

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا
يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَإِذَا قِيلَ انشُرُوا فَانشُرُوا يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾

Al-Mujadilah (The Disputation) 58:11

O You Who Believe!

- When you are told to make room in the assemblies, (spread out and) make room, Allah provide for you with (ample) room.
- And when you are told to rise up, rise up.
- Allah will rise up, to (suitable) ranks (and degrees).
- Those of you who believe and who have been granted (mystic) Knowledge.
- And Allah is well- acquainted with all you do.

Commentary

Allamah Taba Tabai (AR)

God says, " O you who believe! When you are told to make room in the assemblies (spread out) and make room. God will give (ample) room (from His Mercy)."

The Arabic word "Yafsah" means to create space and this is the meaning of "Al fasakh" also. The word "Al Majalis", the place or room is the plural of "Majlis" or assembly or gathering. To create space in the assembly means that the host of the gathering should accommodate space for others. God will create room or space in paradise for anyone who does so.

This verse tells us how to behave in a social gathering. People used to come to the gatherings of the Messenger and used to sit spread out in such a manner that there was no space left for others who joined in late. They are being taught the manners of sitting in an assembly. God says, " Make room in the assemblies (spread out)". Though the verse speaks about the assembly of the Messenger the rule stands for all times and for all assemblies.

The verse will now mean, " O you believers! When you are asked to make room or be accommodating in an assembly so that there is ample space for others to sit. For those of you who will be accommodating and make space God will be accommodating and make space for them in Paradise."

God says, "*And when you are asked to leave you (should) leave.*"

This part of the verse speaks about another form of behavior in an assembly. The word "Nashazu" means to leave so that another may sit, as a sign of respect. The meaning of the verse will now be, "When you are asked to stand so that a person who is better than you in knowledge and piety may sit, then you should stand."

God says, "*And when you are asked to rise up then do rise up and God will exalt in rank those who believe among you.*"

There is no doubt that when God raises the status of a person it means he goes closer to God. This is the summation of the intellect. Those endowed with knowledge are the Ulama amongst the believers.

The verse divides the believers in to two groups,

- the believers, and
- the believer who is learned and pious and better.

This is what God refers to by the words, of verse 9 of Surah Al -Zumur, " Say, are those who know equal to those who know not?"

It is now very clear that the prominence spoken about in the verse is due to knowledge and piety. Now the verse will mean, " God has raised the status of those with certitude and raised those with knowledge and certitude a step higher and their prominence is not hidden."

The issue is then confirmed with the words, " And God is aware of all that you do."

Mir Ahmed Ali (AR) and Aqa Mahdi Puya (AR)

For "those who have been granted knowledge" see commentary of Ali Imran: 7 and 18; Nisa: 162 and Ankabut: 49.

The Holy Prophet said:

A scholar is superior to a martyr.

The superiority of a scholar over other men is like my superiority over all the human beings. Imam Jafar bin Muhammad as Sadiq said:

The ink a scholar uses to write is superior to the blood a martyr sheds.

As has been proved in the commentary of the abovenoted verses, the Holy Prophet, Ali, Fatimah and the eleven holy Imams, in their progeny, are the fountainheads of knowledge and wisdom (see commentary of Baqarah: 124). It is a historic fact that none of them ever received any tutoring from any mortal. It is Allah who thoroughly purified them, taught them and granted wisdom to them from His infinite wisdom.

The Holy Prophet said:

I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate.

Umar bin Khattab used to say after receiving guidance from Ali to solve intricate issues:

Had Ali been not there, Umar would have perished.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

Allah exalts some over others on account of merit. It is neither an arbitrary action nor it is due to worldly possessions or position.

In Hujurat: 13 it is said that all human beings are equal in birth, came into existence from a male and female, so those who have more integrity (taqwa) - and according to this verse having belief and knowledge are the inseparable essentials of taqwa- these are exalted by Allah. See Nisa: 95 and Anam: 116.

In the light of Ankabut: 49, Muhammad: 16 and this verse those who have been given knowledge are exalted to the highest degree. All other created beings are inferior to them.

3:7

As explained in the commentary of verse 2 of al Baqarah the Qur'an was revealed to the Holy Prophet. He knew the true meaning of every verse, or after him, it was Ali who claimed that he knew when, why and for whom every verse of the Qur'an was revealed.

Most of the verses of the Qur'an are clear and decisive. There is no ambiguity in them. They are known as the muhkamat. They relate to the fundamentals of the faith, such as the oneness of Allah, the directions pertaining to the practice of the faith and the laws governing the day to day life of the faithful. They can neither be changed nor modified. Any man of average intelligence can understand and follow them.

The mutashabihat are the verses which have been composed in subtle and profound diction and style. They carry implications other than the literal meanings, and therefore, are capable of giving different significations, like "The hand of Allah is on their hands" in verse 10 of al Fat-h. Verse 1 of al Hud says that the Qur'an is a book of clear and decisive verses. Verse 23 of al Zumar says that Allah has sent down the very best discourse as a book conformable in its repetition and consimilarity.

Only the men of understanding who possess a higher level of intelligence contemplate and find out the meaningful implications of such verses. Average and ordinary minds cannot figure out or have knowledge of the real purport of such verses, and if they try this on their own, they are bewildered and go astray. As mentioned in the commentary of verse 1 of al Baqarah, the huruf muqatta-at are also meaningful but their subtle and profound meanings are known to Allah and His chosen representatives (Muhammad and ali Muhammad) only.

Therefore, those who know the true purport of these symbolic letters occupy the highest position in the domain of knowledge and wisdom. In the well-known tradition of thaqalayn the Holy Prophet has clearly made known the fact that whoso remains attached with the Qur'an and his Ahl ul Bayt, after his departure from this world, will never go astray, because these two weighty authorities will never be separated from each other, and joined together, they shall meet the Holy Prophet at the spring of Kawthar; and "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate", said the Holy Prophet in order to guide the faithfuls so that, to have knowledge of the Qur'an, they must refer to Ali and his Ahl ul Bayt, who alone know the true meanings of the mutashabihat.

Zaygh means disease, perversity, evil, and wicked intention, the inclination to go against the truth and to blunder, revolt and go astray. Fitna means to create mischief, or to create difference of opinion and to mislead.

"None knows its interpretation except Allah and those (who are) firmly rooted in knowledge", renders null and void all attempts made by scholars to discover the true meanings of the mutashabihat. The firmly rooted in knowledge are those whom Allah Himself gives the knowledge, as verse 49 of al Ankabut says: But it is clear revelations in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge.

Therefore, the observation of the Ahmadi commentator that reading various passages in the light of each discover the true significance of ambiguous passages, is based upon his inclination to go out of the right course. The Christians also try in vain to assign divinity to Isa by calculating the numerical value of the haruf muqatta-at, and misinterpret the complex verses to suit their dubious theories.

How the complex verses can be interpreted is not mentioned in this verse, nor anywhere in the Qur'an, but it is clearly disclosed that besides Allah only those, endowed with divine knowledge, know the true meanings of the mutashabihat. The firmly rooted in knowledge are the Holy Prophet and his Ahl ul Bayt, the thoroughly purified ones (Ahzab: 33), who possess the desired purity of heart and soul, essential for receiving and holding the truth in order to use it (Waqi-ah: 77 to 79) to do good to themselves and to others.

It is obvious that there is no conceivable necessity of revealing complex verses or letter symbols if even the Holy Prophet, to whom the Qur'an was revealed, did not know their meanings. It is only a hypothetical inquiry, otherwise there is the clear mention of rasikhuna fil ilm (the firmly rooted in knowledge) in this verse, the first among whom is the Holy Prophet, and after him, as said earlier, his Ahlul Bayt are the custodians of his knowledge and wisdom, who alone are entitled to interpret every word of the Quran.

In reply to Anas bin Malik's query about rasikhuna fil ilm the Holy Prophet said:

They are those whose hands do not do aught but that which is just, righteous and good; whose tongues do not utter aught but that which is true; whose hearts and minds are enlightened and rational; whose stomachs are free from that which is forbidden.

- The ayah al tat-hir (Ahzab: 33) confirms that only the thoroughly purified Muhammad and Ali Muhammad are the rasikhuna fil ilm.
- Verse 13 of Luqman says that polytheism (shirk) is the most grievous inequity, the worst type of impurity.
- It is a historical fact that all the companions of the Holy Prophet, before embracing Islam, for a long time in their lives, were idolworshippers.
- The Holy Prophet, Bibi Fatimah and Ali ibna abi Talib and their children were the only ones who were free from the impurity of polytheism right from the day they were born.
- All Muslims, in every age, add karamallahu wajhu (Allah graced and honoured his face above others) after the name of Ali, because he never worshipped any ghayrallah (other than Allah).

The Holy Prophet pointed out the essential purity of body and soul in Ali, equal to his own purity, when he said:

O Ali! Your flesh is my flesh, your blood is my blood. You and I are from one and the same divine light.

Verses 18 of Ali Imran, 162 of al Nisa, 49 of Ankabut, and 11 of al Mujadalah refer to those who have been divinely endowed with knowledge.

As ordinary human beings are unable to know the meanings of the mutashabihat, the divine mercy guides the sincere seekers of the truth to turn to the ahladh dhikr, the Holy Prophet and his Ahlul Bayt (see commentary of verse 43 of al Nahl and verse 7 of al Anbiya):

"So ask the people of dhikr (the reminder or the Quran) if you do not know."

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

Nothing in the earth or in the heavens is hidden from Allah, the self-subsisting, because He is the author of the book of creation (the development of the embryo has been mentioned in the previous verse as an example). In this verse He says that the author of the book of creation is also the author of the book of legislation (the Qur'an).

The book of creation (the universe) contains miscellaneous signs. Some are clear. Some are intricate and perplexing. For example (in the book of creation) the function and the significance of every part of the human structure has been studied and defined except the "appendix". Now a rational student of the book of creation will say:

"As no part is without some significance, this also must have some meaning, though I have not yet understood it."

On the contrary a mischief-maker will mix up that which is known with that which is not known and deny both by saying:

"As no reason or significance is found in this part, therefore, there is no reason or significance in the whole."

Likewise in the book of legislation, some signs (verses) are clear and decisive (muhkam), and some have several possible meanings (mutashabih), therefore, the rational mind will try to understand the mutashabih (unclear) verses in the light of the muhkam (clear and decisive) verses, by proceeding from the known to the unknown or from the concrete to the abstract; but the perverse mind will judge that which is certainly precise and definite in the light of the complex so as to mislead people by dubious misinterpretations.

Verse 1 of al Hud says that all the verses of the book are well arranged and firmly established. The arrangement of the words in the verses and the verses in the surahs is so accurate and proper that they all form a consistent unity, though they were separately revealed.

It implies that the Qur'an was already arranged and established before its revelation, which is confirmed by verse 105 of Bani Israil. In verse 23 of al Zumar, the book is presented as consistent, consimilar and conformable in its parts (mutashabihan). But in this verse mutashabihat refers to the meanings, the implications, the connotations and the denotations of the complex passages.

- Muhkam (clear) and mutashabih (complex) are relative terms.
- What is unclear to some may be apparent and definite to others.
- There may be quite a few features and viewpoints inherent in certain ideas, or commands, or narrations.
- Studying them from a particular angle will make their meaning and purpose crystal clear but their clarity may turn into obscurity when they are viewed from another standpoint.

At all events, the complex should be examined and interpreted in the light of that which is clear and decisive, or as explained by the Holy Prophet, or by those whose authority has been established by the Holy Prophet and the Qur'an (see pages 1 to 7, commentary of verses 6 and 7 of al Fatihah, and verses 2, 30 to 37 and 124 of al Baqarah).

- In the light of verses 16 to 19 of al Qiyamah, the divine agency collects, recites and interprets the Qur'an.
- As the book is a guidance for mankind, there should be no unintelligible or incomprehensible passage in it.
- There is none.
- As asserted by the Ahlul Bayt, rasikhuna fil ilm is conjuncted with Allah and yaquluna is an adverbial clause qualifying the state of knowledge, referring to rasikhun.

In the Nahj al Balagha, Ali ibna abi Talib says that the rasikhuna fil ilm believe in the unknown. in the light of the known. As explained in the commentary of verse 3 of al Baqarah the knowledge of the ghayb (unknown) is with the infinite, therefore, the awareness of the finite created beings, even if they are endowed with the divine insight, cannot be at par with the absolute wisdom of the ghayb ul mutlaq, the hayyul qayyum creator.

All that which becomes (in obedience) effective, as soon as He wills, is knowable to man. A finite being can know as much as the infinite all-wise likes him to know, and grow in knowledge, which implies that basically his knowledge was insufficient but he rises towards the level of perfection, with the help of divine endowment, on his own merits, to become aware of the meanings of all that which has been revealed in the book. Because, if it is not so, such revelations (mutashabihat) would be unprofitable and frustrating. So what Imam Ali ibna abi Talib and Imam Muhammad bin Ali al Baqir have said in this connection is true.

3:18

Allah himself bears witness to His own unity. It is His infinite mercy that He makes known His self-subsisting and everliving existence (wajib ul wujud) to His created beings who, otherwise, could never know anything about Him. See commentary of verse 255 of al Baqarah. The finite created beings can only say that there is no god save Allah.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

In this verse shahadat (bearing witness) has been restricted to Allah, the angels and those endowed with (divine) knowledge, although in many other verses it is stated that every being in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah and bears witness to His unity (tawhid).

The restriction is justified because, in this verse, shahadat has been used in the sense of a particular knowledge which contains perceptual insight to realise the truth of His tawhid. Allah directly knows that "there is no god save He", because He is the known, the knowing and the knower. Those who have attained the perceptual insight of the realisation of truth, by complete mental absorption of the absolute, possess the same quality of knowledge. Whoever reaches this stage naturally becomes entitled to bear witness over His creation.

In the Qur'an such witnesses have been described as shuhada. In verses 41 of al-Nisa and 89 of al Nahl, Allah says that He will call the Holy Prophet as witness over other witnesses.

For ulul ilm (those endowed with divine knowledge) see commentary of rasikhuna fil ilm in verse 7 of this surah.

Qa-iman bil qist means that Allah is the vigilant, enduring and (ever) lasting upholder and maintainer of justice.

Any unjust being, or any being with an iota of iniquity, can never be God, because if arbitrariness had been applied as a primary force to effect and control the universe, no law, physical as well as social, devoid of reason and equity, would be valid and operative. In that case, God could not have an essential existence to be proved by reason, but a contingency that might or might not exist. So it is an imperative fact that absolute justice is ingrained and implanted in the activity of the active factor.

Absolute justice, by itself, is one of the aspects of the infinite mercy of the almighty Lord, which regulates and manages His kingdom, the whole universe. It is essentially evident in His every will and act.

He has prescribed for Himself mercy, (An-am: 12)

Justice is one of the 5 fundamental doctrines of Islam-Original, Shi-ism. It distinguishes Shi-ism from other schools of thought. The 5 roots of the faith (usul al din) are given below:

(1)Tawhid: There is no god save Allah.

(2)Adl: Allah is all-just.

(3)Risalat: The prophets or messengers of Allah, appointed by Him, were truthful, holy and infallible. The last messenger of Allah, the seal of prophethood, is Muhammad al Mustafa.

(4) Imamah: After the Holy Prophet, the office of the prophethood was terminated, but the divine guidance continued, for which Allah appointed the twelve Imams in the progeny of the Holy Prophet.

(5) Qiyamat: The day of final judgement.

Faith in Allah's justice is essential. The laws made by Him to operate the universe are precise and decisive. These are bound by rules based upon justice, and are not arbitrarily changed. That is why there is complete harmony in the working of the whole creation, otherwise there would have been chaos and confusion. All Allah's acts are just and right.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

If qa-iman bil qist is treated as the adverbial clause qualifying the state of ulul ilm (those endowed with knowledge), then grammatically it should have been in plural, therefore, it is true that it qualifies the state of the divine unity. It lays stress on the interrelation between the unity of His essence and His justice, which, as His all embracing attribute, defines and determines His action, and reflects itself in all His attributes. The source of all the attributes manifesting in His justice is the unity of His essence.

According to the Holy Prophet the structure of the whole universe stands on the foundation of His justice. So none can perceive Him and His unity unless one upholds and maintains justice. Justice is with unity and unity is with justice. They are correlative and inseparable. Islam teaches us that all excellences flow from the sublime source of justice and all vices proceed from the base root of injustice-see Nisa: 135; Ma-idah: 8; and Hadid :25.

In verse 7 of this surah the Qur'an refers to the decisive verses (muhkamat) as the essence of the book, in the light of which all the other complex verses (mutashabihat) should be interpreted. In view of the interrelation between the unity of His essence and His justice, all the verses in His book of creation and in His book of legislation should be interpreted in a manner which must always be in harmony with the unity of His essence and His justice. The logical method, prescribed by the Qur'an, is to proceed from the known to the unknown. As the whole universe stands on the basis of the unity and justice of the absolute, it is essential to prescribe justice (adl) as the second article of faith, immediately after tawhid, the first article of faith.

4: 162

For rasikhuna fil ilm refer to the commentary of Ali Imran: 7.

Verse 49 of al-Ankabut says that the Qur'an is in the hearts or chests of those who have been endowed with divine knowledge. It is a gift of Allah. No mortal had taught or tutored such men described as rasikhuna fil ilm in this verse. The Holy Prophet, Ali, Fatimah and the Imams in their progeny, historically, had never been taught and tutored by any individual or group, yet the Holy Prophet is the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate. They are the fountainhead of wisdom and indisputable authority on any branch of knowledge, physical as well as spiritual. Although the other human beings have also attained distinction in knowledge and learning but the Holy Prophet and his Ahl ul Bayt are the ultimate in awareness of all the divine laws governing the whole universe.

Please refer to the commentary of al-Baqarah: 136, 177 and 285; Ali Imran: 84, and Nisa: 136 and 152 for belief in all the messengers of Allah and the books given to them.

The Qur'an clearly states that all the infallible prophets and the messengers of Allah were the bearers of glad tidings and warners in order that there be no plea for mankind against Allah after these messengers had come to them with His commandments and guidance. Although the essence and origin of all revelations were similar, yet, as some of the prophets have been exalted over others (Baqarah: 253), the final message, the Qur'an, revealed to the last and the most superior messenger of Allah, the Holy Prophet, is complete and perfect in all dimensions and in its scope and application.

Several of the prophets are mentioned by name in the Qur'an while others are not. "For every people there was a messenger", says verse 36 of al-Nahl and also verse 24 of al-Fatir. All the messengers of Allah gave the glad tidings of the advent of the Holy Prophet. See commentary of al-Baqarah: 40. For kallamallah see commentary of al-Baqarah: 253.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

Grammatically wal muqimin, like wal rasikhun, is in possessive and objective case, whereas wal mutunuz zakat and wal muminun are in nominative case. All commentators agree that in certain circumstances by giving the form of the possessive and objective case to the verb and the nominative case vice versa, it will receive a distinction for the sake of emphasis.

According to a tradition A-isha observed that this is one of the mistakes committed by the scribes who wrote the Qur'an under the supervision of a committee appointed by Uthman but she and other companions, who used to criticise the government for less important issues did not object to it.

For awhina see commentary of al-Fatihah: 7.

The word Kama implies that in essence the revelation revealed to the Holy Prophet was similar to that which was revealed to other prophets and that he had the experience of all the specific forms and the manners of the revelations used separately for the earlier prophets (see commentary of al-Baqarah: 253). Qaba qawsayni aw adna (two bows or nearer) in verse 9 of al-Najm puts the Holy Prophet on the highest pedestal of the nearest nearness to Allah.

The well-known Persian poet Rumi says:

The holy name of Ahmed bears all the names of the prophets. Since the hundred-per-cent (out-and-out) has come, the lesser than that is certainly with us.