsewhere<sup>11</sup> refers to disbelief as the cause of error:

***“Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.”***

Lying and disbelief have also been mentioned as the sources of error<sup>12</sup>:

***“Truly, Allah guides not him who is a liar and a disbeliever.”***

According to another Qur'anic Verse,

***“Allah guides not one who is a transgressor, a liar!”<sup>13</sup>.***

In other words, transgression of bounds and lying lead to error. It is to be noted that the aforementioned themes abound in many a Qur'anic Verse. In short, the Holy Qur'an considers certain characteristics, e.g. disbelief, wrong doing, vice, lying, transgression of bounds, prodigality, and ingratitude as leading to

error.

Are not such people worthy of being in error? Shadows and veils conceal the hearts of people with such characteristics. In any case, such deeds and conducts lead to undesirable consequences, cast a veil on man's eyes, ears, and intellect leading him to error.

Since the qualities of all things and the effects of all means are subject to Divine Will, such error in all cases may be attributed to God; however, such attribution is consistent with His servants' free will. Divine Will on which emphasis is laid in the Verses concerning with Guidance and error by no means indicate unfounded and unwise Will, but there are certain conditions in each and every instance consistent with Divine Wisdom.

According to a Qur'anic Verse,

***“And He it is Who accepts repentance from His servants and forgives sins and He knows what you do”***<sup>14</sup>

in which acts are attributed to servants rather than to His Sacred Essence. Therefore, there is no predestination. Hopefully, the above discussions have shed light on the issues.

## **Surah al-Zumar – Verse 38**

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ قُلْ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَنِيَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ هَلْ هُنَّ كَاشِفَاتُ ضُرِّهِ أَوْ أَرَادَنِي بِرَحْمَةٍ هَلْ هُنَّ مُمْسِكَاتُ رَحْمَتِهِ قُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ يَتَوَكَّلُ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ

***38. And indeed if you ask them: “Who created the heavens and the earth?” Surely they will say: “Allah.” Say: “Tell me then, [Have you thought about] the things that you invoke besides Allah? [Indeed] if Allah intended some harm for me, could they remove His harm? Or if He intended some Mercy for me, could they withhold His Mercy?” Say: “Sufficient for me is Allah. In Him those who trust must put their trust.”***

Idolaters believed in God's creativity but also believed in idol's lordship and intercession. The blessed Verse in question says that one who deserves to be worshipped is supposed to be able to intend assistance or harm for others.

The preceding Verses treated of disbelievers' and polytheists' errors and their evil consequences. The Verse in question deals with the arguments for Divine Unity to produce further arguments in order to complete the discussion.

The foregoing Verses concerned with the sufficiency of Divine Succor and the same is resumed in this Verse and it is accompanied with arguments. The Verse opens with the question:

***“If you ask them: ‘Who created the heavens and the earth?’ Surely they will say: ‘Allah.’”***

It would be unwise to believe that such immense world be created by an earthly being let alone by inanimate idols devoid of understanding.

Thus, the Holy Qur’an asks them to make use of their intellect, conscience, and primordial disposition in order to reinforce in their hearts the first pivot of Divine Unity which is the creation of the heavens and the earth.

Then, mention is made of the question of assistance and harm in human affairs to substantiate the fact that idols play no role therein, saying:

***“Say: ‘Tell me then, [Have you thought about] the things [i.e., objects of worship] that you invoke besides Allah? [Indeed] if Allah intended some harm for me, could they remove His harm? Or if He intended some Mercy for me, could they withhold His Mercy?’ Say: ‘Sufficient for me is Allah. In Him those who trust must put their trust.’”***

Now that they are neither creators nor are they able to render assistance or harm, their worship is meaningless.

Why do you turn away from the Originator of the creation of the world within His Control lie any assistance and harm and resort to such beings that are devoid of capability and understanding?

Even if objects of worship happen to possess understanding, e.g. jinn and angels worshipped by some idolaters, they are neither creators nor have they any control over assistance and harm.

In this vein, the blessed Verse in question presents a general and final conclusion saying:

***“Sufficient for me is Allah. In Him those who trust must put their trust.”***

The belief held by polytheists as to the creation of the sky and the earth by God is oft-repeated in the Holy Qur’an<sup>15</sup>.

It indicates that they firmly believed in it and the same serves as the best argument against polytheism, since monotheistic Creatorship, Lordship, and Sovereignty in the world of existence is the best argument for monotheistic servanthship which leads to trust in Divine Pure Essence and turning away from all entities besides Him.

It is also worthy of note that the pronouns whose antecedents are false objects of worship and also the plural forms denoting the same are all feminine in gender

*(hunna “them [feminine];”  
kashifat “remover [feminine];”  
mumsikat “withholder [feminine]).*

It is worthy of note that firstly, well known idols worshipped by Arabs bore feminine names (e.g. Lat, Manat, and ‘Uzza) since they believed in the weakness of the fair sex and God Almighty intends to reveal the weakness of the idols as per their own beliefs; secondly, many an object of worship were inanimate and feminine plural forms have been used at times for inanimate objects as mentioned in the blessed Verse in question.

It is also worthy of note that owing to the precedence of

*‘alayh (“in”),*

the clause:

***“In Him those who trust must put their trust”***

indicates limitation and restriction (hasr), i.e., those who put trust solely rely on Him.

## **Surah al-Zumar – Verses 39 – 40**

قُلْ يَا قَوْمِ اَعْمَلُوا عَلٰى مَكَانَتِكُمْ اِنِّىْ عَامِلٌ فَاَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ

مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَيَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ

**39. Say: “O my people! Act upon your stance [and position or authority]. I [also] act upon mine. Then you will come to know.**

**40. to whom comes a disgracing torment [of this world] and on whom descends an everlasting torment [of Resurrection].”**

Believing in Allah and putting trust in Him leads one to adopt a stance against enemies; therefore, a leader is supposed to act decisively and kindheartedly.

The blessed Verses in question reveal a Divine and effective warning to those failing to submit to intellect and conscience by saying:

***“O my people! Act upon your stance [and position or authority]. I [also] act upon mine. Then you***

***will come to know.”***

Verse 40 informs them as to who will be afflicted with a disgracing torment in this world and the everlasting torment in the world to come;

***(“to whom comes a disgracing torment [of this world] and on whom descends an everlasting torment [of Resurrection]”).***

Thus, He asks them to either submit to your intellect and conscience or await two excruciating torments, one in this world which is disgracing and another in the Hereafter which is everlasting. These are the torments caused by you and the fire for making which you have collected firewood.

## **Surah al-Zumar – Verse 41**

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ لِلنَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ فَمَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ  
عَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ

***41. Indeed We have sent down unto you [for your Guidance] the Book [the Holy Qur’an] for mankind in truth. Therefore, whosoever accepts the Guidance, it is only for his ownself, and whosoever goes astray, he goes astray only for his [own] loss. And you are not a guardian over people [so that you necessarily have to guide them].***

Following an enumeration of the arguments for Divine Unity and an exposition of the fates of disbelievers and monotheists, the blessed Verse in question explicates the fact that they shall be rewarded or chastised for their acknowledgement or denial of Truth and if the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) insists on guiding them, it is not for his own benefit rather he fulfils his obligation toward God.

The Verse reads:

***“We have sent down unto you [for your Guidance] the Book [the Holy Qur’an] for mankind in truth. Therefore, whosoever accepts the Guidance, it is only for his ownself, and whosoever goes astray, he goes astray only for his [own] loss.”***

The blessed Verse further adds:

***“You are not a guardian over people [so that you necessarily have to guide them].”***

His duty is to proclaim his prophetic mission and also to warn them.

The fact that whoever treads the Path of Truth will reap the fruits thereof and whoever goes astray shall

pay for the evil consequences thereof is oft-repeated in Qur'anic Verses which emphasizes that neither God nor His Prophet (S) need His servants' belief nor are they afraid of their disbelief. God does not aim at gaining anything but He intends to show His Liberality to His servants.

The word wakil is ad hoc employed in the sense of someone responsible for converting those in error to faith.

The word is attested in the Holy Qur'an in the same clause or clauses similar to it which bear testimony to the fact that the Noble Prophet (S) is not obliged to convert people to the Islamic faith, since such conversion may not be attained through obligation, rather it is his duty to proclaim Divine Command to people at all times whether they turn to it or turn away from the same.

## Surah al-Zumar – Verse 42

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا فَيُمْسِكُ الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

***42. It is Allah Who takes away the souls at the time of their death and those that die not during their sleep. He keeps those [souls] for which He has ordained death and sends the rest for a term appointed. Indeed in this [taking and giving the soul at the time of sleep and wakefulness] are [great] signs [of Divine Omnipotence] for a people who think deeply.***

In order to make it clear that all human affairs including their life and death is lies within Divine Omnipotence, the blessed Verse in question says:

***“It is Allah Who takes away the souls at the time of their death and those that die not during their sleep.”***

Thus, sleep is death's brother and the former indicates the least frailty of the nexus between soul and body and many a bond between the twain is severed at the time.

The Verse further adds:

***“He keeps those [souls] for which He has ordained death and sends the rest for a term appointed,”***

such that they do not wake up and other souls for who He has ordained to live on are restored to their bodies for an appointed term. Verily, the point in question indicates clear signs for those who reflect upon the same.

## Surah al-Zumar - Verse 43

أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاءَ قُلْ أَوْلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ

**43. Have they taken [idols] as intercessors besides Allah? Say “Even if they have power over nothing whatever and have no intelligence [could they still be intercessors on your behalf]?”**

An intercessor is supposed to be authorized by God. By whom are idols authorized? An intercessor is supposed to be God’s favorite; however, idols are neither God’s favorites nor is God satisfied with them.

The preceding Verse treated of God’s Sovereignty over human existence and His plan of actions carried out through death, life, sleep, and wakefulness.

The blessed Verse in question discusses polytheists’ error as to the question of intercession in order to substantiate the argument as per which the Master of intercession is the same as the One of human death and life rather than unintelligent idols.

The blessed Verse asks:

**“Have they taken [idols] as intercessors besides Allah?”**

As mentioned above, one of the pretexts used by polytheists was;

**“We worship them only that they may bring us near unto Allah”<sup>16</sup>**

since they either regarded idols as icons and tokens representing angels and sacred spirits or they considered such inanimate pieces of stone and wood possess secret powers.

It is noteworthy that intercession is dependent upon intelligence and understanding in the first place and secondly, it depends on power, mastery, and sovereignty.

The blessed Verse proceeds to ask polytheists whether they invoke their idols to intercede on their behalf:

**“Even if they have power over nothing whatever and have no intelligence [could they still be intercessors on your behalf]?”**

If they consider their intercessors to be angels and sacred spirits, they are supposed to know that they have nothing of their own but they are totally dependent on God.

They may not invoke their stone and wooden idols to intercede on their behalf since besides lack of



mastery, they are devoid intelligence and understanding. Polytheists are asked to abandon such pretexts and turn to the Master and Sovereign of the entire world of existence and all paths lead to Him.

## Surah al-Zumar – Verse 44

قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ جَمِيعاً لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

**44. [O Prophet!] Say [unto them]: “To Allah belongs all intercession [in this world and the Hereafter]. His is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. Then to Him you shall be brought back.”**

God Almighty is the Master of the entire existence and all the agents involved in it.

The blessed Verse in question says:

**“To Allah belongs all intercession [in this world and the Hereafter]. His is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. Then to Him you shall be brought back.”**

Thus, all idols are totally abandoned, since the Unity prevailing the entire world informs us that intercession is solely possible if it is permitted by God Almighty;

**“Who is supposed to intercede with Him without His Permission?”<sup>17</sup>**

Some exegetes maintain that intercession is basically the same as supplication to the Most Beautiful Divine Names, His Graciousness, Forgivingness, and Concealing of sins committed by His servants. Thus, any intercession is supposed to be carried out with His Pure Essence. Therefore, how may one intercede with Him without His Own Permission?<sup>18</sup>

Exegetes produce different interpretations as to the nexus between the clause:

**“then to Him you shall be brought back”**

and the preceding points discussed herein.

1. The clause indicates that not only the intercession in this world is subject to His Permission and one is not supposed to invoke other entities besides God to solve their problems and remove their hardships, but also intercession and deliverance in the Hereafter shall be dependent upon His Will.

2. The clause in question produces another argument for the fact that intercession is solely dependent on God Almighty since the first argument lays emphasis on Divine Mastery and the second one emphasizes the return of all beings toward Him.

3. The clause serves as a warning to polytheists as per which they all return unto God Almighty and shall be chastised for their evil deeds. It is to be noted that all the interpretations sound appropriate; however, the first two seem to be more suitable as to the contextual meaning of the Verse.

## Surah al-Zumar – Verse 45

وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْمَأَزَّتْ قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ  
دُونِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ

***45. And when Allah Alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter are filled with disgust and when those besides Him are mentioned, they rejoice immediately.***

One may test his belief and faith in the Hereafter through his disgust at or attention toward Divine Commands. Likewise, remembrance of God which is the source of consolation for believers is a source of harm for disbelievers.

The blessed Verse in question also treats of monotheism and polytheism depicting quite a vicious picture of polytheists and those denying the Hereafter confronting the question of Divine Unity, saying:

***“And when Allah Alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter are filled with disgust and when those besides Him are mentioned, they rejoice immediately.”***

Man is at times so accustomed to vices and so far from purity and good that he is offended upon hearing the Name of Truth and rejoices upon hearing falsehood, failing to show humbleness toward God, the Creator of the world of existence, though he kneels down before manmade pieces of stone and wood, human beings, and creatures like himself.

A similar theme is to be found in 17:46:

***“And when you make mention of your Lord Alone in the Qur’an, they turn on their backs, fleeing in extreme dislike.”***

Noah (Nuh), the Arch-Prophet, complains to God Almighty about such misguided people saying:

***“And indeed, every time I called unto them that You might forgive them, they thrust their fingers into their ears, covered themselves up with their garments, and persisted [in error], and magnified themselves in pride”<sup>19</sup>.***

The biased obdurate and the vain ignorant are like that. It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question clearly indicates that the misfortune of such people sprang from denial of Divine Unity and

faithlessness in the Hereafter.

Au contraire, believers are so rejoiced by hearing the Sacred Name of the One God that they sacrifice their possessions for Him. The mere Name of the Beloved makes them some happy and illuminates their hearts that not only His Name but also whatever is attached to Him rejoices them.

One is not supposed to assume that such dislike is restricted to the polytheists contemporaneous with the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) but vicious disbelievers at all times rejoice at hearing the names of God's enemies, atheistic schools of thought, and tyrants' and wrong doers' triumphs, but the mere names of the good and the pure and their plans and victories are excruciating pains to them.

As a consequence, as per the interpretations included in a number of traditions, the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to those people who dismayed at hearing the excellence of the Noble Prophet's (S) Household (as) and the triumphs of their school of thought.<sup>20</sup>

## Surah al-Zumar - Verse 46

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عَالِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ  
فِي مَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

**46. Say: "O Allah! Creator of the heavens and the earth! Omniscient of the unseen and the seen! You shall arbiter between your servants about that wherein they used to differ [at all times]."**

Confronting obdurate disbelievers, religious leaders and promulgators of religion are supposed to remember God and invoke him for succor at all times. The blessed Verse in question is saying that these obdurate people and the vain ignorant are even disgusted at hearing the Name of God Almighty.

God Commands His Prophet (S) to turn away from them and turn toward His Threshold invoking Him with a tone revealing his profound faith imbued with his love for Him and complain to Him about such people such that he may find a source of consolation for his heart filled with sorrow and also make attempts thereby to awaken disbelievers' sleeping souls thus:

**"Say: "O Allah! Creator of the heavens and the earth! Omniscient of the unseen and the seen! You shall arbiter between your servants about that wherein they used to differ [at all times]."**

The Resurrection Day is the Day of Judgment of all differences. Now many a truth are concealed from man's perception, but He is the Master and the Sovereign, the Creator of all things, the Omniscient of their secrets. Man will think about compensating his past deeds on that Day, but it will be of no avail.

## Surah al-Zumar - Verse 47

وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعاً وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لَافْتَدَوْا بِهِ مِنْ سُوءِ الْعَذَابِ  
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَبَدَا لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَحْتَسِبُونَ

**47. And those who did wrong, if they had all that is on earth and therewith as much again, they verily, would offer it to ransom themselves therewith on the Day of Resurrection from the Divine excruciating torment [though it shall be of no avail], and there will become apparent to them from Allah what they had not been reckoning.**

There shall be no ransom for wrong doers on the Day of Judgment, as a consequence of which the blessed Verse in question says:

***“If wrong doers had all that is on earth and therewith as much again, they verily, would offer it to ransom themselves therewith on the Day of Resurrection from the Divine excruciating torment [though it shall be of no avail].”***

Wrong doing (shirk) ad hoc bears a wide range of meaning which includes polytheism and other wrong doings as well.

The blessed Verse proceeds further to add:

***“there will become apparent to them from Allah what they had not been reckoning.”***

They may not imagine the torments to be inflicted upon them. Besides, they falsely imagine that Divine Mercy will be granted to them but they were unaware of His Wrath. They do deeds which are supposed by them to be good deeds whereas some of their deeds were grave sins.

It stands against the Promise given to believers<sup>21</sup>:

***“No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do.”***

It is reported that on death bed, a Muslim was quite restless.

Upon inquiry, he replied:

*“I recalled the Verse*

***‘and there will become apparent to them from Allah what they had not been reckoning’***

*and fear wrapped me up. I fear that there will become apparent to me from Allah what I had not been*

## Surah al-Zumar – Verse 48

وَبَدَأَ لَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

**48. And [on that Day] the evils of that which they earned [in their mundane life] will become apparent to them, and that which they used to mock at will encircle them.**

The Day of Resurrection is the Day on which all secrets shall be known, thus the blessed Verse in question says:

**“[on that Day] the evils of that which they earned [in their mundane life] will become apparent to them, and that which they used to mock at will encircle them.”**

It is noteworthy that four points are raised in this Verse as to polytheists and wrong doers:

1. Fear of Divine Chastisement is so severe that even if they had all the worldly possessions, they would not be able to barter them for deliverance from torment.
2. Different kinds of Divine Chastisement will become apparent to them which they did not imagine.
3. All sins committed by men will become apparent and embodied before them.
4. That which they used to mock at will become apparent to them like absolute or objective reality and they shall find no deliverance.

It is to be noted that :

**“the evils of that which they earned [in their mundane life] will become apparent to them”**

produces another argument to substantiate the question of the embodiment of deeds, since there would be no need for the words chastisement and recompense to be included by predestination.

## Surah al-Zumar – Verse 49

فَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَانَا ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَّلْنَاهُ نِعْمَةً مِّنَّا قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيْتُهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ بَلْ هِيَ فِتْنَةٌ وَلَكِنَّا أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

**49. When harm touches man, he calls to Us; then when We have granted him a favor, he says: “Only because of my knowledge [and plan of actions] I obtained it.” [It is not like that], it is only a trial, but most of them know not!**

Experiencing hardships renders man to confess to his weakness and awakens man’s God seeking primordial natural disposition in him and flourishes the same.

Thus, the blessed Verse says that whenever man is afflicted with loss and harm, pain, hardship, and poverty, he invokes God for their removal. He is the same man who disgusted at hearing the Name of the One God, now that he is entangled with vicissitudes, he seeks refuge in Divine Mercy.

Yet, his refuge is also transient since when God Almighty grants him a favor, he says that it was solely out of his savoir-faire and competence:

**(“then when We have granted him a favor, he says: ‘Only because of my knowledge [and plan of actions] I obtained it.’”)<sup>23</sup>**

An instance of such ingratitude is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an<sup>24</sup> uttered by Qarun (Korah) addressing the scholars of the Children of Israel providing him with admonitions:

**“This has been given to me only because of the knowledge I possess.”**

Such ignorant people do not reflect in the least upon the fact that their knowledge is also a Divine Favor granted to them. Do they assume that the knowledge leading to gaining abundant possessions is their own? Is it their innate quality?

Addressing such vain and incapable braggarts who forget their small capacity when they gain worldly possessions, the Holy Qur’an says:

**“[It is not like that], it is only a trial, but most of them know not!”**

The trial aims at making them reveal what they entertain in their hearts upon gaining mundane possessions. Are they rendered desperate upon experiencing afflictions? Do they become vain upon gaining worldly possessions?

Do they invoke God or are they ensnared by mammon upon being afflicted with vicissitudes? Do they consign themselves to oblivion or they notice their frailties and remember God more than the past?

It is unfortunate that the majority of people are forgetful and do not attend to such facts. Qur’anic Verses reiterate the truth many a time that the Omniscient God entangles man with hardships and also bestows on him peace and other Bounties so as to test him, make him to comprehend better the true value of his existence, and make him acquainted with the fact that everything springs from Him.

Vicissitudes basically pave the path for man’s primordial natural disposition to flourish; it is in the same

manner that blessings serve as a prelude to gaining knowledge.

## Surah al-Zumar – Verses 50 – 51

قَدْ قَالَهَا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَالَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ سَيُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا  
وَمَا هُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ

**50. Indeed, those before them said it [as well], yet that they had earned [in the world] availed them not.**

**51. Therefore, the evil [consequences] of that which they earned overtook them and those [Meccan disbelievers] who did wrong shall soon be overtaken by the evil [consequences] of what they had committed and they shall never be able to render Us desperate [to escape from Us].**

History is the best testimony that upon Divine Wrath mundane possessions may save man neither in this world nor in the Hereafter.

When God Almighty caused the earth to swallow Qarun (Korah) and his swelling place, he had no group or party to render him assistance against Allah, nor was he one of those who could save themselves<sup>25</sup>.

Verse 50 reads:

**“Those before them said it [as well, i.e., they also claimed that their possessions were the fruits of their knowledge and competence], yet that they had earned [in the world] availed them not.”**

Vain people like Qarun considered their possessions to be owing to their own competence and had consigned to oblivion the fact that they were due to Divine Bounties; however, history bears testimony to the fact that when God caused the earth to swallow their possessions, there was no one to render them assistance nor their possessions were of any avail to them, as it is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an<sup>26</sup>:

**“Therefore, We caused the earth to swallow him and his dwelling place. Then he had no group or party to help him against Allah.”**

The same fate was in store for the peoples of ‘Ad, Thamud, Sheba, and others.

Verse 51 says:

***“The evil [consequences] of that which they earned overtook them.”***

They were afflicted with Divine Chastisements, e.g. storm, flood, earthquake, and outcries from the heaven (instantaneous death), and met their dire end.

The blessed Verse further adds that it was not merely their fate, but Meccan polytheists and wrong doers would soon be overtaken by the evil consequences of their vicious deeds and would not be able to escape from Divine Chastisement. Yet, the dire fate embraces all vain wrong doers in all eras unaware of Divine Wrath.

Exegets have considered:

***“[they] shall soon be overtaken by the evil [consequences] of what they had committed”***

to indicate affliction with mundane or otherworldly torment.

However, taking into account:

***“the evil [consequences] of that which they earned overtook them,”***

it sounds that the former is more appropriate herein.

## **Surah al-Zumar – Verse 52**

أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

***52. Do they not know [yet] that Allah enlarges the provision for whom He wills? Indeed, in this are signs [of Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence] for those who believe.***

Man’s knowledge and endeavor are the requisites for gaining provision, but they are not sufficient. He is not supposed to solely rely on his knowledge and capabilities, since everything depends on another Power.

In reply to those who considered their possessions as the fruits of their knowledge and capacities, the Holy Qur’an reminds man to take a glance at the history of ancient peoples and notice that others uttered such claims and experienced the afflictions and torments. It is a historical reply.

Thus the blessed Verse in question produces an intellectual reply:

***“Do they not know that Allah enlarges the provision for whom He wills?”***

There are many a worthy people overtaken by deprivation, privation, seclusion, and isolation and there



exist many an incompetent and weak people enjoying all means of mundane welfare.

Had such means of worldly welfare the fruits of their endeavors and capabilities, there would not have been such discomfort for the worthy merits. It reveals that there is a Powerful Hand behind worldly affairs that manages everything as per a well measured plan.

It is true that man is supposed to make his level best in life and making effort serve as the key to many a problem, but it would be a gross mistake to forget the Cause of all the causes and merely perceive the causes and consider ourselves as the real author of all the causes.

One of secrets of the unfulfilled wishes of some competent and knowledgeable people and the success and prosperity of some incompetent ignorant people is to remind people that they should not lose the thread in the world of causes nor are they supposed to rely on their own capacities.

Thus the blessed Verse ends:

***“Indeed, in this are signs [of Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence] for those who believe.”***

In this vein, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as) says:

*“I knew God through the abrogation of decisions, solution of problems, and abrogation of wills.”*<sup>27</sup>

These beacon man’s frailty and weakness so as he may not forget his incompetence and be not ensnared by vanity.

## **Surah al-Zumar – Verse 53**

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ  
الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

**53. Say “O My servants who have transgressed against [and wronged] yourselves! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: verily, Allah forgives all sins, since He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Gracious.”**

Pursuant to the recurrent warning to polytheists and wrong doers mentioned in the preceding Verses, the blessed Verse in question provides all sinners with the hope of turning to Allah Almighty, since the main goal behind all them is to guide man toward Him rather than hostility and vengeance.

Proclaiming His Boundless Mercy, Forgiving, and Love to all, He says:

***“Say unto them ‘O My servants who have transgressed against and wronged yourselves! Lose not your hope of Divine Graciousness since God Almighty forgives all sins.’”***

He is Oft-Forgiving and Most Compassionate. Reflection on the meaning of the Verse indicates that It is the most promising Verse addressed to all sinners.

According to a tradition narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), the extent of its implication is such that

*"No Verse may be found throughout the Holy Qur'an to be more inclusive than this one."*<sup>28</sup>

The reason is crystal clear since:

1. The phrase:

***"O My servants!"***

is a beacon of Divine Favor.

2. The employment of the word:

***"transgression" (israf)***

in the senses of "wrong, sin, and crime" is another Divine Favor.

3. The phrase:

***"against yourselves" ('ala anfusihim)***

designates that man is the source of all his sins. It also makes a reference to Divine Love, since it may be likened to a father addressing his child and saying unto them: *"Do not inflict so many wrongs on yourself!"*

4. The negative imperative verbal form

***"Despair not!" (la taqnatu)***

is also worthy of note since

***"despair" (qunut)***

is originally employed in the sense of despair of good but connotes that sinners are not supposed to despair of Divine Favor.

5. The phrase:

***"of Divine Mercy"***

following the clause:

***“Despair not”***

lays further emphasis on good and love.

6. The clause:

***“Verily, Allah forgives all sins”***

opened with the emphatic particle *inna* and taking into account the plural definite noun *al-dhunub* (“the sins”) which includes all sins, the Promise reaches its zenith and the sea of Divine Mercy becomes full of waves.

7. Hopefulness reaches its climax with the adverb of manner

***jami’an*** (“all”).

8 and 9. The two promising Divine Beautiful Names:

***“the Oft-Forgiving (ghaffur)”***

and

***“the Most Gracious (rahim)”***

at the close of the Verse leave no room for the least despair and hopelessness.

Taking the above into consideration, we notice that it is the most inclusive Qur’anic Verse encompassing Divine Forgiveness of all sins as a consequence of which it is considered as the most promising Qur’anic Verses.

One may not expect otherwise from God Almighty Whose Ocean of Mercy is Boundless. His Graciousness exceeds His Wrath and has created His servants to bestow His Mercy upon them rather than subject them to His Wrath and Torment. God Almighty is the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate, and the Most Loving.

Man may not expect otherwise.

Two questions have preoccupied exegetes that their solutions lie in the Verse in question and the following One. Firstly, does the Verse include all sins, even polytheism and grave sins as well?

If so, what is the reason behind the exclusion of the sin of polytheism among those to be forgiven by God Almighty according to which:

***“Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should associated with Him, but He forgives except that to whom He wills”<sup>29</sup>?***

The other question concerns whether the Divine Promise as to Forgiving is conditional upon repentance and the like.

However, the two questions are interrelated and the response may be found the following Verses, since the latter contain three illuminating injunctions:

***“Return to your God,”***

***“Submit to His Will,”***

and

***“Follow the injunctions sent down for you by your Lord.”***

The three injunctions inform us that the gates of Divine Forgiving and Mercy are open to all servants provided that following committing sins, they perceive that they have sinned and change their course toward Divine Threshold, submit to His Command, show their sincerity in their repentance through doing righteous good deeds.

Thus, it becomes known that neither polytheism nor any other sin is excluded and its conditionality upon Divine All-Embracing Mercy is indubitable.

Regarding the aforementioned Verse<sup>30</sup> as to the exclusion of polytheists from Divine Mercy it is worthy of note that the exclusion is applicable to those passing away as polytheists rather than those who wake up and tread of the Path of Truth since almost all Muslims in the first days of Islam used to be polytheists.

Taking into account the state of many a sinner who following committing sins turn so grieved and regretful that they may never assume that there might be a path of return for them and consider themselves to be too impure to be absolved from their impurities, inquiring whether their sins might be forgiven and if there might be a path of return toward God Almighty, we may well comprehend the meaning of the Verse.

They are willing to repent in any way but consider their sins as unforgivable, particularly when they repented many a time but broke their repentance.

The Verse in question serves as a source of hope to them all. It is reported that upon his conversion to the Islamic faith, Wahshi, the notorious criminal in the history of Islam and the slayer of Hamza, the Chief of the Martyrs, was afraid that his repentance may not be accepted since his sin was too grave; however some exegetes maintain that the blessed Verse in question was sent down opening the gates of Divine Mercy Wahshi and the like.

## Surah al-Zumar – Verse 54

وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوا لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ

**54. “And turn in repentance and in obedience with true faith to your Lord and submit to Him before the torment comes upon you then you will not be helped.**

There is no salvation and attainment of Divine Help except through return toward Divine Threshold; consequently, repentance is the prerequisite for the bestowal of Divine Forgiving.

The blessed Verse shows the path toward the Boundless Ocean of Divine Mercy for all sinners and criminals saying:

**“Turn in repentance... to your Lord”**

and change your course in life for the better.

**“Submit to Him and obey His Command before [Divine] torment comes upon you then you will not be helped.”**

## Surah al-Zumar – Verse 55

وَاتَّبِعُوا أَحْسَنَ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ بَغْتَةً وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

**55. “And follow the best of that which is sent down to you from your Lord before the torment comes on you suddenly while you perceive not!”**

The blessed Verse bids people to follow Qur’anic injunction since the best path is toward God Almighty and It is the most comprehensive and the most perfect of what is sent down unto man.

Following the two steps of repentance and submission to Divine Will, the Verse treats of the third step which is that of action:

**“follow the best of that which is sent down to you from your Lord before the torment comes on you suddenly while you perceive not!”**

Thus, there are three steps to take so as to attain to Divine Mercy:

1. Repentance, regret about committing sins, and turning to God Almighty.
2. Faith and submission to His Command.
3. Doing righteous good deeds. After taking these three steps, one shall certainly enter the boundless ocean of His Mercy despite the heavy burden of man's sins.

What is intended by:

***“follow the best of that which is sent down to you from your Lord?”***

Exegets produce different possibilities the best of which sounds to be the one as per which Divine Injunctions are of diverse types: some call people to carrying out obligatory acts, some address recommended ones, and some include permissible ones.

Taking the hierarchy of acts into account one may notice that the best indicates selecting obligatory and recommended acts.

Some exegets take it as a reference to the Holy Qur'an among Divine Books, taking into consideration Verse 23 of the same Chapter (39) as per which the Holy Qur'an is the Best Statement (ahsan al-hadith):

***“Allah has sent down the Best Statement, a Book, its parts resembling each other.”***

However, the two interpretations are not inconsistent with each other.

1. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 8, p.497.

2. Ibn Hisham's Sira ["Biography of the Prophet of Islam (S)"], vol. 4, pp. 305–306 (the account is summarized herein); see also Ibn Athir's Kamil, vol. 2, pp. 323–324.

3. Majma' al-Bayan, under the Verse in question.

4. For further details, see Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 3, pp. 177 f.; al-Muraja'at, p. 64.

5. Khashshaf [Exegesis]; Majma' al-Bayan; Abu al-Futuh Razi's Exegesis [Rawd al-Jinan wa Rawh al-Janan]; Fi Úlil al-Qur'an.

6. In his Mufradat, Raghīb says that naqma is employed in the sense of “retribution, chastisement.” It is to be noted that hidaya literally denotes “guidance with favor and precision, *ibid*, under h–d–y.

7. 3:51

8. 5:16

9. 53:23

10. 2:258

11. 2:264

12. 39:3

13. 40:28

14. 42:25

15. 29:61, 63; 31:31; 43: 9, 87

16. 39:3

17. (2:257)
18. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 17, p. 286.
19. 71:7
20. Usul Kafi; Rawdat al-Kafi; apud Nur al-Thiqalayn [Exegesis], vol. 4, p. 490.
21. 32:17
22. Majma' al-Bayan and Qurtubi (Exegeses), under the blessed Verse in question.
23. The verbal form khawwala is taken from takhwil ("grant a favor").
24. 28:78
25. 28:81
26. 28:81
27. Nahj al-Balagha, aphorism no. 250.
28. Majma' al-Bayan; Tafsir Qurtubi; Tafsir Safi, under the blessed Verse in question.
29. 4:48
30. 4:48

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