

Surah al-Dharyat, Verses 47 – 60

Surah al-Dharyat – Verses 47–48

وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ

وَالْأَرْضَ فَرَشْنَاهَا فَنِعْمَ الْمَاهِدُونَ

47. With [indescribable] power did We construct the heaven. Indeed, We are Able to extend the vastness of space thereof.

48. And We have spread out the earth: how Excellent Spreader are We!

The Arabic word ayd may ad hoc be employed either as the plural form of yad (“hand”), as in

“Or have they hands wherewith they hold?”¹

or as an infinitive designating ‘support’, as the derivatives of the root ‘-y-d (“support, back”) attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an, including:

“He it is Who has supported you with His Help and with the believers”²

The Arabic words farsh and mahd designate spreading something for taking rest. Following recounting the story of the Prophets and their peoples and nations, the blessed Verses in question treat of Divine Omnipotence, Beneficence, and Creativity reminding people to behold the manner through which God Almighty, unaided and without time created the heavens ex nihilo, established, and spread it out.

Only God Almighty, the Creator and the Provider, is Aware of the vastness of the heavens and the

number of spheres, planets, and galaxies and despite the strenuous efforts made by astronomers, they have failed to gain full acquaintance with the number of all the stars and planets.

The number is seemingly infinite. Human knowledge is such that the more it is gained, it may still advance, since Divine Emanation is Infinite; consequently, the more human knowledge advances, it becomes finite against Divine Omnipotence.

The blessed Verse 48 proceeds with a treatment of Divine Favors bestowed upon mankind. God Almighty makes mention of His Omniscience and Omnipotence saying

that He spread out the earth like the carpet beneath man's feet and made it an abode for him.

The Arabic word mahd denotes cradle attested in 19:29, when to remove the unfounded accusations, Mary (as) was asked to point to baby Jesus (as) so that they may ask him and they replied:

“How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?”

God Almighty likens the earth to a cradle since the earth is in permanent motion like the cradle moving for pacifying the child.

Ptolemaic astronomers maintained that the sun circles around the earth once in twenty four hours as a result of which a different exegesis was provided for the blessed Verse in question, but it is proved by modern scientists that the earth circles around the sun in twenty four hours and the blessed Verse 48 saying:

“How Excellent Spreader are We!”

is substantiated by modern discoveries and is regarded as one of Qur'anic miracles.

Two quite precise points may be derived from the blessed Verse concerning the creation of the earth.

The first clause:

“And We have spread out the earth”

likens the earth to a carpet prepared and spread for rest.

The second clause:

“How Excellent Spreader are We!”

indicates that the earth which serves as a carpet on which one may rest is like a cradle moving permanently. The beauty of expression lies in the point that despite its permanent motion, the earth likened to a carpet on which one may rest and its motion is not tangible.

God Almighty glorifies Himself herein and concerning Creation, the Creator and the Provider of the world says that He has created the world in the best manner. In other words, the expression “how Excellent Spreader are We!” is a delicate one reflecting that God Almighty prepared the earth with all the means of rest for the life of mankind. The Arabic word mahid is a cognate of mahd and the latter is applied to cradle or any place prepared for rest.

Such place is supposed to be quiet, safe, and comfortable and all these conditions are applicable to the earth. On the one hand, by Divine Command stones are softened and pulverized and on the other, rigidity of mountains and the crust of the earth make it resistant against the pressure caused by the ebb and flow; on the other hand, the atmosphere encompassing the earth preserves the solar heat blanketing the widespread bed shielding it against collision of meteorites burning them into ashes.

Thus, all the means of welfare has been Divinely prepared for human comfort on the globe.

Surah al-Dharyat – Verse 49

وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

49. And of everything We have created pairs that you may remember [and take lessons].

The law of parity predominates all things – generation and continuity of life spring from parity. The blessed Verse in question is saying that pairs have been created for each species of creatures forming pairs.

“Of everything”

designates generality including all species of creatures.

Male and female pairs of mankind, animals, and their species are not solely intended by

“of everything”

as some people might have surmised, but it encompasses all particles and contingent existent beings. It is even a proven fact that the constituent elements, termed prime matter (madat al-mawad) or element consists of two constituents at times termed positive and negative charges, male and female, and/or energy and matter. In short, the blessed Verse is saying that all contingent existent beings are composite consisting of two things.

Unity solely belongs to the Divine Essence of God Almighty Who is Free from parity, elements, or constituents and He is One in His Essence, to His Essence, and in His Essence:

“There is no god but Allah”.

The blessed Verse indicates that all contingent existent beings consist of constituent elements and any composite being requires a maker; likewise, pairs are in need of each other. Thus, contingent existent beings require the Necessary Being Whose Sacred Presence is devoid of composition, mate, partner, and equal. He is not in need of others in terms of Essence nor is He in need of aids in terms of Acts.

Furthermore, the blessed Qur’anic Verse in question says

“of all things,”

namely “of all existent beings” which may refer to the fact that all things in the world consist of negative and positive particles. Today, it is a proven fact that atoms consist of different particles including electrons, elementary particles with negative charge, and protons, those with positive charge.

It is worthy of note that the dependent clause:

“that you may remember [and take lessons]”

makes a reference to the point that parity, multiplicity, and duality in all things in the world remind man of the point that the Creator of the world is One, since duality is one of the characteristics of created beings.³

Surah al-Dhariyat – Verses 50–51

فَفِرُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي لَكُم مِّنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ إِنِّي لَكُم مِّنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

50. Therefore, flee to Allah. Indeed, I am a plain warner to you from Him.

51. And associate not any other object of worship along with Allah. Indeed, I am a plain warner to you from Him.

The phrase:

“plain warner”

(nadhir mubin) is repeated twice in these two blessed Verses.

Other instances, including;

“plain Book”

(kitab mubin)4,

“plain Message”

(balagh mubin)5,

“plain Arabic”

(‘Arabi mubin)6) all bear witness to the clarity of Divine Message and Word and the Prophets’ warning.

It is worthy of note that fleeing toward God Almighty is on a par with fleeing from shadows to light, ignorance to knowledge, anxiety to security, superstitions to truth, discord to unity, polytheism to monotheism, and sin to piety and fearing God Almighty. Imam Baqir (as) regards pilgrimage7 to Mecca as an instance of fleeing toward God Almighty.

In the blessed Verse 50 as in some other Qur’anic Verses, God Almighty commands His Messenger (S) to proclaim that he is sent on a Mission by God Almighty to warn people against obedience to concupiscent desires and satanic deceits by the jinn and men surrounding their hearts placing them in the multiplicities of the world of phenomena and deliver them from the ruses of concupiscence through enlightening them on the manner of fleeing from them such that they may not fall prey to their deception but be able to draw a distinction between the path to deliverance and that to error and thereby rest in safety free from perils.

In other words, the metaphorical expression ‘flee employed ad hoc is one of interest and delicacy, since ‘flee’ is commonly to instances when man is confronted with an awe–inspiring being or incident on the one side and he is aware of a place of refuge somewhere on the other; as a consequence of which he flees the place of incident and turns toward safe haven.

The blessed Verse in question is asking men to escape polytheism and idolatry as terrible belief and turn to monotheism as a safe haven. Escape Divine torment and turn toward His Mercy. Escape disobedience to God Almighty and turn to repentance. In short, escape evils, vices, disbelief, shadows of ignorance, and everlasting torment and find a safe haven in Divine Mercy and everlasting bliss and happiness.

The blessed Verse 52 is asking people to refrain from associating false gods as objects of worship with the One God. The Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is sent unto mankind by God Almighty to warn them against disobedience to Him and manifest the path to obedience to Him.

Treating the manner of escape the multiplicities of contingent existent beings toward Divine Unity, the

blessed Verse is saying that the first path to be opted by believers is to refrain from associating false gods with the One God and turn toward Him wholeheartedly. Then, they are asked to acknowledge and believe in the Prophet Call of the Messenger of Allah (S).

Surah al-Dharyat – Verses 52–55

كَذَلِكَ مَا أَتَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا قَالُوا سَاحِرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ

أَتَوَصَّوْا بِهِ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ

فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِمَلُومٍ

وَذَكَرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَى تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

52. [O Muhammad (S)!] Likewise [your Prophethood was denied], no Messenger came to those before them but they said: “[He is] a sorcerer or a madman!”

53. Have they [former people denying Prophetic Calls] transmitted this saying to these [polytheists to confront the Prophets likewise]? Nay, they are themselves a people disobedient [to God Almighty].

54. So turn away from them, you are not to be blamed.

55. And remind [people], for indeed, the reminding profits the believers.

The blessed Verse 52 concludes the material treated in the preceding Verses and is a consolation to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) suggesting that if Meccan polytheists confront you likewise, he is to know that former Prophets were confronted in like manner. Since the Noble Prophet (S) fulfilled his Prophetic Mission and gave people the ultimatum on behalf of God Almighty, the Noble Prophet’s (S) turning away from disbelievers and his refraining from engaging in disputes with them entails no censure.

The blessed Verses in question commands believers to turn away from disobedient disbelievers and also remind the believers so as to impede the false conception that disbelievers are solely in need of being reminded;

“then turn away”

and

“remind”).

Hearing entails benefits which may not be found in knowing. The sincerity and the manner of expression of the speaker may better impress the audience. Thus, the Noble Prophet (S) was commanded to remind the believers at all times.

The blessed Verse 52 is saying that thus were the people as mentioned in the preceding Verses who called all Prophets sent to guide their peoples as sorcerers or madmen. It becomes evident that Prophets were sent to guide peoples at different times in different regions since God Almighty gives ultimatum to all peoples.

According to tradition sources, the number of Prophets stands at one hundred and twenty four thousand. The false attributions to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) were not unprecedented since all Prophets were called sorcerers and madmen by disbelievers.

Addressed to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) the blessed Verses 53 and 54 ask whether former peoples had suggested their successors to maintain unanimity in their unfounded attributions of sorcery and madness to Prophets. Then the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is suggested to turn away from them since he fulfilled his Prophetic Mission and is not to be censured by God Almighty.

The blessed Verse 55 is suggesting the Noble Prophet (S) to turn away from disbelievers' unfounded attributions springing from their obstinacy and arrogance and remind the believers since they may benefit from reminder and admonition and their faith will be further consolidated, since warning them against Divine Omnipotence and Grandeur at times and talk about His Mercy, Forgiving, and Graciousness in order to encourage them to set their hopes on him entails profits for them.

Surah al-Dharyat – Verses 56–58

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعَمُونَ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ

56. And I created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me.

57. I seek not any provision from them nor do I ask that they should feed Me.

58. Indeed, Allah is the All-Provider, Owner of Power, the Most Strong.

The blessed Verse 56 is saying that God Almighty did not create jinn and mankind but for being worshipped and glorified by them. The *li-* in *li-ya'budun* (“in order to worship”) is employed in the dative case designating purpose. The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse is that the purpose behind the creation of jinn and mankind is that they worship God Almighty.

According to lexicographical sources, ‘servantship’ (*‘ubudiyya*) designates the highest state of humbleness against the object of worship supposed to have granted Infinite Bounties and Blessings and He is solely God Almighty. Thus, ‘servantship’ is the zenith of human perfection and his closeness to God Almighty. It is the highest state of submission to Divine Pure Essence. It is unconditional obedience to God Almighty in all respects.

Finally, perfect servantship is that man does not entertain any thoughts other than those set upon absolute perfection, set foot on the Path toward Him, and consign to oblivion everything, even one’s self, except Him! This is the final goal of human creation set as an ordeal by God for whose attainment man is provided with knowledge the final goal of which is to be immersed in the ocean of Divine Mercy.

Thus, servants need to know the Divine Essence as the Source of all perfect qualities, adapt themselves with the same, and avail themselves of whose light such that sparks of the attributes of Divine Perfection and Majesty may sparkle in their souls, since perfection and closeness to God Almighty are not possible unless one embarks upon assumption of dominical traits and such assumption is subsidiary to acquisition of knowledge.

In this vein, a tradition is narrated from Imam Husayn (as), saying:

*“God did not create mankind except for acquisition of knowledge of Him and when they acquired the knowledge, they worship Him; whoever worships him is needless of serving other objects of worship.”*⁸

According to a Divine Tradition:

*“I was a Secret Treasure, but I intended to be known. I created beings to be known.”*⁹

The two traditions designate that the world of existence was created so that God Almighty might be known and such knowledge entails benefits for creatures rather than for Divine Needless Essence. It also reflects that Divine Emanation resembles His other Attributes bestowing Emanations to inferior creatures.

It is in this light and Mujahid and some other Qur'anic exegets interpret:

“they should worship”

to ‘they should know,’ namely God Almighty did not create jinn and mankind except for their acquisition of knowledge of God Almighty and the Divine Tradition;

“I was a Secret Treasure”

substantiates the interpretation in question, since it goes without saying that worshipping and glorification of God Almighty without knowledge entails no consequences and one who does not know the object of worship and glorification may not embark upon the latter.

Thus, the final purpose of creation of jinn and mankind is that they may acquire knowledge of Divine Essence of Unity. God Almighty created jinn and mankind with all His Most Beauteous and Majestic Attributes so that He may be known and their worship and glorification spring from acquisition of knowledge regarding all Divine Attributes, Most Beauteous Names, and Omnipotence.

The blessed Verses 57 and 58 are saying that one may not imagine that God Almighty is in need of the worship and deeds of jinn and mankind and thereby attain to perfection, since He expects neither provision nor food from creatures as He is the Needless Creator and all creatures are in need of Him, requiring the Absolute Provider to bestow continuity of existence and provision upon them.

Allah is All-Mighty, Omnipotent, All-Dominating, and All-Subduing. All creatures are in need of His Grandeur and Lordship but He is Needless of others by His Essence.

Surah al-Dhariyat – Verses 59–60

فَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُنُوبًا مِّثْلَ ذُنُوبِ أَصْحَابِهِمْ فَلَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ

فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ يَوْمِهِمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ

59. And indeed, for those who did wrong, there is a portion of torment like the evil portion of torment [which came for] their likes; therefore, let them not ask Me to hasten on [since they will taste it]!

60. Then, woe to those who disbelieved the Day which they is promised.

One who does not worship and glorify God Almighty and refrains from treading the Path for which he

was created is a wrong-doer and disbeliever.

The Arabic word zanub literally denotes large bucket by which water is distributed, but it figuratively connotes disbelievers' deeds indicating that a large portion of Divine torment is in store for disbelievers in the same manner that it was sent down upon former peoples like 'Ad and Thamud.

“Let them not ask Me to hasten on”

is a response to disbelievers' derisive inquiry as to the time of Divine torment to be sent down upon them. The blessed Verses in question are addressed to them, saying that the time of your torment shall arrive and they need not hasten.

The last Verse is saying:

“Woe unto those who disbelieved, since they shall be afflicted with severe torments in store for them on the Day of Resurrection.”

1. 7:195

2. 8:62

3. For a tradition narrated in this vein from Imam 'Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha, see Saduq's Tawhid; Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 130.

4. 15:1

5. 16:82

6. 26:195

7. Usul Kafi, vol. 4, p. 256.

8. Tafsir Safi, vol. 5, p. 75.

9. Tafsir Makhzan al-'Irfan, p. 334.

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