

V
GOD

1. God's greatness and power

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 2:255/256

There is no god but God, the Living, the Everlasting. Neither slumber nor sleep seizes Him. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. Who is there who shall intercede with Him except by His leave? He knows what lies before them and what is after them, and they comprehend nothing of His knowledge¹ except such as He wills. His Chair (kursī) extends over the heavens and earth. The preserving of them² oppresses Him not. He is the All-high, the All-glorious.

... In God's words *His Chair (kursī) extends over the heavens and earth* lie four possible interpretations (*aijuh*):

(1) His Chair³ is not confined enough (to be included within) the heavens and earth, because it extends too far and is too wide. Moreover, this is nothing but a vivid description (*taṣwīr*) and fanciful image (*takhyīl*) of his greatness. In fact, there is no such Chair, no sitting (*qu'ūd*) (on such a Chair), and no-one seated (*qā'id*). Thus, God says: '(The unbelievers) measure not God with His true measure. The earth altogether shall be His handful on the day of resurrection, and the heavens shall be rolled up in His right hand' (Sūra 39:67), without proposing the idea (*taṣawwur*) of an (actual) holding-in-one's-hand, an (actual) rolling up (of the heavens), or an (actual) right hand. Rather this is a fanciful image and a physical simile (*tamthīl ḥissī*) of the greatness of his affairs, as God says: 'They measure not God with His true measure.'

(2) His knowledge is extensive. According to this interpretation, knowledge is characterized as a place, namely the Chair of the Wise One.

(3) His sovereignty (*mulk*) extends far. According to this interpretation, sovereignty is characterized as a place, namely the Chair of the Sovereign One.

(4) (It is to be taken into consideration) that it is related that God created the Chair (*kursī*) which stands before the Throne (*'arsh*) (of God) and under which lie the heavens and the earth. This Chair is something very much smaller in proportion to the Throne. According to al-Ḥasan (al-Baṣrī), however, the Chair is identical with the Throne. ...

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 11:44/46

And it is said: 'Earth, swallow thy waters! Heaven, hold (the rain)! And the waters subsided, and the affair was accomplished. And the Ark (of Noah)⁴ settled on (the mountain) al-Jūdī. And it was said: 'Away with the people of the evildoers!'

Since the earth and heaven are addressed here in the vocative with expressions of more precision (*takḥṣīṣ*) than (are addressed to) sensible living beings, and since special attention is devoted to them among all the subjects of creation through the (specific) address with the words *earth* and *heaven*, and since they are commanded to do something in the same manner as beings with reason and intellect, in that they are commanded: *swallow thy waters!* and *hold (the rain)!*, then this is an indication of the vast power (*iqtidār*) (of God) and (an indication) that heaven, the earth, and (other) such powerful bodies allow themselves to be led by God in such a manner that he can cause to originate from them whatever he wills, and that they do not refuse (to do what he commands). (It is as if) they are rational and intelligent beings who have knowledge of his greatness and pre-eminence, and his reward and punishment, as well as his power (*qudra*) over everything, which succumbs (*maqdūr*) to it. And (it is) as if they recognized the duty to obey him and allow themselves to be led by him, and as if they feared him and shrank back before him, with submission and the immediate yielding to his will. Thus, as soon as God issues a command to them, those who are commanded obey without hesitation and without delay in its execution. The swallowing (*bal'*) (of the water) is an expression for absorption, while the restraining (*iqḷā'*) signifies the holding back (of rain). ...

And the affair was accomplished (*quḍiya-l-amru*): and what God had promised Noah concerning the downfall of his people was accomplished.

And the Ark (of Noah) settled on (the mountain) *al-Jūdī*: that is, on a mountain near Mosul.

And it was said: *Away (bu'dan)*: . . . God's statement (in this verse) with verbs in the passive form (with the names of the divine subject omitted) is an indication of the pre-eminence and greatness (of God) and (an indication) that such powerful things (as are portrayed here) appear only through the action of a powerful actor and only through the creation of an irresistible creator. (It should be shown) further, that the one who accomplishes these things is a unique actor in whose deeds no-one can have a share. One cannot go so far as to presume that someone other than God would say: 'Earth, swallow thy waters! Heaven, hold (the rain)!' Also (one cannot imagine) that anyone other than God would carry through this frightful affair as he did, or that the Ark would land and remain on the ridge (of Mount) *al-Jūdī*, unless he caused it to land and remain (there).

Regarding the meaning (*ma'ānī*) (of this verse) and other points (*mukat*) which we could enumerate, the rhetoricians consider this verse to be linguistically perfect (*istaḥṣaha*) and they applaud it, (but surely) not on account of the assonance of the two words *ibla'ī* (swallow) and *aqli'ī* (retain). Although this assonance does not destroy the overall beauty of the words, it stands over against the beauty that constitutes the kernel of the rest (of the verse) and thus appears superficial, that is, not noteworthy. . . .

2. God the creator

Baiḍāwī on Sūra 7:54/52

*Surely your Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then sat Himself upon the Throne ('arsh). He draweth the night as a veil over the day, each seeking the other in rapid succession. (He created) the sun, and the moon, and the stars, (all) governed by laws under His command. Verily, His are the creation and the command. Blessed be God, the Lord of all the world.*⁵

Surely your Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in six days: in six periods of time . . . or in one time period corresponding to six days.⁶ What one usually understands by a day consists of the time between the rising and setting of the sun; but at that time this did not yet exist. That God created things in stages, even though he had the power to call everything into being at once, is (on the one hand) a sign of the possession of free will (*ikhṭiyār*) (by God), and (on the other hand) it is advice and a stimulus for the wise to maintain thoughtfulness in (all) things.

Then sat Himself upon the Throne ('arsh): Then his power (*amr*) was placed (on the Throne), or he took possession (of the Throne). According to our followers, the sitting upon the Throne is an attribute of God (which one accepts) 'without (asking) how' (*bi-lā kaifa*).⁷ This means that when one says that God sits upon the Throne, then, in the same manner as he himself has said this (in the Qur'ān), in so doing one must keep free from (the idea) of residing or of being settled in a place. The Throne is the substance which surrounds all other substances. It is so designated because it is high, or as a simile for the seat of the ruler, since all things and regulations come down from it. Others say that the Throne signifies the lordship (*mulk*) (of God). . . .

Blessed be God (tabāraka Allāh) the Lord of all the world (rabḥul-'ālamīn): He is considered as exalted on account of his uniqueness as God and is to be praised because he alone is Lord (of the world). The specific meaning of the verse is—to be sure God knows it better—as follows: The unbelievers had provided for themselves (more divine) lords. Then God showed them that only one is worthy of being Lord, namely he, since it is he to whom the act of creation and the command (*amr*) are suited, and he created the world according to a proper order and a wise plan. He brought forth the heavenly domain and then embellished it with stars, as he shows in his words: 'So He determined them as seven heavens in two days, and revealed its commandments in every heaven; and We adorned the lower heaven with lamps' (Sūra 41:12/11). After he made these, he called into being the lower substances. Thus he created (first) a substance which was susceptible to the changing forms and the various shapes. This he then subdivided into the various species, each with its specific form and functions. God refers to this in his words: 'Who created the earth—(that is,

what is below) in two days' (Sūra 41 :9/8). Then he brought forth the three kingdoms of nature (mineral, plant, and animal), first by combining their matter together in the first act (of creation), and then by giving them (specific) form in a second act (of creation). Appropriately God continues after the words 'who created the earth in two days' with: 'And he set therein firm mountains over it, and He blessed it, and He ordained therein its diverse sustenance in four days' (Sūra 41 :10/9). The meaning is: (He created the earth and the kingdoms of nature in four days altogether) in addition to the first two days (during which he created the seven heavens), for God says in the sūra (called) 'The Prostration': 'God is He who created the heavens and the earth, and what between them is, in six days, then seated Himself upon the Throne' (Sūra 32:4/3). As soon as the world was created completely, he established his lordship over it, ruling it like a ruler who sits on his throne in order to rule his kingdom. And he directed his command from heaven to the earth, setting the spheres in motion, sending the stars on their journeys, and veiling the days with the nights as one seeks the other (in rapid succession). Then he told, as the confirmation (of the week of creation), and acknowledged, as the consequence that follows from it, who he is, saying: *Verily, His (alone) are the creation (of the world) and the command (over it). Blessed be God, the Lord of all the world!* Then he commanded all the people in the world to worship him in humility and sincerity, saying: 'Call on your Lord, humbly and in private; He loves not transgressors' (Sūra 7:55/53).

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 41 :11/10

(God created the earth in two days.⁸) Then He lifted Himself to heaven when it was smoke, and said to it and to the earth: 'Come willingly, or unwillingly!' They said: 'We come willingly.'

Then He lifted Himself to heaven when it was smoke . . . : The meaning is: Then, after he had created the earth and what is on it, his wisdom led him to the creation of heaven without there being anything that could have dissuaded him from it. Some say that God's Throne ('*arshuhu*') was on the water before the creation of heaven and earth, and that God then caused a (pillar of) smoke to rise up out of the water, which arose over the water and remained (suspended) over it. Then God caused the water to dry up and made from it (the various)

regions of the earth (*aradūn*); and finally God created heaven out of the smoke which had risen up.

God's commanding of heaven and earth to come into being and the fact that both submitted (and obeyed his command) have the following meaning: God wished to call both into being and they did not refuse him. They were called into being as God wished them to be, and they responded (to his command) like someone who obeys a command from one in authority over him just as soon as the effect (*fi'l*) of the command makes its impression on him. What is involved here is a metaphor (*majāz*) which one characterizes as simile (*tamthīl*). It can (however also) pertain to a fanciful image (*takhyīl*),⁹ in which case the meaning would be as follows: God speaks to heaven and the earth, saying: 'Come willingly, or unwillingly!', and they reply: 'We come willingly and not unwillingly.' The meaning is to be seen exclusively in the fact that God's power (*qudra*) upon the things which had been established is described clearly, without thereby implying that an actual statement and answer are meant. This is like when one says that the wall (of a tent) says to the (tent-)peg: 'Why do you split me?', and the peg replies: 'Ask that which pounds me! The stone which is behind me does not follow my will.'

One may now ask: Why does God mention the earth together with heaven and place them together in the command to come into being? Was the earth not already created in two days before heaven (was created)? To this I answer: God had created the material (*ghirm*) of the earth at first without spreading it out. He spread out the earth only after the creation of heaven, for God says: 'And after that (that is, after the creation of heaven) He spread out the earth' (Sūra 79:30). Thus the meaning is: 'Come forth in the form and condition in which you are to be made. Earth, come forth spread out as the resting-place and dwelling-place for your inhabitants! Heaven, come forth arched as a roof for her!' By coming forth is meant that something originates and appears, as when one says: 'His work had come forth in a satisfactory and welcome manner.' . . .

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 32:7/6-9/8

(He) who has created all things well and who originated the creation of man out of clay,

then fashioned his progeny of an extraction of mean water (min sulālatin min mā'in mahīnin¹⁰), then shaped him, and breathed His spirit in him, and appointed for you hearing, and sight, and hearts.¹¹ Little thanks you show!

Who has created all things well (alladhī aḥsana kulla shai'in khal-qahū¹²): ... that is, there is nothing in his creation that would not be so arranged as required by wisdom and demanded for well-being. All creatures are (created) well, even though they show variation with regard to the good and the better. Thus God says: 'We indeed created man in the best form' (Sūra 95:4). ...

That (in this verse) God presents the spirit (which he breathes into man) as his own shows that what is involved is a wondrous creation whose nature no-one knows but (God). Thus God says: 'They will question thee (Muḥammad) concerning the spirit. Say: "The spirit is of the bidding (*amr*) of my Lord. You have been given only a little knowledge"' (Sūra 17:85/87). Thus, it is as if God had said: and (who) breathed something into him which he himself and his knowledge withheld.

3. *The creation as evidence for God*

Baiḍāwī on Sūra 2:164/159

Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day and the ship that runs in the sea with profit to men, and the water God sends down from heaven therewith reviving the earth after it is dead and His scattering abroad in it all manner of crawling things, and the turning about of the winds and the clouds compelled between heaven and earth—¹³ surely (in all this) are signs for a people having understanding.

... Surely (in all this) are signs for a people having understanding: (for people) who ponder over these things and consider them with eyes of understanding. From the Prophet (the following) is related: Woe to him who recites this verse but pays no attention to it—that is, who does not ponder over it. One notes that these signs show the existence and unity of God in so many ways that a detailed description would be too extensive here. The general theological meaning (*al-kalām al-mujmal*) is as follows: The manifestations which are mentioned are types of possible existence, each within

(the realm) of the conceivable manner and of the various ways in which a specific thing has come into being. By way of example, it would also be possible that heaven or its parts could move as little as the earth, that they could move in the opposite direction, that the revolving part (of the earth) could cross the two poles, or that heaven could possess neither an apogee nor a perigee. Since (this however is not the case, but) they are uncomplicated and similar in their parts, they must have a powerful and wise creator, who calls them into being according to the demands of his wisdom and the requisites of his will, and who is too exalted for anything to be able to oppose him. If there were in addition to this creator (yet) a (another) God who had the ability to do the same things (then there would exist various possibilities). First, their wills could agree, (in which case) if both were acting, then the two actors must have called forth a single action (which is absurd). Furthermore, were (only) one of the two acting, then the acting one would be predominant, and there would have to be something that calls forth this predominance, and there would be (at the same time) a weakness in the other which would not be consistent with his divine character. Or, the wills (of the two divine beings) could not agree, which would necessarily lead to mutual encumbrance and persecution, as God indicates with the following words: 'Had there been in them gods other than God, the heavens and earth surely would have gone to ruin' (Sūra 21:22). In the verse (under discussion) lies instruction concerning the high rank of the science of theology (*'ilm al-kalām*) and its representatives, as well as a stimulus for the pursuit of research and study.

4. *God's support and benevolence*

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 2:269/272

He gives wisdom to whomever He will, and whoever is given wisdom has been given much good. Yet none remembers except those who have understanding.

He gives wisdom: He grants his support (*waffaqa*)¹⁴ in (the form of) knowledge and action according to (this knowledge). He is wise before God who is knowing and acting (according to this knowledge). ...

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 2:272/274

Thou (Muḥammad) art not responsible for guiding the unbelievers¹⁵ (to belief); but God guides whomever He wills. . . .

. . . But God guides whomever He wills: He grants his benevolence (*lutf*) to him of whom he knows (1) that the benevolence will bring gain and (2) that he keeps far away from what is forbidden.

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 5:41/45

. . . Whomever God desires to try, thou (Muḥammad) canst not avail him anything with God. Those are they whose hearts God desires not to purify; for them is degradation in this world; and in the world to come awaits them a mighty chastisement.

Whomever God desires to try: when God leaves someone in the condition of temptation and wishes to leave him in the lurch.

Thou (Muḥammad) canst not avail him anything with God: you can do nothing for him to obtain God's support and benevolence.

Those are they whom God desires not to grant his benevolence through which he would purify their hearts. They do not belong among the people who are worthy of his benevolence, since God knows that his benevolence would remain without gain or effect. . . .

Ibn al-Munayyir on this verse

How often people fall into stuttering even though the truth is certain! This verse is to be understood in accordance with the doctrines of the people of the *sunna*, who say that God (himself) wills it when people succumb to temptation, and that he (is the one who) does not wish to purify their hearts from the impurity of temptation and the filth of unbelief. (On the contrary the verse is) not (to be understood) in the sense of the assertion of the Mu'tazilites, which is as follows: God wills that no-one should succumb to temptation, but he wills that everyone should believe and have a pure heart. If someone succumbs to temptation, then this happens against the will of God. And it would also be in accordance with his will if the hearts of the unbelievers remain pure. However this does not happen!

This verse and similar verses should suffice for the Mu'tazilites (as insight into the falsity of their assertion). If only God had willed

to purify their hearts from the filth of (heretical) innovations (*bida'*)! Do they not ponder upon the consequences from the Qur'ān, or do they do it with hearts that are closed through (heretical) innovation? How loathsome it is when az-Zamakhsharī treats the present verse contrary to the external meaning of the words, saying: God does not wish to grant his benevolence to them because he knows that his benevolence would remain without gain or effect for them! God is exalted high above what the blasphemers say. If God's benevolence remains without gain and effect, whose benevolence shall then be profitable, and whose will grants success, when there is nothing beyond God that man could pursue?

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 6:125f.

Whomever God desires to guide, He expands his breast to Islam.

Whomever He desires to lead astray, He makes his breast narrow, tight, as if he were climbing to heaven. So God lays abomination upon those who believe not.

This is the path of thy Lord, straight. We have distinguished the signs to a people who remember.

Whomever God desires to guide: him to whom God bestows his benevolence. God wishes to bestow his benevolence only on him who is worthy.

He expands his breast to Islam: he bestows his benevolence upon him so that he feels a longing for Islam, his soul feels at home therein, and he desires to be a Muslim.

Whomever He desires to lead astray: him whom he leaves in the lurch and wishes to abandon to his own deeds. What is meant is one who is not worthy of his benevolence.

He makes his breast narrow, tight: he withholds his benevolence from him so that his heart hardens and he refuses and resists the reception of truth. Then faith finds no access in him. . . .

As if he were climbing to heaven: as if he were pursuing something impossible. That is, climbing up to heaven is simply a simile for anything impossible, which exceeds one's capability and surpasses one's power.

So God lays abomination (rijs): that is, the abandoning and withdrawing of support. God distinguishes this from its opposite, that is, from what characterizes support. Or, God means the act of vacillating (*irtijās*) . . . , which leads to punishment (*rijs*). . . .

This is the path of thy Lord: This is the path that is required by his wisdom and custom regarding his support. . . .

5. The attributes of God

Ṭabarī on Sūra 6:102f.

This then is God your Lord. There is no god but He, the Creator of everything. So serve Him, for He is Guardian over everything. The vision (of men) reaches Him not, but He reaches the vision (of men).

. . . The exegetes disagree concerning the meaning of God's words *The vision (al-abṣār) (of men) reaches (tudrikuhū¹⁶) Him not, but He reaches the vision (of men)*. Some exegetes maintain that the meaning is as follows: The vision (of men) does not fully grasp (*aḥāta*¹⁷) him, but will be grasped by him. To be cited (as authorities) for this view are (the following):¹⁸

. . . Yūnus ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam has related to us on the basis of (a chain of authorities going back to) Khālid ibn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān and Abū 'Arfaḥa the following quotation from 'Aṭīyya al-'Aufī concerning God's words: 'Upon that day (of resurrection) there will be radiant faces, gazing (*nāẓiratun*) upon their Lord' (Sūra 75:22f.):¹⁹ 'They shall gaze upon God, yet their vision shall not reach him because of his greatness, while his vision shall reach them. This is mentioned in God's words: "The vision (of men) reaches Him not, but He reaches the vision"'. . . .

The proponents of this view give reasons for their interpretation by saying that God has said: 'And We brought the Children of Israel over the sea; and Pharaoh and his hosts followed them insolently and impetuously until when the drowning reached him (*adrakahū*), he said: "I believe that there is no god but He in whom the Children of Israel believe. I am of those that surrender"' (Sūra 10:90). Here, so they say, God ascribes to the drowning the characteristic that it reached the Pharaoh. There is no doubt, however, that the drowning is not ascribed the characteristic that it saw the Pharaoh, and (there is no doubt) that it belongs among those things of which one cannot ascribe the characteristic that it sees anything. They continue by saying that it is far from one's

thoughts that God's words 'the vision (of men) reaches Him not' have the meaning 'does not see him', since one thing may reach something else without seeing it. Thus, God says in his proclamation concerning the story of Moses and his companions when the people of Pharaoh approached: 'And when the two hosts sighted each other, the companions of Moses said: "We are reached (*la-mudra-kūna!*")' (Sūra 26:61). God had told his prophet Moses that they would not be reached, as it is said: 'Also, We revealed to Moses: "Go with My servants (out of the land of the Pharaoh)! And strike (with your staff) for them a dry path in the sea, fearing not being reached (*darak*), neither being afraid"' (Sūra 20:77/79-80).

The proponents of this view say (further) that since one thing can see something else without reaching it and can reach it without seeing it, then interpreting God's words 'the vision (of men) reaches Him not' to mean 'the vision does not see him' gives an entirely isolated meaning, and that the (actual) meaning of these words is: 'the vision apprehends him not', since it is impossible for it to apprehend him. Since the believers and the inhabitants of paradise, so they say, see their Lord with their vision, although their vision does not reach him, this means that it will not apprehend him since it is impossible to ascribe to God the characteristic that anything can apprehend him.

They maintain that since it is permissible to ascribe to God the characteristic that he appears although he cannot be reached, then this is in accordance with the possibility of ascribing to him the characteristic that one knows of him without apprehending his knowledge. Thus, God says: 'And they apprehend nothing of His knowledge²⁰ except what He wills' (Sūra 2:255/256). God, so they say, therefore excludes (the possibility) that his creatures apprehend anything of his knowledge except what he wills. Thus is meant, according to their view of this passage, the knowledge of the contents of (his) knowledge (*ma'lūm*). Although God, so they continue, excludes (the possibility) that his creatures apprehend anything of his knowledge except what he wills, it is not excluded that they know him. (Further) they maintain that since the exclusion of (the possibility of) apprehending anything with regard to his knowledge does not exclude (the possibility) that one may know him, then the exclusion of (the possibility of) reaching God with the vision just as little excludes (the possibility) that the vision sees him. They say that just as it is possible for (God's) creatures to

know things without apprehending their knowledge, it is (also) possible for them to see their Lord with their vision without its reaching him, since the (word) 'seeing' (*ru'ya*) has another meaning than the (word) 'reaching' (*idrāk*), and the (word) 'reaching' has another meaning than the (word) 'seeing'. Therefore (it is possible) that by 'reaching' what is meant is 'apprehending'. . . .

They continue: One may ask us: Do you not deny that God's words 'the vision reaches Him not' have the meaning 'the vision sees Him not'? To this we answer: We deny this, since God proclaims in his Book that there will be faces (*wujūh*) in the resurrection which look upon him, and his Messenger has proclaimed to his community that on the day of resurrection they shall see their Lord, as one sees the moon on a full-moon night and as one sees the sun when it is not obscured by a cloud. Since, so they say, God proclaims this in his Book and since the statements of his Messenger . . . confirm that God's words 'upon that day there will be radiant faces (*wujūh*), gazing upon their Lord' are to be interpreted so that the vision of the eyes will look upon God, and since in the Book of God one (statement) rests upon another within his truth and it is impossible that one of the two statements (of God) discussed here abrogates the other—which is simply impossible with the (se two) proclamations²¹ . . . , then one knows that his words 'the vision (of men) reaches Him not' have another meaning than his words 'upon that day there will be radiant faces, gazing upon their Lord'. Consequently, on the day of resurrection the inhabitants of paradise will look on God with their vision, but will not reach him with it. (One must accept this) in order to agree with God in these two passages, and in order to be able to consider the revelation in the form in which it was delivered in these two sūras.

Other exegetes maintain that the verse under discussion has the meaning: 'The vision (of men) sees Him not, although He sees the vision (of men).' To be cited (as authorities) for this view are (the following):

. . . Hannād has related to us on the authority of (a chain of witnesses going back to) Wakī, Ismā'il ibn Abī Khālid, 'Āmir (ash-Sha'bī), and Masrūq, the following words of 'Ā'isha: 'If someone reports to you that the Messenger of God has seen his Lord, then he lies.' (God's words however read:) *The vision (of men) reaches Him not, but He reaches the vision (of men)* as well as: 'It belongs not to any mortal that God should speak to him, except

by inspiration, or from behind a veil' (Sūra 42:51/50).²² On the other hand, Gabriel appeared to Muḥammad twice in his (true) form²³. . . .

The proponents of this view say that the meaning of (the word) 'reaching' (*idrāk*) in this passage is 'seeing' (*ru'ya*), and they deny that God can be seen by the vision (of men) in this world or in the hereafter. They interpret God's words: 'Upon that day there will be radiant faces, gazing (*nāziratun*) upon their Lord' in the sense that they hope for (*intazara*)²⁴ God's goodness and reward.

(Aṭ-Ṭabarī concludes that) some exegetes place a false interpretation on the statements which are related here from the Messenger of God, by reinterpreting the statement that the inhabitants of paradise will see their Lord on the day of resurrection. Other exegetes (simply) reject such statements of the Messenger of God, disputing them on (the basis of) their reason ('*aql*'). They maintain that (reason) eliminates the possibility that one could see God with the vision, and they put forward all sorts of falsifications, using various derivations of many words. The most important argument by which they, so they say, know about the correctness of this assertion of theirs is the following: They find that their vision can see only something that is removed from them spatially and not something that has direct contact with it, for the vision cannot see anything that has direct contact with it. Thus, so they say, whatever is removed spatially from one's vision belongs to the category of things that can be seen with one's own eyes, since empty spaces and a gap lie between the object and the eyes. Now, so they continue, if the vision should see their Lord on the day of resurrection in the same manner as it sees shapes today, then the Creator would have to be (spatially) limited (*mahdūd*). But, so they say, whoever ascribes this characteristic to (God), (thereby) ascribes to him the characteristic of corporeality, which also includes increase and decrease (which is absurd).

They say that the ability to 'reach' (*adraka*) colours is given to the vision just as (the ability to reach) tones is given to hearing and (the ability to reach) smells is given to the respiratory organ. Then they continue that in the same manner as it is invalid for the hearing to give an opinion without reaching the tones and for the respiratory organ (to give an opinion) without reaching smells, so also is it invalid for the vision to give an opinion without reaching colours. They maintain that in the same way as it is impossible to characterize

God as possessing colour, it is (also) correct to say that it is impossible to characterize him as something visible.

(Still) other exegetes maintain that the verse under discussion has the meaning: The vision of (God's) creatures cannot reach him in this world but can in the hereafter. The proponents of this view say that the (word) 'reaching' (*idrāk*) in this place means 'seeing' (*ru'ya*). As a basis for their view they cite the following: Although the (word) 'reaching' has in some contexts another meaning than the (word) 'seeing', 'to see' is still one of its meanings. Thus it is impossible for the vision of men to see and contact something without this (object) being reached when it is observed and viewed, even when it is not apprehended as something seen in all its parts. Therefore, so they continue, if someone sees something he has looked at, then this means that he has reached it, that is, except for what he did not see. They say that God has proclaimed that on the day of resurrection there will be faces which will look upon him. Now according to their view, it is absurd (to conclude) that the faces should look upon him without reaching him as something that is visible. They say that because of this and because it is impossible that one could find any contradiction or disagreement in what God proclaims, then it is necessary and correct that God's words 'the vision (of men) reaches Him not' be interpreted in a special and not general sense, and mean: The vision (of men) does not reach him in this world, but he reaches the vision (of men) in this world and in the hereafter. That is, with his words: 'Upon that day there will be radiant faces, gazing upon their Lord' (Sūra 75:22f.), God has made an exception, so that (seeing God in this world) is excluded.

Other proponents of this point of view maintain that the verse under discussion is meant in a special sense, but that it may be possible that it has the following meaning: The vision of the evildoer does not reach him in this world or in the hereafter, while the vision of the believers and those who trust in God does reach him. They say (further) that the verse may possibly have the meaning: The vision does not reach him until the end and until (there is complete) comprehension (*iḥāṭa*), and indeed until (there is actual) vision. (Further) according to their view, the verse could mean that the vision (of men) does not reach him in this world, but indeed in the hereafter. (Also) the verse could have the meaning: The vision of the one who sees him does not reach him in the (same) way that the

Eternal one reaches the vision of his creatures. The one (i.e., God) who has excluded (the possibility) that the vision of his creatures may reach him is the one who has acknowledged this himself, since their vision is weak and can penetrate only that to which their God has given the power. On the other hand, they stand there completely open before his vision, and to his vision nothing of them remains hidden. There is no doubt, so they maintain, that God's words: 'the vision (of men) reaches Him not' are meant in a special sense, and that those who trust in God will reach him with their vision on the day of resurrection. Only we do not know which of the four special meanings (which have been mentioned) is intended in the verse (under discussion). As an argument for the truth of the assertion that God will be seen in the hereafter they cite reasons corresponding to those mentioned above.

(Still) other exegetes maintain that the verse is meant in the general sense and that no-one's vision will reach God in this world or in the hereafter. Rather God will create a sixth sense for his companions on the day of resurrection, which will be different from their five senses. With this they will see God. As a basis for this view, they cite the following: God has excluded (the possibility) that the vision of men should reach him except that in this or one other verse an indication is given that this is meant in a special sense. The same God has, so they say, proclaimed in another verse that on the day of resurrection there will be faces which will look upon him. Now, so they continue, since the proclamations of God do not annul each other reciprocally and cannot contradict each other, then the meanings of both proclamations are correct just as revelation brought them down. (Also) they present an argument based on reason (*'aql*) in that they say: If it is possible for us to see him in the hereafter with our vision, then, under the assumption that (at that time) this (same vision) will be increased, we must also be able to see him in this world, although the power of sight is weak. For all of the senses were created for the (purpose of) 'reaching' (*idrāk*) specific sense-objects (*ma'ān*, sing. *ma'nā*). Even if it is weak, in spite of its weakness it reaches what it is intended to reach according to its specific purpose—that is, as long as it does not cease to exist. They say (further): Were it ascribed to the vision that it reaches its creator and sees him in a certain situation and time, it must (also) reach and see him in this world, although it would reach him only weakly. They continue: Accordingly, if there were

nothing of that kind for our vision in this world, there could be nothing of that kind in the hereafter, because (our vision) is created as it is in this world so that it can reach only what is to be reached in this world. Thus, this is now the case, they say, and God has proclaimed that in the hereafter there will be faces which look upon him, (although) one knows that they will see him with another sense than the sense of sight, since what God proclaims can be nothing other than true.

(Aṭ-Ṭabarī concludes:) What is correct concerning this, in our opinion, is what the accounts of the Prophet often bear witness to, namely that he said: 'You will see your Lord on the day of resurrection, as one sees the moon on a full-moon night and the sun when it is not obscured by a cloud.' Thus, the believers will see him, while the unbelievers will be veiled from him on that day, for God says: 'No, indeed! Upon that day they shall be veiled from their Lord, then they shall roast in hell!' (Sūra 83:15-16)²⁵. . . .

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 75:22-25

*Upon that day there will be radiant faces,
gazing upon their Lord.
And upon that day faces shall be scowling;
thou mightest think that upon them is about to
be inflicted some back-breaking calamity.*

The reference here to the face is a (metaphorical) expression for the entire man. With the (expression) radiant (faces) one thinks of rays of happiness.

*Gazing upon their Lord (ilā rabbihā nāzīratun):*²⁶ They finally look upon their Lord and upon nothing else. This is the sense of the object (being placed) in front (of the subject in Arabic). . . . It is (however) certain that the people will look upon boundless and numberless things in the gathering (on judgment day) during which all creatures will meet. The believers will gaze especially fully on that day, since they will feel confident and will not be living in fear and sorrow. It would be absurd (to think) that God would confine the gazing of the believers to himself alone, since this would mean that he would be something on which one could gaze (in the literal sense). Thus, one must comprehend this gazing in the sense in which the limitation (of the one looking) is properly taken into

consideration. This proper perspective is achieved when one sees the gazing in connection with the following saying of men: 'I gaze (in my thoughts) on this and that, which he will perhaps do to me.' Here one means (not literal sight, but) expecting and hoping. Such a meaning is in the words (of the poet):

*And since I look on you as a king
whom the sea (of generosity) never fills up,
grant to me further favours.*

One has heard how a woman of the Sarw in Mecca asked for a gift at noon, when the people closed their doors and proceeded to their places of rest, saying: 'My eyes gaze a little on God and on you.' Such is the meaning (of the verse under discussion): They will (on that day) await the generosity and favour exclusively from their Lord, just as they have placed their fear and hope only on him in this world. . . .

Thou mightest think: you might expect that upon them is about to be inflicted something violent and dreadful like a back-breaking calamity (*fāqira*),²⁷ that is, like a sickness which shatters the spine, just as the radiant faces expect that to them will occur every kind of good.

VI

ANGELS, SPIRITS, AND MANKIND

1. The angels

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 40:7

Those who bear the Throne and those who surround it proclaim the praise of their Lord, and believe in Him, and they ask forgiveness for those who believe: 'Our Lord, Thou embracest everything in mercy and knowledge; therefore, forgive those who have repented and follow Thy way, and guard them against the chastisement of hell.'

It is related that the feet of those (angels) who bear the Throne¹ are in the underworld, while their heads tower above the Throne; yet, they are humble and do not look up. From the Prophet (is related the following): Think not of the greatness of our Lord, but of the angels whom he created! One of the angels named Isrāfīl² has one of the corners of the Throne on his shoulders while his feet are in the underworld and his head extends through the seven heavens; yet, in relation to the greatness of God, he is as small as a little bird (*waṣ'*).

In the Tradition (*ḥadīth*) it is reported (furthermore) that God has commanded all the angels to offer salutations to the bearers of the Throne in the morning and evening in order to distinguish them from the rest of the angels. Others say that God created the Throne out of a green gem and that (it is so large that) in order to fly back and forth between its two posts requires eighty thousand years for fast birds. (Still) others say that around the Throne are seventy thousand rows of angels who circle around it while praising and glorifying (God). Behind them are seventy thousand rows (of angels) who have placed their hands on their shoulders and lift their voices with praise and glory (to God). Behind them are

(another) seventy thousand rows (of angels) who have their right hands placed on their left (hands) and glorify (God) in a different manner at any given time. . . .

One may now ask: What is the use of the words *and (they) believe in Him*, since no-one is prevented from knowing that the bearers of the Throne and the angels who surround the Throne while singing praises to their Lord are believing ones? To this I answer: These words should clearly inspire the high position and superiority of faith. Thus in other passages of his Book, God presents the prophets as upright on account of (their) faith; and thus he adds to the good deeds (which are enumerated in Sūra 90 in the portrayal of the 'steep path') the following words: 'Then that he (also) became of those who believe and counsel each other to be steadfast' (Sūra 90:17). In this God shows clearly the superiority of faith.

The words *and (they) believe in Him* also provide the following information: If what the anthropomorphists (*al-mujassima*) assert were correct, then *those who bear the Throne and those (angels) who surround it* would see and perceive God with their own eyes. In that case, however, they could not have been characterized as believing, since only one who is not present (directly with the object of faith) can be characterized as believing. Now, since the angels are characterized in a commendable manner as believing, one may know that their faith and the faith of those who are on the earth, as well as the faith of every being who is not present at that place, are similar in this respect. For the faith of all arises exclusively through reflection (*nazar*) and deduction (*istidlāl*),³ and there is no other path to knowledge of God. Further (one may know) that one must not ascribe to God any characteristics of the body.

Also, in the words *and (they) believe in Him* and the words *and they ask forgiveness for those who believe*, a mutual relationship (*tanāsub*) is established (between the angels and the other believers). It is the same as if it were said: 'And they believe and ask forgiveness for those who are like them regarding circumstance and condition.' Herein lies instruction concerning the fact that it is the partnership in faith which on most occasions must lead to friendly advice and, sooner than anything else, to sincere sympathy, even though there may be a distinction between the kinds (*ajnās*) (of believers) based on origin, and also their places of residence may be far removed from one another. Between angels and men, the celestial and terrestrial, there never existed any relationship of nature

(*tajānus*).⁴ Yet, after the uniting bond of faith came into being, there has existed with it a general relationship of kind and a real mutual relationship, so that those (angels) who surround the Throne ask forgiveness for those (believers) on earth. . . .

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 53:4–10

*This⁵ is naught but a revelation revealed,
taught him⁶ by one terrible in power,
one very strong; he stood poised,
on the highest (point of the) horizon.
Then he drew near and hung suspended,
two bows'-length away or nearer;
then he revealed to his servant what he revealed.*

By one terrible in power: . . . that is, Gabriel.⁷ It conforms to his power that he snatched up the villages of Lot's people⁸ out of the black water and, carrying them on his wings, raised them up to heaven and then hurled them down again (to the earth). He burst forth with a loud cry against the people (of the tribe of) Thamūd, so that they fell to the ground. Whenever he came down to the prophets and ascended again, this lasted for (only) an instant at the most. (Once) he saw Iblīs⁹ on a steep path in the Holy Land speaking with Jesus and knocked against Iblīs with his wings and flung him onto the most distant mountain of India.

One very strong (dhū mirratin): who is endowed with right judgment in his understanding and opinion and is steadfast in his religion.

He stood poised (fa-stawā): He stood there erect in his true form rather than in the form that he used to assume (at other times) when he came down with the revelation, when he appeared in the form of Dihya (ibn Khalifa al-Kalbī). The Messenger of God wanted to see him in the form in which he was created; so he stood there upright before him *on the highest (point of the) horizon*, that is, the horizon of the sun, and filled out the horizon. Some say that the only one of the prophets who saw Gabriel in his true form was Muḥammad, who saw him thus twice,¹⁰ once on earth and the other time in heaven.

Then he drew near to the Messenger of God and hung suspended (fa-tadallā): and hung over him in the air. . . .

2. The disobedience of Iblīs¹¹

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 38:71–76/77

When the Lord said to the angels: 'See, I am creating a mortal out of clay.

When I have shaped him and breathed My spirit into him, fall down, bowing before him.'

*Then the angels bowed themselves all together,
except Iblīs; he waxed proud and was one of the unbelievers.
God¹² said: 'Iblīs, what prevented thee from bowing thyself
before what I created with My own hands? Hast thou waxed
proud, or art thou of the lofty ones?'*

*He answered: 'I am better than he; thou createdst me of fire,
and him Thou createdst of clay.'*

. . . If one asks what the meaning is of God's words: *what I created with My own hands*, then I answer: We have already demonstrated earlier that one endowed with hands performs most of his acts with his hands. Therefore, action with the hands predominates over against other actions that one performs with something else. Thus one can say of the deed of the heart (which God has just as little as hands): 'It belongs to what your hands perform'; and one can say to one who has no hands (but is responsible for his misfortune): 'Your hands have tied up (the tube) and your mouth has blown.' Thus, there is no distinction between the two expressions 'that is something that you have done' and 'that is something that your hands have done'. The same is true of the two statements of God: 'what We created for them of what Our hands made' (Sūra 36:71) and 'what I created with My own hands'.

One may ask (further): What is the meaning of God's words: *What prevented thee from bowing thyself before what I created with My own hands?* To this I answer: The reason why Iblīs detested and scorned bowing down before Adam is that this would be prostration before something created; thus, he held back arrogantly and was too proud to bow down before another being besides the Creator. Add to this that Adam was created out of clay whereas Iblīs was created out of fire¹³ and that Iblīs believed that fire was superior to clay. Thus, it was on the basis of his higher rank that he was too proud to bow himself before this creature. In this Iblīs did not take into consideration the following: God gave the com-

mand to bow down (before Adam) to those among his servants who are dearest to him and closest to him in favour, namely the angels.¹⁴ These, rather than all others, would have been entitled to be too proud to humble themselves before the small man and to scorn bowing down before him. But they did not do so; on the contrary, they followed God's command and kept it in mind, while disregarding the distance between those who bowed down and the one before whom they bowed. For they wished to esteem the words of their Lord and honour his command. Thus, it would be proper for Iblīs, whose position is lower than that of the angels, to emulate and follow them. He should have known that, by bowing down before a lower being at the command of God, the angels devoted themselves more strongly to the service of God than if they had bowed down before God himself. This meant laying aside their pride and humiliation. For this reason Iblīs was asked: 'What prevented thee from bowing thyself before what I created with My own hands?' That is, what prevented you from bowing yourself before him who you say is a creature whom I have created with my own hands—and he is indeed a creature (of God)—if you wanted to submit yourself to my command and wished to honour my words as the angels did?

Iblīs is told that he refused to bow himself, and, at the same time, the reason through which he was led astray is mentioned. Thus he is asked: Why have you failed to bow yourself while putting forward this reason, when God has commanded you to do this? What is meant is: You had the command of God and should not take this reason into consideration. An example (*mithāl*) for this is the following: A king commanded his vizier to go in search of one of the lowest servants; but the vizier refused, citing the low rank of this (servant). Then the king said to the vizier: 'What prevents you from humbling yourself before someone whose low rank is not hidden from me?' What is meant is: Will you respect my command and my words and disregard consideration for his low rank! Accordingly, the words of God (under discussion) mean the following: I have created this creature with my own hands and thus have complete knowledge concerning his state. In spite of this, I have commanded the angels, on the basis of a wise reason which prompted me to do this, to bow themselves before him. Through this (action) Adam was supposed to receive the gift of a high token of esteem, while the angels were to be subjected to a test. But who are you

that something which has not dissuaded me from (giving) such a command dissuades you from bowing yourself before him?

(Still) others say that (the words) 'what I have created with My own hands' mean: what I have created without anything interceding. . . .

3. The jinn¹⁵

Baiḍāwī on Sūra 72:1f.

Say: 'It has been revealed to me that (as a portion of the Qur'ān was being revealed to me) a company of the jinn gave ear; then they said: "We have indeed heard a Qur'ān wonderful, guiding to rectitude. We believe in it, and we will not associate with our Lord anyone!"'

. . . *That a company (nafar) of jinn gave ear:* (The word) *nafar* indicates (a number) between three and ten. The jinn are reason-endowed, invisible bodies in which the nature of fire or air predominates. Others say that they are a kind of pure spirit (*arwāḥ muḥarrada*). (Still) others say that they are human souls who have left their bodies. This shows why the Prophet did not see them and (thus also) could not expound (the Qur'ān) especially for them. Rather (what occurred was that) they happened to be present once when (Muḥammad was) reciting and they heard him. (Here) God informs his Messenger of this. . . .

4. Man and jinn

Baiḍāwī on Sūra 15:26f.

We created man out of clay (formed) from mud moulded (into shape); and the jinn We created before out of fire flaming.

We created man out of clay (ṣalṣāl): out of dried clay that rings (*yūṣalṣilu*, perfect form: *ṣalṣala*), that is, rings (*yaṣawwitu*) when one strikes it. . . .

(Formed) from mud: from clay that was transformed and became black because it lay near water for a long time. . . .

Moulded (masnūn): formed (out of mud) . . . or out of something

that is moulded in order to dry and take shape, like the loosened materials that one pours into moulding castings. . . . It is thus as if God poured mud (into a mould) and from this shaped the statue (*timthāl*) of a hollow man, which then was dried until it rang when struck. Then God continued to transform it until finally he had made it completely proportionate and could breathe into it some of his spirit (*rūh*). . . .

And the jinn (jānn): the father of the jinn.¹⁶ Some say (that the term *jānn* here refers to) Iblīs. However, the (entire) race of jinn may be meant as is evidently the case with (the term) man (*insān*) (in the preceding verse). Since the expansion of the race proceeded from a single individual who was created out of a single substance, then the entire race is also created out of it. . . .

We created before: before the creation of man.

Out of fire flaming (nār as-samūm): out of the fire of intense heat which penetrates the pores of the skin (*masāmm*). The creation of life in simple bodies (*ajrām basīta*)¹⁷ is just as much possible as his creation into pure substances (*jawāhir mujarrada*), to say nothing of (the creation of life in) those compound bodies (*ajṣād mu'allafa*) in which the fiery element (*juz' nārī*) predominates. These bodies (because of their warmth) are more suited for the reception of life than those in which the earthen element (*juz' arḍī*) predominates. God's expression 'out of fire' indicates that (element) which predominates in the body. This is also the significance of his words: 'He created you out of earth' (Sūra 35:11/12). Just as this verse provides evidence of the completeness of God's omnipotence and the explanation of the origin of the creation of man and the jinn, so also it provides evidence concerning the second assumption on which the possibility of the gathering (of the dead on the day of resurrection) rests, namely, that the material could be joined together and caused to revive.

5. The temptation of Adam and Eve

Baidāwī on Sūra 7:19f./18f.

(God said:) 'O Adam, inherit, thou and thy wife, the garden, and eat thereof where you will, but come not near this tree, lest you be of the evildoers.'

Then Satan whispered (*waswasa*) to them in order to reveal to

them what was hidden from them of their shameful parts. He said: 'Your Lord has only prohibited you from this tree lest you become angels, or lest you become immortals.'

. . . *In order (li-) to reveal to them*: in order to disclose to them. (The conjunction) *li-* has a consecutive meaning; or, it has a final meaning, because in his insinuation (*waswasa*) (Satan) also had the intention to do something wicked to them by disclosing their nakedness. It is for this reason that he speaks of their shameful parts. There is here an indication that it is unnatural to appear naked and that this is something detestable and objectionable even when one is alone or before one's marriage partner, unless there is a need for it.

*What was hidden from them of their shameful parts (saw'āt)*¹⁸: what remained concealed to them concerning their nakedness. Neither of them yet perceived it in himself or in his partner. . . .

He said: Your Lord has only prohibited you from this tree lest you become: only because he did not permit you to become *angels, or lest you become immortals*: beings who do not die or who live forever in paradise. Some have concluded from this that the angels have a higher rank than the prophets.¹⁹ However, against this is the following: It is certain that the realities cannot be reversed. Adam and Eve simply had the wish to obtain the same natural perfection as the angels so that (like them) they would be able to do without food and drink. There is no evidence here for the absolute superiority of the angels.

VII

ESCHATOLOGY

1. *The moment of the Last Judgment*

Baiḍāwī on Sūra 7:187/186f.

They will question thee concerning the Hour, when it shall berth. Say: 'The knowledge of it is only with my Lord; none shall reveal it at its proper time, but He. Heavy is it in the heavens and the earth; it will not come on you but—suddenly!' They will question thee, as though thou art well-informed of it. Say: 'The knowledge of it is only with God; but most men know not.'

They will question thee concerning the Hour: concerning the resurrection. (The word) 'the Hour' (*as-sā'a*) occurs frequently as a designation (of the resurrection), and it is employed for this because the resurrection takes place suddenly, or because the settling of accounts, which follows it, proceeds quickly, or because the resurrection is like an hour to God regardless of its actual duration. . . .

Say: The knowledge of it is only with my Lord: He has reserved the knowledge of it for himself alone and discloses it neither to an angel who stands near,¹ nor to a prophet whom he has sent.

None shall reveal it at its proper time: No-one shall disclose it and its time *but He*. By this is meant that it remains hidden to everyone except him until it takes place. . . .

Heavy is it in the heavens and the earth: It distresses intensely through the fear which people have concerning it—all of whom are perplexed, including both the angels and the jinn and men (*thaqalām*). This is, as it were, an indication of the wisdom (of God) in concealing it.

It will not come on you but—suddenly!: (It will come) unexpectedly and surprisingly, as the Prophet has said: 'Surely the Hour will startle mankind—one man will be digging his well, another will be

watering his animals, another will be spreading out his goods at the market, and another will be adjusting his scales up and down.'

They will question thee, as though thou art well-informed of it (*ḥaḥfiyyun 'anhā*): as though you knew it. (The word *ḥaḥfī*) is the *fa'īl* form from (*ḥaḥfiya*, as in the expression) *ḥaḥfiya 'ani sh-shai'i* ('he gets sore feet from something'), (which one says) when someone inquires earnestly about something. That is, when someone investigates and inquires into something intensely, then he obtains a thorough knowledge of it. . . . It is said that *'anhā* (regarding it) is linked with *yas'alūnaka* (they will question you); (also) it is said that *ḥaḥfī* means *ḥaḥfāwa* (good). The Quraish are reported to have said to the Prophet: 'We are, after all, related to each other; therefore, tell us when the Hour will come!' In this case, the meaning (of the sentence) would be as follows: 'They question you regarding it, as though you were a good person who had shown himself to be affectionate (*taḥaffā*) to them, and who would disclose the knowledge of the moment of the Hour to them alone as relatives.' Others say the meaning may be: 'as though you would be pleased by the question', that is, 'as though you would like it'. (The word *ḥaḥfī*) would then be derived from (*ḥaḥfiya* as in the expression) *ḥaḥfiya bi-sh-shai'i* ('he welcomes something'), (which one says) when someone is pleased. (In this case) it would mean that you (actually) detest the question, since the moment of the Hour is among those things which God has reserved to himself alone in his hidden knowledge. . . .

But most men know not: that knowledge regarding the Hour lies with God (alone), and that he has conveyed it to none of his creatures.

2. *The situation in the grave*

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 40:11

They² shall say: 'Our Lord, Thou hast caused us to die two deaths and twice Thou hast caused us to live; now we confess our sins. Is there any way to go forth?'

. . . In saying that he causes men to die two deaths, God means that he created them as if dead at the beginning (before birth) and that he causes them to die when their appointed times have come.

In saying that he causes men to live twice, he means the first act of bringing to life (at birth) and the bringing back to life at the resurrection. Support for this interpretation is found above all in God's saying: 'How do you disbelieve in God, seeing you were dead and He gave you life, then He shall make you dead, then He shall give you life, then unto Him you shall be returned?' (Sūra 2:28/26). . . .

Anyone who holds that the two deaths refer (here) to the death that follows the life of this world and the death that follows the life in the grave,³ must accept (all together) three acts of bringing to life, and this contradicts what is stated in the Qur'an. He can then at best seek support (for his view that there is life in the grave) by considering one of the (three) acts of bringing to life as not being included in the reckoning, or, on the other hand, by asserting that God brings the dead to life in the grave and that thereafter they will not die again. In this case he would consider them to be among those whom God calls forth with the blast of the trumpet, as he has said: 'For the trumpet shall be blown, and whoever is in the heavens and whoever is in the earth shall swoon, except those whom God wills. Then it shall be blown again, and lo, they shall stand, beholding' (Sūra 39:68).

One may now ask how this (that is, the statement: 'Thou hast caused us to die two deaths and twice Thou hast caused us to live') leads to the further statement in God's saying: 'Now we confess our sins.' To this I answer that they had disavowed the resurrection and were unbelievers; then, countless sins followed upon this, because one who does not fear the results (of his actions) transgresses excessively. Then, when they perceived that the act of causing death and the act of bringing to life are brought about again and again, then they knew that through his power (*qudra*) God is able to cause (man) to be brought back to life as a (new) creation. Thus, they (now) become well aware of the sin they had committed when they disavowed the resurrection, and also their subsequent transgression. . . .

3. The resurrection and judgment

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 36:81

Is not He, who created the heavens and earth, able to create the like of them? Yes indeed; He is the All-creator, the All-knowing.

. . . God's saying *able to create the like of them* can have two meanings: He creates something which in its insignificance and contemptuousness resembles men, when they did not exist in the heavens and the earth; or, he causes men to be brought back to life, since this reappearance is indeed similar to the original creation, although not identical with it⁴. . . .

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 41:19/18–21/20

*Upon the day when God's enemies are mustered to the fire,
held in order,
till when they are come to it, their hearing, their eyes and their
skins bear witness against them concerning what they have been
doing,
and they will say to their skins⁵: 'Why have you borne witness
against us?' They shall say: 'God gave us speech, as He gave
everything speech. He created you the first time, and unto Him
you shall be returned.'*

. . . *God's enemies*: the unbelievers among those who come first and those who come last.

Held in order: that is, those who come first will be held back until the last arrive. Those who are at the head will be stopped until those who follow later have closed ranks with them. What is involved in this expression is a large number of inhabitants of hell-fire. We implore God to protect us from it through his far-reaching compassion. . . .

Then, if one asks how their organs can bear witness against them and how they are able to speak, I answer: God will grant to them the ability to speak as he did to the bush (which spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai)⁶ in that he created in it the ability to speak. Some say that the expression 'skins' may refer to the limbs. Others assert that it is an allusion to the female genitals.

By *everything* God means everything among living creatures, just as his saying: 'Truly, God is powerful over everything' (Sūra 2:20/19 and often) means everything which can be subjugated to his power. The meaning is this: In view of his power, there is no cause for surprise that we (the skins) have the ability to speak, for he certainly has the power to grant this ability to every living creature, just as, in the first place, he caused you to be created and

to grow up, and he caused you to come back to life and to be brought to his judgment.

The men say to their skins: *Why have you borne witness against us because their witness distresses them, and because the degradation through the speech of their own limbs appears intolerable to them.*

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 101:1–11/8

The pounder (al-qāri'a)!⁷

What is the pounder?

And what shall teach thee what the pounder is?

*The day that men shall be like scattered moths,
and the mountains shall be like plucked wool ('ihn).*

*Then he whose deeds weigh heavy in the balance (mawāzīn)
shall inherit a pleasing life (in paradise).*

*But he whose deeds weight light in the balance,
his mother shall be (the) abyss (hāwiya).*

And what shall teach thee what the abyss is?

(It is) a blazing fire!

... *The day that men shall be like scattered moths:* God likens men to moths on the basis of their number, diffusion, weakness, and lowliness, and (also) in that they fly in every direction from which they will be called, just as the moths fly to the fire. (The poet) Jarīr said (concerning his poetic adversary al-Farazdaq):

Al-Farazdaq and his people are, as far as I know, like moths, who conceal the fire of the glowing firebrand.

Among the similes (of the Arabs) are the following: (He is) weaker than a moth, lower than a moth, more ignorant than a moth. ...

God likens the mountains to *'ihn*, that is, dyed wool (*ṣūf*), because they will be colourful, and to dishevelled wool (*manfūsh*) because they will be split into pieces. ...

(The word) *mawāzīn* is either the plural of *mauzūn*, which denotes an action endowed with weight and importance before God, or the plural of *mizān* (scales, a balance). The heaviness of the scales means that they sink down. To this refers the Tradition that Abū Bakr told to 'Umar in his will: The balance of those who on the day of resurrection will have a heavy scale will be so because these men have followed the truth (*ḥaqq*) and had heavy scales in

this world. It is true (*ḥaqq*) that a scale in which only good words are placed is heavy. On the other hand, the balances which have light scales (on the day of resurrection) are light because these men followed futility and had light scales in this world. It is (likewise) true that a scale in which only evil deeds are placed remains light.

His mother shall be (the) abyss (fa-ummuhū hāwiyatun): (This expression) is related to what one says of someone whose destruction one wishes: 'May his mother perish!' If a man perishes, that is, suffers a downfall and is destroyed, then his mother also will perish as a result of grief at his loss. (The poet Ka'b ibn Sa'd al-Ghanawī) said:

May his mother perish!

What will the morning conjure up at its daybreak?

And what will the night bring back when it returns?

Thus it is said likewise (here in the Qur'ān): 'But he whose deeds weigh light in the balance, he has already perished.' Others say that *hāwiya* is one of the designations for hell-fire⁸ and that it is thus the deep fire, since the inhabitants of hell-fire fall down deep (*hawā*) into it. Thus (the saying) has been handed down that one will fall down seventy autumns deep. It means then: His dwelling-place (*ma'wā*) is the fire. Some speak of the dwelling-place as 'mother' metaphorically because she is a lodging and resting place for the child. According to Qatāda, (the phrase) *fa-ummuhū hāwiyatun* means: With him the 'mother of the head' (that is, the skull) is hurled down to the bottom of hell. That is, he will be thrown into it head first.

From the Messenger of God (the following is related): Whoever recites the sūra (called) 'The Pounder', to him God will make the scales heavy on the day of resurrection.

Baidāwī on Sūra 99:6–8

On that day men shall issue forth separately to be shown their works,

*and whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall see it,
and whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it.*

On that day men shall issue forth out of the exits of their graves to the place (of judgment).

Separately: divided up (into various groups) according to their standing.

To be shown (li-yurau) their works: (to be shown) the rewards for their works. Others read: 'in order to see' (*li-yarau*).

And whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall see it (yarahū), and whoever had done an atom's weight of evil shall see it (yarahū): (Here the statement is) divided in order to clarify (its contents). Thus others read: 'he will be shown it' (*yarahū*). Perhaps the good deed of the unbeliever and the evil deed of him who keeps away from major sins⁹ will bring about some lessening of punishment and reward. However, others say that the verse is to be interpreted with the understanding that there will be no cancellation (of good deeds) and no forgiveness (for evil deeds). Or, the first 'and whoever' may refer exclusively to the blessed, and the second to the damned, because previously it is said that they will come forth separately (in various groups). . . .

From the Prophet (the following is related): Whoever recites four times (the sūra beginning with the words) 'When the earth is shaken with a mighty shaking' will be rewarded just as much as one who recites the entire Qur'ān.

Zamakhsharī on the same passage

. . . One may now say: The good deeds of the unbeliever are devalued through his unbelief, while the evil deeds of the believer are forgiven if he has kept away from the major sins. What then is the meaning of the recompense according to the atom's weight of good and evil? To this I answer: (The passage) *whoever has done an atom's weight of good* refers to the group of the blessed, and (the passage) *whoever has done an atom's weight of evil* refers to the group of the damned. . . .

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 56:4–14

*When the earth is shaken
and the mountains are crumbled
and become dust scattered,
and you are three groups:*

Those on the right side, who are they?

Those on the left side, who are they?

Those who go before are (indeed) those who go before.

They are the ones who stand near (God),

*in the gardens of delight—
a throng (thulla) from former generations,
but (only) a few from the later ones.*

. . . *Those on the right side:* those who show their right sides. *Those on the left side:* those who show their left sides. Or, it may concern those of high rank and those of low rank, as one says: 'So and so is to the right and so and so is to the left of me', when one wishes to designate those who are higher and those who are lower in rank. The right side constitutes a good sign and the left side constitutes a bad sign. . . . Others say that those on the right and those on the left are those who experience happiness and unhappiness, since the blessed ones are happy with themselves because of their obedience, while the damned are unhappy with themselves because of their disobedience. (Still) others say that the inhabitants of paradise come to stand on the right and those of hell-fire come to stand on the left.

Those who go before (as-sābiqun): those with pious hearts, who arrived there first (*sabaqū*), for God summoned them, and who were not to be surpassed in striving according to God's pleasure. Some say that there are three classes of men: (1) the one who entered into good very early at a youthful age and remained in it until he left this world. This is the one who goes on before and stands near (God). (2) The one who came into sin early in his life and was remiss for a long time, but then turned in repentance (to God). This is the one on the right side. (3) The one who entered into evil very early at a youthful age and who thereafter was unable to keep away from it until he left this world. This is the one on the left side.

(The questions) *Who are those on the right side?* and *Who are those on the left side?* should awaken curious wonder concerning the condition of the two groups in happiness and unhappiness. The meaning is: What kind of people are they?

(The statement) *Those who go before are (indeed) those who go before* means: Those who go before are the ones whose condition you know and concerning whose peculiarity you have informed. The Prophet said: "Abd Allāh is (indeed) 'Abd Allāh', and Abū n-Najm said: 'My poetry is (indeed) my poetry.' Thereby he would, as it were, say: My poetry is that of which you already have knowledge and of whose purity of language (*faṣāḥa*) and aptness you have already heard. . . .

The ones who stand near (God) (al-muqarrabūn) in the gardens of delight: whose stairs in paradise¹⁰ stand near the Throne (of God)

and whose positions are high. Others read: in the garden of delight.

(The word) *thulla* designates a numerous community (*umma*). . . . What is meant is: Those who go before among the former generations are numerous. These are the communities from Adam to Muḥammad.

But (only) a few from the later (generations): thus referring to the community of Muḥammad. Others say that the former generations and the later ones refer to the older and younger members of this community. From the Prophet (the following is related): 'Both groups belong to my community.'

One may now ask: How can God say: 'But (only) a few from the later (generations)' and then say: 'And a throng of the later (generations)' (verse 40/39 of the same sūra)? To this I answer: The first refers to 'those who go before' (*as-sābiqūn*) and the last refers to 'those on the right side'. The latter increase not only through the former generations but also through the later ones.

One can say (further): It is related that the Muslims were severely persecuted when this verse came down, and that, for this reason, the Messenger of God conferred again and again with his Lord until (the following came down): 'A throng from former generations, and (also) a throng from the later ones' (verses 39f./38f. of the same sūra). To this I answer: This is not feasible for two reasons: first, because the passage under discussion (in v. 10) refers clearly to 'those who go before', while the second verse (40/39) refers to 'those on the right side' . . . ; and second, because abrogation is possible (to be sure, in the case of commands, but) not with information (which is reported).¹¹ According to al-Ḥasan (al-Baṣrī) 'those who go before' are as numerous in the (former) communities as in ours; and, at the same time, those who remain behind are (also) as numerous as in our community. . . .

4. Paradise and hell

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 47:15/16f.

This is what 'the garden' (of paradise) (al-janna), which the godfearing have been promised, is like: therein are rivers of water not going stale, rivers of milk not changing in flavour, and rivers of wine, a delight to the drinkers; rivers, too, of honey purified. And therein are for them¹² every fruit and forgiveness from their

Lord. Are they, as he who dwells forever in the fire, such as are given to drink boiling water that tears their bowels asunder?

. . . *Rivers of milk not changing in flavour*: as is the case with milk in this world. It is neither bitter nor sour nor in any way disagreeable as food.

A delight: . . . What is meant is that the wine is a pure pleasure which is accompanied by neither loss of consciousness nor crapulence nor headache nor any other ill effect of wine.

Honey purified: which does not come from the bodies of bees and is thus without wax and other things.

Boiling water: Some say that when it comes near them it will scorch their faces and peel off their scalps. When they drink it, it will tear their bowls asunder.

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 11:106f./108f.

As for the wretched, they shall be in the fire, wherein there shall be for them moaning and sighing, therein dwelling forever, so long as the heavens and earth abide, except as thy Lord wills. Surely thy Lord accomplishes what He desires.

. . . *So long as the heavens and earth abide*: For this there are two possible meanings (*wajhān*):

(1) The heavens and the earth of the hereafter (*al-ākhirā*) are meant, since these abide forever and are created for eternity. That the hereafter possesses heavens and earth is shown by the (following) words of God: 'Upon the day the earth shall be changed to other than the earth, and (also) the heavens . . . and thou shalt see the sinner that day coupled in fetters' (Sūra 14:48f./49f.), and: 'Praise belongs to God, who has been true in His promise to us and has bequeathed upon us the earth (of paradise), for us to make our dwelling wherever we will in the garden (of paradise)' (Sūra 39:74). Since it is essential for the inhabitants of the hereafter that something must exist that will bear and shelter them, then either there must be existing a heaven that God has created, or the Throne (of God) must shelter them. Everything that shelters one is (however) a (kind of) heaven.

(2) This is an expression for the affirmation and for the negation of the end. Thus the Arabs say: 'So long as there is a bleat (of an

animal), 'So long as (Mount) Thabīr¹³ exists', 'So long as a star shines', and other similar formulas of affirmation.

One may now ask: Wherein lies the meaning of the exception (which is referred to) in God's words: *except as thy Lord wills?* For it is certain that the 'inhabitants of paradise' (*ahl al-janna*) and those of the hell-fire will remain there forever without exception. To this I answer: The exception refers to the eternal stay in the punishment by the fire and the eternal stay in the blessing of 'the garden' (of paradise) (*al-janna*). The inhabitants of the hell-fire will not always remain only in the punishment of the fire; rather, they will also be punished through severe frost and in other ways, (especially) through a punishment which is stronger than all these kinds, namely, in that God will be angry with them, will reject them, and will regard them as contemptible. At the same time, the 'inhabitants of paradise' (*ahl al-janna*) will have, in addition to 'the garden', something that is more important than this and will affect them more strongly, namely, the satisfaction that God will have (for them). Thus God says: 'God has promised the believers, both men and women, gardens in which rivers flow, forever therein to dwell, and goodly dwelling-places in the gardens of Eden—but even greater, God's good pleasure; that is the mighty triumph' (Sūra 9:72/73). Thus, in addition to the reward of the garden, they also receive yet another benevolent gift of God, the nature of which (certainly) no-one knows but him. This is what is meant by the exception. Evidence for this is (seen in) God's words: 'And as for the blessed, they shall be in the garden (of paradise), therein dwelling forever, so long as the heavens and earth abide, except as thy Lord wills—for a gift unbroken!' (verse 108/110, which follows the passage under discussion).

The meaning of God's words: *Surely thy Lord accomplishes what He desires*, which are a counterpart to the words (just discussed above), is as follows: He allots whatever he wills as punishment to the inhabitants of the hell-fire, just as he grants his gifts unceasingly to the 'inhabitants of paradise' (*ahl al-janna*). One should reflect upon this, since in the Qur'ān one part explains another. One is not to be deceived here by the assertion of the Mujbira¹⁴ (who maintain) that the exception means that the people of grave sins (*ahl al-kabā'ir*) will be brought out of the hell-fire through intercession (*bi-sh-shafā'a*). For the second exception (seen in the statement:

'Surely thy Lord accomplishes what He desires') clearly accuses them of falsehood and proves that they lie.

But what must one think of people who repudiate the Book of God on the basis of a Tradition which has come down to them from a non-expert like 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ? According to this Tradition, a day will come when the gates of hell¹⁵ will be closed and no longer will anyone be inside; and this is to happen after the inhabitants have been there for a very long time. It has come to my attention that those who let themselves be misled by this Tradition and believe that the unbelievers will not remain forever in hell-fire have fallen prey to this error. This and similar (views) are clear deceptions, from which may God preserve us! May God increase to us guidance to the truth, knowledge of his Book, and the admonition to be gained from understanding it! If this Tradition according to ('Abd Allāh) ibn ('Amr) ibn al-'Āṣ is sound, then its meaning can only be that the unbelievers will come out of the heat of the fire (and) into the cold of severe frost. Thus hell would be empty and its gates would be closed. . . .

Ṭabarī on Sūra 23:105/107–108/110

(*God shall say:*) 'What, were My signs not recited to you, and did you not say they were lies?'

They shall say: 'Our Lord, our adversity prevailed over us; we were an erring people.'

Our Lord, bring us forth out of it! Then, if we revert, we shall be evildoers indeed.'

'Away with you into hell,'¹⁶ *He shall say, 'and do not speak to Me.'*

. . . *They shall say: Our Lord, our adversity (shiqwatunā)*¹⁷ *prevailed over us: The Qur'ānic readers disagree concerning the reading of this passage. The majority of the Medinan and Baṣran readers as well as some Kūfans read: ghalabat 'alainā shiqwatunā. . . . On the other hand, the majority of the Kūfan readers read: ghalabat 'alainā shaqāwatunā. . . . Some say correctly that here there are two canonical readings, both of which are read with the same meaning by well-informed readers. Whichever of the two one may read is correct.*

The interpretation of the passage is as follows: They shall say: 'Our Lord, whatever precedes us in your knowledge and whatever is prescribed for us in the *umm al-kitāb*¹⁸ prevailed over us.' The (early) exegetes (also) expressed opinions corresponding to this interpretation. To be cited (as authorities) for this view are (the following):¹⁹

... 'Abd al-Marwazī has related to us ... the following words of Muḥammad ibn Ka'b: To my attention has come, or it has been mentioned to me, that the inhabitants of hell-fire call to the wardens for help (saying): 'Call on your Lord, to lighten for us one day of the chastisement' (Sūra 40:49/52). Then, the wardens refer them to what God has said.²⁰ When they have reached despair, they cry: 'Mālik!' This one (as the angel of hell) is over them and has a seat in the midst of the hell-fire and the embankments down which the punishment angels move along (the damned). From there he oversees the farthest part of the hell-fire just as (well as) the nearest (part). (Thus) they say: 'O Mālik, let thy Lord have done with us' (Sūra 43:77). They beg for death (in order to find release), but after eighty thousand years of the hereafter Mālik gives them ... no answer. Then, he lowers himself to them and says: '(No) surely you will tarry (here)' (Sūra 43:77). When they hear this, they will say: 'Have patience as the people of this world have, in obedience to God; perhaps patience is profitable to us.' ... So they then have patience, and when they have persevered in patience for a long time, they cry: 'For us it is the same whether we cannot endure or whether we are patient; we have no asylum'—that is, no escape (Sūra 14:21/25). Now Iblīs rises up and delivers the following words to them: 'God surely promised you a true promise; and I promised you, then I failed you, for I had no authority over you' (Sūra 14:22/26). When they have understood his words, they will loathe themselves. It is to them that the following will be said: 'Surely God's hatred is greater than your hatred for one another, when you were called to belief but you disbelieved' (Sūra 40:10).

They will say: 'Our Lord, Thou hast caused us to die two deaths, and twice Thou hast caused us to live;²¹ now we confess our sins. Is there any way to go forth (from here and escape the punishment of hell)?' (Sūra 40-11). ... Then God will say to them: 'That is because you disbelieved when God was called upon alone; but if others are associated with Him, then you believe. Judgment belongs

to God, the All-high, the All-great' (Sūra 40:12). ... Then they say: 'We have not yet (completely) given up hope.' ... They call to God another time and say: 'Our Lord, we have (now) seen and heard; return us (again to life) that we may do righteousness, for we have sure faith' (Sūra 32:12). ... To this God answers: 'If We had so willed, We could have given every soul its guidance' (Sūra 32:13), whereby the Lord wishes to say: If I had so willed, I would have rightly guided all men so that none of you would have gone astray. 'But, (God continues) My word is now realized (when I said): "Surely I shall fill Jahannam with jinn and men all together." So now taste (the chastisement of hell, for) you forgot the encounter of this your day!' (Sūra 32:13f.). Thereby God wishes to say: (Now taste the chastisement) for what you have failed to do in anticipation of this day of yours. (God continues:) 'We indeed have forgotten you'—that is, we have forsaken you—'Taste the chastisement of eternity for what you were doing!' (Sūra 32:14). ...

Then they say (again): 'We have not yet (completely) given up hope.' ... And they call (to God) another time (with the words): 'Our Lord, defer us to a shorter term, and we will answer Thy call and follow the messengers' (Sūra 14:44/45). ... To this God will say to them: 'Ah, but did you not swear aforetime that there should be no removing for you? And you dwelt in the dwelling-places of those who wronged themselves. And it became clear to you what We did with them and how We struck examples for you' (Sūra 14:44f./45f.). ... Now they say (yet again): 'We (still) have not yet (completely) given up hope.' And they say again: 'Our Lord, bring us forth (out of hell), and we will do righteousness, other than what we have done' (Sūra 35:37/34). ... To this God says: 'What, did We not give you long life, enough to remember in for him who would remember? To you the warner came; so taste you now! The evil-doers shall have no helper' (Sūra 35:37/34f.). Then God remains silent before them as long as he wills until (finally) he calls to them: *What, were My signs (āyāt) not recited to you (again and again), and (every-time) did you not say they were lies?*

After they have heard this, they will say: 'Now He will have mercy upon us', and they will continue: *Our Lord, our adversity, that is, the Book in which things concerning us are written down, prevailed over us; we were an erring people. (They say further:) Our Lord, bring us forth out of it! Then, if we revert, we shall be*

evildoers indeed. To this God says: *Away with you into hell, and do not speak to Me!* . . . Henceforth they will speak no more in hell, since for them entreaty and hope have ended. Some of them will begin to yelp in the faces of others; then their mouths will be closed. . . .

VIII

DUTIES AND PROHIBITIONS

1. *The grave and the light sins*

Baidāwī on Sūra 4:31/35

If you avoid the grave sins (kabā'ir) which are forbidden to you, We will acquit you of your evil deeds (which are not so grave) and admit you by the gate of honour (into paradise).

. . . There is disagreement concerning the grave sins. Most natural is (the interpretation) that a grave sin is every sin for which the Lawgiver prescribed a specific punishment (*ḥadd*) or pronounced a threat of punishment.¹ Others say that what is meant is that whose inviolability is clearly acknowledged. According to the Prophet there are seven (grave sins): associating (other gods) with God, killing a person (*nafs*) whom God declared inviolable, slandering a blameless woman, consuming the wealth of an orphan, (charging) interest (*ribā*), deserting a cause, and being obstinate towards one's parents. According to Ibn 'Abbās, the number of grave sins lies closer to seven hundred than to seven. (Still) others say that God means here the (various) kinds of association, for his words say: 'God forgives not that anything should be associated with Him; less than that He forgives to whomever He wills' (Sūra 4:48/51 and 4:116).

Some say (further): The insignificance and gravity of sins is in relation to the sins that are above them and the sins that are below them. The gravest sin is associating (other gods with God), and the lightest is that the soul shelters sinful thoughts (*ḥadīth an-nafs*). Between these two (gravest and lightest sins) lie the middle ones of which there are two (kinds, those that are graver and those that are lighter). If two (such kinds) present themselves to someone and his soul draws towards them because he does not have control

over it, and he restrains his soul from the graver of the two, then what he committed will be blotted out (of his record) as a reward for avoiding the graver sin. This is among those matters which vary in different people and situations, for God reproved his Prophet for many of his thoughts which would not count as sin in another and surely would not lead to their punishment. . . .

2. *The motivation behind actions*

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 11:15f./18f.

Whoever desires the present life and its adornment, We will pay them in full for their works therein,² and they shall not be defrauded there.

These are they for whom in the hereafter there is nothing but the fire; there what they have done will have failed, and futile will be what they are doing.

We will pay them in full: We will deliver the reward for their deeds in this world, whole, complete, and without diminution, in that health and sustenance will be bestowed upon them here. Some say that the hypocrites are meant here. When someone praises those who recite the Qur'ān,³ doing so (only) in order that people will say of him: 'So and so recites the Qur'ān', then this is already said (and they have their reward). And when one speaks well of those who do good deeds and give gifts (*ṭaṣaddaqa*) (only) in order that people will speak of it, then people have already spoken of it. And when it is said to one who fights and dies that he should fight so that people will say: 'So and so is brave', then people have already spoken of it.

According to Anas ibn Mālik, the Jews and Christians are meant (here). When they grant a request or do a good deed, they receive the reward for it immediately in the form of ample sustenance and physical health. Others say that those among the 'hypocrites' (*munāfiqūn*) who fought on the side of the Messenger of God are meant (here), for he gave to them their share of the booty. . . .

There what they have done will have failed: What they have done will fail in the hereafter . . . , by which is meant that they will receive (no further) reward, since they aimed their deeds not towards the hereafter but towards this world, and since they have already received the reward for that for which they aimed.

And futile will be what they are doing: that is, their deeds are futile in themselves, since they are not done in the right manner. For a futile action, however, there is no reward. . . .

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 2:262f./264f.

Those who contribute their wealth in the way of God, and then (thumma) do not follow up their gifts with reminders of their generosity or with injury, their reward is with their Lord; and no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow.

Honourable words and forgiveness are better than a freewill offering followed by injury. And God is All-sufficient, All-clement.

(The phrase) *reminders of their generosity* signifies that one points out his good deed to the one for whom it was done; that is, that one points it out in order thereby to gain a binding claim on the other. (The Arabs) used to say: 'If you point out a good deed (after you have done it), then forget it!' And from one (of their poets) comes (the verse):

A man who points out a good deed (of his) to me and calls my attention to it (even) once is truly a scoundrel.

Among the excellent sayings (of the Arabs) count the following: 'Twins are he who grants a gift to one who asks, and then brags about it, and he who gives nothing and is miserly.' . . .

Follow up . . . with injury signifies that one becomes arrogant towards the one receiving the gift, because one gave something to him. (The expression) *and then (thumma)* is to make it clear that when one contributes something, there is a distinction between renouncing claim to it and reminding of one's generosity and adding injury (to the one who receives the gift). Further (it is to make clear) that this renouncing of claim is better than the contribution itself, just as God has presented those who go straight in faith, in his words: 'Those who have said: "Our Lord is God" and then have gone straight' (Sūra 41:30; 46:12), as better than those who (merely) accept faith. . . .

Honourable words: a polite refusal.

And forgiveness: and that one forgives the one who requests a gift if his request proves to be annoying for the one approached, or that one receives forgiveness from God because one refuses

politely, or that the one who requests a gift forgives (the one solicited) because he regarded the polite refusal as sufficient. . . .

3. *Spending and hoarding*

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 9:34f.

O believers, many of the rabbis (aḥbār) and monks indeed consume the goods of the people in vanity and bar from God's way. Those who hoard gold and silver, and do not spend it in the way of God—give them the good tidings of a painful chastisement, on the day they⁴ shall be heated in the fire of Jahannam and therewith their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded: 'This is the thing you have treasured up for yourselves; therefore taste you now what you were treasuring!'

When one speaks of the consumption of goods, this can have a double meaning: Either one speaks of the consumption as a metaphor for taking something (which rightfully belongs to others) . . . , or one concludes from it that one receives something for consumption through the goods, so that the goods constitute the basis for the fact that one consumes (something). . . . If it means that they consume in a deceitful manner, then it is thus meant that they take gifts of bribery in the administration of justice and grant mitigation and alleviation in the sphere of religious laws (*sharā'ī*).

Those who hoard: It is possible that here is an allusion to many of the rabbis (of the Jews) and monks (of the Christians) in order to show that in them are combined two blameworthy characteristics: They accept gifts of bribery, and they hoard wealth which they hold back covetously and do not spend for the sake of good. It is (however also) possible that the Muslims who hoard and do not spend wealth are meant. They would then be classed together with the Jews and Christians who accept gifts of bribery, namely in the sense of being more uncouth (*taḡhlīz*) and as an indication of the fact that those among the Jews and Christians who accept forbidden goods, and those among you who do not hand over the appropriate part of your wealth, have earned in like manner the announcement of a painful punishment.

Some say that the (institution of the) legal alms (*zakāt*)⁵ abrogated

the verse about hoarding. (However) it is (also) said that this verse remains in effect and that (the statement referring to) failure to spend for the sake of God means the refusal to pay the legal alms. From the Prophet (the following is related): If a man paid the legal alms for something (which he now possesses), then this is not hoarding, even if it is kept secret. If, however, something reaches the stage that one must pay the legal alms for it but it is not paid, then this is hoarding, even if it lies there openly. From 'Umar (is related) that a man asked him about a piece of land that he had sold. To this 'Umar said: 'Keep the money that you received! Bury it under your wife's bed!' When the man asked whether this then would not be hoarding, 'Umar answered: 'If one has paid the legal alms for something, this is not hoarding.' From 'Umar (is also related): 'Everything for which one has paid the legal alms is not hoarded, even if it lies under seven earths. If, however, one has not paid the legal alms, then this is what God has mentioned (as hoarding), even if it lies on top of the ground.'

One may now ask what is to be done with the following Tradition of Sālim ibn Abī l-Ja'd (who reports): As the present verse was coming down, the Messenger of God said: 'Perish, the gold! Perish, the silver!' This he said three times. Then someone asked him: 'Then what kind of wealth should we cherish?', to which he answered: 'A tongue that mentions (God), a submissive heart, and a wife who supports (her husband) in his religion.'

Again (one may ask what one should do) with the following words of the Prophet: 'Whoever leaves behind (at death) a piece of yellow or white gold is to be branded on that account.' A man then died and a dinar was found in his loin-cloth. At this the Messenger of God said: '(That causes) a branding mark (*kayya*)!' Then, another died and two dinars were found in his loin-cloth. To this the Messenger of God said: '(That causes) two branding marks.'

(To these questions) I answer: That was before the legal alms were introduced as a duty. Regarding the situation afterwards, God is too just and too exalted to punish a servant (*'abd*) of his who accumulates wealth that is lawful and pays the legal alms that are imposed upon it. Many of the Companions of the Prophet, like 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn 'Auf, Ṭalḥa ibn 'Ubaid Allāh, and 'Ubaid Allāh (ibn Jaḥsh), acquired wealth and spent it, without being criticized for it by those who renounced claim to the acquisition of wealth. The renouncing (of wealth) is a free choice (*ikhtiyār*) for

the most excellent (*al-afḍal*), who enter more into piety and asceticism in this world. The acquisition (of wealth) is completely permissible, and those who do this should not be criticized. (Certainly) everything has its limit. When from 'Alī (the following) is related: 'Four thousand (dirhams) and less than that are acceptable expenses (for the cost of living); whatever goes over that is hoarding', then this is a statement concerning the most excellent. . . .

(Further) one may say: Why are gold and silver mentioned specifically among the various objects of wealth? To this I answer: because they constitute the standard of wealth and the price for (all) things. Only (the possession of) that which constitutes more than the necessities of life is (considered) hoarding. If then someone possesses enough so that he can hoard it, then he also does not lack the remaining kinds of wealth. Accordingly, the mentioning of hoarding (gold and silver specifically) refers to the other kinds (also). . . .

4. The prohibition against interest

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 30:39/38

And what you give in interest (ribā), that it may increase the people's wealth, increases not with God. But what you give in alms, seeking (only) the pleasure of God⁶—those (who do this will) receive recompense manifold.⁷

This verse is exactly in accordance with the meaning of God's words: 'God blots out interest (*ribā*), but freewill offerings (*ṣadaqāt*) He augments with interest (in paradise)' (Sūra 2:276/277). What is meant is: what you give (away) in interest charges.

In interest (ribā), that it may increase the people's wealth: so that it will increase and augment their wealth. (What you give for this purpose) does not increase with God and he does not bless it.

But what you give in alms (zakāt): that is, what you contribute freely (*ṣadaqa*) while seeking only God's pleasure, rather than seeking reward, or favour in the eyes of men, or fame. . . .

Some say that this verse came down on account of (the people of the tribe of) Thaḳīf, and that they had practised business transactions with interest. Others say that what is meant is that a man gives (*yahabu*) or presents (*yuhdī*) (something) to another so that the

latter will return more than he was given or presented. Such an increase is not forbidden; yet the one who makes the repayment for this increase will not be rewarded. (Also) others say that there are two kinds of interest: Forbidden interest is every loan (*qard*) for which one receives more (in return) or from which one makes a profit. The interest which is not forbidden consists of giving or presenting something (to another) and requiring more (in return) for it.⁸ In the Tradition (*ḥadīth*) it is reported: Whoever seeks to obtain more through a small gift receives a reward for it. . . .

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 2:275/276

Those who consume interest (ar-ribā) shall not rise again (on the day of resurrection), except as one arises whom Satan has prostrated by the touch (that is, one who is demon-possessed); that is because they have said: 'Bargaining is just the same as interest', even though God has permitted bargaining but has forbidden interest. Now whoever receives an admonition from his Lord and then desists (from the practice), he shall retain his past gains,⁹ and his affair is committed to God. But whoever repeats (the offence)¹⁰—those are the inhabitants of the fire, therein dwelling forever.

Shall not rise again: when they are awakened out of their graves.

Except as one arises whom Satan has prostrated: that is, (as one) who is cast down to the ground. . . .

That is the punishment because they have said: Bargaining is just the same as interest. One may now ask: Why is it not said that interest and bargaining are just the same (reversing the order of bargaining and interest), since (in the present context) the discussion is about interest and not about bargaining? It should have been said that those who charge interest liken it to bargaining and thus regard interest as permissible. Their (misleading) argument apparently consists in saying that: If someone were to purchase for two dirhams something that is worth only one dirham, then that would be permissible. It is the same if one sells one dirham for two. To this I reply: This is a kind of exaggeration (*mubālagha*), namely, in the direction that, in their firm belief that interest is justifiable, they have reached such a stage that they charge interest as the basis (*aṣl*) and standard of what is allowable, in order to liken it to bargaining.

Even though God has permitted bargaining but has forbidden interest: Through these words of God it is denied that they may both be treated as the same, and it is shown that a conclusion from analogy (*qiyās*) (as is represented by the apparent argument of those who charge interest) is nullified through an explicit statement (*naṣṣ*). For these words of God show that their conclusion from analogy concerning what is permitted and what is prohibited by God is invalid. . . .

5. Capital punishment and blood revenge

Baiḍāwī on Sūra 17:33/35

Do not kill the person God has forbidden (to kill), except with justification. Whoever is killed unjustly, We have appointed to his next-of-kin authority (for revenge) but let him not be extravagant in killing—surely he is helped.

Do not kill the person God has forbidden (to kill), except with justification: except in one of the following three cases:¹¹ unbelief after (previous) belief, adultery after having led a virtuous life, and the intentional homicide of a believer who is protected (through blood revenge).

Whoever is killed unjustly: without the death being deserved (according to the law).

We have appointed to his next-of-kin (walī): to him who administers (*waliya*) his affairs after his death, that is, the heir.

Authority (for revenge): authority to carry out the punishment prescribed for homicide on him who is to be punished, or to undertake retaliation (*qiṣāṣ*) upon the one who committed homicide. Since God says (in this verse): (whoever is killed) *unjustly*, this shows that the killing must be an intentionally hostile act, since a (mere) error is not characterized as unjust.

But let him not be extravagant: that is, the one who kills (in one of the three cases mentioned above is justified).

In killing: in that he may (perhaps) kill someone whom it is not justified to kill. The prudent person thus will do nothing that brings destruction to him. Or, the *walī* (who is not to be extravagant) is meant, when he inflicts mutilation while killing, or when he kills another than the one who committed the homicide. The first

meaning (namely, that one of the three cases of justified killing is meant) is supported by the reading of Ubayy: 'You (pl.) shall (however) not be extravagant.' Ḥamza and al-Kisā'ī read: 'You (sing.) shall not be extravagant', whereby one of the two would be addressed.

Surely he is helped (innahu kāna manṣūr): Here the motive for the prohibition (of extravagance) is stated in a new sentence. The pronoun 'he' refers either to the one who is killed (unjustly), since he is helped in this world through the retaliation for the death which is established (by God for the sake of justice), and he will be helped in the hereafter through the reward (of paradise). Or, the pronoun refers to his *walī*, since God has helped the latter in that he granted him the retaliation and commanded (other) *walīs* to assist him. Or, the pronoun refers to those whom the *walī* kills in extravagance, because (they are helped in that) retaliation in extravagance or punishment and responsibility for the extravagance are accepted.

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 2:178f./173–175

O believers, retaliation (qiṣāṣ) is prescribed for you regarding the slain: freeman for freeman, slave for slave, female for female. But if anyone is granted any remission¹² by his brother,¹³ the matter is to be pursued with equity, and the payment (of blood money) is to be made with kindness. This is a concession and a mercy granted to you by your Lord: and for him who commits aggression after that—for him there awaits a painful chastisement.

In retaliation there is life for you who have insight; perhaps you will be godfearing.

According to 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, 'Aṭā', and 'Ikrima, as well as the legal schools of Mālik (ibn Anas) and ash-Shāfi'ī, a freeman may not be killed (in retaliation) for a slave and a man may not be killed for a woman, specifically on the basis of this verse. They say that this verse is a clear commentary on what is unclear in God's words: 'Therein (that is, in the Torah), We have prescribed for them: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and for wounds, retaliation' (Sūra 5:45/49). This verse (just quoted) may have been revealed

in order to inform through it what is prescribed in the Torah for its people. Here, on the other hand, the Muslims would be addressed and would receive what appears as regulation in this verse.

On the other hand, according to Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab, ash-Sha'bī, an-Nakh'ī, Qatāda, and ath-Thaurī, as well as the legal school of Abū Ḥanīfa and his followers, the present verse should be (regarded as having been) abrogated by God's words 'a life for a life ...' (Sūra 5:45/49). Accordingly, retaliation between slaves and freemen and between men and women would remain. Thus, from the words of the Prophet: 'The murder of Muslims is all the same', and from the fact that no relative position of superiority is taken into consideration concerning the soul, (these authorities) conclude that if a (whole) crowd (of people) murdered an individual, they could (all) be killed on his account.

It is related that a blood feud existed between two Arab tribes in pre-Islamic times and one gained power over the other and swore: 'We will kill your freemen for our slaves, your men for our women, and two (of yours) for one (of ours)!' Then, someone confronted the Messenger of God with this legal matter, (that is, for a decision) concerning the time since God brought Islam. It was on this occasion that the present verse came down; and the Prophet commanded them to place everyone on an equal footing.

But if anyone is granted any remission by his brother: ... The brother is the *walī* of the one who was killed. He is called his brother because he stands near him in so far as he is his blood revenger (*walī ad-dam*) and carries out his claim in this regard. ... Or, God mentions the *walī* with the designation of brotherhood so that the one may do what is to be done for the other with the thought that between the two exists a community relationship (*jinsiyya*) and Islam. ...

The matter is to be pursued with equity, and the payment is to be made with kindness: ... This is an instruction to the one who is granted the remission and concerns also those who grant the remission. That is, the *walī* is to pursue (the matter) in the right manner (with) the one who has taken a life, in that he is not to deal (too) severely with him, and (he is to) demand from him only what can be demanded in a good manner. And the one who has killed is to make good the equivalent for the (shed) blood in a respectable manner, in that he is not to postpone or reduce it.

This: the decision that is mentioned concerning the remission and the blood money.

Is a concession and a mercy granted to you by your Lord: since he specifically prescribed retaliation to the people of the Torah and forbade remission as well as the taking of blood money, while he prescribed remission to the people of the Gospel and forbade retaliation and the (taking of) blood money. The community (of Muslims), however, have the choice among (all) three: retaliation, blood money, and remission, which represents for them a magnanimity and a concession.

And for him who commits aggression after that: after the mitigation is put into effect and a man goes beyond what he is ordered to do, by killing someone who had not killed or by killing after receiving blood money. In pre-Islamic times the *walī* would sometimes accept blood money and lead the one who had killed to think that he was safe, (only) in order then to subdue and kill him.

For him there awaits a painful punishment: some kind of very painful punishment in the hereafter. According to Qatāda the 'painful punishment' is that he will certainly be killed, but no blood money will be accepted for him, since the Prophet said: 'I will grant remission to no-one who has killed after receiving blood money.'

In retaliation (qiṣās) there is life for you: ... The meaning is: In this kind of regulation, as (for instance) represented by retaliation, you have strong life. That is, previously for a single (person killed), one killed a (whole) group (in retaliation). How many, after all, did (the poet) Muḥalhil kill for his brother Kulaib, so that (the relatives of) Bakr ibn Wā'il nearly disappeared! For the one person murdered he killed (also) people who had not participated in the murder. This led to civil war and mutual slaughter among them.¹⁴ Then when Islam brought the law of retaliation, therein lay a life for each life, or a (specific) kind of life, namely the life that results from the fact that a man is restrained from taking a life because he knows that retaliation will be inflicted against the one who takes a life. That is, if he plots a homicide, knowing that he will suffer retaliation, and is thus deterred from taking a life, then his companion is saved from murder and he himself is saved from retaliation. Thus, the (fear of) retaliation is the occasion for (saving) the life of two people.

Abū I-Jauzā' read: 'In the account (*qaṣāṣ*) there is life for you.' That is: in that which is reported to you about the regulation concerning homicide. . . .

6. *The prohibition against infanticide*

Baidāwī on Sūra 17:31/33

And slay not your children for fear of poverty; We will provide for you and them. Surely the slaying of them is a grievous sin.

And slay not your children for fear of poverty: for fear of scarcity. When (this verse states that) they (that is, the unbelieving Arabs) killed their children, this means that they buried their (newborn) daughters alive out of fear of poverty. God now prohibits this and promises to them the necessities of life, by saying:

We will provide for you and them. Surely the slaying of them is a grievous sin: a grievous transgression, since through it is brought about the cessation of reproduction and the extinction of the species. . . .

7. *The prohibition against the flesh of swine*

Rāzī on Sūra 2:172f./167f.

O believers, eat of the good things wherewith We have provided you, and give thanks to God, if it be Him that you serve. These things only has He forbidden you: carrion, blood, the flesh of swine, and that over which any other name than that of God has been invoked. But if anyone is forced by necessity, without his own desire or deliberate transgression, then no sin shall be on him. God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate.

. . . Section concerning swine (*khinzīr*). There are here (various) complex questions:

(1) The community (*umma*) (of Muslims) agree that all parts of the swine are forbidden. God speaks of the flesh (and not of the other parts) of the swine because the main use (of the swine) derives from its flesh. This way of speaking is similar to the words of God: 'O believers, when proclamation is made for prayer on the day of assembly (that is, Friday), hasten to God's remembrance and leave

bargaining aside' (Sūra 62:9), where in this case God has specifically forbidden bargaining because it represents the main occupation of the people. Although the bristles of swine are not involved according to the (precise) wording, they (too) are unanimously regarded as forbidden and impure. There is a difference of opinion concerning whether one may use them for sewing (*kharz*) (of leather). Abū Ḥanīfa and Muḥammad (ibn al-Ḥasan ash-Shaibānī) regard this as permissible while ash-Shāfi'ī does not. Abū Yūsuf said: 'I regard sewing with swine bristles to be objectionable'; however, it is (also) related that he regarded it as permissible. The arguments of Abū Ḥanīfa and Muḥammad are as follows: We see that the use of swine bristles is conceded to the shoemakers among the Muslims and is not explicitly condemned. There (even) exists an urgent necessity for it. When ash-Shāfi'ī says that the blood of fleas does not contaminate the clothing because it is difficult to protect oneself from it, why then in the same manner are swine bristles not to be permissible, since one sews with them?

(2) There is disagreement concerning the 'water swine' (*khinzīr al-mā'*, that is, the hippopotamus). Ibn Abī Lailā, Mālik (ibn Anas), ash-Shāfi'ī, and al-Auzā'ī maintain that there is no objection about it, since one eats something that is derived from the water. Abū Ḥanīfa and his followers say that one may not eat it. Ash-Shāfi'ī bases his argument on God's words: 'Permitted to you is the game of the sea and the food of it as a provision for you and for the journeyers (who are going on the pilgrimage)' (Sūra 5:96/97). Abū Ḥanīfa (on the other hand) regards the 'water swine' as a swine and, for this reason, forbids (its use for food), according to God's words: 'Forbidden to you are carrion, blood, the flesh of swine, and that over which any other name than that of God has been invoked' (Sūra 5:3/4). Ash-Shāfi'ī says: When one speaks of swine alone, one knows immediately that the land swine and not the 'water swine' is meant, just as one knows immediately when meat alone is mentioned that it is a usage appropriate to other than fish meat, but not to this. (In the same way) one never refers to 'water swine' simply as swine, but (precisely) as 'water swine'.

(3) To the question whether one must purify seven times a container which has been licked by a swine, there are two statements by ash-Shāfi'ī. The first says: Yes, because one can liken it to the dog.¹⁵ The second says: No, since that strictness (with which they consider contact with dogs) is for the purpose of deterring the people

from having contact with dogs. Regarding swine, however, one has no contact, and the distinction (between swine and dogs) is thus evident. . . .

8. *The prohibition against wine*

Rāzī on Sūra 2:219/216

They question thee concerning wine (khamr)¹⁶ and games of chance (maisir).¹⁷ Say: 'In both are great sin and some uses for men. But the sin in them is greater than their usefulness.' . . .

Some note that in God's words *They question thee concerning wine and games of chance* (precisely) what the people have asked about is not made clear. It is possible that they have asked about the true character and nature of wine. (Also) they could have asked whether it is permissible to make use of wine. And (finally) they could have asked whether it is permissible or sinful to drink it. However, since God answers (the question) by indicating the sinfulness (of these two), the special emphasis of the answer provides proof that the questions concerned permission and sinfulness. In this verse there are (various) complex questions.

I. Some maintain: Concerning wine four verses have been sent down. In Mecca the following verse came down: 'And (We give you) the fruits of the palms and the vines, from which you obtain an intoxicant as well as wholesome food. Surely in this is a sign for people who understand' (Sūra 16:67/69). (On the basis of this) the Muslims drank such drinks, since they were permitted (or at least not explicitly prohibited). Then, however, 'Umar, Mu'ādh, and a group of the (other) Companions of the Prophet said: 'Messenger of God, render to us an opinion concerning wine, since it seizes the mind and steals the wealth!' Then came down the following words of God concerning wine: *In both are great sin and some uses for men*. Henceforth, some people continued to drink it, while others abstained from it. Then, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn 'Auf invited some people (to drink wine), and they drank it and became intoxicated. One of them arose in order to perform the prayer and recited (falsely): 'Say: O unbelievers, I worship (instead of: I do not worship) what you worship' (Sūra 109:1f.). At this point, the (following) verse came down: 'O believers, draw not near to prayer

when you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying' (Sūra 4:43/46), and the number (of Muslims) who continued to drink (wine) decreased. Then some Helpers (*anṣār*) came together, and among them was Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās. When they had become drunk, they boasted and recited poetry to each other, until finally Sa'd recited a poem that included a slander against the Helpers. Then when one of the Helpers struck Sa'd with the jaw-bone of a camel and inflicted a deep head wound, the latter complained to the Messenger of God, and 'Umar said: 'God, give us a conclusive statement concerning wine!' Then came down (the verse): 'O believers, wine (*khamr*), games of chance (*maisir*), idols (*anṣāb*), and divining-arrows (*azlām*) are (a clear) abomination (*rijs*) and some of Satan's work. So avoid it! Perhaps you will (then) prosper. Satan desires only to precipitate enmity and hatred among you, with wine and games of chance, and to bar you from the remembrance of God and from prayer. Will you then not desist?' (Sūra 5:90f./92f.). 'Umar added: 'Will we desist, Lord?'

Al-Qaffāl said that the wisdom of issuing the prohibition (against drinking wine) in these stages lies in the following: God knew that the people had been accustomed to drinking wine and drawing from it its many uses. Thus he (also) knew that it would be unbearable for them if he had prohibited them all at once (from the use of wine), and thus unquestionably (for this reason) he made use of these stages and kindness in the prohibition (against drinking wine). There are (however also) people who maintain that God forbids wine and games of chance in the present verse (Sūra 2:219/216), and that his words: 'Draw not near to prayer when you are intoxicated' came down after it. That is, the demand that the drinking of wine is forbidden during the time of prayer is connected with these words, since one who drinks wine would be performing his prayer while intoxicated. If therefore intoxication is forbidden, then the prohibition against drinking (wine) is also included. The verse (regarding the prohibition of wine) in (the sūra called) 'The Table' (5:90f./92f.) came down after the verse under discussion. It represents the strongest possible form of the prohibition. According to ar-Rabī ibn Anas, the present verse (Sūra 2:219/216) came down after the prohibition against wine.

II. One should take note, according to our view, that the present verse shows the (existence of the) prohibition against wine. It lacks (however) the (more precise) explanation of what wine